

SOUTHWEST AREA STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS



APPENDIX C

**City of Birmingham |
The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham**



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

William A. Bell, Mayor
Andre Bittas, Director
Edwin Revell, Deputy Director
W. Thomas Magee, Chief Planner
H. Douglas Hale, AICP, Principal Planner
Wesley Vaughn, Senior Planner
Stephanie Cruse, Senior Planner
Jason Hjetland, Senior Planner
Donald Wilborn, Senior Planner
Michael Ward, Senior Planner

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Lashunda Scales, District 1
Kim Rafferty, District 2
Valerie Abbott, District 3
William Parker, District 4
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REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM

Charles Ball, AICP, Executive Director
Scott Tillman, Director of Planning and Operations
Darrell Howard, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning
Lindsay S. Puckett, AICP, Principal Planner
Mikhail Alert, Project Manager
Maria Hines, Community Planner
Hunter Garrison, Community Planner
Anthony Alston, Urban Planner
Brett Isom, GIS Manager
Marshall Farmer, Senior GIS Analyst

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CHAPTER 1

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Introduction

Two Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) - North Lakeshore Parkway and Lawson State - were identified in the Southwest Area. This was accomplished through building surveys, land use analysis, stakeholder meetings, and economic development perspectives. The aforementioned SOAs serve as the focal points of their communities, and their success is intrinsically connected to their surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, this plan devotes additional attention to these SOAs. Many of the following recommendations are drawn from this plan's previous chapters and are made even more targeted within these SOAs.

NEEDS

- CODE ENFORCEMENT AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE
- MORE RECREATION FACILITIES/PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS AND HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

OPPORTUNITIES

- BEAUTIFICATION OF BLIGHTED PROPERTIES INTO PRODUCTIVE USES
- COMMUNITY GARDENS + TRAILS
- EFFICIENT TRANSIT SERVICE

NORTH LAKESHORE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA

The North Lakeshore Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA) is one of the industrial districts within the Oxmoor neighborhood of the Southwest Community (see Figure 1.1). The majority of the previous development, which comprises of three-story apartments, office and light industrial uses, is centered within the triangle of Lakeshore Parkway, Venice Road, and Wenonah-Oxmoor Road.

The proposed Future Land Uses for the North Lakeshore SOA consist of four distinct categories:

1. Parks and Recreation land uses for parcels owned by Red Mountain Park.
2. Planned Development land uses for parcels located north of Lakeshore Parkway and Wenonah-Oxmoor Road owned by USX.
3. General Commercial land uses for the majority of the previously developed parcels within the superblock of Lakeshore Parkway, Venice Road and Wenonah-Oxmoor Road.
4. Mixed-Use Medium land uses for the vacant parcels along Lakeshore Parkway that lie west of Shannon-Wenonah Road and Venice Road. These parcels are associated with one of the proposed urban centers designated within the Oxmoor Development Plan.

The purpose of this SOA is to stimulate the development of an Urban Village at the intersection of Lakeshore Parkway and Shannon-Wenonah / Venice Road that would serve residents and businesses within the Southwest Framework Plan study area.

Catalytic Sites in the Lakeshore Strategic Opportunity Area



COMMUNITY RENEWAL



STRATEGY

Convert unused lots into productive uses.



Action 1

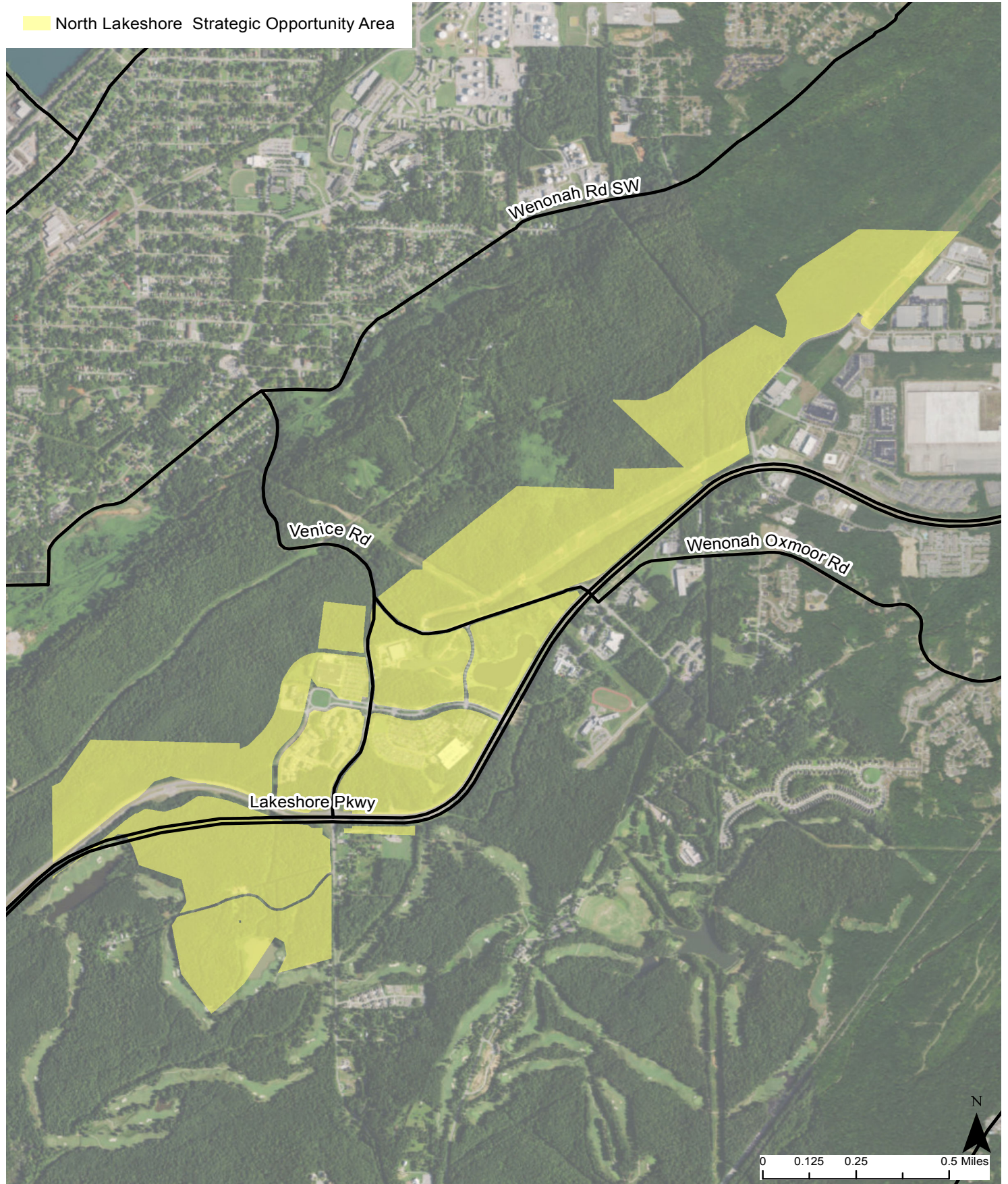
Encourage and allow residents to participate in guerrilla gardening to transform vacant lots within the SOA. Consider partnering with Red Mountain Park and Lawson State Community College to aid in gardening efforts.



Guerrilla Garden (Source: TheConversation.com)

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

FIGURE 1.1: North Lakeshore Strategic Opportunity Area - Southwest Community



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS



STRATEGY

Improve residents' access to fresh food through public-private partnerships.



Action 1

Establish a Farmers Market within the Strategic Opportunity Area to address issues of adequate food access within the Oxmoor Neighborhood and Southwest Community.



East Lake United Methodist Farmers Market (Source: Sheree Martin)



Pepper Place Farmers Market (Source: Shedrick Flowers)

Wildwood Centre (Source: Birmingham Bizjournals)



ECONOMIC VITALITY



STRATEGY

Encourage retail development that is suitable for the Lakeshore Parkway Strategic Opportunity Area.



Action 1

Evaluate the feasibility of developing regional shopping center at intersection of Lakeshore Parkway and Shannon-Wenonah Road to serve residents of the Southwest Area study.



Galleria Mall (Source: AI.com)

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Bikeshare (Source: [Alabamane.wscenter.com](http://alabamane.wscenter.com))



TRANSPORTATION
+
INFRASTRUCTURE

A STRATEGY

Maximize pedestrian travel between proposed SOAs, Red Mountain Park, and surrounding areas of Birmingham by implementing the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System, Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan, and by providing safe pedestrian crossings.

Action 1

Limit private curb cuts and drives along Lakeshore Parkway, Shannon-Wenonah Road and Venice Road South as new development and redevelopment occurs.

Action 2

Evaluate traffic control signage and regulatory signage to ensure minimum requirements are met, and signs are visible.

Action 3

Install ADA accessible sidewalks of the appropriate widths along all other streets intersecting Wenonah-Oxmoor Road and Venice Road as development occurs.

Action 4

Implement the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (RRVTS) by constructing the following bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (as funding becomes available) to achieve the Complete Streets goals and to accommodate increased pedestrian and bicycle activity.

- ✘ County Road 93/Shannon-Wenonah Road Trail (Sharrow w/ Sidewalk)
- ✘ Lakeshore Parkway Trail (Bike Lane)
- ✘ Red Mountain Park Connector Greenway (Sharrows with Sidewalk)
- ✘ Little Shades Creek Greenway (bike lane w/ Sidewalk)

Action 5

Improve crosswalks at all signalized intersections along Lakeshore Parkway and Shannon Wenonah Road within the North Lakeshore SOA.



ADA curb ramp and crosswalk at an intersection (Source: Lee Engineering, LLC.)

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

B STRATEGY

Construct a comfortable pedestrian environment that complements surrounding development and screens unattractive areas.

Action 1

Maintain and update existing street lighting along Lakeshore Parkway, Wenonah-Oxmoor Road, Venice Road and Shannon Wenonah Road.

Action 2

Consider financial incentives for a streetscape improvement program along Venice Road, Shannon Wenonah Road and Lakeshore Parkway. Streetscape improvements could include:

- ✘ Planting street trees
- ✘ Installing and maintaining street lights
- ✘ Providing trash receptacles
- ✘ Encouraging outdoor seating at restaurants and retail centers
- ✘ Displaying public art from local artists

Action 3

Design signage that is compatible with the scale and design of surrounding sites and buildings. Make signs appropriate in scale to motorists and pedestrians.

C STRATEGY

Improve transit service.

Action 1

Improve bus travel time on arterial streets.

Public transit services are an important form of transportation for many Southwest community residents and employers. At present, there is one existing Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) Max bus route that serves the North Lakeshore Parkway Strategic Opportunity Area. The bus route is identified in Table 1.1.

The Southwest Area Framework Plan recommends Route 39-Homewood/Wildwood be realigned to improve service delivery and efficiency.

D STRATEGY

Improve local transit stops and amenities.

Action 1

Enhance bus stop locations (shelters and waiting areas) and coordinate signage with local wayfinding.

TABLE 1.1: Bus Route 39

ROUTE NAME	# OF BUS STOPS (INBOUND AND OUTBOUND)	# OF BUS STOPS IN THE LAKESHORE PARKWAY SOA	MAJOR LOCATIONS SERVED IN SOUTHWEST AREA	NUMBER OF RIDERS IN JULY 2015
Route 39: Homewood/Wildwood	84	2	Wildwood Shopping Center, Oxmoor Industrial Area	8,253

Source: Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA), 2015

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

LAWSON STATE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA

The Lawson State Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA) is one of the primary areas in the Grasselli community with the potential to be a thriving focal center (see Figure 1.2). Wilson Road is the main thoroughfare within the Lawson State SOA. The area also has the benefit of being centrally located in the Southwest Area and proximate to Lawson State Community College. The recommendations that follow seek to attract redevelopment to the area.

The proposed Future Land Uses for the Lawson State SOA consist of five distinct categories:

1. Institutional land uses for parcels occupied either by Lawson State Community College or Wenonah High School.
2. Mixed-Use Medium land uses for potential future redevelopment of the Kimbrough Homes community owned by the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District.
3. Residential-Medium land uses for the parcels bounded by George Avenue, Howard Avenue, 33rd Street SW and Wilson Road to encourage the development of apartments and townhomes that could support student housing in the Tarpley City neighborhood .
4. Mixed-Use uses for the large collection of vacant parcels and single family structures which are located south of Kimbrough Homes and east of Lawson State Community College in the Industrial Center neighborhood. This area would potentially be the site of future expansion for both the community college and the housing authority.
5. Residential-Low land uses for parcels occupied by existing housing in the Tarpley City neighborhood.

Lawson State Community College



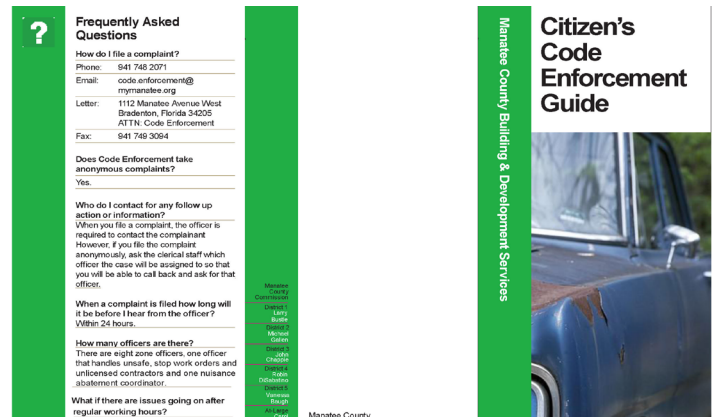
COMMUNITY RENEWAL

A STRATEGY

Improve code enforcement.

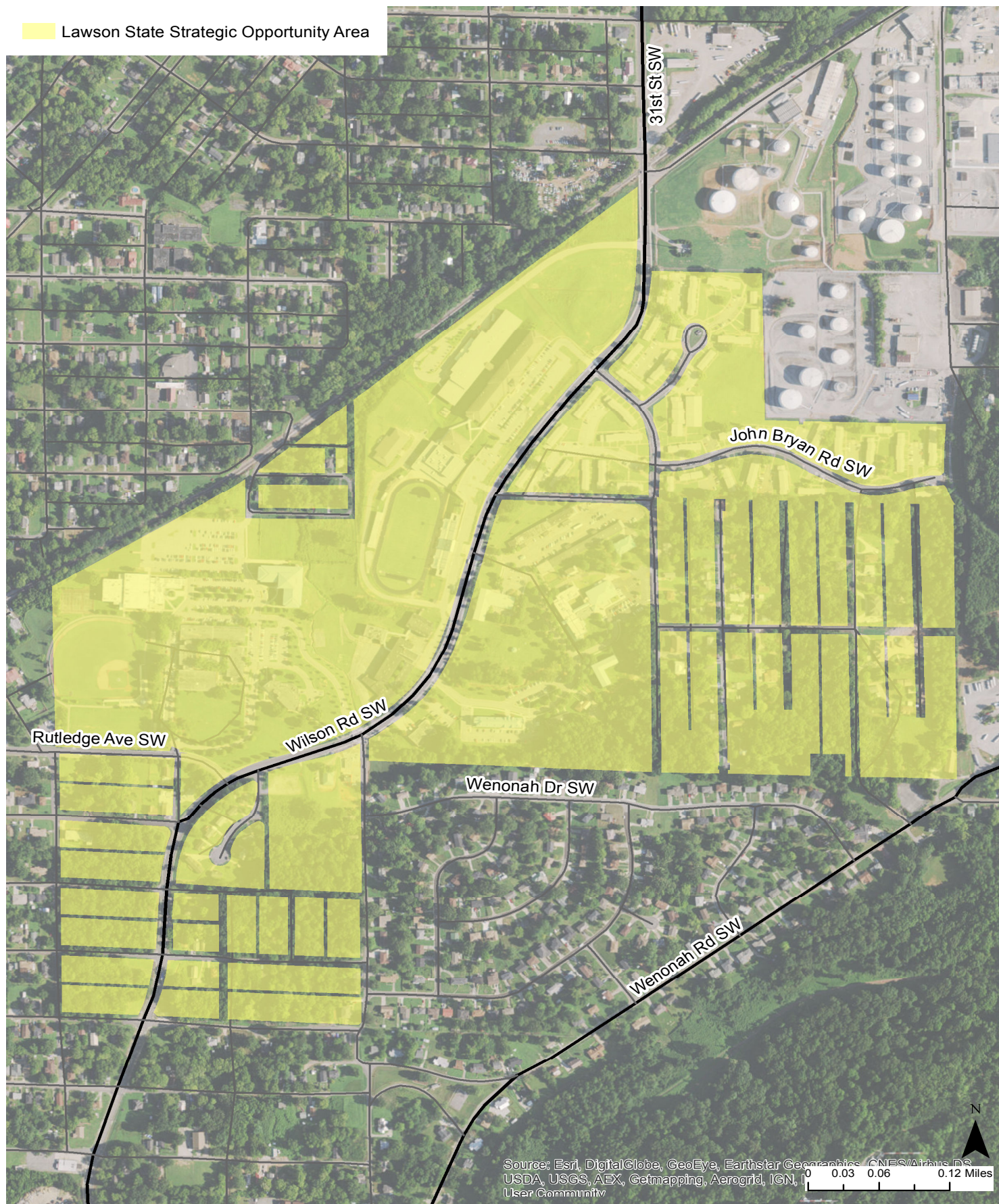
Action 1

Create and distribute a Birmingham Code Enforcement Booklet to enable homeowners and renters to identify building code violations and urban design issues.



Citizen's Code Enforcement Guide (Source: Manatee County)

FIGURE 1.2: Lawson State Strategic Opportunity Area - Grasselli Community



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS



Action 2

Enforce the Birmingham “Front Lawn Parking Ordinance” in areas of the West Goldwire, Grasselli Heights and Tarpley City neighborhoods that adjoin the Lawson State SOA.



Car parked on the front lawn



Action 3

Implement a rental property licensing and inspection system for neighborhoods adjoining the Lawson State SOA.



STRATEGY

Improve code enforcement.



Action 1

Encourage and allow residents to participate in guerrilla gardening to transform vacant lots in neighborhoods adjoining the Lawson State SOA. Consider partnering with Red Mountain Park and Lawson State Community College to aid with gardening efforts.



Action 2

Partner with REV Birmingham and Lawson State Community College to hold pop-up events in the SOA and make streetscape improvements along Wilson Road.



Volunteers help to revive a tired storefront in South East Lake off of 1st Avenue North to prepare for REV’s month long event.



REV Birmingham transforms vacant lot into thriving community space (Source: REV Birmingham)

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Lawson State Community College Campus (Source: Lawsonstate.edu)



Mt. Laurel (Source: DPZ.com)



GREEN SYSTEMS

ECONOMIC VITALITY



STRATEGY

Convert blighted properties into recreational amenities.



STRATEGY

Encourage retail development that is suitable for the Lawson State SOA.



Action 1

Encourage the installation of a pocket park in the area around the Lawson State Community College campus.



Action 1

Create a public-private partnership between Lawson State Community College, Grasselli and Southwest neighborhood associations, and the City of Birmingham to incentivize the reuse of vacant and underutilized structures adjoining the Lawson State SOA.



Action 2

Encourage small-scale retailers and additional neighborhood goods and services to locate within the Lawson State SOA.



Repurposed vacant lot (Source: Bring Life to Vacant Spaces)

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Action 3

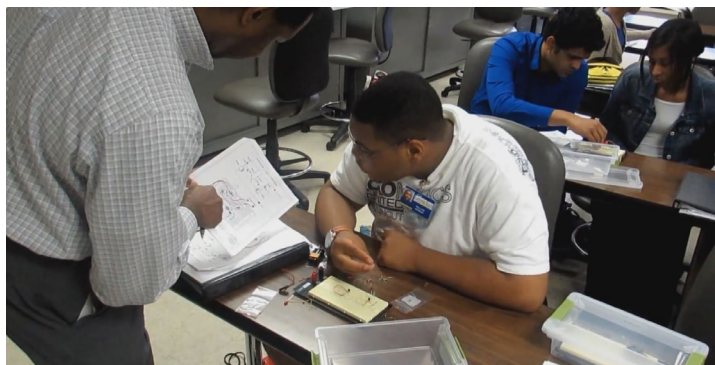
Incentivize, recruit, and attract a grocery store along Wilson Road.

Action 4

Partner with Lawson State Community College and other non-profits to establish a tutoring and mentoring program for at-risk youth.



Students learning about electrical conductors through Lawson State Community College 2-Pi STEM Summer Program (Source: Lawsonstate.edu)



Students learning about circuits (Source: Lawsonstate.edu)

Wildwood Centre (Source: Birmingham Bizjournals)



TRANSPORTATION + INFRASTRUCTURE

A STRATEGY

Maximize pedestrian travel between Lawson State SOA, Red Mountain Park, and surrounding areas of Birmingham by implementing the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System, Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan, and by providing safe pedestrian crossings.

Action 1

Limit private curb cuts and drives along Wilson Road as redevelopment occurs.

Action 2

Evaluate traffic control signage and regulatory signage to ensure minimum requirements are met, and signs are visible.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

**Action 3**

Prioritize installing sidewalks of the appropriate width along the following roadways:

- ✘ Wilson Road, between Ishkooda-Wenonah Road and Rutledge Avenue
- ✘ Rutledge Avenue, from Wilson Road to 38th Street SW
- ✘ Ishkooda-Wenonah Road, from Wilson Road to Wenonah Drive

**Action 4**

Install ADA accessible sidewalks of the appropriate widths along all other streets intersecting Wilson Road as redevelopment occurs.

**Action 5**

Implement the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (RRVTS) by constructing the following bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (as funding becomes available) to achieve the Complete Streets goals and to accommodate increased pedestrian and bicycle activity.

- ✘ Red Mountain Park Connector (Sidewalk w/ Sharrow)

**Action 6**

Explore the feasibility of constructing a Complete Street along Wilson Road.

**Action 7**

Improve crosswalks at signalized intersections along Wilson Road to improve pedestrian safety. Priority intersections include:

- ✘ Wilson Road and Rutledge Avenue
- ✘ Wilson Road and Ishkooda-Wenonah Road



(Source: activetransportation.org/Completestreets)

A balanced transportation system that includes Complete Streets can bolster economic growth by providing accessible and efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, retail, and transportation options (Source: smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/benefits-of-complete-streets/).

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

B STRATEGY

Construct a comfortable pedestrian environment that complements surrounding development and screens unattractive areas.

Action 1

Consider financial incentives for a streetscape improvement program along Wilson Road and Ishkooda-Wenonah Road. Streetscape improvements could include:

- ✂ Installing and maintaining street lights
- ✂ Providing trash receptacles
- ✂ Displaying public art from local artists

Action 2

Implement pedestrian wayfinding along Wilson Road, Venice Road and Ishkooda-Wenonah Road to key sites, such as Lawson State Community College and Red Mountain Park.

Action 3

Design signage that is compatible with the scale and design of surrounding sites and buildings. Make signs appropriate in scale to motorists and pedestrians.

Sign Family Overview



Wayfinding signs (Source: City of Provo)

C STRATEGY

Improve transit service.

Action 1

Improve bus travel time on arterial streets.

Public transit services are an important form of transportation for many Grasselli community residents. At present, there is one existing Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) Max bus route that either serves the Lawson State SOA. The bus route is identified in Table 2.2.



Max Bus (Source: AL.com)

TABLE 1.2: Bus Route 3

ROUTE NAME	# OF BUS STOPS (INBOUND AND OUTBOUND)	# OF BUS STOPS IN THE LAKESHORE PARKWAY SOA	MAJOR LOCATIONS SERVED IN SOUTHWEST AREA	NUMBER OF RIDERS IN JULY 2015
Route 3: Jefferson-Wenonah	90	8	Lawson State Community College	11,645

Source: Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA), 2015

**STRATEGY**

Improve local transit stops and amenities.

**Action 1**

Improve ridership and provide additional connections to retail and employment in the Lawson State SOA by realigning Route 3-Jefferson-Wenonah to follow Wilson Road, Venice Road and Sydney Drive, and to connect with the Route 39-Homewood/Wildwood.

**Action 2**

Enhance bus stop locations (shelters and waiting areas) and coordinate signage with local wayfinding.



Bus Shelter (Source: Brasco.com)

