



Homewood Cluster Planning: **Final Consensus Vision Plans**

November 2015

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OPERATION BETTER BLOCK, INC.

Reweaving The Fabric of Community Life

First, I would like to thank the residents and business owners of Homewood for their participation in this planning process. We have made history together by engaging 80% of the community in the planning process!!! Second, this effort would not have been possible without the funding support of the R. K. Mellon Foundation. Third, I would like to thank Studio for Spatial Practice for their willingness to try something new! Last and certainly not least, I would like to give a huge thank you and big congratulations to Operation Better Block staff for their hard work and dedication to the process and the organization.

This is a very exciting time for Homewood!! Having a land use plan that is resident driven creates endless possibilities for the community. Using data and a door-to-door engagement strategy has allowed us to create an urban planning process that can be duplicated across our region. It is the possibilities of what Homewood can be in the very near future that keeps me up at night!!

The real work has not begun. Now that we have a land use plan, let's get busy creating the Homewood you want to live in, work in, and relax in!!

This is what I truly believe:
"There Is No Development That Is For Us, That Is Not Led By Us."

Love & Respect

Jerome M. Jackson
Executive Director
Operation Better Block, Inc.

Cluster Planning Overview

Why Create Another Plan for Homewood?

Change is coming to Homewood. The goal of Homewood Cluster Planning is to guide that change in the interest of Homewood's residents. The Cluster Planning process created a detailed land use vision for Homewood's future based on the needs and desires of existing, present-day community stakeholders.

The process considered both long- and short-term land use, working with residents in one part of the neighborhood at a time. Building on neighborhood assets, a vision was crafted to define: what should happen to vacant property; what types of development are right for different parts of Homewood; where houses should be renovated, mothballed or demolished and where new ones should be built; as well as where new businesses, industrial uses or parks should be located. In this document, each individual cluster plan has been brought together into a complete, community-driven plan for the entire Homewood neighborhood.

The Cluster Planning Team

Residents, property owners and stakeholders played an integral role in driving this process. Their first-hand knowledge of the community, their desire to improve the area where they live/work/play, and their commitment to completing this plan is what truly brought this team together. This process did not resolve all questions regarding how the vision will be implemented. However, it set goals for ensuring that future development is equitable and addresses the needs of the existing community.

Operation Better Block (OBB) was incorporated in 1971 and has worked for successful Neighborhood and Community Development over the last forty years, focusing on the



Cluster Planning Map: Contrasting with past neighborhood-wide planning efforts, the Homewood Cluster Planning process more effectively engaged community members by focusing on one part of the neighborhood at a time.

Homewood-Brushton neighborhood. OBB's mission is to strategize, organize and mobilize block-by-block to benefit the Homewood community. The Cluster Planning process is a natural extension of that mission.

Studio for Spatial Practice (SfSP) is an innovative, award-winning design firm with a multi-disciplinary approach to architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and art. SfSP specializes in public realm projects that engage clients and community members in creatively envisioning changes to their environment. SfSP brings experience and local insight to the Cluster Planning process, having recently completed the *Bridging the Busway* study.

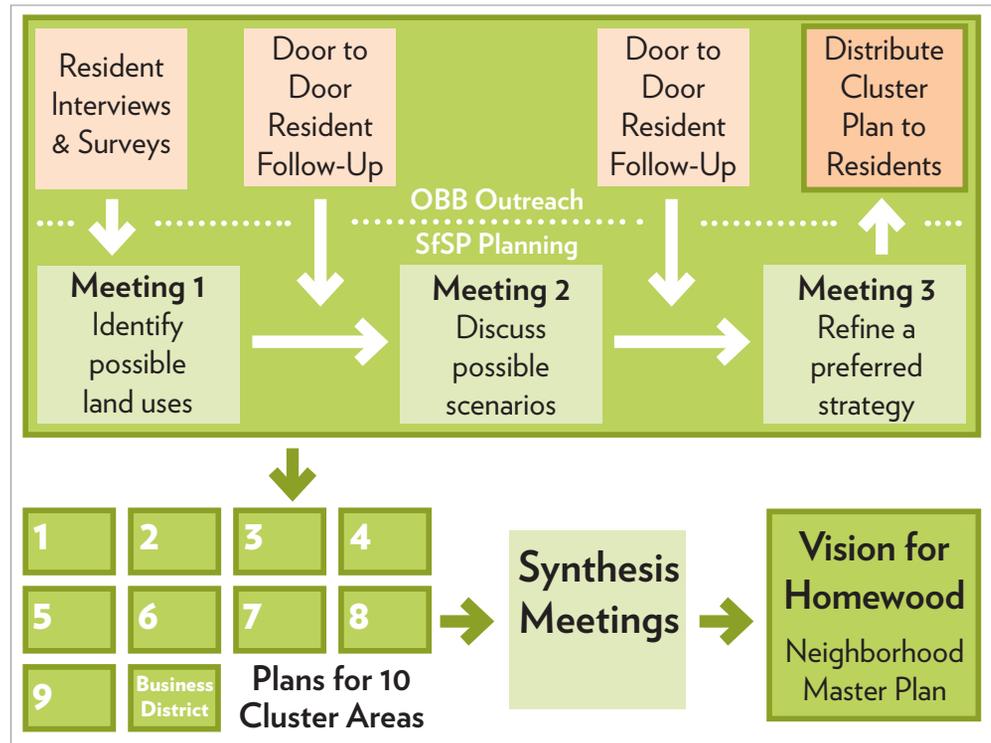
Cluster Planning Overview: Process

How the Homewood Cluster Planning Process Works

After an initial pilot study was completed for residential blocks adjacent to Pittsburgh Faison K-5 elementary school, the planning process began, in January of 2014, with an Introductory Meeting where an overview of the Homewood Cluster Planning process was presented.

As a first step in each cluster, OBB conducted field surveys to collect personal testimonies from residents and parcel-specific data for the target area. OBB shared their up-to-date information with the rest of the planning team and mailed postcards summarizing basic statistics about the cluster to every resident. The postcards were a way to share the data that had been collected and encourage participation in upcoming planning meetings.

Three cluster-specific meetings followed, where findings were presented and residents' input was solicited. OBB staff also went door to door between meetings, following up with residents to share draft planning materials and ask for feedback. Residents' comments were then incorporated into the planning work. At the third meeting, a Draft Consensus Plan was presented for review and comment.



All 10 cluster-specific Final Consensus Plans have been brought together in this report, which comprises a neighborhood-wide Master Plan for Homewood. The final Homewood Community-Driven Cluster Plan was presented and celebrated in November 2015 at the Greater Pittsburgh Coliseum. This document and the individual, cluster-specific plans are available on OBB's website at: <http://obbinc.org/cluster-planning/>

Cluster Planning Overview: Process

Community Engagement: by the Numbers

As diagrammed on the previous page, Homewood residents and stakeholders were invited to public planning meetings to offer opinions, provide information and share their hopes for each cluster.

By knocking on residents' doors, before and after meetings, OBB contacted a total of 2,227 households to engage them in discussions about planning for their cluster.

Approximately 80% of Homewood households were reached through the community engagement process.



Break-out activity held during a Cluster Planning meeting

| | |
|--|------|
| Cluster Meetings Held | 31 |
| Unique Individuals that Attended Meetings | 423 |
| Total Number of Meeting Attendees | 589 |
| Doors Knocked On | 2227 |
| Total Number of Times Knocking on Doors | 6681 |
| Meeting Invites and Meeting Minutes Mailed Out | 1671 |
| Total Mailings Sent Out | 5013 |
| Cluster Booklets Distributed | 2604 |
| Census 2010 Total Households | 2787 |

Community Development Principles

During the Cluster Planning Introductory Meeting, a set of resident-supported community development priorities was drafted to help guide the planning process.

The Community Development Principles, provided to the right, were a work in progress throughout the Cluster Planning process. As new priorities, policies, and practices were recommended, during Cluster Planning meetings, the Principles were modified to reflect the most current and up-to-date community feedback.

Three overarching categories constitute the Principles — Community, Housing and Economy — highlighting a shared vision for Homewood as a livable neighborhood that is recognized as such. Moving forward, these principles can be used to help ensure that future development balances a consideration for people and places.

Residents are concerned about future development, but they want to actively participate in creating a healthy, resilient neighborhood. They are optimistic about the future and want existing community members to positively influence neighborhood dynamics. Residents want to be connected to one another and to a wider, community-based social and economic network.

Community Development Principles [June 2014]

COMMUNITY

- Collaboration is key: take into account existing community plans and other neighborhood organizations that are doing good work
- Create relationships and partnerships within the community of Homewood
- Use the process to educate people about what makes a successful neighborhood and community

HOUSING

- People who live in Homewood get to stay here
- If there is relocation, renovate or build new first, and keep people in their community or neighborhood
- Provide a diversity of housing types for families and individuals with different needs, lifestyles and income levels

ECONOMY

- Residents should benefit from jobs resulting from neighborhood revitalization: jobs that are created should be sustainable and not temporary
- Help local business owners sustain and expand their businesses
- Support neighborhood retail by buying local from community-run businesses
- Leverage Urban Industrial zoning areas to the community's benefit

Community Development Principles & Initiatives

Principles to Initiatives

Through the community engagement process held within each cluster, residents voiced concerns about future planning in the neighborhood as well as aspirations for the quality of future development. They collaborated to develop alternative land use scenarios for vacant land, identifying sites for mixed-use buildings, housing and live/make units, and land that could accommodate different types of open space and urban agriculture. Residents specified where existing- and lower-density development would be appropriate and emphasized the importance of using high-quality materials to build new structures that reflect their context.

The chart and diagram on the following pages highlight initiatives that were identified in each cluster during the community engagement process. While some initiatives are specific to an individual cluster, most clusters shared common themes, including: Zoning changes, open space and stormwater management improvements, and a range of residential development strategies.



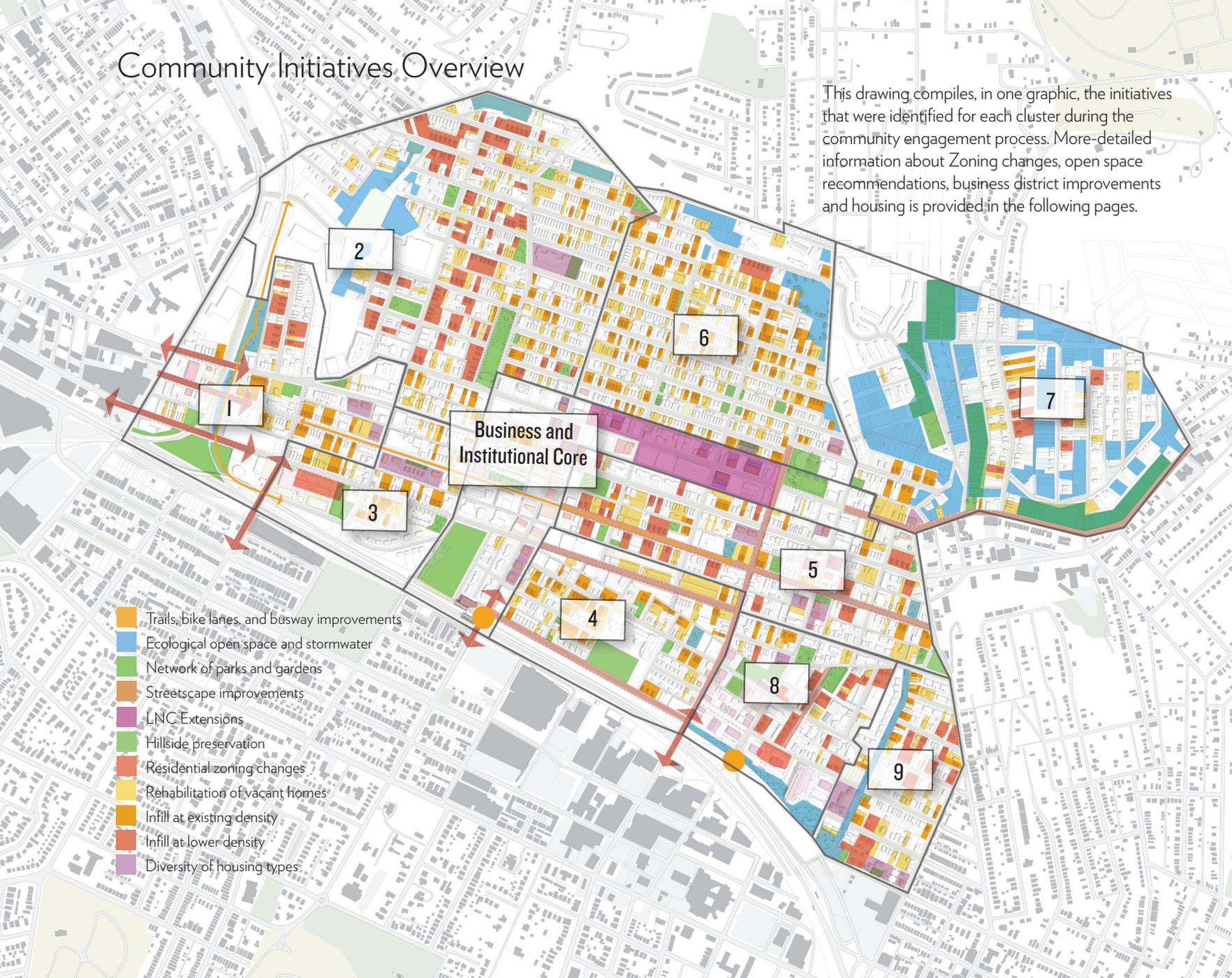
Community Initiatives Overview

| | Cluster 1 | Cluster 2 | Cluster 3 | Cluster 4 | Cluster 5 | Cluster 6 | Cluster 7 | Cluster 8 | Cluster 9 | Business & Institutional Core |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Parking Lot | C | | C | | | | | | | |
| Sideyards | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | |
| Vacant Property Strategy | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Identify Infill Housing Sites | S | L | S | C | L | L | L | S | S | S |
| Large-scale N'hood-serving Retail | L | | | | | | | | | L |
| Small-scale N'hood serving Retail | | | L | | L | | L | | L | |
| Live-Make Uses | | | | L | L | | | L | | |
| Multi-Use Trail | L | | | | | | | S | | |
| Wind Turbine Field | | | | | | | L | | | |
| Ecological Open Space | L | L | | | L | L | L | | S | |
| Stormwater Management | L | | | L | | | L | S | C | |
| Enhance Gateways/ Streetscape | L | | | L | L | L | L | S | | L |
| Large Neighborhood Park | | L | | C | | | | L | | |
| Network of Small Parks/ Gardens | C | L | C | | L | L | L | | | |
| Update Baxter Park | | | | | | L | | | | |
| Zoning Recommendations | | L | | | | | | L | | S |
| Renovate School | | L | | | | | | | | |
| Animal Rescue League | | | C | | | | | | | |
| HACP Vacant Lot Reuse | | | S | | | | | | | |
| 7800 Susquehanna | | | | | | | | C | | |
| Homeowner Repairs | | | | C | | | | | | |
| Safe Routes to Schools | | | | S | | | | | | |
| 311 Blitz - Vacant Lot Clean-up | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Decommission Streets | | | | L | | | L | S | L | |
| Culture/Art/History Identity | | | | | | | | | | S |

Legend: C= Current Initiative, S= Short Term Initiative, L= Long Term Initiative

Community Initiatives Overview

This drawing compiles, in one graphic, the initiatives that were identified for each cluster during the community engagement process. More-detailed information about Zoning changes, open space recommendations, business district improvements and housing is provided in the following pages.



2

6

7

Business and Institutional Core

3

5

4

8

9

- Trails, bike lanes, and busway improvements
- Ecological open space and stormwater
- Network of parks and gardens
- Streetscape improvements
- LNC Extensions
- Hillside preservation
- Residential zoning changes
- Rehabilitation of vacant homes
- Infill at existing density
- Infill at lower density
- Diversity of housing types

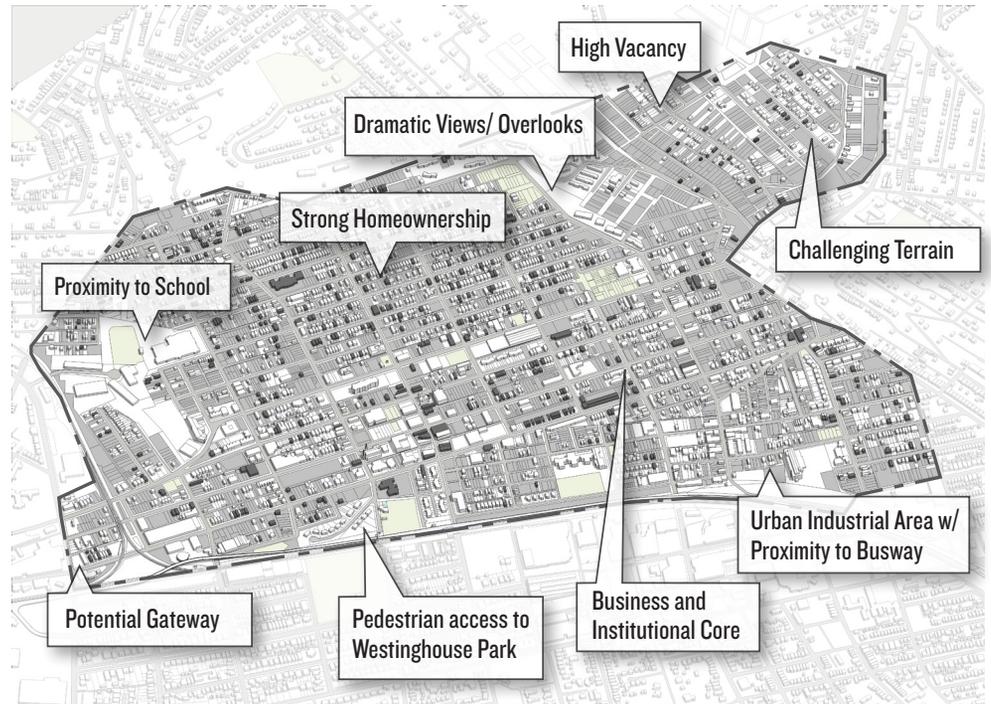
Neighborhood Overview

Existing Conditions

The following pages summarize existing neighborhood-wide conditions relating to land and building uses, public ownership, occupied and vacant properties, and Zoning. This key information was presented and made available at each cluster community meeting to help inform discussions about land use planning.

Assets and Challenges

The diagram to the right illustrates some of Homewood's current assets and challenges. There is the potential to create key neighborhood gateways from Washington Boulevard, the pedestrian bridge from North Lang Ave could be enhanced or rebuilt, and larger-scale development could be located on Urban Industrial land near Wilksburg's East Busway stop. Other neighborhood assets include strong homeownership in Homewood North, and proximity to the Business and Institutional Core centered around Homewood Avenue. Homewood is also the only neighborhood in the city with all of the following: YMCA, YWCA, Carnegie Library branch, CCAC campus, Primary Care Health Center, and Afro-



American Music Institute. The most prevalent challenges, in relation to the built environment, are the high vacancy rate throughout the neighborhood, dilapidated housing and absentee landlords.



North Homewood Avenue

Existing Conditions: Site Documentation



Rosedale Playground



Westinghouse High School



Pittsburgh Faison K-5



Single-family housing on Mount Vernon Street



7800 Susquehanna



Scheibler houses on Rosedale Street



View from Mohler Street in Homewood North



View from Apple Street

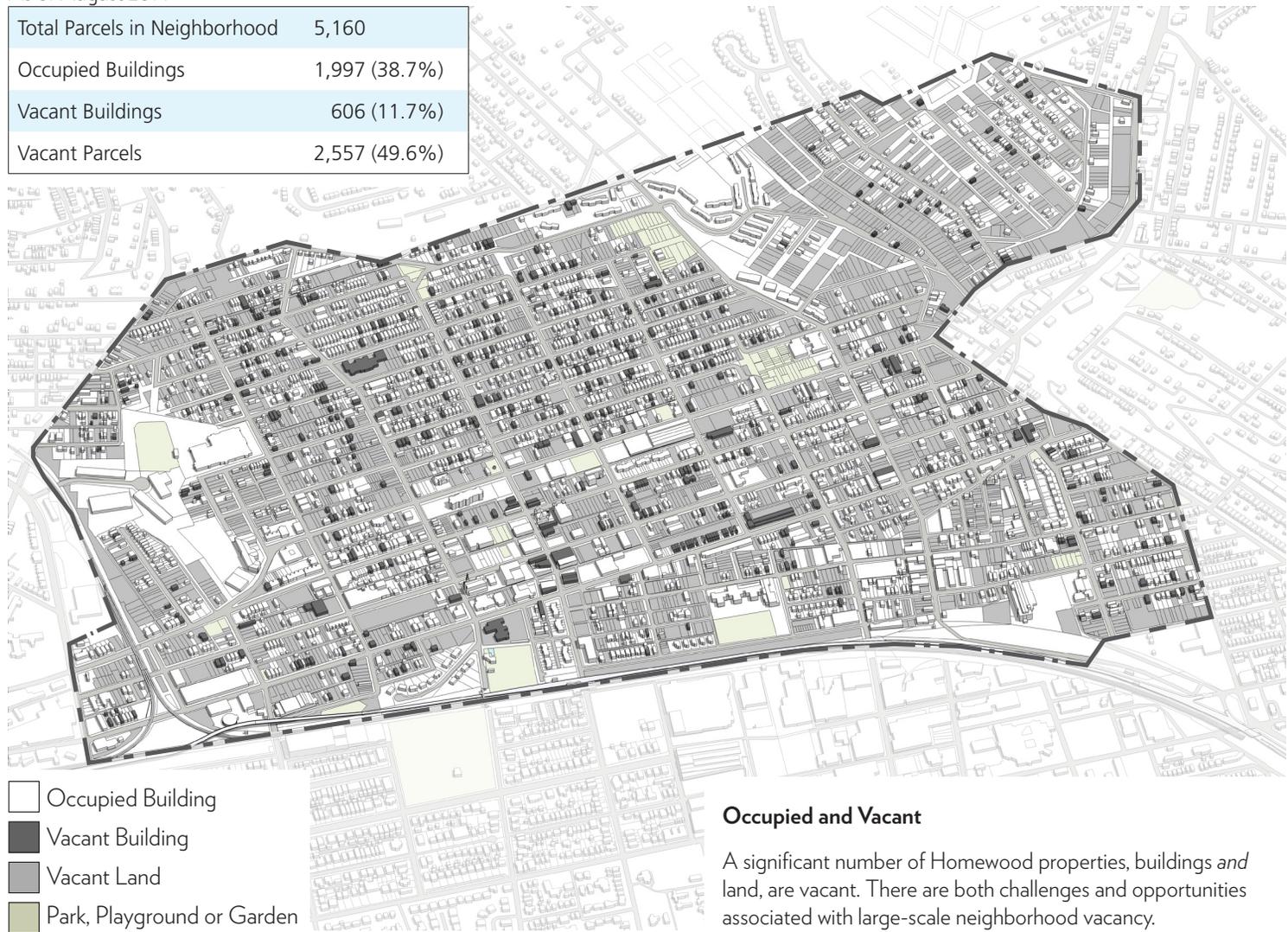


New housing along Finance Street

Existing Conditions: Vacancy

As of August 2014

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Total Parcels in Neighborhood | 5,160 |
| Occupied Buildings | 1,997 (38.7%) |
| Vacant Buildings | 606 (11.7%) |
| Vacant Parcels | 2,557 (49.6%) |

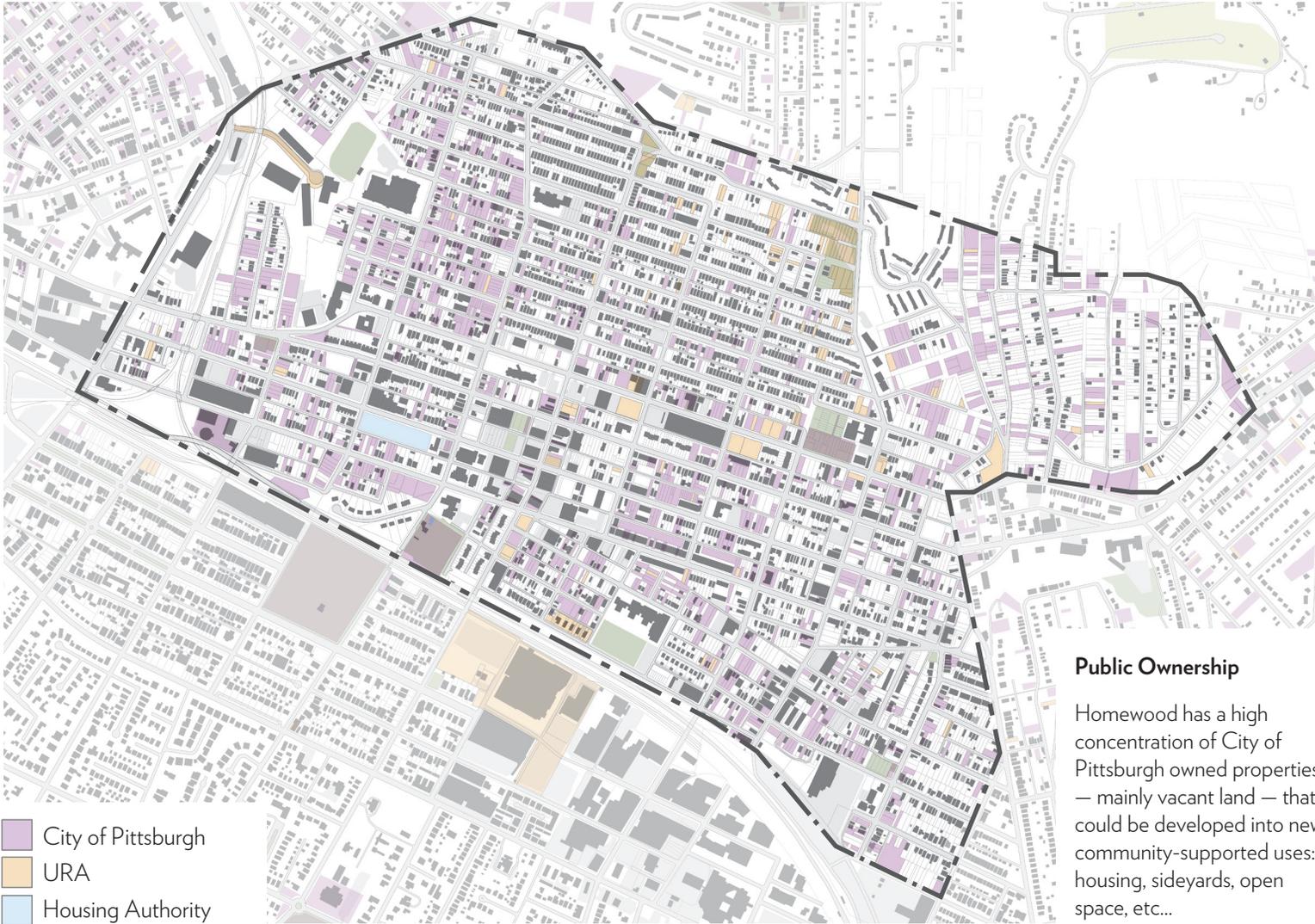


- Occupied Building
- Vacant Building
- Vacant Land
- Park, Playground or Garden

Occupied and Vacant

A significant number of Homewood properties, buildings *and* land, are vacant. There are both challenges and opportunities associated with large-scale neighborhood vacancy.

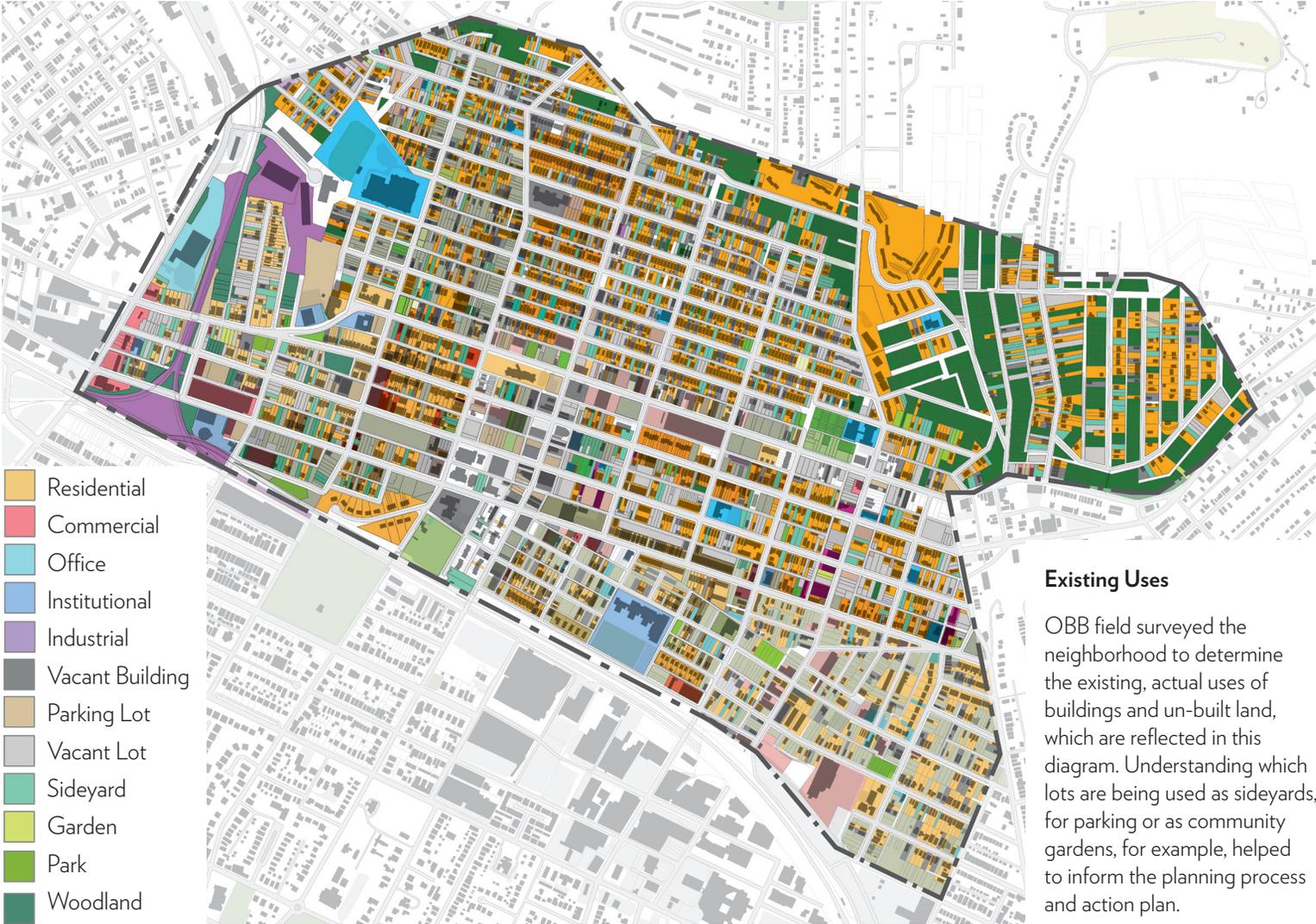
Existing Conditions: Public Ownership



Public Ownership

Homewood has a high concentration of City of Pittsburgh owned properties — mainly vacant land — that could be developed into new community-supported uses: housing, sideyards, open space, etc...

Existing Conditions: Land Uses



Existing Conditions: Zoning



Existing Zoning
 Homewood is a mix of different zoning districts, including residential, mixed-use and urban industrial. In many cases, the use on the ground does not align with the current zoning designation. Potential zoning changes identified during the community planning process are summarized on page 21.

Land Use Category Matrix

During the cluster planning process, discussions about future land uses were organized around a matrix of categories representing possible future uses for vacant property. Three general categories — Housing, Open Space and Mixed Use — correspond to general zoning district types, while a series of sub categories enabled residents to make more refined choices about the scale, character and type of future land uses they envisioned for their neighborhood.

The current zoning for Homewood does not accurately reflect the actual existing conditions and uses of the neighborhood. Mismatched zoning categories may impede future development, limiting the types of uses that could be proposed for the community even if the desired uses once existed on the site. Well-tuned zoning is an important tool that a community can use to guide future development and prevent certain uses from being introduced in neighborhood.

| Housing | | | Open Space | | | Mixed Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Renovate Existing | Rebuild Existing Patterns | Green Residential | Urban Agriculture | Recreation | Ecological | Neighborhood Serving Retail or Live/Make | Large-Scale Employment |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <small>Renovated Existing Houses</small> | <small>New Single Family Houses</small> | <small>Pocket Neighborhoods</small> | <small>Urban Agriculture</small> | <small>Recreation Park Space</small> | <small>Urban Meadow</small> | <small>Artisan Manufacturing/Retail</small> | <small>Technology Industries</small> |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <small>Homeowner Subdivs</small> | <small>New Single Family Houses</small> | <small>Crew Houses/Condos</small> | <small>Community Garden</small> | <small>Recreation Park Space</small> | <small>Substation</small> | <small>Small Neighborhood Retail</small> | <small>Specialty Manufacturing</small> |
|  |  | | |  |  |  |  |
| <small>New Townhouses</small> | <small>Large Lot Single Family Houses</small> | | | <small>Pavement Park Space</small> | <small>Nestle/Nest Management</small> | <small>Grocery Store</small> | <small>Office Space</small> |

To help participants understand zoning during the short time frame of a community meeting, the Planning Team presented land uses as a series of categories with visual precedents illustrating a variety of scales, contexts and materials. Some precedents were sites within the neighborhood, helping to make the exercise more meaningful and accessible to participants.

The alternative land use plans produced in the first cluster meetings informed the scenarios that were produced for review at the second meetings. The land use exercise was well-received and was a valuable tool in developing detailed visions for each cluster.

Land Use Categories: Mixed Use



Artisan Manufacturing

Neighborhood-serving retail uses, such as a corner grocery store, barber shop, dry cleaner, etc., serve residents within a 5-10 minute walking distance. Small-scale live/make uses may include artisan or specialty manufacturing, allowing the occupant to live and work in the same location.



Green Industry

Large-scale employment uses may include green and/or technology industries, specialty manufacturing and/or larger office space. These uses typically require large, contiguous parcels of vacant land and ideally would be sited in existing urban industrial zoning districts.

Land Use Categories

Land Use Categories: Housing



Renovate Existing Houses

This category includes efforts to renovate existing houses that are deemed to be structurally sound and/or architecturally significant, and highlights the ability of homeowners to purchase neighboring vacant lots through the City of Pittsburgh’s Sideyard Program.



New Single Family Houses

When it is recommended for areas with large amounts of vacancy to be rebuilt with new infill housing — at a scale, density and lot size similar to the surrounding context — the goal is restoring the integrity of a street to its historic, fully-built condition.



Pocket Neighborhoods

Green residential housing refers to new infill houses built on larger lots and at a lower density than housing in the surrounding context. It may include a cluster of housing built around shared open space or a community garden. It could also incorporate smaller-scale houses such as senior cottages.

Land Use Categories: Open Space



Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture uses include small- to large-scale farming on vacant lots or community gardens serving nearby neighbors.



Recreation Park Space

Recreational open space includes both active (fields, courts, etc.) and passive (gardens, benches, sculpture, etc.) uses. Small-scale recreational uses may include playgrounds and tot lots.



Stormwater Management

Ecological open space makes formerly-vacant land more productive. An urban meadow planted on a vacant lot will increase habitat. Reforestation of a hillside helps to stabilize the slope. Well-sited rain gardens, built on vacant land, will reduce runoff and flooding in the surrounding area.

Consensus Vision Plans

Consensus Vision Plan Components

The neighborhood-wide consensus vision plan brings together all of the Final Consensus Plans cluster plans created for all ten clusters. The plans are cluster-specific, but initiatives can generally be organized into four overarching themes that emerged during the planning process:

- Zoning Changes,
- Open Space Improvements,
- Business and Institutional Core, and
- Housing.

Each theme is summarized graphically, for the entire neighborhood, in the following pages.

At cluster boundaries, there could potentially be conflicting information and/or non-compatible propositions. Where they exist, inconsistencies should be addressed, reviewed and developed in greater detail by the affected Cluster Associations as future planning and development occurs.

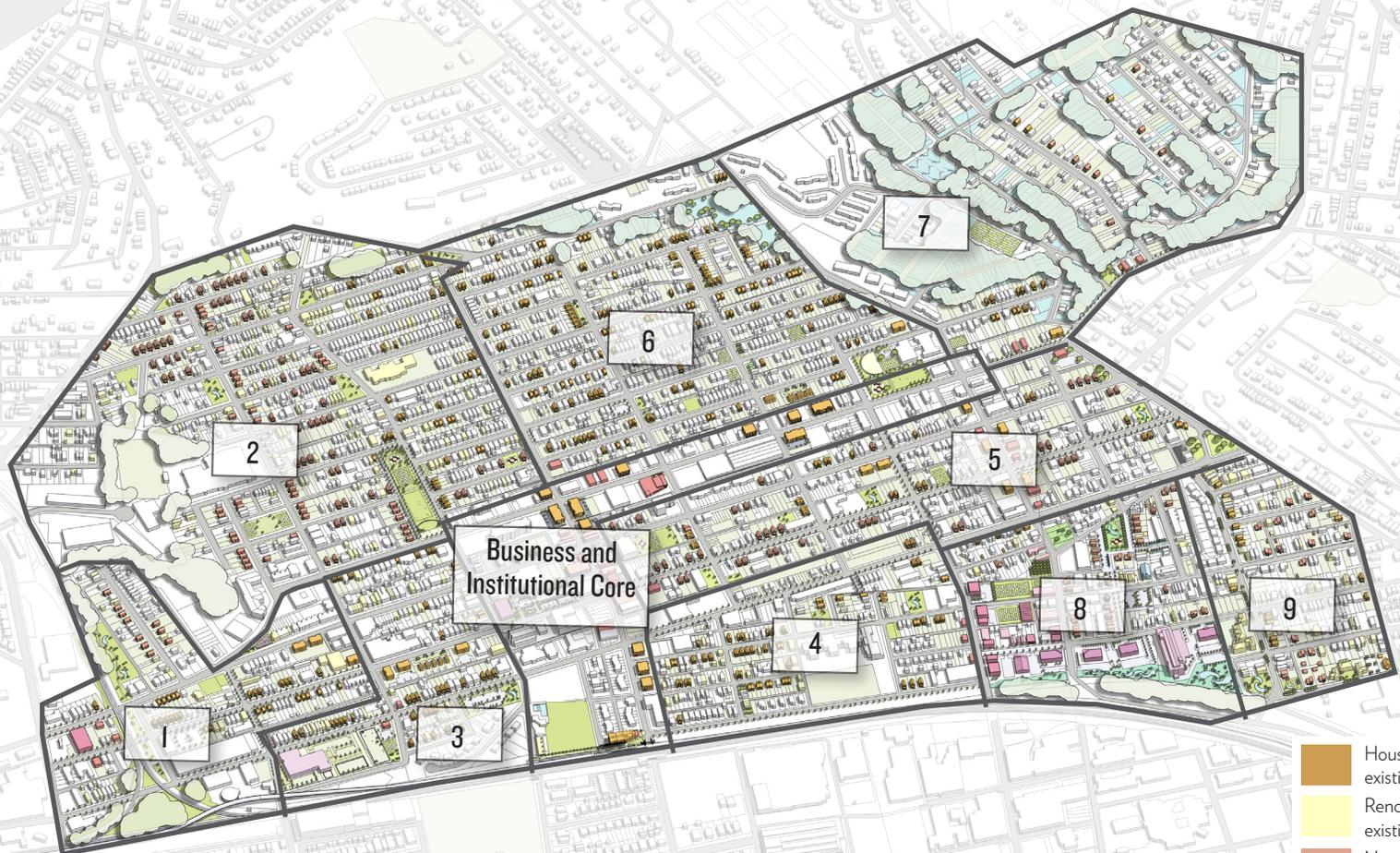
This document provides a general overview of recommendations developed through the cluster-based planning process. For more detailed, cluster-specific information, refer to the individual Consensus Vision Plans and Reports that are available through Operation Better Block at: <http://obbinc.org/cluster-planning/>



New housing along Finance Street



Historic bank building in Homewood's Business and Institutional Core



- Housing infill at existing density
- Renovate existing housing
- New green residential
- Trails / open space
- Ecological
- Small-scale live/make

Consensus Vision Plans

The drawing above integrates the ten individual Cluster Plans into a neighborhood-wide Consensus Vision Plan. The Community Initiatives Chart on page 9 summarizes the initiatives, illustrated above, that were identified for each cluster during the community planning process.

Zoning Change Recommendations

Zoning Change Recommendations

The diagram on the facing page summarizes zoning recommendations that were identified during the cluster planning process. Zoning initiatives typically fell into one of the following categories:

- Neighborhood Retail,
- LNC Extensions,
- Hillside Preservation, or
- Residential Zoning Changes.

Each category is explained in greater detail in the following pages.

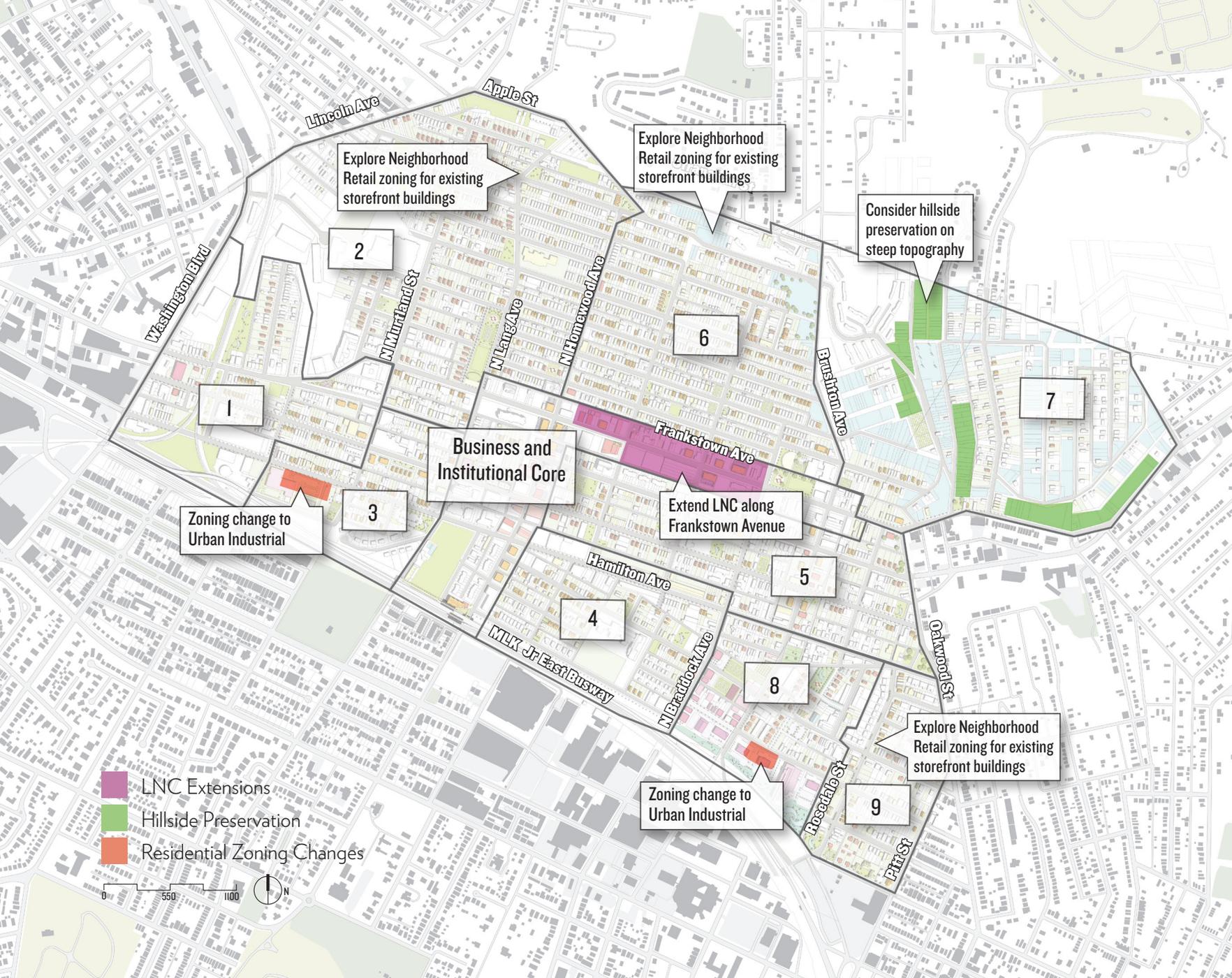
Next Steps

To start implementing the above recommendations, explore the following steps:

- Meet with Homewood's Neighborhood Planner to discuss the recommended zoning changes.
- Collaborate with Homewood's City Council representative to build support for the proposed zoning initiatives.



Examples of single- and multi-family housing, local neighborhood commercial and urban-industrial buildings



Explore Neighborhood Retail zoning for existing storefront buildings

Explore Neighborhood Retail zoning for existing storefront buildings

Consider hillside preservation on steep topography

Zoning change to Urban Industrial

Business and Institutional Core

Extend LNC along Frankstown Avenue

Explore Neighborhood Retail zoning for existing storefront buildings

Zoning change to Urban Industrial

- LNC Extensions
- Hillside Preservation
- Residential Zoning Changes



Zoning: Neighborhood Retail and LNC Extensions

Neighborhood Retail

When Homewood had a larger population, it was common for some mixed-use buildings, containing ground-floor storefronts and upstairs apartments, to be located at key intersections or along secondary neighborhood corridors. These storefronts housed neighborhood-serving retail, corner stores and mom-and-pop businesses, providing residents with quick and easy access to essential items.

Many historic storefronts are currently vacant, but when demand for Homewood buildings increases, community members would support reusing storefront spaces for neighborhood-serving uses. The challenge is that many storefront buildings are located in residentially-zoned areas and cannot accommodate neighborhood-serving retail uses without a zoning change. This condition is common to many neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh.



Beleza Community Coffeehouse, in Pittsburgh's Mexican War Streets

During the Cluster Planning process, Homewood residents developed the concept of "Spot LNC Zoning" to permit neighborhood-serving retail uses in existing storefront buildings nestled into residential areas. In a follow-up Planning Team meeting, the Neighborhood Planner suggested that a new "Neighborhood Retail" zoning category could allow a limited set of commercial uses in existing storefront spaces, in residential districts: coffee shops, cafes, corner stores, restaurants, laundromats, etc. To advance this concept, OBB should continue to work with the Neighborhood Planner and City Council representative to draft legislation.

LNC Extensions

Local Neighborhood Commercial (LNC) zoning allows for mixed use within a neighborhood-scaled business district. Portions of North Homewood, Brushton and Frankstown Avenues are full of mixed-use buildings but the LNC zoning district is discontinuous and does not entirely capture all of the existing businesses along those streets. LNC zoning along Frankstown Avenue is especially fragmented.

To encourage the development of a thriving mixed-use business district, in the heart of Homewood, residents and other neighborhood stakeholders would like the LNC district to completely capture mixed-use areas along Frankstown Avenue, and all of the storefronts along Homewood and Brushton Avenues. Creating continuous LNC-zoned corridors, in those



Continuous LNC districts, with active storefronts and a pleasant streetscape environment, create an inviting, pleasant and coherent pedestrian experience.

designated areas, will facilitate future mixed-use development and help revitalize the neighborhood's core business district.

Open Space Recommendations

Open Space Recommendations

Well-maintained open space is a sought after amenity for any neighborhood. During the Cluster Planning process, Homewood residents provided feedback as to the location and characteristics of desired open space as well as providing feedback about existing open space in the neighborhood. Open space initiatives generally could be organized into the following categories:

- Trails, bike lanes and Busway
- Ecological open space and stormwater management techniques
- Network of parks and gardens
- Streetscape improvements

In this section, each category is explained in greater detail and accompanied by precedent photos. Cluster-specific open space initiatives are graphically summarized on the facing page.

Next Steps

To start implementing these initiatives, the following steps should be explored:

- Research current ownership and potential acquisition strategies for targeted vacant property
- Partner with organizations already doing this type of work (i.e. Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, GTECH Strategies, Grow Pittsburgh, etc.)
- Research resources and funding opportunities for short term vacant lot clean up efforts and other open space recommendations



Publicly owned vacant property



Homewood residents creating a community garden

Zoning: Hillside Preservation and Residential Zoning Changes

Hillside Preservation

Challenging topography in a few Homewood clusters makes it difficult and expensive to maintain neighborhood infrastructure, which often serves only a handful of houses. In some instances, existing slopes are too steep to build on and are in need of a stabilization and reforestation program. Some areas are also undermined, making it unsafe and/or expensive to build new structures. Many of these locations are currently zoned as residential districts, which permits new development, by right.

Many residents participating in the Cluster Planning process would like to preserve, stabilize and reforest the neighborhood's steep slopes. One tool for preserving and stabilizing hillsides is the Hillside zoning district designation. Hillside zoning is the most restrictive category allowing very few uses by right and protecting areas that are not suitable for intense development as environmental or scenic resources. While this concept was discussed at length during cluster meetings, residents did not prioritize that slopes be immediately rezoned as Hillside districts, but they were open to rezoning as a future possibility.



Challenging topography should be protected and reforested. This view is from Apple Street, in Homewood, looking southward over the neighborhood.

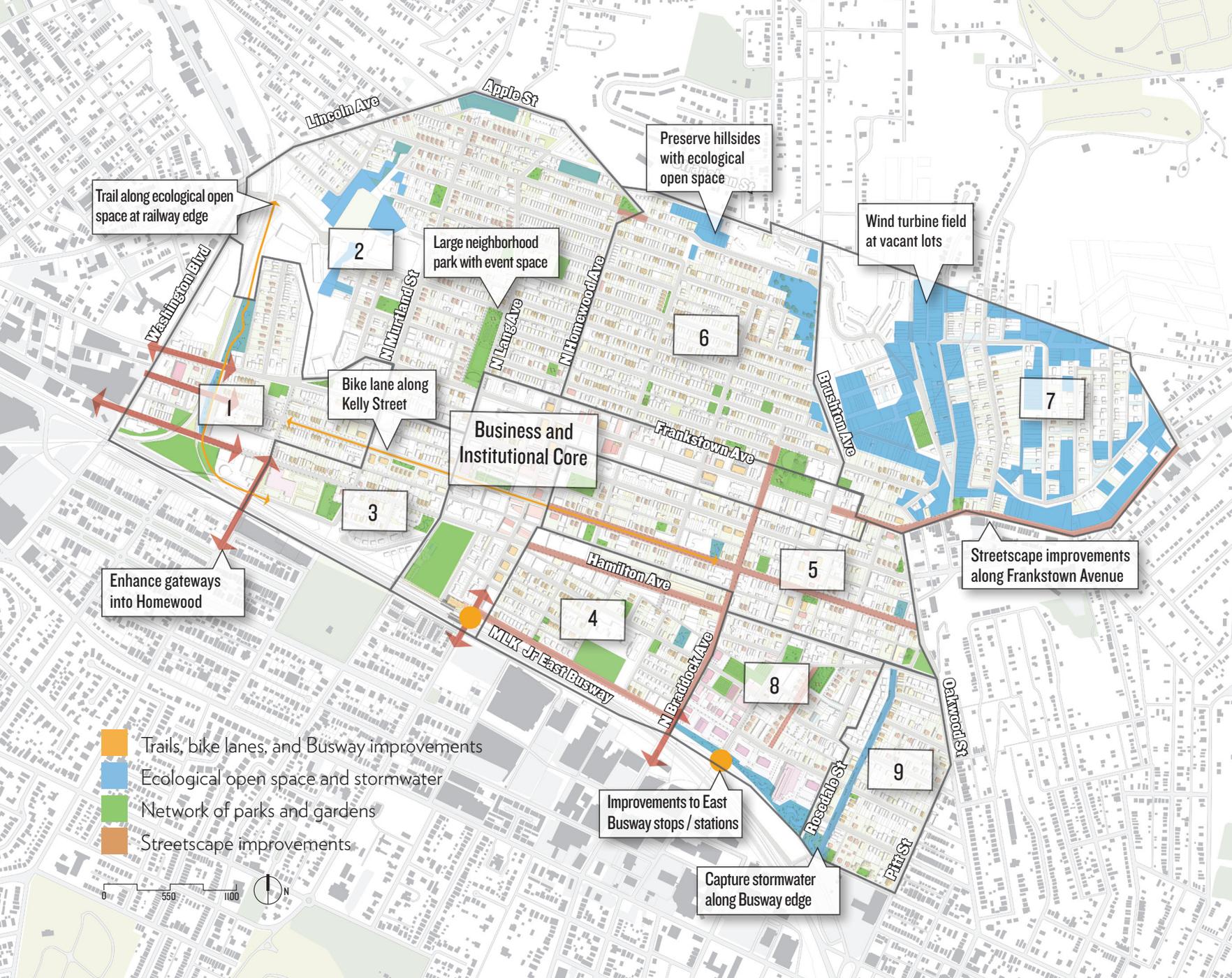
Residential Zoning Changes

The current Homewood zoning map does not accurately reflect existing, on the ground, uses. In some parts of the neighborhood, large, contiguous areas containing single-family homes are zoned as a high-density residential or mixed-use district. In contrast, some areas adjacent to the Business and Institutional core are zoned for low-density uses, making it difficult to take full advantage of the potential for larger-scale, mixed-use, transit-oriented development.

Stakeholders and residents suggested that Homewood's zoning map needs to be updated, and a composite overview of cluster-specific zoning recommendations is summarized in this report. During the Cluster Planning process, a portion of the future Animal Rescue League site was rezoned, extending an existing Urban Industrial district to better accommodate the project.



New single-family homes on Susquehanna Street, in Homewood.



Trail along ecological open space at railway edge

2

Large neighborhood park with event space

Preserve hillsides with ecological open space

Wind turbine field at vacant lots

6

7

1

Bike lane along Kelly Street

Business and Institutional Core

3

Enhance gateways into Homewood

Streetscape improvements along Frankstown Avenue

5

4

8

9

Improvements to East Busway stops / stations

Capture stormwater along Busway edge

- Trails, bike lanes, and Busway improvements
- Ecological open space and stormwater
- Network of parks and gardens
- Streetscape improvements



Open Space: Trails, Bike Lanes and Busway & Ecological Open Space

Trails, Bike Lanes and Busway

The East Busway is an important asset to Homewood, providing reliable public transportation to downtown Pittsburgh. Community members strongly supported improvements to Homewood and Wilkinsburg Stations, along the East Busway, to make them more functional, safe and attractive as community assets and to help support future transit-oriented development in the neighborhood. Improvements to Homewood Station were also studied in greater detail as part of the *Homewood Station Transit Oriented Development Study* (2015) which ran concurrently with, and was guided by, the Cluster Planning process.

In some clusters, residents requested trails be created to connect open spaces to improve pedestrian mobility throughout the neighborhood. Where possible, trails should be multi-modal, adequately-sized to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. On-street bicycle lanes along Kelly Street were discussed at Cluster Planning meetings.



Precedent photo of a complete street with traffic lanes, bike lanes and pedestrian walks

Ecological Open Space and Stormwater

During the public engagement process, residents identified areas experiencing flooding throughout Homewood. Ecological open space was proposed at those locations to help alleviate damage from excess stormwater runoff. Ecological open space may include replanted and stabilized slopes that are too steep to be developed, or urban meadows that help create habitat and allow stormwater to infiltrate into the ground. These green amenities create attractive and functional amenities for the community.

In addition to creating ecological open space, the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association participated in the cluster planning meetings and alongside the residents, developed stormwater interventions in Cluster 7 and along Rosedale Street in Cluster 9. On-street interventions include stormwater planting beds that capture rainwater runoff and help beautify the streetscape.



Reforestation



Urban Meadow

Open Space: A Network of Parks and Gardens and Streetscape Improvements

Network of Parks and Gardens

Cluster meeting participants voiced concerns about the lack of usable open space in Homewood. The cluster vision plans addressed this issue by proposing a network of smaller parks and gardens throughout the neighborhood. Community gardens and playgrounds topped the list of open space improvements, as long as these spaces could be well-maintained.

A large neighborhood park was proposed in Cluster 2, creating an event space on Frankstown Avenue. This park would serve the entire neighborhood by providing a variety of amenities. Maintaining and expanding Baxter playground, on Frankstown Avenue, was proposed. Residents wanted to decommission the Homewood North parklet because of its steep topography and lack of view corridors into the park, contributing to illicit activity.



Passive Park Space



Playground

Streetscape Improvements

Residents and stakeholders voiced a need for improved streetscapes throughout Homewood for safety and beautification purposes. The following improvements were repeatedly requested:

- Updating underpasses that feel unsafe and often flood,
- Adding site furniture along main thoroughfares (benches, trash receptacles, etc),
- Improving street lighting in high crime areas, and
- Enhancing gateways into Homewood.

Additionally, bike lanes and stormwater management techniques should be integrated into the design of streetscape improvements to address the community's concerns about flooding and alternate transportation.



Streetscape improvements needed to existing underpasses in Homewood

Business & Institutional Core Recommendations

District Identity

Create a regional African-American cultural destination in Homewood's Business & Institutional Core

Concurrent District Planning

In addition to the Cluster Planning process, two project ran concurrently and were informed by the Cluster Planning Process:

- The *Homewood Station Transit Oriented Development Study* focused on development and infrastructure improvements around Homewood Station, and
- Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group's *East Busway Corridor Revitalization Project* focused on transit oriented development policy.

Mission of the Homewood-Brushton Business Association

To foster the development and growth of the Homewood-Brushton business community, enhance its visibility, and preserve its history by increasing the capacity of businesses by providing access to capital, industry information, technical assistance and business support.

www.homewoodbiz.org

District Qualities

In the Business & Institutional Core, public meetings focused primarily on the future identity of the district and the uses that could support that identity. Participants were asked to consider relevant categories of uses and how they could best be distributed within the area. Meetings concentrated on Local Neighborhood Commercial uses rather than broader land uses, as in other clusters.

The following qualities were specified and agreed upon by attendees as being vital to creating a cultural destination:

- The district should be a regional — even national or global — destination for African-American culture.
- At the same time, the district should also include services, goods and groceries to meet the daily needs of area residents.
- African-American culture should be broadly defined to include food, music, theater, visual arts, literature, sports, goods and services.
- History is very important and should be celebrated as part of the district identity.
- Homewood should celebrate African-American culture while also welcoming and including all cultures.
- The district should be compact and walkable to focus and define it as a destination and make it accessible to seniors and kids: people of all ages.
- There should be a support structure for helping local entrepreneurs create new enterprises and grow existing businesses.
- The physical environment should be upgraded including improvements to: streetscapes, business district gateways, Stargell Field, the Busway underpass at Homewood Avenue, and the pedestrian overpass connecting to Westinghouse Park.
- Public safety needs to be addressed, both mitigating crime and changing the negative perception of potential visitors.

Homewood Business & Institutional Core: Massing

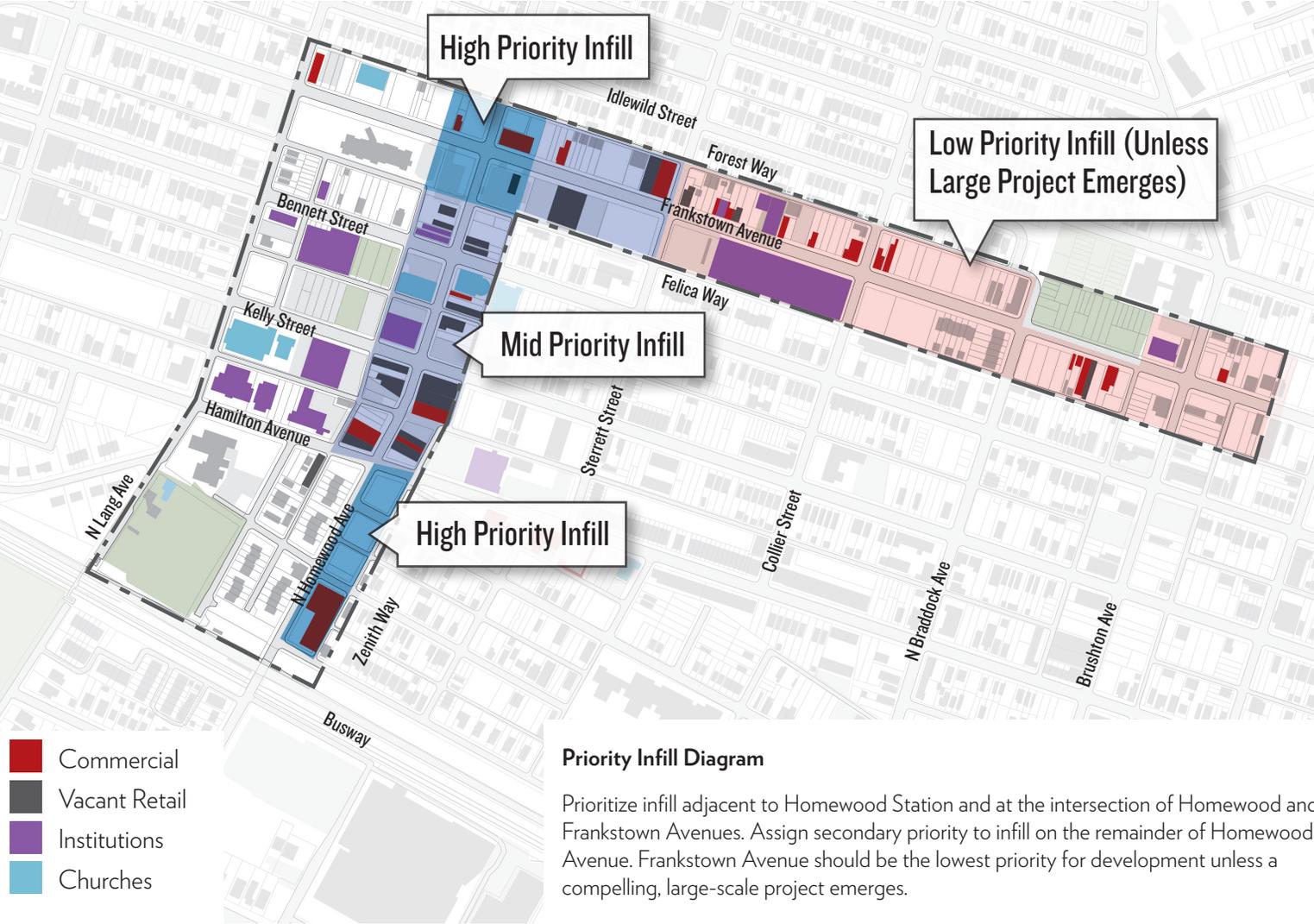
- Commercial
- Vacant Retail
- Institutions
- Churches



Massing Diagram

Mixed-use buildings dominate the Core with a height of 4 stories nearest to Homewood Station (zoning allows for greater height due to transit proximity) and 3 stories along Homewood and Frankstown Avenues. Consider changing zoning in the RM-M district along Frankstown to LNC to encourage new business uses.

Homewood Business & Institutional Core: Priority Infill



Homewood Business & Institutional Core: Priority Uses

Priority Uses

The following uses within each of the categories were deemed most relevant and valuable by community members and stakeholders during the Business District cluster planning meetings:

Culture & Entertainment

- Music Venue
- Event Venue
- Restaurants/ Bars
- Museum

Food & Groceries

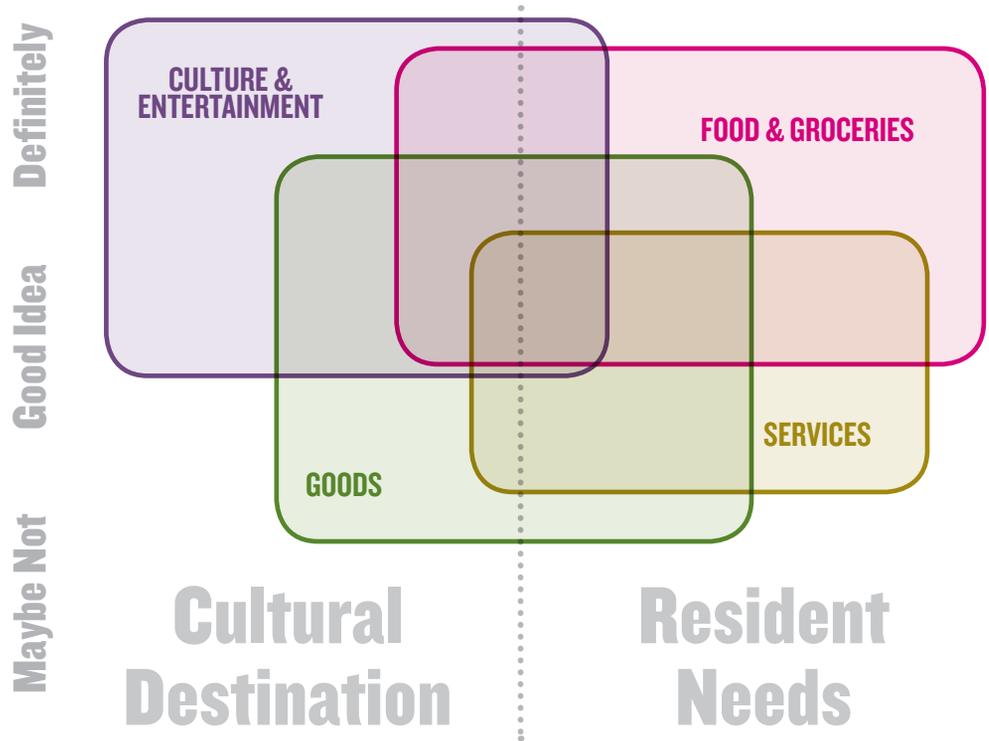
- Grocery Store
- Coffee Shop
- Specialty Foods
- Farmers Market

Services

- Laundry
- Business Incubator
- Community Kitchen
- Car Repair
- Salon/ Barber Shop

Goods

- Art Gallery
- Drug Store
- Jewelry
- Convenience Store
- Sporting goods, hobbies, books and music
- Gasoline



Summary Use Diagram

The diagram above illustrates how the categories of uses presented to the community were ranked in relation to furthering the vision of the Core Business and Institutional district as a regional African-American cultural destination.

Homewood Business & Institutional Core: Strategies



Business and Institutional Core Use Scenario

Concentrate new Cultural and Entertainment uses — Arts, Music and Food Venues — along Homewood Avenue with Frankstown Avenue providing a secondary cluster of nightlife destinations. Good and Services can be spread throughout the cluster and around the existing services on Frankstown and Brushton Avenues.

Business & Institutional Core: Creating a Business Directory & Buying Local

Recommendations

Cluster Planning participants provided additional recommendations for establishing the Cultural Identity of the Business District, which are explained in greater detail below:

- Create a Homewood Business Directory
- Buy Local
- Improve the Streetscape

These recommendations involve both short- and long-term actions and are explored further in the Business & Institutional Core’s Cluster Vision Consensus Plan document.

Create a Business Directory

To promote and support “Buying Local” in Homewood, residents and stakeholders suggested that a neighborhood-specific business directory be created. This directory would list all Homewood businesses, provide addresses and contact information and map locations.

Posting the directory on-line, and in highly visible locations, is important to successfully reach a broad audience of potential customers. Participants suggested posting a directory at Homewood Station, sharing it on other community websites and linking to event listings. The directory should be kept current as a living resource that community members can use to find valuable amenities and resources within their own neighborhood.



Existing view along Homewood Avenue’s Business & Institutional Core



Example of integrated wayfinding signage and business directory

Business & Institutional Core: Streetscape Improvements

Buy Local

To strengthen the Business & Institutional Core, Homewood residents are highly encouraged to “Buy Local.” This means supporting existing businesses within the community rather than spending the same dollars elsewhere.

During the Cluster Planning visioning sessions, residents and other stakeholders agreed that buying local would save transportation costs, lessen environmental impacts by reducing or eliminating driving times, and aid in keeping Homewood a unique neighborhood with a strong local identity rooted in small, community-based shops. Local businesses also help create jobs within the community since they often utilize the services of neighborhood-based printers, attorneys, bankers, caterers, etc.



Perry's Honeydrinker Grocery in Homewood provides residents access to locally sourced/ ready made food

Improve the Streetscape

To support the vision of a fully-revitalized Business & Institutional Core, Cluster Planning participants strongly supported the idea of improving the streetscape along North Homewood and Frankstown Avenues. Recommended elements include a street furnishings package, providing amenities such as benches, trash receptacles and plantings, as well as improved lighting and widened sidewalks to accommodate outdoor seating.

Residents and stakeholders felt that improvements to Homewood Station would further enhance the pedestrian experience and help support redevelopment in the Business & Institutional Core.

By providing a pleasant, high-quality, coherent pedestrian experience for residents and visitors alike, existing and proposed businesses along Homewood and Frankstown Avenues would be positively affected. An improved streetscape encourages pedestrian activity and helps reduce crime while also enhancing the public realm.

Next Steps

OBB has developed and strengthened several partnerships with the HBBA, Urban Innovation 21, and the URA. These groups are all focused on strengthening the business corridor from activities such as providing grants and technical support to new and existing businesses, focusing on and improving the pedestrian experience along the business corridor and at transit stops, and sharing resources to develop N Homewood Ave and Frankstown as the cultural destination that it once was.

Housing Recommendations

Housing Recommendations

Homewood residents provided feedback as to the location and type of housing initiatives that should be implemented throughout the neighborhood. Recommendations from the Cluster Planning process fall into the following categories:

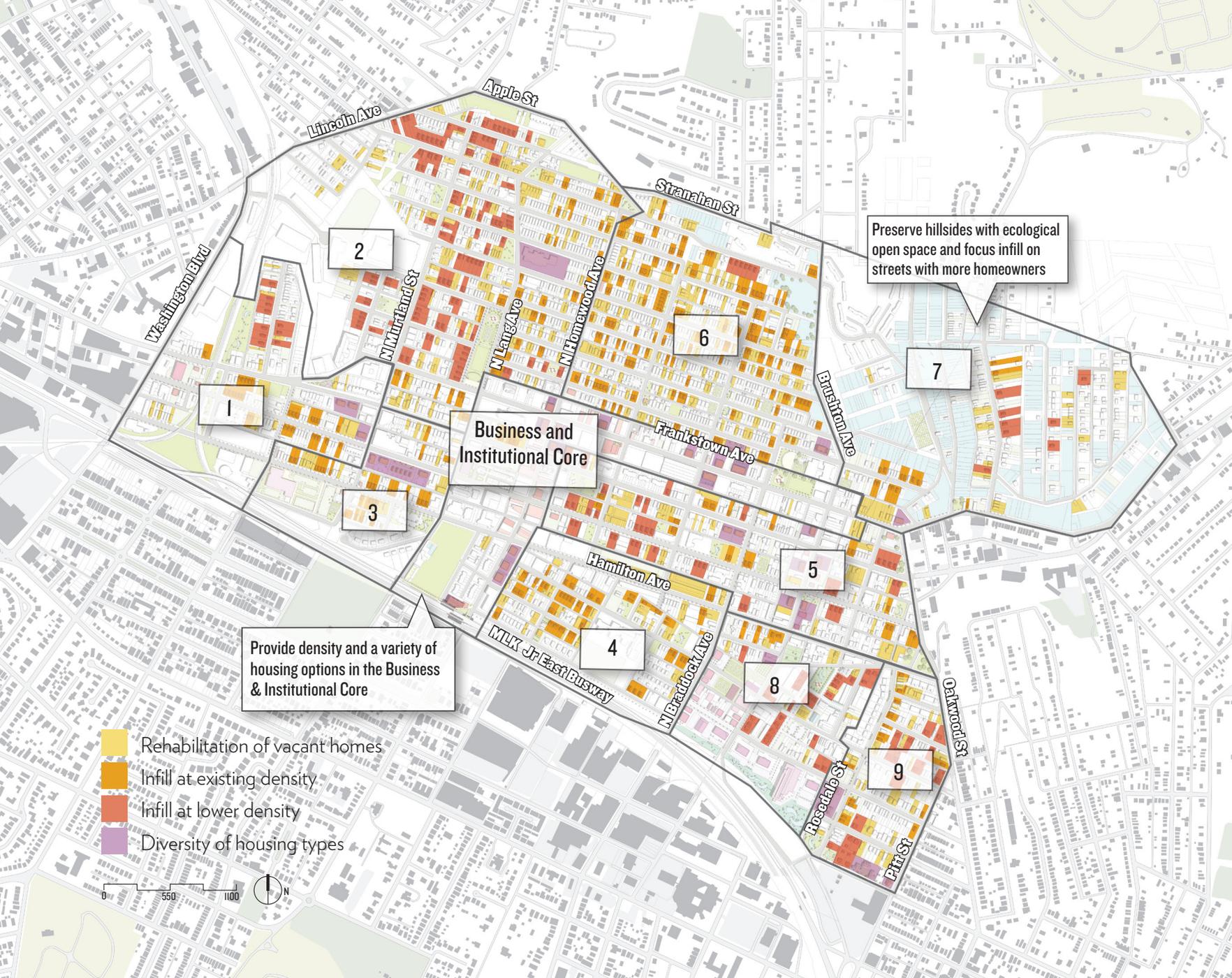
- Renovate existing vacant homes
- Build new infill homes to match the density of the existing context
- Build new infill housing at a density that is lower than the existing context
- Provide a diversity of housing types

Housing recommendations, involving both short- and long-term initiatives, are explained in greater detail, with precedent photos, in each cluster-specific report.

Next Steps

To begin implementing these recommendations, the following steps should be explored:

- Assess vacant property to assess structural integrity. Mothball buildings with structural integrity
- Prioritize strategic code enforcement and possible demolition when a vacant structure is in severe disrepair,
- Prioritize renovations through partnerships and connect individuals and groups to identify housing renovation resources
- Invite interested developers to cluster association meetings to discuss Cluster Vision Plans



Business and Institutional Core

Preserve hillsides with ecological open space and focus infill on streets with more homeowners

Provide density and a variety of housing options in the Business & Institutional Core

- Rehabilitation of vacant homes
- Infill at existing density
- Infill at lower density
- Diversity of housing types



Housing: Renovation Strategy & Infill at Existing Density

Renovate Existing Vacant Homes

Homewood’s existing housing stock is similar in size and character to coveted housing in other Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Unfortunately, many homes are currently vacant and in varying states of disrepair.

In the short term, residents feel that creating a Vacant Property Strategy is the most important initiative, detailing precisely which existing vacant buildings in each cluster area should be: renovated in the near future, mothballed and preserved as a future rehab project, or demolished.



Existing housing stock along Race Street

Infill at the Existing Density

At the first meeting for each cluster, residents and other stakeholders participated in a future land use planning activity. Working over an existing conditions map, community members decided where infill housing, at the existing density, was critical in order to strengthen the neighborhood. In most clusters, infill housing was proposed on streets that were mostly intact with only a few vacant lots. When this category was recommended for areas with significant vacancy, the goal is reestablishing a similar number of houses as used to be on the street.

Community members strongly supported building new infill housing if it was built to a similar scale, character, density, and lot size, when compared to the surrounding context. They cautioned against using inferior construction methods, demanding high-quality materials for new houses. Each cluster association should identify priority infill housing sites, within their area, and work with developers to guide new construction projects.



New Single-Family Houses



New Townhouses

Housing: Infill at Lower Density & Diversity of Housing Types

Infill at a Lower Density (Green Residential)

During the Cluster Planning process, residents and other stakeholders agreed that not all vacant lots should be developed at the ratio of one unit for each available parcel — in some instances, a lower-density solution would be more appropriate.

New infill housing, with larger lots and a lower density than the surrounding context, was proposed as a solution. New “Green Residential,” built at a lower density than the historic neighborhood, may include single-family homes or a cluster of housing built around a shared open space or community garden. Green Residential development could also incorporate smaller-scale houses, such as senior cottages, adding to the diversity of housing in Homewood.



One-Story Cottages



Large Lot Houses

Provide a Diversity of Housing Types

Community members felt strongly that a mix of housing types should be created in Homewood, when and where development occurs. Housing need to be affordable but must also serve a range of current and future residents.

During the Cluster Planning process, residents suggested developing a variety of housing types including:

- One-story cottages around a shared green space,
- Multi-family houses,
- Small apartment buildings,
- Senior housing, and
- Apartments in mixed-use buildings.



New mixed use senior housing building on Homewood Avenue

Next Steps

From an organizational perspective, the following steps are advised to continue engaging residents in discussions about future development in Homewood:

Form Cluster Associations

Each cluster has the opportunity to develop a cluster association. Cluster Associations may differ in how they are structured and operate, from cluster to cluster — this is not a one-size-fits-all approach. In fact, Clusters 8 and 9 have joined to form a combined Association.

Cluster Associations are intended to own and evolve the Cluster Plan Vision over time, helping to guide development as it evolves in each cluster. They will work with community partners on shorter-term implementation projects, such as: connecting eligible homeowners to the sideyard program, identifying priority vacant lots for grass-cutting or a targeted clean-up, and participating in a 311 blitz to clean up vacant lots en masse.

OBB is providing technical assistance to support the associations — it will be an ongoing partnership. OBB will set up space for meetings, create informational and outreach materials, build relationships through

continued community outreach, and bring other resources to the table. While cluster associations organize to work towards shorter-term wins, OBB will work hand-in-hand on longer-term project implementation. For example, OBB can acquire tax-delinquent vacant land for future park space and bring potential housing developers to cluster associations for discussions with local residents.

The goal of creating Cluster Associations is not only to see each cluster plan vision implemented, but also to help residents stabilize their blocks, become agents of change and create a resilient social network that enhances the community's strength and vitality.

Support Homewood's Community Development Collaborative

Several Homewood stakeholders recently joined forces to bring much-needed change to the neighborhood. Seven organizations form the Homewood Community Development Collaborative:

- Building United of Southwestern Pennsylvania,
- Community Empowerment Association,
- Homewood Concerned Citizens Council,
- Homewood Renaissance Association,
- Operation Better Block, Inc.
- Rosedale Block Cluster, and
- Save Race Street Committee.

The Collaborative's purpose is helping each organization continue with its independent leadership and agenda, and also creating a forum where they can coordinate efforts and facilitate unified development — throughout Homewood — addressing community needs comprehensively and holistically. The Collaborative, acting as a cohesive team, will have a greater, more meaningful impact than the individual organizations acting on their own.

Available Resources

A variety of resources are available for the Homewood community. On the following pages, resources discussed during Cluster Planning meetings are listed and briefly summarized, with contact information so that residents can learn more about specific initiatives.

Homegrown Project

Every Homewood resident is eligible to receive free, raised-bed planters, dirt and seeds at their home. Applications were distributed and are available through OBB. Visit <https://phipps.conservatory.org/green-innovation/in-the-community/homegrown> for more information.



Charity Bauman (right) of Phipps' Homegrown Project and Homewood residents display vegetables from their raised bed gardens. Photo courtesy of Phipps Conservatory.

Rain Barrel Give-Away

The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association (NMRWA) is giving away 200 free slim, "Hydra" rain barrels to Homewood residents. MNRWA is also planning to build a stormwater infiltration feature on a vacant corner lot at the intersection of Oakwood and Batavia, to help control localized flooding. Visit www.rosedalerain.com for more information.

OBB Projects & Programs

The following OBB programs are available to all Homewood Residents:

1. Each cluster has the ability, with OBB's assistance, to develop and maintain a **cluster association**. Comprised of residents and property owners, their role is prioritizing initiatives identified in each respective Cluster Vision Plan, completing each Plan's short-term implementation projects and partnering with OBB to act on longer-term initiatives.
2. OBB hosts several **annual community events** throughout the neighborhood. These vary from block clean-ups to a twice annual Redd-Up community-

wide clean-up where volunteers come from near and far. Another event that OBB sponsors is the Dick's Sport Goods Pittsburgh Marathon. Every year, OBB hosts a water station at mile marker 18. The Marathon has quickly become one of the most anticipated and celebrated events in Homewood.

3. **Bridge to Benefits** helps identify, educate, qualify and enroll financially-struggling families to receive public benefits. The goal is connecting residents to available community services and public benefits through a community-wide education campaign and strategic door-to-door outreach. By utilizing mobile Benefits Banks® enrollment, OBB completes



Michael Hiller of NMRWA explains that 200 free rain barrels are available for Homewood residents.

Available Resources

enrollments, make referrals and performs case management duties. The overarching goal is helping residents access available services and benefits and avert financial crisis while moving towards financial stability and self-sufficiency.



Junior Green Corps after a neighborhood clean up day

4. The **Junior Green Corps (JGC)** provides Homewood youth, ages 14-19, with structured activities that improve their physical environment, equip them for leadership roles in the community and provide them with opportunities to explore green collar jobs and careers. The JGC targets youth who face economic, educational or personal barriers such, as deficiencies in basic literacy skills, parenthood and minor legal issues.

Through strategic partnerships with other organizations, JGC provides its youth with access to the green industry and an opportunity to create a better tomorrow.

5. OBB is committed to ensuring the implementation of the completed Cluster Plan for Homewood. One means for accomplishing this is strategically promoting **community and economic development** in the interest of Homewood's current residents. OBB is working to acquire and renovate vacant houses, and partner with other groups to bring tenants into commercial spaces in Homewood's core business district.

Property Tax Reductions

The Homestead/Farmstead Exclusion (Act 50) is a program that reduces your assessed market value by \$18,000 for County taxes only. To qualify, you must be the owner and occupy the dwelling as your primary residence. The application deadline is March 1 of each year and you do not have to reapply each year. Once you have filed, your exemption will remain in effect until you sell/transfer the property or change your occupancy.

The Senior Citizen Property Tax Relief Program (Act 77) is for residents who are at least 60 years old, have an annual income of \$30,000 a year or less (counting just half of Social Security or Railroad Tier One benefits) and have lived in and owned their current Allegheny County residence for at least 10 years. These senior citizens can be eligible for a 30% reduction on their County tax bill.

Financial Counseling and Homeowner Preparation

NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania (NWWPA) creates greater neighborhood wealth, providing access to financial education, coaching and community leadership development. NWWPA programs and services include homebuyer education workshops, financial education workshops, the eHome online homeownership program, budget and credit counseling, a foreclosure prevention program, a youth financial literacy program and a leadership development program. Visit <http://www.nwwpa.org/programsServices.htm> for additional information.

Sideyard Sale Program

Homeowners living next to overgrown, publicly-owned, vacant lots no longer have to look out the window and cringe. The City of Pittsburgh, in cooperation with City Source Associates, introduced a low-cost way for residents to acquire neighboring vacant lots. Once the lot is purchased for a minimum fee, the owner can transform the lot into a garden, parking pad, deck, etc., in compliance with local zoning regulations. Homeowners will increase the size of their property and the value of their home, but they will also enhance the appearance of their neighborhood. For more information and to see if you qualify, call (412) 255-2300.

Homeowner Repairs

Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh repairs and renovates the homes of low-income, elderly homeowners, military veterans, and individuals with permanent physical disabilities. You may qualify for assistance if you: are at least 60 years of age, or have a documented disability, or are a military veteran, and are the homeowner of record for an Allegheny County property who is current on all real estate taxes and earns less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Visit <http://www.rtpittsburgh.org/contact/homeowner-info/> for more information and to see if you qualify for the program.

Free or Reduced Legal Services

Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) strives to ensure access to justice by providing free “civil” legal services to low-income individuals and families. NLS was created to address the lack of basic legal assistance in civil matters for those without the means to hire a private attorney. Visit http://www.nlsa.us/about/we_do.html for more information.

Homewood Cluster Planning
is a project of Operation
Better Block, in collaboration
with Studio for Spatial Practice

For more information please
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801 N. Homewood Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

412.731.1908
www.obbinc.org



Photos from the
Neighborhood planning process