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Introduction
The pattern of disinvestment is similar to what many urban neighborhoods have faced in an era of integration, suburbanization and inner-city depopulation. In a turnaround from recent decades, cities are starting to see renewed interest in urban living. These changes suggest that where there was once little hope for reversing disinvestment trends, there are today significant opportunities for harnessing this momentum to bring life back to Burnet Avenue. This possibility was a constant theme throughout this study—finding ways to “bring back Burnet Avenue” and restore its prior glory as a thriving urban main street. The goal: to make Burnet Avenue a unique urban place with an active and safe street life, including a range of new housing and retailing opportunities where people will choose to live and work.

Burnet Avenue and the study area are located in the Avondale community, part of Cincinnati’s Uptown District. The district encompasses a series of diverse neighborhoods with rich histories, a world-renowned university, cutting-edge healthcare and research institutions, lively neighborhood commercial areas, beautiful parks, the Cincinnati Zoo, and other important resources—all within walking distance of each other. The result is a uniquely vital “urban village” in which people of many ages, ethnic backgrounds, races, incomes, stages in life, and family types live, work, study, seek health care, shop, and play.

Successful revitalization of Burnet Avenue will depend on the ability of new development to capture the value of both “internal” or neighborhood-strengths and “external” strengths, which is to say the wealth of opportunities that Uptown offers. Internally, this will mean finding ways to build on a strong sense of community and residents’ desire to regain ownership of Burnet Avenue as a community-based Main Street. Externally, it will mean finding ways to encourage employees to live in the surrounding areas; and to gain access to spending by institutional employees on meals, services and entertainment; and an ability to tap into the institutions’ buying power (i.e., identifying development projects for Burnet Avenue that help create local business opportunities while achieving maximum neighborhood benefit).

HISTORY OF BART

In autumn 2003, representatives of LISC and the Avondale Community Council approached Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, the Health Alliance, and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens to request their support for a redevelopment initiative along Burnet Avenue. Later that fall, the representatives from the three institutions held a meeting with members of the community to discuss the role institutional stakeholders could play in a revitalization effort. At a subsequent meeting, the community and Institutions began considering how to move the effort from idea to reality. The acknowledgement that several past revitalization efforts had failed led the participants to conclude that a successful effort would require a more inclusive and integrated process than had been tried before, and that it would need to be led by a broad-based entity. The “Revitalization Team” would need a structure that gave institutional and non-institutional stakeholders equal voices in shaping a plan and strategy. The goal would be to seat Uptown institutions, residents of Avondale, the local Community Council and business association; homeowners; and other interested parties at one table to work collaboratively and comprehensively on the revitalization of Burnet Avenue.

The Burnet Avenue Revitalization Team or (BART) held its first meeting on January 29, 2004. It was charged with developing a revitalization plan that incorporates the goals and aspirations of the Burnet Avenue and Avondale communities, local business owners, and nearby institutions and stakeholders.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Burnet Avenue is well known as a neighborhood “Main Street” that has suffered from years, if not decades, of disinvestment and social change. Once it was a thriving, culturally rich area with many retailing choices, but little remains of the people or businesses that shaped the character of this predominantly African-American community. The street today is characterized by abandoned and underutilized buildings, vacant lots with overgrown vegetation, and multiple unclaimed urban spaces, all contributing to a perception that Burnet is unsafe, unattractive and isolated—in short, a place to avoid.

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PROCESS

The Burnet Avenue Revitalization Plan grew out of a community-based planning process that began in January 2004. BART served as the steering committee and advisors for the development of this plan and its process. The process began with an intensive analysis of the study area, and evolved through five phases: first, understanding the physical and social dimensions of the study area; second, planning and conducting a community workshop and charrette; third, outlining several alternative design options; fourth, working with the steering committee to improve the plan and develop a strategy for implementation and phasing; and fifth, refining the draft and final versions of the revitalization plan and developing general design guidelines for each phase of development.

The consultants met regularly with BART over the course of the study to review work that had been completed to date, advance strategies for revitalizing Burnet Avenue, and set the agenda for various community events. Early in the process, the consultant team worked with BART to identify key stakeholders, including the city (Department of Community Development); major institutions (including the Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati Zoo, and the Health Alliance); neighborhood leaders (Avondale Community Council); local developers; residents; homeowners; local businesses; and others. Initial wide-ranging interviews helped uncover areas of shared vision, opportunity and challenge, which then formed the basis of subsequent
workshops and a community charrette, where residents, business owners and stakeholders came together to participate in a day long planning session.

After the initial phases of work were complete, including interviews and analysis, the consultants worked with BART to organize and conduct a daylong community workshop and charrette, in which over 40 people participated. Numerous flyers were sent to residents and stakeholders to publicize community meetings, keep people informed about the development of the revitalization plan, and express the planning principles that emerged from the charrette.

In addition to the community events, members of BART would “check-in” regularly with each of their respective communities or constituents at each stage of the planning process to gain further input into the development of the plan. The final plan reflects the goals articulated by BART, various stakeholders, community members, and the participants in the workshop and charrette.
STUDY AREA
The revitalization plan for Burnet Avenue encompasses an eleven square-block area within the neighborhood of Avondale, bounded by Erkenbrecker Avenue to the south; Harvey Avenue to the east; Drury Avenue to the west; and Forest Avenue to the north. The area is directly adjacent to several regional institutions, including Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. This unique positioning between neighborhood and regional resources affords great opportunities and challenges to the revitalization of this area.

Uptown Cincinnati is well known for a multitude of regional and national institutions that have collectively had a significant impact on the area’s economic growth. While major institutions have seen tremendous growth internally, many of the surrounding communities have seen paralleled disinvestment over the last several decades. As with each of the other neighborhoods that play a part in Uptown, Avondale has a unique and rich history as a predominantly African-American community. Revitalization of Burnet and the surrounding blocks offers the chance to leverage both the regional economic opportunities that Uptown affords and to preserve the neighborhood character integral to the Avondale community.
EXISTING CHARACTER

Rockdale Elementary School
The new Rockdale School (shown here under construction) will become a neighborhood anchor for students, residents and the broader community.

Drury Lot
A large surface parking lot within the study area that has long-term commitments to serving the area’s institutional parking demands.

Residential Blocks
Many of the existing homes within the area are original and are the source of high maintenance. While many homes have been well-maintained, others are either vacant or in great disrepair.

Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
Children’s, one of many hospitals to the south of the study area, offers a unique change in both scale and character. Collectively, these institutions are a significant source of jobs for Uptown.

Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens
The zoo and its botanical garden are a unique neighbor to the study area, and could offer opportunities for creative partnerships with the community.

Strip Development
Much of the northern portions of Burnet Avenue are characterized by “strip mall” development, with large surface parking lots at the street and one-story retail set further back. These buildings do not contribute to defining a main street character on Burnet Avenue.

Contributing Buildings
Several of the remaining buildings, mostly clustered at the intersection of Rockdale and Burnet avenues, offer a “historic” character to Burnet Avenue. While the lower levels are boarded-up, the upper levels still have active uses. If feasible, revitalization options should explore ways to renovate and restore these “main street” buildings that could contribute to the environment of Burnet Avenue.

Erkenbrecher
While some are in need of repair, the existing homes south of Erkenbrecher are unique in design and layout, offering opportunities to renovate and enhance the residential fabric within the study area.

Burnet Avenue
Burnet Avenue has many vacant or abandoned buildings along the four blocks within the study area. Very few retail shops remain, and many of the ground floors have been boarded up since tenants vacated. Nearly half of the street is either vacant or abandoned, offering a great opportunity to rebuild much of the Burnet Avenue.
CHALLENGES

- Safety—rebuild Burnet Avenue to reclaim community ownership.
- Reverse the disinvestment pattern along Burnet Ave and throughout the surrounding neighborhood.
- Redevelop large and unattractive parking lots into a series of urban places. Put life back into Burnet Avenue and build a critical mass of retail, cultural, entertainment and similar active uses.
- Establish trust and rapport between the community and surrounding institutions—create a new and productive dialog to achieve mutual benefits.
- Eliminate vacant and abandoned buildings and develop a new image that involve African-American businesses in the development and the area’s mass appeal.
- Overcome development feasibility challenges.
• Create a pedestrian-friendly public realm that is the heart of the community.
• Seek a diverse mix of uses:
  > Retail
  > Arts and culture
  > Public space
  > Office
  > Institutional (including offices and research)
  > Housing
  > Parking
• Foster a new bridge between the institutions and the neighborhood to unlock future development potential.
• Reconnect the surrounding residential blocks to Burnet Avenue—enhance the quality and character of their streets by infilling them with new housing.
• Establish a phased strategy—large enough to make a difference, achievable over time.
• Create a series of “signature spaces” that celebrate the identity of this neighborhood—architectural gateways, new street signs, public squares and urban places.
• Connect the Rockdale School to its surrounding neighborhood.

• Strengthen business opportunities for local and minority entrepreneurs.
• Create a healthy business district along Burnet Avenue.
• Enhance the image of Burnet Avenue to capture more local and regional patrons.
• Seek a new identity that is unique, enabling Burnet Avenue to become known for special retailing experiences unlike those on many of its nearby competitors.
On September 11, 2004 over 40 participants attended a workshop and charrette for revitalization of Burnet Avenue and surrounding residential blocks. In the morning, a series of workshops prepared participants for the afternoon design exercise. The topics for the workshops included:

**Understanding the neighborhood context**
What are the emerging issues from the Uptown Study and how do they pertain to Burnet Avenue? What is the Consortium’s role in Uptown?

**Safety and Fostering Community**
What safety issues affect Burnet Avenue? What actions are being taken to improve safety and promote a better place for people to live and work along Burnet Avenue?

**Development and Economic Inclusion**
A discussion of key elements that are driving today’s development projects.
- Housing
- Office
- Mixed use
- African-American business participation

**Urban Issues and Opportunities**
Burnet Avenue and study area urban issues and opportunities
- Public realm
- Land uses
- Housing infill and new development
- Retail and office
- Connections (pedestrian and open spaces)

Participants included residents, business owners, area stakeholders and city and neighborhood representatives. In the afternoon the participants worked in small breakout groups facilitated by members of BART and the consultant team to discuss a series of questions focusing on the neighborhood’s assets, problems and opportunities for revitalization. Representatives of the small groups presented each group’s work to the other participants at the end of the day. The principles and revitalization plan that follow this section represent the collective thinking that came out of the workshop, charrette and numerous BART meetings.
Principles and Revitalization Plan
SECTION

PRINCIPLES

1) Develop a bold plan and “big enough” to make a real difference for the people who live and work in the community.
   • Redevelop as much of Burnet Avenue as is feasible.
   • Create buildings with enough height (3-5 or more floors) to attract investment, enable ground floor neighborhood-oriented retail, and ensure the avenue is attractive.

2) Pay attention to safety—develop an action plan to take back Burnet for the neighborhood.

3) Create a unique identity for Burnet that celebrates the community and its culture.
   • Create gateway developments where Burnet crosses Forest and Ekenbrecher.
   • Preserve and redevelop special buildings that convey a sense of the Avenue’s rich history (e.g., the RED Building at the corner of Burnet and Rockdale).
   • Line the street with retail, galleries, community-based organizations like the Pride Center, and other uses that serve the neighborhood and draw people to use and enjoy the avenue.

4) Seek new development opportunities that celebrate Avondale’s and Burnet Avenue’s “Afrocentric” character.
   • Include projects that support active ground floor ethnic and cultural uses.
   • Create and promote opportunities for economic inclusion.

5) Create places for people of all ages—including a proud new civic space on Burnet.

6) Seek uses that include neighborhood-oriented retail (possibly a quality restaurant, café, or bakery).

7) Introduce housing, office, and other uses to support development that includes retail and similar active, pedestrian-friendly, uses at street level.

8) Work with adjacent institutions to create opportunities for small businesses that can support the institutions’ needs (cleaners, uniforms, workforce training, catering, others?).

9) Extend the benefits of revitalization to the entire neighborhood:
   • Seek development that maximizes job opportunities for local residents while expanding local business ownership.
   • Create a strategy for infill housing.
   • Establish programs to support expanded home ownership.
   • Expand access to home-improvement loans.
   • Prepare design guidelines for Burnet Avenue and the rest of the neighborhood.

10) Capitalize on the new school and the programs it offers—embrace the community-based approach to the school and give the school a unique identity on Burnet Avenue.

11) Promote positive advertising for Burnet Avenue and Avondale—overcome the myths, misconceptions, and advance our new vision.

12) Act now—let’s make something happen to celebrate change!!
**INTRODUCTION**

1. **Burnet Avenue Revitalization Strategy**
   - The future parking and preserve space for additional recreational use.
   - Redoelop the gas station site. Seek community-related uses such as classrooms and community rooms that expand programs with the hospitals and zoo.
   - Work with the city to re-stripe crosswalks—promoting a pedestrian-safe and friendly environment.
   - Fill in vacant lots with new homes seeking assistance through homeownership programs.
   - Rebuild the neighborhood block with a mix of housing that will accommodate a range of incomes and housing choices.
   - Work with the city and school department to promote existing programs at the new Rockdale Park. The new park can include outdoor classrooms that explore natural habitats and botanical gardens.
   - Enhance the character of Erkenbrecher—between Harvey and Drury—to provide a better transition between the existing homes and nearby institutions.
   - Work with the city and school department to promote existing programs at the new Rockdale Park. The new park can include outdoor classrooms that explore natural habitats and botanical gardens.
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   - Target home-ownership programs to gain new homeowners within the area.
   - Collaborate with the nearby institutions, such as the Health Alliance and Children’s Hospital, to promote Burnet and Avondale as places to live, work, shop and play for these institutions’ employees.

**VISION PLAN**

2. **Proposed Rockdale School.**
3. **Fill in vacant lots with new homes seeking assistance through homeownership programs.**
4. **Seek ways to maintain a pedestrian connection to the zoo for nearby community members who are part of the zoo’s education and research programs.**
5. **Rebuild the neighborhood block with a mix of housing that will accommodate a range of incomes and housing choices.**
6. **Provide new parking structures that accommodate the existing parking needs of the institutions while “wrapping” the edges with housing.**
7. **Work with the city and school department to promote existing programs at the new Rockdale Park. The new park can include outdoor classrooms that explore natural habitats and botanical gardens.**
8. **Enhance the character of Erkenbrecher—between Harvey and Drury—to provide a better transition between the existing homes and nearby institutions.**
9. **Work with the city and school department to promote existing programs at the new Rockdale Park. The new park can include outdoor classrooms that explore natural habitats and botanical gardens.**
10. **Target home-ownership programs to gain new homeowners within the area.**
11. **Collaborate with the nearby institutions, such as the Health Alliance and Children’s Hospital, to promote Burnet and Avondale as places to live, work, shop and play for these institutions’ employees.**
12. **Rebuild Burnet Avenue. Work with the City to identify feasible or potential public/private mixed-use sites along Burnet Avenue (now sidewalks, crosswalks, street furniture, lighting and on-street parking).**
13. **Work with the postal service to unlock the long-term redevelopment of the post office site. Seek near-term development options that include a new building on the existing surface parking lot. This building would provide a new face along Burnet while preserving the post office building. The two buildings would be linked by a new lobby, providing a modern public facade.**
14. **Transform the existing median strip into a well-landscaped “mini-park.”**
15. **New apartments and townhomes on the north side of Rockdale will provide choices for residents with mixed incomes and diverse housing preferences.**
16. **New buildings on Burnet should face the street to recreate its “historic main street” character.**
17. **Create a new linear park to link Harvey and Bucket.**
18. **“Wrap” structured parking with housing.**
19. **Create new housing that has a range of unit types.**
20. **Rear and on-street lot support ground level retail uses.**
21. **Create new housing that faces the street to recreate its “historic main street” character.**
22. **“Wrap” structured parking with housing.**
23. **Create new housing that faces the street to recreate its “historic main street” character.**
24. **New development should include housing on the upper levels and a public plaza at the street center.**
25. **Creation of the existing retail site should create a prominent “gateway” at the corner of Burnet and Forest and to the home for the Pride Center. Buildings should be a new mixed-use hotel and retail space on the ground floor. Parking should be located behind the buildings.**
26. **New structured parking can support development along Burnet Avenue.**
27. **A new parking structure lined with housing will provide much-needed parking for new development along Burnet Avenue, while building a residential face along Erkenbrecher and Harvey.**
28. **New development should include housing on the upper levels and a public plaza at the street center.**
29. **Creation of the existing retail site should create a prominent “gateway” at the corner of Burnet and Forest and to the home for the Pride Center. Buildings should be a new mixed-use hotel and retail space on the ground floor. Parking should be located behind the buildings.**
30. **New structured parking can support development along Burnet Avenue.**
Redevelopment Strategies
REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

OVERVIEW
The revitalization plan for Burnet Avenue and its surrounding blocks are organized into a series of phases or projects. While they have been numbered sequentially, multiple phases could happen during the same time period. The following section outlines the opportunities, challenges and strategies for the redevelopment components contained in each of the phases. The strategies are organized by land use and development type, followed by considerations for improving safety, updating zoning and regulatory requirements and outline the role for BART during the redevelopment process.
STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

retail

- Opportunities
  - Introduce uses that draw all a diverse group of people back to Burnet
  - Tap into the institutions’ "economic energy"
  - Provide opportunities for small businesses
  - Complement other Avondale commercial districts
- Challenges
  - Achievable rents are far too low to cover the cost of new construction
  - There is not a large enough nearby residential market to support very much retail space
  - Institutions can also support retail...but demand may not complement residential demand

housing

- Opportunities
  - Promote homeownership across Avondale
  - Encourage home improvement across Avondale
  - Provide a wider range of housing that reflects the aspirations of a community of different household types, ages, incomes, interests, etc.
- Challenges
  - Costs of maintaining large older houses
  - Limited range of housing options in the neighborhood
  - Financing and other barriers to home ownership
  - Attraction of investment capital is low

infill housing

- Opportunities
  - Reestablish the urban fabric of the existing residential streets
  - Introduce new housing products that will contribute to bringing a diverse new population
  - Increase home ownership within the neighborhood
- Challenges
  - Many sites that are in need of repair and create a negative image of the neighborhood
  - Forming a targeted approach towards infilling the numerous site.
  - The existing lot sizes conflict with the new zoning to reduce the frontage requirements to enable redevelopment

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

initiative programs to breakdown barriers to homeownership and improvement
- Create new types of housing to encourage current residents to remain in, and new residents to come to, Avondale
- Encourage high quality, well-designed, housing
- Establish a low income tax credit and/or a new markets tax credit fund(s)
- Work with Metropolitan Housing to redevelop their existing site between Hickory and Rockdale. Include mixed-income and replacement housing
- Perform a feasibility study for the re-use of the ‘red brick’ building on the SW corner of Rockdale and Burnet. If restoration of deemed feasible, work closely with the exiting owners and tenants to develop a plan of action
office

• Opportunities
  – Search for synergies with institutions’ facilities needs
  – Create places of businesses to grow and remain in Avondale
• Challenges
  – Economics of office space would not cover the costs of new construction
  – Insufficient neighborhood-based business demand to support a new office building

public spaces

• Opportunities
  – Create real civic spaces as part of Burnet Avenue
  – Foster a neighborhood of safe and welcoming streets
  – Celebrate the neighborhood’s rich history by preserving its magnificent houses and the character of its traditional streets
• Challenges
  – Dollars—who can afford to build a new square...or even improve a park?
  – Safety and security—who owns parts of Burnet Avenue?
  – Ongoing pressures to demolish the community’s signature housing stock

safety

• Opportunities
  – Reverse the perception of Burnet as an unsafe place to live and work
  – Create a safe environment for new businesses and home owners
  – Reduce crime and the drug trafficking within the neighborhood, making it a safe place for kids to live and go to school
• Challenges
  – Identifying the problem areas and determining a strategic approach that will create results
  – Lack of neighborhood education and awareness (for residents and businesses)
  – Determining a course of action during the redevelopment stage that ensures the problems do not get worse as buildings are removed and vacant sites are land banked for development

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

• Include as part of larger mixed-use developments—Housing, Parking and Retail
• Mix institutional and neighborhood-based tenants

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

• Integrate public spaces and possibly new parks into new development—to enhance the community and weave this new development into the life of the neighborhood
• Use new development to recapture Burnet Avenue and promote security along other streets

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

• Continue to work with the USC program to promote safety awareness
• Participant in the Uptown Safety Summit led by the Uptown Consortium
• Create an action plan that is endorsed by local and city officials, potentially including:
  – A neighborhood watch program
  – School education programs
  – Target workforce development to get people off the street and into jobs
  – Local business safety workshops
• Ensure that safety discussions and strategies are incorporated into the implementation of the five phases included on this revitalization plan
• Work with the media to promote positive “advertising” for Burnet
**STRATEGIES & ACTIONS**

- Target area should be designated an Urban Renewal Area by City.
- Secure investment capital for land banking and project investments.
- This revitalization plan should be presented to the city to update/modify the existing zoning to enable development to occur. This could be a zoning change, new overlay district.
- Review the existing design review and development submission requirements to ensure that these regulations have the appropriate level of design review and coordination.

**REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

- Identify key sites that should be acquired and assembled for development.
- Create a Business Improvement District (B.I.D.) potentially in conjunction with other Uptown Commercial Districts.
- Market the revitalization plan to potential developers.
- Market the Plan to potential street-level tenants.
- Undertake a marketing study for new housing.

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**zoning & regulatory**

- Opportunities:
  - Unlock the ability to enable the planning vision
  - Enable the revitalization process to begin
  - Expand upon the broad development guidelines that are included in this plan
  - Ensure quality and design standards

- Challenges:
  - Need for assembling properties and extending zoning boundaries to areas within the planning study area
  - Deed restrictions and title problems could delay redevelopment efforts
  - New building heights that are 5 stories and up to 65 are higher than existing zoning
  - Need for a shared parking strategy
  - Existing frontage requirement for single family lots limits the redevelopment potential

**redevelopment process**

- Opportunities:
  - “Make no little plans.” The vision cannot be timid and succeed—or do justice to the site’s importance to Burnet Avenue and Avondale. The vision must of a scale, compelling nature, and relevance to the lives and aspirations of surrounding neighborhoods and stakeholders, to be deemed worth achieving and draw significant institutional, private, and public leadership, funding, and political support in future years.
  - High land costs and development economics. Phased development, at a sufficient scale to absorb high land and other development costs, will be critical to moving forward. Each phase must have a sufficient critical mass and sense of place to be successful as the site is redeveloped over time.
  - Multiple and diverse stakeholders. A well structured partnership that recognizes the unique missions of its individual institutional, community, and public members, and can provide long-term leadership will be essential. This partnership will require financial resources that recognize the long-term costs—and value—of revitalizing Burnet Avenue.

- Challenges:
  - Multiple ownerships. The site’s fragmented ownership suggests that redevelopment at a community-building scale and assembling sites will be difficult.
  - High land costs and development economics. The relatively high costs of land will require creative approaches to financing start-up redevelopment and densities that can absorb land costs.
  - Multiple and diverse stakeholders. The site’s proximity to the nearby institutions will require a carefully managed outreach program at every stage of planning and development.
Phasing & Projects
**PURPOSE**

Phase/Project I includes the blocks bounded by Hickory to the north; Erkenbrecker to the south; Burnet to the west; and Harvey to the east. The project should include a mix of uses that bring more people to Burnet Avenue. Office and retail uses during the day and new housing that will bring people during the evening and on weekends. Development along Burnet Avenue should be grand in scale with limited setbacks to establish a prominent street frontage and contribute to the avenue’s Main Street character. The post office lot is integral to the development of the southern portion of the site. Designs for this area should accommodate the needs of the post office and find ways either to relocate it within a new building that replaces it or place a new building in front of the existing post office. Either option will have to provide replacement parking for the facility existing lot on Burnet and ensure that “back of house” operations are accommodated.

**potential development program**

- **Building Program**: 350-400,000 sq ft.
  - Retail: 50-60,000 sq ft.
  - Office: 200-220,000 sq ft.
  - Housing: 95 units (81,200 sq ft per unit)

- **Open Space/ Park**: 1.5 acres
  - Linear Park: 1.25 acres
  - Pocket Park: .25 acres

- **Parking required**: 1,200-1,500 spaces

- **Streets**: 3,050 feet
  - Rebuilt Burnet: 1,000 feet
  - Extension of Northern: 600 feet
  - Rebuilt Hickory: 600 feet
  - New residential street: 650 feet
  - Parking access road: 200 feet

**elements**

1. New development in front of the post office building.
2. Existing post office and parking lot.
3. New pocket park with townhouses that ‘wrap’ the parking garage.
4. Mix of housing units, including townhouses and multi-unit buildings.
5. Parking garage that supports new retail and office space on Burnet.
6. Townhouses that face the new linear park.
7. New linear park that links Burnet to Harvey.
8. New mixed-use development (ground-floor retail with office space above).
9. New mixed development with office or retail above.
10. New entry road to the parking garage that is lined with retail and active ground-floor uses.
**design guidelines**

**LAND USE**
Buildings along Burnet Avenue should include a mix of uses, with the majority of the ground floor dedicated to retail and other active and pedestrian-friendly uses. On-street parking should be provided on both sides of the street (parallel and angled). Large parking areas and structured parking should be at the rear of buildings. Buildings along the linear park and Harvey should be residential and have a mix of unit types, including townhouses and multi-unit buildings.

**BUILDING HEIGHT AND MASSING**
This initial phase will set the character for further development along Burnet Avenue. Building height should be limited to 4-5 stories to define the street edges and step down in scale to meet the adjacent residential community to the east and west. Ground-floor building facades should be as transparent as possible to display activity, and building massing should address corners and public spaces. Building articulation such as awnings, trellises, and arcades are encouraged to break up building scale and create visual interest. The entry road into the garage should be lined with active ground-floor uses.

**STREETS**
Burnet Avenue should be rebuilt to accommodate the development along the street and provide for a much enhanced streetscape and public environment that will support ground-level retail. The street should have a Main Street character, with adequate space for sitting areas, outdoor dining, and landscaping. Existing utilities should be buried. Sidewalks should have pedestrian-scale ornamental lighting, with provision for banners and public display of art.

**SETBACKS**
A 12-foot setback on the west side of the street and a 15-foot setback on the east side should be maintained.

**PARKING**
To support ground-level retail, introduce angled parking for the entire east side of Burnet Avenue and maintain the existing on-street parking on the west side of the street.

**LANDSCAPING**
Street trees should generally be planted in 5’ wide planting grates within the sidewalk to create a buffer between pedestrians and cars. To create a continuous green canopy for shade and street definition, trees should be planted no more than 20’ apart. All edges of the parking lot should be landscaped to limit neighborhood impact and meet the requirements of the Cincinnati Park Board. Planting strips with shade trees between parking rows are encouraged.
**design guidelines**

**LAND USE**
Northern is extended to Harvey to establish the southern edge of the linear park, and Hickory is rebuilt as the northern edge of the linear park. Development that abuts the park should include a mix of retail and housing on the western end and residential uses for the remainder of the block.

**BUILDING HEIGHT AND MASSING**
Building height should be limited to 3-4 stories to define the edges of park. Ground-floor building facades should be as transparent as possible for retail uses to display activity. Building articulation such as awnings, trellises, arcades is encouraged to break up building scale and create visual interest. Front yard stoops are encouraged to provide vertical separation between the street and living areas.

**STREETS**
Northern is one-way with on-street parking. Hickory is one-way with on-street parking.

**SETBACKS**
A 15' setback from the roadway allows for landscaping and small front yards. For the blocks that abut Burnet Avenue the 15' expanded sidewalks will provide space for the active ground-floor uses. Further east along Northern and Hearn, the sidewalks should be 6-7 feet wide, as shown in the street section above.

**PARKING**
On-street parking should be provided on Northern and Hickory. Pedestrian pathways and crosswalks should be clearly marked and well-lit.

**LANDSCAPING**
Street trees should generally be planted in 5' wide planting strips between sidewalks and roadways to create a buffer between pedestrians and cars. To create a continuous green canopy for shade and street definition, trees should not be planted more than 20' apart. All edges of the linear park should be landscaped. There should be several “sub-areas” within the linear park that could include play equipment for kids, sitting areas, information kiosk, etc.

The new linear park should be well-landscaped and include activities to attract people of all ages.

Adjacent townhouses should frame the park edges.

The park should have a unique identity and include a signature “design feature” along Burnet Avenue that reflects the pride and culture of the community, similar to the fountain in Ludlow.

Vacant lots and buildings where the new linear park will be located.

View 2—The park should be filled with spaces that can accommodate a range of uses.

New street section of the linear park (see design guidelines below)
The corner of Erkenbrecker and Burnet, with the post office in the background.

View 4—The new Entry road with abutting development leading to the parking garage off of Burnet Avenue.

View 3—The new development should have an expressive architectural element at the corner to signify the southern end or “gateway” into Burnet Avenue.

The municipal parking area behind Burnet and a view from where the new street will be located.

Buildings should accommodate a mix of uses, with active ground-floor retail and housing or office space above.

The parking structure should be located in the middle of the block. Where limited frontage needs to occur, the structure should be design to complement the adjacent buildings.

The massing of buildings should be expressive and have “gateway-like” features, especially for the northern and southern ends of Burnet Avenue.
Purpose
The second phase/project introduces more housing and mixed-use development. Buildings facing Burnet should help define a street wall and urban environment. Metropolitan Housing owns a large parcel of land in the middle of this phase; development on this site will need to be coordinated with Metropolitan Housing and to accommodate its goals, site constraints, and development timeline. With these challenges comes the opportunity to rebuild and modernize Metropolitan’s housing stock and introduce a mixed-income model of housing.

The gas station site is identified for a civic use (community building and outdoor spaces – see View 1). Given the size of the site, this project will need to be coordinated with the School Department (to potentially share parking) and the affordable housing to the north. Many community members expressed a desire to renovate the “Red Brick Building” on the corner of Rockdale and Burnet given its expressive architectural character and “historic” detailing. The feasibility of reusing this building should be explored coordinating its reuse with the new civic building to the south would unlock the redevelopment potential of both buildings.

Key Plan
Potential Development Program
- Building Program ~190,200,000 sq. ft.
  - Retail 15,000 sq. ft.
  - Civic/Community 15-25,000 sq. ft.
  - Housing 135 units (#1,200 sq ft per unit)
- Open Space/ Civic Square 8-10,000 sq. ft.
- Parking required ~350-400 spaces (Potential to share school parking and on linear park)
- Streets ~700 feet
  - Rebuilt Burnet 350 feet
  - New residential street 350 feet

Elements
1. New development along Burnet Avenue that includes ground-level retail and upper level housing.
2. A mix of housing units, including townhouses and multi-unit buildings.
3. A mix of housing units that includes single-family houses, duplexes and townhouses.
4. A small but prominent building that frames the western edge of the park, potentially including reuse and rehabilitation of the existing one-story retail building.
5. A civic building that potentially contains uses like the Community Pride Center, classrooms, and other programs that could be related to the Rockdale School and nearby institutions.
6. Restored and renovated “Red Brick Building” at the corner of Rockdale and Burnet.
7. Burnet Avenue is rebuilt to match the character and profile of the reconstruction in Phase 1. New linear park links Burnet to Harvey.
8. New residential street.
LAND USE
Buildings along Burnet Avenue should include a mix of uses, with the majority of the ground-floor dedicated to retail with housing above. Parallel and angle parking should be provided on both sides of the street. Large parking areas and structured parking should be placed behind or under buildings. Buildings along the linear park and Harvey should be residential and have a mix of unit types, including townhouses and single-family houses.

BUILDING HEIGHT AND MASSING
Building height should be limited to 3-4 stories to define the edges of Burnet Avenue and step down in scale (to 3 stories) to match the character of adjacent residential community. Ground-floor building facades should be as transparent as possible to display activity, and building massing should address corners and public spaces. Building articulation such as awnings, trellises, arcades is encouraged to break up building scale and create visual interest.

STREETS
Burnet Avenue should be rebuilt to accommodate new development and provide for a much enhanced streetscape and public environment that will support ground-level retail. The new residential street should have two lanes of travel with small setbacks from the street. Sidewalks should be 15’ wide.

SETBACKS
Residential Street: A 10-foot setback from the sidewalk should be maintained from front yards.

PARKING
Burnet Avenue—To support ground-level retail, introduce angled parking for the entire east side of Burnet Avenue and maintain existing on-street parking on the west side.

LANDSCAPING
New residential street—On-street parallel parking should be provided on both sides of the street.

New residential street that will connect Hickory to Rockdale and provide new frontage for the residential uses that are included in this phase.

New development along Harvey should reduce in scale to include duplexes and single-family housing.
The third phase/project completes the revitalization of the northern section of Burnet Avenue. This area extends north from Rockdale to Forest. The existing single-story retail establishments are surrounded by large surface parking lots. New development should be placed close to the street and require parking at the rear of buildings. During the course of this study the Pride Center moved next door to the Super Suds Laundry store within the strip-retail development. Redevelopment should seek an increase in density both to unlock the redevelopment potential of this site and to enable new buildings to have multiple floors.

Two existing buildings on the northern corners of Rockdale and Burnet offer the opportunity for potential reuse and redevelopment. If renovated, the ground floors of these buildings should be used for neighborhood-oriented retail.

### PHASE 3 PROJECTS & PHASES

#### KEY PLAN

**potential development program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Program</th>
<th>~162,167,000 sq. ft.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>30-35,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>110 units (81,200 sq ft per unit)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space/ Civic Square</th>
<th>2,500-5,000 sq. ft.</th>
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<tr>
<td>(At the two corners of Burnet and Forest)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Parking required</th>
<th>~350-400 spaces</th>
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<tr>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>~400 feet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebuilt Burnet</td>
<td>400 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### elements

1. Reuse and restore existing three-story building. Open the ground floor for active uses such as retail.
2. Restore existing one-story building, currently occupied.
3. New retail development that matches the scale and character of the existing and restored building to the west (see note 2).
4. New multifamily housing development, including condos, loft apartments and mixed-income units.
5. Mixed-use development along Burnet Avenue that includes ground-level retail with a mix of upper-level uses (potentially office or housing).
6. A mix of retail and housing.
7. Burnet Avenue is rebuilt to match the character and profile of the reconstruction in Phase 1 and Phase 2.
PHASE 3 PHASING & PROJECTS

The existing development is characterized by large surface parking lots and buildings that are set back from the street.

Architectural massing can signify entry or a “gateway” into public or urban areas.

Mixed-use development (3-4 stories) will bring more people back to Burnet and support a shared-parking strategy for the users.

Several existing buildings are prime candidates for reuse rehabilitation.

View 1—Redevelopment of the northern parcels should embrace the corner of Burnet and Forest, creating small civic places with architectural forms that celebrate the “gateway” into Burnet Avenue.

ANALOG PHOTOS
**PURPOSE**

The fourth phase/project builds focuses around several large “opportunity areas” that are within the blocks that surround Burnet Avenue. With the new Rockdale School completed, there is the opportunity to consider the design of the park that will replace the old school when its use as a swing school ends. While this may be 5 years off, the park will add tremendous value for the students as well as for residents of the community. With this comes the opportunity to start a discussion about the park: Who will program it? How will it be used? How can nearby institutions help make it even better? The park presents a unique opportunity to foster a relationship between the Cincinnati Zoo and the school. Such a partnership could lead to, for example, outdoor-learning “classrooms” that serve both children in existing zoo programs and students at the school. The Zoo might donate botanical plantings to enhance the design and appearance of the park plantings. Such features would provide great value for the school, community residents, and the zoo and would lay a foundation for further collaboration between these strong institutions.

For many years the Zoo has used the Drury parking lot for its patrons. This lot is the second opportunity area within the neighborhood. The illustrative plan on this page illustrates one of many ways to look at reuse of this site, returning the block to residential uses while maintaining an option for parking. Any redevelopment of this site will need to consider ways to achieve both goals. Other options might include new “neighborhood-oriented” Zoo facilities that reactivate streets with people and provide a transition from the internally-focused zoo campus to an externally oriented building that restores many attributes of the neighborhood.

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**KEY PLAN**

**elements**

1. New recreational park will replace the old Rockdale Elementary School.
2. Streetscape improvements (sidewalks, street trees, and crosswalks) along Rockdale and Northern.
3. Redevelop the Drury parking lot to include new townhouses that wrap a parking lot/structure.
4. Provide parking in the middle of the block to accommodate the parking demand of on-site housing and nearby institutions.

**potential development program**

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Open Space/Recreation 3.25 acres

Parking required ~500-800 spaces
**design guidelines**

**LAND USE**
Existing homes and new in-fill housing on vacant lots. New housing, parking and zone/community-based uses for the Drury site.

**BUILDING HEIGHT AND MASSING**
Building height should be up to 3 stories tall to relate to the existing homes.

**SETBACKS**
Residential Streets: Setbacks from the sidewalk should match existing setbacks (see section 1), new setbacks on Drury lot should match section 2.

**PARKING**
The existing on street parking is maintained.

**LANDSCAPING AND SIDEWALKS**
Street trees should be planted along existing streets and should generally be planted to match the alignment of existing trees (see section 1). Sidewalks should be rebuilt on existing streets. New development within the Drury site should have street trees planted at all public right of ways. To create a continuous green canopy for shade and street definition, new trees should not be planted more than 20'-0" apart.

**SETBACKS**
Residential Streets: Setbacks from the sidewalk should match existing setbacks (see section 1), new setbacks on Drury lot should match section 2.

**ANALOG PHOTOS**

- View — View of new neighborhood and school park from Wilson.
- Existing Rockdale School—to be demolished to make way for a future park.
- View 1— View of new neighborhood and school park from Wilson.
- View 2 — 35
- View 3 — View of new neighborhood and school park from Wilson.
The fifth phase/project focuses on the internal blocks where many existing homes (ranging in size from 3,000 to 4,000 square feet) have suffered from lack of maintenance and neglect. In addition, there are numerous opportunities to infill vacant lots with new homes throughout the study area. New zoning that requires increased lot frontage has made infill housing difficult to build. Most existing lots do not meet the minimum frontage requirement. The zoning should be changed or modified to enable redevelopment of these sites. Designs of infill homes should complement the character of the adjacent houses. Because there are so many of single-family homes, infill development should emphasize new unit and building types to attract a variety of potential home owners who might be seeking smaller unit sizes.
Many homes within the study area are old and in urgent need of repair or replacement.

Looking east on Erkenbrecker toward homes that are good candidates for infill and renovation.

View 1—Renovated homes on Erkenbrecker, the new pocket park and new development that will occur in Phase One (north side of street—left side of image).

Infill housing should be consistent in scale and character with the adjacent homes.

Housing should surround the new pocket park.
Next Steps
NEXT STEPS & KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING...

The efforts of this planning study should not be considered the end of the journey towards getting this plan implemented. This plan should be used to further advance peoples understanding of the shared vision and the future potential of what Burnet Avenue and its surrounding blocks can become over time. Many of the pieces of the plan will require additional consideration as development proposals are put forth and as various members of the community establish the means by which projects should be reviewed and partnerships should be built. The following section outlines some of the next steps that should be considered to ensure that this plan keeps the momentum going.

Future of the BART
BART played a major role in not only the creation of the issues and opportunities and vision statement, but also the creation of the revitalization plan itself. As parts of this plan move forward the consultant recommends that the BART works with the Community Council and City to understand what the nature and future roles of the group should be.

The future of BART could potentially be supplemented with additional members, or conversely subdivided into focus groups that take on various portions of the plan which are best suited to the interests and expertise that members have.

Establishing early action items and immediate next steps
A major consideration for this plan was to ensure that it be visionary on the one hand, while being practical and achievable on the other. The result of these two approaches is that there will inevitably be items of the plan that are longer-term and many that can be considered for early action items. Moving forward, the Community Council, BART and City should establish a list of items that can be explored and considered for near term advancement. First and foremost, each of the recommendations and action items that are included in the plan should have a series of “champions” identified who can advance each of the elements of the plan. The very next step following the adoption of this plan should be a strategy session between BART, the Community Council and City to see who would best champion the various components of the plan. In some cases these elements will become regulatory, while others will become ongoing dialogs between various stakeholders.

Implementation Committee
The City and Community Council may wish to establish an implementation committee with a membership similar to that of the BART to assist in implementing the goals of the plan.

Rezoning
Some of the recommendations of this plan may already be consistent with current zoning, while others may need to be considered for future zoning updates. This will require a continued dialog with the City to ensure that zoning is updated to be in accord with the recommendations of this plan.

Establish a Design Review Committee
In addition to the regulatory requirements of zoning, there are circumstances when Design Review Committees can be established to review potential development submissions as they occur. City may wish to explore appropriate design review for this study area.