

# Weinland Park

## Neighborhood Plan

### COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS A SUSTAINABLE, MIXED-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD

Weinland Park will be a sustainable mixed-income community that is safe, walkable, stable, attractive and cohesive. Current residents will find new opportunities for jobs and homeownership while welcoming new residents who come to the community to live in new housing. Neighborhood image and quality of life will improve with the development of new, mixed-income housing and green spaces on underused and vacant sites, improved retail options in the neighborhood, a new Weinland Park presence on High Street, and attractive gateways at the neighborhood's entrance points.

#### Community priorities include:

- Access to employment, workforce development and skills education
- Human services enhancements, especially for youth, young parents, and elders
- Improvements to neighborhood safety, including better relationships with the police
- Improvements to neighborhood quality of life, including traffic calming, code enforcement, and trash collection
- Creating compatible new development at underused sites in the neighborhood, including green spaces
- Ensuring that existing residents are not displaced in the revitalization process

#### REVITALIZATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

##### Building on Weinland Park's assets:

- Location near OSU, downtown, and improving neighborhoods
- Streets with a consistent architectural character
- A large public park and several smaller green spaces
- Walkable distance to shopping and other necessities
- Access to public transportation
- Strong neighborhood institutions, including the Civic Association, the elementary school, the library, Godman Guild, Northside CDC and the community garden

##### New investments are already underway:

- New school and park design and construction
- Planned street and sidewalk improvements
- New houses built on vacant lots by Northside CDC
- University Childhood Development Center to be located next to the school
- New management of the Section 8 rentals will bring property improvements, supportive services for tenants, community outreach and neighborhood activities
- South Campus Gateway Center transforming the northwestern corner of the neighborhood
- Plans for a new Northside Library

##### Challenging and complex revitalization and development context:

- Vacant industrial sites need environmental clean-up
- Fragmented ownership patterns require land assembly strategies
- Neighborhood image of safety concerns and concentration of poverty in Section 8 rentals needs improvement

#### REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

##### Enhance the reality and perception of quality of life in streets, parks and public places.

Support the efforts of homeowners, other residents and organizations that are working to make Weinland Park a better neighborhood through investments in the public realm.

##### Revitalize existing neighborhood housing.

Provide housing stability for people who want to stay in the neighborhood through promoting affordable homeownership, new houses on vacant lots, and repair and rehab of existing homes.

##### Provide enhanced human services programs for neighborhood residents.

Support children, youth, young parents, elders and others who need mentoring, education, and assistance to become or remain self-sustaining.

##### Enhance the reality and perception of public safety.

Physical improvements and housing rehab should be accompanied by additional code enforcement efforts and community policing.

#### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

##### Promote new housing of every type for people with a broad range of incomes in the six "Opportunity Areas" for new development.

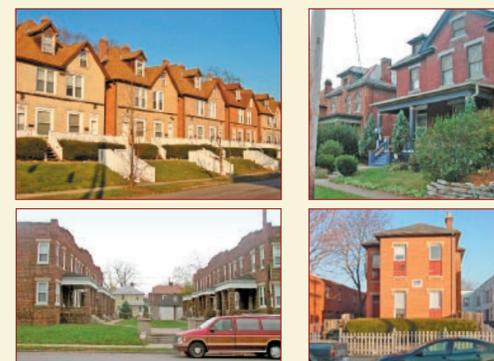
The neighborhood has vacant land and buildings that can be redeveloped. A variety of new housing choices will bring new residents to Weinland Park who will become part of the community without displacing the people who already live there. This will create a diverse mixed-income neighborhood.

##### Promote new development in sufficient amounts and density to create a "critical mass" to support new amenities for the whole neighborhood and unlock development feasibility.

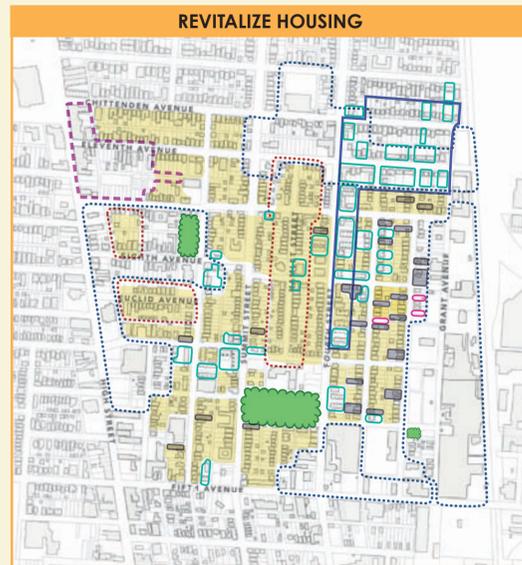
Approximately 1,000 new apartments, condominiums and townhouses can bring new residents to help create the market for new retail, services and amenities that will benefit everyone who lives in Weinland Park.

##### Create new public-private partnerships to coordinate development and revitalization strategies to fully realize development potential that will bring benefits to the neighborhood.

Strong partnerships will be needed to support revitalization and resolve the challenges to new development, including environmental clean-up and market feasibility.



# Revitalization Strategy: Investing in people and places



**RETAIN THE DESIGN CHARACTER OF THE HEART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD**  
Many of the streets in Weinland Park have retained the basic architectural integrity of their housing in scale, materials, and design. That integrity should be retained and enhanced in the revitalization process. Part of the neighborhood is under the jurisdiction of the University Area Commission and several blocks are in the New Indianola Historic District, which is subject to review by the Historical Commission. Design standards should be established for the neighborhood. One possible mechanism is a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD). NCDs can require anything from advisory to mandatory control over external changes to buildings, depending on the neighborhood and the kinds of preservation and neighborhood character issues that exist. An NCD could be crafted that would focus on preserving the general character of the interior of the neighborhood while acknowledging that different design review criteria would be necessary for redevelopment of the Opportunity Areas.

#### PROMOTE HOMEOWNERSHIP

Only 8% of Weinland Park households own their own homes. Higher levels of homeownership promote neighborhood stability and provide families with a major asset and source of wealth.

- Convene a meeting of all Columbus providers of homeownership assistance to create a strategy to target Weinland Park for homeownership programs. For example, the Columbus Housing Authority lease-to-own program for Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Program participants should be asked to expand its efforts in Weinland Park.
- Coordinate all available affordable homeownership and other housing assistance programs in a one-stop housing information center. There are a number of programs offering assistance to low and moderate income first time homeowners or others that meet program criteria. There should be a one-stop homeownership center for Weinland Park residents where information on all the homeownership assistance and homebuyer counseling programs should be available. Northside CDC would be the logical organization for this task, but would need to be supported with additional staff and capacity to do so.

- Discuss with the University the potential for expansion of the Ohio State University Homebuyer Program to include any existing Weinland Park resident or family member of a resident for purchase of a home in the neighborhood. The program currently offers downpayment assistance to university faculty and staff who buy a home in University District neighborhoods.

- Seek City tax abatements in Weinland Park for homebuyers of new construction, conversion from rentals, and improvements by owner-occupants. The tax abatement program would help jump-start a more robust homebuyer market in Weinland Park. Given the relatively low values of neighborhood houses, expansion of this program to the neighborhood for a ten or fifteen year period is not likely to deprive the City of significant tax revenue during that period while helping to strengthen values during revitalization.

- Promote rehabilitation and conversion of two-family to single family units or condominiums for sale. Infill or block by block rehabilitation strategies should focus on creating single family and condominium units that can attract residents to Weinland Park.

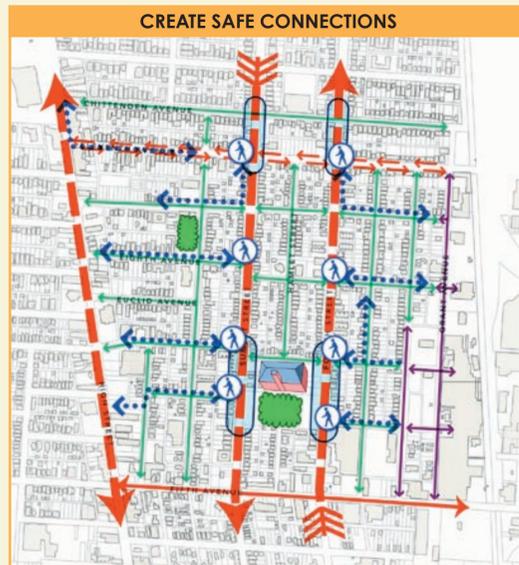
#### PRESERVE AFFORDABILITY AND STABILITY FOR LOWER-INCOME RESIDENTS

A real mixed-income Weinland Park will preserve housing for lower-income residents. Some people will not be able to become homeowners for a variety of reasons. Some low-income homeowners will need assistance to maintain their properties.

- As long as the Columbus Community Properties' Section 8 units remain in the neighborhood, there will always be some lower-income residents. In addition to renovating the properties and establishing good tenant selection and management practices, Community Properties will also be providing supportive services to its tenants.
- A limited number of programs exist to assist low-income homeowners maintain and rehabilitate their homes. Information on these programs should be part of the one-stop housing information center proposed above.

#### ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ORGANIZATION

Northside CDC is pursuing a successful strategy of infill construction of new single-family homes on vacant lots in Weinland Park. The CDC knows the neighborhood and works with neighborhood residents. Organizational support for more staff and operational expenses would help Northside enhance its leadership in neighborhood affordable housing programs.



#### BUILD ON WEINLAND PARK'S WALKABLE CHARACTER

Weinland Park is a walkable neighborhood, with the school, park, library, grocery store, Godman Guild and other community destinations readily accessible on foot or by bicycle. Streets should have sidewalks and pedestrian crossings should be safer.

#### ADVOCATE TO MAKE SUMMIT AVENUE AND NORTH FOURTH STREETS INTO TWO-WAY STREETS

The one-way street pair of Summit Avenue and North Fourth Street creates a barrier in the heart of the neighborhood, which contains community institutions like the school and park, because of high-speed traffic in the one-way corridors. This high-way-like character has a detrimental effect on the houses along these streets and the neighborhood as a whole. Ideally, these streets should be returned to two-way traffic with parallel parking and pedestrian amenities such as well-marked crossings and pedestrian-activated crossing lights.

- Request a traffic analysis to include daily and peak hour vehicle counts and vehicle speed monitoring and modeling of peak hour level of service in a two-way street system.
- Request an alternative reconfiguration of the ramps to I-670 based on two-way traffic on Summit and N. Fourth.
- Request modeling of two-way traffic for entry and exit traffic for big events at Ohio State and the Fairgrounds

#### REQUEST LOW-COST IMPROVEMENTS FOR NEXT YEAR'S WORK PLAN

Meet with the City Transportation Division to put Plan recommendations on pedestrian safety and control of speeding in the work plan for the City's Public Service Department. Potential improvements, especially to Summit Street and North Fourth Street should include:

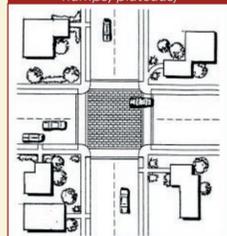
- Signal timing to reduce speeds
- Signage
- Pavement markings

#### REQUEST INSTALLATION OF TRAFFIC CALMING ELEMENTS AT KEY INTERSECTIONS

Certain intersections are particularly dangerous, such as the Seventh and Summit intersection by the school and park. Traffic calming elements, such as a raised intersection, would call attention to pedestrians crossing and force traffic to slow down.



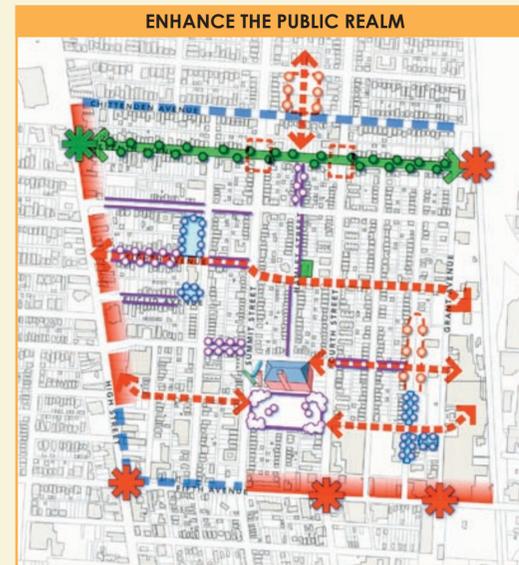
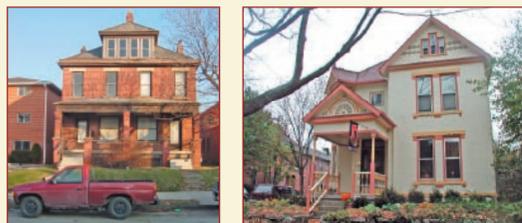
#### RAISED INTERSECTIONS (raised junctions, intersection humps, plateaus)



Source: Reid Ewing, Traffic Calming: State of the Practice (ITE/FHWA, 1999), 45.

#### WORK WITH THE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY AREA COMMISSION TO REQUEST A FULL TRANSPORTATION STUDY AND MOBILITY PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY AREA, INCLUDING WEINLAND PARK

The City Transportation Division will be doing approximately two studies a year. A recently-completed area plan and a working committee familiar with working on a plan are among the Division's criteria for choosing planning locations. A mobility plan for Weinland Park should include pedestrian accessibility and safety; control of speeding through street redesign, pavement marking, signs, signal adjustments and enforcement; traffic calming; landscaping; and pedestrian and motorist education programs.



#### IMPROVE PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC SPACES FOR EVERYONE

The network of public spaces, such as parks, streets and sidewalks, is the public realm. In addition, there are many spaces, like front yards, that are open to public view. The design and upkeep of the public realm and the visible parts of private spaces influences how we feel about a place and what kind of image a neighborhood presents to visitors and people passing through.

#### EXTEND PLANNED STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Weinland Park is a walkable neighborhood. Tree-lined streets and sidewalks with safe street crossings make walking pleasant and secure. Improvements are programmed for some Weinland Park streets. They should be extended to the entire neighborhood. Development in the Opportunity Areas can result in streetscape improvements around new projects.

#### PROGRAM PUBLIC PARKS FOR BOTH PASSIVE AND ACTIVE USES

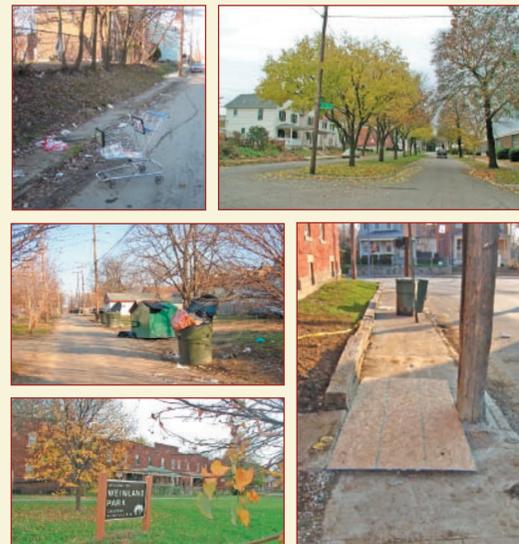
Weinland Park itself and other green spaces in the neighborhood must provide opportunities for both passive enjoyment of nature and active recreation. New green spaces created through redevelopment should include tot lots in areas with families.

#### COORDINATE CITY AND VOLUNTEER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CODE ENFORCEMENT, TRASH MANAGEMENT, AND OTHER MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Both residents and outsiders get a negative image of Weinland Park if there is litter, graffiti, poorly maintained building exteriors, and vacant and abandoned property. The City's code enforcement department has limited resources. Efforts to consolidate trash management and prevent dumping have not been entirely successful. Residents and major property owners should meet with the City to develop additional approaches to these problems. Community Properties is beginning to inventory, clean up and secure abandoned lots and buildings in its part of the neighborhood.

- Schedule a neighborhood clean-up event at least twice a year  
The Civic Association, the City, the University, Community Properties and others can collaborate on neighborhood clean-up events.

- Create a beautification program for traffic islands and other small public spaces  
Solicit sponsors for funding plantings, seek landscape design help from students, and engage young people in planting and maintaining the plants. Signs should be installed to acknowledge the sponsors. Other ways to promote beautification and pride in the neighborhood include initiatives such as a "best garden" award that include community garden plots as well as house yards.



#### PLANNING PROCESS

**THE WEINLAND PARK WORKING COMMITTEE.** The Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan began in the spring of 2004 with the creation of a Working Committee representing neighborhood, government agency, nonprofit, institutional and business interests. The Committee identified themes to be addressed in the neighborhood plan and organized five subcommittees to develop policy statements:

- Community Involvement and Public Safety
  - Housing
  - Human Services
  - Infrastructure
  - Land Use, Economic Development and Aesthetics
- In addition, the Working Committee analyzed the assets and liabilities of the neighborhood.

**THE CONSULTANT TEAM.** In late 2004, a consultant team composed of Goody Clancy & Associates, a planning and urban design firm working with the City and Campus Partners on the revitalization of High Street, and Mt. Auburn Associates, a workforce development specialist, began assisting the City and the Committee to visualize Weinland Park's potential and develop a workforce development plan. The consultant team met several times with the Working Group and interviewed residents, state and city agency staff, Weinland Park residential and commercial property owners, private developers working in the city, nonprofit housing developers, university and Campus Partners representatives, and other knowledgeable persons.

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING WORKSHOP: FEBRUARY 5, 2005.** The centerpiece of the planning process was a day-long neighborhood planning workshop that attracted over 42 participants. A display of maps and analysis materials and presentations by the consultants suggesting frameworks for understanding neighborhood issues were followed by an interactive process in which three small breakout groups discussed their ideas for the neighborhood. Each group discussed the following questions:

- What is good and not so good about the neighborhood?
  - What will make the biggest difference in obtaining jobs?
  - What do we need to do to build the community and enhance the neighborhood?
  - What is your vision for the "opportunity areas"?
- Each group presented its three top priority issues and then all participants voted among them to identify the whole group's priorities.

**PRESENTATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE WORKING COMMITTEE: March 28, 2005.** Based on the planning workshop and previous discussions, the consultant team presented alternatives for physical development and program strategies for neighborhood improvement, including potential new housing, retail, and mixed-use development.

**THE FINAL PLAN.** When completed, the Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan will be presented to the Columbus City Council for adoption and incorporation into the City's Comprehensive Plan.

#### IMPLEMENTATION: REVITALIZATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Revitalization and community-building in Weinland Park will depend on the collaboration of residents, the City, OSU and Campus Partners, large property-owners such as Community Properties, community nonprofits such as Godman Guild and Northside CDC, and investor-owners of neighborhood property.

- Explore new ways that OSU can support revitalization in the neighborhood. OSU has long been committed to Weinland Park revitalization. Examples from other university-community programs may prove appropriate here.
- Create a Neighborhood Plan Implementation Committee. As the plan is adopted, an Implementation Committee or similar group should be formed to be the stewards of the plan, advocate for implementation, and monitor implementation of the plan. Ideally, this group should include residents and the

- major stakeholders in the neighborhood.
- Work with the police department to improve community relations. Crime is still an issue in Weinland Park, giving the neighborhood a negative image. Efforts to improve police knowledge of community members and enhance community relations with the police should be pursued.
- Fund internships and a community organizer position. A paid community organizer can help Weinland Park groups be more effective in advancing revitalization efforts. Internships for university students can also be helpful, but they are most useful if an internship is followed by at least a year of paid employment. Community Properties, Godman Guild, or Northside CDC could all be suitable institutions to host an organizer and interns.

For more information, please visit [www.columbusinfobase.org](http://www.columbusinfobase.org)

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