AVONDALE I-71-4

AVONDALE
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**Vision Statement**

*Our vision is for Avondale to be an economically and environmentally sustainable community that promotes homeownership and neighborhood investment for the benefit of both its existing and potential residents while expanding upon new development opportunities brought by the new I-71 interchange on MLK.*

**Goals, Strategies and Actions**

**Economic Development**

**Goals: Stability and Growth**

- Increase tax base
- Increase jobs for low-income residents
- Draw people in to spend time and money

**Strategies**

- Provide new retail in Towncenter (less check cashing)
- Office space
- Mixed-use @ Burnet Ave.
- Business-focused on Reading due to traffic speed

**Actions**

- Towncenter Redevelopment
- Reading/MLK business district
Neighborhood Redevelopment

Goals: Social Equity/Vibrancy/Vitality

- Improve identity of neighborhood
- Improve housing stock
- Improve ownership/investment
- Provide opportunities for events

Strategies

- Provide cultural center
- Streetscape improvements
- Create a residential node
- Decrease large high-rise public housing

Action

- Streetscape & public space
- MLK gateway
- Urban garden
- Cultural center (culinary & dance)
- Events at Fleischmann gardens

Environmental Improvements

Goals: Improve Livability

- Sustainable industry
- Design guidelines
- Parks for social equity and access

Strategies

- Parks where access is limited
- Permeable pavers, adaptive reuse, etc.
- Industry at I-71 is sustainable

Actions

- Add a park in the Northwest Quadrant
- Urban garden/agriculture/reclamation
Transportation

Goals: Improve Equity/Utilization/Efficiency

- Establish connectivity
- Consider social aspects
- Improve safety

Strategies

- Identify areas in need
- Identify areas in decay

Actions

- Reroute at Prospect
- Signage
- Multi-modal options
- New route @ Northwest Quadrant
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENTS OF FRAMEWORK PLAN</th>
<th>SOCIAL ASPECT</th>
<th>ECONOMIC ASPECT</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIVE + PRESCRIPTIVE TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>retain/expand/remove existing businesses of any type</td>
<td>economic viability increases social equity</td>
<td>increase income and tax base</td>
<td>green jobs</td>
<td>decrease check cashing and expand grocery and basic services (dry cleaning, banking, pharmacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>clean or green industry opportunities</td>
<td>increase activity and number of people who live and work in Avondale</td>
<td>create jobs</td>
<td>closed loop and inspiration</td>
<td>bicycle shop and recycling center</td>
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<tr>
<td>new regional commercial opportunities (office/retail)</td>
<td>increase wealth of residents and attract outsiders</td>
<td>increase per capita income and improve schools</td>
<td>pride and cleanliness</td>
<td>Pregnancy Center (pregnatal, children, classes), office space for new tenants, non-chain pizza shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>new institutional employment centers opportunities</td>
<td>economic viability increases social equity</td>
<td>jobs for low-income residents</td>
<td>rehabilitate urban fabric</td>
<td>mixed-use development with hotel for extended stay to service Children's</td>
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<tr>
<td>housing (all segments)</td>
<td>increase homeownership, safety, and investment</td>
<td>increase property values and tax base</td>
<td>passive environmental strategies</td>
<td>housing is inadequate and in decay: homeownership programs, rent to own, CDBG</td>
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<tr>
<td>neighborhood business districts</td>
<td>create opportunities for events</td>
<td>improve public transit</td>
<td>reconfigure existing town center to open it up to the community as THE neighborhood district</td>
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<tr>
<td>cultural/civic amenities</td>
<td>neighborhood identity</td>
<td>could involve infill, adaptive reuse, or urban garden</td>
<td>develop cultural center at Reading &amp; Rockdale and create urban infill gardens</td>
<td>NEIGHBORHOOD investment rather than city maintenance, get ppl involved, zoo programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programmed parks and recreation</td>
<td>people meet neighbors (sense of community)</td>
<td>improves livability and property values</td>
<td>greenfields stay green</td>
<td>currently, no brownfields have been identified for intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brownfield mitigation</td>
<td>people perceive positive investment</td>
<td>high initial cost low maintenance save nature</td>
<td>improve land and health</td>
<td>gateway opportunity at Woolper/Forest &amp; Vine and at Reading &amp; MLK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green infrastructure: landscape &amp; gateways</td>
<td>people perceive positive investment</td>
<td>high initial cost low maintenance save nature</td>
<td>improve air quality</td>
<td>permeable pavement in new development &amp; green roofs for stormwater runoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>green infrastructure: stormwater management</td>
<td>people perceive positive investment</td>
<td>high initial cost low maintenance save nature</td>
<td>improve water quality and return water to the ground</td>
<td>expand civic gardens and improve biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green infrastructure: natural areas</td>
<td>people perceive positive investment</td>
<td>high initial cost low maintenance save nature</td>
<td>improve air, water, soil</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>highway design</td>
<td>user-friendly, efficient and connectivity</td>
<td>mobility of viable jobs and capital</td>
<td>with efficiency, decrease cars on the road</td>
<td>mediate effects of new I-71 ramp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street network</td>
<td>user-friendly, efficient and connectivity</td>
<td>mobility of viable jobs and capital</td>
<td>with efficiency, decrease cars on the road</td>
<td>dead ends and no outlets need to be better maintained and connected (town center &amp; Rockdale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus &amp; rail</td>
<td>user-friendly, efficient and connectivity, signage</td>
<td>mobility of viable jobs and capital</td>
<td>with efficiency, decrease cars on the road</td>
<td>bus is sufficient and utilized, but not efficient over long distances desire for multi-modal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicycle &amp; pedestrian</td>
<td>people on the street</td>
<td>draw people in, out, and through to spend $</td>
<td>less pollution and noise</td>
<td>bike paths connecting major greenspaces, commercial districts, and school(s)</td>
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Rationale

The existing conditions of Avondale are less than favorable. Many of the blighted areas include sidewalk and roadway integrity, building decay, and social perspectives. The main arteries of Avondale including Reading, Forest, and MLK are deteriorating rapidly due to heavy use and lack of maintenance. Many buildings remain vacant due to lack of interest in the area. The buildings which remain inhabited are often a danger to the residents due to unsanitary conditions. The lack of structural integrity also poses a threatening condition. Social perspectives are in decline due to several reasons. The presence of crime gives Avondale a dreadful aura which repels quality social growth. Another poor social perspective includes the lack of necessary goods and services. For example, the lack of retail, private businesses, and specialty firms do not promote the preferred economic growth. The existing conditions of the Avondale environment have the potential to be improved, even though the parks are in acceptable condition. The aged utilities continue to deteriorate which provide a less than desirable level of service which may not be conducive to future development.

Avondale: I-71 & MLK Interchange Phasing

Phase 1:
- Land acquisition by the developer
- Close and Demolish existing Whittier street
- Close and Demolish Fredonia overpass
- Demolish all existing buildings, cap all associated utilities, and landscaping in project boundaries to prepare for new construction

Phase 2:
- Form and pour new Whittier street in the proposed location, open after completion
- Demolish MLK’s two east bound lanes only, while directing east and west traffic using the two existing west bound lanes
- Lower MLK’s two east bound lanes to grade and form and pour the new east bound lanes at the proposed elevation over I-71
Phase 3:
- Demolish MLK’s two west bound lanes only, while directing east and west traffic using the two new east bound lanes
- Lower MLK’s two west bound lanes to grade and form and pour the new west bound lanes at the proposed elevation over I-71
- Install necessary retaining walls west of the MLK bridge on the north side of the roadway for soil stabilization
- Finalize MLK bridge construction and open to public

Phase 4:
- Construct the MLK to I-71 southbound entrance ramp
- Construct the I-71 to MLK southbound exit ramp

Phase 5:
- Construct the MLK to I-71 northbound entrance ramp
- Construct the I-71 to MLK northbound exit ramp
- Open new entrance and exit ramps

Phase 6:
- Close and remove existing exit ramp I-71 to Taft southbound
- Close and remove existing entrance ramp McMillan to I-71 northbound

Phase 7 (outside of the Avondale limits):
- Initiate TM-7 interchange phasing and construction
MLK-2 Stand Alone Alternative Offset Diamond, www.uptowntransportationstudy.org
Transportation effects from the proposed interchange:

- Increased traffic on MLK:
  - Advantages: Initiates more people going through Avondale, which could promote economic health, the I-71 exits/entrances could decrease traffic flow on nearby exits thus reducing total flow on the interstate
  - Disadvantages: Increases traffic on MLK which could possible cause traffic problems, proximity of proposed MLK interchange to Taft/McMillan could cause traffic congestion
Bus Transportation Plan:

- Metro routes: 1, 43, 45, 46, 47, 51.

- Use of dead ends and poor road quality reduces Metro’s ability to service the area effectively.

- Propose extension of route 51 to extend north on Washington avenue to Clifton springs avenue and then reconnect with existing route to Dana.
  
  - Advantages: Avoids congesting Reading road, provides Avondale with additional bus service.

- Additional bus routes through Avondale are not favorable options due to the increased congestion, environmental impacts, and minimal benefits to the area.

Metro routes from [www.go-metro.com](http://www.go-metro.com)
City Light Rail and Streetcar Proposal:

- The implementation of a light rail or street car is less than favorable to the Avondale area:
  - With the proposed construction of the new MLK I-71 interchange there would be a large area of disturbance to Avondale.
  - Installation of a light rail or streetcar would further disturb the area.
  - The areas of dense housing in Avondale are not permissive for construction of rail stations without acquisition of properties and further displacing residents.
  - The benefits of a light rail or street car system would be minimal due to the fact that our society favors automotive transportation.

Framework Plan Proposal

Urban Agriculture: 603 Rockdale

When we initially examined our framework, we took inventory of the cultural centers in Avondale. We found the main cultural centers, such as the Boys and Girls Club and Hirsch Recreation Center, were meant to service the recreational needs of children, and adults had very little opportunity to socialize. As represented in the Avondale Community Plan of 2004, two-thirds of families in Avondale are headed by women (Avondale Community Council, 2004). We used this statistic to try to devise cultural activities that would attract women, such as dance, cooking, and hairstyling. We proposed a Community Culinary Center as part of the Avondale Town Center Redevelopment, and the idea for the Avondale Community Garden stemmed from this idea.
In Avondale, many residents do not have local access to fresh produce. This community garden, which focuses on agricultural crops, could provide residents with an option for local fresh food. Working in conjunction with the Avondale Community Culinary Center located at the corner of Forest Avenue & Reading Road, residents could learn proper nutrition as well as methods for cooking with fresh produce. Any surplus produce could be shared among the community stakeholders or sold by active members in the job-training program at the Culinary Center. A small shelter located on the Rockdale Avenue site that includes restrooms and an overhang to protect from any weather could serve as the main distributing location.

According to the Hamilton County Auditor, the property is currently owned by the City of Cincinnati and has been vacant for over forty years (Hamilton County Auditor, 2009). In conjunction with the City of Cincinnati’s 2009 Urban Gardening Pilot Program, any vacant land can be made into a communal garden if the stewards agree to a variety of simple rules including the following: (1) maintain and water the plot while keeping it free of weeds and litter, (2) harvest and enjoy the fruits and vegetables grown, (3) give away or sell extra produce, (4) use organic methods whenever possible, (5) evaluate the experience, (6) seek knowledge when questions arise, and (7) hold a liability insurance policy on the property (City of Cincinnati, 2009). The property at 603 Rockdale could qualify for this program.
Framework Plan Proposal

Streetscape and Transportation Network

Avondale is a community that has experienced recent expansion due to the growth of Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. The new interchange proposed near the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Reading Road will provide Avondale with a great opportunity to attract more people to the area. With more automobile, bus, and pedestrian traffic, there is a need to analyze the transportation network in the area. Several areas were noted as flawed, such as the intersections of Forest and Reading, as well as at Reading and Prospect, near the South Avondale Elementary School.

The South Avondale Elementary School, located in the southeast corner of the site, has been noted as a problem area during the time the students get out of class. At about 3:15pm everyday traffic builds up around the entire site with school buses, metro buses, parents picking up their children, automobile traffic, and those who walk home from school all in the area at the same time. This project proposes shutting down Rockdale at Knott to all vehicles but school buses. This allows the buses to line up at the turn-around and safely pick up the children when school lets out. The south side of the school, along Prospect, would then be converted to
parental pick-up and drop-off. Knott Street, along the west side of the site, should be closed to all traffic until the buses have pulled away, allowing traffic to flow freely around the entire site.

The proposal calls for the removal of three bus stops in the area of the Elementary School, and the inclusion of bus bump-outs along Forest Avenue. Bus bump-outs are used most effectively on streets that have longer building setbacks. This allows for cars to continue moving along the street, while the buses are able to stop, pick up and drop off passengers, and continue on their way without impeding the traffic movement in the area. The map shown to the right also suggests removing the bus lines that are shown in green, while adding connectors that are shown in the red. This would much better serve the community of Avondale as well as clear up a lot of the congestion that occurs around the study area.

Streetscape issues were also taken into consideration, but at a very conceptual level. While Forest Avenue would benefit most by the inclusion of bus bump-outs, Reading Road could do a lot for itself with street and sidewalk beautification. This would include street trees, furniture, sidewalk improvements, and improved bus stops.
Framework Plan Proposal

Town Center Redevelopment Plan: 3527 Reading Road

Site: 9.47 acres

Original Structure:

42,448 finished square feet

Built 1983 (Hamilton County Auditor)

Uses include check cashing, fast food, dental clinic, low-cost clothing store, tax services

Parking lot consumes 2/3 of site – highly underused

Proposed Structure:

92,820 square feet

9 separate proposed tenants
Anchoring Institution:

A. Salon / school - 18,519 sq.ft.

Other uses:

B. Dry Cleaners – 5,100 sq.ft.
C. Clothing store – 5,107 sq.ft.
D. Hardware store / carpentry school – 9,860 sq.ft.
E. Butcher / produce store – 9,647 sq.ft.
F. Community culinary school – 9,584 sq.ft.
G. Bank – 10,000 sq.ft.
H. Dental / medical clinic – 10,000 sq.ft.
I. Pregnancy / prenatal care center / daycare – 15,000 sq.ft.

There is additional space available on second floors of buildings B, C, E, F, G, and H for future development of office use and possibly residential mixed use. Buildings A, C, and I currently use the second story for classrooms and teaching space. Green roofs have been implemented to increase sustainability of the building and to promote a green lifestyle throughout the community.

Proposed town center – front view
Parking

The community has fairly good access to the bus system, and few residents use personal automobiles to travel. The new town center is within reasonable walking distance for the majority of community residents. This development was designed to help provide much-needed services to the vastly neglected residents of Avondale, and thereby parking space was reduced from the normal required level. 200 spaces have been proposed; the total land area covered by parking spaces is 65,000 square feet. This number comes from the 325 square feet of land required per space—this includes circulation areas, end-of-aisle areas, and landscaping (Victoria Transport Policy Institute). Approximately 170 spaces were deemed necessary and 30 additional spaces for possible overflow. There is ample room for future expansion of parking if the need arises.

Plaza

The plaza is 37,369 sq.ft. of semi-public space. Tables and benches can be used by employees, customers, and students of the town center. The idea behind the plaza was to create a peaceful, open space for residents and guests to enjoy the company of others and relax during a break in the day.
The proposed town center is less about form and more about the social services it offers. With investments by business owners, community organizations, leading local institutions and other parties, the town center can become an invaluable resource for the neighborhood. Over time, investments begin to pay off. Residents of the community take an active role in the town center and learn new skills that were previously out of their reach. The town center is based around the theory of “give a man a fish, feed him for the day; teach a man to fish, feed him for life”. By providing opportunities to learn life skills, the residents are able to better their lives and their children’s lives. This creates a stepping stone for the next generation to succeed and further improve their world.

Framework Plan Proposal

Reading/ MLK Redevelopment Plan: 560 Martin Luther King Drive

The site of the former Columbian School, the area is currently a large underutilized lot covered with surface parking and we believed that there were better uses for such a large piece of land. With the proposed I-71 interchange at MLK the area will become much more attractive to development as it will be seen by many more people than it does now. The proposal for the land is to develop the site into a walkable area of mixed retail and office space that is designed for the adjacent employment centers like the hospitals. The buildings would all be built up to the street to encourage more walkability and interaction with the street as well as creating a more dynamic sense of place.
The major aspects of the site plan include 3 important features that will help the area stand out as well as integrate itself within the local community. The first element is the concealed parking structure on Harvey, that features retail and offices on the bottom floor and parking on the upper floors that is disguised with plantings and interesting architecture. The retail and offices will cater to the employees and people that work close by. The parking will help to replace the surface parking lost in the new construction that was used by Jewish Hospital. The next element is the retail that will be placed on MLK Dr. and will be focused on capturing the new traffic that will result from the new interchange with stores that attract drivers to come and explore the area. The retail will total to around 37,000 square feet of space that can be modified for various stores and spaces that would invest in the spaces. The surface parking is placed in the back to make the site more pedestrian friendly and encourage on street interaction.
with streetscape improvements and beautification.

*Bird’s Eye View of retail space*

The final element will be the gateway structure that be placed on the corner of Reading and MLK as a way of informing drivers of where they are in the city. The neighborhood of Avondale as a whole is lacking a definable identity and signage will help to inform drivers of where they are and to possibly encourage them to stay in the area.

The overall goal of the plan is to develop the underutilized land into an area that welcomes people driving through to stop and explore the area. Connection to places further up Reading Rd is the major reason for the project as Avondale is trying to build unity between its retail and business nodes. This action will hopefully benefit the neighborhood of Avondale as a whole by informing drivers of their location and to encourage them to invest in the area.

*lakewoodcitizen.com*
Bibliography


