



lower price hill concept plan

Spring 2015 • Community Learning Center Institute







# context

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# introduction

## *A Concept Plan for Lower Price Hill*

The concept plan for Lower Price Hill was a project prompted by the Community Learning Center Institute through Oyler School in the Cincinnati neighborhood of Lower Price Hill (LPH). The CLCI approached the University of Cincinnati's Niehoff Urban Studio in early 2015 for assistance in developing a strategic plan that focused especially on housing in the neighborhood, as affordable housing had been identified by community members as a major priority. However, the project's scope broadened and evolved to eventually include other aspects along with housing.

Adelyn Hall, a Master of Community Planning student and intern with The Model Group Inc., made the connection for UC students to get involved on this project. She connected Darlene Kamine, the executive director of CLCI, with Frank Russell at the Niehoff Urban Studio, and the three worked to recruit students. Winfield Harris was one of these students; he opted to use the project as his senior capstone project for his Bachelor of Urban Planning degree. Gretchen Keillor, a senior Master of Community Planning student, also volunteered for the project to gain more experience in urban design and community development. Kate Eisenpress, an Internal Research Fellow at CLCI and based in Oyler, provided assistance and insight throughout the process as well. These six people – Darlene, Adelyn, Frank, Winfield, Gretchen, and Kate – drove the community plan process throughout the spring of 2015.

Initially, the focus was expected to be primarily upon affordable housing for the neighborhood. However, during the initial set-up meetings, several factors were illuminated: First, there are multiple interconnected issues at play in the neighborhood itself (such as environmental factors, cleanliness and crime, and the lack of local businesses) that all influence the housing situation and need to be addressed as well. Second, while the neighborhood of LPH has been studied extensively over the last three decades, none of these plans had very strongly engaged the community itself, nor had many of the plans come to fruition. Despite extensive planning, there has been a lack of engagement and impact. Third, while multiple developers are poised to invest in the neighborhood with significant land-banking occurring and properties being bought, there is a fear of gentrification or misguided action that these developments will happen in ways that are not actually beneficial to the community. And finally, in the midst of

all these factors, there is no formal body located in LPH to coordinate these various efforts. In lieu of a formal organization, Oyler School has stepped in to coordinate efforts amongst disparate bodies, based on the rationale that the school is the unifying force for the neighborhood; i.e., something that many residents and organizations have in common.

The community of Lower Price Hill needed a more comprehensive plan that focused on more than just housing, one that was designed by residents and led by the unifying anchor of Oyler School, that would outline exactly what residents wanted for their neighborhood in order to guide the future activities of developers.

To create this more comprehensive community plan, our team engaged in several activities. We first sought to understand existing property ownership and the momentum of projects already occurring. We looked at case study examples of revitalization efforts in historic neighborhoods in three other cities. We sought to interface directly with developers, to pro-actively anticipate their needs and ensure that the plan is relevant and implementable. Much of the time over the semester was devoted to the creation of the community plan itself, which involved vision, charrette, and conceptual development meetings with the community. Our team took a deeper dive into the housing issues as well, and then finally equipped the community with tools for next steps.

The following chapters document the breadth of work accomplished in this short couple of months (from January – May 2015). Our hope is that this process serves as an initial catalyst for the revitalization of Lower Price Hill: a community designed by residents that is truly a great place to live.

# existing momentum

## *Ongoing Projects within the Neighborhood*

To understand the context of existing revitalization momentum in Lower Price Hill, our team has compiled this list that outlines projects already taking place. These projects represent opportunities to join forces in future endeavors that allow LPH to maximize impact by working together.

### COMMUNITY MATTERS

This organization's main campus is located just south of Oyler along St. Michael's; they also run the Lower Price Hill Community School. This organization is working on multiple projects in Lower Price Hill, including an \$8m renovation of St. Michael's Church, housing for



**COMMUNITY  
MATTERS**

Americorps volunteers, the creation of a thrift store and laundry mat, and the renovation of an existing space into a food bank. They are also purchasing houses along St. Michael's with the intention of creating a renter's equity program and own property along 8th St. where the Urban Appalachian Council once existed – which is now adjacent to a community garden that they operate.

### BLOC MINISTRIES

BLOC has recently opened BLOHead Pizza, which serves as the only restaurant in the neighborhood currently. They own a Women's Ministry center and an Arts Incubator space on the corner of Storrs and Neave, as well as another business incubator space on 8th St. near State. They have also recently purchased a warehouse on Burns (south of BodyCote) that will be converted into a business incubator space. For a full map of BLOC properties, see Appendix A.



## OHIO RIVER TRAIL WEST & PRICE LANDING

This planned bike and green-way trail will stretch from Evans Field south to Price Landing, which is a new riverfront park whose funding has recently been approved. The \$1.3m trail project will connect downtown Cincinnati with neighborhoods along the Ohio River to the west. See Appendix B for a conceptual plan of this project.



## PORT AUTHORITY

The Port Authority of Cincinnati has been land banking vacant or abandoned properties throughout the neighborhood, and is working with CLCI and other organizations of LPH to determine the best possible future use of these properties. For a full map of property ownership in LPH, see Appendix C.



Port of Greater Cincinnati  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

## WATERFIELDS AQUAPONICS

This business has been an inspiring story of success for the neighborhood of Lower Price Hill, one of whose owners lives in the neighborhood. They strive to employ residents of LPH, and have recently applied for city funds for a renovation and expansion of their business on State.



These are just a few of the projects already occurring in the Lower Price Hill neighborhood as of this writing (April 2015). Many others will undoubtedly be candidates to add to this list in the coming months.

# case studies

## *Examining Other Neighborhoods for Lessons Learned*

After understanding the momentum of existing projects in Lower Price Hill, our team investigated case studies from similar neighborhoods nationwide in order to learn from their triumphs and mistakes. The neighborhoods were selected based on their size and demographic similarities to Lower Price Hill, traits such as architectural style or the presence of neighborhood school, and finally common issues that the neighborhoods faced such as vacancy or crime. The selection matrix is detailed below. Each case study offered inspiration and lessons for Lower Price Hill to learn from.

<i>Overview Matrix</i>	PITTSBURGH	SLAVIC VILLAGE	RESERVOIR HILL
<b>PROFILE</b>			
Size (sq. miles)	0.8	3.5	0.3
Population	3,286	21,500	5,600
Average Income	\$21,000	\$26,000	\$40,500
<b>TRAITS</b>			
Similar architectural style	-	-	x
Presence of Park / Greenway	x	-	x
Schools in Neighborhood	x	x	x
Strong Businesses / Retail	-	x	-
<b>ISSUES</b>			
Vacancy	x	x	x
Crime	x	x	-
Affordable Housing	x	x	-
Green / Environmental	x	-	x



### PITTSBURGH: ATLANTA, GA

The Pittsburgh neighborhood of Atlanta is located in the southwest quadrant of central Atlanta, very close to downtown amenities. Pittsburgh's initial development was largely due to the adjacent rail yard; the neighborhood actually got its name because all the pollution from nearby trains clouded the air (which was similar to the environment of Pittsburgh, PA at the time). Today the neighborhood is home to several schools, a community center, and a recreational park. There is no main thoroughfare for businesses; instead they are scattered on corners throughout the neighborhood (similar to Lower Price Hill). A historically black working-class town, the neighborhood has also been designated a National Historic District and has many historic buildings (though not in the same architectural style as Lower Price Hill).

<b>SIZE</b>	0.8 sq. mi.
<b>POP</b>	3,286
<b>INCOME</b>	\$21,000
<b>RACE</b>	96% black
	2% white
	2% other

Between 1970 and 1990, the neighborhood lost 50% of its population, resulting in high vacancy and crime rates. Beginning in the 2000s, the neighborhood had begun to turn around, but when the housing crisis wracked the nation in 2008, Pittsburgh was one of

the first (and worst) neighborhoods to experience high foreclosure rates. At the worst, more than fifty percent of Pittsburgh's 1,800 parcels were vacant – many of them newly-constructed homes. However, Pittsburgh is again on its way to success, due in part to the following three factors. This list is not exhaustive, but rather chosen for their relevance to Lower Price Hill's current situation.

*#1: Consolidating Responsibility for Development into a Single Organization Can Be Risky*

In 2006, prior to the housing crisis, there were at least four separate organizations working in Pittsburgh to continue pushing its positive momentum forward. In 2008, faced with the need for an overwhelming neighborhood rehabilitation, these organizations came together to establish primary strategies for the neighborhood's recovery and entered into a formal joint venture agreement. By consolidating responsibility for the neighborhood into one partnership, the effectiveness of each organization was magnified -- and this model is one that many communities now follow. However, one of the organizations providing a primary source of funding eventually became disinterested in the neighborhood's development and backed out, resulting in many acres of land now no longer being rehabilitated. This has proved to be detrimental to the neighborhood's development momentum.

Lower Price Hill currently has several organizations working within it: Oyler Community Learning Center, Lower Price Hill Community School, and Bloc Ministries, at the least. Oyler is currently acting as the defacto facilitator for each of these groups; without profits at stake or any interest in actually owning and being responsible for land, the school is well-poised to enable the neighborhood's development without needing to dangerously consolidate into one organization.

*#2: Capitalizing on Upcoming Civic Improvements (I.e., the Beltline Green-way)*

The Beltline is a major green-way development planned for Atlanta that will create a system of more than 33 miles of trails encircling Atlanta, using an unused railroad bed system. Pittsburgh is lucky enough to be one of the neighborhoods that this major green-way project will affect; the Beltline is planned to run along the southern edge of the neighborhood. Recognizing this opportunity, in 2006 the Annie E. Casey Foundation purchased the industrial lot that currently occupies the land adjacent to the railroad / Beltline track, intending to partner with Pittsburgh to capitalize on an economic development opportunity.

The lesson to be learned here is that the neighborhood pro-actively stepped in to capitalize on a green-way opportunity; instead of waiting for the development to come

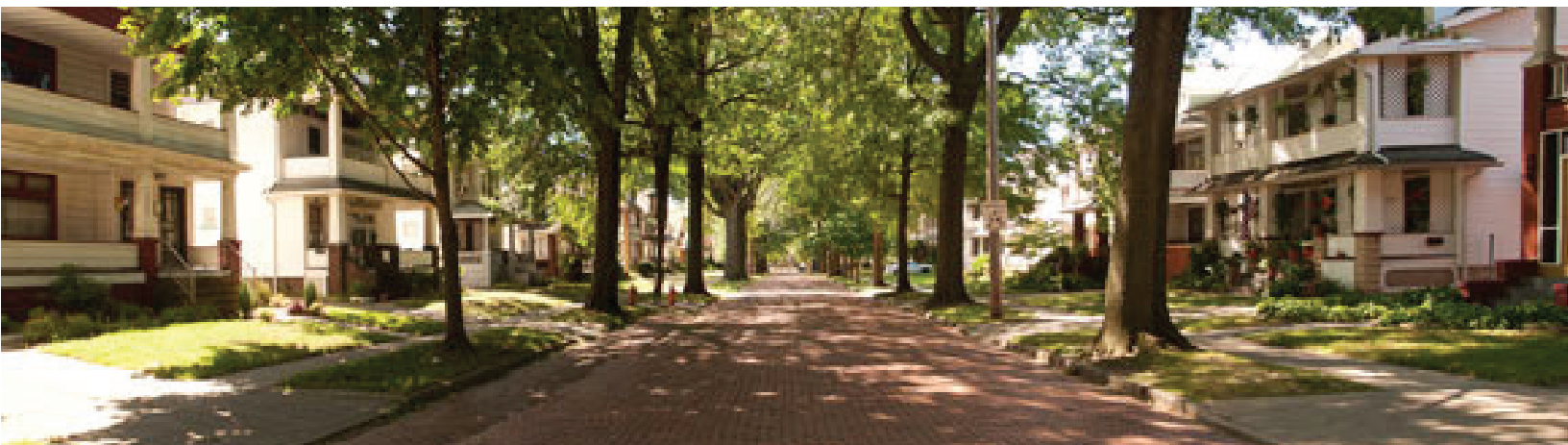
to them, they took action to ensure the development was what they wanted it to be. Lower Price Hill is facing a similar exciting juncture, with the planned construction of the Ohio River Trail. The trail's proximity is a major opportunity for the neighborhood, and proactive action and advocacy is required to secure the best interests of the community.

### *#3: Emphasis on, and Commitment to, Green Construction*

The two aspects of providing affordable housing are land / structure costs and operating costs. The latter often is overlooked, but has the most effect on actual residents. According to a report issued by McKinsey & Company, the average household spends 5% of their income on utility costs, while the average low-income household spends 15% of their income on utility costs – and sometimes as high as 35% for fixed-income households. The average household income in Pittsburgh is \$21,000 annually. To help provide affordable housing, Pittsburgh committed to using green building techniques, particularly low-flow plumbing fixtures. Pittsburgh has also designed educational programs for the community to help retrain community members on lifestyle choices to reduce energy usage.

The community of Lower Price Hill could demand green construction techniques from developers, and the leading organizations of the neighborhood could also work to educate community members on how to reduce energy usage, in order to truly provide the most affordable housing possible.

With several similarities to Lower Price Hill, as well as common challenges, the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Atlanta holds several key lessons that may be relevant for the community of Lower Price Hill.



### SLAVIC VILLAGE: CLEVELAND, OH

Slavic Village is a historically Polish and Czech neighborhood on the east side of Cleveland. Located near the Cuyahoga River (and its accompanying industrial rail yards), the neighborhood has traditionally been a blue-collar, working-class area. With several amenities and institutions such as Cleveland Central Catholic High School and the Broadway School of Music, combined with multiple main corners and streets of retail, the neighborhood has a history of strong community and identity. Slavic Village Development has been investing in and guiding the neighborhood's growth since 1980.

<b>SIZE</b>	3.5 sq. mi.
<b>POP</b>	21,500
<b>INCOME</b>	\$26,000
<b>RACE</b>	75% white
	20% black
	5% other

As the neighborhood's population declined in the 1970s and 80s (due to suburban migration), crime became an issue: drug arrests rose 478% between 1990 and 2005, and violent crime rose 76%. And in 2007, the foreclosure crisis put the neighborhood into a tailspin. Slavic Village was one of the worst-hit neighborhoods in the country, leading the nation in foreclosure filings. Even today, approximately 25% of the neighborhood's housing units are vacant. Despite these challenges, long-time residents insist that it's a good neighborhood – and their hopes for improvement are beginning to be answered.

*#1: "We can't wait for others to step in." -- Tony Brancatelli, City Councilman of Slavic Village*

In researching this case study, story after story popped up of residents taking neighborhood clean-up into their own hands. A son stopped by to board up the house next to his mother's to prevent squatters and vandalism; a woman mowed her

lawn, but also the two on either side of her to keep away mice and snakes; an elderly woman cleared weeds from an adjacent vacant lot. While these individual citizens do not necessarily have the power to demolish blighted homes, they do feel a sense of ownership for the neighborhood, and so they help in the ways that they can.

### *#2: Public-Private Partnerships Can Make Up for Resources that Cities Lack*

The City of Cleveland, as of 2009, was dealing with so many foreclosures that they could not accurately report a total number – they literally could not keep up with the reportings. The City estimated the number at 15,000 homes. Needless to say, resources for demolition, or even property stabilization (i.e., boarding up windows), are limited. To fill this gap, Slavic Village has embraced a public-private partnership. Slavic Village Development has been guiding the neighborhood's growth since 1980. To address demolition, they work to attract investors, and then provide a list of demolition candidates to the city – with the idea that the city will respond to the added pressure if there are investors waiting. The Slavic Village Recovery Project is a privately-backed program that strives to tackle the rehabilitation side of the problem: they acquire properties that can be saved, rehabilitate them with a \$40,000 investment, and then resell them for about \$60,000. Both organizations' work coordinates for the overall benefit of the neighborhood.

### *#3: There Are Ways to Provide Affordability without Being Section 8*

Slavic Village Development cites several affordability programs for home-buyers, including homeownership programs through the City of Cleveland (Afford-a-Home, tax abatement, homeownership training, etc.) The Neighbors Invest in Broadway (NIB) program, however, is operated directly through Slavic Village Development. This program invites interested home-buyers to submit an application to purchase a "distressed home" for a low cost. If the application is approved, the new owner is expected to utilize sweat equity to rehabilitate the home. Preference is partly based on proposed reuse (i.e., for sale or owner occupants receive preference over rental properties) to help create sustainable homeownership in the neighborhood. This program is similar to a successful initiative that the Mayor of Baltimore implemented in the 1970s, in which he sold historic but distressed brownstone row houses for just \$1 each, under the condition that the new owners live there and renovate the homes – and many of them did, resulting in historic preservation and revitalized neighborhoods.

While Slavic Village does not share as many physical or historical similarities to Lower Price Hill, the neighborhood's efforts to improve and rehabilitate housing in non-traditional ways are especially relevant to Lower Price Hill.



### RESERVOIR HILL: BALTIMORE, MD

Reservoir Hill is a small neighborhood located just north of downtown Baltimore. It was originally founded as a wealthy residential neighborhood, and over the years the large single-family houses and lots were subdivided into smaller multi-family portions. The neighborhood is bordered on the north by Druid Lake, which has recreational trails and a park. There are many historic buildings in the area, with several examples of Italianate row houses (similar to Lower Price Hill). There are not very many businesses in the neighborhood itself, but there is an elementary school, which has served as the unifying institution for the neighborhood.

<b>SIZE</b>	0.3 sq. mi.
<b>POP</b>	5,600
<b>INCOME</b>	\$40,500
<b>RACE</b>	88% black
	9% white
	3% other

Similar to many American neighborhoods, the late 20th century brought population decline and a deterioration of housing to Reservoir Hill. The neighborhood also lost its primary commercial strip along Whitelock St. during this time. As of 2010, the neighborhood was struggling with a 25% vacancy rate. Despite a lack of diversification in the neighborhood (i.e., all housing and nothing to do!), the community has managed to capitalize on the assets that it does have in order to lead growth efforts.

### *#1: School-Centric Development*

In the absence of a strong retail, industrial, or business presence, the community's institutional landscape is dominated by the John Eager Howard Elementary School. In 2005, the City of Baltimore had slated this school for closure (based on reducing facility space), but the community's efforts overturned this decision. The school has not only remained open, but the community was also able to secure additional funding for renovations of the school campus. Beginning in 2015, \$15-17 million is planned to go toward the renovation of the school and the surrounding block. The Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) acknowledges this investment as an opportunity to "let school redevelopment springboard into neighborhood redevelopment," and "has partnered with Neighborhood Design Center to create a community investment strategy to guide city investment in the rest of the community" (RHIC website). This is almost exactly what Lower Price Hill is doing currently, by recognizing Oyler Community Learning Center as the central unifying force for the community.

### *#2: Greening the Neighborhood*

Reservoir Hill has traditionally identified itself simply as a good place to live, all the way back to its beginnings as a wealthy residential community outside the bustle of downtown. RHIC has maintained this identity by focusing so strongly on quality of life issues – i.e., providing quality housing, schools, recreation, and a sense of community – rather than, for example, attracting small business owners. One of their initiatives related to quality of life is to "green" the neighborhood, not only in terms of planting trees and aesthetic qualities, but to assist the community in becoming more sustainable. In 2007, RHIC created a Master Green Plan to guide these efforts; some of the goals of this plan are to lower energy consumption, increase tree canopy, recruit recyclers, expand community gardens, and rehabilitate vacant lots into community spaces. RHIC offers multiple programs to educate and encourage the community to fulfill these goals, including offering environmental education at the elementary school, the "Tree Stewards" program, and the "Flip the Power" energy conservation program for youth.

### *#3: Pro-actively Seeking Funding from City-Wide Organizations*

Reservoir Hill has received positive press and recognition as a "strong but undervalued" community by several outside organizations. Based on this, these organizations have provided funding, grants, or pilot programs to help improve the community. For example, the Baltimore Community Foundation selected Reservoir Hill as one of two target neighborhoods to invest in, committing \$300,000 as well as staff support over three years. Healthy Neighborhoods Inc. has also invested \$15 million to date in

Reservoir Hill housing, through acquisition, rehab, loans, and community improvement projects. By pro-actively promoting the neighborhood in a positive way and seeking out these opportunities, RHIC has added value to their community.

Reservoir Hill offers several great examples for Lower Price Hill, including school-centric development, neighborhood greening, and innovative funding opportunities.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

More details on these case studies can be found by contacting the following organizations.

#### Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association, Inc.  
404.522.9331  
[facebook.com/PCIAatlanta](https://facebook.com/PCIAatlanta)

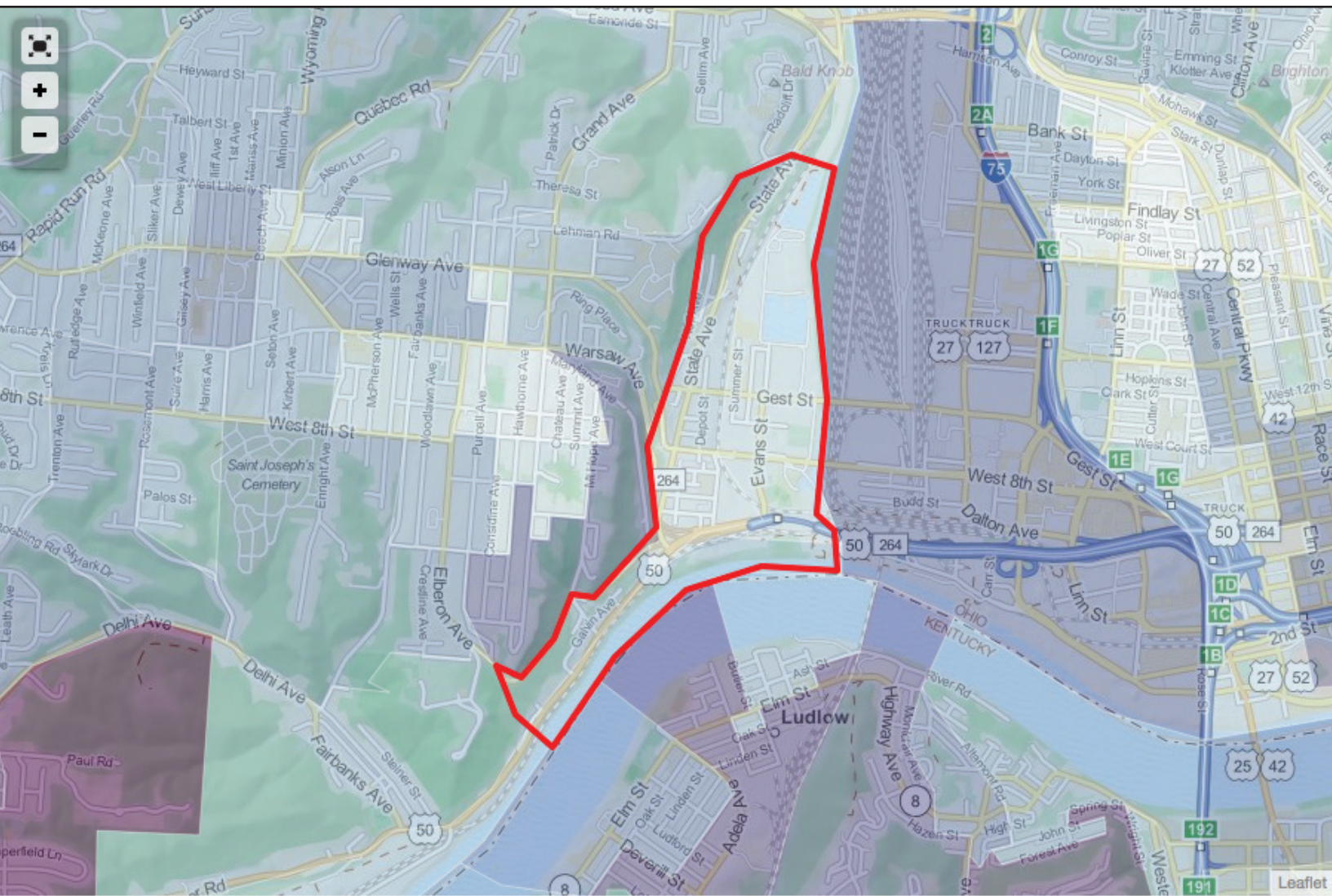
#### Slavic Village

Slavic Village Development  
216.429.1182  
[slavicvillage.org](http://slavicvillage.org)

Slavic Village Recovery Project  
216.429.1182, ext. 143  
[slavicvillagehomes.org](http://slavicvillagehomes.org)

#### Reservoir Hill

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Inc.  
410.225, 7547  
[reservoirhill.net](http://reservoirhill.net)



\$10,000 \$20,000 \$30,000 \$40,000 \$50,000 \$60,000 \$70,000

### LOWER PRICE HILL MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Source: City-Data 2015

# developer perspective

## *Working with Developers to Streamline Effectiveness*

The City of Cincinnati is undergoing a surge of development funded by several public-private partnerships and local initiatives to boost economic performance and quality of life in the City's 52 neighborhoods. Because of these available funding initiatives and partnerships, development in Lower Price Hill, while undeniably challenging, is no longer being viewed as impossible. This section will provide a brief overview of the developer's perspective and process concerning development in the neighborhood of Lower Price Hill, so that stakeholders interested in raising the quality of life in the neighborhood can better assess projects that would be appealing to developers in the region.

### **WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?**

Economic Development can be defined for the purpose of this report as a process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance and sustain the economic well being of a community. Economic development is in contrast to economic growth, as economic growth looks to a single industry to propel economic activities in the region and is considered to be a short-term solution (The International Economic Development Council). The neighborhood of Lower Price Hill faces a unique challenge, as the median household income of the community, currently estimated at \$15,000 annually (City of Cincinnati Planning and Buildings 2015), does not immediately entice developers to come to the area.

However, with the success of the Oyler Community Learning Center and several new City and State economic development initiatives that are aimed at helping communities like Lower Price Hill become more competitive and stable, Lower Price Hill has an opportunity to take advantage of these programs and partnerships and propel economic development forward in the area. Furthermore, Lower Price Hill has the opportunity to leverage its close location to the river, its historical legacy that contributes greatly to the City of Cincinnati's history and its hard working class residents who are dedicated to the neighborhood.

## DEVELOPER'S PROCESS

Ideally, development is triggered in a neighborhood after the community has had an opportunity to create a vision for the future. Developers come into the process in order to execute that vision. They then look to location, product type and the target market to ensure that the value of development will be more than the project costs (Chamlee 2015). In low-income areas such as Lower Price Hill, capital to fund these projects will come from a variety of sources and will be provided as a subsidy to incentivize stakeholders to develop in the area.

While subsidies will be used to promote physical growth in the area, it is important to note that the Lower Price Hill concept plan also provides in parallel strategies for growth in human capital, through a variety of initiatives, such as a job-training programs, home-buyer classes, etc. This is key to sustainable economic development and will propel future development in Lower Price Hill to not be so dependent on subsidies and outside funding.

Developers base their decision to go forward with a project on opportunity (strategic location, site availability and cost), market feasibility (supply versus demand), due diligence (title, timing, zoning, permits, etc.), financial analysis (net operating income, project costs and sources of capital) and risk (Chamlee 2015). While executing the physical development is dependent on these five factors, there are several things Lower Price Hill can do to prepare for sustainable growth in the area through the creation of a strategic economic development plan.

## CREATING A STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As the Community Learning Center Institute leads this development initiative in Lower Price Hill, their role is as a facilitator to bring together the many stakeholders in this process, creating public-private partnerships that will stimulate human and physical growth in the neighborhood. It is crucial that CLCI is able to mitigate risk for the developer and the existing residents, as well as balance community objectives with development objectives through transparent and honest conversations with all parties.

Through these public-private partnerships, CLCI will be able to address the five factors (opportunity, market feasibility, due diligence, financial analysis and risk) head on, further incentivizing development to occur in the neighborhood. For example, as the Port Authority has several land-banked properties in the area, this creates opportunity for development to occur in the area, as these properties are ready to be acquired from the City at a marginal cost. Furthermore, market feasibility and risk can be lowered

through additional funding opportunities, covered in the next section of this chapter. Due diligence can also be facilitated by CLCI, as the community learning center has successfully fought for flexible zoning in the area based off of a campus model. It is crucial that CLCI continues to address these five development factors in order to continue to open doors for development in the future.

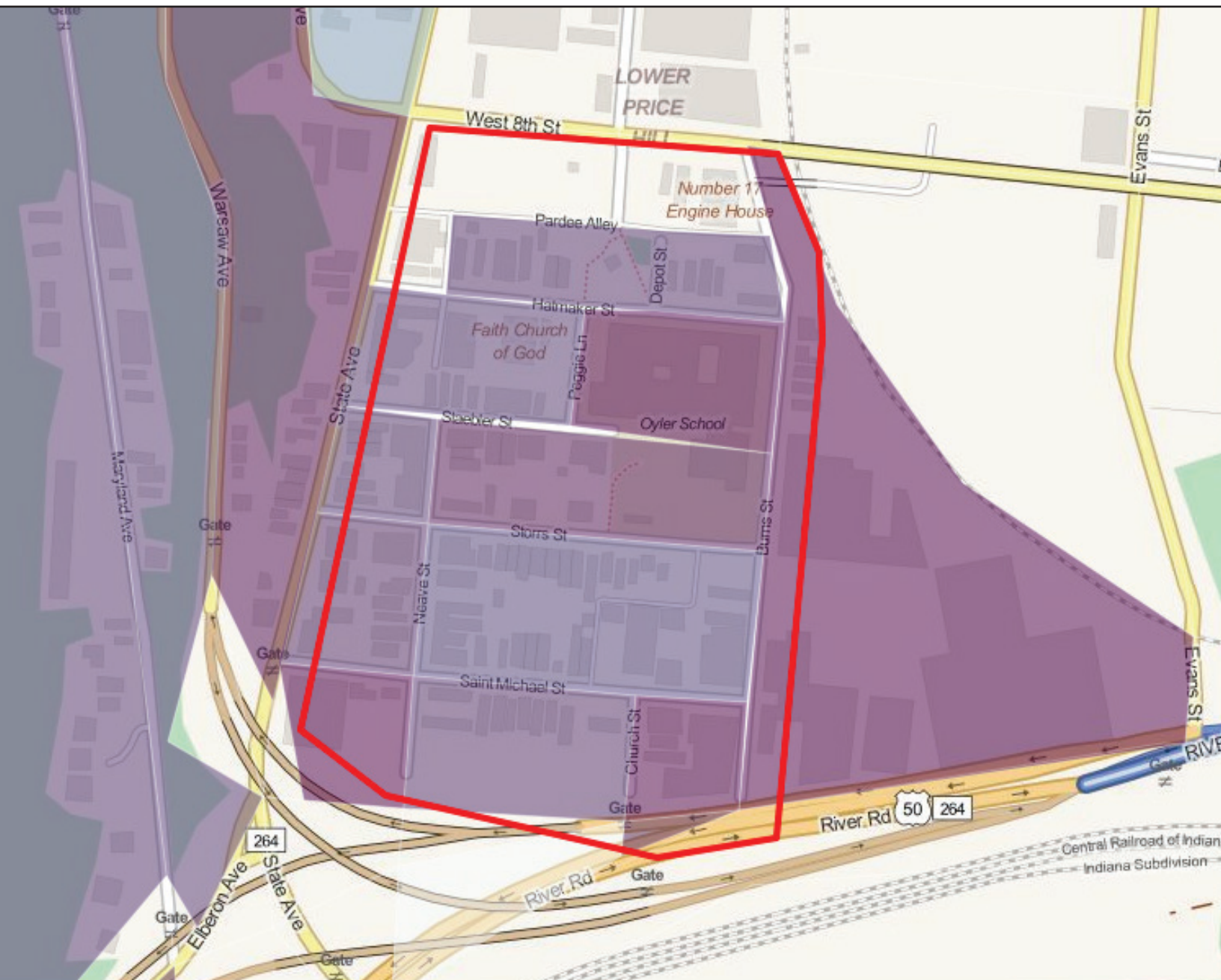
This concept plan provides the first crucial step to creating a strategic economic development plan, through the creation of clear goals and objectives formed by the community, and pinpointing strategic locations for development in the future. In the near future, a thorough economic conditions analysis, assessment of opportunities for growth and a real estate market analysis is recommended for the three key areas outlined later in the concept plan: Staebler, Hatmaker and State.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

Finally, CLCI should look to available funding opportunities in order to assist economic development in the neighborhood, such as providing developers with gap financing in order to incentivize future development. Below is a table of potential funding opportunities currently available in the City of Cincinnati. The table on the following page is to serve as a guide to CLCI and should be regularly updated as new funding in the region comes available.

SOURCE	TITLE	DEFINITION
<b>OHIO CAPITAL CORPORATION FOR HOUSING</b>	Carol Mount Peterson Resident Development Fund	The purpose of the Carol Mount Peterson Resident Development Fund is to assist residents of OCCH properties in reaching their full potential through engagement, empowerment, education, removal of barriers, and access to resources, experiences, and opportunities. Priority goals for 2015 proposals are in six core areas: summer camp, wellness, youth empowerment and education, advancement, enriching the lives of seniors, and innovative strategies. Applications should address one of the goals identified above.
	Place-Based Strategies Fund	The Ohio Capital Impact Corporation, the philanthropic affiliate of Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, is pleased to announce the availability of \$250,000 for the 2015 Place-Based Strategies Fund. Funding is made possible in part by contributions from OCCH, Key Bank, Huntington Bank, and Fifth Third CDC. OCCH partners can request up to \$30,000 for grants to improve the neighborhoods and revitalize the communities in which an OCCH-sponsored equity fund has invested.
<b>OHIO HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY</b>	LIHTC 9% / LIHTC 4%	The HTC program is a tax incentive program designed to increase the supply of quality, affordable rental housing by helping developers offset the costs of rental housing developments for individuals with low-to-moderate income. This program has been the largest driver of the production of new affordable housing in the state and nation over the past several years. Since 1987, OHFA has used the HTC Program to facilitate the development of over 89,000 affordable rental housing units in Ohio.
<b>CITY OF CINCINNATI</b>	Home, CDBG, NSP and City Capital Funds	The NOFA is the primary procurement process for accessing City funding for housing development projects. City assistance to NOFA projects will be gap financing. The amount of financial assistance allocated will be limited by the availability of HUD and Capital funding. The City of Cincinnati's NOFA process provides a stimulus for housing development. The City seeks exceptional homeownership and rental projects that make positive and visible impacts in our neighborhoods. The NOFA is designed to produce housing products which help achieve PLAN Cincinnati's goal of providing a full spectrum of quality housing options for individuals across income groups and all stages of life. The NOFA will include the CoreFour pilot program. The CoreFour program will strategically align City funds with ongoing neighborhood development plans and efforts from public and private partners.
<b>OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY</b>	Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit	The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program provides a tax credit in order to leverage the private redevelopment of historic buildings. The program is highly competitive and receives applications bi-annually in March and September. Over the thirteen completed funding rounds, tax credits have been approved for 244 projects to rehabilitate 320 historic buildings in 49 different Ohio communities. The program is projected to leverage more \$3.4 billion in private redevelopment funding and federal tax credits directly through the rehabilitation projects.
<b>TECHNICAL PRESERVATION SERVICES</b>	The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program	The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program encourages private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. The National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service administer the program in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices.

TYPE	FREQUENCY	DEADLINE	WEBSITE
Competitive	1 x / Year	April & June	<a href="http://www.occh.org/initiatives/RDF.html">http://www.occh.org/initiatives/RDF.html</a>
Competitive	1 x / Year	June	
Competitive / Non-Competitive	1 x / Year	February	<a href="https://ohiohome.org/lihtc/default.aspx">https://ohiohome.org/lihtc/default.aspx</a>
Competitive	1 x / Year	February	<a href="http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/neighborhood-development/nofa-notice-of-funding-availability/">http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/neighborhood-development/nofa-notice-of-funding-availability/</a>
Competitive	2 x / Year	March and September	<a href="http://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_ohptc.htm">http://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_ohptc.htm</a>
Non-Competitive	1 x / Year	December	<a href="http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/neighborhood-development/nofa-notice-of-funding-availability/">http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/neighborhood-development/nofa-notice-of-funding-availability/</a>



### LOWER PRICE HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Source: City-Data 2015

# housing analysis

## *2015 Housing Vacancy Analysis*

### BACKGROUND

Lower Price Hill Historic District is a registered historic district in the neighborhood of Price Hill, Cincinnati, Ohio listed in the National Register on November 15, 1988. The district is bounded by West Eighth Street, State Street, Burns Street and English Street. Located west of downtown Cincinnati, the area served as an important transportation and industrial hub for the City of Cincinnati in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The district consists primarily of single and multifamily dwellings, which were built to house those who worked in the area. Many of the homes that remain today date back to the 1850s. The region was not thought of as a part of Price Hill until the early 20th century.

As the years progressed, the Lower Price Hill Historic District suffered the same fate as many other industrial neighborhoods across the Midwestern United States. The neighborhood experienced a dramatic shift in the second half of the twentieth century, when industries closed or left the region, part of a national trend of industrial decline that affected traditional “Rust Belt” cities. While much of the white middle class moved to the suburbs, jobs left the industrial neighborhood, poverty increased and abandoned factories posed fire risks. With shrinking population comes an abundance of housing stock. The result of this is blighted, abandoned and vacant properties, some offering havens for drug users. As a result, crime and violence increased.

The neighborhood, which has yet to truly recover from the departure of industries back in the late 20th century, suffers from vacancy, blight and poverty. Throughout the City of Cincinnati, many tactics have been employed to help stabilize neighborhoods experiencing blight, abandonment and vacancy. The neighborhood leaders are also seeking to employ strategies of their own, which include acquiring abandoned and vacant properties for redevelopment into commercial space and single family housing. The proximity of the Lower Price Hill Historic District to the Ohio River development project creates an opportunity for the neighborhood to revitalize itself, helping spur economic and population growth.

## MOTIVATION

In an effort to guide the Lower Price Hill Community in undertaking stabilization and redevelopment projects, this chapter examines the current housing stock within the community, specifically on vacant, abandoned and blighted properties within the area to identify properties of interest for stabilization and acquisition. The goal of this quantitative research is to create the basis for determining a set of neighborhood indicators that may be used in order to identify the state of the built environment and to indicate the appropriate remediation or rehabilitation efforts to correct blight, abandonment and vacancy within the neighborhood.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary data and information sources used in this vacant housing study include the following:

- Social and economic information from the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010 decennial survey and 2012 American Community Survey (ACS);
- Population and household levels and projections from the 2010 Cincinnati Statistical Neighborhood Approximations;
- Land use designations and definitions from the City of Cincinnati Municipal Zoning Code and the Hamilton County Zoning Code; and,
- Land and building use map data derived from the Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS) and the Cincinnati Department of Buildings and Inspections.

## GRAPHIC LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

This study focuses on trends and needs within the boundaries of the Lower Price Hill Historic District neighborhood. Where data was readily available, Lower Price Hill Historic District's demographic and housing trends have been compared with surrounding communities' in the City of Cincinnati. Demographic and housing market data have been presented and analyzed at two geographic levels: for the city overall and by census tract.

For this plan and data collection purposes, the Lower Price Hill Historic District consists of U.S. Census Blocks 2018, 2022-27, 2046-51, Block Group 2, Census Tract 263, for Cincinnati, Ohio, Hamilton County.

## POPULATION

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010 decennial survey, the Lower Price Hill Historic District's population was 500 residents, showing a slight decline from the 2000 census, which showed a population of 537 residents. The Historic District's demographics are similar to that of the past two decades. The largest demographic shift has been the increase of children under the age of 14 living in the neighborhood. Since 2000, the percent of children living in the neighborhood has increased each year.

## AGE

The table below shows the population distribution based on resident age in the historic district. The largest age group in the district consists of children under the age of 14. Roughly 35% of the neighborhoods population consists of children in that age range.

### POPULATION BY AGE DISTRIBUTION

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010*

Lower Price Hill Historic District: Block 2018, 2022-2027, 2046-2051, Block Group 2, Census Tract 263, Hamilton County, Ohio			
Total:			
Male:	223	Female:	277
Under 5 years	29	Under 5 years	45
5 to 9 years	32	5 to 9 years	26
10 to 14 years	19	10 to 14 years	24
15 to 17 years	13	15 to 17 years	19
18 and 19 years	6	18 and 19 years	10
20 years	6	20 years	3
21 years	1	21 years	4
22 to 24 years	8	22 to 24 years	17
25 to 29 years	16	25 to 29 years	26
30 to 34 years	11	30 to 34 years	14
35 to 39 years	11	35 to 39 years	14
40 to 44 years	12	40 to 44 years	16
45 to 49 years	11	45 to 49 years	8
50 to 54 years	22	50 to 54 years	14
55 to 59 years	9	55 to 59 years	13
60 and 61 years	1	60 and 61 years	3
62 to 64 years	4	62 to 64 years	1
65 and 66 years	0	65 and 66 years	3
67 to 69 years	3	67 to 69 years	4
70 to 74 years	2	70 to 74 years	5
75 to 79 years	5	75 to 79 years	6
80 to 84 years	1	80 to 84 years	1
85 years and over	1	85 years and over	0

## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

According to the ACS, household size has increased since 2008, despite the shift away from family households. There are a total of 165 households in the Lower Price Hill Historic District. The table displaying household size below shows 27% of households consists of two persons while 21% live alone. The neighborhood, which consists primarily of multifamily dwellings, has a high rate of large-sized families living together, as nearly 40% of residents have a household size of 4 or more persons. The second table, displaying housing size by occupancy, shows that the majority of renter occupied households in the neighborhood consists of more than 1 person.

### HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

Lower Price Hill Historic District: Block 2018, 2022-2027, 2046-2051, Block Group 2, Census Tract 263, Hamilton County, Ohio	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>165</b>
1-person household	36
2-person household	46
3-person household	20
4-person household	29
5-person household	18
6-person household	9
7-or-more-person household	7

### HOUSING SIZE BY OCCUPANCY

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

Lower Price Hill Historic District: Block 2018, 2022-2027, 2046-2051, Block Group 2, Census Tract 263, Hamilton County, Ohio	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Owner occupied:</b>	<b>27</b>
1-person household	2
2-person household	10
3-person household	4
4-person household	5
5-person household	2
6-person household	2
7-or-more-person household	2
<b>Renter occupied:</b>	<b>138</b>
1-person household	34
2-person household	36
3-person household	16
4-person household	24
5-person household	16
6-person household	7
7-or-more-person household	5

## INCOME AND POVERTY

The median household income of the Lower Price Hill Historic District neighborhood stands at \$13,355, as compared to the City of Cincinnati's average median household income of \$31,301. The Lower Price Hill neighborhood suffers from severe poverty. Many residents are living well below the national poverty level, as two-thirds of the historic district residents are living below the poverty line. The unemployment rate among residents is currently 11%. Since 2000, the average median income of neighborhood residents has declined steadily by about 3% each year.

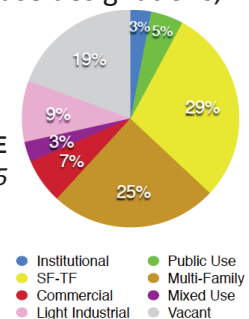
## LAND USE

The Lower Price Hill Historic District consists primarily of residential dwellings, with a total of 89 residential dwellings. Single and two family residential apartments dominate the neighborhood. Single and two family dwellings account for almost a third of all the buildings in the neighborhood. Multi-family dwellings or buildings housing more than 2 families, make up a fourth of the buildings in the neighborhood. The largest concentration of these residential dwellings is located along Neave Street and Storrs Street.

The next largest category of land use designation is vacancy. 33 buildings in the historic district are vacant or unoccupied. Vacant buildings account for 19% of the structures in the neighborhood. The vacant structures in the neighborhood are sporadically located throughout the neighborhood with no large concentrations in any one particular area of the district. Vacant buildings are present on every street in the historic district, making them as prevalent and noticeable as the occupied buildings.

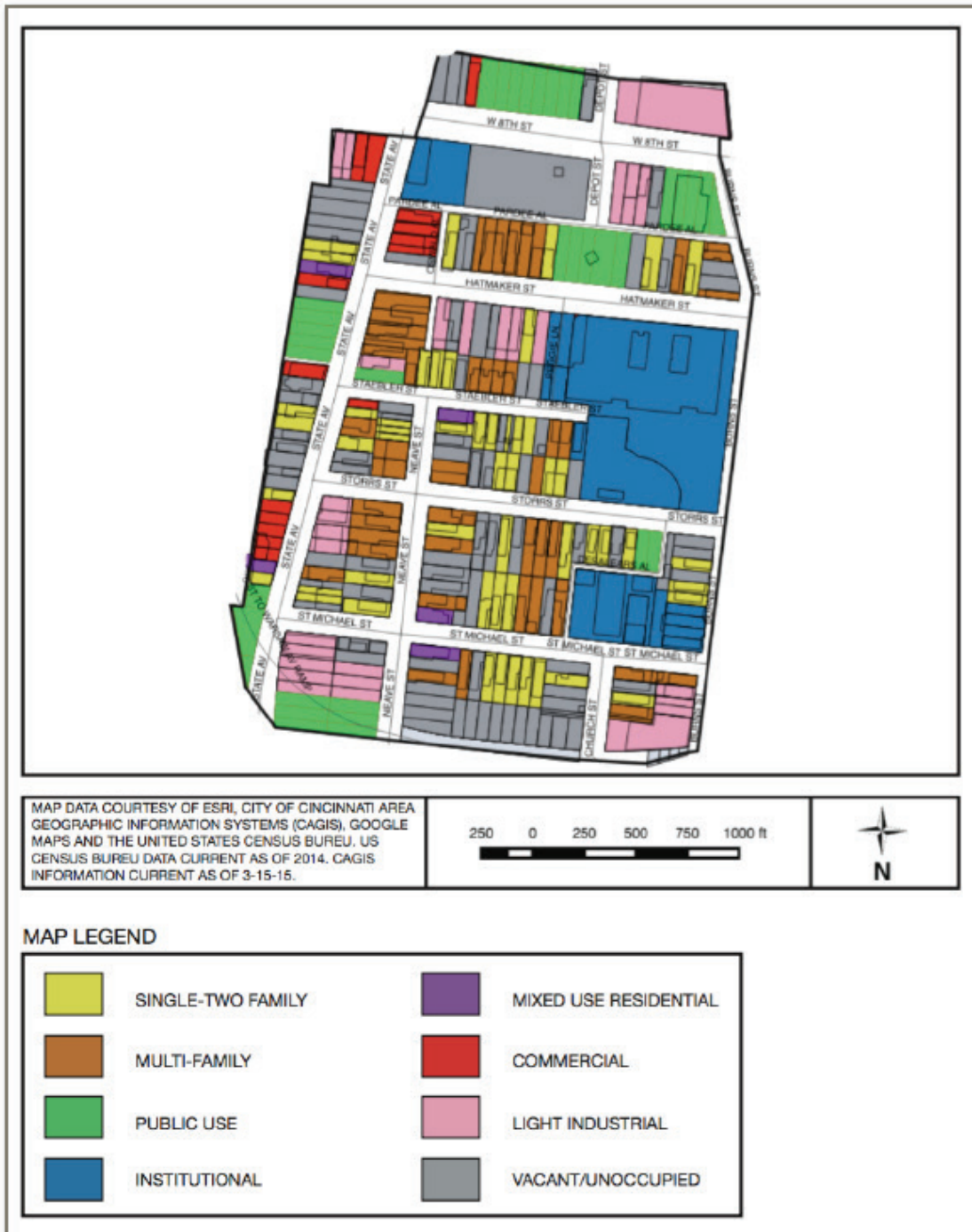
Commercial buildings or space is lacking throughout the neighborhood, as only roughly 7% of the structures are designated for commercial use. The commercial structures present in the district are primary convenience stores or shops. The stores are concentrated along State Avenue. Mixed use development is also lacking in the historic district. Mixed use developments, or buildings with two or more land use designations, account for only 3% of the structures in the area.

**LAND USE BY PERCENTAGE**  
Source: CAGIS 2015



# LAND USE MAP FOR LPH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Source: CAGIS 2015



## VACANCY

Vacancy is the biggest problem for the Lower Price Hill Historic district. Vacant and abandoned properties have negative spillover effects that impact adjacent properties and, if concentrated, entire communities and even cities. Vacant and abandoned properties are widely considered to attract crime. Increased vacancies leave fewer neighbors to monitor and combat criminal activity. Boarded doors, unkempt lawns and broken windows can signal an unsupervised safe haven for criminal activity.

The Cincinnati Metropolitan region is one of the largest metropolitan regions in the country. The Cincinnati Metro region also has a very high vacancy rate when compared to other metropolitan regions throughout the country. Ranking in the top 20 out of 75 metropolitan regions with the highest rates of vacancy, Cincinnati has a vacancy rate of 9.8%. The vacancy rate for Cincinnati has increased slightly each year since 2005. The Lower Price Hill Historic District has a vacancy rate of 19%, which is much higher than the city average. The widespread vacancy in the district is the result of years of population loss.

Highest Vacancy Rates Among the 75 Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 2012			
#	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Vacancy Rate (%)	Vacant Units
1	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	12.6	68,181
2	Jacksonville, FL	12.1	72,735
3	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	11.8	100,005
4	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	11.7	220,931
5	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	11.5	57,874
6	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	11.5	63,692
7	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	11.4	108,558
8	Dayton, OH	10.9	42,063
9	Columbia, SC	10.8	36,358
10	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	10.7	232,667
11	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	10.6	100,412
12	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	10.4	79,771
13	Oklahoma City, OK	10.4	56,484
14	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	10.3	139,840
15	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	10.3	40,524
16	Toledo, OH	10.1	30,426
17	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	10.0	235,299
18	Tulsa, OK	9.9	41,156
19	Akron, OH	9.8	30,683
20	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	9.8	89,880
21	Greensboro-High Point, NC	9.6	31,214
22	St. Louis, MO-IL	9.6	118,525
23	Richmond, VA	9.6	51,088
24	Columbus, OH	9.4	75,357
25	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ	9.4	170,883

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012

## DEFINING VACANCY

For this plan, vacancy is defined in part using the City of Cincinnati's Municipal Zoning Code definition. The Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority's definition of vacancy is also used. The City of Cincinnati's Municipal Zoning Code requires a building to meet multiple requirements to be considered vacant or unoccupied by the Cincinnati Department of Buildings and Inspections.

The table on the next page shows multiple attributes related to vacant structures. Characteristics related to vacancy, which are identified in the Cincinnati zoning code, are defined in the table. The city zoning code explicitly lists only four characteristics a building must have to be considered vacant by the city inspectors. The City of Cincinnati Municipal Zoning Code defines a building as vacant if it is considered to be dangerous and unsafe and a "vacate premises" order is issued after inspections and code violations are filed. The city also recognizes foreclosed buildings as vacant only after the building has undergone foreclosure proceedings and 30 days has passed with the building remaining unoccupied. The city required all vacant buildings to be sealed from entry by unauthorized persons. This includes sealing doorway entrances as well as windows to prevent further building code violations and fines.

The Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority uses only two criteria to define a structure as being vacant or unoccupied. A building with sealed entryways or boarded windows and doorways, resulting from a vacate premises ordered issued by the city is considered vacant. A building with no active connection to water services is considered vacant being as the building can no longer function as a structure to properly house residents.

For this plan and the Lower Price Hill Historic District, a building or property is defined as being vacant if containing at least one of the following characteristics:

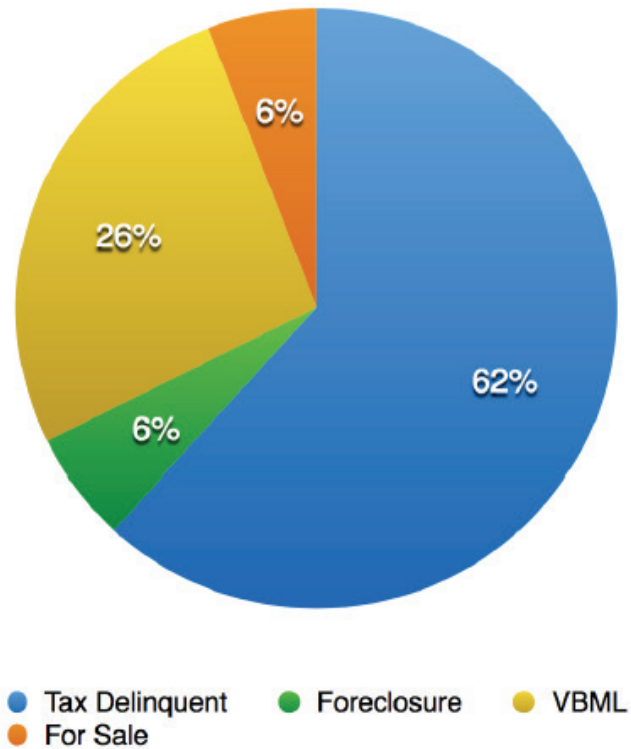
- Building is considered dangerous or unsafe after inspections by city officials;
- Building is visibly unoccupied with sealed entry ways;
- Tax Lien has been filed by the city on property and issued to property owner and thirty days has passed with no payments made by owner;
- Public utilities such as water, gas, or electric power services are no longer active for property; and,
- A Vacant Building Maintenance License (VBML) has been issued by the city for the property.

### VACANCY STANDARDS

	Unclean and Unsanitary Conditions	Dangerous and Unsafe Premises	Foreclosure	Unoccupied or without authorized human inhabitants	Tax Delinquency	Disconnected Utilities	Vacant Building Maintenance License
<b>DEFINITION</b>	A condition dangerous or harmful to the lives or health of the occupants by reason of lack of repair, or by reason of such accumulation of dirt, filth, litter, refuse or other offensive or dangerous substances or liquids, or by reason of such defects in or lack of repair or improper use of the drainage, plumbing or ventilation.	Buildings which are, or have become, so dilapidated, decayed, or unsafe, or which so substantially fail to provide the basic elements of shelter or safety that they are unfit for human habitation or dangerous to life or property.	A property upon which a mortgagee has filed an action in foreclosure in order to recover monies pursuant to a mortgage agreement which has been secured by a lien on property.	Buildings purposely sealed from entry. Windows, doors and entry ways are sealed with the intent to prevent entry into the premises.	Tax or special assessment delinquencies exceeding the fair value of the land that remains unpaid thirty-five days after notice to pay has been mailed.	Buildings which have no active connection to public utilities including, electric power grid, sewage, water services, drainage, and gas.	The owner of a building is ordered in whole or in part to be vacated or kept vacant until the premises conform to the minimum standards of safety and structural integrity set forth in the city municipal code.
<b>CITY OF CINCINNATI</b>		X	X	X			X
<b>PORT AUTHORITY</b>				X		X	
<b>LOWER PRICE HILL</b>		X		X	X	X	X

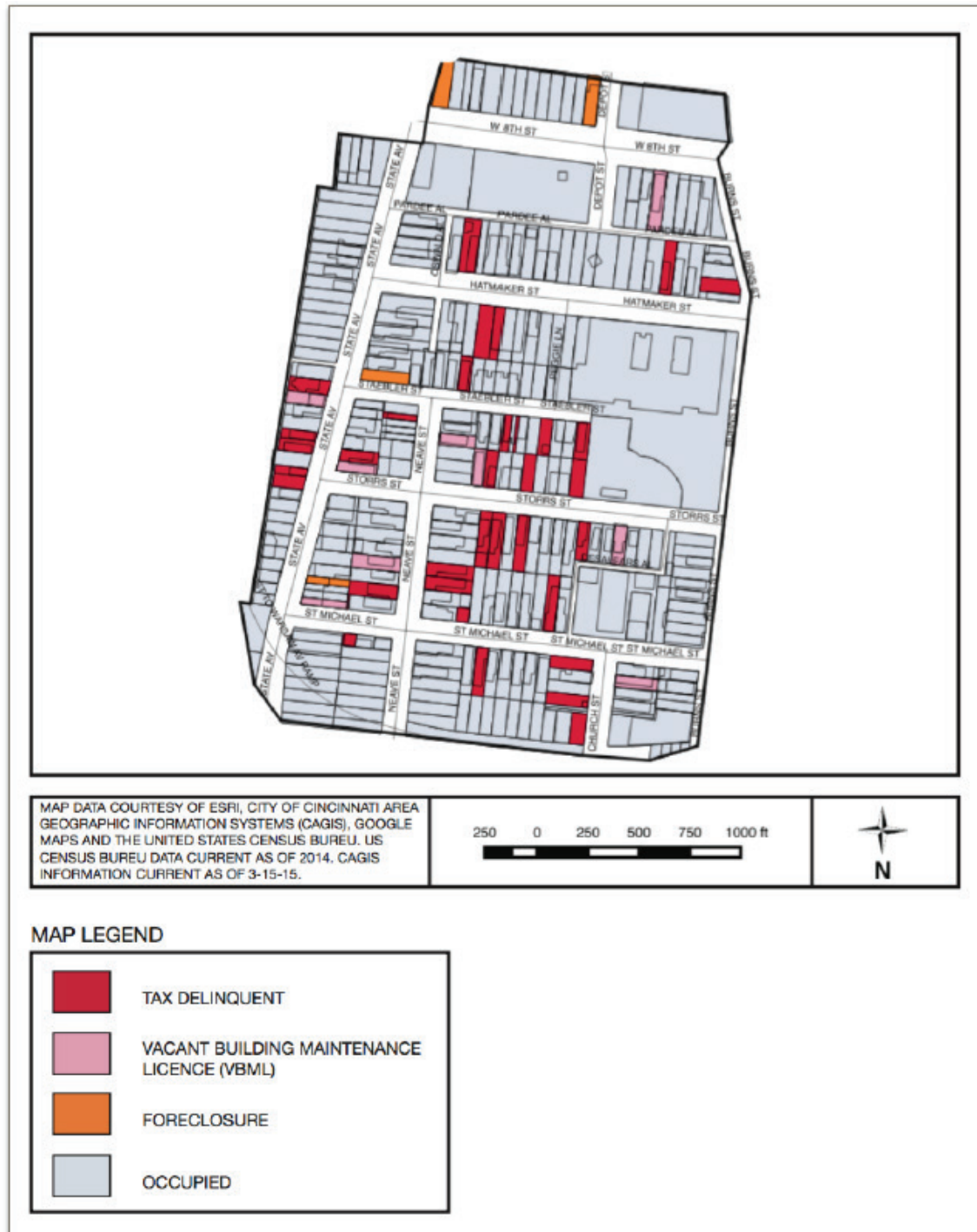
### VACANT BUILDING TYPE BY PERCENTAGE

Source: CAGIS 2015



# VACANT MAP FOR LPH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Source: CAGIS 2015



The pie chart on page 35 separates vacant buildings in the historic district into four additional categories: Vacant buildings are either for sale by owner, tax delinquent, foreclosed, or ordered vacant by city officials and have received a vacant building license. Buildings that are vacant but have not received a VBML license or have no active public utility connection are considered tax delinquent.

The map and pie chart on the previous pages show over half of the vacant buildings in the neighborhood are tax delinquent, meaning the property owners have not paid local property taxes and 35 days has passed since the first notice to pay was issued to the property owner. 21 buildings out of 33 vacant in total are tax delinquent. This shows there is large problem of negligent property owners who have abandoned their properties. This creates an opportunity for building acquisition via citywide tax lien property sales. Any vacant, non historic buildings, which have a tax lien filed and have been condemned by the City Building and Inspections Office, are eligible for demolition. This presents another opportunity for the neighborhood to create additional space for new developments, such as mixed use commercial and residential dwellings. Also created is an opportunity to increase public use space, such as parks.

The table below displays a listing of the vacant properties in the Lower Price Hill Historic District neighborhood where information was readily available. The table provides an insight to the status of the vacant buildings including the address, last date of property transfer and the blight category.

#### LPH HISTORIC DISTRICT VACANT PROPERTIES TABLE

Source: Hamilton County Auditor Filings 2014-15

PARCEL ID	ADDRESS	ACREAGE	ZONING	ZONED UNITS	TAX DELINQUENT	LAST TRANSFER OF PROPERTY	BLIGHT CLASSIFICATION
1490013018	2011 8TH STREET	0.1640	C	?	NO	2/16/2007	Blighted
14900110291	654 NEAVE ST	0.070	R-MF	5	NO	7/20/2009	Extreme Blight
14900110105	708 STATE AVE	0.06	CC-MF	4	NO	9/5/2014	Blighted
14900110036	709 STATE AVE	0.0940	R-TF	2	NO	3/5/2013	Extreme Blight
14900110041	713 STATE AVE	0.0580	R-TF	2	NO	9/10/1991	Blighted
14900110067	731 STATE AVE	0.0600	C	?	NO	3/9/1998	Slightly Blighted
14900110065	735 STATE AVE	0.0530	R-SF	1	NO	6/7/2010	Slightly Blighted
14900110196	2154 STAEBLR STREET	0.041	R-SF	1	NO	8/5/2014	Slightly Blighted
14900110136	2113 8TH ST	0.0770	R-MF	6	YES	1/1/1970	Blighted
14900110322	614 CHURCH ST	0.0510	R-MF	2	YES	6/1/1982	Blighted
14900110144	2112 HATMAKER ST	0.0640	R-MF	2	YES	7/10/1990	Extreme Blight
14900110287	644 NEAVE ST	0.450	R-MF	2	YES	?	Extreme Blight
14900110288	646 NEAVE ST	0.432	R-MF	3	YES	?	Extreme Blight
14900110098	653 NEAVE ST	0.0900	R-MF	3	YES	4/20/2011	Extreme Blight
14900110250	708 NEAVE ST	0.0430	R-MF	3	YES	8/3/2010	Blighted
14900110203	714 NEAVE ST	0.05	R-MF	3	YES	?	Extreme Blight
14900110380	668 STATE AVE	0.0320	R-SF	1	YES	4/16/2013	Blighted
14900110103	700 STATE AVE	0.0390	CC-MF	6	YES	6/29/2009	Extreme Blight
14900110067	702 STATE AVE	0.0450	CC-MF	5	YES	6/29/2009	Extreme Blight
14900110036	703 STATE AVE	0.0400	R-TF	2	YES	7/28/2010	Extreme Blight
14900110057	705 STATE AVE	0.0320	CC-MIXED USE	8	YES	7/28/2010	Extreme Blight
14900110040	711 STATE AVE	0.0470	R-SF	1	YES	2/18/2010	Slightly Blighted
14900110305	2117 STORRS ST	0.0490	R-MF	2	YES	5/15/2006	Extreme Blight
14900110208	2150 STORRS ST	0.0490	R-MF	3	YES	3/4/2013	Extreme Blight
14900110347	2131 ST. MICHAEL ST	0.0570	R-MF	7	YES	6/13/2012	Blighted

## BLIGHT

Blight is a direct result of widespread vacancy in a neighborhood. Blight refers to the visible deterioration or neglect of a building or property. Blighted buildings and properties have a negative effect on the neighborhoods and communities in which they are located. Blight increases neighborhood undesirability and crime, while lowering property values and opportunities for economic growth. In the historic district of LPH, every vacant or unoccupied building has some form of blight.

The table below displays the various types or categories of building blight. For this chapter, a building or property is considered to be blighted if containing at least one of the following characteristics:

- Building or property is financially abandoned;
- Building or property is functionally abandoned;
- Building or property is physically abandoned;
- Building or property is issued a public safety violation; and,
- Building or parcel which cannot be corrected through zoning regulations.

### BLIGHT DEFINITIONS TABLE

Source: City of Cincinnati Municipal Code and HUD Housing Standards

	Functionally Abandoned	Financially Abandoned	Physically Abandoned	Public Safety Violation	Zoning
	Property is no longer fulfilling its role as a residence (suspension of mail service, vacancy, etc.).	Mortgage or tax foreclosure proceedings have been initiated for that property. No mortgage or tax payments have been made by the property owner for at least 35 days, AND the property has been vacant for at least 35 days	When owners neglect the interior or exterior upkeep of a property.	The property poses a direct threat to public health or safety in its present condition by reason of environmentally hazardous conditions, solid waste pollution, or contamination.	A parcel that, collectively considered, adversely affect surrounding or community property values or entail land use relationships that cannot reasonably be corrected through existing zoning codes or other land use regulations.
City of Cincinnati	X	X	X	X	X
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)			X	X	
Hamilton County	X	X	X	X	X

## BLIGHT STANDARDS

This section will focus on the current physical conditions of the residential and commercial buildings in the neighborhood of Lower Price Hill in Cincinnati, Ohio. Specifically outlined in this section will be the conditions of vacant and underutilized structures in the Lower Price Hill Historic District neighborhood.

Physical building conditions shall be categorized into the three separate groups, as listed below:

1. Blighted - Extremely Blighted;
2. Slightly Blighted; and,
3. No Blight.

### **BLIGHTED - EXTREMELY BLIGHTED**

Buildings classified into this category are defined as having excessive amounts of blight, which can be easily noticed about the structure.

Buildings in this category will have, but are not limited to, the following indicators:

- Deteriorated External Walls;
- Deteriorated Visible Foundation;
- Deteriorated Roof;
- Deteriorated Gutters/Downspouts;
- Deteriorated Exterior Finishes;
- Deteriorated Windows and Doors; and
- Deteriorated Stairways/Fire Escapes.

### **BLIGHTED - SLIGHTLY BLIGHTED**

Buildings listed in this category are defined as having a small amount of blight that is obvious to the person viewing the structure. While the building has a small amount of blight, items that indicate blight do not immediately grab the eye.

Buildings in this category will have, but are not limited to, the following indicators:

- Graffiti;
- Weeds;
- Unkempt Lawns;
- Litter; and,
- Illegal Dumping.

## NO BLIGHT

Buildings listed in this category are defined as having virtually no observable blight on the building or structure. It is difficult to identify any evidence of blight and the entire structure has a generally neat and clean appearance. The following pages display photographic examples of blight by classification based on the standards previously identified.

Examples



- 1. Deteriorated Exterior Walls
- 2. Deteriorated Exterior Finishes
- 3. Sealed Entry
- 4. Deteriorated Concrete Stairway

## EXTREMELY BLIGHTED



- 5. Visible Garbage Mound behind building

Examples



- 6. Broken Window
- 7. Unauthorized Inhabitants
- 8. Deteriorated Foundation

## EXTREMELY BLIGHTED CONTINUED



- 9. Multiple Entry Points Sealed

## SLIGHTLY BLIGHTED

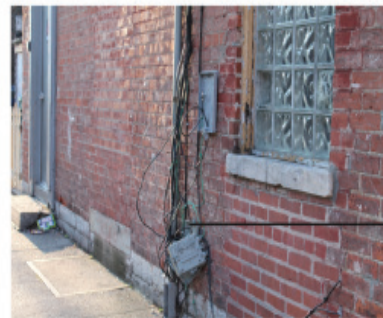
### Examples



1. Illegal Dumping



2. Minor litter



3. Tampered Utility Box



4. Broken Door Window

**NO BLIGHT****Examples**

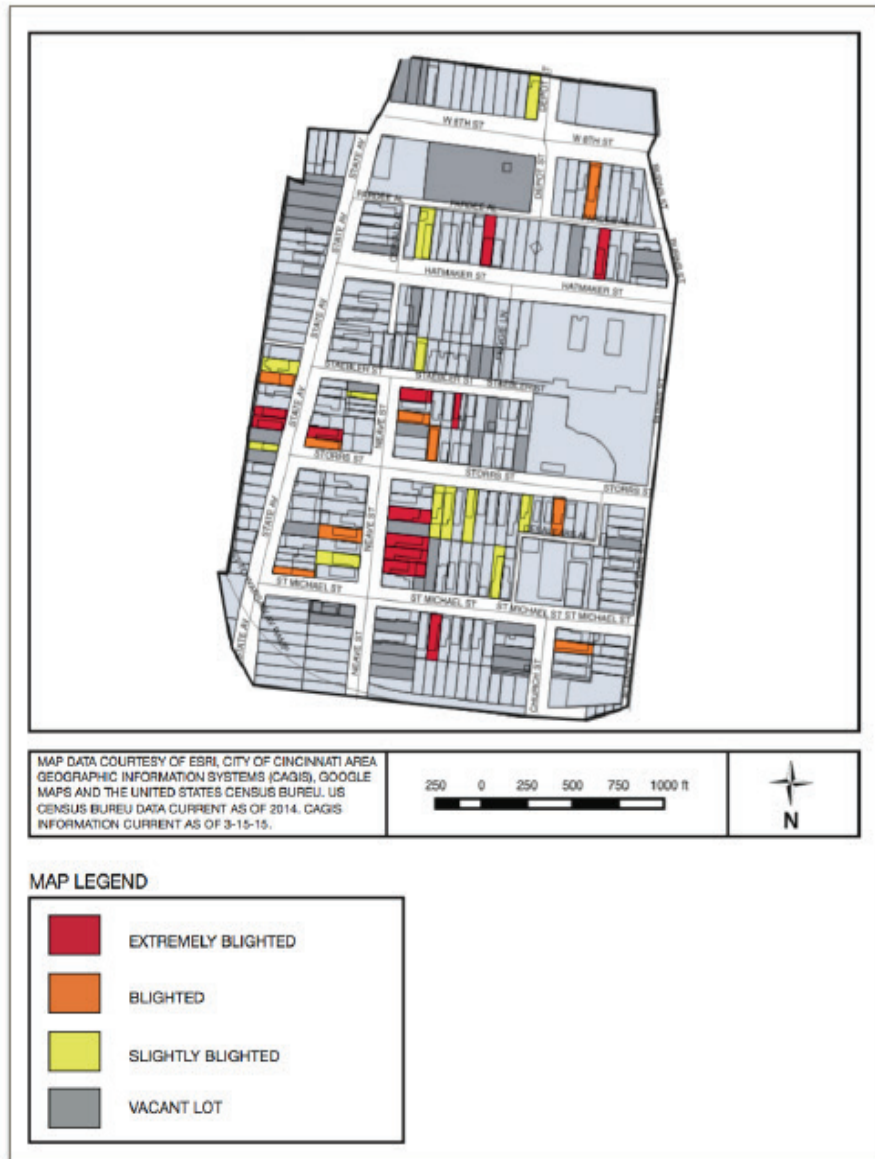
1. No visible Structural Damage
2. No visible litter
3. Building appears to be occupied and maintained.



### BLIGHT MAP FOR LPH HISTORIC DISTRICT

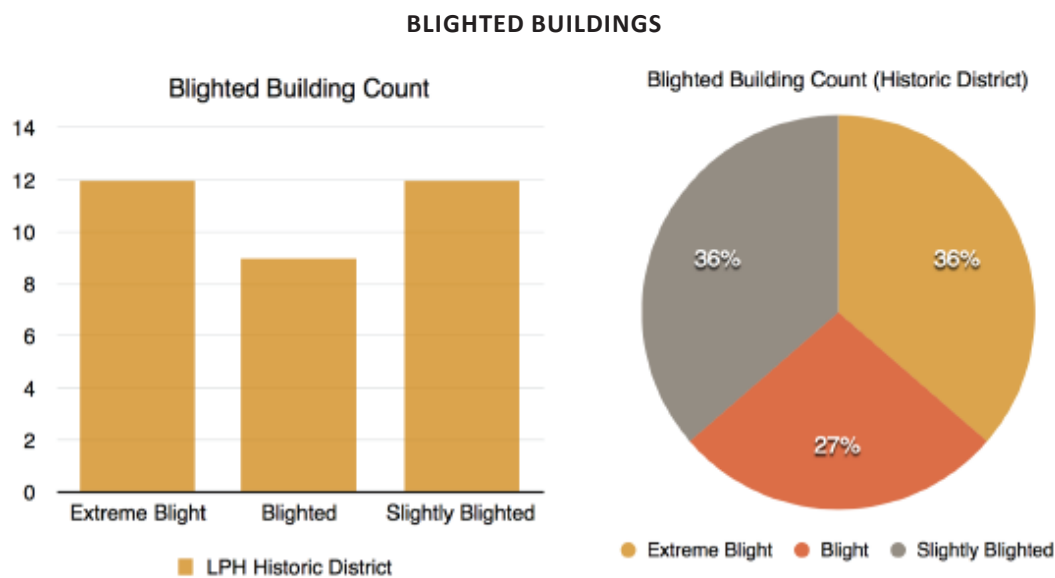
Source: CAGIS 2015

Figure 2.2 Blight Map for Lower Price Hill Historic District.



Based on the map of blighted properties, the heaviest concentration of blight occurs near the intersection of Neave and St. Michaels Streets. Buildings in this area are in the most need of serious repairs or remediation. As a result of the concentrated blight and neglect, this area was considered by residents to be a crime “hotspot” or area of high crime concentration.

The graphs below provide further breakdown of the vacant buildings in the Lower Price Hill Historic District neighborhood. There are 33 total vacant or unoccupied blighted buildings. In other words, all the vacant and unoccupied buildings in the neighborhood have some form of blight. Over 2/3 of the vacant buildings in the neighborhood are slightly or extremely blighted.



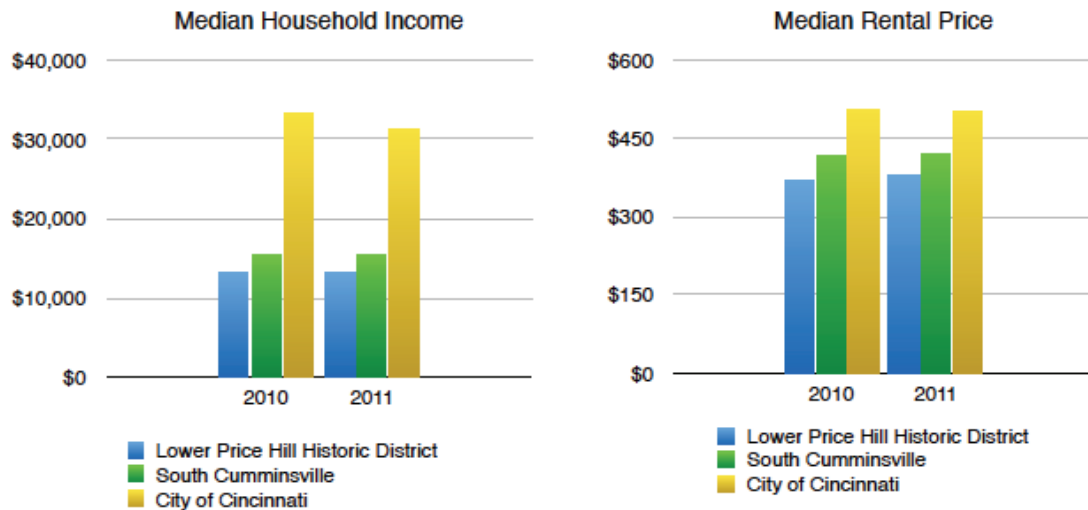
Extremely blighted buildings are those which have been condemned by the City of Cincinnati Building and Inspections office. The graphics above show there are a large amount of vacant buildings in need of immediate remediation and expensive repairs. At the same time, there are many opportunities for small scale improvements and clean up projects in and around those buildings labeled slightly blighted.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines housing to be affordable when an individual or family spends no more than 30% of their income on housing costs, such as mortgage and rent payments. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. The State of Ohio and the City of Cincinnati adopted HUD's definition of affordable housing as costing no more than 30% of personal income.

### MEDIAN INCOME AND RENT

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010



Currently 2/3 of Lower Price Hill Historic District residents spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Roughly 48% of the residents currently live below the poverty line. As of the 2010 Census, the Lower Price Hill Historic District has a median household income level of \$13,037, which is well below the City of Cincinnati average of \$31,000. Compared to the South Cumminsville neighborhood in Cincinnati, Ohio, which has a median household income of \$15,357 and similar neighborhood characteristics as Lower Price Hill, the median household income lags behind. The median rental price in Lower Price Hill is also less than the city average. Cincinnati has a median rental average price of \$504, while Lower Price Hill has a median rental price of \$376.

The HUD definition of housing affordability, while widely used as the standard measurement of affordability, is not the only way to measure housing affordability or the only way to measure how cost burdened individuals are. The matrix on the next page displays multiple sources of housing affordability indicators. Included in the table are sources from the HUD, City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Housing Authority offices. Also included are definitions of affordability from the National Realtors Association, Center for Neighborhood Technology and the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

The National Association of Realtors, whose members are known as property realtors, is the largest trade association and one of the most powerful lobbying groups in North America. The organization puts together an affordability index. The Housing Affordability Index measures whether or not a typical family earns enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a typical home at the national and regional levels based on the most recent price and income data available for a particular region.

### AFFORDABILITY MATRIX

Source: The Center for Neighborhood Technology, HUD

	Housing Prices in Relation to Income	Rental Costs in Relation to Income	Interest Rates and Mortgage Availability	FMR/Hourly Wage Ratio	Transportation Costs
	Equating average house price to income ratios. A ratio is calculated by dividing house price by household income. A higher ratio is worse for housing affordability.	Assessed by calculating the average percentage (%) of income spent on rent. This is equated for 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties. A higher ratio is worse for housing affordability.	Interest rates would be assessed using the bank rate (%) and mortgage availability could be assessed by the average TLV (loan to value) rate (%) on mortgages.	Calculates the Fair Market Rent (FMR) and the needed hourly wage (called the "housing wage") to afford the FMR in a given area.	Includes the costs of owning a vehicle and the cost of gas. Also includes costs of public transit.
Threshold	30% of income	30% of income	Median-income family has 120% of income required to qualify for mortgage of median priced home	Hourly wage needed to avoid paying more than 30% of income on housing	15% of income
U.S. Housing and Urban Development Dept. (HUD)	X	X			
National Realtors Association			X		
City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County	X	X			
Center for Neighborhood Technology	X	X			X
National Low Income Housing Coalition				X	

The organization is considered a national leader in promoting more livable and sustainable urban communities. They research, invent and test urban strategies that use local housing resources more efficiently and more equitably. The organization created their own affordability index which calculates housing affordability by combining the costs of housing mortgage or rent and the costs of transportation.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is a national organization dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes. The organization calculates housing affordability by calculating the hourly wage needed to avoid paying more than 30% of income on housing costs.

### HOUSING OCCUPANCY

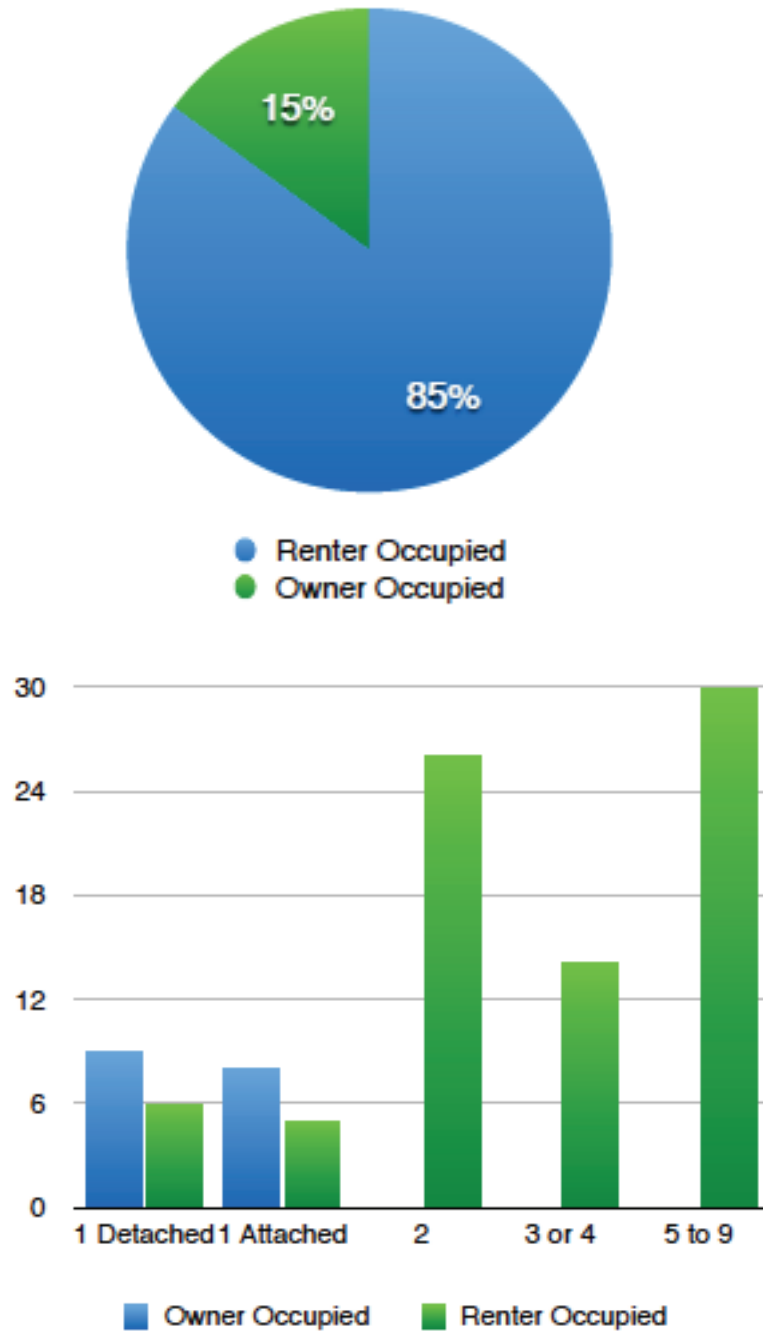
The Lower Price Hill neighborhood has a low ownership rate compared to the majority of Cincinnati neighborhoods. Roughly 15% of the occupied housing units in the neighborhood are owner occupied. The other 85% are renter occupied housing units. The table below further breaks down the ownership and rental rates in the neighborhood. The table compares the percent of residents which live in various types of housing units and number of units within the housing structures. The table further illustrates the majority of residents in Lower Price Hill live in multifamily dwellings. Dwellings containing 5 to 9 units house 30% of the area residents.

The Figure 2.8 also illustrates the lack of attached single family dwellings, which are key for a neighborhood such as Lower Price Hill seeking to increase home ownership while maintaining density and close community relations and interaction. Less than 8% of the

residents live in single family attached homes, while no residents live in owner occupied multi-unit homes.

#### OCCUPANCY BY PERCENTAGE FOR LPH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010



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## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The Lower Price Hill Historic District neighborhood, while suffering from severe vacancy and blight, shows multiple opportunities for improvement. The biggest opportunity the neighborhood has is the opportunity for property acquisition, specifically vacant and underutilized buildings. As the neighborhood possesses a large amount of vacant properties relative to its size, community organizations should take advantage of its financial assets and begin acquiring vacant buildings that currently have tax liens filed. These buildings are most in need of repairs and constitute a large portion of the blighted buildings in the district. These buildings are also the easiest to acquire as a result of the low value/low purchase costs. Vacant, blighted structures must be addressed first in order to increase the desirability of the neighborhood.

Increasing home ownership in the neighborhood will be an immense challenge given the large percentage of renter occupied dwellings. For the neighborhood to begin reversing the trend of increasing renter occupancy, it must begin by stakeholders setting targets for home ownership rates over the next decade. In addition to setting strategic goals, nearly all of the new residential development or redeveloped buildings must be designed as owner occupied dwellings.



**LOWER PRICE HILL AERIAL PHOTO**

*Source: CAGIS 2015*



# community plan

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*Vision* •

*Mapping* •

*Concept* •



# vision

## *Establishing a Voice for the Community*

Our team specifically wanted the concept plan for Lower Price Hill to actually be created by the community. As such, our role was simply to provide the venue, tools, and support for the community to do so. After an initial stakeholder meeting in November of 2014, this process continued over the course of three public meetings hosted at Oyler School on January 29, March 16, and April 23, 2015. At the first meeting, we established themes for the vision of Lower Price Hill. At the second meeting, we helped the community assign geographic locations for each of these vision themes through a mapping exercise. And at the third meeting, we presented a compiled concept plan based on the feedback heard through the mapping exercise as well as inspirational renderings for specific priority zones.

The intent of the first meeting on January 29 was simply to begin the discussion with the community. At this meeting, attendees broke into groups to brainstorm answers to visioning questions such as, “what are your best memories of LPH?” and “what can we do together to make this the very best version of LPH ever?” Topics discussed included housing, jobs, support for families and young children, and overall neighborhood improvements. Residents discussed problems in the community and raised complaints, but also highlighted positive aspects of their neighborhood and suggested many ideas for how Lower Price Hill could be improved.

After this visioning process, our team sorted through all of the feedback heard from community members and arranged them into five primary themes: housing, local shops & services, recreation, safety, and clean & beautiful. These themes served as a foundation for our planning process moving forward.

Feedback related to housing essentially involved residents requesting great places to live. Topics included more owner-occupied housing, single-family homes, and improved and

### STAKEHOLDERS AT NOVEMBER MEETING

Bloc Ministries  
Business District  
Subcommittee of the  
Queensgate Business  
Alliance  
Community Learning  
Center Institute  
Community Matters /  
Education Matters  
LISC  
Model Group  
P.G. Sittenfeld, City  
Councilman  
Price Hill Will  
Port Authority  
Oyler School

repaired properties. Concern was expressed about absent landlords, too-expensive rents for the quality of the property, and the transient and disconnected occupants of Section 8 housing.

For the local shops and services theme, much of the feedback related to businesses that had closed and were missed by the community. Residents need places and services to find the things that they need, and so some suggestions included a bakery, clothing store, salon, coffee shop, family restaurant, and grocery store. Residents also recognized the importance of attracting customers to these businesses from other parts of the city, because the neighborhood is not large enough to support many stores on its own.

The concept of clean and beautiful recurred over and over again; at minimum, residents want the trash to be picked up, boarded-up buildings to be stabilized, and vacant lots dealt with. They also requested more greenery and treescapes to make the neighborhood go beyond just being clean, but also beautiful.

The residents of Lower Price Hill reported a strong lack of recreational activities in the neighborhood – simply, things to do! At previous meetings, some residents had stated that their only real option for entertainment in the neighborhood was sitting on their front stoops. In this vein, much of the feedback from the vision process called for parks,



outdoor space, gyms, socializing spots, sports fields, performing arts opportunities, or community events – essentially, places for the community to socialize and have fun.

The final theme discussed quite a lot was safety. Residents reported not feeling safe in many parts of the neighborhood, and this was a key connection to recreation, because the lack of safety resulted in neighbors not feeling comfortable with going outside. Some ideas suggested were the concept of neighbors watching out for each other, better renter screening, and improved police relationships.

## mapping

### *Assigning Community Feedback to Geographic Locations*

For the second public meeting on March 16, our team came prepared with a mapping exercise to help community members assign their comments and feedback to geographic locations within the neighborhood. After a brief introduction, the attendees broke into groups of 8-10 people to complete the exercises; each group was assigned a facilitator, recorder, and presenter. The groups all had two identical maps to fill out, which had been pre-populated with neighborhood assets for people to layer on top of.

The exercise focused first on establishing good and bad areas of the neighborhood (by asking questions like “where do you feel the safest in LPH?” and “what areas are most in need of beautification?”) in order for us to be able to clearly identify the exact locations that community feedback related to. Each team filled out their first map with answers to these questions.

The second portion of the exercise was a brainstorming session, starting with a fresh asset map. This blank slate encouraged attendees to envision their ideal Lower Price Hill. For example, where do they want businesses to go? Or parks, single-family homes, recreation areas? Each team filled out a second map with answers to these questions. At the end of the meeting, each group had 2-3 minutes to present their ideas to the rest of the groups. (To view the exact questions posed in this exercise, see Appendix E).

After this meeting, our team gathered all of the maps and processed the data. We combined the feedback from each team onto appropriate layers – for example, one layer

included responses from all of the groups of where they feel unsafe, so that all of these locations from all the different teams could be viewed on a single map. This process was completed for each question asked of the groups, and then these layers were digitized. Following are the maps of our findings, accompanied with commentary on each. To help to make sense of the many questions asked, we organized them into three thematic groups: well-liked places, the business environment, and residential life.

### WELL-LIKED PLACES

Well-Liked Places essentially highlights those businesses and places in the neighborhood that community members value, frequent often, and regularly engage with. These are the leading organizations in the community that residents prioritize. To get at this concept, we asked three separate questions that strongly relate to each other: 1) What do you consider the heart of the neighborhood to be? 2) What is your favorite place in LPH? And 3) Where do you go for fun in LPH? The answers to these questions ended up overlapping quite a bit. From there, we overlaid information about safety to understand whether these places of value were being adequately protected and served.

### HEART

The heart of the neighborhood was overwhelmingly considered to be Oyler School, with 7 groups out of 10 labeling Oyler as LPH's heart. Shortly following was LPH Community School (identified by 5 groups) and Santa Maria Services (identified by 3 groups). One group each labeled Hatmaker Park, the Lower Price Hill Community Garden (south), and the Price Hill Health Clinic.



DUTTON

PRICE HILL  
HEALTH CENTER

DEPOT

8TH

PARDEE

HATMAKER  
PARK

HATMAKER

SANTA MARIA  
SERVICES

OYLER COMMUNITY  
LEARNING CENTER

STAEBLER

BURNS

WARSAW

STATE

STORRS

NEAVE

LOWER PRICE HILL  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ST MICHAEL

COMMUNITY  
GARDEN

CHURCH

RIVER

## FAVORITE

Oyler led the “favorite” category as well, with 7 groups out of 10 reporting the school as their favorite place in the neighborhood. LPH Community School was identified by two groups, as was State Avenue Methodist Church. One group each identified the Dream Center, Hatmaker Park, Henry’s Market, Lower Price Hill Community Garden (south), Meiser’s Market, and Santa Maria Services.



## FUN

Many of the places identified as the most fun in Lower Price Hill were outdoor recreational spaces. The Sprayground at Oyler was identified as the neighborhood's most fun place by 9 out of 10 groups, followed by Hatmaker Park (identified by 5 groups) and Evans Field (identified by 4 groups). Santa Maria Services was also identified by 5 groups, and the LPH Community School, Community Garden (north), Oyler, and State Ave. Methodist Church all were identified by 2 groups each. Other fun places, marked by 1 group each, were Blothead Pizza, the Boys and Girls Club, LPH Community Garden (south), Paradise restaurant (though it is closed now), and the State Ave. Church of Christ.



## SAFE

The safe places identified by community residents largely match with those places that are also their favorite, most fun, or heart of the neighborhood – which is unsurprising. The one exception is the Ethiopian Church, which was listed as a safe place by one group (but not previously identified as a favorite, fun, or heart place).



## UNSAFE

The Four Corners (at the intersection of Storrs and Neave streets) was overwhelmingly listed most often as the most unsafe place in the neighborhood. One group also noted feeling unsafe under the viaduct. The other two major unsafe places were Hatmaker Park and the Sprayground at Oylar – which, troublingly, were also listed as favorite, fun, or community heart locations. This essentially means that while the community values these places and regularly uses them, residents do not feel safe doing so, which clearly points to these places as first priorities for improvements.



BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

DUTTON

PRICE HILL HEALTH CENTER

PARADISE RESTAURANT

DEPOT

8TH

STATE AVE.  
CHURCH OF CHRIST  
MEISER'S MARKET

PARDEE

LOWER PRICE HILL  
COMMUNITY GARDEN

HATMAKER PARK

HATMAKER

SANTA MARIA SERVICES

OYLER COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

BLOCHHEAD PIZZA

STAEBLER

DREAM CENTER

CINCINNATI RECREATION SPRAYGROUND

STORRS

STATE AVE.  
METHODIST CHURCH

NEAVE

HENRY'S MARKET

LOWER PRICE HILL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ST MICHAEL

COMMUNITY GARDEN

CHURCH

BURNS

RIVER

WARSAW

## TRAFFIC

This question aimed to highlight where people felt unsafe due to high volume or high speeds of traffic. Several pedestrian crossing points were noted at the borders of the neighborhood, along 8th and State, which makes sense as those roads are high-traffic thru-roads from other parts of the city. The other traffic problem areas were, surprisingly, around Oyler School and LPH Community School themselves. This seems problematic, given students walking to or from school – but a simple step to rectify this might be to implement a 20mph school zone around the school (as is common for other school districts).



## THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

These questions sought to make sense of the businesses and services that the people of Lower Price Hill regularly go to or would like to have, and where these are located (or could be located in the future).

## GO TO

The businesses that people identified as places they regularly visit revealed how much the community values its corner stores and independent businesses. Repeatedly in the mapping exercise process, we heard that while residents would appreciate a larger grocery store in the area, they worried that it would put neighborhood staples (like Henry's or Meiser's) out of business. Other frequently-visited businesses were service-related, such as the Price Hill Health Clinic, Santa Maria Services, or the Clinic at Oyler. Blothead Pizza was the business marked most frequently, identified by 8 out of 10 groups.



DUTTON

PRICE HILL  
HEALTH CENTER

DEPOT

WATERFIELDS HYRDOPONICS

8TH

STATE AVE.

CHURCH OF CHRIST  
MEISER'S MARKET

PARDEE

HATMAKER

ONE SIGHT

VISION  
CENTER  
DELTA  
CINTI DENTAL  
HEALTH CLINIC  
DEPT CLINIC

ETHIOPIAN  
CHURCH

SANTA MARIA  
SERVICES

STAEBLER

BLOC HEAD

PIZZA  
WOMEN'S  
MINISTRY

BLOC ARTS  
BUILDING  
DREAM  
CENTER

STATE

STORRS

STATE AVE.  
METHODIST  
CHURCH  
WATERBURY  
LEARNING  
CENTER

NEAVE

HENRY'S MARKET

LOWER PRICE HILL  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
& LAUNDROMAT  
COMMUNITY  
& THRIFT STORE  
MATTERS

FURNITURE MEDIC

ST MICHAEL

CHURCH

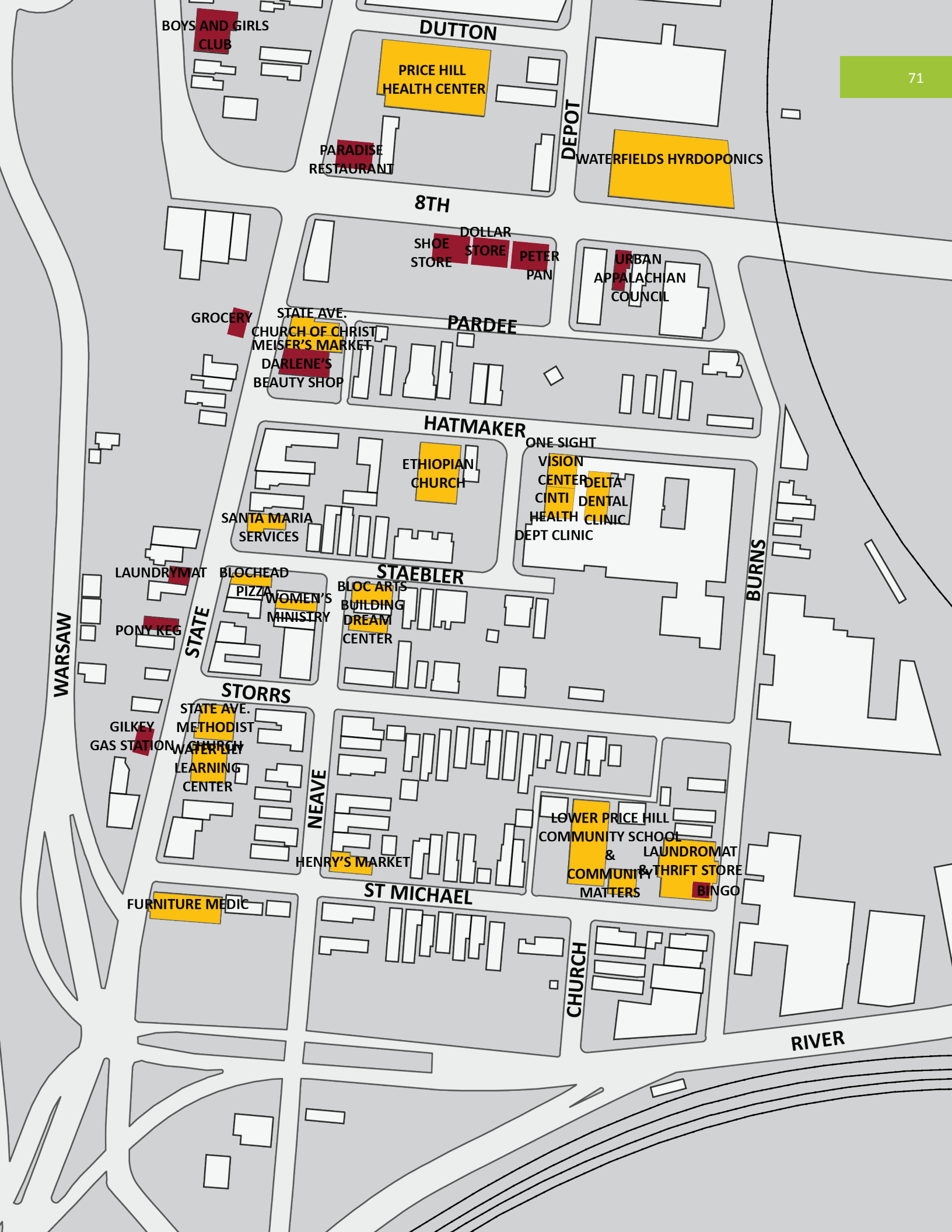
BURNS

RIVER

WARSAW

## CLOSED

Most of the businesses that people miss because they are now closed are those businesses that provided entertainment or recreation opportunities to the people of LPH. Paradise Restaurant, a family restaurant that was on the corner of 8th and State, was most-often identified (by 5 groups of 10). Pony Keg was identified by 3, and the Boys and Girls Club and the outdoor pool at Oyler were each marked by 2 groups. Other less-often identified businesses included a shoe store, beauty shop, a dollar store, gas station, and a laundry mat.



## PROPOSED

Nearly all of the proposed locations for future new businesses filled in the historic business corridors that used to exist along 8th and State in Lower Price Hill. As evidenced by the location of closed businesses, these streets used to be the neighborhood's business district – and residents want those businesses to return. Toward the southern end of the neighborhood along River Rd., one group proposed larger office buildings.



BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

DUTTON

PRICE HILL HEALTH CENTER

PARADISE RESTAURANT

DEPOT

WATERFIELDS HYRDOPONICS

8TH

SHOE STORE

DOLLAR STORE

PETER PAN

URBAN APPALACHIAN COUNCIL

GROCERY

STATE AVE.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

MEISER'S MARKET

DARLENE'S BEAUTY SHOP

PARDEE

HATMAKER

ONE SIGHT

VISION CENTER

DELTA CINTI DENTAL

HEALTH CLINIC

DEPT CLINIC

SANTA MARIA SERVICES

ETHIOPIAN CHURCH

STAEBLER

BLOC ARTS BUILDING DREAM CENTER

BLOC HEAD

PIZZA WOMEN'S MINISTRY

LAUNDRY MAT

PONY KEG

STATE

STORRS

STATE AVE.

METHODIST

WATERLY

LEARNING CENTER

GILKEY GAS STATION

NEAVE

HENRY'S MARKET

ST MICHAEL

LOWER PRICE HILL COMMUNITY SCHOOL & LAUNDROMAT COMMUNITY & THRIFT STORE MATTERS BINGO

FURNITURE MEDIC

CHURCH

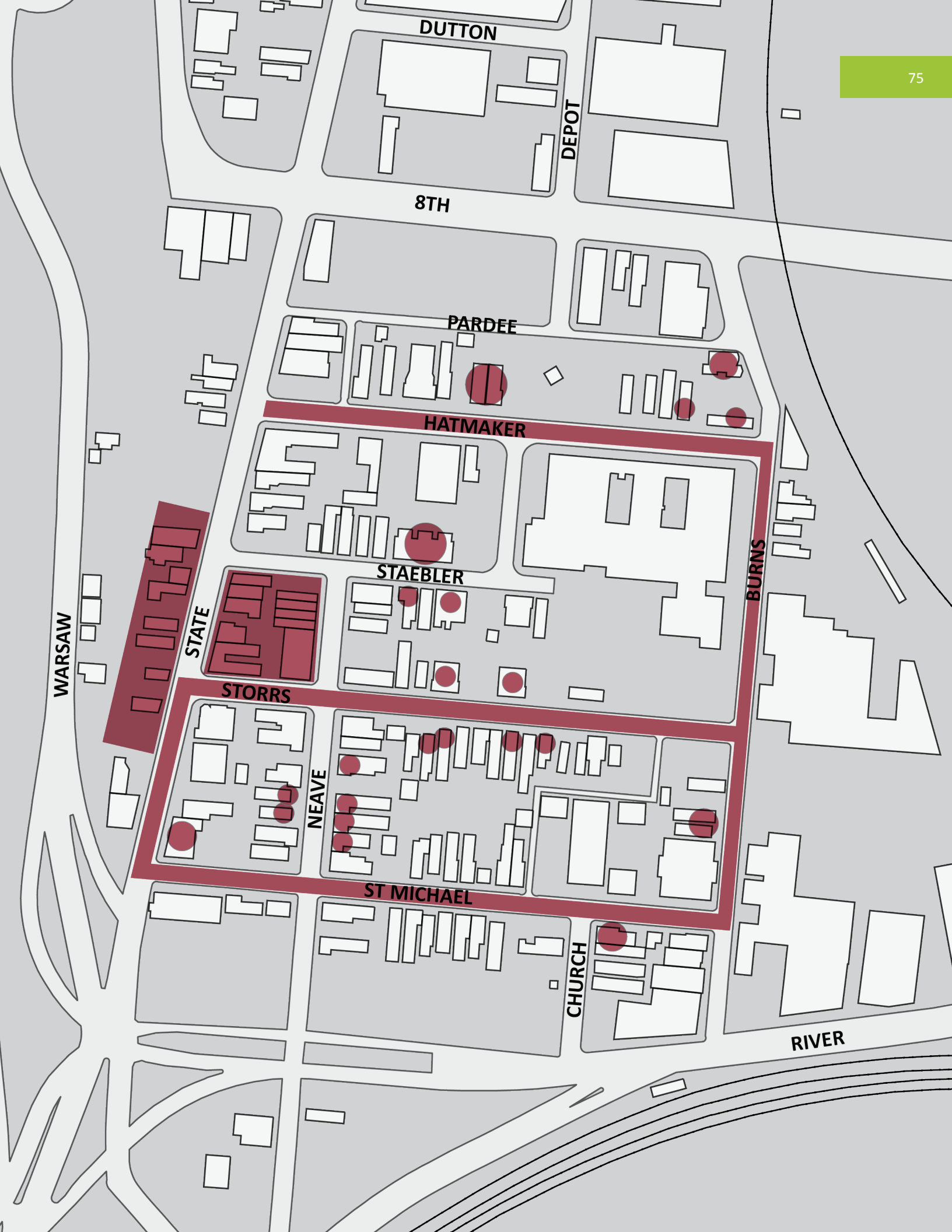
RIVER

## RESIDENTIAL LIFE

This section of questions sought to capture elements most directly related to quality of life: i.e., what amenities might exist for residents to enrich their lives above and beyond necessary services or safety.

## HOUSING

We first began by asking where people want more housing, distinguishing between rentals or owner-occupied homes with two different colors. The neighborhood already has a higher proportion of rental properties than owner-occupied homes, and we also only received one response from one group about where to locate rental properties (which was simply a large circle drawn over the entire map), and so we have chosen to focus on responses relating to homeownership instead. The red areas for homeownership are primarily outlined in the central areas of the neighborhood, along the quieter inner streets.



## RECREATION

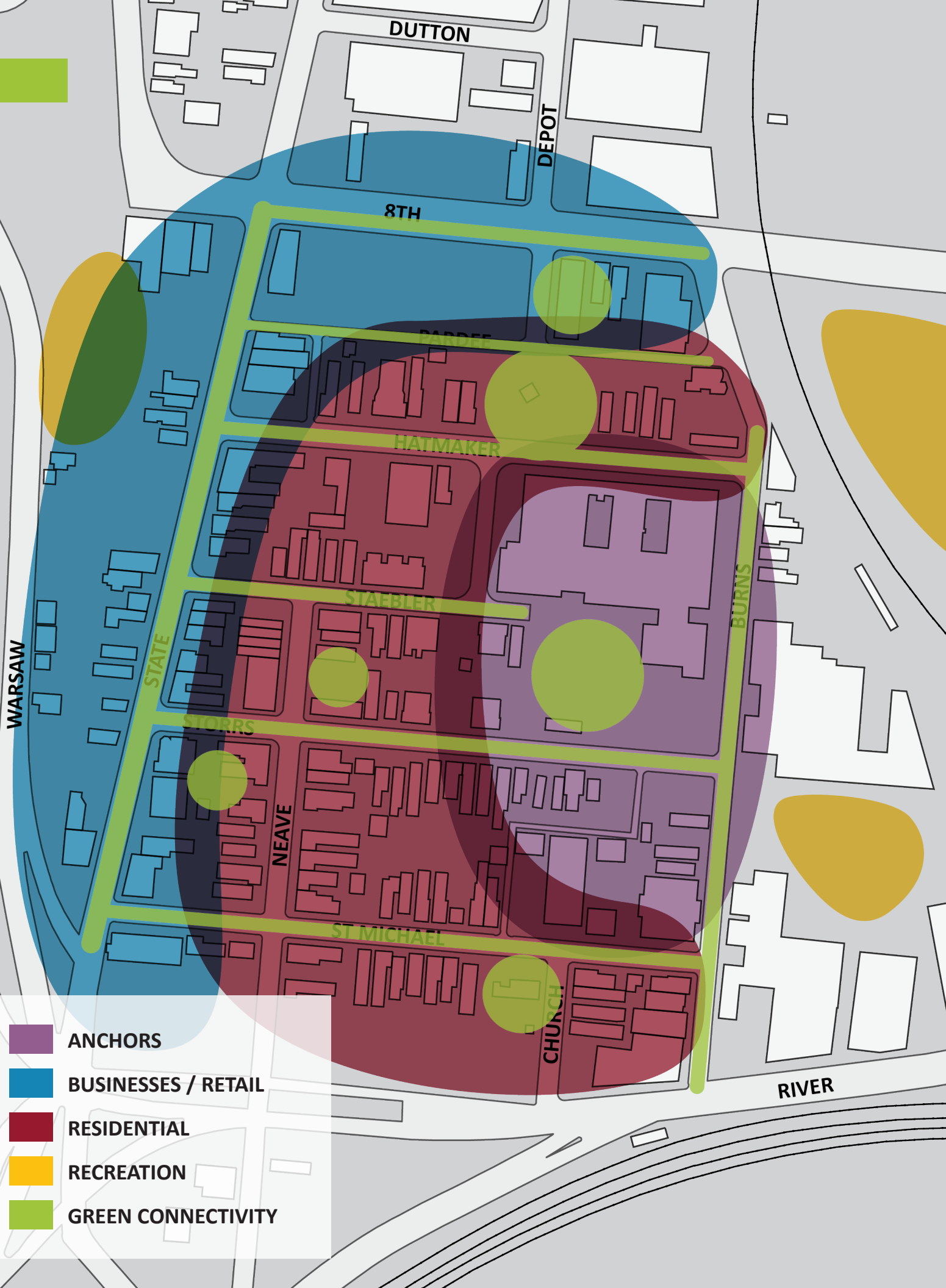
Opportunities for outdoor recreation are two-fold: the residents suggested several smaller park areas within the neighborhood, as well as larger recreation areas at the edges of the neighborhood. In the northwest corner along State, one group suggested a Recreation Center or gym. In the southeast corner in a warehouse area, one group suggested a skate park. To the northeast, the yellow squares indicate Evans Field, specifically the need for improved facilities (concession stands, scoreboards, etc.) and a better connection to the sports fields.



## CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL

Residents identified areas most in need of clean-up, greenery, and beautification in terms of vacant lots scattered throughout the neighborhood as well as along streets. Most of the streets in the neighborhood were highlighted by at least one group, though State was identified especially often. The two parks in the neighborhood, Hatmaker and the Sprayground, were also marked as in need of beautification.





# concept

## *A Cohesive Plan Built by the Community*

At our final public meeting on April 23, the team presented the results of our findings as well as the concept plan generated from these findings. We also shared several renderings created of priority zones in the neighborhood that could be improved, simply to inspire residents and show them what might be possible. And finally, we explained next steps for the process, which involves breaking into work groups based on the five themes identified by the community.

Based on the findings outlined by the community during the mapping exercise, our team sought to highlight the commonalities of this feedback in order to develop the concept plan for Lower Price Hill. The concept plan is divided into districts, paths, and priority zone areas.

### DISTRICTS

In terms of districts, the first thing that we wanted to recognize was the value that the community places on Oyler School, LPH Community School, and Community Matters. These institutions have served as unifying anchors for the neighborhood and continue to invest in and enrich the community of Lower Price Hill. They are designated in a campus zone, shown in purple. This creation of an “anchor campus” would enable these organizations to more closely coordinate efforts and streamline their collaborations.

The second important overlay district is shown in blue: local businesses and retail. This reflects the idea explained earlier, that community residents simply want to revive the streets of 8th and State to be vibrant business districts once again.

Between the anchor campus and the business district, the streets would be designed as quiet, residential, family-oriented streets (shown in red). Located off the main traffic thru-roads of 8th and State, but still accessible to both the anchor institutions and the business district, these streets would be narrower, tree-lined, and with less traffic – perfectly suited for owner-occupied homes.

At the edges of the neighborhood, shown in yellow, are the proposed recreational areas mentioned earlier: a Rec Center within the business district (in the northwest

corner), improved facilities and better connection to Evans Field (in the northeast), and a potential skate park to adapt and reuse existing parking lots (in the southeast).

Overlaid on top of the entire neighborhood is a network of greenery and parks. The green circles indicate locations of existing or proposed neighborhood parks, with the intention that each resident would be within one block of an outdoor green space. Because many of the buildings are of the zero-lot-lines type, they do not have front yards or very accessible backyards, and so the creation of usable outdoor space for the residents is essential.

The green lines reflect a connected network of greenery throughout the neighborhood – whether this network takes the form of street trees, window boxes, bushes, or planters, each street will be clean, free of trash and blight, and beautiful.

## PATHS

The paths throughout the neighborhood address issues of circulation and access integral to completing the feel for each of these districts – it's not just about what kinds of buildings are there, or the occupants they hold, but the broader context of travel patterns that they exist in. On the borders of the neighborhood, the solid thick line indicates the thru-roads (and the higher volume and speed of traffic) that would be appropriate to attract non-LPH residents to sustain the neighborhood businesses along 8th and State. While these streets can be designed for thru-traffic, they should also be designed for the safety of pedestrians. On 8th in particular, creating a central median with street trees would encourage traffic calming for the high-speed motorists coming across the viaduct and provide a safety island for crossing pedestrians. Along State, street trees planted along the sidewalk areas would also help to slow traffic while providing an amenity for the businesses located there. On both streets, adequate painted crosswalks and lighted crosswalks should be installed – especially at the problematic intersections of 8th and Depot, and State and Staebler (as noted in the community mapping exercise).

The circulatory paths (shown in short dashes) enable traffic to move within the neighborhood itself, providing access to the organizations within the anchor campus. These roads would be two-way streets, but with slower speed limits than on 8th and State – and perhaps a school zone speed limit during certain hours around Oyler School.

Access paths (shown in long dashes) would provide access into the residential areas, but would not be intended for thru-traffic. These might become one-way streets, or narrowed to allow for the planting of street trees and wider sidewalks. By encouraging



traffic to follow the outer circulatory paths instead, these streets could remain quieter and more appropriately suited for residences.

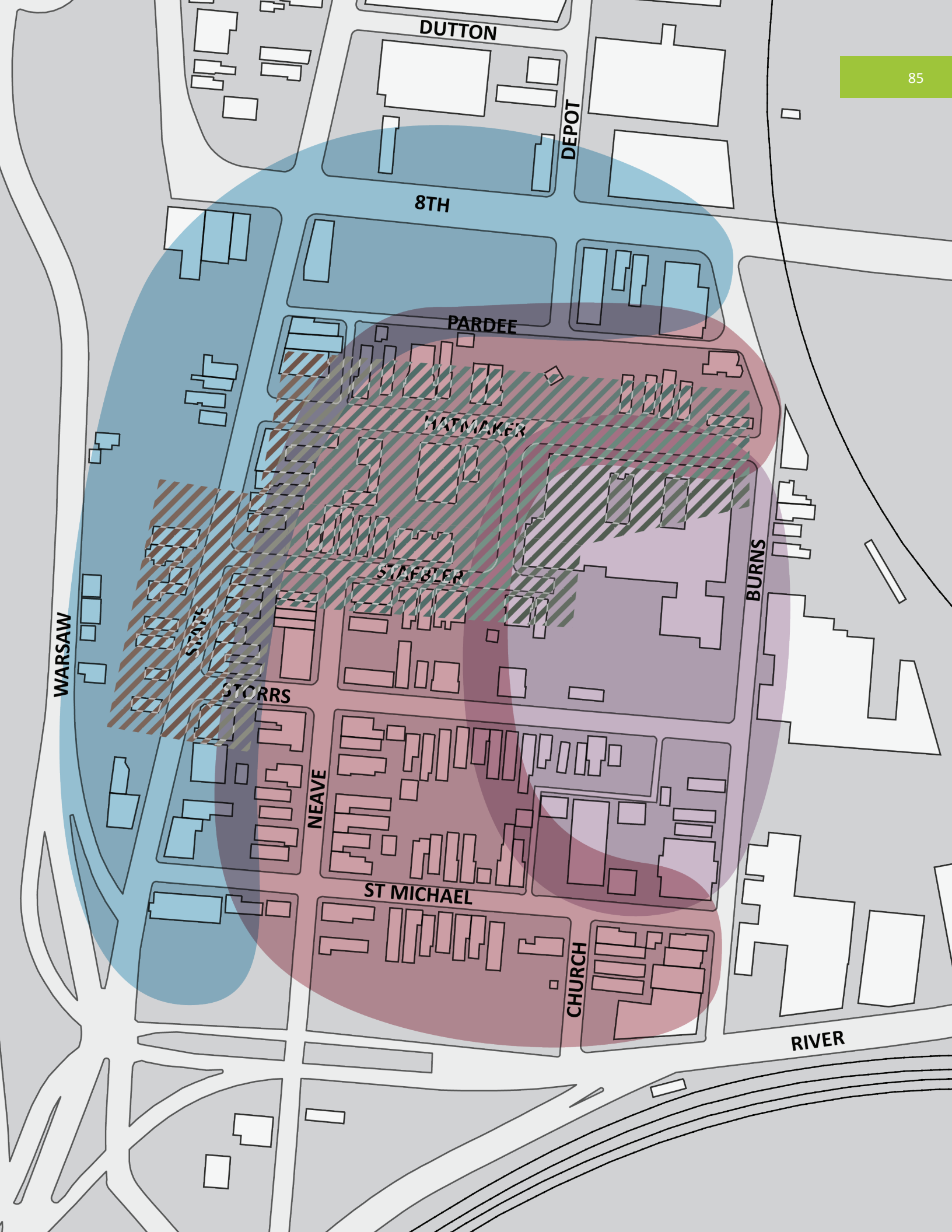
Finally, while there are ample east-west pathways for pedestrians to traverse through the neighborhood along sidewalks, Neave is one of the only officially marked pathways that passes through the neighborhood in a north-south direction. While State and Burns can serve as north-south circulation for vehicular traffic, pedestrians require a smaller scale solution. Thus, a pedestrian pathway is proposed (shown as a dotted line) to travel from the northern end of the neighborhood near the Price Hill Health Clinic through Hatmaker Park and along the border of the anchor and residential zones, to finally connect at the southern end of the neighborhood to the future riverfront park. Ideally, this pathway would be officially marked, with passage agreements with property owners to enable pedestrians to cut through mid-block. Another official pathway is proposed to connect more directly to Evans Field (leading east from Hatmaker Park and Oyler). Evans Field was highlighted as a strong asset for recreation in the community, and it should be more clearly accessible to residents.

## PRIORITY ZONES

In considering next steps, our team wanted to highlight a few initial priority zones for community efforts to focus on. While Lower Price Hill is a fairly small area geographically, all of these proposed ideas might feel overwhelming – where to begin? The following priority zones are intended to provide an initial place to start, so that the neighborhood can begin its transformation building by building and block by block.

The priority zones were chosen based on several factors. We began by looking at where there were multiple categorical overlaps from the community's feedback – for example, if one intersection was labeled as a traffic problem but also a prime business location but also in need of beautification. They were also selected based on the premise that Oyler School is leading this effort and so the school wants to start right in its own backyard, on the streets directly bordering the school's property where it could have most influence. Furthermore, other organizations are currently carrying out projects in other areas of the neighborhood (most notably, Community Matters and LPH Community School are working to improve St. Michael's), and so the zones delineated here are intended to complement and not duplicate those efforts.

The first priority zone is along Staebler. This short street was selected as a priority zone because of its intended use as a residential district, its identified need for clean-up and beautification, and its proximity to Oyler School. As homeownership was identified as a priority for the residents of LPH, this first zone would focus almost exclusively on that



typology: of a quiet, clean, tree-lined, family-oriented neighborhood street that would provide a high quality of life for the people living there.

The second highlighted priority zone lies along Hatmaker St. This zone was selected again for its residential districting, but also because of the major identified community assets of Hatmaker Park and the very front door of Oyler School. Hatmaker Park was consistently brought up as a valuable community asset – but one very much in need of clean-up and beautification, and more importantly, improved safety measures. This was one of the locations that residents had noted as a community heart, favorite and fun place, but explicitly did not feel safe there at the same time.

The final priority zone lies along State between Staebler and Storrs. This block was chosen for its importance to the development of local businesses. There are already several oft-visited businesses on these two corners (Blothead Pizza, Santa Maria Services), as well as existing building stock (as opposed to vacant lots further north) that could easily be turned into a cohesive storefront block with minor infill required. The intersection of State and Staebler was identified as a problematic pedestrian crossing, indicating at least that there is existing pedestrian traffic there, which would be appealing for storefront businesses. Furthermore, Storrs and Staebler are the two proposed access paths into the residential areas, which provides a nice urban design opportunity for an entrance plaza or public gathering place between the two quiet streets that subtly creates a gradation between business district and residential.

To help jump-start ideas and inspiration for these priority zones, our team created a few before-and-after renderings of streets in Lower Price Hill. These renderings were created using actual street views of the neighborhood and layering basic improvements to the structures and streetscapes on top. There are no elements of demolition, and very few elements of new construction proposed; the improvements are primarily rehabilitations and renovations.



**HATMAKER ACROSS FROM OYLER**

The first rendering shows Hatmaker street across from Oyler School, looking east toward Burns to propose an ideal for a quiet residential street. For this shot, our team updated the brick facades and windows of the existing buildings, as well as the sidewalks and street pavement. One building was added to fill a vacant lot toward the end of the street (the blue building), and trees and shrubs were planted in front of each house for beautification. Fences and benches were also added. The result is a clean, beautiful, residential street that encourages residents to enjoy their neighborhood.



HATMAKER PARK

The second rendering shows Hatmaker Park to illustrate the clean and beautiful theme. The buildings have again received façade and window updates, while additional greenery has been planted within the park and benches added on the street. The presence of a food truck indicates the potential for community events in the space; other possibilities include a farm stand, craft fair, or block party.

The final rendering shows the intersection of State and Storrs, to illustrate a revitalized business district in Lower Price Hill. The buildings received façade and window updates (with a few buildings being painted or covered in murals), and one building was constructed on the left side of the street to fill in a cohesive block. The street was



narrowed to allow for wider sidewalks and street trees, and to encourage traffic to slow down as it nears the pedestrian crossing along State. The first floors of the buildings have been renovated to create windows for storefront displays, and window boxes added for additional greenery in the upper windows.

Again, in each of these renderings only relatively minor updates have been applied – façade updates, tree plantings, and the installation of benches, for example – which celebrate and maintain the historic nature of these beautiful buildings. These minor updates were intentional in the creation of these renderings, to encourage the community that the improvements are manageable – and truly make a big difference!





## RESIDENTIAL

To encourage more accountability for the neighborhood's quality through home ownership and better-screened tenants. The community acknowledges the need for education on home ownership and financial assistance, seeks to preserve historic assets while improving the condition of properties, and prioritizes mixed income, mixed generations, mixed use, and mixed owner / renters.

## LOCAL BUSINESSES

To increase the number and variety of local businesses and services in Lower Price Hill while empowering neighborhood residents. The community also recognizes the need for job training and supportive services (such as child care) and the opportunity for successful local businesses to bring the community together.

## GREEN & BEAUTIFUL

To create a Lower Price Hill that is clean, green, and beautiful. Resident feedback highlights the basic need for clean-up and repair throughout the neighborhood, as well as improvements to parks, lighting, vacant lots, and buildings. The ideal Lower Price Hill is lush with trees, gardens, and safe outdoor spaces for the community to gather.

## RECREATION

To provide the residents of Lower Price Hill with fun activities and recreational opportunities within their own neighborhood. Suggestions include physical activities (such as sports fields or a recreation center), outdoor activities (fishing and biking), arts and entertainment (dances, carnivals), and school-based activities (science fair, parent volunteers).

## SAFETY

To reduce crime and eliminate environmental dangers throughout the neighborhood. Areas of criminal activity have been identified throughout the neighborhood, while environmental dangers include traffic and air quality issues. Some solutions may be simple infrastructure improvements (speed bumps, lighting), while others rely more heavily on community involvement (block watchers).

# next steps

## *Community Members Involved in Developing Solutions*

### WORK GROUPS

To keep momentum for this process moving forward, we have assigned work groups for community members to be directly engaged in. Each work group will focus on one of the themes previously identified – residential, local businesses, clean & beautiful, recreation, and safety – and has been assigned a team leader. The work groups are encouraged to start by focusing their work on the priority zones identified in the community plan and explore grants or identify specific projects to tackle.

Each work group has been provided with a packet of summarizing information derived from this planning process to serve as a springboard for their ideas and activities. The packets contain a summary vision statement for each theme, renderings or other inspiring images, a list of feedback and ideas heard throughout the public meetings related to their theme, and a map of the places identified through the mapping exercises related to their theme. The vision statements for each group are detailed opposite.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

As a final recommendation, our team developed a list of other organizations to potentially partner with as this community development process moves forward. These are organizations that have successfully revitalized communities that we could learn from, departments at the city who may be able to provide resources, and other non-profits or community organizations whose efforts we could come alongside.

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

3CDC  
 Bloc Ministries  
 Business District  
 Subcommittee of the  
 Queensgate Business  
 Alliance  
 City Council  
 Community Matters  
 DAAP  
 DPMT7  
 Keep Cincinnati Beautiful  
 LISC  
 LPH Community Council  
 Model Group  
 Parks and Recreation  
 Port Authority, City of  
 Cincinnati  
 Price Hill Will  
 Hand Up Initiative, Trade  
 and Development, City of  
 Cincinnati  
 Walnut Hills Redevelopment  
 Foundation  
 Working in Neighborhoods

## CONCLUSION

The neighborhood of Lower Price Hill has a bright future. With a highly engaged body of residents, multiple organizations already doing great work, and interested investors, the community is poised to become not only one of Cincinnati's great neighborhoods to live, but also an example for the revitalization of historic low-income neighborhoods nationwide.

## references

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# appendices

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*A: BLOC Ministries Properties •*

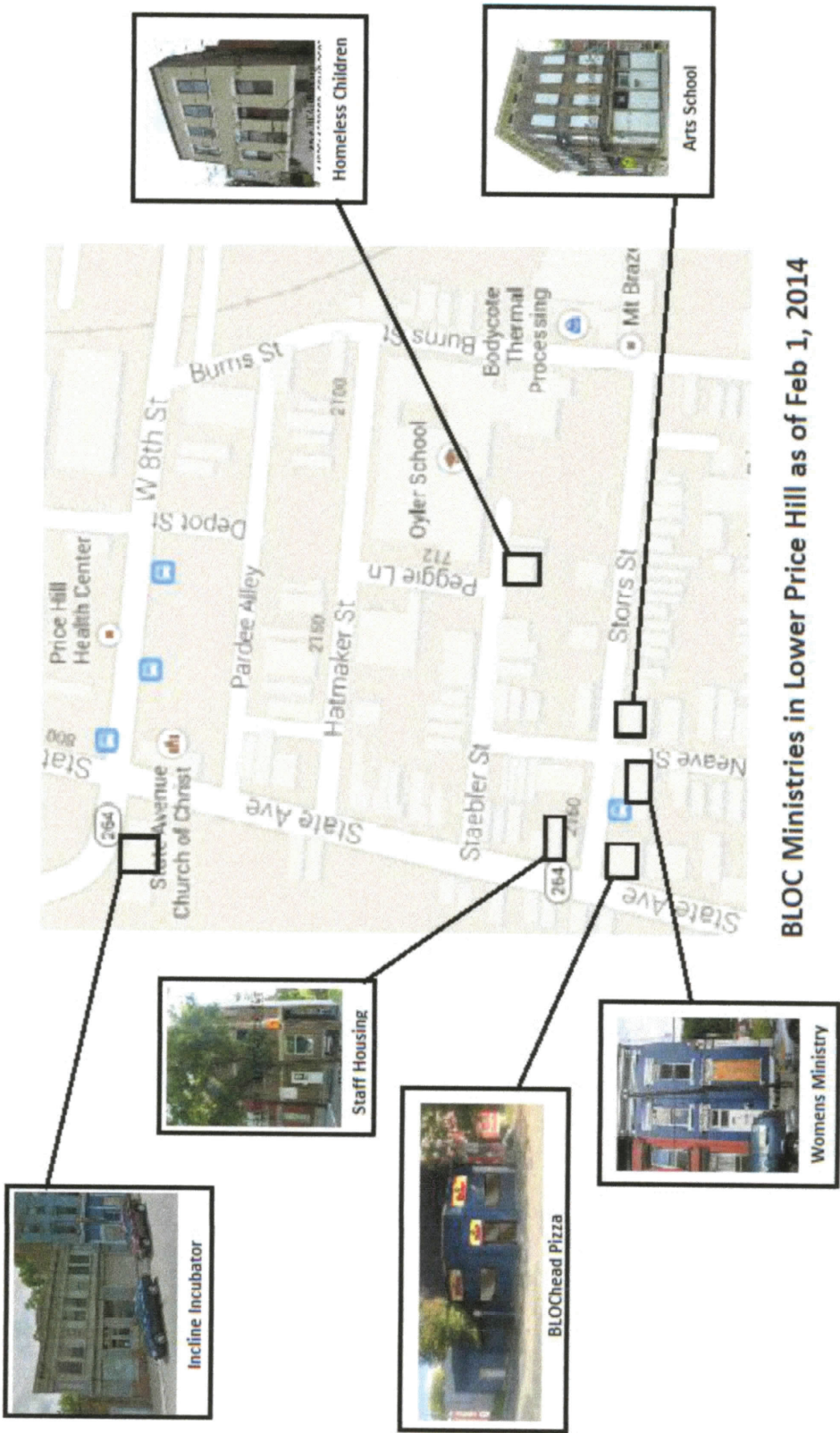
*B: Ohio River Trail West & Price Landing •*

*C: Port Authority Map •*

*D: Mapping Exercise Instructions •*



# BLOC Properties in Lower Price Hill



BLOC Ministries in Lower Price Hill as of Feb 1, 2014

# Conceptual Site Plan

- SITE KEY:**
- 1 Overlook
  - 2 Outdoor Classroom/Shelter
  - 3 Vegetated Mounds
  - 4 Native Meadow
  - 5 Multi-Purpose Lawn
  - 6 Dog Park
  - 7 Amphitheater
  - 8 Playground
  - 9 Rain Garden Planters
  - 10 Arrival Plaza with Planter, Flag, & Seating
  - 11 Picnic Shelter & Lawn
  - 12 Bus Parking/ Drop-Off
  - 13 Parking Lot
  - 14 Fishing Spot & Boat Launch
  - 15 Eco Barge / Environmental Education Center
  - 16 Reinforced Turf/ Overflow Parking





# Lower Price Hill

## community planning exercise

0

2 MIN

*Before you begin:*

- 1) Introduce yourselves! (Using the name tags and sign-in sheet provided.)
- 2) Assign one person to draw, one to take notes, and one to present at the end.

1

map #1  
10 MIN

## Strengths & Assets

the very best of Lower Price Hill

With the **GREEN** marker, draw symbols on the map to answer the following questions. It's okay to mark multiple locations.



Where do you consider the heart of the neighborhood to be?



Where do you feel the safest in LPH?



What businesses or services do you use in LPH?



Where do you go for fun in LPH?



What is your favorite place in LPH?

2

map #1  
10 MIN

## Weaknesses & Critiques

what could be improved?

With the **RED** marker, draw symbols on the map to answer the following questions. It's okay to mark multiple locations.



Where in the neighborhood do you feel unsafe?



Where are businesses closed that you wish were still open?



What areas are most in need of beautification?



Where is traffic too fast / too busy?

**3** map #2  
20 MIN

## IDEAS

what do you think?!

*Using the colors below as a legend, draw on the map to create your vision for Lower Price Hill.*



### CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL:

Where do you wish there were trees or green space? Consider all possibilities, not just park areas.



### HOUSING: Home-Ownership

Where would you create more opportunities for home ownership? Are these all single family homes? Condos?



### HOUSING: Rentals

Where would you put more rentals? Where would you put different rentals?



### LOCAL SHOPS & BUSINESSES

Where would you put businesses? What businesses would go where?



### RECREATION & THINGS TO DO

Where would you put recreation & entertainment? What would that be?



### OTHER:

Anything else that you would like to see included as part of Lower Price Hill?



25 MIN

## Present

share what your group created

*Each group will have 2-3 minutes to present 2-3 of their key ideas to the rest of the meeting attendees. Choose one person who will convey the group's vision for LPH.*

# Thank you!





**LOWER PRICE HILL CONCEPT PLAN**

Spring 2015  
Community Learning Center Institute