



Ward 5 Central Neighborhoods

Master Plan • Cleveland, Ohio

WARD 5 CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Master Plan

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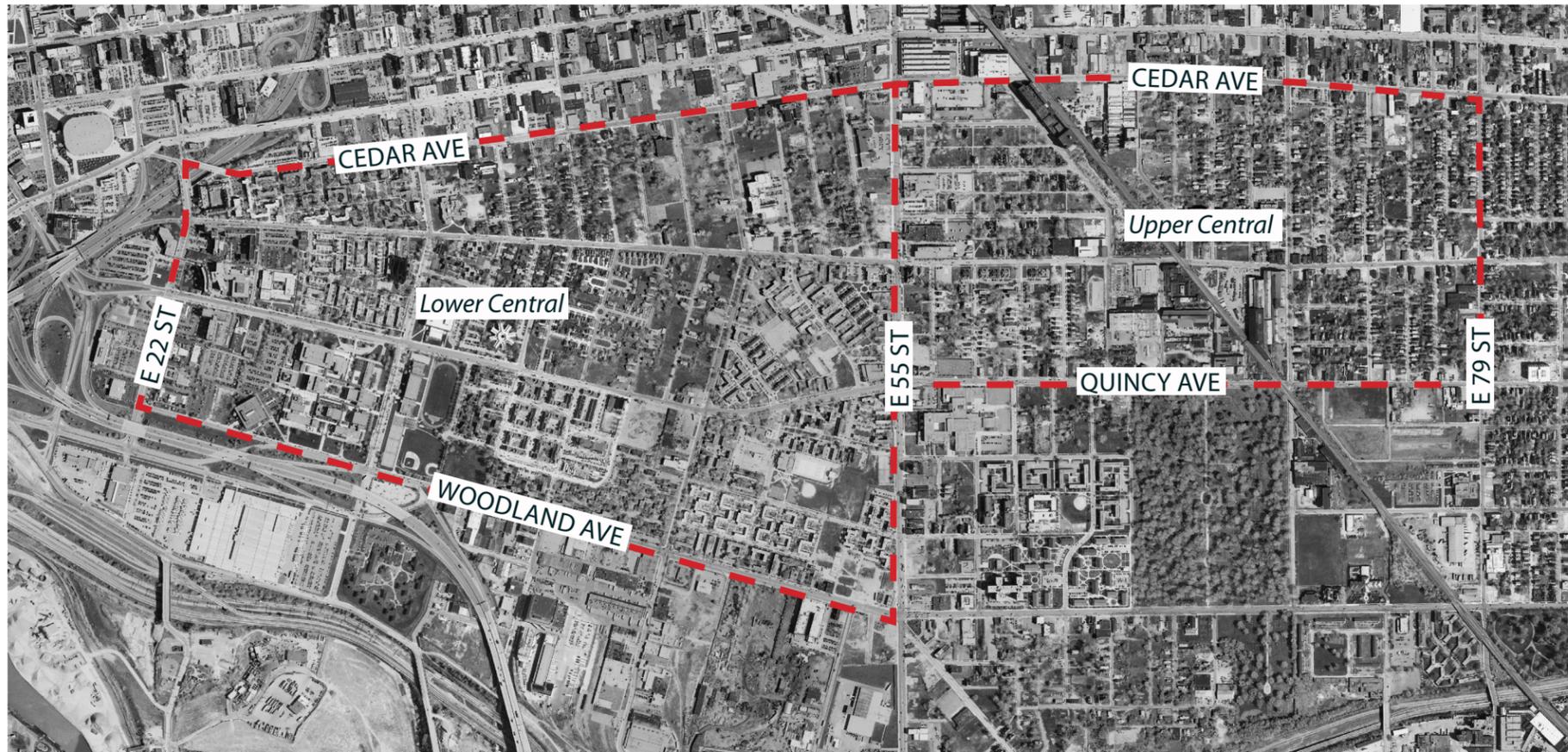


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Upper and Lower Central

1. THE CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

Study Area The Lower Central neighborhood is bounded by Cedar Avenue, Woodland Avenue, East 22nd Street, and East 55th Street; Upper Central is bounded by Cedar Avenue, Quincy Avenue, East 55th Street, and East 79th Street.

Purpose and Goals of the Study The Upper and Lower Central Neighborhoods in Ward 5 have a long and important history as one of Cleveland's most significant centers of entertainment and culture. Numerous Cleveland institutions have their roots in Central, including the Phillis Wheatley Home, founded in Central in 1911 and located in its current building on Cedar Avenue since 1928. Many residents feel pride and nostalgia for the neighborhood's illustrious past and would like to see the area regain its status as a citywide and regional destination.

In recent years, the Central neighborhoods have experienced a remarkable amount of reinvestment, particularly in the form of new residential and retail development. This planning process is an opportunity to build on the momentum underway in Central and to encourage catalytic development that will benefit existing residents and attract new ones.

Residents and community stakeholders were active participants in this planning process. The following goals were established for the Central neighborhoods during meetings with the community:

- Put the "central" back in Central
- Make the neighborhood whole by creating places of destination for residents and visitors
- Respect and celebrate the history of the Central neighborhoods
- Identify amenities to support existing and new residential areas
- Create an environment that supports local retail businesses
- Improve connections and access to resources within and beyond the neighborhood



(Image from the Western Reserve Historical Society)

Historic Central Much of the residential development in Upper and Lower Central began in the 1880s when Austro-Hungarian and Italian immigrants and Jewish immigrants from Poland and Russia began arriving to work in Cleveland's foundries and steel mills. After the turn of the century, the European immigrants in Central were joined by African-Americans migrating from the rural south.

By 1920, Central had a population of 78,000, making it the most heavily populated neighborhood in Cleveland. During the 1930s, housing deterioration and overcrowding transformed Central into the City's most distressed neighborhood. Government officials and community leaders responded with programs which resulted in the nation's first housing projects, including Olde Cedar Estates built in 1936. Urban Renewal activities in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in demolition of much of Central's older housing and the construction of freeways and institutions. The neighborhood's population declined substantially as a result.

The Central neighborhood was historically a hub of activity, entertainment, and culture. Long-time residents remember when the neighborhood was "Party Central"—the place where people came together for dining, music, and dancing. Few of the neighborhood's historic entertainment establishments remain, but there is a strong desire to retain a sense of the neighborhood's past and to celebrate the history and culture of Central.



Historic postcard of the Majestic Hotel (Cleveland Memory Project)



The Alpha Hotel (Cleveland Memory Project)



Preliminary sketch plan for Poets Streets area

Planning Methodology The Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio, Ubiquitous Design, and Richard L. Bowen & Associates collaborated on the Ward 5 Central Neighborhoods Master Plan. The plan was a three-phase process, beginning with an analysis of existing plans and current development trends in the neighborhood. This was followed by an extensive community-based process to define a shared vision for the future, and then by the development of a detailed master plan that will achieve this vision.

The planning process for the Ward 5 Central neighborhoods was directed by a three-tiered organization, including a core Working Group, a project Steering Committee, and the community-at-large:

- *The Working Group* consisted of the Executive Director and staff from Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation, planning staff from the City of Cleveland, and the consultant team from the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio, Ubiquitous Design, and Richard L. Bowen & Associates. The working group compiled and analyzed information, and coordinated Steering Committee and public input throughout the process.
- *The Steering Committee* was a larger group of community leaders and stakeholders who oversaw the master planning process and provided policy direction to the Working Group. Steering Committee members are listed in the acknowledgements on page 25. The Steering Committee met at key points in the process to review the progress of the work, evaluate technical conclusions and emerging directions, and process the opinions and ideas put forward by the community-at-large. Community-wide input occurred during three public meetings held in each phase of the process.

The process was organized around a series of public forums. During these meetings the consultant team worked directly with the community, and members of the Working Group and Steering Committee, to secure agreement on development directions for the neighborhood and preferred design concepts for specific sites and public improvement projects. The results of these meetings become the basis for preparation of the plan.

The process began by collecting data about existing conditions in the neighborhood. The UDC prepared an updated base map of the BBC area, along with a series of maps of current conditions, including land use, zoning, recent and proposed development projects. Demographic data from the 2000 Census was compiled to provide an indication of population trends and key changes in the composition of the community. This process led to an overall understanding of the development potential of the neighborhood, including the area's strengths and problems to be addressed by the plan.

Based on community input and an analysis of existing conditions, the UDC prepared sketches of preliminary development options. These preliminary plans were reviewed with the Working Group, the Steering Committee and the community at large. The plans were then refined with an increased emphasis on neighborhood development potential and enhancement of the key streets in the area. The final plans were again reviewed with the Working Group, the Steering Committee, and the community, and the community's priorities for implementation were identified.



Arbor Park Plaza Shopping Center

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Demographics Central has changed in recent years as individuals and families have moved into new and rehabilitated housing throughout the neighborhood.

Population:

- There were approximately 12,000 people living in Central in 2000; this number has grown since 2000 due to the large number of new housing units constructed in the neighborhood.
- 93% of neighborhood residents are African-American

Households and housing:

- Central is the site of approximately 4,000 public housing units, representing 35% of all CMHA-owned units.
- There were 2,665 families living in the neighborhood in 2000; 2,078 of these families have children age 18 or younger.
- 88% of families with children in the neighborhood have a female head of household.
- There were 5,441 housing units in Central in 2000.
- At the time of the 2000 census, 18% of these housing units were vacant.
- Of the occupied housing units, 8% are owner-occupied and 92% are renter-occupied.
- Median rent in Central in 2000 was \$164 per month, compared to \$465 in Cleveland and \$541 in Cuyahoga County.

Employment and Income:

- 67.5% of Central residents work full or part time.
- 55% of Central residents over 25 have a high school degree, compared to 69% in the City of Cleveland and 82% in Cuyahoga County; 4.2% of Central residents have a college degree.
- The median household income in Central (1999) was \$8,657, compared to \$25,928 in the City of Cleveland and \$39,168 in Cuyahoga County.



Vacant and under-utilized industrial buildings in the Literary Streets area



Cuyahoga Community College



Cedar Avenue



Boy Scouts headquarters



Traditional housing stock



Cedar Estates

Physical Conditions Lower Central is adjacent to Downtown Cleveland and well-connected to the region's freeway system. As a result, the neighborhood is home to many Cleveland institutions, which benefit from the central, well-connected location.

Much of the single-family and two-family housing in the neighborhood is newly constructed, especially in the Home Ownership Zone, but pockets of older housing also exist. The neighborhood also has a high concentration of public housing.

There is relatively little vacant land in the neighborhood. The exception is in the Literary Streets area, near East 55th and Ashland Avenue. Many houses have been demolished and land in this area has environmental issues, due to a former industrial use.

The neighborhood is well served by public transit, with bus lines on East 55th Street, East 79th Street, Cedar Avenue, Central Avenue, and Quincy Avenue/Community College.

Major arterials in the neighborhood such as East 55th Street, East 79th Street, Cedar Avenue, and Central Avenue carry heavy commuter traffic. The streets are generally well-maintained, although they typically lack street trees and other amenities that would make the neighborhood more pedestrian-friendly.



Housing: Central Commons

Land Use Central's housing stock is a mix of single family and apartments in larger developments. The neighborhood has a broad mix of styles and types of housing from old wood frame Colonials, to suburban tract housing, to new developments in traditional architectural styles. New housing development has occurred or is planned throughout the neighborhood.

There are numerous institutions in Lower Central, including Cuyahoga Community College, St. Vincent Charity Hospital, the Visiting Nurse Association, and the Teachers Credit Union. Industrial uses also occur along East 55th Street. Retail uses are concentrated at high traffic intersections, most notably the newly renovated Arbor Park Plaza, a large-scale retail development at East 40th Street and Community College Boulevard. Industrial uses are largely concentrated along Cedar Avenue, between East 55th and East 71st Street.

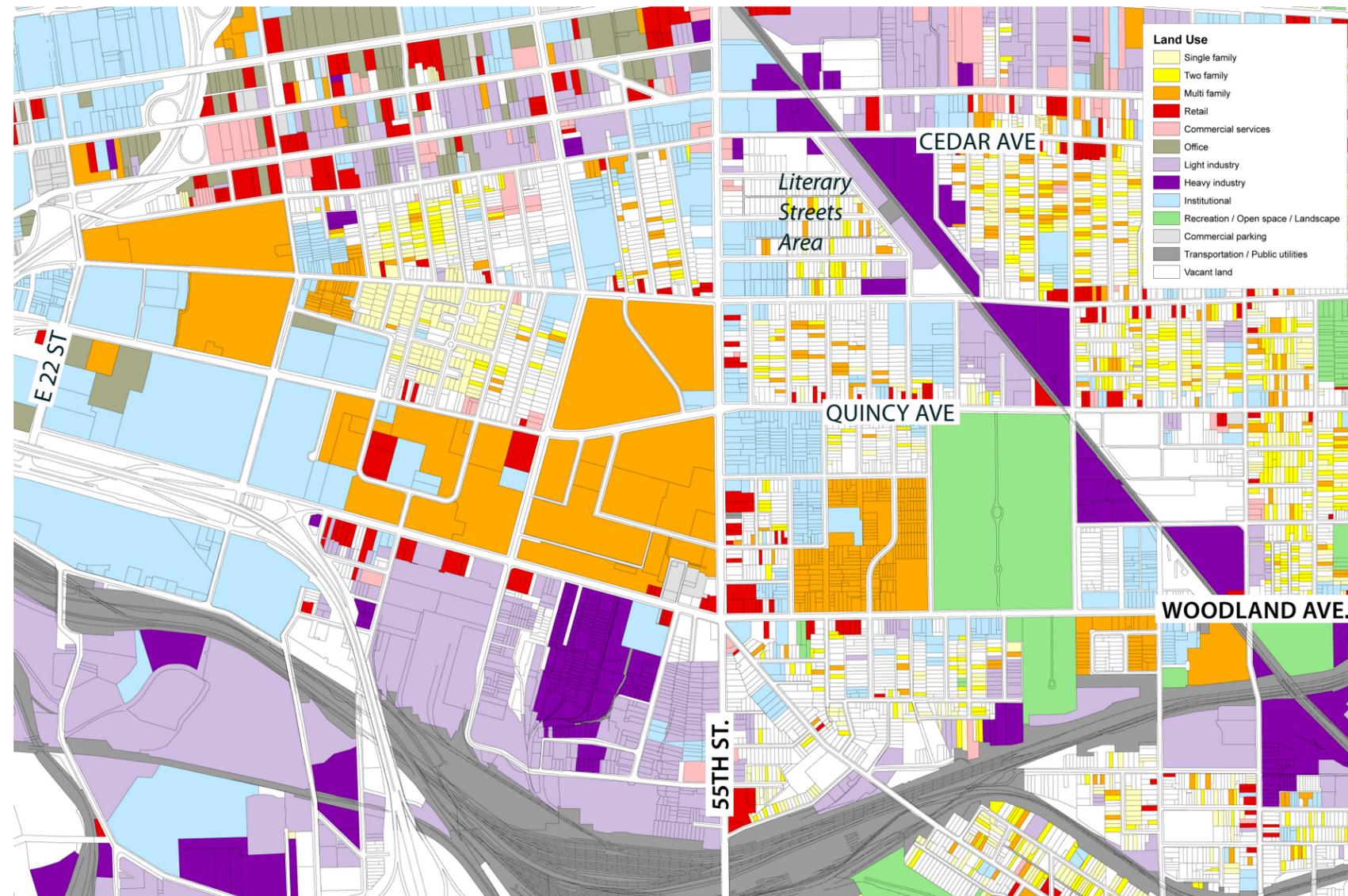
There is relatively little vacant land in the neighborhood, except for the concentration of vacancy noted on the previous page, in the Literary Streets area off Ashland Avenue and East 55th Street.



Institutional use: Woodland Library



Commercial / retail uses





Recent Development Upper and Lower Central have been the focus of considerable residential and retail development in recent years. New housing has been developed as a series of residential villages, including:

- *Villages of Central / Home Ownership Zone* (2000 -) 458 single family homes, duplexes and townhouses
Includes: Central Village, Friendship Village, Garden Village, St. John's Village West, St. John's Village East, and Woodland Village
- *Gabriel's Green* (2000) 50 units of affordable income housing and a community center as part of the project
- *Central Commons* (2000) 81 market rate, for sale homes
- *Arbor Park Village* (2001) 629 single family units of affordable housing
- *East Central Place* (2006) 81 unit mix of for sale, lease-purchase, and affordable units on scattered sites

There have also been significant renovations to the existing CMHA facilities including Carver Park and Phoenix Village (formerly King Kennedy).



Arbor Park housing



Central Commons



St. John's Village West



St. John's Village East



Gabriel's Green

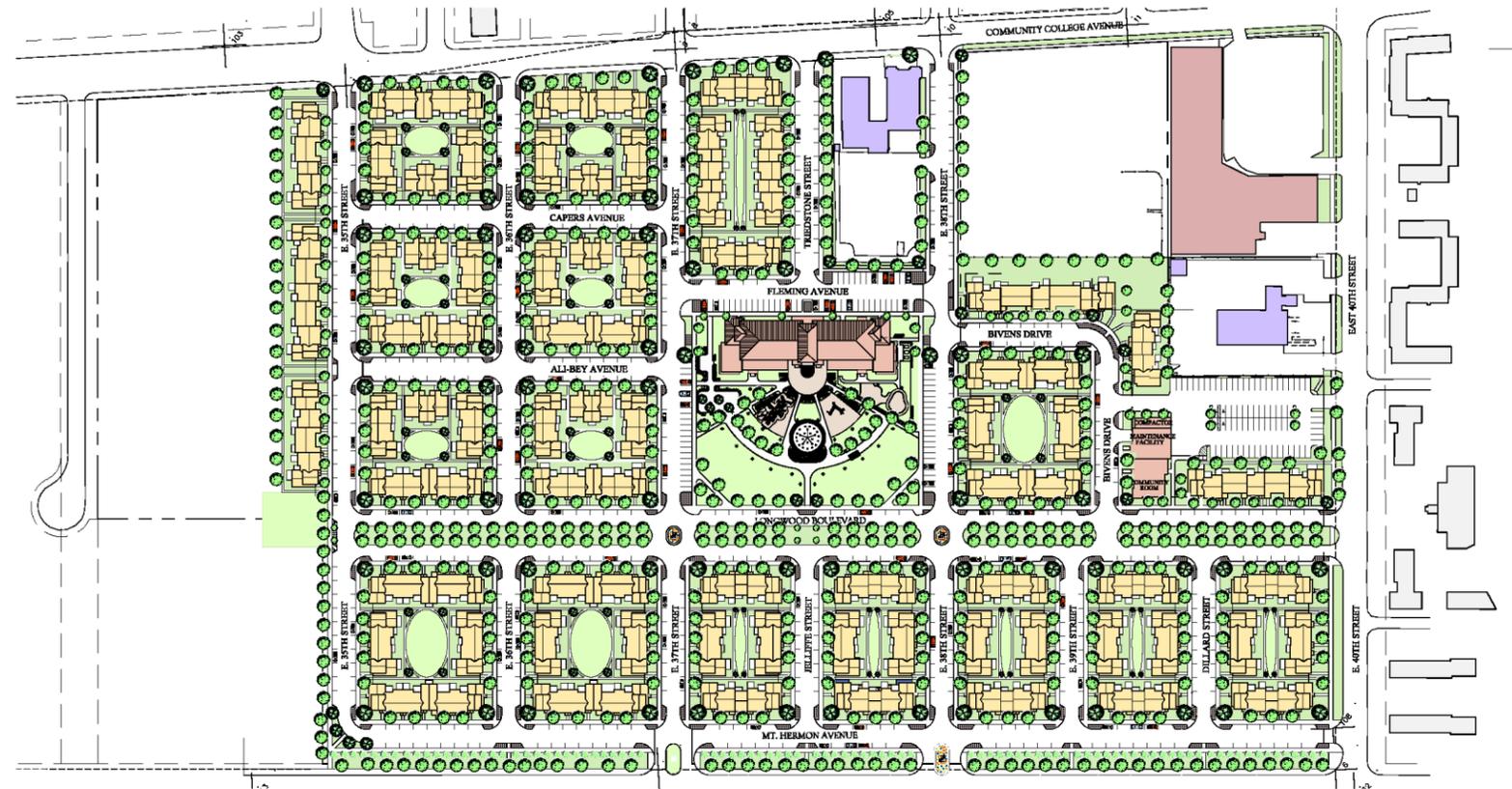
The upper and lower Central neighborhoods have numerous small parks and green spaces that were created as part of new residential developments.



Landscaped oval at St. Vincent Charity Hospital



Running track at Cuyahoga Community College



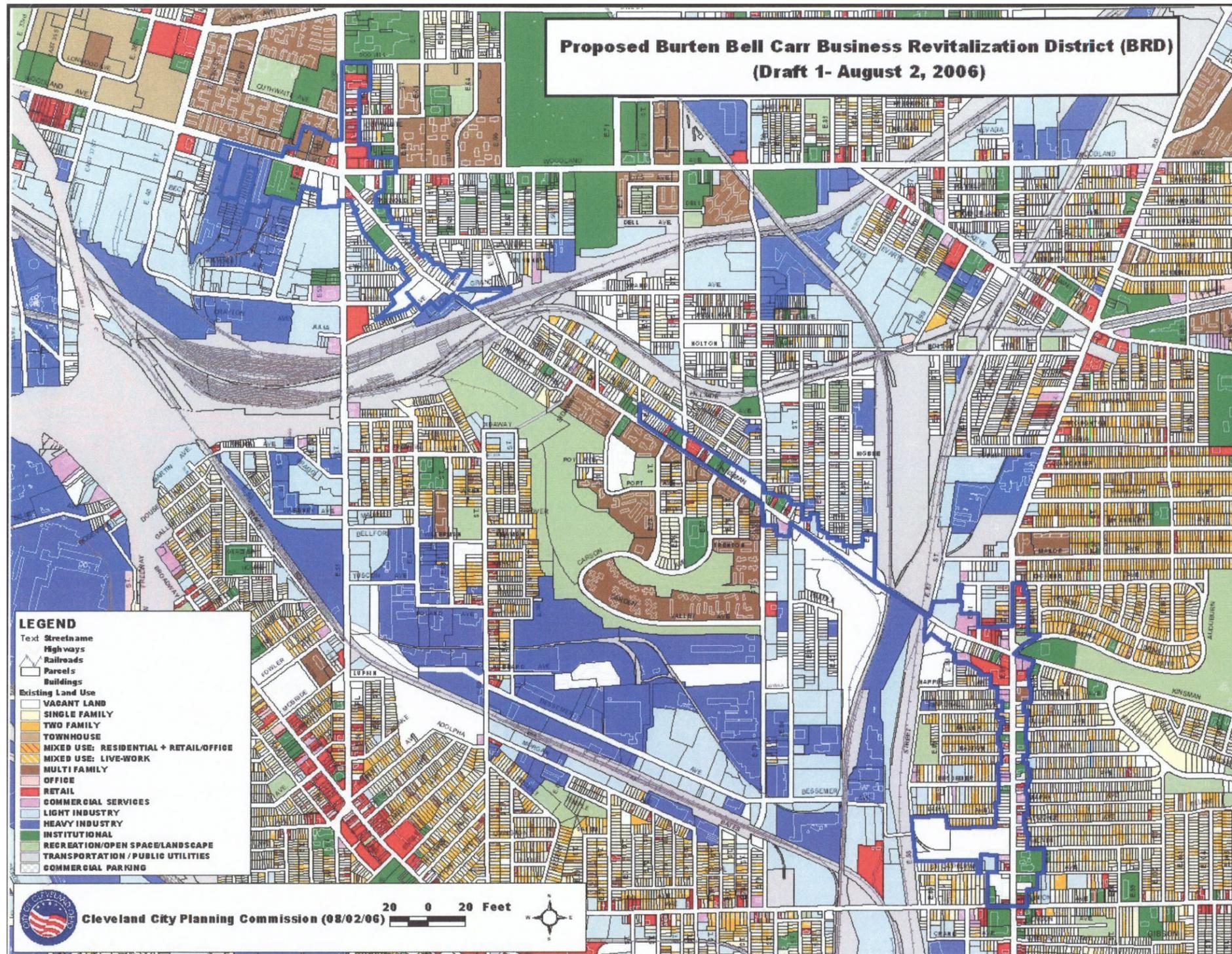
NEFF & ASSOCIATES
ROBERTS CONSULTANTS
THE OUTSIDE IN

ARBOR PARK VILLAGE
CLEVELAND, OHIO
SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ARBOR PARK ASSOCIATES, L.P.

cityarchitecture
JULY 2003

Parks and Green Space Each of the new residential developments in upper and lower Central were developed as “villages” with housing arranged around small parks and green spaces. These spaces primarily serve the residents of each village. Some of the larger, institutional properties in the neighborhood, such as Cuyahoga Community College and St. Vincent Charity Hospital also have green spaces and landscaped areas. While these green spaces help to beautify the neighborhood, they do not actually function as public space. The neighborhood has no public park or central gathering space for residents.



New Business Revitalization District: The Burten, Bell, Carr Business Revitalization District (BBC BRD) was formed in early 2007 to review the designs of all proposed new-construction developments and major renovations to existing buildings along the main thoroughfares of Ward 5. The committee is charged with ensuring that new projects are aesthetically-pleasing and functionally-accessible to potential users. Through this process, the BBC BRD oversees that future development in the Ward 5 neighborhoods is held to the highest standard possible.

3. ECOLOGY & SUSTAINABILITY

Ward 5 has many characteristics that make it suitable for ecologically-friendly development. These include:

1. Good access to a range of public transportation options.
2. Close proximity to downtown Cleveland, thus reducing commute times.
3. Existing and future integration into the regional bike trail system.
4. Many existing structures are of solid construction and capable of rehabilitation, thus reducing construction waste.
5. Large quantities of open land that, with the correct guidelines, could be developed in an environmentally conscious way.
6. Many sites that could provide areas for stormwater detention and infiltration.

Any new development within Ward 5 should seek to maximize these characteristics while also following the best practices suggested by LEED for Neighborhood Development. Some of these include:

1. Encourage infill construction
2. Promote pedestrian friendly environments
3. Utilize public transportation whenever possible
4. Reuse existing infrastructure
5. Conserve natural resources
6. Encourage brownfield reuse and cleanup
7. Utilize bicycle networks
8. Reduce automobile dependence
9. Encourage higher density, mixed-use development
10. Consider proximity to schools and work
11. Wetland avoidance, conservation and restoration
12. Reduction of stormwater runoff



Parking lot vegetated swale

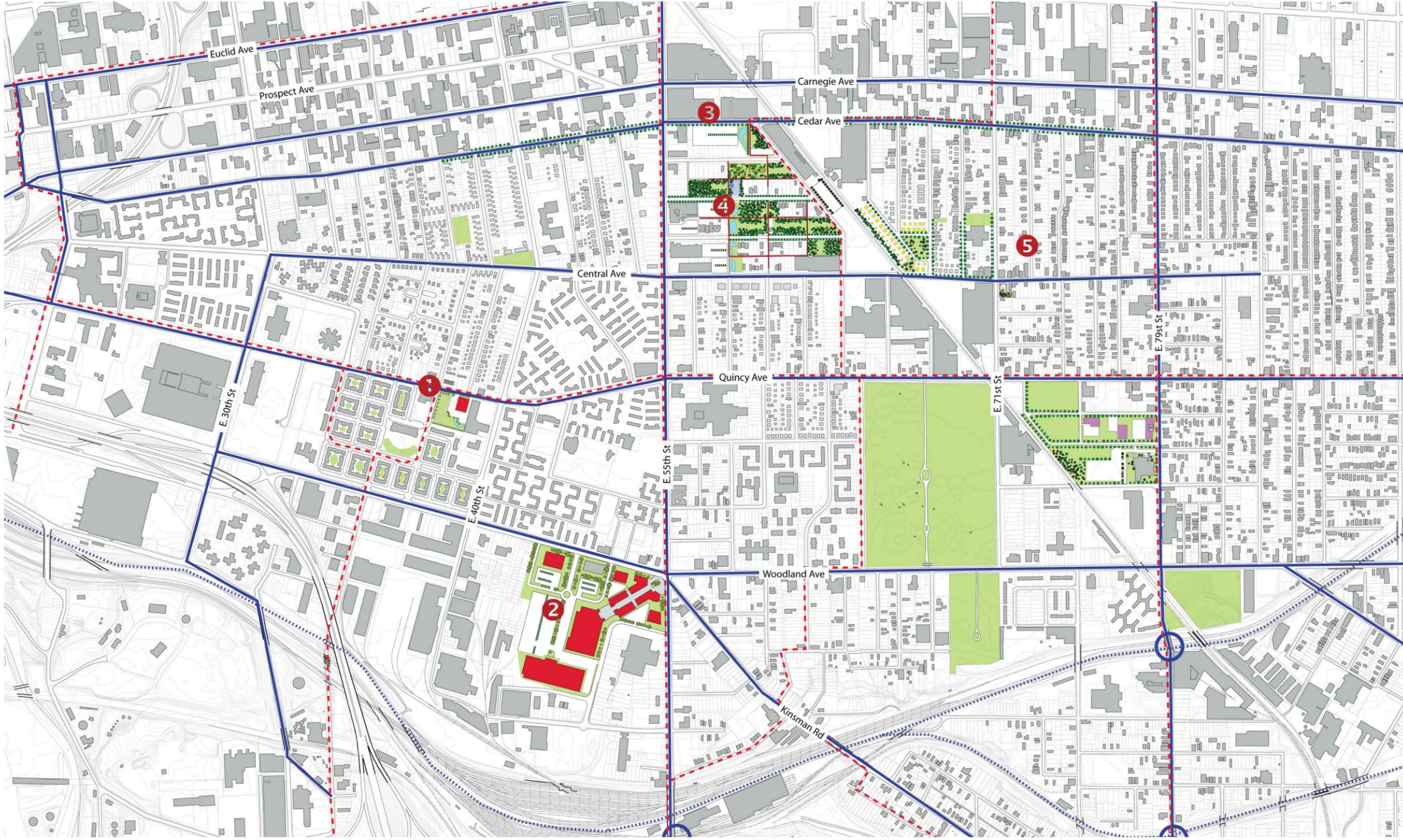


Existing and proposed bike trail system

4. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview The major investments that have occurred in recent years encompass much of the neighborhood. However, there are several key sites that provide development opportunities and good locations for neighborhood amenities and enhancements. These sites include:

- 1 Quincy Avenue and East 40th Street
- 2 East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue
- 3 Cedar Avenue
- 4 Ashland Avenue / Literary Streets Area
- 5 East 71st Street and Central Avenue





FOCUS AREA 1 Quincy Avenue and East 40th Street The Quincy Avenue and East 40th Street intersection is a neighborhood commercial node, anchored by the Arbor Park Plaza shopping center. The open site immediately west of the shopping center is a key development opportunity in the neighborhood. Residents identified a drug store as a neighborhood need, well-suited to the site. A drug store or other free-standing retail building could be accommodated on the site, sharing a loading corridor with the shopping center. In addition to retail use, the site could also accommodate a large open green space to complement the numerous smaller, more formal green spaces in nearby Arbor Park. The new green space could be designed to be open and flexible, so that residents could use the area for informal sports and games, picnicking, dogwalking, etc. This green space could also accommodate an area to detain water from the large drug store parking lot.



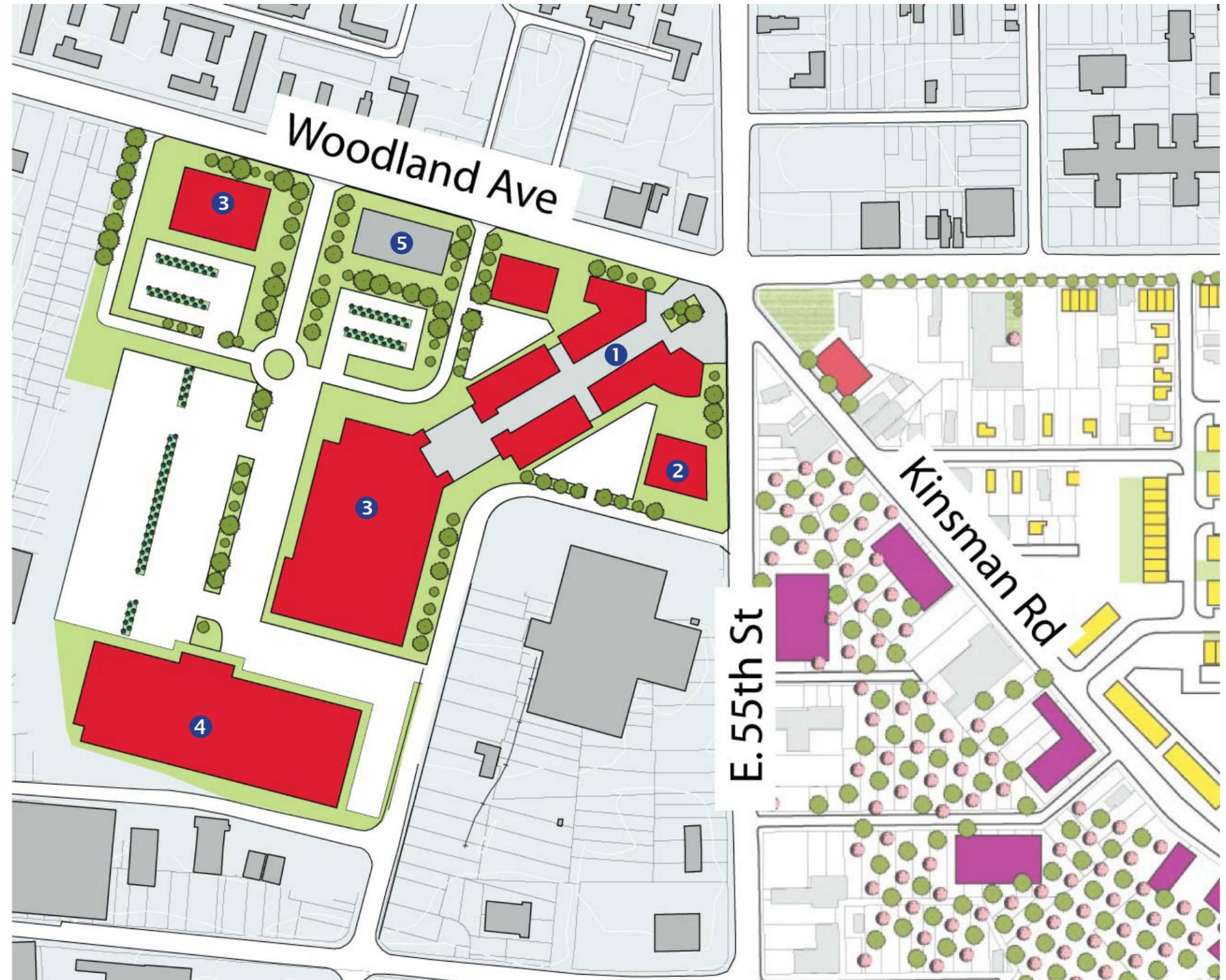
- ① Arbor Park Plaza
- ② New retail site
- ③ Public green space

FOCUS AREA 2 East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue The southwest corner of the intersection at East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue is a major development opportunity for the neighborhood. The property closest to the corner is currently vacant. The Cleveland School Board owns the building and property just west of the intersection, and a salvage yard occupies the next site to the west. These three sites could be combined to create a large development parcel that would have the advantage of fronting on two high-traffic arterials, as well as freeway visibility to the south of the site.

In response to residents' requests for high-quality destination retail in the neighborhood, the site could be developed as an urban lifestyle center. The development could combine retail uses, a seasonal outdoor market, a cultural center, a hotel, and possibly some new housing. Unlike many suburban lifestyle centers, this development could be designed to connect with the surrounding community, with integrated access for public transit, pedestrians, and cars.

This retail center could set precedent for how to manage stormwater on-site. The many parking surfaces will produce a large amount of runoff which could be contained within vegetated swales and detention basins. The pavers used throughout the complex could be permeable, thus allowing for water infiltration.

- ① Neighborhood-scale retail
- ② Cultural Center
- ③ Big box retail
- ④ Hotel
- ⑤ Conversion of historic building for housing





Urban lifestyle center concept



Cultural center



Outdoor market



Neighborhood-scale retail



New hotel

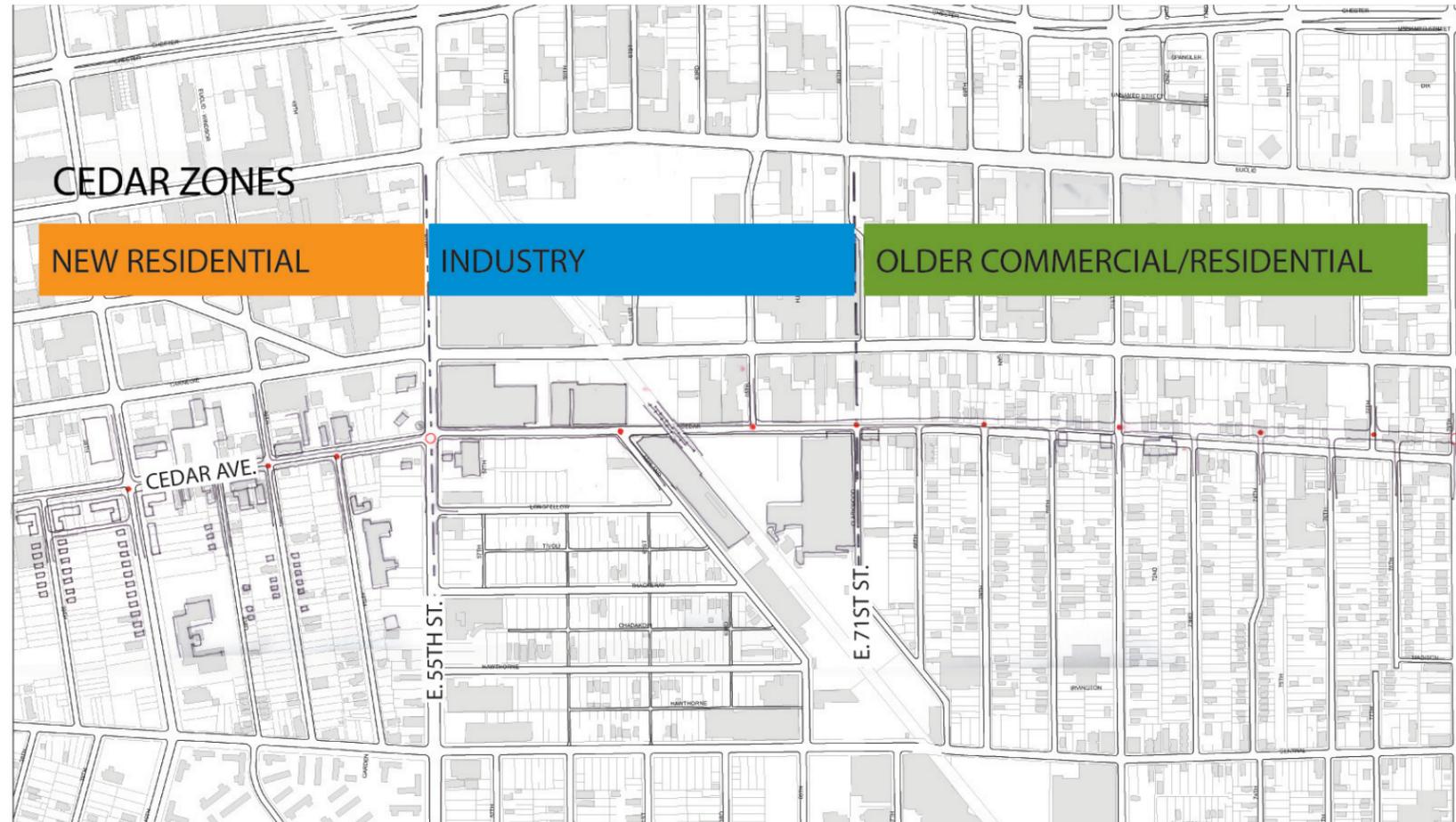


Existing conditions at the Woodland Avenue and East 55th Street site.



Potential redevelopment area at East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue

- ① Vacant site
- ② School Board building
- ③ Salvage yard



PROJECT AREA 3: Cedar Avenue Long-term residents remember Cedar Avenue as the “Street of Dreams”—an active commercial corridor with attractive architecture and a vibrant street life. Over time, the character of the corridor has changed and the street has become much less conducive to pedestrian traffic.

Land use along Cedar Avenue changes through the neighborhood. The western segment of Cedar Avenue (west of East 55th Street) is fronted by considerable new residential development. The center segment of Cedar Avenue (between East 55th Street and East 71st Street) is where the neighborhood’s industrial uses are concentrated. The segment east of East 71st Street blends older, traditional commercial buildings and housing (old and new). All parts of the Cedar Avenue corridor would benefit from streetscape enhancements, but the character of these enhancements should vary to reflect the adjacent land use.



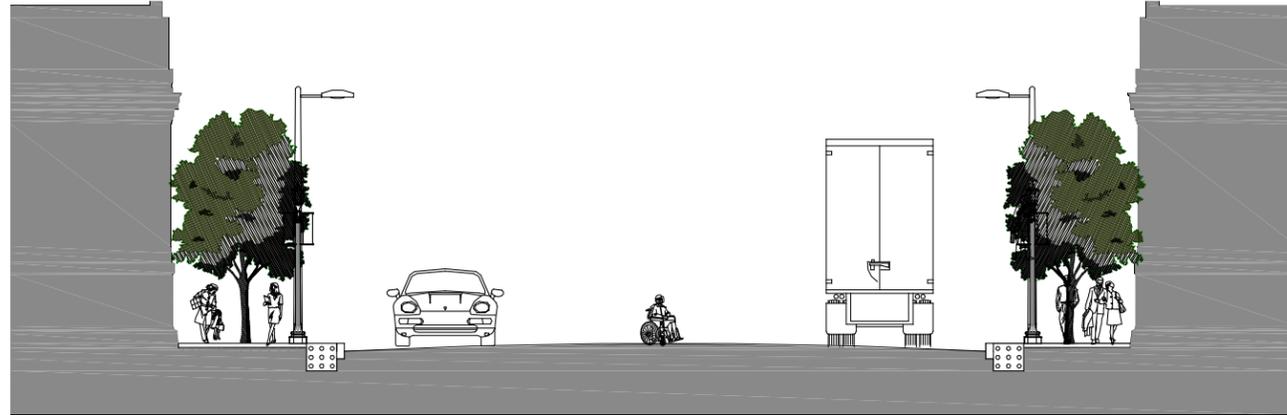
The changing character and land uses of Cedar Avenue

CEDAR AVENUE Residential Streetscape In the residential section of Cedar Avenue, street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, and seating will help to buffer residents from heavy traffic and create a more pedestrian friendly environment.



CEDAR AVENUE Industrial Streetscape In the industrial section of Cedar Avenue, district signage and street trees would provide an attractive, low-maintenance identity for industries and businesses in the area.



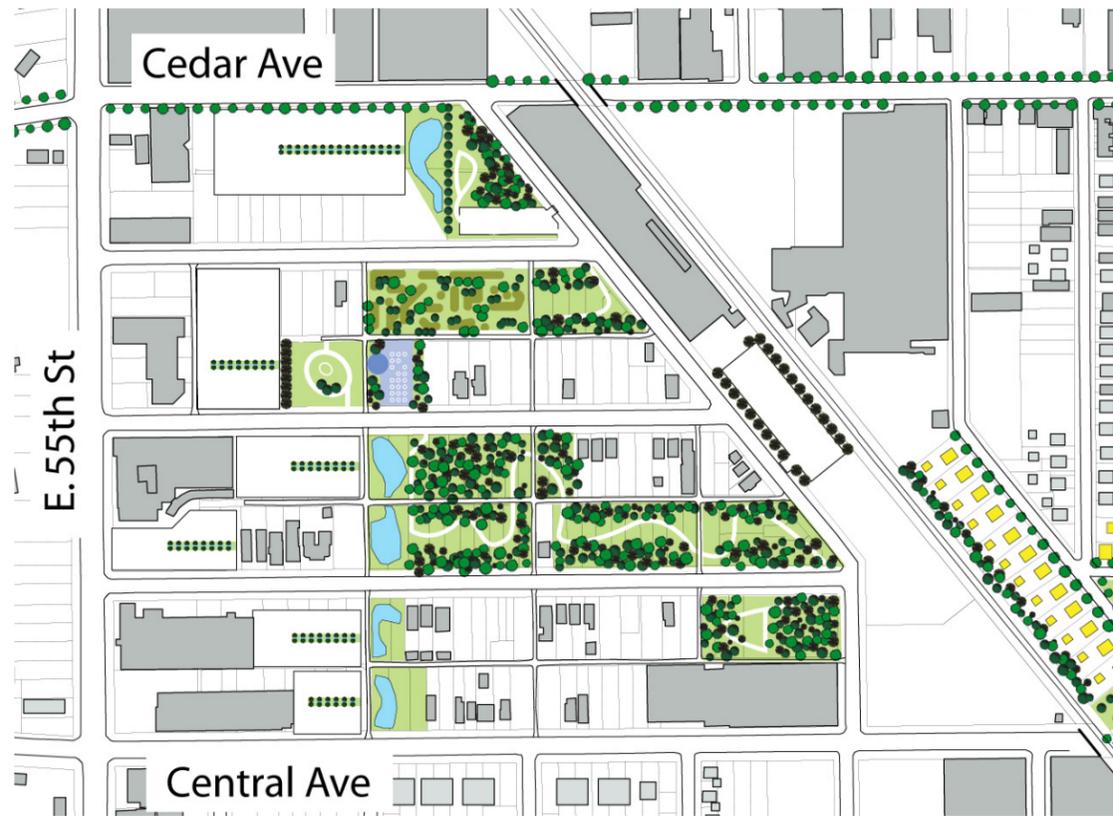


Existing commercial area

CEDAR AVENUE Commercial Streetscape Existing, traditional commercial areas along Cedar Avenue can be enhanced with street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, and district signage within the existing right-of-way. New commercial and retail development along Cedar Avenue should include similar street trees and signage to tie together old and new.



New commercial development



Literary Streets as Recreational Amenity

FOCUS AREA 4: Ashland Avenue and Literary Streets Area The Literary Streets area got its name from the streets that run through it, many of which bear the names of famous writers. The area is bounded by railroad tracks and a vacant industrial complex along Ashland Avenue to the north east. The neighborhood has a scattered group of single-family houses, many vacant lots, and a relatively new playground. Brick streets, in varying condition, still exist in the neighborhood. The area is known to have environmental issues related to past industrial activity in the area.

The Literary Streets area is one possible location for a neighborhood park. Walking trails, a water park, and miniature golf course are among the amenities residents would like to see in this park. Because of the location and accessibility of the site, the park has the potential to serve both as a neighborhood facility and a regional draw. Pedestrian links from surrounding housing areas, including Gabriel's Green, Friendship Village, and Woodland Village could be established. Linking to Garden Village (to the east of the railroad tracks) would also be accomplished via a short pedestrian passage that goes under the tracks.

The Literary Streets area is bounded on the west by a string of large institutional buildings that front onto E. 55th Street. The parking lots associated with these buildings become very large areas of impervious surface. This condition could be improved by using some of the land in the Literary Street area to collect the water from these lots and permit it to infiltrate back into the ground.

It is also possible that this area could be the location of infill housing, as there is a large quantity of available land. This large amount of land could allow for a mixture of residential units and greenspace that would be an uncommon commodity within the city. The site's industrial history may require a level of reclamation prior to residential uses. This clean-up could possibly be accomplished through the use of phytoremediative plants.



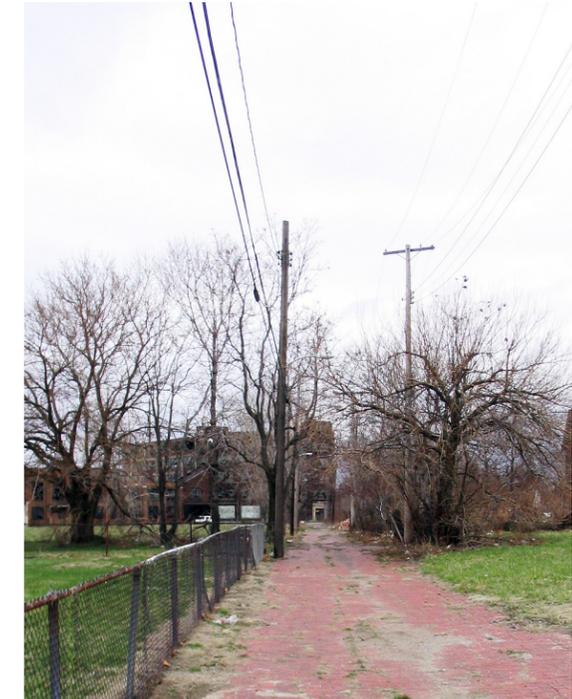
Literary Streets with Infill Housing



A water park, a miniature golf course, and walking trails are among the ideas suggested for the Literary Streets area



A mixture of formal and informal recreational uses can be accommodated in the Literary Streets area



Some of the existing brick streets could be retained to serve as walking paths through the area

Modified Garden Village Plan



- 1 Existing retail businesses
- 2 New plaza/outdoor space
- 3 Existing industry (Cleveland Track Metal)

FOCUS AREA 5: East 71st Street and Central Avenue The intersection of East 71st Street and Central Avenue is an opportunity to re-establish a mixed use node of activity, reminiscent of the Central neighborhood in its heyday. The intersection currently has traditional retail buildings on the north side of Central Avenue, an industrial use on the southwest corner, and a vacant site on the southeast corner. Preserving the retail buildings and attracting new businesses would reinvigorate this pedestrian-friendly retail area. As one of the only remaining pieces of historic Central, this intersection could become a new historic preservation district possessing its own unique, unified identity. This identity could be expressed through a strategic storefront renovation process and streetscape improvements.

A new paved plaza at the southeast corner of the intersection would serve as a community gathering place and a venue for outdoor performances. The industrial use also fits into the mix, since workers could patronize local establishments and use the plaza at lunchtime in good weather. The blend of activities would help keep the intersection active at many times of the day.

Existing residents and new residents of the housing at Garden Village would benefit from having a small activity center within walking distance of their homes. An enhanced streetscape in this section of Central Avenue would help the neighborhood feel more cohesive. The original plan for Garden Village (lower left) proposes a green space along the railroad tracks. This would buffer the housing from train noise, but the green space would have limited visibility, reducing the likelihood that it will be well-used and increasing potential safety issues. As an alternative, the plan could be reconfigured as shown (in the upper left drawing) to locate the green space in the center of the housing area, with residences facing directly onto the green. The downside of this alternative is that some of the housing in Garden Village would back up to the railroad tracks, but the noise from the tracks could be mitigated by planting a landscape buffer between the backs of the houses and the tracks.

Original Garden Village Plan





Existing retail on the north side of Central Avenue with plaza site in the foreground



- 1 Existing retail businesses
- 2 New plaza/outdoor space
- 3 Existing industry (Cleveland Track Metal)



Paved plaza

5. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities Residents participating in the planning process were generally in agreement about their top priorities for the neighborhood. These include:

- Attracting retail development into the neighborhood so that residents can shop locally. There were questions about the range of businesses that could be included in the potential urban lifestyle center at East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue. For instance, some residents questioned the viability of a hotel at this location. But there was general agreement that a large-scale mixed use development would be a benefit to the neighborhood.
- A cultural center or community center would be valued by the neighborhood.
- Residents also supported the idea of a smaller-scale retail hub at East 71st Street and Central Avenue.
- The controlling of illegal dumping should be considered a large priority for the neighborhood.
- Developing a neighborhood park or green space is another priority for the neighborhood. Most participants supported the idea of a community park in the Literary Streets area if environmental problems can be remediated.

Action Steps

- Conduct a market study to determine the appropriate mix of businesses for an urban lifestyle center at East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue; gauge developer interest in the site.
- Seek funds for environmental remediation of the Literary Streets including the Clarkwood area
- Continue acquisition of land within the Central Villages for infill housing.
- Develop plans for a mixture of recreational uses for the Literary Streets area. These plans can be implemented incrementally, as funds permit. Develop a landscape plan that would begin to remove toxins from the site through plant-based remediation.
- Pursue acquisition of the vacant site at the southeast corner of the intersection of East 71st Street and Central Avenue for use as a public plaza; develop plans for this public space.
- Identify organizations that would be interested in collaborating on a cultural center of the neighborhood.

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