

NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK PLAN FINAL DOCUMENT



PREPARED BY THE REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
AND THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
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North Birmingham Community Framework Plan: Final Document

Adopted by the Birmingham Planning Commission on February 18, 2015

Endorsed by the Birmingham City Council on March 31, 2015



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Introduction

1.1 About the Framework Plan

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan is a subset of the City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2013. This community framework plan includes the neighborhoods of Acipco-Finley, Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park, Hooper City, and North Birmingham.

For the purposes of completing this plan, the City of Birmingham contracted with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) Building Communities Program, which uses a combination of funding from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and a local match from the City.

The objective of this planning effort was the development of a framework plan for the North Birmingham Community that fits seamlessly with other current and future planning efforts. In this regard, RPCGB worked closely with City staff, community leaders, and regional stakeholders to ensure a meaningful and deliberate planning process. In accordance with this goal, RPCGB and the City led a series of public community meetings throughout the North Birmingham Community to ensure community input and guidance for the final plan.

This framework plan uses research produced in the Existing Conditions Document and the North Birmingham Community Health Impact Assessment to recommend projects and to outline implementation strategies. These projects intend to improve the quality of life for those in the North Birmingham Community and to attract and retain residents and businesses in the future.

1.2 Geographic and Historic Context

Location

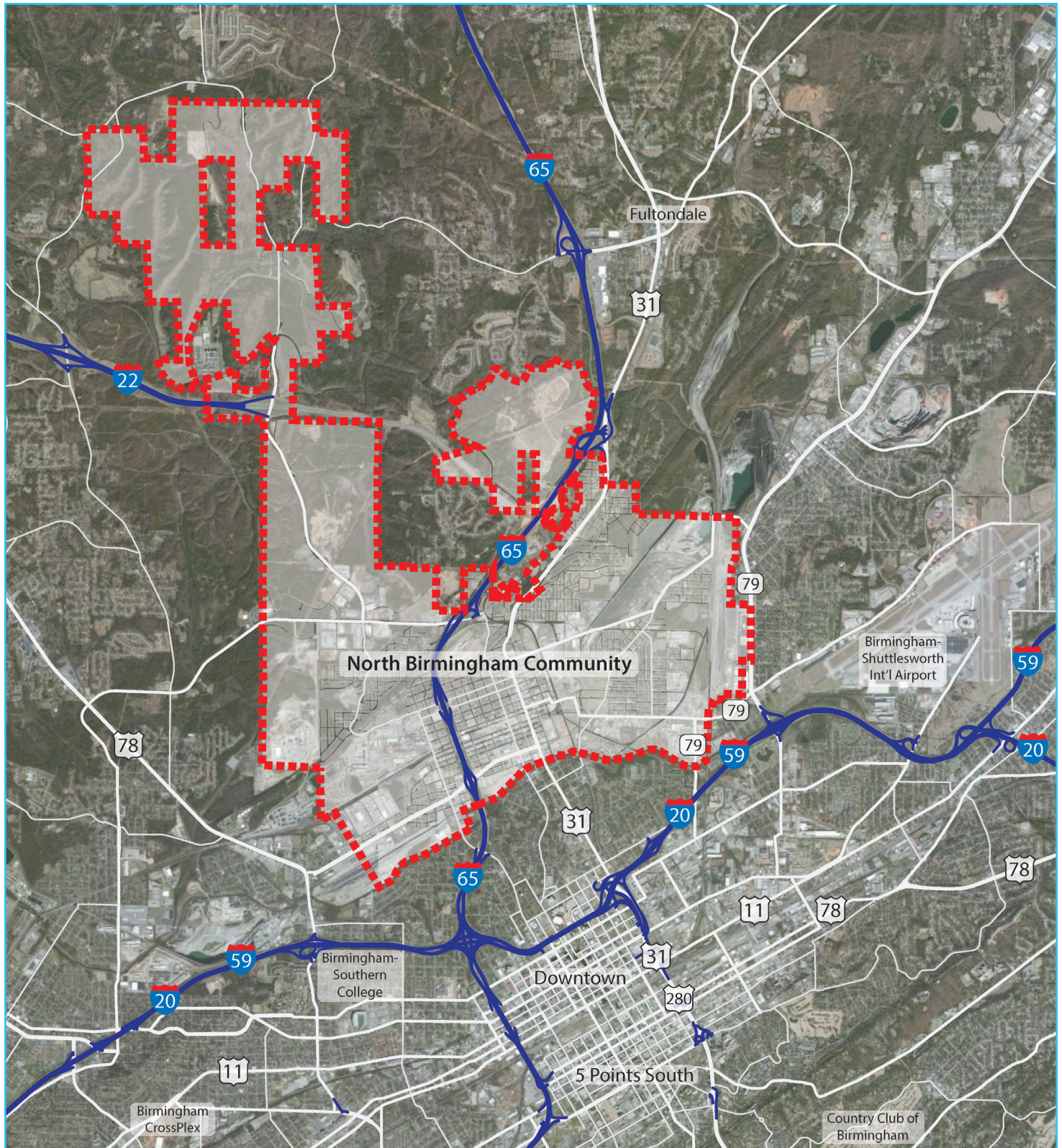
The North Birmingham Community is located north of Birmingham's downtown, south of the cities of Fultondale and Gardendale, and bisected by two major highways (Interstate 65 and U.S. Highway 31). The community is bordered by Village Creek to the south and generally bounded by Walker Chapel Road to the north and both State Route 79 and the CSX railroad to the east. On the following pages, Map 1.2.1 shows the location of the community within regional context and Map 1.2.2 shows the locations of its six neighborhoods.

History

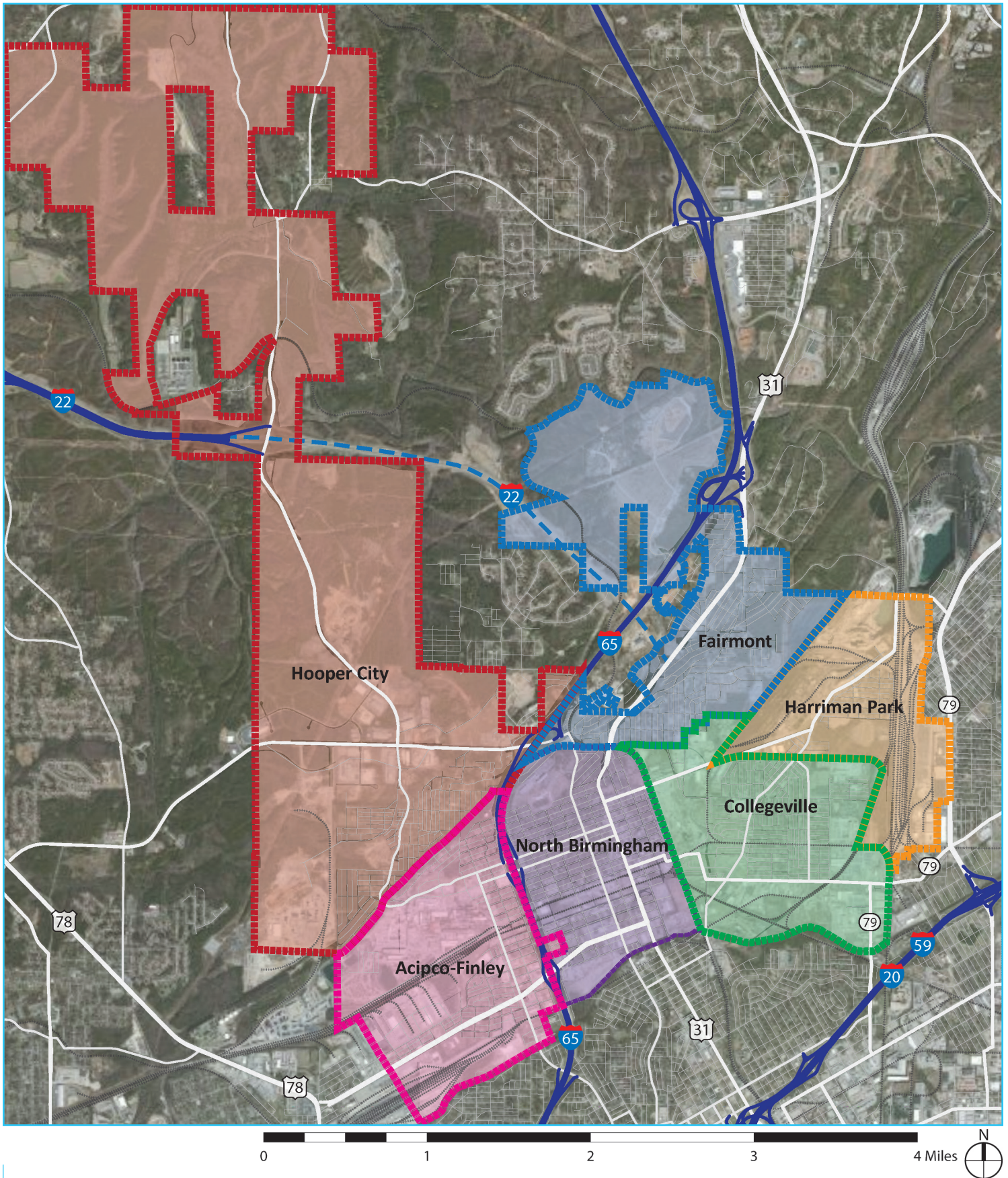
The majority of the neighborhoods within the North Birmingham Community originated as company-built camps for industrial workers during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These small communities were clustered adjacent to their respective industries and provided housing, educational opportunities, and services to workers in the factories.

Today, the North Birmingham Community is experiencing dynamic changes and uncertainties. The combination of the proximity of residential areas to heavy industry and the lack of environmental regulation during the early 20th century has caused significant environmental pollution that has accumulated over time. With severe blight, a declining population, and a lagging workforce, substantial investments and partnerships are necessary to revitalize the community. The community's strategic location, access to major transportation networks, available land, and rich history should prove invaluable as the community moves forward.

Map 1.2.1: North Birmingham Community Regional Context



Map 1.2.2: North Birmingham Community Neighborhood Context



1.3 Plan Development & Public Participation Process

The planning process is the mechanism by which community members, stakeholders, and government agencies work together to develop a vision, articulate goals, and craft implementation strategies. Driven by quantitative and qualitative analyses, the planning process coalesces in-depth analyses of a community's existing socioeconomic, demographic, transportation, and infrastructure data with the community's values and aspirations. The North Birmingham Community Framework planning process began in December 2013 and concluded with its adoption by the Birmingham Planning Commission in February 2015. Conducted in three phases, the planning process was executed with the full involvement of community members, stakeholders, and government agencies.

Phase I: Community Assessment

The community assessment began with the collection and analysis of socioeconomic, demographic, transportation, and infrastructure data. A parcel-by-parcel inventory was conducted throughout the entire community to determine the present use of each property, identify discrepancies with the City's land use map, discern land use densities, and provide a detailed analysis of the community's property conditions. The completion of the community assessment resulted in the Existing Conditions Document. The Existing Conditions Document and the North Birmingham Community Health Impact Assessment provided information for community members and staff members to develop this plan's recommendations.

Phase II: Public Involvement

The public involvement process for the North Birmingham Community Framework Plan engaged multiple government agencies, non-profits, private organizations, and the general public through stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and online on the project website: <http://www.imaginebham.com>.



Stakeholder Interviews: Stakeholder interviews began in December 2013. The interviews were conducted to assess challenges in the community. The stakeholder interview process provided guidance on the development of appropriate strategies and corresponding actions for implementation.

The following City of Birmingham departments were interviewed: Community Development; Mayor's Office of Economic Development; Birmingham Police Department; Birmingham Fire & Rescue Services; Traffic Engineering; Planning, Engineering & Permits; and Parks and Recreation.

The other government agencies interviewed were: Jefferson County Department of Health, Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, Housing Authority of the Birmingham District, and the Alabama Department of Transportation.



Kick-Off Meeting: To introduce the community to the framework planning process for initial feedback, a kick-off meeting was held on February 24, 2014, at the North Birmingham Public Library. Community members and stakeholders were asked to describe the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the North Birmingham Community. Participants identified specific concerns that the framework plan should address and articulated their vision for the community.



Community Renewal Meeting: On March 10, 2014, the community was invited to the Trinity CME Church to identify challenges and opportunities for the revitalization of their community. Presentations by representatives of Main Street Alabama and REV Birmingham, business owners, and private sector developers provided insight into the opportunities for revitalization. Workshops and table exercises engaged participants to identify focus areas for redevelopment and investment.

- 🗨️ **Steering Committee Meeting:** A Steering Committee of community residents and stakeholders was established and met for the first time on June 24, 2014, a meeting was held with Steering Committee members for the presentation of the Existing Conditions Document. The committee discussed strategies and recommendations to address the challenges noted in the document.
- 🗨️ **Charrette:** A series of meetings held on July 21-25 at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's offices facilitated residents' feedback about how their community looks and feels and what changes need to be made to improve their community's aesthetics.
- 🗨️ **Proposals and Recommendations:** The community meeting on August 26, 2014, at the North Birmingham Public Library provided a forum for the public and staff to review and make further edits to the plan's proposals and recommendations.

Community members, stakeholders, and government agencies played an essential role in validating the North Birmingham Community Framework Plan. Their continued commitment will be needed to implement the strategies and actions outlined in this plan in order to achieve the community's vision.

Phase III: Plan Development & Adoption



The final community meeting was held on January 29, 2015, at the North Birmingham Public Library to present the final draft of the plan. The plan was adopted by the Birmingham Planning Commission on February 18, 2015, and endorsed by the Birmingham City Council on March 31, 2015.

Figure 1.2.1: Final Community Meeting on January 29



Source: Birmingham City Council

1.4 Vision Statement

Input from residents and research from analyses were used to develop the vision for the North Birmingham Community Framework Plan. This vision reflects the community's values and aspirations for the future:

The North Birmingham Community is a 21st century industrial powerhouse recognized for its role in the civil rights and environmental justice movements. Its stable and historic neighborhoods strategically located near Downtown Birmingham make it a vibrant and attractive destination for visitors, residents, and businesses.

1.5 Plan Recommendations and Goals

The recommendations and goals of this plan were developed during the plan's public engagement process with help from the findings of the North Birmingham Community Health Impact Assessment. The three overarching recommendations -- Community Renewal, Industrial Development, and Commercial Development -- each have three goals, all listed below, with accompanying strategies and actions described later in this report.

Community Renewal Goals

- 1) **ELIMINATE BLIGHT AND STRENGTHEN VULNERABLE AREAS TO CREATE A COMMUNITY THAT IS STABLE AND ATTRACTIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT RESIDENTS.**
- 2) **TRANSFORM HAZARDOUS AREAS INTO ENVIRONMENTALLY-SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE USES THAT ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S QUALITY OF LIFE.**
- 3) **ESTABLISH THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY AS A DESTINATION FOR MIXED-INCOME HOUSING AND HIGH-QUALITY NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES.**

Industrial Development Goals

- 1) **TRANSFORM THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY INTO A REGIONAL MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE, 21ST CENTURY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.**
- 2) **ATTRACT AND RETAIN 21ST CENTURY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.**
- 3) **PROVIDE VALUABLE AND SUSTAINING CAREERS IN 21ST CENTURY MANUFACTURING FOR THE COMMUNITY'S WORKFORCE.**

Commercial Development Goals

- 1) **TRANSFORM THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS DISTRICT INTO A MIXED-USE, TRANSIT HUB FOR LIVING, WORKING, AND SHOPPING.**
- 2) **EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS AND AMENITIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.**
- 3) **ENHANCE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, HEALTHY FOOD OUTLETS IN THE COMMUNITY.**

Community Renewal

Community Renewal

2.1 Community Needs and Opportunities

To sustain healthy neighborhoods and a high quality of life, communities need to be supported by mixed-income housing, neighborhood amenities, institutional facilities, and access to centers of employment, healthcare, and higher learning. The North Birmingham community faces certain challenges to reaching its potential of achieving these sustainable features.

Blight

The prevalence of blight is one of the predominant issues impacting the North Birmingham community. Overgrown and vacant lots, abandoned properties, and dilapidated structures present serious issues for residents and businesses. Blighted properties in the community raise safety concerns, require additional maintenance and city services, and diminish the value of surrounding properties. The abandoned and operating industrial sites in the community contribute to the problem of blight with pollution and environmental contamination.

Lack of Institutional Facilities and Neighborhood Amenities

While the community is generally supported by safety services and educational facilities, it lacks quality healthcare facilities, daycare centers, recreational amenities, and neighborhood shops. Although each neighborhood within the community has at least one recreation center or park, most are not large enough to offer the programs and activities desired by residents.

In addition, the community does not have any designated bicycle or pedestrian paths and trails, which would offer an alternative mode of transportation and enhance quality of life. Although the North Birmingham Business District is centrally located, the community as a whole is underserved by services such as grocery stores, restaurants, daycare centers, and pharmacies. Transit service is also inadequate in providing sufficient and effective access to neighborhood facilities and services or those in other communities.

The strategies and recommendations presented in this section will address the community's blight and lack of services. When applied to strategic sites identified in this plan, the presented solutions will enhance the community's quality of life and foster a healthier economy. For more detailed information on the community's assets and challenges, refer to the Existing Conditions Document.

Table 2.1 Community Needs and Opportunities

NEEDS
Maintenance, safety, code enforcement, and monitoring of blighted properties
Larger parks, recreation facilities, and/or more recreation programs tailored to residents
Variety and greater number of neighborhood shops and services
Healthcare facilities and businesses serving healthy foods
OPPORTUNITIES
Revitalizing of the North Birmingham Business District
Converting blighted, flood-prone, and environmentally contaminated properties into productive uses
Capitalizing on the community's strategic location and historical assets
Working with the Birmingham Land Bank Authority and the RISE initiative

2.2 Community Renewal (CR) Strategies and Actions

Two Community Renewal strategies are recommended for the North Birmingham Community to address blight, environmental issues, and neighborhood assets:

- 1) **Maintain & Stabilize**
- 2) **Revitalize & Develop**

The **Maintain & Stabilize Strategy** identifies blighted and hazardous areas for the conversion into productive uses through small-scale initiatives. This strategy will reduce the supply of deteriorated and dilapidated structures, vacant and overgrown lots, and abandoned properties. Consequently, the value of surrounding properties in well-maintained conditions will stabilize and eventually increase in value.

The **Revitalize & Develop Strategy** seeks to establish public-private partnerships, allocate resources for revitalization, and prioritize targeted development. The objective of the Revitalize & Develop Strategy is to focus on areas whose high potential is held back by blighted surroundings and where the return on investment is highest and most assured.

The goals below relate to the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan and will be achieved by implementing the action items corresponding to the two overarching strategies. The implementation table in Chapter 6 identifies potential partnerships that could help carry out these action items.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL (CR) GOALS

- 1) **ELIMINATE BLIGHT AND STRENGTHEN VULNERABLE AREAS TO CREATE A COMMUNITY THAT IS STABLE AND ATTRACTIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT RESIDENTS.**
- 2) **TRANSFORM HAZARDOUS AREAS INTO ENVIRONMENTALLY-SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE USES THAT ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S QUALITY OF LIFE.**
- 3) **ESTABLISH THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY AS A DESTINATION FOR MIXED-INCOME HOUSING AND HIGH-QUALITY NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES.**

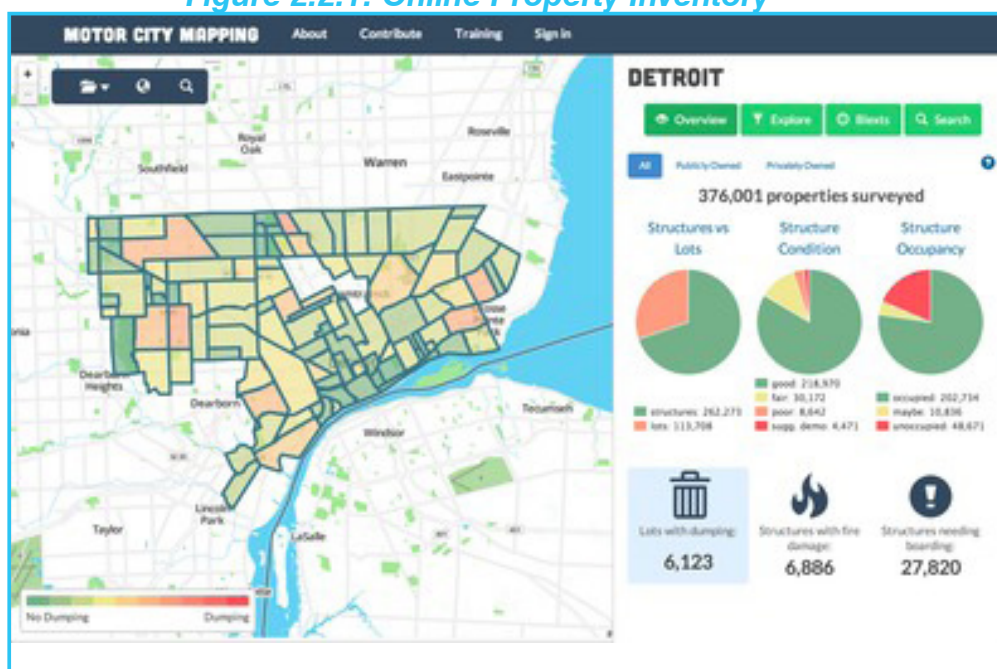
MAINTAIN & STABILIZE STRATEGY (CR1)

ACTION CR1-A: DEVELOP A PUBLIC DATABASE OF PROPERTIES IN VIOLATION OF BUILDING CODES, IN CONDEMNATION, AND IN TAX-DELINQUENCY.

A public and regularly updated database of blighted, tax-delinquent, and condemned properties will benefit residents, community organizations, investors, and stakeholders in the North Birmingham Community:

- Residents and community organizations will learn about the progress of code enforcement and redevelopment opportunities.
- Housing, community, and economic development organizations will have access to possible locations for housing, social assistance, and workforce development services in the community.
- Urban planners and economic developers will use this information to find sites that can be assembled for redevelopment to meet community needs.
- City officials and government agencies will leverage this information to develop initiatives and partnerships to strengthen and better serve the community.

Figure 2.2.1: Online Property Inventory



Source: Motor City Mapping, Detroit, MI, 2014

ACTION CR1-B: MODERNIZE THE ENFORCEMENT OF BUILDING CODES, PERMITTING, AND THE CONDEMNATION PROCESS.

Blighted properties pose health and safety hazards, attract criminal activity, create an unsafe environment, impose a burden on city services, and diminish tax revenues. It is essential to enforce building codes and the utilize the condemnation process to stabilize property values, prevent blight, and create a safe and attractive environment. By modernizing, the City could streamline its enforcement and permitting process and build a more informed and supportive base of residents. The city's permitting software has already been approved for an upgrade, which will help achieve this action.

Educate property owners about the violations and options to resolve citations by:

- Creating a dedicated website with information on typical code violations and a brief description of building codes, permitting, and the condemnation process.

Streamline the inspection and legal process of condemnation by:

- Increasing staff dedicated to code enforcement and encouraging neighborhood residents to report and cite violations.
- Developing an app or website for residents to report, check, and learn about the status of code enforcement cases.

Figure 2.2.2: Code Enforcement Guide and Policing



Sources: *Citizen's Code Enforcement Guide in Manatee County, FL, 2014 (left); Kenner Code Violations, 2012 (right)*

ACTION CR1-C: PROVIDE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES TO TARGET BLIGHTED PROPERTIES FOR REPAIR, RENOVATION, CONVERSION, AND ACQUISITION.

Reversing the effects of blight requires different approaches depending on the condition and context of blighted properties. A vacant lot that is abandoned and/or overgrown needs a new use that is productive in meeting the residents' needs. For properties with a deteriorated or dilapidated structure, blight can be eliminated through renovation or demolition. Lastly, properties that are tax-delinquent or abandoned without a clear title require legal and financial measures such as land bank acquisition. The city's Department of Community Development plans to implement its RISE initiative in North Birmingham following the adoption of the framework plan. RISE uses these stabilization tools in neighborhoods and will apply them in the North Birmingham community in accordance with this framework plan. Below are just three examples of how stabilization may be applied in the community.

1. Renovate and Repair Deteriorated and Dilapidated Structures (Figure 2.2.3)

Use grants, competitive loans, and home improvement programs:

- *Critical Repair Grant Program, City of Birmingham:*
Provides residents who make 30% or less of area-median income (AMI) up to \$7,500 for structural and plumbing repairs and modernization of electrical and mechanical equipment. Structural work is typically limited to correcting issues related to other repairs. Following the application's acceptance, housing inspectors visit the home and review the requested work to determine the highest needs to be addressed.
- *Commercial Revitalization Program, City of Birmingham:*
Offers facade and storefront improvement rebates of up to 20% of costs and capital improvement rebates of up to 10% of costs, following design guidelines established by the area's merchant's association.
- *Volunteer Rehabilitation Program, City of Birmingham:*
Provides funding to volunteer programs to assist residents making 80% or less of AMI for exterior paint, roof repairs, deck repair, and handicap ramp construction.

2. Convert or Reuse Abandoned and Overgrown Vacant Lots

Recreational Uses (Figure 2.2.4)

- Playgrounds and fields

Healthy and Nutritional Uses (Figure 2.2.5)

- Mobile health clinics, mobile grocery stores, and farmer's markets

Stormwater Management (Figure 2.2.6)

- Retention/detention ponds, bioretention cells, rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration trenches, and other stormwater management tools

Environmental Remediation (Figure 2.2.7)

- Phytoremediation and bioremediation

3. Acquire then Transfer Tax-Delinquent Properties

The Birmingham Land Bank Authority can acquire properties that are five or more years tax-delinquent and can produce a clean title. The intent of the land bank is not to hold property, but to produce clean titles and dispose of the property so that the property is back in productive use. The land bank has several disposal options for properties in which they clean title, one of interest for North Birmingham is through its Side Lot Program to adjacent property owners at a minimal cost. The BLBA will maintain an up to date map of tax-delinquent property on the City's website. A map of the community's tax-delinquent properties, as of the publication of this Plan, is in the Existing Conditions document.

Figure 2.2.3: Volunteers Paint a House Facade



Source: Habitat for Humanity Riverside, 2014

Figure 2.2.4: Vacant Lot Converted to a Playground



Source: Bring Life to Vacant Spaces, 2014

Figure 2.2.5: Vacant Lot Converted into Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture



Sources: East Lake Farmers Market's Mobile Market, Weld for Birmingham, 2015 (top); Bon Secours Hampton Roads Health System's Care-A-Van, 2012 (above)

Figure 2.2.6: Vacant Lot to Rain Gardens and Bioswales



Sources: *Rain Gardens*, 2014 (left); *Eco Brooklyn Inc.*, 2012 (right)

Figure 2.2.7: Phytoremediation on a Former Vacant Lot



Source: *Landezine*, 2014

ACTION CR1-D: DESIGNATE, REMEDIATE, ACQUIRE AND/OR CONVERT PROPERTIES IN ENVIRONMENTALLY-CONTAMINATED AND FLOOD-PRONE AREAS INTO PRODUCTIVE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY-SAFE USES.

Portions of the Collegeville, Fairmont, Harriman Park, and North Birmingham neighborhoods were declared a superfund site in 2012 (as shown in Map 2.2.1 on the following page) and are undergoing environmental remediation efforts. Councilor William Parker's office has been working with the EPA and other federal agencies to address this site and other environmental issues in the area.

Additionally, since the community is still an industrial center, there is also a significant number of abandoned, industrial properties that are brownfields. Additionally, parts of Collegeville, North Birmingham, and Acipco-Finley are prone to substantial flooding along Village Creek that passes by on their southern borders. These flood-prone and contaminated sites need to be identified and planned for in order to prevent them from becoming blighted properties.

Inventory, characterize, assess, remediate, and redevelop brownfields

- The EPA Brownfields Program provides grants and revolving loans towards technical assistance, assessment, planning, remediation, and environmental job training.
- ADEM provides a 10-step guide to redevelop brownfields (Figure 3.2.3 on p. 29) and a Brownfields Cleanup State Revolving Loan program.

Acquire properties located in high flood-prone areas

- Continue city efforts with FEMA to acquire properties east of Maclin Park in Collegeville.
- Identify additional flood-prone areas to expand FEMA's Flood Buyout Program.

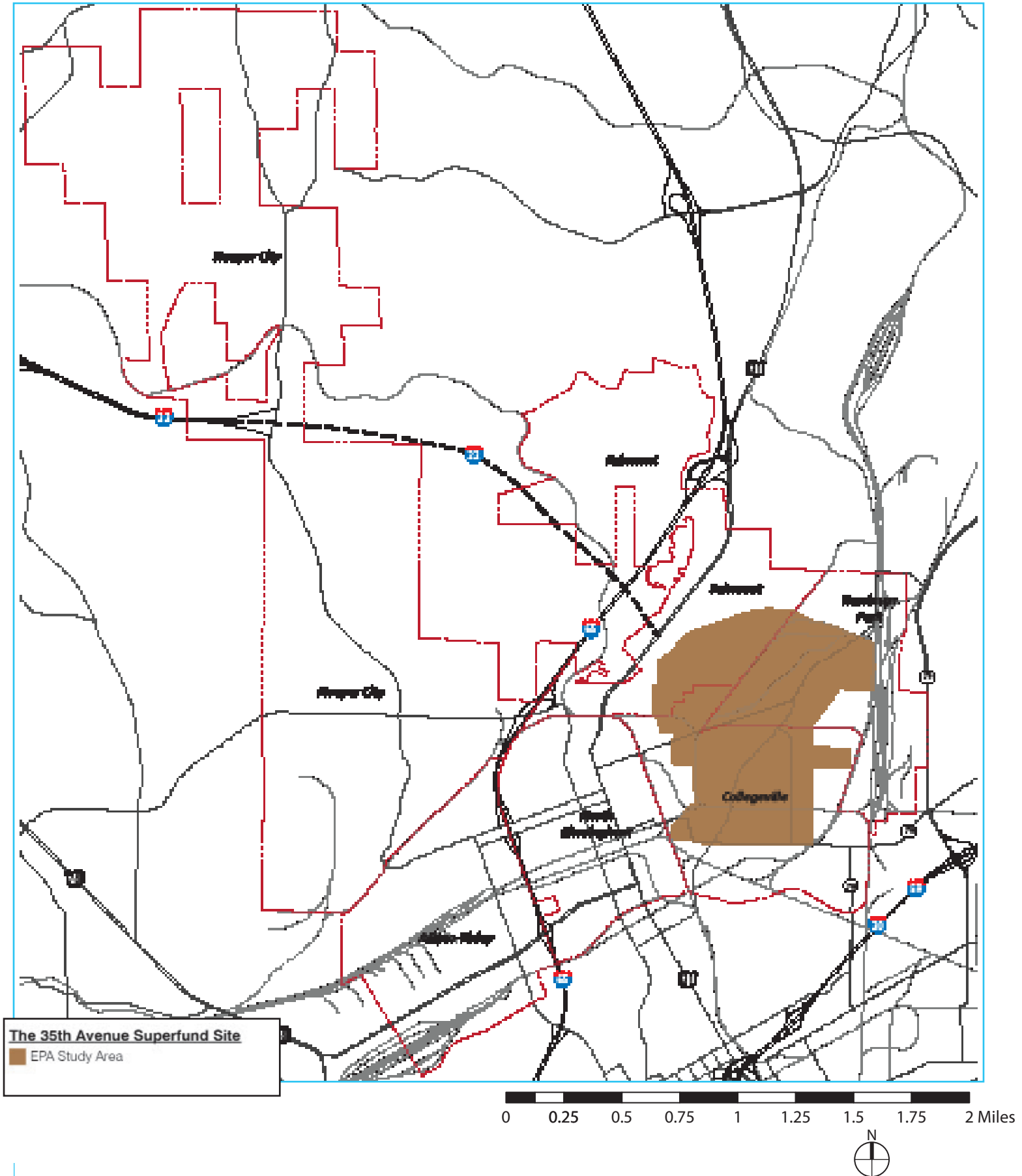
Rezone flood-prone properties for open space

- Categorize these areas as open space in this plan's future land use map (Chapter 5) to ensure that future zoning in this area only allows uses that are flood resilient.

Develop programs to mitigate flooding and improve air and water quality

- Implement the City of Birmingham's ongoing Village Creek Watershed Management Plan.
- Create and enforce Low-Impact Development guidelines for stormwater management.

Map 2.2.1: The 35th Avenue Superfund Site in Collegeville, Harriman Park, and Fairmont



REVITALIZE & DEVELOP STRATEGY (CR2)

ACTION CR2-A: PROMOTE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PUBLICLY OWNED, VACANT FACILITIES AND OTHER HIGH-OPPORTUNITY SITES.

The North Birmingham Community has several large vacant sites with great potential for redevelopment based on current ownership, location, community member suggestions, recommendations of the North Birmingham Health Impact Assessment, and other factors identified in the market study conducted for the Existing Conditions Document. Below are just six identified sites that can help meet the community's needs through adaptive reuse. All six sites have access to major thoroughfares and are generally centralized in the community. Map. 2.2.2 on p. 21 locates each site. Some of the potential uses for the selected sites are repeated due to the use's general need and the flexibility of some sites.

1. North Birmingham Elementary School (closed): owned and maintained by the Birmingham Board of Education but unoccupied. The future land use map includes this property within the mixed-use medium area, which provides additional redevelopment flexibility. The 40,000 square-foot property can be adapted for multiple uses:

- Mixed-use development with assisted living for senior citizens, affordable and mixed-income residential units, live-work units, and retail or office space for small businesses.
- Community facility for services such as daycare, senior care, exercise programs, after school programs, cooking demonstrations, and office space for non-profit organizations.

2. Former Carver High School (closed with temporary use): the property is owned by the Birmingham Board of Education and is currently being used by EPA for environmental remediation operations. The building footprint is about 130,000 square feet. The property, designed as mixed-use medium in the future land use map, could be adapted into multiple uses:

- Higher education facility, trade school, or training center for GED certification, professional certifications programs, and other programs that resemble the former school's original purpose.
- Commercial incubator for bakeries, restaurants, and other neighborhood-oriented businesses.
- Residential development with mixed-income units.
- Community facility for services such as daycare, senior care, exercise programs, after school programs, cooking demonstrations, and office space for non-profit organizations.

3. Riggins Elementary School (closed): owned, maintained, but unoccupied by the Birmingham Board of Education. Due to its location adjacent to a coke plant, the facility should not be redeveloped for inhabitable uses. However, with its building footprint of about 40,000 square feet on a 9-acre site, the property could be used for:

- Research center and testing grounds for environmental remediation techniques.

4. Northern Health Center (closed): owned and maintained by the Jefferson County Board of Health but unoccupied. The property has a 14,000 square foot building footprint. It could be reused in several ways to fit into its mixed-use designation in the future land use map:

- Higher education facility or training center for GED certification, professional certifications programs, and other similar programs.
- Mixed-use development with affordable live-work units, office space for non-profit and faith-based organizations, and small businesses.
- Mobile health clinics, health screenings, and healthy produce and cooking demonstrations until the community has the residential concentration to support a community health clinic.

5. Former U.S. Pipe & Foundry site (vacant): The 60 acre-site is designated as light industrial in the future land use map because of its industrial past. It would need to be assessed for environmental contamination and possibly remediated, but could be ideal for:

- Industrial district for 21st century industrial manufacturing businesses that could include an industrial incubator and a center for research, education, and training in industrial sectors.
- Region or community-wide large-scale stormwater management improvements, such as retention or detention ponds, bioretention cells, rain gardens, bioswales, and infiltration trenches.
- Research center and testing grounds for environmental remediation techniques, such as phytoremediation, bioremediation, and in situ chemical reduction.

6. Lots east of Maclin Park (vacant): Due to its location in a floodplain, the lots in this area should be only redeveloped into inhabitable uses compatible with the open space designation in the future land use map.

Potential uses should build off the ongoing improvements being made to Maclin Park. Examples include:

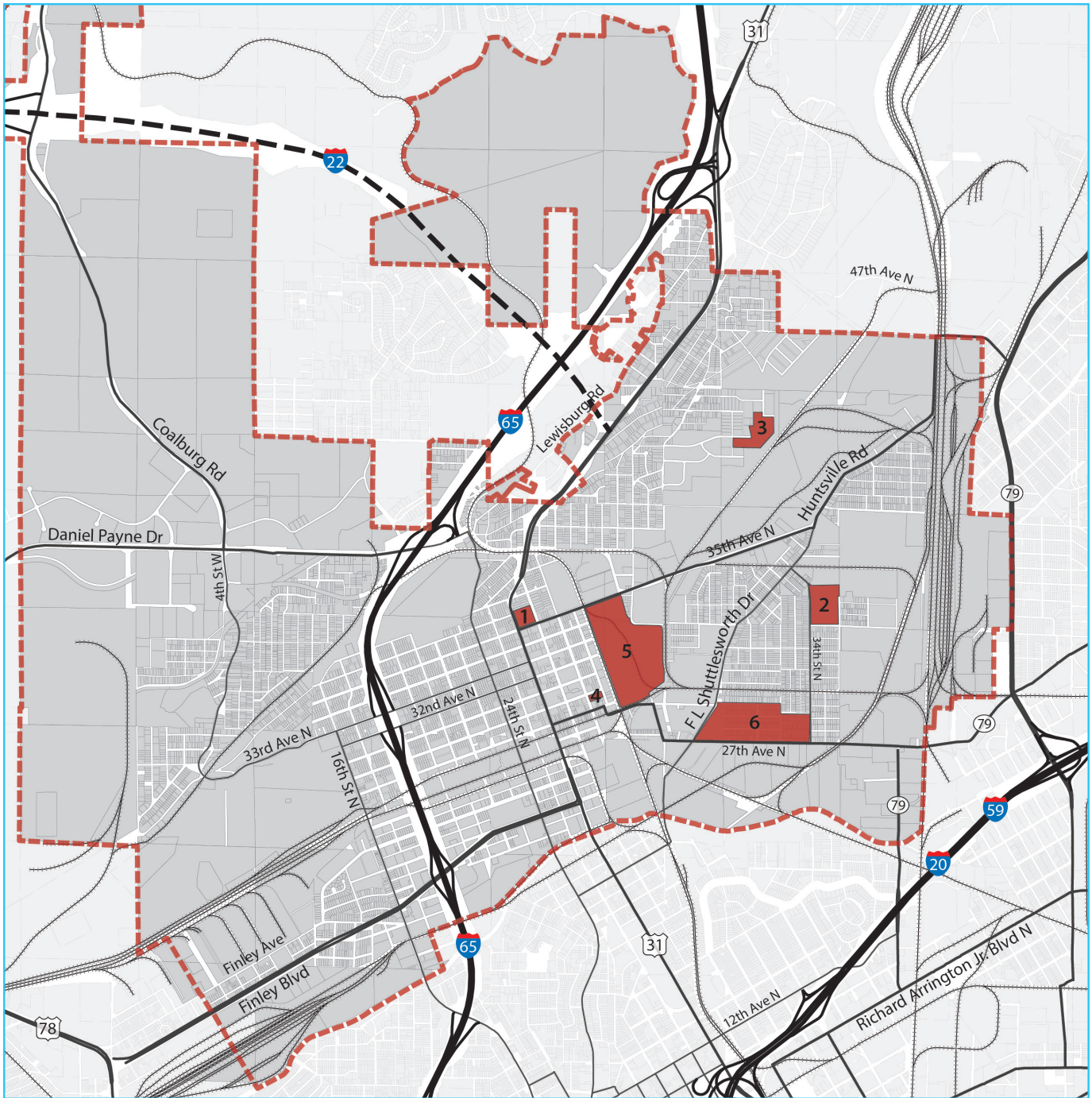
- Region or community-wide large-scale stormwater management improvements, such as retention or detention ponds, bioretention cells, rain gardens, bioswales, and infiltration trenches.
- Large open areas for temporary uses such as mobile grocery stores, food trucks, farmer's market, and festivals.

ACTION CR2-B: EXECUTE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PUBLICLY OWNED, VACANT FACILITIES AND OTHER HIGH-OPPORTUNITY SITES.

Successfully redeveloping one of the identified high-opportunity sites will involve coordination between the City of Birmingham, the public agency that owns the site, the interested developer, and residents. This group must agree on the best use for the site that caters to the local community's needs, such as a use that will strengthen or employ the local workforce or as a use that will provide services and amenities to residents.

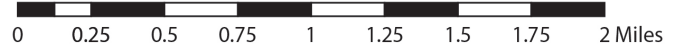
First, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development can assist in identifying and attracting developers. Then the City of Birmingham can work with the public agency that owns the property -- such as the Birmingham Board of Education or the Jefferson County Board of Health -- to buy the property from them or execute a land swap for it. Then, the City can either sell the property to the developer or sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that gives the developer the opportunity to prepare the site for development before the City agrees to sell the property if the developer has met all of the MOU's conditions.

Map 2.2.2: Sites for Adaptive Reuse and Redevelopment



Sites for Adaptive Reuse and Redevelopment

- Sites for Adaptive Reuse and Redevelopment
- 1. North Birmingham Elementary School (closed)
- 2. Former Carver High School (closed)
- 3. Riggins Elementary School (closed)
- 4. Northern Health Center (closed)
- 5. Former U.S. Pipe & Foundry site (vacant)
- 6. Lots East of Maclin Park
- Community boundary



ACTION CR2-C: ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS AND ALIGN RESOURCES TO REVITALIZE OTHER SITES IN THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY.

Revitalizing the North Birmingham Community will require public-private collaboration. The implementation table in Chapter 6 pairs potential partners with specific action items. Below are just a few organizations and resources that the North Birmingham Community could partner with:

- **City of Birmingham:** The Department of Community Development, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, and the Planning, Engineering & Permits Department should coordinate and prioritize the allocation of grants, loans, and resources.
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** The federal agency is working with the city's elected officials to remediate contaminated properties and to leverage resources across state and federal agencies to collaborate on addressing stormwater management, improvements to health, and community and economic development.
- **Northern Birmingham Community Coalition (NBCC):** This organization of neighborhood leaders focuses on commercial revitalization, access to healthcare, and housing redevelopment in the context of environmental justice.
- **Birmingham Land Bank Authority:** The BLBA can acquire and redistribute properties that have been tax delinquent for five or more years. These properties can be transferred to adjacent property owners, nonprofits, and developers. The land bank can use this plan as a guide for which delinquent properties to acquire and how best to distribute them.
- **Faith-based, non-profit, and community development organizations and local businesses:** This group of local stakeholders can develop new housing, provide community services, and coordinate the maintenance of neighborhood blocks by allocating materials, tools, and volunteers.
- **Jefferson County Health Action Partnership:** This coalition of more than 80 organizations and agencies works together to improve the county's health measurements. The partnership will be of particular help when implementing health-related action items.
- **Housing Authority of the Birmingham District:** The authority manages public housing in the Collegeville and Fairmont neighborhood, coordinates the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program, and the Lease-Purchase Homeownership Program.
- **Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA):** The transit authority operates and directs the city's public transportation. BJCTA can help the North Birmingham Community by improving transit routes and bus stations for better connectivity.

Economic & Workforce Development

Economic & Workforce Development

3.1 Economic & Workforce Development Needs and Opportunities

Economic and workforce development are critical, complementary components of a city's growth. Without an educated and skilled workforce, companies cannot grow and cities cannot retain and attract companies. Without a diverse and stable foundation of industries and supporting businesses, employees are not able to develop, retain, and expand their skills and careers in order to contribute to a city's economy. Consequently, a lack of or imbalance between these two components leads to economic decline, high unemployment, poverty, and low quality of life. The Industrial Development and Commercial Development strategies and recommendations presented in this section will address these challenges and opportunities.

Skills, Education, and Income Gap

The North Birmingham community faces many challenges to building and sustaining a strong economy. With an increasingly older population, an unemployment rate of 23.2% in 2010, and an educational attainment of only 6.7% for bachelor's degrees and higher, there is a severe mismatch in the community's labor force between the types of jobs available and the skills and education required. While the largest share (41.3%) of jobs in the community are in the goods-producing industries, only 10.5% of the community's labor force works in these industries. Alternatively, while 70.9% of the community's labor force works in the services and trade sectors, only 42.2% of all jobs within the community are from these sectors. This discrepancy demonstrates the need to strengthen the relationship between local employers and the community's workforce.

Although the educational attainment rates for higher education are relatively low, 75.5% of adults in the community have at least a high-school diploma. Paired with the prevalence of goods-producing industries in the community, the high rate of high school graduates can provide a ready supply of labor to new businesses.

Business District, Transportation Improvements, and Opportunity Sites

Despite these challenges, the North Birmingham Community has many opportunities to reverse this cycle of economic decline. The North Birmingham Business District is a critical asset that serves the entire community. With its historic character, land ready for development, and unoccupied buildings available for adaptive reuse, the district has the potential to attract new businesses and tenants. Targeted investments in education, workforce development, and employment opportunities are needed to overcome this challenge.

Another opportunity area for economic development is located along Finley Boulevard. With its capacity for freight movement, connection to major highways, underutilized properties, and vacant parcels, the area along Finley Boulevard is prime for commercial and industrial development. In addition, the planned expansion of Finley Boulevard to Vanderbilt Road will provide a better connection to the airport and will make the area even more attractive to new and existing businesses. The extension under construction of Interstate 22 to U.S. Highway 31 and the presence of large strategically-located brownfield sites throughout the community also present opportunities for long-term economic development.

Table 3.1 Economic & Workforce Development Needs and Opportunities

NEEDS
Industrial and commercial development
Employment opportunities for stable careers
Higher education and professional/technical training programs
Variety and greater number of neighborhood businesses
OPPORTUNITIES
North Birmingham Business District’s historic character and available space for expansion
Finley Boulevard corridor’s access and availability for commercial and industrial development
Undeveloped, large parcels with access to highways
Large, brownfield sites strategically located for adaptive reuse

3.2 Industrial Development (ID) Strategies and Actions

The North Birmingham Community, developed from the traditional industries of mining, iron, and steel, is still predominantly an industrial center for Birmingham. Despite the recent, ongoing challenges with environmental justice that is partly a result of decades of environmental pollution, it is essential for the economic prosperity of the community, the city, and the region as a whole, to continue providing opportunities within the community for industrial development.

The challenge for the North Birmingham Community is to change the negative perception of industry of the past as a source of pollution, nuisance, and blight into the 21st century industrial development that provides opportunities for employment and economic prosperity. Future industrial development must work closely with residents to avoid the environmental and workforce mistakes made in the past.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (ID) GOALS

- 1) TRANSFORM THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY INTO A REGIONAL MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE, 21ST CENTURY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.**
- 2) ATTRACT, PROTECT, AND RETAIN 21ST CENTURY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.**
- 3) PROVIDE VALUABLE AND SUSTAINING CAREERS IN 21ST CENTURY MANUFACTURING FOR THE COMMUNITY’S WORKFORCE.**

21st Century Industrial Development in the North Birmingham Community

There are several potential benefits for encouraging industrial development in the North Birmingham Community. Manufacturing is still an urban process, as 80% of all U.S. goods are exported from the 100 most populous metropolitan areas in the United States. As the nation's source of research, development, and innovation, manufacturing strengthens networks of competitors, suppliers, customers, universities, and research and development cooperatives (APA, 2014). With access to highways and proximity to an international airport, major universities, and research centers, the North Birmingham Community provides a strategic location for 21st century manufacturing.

Encompassing a wide range of fields and sectors, industrial development enhances employment diversity, wages, and the quality and stability of jobs. Since the end of the recession in 2009, manufacturing has been one of the few sectors in the economy that has consistently increased in employment. Furthermore, out of all the manufacturing jobs, about 30% are in the growing fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). With an average salary of \$53,000 and about half requiring less than a bachelor's degree, STEM manufacturing jobs are not only a source of higher income but are also within reach to the community's labor force (APA, 2014). As of 2011, across the nation the educational attainment of the manufacturing's labor force with a high-school degree had the largest share – about 35%, which further emphasizes the compatibility of the community's labor force to the manufacturing industry (Manufacturing Institute, 2012). Although the manufacturing labor force typically tends to comprise an older demographic, new employment opportunities will become available for a younger generation as more veteran workers go into retirement (APA, 2014). Hence, manufacturing jobs provide an incentive for a younger generation of workers to stay in the community, build a stable and relatively well-paying career, and contribute to the local economy.

Since the late 20th century manufacturing in the United States has restructured from single entities housing material sourcing, manufacturing operations, and distribution to multiple, individual businesses outsourcing specific functions in the supply chain. In essence, manufacturing has split into three specialized sectors: production, distribution, and repair. The specialization on production allows businesses in manufacturing to evolve by relying on technology and innovation to produce new products and methods. The distribution sector – made of businesses in wholesaling, warehousing, shipping, and delivery – have space and access requirements while enterprises in the repair sector mostly value proximity to goods sold and used by retail consumers and businesses. Although urban manufacturers typically comprise of small- and medium-sized enterprises employing on average 40 workers, collectively these enterprises provide a significant contribution to jobs, productivity, and innovation (APA, 2014).

Today, 21st century manufacturing can coexist within and adjacent to residential neighborhoods and commercial districts in the North Birmingham Community. Modern processes, buildings, and equipment can limit nuisances from sounds, odors, and mechanical vibrations. Urban design and land use regulations such as landscape elements, street configurations, facade treatments, and zoning provide solutions to buffer bland or unattractive industrial facilities and manage freight traffic (APA, 2014). Given its strategic location, site compatibility, and ready labor force, the North Birmingham Community has a tremendous opportunity to become the city's hub for 21st century manufacturing while enhancing economic and workforce development to a higher level.

Sources:

American Planning Association. (2014). *PAS Report 577: Sustainable Urban Industrial Development*. Chicago, IL.:

Leigh, N. G., Hoelzel, N. Z., Kraft, B. R., & Dempwolf, C. S.

Manufacturing Institute, Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation, National Association of Manufacturers. (2012). *Facts about Manufacturing*. (9th ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org>.

STRATEGY ID1: PUBLISH A COMPREHENSIVE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF INDUSTRIAL LAND, BUILDINGS, AND BUSINESSES

ACTION ID1-A: IDENTIFY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR POTENTIAL SITING IN VACANT LAND AND EXISTING INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES.

For the most part, 21st century manufacturing requires large and flat yards, structures with large building footprints, capacity for truck parking, and high-loading clearances. However, older industrial properties with small building footprints, small truck bays, and narrow access roads are not completely obsolete for 21st century industrial development. The site factors to consider are:

- Site grade and elevation
- Soil type and capacity for storm water drainage
- Size and capacity of water treatment plants and of water and sewer mains
- Quality of natural gas and electric power services
- Quality, type, and distance to telecommunication service
- Site and building design
- Conditions of current and surrounding properties

By matching these general guidelines with available vacant, undeveloped land and industrial properties in the community, local planners, community stakeholders, industrial businesses, and the development community can identify the best sites to locate and expand 21st century industrial development.

Figure 3.2.1: Small-scale 3D printing studio shop



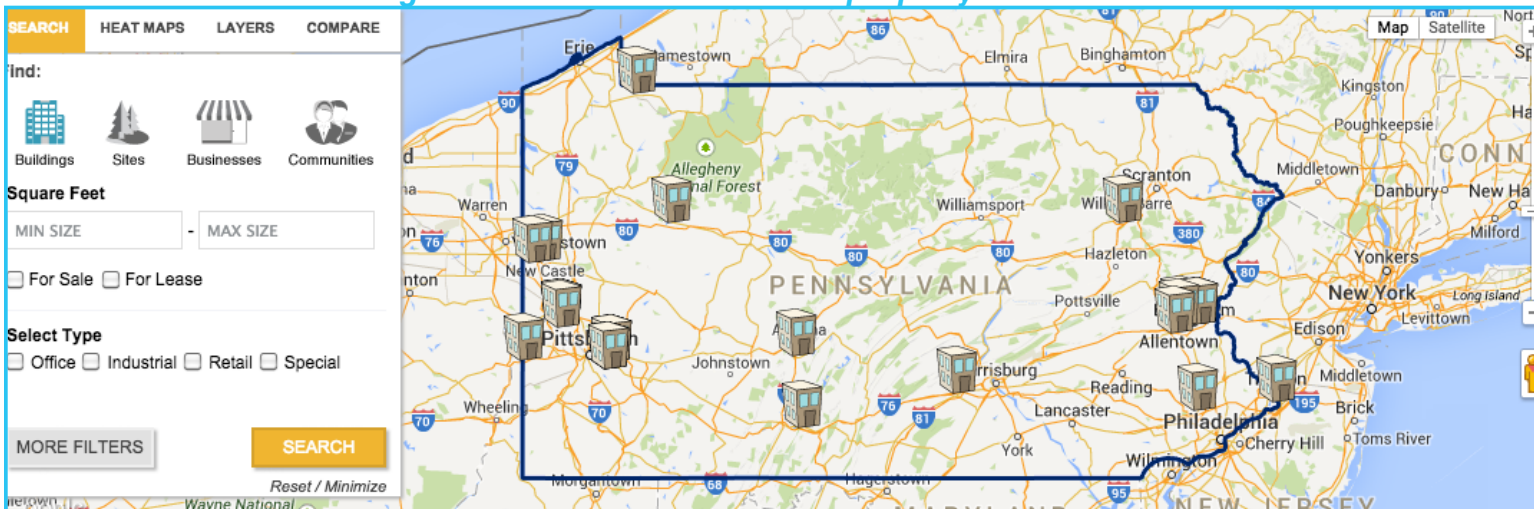
Source: *blogTO, New 3D print studio, 2013*

ACTION ID1-B: IDENTIFY, CATEGORIZE, AND ASSESS BROWNFIELDS IN THE COMMUNITY.

Vacant, abandoned, or underutilized properties that are affected by environmental contamination are referred to as brownfields. Rail yards, gas stations, dry cleaners, landfills, and factories associated with raw materials and chemicals that are no longer in operation are typical examples. Despite the high risk, liability, and uncertainty associated with their redevelopment, brownfields present many opportunities to urban communities. Their strategic location in proximity to centers of employment, cheaper land relative to other in-town locations, and existing infrastructure make them valuable.

A comprehensive database of brownfields in the community – categorized by type, size, and degree of environmental contamination – is critical in order to assess the benefits and impacts of redevelopment. This database could be the city’s first step towards addressing these properties with the help of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and the EPA. ADEM provides a 10-step guide to redevelop brownfields (as shown in Figure 3.2.3 on the following page), a list of brownfields throughout the state, and a Brownfields Cleanup State Revolving Loan program. The EPA’s Brownfields Program also offers grants and revolving loans for technical assistance, assessment, planning, remediation, and environmental job training. These agencies could help the City develop a brownfield database.

Figure 3.2.2: Online brownfield property database



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 2015

Figure 3.2.3: ADEM's "Ten-Step Process for Successful Brownfields Redevelopment"

- | | |
|--|---|
| Step 1 - Identify Property | Step 6 - Liability / Cost Protection |
| Step 2 - Site Evaluation | Step 7 - Exploring Marketability |
| Step 3 - Remediation / Cleanup Planning | Step 8 - Redevelopment Begins |
| Step 4 - Site Solution | Step 9 - Completion |
| Step 5 - Site Cleanup | Step 10 - Identify Next Property |

ACTION ID1-C: DEVELOP A DATABASE OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES AND BROWNFIELDS IN THE COMMUNITY.

In addition to a brownfield database, a public database of vacant, undeveloped, existing, and blighted industrial properties will have numerous uses:

- Residents and community organizations will benefit from learning about redevelopment opportunities in or near their neighborhoods.
- Industrial brokers and real estate agents will have another source of reliable information to guide and inform their clients.
- Industrial land developers and manufacturers will have ready access to the possibilities of locating or expanding their business in the community.
- City officials and government agencies will be able to leverage this information to plan how to redevelop vacant and abandoned industrial properties.

Together, these stakeholders can work to find the appropriate use for a property that serves the community as a potential quality of life enhancement (parks, open space, etc.) or a business that creates local jobs.

STRATEGY ID2: MAINTAIN URBAN INDUSTRIAL LAND AND IMPROVE THE CHARACTER OF INDUSTRIAL AREAS

ACTION ID2-A: UPDATE THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE FOR INDUSTRIAL AND MIXED-USE DISTRICTS IN THE COMMUNITY TO ENSURE COMPATIBILITY AND GROWTH OF INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES WITHOUT RESIDENTIAL CONFLICTS.

In order for industrial districts to operate in the long-term, it is essential to prevent encroachment of incompatible uses, allow for synergies between industrial businesses in the supply chain, and plan for industrial business expansion. Designating areas for industrial land uses as far as possible from neighborhoods in the Future Land Use Map, detailed in Chapter 5, will allow for industrial businesses without creating conflicts in residential areas. This plan's Future Land Use Map does not expand the size of heavy industrial land uses beyond the areas designated in the 2013 comprehensive plan. Instead, the the plan does designate mixed land use areas that will allow for some light industrial uses in mostly commercial areas.

The city's Zoning Board of Adjustment or Planning Commission should only grant variances issue rezonings, or generally steer from this idea if the proposed use is compatible with or adequately buffered from an existing industrial use. Such examples include commercial uses within the local industry's supply chain. However, as expressed by community members, businesses such as junk dealers and others that degrade the community's visual appeal should not be allowed.

Figure 3.2.4: Compatible industrial use in a neighborhood



Source: a State of Teal, Avondale Brewery, 2014

ACTION ID2-B: INCORPORATE AND ENCOURAGE HIGHER-QUALITY DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS IN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS.

Community members expressed concerns during regarding the aesthetics, noise, and other negative impacts caused by industrial uses. For North Birmingham to attract and to benefit from industrial businesses in the future, higher-quality design and operational standards must be created, monitored, and enforced. These standards can be applied through the conditions within industrial master plans for large sites and in the conditions for rezonings and variances for industrial properties.

Problem: Waste piled up visibly above fences

Possible Solutions:

- Conditions placed on future industrial properties restricting visibility of waste
- Landscaping (trees and vegetation) that creates a more appealing and effective buffer

Problem: Trucks using neighborhood streets

Possible Solutions:

- Refer to Strategy T13 in Chapter 4: Transportation and Infrastructure

Problem: Stormwater runoff

Possible Solutions:

- Requiring individual properties to install landscape elements that control and mitigate stormwater runoff
- Area-wide stormwater features

Problem: Noise

Possible Solution:

- Agreements with affected residents that detail when a business should conduct its loud operations

Problem: Pollution

Possible Solutions:

- Additional and continuous monitoring for air toxics
- Real-time notification system for pollution events
- Enforce existing air pollution regulations (Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Jefferson County Board of Health rules and regulations)
- Free health clinics to screen for air pollution-related health problems
- Establish pollution prevention committee with citizen involvement to be tasked with ensuring available pollution prevention technologies measures are used

ACTION ID2-C: CONDUCT MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS IN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH THE BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS.

Infrastructure maintenance and improvements can be prioritized and carried out through the city's capital improvement budgetting process. Items to consider would be:

- Street repair and improvements to ensure that truck routes are well established and maintained and previously impaired residential streets are repaired
- Broadband services for high-tech industries that could also serve residents
- Signage that properly identifies neighborhoods and industrial districts
- Lighting around industrial properties and adjacent neighborhoods to address safety concerns

STRATEGY ID3: PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH, AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

ACTION ID3-A: DEVELOP A LOCALLY-FOCUSED INDUSTRIAL INCUBATOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER.

Business incubators are invaluable tools to strengthen economies and an industry's workforce. By providing technical support in a flexible facility, incubators assist startup firms from the early stages of business development to when a company has become established. Incubators vary by industry, but in general they provide:

- flexible and affordable leases
- conference rooms, laboratories, and shared spaces
- assistance in finding affordable expansion and investment capital
- accelerated growth in a targeted industry sector

While the City of Birmingham already has one business incubator -- the Innovation Depot -- an industrial incubator located within the North Birmingham Community would go a long way in advancing 21st century manufacturing and workforce development. The North Birmingham Industrial Incubator could tailor to both existing industrial sectors in the local community and to future businesses. The community's existing businesses would benefit from the ideas developed from the incubator's companies and could partner with the incubator to train potential employees for specific skills. The community's incubator would also develop a more diversified economy, produce goods to service the local community, and help train a more productive and skilled workforce.

A great source of research, development, and innovation that should be pursued to advance 21st century manufacturing in the North Birmingham Community is the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation. Initiated by the current White House administration, the objective is to establish regional hubs – Institutes for Manufacturing Innovation (IMIs) – from public-private partnerships of universities, government agencies, and industries to develop new industrial technologies, processes, and products. Out of a planned initial network of 15 IMIs, four hubs have been established in the Midwest and Eastern regions of the country focusing on power electronics, digital manufacturing, 3D printing, and lightweight and modern metals. By leveraging the Birmingham region's major research and technical universities and colleges, a strong healthcare sector, and well-established industrial companies, the North Birmingham Community has the opportunity to bring in a IMI to become a regional center of research and innovation for 21st century manufacturing. Additionally, these larger employers in the area could work with the incubator and workforce development service to address their employment needs.

Action CR2-A and Map 2.2.2 from Chapter 2 recommend sites for a North Birmingham industrial incubator or a research center at the North Birmingham Elementary School and at the former U.S. Pipe & Foundry site.

3.3 Commercial Development (CD) Strategies and Actions

The North Birmingham Business District began developing during the early decades of the 20th century as a trading center for northeast Jefferson County. Today, the district has some neighborhood amenities and shops but lacks the concentration of businesses needed to support a thriving, vibrant, and active community.

Aside from the North Birmingham Business District, the community's commercial areas are characterized by abandoned properties, vacant lots, fast food outlets, and convenience stores scattered on major roads and in neighborhood pockets. As mentioned before, the community is underserved in the quantity and quality of neighborhood amenities, such as daycare centers, retail shops, restaurants, and grocery stores. The substandard level of transit service and private vehicle transportation hinders access to healthier food outlets and amenities outside of the community as well.

The challenge for the North Birmingham community is to leverage its commercial core and the ongoing expansion of its major roads to revitalize its business district and neighborhood commercial pockets. This section includes strategies and actions that directly target commercial development in North Birmingham.

The goals below relate to the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan and will be achieved by implementing these strategies and actions. A series of action items are presented and described on the following pages. The implementation chapter identifies potential partnerships for each action item along with a potential timeline.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CR) GOALS

- 1) TRANSFORM THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS DISTRICT INTO MIXED-USE, TRANSIT HUB FOR LIVING, WORKING, AND SHOPPING.**
- 2) EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS AND AMENITIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.**
- 3) ENHANCE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, HEALTHIER FOOD OUTLETS IN THE COMMUNITY.**

STRATEGY CD1: PUBLISH A COMPREHENSIVE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF COMMERCIAL LAND, BUILDINGS, AND BUSINESSES.

ACTION CD1-A: CONDUCT A MORE DETAILED REAL ESTATE MARKET ANALYSIS OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMUNITY TO ATTRACT THE RECOMMENDED BUSINESS TYPES IN SPECIFIED LOCATIONS.

A preliminary market study has been conducted and is presented in the appended Existing Conditions Document. The study analyzes the supply and demand of the local market to determine the spending potential and retail sales of existing business groups. A more detailed and focused real estate market analysis is needed to determine the market rate and appraised values for commercial properties, the vacancy rate, the absorption rate, and the overall stock of commercial land and spaces. This analysis should identify commercial development constraints in North Birmingham, too. General site and building factors to consider for commercial properties are:

- Ceiling heights of at least 9 feet for office and 14 feet for retail
- 90 feet of depth and 25 feet in width for most retail shops
- Building footprints between 50,000-200,000 square feet for big-box stores
- Sidewalk access and ground level space for retail
- Quality of electric power and telecommunication services
- Building design and conditions of surroundings

From this analysis, better informed decisions can be made to identify market rents and sale prices needed to support investment in commercial development, business attraction, and expansion.

ACTION CD1-B: PROMOTE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUGGESTED AND RECOMMENDED BUSINESS TYPES AT IDENTIFIED SITES.

The preliminary market study in the Existing Conditions document, the recommendations made by the North Birmingham Health Impact Assessment, and suggestions from community members identified possible sites and businesses that could address the community's needs.

Map 3.3.1 on the following page:

A. Mixed-use development near transit access:

- Assisted living units for senior citizens and/or a senior center
- Affordable and mixed-income residential units
- Retail space or office space for small businesses

B. Retail and service:

- Small sporting goods, furniture stores, electronic goods stores
- Florists, hobby and gift shops, tailors
- Specialty food stores and restaurants

C. Grocery and/or general merchandise

D. Industrial development:

- Warehousing, distribution, and logistics
- 21st century industrial incubator

E. Highway commercial:

- Outlet malls, shopping centers, and big-box stores that would reduce the community's retail gaps

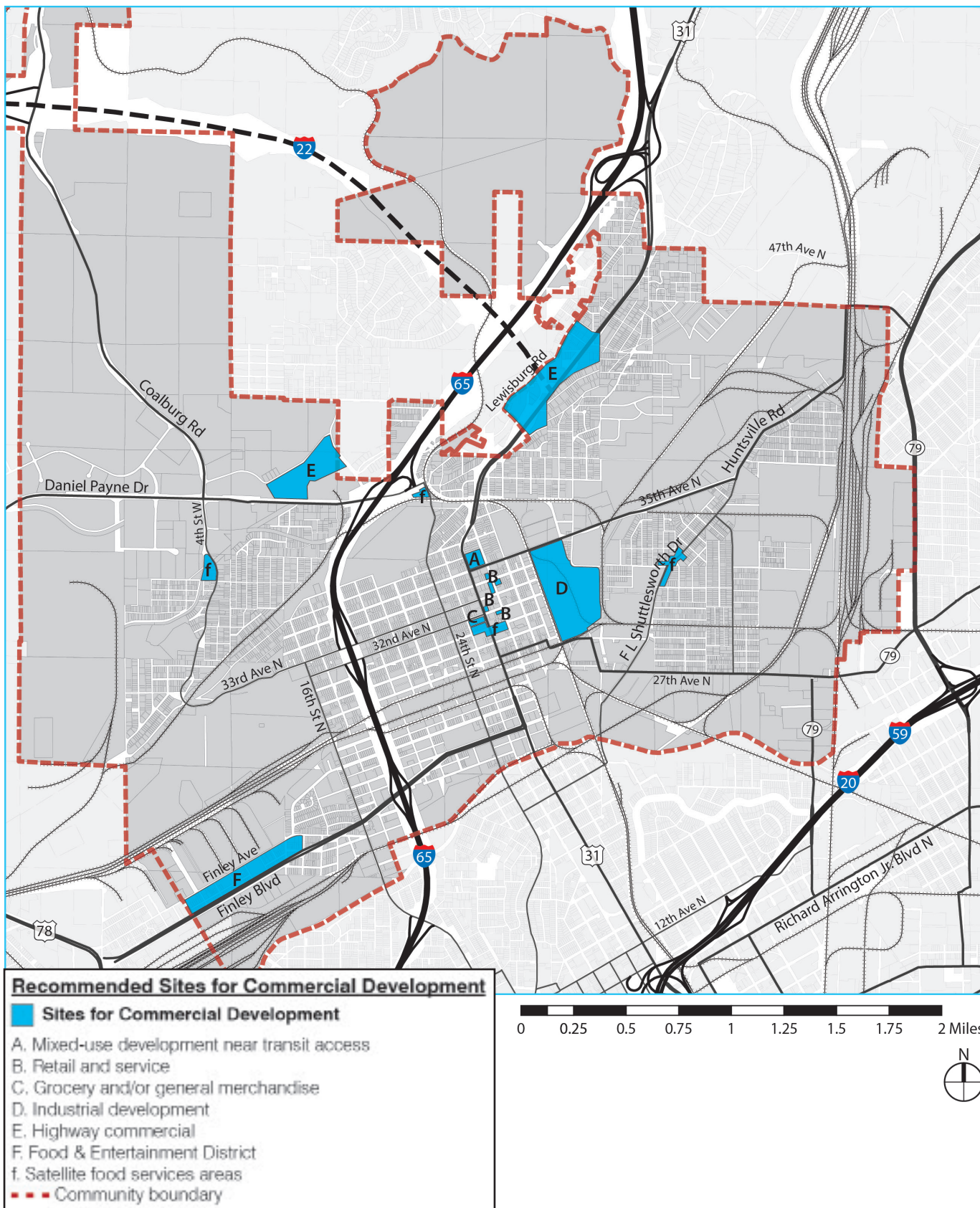
F. Food & Entertainment District

- Food outlets, small specialty grocery stores, entertainment activities and businesses within a mixed-use district

f. Satellite food services areas

- Farmer's markets, small specialty grocery stores, food trucks, and mobile grocery trucks to improve the access to quality food

Map 3.3.1: Initial Market Study Sites for Commercial Development



STRATEGY CD2: PROMOTE AND ENHANCE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ACTION CD2-A: UPDATE THE CITY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND ZONING ORDINANCE TO ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN COMPATIBLE LOCATIONS.

Fortunately, the North Birmingham Business District already has the urban design elements needed to attract businesses, customers, and visitors. Some of the district's attractive design features are its historic character, district signage, pedestrian scale, light posts, wide sidewalks, continuous building frontages, and plenty of on-street and off-street surface parking.

Where the district falls short of success is in its mix and concentration of commercial uses and complementary uses. Mixed land uses and complementary uses are designated in the Future Land Use Map in Chapter 5. By mixing residential and office uses vertically within a building and horizontally across adjacent parcels, a greater concentration of customers, employees, and businesses can be attracted to support more commercial businesses. An improved transit plan, detailed in the following chapter, will help the area become a transit hub better connected to the rest of the city and to nearby neighborhoods.

ACTION CD2-B: ESTABLISH A FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IN THE ACIPCO-FINLEY NEIGHBORHOOD.

The North Birmingham community is known for landmark restaurants and one of the largest farmer's markets in the state. All situated within the Acipco-Finley neighborhood, institutions such as Niki's West restaurant, Eagle's restaurant, and the Alabama Farmer's Market attract customers and visitors. Unfortunately, the community as a whole is underserved by restaurants, grocery stores, and healthy food access. Hence, there is a great opportunity to leverage these community assets to strengthen the area into a destination with uses such as:

- **Food outlets:** sit-down and specialty restaurants (Figure 3.3.1)
- **Food distribution and warehousing:** suppliers connecting farmers, the farmer's market, local restaurants, customers, and visitors
- **Entrepreneurs:** spin-off businesses that start out at the farmer's market or in rentable kitchen facilities, such as mini grocery stores and food trucks
- **Entertainment activities and businesses:** Complimentary businesses and sites for festivals

Figure 3.3.1: Uptown, A Food & Entertainment District



Source: Weld for Birmingham, 2014

ACTION CD2-C: USE ART PROJECTS, LANDSCAPING, AND POP-UP SHOPS TO ENERGIZE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

Transforming a blighted commercial area into a more attractive place through aesthetic improvements can improve the quality of life for residents, boost the confidence of investors and businesses to open a new business in the community, and encourage customers and visitors to return. For these improvements to work best, community members should be engaged to decide the best locations and a look and feel the community supports.

Projects that could improve an commercial area's appearance include:

Art projects and signage:

- Murals on blank facades, neighborhood signs and banners, and decorative lighting

Landscape projects:

- Trees, benches, and hedges to define a space; plants and flowers to decorate retail displays and outdoor dining areas; and rain gardens for stormwater management

Pop-up projects (figure 3.3.2):

- Temporarily convert vacant storefronts into spaces for emerging businesses to convey a vibrant commercial area
- Temporarily close a street for a block party, festivals, and other activities
- Transform unused on-street parking into platforms for dining areas, vegetation, or displays
- Organize community volunteers to clean up sidewalks and landscape elements, paint building facades, and make minor repairs to signs and entrances

Figure 3.3.2: Pop-Up Shops & Festival in Woodlawn



Source: Kelsey Stein of AL.com, 2013

Transportation & Infrastructure

Transportation & Infrastructure

4.1 Introduction

Transportation plays a critical role in the livability of the North Birmingham Community, affecting access to education and opportunity, food, retail, worship, and recreation. Circulation patterns and behaviors also affect the quality of residential streets and the safety and walkability of the area’s major streets. The planning and execution of quality transportation connections has always been a precursor to growth and economic success. However, a lack of investment in transportation infrastructure and services has failed to support the community’s desired changes.

The Birmingham Comprehensive Plan identified several goals for the City’s transportation system, as well as policy considerations for decision-makers. These include:

Goals	Policies
<p>Birmingham’s transportation systems help build the city’s 21st-century economy and a livable urban center.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support strategic initiatives using private and public funds to maintain and enhance the city’s street and transit systems to support city livability. • Ensure that street improvements and development projects are designed to accommodate all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. • Support Complete Streets policies and practices. • Support the development of a multi-modal transportation plan that creates complete networks and offers high quality travel options for every budget into and within the city.
<p>Bicycling and walking in the City of Birmingham are comfortable, safe, and convenient modes of transportation and recreation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support investments and programs that provide safe, functional, attractive pedestrian environments and walkable districts along transit arterials. • Support the development of a complete bicycle network of on-street and of-street bicycle routes and trails. • Support implementation of the Rid Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System, including the on-street pedestrian segments.
<p>Transit in Birmingham is fast, reliable, well-connected, and inviting for use by residents and visitors alike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support coordination and policies among major employers, the City, BJCTA, ALDOT, and the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for better transit service and efficient routing within the city and county. • Support coordination among the MPO, the City, and the region to improve access to private, state, and federal funding for safe and high-quality transit. • Support compact development at potential transit stops to support high-quality transit.
<p>Streets and sidewalks are accessible and maintained in good repair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a system of public criteria for street and sidewalk maintenance priorities. • Support establishment of a pavement management system, ideally as part of an overall asset management system.
<p>Birmingham has state-of-the-art inter-city passenger travel and freight transportation systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support expeditious completion of air terminal and cargo projects and the Intermodal Facility. • Advocate for passenger rail and enhanced passenger air service. • Evaluate options to expand Birminghamport based on market conditions and feasibility.

4.2 Community Concerns Related to Transportation

North Birmingham Community residents and stakeholders and the North Birmingham Health Impact Assessment provided input and research on transportation topics while this framework plan was prepared. All comments and suggestions were analyzed to develop the following community-based concerns and priorities.

Expand Transportation Choices and Options

The overarching transportation theme was expanding and increasing personal mobility choices. Community residents and stakeholders emphasized their desire to have greater access to convenient and safe walking, bicycling, and public transit opportunities. Many of the North Birmingham Community residents grew up walking, biking, and using the public transit system. They noted that they no longer can do so -- especially regarding the public transit system -- and that their access to jobs and services by and large requires them to drive. For lower-income communities with many residents who are elderly and/or do not own vehicles, the combination of businesses and services leaving the community and inadequate public transportation amplifies this economic and social isolation.

Improve Public Transportation

A specific element of expanding travel choices is the need for broad support for investing near-term and long-term in public transportation. The Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority is seeking to remake its fixed route bus services and has proposed several options to make these services more efficient, reliable, and ultimately more attractive.

Many North Birmingham Community residents and stakeholders spoke about the potential for improving public transit services, and are excited about the prospect of a higher-level transit stop -- that is, a community super stop within the downtown North Birmingham area (identified in Map 4.3.3). Residents were equally as excited about the prospect of reconfigured transit services that would provide more frequent and reliable service to opportunities. They highlighted opportunities within the historic North Birmingham neighborhood's downtown area and expressed a desire to be able to travel within the activity centers in their community.

Create Safe Walking and Bicycling Environments

As with public transportation, North Birmingham Community residents strongly supported the expansion of walking and biking for both commuting and recreational uses. Active transportation is growing in prominence within the City of Birmingham, and areas that have embraced non-motorized travel are highly valued. Whether it's children walking to school, residents walking to the shops in the North Birmingham neighborhood center, commuters biking to work, or visitors following the Civil Rights trail to Bethel Baptist Church, North Birmingham Community residents need a safe place to travel.

North Birmingham Community residents advocated for walkable streets, and in areas where the pedestrian infrastructure exists, to maintain and improve these facilities. Residents and stakeholders recognized that safe, convenient, and attractive non-motorized travel environments are also key to having to successful transit, as most transit passengers are really pedestrians on buses.

Support Green Infrastructure

The North Birmingham Community has issues with flooding near Village Creek. As such, a number of roadways experience flooding. Flooding in the Collegeville neighborhood impacts area roadways during heavy rains and makes some of these facilities unpassable. Residents expressed an interest in how the transportation system might help minimize or mitigate the impacts of stormwater.

Minimize and Mitigate Freight Impacts on the Community

North Birmingham residents expressed frustration with the movement of freight through their community by truck and rail. They expressed a desire to ensure that freight movement doesn't infringe on their desires for the community's streets to become multimodal.

Truck Impacts

Residents in Collegeville, Harriman Park, and North Birmingham expressed concern about the number, size, and speed of trucks traveling through their neighborhoods. Many of these trucks have origins/destinations within the community traveling to or from the many heavy industrial, mining, or logistics facilities. The routes of these trucks follows a direct path to the interstate roadway system, with trucks entering and existing I-65 at 32nd and 33rd Streets respectively, and I-20/59 from SR-79/Tallapoosa Road.

Likewise, trucks heading west are using 33rd Avenue West/4th Street West to cut through the Hooper City neighborhood to access Coalburg Road and Corridor X (Future I-22). Coalburg Road is currently the terminus of Corridor X, a future interstate roadway that connects the Cities of Memphis, Tennessee and Birmingham generally following the U.S. 78 corridor. 4th Street West becomes Coalburg Road as it crosses Daniel Payne Drive/41st Avenue West. Daniel Payne Drive/41st Avenue West also has an interchange with I-65.

In short, truck traffic problem areas within the North Birmingham Community impacts (Map 4.3.3):

- F.L. Shuttlesworth Drive
- Coalburg Road
- 4th Street West
- 34th Street West
- 32nd Avenue North
- 33rd Avenue North
- 35th Avenue North

Rail Impacts

The impacts of freight rail on the North Birmingham Community, and in particular the Collegeville neighborhood, are well documented. Freight rail lines split the Collegeville Center public housing community essentially down the center. They crisscross the Collegeville neighborhood, and there are a large number of at-grade rail crossings. Trains have been known to routinely block access into and out of Collegeville, stopping across the at-grade crossings as trains are loaded at the nearby industrial facilities or train sets are assembled. Because of this, neighborhood residents are subject to disconnection and safety concerns.

Collegeville residents expressed concern and frustration about the continuing issues with freight rail movements. However, the City of Birmingham and the Alabama Department of Transportation approved plans in February 2015 to build a pedestrian and automobile bridge to address this need.

Make Infrastructure Maintenance Investments a Priority

North Birmingham Community residents, especially those in Hooper City, expressed concern over transportation infrastructure maintenance. Residents prioritized a "fix-it first" strategy for repairing and maintaining streets within existing residential neighborhoods and developed commercial areas before building new streets and expanding into areas with little or no development.

A number of streets and sidewalks across the North Birmingham Community exhibited signs of neglect and deterioration. Vegetation in the rights-of-way of some areas was completely overgrown, covering important signage such as speed limits and way-finding, blocking driver sight lines, and encroaching into the travelway. Pavement edges were observed to be crumbling and/or deteriorated, and stormwater drainage and conveyance infrastructure is in need of maintenance.

4.3 Strategies for Addressing Community Concerns

Despite the transportation deficiencies brought about by the impacts industry, North Birmingham Community residents recognized the potential for improved mobility through the power of place-making. Residents' desires for expanded travel choices, improved transportation facilities, and enhanced services reflects their vision for a renewed sense of place. The recommended modifications to the transportation system reflect addresses how the travel network might meet the community's mobility needs and contribute to (re)development of North Birmingham as a vibrant place.

STRATEGY T11: BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The City of Birmingham's residents stated a desire to provide more options to residents and business about the way the people and goods could travel in the city. The North Birmingham Community residents echoed this sentiment and discussed their desire for the North Birmingham neighborhoods to have more travel choices. One way to accomplish this is for the city to build a multimodal transportation network.

ACTION T11-A: BUILD OUT THE RED ROCK RIDGE AND VALLEY TRAIL SYSTEM.

The Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System is a transformative, long-term plan for greenways, bikeways, and complete streets. Centered in Jefferson County, Red Rock is intended to be the basis of a regional plan non-motorized travel for the Birmingham metropolitan area. When completed, it will knit together communities across Jefferson County. A significant portion of the plan is within the City of Birmingham, and provides guidance for the development of a non-motorized travel network. The City of Birmingham has adopted the Red Rock plan as its non-motorized transportation plan. As the city moves forward with developing a comprehensive transportation plan, Red Rock will be incorporated and adjusted where necessary.

A key part of the framework planning process is consideration for how the Red Rock plan might be implemented within individual plan areas which are comprised of communities and neighborhoods. Red Rock identifies six (6) distinct trail sections of the Village Creek Corridor that serve the North Birmingham Community. A small portion of the Five Mile Creek Greenway system is also located in the North Birmingham Community planning area.

The existing, planned, and/or proposed trails located here include:

Carver High School Trail

The Carver High School Trail is a proposed street-based trail that travels along 24th Street North, starting at Village Creek and running to 36th Avenue North, turning east and connecting to the proposed U.S. Highway 31 Greenway and ending outside of the Titusville Community. This trail provides the North Birmingham Community's residents direct access to George Washington Carver High School and is envisioned to facilitate bicycle movements via sharrows pavement markings and shared access road signage. The trail also is envisioned to have a sidewalk on at least one side of the road.

U.S. Highway 31 Greenway

The U.S. Highway 31 Greenway is a proposed multi-use trail that will link the interior of the North Birmingham Community with Turkey Creek. The facility is recommended to be developed as a shared-use side path that will begin at 24th Street North with the Carver High School Trail and will travel east along 35th Avenue North towards U.S. Highway 31. The proposed trail will cross the railroad tracks on a side-bridge at the existing vehicular bridge. It will parallel Highway 31 as it travels northeast and connect with the Turkey Creek Greenway.

Shuttlesworth Drive Trail

The Shuttlesworth Drive Trail is a proposed street-based path that will follow Shuttlesworth Drive, connecting 21st Avenue North and Cedar Street in the northern part of the Harirmon Park neighborhood. This connection to Cedar Street also will enable access to the Lewisburg Greenway which is proposed to connect with the Five Mile Creek Greenway. The proposed trail will include sharrows (pavement markings indicating that roadway travel lanes are to be shared by both motorized vehicles and bicycles), signage to mark the route for shared access, and sidewalks.

29th Avenue Trail

The 29th Avenue Trail is a street-based trail that provides a direct connection to the historic Bethel Baptist Church at 33rd Street North. The trail follows 29th Avenue North, and originates at the Carver High School Trail at 24th Street North. The trail would include sharrow pavement markings and signage to mark the route for shared access.

33rd Avenue North Trail

The 33rd Avenue North Trail is a street-based trail that originates near Clayton Park on 33rd Avenue North. The trail follows 33rd Avenue North and connects with the Carver High School Trail. It terminates at the Carver High School Trail at these two trails' intersection at 24th Street North. The 33rd Avenue North Trail is envisioned to include new facilities for bicyclist (dedicated bike lanes) and pedestrians (sidewalks). The trail will include signage and pavement markings identifying the route, as well as intersection treatments such as crosswalks, pedestrian/bike signals, medians and improved lighting (or some combination of these). These facility treatments are dependent upon vehicle speeds, traffic volumes, and roadway width.

35th Avenue North Trail

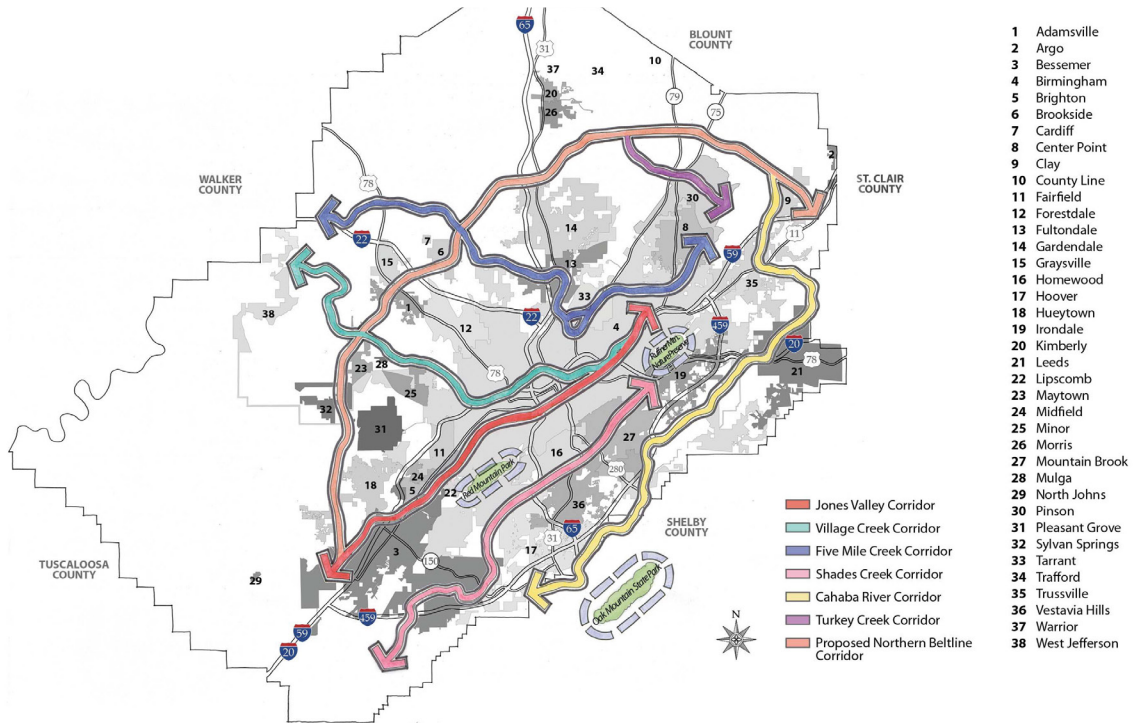
The 35th Avenue North Trail is a street-based trail that runs east/west along 35th Avenue North, starting at the Carver High School Trail which runs along 24th Street North, and ending at the Shuttlesworth Drive Trail. This proposed trail facility will connect the North Birmingham Elementary School Building and the North Birmingham Park. The 35th Avenue North Trail will include new facilities for bicyclist (dedicated bike lanes) and pedestrians (sidewalks). The trail also will include signage and pavement markings identifying the route.

Lewisburg Greenway

This proposed rail-to-trail greenway travels east from the Mary Lee Greenway along the rail crossing Five Mile Creek three times (using old abutments) traveling until the Cedar Street Trail. The proposed Boyles Gap Trail is located just east of Cedar Street and north of Boyles Lake and connects the Lewisburg Greenway with the Aqueduct Trail near Thompson Tractor.

Figure 4.3.1 highlights the existing, planned, or proposed Red Rock trails that serve or will serve the North Birmingham Community. It should be noted that the framework plan's recommendations may provide suggested modifications to the trails' configuration. This is especially true of the street-based trails as recommendations for the streets serving the community take into consideration the North Birmingham Community Framework Plan has made recommendations about street types to include ideal street design characteristics.

Figure 4.3.1 Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System Map



Source: Freshwater Land Trust

STRATEGY T12: IMPROVE URBAN FORM

Urban form impacts transportation and vice versa. Downtown North Birmingham is a typical “town center” and the residential neighborhoods that surround it were built around a well-connected street grid that enabled individuals to walk, bike, and drive to the downtown area. Likewise, neighborhoods such as Hooper City and Fairmont have a rural town character.

Maintaining the North Birmingham Community’s urban form and enhancing this form with good urban design will assist the community with its goal of returning downtown North Birmingham, and indeed all of the North Birmingham Community, to a place of prominence. Urban design will also help to ensure that the place-based solutions recommended in this framework plan improve the overall quality of life for residents through strategies that improve human health and that are able to attract and retain residents.

ACTION T12-A: DEVELOP COMPLETE STREETS USING CONTEXT ZONES.

The design of a street helps define context as much as adjacent land uses and buildings. The conventional design process prioritizes vehicular mobility and access using roadway functional classification, design speed, traffic volume, and vehicular level of service as the determinants for design criteria -- an approach with limited sensitivity to the surrounding context. Roadways governed by functional classification and conventional design standards result in a predetermined configuration that ensures thoroughfare are designed consistently, regardless of context. In short, traditional roadway functional classifications alone are not sufficient for designing Complete Streets, and while this approach may be valuable in many circumstances, it all too often is a source of conflict in urban communities.

The Birmingham Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Framework Plans' transportation elements take a closer look at opportunities to implement Complete Streets. Complete Streets are designed to broaden the focus of the thoroughfare beyond that of accommodating the automobile, and instead focus on enabling safe access for all types of street users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. They also have been documented to improve safety for pedestrians and motorists alike, encourage more walking and bicycling, ease congestion through mode sharing, and improve air quality.

The City of Birmingham has adopted a complete streets policy. The city also has adopted the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System plan which includes both a complete streets policy and recommendations for establishing modal priorities for the city's streets.

One strategy for accomplishing the development of complete streets is for the City of Birmingham to utilize the model Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) framework established by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) as published in *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*, RP 036. This report is an ITE-recommended practice and has been endorsed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares recommends the use of context zones. Context zones are a tool to classify the built environment. Each context zone is part of a continuum of environments that range from natural to highly urbanized, and are used to categorize urban development according to density and intensity, as well as the form of developing adjacent to a roadway. Context zones also are used to help characterize the basic determinants of a walkable community's street design. Finally, context zones can be used to help define street typologies. Street typologies will be discussed later in this chapter, along with a recommended toolkit for informing the selection of street design elements.

An Abridged Guide to Designing Complete Streets as Applied in the Framework Planning Process

Introduction

Street designs must prioritize users based on the context of the street type, and aim to equitably share limited right-of-way space. Each street type will balance the needs of users, giving priority based on the context, land use, existing built environment, and constraints. It is difficult to design the ideal "complete street" as trade-offs between the accommodations for travel modes must be made. Regardless of tradeoffs, all streets must consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists and should always strive to promote healthy and active transportation. Depending upon the street type, the degree of accommodations for walking and bicycling will vary.

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan echoes the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan's recommendation for the City of Birmingham to develop a comprehensive transportation plan, and while not specific to the North Birmingham Community, the development of this citywide plan will provide guidance for design of streets that are important to travel and the quality of life within North Birmingham's neighborhoods.

Understanding Context Zones

Context zones are part of a continuum of environments, ranging from natural to highly urbanized. They are used to categorize urban development according to density and intensity, as well as the form of development adjacent to a roadway. Traditional roadway design methodologies do not sufficiently describe the development context at a level of detail that relates the context to the transportation system or to street (thoroughfare) design.

Effective design of streets to reflect context sensitivity requires that designers know the intensity of urban development and the desired travel modes that best serve the users of the facility. In most cases, the users are the residents and businesses of the adjacent neighborhoods. Context zones, therefore are intensity gradations that distinguish the urban built environment adjacent to and surrounding roadways. In short, context zones describe the physical form and character of a place -- including the mass or intensity of development within a neighborhood or along a thoroughfare.

Context zones are interpreted on a block-by-block basis to respond to specific physical and activity characteristics. Context zones also are a basic determinant of a walkable community’s street design criteria. For the purposes of this document, they will be used to assist with defining street typologies within the North Birmingham Community.

Step 1. Defining Context Zones for North Birmingham

Table 4.3.1 presents the full range of context zones. However, only four have applicability to the design of urban roadways (C3 to C6). Of these four context zones, only three apply to the North Birmingham Community:

- C3 – Suburban
- C4 – General Urban
- C5 – Urban Center

The Fairmont neighborhood has characteristics of a rural community (C2). The Hooper City neighborhood has characteristics of both rural (C2) and suburban (C3) communities. The North Birmingham, Collegeville, and Harriman Park neighborhoods have General Urban (C4) characteristics, with downtown North Birmingham being characterized as an Urban Center (C5).

This variation in urban design character within the City of Birmingham’s corporate limits is not uncommon. From a street design perspective, this variation speaks to the diversity of the city’s travel needs and design of transportation facilities. It should be noted that as this framework plan identifies a set of recommended street types for application within the North Birmingham Community that the street types do not necessarily have to be continuous along the entire length of a street. A single street may change typology as the surrounding land uses or functions of the road changes. Additionally, different street types serve different functions; every street is unique and each street type plays an important role in the surrounding neighborhood.

Table 4.3.1 Context Zones

Context Zone	Distinguishing Characteristics	General Character
C1 - Natural	Natural Landscapes	
C2 - Rural	Agricultural with scattered development	Agricultural activity and natural feature
C3 - Suburban	Primarily single family residential with walkable development pattern and pedestrian facilities, dominant landscape character. Includes scattered commercial uses that support the residential uses, and connected in walkable fashion.	Detached buildings with landscaped yards, normally adjacent to C-4 zone. Commercial uses may consist of neighborhood or community shopping centers, service or office uses with side or rear parking.
C4 - General Urban	Mix of housing types including attached units, with a range of commercial and civic activity at the neighborhood and community scale	Predominantly detached buildings, balance between landscape and buildings, presence of pedestrians
C5 - Urban Center	Attached housing types such as townhouses and apartments mixed with retail, workplace, and civic activities at the community or subregional scale.	Predominantly attached buildings, landscaping within the public right of way, substantial pedestrian activity
C6 - Urban Core	Highest-intensity areas in subregion or region, with high-density residential and workplace uses, entertainment, civic, and cultural uses	Attached buildings forming sense of enclosure and continuous street wall landscaping within the public right of way, highest pedestrian and transit activity
Districts	To be designated and described locally, districts are areas that are single-use or multi-use with low-density development pattern and vehicle mobility priority thoroughfares. These may be large facilities such as airports, business parks and industrial areas	

Source: *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, an ITE Recommended Practice, 2010*

Step 2. Understanding Street Types and Functions

Streets comprise more than 80% of public space in cities, but they often fail to provide their surrounding communities with a space where people can safely walk, bicycle, drive, take transit, and socialize. The design of streets is critical to achieving desired urban forms and addressing livability. Specific solutions should be tailored to individual situations and contexts, and the decisions about these solutions need to be thoroughly documented.

In the absence of a local street design manual or citywide transportation plan, the North Birmingham Community Framework Plan relies heavily on the guidance of *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*, an ITE Recommended Practice and the *Urban Street Design Guide*. The ITE Recommended Practice uses both functional classification and thoroughfare (street) type to classify streets, and also to inform decisions related to both the physical design and operations of the street. Functional classification defines a roadway's function and role in the network, in addition to governing the selection of certain design controls. Thoroughfare (street) type governs the selection of the roadway's design criteria and, along with the surrounding context, is used to determine the physical configuration of the thoroughfare. Design criteria and physical configuration address which elements are included in the design and selection of dimensions.

The use of street types within the North Birmingham Community Framework Plan is an attempt to reflect the community's local context in order to identify potential designs for:

- Streetside (sidewalks, planting strips)
- Traveled way (lanes, medians, on-street parking, bicycle lanes)
- Intersections

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan, while addressing development across a wide spectrum of geographies, focuses its transportation element on urban streets as one of the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan's and indeed the community residents' desires is to support existing and create new walkable neighborhoods. For the purposes of this plan, street recommended will focus on three different types (described further in Table 4.3.2):

- Boulevards
- Avenues
- Streets

About Roadway Functional Classification

Roadway functional classification systems use a hierarchy to group classes of streets based on the relative emphasis of vehicle mobility versus property access. The system is used to design roads that support different speeds, volumes, and types of traffic. On one end of the spectrum are arterial roadways, which facilitate higher vehicle speeds and longer trips, and accommodate the greatest number of trips for all modes of travel. At the other end of the spectrum are local streets, which provide easy access to individual residences at slower speeds. In between arterial and local streets are collectors, streets characterized by a balance between access and mobility.

The functional classification system is the basis for most local, state, and national roadway design guides and manuals. The functional classifications are based on operational characteristics predominantly for the mobility and capacity of motor vehicles, and are used to recommend values for elements such as lane widths, speeds, geometry, and intersection design.

Table 4.3.2 Street Type Descriptions

Thoroughfare/Street Type	Characteristics
Boulevards	Walkable, low-speed (35 mph or less) divided arterial thoroughfare in urban environments designed to carry both through and local traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists. Boulevards may be long corridors, typically four lanes, serve longer trips, and provide pedestrian access to land. Boulevards may be high-ridership transit corridors. Boulevards are primary goods movement and emergency response routes and use vehicular and pedestrian access management techniques. Curb parking is encouraged on boulevards.
Avenues	Walkable, low-to-medium speed (25 to 35 mph) urban arterial or collector thoroughfare, generally shorter in length than boulevards, serving access to abutting land. Avenues serve as primary pedestrian and bicycle routes and may serve local transit routes. Avenues do not exceed 4 lanes, and access to land is a primary function. Goods movement is typically limited to local routes and deliveries. Some avenues feature a raised landscaped median. Avenues may serve commercial or mixed-use sectors and usually provide curb parking.
Streets	Walkable, low speed (25 mph) thoroughfare in urban areas primarily serving abutting property. A street is designed to connect residential neighborhoods with each other, connect neighborhoods with commercial and other districts, and connect local streets to arterials. Streets may serve as the main street of commercial or mixed-use sectors and emphasize curb parking. They are restricted for local deliveries only.

Source: *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach an ITE Recommended Practice.*

Table 4.3.3 illustrates the relationship between street types and functional classification. In general, boulevards serve an arterial function, avenues may be arterials or collectors and streets typically serve a collector or local function in the network. More detailed descriptions of the general design parameters and desired operating characteristics of the street types are given in Table 4.3.4.

Table 4.3.3 A Comparison of Roadway Functional Classification and Street Typology

Roadway Functional Classification	Street Type		
	Boulevard	Avenue	Street
Major Arterial	X	X	X
Minor Arterial	X	X	X
Collector		X	X
Local			X

Source: *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, an ITE Recommended Practice.*

Table 4.3.4 Operating and Design Characteristics by Street Type

Street Type	Travel Lanes	Target Operating Speed	Median	Driveway Access	On-Street Parking	Pedestrian Facilities	Bicycle Facilities	Freight Movement Character
Boulevard	4 – 6	30 – 35	Yes	Limited	Optional	Sidewalk	Bike Lane or Parallel Route	Regional Truck Route
Avenue	2 – 4	25 – 30	Optional	Yes	Yes	Sidewalk	Bike Lane or Shared	Local Truck Route
Street	2	25	No	Yes	Yes	Sidewalk	Shared	Local Deliveries

Source: *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach an ITE Recommended Practice*

Step 3. Establishing a Mode Priority for Streets

The Birmingham Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Framework Plans' transportation elements take a closer look at opportunities to identify and improve connectivity between neighborhoods, mobility within communities, and access to services and opportunities external to the City of Birmingham. The comprehensive plan specifically called for improving access and mobility in commercial and employment activity centers. It also called for coordinating and prioritizing travel along the transportation system by travel mode. This includes cars, trucks, bicycle and pedestrians, and public transit.

Mode priority classifies streets according to whether they are particularly suitable for transportation other than cars. The classification is based upon land use, urban design, the need for certain streets to contribute to the complete user network and a range of other factors that influence mode choice.

Mode priority can be achieved by taking a Layered Network approach. Layered networks designate modal emphasis by street to create a complete streets network. Layered networks recognize that while all traveler types need to be accommodated within a community, no single street can accommodate all transportation users at all times. The layered network concept envisions streets as systems, each street type designed to create a high quality experience for its intended users. A layered network approach can also use context sensitive land use and mode overlays to enhance additional transportation modes (*Fehr & Peers. Multimodal Level of Service Toolkit. Layered Networks. 2010*).

This approach for establishing mode priority has several advantages, including, but not limited to:

- Helping mitigate the challenge of accommodating all users on every roadway
- Creating flexibility and options with multiple travel routes
- Accommodating different travel modes on different streets
- Allowing network layout and roadway design for ideal bicycle or transit networks
- Working well with established Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS) methodologies

This methodology also will help to identify deficiencies in a community's travel network and highlight areas where changes are needed in order to develop the desired complete streets network. Additional roadway connectivity and redundancy to create the multi-modal network may be required. Likewise, if land uses do not support the design of layered networks, establishing modal priority may be less effective and provide support to critics of the complete streets approach.

About Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS)

The MMLOS method addresses the perceived quality of service for passenger car (automobile) drivers, bus passengers, bicycle riders, and pedestrians to the extent that these perceptions are influenced by factors that fall exclusively within the right of way of the urban street. Quality of service (as expressed in terms of letter grade levels of service) is an indicator of the traveling public's perceived degree of satisfaction with the traveling experience provided by the urban street under prevailing demand and operation conditions. It does not take into account how many people will actually use the facility or how expensive it is to the agency and the general public to provide the facility. It does not consider environmental concerns or collision rates.

For additional information about MMLOS, see:

Multimodal Level-of-Service Analysis for Urban Streets: NCHRP Project 3-70. National Cooperative Research Program. Transportation Research Board of the National Academies. 2009.

Step 4. Design the Street

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan recommends a number of different street types for application within the North Birmingham Community. These recommended street types are intended to offer additional guidance to the traditional roadway functional classification system. Specifically, the street types contained herein are intended to serve as models, informing the selection of street design elements and providing options for communities when they need to make informed choices during the visioning process for proposed area transportation and/or roadway projects.

The recommended street types offer a balance between functional classification, adjacent land uses, and the competing needs of all transportation modes. Each street type prioritizes users and various design elements based on the context and character of the neighborhood and street. Within the North Birmingham Community's constrained rights-of-way, trade-offs must be balanced and equitable, and should always encourage the healthy and active transportation options of bicycling and walking.

Note:

1. Renderings of the different street typologies that are included within the framework plan are intended to highlight general design concepts, and in some cases, exemplify specific ideas. They are not intended to be prescriptive in any way. The City of Birmingham still needs to develop and incorporate a local street design manual as part of a larger citywide transportation plan. Doing so will help to create internal design consensus between the different departments that regulate/influence both the public and private realms.

2. The Birmingham Comprehensive Plan recommends that the city develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that would address issues with street design.

Industrial Street

Context Zone:

- C3 – Suburban
- C4 – General Urban

Street Type: Boulevard, Avenue, Street, Parkway*

Mode Priority: Auto, Truck

North Birmingham Applicability:

- Daniel Payne Drive
- Coalburg Road
- Erwin Dairy Road (47th/49th Avenue North)
- 27th Avenue North
- Finley Boulevard

Overview

Industrial Streets are an important transportation asset and are key to the City of Birmingham's economy. They support the manufacturing and commercial businesses that form Birmingham's industrial base. Industrial Streets support truck traffic and accommodate the loading and distribution needs of wholesale, construction, commercial, service, and food-processing businesses. They typically connect directly to the regional highway system and other distribution hubs such as rail yards and the Birmingham Shuttlesworth International Airport.

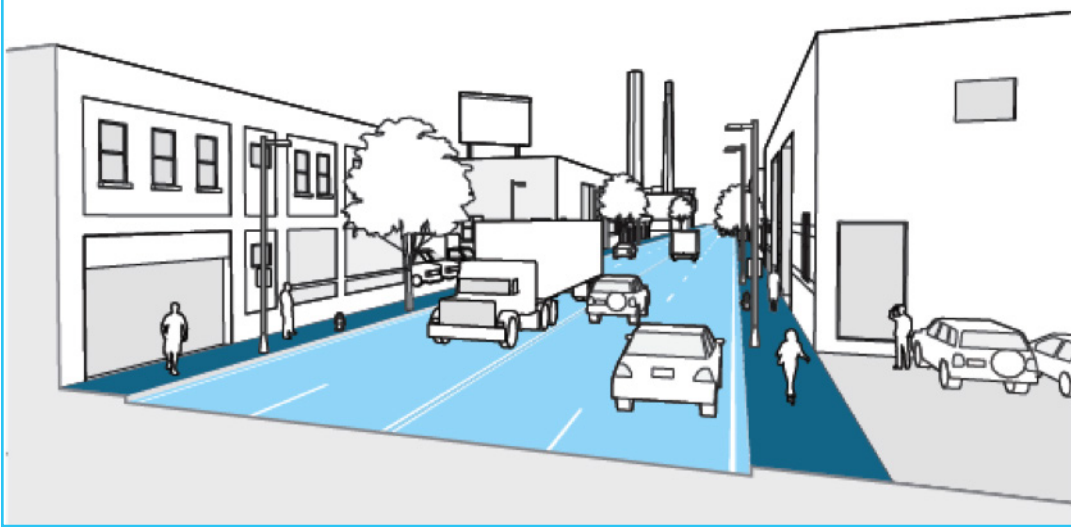
Accommodation of truck traffic, including providing adequate turning radii at intersections, is a primary design consideration for these streets. While pedestrian use may be light, sidewalks and accessible accommodations should be provided. Traffic volumes and congestion may be higher on Industrial Streets compared to pedestrian-oriented streets. When designing Industrial Streets, consideration should be given to discourage and minimize cut-through traffic on residential streets in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Industrial Streets also should consider using trees and greenscape to help mitigate noise and for phytoremediation -- the ability of plants to uptake and remove contaminants from the water, soil, and air.

Depending on the context, Industrial Streets may be designed for all street typologies (Boulevards, Avenues, and Streets). In areas where industrial uses are adjacent to natural lands and/or designated open space systems such as the Red Rock Ridge and Valley's identified greenway and blueway network, Industrial Streets also may be designed as Parkways.

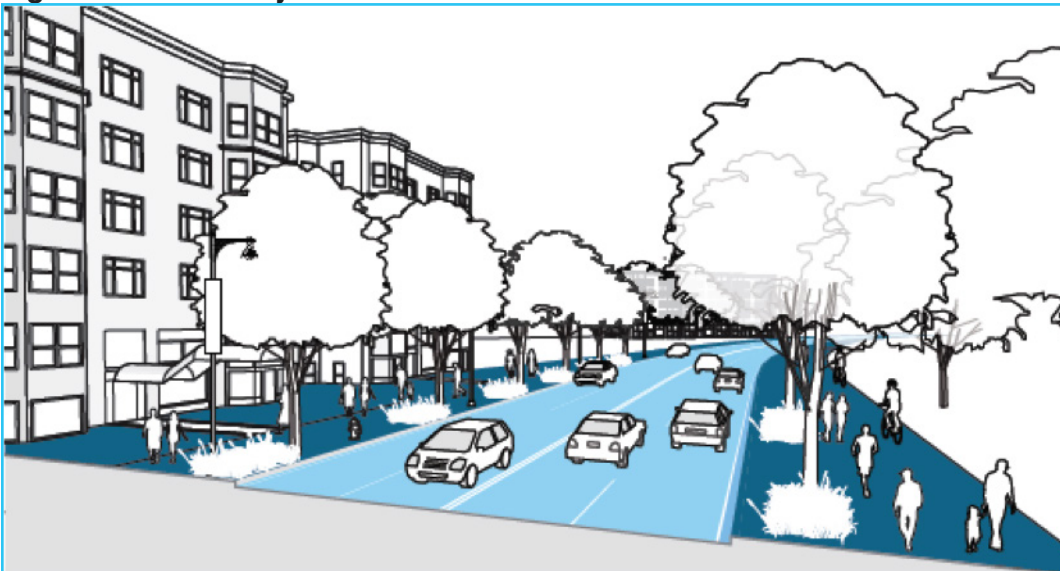
** Parkways are typically four-lane higher-speed roads, characterized by long, uninterrupted stretches running parallel to an open space system. Parkways have fewer intersections. However, the combination of higher speeds and longer distances between signalized crossings can make Parkways difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross. It is extremely important to provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle accommodations at intersections along Parkways. Parkways do not provide transit accommodations or on-street parking.*

Figure 4.3.2 Industrial Street



Source: Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines 2013

Figure 4.3.3 Parkway



Source: Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines 2013

Neighborhood Main Street

Context Zone:

- C4 – General Urban
- C5 – Urban Center

Functional Class: Arterial, Collector

Street Type: Avenue

Mode Priority: Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit

Applicability:

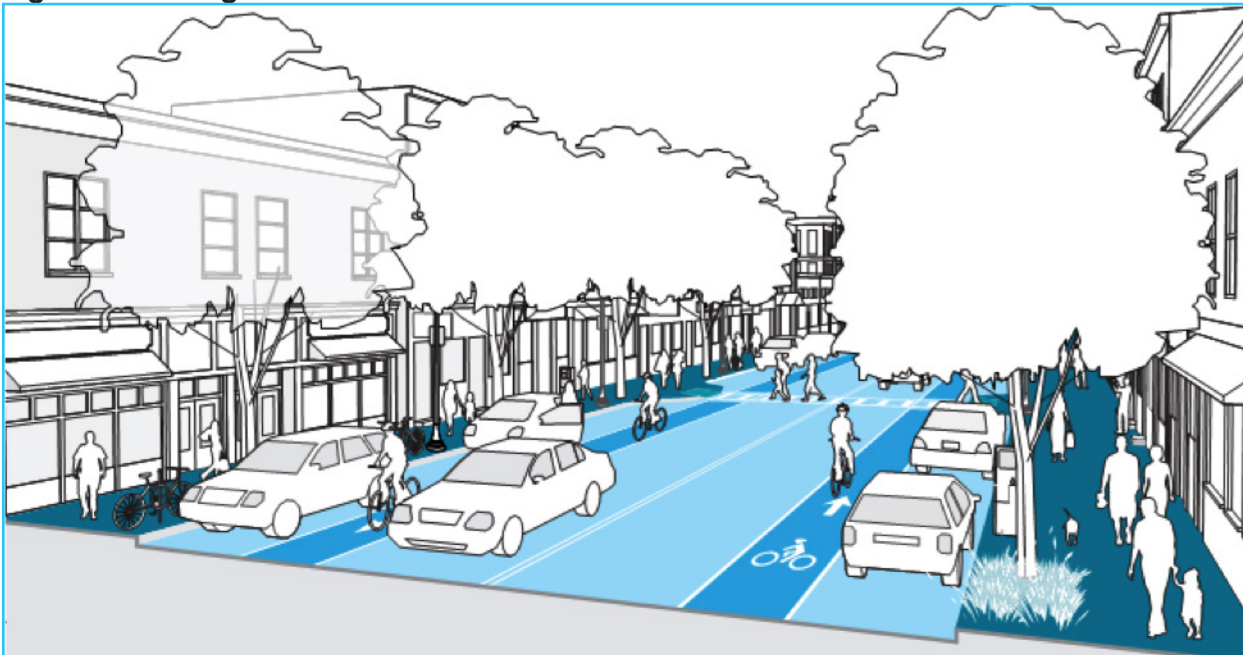
27th Street North between 29th Avenue North and 35th Avenue North

Overview

Neighborhood main streets are a nexus of neighborhood life, with high pedestrian volumes, frequent parking turnover, key transit routes, and bicyclists all vying for limited space. Neighborhood Main Streets are typically located in the heart of a residential neighborhood. They are characterized by dense commercial and retail uses. They are often concentrated in an area only a few blocks long. Neighborhood Main Streets are the nucleus of neighborhood economies, providing residents with daily essentials, locally-owned businesses, and services.

Neighborhood Main Streets are a meeting ground for residents. They should be designed to support gathering and community events such as farmers' markets and festivals. In addition they are characterized by public facilities such as libraries, as well as community and health centers.

Figure 4.3.4 Neighborhood Main Street



Source: Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines 2013

Neighborhood Connector

Context Zone: C4 – General Urban

Functional Class: Arterial, Collector

Street Type: Avenue

Mode Priority: Bicycle, Pedestrian, Transit

Applicability:

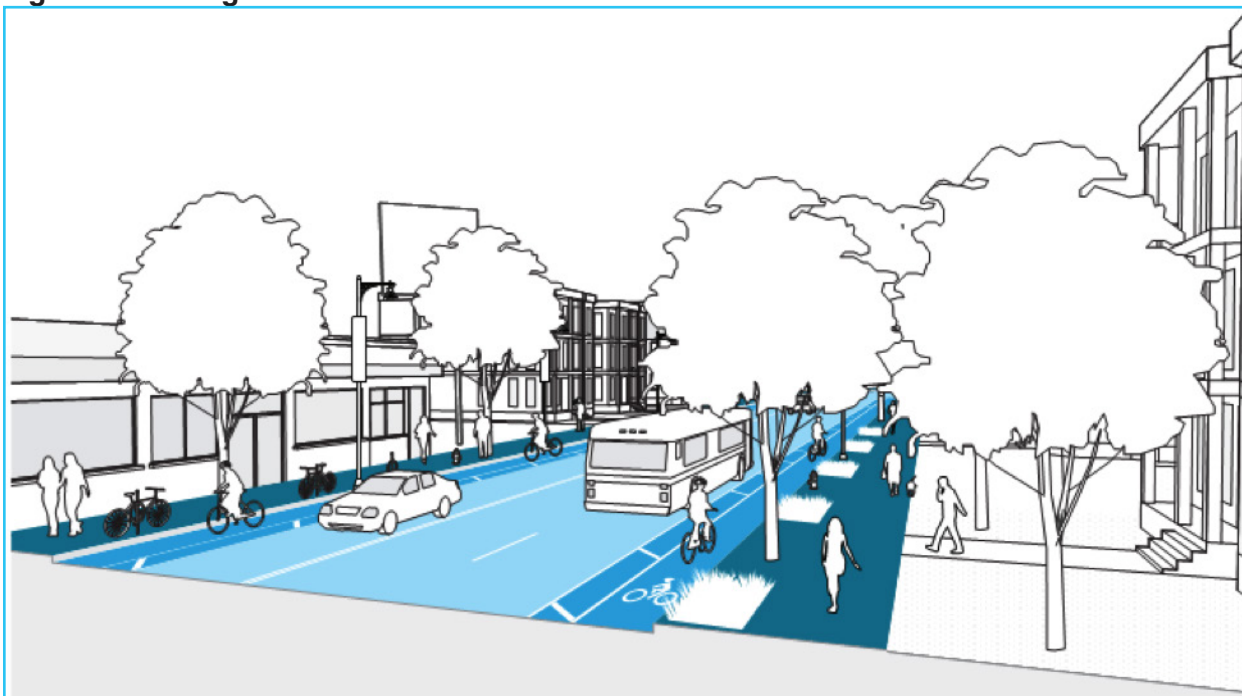
- 24th Street North
- 26th Avenue North/11th Place North (between Finley Avenue West and 24th Street)
- 33rd Avenue North/4th Street West (between U.S. 31 and Daniel Payne Drive)
- F. L. Shuttlesworth Drive (between 27th Avenue North and 35th Avenue North)

Overview

Neighborhood Connector Streets are through streets that traverse several neighborhoods and form the backbone of a multimodal street network. They provide continuous walking and bicycling routes and accommodate bus routes. While they are essential to the flow of people between neighborhoods, the needs of people passing through must be balanced with the needs of those who live and work along the street.

In Birmingham, Neighborhood Connector Streets are typically two or three-lane streets. However, they may be up to four travel lanes in width. Land uses, speeds, and right-of-way widths can vary, and the street typology may change throughout the duration of the street. Design considerations include encouraging efficient movements of vehicle and transit traffic, continuous and comfortable bicycle facilities, wide sidewalks with sufficient buffers to motor vehicle traffic, and safe pedestrian crossings at intersections. Street lighting, tree plantings, street furniture, and other urban design elements should create a unifying identity for the entire street.

Figure 4.3.5 Neighborhood Connector



Source: *Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines 2013*

Neighborhood Residential

Context Zone: C4 – General Urban

Functional Class: Collector, Local

Street Type: Street

Mode Priority: Bicycle, Pedestrian

Application:

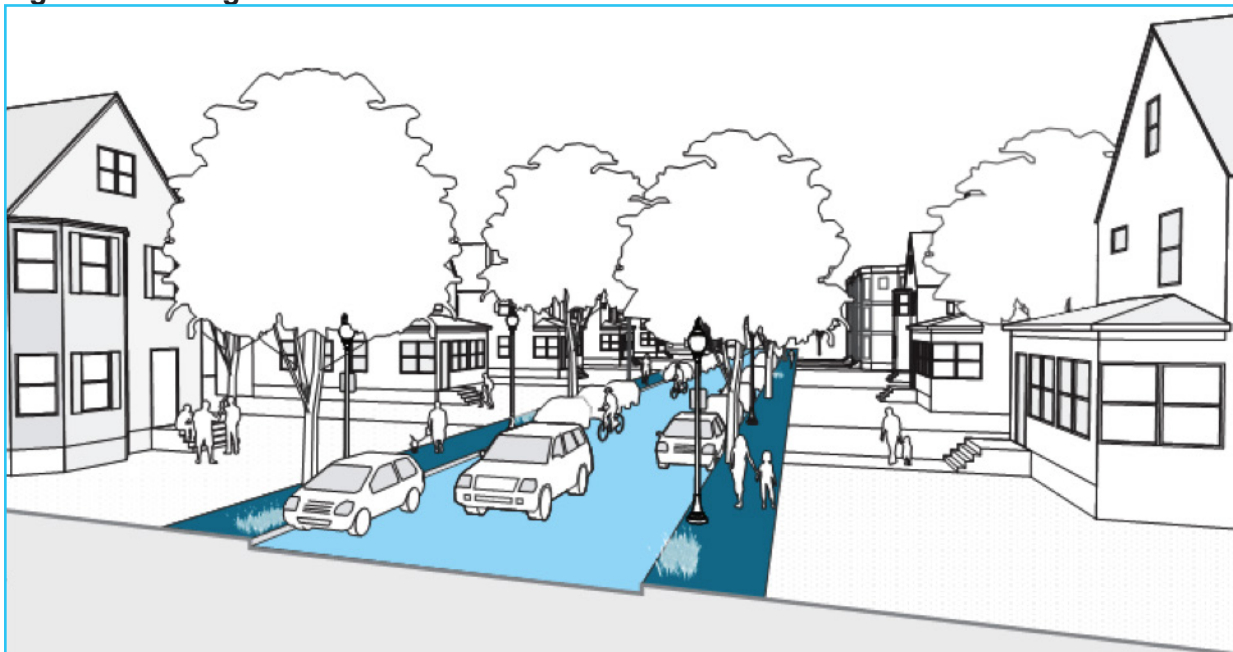
- 32nd Avenue North
- 34th Street North
- 27th Street North – North of 35th Avenue North
- All local streets serving residential neighborhoods/communities

Overview

Neighborhood Residential Streets provide access to Birmingham’s residential neighborhoods serving both single family and multifamily homes. These streets are used primarily for local trips and are characterized by lower vehicle and should provide safe and inviting places to walk with direct access to local stores and schools. They are often underutilized as spaces for play and leisure. They often have on-street residential permit parking. The primary role of Neighborhood Residential Streets is to contribute to a high quality of life for residents of the city. Typically they are not more than two travel lanes (one in each direction) and are not intended for through-traffic

The design of Residential Streets focuses on encouraging slow speeds. The emphasis is on pedestrian safety, space for children to play, ample street trees, and well defined walking and bicycling paths to nearby parks, bus stops, community centers, and libraries.

Figure 4.3.6 Neighborhood Residential



Source: *Boston Complete Streets Design Guidelines 2013*

Shared Street

Context Zone:

C4 – General Urban

Functional Class: Local

Street Type: Street

Mode Priority: Bicycle, Pedestrians

Applicability:

31st Avenue North (between U.S. 31 / 26th Street North and 27th Street North)

Overview

A Shared Street is a street with a single grade or surface that is shared by people using all modes of travel at slow speeds. Curbs are removed, and the sidewalk is blended with the roadway. Speeds are slow enough to allow for pedestrians to intermingle with bicycles, motor vehicles, and even transit. Shared Streets are applicable to residential streets and commercial alleyways.

Overall, the primary design consideration for Shared Streets is maintaining slow vehicular speeds (no more than 15 mph) in order to minimize the potential for conflicts with pedestrians. Entrances to Shared Streets are usually raised and often narrowed to one lane in order to force drivers to slow before entering. Chicanes can be used to help regulate vehicular speeds along the length of the street, and can be formed using trees, benches, plantings, play areas, and parking areas that are laid out in an alternating pattern to deflect and slow traffic.

Commercial Shared Streets

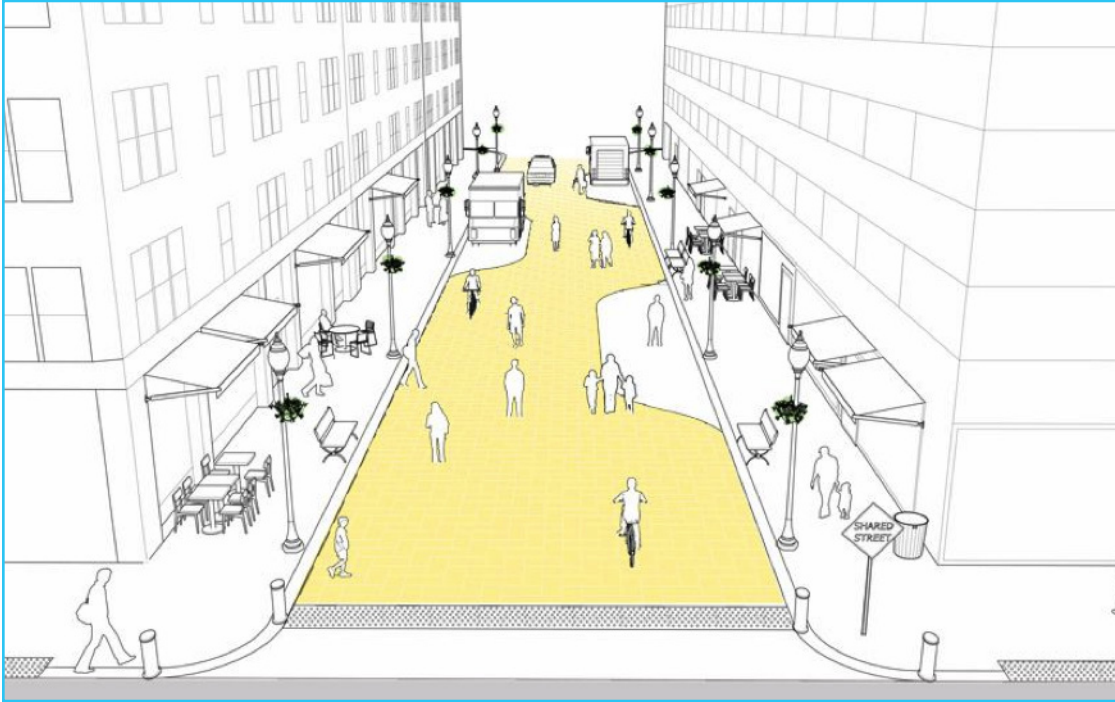
Commercial shared streets maintain access for vehicles operating at low speeds and are designed to permit easy loading and unloading for trucks at designated hours. They are designed to implicitly slow traffic speeds using pedestrian volumes, design, and other cues to slow or divert traffic.

Textured or pervious pavements that are flush with the curb reinforce the pedestrian-priority operation of the street and delineate a non-linear path of travel. Street furniture, including bollards, benches, planters, street lights, sculptures, trees, and bicycle parking, may be sited to provide definition for a shared space, subtly delineating the traveled way from the pedestrian-exclusive area. Commercial shared streets restrict transit access.

Residential Shared Streets

Low-volume residential streets, especially in older cities, often have narrow or crumbling sidewalks. Many of these streets operate de facto as shared spaces, in which children play and people walk, sharing the roadway with drivers. Depending on the residential street's volume and role in the traffic network, these streets have the potential to be redesigned and enhanced as shared streets. Shared streets can meet the desires of adjacent residents and function foremost as a public space for recreation, socializing, and leisure.

Figure 4.3.7 Commercial Shared Street



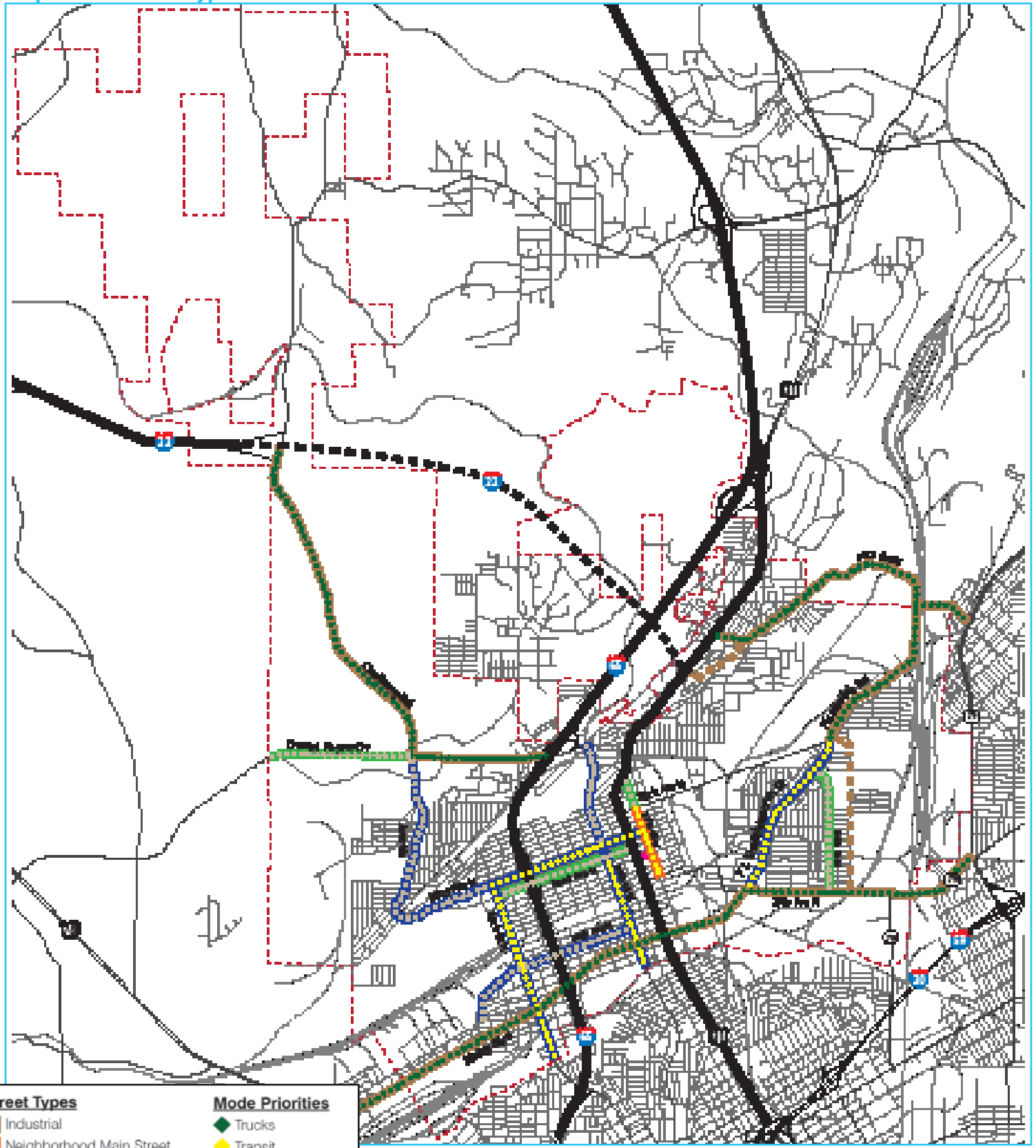
Source: NACTO Urban Streets Design Guide 2012

Figure 4.3.8 Residential Shared Street



Source: NACTO Urban Streets Design Guide 2012

Map 4.3.1: Street Types and Mode Priorities



Street Types		Mode Priorities	
Industrial	Neighborhood Main Street	Trucks	Transit
Neighborhood Connector	Neighborhood Residential	Bikes/Pedestrian	
Shared Streets	Highway		

STRATEGY TI3: ADDRESS TRUCK MOVEMENTS

North Birmingham Community residents expressed concerns about truck traffic moving through their neighborhoods. Specifically, Collegeville neighborhood residents expressed concern about the volume and speed of trucks traveling through their neighborhood along Shuttlesworth Drive and on 34th Street North, both of which are residential streets. They also expressed concern about the types of cargo and the placement of cargo in the trucks, noting that their perception about the security of loads, primarily construction debris and scrap metal, carried by large haulers made them feel uneasy both as motorist traveling behind these vehicles, and as pedestrians as these vehicles passed them standing on the street.

North Birmingham residents expressed concern about the speed at which trucks travel along 32nd and 33rd Avenues North as they enter and exit the interstate. Hooper City residents complained about trucks using 33rd Avenue North/4th Street West as a cut through route to Coalburg Road and ultimately, Corridor X (Future I-22). Like the streets in Collegeville, the streets in the North Birmingham and Hooper City neighborhoods respectively, are primarily residential streets. Heavy truck use on the streets noted above was confirmed through field observation. These streets also bear signs of damage from heavy truck use as pavement conditions are deteriorated and the travelways are deeply rutted.

Designation of truck routes for the North Birmingham Community will help to provide a seamless transition between truck traffic and the internal road network. It also will assist with providing easy access to truck information in the form of consistent, readable and accurate signage, readily available maps, reduce travel time and regulating weight restrictions.

As envisioned for the North Birmingham Community, a truck routing program also will focus more on communication and education. This will be accomplished through:

Clearly Defining Existing Truck Routes

- Existing truck routes will be mapped and sign locations will be identified and posted in locations lacking clear indication of height restrictions and weight limitations.

Communicate Expectations for Truck Movement

- Communicate with businesses and trucking companies to ensure that they understand the community's desired routing. Maintaining good communications also will help with keeping an open dialogue, avoiding misconceptions and fostering mutual cooperation.

Providing a “Good Neighbor” Incentive to Businesses

- Provide incentives to freight intensive businesses to act as good neighbors within the community by following recommended routing and to conduct trucking operations during off-peak commuter travel hours in order to minimize truck impacts on morning and evening congestion.

ACTION TI3-A: DESIGNATE TRUCK ROUTES IN THE NORTH BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY.

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan recommends a number of strategies be provided to address truck travel. The first of these strategies is to provide truck traffic with travel directions by designating certain streets as truck routes. Truck routes provide rules that balance the needs of commerce and the trucking industry with the desire to minimize the impacts of trucks on sensitive land uses. Truck routes do not prohibit trucks from using any road within a community. Instead, they express a cognizance about the types of roads that are most suitable to facilitate truck movements while accommodating them to the greatest extent possible. By doing so, their intrusion

into sensitive areas such as residential neighborhoods, is minimized. As such, truck routes serve an important role in creating an efficient transportation network of interconnecting streets, enabling truck operators the ability to effectively ship and deliver goods and services to the consumer. Map 4.3.2 present the recommended truck routes for the North Birmingham Community.

ACTION TI3-B: USE TRAFFIC CALMING TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE LIVABILITY AND STRENGTHEN TRUCK ROUTING.

Truck traffic traveling through Hooper City, for example, is primarily through traffic, might be addressed through the use of traffic calming. Traffic calming uses physical measures to change driver behavior on streets to the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists, and other users of the street. In simple terms, traffic calming techniques are typically aimed at lowering vehicle speeds, decreasing truck volumes, and/or reducing the amount of cut-through traffic in a given area.

Applying traffic calming measures will help the entire North Birmingham Community to provide for safe travel throughout the area and enhance livability. In Hooper City, the program will help to reduce truck volumes and speeds by applying both regulatory and engineering measures to dissuade truck traffic from cutting through the neighborhood, and to direct them to more appropriate routes.

Specific traffic calming strategies that might be utilized in Hooper City include:

Truck Route Signing

- Signs placed along streets at appropriate intervals to designate truck routes or restrict truck traffic.

Target Enforcement

- Increased police enforcement of traffic regulations within a designated area.

Neighborhood Speed Watch Program

- A speed-monitoring program in which residents of a neighborhood measure vehicle speeds with a radar unit and record license plate numbers of those exceeding the speed limit. The registered owners are sent letters explaining the safety concerns in the neighborhood and asking them to reduce their speeds.

Other strategies that might be considered include:

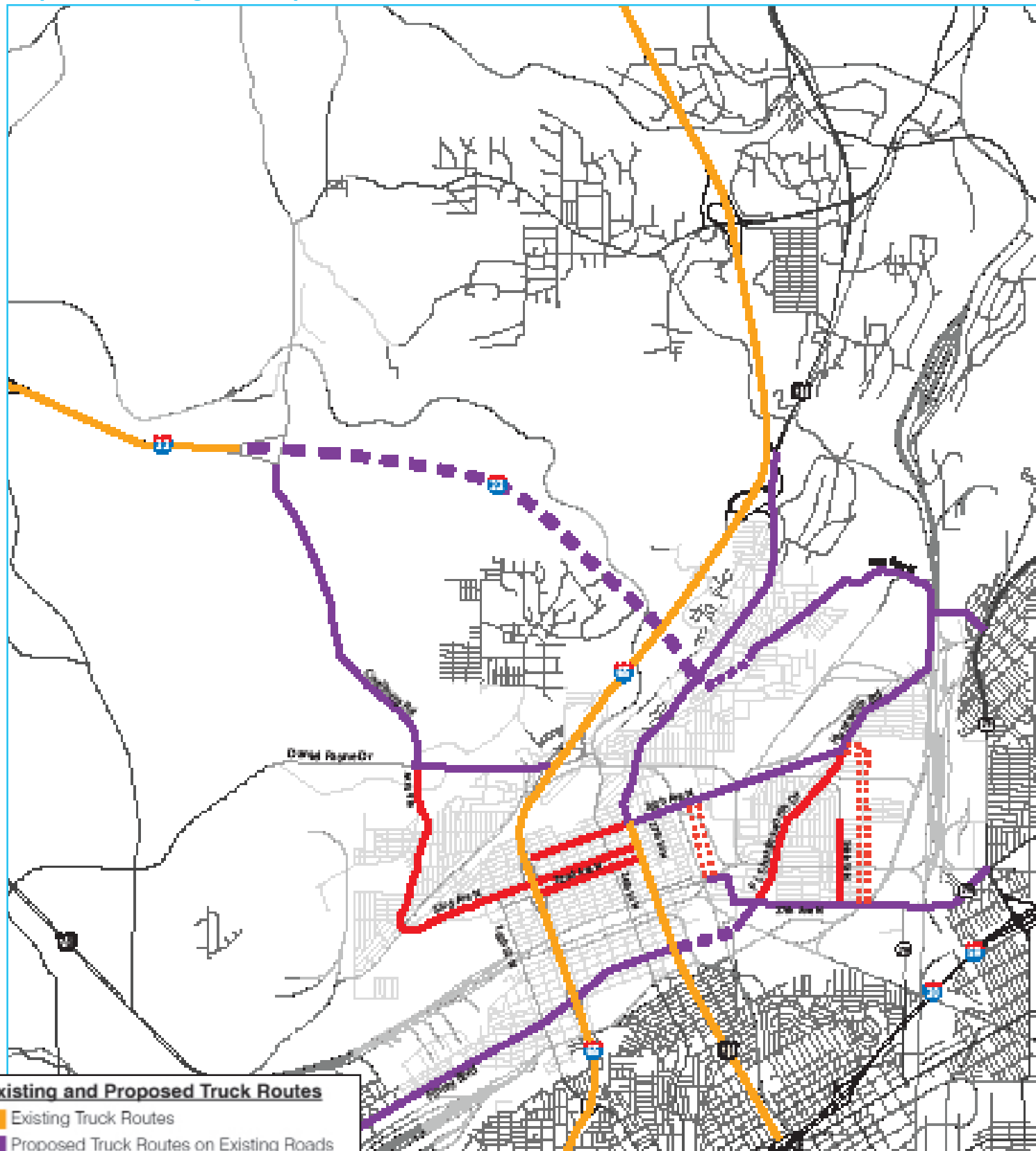
Traffic Circles

- Traffic circles are raised circular islands placed in the center of the intersection about which drivers must navigate around. They cause vehicles to slow down through the intersection because they are forced to make turning movements. They are very effective at slowing vehicle speeds down. Pedestrian safety is also increased due to the decrease in speeds. Large vehicles may have trouble navigating around the traffic circles, especially when making left-hand turns.

Roundabouts

- Traffic circles are raised circular islands placed in the center of the intersection about which drivers must navigate around. They cause vehicles to slow down through the intersection because they are forced to make turning movements. They are very effective at slowing vehicle speeds down. Pedestrian safety is also increased due to the decrease in speeds. Large vehicles may have trouble navigating around the traffic circles, especially when making left-hand turns.

Map 4.3.2: Existing and Proposed Truck Routes



Existing and Proposed Truck Routes

- Existing Truck Routes
- Proposed Truck Routes on Existing Roads
- - - Proposed Truck Routes on Approved Roads
- · · Proposed Truck Routes on Proposed Roads
- Problem areas

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75 2 Miles



STRATEGY TI4: CLEAN AND GREEN STREETS

ACTION TI4-A: DEVELOP GREEN STREETS

While streets are efficient conveyors of traffic, they are also very efficient at conveying high volumes of water and the pollutants that this water picks up on its way to streams and other water bodies. Green Streets are a basic stormwater management concept that has been shown to be successful in cities across the country. They offer practical design solutions and methodologies for managing stormwater, as well as a realistic approach for adding greenspace within an urban environment.

A green street:

- Is one component of a larger approach to improving water quality
- Is designed to incorporate a system of stormwater treatments within the right-of-way
- Is a visible system of green infrastructure
- Is aesthetically pleasing

One of the guiding principles for today's road design and planning has to be to conserve protect and restore the environment as the first consideration. The drainage system for streets is an extension of the natural drainage system. Green streets are recommended on:

- 27th Court North between 31st Street North and 33rd Street North
- 27th Alley North
- 28th Avenue between 31st Street North and 33rd Street North
- 31st Street North between 27th Avenue North and 29th Avenue North
- 32nd Street North between 27th Avenue North and 29th Avenue North
- 33rd Street North between 27th Avenue North and 29th Avenue North

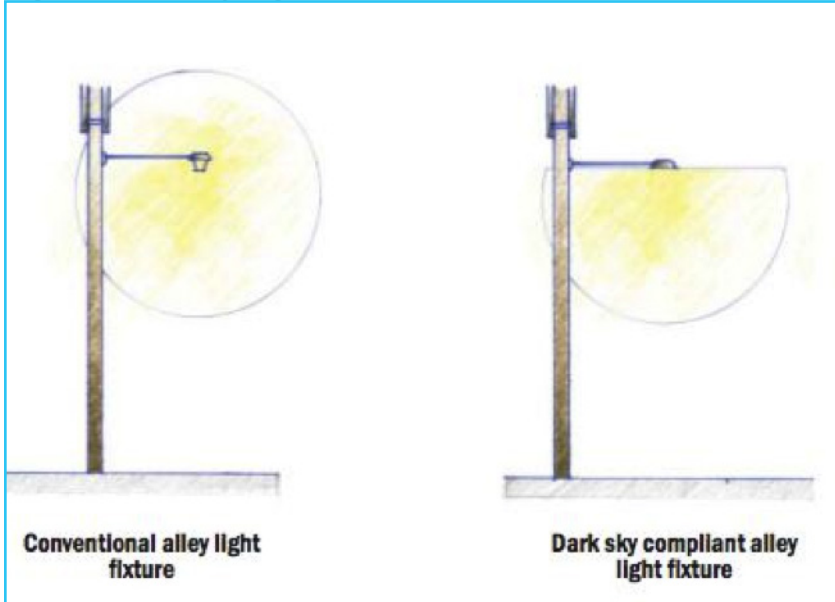
ACTION TI4-B: IMPLEMENT AN ALLEYWAY CLEANUP PROGRAM.

The City of Birmingham has an abundance of alleyways. Like most cities, alleyways are looked upon with disdain, fear, and loathing as they are perceived to be havens for dumping unwanted items and crime. Alleyways, however, can become assets for the transportation system, helping to shape urban form and improve urban design, as well as facilitating safe and convenient travel. Alleyways can also help to manage stormwater.

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan recommends that the City of Birmingham implement an Alleyway Cleanup Program. This proposed program would incorporate green streets concepts, helping to strengthen the City's green infrastructure. Alleyways often run parallel to the larger street network, making them ideal low-speed, low-volume links for cyclists. They also may be operated as pedestrian-only environments or as shared streets, a street with a single grade or surface that is shared by people using all modes of travel at slow speeds. From a traveler safety perspective, alleyways provide direct property access and eliminate the need for driveways along main roads eliminating conflicts with people who are walking and biking.

While alleys can serve as low-speed connections for bicyclists, careful attention must be paid to visibility at all intersection crossings. Enhanced intersection crossing treatments should be considered where bicyclists may have limited visibility. Additionally, in order to maintain a safe environment, alleys should have adequate lighting. Pedestrian-scale light fixtures that focus their illumination toward the ground and minimize light pollution are recommended. Public safety is of paramount consideration for all new and existing alleys. Good lighting is an essential prerequisite to a feeling of public safety in alleys.

Figure 4.10 Alley Light Fixtures



Source: *The Chicago Green Alley Handbook*, Illustration by Hitchcock Design Group

The proposed Alleyway Cleanup Program also is compatible with the City of Birmingham’s RISE Initiative. While the framework plan recommends that alleyways be maintained for transportation purposes, it might not be feasible or desired to do so. The Alleyway Cleanup Program would empower adjacent property owners to take steps to partially or fully close the alleyway for greening projects, creating linear pocket parks and connecting neighbors.

STRATEGY T15: PLAN FOR TRANSIT

ACTION T15-A: ESTABLISH NORTH BIRMINGHAM AS A TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SUPER STOP AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

The North Birmingham neighborhood has “good bones.” Its urban form with gridded streets, dense development pattern, and pedestrian scale buildings, help to make the neighborhood walkable, and makes it an ideal place to develop into a public transportation node. This is especially true for the neighborhood’s core.

The North Birmingham neighborhood can be typified as a Transit Neighborhood. A transit neighborhood is primarily residential in character and is served by a high frequency bus line(s) that connect at one location. Densities are low to moderate and economic activity is not concentrated around stations, which may be located at the edge of two distinct neighborhoods. Transit neighborhoods can offer significant development opportunities with potential to provide residents with more housing, retail, employment, and mobility options. Densities are usually evenly distributed in the half-mile radius around stations.

The City of Birmingham is developing its transit infrastructure and services, and high quality, high volume transit services are not anticipated to occur in the immediate future. However, the concept of transit-ready development -- transit oriented development (TOD) that does not yet have high quality transit services but is oriented towards and ready to accommodate future high quality transit services -- is applicable for specifically downtown North Birmingham. Downtown North Birmingham has been identified as a key neighborhood activity center in the City of Birmingham’s comprehensive plan. It also was identified as a transit hub in the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority’s Transit Development Plan, and is proposed to host a transit “super stop.”

It is important to note that a transit neighborhood's streets are supportive of multiple transportation modes. This is especially true of the streets surrounding the transit station. These streets provide for the safe travel of automobiles, buses, pedestrians and bicyclists. While the entirety of the urbanized areas of the North Birmingham Community are recommended to be provided with Complete Streets treatments, the areas adjacent to future high capacity transit service stops are recommended to receive priority when implementing Complete Streets concepts. Additionally, mode priority for streets within this district emphasize both transit and non-motorized traveler (cyclists and pedestrians) movement.

ACTION T15-B: IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE DELIVERY AND EFFICIENCY.

Public transit services are an important form of transportation for many North Birmingham Community residents, and local transit services need to continue to be supported. At present, there are two (2) existing Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) MAX bus routes that either serve or pass through the North Birmingham Community:

- Route 23 – North Birmingham
- Route 40 – Hooper City, Fairmont

Route 23 primarily serves the North Birmingham, Collegeville and Harriman Park neighborhoods. Route 40 provides service to entirety of the North Birmingham Community. This includes the Hooper City, Fairmont, North Birmingham, Collegeville and Harriman Park neighborhoods. Headways -- the frequency with which service is provided -- for Route 23 and Route 40 are 45 minutes and 90 minutes, respectively. Both Route 23 and Route 40 are among the system's top 15 routes in terms of ridership with Route 23 ranking 7th and Route 40 ranking 10th. Both of these routes have origins and destinations in downtown Birmingham, at the BJCTA's Central Station. However, as part of the public meeting process for the framework plan's development, it was largely discussed and agreed that this service could be streamlined to improve service delivery.

A common complaint among North Birmingham Community residents, who are also transit riders, is that transit services are infrequent, and as such inconvenient as a source of transportation to and from employment, services, and opportunities. Residents noted the long wait times between buses, and the amount of time that they had to devote to travel. BJCTA also noted that these routes had low productivity, meaning lower than normal ridership and higher than average costs.

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan recommends that transit services for North Birmingham be reconsidered in order to improve service delivery and efficiency.

This includes:

Area Based Circulator/Shuttle Services

Envisioned as a personalized bus service that travels within the North Birmingham Community, this service would allow the BJCTA to eliminate the long, circuitous Route 23 to provide more convenient and frequent service to a wider range of community residents. As proposed, this service would enable transit users to make reservations for rides on the service. The bus would pick riders up according to appointment and take them to a location within the North Birmingham Community or to the proposed transit super stop in downtown North Birmingham. At this super stop, riders could transfer to a trunk-line bus into downtown or access future routes that might be part of either a larger high capacity commuter transit service.

Other variations of how this service might be operated include:

Flex Route Service - Flex routes offer commuters a reservation-free ride during morning and evening commutes, picking up and dropping off riders at scheduled stops and times along the route. Specific stops within the North Birmingham Community would be designated for this service.

Subscription Service - North Birmingham Community residents will be able to purchase subscriptions to the service. This type of service would support individuals who need to make recurring trips at the same time and location, and is ideal for older individuals who make recurring medical or social service trips, but who do not qualify for BJCTA's VIP paratransit services. It is also ideal for late night travelers, specifically those individuals who are going to or coming home from work. As envisioned in this recommendation, once subscribed, riders will be picked up and dropped off on their schedule until they cancel the subscription.

Trunk Line Bus Service

Although not identified in any specific corridor study as a high capacity transit corridor, transit services to the North Birmingham Community might be streamlined to provide a trunk-line transit route to downtown North Birmingham. This trunk line service would provide bus service along a fixed route (U.S. 31), operating like a train in that services would be very frequent, reliable, and provide amenities to ensure rider choice.

Designate Downtown North Birmingham BJCTA stop as a Neighborhood Activity Center Transit Super Stop

The existing downtown North Birmingham stop offers:

- On-street location for multiple bus routes
- Bus pull-off to permit dwell time outside of travel lane
- Safe and easy transfer between buses especially for ADA customers
- Sidewalk

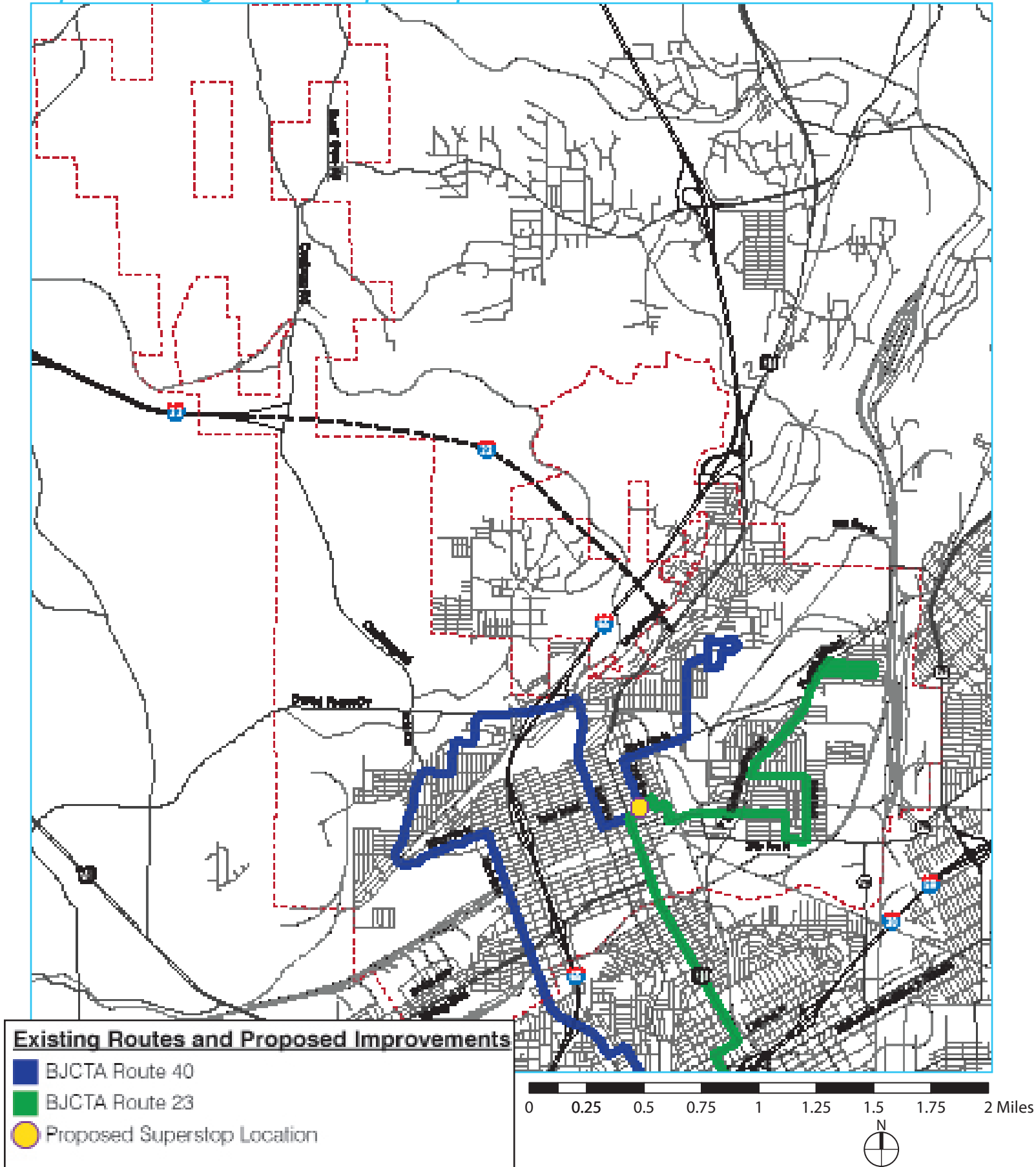
Improvements to this location will need to address

- ADA access
- Lighting
- Transit information (real time and graphics)

Improve Local Transit Stops and Amenities

Bus stops and shelters are recommended to be improved, upgraded to reflect the modern city that Birmingham is striving to become. Improvements to bus stops and shelters will help to change the character of the community. Visually appealing bus stops will offer transit riders a safe and physically comfortable wait experience. Transit stops also should include a higher level of design to provide additional comfort and amenities to encourage ridership. Additionally, transit technology provisions and other passenger amenities/enhancements such as phone applications, bike racks, and security cameras, should be incorporated into the improved transit stops in order to accommodate future transit services.

Map 4.3.3: Existing Transit and Proposed Improvements



STRATEGY T16: INVEST IN THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

ACTION T16-A: DEVELOP A CAPITAL MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM.

The construction and maintenance of key physical infrastructure is a core function of municipal government. Infrastructure and capital assets allow for the delivery of public services and the movement of goods across the city, both essential components in fostering the city's long-term economic growth. Like most U.S. cities, fiscal challenges are ever present. These fiscal challenges have, at times, resulted in Birmingham deferring investment in new and existing infrastructure.

The North Birmingham Community Framework Plan echoes the recommendations of the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan, and strongly encourages that the City of Birmingham develop a multi-year capital maintenance and infrastructure program that will prioritize infrastructure projects, identify potential funding sources, and provide a discussion of both the costs to maintain city assets, as well as the costs/impacts of deferred maintenance.

Infrastructure investment priorities specific to the North Birmingham Community should strive to promote equity, strengthen the economy, and promote public health and safety. As such, infrastructure proposed for funding in the city's capital maintenance and infrastructure plan be consistent with these planning priorities:

- Promote infill development and equity by rehabilitating, maintaining, and improving existing infrastructure
- Reuse previously developed and underutilized land, particularly in underserved areas
- Encourage efficient development patterns by ensuring that new infrastructure be located in an area appropriately planned for growth, served by adequate transportation and services minimizes ongoing costs to taxpayers.

ACTION T16-B: ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES.

Competing spending priorities and the need to maintain the Birmingham's long-term fiscal stability means the General Fund cannot afford to shoulder the costs of all potential infrastructure investments. Instead, the city must focus its limited infrastructure dollars on core priorities and responsibilities.

In order to advance many of the North Birmingham Community's transportation initiatives, the city has offered to partner with residents, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and the private sector on the development and implementation of some key projects. Initiatives such as the green streets and clean alleyway recommendations contained herein might be advanced as a partnership between the City of Birmingham's Public Works Department's horticulturalist, the Stormwater Management Department, and neighborhood associations and garden clubs.

Initiatives for main street development might be spearheaded by the local merchants association. Likewise, implementation of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley trail system might be advanced by a non-profit organization such as the Freshwater Land Trust.

4.4 Programmatic and Project Recommendations List

Roadway and Intersection Improvements

Corridor X/I-22 Extension

- 1 • Realign Erwin Dairy Drive/47th Avenue with Corridor X/I-22 Terminus @ U.S. 31
- Straighten and Widen Roadway
- Add Shoulders
- Add Median
- Widen Rail Underpass @ Cedar Court

Finley Boulevard Extension

- 2 • Extend Finley Blvd. from U.S. 31 to F. L. Shuttlesworth Drive
- Maxine Parker Memorial Bridge

Industrial Access Roadway

- 3 • New Industrial Access road between F. L. Shuttlesworth Drive and Vanderbilt Road generally following 35th Street North alignment.
- Roadway closes/connecting gaps in the network.
- Roadway is proposed to replace 34th Street North as primary freight route as it provides direct access to existing industrial users and removes trucks from the neighborhood.

Formalize 31st Avenue North between U.S. 31 and 27th Street

- 4 • Formalize existing intersections
- Modify existing parking lot access points
- Delineate street/travelway with striping and/or curbs
- Add sidewalk

U.S. 31 Traffic Calming and Access Management

- 5 • Add pavement edge striping
- Reduce lane width
- Add median for access management
- Eliminate/minimize direct driveway access to U.S. 31 (encourage access at side streets)
- Add planters to help screen pedestrians

Daniel Payne Drive

- 6 • Rebuild as a Industrial Street (Sidewalks)
- Resurface/Repave

Various Intersection Improvements

- 7 • Intersection Realignment: 35th Avenue @ Shuttlesworth Drive
- 8 • Intersection Reconfiguration: Add Roundabout – Shuttlesworth Drive @ 33rd Terrace

Green Streets

- 9 • 27th Court North between 31st Street North and 33rd Street North
- 27th Alley North
- 28th Avenue between 31st Street North and 33rd Street North
- 31st Street North between 27th Avenue North and 29th Avenue North
- 32nd Street North between 27th Avenue North and 29th Avenue North
- 33rd Street North between 27th Avenue North and 29th Avenue North

Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Improvements

Bike Lane

- 10 • 33rd Avenue between 19th Street North and 27th Street
- 24th Street between 26th Avenue and 39th Avenue
- 26th Avenue/11th Place North between Finley Avenue W and 24th Street North
- Finley Avenue West between Alabama Farmer's Market and 11th Place North

Shared Use Lane (Sharrows)

- 11 • 22nd Street between 33rd Avenue and 36th Avenue North
- 27th Street between 33rd Avenue into Norwood (Shared Bus/Bike)

Roadway Maintenance

Hooper City

- Roadway Repaving
- Roadway Edge Build-up
- Vegetation Maintenance (Cut Grass/Bushes)
- Clean Swales/Drainage

North Birmingham

- Roadway Repaving
- Sidewalk Maintenance
- ADA Compliance (curb ramps)

Collegeville

- Roadway Repaving
- Sidewalk Maintenance
- ADA Compliance (curb ramps/bus stops)

Reduce Roadway Infrastructure Burden

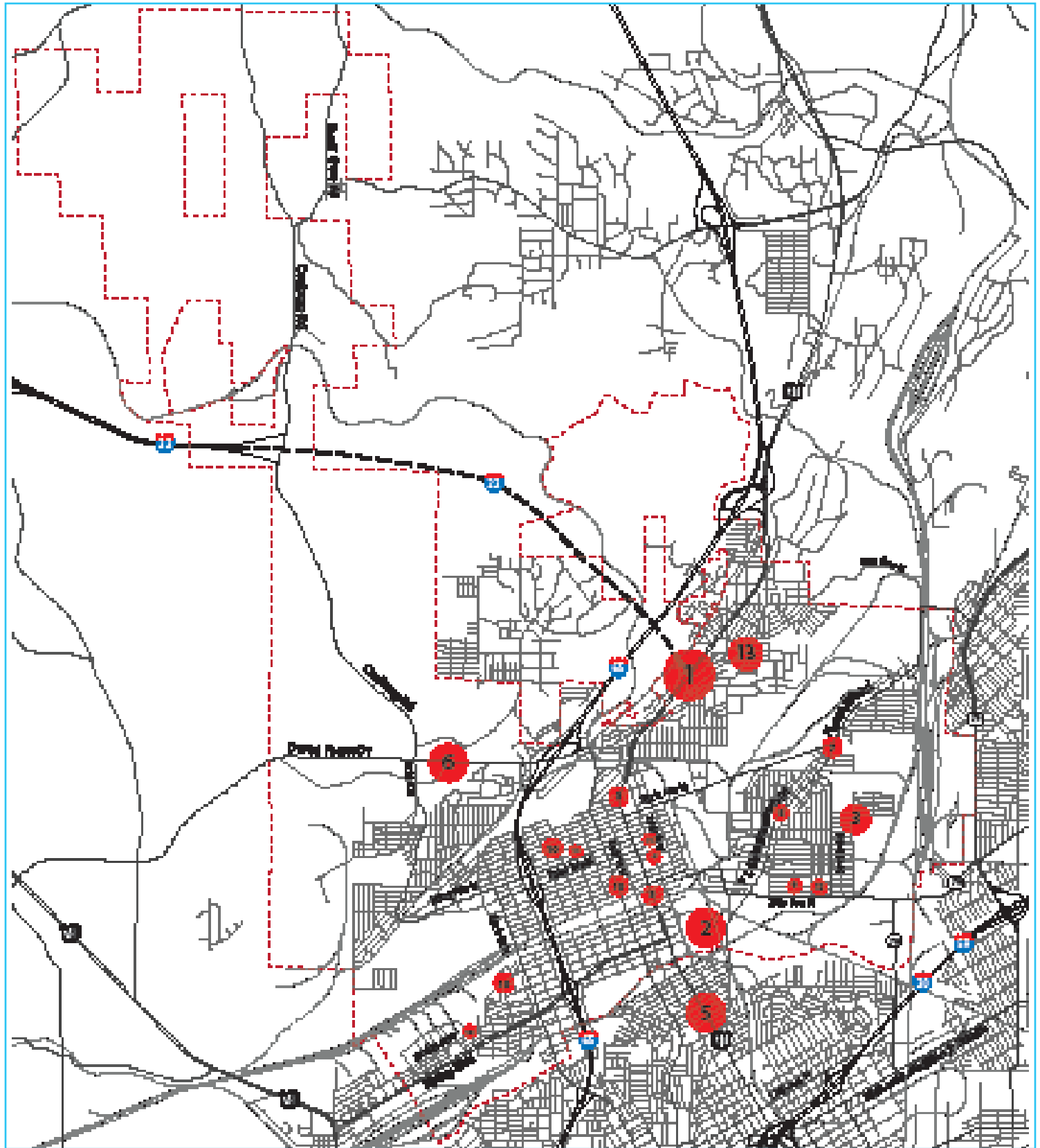
Collegeville: Abandon Roadways

- 12 • 27th Court North between 31st Street North and 32nd Street North (potential Green Street)
- 28th Avenue between 31st Street North and 32nd Street North (potential Green Street)

Fairmont: Abandon Roadways

- 13 • 30th Place North between 42nd Terrace and Cheek Road (make private road – 1 house)
- 30th Street/Ray Road between 47th Avenue North and 45th Avenue North (make private road – 1 house)
- 45th Avenue North between U.S. 31 and Cheek Road (make private road – 1 house)
- Fairmont Way between 43rd Avenue North and Dead End (no houses)

Map 4.3.4: Programmatic and Project Recommendations



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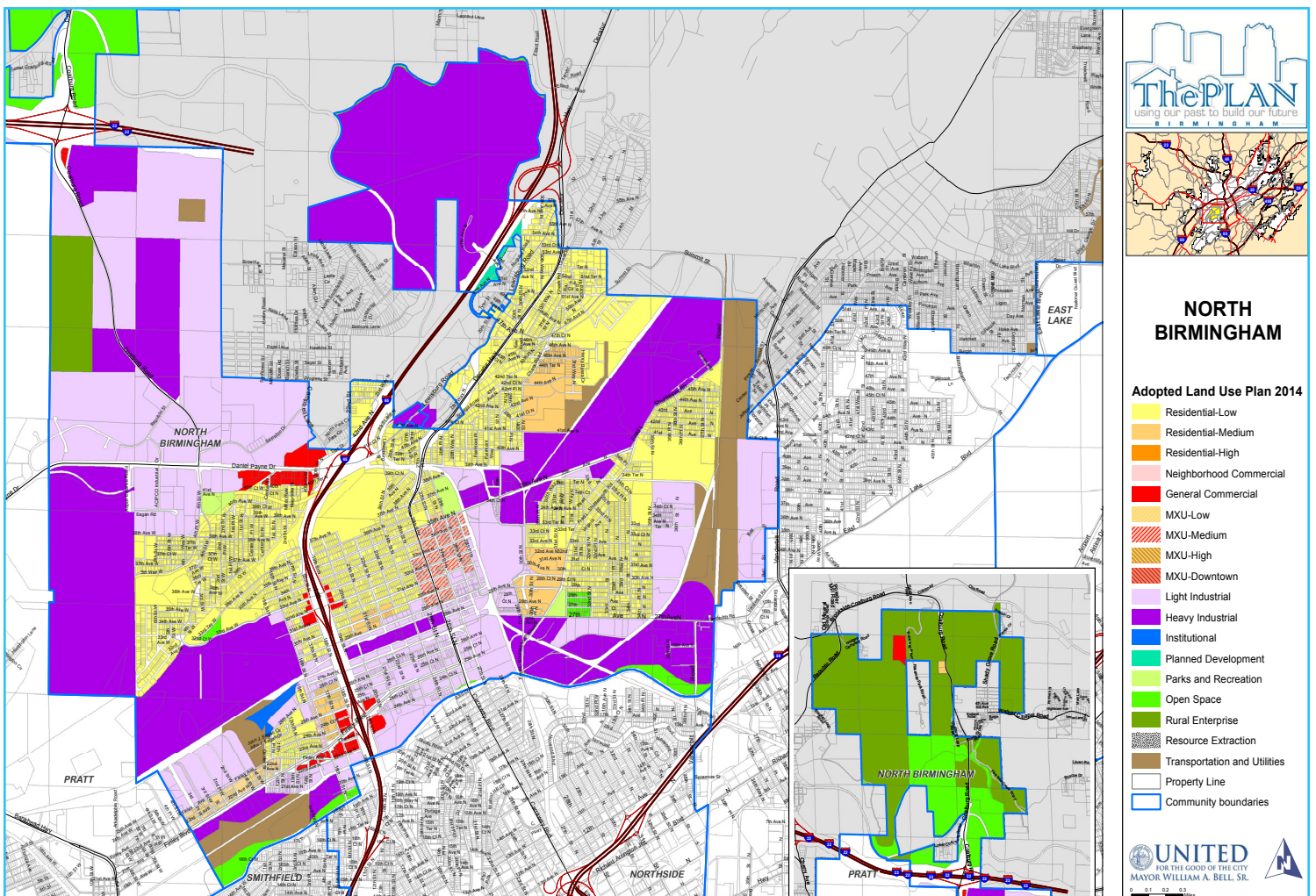
Future Land Use

5.1 Future Land Use Map Changes

Adopted in 2013, the City of Birmingham’s Comprehensive Plan sets forth a future land use map (Map 5.1 below) for the entire city, including the North Birmingham community. This framework plan proposes an amended future land use map (Map. 5.2 on the following page) based off land use and building surveys reported in the Existing Conditions document.

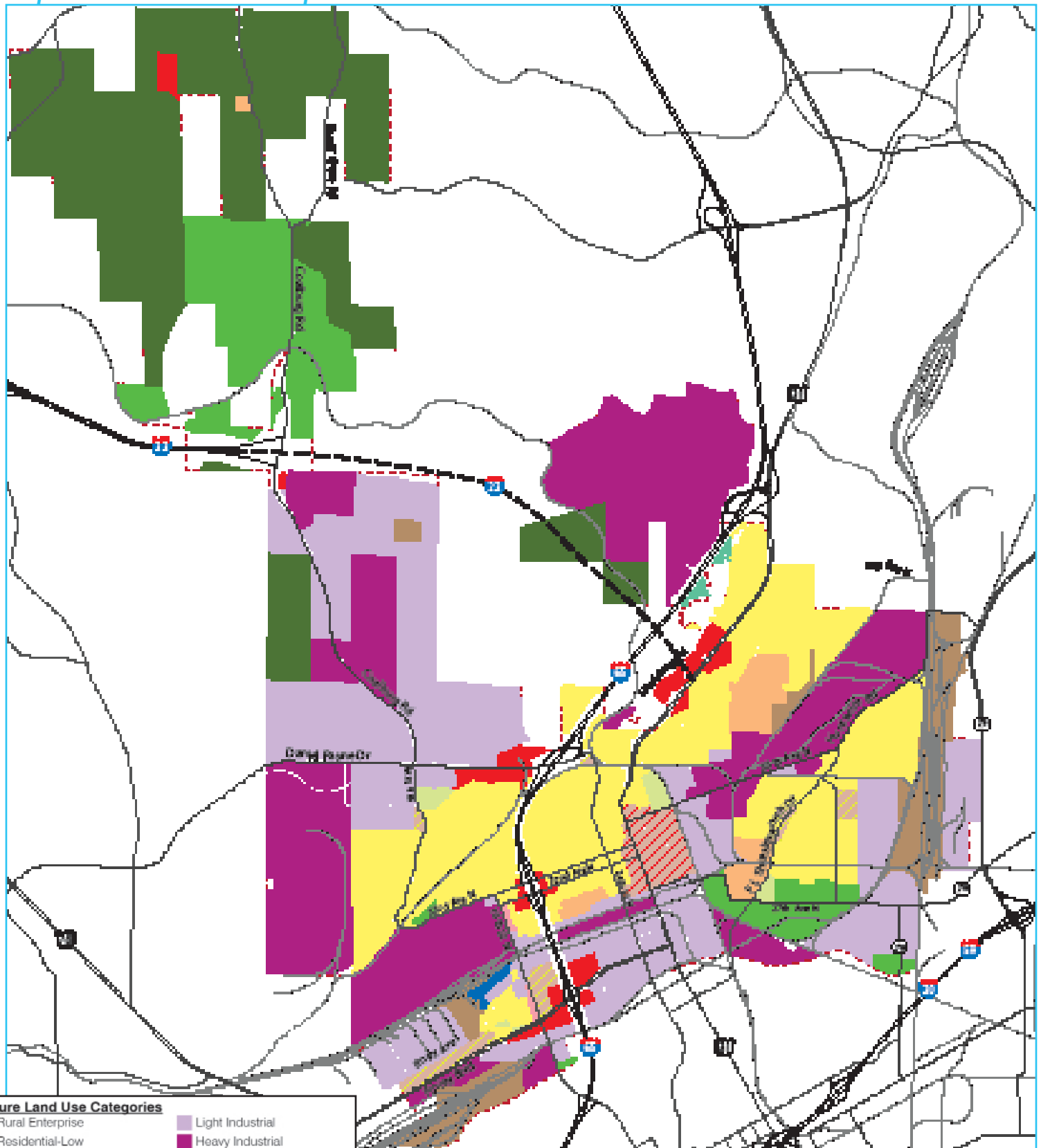
The most significant change between the two maps is the expansion of Mixed-Use Low and Mixed-Use Medium. This land use will provide more flexibility to attract future development and more complementary uses to sustain future development. The proposed future land use map also expands general commercial along major roads and expands open space around flood-prone properties. The enlarged general commercial areas along Highway 31 near the proposed I-22 extension exit and near I-65 near 26th Avenue North. With this designation, future land uses will suited to these high-volume thoroughfares. Tthe expansion of open space in the southern portion of the Collegeville neighborhood is a result of property buybacks in the floodplain and the approved Finely Boulevard extension to I-20/59. Open space in this area will minimize conflicts and create opportunities for improved buffers and stormwater management. Lastly, the properties previously designated as heavy industrial that were found as vacant were changed to light industrial. Map 5.3 identifies these changes.

Map 5.1 Adopted Future Land Use Map (2014)



Source: City of Birmingham

Map 5.2 Future Land Use Map

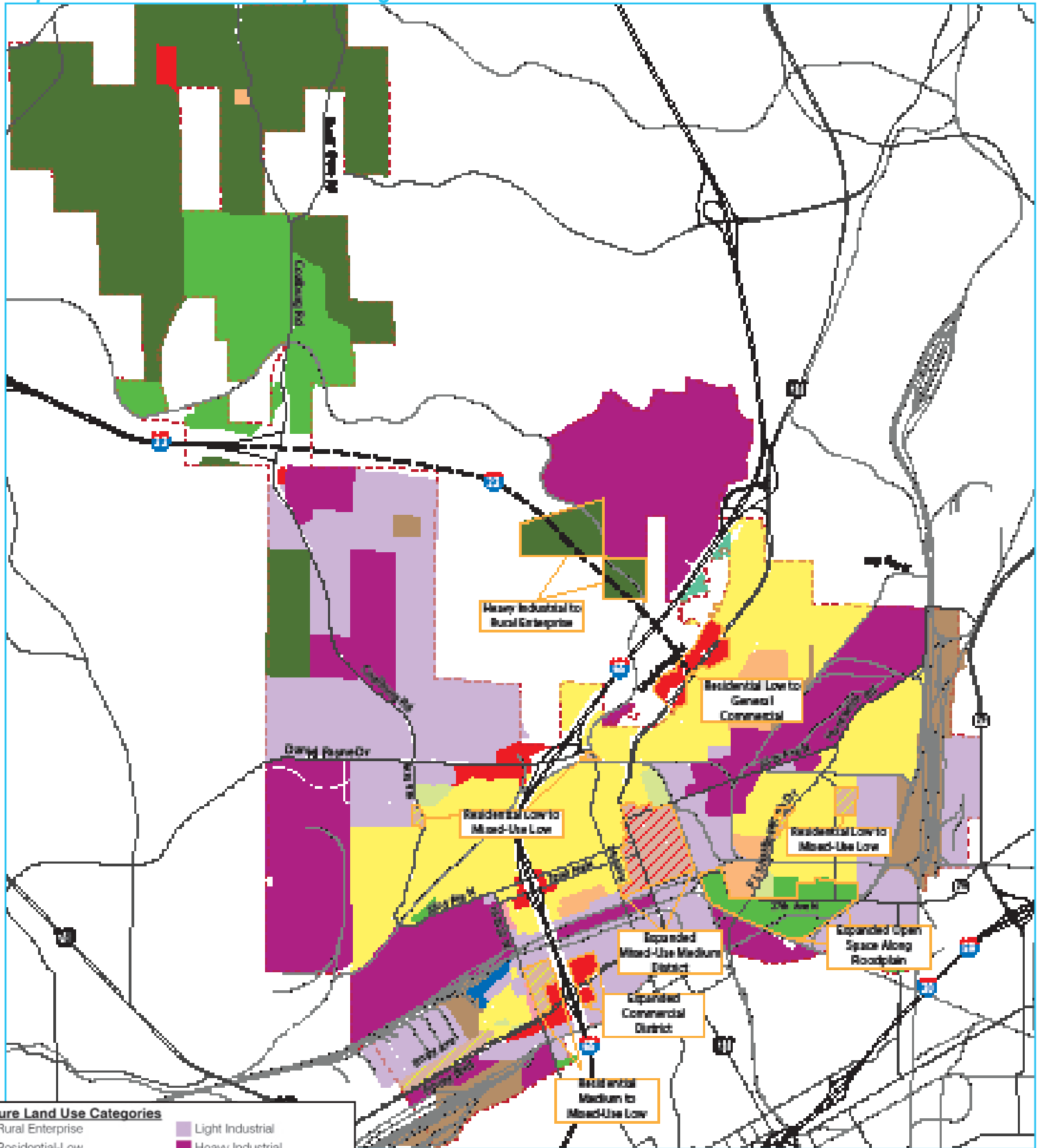


Future Land Use Categories	
Rural Enterprise	Light Industrial
Residential-Low	Heavy Industrial
Residential-Medium	Institutional
Neighborhood Commercial	Parks and Recreation
General Commercial	Open Space
Mixed-Use Low	Transportation/Utilities
Mixed-Use Medium	Planned Development

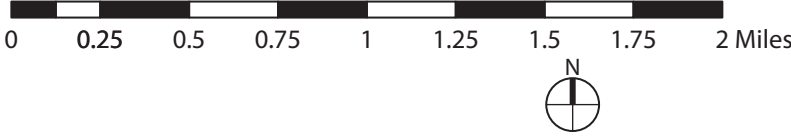
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Map 5.3 Future Land Use Map Changes



Future Land Use Categories	
	Rural Enterprise
	Residential-Low
	Residential-Medium
	Neighborhood Commercial
	General Commercial
	Mixed-Use Low
	Mixed-Use Medium
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Institutional
	Parks and Recreation
	Open Space
	Transportation/Utilities
	Planned Development



Implementation

6.1 Implementation

Following the plan's adoption, the implementation phase of this plan will begin. The City of Birmingham's Department of Planning, Engineering, and Permits will organize a group of stakeholders that will be responsible for carrying the plan forward. The department will provide the group with support.

The Implementation Table below lists the recommended action items, the relevant page number, an approximate timeline for the action's completion, and potential partnerships that could help implement the actions. The recommended action items are grouped by timeline, from in progress to long-term.

Term	Meaning
#	A numerical designation for each action item not related to priority
Recommended Action Item	A brief description of a project
Page	The page number(s) on which the recommended action item is described
Timeline	The potential completion date based on feasibility and priority
In progress	Implementation is ongoing
Short-term	0-5 years
Medium-term	5-10 years
Long-term	10+ years
Potential Partnerships	Public agencies, organizations, and stakeholders that have expressed interest in the action item or have relevant authority.

6.2 Implementation Table

#	Recommended Action Item	Page	Timeline	Potential Partnerships
1	Modernize the code enforcement and condemnation process	12	In progress	Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits inspectors; Dept. of Community Development inspectors
2	Update zoning to include mixed-use areas to benefit industrial and commercial districts	30, 36	In progress	Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits
3	Renovate Maclin Park and redevelop nearby lots with flood-resilient uses	20, 21	In Progress	Birmingham Land Bank Authority; Housing Authority of the Birmingham District; YMCA of Greater Birmingham; Dept. of Parks & Recreation; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
4	Analyze industrial & commercial development potential in the community	27, 34	Short-term	Office of Economic Development; Northern Birmingham Community Coalition; REV Birmingham; Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham; Non-profit consulting firm
5	Incorporate and encourage higher-quality design and operational standards for industrial uses	31	Short-term	Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits; Neighborhood Associations; Local businesses
6	Conduct maintenance and improvements in industrial districts to benefit businesses and residents	31	Short-term	Dept. of Public Works; Local businesses; Neighborhood associations
7	Create a public database of blighted and tax-delinquent properties	11	Short-term	Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits; Dept. of Information Management Services; Dept. of Community Development
8	Identify and assess brownfields in the community	28	Short-term	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management (ADEM); Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits; Jefferson County Health Action Partnership

#	Recommended Action Item	Page	Timeline	Potential Partnerships
9	Create a public database of brownfields in the community	29	Short-Term	Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits; Dept. of Information Management Services
10	Build a transit super stop in downtown North Birmingham and improve transit services	63-66	Short-term	Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority; Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
11	Designate truck routes to minimize truck traffic in neighborhoods	59, 60, 61	Short-Term	Alabama Department of Transportation; Dept. of Traffic Engineering
12	Use art projects, landscaping, and pop-up shops to energize commercial districts	37	Short-Term	REV Birmingham; Magic City Mural Collective; Property owners
13	Repair, renovate, and convert blighted and flood-prone properties into productive uses	13, 17	Medium-term	Dept. of Community Development; Birmingham Land Bank Authority; Neighborhood associations; Habitat for Humanity; U.S. Corps of Engineers
14	Remediate and redevelop brownfields	17	Medium-term	Office of Economic Development; Clinton Global Initiative; Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management
15	Attract suggested business types at identified sites	34, 35	Medium-term	Office of Economic Development
16	Improve the access for quality food in neighborhood stores	34, 36	Medium-Term	REV Birmingham; Alabama Farmer's Market; Neighborhood grocery and corner stores
17	Use traffic calming techniques to enhance livability and strengthen truck routing	60	Medium-term	Alabama Department of Transportation; Dept. of Traffic Engineering
18	Implement an Alleyway Cleanup Program	62, 63	Medium-term	Dept. of Public Works; Neighborhood associations; Local businesses
19	Develop green streets	62	Medium-term	Dept. of Traffic Engineering
20	Develop complete streets using context zones	44-58	Long-term	Dept. of Traffic Engineering; Alabama Dept. of Transportation; Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
21	Develop a Capital Maintenance and Infrastructure Program	67	Long-term	Dept. of Planning, Engineering, and Permits; Alabama Dept. of Transportation; Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
22	Promote and execute the redevelopment of publicly owned, vacant facilities and other high-opportunity sites	19, 20, 22	Long-Term	Birmingham Board of Education; Jefferson County Board of Health; Higher education institutions; Office of Economic Development; Local Initiatives Support Coalition; Local hospitals; Alethia House
23	Develop a locally serving industrial incubator and workforce development on the former U.S. Pipe & Foundry site	32	Long-term	Office of Economic Development; Alabama Dept. of Commerce; Higher education institutions; Community Development Block Grant for incubators National Network for Manufacturing Innovation; Alabama Industrial Development Training division; Alabama Technology Network
24	Establish a food & entertainment district in the Acipco-Finley neighborhood	26, 36	Long-term	Alabama Farmer's Market; Alabama's Farmer's Market Authority; Local restaurants; REV Birmingham
25	Build out the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System	42, 43, 44	Long-term	Freshwater Land Trust; Dept. of Traffic Engineering; Alabama Dept. of Transportation