



Russell District Planning

Improving the 30th
Street Corridor
Area's Connectivity

Acknowledgments

Russell: A Place of Promise

Theresa Zawacki, Interim Co-Executive Director
Cassandra Webb, Interim Co-Executive Director
Colby Bentley, Assistant Director of Place
Vashti Proctor, Community Engagement Support

Consultant Team

Perkins&Will
Zan Stewart, Managing Principal
Sarah McColley, Project Manager
Lauren Hawley, Project Designer
Devaki Kesh, Urban Designer
Negar Mohammadi, Urban Design
Evanthia Constantinou, Urban Designer
Tian Wang, Landscape Designer
Danielle Baez, Researcher

Nelson\Nygaard
Phil Veasley, Transportation Engineer

Stakeholder Committee *(Alphabetically by Organization)*

Arthur’s Earth Sanctuary
Althea Crockett
Dre Smith
Blueprint Kentucky – Tyler McDaniel
ElderServe – Tiffany Ellis
Gathering Strength, Inc. – Elizabeth Fust
Goodwill Industries of Kentucky
Emory Lee
Rena Sharpe
HWC Engineering – Jennifer Caummisar-Kern
Joash Construction – Joseph Scott
Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet
Kiersten O’Leary
Annabel McKee

LDG Development – Ramona Vasta
Louisville Metro Government Dept. of Transportation
Michael King
William Bell
Louisville Metro Government Office for Women
Gretchen Hunt
Kylie Moxie (Work Group)
Louisville Metro Government Office of Planning
Sara Ellis
Harrison Hart
John Hawkins
Melanie Reason
Louisville Metro Parks – Michelle King
Norton Healthcare – Anthony Mathis
Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center
Sadiqa Reynolds
Norton Healthcare West Louisville Hospital
Corenza Townsend
Olmsted Parks
Fari Nzinga
Sarah Wolff
Pushing Forward – Kiara James
RPOP Ambassadors
Camara Douglas
LaiEsha Allen
Jackie Coleman
Kinshasta Reed
RPOP Board of Directors
Frank McNeil, Jr.
Charlene Kimbro
Leah Peale
Beverly Nzingha Sweeney-Sheppard
Zahara Gully
RPOP Real Estate Committee
Thomas Williams
Gwen Kelly
Trimen Solutions – Shaun Spencer
University of Louisville Office of Disability Services
Cishella Durling

Contents

01 Existing Conditions

PAGE 4

02 Community Engagement

PAGE 56

03 District Recommendations

PAGE 72

04 Action Plan

PAGE 100

01

CHAPTER ONE

Existing Conditions

UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECT

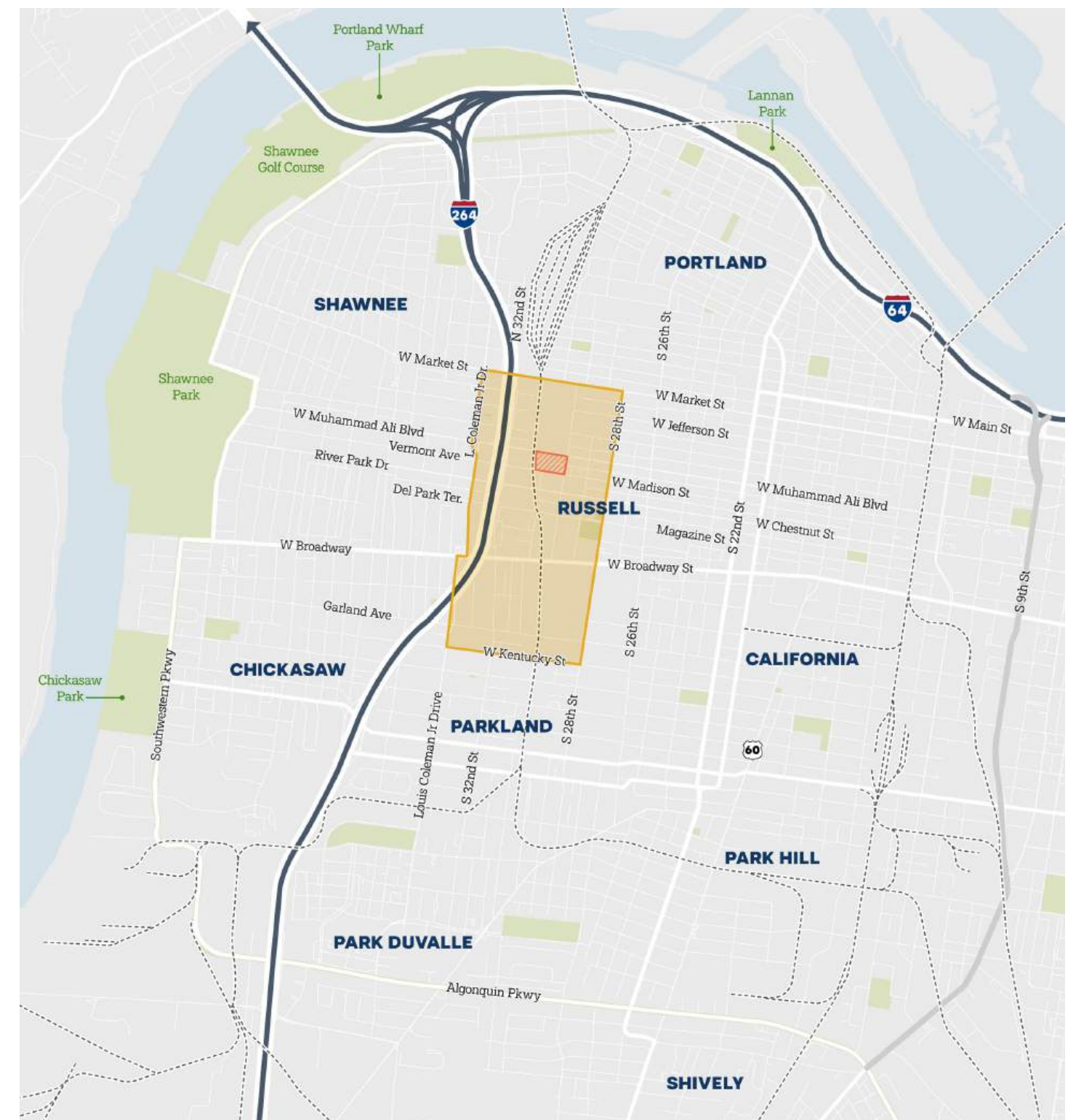
Project Purpose & Study Area

The study area is focused on the portions of the Russell and Parkland neighborhoods bound by West Market Street to the north, South 28th Street to the east, West Kentucky Street to the south, and Louis Coleman, Jr. Drive to the west. A broader area that includes downtown Louisville and other adjacent neighborhoods was used to evaluate the study area for broader connectivity and key demographic indicators.

At the center of the study area is a 5-acre site committed to Russell: A Place of Promise (RPOP) by Louisville Metro Government, at 30th and Madison, which will be home to RPOP's office, new housing options, and a variety of commercial and community-serving uses. Largely due to the 2017 Choice Neighborhoods initiative (see [page 23](#)), the study area has experienced significant investment of approximately \$500 million dollars in the last 7 years, by both the public and private sectors. These investments are described on pages 8 to 15.

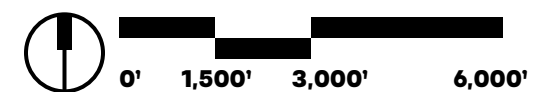
RPOP decided to conduct a district planning study to determine how to better connect these investments to each other and to the neighbors in Russell and Parkland through improvements to the public realm, like streets, parks, and the spaces under the viaducts created by the railroad tracks and I-264 / the Shawnee Expressway. Overall, the plan aims to use design solutions to make it safer, easier, welcoming, and more comfortable for families to access the investments. Solutions should create a complete neighborhood by improving connectivity, embedding art and storytelling, and celebrating history.

These improvements will make walking, biking, and taking transit safer and more comfortable, while beautifying the neighborhood and benefiting Russell and West End families and stakeholders.



Legend

-  **Study Area Boundary**
 **30th & Madison RPOP Site**
 **Parks and Open Space**
 **Interstate**
 **Railroad**



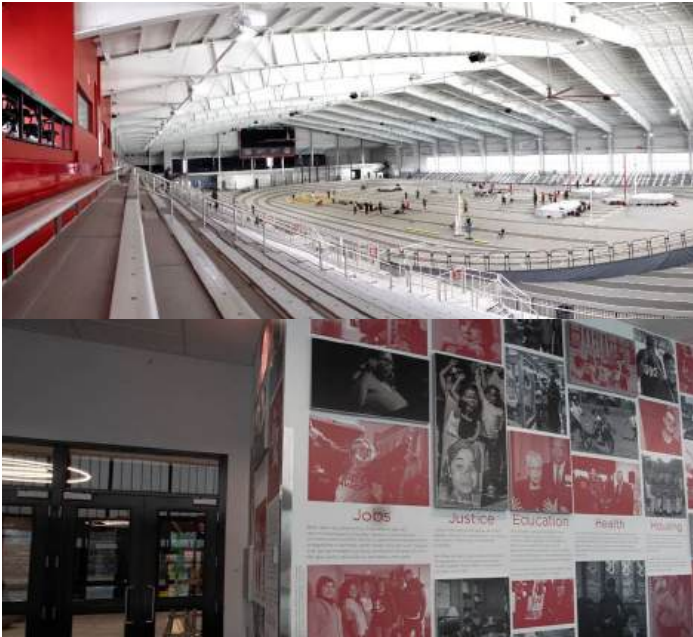
RUSSELL'S GROWTH

Recent Projects

The study area has experienced **significant investments** by public, private, and non-profit entities, particularly along the 30th Street corridor from West Market Street to Garland Avenue as shown on the map to the right. These investments include housing, medical care facilities, senior care facilities, sports and recreation, training resources and education, green space, and childcare. Specific investment projects, from north to south, are:

- » Norton Healthcare Sports & Learning Center
- » Two-Way Conversions on West Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park / West Chestnut Street
- » Russell: A Place of Promise 30th and Madison Site
- » Eclipse in Russell Apartments
- » Bezos Academy
- » ElderServe Expansion
- » West Broadway Complete Street (Broadway all the Way)
- » The Norton Healthcare Goodwill Opportunity Campus
- » The Nia Center
- » Norton West Louisville Hospital
- » Elliott Park Improvements
- » Arthur's Earth Sanctuary

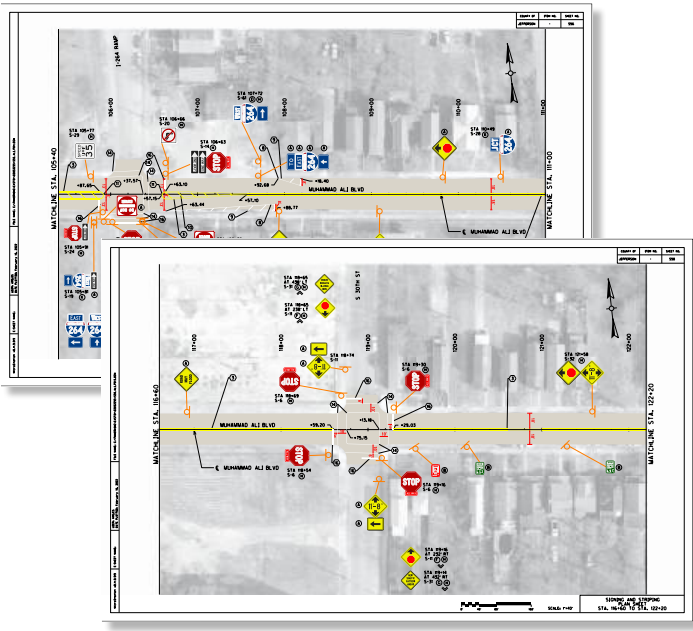




■ **Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center Facilities** — Photo from Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center website

Norton Healthcare Sports & Learning Center

Opened in 2021, this 24-acre campus on a former brownfield is now a premier track and field facility that also offers other forms of recreation and educational and community programming hosted by the Louisville Urban League. It includes a hydraulic indoor track, an outdoor track and field, family fun zone with a bowling alley, courts for other sports, rock climbing, and private event and meeting spaces. The facility hosts track meets, concerts, and other community events. The Louisville Urban League aims to foster economic and civic empowerment to elevate the standard of living for African Americans and residents of underserved urban neighborhoods.



■ **Construction Drawings on West Muhammad Ali Boulevard** — Plans from Louisville Metro Government Department of Transportation

Two-Way Conversions on West Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive / West Chestnut Street

A part of the Reimagine 9th Street project, the construction of the two-way conversions on these east-west streets is underway and is anticipated to be complete in 2026. The design is limited to “curb-to-curb” changes with paving, striping, intersection changes, and traffic signal changes. The two-way conversion will run from 9th Street in Downtown Louisville to Northwestern / Southwestern Parkway. The project aims to reunite Russell and Downtown with greater Louisville, provide safe and efficient operations for all road users, improve health outcomes and economic opportunity, and create engaging public spaces. The project cost is nearly \$25 million with \$15.6 million in federal RAISE grant funds, \$4 million from other federal sources, and \$5.4 million from Louisville Metro for both design and construction.



■ **Proposed site design for RPOP's 30th and Madison Street site** — Rendering from Perkins&Will

Russell: A Place of Promise's 30th and Madison Site

RPOP has been working through a design process with architects and landscape architects at Perkins&Will to develop a site plan on the 5-acre site at 30th and Madison Streets. RPOP is currently working with Norfolk Southern Railroad to finish land acquisition on the southwestern edge of the property and with Louisville Metro Government to finish land entitlement for the other parcels. The site design includes a central public space and buildings that house a bank, RPOP's future office, medical offices, and housing.



■ **Eclipse in Russell apartments** — Photo from LDG Development website

Eclipse in Russell Apartments

This project, built by LDG Development and part of the LOU 2.2 Housing initiative, is located between Chestnut and Magazine Streets at 30th Street and offers high-quality 280 affordable, income-restricted homes at 30% and 80% Area Median Income (AMI) limit. Local and federal financing programs for affordable housing will keep rents affordable for a long time. The building has one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, and the development includes wraparound services to improve resident health, education, and economic mobility. It hosts on-site, after-school activities, community events, and a resident food pantry.



■ **Bezoz Academy** — Photo taken by the project team

Bezoz Academy

Bezoz Academy’s programs are based on the principles of the Montessori method, and they are building a network of Montessori-inspired preschools in under-resourced communities. Classrooms use hands-on materials that spark children’s interest and learn at their own pace. The school in Russell was a partnership with LDG Development and is located at South 31st Street and River Park Drive near the Eclipse Apartments.



■ **Elliott Park Sprayground** — Photo from Olmsted Parks Conservancy website

Elliott Park Improvements

Elliott Park is an Olmsted Park that includes a basketball court, grills, multi-use fields, a playground, restrooms, shelter, sprayground, and walking paths. In 2024, it underwent a \$3 million dollar renovation that included upgrading the playground and basketball court, renovating the historic field house, and adding a sprayground. Funding came from several sources: the Olmsted Parks Conservancy, City budget allocations, the American Rescue Plan, and \$725,000 from local donors. LDG Development donated \$100,000 to help make some of the improvements.



■ **The ElderServe building at Magazine Street and 28th Street** — Photo taken by the project team

ElderServe Expansion

ElderServe, located across the street from Elliott Park, is a non-profit that has been in service for more than 60 years. It helps seniors in Jefferson County overcome social isolation and maintain their independence through programs, activities, creative workshops, and more. In 2025, it expanded its on-site services to include an adult day health center that offers medical care, particularly for those suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.



■ **The Goodwill Opportunity Center** — Photo from the Goodwill Opportunity Center’s website

The Norton Healthcare Goodwill Opportunity Campus

Built on a former brownfield, this \$100 million project (which also includes the Norton West Louisville Hospital) used New Markets Tax Credits to help build the campus. It opened in 2024 and is a one-stop shop for childcare, workforce development, career coaching, mental health services, and physical amenities like a technology lab, business center, conference rooms, and community cafeteria. KentuckianaWorks, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana, Blak Koffee, the YMCA, Volunteers of America, Park Community Credit Union, Kentucky College of Barbering, Legal Aid Society, University of Louisville College of Dentistry, and the Shawnee Christian Health Center are all co-located on the site. To make the campus easier to access, a sheltered TARC bus stop was added.



■ The Nia Center, next door to the Goodwill Opportunity Campus — Photo taken by the project team

The Nia Center

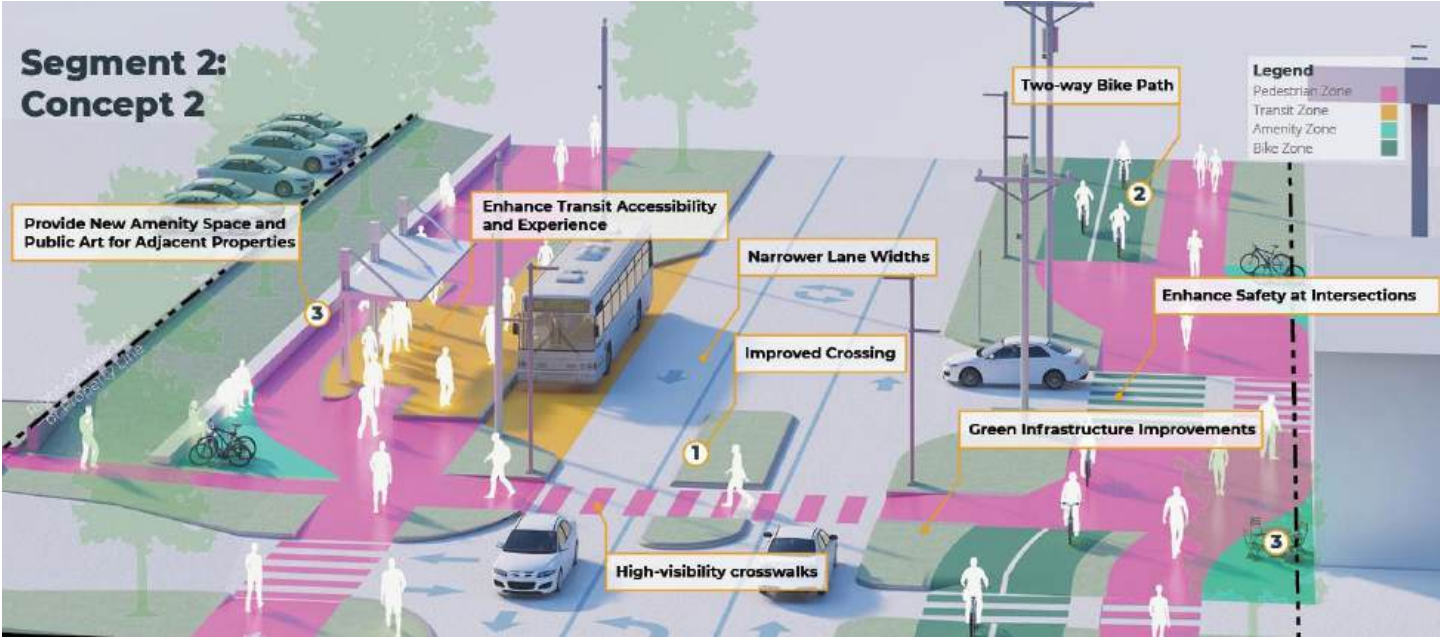
The Transit Authority of River City (TARC) has agreed to sell the Nia Center to the West Louisville Dream Team, Inc. for \$2.1 million in January 2026. This is an economic development group comprised of West Louisville residents and business owners that aims to continue the Nia Center’s current small business operations, youth and mental health programs, and revitalize the building



■ The Norton West Louisville Hospital— Photo from the Norton West Louisville Hospital website

Norton West Louisville Hospital

This is a comprehensive healthcare center on the Opportunity Campus at South 28th Street and West Broadway, which is the first medical center built in West Louisville in more than 150 years. Before building the center, Norton Healthcare conducted community engagement through surveys (more than 4,500 were collected) and more than 300 events to learn what residents needed. The hospital includes adult and pediatric care physician offices, emergency room services, women’s care, outpatient functions, and more.



■ Broadway All the Way Design Option — Image courtesy of Louisville Metro Government Department of Transportation

West Broadway Complete Street (Broadway All the Way)

This 10-mile streetscape project aims to prioritize safety, mobility, and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and transit riders. During the planning phase, public engagement occurred to identify priorities for the street. Now, it is in the design phase funded by a federal grant, which also includes some public engagement. The corridor was divided into four segments; Segment 1 (Southwestern Parkway to 29th Street) and Segment 2 (29th to 12th Street) run through the study area. In Segment 1, a shared use path is envisioned along the northern edge. In Segment 2, two lanes will be used for bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes. Generally, conditions for pedestrians will be improved (intersections and sidewalks), and the streetscape will include bike paths, places for café seating, plazas, better landscaping, improved lighting, and better signage.

“Broadway All the Way is a visionary transportation project to reimagine the Broadway corridor in Louisville, KY, with a specific focus on prioritizing safety, mobility and accessibility for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.”

— Broadway All the Way project statement on the project’s website

BUILDING CONSENSUS

Project Themes

RPOP has conducted hundreds of public engagement activities since 2018 about the future of the neighborhood and the site at 30th and Madison Streets. This study’s themes emerged from common topics raised during these conversations, meetings, site walks, and storytelling events. **Health and Wellness** and **Entrepreneurship** emerged as overarching themes for all recommendations, but **Community and Family** and **Arts and Culture** were also important themes for residents.



Health & Wellness

Health and Wellness involves the social determinants of health, like active living, access to food, strong social ties, and access to healthcare. A hospital was recently built in the study area and a Kroger is immediately east of it. However, true access to healthcare and healthy food is limited due to the conditions of the public realm, making connections to these places unsafe or uncomfortable. If residents can walk, take transit, or bike to and from destinations, active lifestyles become an easier routine. Infrastructure improvements improve social ties by providing spaces, like comfortable streets and parks, for people to gather and recreate.



Art & Culture

Sharing Art and Culture has consistently come up during engagement events. Russell has a deep history of community resilience. RPOP’s previous Storytelling events have uncovered many stories of past and present residents, business owners, and changemakers. These histories and more can be reflected through public art by local artists, events and performances, and wayfinding. Vacant sites, blank walls, streets, parks, and viaducts are immediate opportunities to celebrate and share Russell’s legacy.



Business & Entrepreneurship

The Business and Entrepreneurship theme involves small business support, workforce training, and hiring practices. The Goodwill Opportunity Campus, the Nia Center, and other organizations in the neighborhood provide many of these services, but improvements to infrastructure and the public realm can increase true access to these services. Public realm improvement priorities may help identify sites that could redevelop in the future with new opportunities for small businesses and training.



Community & Family

Community and Family includes keeping residents in place, providing access to high-quality greenspace and recreation, and providing safe, joyful, and inclusive spaces for families. RPOP’s purpose as a community land trust (CLT) is to generate investment in Russell without displacement and their mission is underway with 25 housing units being built nearby on Elliott Avenue, and the future redevelopment of the 30th and Madison site. This planning study can support those projects through better street design, improving the design of William Britt Park, improving wayfinding, and recommending potential programs for the public spaces.

LOUISVILLE’S PAST EFFORTS

Legacy of Planning

Several planning efforts underway or completed in recent years affect the study area and broader **Russell and Parkland neighborhoods**. Some are at the neighborhood scale and others are city- and metro-wide initiatives.



“Addressing the challenge of growth may require targeting regional cooperation, focusing on local and regional strengths such as local food, arts and entertainment, and livability.”

— Overview of Louisville in the Vision Louisville Phase 1 Report

UNDERWAY

Brownfields Study

RPOP is partnering with the Commonwealth of Kentucky’s Energy and Environment Cabinet and the Louisville Metro Government Brownfields Program to offer community education and information about resources available to redevelop brownfields, which are vacant and underutilized properties with real or perceived environmental contamination that complicates their redevelopment, in the 30th Street corridor. These conversations will include opportunities for residents and other stakeholders to provide input into the future of brownfields in this area.



■ Site walk in Russell during the Publica effort — Photo from the Designing Safety, Building Belonging Louisville Report

COMPLETED 2026

Publica’s Designing Safety, Building Belonging Louisville Report

This study focuses on rethinking the how safety in public spaces is considered, particularly for women, girls, and non-binary people, with an emphasis on the importance of intersectionality of experiences. The report defines safety as freedom from violence, harassment, and intimidation; usability; and sense of belonging and levels of participation. RPOP was highlighted in this report as a case study of ambitious community groups that are reshaping the city to meet their needs, and as part of the effort, Publica conducted a public realm audit in Russell. The report stated, “Safety for many people, particularly in Russell, is about being safe in the knowledge that they will recognize and be welcomed in their neighborhoods in the future and that their children will have access to property and wealth in the places where they grew up.” Some broad opportunities for Louisville as a whole

included: implement a program of community engagement to inform neighborhood safety and management systems (night time walks, better wayfinding and signage); deliver active bystander training; celebrate women’s stories in public spaces; invest in women-led local businesses and events; co-design public spaces with women, girls, and gender diverse people; develop a night-time strategy for additional night-time activities; include gender inclusion in the LDC; and use gender inclusive principles in urban design. Feedback from Russell residents that could be helpful for the District Planning effort include adding more places to gather, cleaning up the public realm to address trash and strong smells, adding traffic calming measures, improving sidewalks and safety for pedestrians, and adding wayfinding signage.

UNDERWAY

Land Development Code (LDC) Reform

Louisville Metro Government is reforming the Land Development Code with a focus on equity and form-based districts through a multi-year effort. The reform began in 2020 and many input events have been held throughout the years. The Office of Planning is currently pursuing changes to all urban residential districts to allow Neighborhood (formerly “Middle”) Housing, like duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, walking courts, and cottage courts. This would change what is allowed by-right on residential properties in the study area. Additionally, the reform includes changes to the EZ-1 Enterprise Zone zoning district, which comprises a significant portion of the land in the study area, particularly following the railroad tracks, and which allows residential, industrial, and commercial uses.



■ Excerpts of the Neighborhood Housing Standards and Graphics — Images from the Louisville Metro Government Office of Planning’s 2024 document about Neighborhood Housing in the LDC

COMPLETED 2025

TARC 2025: Moving Forward Together:

This planning process evaluated three scenarios for the bus network to improve service frequency and ridership. The TARC Board approved the “Enhanced” version of the network as the basis for the re-design, and implementation is anticipated for August 2026. The draft network would include a couple frequent routes (15 minutes or less) in and near Russell on Broadway, Dixie Highway, and Market Street. Other, 30-minute routes would also run through the neighborhood on Muhammad Ali Boulevard, 28th Street, Louis Coleman, Jr. Drive, and part of Market Street.



■ The TARC “Enhanced” Plan in and around Russell — Map from the TARC 2025 Draft Plan StoryMap

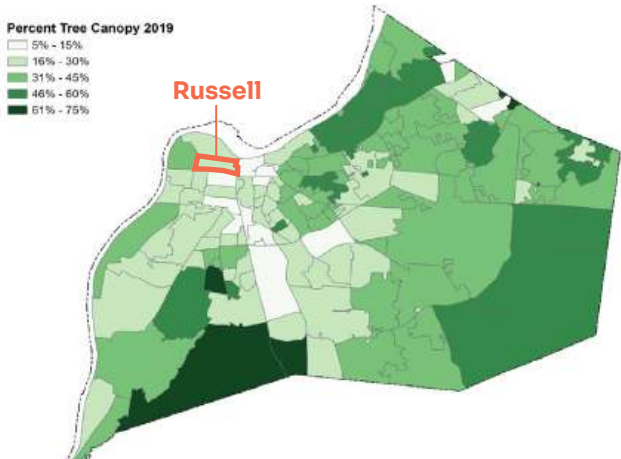
COMPLETED 2025

Urban Forest Master Plan

This is a long-term plan, led by Louisville Parks and Recreation and Trees Louisville, to address challenges facing Louisville by best stewarding the urban forest through care and management of the tree canopy and partnerships with different organizations. The goals for the urban forest are to:

- » Prioritize access to tree canopy or all residents, working toward a minimum of 30% tree canopy in each neighborhood.
- » Work toward a mentality change that recognizes trees as vital city infrastructure.
- » Ensure people can walk, bike, and take transit without heat stress.
- » Ensure tree canopy is resilient, protected, and sustainable in the long term.

This plan emphasized how inequitable tree canopy coverage is across Louisville, and how redlining contributed to this inequity. Tree canopy coverage slightly grew between 2012 and 2019, reaching a citywide average of 39% coverage. Despite this growth, Russell was one of the neighborhoods that lost tree canopy coverage during that time. The plan offers 10 strategies (with 33 smaller actions) to increase tree canopy coverage.



COMPLETED 2023 + 2013

Parks for All / Parks System Master Plan

A parks system master plan was developed in 2016, but the 2023 Parks for All plan now serves as the parks system master plan. This was an equity initiative led by Parks Alliance of Louisville and Louisville Parks and Recreation to develop an equitable and transparent investment plan for the park system, which includes 161 parks and recreation sites. Throughout the city, there are 81 neighborhood parks, 29 community parks, 14 community centers, 10 major urban parks, 10 golf courses, 6 parkways, 4 greenways, 3 outdoor pools, 2 historic homes, 1 regional park, and 1 aquatic center. The action plan establishes organizational structure, policies, practices, and operations; dedicates more financial resources for services; allocates financial resources to equitable investment; recommends investment in existing assets; improves and ensures equitable maintenance practices; provides equitable distribution of funding for community center operations; develops a plan for long-range capital investments that build on increasing funding; and, frames a coordinated strategy among the Louisville Parks and Recreation Department and park non-profits.

The plan notes, “Compared to similarly sized cities, Louisville Metro has invested significantly less in its public park system for decades, even though Louisville’s Park System is significantly larger, with more acres and more assets than the average urban park system. This means Louisville spends less on parks but has more to maintain, even when Jefferson Memorial Forest is excluded.” The plan also noted that William Britt Park received no capital investments from Metro Budget, Metro Council, or philanthropic partners between 2004 and 2023, and Elliott Park received less than others. Both parks were listed as “third priority” sites for investment (Elliott Park recently underwent a major renovation, right).

COMPLETED 2020

Elliott Park Master Plan

The Olmsted Park Conservancy and Louisville Parks and Recreation collaborated on the Elliott Park Master Plan, which builds on “Olmstedian” principles and aims to make the park a lasting and inclusive asset for Russell residents. The plan notes, “The Elliott Park site was pivotal in making the Russell Neighborhood the community that it is today. Its use as a baseball field from the early 1880’s to mid 1920’s solidified the land as both a formal and informal recreation space for the neighborhood.” Since this plan was written, the park has gone through a renovation as described on page 12.

COMPLETED 2020

Louisville Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan

This plan updates and builds on the previous comprehensive plan, Cornerstone 2020, adopted in 2000, and grew out of Vision Louisville (2012) that provided a 25-year vision for the city. This plan applies to all of Louisville Metro—all cities and unincorporated areas of Jefferson County—and sets the policy vision. The plan anticipated that the metropolitan area would grow to more than 1,550,000 people by 2040. The plan has six plan elements (community form, mobility, community facilities, economic development, housing, and livability), all of which have a series of goals and strategies to reach those goals. This plan led to the Land Development Code reform currently underway.

Rendering — Image from the Vision Russell Transformation Plan

COMPLETED 2017

Vision Russell Transformation Plan

This study was the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan (through the Department of Housing and Urban Development), led by the Louisville Metro Housing Authority. The five priorities of the plan are to improve educational outcomes for children, improve the health and safety of residents, create strong retail and service centers and expand economic opportunity, increase the availability of high-quality mixed-income housing, and improve connectivity within the neighborhood. In the study area, this plan identified a neighborhood center at 30th Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard. Several other centers were identified throughout Russell and conceptual plans were developed for them. Before the Transformation Plan was completed, several funding resources were secured to advance housing, improve streetscapes, invest in office and retail development, start building a health center, and more.

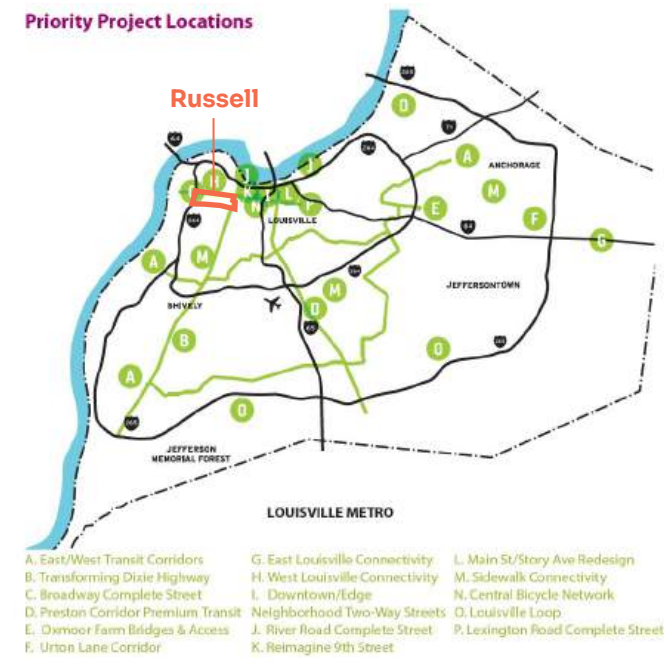
The 2019 progress report noted the success of creating Russell: A Place of Promise. In the study area, this plan led to the construction of the Eclipse Apartments and the Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center and improvements to Elliott Park (see other initiatives that also recommended these park renovations).



COMPLETED 2017

Move Louisville

This 20-year multimodal transportation vision for policy and investment aimed to reduce vehicle miles traveled, preserve existing streets and sidewalks, provide better connectivity and real options for travel, provide a better link between transportation and land use, put the city in a position to enhance its transportation funding, and identify opportunities for redevelopment through transit-oriented development. In Russell, this plan led to the Broadway all the Way Complete Streets project with design currently underway, the two-way conversions on River Park Drive / Chestnut Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard currently under construction (now part of the Reimagine 9th Street initiative), and an expanded bike network that has routes in the neighborhood. Another project recommended in this plan that would affect Russell is the extension of River Road west from 7th Street to Portland and Russell. River Road is re-imagined as a complete street and would connect to existing and proposed waterfront parks.



COMPLETED 2013

Vision Louisville Phase I and Phase II

Phase I of Vision Louisville was created in 2012 and Phase II was finished in 2013. This was a 25-year vision for the future of Louisville, noting that changing economies, climate change, infrastructure maintenance, water access, energy usage, and demographics will drive future change. It suggested that the best focus areas for Louisville’s future will be:

- » **Regionalism:** pooling resources across cities and nearby states
- » **Connectivity:** multimodal networks, connecting to the Ohio River, digital connection
- » **Living:** all neighborhoods should have access to resources, amenities, and activities
- » **Creativity:** attracting and retaining talent, becoming a leader in industry, entrepreneurship, education, innovation, culture
- » **Health:** physical and social health, healthcare for the aging population, increasing life expectancy, health equity
- » **Energy:** shifting to renewable energy, reusing brownfields for renewable energy, retrofitting large buildings to be more sustainable,
- » **Identity:** developing a brand that is the heart of everything the city does / the city voice

Phase II was an opportunity for residents to tell city leaders where to focus energy and resources based on the themes above.

■ **Move Louisville Priority Projects Diagram** — Image from the Move Louisville plan document

COMPLETED 2013

Louisville Loop Master Plan

The Louisville Loop is the city’s planned 100-mile, multi-use pedestrian and bike path. Some segments are already built. A vision that began in 1993, was revived through other efforts and was carried forward again in 2011 by adding it to the 25-year vision for the city. This master plan has five goals for the network: build community engagement, encourage health and wellness, maintain and conserve, encourage sustainable development around the Loop corridor, and ensure funding to develop and sustain the Loop. The Loop is intended to be mostly an off-road shared use path, often along stream corridors, the Ohio River, streets, and natural areas. The master plan identifies several partners for planning, design, and implementation that includes various departments at the Metro Government, non-profits, and other governmental agencies. The closest segments of the loop to Russell are built paths in the Shawnee Park and Shawnee Golf Course to the west, and the segments directly to the north along the Ohio River. With other plans for bike routes throughout the city, Russell could be better connected to the Louisville Loop.

COMPLETED 2013

Sustain Louisville

This is the city’s first sustainability plan, prepared by the Office of Sustainability. The Office’s objectives are to protect the environment and reduce Louisville’s carbon footprint; ensure the health, wellness, and prosperity of all citizens; and, create a culture of sustainability. The plan notes how interconnected each of the focus areas are. For the west side of Louisville specifically, it mentions the amount of land area dedicated to vacant and underutilized properties, often brownfields, that could be repurposed for economic growth.

COMPLETED 2013

Prepare Louisville

This plan documents how Louisville is starting to feel the effects of climate change, such as warming temperatures, more days above 90 degrees, more precipitation, and less snowfall in the winter. It also noted how this could continue if global emissions continue on the same trajectory. The plan focuses on climate equity, stating, “Prepare Louisville addresses climate impacts to the entire community, with additional attention to reducing existing stressors and investing in those who have been historically marginalized.” This involves empowering Louisville’s residents, prioritizing investment in disadvantaged groups, reducing stressors to vulnerable populations, and engaging disadvantaged groups in decision-making.

Many recommendations from this plan are relevant to this District Planning effort. Some examples are: creating cooler neighborhoods with increased tree canopy and shade in public places, thereby reducing impervious and heat-absorbing surfaces; investing without displacement; promoting environmental justice by investing in high-heat and vulnerable neighborhoods; protecting people from air pollution by expanding bike, pedestrian, and transit networks; improving the availability of healthy foods by promoting community and urban gardens, connecting food delivery to lower income neighborhoods, and transforming vacant lots into gardens; and, increasing access to health care by increasing access to neighborhood clinics and healthcare options.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Russell Neighborhood Today

An analysis of the Russell neighborhood was conducted by Perkins&Will and RPOP in 2019, so this district planning effort focused on key physical environment conditions and demographic indicators that needed to be updated with new data.

Historic Policy Decisions Affect Today’s Conditions

Historic discriminatory decisions of the past affect connectivity and the socioeconomic status of neighborhoods across the country to this day. Many of the most apparent are Urban Renewal projects in the 1950s - 1970s that focused on “slum clearance,” the construction of the interstate system, and the Homeowner’s Loan Corporation’s (HOLC) “Residential Security” maps created in the 1930s, which are commonly referred to as redlining maps (Louisville’s is to the right). Redlining caused banks to deny loans in certain neighborhoods based on race and socioeconomic status. Throughout the country, areas that were redlined still experience higher poverty rates, lower homeownership rates, among other disadvantages¹.

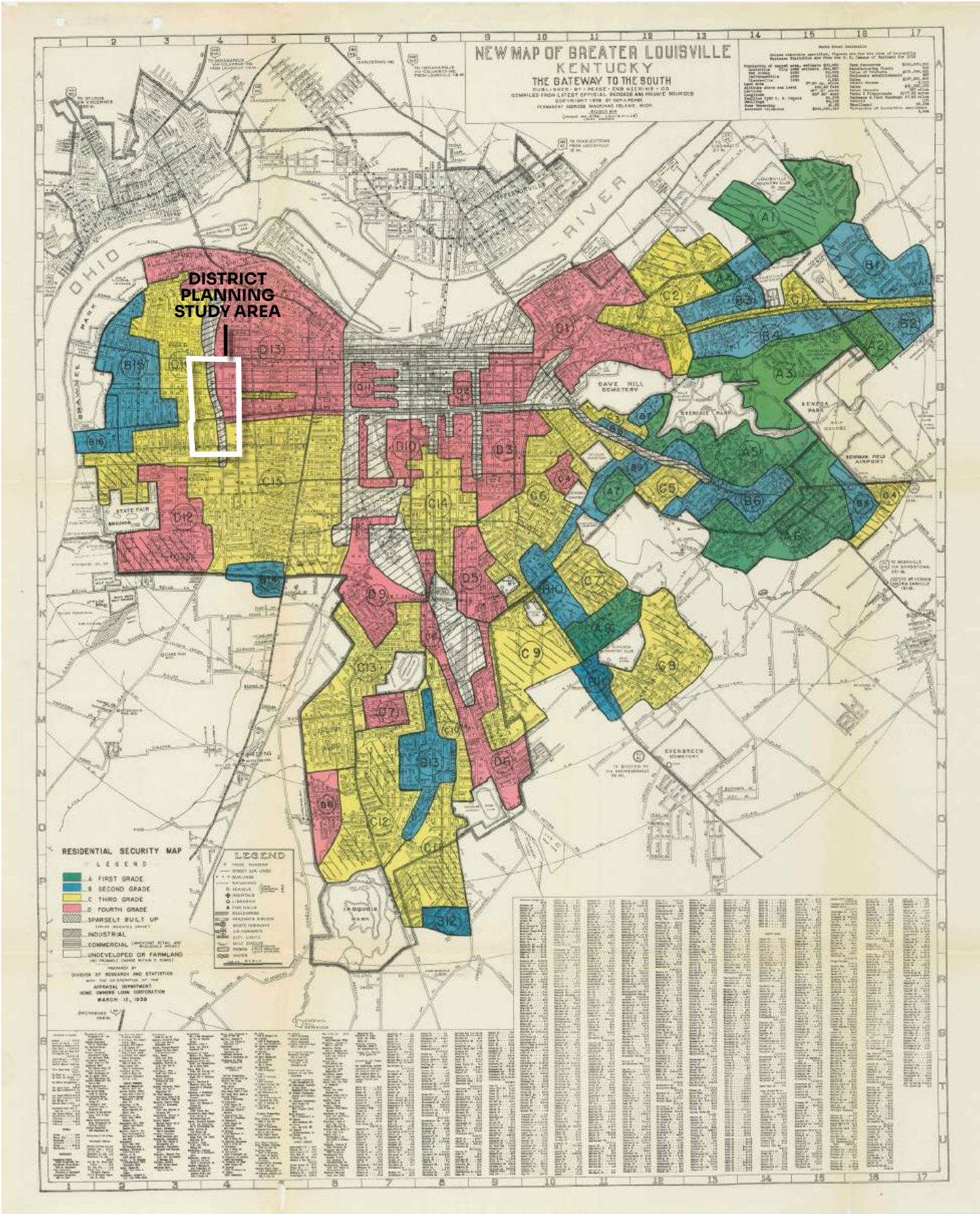
To build Interstate 264 through the West End, 814 buildings that housed 870 families were demolished,

many of which were in Russell and this study area². Today, the system of viaducts created by the railroads and the interstate create uncomfortable conditions, and properties between them are isolated from the centers of the Russell and Shawnee neighborhoods.

In the HOLC 1937 map for Louisville, nearly all of Russell was “redlined” as “hazardous” for residential security. In contrast, Downtown Louisville had pockets of “Grade D” areas, but most of it was designated as commercial or industrial land that was not graded for home loans. Most of the areas that avoided redlining are residential neighborhoods to the northeast and southeast of downtown. As shown by data mapped for this study on the following pages, neighborhoods that were not redlined and did not experience the barrier created by an interstate have higher median incomes, higher educational attainment, lower concentrations of vulnerable populations, and lower concentrations of households with no car.

1 <https://www.loyic.org/redlining-louisville-news>

2 <https://www.udstudio.org/stories/a-history-of-urban-renewal-in-downtown-louisville-slum-clearance-and-highway-construction>



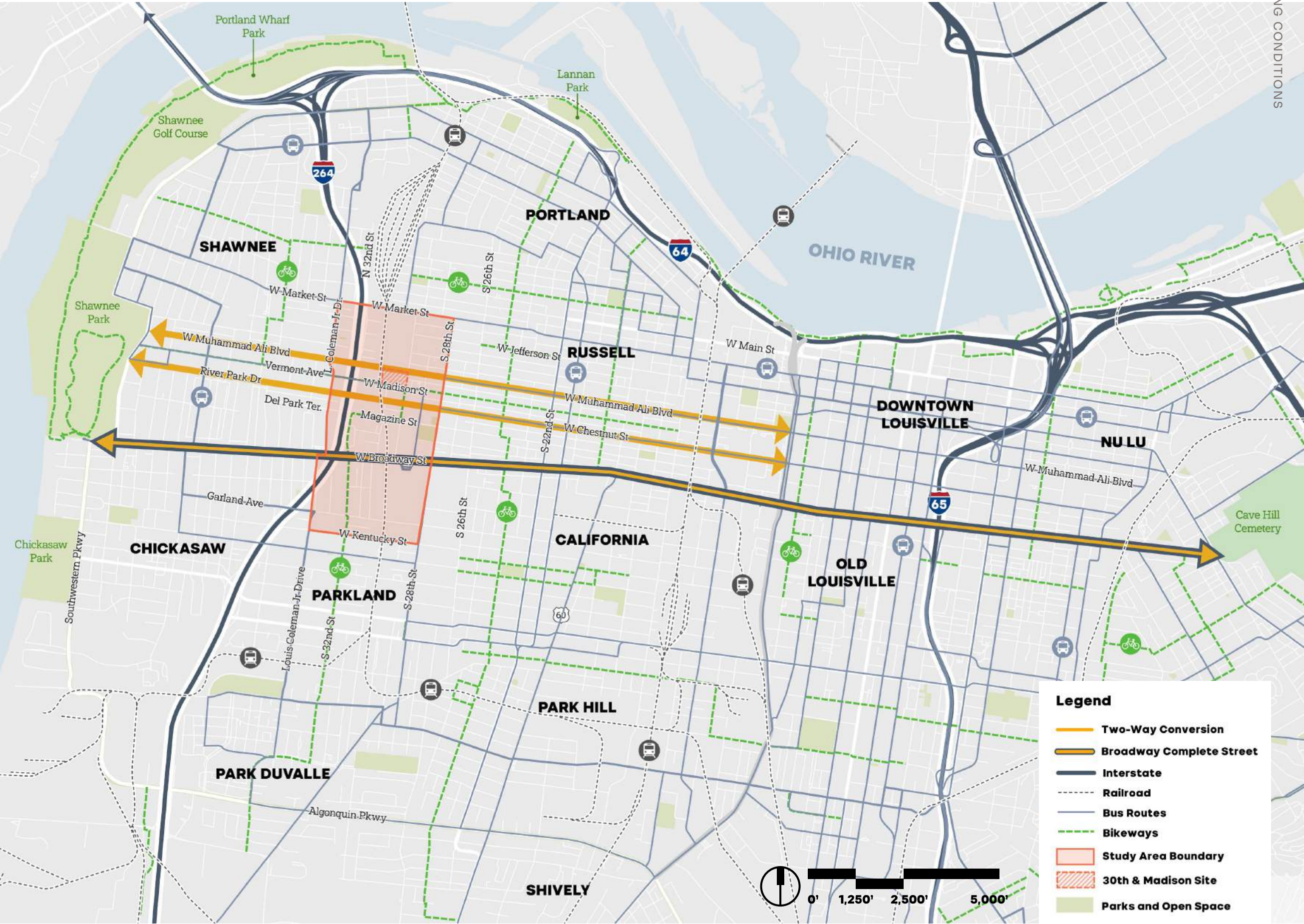
■ Louisville’s HOLC “Residential Security” Map

Broader Connectivity

The study area is experiencing improvements to the transportation network with the two-way conversions on West Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive / West Chestnut Street, the complete street re-design on West Broadway, and bus system changes with the new TARC network. In the new TARC network, bus service on Broadway and part of West Market Street will arrive every 15 minutes or less. Other routes in the study area will have service every 30 minutes. The Broadway All the Way project integrates the new TARC route in its design with proposed separated transit lanes where feasible. The streetscape projects will better connect Russell and Parkland to east / west neighborhoods and downtown Louisville.

Several planned bikeways also connect into the neighborhood. Some of the streets are planned to be “Neighborways,” which are low-traffic volume streets that will have pavement markings, signage, traffic calming, and intersection crossing treatments to prioritize cyclists and pedestrians. The Louisville Metro Bikeways plan shows that Madison Street is intended to be a “Neighborway” from 15th Street to Southwestern Parkway, which would connect to the Louisville Loop. Portions of 30th Street to Del Park Terrace and 32nd Street are also planned “Neighborways.”

It will be key to improve Russell streetscapes that connect to these major infrastructure investments to create a continuous and safe pedestrian experience.



Demographic Indicators

Vulnerable Populations by Census Block Groups (2023 ACS data)

The study area is home to high concentrations of seniors (> 65 years old) and youth (<18 years old), which are considered vulnerable populations, particularly related to mobility needs. The five block groups that are partially or fully within the study area have a population of 25.5% to 30.8% children and 12.9% to 20.3% seniors. The rest of Russell has high percentages of each population, particularly children. Nearby neighborhood California generally has a high child population percentages. In contrast, Old Louisville has lower populations of children and relatively high senior populations (some block groups are above 30% seniors), and Downtown Louisville has low populations of both groups.

When designing streets, intersections, parks, and other places in the public realm, it is important to consider the safety and comfort of children and seniors. Current infrastructure throughout the study area does not consistently support safe travel for the most vulnerable populations, due to broken and narrow sidewalks, incomplete and disconnected sidewalks, little to no street lighting, limited tree coverage, insufficient ADA ramps at intersections, blocked sidewalks, and sidewalks right next to travel lanes with no buffers.



Percentage Renters

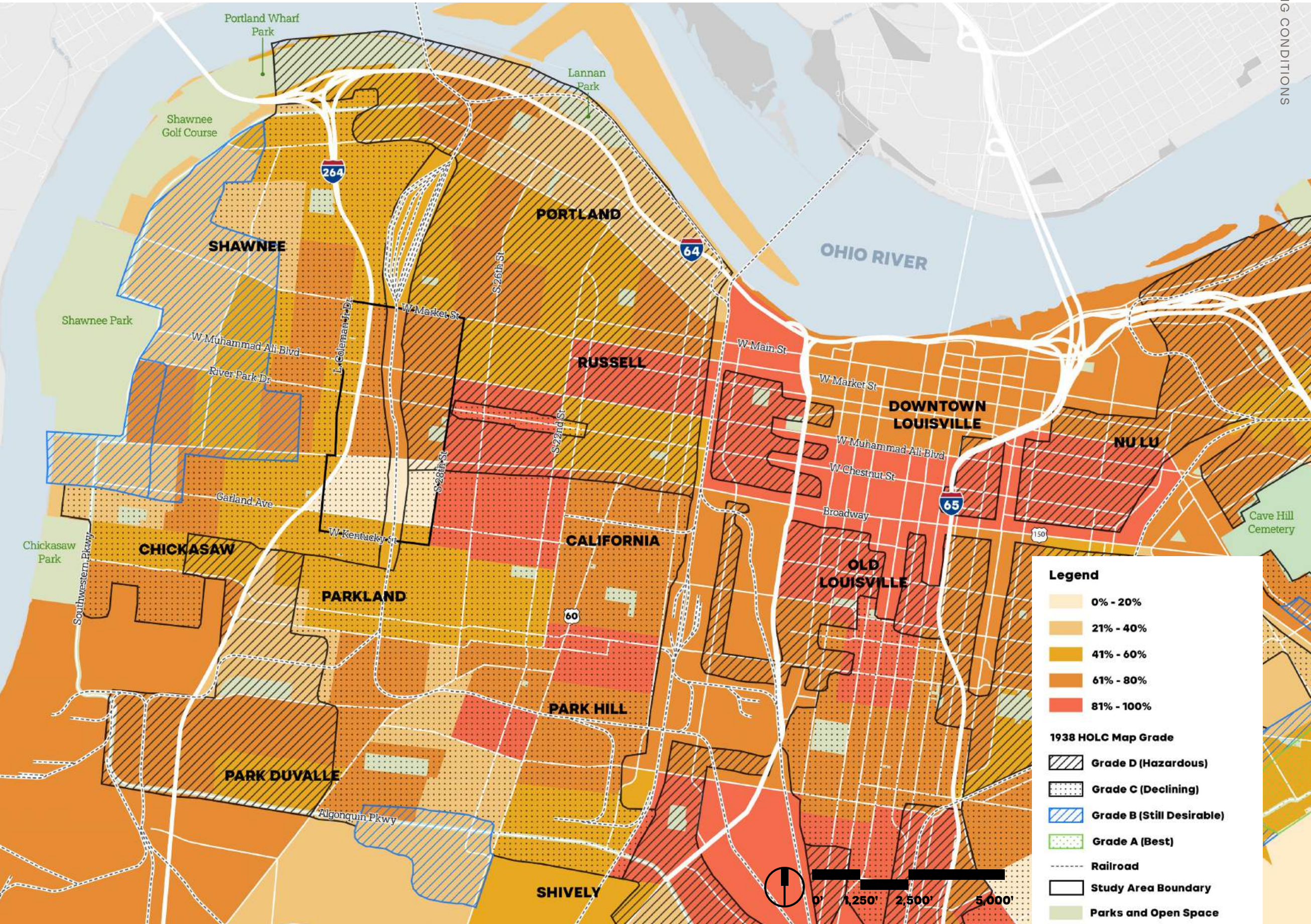
Percentage of Renter-Occupied Households by Census Block Groups (2023 ACS data) and HOLC 1937 Data¹

Determining the homeownership and renter rates is important for determining how at risk residents are to displacement, particularly as investment continues in Russell over time. Homeowners can experience displacement pressures through higher property taxes and pressure to sell their homes to investors, but renters are extremely vulnerable to the decisions of landlords.

The study area and Russell neighborhood as a whole have more than 60% renters compared to homeowners. The Census block group north of Broadway in the study area has 78% renter-occupied households, while the block group to the south has only 17% renter-occupied households. In the block groups that make up the rest of Russell, two have between 40% and 42%, while the others are between 81% and 97% renter-occupied households. Neighborhoods to the west, south, and far east have lower percentages of renters, but Downtown and Old Louisville also have very high percentages.

Many of the places in Russell with high renter-occupied households were graded as “Grade D” or “Grade C” in the HOLC 1937 maps. However, in the West End, some places were not redlined, like part of Shawnee near the river, which received a “Grade B.” These areas generally have lower renter-occupied household rates.

¹ Mapping Inequality: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/KY/Louisville/context#loc=13/38.2183/-85.7399>



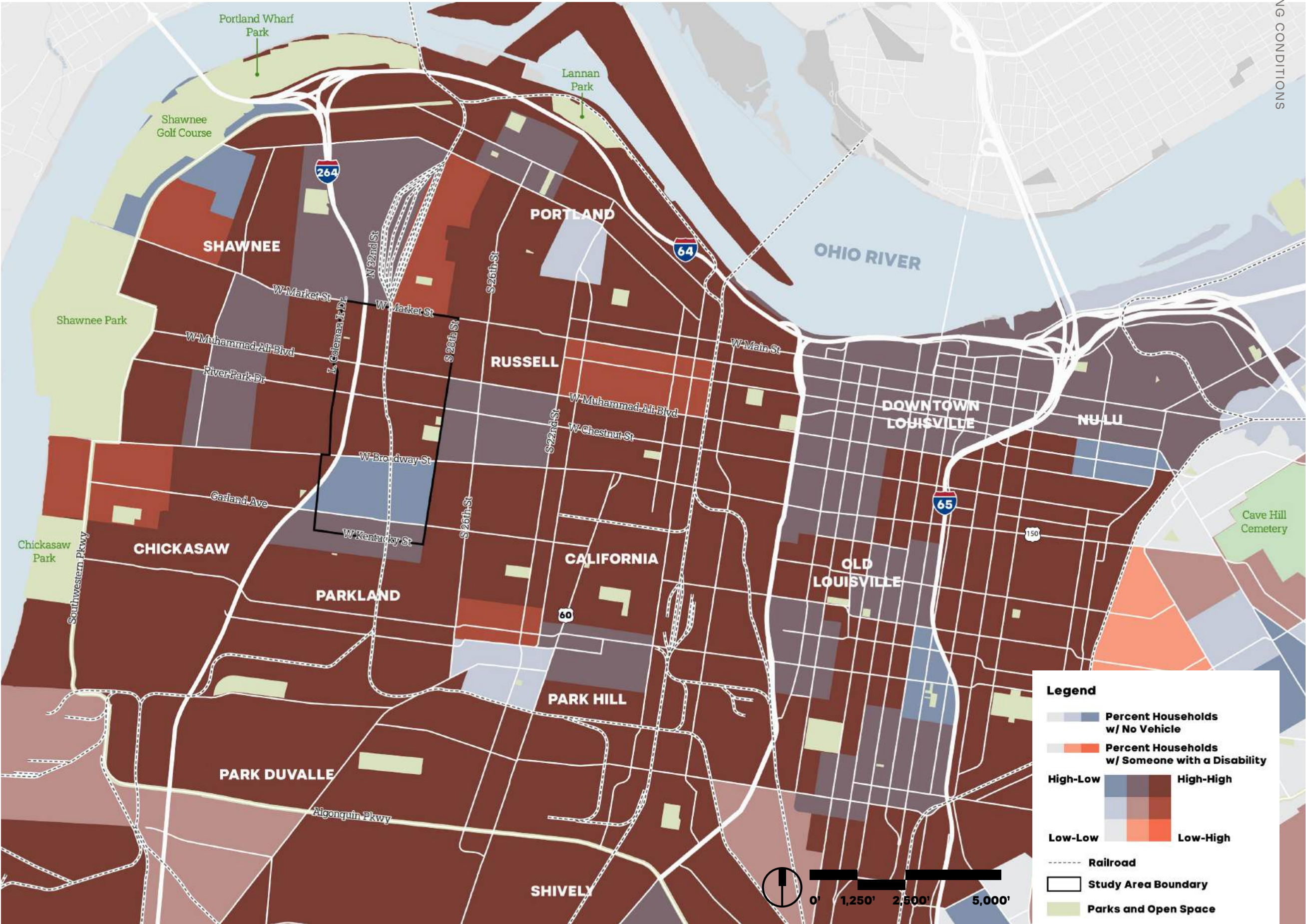
Households with Someone with a Disability x Households with No Car

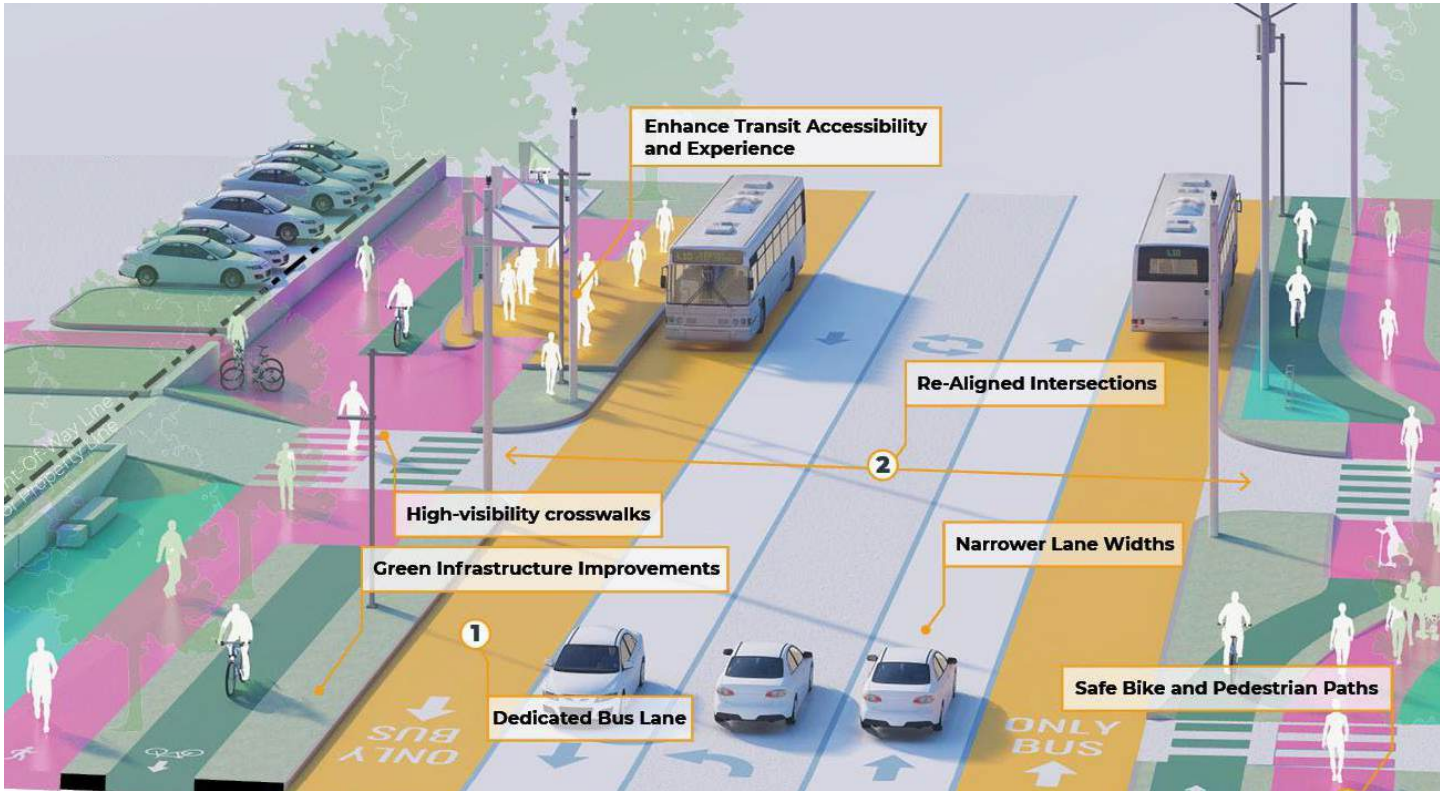
Data shown by Census Block Groups (2024 ACS data)¹

Individuals with a disability, without access to a car, or both, experience more access barriers, particularly when infrastructure is not built or maintained. The presence of sidewalks, long crossing times at wide intersections, and ADA compliance for ramps, signals, and crosswalks is are key public realm improvements needed in Russell to improve connectivity. These improvements support better access to bus stops and are particularly important for streets leading to rapid routes, like those on Broadway and proposed in TARC's new bus network.

Compared to Downtown Louisville and neighborhoods to the east and southeast, the West End has higher overlap of households with no access to a vehicle and households where at least one occupant has a disability. The largest Census block group in the study area has 31.5% of households with a disability and 46% of the households do not have a car. Comparatively, in the Census block group on the south side of Broadway, only 3% of households have a person with a disability and 11% of households have no vehicle at home. In Downtown Louisville, 30% to 42% of households have no vehicle, but only 12% to 13% of households have an occupant with a disability.

1. Data breaks for Medium to High: Medium for Disability is 6% to 15%; Medium for No Vehicle is 1.7% to 8.7%; High for Disability is 15% or higher; High for No Vehicle is 8.7% or higher





■ **Broadway All the Way Project – Conceptual Design Option** — Courtesy of Louisville Metro Government

Nighborhood Connectivity

As previously described, the study area will experience changes in transportation and mobility through various ongoing projects, like the two-way conversions on Muhammad Ali Boulevard and Chestnut Street, Broadway complete street project (Broadway All the Way), and the re-design of the TARC bus routes. In addition to inconsistent sidewalk conditions, viaducts for the railroad tracks and I-264 / Shawnee Expressway interrupt the pedestrian experience. Viaducts create dark, narrow spaces that feel unsafe, collect trash, and puddle stormwater runoff, and contribute to perceived barriers to connection. The interstate also has multiple exits that connect directly with neighborhood streets (onto and off 32nd Street and 33rd Street), which increases traffic speeds in those neighborhoods and further creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians.

Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- 30th & Madison Site
- Reimagine 9th Street Project**
- Two-Way Conversion Street
- Broadway All The Way Project**
- Complete Street
- Bus Routes
- Street Cutoff by Highway
- Bus Stop
- Viaducts
- Railroad crossing
- Cut-off and Dead-end
- Parks
- Interstate ROW
- Interstates
- Interstate Ramp
- Bikeways



Land Use & Zoning

Land Use

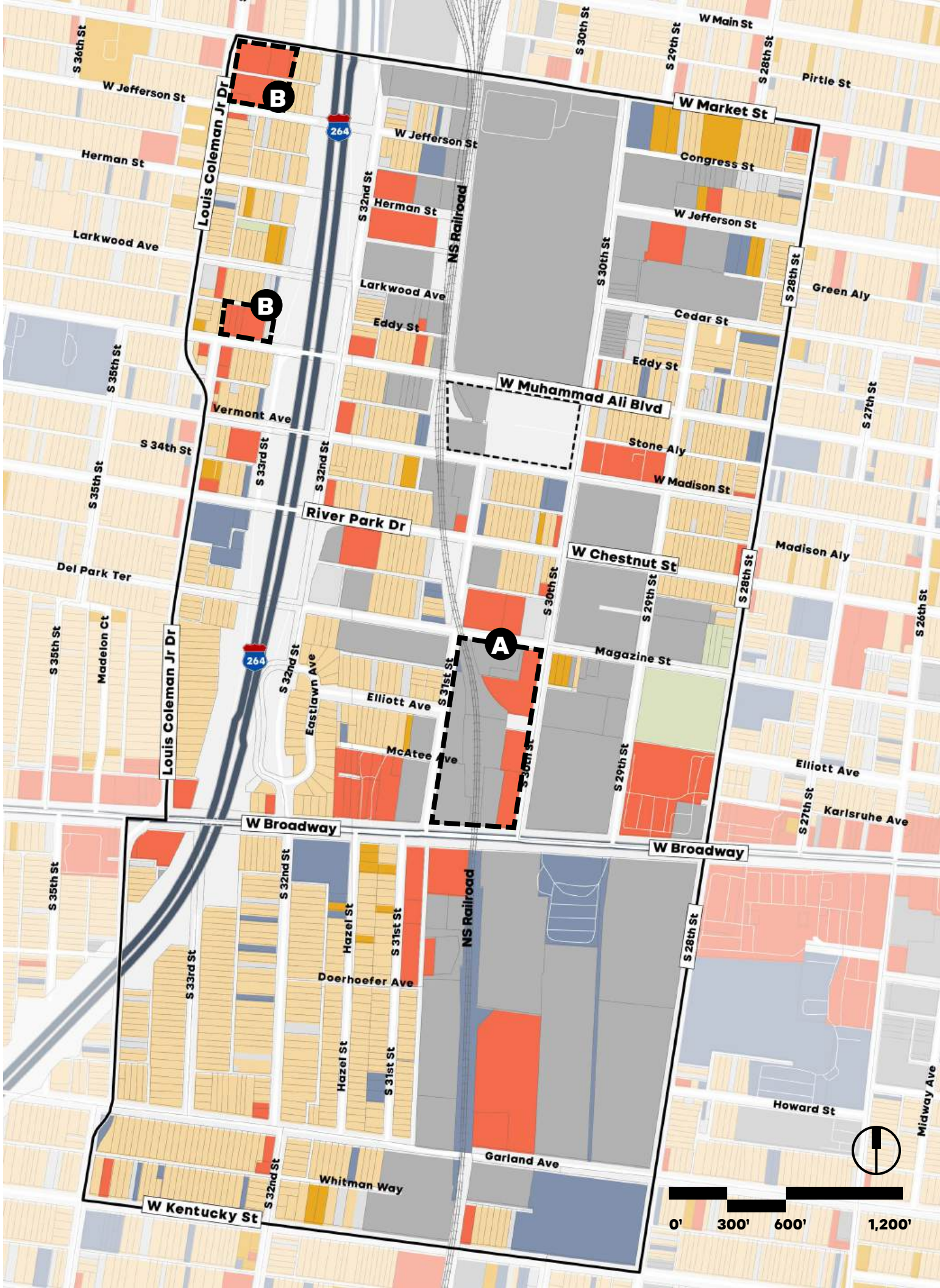
Generally, the current land uses across the study area align with the zoning districts assigned to the properties. Industrial land dominates the properties along the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks due to the historic industrial nature of this part of the Russell neighborhood. Some of these properties are now vacant. For example, the land between Magazine and Broadway west of 30th Street has no buildings, but it is fenced and various building materials are scattered across the properties (A on the map).

Pockets of commercial properties are distributed throughout the study area, but most of those are along West Broadway, particularly east of 28th Street and west of Louis Coleman, Jr. Drive. Some of these properties are located near the interstate exits and entrances, but they may feel disconnected from the rest of the community, particularly on foot, and businesses may have limited success because of the barriers created by the railroad tracks and interstate. For example, the collection of commercial properties just west of I-264 on West Muhammad Ali Boulevard at the exit onto 33rd Street and at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Louis Coleman, Jr. Drive are now vacant (B on the map).

Residential land use makes up many blocks of the study area with mostly single-family properties and some multi-family. It is easy to see where the interstate, the ramps, and the surrounding right-of-way interrupted the residential fabric of the neighborhood by cutting off streets and demolishing homes. In recent years, some residential properties have become vacant, but there has also been new investment—the Eclipse apartments were recently constructed at 30th and Magazine Streets.



Single-family homes in Russell— If the Office of Planning continues to pursue Neighborhood Housing in the LDC update (see page 40), properties zoned with a Single-Family Residential district could have Neighborhood Housing allowed by-right.



Zoning

As noted above, Louisville Metro Government is undergoing a comprehensive reform of the Land Development Code (LDC), also known as the zoning code, which has been underway with many public outreach events since 2020. The Metro Government acknowledged the systemic racism persisting in contemporary zoning practices due to intentional segregation and discrimination more than a century ago. The new version of the LDC will be focused on equity and form-based districts to make it consistent with the recommendations in the Plan 2040 comprehensive plan and to redress the harmful impacts of previous policies.

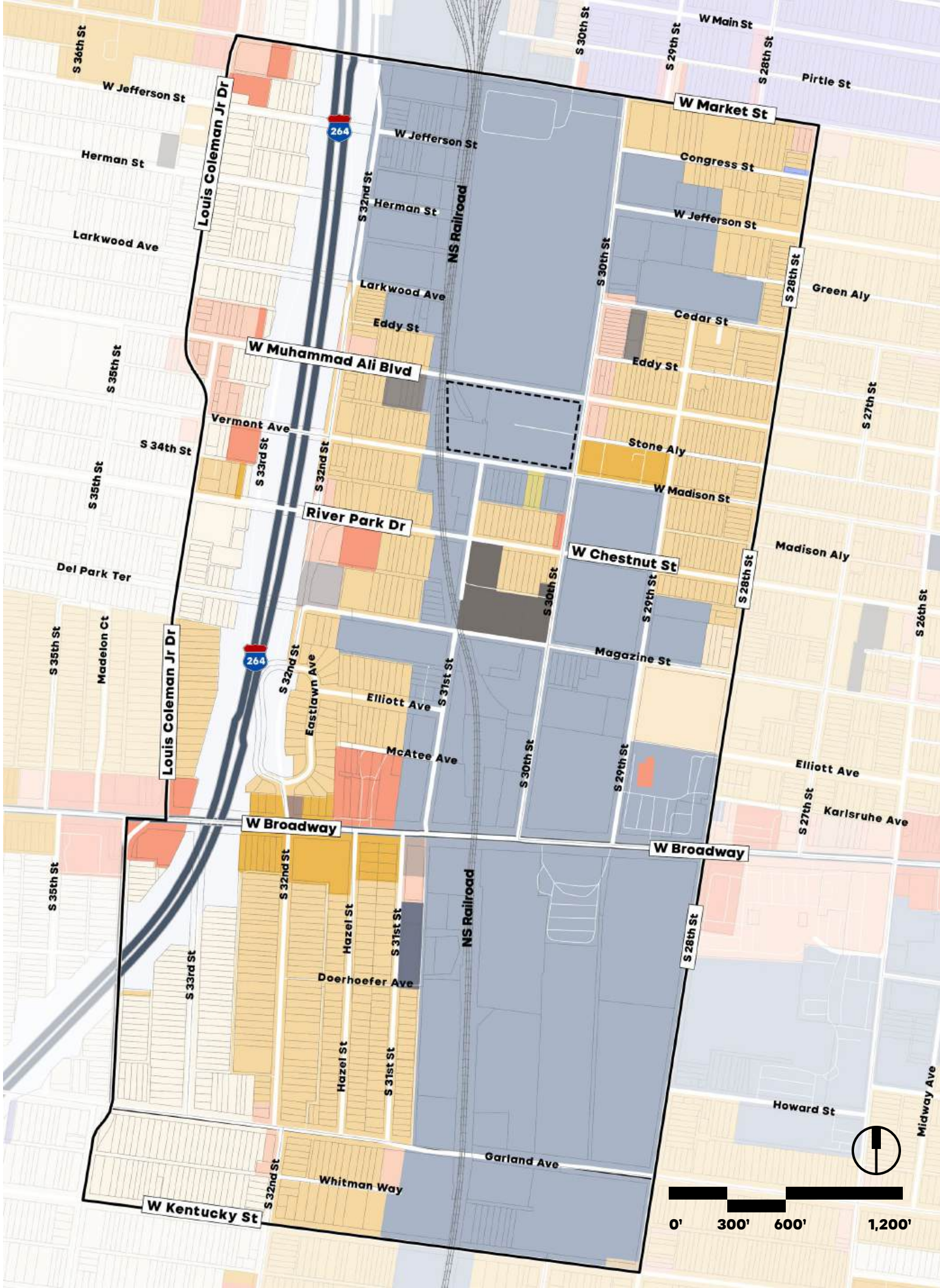
The EZ-1 Enterprise Zone district, which allows flexibility with commercial, industrial, and residential uses, makes up approximately 180 acres, a large percentage (44%), of the land in the study area. When it was created in the 1980s, it relaxed environmental regulations and provided tax incentives, but it was widely criticized, and a 2001 study indicated that these districts did not actually help neighborhoods. There may be updates to this district during the re-write, but the website does not provide specifics about those changes as of the writing of this report. The Metro Government’s StoryMap linked above describes the effects the EZ-1 zoning district had on communities: “The EZ-1 zoning district expanded opportunity for harmful industrial zones to be located within or near neighborhoods occupied by Black populations, and low- to- moderate income households. The EZ-1 zoning district replaced lower intensity industrial or commercial districts with a hybrid district that permitted higher intensity industrial and noxious uses, as well as residential uses.”

The LDC reform also intends to allow neighborhood housing in all urban residential districts, which could open the study area to small-scale economic growth for homeowners and a variety of housing types that meet different income levels and space needs.

As noted on the LDC reform’s project website, “Building on two years of research and community conversations, the Office of Planning is proposing an amendment (23-LDC-0003) to the Louisville Metro Land Development code (LDC) that will allow Neighborhood Housing to be built in all residential areas in Louisville Metro. The proposed changes include six different Neighborhood Housing types: duplex, triplex, fourplex, townhouses, walking courts, and cottage courts.

Neighborhood Housing will be included in LDC Chapter 4, Part 3: Permitted with Special Standards. This means that the Neighborhood Housing types listed above will be permitted in all zoning districts where residential use is allowed, provided that the standards for building size, height, setbacks, and other design criteria are met. The standards are in ranges that will fit the form of existing homes and neighborhoods, allowing for flexibility and easy implementation.”

In this effort’s first Stakeholder Committee meeting in March 2026, some raised the concerns about package liquor stores in the neighborhood. The LDC reform process is also evaluating regulations for that use.





38%

of Louisville residents live within a **10-minute walk of a park**

77%

Percent of people living within a 10-minute walk of a park in the 100 most **populous cities**.

57%

Percentage of **all cities and towns** whose people live within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Park Access

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) measures and ranks park access for the 100 most populated cities in the United States. Louisville ranks 96th out of 100, with only 38% of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park. Comparatively, on average in the 100 most populous cities, 77% of residents do, and 57% of residents do in all cities and towns across the country. In Louisville, residents in neighborhoods of color have 46% less park space than residents of white neighborhoods. Elliott Park and William Britt Park are the only two parks within the study area.

There are very few parks in the Russell neighborhood overall; however, TPL’s ParkServe score does not show the neighborhood as having major walkability gaps in park access. This is likely because Westonia Park and Portland Cemetery are also measured with the tool. Although most Russell residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park or greenspace, this does not mean that the parks serve all the recreational needs of the neighborhood.

The 2023 Parks for All Plan (see page 22) noted that William Britt Park received no capital investments from Metro Budget, Metro Council, or philanthropic partners between 2004 and 2023, and Elliott Park received less than others in the city. Both parks were listed as “third priority” sites for investment in the plan, and Elliott Park recently underwent a major renovation funded through multiple sources. William Britt Park is an opportunity to improve an existing public space within the neighborhood. No new parks were recommended around Russell, so adding parks and public spaces may be the responsibility of private redevelopment projects or neighborhood advocacy for repurposing vacant properties as usable greenspaces.

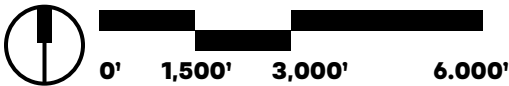
■ Elliott Park sprayground (photo, top) — Photo from Olmsted Parks Conservancy website



Legend

- Park with Public Access
- 10-Minute Walk Service Area
- High Priority Areas for New Parks
- Study Area Boundary
- 30th & Madison RPOP Site

■ Gaps in park access in a 10-minute walk service area — Map created with data from the Trust for Public Land ParkServe Tool



Heat Risk & Tree Coverage

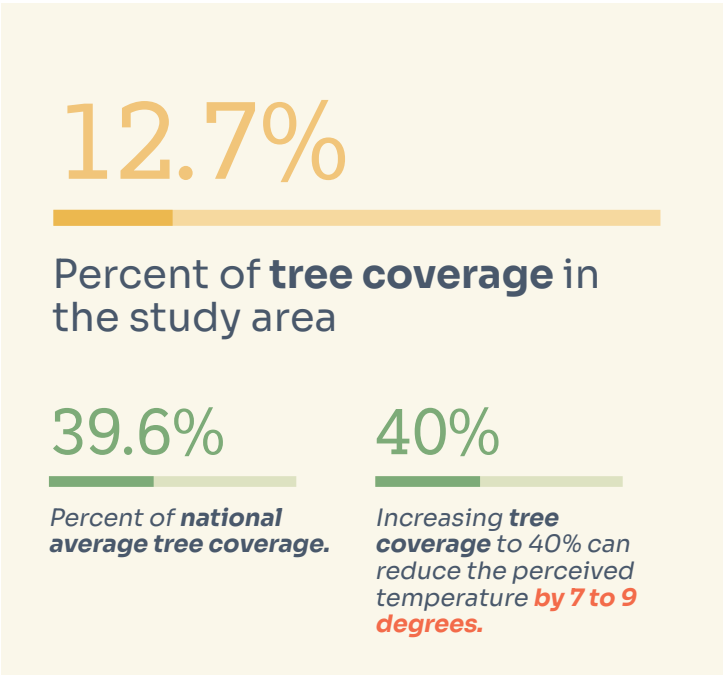
Higher temperatures can have several adverse impacts for neighborhoods, like worsened air quality, higher risk for heat-related health incidents (like heat stroke, extreme dehydration) particularly for seniors and children, and higher utility bills. Impervious surfaces, like roofs, parking lots, and streets increase air temperature because they absorb the heat instead of reflecting it, and reduce natural cooling via evaporation.

Tree canopy coverage and other forms of shade reduce the perceived temperature and risk of heat-related incidents. Most of the neighborhood in the study area experiences severe heat risk or high heat risk as shown in the map to the right, likely due to the industrial nature of land development over time. This is exacerbated by a very low tree canopy coverage of 12.7% within the study area, compared to a national average of 39.6%.¹ Tree canopy is focused along the interstate right-of-way and on some residential streets. Increasing the tree canopy coverage to 40% can reduce the perceived air temperature by 7 to 9 degrees.²

One way to increase canopy overage is to plant trees in the public realm—along streets and in parks. Louisville Metro Government recently released an Urban Forest Master Plan (see page 22 for a summary), which aims to increase the tree canopy coverage through 10 strategies. The Urban Forestry Team has funding to plant street trees through May 2029 with an annual cycle for prioritizing places for street trees. This program could be used to fund the installation of street trees in the study area and Russell more broadly.

1 <https://ncelenviro.org/articles/first-in-science-city-trees-can-reduce-urban-heat-island-effect/#~:text=Results%20Researchers%20found%20an%20urban,very%20small%20amounts%20of%20cooling>

2 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-51921-y#:~:text=Trees%20may%20be%20able%20to,urban%20and%20geographical%20contexts18.>



Susceptibility to Change / Redevelopment Potential

Properties that are susceptible to change could face redevelopment pressure, particularly as investment occurs over time. To determine the most susceptible properties, a series of six criteria were added together (see chart below), found through data analysis and field checks using Google Earth street view and site visits. **No parcels had all six criteria**, and some noted as “susceptible to change” through initial analysis

Land Value > Improvement Value:
Is the land value higher than the improvement (building) value?

1 or 0
1 = Yes
0 = No

+

Vacancy Status:
Is the property vacant based on Jefferson County Land Use data and evaluated using desktop research?

2 or 0
2 = Yes
0 = No

+

Ownership status: Is the property owned by a public agency or non-profit, which presents opportunities for more redevelopment control?

1 or 0
1 = Yes
0 = No

+

Present-Day Density Entitlement:
How many residential units are permitted per acre? When residential is allowed through form districts, it received a 1.

0 to 3
3 = ≥58
2 = 34.9 to 57.9
1 = 17.43 to 34.8
0 = ≤17.42

+

Present-Day Use Entitlement:
Does present day zoning allow commercial and / or industrial uses?

2 or 0
2 = Yes
0 = No

+

Potential for Neighborhood Housing:
Single-family residential districts may allow Neighborhood Housing after the LDC update. Is it zoned single-family?

1 or 0
1 = Yes
0 = No

are already undergoing or recently completed new investment, like the Goodwill Opportunity Campus and Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center. These properties were removed by multiplying the sum by zero. Parcels that came out as susceptible or very susceptible were typically vacant properties with present-day high-density, commercial, or industrial zoning entitlements or potential for Neighborhood Housing.

1 or 0
Yes = 0
No = 1

Recent developments, public spaces:
Did the property recently experience investment, is it currently being redeveloped, or is it a park or school?

×

Maximum score of 9

No properties reached the maximum score. See legend below for how susceptible they are.

29%

Percent of study area properties that are susceptible to very susceptible to change.

25%

Percent of study area properties that are vacant.

Legend

0 to 2 - Not Susceptible to Change

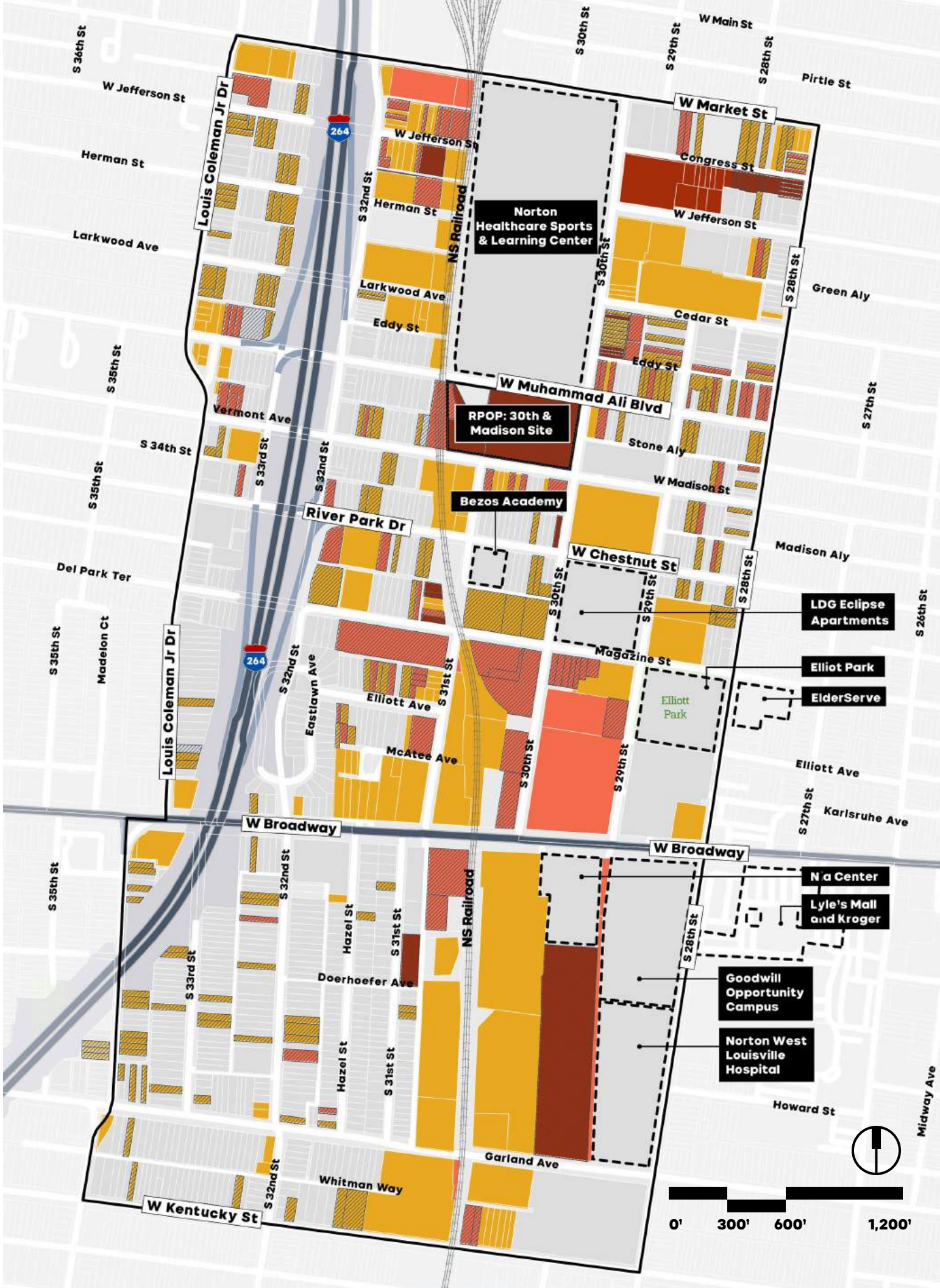
3 to 4 - Somewhat Susceptible to Change

4 to 5 - Susceptible to Change

6 to 8 - Very Susceptible to Change

Vacant Properties

Recent & Ongoing Investment



PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Nationwide Case Studies

Several best practice case studies in North America were evaluated for how to improve **corridors, railroad and interstate viaducts, and the public realm** to reconnect communities, particularly in under-invested neighborhoods.

All the initiatives reviewed involved many years of effort, partnerships between multiple organizations, and funding from a variety of sources. It is common for non-profit organizations to lead the projects or to be created in order to advance the large-scale projects. Funding for implementation often comes from multiple sources, like federal, state, and local governments, philanthropic organizations, and donations. In historically Black and under-invested neighborhoods, the organizations leading the projects also put anti-displacement and workforce development policies in place.

Common Themes

Common findings for physical improvements include:



Streets, Trails and Park Connections

Using leftover spaces around infrastructure for trails, sidewalks, parks to reconnect neighborhoods.



Events & Programming

Festivals, fitness, farmers' markets, art, performances.



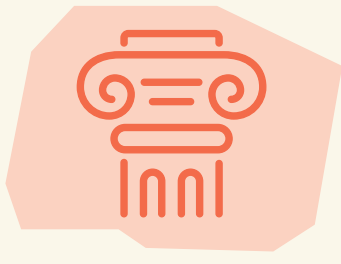
Honoring Black History and Art

Sharing neighborhood pride and history through art, events, and long-term economic benefits.



Stormwater Management and Shade

Reducing impervious surfaces, planting native landscape, using the public realm for shade and stormwater management.



Public Art of All Types

Murals, temporary and long-term installations, performances, sculpture, lighting.



Opportunities for Redevelopment and Reclaimed Land

Taking back land for the community, identifying key sites for development.



CASE STUDIES

Viaduct Treatments

While some cities are removing and burying their interstates in urban areas, several cities across North America have made smaller interventions to improve the experience of walking, biking, and driving under viaducts. The study area has viaducts created by both the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and the I-264 / Shawnee Expressway. A few examples of improvements are described in the following pages.

■ Electric Philadelphia installation at 6th Street (photo, top, opposite)— © 2020 City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program / Drew Billiau & David Guinn, 6th and Vine Streets. Photo by Steve Weinik.

Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia



In the Auburn Avenue underpass created by I-75/85 running through Downtown Atlanta in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood, neighborhood history is shown with a large-scale mural and signage that hangs down from the interstate noting important landmarks. Sweet Auburn is one of the nation’s most significant historic Black neighborhoods; its commercial district is what enabled the area to thrive, with its success as the largest concentration of African American businesses in the country, later becoming the stage for much of the nation’s Civil Rights Movement. Some of these institutions are still in the neighborhood today, while others were lost due to the impacts of the interstate’s construction through the middle of the neighborhood, Urban Renewal, and disinvestment. The viaduct installation was made possible by Transportation Enhancement funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Central Atlanta Progress / Atlanta Downtown Improvement District.

Just south of Auburn Avenue, another viaduct created by the railroad tracks across Grant Street was improved with an art piece created out of road safety reflectors arranged in a pattern. It is a low-cost, durable installation that provides some light and improves the experience walking under it. This was completed through the MARTA Artbound program with artist Adam Bostic.

■ Viaduct in Atlanta near King Memorial MARTA station (photo, middle, right) — Photo courtesy of Marques Chaplin

Auburn Avenue viaduct in Atlanta (photo, bottom, right) — Photo courtesy of Cities United

Electric Philadelphia
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



The “Electric Philadelphia” art piece on the 6th Street underpass in Philadelphia serves as the gateway to the historic district. It involves paint and lighting that spread along retaining walls outside and inside the underpass. The 6th Street underpass project required significant coordination between different organizations, such as Mural Arts Philadelphia, Visit Philly, Historic Philadelphia, and the Office of Councilmember Isaiah Thomas. It received funding from Visit Philadelphia, A.P. Construction, PennDOT, and the City of Philadelphia.



The Bentway
Toronto, Canada



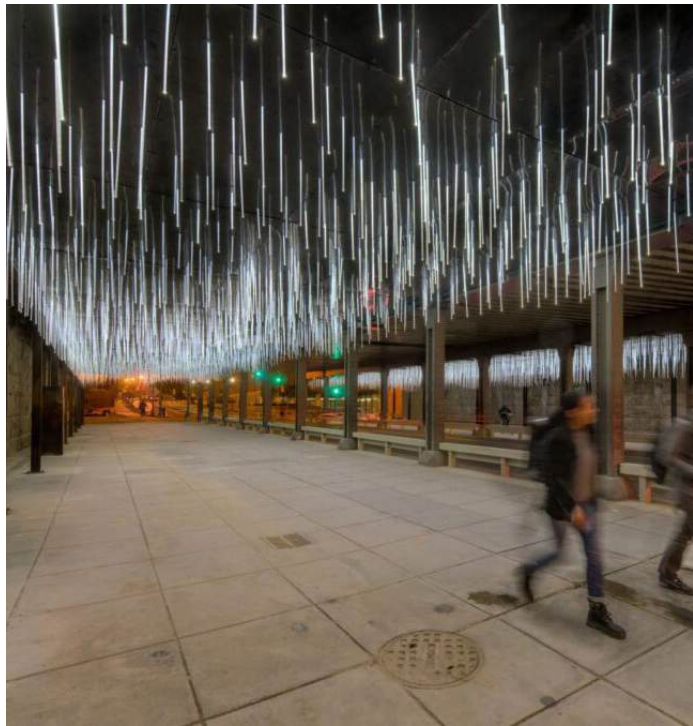
The Bentway project in Toronto attempts to re-imagine spaces underneath the Gardiner Expressway viaduct (branded as “Toronto’s shared space”) for use as public spaces and events and to address environmental and public health concerns along the expressway. This is a large-scale initiative with installations and programming that fall into different intensities of design and resources. The example here shows the application of colorful paint and wayfinding on the interstate columns and walls.



NoMa Rain Installation
Washington, D.C.



The Rain installation in the NoMa neighborhood of Washington, DC, on M Street NE, uses creative lighting to brighten the underpass. The 4,000 LED-powered polycarbonate rods glow 24 hours per day. Like another installation in the neighborhood, Lightweave, the lighting responds to traffic in the underpass. The traffic pulses the lights like a rain shower. This installation was part of an initiative called the NoMA Parks Project led by the NoMa BID and NoMa Parks Foundation, that began with recommendations in 2012 to improve three NoMa underpasses with art installations. Rain was installed in 2018 and was designed by Thurlow Small Architecture + NIO architects.



Painted infrastructure as part of the Bentway (photo, top, right) — Photo courtesy of the Bentway, Photographer Samuel Engelking.

NoMA Rain Light Installation (photo, above) — Photo from the NoMa website



CASE STUDIES

Reconnecting & Reclaiming Land

Other cities across North America have made more visionary goals to reconnect their communities around interstates, major streets, and transit infrastructure by reclaiming land and making policy decisions to combat displacement now and as the vision is realized.

Rendering of Sankofa Park on Crenshaw Boulevard (image, top) — Perkins&Will

Reconnect Rondo, driven by the community, aims to create a land bridge to reclaim land (photo, bottom) — Photo from the ReConnect Rondo website





Reconnect Rondo St. Paul, Minnesota



ReConnect Rondo is a non-profit leading the reconnection and land bridge project in the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul, which was disconnected by I-94 in the 1950s-1960s. Before the construction of the interstate, 80% of St. Paul's African American population lived in Rondo and businesses prospered. The project emerged from a variety of planning and research initiatives and community engagement, which have been ongoing for 10 to 15 years. The mission is to “create an African American cultural enterprise district connected by a community land bridge.” In addition to the long-term, physical design and land reclamation project of the land bridge, an Anti-Displacement and Community Investment Strategy was developed in 2021.

Many things will be implemented before the land bridge, including business incubation and pilots / pop-ups; community events; creating spaces for music, dance, and art; investment in cultural institutions; prioritizing local artists in galleries, museums, theater, music, and programming; and, strategic land acquisitions for affordable housing.



The Underline Miami, Florida



The Underline in Miami is a series of trails and greenspaces underneath the Miami Metrorail transit line, turning the space into a 10-mile linear park with a focus on public art and environmental stewardship. The initiative is a public-private partnership with multiple City departments (the City of Miami and City of Coral Gables), Friends of the Underline, and more. The original trail, the M-Path, was built in 1983 when Metrorail was built and was enhanced through this effort.

Planning began in 2013, and some phases have been constructed. It offers multiple forms of activity that attract people with different interests, like an urban gym, mini sports courts, dining tables, a sound stage plaza, gaming tables, a dog park, and playgrounds. The infrastructure itself is used for wayfinding signage by painting on the columns, thousands of new trees were planted, more landscaping was added through gardens and living classrooms, public art is installed, and micromobility hubs with bike racks and bike repair stations are placed along the corridor.

Destination Crenshaw Los Angeles, California



Destination Crenshaw is focused on 1.3 miles on the most iconic Black business corridor in Los Angeles, Crenshaw Boulevard, and the heart of the largest Black community on the west coast. This effort has goals of boosting the community through economic development, environmental healing, and elevating Black art and culture.

The planned light rail line to the airport was part of the impetus for the Destination Crenshaw planning effort, which includes the installation of public art and construction of new public spaces. The design elements include public art by local artists that celebrates Black culture, bringing cultural references into furnishings, installing wayfinding signage

along the corridor, using sustainable landscaping, planting hundreds of new trees, adding street furniture, and improving the sidewalk conditions.

The public art program, which is the largest public/private Black art program in the country, is well-funded through state and local funding sources. In addition to the physical improvements, the policies from project resulted in the Destination Crenshaw non-profit organization that ensures the expansion of resident job and training opportunities, commissions art and artists, and plans for long-term maintenance and operations. Through the DC Thrive program, at least 70% of construction jobs for the implementation of the project come from the neighborhood.



- **The Underline (photo, opposite, right)** — Photo from Adobe Stock, Felix Mizionnikov
- **Concept design for the land bridge (image, opposite, left)** — Architectural rendering: Design by Melo and Visuals by James. Accessed on Reconnect Rondo website.
- **Public space designs and inspiration for Destination Crenshaw (above)** — Renderings from Perkins&Will.

02

CHAPTER TWO

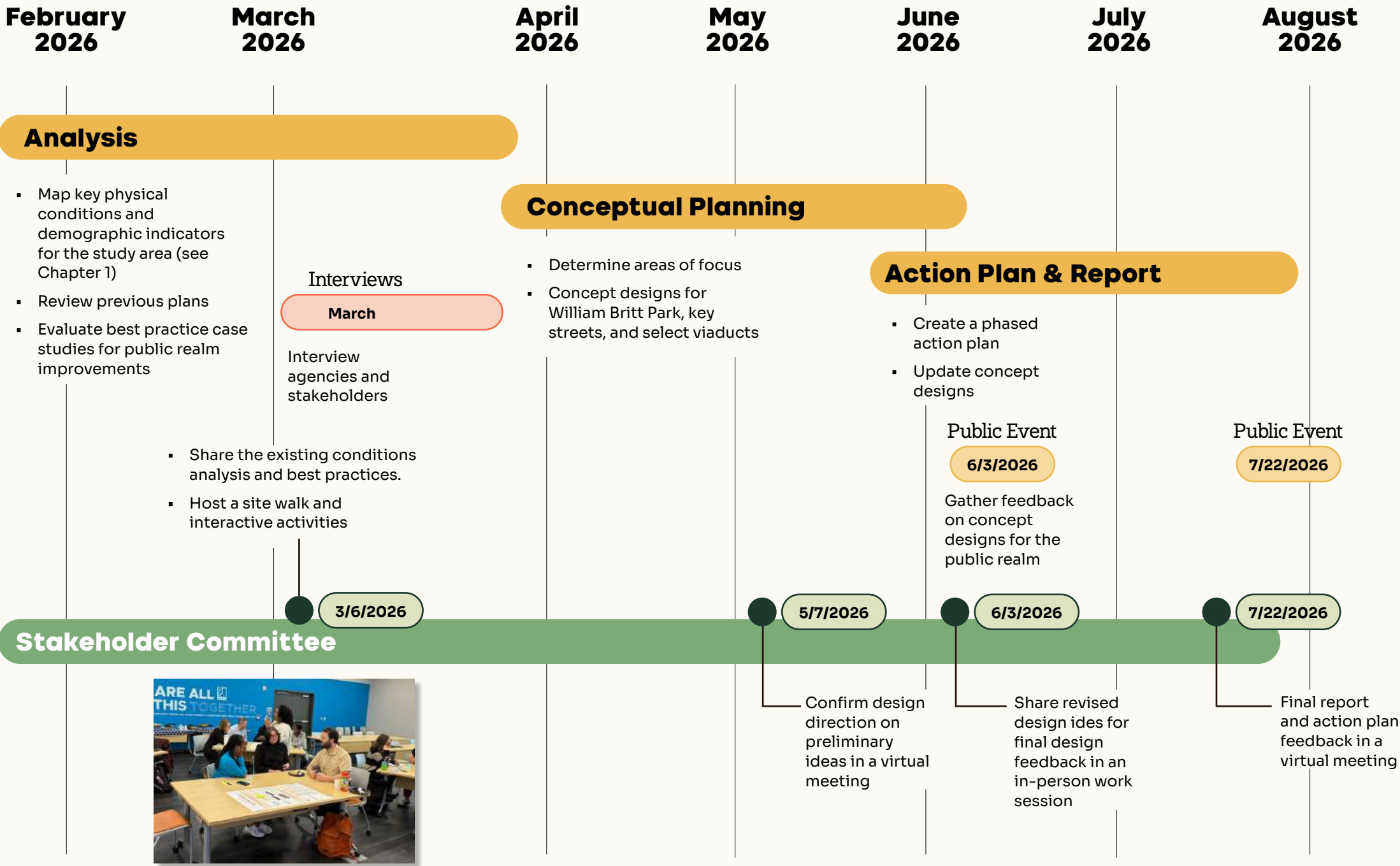
Community Engagement

SEEKING INPUT

Engagement Approach

This district planning study builds on years of RPOP’s engagement efforts, which have included hundreds of meetings, site walks, and work sessions. To avoid resident planning fatigue and duplicative feedback, this engagement effort focused on key stakeholder input and engaged the public during one in-person event and one virtual event .

The project was generally introduced to residents on September 18, 2025, at the Homecoming Kick-off Dinner held in the Beecher Terrace Community Room. The more involved engagement process started in March 2026 with the first Stakeholder Committee meeting, neighborhood site walk open to the public, and stakeholder and agency interviews. For in-person meetings, RPOP ensured that venue rentals and catering benefited local Russell businesses.



LEARNING

Technical Advisors' Interviews

Throughout March 2026, the project team met with multiple technical advisors for small group or individual interviews to learn about past, ongoing, and upcoming efforts in the neighborhood. These advisors included Louisville Metro Government departments, stakeholders with significant investment in Russell, and the Brownfields Corridor Planning team. The list of advisors is below.

- » Norton Healthcare and Norton Sports and Learning Complex
- » Louisville Urban League
- » Louisville MetroParks
- » Louisville Metro Government (LMG) Office of Planning
- » LMG Office of Planning
- » LMG Department of Transportation
- » The Mayor's Office for Women
- » Brownfields Corridor Planning Study Team: Office of Planning, Blueprint Kentucky, State Department of Environmental Protection

LMG Office of Planning | In-person, March 5, 2026

This small group discussion focused on the Land Development Code reform process, how to make streetscape improvements, programs for placemaking projects, and how to use this district planning study to advocate for future public investment. Some key points of information included:

- » They want to aim for a form-based code, and the earliest it will be in place is 2029.
- » Middle housing (Neighborhood Housing) is still recommended for all urban residential districts.
- » The Urban Forestry Department and non-profits like Trees Louisville and Louisville Grows can help plant street trees.
- » Street lights and sidewalk repair are tough to implement because of cost.
- » The Public Art Commission and Office for Creative Industries can help with placemaking and public art, but maintenance needs to be considered.
- » RPOP should advocate for projects in this plan with the Councilperson and other LMG departments could help RPOP with grant applications.

LMG Office for Women | In-person, March 5, 2026

Discussion focused on the office's work with Publica and the City Hub and Network for Gender Equity, which look at reducing gender-based violence and lifting the weight of unpaid labor that women and caregivers do. Publica's non-profit arm, Campaign for Inclusive Cities, conducted a study in Louisville that involved site walks and evaluations in Russell and Smoketown. Another conversation point was the concept of "Care Blocks," which were piloted in Bogota, Colombia, and Russell could be a good candidate. Care Blocks support caregivers by building physical locations near public transit with co-located resources, like laundromats, grocery stores, healthcare, childcare, job training, upskilling, and more.

LMG Dept. of Transportation | In-person, March 5, 2026

This small group discussion centered on public art on viaducts, streetscape projects underway, and what elements would make advocacy for projects easier. Some key points of information included:

- » The Community Art Project may be able to help with art on the viaducts.
- » There are precedents in Louisville for art on KYTC viaducts, and it is more feasible when working within KYTC's parameters.
- » The two-way conversions of Muhammad Ali Boulevard and Chestnut Street are under construction with curb work, signal upgrades, some intersections becoming four-way stops, repaving, and restriping. The project does not include new lighting or sidewalks.
- » The Broadway All the Way project is 40% of the way through the planning grant, which will include construction documentation. Cost is putting constraints on the level of design.
- » Neighborhood plans should focus on curb-to-curb improvements and follow engineering and Complete Streets standards. Maintenance should also be considered for streetscapes and placemaking projects.
- » LMG can add neighborhood planning projects into the Long Range Transportation Plan, and RPOP can send a list of sidewalk repairs for local funding (which has a long back log of projects).
- » Money typically used for speed humps can also be used to install RRFBs and other traffic calming measures.

Brownfields Corridor Planning Team | In-person, March 5, 2026

This small group discussion focused on the scope of the Brownfields Study and how the District Planning Study can benefit that effort. The grant timeline is five years, and it started in October 2025, with most community engagement work occurring in the first two years. They will write two reports: Phase I (an assessment) and Phase II (to get properties ready for redevelopment to reduce risk). Many sites have been identified in Russell, and they are at the beginning of the process. RPOP partnering with the team to lead community engagement.

Louisville Metro Parks | Virtual, March 23, 2026

Discussion concentrated on funding for parks, opportunities at William Britt Park, general needs for parks and recreation, and opportunities to increase tree canopy coverage. Some key points included:

- » The budget fluctuates each year, and they have had higher capital budgets the last three years, but operations has been stagnant.
- » William Britt Park could be a better gathering place for the neighborhood and could incorporate public art. It is a good idea to include it in the district planning effort; other neighborhoods have also created concept plans for parks, too.
- » Louisville residents have expressed the need for improvements to parks, increased safety and security, and active spaces with programming.
- » The West End has a high density of parks to residents, but they are usually smaller pocket parks.
- » The Urban Forestry team is the biggest opportunity to increase trees, and their grant funding stops in 2029. They need to prioritize work a year in advance, and the sidewalks around the 30th and Madison Site and the CLT homes could be great opportunities for installation in Russell.

Norton Healthcare – West Louisville Hospital |
Virtual, March 23, 2026

Discussion focused on the hospital's plans for their campus and neighborhood features that would complement the recent investment in the area. It was noted that the neighborhood now has many resources and social services, but that other components are needed to create a self-sustaining neighborhood, like more housing, grocery stores, community spaces, restaurants, greenspaces, entertainment venues, recreation facilities for basketball and football, fitness centers, dog groomers, and places that residents currently leave the neighborhood to find.

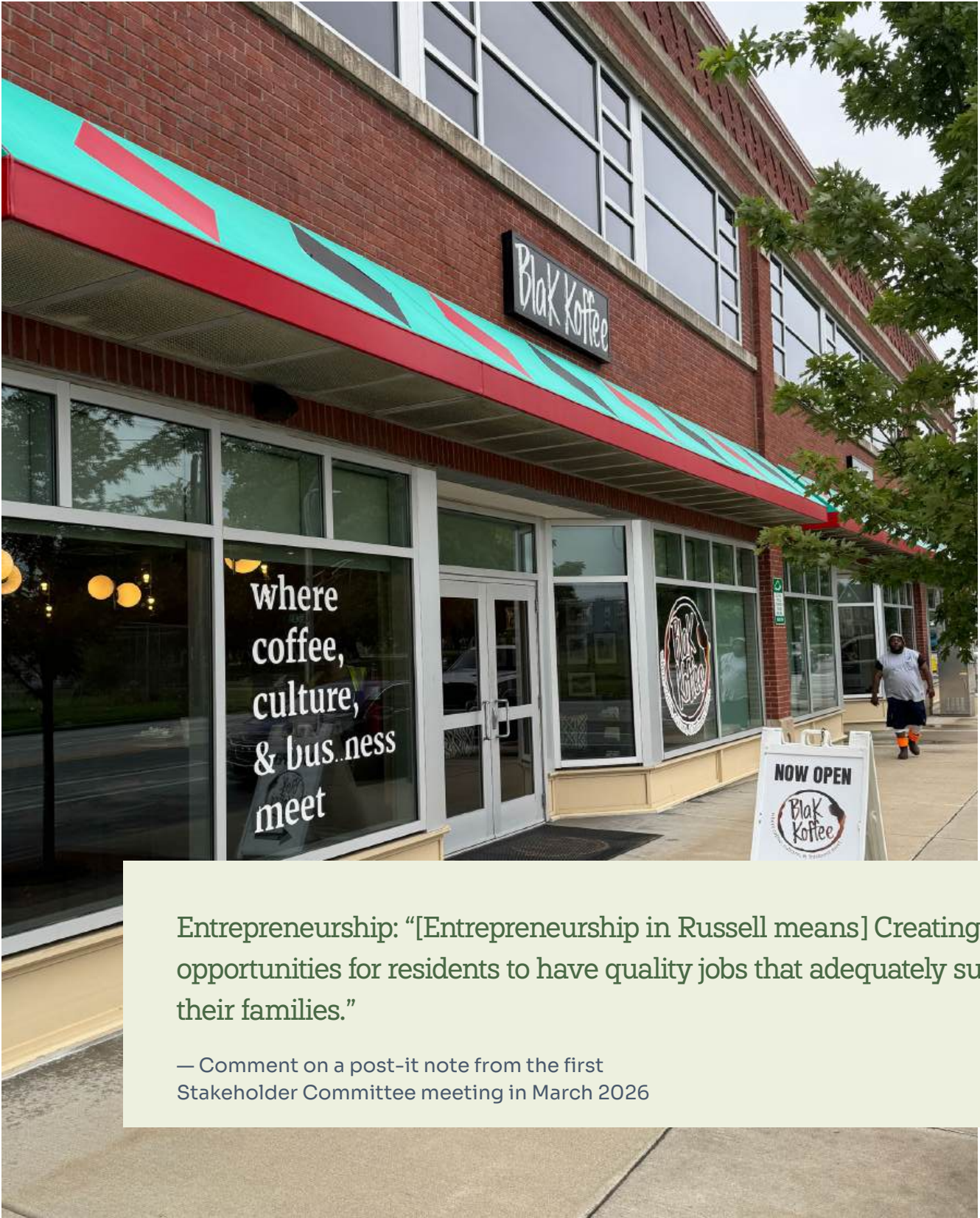
They also shared that maintenance of investment is important, and that community ownership will encourage positive behavior around new places. To keep the Norton properties clean, they focused on community buy-in and ensured that local residents were hired for construction. They also were intentional about where trash receptacles were placed and make sure maintenance staff really cares. Their security cameras are coupled with dispatchers to reinforce accountability.

Norton would like to expand in the area, but resources are currently being dedicated to other projects. They have also heard that employees would like to live closer to work, so more workforce affordable housing in the area would help (not just housing for people who qualify for subsidy programs).

Louisville Urban League and Norton Sports and Learning Center |
Virtual, March 23, 2026

The Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center is often booked to capacity, particularly for track meets, and they are aiming to host bigger meets with higher attendance. The complex will have a Chief Growth Officer soon, and they are expanding this year with fields on the south side of the site. The facility is also home to some Black-owned restaurants that need more press to attract visitors. Some of the discussion also focused on how the built environment can be improved to benefit their campus, like:

- » Add cohesive wayfinding that directs drivers to all the facilities in the area. This is especially important as the two-way conversions change how people travel to and from Downtown.
- » Create a brand for the corridor.
- » Add arts and culture, sports and entertainment, and restaurants.
- » Maintain properties and the public realm to a higher standard.
- » Hire residents of the community to build ownership and increase safety and pride in new investment.
- » Build wide sidewalks, even where sidewalks already exist.
- » Provide clear, designed on-street parking spaces.
- » Increase street lighting that is consistently “on.”



Entrepreneurship: “[Entrepreneurship in Russell means] Creating opportunities for residents to have quality jobs that adequately support their families.”

— Comment on a post-it note from the first Stakeholder Committee meeting in March 2026

■ The Blak Koffee storefront on 12th Street in the Russell neighborhood — Photo from RPOP

PROVIDING GUIDANCE

Stakeholder Committee

The Stakeholder Committee met four times between March and July 2026 at key milestones in the planning process. They guided the project team on issues with the physical environment in the study area, design ideas, how improvements to the neighborhood could benefit their investments, and suggestions for funding sources for implementation.

Stakeholder Committee Member Organizations

- » **Arthur’s Earth Sanctuary**
- » **Amped Louisville**
- » **Bezos Academy**
- » **Breathe Black Yoga**
- » **Dare to Care**
- » **Disability Advocates**
- » **ElderServe, Inc.**
- » **Goodwill Opportunity Campus**
- » **Joash Construction**
- » **Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet**
- » **LDG Development**
- » **Louisville Metro Government** (Metro Parks, Office of Planning, Public Works, Office for Women)
- » **Louisville Urban League**
- » **Metro Council District 3**
- » **Norton Healthcare**
- » **Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center**
- » **Olmsted Parks Conservancy**
- » **RPOP Board Members**
- » **TARC**
- » **University of Kentucky Research**



Stakeholder Committee Meeting #1 | March 6, 2026

The first Stakeholder Committee meeting occurred on Friday, March 6, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM, at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus. Breakfast and lunch were catered by Blak Coffee, which has a storefront inside the Opportunity Campus. Twelve members of the Committee attended the meeting. The project team described the project purpose and goals, existing conditions analysis to-date, including maps of physical conditions and demographic indicators, and best practice case studies for public realm improvements.

Three interactive activities ensured the Committee was able to provide meaningful feedback to drive the process. Committee members were split into small groups around the room, and each activity allowed each person time to think and document their thoughts alone, the group discussed their thoughts to identify themes, and then each group shared with the room. A summary of the three activities is to the right and results are on the following pages.

ACTIVITY 1: PROJECT THEMES

What do the four project themes mean for Russell specifically? How can we tie these themes to public realm improvements and policies?

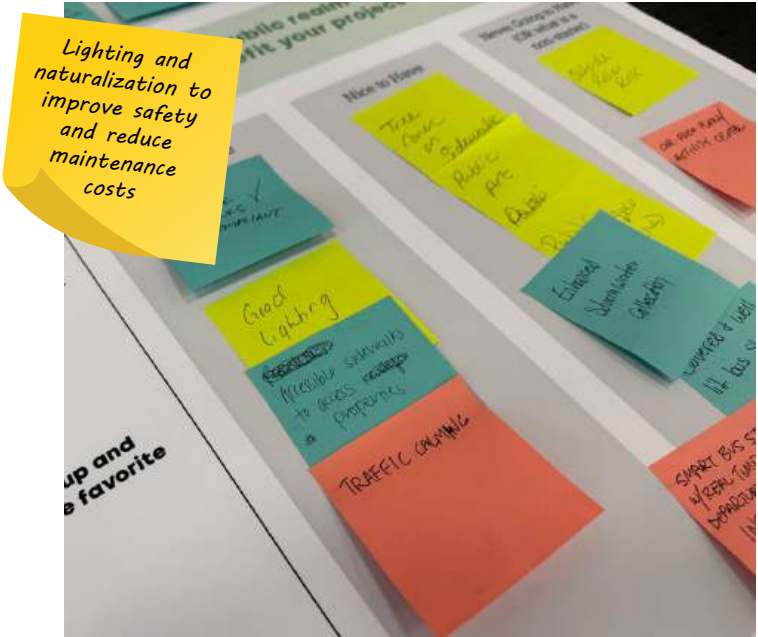
ACTIVITY 2: YOUR PROJECTS

What does your project bring to the neighborhood? What improvements to the public realm and built environment would benefit your project?

ACTIVITY 3: SITE WALK

30-minute site walk (approximately one mile) then indoor mapping activity to note challenges in the public realm.

- » **Activity 1:** The four project themes (health and wellness, business and entrepreneurship, community and family, and arts and culture) were re-introduced to the Committee, and they were asked what the themes could mean for Russell more broadly and how they could be tied to public realm improvements and policies. Results are summarized to the right.
- » **Activity 2:** This activity asked Committee members to share what their project or investment is in the neighborhood (if applicable). Then it asked them to share what improvements to the public realm are “got to haves,” “nice to haves,” or non-starters. Results are summarized to the right.
- » **Activity 3:** Some Committee members needed to leave before the site walk, but other stakeholders and residents joined. The group walked approximately one mile, starting at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus, north on 28th Street to Magazine, west to 31st street, east to 30th Street, then south back to Broadway. A discussion about conditions in the built environment and what could be done to address them followed the walk.



Notes on the second activity about public realm improvements

Key Themes from Activity 1:

Health and Wellness

What it Means

» Access to culturally-informed healthcare

» More outdoor spaces

» Access to healthy food

» Access that includes safe transportation

How

» Share information

» Create more public spaces

» Add more sidewalks

Entrepreneurship

What it Means

» Commercial spaces for businesses

» More training and support services

» Keeping money in the neighborhood

How

» Policies that prevent displacement

» Tax incentives

» Live/work units

» Business coaching

» Pop-up spaces

Community and Family

What it Means

» Legacy residents that continue to thrive

» Affordable housing

» Fair lending

» Multi-generational living and a “larger village”

» Safe, joyful spaces and parks

How

» Adhere to ADA policies

» Public spaces to connect and play

» Access to jobs

» Public-private partnerships to fund projects and maintenance endowments

Arts and Culture

What it Means

» History and heritage

» “Harlem of the South”

» Community artists and neighborhood history

How

» Install, maintain, and update historical markers

» Create educational programs

» Festivals, theatres, performance spaces

Key Themes from Activity 2:

What We Bring to Russell

Social Services

Affordable Housing

Art Venue

Brownfield Clean-up

Job Training

Jobs

Preschool

Disability Justice

Healthcare

Community Space

What Would Benefit Us

» Improved infrastructure (lighting, sidewalks, sewer / water, traffic calming, crosswalks)

» Environmental clean-up

» Conference room spaces and more art spaces / galleries

» Tree canopy on sidewalks

» Covered and lit bus stops with real-time information

» Rezoning and flexible zoning

» Construction paired with local job training

» More family and sit-down restaurants

Key Themes from the Site Walk:

- » Many sidewalks are too narrow (on 28th Street) or do not exist (30th Street)
- » Tree roots, broken concrete, and cars parked on the sidewalk create walkability barriers
- » Sidewalks need benches and lighting
- » Stormwater management is an issue
- » Alleys need to be cleaned of debris and trash
- » Public art is not maintained

More outdoor safe space for activities, especially for the aging population

Entrepreneurship: many people have businesses or business aspirations, but there are not many commercial spaces to operate, or training to help businesses expand or grow



“Community and family. It’s home for many people, and despite the changes, or lack of resources, many people never left and continue to thrive.”

— A comment from a group in the first activity about the four themes

Stakeholder Committee Meeting #2 | May 7, 2026

The second Stakeholder Committee Meeting was hosted virtually via Google Meet on May 7, 2026, at 3:00 PM. The project team presented the preliminary design ideas for streetscapes, viaduct art installations, interstate improvements, and the William Britt Park re-design. Committee members provided feedback on the design ideas so that the project team could make adjustments before presenting them to the public in the June public meeting (see page 70). The key feedback included:

- » Consider sharing the history of this immediate area in the public art, rather than Russell as a whole and the historic Walnut Street commercial area to the east
- » Emphasize ADA compliance for all sidewalks and wide walking paths without obstacles
- » Trees should be native and appropriate for urban conditions
- » Share the benefits of roundabouts vs. stop signs for the off-ramps
- » William Britt Park design was generally supported

After this meeting, the project team refined the design concept graphics prior to sharing them with the public in June, provided a list of benefits for roundabouts, and gathered imagery to represent park design elements.



Stakeholder Committee Meeting #3 | June 3, 2026

The third Stakeholder Committee Meeting was hosted in-person at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus on June 3, 2026, at 11:00 AM. During this meeting, the project team presented design changes based on feedback in the May meeting and led the Committee members through an exercise to identify partners and funding sources for each project type. This feedback was used to build out the Action Plan in Chapter 4.

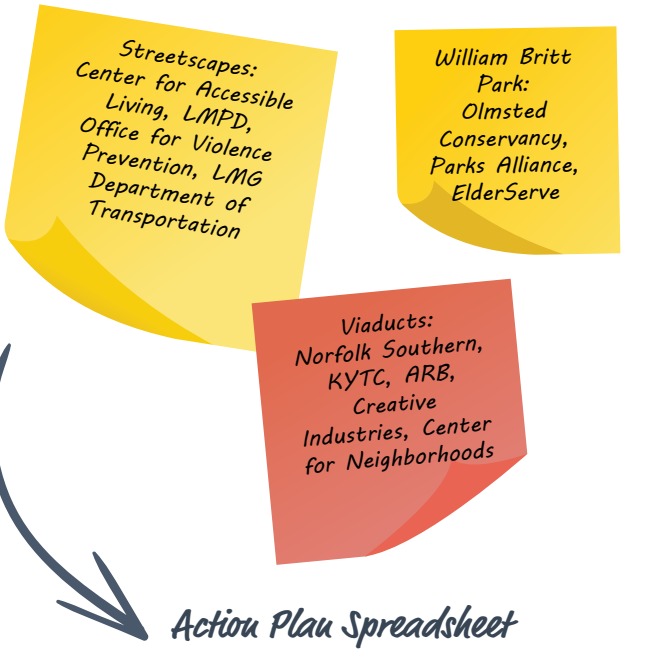
“Create a Botanical Garden like the one on River Road to reduce stress and anxiety.”

“Bring Back the Mayor’s Summer Scene Program!”

— Comments from the Stakeholder Committee about William Britt Park during the third meeting



Who could be Champions and Partners in Implementation in each project type?



	Project Description	Champion	Partners	Priority
S.1				
PS.1				
V.1				

Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4 | July 22, 2026

The fourth and final Stakeholder Committee meeting occurred virtually via Google Meet on July 22, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM. Fourteen members of the Committee attended. The project team shared updates to the design concepts for discussion and the general action plan timelines and funding sources. Some key feedback themes from this meeting included:

- » The need to consider maintenance for sidewalks and planter boxes along streetscapes. The maintenance plan should be in place prior to making the improvements.
- » Stop signs are needed at Magazine Street and 28th and 29th Streets. Previous advocacy efforts were unsuccessful, but recent development has brought more people to the area and may demonstrate the need for additional safety measures.
- » Concerns about the roundabouts at the interstate exit ramps, particularly for pedestrians, because traffic would not stop and drivers may not look for pedestrians if they are focused on their right turns.
- » A historical marker could be placed at Elliott Park to commemorate the Eclipse baseball team who played there (it was formerly known as Eclipse Park). Previous efforts with the Kentucky Historical Society for a historical marker were unsuccessful.
- » Construction funding for the two-way conversion project needs to be spent by September 2027, and some of that money could be allocated to lighting, curb bump-outs, and improvements at the viaducts over the streets.
- » The first priorities should be repair and maintenance of the sidewalks, regular cleaning of the alleys, and adding street lights.

As a result of this meeting, the project team updated the Recommendations and Action Plan chapters to reflect this feedback.

BROADER FEEDBACK

Public Meetings

Public Meeting #1 | June 3, 2026

The first Public Meeting occurred in-person on June 3, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Elderserve. Twenty-five (25) Russell neighbors attended the meeting. The project team gave a presentation that summarized the entire planning process to-date, including the analysis, Stakeholder Committee input, and design concepts. After the presentation, attendees could move around the room to talk to the project team, provide comments, and vote on specific design concepts. Feedback from this meeting resulted in revisions to the design of William Britt Park, and refinements of the viaduct concepts.

William Britt Park



Overall support for the design concept, but especially shade trees and seating.



Not a fan of the chessboard because of maintenance and keeping the pieces in place. This was removed.

#1

This came up as the first priority project to implement.

Viaduct Treatments



#2

Attendees noted this as the second priority for implementation and emphasized the importance of lighting over the art installations.



Overall support for the design concepts

Streets and the Interstate



- » Attendees emphasized that they experienced high-speed traffic at the interstate and that it needs to be addressed.
- » Many attendees expressed concerns about the idea of roundabouts in this area.
- » Streetscape improvements were generally supported.



Public Meeting #2 | July 22, 2026

The second and final public meeting was streamed live on RPOP's YouTube and Facebook channels. The project team shared most of the same information as the first public meeting with updates to the William Britt Park and viaduct designs. Participants watching on social media could submit comments and questions during the presentation, which were answered directly by RPOP and the project team. Some feedback received during the meeting included:

- » Many people do not use the sidewalks because they are in disrepair. Because of this, some residents who use electric wheelchairs will ride in the street. Occasionally, this occurs with people pushing strollers and riding scooters.
- » There is some growing use of e-bikes and scooters throughout the neighborhood, especially with the low cost and easy access to other parts of Louisville.
- » Changes to the public realm need to consider the unhoused and how it may affect their use of the neighborhood.
- » The immediate-term / priority projects list makes sense.
- » Participants seemed most concerned about moving through and around the neighborhood.

The meeting video will live on RPOP's social media for residents to view later on their own time. RPOP will continue to accept comments and feedback. As of the writing of this report, the video has had 307 total views, 49 viewers, and 18 total interactions.

03

CHAPTER THREE

District Recommendations

Design Focus Areas

Resident and Stakeholders Needs Translated to Design Solutions

The engagement process uncovered basic needs for improving the public realm: more and wider sidewalks, more shade and seating, more street lighting, improved conditions at the interstate interchanges and viaducts, clearer wayfinding, telling Russell's story (past and present) through public art, and maintaining infrastructure and improvements. Technical advisors also noted that new infrastructure needs to be easy to maintain and that financial and staff resources are stretched across the city.

Because of these ideas and constraints, design solutions were focused on the following places in the public realm:

- » The north-south corridor connecting Market Street to Broadway (and eventually to Kentucky Street) on 30th Street, to Magazine Street, to 28th Street;
- » Secondary corridors of Market Street, 29th Street, and 30th Street from Magazine to Broadway;
- » The I-264 exit ramps at Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive;
- » The viaducts created by the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and I-264; and,
- » William Britt Park and extending the connection to Elliott Park.

Why are street lights along sidewalks and at intersections important?

76%

of all pedestrian-related crash fatalities occur during periods of darkness
NATIONWIDE¹

¹ Federal Highway Administration, 2026

What are the benefits of street trees?

- » Shade and reduction in heat risk
- » Buffer between cars and the sidewalk
- » Stormwater runoff reduction
- » Slower driving speeds
- » Habitat

Why is 30th → Magazine → 28th the priority corridor for streetscape improvements?

- » It connects the most recent new developments, resources, and upcoming 30th and Madison RPOP site
- » The 28th Street intersection with Broadway can be improved as part of Broadway All the Way

Legend

- Viaduct Improvements
- Interchange / Intersection Improvements
- Park Design Opportunity
- Priority Streetscape Projects
- Secondary Streetscape Projects
- Streetscape Project Underway
- Recent & Ongoing Investment



Project Themes

These recommendations are not stand-alone design choices, but holistic physical expressions of the Project Themes established through years of Stakeholder Committee input. Every intervention in this plan, from a widened sidewalk to a shaded gathering space, was selected because it advances what the community explicitly named as its priorities.

Safer, more comfortable streets answer **Health & Wellness’s** call for safe transportation and active living. Investments in shared, joyful public space respond to **Community & Family’s** vision of a neighborhood that cares for its own. Public art and storytelling throughout the corridor carry **Arts & Culture’s** charge to make Russell’s history and identity visible in the public realm. And because Russell’s commercial and community assets are scattered rather than concentrated along a single corridor, these same streetscape improvements work to knit dispersed anchors together into a connected network, supporting **Entrepreneurship’s** goal of keeping money and opportunity in the neighborhood.

The “In Practice” column makes this connection explicit for each theme, showing not just what the community said mattered, but what interventions are actually being tangibly proposed because of it.



Health and Wellness

What it Means

- » Access to culturally-informed healthcare
- » More outdoor spaces
- » Access to healthy food
- » Access that includes safe transportation

How

- » Share information
- » Create more public spaces
- » Add more sidewalks



Entrepreneurship

What it Means

- » Commercial spaces for businesses
- » More training and support services
- » Keeping money in the neighborhood

How

- » Policies that prevent displacement
- » Tax incentives
- » Live/work units
- » Business coaching
- » Pop-up spaces



Community and Family

What it Means

- » Legacy residents that continue to thrive
- » Affordable housing
- » Fair lending
- » Multi-generational living and a “larger village”
- » Safe, joyful spaces and parks

How

- » Adhere to ADA policies
- » Public spaces to connect and play
- » Access to jobs
- » Public-private partnerships to fund projects and maintenance endowments



Arts and Culture

What it Means

- » History and heritage
- » “Harlem of the South”
- » Community artists and neighborhood history

How

- » Install, maintain, and update historical markers
- » Create educational programs
- » Festivals, theatres, performance spaces

In Practice

- » Formalized on-street parking to buffer pedestrians from moving traffic
- » High-visibility striping and signage at crossings to clarify right-of-way
- » Sharrows and lane treatments to reduce conflicts between cyclists and vehicles
- » Widened, clear sidewalks for pedestrians, wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers
- » ADA-compliant ramps at intersections
- » Street trees for shade along key corridors, responding to high heat risk
- » Underpass lighting

In Practice

- » Streetscape improvements along W. Muhammad Ali Blvd and W. Broadway connecting scattered assets — from Norton Healthcare Sports & Learning Center to Goodwill Opportunity Campus to Lyle’s Mall and Kroger — into one walkable network
- » Improved wayfinding linking residents to dispersed businesses and services
- » Traffic calming and safer crossings at key connection points, making commercial and service sites reachable on foot

In Practice

- » William Britt Park improvements: shade trees, community gathering space, and outdoor seating
- » Traffic calming and clearer crossings near residential blocks to protect families and legacy residents
- » ADA-conscious sidewalk widening and ramps at intersections to support multi-generational, accessible use of public space
- » A “Care Block” model co-locating care facilities, education, and recreation within a 15-20 minute walk, supporting caregivers
- » Regular programming with Louisville Metro Parks at Elliott and William Britt Parks

In Practice

- » Public art and murals concentrated on the viaducts, sharing Russell’s story and its legacy as a thriving center of Black commerce and community life
- » Historical markers integrated into the streetscape to surface history at a people-centered scale
- » Storytelling woven into design elements throughout the corridor
- » A dedicated public art program for the viaducts, ensuring murals are sustained and cohesive rather than one-off installations
- » Underpass lighting

Recommendations

Streetscape

S.1

Improve 30th Street Market Street to Magazine Street

Existing Conditions

The 30th Street corridor between Market Street and Magazine Street currently presents a discouraging environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Sidewalks exist along some blocks but disappear on others, giving way to grass at the curb, blank walls, and occasional harsh fencing. The street lacks any defined edge connecting homes to the public realm, leaving it auto-oriented with little shade, seating, or refuge. The corridor also runs perpendicular to access for Bezos Academy on River Park Drive, a preschool, making pedestrian and cyclist safety a critical priority.

Short-Term Interventions

- » **Corner bump-outs** painted or constructed with curbs and planters, would shorten crossing distances and slow vehicle turns. Planters could absorb stormwater and reduce impervious surfaces.
- » **On-street parking** on both sides would narrow the street’s effective width, reinforcing its residential character while buffering pedestrians and cuing more attentive driving. Parking would be set back from intersections to preserve sight lines.
- » **Sharrows**, shared-lane markings, would signal the street as shared, valid space to ride.
- » **Street trees** on at least one side would provide shade, soften stark blank walls, and define the edge between sidewalk and street. They help with stormwater infiltration, offset heat, and provide pedestrians a more pleasant walk.
- » **Pedestrian-scaled street lighting** on both sides would improve visibility and safety after sunset, helping define the streetscape, particularly at intersections and crossings.



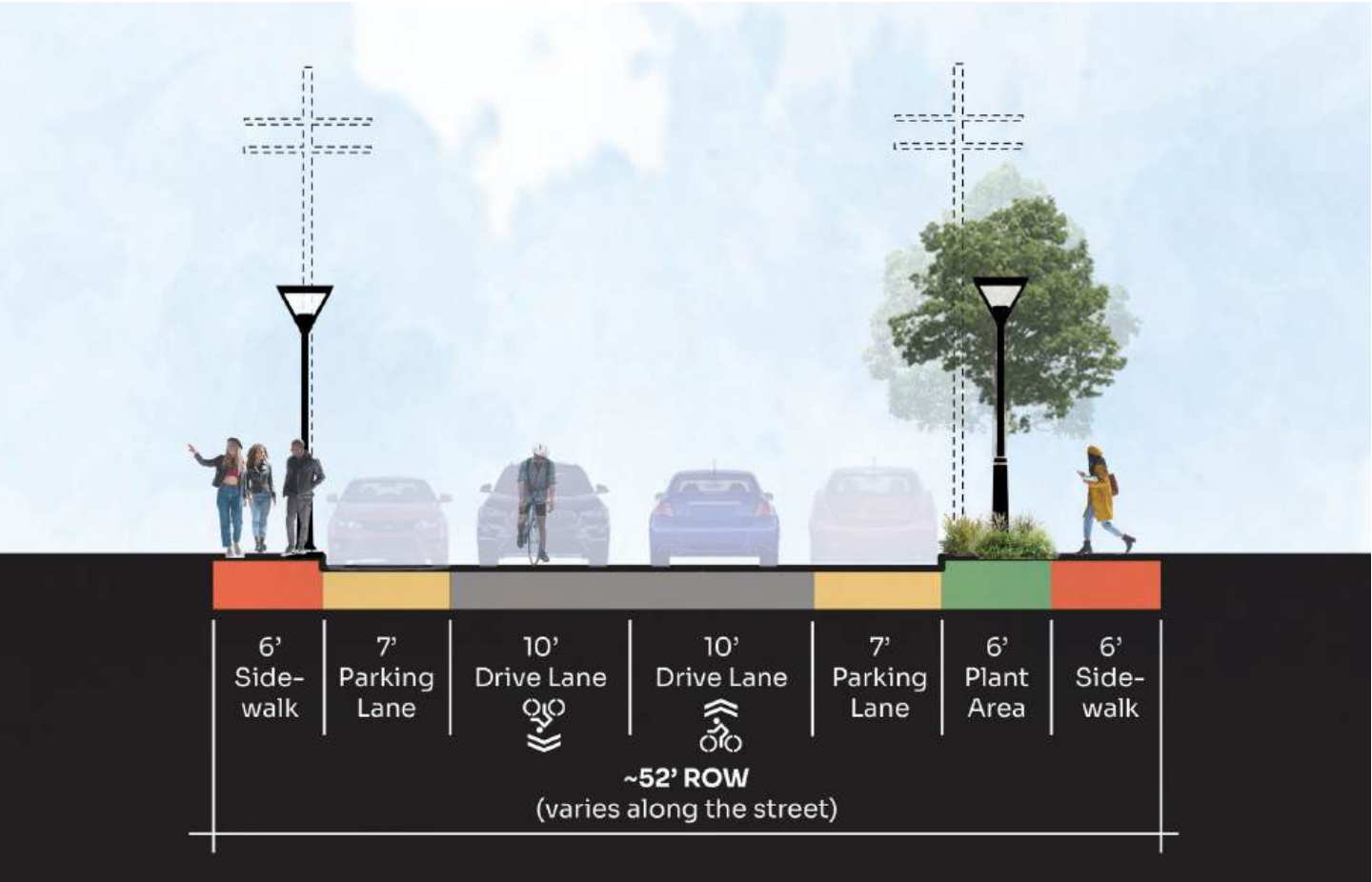
- » **Street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks)** would keep the street cleaner and provide places for rest.
- » **Striping and signage** improvements, via high-visibility markings, offer a low-cost way to clarify right-of-way and emphasize crossings.

Long-Term Interventions

- » **Widened sidewalks and street trees** on both sides of the street would improve the walking experience along the full corridor, extending the shade and refuge into a more complete streetscape.
- » **Buffered bike lanes** would add protected separation between cyclists and traffic—a step beyond sharrows toward a fully connected network, extending the route from Broadway All the Way between Magazine and Madison.
- » **The relocation of utilities underground** or behind the pedestrian zone would clear the street edge of clutter, protect infrastructure from weather and wear, and free up space for trees and bike racks.



Existing Conditions on 30th Street Facing South — Google Earth, Street View, June 2024



Short-Term Recommendations on 30th Street (facing North)
Note: Narrow right-of-way widths limit space available for improvements if curbs are not moved.



Recommendations

Streetscape

S.2

Improve Magazine Street 30th Street to 28th Street

Existing Conditions

This short connection between 30th and 28th Streets has varying sidewalk conditions block to block, with a notable absence of crosswalks. Some on-street parking exists between 28th and 29th. This stretch links directly to LDG Eclipse Apartments and ElderServe at 28th and Magazine, making safe crossing for seniors a particular priority.

Short-Term Interventions

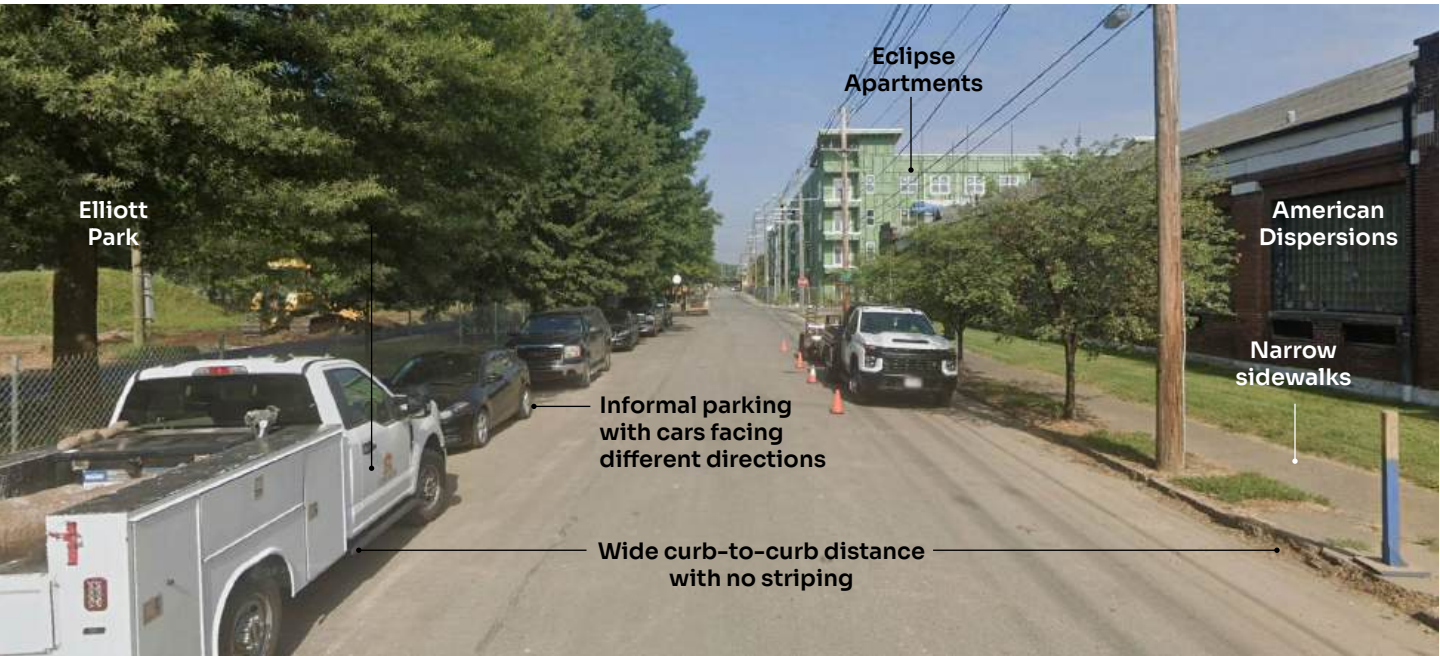
- » **Corner bump-outs** painted or constructed with curbs / planters and integrated bioswales on both sides, would shorten crossing distances and slow vehicle turning speeds at intersections, while also managing stormwater along this connector.
- » **On-street parking** on both sides would buffer pedestrians from traffic and narrow the street's effective width.
- » **Sharrows** would help cyclists position safely alongside parked cars and signal that this connector is a shared, valid space to ride.
- » **Park connectivity improvements** between William Britt Park and the newly renovated Elliott Park would join the playground, multi-use fields, and walking paths to the broader corridor for integrated recreation.
- » **Striping and signage** in the form of high-visibility markings, are a low-cost and high-payoff intervention that would clarify right-of-way and add emphasis at crossings, better protecting seniors crossing to ElderServe, and children and families headed to the parks.



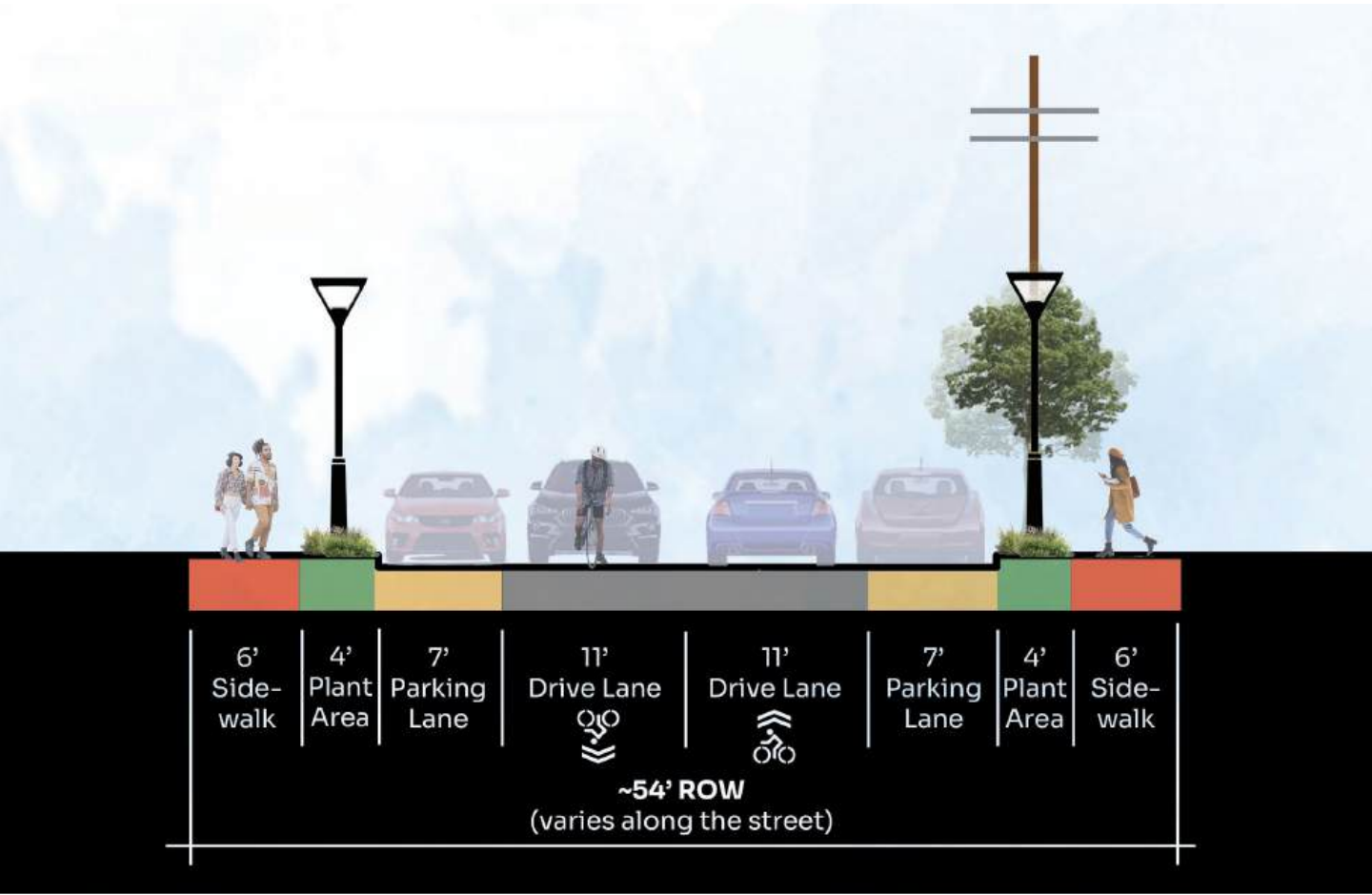
- » **Pedestrian-scaled street lighting** on both sides of the street would improve safety and visibility after sunset, particularly important for people crossing the street to reach LDG Apartments, both parks, and ElderServe.
- » **Street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks)** would keep the street cleaner and provide places for rest.

Long-Term Interventions

- » **The relocation of utilities underground** or farther back from the street edge would clear physical clutter, enable more flexible right-of-way design, and protect critical infrastructure by reducing exposure to extreme weather and wear, with added maintenance savings. It would also free up space for pedestrians, trees, and protected bike lanes.



Existing Conditions on Magazine Street Facing West — Google Earth, Street View, June 2024



Short-Term Recommendations on Magazine Street (facing West)
Note: Narrow right-of-way widths limit space available for improvements if curbs are not moved.

Recommendations

Streetscape

S.3

Improve 28th Street Magazine Street to Broadway

Existing Conditions

28th Street from Magazine to Broadway has sidewalks on both sides, but several stretches run alongside large surface parking lots, creating a visually flat and uninviting environment for pedestrians. On the west side, the sidewalk abuts the road directly with little to no buffer; while the east side has a narrow planting strip. This segment is a critical connector linking Elliott Park, William Britt Park, and ElderServe to the Goodwill Opportunity Campus, Kroger, and Lyle’s Mall at Broadway, as well as the corridor’s scattered commercial and retail sites.

Short-Term Interventions

- » **Corner bump-outs** painted or constructed with curbs or planters would reduce crossing distances and ensure vehicles turn slowly at intersections.
- » **On-street parking** on the east side (see long-term interventions described below).
- » **Sharrows** for cyclists.
- » **Pedestrian-scaled street lighting** to improve visibility and pedestrian safety after sunset, especially along such a critical corridor.
- » **Striping and signage** to clarify right-of-way and emphasize crossings along this busy two-way street that connects a number of community assets. Stop signs should be placed at key intersections.
- » **Street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks)** would keep the street cleaner and provide places for rest.

Long-Term Interventions

- » **Adjusting the curb locations** along the corridor to narrow street, slowing traffic and shortening

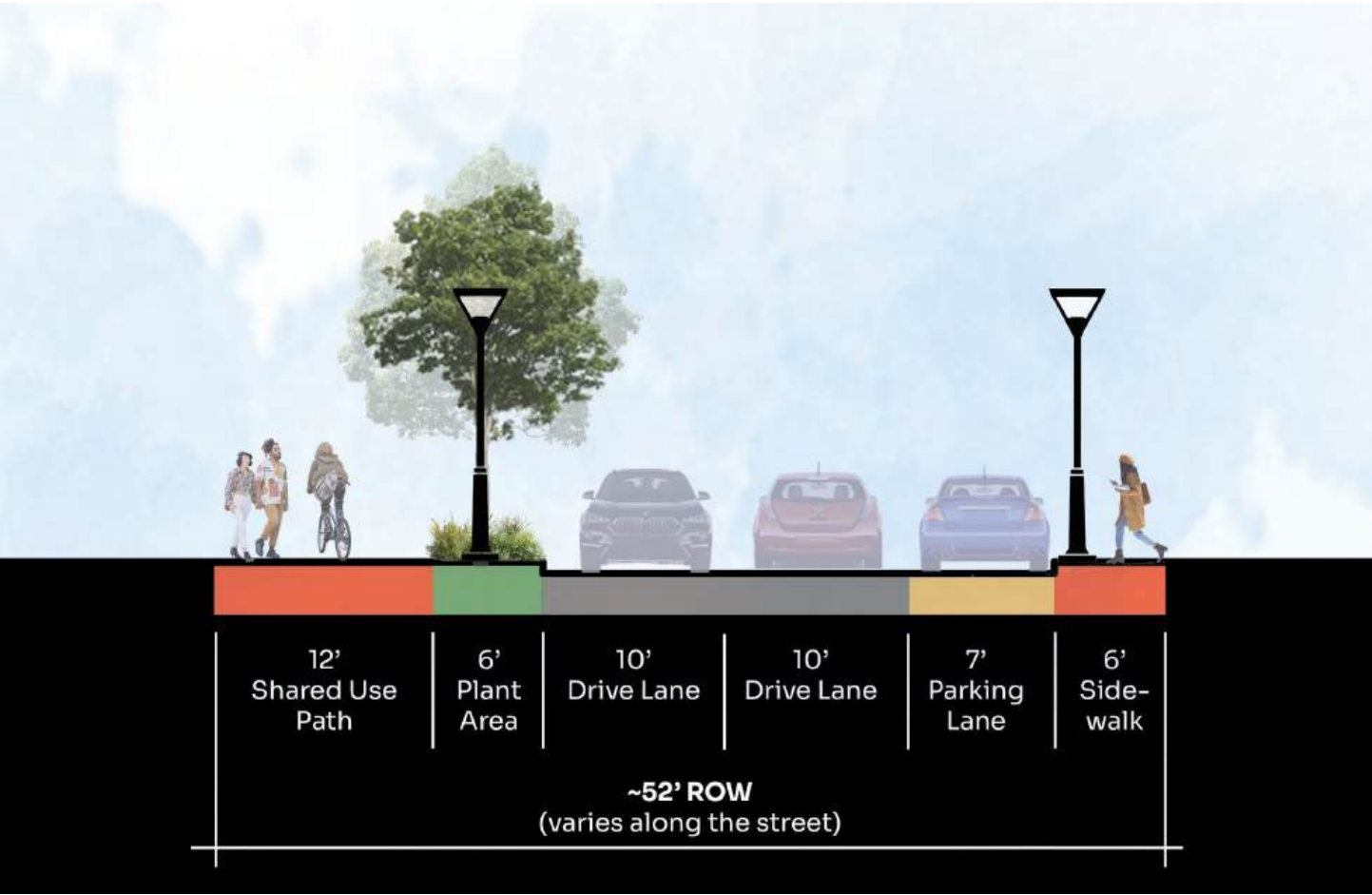


pedestrian crossing distances while also delineating the wider shared-use path below, enhancing the pedestrian experience.

- » **Removing a parking lane** on the west side and **replacing it with a wider shared-use path** to extend safe, accessible transportation to walkers, joggers, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments alike. A path here would do double duty: connecting residents directly to daily needs like groceries and community assets such as the parks and Goodwill Opportunity Campus, while offering a genuine recreational amenity along the way. Paired with a wider planting area and street trees, it would also give west-side pedestrians a buffer and create a lively, more inhabited space alongside the street.
- » **The relocation of utilities underground** or farther back from the street edge would clear clutter and free up space while enhancing sight lines for vehicles to better encourage attentive driving.



Existing Conditions on 28th Street Facing South — Google Earth, Street View June 2024



Long-Term Recommendations on 28th Street (facing North) with a Shared Use Path on the West Side
Note: Narrow right-of-way widths limit space available for improvements if curbs are not moved.

Recommendations

Streetscape

S.4 Improve 28th Street South of Broadway

Existing Conditions

Although sidewalks run along both sides, the east side has few to no street trees, and expanses of parking lots and open lawn offer little shade or refuge, with several lots spilling pedestrians and cyclists directly onto the street and in conflict with traffic near Kroger and the Goodwill Opportunity Campus.

Interventions

- Continue the short- and long-term recommendations from project S-3, in alignment with Broadway All the Way.
- » **Short-Term:** Add corner bump-outs, formalized on-street parking on the east side, street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks) where space allows.
 - » **Long-Term:** Adjust curb locations for a wider shared-use path for a variety of users with expanded planting and street trees, and ultimately relocate utilities underground, to better connect community assets along the corridor’s southern stretch.

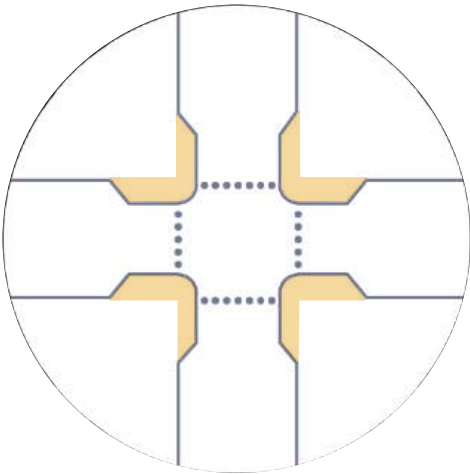
S.5 Improve the Intersection Broadway and 28th Street

Existing Conditions

Bus stops with benches and shade exist on the west side of Broadway, but the intersection is otherwise exposed to high heat risk with few street trees, fenced off and segregated by swaths of retail parking, and lacks crosswalks or visible signage at any of its four legs.

Interventions

- » **Short-Term:** Safety measures like “No Turn On Red” signage, left-turn protected signal phases, and Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) for crossing signals, alongside high-visibility painted crosswalks.
- » **Long-Term:** Leverage Broadway All the Way improvements to enhance intersection crossing safety, coordinating any permanent design changes with that project’s broader timeline and investment.



Four-way intersection with corner bump outs and integrated crosswalks to narrow and slow traffic — NACTO, Design Interventions

S.6 Improve 30th Street Magazine Street to Broadway

Existing Conditions

This segment has few or no sidewalks on either side, missing curbs in places, few trees, and a landscape scaled for automobiles and industrial sites, with fences delineating individual lots.

Interventions

Continue the short- and long-term recommendations from project S-1 (Improving 30th Street from Market to Magazine), in alignment with Broadway All the Way. If development occurs as currently envisioned on the west-side properties from Magazine to Broadway, coordinate with the developer to build wider sidewalks, relocate utility poles, plant street trees, and add pedestrian lighting on both sides of the street.

S.7 Improve 29th Street Cedar Street to Broadway

Existing Conditions

Sidewalks and a residential character mark the northern section, but crosswalks disappear entirely south of W. Muhammad Ali Blvd, and the corridor grows increasingly exposed near Eclipse Apartments, where a large surface parking lot leaves few places of refuge.

Interventions

- Use the same short- and long-term principles as S-1 and S-2, in alignment with Broadway All the Way.
- » **Short-Term:** Formalize on-street parking with striping, install pedestrian lighting on both sides, and use painted curb extensions at intersections
 - » **Long-Term:** Add sidewalks where none exist, widen sidewalks where space permits, move utilities underground, and plant street trees on both sides.

S.8 Improve Market Street Louis Coleman Jr. Drive to 28th Street

Existing Conditions

On-street parking is marked and sidewalks run both sides, though the north side is completely exposed with few to no street trees or refuge, and utility poles interrupt the sidewalk in places despite some mixed retail and sharrows along the corridor.

Interventions

- » **Short-Term:** With recent investment and planned transit improvements increasing pedestrian traffic, study the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) warrants for all-way stops at all intersections [alternatively, install Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons at key crossing locations], paint high visibility crosswalks, install pedestrian street lights on both sides of the street where lacking, install street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks) where space allows, and paint curb extensions at intersections to reduce crossing distances.
- » **Long-Term:** Move utilities underground, widen sidewalks where space permits, add street trees, and build permanent curb extensions with constructed curbs and planters.

Recommendations

Interstate Improvement

IN.1

IN.2

Improve the I-264 Exit Ramps at Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive

The I-264 exit ramps at Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive present an opportunity to transform existing ramp infrastructure and reintegrate it into the surrounding neighborhood fabric. Currently designed to prioritize fast vehicle movement, these ramps can be redesigned to better serve pedestrians, cyclists, and other users while maintaining adequate traffic flow. Traffic volumes are relatively low outside peak rush hour, making the corridor well-suited for calming interventions that prioritize a person-based, rather than auto-based, scale, without significantly impacting vehicular circulation.

As Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive are undergoing two-way conversions, funding for more involved changes may not yet be available, and any work will require significant coordination with KYTC and future public engagement efforts. The goal of including this concept is to document the importance of slowing down traffic to and from interstate ramps and making the streets more neighborhood-friendly.

Interventions

- » **Roundabouts at the off-ramps on Muhammad Ali Boulevard and River Park Drive (IN-1, IN-2)** would calm traffic entering and exiting the highway, improving safety at these critical points.
- » **Four-way stops at Muhammad Ali Blvd + 32nd Street, Madison + 32nd Street, River Park Drive + 33rd Street, Madison + 33rd Street**, paired with painted bump-outs and crosswalks, would increase pedestrian visibility and reduce points of conflict.

Benefits of Roundabouts at Off-Ramps

- » Fewer conflict points for crashes
- » Fewer severe crashes due to the elimination of high-speed right-angle crashes
- » Forced slower entry speeds, especially coming off the interstate
- » More intuitive with the single direction approaches
- » Shorter crossing distances for pedestrians
- » Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- » Clear crossing space with reduced risk of cars stopping in crosswalks
- » More predictable vehicular paths
- » Reduced noise and aggressive driving behaviors with no stop-and-go intersection
- » Gateway opportunities

Local Roundabout Example at University of Louisville



- » Significant pedestrian traffic
- » Speed tables at crossings
- » Clear sight lines

- IN.3

IN.4
- 33rd Street** would narrow to one lane, with the freed space used for traffic calming measures and painted curb extensions that could double as murals, or public art.
 - 32nd Street** would see the same lane reduction and curb-extension treatment, with painted extensions as art installations, plus on-street parking formalized with striping on the east side in front of residential lots.

Interchange Concept Plan at River Park Drive and Muhammad Ali Blvd



Recommendations

Viaduct Treatments

Railroad and Interstate Viaducts

The preliminary design framework for the viaducts is grounded in a holistic vision of what healthy neighborhoods need to thrive: entrepreneurship, movement, food access, and deep community ties. The approach paints Russell as a thriving ecosystem, not the systems of oppression it has endured, shifting focus to the vibrancy and resilience of neighbors who have consistently uplifted and supported one another. Russell has a wealth of organizations invested in improving residents' lives, and significant work already done across these themes. The viaducts themselves are currently harsh, unlit gateways, hostile to pedestrians, and offer an opportunity to make that investment visible and celebrated. The preliminary, conceptual designs improve physical conditions while introducing elements of warmth, brightness, creativity, and Russell's resilient soul, both past and present, with the intention to hire local artists to embed their work in their own community.

People's Stories

The preliminary, conceptual designs shown in this chapter weave together the personal narratives of Russell residents and their aspirations and contributions, putting people at the heart of the pedestrian experience and allows for meaningful connection to the surrounding community context.

Community Initiatives

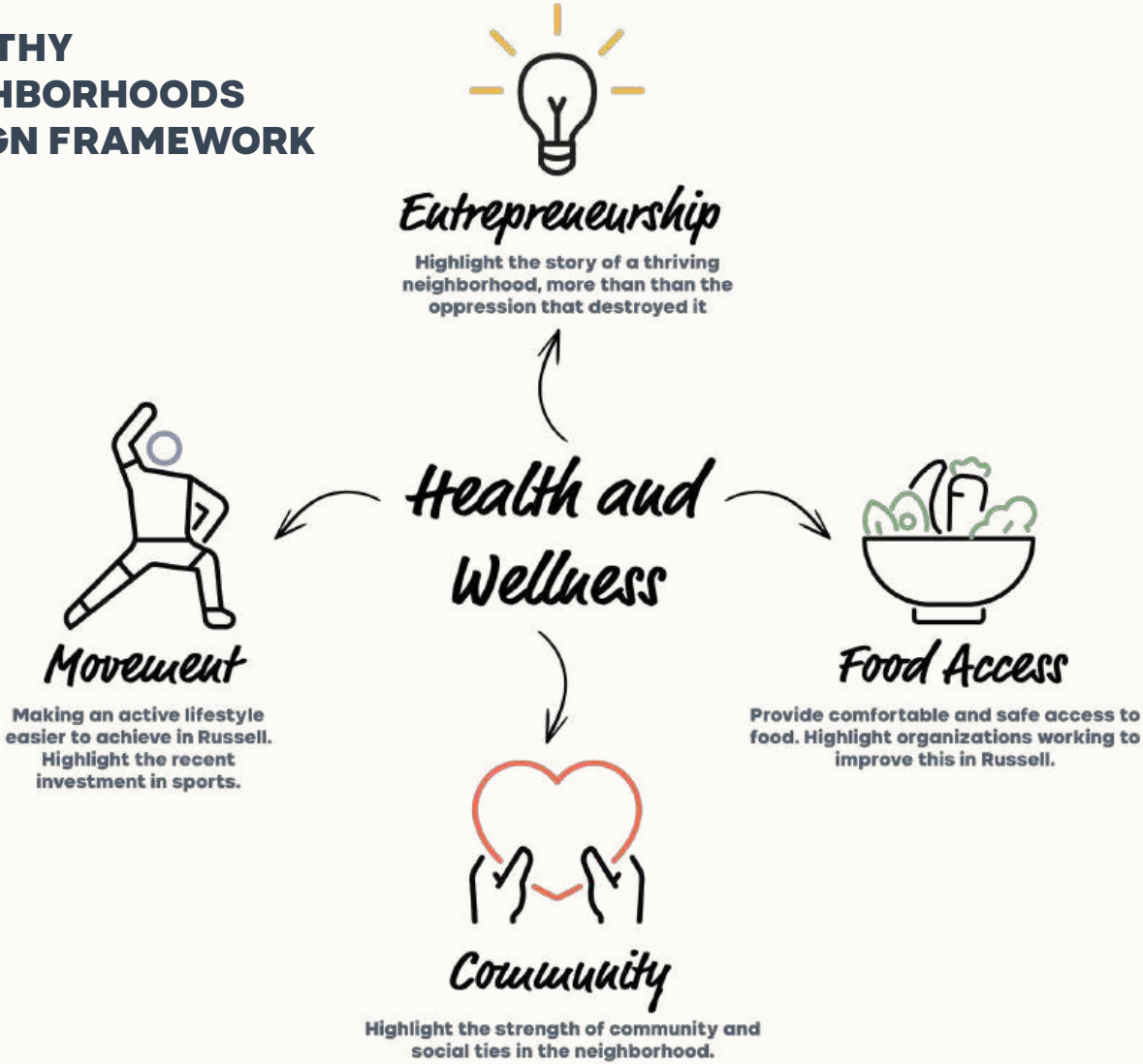
The viaducts are ripe for platforming Russell's already active community initiatives: workforce development, health clinics, mobile food pantries, and other local resources, strengthening visibility of them in the public realm and encouraging access to these investments.

Focused Corridors

Each corridor can develop a distinct identity — health & wellness, entrepreneurship, sports & recreation — becoming threads in an overarching, cohesive neighborhood-wide tapestry.



HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS DESIGN FRAMEWORK



VIADUCT INSTALLATION DESIGN PARAMETERS

Hire local artists to design and construct the installations.

- » Involve the residents: Consider resident input on the design. Allow them to participate in the painting of the art.
- » Give creative freedom: Artists should have creative license to interpret the themes along the streets while embedding Russell-specific history and culture.

Colors should be bright.

- » Use colors currently present in other art installations across Russell.
- » Use a warm color palette complemented by shades of blue: oranges, yellows, golds, reds.

Lighting should be multi-purpose.

- » Lighting should complement the art AND enhance pedestrian safety and security in the viaducts.
- » Street lights, overhead lighting.

Create maintenance plans before making improvements.

- » Establish maintenance agreements for the art pieces and planter boxes before improvements are made.
- » Work with City departments, Norfolk Southern, KYTC, property owners, and members of the community.

Recommendations

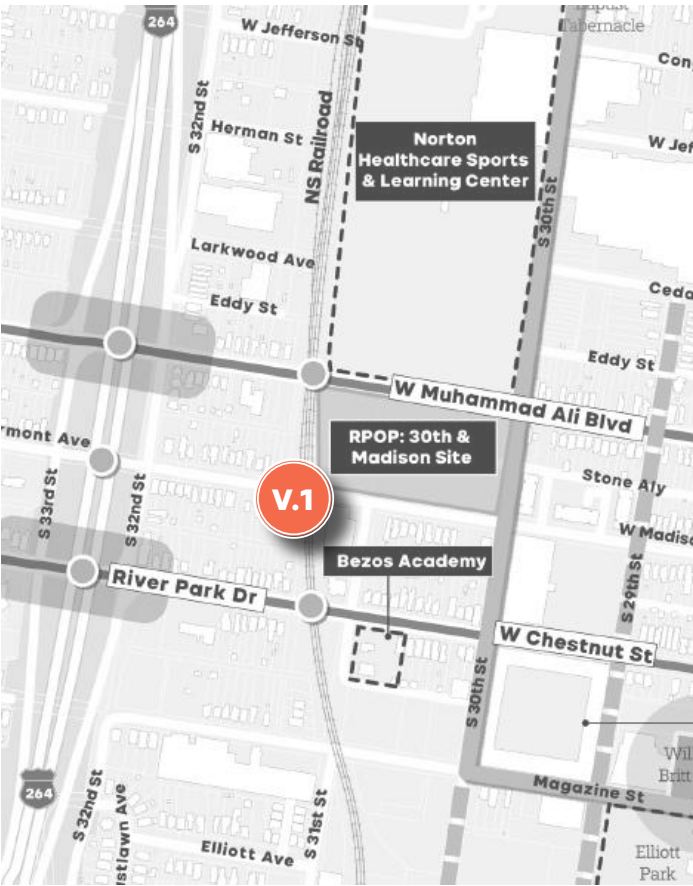
Viaduct Treatment

V.1 Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the Madison Street railroad viaduct

The preliminary concept for the Madison Street railroad viaduct serves as a living record of Russell’s present-day community, telling the stories of its people and organizations, celebrating resilience, and connecting residents to the resources around them. The concept for the viaduct may slow the pace of movement along Madison Street, drawing people through with greater intention and inviting them to notice and connect with the people and places of Russell.

Installation Themes

In this preliminary concept, people’s stories and community initiative narratives could be woven into a painted mural on the overpass, paired with resources from local organizations accessible via QR codes or posters that connect residents to food access programs, community kitchens and mobile pantries, and career coaching and technology resources at the Goodwill Opportunity Campus. The viaduct sits closest to RPOP’s five-acre campus and the Norton Healthcare Sports & Learning Center, anchoring the corridor with recreation, education, and community programming just steps away.



The concept uses bold color to create a vibrant, energetic environment reflecting the neighborhood’s spirit. Artistic, pedestrian-scaled lighting would ensure safety and “eyes on the street” after sunset, while wayfinding signage would improve navigation. Planters could soften the hardscape and buffer pedestrians from vehicular movement, further slowing traffic. The surrounding streetscape is intended to function as a low-traffic “neighborway,” prioritizing cyclists and pedestrians with curb extensions that could blend with the mural’s art.



Preliminary concept design for the railroad viaduct over Madison Street (facing west) — Image is AI-assisted
Existing conditions of the railroad viaduct over Madison Street — Google Earth Street View

**The “Neighborway” street type is a Louisville Metro Government classification to support the bike network. The initial phases of implementation will include low-cost, high visibility pavement markings.*



Local Mural Design and Color Inspiration

Recommendations

Viaduct Treatment

V.2 Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the Madison Street interstate viaduct

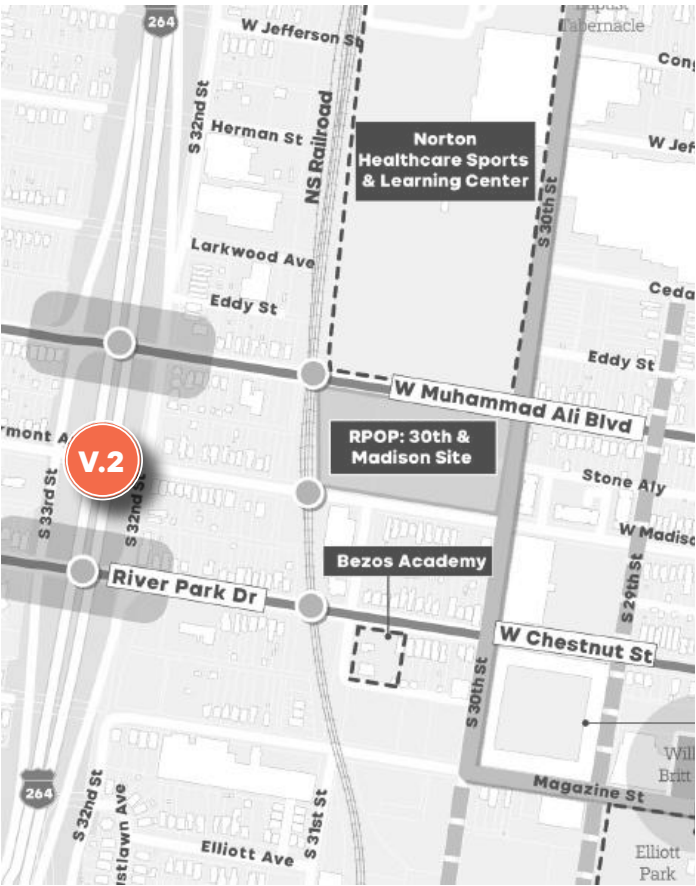
The proposed concept for the Madison Street interstate viaduct is a bold cultural gateway connecting the Shawnee and Russell neighborhoods, severed by the construction of the interstate. The preliminary concept honors what existed before that division cut apart the neighborhood—the housing, businesses, and rich community life that defined the area—creating a public realm that is welcoming, safe, and rooted in the legacy of people who call this neighborhood home.

Installation Themes

In this concept, cultural narrative murals celebrate the pride, everyday life, and history of the Russell community, once known as Louisville’s Harlem, a thriving Black neighborhood with a self-sustaining internal economy centered on Walnut Street, the heart of Black life in the city. Symbols, signage, and wayfinding elements could evoke this once-walkable, socially-connected neighborhood of housing and commerce.

An overhead slogan, like, “Rooted in History, Alive in Culture,” could serve as a cultural touchpoint, ground the space in the neighborhood’s history, and double as a screen that softens the highway structure’s scale overhead.

Murals could extend onto the sidewalk, highlighting historic eras and reinforcing that memory of thriving commerce and culture at the ground level. Planters could buffer pedestrians from vehicular movement while softening the space visually, and overhead lighting could double as an artistic element, enhancing visibility, comfort, and safety along the expanded sidewalk.



- V.3
- V.4
- V.5
- V.6

Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the Muhammad Ali Blvd and River Park Drive interstate and railroad viaducts

These four projects are similar to V.1 and V.2 but may have different themes for each corridor (for example, entrepreneurship and Black businesses on River Park Drive and sports and recreation on Muhammad Ali Boulevard). Future installations should include wayfinding signage and lighting that complements the art and improves safety. Portions of these projects could be advanced more quickly with the on-going implementation of the two-way conversions of the streets.



Preliminary concept design for the interstate viaduct over Madison Street (facing west) — Image is AI-assisted

Existing conditions of the interstate viaduct over Madison Street — Google Earth Street View

**The “Neighborway” street type is a Louisville Metro Government classification to support the bike network. The initial phases of implementation will include low-cost, high visibility pavement markings.*

A Major Neighborhood Concern: Maintenance

As noted in the Viaduct Design Parameters on page 89, maintenance agreements and schedules should be top of mind prior to installing the lighting, public art, and planter box improvements for long-term safety, appearance, and upkeep. RPOP and the City could establish agreements with KYTC and Norfolk Southern for elements directly on or next to their infrastructure. The planter boxes could be maintained KYTC, Norfolk Southern, LMG Department of Transportation / Public Works, nearby property owners, or residents. Some residents may be inclined to “adopt” a planter box and help maintain the landscaping. Community ownership of these spaces will help ensure that these improved spaces stay beautiful in the long-term.

Recommendations

Public Space

PS.1 Re-design and Re-build William Britt Park

The William Britt Park design establishes a direct connection between the two parks on Magazine Street via a weaving promenade that links to Elliott Park’s pathways across the street. Though Elliott Park has undergone recent renovations, the two parks remain disconnected by the street between them. Improved crosswalks at 28th and Magazine Streets would enhance pedestrian safety, particularly for seniors crossing from ElderServe to reach either park. A painted mural on the street itself would stitch the two parks together, extending the park experience across Magazine Street, rather than treating it as a barrier.



Existing Conditions Aerial at William Britt Park — Google Earth, June 2024

Concept design for William Britt Park

The Essentials for a Small Neighborhood Park

Shade

Seating

Safety

Design Program Layout Options for the Park



See plan, right

- Passive Play:** Bocce, swings, sound garden
- Plaza:** Seating and flex space for events
- Woodland Planting:** Tree preservation, native understory
- Urban Meadow:** Seasonal interest, pollinator garden, visually open and airy
- Community Garden:** With raised beds
- Public Art**



Design Elements

Existing trees would be preserved and complemented by enhanced understory landscaping and seasonal accents, integrating native trees, specimen trees, gardens, and meadow spaces with quiet corners for pedestrians to pause. A small plaza would serve as a neighborhood gathering point, furnished with fixed tables and chairs, and communal picnic tables, to encourage social and lively use of the space. Climbable sculptures and swing pavilions would offer active play areas alongside a bird bath and feeder encouraging wildlife interaction nested in a place where everyday life continuously crosses paths.

The street, marked with a mural connecting William Britt Park and Elliott Park (PS.2), could also close for community events or food truck gatherings, with enough width between the curbs to host regular events without impeding traffic flow.

PS.2 Design an on-street art piece between William Britt Park and Elliott Park and make intersection improvements on Magazine

A painted mural on the street itself would stitch the two parks together, extending the park experience across Magazine Street rather than treating it as a barrier, paired with improved crosswalks at 28th Street and Magazine to protect seniors crossing from ElderServe. To further improve safety, add stop signs on 28th Street at the intersection with Magazine.

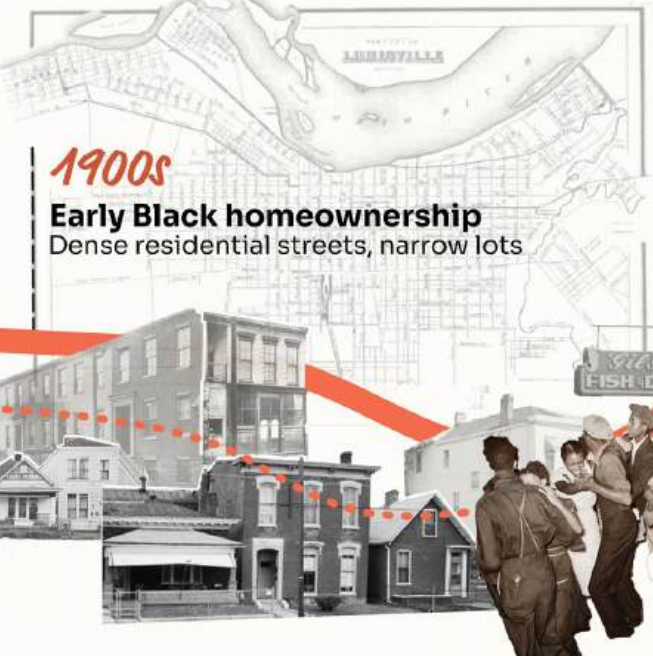
PS.3 Install a historical marker at Elliott Park to commemorate the historic baseball teams who played here.

Work with Olmsted Conservancy and LMG Parks and Recreation to install signage at Elliott Park.

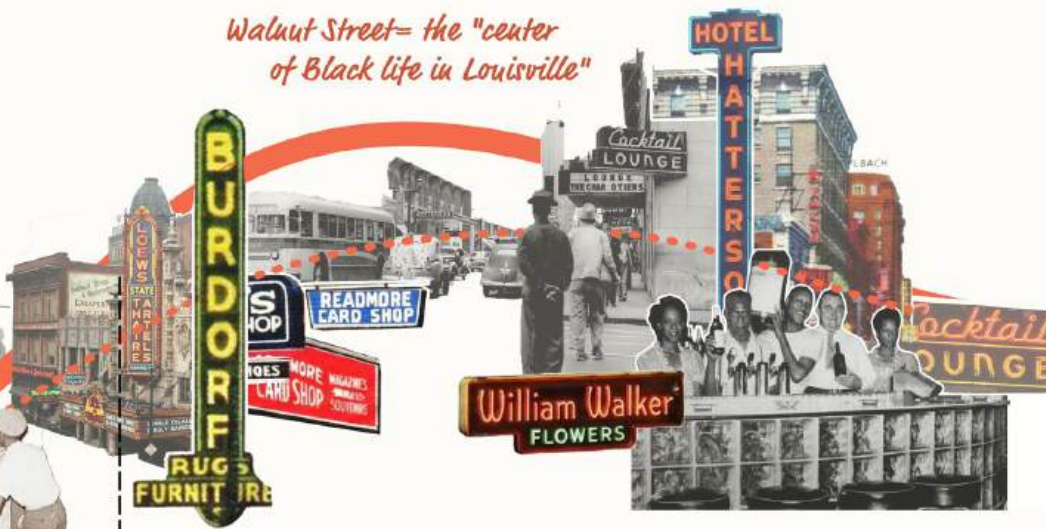
RUSSELL HISTORY AS STORYTELLING INSPIRATION

At the Viaducts (particularly the Madison Street Interstate viaduct):

1900s
Early Black homeownership
Dense residential streets, narrow lots

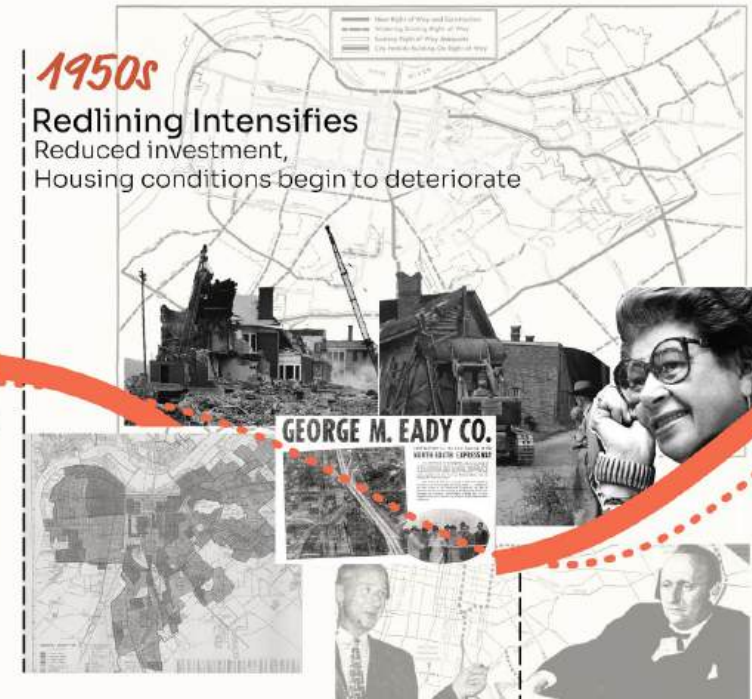


Walnut Street= the "center of Black life in Louisville"



1940-50s
Russell becomes Louisville's Harlem!
A thriving Black Neighborhood with self-sustaining internal economy

1950s
Redlining Intensifies
Reduced investment,
Housing conditions begin to deteriorate



1960s
Urban Renewal
Construction of Interstate 264
Demolition of homes and businesses
Clearing of commercial blocks



Today
Efforts to revitalize Russell
Reinvestment in housing,
economic development, and
public space improvements



Recommendations

Programming & Policies

PR.1 Establish a program for interstate and railroad viaduct public art treatments

Public art across Russell’s six identified viaducts offers a chance to turn currently overlooked infrastructure into a connected, storytelling thread running through the neighborhood, one that ties each corridor to a distinct piece of Russell’s identity. Rather than treating each installation as a standalone project, this program establishes a consistent protocol for how public art gets selected, designed, and built across all six sites, ensuring the work emerges with a cohesive soul even as it takes different forms street to street.

Proposed themes include sports and recreation along Muhammad Ali Boulevard, health and wellness along Madison Street, and entrepreneurship along River Park Drive, with each corridor’s art reflecting its designated theme (see page 88). RPOP should work with the Office of Arts and Creative Industries to incorporate these projects into their Cultural Master Plan to help generate momentum and potential funding.

Design parameters should include lighting that enhances pedestrian safety and security while complementing the artwork, the use of bright, warm, enlivening colors, and the hiring of local artists to design and construct each installation to encourage investment and rooting in place. Artists should be given creative license to interpret these themes along their respective streets, while embedding the broad tapestry of Russell’s history and culture into the work.



Elliott Park, Juneteenth — Photo from Olmsted Parks Conservancy website

PR.2 Establish programming with the Louisville Metro Parks for Elliott Park and William Britt Park

Establish programming with Louisville Metro Parks for both Elliott Park and William Britt Park, finding ways to connect the two as one shared public space that offers a variety of programs for seniors, children, families, and others. Especially considering the proximity to ElderServe across 28th Street, there is opportunity for health and wellness programming and opportunities for social connection geared toward seniors right outside their door. Regular programming should make use of the parks as they exist today, while leaving room to consider new options for William Britt Park if it’s redesigned down the line (see page 95).



Residential properties in Russell — Photo from the project team

PR.3 Develop a program to encourage inclusive access to key daily needs for caregivers and women

Caregivers in Russell, many of whom are women, juggle daily needs that are often scattered across the neighborhood, from childcare to eldercare to their own access to skills, job training, food access, and recreation. This program supports those caregivers by co-locating many of these needs and ensuring the streets connecting new and existing resources are safe, accessible, and comfortable to travel. In line with the rich concentration of community assets in Russell, this concept elevates it one step further, to deliver a distributed network of care.

The concept draws from Bogotá, Colombia, which launched its District Care System in 2020 to deliver a distributed network of city Care Blocks. Designed to be accessible within a 15 to 20-minute walk from most households, Bogotá’s network co-locates care facilities, such as those serving children and older adults, with educational, skills, and recreational

resources, giving primary caregivers, many of whom are women, a single, walkable destination to access services and support. The program has reached hundreds of thousands of women and families in Bogotá, with a companion Care School for Men engaging men and boys in cooking, cleaning, and caregiving, broadening who shares in the work of care.¹

Applying this model to Russell would give caregivers across the neighborhood a proven, accessible way to access the holistic support they need, close to home. CHANGE has created a new guide to help communities with this endeavor, accessible here: <https://www.citieschange.org/resources/care-block-implementation-guide/>

P.1 Advocate for Neighborhood Housing on the properties zoned for single-family residential when the Office of Planning advances LDC updates

As the Office of Planning advances Land Development Code (LDC) updates, RPOP should advocate for neighborhood housing on properties currently zoned for single-family residential. A 2024 moratorium on density-related LDC changes, extended by the General Assembly to April 2027, has stalled pathways to expanding neighborhood housing in the meantime. When that window opens, the City will need advocates to support its rezoning efforts and build momentum in the months ahead to secure the code changes necessary to increase affordable housing.

Expanding neighborhood housing in Russell would create opportunities for affordable housing, wealth generation, and greater density, supporting a more circular local economy.

¹ CHANGE and Publica, “Designing Safety, Building Belonging: Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Urban Spaces,” 2025.

CHAPTER FOUR

**Action
Plan**

Priority Projects

The proposed actions align with the goal of making the neighborhood safer, easier, more welcoming, and more comfortable for families to access resources and destinations. As highlighted in previous chapters, this study builds on years of on-the-ground engagement. Through a layered stakeholder input process, projects were prioritized based on community support, feasibility, low-hanging fruit, funding accessibility, and strength of local partnerships, resolving into a clear path to implementation.

The projects to the right reflect that prioritization. Some are ambitious, long-term efforts with major implications for connectivity and richness of community experience; others are achievable with less time and a lighter lift. Each priority reflects not just time, effort, and funding, but community needs, support, and alignment with existing projects and funding opportunities across Russell, Parkland, and city-wide initiatives.

Design opportunities center on streetscape interventions that enhance comfort and mobility: pedestrian-scaled infrastructure for walking and biking; shade and seating for pedestrians and those navigating with wheelchairs, walkers, or strollers given high heat risk; clearer wayfinding; better lighting; traffic calming; and public art reflecting Russell's story, particularly along viaducts, to help heal connectivity in the public realm. William Britt Park also emerged as a top priority, with public meeting input pointing to shade trees, history/storytelling murals, and community gathering space.

These priorities also reflect a need for ease of maintenance, as financial resources are stretched and will shift over time. On the map to the right, high priority / short-term projects are shown in dark red and high priority /long-term projects in light red.

Priority Projects

IMPROVE CORRIDORS: Make safety and connectivity improvements to enhance the walking and biking experience along:

- S.1

30th Street from Market to Magazine
- S.2

Magazine Street from 30th to 28th
- S.3

28th Street from Magazine to Broadway
- S.6

30th Street from Magazine to Broadway

- S.5

Improve the intersection of Broadway and 28th Street
- IN .1b

Make a four-way stops at Muhammad Ali Blvd and 32nd Street with intersection safety improvements
- IN .2b

Make a four-way stop at River Park Drive and 33rd Street with intersection safety improvements
- V.1

Hire a local artist to develop and install a mural and art piece at the Madison Street railroad viaduct
- V.2

Hire a local artist to develop and install a mural and art piece at the Madison St. interstate viaduct
- P.1

Advocate for Neighborhood Housing on the properties zoned for single-family residential when the Office of Planning advances LDC updates

Long-Term Priority Projects

- IN.1

Improve the I-264 Interchange at Muhammad Ali Boulevard
- IN.2

Improve the I-264 Interchange at River Park Drive



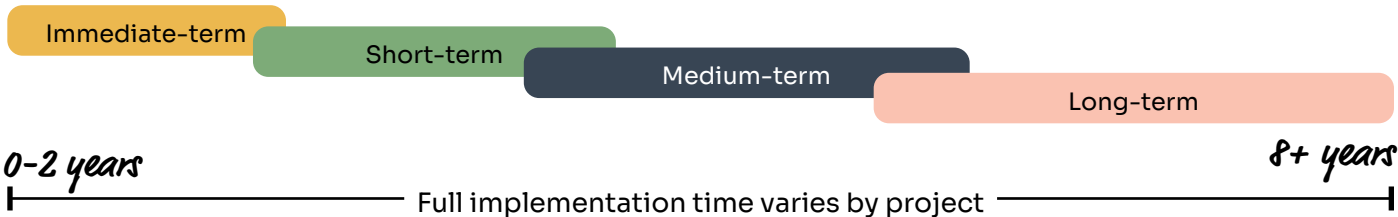
Full Action Plan

The action plan divides all recommendations into Streetscape (S.#), Public Space (PS.#), Interstate Improvement (IN.#), Viaduct Treatment (V.#), Program (PR.#), and Policy (P.#). Each notes constraints that may impede the intervention, an anticipated cost level (\$ to \$\$\$\$), funding sources, implementation champions and partners, and a general timeline. Champions are organizations that could be grant applicants or lead the implementation. Partners have a stake in the success of the project and can assist the Champions with advocacy and funding if appropriate.

Timelines are listed below, though funding availability, overlap with existing and on-going efforts, and partner capacity will all influence actual sequencing. Timelines represent when focused resources and effort should begin.

- » Immediate-term (0-2 years) projects are the low-hanging fruit: street safety improvements outside of large infrastructure, the art program and mural pieces at the Madison Street viaducts, developing parks programming, and affordable housing advocacy opportunities currently under review as part of the advance LDC updates.
- » Short-term (3-5 years) improvements range from the on-street art piece between the parks and intersection improvements connecting existing parks, to four-way stops at key intersections, to expanded murals and art at the interstate and railroad viaducts at Muhammad Ali Blvd, to a responsive program supporting caregivers.
- » Mid-term (6-8 years) projects bring holistic streetscape improvements, sidewalks, benches, lighting, and street trees, to critical corridors, layered alongside the redesign and rebuild of William Britt Park and the River Park Drive viaducts.
- » Long-term (8+ years) work centers on transforming interstate ramps and adjacent streets into low-speed neighborhood environments, and re-routing the 32nd and 33rd Street corridors to one-lane routes with traffic calming and integrated on-street parking.

PROJECT START TIMELINE



(these colors are used on the maps and tied to the timeline in the tables)



Neighborhood Call to Action

Recommendations only move forward with sustained community energy behind them. The following priorities outline where RPOP and the network of neighborhood partners can focus that energy in the years ahead, from advocacy on longer-term policy fights to the quick, visible wins that build momentum along the way.

Continue Momentum and Advocacy for Longer Term Projects

As Broadway All the Way gets underway, the community should continue to align with and advocate for improvements already in progress, especially along 28th Street (S.4), leveraging that momentum to enhance the safety of intersections throughout the streetscape. Advocacy should also continue around the heavier lifts, particularly the interstate improvements: roundabouts, ramp replacements, and four-way stops. These are ambitious, but they are also goals worth fighting for now. None of this moves without strong partnerships: city agencies, local organizations, and engaged residents alike working together.

Neighborhood Housing Advocacy

As the Office of Planning advances LDC updates, continued advocacy for neighborhood housing on single-family zoned properties remains critical (see page 97). Neighborhood housing (duplexes, triplexes, and other small-scale multi-unit buildings) offers a path to greater density without the scale or disruption of large multi-family development, opening opportunities for affordable housing and wealth generation for Russell residents and the broader community. The General Assembly extended a 2024 moratorium on density-related LDC changes to April 2027, the same changes that would open the door to neighborhood housing. A full code rewrite could still take years beyond that, and coalescing and generating neighborhood support along the way will be its own challenge worth preparing for now, making sustained advocacy essential.

Street Tree Prioritization

In coordination with the City’s Urban Forestry Department’s ongoing tree canopy efforts, RPOP should help determine which street trees get planted first, starting with the priority streetscape corridors (30th, Magazine, and 28th Streets). Identifying the most effective and critical locations for shade, so trees have time to mature, and sequencing the expansion of the canopy thoughtfully, will generate a faster response to high heat risk and stormwater management needs, and have an outsized impact on the pedestrian experience. Developing a street tree maintenance strategy for the early years after planting is key to the success of this effort.

Local Artist Engagement

Engaging local artists and the broader public to develop the viaduct art pieces is one of the easiest and most powerful wins on this list. With no shortage of local talent, putting out a call for proposals, engaging artists to develop pieces, and pulling in the community to comment and build consensus around which pieces get installed is a natural way to raise visibility and deepen the connection between these projects and the people invested in them. It also gives local artists a real platform to showcase and elevate their work.

Add Mobility Projects into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan

RPOP can work with LMG Department of Transportation and the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA) to add key mobility projects, particularly high-priority streetscape projects and the I-264 interchange improvements, into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is updated every four years. The last plan was adopted in 2023, so an update will occur soon. The MTP / TIP provide more opportunities for federal, state, and local funding for implementation.

Full Action Plan

Streetscape

X.#

High priority project (noted on chart)

Cost Key

\$

Low cost:
policies, programs,
striping, public art

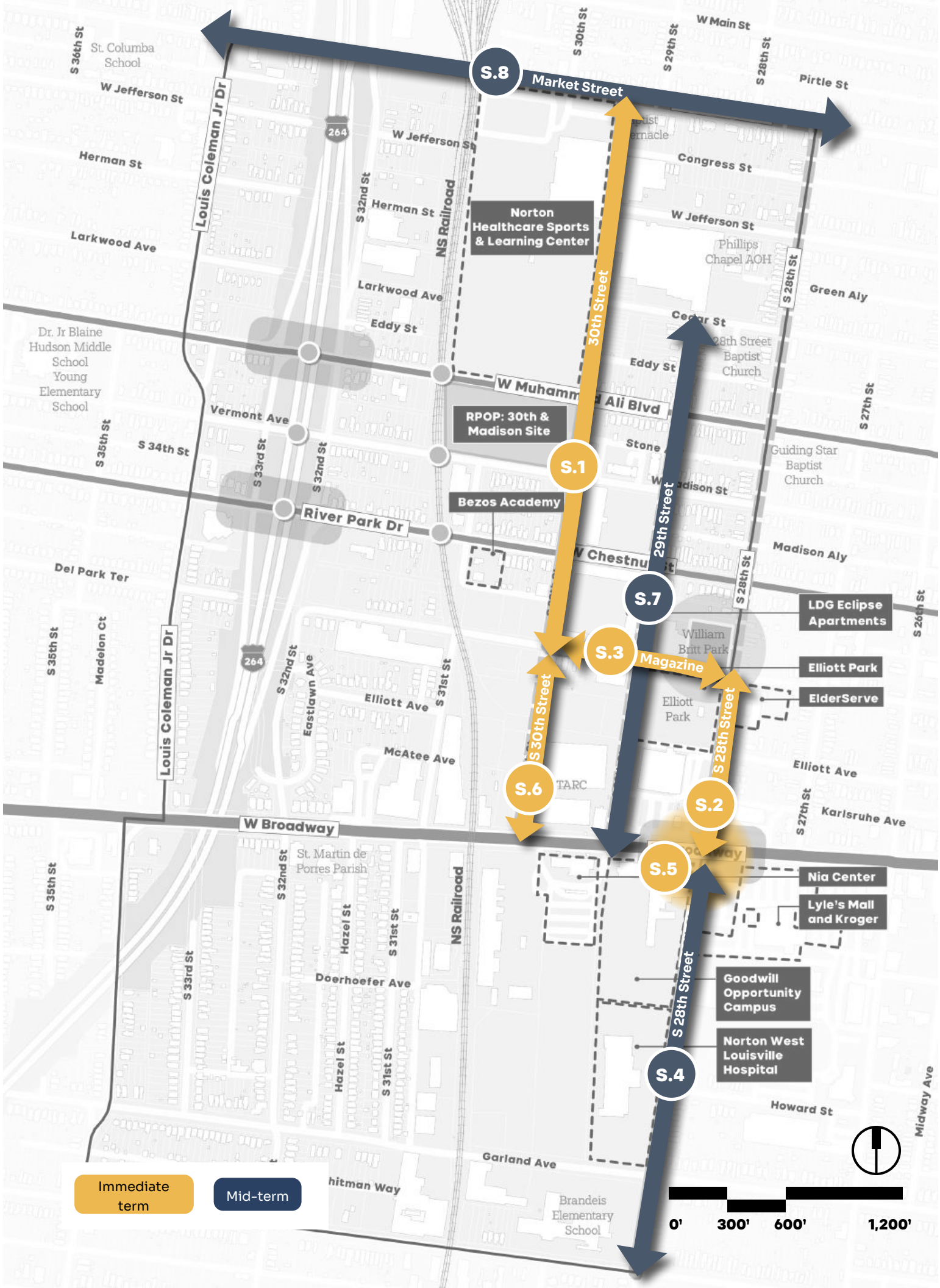
\$\$

Medium cost:
park construction,
programs

\$\$\$

High cost:
interstate changes,
long-term streetscape
changes

#	PROJECT NAME	COST	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	POTENTIAL FUNDING
S.1	Improve 30th Street from Market Street to Magazine Street	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: KIPDA, Streets for People, TARC, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention, Trees Louisville	Immediate term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.2	Improve Magazine Street from 30th Street to 28th Street	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: ElderServe, Streets for People, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention	Immediate term	Businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.3	Improve 28th Street from Magazine to Broadway	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, Louisville Department of Transportation Partner: KIPDA, Streets for People, TARC, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention, Trees Louisville	Immediate term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.4	Improve 28th Street south of Broadway	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: KIPDA, Streets for People, TARC, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention, Trees Louisville	Mid-term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.5	Improve the intersection of Broadway and 28th Street	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: Streets for People, TARC, Project Design Team for Broadway All the Way, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention	Immediate term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.6	Improve 30th Street from Magazine Street to Broadway	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: KIPDA, Streets for People, TARC, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention, Trees Louisville	Mid-term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.7	Improve 29th Street from Cedar Street to Broadway	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: KIPDA, Streets for People, TARC, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention, Trees Louisville	Mid-term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy
S.8	Improve Market Street from Louis Coleman Jr. Drive to 28th Street	Short-Term: \$ Long-Term: \$\$\$	Champion: RPOP, Center for Accessible Living, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: KIPDA, Streets for People, TARC, Louisville Metro PD, Office of Violence Prevention, Trees Louisville	Mid-term	MTP/TIP, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, local philanthropy



Full Action Plan

Interstate Improvement

X.# High priority project (noted on chart)

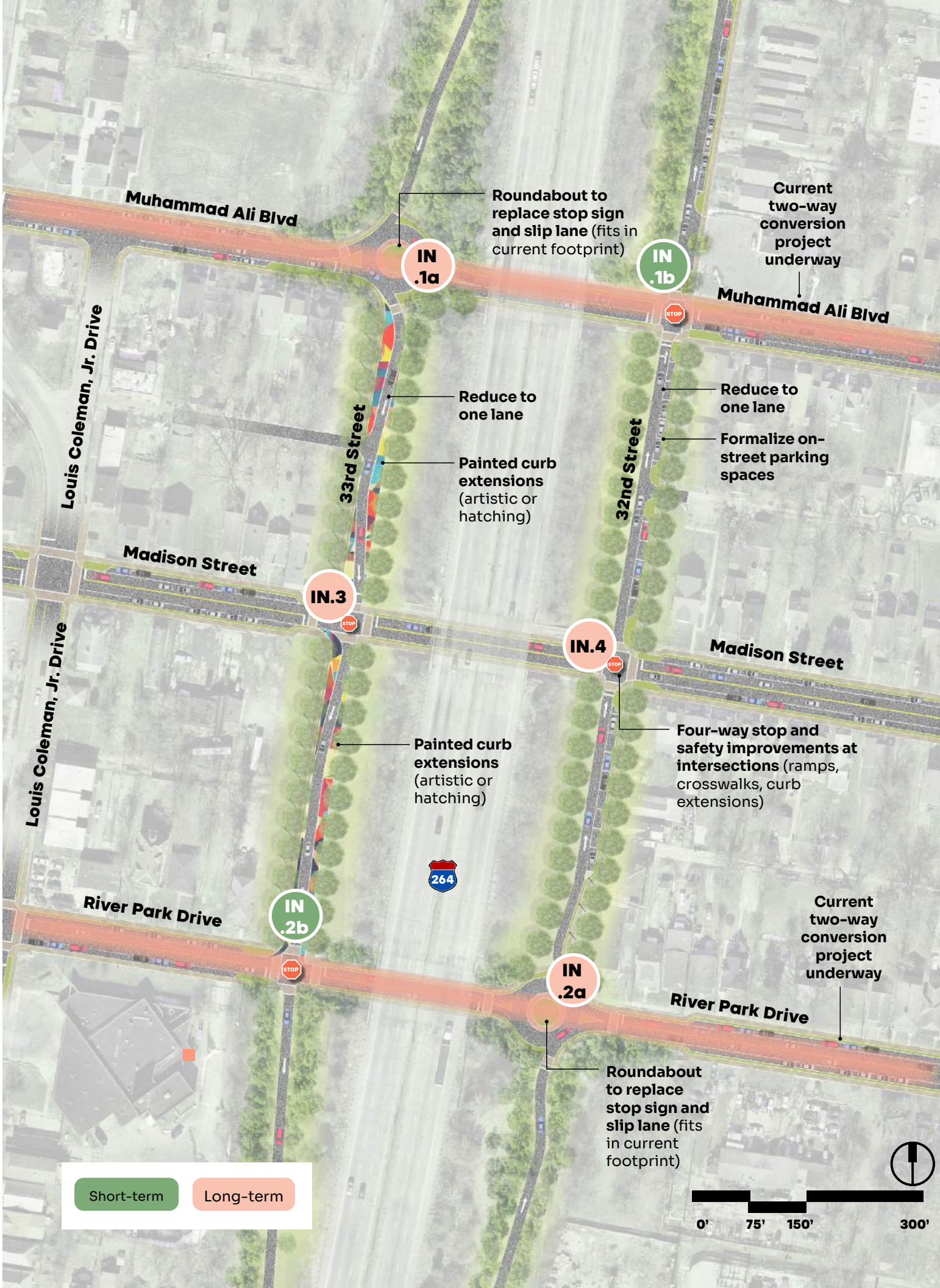
Cost Key

Low cost:
policies, programs, striping, public art

Medium cost:
park construction, programs

High cost:
interstate changes, long-term streetscape changes

#	PROJECT NAME	COST	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	POTENTIAL FUNDING
IN.1	Improve the I-264 interchange at Muhammad Ali Blvd	High cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Long-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN.1a	Replace the ramp at 33rd Street with a single-lane roundabout at Muhammad Ali Blvd before Louis Coleman Jr. Drive	High cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Long-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN.1b	Make four-way stop at Muhammad Ali Blvd and 32nd Street with intersection safety improvements	Medium cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Short-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN.2	Improve the I-264 interchange at River Park Dr	High cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Long-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN. 2a	Replace the ramp at 32nd Street with a single-lane roundabout	High cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Long-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN .2b	Make a four-way stop at River Park Drive and 33rd Street with intersection safety improvements	Medium cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Short-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN.3	Reduce the 33rd Street corridor to one lane in one direction with traffic calming measures	Medium cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Long-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs
IN.4	Reduce the 32nd Street corridor to one lane in one direction with traffic calming measures and on-street parking on one side	Medium cost	Champion: KYTC Partner: RPOP, LMG Department of Transportation, KIPDA, Streets for People	Long-term	MTP/TIP, KYTC, Senator legacy projects, Governor legacy projects, federal programs



Full Action Plan

Viaduct Treatments

X.#

High priority project (noted on chart)

Cost Key

\$

Low cost:
policies, programs, striping, public art

\$\$

Medium cost:
park construction, programs

\$\$\$

High cost:
interstate changes, long-term streetscape changes

#	PROJECT NAME	COST	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	POTENTIAL FUNDING
V.1	Railroad Viaduct: Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at Madison Street	\$	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, Office for Violence Prevention	Immediate term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, Norfolk Southern, grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, and philanthropic organizations
V.2	Interstate Viaduct: Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the Madison Street	\$	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, Office for Violence Prevention	Immediate term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, KYTC, grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, and philanthropic organizations
V.3	Railroad Viaduct: Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the River Park Dr	\$	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, Office for Violence Prevention	Mid-term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, Norfolk Southern, grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, and philanthropic organizations
V.4	Interstate Viaduct: Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the River Park Drive	\$	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, Office for Violence Prevention	Mid-term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, KYTC, grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, and philanthropic organizations
V.5	Railroad Viaduct: Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the Muhammad Ali Blvd	\$	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, Office for Violence Prevention	Short-term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, Norfolk Southern, grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, and philanthropic organizations
V.6	Interstate Viaduct: Hire a local artist to develop a design concept and install a mural and art piece at the Muhammad Ali Blvd	\$	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, Office for Violence Prevention	Short-term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMC Neighborhood Development Funds, KYTC, grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, and philanthropic organizations



Full Action Plan

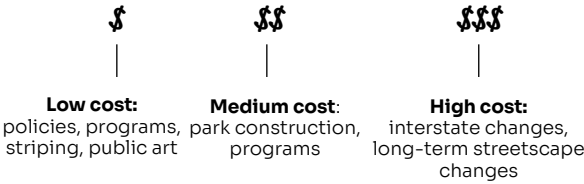
Public Space

#	PROJECT NAME	COST	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	POTENTIAL FUNDING
PS.1	Re-design and re-build William Britt Park	💵💵	Champion: RPOP, LMG Parks and Recreation, Parks Alliance of Louisville Partner: Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Wilderness Louisville, Inc., National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)	Mid-term	Louisville Parks and Recreation, federal, state, and private grant sources, Trust for Public Land's Equitable Communities Fund, Project for Public Spaces
PS.2	Design an on-street art piece and intersection improvement on Magazine Street between William Britt Park and Elliott Park	💵	Champion: RPOP, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries, LMG Department of Transportation Partner: Louisville Visual Art Association, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Parks Alliance of Louisville, Roaming Hunger Food Trucks, Louisville Food Truck Association, Streets for People	Short-term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries, Louisville Metro Council Capital Infrastructure Funds, philanthropic grants
PS.3	Install a historical marker at Elliott Park to commemorate the baseball teams who played here.	💵	Champion: Olmsted Conservancy, LMG Parks and Recreation Partner: RPOP, Parks Alliance of Louisville	Immediate term	Kentucky Historical Society, LMG Parks and Recreation, businesses and organizations with a presence in the corridor



X.# High priority project (noted on chart)

Cost Key



Programs

#	PROJECT NAME	COST	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	POTENTIAL FUNDING
PR.1	Establish a program for interstate and railroad viaduct public art treatments that follow the themes of this project. Use the themes along the designated corridors.	💵	Champion: ARB, LMG Office of Arts & Creative Industries Partner: RPOP, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Louisville Visual Art Association, Louisville Metro PD, LMG Office for Violence Prevention	Immediate term	Office of Arts & Creative Industries
PR.2	Establish programming with the Louisville Metro Parks for Elliott Park and William Britt Park	💵	Champion: RPOP, LMG Parks and Recreation Partner: Kentucky Shakespeare, LMG Office for Violence Prevention, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Parks Alliance of Louisville	Immediate term	Louisville Parks and Recreation, Parks Alliance of Louisville, Office for Violence Prevention
PR.3	Develop a program to encourage inclusive access to key daily needs for caregivers and women	💵💵	Champion: RPOP, LMG Office for Women Partner: LMG Office for Violence Prevention, Publica	Short-term	Office for Women, Office for Violence Prevention

Policy

#	PROJECT NAME	COST	PARTNERS	TIMELINE	POTENTIAL FUNDING
P.1	Advocate for Neighborhood Housing on the properties zoned for single-family residential when the Office of Planning advances LDC updates	💵	Champion: LMG Office of Planning, RPOP Partner: Metropolitan Housing Coalition, Housing Alliance of Louisville	Immediate term	Staff time

First Things First

Public feedback has consistently emphasized the importance of long-term maintenance, improving current sidewalk conditions, and scheduling regular clean-ups. While this action plan prioritizes important projects for the public realm throughout the neighborhood, RPOP and community advocates should work with Louisville Metro Government Public Works to make the following basic improvements in the interim, as they will have an immediate positive impact on residents' daily quality of life:

- » **Add sidewalk segments and ADA ramps in need of repair to the Sidewalk Repair Program, which aims to eliminate “tripping hazards that pose a risk to the traveling public and ensuring that all sidewalks conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) dimensional requirements.” Residents may continue calling 311, and / or RPOP could send a list to LMG Department of Public Works that highlights particularly damaged sidewalks, which may be added to the top of the queue.**
- » **Establish a regular maintenance and clean-up program for the alleys in the West End. Trash and debris is often dumped in the alleys and should be regularly cleared.**
- » **Create long-term maintenance agreements for any new improvements in the public realm to ensure long-term upkeep, safety, and beauty.**

Thank you to all Russell residents and stakeholders who generously gave their time and ideas to guide this study!





Perkins&Will