

ENGAGED NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

February, 2020

The City of
Springfield
Ohio



CINCINNATI
URBAN
DESIGN &
ARCHITECTURE
STUDIO LLC

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This plan proposes more than 40 initiatives organized in 5 topic areas, all of which are broken down in detail.

So where to begin? The consulting team was tempted to say “do everything” but much like carts and horses, we need to start with one thing to get to the next.

This report is designed to speak to different audiences and actors within the study area. Neighbors, City officials, lenders, developers and many others have a role to play. The most important role, however, is that of the residents of the neighborhood itself. These are their streets, homes, historic sites, parks and activities. It is their ownership of this plan which will create the most durable momentum, inspiring all other parties to work on driving this important community toward its position as Springfield’s center of livable history.

Community revitalization is hard, slow and costly. There are always moments when initiatives seem impossible, impetus appears to have stalled or volunteers are fractious, mostly because they’re just plain tired. But, truly, the only way out is through. Outlined in this report is at least 10 years of work.

Best get started.



Springfield 2023

Vision and goals are essential. It is the practice of this consulting team to gather information, listen, analyze and then try to distill the essence of a subject area into a personality profile. This statement projects a few years in the future, once the work proposed is well underway, and describes the aspirational best that the work is targeting.

This study area has an abundance of assets which add up to something terrific:

Springfield 2023

The District is a community of tree lined streets and small parks. Some of the most historic homes in Springfield, both large and small, sit beside newer buildings, all sheltering growing families and generations of neighbors.

The community works together on projects as diverse as pocket parks and Juneteenth celebrations and values their heritage. Gammon House, a stop along the legendary Underground Railroad, welcomes tens of thousands of visitors each year, hosts lectures, exhibitions and outdoor concerts in season. A small commercial district is home to a coffee shop, restaurants and independent retail businesses of distinction.

Just minutes from downtown, the neighborhood is delightfully walkable and crisscrossed with bike paths. A school, recreation center and several churches add to the rich tapestry of community which is the hallmark of this special place.

Implementation Matrix

For progress to occur, a wide variety of individuals and agencies have to engage, generally for extended periods of time.

Those roles are set out in the Implementation Matrix, which the consulting team hopes can serve as a granular guide to action. Each recommendation is assigned to a designated lead and supporting actors. For example, the city is the obvious lead on Code Enforcement, but others, such as the Clark County Land Bank, could help, so it makes sense to include them as part of the team.

Many of the recommendations are multi-phase, requiring coordination of different groups. Those continuing chapters are also broken down.

A reality of revitalization is constant change. Projects are moved forward and back as reality and resources demand. So, the matrix is a guide, not an absolute.

But in addition to vision and goals, every project should have a To Do list.

Putting the Plan Together

Creating a blueprint for community revitalization always requires deep stakeholder involvement as well as a combination of art, vision and science. When Urban Fast Forward and CUDA Studio partnered with the City of Springfield to develop this plan, the team began with a comprehensive analysis of the study area and extensive community engagement.

The consulting team began work in early 2019. A steering committee was created, and the team received a wealth of information from the city and county including prior plans, GIS and AutoCAD mapping data, and initial feedback on the study area.

The consulting team walked the area several times, taking photos and measurements.



There were two public workshops, public engagement at Juneteenth, and numerous follow-up conversations. This feedback was substantially positive. Notable comments included concerns about youth engagement, aging in place and a desire for future planning to include the neighborhood west of the current study area.

This report is the culmination of those process elements.

Recommendations are intended to be a work plan for city executives, community members and allied entities. They incorporate both short- and long-term goals, tactical placemaking suggestions and community building initiatives married with pragmatic policy recommendations.

Existing Conditions

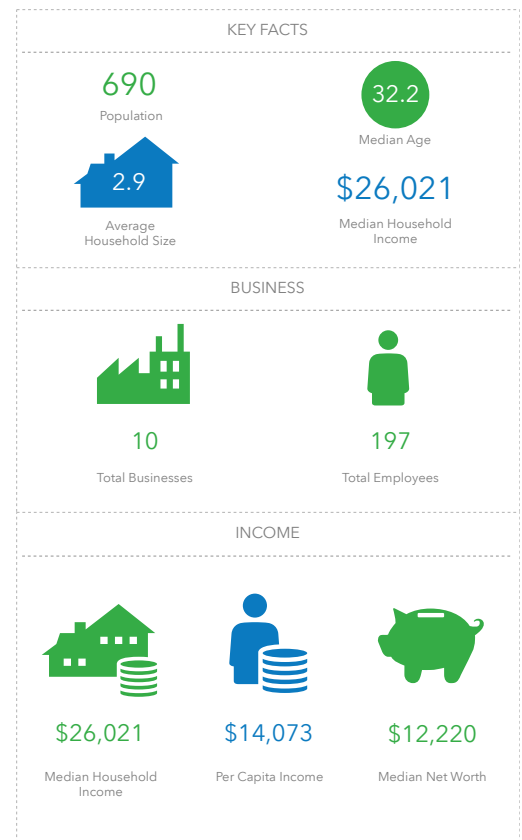
The study area is 98 square acres within the City of Springfield. It is bounded by Pleasant Street to the north, Perrin to the south, South Limestone to the west, and Center to the east. The area encompasses approximately 24 city blocks and includes much of the South Fountain Historic District.

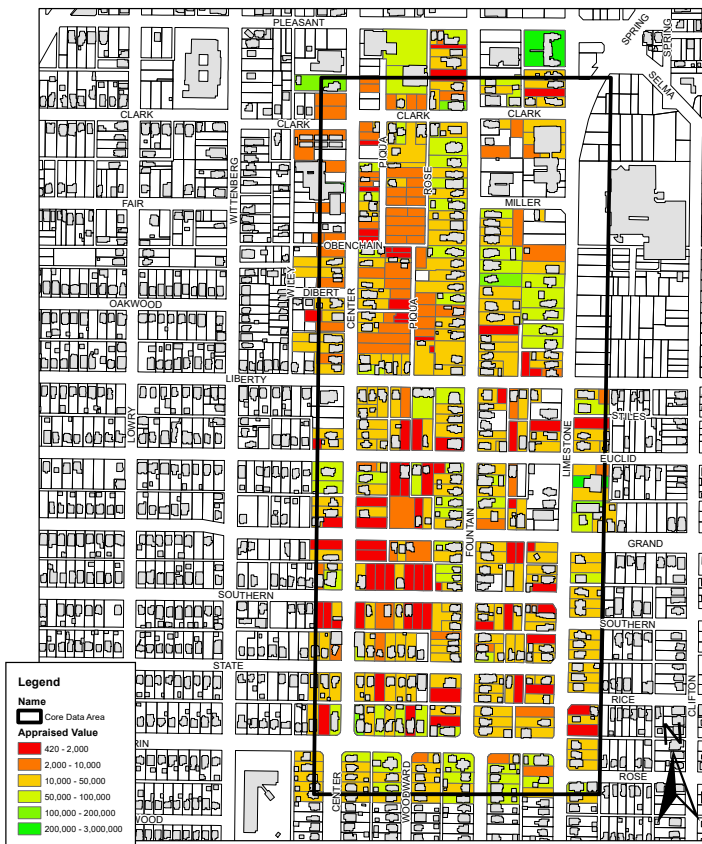
Within the study area are some 690 residents in 233 households. Average household size is 2.88 people. 2/3 of residents are renters, 1/3 homeowners.

Median age, at 32.2 is below the city median age of 37. Median income is \$26,021, well below the \$34,887 city wide median as of the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS).

Household income is low with over a quarter of the population (26.2%) making below \$15,000 per year. According to the ACS 2012-2016 data 31.7% of households within this area (78) have income below the poverty level. 61 (21.8%) are on Social Security and 46 (18.7%) are on another form of retirement income. Of renters, 39.1% spend 50% or more on rent.

The consulting team collected assessed property values from the Clark County Auditor to create a map of property values for 2018. Among the key findings:





- 149 Parcels (33%) valued less than \$10,000
- 229 Parcels (51%) valued between \$10,000 and \$50,000
- Only 71 parcels (16%) valued higher than \$50,000

The study area is primarily residential, a mix of grand 19th century homes, those more modest and older multi family. Many of the homes have been renovated, though others are vacant or in disrepair and there are significant gaps where structures once stood.

At the north of the study area is Gammon House, a link in the Underground Railroad. This important site is now a small museum. To the north of Gammon stands a funeral home, originally residence to Robert Henry, former Mayor of Springfield and the first African American mayor of any city in the United States.

Governmental Action

Recommendation: Prioritize Property Tax Collection

Taxes are a primary revenue stream. Only with adequate resource can a community maintain and advance. Failing to collect them, or act against those who fail to pay, starves the city and county of resource which might be allocated to the subject area as much needed reinvestment.

Recommendation: Strengthen Code Enforcement

Feedback from stakeholders revealed a historic reticence about firm action and consequent procedural confusion. They made a clear request for more rigor.

Recommendation: Designate a Code Enforcement Point Person

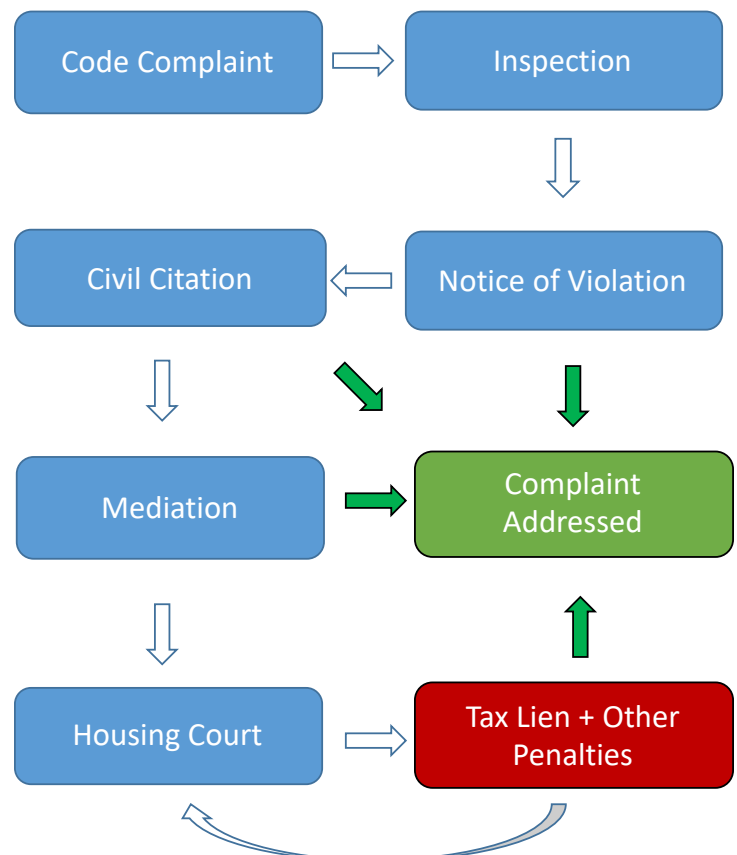
The job of property and building code enforcement should be handled by one full-time person with sole responsibility to enforce code and shepherd violators through the system.

Recommendation: Introduce Opportunities for Early Resolution

- Use Mediation for Positive Action
- Establish a Housing Court
- Foreclose and Transfer Worst Offenders into City/County/Land Bank Control
- Revise and Enhance the Nuisance Ordinance

Recommendation: Provide Compliance Tools and Support for Cooperative Property Owners

There is always a tension between carrot and stick regarding compliance issues. Many of the recommendations herein involve better enforcement and more "pain" for property maintenance violators. That's the stick.



The consulting team also recommends carrots for property owners who wish to make repairs. These could be based on the goals of the city's housing rehabilitation program.

Recommendation: Reform Zoning to Enable Change

An initial evaluation of the city's zoning regulations finds that much of the study area is zoned adequately for present conditions. However, the code poses challenges to future opportunities also important to the plan.

- Enable limited corner commercial uses
- Diversify allowable housing development
- Evaluate residential lot sizes and building setbacks and adjust zoning as needed to ensure conformity
- Remove or reform parking requirements for the CN-2, RS-8, and RM-12 zoning areas

Recommendation: Establish Construction Guidelines Which Define the Desirable

Developers often choose opportunities based in part on the regulatory environment. The more restrictive a zoning code, the more likely it is to discourage potential projects. Yet often a city's most important tool in determining the character of its neighborhoods is zoning. Regrettably, modern codes emphasize such elements as yard setbacks, height limits, and floor area ratio, sometimes defining the details but not the vision.

Recommendation: Favor Renovation but Simplify the Process

If historic standards, or the process for obtaining approvals, are too onerous, especially for small projects, then renovation is made less likely. The tricky balance is between rules that benefit invested homeowners and the need for those to be NOT an impediment to future investment.

- Allow Staff to Approve Minor Work Even if Appearance is Altered
- Staff Makes Recommendations to the Landmarks Commission
- Pre-approve Key Materials and Products
- Consider Approval of Materials/Products Not Pure Restoration Replacement

Recommendation: Reallocate Land Bank Funding to Stabilization/Rehabilitation

Historic fabric sets this community apart from many others. To protect remaining character, it is important that where possible the Land Bank opt for salvation over destruction.

Recommendation: Become a Certified Local Government

This certification will make Springfield eligible for funding, technical assistance grants and historic preservation programs. Springfield is already performing the functions of a Certified Local Government and can apply immediately.

Financing

Recommendation: Create or Partner with Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

A local CDFI could assist with gap financing for owner occupied renovations, support low down payments for new homeowners and offer predevelopment funds for new projects. Depending on how it is constituted, and financed, it may be able to make grants as well as loans.

A truly local CDFI is the community's funding expert and advocate.

Recommendation: Create Pathways to Homeownership

63% of housing in the study area is rental, including single family, duplexes, and larger multi dwelling units. The task is to identify opportunities for programs and partnerships where existing residents, either owners or renters, can invest in their neighborhood and become stakeholders in the process. Part of that is to find means whereby homeownership can be made more possible.

Recommendation: Provide Homeowner Assistance Tools

- Loans
- Grants
- Tax Abatements
- Community Reinvestment Area

Case Study: Working In Neighborhoods: For over four decades, Working in Neighborhoods (WIN) has advanced the cause of community revitalization in neighborhoods throughout Cincinnati. This faith-based organization focuses on assistance for first-time homebuyers and developing and rehabbing housing in disadvantaged communities. The organization also focuses on training residents for community leadership. WIN would serve as a good role model for the Engaged Neighborhood focus area.

Development

Recommendation: Establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC)

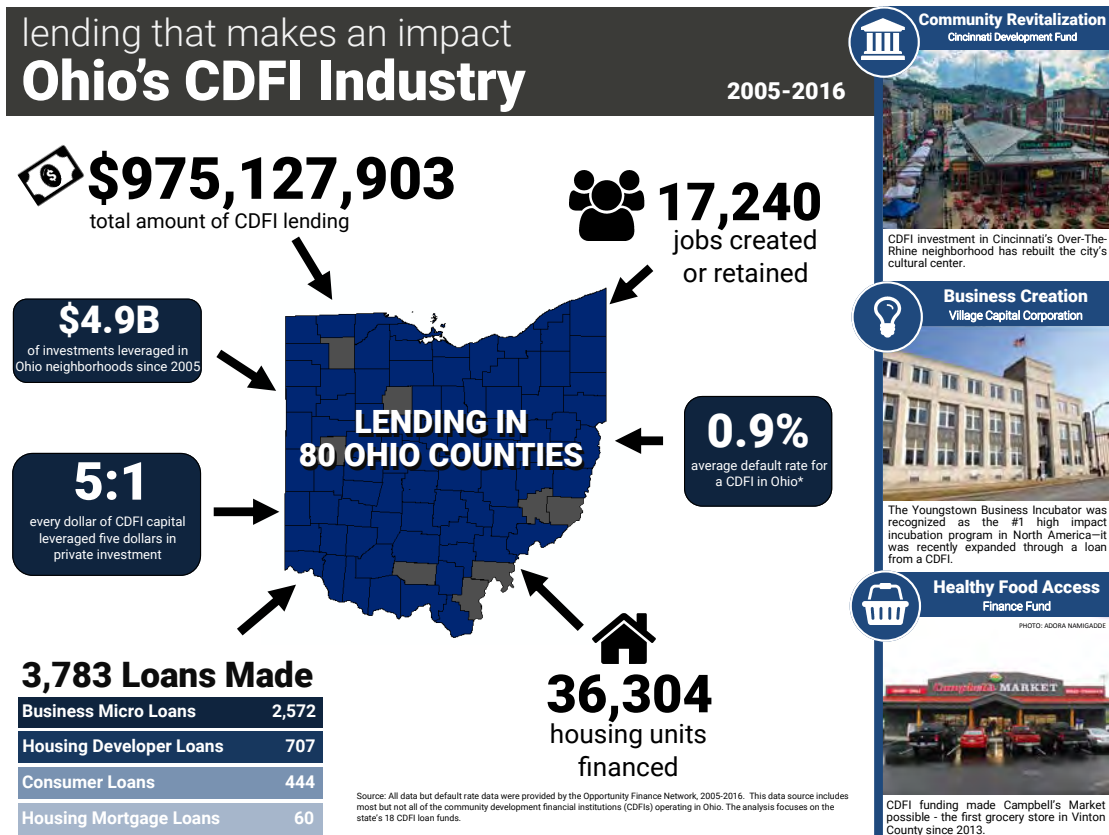
There is pressing need for a leadership organization to coordinate development and activation in the study area and to the west. This would ensure a cohesive development strategy that can focus the entire neighborhood, not just a limited number of blocks. A formally organized Community Development Corporation (CDC) would likely have the greatest effect in this role.

Case Study: NECIC: Mansfield North End

The North End Community Improvement Collaborative is a group dedicated to improving the North End of Mansfield Ohio. The 501(c)3 CDC could serve as a guide for Springfield.

Recommendation: Determine the Starting Point for Development

Due to low valuations, there is little possibility of financing new housing in the study area. But there is an abundance of properties ripe for rehab. By beginning to tackle these, the CDC can signal emerging momentum, bring deteriorated properties back to life one by one and attract those for whom self-performing the renovation process is too much. As resource allows, new construction infill can become a priority.



Recommendation: Expand Development Efforts as Resources and Partnerships Allow

- Single Family Homes
- Duplexes
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Cottage Courts
- Commercial and Mixed-Use Amenities

Recommendation: Build New Parks – Not all of Them Pocket Sized

Small, neighborhood-scale gathering places, pocket parks can be accommodated on a lot as small as 15' wide. They're usually less expensive to build and maintain than larger scale oases but these little gems have the ability to reflect a neighborhood's unique personality; quirky, refined, child filled, historic – whatever tone creators wish to set.



Ultimately, perhaps the area of largest potential lies at the site of recently demolished manufacturing buildings along the Little Miami Scenic Trail between Grand and Euclid. These vacant lots could become a park with features including large grassy areas, an amphitheater, recreation courts, playgrounds, a sculpture garden, and a renewable power array among other ideas.

Recommendation: Fix the Details Early

Sometimes small but important infrastructure details get lost in the mix. And yet, these improvements, often easy to implement, can make a material difference in creating perceived momentum. From bike racks to trash cans, everything matters. Equally however, everything offers an opportunity to reinforce the essential specialness of this place.

Case Study: David Byrne's Bike Racks

Artful bike rack designs would be a great way for Springfield to showcase destinations within and around the study neighborhood. The initiative also highlights local artists while enlivening the street and business district and encouraging bicycle use.

Recommendation: Let History Repeat Itself

To truly create neighborhood pride and delight visitors, streets need the kind of enhancements which convey a strong and distinctive sense of place. These elements should be true to the brand of the area, historic but dynamic within the contemporary era. They should be distinctive, and, in all ways feasible, exceptional.

Recommendation: Highlight Strategic Gateways

Highlighting the spots where people enter a special district – by car, bike, or foot – is important. There are 19 points of entry to the South Fountain Historic District, yet only the northern and southern entries are marked.

The community should heighten its profile where possible, designating at least a few more thresholds as key.

Recommendation: Strategically Highlight Thresholds

Ultimately, threshold improvements need to be permanent. Create cobblestone inserts at intersections of primary importance. Such improvements would also serve a serious secondary purpose. Slightly raised and incorporating the textural change of stones, they would be a reminder to drivers to slow down.

Permanent improvements should center on making thresholds durable reminders that the South Fountain Historic District is a celebrated place within the city.

Recommendation: Repair and Improve Key Intersections

Intersections are more than places for cars and trucks to meet and pass through. They're places for the community to connect as well, and they need to be safe pathways for both pedestrians and bikes as well as fertile ground for future development.

Recommendation: Create Sharrows

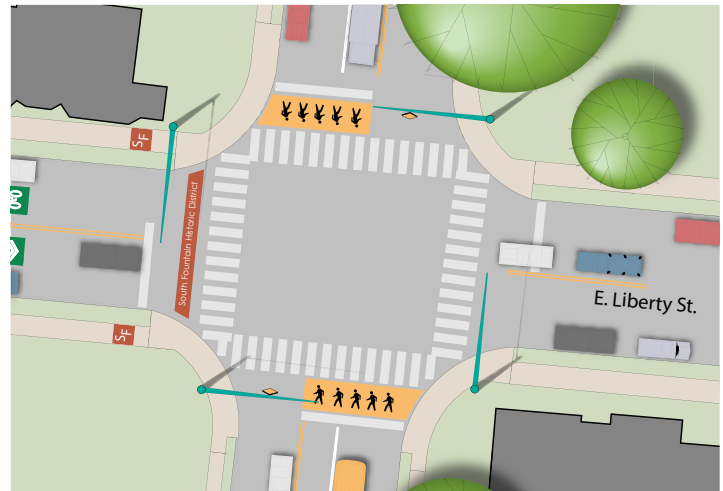
Sharrows are pavement marking depicting a bicycle capped with two chevrons, used on streets too narrow to accommodate separate tracks and indicating a lane of traffic to be shared by bikes and cars.

Recommendation: Paint the Streets

- Entries
- Crosswalks
- Pedestrian Crossing Warnings

Recommendation: Send A Signal At Pedestrian Crossings

As a modest signal that this area is pedestrian friendly, Springfield should install overhead on-demand flashing lights for pedestrians. This signal should be accompanied by signs at driver eye-level to reinforce that pedestrians may be crossing.



Recommendation: Decrease Curb Radii and Add ADA Sidewalk Curbs

The intersections along South Limestone encourage drivers to make turns into side streets at great speed. Larger turning radii also increase crosswalk distances for pedestrians, and their geometry makes it impossible to align crosswalk ramps at the curb. As resources allow, Springfield should reconstruct two key intersections at S. Limestone/E. Grand and S. Limestone and E. Liberty.

Recommendation: Add Traffic Signals

Unlike vehicle drivers and passengers, pedestrians travel unprotected, and walkable neighborhoods are, by definition, those in which they feel safe. This is especially crucial where children are members of the walking community. The city should install a full traffic signal at S. Limestone/Liberty, where one was removed from this corner some time ago. That decision didn't account for pedestrians.

Recommendation: Don't Forget Center, Perrin and Euclid

Perhaps no street in the study area is more hostile to pedestrians than Perrin Avenue. It's a harsh and unpleasant road that discourages both visitation and investment. Yet it's an important connector to Center Street and Center leads to one of the area's most important resources: Gammon House. Similar problems exist on Euclid and on Center itself.

Recommendation: Reinforce East/West Connections

While the study area is only 3 blocks wide east to west, the broader neighborhood from South Limestone to South Yellow Springs offers additional opportunity. But the emergence of that inclusive overall vibrancy depends on what some might consider – wrongfully – minor streets.

East/West connections should be reinforced as thoughtfully as those running North/South, and, in this area, offer some special opportunities.

Recommendation: Improve Downtown Connections

Parking lots and buildings offer opportunity for tactical activation and visual improvements to bridge gaps in the walk to downtown and add liveliness to the corridor. While the means are myriad, the goal is simple: to enliven three currently dull but important corridors connecting one of Springfield's most interesting neighborhoods to the urban core.

Recommendation: Cherish Gammon Square

Although Ohio was a crucial state to the Underground Railroad, fewer than 30 known Railroad sites remain. The Gammon House of Springfield is one.

This should be a source of significant civic pride for the citizens of Springfield. The Community could create a set of high-quality gathering places which raises the profile of Gammon House, cultivates a publicly appealing venue and promotes a distinctive asset of the area.



Marketing and Branding

Recommendation: Name the Neighborhood A recurring theme around stakeholder engagement was what to call the neighborhood. This important lack was reinforced by Google and other mapping sites. There are several names of smaller blocks and sub-neighborhoods but nothing for this larger section. It's hard to build the reputation of an area when no one knows what to call it.

Recommendation: Build a Brand A brand is neither a name nor a logo. These are brand marks and while they might convey essential information to a seeking consumer, they are images rather than values.

Fundamentally a brand is a promise. It needs to be authentic to the product and possible to deliver consistently through a variety of means. There needs a compelling story for both internal and external audiences. A story that is easy to tell, pleasant to hear and, most important of all, true.

Recommendation: Use All Available Tools

- Constituent Websites
- Social Media

Recommendation: Promote Everything, Every Place

There are a lot of proposed activities in this report: street painting, crosswalk installations, infrastructure upgrades, new developments, tree plantings. This is in addition to social activities already happening and yet to be planned. Each of these, every time, is an opportunity to seek publicity.

Recommendation: Tell the Bad Stories as Well – To the Right Audience

Axioms about grease and squeaky wheels have basis in reality. So, the neighborhood should yelp as loudly and long as it takes to get a matter solved.

Civic Infrastructure

Recommendation: Build Community Capacity Community revitalization is a difficult process which requires time, money and community capacity. Time is what it is. Every day moving closer to the goal. Money is available in support of clear objectives.

But making that to do list and continually seeking that money takes community capacity.

Recommendation: Support and Strengthen Neighborhood Associations These associations can be a regular forum to discuss problems and work through solutions. By working together they also can serve as an area wide leadership group. Even singly, they are a regular, formal way for citizens to have a voice. Sometimes that speech is the expression of discontent, but better to air differences than have them covertly undercutting progress. This is also where the community can come together to promote events, ideas and share news.

Recommendation: Develop an Activation Strategy Consistency is key to activation. A regular calendar of events, large and small, is likely to have greatest impact. Annual events are terrific, but so are those which celebrate a street painting, highlight endings or beginnings, create friendly competition or invite some form of playful participation by young, old or both.

Recommendation: Leadership Matters It is essential, if the study area wants to make true progress, that its leaders work together to access the ideas and support the aspirations of all its residents.



A Special Place

Springfield 2023

The District is a community of **tree lined streets** and **small parks**. Some of the most **historic homes** in Springfield, both **large and small**, sit beside newer buildings, all sheltering **growing families** and **generations of neighbors**.

The community **works together** on projects as diverse as **pocket parks** and **Juneteenth** celebrations and values their **heritage**. **Gammon House**, a stop along the legendary **Underground Railroad**, welcomes tens of thousands of **visitors** each year, hosts **lectures, exhibitions** and outdoor **concerts** in season. A small **commercial district** is home to a **coffee shop, restaurants** and independent **retail** businesses of **distinction**.

Just **minutes from downtown**, the neighborhood is delightfully **walkable** and crisscrossed with **bike paths**. A **school, recreation center** and several **churches** add to the **rich tapestry of community** which is the hallmark of this **special place**.

IMPLEMENTATION

INITIATIVE	TASK	RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTOR - Phase 1			RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTOR - Phase 2		
		Primary	Secondary Partner	Secondary Partner	Primary	Secondary Partner	Secondary Partner
GOVERNMENT ACTION	Prioritize Property Tax Collection						
	Strengthen Code Enforcement						
	Designate a Code Enforcement Point Person						
	Introduce Opportunities for Early Resolution						
	Provide Compliance Tools						
	Reform Zoning to Enable Change						
	Establish Construction Guidelines Which Define the Desirable						
	Favor Renovation but Simplify the Process						
	Reallocate Land Bank Toward Stabilization/Renovation						
	Become a Certified Local Government						
FINANCING	Create or partner with a CDFI						
	Create Pathways to Home Ownership						
	Provide Homeowner Assistance Tools						
DEVELOPMENT	Create a Community Development Corporation						
	Determine the Starting Point for Development						
	Expand Development Efforts as Resources and Partnerships Allow						
	Create New Parks - Not All of Them Pocker Sized						
	Fix the Details Early						
	Let History Repeat Itself						
	Strategically Highlight Thresholds						
	North and South Entries Into South Fountain Historic District						
	Repair and Improve Key Intersections						
	Create Sharrows						

IMPLEMENTATION

INITIATIVE	TASK	RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTOR - Phase 1			RESPONSIBLE IMPLEMENTOR - Phase 2		
		Primary	Secondary Partner	Secondary Partner	Primary	Secondary Partner	Secondary Partner
DEVELOPMENT	Paint the Streets						
	Send a Signal At Pedestrian Crossings						
	Decrease Radii and Add ADA Sidewalk Curb Ramps						
	Add Traffic Signals						
	Paint Intersections for Starters						
	Install Street Lights						
	Consider Inlays to Slow Traffic in Style						
	Don't Forget Center, Perrin and Euclid						
	Reinforce East/West Connections						
	Improve Downtown Connections						
	Cherish Gammon Square						
MARKETING AND BRANDING	Name the Neighborhood						
	Build a Brand						
	Springfield 2023						
	Use All Available Tools						
	Promote Everything Every Place						
	Tell the Bad Stories as Well						
CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE	Build Community Capacity						
	Support and Strengthen Neighborhood Association						
	Develop an Activation Strategy						
	Leadership Matters						

PUTTING THE PLAN TOGETHER

Creating a blueprint for community revitalization always requires deep stakeholder involvement as well as a combination of art, vision and science. When Urban Fast Forward and CUDA Studios partnered with the City of Springfield to develop this plan, the team began with a comprehensive analysis of the study area and extensive community engagement.

Even before that however, conversations were held with neighborhood representatives and the city's Community Development Department regarding the section of the city south of downtown and just west of Limestone. These discussions evolved to also include the area west of Limestone Street to South Yellow Springs Street.

Throughout the process, community input, both formal and informal, was essential and will continue to be crucial as the plan is implemented.

The consulting team began work in early 2019. A steering committee was created, and the team received a wealth of information from the city including prior plans, GIS and AutoCAD mapping data, and initial feedback on the study area. The information the team reviewed includes:

- Springfield Comprehensive Plan
- Springfield Zoning Code
- Limestone Street Corridor Study
- Restarting the Heart: The Center City Renewal
- Clark County Comprehensive Plan
- Springfield Housing Study (2002)
- Springfield Guidelines for Historic Properties
- Delinquent Property Tax Data
- Clark County Multi-Use Trail and Needs Assessment
- Clark County Labor Market Analysis
- Housing in the Champion City: Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis for Springfield, Ohio
- U.S. Census Data
- GIS Data
- AutoCAD Data



Session #1 on Saturday
#1 Springfield, Ohio

ENGAGED NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

STAKEHOLDER GROUP INTERVIEWS
Friday, March 8, 2019 and Saturday, March 9, 2019
Sign-In Sheet

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The team visited the study area on two occasions, conducting a parcel by parcel survey of vacancy and building conditions as a baseline for the first workshop.

The team also took measurements of street curbs and sidewalks to begin developing maps and illustrations for urban design.

This research is the basis of a blueprint for momentum in the study area and potentially beyond.

The City asked for a plan which would outline a multi-faceted approach. Among the goals set out were development of ways to tackle the deteriorated condition of housing in the area and identification of a path to reestablish area wide housing equity. Vacant land usage was called out as another top priority.

Workshop 1

Participants were asked to identify assets, challenges, desires and other aspects of the study area. Each group had a clean map of the area on the table and was encouraged to comment. Preliminary data from the vacancy survey was also presented.

Additionally, pictures of different building types, street scenes and parks were displayed. The consulting team invited participants to express their preferences for new construction, street and civic space designs.

Friday sessions were held at the Dome STEM Academy and included community representatives, regional organizations, business leaders and others engaged in the study area and region. Over 30 representatives from different groups attended.

Saturday's workshop was held at Family Needs located at the corner of Grand Avenue and Limestone Street. This session focused on residents of the study area. The team had 4 sessions and some 42 residents attended.

After the workshop, the team conducted a deep dive session with City officials, the Historic Landmarks Commission and had multiple follow-up discussions with key stakeholders and the city's code enforcement department. In total there were 84 participants and the team conducted 30 follow-up conversations during this phase.



PUTTING THE PLAN TOGETHER



Juneteenth

On June 15th, the consulting team set up a booth at the annual Juneteenth celebration, held in an empty lot across Piqua Place from the Gammon House and along closed several streets. Despite the threat of heavy rain in the afternoon, initial attendance was strong, and the team gathered organic input from residents and stakeholders from across the region. Rain arrived as promised in the afternoon, ending the engagement earlier than planned.

Workshop 2

Conducted on Saturday October 5th, Workshop 2 was at Second Missionary Baptist Church. More than 40 people attended. The consulting team presented preliminary plan recommendations to attendees who were encouraged to review these and provide verbal and/or written observations

The team received 20 comment sheets following the workshop.

Public Engagement Findings

Top Assets:

- 1.) Rocking Horse
- 2.) The Dome
- 3.) Proximity to Downtown
- 4.) Architecture, Gammon House, Bike Trail, Library
- 5.) Front Porches, History, YMCA

Top Challenges

- 1.) Absentee Landlords, Litter
- 2.) Lack of Parks, Wide Streets, Lighting, Vacancy
- 3.) Ignored Stop Signs, Code Enforcement, Drug Dealing, Snow Removal, Perceptions

Top Desires

- 1.) Infill Construction
- 2.) Street Trees
- 3.) Coffee Shop
- 4.) Playground, Dog Park, Grocery
- 5.) Community Garden, Dry Cleaners, Gammon House, Splash Pad, Amenities, Lighting

Feedback from the workshops was substantially positive. As shown in the word clouds on page 22, notable comments included concerns about youth engagement, aging in place and a desire for future planning to include the neighborhood west of the current study area.

This report is the culmination of these process elements.

Recommendations are intended to be a work plan for city executives, community members and allied entities. They incorporate both short- and long-term goals, tactical placemaking suggestions and community building initiatives married with pragmatic policy recommendations.

Outlined herein is easily a decade of work for a wide variety of project participants. Time to begin.



ENGAGED NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Springfield, Ohio

Proposed Initiatives:

Facilitate Community Development Capacity *CRAP financing is greatly needed*

Reposition Code Enforcement for Success *make people more aware of the codes*

A Brand for the Neighborhood *Needed more suggestions for this. A list to choose from or to piggy back off of.*

Reform Zoning to Enable Change

South Fountain Historic District Improvements *Seems S like stone to property for business is high. It would be better further west so that it was more accessible to the comm. as a whole and cheaper costs.*
South Fountain Historic District Guidelines

Pathways to Homeownership *Look at alternative ways rent to own*

Development Opportunities *Cottage Courts with non-conventional homes*

East-West Connections

Community Gardens *Market to businesses for fresh produce possible infrastructure creation. Also volunteer to earn programs partnered with CDC or DFE for home improvements or parkway ownership.*

Pocket Parks *ART!! Parks with exercise equipment to make the community healthier.*

3D Zeloxa Streets Research
Center, Perrin, and Euclid Street Improvements *I've only walked so far once because of the traffic and danger.*

Love the ideas for making this area walkable. Bumble stripes, paint, trees

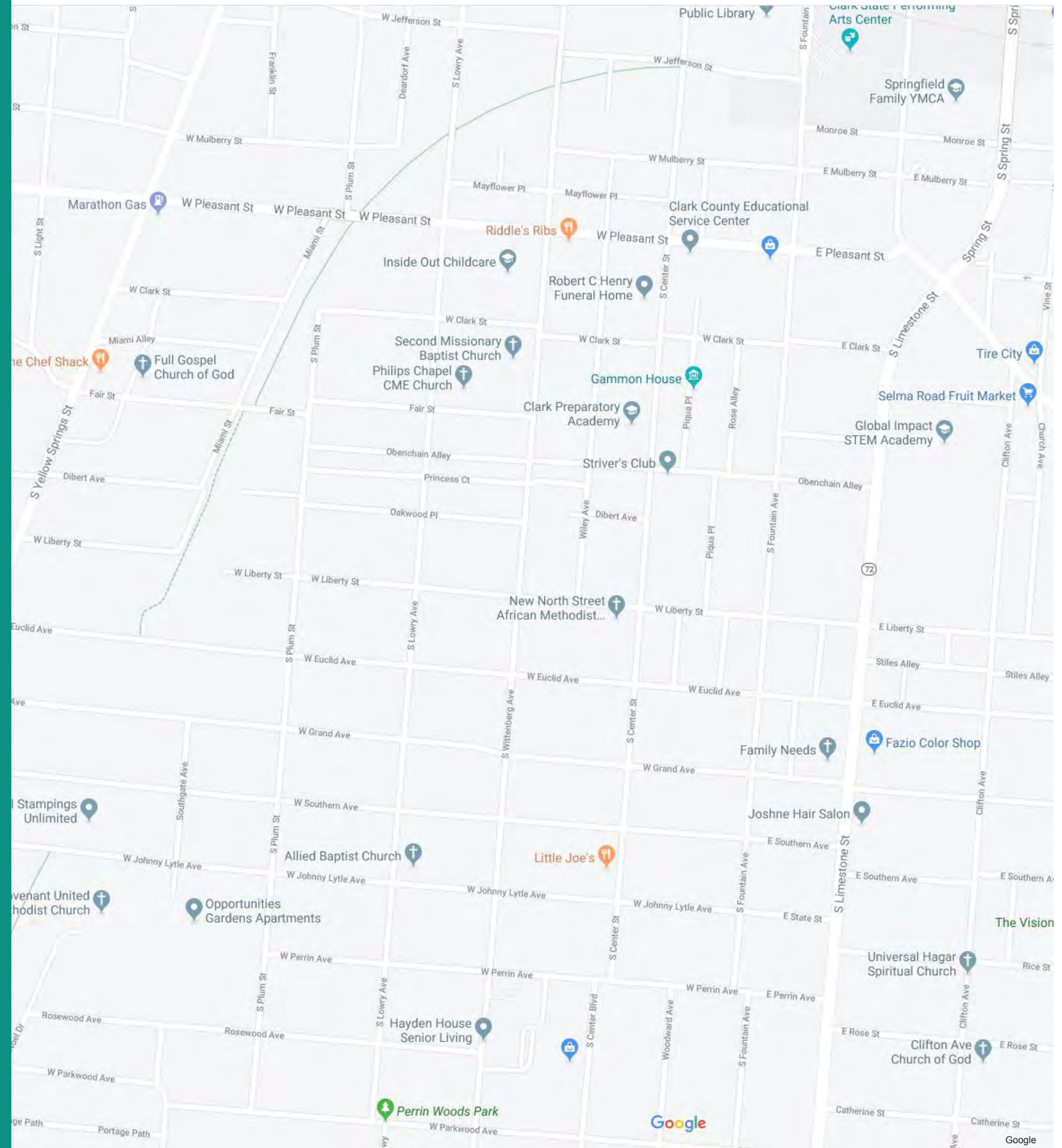
East/West Connections - very smart to enhance bike path are all positives!

Downtown Connection
I think the entrance is sufficient. Downtown already is getting a lot of attention.

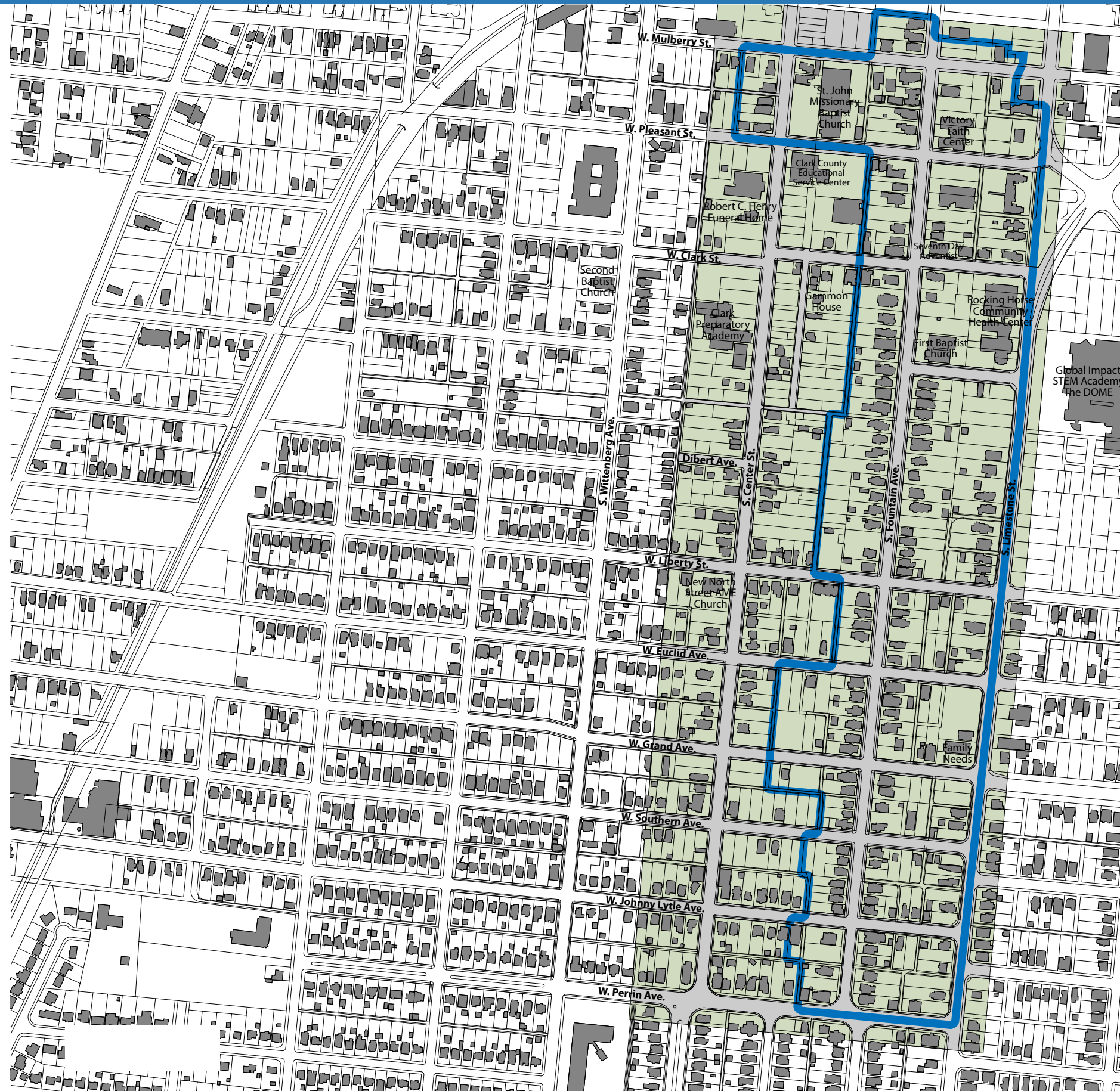
Gammon Square *Every idea for this is beautiful!*

Existing Conditions



The Study Area
Demographics
Housing
Vacancy
Property Values



EXISTING CONDITIONS



THE AREAS

Study Area ———— 
Historic District ———— 

The study area is 98 square acres within the City of Springfield. It is bounded by Pleasant Street to the north, Perrin to the south, South Limestone to the west, and Center to the east. The area encompasses approximately 24 city blocks and includes much of the South Fountain Historic District.

South Limestone is the primary traffic arterial between downtown and Interstate 70 to the south. There are few signalized intersections along the corridor and no on street parking. Crosswalks, if existing, are poorly marked. Street trees are intermittent. Consequently, there is little to no visual friction to slow drivers and cars speed through what is primarily a residential area.

A historic structure in this corridor, the Dome, now houses the Global Impact STEM Academy.

South Fountain Avenue is primarily residential in the study area, with a collection of grand 19th century brick and wood frame homes. Tree cover is denser here, and historic style light fixtures line the sidewalks. Many of the homes have been renovated, though others are vacant or in disrepair.

Housing erosion is even more significant on Center Street, evidencing significant demolition, and gaps, some of them poorly maintained, where structures once stood.

Near the corner of Center and Clark streets sits Gammon House, a link in the Underground Railroad. This important site has been restored and is now a small museum, though it is susceptible to even greater expansion. To the north of Gammon House stands a funeral home that was originally residence to Robert Henry, former Mayor of Springfield and the first African American mayor of any city in the United States.

Outside the core study area, particularly to the west, are blocks of more modest frame houses. These lie along the east-west side streets of the neighborhood and many, while not grand, have a character and charm that contributes another thread to the neighborhood tapestry. These streets are also where multifamily buildings in the area tend to be clustered.

The western edge of this larger area is bordered by the Little Miami Scenic Greenway and Yellow Springs street. These blocks are more industrial in character, with several large vacant lots which once housed warehouses and manufacturing sites.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

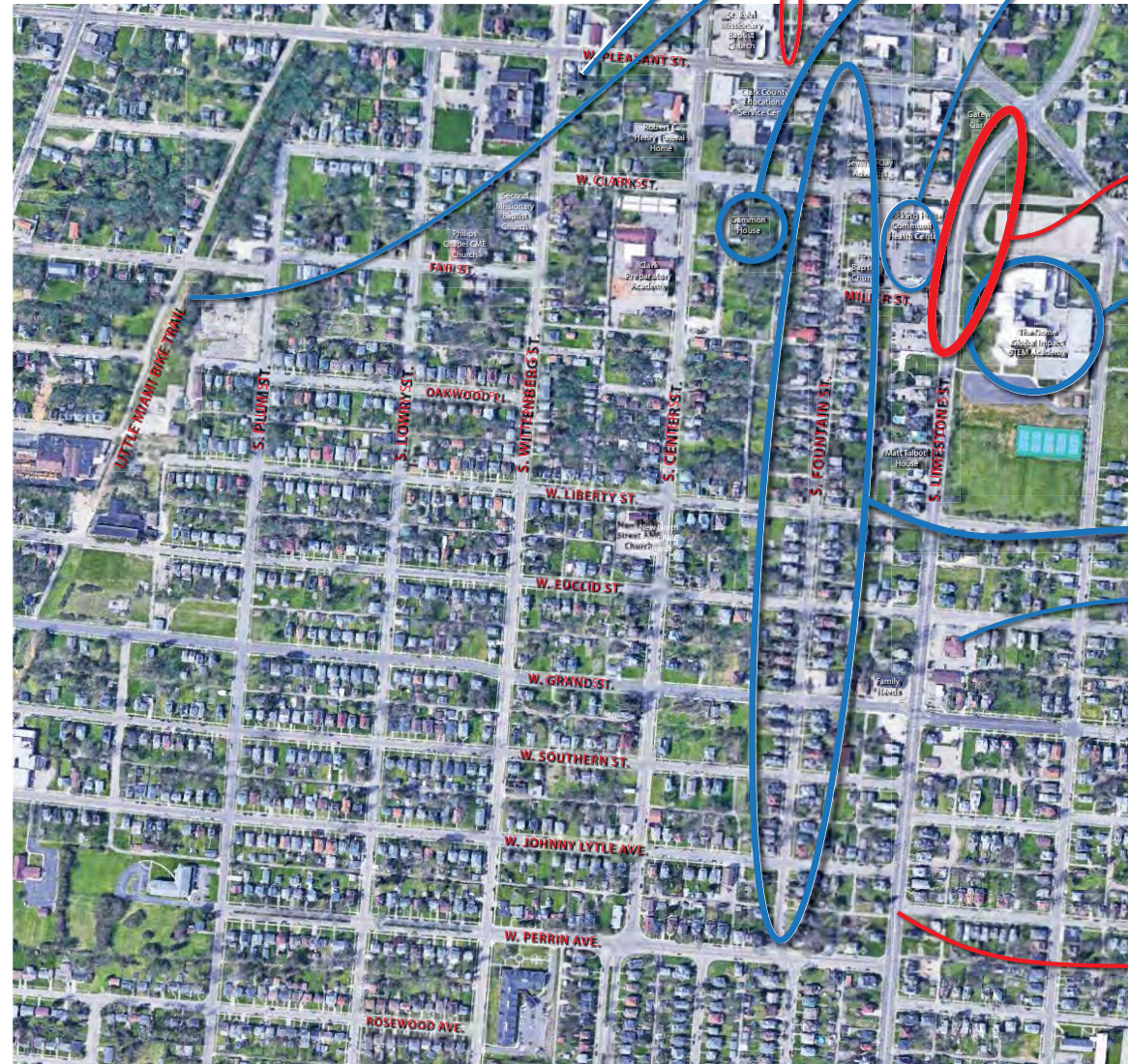
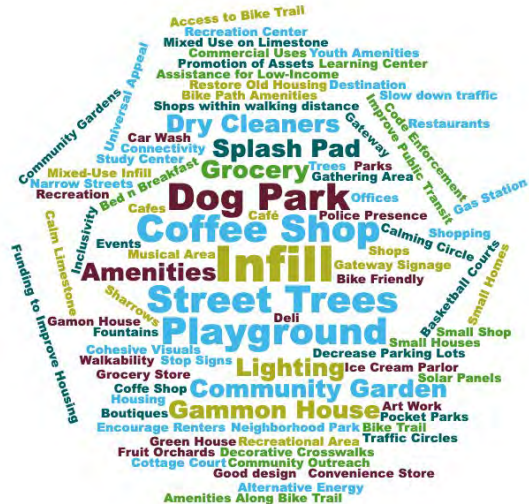
Assets



Challenges



Desires



RIDDLE'S RIBS
LITTLE MIAMI BIKE TRAIL
DRUG ACTIVITY IN ALLEY
GAMMON HOUSE MUSEUM
ROCKING HORSE

LACK OF PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ON LIMESTONE
GROCERY
GLOBAL IMPACT STEM SCHOOL

TIGHT-KNIT NEIGHBORHOOD
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE
PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER

LIMESTONE IS BIG DIVIDER;
LIMESTONE NEEDS TO SHOW BETTER

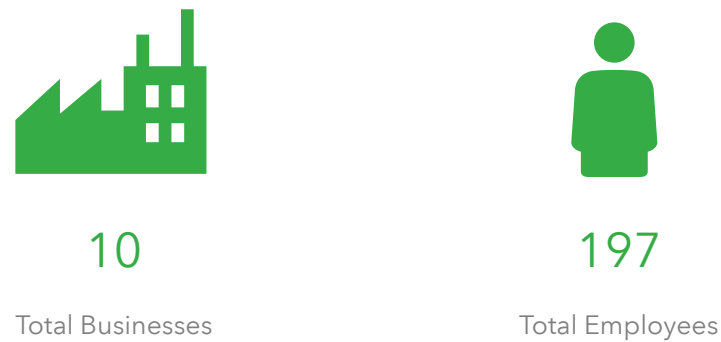
UNATTRACTIVE SOUTHERN GATEWAY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

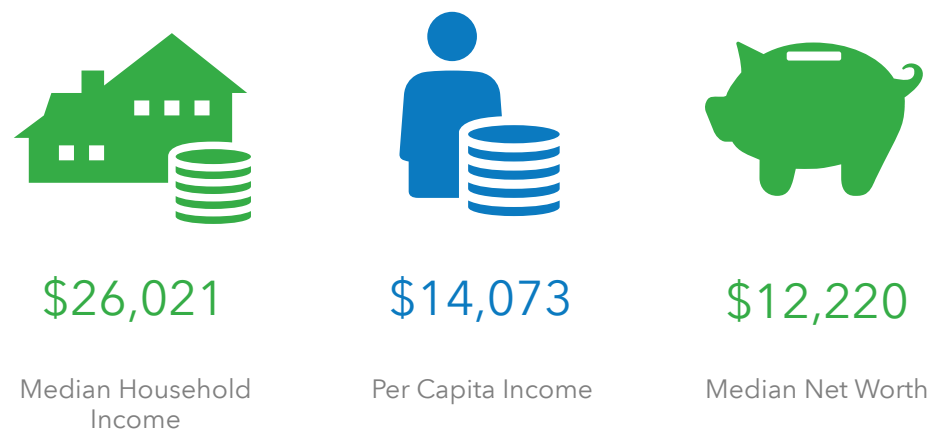
KEY FACTS



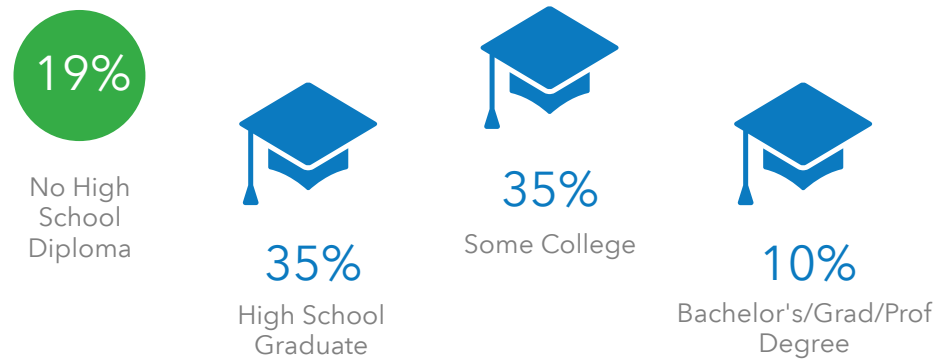
BUSINESS



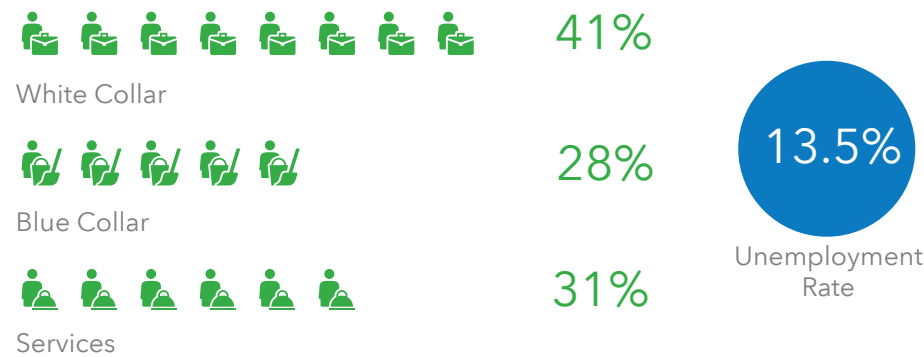
INCOME



EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



Households By Income

The largest group: <\$15,000 (26.2%)
The smallest group: \$150,000 - \$199,999 (0.4%)

Indicator	Value	Difference
<\$15,000	26.2%	+12.9%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	21.9%	+9.9%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	14.2%	+3.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	15.0%	-1.3%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	7.7%	-11.8%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	5.6%	-6.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	7.3%	-3.5%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	0.4%	-2.7%
\$200,000+	1.7%	-0.5%

Bars show deviation from
Clark County

Demographics

Within the study area are some 690 residents in 233 households. Average household size is 2.88 people. 2/3 of residents are renters, 1/3 homeowners.

Median age, at 32.2 is below the city median age of 37. **Median income is \$26,021**, well below the \$34,887 city wide median as of the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS).*

According to the 2010 Census, 49.3% of the population is African American, 35.9% is white, and 11.3% is Hispanic. Trend lines are shifting as of 2018 with an increase in Hispanic residents and a slight decline in both White and African American residents. Demographic projections provided by ESRI show a slight decrease in the overall population.

The ACS 2012-2016 indicates that out of a total of 246 households, 19.5% or 48 of those are households with children under 18 led by single females. 50 households within the study area contain at least one person over 65 years of age which is 20% of the total 246 households estimated in the ACS.

Educational attainment is low with 19% having no High School Diploma, 35% with only High School and only 10% of the population with a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

The community has a **13.5% unemployment rate**. Of those employed almost 1/3 (31%) are service workers and 41% are white collar.

Household income is low with over a quarter of the population (26.2%) making below \$15,000 per year. According to the ACS 2012-2016 data **31.7% of households within this area (78) have income below the poverty level**. 61 (21.8%) are on Social Security and 46 (18.7%) are on another form of retirement income. Of renters, 39.1% spend 50% or more on rent.

*Data from the American Community Surveys is compiled from a survey of a select sample representative of community population. Projections note a 5-year trend of changes from the 2010 decennial census. The Census Bureau has stated a 90% confidence level in data used from these surveys.

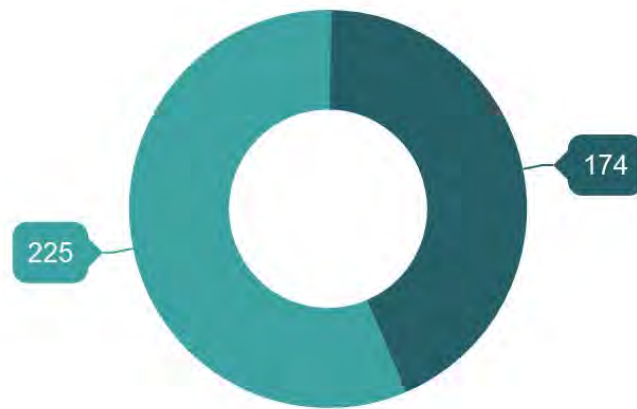
EXISTING CONDITIONS

399 Total Parcels
43.6% Vacancy*

Within the 75 acre study area, the team conducted an on-site survey. They found 399 properties and 174 of them were found to be vacant lots and buildings that appeared uninhabitable.



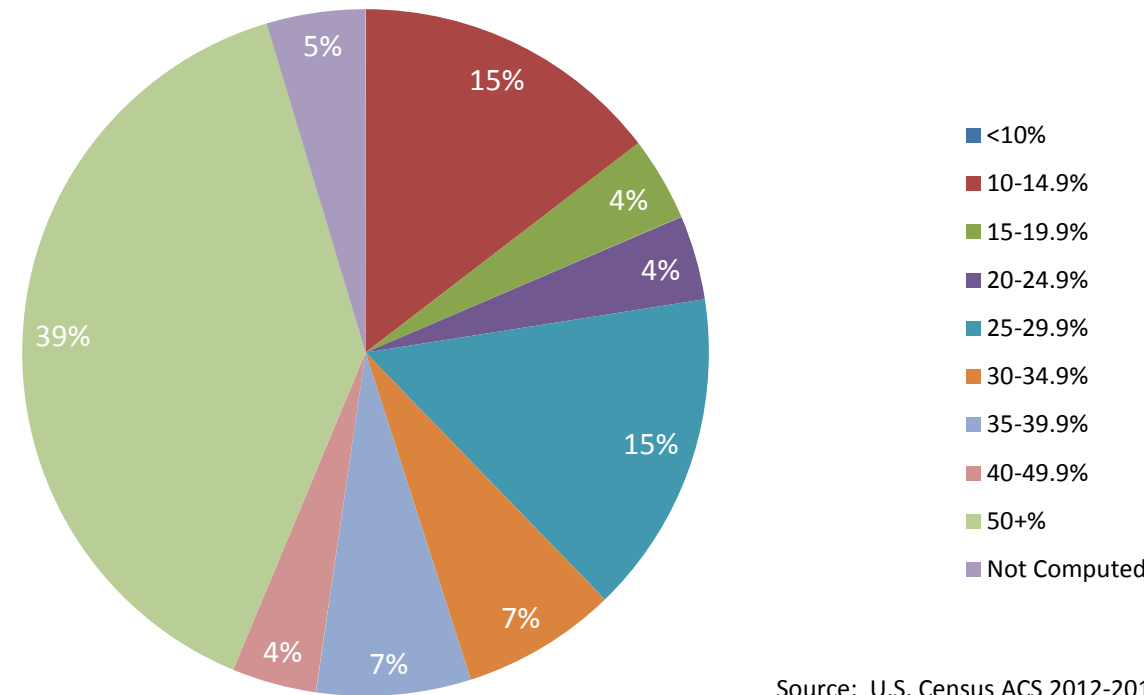
Percent of Vacant Parcels



■ Vacant (43.61%) ■ Occupied (56.39%)

*Vacancy was determined by counting known vacant land, buildings and building condition based on building and property maintenance codes.

Gross Rent As Percentage Of Household Income In The Past 12 Months



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2012-2016

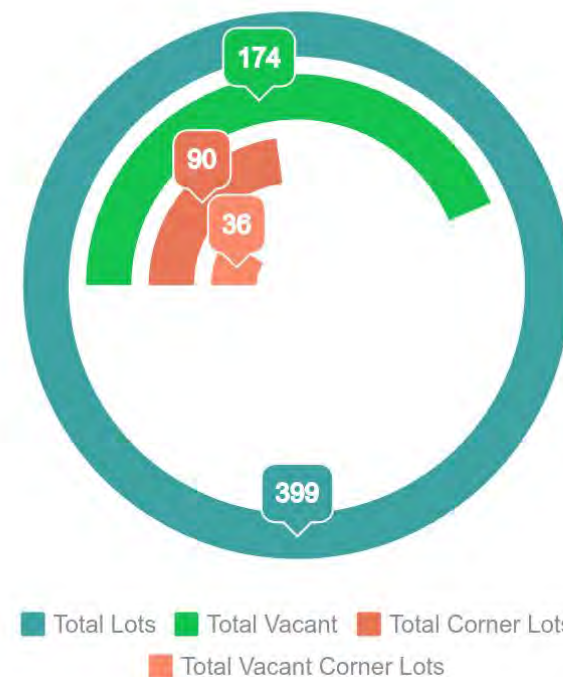
Corner Lot Vacancy

During the on-site survey, the team focused on corner lots at street intersections and recorded their observations. Out of a total of 90 corner lots, 36 were vacant.

Vacant lots were determined by the following qualities:

- 1.) Whether the lot appeared to be a part of an adjacent occupied building.
- 2.) Whether the lot appeared to be maintained.

Of the total number of corner lots in the Core Data Area, 40% of the corner lots were vacant.



■ Total Lots ■ Total Vacant ■ Total Corner Lots ■ Total Vacant Corner Lots

Housing

As of the 2010 Census, the study area had 358 total housing units. This count included two, three, and multi-family buildings. The number is a decline of 48 units from 2000. Based on ongoing demolitions and demographic trends, that total is likely to continue trending down.

The effects of long-term disinvestment are clear, though they vary from block to block. Beautiful historic homes, fully restored, sit alongside those still in decay. Vacant lots pepper the area, residential sites from which the residences have been removed.

In the north part of the study area are the Henry and Gammon Houses. To the south is a very modest commercial district where the only retail is a convenience store. To the west is The Dome, a historic school which now houses the Global Impact STEM academy.

Vacancies

The consulting team conducted a house by house analysis of the study area, evaluating 399 parcels. Those with buildings were ranked between 1 and 5. 5 represented a building in good condition without apparent building or property maintenance code violations. A rating of 1 indicated a structure which appeared to be uninhabitable.

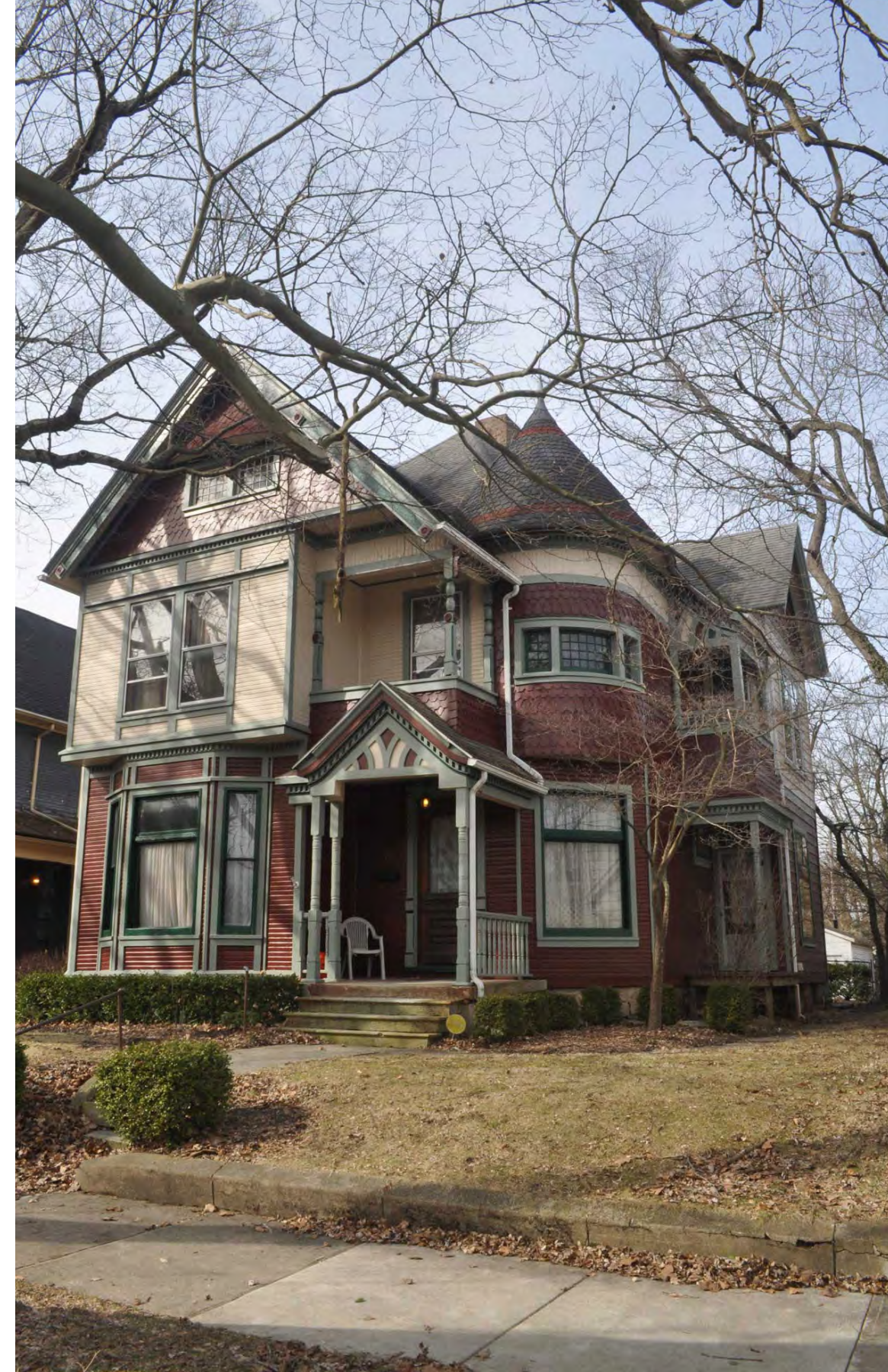
Of the total number of parcels reviewed, only 225 buildings out of 279 appeared occupied based on exterior inspection. Further analysis revealed that some of these structures were, in fact, occupied. Such mislabeling tells a story in itself, due to such factors as:

- Piecemeal rehabilitation by owner-occupant
- Income constrained homeowner unable to afford repairs
- Renter with an absentee landlord

Ultimately it was concluded that 43.6% of properties in the study area can be considered vacant or unoccupiable.

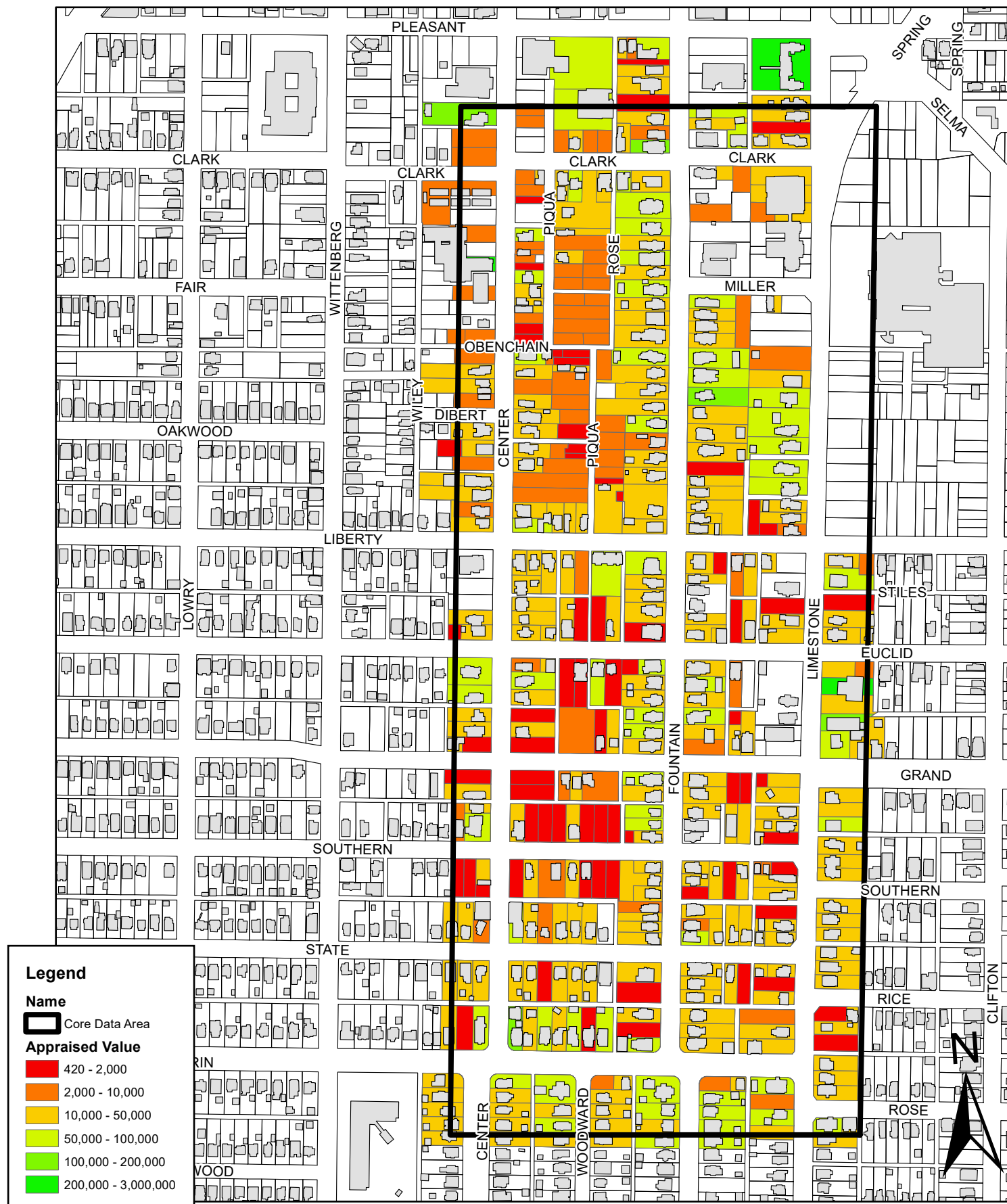
Of those, corner lot vacancy was the most concerning. Of 90 corner lots, 40% or 36 were empty.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



ENGAGED NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Springfield, Ohio

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Property Values

The consulting team collected assessed property values from the Clark County Auditor to create a map of property values for 2018. Among the key findings:

- 149 Parcels (33%) valued less than \$10,000
- 229 Parcels (51%) valued between \$10,000 and \$50,000
- Only 71 parcels (16%) valued higher than \$50,000

Note: 72 parcels do not have tax information due to association with non-profit or government entities.

These **low property values are a significant problem for the future of the area.** Appraised values can be tied not only to physical inspection but also to values available through public records. Low valuations can lead to a serious financing gap. Homeowners looking to renovate and occupy existing structures often cannot obtain mortgages at sufficient valuation.

As example, from one of the public engagement sessions: a property owner purchased a house for \$10,000 and invested \$75,000 of private funds to rehab most of the house. To finish the job and reclaim some of the monies invested, they sought a mortgage. The bank, however, appraised the property at only \$35,000, making it financially impossible for the property owner.

While the methodology of bank appraisals is regulated and beyond the scope of this study, they, along with publicly established valuations, will be an important indicator of neighborhood change as this plan is implemented.

Purchase Price:	\$10,000
Rehab Cost:	+ \$75,000
Total Invested	\$85,000
Loan Based On Bank Appraisal:	\$30,000
Financing Gap:	- \$55,000

GOVERNMENT ACTION

CODE ENFORCEMENT AND TAX COLLECTION

Recommendation: Prioritize Property Tax Collection

Presently the County does not consistently collect delinquent property tax and/or levy liens on properties falling into disrepair. This is a limitation on actions that might otherwise move the study area forward. Such delinquencies and levies, if pursued, would make it possible to bring foreclosure actions against property owners, potentially freeing parcels for transfer into other hands.

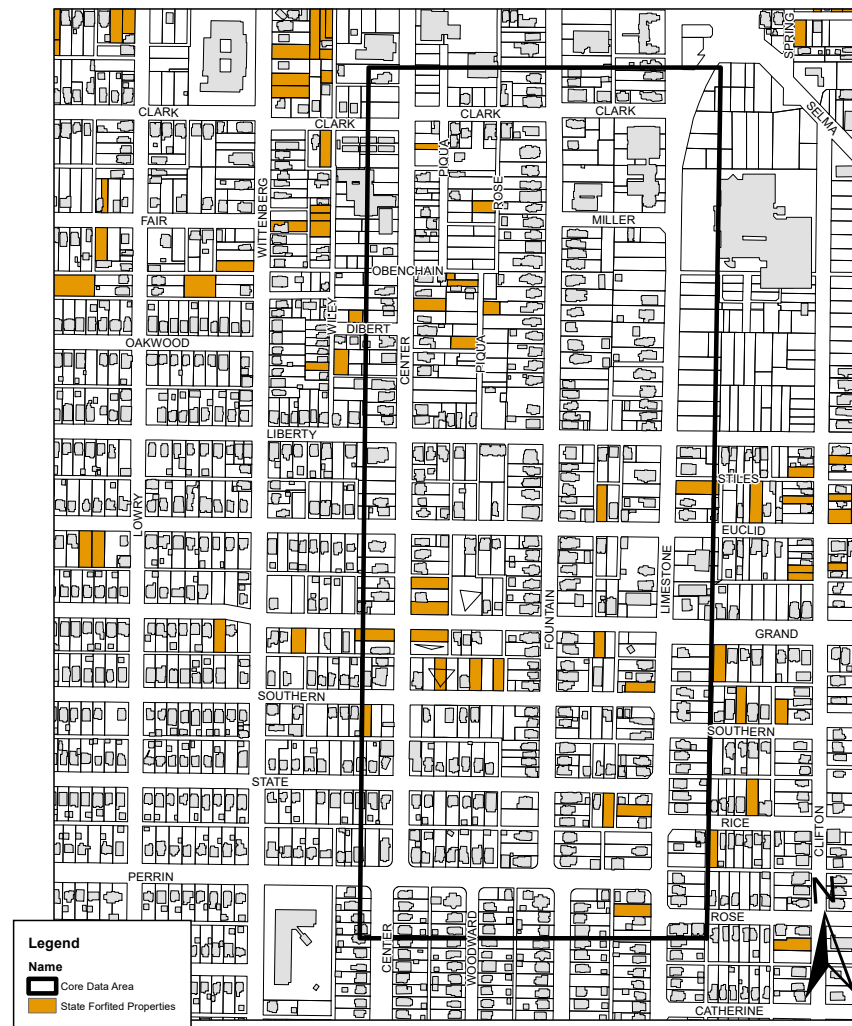
Current policy is that the Auditor and Treasurer only bring tax foreclosures if a buyer is identified prior to the initiation of such action. This may occasionally result in passing a single property into the hands of a willing redeveloper. It more usually however holds property – and the surrounding neighborhood – captive to disinvestment.

This practice does little to incentivize existing delinquent owners to fix or dispose of their properties and buildings.

Substantial reform is recommended. Taxes are a primary revenue stream, since only with adequate resource can a community maintain and advance. Failing to collect them, or act against those who fail to pay, starves the city and county of resource which might be allocated to the subject area as much needed reinvestment.



Engaged Study Area - State Forfeited Properties



Recommendation: Strengthen Code Enforcement

The consulting team conducted a deep dive into the city's code enforcement program, concluding that reform should be a top priority here too.

Even a dedicated code enforcement officer will be rendered ineffective by lack of procedures and policy guidance. Feedback from stakeholders revealed a historic reticence about firm action and consequent procedural confusion. Stakeholders made a clear request for more rigor.

An example is code complaints by tenants. Current policy requires the property owner to be point of contact for follow up on violations reported by a renter. Thus, if an occupant reports unsafe conditions, the code enforcement officer has no means of verifying the complaint unless the landlord responds.

While this could be viewed as support for property rights, it might also be a failure to support tenant rights and good property maintenance. Moreover, a typical landlord response to these complaints is eviction for the renter reporting violations.

Code analysis and revisions might draw on best practices from other cities, including Columbus. Revisions could also be applied to city ordinance. For example, Section 701.03, which deals with Landlord-Tenant Rights and Responsibilities, could be updated and strengthened to become effective as part of a code enforcement overall.

Recommendation: Designate a Code Enforcement Point Person

Currently, the city houses code enforcement under the Community Development division. Enforcement staff not only shares responsibilities for citing and managing zoning code infractions but also staffs various zoning boards and the Landmarks Commission.

Inevitably this means that code enforcement can never quite receive undivided attention.

It is recommended that the job of property and building code enforcement be handled by one full-time person with sole responsibility to enforce code and shepherd violators through the system.



CODE ENFORCEMENT AND TAX COLLECTION



Recommendation: Introduce Opportunities for Early Resolution

Mediation: Many owners are either unaware of the extent of violations or to some degree unable to correct easily. A mediation process could be both informative and helpful for those who wish to take positive action. At present the City mediation processes focus largely on landlord tenant disputes. A more structured approach with a spotlight on housing could facilitate property improvements over time. It would also allow the City to initially take a role as helper and counselor instead of immediately being seen as punitive.

Establish a Housing Court: Clark County's system does not have a court dedicated to housing issues. Without one, property violations are heard by judges who may not have experience and familiarity with development and/or the code being enforced.

As recommendations herein are implemented, it could be anticipated that more violations will progress to court. An established process ready to review these cases sends a message that the city and county are serious about code enforcement, while also potentially expediting judicial review.

Progressively, threat of court action will help motivate property owners to improve neglected buildings.

Foreclose and Transfer Worst Offenders into City/County/Land Bank Control: As noted, present properties are only foreclosed if a willing buyer exists. While this prevents the buildup of a large backlog of unwanted parcels, it lets persistent offenders slide and potentially significant buildings continue to deteriorate.

The county should become more proactive in acquiring existing buildings at risk of demolition by neglect, working with Springfield's code

enforcement point person to identify potential acquisitions.

The main goal is that city, county, and land bank facilitate the transfer of properties to an owner who can improve them and help move forward the area overall.

Revise and Enhance the Nuisance Ordinance: In the past twenty years Springfield's current nuisance ordinance has been used only once, on a derelict book publishing warehouse downtown. In that instance, a fire rendered the building unsafe and a threat to a public right-of-way.

Yet stakeholders cite many occasions when, in their view, nuisance should be addressed.

The consulting team recommends the ordinance be updated and made applicable to a wider array of offenses while also enabling collaboration between code enforcement, fire, and police departments. For example, the fire department regularly inspects buildings con-



sidered commercial per the Ohio Building Code. If fire violations are found in conjunction with those from the police, it could allow the city to act against repeat problem properties, especially in multi-families over three units.

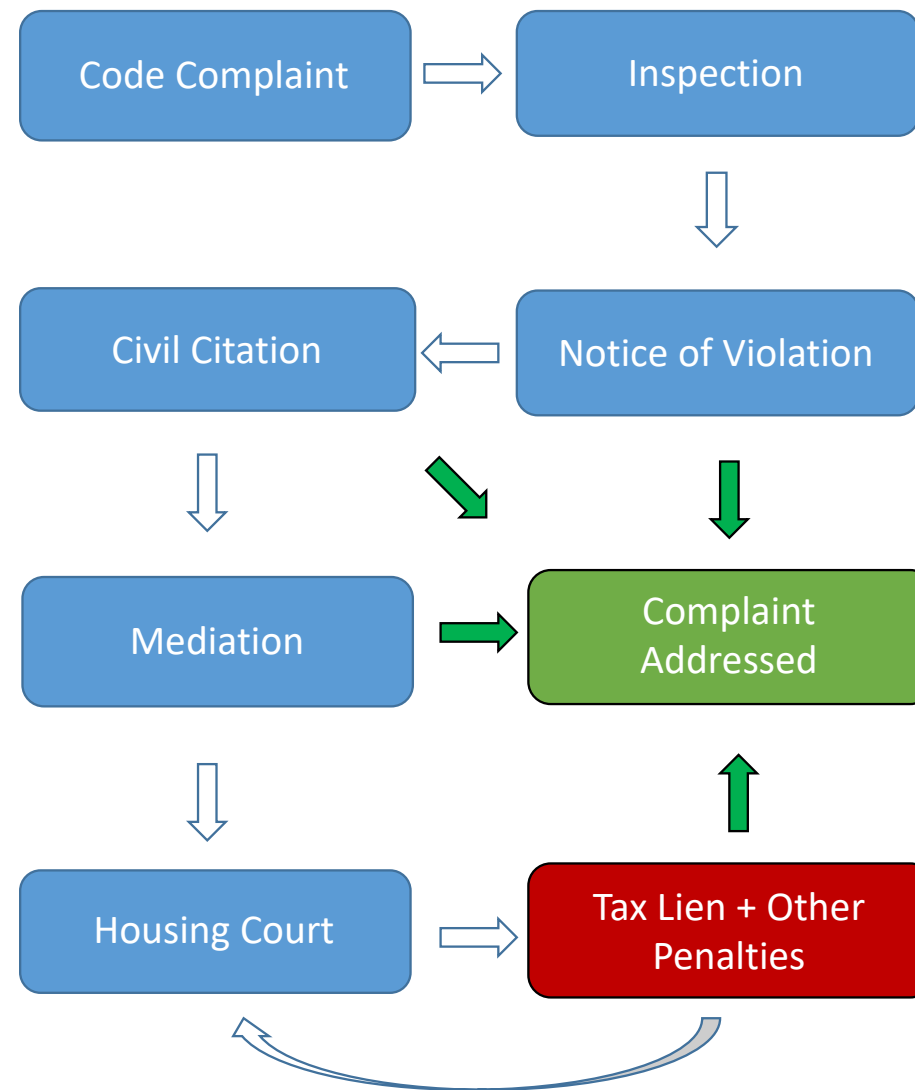
Recommendation: Provide Compliance Tools and Support for Cooperative Property Owners

There is always a tension between carrot and stick regarding compliance issues. Many of the recommendations herein involve better enforcement and more "pain" for property maintenance violators. That's the stick.

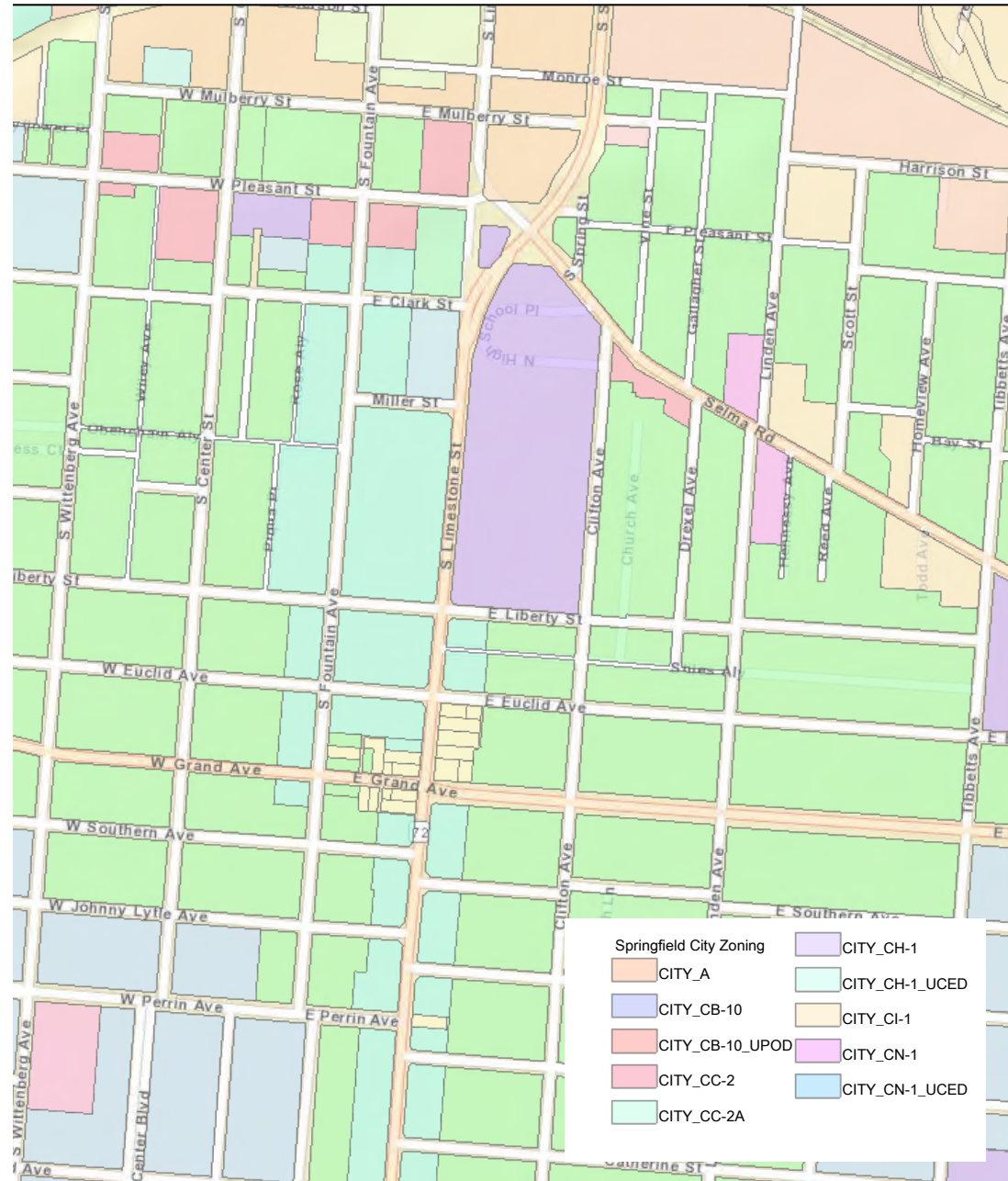
The consulting team also recommends carrots for property owners who wish to make repairs. These could be based on the goals of the city's housing rehabilitation program and might include:

- Income-based assistance
- Connections to organizations which can help
- Home-ownership incentives
- Tax abatements for seniors wanting to age in place

As example, a city program that has been very successful is "Mow-to-own", beneficial to adjacent or proximate owners of vacant property. Might a similar program be established to facilitate a transfer for nearby owners who may volunteer time to maintain a derelict building?



ZONING REFORM



Recommendation: Reform Zoning to Enable Change

An initial evaluation of the city's zoning regulations finds that a majority of the study area is zoned adequately for present conditions. However, the code poses challenges to future opportunities also important to the plan.

Below are four core zoning recommendations to facilitate opportunity in South Fountain and beyond:

Enable limited corner commercial uses: Most of the study area is zoned residential RS-8 or RM-12.

There is limited commercial zoning except for some CN-2 Commercial, along Grand from South Fountain to Limestone. Overall however zoning is neither well-defined nor expansive enough to encourage the revitalization of older commercial uses at this or other key intersections. CN-2 zoning is adequate in this area however it is not contiguous and does not include parts of the NE corner of Grand and S. Fountain. The consulting team recommends that the city review the zoning at this section and potentially rezone the remaining parcels of the corner to consolidate CN-2 zoning in this area.

While residential zoning should remain in place it is recommended that it be amplified with language added to both RS-8 and RM-12 to allow for corner retail as a conditional use. This revision could be made to support neighborhood scale, pedestrian-oriented uses that activate underutilized on-site parking as outdoor dining and other people-focused amenities.

Conditions for this use could include historic importance of a building or a site that was previously commercial, as well as other factors such as impacts on parking, noise, circulation and prospective use.

Well thought out, allowing these uses will help integrate neighborhood services and amenities into the community and support interest from regular and occasional visitors.

Diversify allowable housing development: Historic communities often center on main streets, commonly with mixed use buildings including residences above storefronts. Behind these, single family homes, small apartments, four-plexes, townhomes, and other housing typologies are integrated into a textured mix.

Zoning focusing primarily on the development of single-family detached housing has been the primary vehicle for dismantling this system. The application of this focus to historic communities such as the study area has promoted decline instead of enabling success. Previously useful and permitted building types are rendered illegal and therefore obsolete. Populations thin out as permitted housing types dwindle.

ZONING REFORM

It is recommended that Springfield revise code provisions to allow the gradual reintroduction of more diversity. Provisions for townhomes already exist, and there is potential in RM-12 for Accessory Dwelling Units as provisional uses. Adding this typology to RS-8, would further open affordability options for current homeowners while also adding more residents to the neighborhood.

Additionally, the regulation for accessory units in both zones could expand to include additional building typologies such as the historic “Granny Flat” style outbuilding.

Evaluate residential lot sizes and building setbacks and adjust zoning as needed to ensure conformity: The consulting team did a sweep of lot sizes and zoning conformity throughout the district. While most buildings and lots conform to their respective zoning designations, there are outliers. For example, lots and setbacks along Center Street were found to be narrower than current zoning allows.

While such deviations are common in an older built environment, their mismatch to current provisions can create contemporary problems.

Such regulation makes it harder for owners of certain historic properties to obtain loans for purchase or rehabilitation. Lending underwriters, looking to a formulaic assessment of risk, may view otherwise immaterial nonconformance as adding jeopardy.

The city is encouraged to review zoning to ensure that all provisions fit the realities of the neighborhood and to not prohibit inconsequential non-conformities. While grandfathering would apply to what is currently built on a site, any expansion or modifications of non-conforming structures would require variances. Opportunities for new infill construction on these sites could also be affected.

Remove or reform parking requirements for the CN-2, RS-8, and RM-12 zoning areas: Currently, these are 3 required parking spaces per 1,000 sq. ft for retail and 2 per unit of single-family. It’s the same for multi-family units over 800 Square feet in size. Units under 800 square feet are required to have 1.5 spaces per unit.

Parking requirements can be a considerable detriment to new development. Many zoning codes require the creation of a specific set of dedicated parking stalls on site. Springfield is no different. While off-site locations are allowed, they must remain within the same zone, and code calls for 2 spaces per residential unit and 3 per 1,000 square feet of commercial.

These are overdue for reform.

The most radical standard for parking restructuring is to eliminate all requirements. Urban thinkers argue that requirements are an invis-

ible tax through the costs of construction and the lost value of land dedicated to that passive use. Removing mandated spaces eliminates that burden, allowing the market to dictate parking needs. However, accepting such a bold assertion is a bridge too far for many communities.

There are many less uncompromising strategies which still serve to reduce parking burden:

1. Expand current 300’ parking adjacency zone to 1200’ to allow additional parking lots to count
2. Consider on-street parking toward requirements
3. Develop shared parking ratios for mixed-use and buildings with users across multiple dayparts
4. Reduce the parking requirements for historic areas and downtown adjacent neighborhoods



Recommendation: Establish Construction Guidelines Which Define the Desirable

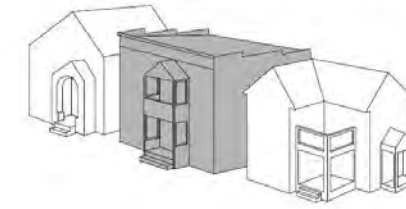
Developers often choose opportunities based at least in part on the ease of navigating the regulatory environment. The more restrictive a zoning code, the more likely it is to discourage potential projects.

Yet often a city’s most important tool in determining the character of its neighborhoods, is zoning. Regrettably, modern codes, with a detailed emphasis on such elements as yard setbacks, height limits, and floor area ratio sometimes define the details but don’t clarify the vision.

If a zoning code is to entice new development compatible with existing historic structures and support the character of an area, then a look back to the requirements of the era in which those buildings were constructed could be useful.

Such requirements should not be onerous or overly regulatory but illustrative and focused on fundamental form and function.

2. Buildings shall be architecturally oriented to the street and the main entrance shall be located on the street facade.



Consider



Avoid

Milford, OH Zoning Code

Sometimes it really was better in the old days.

A first recommendation is to limit the development of garages to the rear of a building. Setting garages back, often fully to the rear of a house, creates more prominence for the front of the building, and allows a better relationship of the main structure to the street. The alley network is an advantageous, predominant form in the study area.

Historically zoning codes required front entrances and glazing minimums to facilitate an active street front. A minimum 30% glass on the first floor both brightens the home and allows a level of transparency that can contribute to a safer environment, showcasing residential vitality and putting eyes easily on the street. Front porches could be a required frontage for new infill development, conforming to the bulk of surrounding homes.

Zoning can regulate types of frontage, defined well and divided into typologies, offering a selection of allowable frontage types.

Zoning revisions also could accommodate the prospect of new Mixed-Use buildings, built to accommodate amenity businesses on the first floor, with residential or professional office uses above. These might be no taller than three to four stories and could be architecturally dynamic – indicating that a bright, creative future for the neighborhood is dawning.

There also may be a few existing buildings in the area that could house commercial activity and, if well defined, this could be a permitted use. In addition to large historic homes along South Limestone which could be adapted into offices or retail businesses, a few single-story commercial buildings also present opportunities.

One such building, for example, on the northeast corner of South Fountain and Grand, could be converted into a café / coffee shop, personal service business, or retail establishment. Such conversions, when creatively done, can re-energize a neighborhood but the first step is ensuring that these uses are legal and thus achievable without a fight.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Recommendation: Favor Renovation But Simplify the Process

The Value of Historic Standards: It's easy to agree that historic districts need standards. District-wide criteria ensure a minimum level of quality. People who invest in their home don't see their asset value diminished due to non-compliant or poorly renovated properties nearby.

Moreover, numerous studies confirm that property values in districts regulated by local standards consistently fare better than those in the rest of a local market. A recent study of Nashville's historic districts, for example, showed that values for single family houses in Historic Overlay Districts rose significantly above those in the rest of the city. Historic Districts also tend to have more owner-occupied houses and a longer term of residency – two aspects of great potential value to Springfield.



However, acknowledgment of the positive aspects of owning a home in Springfield's historic districts is poor comfort to those who have found the historic review process, even for minor repairs, invasive or onerous. These stewards of Springfield's heritage, purchasing and/or renovating challenging historic property, too frequently cite local regulations as a severe burden.

Currently, any property owner in the historic district must defend any proposed work which changes the appearance of a property – no

matter how small the scope, via a personal appearance at a monthly meeting of the Landmarks Commission. Members of the commission are dedicated volunteers with the best long-term interests of the district in mind, but such hearings have been widely characterized as adversarial and unnecessarily expansive.

If historic standards, or the process for obtaining approvals, are too onerous, especially for small projects, then renovation is made less likely. The tricky balance is between rules that benefit invested homeowners and the need for those to be NOT an impediment to future investment.

Allow staff to approve minor work: Re-painting; replacement and/or painting of porch trim, railings, decking, stair treads & risers; re-siding with fiber cement board or permitted materials to match

existing wood siding; window replacement with pre-approved window types; and fencing and/or miscellaneous site-work are all items which, in most ordinary circumstances can be reviewed more expeditiously.

The Springfield Guidelines for Historic Properties are thorough and graphically detailed. While they state that city Staff has the authority

**"I was in for a single thing, and they wanted to review everything else going on with the house."
- Applicant**

to issue Certificates of Appropriateness for certain work, they also limit those approvals to repairs "with no alteration or change in appearance".

This means projects as minimal as painting a dormer a different color requires an applicant to appear before the commission in order to proceed.

Unlike such public hearings, city staff (and/or outsourced consultants) could meet with applicants at mutually convenient times and the review process could be expeditious. Such a revision to process will not only reduce stress for homeowners but encourage improvements now being held in abeyance due to unwieldy procedures.

Staff should make recommendations to the Landmarks Commission: When Certificates of Appropriateness must be approved by the Landmarks Commission, recommendations should first be vetted by, and then forwarded from, staff.



This additional step would speed both applications and meetings, generating readily approvable submissions and more predictable outcomes. Staff recommendations could be issued to the applicant prior to the Commission hearing. Applicants then would have the opportunity to refine any problematic aspects of proposed work and ensure that historic guidelines are met.

Pre-approve key materials and products: While each home in the South Fountain Historic District may have unique detailing, there are myriad typical building components in widespread use. Pre-approval of some of these would lead to expedited staff review and more predictability.

These materials, building elements, and products can include:

- Windows
- Shutters
- Siding
- Porch railings
- Fencing

Consider Approval of Materials/Products Not Pure Restoration Replacement: This is an important component of balancing the desire for standards with the need for action and affordability. Such a revision could make renovations more feasible financially and forestall applicant claims that high cost is the reason for lack of repairs and upgrades.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

An example of this is windows. The guidelines state that wood windows on the primary façade must be replaced with new wood windows (once the justification for full replacement has been made). Wood windows are frequently more expensive to install and require more maintenance over time, thereby imposing an undue burden. Certain aluminum and aluminum-clad wood windows are now commonly used in high caliber restoration projects and could be considered appropriate.

Recommendation: Reallocate Land Bank Funding to Stabilization/Rehabilitation

Clark County Landbank has historically focused on building demolition to eliminate blight. While this removes derelict buildings, it also creates obvious gaps throughout the community. Unless filled with new construction, this replaces one form of scar with another.

More recently, the Land Bank has begun the rehabilitation of individual properties, a welcome reorientation. In an area with a pronounced and fundamentally lovely historic character, it's important to preserve



buildings unless they are demonstrably beyond repair. Many of these structures, even in a state of dilapidation, have unique intrinsic value, making them worth reinvestment.

That historic fabric sets the community apart from many others. To protect remaining community character, it is important that where possible the Land Bank opt for salvation over destruction.

“Simply put: the vacant and dilapidated properties in and around the district are dragging down property values throughout the district.”
- Stakeholder Interview Participant

Recommendation: Become a Certified Local Government

Springfield, Ohio might wish to apply to become a Certified Local Government. <https://www.nps.gov/clg>

“This is the goal of the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program: Local, State, and Federal governments work together in the Federal Preservation Program to help communities save the irreplaceable historic character of places.”

Springfield is already performing some functions of a CLG:

- It has established a Landmarks Commission;
- It enforces historic preservation guidelines; and
- It can facilitate public participation in local efforts including assistance with nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

By becoming a CLG, Springfield can become eligible for funding for “rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies, to name a few.” In fact, the State of Ohio is required to give 10% of its allocation of the Federal Historic Preservation Fund to qualified CLGs in Ohio.

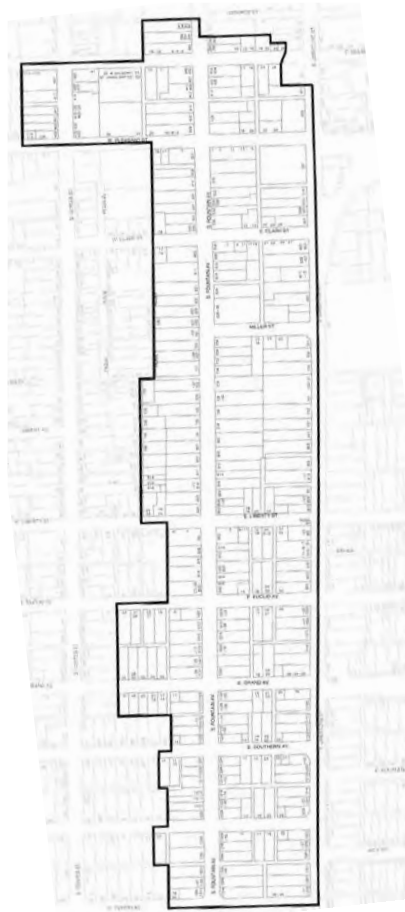
In the past Springfield did not have the capacity to seek and maintain a CLG status but now, with renewed energy and strategic management, Springfield may be well-positioned to seize the benefits of a Certified Local Government.

SPRINGFIELD REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Among the architectural styles present in the neighborhood are excellent examples of Greek Revival, Italianate, French Second Empire, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman bungalow residential architecture. A number of American Four-Square houses and simple vernacular gabled buildings exist as well. Finally, the district includes a couple of apartment buildings built in the early 1900s which have a strong Craftsman influence. (For a description and photographs of each of these styles and representative building types, please see Section II.)

The neighborhood boasts a large number of outstanding original or restored porches that are significant to its overall late 19th century character. Houses are constructed of either frame or brick, and are 2 to 2-1/2 stories tall. Original wood trim, carved or sawn into a variety of shapes and found on wall surfaces, cornices and porches, is in good supply. The Queen Anne and French Second Empire homes, in particular, have distinctive roofs and several retain their original decorative slate or shingles. In addition to residential buildings, the neighborhood has scattered institutional buildings (a fire station and churches) and an early gas station.

Over the past 25 years, the South Fountain district has attracted many residents who are interested in maintaining or even restoring the historic architecture that the neighborhood exhibits. Through attention to detail and a lot of elbow grease, some of the area's most spectacular high style buildings have been brought back to life. The neighborhood provides many good examples of appropriate rehabilitation treatments.



[MAP 1] South Fountain Preservation Area

SPRINGFIELD GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC PROPERTIES



FINANCING

DEVELOP PATIENT CAPITAL

lending that makes an impact Ohio's CDFI Industry

2005-2016

\$975,127,903
total amount of CDFI lending

17,240
jobs created
or retained

\$4.9B
of investments leveraged in
Ohio neighborhoods since 2005

5:1
every dollar of CDFI capital
leveraged five dollars in
private investment

**LENDING IN
80 OHIO COUNTIES**

0.9%
average default rate for
a CDFI in Ohio*

3,783 Loans Made

Business Micro Loans	2,572
Housing Developer Loans	707
Consumer Loans	444
Housing Mortgage Loans	60

36,304
housing units
financed

Source: All data but default rate data were provided by the Opportunity Finance Network, 2005-2016. This data source includes most but not all of the community development financial institutions (CDFIs) operating in Ohio. The analysis focuses on the state's 18 CDFI loan funds.

*Average default rate based on 2014-2016 data from reporting CDFIs.

Community Revitalization Cincinnati Development Fund



CDFI investment in Cincinnati's Over-The-Rhine neighborhood has rebuilt the city's cultural center.

Business Creation Village Capital Corporation



The Youngstown Business Incubator was recognized as the #1 high impact incubation program in North America—it was recently expanded through a loan from a CDFI.

Healthy Food Access Finance Fund



CDFI funding made Campbell's Market possible - the first grocery store in Vinton County since 2013.

Recommendation: Create or Partner with Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

Creating great communities comes from the hard work and dedication of stakeholders and leaders. However, these efforts alone are rarely enough.

Revitalization of a community takes money. That's where a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) could help. A CDFI is a non-profit financial organization able to take on traditionally risky projects by pooling existing loans and leveraging potential tax credits.

A successful regional example is the Cincinnati Development Fund (CDF), <https://www.cindevfund.org/>, which partners with investors and local banks, utilizing Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) requirements to raise monies and pooling resources to provide gap financing for a variety of projects. Since formation in 1988, CDF has invested in rehabilitation and construction of new housing, commercial space, mixed-use space, and institutional and non-profit projects.

CDF provides patient capital and gap financing for projects deemed too risky by more conventional lenders. The nature of such financing allows CDF to apply flexible underwriting standards.

A local CDFI could assist with gap financing for owner occupied renovations, support low down payments for new homeowners and offer predevelopment funds for new projects. Depending on how it is constituted, and financed, it may be able to make grants as well as loans.

A truly local CDFI is both partner and negotiator with the city, looking to leverage and maximize the potential of tax abatements, Community Development Block Grants, Tax Credit funding, Heritage Funds and Department of Transportation allocations. It's the community's funding expert and advocate.

The consulting team recommends that the lenders active in Springfield, as well as the city and other stakeholders, coordinate on a Community Development Financial Institution.

This might be one unique to Springfield, or an extension of CDF, which has expressed a willingness to talk. There are many benefits to working with an existing organization with logistical and operational experience. Such a collaboration allows the community to hit the ground running in terms of project development and capabilities.

In addition to working with CDF another resource may be Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which has a Cincinnati office and various useful programs.

<https://www.lisc.org/>

GAP FINANCING

Recommendation: Create Pathways to Homeownership

The task is to identify opportunities for programs and partnerships where existing residents, either owners or renters, can invest in their neighborhood and become stakeholders in the process. Part of that is to find means whereby homeownership can be made more possible.

63% of housing in the study area is rental, including single family, duplexes, and larger multi dwelling units. Condition varies widely. Qualified low-income owners might potentially purchase low priced properties, only to then be stuck with massive repairs to a property which will not appraise for invested value.

Yet what the study area needs most is more invested homeowners. Ownership, however, might be just the first task. Homes will have to be improved and maintained. It is recommended that a comprehensive homesteading program of some type be developed. The focus of such an organization could be to develop pathways to allow and encourage low-income renters to transition into property owners.

Regionally Cincinnati has such a program <http://hurccincy.org/>.

Homeowner Assistance Tools

Loans: The city, CDC, CDFI, or other entity can develop a revolving loan fund that can help struggling homeowners with repairs.

Grants: Funding can be developed to incentivize certain communi-

ty goals through grant programs. For example, if the city wanted to encourage the creation of more parking via access through an alley or driveway, or trees on private property, a grant program could be created to reward that. Other infrastructure grants could tackle lead piping, storm-water runoff, conversions of multi-unit buildings to single-family and so on.

Tax Abatements: These are tax incentives that homeowners can use to lower their yearly tax bill thus making some repairs more affordable over time. The city can develop its own tax abatement program or utilize some existing programs allowed by the state. Some of those could include:

- o Owner occupied rehab
- o Age in place improvements
- o Emergency repairs
- o Senior Homeowner
- o Tenure of Ownership

Community Reinvestment Area (CRA): The State of Ohio allows municipalities to designate areas as a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA). The Engaged Study area is in one of those, the recently expanded South Limestone Area. The tax exemption is for up to 10-15 years depending on the project. Projects range from renovation work to new construction.

Case Study: Working In Neighborhoods

For over four decades, Working in Neighborhoods (WIN) has advanced the cause of community revitalization in neighborhoods throughout Cincinnati. Founded in 1978, this faith-based organization focuses on several programs for community help. One is assistance for first-time homebuyers; the second is developing and rehabbing housing in disadvantaged communities. The organization also focuses on training residents for community leadership.

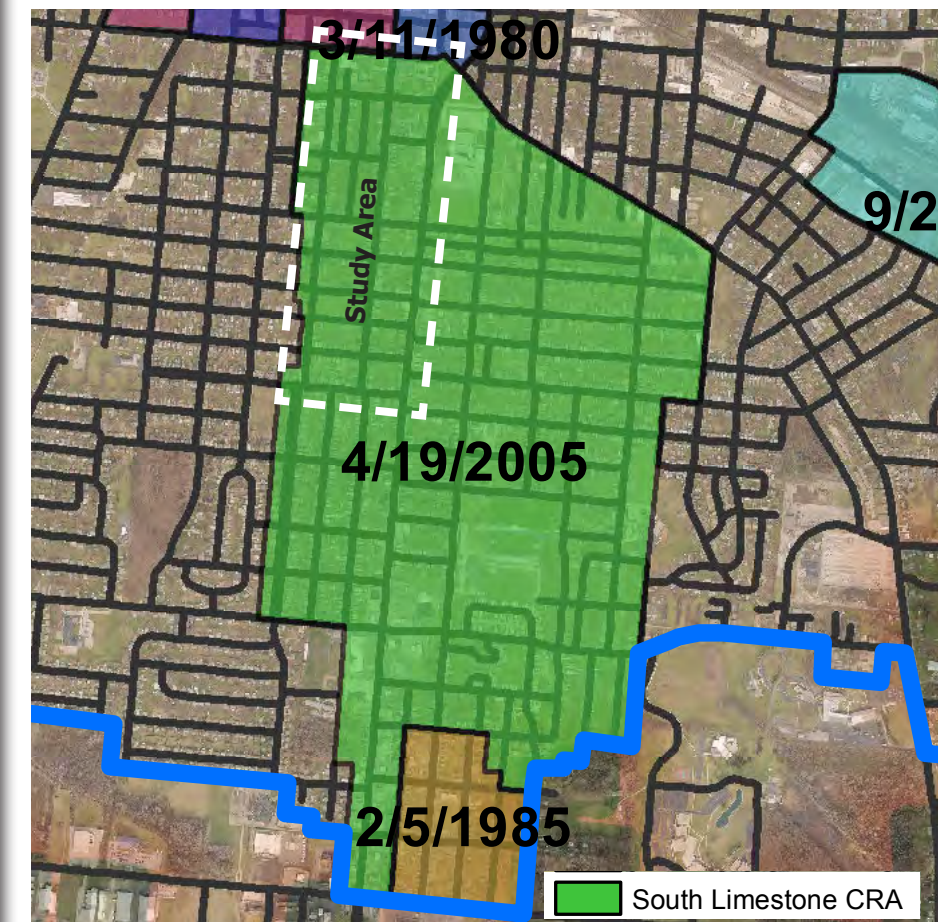


To date, WIN has invested over \$20 million in several neighborhoods across Cincinnati. Mostly in housing development and investing in first-time homebuyer programs. WIN has saved 1,906 families from foreclosure and boasts a 95% homeowner retention rate. The organization has built or renovated over 166 homes, all of which were sold to first-time homebuyers. While scattered throughout several neighborhoods, the group primarily works in College Hill

and South Cumminsville. Energy sustainability has become a core component of WIN's approach to housing construction. Since 2008, all of their home rehabs have been high-energy efficient homes.

While housing rehab is a significant component of the group's focus, their social mission is just as essential and crucial to developing sustainable neighborhoods. WIN has several programs that help prepare families to purchase their first homes, through classes and individual counseling. Programs include a focus on buyer credit, how to look for a home, managing debt, and basic home repair, among others. WIN teaches over 300 families to purchase their first home every year.

This Community Development Corporation would serve as a good role model for Springfield and the Engaged Neighborhood focus area. WIN's focus on empowering existing residents and developing new housing has served as a testament of success for Cincinnati, its neighborhoods, and the organization. The consulting team believes this approach would do well here.



90% DRAFT

DEVELOPMENT

ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Case Study: NECIC: Mansfield North End



The North End Community Improvement Collaborative is a group dedicated to improving the North End of Mansfield Ohio. The 501(c)3 CDC could serve as a guide for Springfield.

Founded in 2006 by residents, NECIC is primarily focused on empowering entrepreneurs, assisting elderly and tackling food deserts within its neighborhood boundaries. The CDC also hosts an African American Leadership Initiative program that works to ensure success through networking, connecting and inspiring participants. A program called Temp2Higher focuses on workforce training and job placement.

<https://www.necic-ohio.org/>

Housing is another core component of the CDC. While its efforts largely have been on targeted demolitions; it has also coordinated strategic land purchases to keep properties out of predatory hands. NECIC's recently updated Vision Plan calls for developing senior housing and exploration of alternative housing forms such as tiny homes under the influence of the Cass Community Social Service Tiny Homes Project in Detroit.

This CDC serves as a potential guide for a future similar organization operating within the focus area. Efforts for equity and empowerment coupled with the more difficult task of housing stabilization are powerful forces for change.

<p>CDCs revitalize distressed communities by building, rehabilitating, and preserving affordable, safe homes and rentals for Ohio families, senior citizens and veterans. Housing development and counseling help Ohio families and communities become stable.</p>	<p>CDCs provide education and asset building tools so low and moderate income families can become financially independent, improve credit, reduce debt and foreclosure risk, and contribute to community stability.</p>	
<p>Community economic development creates jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities, builds individual and community wealth, and attracts capital to disinvested communities.</p>	<p>Through local engagement, residents can take ownership of their community and are empowered to make lasting changes through grass roots efforts.</p>	<p>CDCs strengthen local food systems, which improve access to healthy foods and benefits the community, its economy, and the environment.</p> <p><small>Ohio Policy Institute</small></p>



Recommendation: Create a Community Development Corporation (CDC)

The South Fountain Historic District is more than a collection of Victorian and Colonial Revival architecture. It's one of the most interesting and important areas of the city.

There is pressing need for a leadership organization to coordinate development and activation in the study area and to the west. This would ensure a cohesive development strategy that can focus on the entire neighborhood, not just a limited number of blocks. A formally organized community-led Community Development Corporation (CDC) would likely have the greatest effect in this role.

This is a community of strong leaders. But each of those volunteers has full time duties elsewhere. A CDC, with professional leadership will have the clarity of focus and a full-time commitment to moving the area forward.

Increasing our community development capacity is "essential for property development and valuation."

- Workshop #2 Participant

Development of a CDC could happen organically, building on existing organizations and stakeholders, or a new organization created to start with the implementation of this plan. The team recommends that the community continue conversation about the most effective structure.

The Ohio CDC Association <https://www.ohiocdc.org/> offers a wealth of information about how to proceed along with informational and operational resources.

The State of Ohio, through its Development Services Agency, also offers information and possible funding. https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_cdc.htm

Funding is essential because, for success, the CDC will need operational staff on at least a part-time basis. Volunteer CDCs do exist but have limited capacity as volunteers are always time constrained. Real impact usually requires a staff person regularly attentive to advancing the community's goals.

Once established it is recommended that the new CDC look for actionable wins. Rehabilitating existing buildings is a likely first step, but the construction of new housing should be a primary goal as soon as resource will allow.



DEVELOP INFILL



Recommendation: Determine the Starting Point for Development

At present, due to low valuations, there is little possibility of financing new housing in the study area. But there is an abundance of properties ripe for rehab. By choosing a focus area and beginning to tackle these, the CDC can signal emerging momentum, bring deteriorated properties back to life one by one and attract homeowners for whom self-performing the renovation process is too much.

The challenges of renovating large homes are numerous anywhere. In the South Fountain Historic District, the poor condition of many properties around the district pose an even greater challenge. Whether historic or more modern, well-maintained properties throughout the district keep company with those in poor and deteriorating condition, suppressing the value of everything.

It is to be expected that in the early stages these homes will be sold for less than the cost to acquire and renovate. Financing must accommodate this reality.

Gradually however a growing number of homes sold for rising prices will positively affect appraisal comps which will, in turn, ease lending restraints – not just for the CDC but for all.

Infill new construction is an obvious future step. As values rise, and the city develops new guidelines for infill construction, development interest in the community should emerge. One of the neighborhood's biggest problems – the large quantity of vacant lots – turns then from challenge to opportunity.

Through partnership with a CDFI, the CDC may pursue new infill construction at earlier opportunity. If adequate funds can be secured, there is a market for new residential housing within the study area.

As the community progresses it will become more likely that commercial developers will begin to take an interest in the area. The CDC could cultivate partnerships to encourage development of vacant land by providing access to resources – including financial - and guidance on how to develop within the framework of the historic district.

DEVELOP INFILL: RESIDENTIAL

Recommendation: Expand Development Efforts as Resources and Partnerships Allow

Single-Family Homes: Many neighborhood homeowners have invested time, effort, and financial resource into these homes. Yet, overall property values remain depressed. Moreover, some 40% of the properties in the study area are vacant lots, vacant buildings, or buildings that appear to be unfit for occupancy.

Yet, there is anecdotal evidence that people would move into the neighborhood if new or renovated homes were available. During stakeholder interviews several participants mentioned knowing people who want a walkable, urban neighborhood close to downtown. This echoes national trends, especially trend preferences of the increasingly important millennial work force.

However, many of those potential home buyers are not also renovators. They seek a home completely ready for occupancy.

At present there are more than 120 vacant lots in the core data area. These are designated on the map here, with a sub designation of Core Areas #1 and #2.

Yet very few new homes have been built in the neighborhood in recent decades. While rehabilitation of existing homes certainly will continue, new homes are also essential. Available for sale at reasonable prices, these will attract a new type of buyers to the area. They will begin to fill in the many missing teeth of vacant lots, and signal rising momentum. This in turn will help raise market values throughout the area.

"When I got a job in Springfield I had to live in temporary housing for 8 months because there wasn't good new construction housing available."

– Professional transferred to Springfield.



The Community Development Corporation (CDC) could work with the City, the Land Bank, and the new Community Development Fund,

to acquire properties in focused areas and secure financing to build new homes. Gap financing (the monies required to fill the gap between the cost of building a new home and the market price for that home in an economically depressed area) likely will be required at least in the first phase.

The CDC could obtain necessary low-interest loans and/or grants to build about 20 homes over 2 to

4 years. These should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the area, though to achieve a comfortable price point for a middle-income buyer they are likely to be smaller and less ornate than many of the existing grand ladies. Garages would be behind, and architectural features such as front porches should be included.

Ideally the CDC will be able to group these homes in one of the two Core Areas shown or another area with several contiguous or nearly contiguous properties. This grouping of new builds will demonstrate an all-in commitment and may provide the critical mass for instigating other development. Such an assemblage may also make the new homes more marketable as buyers will have the comfort of a wave of new construction rather than disparate scattered sites.

Practically speaking the CDC will want to identify small developers with an understanding of urbanism to tackle the construction, assigning each one or two sites, at least in the beginning, to allow them to demonstrate the necessary capacity to execute on time and on budget. Ideally relationships will develop which can carry forward to see continual and increasing development throughout the community.

The community also could consider incorporating housing types which are not single-family detached houses, one per lot. Alternatives include:



Duplexes: Duplexes have a massing that is complimentary to the larger homes of the neighborhood but are, of course, subdivided internally. If owner occupied, they provide supplemental rental income for the landlord. They are also a way to draw new people to the district.

Many communities are initially averse to rental property, especially new construction. But, as noted, there is an abundance of vacant lots in this area, and a paucity of housing for young professionals and families who would otherwise be drawn to a walkable area close to downtown. Contemporary apartments are a perfect entry point for these potential future homeowners. Young purchasers often discover their neighborhood of choice as renters and then, when ready, look to buy in the place that has become comfortable for them.

Accessory Dwelling Units: Bonus units can provide spaces for multi-generational living. Often placed above a detached garage, or via the creation of a small backyard cottage, these small dwellings can be occupied by older parents, extended relatives, or even "bounce-back" young adults who have graduated college and are starting out on their own but not yet financially ready to leave home.



DEVELOP INFILL: COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE



Cottage Courts: Given adequate contiguous land, the neighborhood could consider a Cottage Court. This type of development clusters 4 to 10 small houses around a central green. It's efficient land use since the entire development might require an acre or less depending on the number of cottages included. The green is held in common. Houses are designed for spatial efficiency but modest in size overall, usually topping out around 1000 – 1500 square feet.

Commercial and Mixed-Use Amenities: While the South Fountain neighborhood is close to downtown and several community focused institutions, more amenities would help attract new residents. Businesses and personal services would be especially valuable.

Modern urban dwellers look for proximate commercial amenities – within walking distance if possible. In up and coming areas these businesses often are a lure for new residents.



During the stakeholder interviews participants expressed several ideas for businesses including:

- o Coffee shop
- o Breakfast and lunch café
- o Local restaurant / deli
- o Ice cream parlor
- o Dry cleaners
- o Food truck court
- o Grocery / convenience store
- o Bed & breakfast

Assuming such businesses would consider locating in the area, where might they be placed?

At least three should be in a concentrated area, creating the beginnings of a small business district.

Limestone Avenue is the likeliest location for such an initiative, especially from Grand to Liberty. Thousands of vehicles pass through each day, and that's one of the few fully signalized intersections. The



Dome, a destination of great pride – is located on the NW corner of Liberty and South Limestone.

High traffic volume offers potential patrons. Nonetheless these businesses should not have drive-through windows, fuel pumps, car washes, or other similar automotive focal points. Wanted are small, distinctive businesses, often with mom and pop ownership, which can drive destination demand. Passing drivers may discover these businesses as they pass, returning to patronize the businesses later.

Ideally there will be buildings in place, either at this intersection or nearby, which can house an introductory cluster. These early adopters will have to be courted and, essentially, hand carried into the area. Incentives will be vital. They may need help from the CDC with financing and with property renovations. Landlords, probably under financial stress for years are unlikely to risk substantial resource on what may look like an unlikely prospect.

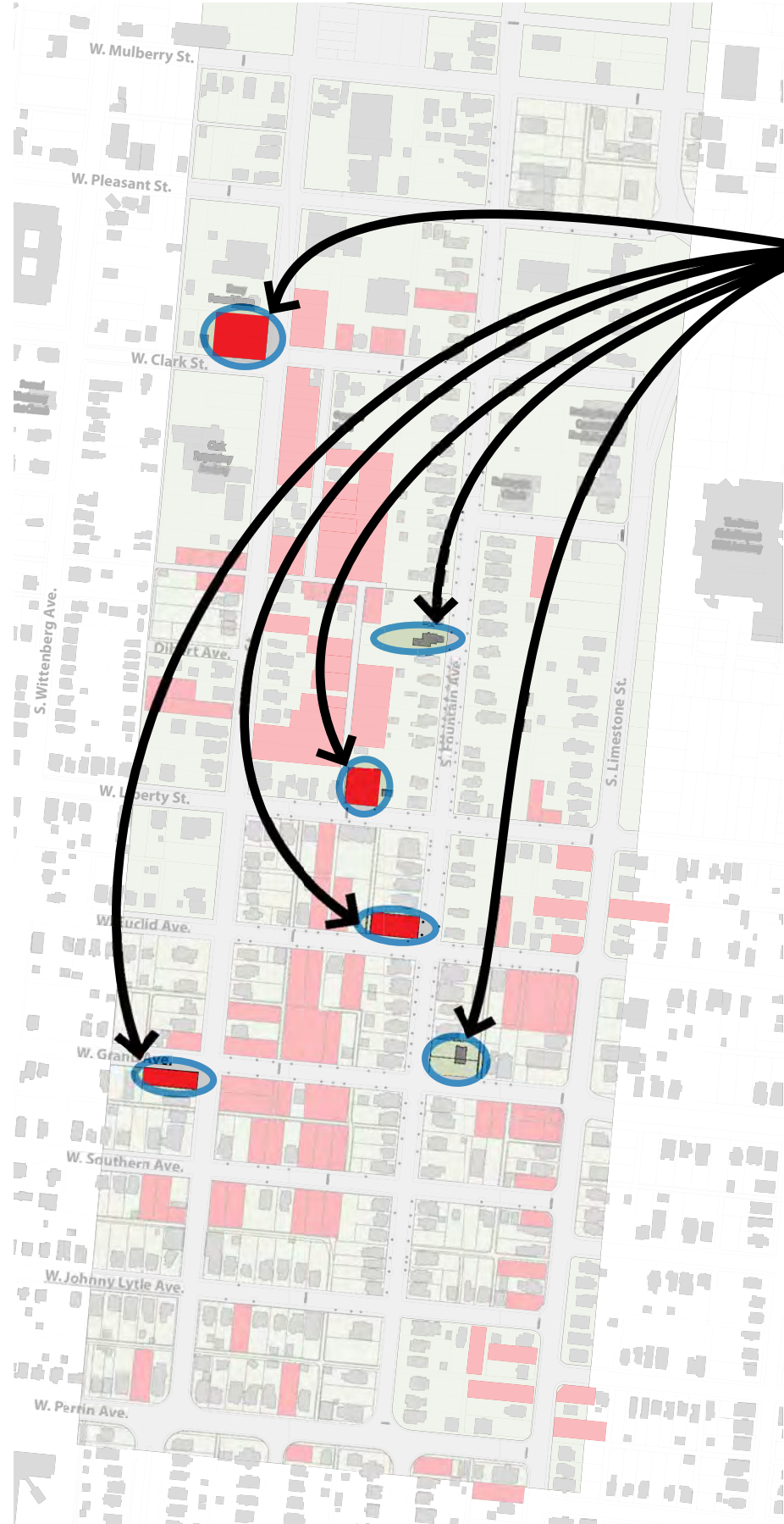


Certain businesses are strong early contributors: coffee shop, lunch place, yoga studio, pub. These are gathering places for neighbors and attractions for those looking to discover a new place.

Eventually, the CDC is going to want to explore the possibility of constructing new mixed-use buildings on South Limestone, most likely in partnership with private developers. S. Limestone is a major entry from I-70 into downtown. New, well-designed urban buildings along this stretch will indicate that Springfield is growing and vibrant. They also will create new housing of a contemporary style and improved locations for small businesses to enhance the area.



BUILD PARKS



POCKET PARKS

Emptiness - 
127 Vacant Lots in Core Data Area

Potential Pocket Park Locations 

Recommendation: Create New Parks – Not all of Them Pocket Sized

Springfield’s “Mow-to-Own” policy has generated good results. Responsible neighbors across the community have taken ownership of litter laden vacant lots. At times this ownership is as simple as a mowed lawn; in other cases, elaborate plantings appear. Some of these might now be turned into more public gathering places, elevating living in and visiting the neighborhood to a greener urban experience. Others, currently still vacant, might also be turned into pocket parks.

Small, neighborhood-scale gathering places, pocket parks can be accommodated on a lot as small as 15’ wide. In even slighter spots, it is still possible to insert green slivers. Because they’re small, they’re usually less expensive to build and maintain than larger scale oases but these little gems have the ability to reflect a neighborhood’s unique personality; quirky, refined, child filled, historic, restful – whatever tone creators wish to set.

Distinctive Gathering Spaces: To be successful, pocket parks must be well planned, designed, and located in places open to view by passers-by as well as occupants of adjacent buildings. Corner lots



are often excellent sites. In residential neighborhoods, it’s usually best to limit recreational uses that may cause loud noise, especially at early and late hours, although the sound of children playing shouldn’t be considered noise. But a variety of spaces can be accommodated, each with a slightly different tone.

Interesting, Fun, and Energetic: Springfield is already home to one of the most unique parks in the region: the Hartman Rock Garden. Situated in a residential neighborhood, this pocket park shows how a creative gathering space can add positive notoriety to a neighborhood and add to the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Each site could be designed to suit its surroundings and embrace neighborhood distinction. Stakeholder interviews for this plan offered several ideas for potential themes. Some of those are:

Yoga/Exercise Lawn: Any level green space can be used, and regular yoga sessions are a gentle way to activate spaces, fitting nicely into a calendar with a diverse array of events. Boot camp operators and other fitness providers are always in the hunt for open air workout



BUILD PARKS



spaces in good weather and consumers love the opportunity to be outdoors during a workout. Someone needs to program the park, managing a schedule to avoid conflicts, but it would be simple for an available lawn to become a regular site for a variety of events.

Discovery/Kinetic Playground: Play is, for children, an essential element of the discovery process. Imagine a kinetic energy playground where engagement and activity yields reward in the form of sounds, lights and whirligig spins. Such recreational equipment would be a fun incentive to exercise as well as a tool to learn about how energy is produced and consumed. Distinct spaces could include stationary bicycles, connected to generators and solar panels or windmills that could produce enough energy to feed interactive elements.



Fitzroy Solar Playground; Sustainability Matters

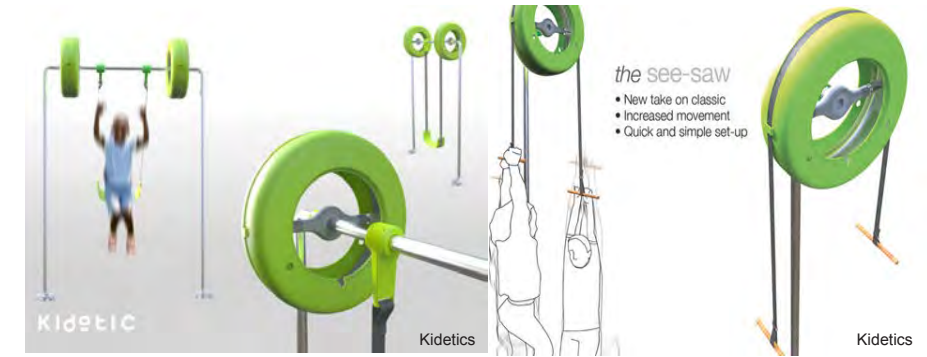
Dog Park: 365 days a year, good weather or bad, dogs need exercise and relief. And pet owners have an almost instant bond with each other. While over time a refined area might be developed, a fenced enclosure with a water source and some litter mitts is the beginning of a pet playground. Add a few benches and a cleanup system and even this simple location will find happy users.



Potential Cycle Trail Head: The vacant land between the terminus of Liberty Street and the Little Miami Bike Trail may be an excellent place for people to park their cars, load and unload cycles and begin a ride. When created this can be simple but well signed, including with directional signage at key intersections. Such a location is both a convenience and a welcome for cyclists. It brings them in to discover the area and offers potential customers for the small businesses. Giving a cycling focus to the community will help enhance its reputation as a future oriented place.



A2 Peak Power; Taiwan Today



BUILD PARKS

Case Study: Activating Voids

Vacant lots, often decried as missing teeth in neighborhoods, can be used to put a smile on the face of a community when activated tactically.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Redevelopment, activation through experimentation can encourage a multilayered approach to land use and increase likelihood that a vacant space will eventually find permanent use. "Temporary uses, particularly when clustered in a specific locality, can alter existing identities for neighborhoods — or even create entirely new ones."

Such was the case with Mt. Vernon, a community in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where more than fifteen lots sat vacant. A Mt. Vernon youth program, organized by a local ministry, and led by Réna Bradley, a graduate architect who is now the Community Development Director at Bridge of Grace Ministries, decided to tackle these underutilized spaces to give local teens an opportunity to positively impact their community.

The main idea of the project was to challenge the students to become builders, researchers, designers, and architects. The students gathered data and opinions from the community before forming their ideas for the lots. Suggestions that led the way were centered on property beautification, social engagement opportunities, and recreational spaces for youth. Some 50% of Mt. Vernon residents are under age 25.

The project, ultimately called Tired- A- Lot, encouraged participants to utilize upcycled and locally sourced materials and led to two complementary activation ideas. The first group decided on a seating area and clubhouse with a tire swing. An

interactive mural was also part of the plan, allowing community members to leave a comment or share a memory evoked by the painting. The second group worked on a butterfly garden, paths, planters, and a trellis. They also created a play area made from recycled tires.

The initial project, which eventually spanned two summers, became the basis for an ongoing program.



Bradley says she believes that the efforts of Tired-a-Lot are truly making a difference, both in the lives of the teens who are realizing the "latent potential and brilliance that is within them" and in the community at large.

"I think that blighted neighborhoods or vacant lots or uneven sidewalks can communicate that no one cares about this place," Bradley says. "As much as people associate themselves with the place they're from, that message could be read as no one cares about us or our community, and no one is trying to do anything about it. But when communities get together and make change—be that picking up trash or building a playground—it starts to communicate the opposite: Someone cares.

It's hard to measure that kind of change, but I think our youth and the adults in the community feel that."

Community Gardens: Community gardens can be a nice amenity for urban neighborhoods, bringing disparate neighbors together over fruit, flowers and vegetables. But they can also lead, if badly tended, to unintentional blight. From soil conditions, to water, to invasive plant species and bugs, they require perseverance, training, and passion to cultivate.

This is an instance where good intentions aren't enough. Unmaintained gardens quickly become nuisances, visual liabilities instead of neighborly assets. A management entity will be needed — whether simply a defined group of volunteers or a formal organization.

A large community garden might need professional advisors. The Ohio State University Springfield Extension offers master gardening classes and is willing to help champions from the neighborhood who wish to establish community gardens.

And Then...

Ultimately, perhaps the area of largest potential lies at the site of recently demolished manufacturing buildings on Euclid. These vacant lots could become a park with features including large grassy areas, an amphitheater, recreation courts, playgrounds, a sculpture garden, and a renewable power array among other ideas.

A community-led planning and design process could be undertaken, well facilitated, to gather the fullest range of ideas.



University of Maryland



FIX THE DETAILS EARLY

Recommendation: Fix the Details Early

Sometimes small but important infrastructure details get lost in the mix. And yet, these improvements, often easy to implement, can make a material difference in creating perceived momentum.

From bike racks to trash cans, everything matters. Equally however, everything offers an opportunity to reinforce the essential specialness of this place.

Trash Cans: There are two users of trash cans. One is the person who puts their own trash into an available can, and the other is the stakeholder who cares enough to clean up the streets and put the discarded waste of others into a bin. These receptacles should be placed every block to every block, one on each side, especially at street corners.



And then, for this plan to work, they need to be emptied regularly by the City. That sounds simple but is often the most persistent challenge so make sure a well-defined plan is in place, with follow up.

Bike Racks: Biking is a 21st century mode of

transportation and one preferred, along with walking, by millennial consumers for neighborhood adventures. As shown in the attached case study they are also an opportunity to display creativity and even whimsy. Look for trafficked locations – by the Dome? At Gammon House? – to place these conveniences. As retail destinations grow, they'd be good sites. Encouraging biking through such visual references highlights the area as a progressive one.

Street Trees: As noted elsewhere, planting trees has unending benefit to the community, the public realm, and the environment. And though traffic engineers sometimes contest it, the best place for trees is along the street where they can slow traffic, absorb rainwater, shade adjacent properties, and, as research consistently shows, improve property values.

South Fountain has excellent tree coverage along 2/3rds of the corridor between Pleasant and Perrin. The rest of the area, however, is considerably under arbored.

Trees, even in an urban environment are remarkably resilient if chosen and planted correctly. The potential CDC, in collaboration with the city's Urban Forestry Division should coordinate in a planting strategy, starting along Center Street and the side streets and moving through the area progressively. Local arborists such as at the OSU extension office might be a resource to develop a preferred tree list



Pannier Signs: Cultural Tourism DC

and master plan for the area.

Ornamental street trees also would be helpful to punctuate key intersections such as Limestone/Grand, and Limestone/Liberty. Reconstruction of these intersections to accommodate trees would allow new sidewalks to be placed at a more comfortable distance of 5' – 6' back from the street. Trees at these locations should be placed 20' to 30' back from the intersections to allow for driver visibility.

Viewed more broadly, this punctuation of greenery along the City's most important paths to downtown will create a sense of cadence and care.

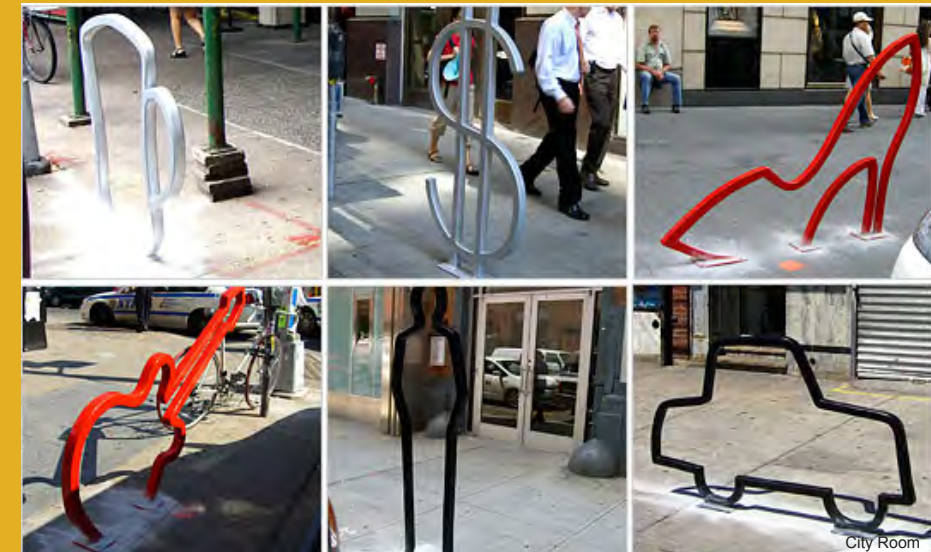
Since the city is a charter member of the Tree City USA organization, this is an area where Springfield can take the lead in a big way. City planting budgets can support the plan developed and potentially be augmented by tree planting grants through regional and state organizations.



Travis Estell

Case Study: David Byrne's Bike Racks

In 2008, the New York City Department of Transportation in collaboration with the art gallery Pace-Wildenstein conducted a design competition for new temporary bike racks in the city. The city eventually selected 9 designs by musician and bicycle enthusiast David Byrne, (of Talking Heads fame), which were in use for one year before being auctioned.



City Room

The striking designs were meant to showcase the personality of the area while also giving beauty to a functional object that most normally don't think about. Racks were constructed with welded tubes of steel and powder coated to have a similar feel and appearance to a typical city bike rack. It was important to Byrne that the bike racks were not mistaken for modern art pieces.

By building attractive bike infrastructure the city's transportation department also hoped to encourage more travel by bicycle. As then Director of Transportation Janette Sadik Khan explained, "By bringing attractive yet functional sculptures to our streets, we are elevating the profile of cycling, and we believe that more and more people will begin to think about cycling as a mode of transportation, and not just a mode of recreation."

Artful bike rack designs would be a great way for Springfield to showcase destinations within and around the Engaged Study neighborhood.

The initiative also highlights local artists while enlivening the street and business district and encouraging bicycle use.

References:

https://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/08/19/new-bike-racks-courtesy-of-david-byrne/?_r=0

<http://davidbyrne.com/explore/bike-racks/about>

LET HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF

Recommendation: Let History Repeat Itself

While it will take time to implement in full, the study area should be peppered with reminders that this is not only one of the most beautiful but also among the most historic places in Springfield.

In following pages, street and intersection improvements will be discussed. But a context for those improvements is equally important. Street and intersection design, well executed, contribute to the high functioning of an area. But on their own they are just, well, functional.

To truly create neighborhood pride and delight visitors, streets need the kind of enhancements which convey a strong and distinctive sense of place. These elements should be true to the brand of the area, historic but dynamic within the contemporary era. They should be distinctive, and, in all ways feasible, exceptional.

Plaques: Mounted on posts near sidewalks, these markers could call attention to particularly historic sites, most notably houses. A brief story about the location, and perhaps even a QR code connecting to a website is a quiet way to emphasize that this area has always held a special place in Springfield's narrative.



Later perhaps these plaques can also tie to such amenities as self/ap-guided walking tours. Because certainly these snippets of local lore are going to encourage walkability.

Entry markers: Working with ODOT and other governing entities, the community should ensure that directional signage begins **outside** the area. This is a truly historic neighborhood. Even now it has significant assets. Recognition of these not only encourages visitation, it reminds residents that theirs is a community well worth a detour.

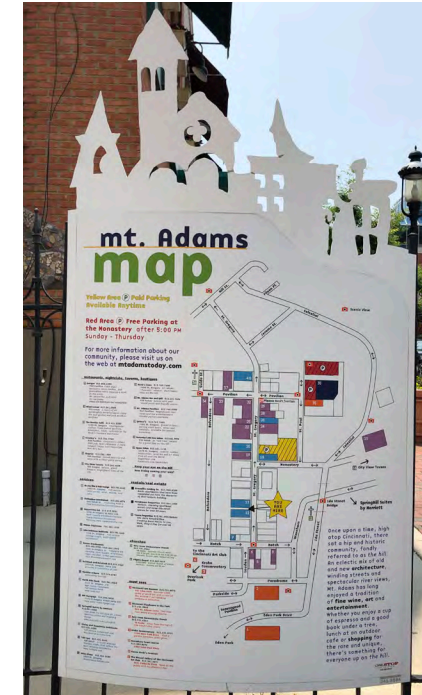
Streetlights: As lights in the area reach the end of their useful life, they should be replaced with lamping that denotes history but is wholly modern in technology. First Energy is currently working with

BREWING HERITAGE TRAIL

Home The Trail Download the App Tours Tour Information More...



The Brewing Heritage Trail is a walking trail and series of guided tours that celebrates Cincinnati's brewing heritage. Our history is shared with embedded trail markers, signage with photos and stories, public art, a free smartphone app, and Brewery District Community Urban Redevelopment Corp. Learn more about the Trail HERE.



the city to establish a palette of LED light fixtures. At least one of these should be an acorn top style and any fixtures chosen should be fixable with parts the city keeps regularly in stock. A streetlight, no matter how historically evocative, is noncontributing if it takes weeks to obtain parts for repairs.

Streetlights are another boost for walkability. Illumination adds softness to a nighttime landscape and conveys a greater sense of safety. Illumination levels should be gauged. Too much can subconsciously signal that a place is unsafe and therefore needs excessive lighting to protect from unknown dangers.

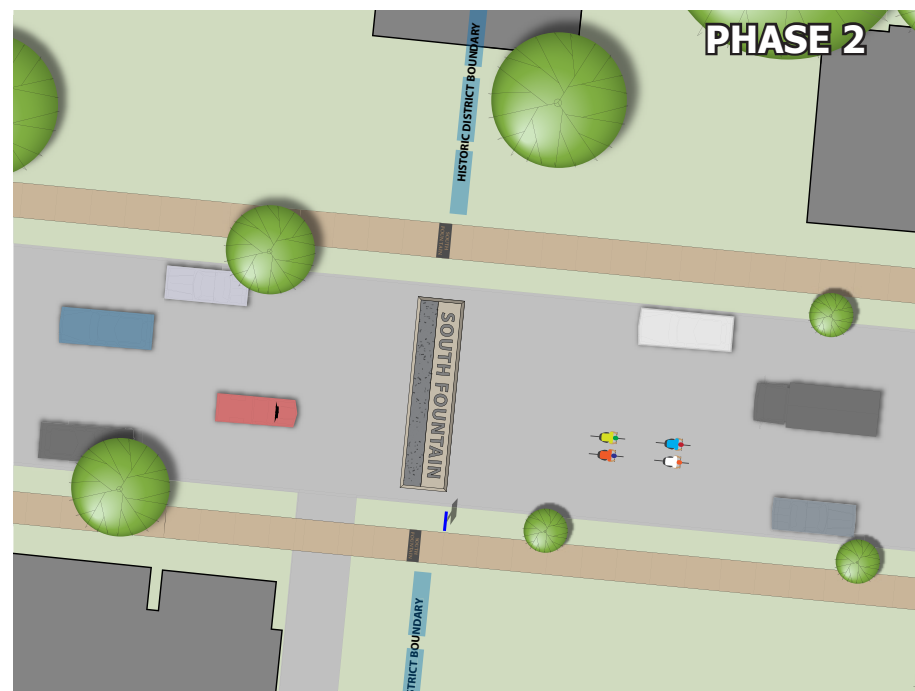
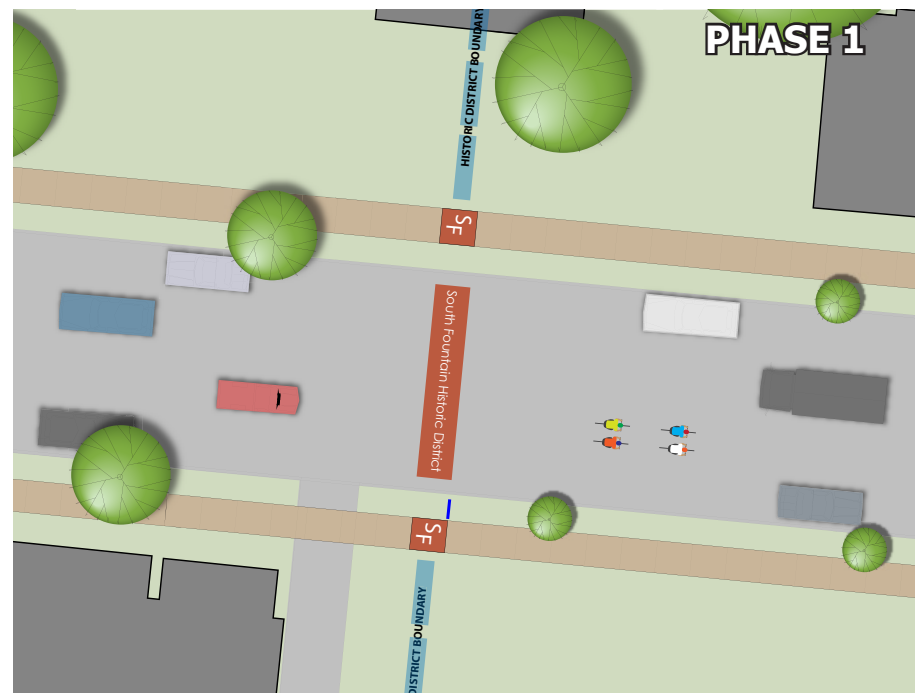
It's important to progressively install working historic style streetlights throughout the area. Especially in need of illumination are Center and its cross streets, including the east and west gateway streets of Grand, Liberty, and Perrin.

Sidewalks: As we actively encourage walkability it's important to ensure that pedestrian pathways are safe and in good repair. This is a neighborhood of both children and seniors, two populations not always steady. Let's reduce possible trip hazards where possible. But perhaps more important deteriorated sidewalks instantly characterize a neighborhood as one lacking in custodial care.

Pavement: While technically this note would fit into the later discussion of streets, it must not go unremarked. The paving in the area, especially along South Fountain and West Euclid are in fair to poor condition.

Financial limitations likely dictate that repairs will be phased over time, however much needed. In each of these repair intervals, the city should consider deleting double yellow lines along primarily residential streets. While essential for connectors and arterials, along less travelled roadways they actually increase speeding by tacitly signaling a more aggressive corridor character.

STRATEGICALLY HIGHLIGHT THRESHOLDS



Recommendation: Strategically Highlight Thresholds

Highlighting the spots where people enter a special district – by car, bike, or foot – is important. It calls out a special place. As the map to the far left indicates. There are 19 points of entry to the South Fountain Historic District. Yet only the northern and southern entries are marked - most modestly.

Perhaps not all 19 are uniquely worthwhile but the community should heighten its profile where possible, designating at least a few more as key. This recognition should be phased as funding is available, and thoughtfully designed to call attention to an enduring place.

Street improvements, even incremental, send a signal that this is a community on the rise. Phase 1 improvements could include marking thresholds with paint or decals across the roadway and sidewalks at what are agreed as the most important entries.

The actual painting of these thresholds could provide the South Fountain community with opportunity for an event. A painting party would become not only a social moment for the neighborhood, but also a potential subject for positive publicity via local media.

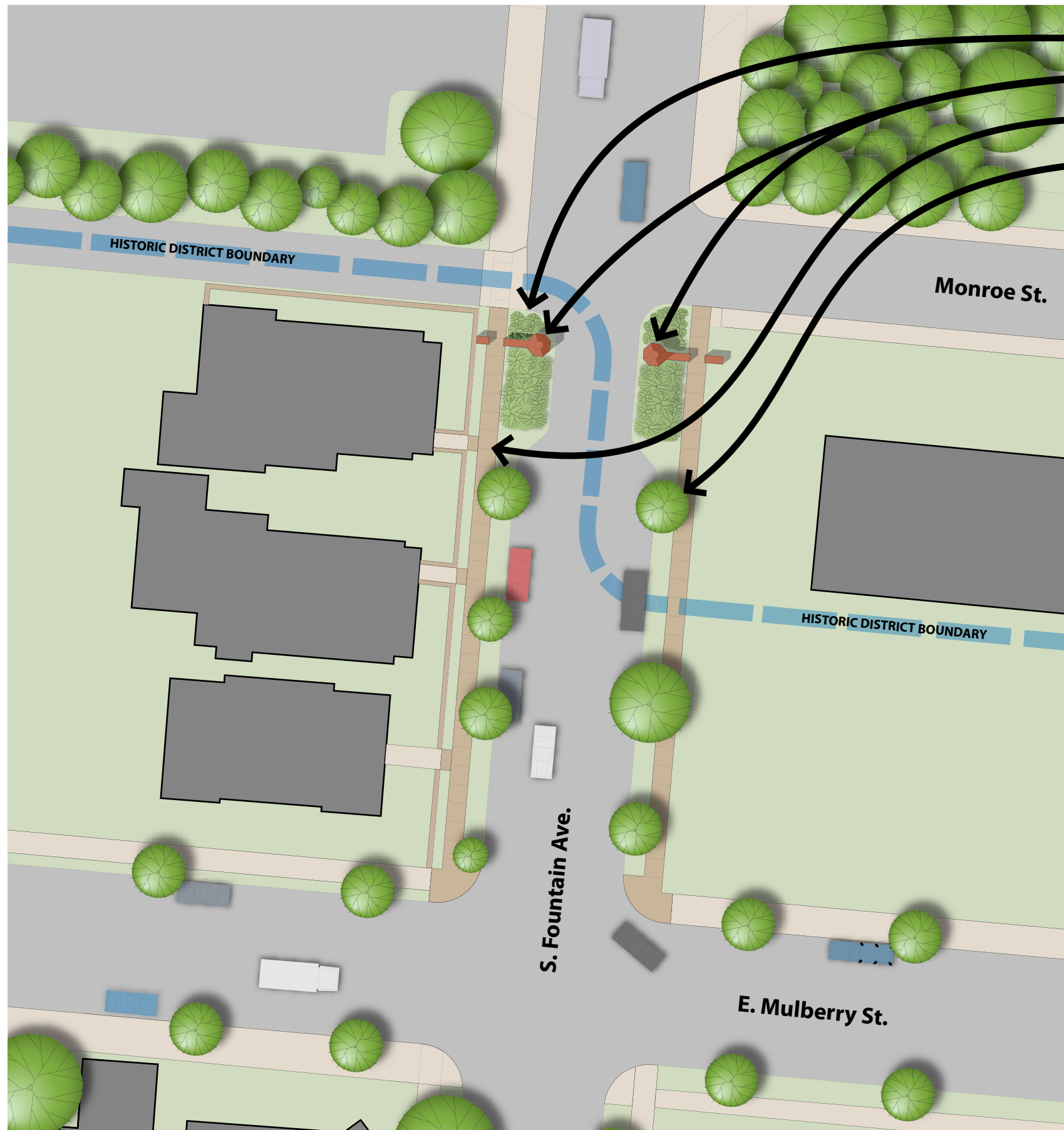
Paint wears out. Phase 2 improvements should center on making thresholds durable reminders that the South Fountain Historic District is a celebrated place within the city.

One idea, shown on here, is for the primary material in the roadway to be upgraded with cobblestone inserts in a concrete frame at intersections of prime importance. Words or graphics might be inset to lend a historic tone. Such paving improvements would also serve an important secondary purpose. Slightly raised and incorporating the textural change of cobblestones they would be a tactile reminder to drivers to slow down.

Bronze sidewalk plaques might be an amplification of the historic signage recommended elsewhere herein, highlighting key locales. Gateway signage should also be an area for continuous improvement.



STRATEGICALLY HIGHLIGHT THRESHOLDS



- Decrease Street Width at Gateway
- New Stone or Brick Gateway Wall & Lights
- Replaced Sidewalk and Tree (Collector) Strip
- Additional Street Trees, New Streetlights

Recommendation: North and South Entries into South Fountain Historic District Should be Bold and Memorable

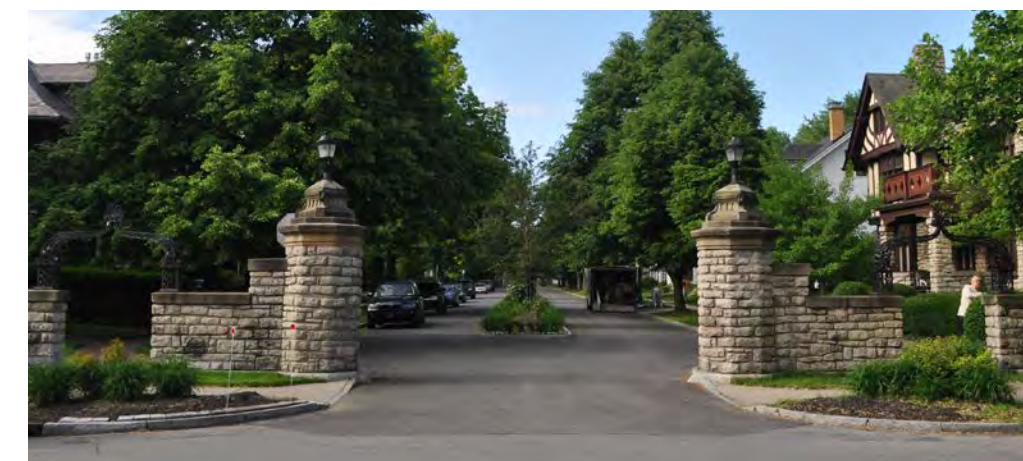
Traffic management is particularly important at the northern gateway because the roadway around the performing arts auditorium and its parking lots, is overly wide and pedestrian unfriendly. To induce a dramatic vehicular change that gateway could be redesigned to reduce the width of the pavement. Bump outs at the corners, repurposing 8' of roadway currently used for on-street parking on both sides, would leave travel lanes unaffected but force drivers to slow.

For dramatic architectural impact, significant gateways can be constructed. Solid in appearance, constructed of stone, brick, iron or similar materials, these should refer to area history but avoid the trap of looking like replicas. Actual gates should be avoided. Gateways should serve as a grand entrance to a place, not an exclusionary device.

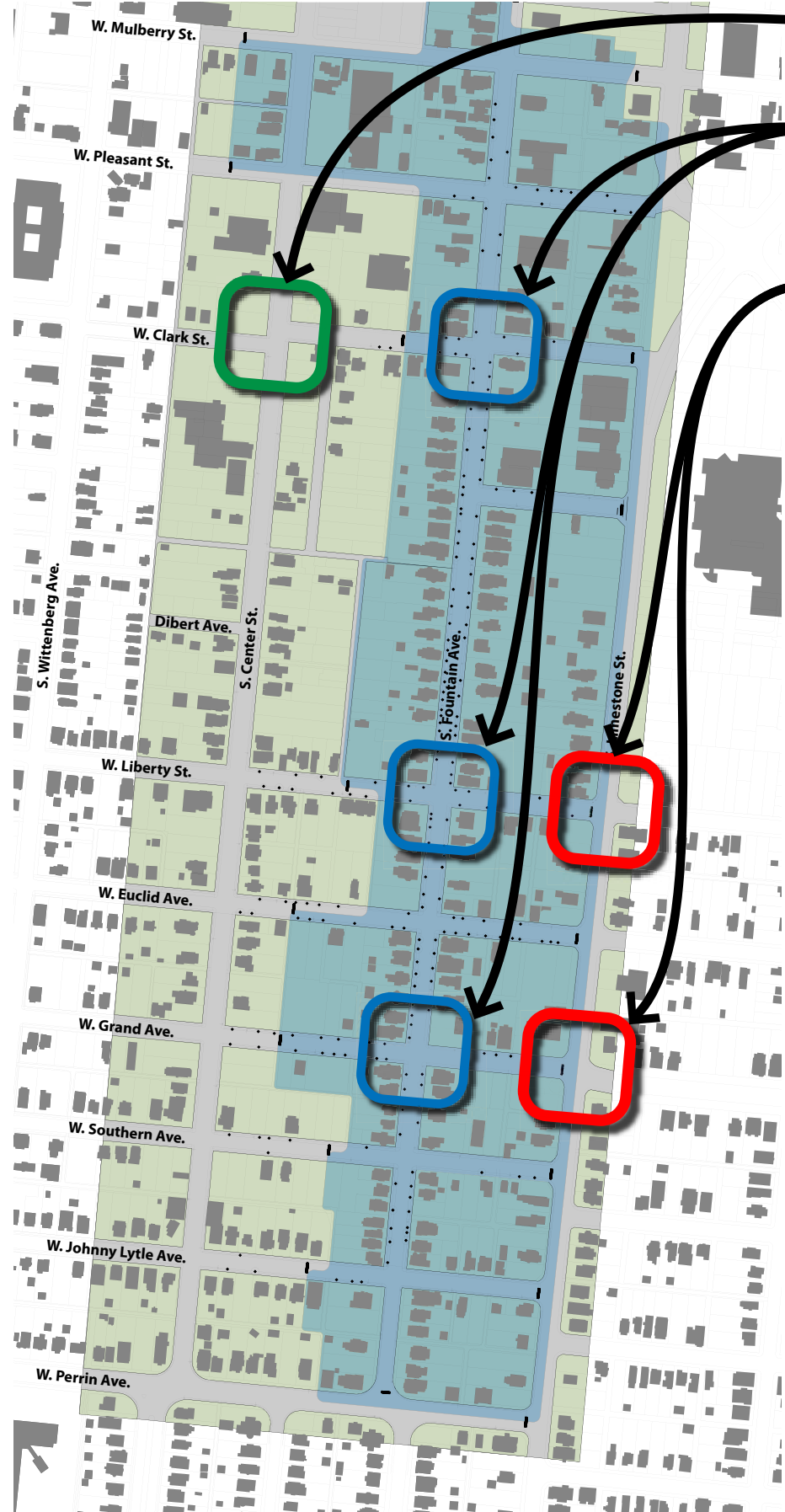
Lastly, as noted elsewhere, street trees, lighting and sidewalk condition should be core components to all improvement plans.



Existing condition - South Fountain Ave. at Monroe St.



REPAIR AND IMPROVE KEY INTERSECTIONS



Key Heritage Intersection
(Gammon Square)

Key Internal Intersections
(S. Fountain Ave. & Clark St.)
(S. Fountain Ave. & Liberty St.)
(S. Fountain Ave. & Grand Ave.)

Key Limestone Intersections
(S. Limestone St. & E. Liberty St.)
(S. Limestone St. & E. Grand Ave.)

Recommendation: Repair and Improve Key Intersections

South Limestone Street is not a pedestrian friendly street for several reasons:

- Vehicular traffic moves too fast
- Sidewalks are narrow and very close to the curb
- There are no street trees or on street parking to provide friction
- There are only two pedestrian crossings from Perrin to Selma
- Large curb turning radii (from 35' to 40' radius) encourages turns at excessive speed

Limestone Street was the subject of a Corridor Study in 2017. The final report contained many recommendations, including those to specifically increase pedestrian-friendliness.

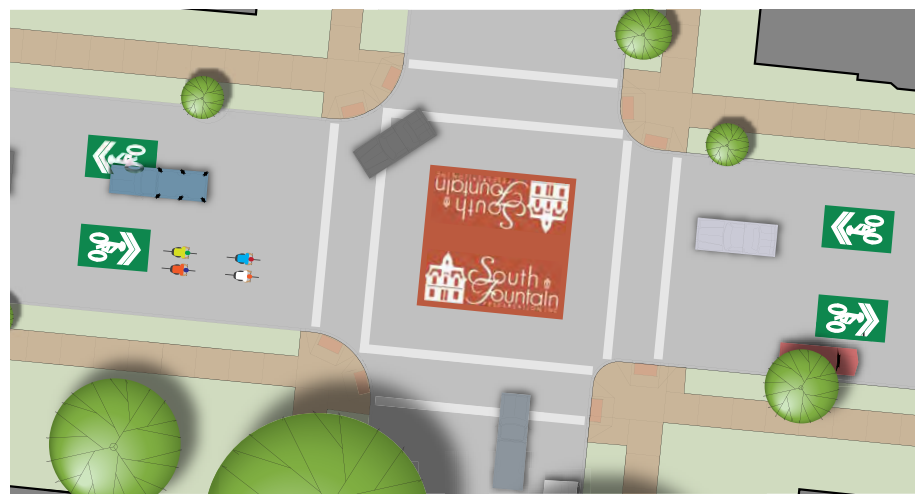
South Limestone was renovated not long ago, and those recommended upgrades were not incorporated. The next cycle of major renovations is likely well in the future. The community however can undertake a series of connected physical improvements which would progressively increase walkability over time.

Intersections along **South Limestone at Grand and Liberty** should be improved to achieve pedestrian safety while also creating an attractive gateway and inviting procession towards downtown. Other neighborhood intersections should be improved to create a sense of place within the neighborhood. Those intersections include:

- **Clark and Center (Heritage Square)**
- **Clark and S. Fountain (Path to Heritage Square)**
- **Liberty and S. Fountain**
- **Grand and S. Fountain**

These intersections are more than places for cars and trucks to meet and pass through. They're places for the community to connect as well, and they need to be safe pathways for both pedestrians and bikes as well as fertile ground for future development.

In all street and intersection improvements, the city should follow NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) where applicable.



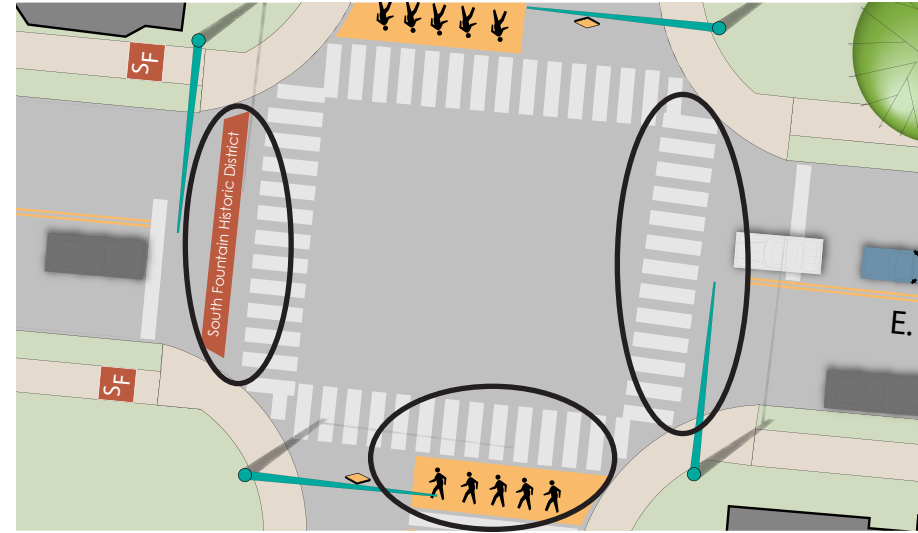
INTERSECTION REPAIR 1: LIMESTONE AT GRAND AND LIBERTY



Recommendation: Create Sharrows

Sharrows are pavement markings depicting a bicycle capped with two chevrons, used on streets too narrow to accommodate separate tracks and indicating a lane of traffic to be shared by bikes and cars.

Springfield could designate Liberty Street and Grant Avenue as Bicycle Routes from the Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail to Limestone. This designation could be made physically through painted Sharrow markings and amplified through maps, touring information, signage and even on-line apps.



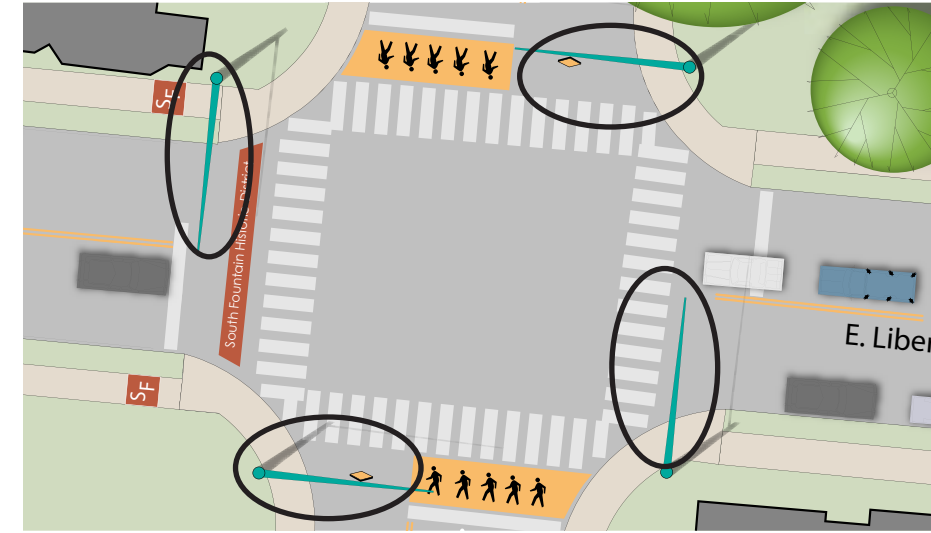
Recommendation: Paint the Streets

Entries: As in other locations discussed, entries here could be marked with painted graphics or decals on sidewalks and roadway pavement. At all primary intersections, as shown here, the graphic could span the entire roadway width, announcing a point of entry but also creating desirable visual friction.

Crosswalks: Intersections should be safe places for pedestrians to cross. The Global Impact STEM Academy and The Dome are located at Limestone and Liberty. While most visitors arrive in cars, a number of staff would like to bike to work. At present however, street conditions discourage both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Springfield should paint zebra striping at all four crossing points of the Limestone/Liberty and Limestone/Grand intersections. Zebra striping is more easily seen by drivers and serves as an obvious path for pedestrians. Crosswalks should be 10' wide and placed within 4' of the projected curb line.

Pedestrian Crossing Warnings: Springfield could take the extra step of painting yellow crosswalk warnings. Such a painted area could then have pedestrian body symbols painted in black. Ground-mounted pedestrian crossing 'paddle signs' should also be considered.



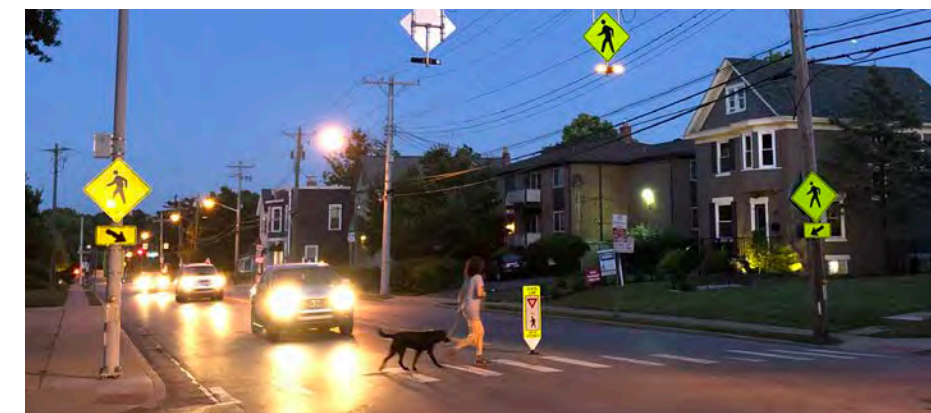
Recommendation: Send A Signal At Pedestrian Crossings

As a modest indication that this area is pedestrian friendly, Springfield should install overhead on-demand flashing lights for pedestrians. These can be installed on existing traffic signal poles and extension arms.

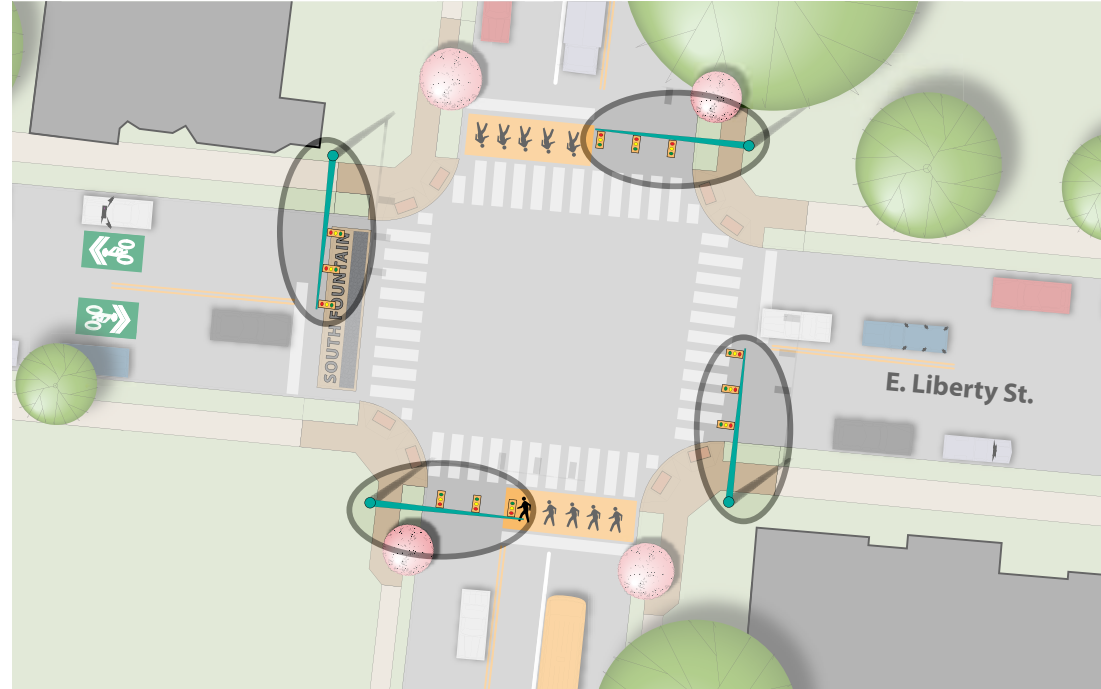
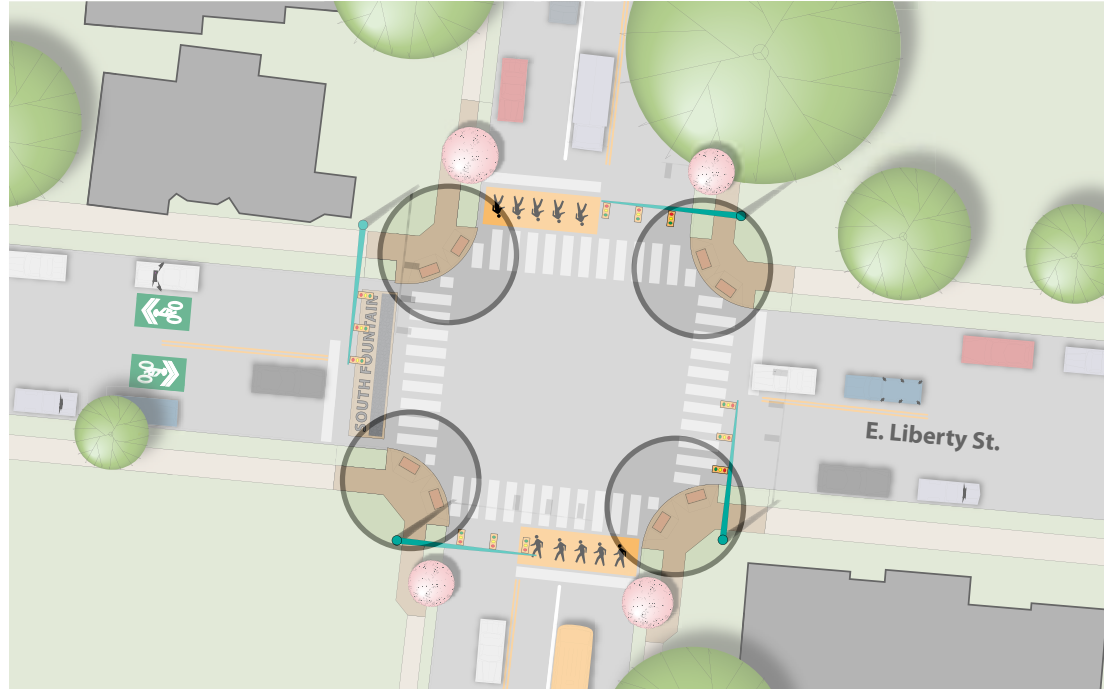
The intersection of South Limestone and East Liberty Street doesn't have traffic signals. In order for crossings to be consistently safe, vehicular traffic needs to stop. Effecting that is probably beyond the reach of even the most substantial painted markings. Flashers would increase safety though demand actuation is key to effectiveness. A constantly flashing signal becomes easy to disregard over time. One flashing only when needed is more noticeable and more likely to be obeyed.

This signal should be accompanied by ground-mounted signs at driver eye-level to reinforce that pedestrians may be crossing.

Once the preceding improvements are in place, it will be time to go for bigger goals.



INTERSECTION REPAIR 2: LIMESTONE AT GRAND AND LIBERTY



Recommendation: Decrease Curb Radii and Add ADA Sidewalk Curb Ramps

The intersections along South Limestone encourage drivers to make turns into side streets at great speed. Larger turning radii also increase crosswalk distances for pedestrians, and their geometry makes it impossible to position ADA curb ramps to ensure safe crossing.

The City of Springfield has done an admirable job of installing handicap accessible sidewalk ramps at many intersections. Within the study boundary, however, only 48% of curbs have ramps. Curb ramps not only aid those with physical and sensory impairments, they assist all pedestrians when crossing the street, especially seniors and parents pushing strollers.

As resources allow, Springfield should reconstruct two key intersections at S. Limestone/E. Grand and S. Limestone and East Liberty.

The new radii should be 12'. Each corner should have two sidewalk curb ramps, aligned with 10' zebra crosswalks placed within 4' of the projected curb. Decreasing turning radii here will reduce the crosswalk distance at East Liberty from 57' to 39' and dissuade drivers from sliding around corners at high speed.

Recommendation: Add Traffic Signals

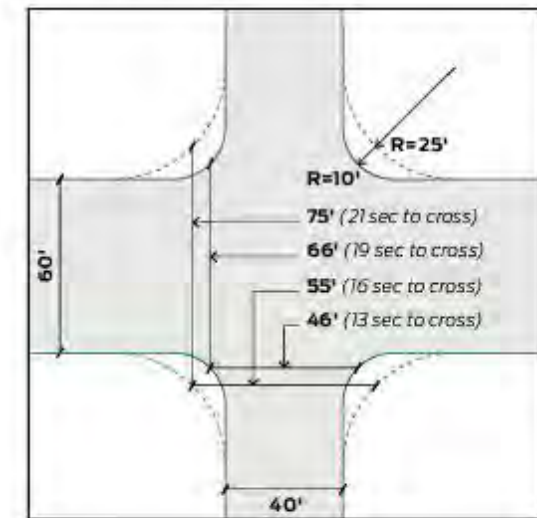
Pedestrians matter, they should matter a lot. Unlike vehicle drivers and passengers, pedestrians travel unprotected, and walkable neighborhoods are, by definition, those in which they feel safe. This is especially crucial where children are members of the walking community.

South Limestone at East Liberty is home to the Global Impact STEM Academy. This highly regarded institution is attended by children from 5 counties, including some from only blocks away. Liberty is also the only place between Selma Road and Grand Avenue, a distance of some 2000', at which pedestrians can rightfully cross South Limestone.

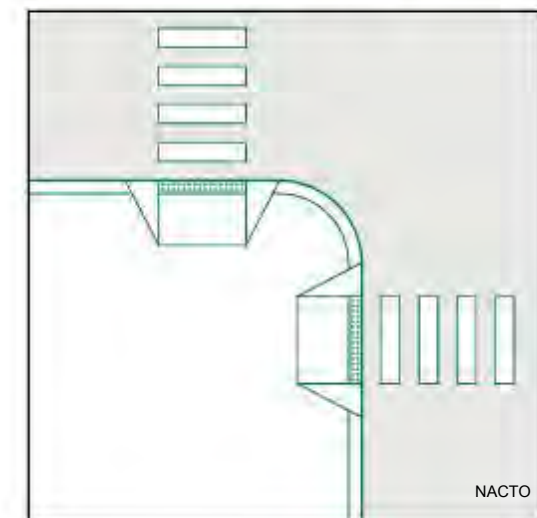
The city should install a full traffic signal at S. Limestone/Liberty. A light was removed from this corner some time ago, when it was decided intersection traffic didn't require signalization. That decision, however, didn't account for pedestrians. A new traffic signal will increase both safety and thereby walkability. It may also create a better environment for business to develop at the intersection and nearby by slowing traffic.

As the area revitalizes, other corners should be studied for similar intervention. The continuing goal is to create an environment in which walkers and cars can happily and safely coexist.

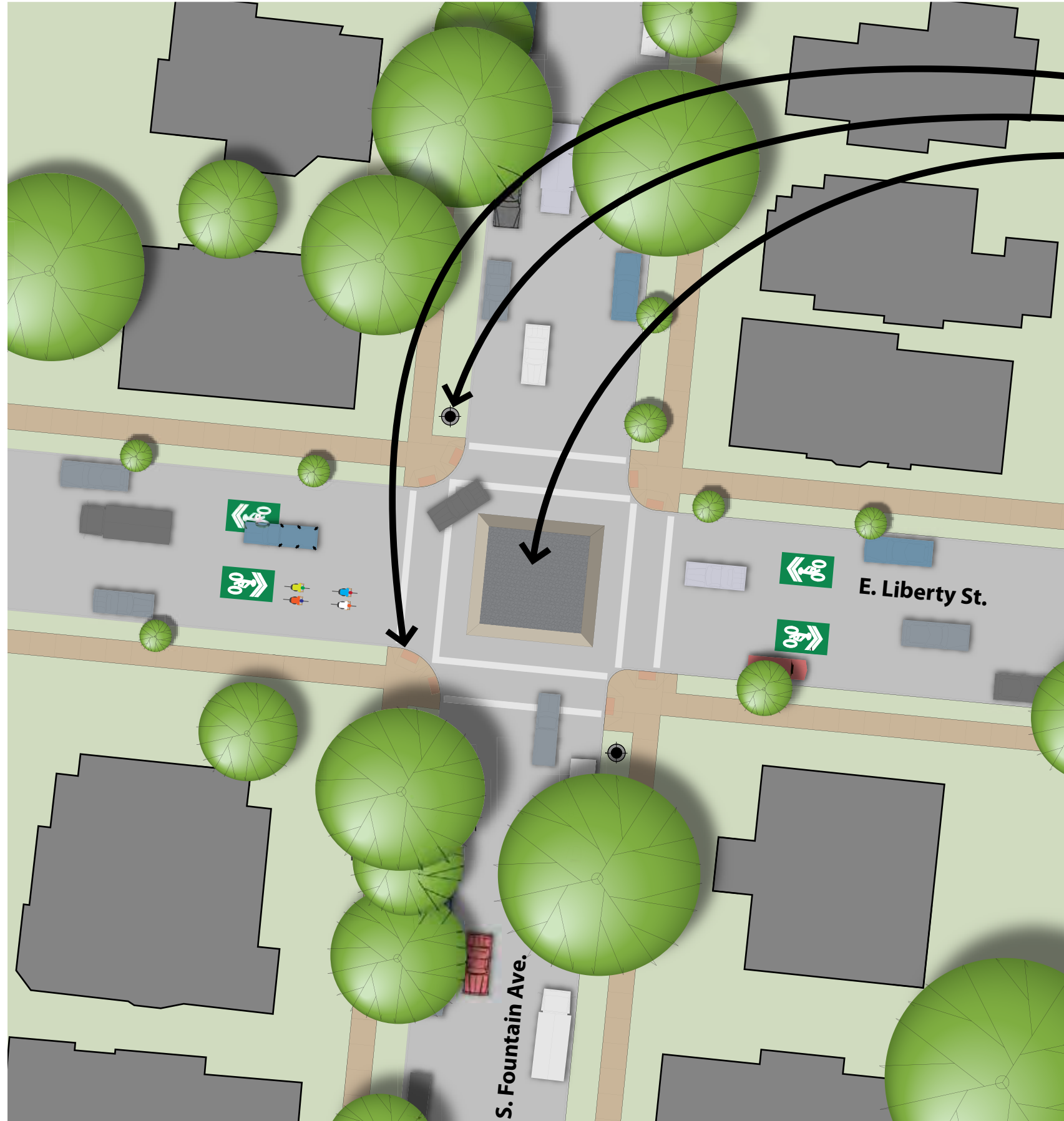
The size of the corner relates directly to the length of the crosswalk. Longer crosswalks take more time to cross, increasing pedestrian exposure risk and diminishing safety.¹



A smaller curb radius expands the pedestrian area, allowing for better pedestrian ramp alignment.



INTERSECTION REPAIR 1: KEY INTERIOR INTERSECTIONS



PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS - Phase 2

- Install ADA Curb Ramps
- Install New Streetlights
- Raised Cobblestone Intersection (Speed Table)



Recommendation: Paint Intersections for Starters

Paint can serve as an excellent way to achieve awareness and limited pedestrian safety but it can also serve as a placemaking, branding and recognition activity that can bring community stakeholders together. Paint the key internal intersections of the South Fountain Historic. For interior streets, a painted intersection can make a bold statement that a community is unapologetically proud of its neighborhood, its heritage, and that its public places matter. As stated earlier, painted intersections can also help slow vehicular traffic down because drivers take note of the rarely seen occurrence of brightly painted pavement.

If undertaken by volunteers at a pre-scheduled, well-publicized event, painting an intersection or two can become a time of unification for a neighborhood. The event itself can be fun and its result can become a source of greater community pride than if the painting was done by hired painters.



INTERSECTION REPAIR 2: KEY INTERIOR INTERSECTIONS

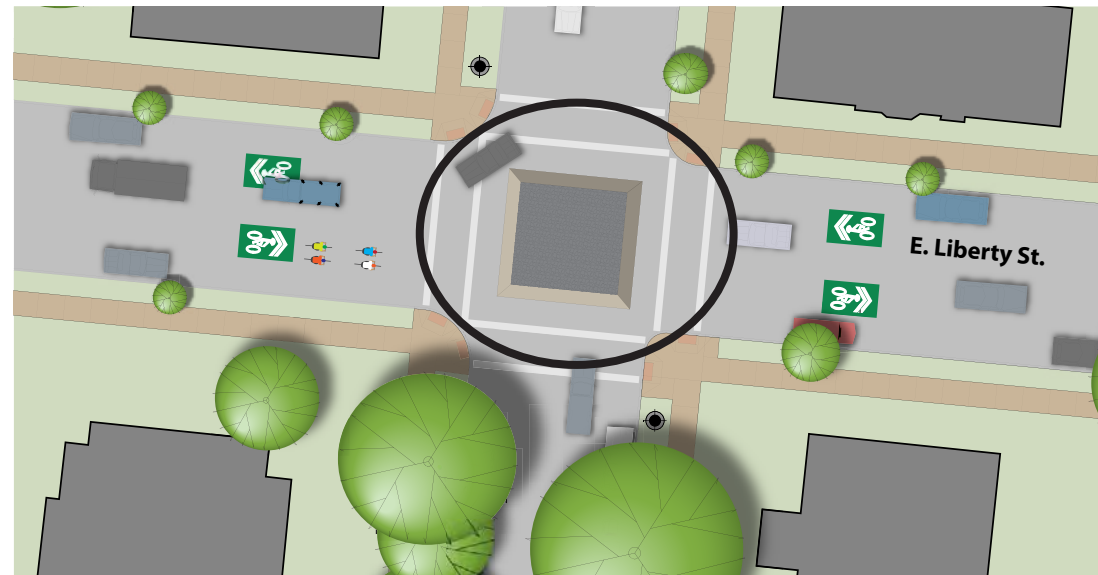


Recommendation: Install Street Lights

As previously covered, working street lights help with visibility and pedestrian safety on the street. The City of Springfield should replace the existing post-top streetlights along South Fountain Avenue – and add a few new ones. The existing streetlights are well-scaled, post-top lights of traditional aesthetic. However, they are slowly deteriorating, nearing the end of their useful life, and probably inefficient.

The City and community should work together to select new streetlights and additional places for them carefully. There should be two streetlights at each intersection – on diagonally opposite corners. Space street lights close enough to ensure a low level of lighting along all sidewalks while not “overlighting.” “Overlighting” can result in emitting the feeling that a place is not safe and therefore needs excessive lighting to scare away criminals.

The consulting team found that Springfield’s current agreement with First Energy Corporation allows for the installation of 4 fixture types – one of which is an acorn top fixture. While the City is working with First Energy on a replacement plan we recommend that new street light fixtures have a top shield that inhibits light from the fixture reaching second-floor bedroom windows.



Recommendation: Consider Inlays to Slow Traffic in Style

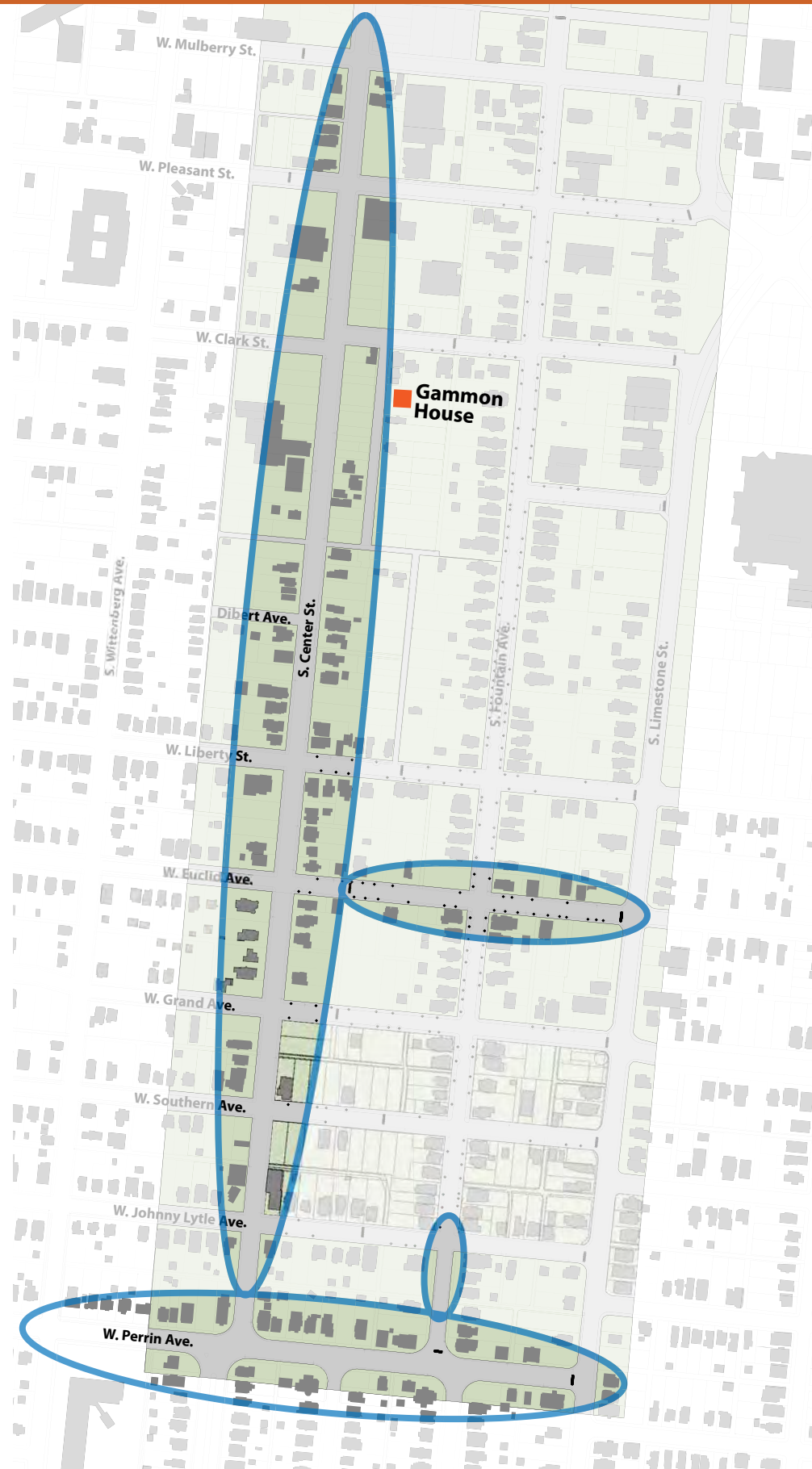
Springfield should install cobblestones (or textured brick pavers) at the key intersections of the South Fountain Historic District listed above. The installation of cobblestone inlays at these intersections will show all those who pass through that this is a celebrated neighborhood. Cobblestones instill feelings of permanence, durability, and importance.

A cobblestone inlay, or an inlay of any textured surface, will provide drivers with a visual and tactile reminder to drive slowly. It can be built with a concrete “frame” that rises slightly, to create a “speed table”.

These cobblestone inlays should not extend fully to all sides of the intersection (or crosswalks) so bicyclists can easily ride through the intersection without maneuvering around the inlays.



CENTER, PERRIN AND EUCLID



CENTER, PERRIN and EUCLID

Recommendation: Don't Forget Center, Perrin, and Euclid

Center, Perrin, Euclid, and a block of South Fountain are either wide streets that do not have collector/tree strips or do have ones that are so narrow they can't adequately host trees. The sheer length of Center Street also contributes to high speeds along it. Perhaps no street in the study area though, is more hostile to pedestrians than Perrin Avenue.

West of Wittenberg, outside the study area, Perrin has a 12' grassy median. At present however, this doesn't extend further east, resulting in a 52' residential street with excessive turning radii, encouraging speed and making pedestrian crossings uncomfortably long. No collector/tree strips mean sidewalks are separated from traffic by only the width of a curb. Speeding is endemic.

It's a harsh and unpleasant road that discourages both visitation and investment. Yet it's an important connector to Center Street and Center leads to one of the area's most important resources: Gammon House.

Reconstructing these streets is no less important than the works on others cited herein. Fortunately, the overall width of Perrin facilitates a reconstruction which will both add delight and improve function. Perrin Avenue and Center Street both qualify for federal funding due to their classification as collector streets for Limestone and Interstate 70.

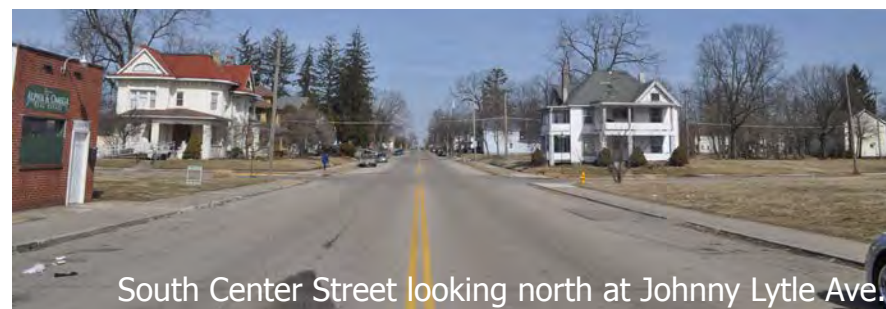
The following improvements, many described elsewhere, should be part of the overall plan.

- Continue the Median, 12' wide
- End Median with a Gateway Marker at S. Fountain
- Nose Medians with Cobblestone
- Install New Sidewalks, Setback 5' From Curb
- Add Sidewalks and Tree Strips
- Fill Those Strips with Trees
- Put Zebra Crossings at Intersections
- Reduce Curb Radii at All Corners

These improvements will increase the walkability of these corridors, while adding congeniality which in turn will build value. Gammon House and the area overall will be the long-term beneficiaries of this investment.



Looking east towards Limestone on Perrin



South Center Street looking north at Johnny Lytle Ave.



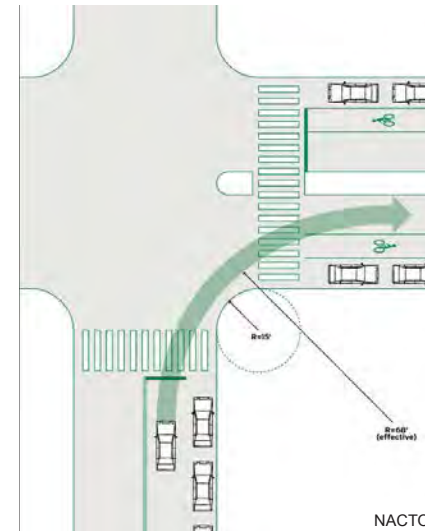
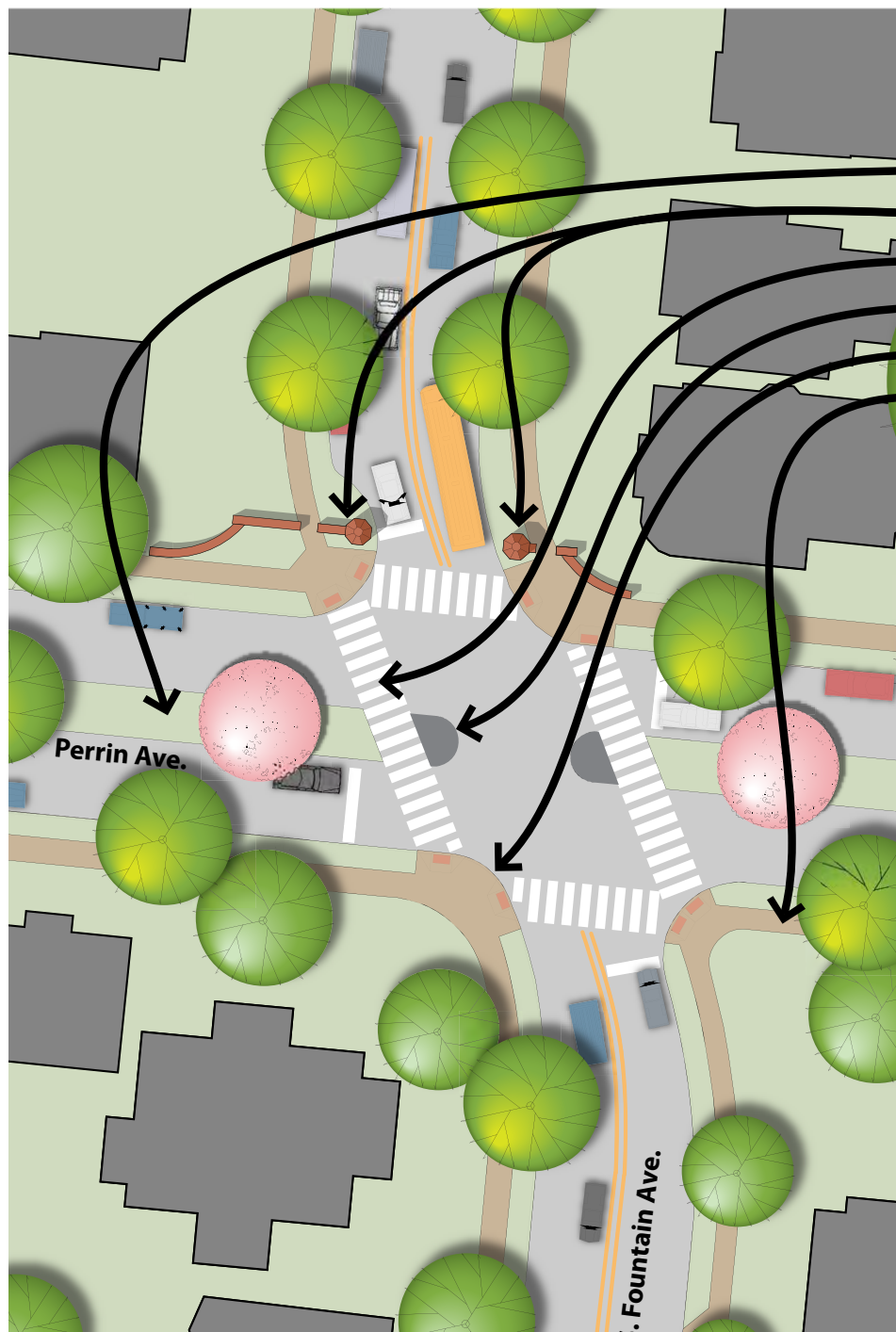
Perrin Street looking east

CENTER, PERRIN AND EUCLID- A CLOSER LOOK AT PERRIN



PERRIN AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS - Phase 2

- New Median (with ornamental trees at intersections)
- Historic District Gateway Walls
- "Zebra" Striped Crosswalks
- Cobblestone Ends to Medians (flush)
- Reduced Curb Radii At All Corners
- New Sidewalks and Collector / Tree Strips



A Closer Look at the Intersections of Perrin and South Fountain

Springfield should follow NACTO standards wherever applicable.

Because the intersection is offset, new curbs should reshape the path of South Fountain Avenue which will gently guide drivers to the stopping point at all four entries into the intersection. The turning radii at all corners (even the acute angles) of the intersection should be no greater than 16'.

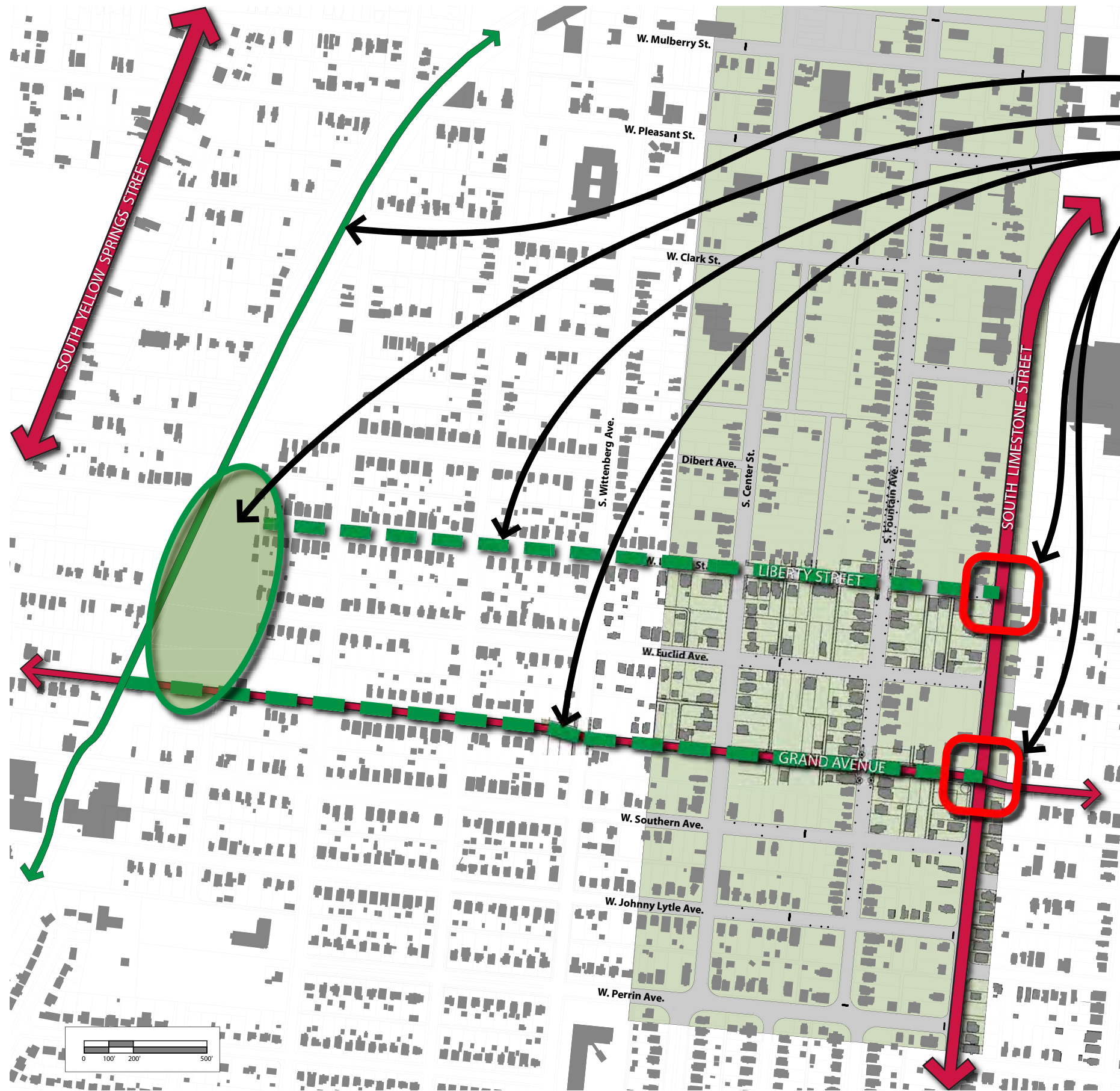
Crosswalks at this intersection should be 10' wide, painted zebra-stripes or minimum 1' wide single line stripes. The front rail of each crosswalk should be placed no farther than 4' from the projected curb line, and no closer than 2'. Double yellow lines on South Fountain Avenue should extend no farther than necessary to indicate to drivers where the curve of the street is.

Placement of the new curb along Perrin should be approximately the same as the extant condition. However, the existing sidewalk should be removed and replaced with a new 5' wide concrete sidewalk positioned so that a minimum 5' wide collector / tree strip is formed between the new sidewalk and the new curb. Substantially-sized trees and post-top streetlights should be installed in the collector strip. It is preferable that electric lines be fed underground.

The median should be grassy with trees. Ornamental trees should be placed at the major intersections. The median should be 12' wide (which will match the median west of Wittenberg Street). At the ends of the median, where it intersects with the crosswalks, the crosswalk markings should take precedence. The curb of the median (if there is one) should stop "before" the crosswalks allowing the crosswalks to pass through. The nosing of medians should be made of cobblestone or textured concrete so drivers can feel the rumbling of their tires as they pass over. It may be possible for a curbless median to be constructed as a bio-swale, thereby becoming drainage for the street.

The intersection (shown to the left) was drafted to allow full turns by school buses in all directions. The intersection was drafted utilizing information obtained from Clark County and from field measurements. It is believed that this new configuration can occur without the need to acquire any additional property for the right-of-way although field surveying should verify that belief.

REINFORCE EAST AND WEST CONNECTIONS



Connection Opportunities:

- Little Miami Scenic Bike Trail
- Potential Trail Head and Large Park
- East-West Car, Bike, and Pedestrian
- Key Connective Intersections

Recommendation: Reinforce East/West Connections

While the study area is only 3 blocks wide east to west, the broader neighborhood from South Limestone to South Yellow Springs offers additional opportunity. But the emergence of that inclusive overall vibrancy is dependent on what some might consider – wrongfully – minor streets.

East/West connections should be reinforced as thoughtfully as those running North/South and, in this area, offer some special opportunities.

As the profile of the neighborhood rises and development on Limestone emerges, particularly at the intersections of Liberty and Grand, the neighborhood will become more connected and visitors will venture into the area. That comfort and those visitations could lead to development and growth.

Liberty terminates at the Little Miami Scenic trail, offering the possibility of a cycling trail head.

Grand Avenue, signalized at Limestone, could be a site for a concentration of neighborhood amenities.

The demolished manufacturing buildings between Liberty and Grand along the Little Miami Bike Trail could be a substantial park, hosting features such as an amphitheater, playground, sculpture garden or sport courts. A portion of this land might also be used for a new senior housing development, putting eyes on the park and creating an opportunity for the area's older residents to age in their community.

Lastly, along all these streets, as in the larger area, pedestrians should be prioritized. This is a lovely neighborhood, home to children, families and seniors. Their streets should at all times be comfortably walkable.

IMPROVE DOWNTOWN CONNECTIONS

Engaged Neighborhood and Downtown Transition Area



Recommendation: Improve Downtown Connections

While the study area ends at Pleasant Street, its northernmost boundary is a five-minute walk from downtown Springfield and the Little Miami Bike Trail.

Unfortunately, along South Fountain, this walk is neither engaging nor especially pleasant. Bordered by parking lots and a solid yet landscaped frontage of the Kuss Auditorium and the Clark County Public Library, the span leaves much to be desired. Building fronts don't engage with the street, and the parking lots create a void which discourages pedestrian interaction.

Generally, research shows that pedestrians will travel 1200 - 1500 feet if there's something engaging to be moving toward. The distance from the edge of the Historic District to the fountain is about 850 feet, well within the tolerance for a **pleasant** walk.

It's slightly better walking to downtown along Center, with more buildings interspersed among the parking lots. But then it's worse along Limestone, where the traffic configuration plus parking lots chop up the momentum.

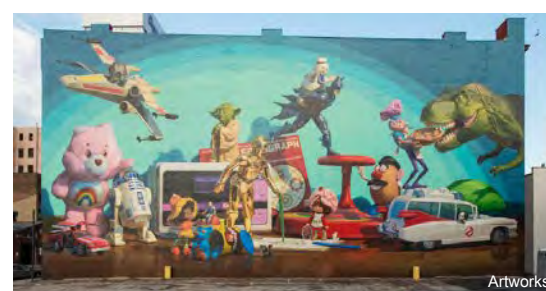
Yet as many of the buildings in this zone are institutional and relatively new, replacing parking lots with buildings is not an option.

But parking lots and buildings offer opportunities for tactical activation and visual improvements to bridge gaps in the walk to downtown and add liveliness to the corridor. What about wall murals? A sculpture program? Historic plaques? Interesting plantings in tree strips? While the means are myriad, the goal is simple: to enliven a dull but important corridor connecting one of Springfield's most interesting neighborhoods to the urban core.

Cincinnati has had great impact and achieved regional renown through its art mural/summer employment program Artworks. <https://www.artworkscincinnati.org>

Improvements also can be made to Simon Kenton/Little Miami Trail trailhead at South Fountain to better activate that site.

Finally, South Fountain is two lanes in each direction with a painted center median. Since this is not a significantly trafficked street, traffic calming could be implemented. Calming could create and/or retain on-street parking, bike lanes, and other pedestrian buffers as well as offer additional opportunities for art and creativity.



GAMMON SQUARE



Recommendation: Cherish Gammon Square

Although Ohio was a crucial state to the Underground Railroad, fewer than 30 known Underground Railroad sites remain.

The Gammon House of Springfield is one.

This should be a source of significant civic pride by the citizens of Springfield. Yet, when stakeholders were asked to list the greatest assets of the neighborhood, Gammon House, located at 602 Piqua Place, was often forgotten.

Of rather modest size and sited on a somewhat hidden block Gammon House is out of sight, out of mind. Piqua Place is a secondary street, only one block long and set back from Center Street 100'. The block of lots between Center and Piqua Place, now vacant, were previously occupied by buildings which completely obscured Gammon House from view.

That vacant land is now an opportunity, of which more later.

Those same forgetful stakeholders, when reminded of Gammon House, were quick to identify it as a treasure and potential regional draw.

The present owners of Gammon House, a historic trust, have done a heroic job in restoring the structure, working on the property for years. Their vision is of an historic site alive today as a reminder of an unjust past but a hopeful future.

This is a jewel in the midst of the study area.

The Community could create a set of high-quality gathering places which raises the profile of Gammon House, cultivates a publicly appealing venue and promotes a distinctive asset of the area. In this way Springfield will attract visitors from throughout the Midwest to a unique cultural, educational and retreat venue.

GAMMON SQUARE



THE GAMMON SQUARE SITE

The primary intersection nearest the Gammon House is Center and Clark. The House sits southeast of that on Piqua Place, neighbored by private homes to the north and south.

The vacant land situated between Gammon House and Center Street is about two-thirds of an acre. This area, called here Gammon Green, offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create gathering spaces which would lift Gammon House to more prominence and add substantial assets to the community.

An additional heritage site, the Robert C. Henry House, is at the opposite corner of Center and Clark. Henry was the first African-American to be elected mayor of an Ohio city and in fact among the first of any city in the United States. The house continues to operate as the Robert C. Henry Funeral Home.

A small grassy lot with a number of mature trees lies between Henry House and the intersection of Center and Clark Streets. This land, along with the potential Gammon Green, offers more than an acre for new uses.

Moreover, these two sites, situated proximate to each other, offer a potential cultural gravity that the City of Springfield and prominent civic partners could curate into a regional destination.



Clark Street and Center Street intersection looking southeast

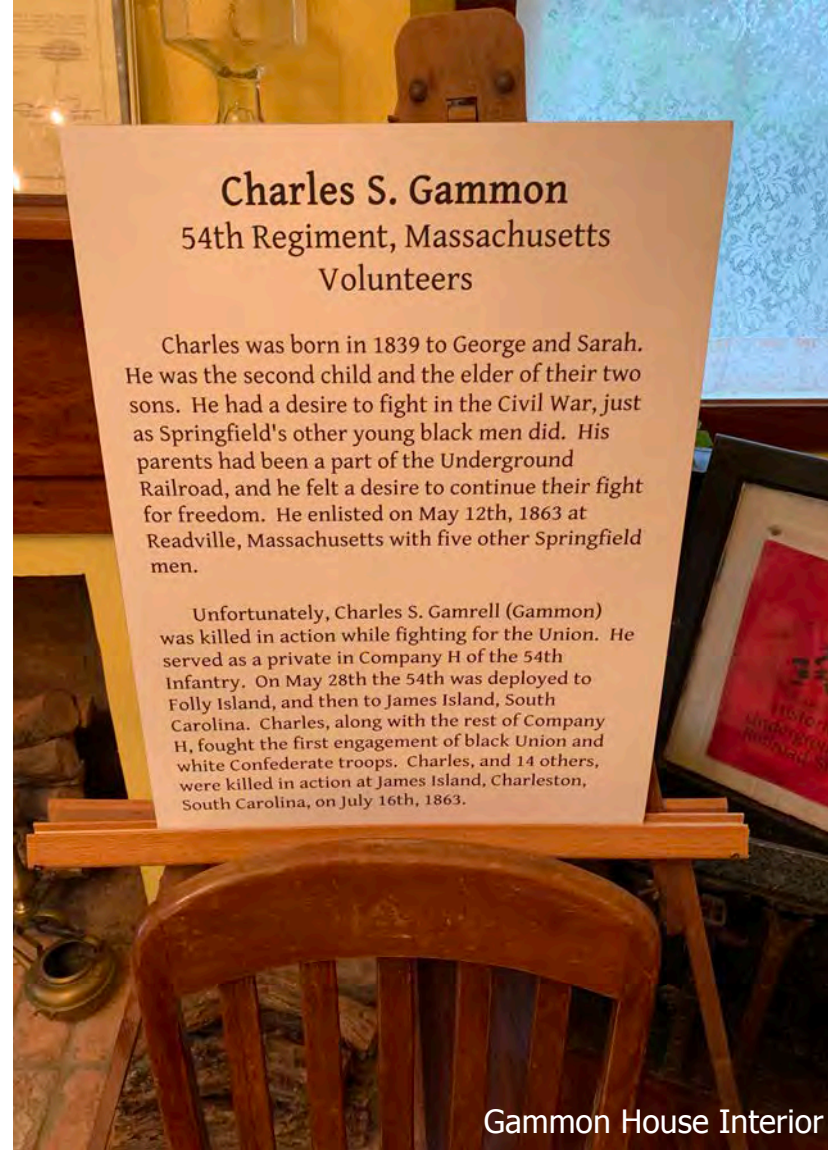


Clark Street and Center Street intersection looking northwest

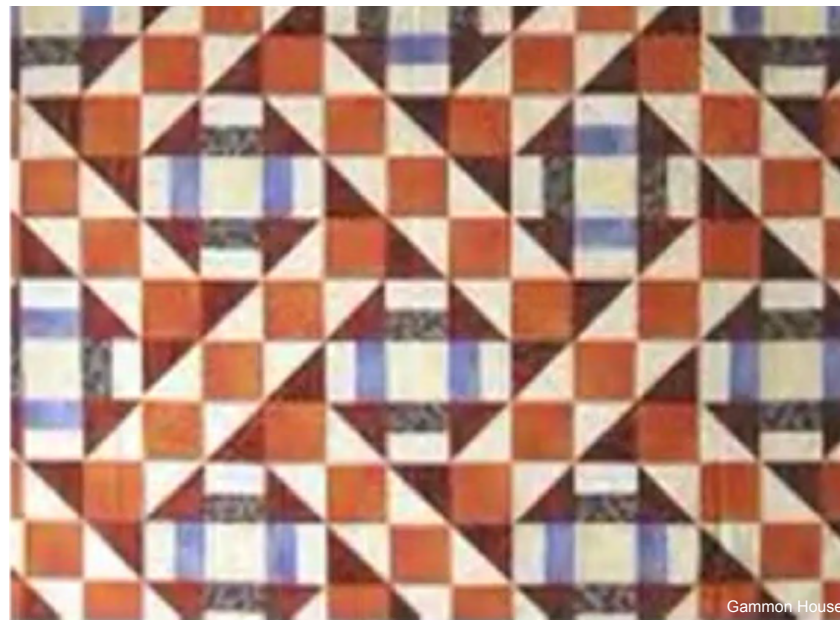
GAMMON SQUARE



Gammon House Interior



Gammon House Interior



Gammon House



Case Study: John Parker House

For 150 years, a lone house has sat at the edge of the Ohio River, and at the edge of Ripley Ohio. Home of John P. Parker in the 1860s this historic residence was a gateway to Ohio along the Underground Railroad.

Parker, himself a former slave, sheltered escaped slaves. One such was Margaret Garner who would later become the basis for the character Eliza in Uncle Tom's Cabin. After his death in 1900, the house changed hands but by the 1980's was abandoned and in disrepair.



A non-profit group, The John P. Parker Historical Society, was formed in 1996 to purchase the site. Over time the house and grounds were restored, and a park created adjacent to the house. Today the Parker Historic Site is a part of the National Park Service. The society curates the museum and holds regular events, continuing to tell the story of abolitionism and especially Parker's work in the Underground Railroad.

John Parker House serves as a vivid example of building a brand for the neighborhood by highlighting history. Gammon House is well positioned to fill the same role for the study area, Springfield and the broader region, highlighting a strong local asset while also inviting destination visitors to explore an important era in American history.

GAMMON SQUARE: PAINT THE STREETS WITH HERITAGE



PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Painted "Quilt" Intersection
- "Gammon Square" Square Signs

A Place to Start: Paint the Streets with Heritage: The community should paint the intersection of Center Street and Clark Street as well as the portion of Pi-qua Place in front of the Gammon House as soon as good weather returns. What to paint? Well, almost anything - that's the great thing about paint.

But in this case, the painted intersection of Center and Clark Streets should be steeped with meaning. So how about a quilt pattern, an artifact so essential to the routes of escaping slaves?

According to legend, the Gammon family and other conductors along the Under-ground Railroad hung quilts over their windowsills to let escaping slaves know that they had reached a place of safety. Many historians believe that symbolic messages were sewn into quilt patterns.

So, what better graphic to remind those present-day visitors to Gammon Square that this place welcomes those who wish to learn and celebrate understanding? Painting a quilt pattern on the streets, as shown here with an actual historic design, is one example of a design that can exuberantly proclaim a vibrant connection to history. The final decision on a design, however, should be community-driven.

Citizens sometimes feel that improvements take too long, hoping for more immedi-ate impact. Street painting can be as quick as weather allows and a painting party, involving young and old, is a wonderful opportunity to show pride, signal momentum and foster community connection. It's also a natural hook for publicity - what better image for the nightly news than area children decorating their streets and talking about their community's connection to one of the nation's most important moments. The painted area should be huge; worthy of notice by those in other cities.

If resources allow, it would not be too early to also install signs announcing Gam-mon Square. These should have a durable permanent appearance. As means allow, the community should also install directional signs at major gateways and along heavily travelled corridors, directing visitors to this cherished and valuable resource.



GAMMON SQUARE: PERMANENT PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS



Bigger Goals: Public Improvements

- Lanterns at terminated views of Clark St.
- Cobblestone or Paver Intersection
- Ornamental Street Trees at Gammon and Henry Houses

South Center Street Improvements:

- Move Curbs to Narrow Street
- Add Bump-outs for Crosswalks and Vehicle Parking & Drop-off
- Replace Sidewalks
- Create Larger Collector Strips and Add Street Trees
- Replace Street Lights with Historic Style

As exciting as painting streets may be, it's only temporary. To create an enduring destination and community asset, permanent investment is required.

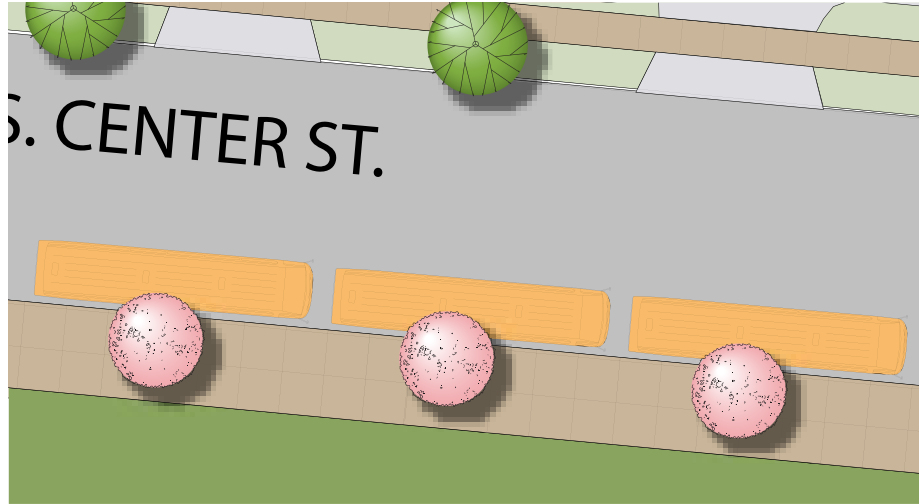
Springfield, working closely with neighborhood associations, could install permanent improvements to the public realm in order to create a dramatic, meaningful pedestrian-friendly place for residents, tourists, and academic visitors.

Improvements could incorporate symbolic elements that reinforce the meaning and importance of Gammon House and the Robert Henry House.

Shown here are several ideas that might be incorporated over time, adding up to a place that is dramatic, meaningful and pedestrian friendly for residents and visitors alike.



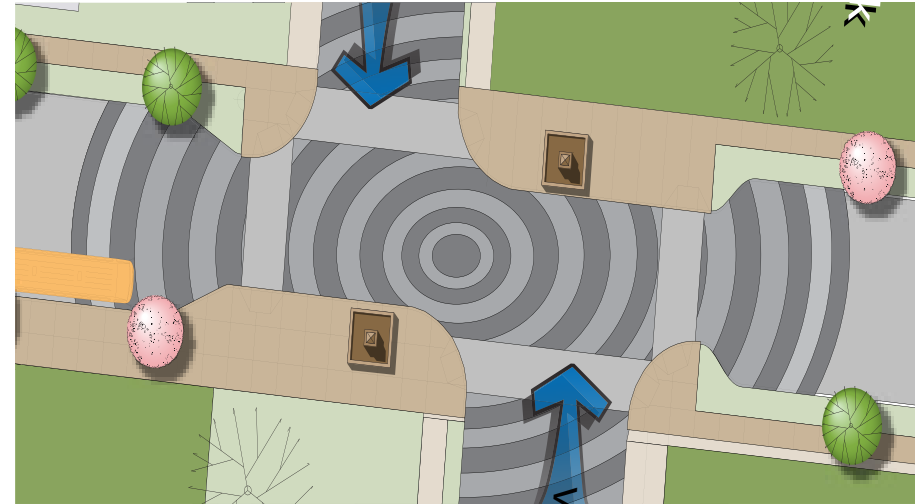
GAMMON SQUARE: PERMANENT PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT ELEMENTS



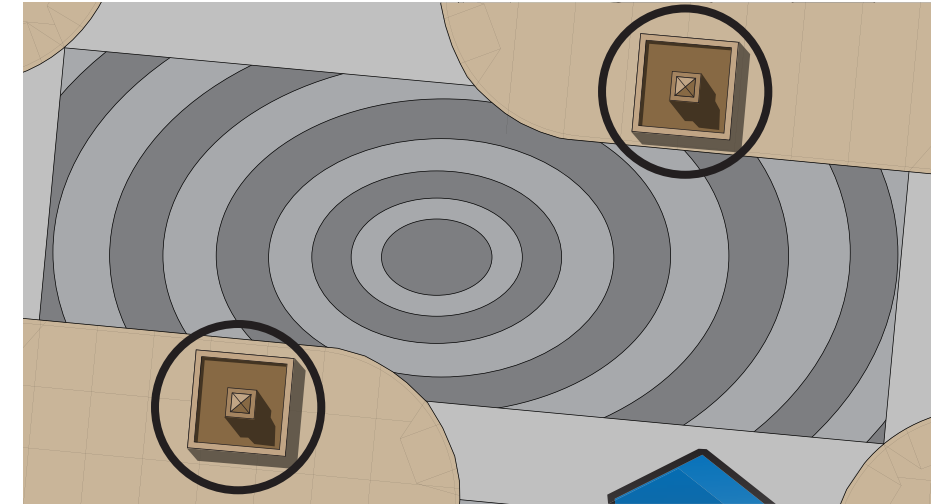
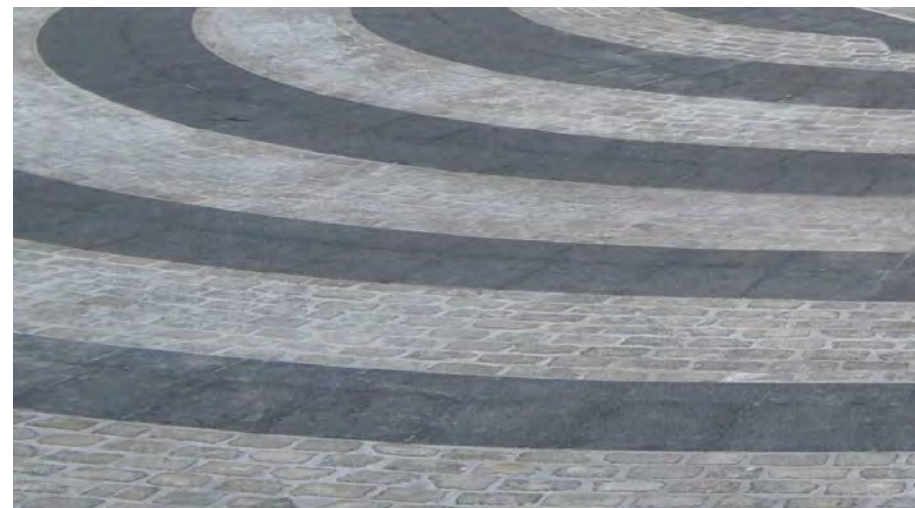
Ornamental Street Trees: These should be used to create a sense of entry and a softening effect along South Center Street frontage of both Gammon Green and Henry Park. Seen from afar, colorful trees indicate a special place is ahead.



The Tree Center



Cobblestone or Paver Intersections: The materials could be complimentary to materials used for other nearby improvements such as the South Fountain Historic District Entries and architectural gateway markers. This inset will define the area as a special place which is cared for and permanent. Textured materials will encourage drivers to slow down when passing through this pedestrian-friendly place.



Lanterns: West Clark Street is offset at South Center Street, so neither vehicles nor pedestrians can see down the street when entering at Clark. The city, working with prominent partners and the community could install signature lanterns at the terminus of Clark Street.

Placed in newly created bump-outs, these would be seen from all directions, and unlike other components, uniquely effective after dark. Lanterns were used along the Underground Railroad to illuminate otherwise frightening nights and show escaping slaves the path to freedom.



GAMMON SQUARE: PRIVATE IMPROVEMENTS



PRIVATE IMPROVEMENTS - Phase 2

- Gammon Green with "Framing" Trees
- "River" and Origin Fountain
- Gammon Plaza and Information Kiosks
- Amphitheater and Monument Wall

Gammon Green: This portion of the Plan highlights ideas for improvements which might be made to private property. Chances of success are best when private-public partnerships are cultivated, and the efforts by one are reinforced by the other.

These ideas have been shared with the owners of Gammon House.

While the community paints the streets and installs signs, the owners of Gammon House and other private property could be planning, designing, fundraising. During that period, Gammon House owners simply need to maintain the Gammon Green as a grassy field – and continue to fundraise.

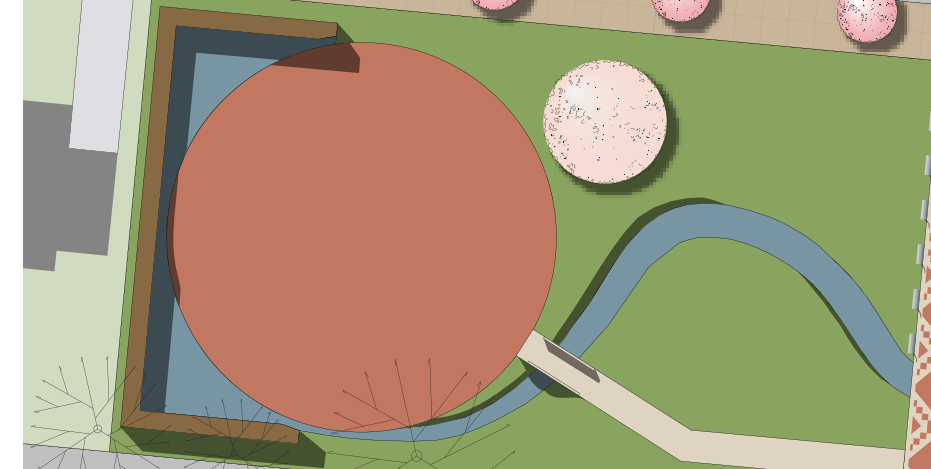
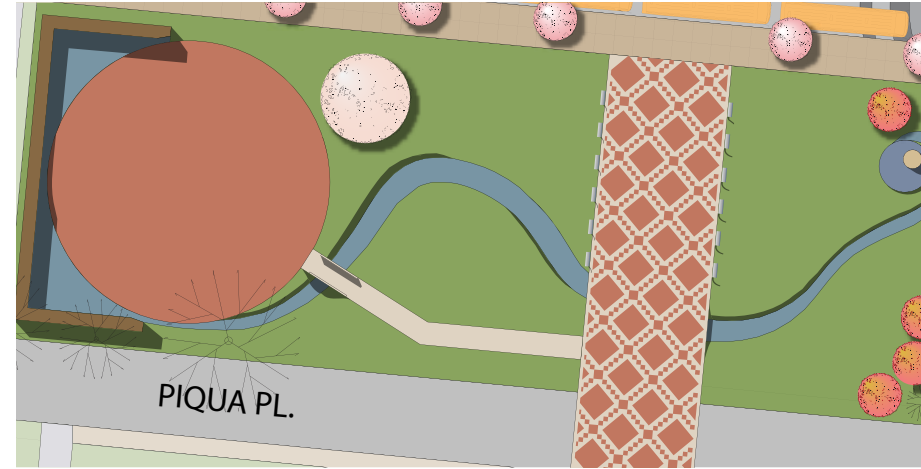
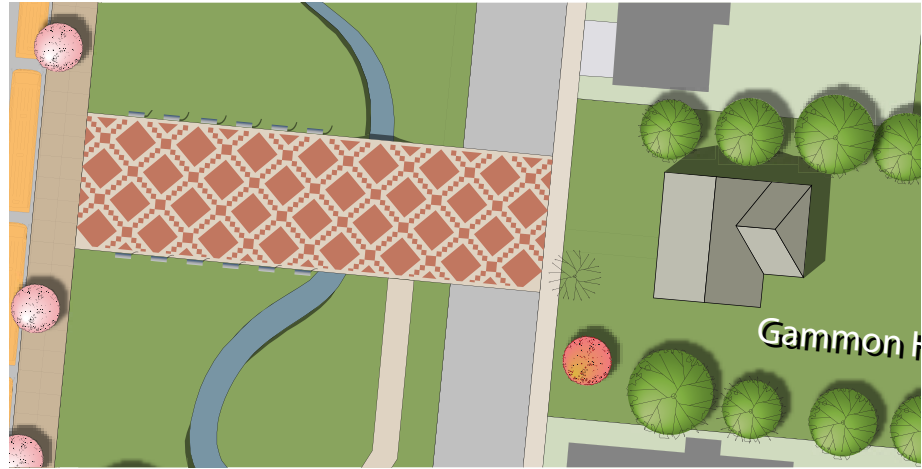
Currently the lot on the northwest corner of Clark and South Center Streets is owned by Henry House. If it is their wish to enhance their property by participating in area improvements, this spot represents a singular opportunity to create a small park, enriching the connection between these two historic homes.

This park could have a hardscaped space of brick or pavers where visitors might gather. Columns and ornamental trees could frame the space with other foliage planted to the west to provide shade and a soft perimeter.

While Gammon Green must have engaging features, it should remain relatively simple, conveying the feeling of an oasis, a place apart from its busy urban surroundings.



GAMMON SQUARE: PRIVATE IMPROVEMENT ELEMENTS



Gammon Quilted Plaza and Information Kiosks: A plaza should be constructed as a primary place of arrival for visitors, including large groups.

Gammon Plaza could be made of high quality, durable materials, its design embedded with meaning. Perhaps it could take inspiration from a quilt pattern that the Gammons might have displayed at the window to show escaping slaves that this was a welcoming, safe place.

Display Kiosks, made of durable, outdoor materials, could line Gammon Plaza. Creatively designed to fuel the emotional goals of the space, they could reflect the austerity of slavery, and the hopeful promise of lessons learned offering visitors' information even when Gammon House isn't open.

River and Origin Fountain: Water features often play a critical role in creating an environment of contemplation. Fountains mitigate surrounding noise by providing ambient sounds of splashing. Reflecting ponds produce feelings of serenity and peacefulness.

Water features at Gammon Green could be both functional and symbolic. A fountain placed near the intersection of Clark Street and South Center Street would offer the greatest amount of noise masking, inducing a serenity that would pervade the entire site.

A symbolic river could be constructed to flow from the fountain and through the plaza, linking various elements of Gammon Green, and invoking the Ohio – which provided the threshold to freedom for escaping slaves. If that river became a site for splashing children, such happy sounds would provide a different background to contemplation, subtly future-oriented and positive.

Amphitheater and Monument Wall: The Gammon House has been restored with adherence to its original architectural quality. It currently contains wall displays and other artifacts and will be the central feature of a visit to Gammon Square. However, it is a modest-sized house and will not always be open for visitors. In addition to the assembly plaza, Gammon Green could host an amphitheater space for small lectures, performances, and group gatherings. It can be designed with simple elegance as a flat hardscaped space. Terraced seating would accommodate a variety of groups and also be a resting place for visitors coming to tour the site.

Single family houses will remain just to the south of Gammon Green on adjacent property. To prevent noise from spilling over to neighboring private property, and to maintain a sense of contemplative enclosure, a monument wall could be built along the southern property line. Of no more than 6' to 8', this could accommodate a water feature or outdoor displays and art. Such artwork could be either permanent or rotating exhibits.



GAMMON SQUARE INSPIRATIONS

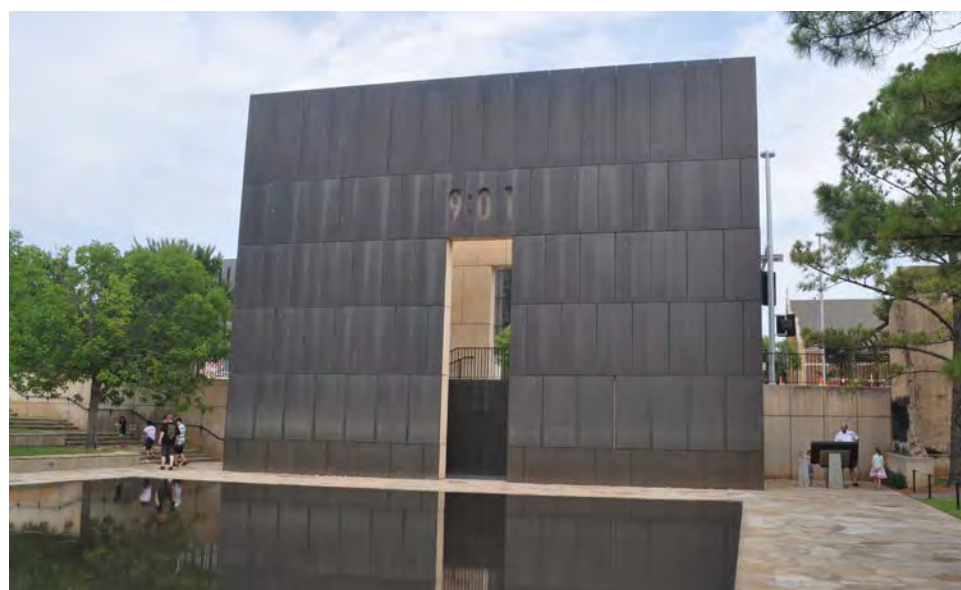
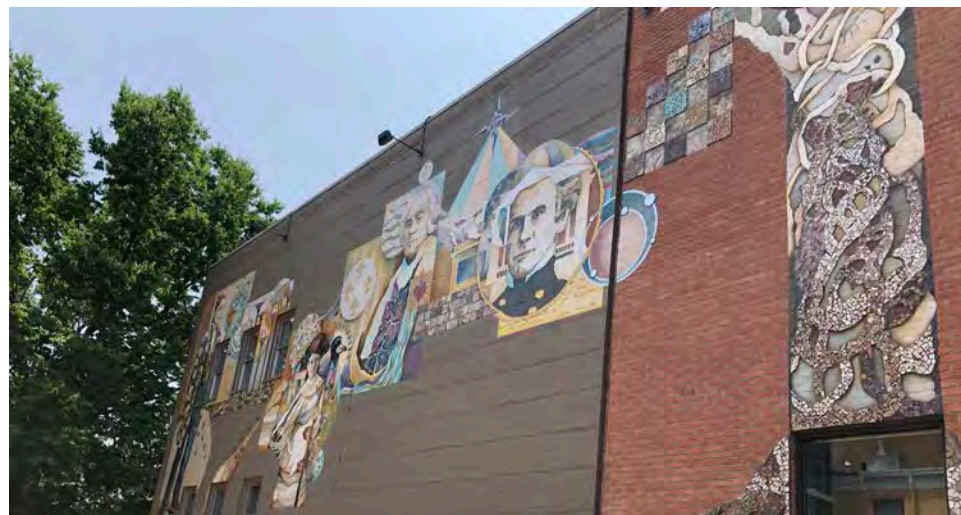


Amphitheater and Monument Wall

Monument walls can help enclose an outdoor space to form a comfortable, meditative environment. They can be designed artfully to encapsulate graphics, engravings, names, artifacts, to **evoke feelings imposed by distant events**. These walls can provide a sense of depth and even sacred thoughtfulness.

Monument walls can be built of stone, brick, wood, rusted or painted metal. They can be simple, ornate, square, curved, or covered with vines. They can have permanent fixtures such as engravings and entablatures, or exhibits that change with seasons. Monument walls can have water features such as fountains or pools at their base. They can have accent lighting for dramatic and symbolic effect.

The design of the monument wall, as well as all features of Gammon Green, should be thoughtfully conceived and creatively composed. They should be steeped with symbolism and effectively communicative. The collective result of the Gammon Green features should be to **make visitors feel welcome, educated, proud, and energized to create a more peaceful and just world**. Visitors should be emotionally impacted by these features so much so that they tell their acquaintances and seek a quick return to Gammon Square.



GAMMON SQUARE: VISITORS AND EVENT CENTER



PRIVATE IMPROVEMENTS - Phase 3 Visitors and Event Center

Location Options

Visitors and Event Center: Gammon House has artifacts and displays that explain who the Gammons were and what they accomplished. Modestly sized however, the house can only host so many people. To maximize its impact, the Gammon House could strongly consider developing an event center.

Such a center could host retreats, lectures, performances, and general events related to the study of the Underground Railroad.

Museums dedicated to the commemoration and study of the Underground Railroad exist, sparingly, throughout the eastern half of the country. However, Gammon's location as an Underground Railroad site is a particular distinction. A dedicated event center may enable the Gammon House to more fully engage with a network of Underground Museum venues, potentially leading to coordinated events such as lecture series, circulating exhibits, and other programs.

An event center also may open a revenue stream to make operations more consistently sustainable.



MARKETING AND BRANDING

PROMOTE EVERYTHING EVERYPLACE

Facebook: South Fountain Historic District has a page which has not been updated for some 45 days and posts are erratic throughout. The page has only 529 followers, too few for widespread impact.

Instagram: South Fountain has an Instagram page South-fountainave. The last post there was also about 45 days ago and posting is inconsistent, though many of the pictures are lovely. The page has only 599 followers.

In terms of reach, Facebook has more users by about double, but Instagram users tend to be more engaged. They are also more inclined to share content if it is interest aligned and photogenic. Facebook is a medium which supports more storytelling. Instagram is based on visual impact.

Instagram also tends to reach a younger demographic. Since the study area wants both a younger and an older audience, both platforms are useful.

Recommendation: Promote Everything Every Place

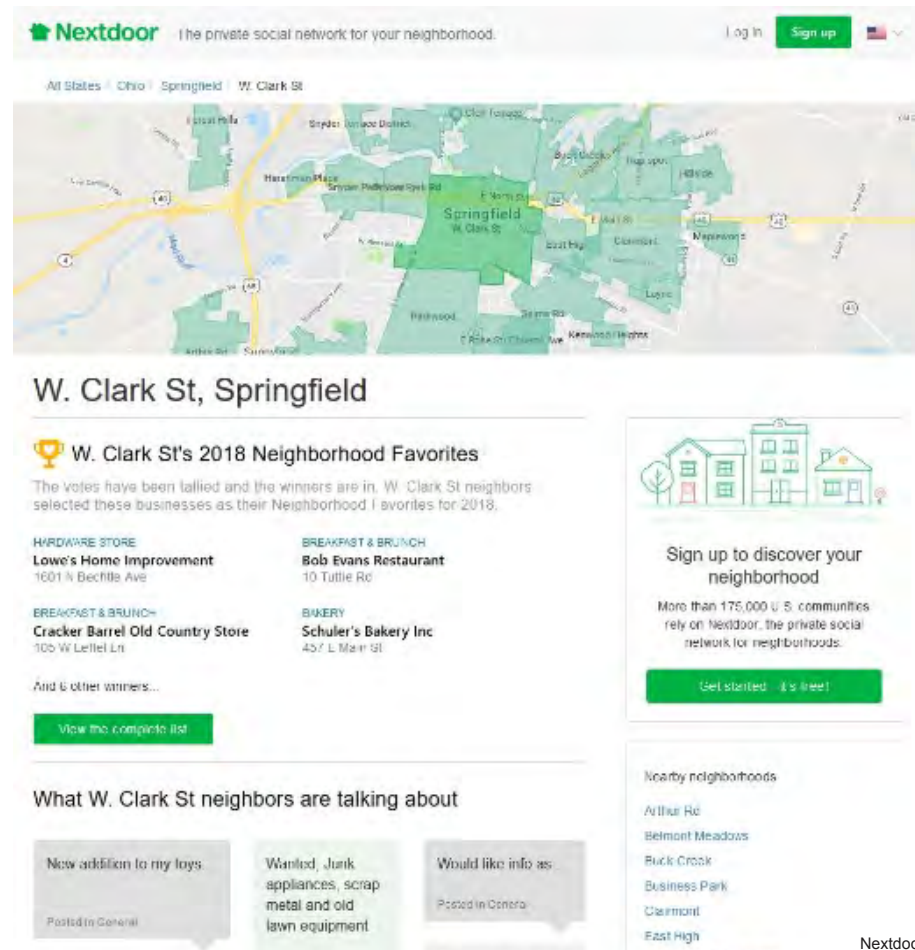
Social media sometimes looks like the best form of promotion, especially since it appears to be free. But as the Yellow Springs example highlights, free doesn't calculate the time and attention which must be supplied to make social media work.

And old media hasn't gone away. It just takes time and attention too.

There are a lot of proposed activities in this report: street painting, crosswalk installations, infrastructure upgrades, new developments, tree plantings. This is in addition to social activities already happening and yet to be planned. Each of these, every time, is an opportunity to seek publicity. Such efforts won't always succeed, but what's the harm in pitching?

Newspapers, radio and televisions still have pages and airtime to fill. Stay true to the brand but don't hide the area's light under a bushel, even an historic one. Take pictures of everything. Write interesting press releases and send them out. Pitch every story. Build relationships with the reporters who might receive such pitches. Take no for an answer on occasion but never as a matter of course.

Gradually but steadily the larger community will discover the study area and want to learn more.



Recommendation: Tell the Bad Stories as Well – To the Right Audience

Even in the best neighborhoods, things rarely go perfectly. And those stories need to be told too.

Is there is a problem the police should solve? Tell them.

The city not picking up trash from curb cans? Tell them.

Streetlights needing repairs from First Energy? Tell them.

Code enforcement problems? Tell them.

Neighbors should be empowered to help. Print a contact card with all the necessary numbers and distribute to every home. Encourage understanding that too often, due to resource limitations, service provision is complaint driven. By calling in a problem, politely but repeatedly if necessary, residents are actually helping ensure performance of basic functions. And that quality of life in the area is improved.

Axioms about grease and squeaky wheels have basis in reality. So, the neighborhood should yelp as loudly and long as it takes to get a matter solved.

Tips: Optimize Engagement on Instagram

Starting an account is easy but building an audience through engagement is the challenge. Below are some examples of non-profit and municipal Instagram users that have had success and one that has not. A general rule is to create engaging and unique content on a consistent basis, leverage hashtags (but don't go overboard) and innovate for your intended audience.



Paducah Kentucky's Instagrams follow these rules well. As shown above, they posted a great picture of an interesting scene in the city. Accompanied by a brief description and the appropriate hashtags to get search traction. It catches the eye. Consider that Paducah has attracted more likes and followers which translate into more positive branding, more local tourism and economic activity.

A second example is the Village of Silverton, OH, with an interview with a local business. Although well meaning, the level of interaction was low for this post. Instagram is a visual medium, such text heavy posts may be more appropriate for Facebook.

Community leaders and organizations in the Engaged Neighborhood have an opportunity to access new audiences through social media, engage a younger demographic and interact with residents, visitors and others in a more direct manner. Elevate the community profile by promoting the assets of the community consistently putting forth positive images and information.



COMMUNITY
GROWTH AND CIVIC
INFRASTRUCTURE

BUILD COMMUNITY ACTIVATION



Recommendation: Build Community Capacity

Community revitalization is a difficult process which requires (at least...) 3 things: Time, money and community capacity.

Time is what it is. Everyday check something off the to do list, thus moving a fraction closer to the goal. Inevitably those steps will add up to change.

Money is out there to be accessed. Neither readily nor easily but nonetheless available in support of clear objectives.

But making that to do list and continually seeking that money takes community capacity.

As discussed here: <https://communitydevelopmenttoolbox.weebly.com/community-capacity-building.html>, there are 4 key components to building that capability as stated below:

A sense of community: reflects the degree of connectedness among members and recognition of mutuality of circumstance, including a threshold level of collectively held values, norms, and vision.

A level of commitment among community members: describes the responsibility that particular individuals, groups, or organizations take for what happens in the community.

The ability to solve problems: is the ability to translate commitment into action and is an important component of virtually all definitions of capacity relating to community.

Access to resources: economic, human, physical, and political capital within and beyond the neighborhood"

The starting point is the first of these listed above: connectedness,

recognition of mutuality and determination of collectively held values. In the process of developing this report it became clear that the community has some fractures. Historic vs. Modern; Preservation vs. Demolition; Class vs. Class; and, quietly but nonetheless, black vs. white. It's an area of very committed people, all wanting their neighborhood to thrive but not, at the moment, regularly coalescing around common goals and shared values.

It takes a village to rebuild a village. Other communities have undertaken the detailed work to put together quality of life plans. In 2012 some 200 residents of Madisonville, a Cincinnati neighborhood, came together to work on such a plan, exploring the community's aspirations in 6 key areas.

<https://www.mcurc.org/quality-of-life-plan/>

Perhaps the most important part of the process was its inclusiveness. Participants came from across demographic sectors. Conversations were not always comfortable, but outcomes were better for the willingness of participants to be candid and step, at times, outside their comfort zones.

Recommendation: Support and Strengthen Neighborhood Association

Many communities benefit from an organization which deals regularly with the ordinary details of community. Monthly meetings, held in an accessible location, usually in the evening are a good way to work for change, plan events, deal with police problems and support change.

An association can be a regular forum to discuss problems and work through solutions. They are a regular, formal way for citizens to have a voice. Sometimes that speech is the expression of discontent, but



better to air differences than have them covertly undercutting progress. Regular forms of communication, such as newsletters, ensure that important information is shared equally.

Formally associations have usually organizing documents, officers and a regular schedule of meetings. When constituted in such a way they also usually have standing with local government. To get started, the city has a "How to Create a Neighborhood Association" packet and resources available on their website.

It's work but done well it's also a primary driver of community connection.

As the study area is not large, a joint association with the neighborhood to the west might be highly effective. Shared boundaries and common challenges are a good reason to work together with neighbors and progress might be accelerated.

Recommendation: Develop an Activation Strategy

In any community activation, one of the first decisions to be made concerns the audience being targeted. And a base line for that consideration is whether that focus is internal and external.

Internal events are generally about building community, while those with an external focus are about gaining recognition.

It is recommended that internal events be the first initiative. As noted above, this is an area still in the process of building cohesion. Inclusive events are a tool for that.

The community has a regular series of events, centered on holidays and historic assets, but, at least to an outsider, these appear to have a narrow focus both socially and geographically. It's important to note that an invitation is not always construed by the recipient as an encouragement. And even in neighborhoods, geography can be destiny.

A balance of styles and locations is likely to prove beneficial. Perhaps the two organizations noted following could share event planning and actively encourage their individual constituencies to join in.

External events too will benefit from greater inclusiveness. Promoting this area as Springfield's historic heart should be engaging citywide. Offer inclusive experiences which will invite outsiders in and make them very welcome when they arrive.

Eventbrite's website offers samples: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/community-event-ideas-ds00/>

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

But such a tally should be just the starting point for generating ideas that are engaging and authentic to the community.

One of the problems of community activation is the demands it makes of volunteers. Moreover, it is often those with the busiest lives who are most likely to step up. But it's necessary to actively recruit participants as well. Sometimes it's the quiet person in the corner who has a killer idea. Cast a wide net and find ways to encourage participation.

Lastly, consistency is key to activation. A regular calendar of events, large and small, is likely to have greatest impact. Annual events are terrific, but so are those which celebrate a street painting, highlight endings or beginnings, create friendly competition or invite some form of playful participation by young, old or both.

Recommendation: Leadership Matters

There are at least two strong organizations with deep roots in the community: South Fountain Preservation <https://www.southfountain.org/> and 1159 South <https://www.1159south.org/> .

The recommendations in this section, as well as most of those in this report, need the strongest commitment possible from the greatest number. There is more than enough work for every interested participant to have a share and make a difference.

Whether through a Quality of Life planning process or some other means it is essential, if the study area wants to make true progress, that its leaders work together to access the ideas and support the aspirations of all its residents.



SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

APPENDIX

Background Data
Workshop Feedback
Activation Phasing

Final Draft
February, 2020