



# Near Northwest Neighborhood Plan

## 2019



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# What is a Plan?

The purpose of a plan is to develop a shared long-range statement of what a neighborhood, or other area of the city, wants to achieve. It communicates an area's intended direction to residents, business and property owners, service providers, and other decision makers.

The goal of a plan is to create more attractive, convenient, efficient, equitable, and healthy places for present and future generations. It aims to ensure an area's needs are met and new development is accommodated while the positive aspects and character of the area is maintained.

A plan provides a broad framework for future development and a starting point for more detailed planning and public engagement as individual projects are pursued. The plan will continually evolve to meet the changing needs of a community. A plan is not intended to represent the exact results expected from its implementation.

## How are Plans Used?

1. Neighborhood residents will use the plan to gain an understanding of planning initiatives in the short, medium, and long terms.
2. Public officials and community leaders will use the plan to direct funding and to make decisions on zoning and land use issues.
3. Planners and City staff will use the plan to understand key issues important to the area and as a guide to implementing priority projects and initiatives.



# Introduction

The Near Northwest Neighborhood Master Plan looks at the overall area and uses the community's vision as a basis to provide a broad framework which identifies principles and concepts for future development and improvements. The plan identifies long-term physical improvements for a 20-year period while being mindful of short-term opportunities. The purpose of this plan is to:

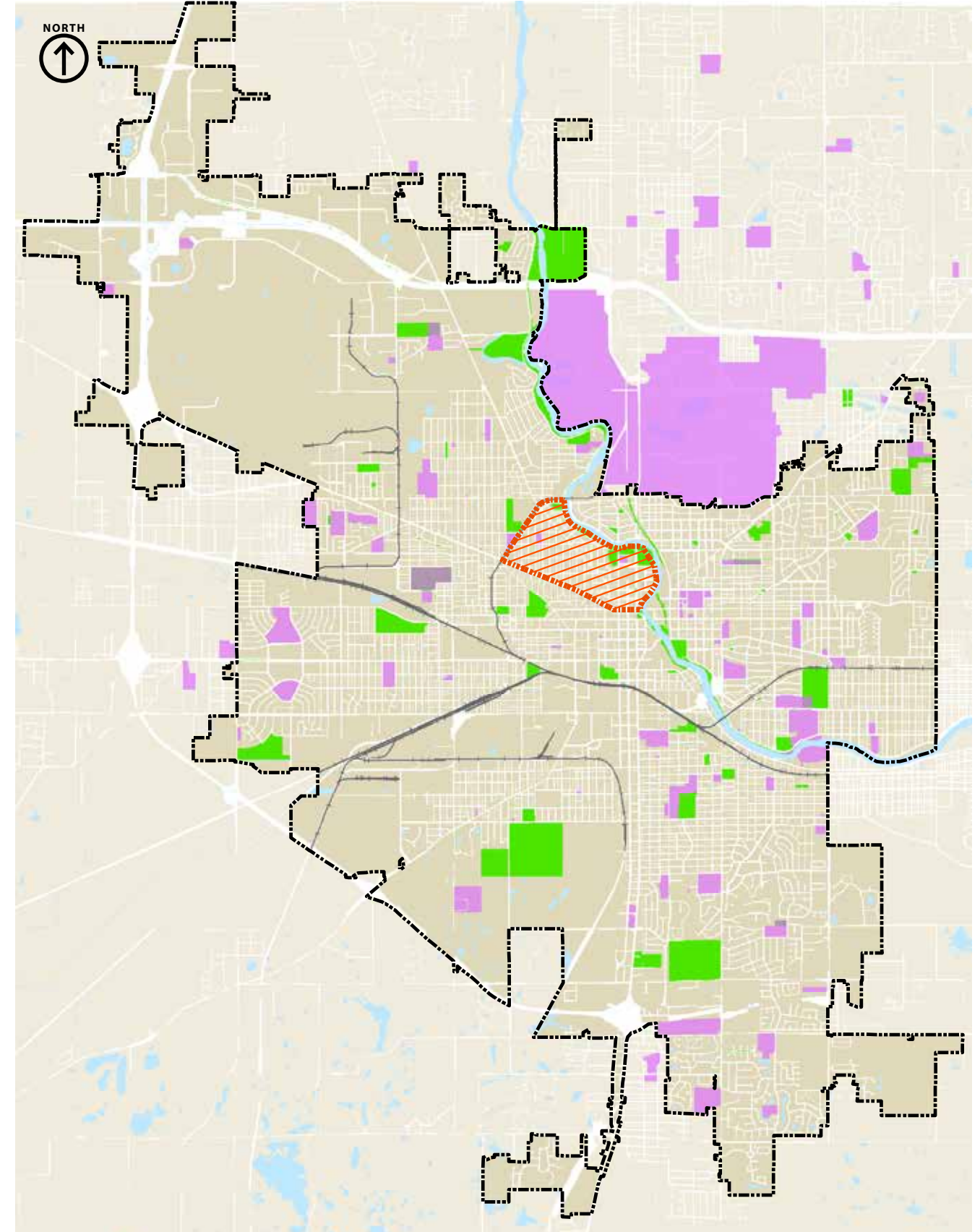
- serve as a guide to business and property owners, residents, developers, City staff, elected officials, and others in making investment, land use, and design decisions;
- provide context for existing neighborhood enhancement efforts;
- provide a set of recommendations that will help guide decision making in the Near Northwest Neighborhood;
- build confidence for future investment by neighborhood stakeholders and other community partners;
- instill pride for residents who believe in their neighborhood's potential; and
- improve quality of life for residents, their children, and grandchildren.

The plan builds upon *City Plan*, South Bend's Comprehensive Plan, but provides a more specific framework for the Near Northwest Neighborhood.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood is located just north and west of downtown South Bend. It is bounded by the St. Joseph River & former railroad tracks to the north, the St. Joseph River to the east, Lincoln Way West / LaSalle Ave to the south and the former railroad tracks to the west.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood has proximity to the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, and Holy Cross College. In addition, Michigan Street, which is a major north/south corridor that goes through downtown South Bend and extends north into the state of Michigan and to the south towards Indianapolis, runs through the eastern portion of the neighborhood.

The Near Northwest has, within its boundaries, four local historic districts (Chapin Park is also a national historic district) and the City's only local historic landscape landmark, Leeper Park.



Location of Near Northwest Neighborhood in the City of South Bend







# Context & Analysis

## Neighborhood Background

The Chapin Park historic district and the majority of the neighborhood south of Lindsey Street & Navarre Street (River Bend area) was built by the beginning of the 20th century. In the late 1800's, portions of Chapin Park were one of the most exclusive areas in South Bend. As a result, at the turn of the century the Near Northwest was home to some of the most prominent South Bend families including Chapin, Fassnacht, Sibley, Muessel, Fuerbringer, and Coquillard.

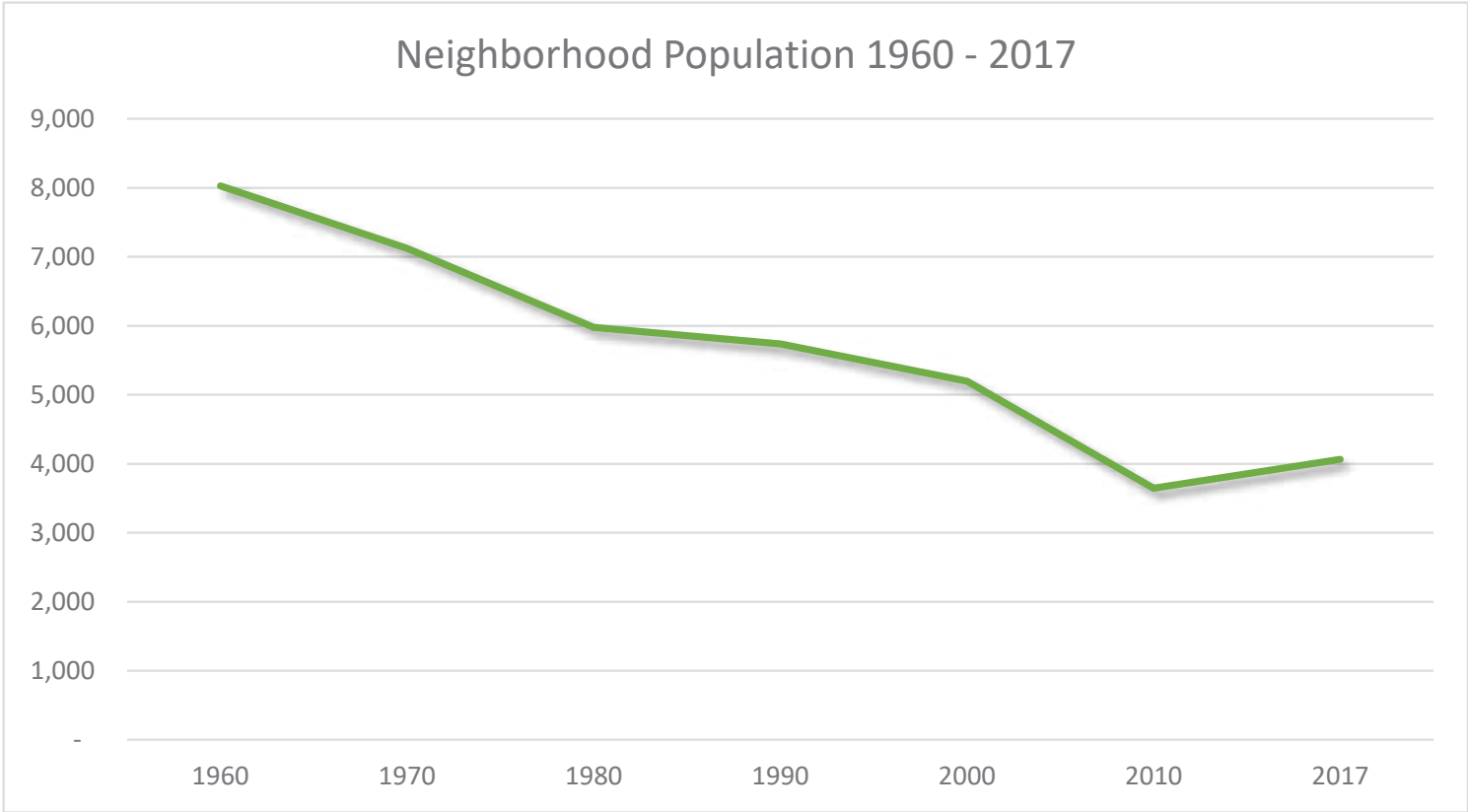
By 1917 more than 95% of the neighborhood was built and the area outside of Chapin Park was considered a quality, working-class community. Shortly thereafter, in the late 1920's, the neighborhood was fully developed and seen as an ideal location due to access to the streetcar. The area also boosted proximity and access to the St. Joseph River, parks, and schools.

At the time of South Bend's peak population, in the

1960's, the neighborhoods population was roughly 8,000 people. Like the rest of the city, the neighborhood was impacted by the economic, social, and cultural decline that occurred following the closing of Studebaker Motor Company and other industrial employers in the area. By 2017 the population had declined by roughly 49% to around 4,000 people; during this same time period the City population decreased by about 23%. It is worth noting that between 2010 and 2017 it is estimated that the population increased by 11%, having dipped to around 3,600 people in 2010.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood is comprised of the entirety of Census Tracts 6 and 7. Portage Avenue is the dividing line between Census Tracts with tract 6 to the south and tract 7 to the north. The tracts have distinctly different socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

According to the U.S. Census, there is a significant difference between the age of residents in each Cen-



Source: 1960 - 2010 U.S. Census and 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

sus Tract. Over 40% of the population in Census Tract 6 are youth (19 and under), while in Census Tract 7 less than half that, around 20% of the population are youth. The City's population as a whole is roughly 30% youth. Census Tract 6 has a slightly smaller percentage of 20 to 64-year-olds than the City, at almost 52% and around 58% respectively, yet Census Tract 7 has close to 68% of its population in the same age range. When examining closer, it is found that that Census Tract 7 has a population between 20 and 34 that is 10% greater than that city percentage. While Census Tract 7 has a population of 65 and older similar to the city, roughly 12% and 12.5% respectively, Census Tract 6 has significantly less with under 7% of the population 65 and older.

According to the American Community Survey, of those 25 years and older, almost 26% of tract 6 neighbors do not have a high school diploma, while about 12% of people in tract 7 do not. On the other end of the spectrum, almost 44% of tract 7 residents have a higher education degree while less than half that many, close to 17%, of tract 6 residents have the same. The levels of educational attainment contribute to the economics of the neighborhood.

In Census Tract 6, almost 16% of residents in the workforce (aged 16 years and older) were unemployed. While almost 7% were unemployed in Census Tract 7. In 2017, over 40% of residents in Census Tract 6 lived below the poverty level, including almost 60% of the youth (18 and under). Around 25% of Census Tract 7 residents lived below the poverty level, including almost 30% of the youth. Nearly 20% of the households in Census Tract 7 had an income of \$100,000 or more

while less than 1% of Census Tract 6 residents had the same income.

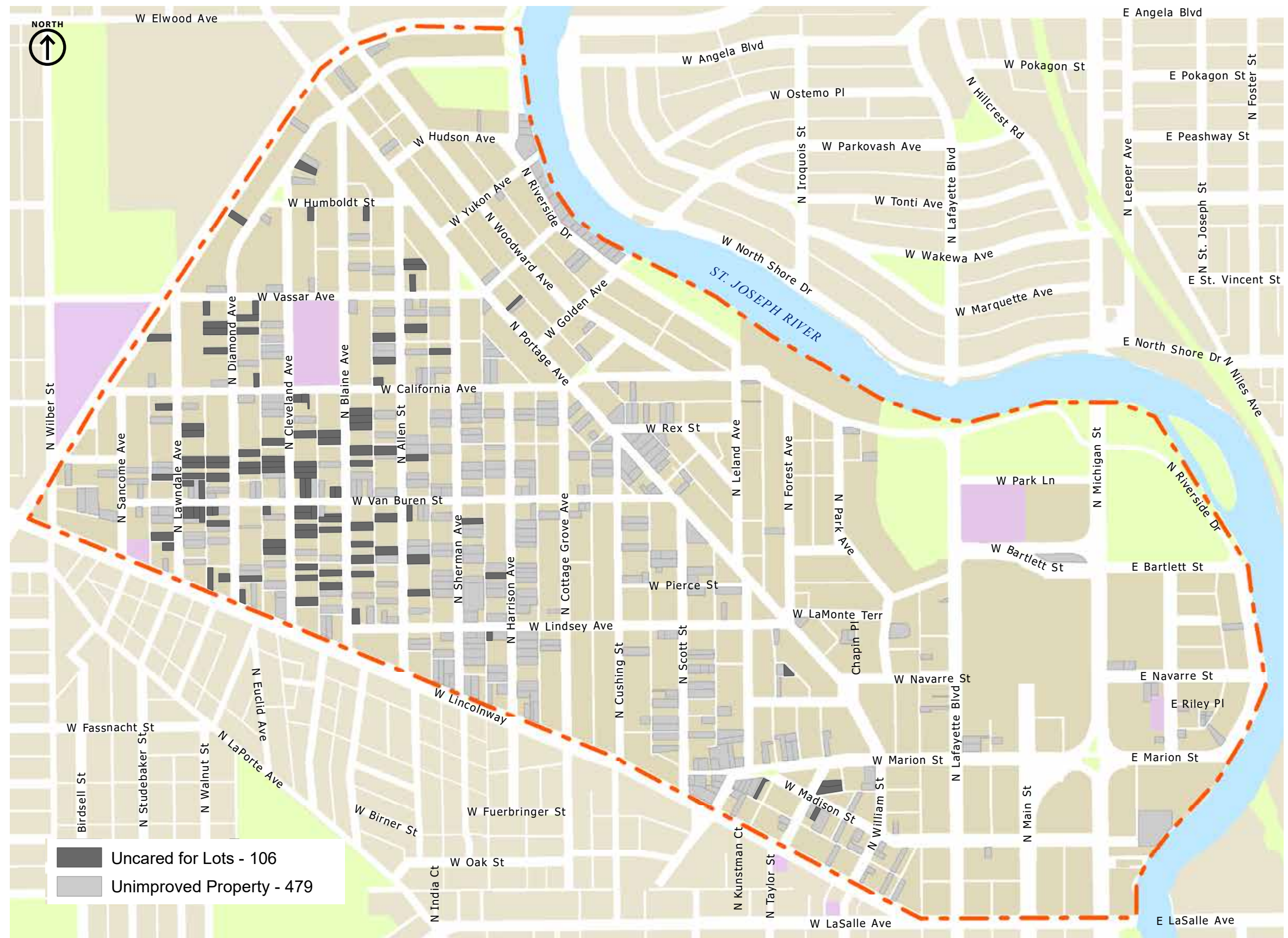
The housing in the Near Northwest isn't too dissimilar to other older South Bend neighborhoods; close to 66% of the neighborhoods residential structures are single family houses and over 25% have 2 to 3 units. Portions of the neighborhood saw some of the earliest housing construction in the city, and according to the U.S. Census over 80% of the housing units were built in 1939 or earlier. The total number of housing units across both Census Tracts has decreased from 2000 through 2017 with an approximately 19% reduction to just over 1,800 housing units. According to the American Community Survey, in 2017 close to 27% of housing units in the neighborhood were vacant. And the percentage of owner-occupied units in Tract 7 was close to the citywide percentage, 55.3% and 57.2% respectively, but Tract 6 had 43.8% which were owner-occupied.

Within the Near Northwest there are a total of 2,229 individual parcels. Of the neighborhood properties, 479, or 21.5%, are unimproved – they are vacant lots that do not have a structure, surface parking lot, etc. located on them. Within those properties, there are 106 parcels which have been determined to be uncarred for vacant lots – meaning that the owner doesn't maintain the property, so Code Enforcement has a continuous enforcement order to keep the property mowed and/or the owner hasn't paid property taxes resulting in the property going on the County Tax Sale. These 106 properties have a negative influence on the neighborhood.

	Census Tract 6		Census Tract 7		City of South Bend	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Population	2,374		1,689		101,928	
19 years and younger	985	41.5%	342	20.2%	29,964	29.4%
20 to 64 years	1,227	51.7%	1,146	67.9%	59,162	58.0%
65 years and older	162	6.8%	201	11.9%	12,802	12.6%

Source: 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates





Unimproved property and uncared for lots in the Near Northwest Neighborhood

**Land Use**

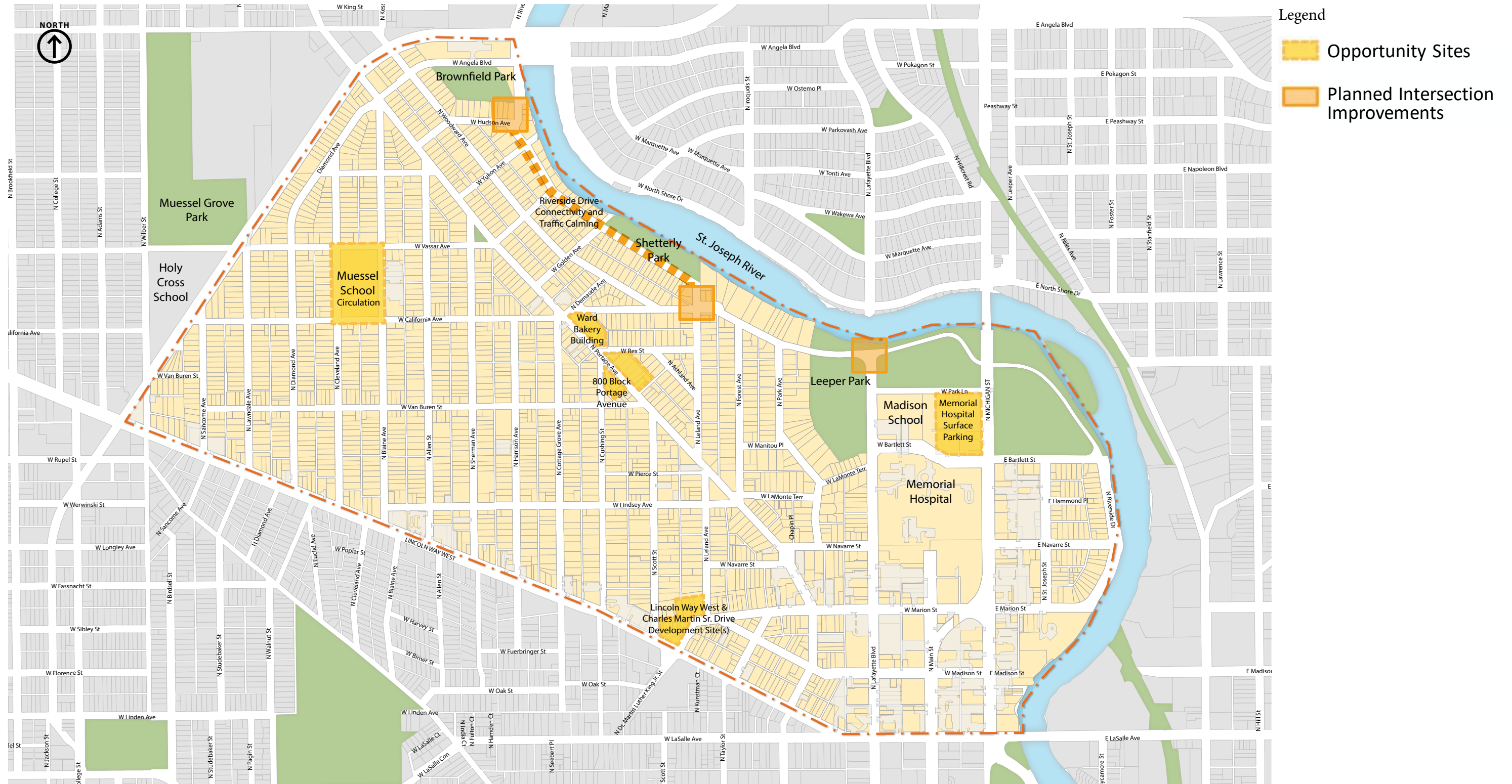
The current land uses in the neighborhood vary however most of the neighborhood is residential. Non-residential uses tend to be concentrated in a few areas within the neighborhood. A mix of commercial, institutional, and residential can be found along Lincoln Way West. The area north of LaSalle Avenue, between Lafayette Boulevard and along both sides of Michigan Street, is an extension of downtown and is largely occupied by the needs of Memorial Hospital and medical offices, institutions like South Bend Civic Theatre, and other commercial activities. A limited neighborhood scale mix of uses can be found near the Portage Avenue neighborhood nodes at California Avenue and Marion Street. There are two elementary schools and a variety of religious institutions found within the neighborhood, as well as Leeper Park and Brownfield Park.



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## Opportunity Sites

As part of an initial review of the neighborhood, a handful of locations that have potential for near term impacts were identified as opportunity sites. The intent of identifying these sites was to use the planning process to explore a variety of improvements at each location. The sites range from locations for potential development to areas where infrastructure improvements could be beneficial.



*Near Northwest Neighborhood opportunity sites*



*Ward Bakery Building*

The Ward Bakery Building, at the corner of Portage Ave. & California Ave., has been vacant for several years; last occupied by a small distribution company. The brick building has been a fixture in the neighborhood since it was built 100 years ago, in 1919. Given its location at a natural neighborhood node, it has the potential to be reused for a variety of purposes that would benefit the community.



*800 Block of Portage Avenue*

The City owns a series of vacant lots on both sides of Portage Avenue between Rex and Van Buren Streets. In conjunction with a reuse of the Ward Bakery Building and the existing buildings & activities at Portage & California Avenues, this location is a logical extension of the neighborhood node and has potential for future development.



*Lincoln Way West & Charles Martin Sr. Drive Development Site(s)*

The City has recently completed work that enhances the development site(s) located at the corner of Lincoln Way West & Charles Martin Sr. Drive. Recent streetscape improvements at the intersection followed the Complete Streets model and have made the intersection more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, introduced on-street parking, clarified vehicle movements, and removed a slip lane. The City has also acquired properties in the area in order to consolidate ownership and assist in facilitating development.



*Muessel School Circulation*

Recently, there have been concerns expressed about the traffic circulation at and around Muessel Elementary School. In particular, the concerns relate to student drop-off and pick-up. This process provides and opportunity to examine the traffic flow and existing infrastructure for potential improvements.



*Memorial Hospital Surface Parking*

Memorial Hospital is a large employer and land holder in the neighborhood. A portion of its property includes surface parking lots, many that could see future demand given that their location is an extension of downtown. Long term it is hoped that some of these lots will see opportunities for redevelopment to a higher use. There are not currently plans for development, however understanding the sites could be valuable in the future.



*Riverside Drive Connectivity and Traffic Calming*

Riverside Drive offers a few challenges to the community – limited right-of-way width to improve path network connectivity, a traffic cut-through to downtown, and intersections with difficult geometries. This process provides and opportunity to explore possible solutions to address these issues.





**Neighborhood Economics: The Value of Urban Neighborhoods**

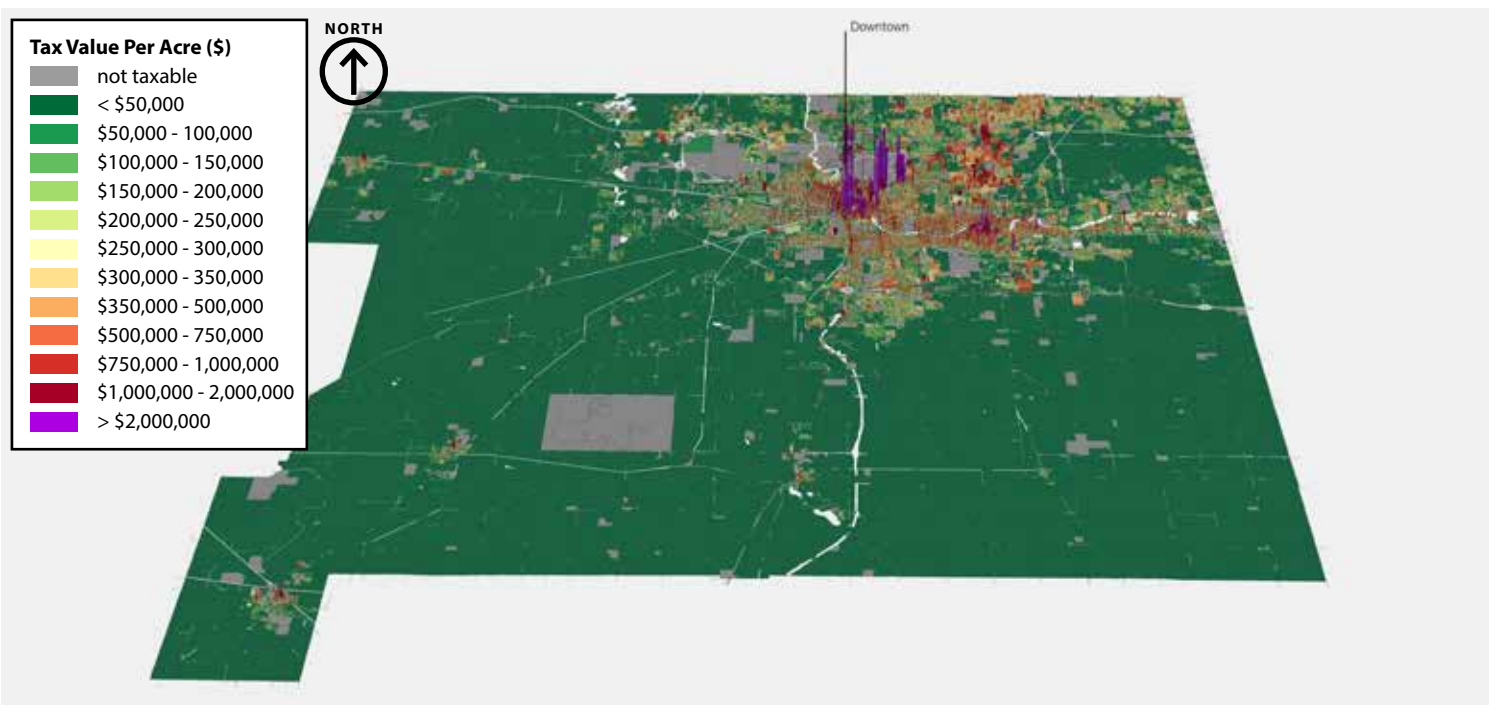
Studies have shown that urban, walkable development generates a greater level of value for a community than suburban development patterns. The City of South Bend worked with Urban3, a firm that approaches land value economics through property & retail tax analysis and community design. In 2016, Urban3 examined value per acre of land in South Bend and St. Joseph County. This analysis showed that properties in the Near Northwest generate a higher tax per acre than larger, more expensive housing on the edge of town or in the County.

In addition to generating higher taxes per acre, repairing existing houses and infill development in a neighborhood like the Near Northwest has a lower cost of service for government. The necessary infrastructure already exists – streets, sewer and water lines, police and fire department coverage – and does not require the extension of the infrastructure network, which would increase short- and long-term costs to the City. Urban neighborhoods generate more revenue for the City and cost less to provide services making them a more sustainable approach to development.

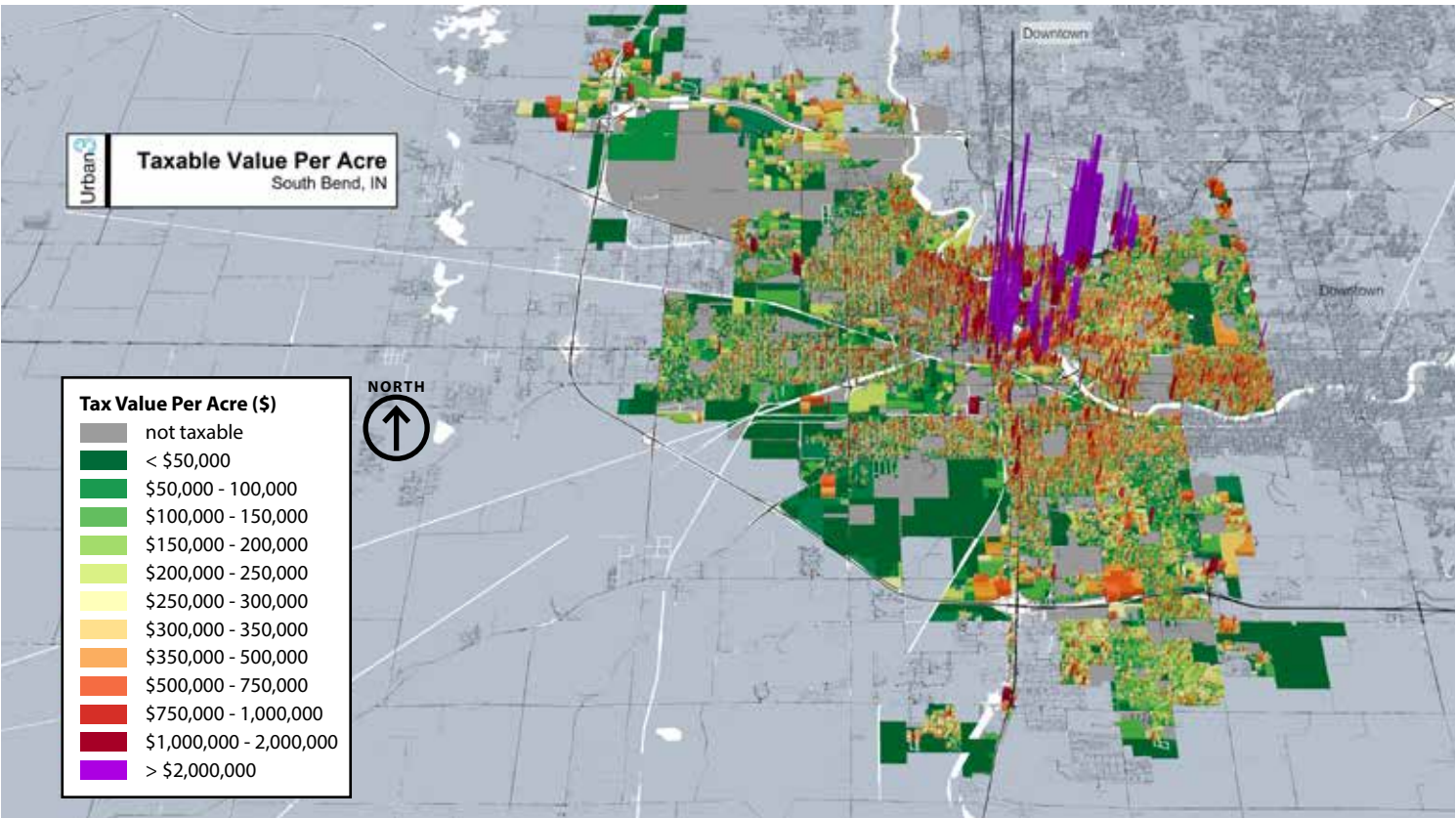
Even with this value, it can be a challenge to repair or build in the Near Northwest. Based on the American Community Survey, in 2017 the median value of an owner-occupied housing unit in Census Tract 6 was \$55,000 and in Census Tract 7 was \$101,700. The hard cost to construct a modest house can be \$125 per square foot, making a 1,200 sq. ft. house \$150,000 to build. This cost is more than housing values support. This only accounts for the hard costs to build a house, it does not include soft costs like purchasing land, completing survey, etc. An additional challenge is that most neighborhood vacant lots are in Census Tract 6, where housing values are lower.

The housing values play an important role in people’s willingness to buy and/or repair a property. In Census Tract 7, owners can be encouraged to maintain, or make improvements to, their properties since they

are able to invest in repairs without worry of a significant over-investment in the house. Investment helps sustain existing housing prices and can encourage increased value. While in Census Tract 6, the lower value of houses can discourage investment since it can be difficult to recover costs of basic repairs, let alone major rehabilitation work. The lower values can encourage limited investment, resulting in housing prices lowering over time. While urban neighborhoods provide a more sustainable approach for the city, having housing values lower than the cost of building a house hinders development.



Taxable value per acre in St. Joseph County  
Source: The Dollars and Sense of South Bend Development, 2016, Urban3, LLC



Taxable value per acre in South Bend  
Source: The Dollars and Sense of South Bend Development, 2016, Urban3, LLC



## Neighborhood Energy

There are a variety of activities happening within the neighborhood, each working to build a stronger Near Northwest. These efforts represent some of the positive momentum within the neighborhood; they should be acknowledged and built upon.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. (NNN, Inc.) is an established community development corporation which works to provide safe, decent, affordable housing to low-moderate income households through rehabilitation, new construction and offering some rental units. The NNN, Inc. also organizes community events such as Arts Café and the Annual Chili Supper, has a community space which can be used by neighbors to organize activities and events of interest to them and the broader community, and brings the community together around issues that impact the neighborhood.

Cross Community, Inc. is a new non-profit organization that has a goal of building houses in the neighborhood. Although the organization is new it was established by individuals that are invested in the neighborhood.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood is full of engaged neighbors who care about the quality of life within their neighborhood. Their level of engagement falls within a wide spectrum, including being involved in public process and conversations on issues that impact the community to higher level of investments of time and resources to improve the neighborhood. There are a number of different neighbor-driven efforts that help make the Near Northwest unique.

The Local Cup (TLC) is a pay-it-forward coffee shop that was imagined and created by near northwest neighbors. The pay-it-forward model allows all neighbors, no matter their income, to enjoy a coffee drink and be a part of the larger community. TLC has become a gathering place, bringing people together to build stronger relationships between neighbors.

South Bend Bike Garage is a community cooperative where people can work on bikes together. Developed by Near Northwest neighbors, it is a place those with a bike can learn how to make repairs as well as offering used bikes to those that need one – either by buying it or earning it through volunteering time.

Neighbors have also taken on place making efforts. A neighbor recently started the Sherman Avenue Community Garden. Buying two tax delinquent vacant lots and creating a space where neighborhood youth help with gardening. This past summer, the neighbor organized a summer concert series in the garden – inviting neighbors to come listen to local musicians while enjoying the garden surroundings. In another effort, a neighbor acquired a large-scale, almost 12 foot tall red Adirondack chair and installed it in a high-profile location along Portage Avenue. Neighbors are invited to climb into the chair to take pictures – it is not uncommon to see kids and families enjoying the unique opportunity.

Some neighbors have gone even further with their investment in the neighborhood and become small-scale developers. In 2007, a small group of neighbors created Chapin Park, Inc. with the goal of showing that quality historic preservation can be a model for improvement and sustainability in Chapin Park and the broader neighborhood. They have bought and restored a number of properties in Chapin Park. Thrive Michiana, LLC was founded by a neighbor and is currently working on establishing a triple-bottom-line demonstration urban infill project in the neighborhood. The focus area of its efforts is located around the area of California Avenue, Portage Avenue, and Cushing Street. To date, it has partnered with Habitat for Humanity and New Energy Homes to build five net-zero houses and it has rehabilitated a few buildings – both residential and mixed use. They own additional properties, including the space used by South Bend Bike Garage, with plans for additional development and rehabilitation of buildings within its focus area.

Engaged neighbors are involved in the Chapin Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA), which focuses its

efforts in the historic Chapin Park. CPNA brings together neighbors and organizes activities such as the annual Halloween Party and Christmas event.

The Urban Garden Farmers Market is a weekly farmer's market that occurs from spring through fall in the NNN, Inc. parking lot and community space. It provides a place for neighbors to buy fresh local produce and goods directly from the producers.

All of these efforts help to make the Near Northwest Neighborhoods a vibrant and active neighborhood that neighbors enjoy calling home.

A planning process was developed that focused on gathering input from individuals and organizations that have an interest in the Near Northwest. The City and consultant team held a series of meetings and a four-day charrette with neighbors, community members, and stakeholders. The process allowed discussion and exploration of design ideas and concepts for the future vision of the neighborhood.

## Community Presentation & Workshop

Over 90 community participants attended the evening presentation & workshop and contributed their input through a series of exercises:

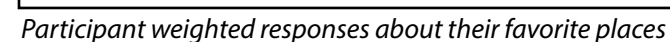
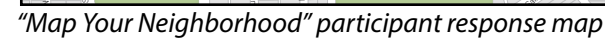
- In addition to the Community Workshop, a pop-up event was held by city staff during the Near Northwest Neighborhood's annual Chili Supper. This pro-

The following is a summary of the thoughts that were shared.

Participants were asked to write and draw where they go and what they do in the neighborhood. They were asked to share their favorite place(s), what people do for fun, where they go and how (walk, bike, drive), and where they go for walks and why. Participant responses, including what was drawn, have been compiled and represented on the participant response map.

Top responses to what neighbors do for fun in the neighborhood revolved around walking / running / biking, visiting with neighbors, and going to parks.

When asked where they go and where they walk in the neighborhood top responses included the St. Joseph River and Riverside Trail, neighborhood parks, The Local Cup and NNN, Inc. buildings, and walks through the neighborhood (within a few blocks of their house).





Neighborhood vision

Participants were asked to write and draw what they would like the neighborhood to be like in 20 years. They were also asked what are things that they want to remain, what is important for the future, and what are things they would like to see changed. The common themes that occurred in the responses are:

- Sense of community, keep front porch feel, family friendly
- Diversity of people & housing
- Walkability
- Historic feel homes & brick streets
- Vibrant neighborhood
- Property maintenance of homes and vacant lots
- Reuse of vacant lots for housing, mixed use development, and gardens (including growing food)
- Support homeownership & quality rental, new infill development
- Safety, lighting
- More parks and improvements at existing parks – increase utilization
- Improved sidewalks & trail connections (especially along the river) and improved alley conditions
- Neighborhood stores (including grocery options / access to healthy food), restaurants, and recreation activities



Participant responses for the neighborhood vision exercise

*Neighborhood amenities*

Participants were asked to share their thoughts about what neighborhood amenities exist, which are important to keep / expand, and what is missing.

- Needs: Bike paths, speed humps
- The Coal Line Trail is going to be a great asset. Do it!
- Recreational center
- Neighborhood festivals, seasonal events. Summer concerts invite restaurants to lend the best, most popular staff
- Tenant education
- Safe walking areas important. The school is a safe area to walk around block. Need more. Sometimes a loose dog is a problem. Glad that a plan is in the works where trails set to be.
- Parks are most important asset. Muessel Grove needs attention
- NNN Community Center is vital place to gather. Invest in more opportunities for neighbors to access the space.
- A police station
- Blaine/Van Buren near Muessel School– 2-way, lighting, repave road, sidewalks
- Sidewalk/path along Riverside
- Improve sidewalks!
- {Re: Improve sidewalks!} Ditto
- Health clubs, Ethnic Restaurants (Thai, Chinese, Mexican, Polish), Brewery and Restaurant, coffee shop, bakery
- More popular restaurants/coffee shops, clean up streets and alleys
- Fix brick streets with bricks
- Vacant lots–ideas for neighborhood children/families to enjoy outdoors.
- A better grocery store, sidewalks in good condition.
- More to the commercial
- Neighbor-owned and run grocery, etc.
- More street lights, coffee shops, delis, places to grab quick, cheap food, places to come together, music, ent., food, etc. Dog Park!
- Local market
- Vacant lots being gardened by residents
- {Re: Vacant lots being gardened by residents} yes!
- Grocery store with fresh options that can be reached by walking
- Access to fresh local food
- {Re: Access to fresh local food} Ditto
- Local food shopping
- Café w/ normal business hours
- More cafes, bakeries, diners, taqueria
- Bakery
- {Re: Bakery} Yes!
- Greenhouse at Leeper
- {Re: Greenhouse at Leeper} Yes!
- Restaurants -x2 -x3
- Local Cup, urban farmer’s market, grocery store
- Dog poop baggies, Bike racks, Neighborhood garden, more street lights or safety call stations, dog park, café, deli or breakfast place, evening entertainment
- Water for walkers/bikers in parks and facilities for non-home owners
- Public food kiosk
- Access to higher quality foods
- More gardens on vacant lots
- Missing affordable commercial spaces for startups
- Focus on market before moving on
- Concerns for super market–quality of food, sanitary upgrade
- Farmers market w/ roof
- Allow vacant lots to be urban farmed
- Better small market choices
- Food delivery
- Pizza
- Local food market with healthy options, fresh produce
- Require more of landlords



*St. Joseph River*



*Brownfield Park*



*The Local Cup - Pay-it-Forward Coffee Shop*



*Madison STEAM Academy*



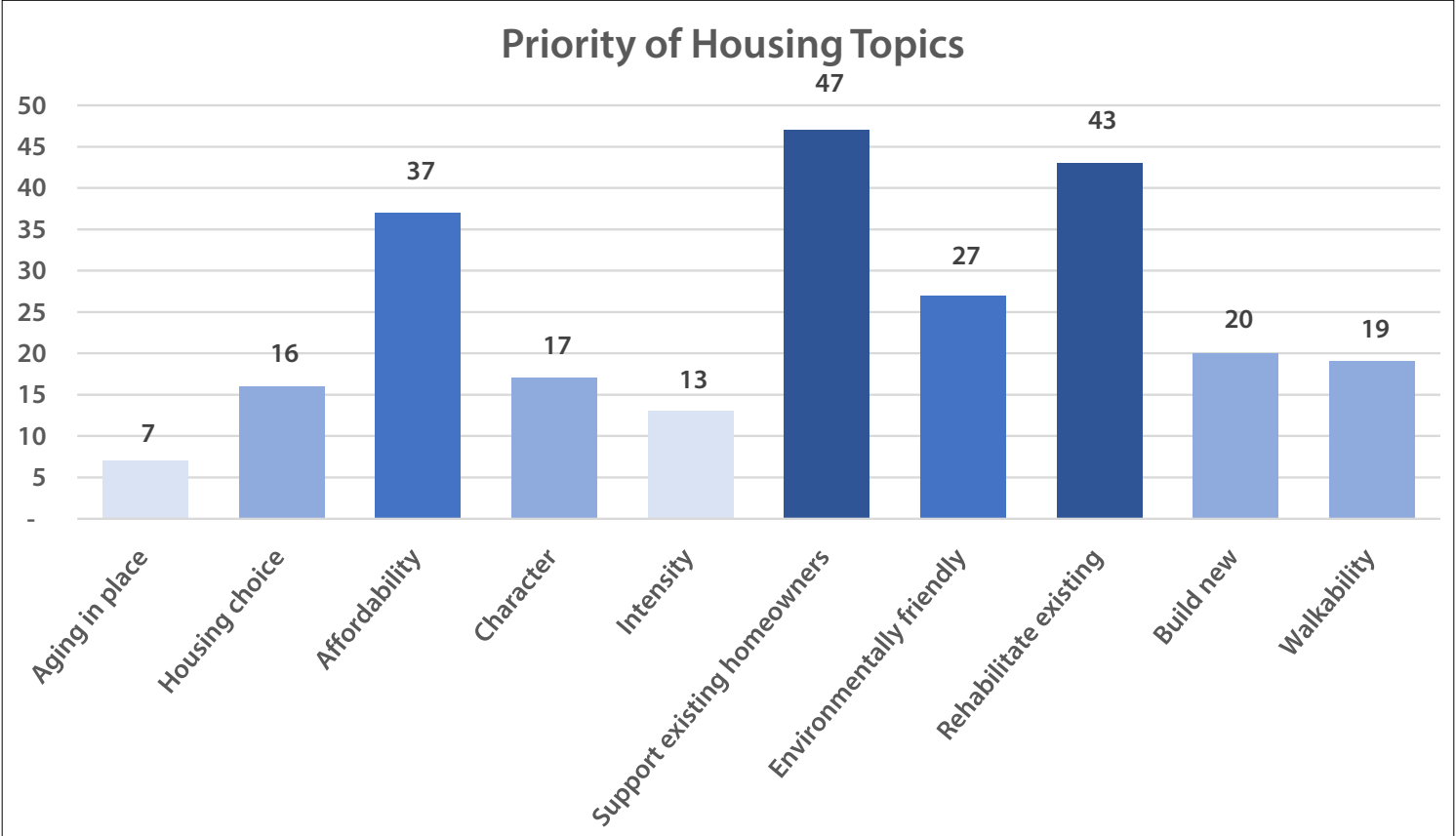
*Housing*

Participants were asked to share their vision for housing in the neighborhood and to prioritize the housing related topics that are most important to them.

We heard the following:

- In addition to the importance of helping existing homeowners, character of the neighborhood—walkability, sustainable building, & better lighting, streetscapes are important
- Community built by this community
- Tiny houses, single family's [sic]
- Grant programs for upgrades and safety to older existing houses
- Mix use of housing, single family, senior housing, 4plexes, and veteran
- RE: Housing, Most important ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER, no vinyl, no replacement windows, no removal of trim, no 'wrong' doors and railings
- Duplexes, renovated homes
- Develop new homes that are affordable without raising taxes, build garages, restore the alleys
- To [sic] many non-conforming rental properties, not zoned, illegal rentals
- Housing for seniors that includes garden space
- Diverse size/priced single, multifamily rental/owner occupied where bank president, English teacher, store clerk, and waitress can live on same block
- Neighborhoods decline as the number of rentals increase
- No buffer between commercial store and single family homes
- Less rental properties and bad landlords
- Support renters whose landlords are not caring well for home.
- Gathering place

When asked to prioritize housing related topics, neighbors identified supporting existing homeowners, rehabilitating the existing housing, and affordability as the top three housing topics. See graph for prioritization exercise results.



Participant responses to identifying the top three most important housing related topics

*Vacant lots*

Participants were asked what should be done with vacant lots and if they owned a vacant lot, what would they do with it.

Neighbors have a variety of ideas of what could be done with vacant lots, including:

- Farmer market
- Affordable multifamily housing
- New construction living space
- Sell to neighbors and adjacent properties
- Sell lots to abuters [sic]
- Rebuild homes, community gardens, rest and relax areas
- Vacant lot into a park, “Larry’s Community Garden” on Facebook
- 523 N. Scott Street, I own it, I want to buy 525 N. Scott street–Why won’t the city sell it to me?
- Close irregular allies. [sic]
- Poplar Tree Garden
- Clean up and build affordable housing (non-gentrified)
- Put in a land trust
- Creative multi-use space, outdoor theatre, gardens, parks
- If clustered, city could purchase for parkland or greenfield development
- Wild flower patches, milkweed patches
- I want to buy empty lot at 521 N. Scott St. I own 523 N. Scott
- If you build new on vacant lots the new buildings must mesh with existing in terms of materials, scale, massing
- Small units
- Allow invested neighbors to purchase and use the property
- Vacant lot sell to existing homeowners, remove all taxes or code enforcements
- We own a home surrounded by vacant lots. We would purchase the lots and increase the value of our lot and home – but cost prohibited. Owners of lots has defaulted on taxes–all lots different prices get owned by 1 person–How to acquire?
- Safe and affordable housing for low income families

- Offer to neighbors for purchase at a discount
- Sell to residents to improve soil and grow food
- Empty lots are visually an eyesore and a liability for the city. Why not just approach existing homeowners and “give” them the lot or a portion of green space is always a good thing. These lots generate no income currently–why they are vacant why the need to collect taxes.
- Build a park or community green house
- Build single family homes with TIFs

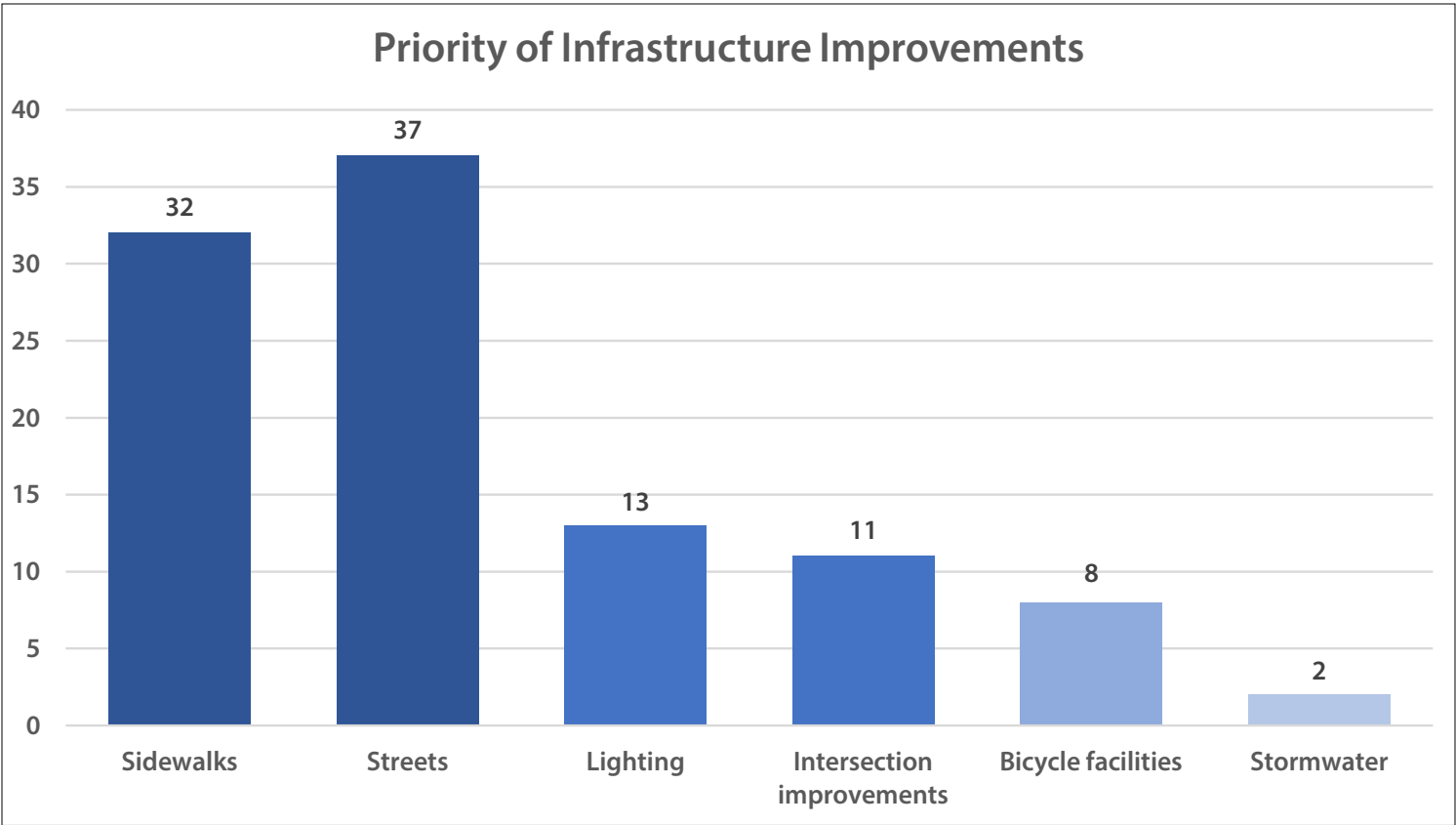
Neighbors said if they owned a vacant lot they would:

- Tiny homes
- Gardening
- The vacant lot that was/is part of my house is landscaped well. But could allow public access as a flower garden
- Make sure its use contributed to neighborhood fabric
- Youth activity center
- Trees
- Assist people to build affordable housing they can own.
- Plant weed!
- Plant a garden
- Create open space merchant stands
- Neighborhood gardens
- Please get garbage bags off of front porches and back to alleys
- Green house. If I was given a vacant lot or able to acquire one inexpensively, I would create a beautify the neighborhood program where I could grow plants and donate to neighbors.
- Plant a market garden to provide affordable food to the neighborhood
- Vacant lots–more neighborhood plots for gardens
- Offer to nighbor [sic] for purchase
- Increase ownership (lots next to my house)
- Plant a beautiful flower garden
- Garden?
- A playground w/ a slide, swings, ducks, splash pad, and pond
- Develop into small-size zero energy homes–develop into urban garden
- Vegetable garden for neighbor use



*Infrastructure*  
Participants were asked to prioritize the types of infrastructure improvements that should be completed. Streets received the most responses, followed closely by sidewalks.

When asked about locations for improved infrastructure, street improvements identified were Portage Ave. and several residential streets to the west of Portage Ave. including Cushing, Sherman, Harrison, Allen, and Blaine. Bike facility improvements were shown as needed on Portage Ave., Angela Blvd., and along Riverside Drive. Participants identified intersection improvements needed at Portage Ave. and California Ave.; Angela Blvd. and Woodward Ave.; and at Hudson Ave. and Riverside Drive.



Participant responses to identifying the top two most important infrastructure related topics

**Charrette**

A charrette is an intensive planning session where neighbors, stakeholders, designers and others work together to develop a vision for the future. It provides a place to generate ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. The dynamic and inclusive process, with frequent presentations, is a fast method of identifying and overcoming obstacles. The shared experience helps establish interest in the design and build support for the vision. Charrettes are organized to encourage the participation of all. That includes everyone who is interested in bringing the vision to reality: residents, property owners, developers, and local government.

In March, the city staff and consultant team engaged with community members during a four-day design charrette. During the charrette there were several opportunities for the public to provide their input, including an opening presentation, an open house, a brown bag lunch discussion, a walking tour, 19 hours

of drop-in open studio, stakeholder meetings, and a wrap-up presentation.

The opening presentation set the stage for the charrette by presenting the project, sharing the input collected during the February community presentation & workshop, sharing the schedule and additional opportunities for involvement during the four-day charrette, and finally having participants complete an interactive exercise exploring future land uses in the neighborhood. The land use exercise asked participants to break into groups and discuss a variety of land uses and where they fit into the neighborhood, marking locations on maps with dots.

The public open house provided an informal review of in-progress ideas and drawings. There was an informal overview of the ideas generated to that point and the community was able to explore drawings and have conversations with the city staff and consultants.

A brown bag lunch discussion was led by the Incre-

mental Development Alliance and focused on the economics of neighborhood development. Community members learned about different development patterns and their value versus cost to the city. In particular, older buildings and the more urban development found in the Near Northwest is more valuable (cost less for services and generate higher per acre taxes) when compared to other development patterns.

Residents and community members were invited to join city staff and consultants on an informal walking tour down Sherman and Harrison Avenues. Along the way, there was discussion about the existing buildings, neighborhood building types, and opportunities for the future.

The open studio offered the community times to stop in, review the concepts & drawings in real time, and talk to design team members. This provided community members another opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts on the vision for the area.

A series of stakeholder meetings were held during the charrette. These were small meetings with specific individuals and organizations in order to develop feasible ideas as part of the vision. Stakeholder meetings included area not-for-profits, elected officials, residents from Sherman & Harrison Avenues, representatives of area financial institutions and relevant city departments.

The wrap-up presentation provided a chance for the community to see and learn about the results of the design charrette, including the concepts which would continue to be refined and next steps.

During the charrette there were over 250 people that participated across the events and hundreds of sticky notes and comments were shared with the city and design team. Feedback boards used during the charrette and additional comments collected can be found in Appendix 1.



Meeting attendees listen to the opening presentation



Participants completing the "Map Your Neighborhood" exercise



**Final Presentation**

In April, a final presentation was held to provide a chance for the community to see the concepts that were developed throughout the series of public workshops and engagement opportunities. The ideas presented to the over 60 attendees were formalized into the Plan Document.

*Pictures from charrette process (clockwise): top left, attendees take a closer look at concepts during the open house; top right, participants stop for conversation during the walking tour; bottom right, Opticos leads a focus group meeting; bottom left, participants work together on the land use exercise.*





# Neighborhood Strategy

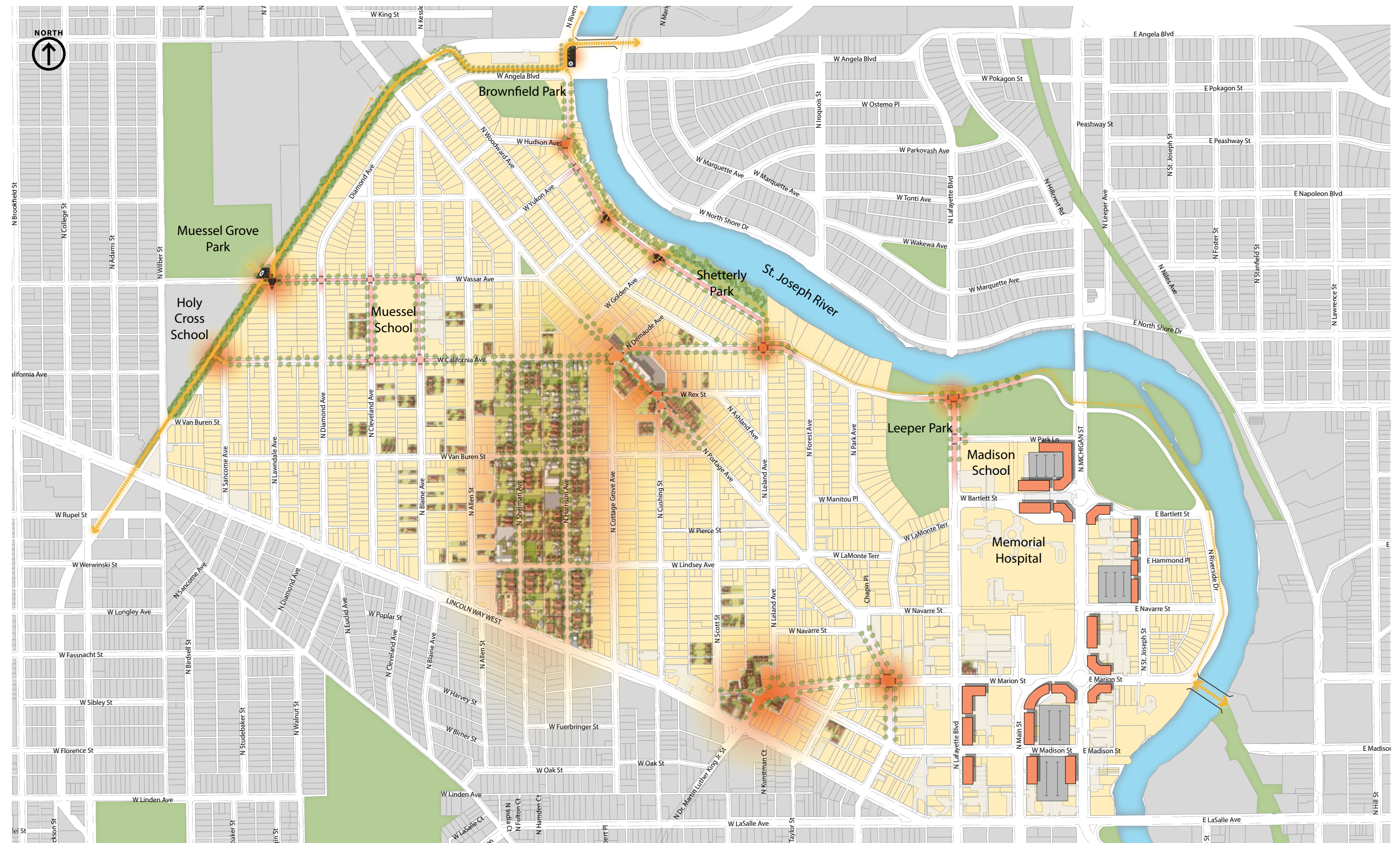
The neighborhood strategy provides a 20-year vision for the future of the Near Northwest. It provides a broad framework for future investment and development based on the shared vision of the community.

## Guiding Principles

Based on community input and observations, guiding principles were developed which identify key considerations. The neighborhood strategy was developed using the guiding principles as a frame of reference for the planning process. The guiding principles are:

- Maintain and enhance the unique identity of the neighborhood
  - Build upon existing institutions, local organizations, and community assets to reinforce the Near Northwest Neighborhood’s image
  - Protect historic landmarks and architectural character
  - Encourage new development to respond to the existing character
  - Consider neighborhood activities and events that allow for community gathering
- Provide a neighborhood for all residents to thrive
  - Enable stability and a sense of community by increasing housing access
  - Retain existing local businesses and promote new neighborhood serving shops and services
- Future development should respond to its surroundings and respect the existing neighborhood
  - Use an incremental development approach
  - New development character should fit within the neighborhood
  - Preserve existing housing while expanding housing choice
  - Develop high-level design principles for “Downtown North”
- Reinforce the neighborhood center node on Portage Ave.
  - Explore adaptive reuse of the Ward Bakery building
  - Investigate opportunities to build on vacant lots in the node
- Concentrate a mix of more intense uses in the area
- Focus more intense uses along corridors
  - Focus commercial uses within nodes, including Lincoln Way West at Wilbur St. and Charles Martin Sr. Dr.; and Portage Ave. at California Ave. and Cushing St.
  - Maintain the existing residential character with thoughtful transitions to the surrounding neighborhood
- Improve bike and pedestrian connectivity in and around the neighborhood
  - Strengthen connections to the river
  - Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists
  - Explore expansion of the trail network
- Improve resident access to parks and active recreation
  - Plan for better utilization of existing parks and trails
  - Explore the connection between Muessel Elementary School and Muessel Grove Park
  - Explore enhanced access to park space west of Portage Ave.
- Incorporate a mix of housing types
  - Well designed, properly scaled & integrated infill housing should be permitted
  - Focus more intense housing along or near corridors with the most intense housing appropriate for the Lincoln Way West corridor
  - Thoughtful integration of missing middle housing types can provide housing affordability and housing choice
- Use short-and long-term strategies to activate vacant lots
  - Appropriate infill construction is desired, but not all vacant lots will be developed
  - Activated vacant lots can be an asset
  - Community driven projects will have the greatest impact





Neighborhood strategy for the Near Northwest Neighborhood

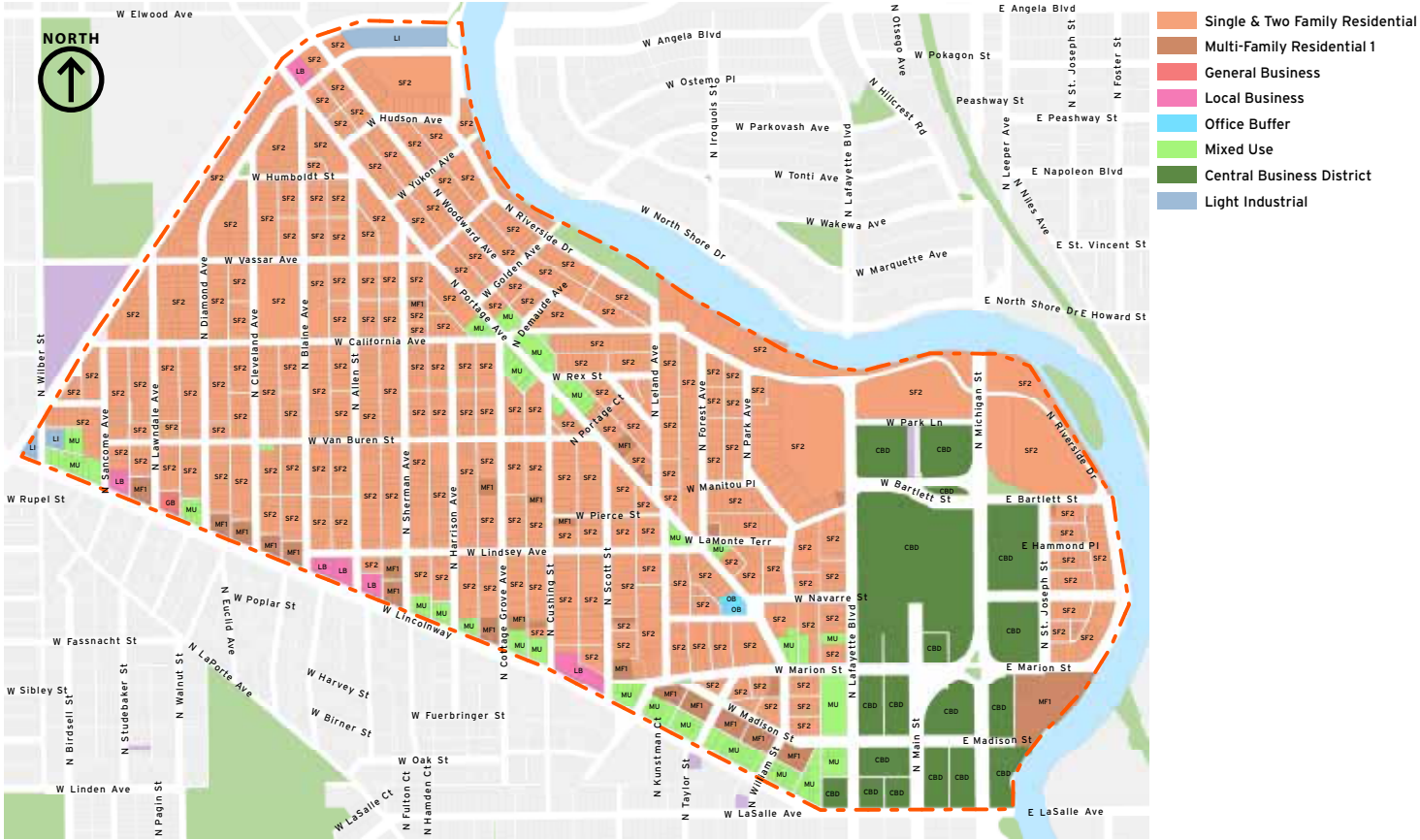


Land Use & Zoning

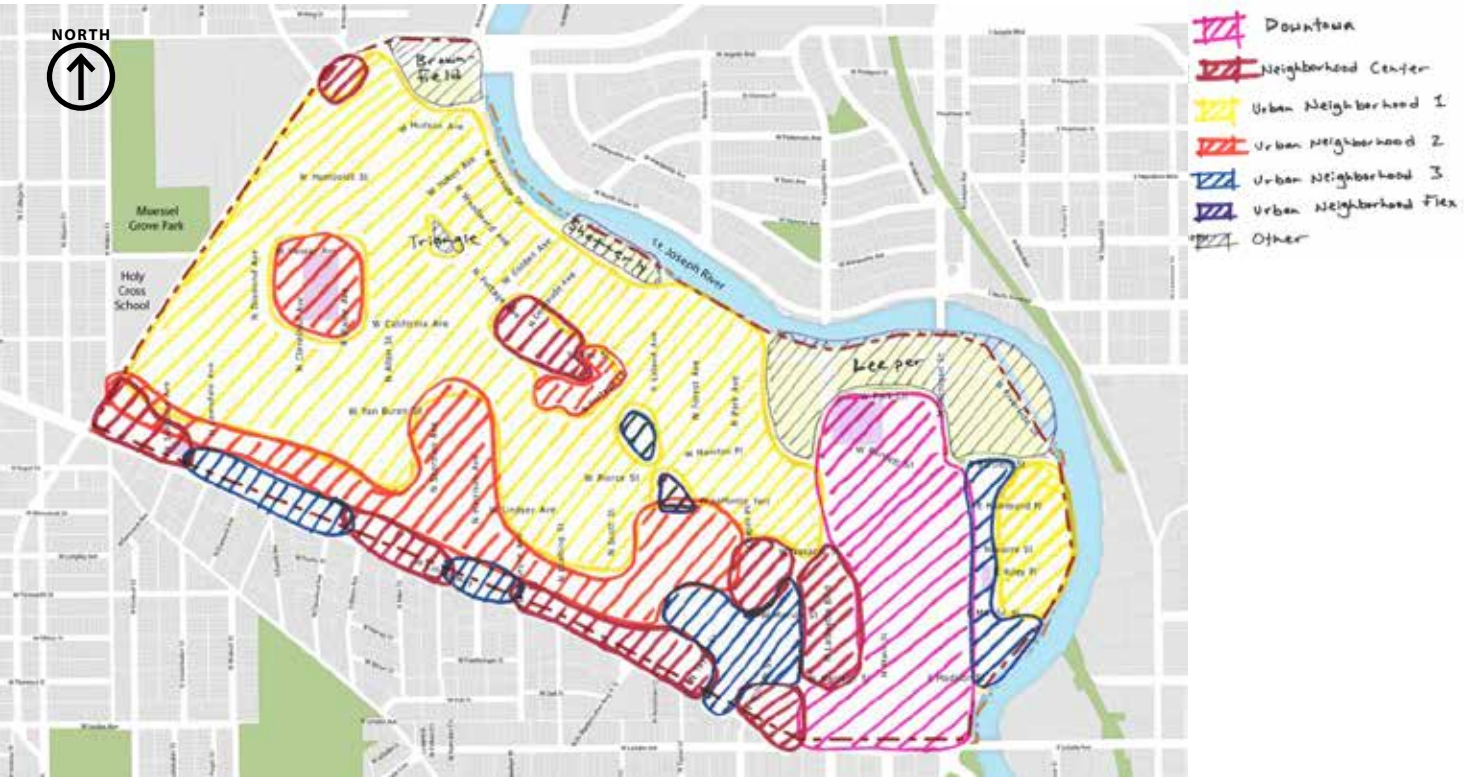
While exploring opportunities to create a vibrant neighborhood the current and proposed land uses, as well as zoning, for the neighborhood need to be examined. Zoning and land use go hand-in-hand since zoning divides land into districts, or zones, which among other things regulates land use. The location of future zoning districts and their regulations need to support the vision for the neighborhood – a safe, diverse, walkable neighborhood that provides opportunities for people to live, work, shop, eat, play, and thrive.

During the charrette process, participants were asked to complete an interactive exercise exploring the future land uses, and ultimately zoning, in the neighborhood. Participants worked in small groups, discussing different land uses and how, or if, they might fit into the neighborhood. As part of the conversation, they used a neighborhood map to show where the land uses were appropriate in the neighborhood. The results of the mapping exercise and the concepts discussed by participants were compiled into a single map. The land use exercise results can be found in Appendix 2.

The future zoning of the Near Northwest Neighborhood should foster the development of amenities that serve the neighborhood; increase housing choice; encourage a mix of uses; and activate key locations. Future land use should look at opportunities for mixed use development at the Portage Avenue node, the Lincoln Way West and Charles Martin Sr. Drive node, and key locations along Michigan and Main Streets. Well designed, properly scaled and integrated infill housing should be allowed to be developed within the neighborhood. Missing middle housing types, such as duplexes, already exist in the neighborhood, these and other missing middle types should continue to be allowed to blend in with the surrounding area. More intense and larger scale missing middle options should be focused along Lincoln Way West, at the Portage Avenue node, and near downtown.



Current zoning for the Near Northwest Neighborhood



Compilation of public input from the land use exercise







Connectivity Plan

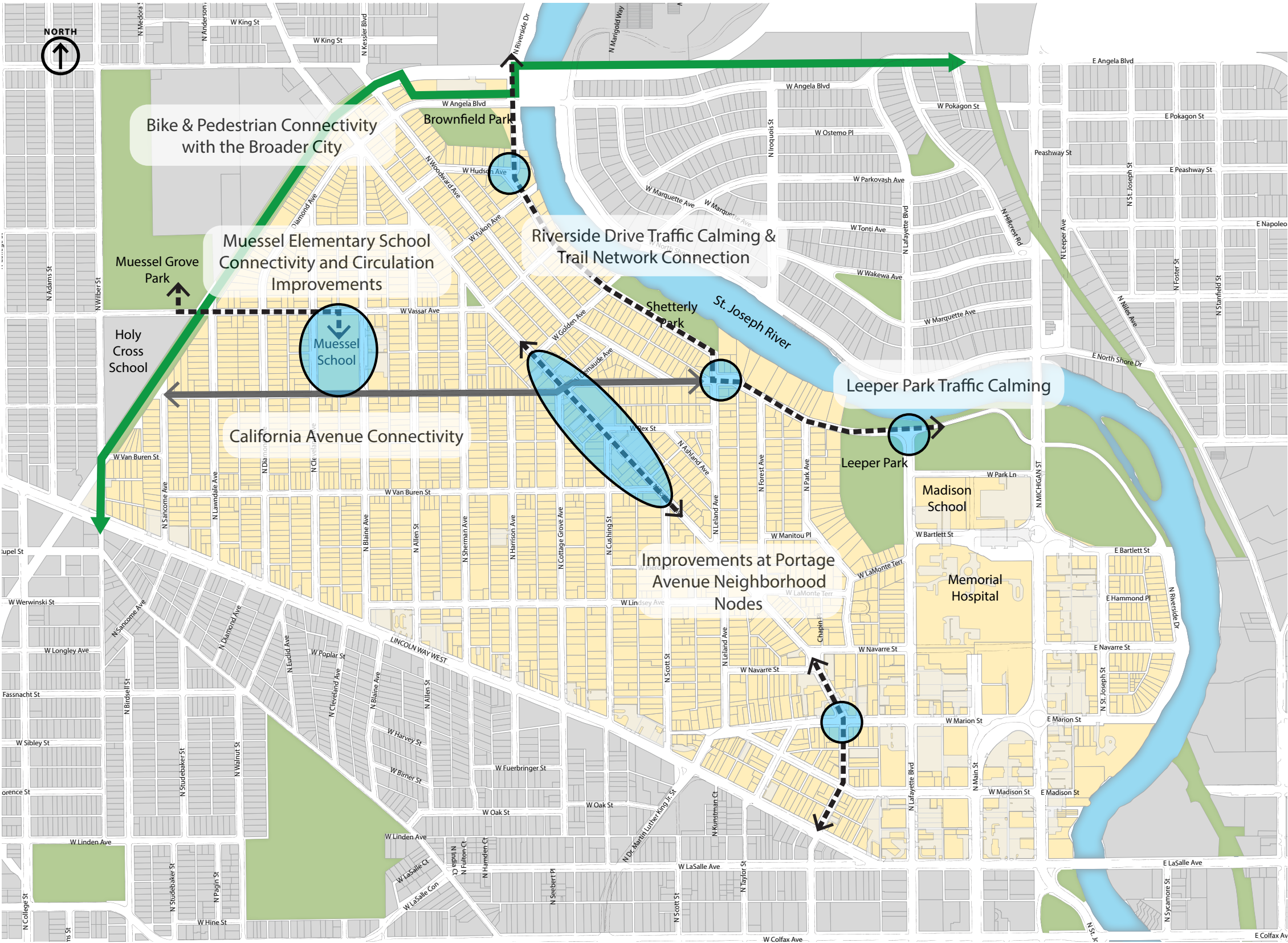
The goal of the connectivity plan is to increase neighborhood walkability, bikeability, and connections within and to the broader community. While examining the connections in and around the neighborhood as well to the broader community, there were seven (7) concepts identified for further exploration.

*Improvements at Portage Avenue Neighborhood Nodes*  
With anticipated development at the Portage & California Avenues node, complete streets principles and traffic calming efforts should be pursued, such as: clear on-street parking, improved pedestrian crossings, street trees, minimal curb cuts, and reinforcing bike infrastructure.

The William (Portage) & Marion Streets node, has opportunities for applying complete streets principles to improve the experience for pedestrians and bicyclists, including increasing safety by reducing the pavement at the intersection.

*Muessel Elementary School Connectivity and Circulation Improvements*  
Not uncommon at schools, drop-off and pick-up times can cause concerns for safety of students. There is an opportunity to incorporate complete streets principles at the school, particularly on Blaine and Cleveland Avenues, in order to slow traffic and improve pedestrian crossings.

During a stakeholder meeting, school officials noted that if the connection between the school and Muesel Grove Park were improved a variety of classes could use the park. Though the distance between the school and park is only two blocks, street crossings present a challenge for moving students between the locations. The future Coal Line Trail effort will make significant improvements to the Vassar and Lawndale Avenues crossing. Potential improvements at Vassar and Cleveland Avenues would have a twofold benefit - access to the park as well as assisting with drop-off / pick-up. Additional improvements along Vassar Avenue can be explored to improve the safety and connection between these two neighborhood assets.





*Leeper Park Traffic Calming*

Leeper Park is a neighborhood asset that attracts many people from the neighborhood and broader community. The improvements occurring in 2019 & 2020 will invite people to engage with the park in new ways – with increased walking paths through and around the park, an updated playground, and a new river overlook.

Leeper Park is unique in that it has streets within it, dividing the park into three distinct sections. The increased use brings greater attention to the need to slow traffic down, improve the user experience, and improve the connection between the different sections. Improvements at the Lafayette Boulevard and Riverside Drive intersection will incorporate traffic calming measures to slow traffic – including reducing the crossing distance across Lafayette Blvd. and reducing pavement width along Riverside Drive. In addition, as part of the new river overlook improvement there will be a raised intersection at Riverside Drive and the sidewalks at the overlook, this will help slow traffic and improve the pedestrian connection to the river. Although Michigan Street at Leeper Park is owned by the State of Indiana, the City is exploring opportunities to create a safe pedestrian and bike connection across it.

*California Avenue Connectivity*

Given the unique nature of the neighborhood’s street pattern, California Avenue (changing to Riverside Drive to the east) is the only east/west connection that extends through the entire neighborhood. Given its importance as an east/west connector, opportunities should be taken to reinforce the street as part of the bike and pedestrian network. This could include a variety of approaches, as appropriate based on location, such as: connection with the Coal Line Trail, improved street crossings, adequate tree coverage, and sidewalk improvements.

*Bike & Pedestrian Connectivity with the Broader City*

While it is important for neighbors to be able to easily move around the neighborhood, it is also important for them to be able to access the broader community – whether to commute to work, to visit friends, run

errands, or for leisure and exercise. Opportunities to provide connections to the broader region through the trail network, bike network, and bus routes should be taken, including connection points to the Coal Line Trail, Riverside Trail, and the East Bank Trail.

*Riverside Trail Network Connection*

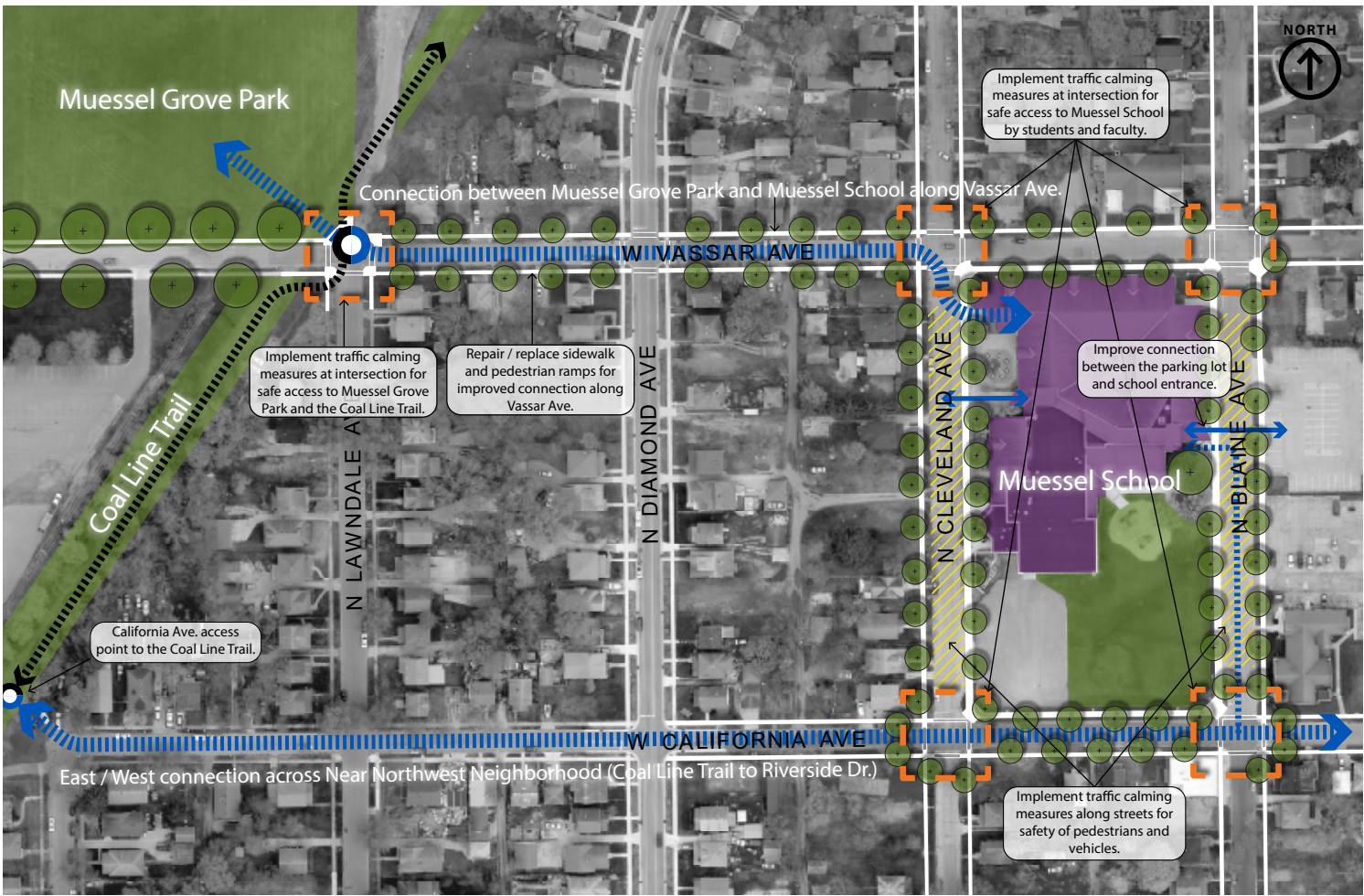
Following the construction of Riverside Trail, north of Angela Blvd., the gap in the trail network along Riverside Drive has been apparent. Due to the limited right-of-way and space in the stretch between Leland and Hudson Avenues a traditional trail connection is not viable. However, in exploring the challenge there may be alternate approaches which could provide an improved level of connectivity. Approaches could include providing some enhancements to the segment such as a separated path where able, safe street crossings, and clear connection points for those wishing to use the trail network. A preliminary concept has been developed (see next page) but will need further exploration to make a final decision on the path forward.

*Riverside Drive Traffic Calming*

There is a recognition of traffic concerns along Riverside Drive. Recently, the city installed a temporary traffic circle at Hudson Avenue to test and adjust the concept prior to a permanent installation. It is anticipated that a final design and permanent solution will be installed in 2020/2021.

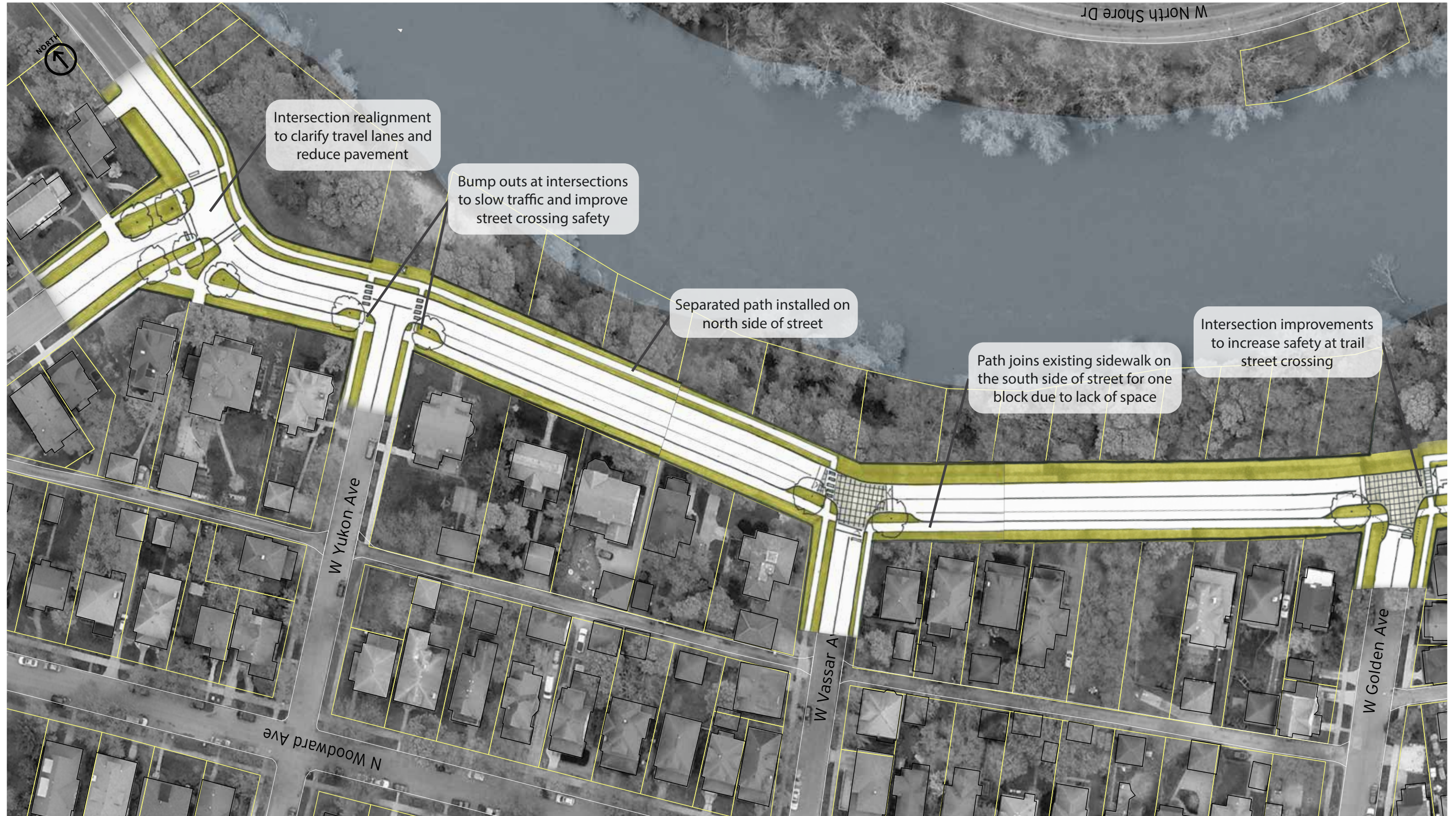
Another location of concern is the intersection of California Ave., Leland Ave., and Riverside Drive. The City also used a temporary traffic control installation in this location in order to test possible solutions to improve the intersection. Additional options for intersection modification continue to be explored. The goal of any improvements would be to clarify the appropriate movements for intersection users and help reduce pavement.

In addition, there are concerns about slowing traffic along Riverside Drive between Angela Blvd. and Michigan Street. Work in Leeper Park as well as trail network connection work should explore opportunities to assist with slowing traffic in the area.



Muessel Elementary School connectivity and circulation improvements overview









Separated path installed on north side of street

Small curb extensions at alley intersection to slow traffic

Reduce pavement to slow traffic at curve and help clarify intersection

Intersection realignment to clarify travel lanes and reduce pavement



## Neighborhood Character

A common theme heard throughout the process was that any future changes should be consistent with the neighborhood character. It is recognized that the character in different areas of the neighborhood may vary slightly – in addition to the residential nature of the neighborhood there are multiple historic districts, commercial corridors, and a portion of downtown all within one neighborhood. Although the details of character might be varied depending on where you are in the neighborhood, common themes exist:

- Front Porch Community - it is open and welcoming through its built form;
- Walkable, urban neighborhood;
- Variety of housing types consistent with the early 1900's including a range of styles and the number of units;
- Vast majority of the neighborhood was built prior to 1917, attention to detail is important;
- A mix of uses is appropriate in select locations including the corridors and the area which is an extension of downtown; and
- New development should not detract from the character of the existing residential areas.









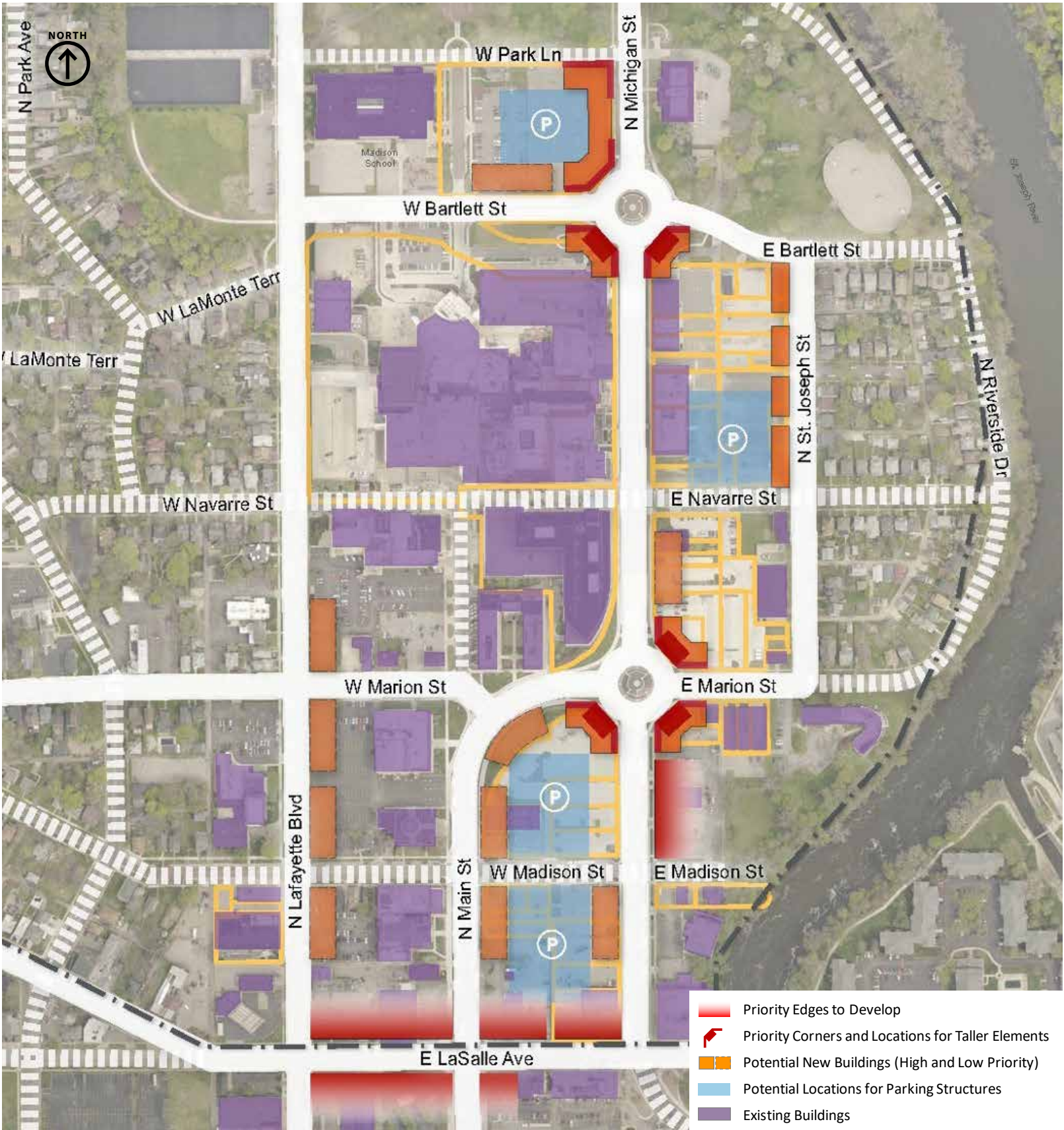
Memorial Hospital Development Principles

Downtown North is a key gateway into downtown South Bend and given its current uses, mainly surface parking lots, has significant opportunity for future development. In anticipation of potential development, general vision and urban design guidelines were created to help encourage desired development:

- Reinforce entry into downtown from the north;
- Define building edges at roundabouts;
- Use building form to define primary and secondary streets;
- Define priority lots for development and identify suitable locations for new, high quality housing as well as a parking structure(s); and
- Use thoughtful transitions in form and scale to the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Priority locations and edges for encouraging development were identified as along LaSalle Avenue, corners located at the Marion Street and Bartlett Street roundabouts, the edge along Leeper Park at Park Lane and Michigan Street, a stretch of Michigan Street north of Madison Street, and along N. St. Joseph Street. Buildings along the roundabouts should incorporate taller elements at the corner.

Should an additional parking structure(s) be pursued, four locations have been identified that would allow for loading off secondary streets as well as the wrapping of the garage with a building (concealing the garage from the street and allowing for street activation).



Development principles for Memorial Hospital campus





Existing view south on Michigan St. near Park Lane



View south on Michigan St. near Park Lane with example of implemented design principles



### Portage Avenue Neighborhood Node

The Portage and California Avenues intersection is a natural node within the neighborhood. It is centrally located on the Portage Avenue corridor and is the location of neighborhood assets Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. offices and community space as well as The Local Cup coffee shop. This node, which spans from Golden Avenue to Van Buren Street, has opportunity for development. The former Ward Bakery building has been underutilized since the closing of the bakery and more recently has sat empty for several years. The building needs significant repairs and improvements but could be redeveloped into a true neighborhood asset. Concepts that have been discussed include housing as well as a mixed-use development providing business incubator space, small commercial space, and some housing.

In addition to the Ward Bakery, there are several vacant lots south of California Avenue owned by either the City or a neighborhood small-scale developer. Thoughtful infill development - focused on walkable, neighborhood scale, a mix of uses, and a variety of housing types - can help to reinforce the neighborhood node.



Portage and California Avenues conceptual plan for improvements



Existing Portage and California Avenues intersection



Portage and California Avenues intersection conceptual improvements



**Lincoln Way West & Charles Martin Sr. Drive Node**

The City recently acquired property and completed streetscape improvements at the intersection of Lincoln Way West and Charles Martin Sr. Drive. One of the results of these efforts was the creation of a development site at a key intersection just outside of downtown South Bend. In addition, the infrastructure improvements included complete streets principles to reduce the amount of pavement, slow traffic, improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience, improve vehicular circulation, and provide clearly defined on-street parking. Future development at this node should utilize urban design principles to hold the corner, be pedestrian oriented, and provide a mix of uses.



*Conceptual improvements at Lincoln Way West and Charles Martin Sr. Drive*



Support Existing Neighbors

An engaged and active community is a powerful neighborhood resource. The City wishes to support efforts spearheaded by neighbors, community organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders that aim to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Area residents and stakeholders are often better able to implement ideas than government. Neighbors best know their neighborhood, challenges, and opportunities while government can have required processes and policies which can hinder a project.

Though ideas may start out as small opportunities, implementing several small, incremental efforts can have a large impact. The positive momentum that is created around locally driven efforts reinforces the value of past commitments and encourages people to pursue future projects. Neighbors, community organizations, and stakeholders working together with city government can have a lasting impact on neighborhood quality of life.

Ultimately, a goal of a neighborhood plan is to make improvements to the area that benefit those who currently live there. While future efforts will not directly impact every property in the entire neighborhood, there are opportunities to ensure residents have access to resources which can improve their quality of life. This includes the exploration of new or expanded programs, continuing existing programs, and increasing awareness of available resources.

The City recognizes there are challenges that the neighborhood and its residents face – including infrastructure needs, crime, and limited incomes. These challenges also impact other residents and neighborhoods throughout our community. Citywide challenges must be looked at from a higher level and be addressed in a more holistic way. While solutions may need to be tailored to varying circumstances across neighborhoods, we need to tackle these issues with a thoughtful, city level approach.



Credit: Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.



Credit: Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.



Credit: Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.



Credit: Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.





**Vacant Lot Activation**

There are nearly 500 unimproved properties in the neighborhood. Using the Analysis of Residential Market Potential, completed in 2018, the potential development over 20 years is anticipated to impact less than 50% of the unimproved properties. Ultimately, solutions for the reuse of many neighborhood lots will not be new buildings, but rather a community engaged effort to activate the vacant lot. Types of activation can range from a garden to a playground, or an art space to a dog park, and everything in between.

For lot activation to be successful, one of the key elements is that there is community buy-in for the project. Community members need to develop the idea, create the space, and maintain it as a community asset. Without this type of ownership projects will be unlikely to have long term success, potentially returning to an inactivate space within a short time. The City is developing a resource guide to assist neighbors in coming together to activate vacant lots and creating a true neighborhood asset.

It is a common misunderstanding that the City owns all the vacant lots throughout our community. The City does not own most of the unimproved properties within the neighborhood. As a result, collaboration and engagement with property owners will be an important part of any effort to activate lots. Depending on the project, setting up a way to take ownership of the property might be necessary.



*The birthday chair is a place making effort*



*Sherman Avenue community garden and gathering space*



*Urban gardening*



*Portage Avenue Unity Garden*



Neighborhood Infill

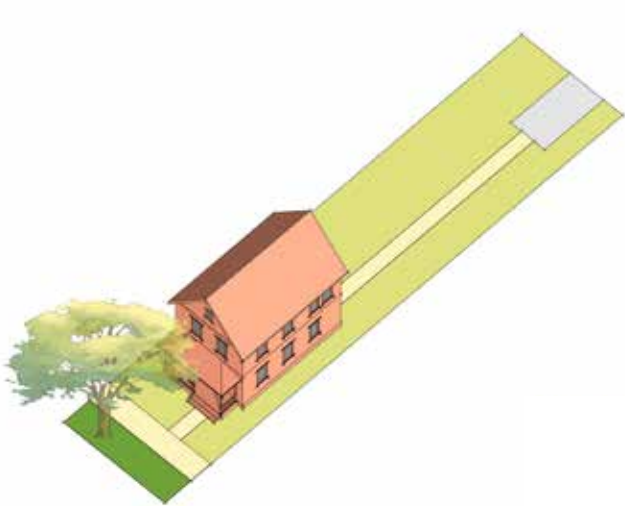
Not uncommon across the country, as the post-war housing market shifted away from urban neighborhoods, the condition of housing in these areas declined. The comparatively low value of housing in South Bend reinforced the decline by discouraging investment in the housing stock. Through the years, many houses were demolished in the Near Northwest but some of these vacant lots provide an opportunity for development.

The City engaged with Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc. in 2018 to complete an Analysis of Residential Market Potential of three different geographies. The study examined the potential market for new and renovated housing based on the housing preferences and socio-economic characteristics of households in the relevant draw areas. One of the study areas includes a portion of the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Census Tract 6, as well as two additional Census Tracts. For this study area it was determined that “between 56 and 70 new mixed-income rental and for-sale dwelling units could be developed and absorbed within Study Area A each year over the next five years.” The study provided a breakdown of the housing types and price ranges that would meet the needs of the market potential. This information was used during the charrette process when examining infill opportunities.

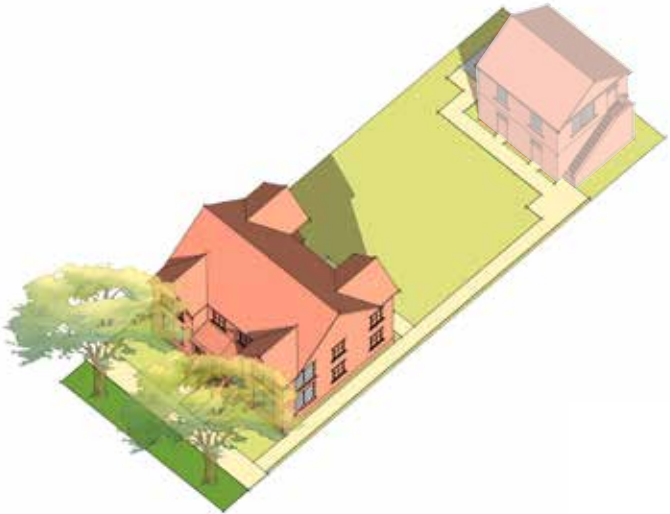
When developing any new construction in the Near Northwest the buildings should reflect the character of the neighborhood. In addition, new housing should include a range of types – from single family and accessory dwelling units, to multiplexes, rentals and mixed-use buildings. Housing should also provide a range of price points to keep it a diverse, mixed-income neighborhood. Any larger buildings should be designed with consideration for human scale and to fit into the existing urban context.

A variety of building types were explored throughout the charrette process. The buildings provide a variety of housing options and can fit into the existing neighborhood fabric.

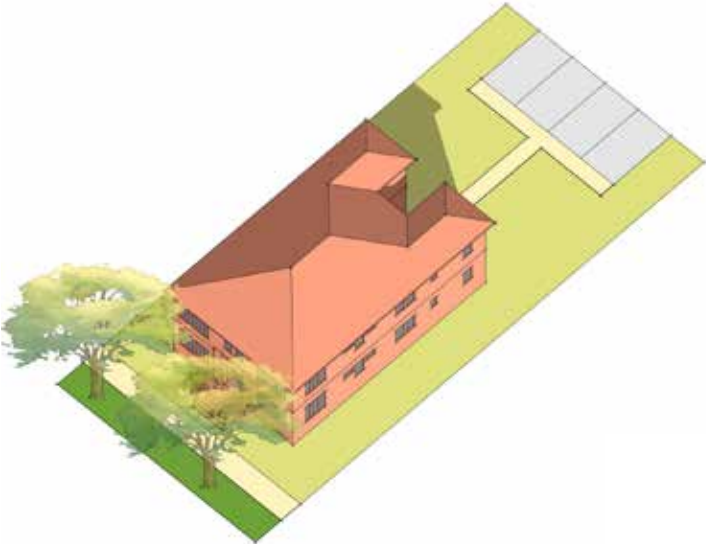
Single Family  
A single-family house provides one unit on a parcel.



Duplex  
A duplex provides two housing units on one parcel. Units can be stacked or side-by-side, and units can have individual entrances or share one entrance. There are many originally built duplexes that seamlessly exist within the neighborhood.



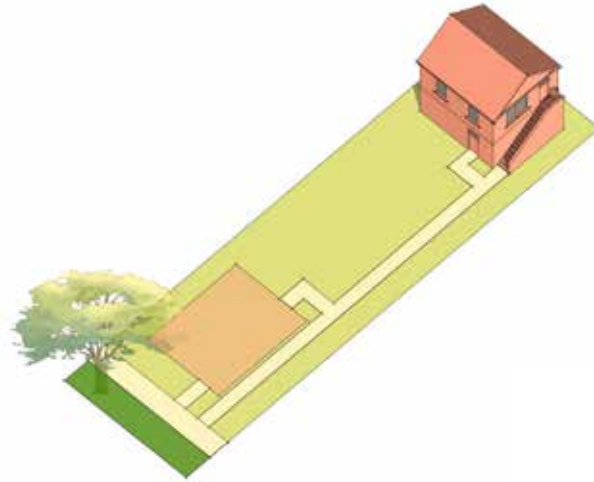
Fourplex  
A fourplex provides four housing units on one parcel. Units can be configured in a variety of ways to fit into a single building and on the property. Depending on the layout of the units, they can share and/or have individual entrances.





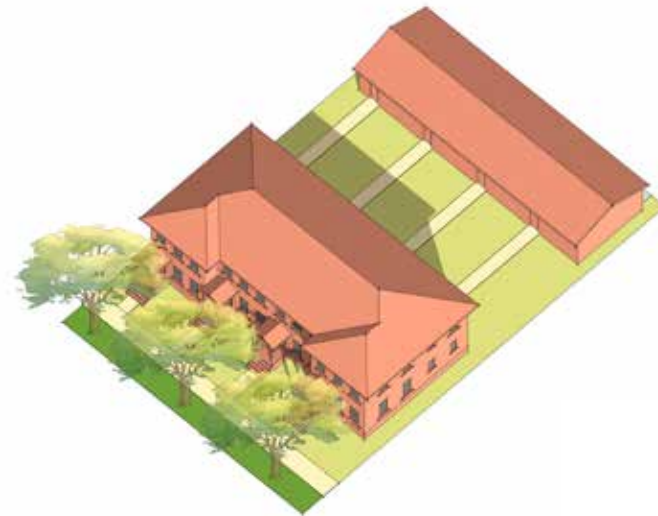
#### *Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)*

An accessory dwelling unit is a second, small housing unit which is provided on the same lot as a primary structure such as a single-family house or duplex. ADU's are often detached from the main house but can also be attached, such as a garage which is converted into an apartment.



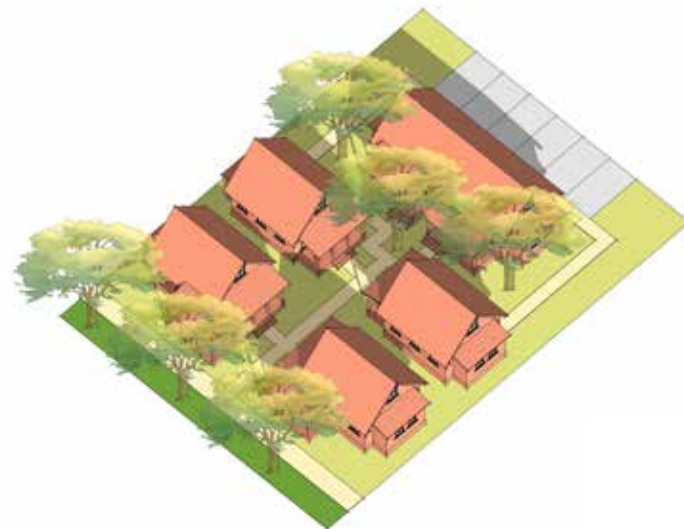
#### *Townhouse*

A townhouse is a housing unit which shares one or more walls with another independently owned housing unit.



#### *Cottage Court*

A cottage court consists of a series of small, detached buildings arranged to define a shared court that is typically perpendicular to the street.

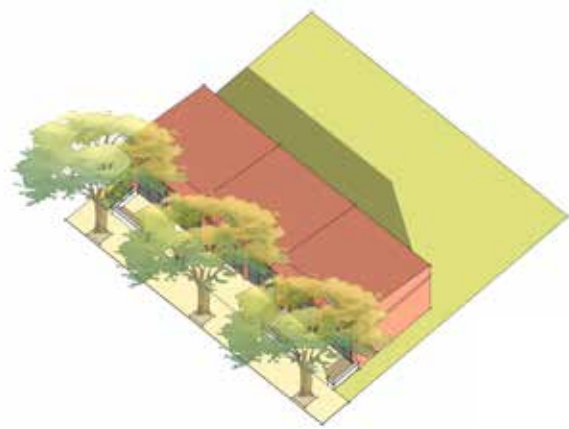


*Credit: The Tiny Life*



### *Makerplex*

A makerplex is a flexible building type that can accommodate small scale manufacturing or other small businesses including a retail storefront. They can sometimes be combined with a modest sized housing unit to allow for an artist or small business owner to live and work in the same building.



*Credit: MAKE South Bend*







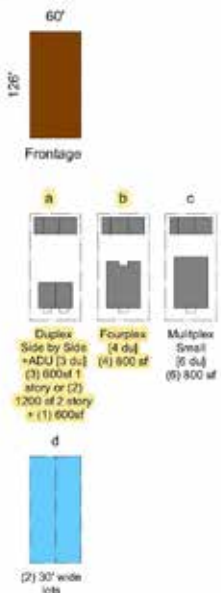


30' Wide Lot



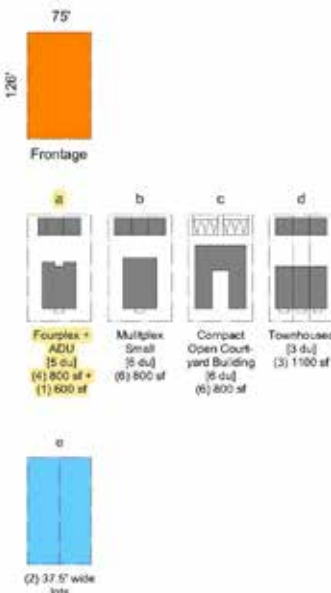
Building type study by lot width, 30'

60' Wide Lot



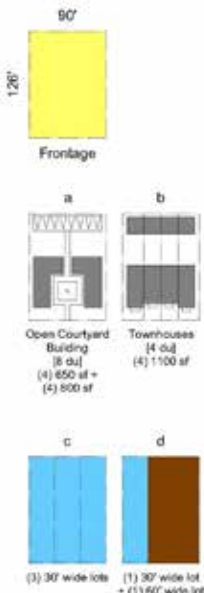
Building type study by lot width, 60'

75' Wide Lot



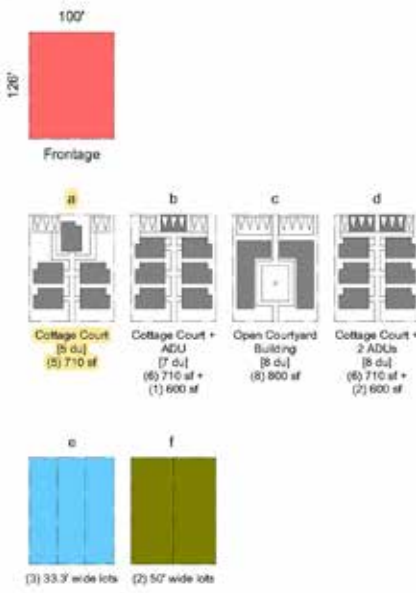
Building type study by lot width, 75'

90' Wide Lot



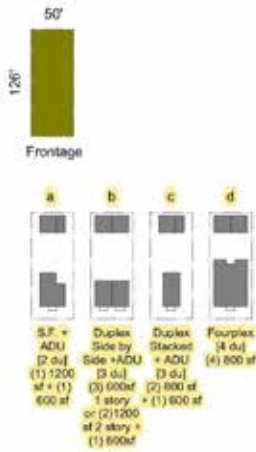
Building type study by lot width, 90'

100' Wide Lot



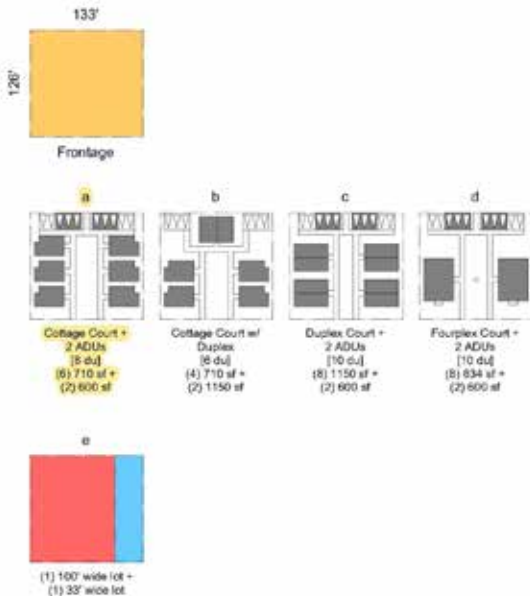
Building type study by lot width, 100'

50' Wide Lot



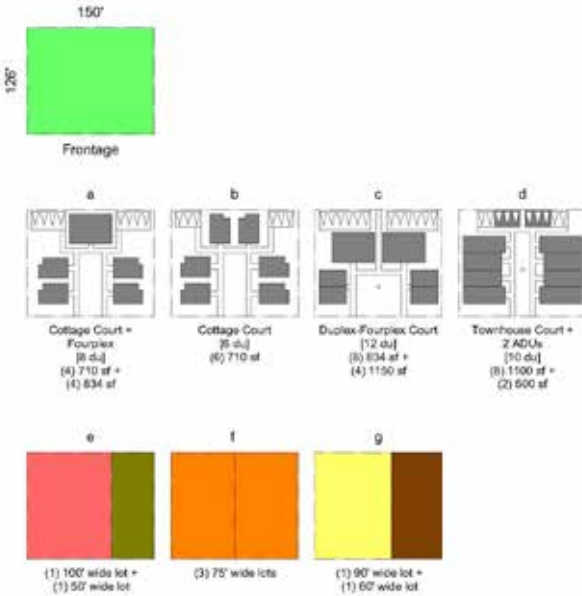
Building type study by lot width, 50'

133' Wide Lot



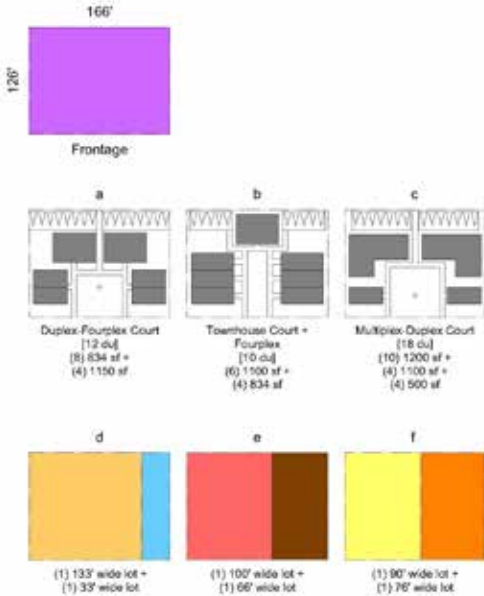
Building type study by lot width, 133'

150' Wide Lot



Building type study by lot width, 150'

166' Wide Lot



Building type study by lot width, 166'



1. *Pre-Approved Building Plans for Small Residential Structures*

One of the “soft” costs of construction is paying for a building plan that fits in the surrounding neighborhood and meets zoning and local building code requirements. A collection of pre-approved plans would reduce the overall costs by providing those interested in new construction a selection of building types that fit into the neighborhood context – both in style and characteristics as well as common lot widths found within our neighborhoods. Since properties have varying conditions and constraints, a property specific site plan would still need to be developed.

2. *Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit Revolving Loan Fund*

Paying for the construction of an ADU can be challenging. Most homeowners do not have enough equity in their home to access a home equity related loan product, this is either due to the mortgage balance or because the appraised value of the home is less than the cost to build an ADU. Obtaining a personal loan large enough to pay for new construction can be equally as challenging. Refinancing their entire property is often necessary in order to amortize the pay back schedule of such an investment to a manageable level. A revolving fund would look to provide loans, in part secured by the rents created by the new unit, as another pathway for willing property owners to add an ADU to their lots.

3. *Infrastructure Replacement Funding*

There are practical considerations for building in older neighborhoods where underground infrastructure can be 75 to 100 years old, including making connections into existing utility lines in the public right of way. Buildings that will use municipal sewer and water services (this includes all buildings within City limits) need to make connections to the sewer and water lines which are located under the street in front of the building. In areas with existing infrastructure, this entails excavating the street so new sewer and water laterals

can be installed. Infrastructure replacement funding would be focused on off-site infrastructure such as sidewalks, water and sewer laterals, and any repairs or upgrades to water mains required in areas which may have insufficient service, particularly for new buildings with sprinkler systems. Funding could be provided as low interest, long term financing or as small grants.

4. *Sprinkler Grants for Qualifying Rehabilitation and New Construction of Multi-Unit Buildings*

Building code requires certain types of buildings to include sprinkler systems, such as mixed-use buildings and medium sized multi-unit residential buildings. The addition of sprinklers can be cost prohibitive to the rehabilitation of existing buildings or the construction of new multi-unit buildings. Sprinkler grants would help to cover these additional costs borne by small buildings that are difficult to recover through rents early in the redevelopment of the neighborhood. These grants would likely be tiered to the size of the project and would be phased out after a period of time.

5. *Patient Capital to Provide Equity Positions for Small Developers and Mission-Based Organizations*

Patient capital could help keep small projects from being largely owned by an investment partner, providing a wealth building tool. This resource could be used to fund 5-20% of a project in order to help new developers or neighborhood-based organizations have the capital necessary to obtain construction loans. The equity would be in the form of a low-interest loan that returns dollars over a 3-10-year period. The terms and lengths of loans could be adjusted based on the outcomes achieved by the project.

6. *Loan Guarantee Fund*

A challenge sometimes encountered by small developers is not having a personal financial statement with enough assets to meet banking institution thresholds for a personal guarantee for a construction loan. The loan guarantee fund would provide the financial backing to viable projects in

order to assist the developer in obtaining a construction loan. This allows the developer to focus on securing investment dollars but not having to attract an investor with high net worth and liquid assets – who will likely want a high rate of return. The fund does not directly provide resources unless the developer fails to meet the repayment terms of the construction loan.

Program parameters and requirements will need to be developed in order to protect the funds resources and ability to provide long term assistance. Areas that will need to be considered include developer resources and credentials, project viability, loan products to be used, eligible amount of construction loans to be covered, and potential cost containment measures such as requiring the use of a pre-approved building plan.

While these programs have been identified as potential options to facilitate development they need to be further explored and evaluated in order to determine program requirements and if any would be a good fit for South Bend. The City could develop a pilot program(s) to test to see if and how these programs would assist in furthering development. If programs are implemented, they would phase out, or evolve, as the market improves to address the gap on its own.



Development Strategy

The development strategy is a more specific examination of a target area to determine how to best implement the principles and concepts identified in the neighborhood plan. It provides a guide for implementing a specific project based on examining things such as feasibility, funding & funding gaps, partnerships, and phasing.

Infill housing should be focused in targeted areas that build off existing strengths. Focusing efforts will help to maximize the impact on the surrounding neighborhood; the stability and certainty provided will enable

infill to expand into a larger geography. The initial target geographies include Sherman and Harrison Avenues as well as the Portage Avenue Node (which was previously discussed).

Sherman and Harrison Avenues were identified as the target area based on a variety of factors. Their location helps to build off the strength of past investment in and around the neighborhood and will reinforce this past work, allowing the positive impacts to spread further in the community. In addition, this geography was identified as a strategic target area in past planning processes such as the West Side Main Streets Plan and as part of the Federal Department

of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) technical assistance that the city received related to the vacant & abandoned property initiative. Focusing on a target area will allow the piloting of implementation strategies with the results helping to inform the neighborhood-level approach to infill development.

Within the Sherman & Harrison target area, the City as well as partner organizations such as Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. and Cross Community, Inc. own a number of vacant lots. These properties will provide a starting point for investment within the target area.



Target areas and the existing structures



Property ownership in Sherman & Harrison target area



The neighborhood level lot width analysis was used to conduct a lot analysis within the target area. Lot combinations, where there are multiple adjacent vacant lots, were analyzed to determine typical dimensions and explore what opportunities exist for a variety of building types in the area.



Lot width analysis in Sherman & Harrison target area

No matter which building type is developed on a particular property, there are some basic guiding principles that should be followed to ensure that there is cohesive and thoughtful development:

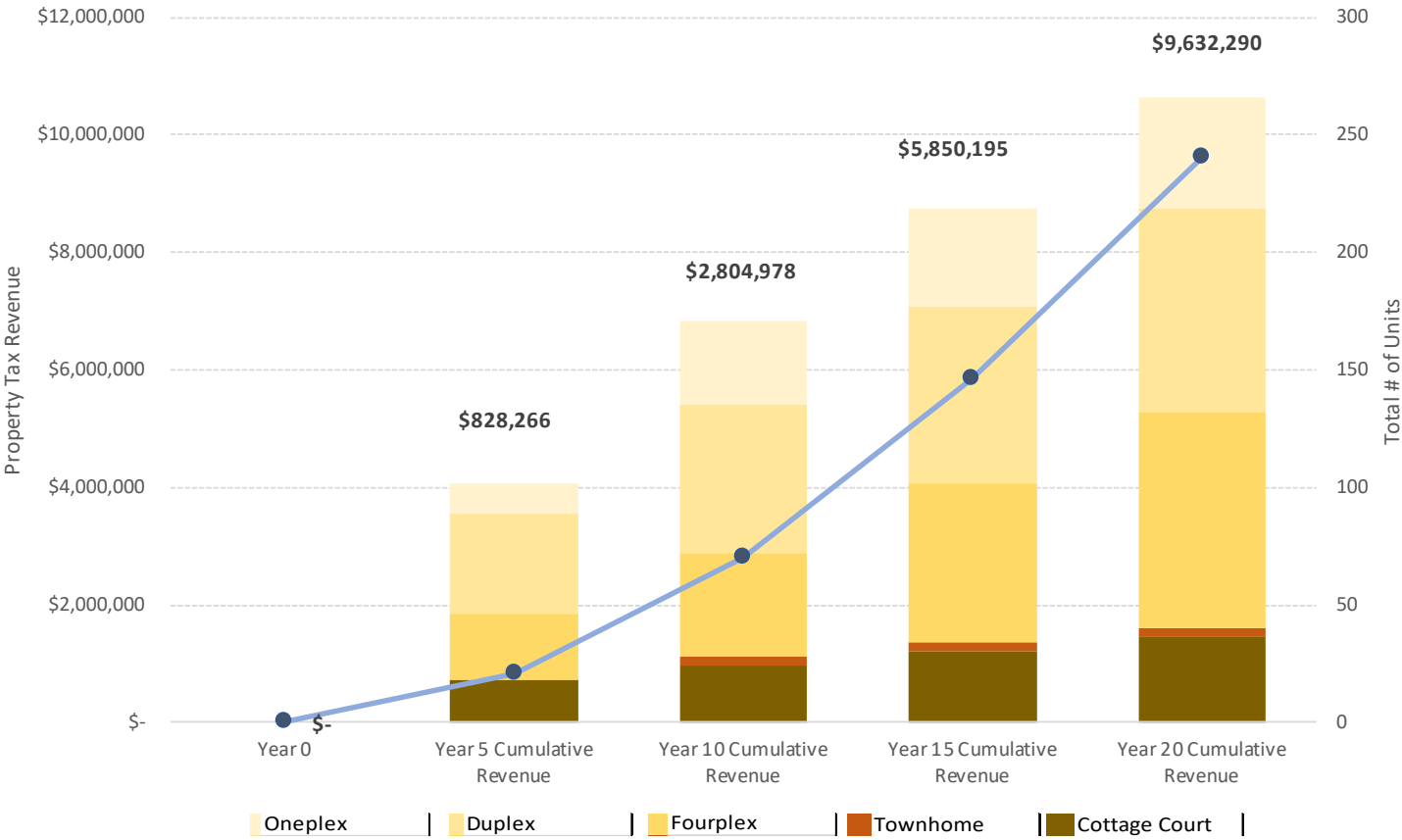
- Building design should be completed with a special consideration for the character of the neighborhood;
- Larger scale buildings are most appropriate at corridors, nodes, and/or corner locations;
- More intense uses should be focused along the corridors or in nodes;
- Buildings should address the street;
- Details will assist in making buildings consistent with the neighborhood – including, but not limited to: roof design and pitch, exterior trim size, porch or stoop proportions, first floor elevation, eaves, etc.; and
- Consistent with City Code, garages will be accessed off an alley where one is present.

Using the Residential Market Potential Study as a basis, projected 5, 10, and 20-year build-out scenarios were developed. These are not intended to show the exact type and location of new buildings but rather provide a vision for how the neighborhood could develop based on general urban planning and market-based principles.

The buildout scenarios may appear aggressive, and many of the units are anticipated to be missing middle housing types such as duplexes and fourplexes rather than single family houses. As a result, the development of one parcel could account for two or four units.

Based on the future scenarios, the potential property tax revenue was calculated for the target area. Understanding the potential tax revenue provides a framework for examining the return on investment (ROI) and can help determine the type and amount of City investment. In five (5) years roughly \$800,000 in tax revenue could be generated and by year twenty (20) a cumulative total of over \$9 million in tax revenue is possible based on the developed buildout scenarios. For additional information, see Appendix 4.

### Cumulative Property Tax Revenue & Unit Count



As part of the process, proformas were created for each housing type in order to examine the current market viability within the Sherman & Harrison target area. It was determined that none of the housing products examined can be accomplished with the traditional financing model. Based on this, we then explored what needs to happen in order to “get to yes” rather than simply saying it does or does not work.

Of scenarios, the duplex appears to be most viable. Viability of a housing type is determined based on the amount of variation from the traditional financial model that is required to make construction possible. While both the owner-occupied duplex and purely for rent duplex both perform relatively well, the owner-occupied duplex has the benefit of lower operating expenses which improves its financial performance. Financial constraints are based on the proforma –

including the baseline assumptions – and current market conditions. The examination of market viability helped identify the potential programs to assist with addressing the financial gap which are listed in the Neighborhood Strategy. Since the findings are based on market conditions within a specific geography – the Sherman & Harrison target area – it cannot be assumed that the findings will directly apply to other locations. Differing market conditions will result in different levels of viability and differing financial needs for the construction of the various housing types. For additional information on the proformas, see Appendix 3.

While efforts will focus in the Sherman & Harrison target area, it is anticipated that development will occur in other portions of the neighborhood, building off existing or future strengths and spreading outwards.





Target area 5-year build-out scenario



Target area 10-year build-out scenario





Target area 20-year build-out scenario



# Implementation

In this chapter the priority initiatives identified through the planning process are further explored to determine how they can be implemented. Each project is reviewed to develop an anticipated timeframe for completion as well as identifying the lead entity. The lead role is crucial for the implementation of each project. Neighborhood revitalization efforts take neighbors, multiple stakeholders and organizations, and government working together. No one entity can accomplish all efforts alone.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood has a true asset in the many engaged residents who care about the future of their neighborhood. Some of these neighbors are small-scale developers that own multiple properties and wish to have a positive impact on the neighborhood through stabilizing existing buildings, building new, and working on placemaking efforts. In addition to the momentum created by neighbors there are organizations interested in seeing positive projects happen in the neighborhood including, the City of South Bend, Near Northwest Neighborhood Inc., and Cross Community Inc.

Strategy 1: Create a safe and attractive neighborhood through infrastructure improvements					
Strategy & Action Steps	Lead Role	Potential Partners	1-2 Year	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Complete traffic calming improvements in Leeper Park to help slow traffic	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts, Division of Engineering, Dept. of Community Investment		x		
Complete intersection improvments at Riverside Dr. & Hudson Ave. to help improve safety	Dept. of Community Investment, Division of Engineering		x		
Explore opportunity to improve the trail system connectivity along Riverside Drive	Dept. of Community Investment	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts, Dvision of Engineering			x
Work with Muessel Elementary School to address student drop-off and pick-up circulation concerns	Dept. of Community Investment, Division of Engineering	Muessel Elementary School	x	x	
Complete infrastruture improvements within the Sherman & Harrison Avenues target area to support development	Dept. of Community Investment, Divison of Engineering	Developer(s)		x	
Explore reconfiguring the California, Leland, & Riverside intersection to improve circulation and safety	Dept. of Community Investment, Division of Engineering				x



Strategy 2: Reinforce the neighborhoods strengths with housing development & preservation					
Strategy & Action Steps	Lead Role	Potential Partners	1-2 Year	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Explore mechanisms that can assist with the financial gap that impacts housing development	Dept. of Community Investment	Financial institutions, Non-profits	x	x	
Support the production of a range of housing types including new construction and rehabilitation of market rate and affordable units, as well as homeowner and rental housing	Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., Developers	Dept. of Community Investment, Builders	x	x	x
Continue and enhance partnerships with entities that can build and rehabilitate housing	Dept. of Community Investment, Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.	Non-profits, Builders, Developers	x	x	x
Explore expanding the South Bend / UEA Pilot Home Repair Program geography to include a portion of the near northwest	Dept. of Community Investment		x		

Strategy 3: Use vacant lots as an opportunity to support neighborhood vibrancy					
Strategy & Action Steps	Lead Role	Potential Partners	1-2 Year	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Develop vacant lot activation guide to assist neighbors in reuse of vacant lots	Dept. of Community Investment	City consultant	x		
Identify vacant lots for activation and develop project	Neighbors, Non-profits	Property owner(s), Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., Dept. of Community Investment	x	x	x
Continue being supportive of vacant lot activation efforts	Dept. of Community Investment	Non-profits, Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.	x	x	x
Pursue strategic opportunities to acquire properties	Dept. of Community Investment, Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., Developers, Neighbors		x	x	x
Support efforts for neighborhood scale infill development	Dept. of Community Investment	Developers, Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.	x	x	x



Strategy 4: Reinforce the Near Northwest as a walkable, mixed-use, urban neighborhood					
Strategy & Action Steps	Lead Role	Potential Partners	1-2 Year	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Update the zoning ordinance and map to facilitate missing middle housing and neighborhood center nodes	Dept. of Community Investment		x		
Encourage a mix of uses to be developed in neighborhood centers, such as those on Portage Ave. and Lincoln Way West	Dept. of Community Investment	Developers, Non-profits	x	x	x
Support the productive reuse of the Ward Bakery Building	Dept. of Community Investment	Developers, Non-profits	x	x	x
Explore improvements at the Portage & California Avenues intersection that reinforce the neighborhood node	Dept. of Community Investment	Division of Engineering		x	
Facilitate new development at the Lincoln Way West & Charles Martin Sr. Dr. node	Dept. of Community Investment	Developers		x	x
Explore opportunities to reinforce Portage Ave. & Marion St. as a neighborhood node	Dept. of Community Investment			x	x
Encourage future development to be consistent with the existing character of a walkable, urban neighborhood	Dept. of Community Investment, Division of Engineering	Developers, Non-profits	x	x	x
Engage with Memorial Hospital on any future development - in particular efforts related to the interface with Leeper Park, the interface between the hospital and the surrounding residential areas & Downtown, and future development between Marion Street & LaSalle Avenue	Dept. of Community Investment	Memorial Hospital, Division of Engineering			x

Strategy 5: Improve the experience of and access to outdoor recreation opportunities					
Strategy & Action Steps	Lead Role	Potential Partners	1-2 Year	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Complete work in Leeper Park to upgrade the playground and user experience	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts	Dept. of Community Investment	x		
Complete playground improvements at Brownfield Park	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts		x		
Complete the construction of the first phase of the Coal Line Trail, providing additional neighborhood access to the trail system and introducing a trail head at Muessel Grove Park	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts, Dept. of Community Investment, Division of Engineering			x	
Explore opportunities to improve the pedestrian connection between Muessel Grove Park and Muessel Elementary School	Dept. of Community Investment, Division of Engineering	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts			x
Explore improving access to greenspace for areas outside a half-mile / 10-minute walk radius of a park	South Bend Venues Parks & Arts, Dept. of Community Investment; Non-Profits, Developer(s)			x	x



Strategy 6: Strengthen neighborhood connections and capacity of residents					
Strategy & Action Steps	Lead Role	Potential Partners	1-2 Year	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Continue a close working relationship with the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.	Dept. of Community Investment		x	x	x
Continue to engage with neighbors related to concerns and opportunities	Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., Common Council, City of South Bend Departments	Neighborhood Resources Connection	x	x	x
Encourage neighbors to organize around quality of life issues	Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., Common Council	Neighborhood Resources Connection	x	x	x
Continue holding neighborhood events that build a sense of community and neighbor capacity	Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., Residents		x	x	x



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