



The Birmingham Plan

Draft 2 | 11/05/21

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A. Introduction

A. Introduction

Context

Context

Planning for the future of a successful City holds an intriguing set of challenges of which our interactions with the residents, workers, neighbors, and leaders in Birmingham bring forth. All too often the act of planning is encumbered by an obsession with the present and past. However, we've met with many people who look forward with hope. Even among the hopeful, a broader concern for deteriorating social connectivity rang clear in conversation.

While Birmingham has long supported a series of close-knit communities within its borders, the greater culture has shifted towards increasing isolation. This comes not at the fault of individuals - who remain bright, engaged, loving, and caring members of families, civic, and social groups - but due in large part to changes in the structure of our regions and technology's role in bridging social gaps created by increasing physical isolation.

Structurally, the fabric of daily life has been spread apart, few places as completely as Metropolitan Detroit. People have been spread further from their workplaces, social spaces, entertainment, and the staples of daily life, forced to spend an increasing amount of their time driving from place to place. Today, the resulting and relentless traffic congestion leaves little time for family or friends, and especially little time for engaging within our communities.

Birmingham is rare. It has been a place built heavily upon community, weaving together neighbors, schools, churches, civic clubs and institutions, and businesses. From residents, we heard a great deal of nostalgia for the City's former social structures. For some, the loss of strong social spheres is manifest in the changing character of homes and business districts. For others, blame is placed on greater societal issues. We heard the loss expressed especially strongly from the City's civic institutions which are trying to build and support community but feel that they are increasingly unknown as society has forgotten their critical role. Some feel that downtown's more recent intensity of activity has further eroded its' culture. Yet at the same time we heard a great deal of optimism from new and younger residents who are invigorated by downtown's activity and growth, an increasingly rare opportunity in Metropolitan Detroit.

Birmingham is rare because it remained intact while most historic places in Metropolitan Detroit eroded their downtowns and invested in car-centric roadways and businesses. As a rare place, Birmingham is desirable. That desire results in growth pressure which continually increases property values. New residents are willing to pay for the lifestyle that Birmingham offers, many stretched thin to do so. Some residents prefer that the City become increasingly exclusive while others feel that it is antithetical to the community's history. Many residents are dismayed that the demand to live in Birmingham has resulted in a significant number of demolitions. However, other residents have purchased the new homes for the quality of life offered in the City and its neighborhoods. Some residents would like to downsize and remain in the community but can't find the apartments and condos they desire. No single group is in the majority.

Through conversations with residents and leaders we've been exposed to these divergent desires. But overall, when we've surveyed residents, responses as a whole have been optimistic for the City's future. Birmingham is doing well today and will continue to be a wonderful place to live. As a result this plan looks to improve upon what works. The primary issue requiring radical change is the divide caused by Woodward. Remaining plan elements are either incremental improvements - such as bicycle and micro-mobility accommodations - or organizational improvements - such as analysis by Planning District and optimizing the zoning code. This plan reinforces the structure of Birmingham that makes it comfortable to walk, easy to meet neighbors, and a very successful community.

A Global Pandemic

In the process of reviewing the first draft of this plan, a global pandemic disrupted everyone's lives, work, schooling, and leisure time. As we submit this second draft nearly two years into the pandemic, the long-term influence of Covid-19 are still unknown. Questions remain in many arenas: will this virus become endemic; what will the balance be between working remotely and working in offices; how will interactions with friends, family, and neighbors change?

A. Introduction

Planning Districts

First we must acknowledge the tragic loss of family, friends, and colleagues. The community has experienced and continues to experience loss, and will forever be changed. Today we cannot know the extent.

At this point, with the pandemic a continuing issue, Birmingham has experienced difficulties and successes. The walkable streets, accessible parks and trails, and places to socialize in safe conditions have been invaluable for residents. The underlying structure of the City, which this plan intends to support and enhance, has provided a great deal of normalcy and hope. The City also benefited from years of outdoor dining experience, which became a necessity across the globe. However, Downtown has suffered with the loss of in-person office work, dining in interior spaces, reduced spending on shopping and dining, and supply chain issues. The long-term consequences are unclear, however many mixed-use districts like Downtown are beginning to recover. The future of office work remains unclear, which further reinforces this plan's goal of adding housing to the City's Mixed-use Districts. In fact their potential impact on parking is further minimized. We will continue to monitor trends during the plan review process.

Planning Districts

Of the City plans following 1929, only the 1980 Plan addressed structural elements of neighborhoods and commercial districts. Interestingly, when describing neighborhoods, the plan defined them by the roads that bound them rather than by a name. The scale used for many of the neighborhoods discussed by the 1980 Plan is similar to that which this plan has defined. Yet properly defining and controlling the extent of commercial districts and their effect on residential neighborhoods is clear. Through this process of defining residential areas and establishing permanent extents to commercial areas, the 1980 Plan began to identify a city structure, including recognition of the positive role that neighborhood commercial centers play.

While prior plans have dealt with issues pertinent to the success of the City and its neighborhoods, these plans have lacked the necessary descriptive language that clarifies where and why land uses should be allowed. Allocating parks is the clearest example. Today the Torry Planning

District, north of Lincoln, clearly lacks park space yet the 1929 Plan (See Fig. 1) identified a large park for this neighborhood which was not acquired. The purpose for locating the park in 1929 was in finding land yet to be fully platted and built upon. Today we can more clearly specify that the Torry Planning District needs park space, which is a more actionable proposition. Similarly, the 1980 Plan makes park space recommendations based upon objective, numerical analysis. Yet acquiring land for the neighborhood's future quality of life is an emotional appeal which requires a name and identity.

This plan establishes Planning Districts as a tool for evaluating access to community amenities, civic institutions, and neighborhood-centric commercial areas. Planning Districts are also a tool for evaluating access to facilities like bicycle facilities and improved streets. Not every deficit can be corrected, but evaluating the deficit leads to discussions of alternatives and opportunities. While there may be a few opportunities to add park space in the Torry District, the Quarton District also lacks park space but has no space to allocate. Rather in the Quarton District, the use and improvement of nearby school fields may be the most viable outcome. These districts are derived from prior plans and solidified here so they continue as a useful civic tool for the future.

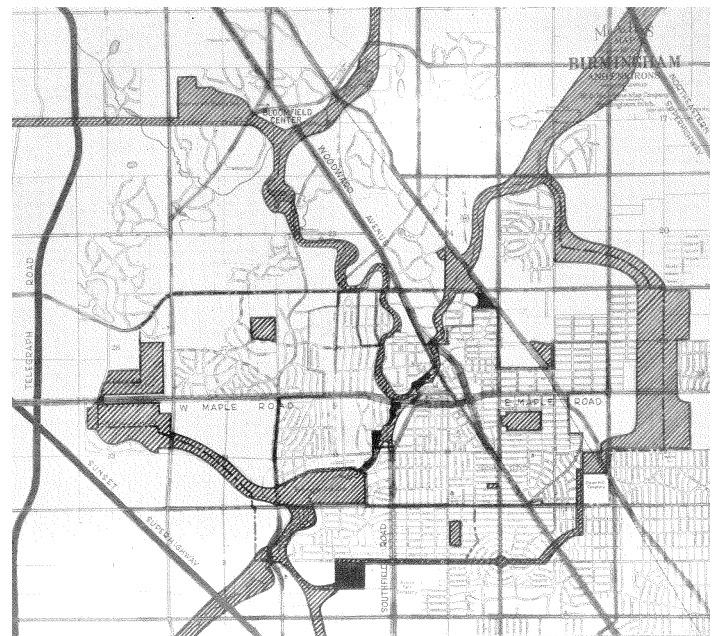


Figure 1. 1929 Plan of Birmingham and Vicinity - the shaded areas indicate proposed future parkways.

A. Introduction

Planning Districts

Retaining Quality of Life

Birmingham’s high quality of life comes from a number of relatively mundane characteristics, but the city stands out in that it has retained all of these characteristics while other places have not. Just as quality of life has a positive feedback loop with resident pride and local investment, it also does with fiscal viability. The city is fiscally successful because it invests in itself, residents invest in the city, and overall that maintains a high quality of life. Elements key to that quality of life are:

1. School quality and access
2. Park quality, access, and diversity

3. Downtown access and success
4. Tree canopy
5. Narrow streets
6. Walkability
7. Age diversity
8. Property maintenance
9. Housing diversity and quality

Individually each of these elements is rather mundane, but they work together to make places feel safe, comfortable, friendly, and relaxed - like home. While not an element above, good governance is and has been key to maintaining these individual qualities and the city’s overall quality of life.

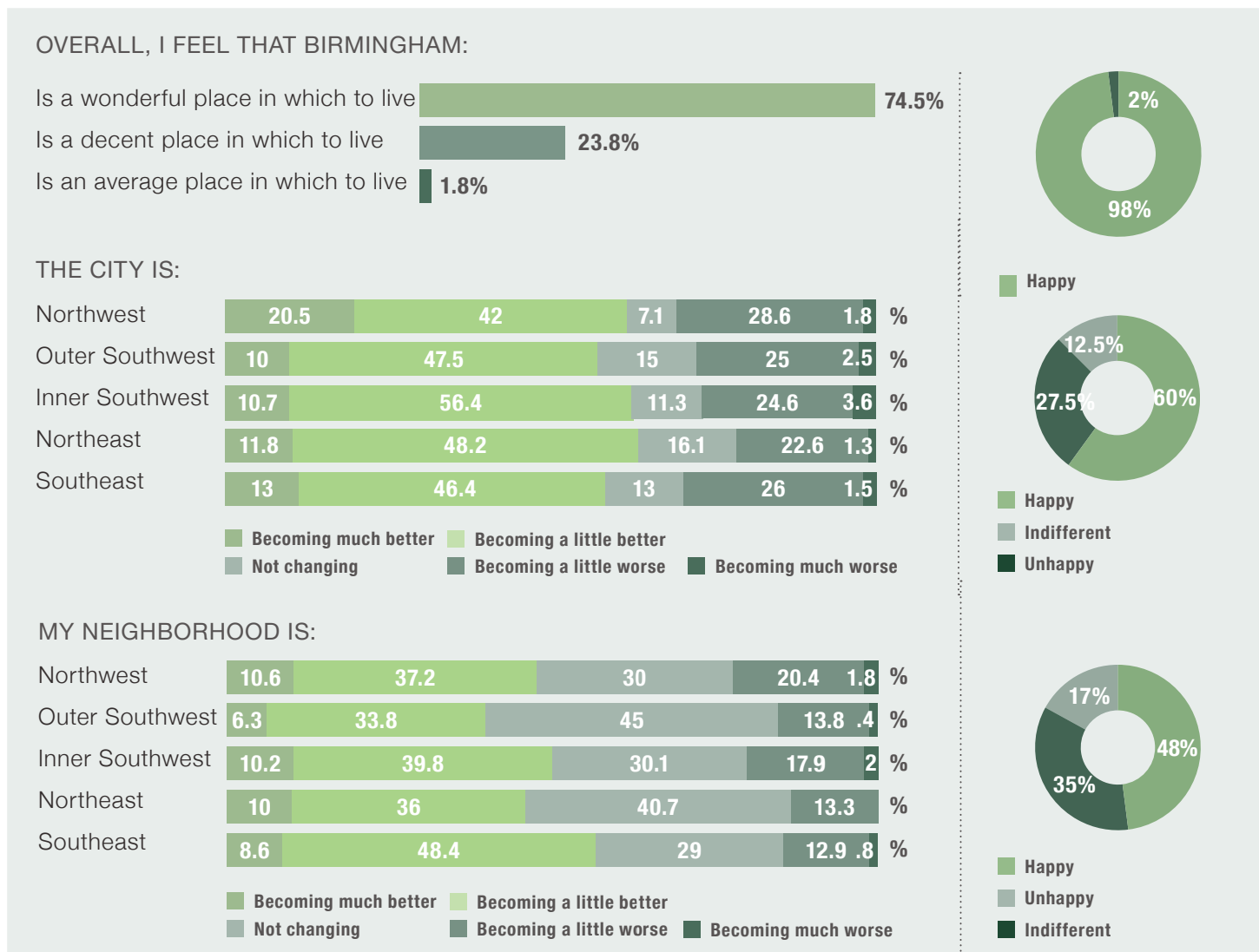


Figure 2. The Birmingham Plan initial survey results (May 2019).

A. Introduction

Planning Districts

Resilience is an important quality for any community to possess. As the world changes, cities need to withstand those changes and emerge strong. Birmingham has fared well in this regard throughout its' history, despite the disastrous blows many cities have endured through the 20th Century. Resilience is derived from social, physical, environmental, and governmental systems. Each of these areas influences the other; a healthy and resilient community must understand the balance and interaction of its systems, that decisions and initiatives should be weighed by their impact in all of these areas.

Ultimately, cities are social ecosystems for people. Cities thrive where people build roots and interconnections, the physical social network. Neighborhood social networks build, support, and retain a high quality of life. Citywide social networks build, support, and retain civic services such as schools, parks, libraries and historical resources, support organizations for seniors, impoverished residents, and others, extracurricular educational, skills, health development, and community building activities. Business social networks build innovation and local economies. Each scale of physical social network needs a means for people to observe each other in the city, places for them to meet and interact, and support structures which help them develop. For instance, people who enjoy observing nature need places to do so alone and together, and an advocacy organization for ecological preservation. Similarly, business innovation needs space for creative and driven people to interact, and buildings with inexpensive rent or shared facilities where they can incubate new ventures.

A key component of all three social realms is diversity. When cities become too narrow in their diversity of age, race, family structure, background, experience, civic institutions, and businesses, they eventually decline. Residents have discussed the needs of the older adult population extensively. Discussed less frequently are the needs of middle aged and younger populations. Focusing too much on one group over another is a distraction of the

present; cities need to provide for and retain a population that is diverse in age. Similarly, businesses must be diverse in their sizes, areas of focus, and age. Cities need well established businesses along with new and innovative businesses. To achieve this, buildings are needed which differ in the size of space provided, rent, and location in the community, and zoning needs to allow for a broad and ever-changing range of business types.

As places where people exist in physical space, cities must be supportive of peoples' physical needs and abilities, and provide the spaces necessary for interpersonal networks to thrive. At a basic level, people need food, shelter, exercise, and access to nature. To exist as a broader society, people need access to a marketplace and places to gather. While food and shelter are often discussed, exercise and access to nature have only more recently been studied. The form of a city significantly influences one's likelihood of daily exercise. If much of a day's trips can occur by walking and biking, then on average people are physically healthier. When a city maintains a vibrant tree canopy, parks, and natural areas, combined with opportunities to walk, people are mentally healthier. At the broader societal level, people need a marketplace for jobs and to acquire goods. Ideally this should be near to where they live to achieve the physical and mental advantages of walking and nature. And places to gather are also key social requirements, which should be varied in type and distributed throughout the community, typically in the form of plazas, parks, and preserves,



Figure 3. Vibrant tree canopy in Birmingham.

A. Introduction

Planning Districts

but also in the form of cafes, markets, and social clubs.

Birmingham straddles the Rouge River and has a direct relationship with the watershed. The river and watershed are important for the region and for peoples' daily life in the city. Since the industrial revolution, cities have done a poor job of caring for the natural environment upon which they are built. Eventually those natural systems react in a way that makes places less hospitable. For instance, caring for the city's soils, water quality, and street design and maintenance impacts the health and longevity of street trees, which impact mental health, clean the air of pollutants, and keep the City cool during the hot months. Beyond the immediate environment of Birmingham, choices made within the city have a broader impact. Buildings can use less energy or generate their own, driving can be reduced, recycling opportunities can be expanded, composting opportunities can be added, and choices being made concerning material use in homes, businesses, and municipal operations can cause less impact. Overall, caring for the city's local environment and lessening its impact on the broader environment will in turn support the city's future health.

All of these other aspects of resilience rely upon good governance. Yet in a dynamic city, and a distracted society, governance is difficult. Too often difficult decisions are put off and important ones not made to

avoid conflict. And as part of this ethos, new and innovative ideas are also pushed aside. Rather than regularly voicing their desires for the City's future, those who support change don't get involved while those who oppose it show up in force and ferocity. In the lead-up to the master plan's charrette process, a digital survey of residents painted a very different picture than what was heard in person, representing nearly 10 times the number of people. In order to better inform decision-making the City should endeavor to reach a broad cross-section of residents, many of whom cannot attend meetings. It should also support the physical world social network needed to support an engaged and broad constituent. This is a key point where the physical and social structure of the city should better support its' governance. When working well, broad participation helps a city remain resilient. When working poorly, the loud voice of the minority weakens a city's ability to adapt to the future.



Figure 4. Residents biking in Birmingham.



Figure 5. Birmingham Hometown Parade (May 2019).

B. Future Land Use

B. Future Land Use

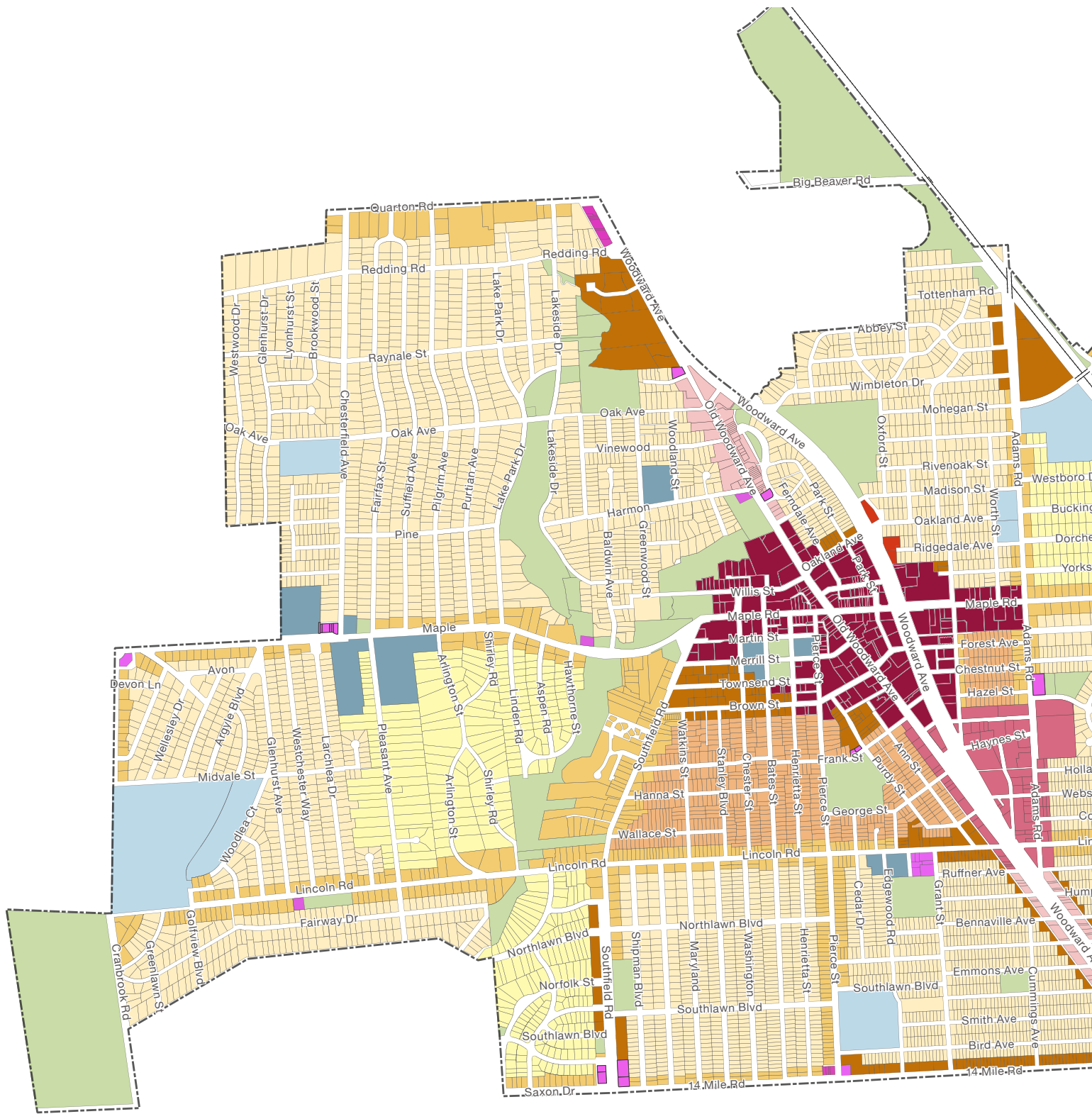


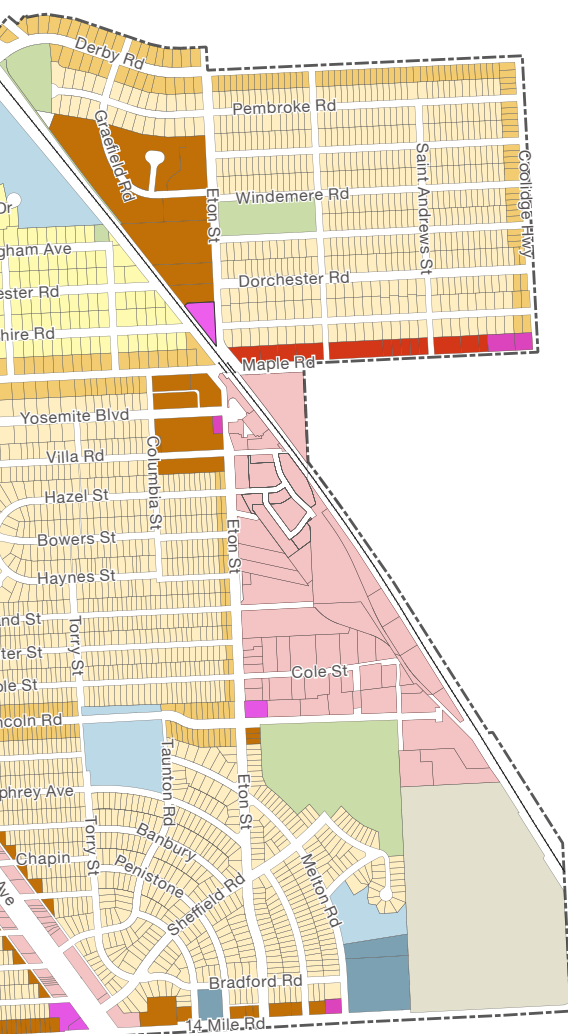
Figure 6. Future Land Use Map.

B. Future Land Use

Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Map

Birmingham's future land use map is structured by Planning District boundaries within which land uses reinforce the desired future character. This map serves as the basis for zoning, specifying where different uses and intensities are appropriate throughout the City. This Future Land Use Map aims to identify, sustain, and strengthen Birmingham's neighborhoods and mixed-use districts. The following sections describe each land use in greater detail.



Boundaries

- Planning Districts

District Destinations

- Civic Destination: General
- Civic Destination: School
- Civic Destination: Cemetery
- Recreational Destination
- Commercial Destination

Mixed Use District Fabric

- High Intensity
- Medium Intensity
- Low Intensity

Neighborhood District Fabric

- High Intensity
- Medium Intensity
- Low Intensity

District Seams

- High Intensity (TZ-1, TZ-3, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, and MX)
- Medium Intensity (TZ-1, R3, R4, R5, R6, and R8)
- Low Intensity (R1A, R1, R2, R3)

B. Future Land Use

Zoning Plan

Zoning Plan

A zoning plan is required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) and Zoning Enabling Acts (MZEA). Section 33(d) of the MPEA (PA 33 of 2008), as amended, requires that the comprehensive plan shall serve as the basis for the community's zoning plan and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006), as amended, requires a zoning plan to be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance.

Birmingham's Zoning Plan (the chart below) presents a summary of the zoning districts that apply to each of the proposed future land use planning district designations. To implement the zoning plan, recommended future revisions to Birmingham's zoning ordinance are discussed throughout this plan.

Future Land Use Planning District	Corresponding Zoning District(s)
District Destinations	
Civic Destinations: General	Any district which permits institutional uses
Civic Destinations: School	Varies: must match the predominant district of surrounding properties
Recreational Destinations	PP: Public Property
Commercial Destinations	N/A: New zoning district required
Mixed-use District Fabric	
High Intensity Fabric	Downtown Overlay; Triangle Overlay; MX: Mixed Use
Medium Intensity Fabric	Downtown Overlay; Triangle Overlay; MX: Mixed Use
Low Intensity Fabric	Downtown Overlay
Neighborhood District Fabric	
High Intensity Fabric	R2: Single-Family Residential; R3: Single-Family Residential; R4: Two-Family Residential
Medium Intensity Fabric	R1: Single-Family Residential; R2: Single-Family Residential
Low Intensity Fabric	R1A: Single-Family Residential; R1: Single-Family Residential
District Seams	
High Intensity	TZ-1: Transition Zone; TZ-3: Transition Zone; R3: Single-Family Residential R4: Two-Family Residential; R5: Multiple-Family Residential R6: Multiple-Family Residential; R7: Multiple-Family Residential R8: Attached Single-Family Residential; MX: Mixed Use
Medium Intensity	TZ-1: Transition Zone; R3: Single-Family Residential R4: Two-Family Residential; R5: Multiple-Family Residential R6: Multiple-Family Residential; R8: Attached Single-Family Residential
Low Intensity	R1A: Single-Family Residential; R1: Single-Family Residential; R2: Single-Family Residential; R3: Single-Family Residential; R4: Two-Family Residential (only where abutting R3 or more intense zoning districts)

B. Future Land Use

Birmingham Planning Districts

Birmingham Planning Districts

Planning Districts identify segments of the city that demonstrate a consistent character, which differs from that of surrounding areas. (See Figure 8) Those character differences may be defined by the mixture of uses, the size of properties and blocks, the trajectory of streets, or natural and man made divisions like the Rouge River or railroad alignment. These districts were originally identified by their bounding roads in the text of the 1980 Master Plan but not reflected in Future Land Use. Adding this distinction to Future Land Use indicates that land use decisions should consider the area's unique character. In addition to land use decisions, this plan uses Planning Districts for analysis and structuring of other municipal programs such as parks and civic art.

Birmingham's Planning Districts, due in part to the era in which the city was built, reflect the structure of a 1920's neighborhood unit. Figure 7 illustrates neighborhood unit structure, which is reflected in the Future Land Use Map.



Figure 7. Planning District Structure.

The neighborhood unit consists mostly of District Fabric, whether mixed-use or residential. Some districts are higher density and others lower, which is reflected in the intensity of the district fabric. Districts typically contain recreational space, civic institutions, and a small commercial area, which are all destinations for district residents. Most of Birmingham's Planning Districts include these elements, Barnum and Pierce most closely resembling the diagram.

The edges of Planning Districts are designated District Seams. These are places where districts abut each other, natural or man made barriers, and roadways that are more significant than a neighborhood street. Seams recognize this condition which results in greater pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic along the Seam. Most Seams are low intensity, reflecting the character of surrounding District Fabric. Higher intensity Seams occur along regionally significant roadways which carry high traffic volumes and in places adjacent to Mixed-use Districts which are much higher in intensity than the surrounding District Fabric.

Four Mixed-use Districts are identified, differentiated by character and intensity. Like other Planning Districts, most Mixed-use Districts include or should include recreational space and civic institutions. Commercial destinations are not generally part of a Mixed-use District, however, because these districts include a mix of commercial uses more broadly.

Planning Districts serve as a guide for the types of land use which are appropriate across distinct segments of the city. Changes in land use should consider the neighborhood unit structure and typical distribution of uses as follows:

- District Fabric is either mixed-use or neighborhood, and is consistent across the district;
- District Seams occur along the edge of a district;
- Commercial Destinations occur along the edge of a district and are limited in area (a local exception is recognized for the historic destination at Barnum Park);
- Civic Destinations may occur within a district or at its edge, and are few in number;
- Recreational Destinations may take many forms, but districts should include or abut at least one.

B. Future Land Use

Zoning Plan

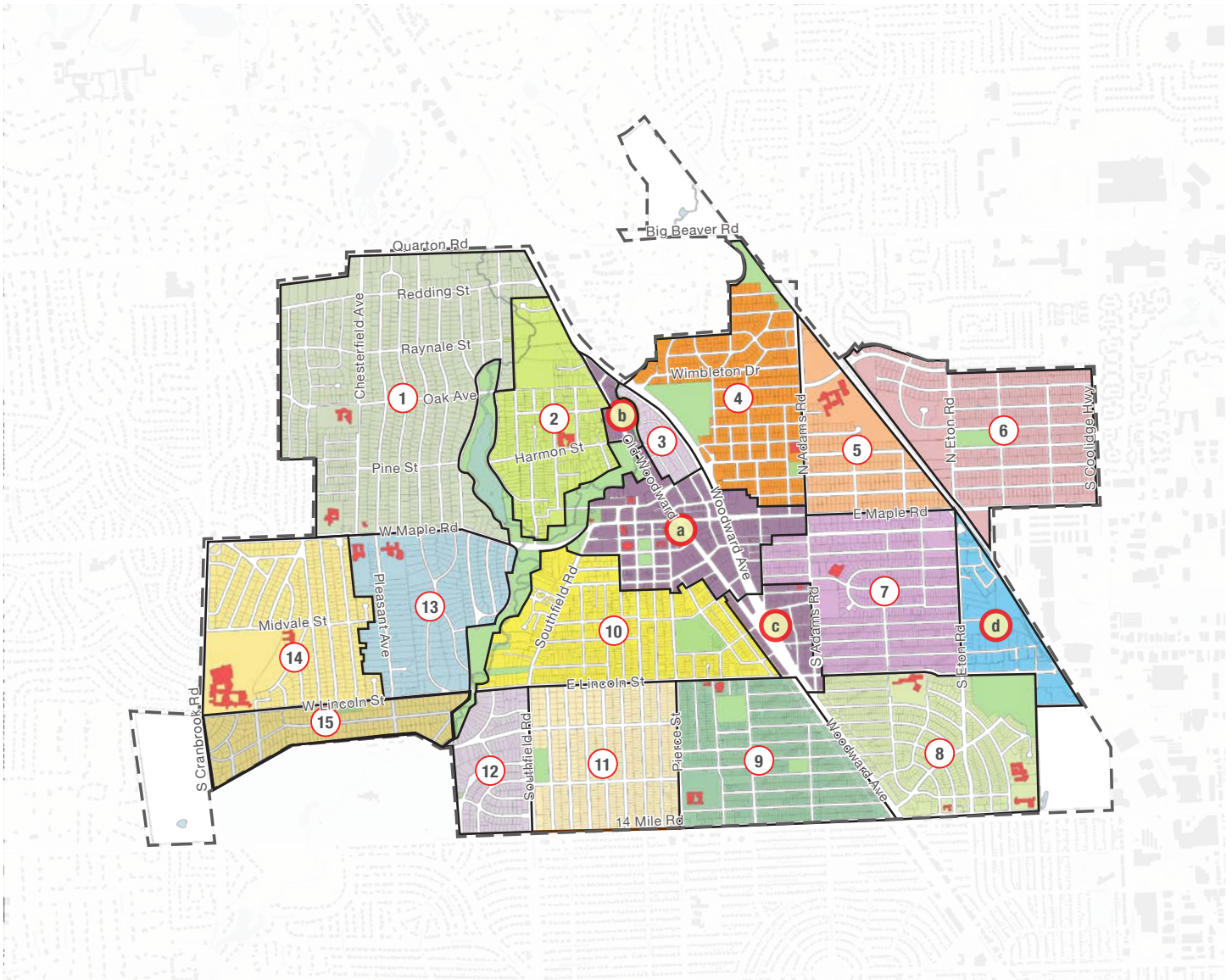


Figure 8.

BIRMINGHAM PLANNING DISTRICTS

Neighborhood Districts

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 Quarton | 9 Pierce |
| 2 Holy Name | 10 Barnum |
| 3 The Ravines | 11 Crestview |
| 4 Poppleton | 12 Birmingham Farms |
| 5 Derby | 13 Linden |
| 6 Pembroke | 14 Seaholm |
| 7 Torry | 15 Lincoln Hills |
| 8 Kenning | |

Mixed-use Districts

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| a Downtown | c South Woodward |
| b North Woodward | d Railroad District |

B. Future Land Use

Mixed-use District Fabric

Mixed-use District Fabric

Birmingham's Mixed-use Districts are defined principally by Mixed-use District Fabric. As the name implies, these are blocks and buildings which include a variety of uses. Between the Downtown and Triangle District Overlays, and the Eton Corridor Plan, each area has a clear set of rules and applicable zones. To achieve greater zoning consistency citywide, these zones may be changed through a zoning update, but should retain the intent of prior plans for Downtown, the Triangle District, and the Eton Corridor. Each district is distinct in its mix of uses and location for required ground floor commercial uses. To be successful, each district must also develop moderate to high densities of housing, and provide civic and recreational space.

- Maple and Woodward is a high intensity mixed-use district which includes zones as defined in the Downtown and Triangle District Overlays. Zoning may be modified to create greater consistency between these overlay districts, but should generally retain the heights and uses as defined in those overlays. Ground floor commercial uses are required as defined by the Red Line Retail standards.
- Haynes Square is a medium intensity mixed-use district which includes zones as defined in the Downtown and Triangle District Overlays. Similar to Maple and Woodward, zoning may be modified for greater consistency. Haynes Square should be lower in height and intensity than areas further north in the core of downtown. Ground floor commercial uses should be provided along Old Woodward, Woodward, and Haynes Street. Other streets may include other primary uses.
- Market North is a low intensity mixed-use district which includes zones as defined in the Downtown Overlay. Market North should consist of buildings lower in scale and intensity than the core of Downtown to the south, and of smaller scale businesses. Ground floor commercial uses are required as defined by the Red Line Retail standards.
- The Rail District is a low intensity mixed-use district which includes zones as defined in the Eton Corridor Plan. Similar to other Mixed-use Districts, zones may be modified for greater consistency.

Neighborhood District Fabric

Neighborhood District Fabric constitutes the majority of each neighborhood-based Planning District, and as a result most of the City overall. Identified as low, medium, and high intensity, neighborhood fabric consists of single-family housing within a narrow range of size and character. This housing is arranged in blocks bounded by low speed, pedestrian and bicyclist-centric roads, lined with mature street trees.

Neighborhood District Fabric is often distinguished in terms of block structure, which is its framing element. Across Birmingham, block structure varies substantially. Most of Quarton Lake Estates has long blocks, oriented north-south, with the exception of the western portion which has a variety of shorter blocks, some that change direction. Holy Name has principally square blocks. Interestingly, Crestview and Pierce have similarly sized blocks but in different orientations. Kenning and Birmingham Farms have many curvilinear blocks. The structure of a neighborhood's blocks establishes a great deal of its character. Deep blocks support deeper properties. Short blocks are more easily walkable. Curvilinear blocks deflect views. Very straight blocks give long views. No pattern is better or worse, they simply provide a structure for the neighborhood fabric.

In each neighborhood, the size of private lots varies while often occupying the same structure of blocks. For instance, Crestview has larger lots to the west and smaller lots to the east. The same is true in Pembroke, with smaller lots to the north and larger to the south. Variety of lot sizes in a neighborhood contributes to the visual interest of pedestrians, with houses of different types and sizes. This also supports a diversity of resident types in terms of family structure, age, and income. Each Planning District includes a narrow range of diversity internally, which is reflected in the narrow range of zoning districts within each intensity of neighborhood fabric.

- Low Intensity Fabric includes R1-A and R1 zoning districts.
- Medium Intensity Fabric includes R1 and R2 zoning districts.
- High Intensity Fabric includes R2, R3, and R4 zoning districts.

B. Future Land Use

District Seams

District Seams

District Seams are an important means of coordinating land use and transportation and significant routes of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movement. Identified as low, medium, and high intensity, neighborhood seams consist of a variety of single-family and multi-family housing types, limited according to intensity, home-based businesses, and some size-limited businesses in high intensity seams. By definition, Seams are applied only at the edges of Planning Districts - one or two lots deep. The intensity of Neighborhood Seams is directly related to the Neighborhood Fabric intensity and the size of the adjacent roadway. High Intensity Seams are very limited in application, only appropriate adjacent to mixed-use centers and the intersections of major and section line roads.

Low Intensity Seams match the intensity of the Planning District's neighborhood fabric. These Seams signal a response to adjacent transportation conditions, where streets may require wider sidewalks, bicycle accommodations, or traffic calming to lessen the impact of higher speed and volume traffic within a residential context.

Medium and High Intensity Seams are located along regionally significant streets and in places where multi-family



Figure 10. A Medium Intensity Neighborhood Seam.

housing, attached single-family housing, and commercial uses have previously been built. The Seam designation establishes consistency, recognizing what has already been built and enabling infill development in conditions that are not conducive to single-family housing. Medium and High Intensity Seams provide opportunities for building townhomes, cottage courts, and small multi-family buildings. These types are allowed within some Mixed-use Districts, however the value of land precludes their construction.

Non-residential uses within the edge of Planning Districts are designated as Commercial Destinations, not Seams, and are subject to restrictions of business size, noise, hours of operation, and other elements ensuring compatibility with surrounding housing.

- Low Intensity Seams include R1A, R1, R2, and R3, and R4 where abutted by R3 or more intense properties on all boundaries.
- Medium Intensity Seams include TZ-1, R3, R4, R5, R6, and R8 districts.
- High Intensity Seams include TZ-1, TZ-3, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, and MX districts.



Figure 9 - Crestview neighborhood fabric.

B. Future Land Use

District Destinations

District Destinations

Within each planning district there may be one or more special land uses which serve as destinations for residents of that district, surrounding districts, or even outside of the city. Most frequently these destinations are churches and other civic institutions, followed in frequency by open spaces. Destinations are key supportive features within the city and planning district, giving many residents the opportunity to walk to some of their daily needs and to socialize with neighbors. However, destinations also generate some amount of traffic and parking demand, and may have peak hours of activity that require consideration for their surroundings.

Destinations are organized in three categories: Civic Destinations, Recreational Destinations, and Commercial Destinations. Civic destinations include civic institutions and outdoor spaces in institutional use. Schools and cemeteries are further identified within the civic category due to their importance within the city. Recreational destinations include parks and public open spaces of different sizes, from pocket parks to

the Rouge River natural area. Commercial destinations are a special category of non-residential uses that serve a local rather than regional customer base due to their size, hours of operation, and the specific category of business. These include neighborhood-supportive services where a significant share of customers are located nearby. (See Figure 11)

- Civic Destination: General includes any zoning district within which the institutional use is allowed, and is restricted only to allowed institutional uses.
- Civic Destination: School should match the predominant zoning district of surrounding properties.
- Civic Destination: Cemetery includes the Public Property District.
- Recreation Destinations include the Public Property District.
- Commercial Destinations are intended for a new zoning category which limits development and operational parameters necessary to promote compatibility with surroundings.



Figure 11. Example of a commercial destination land use.

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C. Summary of Key Actions

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

This section summarizes the actions and recommendations embedded in each subsequent chapter and subsection of this document.

OVERCOME THE WOODWARD DIVIDE

1. Adjust Elm to meet Woodward perpendicularly per the Triangle District plan.
2. Adjust Worth to meet Woodward perpendicularly per the Triangle District plan.
3. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board to pursue a speed reduction on Woodward, to 35mph or similar, through legislative means.
4. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board to study lane reduction and re-striping options for Woodward in coordination with MDOT. Recommended actions:
 - a. Participate in a traffic study along Woodward, with MDOT, once I-75 reopens fully to determine whether the road can be reduced to 3-lanes in each direction.
 - b. Pending verification of potential lane reductions, fund and implement re-striping on Woodward, between 14 Mile and Oakland, potentially to Quarton, converting the outside lane to a buffered bicycle and transit lane.
 - c. Participate in regional plans to coordinate bicycle and transit infrastructure along Woodward between municipalities.
5. Create a Haynes Square Plan, implementing the intent of the following recommendations:
 - a. Reconfigure the Woodward and Old Woodward intersection at Haynes Square as described in later Chapters.
 - b. Divert Adams traffic onto Haynes by angling Adams to intersect perpendicularly with Haynes, taking a portion of the parking lot of The Plant Station.
 - c. Adjust Adams to meet Woodward perpendicularly at Ruffner.
6. Create a North Woodward Gateway Plan to address

land use, gateway, and road design elements of Woodward north of Maple.

7. Revisit and adopt a South Woodward Gateway Plan, focused on traffic calming and beautification of Woodward.
8. Update the multi-modal plan as to improve Woodward crossings and conditions.

REDEFINE DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Create a greater downtown branding plan, in coordination with the Birmingham Shopping District, to brand the City's multiple mixed-use districts. This plan should address, at a minimum:
 - a. District way-finding (vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclist-oriented), business directory, and gateway signage;
 - b. Differentiation in streetscape products like tree grates, lights, trash and recycling cans, and public art themes;
 - c. A marketing plan for each of the distinct districts;
 - d. A phasing plan to install business directory and way-finding signage throughout all districts.
2. Install parking way-finding signage in downtown, ensuring the design is simple and elegant. (priority)
3. Permit murals and wraps like the popcorn utility wrap to be city-initiated or by the Public Arts Board.

IMPLEMENT HAYNES SQUARE

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Implement the public parking deck recommendation of the 2007 Triangle District Plan.
2. Create a parking assessment district, per the 2007 Triangle District Plan, or incremental tax district as necessary for land purchases and for financing the development of parking structures.
3. Study the potential for Public Private Partnerships to construct parking structures in the Triangle District.

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

4. Create a Haynes Square Plan which provides the details, timing, and funding for implementing Haynes Square. This may be an update to the 2007 Triangle District Plan. This plan should:
 - a. Reconfigure the streets around Haynes Square to create the square and fix the acute intersection between Woodward and Old Woodward.
 - b. Build the public square with a cafe, trees, seating, a kids play area, and other civic features.
 - c. Consider revising the design of Worth Park in the form of a plaza and other opportunities for shared streets and passageways, civic art, traffic calming, and way-finding.
 - d. Detail streetscape and landscape improvements along Worth, Bowers, Haynes, and Webster.
 - e. Improve pedestrian linkages to the surrounding neighborhoods, especially along Adams.
 - f. Consider swapping land to install a public parking lot along the south Old Woodward alley.
 - g. Create a parking district for Haynes Square which allows residences to purchase parking passes in public garages, in addition to commercial parking.
 - h. Install metered, on-street parking along Adams and Lincoln Roads.
 - i. Create subdivision and zoning standards to encourage redevelopment of the Adam's Square shopping center, offering significant development capacity in exchange for a public open space and public parking.
 - j. Consider streetscape improvements along Woodward to improve the walkability to both downtown and the market districts.
 - k. Consider green stormwater management opportunities made possible through the area's growth and redevelopment.

ENCOURAGE GATHERING PLACES

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Build a cafe in Booth Park as recommended in the 2016 Downtown Plan.
2. Build a model neighborhood destination at the northeastern corner of Lincoln and Eton.
3. Create a neighborhood destination zoning district. This district should consider the following recommendations:
 - a. Allow by-right Commercial Destinations of up to 10,000 square feet total, no more than 3,000 square feet per tenant.
 - b. Limit uses to bakeries, banks, bicycle shops, cafés, carry-out foods, coffee shops, exercise studios, florists, hardware, ice cream parlors, mail centers, personal care, medical offices, pharmacies, real estate offices, financial services, small groceries, specialty shops, and other small local service-businesses. Housing should be permitted above the ground floor.
 - Where located in parks, limit uses to bakeries, cafes, and coffee shops.
 - c. Nationally branded chains should be permitted when designed to look local.
 - d. Limit evening hours and prohibit excessive noise, including music in the late evenings, and early or late truck deliveries should be restricted.
 - e. Larger restaurants and other potentially intensive commercial should be permitted as special uses, with appropriate design, management, and operational conditions geared to minimize their potential impact on surrounding properties.
 - f. Drive-thru windows should be prohibited.
 - g. Loading docks should be minimal, if provided.
 - h. Landscaped screening should be required from adjacent single-family properties.
 - i. Allowed up to three floors, provided they match the scale of a two and one-half story structure.
 - For buildings with 3 stories, the upper floors must be residential.

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

- For buildings with 2 stories, the upper floor may be office or residential.
 - Where located in parks, limit height to one story.
 - j. Parking should be as minimal as possible, or not required. If required, parking should not exceed 3 cars per 1,000 square feet of non-residential uses and 1 car per bedroom of residential uses.
 - k. Planning Board review should ensure minimal impacts to the neighborhood.
4. Establish policy to continue the tradition of constructing Birmingham's civic buildings and parks as iconic structures and landscapes to the highest standards and at a civic scale. This should include authentic durable materials, oversized windows, high ceilings, and Tudor design and detailing.
 5. Ensure the Community Foundation / Fund is established in a timely manner.
 6. Establish a Civic Events Board or extend the role of the Public Arts Board to develop regular civic events to continue engaging the community throughout the year and promote existing civic institutions.
 7. Convene a committee to study the location, programming, and funding for new facilities for Next.

PRIORITIZE THE NEIGHBORHOOD LOOP

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

8. Hire a consultant to design the Neighborhood Loop bicycle boulevard, including signage and diverters, and pedestrian improvements, like complete sidewalks and crosswalks.
9. Update the Multi-modal Plan to include and prioritize the Neighborhood Loop design elements.
10. Develop civic programming events along the neighborhood loop, within the purview of the Civic Events Board or Public Arts Board.
11. Update the multi-modal plan to implement the Neighborhood Loop.

ACCOMMODATE MORE MODES OF MOVEMENT

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Update the Multi-modal Plan to address new mobility technology, recent design innovations, and a public education component.
2. Require protected bicycle facilities on all streets posted at or above 35mph.
3. Pilot a shared use street along Merrill Street first from Old Woodward to Shain Park, and in a later phase connecting to the Rouge River trail system through Martha Baldwin Park.
4. Update the multi-modal plan to implement additional multi-modal and micro-mobility best practices.

IMPROVE REGIONAL TRANSIT CONNECTIONS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Update the Multi-modal Plan to improve the conditions at bus stops along more major roads.
2. Convene a committee to study a public circulator.

ENCOURAGE HOUSING IN MIXED-USE DISTRICTS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Immediately pilot unbundled residential parking in Downtown. This may be achieved by releasing 100 to 200 passes for new downtown residential units.
2. Task the Advisory Parking Committee to study downtown residential parking. The committee should consider:
 - a. Offering a limited supply of permits for downtown housing, eliminating on-site parking. Evaluate the supply and modify as needed over time to maximize garage usage and housing.
 - b. Tie parking passes to an average rental or sales rate of 150% of Area Median Income or less, calculated on a per-building basis.

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

- c. Tier permit costs according to the number of vehicles per residence, increasing in price for each vehicle and by parking garage.
3. Task the Advisory Parking Committee to study opportunities for expanding downtown parking capacity and accommodate more monthly permit users as capacity becomes available.
4. Build public parking in the Triangle District as previously discussed.
5. Provide public parking for the western Haynes Square district.
6. Build public parking in the Rail District. This should be on a site with adequate access to the Lower Rail District and the future connection to the Troy Transit Center.
7. Establish permanent unbundled residential parking in all mixed-use districts as municipal garages are built.

INFILL SOME MEDIUM AND HIGH INTENSITY DISTRICT SEAMS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Create a new zoning district or modify the transition zone districts to encourage infill development of small homes, townhomes, duplexes, and small multi-family buildings, limited to medium and high intensity district seams.

STUDY ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Enable Accessory Dwelling Units in already compatible zones: MX, TZ1, TZ3, and R4 through R8.
2. Convene a committee to study Accessory Dwelling Units, where they are appropriate in Birmingham, and the regulations necessary to ensure any negative impacts are minimized.

UPDATE THE ZONING CODE

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Update the zoning code. Focus on brevity, clarity, graphics, and aligning zones with Future Land Use categories. Consolidate zones and uses as much as is practical and ensure the updated document is legible, clear, and predictable for residents as well as developers. This should be a significant update.

EQUIP PARKS TO SERVE NEIGHBORHOODS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Develop Worth Park as quickly as plausible to provide a portion of the needed open space access for Torry.
2. Attempt to purchase part of the Adams Square parking lot for park space, and if unsuccessful ensure that redevelopment would require that open space be provided at Adams and Bowers.
3. Establish a formal arrangement with the school districts for community use of school facilities.
4. Expand the 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan or create a new plan beyond the 2022 horizon, to implement Parks Best Practices by adding missing amenities and updating those that are out of date. Utilize Planning Districts to determine sufficiency of park access across the city.

KEEP STREETS PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board with an update to the Residential Street Standards, aligning the following streetscape elements with Future Land Use categories. Update the Multi-modal Plan accordingly.
 - a. Sidewalk width;
 - b. Planter width and type;

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

- c. Type and extent of on-street parking;
 - d. Frequency of curb cuts; and
 - e. Width of roadway.
- 2. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board with a study of bicycle accommodation alternatives along Lincoln. Update the Multi-modal Plan accordingly.
- 3. Reduce residential posted speed limits to 20 mph.
- 4. Update the Multi-modal plan to complete gaps in sidewalks and accessible corner ramps where not already specified.

REPLACE UNIMPROVED STREETS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Adopt policy recommendations specified by the Ad-hoc Unimproved Streets Committee (AHUSC).
2. City staff should survey the current condition of unimproved streets, categorized by the current quality such that streets in the most extreme states of disrepair can be prioritized for improvement. Stormwater issues should receive special priority.
3. City Commission should establish a yearly budget to remedy unimproved streets, considering the general fund plus bond strategy and repayment timelines recommended by the AHUSC.
4. Remedy unimproved streets according to the repair priority and budget, ensuring improvements occur in different planning districts, not all in a single district in a single year.

RETAIN STREET TREE CANOPY

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Survey missing street trees and prioritize new plantings along neighborhood streets with thin canopies.
2. Survey areas with constrained root conditions and establish a plan to provide additional root volume.
3. Prevent existing, healthy trees from being removed due to new construction. (Permitting, Inspections)
4. Create a streetscape improvement plan for the

Triangle District and Rail District. (already specified)

5. Convene a committee to establish tree policies to:
 - a. Select large canopy species native to the region for streets and parks, retaining the character of each neighborhood's distinctive canopy while considering the region's future climate.
 - b. Minimize overly-used or exotic species, such as Crab Apple, Honey Locust and Pear Trees.
 - c. Craft policy requiring that trees removed due to new construction be replaced, as well as mandatory contributions to fund new off-site trees.

REVISE PARKING RESTRICTIONS

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Convene a committee to study citywide street parking restrictions and permits, charged with:
 - a. Creating a consistent and limited set of citywide parking standards. An example of such a set follows:
 - No restriction
 - 2-hour parking from 9am to 4pm, except by permit (this addresses daytime parking issues from students and downtown workers)
 - Parking by permit only, 5pm to 10am (this addresses nighttime parking issues from food service)
 - Neighborhood Parking Benefit District, used in association with (b) or (c) above.
 - b. Create a plan to re-assign street parking restrictions citywide for greater consistency.
 - c. Establishing a consistent residential permit system to service those neighborhoods that choose to use such a system which includes permit fees to cover costs, decals, and visitor rear-view mirror tags purchased separately from the residential permit. The existing permit systems may suffice to operate more broadly.

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

RETAIN HOUSING CHARACTER

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Review and update site, building, and design codes to prevent increased rainwater runoff and other negative impacts from new house construction.
2. Expand the inspection process for new house construction to ensure that they are built per approved plans to minimize negative impacts on surrounding properties.
3. Revise the Zoning Code's residential zoning district boundaries and standards to better match and maintain current building scale, position on the property, driveway configuration, and other key characteristics.
4. Convene a committee to study incentives to encourage renovations to expand existing houses rather than the construction of new houses.
5. Convene a committee to study age-in-place-friendly building regulations, such as grab-bars, ramps, and elevators in single-family homes.
6. Task the Historic District Commission and Historic District Study Committee with proactively establishing new historic districts as well as landmarks.
7. Convene a committee to study neighborhood lighting standards, including exterior residential lighting and street lighting.

CONTINUE IMPROVING THE MAPLE AND WOODWARD DISTRICT

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

8. Adopt a policy requiring a minimum 6 foot clear path along the sidewalk be retained throughout mixed-use districts.
9. Expand activities and special events to attract office workers and residents to shop and dine downtown, including weekly food-truck events at Shain Park. This can be pursued by the contemplated Civic Events Board along with the Birmingham Shopping District.

10. Update the Multi-modal Plan to address micro-mobility, increased pedestrian activity due to new downtown housing, and recent experiences with increased outdoor dining. See multi-modal plan update recommendations.
11. Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to increase amenities and connections in Downtown's parks. See parks and recreation plan updates.
12. Implement an art-mural program for large blank wall surfaces in key locations.
13. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of tiered parking meter pricing in Downtown. A best practice goal is to achieve an average maximum 85% occupancy all streets.
14. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of tiered parking rates for different garages.
15. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of monthly parking pass fees.
16. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of secure bike parking and electric vehicle charging stations within parking garages.
17. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a review of master plan parking recommendations in 2030 to evaluate technologies and trends at that time.
18. Pursue technological improvements to ease parking usage, such as parking space occupancy indicators (green and red lights above spaces) to more easily direct users through the garages.
19. Install directional and informational signage. (previously addressed)
20. Convene a committee to study a Merrill Street shared space streetscape retrofit between Old Woodward and Shain Park. Consider options for activating the rear of City Hall, changes to the wall, small retail kiosks, and other low-impact means of enlivening the block.
21. Build a parking deck in the Triangle District as soon as possible. (addressed previously)
22. Create a detailed plan for the Bates Street Extension ensuring robust public input.

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

ESTABLISH MARKET NORTH AS A DISTINCT DISTRICT

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. As part of the zoning code update, extend D2 zoning to the multi-family properties along the west side of Old Woodward up to Quarton.
2. Install way-finding signage throughout the district. (Addressed previously)
3. Update the Multi-modal Plan to support increased pedestrian activity on both sides of North Old Woodward and install streetscape amenities. (See the section on Multi-modal Plan updates)
4. Update the Parks and Recreation Plan to add amenities and a cafe to Booth Park. (See the section on Parks and Recreation Plan updates)
5. Convene a committee to develop branding, special signage, seating, and streetscape elements unique to the Market North district.
6. Task the Design Review Board to develop storefront design, signage, and other standards to retain the small-scale business character of Market North.
7. Task the Advisory Parking Committee to study a parking garage in the Lot 6 parking lot.
8. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board to develop a streetscape plan along North Old Woodward, up to Big Woodward, with a focus on adding on-street parking and pedestrian and bicycle amenities and improving safety.
9. Convene a committee to study a permanent, open-air farmers market pavilion with public restrooms on the portion of Lot 6 that is along Old Woodward.

ADOPT A SOUTH WOODWARD GATEWAY PLAN

Master Plan Actions

1. Revise and adopt the South Woodward Gateway Urban Design Plan. Consider:
 - a. Incorporating the Neighborhood Sleeves concept.
 - b. Piloting a shared-use alley by re-paving the alleyway, moving power poles underground, and opening businesses onto the alley.
 - c. Piloting a Neighborhood Sleeve with existing buildings or through redevelopment, including streetscape improvements on the side streets with chicanes and streetscape details like tree pits, benches, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and trash and recycling receptacles.
2. Incentivize redevelopment through increased zoning capacity and reduced parking requirements.
3. As part of a zoning code rewrite, establish zoning standards to enable Neighborhood Sleeves. This may be done by requiring storefronts along neighborhood streets and other strategies.
4. As part of a zoning code rewrite, establish zoning standards to enable shared-use alleys. This may be done by:
 - a. Requiring storefronts at entries along the alley.
 - b. Permitting attached single-family housing along the neighborhood-side of the alley, limited to 2 stories.
5. As part of a zoning code rewrite, establish zoning standards to encourage redevelopment of South Woodward Gateway properties. This may be done by:
 - a. Permitting multi-family housing on the commercial properties.
 - b. Permitting 2 stories along the alley and 3 or 4 stories between Woodward and 50 feet of the alley.
 - c. Reducing parking requirements and allowing shared parking.

C. Summary of Key Actions

Key Actions

DEVELOP A NORTH WOODWARD GATEWAY PLAN

Master Plan Actions

1. Plant a full and consistent tree canopy along the Woodward median throughout Birmingham, beginning with the northern and southern entries.
2. Develop and adopt a North Woodward Gateway Urban Design Plan to improve the appearance of the northern entrance to Birmingham, slow traffic entering the city, and improve the Old Woodward entrance as a signature gateway to Birmingham and Downtown.

KEEP IT LOOSE IN THE RAIL DISTRICT

Master Plan Actions

1. Develop an Overlay Zoning District for the Lower Rail District that permits the existing, but somewhat improved condition to persist. Consider sunsetting the overlay once public parking is available. See recommendations in the text of this section.
2. Construct a shared-use street section along Cole and Commerce Streets.
3. Update the 1999 Eton Road Corridor Plan for the area south of Palmer Street to permit the existing, but somewhat improved condition to persist. Consider the following amendments:
 - a. So long as the buildings--existing or new--are one story, eliminate all requirements of Section 5 of the Site Design Guidelines p 41-46. of the Eton Road Corridor Plan. These include but are not limited to:
 - Eliminating building frontage and sidewalk requirements.
 - Eliminating parking requirements, except as the on-street parking shall be as determined by the "Immediate Neighbors" of the adjacent Torry or Kenning Neighborhoods.
 - Eliminating the signage and landscaping requirements.
 - Eliminating building use and aesthetic requirements.

4. As part of a zoning code update, modify the MX District to enable the urban development envisioned by the plan. Consider the following:
 - a. Exempt LA-01 (E) and (F), as is true in Downtown, or at a minimum that plantings in the MX District are only required within the streetscape and within open areas of the property, but not based on a minimum number of trees per residential unit as currently defined.
 - b. MX District zoning should be carefully analyzed by contracting two or more architects to complete preliminary building designs for mixed-use buildings on existing sites, small and large, with and without on-site parking, attempting to achieve capacity. The architects should be requested to discuss and present challenges and constraints that are faced in the process. While some challenges are part of code design, others may be unknown without testing.
5. Update the 1999 Eton Road Corridor Plan for the area south of Palmer Street to increase vehicular connectivity. Consider the following:
 - a. At the termination of Holland Street, creating a connection to the rail station by purchasing a 30 ft wide corridor or easement.
6. Develop a plan to provide access to the Troy Transit Center and consider the development of surrounding properties, including the School District bus parking lot and the DPS facility.
7. Convene a committee to study redevelopment of the DPS building to occupy a portion of a public parking facility in its place, which services the lower Rail District.
8. Construct the contemplated linear park and trail along the railroad.

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Ch 1. Connect the City

Ch 1. Connect the City

Overcome the Woodward Divide

Overcome the Woodward Divide



Figure 12. The Woodward divide.

Woodward divides Birmingham physically and mentally. It is an extremely fast, high volume, and divisive roadway described as a “superhighway” in the city’s 1929 plan. While it provides regional connections that support Downtown activities, Woodward separates the City’s neighborhoods. Particularly for older adults and children, Woodward can be an impenetrable barrier to mobility.

A complete street plan for Woodward has been produced by the Woodward Avenue Action Association, and has been well supported but not yet implemented. The state department of transportation (MDOT) indicated that their current preference for major roadways such as Woodward is to provide greater accommodation for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit, and to stitch together those communities historically divided by state routes. However, implementing those changes are currently well beyond MDOT’s ability to fund directly. Funding aside, they are likely to support City-led initiatives to improve crossings and the character of Woodward. In the short term, small key changes to Woodward should be targeted, especially with a focus on pedestrian and bicyclists at crossings. In the long term, larger changes should be studied and advocated for at the county and state levels.

Short-term Action: Improve Crossings

The simplest changes to have a significant impact are to improve key crossings by providing sufficient crosswalk time at signals, better signage, more substantial crosswalk and bike lane striping, pedestrian activated signals, and pedestrian refuges. Presently, there are too few crossings, and most of those that exist are uncomfortable for pedestrians and cyclists.

An initial set of key crossings is selected from those major Sectionline and Quartersection roads, crossings necessary to implement the Neighborhood Loop (discussed later), and crossings that already exist but are insufficient. (See Figure 14) These include: Sectionline crossings at 14 Mile and Maple, Quartersection crossings at Lincoln and Oak, Neighborhood Loop crossings at Emmons and Oak, and existing crossings at Brown and Oakland. Additionally, the intersection of Old Woodward and Woodward is proposed for redevelopment (discussed later). Development of this intersection would include adding a crossing at Haynes St.

Short-term Action: Re-striping

Should Woodward be justifiably reduced to three lanes in each direction, reconfiguring the roadway still remains prohibitively expensive. However, as a lower cost option,



Figure 13. Neighborhood Loop Crossing at Emmons.

Ch 1. Connect the City

Overcome the Woodward Divide

the City should pursue re-striping the outside travel lane, converting it to a substantial protected bicycle lane, one-way each side, or a pair of two-way cycle tracks on each side, similar to what the City of Ferndale is pursuing. Regionally, Ferndale's Woodward bike facilities should connect north to facilities in Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak, and Birmingham, and on to Bloomfield Hills and Pontiac.

Another consideration for re-striping is a shared bicycle and transit lane. As the regional transit authority pursues improvements to bus frequency, a dedicated lane would improve bus function through Birmingham. Because buses are relatively infrequent, the transit lane could be shared with cyclists. This would require one-way cycle facilities.

Medium-term Action: Reduce Vehicle Speeds

Woodward's high travel speeds perpetuate the City's east-west disconnection, create dangerous conditions accessing

businesses along the corridor, and threaten the safety of all roadway users. While reducing vehicle speeds is a critical and immediate issue to tackle, change is not simple.

Overall the Woodward corridor varies in its speed and context along its trajectory, from a low speed urban context in downtown Detroit to a high-speed highway-like context in Bloomfield Hills, before slowing down again at Pontiac. Along its trajectory, Woodward's speed and design changes in a number of contexts. Through Ferndale, the posted speed is 35 mph and on-street parking is permitted. Birmingham presents a more urban context to Woodward than Ferndale, which should warrant lower speeds.

Unfortunately MDOT is forced by state law to use the "85th Percentile Rule" when attempting to lower speeds, which measures the typical speed actually traveled on the roadway and can result in increased posted speeds instead of

KEY WOODWARD CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

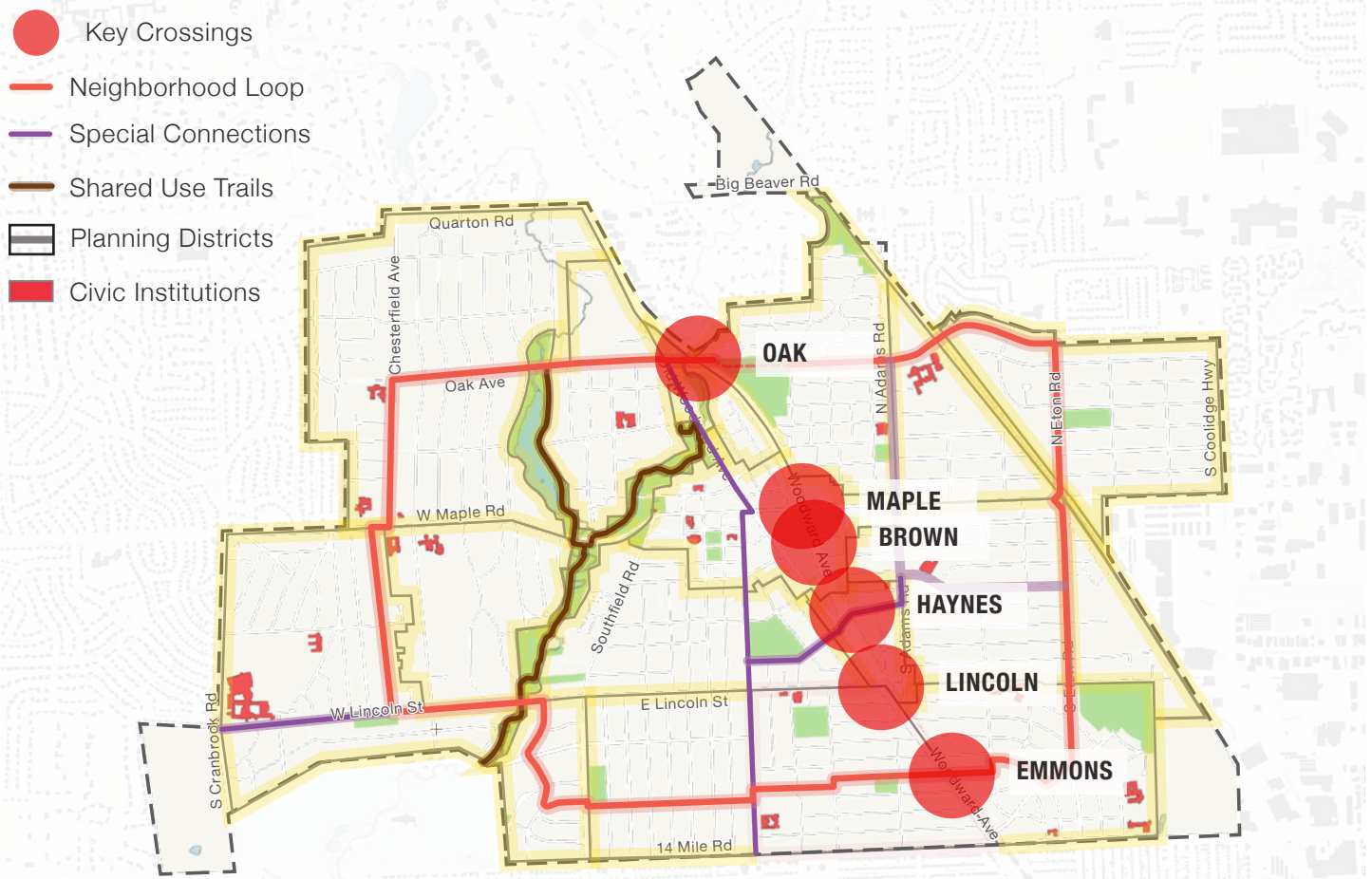


Figure 14. Key Woodward Crossing Improvements.

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Overcome the Woodward Divide

reduced. The most expedient path to changing the speed along Woodward is through legislative means.

The posted speed is not the only means necessary to control speed. Land use, landscaping and landscape architecture, travel lane size, lighting, and other elements in and around the roadway signal drivers to reduce speed who may otherwise ignore speed limits. From the south, the large clear zone and curb separation in the South Woodward Gateway gives visual clues to drivers that Woodward is a high-speed roadway. Solving the speed issue here requires land use changes described later in this plan, along with posted speed reductions. From the north, the highway-like conditions of Woodward through Bloomfield Hills brings drivers in to Birmingham at high speeds. From this direction, drivers need a signal that they have entered a different type of environment than Bloomfield Hills and should reduce speeds. Like the South Woodward Gateway, Birmingham needs a vision for the North Woodward Gateway, from Big Beaver to Maple, with a particular focus on the Old Woodward and Oak Avenue intersections.

Long-term Action: Re-align Secondary Intersections

Traffic problems caused by Woodward spill into surrounding streets in a few key locations. Due to Woodward's angle, Adams, Worth, and Elm streets intersect at obtuse angles in the northbound direction allowing soft-right turns at high speeds. When streets intersect at extreme angles, pedestrian crossing distances increase and vehicle speeds increase, leading to safety and operational issues. Additionally, these intersections occur close to east-west streets: Ruffner, Lincoln, and Haynes, further complicating operations. Elm and Worth should be realigned to intersect Woodward perpendicularly, as shown in the Triangle District Plan. (See Figure 15)

The intersection of Adams with Woodward is especially complicated due to its traffic volume and existing median breaks, making it particularly dangerous for pedestrians. To address this issue, when the Haynes Square intersection redevelopment occurs (discussed later), traffic along Adams should be rerouted to access Woodward at Haynes, which is already a near-perpendicular intersection. Additionally, the median break on Woodward at southbound Adams should be closed. The Haynes Square intersection would allow southbound Adams traffic to turn Left onto Woodward at

a new traffic signal. This will reduce traffic at Adams and Lincoln. At the Woodward intersection, Adams should be realigned to intersect perpendicularly, as is proposed for Elm and Worth. Where Adams meets Haynes, the street should turn to the left slightly, to intersect perpendicularly with Haynes, which may also be accomplished through signage encouraging southbound Adams traffic to use Haynes for Woodward access. Additionally, this movement will help provide momentum to future retail in the Haynes Square / Triangle District area. To accommodate this, Haynes between Woodward and Adams should receive a streetscape redevelopment similar to Maple through Downtown, which has the same width.



Figure 15. Key Woodward intersection adjustments.

Ch 1. Connect the City

Overcome the Woodward Divide

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Adjust Elm to meet Woodward perpendicularly per the Triangle District plan.
2. Adjust Worth to meet Woodward perpendicularly per the Triangle District plan.
3. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board to pursue a speed reduction on Woodward, to 35mph or similar, through legislative means.
4. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board to study lane reduction and re-striping options for Woodward in coordination with MDOT. Recommended actions:
 - a. Participate in a traffic study along Woodward, with MDOT, once I-75 reopens fully to determine whether the road can be reduced to 3-lanes in each direction.
 - b. Pending verification of potential lane reductions, fund and implement re-striping on Woodward, between 14 Mile and Oakland, potentially to Quarton, converting the outside lane to a buffered bicycle and transit lane.
 - c. Participate in regional plans to coordinate bicycle and transit infrastructure along Woodward between municipalities.
5. Create a Haynes Square Plan, implementing the intent of the following recommendations:
 - a. Reconfigure the Woodward and Old Woodward intersection at Haynes Square as described in later Chapters.
 - b. Divert Adams traffic onto Haynes by angling Adams to intersect perpendicularly with Haynes, taking a portion of the parking lot of The Plant Station.
 - c. Adjust Adams to meet Woodward perpendicularly at Ruffner.
6. Create a North Woodward Gateway Plan to address land use, gateway, and road design elements of Woodward north of Maple.
7. Revisit and adopt a South Woodward Gateway Plan, focused on traffic calming and beautification of Woodward.
8. Update the multi-modal plan as to improve

Woodward crossings and conditions.

MULTI-MODAL PLAN UPDATES

- a. Improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings along Woodward at 14 Mile, Emmons, Lincoln, Haynes, Brown, Maple, Oakland, and Oak.
- b. Move signage at Lincoln and Woodward which obscures pedestrian countdown timers.
- c. Add a signal for the Brown Street crosswalk along the northbound lanes of Woodward.
- d. Install ADA-compliant ramps at intersections that are not in compliance along Woodward.
- e. Review pedestrian crossing times for MUTCD compliance, some may need to be lengthened.
- f. Add a protected only left turn signal for northbound left turns to Old Woodward. This may be omitted if the Haynes Square street reconfiguration occurs quickly.
- g. Update the plan to reflect the chosen outer lane conversion along Woodward.

Ch 1. Connect the City

Redefine Downtown Districts

Redefine Downtown Districts

Birmingham's mixed-use districts are defined circumstantially by their areas of historic growth and the division caused by Woodward. However, the Downtown area in particular contains multiple sub-districts which require their own character and definition to become active and competitive. Old Woodward is too long to sustain a consistent main street without sub-districts of distinct character. Most traditional main streets, and shopping malls which have modeled themselves from traditional main streets, are ¼ mile in length. This is the distance from Willits to Brown, the most active section of Old Woodward, and Bates to Park, the most active section of Maple (See Figure 17). Beyond this distance, activity and retail quality declines. But once downtowns are successful enough, they can expand beyond this distance by establishing secondary districts.

Downtown Sub-districts

Larger downtowns contain multiple districts with their own distinct character. For instance, Downtown Detroit contains

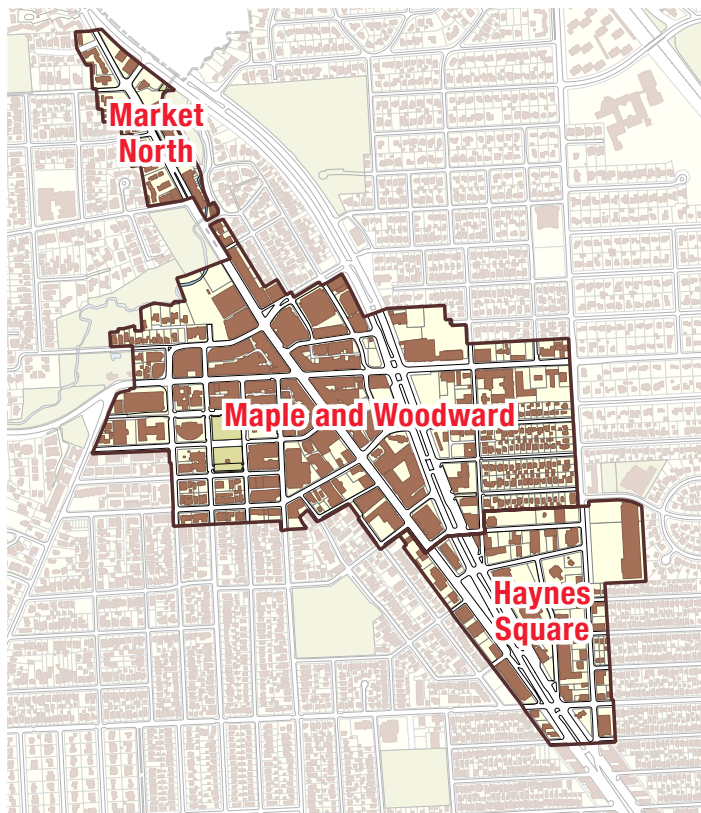


Figure 16. Three districts of downtown.

Bricktown, Greektown, Hudson Corktown, and other districts. Together they make up the greater downtown, but they each have an individual character. Similarly yet at a more relate-able scale, Ann Arbor has a downtown district along Main Street and a university district along State Street. Both are distinct yet interconnected.

North to south, Downtown Birmingham includes three distinct districts. At the center, Maple and Woodward, Downtown is at its most intense and successful.

To the north along Old Woodward, the topography and building scale clearly changes after Oakland, becoming clearly distinct by Euclid. North of Euclid is a distinct Downtown sub-district. This Market North area (See Fig A.2-09) is now most clearly defined by the Farmers' Market and Booth Park, as well as a scale that is less intense than Maple and Woodward. To the south along Old Woodward, the street activity clearly changes after Brown. This area is distinct and requires an identity, but the area is heavily constrained by the intersection of Woodward and Old Woodward. Each sub-district should be clearly differentiated, offering a different customer experience yet working together as the larger downtown area.

Further, Downtown Birmingham is considered to be only west of Woodward. This perpetuates the mental divide that Woodward cuts through the community (See Figure 12). If Woodward were not a major division, downtown would continue east on Maple. The form of more intensive buildings east of Maple reflects this condition, with the housing along Forest, Chestnut, and Hazel establishing a break between this core downtown area and the remainder of the southern Triangle District.

Spanning Woodward mentally makes the most significant impact south of Brown where the west side is constrained just at the point that the east side, the southern Triangle District, is at its widest. This Haynes Square area, centered on Haynes Street, is cohesive when it spans Woodward (discussed later). With its own identity, Haynes Square can be elevated to a full sub-district of downtown rather than the unsuccessful southern fringe of a successful downtown.



Ch 1. Connect the City

Redefine Downtown Districts

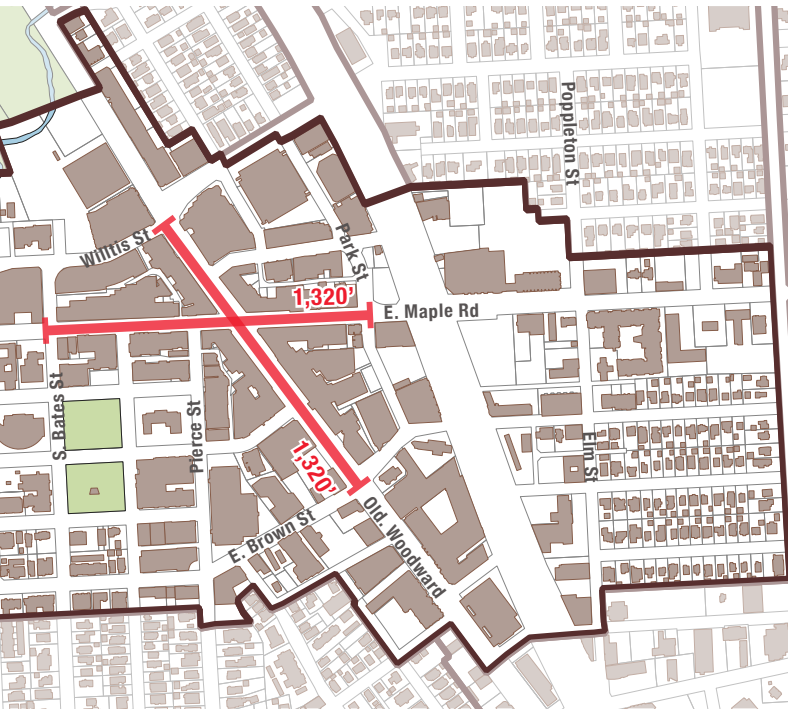


Figure 17. Typical length of main streets.

Identity, Signage, and Way-finding

Many downtown visitors are unfamiliar with its business offerings, parking locations, and street layout. When establishing multiple districts, signage is especially important to orient visitors. Similarly, multiple districts can assist in way-finding overall if signed properly. Today, signage is lacking throughout the greater downtown area, from way-finding for parking access to civic institutions and business directories. Each district should have clear signage which is consistent in the information provided but differentiated by district. (See Figure 18)

Parking signage is especially important as the City deals with extremely high occupancy of its Downtown garages. Prior to the Covid pandemic, many of the City's parking garages operated at 99% capacity; still in the pandemic we will rely upon recent, historic usage levels. While the North Old Woodward, Park, and Peabody garages typically operated above 90%, visitors are not always aware of nearby spaces available in the Chester and Pierce garages. Technology should be employed to inform users of available capacity throughout the greater downtown. Much of this equipment is unattractive, like the signage in use currently in Ann Arbor, yet there are minimal and elegant solutions available to direct users to the nearest available



Figure 18. Way-finding signage examples.

capacity. This signage should be piloted in downtown and spread to the City's other mixed-use districts once parking investments are made.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Create a greater downtown branding plan, in coordination with the Birmingham Shopping District, to brand the City's multiple mixed-use districts. This plan should address, at a minimum:
 - a. District way-finding (vehicular, pedestrian, and cyclist-oriented), business directory, and gateway signage;
 - b. Differentiation in streetscape products like tree grates, lights, trash and recycling cans, and public art themes;
 - c. A marketing plan for each of the distinct districts;
 - d. A phasing plan to install business directory and way-finding signage throughout all districts.
2. Install parking way-finding signage in downtown, ensuring the design is simple and elegant. (priority)
3. Permit murals and wraps like the popcorn utility wrap to be city-initiated or by the Public Arts Board.

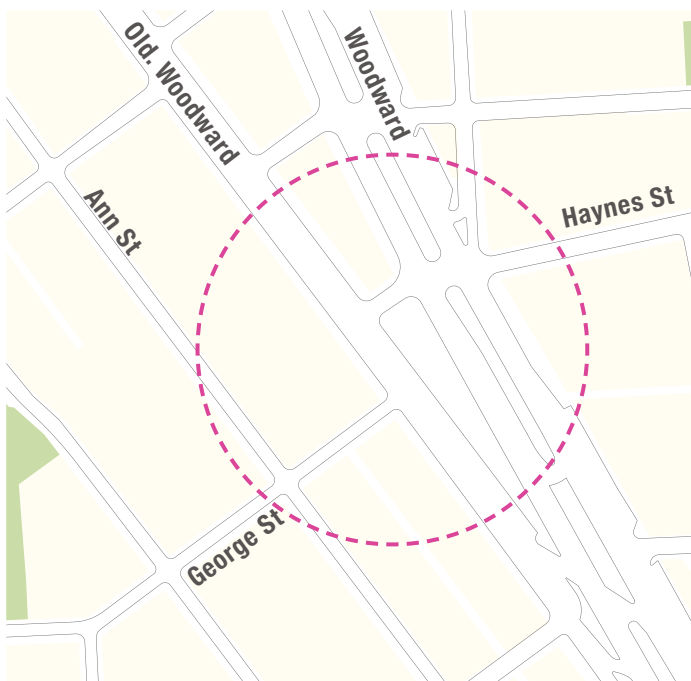
Ch 1. Connect the City

Implement Haynes Square

Implement Haynes Square

Connecting the city requires a change in perception about Woodward. No greater opportunity exists to change this perception than Haynes Square. South of Frank Street, the character of downtown changes, expressed in zoning, street life, and business success. Rather than consider South Old Woodward an inferior retail district, the area can be combined with the lower Triangle District, spanning big Woodward. The Haynes Square district is bound by Bowers to the North, Adams to the East, and Lincoln to the South. Its size is similar to the active office and retail core of Maple and Woodward.

Street reconfigurations to achieve this result in a public open space at south Old Woodward and Haynes Street. This square is the new heart of a district independent from Maple and Woodward. (See Figure 19) The square should be similar to Shain Park from a design perspective, but about half its size, with a cafe, seating, and restrooms as is recommended for other urban parks. Lined by trees along its edges, the square will provide an attractive entrance to the greater downtown area, flanked by tall, new development east along Woodward and the 555 building to its north.



EXISTING

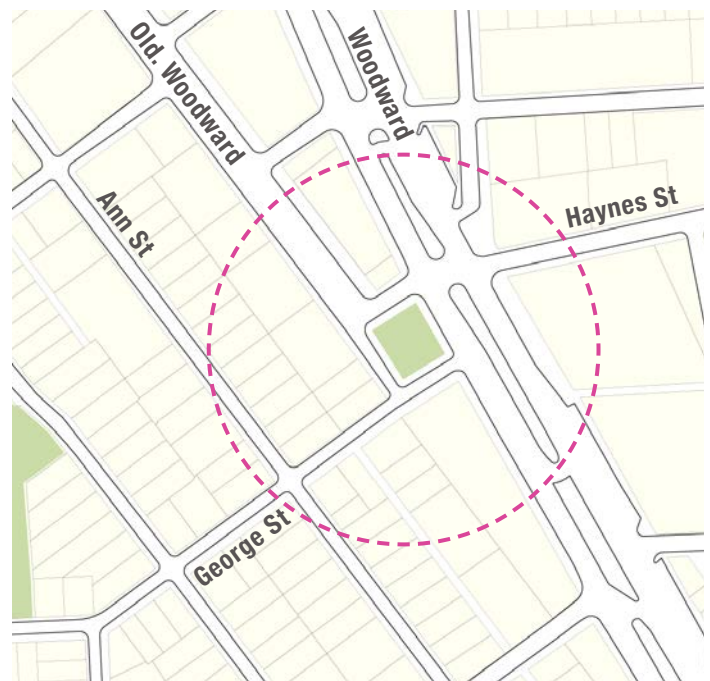
Figure 19. Haynes Square reconfiguration.

This combined district represents Birmingham's greatest opportunity for the development of both extensive middle-income housing—a deficiency that should be addressed—and emerging commercial business spaces. While Maple and Woodward includes a significant presence of offices, Haynes Square should focus on residential above commercial uses, and on commercial uses that serve a different market than the core shopping district of Maple and Woodward.

To capitalize on its potential, two major investments are required: reconfiguring the intersection between Woodward and Old Woodward, and constructing a parking garage on the east side of Woodward.

Street and Property Reconfiguration

A pair of related issues make clear the need for street and property reconfiguration in this area. First, the intersection of Old Woodward and Woodward occurs at a very acute angle and requires a dangerous northbound left turn. The intersection also creates a narrow and unusable strip of land which mirrors the poor frontage condition of the South Woodward Gateway. Second, properties that are located along Old Woodward south of George Street are zoned for taller buildings, but have not seen redevelopment



PROPOSED

Ch 1. Connect the City

Implement Haynes Square



Figure 20. Redevelopment of Haynes Square.

due in part to parking issues. The parking necessary to redevelop properties south of George St is difficult to accommodate with shallow lots that back onto single-family properties. This plan recommends that Old Woodward be reconfigured to alleviate the awkward intersections and provide larger building sites. George St. is extended to big Woodward, and Old Woodward removed south of George. South of George St, properties are extended to big Woodward, providing sites that can accommodate buildings and parking. Property extensions may be traded for a public surface parking lot where buildings currently sit along Old Woodward, 70 feet deep measured from the alley, which leaves over 100 feet of property for development, deeper than current properties.

Through this redevelopment, Haynes St. crosses Woodward to meet Old Woodward at a new signal. On the east side of Woodward, Haynes becomes a main street, paired with Worth Street. To support the main street with additional traffic, as Maple and Woodward is supported by Maple's

traffic, Adams should be slightly adjusted so that south-bound traffic uses Haynes to access Woodward. This adjustment is detailed in Figure 15.

Public Parking

Due to the odd lot shapes in the district, significant zoned capacity, and lack of access to the downtown parking district, private development is unlikely to take the first step to launch the Haynes Square, as has been the case for the Triangle District, which is synonymous. To successfully launch Haynes Square, the City needs to invest in a parking garage. Unfortunately, neither of the 2007 Triangle District plan's proposed public parking structures nor its proposed parking assessment district have been implemented. A new garage is needed and should be suited to meet most of the needs of the district, alleviating developers from the burden of parking with both commercial and residential parking permitted. With a structure in place, and mixed-use residences able to unbundle parking (See the Mixed-use Districts section), new housing and businesses

Ch 1. Connect the City

Implement Haynes Square

are likely to develop quickly. Due to the district's size and low existing intensity, development will bring significant increases in tax revenue. While a smaller garage has been discussed, which may be pursued to whet the appetite of developers, the construction of multiple smaller garages is less efficient in the long run than one higher-capacity structure.

Other Area Improvements

At the intersection of Haynes and Worth Streets, the 2007 Triangle District plan recommends a triangular green called Worth Park. This space provides an important focal center for the east side of Haynes Square. It also provides needed open space for the Torry neighborhood. Like other urban parks discussed in this plan, Worth Park should have ample seating, shade, and areas for children to play. Worth Street, which has few existing buildings facing onto it, should be considered for a shared-use treatment to provide interest and connect with the South Woodward Gateway alley system. Worth Park may be built in the form of a plaza - mostly paved - which is a type of civic open space Birmingham does not yet have. New buildings in the area can take advantage of the dynamic and pedestrian-centric streetscape and plaza.

A missing piece for decades has been the Adam's Square shopping center, which represents the greatest single redevelopment site in the City. With an active Haynes Square district adjacent, redevelopment is likely to occur. To prepare for this, zoning and subdivision requirements should be considered such that Adam's Square provide open space for the Torry neighborhood and public parking in exchange for development capacity modeled upon the Triangle District Overlay.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Implement the public parking deck recommendation of the 2007 Triangle District Plan.
2. Create a parking assessment district, per the 2007 Triangle District Plan, or incremental tax district as necessary for land purchases and for financing the development of parking structures.
3. Study the potential for Public Private Partnerships to construct parking structures in the Triangle District.
4. Create a Haynes Square Plan which provides the details, timing, and funding for implementing Haynes Square. This may be an update to the 2007 Triangle District Plan. This plan should:
 - a. Reconfigure the streets around Haynes Square to create the square and fix the acute intersection between Woodward and Old Woodward.
 - b. Build the public square with a cafe, trees, seating, a kids play area, and other civic features.
 - c. Consider revising the design of Worth Park in the form of a plaza and other opportunities for shared streets and passageways, civic art, traffic calming, and way-finding.
 - d. Detail streetscape and landscape improvements along Worth, Bowers, Haynes, and Webster.
 - e. Improve pedestrian linkages to the surrounding neighborhoods, especially along Adams.
 - f. Consider swapping land to install a public parking lot along the south Old Woodward alley.
 - g. Create a parking district for Haynes Square which allows residences to purchase parking passes in public garages, in addition to commercial parking.
 - h. Install metered, on-street parking along Adams and Lincoln Roads.
 - i. Create subdivision and zoning standards to encourage redevelopment of the Adam's Square shopping center, offering significant development capacity in exchange for a public open space and public parking.
 - j. Consider streetscape improvements along Woodward to improve the walkability to both downtown and the market districts.
 - k. Consider green stormwater management opportunities made possible through the area's growth and redevelopment.

Ch 1. Connect the City

Encourage Gathering Places

Encourage Gathering Places

While Birmingham is more walkable than most cities in Metro-Detroit, accessing daily destinations still require a car for many residents. City structure and the distribution of daily destinations is the greatest determinant of the transportation mode people will choose and its impact on sociability and the environment. When comparing Birmingham's neighborhoods with immediately surrounding communities, the differences are stark; Birmingham's neighborhoods are more consistent, cohesive, and complete. But there is still room for improvement in the City's neighborhoods. The most significant modifications concern accommodating nearby, daily destinations, means of accessing the City's mixed-use districts more easily, and accommodations provided at neighborhood parks. When people have access to nearby destinations, they are more likely to choose walking or biking, which increases interaction among neighbors.

Due to the regional draw of Downtown, its price point is too high to provide normal neighborhood services, and its location is too far for most residents to walk. Historically, Birmingham has supported civic institutions and parks within neighborhoods, and has had a number of smaller, neighborhood businesses that provided more frequent offerings to nearby residents. Birmingham retains its' parks and institutions, but only a few neighborhood commercial destinations: Maple and Chesterfield, Maple and Eton, and 14 Mile and Southfield.

Neighborhood Destinations are the glue for neighborhood and community social structures. At destinations, neighbors meet and interact, and the act of walking or rolling to nearby destinations builds familiarity between neighbors on the street. Neighborhood Destinations fall into 3 categories: Commercial Destinations like markets and cafes, Recreational Destinations like parks and trails, and Civic Destinations like schools and religious institutions.

Commercial Destinations

Local bakeries, specialty markets, coffee shops, brew pubs, dry cleaners, hair salons, pharmacies, and even service stations comprise neighborhood scaled amenities that are unique to Birmingham among surrounding communities. Easy access to these amenities, especially

by walking, contribute to the City's comfortable lifestyle and high property values. Recent studies indicate house values dramatically increase when located within a ten-minute walk of a coffee shop, green grocery, micro-brewery, park, or school. But some city residents live beyond a comfortable walk or bike ride.

Commercial destinations should be located to provide walkable access to neighborhoods, but not be so close to one another that they become a larger district. (See Figure 22) To accommodate social interaction, a few cafes within existing parks may provide a sufficient destination. Commercial Destinations should be encouraged and their scale and specific uses should be limited, along with operating hours and noise, to limit their impact on surrounding residents. These destinations should also be allowed to provide residential uses above the ground floor, which will help their success by providing immediately adjacent customers and allowing the residential units to offset some of the operational costs of managing the buildings. Scale and character should remain compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, reviewed by the Planning Board.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Build a cafe in Booth Park as recommended in the 2016 Downtown Plan.
2. Build a model neighborhood destination at the northeastern corner of Lincoln and Eton.
3. Create a neighborhood destination zoning district. This district should consider the following recommendations:
 - a. Allow by-right Commercial Destinations of up to 10,000 square feet total, no more than 3,000 square feet per tenant.
 - b. Limit uses to bakeries, banks, bicycle shops, cafés, carry-out foods, coffee shops, exercise studios, florists, hardware, ice cream parlors, mail centers, personal care, medical offices, pharmacies, real estate offices, financial services, small groceries, specialty shops, and other small local service-businesses. Housing should be permitted above the ground floor.
 - Where located in parks, limit uses to

Ch 1. Connect the City

Encourage Gathering Places

bakeries, cafes, and coffee shops.

- c. Nationally branded chains should be permitted when designed to look local.
- d. Limit evening hours and prohibit excessive noise, including music in the late evenings, and early or late truck deliveries should be restricted.
- e. Larger restaurants and other potentially intensive commercial should be permitted as special uses, with appropriate design, management, and operational conditions geared to minimize their potential impact on surrounding properties.
- f. Drive-thru windows should be prohibited.
- g. Loading docks should be minimal, if provided.
- h. Landscaped screening should be required from adjacent single-family properties.
- i. Allowed up to three floors, provided they match

the scale of a two and one-half story structure.

- For buildings with 3 stories, the upper floors must be residential.
- For buildings with 2 stories, the upper floor may be office or residential.
- Where located in parks, limit height to one story.
- j. Parking should be as minimal as possible, or not required. If required, parking should not exceed 3 cars per 1,000 square feet of non-residential uses and 1 car per bedroom of residential uses.
- k. Planning Board review should ensure minimal impacts to the neighborhood.

- Commercial Destinations
- Recreational Destinations
- 5-minute Walk (existing)
- 5-minute Walk (new)

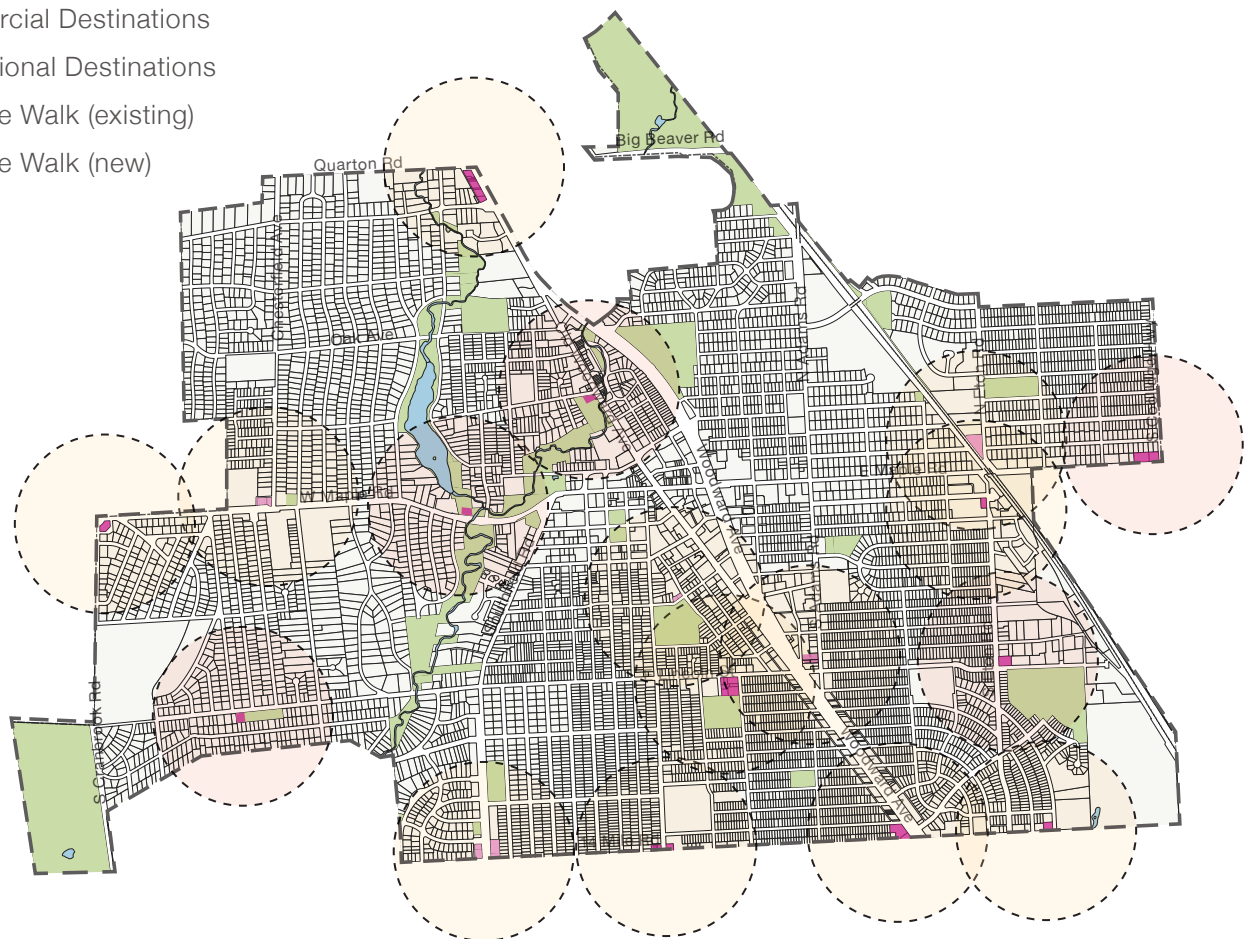


Figure 22. Proposed Neighborhood Destinations.

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Encourage Gathering Places

Civic Destinations

Birmingham has a long tradition of investing in civic buildings and landscapes, which began with the construction of its first library and the build-out of its civic center in the 1920s. This civic center is centrally located downtown, with its constituent buildings grouped around Shain Park. The center occupies five blocks that once housed privately owned houses, which the city purchased and razed as part of the 1929 Plan. Outside of the City's primary civic cluster in Downtown, nearly all of Birmingham's neighborhoods include one or more civic uses within a short walk for most of their residents. This relationship is relatively rare in postwar suburbs and contributes to Birmingham's desirable quality of life. These Civic Destinations include fire stations, meeting halls, museums, places of worship, post offices, schools, and specialized civic institutions such as Next and the YMCA. The 1929 plan proposed anchoring each of the city's neighborhoods with a civic center, a

school, or a park. Largely implemented, this plan resulted in the numerous schools and parks that now exist in most of Birmingham's neighborhoods.

Civic buildings offer neutral, aspirational places for citizens and community leaders to exchange ideas, form community associations, or simply socialize. Located in a neighborhood setting, these institutions encourage neighborhood interaction. (See Figure 23) They also tend to draw people from other nearby neighborhoods, cross-pollinating the City's social structures. Civic buildings and landscapes should be grand and iconic, and be distinct from residential construction to avoid confusing public and private uses. Birmingham's prewar civic buildings—the City Hall, library, post office, and train station—were built of brick and stone in an English Tudor style, with the exaggerated scale and exceptional quality befitting signature civic buildings.

Throughout the community, Civic Destinations should be

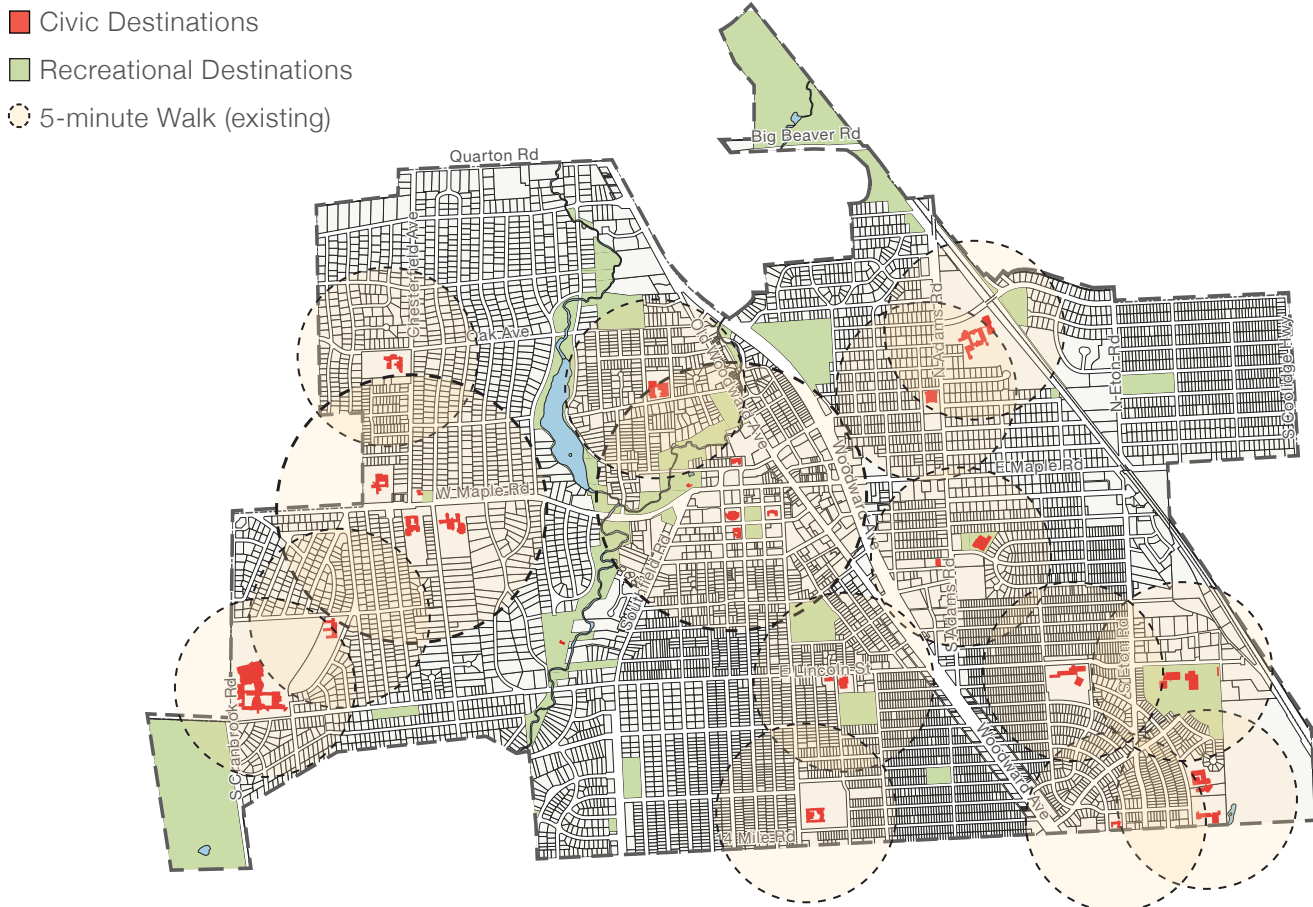


Figure 23. Civic Destinations.

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Prioritize the Neighborhood Loop

maintained and supported. During the planning charrette, some of the City's civic institutions discussed their great variety of programs. We also heard that some struggle to reach residents and new generations who are not familiar with the role that civic institutions play in the community. To support these institutions, Birmingham should have a Community Foundation or fund, which the Chamber of Commerce is in the process of establishing. In addition to the fund, regular social events should be organized throughout the city. At present, a series of events occurs downtown, but additional events should be considered throughout the community. The Community Foundation or fund should contribute to these events and involve civic institutions in organizing and promotion. Regular events such as these are an important means of gaining visibility among community members, engaging them, and strengthening the community's social and civic structure.

Of particular interest to older residents is the lack of a sufficient senior center. While Next's programs and staff meet much of this need, their facilities are insufficient. Surrounding communities boast substantial seniors facilities. Beyond the senior focus, some younger adults use Next's facilities and Next has begun to broaden their appeal beyond the senior cohort. Improved facilities for Next would contribute to both older and younger adult populations. At present Next occupies a former school building located adjacent to Seaholm. New facilities for Next would ideally be located near the center of the city, for more convenient access to all residents. Many options exist and should be studied, including: part of a public parking facility development in Haynes Square or the Bates Street extension, replacing the surface parking in Shain Park, or other locations near the city center. In addition to programming for Next, the facility should provide space that may be reserved free of charge for meetings of resident organizations.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Establish policy to continue the tradition of constructing Birmingham's civic buildings and parks as iconic structures and landscapes to the highest standards and at a civic scale. This should include authentic durable materials, oversized windows, high ceilings, and Tudor design and detailing.

2. Ensure the Community Foundation / Fund is established in a timely manner.
3. Establish a Civic Events Board or extend the role of the Public Arts Board to develop regular civic events to continue engaging the community throughout the year and promote existing civic institutions.
4. Convene a committee to study the location, programming, and funding for new facilities for Next.

Prioritize the Neighborhood Loop

Presently, the city's major roads run between planning districts which is efficient for long-distance car needs, but is less convenient and safe for walkers and cyclists. Additionally, many neighborhoods experience cut-through traffic when congestion is high on major roads along the district perimeter. To address these issues and increase social interaction through walking and cycling, a Neighborhood Loop is proposed. (See Figure 24) This is a pedestrian and bicycle priority route through most of Birmingham's neighborhoods, avoiding larger roads where possible. This plan recommends that improvements be prioritized over most other multi-modal improvements. The loop is also an opportunity for a future internal public transportation circulator for the City, to provide mobility options for those who cannot walk long distances or cycle.

The loop is intended to be a bicycle boulevard system which also focuses on pedestrian accommodations and comfort. Bicycle boulevards are routes that are designed for bicycle access while discouraging through access for cars. As such, the loop will serve to reduce cut-through traffic by diverting cars to provide better bike and pedestrian access and safety. Pedestrian accommodations include sufficient sidewalks, marked crosswalks, shading, and benches. The proposed loop route builds upon the cycle track recently piloted along Eton Rd.

Beyond physical accommodations, the Neighborhood Loop is intended to be a social concentrator for the City's neighborhoods. Once established, at least by signage, activities should be planned along the loop to encourage pedestrian and cyclist use, especially families. During the summer, a monthly program could close the loop to traffic one day per month, and parks along the path programmed

Ch 1. Connect the City

Prioritize the Neighborhood Loop

with family-friendly activities. Where the Hometown Parade brings people to Downtown, activities along the loop are intended to connect neighbors with each other and get residents walking and riding through other neighborhoods they don't normally experience. Additionally, the loop is intended to make pedestrians and cyclists more visible throughout the City, especially across the major roadways.

Bicycle destination signage is currently lacking throughout the City. While the 2013 Multi-modal Plan recommended signage, this plan establishes a number of more clear destinations with planning district boundaries and multiple downtown districts. Signage should be installed along the Neighborhood Loop and other routes with bike lanes. Signage may be expanded to secondary connections and routes at a later time. Bicycle signage provides significant way-finding assistance to riders who may be unsure of how to use the bike network.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

5. Hire a consultant to design the Neighborhood Loop bicycle boulevard, including signage and diverters, and pedestrian improvements, like complete side-walks and crosswalks.
6. Update the Multi-modal Plan to include and prioritize the Neighborhood Loop design elements.
7. Develop civic programming events along the neighborhood loop, within the purview of the Civic Events Board or Public Arts Board.
8. Update the multi-modal plan to implement the Neighborhood Loop.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MULTI-MODAL PLAN

- a. Add benches along the loop where the Neighborhood Loop crosses major roads, like Maple, schools, and parks, like Linden Park.
- b. Add bicycle destination signage along the Neighborhood Loop and routes with bike lanes.
- c. Add bicycle parking and repair stations like those found in Shain Park to all parks.

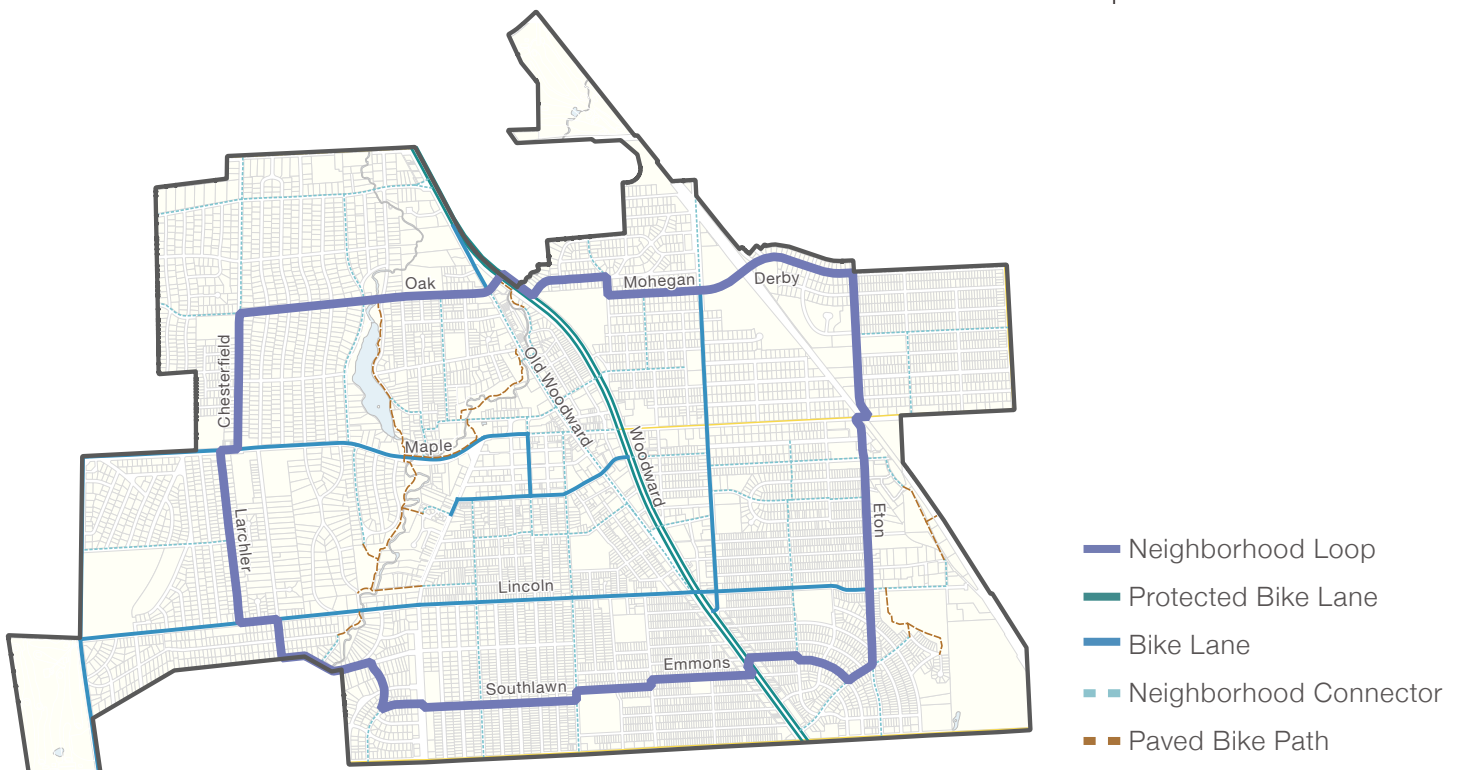


Figure 24. The Neighborhood Loop

Ch 1. Connect the City

Accommodate More Modes of Movement

Accommodate More Modes of Movement

Much of the congestion that Birmingham experiences is due to regional issues, which the city has little opportunity to change. While recommendations are provided to deal with cut-through traffic and dangerous intersections, providing viable alternatives for getting around the City without a car is the most effective strategy to reduce the inconvenience caused by congestion. Across the country mobility has evolved from a focus on personal automobiles to support bicycle and pedestrian priority, and to integrate evolving technologies. Birmingham needs a strategy to integrate a wide variety of alternatives to personal vehicles.

The 2013 Multi-modal Plan increases priority for bicycles and pedestrians which is a critical improvement. Today, there remains a long way to go to achieve the goals of this plan. With emerging technologies and lessons learned in bicycle accommodations, the 2013 plan should be updated to integrate new modes as well as experiences from implementation to date.

Beyond bicycles and pedestrians, preparing for unknown future mobility devices is difficult to predict but important to allow for increased access throughout the city. To successfully integrate new technologies, strategies are required for both facilities and education.

Multi-modal Facilities

To accommodate an increasing number of mobility options, facilities for different roadway users should be considered according to the speed of user. A significant difference in speed is why cars and pedestrians don't mix well. Similarly, this is why bicycles need dedicated lanes when cars travel above 25mph; the difference in speeds causes a safety issue. This view is important when considering how to integrate scooters, single wheels, and even e-bikes. Whether a street should be slow speed and shared for all users, higher speed and separated for all users, or somewhere in between intersects transportation network and urban design.

Within neighborhoods, accommodation for multiple modes is relatively easy. Most streets in Birmingham are narrow, slowing cars enough to mix modes within the street. The Neighborhood Loop, consisting of a series of bicycle

boulevards, also provides safe and convenient access for multiple modes. But in neighborhoods, bikes, scooters, and similar technology should be discouraged from using sidewalks through signage and education.

Within Mixed-use Districts, accommodation for new mobility modes should be considered more carefully. On streets with larger volumes of car traffic, improved bicycle accommodations such as protected bike lanes are necessary to ensure comfort and safety for riders of all ages. These lanes can also accommodate faster moving new technology like scooters. However, many streets in Birmingham cannot accommodate both bike lanes and on-street parking yet these mixed-use districts also experience the highest parking usage rates. The most effective means of accommodating multiple modes is to slow the speed of all users.

Another recommended initiative is to pilot shared-use streets where materials, signage, and the street edge are designed for all users to operate at very slow speeds and mix. These shared use spaces and streets are common in Europe and are increasing in use in the US. A notable example is Argyle Street in Chicago. Merrill Street is an excellent location to pilot a shared use street, connecting Old Woodward with Shain Park and the Library, potentially extending to Martha Baldwin Park and the Rouge River trail network. Worth Street in Haynes Square could pilot the form as a future main street, along with Cole Street in the Rail District. Over time a network of shared use streets should be assembled, better accommodating changing mobility.

Educating Roadway Users

While new mobility options provide benefits for many travelers, addressing safety issues and a clear understanding and respect for rules is critical. Riders of bicycles, scooters, and other modes must be aware of where they are expected and allowed to ride, whether safety equipment is required, and how right-of-way is determined. In addition to awareness, the city should understand that most frequently violations occur where people feel that it is unsafe or very inconvenient to ride where directed. But equally importantly, drivers need to respect the rights of other roadway users, many of which do not. To address these issues, adequate signage, public education, and enforcement are necessary.

Ch 1. Connect the City

Improve Regional Transit Connections

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Update the Multi-modal Plan to address new mobility technology, recent design innovations, and a public education component.
2. Require protected bicycle facilities on all streets posted at or above 35mph.
3. Pilot a shared use street along Merrill Street first from Old Woodward to Shain Park, and in a later phase connecting to the Rouge River trail system through Martha Baldwin Park.
4. Update the multi-modal plan to implement additional multi-modal and micro-mobility best practices.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MULTI-MODAL PLAN

- a. Shift the burden of public bicycle parking in the downtown from private businesses to the city.
- b. Increase proposed streetside bicycle parking.
- c. Add parking areas for micro-mobility devices.
- d. Convert bicycle lane signage to mobility lane.
- e. Install signage informing micro-mobility users and cyclists of where they are permitted to ride.
- f. Provide mobility education to all residents.

Improve Regional Transit Connections

Regional transit will increase in importance as long as the transit authorities invest in the system, and residents support that investment. As one of a number of cities and mixed-use centers along Woodward, Birmingham would benefit significantly from improved bus or rail along the corridor. While this has been projected for decades, there is still hope that it will occur.

To support transit, Birmingham has relatively little work to do, already having a well established downtown along Woodward. Most significantly, Birmingham needs to add residents to Downtown, which is proposed in greater detail in following chapters. Residents Downtown would also be located along the regional transit corridor, more readily users of that service and able to reduce car dependency as a result. The Rail District also needs to secure a

connection to the Troy Transit Center and add residents and businesses. This is also discussed in later chapters. Physically the City needs to improve transit stops to be covered and include real-time information, along with nearby long-term covered bike parking.

For Birmingham, regional transportation will mean relatively little for residents who are further from Downtown without an internal circulator. A circulator, autonomous or otherwise, would also improve access around the City to residents who have difficulties walking and biking during the winter months. A circulator within Birmingham should run along the Neighborhood Loop, with a few diversions to high-frequency destinations like Seaholm. Overall this would provide greater access to residents and reduce some parking issues Downtown and also at Seaholm.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Update the Multi-modal Plan to improve the conditions at bus stops along more major roads.
2. Convene a committee to study a public circulator.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MULTI-MODAL PLAN

- a. Improve bus stops by adding shelters, paving, and seating along:
 - Big Woodward
 - Old Woodward (completed in part with Phase 1 streetscape).
 - Maple, including stops outside of Downtown
 - Coolidge Hwy.
 - 14 Mile Rd.

Ch 1. Connect the City

Multi-modal Plan Updates

Multi-modal Plan Updates

A number of adjustments are recommended to the 2013 Multi-modal Plan within the previous sections. Those updates that are able to be expressed on a map are included in this section for ease of comparison to the existing plan. In addition, these recommendations impact the overall network for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit. Some of the updates identified in this section are adjustments based upon those impacts.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian facilities are generally adjusted in order to implement recommendations in the Connect the City and Prioritize the Neighborhood Loop sections. These are specified in Figure 25.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

Bicycle facilities are generally adjusted in order to implement recommendations in the Connect the City, Prioritize the Neighborhood Loop, and Accommodate More Modes of Movement sections. These are specified in Figure 26 and include recommended adjustments to the overall bicycle network function as a result of other changes.

TRANSIT FACILITIES

Transit facilities are generally adjusted in order to implement recommendations in the Connect the City, Prioritize the Neighborhood Loop, and Improve Regional Transit Connections sections. These are specified in Figure 27.

- Improvements Added
- Curb Extensions Added

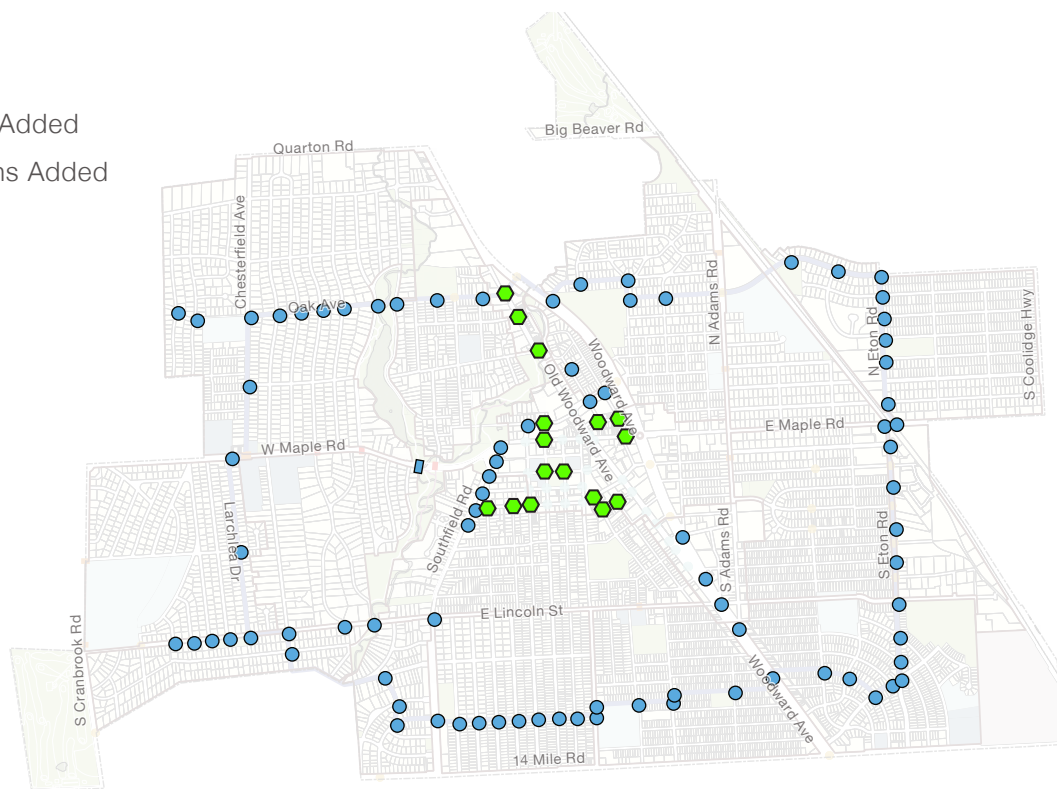


Figure 25. Pedestrian updates to the multi-modal plan.

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Multi-modal Plan Updates

- Bike Connection Added
- Type Changed
- Removed / Relocated

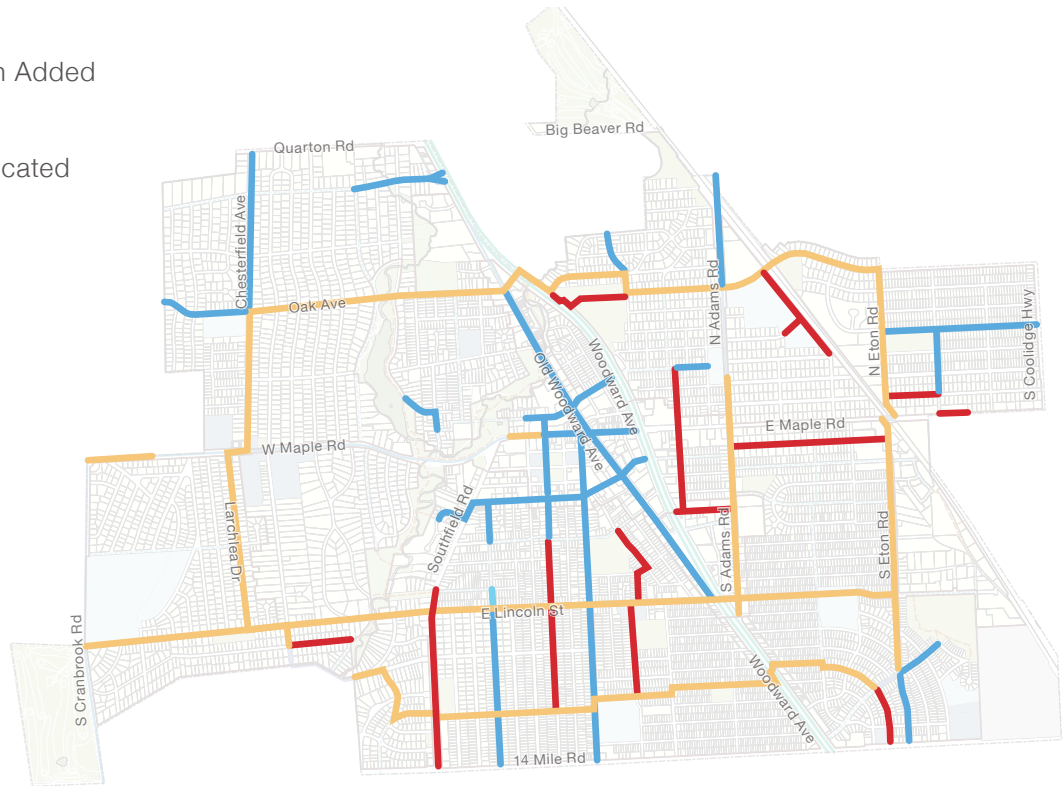


Figure 26. Bicycle facility updates to the multi-modal plan.

- Transit Stops Added
- Removed / Relocated

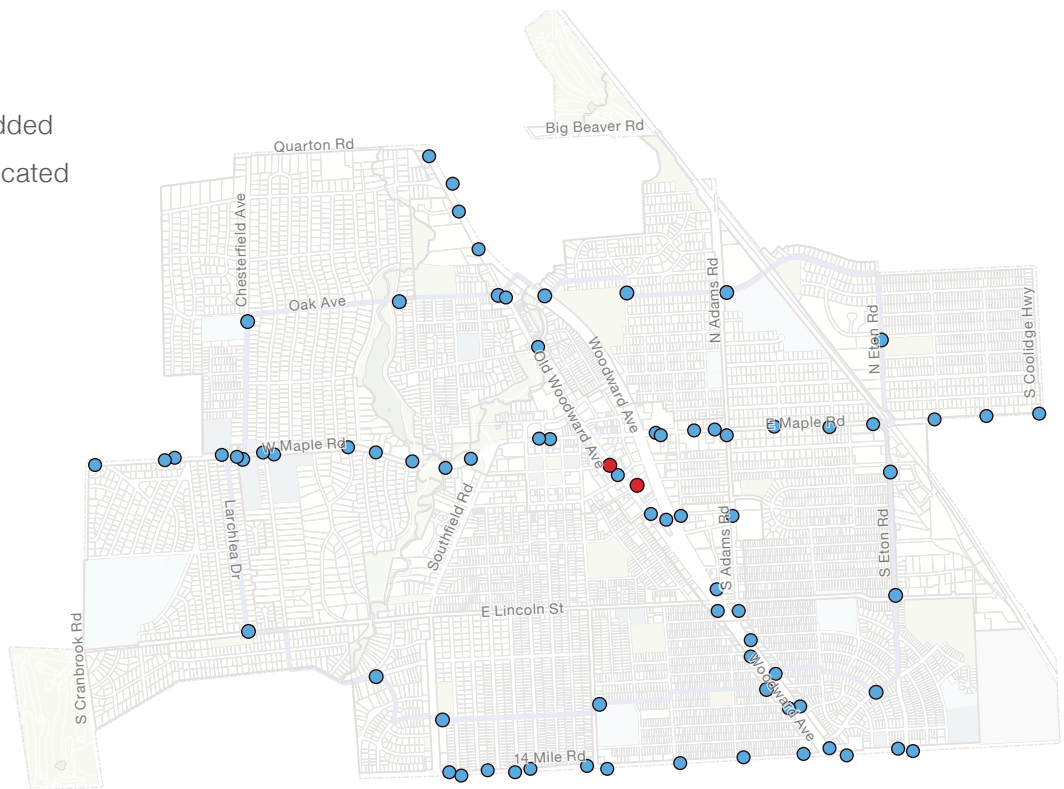


Figure 27. Transit updates to the multi-modal plan.

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Ch 2. Embrace Managed Growth

Ch 2. Embrace Managed Growth

Encourage Housing in Mixed-use Districts

Encourage Housing in Mixed-use Districts

Maple and Woodward

The Maple and Woodward district (Downtown Birmingham) has an imbalance of commercial to residential development, with very few households compared to a significant amount of office and retail space. This lack of housing has been recognized since the 1980 plan, due significantly to a policy which does not allow residences to park in the public parking decks. Each mixed-use district requires a balance of housing with offices and retail space; a proper mix ensures that the district is active during daytime hours and into the evening, supporting retail spaces and restaurants and promoting greater public safety. If housing is to be provided downtown to re-balance the 24-hour life-cycle of the downtown, it will require access to the municipal parking supply.

Providing parking on private properties in downtown is difficult due to the small size of properties and goals for walkable streets activated by storefronts. Properties in suburban locations can more easily provide on-site parking because land is not scarce. Those areas are also not walkable. Walkable streets require small blocks and a lot of activity; there is not room for parking on every property. The current rules encourage development to add housing on upper floors to achieve a height bonus, but require some of the very valuable ground floor to be set aside for parking. This results in very large and very expensive housing in a downtown that needs small and relatively inexpensive

apartments and condos.

Parking downtown is typically heavily utilized during the daytime, with most public garages over 90% of their capacity. However, that same parking is virtually empty during the evening and overnight. Weekend parking is also underutilized with around 2,000 spaces available. This parking imbalance is an ideal opportunity to accommodate housing, which requires parking at night and on weekends, and vacates parking during the day. When initially proposed as a concept, concern for the time that residents would depart and office workers would arise was raised. Having monitored parking patterns, at least half of total parking capacity is available at 10am, providing a significant period of overlap between uses. (See Figure 28)

Presently, four and five-story buildings are allowed in most areas downtown yet most buildings are lower. Considering the difference between the height of existing buildings and the currently allowed potential, all housing growth needed in the downtown area could be accommodated within the existing zoned capacity. Some of that capacity is further limited by the historic status of many existing buildings. However, we do not recommend increasing heights beyond what is currently zoned, except where adjusting zone boundaries for greater consistency. Focus should instead be on filling existing capacity, here and in other mixed-use districts.

New residential parking permit price should be set attainably yet to discourage residents from parking cars that

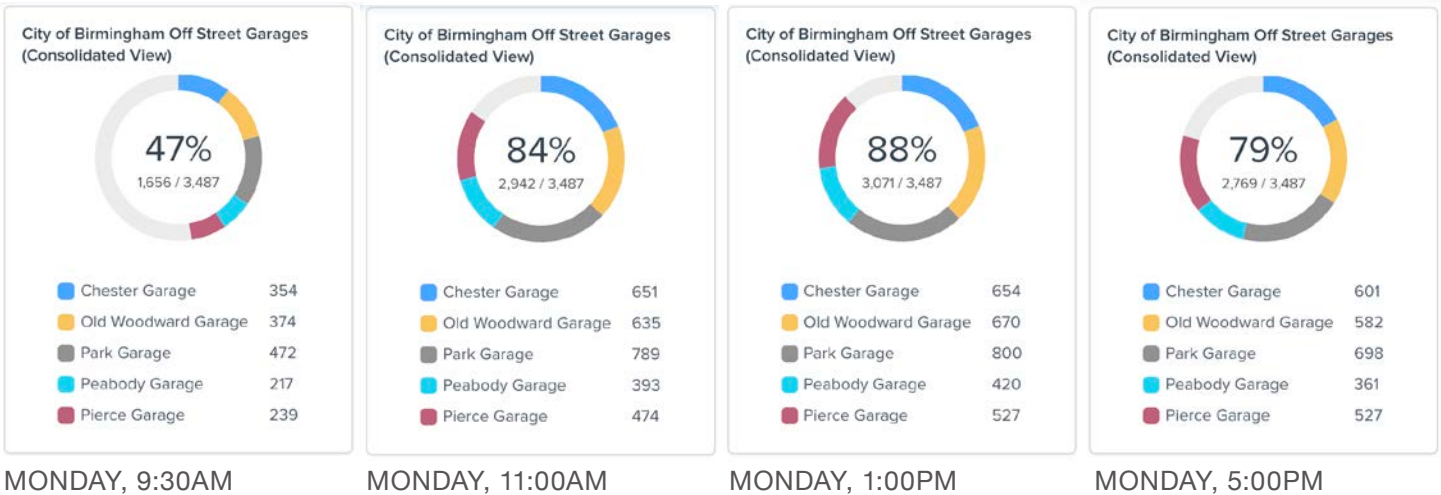


Figure 28. Downtown garage capacity at different times on a Monday.

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Encourage Housing in Mixed-use Districts

are not used regularly. Distribution of permits can also be managed through permit assignments, assigning spaces in less used garages like Chester Street. For the mostly younger and older residents who may not need a car, they benefit from the cost of parking being entirely eliminated from the cost of their housing. And lastly, the added income for the parking district can be reinvested into existing structures and for replacements and new structures.

Haynes Square

Haynes Square, to both sides of Woodward, can accommodate a significant amount of infill development. As discussed in a prior section, this area should be targeted for more housing than office within the use mix. Most of the available capacity is located east of Woodward in the Triangle District, which is already zoned for significant infill capacity. However, like Downtown, housing development in Haynes Square / Triangle District, on both sides of Woodward, is restricted by parking.

To the east of Woodward, many properties are oddly shaped and all are relatively shallow in depth. These characteristics mean that parking provided on-site is inefficient. Non-residential development in this area has been slow for similar reasons - parking is difficult to fit due to the geometry of most properties. A public parking structure is needed east of Woodward to drive private sector development, as previously discussed.

To the west of Woodward, properties are also too shallow to provide sufficient on-site parking. In addition, because this area is near to the downtown parking district but not within, development demand funnels to the downtown district where parking is not required for new development. One solution to this issue is proposed in a previous section, removing the southern portion of Old Woodward to extend properties and create public surface parking. This will not provide sufficient parking for the district, however, as the public parking opportunity is very close to lower scale homes. The western Haynes Square district could be provided additional parking access by: extending the downtown parking district; building a parking structure on the west side of Woodward as part of the Haynes Square street modifications; or including this area within a Triangle District parking district.

The Rail District

Like the Triangle District, the Rail District has long been zoned for significant infill but has seen little growth over time, particularly in the lower Rail District near Cole and Lincoln. This location is ideal for housing infill with its proximity to Kenning Park and future access to the Troy Transit Center. Development has occurred in the area on properties that are large, but the many smaller properties around Cole Street remain underdeveloped, despite being zoned for high density infill. Similar to the Triangle District, development of housing is restricted by the size and shape of properties, and lack of public parking. A public parking garage should be built near the lower Rail District and future Troy Transit Station access. Like the other mixed-use districts, this garage should allow for unbundled residential parking by selling residential parking passes. The garage would also help alleviate parking conflicts with the adjacent Torry neighborhood.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Immediately pilot unbundled residential parking in Downtown. This may be achieved by releasing 100 to 200 passes for new downtown residential units.
2. Task the Advisory Parking Committee to study downtown residential parking. The committee should consider:
 - a. Offering a limited supply of permits for downtown housing, eliminating on-site parking. Evaluate the supply and modify as needed over time to maximize garage usage and housing.
 - b. Tie parking passes to an average rental or sales rate of 150% of Area Median Income or less, calculated on a per-building basis.
 - c. Tier permit costs according to the number of vehicles per residence, increasing in price for each vehicle and by parking garage.
3. Task the Advisory Parking Committee to study opportunities for expanding downtown parking capacity and accommodate more monthly permit users as capacity becomes available.
4. Build public parking in the Triangle District as previously discussed.

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Infill Some Medium and High Intensity District Seams

5. Provide public parking for the western Haynes Square district.
6. Build public parking in the Rail District. This should be on a site with adequate access to the Lower Rail District and the future connection to the Troy Transit Center.
7. Establish permanent unbundled residential parking in all mixed-use districts as municipal garages are built.

Infill Some Medium and High Intensity District Seams

Increasing the housing supply in only the high intensity mixed-use districts will result in a narrow range of new housing types, almost exclusively larger multi-family buildings. This form of infill addresses the need of some but not all demographic groups. One under-supplied group is households with young children, which are important in supporting the public school system. Few opportunities exist for new townhomes, duplexes, smaller houses, and small multi-family buildings. To accommodate these housing types, medium and high intensity district seams should be zoned to enable this range of housing.

Most of the medium and high intensity district seams are already mapped on multi-family properties, which does

- High Intensity Seams
- Medium Intensity Seams

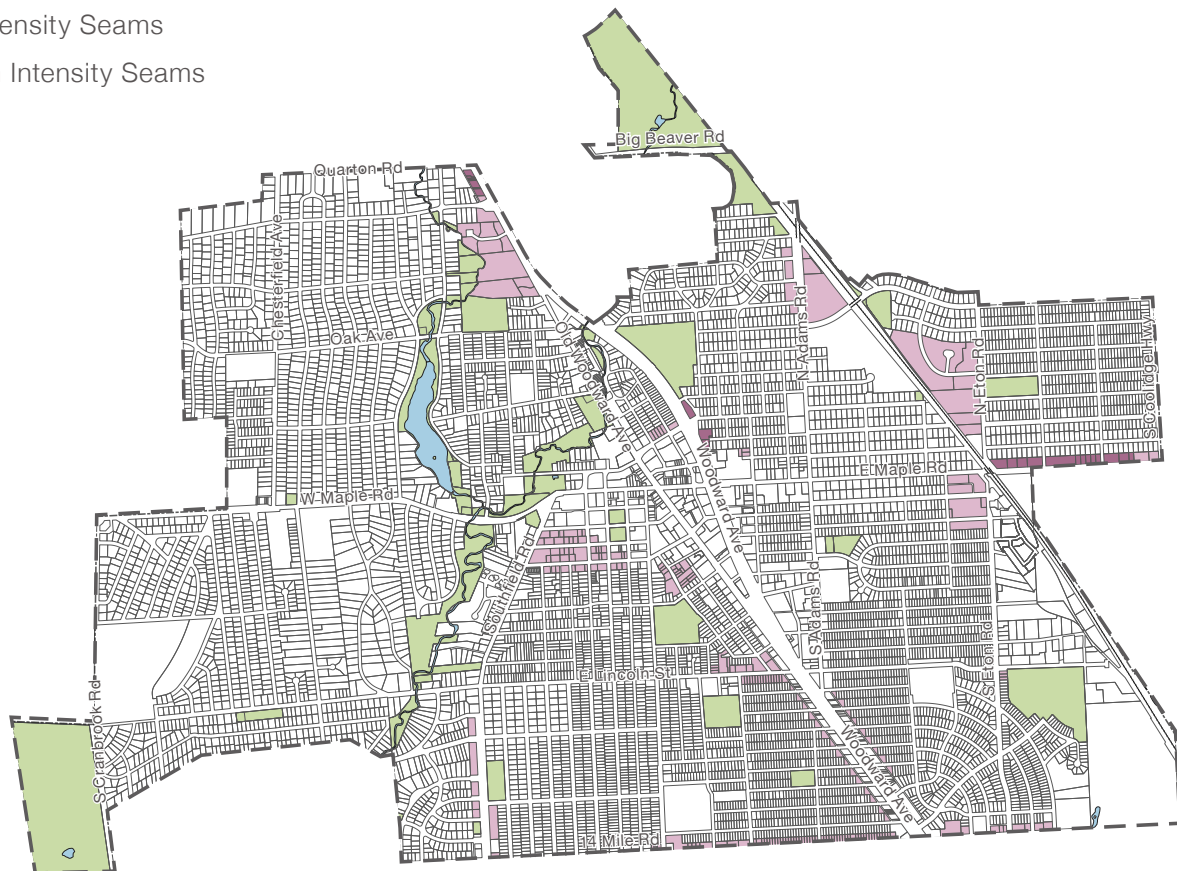


Figure 29. High and Medium Intensity District Seams.

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Study Accessory Dwelling Units

add to the housing supply. However, there may be some additional infill capacity available in these properties by adjusting downward the minimum open space per dwelling standards, which are quite high today. Additionally, some medium and high intensity district seams are mapped on properties that are single-family today, notably along 14 Mile Road. While there are not many properties available for infill at this scale, those areas able to accommodate infill should be zoned to encourage it.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Create a new zoning district or modify the transition zone districts to encourage infill development of small homes, townhomes, duplexes, and small multi-family buildings, limited to medium and high intensity district seams.

Study Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are a low impact way to provide additional housing, particularly for older adults and lower income individuals. The City currently allows accessory structures but has restrictions to prohibit their use as permanent dwellings.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are small homes typically located in the rear yard of a single-family or attached townhouse lot, frequently over a garage but often a small secondary unit within the primary home. ADUs can provide housing sought by many young renters, single-person households, and older adults. Birmingham has had historic ADUs for decades.

Presently, there is considerable market demand for ADUs in the City, but accessory structures are not permitted to be used as residences for people other than a relative of the primary household. The primary advantage of an ADU, if properly regulated, is that the property owner must also live on the property, providing oversight by the owner. For older adults looking to downsize but avoid a spike in property tax by selling, they can build an at-grade ADU to live in and rent their primary home. ADUs add a small amount of additional units, at a very low overall neighborhood impact.

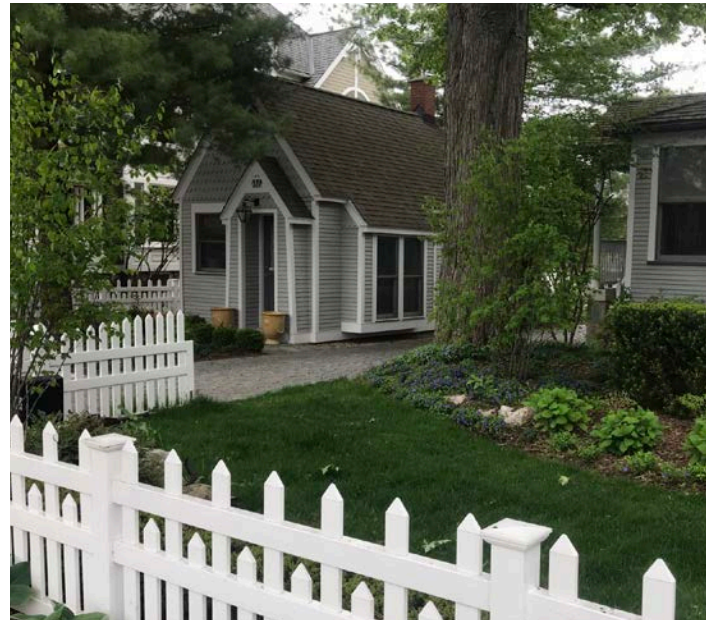


Figure 30. An existing ADU equivalent.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Enable Accessory Dwelling Units in already compatible zones: MX, TZ1, TZ3, and R4 through R8.
2. Convene a committee to study Accessory Dwelling Units, where they are appropriate in Birmingham, and the regulations necessary to ensure any negative impacts are minimized.

ADU BEST PRACTICES

- a. Permit ADUs where the property owner lives on-site, in the primary home or ADU.
- b. Prohibit two-rental structures on any single-family property.
- c. Require ADUs to be designed and built to match or exceed the quality of the primary structure.
- d. Require adequate landscape screening between ADUs and adjacent properties
- e. Do not require parking for ADUs.
- f. Increase the allowable height for accessory structures to allow 2 stories when there is a dwelling within it above a garage.
- g. Exempt the area of interior staircases from the maximum area of accessory structures when there is a dwelling within it.

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Update the Zoning Code

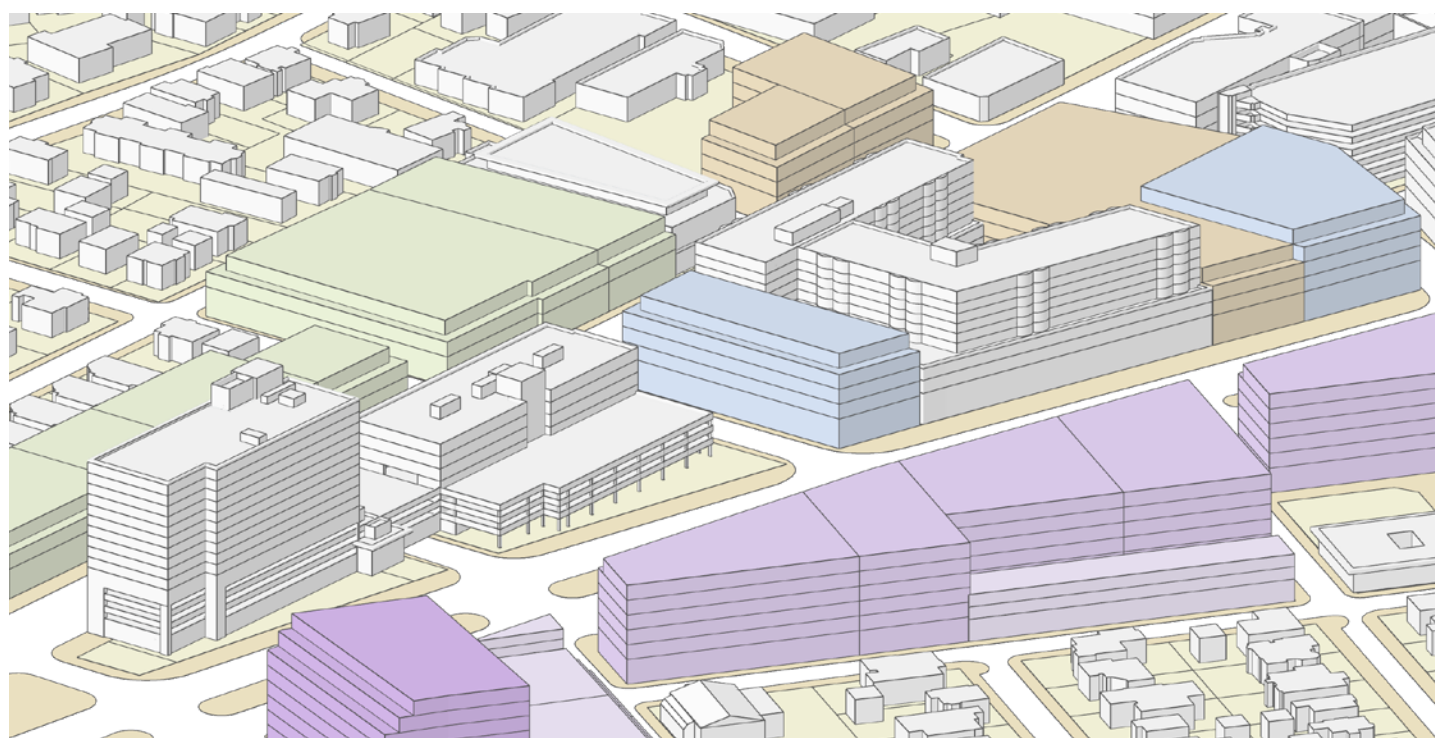
Update the Zoning Code

Birmingham's Zoning Ordinance is difficult to understand and has been adapted for recent districts, like Downtown and the Triangle District, through overlays which are essentially a patchwork over code elements that no longer function for the City's goals.

Birmingham's Zoning Code is due for an overhaul. While it is certainly better than many other codes for cities of a similar size across the country, the code no longer aligns with best practices. Zoning codes should be legible and comprehensible for residents and professionals alike, including graphic exhibits to clarify text-based concepts. Zones should be minimized, combining those which may be very similar but in different parts of the city (See Figure 31), like the Downtown Overlay, Triangle District Overlay, and the Mixed-use district established for the Rail District. Ideally the residential districts should also be examined for their appropriateness and some collapsed, especially

towards the higher end - R6 through R8. The existing Business and Office districts should be rezoned to the most appropriate mixed-use district.

Clarity and simplicity in zoning helps residents understand the implication of the zoning code, which is otherwise opaque to most. Additionally, collapsing zones and standards can simplify the review process and make new revisions easier to implement. Along with these, use categories should be collapsed to the broadest categories practicable. Overlays remain a useful tool, but they are best used to apply more stringent standards for an area, rather than overriding the majority of the code. At Maple and Woodward, for instance, the overlay is a good means of limiting ground floor office uses, which may be appropriate in other mixed-use districts.



Max allowable heights:

■ D2 3-story development - 56'

■ D3 4-story development - 68'

■ D4 5-story development - 80'

Max allowable heights:

■ MU-3 MFR 5-story development - 60'

■ MU-5 SF 6-story development - 82'

■ MU-7 9-story development - 118'

Figure 31. Existing Development Potential in Neighboring Overlays.

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Update the Zoning Code

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Update the zoning code. Focus on brevity, clarity, graphics, and aligning zones with Future Land Use categories. Consolidate zones and uses as much as is practical and ensure the updated document is legible, clear, and predictable for residents as well as developers. This should be a significant update.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Collapse uses into the broadest categories possible, with detailed use specification only provided where absolutely necessary, and in limited areas.
- b. Combine the business, office, Downtown, Triangle, and mixed-use districts into a single set of mixed-use districts shared between all mixed-use areas. Low intensity mixed-use districts would only include the lower intensity mixed-use zones, and high intensity mixed-use districts the higher intensity zones.
- c. Consider zoning district modifications for residential districts following the character descriptions and analysis for the City's neighborhoods, described in the next chapter of this plan.
- d. Revise residential districts to reduce the number of non-conforming structures by better aligning standards with existing structures.
- e. Ensure new zoning language is considered for simplicity and expediency, achieving regulatory goals in a manner clear to the general public.

Ch 2. Embrace Managed Growth

Update the Zoning Code

Downtown overlay

Triangle overlay

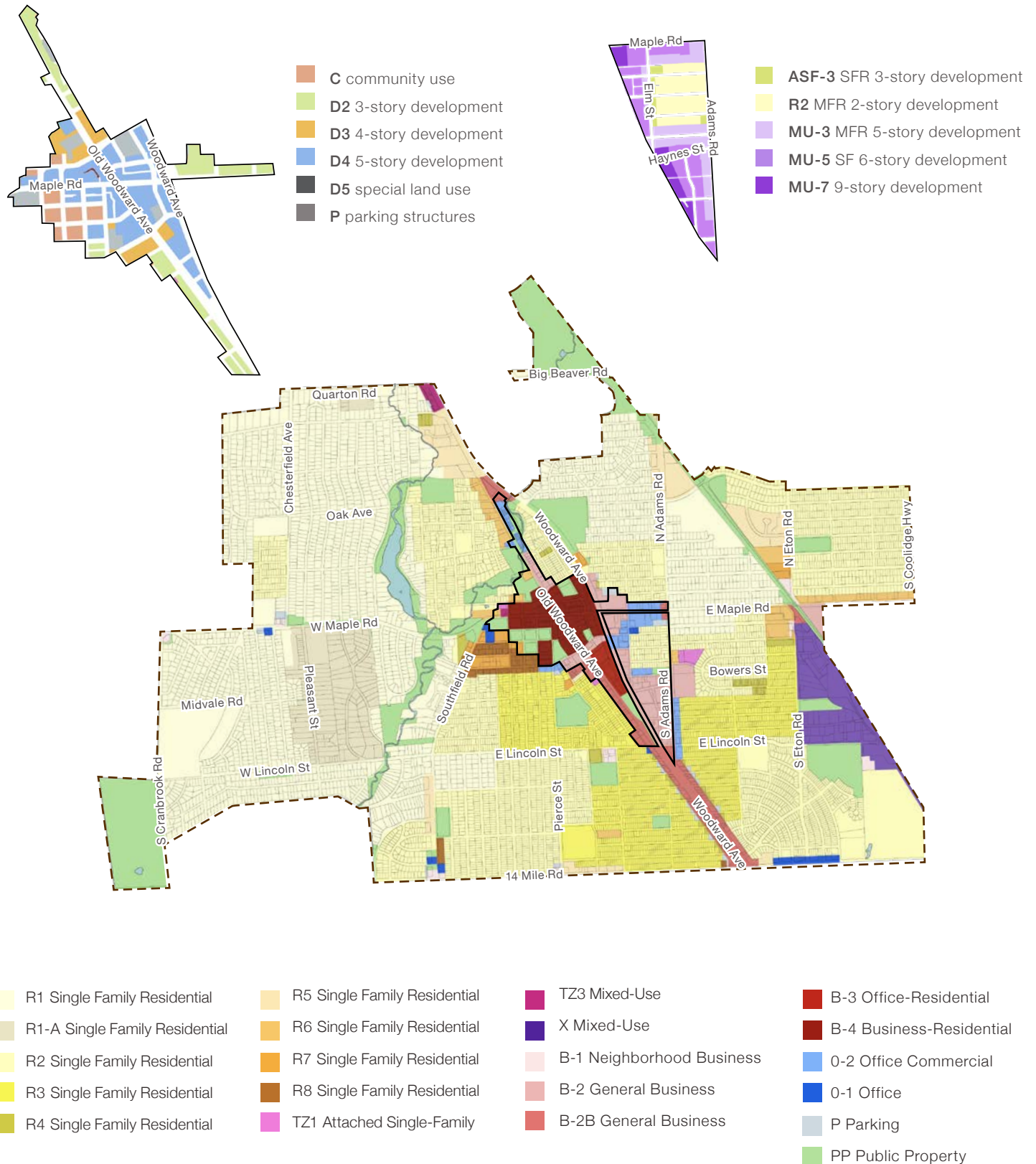


Figure 32. Existing Zoning Districts.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Equip Parks to Serve Neighborhoods

Equip Parks to Serve Neighborhoods

Birmingham's natural areas, parks, recreational facilities, and schoolyards are vital resources for its neighborhoods and surrounding communities. These open space amenities are important both for public health and as places where neighbors interact. Each neighborhood should have nearby access to open space which is designed with a broad set of activities to support a range of ages and abilities. While some neighborhoods are well served with parks and open spaces, when analyzed from a Planning District basis, many lack sufficient services. The 2018 Parks Master Plan addresses many service needs from a park-by-park basis. However, a planning district-based analysis should be completed to ensure that each neighborhood can supply diverse activities to its residents, within its existing parks or with sufficient programming at nearby community parks.

While Birmingham boasts many parks and the Rouge River natural area, an open space amenity is not located within close proximity to all residents. Considering which parks are accessible by a short walk to most residents, the core portion of the city is well accommodated while edges have less access. Opportunities to add park space are limited because the city is fully built, but parks programming can be augmented to make up for lacking amenities and spaces may be considered for reprogramming.

Parks and open spaces differ in their size, context, and ability to provide services and amenities. Larger, community parks provide more numerous amenities. Because these

are limited in number, each services a significant portion of the city, not only the surrounding neighborhood. Yet these parks must also provide neighborhood park amenities. This dual-purpose can cause conflict, where direct neighbors attempt to limit their use and access. For instance, some residents have expressed serious frustration that dog runs have been excluded from neighborhood parks. The single run at Lincoln Hills Golf Course is insufficient for a city the size of Birmingham.

Open space amenities are a critical resource for quality of life across the city. To ensure each Planning District has sufficient access to these amenities, access, service area, and the provision of amenities should be studied. Amenities should be provided according to the size, and location of each open space by type. A chart and map are provided as best practice recommendations for a future update to the Parks Master Plan.

Of all Planning Districts, Torry is most notably lacking park space. Already built-up there are few easy solutions to providing new open space. Two potential opportunities exist around Torry looking further to the future. Open space may be required as a condition for redevelopment of the Adams Square shopping center. Alternatively, the current post office site would accommodate a well-sized park if, within the horizon of this plan, the post office elects to vacate the property. As both options are difficult, the planned Worth Park in the Triangle District should be developed. Worth Park is reasonably accessible for the Torry neighborhood, but it would not fulfill all of the neighborhood's needs.

Quarton and Seaholm districts also lack official open park space for much of their Planning Districts. Like Torry, these areas have little opportunity for new open spaces. However, both neighborhoods utilize schoolyards as informal open spaces. The city should consider a more formal arrangement for neighborhood use of these spaces, including equipment and amenity needs to fulfill neighborhood park best practices. Officially using school fields as community and neighborhood parks requires approval from the school



Figure 33. Kids playing in Booth Park.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Equip Parks to Serve Neighborhoods

Park	Athletics	Cafe	Garden	Dogs	Exercise	Play	Splash	Seating	Walkways
Mini Parks									
1. Baldwin Well								X	
2. Derby Well			X		X			X	X
3. Pump House					X			X	X
4. Redding Well			X		X			X	X
5. Lynn Smith			X		X			X	X
6. Martha Baldwin					X			X	X
7. South Well			X					X	X
Neighborhood Parks									
8. Crestview	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
9. Howarth	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
10. Linden	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
11. Pembroke	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
12. St. James	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
13. W. Lincoln Well Site	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
14. Adams Park	X				X	X		X	X
A. Adams Square	X			X	X	X		X	X
B. Quarton School	X			X	X	X		X	X
Community Parks									
15. Barnum	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
16. Kenning	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
17. Poppleton	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
C. Seaholm	X			X	X	X		X	X
Specialty Parks									
18. Booth		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
19. Rouge River								X	X
20. Shain		X				X	X	X	X
21. Quarton Lake			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
22. Museum								X	X
23. Manor					X	X		X	X
24. Springdale	X			X	X	X		X	X
25. Lincoln Hills	X			X				X	X

Figure 34. Amenity Targets by Park and Park Type.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Equip Parks to Serve Neighborhoods

board and collaboration with the city concerning access, hours, liability, equipment, and maintenance. In a fully built community like Birmingham, school fields are one of the only opportunities to expand open space access and amenities.

4. Expand the 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan or create a new plan beyond the 2022 horizon, to implement Parks Best Practices by adding missing amenities and updating those that are out of date. Utilize Planning Districts to determine sufficiency of park access across the city.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Develop Worth Park as quickly as plausible to provide a portion of the needed open space access for Torry.
2. Attempt to purchase part of the Adams Square parking lot for park space, and if unsuccessful ensure that redevelopment would require that open space be provided at Adams and Bowers.
3. Establish a formal arrangement with the school districts for community use of school facilities.

PARKS BEST PRACTICES

Each type of park should provide specific amenities, as their size and configuration permits. All spaces should include public/civic art, signage, accessible paths, trash and recycling receptacles, and shaded seating.

Plazas are the most limited type of open space. These paved areas are small and typically provide only the amenity of passive recreation with seating along their edges. Some may also include water features and splash pads. Birmingham does not have plazas today, but some are

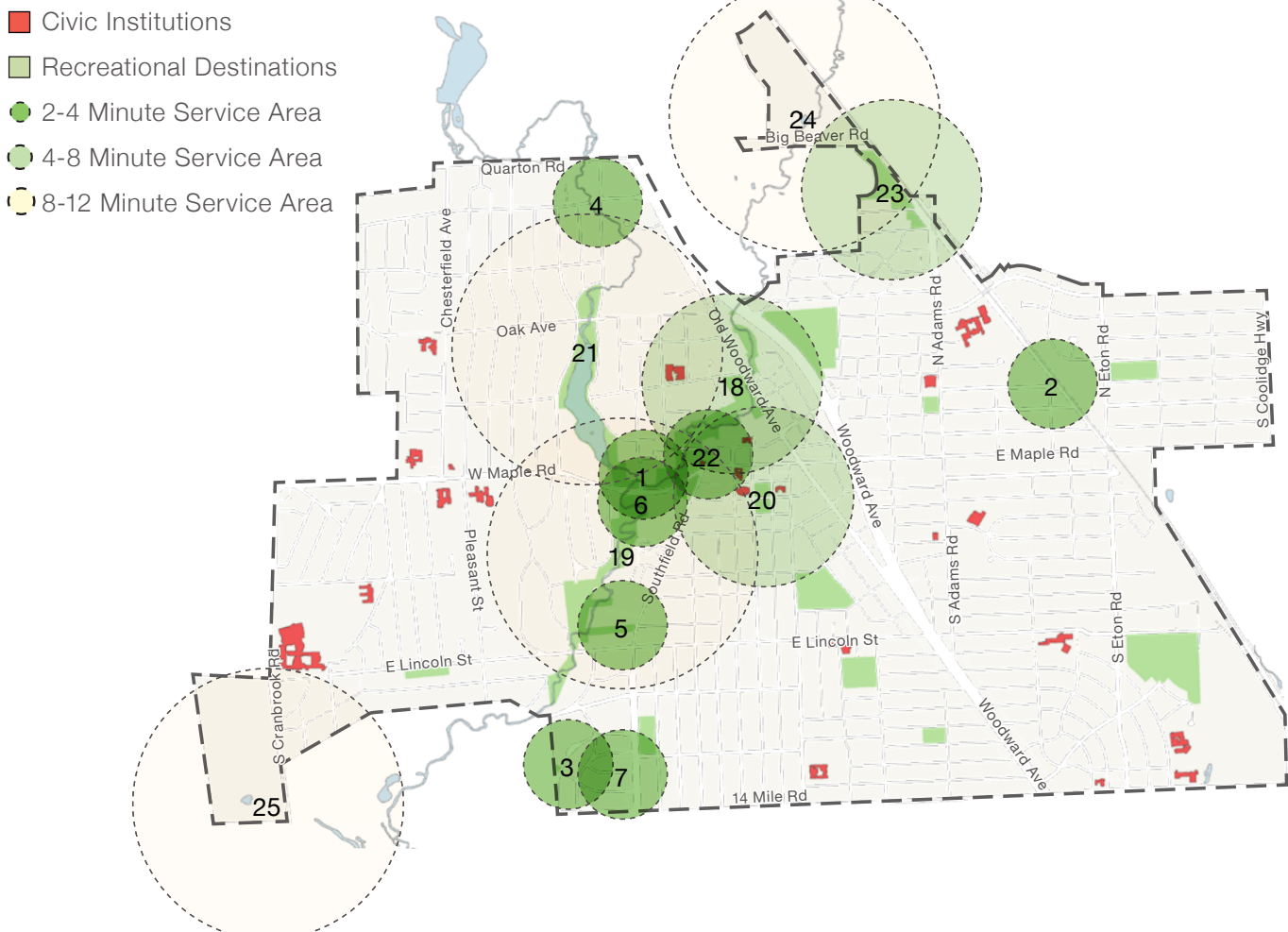


Figure 35. Birmingham Specialty Parks and Mini Parks.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Equip Parks to Serve Neighborhoods

contemplated by this and other plans.

Mini parks, like the well sites, are also quite limited due to their size. They serve an area of roughly 2-to-5 minutes walking distance. These spaces provide limited active recreation with limited trails. Exercise opportunities should be considered along trails. Passive recreational opportunities are provided with seating areas and may be expanded with community gardens and small dog runs. Mini parks should have some lighting, but be limited in intensity and frequency.

Neighborhood parks are of a moderate size, able to provide a variety of amenities. They serve an area of roughly 5-to-7 minutes walking distance. These should include play equipment for children, passive seating areas, and active amenities like tennis, basketball, and limited sports fields as space allows. Neighborhood parks should also provide bicycle

parking and lighting, dog runs, and green stormwater infrastructure, and may provide community garden space.

Community parks are substantial spaces that should include a significant variety of amenities. These parks serve a neighborhood park function for those residents within a 5-to-7 minute walk, but also serve a much more significant portion of the city that may walk, bike, or drive to access their amenities. Community parks should provide the amenities of neighborhood parks, and include more significant active recreational offerings, cafes, restrooms, and other specialized amenities. They should provide ample bicycle parking, lighting, and some public parking.

Specialized parks serve a very specific function due to their location, and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. These include the Rouge River Natural Area, Shain Park, and other special open spaces.

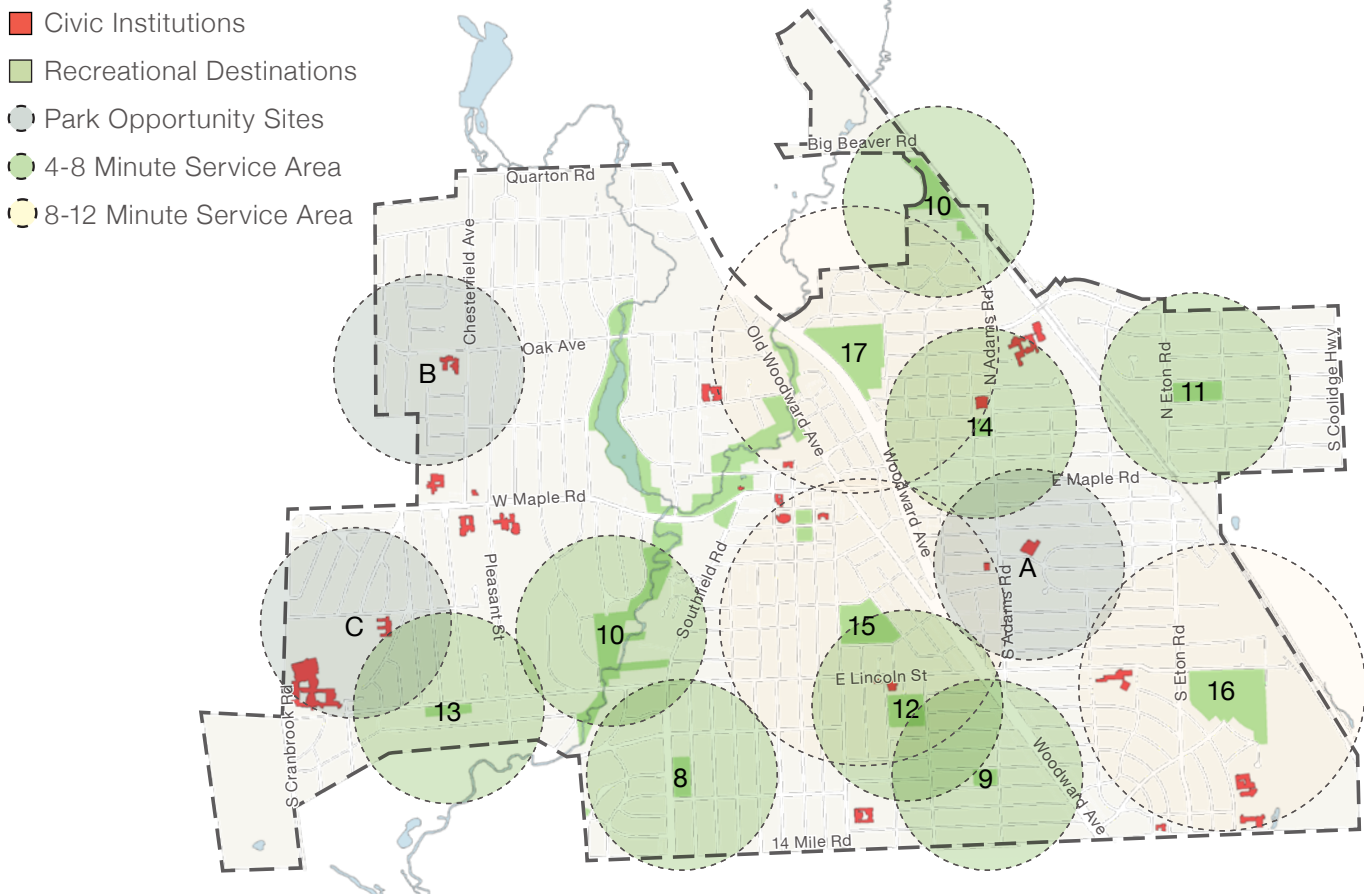


Figure 36. Neighborhood and Community Parks.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Keep Streets Pedestrian-oriented

Keep Streets Pedestrian-oriented

Streets are the most pervasive public space in a city, and Birmingham's streets are exceptionally beautiful and pleasant. However, the role of moving cars is too often considered the primary role of streets, which are then widened to make driving easier. In most cases, widening neighborhood streets reduces their function and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, reduces street tree canopy, and increases vehicle speeds. Fortunately, Birmingham has resisted calls to widen streets for the movement of cars. As a result, Birmingham retains a wonderful tree canopy and streets that are pleasant to walk along, bike along, and not too difficult to drive along.

Yet today, calls for wider streets continue. Too often our job as consultants is concerned with reducing roadway pavement and adding trees; making streets elsewhere more like those found in Birmingham. Once streets are widened, cars will move more quickly and those streets become convenient ways to cut around areas of congestion. However, some streets in Birmingham are too narrow, like Westchester Way, paved approximately 16 feet yet operating two-way with parking. Streets narrower than 20 feet paved and operating two-way with on-street parking should be considered for a modification of function or widening. Most other streets should not.

Beyond the space to accommodate automobiles, street design must consider pedestrian comfort and safety, bicyclist comfort and safety, and street trees.

Pedestrian comfort and safety is influenced by the size and location of sidewalks. Birmingham's historic neighborhood standard was a minimum 4 foot sidewalk, which is insufficient by today's standards. In most neighborhoods, sidewalks should be a minimum of 5 feet wide, and 6 feet in neighborhoods near mixed-use districts or streets with multi-family housing. The recently passed Residential Street Design Standard specifies a 5 foot minimum, which works for most places. In a mixed-use context, sidewalks should be wider, no less than 14 feet from curb to edge of right-of-way assuming a paved tree lawn with tree wells. Shared space streets are a special exception to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Sidewalks should also be continuous and pervasive. Today, sidewalks are missing in numerous places, which should be surveyed and remedied. Similarly, street intersections which do not have accessible ramps to crossings should be remedied.

Bicyclist and micro-mobility comfort and safety is principally influenced by the speed of vehicles and availability of dedicated facilities. In most streets, narrow lanes result in slow car movement, which provide bike and micro-mobility needs. But more so than cars, frequent stopping is extremely inconvenient. Bicycle boulevards should be considered to solve this issue, arranging intersection control to prefer bike and micro-mobility through movement and diverting cars to avoid cut through movement. The neighborhood loop proposes such a system. Along streets with speeds above 25mph, however, dedicated facilities should be provided or means of slowing traffic pursued.

The tree lawn is critical to street trees; sufficient root area results in greater canopy. Canopy health is very closely related with the health of residents, mental and physical, and the success of children in school. In fact, programs exist across the country to re-establish urban tree canopies to improve the health outcomes of children. In neighborhoods, tree lawns should not be sacrificed for pavement width.



Figure 37. A pleasant, right-sized street in the Quarton district.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Keep Streets Pedestrian-oriented

All of these variables in mind, the ideal roadway width will depend upon the right-of-way width and what the street should best accommodate. Lincoln is perhaps the most difficult decision point in Birmingham. It needs on-street parking but is also an important route for cyclists. Certainly Lincoln needs to sustain its tree canopy. And as a major vehicular connector, Lincoln must accommodate cars. With recent crosswalk improvements, the means of accommodating bicycles must be carefully considered. Today, Lincoln is too busy a street to feel safe for many bicyclists.

Standards were set for residential streets by the Multi-modal Transportation Board and City Commission due to recurring resident requests for wider streets when they are improved. The current policy sets a standard residential street at 26 feet from curb-to-curb where the right-of-way is 50 feet or greater and 20 feet with parking along one side where the right-of-way is less than 50 feet. The policy provides for modifications for a number of specific conditions that may legitimately require greater paving, such as school bus routes. Generally these standards align with best practices to keep traffic moving slowly through neighborhoods, increasing safety.

These standards should be retained, but may be augmented to simplify the exception criteria, aligning it with future land use. Minor modification is also needed to accommodate wider sidewalks along district seams. The residential street standards provide a modification of roadway width from 26 feet to 28 feet where on-street parking is in more active use. Because on-street parking will be more actively used in neighborhoods with high intensity fabric, the standard here may default to 28 feet. Similarly, neighborhoods with low intensity fabric will have low on-street parking usage and should be less justified to allow for wider streets. Additionally, provided the narrow width of most streets, the standard residential street posted speed should be lowered to 20 mph. The Michigan Vehicle Code 257.627(2) (e) states that the maximum speed in city neighborhoods is 25 mph unless another speed is fixed and posted. The main remaining issue with streets is parking beyond the roadway on unimproved streets as it encourages cut-through traffic and speeding. Once streets are improved this issue will be resolved.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board with an update to the Residential Street Standards, aligning the following streetscape elements with Future Land Use categories. Update the Multi-modal Plan accordingly.
 - a. Sidewalk width;
 - b. Planter width and type;
 - c. Type and extent of on-street parking;
 - d. Frequency of curb cuts; and
 - e. Width of roadway.
2. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board with a study of bicycle accommodation alternatives along Lincoln. Update the Multi-modal Plan accordingly.
3. Reduce residential posted speed limits to 20 mph.
4. Update the Multi-modal plan to complete gaps in sidewalks and accessible corner ramps where not already specified.

STREETSCAPE BEST PRACTICES BY LAND-USE CATEGORY

1. Mixed-use Center: 8 foot sidewalks or wider, excluding a paved tree lawn area; 5-to-6 foot tree lawn principally paved with tree wells; on-street parking both sides.
2. High Intensity Fabric: 6 foot sidewalk; tree lawns 6 feet or wider, appropriate for long tree wells or continuous planters; on-street parking both sides.
3. Medium and Low Intensity Fabric: 5 foot sidewalk; tree lawns 8 feet or wider; on-street parking on one or both sides.
4. High and Medium Intensity District Seam: 6-to-8 foot sidewalk; tree lawns 6 feet or wider, appropriate for long tree wells; on-street parking both sides.
5. Low Intensity District Seam: 6 foot sidewalk, tree lawns 6 feet or wider; on-street parking both sides.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Replace Unimproved Streets

Replace Unimproved Streets

Many neighborhood streets in Birmingham are in disrepair. Residents are confused about the process to improve streets, which is exacerbated by unique situations in two parts of the community.

As is readily apparent, many neighborhood streets are in very poor condition. The situation is historic, related to the standards in place as far back as each neighborhood was initially developed. It has been incumbent upon neighbors to choose to improve their streets, and pay into that improvement based upon how much lot frontage they have along the street. To date, a significant number of residents have done just that, yet it leaves nearly 26 linear miles of streets unimproved. Most unimproved streets are easily

recognizable in that they do not have curbs. Yet, to confuse the matter, there is a small section of unimproved streets that have historic curbs. And lastly, there is a section of Birmingham where sewer service is located in the rear lot, not in the street, which requires special consideration when improving streets.

The City Commission convened an Ad-hoc Unimproved Streets Committee (AHUSC) to study this issue. In late 2020, the committee issued its recommendations. A high-level summary of those recommendations are to: 1) change the process of initiating street repair to be instigated by the City; 2) use the City's general fund to pay for the non-utility improvements to streets and bonds to pay for the utility portion of improvements, reimbursed by residents through special assessment and utility rate fees; and 3) to prefer

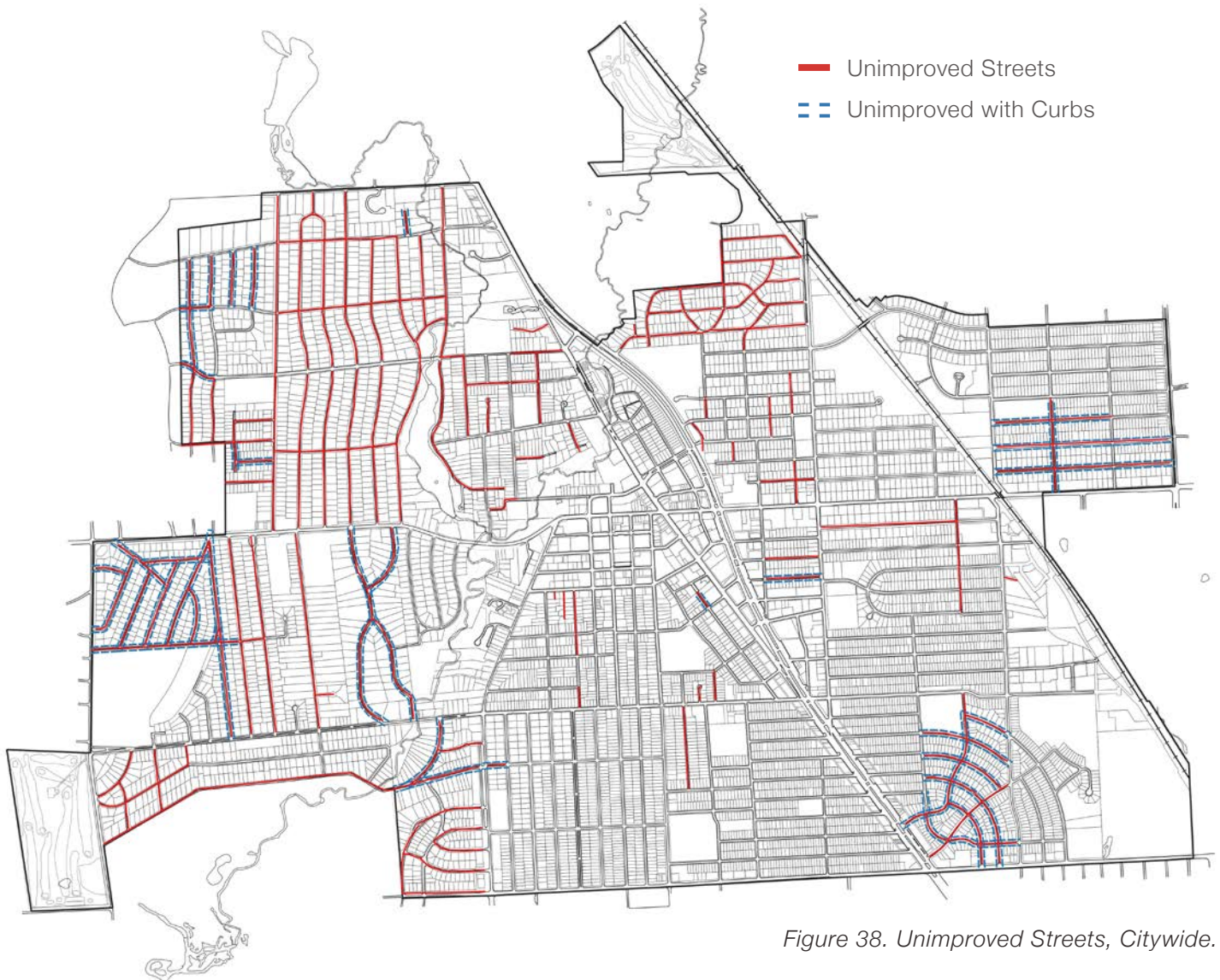


Figure 38. Unimproved Streets, Citywide.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Retain Street Tree Canopy

construction of concrete streets over asphalt for their longevity, with exceptions for low volume conditions.

With these well researched recommendations in place, adjustments to unimproved streets policy and the city budget are required, along with a strategy for prioritizing streets to improve. A consistent approach is recommended, ensuring funds are regularly allocated to carry on improvements. From a priority standpoint, the current condition of unimproved streets should be surveyed to categorize the state of disrepair. The stormwater condition of streets is a particularly important element to consider as streets with stormwater problems will deteriorate more quickly than others. To work through the list of repairs, consideration should be given to equitably distribute repairs throughout the city so that one neighborhood is not prioritized over another. This can be done by ensuring that more than one Planning District receives repairs in any year. Some Planning Districts, like Quarton and Seaholm, are almost entirely unimproved and may receive a greater share of improvements than other districts as a result.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Adopt policy recommendations specified by the Ad-hoc Unimproved Streets Committee (AHUSC).
2. City staff should survey the current condition of unimproved streets, categorized by the current quality such that streets in the most extreme states of disrepair can be prioritized for improvement. Stormwater issues should receive special priority.
3. City Commission should establish a yearly budget to remedy unimproved streets, considering the general fund plus bond strategy and repayment timelines recommended by the AHUSC.
4. Remedy unimproved streets according to the repair priority and budget, ensuring improvements occur in different planning districts, not all in a single district in a single year.

Retain Street Tree Canopy

Birmingham's downtown and neighborhoods benefit from a rich tree canopy, increasing both house values and

the public well-being. This street tree canopy should be protected and well maintained. At present, the City works to diversify tree species, which is important in avoiding disease. Considerations should also be made to select species that will sustain the City's future climate. Much of the community is well stocked with trees but some streets, like Brown and 14 Mile, have gaps in the street tree canopy, sometimes spanning an entire block.

Most substantially, the City's commercial districts have severe street tree gaps, including entire streets without trees. Maple and Woodward have more consistent trees than elsewhere, with limited gaps such as Willits. However, streets like Merrill appear to have insufficient root area, resulting in small and ineffective trees. New plantings with the recent Woodward and future Maple streetscape projects have extended the root area to support a healthier tree stock, which is necessary elsewhere. The Triangle and Rail Districts have few street trees and are in need of streetscape redesign. Plantings are especially needed in these areas to fight the urban heat island by shading sidewalks and roadways, and to provide relief for pedestrians.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Survey missing street trees and prioritize new plantings along neighborhood streets with thin canopies.
2. Survey areas with constrained root conditions and establish a plan to provide additional root volume.
3. Prevent existing, healthy trees from being removed due to new construction. (Permitting, Inspections)
4. Create a streetscape improvement plan for the Triangle District and Rail District. (already specified)
5. Convene a committee to establish tree policies to:
 - a. Select large canopy species native to the region for streets and parks, retaining the character of each neighborhood's distinctive canopy while considering the region's future climate.
 - b. Minimize overly-used or exotic species, such as Crab Apple, Honey Locust and Pear Trees.
 - c. Craft policy requiring that trees removed due to new construction be replaced, as well as mandatory contributions to fund new off-site trees.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Revise Parking Restrictions

Revise Parking Restrictions

Parking policies within Birmingham neighborhoods confuse visitors and residents and are difficult if not impossible to enforce. Current posted requirements differ substantially throughout the City to such an extent that the Police Department can only enforce by complaint. Decades of block-by-block modifications have eroded the public nature of streets.

The source of resident requests are real problems created by parking overflow in key areas of the City, but there is a mismatch between the conditions creating problems and the number and location of solutions. Residents are understandably concerned with parking spill-over from nearby non-residential uses. City staff is concerned that removing parking exacerbates parking spill-over, the complexity of regulations is difficult to enforce, and that street parking is a public good.

Observations in the Rail District and Seaholm corroborate these concerns (See Figure 39). Rail District regulations have been created to limit nighttime use of on-street parking to ensure residents have available parking, resulting in 8 different parking standards within a small area. Seaholm regulations have been created to limit daytime student parking, resulting in 12 different parking standards within a small area.

These conditions are difficult to enforce and represent a small segment of the city which has many more similar conditions. Some areas have entirely removed parking, which encourages speeding - another issue of concern to residents. In many cases the perception of insufficient parking is not in step with the actual availability of parking, however, the complexity of restrictions contributes to violations.

To reduce excessive complexity that leads to enforcement difficulties, and to solve for the real issues of spill-over parking, we recommend that the city begin anew with a simplified selection of standard restrictions. There is far too much variation in existing restrictions to adjust them one-by-one. A committee should study the situation citywide and establish a limited set of options and a plan to re-assign parking restrictions. The option to have no

parking restrictions at all along streets should be the default preference where there is not a clear conflict caused by adjacent mixed-use districts or institutions.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Convene a committee to study citywide street parking restrictions and permits, charged with:
 - a. Creating a consistent and limited set of citywide parking standards. An example of such a set follows:
 - No restriction
 - 2-hour parking from 9am to 4pm, except by permit (this addresses daytime parking issues from students and downtown workers)
 - Parking by permit only, 5pm to 10am (this addresses nighttime parking issues from food service)
 - Neighborhood Parking Benefit District, used in association with (b) or (c) above.
 - b. Create a plan to re-assign street parking restrictions citywide for greater consistency.
 - c. Establishing a consistent residential permit system to service those neighborhoods that choose to use such a system which includes permit fees to cover costs, decals, and visitor rear-view mirror tags purchased separately from the residential permit. The existing permit systems may suffice to operate more broadly.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Revise Parking Restrictions

EXISTING PARKING RESTRICTIONS

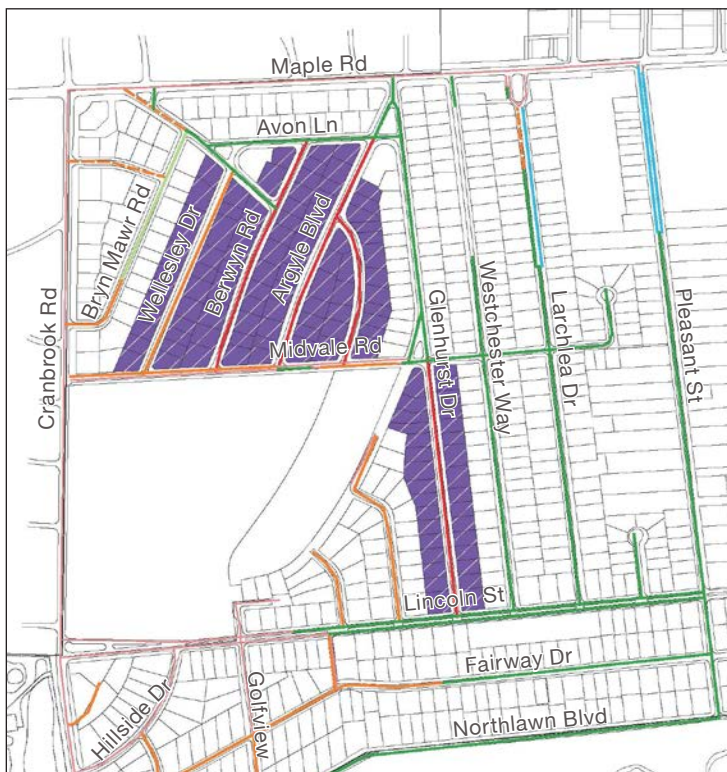
TORRY AT THE RAIL DISTRICT:

- 15 Min Parking 8am-9am Except Sun. & Holidays
- 2 HR Parking 6am-4pm Except Sat, Sun., & Holidays
- 2 HR Parking 8am-6pm Except Sun. & Holidays
- 2 HR Parking 9am-6pm Except Sun. & Holidays
- 2 HR Parking Limit
- No Parking Anytime
- Parking Allowed, All Times
- Permit Parking Required at All Times

SEAHOLM AND LINCOLN HILLS:

- 2 HR Parking 9am-5pm Except Sat, sun, & Holidays
- No Parking 8am-6pm
- No Parking, 7am-9am Except Sun. & Holidays
- No Parking, 8am-6pm Except Sat., Sun. & Holidays
- No Parking, 8am-6pm Except Sun. & Holidays
- No Parking, M-F 7am-2pm
- No Parking, School Days 7am-3pm
- No Parking, School Days 8am-10am
- No Parking, Sunday 7am-1pm
- Parking Allowed, All Times
- Parking Permit 7am-4pm School Days
- Residential Permit Parking

Figure 39. Sample of Existing Parking Restrictions



- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Permit - North Woodward | — Duration Limited Parking |
| ■ Permit - Poppleton | — No Daytime Parking |
| ■ Permit - South Central | — School Restricted Parking |
| ■ Permit - South Woodward | — Church Restricted Parking |
| ■ Permit - Triangle District | — Permit Required |
| ■ Permit - Western District | — No Parking |
| | — Unrestricted |

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Retain Housing Character

Retain Housing Character

The value of properties in Birmingham has risen such that the cost of purchasing and demolishing existing homes is viable. Some parts of the City have already been significantly rebuilt and the trend is moving into other neighborhoods. Many residents feel that the scale of new homes are overwhelming and out of character with their neighborhoods. Numerous residents recounted the adverse effects such large houses have had on their properties and their quality of life. While the City has implemented progressive design standards for garage placement and overall construction management, many of the new houses are, in fact, oversized for their lots and often negatively impact surrounding households.

Except in historic districts, new houses are not evaluated for the appropriateness of their architectural design or building materials by a review board or committee. New house plans are only reviewed for compliance with building codes and required site engineering regulations. House design and consumer preferences have changed since Birmingham's neighborhoods were first developed. Recession-era, prewar houses were usually modestly designed and downplayed the home-owners wealth or lack thereof. Large houses and manors were broken up into a series of smaller volumes which effectively disguised

their overall volume and, with commensurate architectural details, gave them the appearance of matching the scale of neighboring houses. Most of Birmingham's original houses were constructed with quality craftsmanship and designed with architectural massing and details intended to blend into the neighborhood rather than command attention.

Following trends in today's housing market, developers endeavor to exaggerate the size of houses, making even the most modestly sized house appear as large as possible. These houses are designed to stand out and be noticed, rather than harmonize with and complement neighboring houses. As a result, many new houses become the focal point, for better or worse, of the street.

Additions to existing homes should be encouraged as a way to accommodate changes that the market desires without eroding neighborhood character. Often the driver of new construction is market demand for additional bathrooms, a master, closet space, larger kitchens, and larger garages which tend to be lacking in older homes. While it is often easier to tear down an existing home and build a new one, this is a destructive process that creates significant waste material. Renovation and addition could be encouraged through a number of policies such as: a fast-tracked approval process (requiring a slowing down of new construction approvals), waived fees for review and inspection, and increased lot coverage allowances at the ground level (not second story). While additions and renovation cannot be required, they can be encouraged.

Leveraging historic districts is another means of controlling the pace of demolitions, providing review of the scale and character of new housing, and encouraging renovation. Expanding existing historic districts and landmarks, and establishing new districts would provide oversight of new construction and renovation in many areas of the city. The Historic District Commission (HDC) should be charged with actively studying and

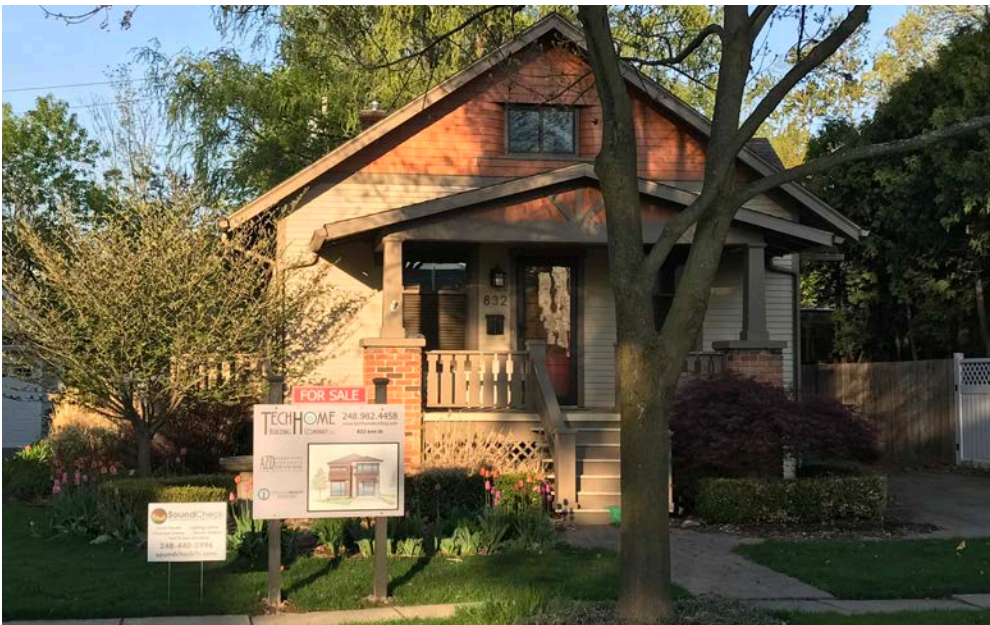


Figure 40. Historic home with a sign marketing demolition for a larger home.

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Retain Housing Character



Figures 41 & 42. Infill housing on two sides of one street, older homes (left) and new homes (right).

establishing historic districts and landmarks throughout the city. Additionally, HDC review authority should be strengthened in consideration of demolitions and renovations.

Lastly, light intensity and color is an often overlooked quality of Birmingham's neighborhood streets. Some new homes have been built with lighting that is too intense, degrading the calm character of Birmingham's neighborhood fabric. Lighting should be subdued generally, avoid spillover onto neighboring properties, and be oriented downward not outward. Luminaires should be shielded to eliminate glare and limited in individual intensity. Multiple bulbs of lower intensity can provide the same light coverage without glare or hot spots. Color temperature is also keenly important. Light that is towards the blue end of the spectrum, higher color temperature, disrupts natural human cycles when used at nighttime. Color temperature should not exceed 3200 Kelvin after dusk. Currently the Zoning Ordinance uses Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) standards as a baseline, Zone E4 for everything R4 and above. Neighborhood illumination is not regulated, which is clearly in need. The International Dark Sky Association model standards are recommended in place of IESNA standards. These standards should be evaluated for use in neighborhoods as well as for adjustment or replacement of existing zoning requirements concerning lighting in R4 and above.

Similarly, the color temperature and intensity of streetlights requires study to avoid issues similar to residential exterior

lighting. Across the country many cities have switched to LED streetlights. This is a recommended practice for maintenance and energy usage but the fixtures and luminaires must be carefully selected. LED streetlights produce more glare and hotspots than prior technologies. The earliest models, still available, are set to color temperatures that are too blue. As the city contemplates a change in technology, common pitfalls should be avoided, ensuring: luminaires are shielded with globes or similar devices that scatter light; luminaires have a color temperature no greater than 3500K; poles are installed more frequently, at a lower height, to achieve the desired light level while avoiding glare, excessive intensity, and hot spots.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Review and update site, building, and design codes to prevent increased rainwater runoff and other negative impacts from new house construction.
2. Expand the inspection process for new house construction to ensure that they are built per approved plans to minimize negative impacts on surrounding properties.
3. Revise the Zoning Code's residential zoning district boundaries and standards to better match and maintain current building scale, position on the property, driveway configuration, and other key characteristics.
4. Convene a committee to study incentives to

Ch 3. Retain Neighborhood Quality

Retain Housing Character



Figure 43. High quality contemporary infill, in scale with neighborhood fabric.

encourage renovations to expand existing houses rather than the construction of new houses.

5. Convene a committee to study age-in-place-friendly building regulations, such as grab-bars, ramps, and elevators in single-family homes.
6. Task the Historic District Commission and Historic District Study Committee with proactively establishing new historic districts as well as landmarks.
7. Convene a committee to study neighborhood lighting standards, including exterior residential lighting and street lighting.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL LIGHTING

- a. Residential lighting standards should address:
 - a. Maximum luminaire intensity,
 - b. Color temperature range,
 - c. Shielding and directionality, and
 - d. Spillover.

- b. Street lighting standards should address:
 - a. Maximum luminaire intensity,
 - b. Color temperature range,
 - c. Shielding and directionality,
 - d. Lamp design, and
 - e. Pole height and spacing.
- c. Consider the International Dark Sky Association model standards.
- d. Consider aligning lighting intensity restrictions with the Future Land Use categories for neighborhood fabric intensity where high intensity fabric justifies higher lighting intensity and low intensity fabric justifies lower lighting intensity. Dark Sky LZ1 may be appropriate in low intensity fabric and medium intensity fabric areas, LZ2 in high intensity fabric areas, and LZ3 in the city's mixed-use districts.

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

Maple and Woodward (Downtown Birmingham) is a vibrant urban center that is the envy of many other communities. Although its population is only 21,000, Birmingham has a commercial core the size of a city of 200,000. The city's assortment of shops, restaurants, parks, offices, civic buildings, and entertainment venues offers an exciting, safe, and walkable environment and lifestyle to its residents. It also draws people from throughout the region. Like any dynamic urban center, Downtown Birmingham continues to address challenges such as affordability, conflicting commercial and residential interests, rapid growth, adequate parking, and effective traffic management.

Active Sidewalks

Given Downtown's walkability and scale of commercial presence, it has only a moderate amount of weekday pedestrian traffic. During the weekends Birmingham's downtown pedestrian traffic has noticeably fewer visitors than Downtown Royal Oak and Detroit's. Combining offices, services, and housing means that a district can be busy day and night, which provides a more robust customer base during most hours of the day. Increasing housing in downtown will begin to shift the balance, further bolstered by increasing the number of events, improving streetscapes, and activating downtown's open spaces.

Old Woodward, between Hamilton and Merrill Streets, West Maple, and Pierce Streets carry the most pedestrian traffic. This is the core of the Maple and Woodward district. Due to their size and volume of traffic, both Maple and Woodward perform poorly for restaurants compared to smaller streets with intimate outdoor dining experiences, as is found along Merrill and Pierce. Similarly, Hamilton boasts a collection of smaller businesses in a vibrant environment, but is negatively impacted by the bank on the corner, deadening 350 feet

of Hamilton at the most critical retail intersection.

Merrill provides an ideal opportunity to pilot a downtown shared space street, which reduces, but does not eliminate, the car and accommodates and allows dining areas and public seating to extend further into the street during evening hours. Paving generally in the character of Merrill through Shain Park is recommended, where pedestrian movement, clusters of public seating, public art, and bike racks would displace but not eliminate space for cars. Connecting the active portion of Merrill to Shain Park would improve the pedestrian experience, though it is made difficult by the surface parking lot at City Hall and relatively poor frontages along the Townsend Hotel. Liner buildings, small or temporary retail kiosks, food trucks, or similar means of activating the municipal building frontage on Merrill could activate this connection.

The seasonal dining decks proposed in the Downtown Birmingham 2016 plan have successfully expanded the afternoon and early evening street life. The popularity of these decks has increased the demand for downtown parking at the same time that their implementation has decreased the number of parking spaces available to both diners and shoppers. Yet the pandemic has made outdoor dining necessary, a trend likely to continue in good weather, maintaining demand for dining decks. As a result, two solutions should be pursued in parallel: the use of technology to make parking easier to access and locating



Figure 44. Old Woodward following the recent streetscape redevelopment.

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

other opportunities for outdoor dining that do not displace parking. Technology may relieve some amount of the street parking problem in Downtown by making garages easier to access and adjusting the supply of on-street parking through pricing cues. These technologies are discussed in the following section.

Additional opportunities for outdoor dining in the public realm should be pursued along with technology. Outdoor dining next to the curb or building facade should be encouraged and opportunities to provide this seating without fencing should be explored. Today a few instances of fenced outdoor seating significantly restrict sidewalk width, a minimum 6 foot clear path should be required along the sidewalk even if the sidewalk is not 6 feet wide. Where streetscape projects make curb changes, space at corner and mid-block bulb-outs may be used for dining. And alleys and passageways should be considered where dining in those locations is convenient for an adjacent business.

Old Woodward, being the largest and most trafficked roadway, requires the greatest consistency and quality of storefronts, with more transparency than the smaller streets. The new streetscape is an improvement for pedestrians, but at present it lacks adequate public seating. In fact, throughout the Maple and Woodward area, and in other mixed-use districts, public seating is lacking. New seating installed with the recent streetscape project is out of character with Birmingham and should be replaced by

benches with backs, like those found in Shain Park.

Bike parking and micro-mobility corrals are also lacking throughout the district. As micro-mobility has yet to become a concern locally, addressing bike parking should come first, but micro-mobility will arrive soon. Bike racks are most easily accommodated in bulb-outs at intersections where they can be installed perpendicular to the curb, accommodating 3 or 4 U-racks.

Public Space

Downtown boasts a wide variety of parks from its' collection of pocket parks, to the formal square of Shain Park, and Booth Park and the Rouge Trail. Shain Park is active on a daily basis, due to its variety of amenities and its visibility. Other park spaces in Downtown could be improved with additional amenities and better visibility and connections.

Signage and trail connections would make more existing park spaces accessible from Downtown. Directional signage throughout Downtown should direct people to the area's parks and trails, in addition to key landmarks and institutions. To access these destinations, a few key connections should be added. From Maple and Woodward, Booth Park feels separated, more a part of Market North. The Bates Street Extension recommended in the 1996 plan should be pursued, particularly with a focus on connecting Maple and Woodward to Booth Park and the Rouge River trails. Where the Willits Trail meets Maple at the Birmingham

Museum, the museum's entry with seating and the bell should more clearly connect down the slope and into the trail system.

Seating at both Shain and Booth Parks does not accommodate visitors during peak hours. Shain Park's movable seating has been a good addition which should be expanded. More regular park benches should also be installed around the central loop. In major cities, the central loop would be entirely lined with benches, which is too much for Birmingham's character, but the supply should be greatly increased. Booth Park has

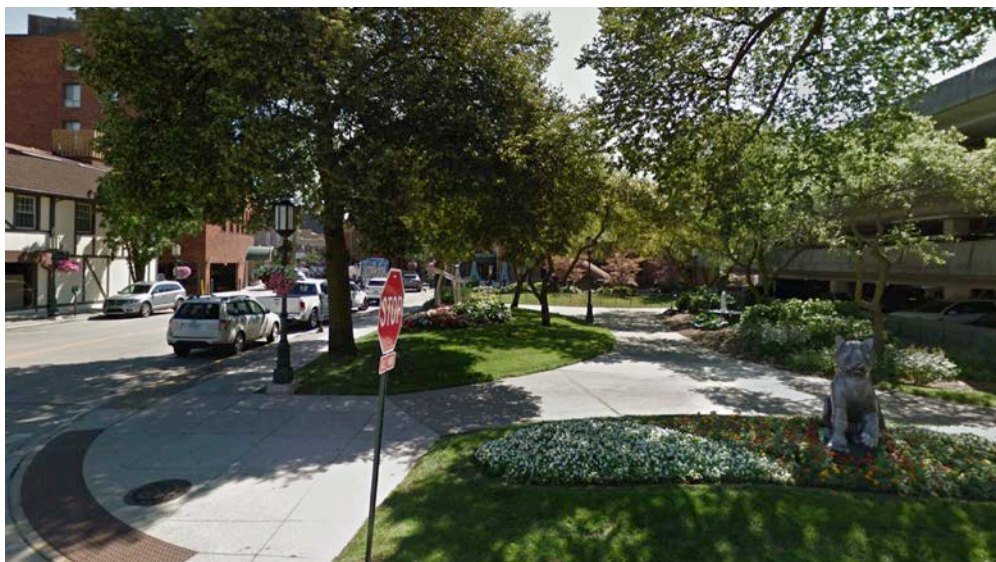


Figure 45. The Pierce-Merrill pocket park.

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

a well used set of play structures but very few accommodations beyond that. The entry is underwhelming, an ideal location to get information, a beverage, and to have seating opportunities either in a plaza space towards the entry corner or a more naturalistic setting further into the park and along the Rouge River trail. Shain and Booth Park's lack of food and beverage offerings could be rectified by opening a small café or coffee shop, either of which would enhance park-goers' experiences and draw more people to the parks during the daytime.

Downtown's pocket parks are underutilized during the day and evening. The Old Woodward-Oakland pocket park's size is limited and its use is inhibited by the vehicular turn lane along its South edge. The 1996 master plan recommended removing this south vehicular lane and expanding the park, which would improve the park's appeal, the walkability along Old Woodward, and the pedestrian linkage between the Market District and downtown. Each of these spaces would benefit from additional seating and public art. The Pierce-Merrill space has sufficient public art but no seating, and Pierce-Brown also has no seating. The plaza at the Library's entrance also lacks seating, which could easily be provided along the sloped ramp, a good place for public art as well. In fact the Library entrance plaza pavement should have a surface mural or more compelling paving.

Parking



Figure 46. The Library's entrance plaza.

Many parking issues in the Maple and Woodward District are common to all mixed-use districts where there is an imbalance between housing and commercial uses. Presently, municipal parking downtown is operating at or above 90% occupancy and the district is growing. During its busiest periods, valet services are employed to fully utilize rooftop capacity which is otherwise not preferred by individual drivers. While the roughly 5-10% available capacity seems right-sized for the district, monthly passes for Downtown workers have a significant waiting list and parking continues to spill-over into adjacent neighborhoods.

Continued growth and success Downtown is important for the continued success of the City. In each of the City's major plans, post-1929, increasing parking capacity has been recommended. The City's current insufficient supply is a result of not following those recommendations in a timely manner. During the process of this plan, the deck recommended for the Willits Block in 1996 (the Bates extension) failed to pass a bond measure which may have been unnecessary had a fund been set aside nearly 25 years ago. At present, additional parking is needed, and this site is a prime opportunity, along with increasing the capacity of other existing garages.

The need for more parking capacity is clear. Prior to the pandemic, many people were on the waiting list for monthly permits in the City's garages. The City has considered resident requests to add secure bicycle parking to garages and spaces for electric vehicle charging. Both of these proposals should be pursued in time. However, there is not sufficient capacity to remove regular vehicle spaces. Some recent trends are likely to reduce future parking demand, like the rise of Transportation Network Companies, re-balancing housing and commercial in the Downtown, and reduced rates of teen driving. Autonomous vehicles (AVs) are also a future consideration, however, at this point in time AVs are still in development and are not likely to see widespread usage until the end of this plan's horizon. At present it

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

remains unclear whether AVs will reduce traffic and parking demand or increase it. To address this timing issue, another set of parking analysis will likely be needed in 10 years. In the meantime, more parking is needed and will continue to be needed for at least the next 15 years. The best short-term strategy is to invest in parking, but construct garages that may be converted to other uses in the future.

While parking across Woodward in Haynes Square / Triangle District is somewhat remote, the area is in need of parking investment and may be able to accommodate some Downtown / Maple and Woodward workers. A parking deck here should be pursued immediately in order to jump-start development there and provide some alleviation for parking demand Downtown (as discussed in the sections addressing Haynes Square).

In addition to capacity, the downtown parking district is pursuing a number of technological solutions. In the garages, they intend to test a pay-by-phone near field communication (NFC) system aimed at reducing the lines entering garages. In the broader mixed-use district discussion, smart signage is recommended to direct users towards garages with capacity and away from those at or near capacity. Metered parking has recently been equipped for monitoring and demand or tiered pricing, which allows prices to be adjusted electronically. These systems are used to balance where people park by manipulating meter rates on a per-block basis. This should be pursued and monitored, but rates should not be changed too frequently. Together these technologies will help the existing parking supply feel less constrained.

During the master plan design charrette, numerous attendees stated that the monthly parking pass rates are extremely low in Birmingham, recommending that they be raised. Fees should be set to be competitive with other jurisdictions. The additional funding created by increased fees should be reinvested in building new parking capacity, technological improvements, safety, lighting, and aesthetic improvements.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. Adopt a policy requiring a minimum 6 foot clear path along the sidewalk be retained throughout mixed-use districts.
2. Expand activities and special events to attract office workers and residents to shop and dine downtown, including weekly food-truck events at Shain Park. This can be pursued by the contemplated Civic Events Board along with the Birmingham Shopping District.
3. Update the Multi-modal Plan to address micro-mobility, increased pedestrian activity due to new downtown housing, and recent experiences with increased outdoor dining. See multi-modal plan update recommendations.
4. Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to increase amenities and connections in Downtown's parks. See parks and recreation plan updates.
5. Implement an art-mural program for large blank wall surfaces in key locations.
6. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of tiered parking meter pricing in Downtown. A best practice goal is to achieve an average maximum 85% occupancy all streets.
7. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of tiered parking rates for different garages.
8. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of monthly parking pass fees.
9. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a study of secure bike parking and electric vehicle charging stations within parking garages.
10. Task the Advisory Parking Committee with a review of master plan parking recommendations in 2030 to evaluate technologies and trends at that time.
11. Pursue technological improvements to ease parking usage, such as parking space occupancy indicators (green and red lights above spaces) to more easily direct users through the garages.
12. Install directional and informational signage. (previously addressed)
13. Convene a committee to study a Merrill Street shared space streetscape retrofit between Old

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

Woodward and Shain Park. Consider options for activating the rear of City Hall, changes to the wall, small retail kiosks, and other low-impact means of enlivening the block.

14. Build a parking deck in the Triangle District as soon as possible. (addressed previously)
15. Create a detailed plan for the Bates Street Extension ensuring robust public input.

MULTI-MODAL PLAN UPDATES

- a. Install benches with backs and armrests throughout the Downtown area.
- b. Increase bike parking within the public streetscape throughout Downtown, especially at corner and midblock bulb-outs which support multiple racks.
- c. Reserve space for micro-mobility storage at corner and midblock bulb-outs along with bike parking.
- d. Expand the distance of corner curb extensions at street intersections and midblock to accommodate public seating. Permit outdoor dining in these seating areas for abutting businesses.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN UPDATES

- a. Increase the amount of seating in Shain, Booth, and the City's pocket parks with benches.
- b. Expand portable café seating in Shain and Booth Parks and on all widened sidewalks.
- c. Open cafés in Shain and Booth Parks with public restrooms and limited food and beverage offerings.
- d. Expand the Oakland – Old Woodward pocket park by removing the south vehicular lane, per the 1996 master plan recommendations.
- e. Add paths and seating to the Pierce-Brown pocket park.
- f. Improve the Library's entrance plaza with seating and murals.
- g. Integrate the Birmingham Museum into the Rouge River trail and park system, including more connections and signage Downtown.
- h. Add green stormwater infrastructure to parks and pocket parks.

Establish Market North as a Distinct District

Historically, the 1/3rd mile-long Market North – Old Woodward retail district has been viewed clearly different from the core Downtown. It has now become a dining and shopping destination of its own. North Old Woodward has transitioned from a collection of fine art galleries into a busy dining district. The district requires its own identity, branding, and focus on its' specific needs independent of other districts. Because it hosts a popular seasonal farmer's market, and following the aptly named Market North End restaurant, it is recommended that the area be called Market North. The future of Market North is bright but it should retain its character of small shops and restaurants, and a street life distinct from Maple and Woodward.

Active Sidewalks

The implementation of the 1996 master plan's traffic-calming design for Old Woodward, which reduced the number of lanes and inserted a landscaped island, has significantly slowed vehicular speeds and improved the area's walkability. But problems still exist such as the pedestrian crossing at Harmon and Old Woodward, which can be dangerous at times. Further north along Old Woodward, traffic increases in speed and pedestrian crossing opportunities are non-existent, clearly missing at Vinewood Ave. North of Harmon St, Old Woodward needs to be redesigned to slow traffic and focus on increasing street parking and pedestrian crossings, especially in anticipation of increasing redevelopment.



Figure 47. Small scale outdoor dining.

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District



Figure 48. Character of small scale businesses in Market North.

Market North's district character should be reinforced at the connection between the sidewalk and building facades. Currently some storefronts and signage are unattractive and incongruous with Birmingham's upscale character and image. This district is distinct from Maple and Woodward in storefront design, featuring less glazing and more small-scale business facades. Even with new buildings, the storefront scale should be retained with paned windows featuring more traditional muntins above bulkheads and framed door entries. Benches should be encouraged along the building facades, facing towards the street. And streetscape elements like benches, trash cans, and signage should be unique to this district.

Unlike Maple and Woodward where restaurants have large seating areas in dining decks, Market North maintains a character of smaller cafes and even ice cream stores with limited outdoor seating. This treatment should be encouraged in new buildings, with intimate cafe spaces and some outdoor dining along the building and the furnishing zone (See Figure C.3-03). The condition at the Market North End restaurant is also to be encouraged (See Figure C.3-04).

Public Space

Market North is anchored by Booth Park and the farmers market. Booth Park provides direct access to the Rouge River trail system, and occupies nearly 500 feet of Old Woodward frontage which creates a clear distinction

between Maple and Woodward and Market North. As discussed previously, the park lacks adequate seating for its users at peak hours. Additionally the entry corner at Harmon and Old Woodward is too informal for its' setting. Proposed in the Downtown 2016 plan, Booth Park should have a cafe and restrooms within an iconic park building near this entrance in a paved plaza.

The Farmers Market gives the district its name, but has little presence on non-market days. Rather than an afterthought, the district's identity should be reinforced with a

permanent, open-air market pavilion. The pavilion could be located where the market currently takes place, in the portion of municipal parking lot 6 that is open to Old Woodward. Designed appropriately, cars could continue to park under the pavilion awnings on non-market days. (See Figure 49).

Housing

The district's existing housing is mainly in inefficient multi-family buildings along its northwestern edge.



Figure 49. Proposed open air market pavilion.

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Continue Improving the Maple and Woodward District

Redevelopment has begun with new mixed-use buildings on the east side of Old Woodward and development interest beginning on the west. Many of the district's buildings along Old Woodward are prime opportunities for redevelopment as mixed use structures. While some may be nostalgic for the area's garden apartments, their form and deep setbacks from Old Woodward signal that drivers can speed through the area, especially coming from the high speed portions of big Woodward just to the north. Better definition at the streetscape with new buildings will slow cars and reinforce walkability. But improvements are needed along Old Woodward to support additional pedestrians, particularly north of Harmon.

Parking

As the Market North district is seeing redevelopment interest, it has too little parking to support its potential. As in Maple and Woodward, daytime parking is full in Lot 6 while it is empty at night. The Downtown 2016 plan, completed about 25 years ago, recommended that a parking deck be built on Lot 6. This recommendation should be pursued along with the permanent market pavilion, with a low deck, about 2-3 floors total, located behind the existing buildings.

To avoid disturbance to neighbors along Brookside, care should be taken to eliminate any light spill over and to present a pleasant facade to the west, and care also taken to limit impacts on the Rouge River.

MASTER PLAN ACTIONS

1. As part of the zoning code update, extend D2 zoning to the multi-family properties along the west side of Old Woodward up to Quarton.
2. Install way-finding signage throughout the district. (Addressed previously)
3. Update the Multi-modal Plan to support increased pedestrian activity on both sides of North Old Woodward and install streetscape amenities. (See the section on Multi-modal Plan updates)
4. Update the Parks and Recreation Plan to add amenities and a cafe to Booth Park. (See the section on Parks and Recreation Plan updates)
5. Convene a committee to develop branding, special signage, seating, and streetscape elements unique to the Market North district.

CURRENT ZONING WITH OVERLAY



PROPOSED OVERLAY EXTENSION



Downtown Overlay Zoning

- D2 3-story development
- D4 5-story development

Zoning

- R2 single family residential
- R6 single family residential

- B2 general business
- O office commercial

- P parking structures

Figure 50. Extension of D2 zoning in Market North.

Ch 4. Support Mixed-use Districts

Implement Haynes Square

Implement Haynes Square

The Haynes Square plan corrects a dangerous Woodward intersection, activates and elevates the South Old Woodward commercial district, and connects the Triangle District across Woodward to take part in the overall downtown. Details are addressed in the chapter Connect the City. That content will not be repeated here; this is a reminder of its' goal to support the South Old Woodward and Triangle District areas.



Figure 51. Booth Park's underwhelming entrance.

6. Task the Design Review Board to develop storefront design, signage, and other standards to retain the small-scale business character of Market North.
7. Task the Advisory Parking Committee to study a parking garage in the Lot 6 parking lot.
8. Task the Multi-modal Transportation Board to develop a streetscape plan along North Old Woodward, up to Big Woodward, with a focus on adding on-street parking and pedestrian and bicycle amenities and improving safety.
9. Convene a committee to study a permanent, open-air farmers market pavilion with public restrooms on the portion of Lot 6 that is along Old Woodward.

MULTI-MODAL PLAN UPDATES

- j. Expand pedestrian safety and traffic-calming measures along North Old Woodward.
- k. Install additional pedestrian seating throughout the Market North district.
- l. Install new Market North branded streetscape fixtures throughout the district.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN UPDATES

- m. Install ample benches in Booth Park.
- n. Install a small café and public restrooms in Booth Park along with movable tables and chairs.
- o. Create a paved plaza, ideally pervious, at the entrance to Booth Park with signage and seating.

Adopt a South Woodward Gateway Plan

The South Woodward Gateway, located along Woodward from 14 Mile to Lincoln, is the most unsophisticated stretch of retail in the City. The southern portion of Woodward presents a sloppy and tired image of the community, which is otherwise active and successful. Woodward's growth and decades of mis-focused transportation policy has divided Birmingham and eroded the quality of the pedestrian and business environments. This Gateway district is Birmingham's first impression to those traveling from the south. Numerous times the Gateway has been defended, suggesting that the quality of Woodward through Royal Oak is worse. Yes, the character of Woodward in Birmingham

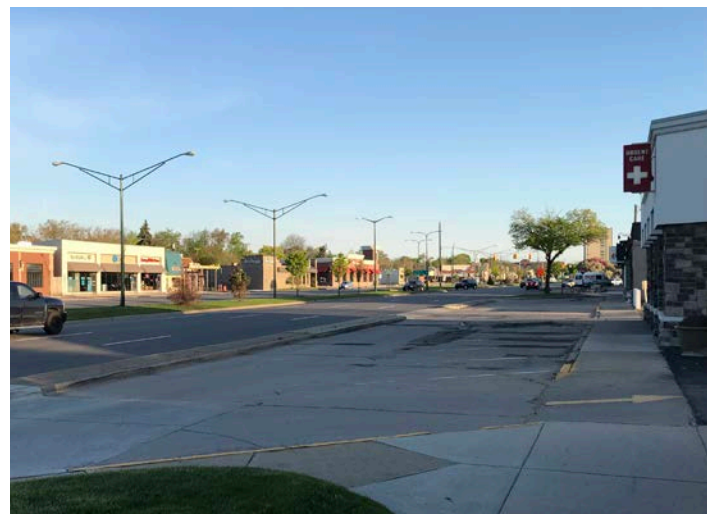


Figure 52. Typical character of the gateway.

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Adopt a South Woodward Gateway Plan

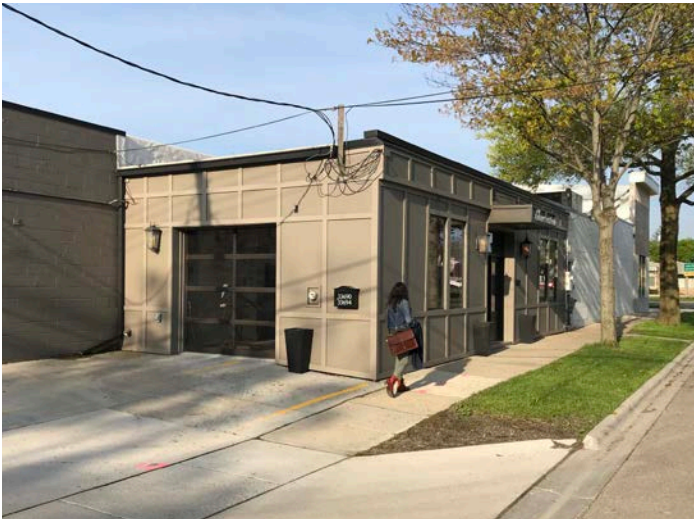


Figure 53. Building with potential for sleeve activation.

is better than Royal Oak, but it still is not good and not in keeping with the image of Birmingham. However, the area provides lower cost retail space with excellent exposure to traffic, housing most of the national chain merchants in the City. The Gateway is valuable for Birmingham, it just needs a new and sophisticated image.

Woodward's conversion to an attractive and grand avenue is now supported by the Department of Transportation, however that future remains distant. In the interim, changes can be made on the side of private development to make this area more attractive and functional, paired with near-term improvements to Woodward itself, detailed in the chapter Connect the City. Today, communities to the south are well on their way to improving Woodward's streetscape

but have not yet addressed adjacent building form. While streetscape improvements are needed, and Birmingham should improve median plantings right away, the character of buildings along Woodward establish the area's image.

The low quality of the Gateway is well recognized; in 2013 The Southern Gateway Urban Design Plan was developed. Never adopted, the plan should be revisited, updated, and adopted. With fresh eyes, the Gateway needs a more radical transformation than previously proposed, which focused heavily on public sector improvements, leaving existing buildings as-is. With the right incentives and capacity, the area's aged buildings can be redeveloped in a manner that truly changes the Gateway's character. In addition, the Gateway's interface with the neighborhoods along it should be revisited.

From a neighborhood perspective, the Gateway provides some neighborhood retail services but it continues to encroach into neighborhoods with parking, increases neighborhood cut-through traffic, and is incredibly inconvenient for pedestrians. Many businesses have purchased neighborhood houses beyond the alley, converting these to surface parking. This condition is most prevalent on the west side, but exists on both sides of Woodward. In many cases, this results in neighborhood houses facing onto open parking lots, and many more sharing a side or rear lot with them. As is recognized in the 2013 plan, the triangular parking lots are incredibly inefficient, even larger ones, and are better served by efficient mid-block parking.



Figure 54. Shared-use alley space concept.

The 2013 Southern Gateway Urban Design Plan recommends that alley pavement be improved and made consistent and shared-use to accommodate pedestrians, shoppers, and service vehicles. In addition to the surface treatment of alleys, they require active uses along their edges to be safe and pleasant. Currently businesses face onto Woodward and use alleys for parking and service. For transformational change, businesses should also face onto alleys, creating true shared-use streets. This dual-sided condition is becoming common in the local area, found at Kroger along Maple, along Big Beaver in Troy, and elsewhere throughout the region. In the alley, businesses should be encouraged

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Adopt a South Woodward Gateway Plan



Figure 55. Neighborhood Sleeve configuration which creates small neighborhood-focused nodes along side streets.

to extend outdoor seating and outdoor retail displays into the shared-use alley space (See Figure 54).

Full alley activation requires that both sides of the alley engage to define its character. With parking addressed more efficiently, the triangular parking lots should revert to residential use in order to reduce noise spill over into the neighborhood. Most of the triangular properties can retain yard space, with shallow townhouses lining the alley and side streets. A muse-type townhouse is appropriate along alleys, which has a flush single car garage entry along with the building facade. Common in the United Kingdom, Birmingham has a few townhouse developments that approximate this treatment.

Neighborhood Sleeves

To create a better interface between Gateway retail and surrounding neighborhoods, buildings should provide active facades along side streets. In an ideal condition, as

illustrated, the redevelopment of an entire block face would consolidate parking in the mid-block and face buildings towards side streets. Doing so simplifies parking access, provides more spaces, and provides retail experiences. Presently, facing buildings onto Woodward creates an awkward parking condition and poor pedestrian experience and parking access from Woodward is inefficient.

Each residential street in the Kenning and Pierce neighborhoods terminates on Woodward. Currently, the last 150 feet or more of each residential street is presented with surface parking, an unattractive alley, and typically a long blank wall along the side of buildings that face Woodward. For the neighborhood this is a poor experience by car, and especially walking. Potential exists to face storefronts onto side streets rather than Woodward, like the condition depicted along Benneville (See Figure 53). If this building were a coffee shop, it could have a pleasant outdoor patio nearby neighbors might frequent.

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Develop a North Woodward Gateway Plan

If most buildings faced businesses onto the neighborhood streets rather than Woodward, the end of each street would become a small neighborhood main street with a handful of shops. These Neighborhood Sleeves would benefit neighborhood residents and provide a superior pedestrian experience over Woodward. Limited in size, each Neighborhood Sleeve would create minimal traffic, and further they would encourage neighborhood residents to walk or bike for convenient access.

The 2013 Southern Gateway Urban Design Plan includes two recommendations for reducing traffic speed into neighborhoods. These options - angled parking with bump-outs entering the neighborhood, or parallel parking with chicanes entering the neighborhood - perfectly support Neighborhood Sleeves and pedestrianized alleys.

In a full redevelopment scenario, new buildings could accommodate housing above. Due to the street geometries, buildings could also include a mix of larger and smaller spaces. Should development demand be sufficient, a single parking deck would fit mid-block, allowing for two stories of housing above shops, further activating businesses. Where full redevelopment does not occur, corner properties along the side streets should face onto those streets with active storefronts. Each piece of the Gateway concept - alleys, alley housing, parking consolidation, and sleeves - could develop independently.

Master Plan Actions

1. Revise and adopt the South Woodward Gateway Urban Design Plan. Consider:
 - a. Incorporating the Neighborhood Sleeves concept.
 - b. Piloting a shared-use alley by re-paving the alleyway, moving power poles underground, and opening businesses onto the alley.
 - c. Piloting a Neighborhood Sleeve with existing buildings or through redevelopment, including streetscape improvements on the side streets with chicanes and streetscape details like tree pits, benches, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and trash and recycling receptacles.
2. Incentivize redevelopment through increased zoning capacity and reduced parking requirements.
3. As part of a zoning code rewrite, establish zoning standards to enable Neighborhood Sleeves. This may be done by requiring storefronts along neighborhood streets and other strategies.
4. As part of a zoning code rewrite, establish zoning standards to enable shared-use alleys. This may be done by:
 - a. Requiring storefronts at entries along the alley.
 - b. Permitting attached single-family housing along the neighborhood-side of the alley, limited to 2 stories.
5. As part of a zoning code rewrite, establish zoning standards to encourage redevelopment of South Woodward Gateway properties. This may be done by:
 - a. Permitting multi-family housing on the commercial properties.
 - b. Permitting 2 stories along the alley and 3 or 4 stories between Woodward and 50 feet of the alley.
 - c. Reducing parking requirements and allowing shared parking.

Develop a North Woodward Gateway Plan

The approach to Birmingham from the north is nearly as unimpressive and messy as the approach from the south. Both the North and South Woodward Gateways are important opportunities to showcase Birmingham's character, and play an important role in calming speedy traffic entering the city. While speeding is prevalent everywhere on Woodward, it is especially important to address southbound due to increasingly speedy conditions north of Birmingham. The northern approach is also complicated by a mixed jurisdiction, with Birmingham controlling only half of the road's edge, up to the northern intersection with Old Woodward.

The North Woodward Gateway provides a significant opportunity to calm traffic and change the perception of Birmingham along Woodward, despite only controlling half of the road's edge. Key to this transformation is the northern intersection with Old Woodward. The triangular

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Keep it Loose in the Rail District

green provides a perfect terminated and deflected vista for southbound drivers. Today, drivers are greeted by a gas station advertisement and price list. This should be a grand entry to Downtown with impressive and tall civic art or a signature gateway building. In fact the entire triangular property, which is privately owned, from Oak Ave to the point should be the most impressive structure in the City. Short of transformation, every effort should be made to announce Birmingham's presence, its' character, and the importance of its' Downtown at this location.

Leading to the Old Woodward intersection, streetscape improvements, traffic calming, and frontage improvements should be studied. With consideration for lane reduction, such as in the South Gateway, a glimpse of a multi-way boulevard could come to life between Quarton and Old Woodward. Significant transformation is possible by continuing the slip lane along Colonial Court Terraces to Quarton and Old Woodward, removing the outer travel lane for further landscaping, and accommodating bicycles and parking within the slip lane.

Certainly other opportunities exist to improve the entrance character and slow traffic, which should be studied. Like the South Woodward Gateway, the North Woodward Gateway needs an urban design plan. Yet ahead of a full gateway plan, additional canopy trees should be added to the Woodward median throughout the city.

Master Plan Actions

1. Plant a full and consistent tree canopy along the Woodward median throughout Birmingham, beginning with the northern and southern entries.
2. Develop and adopt a North Woodward Gateway Urban Design Plan to improve the appearance of the northern entrance to Birmingham, slow traffic entering the city, and improve the Old Woodward entrance as a signature gateway to Birmingham and Downtown.

Keep it Loose in the Rail District

The Rail District is divided between what has been envisioned for its future and the utility that it currently provides. This is a place of experimentation for Birmingham, and has been for some time. Layers of history expose incremental changes. Traces of former rail spurs from the Grand Trunk Railroad are evident in odd property divisions, fence lines, and paths of unkempt foliage.

The district's northern edge, at the top of South Eton Rd., has been capped by an upscale restaurant housed in the City's former passenger rail station, now closing. From nearby parking lots, the City's Whole Foods market and large scale commercial in Troy is visible just over the tracks, yet inaccessible. Just below this, the District Lofts illustrate a grand future vision that is formal and neat. Along with the adjacent Iron Gate to the south, the area includes some of the City's most contemporary multi-family offerings. Just east of Iron Gate, also part of the 1999 Eton Road Corridor Plan, is an experiment in live-work units that create a tight urban street grid open for future connections to neighboring properties. The Griffin Claw brewery is next southbound on Eton, a substantial micro brewery with an informal brewpub and outdoor beer garden, especially popular with young families. Next to this, tucked far back from Eton is the Robot Garage, a wonderland of toys and classes for creativity in making, from legos to art to



Figure 56. The District Lofts preview the Rail District's urban future.

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Keep it Loose in the Rail District

robotics. Auto service, a lumber yard, and the City's Public Services Department follow old lines of rail spurs.

The Lower Rail District, south of Palmer Street, consists of small, mostly single-story warehouse buildings occupied with varied businesses including yoga, co-working, dog daycare, art, dance, auto body shops, and more. These are arranged haphazardly among small parking areas, charming in a way that is certainly not suburban. Only the degraded character of the street and lack of trees detract from the area's charm. The southern end of the district is capped by Kenning Park with the City's Ice Rink and skate park, along with a new and quite urban senior retirement development.

The Rail District has no single character but overall it has an intimate charm. Other parts of the City are increasing their refinement, and many lament the loss of the City's artistic and entrepreneurial roots. Yet this is alive in the Rail District.

Plans and zoning for the Rail District point to a heavily urbanized future. A 2017 Ad-hoc Committee report for the Rail District estimated the zoned potential that could be built on properties likely to redevelop in the near future could increase intensity 10-fold, albeit unlikely. Due to the significant disparity between the district's long-term future and the functional and desirable near-term conditions, policies and improvements should permit the district's current condition and success to continue while incrementally preparing it for an intensified future condition.

Near-term Conditions

Many existing buildings within the Lower Rail District are legally non-conforming, disincentivizing investment in existing buildings and continuation of the present condition.

The Lower Rail district is a type of commercial development which is currently emerging nationally. It provides incubator space for businesses at a much lower cost level than the downtown shops. The current code applies standards that



Figure 57. The Lower Rail District.

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Keep it Loose in the Rail District



Figure 58. Current conditions in the Lower Rail District.



are appropriate to create pedestrian-oriented streets but as a result is burdensome to existing structures and uses. In the near-term, the Lower Rail District should remain informal and somewhat experimental. This character should be encouraged through zoning, development review, and in the public realm.

Zoning need only be slightly adjusted. These adjustments are the type appropriate for an overlay district which applies only to the Lower Rail District. The overlay should consider allowing the following when existing buildings are improved or expanded, or when new single-story buildings are built:

- Parking to remain between buildings and front lot lines if it already exists.
- Buildings to retain their present setback when renovated, expanded, or reconstructed.
- Parking lots of 70 feet wide or less to be exempted from required trees and landscaping.
- Screening not be required except along lot lines facing Eton Street.

- Small footprint towers of 600 square feet or less should be allowed to exceed one story without causing the overall structure to be interpreted as over one story, invalidating the overlay allowances.

Development review should allow the unique nature of the district to continue when single story structures are improved or expanded, or when new single-story buildings are built, including the following:

- The wall cladding may be any material including raw concrete block, corrugated metal, wood, or brick.
- Awnings and canopies of any size may be used.
- Pavement should be painted or removed where there is no parking. No landscaping should be required.
- Shared-use street conditions with bollards to define sidewalks should be pursued, which requires site specific design interpretation.
- Large expanses of walls should be painted with murals.

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Keep it Loose in the Rail District

To support the district's current character and prepare for the future, streetscape improvements should be pursued which work for both. While mentioned in a number of existing contexts in other districts, shared-use streets are ideal for implementation along Cole and Commerce Streets, and Lincoln to the East of Eton. For the current condition, shared-use formalizes the condition that has occurred organically over time, and provides greater importance to pedestrians and cyclists. In the long-term condition, it helps to retain the character of the district, with greater use of shared-use streets than other places in the City.

Long-term Conditions

Many of the City's district-specific plans have become long-range, with investment remaining focused Downtown. Beyond the clear draw of Downtown's reputation, building there removes a \$50,000 per car obligation from

developers. Both the Triangle and Rail Districts suffer from lot patterns that are generally small and include a number of oddly shaped properties. Redeveloping these properties at a high capacity doesn't work when parking must be accommodated. On the other hand, Downtown's small properties are being developed, including the recent hotel at Brown and Old Woodward. Like the Triangle District, the Rail District needs public parking capacity and the ability to use that capacity in lieu of providing parking in mixed-use development projects. As opposed to the Triangle District, the City owns property in the rail district. Most notably, the Public Services Department site is well located to provide parking access to Cole Street. Uses on site are necessary for maintenance of the City, and there are few places to relocate those uses. Even remaining on site, the DPS building is approximately the size of a parking structure, and may be part of a redevelopment plan to accommodate both. Additionally, the School District's underutilized bus lot can easily accommodate structured parking. These are options to be weighed in service of unlocking the area's development potential.

Before the district begins to see more intense development, its standards should be revisited. There are a number of ways that the MX standards differ from the Downtown Overlay standard, despite having similar desired physical outcomes. As discussed previously, zoning districts across the City that are similar in their desired outcome should be consolidated. If not consolidated with Downtown and Triangle District zones, the MX zone should be carefully analyzed. A quick reading of zone standards passes muster, however some details have potential negative consequences. For instance, the zone has tree requirements tied to the number of residential units; because this doesn't account for potentially high lot coverage on these small properties, the tree requirements could be a barrier to development, disincentivizing new housing in the district.

Connectivity is the most significant limitation to the Rail District. The Grand Trunk Railroad limits all modes of connectivity, with crossings only at Maple and 14 Mile, of which the Maple crossing is in poor condition. Additional rail crossings should be studied, mainly for pedestrian and bicycle movement. A vehicular bridge would be logical at Lincoln, like the Derby bridge, though difficult to achieve due to existing buildings. In the further future, with

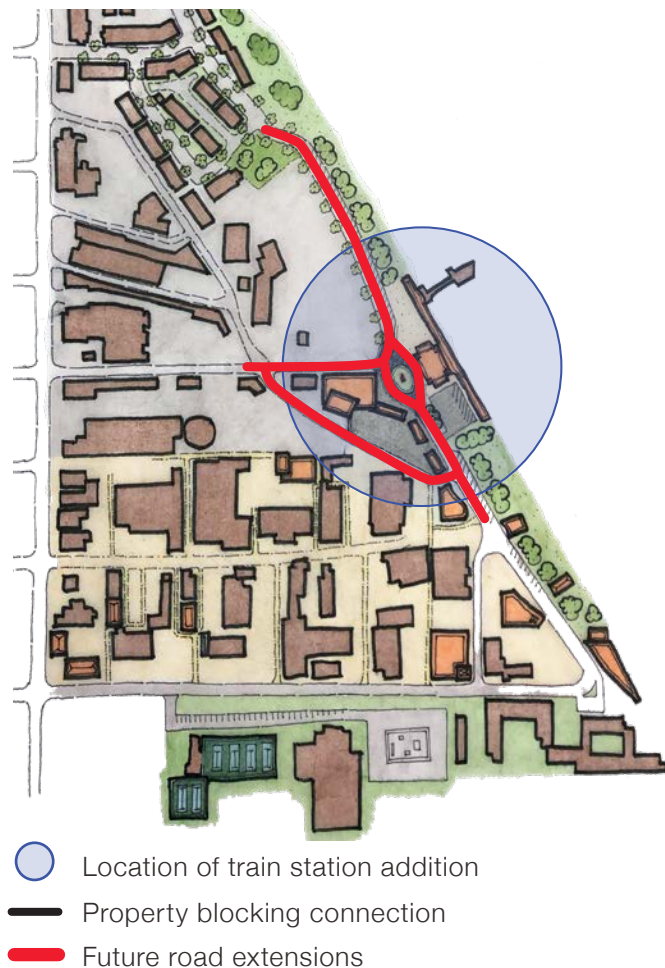


Figure 59. Increased street connectivity and access to Troy Transit Center.

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Keep it Loose in the Rail District

significant development in the Rail District, further connections will be necessary. Every effort should be made to avoid increased car trips from new development, providing extensive pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure instead. Today, right-of-way and access should be reserved to connect Lincoln with Lewis Street, also connecting to Cole and Holland. Additionally the contemplated greenway along the railroad should be pursued for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

Over Birmingham's long history, the railroad connection to Detroit has been an important asset. In recent decades, disinvestment in rail and investment in automobiles has reduced the role of rail travel. However, this trend is slowly changing across the country. Into the future, rail's comeback is projected to continue. The City cannot risk being left without a direct connection to passenger rail. Looking forward a few decades, rail access in the Rail District is the most likely economic driver. The City needs to secure a long-term connection to the Troy Transit Center and consider the redevelopment potential this may bring to the district in the future.

Master Plan Actions

1. Develop an Overlay Zoning District for the Lower Rail District that permits the existing, but somewhat improved condition to persist. Consider sunsetting the overlay once public parking is available. See recommendations in the text of this section.
2. Construct a shared-use street section along Cole and Commerce Streets.
3. Update the 1999 Eton Road Corridor Plan for the area south of Palmer Street to permit the existing, but somewhat improved condition to persist. Consider the following amendments:
 - a. So long as the buildings--existing or new--are one story, eliminate all requirements of Section 5 of the Site Design Guidelines p 41-46. of the Eton Road Corridor Plan. These include but are not limited to:
 - Eliminating building frontage and sidewalk requirements.
 - Eliminating parking requirements, except as the on-street parking shall be as determined by the "Immediate Neighbors" of the adjacent Torry or Kenning Neighborhoods.
4. As part of a zoning code update, modify the MX District to enable the urban development envisioned by the plan. Consider the following:
 - a. Exempt LA-01 (E) and (F), as is true in Downtown, or at a minimum that plantings in the MX District are only required within the streetscape and within open areas of the property, but not based on a minimum number of trees per residential unit as currently defined.
 - b. MX District zoning should be carefully analyzed by contracting two or more architects to complete preliminary building designs for mixed-use buildings on existing sites, small and large, with and without on-site parking, attempting to achieve capacity. The architects should be requested to discuss and present challenges and constraints that are faced in the process. While some challenges are part of code design, others may be unknown without testing.
5. Update the 1999 Eton Road Corridor Plan for the area south of Palmer Street to increase vehicular connectivity. Consider the following:
 - a. At the termination of Holland Street, creating a connection to the rail station by purchasing a 30 ft wide corridor or easement.
6. Develop a plan to provide access to the Troy Transit Center and consider the development of surrounding properties, including the School District bus parking lot and the DPS facility.
7. Convene a committee to study redevelopment of the DPS building to occupy a portion of a public parking facility in its place, which services the lower Rail District.
8. Construct the contemplated linear park and trail along the railroad.

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Ch 5. Advance Sustainability Practices

Ch 5. Advance Sustainability Practices

Green the City's Municipal Operations

Green the City's Municipal Operations

In impact, the City should lead by example. Municipal buildings and operational choices should align with environmental goals. New buildings should meet LEED standards, as addressed in the following section. Recycling should be a focus within and around municipal properties. Plastic and styrofoam bottles and containers should not be purchased by the City. Municipal fleet fuel efficiency standards can be increased and converted to Electric Vehicles. Staff may be incentivized to commute to work by bike, public transit, or carpooling. And the City may require its contractors to adopt similar policies.

Master Plan Actions

1. Establish a Sustainability Board to oversee the recommendations of this plan section and other future sustainability initiatives.
2. Task the Sustainability Board to create an action plan to reduce environmental impacts of municipal operations.
3. Install Electric Vehicle charging stations throughout the city at garages, public parking lots, and on-street in Mixed-use Districts.
4. Task the Sustainability Board to study opportunities in Parks and Recreation, such as pollinator gardens, solar panel pavilions, plant species, tree canopy, landscape maintenance processes, and environmental regulations.

Require Green Building in New Construction

Elsewhere in the country, building energy use and production is moving slowly towards neutrality, with some states far ahead of others. Michigan has residential and commercial energy codes which comply with federal mandates, yet leave room for improvement. Detroit and Grand Rapids have adopted 2030 Districts with district goals of reaching net zero energy usage by 2050. With a significant amount of new construction in Birmingham, there is room to incentivize movement towards net zero and use of LEED standards within the City's mixed-use districts.

Master Plan Actions

1. Require adherence to LEED standards within the City's mixed-use districts and municipal buildings.
2. Task the Sustainability Board increasing energy standards for new construction above those of the state energy code, ideally implementing 2030 District goals.

Expand Recycling and Composting

Recycling and composting have been targets of recent policies across the country, aimed at reducing the use of plastics and styrofoam, and reduce the volume of compostable waste in landfills. For residences, recycling programs have been available for some time, but municipal compost has not. Currently yard waste compost is collected in the fall, which may be able to expand to food scraps, which is especially important for restaurant and grocery store waste. Composting potential should be investigated. Concerning normal recycling, commercial standards should be considered along with a greater number of recycling bins in City parks and public spaces. Many area businesses use plastic utensils and styrofoam carryout, along with plastic bags. All of these could be reduced or eliminated either through ordinance or through a Birmingham Shopping District program.

Master Plan Actions

1. Task the Sustainability Board to study the potential for food waste compost service for homes and businesses.
2. Increase the availability of recycling bins in public spaces like parks, public buildings, and along streets with high pedestrian traffic.
3. Task the Sustainability Board and Birmingham Shopping District to recommend the best path towards business operations changes to reduce plastics and styrofoam, either through ordinance or first through a voluntary shopping district program which leads to a future ordinance.

Ch 5. Advance Sustainability Practices

Install Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Neighborhood Streets and Parks

Install Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Neighborhood Streets and Parks

Water quality management has undergone significant improvements in recent years. Birmingham regularly experiences flooding and is situated along a sensitive natural river system. Untreated runoff threatens the Rouge River natural system and damages private properties. Streetside landscape areas, City parks, and other City properties are clear opportunities to provide stormwater solutions, and are plentiful. To address this issue, a new plan should be created which evaluates the issues and problem areas, emerging best practices, and establishes a strategy to implement green infrastructure across the city.

Master Plan Actions

1. Create a Green Infrastructure Plan establishing strategies, design standards, and locations in streets, parks, and other City properties with locating street-side areas where stormwater can be cleaned and retained through bioswales and other means, particularly in areas experiencing flooding.

Improve the Rouge River Natural Area

The Rouge River frontage has been recognized as an important walkway by the City and Oakland County since the 1920s, part of a planned but not fully executed regional park system. The park area is an asset to the City, including diverse wildlife habitats and ecosystems, wooded uplands, prairies, and wetlands. The Rouge borders eight neighborhoods as well as Downtown. Approximately 48% of Birmingham's residents and over 11,000 employees are within a five-minute walk of the Rouge. A midday walk in the summertime along the Rouge trail includes workers, joggers, families enjoying opportunities to get near the river, and diverse wildlife. Many people use the park and recent studies have shown that access to trees, wildlife, and naturalistic settings is important for mental health.

However, the Rouge River natural areas require better management, maintenance, and accommodations for the diverse set of users who value it. The park's natural ecosystem is challenged by invasive plant species, minimal forest management, degraded bank conditions, landscape chemical runoff, and roadway storm-water runoff. Active management of the area is needed, along with stormwater management interventions to clean water before it enters the Rouge.

The Rouge's relatively flat topography is ideal for pedestrians and cyclists of all ability levels. However the condition of trails and access severely limit its use. The existing wood chip and crushed-stone hiking trails are unstable surfaces and sections of the existing Rouge trail traverse steep grades or waterlogged soils. In fact, the Rouge hiking trail is often entirely unusable during heavy rain or freezing conditions. Where the river comes close to property lines, the trail often becomes steep and difficult to traverse. A properly designed, paved walkway could provide an easy alternative to West Maple's steep hill between Baldwin and Southfield Road, as well as link Linden, Seaholm, Quarton and Beverly Hills residents directly to Booth Park. And due to the trail's trajectory, much of the park is completely inaccessible. Additionally, many of the trail heads are unmarked and hidden. The river trail is of both community-wide and regional importance. Access and accommodations are necessary for the health of all Birmingham residents.



Figure 60. A segment of the Rouge trail.

Ch 5. Advance Sustainability Practices

Improve the Rouge River Natural Area

Many sections of the Rouge trail and trail heads lack benches, bicycle racks, lighting, way-finding maps, educational placards, and other basic amenities. Benches are convenient for the enjoyment of the natural area, but also for many older adults who need places to rest along long walks. Lighting and forest management are important for security. Regular surveillance of the trail is difficult for the police and public due to insufficient access, and emergency response vehicles have limited or no access to many segments of the trail.

The needs of pedestrians and cyclists are often aligned, but in the natural areas, multiple facilities are merited. By adding pedestrian and bike bridges at key locations, much more of the natural area would be accessible, and the trail would be able to avoid steep areas if it crossed the river more frequently. Opening up access to the far side of the river would allow for a paved pedestrian and bicycle trail, along with a smaller pedestrian walkway that may be more naturalistic in design and access the river more intimately. Care is needed in designing upgraded trails. The design of trails should endeavor to remain as narrow as practical for the effective use of the facility, in order to minimize the visual and actual impact on the natural area.

Along with amenities and trails, the natural area requires active management and targeted improvements. In many instances, the banks and slopes have been stabilized in a way that intrudes upon the ecosystem, clearing segments

of plants and wildlife access. In others, the banks are not stabilized at all. Along with the edge conditions, plant species and tree health need monitoring and management. Natural areas at the urban interface cannot simply be left to chance.

Master Plan Actions

1. Develop and implement a restoration master plan to restore the Rouge River ecosystem to its natural and sustainable conditions. The plan should consider:
 - a. Retaining environmental scientists to inventory and analyze the Rouge corridor's wildlife, ecology, natural systems, and pollution sources.
 - b. Establishing a phased enhancement time frame to stabilize riverbanks, remove invasive species, reintroduce native ground covers, wildflowers, under-story, and canopy tree species.
 - c. Identifying and mitigating potential pollution or chemical sources, including the existing Springdale snow storage dumping area.
2. Develop and implement a trails and access master plan to improve the Rouge River trails and trail heads. The plan should consider:
 - a. Installing pedestrian linkages to the park's surrounding neighborhoods and commercial districts, including to Quarton Road.
 - b. Securing easements of additional key properties to expand the park area and improve its walkability, for complete ecological restoration, and universal accessibility.
 - c. Coordinating with Bloomfield and Beverly Hills to expand trail access and connections.
 - d. Installing an environmentally sensitive, hard-surfaced pathway for pedestrians and cyclists along the Rouge River.
 - e. Expanding the extent of the trail system, crossing the river at more locations to access large portions of the natural area currently cut off.



Figure 61. A segment of the Rouge trail.

Ch 5. Advance Sustainability Practices

Implement Plan Actions Supporting Sustainability

- f.** Installing bridges, ramps, and other enhancements to enable access by all ages and abilities.
 - g.** Installing other amenities such as bicycle racks, lighting, markers, seating, and signage at trail heads, and seating, markers, and interpretive features throughout the trail system.
- 3.** Establish a “Friends of the Rouge” foundation to oversee, build support, and raise funding for the park’s enhancements. Consider securing corporate or philanthropic funding in exchange for special recognition.
- 4.** Provide funding for city staff and resources to permanently preserve and manage the Rouge ecosystem.
- 5.** As part of a zoning code overlay, implement policy to ensure that private property construction, fencing, landscaping, lighting, etc., are compatible with the park’s ecology, its restoration master plan, and overall public welfare.

Implement Plan Actions Supporting Sustainability

Many of the plan goals and actions addressed in previous chapters implement public health and environmental sustainability goals. They specifically advance sustainability practices in Birmingham and should be implemented with sustainability in mind. These include:

- Preserving, enhancing, and diversifying the city’s tree canopy in streets and open spaces.
- Infill housing in Mixed-use Districts result in households which on average drive less, use less overall energy in heating and cooling, and use practically no water and fertilizer in landscape maintenance.
- Bicycle and pedestrian multi-modal improvements, and support for neighborhood destinations encourage exercise and more trips taken by foot or bike rather than by car.
- Support for the Farmer’s Market increases connections to food growing, healthy consumption, and food education.

