

REVIVE CINCINNATI:
NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE LOWER MILL CREEK VALLEY

Cincinnati, Ohio URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

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Revive Cincinnati: Neighborhoods of the Lower Mill Creek Valley

PREPARED FOR

City of Cincinnati
Department of City Planning
and Buildings
In cooperation with
Metropolitan Sewer District of
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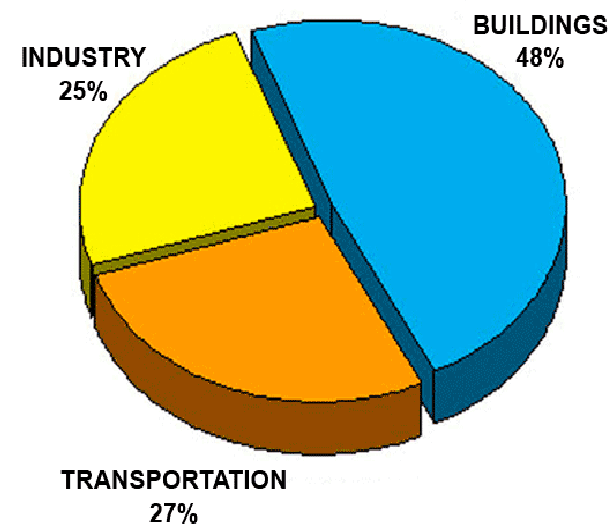


FIGURE 1: U.S. ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century will be a period of enormous change. World population growth combined with increasing industrialization in the developing nations has resulted in an enormous drain on resources, particularly energy and water. Petroleum, once treated for all practical purposes as limitless, is now proving more difficult to secure. Furthermore, most of the known petroleum reserves are located in countries with a reputation for instability, raising concerns in the U.S. over energy security.

In addition, the dependence of industry on petroleum, coal and other fossil fuels has resulted in the release of enormous amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs), raising atmospheric concentrations well beyond historic levels. Concerns over the possibility of climate change with devastating effects along with future energy sources is causing industry and government to rethink how energy will be supplied, used, and conserved in the coming decades.

These global issues are spilling over into U.S. cities, causing them to contemplate how these changes will affect their operations, and what sort of adaptive measures should be put in place to enable them to continue to grow and develop economically. For the City of Cincinnati, the future supplies and costs of energy will become major issues in the coming decades. Current decisions about transportation, specifically the I-75 corridor, will have impacts for decades, if not generations to come.

LESSONS FROM THE BUILDING DESIGN COMMUNITY

Early on, leaders in the building design industry recognized the relationship of buildings to the problems and issues associated with energy and GHG emissions. The leaders noted that 48% of the energy produced in the U.S. is used in buildings.¹ (See Figure 1.) Programs such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) were established to provide a consistent way of measuring a building's contribution to sustainability, including improvements in energy efficiency and GHG emissions reduction. Over the last decade, LEED has transformed the building industry by redefining building value in the minds of the building owners, tenants, residents, and the general public. In the past, buildings were designed and constructed to achieve the lowest first cost, without much regard to energy efficiency. Today, LEED-certified buildings command higher prices and rents as buyers and tenants recognize the value in lower operating costs.

The work and accomplishments of the USGBC are remarkable in the sense that they created a meaningful value proposition for building "green," incorporating energy efficiency and GHG emissions reduction. Conspicuously absent however are incentives, not only to embed energy conservation and emissions reductions into the building designs, but to do so at a speed commensurate with the problems and urgencies at hand.

The building design community sought to address this missing element. In 2007, industry leaders established the Architecture 2030 Challenge, setting a goal of producing only "zero net energy" buildings by the year 2030. They reasoned that by 2035, 75% of the

U.S. building stock would either be replaced or subject to a major renovation. Furthermore, unless action is taken immediately, many if not most of the new or renovated building stock will have achieved little in the way of GHG emissions reductions or energy efficiency. Accordingly, the leaders set aggressive targets and timetables for reducing energy consumption and GHG emissions.

With today's technologies, building designers can readily achieve 50% reductions below the regional or national averages (by building type) starting now. In addition, expected advances in building technology make it reasonable to set increases in the fossil fuel reduction standards. According to the timetable, new buildings or major renovations will be carbon-neutral by 2030.

IMPACTS OF TRANSPORTATION

The energy consumption statistics for buildings also raise an important question: "What about the other 52%?" As depicted in Figure 1, transportation accounts for 27% of U.S. energy consumption, with the remaining 25% going to industry. More importantly, 95% of the energy used for transportation is petroleum based, thus making transportation in its current form a strategic energy issue for this country. Given the substantial energy impacts plus the strategic issues associated with its heavy reliance on petroleum, strong arguments can be raised for moving away from fuel-based forms of transportation to those that are energy-based. It also follows that the roads, highways and infrastructure associated with fuel-based transportation need to be revisited, deferring to more multi-modal forms.²

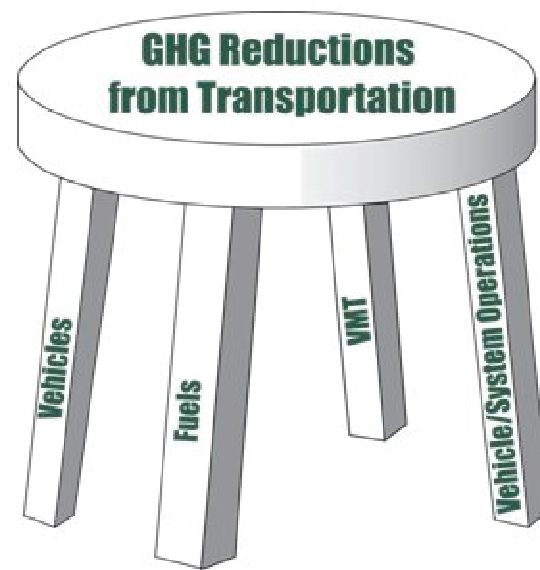


FIGURE 2: THE 4-LEGGED STOOL OF GHG REDUCTION STRATEGIES FOR TRANSPORTATION

These issues have not gone unnoticed. Recognizing these issues, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation have spelled out policies and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transportation through several strategies including energy efficiency. Like buildings, they are addressing GHG emissions and have distilled their reduction strategies into four elements, known unofficially as the four-legged stool. The first and second legs address vehicles and fuels, seeking a 50% cut in GHG emission per mile by 2030 and an almost complete decarbonization of transport vehicles and fuels by 2050. The third leg involves slowing the annual growth of U.S. vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to 1%. This strategy is seen as especially valuable for meeting GHG emissions reduction targets. Moreover, VMT growth is already slow-

ing due to fuel price increases and demographic changes. The fourth leg focuses on vehicle and systems operations, seeking to change the way in which light duty vehicles (LDVs) are used and driven. One of the precepts is termed "eco-driving," a set of best practices to reduce fuel use and GHG emissions. By following a number of simple tips, drivers can reduce fuel use by up to 15%.

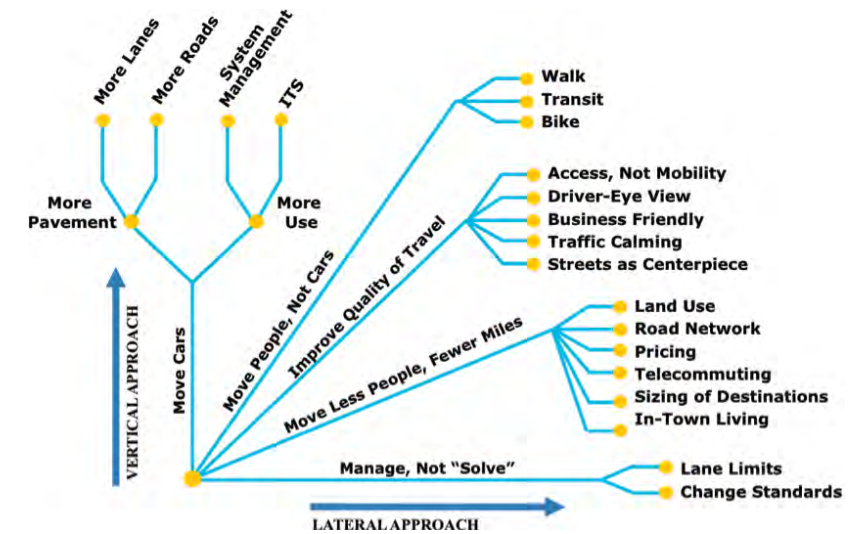


FIGURE 3: ADDRESSING TRAFFIC CONGESTION: VERTICAL APPROACH VS. LATERAL APPROACH 3

A 2030 CHALLENGE EQUIVALENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE?

Recalling the rationale for the Architecture 2030 Challenge, it stands to reason that much of the infrastructure will also be replaced or will undergo substantial renovation over the next several decades. However, unlike buildings, infrastructure is a mix of systems that provide services and connections among people and communities. A city's infrastructure provides mobility and access, power, water, fresh air, sanitation, heat, light, comfort, information and materials flow,

and security. In a large sense, infrastructure delivers quality of life to communities.

In contrast, buildings are discrete entities, mostly independent of one another. If a building outlives its usefulness, it is relatively easy to tear it down and replace it with one that is more suitable. Not so with infrastructure. Repair and replacement at a systems-level is not only expensive but highly disruptive to day-to-day operations. Therefore it is not surprising that much of this nation's infrastructure is now in serious disrepair. In their 2009 Report Card, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave the nation's infrastructure a grade of D. They also estimated that the cost of repair and upgrade to acceptable levels would require an expenditure of \$2.2 trillion over the next five years.

ASCE has been publishing its Infrastructure Report Card for more than a decade, yet only recently has it received much attention. In prior years, the Report Card was frequently dismissed as a self-serving statement designed to provide employment for the engineering industry. However, in the last several years, numerous examples of infrastructure decay and concurrent increases in risk to the public have turned up, the most tragic of which was the August 1, 2007 collapse of the I-35 bridge during rush hour in Minneapolis, MN. This not only vindicated ASCE but brought the issue of the nation's inadequate and decaying infrastructure to the forefront.

The urgent need of U.S. infrastructure repair has promoted legislators at both the federal and state level to prepare legislation and issue bonds to fund critical infrastructure projects. Infrastructure repair and replacement is also seen as a means of job creation, which in the current economy has important ramifications. Although it is

clearly important to make the needed repairs and upgrades and create jobs, it is perhaps more important to make sure that the resulting infrastructure will target the same level of energy and resource efficiencies, and GHG reductions as did the building industry. There are significant concerns that expediency will trump energy and resource efficiency and ecological effectiveness, and that politics will trump sensibility.

ROADS ARE FOREVER!

Furthermore, it is the nature of infrastructure that makes it so important to direct its repair, upgrade and replacement in a sensible energy and ecologically efficient, and socially effective way. Buildings define a city but the roads, bridges, highways and interstates are its operating system. Once built, roads are there for generations, predetermining how people and communities will live, work and connect to other communities, cultural and sport facilities, and core urban areas. The same can be applied to airports, dams, railways, water ways, water and wastewater systems, transit systems, and more. Not taking advantage of the opportunity to improve the community connections and effectiveness will have negative ramifications for generations to come.

Recognizing the importance of roads and transportation to a city and its various communities, FHWA has shifted its policies from mobility to livability. It is taking a more collaborative approach to transportation improvements by considering the unique context, scope and stakeholders associated with each project. Here it is seeking to incorporate the principles of context sensitive design into all aspects of transportation planning and project development. Through

this approach, FHWA believes that it is creating a pathway to sustainable transportation. In FHWA's view, transportation needs to be an asset to the city, providing access to a city's cultural and economic resources, and connecting the communities that reside therein.

FOCUS ON CINCINNATI

In crafting the I-75 Focus Areas project, the City of Cincinnati affirmed its determination to get engaged in the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Kentucky Transportation Council (KYTC) planning process for improving I-75 highway safety, access, and capacity. The City saw this as an opportunity to use the investment in the study to rethink, revitalize, and improve communities and business areas along the corridor. The City also seeks to coordinate with investments in other infrastructure needs including improvements in the sewer system required under the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) Consent Decree.

Considering the long term implications of the I-75 improvements to the City's well-being, it is recommended that the City focus on four areas of improvement:

- 1 Making Cincinnati a more livable city.
- 2 Regenerating the river corridor and mitigating the impacts of past development.
- 3 Increasing Cincinnati's business attractiveness to spur economic growth.
- 4 Resolving city-wide symptoms and consequences of non-sustainable development.

MAKING CINCINNATI A MORE LIVABLE CITY

Livability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life – including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities.⁴ In terms of sustainable transportation, such a city should provide good access to the people, places, goods, and services important to social and economic well being.

The Urban Design Associates (UDA) project team conducted a number of public meetings which involved many community organizations inside and outside of the focus areas. The team also met with individual leaders and residents, all geared to developing a sound understanding of community needs and issues. Based on the results of those meetings which collectively defined the sense of livability, the team composed a set of community objectives and priority issues. These are:

- » Connect the City together by improving internal mobility
- » Restore the urban ecology to improve quality of life
- » Build on the rich heritage and unique communities of the City
- » Create a vision for a new economy and attract related businesses

INCREASING CINCINNATI'S BUSINESS ATTRACTIVENESS TO SPUR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The City recognizes the importance of I-75 as a major factor in the City's growth and development. Yet the City also recognizes that I-75 is part of a major north-south interstate highway and rail transportation corridor that bisects the city, consequently disconnecting a number of Cincinnati communities.

The presence of a busy interstate and rail corridor will no doubt continue to be a major contributor to economic success. However, in an increasingly globalized the twenty-first century economy, cities are finding that they are competing globally for business investment.

Because of advancements in computers and telecommunications, businesses are finding that they can locate most anywhere, so long as they can attract employees with the requisite knowledge skills. Thus for cities, the basis of competition is quality of life.

Hence for Cincinnati, a key determinant for business attractiveness will be its ability to create a more livable city; one that not only meets the needs and values of its communities, but one that has broad appeal to a knowledgeable and skilled workforce of the future.

EVOLVING FEDERAL POLICY: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

At the federal level, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have recently established an interagency partnership for sustainable communities incorporating the following principles:⁵

- » Provide more transportation choices. Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- » Promote equitable, affordable housing. Expand location and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- » Enhance economic competitiveness. Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- » Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities – through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling – to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

- » Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
- » Value communities and neighborhoods. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods – rural, urban, or suburban.

This new partnership direction from the three federal agencies most involved in urban transportation and community investment, and most invested in its effective and beneficial outcome, argues for the importance of broad consideration of issues addressed in this study, and for long-term outcome perspective in decision-making. It also emphasizes the importance of social and economic impacts – both how they are considered, and how they are valued.

¹ Source: *An Introduction to the U.S. Green Building Council and the LEED™ Green Building Rating System*, U.S. GBC, August 2003.

² Source: *Global Climate Change: Transportation's Role in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, Cynthia Burbank, *National Planning and Environment Practice Leader*, Parsons Brinckerhoff, *Climate Change Workshop for MPOs and DOTs*, September 24, 2008, Albany, NY, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/climate/gccal-bany.htm>

³ Sources: Glatting Jackson, *CSS Implementation: Debunking the Myths*, <http://www.ite.org/css/2-CSS%20Implementation%20-%20Debunking%20the%20Myths%20.ppt>

⁴ Source: *Partners for Livable Communities*, <http://www.livable.com/about-us/what-is-livability>

⁵ Source: *HUD, DOT and EPA Partnership: Sustainable Communities*, June 16, 2009 <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/index.html>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

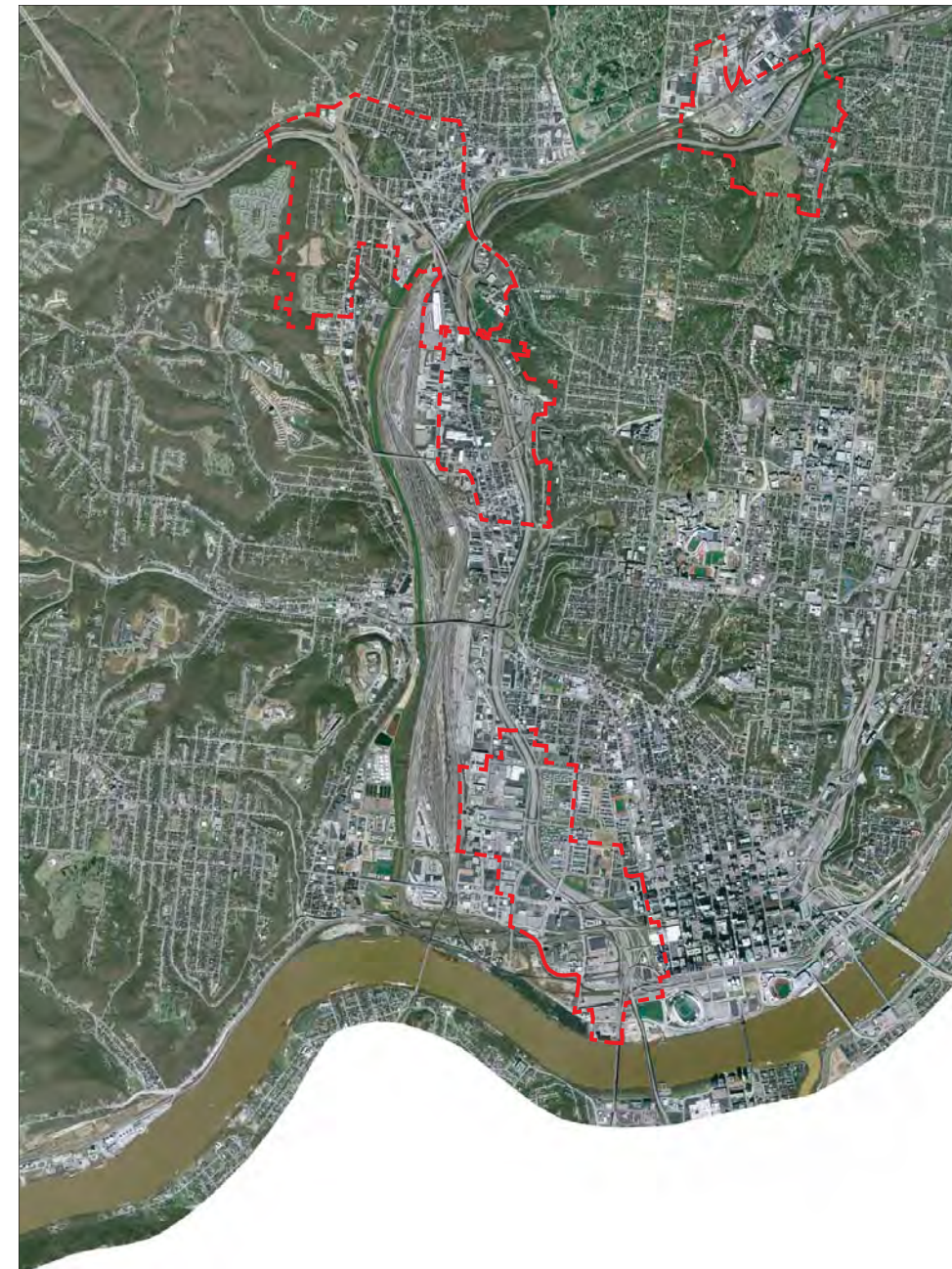
THE MILL CREEK VALLEY, regarded by many as a tired industrial valley, will be the beneficiary of massive infrastructure improvements over the next twenty years. The reconstruction of I-75 and improvements to the storm and sanitary sewers that flow into the valley, if properly designed, will have a transformative effect on the future of the city. These multi-billion dollar investments will influence the quality of life for the valley communities and have the ability to improve Cincinnati's competitiveness by attracting future generations of citizens in search of great places to live, work, and play. This study will demonstrate that by properly managing these huge investments, the city will leverage additional investment in the creation of a sustainable ecosystem, new forms of mobility, preservation of unique historic neighborhoods, and transformation of underutilized land into centers of research and commerce.

Four study areas were identified by the City based on the location of highway interchanges: Mitchell; Northside/South Cumminsville; Camp Washington; and Queensgate. To understand the potential for these four study areas, the team studied the major systems of the Mill Creek Valley including highways, railroads, the Creek, open space systems, and future improvements. Each of these systems influenced the planning frameworks for communities in the four study areas. In addition, each community in this study developed plans for strengthening their neighborhoods and attracting investment. This study integrated their work within the context of valley wide improvements and the massive change that could come with a sustainable new highway and sewer infrastructure that contributes to sustainability.



VIEW ACROSS THE VALLEY

This image depicts the cross section of uses the valley has to serve.



REGIONAL AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

This image shows the approximate boundaries of the four study areas (counterclockwise from the upper right): Spring Grove Village / St. Bernard; Northside / South Cumminsville; Camp Washington / CUF; Queensgate.

FINDING JOINT RESOLUTIONS

It is important to recognize the major city-wide projects that have, in effect, initiated this Revive Cincinnati study. The rebuilding efforts of both the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) of Greater Cincinnati and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) systems will have a long lasting impact on this region. Finding joint resolutions that can accomplish the goals of both entities while achieving broader community goals that will advance the City well into the twenty-first century is imperative. The following lays out goals and recommendations related to MSD and FHWA/ODOT.

MSD

MSD is facing EPA and federal court-ordered mandates remedying wet-weather overflows of its aging and mostly combined sewer system. Widespread Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) during wet weather events are the primary problem; many of these CSOs occur in and along the Mill Creek Valley floor. The needed corrective actions will total in the billions of dollars of capital investments. The environmental and public health and welfare needs behind CSO corrective actions are well documented. At the same time, the corrective actions program must be managed and delivered in a way that minimizes adverse effects on ratepayers and economic competitiveness of the City. In addition, these corrective actions should, where possible, contribute to the goal of creating vibrant and livable communities.

FHWA & ODOT

The FHWA's scheduled multi-billion dollar program to rebuild I-75 aims to resolve major safety and capacity problems along the corridor from the Brent Spence Bridge north to the I-275 loop. The redesign of the highway and most of the interchanges is underway. Substantial construction gets underway in 2011 and continues through 2018.

There are, however, opportunities to positively affect the environment and communities surrounding the interstate without drastic changes to much of the current ODOT design.

A Shared Vision

With a rebuilt interstate thru the same valley that is populated with some of MSD's most problematic CSOs, there is a significant opportunity to jointly resolve, though near-term investments or longer-term strategies, wet weather and community livability issues. These opportunities are complete and far-reaching compliments to the principles established jointly by USDOT (including FHWA), USEPA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development in their June 2009 Partnership for Sustainable Communities policy agreement.

Recommendations

The Revive Cincinnati plan makes the following recommendations in support of City and MSD needs, and in consideration of the DOT/EPA/HUD sustainable communities policy:

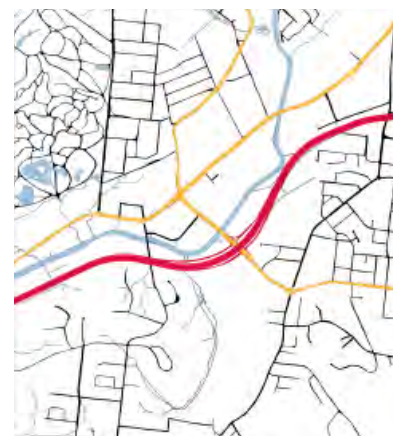
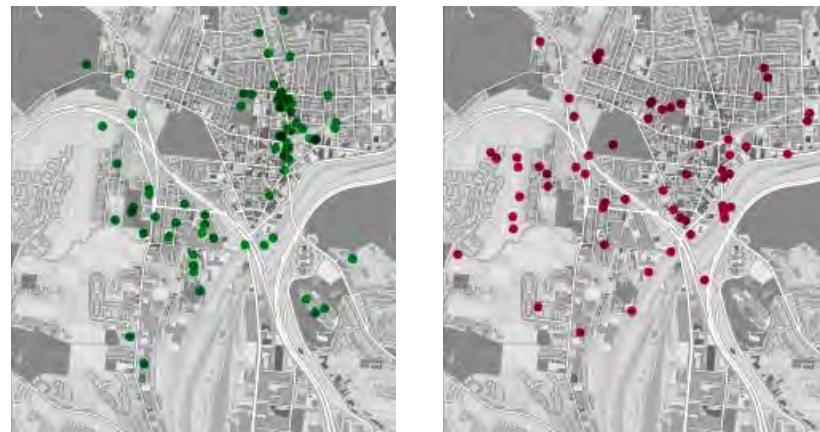
- » No highway stormwater. The FHWA design goal for the I-75 rehabilitation should be removal of all highway-tributary stormwater runoff flows into the combined MSD system. This can involve a range of strategies, from conventional to innovative.
- » Meet long-term needs. Investments should meet long-term needs now, where possible, with the I-75 reconstruction. This should extend beyond just the "within the right-of-way" needs.
- » Service to communities. Federal and state investments in I-75, including needed storm infrastructure, should also serve the adjacent communities. Integrate I-75's infrastructure investments with the needs of neighborhoods and MSD's strategic plan.

- » Network perspective. To achieve net cost efficiency and effectiveness, the current and future perspective of storm sewers in the Mill Creek Valley must embrace a "connected network" perspective, that moves away from a project-level treatment and into a system-level approach that serves both communities and transportation corridors, whether federal freeways or city streets.
- » Flow separation as the end game. The end game for the four study areas of the Revive Cincinnati plan should be the strategic separation of storm and sanitary flows. This objective should govern design decisions in the near and long term.

MSD has developed and is highlighting a program that provides the institutional platform for implementing and shepherding many of these recommendations at the community level. The Communities of the Future program is helping MSD partner with other organizations that have a vested interest in more livable, more sustainable communities, using creative solutions to long-standing wet-weather flow problems as a focal point. Properly crafted, these community level solutions have the opportunity to effect beneficial change in the areas of urban design, economic investment, and sustainable transportation in concert with area-based wet-weather flow management. Concepts outlined to date in the Communities of the Future program, including for example major stream daylighting, flow separation, storm flow rerouting and upland runoff storage, have targeted priority opportunities in the Lick Run and West Fork drainages of the Lower Mill Creek. However, these concepts, and the Communities of the Future template, are valuable and broadly applicable to all of the communities of the Mill Creek Valley, as well as to major infrastructure investments, most notably FHWA's I-75 major rehabilitation program.

Analysis and Planning Process

DURING THE COURSE of the 8-month process, the planning team, which consisted of urban designers, landscape architects, transportation engineers, and market analysts, conducted a three-phase process including: Data Collection and Analysis; Alternatives Exploration; and Development of the Preferred Plan. The process included focus group meetings with residents and civic leaders, institutions, City representatives, area businesses, and other key stakeholders. These participants described their perceptions of the City of Cincinnati, the Mill Creek Valley, and their respective study areas, outlining for the planning team the challenges ahead as well as their hopes for the future. The process created a consensus opinion about the overall approach for improving the study areas and how this in turn would help improve the future of the City. This document describes that strategy.



ANALYSIS DRAWINGS SAMPLES
 (TOP LEFT) Stake holders placed green dots on the Strengths of each study area and red dots on the Weaknesses of each study area; (BOTTOM LEFT) Stake holder meeting; (ABOVE) A series of analysis drawings provide understanding of each study area

- CITY FOCUS GROUPS:**
- » Strategic Program for Urban Redevelopment (SPUR) Team
 - » Park Board and Recreation Commission
 - » ODOT Project Managers
 - » MSD Project Managers
 - » DOTE Project Managers
 - » Economic Development Project Managers
 - » City Planning Project Managers

- STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS:**
- » Neighborhood Gateways and Public Art
 - » Uptown
 - » Mitchell Avenue/St. Bernard Stakeholders
 - » Northside Business Association
 - » Cincinnati Northside Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation
 - » Developers and Brokers
 - » Camp Washington Residents and Businesses
 - » USGBC/AIA-COTE/ASLA
 - » Museum Center at Union Terminal
 - » Mill Creek Restoration Project Board Members
 - » City Planning Commission
 - » Historic Preservation
 - » South Cumminsville/ Working in Neighborhoods (WIN)/ Communities United for Action (CUFA)
 - » Queensgate Stakeholders
 - » Cincinnati USA Chamber

Mill Creek Valley

THE VISION FOR THE Mill Creek Valley enhances the valley as a major transportation corridor while transforming it into a viable and sustainable open space corridor. These corridors, which are in fact systems, will serve to revitalize communities and centers of industry, research, and commerce. This study proposes a series of integrated and sustainable infrastructure improvements, linked to communities, education and research centers, and the downtown. These initiatives include:

Transportation

- » Rail freight transportation and port facilities
- » Intercity passenger service
- » Dedicated transit corridors
- » Interstate interchanges, crossings, and landscaping
- » Arterial road improvements
- » Bicycle and trail network

Restored Ecosystem

- » Connected park system
- » Active and passive neighborhood parks
- » Restored wetlands and tributaries
- » Green streets and public spaces

Liveable Communities

- » Focus on an emerging Green Economy
- » Transportation related industries
- » Mixed-use neighborhood centers
- » New residential neighborhoods and infill development
- » Enhanced sense of place and improved quality of life



VIEW OVER QUEENSGATE

The wide Valley is composed of many systems which need to work together.



REGIONAL ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

This image highlights the proposed improvements to streets, blocks, and open space networks across all four study areas.

Neighborhood Proposals



MITCHELL AVENUE

- » Promote two nodes of retail activity
- » Link existing cemeteries, parks, and trails
- » Naturalize the Mill Creek to enhance water quality issues and advance MSD initiatives
- » Create a stronger Mitchell/Vine gateway
- » Retain and encourage light industrial uses
- » Create street-oriented and riverfront-oriented mixed-use developments
- » Create Mill Creek Greenway and Trail System



NORTHSIDE AND SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE

- » Reconnect South Cumminsville to Northside through improved street sections and new links through I-74
- » Restore and naturalize the West Fork to provide stormwater management, recreational opportunities and connectivity to Mt. Airy Forest
- » Enhance the Ludlow viaduct entrance to Northside at Knowlton's Corner
- » Support a new Research and Development park in South Cumminsville
- » Create Mill Creek Greenway and Trail System



HOPPLE STREET

- » Capitalize on and improve connectivity of the major arteries of Spring Grove and Central Parkway
- » Establish Research Development and green jobs facilities along Spring Grove Avenue integrated with Cincinnati State and University of Cincinnati
- » New industries should be conceived in a green park that uses stormwater mitigation techniques and clean energy
- » Continue to offer diverse housing and enterprise options



QUEENSGATE AND THE WEST END

- » Mitigate the divide between east and west of I-75 with better connected street network
- » Recover real estate for downtown growth and competitiveness
- » Continue and enhance services as an intermodal transfer point
- » Connect trail and park network from Mill Creek to Lower Price Hill, the Banks, and points east and west along the Ohio River
- » Create premier industrial and flex space real estate opportunities that are development-ready

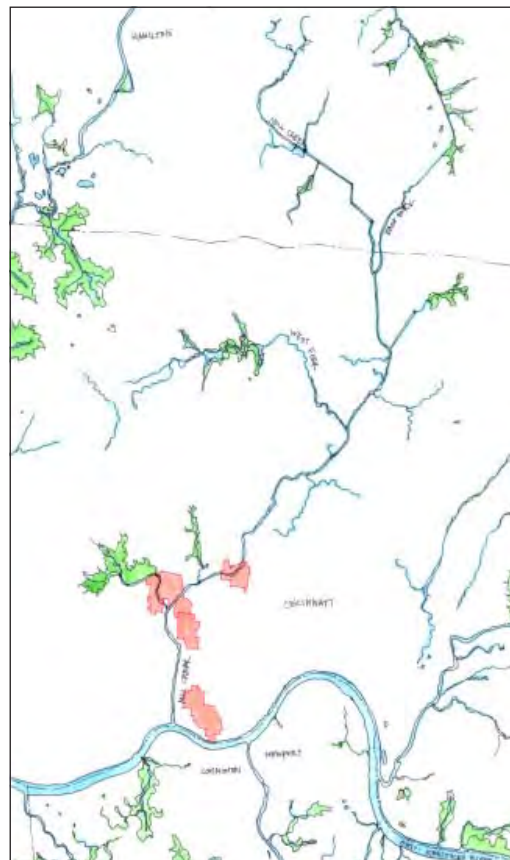


MILL CREEK VALLEY

Overview & History

HUMANKIND HAS ALWAYS settled near water and the Lower Mill Creek Valley has been and will continue to be an important part of Cincinnati because of its links to waterways, industry, commerce, and transportation systems. Early settlers including the Native Americans used the Mill Creek Valley as a place for food, shelter, and trade. During the industrial era, factories and storage facilities were built because of the easy access to rail and barge networks. As a result, the valley became the industrial heartland, dividing the city into two halves.

In the future, this valley has the opportunity to transform itself from an industrial corridor into a more dynamic urban corridor by restoring natural systems, supporting new industries, encouraging local businesses, enhancing neighborhoods, providing new open spaces and community amenities, and linking them via multiple modes of transportation. In essence, the Lower Mill Creek Valley has the potential to reverse the trend of a shrinking city by balancing industrialism, urbanism, and environmentalism in a way that makes it the hallmark for sustainable development in the Mid-West.



WATERSHED DIAGRAM
The Mill Creek Watershed is 166 square miles and has been the conduit for industry for two hundred years. (Study areas are indicated in red)



REGIONAL AERIAL
The City of Cincinnati and its neighborhoods are shaped by the Mill Creek Valley.

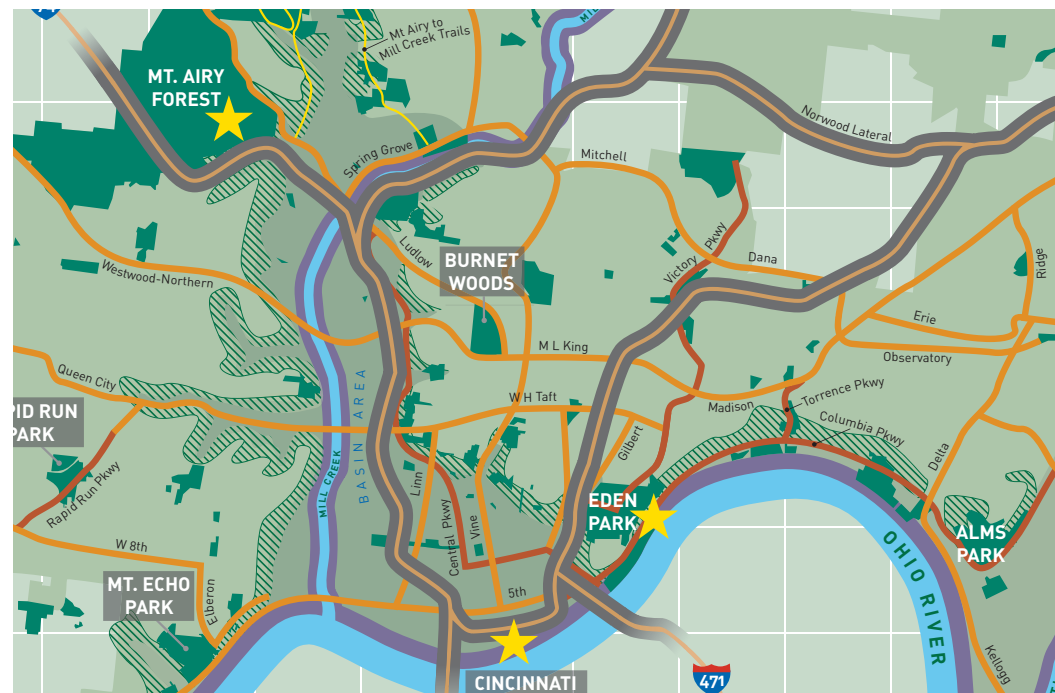
Cincinnati has a great history, founded on the idea that parks and open spaces can create a more livable and more economically robust city. A significant milestone occurred in 1907 when the City, working with the renowned landscape architect George Kessler, adopted its first master plan for its parks, parkways, and recreation system. The plan called for major parks located throughout the city to be connected by way of parkway streets that linked neighborhoods, districts and the downtown together. The plan was important because it became the framework for how the city could grow and evolve into the modern twentieth century city we see today. Over time the City has further developed its vision for parks, recreation, and open spaces through subsequent master plans and guidelines including the latest plan called the Centennial Plan, adopted by the City in the 2007. In addition, the Mill Creek Watershed Greenway Master Plan, published in 1999, provides a multi-objective strategy for revitalizing the Mill Creek neighborhoods and communities.

For cities like Cincinnati to sustain themselves in the twenty-first century, they must embrace their historic foundations while also adapting to the changes that society, technology, and a global economy demand. The Mill Creek Valley is the greatest opportunity the City has to provide a restored landscape where neighborhoods, industries, and people can be reconnected again. The time to achieve this goal is now because of the multi-billion dollar investments that MSD and ODOT are making in the valley. MSD's goal to resolve overflow volumes in its sewer and storm systems provides an opportunity to naturally handle water in a way that can create new forms of revenue, environmental habitats, and parks and open space linkages. Additionally, a renewed Mill Creek Valley can become the basis for new green industries, renewable energy fields and urban farms. This can further expand the economic development capabilities for the neighborhoods of the Mill Creek Valley.



1907 KESSLER PARKS PLAN
Kessler's vision created a network of parkways and parks to tie the city together.

Source: Cincinnati Parks



2007 PARKS DEPARTMENT PLAN
The Centennial Plan continues to seek ways to enhance the city's parkway and park network.

Source: Cincinnati Parks

Mill Creek Valley Systems

The Mill Creek Valley is a complex area made up of many systems including open space, roads, highways, rails, and neighborhoods. In order to create visionary designs that better organize these systems, the planning team first had to understand each system. The following are the observations of existing conditions for:

- » Open Space Network
- » Roads and Streets
- » I-75 Corridor
- » Rail Corridor
- » Neighborhoods Along The Valley



REGIONAL LAND USE

This diagram shows the major systems that overlay on the Valley.

OPEN SPACE NETWORK

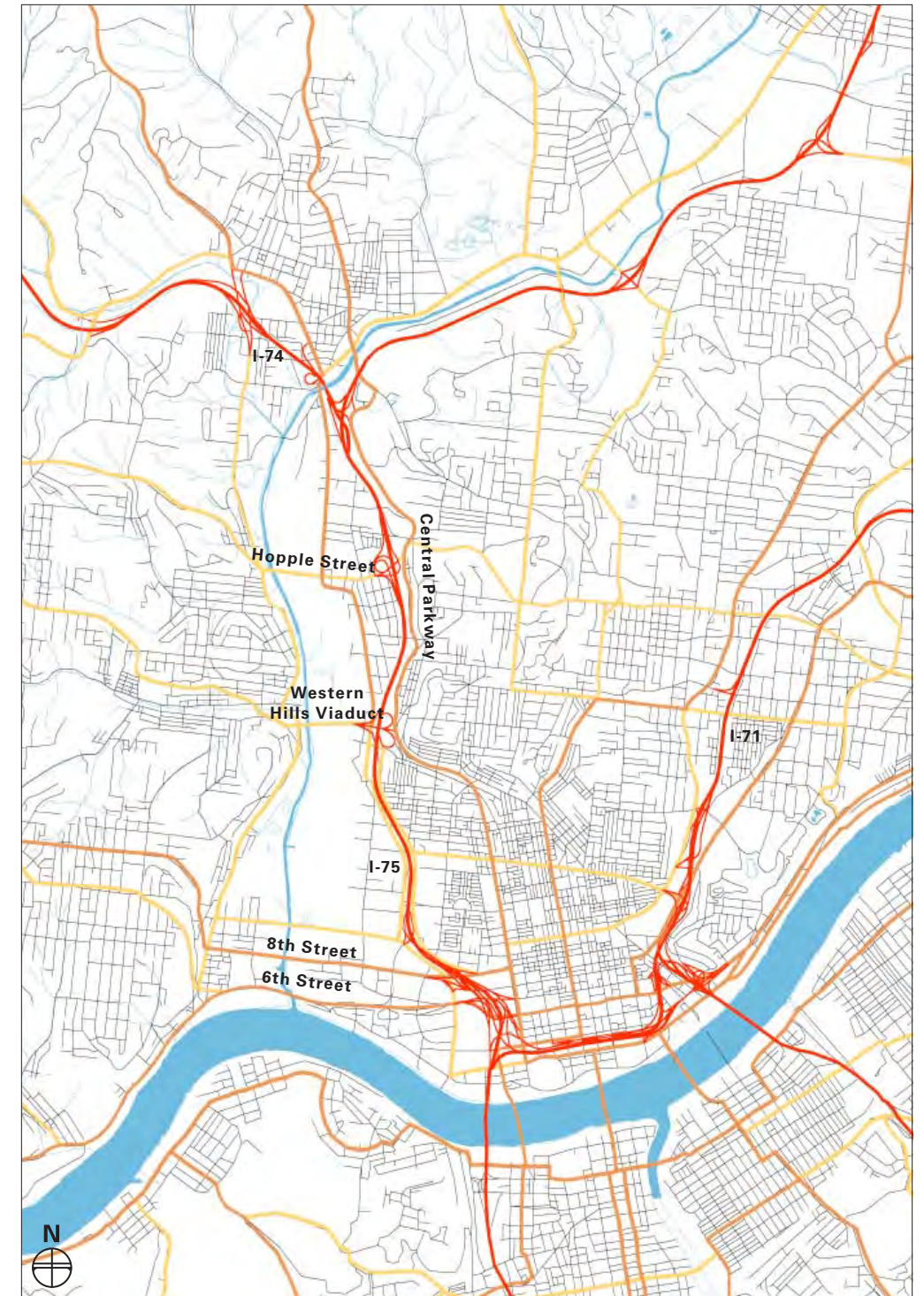
Based on the original Kessler vision, the City has created an amazing array of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces throughout the region. As illustrated in the diagram titled “Open Space Network,” there are a number of important parks and recreation facilities that lie adjacent to the Lower Mill Creek Valley, including Mt. Airy and Mt. Storm which provide large areas for both passive and active recreation opportunities. No less significant are the small neighborhood parks and recreation facilities which are vital to communities. The plan also shows sloped areas with significant tree cover (and some privately owned land) that cannot be used for parks. However, they still provide an important part of the open space environment and serve as a habitat for small mammals, birds, and other animal species. Finally and most importantly, this diagram illustrates open spaces along the creek that citizens and city leaders view as the next significant project that the City must undertake: restoration of the Mill Creek. Mill Creek stands to be the single greatest link between all parks and open space. To that end, the Mill Creek Restoration Project has assembled diverse public and private partners and embarked on a vision and plan to change the Mill Creek so it eventually becomes the “emerald spine” for the city.

ROADS AND STREETS

Parks were only one element of Kessler’s master plan. Parkways provide scenic streets within many areas of the city. In the Lower Mill Creek Valley several parkways are worth noting. First, Central Parkway lies just east of and parallel of the I-75 corridor linking neighborhoods to downtown. Not only does it provide a scenic parkway to many interesting neighborhoods, it also was the corridor in which a subway was partially built in the 1930s. Second, Hopple Street and Western Hills Viaduct provide a vital and important connection between east and west. Specifically, the bridge structure of the Western Hills Viaduct is one of the city’s most important icons



OPEN SPACE NETWORK
A range of large and small parks, recreation areas and open space are in the city but can be strengthened through better connections.



ROADS AND STREETS
Cincinnati’s hierarchy of streets is well dispersed, however east-west connections across the Valley are lacking.

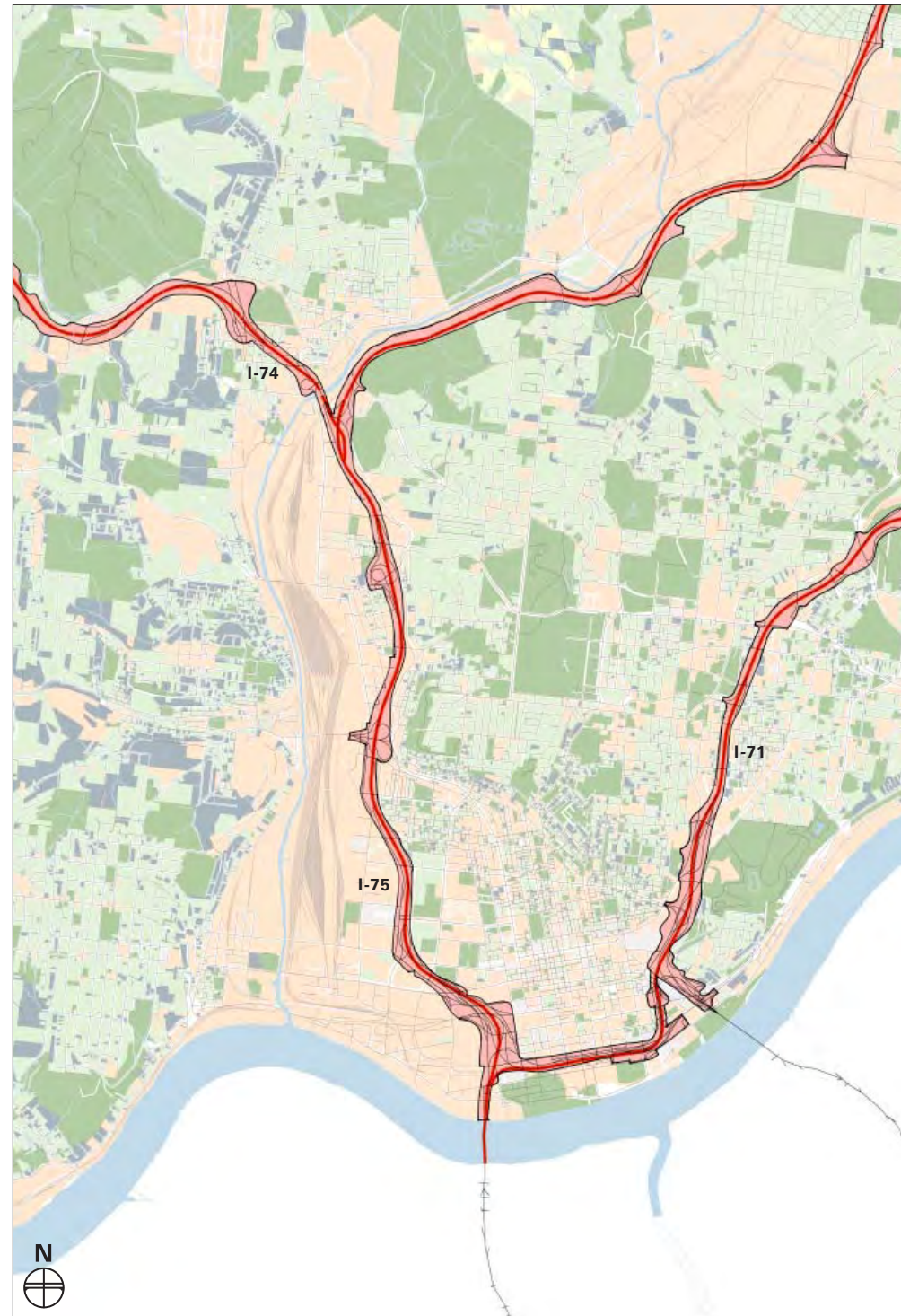
with art deco influences in the design of its structure. 6th Street is the final east-west connector that lies closer to the Ohio River, where it provides an important connection between downtown and Price Hill and points further west.

I-75 CORRIDOR

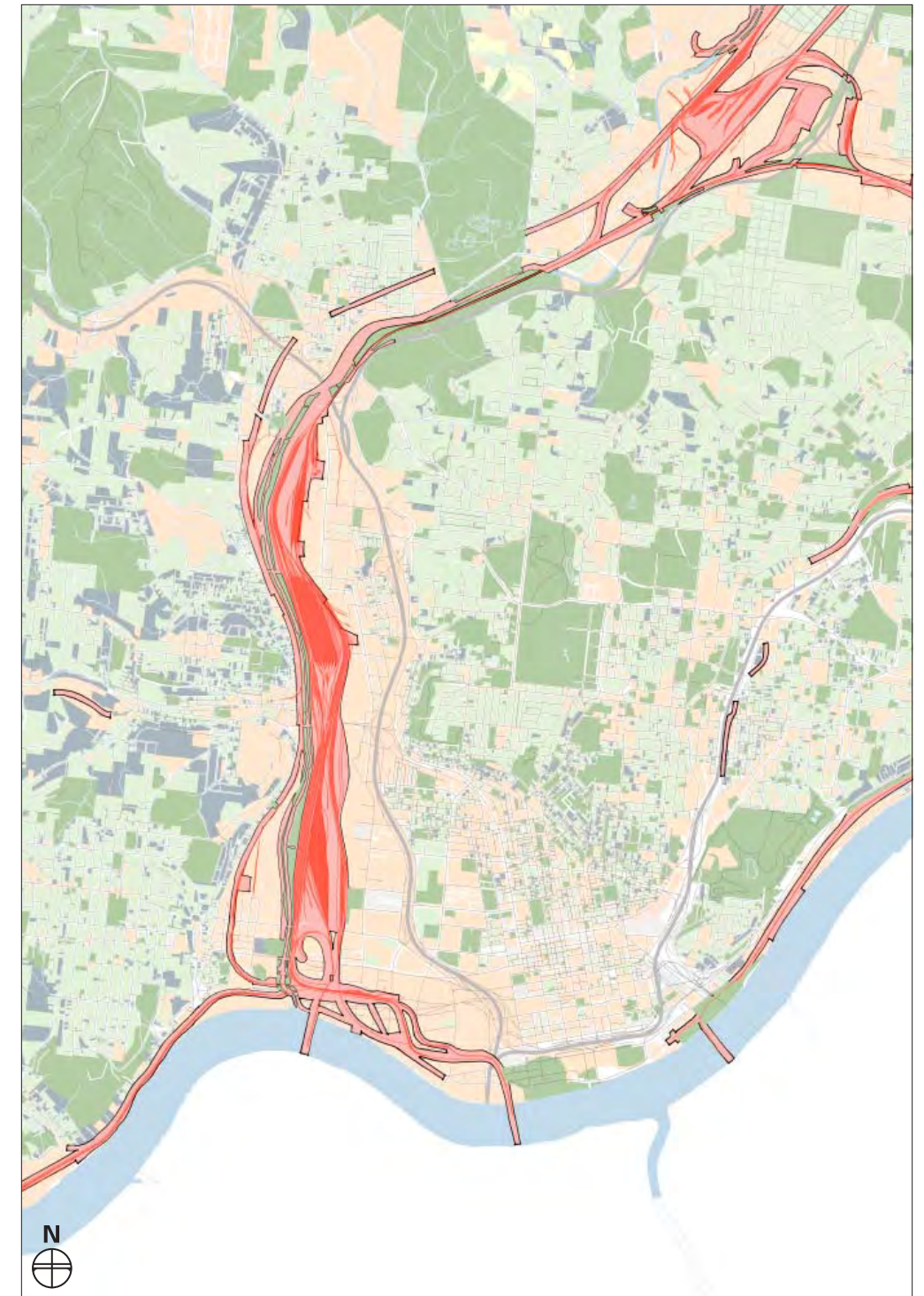
I-75, which stretches from Michigan to Florida, is one of America's most important and heavily travelled north-south interstate highways. In the Cincinnati area, nearly 200,000 vehicles use I-75 daily, including a high percentage of trucks. All parts of the existing facility suffer from congestion, delay, safety, and reliability problems. The current facility was first constructed in the mid-1960s, and has been modestly upgraded and improved over the decades. The Federal Highway Administration is finalizing plans for several billion dollars in needed improvements over the next 10+ years, including establishing "four lane continuity" on the freeway mainline, upgrading interchanges, and providing a new Ohio River crossing. A key FHWA planning assumption in all of this is that the freeway capacity will be augmented in the future by passenger transit investments in the Mill Creek Valley.

RAIL CORRIDOR

The Mill Creek Valley has a rich railroad history. For much of the 20th century, as many as seven major railroads had operations and freight and passenger terminals in the Mill Creek Valley. Today, after modern-era consolidation, two Class I railroads have major operations in the valley. Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS) and CSX Transportation have large switching yards and intermodal operations, as well as through-mainline trackage, that run the length of the valley and consume much of the land area of the valley floor. CSX's Queensgate Yard is one of the largest facilities in its system. NS and CSX are the dominant railroads in the eastern U.S., and the Mill Creek Valley corridor is seen by both as strategically important for efficient freight operations as one of the western most north-south corridors for both systems.



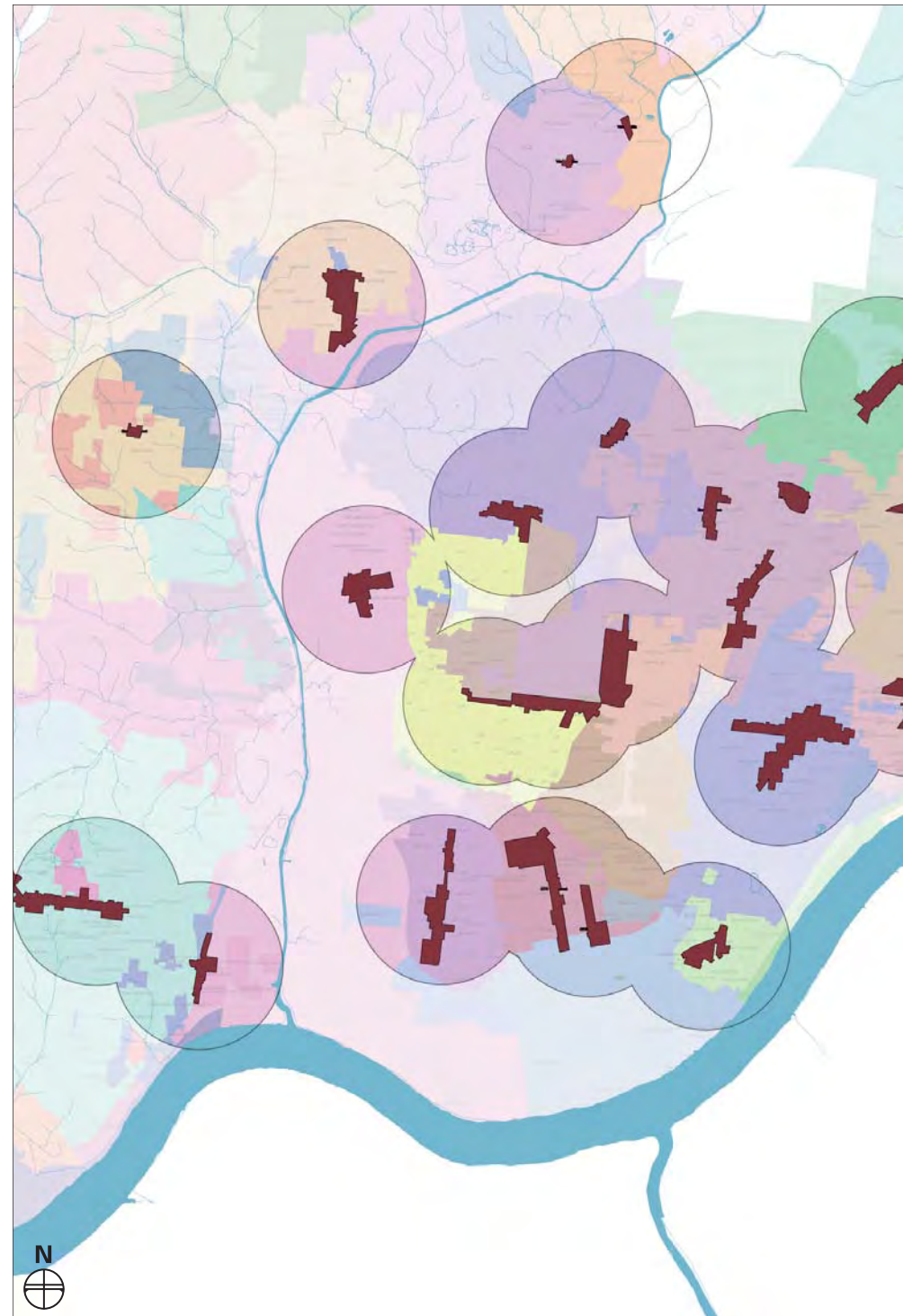
I-75 CORRIDOR
I-75 follows the along the base of the east wall of the Mill Creek Valley in the study area.



RAIL CORRIDOR
Major railroad facilities dominate much of the floor of the Mill Creek Valley.

NEIGHBORHOODS ALONG THE VALLEY

Great cities are composed of unique, varied, and vibrant neighborhoods, and Cincinnati is no exception. The vitality of neighborhoods can change over time and although some have seen some decline, the fabric for revived life remains. Connecting these communities to new economic engines such as green jobs in the Valley will be important in bringing them back and sustaining the city. Aiding this 'shrinking city' revival are all the other systems, especially the emerging public transit networks. A return to neighborhood centers that contain a healthy mix of uses will also improve life. The diagram at right shows one half mile walking radii to indicate walkability between centers.



NEIGHBORHOODS AND THEIR CORES

Cincinnati's neighborhood cores were built as walkable nodes and their adjacencies create an important network to support thriving communities. Circles indicate a half mile radius (ten minute walk) from neighborhood cores.

Environmental Analysis



A section of channelized Mill Creek. One can easily imagine returning the banks to a natural edge, creating wetlands to slow stormwater velocity meanwhile naturally treating it before reaching the Creek. Naturally occurring vegetation is currently a maintenance problem for the City but could become part of the solution if allowed to flourish.

MILL CREEK VALLEY IS AN IMPORTANT open space system since it physically defines the western and central portions of the city. In fact, Mill Creek is part of the gateway experience into Cincinnati for those travelling southbound on I-75. More importantly, Lower Mill Creek Valley has become a divider, a separation between communities with few points to connect across. It is time to break down those barriers where possible and reconnect communities, districts, and people back together in a way that orients future development along the Mill Creek and renews existing communities throughout the valley.

The Valley is defined by three primary attributes – its geology, hydrology, and ecology. The geology of the Mill Creek Valley is defined by its steep side slopes, most of which were formed thousands of years ago during the last glacial period. Many of these sloped areas remain undeveloped today, although homes have been built along portions on the easterly side of the valley. The hydrology of the valley consists of the Mill Creek drainage corridor and all its adjoining tributaries. The original drainage course of the Mill Creek has been modified to deal with urban drainage, transportation and development. Concrete channels and other flood control devices throughout the valley have changed the nature of the ecology that once existed along the creek. According to the City Park Board, much of the riparian corridor has the lowest percentage of tree canopy in the city. Additionally, in many areas the floodplain is fully developed, increasing expected property damages from future flood events.

The illustrative diagram on the following page shows the existing floodplain and drainage course of the Mill Creek. In some areas you can see linear segments of the creek which are indications of existing flood control efforts. In other segments of the creek you can see more

irregular and inconsistent shapes that represent areas of naturalized landscapes. These areas remain undeveloped and un-channelized for a variety of reasons. Upon closer examination of the floodplain, especially near the Hopple interchange, it appears that there is a fair amount of natural edge on the western shore of the Mill Creek connected together. It forms a natural sanctuary along its entire length from the north of the MSD treatment facility to the Northside community.

Moreover, MSD has been working on a plan to separate the sewer and storm drainage systems throughout the city. In most cases, the storm drainage system will eventually outfall into Mill Creek. This can become an opportunity to harness, filter and re-use the water for amenities, wetland parks and open spaces - a sustainable, natural filtration system that requires no power to operate. Naturalized sections of the Mill Creek could be improved in conjunction with MSD's plan so that water may be stored in the soft naturalized areas as long as other improvements were made in the floodplain.

Finally, during our analysis of the valley we determined that there are four sub-systems that represent the entire Mill Creek. On the following pages, we've categorized these as Waterway, Natural, Park, and Circulation Systems. These categories allow us to clearly identify the issues and opportunities associated with each.

WATERWAYS

Floodplain

Issue: Irregular hydrology in this heavily urbanized watershed, coupled with a lack of riparian vegetation and steep channelized banks (both native and concrete) cause the water to increase in velocity during storm events and the flooding to increase in areas with smaller banks.

Opportunity: Remove channelized banks and create softer edges to detain and slow stormwater flow preventing downstream flooding and stream channel erosion. These new edges could serve as wetlands with potential for trails and passive recreation.

Combined Sewer Outflows (CSOs)

Issue: Over 20 combined sewer outflows cause both sewage and stormwater to pour into Mill Creek when the system is over capacity. As illustrated by the scale of the purple dots, the problem is most severe in several northern focus areas including Mitchell Avenue, Northside/South Cumminsville and Camp Washington.

Opportunity: Target large scale CSOs along Mill Creek corridor for redesign to serve as stormwater detention/retention, reducing the peak stormwater run-off. These efforts could combine with Parks and the developing Mill Creek Greenway Trail to create open space along Mill Creek. Restore natural drainage systems.

Tributaries and Sub-Water Basins

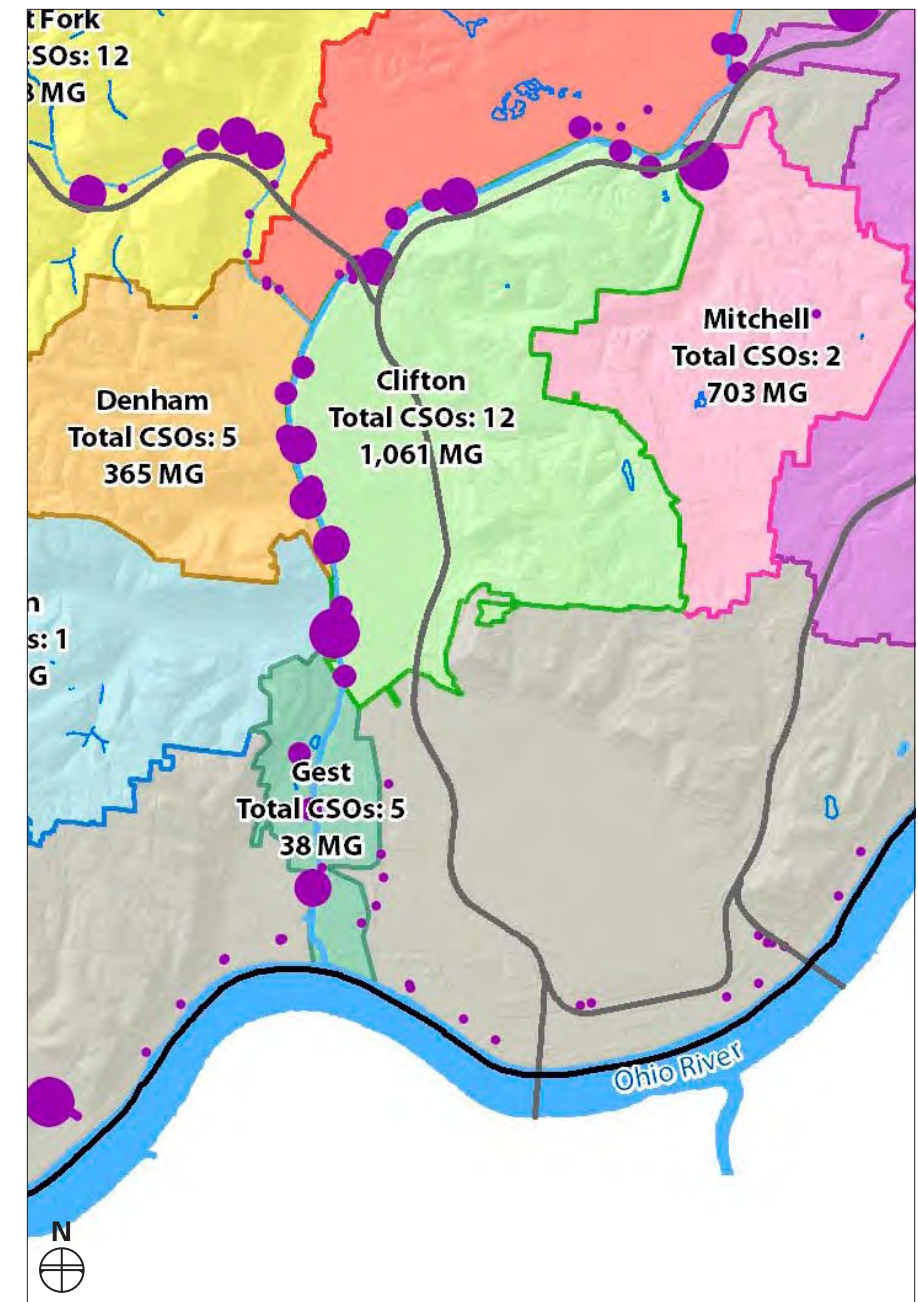
Issue: Many tributaries no longer exist as natural areas because piped storm and sewer systems were constructed for development and flood control.

Opportunity: Where possible, restore the tributaries back to a natural state to serve as amenities and open spaces for neighborhoods and commercial centers while recreating habitat.



FLOODPLAIN MAP

The thin lines of blue along Mill Creek indicate areas that have been channelized to reduce flooding, but in fact wider areas, when treated correctly, would do more for flooding problems.



CSO LOCATIONS

The scale of purple dots indicates the intensity of the problem at each CSO location.

Courtesy of Human Nature, Inc.

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NATURAL SYSTEMS

Wetlands and Riparian Areas

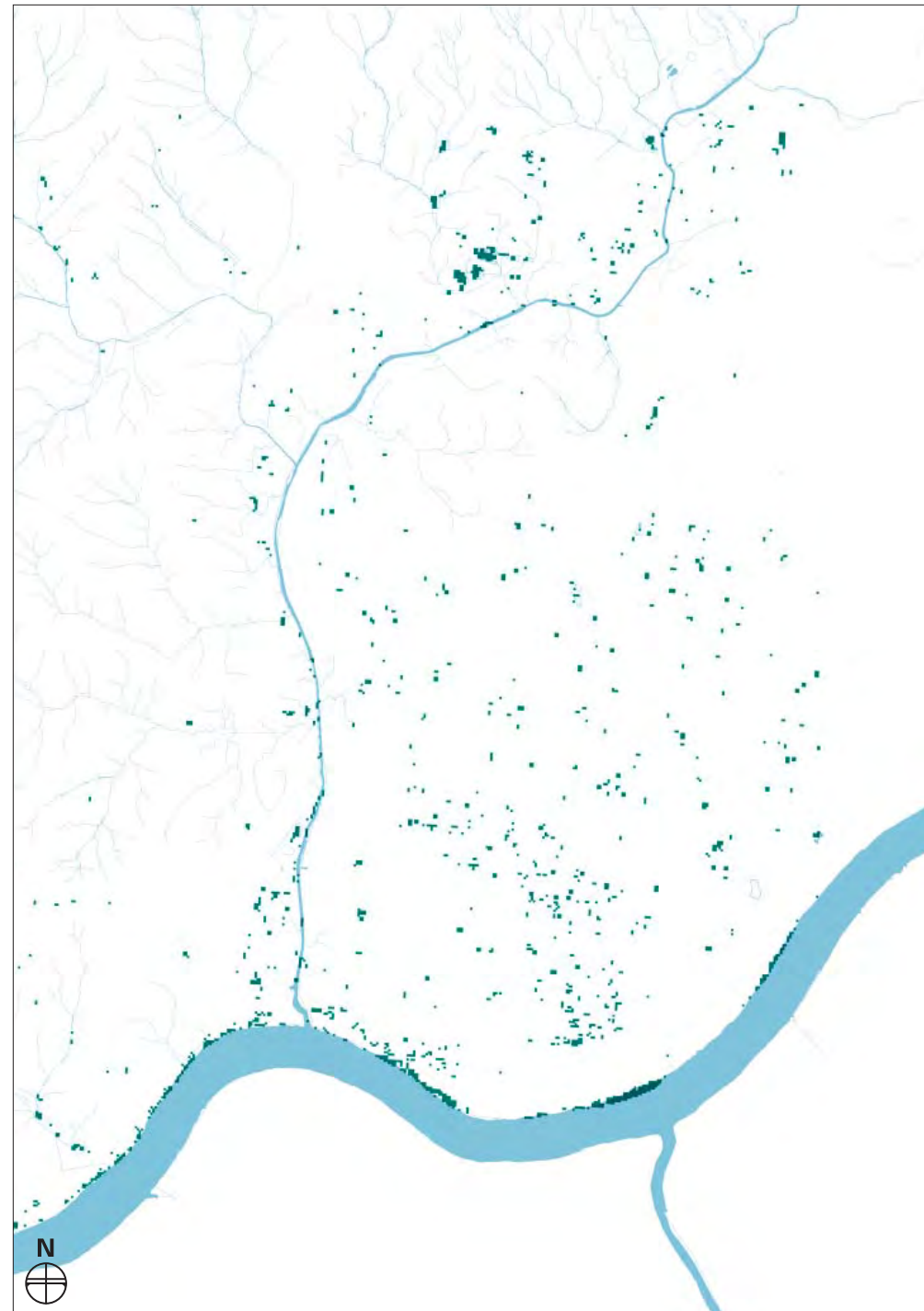
Issue: The presence of water in the Mill Creek Valley has supported wetlands for centuries. Wetlands are one of the most productive and ecologically diverse environments we have on this planet and their environmental and visual benefits are important to preserve. Over time the impact of pollution, development, flood mitigation, and severed tributaries have changed the wetlands that once existed in this valley. However, as the diagram illustrates, there are still many small wetland areas throughout the valley. Proof of this became evident to a group of citizens in the Northside community who did some field surveying and discovered pockets of highly valuable and functioning wetlands along the Mill Creek.

Opportunity: There's little doubt that other valuable wetland habitats exist along the Mill Creek. Every attempt to survey and map them should be made so this important ecological environment can be protected and enhanced as flood storage, open space, parks, wildlife habitat, water quality improvement, and development improvements are being conceptualized.

Vegetation

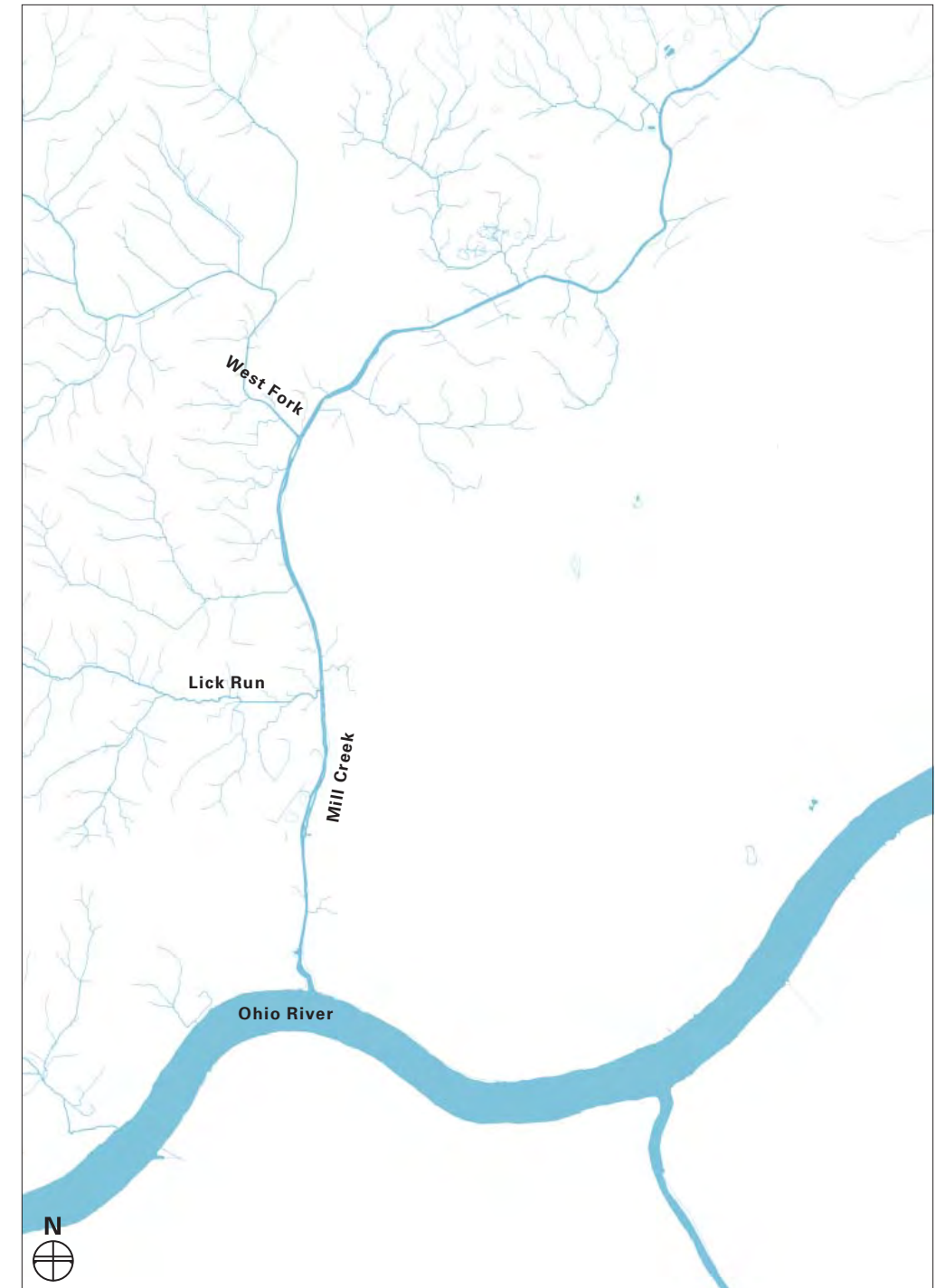
Issue: Although large portions of the Mill Creek riparian corridor suffer from deterioration there are still a variety of ecosystems along its shores. Principally, the ecologies are water dependant and are constantly in a state of transition due to flood events, previous contamination from industrial pollution, and ongoing impacts by people.

Opportunity: Create more environmentally friendly flood damage reduction, restore the riparian ecologies in key areas and prevent additional pollution from contaminating the Mill Creek Valley. Additionally, support through funding and collaboration with the Mill Creek Restoration Project (or other entity) could support the ownership and management of the improvements and upkeep of the Mill Creek Greenway and Trail.



WETLANDS

Small pockets of wetlands can be seen throughout the valley.



TRIBUTARIES

Tributaries to the Mill Creek naturally drain stormwater. Some of these tributaries are not visible today as they are piped underground.

PARK SYSTEMS

Wooded Areas and Slopes

Issue: Slopes must be stabilized and protected against future development so the wooded areas that visually define the edge of the Mill Creek Valley can be preserved.

Opportunity: Consider the wooded slope areas for conservation easements or publicly dedicated lands that may be preserved as forest. Create pedestrian and hiking trails that would connect the neighborhoods above the valley with the Mill Creek Greenway.

Parks (passive)

Issue: There is no continuous green spine or pedestrian trail along the Mill Creek linking the Ohio River with communities to the north in the valley.

Opportunity: Help the Mill Creek Restoration Project (and others) fulfill its vision by addressing ownership, budgeting and long term management issues associated with trails and ecological improvements.

Recreation (active)

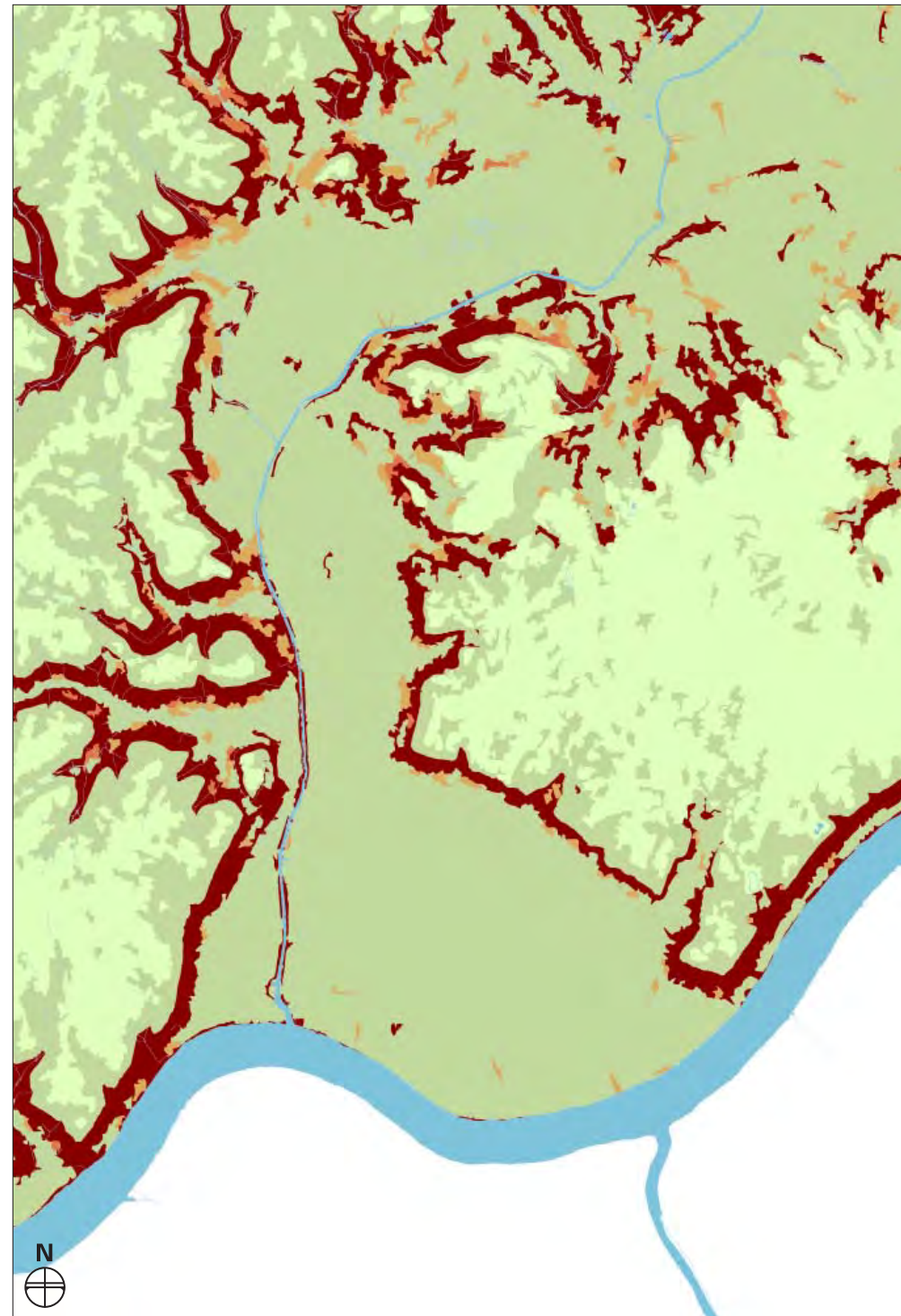
Issue: Active sports fields are not adequate in certain areas of the valley.

Opportunity: Create new ball fields as part of a flood damage reduction and stormwater detention requirement, similar to those along the West Fork near the Beekman interchange.

Public vs. Private

Issue: The City is facing a budget crisis and there are limited funds for new parks and recreation facilities.

Opportunity: Create a community-based effort to clean up existing fields and construct new pocket parks, kid's play areas, community gardens, farms, etc. by enlisting the sponsorship of major companies in Cincinnati like Macy's and Procter & Gamble.



SLOPES

Slopes at the edge of the valley floor are steep (indicated in red) and are clearly defined by stream corridors.



PARKS, RECREATION AND WOODED AREAS

When taken together, parks, recreation and wooded areas create a compelling open space plan but lack strong connectivity. A green Mill Creek is the key to doing this at the regional scale.

CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

Trails

Issue: There are very few dedicated and improved trails that connect neighborhoods to the Mill Creek and to each other via the Mill Creek.

Opportunity: Utilize City-owned lands, vacated railroad corridors, and utility easements to create trails from neighborhoods to the creek. Additionally, work with flood control authorities and property owners to create a continuous trail along the Mill Creek.

Bike Routes and Lanes

Issue: The City must ensure that safe and convenient bike routes are accommodated along the major east-west street corridors like Hopple Street/MLK, Western Hills Viaduct, 8th Street and 6th Street.

Opportunity: A design for bike lanes must be coordinated between the City public works department, ODOT, DOTE, and neighborhoods.

Parkways and Boulevards

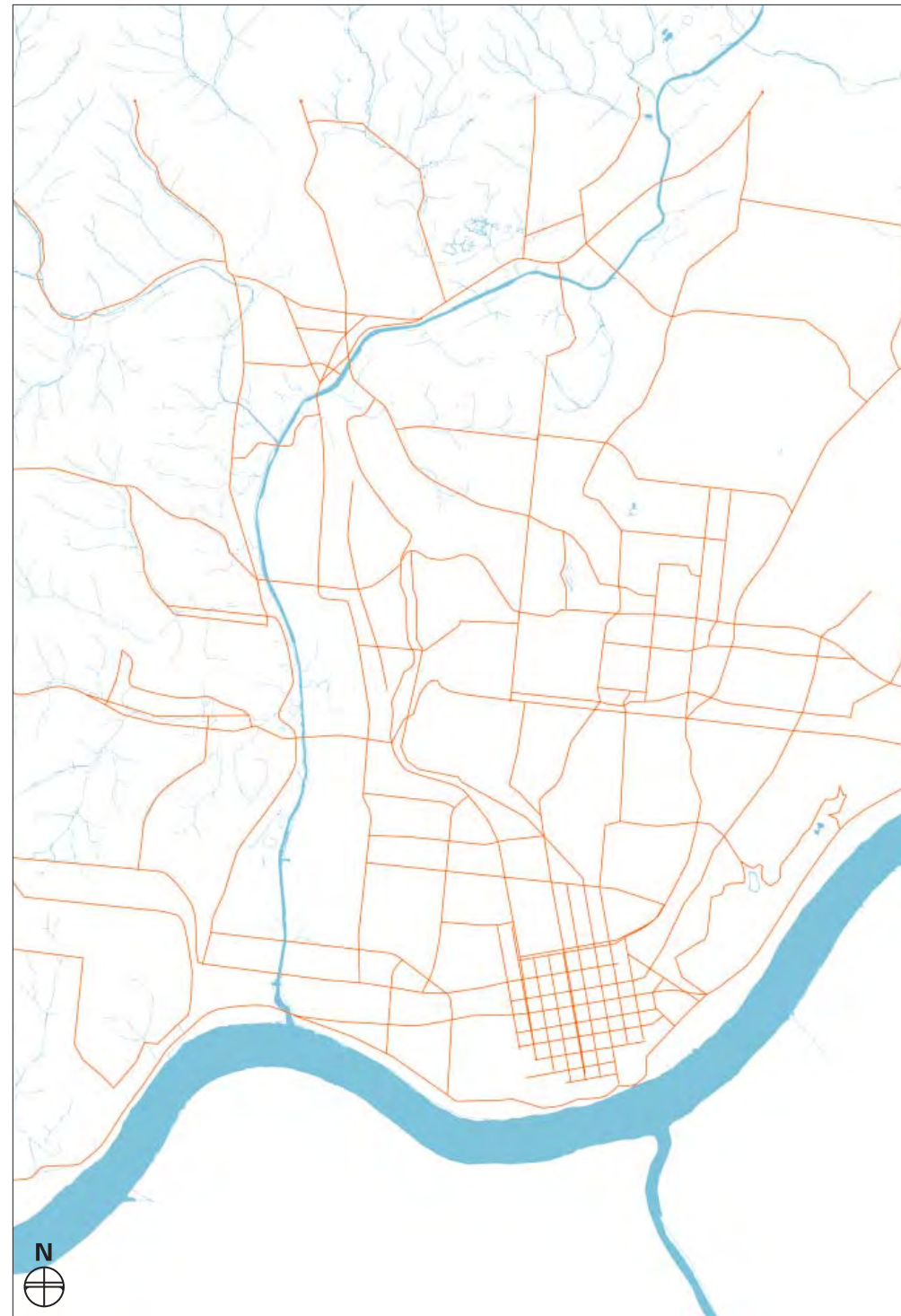
Issue: The historic parkways of Mitchell Avenue, Hopple Street/MLK, Western Hills Viaduct, and 6th Street should be redesigned as such to include appropriate right-of-ways that can accommodate gracious streetscapes, medians, bike lanes, detached pedestrian sidewalks, and bioswales that promote sustainable design practices.

Opportunity: A design for parkways and boulevards must be coordinated between the City's public works department, parks department, ODOT, DOTE, and neighborhoods.

I-75

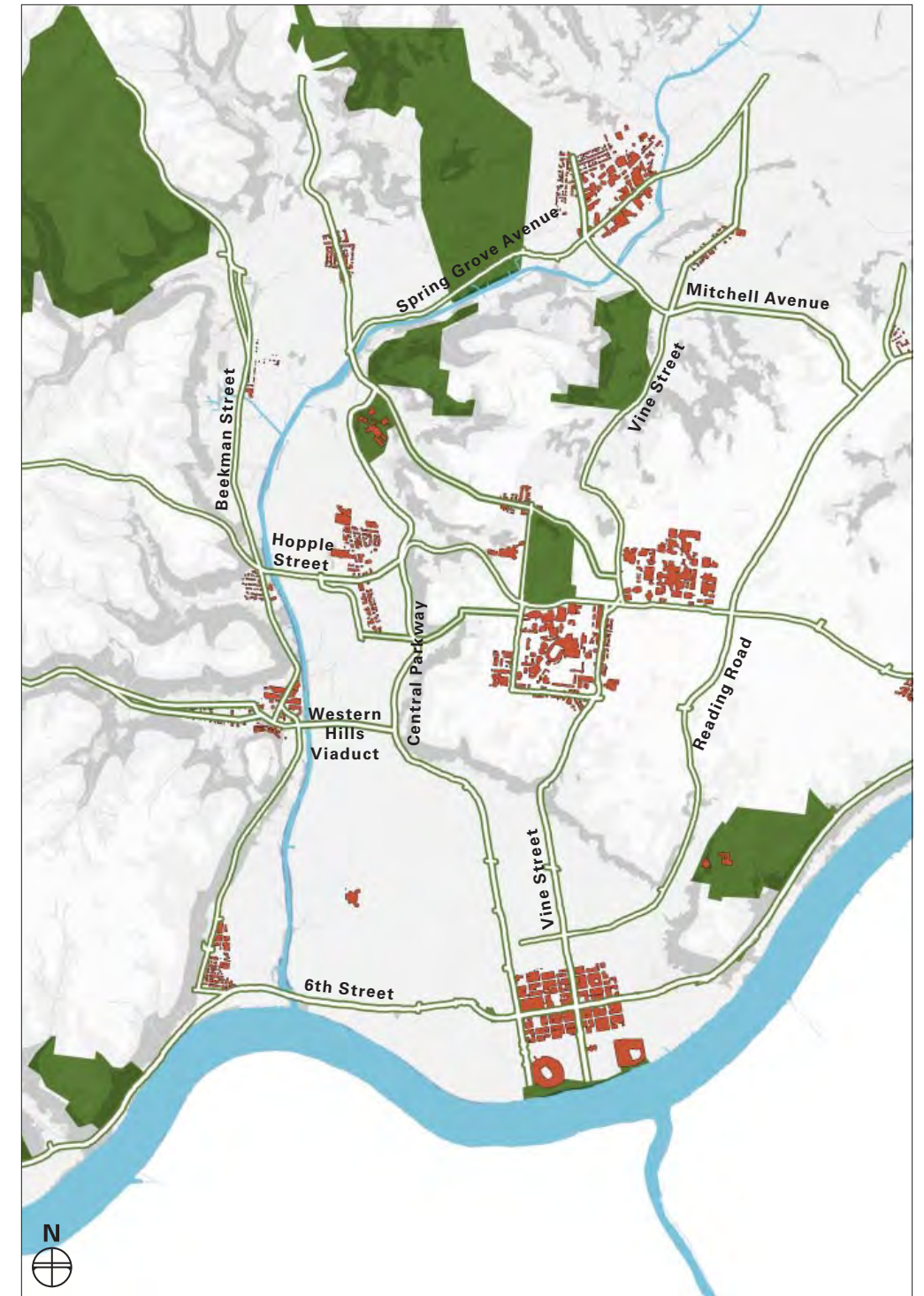
Issue: I-75 is a barrier for pedestrian circulation providing limited crossings that are uncomfortable and unsafe for pedestrians.

Opportunity: Create a garden highway with pedestrian friendly crossings at interchanges and other pedestrian bridges by reconfiguring and softening the overpasses to add more streetscape elements (plantings, sidewalks) and less pavement.



BIKE ROUTES AND LANES

Despite the hilly terrain of the city, on street bike lanes and trails can be created in ways to improve the safety of human-powered transportation (i.e. walking and bicycling).



PARKWAYS AND BOULEVARDS

Improving the city's parkways and boulevards will provide for better and more intuitive connections throughout the city.

Enhanced Valley, Revived City

KEY INITIATIVES:

- » Plan with a vision for future generations
- » Improve internal mobility within the city
- » Restore the urban ecology as a means for improving the quality of life
- » Build on the rich heritage and unique communities that exist today
- » Capitalize on universities and businesses and position them as catalysts for economic growth

CINCINNATI HAS A UNIQUE and rare opportunity to coordinate a series of major infrastructure investments to dramatically transform the future of the Lower Mill Creek Valley. It is tempting to see each infrastructure initiative as an independent project with a limited scope and set of objectives. It is harder to think outside the box, to understand the impact of each investment in infrastructure as a critical piece of an integrated remaking of the valley. Each project should be viewed as a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to the quality of life for future generations. Exploring alternatives that challenge traditional thinking about project scope, constraints and opportunities can be difficult. Decisions that now may be expedient and politically correct may be strategically wrong in the long run. This study illustrates methods for integrating future improvements to transportation, stormwater and sanitary facilities, and natural systems to leverage private investment in redevelopment. The massive investments by ODOT, MSD, and the City should be positioned to regenerate the urban core of the Cincinnati region to the greatest extent possible. This will require that each scope of work accommodate the needs of others. With this inclusive approach, the region will recognize savings by combining uses and maximizing connectivity.

The valley is filled with several regional systems that coexist side by side and often compete with each other. These systems include interstate highways, railroads, waterways, open space, arterial roads, and human inhabitation. Above and beneath these systems are utilities including sewers, electricity, gas, communications, and water.

Over the last century, the “winners” have been the railroads and the interstate. The growth of the railroads has been essential to the economic prosperity of Cincinnati but to accommodate the vast rail yards, the Mill Creek was moved and channelized in sections. The

interstate has been equally critical to the city and region, but created a new barrier that isolates and divides communities and limits local connectivity in favor of regional and national access.

The “losers” have been the waterways, open space, vegetation/trees, and local connections. The Mill Creek has received little respect and has not been viewed as a major habitat and asset for people to enjoy. Tributaries have been piped and portions of the Mill Creek are inaccessible; open space is more often leftover land that has no champion; and local transit is now limited to bus service. Local and arterial streets were disrupted by the interstate, impacting several communities. The interstate and rail lines in the valley have been a barrier to trails and pedestrians rather than a connector.

The following pages look at each of these important valley-wide systems and propose ideas that will bring these systems into equilibrium, accommodate their needs, and recommend strategies for coexisting to create a new framework for urban regeneration.



I-75 Improvements

Interstate 75 is one of the main north-south transportation corridors in the United States. In Cincinnati, I-75 follows the Mill Creek Valley and more or less forms the central north-south axis of the City's urbanized area, just skirting the west edge of the central business district. The physical combination of the Mill Creek Valley, the interstate highway, rail lines and yards, and various public and private utilities centrally bifurcates the metropolitan area, and is a significant consideration in all aspects of urban planning.

ODOT and the Federal Highway Administration, in concert with the City and local stakeholders, is undertaking a major safety and capacity upgrade and improvement of I-75, in logical construction segments, over the next decade. Total cost for the program, including a new Ohio River crossing and needed improvements in Kentucky, is expected to total \$3.5 billion. Of this amount, more than \$1.2 billion in freeway system improvements is planned for the Revive Cincinnati study areas, extending from the Mitchell Avenue interchange south to the Ohio River. In general, the FHWA work program will add at least one through-lane of capacity to the freeway continuity, upgrade all interchanges and structures, and make related ancillary improvements to the connecting roadway network.

The Revive Cincinnati study area focuses on four interchanges as central nodes of enhanced access and mobility and urban redevelopment. The Mitchell Avenue interchange is currently a conventional diamond interchange, and is proposed to be reconfigured as a tight diamond layout. The existing I-74/I-75 interchange combines directional, distributed diamond and irregular local ramps in a complex mix to serve the confluence of two interstates and two local communities; the proposed reconfiguration eases directional ramp geometrics, removes irregular local ramps, and maintains a distributed

diamond connection for the South Cumminsville and Northside communities. The existing Hopple Street interchange, which combines partial cloverleaf, diamond and trumpet design elements and is complicated by adjacent intersections, is planned to be replaced by a simplified design that is principally a diamond in basis, and that will grade-separate the Central Parkway intersection. Most complex of all is the Queensgate Highway Network, which currently provides access among I-75 and I-71, US 50, and a series of local arterials using multi-level directional ramps, spread diamond interchanges, cloverleaf and trumpet elements and collector-distributor roadways nested in the freeway cross-section. The conceptual plan for Queensgate is to improve and expand capacity along the lines of the current system design applying modern geometry and safety standards.

The first three interchange areas are well developed in terms of intended design execution in the ODOT/FHWA project development process. The Queensgate area is less far along in the development process, and is very much tied to decisions surrounding the Brent Spence Bridge and the Ohio River crossing.

Further expansion on the 50-year recommendations are presented in the Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix, pages 60-72, including actions and strategies for a starting point in establishing a "greener" and more sustainable corridor as part of FHWA's I-75 investment program. At the neighborhood level, recommendations are summarized on pages 97-105 of the Appendix.



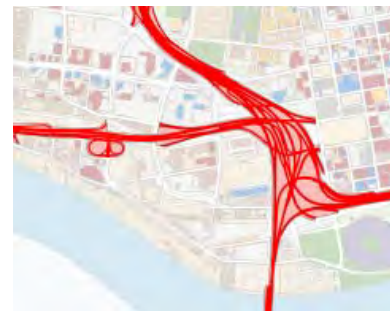
ODOT's Proposed Mitchell Avenue interchange



ODOT's Proposed Hopple Street interchange



ODOT's Proposed I-74/I-75 interchange



ODOT's Conceptual Queensgate Highway Network

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:

- » Refine design of interchanges and access networks for best fit with community context, within FHWA project development work program limits.
- » Embrace and integrate DOT/HUD/EPA Sustainable Communities principles, and examine opportunities both within right of way and without.
- » Integrate Green Highways and similar best practices where practicable in project delivery over time.
- » Consider context of change in assumptions driving key decisions, and reconcile under NEPA.
- » Target and develop nationally identifiable gateway and aesthetic opportunities along the corridor.

Rail Improvements

Seven major railroads once served the City of Cincinnati, mostly via tracks and terminals (both freight and passenger) that were located in and along the Mill Creek Valley. The Revive Cincinnati study area today is characterized in large part by the considerable remnants of that rail history, primarily the facilities and operations of two Class I railroads, CSX and NS, that have major assets that stretch along the length of the Mill Creek Valley parallel to I-75. The Indiana and Ohio Railway, a short-haul line, is also a significant operator in the valley. NS and CSX are the largest rail freight operators in the eastern US, and the Mill Creek corridor is one of the most important north-south connections for both railroads. The capacity restrictions to freight operations in the valley are notorious, and the CSX and NS operate in the most restricted sections (south of Spring Grove Village) under a unique joint operating agreement. Both railroads have significant switching, train makeup, maintenance, and intermodal (truck freight) operations in the area south of the I-74/I-75 interchange. CSX's Queensgate Yard is one of the largest yards on the CSX system.

Issues and opportunities surrounding rail improvements and larger freight considerations are further discussed the Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix, pages 22-31 and 94-96.



NS Gest Street Yard with Union Terminal in background



Courtesy of Larry Stulz

CSX Queensgate Yard

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:

- » Develop next-generation urban intermodal port function with freight and commerce access across multiple modes: rail, truck, barge
- » Target perimeter enhancements to aid intermodal access and efficiency (truck access, land uses, shared facilities).
- » Make best use of rail sidings and connected facilities for "distributed port" function.
- » Facilitate rail capacity enhancements (fourth main), but be creative in planning and execution for best net result.

Transit Alignments

In the first half of the twentieth century, the entire Revive Cincinnati study area was served by a robust and well-connected network of streetcars on virtually every major arterial roadway, providing interconnections with passenger rail and interurban lines, as well as packets and ferries on the Ohio River. Today, an evolving bus network runs over most of the same routes once served by streetcars. Part of the strategy established by FHWA for making transportation improvements in the I-75 corridor includes using transit, over the long-term, to augment needed highway capacity investments. While a primary focus has been on rail transit in this strategy, a truly effective solution will necessarily include a range of alternative mode investments, including an effective bike network, and can logically embrace higher speed passenger rail as one part of the system. (Further expansion on transit recommendations is provided in the Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix, pages 81-94).

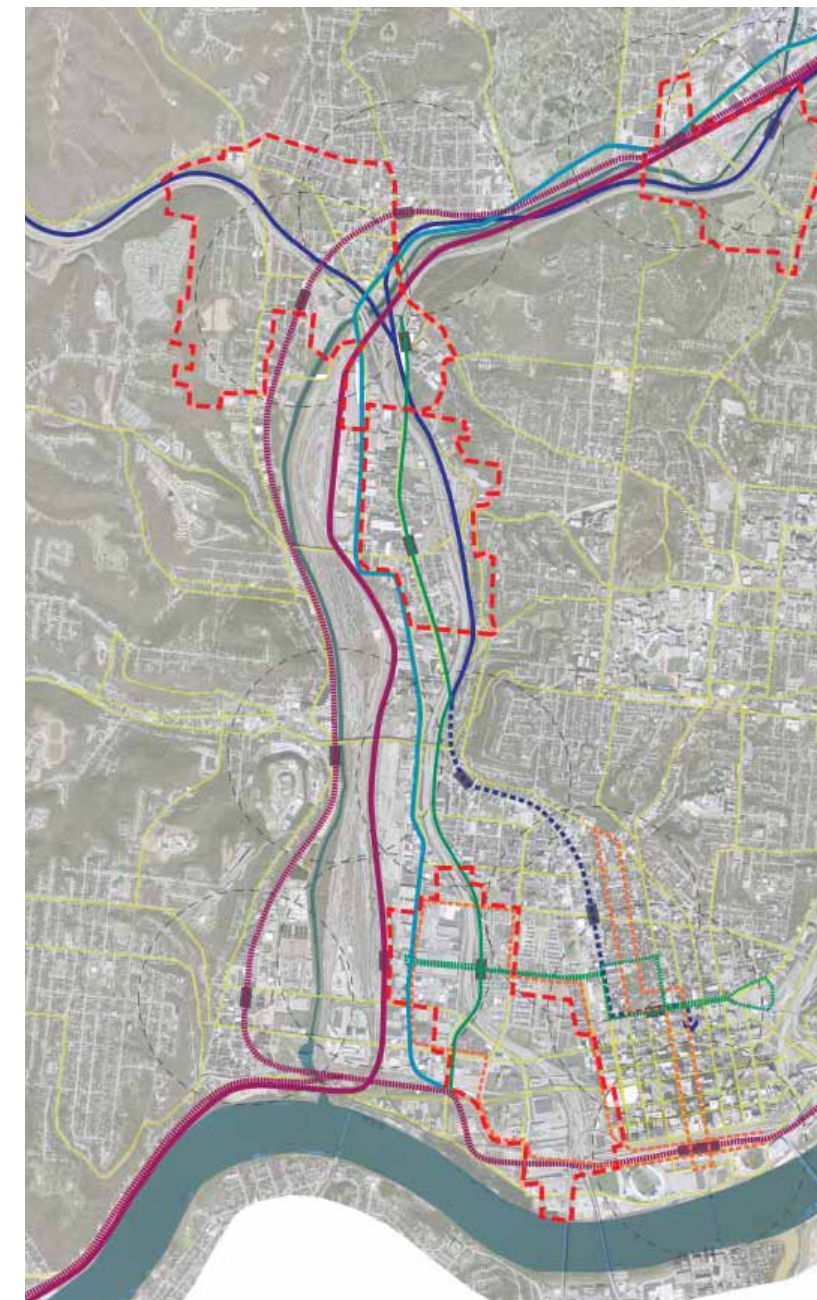


Community redevelopment efforts, such as the American Can building project in Northside, would benefit from transit service on the west side of the Mill Creek.



Source: FHWA and MnDOT, D Gonzales

Express bus or bus rapid transit (BRT) on the new freeway shoulder, such as this operation on I-35 in Minneapolis, could provide a practical platform for initiating major new transit capacity in the I-75 corridor.



- MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:**
- » Reestablish passenger rail service in the Mill Creek Valley to Union Terminal-near, but examine a full range of options for location and delivery that are effective solutions for freight operations as well.
 - » Embrace and prepare for different transit modes and locations for different needs over time (including bus rapid transit/BRT, light rail transit/LRT, and variations on commuter rail).
 - » Examine ways to refine and optimize planned BRT/LRT alignment and service along the I-75 right-of-way (the City DOTE's preferred transit plan)
 - » In concert with up-system freight and/or passenger rail investments, establish rail transit or BRT service on or along the CSX trackage/old B&O right-of-way from the Second Street transit center to the city neighborhoods of the Mill Creek Valley; at minimum, reestablish, protect and preserve the corridor for alternative transportation (transit or railway) function.
 - » Consider possible co-location of commuter rail and start up passenger rail service spines in a phased implementation approach.

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Open Space Improvements



Open Space Frameworks Plan

Given the many efforts underway for Mill Creek, the Open Space Improvements of this report strive to bring together all of the various ideas, goals and plans that have been already prepared for the Mill Creek Valley by being the “glue” that binds everything together. Three important partners, MSD, ODOT, and the Mill Creek Restoration Project have and are continuing to promote improvements in the valley. Since MSD has funding to correct their CSO issue and ODOT is well underway with their I-75 highway improvements, the goals and recommendations of this report will closely align with their current plans but seek to expand them where possible.

Based on numerous discussions with the community groups and organizations, the following open space design principles were established:

- 1 Waterways
 - a Propose opportunities for MSD to separate their storm and sewer strategically so water can be used to create new naturalized landscapes such as ponds, and/or wetland, and/or park basins (in conjunction with the Parks Department and Mill Creek Restoration Project) in the West Fork or Mill Creek Valley.
- 2 Natural Systems
 - a Identify under-utilized or undeveloped private land in the valley that could become a conservation easement for property owners who may not have any near term viable options for development or sale of their land. Ensure that tax credit or rebate programs exist to make conservation easements more appealing.

- HIGHWAY
- PARKWAYS & BOULEVARDS
- GREENWAY
- HIGHWAY “GARDEN”
- - - TRAILS
- PROPOSED PARK

- b Reduce the heat island effect of the Mill Creek Valley, specifically Queensgate area by 20% by creating a street tree planting program or providing land owners with a tax credit for planting and caring for trees on their property.
 - c Help ODOT and MSD to find ways to commingle their stormwater and water quality obligations in or near the I-75 corridor so integrated and efficient naturalized systems can improve the impervious and visual condition of the corridor.
- 3 Park and Recreation Systems
 - a Park Board, Recreation Commission and Mill Creek Restoration Project to program potential park and greenway improvements in the Mill Creek Valley with recreation, restoration, education, and commerce in mind.
 - b Identify under-utilized or vacant city property in the Mill Creek Valley that may be re-purposed as open space for stormwater storage, habitat creation, park improvements, and energy capture.
- 4 Circulation Systems
 - a Create open space and trail connections between Mill Creek and the adjacent communities of South Cumminsville, Northside, Camp Washington, and Queensgate.
 - b Where possible, create open space and/or trails for land that exists under elevated transportation systems such as highway interchanges, street over-passes, and rail trusses.
 - c Where possible, convert the existing B&O rail corridor into a “rails-to-trails” project. Connect 20 miles of trails together
 - d Ensure that the east-west parkways are improved with the ideas and recommendations of the Kessler Plan and subsequent Centennial Plans.

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:

- 1 Establish a single entity that can own, operate, finance and manage the Mill Creek Greenway area
- 2 Work with MSD to help solve their CSO issue by creating wet ponds, wetlands, etc. as amenities for the communities that live in the Mill Creek Valley
- 3 Enlist corporate sponsorship to aid in fundraising activities to implement the Mill Creek Greenway plan
- 4 Continue encouraging and supporting local groups, citizens, etc. to volunteer for restoration projects along the Mill Creek.
- 5 Collaboration with ODOT, DOTE and MSD to research and construct ways to connect stormwater solutions.

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MSD Strategies

At the same time the FHWA is undertaking a \$3.5 billion upgrade of I-75, Cincinnati MSD is obligated by federal consent decree to address long-standing combined sewer overflow issues in its own \$3 billion wet-weather flow reduction program. Much of MSD's consent decree effort is focused on the Mill Creek drainage, including the four focus areas of the Revive Cincinnati study. MSD's program is working on several fronts to remove or better manage extraneous flow, including removal of storm drainage connections, "daylighting" of natural stream that had been piped and combined with sewer flows in the early urban history of the city, and, where necessary, use of gray infrastructure investments (such as controlled treatment and storage/conveyance structures) to better handle peak flows.

MSD's program efforts are linked to FHWA's I-75 project development, and the future community picture for the four focus areas of the Revive Cincinnati study, on three fronts (see also pages 77- 79 of the Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix):

- 1 Existing MSD assets in ODOT project footprint (such as interceptor and trunk sewers, flow control structures, or maintenance easements)
- 2 Changes to MSD wet weather discharge volume or quality from or within I-75 footprint (direct or indirect highway connections to CSO systems)
- 3 Planned or possible improvements and future assets external to ODOT footprint (including stream daylighting and watershed efforts, future utility corridor connections, 'external' store/treat/discharge sites and other green amenities, and gray infrastructure investments, such as a deep tunnel).

Significant efforts are underway on these fronts by MSD and are being coordinated with and informed by the recommendations for the Revive Cincinnati study in an ongoing exchange.



Much of Cincinnati's wet-weather flow problem is found in numerous small sources, such as this parking area inlet. As communities change for the future, the design template must actively and creatively address correction of these problems in ways that are systemically effective and cost-efficient



MSD has numerous assets that will be affected by the I-75 upgrade project, such as this CSO outlet near Northside/South Cumminsville.

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:

- » Deliver a FHWA I-75 corridor project that embraces both DOT and EPA federal objectives.
- » Identify and remove or manage all elements of interstate corridor drainage that exacerbate MSD's wet-weather flow management mandate, including making best use of public transportation right-of-way for addressing quantity and quality considerations.
- » Develop a manual of low impact development practices to manage and reduce wet weather flow on private property to provide to developers. Create incentives for implementing these practices on private property by providing sewer credits or through cost-sharing, depending on the volume of runoff removed from the system. Incorporate these best management practices into applicable codes.

Community Enhancements

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

All four study areas were isolated to some degree with the construction of I-75 and I-74. Local streets were stubbed off and short trips now require using the interstate as an arterial for local trips. South Cumminsville has never recovered; Colerain Avenue lost connectivity and withered as a main street; and Queensgate was isolated from the downtown with the destruction of most of the West End neighborhood. This reports recommends ways to re-establish connectivity with new above- and below-grade interstate crossings and improved intersections and road geometries.

IMPROVING ACCESS

The City is considering several improvements to arterial roads and intersections. These initiatives are integrated into each study area plan. Alternative transit alignments and station locations are illustrated to encourage protection of these options for future transit design studies. Trails and whole street concepts that welcome pedestrians and cyclists will better connect the communities to the rest of the city.

CREATING OPEN SPACE AMENITIES

Restoration of the Mill Creek and its tributaries as part of a program of stormwater management will create an armature for trails and recreation areas that will greatly improve the quality of life in the valley. Open spaces also have the greater effect of reducing carbon impact of highways when reforested ROW's and new green spaces are planned appropriately. Additionally, managing and mitigating stormwater from highways with pocket parks and rain gardens at interchanges and gateways can reduce a significant amount of stormwater flow per year.



Mitchell Avenue



Northside and South Cumminsville



Hopple Street



Queensgate and the West End

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MITCHELL AVENUE

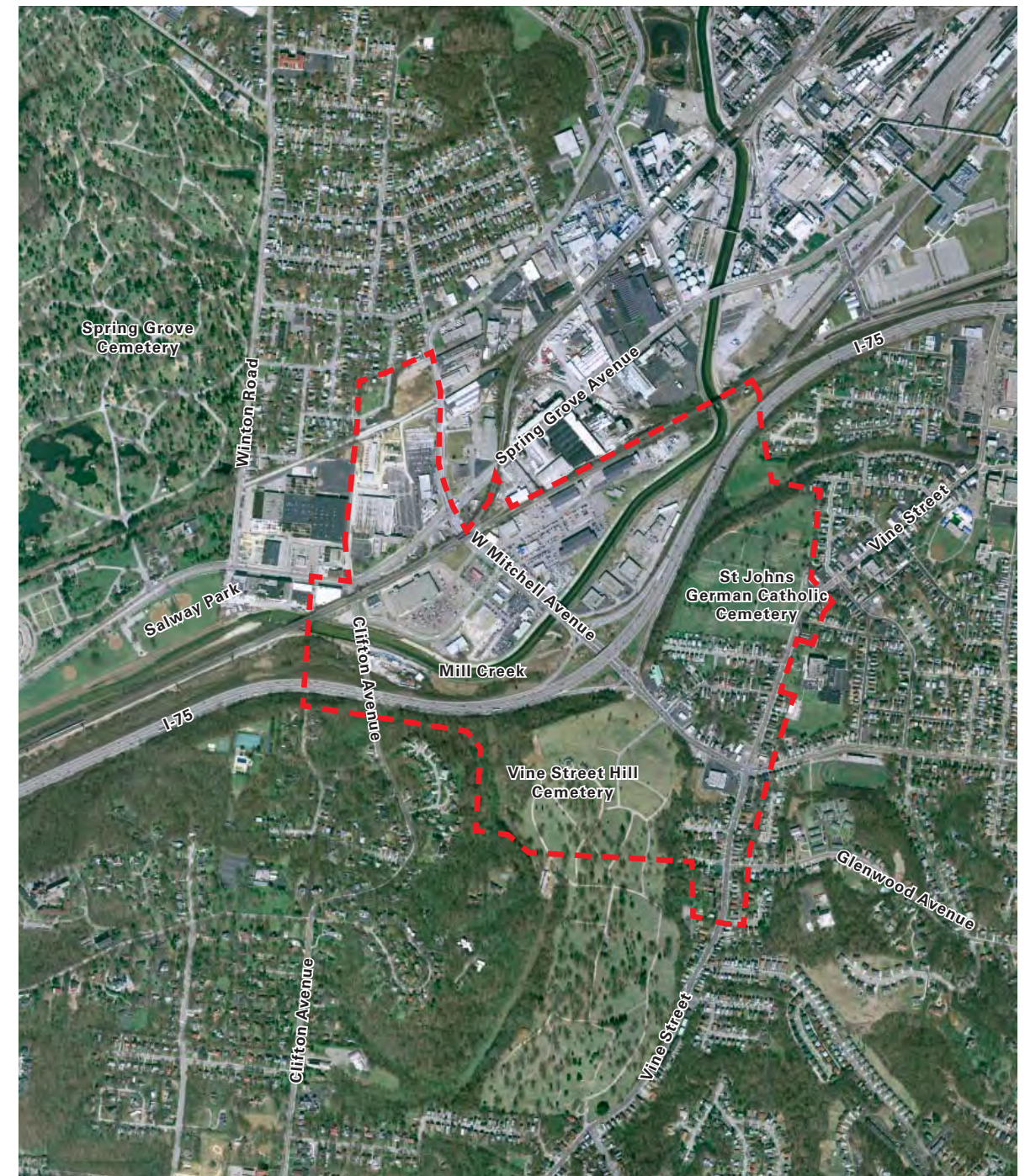
Challenges and Opportunities

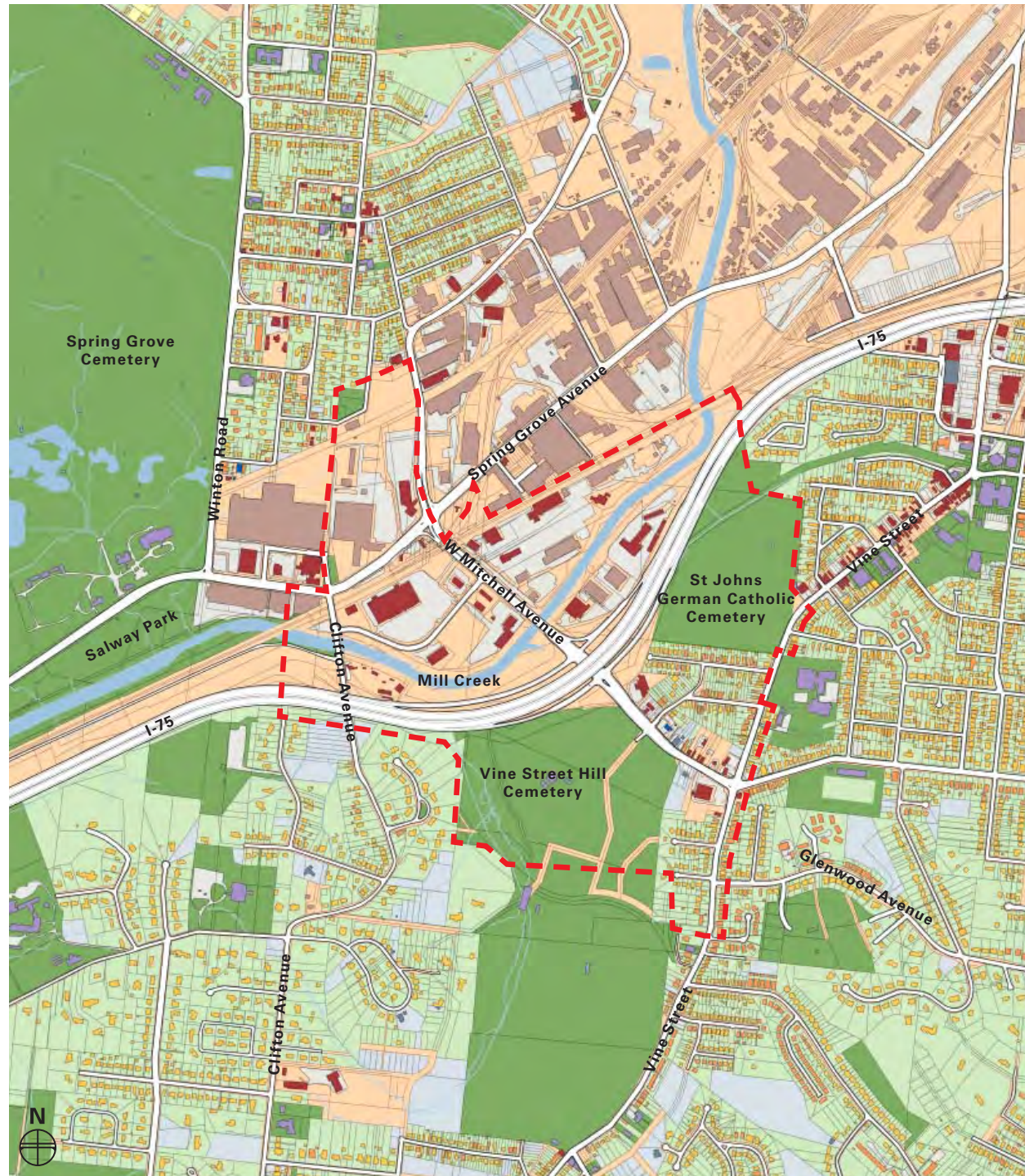
THE MITCHELL AVENUE INTERCHANGE AREA is viewed by many as the primary northern portal into the City of Cincinnati. It is central to several neighborhoods including Spring Grove Village, St. Bernard, Clifton, North Avondale and corporations and institutions including Proctor & Gamble (P&G), Cincinnati Zoo, University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, and several hospitals. In addition, this area enjoys acres of green space preserved by Spring Grove Cemetery, St. Johns Cemetery, Vine Street Hill Cemetery, and Salway Park.

As can be deduced from the varied neighbors mentioned above, there are a vast mix of uses in the Mitchell Avenue area which can be the ingredients for a very successful and sustainable community. Today these pieces struggle to coexist in a complimentary and cohesive way, but with some adjustments in land use and improvements to all forms of mobility, this area can become more.

Many modes of transportation run through this area, all of which serve purposes that are highly used. The I-75 interchange is a popular access point for residents, workers, and visitors to locations within roughly a two mile radius. Vine Street is an important north-south artery starting here and running all the way to downtown. Spring Grove Avenue is a popular route for trucks and bicyclists, while residents use it as a local connector. Mill Creek is slowly being revitalized with multi-use trails that will one day extend the full length down to the Ohio River. Rail lines for freight will remain an important part of the city's economy into the future. New rail lines for commuter and inter-city rail connections are important as well. This document proposes several options for potential alignments.

Harnessing all the best attributes of the Mitchell Avenue interchange area is reasonably conceivable and will turn this community into a very viable and vibrant asset within the larger city.



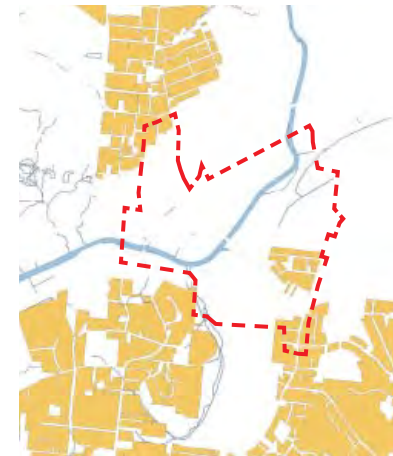


STUDY AREA The Portrait drawing presents a map of the study area with buildings and parcels color coded to designate their current use.

- EXISTING RESIDENTIAL
- EXISTING INSTITUTIONS
- EXISTING COMMERCIAL
- VACANT PROPERTY
- PARKS & OPEN SPACE
- EXISTING INDUSTRIAL



BUILDING FOOTPRINTS
The scale of building footprints in the Mitchell Avenue area clearly describes the mix of uses between residential and industrial. Here, as opposed to the other study areas, development exists right alongside Mill Creek.



RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT
Residential settlements are defined by the topography and other natural features. Also evident when compared to the other uses, this area is predominantly residential.



COMMERCIAL LAND USE
Although small in number, the commercial uses here are successful due to the central location for all nearby neighborhoods.



INDUSTRIAL USES
Industrial uses occupy most of the northeast quadrant of this area. Historically these all used the rail lines as a main source of transport and the creek as a source of power.



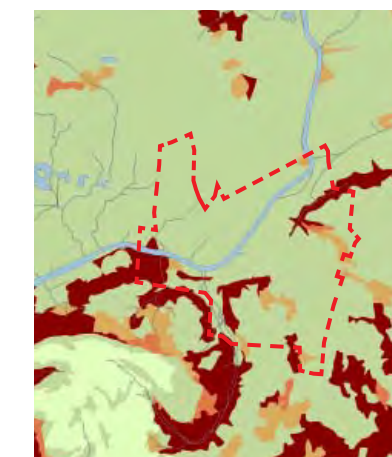
STREETS AND HIGHWAYS
The Mitchell Avenue area is well served by all levels of roads, even though some are over capacity. Mitchell Avenue itself is the primary connector across both I-75 and Mill Creek with Clifton Avenue being a preferred neighborhood level connection.



PARKING LOTS
Parking lots are associated with the commercial and industrial uses. In some cases, especially along Vine Street and Mitchell Avenue, these lots could be seen as opportunities for future development.



PARKS, RECREATION, AND INSTITUTIONS
Green space is plentiful in the Mitchell Avenue area in the form of cemeteries, parks, small recreation areas, and institutional lands. You can also see that Mill Creek is bounded by potentially usable green space through this area.



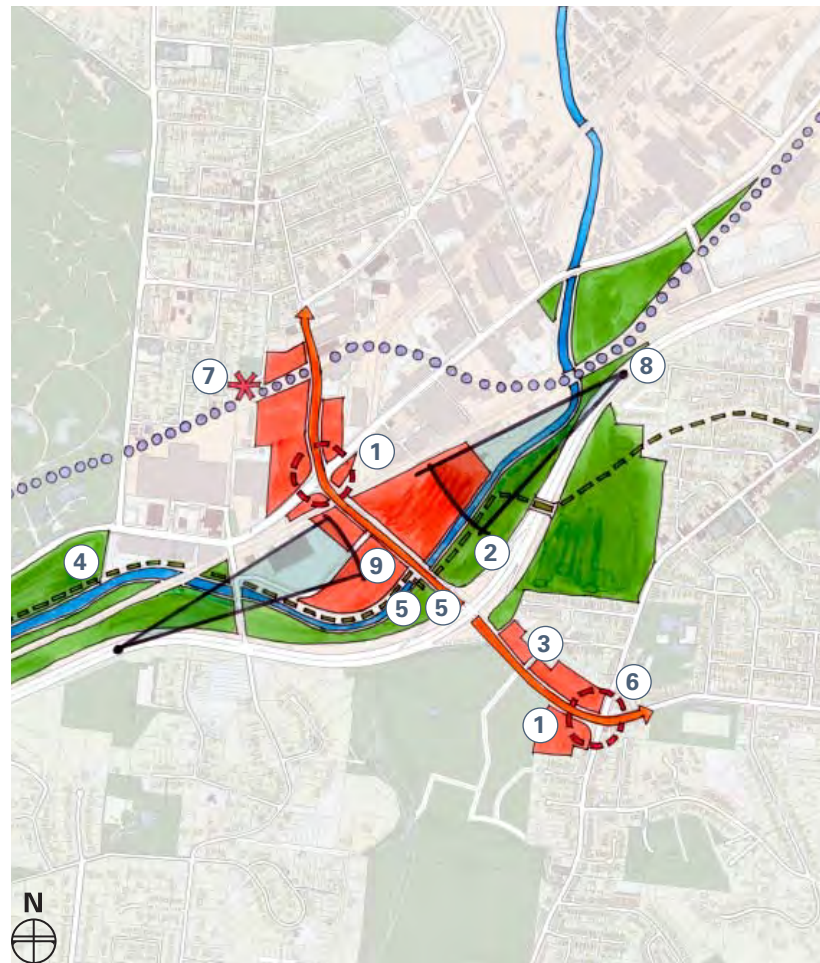
STEEP SLOPES
Topography closely relates to the Parks and Institutions diagram south of Mill Creek indicating the amount of hillside green space. The medium and light green areas are clearly the most gentle slopes allowing for development as seen in the Building Footprints diagram.

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Planning Process

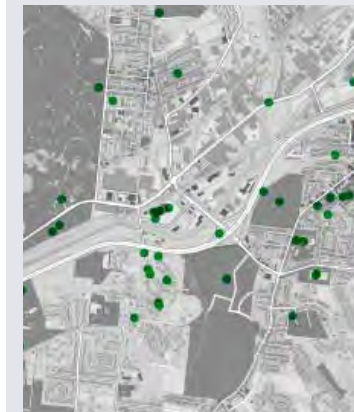
Through the Planning Process the consultant team worked with the steering committee and the general public to identify strengths, weaknesses, and visions for each study area (see the summary at right). Armed with this information and having analyzed and researched various reports and ideas, the team developed the following urban design principles to guide the plan development.

- 1 Create two nodes (Mitchell Avenue & Vine Street, Mitchell Avenue & Spring Grove Avenue)
- 2 Create northern gateway experience
- 3 Mixed-use development – street oriented
- 4 Mill Creek becomes a park experience composed of the Greenway and Trail systems – realize the Kessler Plan
- 5 Integrate water quality/stormwater management in to the Mill Creek corridor
- 6 The City of Cincinnati and City of St. Bernard need to collaborate to realize a common vision
- 7 Preserve the tight alignments along the B&O for commuter/inter-city rail – station and Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- 8 Create a scenic view from the interstate looking west
- 9 Neighborhood serving retail – horizontal mixed-use



INITIATIVE DIAGRAM The initiative diagram illustrates the strengths that the community identified and some of the visions for the future, including new rail and trail connections and two hubs of retail at the intersections of Vine/Mitchell and Mitchell/Spring Grove.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT



STRENGTHS

- » Direct access to downtown and surrounding universities
- » Substantial green space with multiple cemeteries, parks and recreation areas
- » Densely populated residential neighborhoods
- » Strong communities and institutions that are very involved
- » Available land for development
- » Major bus/ transit hub at Mitchell Avenue and Vine Street
- » Direct truck access to I-75 from industrial sites alleviates traffic through residential neighborhoods
- » Rich industrial history with canal and transportation access
- » Native, pre-industrial history of the Maketawah (aka: Mill Creek)



WEAKNESSES

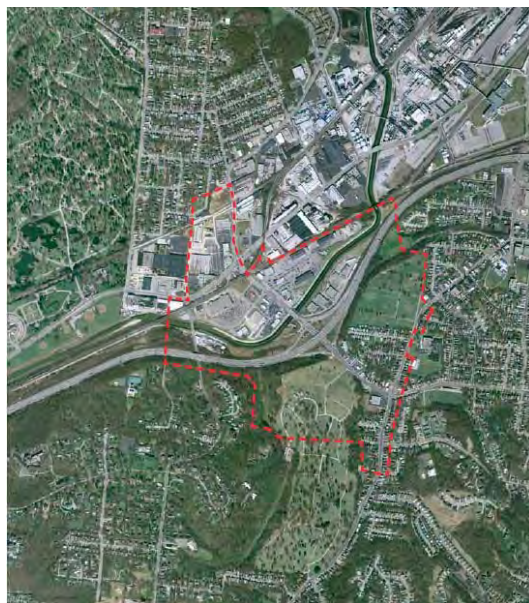
- » Alien retail landscape and blighted properties along Mitchell Avenue and Vine Street give the wrong impression/ identity for the surrounding community
- » Poor signage and wayfinding to places and institutions
- » Inefficient public safety response times
- » Traffic congestion along Mitchell Avenue near I-75
- » Dangerous traffic along Clifton Avenue to the West
- » Weak connection between I-75 and Winton Road



VISIONS

- » Interchange, intersection, and streetscape improvements along major transportation corridors to create a better first impression for the nearby institutions and the city
- » Create a more effective buffer along the Mill Creek to produce a better transition between the heavy industrial land and the adjacent residential neighborhoods
- » Produce a natural waterway that is both beautiful and productive, serving as a catalyst for economic development as well as a device for sustainable stormwater management
- » Celebrate the native and industrial history of the Mill Creek Corridor

Economic Development Opportunities



The Mitchell Avenue interchange area is primarily a local-serving interchange today but will see increased traffic after the realignment. It handles a tremendous amount of drive-by volume and has strong visibility, as well as adjacent land uses that are lower-density and rather undeveloped. The area north and east of I-75 is largely composed of local-serving retail and industrial uses (particularly activities associated with trucking and warehousing), while retail on the north and west side is more regional-serving in nature. On the other side of the interstate there is some local-serving retail along with a small number of single-family homes. There are industrial uses associated with P&G's Ivorydale industrial complex (located further north on I-75). This side of the study area, however, is predominantly permanent green space – including a prominent cemetery and the Cincinnati Zoo – and is more disconnected from the core area of I-75 closer to downtown.

Notably, the area is close to many solid middle-income residential neighborhoods, including those in adjacent St. Bernard, that are not well-served by neighborhood and even regional-serving retail. In concert with employment at the P&G facility, these households can support additional retail development today and potential local-serving office and new residential development opportunities in the medium- to long-term. In fact, quantitative analysis of supply-demand patterns for retail development suggest that the areas in closest proximity to the interchange are underserved with respect to retail. Moreover, the location of this site vis-à-vis major commuting patterns confirms that the site could capture attention from large swaths of persons in the region, buttressing retail demand but perhaps not so much as to suggest a regional-serving retail presence. Combining the above, data suggests that this location could accommodate a stronger locally-serving retail presence.

If properly developed and perhaps incentivized in the near term, the introduction of a locally-serving retail presence – especially in a town center configuration – is desirable. Solutions for this introduction must take into account ways to integrate future development with the existing grocery-anchored shopping center, either by incorporating it into future retail concepts or by repositioning the existing retail into a future retail footprint.

The surrounding industrial fabric as well as the policy prerogatives of locating new industrial facilities in the Bond Hill area (northeast of St. Bernard) suggest a strong opportunity to introduce both large format (freestanding) and small format (flex/R&D) industrial space where space and site selection constraints permit. Industrial users will benefit from the enhanced access provided by the interchange as well as follow the site selection instincts of locating new facilities in proximity to existing or planned concentrations of industrial activity and infrastructure.

There is a strong medium- to long-term opportunity to introduce office users in the area. Specifically, local-serving office, back-of-house, or front-office space associated with industrial development as indicated above, would be a logical fit for this area. This is not to suggest a strong market presence for speculative office construction but rather owner-occupied space and specialty office that may also have direct connections to flex/R&D space or freestanding industrial space.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- » Office – Local-serving office development associated with local industrial/corporate users. Not a natural location for large-scale multitenant speculative office.
- » Retail – Continued development of local-serving and some regional retail closer to interchanges and along community thoroughfares. Large-scale regional retail a distinct possibility, especially in a town center configuration and assuming parcel development.
- » Residential – Limited residential opportunity over near or even mid-term. Limited sites available for redevelopment and permanent green space takes up a significant portion of land that would be suited for residential use on the east/south side of interstate.
- » Industrial – Excellent opportunity for the introduction of industrial activities, especially those that are analogous to the types of activities currently present at TechSolve and targeted for inclusion in the Bond Hill area.

MITCHELL AVENUE			
10-YEAR ABSORPTION POTENTIAL	PESSIMISTIC	FAIR SHARE	AGGRESSIVE
Office (SF)	50,439	191,905	395,778
Industrial – Free-Standing (SF)	504,295	1,017,034	1,972,864
Industrial – Flex/R&D (SF)	1,059	1,395	5,257
Residential – Single-Family (Units)	10	154	160
Residential – Multi-Family (Units)	47	420	464
Retail (SF)	36,306	104,515	175,220

Urban Design Strategies

THE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES for the Mitchell Avenue interchange area are varied and build on the strengths that already exist. First and foremost, this area is to be re-envisioned as a more compelling gateway to the city and at the same time, should provide a center and ‘front door’ for the adjacent neighborhoods. Redefining this gateway will require physical changes that provide a visual announcement while offering better connections, smooth flow of traffic and more sustainable development.

The naturalization of Mill Creek (removal of channel walls, creation of natural floodplains, re-introduction of natural vegetation as a filtering system) combined with new multi-use trails and areas for activity and gatherings along the creek will serve as a green spine to connect the existing green spaces into a larger natural organism. Thus, one could envision the Mitchell Avenue interchange area becoming an important park in Cincinnati’s Mill Creek Greenway system.

To strengthen and advance Mitchell Avenue as a commercial destination for the community, it is recommended that a Gateway Redevelopment Initiative be established as a joint venture by the City of Cincinnati and St. Bernard. Such an initiative should include plans for: acquisition of under utilized or vacant properties, wayfinding and signage, street redesign and streetscape improvements, and a branding exercise.

Lastly, as planning for future city-wide transportation systems evolves, the Mitchell Avenue interchange area is ideally situated to take advantage of new Transit Oriented Design (TOD) opportunities. Whether the alignment of a new passenger rail system falls on the old B&O Railroad right-of-way or follows the I-75 alignment, nearby land should be earmarked for station(s), commuter lots and new development.



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The enhanced Mitchell Avenue interchange area should hold the following guiding principles:

- 1 Naturalize Mill Creek where possible to naturally treat water runoff and enrich the greenway.
- 2 Make trail connections between Mill Creek, parks, recreation facilities, cemeteries, and downtown St. Bernard (via Miami/Erie Canal ROW).
- 3 Take advantage of the Mill Creek Valley view sheds from I-75 as part of the gateway experience.
- 4 Build on the local retail destination by creating two nodes at intersections of Mitchell/Vine and Mitchell/Spring Grove
- 5 Create street-oriented and river front-oriented mixed-use development.
- 6 Launch a traffic study and street design initiative for both Mitchell Avenue and Vine Street to determine the best solution for traffic flow.
- 7 Preserve potential alignments for future passenger rail and surrounding land studied for potential station(s), commuter lots and new development.
- 8 Seek essential cooperation between the City of Cincinnati and St. Bernard to transform Mitchell Avenue. A joint venture should include: land acquisition and consolidation, wayfinding and signage, street improvements, marketing and branding.



MILL CREEK ALTERNATE A second option for the land south of Mill Creek was explored in the case that a new, improved bridge connection is not viable to maximize the value of this land. This natural floodplain will greatly enhance the efforts of MSD to treat runoff water as well as add to the whole Mill Creek Greenway system.



ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



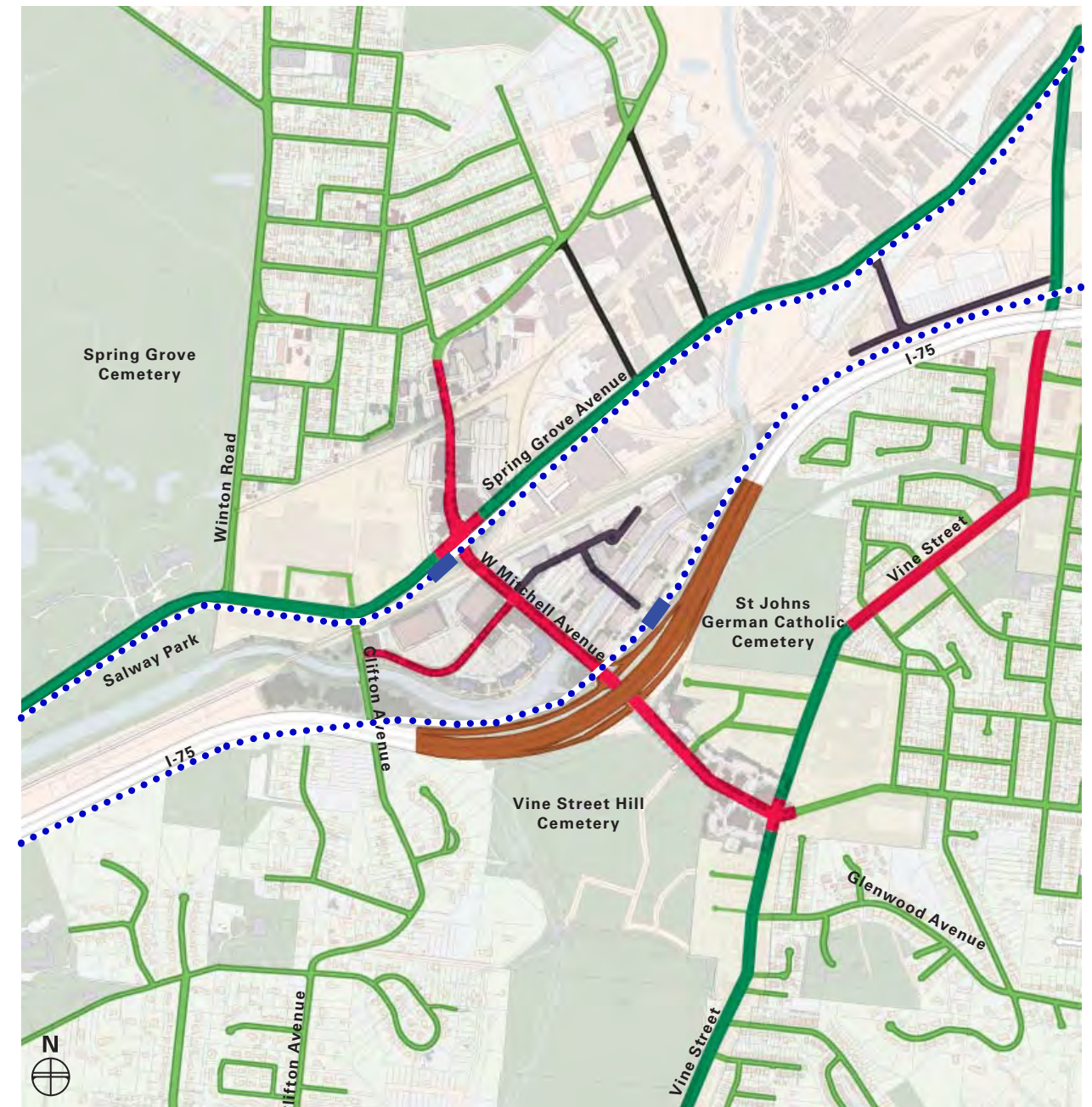
- Land Use**
- RESIDENTIAL
 - MIXED-USE
 - INSTITUTIONAL
 - INDUSTRIAL
 - OFFICE AND MIXED-USE
 - OPEN SPACE

Mobility Improvements

Spring Grove and Mitchell Avenues form the main axes of the local street grid. Spring Grove Avenue and parts of Vine Street are recommended for development and management as Great Streets of this focus area to achieve long-term anchors of the area’s mobility framework. Mitchell Avenue is envisioned as a new Main Street, embracing the retail and commercial activity center function, but including enhanced access and capacity management. New Signature Streets support targeted development or value enhancement areas. A reworked I-75 interchange at Mitchell Avenue will preserve existing interstate highway access, but this interchange will likely be subject to increasing pressure in the future for mixed-mode access to the Spring Grove corridor. Appropriate gateway elements are recommended on Mitchell Avenue to aid identity, wayfinding, and marketability.

Spring Grove, Mitchell Avenue, and Vine Street, along with Clifton Avenue and Winton Road, will continue to be important bus transit service spines, complimented in the future by potential LRT or BRT transit corridors along the old B&O rail alignment or along Spring Grove Avenue, with a station or hub directly serving Spring Grove Village and the existing local industries. An emphasized and designated bike/pedestrian connector along Mitchell Avenue will be an important amenity for a sustainable urban design strategy.

- MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:**
- » Enhance role, function and efficiency of Spring Grove Avenue
 - » Accommodate critical movements for freight and commerce
 - » Weave rail transit and function in to node development and Spring Grove Village future
 - » Establish bike system continuity
 - » Develop scale-appropriate bookend gateways on Mitchell Avenue



STREET CLASSIFICATIONS
 This diagram depicts the proposed street hierarchy and potential transit alignments. See page 76 of Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix for detailed descriptions.

■ NEW INTERCHANGE	■ OTHER SIGNATURE STREET	■ MAIN STREET	●●●● OPTIONAL TRANSIT ALIGNMENTS
■ GREAT STREET	■ NEIGHBORHOOD STREET	■ RESIDENTIAL STREET	

Open Space Improvements



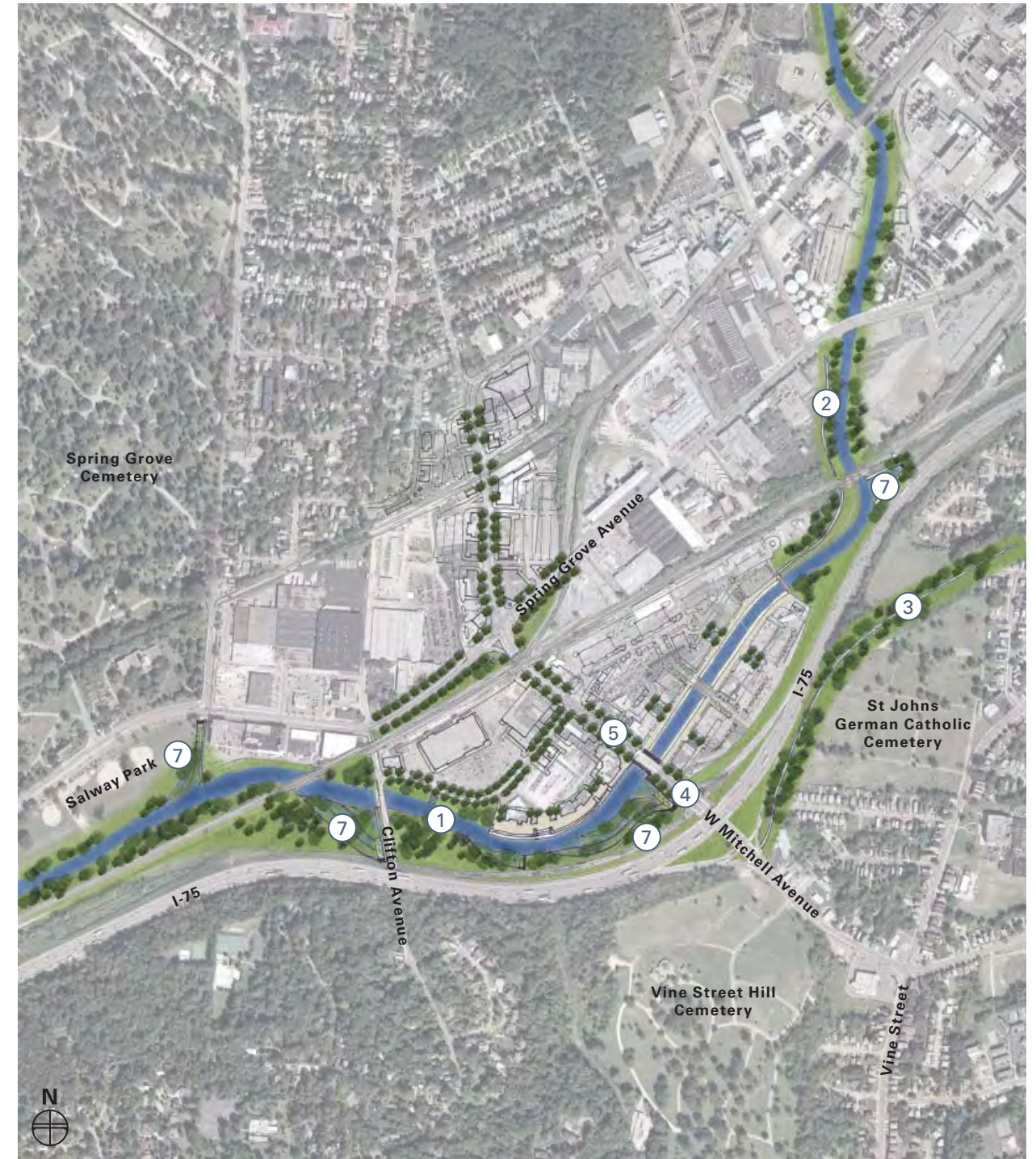
CSO OVERFLOW INTENSITY MAP



CHANNELIZED BANKS OF MILL CREEK

As a gateway into Cincinnati, the Mitchell Avenue area, specifically the area adjacent to Mill Creek should be improved to create a signature urban ecology. This can be achieved by the following:

- 1 Remove 50% of Mill Creek’s concrete channel after the Mitchell Avenue Bridge to provide a soft transition to Salway Park and to create a more desirable environment for future development to physically embrace.
- 2 Work with Mill Creek Restoration Project to find ways to create a trail systems that connects this area to their improvements further north and south in the Mill Creek Valley.
- 3 Work with St. Bernard for the creation of a public trail on the Erie Canal (or some alternative route) from their community to the Mitchell Avenue interchange.
- 4 Ensure that multi-purpose trails are integrated into the new Mitchell Avenue interchange. Work with the surrounding communities to determine the best side of Mitchell Avenue for regional trail connections.
- 5 Create an enhanced streetscape along Mitchell Avenue, improving the entry into the neighborhoods.
- 6 Work with ODOT to implement sustainable landscape strategies, including porous paving, swales, rain gardens, enhanced tree canopy, etc. at the Mitchell Avenue interchange.
- 7 Where possible, treat stormwater adjacent to the Mill Creek by creating wetlands and water quality improvements.



OPEN SPACE PLAN Depicts improvements to natural features, parks, open spaces, and streetscapes.



MITCHELL AVENUE SECTION The section illustrates how the Mill Creek could be slightly modified to increase sustainable practices for water quality and conveyance in a way that provides amenity for future development but scenic beauty for the many travelers who use the I-75 corridor.

Embark on a Study to evaluate the traffic conditions on Mitchell Avenue and Vine Street to determine the best resolution.

Improved wayfinding signage that ties to the greater city signage program.

Explore ideas for naturally treating runoff from I-75 while sharing benefits with MSD initiatives.

Preserve land and/or opportunities for optional transit alignments.

Capture the maximum possible runoff from I-75 and development on either side of Mill Creek in a natural system; avoid letting this water enter the combined sewer system.

Build on the success of the existing Kroger and the high traffic volumes as catalyst for new retail node(s) along Mitchell Avenue.

Where possible, daylight storm drains into Mill Creek.

Connect the Mill Creek system to water treatment, infiltration and conveyance systems near I-75.

Continue to foster good relationships with major (industrial) employers of the area; find ways to partner on initiatives that benefit citizens and corporations. (Ongoing initiative)

SHORT-TERM

MID-RANGE

LONG-TERM & ONGOING

2010

2060

Key Initiatives

Through the analysis and planning phases, issues were identified and strategies were brainstormed for the best long-term solutions. The vision for Mitchell Avenue remained a public process that incorporated neighborhood plans, public improvements scheduled for construction, and community involvement for reviewing design alternatives. As a result, key initiatives in economic development, neighborhood revitalization, green infrastructure and transportation improvements were determined.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVES

- » Connect the Mill Creek system to water treatment, infiltration, and conveyance systems near I-75.
- » Capture the maximum possible runoff from I-75 and development on either side of Mill Creek in a natural system; avoid letting this water enter the combined sewer system.
- » Where possible, daylight storm drains into Mill Creek.

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

- » Embark on a Study to evaluate the traffic conditions on Mitchell Avenue and Vine Street to determine the best resolution.
- » Explore ideas for naturally treating runoff from I-75 while sharing benefits with MSD initiatives.
- » Improved wayfinding signage that ties to the greater city signage program.
- » Preserve land and/or opportunities for optional transit alignments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

- » Build on the success of the existing Kroger and the high traffic volumes as catalyst for new retail node(s) along Mitchell Avenue.
- » Continue to foster good relationships with major (industrial) employers of the area; find ways to partner on initiatives that benefit citizens and corporations.



EXISTING CONDITIONS BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



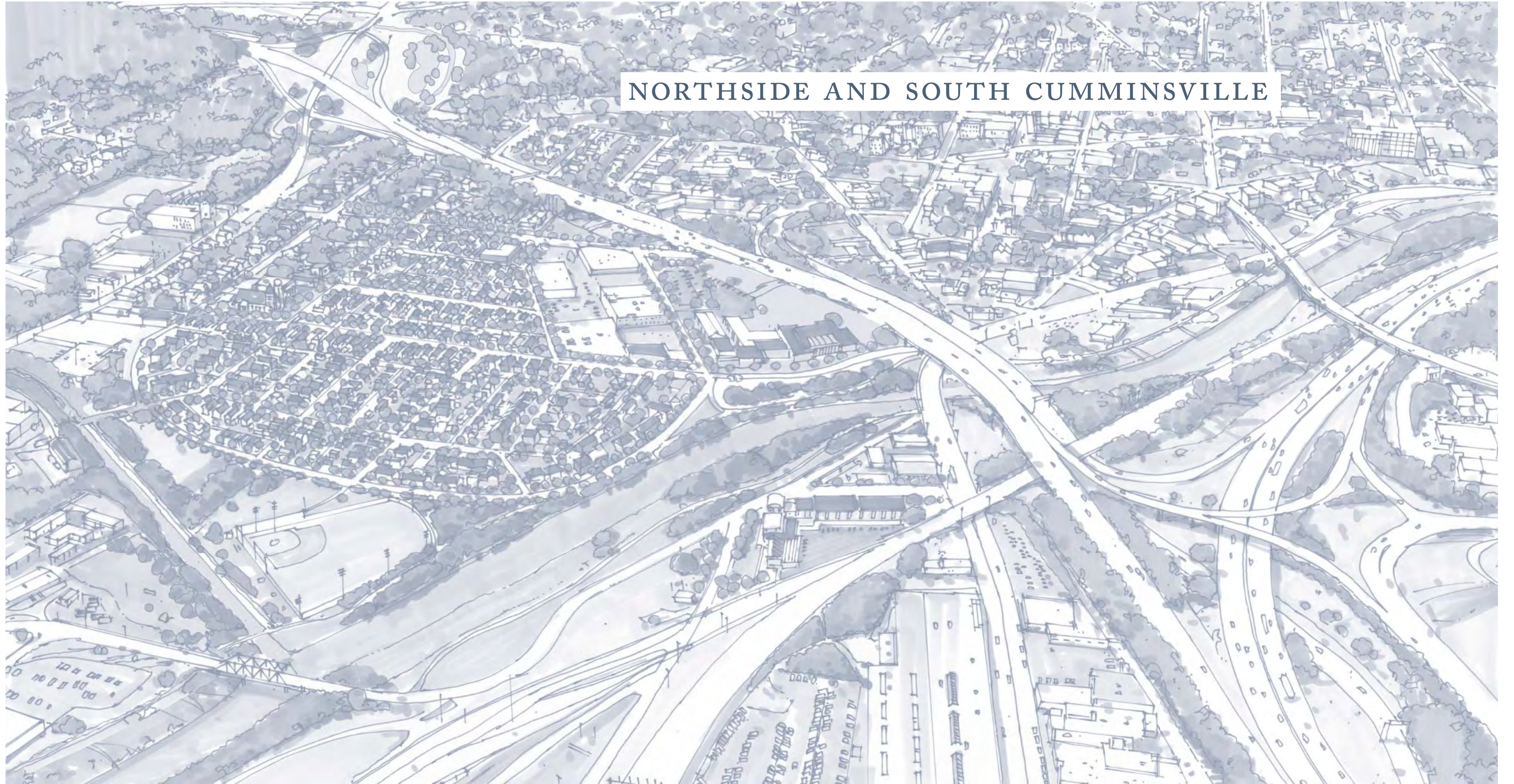
PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



ALTERNATE REDEVELOPMENT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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NORTHSIDE AND SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE



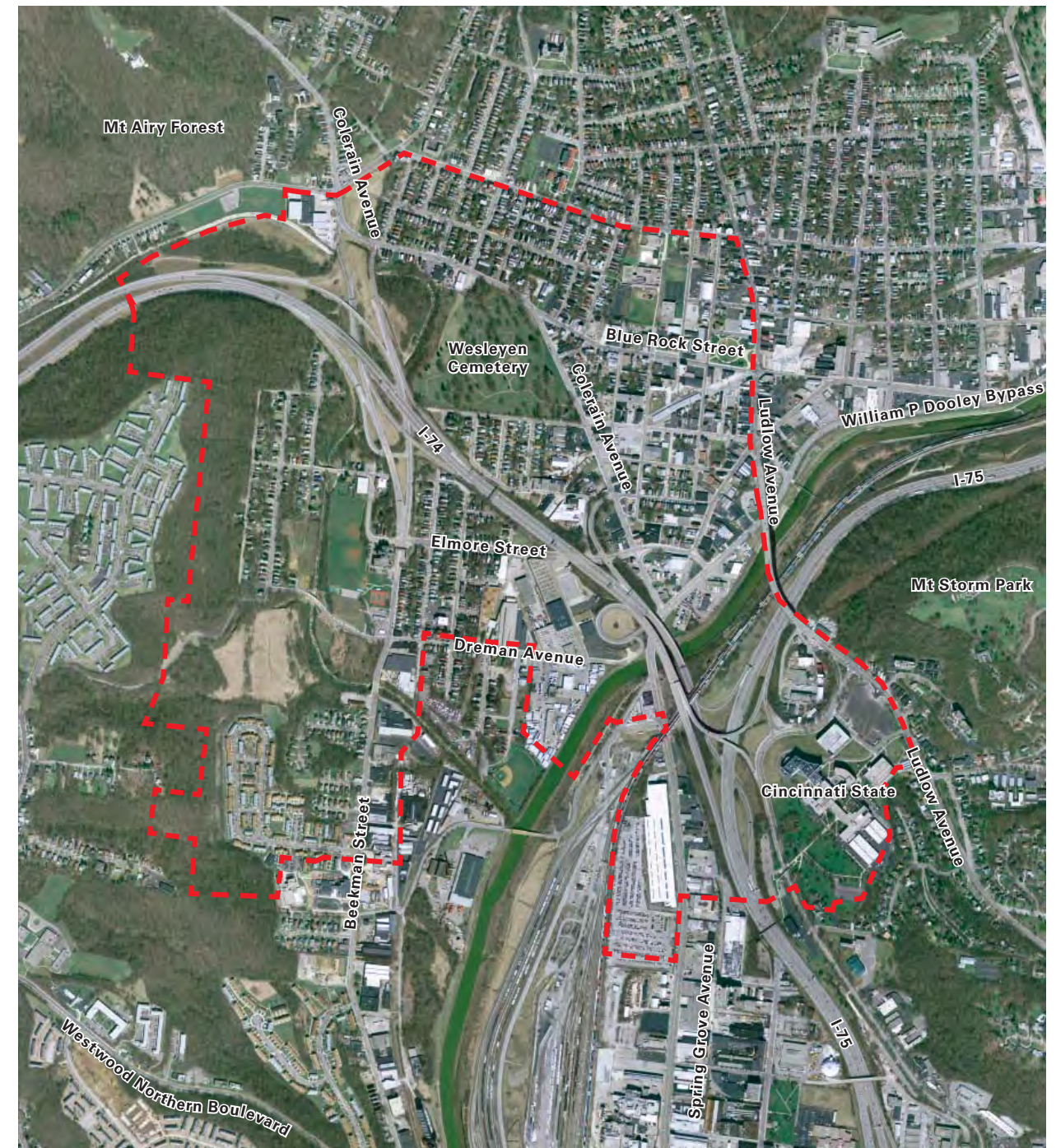
Challenges and Opportunities

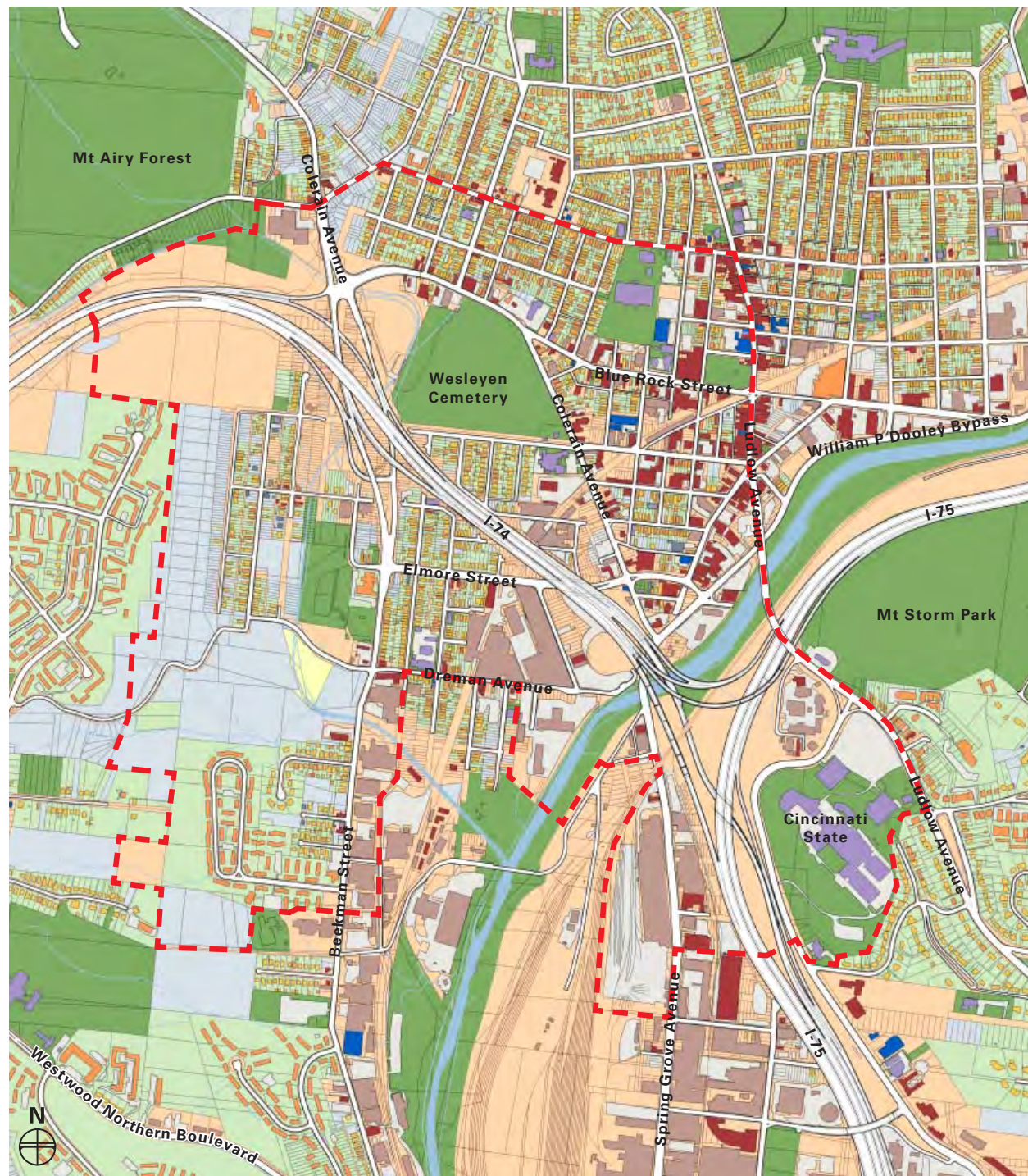
THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF Northside and South Cumminsville are located at the northwest edge of the city, between Mt. Airy Forest and Mill Creek. Originally one single neighborhood, Cumminsville was severed in two with the construction of the last segment of Interstate 74 in the 1970s.

Upcoming modifications to I-74 will significantly affect both communities. The on and off ramps located near Spring Grove Avenue will be demolished in favor of an expanded full-service interchange using the abandoned Colerain Expressway ramps at Beekman Street, diverting incoming traffic to the north side of the study area.

More than thirty years after being divided by I-74, the two neighborhoods find themselves headed in quite opposite directions. Northside has succeeded in promoting itself as a diverse neighborhood with a lively commercial main street, affordable housing, and a light industrial base. South Cumminsville has struggled throughout this period, due largely to a lack of connections to the larger city and a cohesive neighborhood identity. To many Cincinnati residents, South Cumminsville is a 'lost neighborhood'; It is neither a destination nor a place one passes through on their way elsewhere. Any plan intending to revitalize the area must take this into account and do what is required to put South Cumminsville back on the cognitive map of Cincinnati's residents.

Despite this long-term physical division, the futures of these communities remain linked. Enhanced connectivity between neighborhoods and to the city beyond is critical to the effectiveness of any future plans for the area. Additionally, these efforts need to be coordinated with upcoming ODOT and MSD initiatives to maximize their positive impact locally. With careful planning and guidance from members of the community, these neighborhoods will prosper.





STUDY AREA
 The Portrait drawing presents a map of the study area with buildings and parcels color coded to designate their current use.

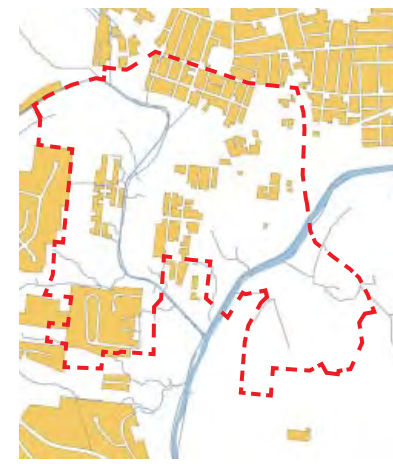
 EXISTING RESIDENTIAL	 EXISTING INSTITUTIONS	 EXISTING COMMERCIAL
 VACANT PROPERTY	 PARKS & OPEN SPACE	 EXISTING INDUSTRIAL



BUILDING FOOTPRINTS
 The scar created by I-74 separating Northside from South Cumminsville is clear in this diagram of building footprints.



STREETS AND HIGHWAYS
 The regular street grid of the former Cumminsville neighborhood has been bisected by I-74 from the northwest to the southeast. The large scale, interchange-like character of Beekman Street as it crosses the interstate is also evident here.



RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT
 The majority of contiguous residential blocks exist to the north end of Northside. South Cumminsville's residential areas are smaller and more fragmented by comparison.



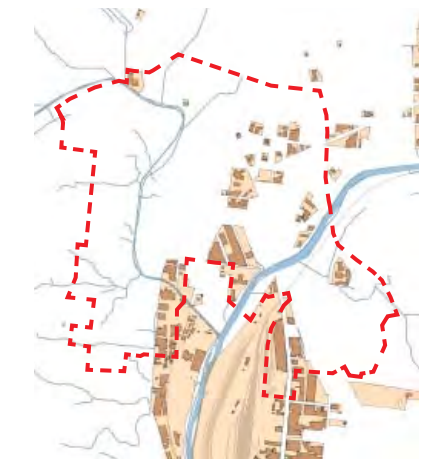
PARKING LOTS
 The study area is dotted with small parking lots near light industrial uses and commercial blocks along major traffic corridors.



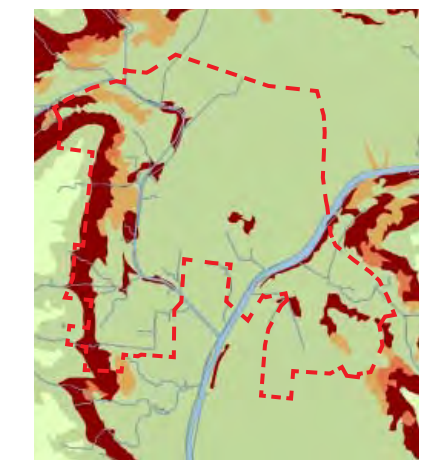
COMMERCIAL LAND USE
 Most commercial development in the study area is concentrated along Hamilton Avenue in Northside.



PARKS, RECREATION AND INSTITUTIONS
 Northside and South Cumminsville have the potential to connect Mt. Airy Forest to the multi-use trail system along Mill Creek and beyond to Cincinnati State and Clifton.



INDUSTRIAL USES
 Pockets of light industrial use dot Northside, while South Cumminsville is at the edge of a contiguous block of industry that continues south along Mill Creek into Camp Washington.



LANDFORMS
 The study area itself is mostly flat land, bounded to the west and northwest by steep hillsides and to the southeast by Mill Creek.

Planning Process

Through the planning process the consultant team worked with the steering committee and the general public to identify strengths, weaknesses and visions for each study area. (See the summary at right.) Armed with this information and having analyzed and researched various reports and ideas, the team developed the following urban design principles to guide the plan development.

- 1 Enhance mobility across all modes of transportation.
- 2 Create a comprehensive open space network that serves not only as a natural amenity for residents but as an ecologically friendly means for treating and transporting stormwater.
- 3 Promote twenty-first century economic development by encouraging eco-friendly or green industries to locate here.



INITIATIVE DIAGRAM The initiative diagram illustrates the strengths that the community identified and some of the visions for the future, including a new trail connection to Mt. Airy Forest following the West Fork, an expanded Mill Creek Greenway system and new eco-friendly industry in South Cumminsville.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT



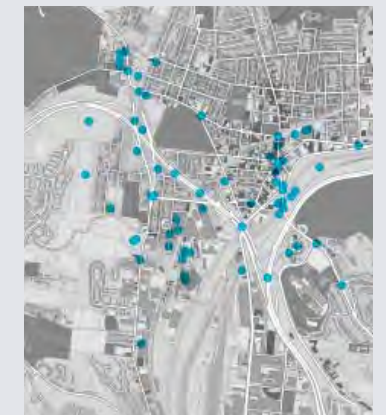
STRENGTHS

- » Thriving commercial core in Northside that has a bohemian/hip quality and feel to it
- » A mix of an industrial and urban feel to the neighborhoods
- » Diverse community
- » Strong social organizations and outreach programs
- » Affordable housing; high ownership to rental ratio
- » Enhanced by architecturally pleasing building stock
- » Accessible to the interstate with close proximity to Downtown Cincinnati



WEAKNESSES

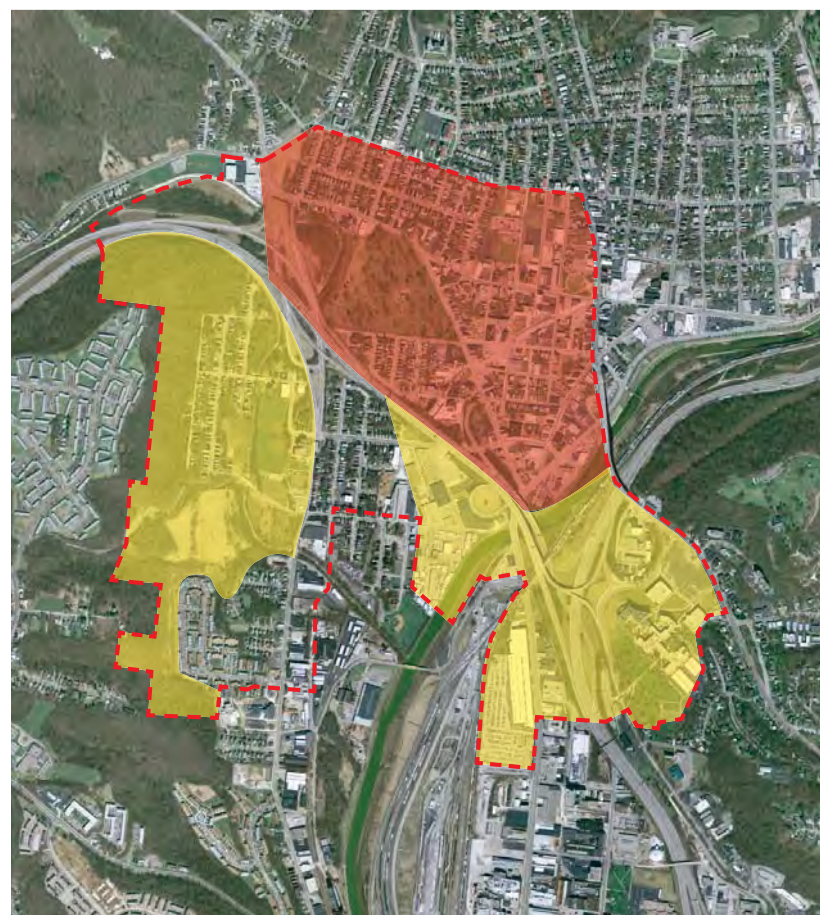
- » Channelized Mill Creek & West Fork
- » No coherent connections between recreational parks
- » Divided highway between Northside and South Cumminsville and inefficient access to I-74 West
- » Imbalance of investment, recognition and growth between Northside and South Cumminsville
- » Lack of signage and wayfinding
- » Street network is poor with disproportionate street ROWs and too many one-way streets
- » Educational institutions are poor in quality
- » Ludlow Viaduct is unattractive
- » Cell phone towers are an eyesore



VISIONS

- » Create pedestrian connections to the Mill Creek and a bikeway trail that runs along its corridor
- » Provide better scaled pedestrian access between Northside and South Cumminsville
- » Stronger street connections so the neighborhoods are easily accessible
- » Preserve the historic and cultural diversity that makes the neighborhoods unique
- » Provide more mass transit
- » More jobs: encourage eco-friendly and "clean" industries
- » Integrated housing opportunities: subsidized housing, retirement village
- » Increase owner occupied housing

Economic Development Opportunities



LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITY
 NEIGHBORHOOD BASED INFILL OPPORTUNITY

The I-74 interchange area can be characterized in two different ways – as a regionally important industrial location and corridor, and as a boutique neighborhood with local character and flavor. The area plays a very important role regionally given its location at the confluence of two interstates (I-74 and I-75), making it important for its accessibility and visibility. Spring Grove Avenue, which traverses this area, is also very well-suited as a trucking thoroughfare with good interstate connections. Meanwhile, there are districts within the study area with true neighborhood-scale residential and retail/service community. Northside is a well-established neighborhood within the City of Cincinnati with a strong sense of identity and place, while South Cumminsville is emerging as a mixed-use area that combines older industrial stock with neighborhood-scale retail and new residential development.

Development interest and activity around the I-74 interchange has been quite strong up to and through the economic downturn, and several opportunities to catalyze the type of development envisioned by City officials continue to circulate. The opportunity to re-position the Ryerson Steel building presents numerous opportunities for both City officials – who envision moving some municipal functions there – as well as Cincinnati State stakeholders – who imagine that a building with that footprint could house significant portions of their Energy and Environment Institute, job training facilities, and research programs into green energy production. To be sure, the proposed activities of Cincinnati State are tangible and forward-thinking just might serve as the anchor institution critical to kick-starting a green energy and jobs corridor beginning in South Cumminsville and extending southward through Camp Washington. Both Cincinnati State and University of Cincinnati are starved for

space, with Cincinnati State in particular forecasting enrollments far beyond existing and planned capacity. Meanwhile, University of Cincinnati is leasing space in Batavia in the former Ford Motor plant to accommodate classroom and office space from its Clermont College campus – their lease includes an option to buy the space, including the adjacent 45 acres of land.

The immediate space needs for teaching and lab facilities coincide with immediate needs for student, faculty and staff housing for both institutions. As Northside has already emerged as a potential preferred destination for some faculty and students, both schools are likely to formalize this trend and act to make housing in Northside a de-facto option for their stakeholders. However, with student enrollment at both institutions increasing and existing capacity to house incoming students relatively fixed, the schools are beginning to examine areas that they might infuse with true student housing options. It is understood that the local hospitals would also enjoy having more nearby housing opportunities for incoming doctors, fellows and staff. Finally, Cincinnati State’s need for a recreation facility – specifically a soccer facility – may present the opportunity to locate a very unique recreational use adjacent to the I-74/I-75 split.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- » Office – Despite regional visibility, this is not an ideal location for larger-scale multitenant speculative office buildings because of its distance from the CBD as well as position opposite the favored quarter. However, there is a strong opportunity for start-up businesses requiring large space (with room to grow) at low rental rates. This is not a likely location for new office construction or costly rehabs, but rather small-scale office/services that are local-serving in nature (boutique professional office) or administrative offices for Cincinnati State, front office for quasi-industrial users that can adaptively reuse old buildings.
- » Industrial – Tremendous opportunity for flex and industrial space, especially as part of a green industrial park that has connections to existing programs at Cincinnati State. The Cincinnati State Energy and Environment Institute stewards have already outlined various ways in which land in and around the I-74 interchange could be used for their plans, which include job training facilities and research capacity in the fields of green energy and energy efficiency. The potential to position this area as the northern terminus of a green industrial corridor extending southward into Camp Washington is certainly catalyzed by this vision should it come to fruition.
- » Retail – Most retail development in this area is likely to occur organically as new small businesses continue to emerge in Northside. This is not a likely location for medium to larger-scale new retail development based on available land parcels, but it could become a mid or longer-term opportunity should significant numbers of housing units be rehabbed to occupancy or delivered to market.
- » Residential – Northside will continue its block by block residential reinvestment as individual homeowners and some investors seek affordable single-family housing in a neighborhood setting. Over time, there will likely be some small to medium scale new residential development (some of this is already occurring). Cincinnati State does not offer on-campus housing so this area could potentially house multifamily private student housing. Additionally, Northside might well likely continue to mature as a residential destination of choice for faculty and staff from University of Cincinnati.

NORTHSIDE AND SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE			
10-YEAR ABSORPTION POTENTIAL	PESSIMISTIC	FAIR SHARE	AGGRESSIVE
Office (SF)	100,879	383,811	791,556
Industrial – Free-Standing (SF)	403,436	813,627	1,578,291
Industrial – Flex/R&D (SF)	3,178	4,186	15,771
Residential – Single-Family (Units)	31	462	481
Residential – Multi-Family (Units)	95	840	928
Retail (SF)	19,663	110,656	149,844

Urban Design Strategies

THE MAJOR DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR Northside and South Cumminsville are directed towards improving connectivity within the neighborhoods and towards improving their accessibility from the larger city. The current street network in South Cumminsville is fragmented and confusing. In conjunction with the development of new residential blocks, these streets should be reconnected into the larger road network. Direct linkage between the neighborhoods is currently limited to Elmore Street, an uninviting five-lane road with limited pedestrian appeal. Improvements to Elmore Street and the addition of another connection between Dremen Avenue and Spring Grove would help to make South Cumminsville more accessible from Northside for both pedestrians and vehicles.

The West Fork stream flows through parts of Northside, Millvale and South Cumminsville from Mt. Airy Forest to the Mill Creek. Through coordination with MSD's efforts in this area, a restored West Fork will provide numerous opportunities for public recreation as well as natural stormwater detention, infiltration and treatment. New multi-use trails along the stream will tie into the larger north-south trail/greenspace network along Mill Creek, linking them to Mt. Airy forest.

A new transit hub located near of Knowlton's Corner in Northside is preferred over the current location as it provides an opportunity to not only strengthen the Hamilton Street commercial district but to serve as the catalyst for a new transit-oriented development adjacent to this, fronting a revitalized Mill Creek Greenway.

Given these new investments in connectivity, environmentally sustainable infrastructure and the industrial history of the area, South Cumminsville is a natural location for a green industrial park. This would be capable of serving Cincinnati State's emerging needs for this type of space, and would tie into the larger industrial corridor south into Camp Washington and beyond.



ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

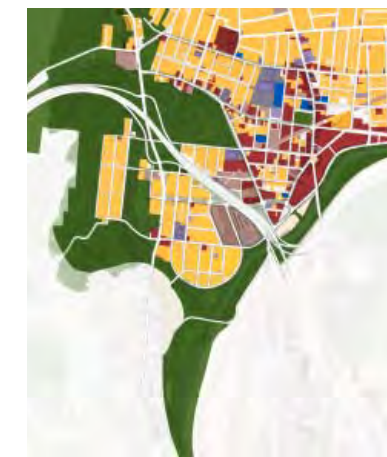
 RESIDENTIAL	 MIXED-USE	 INDUSTRIAL
 COMMERCIAL	 OFFICE	 CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL

The urban design strategies outlined on the previous page establish long-term guidelines to follow and goals to work towards. The following initiatives represent a means of implementing these strategies in specific ways throughout Northside and South Cumminsville.

- 1 Make Elmore Street a tree-lined boulevard from Beekman to the Dooley Bypass, linking the ball fields at the West Fork to the Mill Creek Greenway.
- 2 Create a well-defined southern edge to the main residential neighborhood in South Cumminsville, connecting the several dead-end north-south streets to a curving parkway.
- 3 Continue Beekman Street in street character versus its current interchange ramp character around the intersection of Elmore Street.
- 4 Reconnect the fragmented western blocks of South Cumminsville to themselves and the rest of the neighborhood.
- 5 Abandon Old Ludlow as a vehicular through-street in favor of creating a pedestrian or mews address for redevelopment and the proposed transit hub, and to connect the Northside Business District to the Mill Creek Greenway Trail.
- 6 Encourage select redevelopment at Knowlton's Corner to improve the entry experience to Northside from Ludlow.
- 7 Create a linear park as part of the Mill Creek Greenway Project, extending from the Mill Creek Road bridge south to the Hopple Street viaduct.
- 8 Connect Dremen Avenue to Spring Grove Avenue at the former I-74 on-ramp location.
- 9 Create a transit hub near Knowlton's Corner.
- 10 Restore the West Fork stream network, incorporating natural stormwater detention and infiltration strategies.
- 11 Enhance the pedestrian experience of crossing the Ludlow Viaduct through a more efficient use of the existing right-of-way and creative redesign of the bridge safety barriers and sidewalks.



ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



Proposed Land Use

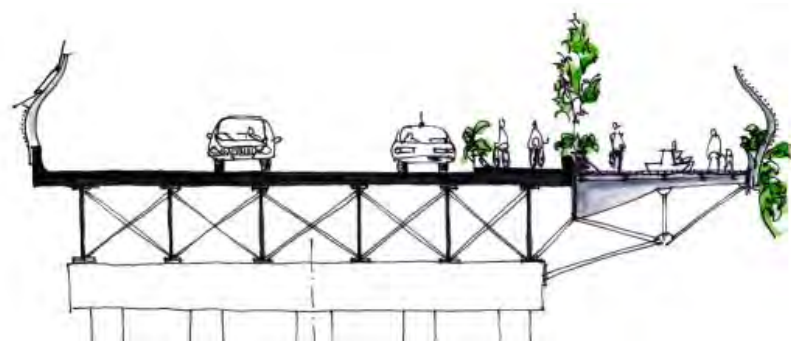
- RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED-USE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- OFFICE AND MIXED-USE
- OPEN SPACE



KNOWLTON'S CORNER AND THE LUDLOW VIADUCT

Enhance the pedestrian experience crossing the viaduct as well as the urban room at Knowlton's Corner where Ludlow becomes Hamilton.

Mobility Improvements



Creative solutions to transportation problems can have exponential mobility benefits, like this concept for a cantilevered widening of the Ludlow Viaduct which offers bike lanes, pedestrian trail, landscaping and solar panels.

- MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:**
- » Re-energize as mid-valley transport hub
 - » High-visibility multiple modes of transport, with an alternative mode edge
 - » Live/work/play close-coupled trips
 - » Refresh key connectivity components and relationship to interstate system

Access to and from Northside and South Cumminsville will change as a result of the interstate highway improvements, but can be mitigated by other mobility improvements. Beekman Street, Elmore Street, Colerain Avenue, Blue Rock Street, and Spring Grove Avenue are recommended for development and management as Great Streets of this focus area, key links in the future mobility framework, which will also provide more flexibility and focus for the important Main Street role of historic Hamilton Avenue. The Dooley Bypass, Ludlow Viaduct and Central Parkway should be recast as Signature Streets enhancing their through-traffic and connection functions, but reflecting its community level context and relationship to other modes. The Colerain/Beekman interchange will have increased importance as the sole point of proximate interstate access for these communities, but the contextual design of the ramp network, inland areas, and connecting streets requires revision to meet the City’s Context and Criteria goals. The entire area will require creative signage and signature design elements to aid orientation, wayfinding, and transport function.

Colerain, Beekman, Hamilton/Ludlow, and Spring Grove will continue to be important bus transit service spines, complimented in the future by a “Knowlton’s Corner” bus hub, and by potential LRT or BRT transit corridors along the old B&O rail alignment, along Spring Grove Avenue, or in elevated systems along Central Parkway and I-75. The B&O rail alignment can directly serve both South Cumminsville and Northside, and under any scenario is recommended for preservation and reestablishment for transportation purposes, including trail considerations. Emphasized and designated bike/pedestrian connectors along Ludlow, Central Parkway, Dooley Bypass and potentially the B&O transit corridor will be important parts of a sustainable urban design strategy.



STREET CLASSIFICATIONS
 This diagram depicts the proposed street hierarchy and potential transit alignments.
 See page 76 of Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix for detailed descriptions.

■ GREAT STREET	■ NEW INTERCHANGE	■ OTHER SIGNATURE STREET	■ MAIN STREET	●●●● OPTIONAL TRANSIT ALIGNMENTS
■ NEIGHBORHOOD STREET		■ RESIDENTIAL STREET		

Open Space Improvements



CSO OVERFLOW INTENSITY MAP



MILL CREEK ALONG THE RAIL YARD

As another important gateway into Cincinnati, the Northside and South Cumminsville areas need to be linked by strategically placed great streets, regional trails, and open space improvements. This can be achieved in a number of ways.

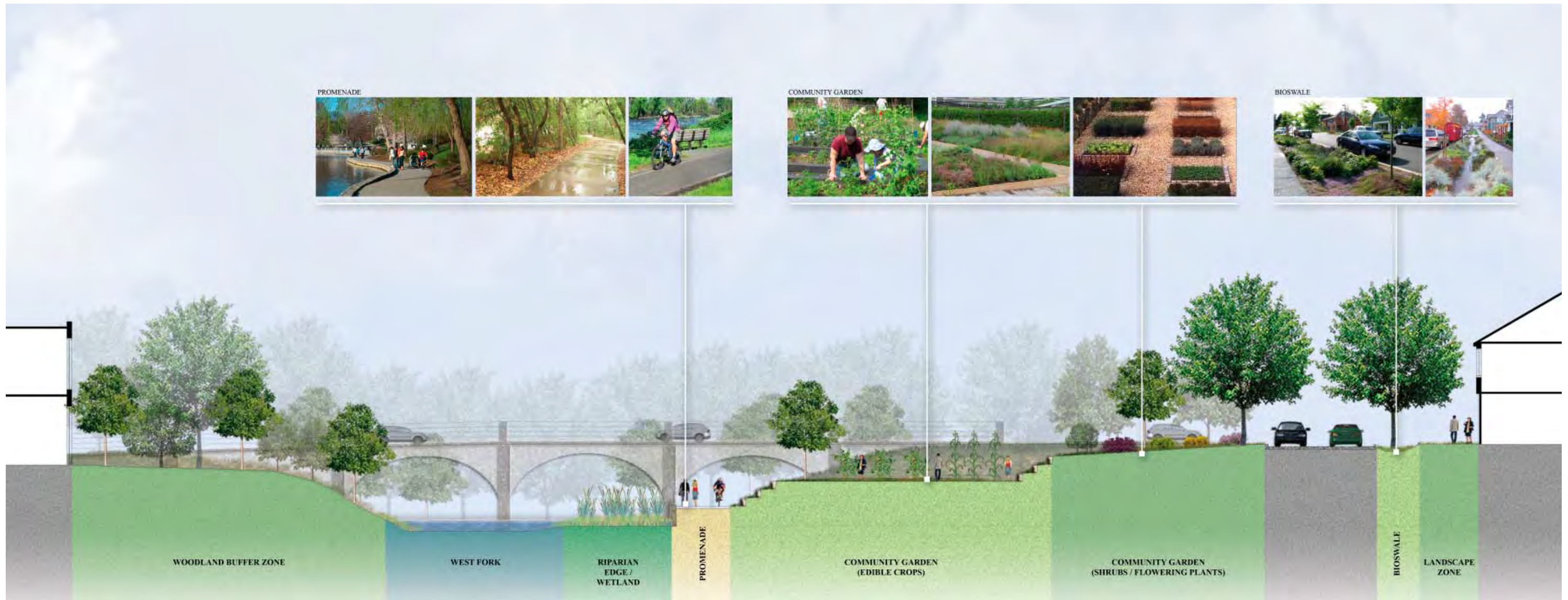
Help reconnect the neighborhoods by identifying key streets that could be modified to be parkway-like so that people can walk or bike from one neighborhood to another. Additionally, improve the edges of the neighborhoods where they front onto Mill Creek as a trail or urban promenade. If possible, encourage development and energy production or urban agriculture to front onto the corridor. Lastly, work with MSD and Mill Creek Restoration Project to create a new greenway in South Cumminsville that could help to store and treat water in a series of small open space improvements along the West Fork that connect Mill Creek to Mt. Airy Forest.

Opportunities

- 1 Naturalize and daylight the West Fork as an amenity.
- 2 Create passive park or open space where the West Fork joins Mill Creek. In addition to passive park uses, this area should provide stormwater detention and improve water quality.
- 3 Connect multi-use trails along Mill Creek and the West Fork to neighborhoods and other park systems.
- 4 Improve wetlands and water quality along Mill Creek and the West Fork
- 5 Create urban orchards and community gardens
- 6 Build ballfields and active play areas
- 7 Build 'eco' park and associated educational center



OPEN SPACE PLAN Depicts improvements to natural features, parks, open spaces, and streetscapes.



NORTHSIDE AND SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE SECTION The section illustrates how the West Fork could be modified to increase sustainable practices for water quality and conveyance in a way that provides amenity for future development.

Key Initiatives

Through the analysis and planning phases, issues were identified and strategies were brainstormed for the best long-term solutions. The vision for Northside and South Cumminsville remained a public process that incorporated neighborhood plans, existing public improvements scheduled for construction, and community involvement for reviewing design alternatives. As a result, key initiatives in economic development, neighborhood revitalization, green infrastructure and transportation improvements were determined.

Promote/elevate the West Fork as an exemplar with respect to the ongoing/upcoming stream normalization and daylighting initiatives.

Partner with Cincinnati State's Institute for Energy and the Environment.

Encourage Cincinnati State's proposed soccer facility.

Support proposed lab/R&D/teaching facilities from universities and hospitals.

Support proposed faculty/staff housing needs from universities and hospitals.

Naturalize and amenitize the West Fork as part of the larger, ongoing effort to reduce stormwater outflow.

Capture the maximum possible runoff from I-75 and development on either side of Mill Creek in a natural system; avoid letting this water enter the combined sewer system.

Work to re-establish street linkages between neighborhoods in a minimum of two locations by elevating portions of I-74 on structure instead of earth fill.

Simplify and minimize the ramping of the I-74/Colerain-Beekman exit in order to make Beekman a street as it passes through the highway.

Coordinate these and other future improvements with MSD & Cincinnati Parks to maximize the opportunities for usable greenspace in this area. (Ongoing)

Encourage future design decisions in and around the I-74/I-75/Colerain-Beekman interchanges to consider the impact on local street quality and connectivity as well as on the total flow of the highway system. (Ongoing)

SHORT-TERM

MID-RANGE

LONG-TERM & ONGOING

2010

2060

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVES

- » Promote/elevate the West Fork as an exemplar with respect to the ongoing/upcoming stream normalization and daylighting initiatives. Use this opportunity to illustrate the real results of implementing the new green best practices.
- » Capture the maximum possible runoff from I-75 and development on either side of Mill Creek in a natural system; avoid letting this water enter the combined sewer system.
- » Naturalize and amenitize Mill Creek and the West Fork as part of the larger, ongoing effort to reduce stormwater outflow.

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

- » Encourage future design decisions in and around the I-74/I-75/Colerain-Beekman interchanges to consider the impact on local street quality and connectivity as well as on the total flow of the highway system.
- » Work to re-establish street linkages between neighborhoods in a minimum of two locations by elevating portions of I-74 on structure instead of earth fill.
- » Coordinate these and other future improvements with MSD, Cincinnati Parks and Mill Creek Restoration Project to maximize the opportunities for usable greenspace and trails in this area.
- » Simplify and minimize the ramping of the I-74/Colerain-Beekman exit in order to make Beekman a street as it passes through the highway – not an elongated remnant of an unbuilt highway that has 'landed' in the middle of South Cumminsville.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

- » Partner with Cincinnati State's Institute for Energy and the Environment.
- » Encourage Cincinnati State's proposed soccer facility.
- » There is a nascent body of new technology companies and collaborative organizations, such as LiveWell, that will have space needs once the economy recovers. Some of these entities have already expressed an interest in sites in the area for the types of green industrial sites discussed above.
- » The Energy Bill working its way through Congress may catalyze nationwide investment in alternative energy technologies, many of which could be produced in Cincinnati itself. The MSA is projected to have the highest number of green jobs added to its workforce over the next 30 years in the state.
- » Support proposed faculty/staff housing needs from universities and hospitals.
- » Support proposed lab/R&D/teaching facilities from universities and hospitals.

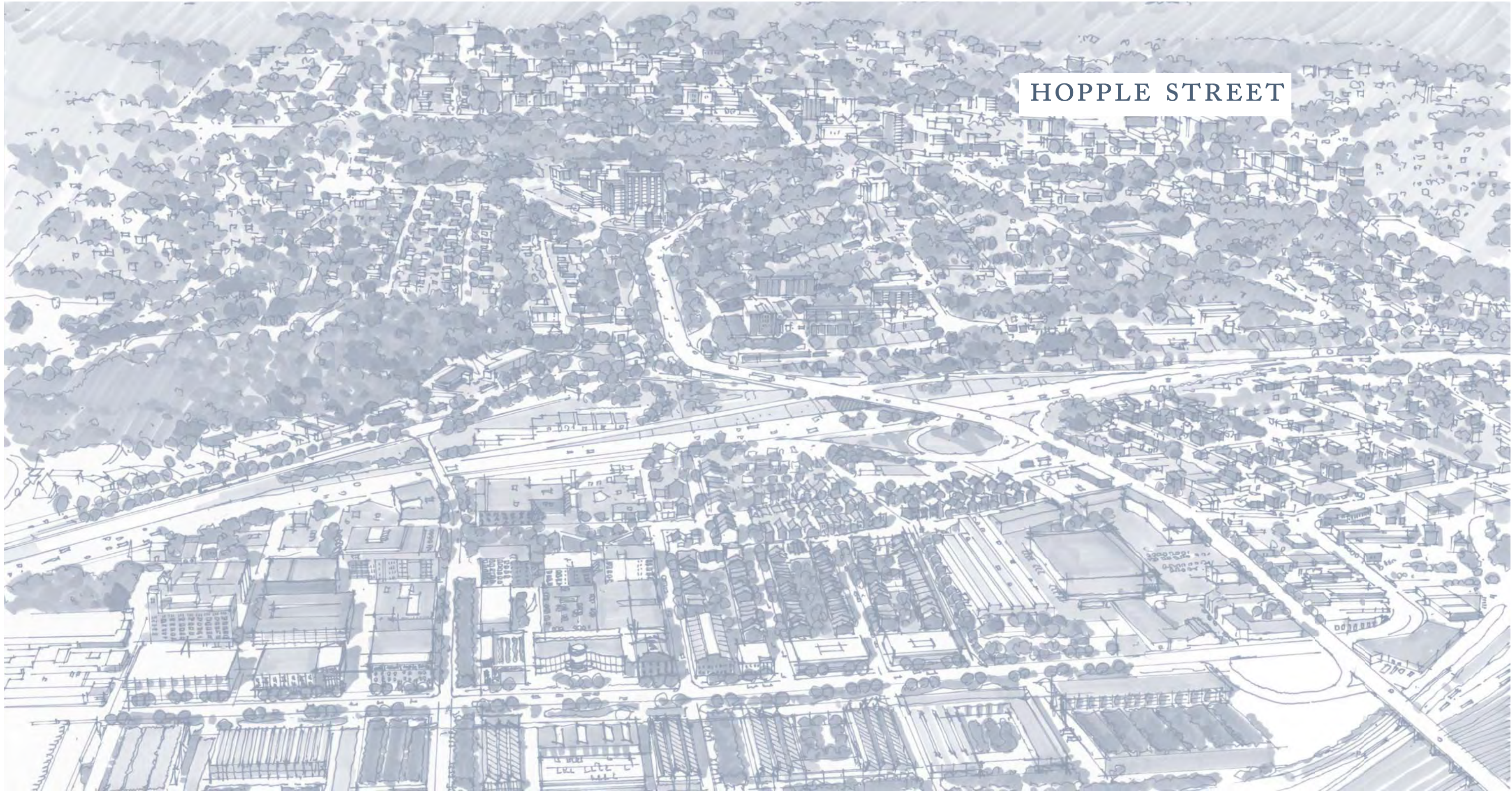


EXISTING CONDITIONS BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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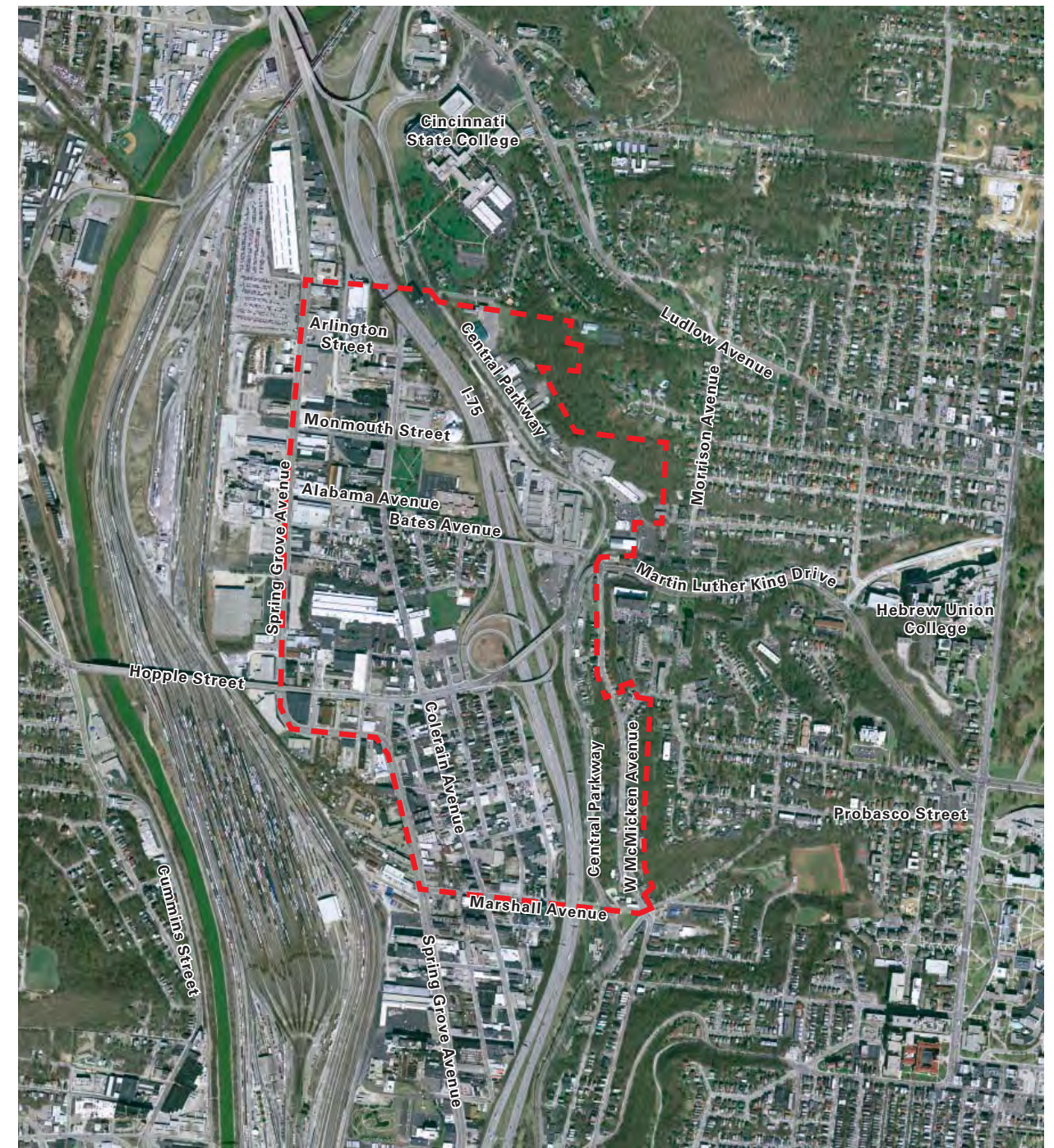


HOPPLE STREET

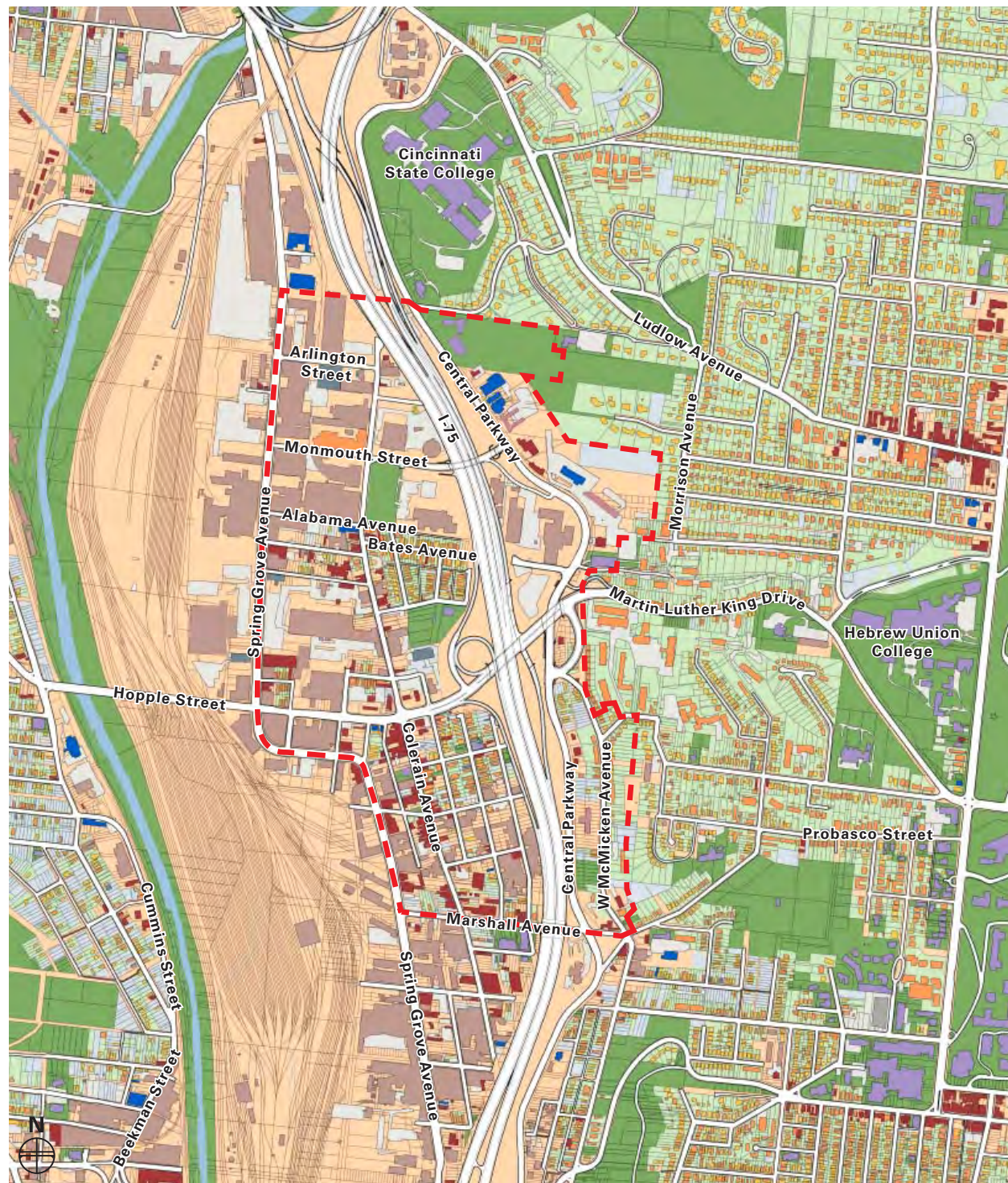
Challenges and Opportunities

LOCATED JUST MINUTES NORTH of downtown Cincinnati, the Hopple Street interchange on I-75 is adjacent to Camp Washington, a historic Mill Creek Valley neighborhood. Camp Washington prospered with the growth of canal and rail transportation as an industrial center in the 19th and early 20th centuries. As a result, the neighborhood has a rich inventory of commercial and residential architecture from that era, however many of the buildings have become unoccupied. With large industrial tracts in transition and many long term businesses seeking more vibrant neighborhoods, the population and concentration of business has declined in recent decades.

Camp Washington has a strong community organization dedicated to revitalizing their neighborhood and help spur smart development to better reconnect the neighborhood to the surrounding amenities. With many grassroots efforts underway, Camp Washington seeks to restore and reinhabit homes in the community and attract businesses to Colerain Avenue and vacant industrial properties. In addition to these efforts, improvements to transportation and open space infrastructure will better connect Camp Washington to the city's universities and hospitals that are located up the hill. Major assets, including a beautiful main street Colerain Avenue, historic architecture, loft buildings, community parks, and vacant industrial land will draw investment by these major economic generators in new research and development facilities. Camp Washington's approximate location provides the creative platform for expansion of university and hospital activities. With strategic investments that better connect the community to the rest of the city and the region, Camp Washington can offer both unique places to work and live.



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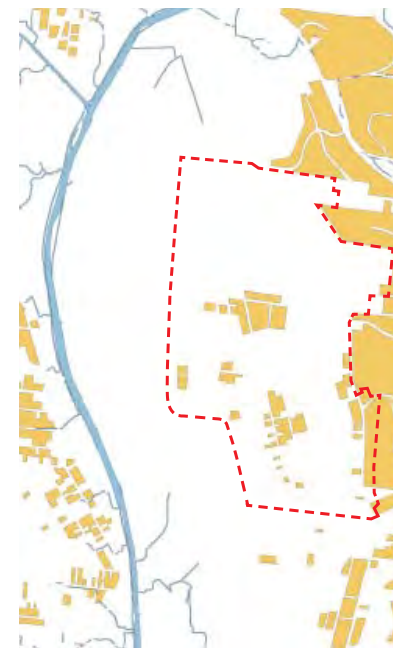


STUDY AREA The Portrait drawing presents a map of the study area with buildings and parcels color coded to designate their current use.

- EXISTING RESIDENTIAL
- EXISTING INSTITUTIONS
- EXISTING COMMERCIAL
- VACANT PROPERTY
- PARKS & OPEN SPACE
- EXISTING INDUSTRIAL



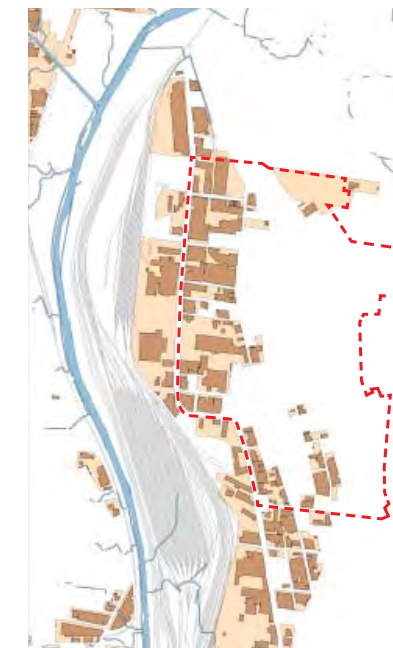
BUILDING FOOTPRINTS
The neighborhood is identified by a mix of industrial uses adjacent to pockets of residential



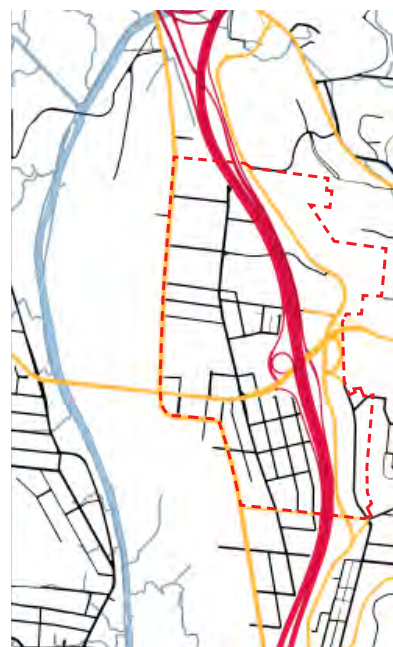
RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT
Underutilized land is in need of restoration to re-establish a sustainable, mixed-use development



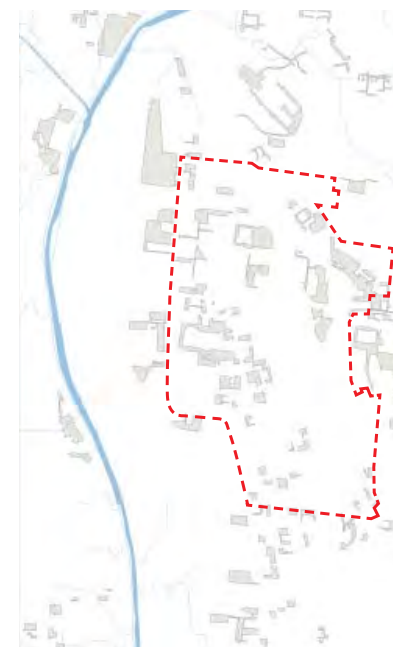
COMMERCIAL LAND USE
Restoration of the commercial district is necessary to create a vibrant core for the Camp Washington neighborhood.



INDUSTRIAL USES
A tremendous presence of rail and vacant industrial sites segment the Camp Washington neighborhood



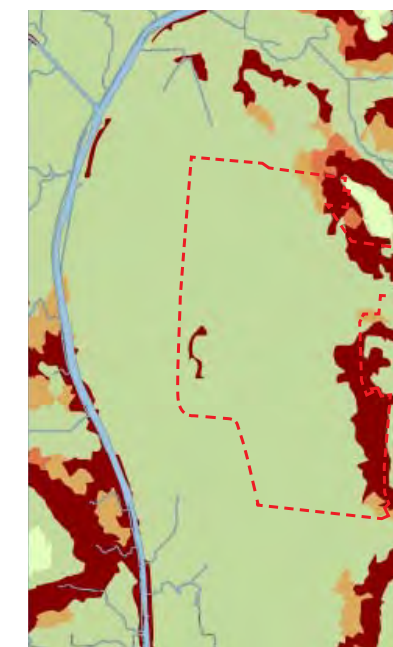
STREETS AND HIGHWAYS
Access to I-75 and Central Parkway is convenient, yet minimal local connections to adjacent neighborhoods and institutions exist. Also evident is how Camp Washington is an island to itself.



PARKING LOTS
Poor land utilization of parking lots, vacant land, and junk yards is an opportunity for potential new development.



PARKS, RECREATION AND INSTITUTIONS
Pedestrian and green connections between the Mill Creek, neighborhood parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and local institutions are lacking.

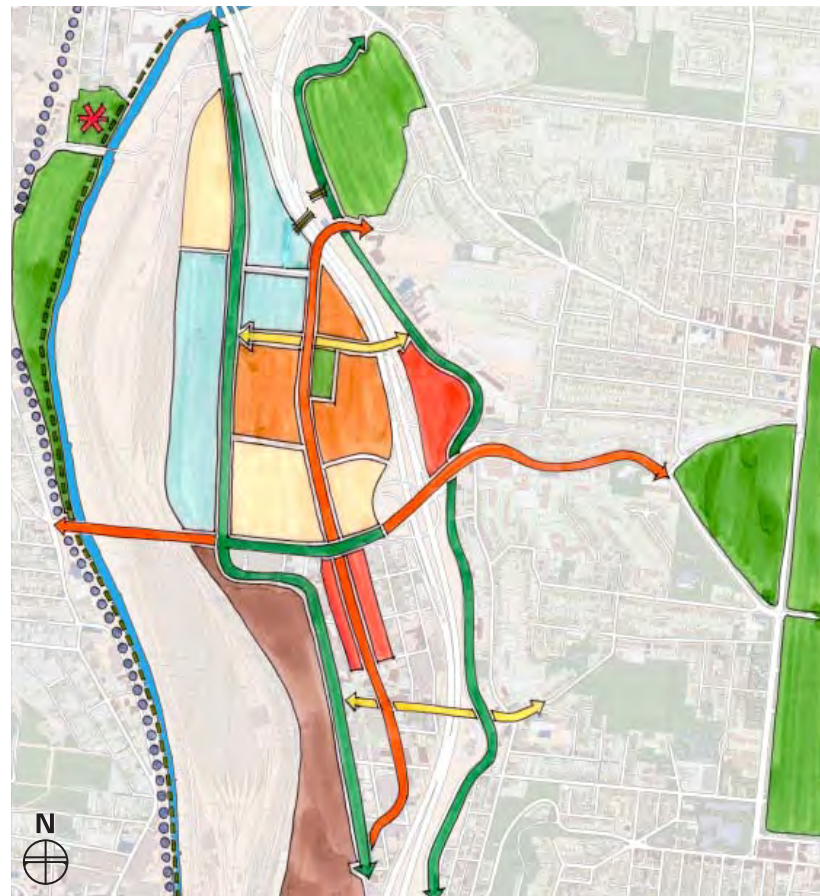


LAND FORMS
Camp Washington is an industrial valley between Uptown and the Western Hills.

Planning Process

The design team, along with the City and neighborhood input, identified issues with existing conditions and strategies for the best long-term solutions. These urban design and development strategies are defined by a set of principles to help guide in the planning process.

- 1 Transform Underutilized Land: The future of Camp Washington is tied to the institutions that are in close proximity to the neighborhood. Potential development of research and manufacturing facilities with a focus in green industries can be linked to the needs of the surrounding institutions and private developers.
- 2 Create Stronger Connections: Strengthen connections to the universities and hospitals with road improvements, trails, and public transit.
- 3 Encourage Mixed-Use Development: Create a sustainable neighborhood with single-family, loft housing, housing above retail, commercial development, and restoration of historic architecture.
- 4 Concentrate on twenty-first century industries and research affiliated with Cincinnati State, the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, and the hospitals. Create a brand.



INITIATIVE DIAGRAM The initiative diagram illustrates the strengths that the community identified and some of the visions for the future, including stronger street, trail, and open space connections along with a variety of new development

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT



STRENGTHS

- » Park Spaces: Fairview Park, Mt. Storm Park, Burnet Woods, Bellevue Park, Rawson Woods Nature Preserve (all located in the Clifton neighborhood)
- » Available industrial land and rail access
- » Potential gateway to many institutions including universities and hospitals
- » Proximity to great neighborhoods and institutions
- » Accessibility to I-75 and Central Parkway
- » The traditional architecture and variety of building types
- » Strong Camp Washington businesses
- » Long term home owners with strong neighborhood involvement



WEAKNESSES

- » Lack of neighborhood core businesses
- » Perceived as an unsafe area in disrepair
- » Un-welcoming gateway/ connection to the universities
- » Numerous roads that are not pedestrian/ bike-friendly
- » Owner neglect and absentee landlords have created many vacancies and blighted properties
- » Large population of Section-8 housing, sex offenders, prostitutes, and addicts creates an unsafe/ unhealthy environment in some areas
- » High percentage of rental units
- » Poor intersections: Hopple/ Central Parkway, MLK/ I-75, Hopple and Spring Grove Avenue



VISIONS

- » Enhance the gateway sequence to the universities to create a stronger connection East to West
- » Stronger street, trail, and open space connections
- » Create a more pedestrian/ bike-friendly environment
- » "Green" major transportation corridors such as Central Parkway to create a positive identity for the neighborhoods that run adjacent to it
- » Provide a variety of businesses
- » Encourage proposed intersection improvements
- » Improve the development quality, traffic accommodation, and streetscape of Spring Grove Avenue, McMicken Avenue, and Central Parkway

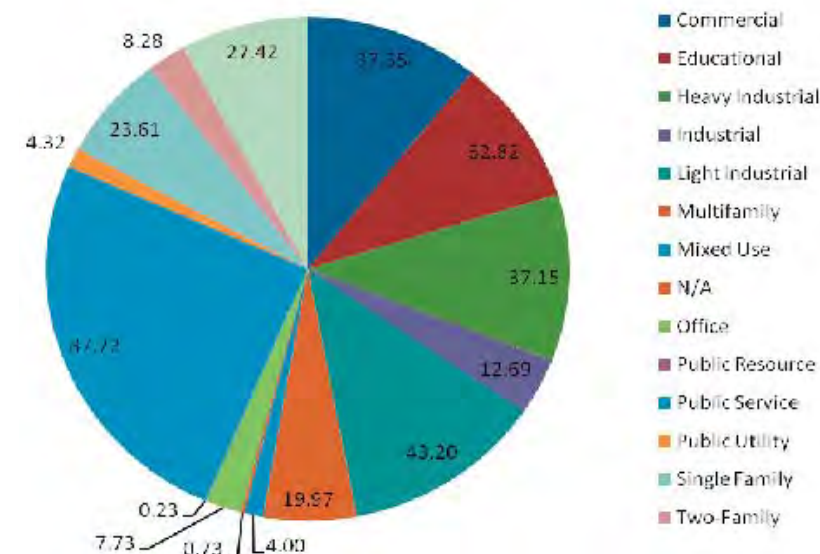
Economic Development Opportunities

The Hopple Street exit is primarily west of I-75 and lies east of the CSX/Norfolk Southern train yard in the Mill Creek Valley. Due to its access and visibility along I-75 and the rail yards, it historically played a regional role as a center for logistics and light industry. As such, there are a large number of industrial users exist here but they are primarily smaller operations. There are also a number of vacant and or abandoned sites, including many that once enjoyed rail access during the heyday of industrial-rail connections but which are now dormant. These facilities, such as the Kahn's and Sara Lee sites, have out-moded parking ratios and irregular building footprints that make them challenges to redevelop, but their locations are strong enough to warrant interest in making the redevelopment feasible. It has been noted that vehicular access to the industrial areas is challenged because of the current exit configuration, hairpin turns, and steep grade involved before getting to Colrain Avenue.



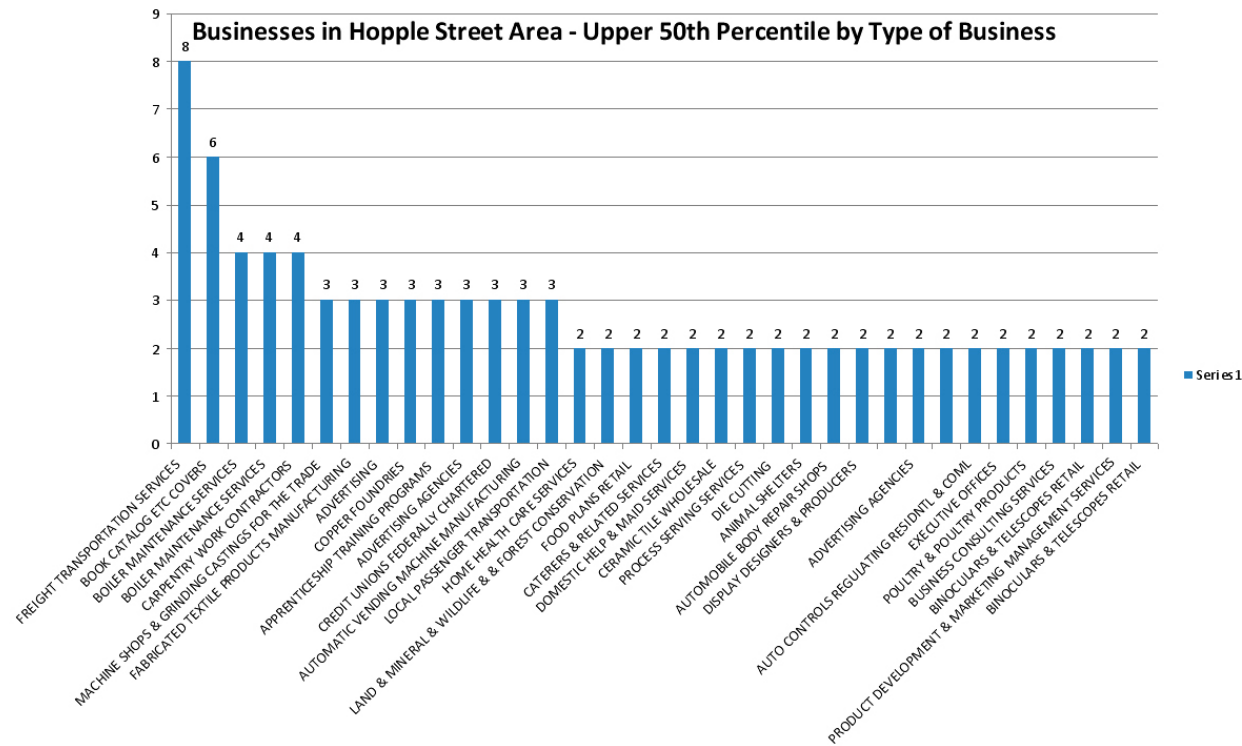
--- INDUSTRIAL R&D OPPORTUNITY
 LOCAL & REGIONAL RETAIL OPPORTUNITY
 NEIGHBORHOOD MULTI-USE OPPORTUNITY

ACRES OF LAND BY EXISTING LAND USE



- » Marshall Avenue and Hopple Street themselves offer cross-Interstate access linking them to the “uptown area” and offering a direct connection to the fastest job-generating site in the City. This gives this part of the study area a competitive advantage in terms of attracting spin-off development associated with the University of Cincinnati and the hospitals that are located in Uptown and have outgrown their current spaces. Investigation suggests that these institutions are indeed at or over capacity internally and will eventually need to look westward to consider expansion opportunities. In the short-term, however, these entities have an institutional bias towards satisfying their new space needs in the Clifton Heights, University Heights, and Fairview (CUF) area, owing primarily to their affiliation with the Uptown Consortium.
- » Camp Washington is a unique area with commercial, industrial, and residential uses. The area is perceived by many to be a very desirable neighborhood with low crime rates and stable residential neighborhoods, suggesting that stakeholders might build upon existing momentum in residential development, including development that might eventually serve the Universities and hospitals. The Camp Washington CDC has demonstrated some success in renovating older housing stock and bringing it to market, even though there seems to have been minimal new investment recently in this area. Hopple and Colerain are the center of this community, which actively seeks out industrial neighbors while stabilizing its retail district and residential fabric. The area also has a local-serving retail district that continues to sustain itself albeit through some level of economic difficulty.

DISTRIBUTION OF PARCELS BY PARCEL SIZE (SF)



- » Stakeholders in the Hopple Street interchange area rightly recognize that this vicinity is a natural location for industrial and quasi-industrial businesses as well as local-serving retail and office users that have a need to co-locate with these heavy users. There are physical access barriers, including tight turnarounds and steep topography that are difficult for large trucks to negotiate, that likely serve as a barrier to market-driven development and absorption potential. Proposed access, ingress, and egress improvements associated with the interchange redesign should address these growth constraints. Meanwhile, neighborhood growth in the form of housing development show some viability but currently only as development-subsidized housing that is sponsored by the Camp Washington CDC.
- » While market-driven development deals will likely respond to transportation improvements and lead to development and redevelopment of existing and underutilized industrial sites for production/industrial activity, major future redevelopment in and around the Hopple Street exit will be linked to the future expansion plans of the University of Cincinnati, nearby hospitals, and to the plans of Cincinnati State University. These institutions are built-in sources of development energy that are in fact planning major initiatives or contemplating medium-term expansion that could portend major investment in and around the exit. Cincinnati State is contemplating an energy and environment institute that will likely be influential here as well as in the I-74 interchange area, both Cincinnati State and University of Cincinnati have expressed housing development needs that

- are logical fits for Camp Washington, and the hospitals and universities are soon to be in need of research/lab facilities. These teaching and research assets – many of which are built around green energy, green building, and green technology – could find a welcome home in and around the Hopple Street interchange in addition to the I-74/Northside interchange areas.
- » As mentioned above, the University of Cincinnati and nearby hospitals have historically looked eastward into Uptown Consortium areas in order to site expansion or new facilities. However, future needs for larger-format and heavy uses are different from professional office space prevalent in Uptown and may not be easy to site there. Meanwhile, these uses are welcome neighbors in Camp Washington and Hopple Street – Camp Washington stakeholder have gone so far as to actively recruit these types of users to their neighborhood. Hopple Street and City stakeholders should keep close contact with these institutional players to ensure that their future needs are accommodated readily in this area as soon as needs arise and especially before they find reason to look beyond Cincinnati borders to satisfy these needs.
- » In the meantime special care and effort can and should be taken to ensure that private developer proposals to acquire and/or redevelop existing sites – such as the Kahn’s site – are accelerated through the permitting and development process. Special efforts should be taken to accelerate the rehabilitation and redevelopment of landmark buildings such as the Crosley Building which are symbolic in stature and prominent from I-75 and which, if

HOPPLE STREET			
10-YEAR ABSORPTION POTENTIAL	PESSIMISTIC	FAIR SHARE	AGGRESSIVE
Office (SF)	100,879	383,811	791,556
Industrial – Free-Standing (SF)	504,295	1,017,034	1,972,864
Industrial – Flex/R&D (SF)	4,237	5,582	21,027
Residential – Single-Family (Units)	21	308	321
Residential – Multi-Family (Units)	95	840	928
Retail (SF)	17,561	98,416	134,454

properly re-occupied, would send a powerful signal to the market that Hopple Street and Camp Washington are once again “open for business” again.

- » While the existing retail district in this area is local-serving in nature and will grow in strength as more jobs are added, the area has tremendous untapped retail potential as a regional-serving retail destination. It is centrally-located to numerous Cincinnati submarkets that are chronically under-supplied with respect to large format retail (medium-box and even big-box stores) and currently must leave the market area or even the City in order to purchase goods sold in these format stores. Visibility, traffic volumes, access, and supply-demand conditions suggest that this market could support a very successful regional retail development – 200,000 to 400,000 SF in a lifestyle-format medium-box configuration – especially to the east of I-75. The proposed migration of City uses to the Ryerson Steel building (or perhaps other locations) certainly opens up the possibility of using this 14-acre parcel as the locus for this potential retail development.

Development Opportunities

- » Office – This area is not a natural location for larger-scale Class A (or even Class B) office space that is market-driven, but institutional users may find it convenient once their options in Uptown are exhausted. There will be some opportunity for reuse of space in Camp Washington, but this will be value driven. Over the longer-term, there may be potential to move some back-office or administrative functions here, especially if space is marketed as a value proposition and the Uptown and CBD show signs of scarcity.

- » Retail – Excellent opportunity for neighborhood-serving retail, especially east of I-75 in what is now city property. There are no comparable retail sites that have ready-to-develop parcels with excellent vehicular access anywhere nearby. Persistent conditions of undersupply of approximately \$200M annually and excellent access only enhance this opportunity.
- » Residential – The industrial surroundings hamper new, market-rate residential opportunities in today’s market. There will continue to be some market in the Camp Washington area for reinvestment in existing stock (possibly with live-work configurations), and over the medium to longer term there could be adaptive reuse of multi-story industrial buildings that are suitable for residential conversion, but it is likely that the development economics of this proposition are unfavorable for some time. The Universities may have reason to catalyze the area’s housing market should they begin to site graduate student or faculty/staff housing opportunities here, or pursue the concept of University-branded alumni housing development.
- » Industrial – Should Queensgate Terminals become a reality, there may be an opportunity to site logistics facilities along the rail yard in and around Camp Washington. Meanwhile, the more intriguing opportunities are university-driven. Cincinnati State’s ambitions Energy and Environment Institute is exactly the type of anchor institution that itself consumes industrial space and generates spin-off opportunities. Even absent this institution, private developers have expressed interest in the area’s industrial stock for green-related industrial development.

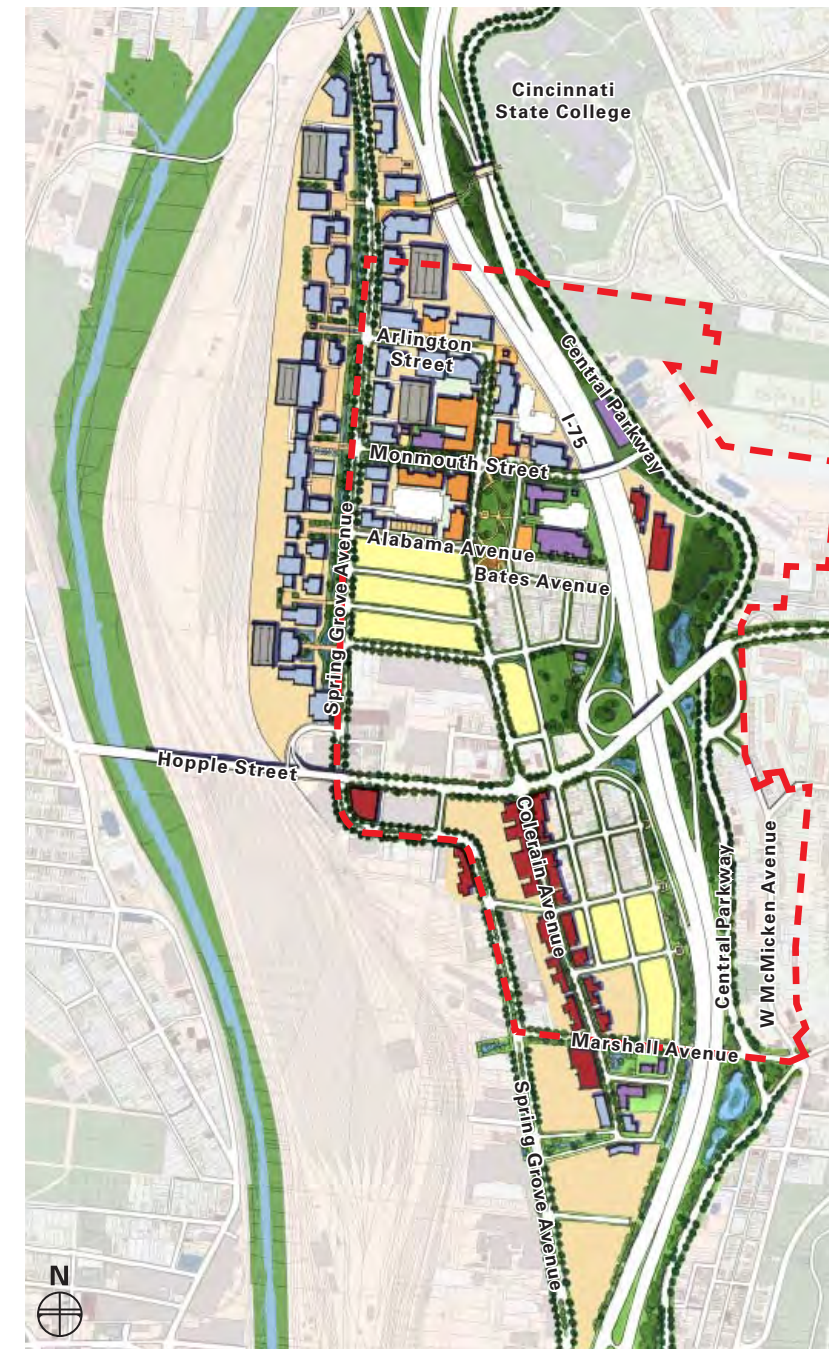
Urban Design Strategies

REVITALIZATION OF CAMP WASHINGTON will be a combination of transportation related infrastructure improvements, reuse and restoration of historic buildings, new development on vacant land, new parks and recreation areas, and strategies to create a 24-hour community. Reconstruction of the Hopple interchange will greatly improve traffic flow from I-75. When combined with planned street and trail improvements to Martin Luther King and Hopple at Spring Grove, strong linkages will be created between the uptown universities and hospitals and large redevelopment areas along Spring Grove Avenue. Future transit corridors along Central Parkway and Spring Grove Avenue will connect this area to downtown and communities to the north.

This former industrial corridor can be reconceived as a center of research in sustainable technology and energy production. The Spring Grove Avenue corridor can be branded as a zero carbon research and employment center affiliated with several nearby research institutions.

Camp Washington has the advantage of existing housing, loft buildings suitable for conversion into business uses and residential units and a beautiful “main street”. In parallel with business development, Camp Washington should continue to revitalize Colrain Avenue and encourage housing development to attract students, researchers, and professionals interested in a more sustainable form of living that has the advantages that a historic urban environment has to offer.

Although not included within this study area boundary, a similar approach to revitalization and infrastructure improvements should be extended to Western Hills Viaduct and CUF area to create a more continuous corridor down to Queensgate.

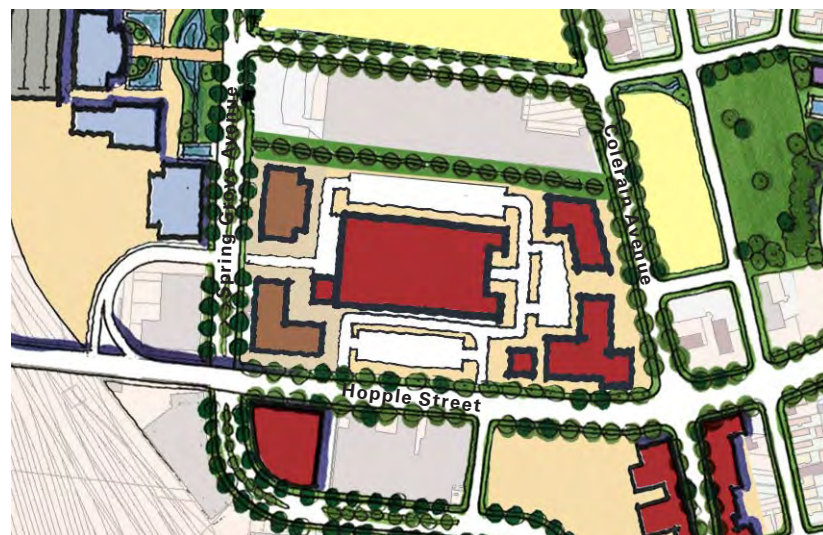


ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

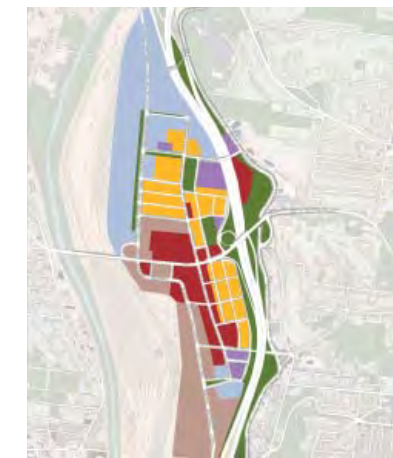
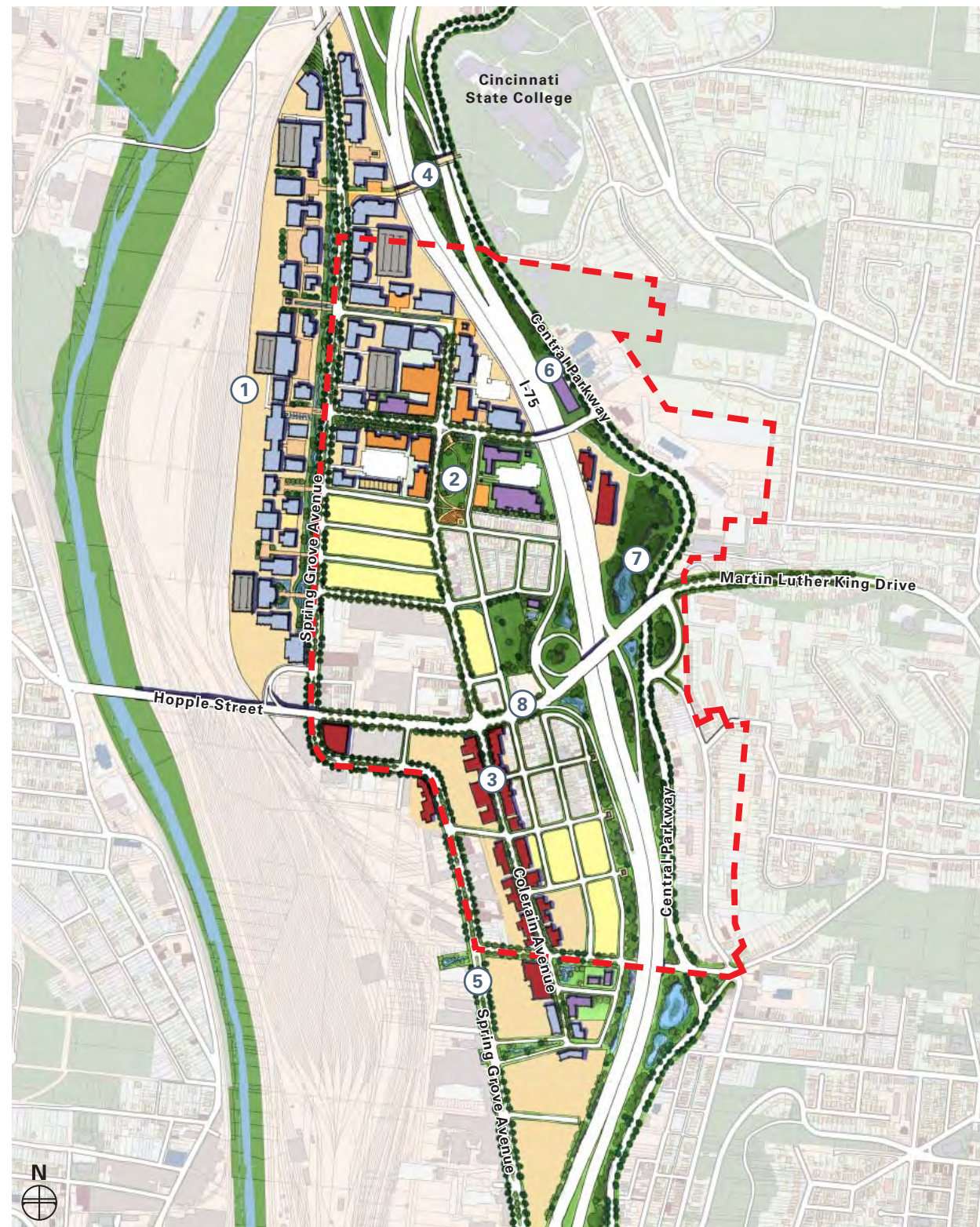
 RESIDENTIAL	 MIXED-USE	 INDUSTRIAL
 FLEX	 INSTITUTIONAL	 RESEARCH/ DEVELOPMENT

To enhance the Camp Washington neighborhood and re-establish its relevance as a vital neighborhood within the I-75 corridor, the following guiding principles should be integrated within the design:

- 1 Transform vacant industrial sites into an eco-park with research and technology facilities to help tie the relationship of the Camp Washington neighborhood to the surrounding institutions and universities.
- 2 Add a variety of uses including office, research and development, flex, and residential surrounding the park to liven the neighborhood core of Camp Washington.
- 3 Re-establish the historic commercial district (with residential above) to provide a variety of businesses and conveniences for the restored neighborhood core.
- 4 Add street, trail, and open space connections to accommodate pedestrian and bike traffic and create stronger connections between Uptown, Camp Washington, and the Western Hills.
- 5 Improve the streetscapes of major transportation corridors, such as Central Parkway and Spring Grove Avenue, to create a positive identity and gateway for the neighborhood and surrounding area.
- 6 Connect Camp Washington to Uptown, Downtown, and adjacent communities to reduce reliance on the automobile.
- 7 Locate stormwater facilities built for I-75 to serve Camp Washington to encourage future investments in separation of sanitary and storm systems.
- 8 Improve wayfinding signage to direct travelers to and/or through Camp Washington.



STUDY AREA ALTERNATIVE The alternative shows a grocer and smaller retail uses placed along Hopple Street to provide a variety of conveniences in Camp Washington



Proposed Land Use

- RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED-USE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
- OPEN SPACE

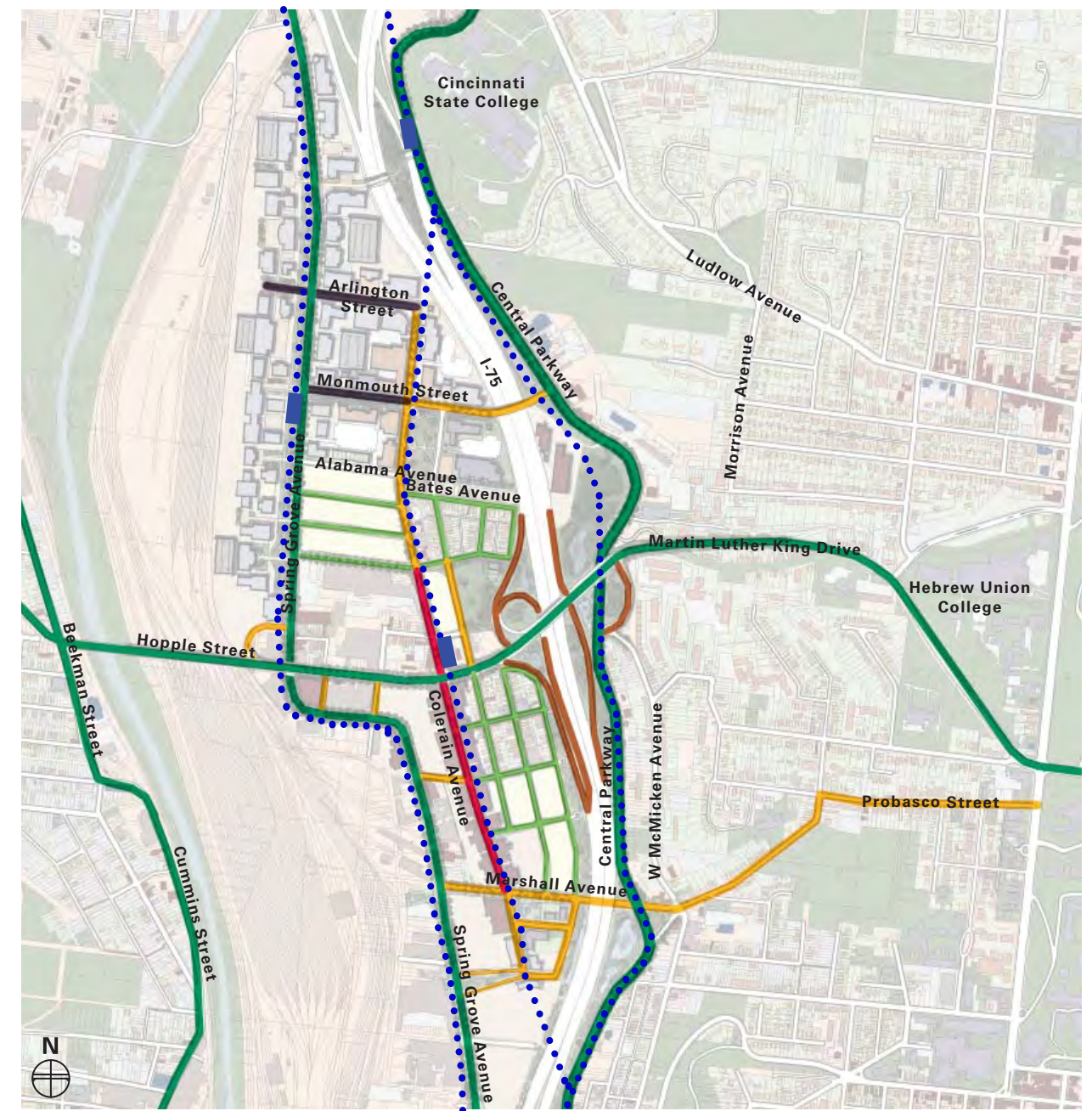
Mobility Improvements

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:

- » Emphasize (as an asset) and make priority accommodations for north-south and east-west movement patterns, and optimize for community redevelopment function.
- » Weave economic activity future into linear rail service assets.
- » Reestablish key historical connections and patterns

Spring Grove Avenue, Central Parkway, and Hopple Street/Martin Luther King Drive underpin the local street grid, and reflect more than in any other area the north-south/east-west movement conflicts associated with the Mill Creek Valley. Spring Grove and Hopple/Martin Luther King are recommended for development and management as Great Streets of this focus area, with increasing importance for accommodating demand and flow. Central Parkway is seen as a re-sized Signature Street enhanced for flow, mixed modes, and aesthetics. Colerain will evolve as the area's Main Street, supported by enhanced cross-corridor Neighborhood Street connections at Monmouth and Marshall. New Signature Streets support targeted development or value enhancement areas. A reworked I-75 interchange at Hopple will preserve existing interstate highway access, but requires further refinement to accommodate bike and pedestrian movement of the 50-year future. Appropriate signage and gateway elements are recommended to aid identity, wayfinding and modal utility.

Spring Grove, Central Parkway, and Hopple/Martin Luther King will continue to be important bus transit service spines, complimented in the future by potential LRT or BRT transit corridors along the old B&O rail alignment (to the west with a station along Beekman near Hopple), or in or along Spring Grove Avenue, or in elevated systems along Central Parkway and I-75 (east side of I-75, with an elevated station near Monmouth at Central Parkway). As an option subset of the latter concept, Colerain can be developed as a transit corridor with transit-only connections across I-75 at the north and south, better serving Camp Washington's future redevelopment template. An emphasized and designated bike/pedestrian connector across Hopple at I-75 along Central Parkway will provide important linkages for a sustainable future.



STREET CLASSIFICATIONS
 This diagram depicts the proposed street hierarchy and potential transit alignments.
 See page 76 of Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix for detailed descriptions.

■ NEW INTERCHANGE	■ OTHER SIGNATURE STREET	■ MAIN STREET	●●●● OPTIONAL TRANSIT ALIGNMENTS
■ GREAT STREET	■ NEIGHBORHOOD STREET	■ RESIDENTIAL STREET	

Open Space Improvements



CSO OVERFLOW INTENSITY MAP



VIEW OF PROPOSED OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Help reconnect Camp Washington to CUF via an improved and pedestrian oriented Hopple Street and Hopple Street interchange. Assist MSD and ODOT to find ways to integrate stormwater storage and water quality improvements in land that can be commingled like the proposed interchange and existing city maintenance facilities buildings. Employ sustainable landscape improvements on key streets to help soften the neighborhood and provide clear and safe pedestrian linkages on streets like Hopple and Spring Grove. As another important connection between the east and west sides of the valley, the Camp Washington area can achieve the following goals:

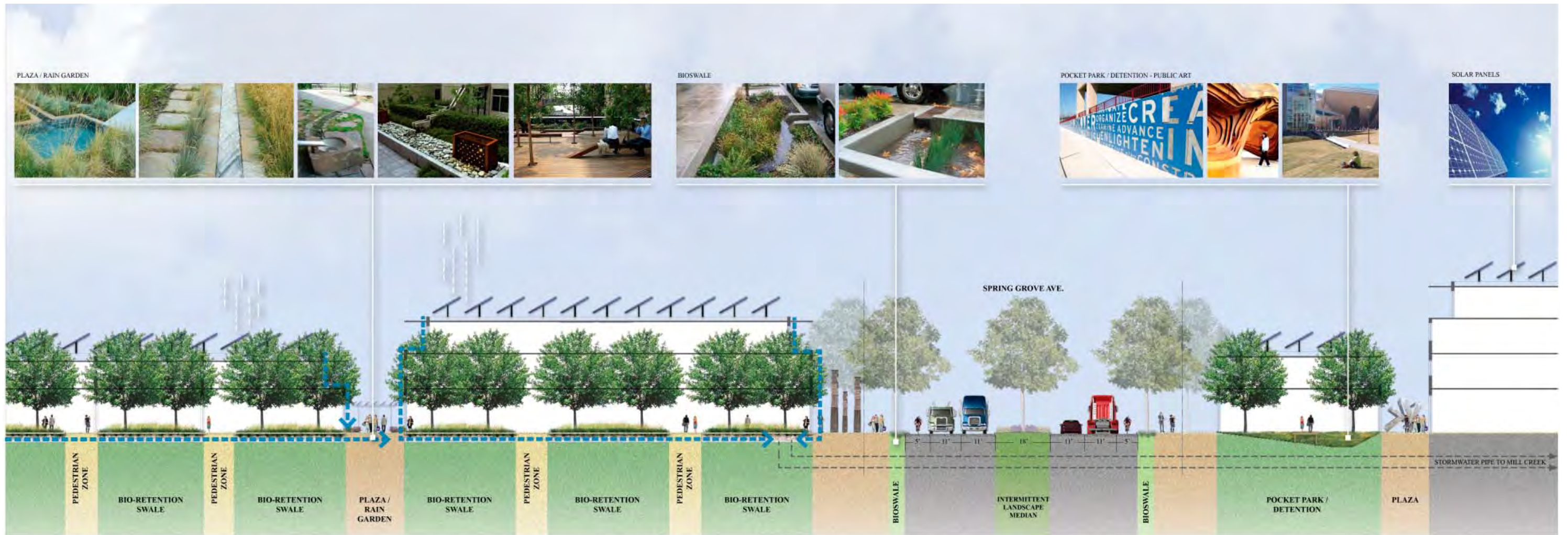
Opportunities

- 1 Create sustainable urban streetscape along Spring Grove by creating infiltration basins that can treat and store stormwater from the street and adjacent parcels.
- 2 Provide a Mill Creek multi-use trail and connections to trails from neighborhoods.
- 3 Create a new trail along Martin Luther King and Hopple Street to connect Camp Washington to the University of Cincinnati.
- 4 Create wetlands and water quality areas along Mill Creek.
- 5 Work with the City, DOTE and ODOT to create a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes on Hopple Street as it crosses the valley.
- 6 Turn Central Parkway into a parkway with new landscaping and re-vegetation on the hillsides along I-75. Integrate stormwater retention areas into the landscape.
- 7 Make improvements to Valley Park as an important neighborhood park and water filtration area for Camp Washington.



OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

Depicts improvements to natural features, parks, open spaces, and streetscapes



SPRING GROVE SECTION This section illustrates how the water can move through the linear park elements while also creating open space amenities for the residents of the neighborhood.

Collaboration between ODOT and DOTE to research separation of MLK corridor stormwater and connection to I-75 stormwater detention or infiltration efforts

Deployment of natural stormwater detention or infiltration efforts

Utilization of traditional separation and storage design components for CSO reduction

Improved wayfinding signage that ties to the greater city signage.

There is a nascent body of new technology companies and collaborative organizations, such as LiveWell, that will have space needs once the economy recovers. Some of these entities have already expressed an interest in sites in the area for the types of green industrial sites discussed above

Optimization of I-75 runoff separation or detention for maximum benefit to critical CSOs

Development of innovative stormwater solutions for an area cut off from Mill Creek by a heavy rail corridor

Pursuit of opportunities to construct water feature recreational areas west of I-75

Embark on a Study to improve the connection between Hopple Street and Spring Grove Avenue

University of Cincinnati is space-constrained and seeking opportunities for expansion. They are also considering new areas to develop housing for students, faculty/staff, and alumni. These efforts are years away from being materialized, but may be important to the area's future

Cincinnati State is embarking on an ambitious "Energy and Environment" institute that will be in need of clean industrial space near campus

Consider routing transit corridor through Camp Washington instead of around it along the opposite side of I-75

The Energy Bill working its way through Congress may catalyze nationwide investment in alternative energy technologies, many of which could be produced in Cincinnati itself. The MSA is projected to have the highest number of green jobs added to its workforce over the next 30 years in the state.

Key Initiatives

Through the analysis and planning phases, issues were identified and strategies were brainstormed for the best long-term solutions. The vision for Hopple Street remained a public process that incorporated neighborhood plans, existing public improvements scheduled for construction, and community involvement for reviewing design alternatives. As a result, key initiatives in economic development, neighborhood revitalization, green infrastructure and transportation improvements were determined.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVES

- » Collaboration between ODOT and DOTE to research separation of MLK corridor stormwater and connection to I-75 stormwater detention or infiltration efforts
- » Deployment of natural stormwater detention or infiltration efforts
- » Utilization of traditional separation and storage design components for CSO reduction
- » Optimization of I-75 runoff separation or detention for maximum benefit to critical CSOs
- » Development of innovative stormwater solutions for an area cut off from Mill Creek by a heavy rail corridor
- » Pursuit of opportunities to construct water feature recreational areas west of I-75

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

- » Embark on a study to improve the connection between Hopple Street and Spring Grove Avenue
- » Consider routing transit corridor through Camp Washington instead of around it along the opposite side of I-75
- » Improve wayfinding signage that ties to the greater city signage program.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

- » University of Cincinnati is space-constrained and seeking opportunities for expansion. They are also considering new areas to develop housing for students, faculty/staff, and alumni. These efforts are years away from being materialized, but may be important to the area's future
- » There is a nascent body of new technology companies and collaborative organizations, such as LiveWell, that will have space needs once the economy recovers. Some of these entities have already expressed an interest in sites in the area for the types of green industrial sites discussed above
- » Cincinnati State is embarking on an ambitious Energy and Environment Institute that will be in need of clean industrial space near campus
- » The Energy Bill working its way through Congress may catalyze nationwide investment in alternative energy technologies, many of which could be produced in Cincinnati itself. The MSA is projected to have the highest number of green jobs added to its workforce over the next 30 years in the state.



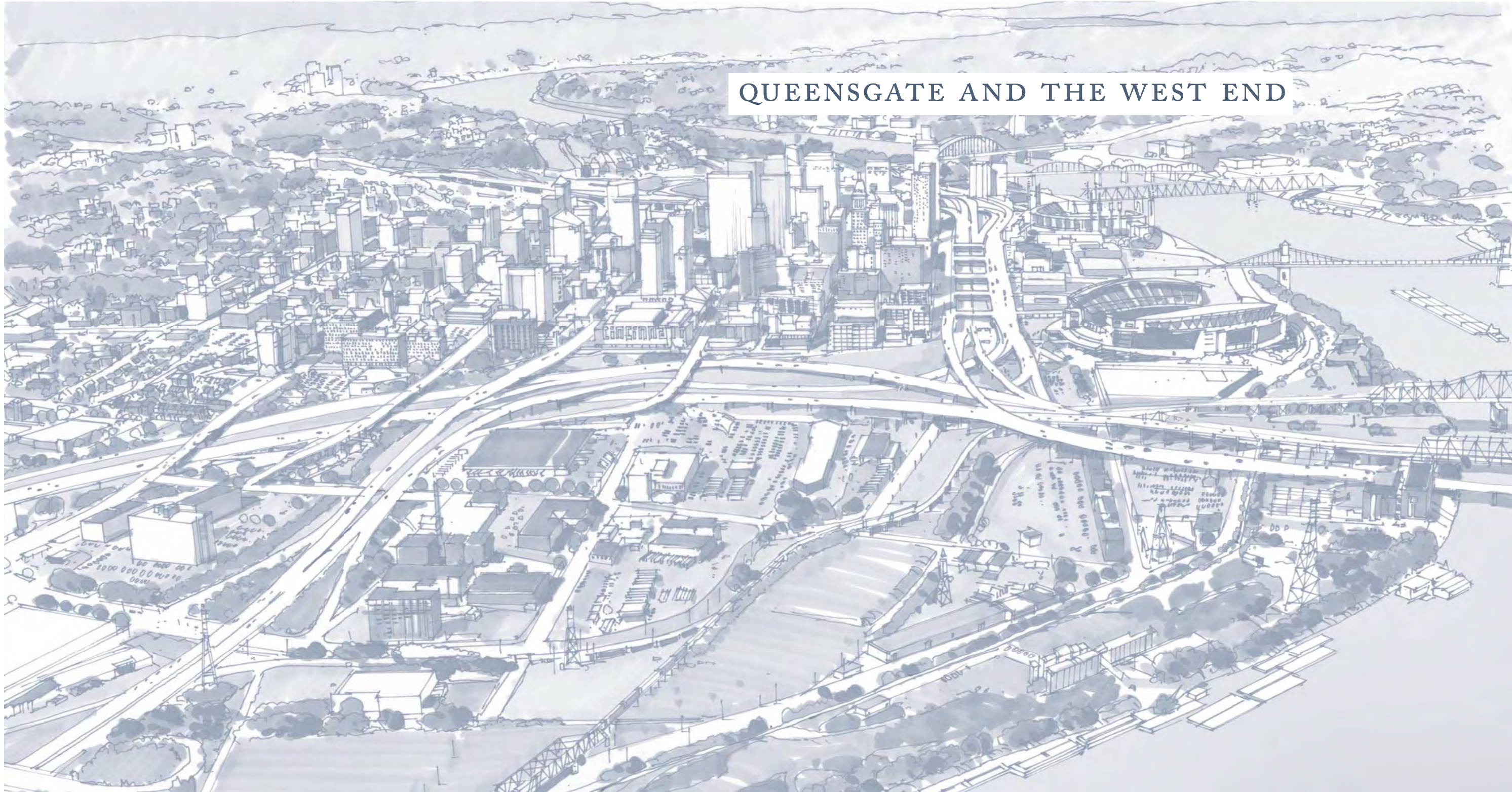
EXISTING CONDITIONS BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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QUEENSGATE AND THE WEST END



Challenges and Opportunities

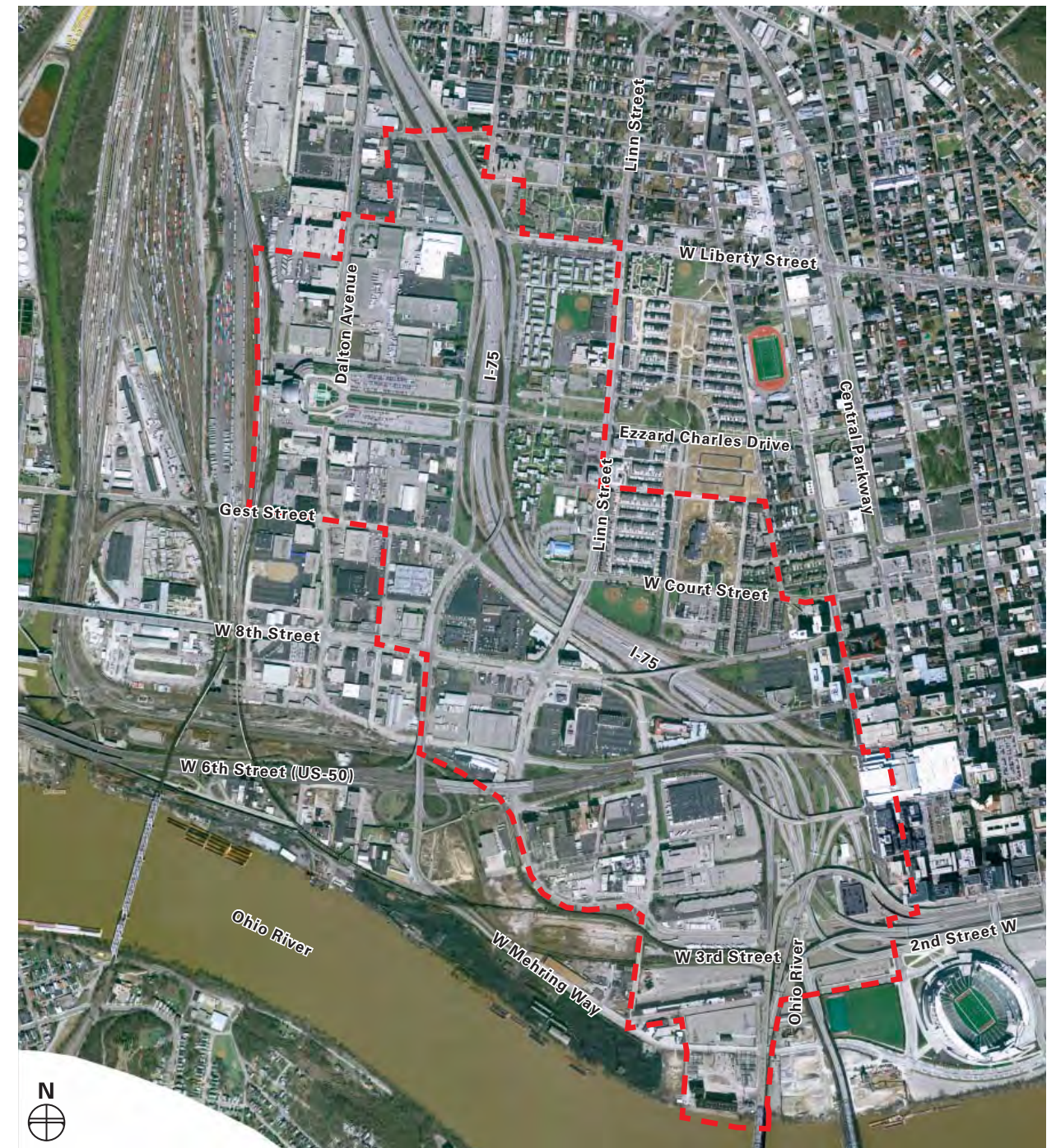


THE QUEENSGATE AREA IS located adjacent to Cincinnati's Central Business District (CBD) and across I-75 from the West End neighborhoods. This area was the location of some of the first settlements in Cincinnati and continues to provide opportunities due to its proximity to commerce and transportation options.

Currently, industrial and commercial uses are the primary land uses in the area. It can be said that Queensgate is the "kitchen" of the city, producing and prepping products and services that keep the city functioning. As industries in the twenty-first century evolve, the purpose of the area must also evolve to meet the needs of current and emerging economies and industries.

As the City positions itself to compete for a new generation of industries, transportation demands will increase and land values along the restored Mill Creek Valley will rise, attracting redevelopment. While a portion of the district is likely to remain industrial uses related to the port, other uses may transition into mixed-use or flex spaces surrounding the museum district. The port itself will likely sustain growth as a modal transfer point. Light industrial or commercial uses can use land more efficiently by structuring and sharing parking.

Vehicular connectivity to Queensgate is limited by physical constraints on three sides. In addition, grade changes and the alignments of rail lines complicate road-based transportation routes. Overcoming these constraints by reconnecting to downtown and the western neighborhoods will reverse the disorienting patterns and improve the vitality of this area. The goal should be to improve the intuitiveness of the district so that everyday users and visitors can understand clearly the relationship to the city and capitalize on its strengths. By doing this, the draw for new industries and corporations will increase greatly.





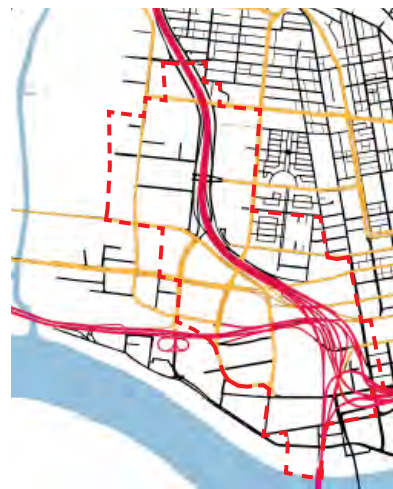
STUDY AREA The Portrait drawing is a map of the study area with buildings and parcels color coded by current uses.

- EXISTING RESIDENTIAL
- EXISTING INSTITUTIONS
- EXISTING COMMERCIAL
- VACANT PROPERTY
- PARKS & OPEN SPACE
- EXISTING INDUSTRIAL



BUILDING FOOTPRINTS

The building footprints in Queensgate indicate larger uses such as office and industrial. The voids created by I-75, the rail, and the Mill Creek illustrate the isolation of this district from the core fabric of the city.



STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

Queensgate is bounded by highways (I-75 and US-50) on two sides. The grid of streets and blocks that exists on the east side of I-75 does not extend across. The street network in Queensgate consists of larger arterials and blocks with fewer connections.



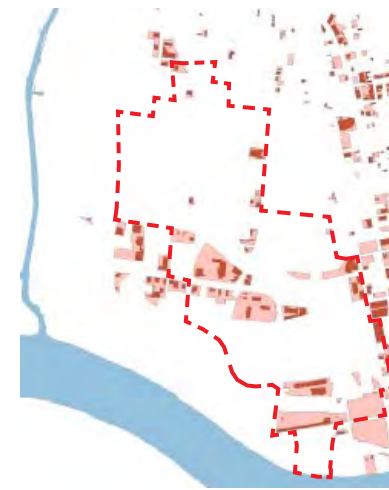
RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT

Residential settlements exist primarily outside of Queensgate. Former residential areas were displaced during the building of the highway. New residential infill projects are helping to extend the west end neighborhoods towards Queensgate. Historic districts can be seen to the north.



PARKING LOTS

Parking lots are larger within Queensgate to relate to the larger, more industrially driven uses. This high percentage of underutilized lands very close to the City's center represents a great opportunity for redevelopment on Cincinnati's west side adjacent to the central business district.



COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial land uses extend into Queensgate's southern area. These patterns are larger users and blocks than the commercial uses in the Central Business District. The commercial uses are also disconnected from the core and neighborhoods by I-75.



PARKS, RECREATION, AND INSTITUTIONS

Queensgate is the home to Union Station which serves as the City's museum complex, an invaluable cultural resource visited by many. While Queensgate is not rich in park space, there are great opportunities to connect across to some of the City's greatest cultural assets.



INDUSTRIAL USES

Industrial land uses constitute the majority of uses in Queensgate. Historically this was driven by the presence of the rail lines and opportunities to connect to industrial docks along the Ohio River.



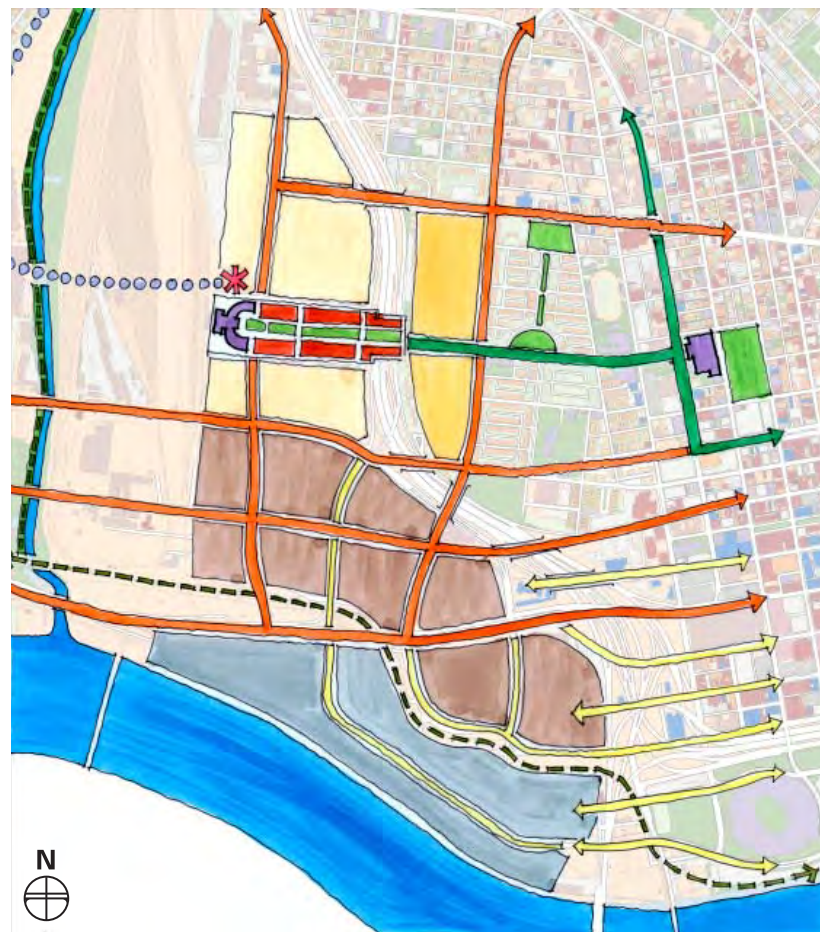
LANDFORMS

The Queensgate district lies in the valley of the Mill Creek on the same flat stretch as the Central Business District. This area was the first settled in Cincinnati because of its accessible landform. The flat quality supports redevelopment and highlights the district's access to waterways.

Planning Process

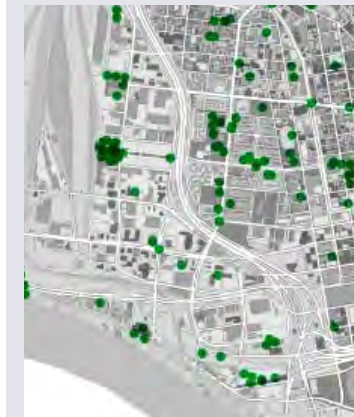
Throughout the public process, City staff, focus groups, the steering committee, and dedicated public meetings provided opportunities for discussion about Queensgate’s current condition and visions for the future. The summary of input from these discussions is displayed in the table to the right. Taking these assessments from stakeholders, the City and Steering Group developed a set of design principles by which to test proposals for Queensgate and the West End neighborhood:

- 1 Extend trail from Mill Creek corridor to the Banks
- 2 Reinforce the Union Terminal as a destination and an area for redevelopment
- 3 Create a future transit hub at Union Terminal
- 4 Improve the surface street network
- 5 Look critically at recommended plan for the Brent Spence Bridge
- 6 Improve street design for multi-modal use
- 7 Develop large floor plate uses
- 8 Decrease impervious surfaces – green up the streets and blocks
- 9 Create sustainable development standards (reduce heat islands, pervious surfaces, tree canopies, central energy, geothermal)



INITIATIVE DIAGRAM The initiative diagram illustrates the strengths that the community identified and some of the visions for the future, including connections to existing cultural and open space amenities in the city.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT



STRENGTHS

- » Potential to be “the gateway” to west side neighborhoods
- » Prime location for consolidating land for redevelopment
- » Centrally located between numerous jobs in downtown and the neighborhoods that are in the vicinity
- » Adjacency to the natural features of the Ohio River and the Mill Creek
- » Historical buildings: Union Terminal, Longworth Hall, and the old Post Office
- » Access to rail yards, ports, and interstate



WEAKNESSES

- » Lack of coherent street network and poor signage for vehicle traffic
- » Few connections to adjacent neighborhoods/ areas
- » Minimal green space
- » Vacant properties and outdated buildings in poor condition
- » Inefficient land use
- » Lack of variety with no central focus
- » Isolated areas with no eyes on the street are a cause for security concerns
- » Constraints: highway, railway, Mill Creek, and Ohio River
- » Poor image and first impression for the City of Cincinnati
- » Unappealing and inaccessible portions of the Mill Creek and Ohio River



VISIONS

- » A recreational waterway that connects parks, the Mill Creek, the Ohio River, and a future trail network
- » Penetration points and public access to the Ohio River
- » A more interesting and unique “gateway” for Cincinnati
- » Better use of land development
- » An enhanced industrial park based around sustainable and green industries
- » Maintaining “the gems of the city”- the good architecture
- » Central Parkway should become a boulevard and alternative route into the city
- » Restore Western Hills Viaduct and the intersection at Linn Street and Central Parkway
- » Incorporating historical aspects of the region as landmarks

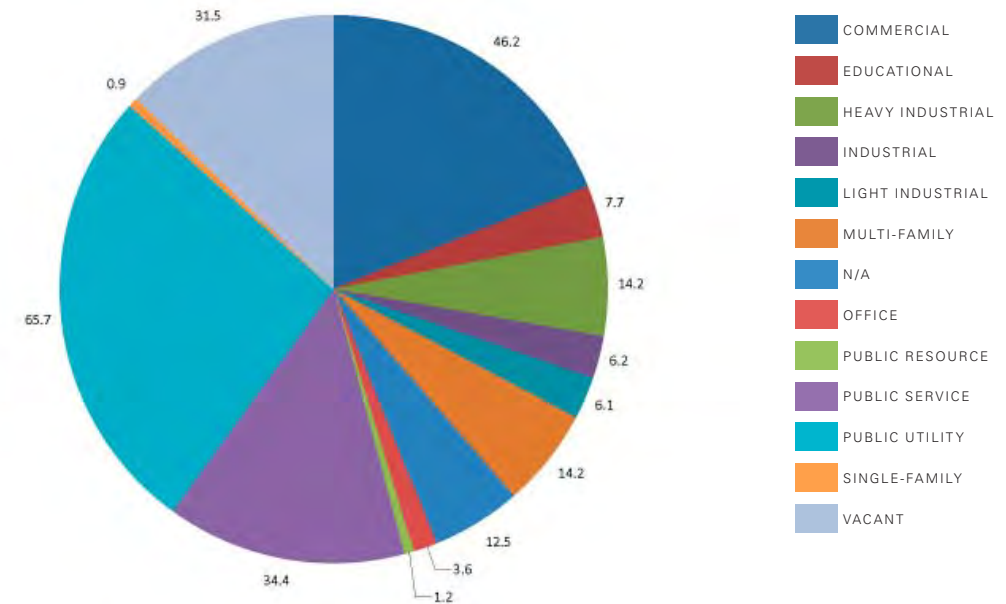
Economic Development Opportunities

Queensgate is a major shipping and logistics center for Cincinnati given its proximity to the Ohio River, I-75, and the CSX/Norfolk Southern railyard. It is a highly visible location given its location close to the Brent Spence Bridge, the Ohio River, I-75, and Cincinnati’s Central Business District. It boasts some of the best transportation access in the entire metro region: it is proximate to (but physically separated from) the CBD; several cross-interstate roadways provide access to the CBD and other intown neighborhoods; and rail and barge access to the area is recognized as among the best in the Midwest.

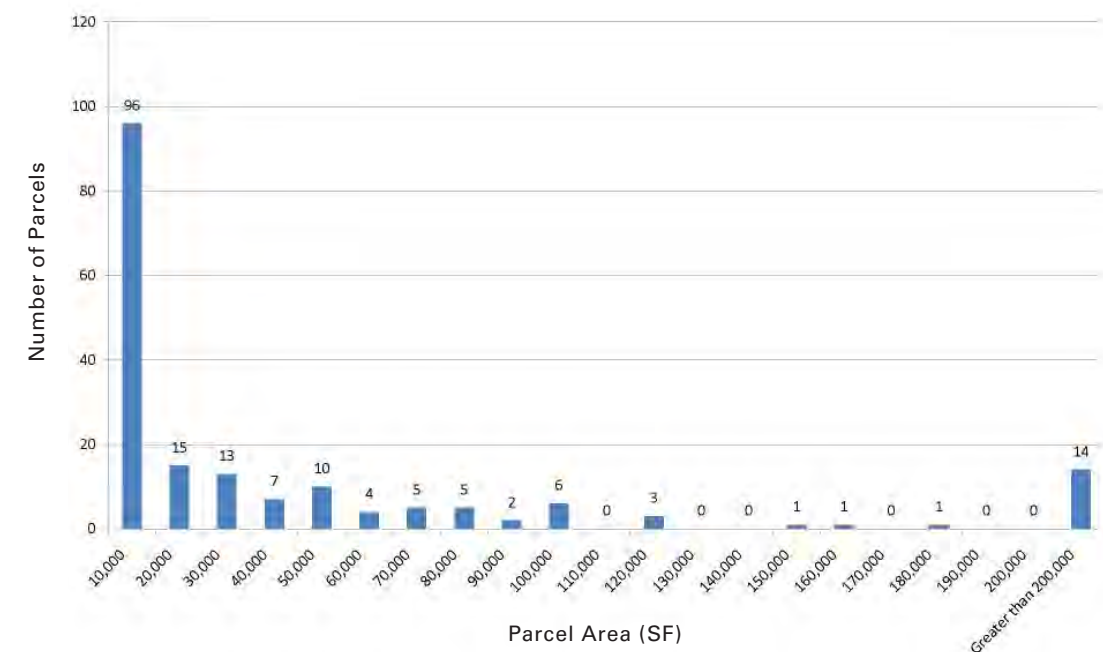
Much of the building stock is antiquated multi-story industrial and functionally obsolete. Core industrial and production users in the area have expressed difficulty in expanding their operations because of parcel fragmentation and the presence of numerous outdated buildings. Many may or may not be brownfields and some are functionally obsolete and expensive to redevelop. As a percentage of total land area consumed, land classified as “industrial” comprises only 10% of the total land area in Queensgate.

As a result, the area has quietly absorbed a variety of office users that are choosing to occupy formerly industrial space in order to be proximate to the CBD in large-format quasi-industrial footprints and without paying CBD prices. Meanwhile, a stable residential area – City West, one of the more successful residential developments in the City – is located within the study area east of I-75. Finally, the Cincinnati Museum Center is a treasured resource with a storied tradition and is one of the state’s most-visited places.

ACRES OF LAND BY EXISTING LAND USE



DISTRIBUTION OF PARCELS BY PARCEL SIZE (SF)



New development opportunities in and around Queensgate are limited primarily due to the fragmented nature of parcels and the redevelopment costs associated with older industrial buildings and contaminated sites. Available tracts of land with or without buildings are on average 10 acres and parcel shapes that vary and are rarely regular. Meanwhile, the market for new industrial development of all types demands minimum sizes of 10 acres and ideally in a square or regular configuration. Solving issues of parcel size mismatch, aggregating enough land to be development feasible, demolishing older structures, remediating contaminated properties, and improving access to transportation infrastructure will be key to catalyzing additional development in this area.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- » Office – Tremendous opportunity to infuse the Cincinnati market with larger-format office space and create a successful “CBD-adjacent” area that can recapture demand that is otherwise flowing towards exurban locations such as Blue Ash and Kenwood.
- » Retail – Southern portion, west of I-75 is not a natural location for retail given heavy industrial uses, lack of drive-by traffic, and very small residential base. More natural location may be closer to the Cincinnati Union Terminal and east of I-75 closer to redeveloping residential areas and also as an outgrowth of activity taking place in Over the Rhine.
- » Residential – Most opportunity exists on the east side of I-75 where residential redevelopment is already taking place. This will occur first as block by block redevelopment. Longer-term potential exists around the Union Terminal perhaps in conjunction with a planned transit-oriented development.
- » Industrial – Opportunity to capture new industrial activity and provide expansion opportunities for existing businesses if parcel size mismatch and availability of modern land parcels can be resolved. Potential for logistics and shipping uses pending decision on shipping and logistics port.

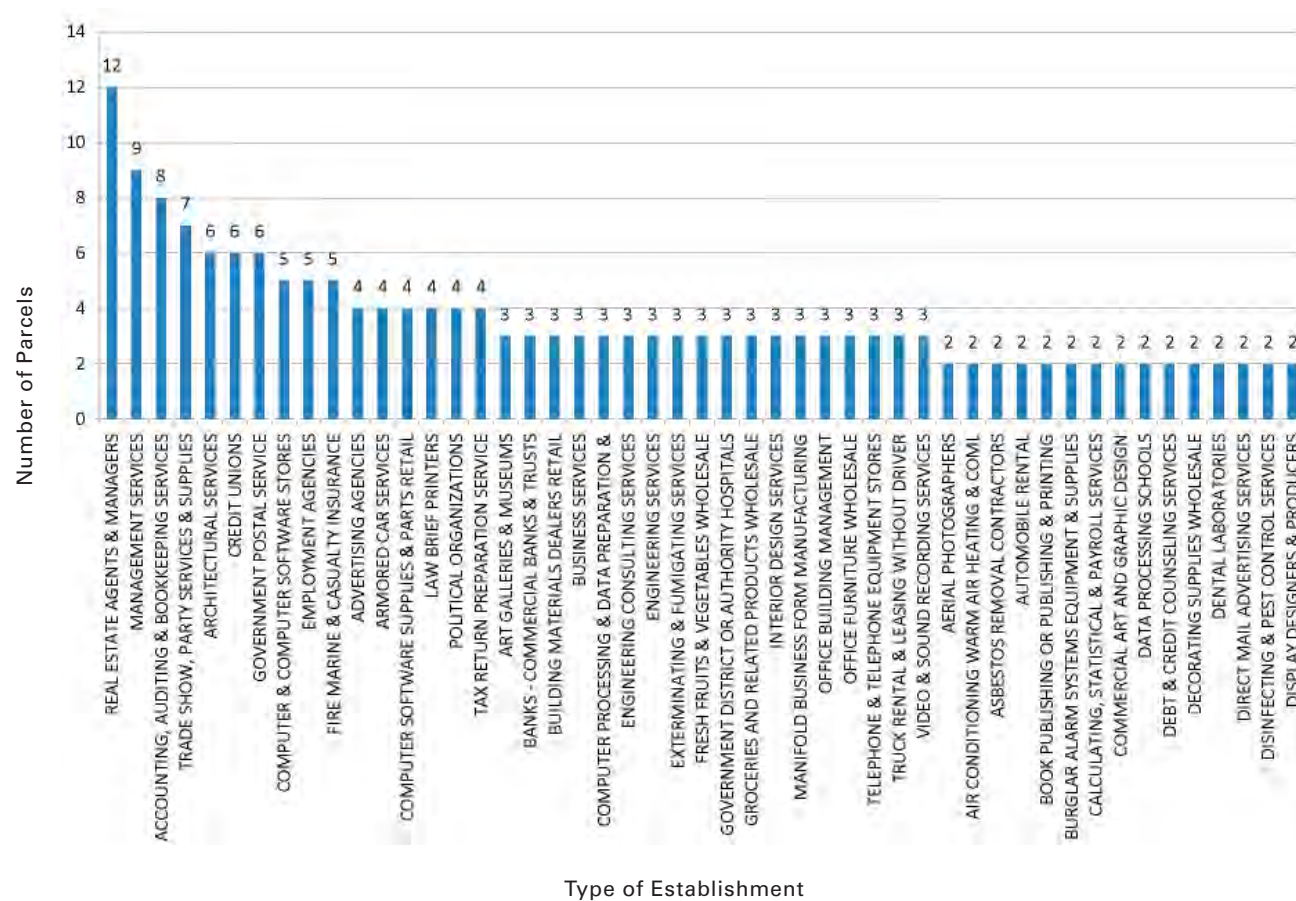
DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES

Multiple trajectories exist for Queensgate, some of which are already being explored by Cincinnati stakeholders. Several stakeholders have embraced the notion of an expanded shipping and logistics center as part of an expanded container-ready port facility. Others are strategizing land-banking efforts to create parcels suitable for renewed industrial development. Some have floated the idea of Queensgate as a location for low-rise office buildings distinct from CBD office structures and attractive to cost-conscious tenants who have fled to the suburbs. Still others have promoted the Museum Center as a catalyst for mixed-use and transit-oriented development that links eastward with CityWest and Over-the-Rhine.

What is clear from the market analysis and inspection of development opportunities is that robust redevelopment in Queensgate is unlikely to become a reality barring a major intervention such as one of the concepts listed above.

- » Port activity and rail yard activity/development/enhancement will impact this area’s demand for industrial real estate, particularly for logistics activities and end-user assembly. Area furthest south and along rail yard will be natural location for logistics activity, while areas buffering the rail line could be used for end-user assembly and repackaging. These users, however, typically demand large quantities of flat-line industrial space with very low job densities. This means that significant land assembly would be necessary to make these facilities possible. Moreover, these activities do not need to locate adjacent to an adjacent port facility, and there are initiatives underway to build exactly these types of facilities beyond Cincinnati’s city limits. Finally, while a thorough investigation of the future of Cincinnati port activity is beyond the scope of this study, initial inspection of market and demand data as well as supply chain throughout the eastern United States indicate that aspirations for a robust shipping and logistics center in Cincinnati may be aggressive.

BUSINESSES IN QUEENSGATE UPPER FIFTIETH PERCENTILE BY NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS



QUEENSGATE			
10-YEAR ABSORPTION POTENTIAL	PESSIMISTIC	FAIR SHARE	AGGRESSIVE
Office (SF)	50,439	191,905	395,778
Industrial – Free-Standing (SF)	90,823	107,395	1,274,407
Industrial - Flex/R&D (SF)	3,178	3,703	31,541
Residential – Single-Family (Units)	0	0	0
Residential – Multi-Family (Units)	95	840	928
Retail (SF)	9,103	60,412	89,399

- » The proximity to Central Business District makes Queensgate an ideal candidate for the creation of a CBD extension populated with modern, lower-rise buildings that have been common in the office developments in Cincinnati suburbs. Examples from other cities, such as San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., show that these places, when created, compete well with suburban jurisdictions for cost-conscious tenants who desire “drivable suburban” office configurations. However, parcelization and land assembly in addition to creating a strong physical connection to the CBD will be key to making this a reality.
- » The core of existing industrial users remaining in Queensgate suggest there is indeed a market demand for the location and that some users are willing to tolerate aged buildings and land configurations in order to enjoy this location. In fact, the region’s Central quadrant has actually gained market share of freestanding industrial space over the last five years, while maintaining near top-of-market rents. Making room for additional users would require a targeted industry recruitment and confirmation effort, as the re-creation of new industrial space from old carries with the opportunity cost of creating office, residential, or logistics spaces that cannot occupy the same land.
- » The Cincinnati Museum Center is already a center of tourism activity and may be a center of transit-oriented development activity. Proposals to add low-density office and multiple if not mixed-use buildings adjacent to the structure suggest that creation of a walkable urban precinct that can combine the energies of Over-the Rhine with pent-up demand for office and retail development. With extension in 3CD regional rail, light rail along I-75, and streetcar connecting across the interstate to downtown proximate neighborhoods, this could become a transit-oriented development core providing an opportunity for commercial and residential development.

Cincinnati stakeholders alone must determine which of the catalytic directions above they wish to pursue and use as a vehicle to improve the climate of investment in and around Queensgate. What must be understood, however, is the fact that the above four interventions may not all be possible simultaneously, or even sequentially. Shipping and logistics facilities are not the type of neighbors that catalyze demand for mixed use and residential environs, nor are they particularly easy neighbors to reconcile with low-rise office space. Similarly, residential and transit-oriented development may preclude the assembly and redevelopment of industrial land so critical to the city if it wants to recapture industrial activity and especially position itself to capture “green” jobs that are anticipated to be strong in the Cincinnati market. Ultimately, stakeholders will have to choose a direction to follow based upon desired policy outcomes, and strive to ensure that the land uses that follow from the intervention are supported through construction and occupancy.

EFFECTS OF A STREETCAR LINE

It is widely accepted that fixed rail transportation improvements have positive impacts on real estate values. This is no different for Cincinnati, and in particular, Queensgate. RCLCO research into the real estate impacts of streetcar investments confirmed this again in 2009. Analysis of real estate value increases as a result of streetcar introduction showed value increases of 400% (or higher) in the case study cities of Seattle, Tampa, and Portland. Value increases were most pronounced when the streetcar was introduced into an existing industrial or under-developed area, as the introduction of the streetcar catalyzed new investment and new development that otherwise would not have taken place. The impacts are most pronounced within a 300 foot distance of the linear length of the line.

RCLCO modeled a hypothetical streetcar alignment modification that would bring the proposed streetcar line through Queensgate rather than directly to the CBD (as depicted in the Transportation

Network diagram on the following Mobility Improvements page). Based upon preliminary modeling of the potential for this alignment to generate value, there is reason to believe that such an alignment could create as much as \$60M in property values alone, and untold spinoff effects in job creation, retail sales, and enhanced investment opportunity for sites connected to the streetcar in the CBD. The chart below summarizes the current and potential value of the land within a 300 foot distance from a Queensgate streetcar alignment.

QUEENSGATE STREETCAR VALUE STATISTICS						
EXISTING LAND USE	CURRENT LAND VALUE (\$2009)	CURRENT IMPROVEMENT VALUE (\$2009)	TOTAL	VALUE INCREASE AS A RESULT OF STREETCAR	ADJUSTED VALUE	VALUE CREATED
SF	\$1,689,170	\$10,959,830	\$12,649,000	68.6%	\$21,326,214	\$8,677,214
O	\$7,569,400	\$37,772,500	\$45,341,900	13.3%	\$51,372,373	\$6,030,473
VA	\$2,456,820	\$290,120	\$2,746,940	32.1%	\$3,628,708	\$881,768
HI	\$1,533,900	\$2,843,880	\$4,377,780	8.2%	\$4,736,758	\$358,978
LI	\$3,128,120	\$3,788,160	\$6,916,280	8.2%	\$7,483,415	\$567,135
IN	\$597,700	\$4,750,000	\$5,347,700	8.2%	\$5,786,211	\$438,511
C	\$47,042,370	\$508,491,000	\$555,533,370	13.0%	\$627,752,708	\$72,219,338
TF	\$116,060	\$427,940	\$544,000	68.6%	\$917,184	\$373,184
PR	\$1,890	\$0	\$1,890	N/A	N/A	N/A
PS	\$8,850,000	\$20,688,450	\$29,538,450	N/A	N/A	N/A
PU	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A	N/A	N/A
MF	\$5,182,800	\$10,218,470	\$15,401,270	20.3%	\$18,527,728	\$3,126,458
Total	\$78,168,230	\$600,230,350	\$678,398,580	69%	\$741,531,299	\$63,132,719

Urban Design Strategies

THE PRIMARY DESIGN STRATEGIES in the Queensgate district are reestablishing connections east and west thus maximizing its proximity to downtown, the rail, and the Mill Creek. Streets will be extended over I-75 back into Downtown and West End neighborhood networks wherever possible. The area surrounding Union Terminal is an excellent opportunity to capitalize on the continuity from the east. New development will line the plaza with shops and additional attractions. Surrounding uses may include retail, residential, and flex space as the district develops.

A major street grid creates legible circulation and development sites for larger users, ranging from 10 to 20 acres. As uses transition and evolve, the blocks have the opportunity to be subdivided by a secondary street grid. This will ensure the greatest flexibility for the area in the future while providing ideal sites for new industrial development.

Enhanced connections to the west will establish Queensgate as the gateway to the city. Connecting to Lower Price Hill and other neighborhoods to the west will also allow greater access to the Mill Creek open space system.

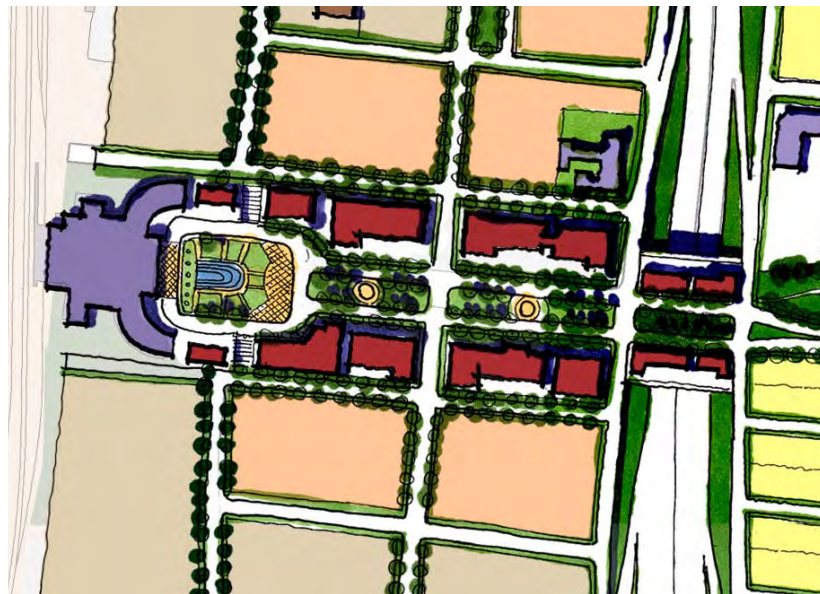
The open space network that runs down the Mill Creek Valley will terminate at the Ohio River and connect to the trail system in the riverfront development. The integrated open space systems allows for both a trail network for passive outdoor recreation as well as daylighted stormwater management trains. A larger community park can be developed east of the new Brent Spence Bridge which provides access to the river and links pedestrians to the stadium and riverfront development.

The proposed plan incorporates ODOT's current alignment for the Brent Spence Bridge segment.



The development of the Queensgate district should hold the following guiding principles:

- 1 Reconfigure I-75, US-50, and Fort Washington Way ramp system to maximize land area for development adjacent to downtown including an expansion of the convention center
- 2 Reconnect street grid across I-75 to engage the West End and create a legible pattern of frequent streets and smaller blocks
- 3 Enhance the Union Terminal district by developing shops and other museums along the plaza
- 4 Consolidate and prepare large sites for industries and corporations supportive to Downtown.
- 5 Connect the Mill Creek open space system with trails in the riverfront development
- 6 Leverage opportunities to use open space for naturalized stormwater management, collecting run-off from I-75, Queensgate, and the central business district
- 7 Connect to riverfront
- 8 Carefully mediate grade separated crossings to minimize the impact of barriers like I-75 and the rail lines



UNION TERMINAL PLAZA ALTERNATE 2 A second option may to create a more usable space with shops and additional cultural amenities which still preserves the axial views of the station.



Proposed Land Use Map

- INDUSTRIAL
- MIXED-USE
- OFFICE AND MIXED-USE
- INSTITUTIONAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- OPEN SPACE

Mobility Improvements

The mobility framework of this focus area has been highly modified over the past 50 years and is now at a crossroads. Dalton Avenue, Linn Street, Liberty Street, Ezzard Charles Drive, Gest Street, West 8th Street, and Mehring Way form the basic structure of the local street grid; 6th Street was converted to an expressway in the 1960s. Under this framework alternative, West 8th, Linn and Liberty are envisioned as Great Streets incorporating special accommodation of other modes and compelling aesthetic signatures. Dalton and Gest/West Court will be recast as a Signature Streets complimenting the economic development strategies of the Go Cincinnati and Metro West plans. Ezzard Charles, another Signature Street of the 50-year future, has an important role in facilitating new transit connections and economic investment in the Museum Center area. Mehring Way would have continued special function in commerce access from I-75 and commuter connections between the Westside and

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 50-YEAR FUTURE:

- » Refine current plans to reflect evolving CBD and Queensgate template, and future centers of activity, commerce and connectivity.
- » Assert visual and aesthetic expectations for 50-year picture.
- » Position project delivery to best leverage assets and benefits to City beyond first-cost and footprint.

lower CBD and also serves as the alignment for the new bicycle trail. I-75 “current alignment” improvements pose significant challenges and limitations. Access to and from the CBD could remain “as-is” below 9th street. From 9th north, purposeful boulevard-level consolidation and distribution of access to and from the freeway would occur. Parts of West 8th and Freeman would take on new importance in interstate connections.

The bus network could remain largely unchanged under this scenario. Complimentary transit investments include passenger rail to the Museum Center/Union Terminal, street-running circulator (hybrid bus or streetcar) from the Museum Center to the Music Hall district and on east to the proposed gaming district, and potential LRT or BRT transit corridors 1) along the CSX/old B&O rail alignment (station at the Metro West development site), 2) along Dalton and dedicated way (stations at the Museum Center and Riverfront Transit Center) 3) in the existing subway tunnels (station at Liberty), or 4) in or along part of reconstructed I-75 and dedicated way (stations at the Museum Center and Riverfront Transit Center).

In addition to the current Downtown Streetcar Loop (north/south) proposal, this scenario includes a Queensgate Streetcar Loop (east/west). This Loop would serve the riverfront including Paul Brown Stadium, the Banks development, Reds ballpark and the city’s largest office towers along 2nd and 3rd Streets with transfer points to the Downtown Loop in this zone. Running through Queensgate, the Loop would promote major reinvestment projects while connecting destinations such as: the Convention Center, City Hall, Music Hall, Main Post Office and Union Terminal Museum Center. Residents of the West End and employees of Queensgate would all be within easy walking distance of the line. A similar ‘bulb-out’ could occur on the east side of the CBD to connect riverside development.

In this framework alternative, a cross-valley bike connection is best made via 8th Street and connection to Mehring.



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK
This diagram depicts the various road types and proposed passenger and light rail alignment for the proposed plan. See page 76 of Transportation and Infrastructure Appendix for detailed descriptions.

■ LOCAL COLLECTOR STREET	■ OTHER SIGNATURE STREET	■ TRANSIT
■ GREAT STREET	■ NEIGHBORHOOD STREET	■ PASSENGER RAIL
■ OPTIONAL STREET	■ BICYCLE TRAIL	●●● QUEENSGATE STREET CAR
		●●● DOWNTOWN STREET CAR

Open Space Improvements



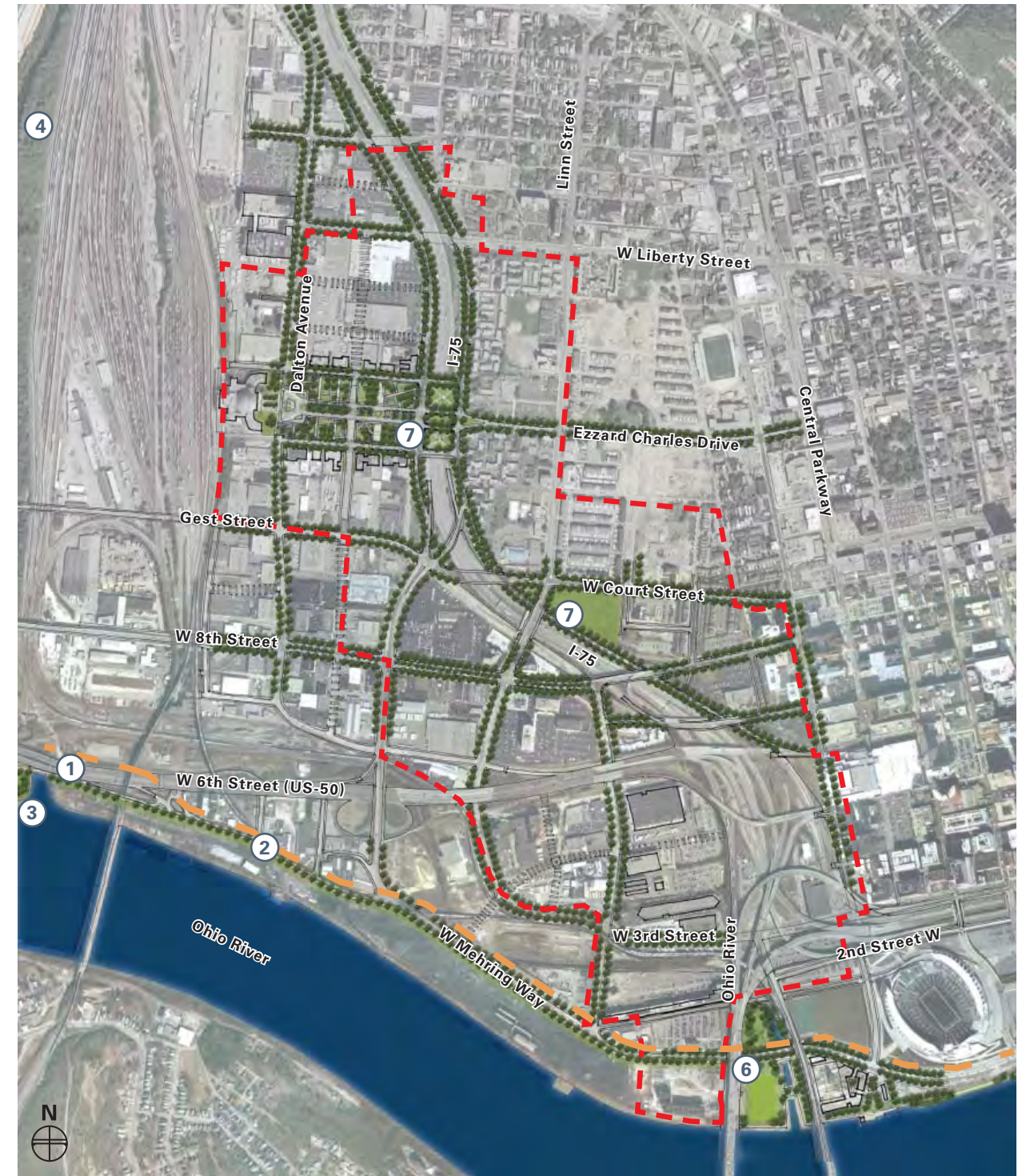
CSO OVERFLOW INTENSITY MAP



VIEW OF PROPOSED OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

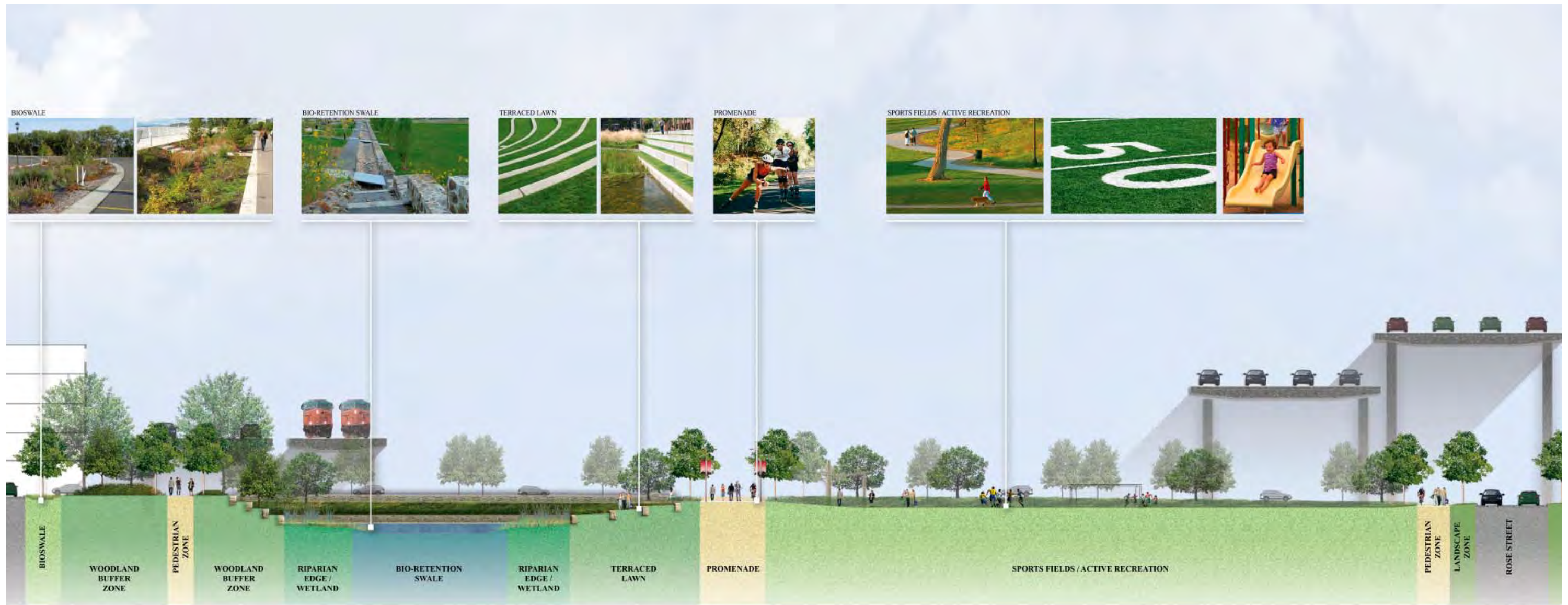
As a gateway into Cincinnati and its heartland for industry and commerce, the Queensgate area can become a model for creating urban ecologies, open spaces, and connections in and amongst the existing infrastructure, easements, and elevated roadways. This can be achieved by the following:

- 1 Provide a Mill Creek multi-use trail and connections to trail from neighborhoods.
- 2 Connect Mill Creek trails to Ohio River trails through Mehring Way connection.
- 3 Enhance connection to downtown and create Confluence Park as a signature park for the City where Mill Creek meets the Ohio River.
- 4 Create wetlands and water quality areas along Mill Creek.
- 5 Continue the Ohio River trail through the Mill Creek Valley to connect the Price Hill area with Downtown and the riverfront areas.
- 6 Create water filtration basin and public park at the base of BSB.
- 7 Create stronger boulevard connections to better connect existing amenities such as ballfields and civic parks.



OPEN SPACE PLAN Depicts improvements to natural features, parks, open spaces and streetscapes.

BICYCLE TRAIL



RIVERSIDE PARK SECTION The section illustrates how the water can be brought to areas underneath the highway interchanges to create sustainable improvements and amenities for people who live nearby.

Key Initiatives

Through the analysis and planning phases, issues were identified and strategies were brainstormed for the best long-term solutions. The vision for Queensgate and the West End remained a public process that incorporated neighborhood plans, existing public improvements scheduled for construction, and community involvement for reviewing design alternatives. As a result, key initiatives in economic development, neighborhood revitalization, green infrastructure and transportation improvements were determined.

Separate storm and sanitary sewers in conjunction with new development and redevelopment

Explore and evaluate options for the most efficient ramp systems at the intersection of I-75, US-50, and Fort Washington Way

Prioritize entrances into the city which feed directly into city streets and minimize grade separated ramps/highway design

The Port Authority has recently expanded its capacities and may be looking for a role as a catalytic land developer and perhaps even owner/operator of properties

The Cincinnati Museum Center has proposed a major development initiative designed to transform the northern boundary of Queensgate into an urban, mixed-use district

Connect the Mill Creek system to water treatment, infiltration, and conveyance systems near I-75

Where possible, daylight storm drains into the larger system

Local stakeholders have proposed the development of a major shipping/logistics port at the Queensgate terminal

Capture the maximum possible runoff from Queensgate, I-75, the central business district, and the West End in a natural system, avoid letting this water enter the combined sewer system

The Planning Department has recently embarked on land acquisition and development initiatives that promises to bring new industrial users to the City

SHORT-TERM

MID-RANGE

LONG-TERM & ONGOING

2010

2060

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVES

- » Separate storm and sanitary sewers in conjunction with new development and redevelopment
- » Connect the Mill Creek system to water treatment, infiltration, and conveyance systems near I-75
- » Capture the maximum possible runoff from Queensgate, I-75, the central business district, and the West End in a natural system, avoid letting this water enter the combined sewer system
- » Where possible, daylight storm drains into the larger system

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

- » Explore and evaluate options for the most efficient ramp systems at the intersection of I-75, US-50, and Fort Washington Way
- » Prioritize entrances into the city which feed directly into city streets and minimize grade separated ramps/highway design

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

- » The Port Authority has recently expanded its capacities and may be looking for a role as a catalytic land developer and perhaps even owner/operator of properties
- » The Planning Department has recently embarked on land acquisition and development initiatives that promises to bring new industrial users to the City
- » Local stakeholders have proposed the development of a major shipping/logistics port at the Queensgate terminal
- » The Cincinnati Museum Center has proposed a major development initiative designed to transform the northern boundary of Queensgate into an urban, mixed-use district



EXISTING CONDITIONS BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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EXISTING CONDITIONS BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

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