

DRAFT NORTHSIDE/SOUTHSIDE FRAMEWORK PLAN

12TH AVENUE NORTH SOA

SLOSS INDUSTRIAL ARTS SOA

CITY CENTER MASTER PLAN SOAS

APPENDIX C: STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM |
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM

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Draft | June 2020



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST
MAYOR RANDALL L. WOODFIN



This project was supported by funding from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Building Communities Program, and the City of Birmingham. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Birmingham MPO or the RPCGB.

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Steel art as gateway

Supergraphic wayfinding

**Inter
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section
printing

1 | Overview

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- What is a Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA)?
- Comprehensive Plan Connection

*Left: Proposed Improvements at Sloss Furnace Entrance, see Page 24 for more details
(Source: Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects)*

What is a Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA)?

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

The Northside Southside Framework Area has eight Strategic Opportunity Areas - two were identified as a part of this Framework Plan and six were identified as a part of the City Center Master Plan. The eight Strategic Opportunity Areas are listed below:

Northside Southside Framework Plan:

1. 12th Avenue North Corridor
2. Sloss Industrial Arts Area

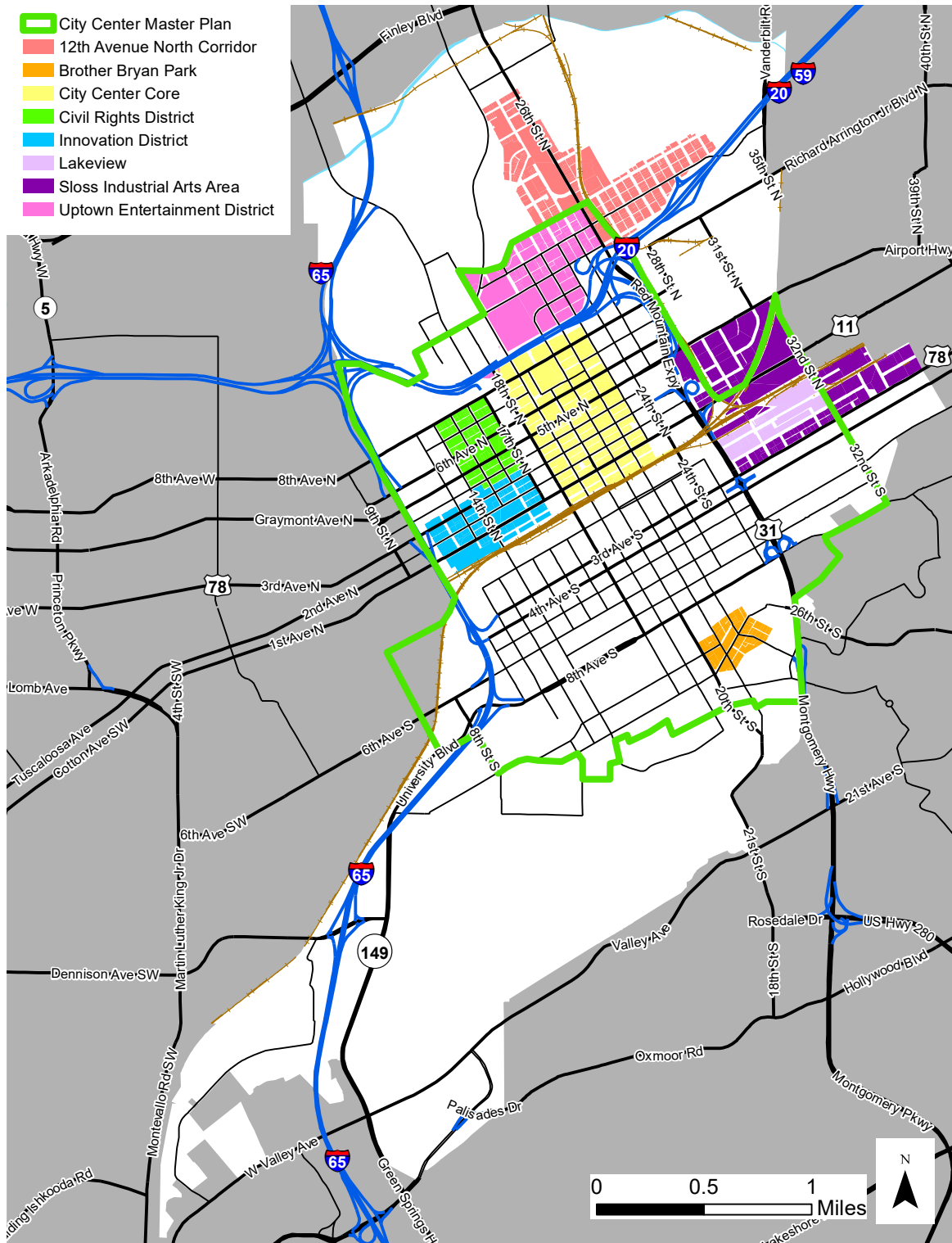
City Center Master Plan:

1. Brother Bryan Park
2. City Center Core
3. Civil Rights District
4. Innovation District
5. Lakeview
6. Uptown

Connection to the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan

The Birmingham Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2014 and goes to great lengths to recommend the identification and prioritization of Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs). The **Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 7.8)** recommends areas as SOAs if they have “market potential, presence of employment centers, location in relation to current and future plans for transit improvements, momentum from existing activities, and good urban form”. Because of their potential impact on their surrounding communities, the **Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 7.12-7.16)** recommends prioritizing transit-oriented development, economic incentives, and infrastructure in SOAs. Thus, this appendix recommends several ways to make SOAs a priority both in this appendix and in the Northside Southside Framework Plan.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS MAP







2 | Northside Southside Framework Plan Strategic Opportunity Areas

Contents

- 12th Avenue North Corridor
- Sloss Industrial Arts Area

*Left: Proposed Jones Valley Trail Extension, see Page 34 for more details
(Source: Freshwater Land Trust and Goodwyn Mills Cawood)*

12th Avenue North Corridor

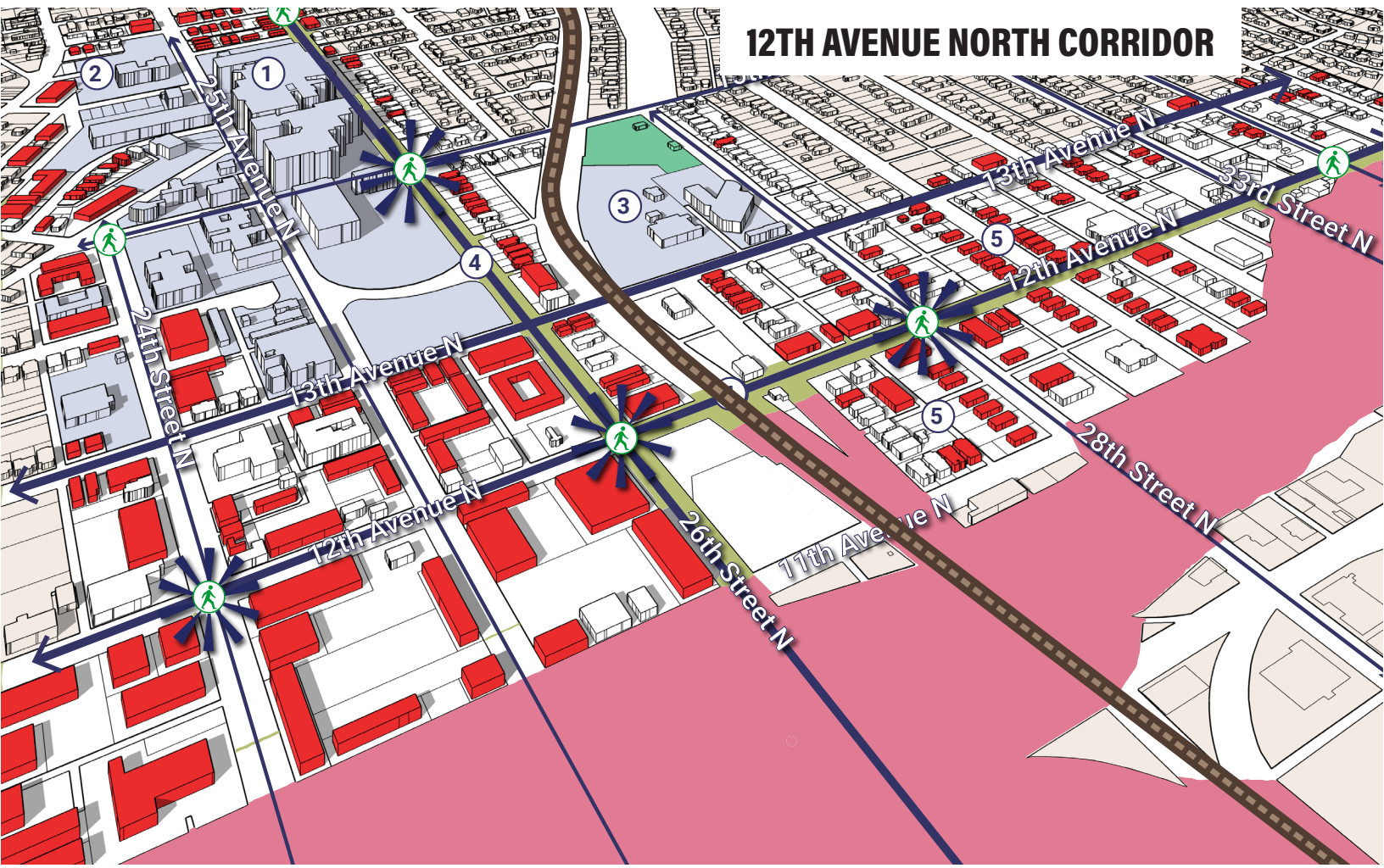
Existing Conditions

The 12th Avenue North Corridor Strategic Opportunity Area is located north of Interstate 59/20 and features a concentration of deteriorated and vacant sites. The corridor stretches into the Norwood and Druid Hill neighborhoods and includes the abandoned Carraway Memorial Hospital, vacant commercial sites along 12th Avenue North, and the charming Norwood Park and Community Center. The corridor has easy access to Interstate 59/20, Uptown Entertainment District, the BJCC, the City Center, and historic neighborhoods presently undergoing revitalization.

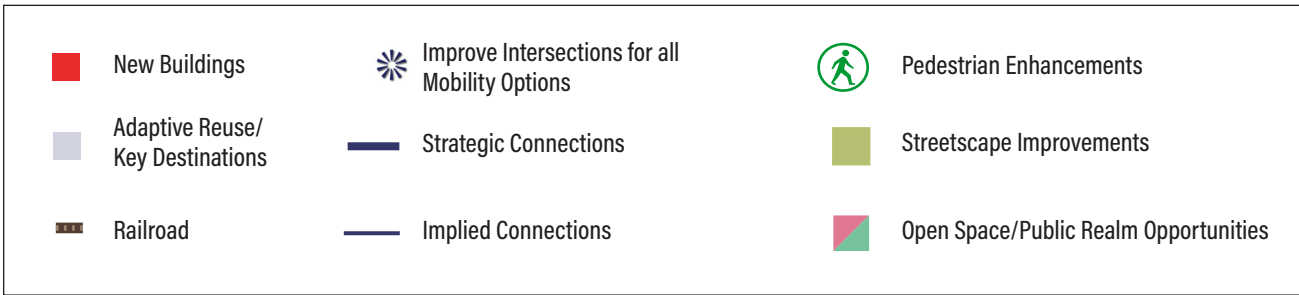
Over the next five years, this district is anticipated to grow and develop substantially. Several developments are already in the pipeline, most notably are the proposed redevelopment of the old Carraway Memorial Hospital campus into a vibrant mixed-use center, the new Protective Life Stadium, and the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center (BJCC) Phase II expansion. Moreover, the 12th Avenue North Corridor is the primary gateway to Birmingham's oldest neighborhoods as well as the City Center, with over 7,300 cars utilizing it to enter and exit the Downtown/City Center area per day. The Corridor was selected as a SOA due to its anticipated growth and redevelopment, its proximity to the neighborhoods in the Northside community, and its potential to connect residents to the Downtown/City Center. This appendix identifies five key district initiatives, listed below, to encourage the revitalization of the 12th Avenue North Corridor.

Key District Initiatives

- 1 Continue to support the proposed Carraway campus redevelopment that is planned to host a variety of housing types, a hotel, several entertainment venues, retail and dining spaces, and dedicated office, medical, and technology spaces.
- 2 Work with the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District to convert the F.D. McArthur School into a mixed-income, mixed-use development.
- 3 Support the redevelopment opportunities for Kirby Middle School and the Armory in Norwood.
- 4 Improve multi-modal connections along 12th Avenue North and 26th Street North/ U.S. 31.
- 5 Construct medium-density residential and neighborhood-scale commercial opportunities on vacant and under-utilized land along 11th Avenue North and 12th Avenue North to buffer the Uptown Entertainment District from the Norwood neighborhood to the north.



12TH AVENUE NORTH CORRIDOR





Carraway Hospital Campus - existing photos

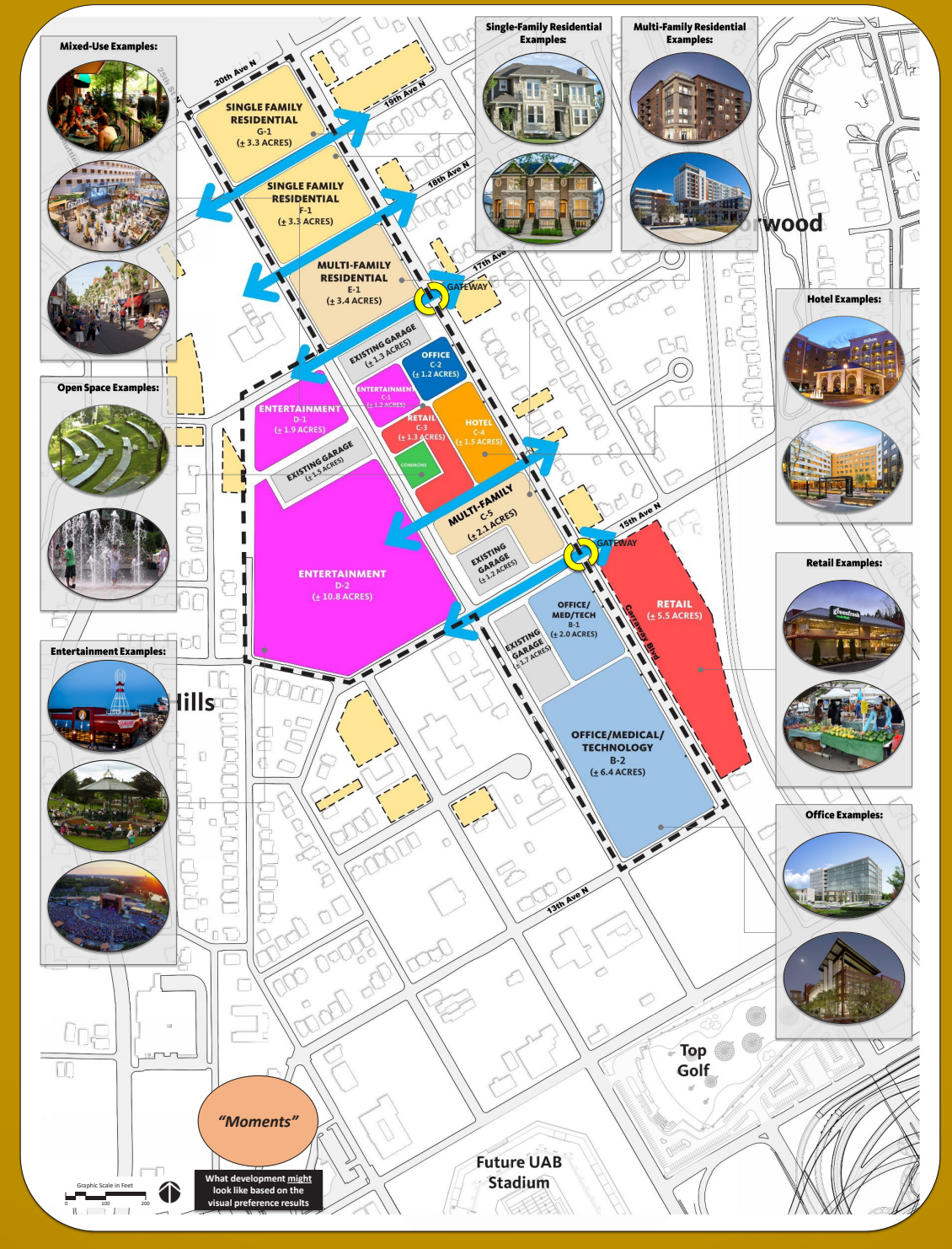
Key District Initiatives

Continue to support the proposed Carraway campus redevelopment that is planned to host a variety of housing types, a hotel, several entertainment venues, retail and dining spaces, and dedicated office, medical, and technology spaces.

In September 2018, Corporate Realty mailed more than 16,000 postcards to residents and property owners inviting them to provide feedback about the site at a public open house, and over 300 people attended. Many residents were interested in affordable, family-style restaurants, grocery stores, farmer markets, and single and multifamily homes. Currently, the proposed site plan now includes 7.2 acres of residential space, 30.8 acres of retail, dining and hotel space, and 9.3 acres of business space. In addition, the plan also includes connecting Carraway Boulevard to 25th Street North via 15th Avenue North. In order to make this plan a reality, the hospital structures will be demolished due to years of vandalism and exposure to the elements. However, the parking decks are still in good shape and will be reused for the new development. This project is expected to start in Summer 2020 and will be completed in phases over the next few years.

This proposed development is anticipated to generate significant growth and redevelopment for the Druid Hills, Evergreen, and Norwood neighborhoods. Already, property values have increased near the site and the value of many residential properties in the neighborhood have more than doubled in the last year. To facilitate incentives, the City expanded the boundaries of the Urban Renewal District to include the boundaries of this proposed project. The City should continue to support this project and help the developer coordinate as much as possible with the adjacent neighborhoods.

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CARRAWAY HOSPITAL



(Source: Corporate Realty and Gensler)

Work with the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District to convert the F.D. McArthur School into a mixed-income, mixed-use development.

Located on the northwest corner of 17th Avenue North and 25th Street North in Druid Hills sits the F.D. McArthur Elementary School. Built in 1910, the school was closed in May 1997 due to budget cuts and dwindling enrollment. In 2004, the City of Birmingham purchased the property to bank or hold land for future residential use. Since then, many commercial and residential infill projects have been designed and proposed, most notably the proposed redevelopment of the Carraway Memorial Hospital campus (see **pages 8-9**). Encompassing 5 acres, with high visibility and multiple access points, the school's position between the Druid Hills and Norwood neighborhoods makes it an ideal location for residential uses, medical or health services, childcare services, civic uses, or a combination of compatible uses. To promote its redevelopment, the City should explore a partnership with a developer in which the City bears the burden for demolition as it is likely that the costs of updating the building would be too high to warrant reusing it. In exchange, a developer could execute a plan for new construction supported by the community that prioritizes affordable housing. The highest and best use for the site will depend most on the redevelopment of the Carraway Hospital site.



F.D. McArthur Elementary School



Kirby Middle School

Support the redevelopment opportunities for Kirby Middle School and the Armory in Norwood.

Kirby Middle School is adjacent to the Norwood Park and Community Center and within walking distance to Topgolf, the Uptown Entertainment District, and the Carraway campus. Due to its location, Kirby Middle School is prime for redevelopment.

Kirby Middle School is adjacent to the Norwood Community Center and within walking distance to Top Golf, the Uptown Entertainment District, and the Carraway Memorial Hospital proposed redevelopment site. Due to its location, Kirby Middle School is prime for redevelopment. The City of Birmingham should work with a private developer to assess the feasibility of repurposing the existing school building or building new infrastructure to transform the site into a new mixed use development, which could include residential units in the form of townhomes and quadplexes, office space, and retail space. The development should support the growth of the surrounding community, fit in seamlessly with the adjacent residential neighborhood, and incorporate Norwood Park and the community center. The adjacency of the greenspace is an important amenity for the neighborhood and can play a key role in the successful redevelopment of the adjacent properties.



Left: Riverview at Clendenin School (Source: AU Associates)

Case Study:

Riverview at Clendenin School, Clendenin West Virginia

Across the country, developers are re-purposing abandoned schools into affordable housing. Built in 1912, the Clendenin School, located in Clendenin, West Virginia, is such an example. Adapted into affordable housing for seniors, the Riverview at Clendenin School, as it is now known, provides 18 units for seniors and serves as a home for an expanded health clinic, which allows seniors to age in place.

“Schools lend themselves well to housing because they have large windows to create beautiful light-filled spaces with tall ceilings,” says Holly Wiedemann, president of Lexington, Kentucky–based AU Associates, the developer behind Riverview at Clendenin School. “These are places that have a lot of meaning and value to people who live in the communities; they went to school there, their children went to school there, they taught there.”

The development has provided an economic spark to the community – the building supplies new housing, and the Cabin Creek Health Systems Clinic offers good jobs drawing people from the surrounding communities.

To make this project a reality, AU Associates assembled \$5.4 million dollars, including \$2.7 million in federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, \$1.2 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development program, \$400,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services, and \$1 million from state and federal historic tax credits (low-income housing tax credits [LIHTCs] are the most commonly used financing).

Note: Case study adapted from “[School Conversions Breathe Life Into Affordable Housing](#),” by Donna Kimura, 2012, Multifamily Executive.

Improve multi-modal connections along 12th Avenue North and 26th Street North/ U.S. 31.

In 2019 there were 1,995 households (6,680 people) within a 10-minute, or half-mile walk of the 12th Avenue North Strategic Opportunity Area, 12th Avenue North, and 26th Street/ U.S. 31. While most of the streets in the 12th Avenue North SOA include sidewalks, most are in poor condition, and there is a lack of safe pedestrian connections southward along 26th Street North/ U.S. 31 to the Uptown Entertainment District and Downtown Birmingham. This is also the case for people living in the residential areas surrounding 12th Avenue North who are trying to travel by foot to enjoy the various businesses and entertainment destinations nearby.

The lack of quality pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian crossing signals, has created a safety hazard for those people who try and walk to businesses along 12th Avenue North and 26th Street North/ U.S. 31, or for those people who simply do not have reliable access to an automobile and must cross the five lanes along 26th Street North/ U.S. 31 to get to the Uptown Entertainment District and Downtown Birmingham. During the public input process of this plan, this need and desire to improve pedestrian access and safety along 12th Avenue North and 26th Street North/ U.S. 31 was repeatedly noted and is a high priority to the City.

Already, the City has commissioned detailed design and engineering drawings that illustrate the following proposed improvements along 12th Avenue North: ADA accessible sidewalks, dedicated bicycle lanes, improved landscaping and street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and a new traffic alignment. This plan recommends that these improvements be implemented as funding becomes available.

Similar to 12th Avenue North, citizens have expressed a great desire to see visual improvements along 26th Street North/ U.S. 31. It is recommended that the City develop a set of streetscape improvements along 26th Street North/ U.S. 31 that will positively contribute to the overall image and identity for the corridor and that can help to transform the corridor from an exclusively automobile-oriented highway to one that is more accommodating to all users. Attractive and inviting streetscapes that provide a safe environment for pedestrians can also help spur local economic activity. In addition, a variety of materials can be used to help differentiate pedestrian zones and call attention to driveway openings, crosswalks, and other areas of vehicle conflict.

Streetscape improvements could include a variety of amenities including:

- » Repairing existing sidewalks / pedestrian infrastructure to ensure ADA accessibility
- » Providing dedicated bicycle infrastructure
- » Providing safe pedestrian crosswalks at the intersections of 26th Street North/ U.S. 31 at 17th Avenue North, 16th Avenue North, 15th Avenue North, 12th Avenue North, 11th Avenue North, and under the Interstate 59/20 bridge
- » Improving street lighting at both the roadway and pedestrian scales (i.e decorative / ornamental lamp posts)
- » Improving the streetscape to include:
 - Landscaping / planting selections
 - Street furnishings at appropriate intervals
 - New and modified traffic signals
 - Wayfinding / informational signage / branding



12th Avenue North at 31st Street North (Source: Google)



26th Street / U.S. 31 at 18th Avenue North (Source: Google)



Duplex (Source: Missing Middle Housing)



Attached Townhomes (Source: Missing Middle Housing)



Fourplex (Source: Missing Middle Housing)

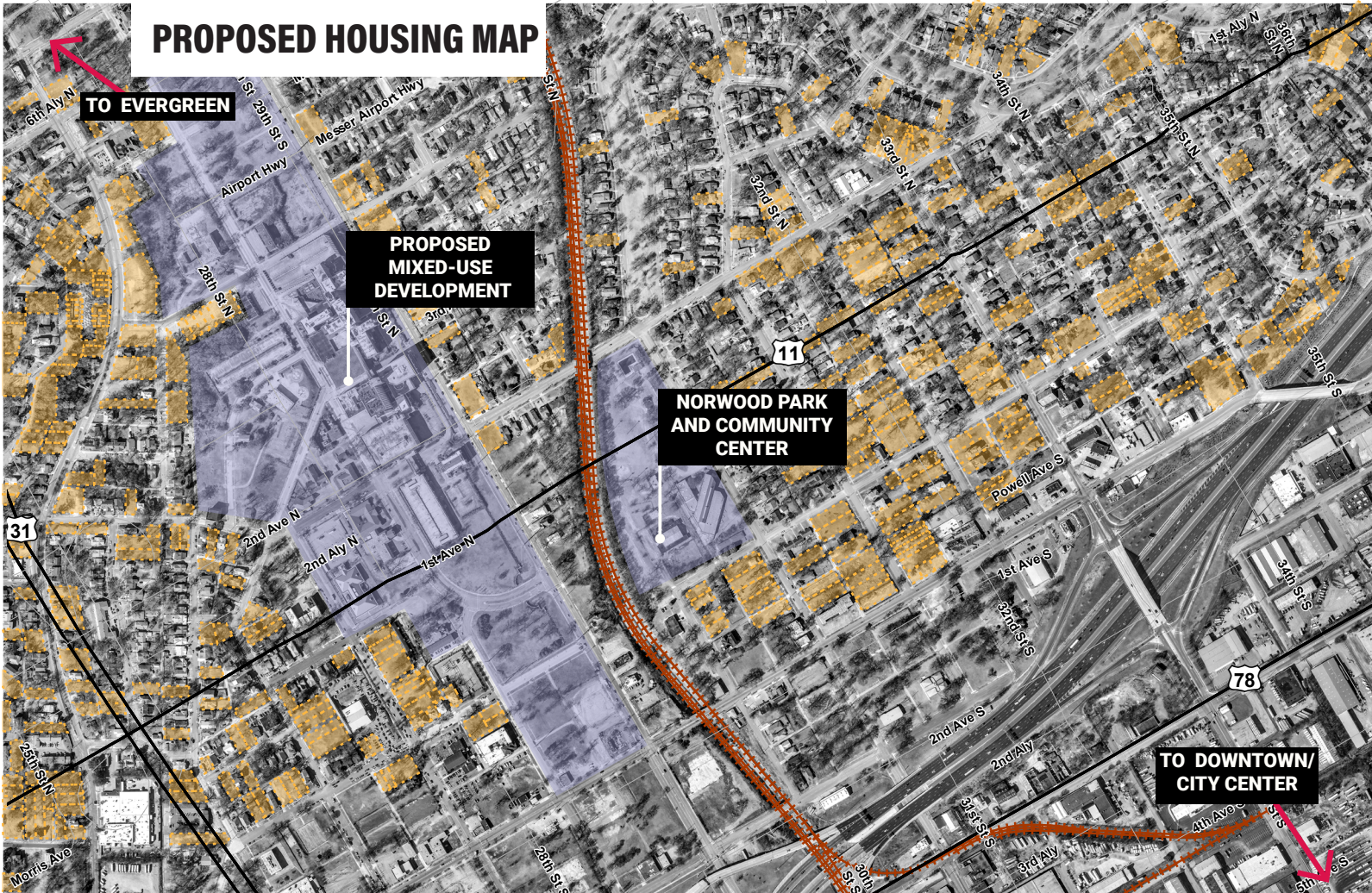


Attached Townhomes (Source: Missing Middle Housing)

Construct medium-density residential and neighborhood-scale commercial opportunities on vacant and under-utilized land along 11th Avenue North and 12th Avenue North to buffer the Uptown Entertainment District from the Norwood neighborhood to the north.

Between 11th Avenue North and 12th Avenue North there are almost 60 properties that are considered dilapidated or vacant according to the 2018 Property Condition Inventory (see **Figure 2.14** on **Page 47** of **Appendix A: Existing Conditions Document**), and those properties are opportunities for future redevelopment. Future development should consider a mix of uses and building typologies, including medium density housing to replace some of the residential population that has been displaced in the area, which can help recreate a lively neighborhood. Redevelopment of existing buildings and infill around existing single-family homes are options in addition to new construction. Examples of potential medium density housing types are provided above.

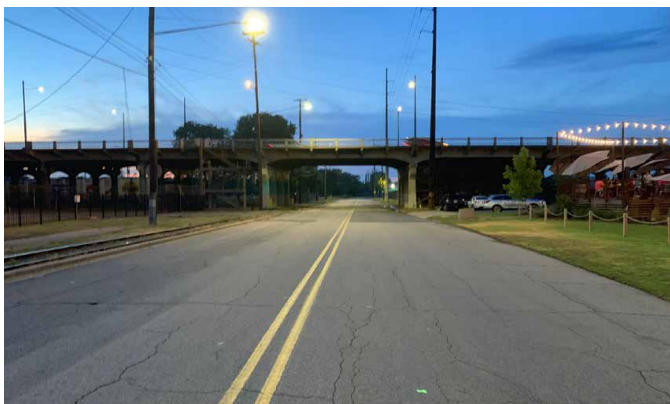
PROPOSED HOUSING MAP



Sloss Industrial Arts Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA)

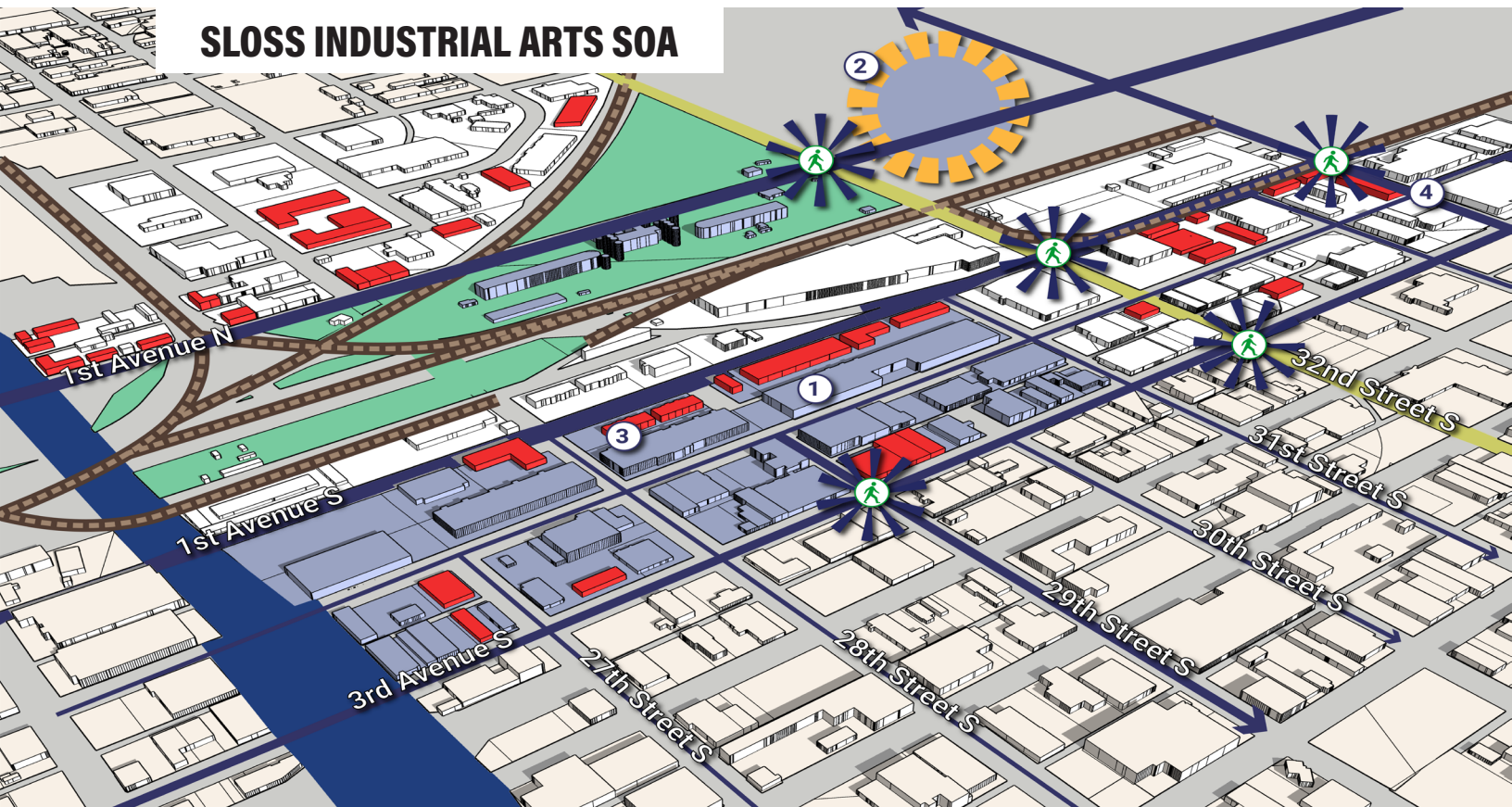
Existing Conditions












The Sloss Industrial Arts Strategic Opportunity Area is bounded by Messer Airport Highway to the north, 3rd Avenue South to the south, 35th Street South to the east, and U.S. 31 to the west. Historically, most of the buildings in this SOA were erected to serve one of two functions: warehousing and distribution or light manufacturing and processing. While these two functions still exist, today the area's significance is based on commerce and arts/design. In fact, over 30 design-oriented businesses are concentrated in the district today, most of which are in the Pepper Place district surrounding 2nd and 3rd Avenues South. In addition to the concentration of art and design businesses, 2nd Avenue South is soon to become a complete street - the project will include street lighting upgrades, new sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, bioretention plant beds, and improved pedestrian street crossings. The project extends along 2nd Avenue South from US Highway 31 to 32nd Street South. This project will be transformative for the district and further support the Saturday farmers market that takes place in the parking lot of the Dr. Pepper building that regularly draws thousands of people to support local farmer's and businesses. This area was selected as a SOA because it is experiencing rapid growth and pressure to evolve from its industrial past into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood that retains its industrial heritage and existing businesses, but expands to include arts and entertainment venues, service retail and restaurants, and new residential uses. To encourage the redevelopment of the area this appendix identifies four key district initiatives listed on **page 17**.



**envisioning an inclusive,
accessible, active, and beautiful
Sloss Industrial Arts District**

Existing Conditions (Source: Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects)



	New Buildings		Improve Intersections for all Mobility Options		Streetscape Improvements
	Key Destinations		Strategic Connections		Open Space/Public Realm Opportunities
	Railroad		Implied Connections		Key Destinations - Back Forty, Sloss Docks, Proposed Mixed-use Development (outside of Framework Area)
	U.S. 31		Pedestrian Enhancements		

Key District Initiatives

- 1** Partner with property owners and existing businesses to build on the area's reputation as a design and industrial district.
- 2** Encourage new medium-density residential uses in the Sloss Industrial Arts Strategic Opportunity Area.
- 3** Make 32nd Street South a great street and connect activity and development from Sloss Furnace to Pepper Place and then into the Lakeview District.
- 4** Support the proposed Jones Valley Trail extension from 1st Avenue South at 32nd Street to 2nd Avenue South at 41st Street South.

Partner with property owners and existing businesses to build on the area’s reputation as a design and industrial district.

The Sloss Industrial Arts SOA bleeds into several other “districts” and includes portions of Lakeview, Pepper Place, and Avondale. These areas have the reputation as the City’s design and industrial epicenter. The concentration of design and creative businesses, service and retail establishments, restaurants, and light industrial uses make the district truly unique. This plan recommends that a stakeholder committee be formed to further capitalize on its reputation by conducting a branding and wayfinding master plan.

Branding and wayfinding master plans can help to create a cohesive identity for the area that can be implemented in conjunction with a comprehensive wayfinding signage program and marketing plan. The success of any branding and wayfinding plan is the ability to communicate a memorable, compelling, understandable, and authentic story about the district. Wayfinding helps direct residents and visitors to destinations within the district, creates an emotional bond with residents and visitors, and provides jurisdictional representatives with a solid foundation for marketing and promotion. Marketing programs communicate the district’s story, illustrating what makes the district unique, and what makes it a great place to experience.

Marketing should be clear – where does the district begin and end? Are Lakeview, Pepper Place, and Avondale a part of the district, or are they their own unique places? Do the leaders of all three districts have distinct visions and missions, or do the visions align, and would they be better communicated if the districts were solidified into one new district? What should the district be named? Is the Sloss Industrial Arts Area appropriate, or does the Lakeview District have more name recognition and, if so, should its boundaries be expanded to include the Sloss Industrial Arts SOA? All these questions and more should be ironed out with the stakeholder committee and tested with the public. The stakeholder committee should be made up of representatives from large institutions, the City, large property owners, various businesses owners, residents, and community leaders. Once formed, the stakeholder committee should work with REV Birmingham, who is in the process of rebranding the Innovation District to “The Switch”, to understand the steps and processes of successfully branding and marketing a district.



Visualization of M2, a 70,000 SF industrial space thoughtfully redesigned for a mix of workplace uses: office, studios, warehousing, light manufacturing and production (Source: M2 Birmingham)



Resident artist at Sloss Furnace (Source: Sloss Metal Arts)



Existing Wayfinding at Pepper Place (Source: Sloss Real Estate)

Case Study:

Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment District

Located in Huntsville, Alabama, the Lowe Mill ARTS and Entertainment District is one of the most successful adaptive reuse projects in the State of Alabama. The district is anchored by the Lowe Mill Arts and Entertainment Center, which is the largest private and independent arts center in the United States. With a focus on visual arts, the historic cotton mill building known as “the Mill”, has been redeveloped into 148 working studios for over 200 artists and makers, six fine art galleries, a multi-use theatre, and performance venues. The Mill serves as a space for artists to create, learn, and collaborate. Studio spaces line the hallways, and visitors can openly explore the Mill and artist spaces where they can shop and learn about the artists and their works. In addition to working artists, Lowe Mill is home to several of North Alabama’s premiere entertainment festivals including Concerts on the Dock, the world’s longest running Cigar Box Guitar Festival, and more. This historic arts center provides the community - both in and outside the Mill - with a space to gain knowledge and hands-on experience in various art mediums and forms, a place to fully immerse in an originaive environment, ultimately making arts, entertainment, and culture accessible to those who visit this vibrant facility.

Blocks away from Lowe Mill ARTS and Entertainment is the Huntsville West co-working space and business incubator, which is a re-purposed elementary school where entrepreneurs, freelancers, and remote workers share resources, collaborate, and innovate. Huntsville West features a variety of shared and dedicated workstations, private offices, lounges, meeting rooms, and an array of resources to support their members. In addition to the Huntsville West technology launchpad, the district also offers an eclectic array of businesses such as Bandito Burrito, Rock N Roll Sushi, Dolce Pan Bakery, Earth & Stone Wood Fired Pizza, Ale’s Kitchen, The Bar at 805, Hops N Guac, and four local craft breweries: Yellowhammer, Straight to Ale, InnerSpace Brewing, and Salty Nut.

For those that want to live near the fun, the Lowe Mill area is also home to a variety of housing types including funky cottages ready for renovation, apartments, and live-work units.



Lowe Mill ARTS and Entertainment Center (Source: City of Huntsville)



Concerts on the Dock (Source: Lowe Mill ARTS and Entertainment)



Single-family home for sale within the district (Source: Capstone Realty)



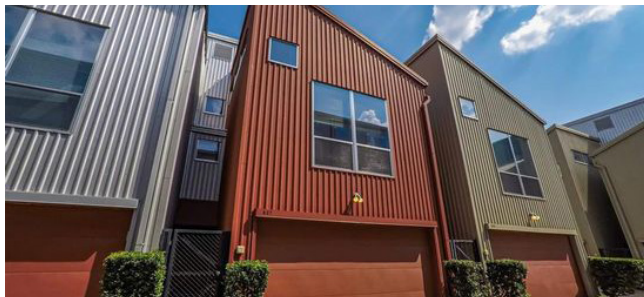
Seaboard Yard Townhomes, 1st Avenue South



Urban Townhomes, Greenville South Carolina (Source: Darrohn Engineering)



Live on Fifth Lofts, 5th Avenue South



Urban Townhomes, Houston TX (Source: Zillow)

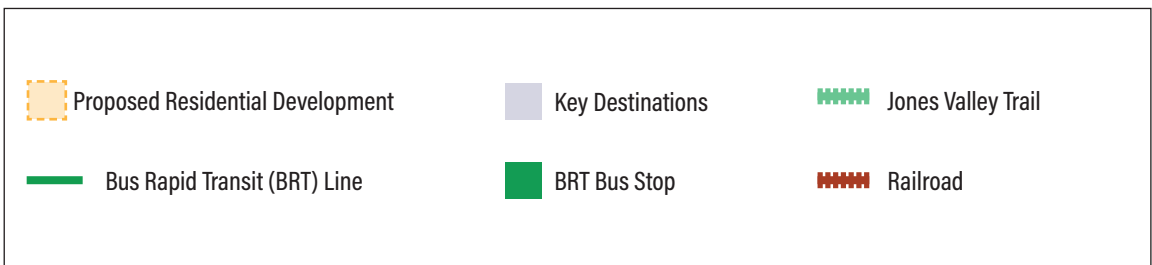
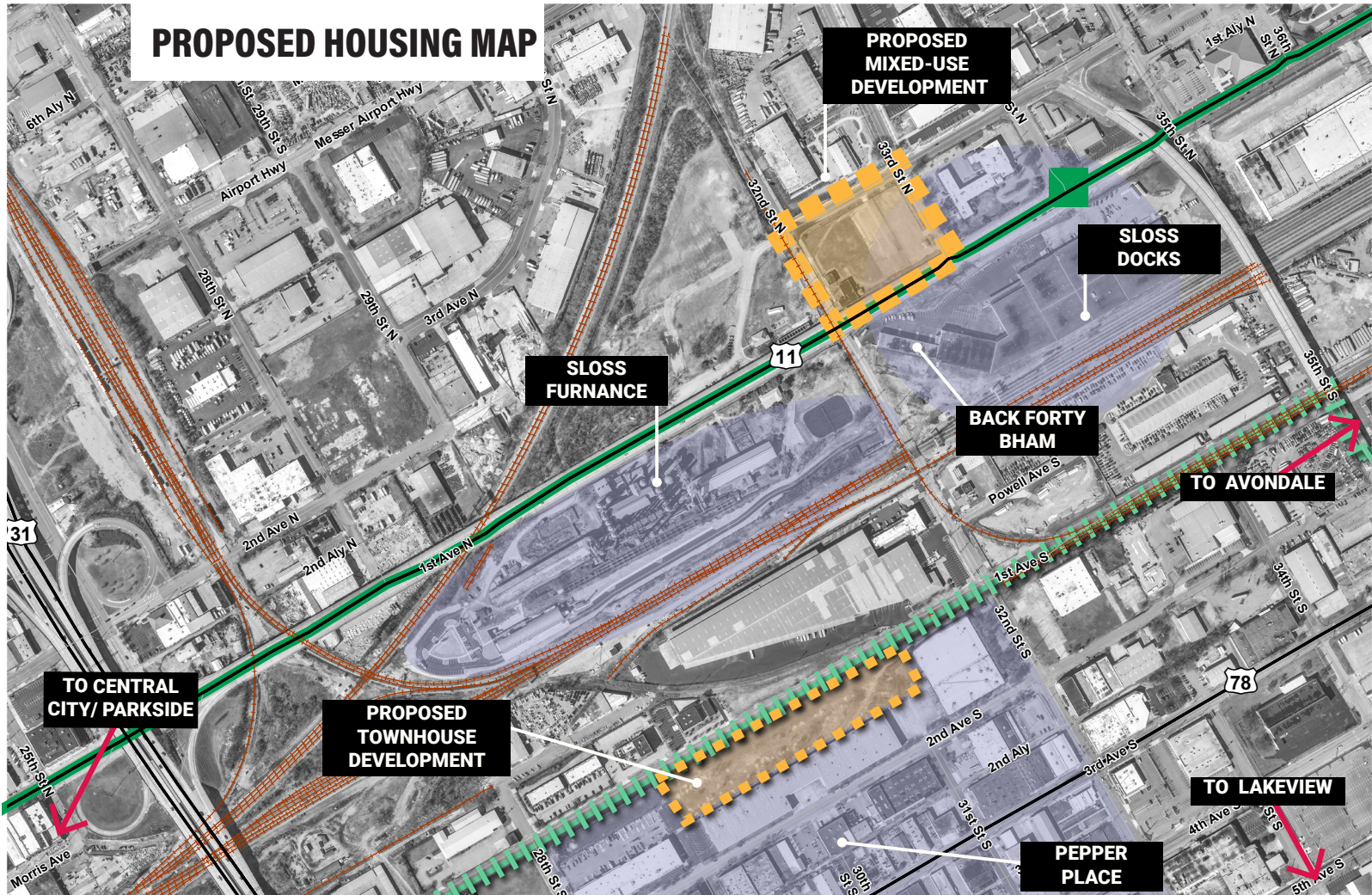
Encourage new medium-density residential uses in the Sloss Industrial Arts Strategic Opportunity Area.

In the past five years, the Sloss Industrial Arts SOA has gained a lot of momentum in terms of new commercial development and redevelopment, and while it is surrounded by neighborhoods, currently the area has very few residential uses within its boundaries. To make this district a successful mixed-use neighborhood, more households will be needed. The City should work with developers to encourage a range of residential housing types in the district.

To this end, two sites have been identified for future residential uses. The first site is located behind Back Forty Beer Company, along 2nd Avenue North and 32nd Street North, and would be ideal for a mixed-use, mixed income development that could include condos, artisan lofts, apartments, studio spaces for artists, retail, and restaurants. A short walk to the future Bus Rapid Transit line and station, this site is prime for redevelopment – it is flat, has existing structures that could potentially be reused, and is located across from the proposed expansion of Sloss Furnace Park.

The second site is located along 1st Avenue South near 31st Street South. Currently undeveloped, this plan recommends that the City work with property owners to encourage the development of medium-density infill housing, such as townhomes. For more information about this second site, see description on **page 82** under **Lakeview Strategic Opportunity Area.**

PROPOSED HOUSING MAP



Make 32nd Street South a great street and connect activity and development from Sloss Furnace to Pepper Place and then into the Lakeview District.

In 2019, Sloss Real Estate commissioned ZGF Architects to explore ways to unlock the potential of the district by connecting the Sloss Industrial Arts SOA to the surrounding neighborhoods. To create a visible and articulated gateway into the area and to connect current activity and development to Sloss Furnaces, Pepper Place, and Lakeview, the study recommended streetscape improvements along 32nd Street. Currently, the 32nd Street right-of-way is shared by cars, trains, pedestrians, and bicyclists, with trains and cars dominating the street space. ZGF Architects' Concept Plan (see right) illustrates how 32nd Street could be re-imagined to improve existing access, circulation and safety for all users.

The ZGF Concept Plan strives to provide a series of implementable projects that will improve 32nd Street, and over time, turn the street into a catalyst to attract new businesses, institutions, and redevelopment. The City should work with stakeholders, the Freshwater Land Trust, the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, and other appropriate partners to implement this plan. The drawing to the right illustrates the final design concept for each segment as designed by Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects. Pages 26-33 provide more detailed drawings of the 32nd Street Concept Plan.

32ND STREET CONCEPT PLAN

3. north segment

2nd Ave. North to Messer Airport Hwy.

- i** Continue the cycle track north of 2nd Avenue North to connect to Messer Airport Highway.

2. central segment

railroad tracks to 2nd Ave. North

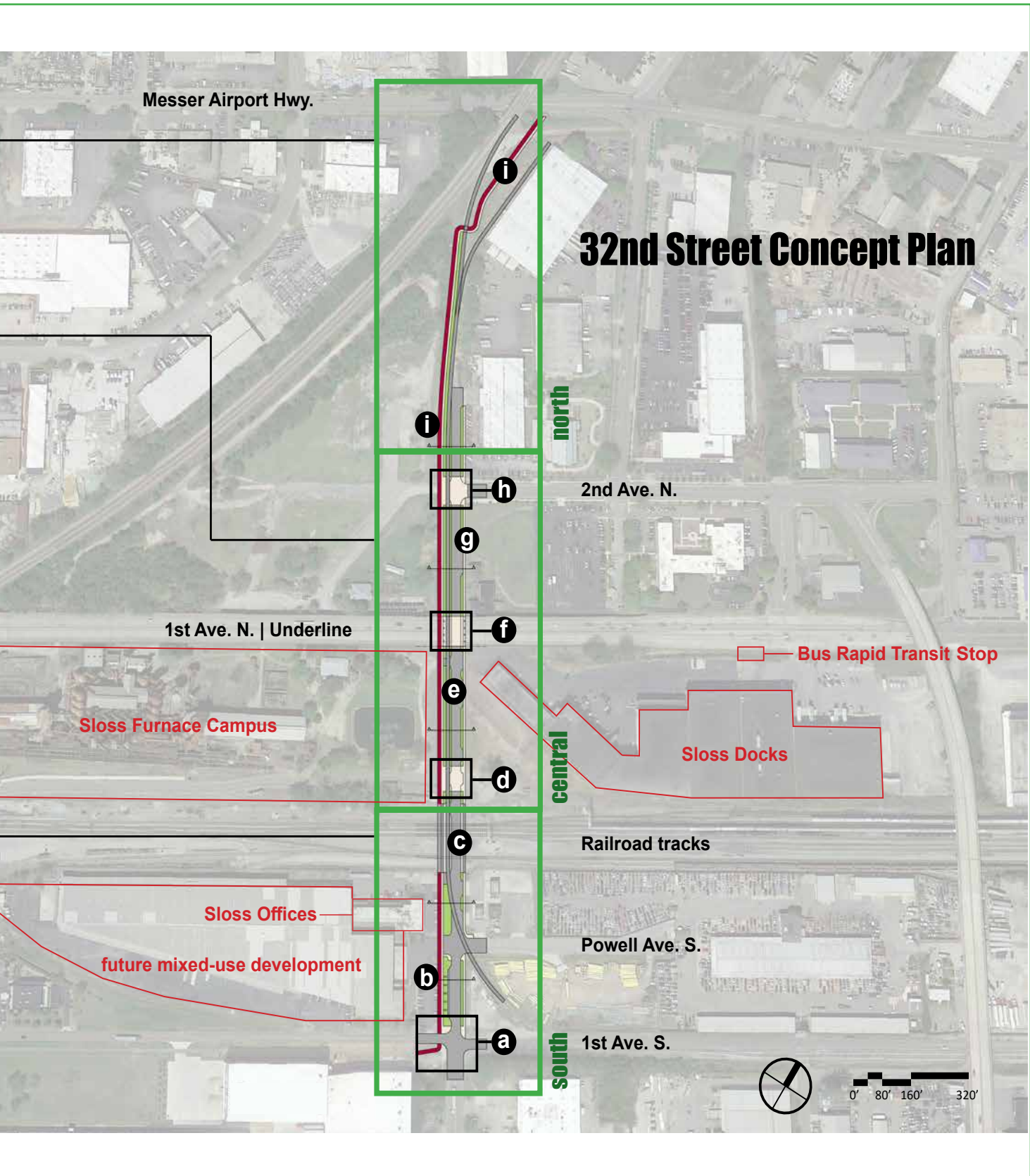
- d** Improve Sloss Furnace Campus entrance and intersection and integrate with new entrance to Sloss Docks.
- e** Develop new sidewalk, cycle track, and landscape furnishing zones to support visual connections between Sloss Furnace Campus and Sloss Docks.
- f** Create a connection across 32nd Street at the Underline to create a unified environment and connection from future BRT stop to Sloss Furnace Campus and future park.
- g** Improve sidewalk environment and connection to catalyze development north of 1st Avenue North .
- h** Improve intersection and pedestrian crossings at 2nd Avenue North.

1. south segment

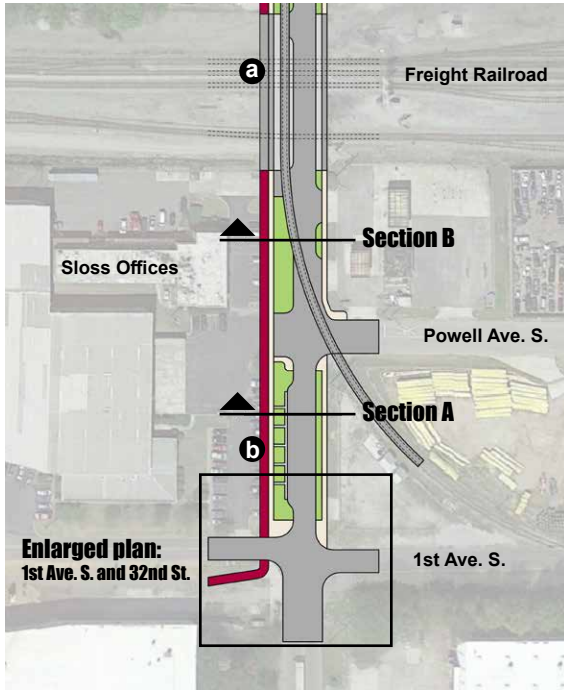
1st Ave. South to railroad tracks

- a** Improve 1st Avenue South intersection and create safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings to 32nd Street.
- b** Create an inviting pedestrian environment and street parking along 32nd Street at Sloss offices.
- c** Create a safe pedestrian crossing at the freight rails to connect 1st Avenue South to Sloss Furnace Campus, Sloss Docks, and future BRT and to connect the overall district.





1. 32nd Street - South Segment (1st Avenue South to railroad tracks)



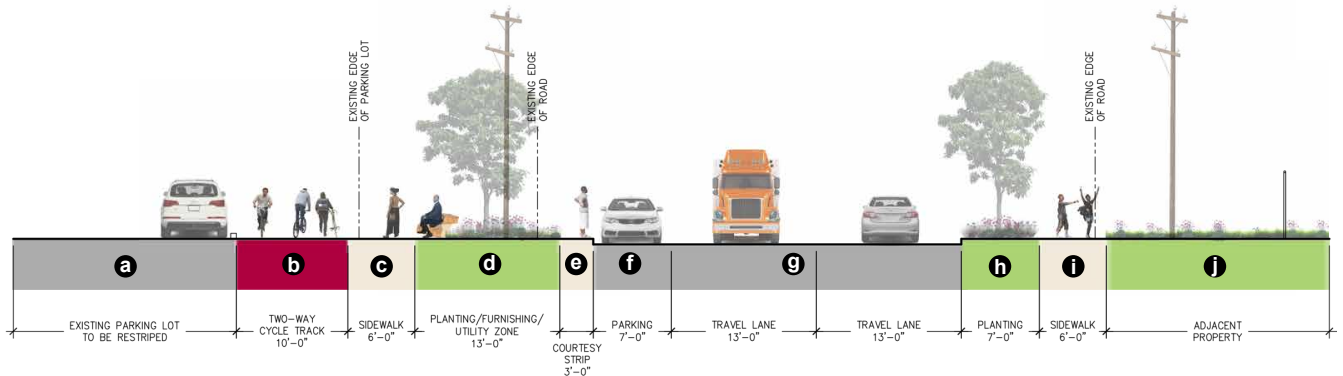
a Connecting across a freight railway

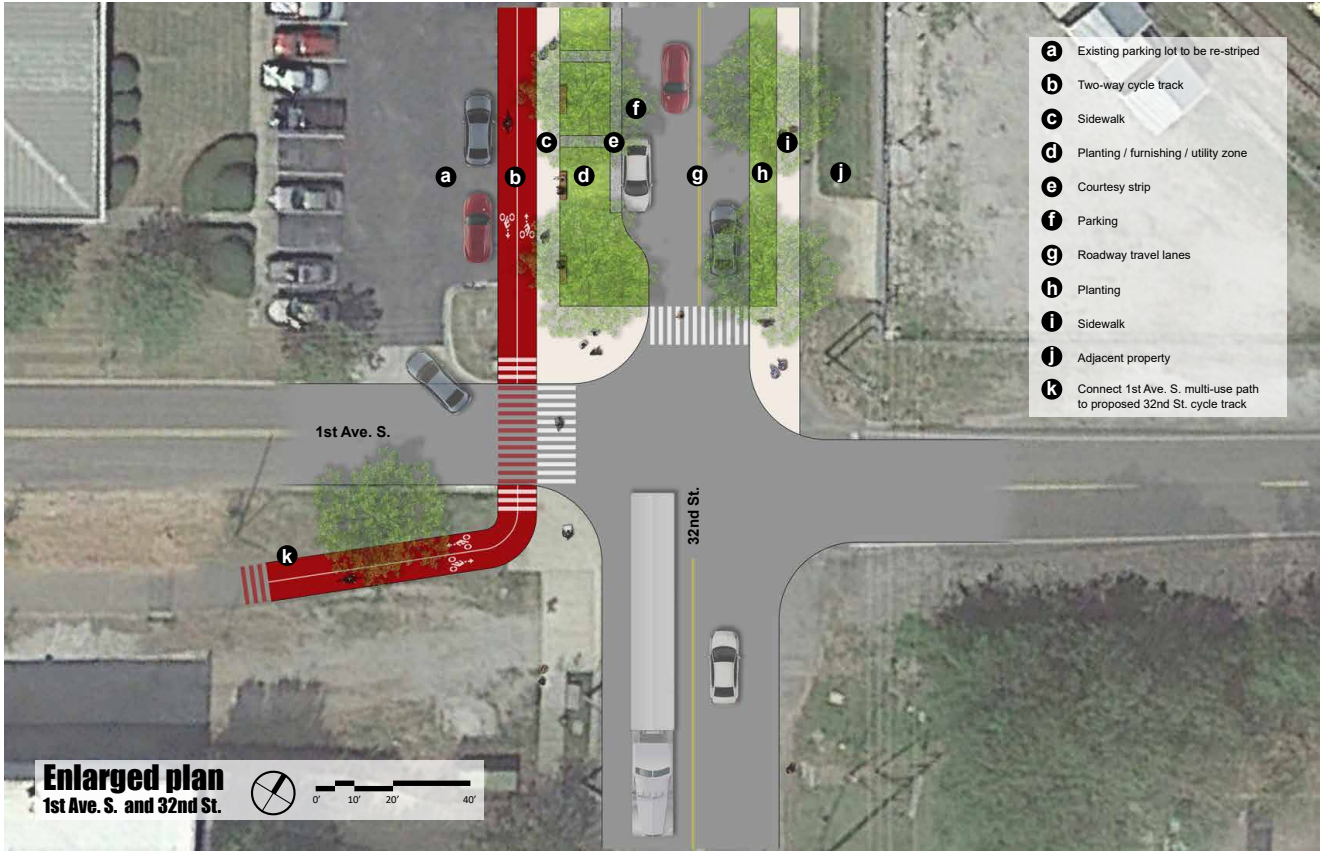
Creating a safe crossing at the railway for pedestrians and bikes is a key element in the success of connecting 1st Avenue South to the Sloss Furnace Campus, Sloss Docks, the emerging neighborhood and employment, and future BRT station. The ability for bikes to cross the freight rails is an important project that allows for significant linkage of the Birmingham Trail network.

b A new sidewalk and parking at Sloss offices

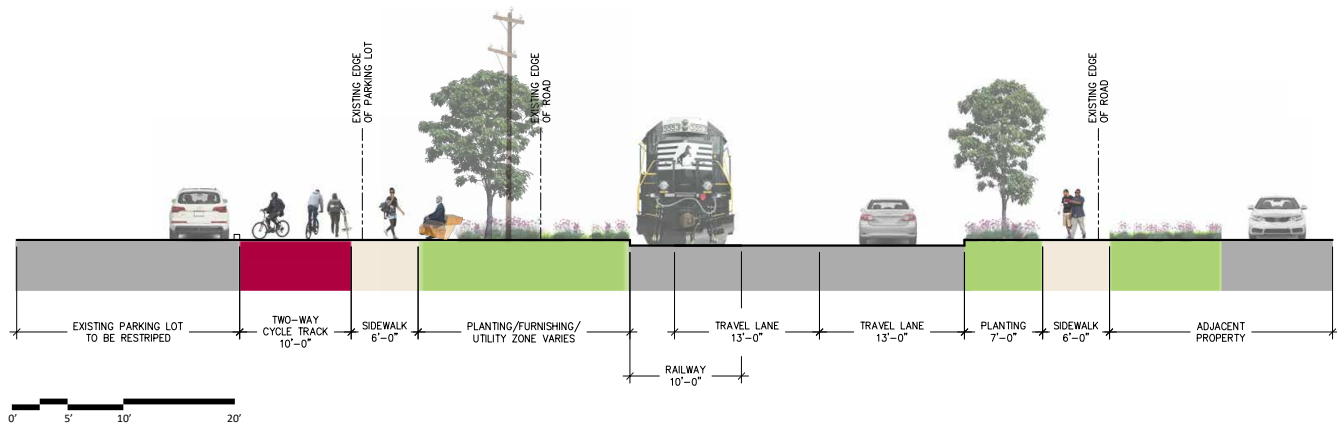
Reconfigure Sloss office parking lot to accommodate new pedestrian sidewalk and cycle track for bicycles. Construct a furnishing zone with landscape and potential seating and on-street parking along the western edge of 32nd Street between 1st Avenue South and Powell Avenue South.

SECTION A: Sidewalk and parking at Sloss Offices



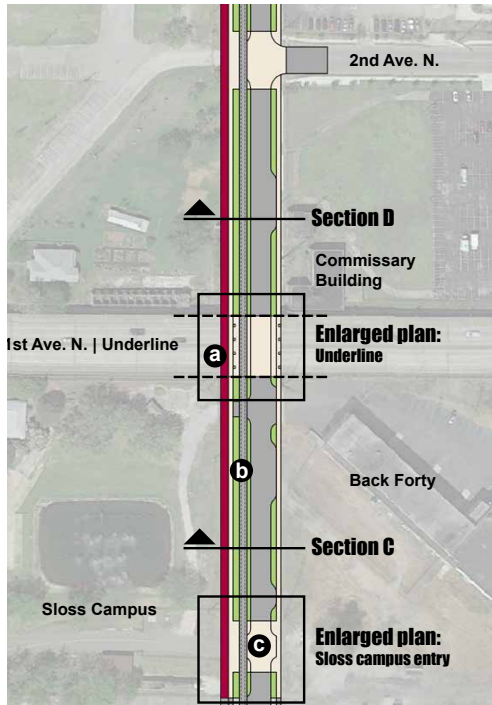


SECTION B: Sidewalk and railway at Sloss Offices



32nd Street Concept Plan (Source: Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects)

2. 32nd Street - Central Segment (Railroad tracks to 2nd Avenue North)



a A new connection at the Underline

There is significant potential to transform the underside of the 1st Avenue North viaduct into both a programmed leisure and recreation destination and major circulation connection to 32nd Street.

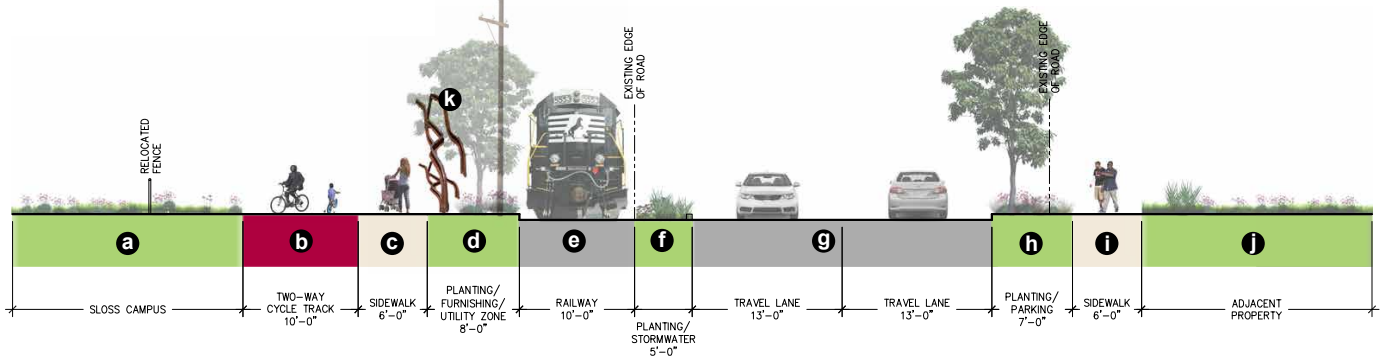
b Enhancing the west edge of 32nd Street

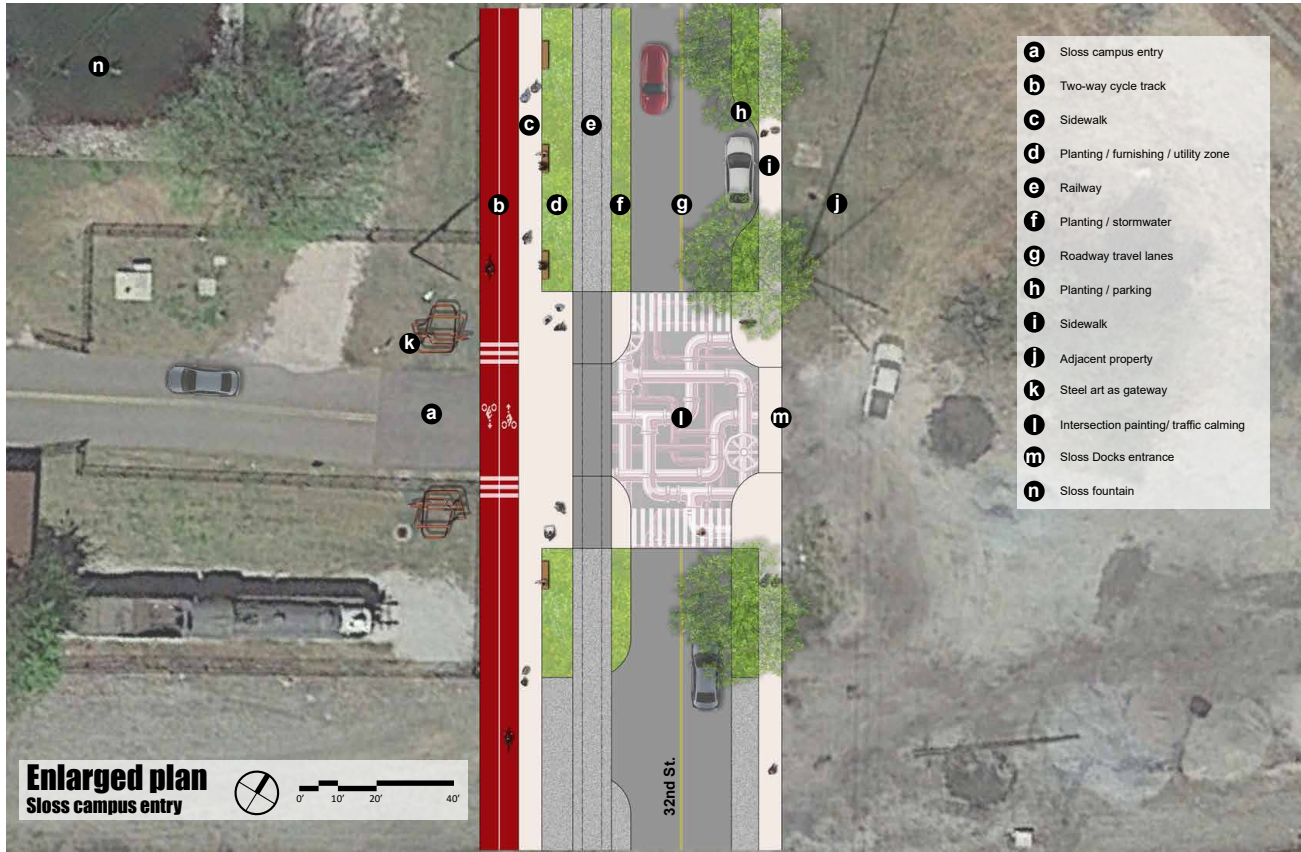
The landscape, furnishing, and stormwater zones on 32nd Street provide amenities for pedestrians and cyclists and manage roadway run-off while creating a valuable buffer to the railway.

c An improved intersection at Sloss campus

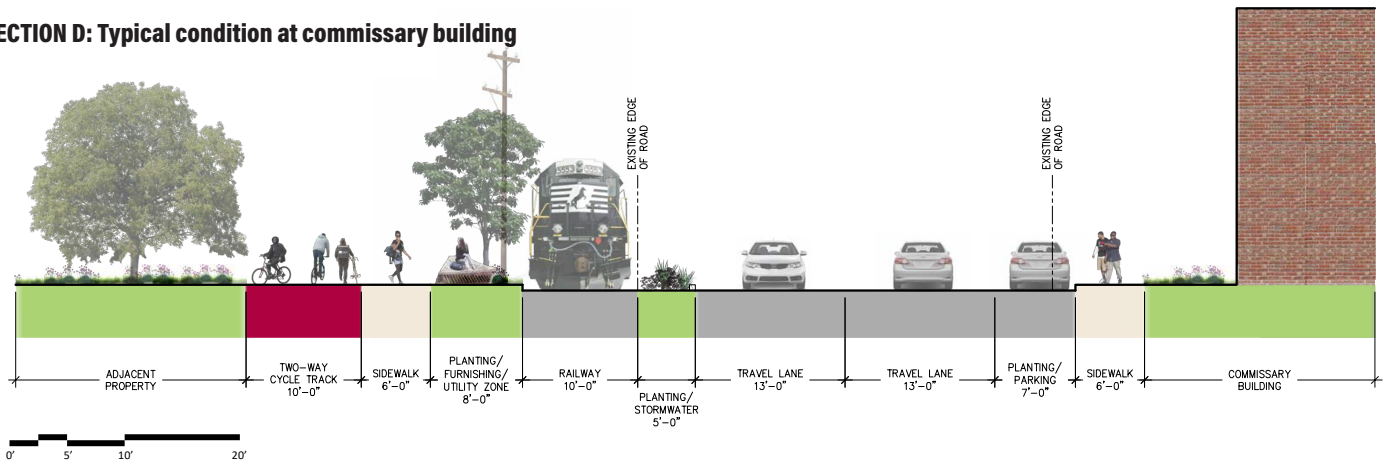
While 32nd Street will continue to facilitate vehicle circulation, there is an opportunity for key intersections to enhance placemaking, wayfinding, and pedestrian connections.

SECTION C: Typical condition at Sloss campus

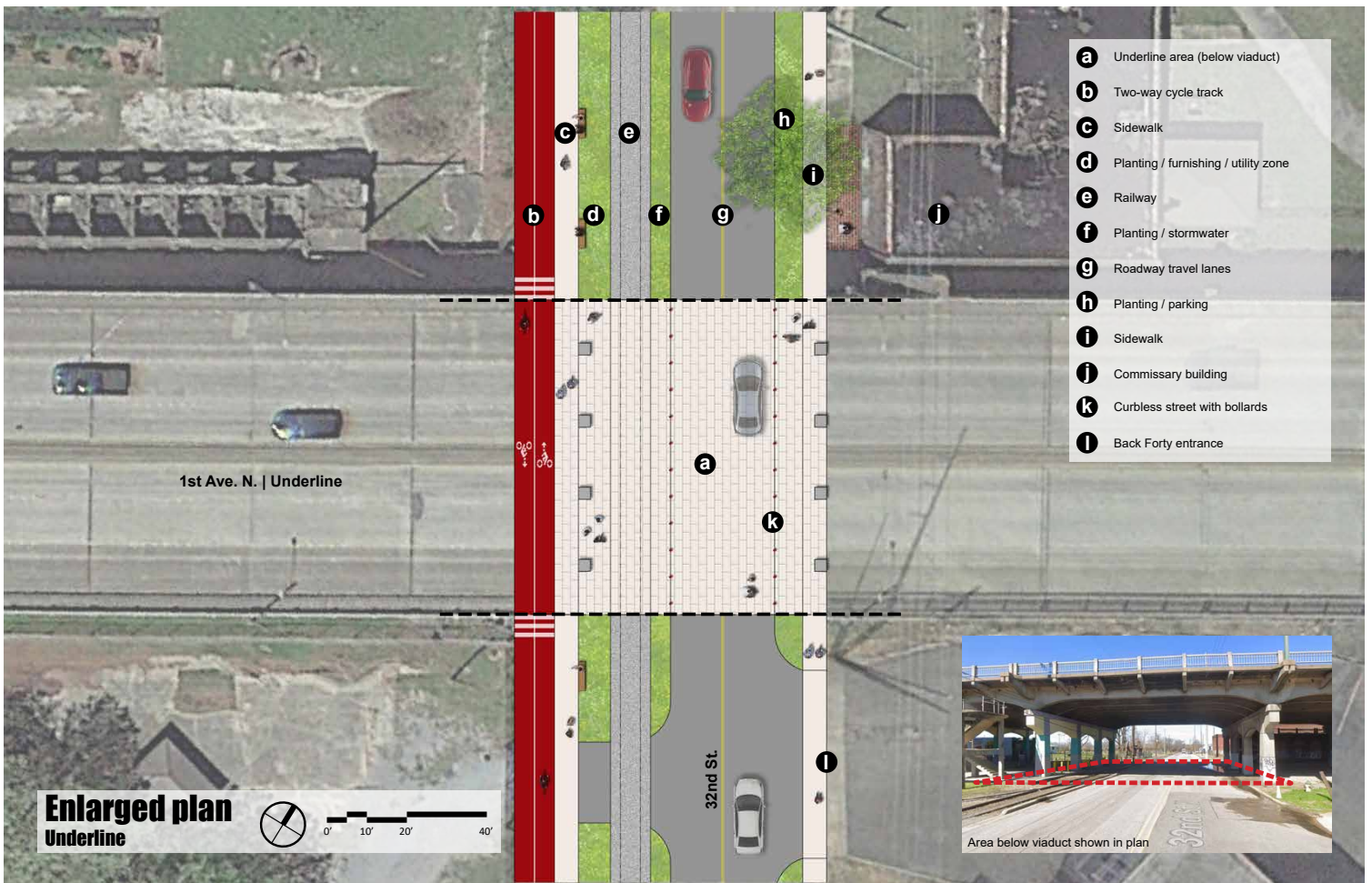
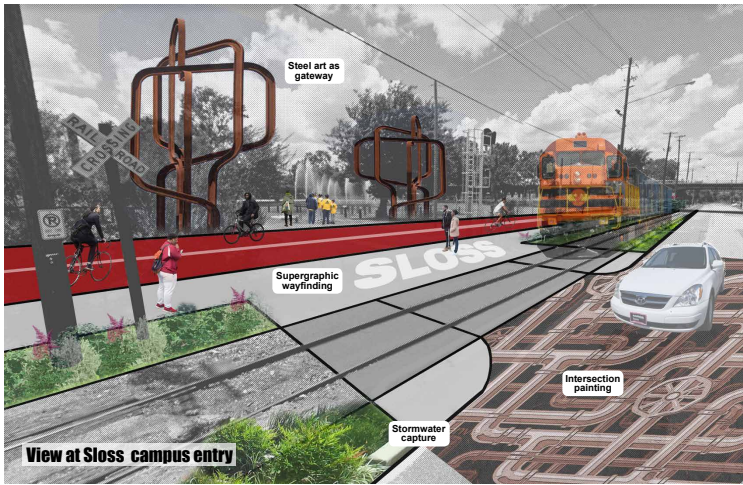




SECTION D: Typical condition at commissary building



32nd Street Concept Plan (Source: Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects)

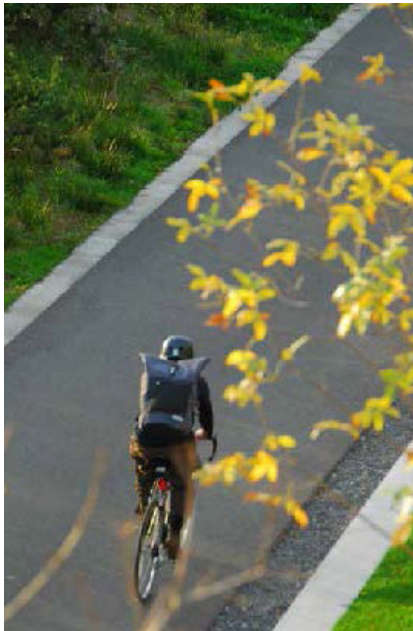


3. 32nd Street - North Segment (2nd Avenue North to Messer Airport Highway)



a Cycle track to Messer Airport Highway

Capture the opportunity to complete a missing section of the Birmingham Trail Network by extending the cycle track for bicycles north of 2nd Avenue North to Messer Airport Highway and connect to existing bicycle facilities.



Strengthen the Birmingham Trail Network with a cycle track segment from 1st Avenue South to Messer Airport Highway.

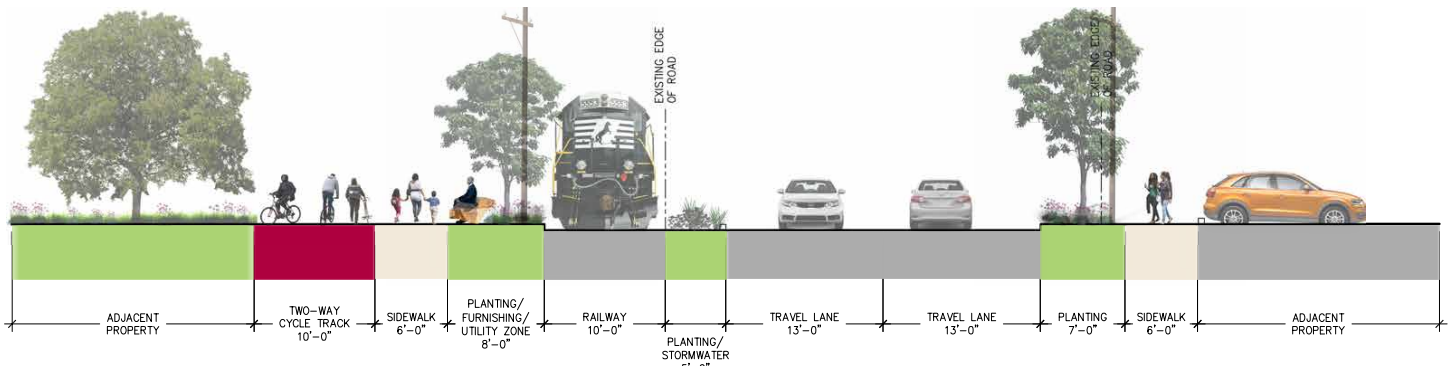


Continue the cycle track along the existing railroad north of 2nd Avenue North.

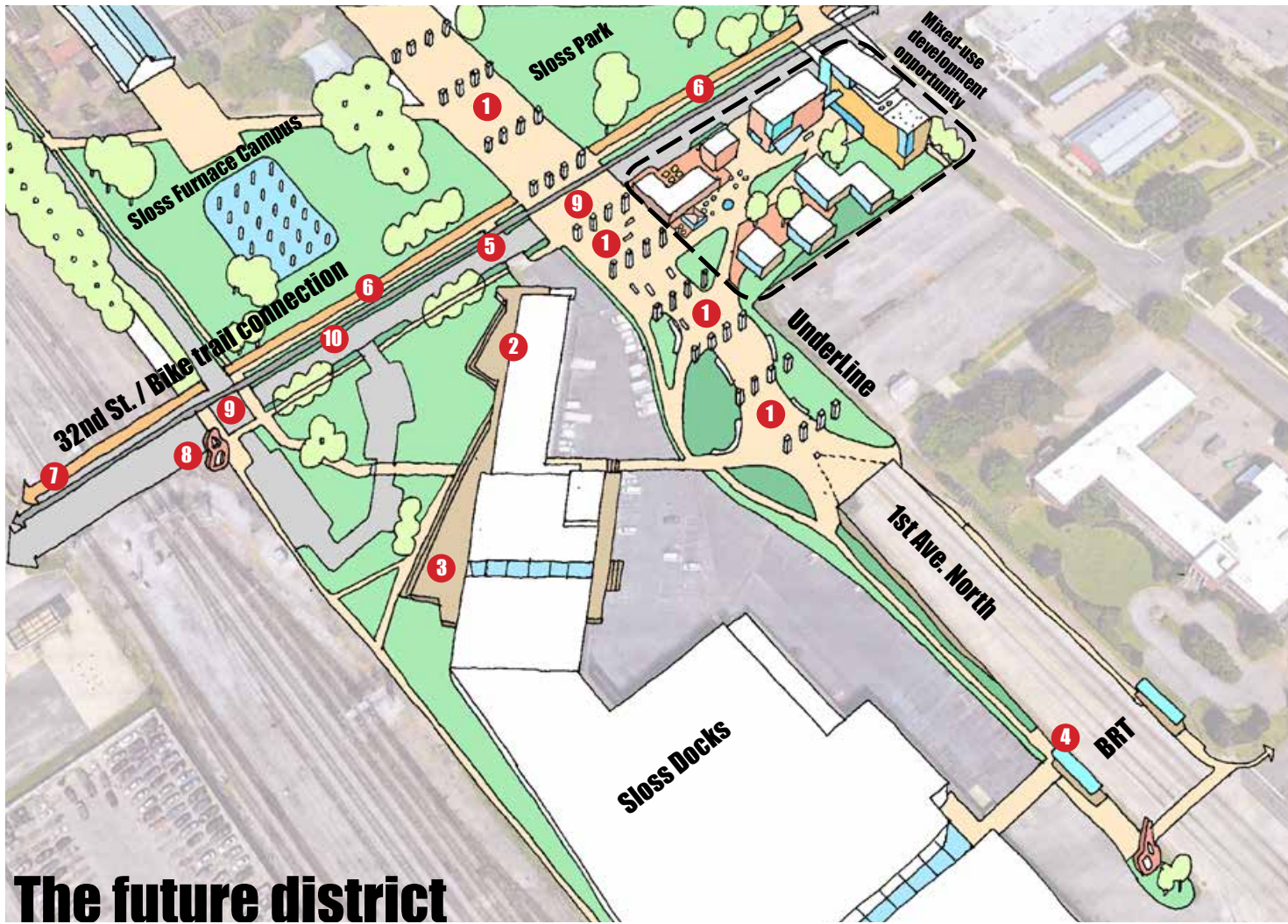


Connect the cycle track to Messer Airport Highway bike lanes east of the Rail Bridge.

SECTION E: Typical streetscape condition north of 2nd Avenue North



32nd Street Concept Plan (Source: Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects)



The future district



District events



Gathering space



Active recreation



Night time experience

32nd St. as a catalyst

An improved 32nd Street will break through the infrastructure that currently isolates the Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark, as well as a growing number of businesses and cultural facilities, and will unlock the potential of this area to evolve into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood.



5 Pedestrian friendly street



6 Seating opportunities



7 Cycle track



8 Steel art



9 Intersection calming



10 Stormwater management

32nd St. proposed improvements



2 Back Forty



3 Sloss Docks



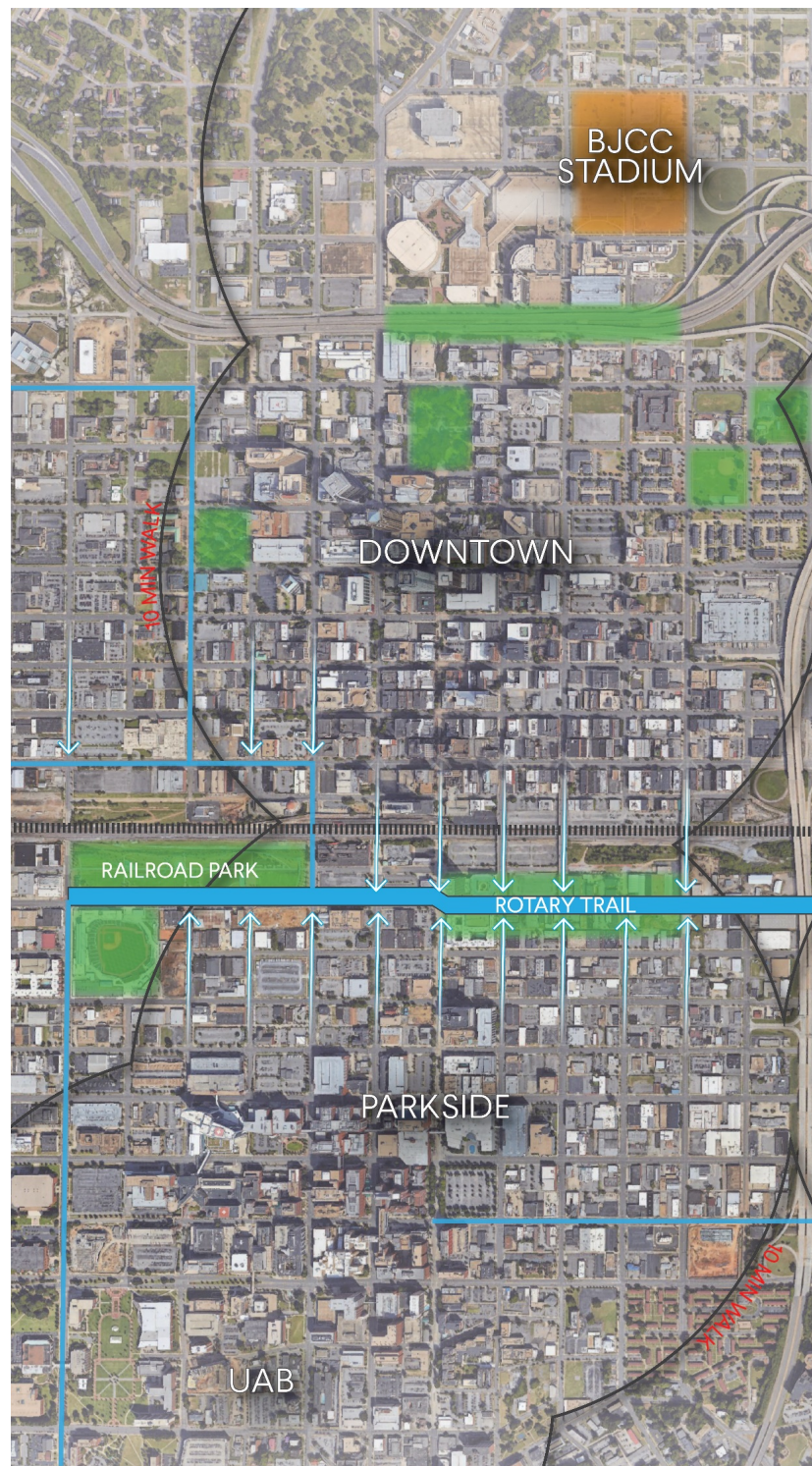
4 Bus Rapid Transit

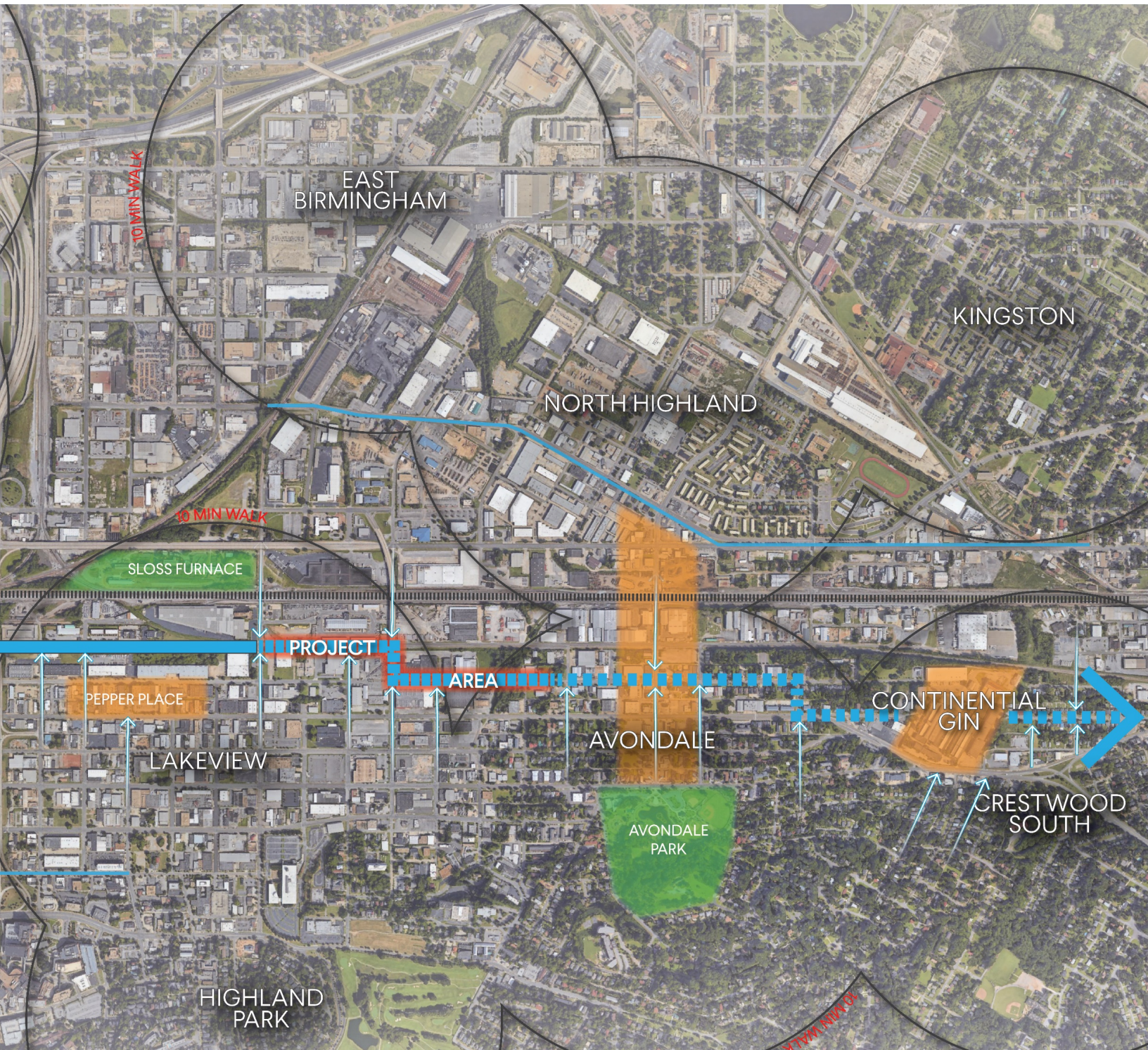
32nd Street Concept Plan (Source: Sloss Real Estate and ZGF Architects)

Support the proposed Jones Valley Trail extension from 1st Avenue South at 32nd Street to 2nd Avenue South at 41st Street South.

Today, the Jones Valley Trail runs through the middle of the Northside Southside Framework Plan area and connects Railroad Park, Regions Field, the Rotary Trail, Sloss Furnaces, and Pepper Place. Approximately 1.35 miles in length, the trail begins at 1st Avenue South and 20th Street South and terminates at 1st Avenue South and 32nd Street. Currently, the trail provides a shared multi-use path for pedestrians and cyclists. In February 2020, Freshwater Land Trust announced a proposed trail extension to the east to connect to 41st Street in Avondale. The trail is anticipated to pick up at 32nd Street South and connect to 35th Street South along 1st Avenue South, where it will then go down 35th Street South and connect to 2nd Avenue South via existing city right-of-way and terminate at 41st Street South.

Once complete, the Jones Valley Trail extension will be a safe, car-free route for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists to travel from Birmingham's Parkside District - which includes Railroad Park and Regions Field - through the Lakeview District with its expanding housing, restaurants and bars, and on to Avondale. This project will connect downtown's north and south sides, including the City Center, UAB and its medical complexes, as well as the neighborhoods of Central City, Highland Park, Forest Park, Glen Iris, and Five Points South.





Proposed Jones Valley Trail Extension Map
(Source: Freshwater Land Trust and Goodwyn Mills Cawood)





BEFORE / FACING EAST TOWARDS AVONDALE

Proposed Jones Valley Trail Extension (Source: Freshwater Land Trust and Goodwyn Mills Cawood)



AFTER / FACING EAST TOWARDS AVONDALE




BHM
 Intermodal Station ↑
 Railroad Park
 Regions Field
 Innovation District →
 Theatre District
 McWane Center
 ← 
 Birmingham Green
 20th Street

HAPPY HOUR
 MON THRU
 4 PM TO 8 PM
 Half Price Appetizers • \$2.50
 \$3 Well Drinks • \$3.50



3 | City Center Master Plan Strategic Opportunity Areas

Contents

- Civil Rights District
- Innovation District
- City Center Core
- Uptown
- Five Points South
- Lakeview

*This Chapter was taken directly from the Adopted Birmingham City Center Master Plan written by the Stantec Urban Places Team. For more information about the Birmingham City Center Master Plan and to download a copy, visit:

www.downtownbhamplan.com/

Civil Rights District

Existing Conditions

The Civil Rights District is located in the upper northwest quadrant of the City Center, with a concentration of historic and cultural sites. It includes the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, comprised of key historic sites as the A.G. Gaston Motel, Kelly Ingram Park, 16th Street Baptist Church, St. Paul United Methodist Church, Bethel Baptist Church, and the Colored Masonic Temple. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the historic 4th Avenue Black Business District are nationally recognized significant resources. This district is rich with the history of the Civil Rights movement and serves as a destination for worldwide visitors and residents alike. Many of these important landmarks and the district itself are under consideration for World Heritage status by UNESCO.

Much of the fabric of the area, including Fountain Heights, a historically African-American neighborhood, and commercial district has been lost over time - some as a direct result of the bombings in the 1960's - and others as a result of poor policy decisions - ceding to surface parking lots largely in service to the commercial core. Housing in

this area is largely limited to the Freedom Manor which was under renovation in 2019.

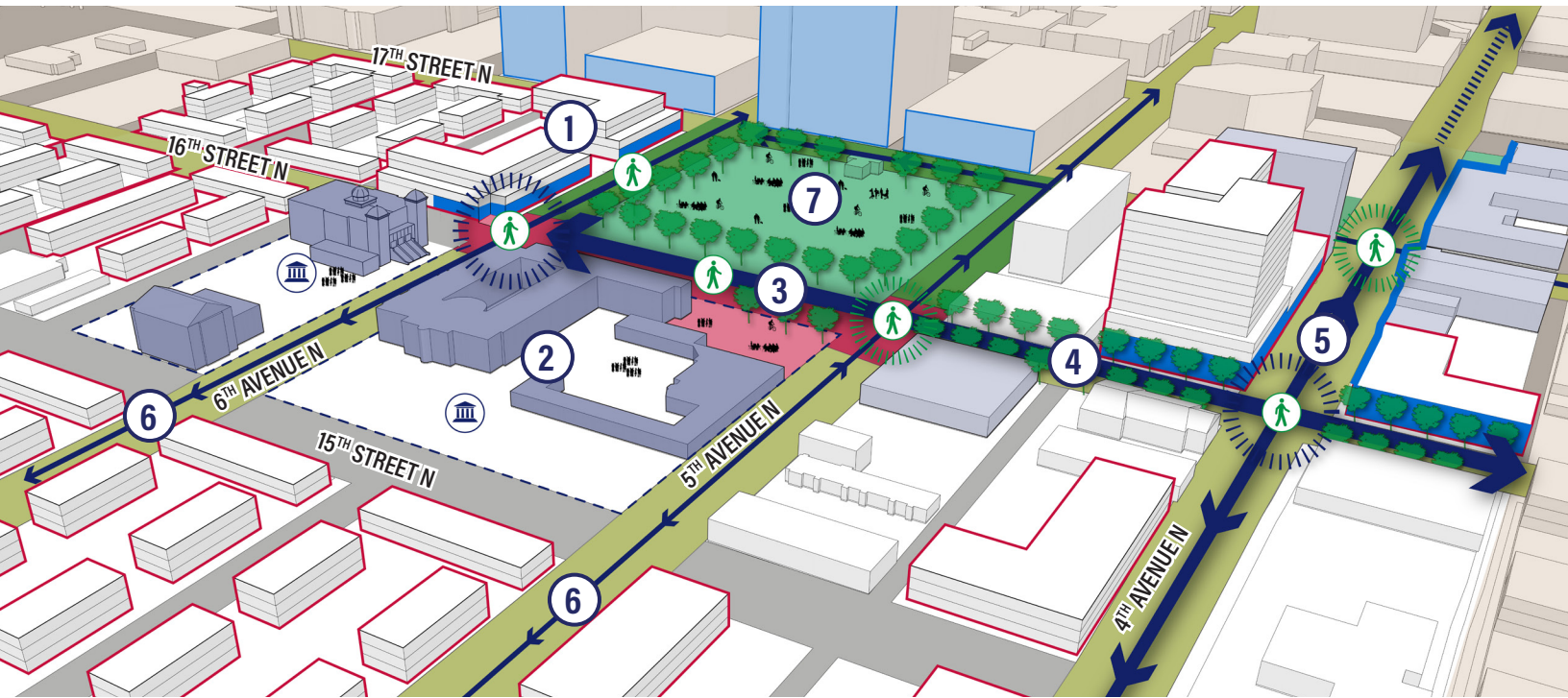
Kelly Ingram Park is a roughly 4-acre public space that has been used in recent decades as a contemplative space honoring the Civil Rights movement in public art. With the exception of the National Monument to the west and the Freedom Manor to the south, the park lacks the well-defined urban edge that nearby Linn Park enjoys. To add insult to injury, the eastern edge of the park has very disappointing views of a parking structure and the blank-walled AT&T building.

The district is bisected by three one-way streets running east-west serving commuter traffic and though it is within a five-minute walk of the Innovation District and the 20th Street/Birmingham Green corridor, it lacks safe and attractive pedestrian routes. Fourth Avenue North has the potential to blossom as a business district once again but is hampered by a lack of investment and the one-way network.

In recent years, there has been limited private-sector interest in the district though plans are underway for the



Tourists visiting the Civil Rights landmarks at the corner of Kelly Ingram Park with Sixteenth Baptist Church in the background



New Buildings	Implied Connections	Pedestrian Connections	Open Space/Public Realm Opportunities
Adaptive Reuse	Two-way Conversions	Active Frontages	Culturally Significant Blocks
Key Destinations	Pedestrian Enhancements	Facade Improvements	
Improve Intersections for All Mobility Options	Improve Intersections for Pedestrians	Streetscape Improvements	
Strategic Connections			

Key District Initiatives

- 1** Three to four story mixed-use development replacing the surface parking lot to the north of Kelly Ingram Park that sensitively respects the 16th Street Baptist Church and reflects conditions existing during the period of historical significance of 1963 including a height transition and setback at the corner at 16th St North/6th Ave North with a public plaza (see the diagram on page 49).
- 2** Expanded Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and fully preserved and interpreted A.G. Gaston Motel.
- 3** Enhancements to 16th Street North to better connect Kelly Ingram Park to the Civil Rights Institute including a renovated plaza and the possibility of a shared street.

- 4** Streetscape improvements along 16th Street North to connect the Civil Rights District to the Innovation District.
- 5** Fully restored 4th Avenue North as the “main street” for the district with streetscape improvements, one-way to two-way conversion, strategic infill, and re-activation of storefronts.
- 6** Conversion of 5th and 6th Avenues North to two-way and improved streetscape detailing to 20th Street North.
- 7** Renovated Kelly Ingram Park that respects the dignity of the current space while providing for its long term sustainability. (Note: A neighborhood-serving park will be needed elsewhere to serve the expected residential population).

Street Improvements

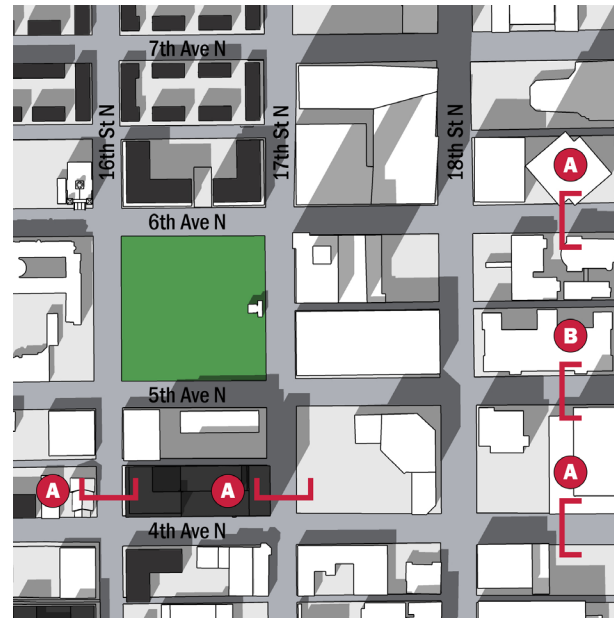
4th and 6th Avenues North and 16th and 17th Streets North (Existing) | Section A

The existing sections of 4th Avenue North and 6th Avenue North include three westbound travel lanes with parallel on-street parking on both sides of the street in roughly 50 feet curb-to-curb. 17th Street North shares the same curb-to-curb width and has three southbound travel lanes with on-street parking. 16th Street North shares the same curb-to-curb width as well with two travel lanes, one northbound and one southbound, with parallel on-street parking.

4th & 6th Avenues North and 16th and 17th Streets North (Proposed) | Section A

The proposed section maintains the curb location but converts from one-way to two-way operations for 4th and 6th Avenues North and 17th Street North. 16th Street North remains two-way and open to traffic but its lanes narrow to 10 feet in width to accommodate other street components. The parallel on-street parking would remain on both sides of each street. This section also includes buffered bike lanes on both sides and wider sidewalks with street trees and space for outdoor dining, although limited. The inclusion of two-way operations, on-street parking, multi-modal

facilities, shade, and space for sidewalk activity are all crucial for facilitating vibrancy and successful ground-floor retail, especially on 4th Avenue North and 16th Street North which have been designated as Signature Streets for priority investment.



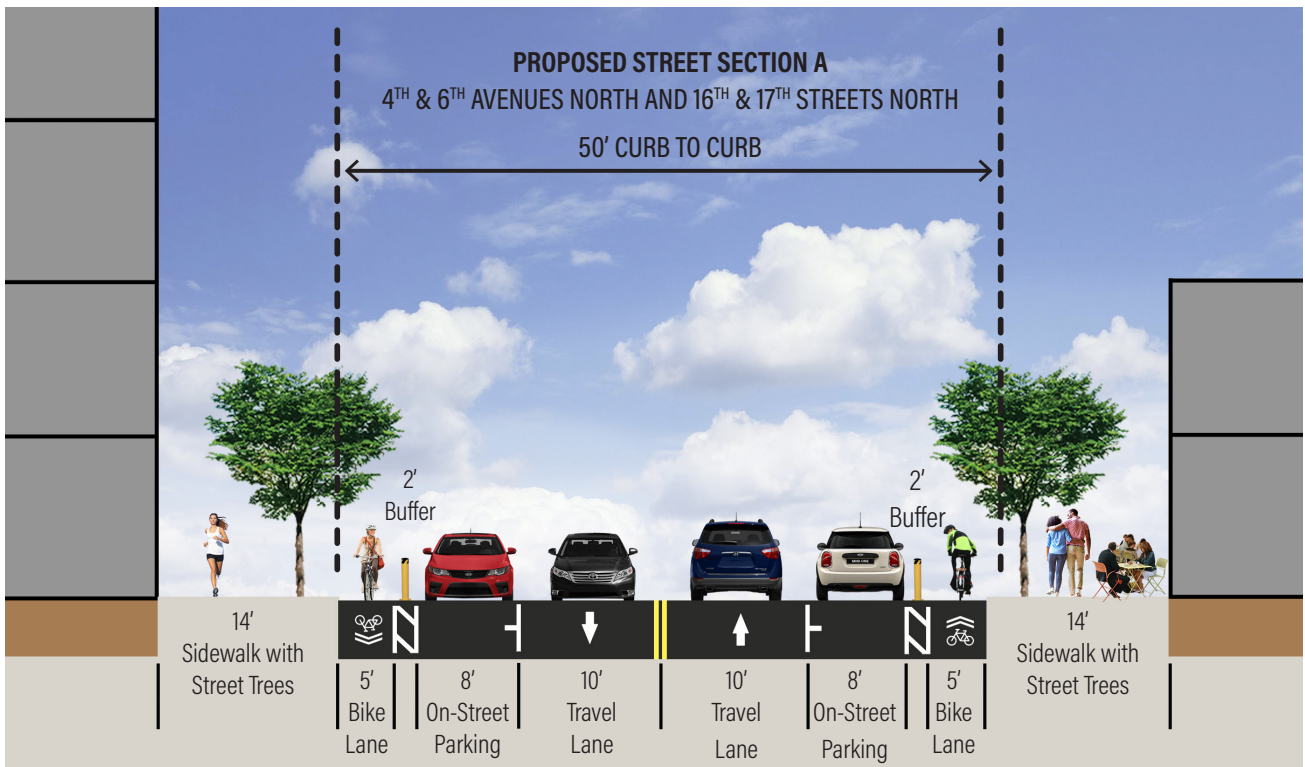
Key Plan for proposed street improvements in the Civil Rights District along 4th Avenue N, 6th Avenue N, 16th Street N and 17th Street N



Left: Existing conditions along 4th Ave North Source: Google Street View, 2019



Left: Existing conditions of 16th Street North Source: Google Street View, 2019



Street Improvements

5th Avenue North (Existing) | Section B

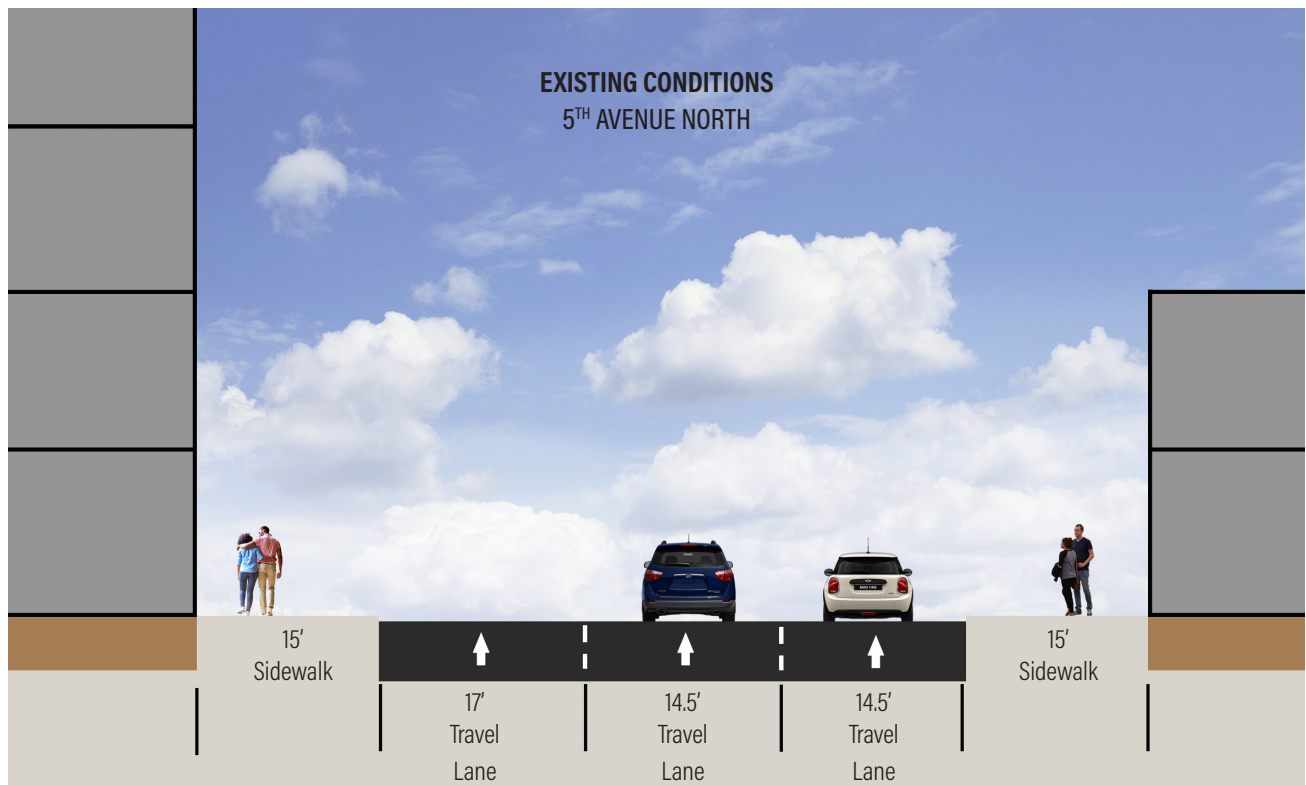
5th Avenue North has a narrower existing curb-to-curb width at only 46 feet with three eastbound travel lanes and parallel on-street parking on both sides of the street.

5th Avenue North (Proposed) | Section B

Since not every component of a Signature Street can fit into every existing street in the City Center, some compromises have to be made. In the case of 5th Avenue North, it is determined that a center turn lane may be a more useful component to provide better access management into existing parking decks and parking lots. The proposed section still includes wide sidewalks with street trees, a conversion from one-way to two-way operations, and parallel on-street parking on both sides of the street.

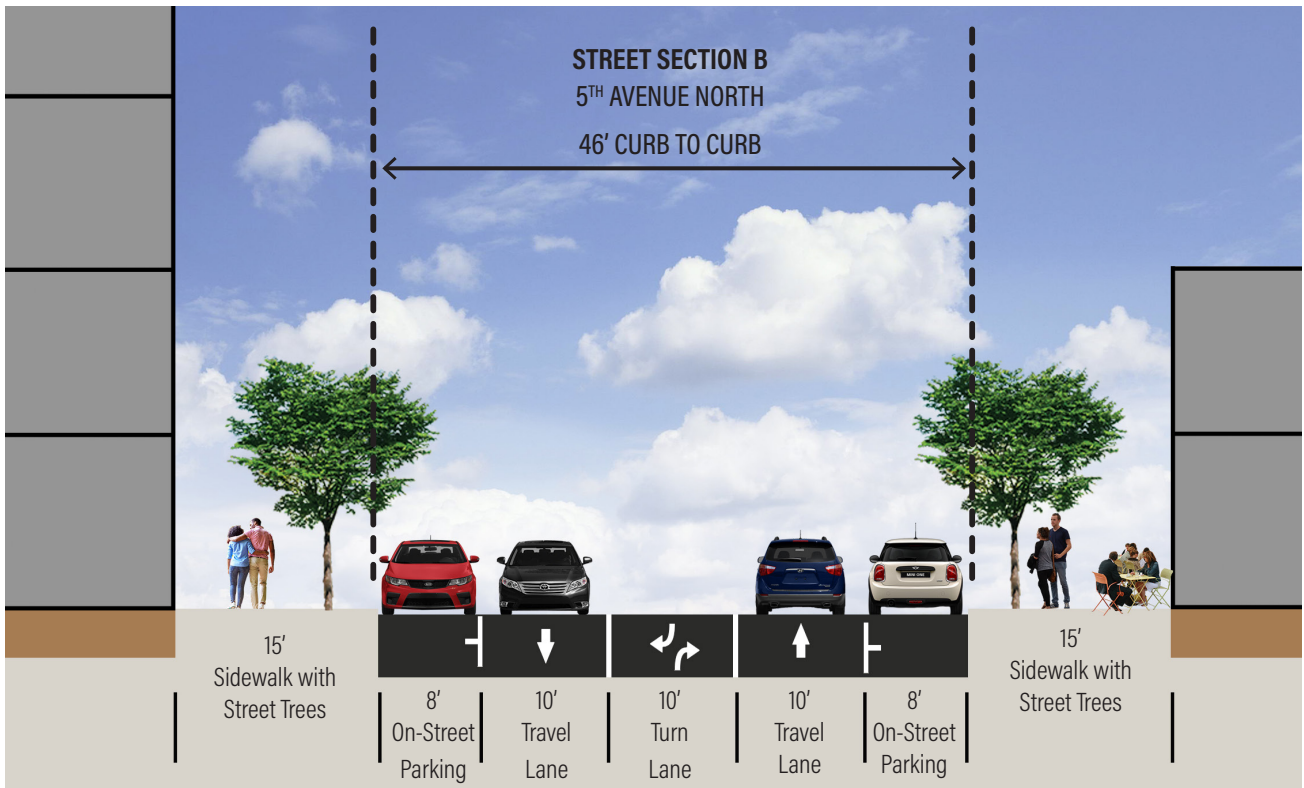


Key Plan for proposed street section B in the Innovation District: 5th Avenue North





Left: Existing conditions of 5th Avenue North
Source: Google Street View, 2019



Civil Rights District “Main Street”

4th Avenue North Enhancements

The Historic Fourth Avenue North Business District, recently designated as a Main Street community by the state, was once the “main street” of the African American business community in Birmingham. Over the years the vibrancy and level of activity has plateaued as existing businesses have remained with little influx of new businesses. Many historic buildings sit vacant or lack ground-floor activity. The conceptual illustration to the right shows the opportunity for the Historic 4th Avenue North Business District if proper investment is made to revitalize the corridor as a neighborhood-scaled activity center.

The beautiful historic buildings should remain, although facades improved and ground-floor tenants encouraged to facilitate activity that spills onto the sidewalks, such as restaurants and shops. New development should respect the scale of the district and provide a variety of shopping and dining options, along with a mix of housing to accommodate a diversity of incomes. The streetscape should be improved with Signature Street elements, including but not limited to: multi-use lanes for bikes and scooters, two-way traffic operations, on-street parking, street trees, outdoor seating and dining, and wide sidewalks.



Above: Existing conditions

Right: Conceptual illustration of proposed enhancements and investments along 4th Avenue North as a revitalized “main street” for the Civil Rights District





Kelly Ingram Park

Kelly Ingram Park, as a key piece of the civil rights story of Birmingham, has been designed as a quiet, contemplative space filled with interpretive sculptures and artwork that record the history of the Civil Rights movement. It's also a public space, like Linn Park, that has lacked on-going maintenance funding. As a result there is a long list of deferred maintenance needs through the park.

Strengths

- The park's history and memorials make it a destination for visitors and residents of Birmingham
- The park's orthogonal layout creates sub-spaces, allowing visitors to feel safe to reflect on their own in different places in the park
- The large trees in the park create shade, provide fall color, and sound when the wind blows
- The size of the park is substantial, so it can accommodate multiple uses at different times of the year, and even different days of the week

Key Strategies

- Consider a larger, more formalized open space that permits civic gatherings and other public events appropriate to the park
- Replace the fountains with new water elements that deliver beneficial sound while providing an interpretive element
- Develop a comprehensive plan for Kelly Ingram Park and the public realm (streetscape and other public spaces) for the entire Civil Rights District to accommodate operations and maintenance, future improvements, placement of future sculptures, memorials and interpretive signage, and management



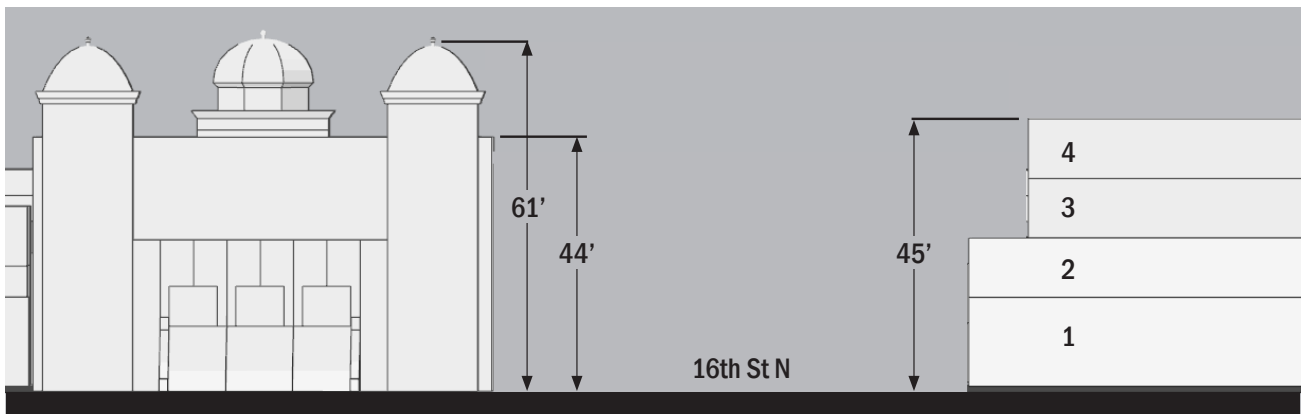
Sculpture in Kelly Ingram Park (top); one of four quadrants of the existing water feature (middle); Sculpture at one of the entrances of the park (bottom)

Respecting the Scale and Dignity of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church is a historic landmark that deserves respect, both socially and physically. To physically respect the church, any adjacent new development should make special effort not to overshadow the height of the church and utilize setbacks and upper story recesses to preserve the line-of-sight to the landmark from across the district.

The maximum height to the top of the tower's cupolas is 61 feet, but the height of the building itself is 44 feet. A typical four-story mixed-use building with a commercial or office ground floor and residential floors above is approximately 45 feet tall. This height respects the scale of the church and the corner during its period of historical significance of 1963.

Recesses should be reserved for the upper floors of the development. Urban buildings are most successful when they create a strong street edge and meet the sidewalk directly, therefore, the ground floor and possibly second floor should directly engage the sidewalk like any other commercial building in the City Center; however, there can be strategic setbacks to create dynamic spaces along the ground floor, such as courtyards or corner plazas. Including a setback at the corner adjacent to the church to help reduce the perceived scale of new development.



Above: Scale Comparison, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church compared to a four-story building

Civil Rights District New Development

Bringing an active edge to Kelly Ingram Park

Sixth Avenue North is prioritized for conversion to two-way traffic operations along with streetscape enhancements that support an improved visitor experience as well as new development. The current one-way street serves only high-speed commuter traffic and does not respect the dignity and historical context of the corridor. The reallocation of travel lanes in favor of dedicated pathways for bikes and scooters along 6th Avenue North is also recommended.

As noted on the previous page, care should be taken with new development to respect the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church's architectural prominence from a range of vantage points. The same is true of Kelly Ingram Park. While it is a public park, it's primary role is one of dignified repose and respite. Active programming is recommended in a new neighborhood park elsewhere in the area (location to be determined).



Above: Existing conditions along 6th Avenue North (above)

Right: Conceptual illustration of development filling in the surface parking lot and enhancements along 6th Avenue North and Kelly Ingram Park's street edge





Innovation District

Existing Conditions

The Innovation District, so named because of the presence of Innovation Depot, is located in the lower northwest quadrant of the City Center amidst a concentration of older commercial and industrial buildings and surface parking lots. Innovation Depot was formed when a partnership of community leaders including the City and the University of Alabama at Birmingham came together to incubate a community of startups and entrepreneurs in a 145,000 square foot former Sears building.

Since the 2004 Birmingham City Center Master Plan, which first identified this area as an “Entrepreneurial Area,” progress in adapting other buildings has been slow. Little investment has occurred in the public realm and the nearby car dealerships combined with vacant and surface

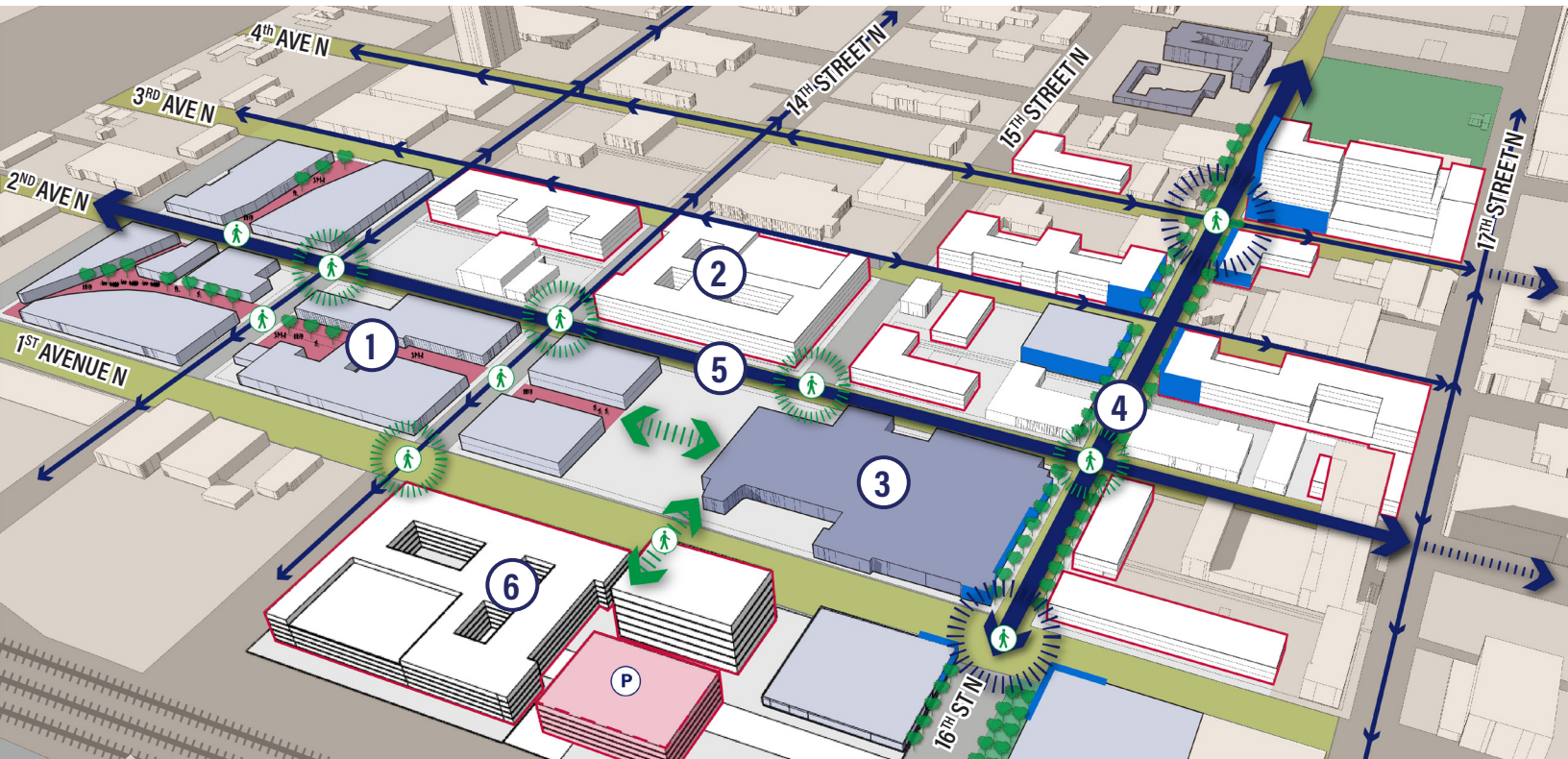
parking lots provide minimal pedestrian interest. The preponderance of one and two story buildings of different dimensions are ideal for a wide range of tenants.

The restoration and re-use of buildings along 17th Street North have begun to extend the nightlife of 20th Street North closer towards Innovation Depot though a substantial amount of vacancy immediately surrounds it. The only housing of note in the area is the 100 unit, 19 story Thomas Jefferson Tower apartments, a 2017 adaptive reuse of the 1929 Thomas Jefferson Hotel.

While the district is quite close to Railroad Park, the walk along 14th Street North passing parking lots and through the railroad underpass is not a very pleasant journey.



The main entrance of Innovation Depot as seen from across 1st Avenue North



New Buildings	Implied Connections	Pedestrian Connections	Open Space/Public Realm Opportunities
Adaptive Reuse	Two-way Conversions	Active Frontages	Public/Private Deck
Key Destinations	Pedestrian Enhancements	Facade Improvements	
Improve Intersections for All Mobility Options	Improve Intersections for Pedestrians	Streetscape Improvements	
Strategic Connections			

Key District Initiatives

- 1** Adaptive re-use of Wholesale Warehouse Loop buildings for Innovation Depot spin-offs, which could include shared, hardscaped, festival-style public space along the former railroad spur.
- 2** High-density mixed-use/housing opportunities along 2nd Avenue North and 1st Avenue North.
- 3** Enhancements to Innovation Depot including urban trail and public space connections and storefront activation on the 16th Street North facade.

- 4** Creation of a north-south spine connecting Innovation District to the Civil Rights District along 16th Street North with substantial streetscape improvements and infill.
- 5** Improvement of 2nd Avenue North as a “main street” for the district, repurposing existing lanes for additional parking and providing high quality pedestrian connections to 20th Street North.
- 6** Adaptive re-use of existing structures and construction of new housing on the existing surface parking lots with parking being moved closer to the tracks and, if necessary, into a shared parking structure.

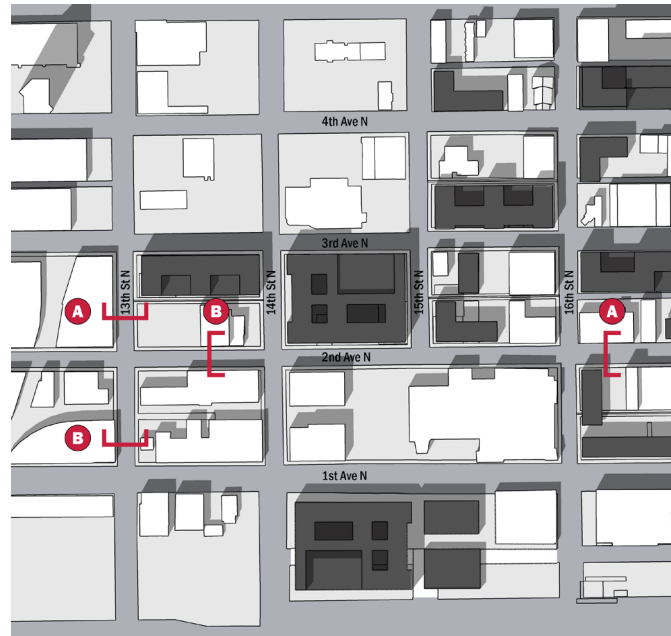
Street Improvements

2nd Avenue North and 13th Street North (Existing) | Section A

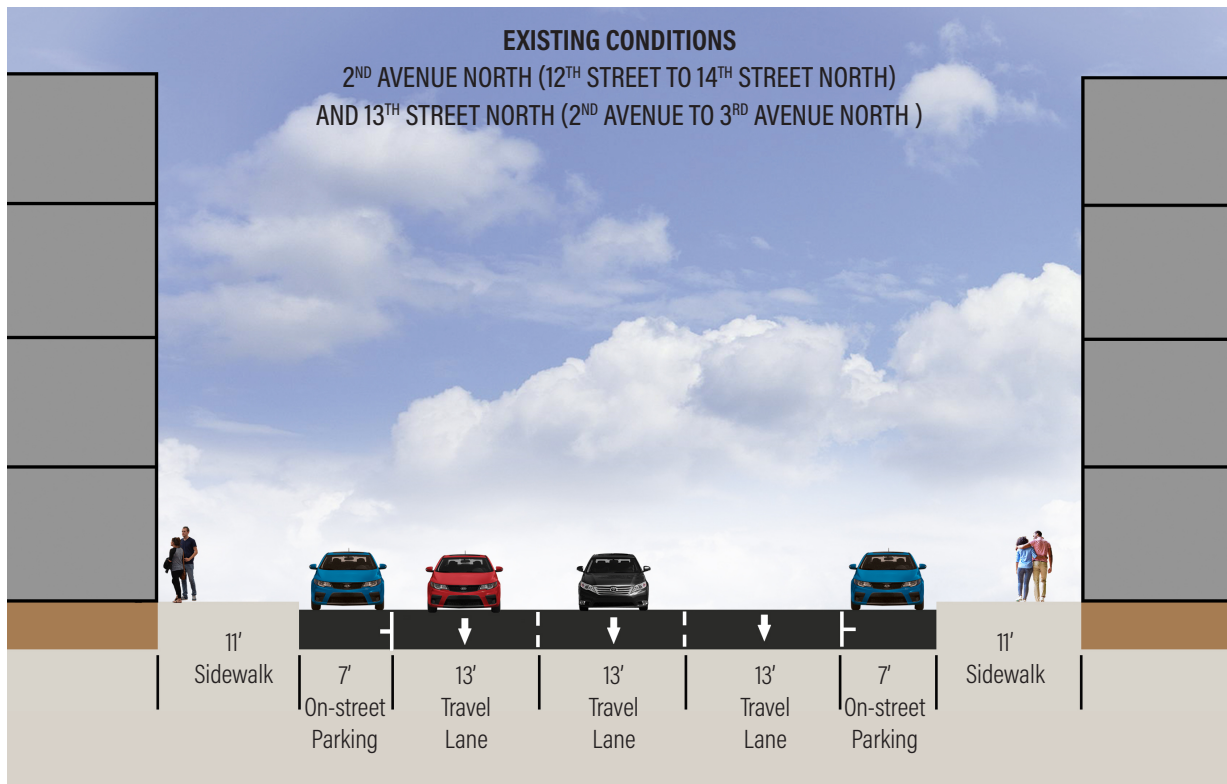
2nd Avenue North (from 12th Street North to 14th Street North) and 13th Street North (from 2nd Avenue North to 3rd Avenue North) are both three travel lanes with one-way operations inside a 54 feet curb-to-curb dimension with parallel parking on both sides of the street.

2nd Avenue North and 13th Street North (Proposed) | Section A

The proposed section maintains the same curb-to-curb dimension, but focuses on parking optimization. The streets are shown with only two travel lanes and reverse-angle parking on both sides of each street. The travel lane widths vary with the right-of-way but there is sufficient dimension to maintain a minimum travel lane width of 10 feet. The back of curb varies in width, but is consistently wide enough to accommodate street trees.



Key Plan for proposed sections A and B in Innovation District: 2nd Avenue North and 13th Street North

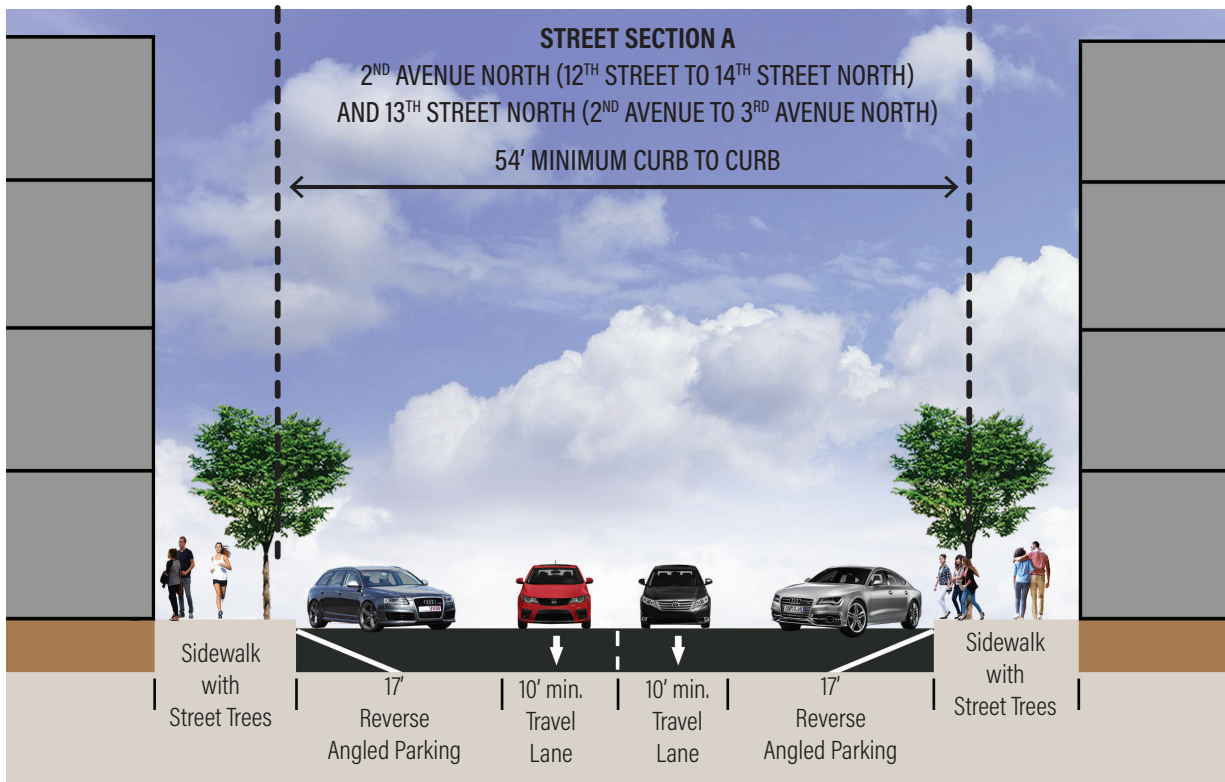




Left: Existing conditions of 2nd Avenue North Source: Google Street View, 2019



Left: Existing conditions of 13th Street North Source: Google Street View, 2019



2nd Avenue North and 13th Street North (Existing) | Section B

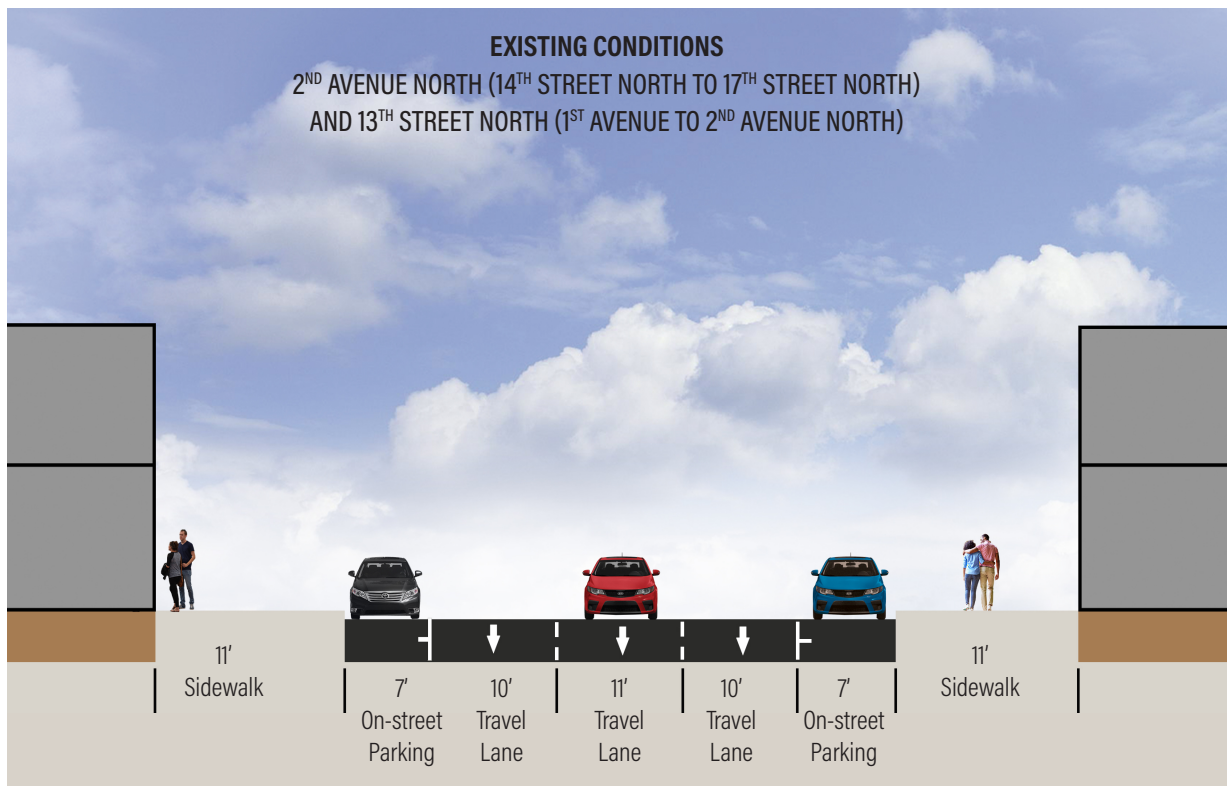
The existing sections for 2nd Avenue North (from 14th Street to 17th Street) and 13th Street North (from 1st Avenue to 2nd Avenue) are the same as the previous section, but are 45 feet curb-to-curb.

2nd Avenue North and 13th Street North (Proposed) | Section B

The proposed section maintains the same curb-to-curb dimension and continues to focus on parking optimization. The streets are shown with only two travel lanes, reverse angle parking on one side of the street, and parallel parking on the other. The travel lane widths vary as the right-of-way differs slightly along the corridors, but there is always enough space to provide a minimum travel lane width of 10 feet. The back of curb varies in width, but is consistently wide enough to accommodate street trees.



Key Plan for proposed sections A and B in Innovation District: 2nd Avenue North and 13th Street North

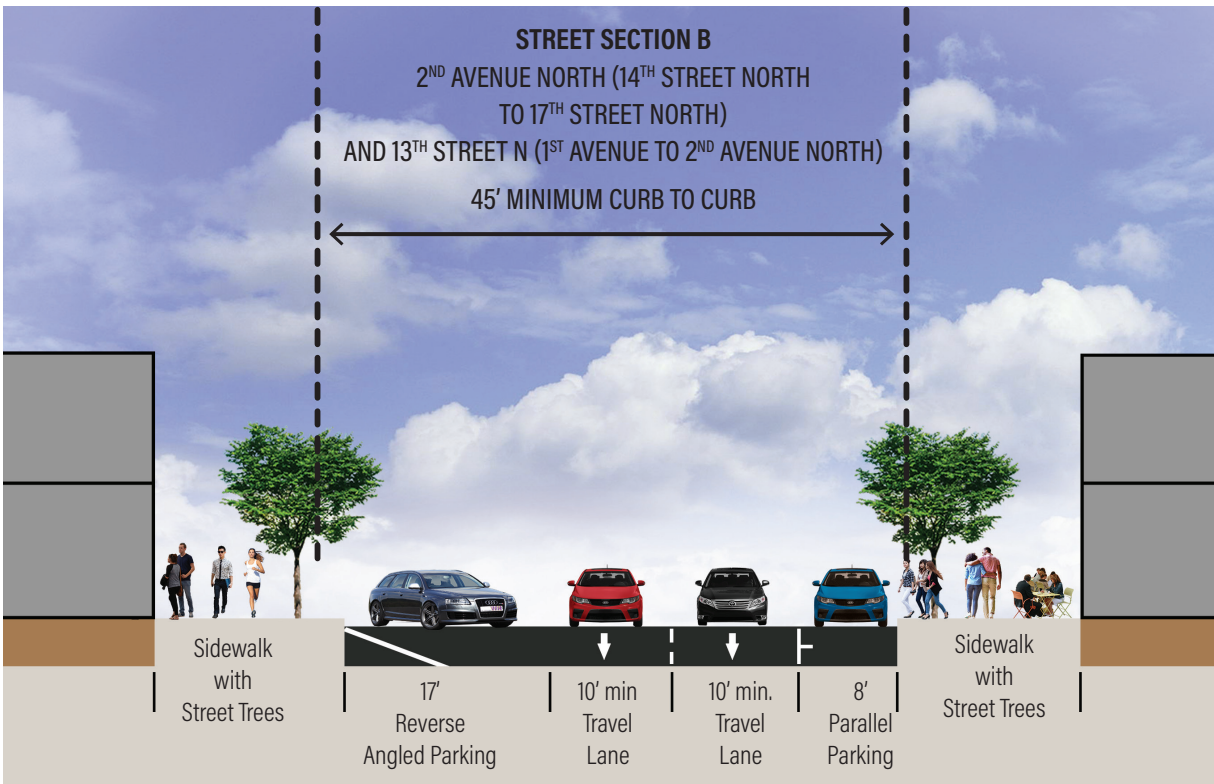




Left: Existing conditions of 2nd Avenue North
Source: Google Street View, 2019



Left: Existing conditions of 13th Street North
Source: Google Street View, 2019



Adaptive Re-Use Opportunities

Much of the existing structures in the Innovation District and elsewhere throughout the City Center are vacant warehouses and simple commercial structures that have fallen into disrepair over the years. These buildings, with their flexible interiors and varied sizes, make them prime candidates for adaptive re-use for businesses that outgrow the Innovation Depot or as additional incubator spaces to support innovation throughout the district.

The following images illustrate these opportunities through:

- Interior renovations, as expressed by active storefronts and interior lighting
- Facade improvements with decorative awnings, enhanced storefronts, and signage
- Streetscape and other active outdoor spaces to add to the vibrancy including street trees, outdoor dining, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and a rooftop terrace



Left: Existing conditions at the northwest corner of 14th Street North and 1st Avenue North

Below: Conceptual illustration depicting new tenants, streetscape enhancements, and facade improvements: continuous planting strip with street trees, outdoor dining, storefronts, signage, and a partial redevelopment opportunity





Above: Conceptual illustration depicting the adaptive re-use and restoration of the historic facade: rooftop terrace, signage, facade improvements, public art, street trees, outdoor dining, etc.

Left: Existing conditions at the southwest corner of 16th Street North and 3rd Avenue North



Innovation District Housing

Activating the Intersection of 1st Avenue North and 16th Street North

As identified in the housing market analysis, the potential for new housing in this area is substantial and critical to encouraging additional “cool space” development. There are a number of large tracts assembled under single ownership that can be easily developed with urban apartments similar to those completed on the south side of Railroad Park. The presence of housing provides an “18 hour” environment to a district that currently rolls up for the day at 5 pm by generating a sustainable demand for restaurant options, convenience retail, and additional mobility choices. Housing also fills in vacant blocks, which currently impede pedestrian activity, and helps to connect this area to the Civil Rights District less than 5 minutes away.



Above: Conceptual illustration depicting new housing on an existing surface lot across from Innovation Depot, a 16th Street North entrance into the Innovation Depot building, as well as streetscape improvements to 16th Street North including, street trees in planting strips, wide sidewalks, outdoor dining, on-street parking, and an autonomous shuttle route

Left: Existing conditions at the intersection of 1st Avenue North and 16 Street North

The Switch Trail

Interstitial, festival-style public spaces
in between Wholesale Warehouse Loop
buildings along a former rail spur

Because the old Wholesale Warehouse Loop buildings were built around a railroad spur, their geometries respond to the curvature of the tracks. Now that the railroad spur is abandoned, this space can be reclaimed for public or semi-public use - turning a back-of-house area for trash and utilities into a gathering space uniting the block. The quirky atmosphere offers numerous opportunities for enhancements with temporary and semi-permanent tactical interventions that might change from season-to-season to accommodate different activities in the community (e.g., festivals, markets, or concerts).



Above: Existing conditions of the former railroad spur in the block between 1st Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North

Right: Conceptual illustration depicting tactical interventions including a mid-block crosswalk along 14th Street North from the Innovation Depot, opportunities for public art, seating, lighting, and a small stage for informal music to create the Switch Trail





City Center Core

Existing Conditions

The City Center Core, approximately 6 blocks wide centered on 20th Street North from I-20/59 to the railroad, is the city's most densely developed and most valuable land per acre. It is home to a number of historic districts and distinctive architecture including the Theater District, the Heaviest Corner on Earth, and a large number of individually notable structures in its boundary. While it continues to be the largest concentration of employment in the region, a number of buildings have been converted in recent years from office to housing and hotels when the anchor tenant downsized or relocated.

Twentieth Street North, also known as the Birmingham Green, was so designated after a major rehabilitation project in the 1970's installed the expansive landscaping that is present today. Unfortunately, like Linn Park, there has been little maintenance or renovations and both public spaces are now in need of substantial investments. In spite of this deferred maintenance, ground floor activity is beginning to return to 20th Street North on its southern edge. Twentieth Street North is also home to two parking structures and their driveway entrances along the corridor, north of 4th Avenue North, creating a dampening effect on vibrant commercial activity. And, like other areas in the City Center, this area has seen significant loss in its urban fabric to accommodate surface parking on the edges over the decades.

Regardless of the current vibrancy along the corridor, the community reveres 20th Street North as their "main street," connecting the City Center to UAB on the south side. It's economic strength and density remains a major asset for the City.

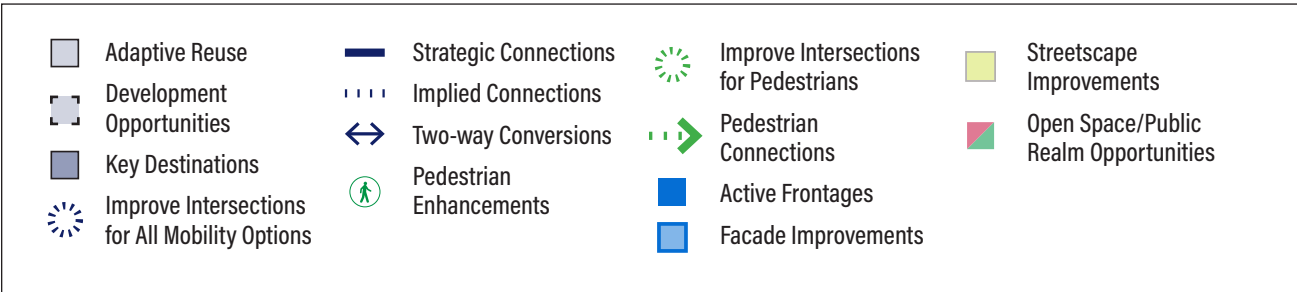
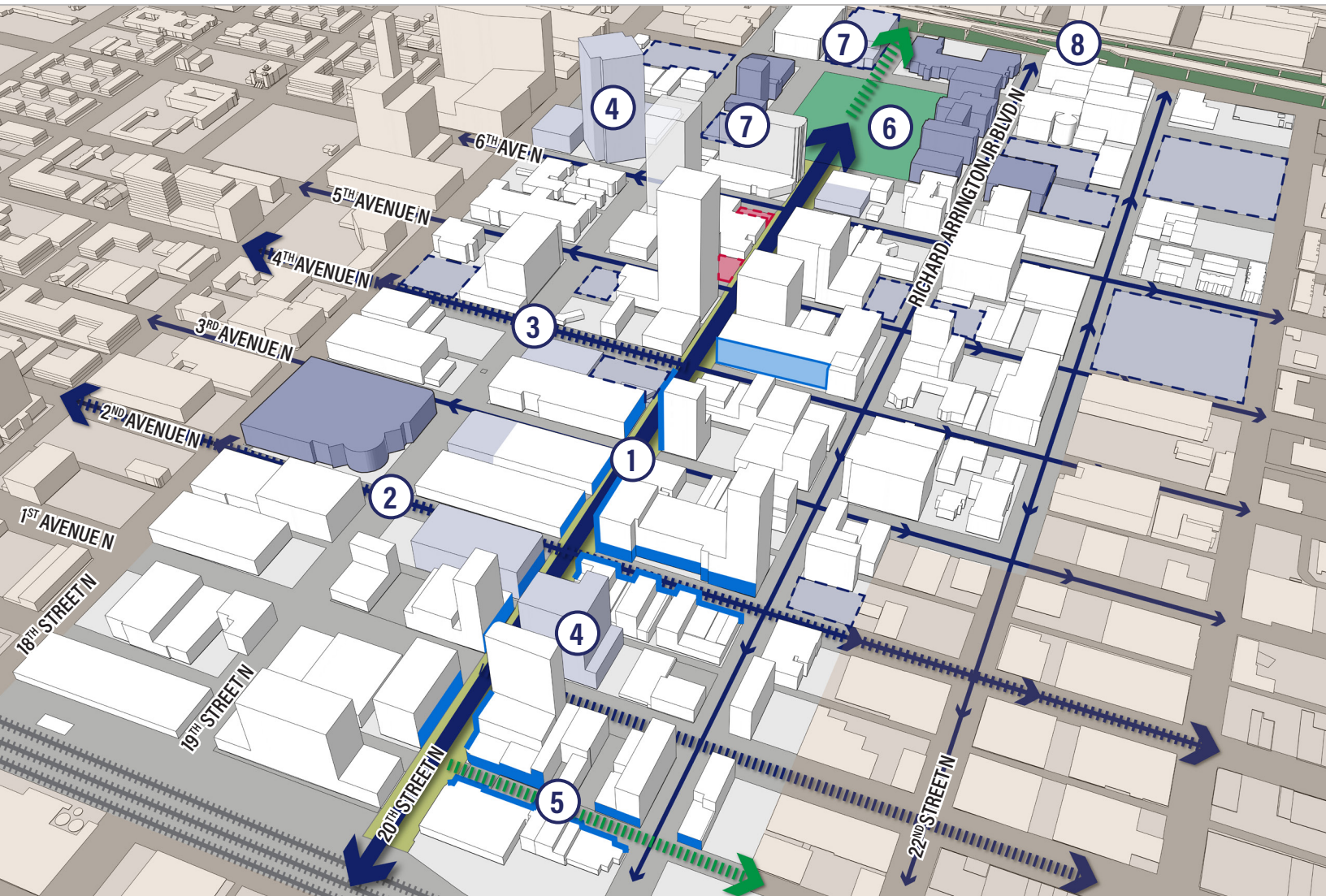
In the last decade, housing has begun to find its place in core and more is expected to follow. Yet, in the evenings, most streets remain largely devoid of activity. Getting a critical mass of housing and hotels near Linn Park will help to balance the daytime activity and be well supported by the Citywalk BHAM project to illuminate and activate the

Key District Initiatives

- ① Enhancements along 20th Street North to re-invigorate its 50-year-old landscaping including rethinking the public realm and key intersections like 4th Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North, improving public spaces along the corridor including plazas in front of Regions Center, and activating storefronts from 4th Avenue North to Morris Avenue.
- ② Connect 20th Street North and the City Center Core to the Innovation District along 2nd Avenue North.
- ③ Connect 20th Street and the City Center Core to the Civil Rights District along 4th Avenue North and 6th Avenue North.
- ④ New housing, hotel, and other mixed-use redevelopment and/or adaptive re-use opportunities in vacant and underutilized parcels or buildings.
- ⑤ Morris Ave enhanced as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented street with improved storefronts and pedestrian connections, specifically at intersections.
- ⑥ Linn Park is renovated and new mixed-use development in immediate proximity help to support its programming and safety.
- ⑦ Consider releasing an RFP for the redevelopment of the City Hall Parking structure and Boutwell Auditorium.
- ⑧ Complete the Citywalk BHAM project.



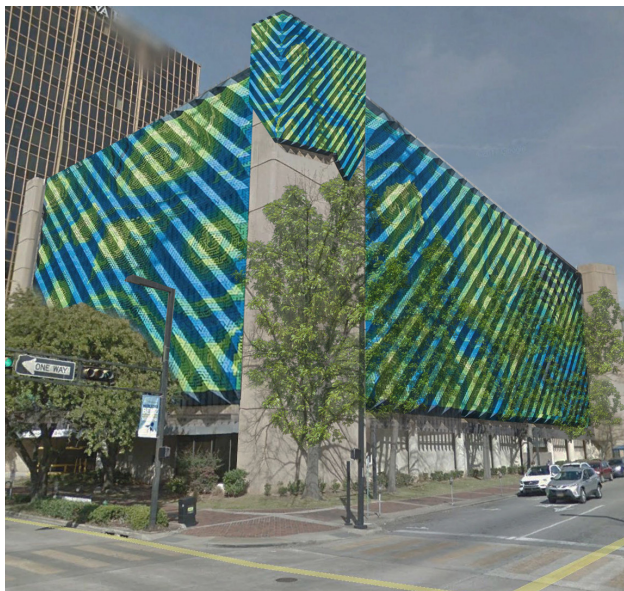
Image of 20th Street North with accommodations for people, wide sidewalks and outdoor dining.



Parking Deck Improvements

Improving walkability through improved aesthetics

Today, parking decks are a necessity in downtowns as most employees in Birmingham arrive for work each day by car. As the City Center adds more housing options and as it becomes more walkable, bikeable, and introduces other mobility options (e.g., scooters, autonomous shuttles, BRT) the need for these decks will decline. However, until they are demolished for redevelopment, the parking deck facades and ground floors should be enhanced to improve the pedestrian experience and ground floor tenant spaces should be actively marketed. The diagram on the right identifies parking decks in the City Center in need of changes.



Proposed facade screen for the parking structure at 20th St N and 4th Ave North (B'ham Parking Authority Deck 3)



The same screening material with nighttime illumination

Development/Redevelopment Opportunities

Development, redevelopment, renovation, and adaptive re-use opportunities include:

1. Parking lot at the corner of 8th Avenue North and 19th Street North
2. The Greyhound Station (recently purchased for redevelopment)
3. AT&T building and parking deck (under construction)
4. Parking lot at the corner of 4th Avenue North and 18th Street North
5. Boutwell Auditorium
6. City parking deck, adjacent to City Hall
7. Parking lot at the corner of 5th Avenue North and 19th Street North
8. FedEx, parking lot, and deck along 4th Avenue North between 19th Street North and 20th Street North
9. Vacant California Fashion Mall at the corner of 3rd Avenue North and 19th Street North
10. Historic Birmingham Trust and surrounding buildings, parking lot, and deck along 2nd Avenue North between 19th Street and 20th Street North
11. Birmingham Board of Education enclosed parking lot
12. The Brown Marx building
13. Jefferson County building parking deck
14. The Public Library parking lot
15. Parking lot behind former Energen building
16. Surface parking lots at Richard Arrington Jr Blvd North and 5th Avenue North
17. Parking lot at the corner of 2nd Avenue North and Richard Arrington Jr Blvd North
18. Vacant block/Parking lot: 7th and 8th Avenue North and 22nd and 23rd Street North
19. Regions Bank/Parking lots block: 5th and 6th Avenue North and 22nd and 23rd Street North
20. Underutilized parcels along 8th Avenue North



AT&T building



The Brown Marx building

20th Street Streetscape

As the overall “main street” for all of the City Center, the streetscape along 20th Street North requires special attention to detail. This plan reinforces the need for 20th Street North to serve as the City Center’s spine to which everything connects. Connectivity to get people to the “main street” is important, but what people find once they arrive is even more so. People must have a positive experience while walking along the sidewalk - it must be wide, attractive, safe, clean, and well lit - to enable them to further explore shops, try a new restaurant, or meet a friend for a drink after work at a sidewalk cafe. Signature Street elements and those in the 20th Street Toolkit are represented in the illustration to the right, including:

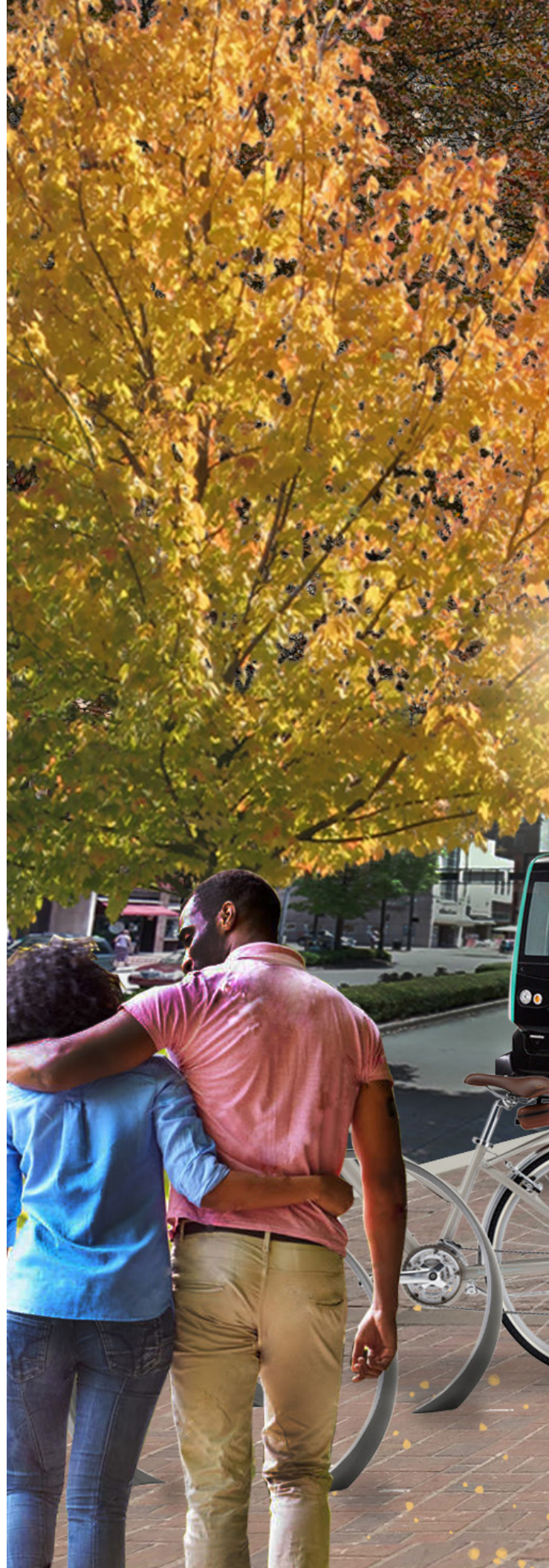
- Street trees in bioswales with other vegetation that also provide a pop of color
- Wide sidewalks with space for outdoor dining and temporary signage
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting, potentially unique to this corridor
- Wayfinding signage for locals and visitors alike
- Benches, bike racks, and garbage and recycling bins

Most important is a sense of consistency from block to block along the entire length of the corridor.



Above: Existing conditions

Right: Conceptual illustration of a 20th Street streetscape renovation





BHM Intermodal Station ↑

 Railroad Park

 Regions Field

 Innovation District →

 Theatre District

 McWane Center

 ←

 Birmingham Green

 20th Street

HAPPY HOUR

 MON THRU FRI

 4 PM TO 6 PM

 Half Price Appetizers • \$2.50 Domestic

 \$3 Well Drinks • \$3.50 Margaritas

20th Street North Mobility Corridor

Planning for the next generation of urban mobility

As the City Center's primary spine, 20th Street North (and South) should contemplate how it provides mobility solutions for the next fifty years with any renovation. Connecting Linn Park to Five Points South via high quality, frequent transit services would help to unite both ends of the City Center. Once established, this transit service could be expanded to include other key destinations in the City Center including UAB, the Civil Rights District, Uptown, Railroad Park, and Regions Field.

In addition to dedicated facilities for cyclists and people using scooters, new autonomous technologies such as automated shuttles can be evaluated. Some amenities and infrastructure modifications to consider are:

- Shuttle stops with benches, concrete landing pads for ADA accessibility, and informational signage (static or interactive)
- Lane striping and advisory signage along the length of the route to designate a 'smart lane' and raise awareness for those using other transportation modes
- Connected infrastructure, especially at controlled intersections with traffic signals or stop signs



Above: Existing conditions of 20th Street North at 2nd Avenue North looking south

Right: Conceptual illustration of a connected, automated shuttle using the 20th Street corridor





ONE WAY

AUTOMATED SHUTTLE ROUTE BE AWARE

Uptown

Existing Conditions

Located north of I-20/59, Uptown includes the Birmingham/Jefferson Convention Center (BJCC), a number of hotels, Top Golf, the future UAB stadium, and a small but lively entertainment district with dining and drinking establishments.

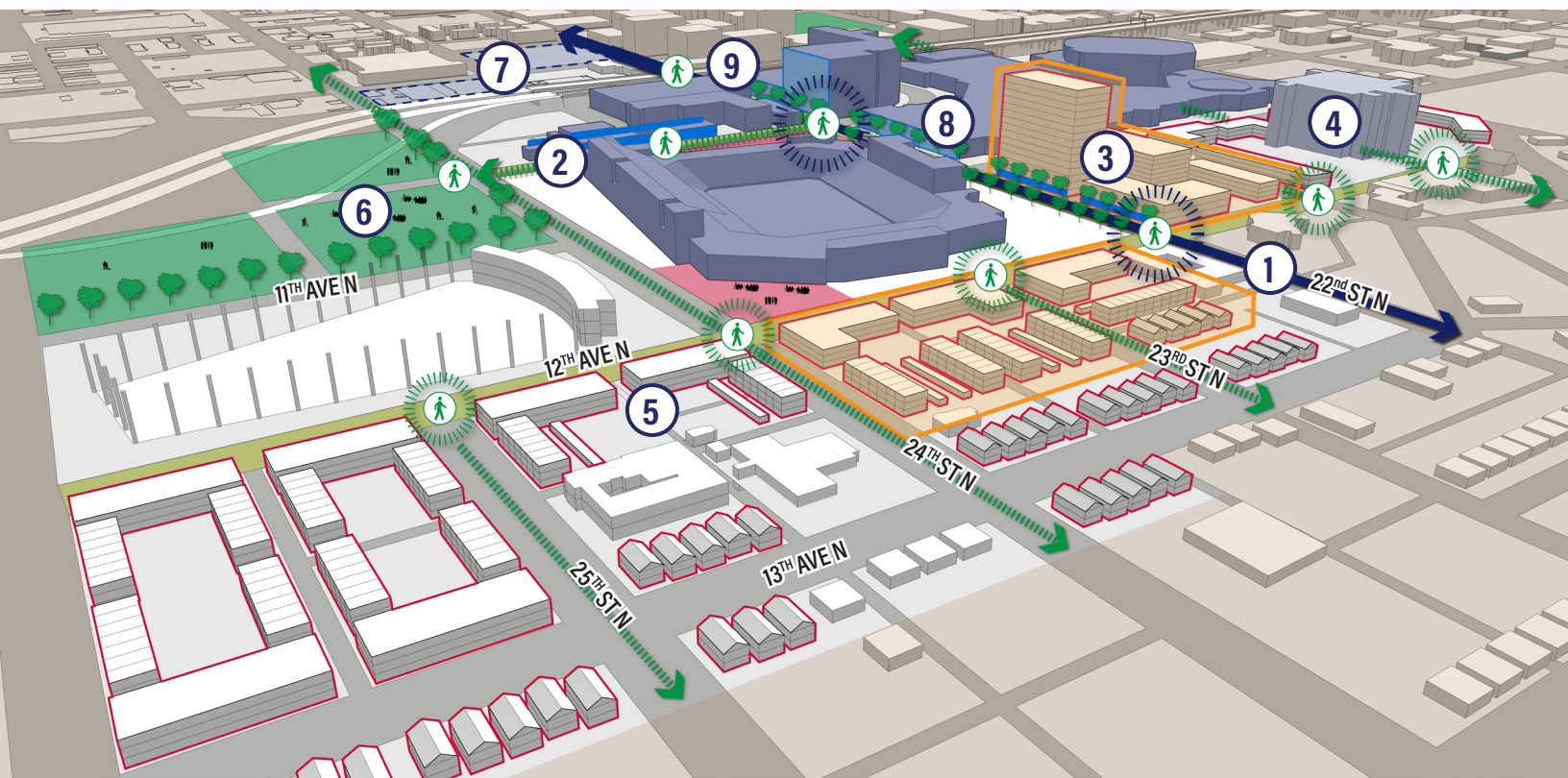
It is also an area that is visually dominated by surface parking lots, and vacant or otherwise underutilized buildings - the most notable of these is the 1974 Patriot Center building and its surrounding 2,000 car parking "structure," left largely vacant when the Social Security Administration moved to a new facility in 2008.

The reconstruction of I-20/59 is expected to provide enhanced spaces underneath the highway deck with public art, streetscaping, lighting, and other amenities to better connect Uptown to the core (Citywalk BHAM), though it will continue to remain a physical barrier nonetheless. On a brighter note, since the I-20/59 exit ramp in this area is being realigned, there will be leftover greenspace available for public use. Both Top Golf and the proposed stadium have large "green spaces," but they aren't accessible to the public. Providing a neighborhood park space would benefit those who live in and visit this area.

The planned football stadium will occupy four blocks of open land and surface parking lots. No new parking is contemplated.



Photo of Uptown's main entrance from Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard North



New Buildings	Improve Intersections for All Mobility Options	Improve Intersections for Pedestrians	Streetscape Improvements
Adaptive Reuse	Strategic Connections	Pedestrian Connections	Open Space/Public Realm Opportunities
Key Destinations	Implied Connections	Active Frontages	
Proposed Phase 1 of New Development	Pedestrian Enhancements	Facade Improvements	

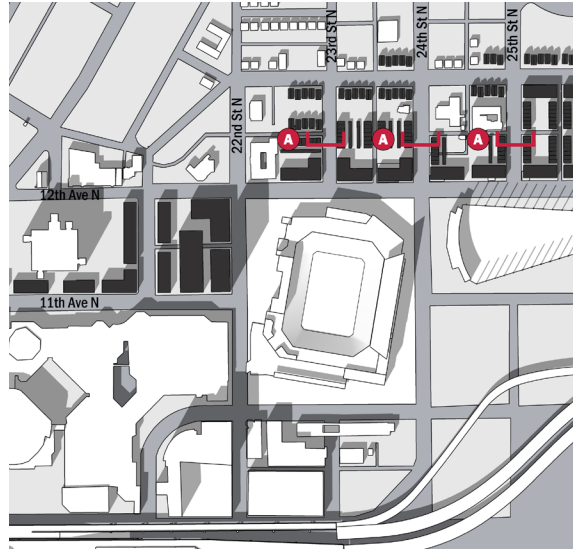
Key District Initiatives

- 1** Improved connections from 22nd Street North to the existing neighborhoods.
Richard Arrington Jr Blvd North connected to the potential open space and enhance the pedestrian realm adjacent to the stadium.
- 2** Medium-density, mixed-use development opportunities on larger blocks of underutilized land, including ground floor commercial, along active streets, such as 22nd Street North.
- 3** Redevelopment opportunities in partially vacant Patriot Center (former Social Security Administration building) and surrounding parking deck.
- 4** Lower-density housing opportunities on larger vacant and/or underutilized land, along less active, neighborhood scale streets. Use this area to stitch Uptowns impeding development with the existing residential neighborhood.
- 5** Open space opportunities under and around the interstate exit ramps.
- 6** Redevelopment and connection opportunities using Citywalk BHAM to the City Center Core and Civic Center around Linn Park.
- 7** BJCC facade improvements.
- 8** Citywalk BHAM.
- 9**

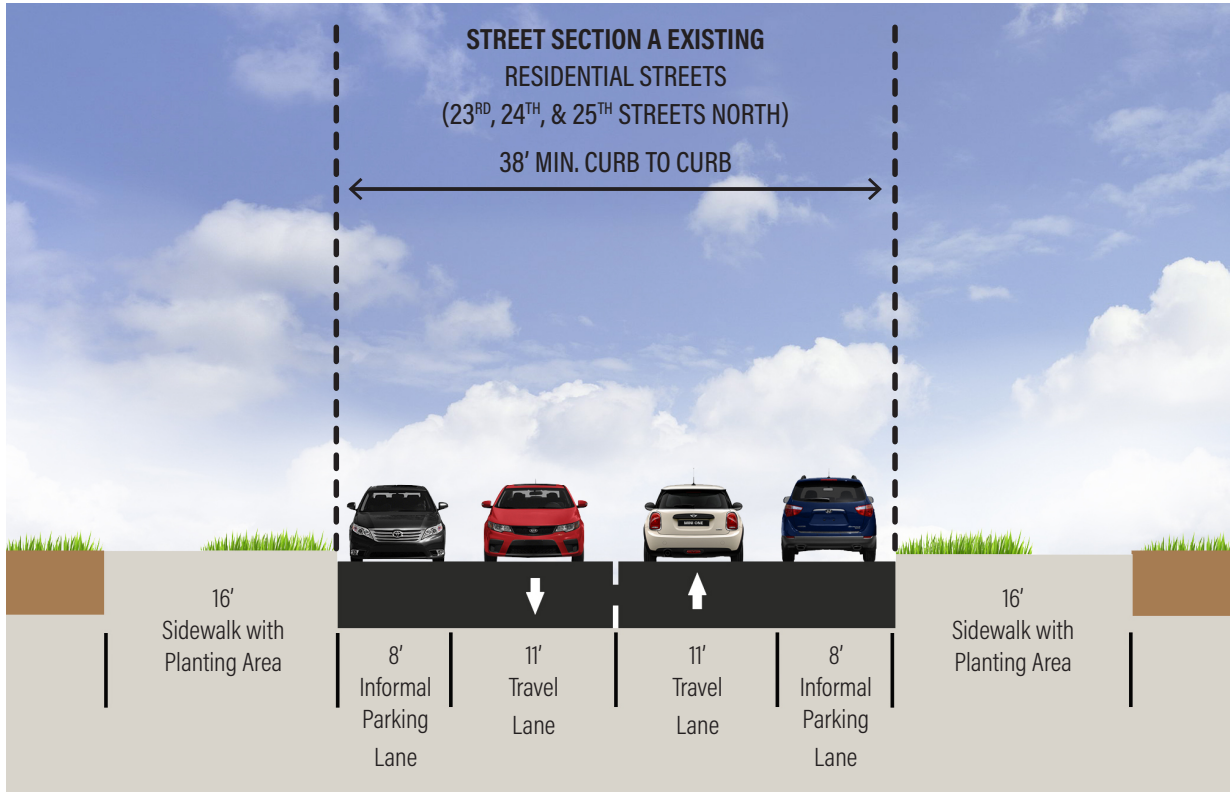
Street Improvements

Typical Residential Street (Existing) | Section A

Residential streets in Uptown include 23rd, 24th, and 25th Streets North. The existing sections include two extra-wide travel lanes, one in either direction, with a dashed centerline and informal parallel on-street parking on both sides of the streets. The curb-to-curb varies, but maintains a 38 feet width. Behind the curb, the sidewalks are fairly wide averaging 8 feet; however, the overgrown planting areas intrude on the sidewalk causing it to appear more narrow. Development is set back far from the street and the topography varies greatly, which could cause issues for future development in the area, especially for larger buildings.

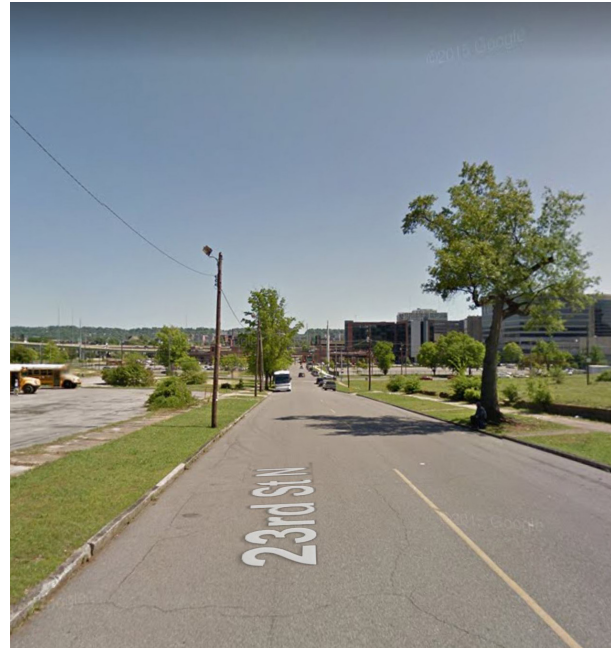


Key Plan for proposed street section A in Uptown: 23rd, 24th, and 25th Streets North

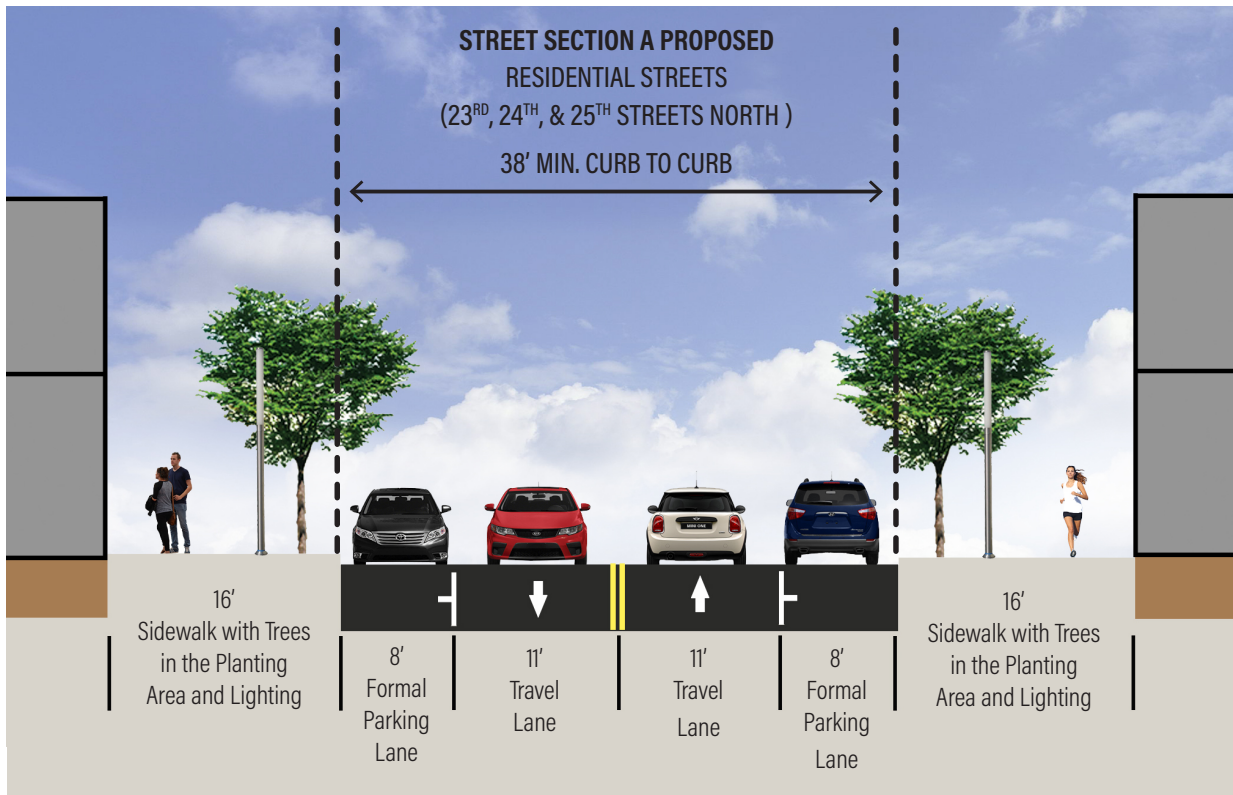


Typical Residential Street (Proposed) | Section A

The proposed sections for the residential streets maintain the same 38 foot minimum width from curb-to-curb but with the parking lanes formalized in their own 8 foot lanes. The centerline changes from a dashed white line to a double yellow line and the planting strip behind the curb is more well-maintained to have more regular street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting.



Existing conditions of 23rd Street North; Source: Google Street View, 2019





Uptown Re-Use and Redevelopment Opportunities

Redevelopment and Adaptive Reuse of the Patriot Center (former Social Security Administration building)

Over the past several years, Uptown has seen development expanding around the BJCC campus. The completion of the I-20/59 reconstruction and the addition of the football stadium will change the landscape of this area fairly dramatically. Development in Uptown thus far has meant the demolition of other buildings, specifically single-family homes. Future development should consider a mix of uses and building typologies, including housing to replace some of the residential population that has been displaced in the area and recreate a lively neighborhood. Redevelopment of existing buildings and infill around existing single-family homes are options in addition to new construction. One example of this approach is shown in the illustration above at the intersection of 11th Avenue North and 21st Street North with the partial redevelopment and adaptive re-use and minimal facade improvements of the Patriot Center (former Social Security Administration building) as well as the redevelopment of the surrounding parking deck for new housing. The illustration also shows necessary intersection and streetscape improvements to provide safe environments for pedestrians and cyclists.



Above: Conceptual illustration depicting the redevelopment and re-use of the Patriot Center, as well as intersection improvements at 11th Avenue North and 21st Street North

Left: Existing conditions

Five Points South

Introduction

The Five Points South neighborhood is one of the southernmost neighborhoods in the City Center, bounded by UAB and the medical campuses to the west and Highway 280 to the east. This is one of the oldest and liveliest neighborhoods in the City Center with a successful entertainment district at its core.

Five Points South is only 1.7 miles from Linn Park, straight down 20th Street, however, at 36 minutes on foot, it's a long and uncomfortable walk. The lack of pedestrian focus makes it a walk that no ones want to take, even on a perfect day.

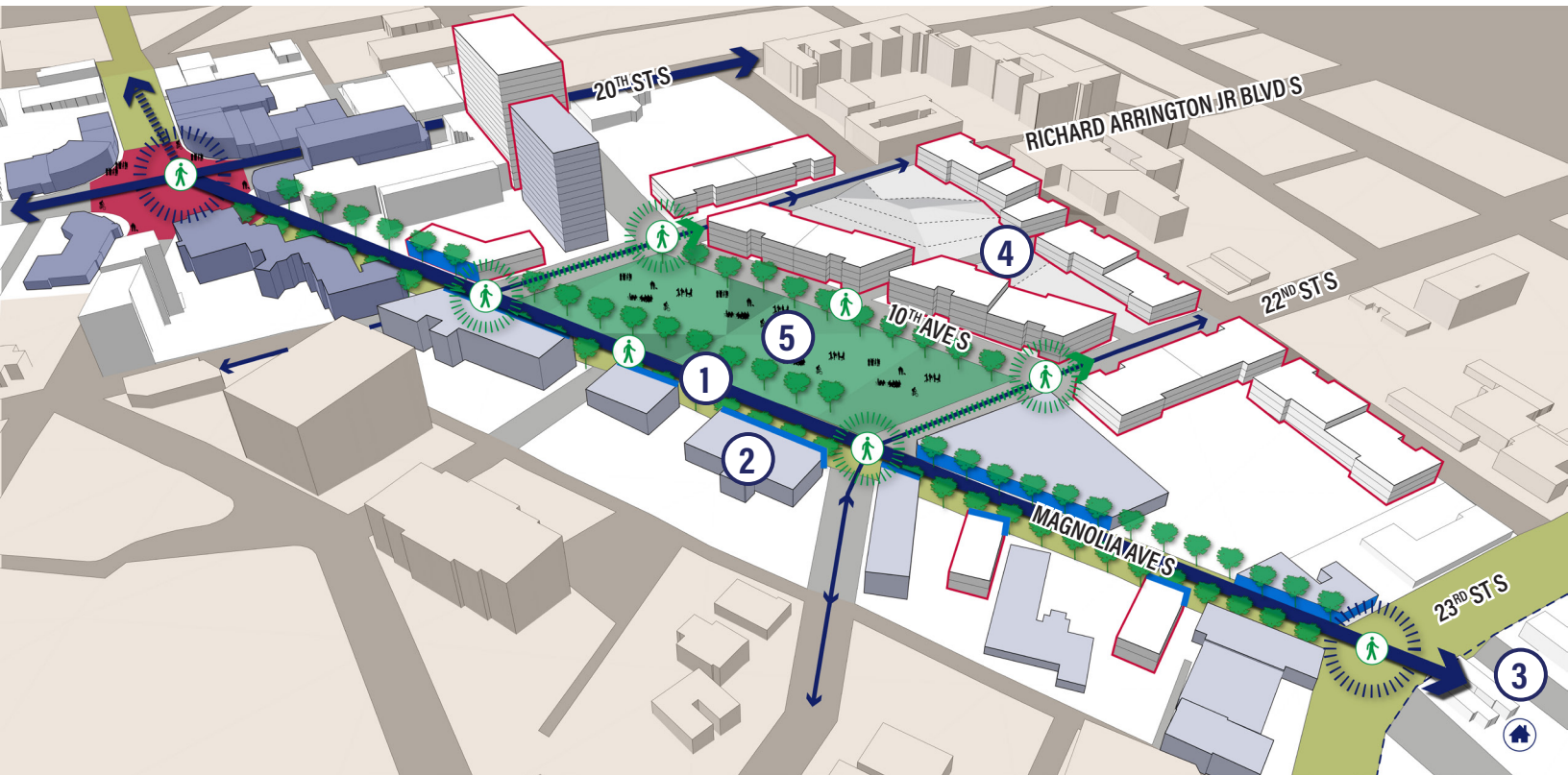
While the Five Points South intersection of 20th Street South, Magnolia Avenue, and 11th Avenue South is vibrant, this experience ends two blocks to the east as Magnolia Avenue crosses Richard Arrington Boulevard South.

Moreover, Brother Bryan Park is an under-maintained public space surrounded on all four sides by vacant and underutilized lots and buildings. The size of the park is adequate, but currently under-utilized, and should be renovated and programmed as a neighborhood park, anchored by mixed-use and/or residential along its edges.

Traveling one additional block up Magnolia Avenue, the 1941 Southtown Court housing complex is proposed to be redeveloped by a consortium of private developers and the Housing Authority into a large mixed-use, mixed-income development in the coming years. The sizable development will put pressure on Magnolia Avenue as the connector between it and Five Points South to be safe, attractive, and fully energized.



Five Points South



New Buildings	Implied Connections	Pedestrian Connections	Open Space/Public Realm Opportunities
Adaptive Reuse	Two-way Conversions	Active Frontages	New Housing Development
Key Destinations	Pedestrian Enhancements	Streetscape Improvements	
Improve Intersections for All Mobility Options	Improve Intersections for Pedestrians		
Strategic Connections			

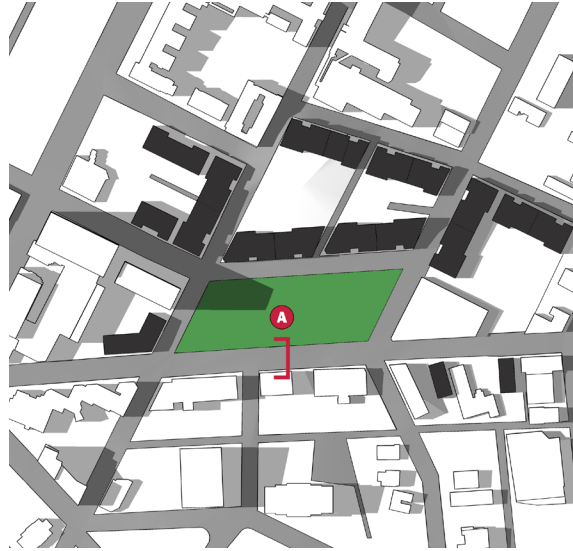
Key District Initiatives

- 1** Streetscape improvements along Magnolia Avenue, connecting the existing activity node at Five Points South with Brother Bryan Park and the proposed Southtown development.
- 2** Adaptive re-use and/or ground floor activation opportunities along Magnolia Avenue create a complete active storefront.
- 3** Proposed Southtown redevelopment.
- 4** Residential and/or mixed-use development opportunities on the blocks north of Brother Bryan Park.
- 5** Renovated Brother Bryan Park including a range of programmatic elements such as a dog park, open green, and shade areas.

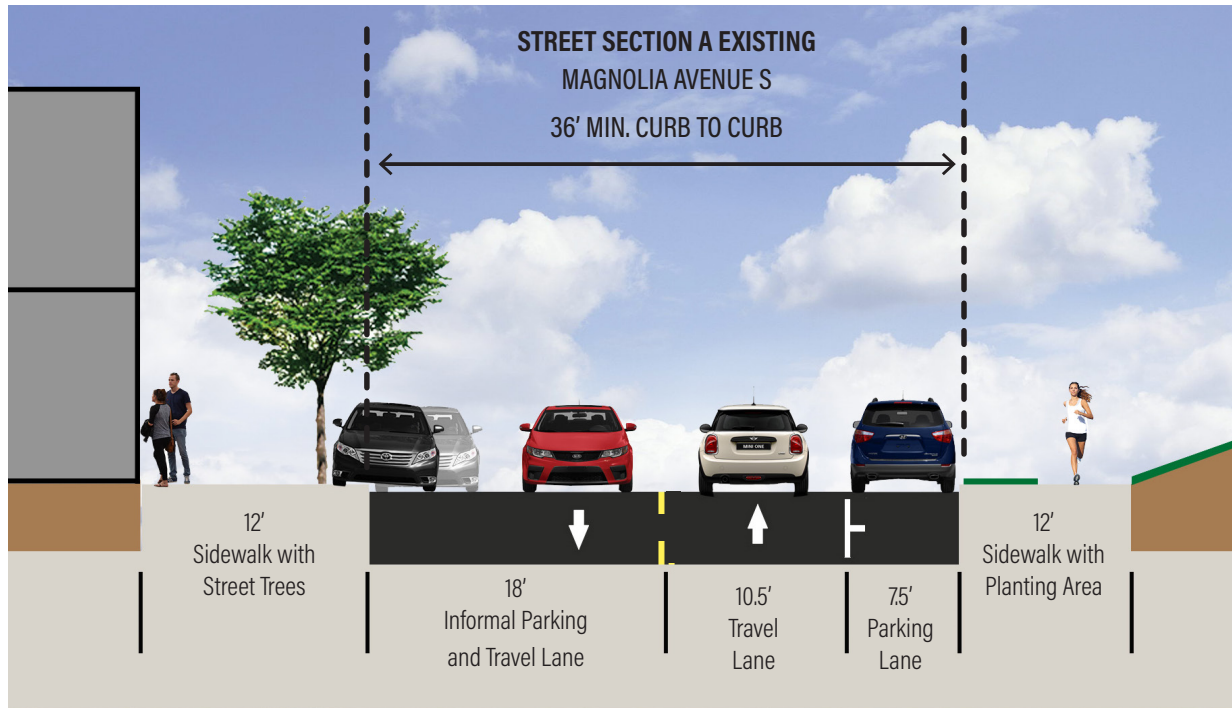
Street Improvements

Magnolia Avenue South (Existing) | Section A

Magnolia Avenue South is the main connection between the existing Five Points activity hub and the future Southtown redevelopment site. The existing section includes two travel lanes, one in either direction, with a dashed centerline, informal parking on one side of the street, and formal parallel, on-street parking on the other side, changing sides all along the corridor. The pavement width varies, but maintains a minimum of 36 feet. Behind the curb, the streetscape is inconsistent. For the most part, the north/west side of Magnolia Avenue South has narrow sidewalks with a planting strip and the south/east side has wide sidewalks with sparse trees in grates. The most important part of the existing streetscape to address is the informal parking. While the width is sufficient to accommodate both a parking and a travel lane, given the opportunity drivers will park on the sidewalk to avoid sticking out into the travel lane too much.



Key Plan for street section A in Five Points: Magnolia Avenue South



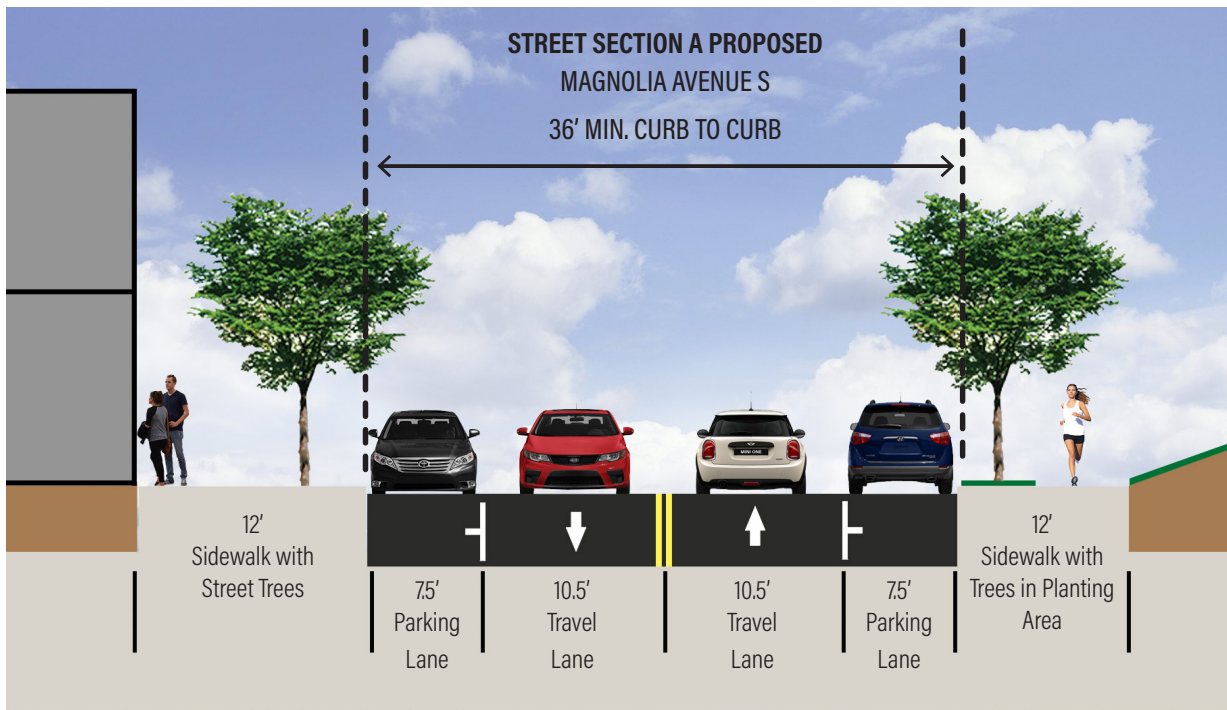
Existing street section with wide sidewalks without consistent street trees, informal on-street parking on one side and formal parking on the other, and two-way operations

Magnolia Avenue South (Proposed) | Section A

The proposed section for Magnolia Avenue South maintains the same 36 foot minimum pavement width but formalizes parallel, on-street parking along the length of the corridor on both sides of the street. It also proposes that the centerline change from dashed to double solid lines. The streetscape behind the curb should also be made consistent with wide sidewalks and street trees, either street trees or in planting areas.



Google streetview snapshot of Magnolia Avenue South



Proposed street section with wide sidewalks with consistent street trees, formalized on-street parking on both sides of the street, and more clearly marked lanes



Streetscape and Park Improvements

Magnolia Avenue South and Brother Bryan Park Improvements

The illustration above shows improvements for Magnolia Avenue South and Brother Bryan Park, as well as some new development opportunities shown behind the park to help anchor the edges. The streetscape improvements along Magnolia Avenue South include: formalized on-street parking throughout the corridor, consistent street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting, wide sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, and an artistic intersection treatment.

The improvements to Brother Bryan Park include:

- » A pavilion at the corner of the intersection to exemplify the activity in the park and draw other users in
- » Formalized entrance into the park with stairs, vegetation, and signage
- » Subdivided into programmed areas for active and passive uses, which could include a fenced in dog park

The new development along 10th Avenue South helps anchor the edge of the park to make it feel less overwhelming in scale, offers ground floor retail opportunities to help activate the edge, and provides more daily users to reinforce Brother Bryan as a neighborhood



Above: Conceptual illustration of proposed improvements to Magnolia Avenue South and Brother Bryan Park

Left: Existing conditions

Lakeview

Introduction

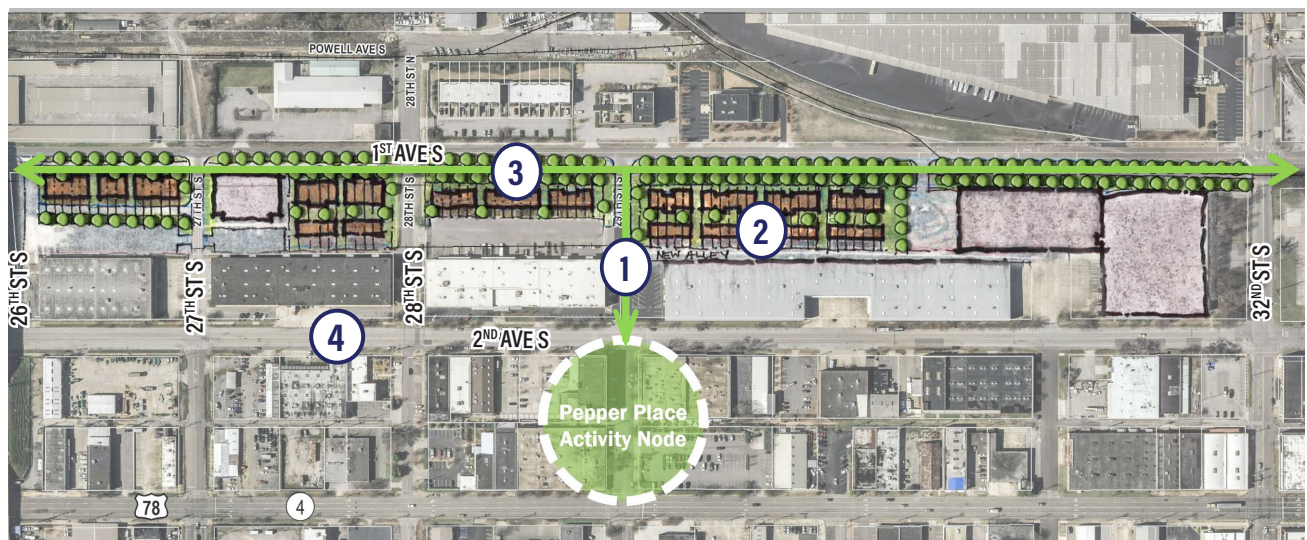
The Lakeview neighborhood is east of U.S. 31/U.S. 280, but still within the City Center. The specific portion of the neighborhood focused on in this section is along 1st Avenue South, north of the popular Pepper Place. Pepper Place is a popular entertainment district centered around the former Dr. Pepper Building on 2nd Avenue South.

The largely industrial area is situated near the successful Rotary Trail. The most notable housing are townhomes along Powell Avenue.

There are a number of vacant parcels along 1st Avenue South, some of which are attached to other uses, from US 31 to 32nd Street South. While the block depth is too narrow to efficiently facilitate large-scale developments with large parking requirements, they are able to accommodate smaller scale infill housing.

Key District Initiatives

- 1 Streetscape connections to Pepper Place activity node along 29th Street South.
- 2 Medium-density infill housing opportunity along 1st Avenue South and existing multi-use path.
- 3 Enhance 1st Avenue South streetscape from 25th Street South to 32nd Street South with continuous sidewalks (on the north side of the street) pedestrian lighting, street trees, and wayfinding signage.
- 4 Green streetscape along 2nd Avenue South.





Above: Conceptual illustration depicting new housing and the extension of the Rotary Trail along 1st Avenue South



Left: Existing conditions