



Neighborhood Business District Strategy Plan

Approved by Cincinnati City Council
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Acknowledgments

The planning process was lead by the Carthage Civic League - a group of Carthage community leaders, residents, property owners and business owners with help from the Department of City Planning.

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Introduction

Carthage is located in the northern part of Cincinnati and is approximately 870 acres in size. It was officially annexed into the City of Cincinnati in 1911 and is one of the northern most neighborhoods of Cincinnati. It is surrounded by Cincinnati neighborhoods Hartwell and Springfield Township to the north, Roselawn to the east, Winton Hills to the west, and the Village of Elmwood Place to the south.

It has access to I-75 from Paddock Road. The Carthage Neighborhood Business District runs along Vine Street from 69th Street to 77th Street and is slightly less than a mile from end to end.

Carthage is a unique neighborhood, containing manufacturing uses to the east and west, with single-family homes surrounding a linear business district in the center of the neighborhood that terminates at the Hamilton County Fairgrounds to the north.



The Carthage neighborhood business district (NBD) serves more than just the population of Carthage. It serves adjacent neighborhoods and townships as well. The majority of Elmwood Place, Roselawn and Hartwell and some portions of Bond Hill and Springfield Township are less than a mile from the Carthage NBD.

Plan Cincinnati considers the Carthage NBD as a Traditional Neighborhood, defined as an area of single-family homes on lots that vary in size. There also may be small footprint, medium density housing types – such as duplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, and small apartment buildings – that are either typically along a major corridor or in areas transitioning from the single-family homes into a neighborhood main street.

The traditional neighborhood type typically includes one or more main streets or corners stores within a short



walking distance from a large percentage of homes that are an important part of their walkability.

Plan Cincinnati defines the Carthage NBD as a “Transform” neighborhood, which means it needs to transform to become more walkable.

This means that there may be some neighborhood services and amenities but may not be sufficiently diverse or comprehensive to meet daily needs, or the NBD may be too large to maintain its uses, has vacancies, does not have visible boundaries, and pedestrians are not able to walk to end to end without an unusual break in the pattern due to either building pattern, vacancies, and street thoroughfare design.

The primary objective for the Transform neighborhood centers is to target major opportunities for large-scale changes, such as infill, redevelopment, and public improvements. The character of the area is intended to completely change.

This focus of this NBD Strategy Plan is to address these issues and identify partners who can help Carthage create and maintain a successful business district.

Accordingly, this plan provides specific objectives to achieve these goals, breaking down the strategies into six-month to 10-year action steps.



Zoning & Land Use

Zoning

The existing zoning is approximately 35% residential, which is located to the west of the NBD, 40% manufacturing, 11.5% commercial, which is generally along Vine Street in the NBD and to the north to the Hamilton County Fairgrounds, and 14% parks and recreational, generally found in the western part of the neighborhood. The Carthage Neighborhood Business District (NBD) is approximately 33 acres in size, making up about 4% of the neighborhood.

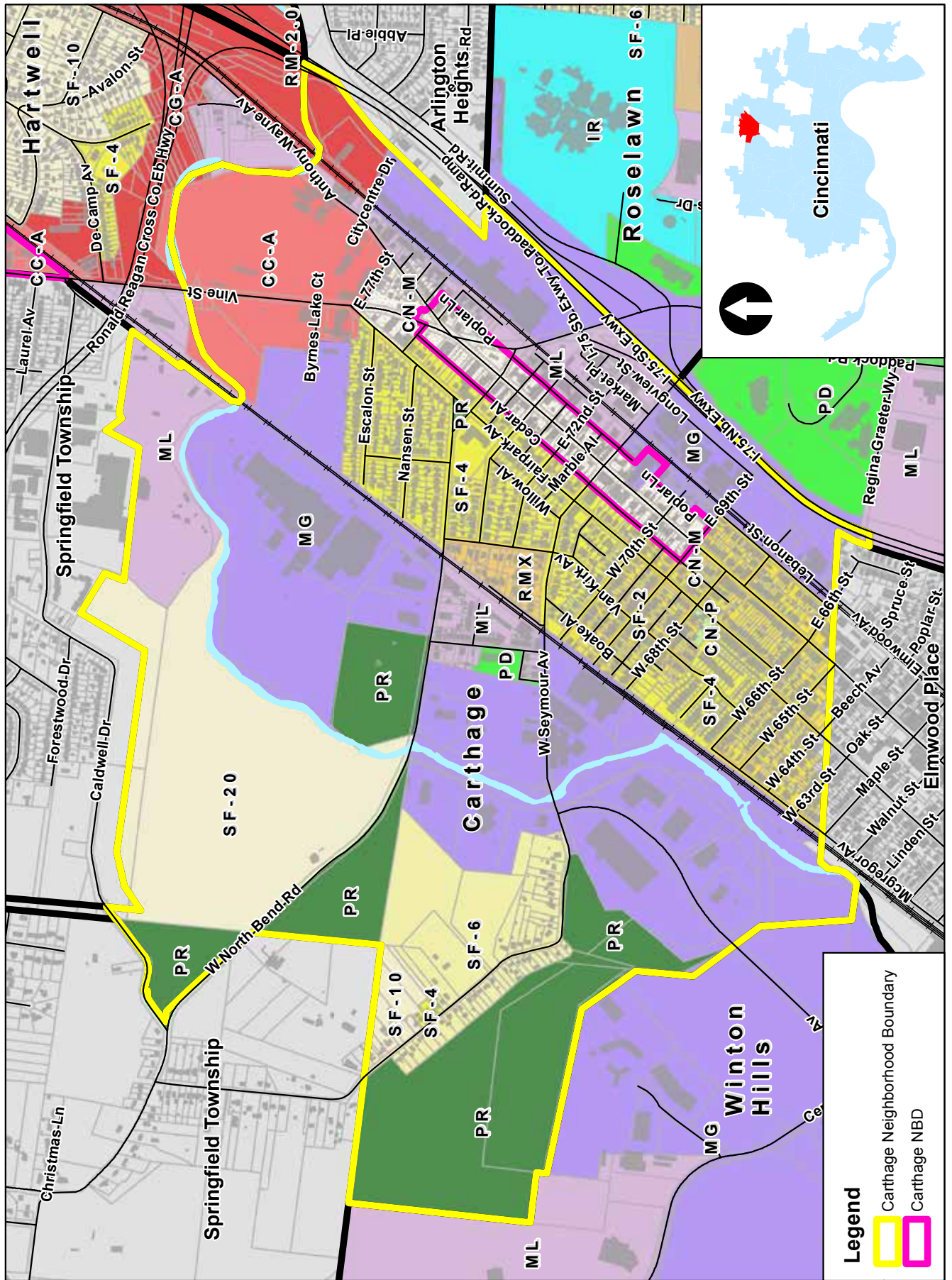
Zoning District	Acres	Percentage
Commercial	99.77	11.48%
CG-A Commercial General - Auto Oriented	64.90	7.47%
CN-M Commercial Neighborhood - Mixed	34.01	3.91%
CN-P Commercial Neighborhood - Pedestrian	0.86	0.10%
Manufacturing	345.10	39.70%
MG Manufacturing General	274.80	31.61%
ML Manufacturing Limited	70.30	8.09%
PD Planned Development	2.25	0.26%
PR Parks and Recreational	118.50	13.63%
RMX Residential Multi-family Mixed	7.26	0.84%
Single Family	296.40	34.10%
SF-2 Single Family	59.76	6.88%
SF-4 Single Family	84.06	9.67%
SF-6 Single Family	44.01	5.06%
SF-10 Single Family	7.53	0.87%
SF-20 Single Family	101.04	11.62%
Total	869.29	100.00%

Land Use

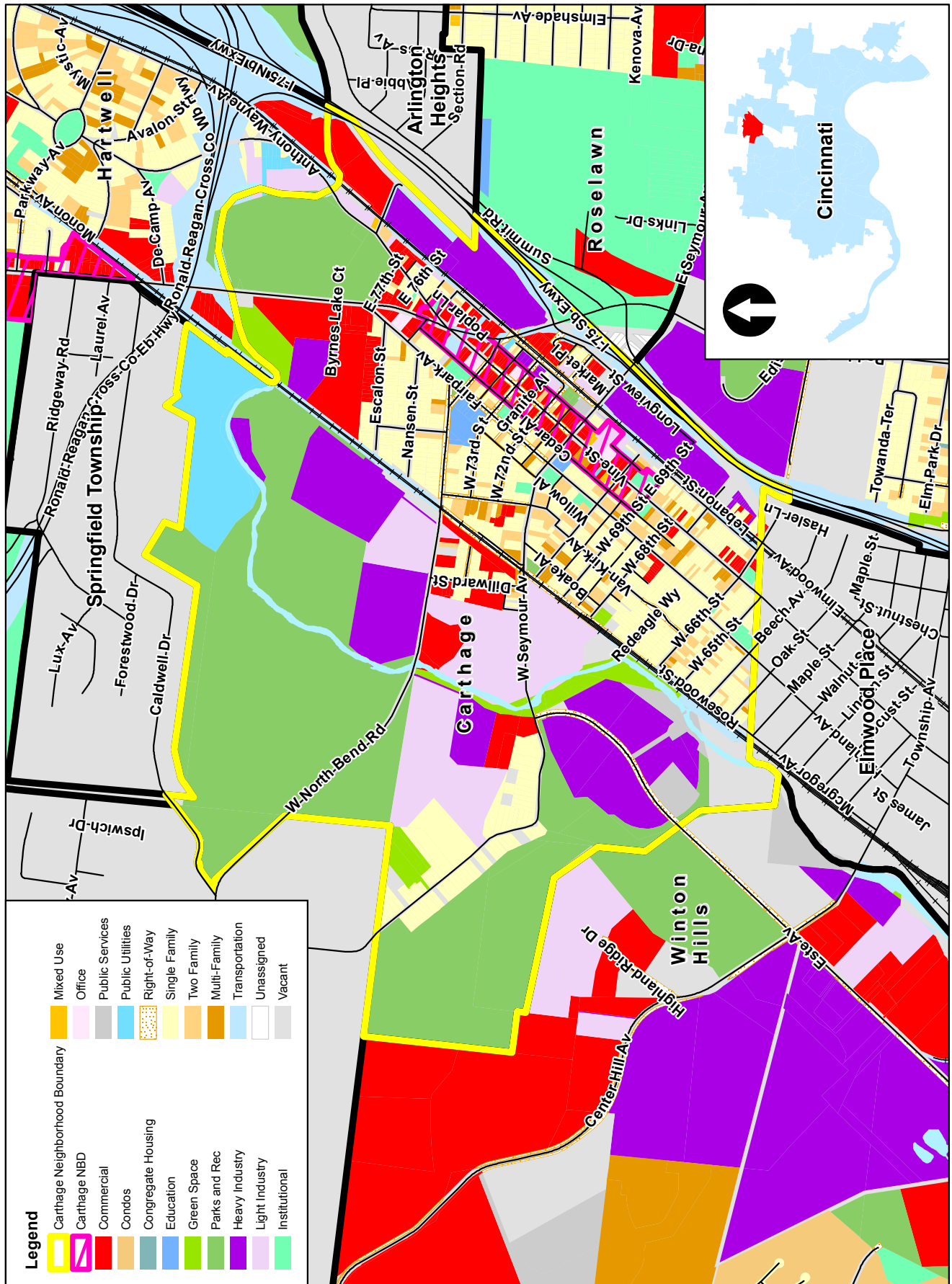
Like many older neighborhoods in the City, the existing land use is relatively similar to existing zoning throughout Carthage, with a few exceptions. A large portion of the western part of Carthage is zoned single-family and manufacturing, but Caldwell Park and Recreation Complex occupies a lot of this land, which lowers the percentage of single-family and manufacturing land uses. The Hamilton County Fairgrounds is also zoned commercial, but is classified by the Hamilton County Auditor as Parks and Recreational. There are also several commercial businesses located in manufacturing zoning districts, but these uses may be compatible with the zoning. There are also several commercial uses scattered throughout single-family zones.

Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Commercial/Mixed Use	63.08	7.83%
Office	2.23	0.28%
Heavy Manufacturing	108.15	13.43%
Light Manufacturing	67.77	8.41%
Educational	3.63	0.45%
Institutional	7.32	0.91%
Parks and Recreational	282.75	35.10%
Green and Open Space	20.27	2.52%
Public Utilities	30.09	3.74%
Transportation	28.59	3.55%
Public Service	8.93	1.11%
Residential	137.94	17.12%
Multi-Family	6.84	0.85%
Two-Family	19.09	2.37%
Single Family	112.00	13.90%
Vacant	20.01	2.48%
Total	780.76	100.00%

Carthage Existing Zoning



Carthage Existing Land Use



Demographics

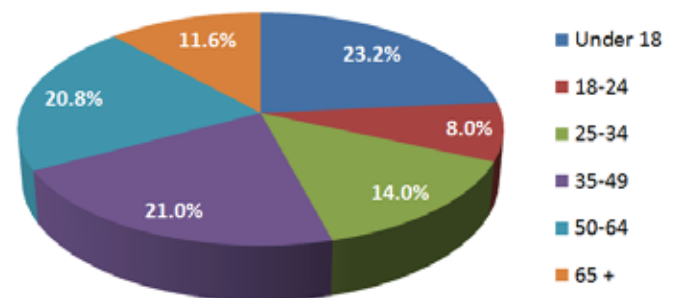
Population

As of the 2010 Census, the population of Carthage is 2,733. Over the thirty-year period from 1980 to 2010, Carthage has held a relatively stable population. Between 1980 to 1990 the population of Carthage decreased by approximately 280 people and from 1990 to 2000 it lost another 80 people. However, between 2000 and 2010 the neighborhood population increased by 320 people, or approximately 12%. By comparison, the City of Cincinnati as a whole lost about 10.4% of its population over that same period.

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change from 2000	% Change from 2000
Male	1,295	1,186	1,176	1,415	239	16.89%
Female	1,487	1,310	1,236	1,318	82	6.22%
Total	2,782	2,496	2,412	2,733	321	11.75%

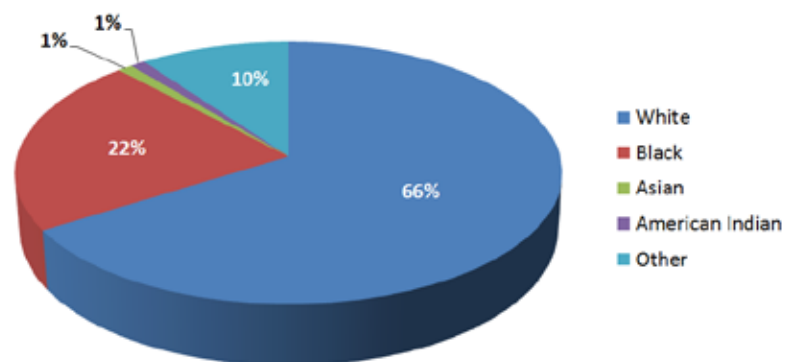
Age

The median age of the neighborhood is 37.5 years old. Age distribution is spread relatively evenly throughout Carthage.



Race

98% of Carthage residents identify themselves as being one race. Of that population, 66% of the neighborhood is white and approximately 21% of the neighborhood identifying themselves as black or African American. 6% of the population identify themselves as Asian, 0.65% identify as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders. 7.5 % identify themselves as being other races.



Carthage has a large Hispanic or Latino population with approximately 18% of the population identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics and Latinos can be of any race, and are not reflected separately in the above chart.

Household Type

There are a total of 1,093 households in Carthage. 57% are Family Households, and 43% are Non-Family Households. Of the Non-family Households, 13% are Single-person Households. The average household size is 2.5 persons, and the average family size is 4.3 persons.

Household Occupancy and Ownership

There are a total of 1,298 Housing Units in Carthage. According to the 2010 Census, 1,093 units (or 84%) were occupied. Approximately 205 (16%) units were vacant.

Carthage consists of almost equal proportions of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units with owner-occupied units being slightly greater. Of the occupied housing units, 568 (52%) were owner-occupied, while 525 (48%) were renter-occupied. 52% of owner-occupancy rate is much greater than the City's homeownership rate of 38.9% in year 2010.

Housing Occupancy	
Total Housing Units:	1,298
Occupied	1,093
Vacant	205
Vacancy Status	
For rent	91
Rented, not occupied	3
For sale only	31
Sold, not occupied	7
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	1
For migrant workers	-
Other vacant	72

Household Income and Poverty

According to the 2009-2013 American community survey, the median household income in Carthage was \$35,000, which was higher than Cincinnati's median household income of \$33,708.

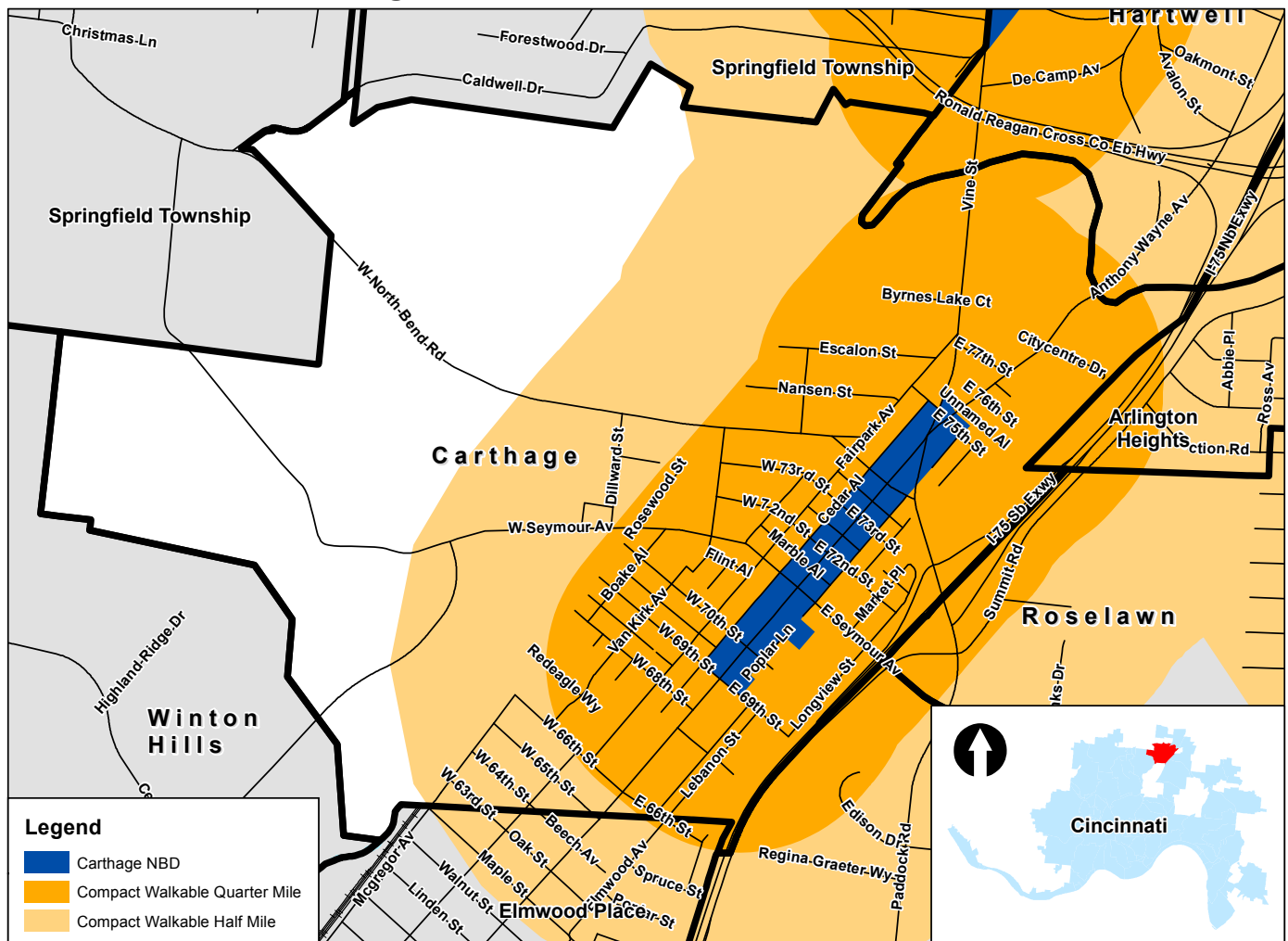
The Study Area

The main study area for this Plan is the Carthage Business District and its surrounding quarter and half-mile compact walkable areas, as identified by *Plan Cincinnati*. A half-mile is approximately a 15 minute walk, which is generally the furthest distance the average person is willing to walk before seeking another form of transportation.



As you can see, half-mile radius around the NBD reaches into the neighborhoods of Hartwell and Roselawn, along with Springfield Township, Arlington Heights, and Elmwood Place outside of the City. In order to implement this Plan, Carthage must work with these communities to achieve common goals.

Carthage Business District Compact Walkable



Assets & Challenges

Carthage was a part of the City's Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) in September and November of 2013. The NEP focused on developing neighborhood assets, and included the following services:

- Concentrating building code enforcement
- Identifying and “cooling down” crime hot spots
- Cleaning up streets, sidewalks, and vacant lots
- Beautifying landscapes, streetscapes and public right of way
- Engaging property owners and residents to create and sustain a more livable neighborhood

As part of the last bulletpoint, Carthage asked the City to work with the neighborhood to create a Neighborhood Business District Strategy Plan to help achieve this goal.

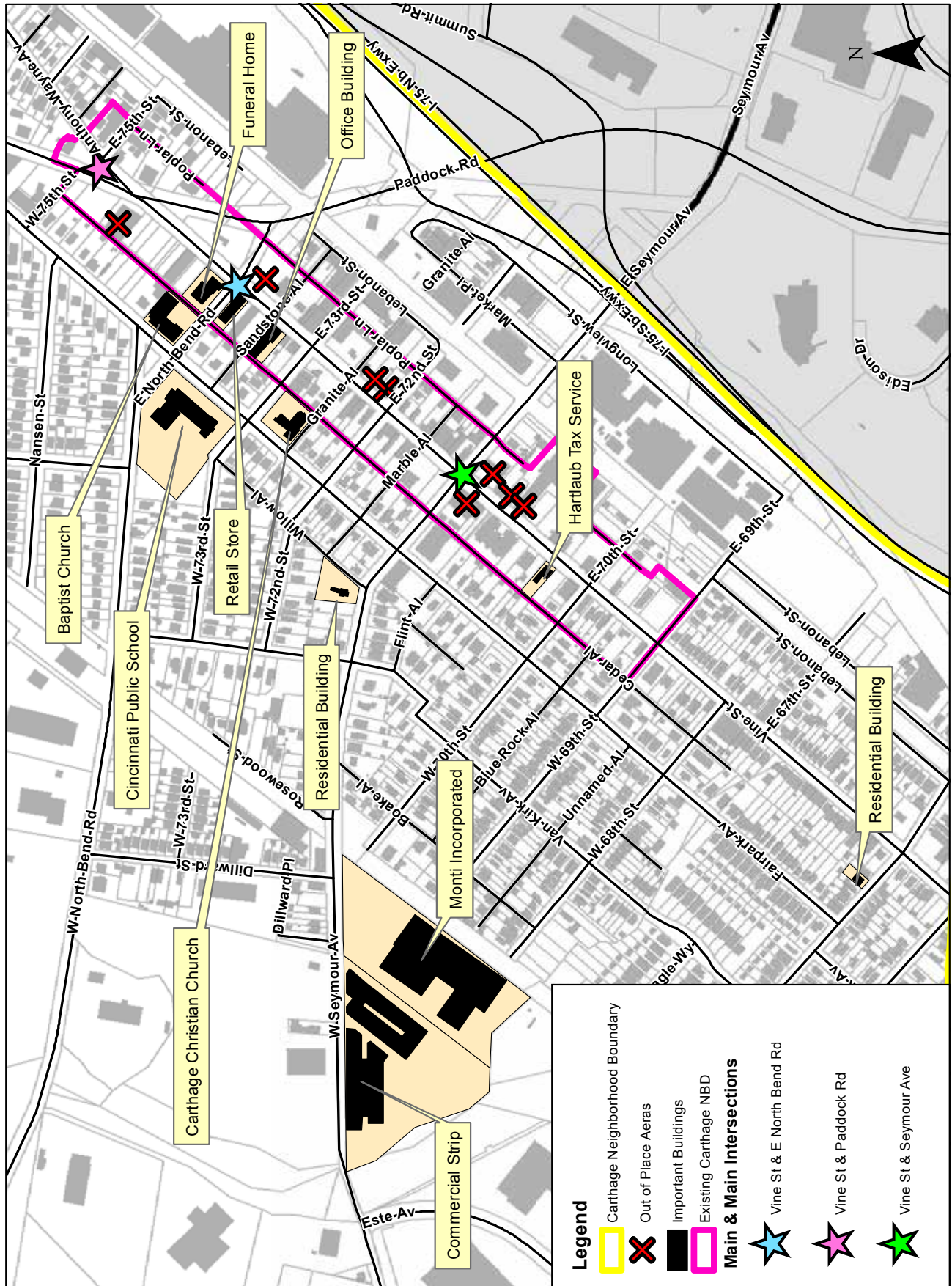
On Wednesday, November 13, 2013, about 30 stakeholders from the Carthage neighborhood participated in a Strategy Meeting to think about the future of the Carthage neighborhood and take the first steps in developing a shared community vision. Residents, employees, property owners, business owners, and others were in attendance, all sharing a common passion in their community.



This meeting featured a mapping activity where attendees were asked to identify the heart of the business district (the intersection of Main and Main), the boundary of the Carthage Neighborhood Business District, important buildings or places that define the neighborhood, and places that are out of place with the rest of the district and need to change.

Attendees were also asked to identify where land uses transfer from commercial into residential, and if these areas should be mostly commercial, residential, industrial, or if they should remain a mix of these uses going forward.

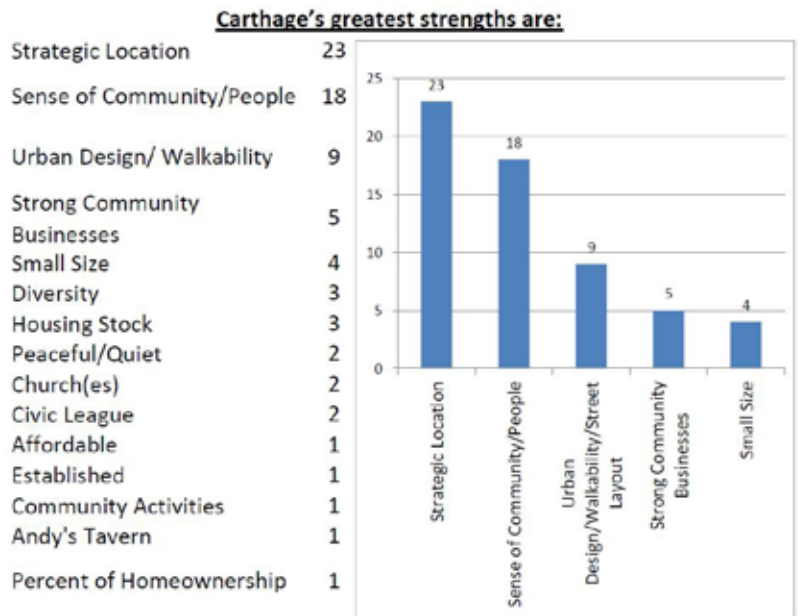
Important Intersections & Buildings



During this meeting, attendees were asked in a survey what they like the best about Carthage, what they like the least, what makes the neighborhood unique, and what they fear for the most about the future of the neighborhood.

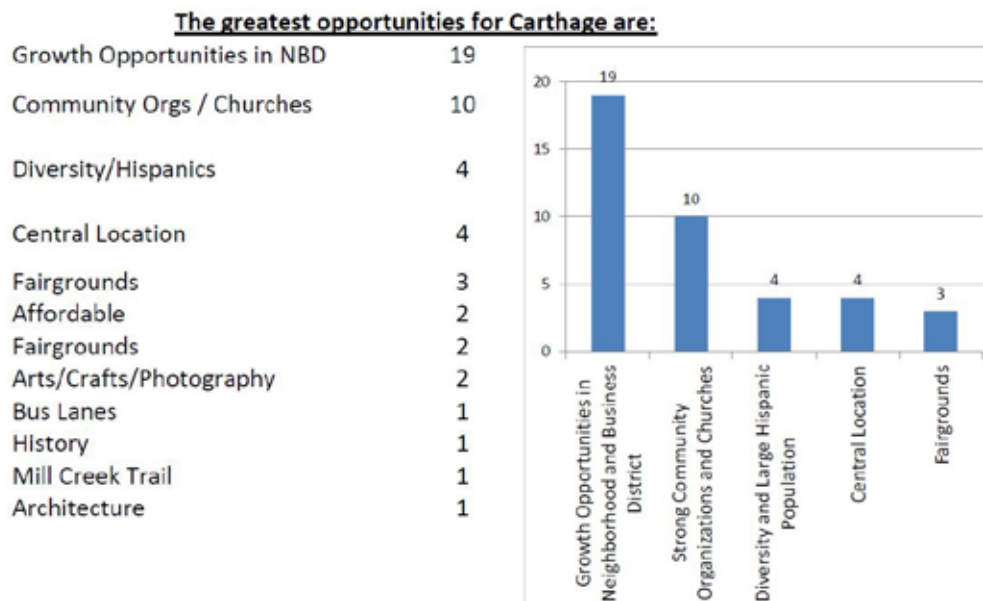
Strengths

The biggest strengths of the neighborhood are its central location in the region, the sense of community, and the compact, pedestrian friendly design of the neighborhood and the business district. These “good bones” of the neighborhood give Carthage an advantage as more and more people who move back into the City are attracted to a compact, pedestrian friendly neighborhood and business district.



Opportunities

For a neighborhood business district ready to transform, opportunities on vacant lots or buildings provide excellent potential for new growth in the business district. Strong partnerships with community organizations and churches, neighborhood diversity and affordable housing stock could make Carthage attractive to first-time home buyers or business owners. Since the creation of this survey, the Carthage Preschool has opened, with a plan to expand to kindergarten and beyond. With the addition of this school, along with a new daycares, Carthage has increased opportunities for young, growing families.

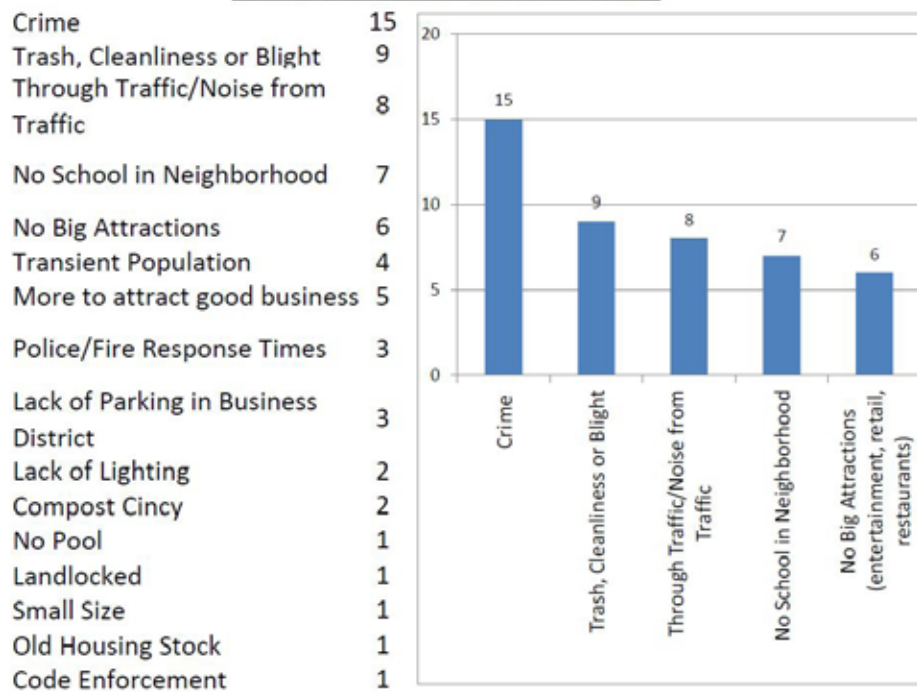


Weaknesses

The biggest perceived weakness and threat to Carthage is crime. A lack of cleanliness and traffic concerns also received a high number of votes, along with no neighborhood school and no big attractions in the neighborhood to attract outside visitors.

*Since this survey was taken, a school (Carthage Preschool) has opened in the neighborhood and Compost Cincy has closed.

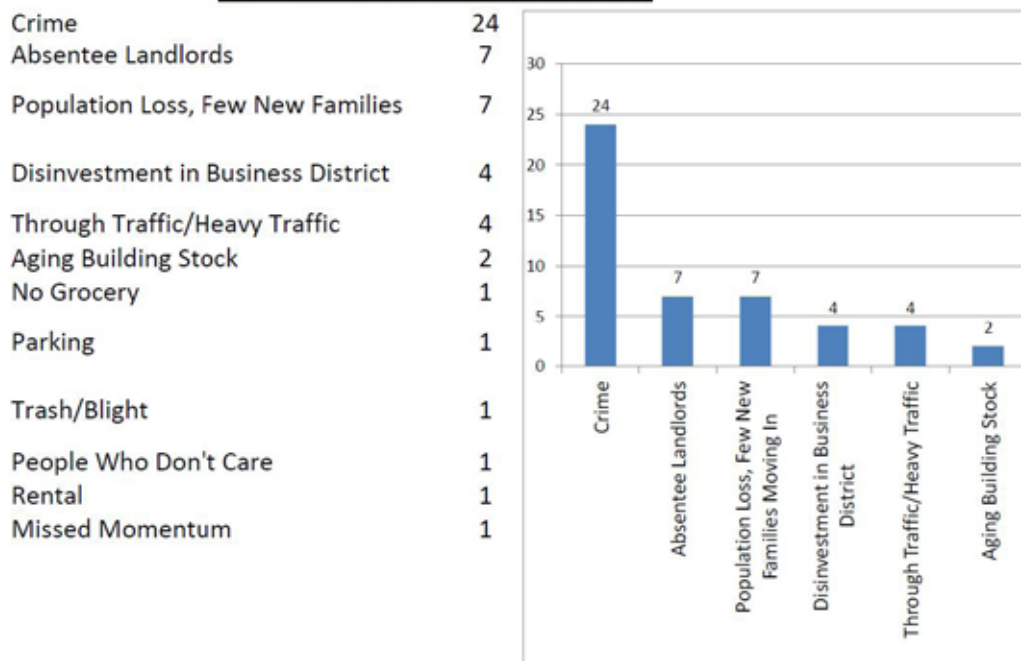
Carthage's greatest weaknesses are:



Threats

Absentee landlords, population loss, and disinvestment in the business district are considered the greatest threats to the neighborhood, although Carthage appears to have regained population in the last 15 years based on Census Data. Recognizing that crime is the largest threat shown in the survey, Carthage neighborhood leaders have worked with the Police to increase engagement in the community and increase Police presence. As a result, crime has been reduced.

The greatest threats for Carthage are:



Future Land Use

This map shows the general location of desired land uses in the future. It is not regulatory, but provides a starting point for the compatibility of any future development in the neighborhood. This map was created based on the feedback received from the strengths and opportunities identified in the survey, and from the mapping activity. This map focuses on strengthening and maintaining a residential core in the center of the neighborhood, preserving parks and open space, and reinvestment in the existing industrial areas and their supporting uses along the Mill Creek and I-75.

The map consists of four categories representing desired future land uses. Each category contains a brief description of the desired land use and form that Carthage would like to see for each area going forward, which will guide future development.

Single-Family

These areas focus on maintaining and enhancing the existing detached homes that make up most of the housing stock in the neighborhood. Existing two and multi-family properties in these areas are encouraged to be maintained. New construction should be small to medium scale and have front yards and porches. Recognizing the affordability of quality housing stock, first-time home buyers are buying homes here and increasing overall property values.



Commercial-Mixed Use

This area focuses on the Carthage NBD and the immediate surrounding area. The NBD should be a gathering place for the neighborhood, featuring 1-3 story buildings that are built to the sidewalk with neighborhood serving retail or offices on the first floor with offices or residential above it. Commercial uses outside of the NBD can be more auto-oriented, but are encouraged to incorporate pedestrian friendly elements into any new development.



Commercial-Industrial

This area allows for the existing manufacturing businesses and their commercial supporting uses to continue. These areas may be more auto-oriented than the mixed-use area in and around the NBD. Manufacturing development should only be in these areas and maintain the current hard edge between these uses and adjacent residential uses.



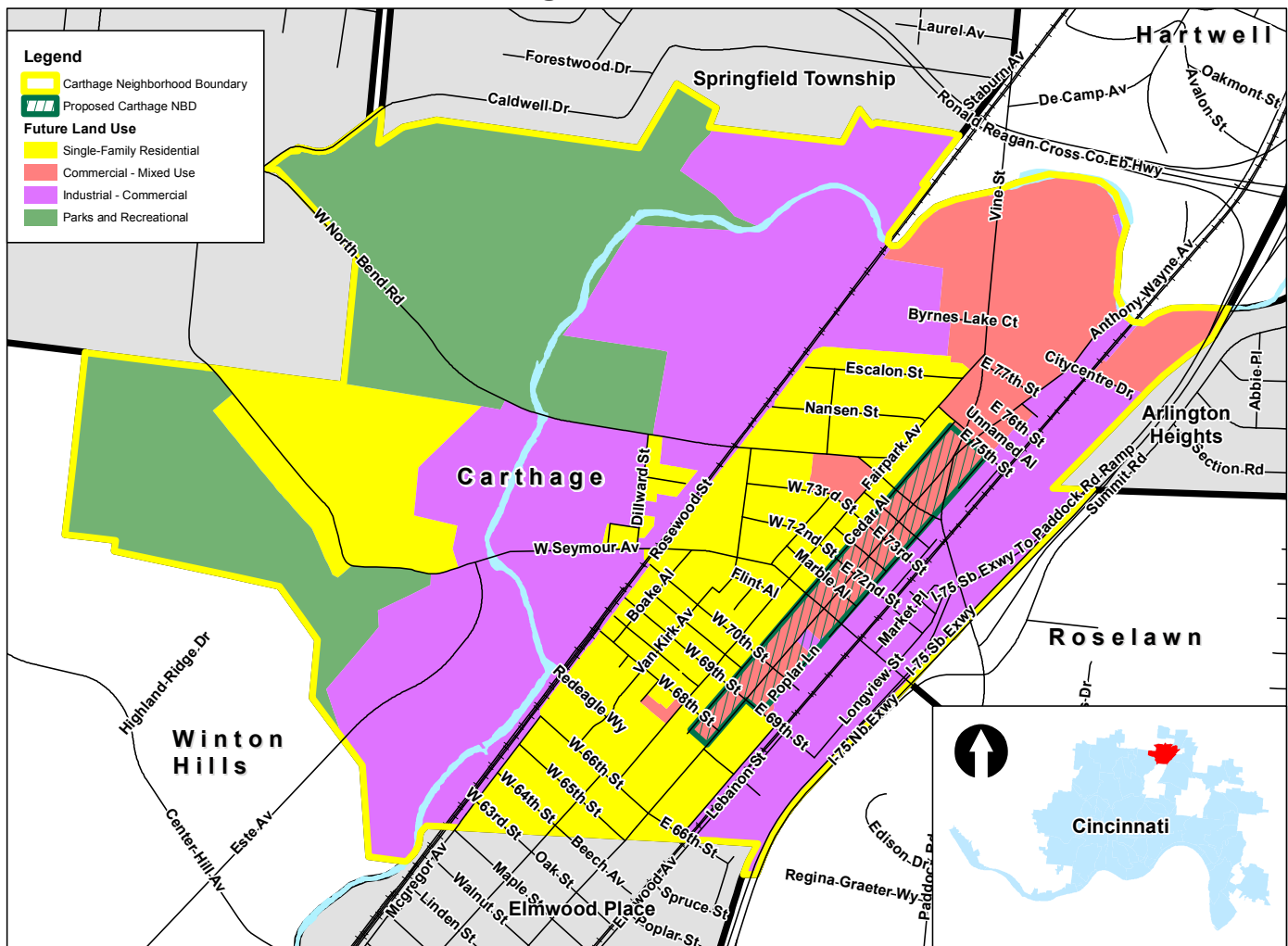
Parks and Recreational

These are natural resource areas, parks, community gardens, recreation areas, trails, and their supporting uses. Carthage is home of Seymour Nature Preserve, Caldwell Park Playground, and the Caldwell Nature Preserve, which has been recognized as one of five “Greenspace Gems” in the tri-state by Green Umbrella



This plan also focuses on shrinking the northern boundary of the Carthage Neighborhood Business District by two blocks from E 77th Street to E 75th Street to allow for a focused effort to revitalize the area with existing “traditional main street” buildings. The two blocks proposed to be removed contain residential homes and several car dealerships, which do not fit into the idea to transform this NBD into one that is pedestrian friendly.

Carthage Future Land Use



Key Development Sites

When community members were asked to identify “out of place” areas along with transitional and opportunity sites, a pattern emerged. All three identified “Main Street and Main Street” intersections (Vine Street and Seymour Avenue), Vine Street and E North Bend Road, and Vine Street and Paddock Avenue) were considered either “transitional” areas or have “out of place” areas on at least one of the corners.

Carthage is the northern gateway into Cincinnati, and is central to numerous highways, including I-75, OH-562, SR-126, and I-74. The neighborhood could benefit from directional signage along I-75 to notify motorists of the location of Carthage and that fueling stations and restaurants are available off the exit.

Vine Street & E. Seymour Avenue

When community members were asked to identify “out of place” areas within Carthage, half of these areas were located at or near this intersection. Two corners have the desired urban form of being built up to the street with parking in the rear, while the other two corners are more auto-oriented. Below is a concept redevelopment of one corner of this intersection, which would also help to serve as a gateway into the neighborhood from I-75.



Vine Street & E. 73rd Street

There are currently two automotive sales uses at this intersection. Both are viable businesses, but Carthage would like to see auto-oriented businesses like these positioned more in the northern part of the neighborhood instead of the heart of the pedestrian-oriented business district. The rendering below shows one potential redevelopment scenario to more pedestrian-oriented buildings with parking accessed from a side street or alley.



Vine Street & E. North Bend Road

This intersection marks the general transition from the pedestrian-friendly portion of the business district to the auto-oriented portion of the business district, where larger parking lots and automotive sales and repair businesses are widespread. The fueling station was marked as an “out of place area”, so perhaps a fueling station would be more appropriate across E. North Bend Road in the future.

Former Jim Beam Plant

The Jim Beam bottling plant along I-75 closed in 2011 and is currently occupied by Industrial Container Services. This site is a prime location for another brewery or manufacturing plant due to its close proximity to railroad lines and I-75. This building or a new building could also help serve as a gateway into Carthage and the City of Cincinnati due to its visibility from the highway.

Hamilton County Fairgrounds

The Carthage Fair, as it was once known, was founded in the once dominant agricultural community that surrounded Cincinnati. The importance of farming to the area led to the need to pass on ideas of new agricultural techniques and machinery as well as tried-and-true practices handed down from the ages. The Fair was created to meet these needs and to act as the culminating event of the agricultural year, expressing the pride farmers felt in their work. As Cincinnati expanded, the Carthage Fair was renamed the Hamilton County Fair. People living in the city, isolated from the farm lifestyle, come each year by the thousands to learn about the origin of the foods they eat and products they use, thus ensuring that our rich agricultural heritage continues (Source: www.hamiltoncountyfair.com)

The Hamilton County Fair has been in Carthage since 1853, and will probably remain here for the foreseeable future. However, if the Fair were to ever close, this 37.5 acre site would essentially be a greenfield for redevelopment at the northern part of the neighborhood. This particular site would be perfect for a mixed-use development that does not take away from the Neighborhood Business District. Some desired uses are office, residential, and some commercial development that does not compete with the Neighborhood Business District. The image below is a rendering of a green office/research complex in Houston, Texas that could serve as a template for future development in Carthage.



Goals & Strategies

Goal 1: A Strong and Welcoming Community

Carthage is a relatively small community of just over 2,700 residents, but it boasts an active community life. When asked about the greatest strengths of the Carthage community, the terms “sense of community,” neighborhood spirit,” or “caring neighbors” were most often used. The Carthage Civic League, founded in 1937, is one of the oldest community councils in Cincinnati. Additionally, the local institutions, such as the churches, preschool, and community garden were specifically cited for their focus on improving the community.

The Hispanic population in Carthage is higher than in any other neighborhood in Cincinnati, at about 18%, and Carthage stakeholders considered this diversity to be a great asset, and wanted to make sure that all residents feel welcome in Carthage.

Carthage stakeholders want their neighborhood to be known for being committed, engaged, diverse, and proud. They want to get more people, especially young adults, to get involved in neighborhood activities, and want people outside of Carthage to know what a unique neighborhood it is.

Objective 1: Continue to strengthen the Carthage Civic League (CCL). Increase its capacity to respond to resident and property owner needs and guide the future growth and redevelopment of the Carthage community.

Strategies

1. Continue to draw upon neighborhood institutions (such as churches, businesses, Seniors, Garden Club, etc.) to increase regular attendance at CCL meetings and events.
2. Identify groups underrepresented on the CCL, identify potential individuals who could fill those roles, and recruit them to join and participate.
3. Continue and enhance communication with members through the Carthage Community website, the Carthage Newsletter, the Facebook page, and NextDoor.com.
4. Create a Leadership Succession Plan to help new members grow in responsibility within the organization.
5. Build relationships with other Community Councils to compare notes and build coalitions (this is especially important with Hartwell, Roselawn, Bond Hill, and Winton Hills).
6. Create a Plan Implementation Committee (in conjunction with the Business Association) to work to implement the Carthage Plan and ask for support or apply for funds when necessary.
7. Continue to utilize and partner with Cincinnati agencies and departments to obtain grants and funding for future improvement programs.

Goal 2: Good Community Character and Quality of Life

Carthage is a unique and charming residential community. The residential streets have a pleasing urban design; they are laid out to be “human-scaled” and are easy to get around with sidewalks on nearly every street. Many homes have well-kept, landscaped yards and trees adding to the attractiveness of the neighborhood. With many houses facing the street behind small front yards, sporting front porches, it’s easy for residents to keep their eyes on the street, maximizing safety. Indeed, many neighborhood stakeholders commented that in Carthage, people look out for each other and for their neighborhood.

The commercial and industrial sections of the neighborhood are mostly separate from the residential section of the neighborhood. Carthage does not suffer from significant commercial/industrial creep from the NBD or industrial uses, as happens in many neighborhoods, due to the clear delineation created by the railroad tracks and roads.

Carthage stakeholders want to maintain their neighborhood scale, and would prefer for any new construction in either the residential portion of the neighborhood or the NBD to be consistent with the character of the buildings already existing. In the residential portion of the neighborhood, new buildings should be small to medium in size with front yards and front porches. Garages should be kept at the rear of the property, ideally off an alley, or at the terminus of a discrete driveway. In the NBD, new buildings should be no more than 3 stories in height, and they should be built to the front lot line, with a setback only if it provides space for landscaping or public use. All parking should be provided in rear lots.

Carthage stakeholders want to reduce crime in their neighborhood such as theft, prostitution, and drug activity. They also want to drastically diminish quality of life offenses such as littering, loitering, vandalism, lack of lighting, ongoing property maintenance issues, and traffic safety/noise issues. Many of these “clean, safe, and attractive” issues were addressed during the 90-day Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) that took place from September to November 2013, and the Carthage neighborhood stakeholders want to continue the positive momentum created by the initial concentrated enforcement.

Objective 1: Ensure a high Quality of Life in Carthage by diminishing minor offenses, regularly reassessing the conditions of the neighborhood, and working with property owners to make improvements.

Strategies

1. Establish a Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee of the CCL (in conjunction with the Business Association, Department of Community & Economic Development, Health Department, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, and Cincinnati Police) to take proactive steps regarding property maintenance and respond to complaints.
2. Seek assistance from other neighborhoods with successful Quality of Life or Property Management Committees (such as College Hill).

3. Schedule a formal assessment by the Committee on at least an annual basis.
4. Identify vacant or dilapidated properties.
5. Contact property owners and encourage improvements.
6. Take corrective action when necessary: call in a report to the City regarding code violations and follow up.
7. Continue to support the Beautification Committee.

Objective 2: Continue to reduce crime in the Carthage neighborhood.

Strategies

1. Continue to work with the Cincinnati Police Department, either as a Citizens on Patrol group or in a less structured manner, working closely with the neighborhood liaison officer.
2. Continue to communicate with and educate residents, business owners, and other stakeholders about personal and property safety.
3. Continue to practice the neighborhood values that encourage an “eyes on your neighborhood” outlook in Carthage.
4. Recognize when residents and businesses actively promote personal and property safety.

Objective 3: Ensure that the Carthage neighborhood is appropriately regulated for existing and desired future uses.

Strategies

1. Apply a pedestrian-oriented commercial zone to the NBD.
2. Allow Auto-oriented zoning only outside of the NBD and along major corridors.
3. Apply a zone that allows a mix of and transitions from commercial to residential uses along Vine Street south of the NBD.
4. Apply a zone that allows a mix of and transitions from pedestrian-oriented commercial to auto-oriented and industrial uses along Vine Street south of the NBD.
5. Apply single-family residential zoning to all areas currently zoned residential.
6. Apply a light-industrial zone to areas currently zoned for industrial use.
7. Maintain any Park & Recreation zones throughout the neighborhood.
8. Consider the application of a Form Based Code to the NBD in the future, if it is available and appropriate.
9. Consider the basic design guidelines set forth in this document whenever new construction or demolition is proposed or any relief is sought for a property addition or new development.

Goal 3: High-quality Housing and Neighborhood Amenities

Carthage has good housing stock in a wide variety of sizes, types, and architectural styles. There is also variety in age of the housing stock; although there are many historic homes built in the late 19th century, the neighborhood is also interspersed with homes from the early-to-mid 20th century, and even a 21st century housing development, “The Mills at Carthage” which contains over 50 single-family homes constructed in approximately 2002, using state-of-the-art environmental building techniques. The housing in Carthage is also generally affordable, which could make it a very attractive place for young families and first-time homebuyers.

Carthage is home to a new Community Center (and New Jerusalem Baptist Church annex) at the old Carthage School, and is adjacent to Caldwell Park and Sports Complex, Seymour Nature Preserve, the Hamilton County Fairgrounds and significant green open space, much of it along the Mill Creek.

Due to its age, some of the housing is in need of renovation or repair. Carthage stakeholders cited a need for the rental properties in the neighborhood, especially those with landlords who do not live in Carthage themselves, to be upgraded in order to provide safe, quality housing to all residents of Carthage. Carthage stakeholders see their housing stock as a clear opportunity to infuse the neighborhood with more young families and more long-term residents.

The Civic League is interested in revitalizing a Recreation Center for youth activities and programs. In the meantime, the Carthage School, Caldwell Park, and neighborhood churches fill the gap for resources for children and young families.

Objective 1: Work with a newly-established Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee to ensure that residential properties are regularly upgraded to provide safe, quality housing to all residents of Carthage.

Strategies

1. Work with local stakeholders and property owners, the Department of Community & Economic Development, the Health Department, and Keep Cincinnati Beautiful to include residential properties in the Quality of Life Committee proposed above in Goal 2, Objective 1.
2. Help direct residential property owners to local organizations that can assist them if they are elderly or cannot afford property upgrades (such as People Working Cooperatively).
3. Increase communication with local renters so that they know who to turn to in an unsafe or unsanitary situation.

Objective 2: Increase amenities to Carthage residents and business owners.

Strategies

1. Work with neighborhood institutions (such as the Carthage School Community Garden, and Churches) to help coordinate programs for youth of all ages during after-school hours, weekends, and summers.
2. Work with Cincinnati Public Schools to develop a Safe Routes to School program for Carthage students.
3. Work with Cincinnati Park Board, Cincinnati Recreation Commission, Hamilton County Park Board, and the Mill Creek Conservancy to ensure that the park, recreation, and green spaces available to Carthage residents are well-maintained and regularly improved.

Objective 3: Increase the number of people who choose Carthage as their permanent, long term home.

Strategies

1. Promote Carthage to local realtors, especially those in the Cincinnati Real Estate Ambassador program.
2. Promote Carthage events to young professional groups throughout Cincinnati to help build awareness about what Carthage has to offer, especially for young or first time homebuyers.
3. Connect Carthage renters to groups with Home Buyer Training Programs such as the Home Ownership Center of Greater Cincinnati or Working In Neighborhoods to build long-term residents from within the rental pool.
4. Sing the praises of Carthage...whenever and wherever you can! Make it a community value to promote the neighborhood and why you love it wherever you go.

Goal 4: Successful Businesses and a Vibrant Business District

Carthage is centrally located. It's easy to get here, especially with good access from I-75, US-562, SR-126, I-74 and Vine Street, but there needs to be highway signage showing where Carthage is. The businesses in Carthage are separated into two distinct areas: those in the neighborhood business district (NBD) and those on the outer edge of the neighborhood. The businesses located within the NBD are smaller businesses that can thrive on walk-up traffic such as restaurants, retail, offices, and services. The businesses on the outer edge are generally more intense commercial uses and light industrial.

Carthage stakeholders noted that many of the business owners in the NBD are good small businesses that keep up their property and show pride in the neighborhood. The commercial and light-industrial businesses were also praised for being very supportive of the Carthage community and willing to lend a hand or make a donation whenever asked.

There is room for growth in the NBD, with some properties under-utilized. These properties may also need considerable interior and exterior work due to age and condition. Properties with absentee landlords were specifically called out as being in need of the most work. There is also a general feeling that the NBD lacks parking; while there is street parking along Vine Street and side streets, there is no common public lot.

Carthage stakeholders also felt that a major amenity lacking in their NBD is a community gathering space. The creation of this feature would give those in Carthage a place to call their "town center" and a natural place to hold community events and meet for activities. Most Carthage stakeholders called out the intersection of Vine and Seymour as their intersection of "Main Street and Main Street", or the heart of their community. Transforming underutilized property at or near this intersection into a community gathering space would allow for a place for community members to naturally convene.

Stakeholders wish to see their NBD grow and develop an even more diverse mix of businesses and services to offer to residents of Carthage and others who live nearby or pass through the neighborhood on their daily commute.

The Carthage NBD is also located just north on Vine Street from the business district for the Village of Elmwood Place. While there is a small break in uses, Carthage stakeholders felt that there needs to be more delineation between the two districts in order to make Carthage separate and distinct. Creating a distinct boundary of the official NBD will be difficult due to interspersed commercial uses along the Vine Street corridor, some of which are stable businesses. However, one strategy to make the NBD boundaries more distinct is to shorten the size of the official NBD and concentrate on redevelopment of the smaller area, beginning with the intersection of Vine and Seymour and moving outward. Increasing mixed-use development in the NBD, with commercial on the first floor and residential on upper floors, can help build out the NBD without relying solely on commercial development. If sufficient property becomes available and the market is supportive, another residential development like The Carthaginian could infuse additional residential uses into the NBD while providing another housing option.

A large site that may be a potential for future development is the Hamilton County Fairgrounds. If this property is ever to redevelop, community stakeholders, and specifically the CCL, would need to take a major role in ensuring that this site is redeveloped in way that it is an asset to the Carthage Community.

Objective 1: Form an official Business Association to work with the CCL to stabilize and grow the Neighborhood Business District.

Strategies

1. Identify leadership in new Business Association.
2. Build membership by approaching local businesses and institutions (those in the NBD as well as other commercial and light industrial businesses).
3. Work in conjunction with CCL to annually implement Carthage Plan, make recommendations, and apply for funds.
4. Create Succession Plan to help new members grow within the Business Association.
5. Continue attending Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United (CNBDU) meetings to meet other NBD representatives, build relationships, and get involved in the funding process.

Objective 2: Enhance the appearance of the NBD and other commercial areas of the neighborhood by making capital/physical improvements to existing properties and infrastructure.

Strategies

1. Seek funding through CNBDU for appropriate streetscape improvements throughout the Carthage NBD.
2. Seek funding through CNBDU for a Façade Program to improve the exterior façade of properties in the Carthage NBD.
3. Continue to work with local organizations and institutions (Garden Club, Churches, schools, seniors, scouts, etc.) on beautification efforts in and around the NBD.
4. Continue to support expansion of (where appropriate) and upgrades to the commercial and light industrial properties outside the NBD.
5. Continue to support and increase the volunteers of the Beautification Committee.

Objective 3: Target new commercial and light industrial development in Carthage.

Strategies

1. Redefine the boundaries of the NBD to include properties facing Vine Street between 68th Street and 75th Street to concentrate funding and support.
2. Develop a Community Gathering Space, or Town Center, at or near the intersection of Vine and Seymour, and could act as a Recreation Center for various programming.

3. Begin NBD redevelopment efforts near the intersection of Vine and Seymour and continue to focus one block at a time until all blocks are redeveloped.
4. Consider infilling residential uses throughout the NBD, especially above the first floor.
5. Work with Department of Community & Economic Development staff to actively pursue new commercial and light industrial uses for properties outside the NBD as they become available.
6. Take an active role in the process to redevelop the Hamilton County Fair Grounds if and when the property redevelops.

Objective 4: Solidify relationships with Elmwood Place and Hartwell to benefit the entire Vine Street Corridor.

Strategies

1. Invite Elmwood Place and Hartwell representatives to participate in Carthage Community/Institution events.
2. Convene one meeting a year with Elmwood Place and Hartwell representatives to discuss common goals.
3. Attend Elmwood Place and Hartwell meetings when possible.
4. Advocate for Elmwood Place at County or State levels and Hartwell at City levels when reasonable.

Action Plan

In order to accomplish the goals of this Plan, the Carthage Civic League should follow the timeline outlined below. The Action Steps give Carthage a strategy to work with City staff to make improvements to the NBD.

In order to accomplish these goals, the first thing Carthage needs to do is build capacity within Carthage Civic League and by forming a Business Association. Building capacity within the organization is important so the workload can be spread out over many volunteers instead of just a dedicated few. This way, nobody is overwhelmed with neighborhood tasks and the organization can continue to function even with some turnover.

The Carthage Civic League should review these Action Steps on an annual basis to determine which Action Steps have been met, which Action Steps should be pursued next, and whether or not there is a need for a change in the timeline.

Immediate Action Steps (First 6 months)				
Timeline				
Activity	Timeline	Level of Priority	Level of Difficulty	Responsible Party
Recruit and elect any remaining positions on CCL Board	Immediate	High	High	CCL Executive Board
Begin to regularly attend CNBDU Meetings (First Friday of each month)	Immediate	High	Medium	CCL Executive Board
Reorganize CCL to include additional committees to correspond with Plan goals and strategies.	Immediate	High	Medium	CCL Executive Board
Form Development Committee to work with the City to redevelop the NBD	Immediate	High	Medium	CCL Executive Board / Business Association
Create Plan Implementation Committee	Immediate	High	Medium	CCL Executive Board
Recruit Block Captains from each block or street segment to spread the word about upcoming Carthage events/issues	Immediate	Medium	High	Communications Committee

Continue to work with the Cincinnati Police Department, either as a Citizens on Patrol group or in a less structured manor to work to reduce crime	Immediate	High	High	CCL Executive Board
Continue to keep Carthage's website updated	Immediate	Medium	Medium	Communications Committee
Develop/increase Carthage email distribution list	Immediate	Medium	Medium	Communications Committee
Meet with other City neighborhoods to discuss successful developments	Immediate	High	Low	Executive Board, Development Committee
Hold meeting for all Business Owners and create a Business Association	Immediate	High	Medium	Business Association
Recruit and elect positions on the Business Association	Immediate	High	High	Business Association
Meet with leadership from Hartwell, Roselawn, Bond Hill, Winton Hills and the Business Association to discuss the plan as a way the communities can work together in future.	Immediate	Medium	Low	CCL Executive Board

Short Range Action Steps (Year One)

Timeline

Activity	Timeline	Level of Priority	Level of Difficulty	Responsible Party
Continue monthly attendance at CNBDU meetings.	Short	High	Medium	Business Association
Work with a newly-established Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee to ensure that residential properties are regularly upgraded to provide safe, quality housing to all residents of Carthage.	Short	High	High	Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee
Develop Leadership Succession Plan for the CCL and the Business Association.	Short	High	Medium	CCL Executive Board / Business Association

Organize Newsletter Team to begin producing Bi-monthly Newsletter sent to all residents.	Short	High	High	Communications Committee
Begin attending Hartwell, Roselawn and Winton Hills Community Council meetings.	Short	High	Low	CCL Executive Committee
Hold special Business Association meeting to increase membership in Business Association	Short	High	Medium	Business Association
Increase the listings in the Carthage Business Directory	Short	Medium	Medium	Business Association
Initiate zoning study of NBD and the surrounding areas	Short	High	Low	Development Committee
Apply to CNBDU for funding for a façade improvement program	Short	Medium	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Hold two special CCL meetings in first year with guest speakers to focus on increasing membership.	Short	Medium	Medium	CCL Executive Board / Membership Committee

Medium Range Action Steps (Years Two -Five)

Timeline

Activity	Timeline	Level of Priority	Level of Difficulty	Responsible Party
Work with Business owners who want to participate in façade program	Medium	High	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Explore use of Form-Based Code in the NBD	Medium	High	Medium	Development Committee
Work with the Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee to ensure that residential properties are regularly upgraded to provide safe, quality housing to all residents of Carthage.	Medium	High	High	Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee
Request funding from CNBDU for DOTE to perform design work for intersection redesign and streetscape improvements	Medium	High	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board

Begin working with City's DOTE to develop plan for intersection and streetscape improvements	Medium	High	Medium	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Apply for funding to CNBDU for construction work for intersection and streetscape improvements	Medium	High	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Work with the City and the Business Association to work on a redevelopment plan for the Hamilton County Fairgrounds, should the site become available	Medium	Medium	Medium	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Work with City's DOTE for intersection and streetscape improvements	Medium	High	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board

Long Range Action Steps (Years Six – Ten)

Timeline

Activity	Timeline	Level of Priority	Level of Difficulty	Responsible Party
Continue working with City's DOTE for intersection and streetscape improvements if not yet complete	Long	High	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Work with the Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee to ensure that residential properties are regularly upgraded to provide safe, quality housing to all residents of Carthage.	Long	High	High	Quality of Life (or Property Maintenance) Committee
Continue to work with the City and the Business Association to work on a redevelopment plan for the Hamilton County Fairgrounds, should the site become available	Long	Medium	Medium	Business Association / CCL Executive Board
Join an existing CDC or create new CDC, preferably with surrounding areas, to guide future development, market the NBD, purchase property, etc.	Long	High	High	Business Association / CCL Executive Board