

Northside Neighborhood Plan

Commercial District & Park and Westnedge Gateway

Northside Urban Garden



Northside Community Center



Water Park and Splash Pad



**Originality,
Options &
Opportunities**

Neighborhood Meeting



Neighborhood Grocery Store



NACD

Northside Association for Community Development

Northside Neighborhood Plan

Commercial District & Park and Westnedge Gateway

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This Plan was prepared for NACD in partnership with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.



August 2009

NACD

Northside Association for Community Development

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Introduction

Westnedge Avenue and Park Street are roadways owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation that connect US-131 directly to the entertainment, business and cultural center of the metropolitan area, downtown Kalamazoo. The streets traverse through the Northside neighborhood, known for being home to a number of parks, churches, and social service agencies. The Northside neighborhood is in the process of developing a vibrant and unique commercial corridor to serve the needs of Northside residents. This transition has taken place because of dedicated leadership, committed public and private institutions, and concerned residents.

The Northside neighborhood is served by the Northside Association for Community Development (NACD). NACD facilitated neighborhood planning meetings in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2008 which culminated in several strategy documents and plans. For a detailed summary of earlier planning efforts, see Chapter 8. Resident needs expressed during earlier planning efforts have not changed much over time; and this Neighborhood Plan seeks to continue the community's current momentum and build upon these previous planning efforts.

For example, this plan includes the 2005 Land Use Plan and also supports and is consistent with all other neighborhood plans. In addition, a summary of goals, objectives and strategies is included relating to NACD's intent to improve and provide commercial areas, housing, recreational and cultural facilities, and streetscapes. A summary of earlier planning efforts and success stories resulting from those efforts is included; as well as a brief discussion on current trends and a summary of demographic figures to provide the reader with a snapshot impression of the Northside. In addition, a citizen input process was employed during this most recent planning process and public comment is summarized below.

Executive Summary of 2009 Resident Input

The NACD and its planning team facilitated two Neighborhood Update Meetings on March 24, 2009. One session was held early in the afternoon to accommodate those available during the lunch hour and the other was held in the evening to allow residents who worked during the day to participate. Sixteen people attended the afternoon session, while 20 people attended the evening session and shared their visions for the desired future of the community. The primary purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the public to present opinions on the

The Northside neighborhood is in the process of developing a vibrant and unique commercial corridor to serve the needs of Northside residents.



Ransom Street at Park Street: some recent streetscape improvements reflect efforts made to date.

Needs expressed during this planning effort are similar to those expressed during earlier efforts; ideas have been consistent and have not changed.



design, use, and economy of the area as the planning process is underway, rather than after plans and concepts are formalized.

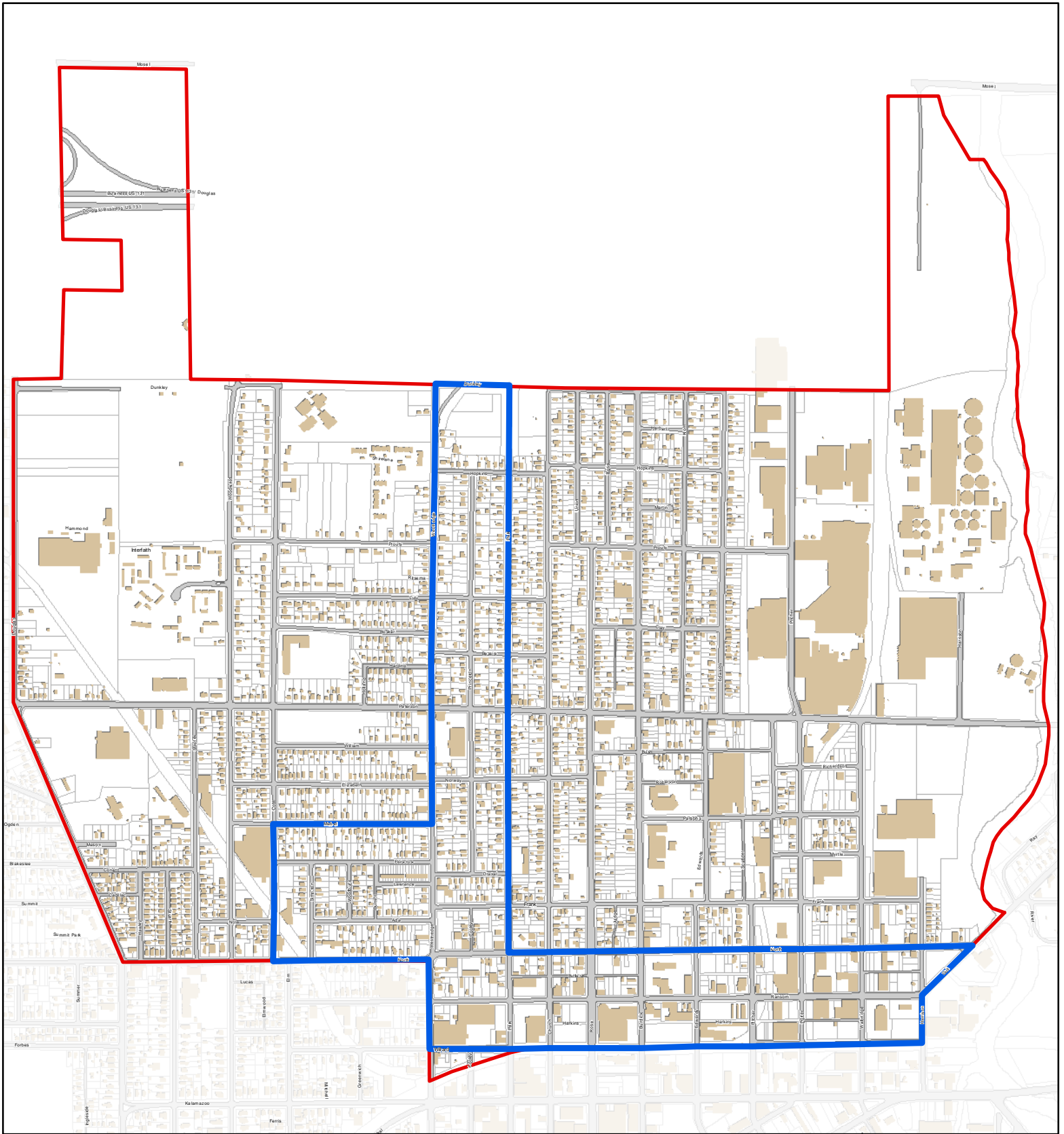
At the beginning of the Neighborhood Update Meeting, participants listened to a presentation summarizing resident objectives generated during past planning efforts and the efforts and achievements of the NACD in response to those objectives. Next, participants were asked to engage in a visual preference survey, reacting to images that reflect existing or potential neighborhood condition scenarios. Finally, participants split into two separate “roundtable discussion groups.” Each group discussed the issues of Beautification, Land Acquisition and Development, Food Security, Physical Fitness, and Business Redevelopment. Participants answered a series of questions and identified improvement areas on a map. A summary of map mark-ups is shown on Map 3 and Map 4.

Important Themes

Several consistently important themes emerged from the two Neighborhood Update Meetings, including the need for:

- **a skill center and tutor center**, that would train youth and adults to increase job skills and enhance employment possibilities
- **development of a designated commercial district** between Westnedge and Harrison/Gull and North and Willard
- **a multi-use recreation center**, that could include roller-skating, go karts, fitness equipment, basketball, softball, boxing and a youth scout program
- **improved streetscapes**, including well-lit streets for pedestrians, pedestrian furniture, smooth sidewalk and street surfaces, street trees and landscaping
- **assuring viable and thriving businesses** in the neighborhood; and in addition, assuring that those businesses employ residents

This plan includes the policies and strategic action elements to help guide NACD, as well as public and private partners, in the effort to meet the needs expressed above and to improve the focus area as delineated on Map 1 on the following page.



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Map I
Focus Area

Legend

- Focus Area - Residential & Commercial Districts
- Northside Neighborhood Boundary



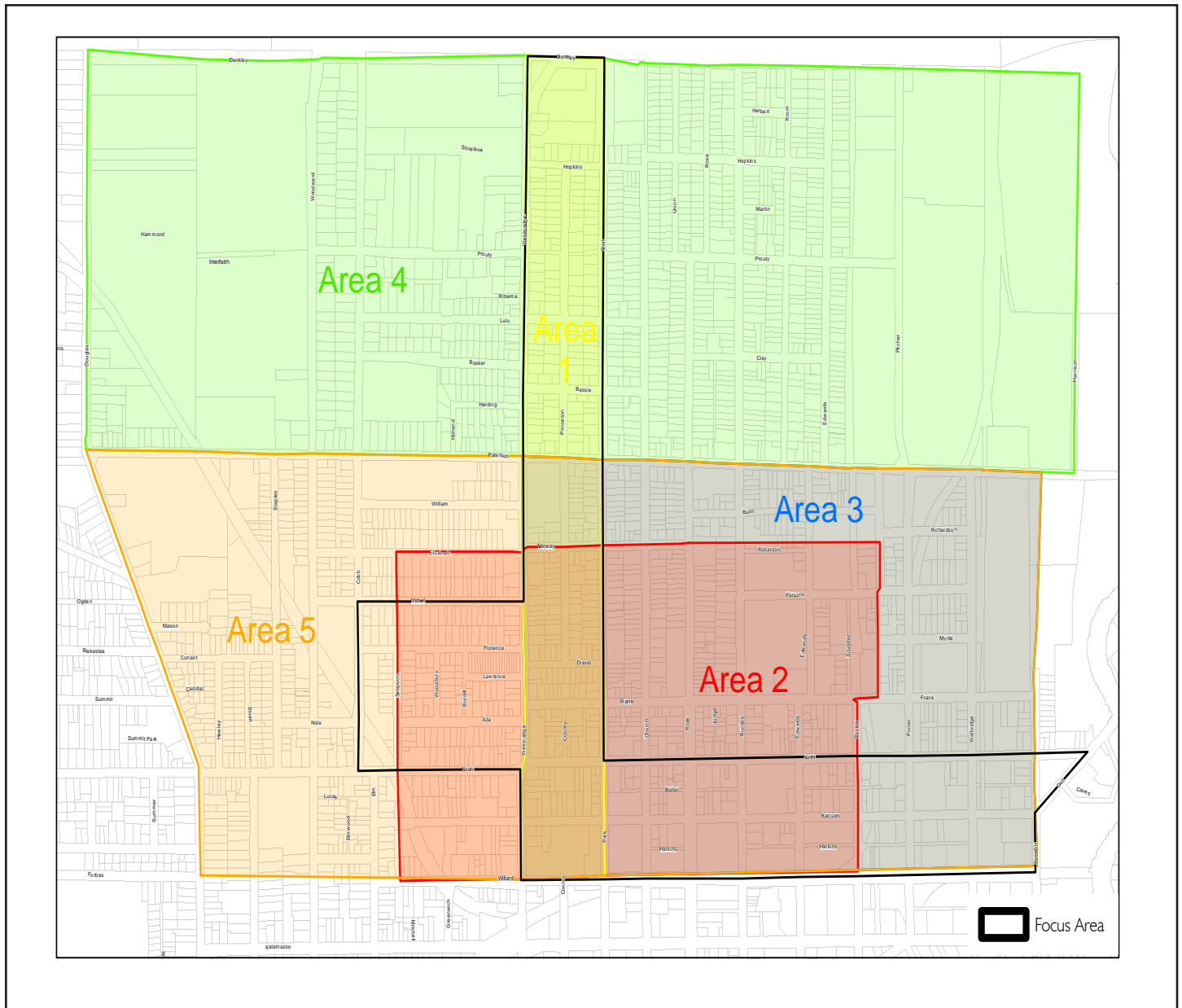
2005 Land Use Plan

In April 2005, the NACD Land Use Committee facilitated three community meetings to garner input from residents and stakeholders. This plan supports and includes this community input. A summary of the input is included on the following pages.

Sub-Area Planning

Participants in the 2005 planning process delineated five planning areas, as illustrated on Map 2 below. Each planning area corresponds to a unique set of wishes and objectives, as noted by the planning participants; and these wishes and objectives help to form the foundation for this Neighborhood Plan.

Map 2. 2005 Land Use Plan Sub-Areas



Area 1

Housing

- Increase housing on Park Street
- Don't want to see businesses in front of homes
- Make homes look like homes, businesses look like businesses
- Repair/demolish apartments by Westnedge and Lawrence
- Provide opportunity and encourage homeowners next to vacant lots to purchase the lot
- Provide mortgage and home buying skills
- Convert old homes to museum/art centers

Public Improvements

- Better street signs
- Improve street signage (welcome, guide to businesses)
- Historical lighting along Westnedge and Park
- Homes historically preserved
- Develop cleaning program
- Need speed bump by highway
- Increased lighting
- Plant trees
- Improve walking area on Willard near RR tracks
- Green space/parks
- Improve overall appearance and cleanliness

Economic Development

- More businesses
- Make a directory of local businesses
- Strip malls, shopping centers
- Street fairs

Public Services

- Programs for youths
- Increase public safety presence
- Increase street cleaning (weekly)
- Safe, well-lit bicycle path

Special Groups

- Programs for youth
- Educate youth on available services
- Mentoring life skills for teens
- Better curb cuts for wheelchairs

Other

- Roller skating rink
- Video store
- Shoe repair
- Cleaners
- Boutiques
- Laundromats
- Restaurants for family dining
- Different styles of restaurants including steak houses, chicken and buffets

Area 2

Housing

- Mixed income houses between Willard and Frank
- Need program to renovate vacant homes
- Tear down abandoned properties
- Make landlords/homeowners more responsible
- Inclusionary housing zone (mix of all income levels)

Public Improvements

- Increased lighting
- Employment training facility
- Place trash cans in public areas/pick up on garbage day
- Improve curb cuts for wheelchairs
- Walking trail
- Museum (Northside history)
- Art Institute

Economic Development

- More stores
- Create training program to teach plumbing, electrical, painting, etc
- Support homeownership programs

Public Services

- Increase leaf/brush pick-up to deter blocked drains
- Get rid of overnight street parking ordinance
- Increase regulations for speeding
- Enforce littering codes
- Increase public safety presence

Special Groups

- Assign youth to pick up litter
- Encourage arts and culture for all ages and needs
- Teen recreation center
- Provide playground equipment/park activities for children with special needs
- Fix sidewalks and curbs for wheelchair bound residents

Other

- Skating rink
- Water park
- Banquet hall
- Indoor track
- Fitness center
- Hardware
- Building supply
- Go carts
- Arcades

Area 3

Housing

- Too many vacant lots
- Create an exterior paint program
- Get rid of bad tenants; i.e. drug dealers
- Build townhouses to replace demolished rentals
- Make landscaping similar
- Design new homes to look like older ones (in all areas)
- Build homes for seniors and handicapped

Public Improvements

- Create and put up signs to tell dog owners to clean up
- Walking trail in LaCrone Park
- More playground equipment in LaCrone Park
- More lighting

Economic Development

- Conference center/office building
- Refurbish abandoned factories
- Purchase abandoned factories
- Create training programs that partner with area businesses
- Co-op ventures to create jobs
- Youth training center at Frank and North Streets

Public Services

- Better lighting
- Fine property owners who do not remove snow from sidewalk
- Dispatch police faster

Special Groups

- Build gymnasium for youth
- Provide high-tech training for youth
- Develop programs to help youth
- Playground equipment for special needs children

Other

- Entertainment complex
- Outdoor track
- Fun park (water, go cart, etc)
- Multi-use building
- Bowling alley

Area 4

Housing

- Beautify/develop building across from Galilee Church
- Program to help homeowners get homes painted
- Help homeowners buy vacant lots next to them
- New housing should not be too intense/dense
- Replace rentals with rentals, so all can afford to live here
- Mixed housing (cost and types)

Public Improvements

- Remove fallen trees
- Bicycle trails
- Do not increase number of stores that sell liquor (set limits)
- Upgrade sidewalks
- Improve handicapped curb cuts
- Increased lighting
- Provide a place for seniors and children to walk
- Picnic tables at LaCrone Park
- Plant flowers in the park
- Reclaim park area behind Pattwood Apts
- More shopping opportunities
- Clean-up program
- Create sculpture/fountain at highway gateway

Economic Development

- Increase businesses
- Support existing businesses
- Improve light industrial area

Public Services

- Create center for driver's education
- Increase street cleaning
- More mailboxes/mail center
- Local recycling center
- Recycling education
- Repair broken sidewalks
- Place trash cans on every corner
- Fine landlords that continuously rent to drug dealers
- Sidewalks on Woodward

Special Groups

- Mentor programs for teens
- Babysitting course
- Hold contest for "gateway" sculpture/fountain design
- Create youth athletic leagues for all seasons and various sports

Other

- Gas station
- Golf course
- Baseball field
- Drive-in movie theater
- Amusement park

Area 5

Housing

- Harrison and North Streets - townhouses

Public Improvements

- Signs, directions to businesses, centers, etc
- Better street lights

Economic Development

- Vocational/technical skills center
- Purchase vacant property

Public Services

- More street lights
- Improve sidewalks on Frank Street
- More public safety patrol

Special Groups

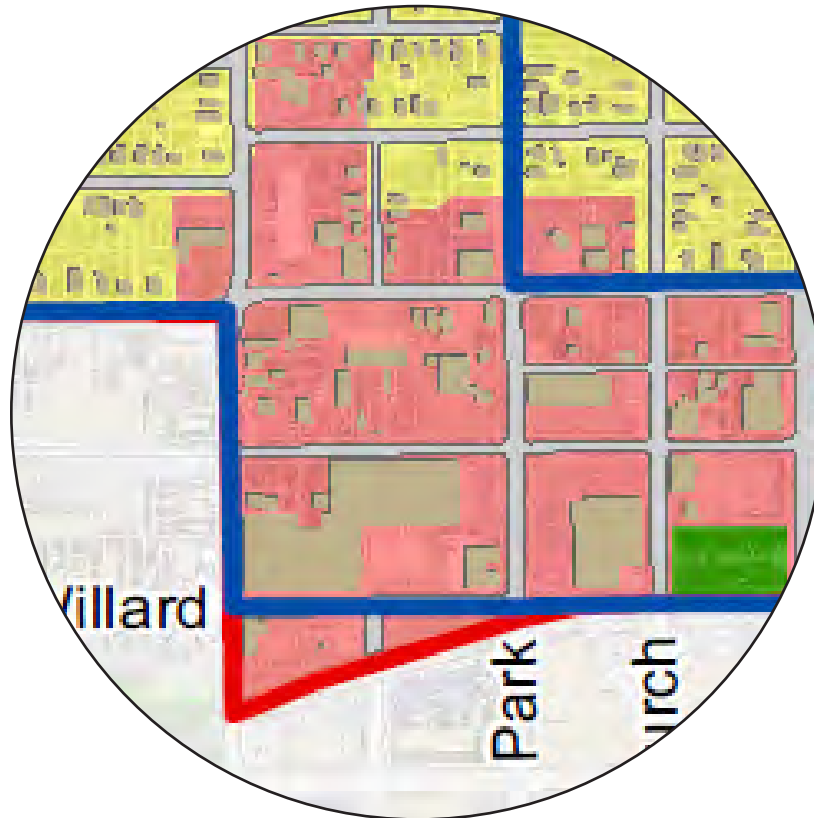
- Boys and girls club
- Programs for youth
- “Court house” type recreational center

Other

- Use available space for mixed uses, not only “light industrial,” but also for housing, recreation, office space and retail. Name the whole complex after a worthy Northsider. Poll community for name.
- Rename a street

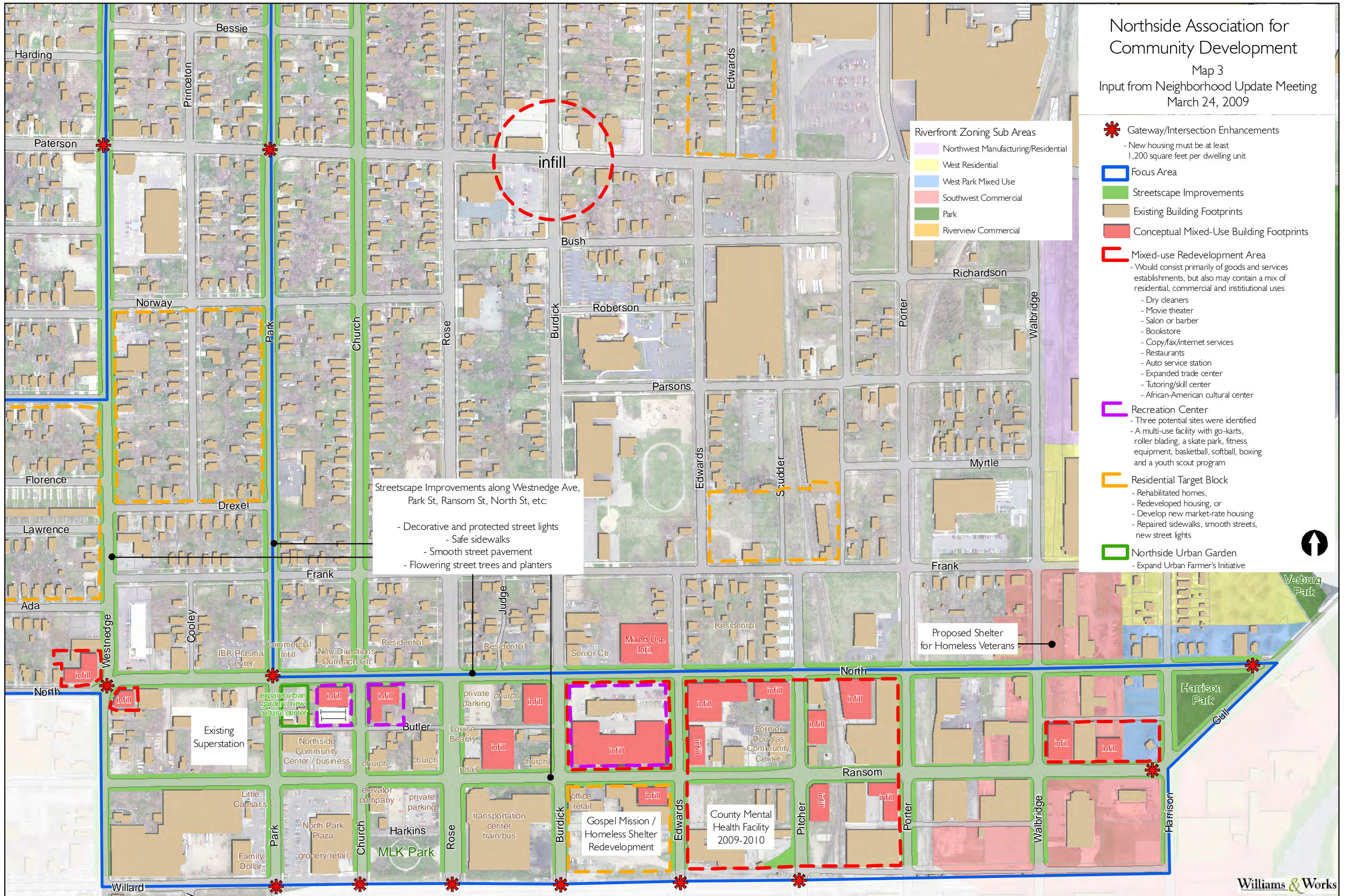
Future Land Use / Development Projects

The maps on the following two pages reflect desired future land uses and development projects and is supported with the strategic action items discussed in Chapter 4 through Chapter 7.



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Map 3
 Input from Neighborhood Update Meeting
 March 24, 2009



Riverfront Zoning Sub Areas

- Northwest Manufacturing/Residential
- West Residential
- West Park Mixed Use
- Southwest Commercial
- Park
- Riverview Commercial

- ✱ Gateway/Intersection Enhancements
 - New housing must be at least 1,200 square feet per dwelling unit
- Focus Area
- Streetscape Improvements
- Existing Building Footprints
- Conceptual Mixed-Use Building Footprints
- Mixed-use Redevelopment Area
 - Would consist primarily of goods and services establishments, but also may contain a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses
 - Dry cleaners
 - Movie theater
 - Salon or barber
 - Bookstore
 - Copy/fax/Internet services
 - Restaurants
 - Auto service station
 - Expanded trade center
 - Tutoring/skill center
 - African-American cultural center
- Recreation Center
 - Three potential sites were identified
 - A multi-use facility with go-karts, roller blading, a skate park, fitness equipment, basketball, softball, boxing and a youth scout program
- Residential Target Block
 - Rehabilitated homes,
 - Redeveloped housing, or
 - Develop new market-rate housing
 - Repaired sidewalks, smooth streets, new street lights
- Northside Urban Garden
 - Expand Urban Farmer's Initiative

Streetscape Improvements along Westmedge Ave, Park St, Ransom St, North St, etc:

- Decorative and protected street lights
- Safe sidewalks
- Smooth street pavement
- Flowering street trees and planters

Proposed Shelter for Homeless Veterans

Existing Superstation

Gospel Mission / Homeless Shelter Redevelopment

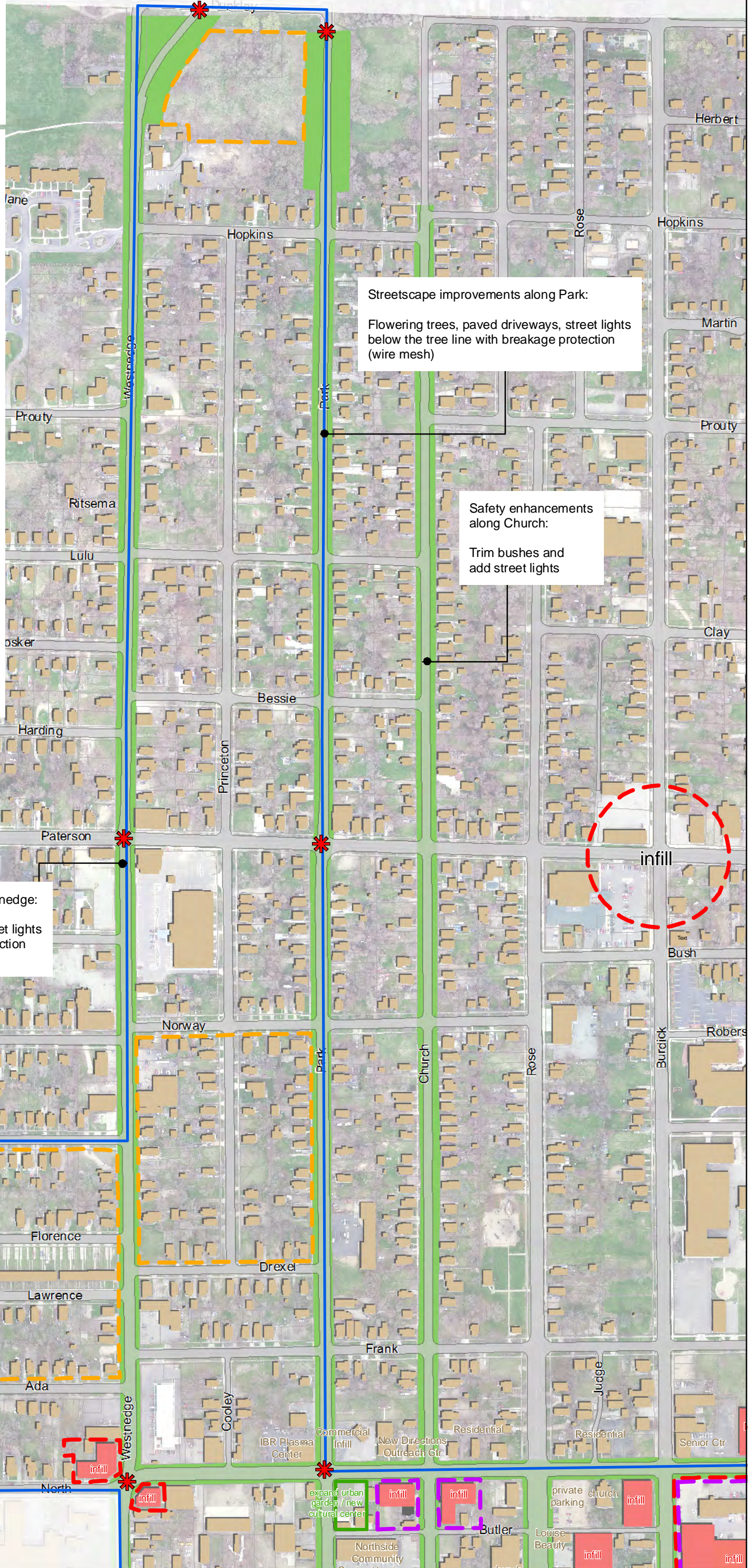
County Mental Health Facility 2009-2010



Northside Association for Community Development

Map 4
Input from Neighborhood Update Meeting
March 24, 2009

-  Gateway Enhancements
 - New housing must be at least 1200 square feet per dwelling unit
-  Focus Area
-  Existing Building Footprints
-  Conceptual Mixed-Use Building Footprints
-  Mixed-use Redevelopment Area
 - Would consist primarily of goods and services establishments, but also may contain a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses
 - Dry cleaners
 - Movie theater
 - Salon or barber
 - Bookstore
 - Copy/fax/internet services
 - Restaurants
 - Auto service station
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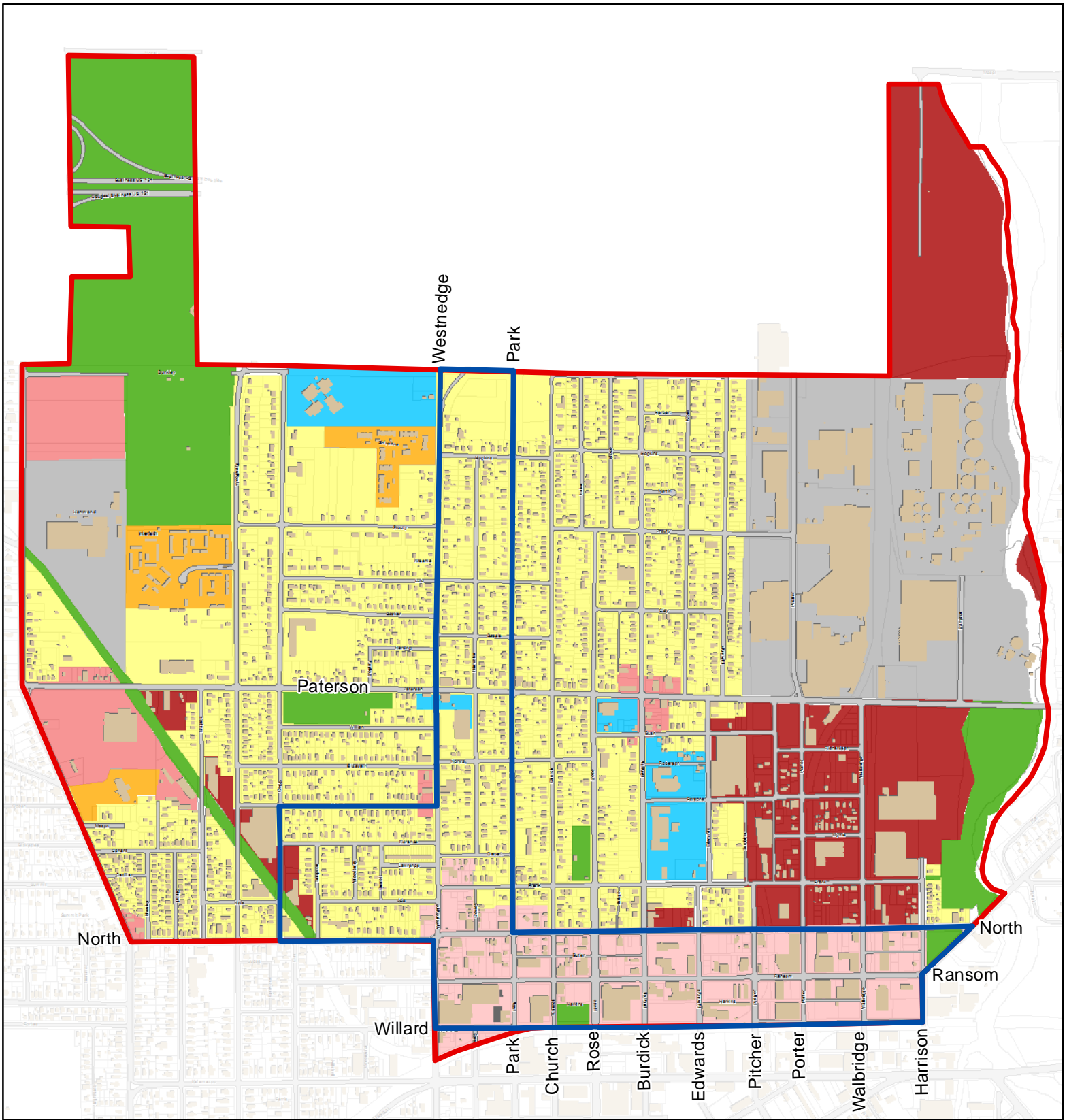


Streetscape improvements along Park:
Flowering trees, paved driveways, street lights below the tree line with breakage protection (wire mesh)

Safety enhancements along Church:
Trim bushes and add street lights

Streetscape improvements along Westledge:
Flowering trees, paved driveways, street lights below the tree line with breakage protection (wire mesh)

infill



Northside Association for
Community Development

Map 5
Future Land Use

Legend

- Focus Area
- Northside Neighborhood Boundary
- Building Footprints
- Single Family
- Multiple Family
- Mainstreet Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Parks



**Commercial District /
Northside Main St**

Neighborhoods with distinctive character, attractive streetscapes, and inviting gathering places within walkable proximity to a variety of retail establishments, personal services and cultural opportunities have an enhanced quality. When residential land uses are added to the mix, the neighborhood becomes livelier and even more livable. One key element of this plan is to encourage the redevelopment of the commercial district. The essential purpose is to proactively attract businesses and to facilitate the redevelopment of this area. Chapter 3 discusses commercial district revitalization.

As a result of NACD's efforts to revitalize the neighborhood, build upon previous successes and ongoing efforts, and to respond to resident input, a goal statement have been crafted. The goal is supported by specific objectives that, together with the goal, form the policy framework of this element of the plan. The goal is meant to portray a desired end, or the preferred condition of the Northside within the next ten years or so. It is intentionally general and is believed to be attainable through concerted effort. The objective statements are meant as more detailed milestones in the journey to achieve the larger goal. Other elements of this plan are also supported with goals and objectives.

Commercial District / Northside Main St Goal

The Northside will be a growing, redeveloping, vibrant neighborhood with viable businesses and industries that offer meaningful employment and foster a sustainable and high-quality community identity. The Northside will include a distinctive and well-defined neighborhood Main Street that acts as a regional destination with an attractive streetscape that serves the needs of residents and visitors as a hub of social and retailing activity.

Objectives:

1. Prepare and implement viable plans for mixed-use redevelopments in the neighborhood core by becoming a Michigan Main Street community; evaluating and promoting new economic development tools to retain and attract investment; and exploring alternative approaches to expand business attraction and retention efforts
2. Beautify the streetscape of key corridors, including sidewalk improvements, sidewalk lighting, street trees and other landscaping, pedestrian furniture, etc
3. Collaborate with the businesses, institutions and colleges desired for the area
4. Expand the Urban Farmer's Initiative
5. Create and annually re-evaluate a detailed marketing strategy on available property
6. Establish a program to create and promote a unique brand for the neighborhood, including signage and a sense of entry

The intent of this plan is to rejuvenate the community to provide a higher quality of life that offers "originality, options and opportunities" for the Northside's residents. Achieving this goal and the accompanying objectives will support that mission.

Following are some specific action steps that NACD should explore in working to revitalize the business corridor on the Northside.

Become a Michigan Main Street Community

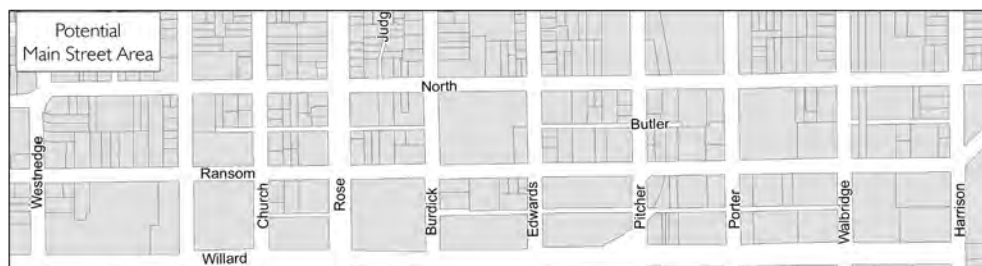
The Michigan Main Street (MMS) program provides technical support to communities who are targeting revitalization and preservation of their traditional commercial districts. The program began in 2003 and is affiliated with MSHDA, the National Main Street Center and the State Historic Preservation Office. MMS can assist NACD in establishing a local Main Street program; the potential benefits of establishing a program include:

- Create visually appealing and viable buildings
- Increase investment
- Preserve historic architectural resources
- Improve community image
- Program is tailored to specific community needs
- Attract new businesses
- Create new jobs
- Strengthen tax base

Clearly, the purpose of the MMS program is far-reaching and can influence redevelopment on the Northside. MMS uses a 4-Point Approach in an effort to assure community involvement, comprehensive planning, economic development and historic preservation. The four “points” include:

• Design	rehabilitation of historic structures, appropriate new construction, design management systems, and long-term planning ...
• Economic Restructuring	convert unused space into productive property and diversify business base ...
• Promotion	advertising, retail activities, special events, and marketing campaigns to foster investment and activity ...
• Organization	governing board and standing committees are volunteer-based, build consensus and divide responsibilities ...

This plan suggests NACD seek to form a local Main Street district on the Northside, roughly for the area delineated below. MMS staff provides services to communities at three different levels, which can be advantageous to achieving the goals throughout this plan. Each level is designed to assist in tackling increasingly more sophisticated revitalization efforts. Each level is based on the number of years a community has invested and includes services as well as “commitments.” For example, for the initial year or two, Kalamazoo’s Northside would be considered an Associate community; for the next five years, a Selected community; and after that, a Master community. The services and commitments offered and required are summarized more fully in appendix item #1.



MMS does not charge fees, but the process required by MMS will demand dollars. For example, Associate communities pay travel costs associated with required training sessions in Lansing. In addition, Selected communities must hire a full-time Main Street manager; and the community must fund the position and pay to run the program. Thirteen local MMS districts exist in Michigan today, including Muskegon, Niles, Grand Haven, Iron Mountain, Marshall, Boyne City, Old Town (Lansing), Clare, Howell, Calumet, Scottville, Manistee and Portland. Muskegon and Old Town (Lansing) are examples of funding the MMS program through grants and fundraisers.

MMS has specific eligibility requirements and application procedures that must be followed. To be eligible for a local Main Street designation, the proposed “district” must:

- Include a predominance of zero-lot line development. While all buildings within the district are not required to be constructed to the lot line, buildings within the district must be encouraged to be located on the front property line; and zoning must allow it.
- Have been planned and zoned for a minimum of 50 years.
- Include a certain level of historic buildings. Even though there is no predefined specific standard for how many buildings must be historic, MMS does require that a “certain” level of historic structures be observably present.
- Include a minimum of 20 parcels.

The business core of the Northside would apparently meet these prerequisites. MMS’ application process begins every January with a workshop that explains the requirements and processes more fully. The City of Kalamazoo would need to endorse NACD’s MMS application. This plan encourages NACD to work toward establishing a local Main Street designation on the Northside.

Engage in Redevelopment Planning

For the past 20 years, NACD has been a leader in facilitating real physical change on the Northside, and the market has generally followed. For example, after successfully overseeing the grocery store development, several adjacent private spin-off developments followed, as discussed later in the plan. Development proposals currently underway include the Gospel Mission redevelopment, a shelter for homeless veterans, and a Kalamazoo County mental health facility. These proposals will reuse properties and buildings and will begin to infuse the neighborhood core with more activity and the people involved will need restaurants, services and other support establishments.

Facilitating further redevelopment can begin with collaborating with the businesses and institutions that are being sought after; and collaborating with the incoming establishments to determine what services would benefit their employees. It will be important to create a marketing strategy on available property that chronicles the high level of pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood, NACD’s success stories, and various details on available properties. Conducting a market study will also help determine what type of businesses the neighborhood can support.

There may be opportunities for technical and grant assistance in connection with the redevelopment of the neighborhood core. For example, the Economic Development Administration manages several Economic Development Assistance programs, where NACD would be an eligible entity that can apply for assistance in working to accelerate new business development. This option should be explored.

Michigan New Jobs Training Program

In keeping with expanding existing job training programs and providing jobs to neighborhood residents, NACD should explore the Michigan New Jobs Training Program in partnership with Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) and employers on the Northside and beyond.

The program allows employers, who are seeking to hire new employees, to work with a community college to identify training costs for new employees. The community college then engages in employee training and is responsible for assuring that the employer's training needs are being met.

The program provides a flexible funding mechanism that allows the employer to avoid paying for training of new staff. The community college would pay for new employee training, and the taxes normally paid by the employer on the employee's wages would be diverted to repay the community college. This economic development incentive should be promoted and discussions between employers and KVCC should be facilitated.

Housing

Chapter 5 of the plan lists goals and objectives pertaining to housing, neighborhood safety, and resident participation in the neighborhood revitalization process. This plan supports diverse, mixed-income communities comprised of housing stock that accommodates the needs of all abilities and lifestyles. This plan recognizes that improved actual and perceived safety, participation and sense of community can have an impact on the quality of life and the quality of the community.

The Northside is currently home to the largest concentration of social service organizations in Kalamazoo County. This includes large, sprawling complexes such as Interfaith Homes, Gladshire, and Northwinds. While these complexes have historically met a regional need, this plan does not support additional similar developments on the Northside.

Additionally, this plan encourages the development of market-rate, single-family dwellings, a minimum of 1,200 square feet in floor area; that are designed consistently with the majority of homes on the block. The construction of homes that are smaller than existing homes on the same block, which do not match the architectural characteristics of existing homes, is explicitly discouraged.

Housing Goal

The Northside will be safe, clean and attractive; offering a variety of quality housing options.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen existing capacity to advocate for local needs
2. Construct market-rate, single-family housing with a minimum of 1,200 square feet of floor area that is harmonious with existing dwellings on the block
3. Petition the City for safety-related streetscape improvements, including sidewalk and street repair, where needed
4. Partner with appropriate agencies to develop and implement a program, or work to expand current programs, to repair and renovate blighted or unsafe properties and to remove those that are beyond renovation
5. Encourage new development that offers a broad range of housing choices formed in walkable patterns with distinctive, quality gathering spaces to promote neighbor interaction
6. Work with City to improve routine rental unit inspection

Public Safety Goal

Through increased public involvement, informed citizens, inter-agency cooperation, and increased public safety staff at the neighborhood level, Northside residents and businesses will enjoy an enhanced and comfortable level of public safety.

Objectives:

1. Investigate methods to shorten response times and to increase responses to complaints
2. Increase resident participation in the public safety process
3. Communicate regularly with public safety staff
4. Expand neighborhood patrolling and crime prevention programs

Resident Participation Goal

Current and future residents of the Northside will trust, understand and seek to participate in the community redevelopment process. Access to services will be convenient, flexible, responsive and streamlined to meet the needs of all segments of the community.

Objectives:

1. Attract and nurture talented, diverse and open-minded volunteers
2. Provide facilities and space for others to offer common or desired services within the neighborhood, such as tax return preparation, home ownership consultation, job training, etc
3. Establish programs to utilize electronic, face-to-face and other media to strengthen community awareness and involvement



These examples illustrate the type of new housing that may be desired on the Northside. The photographs depict new housing that complements architectural details of existing homes and contributes to a range of affordability.



Recreation and Cultural Facilities

During the planning process, residents identified a need for enhanced recreational and cultural facilities on the Northside. Planning participants recognized the breadth of existing parkland on the Northside, as shown on Map 6, and acknowledged that the Northside has one of the largest concentrations of park acreage in the City. However, several improvements to existing facilities, a multi-use recreation center, and a heritage center are desired.

Recreation Goal

Recreation facilities will meet the expectations of park users with continued improvements and enhanced amenities that are supported through inter-agency cooperation and heightened volunteerism.

Objectives:

1. Develop a multi-use recreation center
2. Establish volunteer day program for maintenance in parks
3. Improve existing facilities in neighborhood parks

Cultural Facilities Goal

The Northside will be host to a diverse range of public and private destinations for the arts that foster a quality community image and build upon the unique identity for the area. A heritage center will be developed that reflects the cultural history of the Northside.

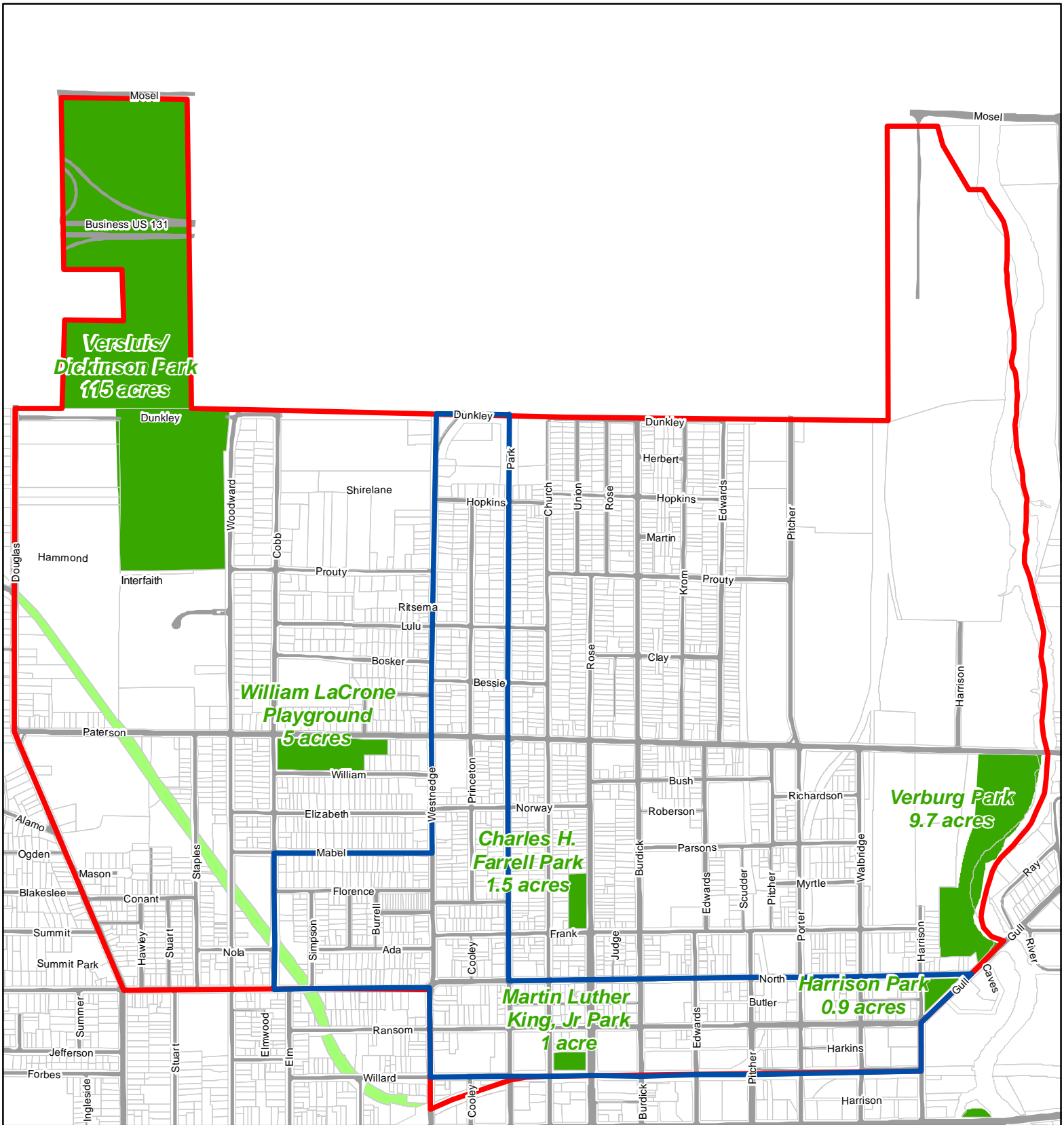
Objectives:

1. Identify cultural, historic and natural resources, and local traditions and artists
2. Work with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Heritage Tourism Program and the Share Your Heritage Workshop program in engaging these resources
3. Partner with essential local entities in creation of an arts incubator to foster leadership and capacity

Multi-use Recreation Center Development

Residents identified the development of a multi-use recreation center as a priority, as the community is underserved with facilities that promote health. The general trend in neighborhood recreation centers is away from single-purpose facilities, which cater to one single activity. A multi-use facility can include fitness equipment, with some meeting rooms or space configured to accommodate civic or educational activities. Specifically, Northside residents are interested in a multi-use center that ideally would include roller-blading and skating, fitness equipment, basketball, softball, boxing and a youth "scout" program.

In planning for the recreation center, it will be important to maximize opportunity and access while ensuring that the broadest range of needs and physical abilities have been contemplated and planned for. In addition, the facility can also double as a job training and daycare establishment. Residents indicated that existing job centers or programs, although cherished, can be expanded to benefit more youth and to broaden training activities. Moreover, a daycare component would increase the likelihood that young families can participate in job training and fitness activities, thereby helping to ensure the long-term viability of the recreation center.



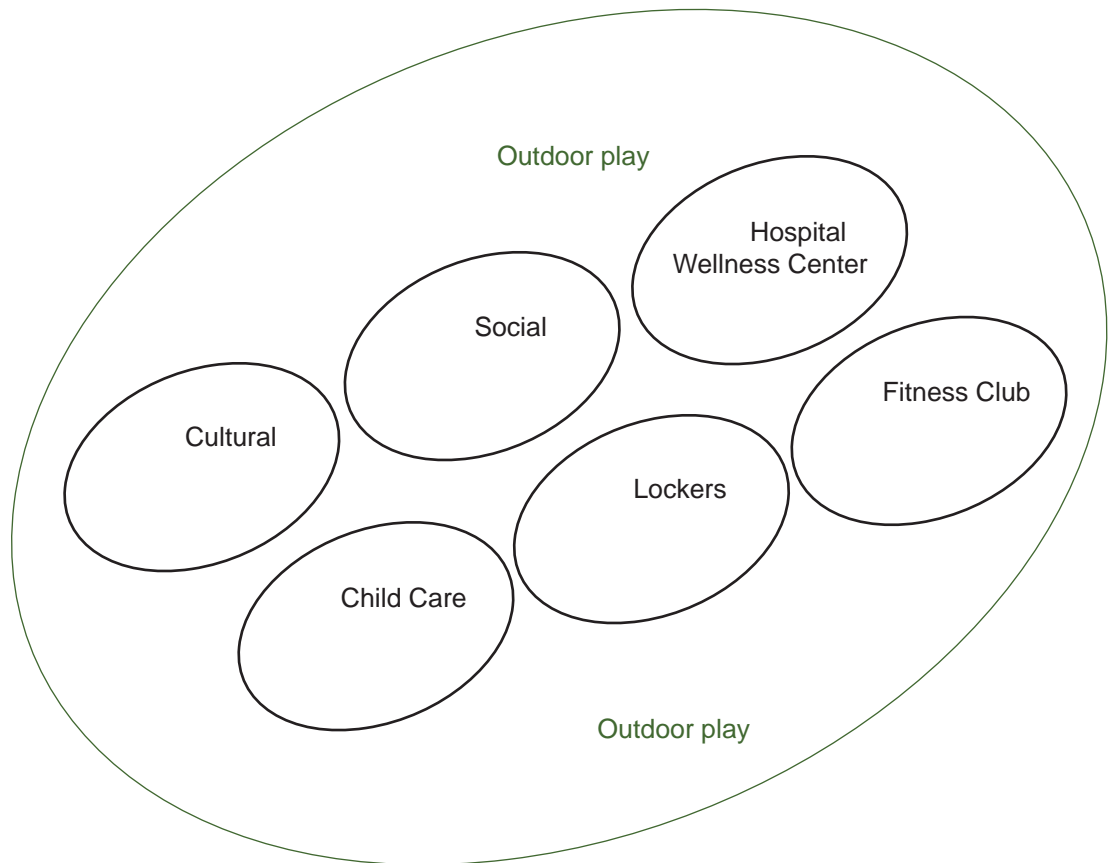
Northside Association for Community Development

Map 6
Parks

- Northside Neighborhood Boundary
- Focus Area
- Parks
- Trails



I. Recreation Facility Layout Concept



Potential Funding Sources

Most recreation buildings and programs are funded by local governments via budgeted park department funds, special tax assessments, or general obligation bonds. Clearly, NACD, as a non-profit neighborhood association rather than a government that levies taxes, will need to be more creative. Funding creativity can include a combination of the following:

- Partnering with the City, where the facility becomes a fee-supported service of the Parks and Recreation Department, which means it does not use tax money to operate and generates its own revenue from user fees and any surplus revenue pays for debt retirement.
- Partnering with a local hospital, which can provide for construction costs if allowed to locate a satellite “wellness center” in conjunction with the fitness club element.
- Corporate sponsorship and the selling of naming rights.
- Partnering with the local branches of the YMCA, YWCA, the Boys and Girls Club and the Douglas Community Association.
- Partnering with the Kalamazoo Public Schools.
- Community fundraising and donations or low-interest loans from philanthropic foundations, the County or the City.
- City CDBG monies, which can sometimes be used for recreation; and NACD should petition the City to determine if this is a viable option.

- Partnering with LISC or some other entity that has available new market tax credits through the National Equity Fund; NACD can capitalize on its non-profit status to attain grant dollars to help fund any land acquisition, demolition and reconstruction that may be needed.
- The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which can provide financial assistance to the City to assist in the development of land for public outdoor recreation. Land Acquisition Grants may also be attainable for land acquisition and passive or active recreational projects.
- Commercial loans.
- The Hasbro Children’s Foundation, which is known to support social services, health education programs and playground refurbishment or construction.

What is the process?

NACD will need a management plan that reflects priorities and operational alternatives; a marketing scheme to solicit membership; policies for energy efficiency and low maintenance facilities; and a framework for flexible, adaptable and multi-functional floor plans. In addition, the recreation center should be connected to the community and youth should play a major role in its development. Youth need safe and successful places to gather and be themselves; and they need permanent employment skill training. Youth need responsibility, and the authority to govern part of the decision-making process to embrace that responsibility. Following are several steps to developing a successful recreation center.

Identify the service area

A critical initial step is to determine the scope of the project and to identify the physical area targeted for use of the recreation center. This provides a geographic framework for data gathering and is necessary to determine the size and function of the facility. Part of this process will involve evaluating existing similar facilities nearby and whether those facilities are accessible to Northside residents.

Conduct an audit of existing facilities and programs

The second step should be analyzing the location, capacity and condition of existing similar services. For facilities, NACD should collect a floor plan of the buildings; utilization pattern by season and day; capacities in terms of power, equipment, and furniture; and transport linkages and connections. For programs that are not specific to any one facility, information to be gathered includes location(s), nature of the program, and various participant data including fees and the level of patronage.

Gather participation data

Various demographic data should be collected to determine the character of those families and individuals who the facility would be marketed to. This information can align the effort to develop a recreation center with the people in the neighborhood. Since new Census information will be published in 2010, it is suggested this step be delayed until then.

However, this phase should also include surveying potential users – the neighborhood or a broader group – to define which recreational services are most sought. Generally, exercise tends to be the number one use of a recreational facility; fitness areas are the top generator of income. Aerobics or dance programs are second; and gymnasiums are third.

Justify the need

NACD can justify the need for a neighborhood recreation center if it can determine, without limitation, that:

- A gap exists in recreational services on the Northside
- Existing facilities within the region do not meet needs of Northside residents
- A profile of the Northside reveals it is well-matched to the make-up of the proposed facility

Conduct stakeholder consultation

A communications tactic should be developed and implemented to engage the community and stakeholders to provide critical information as to the likely use of the facility. Stakeholders can help prepare the concept designs and cost estimates and funding sources.

Streetscape Enhancements

The focus area includes newly redeveloped commercial areas; industrial properties; residential uses; and institutional land uses. The predominant land use near the southern end of the planning area, or the core, is light industrial with scattered commercial, and some properties are vacant. While industry can generate tax base, some of the existing industrial buildings are deteriorating and some operations are not effectively screened. Moreover, several structures in the planning area appear boarded up or highly protected by security devices, telling visitors that the area may be dangerous. Based on resident input and on previous planning efforts, this plan encourages the beautification of key corridors, as follows.

Establish “Gateways” at Key Intersections

The Northside is the gateway into Kalamazoo from the north; and as such, it deserves a stunning entry experience. This plan generally supports the gateway drawings prepared by O’Boyle, Cowell Blalock & Associates (OCBA) for the City of Kalamazoo in November 2006. Moreover, the resident participants in the public input process identified additional gateway areas that should be upgraded, as shown on Map 3 and Map 4. The design principals explored in OCBA’s renderings can be applied throughout the planning area:

2. Gateway Signage

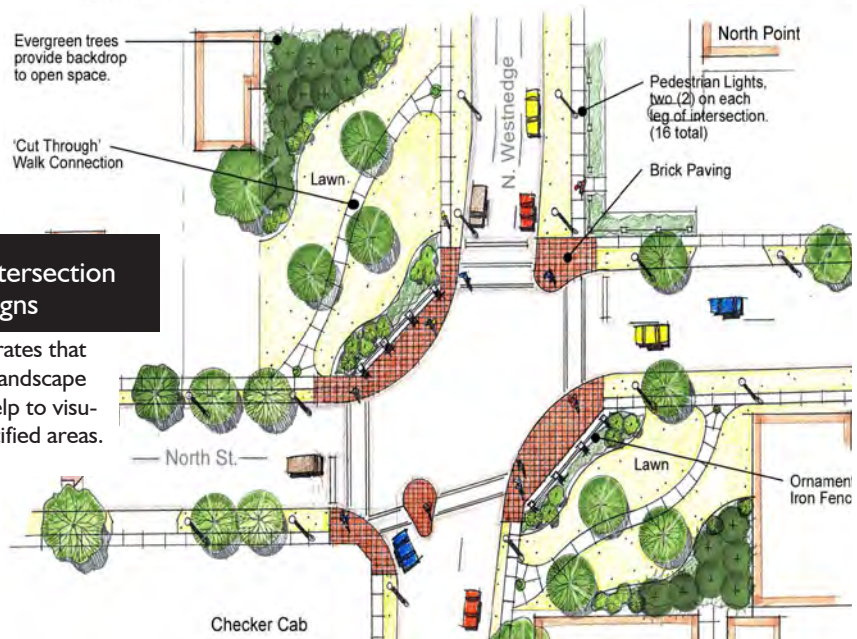
This graphic illustrates a potential gateway design at the Westnedge intersection with Dunkley.



Sign Elevation

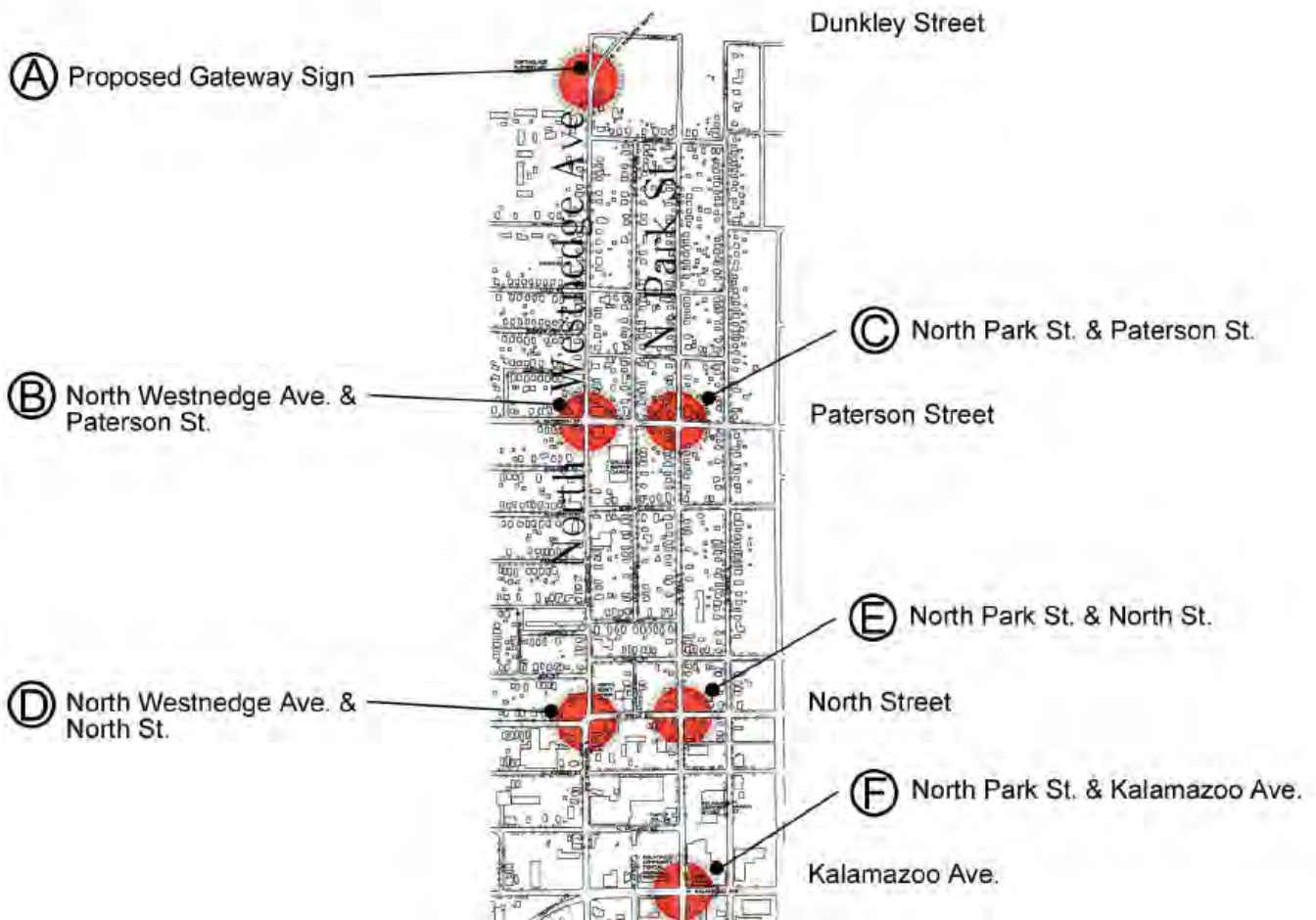
3. Major Intersection Designs

This graphic illustrates that brick pavers and landscape treatments can help to visually improve identified areas.



4. Intersection Locations

The image below, created by OCBA, depicts the locations where improvements are recommended. These areas generally coincide with the gateway areas identified in Map 3 and Map 4, although Maps 3 and 4 identify additional areas where gateways and intersections can be improved.



Enhance Key Corridors

The public identified Westnedge Avenue, Park Street, Church Street, North Street and Ransom Street as the most visible corridors, and the most in need, of visual and physical enhancement. The public realm of these corridors – consisting of the public road right-of-way – can be improved to enhance safety and aesthetics. For example, residents indicated that segments of sidewalk needed to be repaired and repaved to help ensure pedestrian safety; and that powerful landscaping and beautification schemes are needed to improve the look and feel of the overall community. Specifically, the plan to enhance streetscapes within the planning area includes the following.

- Benches, bicycle racks, comfortable bus stops with weather protection, and garbage containers can be used to humanize the streets.
- Segments of unsafe sidewalk can be repaired to encourage pedestrian movement, and brick pavers can be used in certain locations to complement older, more ornate buildings and add to the unique character of the neighborhood.
- Consistent with the OCBA intersection drawings, bulb-outs can be used to augment pedestrian safety by slowing motorized traffic, reducing pedestrian crossing distance, and improving visibility of pedestrians.
- Clearly delineated crosswalks can complete the pedestrian network on the Northside by designated space within the streets for people to use.
- Residents stated that lighting needs to illuminate the sidewalk, where people are, and that fixtures must be protected from vandalism via screen mesh or other means while being decorative.
- A planting program can be implemented to add flowering plants in visible locations to lend an appearance of pride and ownership. The current proposal to partner with Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) in the installation of raised flower beds can be refined and implemented. Garden areas are also desired in vacant lots.
- Street trees can also improve appearance; provide shade; and separate pedestrians on the sidewalk from moving motor vehicles in the roadway.
- While these improvements are underway, the Northside can build upon its current identity in establishing a program to create and promote a “brand” for the neighborhood. This can be realized through signage, banners, consistent planting schemes, repetitive lighting fixtures, and/or certain new businesses.
- Residents also identified several segments of roadway that were in dire need of street and curb replacement and repair, because of excessive potholes or a general crumbling appearance.

It is also notable that the City of Kalamazoo’s Brownfield Redevelopment Authority has begun engineering and design work for streetscape improvements and roadway geometrics for a portion of the Riverfront Redevelopment area near Harrison Street and Gull Street along the east boundary of the focus area. The purpose of this effort is to establish a unique sense of place for this area that is premised on sustainability, walkability, and innovative design techniques, such as road roundabouts. The triangular Harrison Park is included within the scope of this project. It will be important for NACD to be involved with this project to ensure that efforts are not duplicated, and where desired and appropriate, that efforts are coordinated, for the overlapping boundary.

Fund the Streetscape Beautification

- The Michigan Main Street (MMS) program, discussed later in the plan, offers design services to property owners within Selected communities. The MMS architect will complete up to fifteen designs in any Main Street community.
- The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Enhancement Program provides grants for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and improvements to existing facilities; and landscaping and other beautification within public rights-of-way. Generally, a minimum match of 20% is required and the City of Kalamazoo would need to apply for the grant on behalf of NACD. However, Westnedge Avenue and Park Street are state roads and as such, MDOT can allocate money for enhancement of these corridors. This grant program can fund street trees; planters; decorative light poles; decorative paving; and design elements that increase pedestrian safety, such as the bulb-outs recommended in several of OCBA's drawings.

MDOT funds had been designated for Westnedge Avenue sidewalk safety improvements at some point in the past, but the monies were used elsewhere for a variety of reasons. NACD should investigate whether this money is still available, or petition the City to apply for new Enhancement funds.

- Kalamazoo's Neighborhood Development Division administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The funds can help to pay for street improvements, including resurfacing, and also landscaping enhancements within the right-of-way.
- NACD can work with the Community Forestry Grant program to plant additional trees along key corridors. The program provides technical assistance to entities that wish to plant and maintain street trees. Grants of up to \$20,000 may be awarded by the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. NACD can apply for this grant to help "green" certain street segments.
- Bikes Belong Coalition (BBC) grants may be available for bicycle facility development and education-related projects. BBC's mission is to assist in increasing the number of people who regularly use bicycles as alternative transportation, and to promote safe, "complete" streets, or streets that are designed for equal use among motorists and bicyclists. OCBA's concept drawings include bike lanes along Westnedge Avenue and Park Street, as shown below.

5. Bike Lane Image



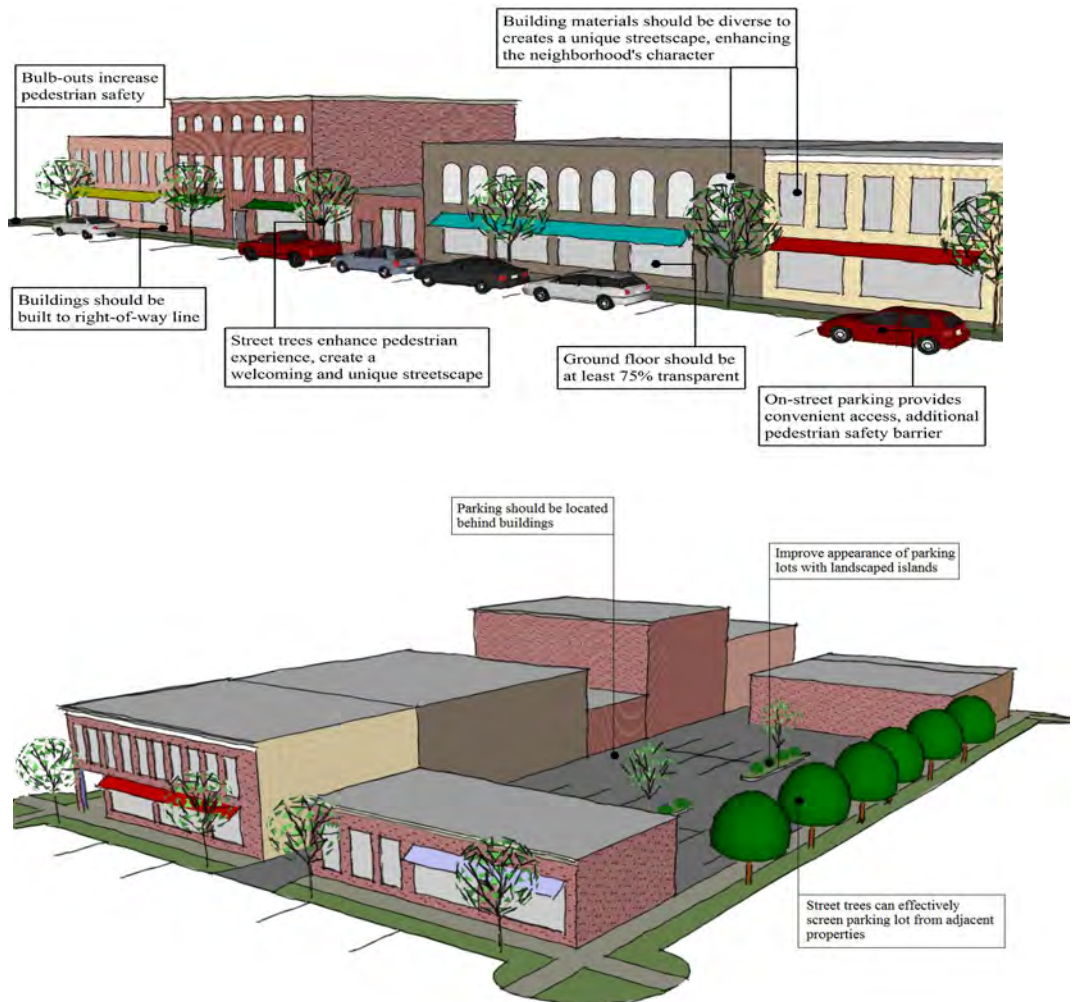
- Tax increment financing is another potential funding mechanism that, if sought after, will require collaboration among a variety of affected entities, including property owners, the City, the County and other taxing jurisdictions levying taxes within a specified area. Tax increment financing could be implemented via a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). A CIA can capture tax increment dollars and use the capital to physically improve a specified area that is generally identified as an aged commercial corridor that has experienced considerable disinvestment. Michigan Public Act 280 of 2005, as amended, sets forth the process to create a CIA and the eligible improvement activities.

Promote Design Guidelines

To enhance the streetscape of the core area and to foster a bustling neighborhood center, immediately adjacent to downtown Kalamazoo, design guidelines should be encouraged. These guidelines can be incorporated into the City’s Master Plan and memorialized into the City’s Zoning Ordinance.

Some existing sites have a suburban appearance, with parking lots in the front yard and buildings set far back from the sidewalk. This communicates that portions of the Northside are meant for automobiles – not people. Some of the older, more historic portions of the core display the characteristics of a people-centered community, with large windows overlooking the sidewalk, buildings built to or near the right-of-way line, high-quality building materials with unique attention to detail, and primary entrances opening up to the sidewalk. These attributes should be promoted and new development should be consistent with this pattern.

6. Design Guidelines





Planning History and Success Stories

Previous Plans

When planning for the future, it is appropriate to review the existing planning documents for benchmarking purposes. Reviewing existing plans helps to measure success and to determine whether expressed current policies reflect the most recent concerns and issues.

Since 1995, Northside residents have attended many Town Hall Meetings to share opinions about the needs and desires of the community. NACD has facilitated planning meetings in 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2008. Needs and desires have included the following development projects and land uses:

- A neighborhood grocery store, water playground, internet and copy shop, urban produce garden, bowling alley, skating rink, an automobile service station, and a laundromat/dry cleaner establishment
- Installation of street lighting along certain segments of roadway

Many other projects have been identified by residents, most of which relate to improving the look and cleanliness of the neighborhood and job creation; and these goals have been chronicled in documents such as the 2005 Neighborhood Strategy planning document. The strategy document included many objectives. The objectives were listings of land uses or programs that should be developed in no more than a 5-year period. The objectives include the creation of:

- A Roof and Furnace Program
- An Employment Training Program
- A Housing Rehab Services Program
- An Urban Garden Program
- Home Heating Assistance
- Property Purchase and Cleanup
- Social Gathering Events

Felpausch



Northside Community Center



Northside Urban Garden



Response to Resident Needs

The NACD has accomplished many of the objectives listed in that 2005 strategy document, and there are earlier success stories, as well. In response to resident needs, NACD developed a 3-tiered phasing plan, including:

- Phase 1. Northside Grocery Store
- Phase 2. Northside Community Center
- Phase 3. Northside Urban Garden

Phase 1. Northside Grocery Store

The opening of North Park Street Plaza in 2003 was the rewarding culmination of 10 years of effort. Residents had been vocal about the need for more retail opportunities for about 20 years, and with the assistance of various public and private entities and individuals, the NACD coordinated the development of the North Park Street Plaza. The 29,000-square foot building includes a beauty supply store, a substance abuse counseling center, and a sickle cell anemia office, with a Felpausch grocery store as the anchor. This development resulted in the demolition and cleanup of abandoned industrial buildings and the creation of 30 jobs, 18 of which went to low-income individuals.

Phase 2. Northside Community Center

Another important achievement for the Northside was realized in 2004, with the construction of a 9,600-square foot building that provides space for the NACD offices, a community room, a child care center and senior care center, and a commercial kitchen. Eight jobs were created as part of this undertaking. Spin-off private development resulted across from the grocery store and Northside Community Center, as well, including a new Family Dollar and Little Caesar's in 2005 and 2006.

Phase 3. Northside Urban Garden

A gardening program was established in 2007 to instruct Northside residents on growing fruits and vegetables. This development involved the conversion of a dilapidated structure to an outdoor garden space; and a second structure was rehabilitated to house youth activities and to help cultivate a variety of edible fruits and vegetables.



A private spinoff development



Spray park



Super station

Spray Park

A water playground opened near the intersection of Florence Street and Burrell Street in the summer of 2008. The recreational facility's \$200,000 cost was funded by numerous private donors, businesses, local foundations, the NACD, and the Downtown Kiwanis Club. The City of Kalamazoo donated the two vacant lots on which the park is located. The park is designed to accommodate 40 children between the ages of 5 and 12, and includes unique spray fixtures that will entertain children and help keep them cool during blistering summer months. Spray fixtures are on timers so that the park is automatically operational daily from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM, except the sprayers turn off when movement is not detected for a period of time. NACD and the Downtown Kiwanis Club fund maintenance and operating expenses estimated at \$10,000 annually.

Acquisition and Demolition

In 2008, NACD purchased several residential properties that have been considered eyesores, near the corner of North Street and Church Street. Several homes were demolished and cleared, to make way for a new development. This activity directly correlates with resident desires to establish a property purchase program.

Other Accomplishments

The same year the spray park opened, a new City of Kalamazoo public safety super station was constructed at the corner of Ransom Street and Park Street. This development resulted in cleanup of another eyesore property and brings necessary public safety services closer to Northside residents. NACD has also established a home heating assistance program and facilitates annual Halloween and Christmas parties, and various informational meetings for residents. Finally, additional street lighting was installed along Church Street to increase visibility and safety.

Summary of Conditions

The purpose of this section of the plan is to provide a brief overview of demographic composition and a summary of housing and other trends within the planning area. The data shown on the following pages reflects 2000 United States Census data for the Northside neighborhood. The data encompasses Census Tracts 2.02 and 3, Kalamazoo County, Michigan. These block groups generally parallel the boundaries of the Northside neighborhood.

Community Characteristics

The Northside is home to 5,776 people, and is thus approximately 7% of the City of Kalamazoo’s total population of 77,092.

A plurality of Northside residents, or about 80%, is African American. Over one-quarter of the city’s African American population resides on the Northside. While this will not influence land use and redevelopment in the community, it does reflect the cherished diversity in the broader city.

7. Northside Racial Composition

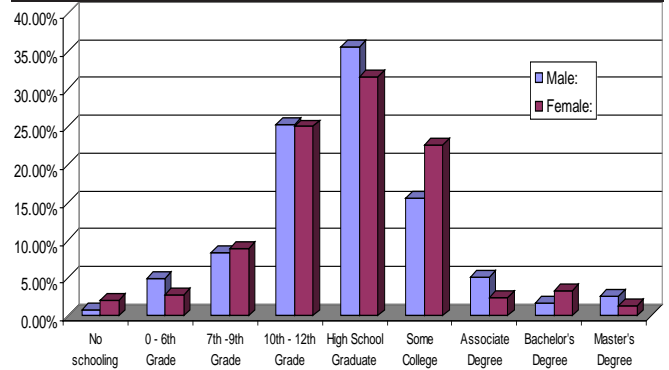
<u>Black or African American alone</u>	<u>80.92%</u>
<u>White or Caucasian alone</u>	<u>6.23%</u>
<u>Two or more races</u>	<u>5.49%</u>
<u>Hispanic or Latino</u>	<u>4.17%</u>
<u>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</u>	<u>0.31%</u>
<u>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
<u>Some other race alone</u>	<u>2.29%</u>

The median household income for Northside residents and the City of Kalamazoo are \$21,999 and \$31,189, respectively. The median family income is \$21,972 for the Northside and \$42,438 for the city.

Thirty-eight percent of Northside households include children under 18 years old; 21% have children under 6 years old. These figures are similar for the city overall. The average household size is 2.955 persons per household on the Northside, and 2.31 persons for the city overall.

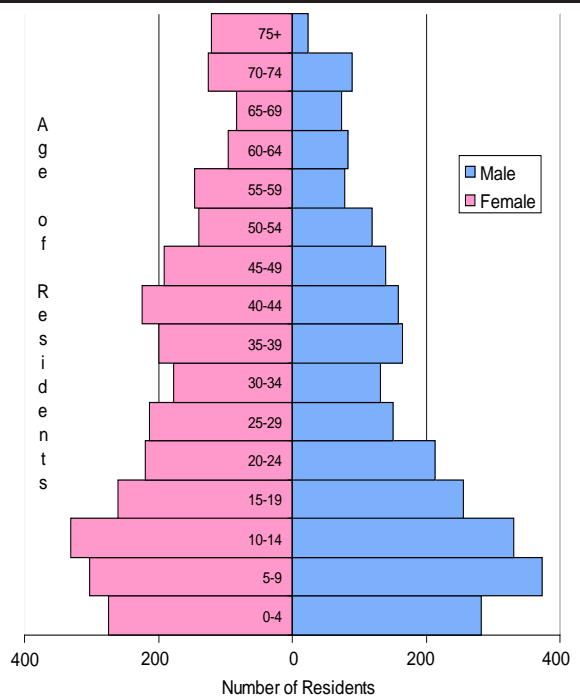
Approximately 60% of Northside residents 25 years or older are high school graduates; 27% of residents have completed some college; and over 8% has received an Associate’s degree.

8. Northside Educational Attainment



The median age for a City of Kalamazoo resident is 26.2 years; while the median age for the United States as a whole is 36.4. The relatively young population in the city likely reflects the higher learning institutions in the community, such as Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University. For the Northside, the median age of residents is 26.5 years, similar to the City overall.

9. Northside Age by Gender



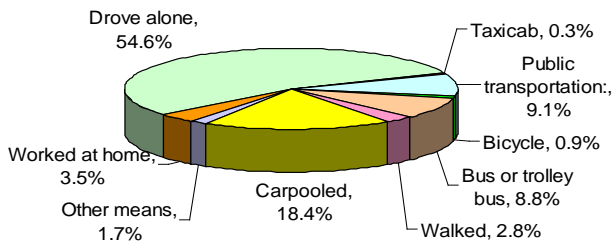
Traffic Counts and Commuting Patterns

The table shows falling traffic counts between 2003 and 2007 along both Park Street and Westnedge Avenue, known as M-331 to MDOT. The loss in vehicles per day is minor and may be reflective of population decline in the City of Kalamazoo since all major thoroughfares have experienced a drop in the number of daily vehicles, according to MDOT.

10. Traffic Counts for M-331 (average vehicles per day)				
	Park Street		Westnedge Avenue	
	South of Paterson	North of Paterson	South of Paterson	North of Paterson
2007	8300	4500	8300	4400
2006	8400	4500	8300	4400
2005	8900	4600	8800	4600
2004	9000	4700	8800	5100
2003	8900	4600	8800	5100

For example, W. North Street between N. Church Street and N. Rose Street experienced 6,634 vehicles per day in 2000, but only 4,046 vehicles per day in 2008, a 39% decline. W. Patterson Street between N. Church Street and N. Rose Street experienced 8,880 vehicles per day in 2006, but only 7,473 vehicles per day in 2008, a 16% decline. However, Harrison Street between E. Harkins Court and Gull Road experienced a 30% increase in traffic counts: 5,018 vehicles per day in 2003, and 7,145 vehicles per day in 2008.

11. Travel Means to Work



Approximately 55% of Northside residents over the age of 16 drove to work alone, compared to 74% of Kalamazoo residents overall. Alternative means of transportation appear to be abundant on the Northside, with almost 18% of residents indicating the use of alternative public transit or buses to travel to work. Comparatively, only 2.8% of the City overall reports utilizing public transit to travel to work. While the Northside is largely auto-dependent, alternative means are available to residents of the neighborhood.

Housing

At the 2000 Census, the rate of homeownership in the neighborhood was similar to that of the city overall, as table 6 indicates. Table 7, however, indicates that housing vacancy was 5 percentage points higher in the Northside than in the broader city. This may be a result of the weakening housing and renter markets, or may be an indicator of neighborhood instability.

12. Housing Stability

	Owner-Occupied	Renter Occupied
Northside	46.71%	53.29%
Kalamazoo	47.81%	52.19%

13. Housing Vacancy

	Occupied	Vacant
Northside	87.17%	12.83%
Kalamazoo	92.54%	7.46%

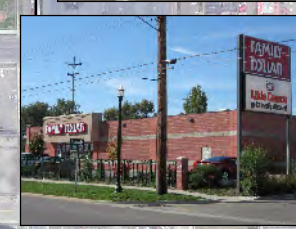
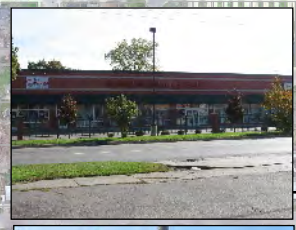
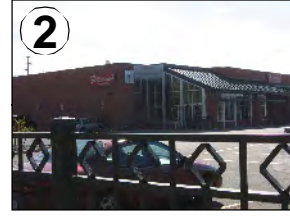
A total of 2,299 dwelling units exist on the Northside, 64% of which are detached, single-family homes. About 11% of Northside dwellings are 2-unit structures; 14% are 3- or 4-unit structures; and 6% of dwellings are located in buildings with 5 or more units. The median year that Northside housing structures were built was 1945; with 38% of structures built before 1939. The median year that housing structures were built in the entire city is 1956, illustrating that the Northside housing stock is 10 years older than that of the city on average.

Map 7 depicts the Northside via use of pictures; and Map 8 illustrates the various zoning districts that currently determine land use and development patterns on the Northside.

Northside Association for Community Development Map 7. Neighborhood Conditions



Williams & Works



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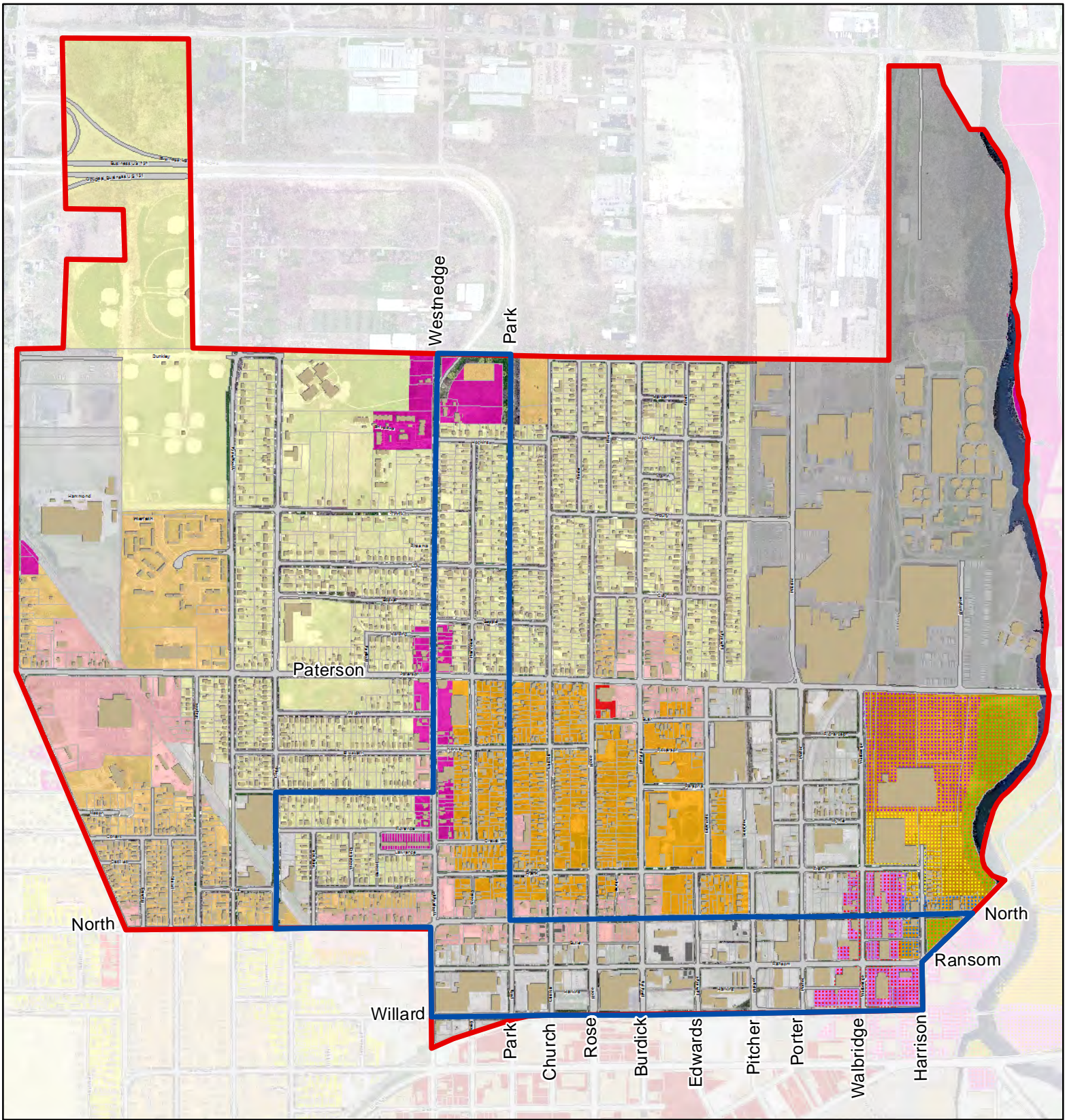
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Northside Association for Community Development



Map 8
Existing Zoning
October 2008

Legend

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Focus Area | CC - Commercial, Community | Riverfront Zoning Sub Areas |
| Northside Neighborhood Boundary | CO - Commercial, Office | Northwest Manufacturing/Residential |
| Zoning | CN-1 - Local Neighborhood Commercial | West Residential |
| RS-5 - Residential Single Family | CMU, Commercial, Mixed Use | West Park Mixed Use |
| RD-19 - Residential Duplex | CCBD, Commercial Central Business | Southwest Commercial |
| RM-15 - Residential Multi-Dwelling | PUD - Planned Unit Development | Park |
| RM-36 - Residential, Multi-Dwelling | M-1 - Manufacturing, Limited | Riverview Commercial |
| RMU, Residential, Mixed Use | M-2 - Manufacturing, General | |

Appendix # I

Main Street Services and Commitments

MMS staff provides services to communities at three different levels. Each level is designed to assist in tackling increasingly more sophisticated revitalization efforts. Each level is based on the number of years a community has invested and includes services as well as “commitments,” as follows:

<p>Associate – 1 to 2 Years Services available to Associate Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation Webinar • Main Street Basic Training • Organization / Promotion 101 Training • Economic Restructuring / Design 101 Training • Main Street in Practice • MMS Quarterly Trainings • MMS Listserv 	<p>Commitment by Associate Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in all Associate level services provided within two (2) years • Attendance at Basic Training required • Attendance at a minimum of two (2) trainings per year • Attendance at one (1) quarterly forum per year • Submit bi-annual reports to MMS • Must attend all training before applying for the Selected level
<p>Selected – 5 Years Services available to Selected Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MMS Orientation (L) • Reconnaissance Visit (C) • Manager Selection Assistance (C) • Board Training (C) • Manager Training (L/C) • Committee Training (C) • Main Street Building Basics - incl. Green Principles (C) • Design Services - fifteen • Work Plan Development Training (C) • Volunteer Development Training (C) • Market Study - incl. Downtown Housing & Population Recruitment Strategy (C) • Resource Team (C) • MMS Quarterly Trainings • Annual Program Evaluations (C) • Accreditation w/ the National Main Street Center • MMS Listserv • National MS Conference Registration • Resource Library Materials • MMS Road Signs • Accredited Technical Assistance Training (C) • Retail Merchandising Training (C) • Entrepreneurship Training (L) • Real Estate Development Training (L) 	<p>Commitment by Selected Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a full-time Main Street Manager who will coordinate and facilitate the work of the program • Establish and maintain an active Board of Directors and Committees using the Main Street 4-Point Approach • Participate in all trainings and services provided by the MMS program • Fund the local Main Street program through both public and private partnerships at a level allowing for the full operation of the program • Submit monthly reports to the MMS program • Submit annual reports to the MMS program • Maintain a membership with the National Main Street Center network • Meet accreditation standards set by National Main Street Center by the fifth year
<p>Master – +6 Years Services available to Master Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Training (C) • Main Street Building Basics Training (C) • Board Training (C) • MMS Quarterly Trainings • MMS Listserv • Biennial Program Evaluation (C) • Mentoring Opportunities • Eligible for Seat on MMS Advisory Committee • Accreditation w/ the National Main Street Center • Invited to attend all training opportunities in Associate and Selected communities • Manager Selection Assistance • Manager Training (C) 	<p>Commitment by Master Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of commitment required for Selected Communities • Must have successfully completed services provided to Selected Communities • Meet accreditation standards set by National Main Street Center <p style="text-align: right;">Location: (L) - in Lansing (C) - in Community</p>