



MIDDLEBURY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

MARCH 8, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Middlebury Neighborhood Plan is the result of a remarkable collaborative effort involving a broad array of participants over the last few years, including neighbors, business owners, leaders from non-profit and community-based organizations, and the City of Akron. The plan provides a framework for continued progress that connects Middlebury's future to its rich history. It ties together existing assets and emerging energy as we look ahead to a Middlebury that offers shared prosperity to those who live and work here.

The members of the Middlebury Neighborhood Plan Core Team would like to thank everyone who helped create this framework for neighborhood progress, particularly the residents who shared their ideas and passion for Middlebury.

Andrew Overbeck and Juliana Silveira from MKSK have been strong listeners throughout this process and have worked hard to incorporate feedback and input from stakeholders. They have created a document that will help align investments and interests around a clear vision for Middlebury.

We would like to extend a special thanks to The Huntington Akron Foundation for funding the project, and NeighborWorks America for resourcing Kyle Julien's (EANDC) contribution to the project.

*Thank you.
The Core Team*

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SPECIAL THANKS

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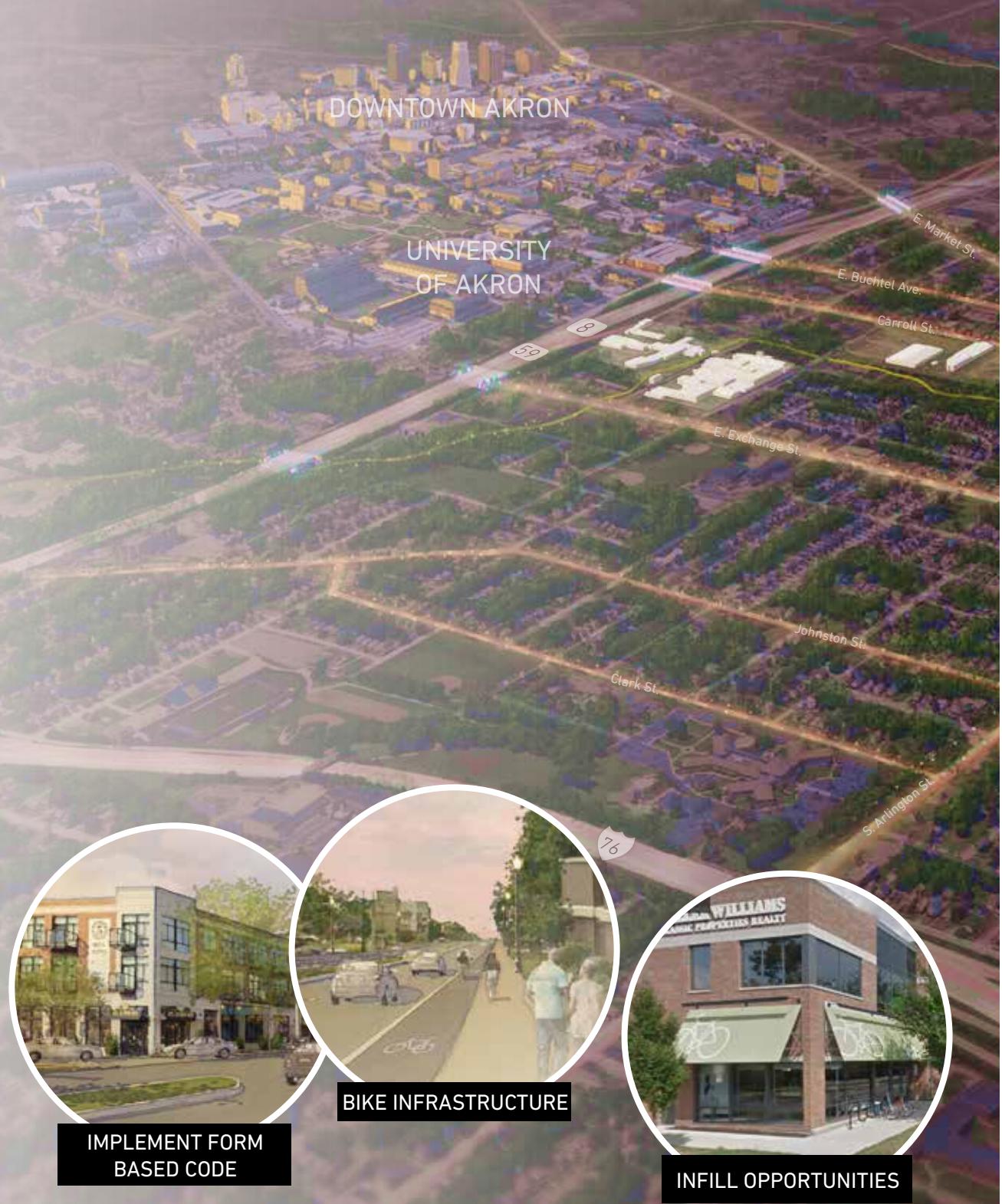


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the continued dedication of community members, Middlebury has come together to shape the resurgence of this foundational neighborhood. Over the past three years, dozens of community conversations, meetings, events, surveys, and happenings have engaged residents in this important work. The Middlebury Neighborhood Plan process is an attempt to capture as many of these great ideas as possible to set forth an achievable vision of shared prosperity for the future of the community. Over the past six months, a Core Team, Steering Committee, and hundreds of community members have come together to tell their stories, express their needs, and share their dreams for what Middlebury can be.

This plan combines this collaborative community input with detailed analysis of existing conditions to create a planning framework for physical improvements, catalytic projects, and policy changes. The Middlebury of the future will be connected by a system of regional trails and multimodal roadways that bring people **to** Middlebury instead of moving people **through** Middlebury. At Middlebury's heart, there will be a thriving, mixed-use community hub at the intersections of East Market, East Exchange and Arlington Streets. A system of new parks and linear open spaces will run through the neighborhood along the Little Cuyahoga River and the regional trails. Employment opportunities in the neighborhood will expand, with new businesses taking over vacant and underutilized warehouse spaces. Rehabbed and new housing will provide a boost in the residential population, while supporting affordability and diversity within the neighborhood.

With Middlebury's proven track record of collaborative problem solving, community engagement and successful implementation, there is no doubt that this plan will lead to lasting and meaningful change for all.



MIDDLEBURY

CALM EAST MARKET STREET

ENHANCE ROUTE 8 CROSSINGS

CELEBRATE THE LITTLE CUYAHOGA RIVER

ADAPTIVE REUSE

IMPROVE EXISTING HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

INTERSECTION TREATMENT

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND + COMMUNITY INPUT

INTRODUCTION

In early 2018, the City of Akron began a historic realignment of its resources for the purposes of strengthening public life in Akron's neighborhoods and designating priority communities for city planning efforts. Middlebury, one of those communities, is at a turning point. The story of Middlebury is one of a thriving industrial city in the first part of the twentieth century, rampant disinvestment over the past several decades prompting concentrated poverty, and a slow yet promising recovery at present. Some development interest is starting to materialize in the neighborhood, but it is crucial that this new investment benefits existing community members.

The planning team approached this process through an asset-based lens, looking at how to build upon existing community strengths to foster a stronger and more sustainable neighborhood. This plan is amplified by the rigorous work of neighborhood leaders, organizations, and individuals who call Middlebury home.

The purpose of this document is to:

- > Document the shared vision for Middlebury, as created with the input of stakeholders, that will guide future efforts in the neighborhood.
- > Create a framework for shared prosperity in Middlebury that will guide future planning, development, and policy work in the neighborhood, whether by governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, or private entities.

- > Create a blueprint for short-term projects that have immediate impact which gives residents a sense of unified movement into future opportunity and development in Middlebury.



BACKGROUND

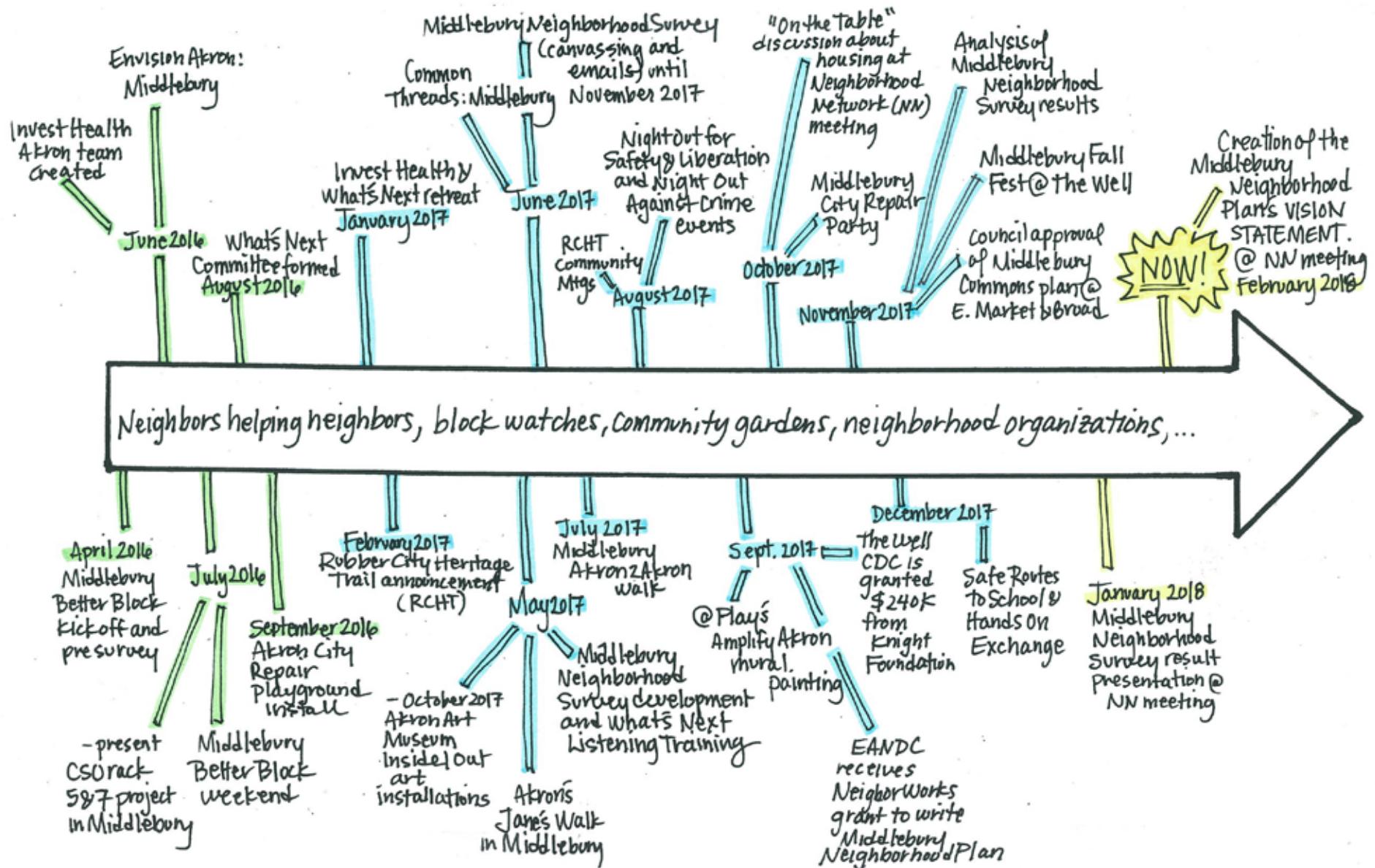
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

This plan wouldn't be possible without an intense period of work by several organizations and individuals who recognized the potential of the neighborhood and have worked to develop a vision for the future.

2016 marked a critical point in community-driven efforts to reshape Middlebury. Middlebury hosted two events during that year that focused on neighborhood form—Envision Akron: Middlebury (organized by Rooted Akron, The Big Love Network, and The W.O.M.B.) and the Middlebury Better Block. The Better Block was organized by a large collaborative coordinated by the Neighborhood Network that transformed the area at the intersections of East Market, East Exchange, and Arlington Streets into a vibrant, walkable and bikeable neighborhood center for a weekend. Also in 2016, The Well CDC was formed, dedicated to improving housing, promoting economic development, and supporting a stronger sense of place in Middlebury. The "What's Next Committee" also formed in 2016, and it has been meeting regularly since. The What's Next Committee responded to residents' concern that the Middlebury Better Block would be a one-off event and not lead to any meaningful change. The Middlebury Neighborhood Plan picks up after the What's Next Committee conducted the Middlebury Neighborhood Survey in 2017, and created a vision statement for the neighborhood in early 2018.



MIDDLEBURY'S TIMELINE OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION



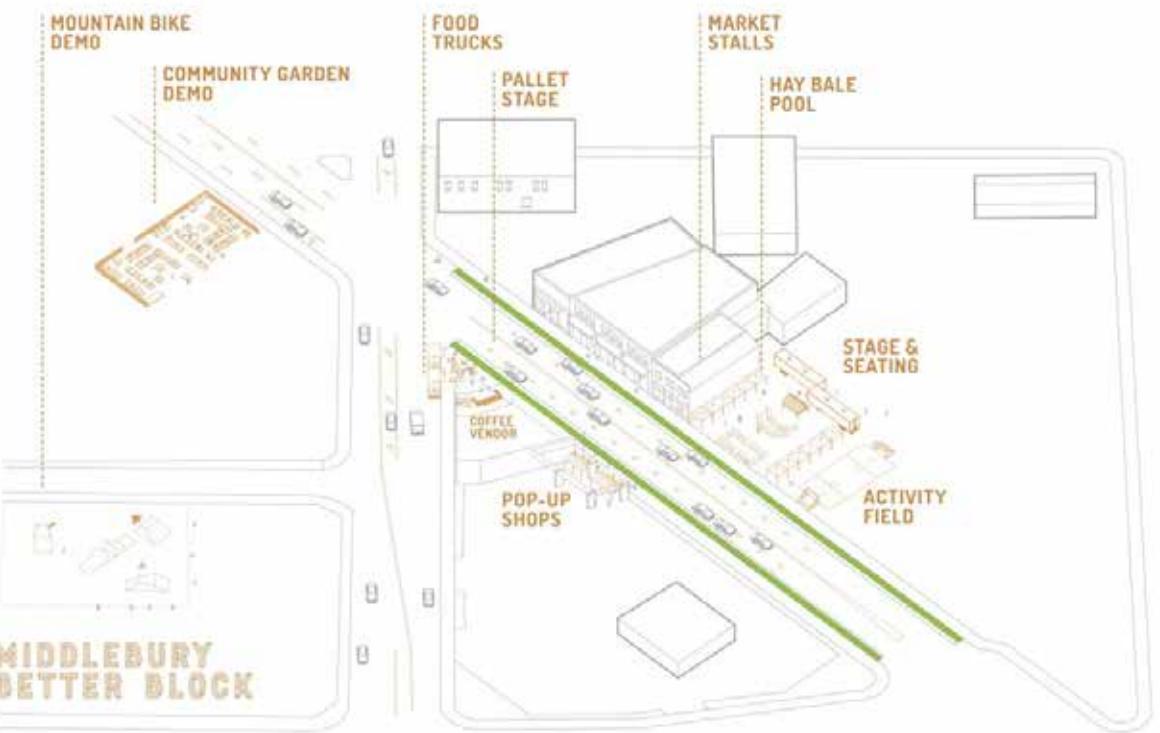
Produced by Marissa Little

BACKGROUND

BETTER BLOCK

The Middlebury Better Block event, held July 30-31, 2016 at the intersection of Arlington Street and East Market Street, was a collaborative effort between over fifteen organizations. Funding support was provided by the Knight Foundation, Jilly's Music Room, Ad Direct, Summit County Public Health, and Summit Cycling Center. With the help of volunteers, the car-centric intersection was transformed into an active, family-friendly space that prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle activity.

The event included temporary improvements to the built environment, including crosswalks, benches, planters and trees, a jungle gym made of old tires, a swimming pool, bumpouts, and more. The event also focused on attracting retailers, including food trucks, mini storefronts for pop-up shops, a farmer's market, and stalls for other retail vendors. One of the pop-up shops, Compass Coffee, has since found a permanent home in The Well CDC. The inclusion of programming like live music, kids activities, and demonstrations added even more excitement to the weekend.



SWIMMING POOL



RECYCLED TIRE GYM



PALETTE BENCHES



POP-UP SHOPS



BETTER BLOCK VOLUNTEERS

BACKGROUND

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Prepared by Marissa Little of Neighborhood Network and Kelly McHood of The Well CDC, the *Middlebury Neighborhood Survey and Community Input Report*, provides a quantitative and qualitative look at Middlebury's challenges, strengths, and opportunities in relation to quality of life. The quality of life sector outcomes that Middlebury stakeholders reflected on were: housing, economy, transportation, parks & recreation, neighborhood amenities, and health & safety. The What's Next Committee created the survey, and from April to November 2017, they collected 211 responses by canvassing the neighborhood. Of the 211 responses, 141 were from neighborhood residents and 70 were from non-residents. The survey results indicate that Middlebury residents are engaged and connected to their community, with 87% of respondents knowing their neighbors and 70% saying that they would volunteer or support future neighborhood events.

The quality of life sector outcomes that Middlebury stakeholders reflected on were: Housing, Economy, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Neighborhood Amenities, and Heath & Safety Themes from the survey responses emerged regarding what makes Middlebury special and some issues that the neighborhood faces. Responses indicated that Middlebury is special because of its rich history; diverse population; and hardworking, genuine people. Respondents agreed that Middlebury's issues include a lack of neighborhood investment, abandoned buildings & blight, and a lack of amenities.

OVERVIEW

211

Surveys completed

\$27,478

Average annual household income

40%

Residents who live in poverty

MIDDLEBURY IS SPECIAL BECAUSE OF...



History



Diversity



People

WHAT THEY HEARD

"Good down-to-earth people"

"It is 'home' to a wonderfully diverse population—can be a template for positive growth for all of Akron."

"Historical significance (people need to be aware of this)!"

"[Too many] boarded up houses"

ISSUES FACING MIDDLEBURY...



Low-income neighborhood



Abandoned buildings/blight



Lack of amenities

MIDDLEBURY'S STRENGTHS...

+ Location

+ Stores and businesses

+ Potential

+ Important institutions

+ Community services

BACKGROUND

MIDDLEBURY'S CONTRADICTIONS

An assessment of Middlebury's current conditions by the What's Next Committee reveals a neighborhood defined by contradictions; its qualities are marked by internal inconsistencies that must be addressed in order to move Middlebury forward.

MIDDLEBURY IS...

- 1** A central neighborhood without a center
- 2** A walked neighborhood that isn't walkable
- 3** A working-class neighborhood without enough work
- 4** A neighborhood surrounded by anchors that don't anchor wealth here
- 5** A neighborhood of homes without enough homeowners

DEVELOPED BY KYLE JULIEN

1. A central neighborhood without a center

Middlebury is close to downtown and important anchors of economic activity, but it has not been able to capitalize on that proximity. This is partly because the neighborhood's center of social and economic activity, and its sense of place, have eroded.

Fifty years ago, Middlebury had a vibrant core with economic significance in its own right. The natural center of the neighborhood, defined by the intersections of the three major streets, has been emptied out so thoroughly that it cannot function in that role. Without a clearly defined core, a place that is easily recognized as the heart of the neighborhood, there is little opportunity to connect to the activity that is occurring along the neighborhood's margins.

2. A walked neighborhood that isn't walkable

Middlebury's street network is engineered to support high-speed traffic and little accommodation has been made to make the neighborhood a comfortable walking or biking environment. There are far too few crosswalks along East Market Street, Arlington Street, and East Exchange Street. Other amenities that would make the neighborhood more walkable—street trees, benches, small public spaces—are also missing. Most private spaces on the major corridors favor accommodating cars at the expense of walkers, as well. Buses and their riders are not incorporated into the street environment, either, despite the importance of the bus lines that run through Middlebury.





3. A working-class neighborhood without enough work

Decades after the decline of large-scale manufacturing in the neighborhood, Middlebury still identifies as a working-class neighborhood. But the job opportunities that remain in the neighborhood don't offer a path to prosperity for enough of Middlebury's residents and it is unclear how the neighborhood economy will support working-class families in the future.

Middlebury's story is still defined by the absence of factory jobs, its economic position still tightly bound in people's minds to manufacturing. People understand the neighborhood through the succession of clay then rubber then decline and uncertainty. What work looks like in Middlebury moving forward—what types of jobs are available, how well they are compensated, how they fit in the neighborhood—is not clear. What is clear is that Middlebury's ability to provide working-class people a chance at a decent wage and prosperity won't happen without intentionally structuring economic development policy and programming that pursue that goal.

There are smaller employers in Middlebury that contribute to the neighborhood's economy and unique character. These include the Pierogi Lady and Akron Building Materials on Johnston Street; Rock Mill Climbing; the Bomb Shelter; Dave's Market, Carter-Jones

Lumber, Modern Builder's Supply, Vulcan Machinery, and Recycling Coordinators on East Exchange Street, among others. These are businesses that continue Middlebury's legacy of work and whose presence enriches the neighborhood in multiple ways. Yet these businesses are not as visible as they could be, and they should enjoy a prominent place in efforts to tell the neighborhood's story. In addition, some employers found in Middlebury, such as the scrapyards and the waste transfer station on Fountain Street, have a net negative impact on the local economy, disincentivizing investment, undermining nearby property values, and creating an environment that discourages working people from settling in the neighborhood.

There are major employers located in and adjacent to Middlebury, but those employers are not integrated into either the neighborhood's identity or physical fabric. The separation is visible in architecture, streetscapes, and also in commuting patterns. Data for the census tracts that contain Middlebury shows little overlap between those who work and those who are residents, a dramatic break from the historic relationship between work and home in the neighborhood. There are 7,950 people working in the neighborhood. Of those workers, less than 1%—only 63 people—live in the neighborhood. There are about 2,000 residents of the neighborhood that work elsewhere (see pages 32-33).

BACKGROUND

MIDDLEBURY'S CONTRADICTIONS

4. A neighborhood surrounded by anchors that don't anchor wealth here

Middlebury should draw immense benefit from being home to regionally significant generators of wealth and knowledge, such as the Summa Health, the East End, Stark State College Akron, Goodyear, and the University of Akron; yet the neighborhood is afflicted by concentrated poverty and entrenched patterns of disinvestment. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested, or are being invested, in sites within or immediately adjacent to the neighborhood, but the impacts of that investment are not being felt down the block.

There are few businesses operating in Middlebury that can function as a middle ground between the neighborhood and the anchors. Today, there is no equivalent to the machine shops that fed into factory production processes and enabled money to recirculate in the immediate area, nor are there many retail or service businesses that serve both residents of Middlebury and the neighborhood's anchors. Physical conditions in the neighborhood, especially the emptiness along East Market Street and the street's configuration that supports high-speed through-traffic, impede the creation of strong social or economic ties between the neighborhood and the nearby major employers. These conditions reinforce the idea that Middlebury is a pass-through

neighborhood, which further undermines the neighborhood's ability to retain some of its generated value.

Data provided by Summa Health provides a sense of how the divide between the anchors and the neighborhood plays out. Of the nearly 4,000 people working at Summa's Akron Campus location, 94% live outside of the 44304, 44305, and 44306 zip codes.

Patterns of development, economic activity, and the circulation of people in Middlebury reinforce the insulation and isolation of the anchors from the neighborhood rather than connectivity. Wealth and knowledge created in Middlebury don't circulate within the neighborhood, when the anchors should be a resource that can be leveraged to broaden prosperity across the neighborhood.



5. A neighborhood of homes without enough homeowners

Middlebury's housing market is broken, and it doesn't provide either adequate housing or wealth-building opportunities for enough of its residents. As a result, too many homes sit empty or in a deteriorated condition, awaiting reinvestment that doesn't seem imminent.

A condition of near market failure prevails in Middlebury, with profound mismatches between the demand for and supply of land, existing homes, and housing finance. The evidence of the broken housing market is everywhere. That evidence was effectively gathered in the Market Value Analysis conducted by the Reinvestment Fund in 2017. The analysis gathered a number of key metrics across the city—sale prices, permits for improvements pulled, amount of vacant residential land, water permit shutoffs, the proportion of homes that are owner occupied, and so on—to create a typology of neighborhoods, a ranking based on the strength of the housing markets in each. Nearly all of Middlebury is in the weakest of the nine categories of neighborhoods, a collection of neighborhoods where 12% of the homes are vacant and the median sales price is less than \$10,000. Only a small portion of the neighborhood immediately east of City Hospital is not in the weakest category, but even that area is only marginally better, in a category

where the median sales price is \$26,000. Conditions in the neighborhood deter investment in the housing stock, which is evidenced through the proportion of homes built in the neighborhood to the number of demolitions. Only a handful of homes have been added to the neighborhood since 2000. Meanwhile, more than 500 residential buildings were demolished between 2008 and 2016. Absentee owners dominate the market in Middlebury as well; nearly 60% of the single-family homes in the neighborhood are rental properties. While a rental property is not necessarily a problem, the concentration of single-family rentals does suggest a neighborhood where owners are more interested in extracting value through cash flows than building value over time.

Because values are so low, it is difficult to attract capital to Middlebury's housing market. Between 2012 to 2016, in the five census tracts that Middlebury touches, there were a total of 16 mortgages originated for the purpose of purchasing owner-occupied one-to-four unit homes. By comparison, there were 159 of the same type of mortgages in the two Goodyear Heights census tracts that are immediately north and east of Middlebury. More than 400 mortgages were originated in the two census tracts in Highland Square north of West Market Street. Middlebury is not home to anything approaching a well-functioning housing market,

and its residents are not accessing the capital markets that would allow the neighborhood to attract and retain value.

Middlebury doesn't reward homeownership with appreciating values, and the downward spiral of home prices nourishes a rental market where too many landlords make their money by providing substandard housing. Neither homeowners nor renters are well-served by Middlebury's current housing market.



BACKGROUND

A VISION FOR MIDDLEBURY

In February, 2018, stakeholders and residents came together to define a vision for Middlebury, a statement that outlines the neighborhood's hopes for its future. The vision was developed in a single community meeting, but builds on months of community events and stakeholder-driven efforts to define where Middlebury is headed. The draft statement was also reviewed and discussed at the February What's Next Committee meeting.

This planning framework is an effort to resolve those contradictions so that this vision for the neighborhood can be realized.

Building on previous community-driven planning efforts and including new methods of community input, this plan prioritizes neighborhood empowerment and the insight that community members contribute to the planning process.

IN 2028, MIDDLEBURY WILL BE...

- 1 A neighborhood with a clearly defined center that is well-connected to surrounding areas and features a mix of inviting public and private spaces
- 2 A walkable neighborhood with a safe pedestrian network connecting walkers to destinations
- 3 A healthy and safe neighborhood, in perception and reality
- 4 A neighborhood with higher rates of homeownership offering quality housing for all
- 5 A "walk to work" neighborhood, offering meaningful work to those who live here, and places to live and spend time to those who work here
- 6 A place drawing inspiration from its past as an ethnically diverse and working-class neighborhood



COMMUNITY INPUT

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

On June 28th, 2018, the planning team conducted a series of small group interviews with five key community stakeholder groups:

- > Anchor institutions
- > Neighborhood development
- > Block watches/residents
- > Service organizations
- > Entrepreneurs/small business

Stakeholders were asked about Middlebury's perception, assets, challenges, and opportunities as well as their vision for the neighborhood. Throughout discussions, some key themes emerged regarding the issues and topics the Neighborhood Plan must address, including the following:

EAST MARKET STREET

Participants identified East Market Street as a key corridor for transportation improvements, especially pertaining to non-motorized traffic. Stakeholders also wanted to see the character along East Market Street enhanced with more local commercial and retail uses to make it a neighborhood destination.

HOUSING & HOMEOWNERSHIP

Stakeholders discussed their desire to see existing neighborhood housing stock restored and, eventually, more diverse housing options constructed to accommodate changing housing demands. Sustainable homeownership and

landlord accountability were also top priorities for the community.

CONNECTIVITY

Middlebury is fortunate to have major institutions and employment centers as assets within or near the neighborhood. Summa Health, the University of Akron, Stark State Akron College, the East End, and Goodyear are all employment hubs and should be better connected to one another and to the neighborhood. The need for pedestrian and bicycle enhancements was another facet of connectivity discussed.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Middlebury has a rich history as the place where Akron was first founded, but that history is somewhat lost in the built environment of Middlebury. The neighborhood also suffers from a negative perception as a community that is transient, unsafe, and a place in decline.

QUALITY OF LIFE

People like Middlebury for its affordability, location, and opportunity, but would like to see more neighborhood amenities to help improve quality of life and sense of community, such as parks and gathering spaces.

SAFETY

Although stakeholders noted that crime is decreasing in Middlebury, the perception of safety remains a challenge.



COMMUNITY INPUT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY EVENT 1 | JULY 11, 2018

The first community event was held during a Middlebury Wednesdays event at The Well CDC/Compass Coffee. The event included the HAPI Fresh Farmers Market, ASIA Inc., a local food truck & brewery, live music, and a neighborhood walking tour. From 4 – 7 p.m., the planning team also set up community engagement stations where more than 50 members of the community participated in planning related activities.

Community event participants were asked to share their vision for the future of Middlebury, which were distilled into the following themes:

- > Become a place of prosperity for all people in the neighborhood. Improve conditions so people can thrive, while being mindful of displacement and gentrification.
 - > Become a place that celebrates its rich legacy. Preserve the character and diversity of the neighborhood. Uncover and make visible the historical and cultural significance of Middlebury.

ONLINE SURVEY

After the community event, an online survey was posted on The Well CDC's website to provide opportunities for residents who were unable to attend the event to give feedback. Forty-one (41) people participated in the online survey. The feedback received included suggestions on places within the neighborhood where the planning team should focus their efforts.



MY VISION FOR MIDDLEBURY IS...

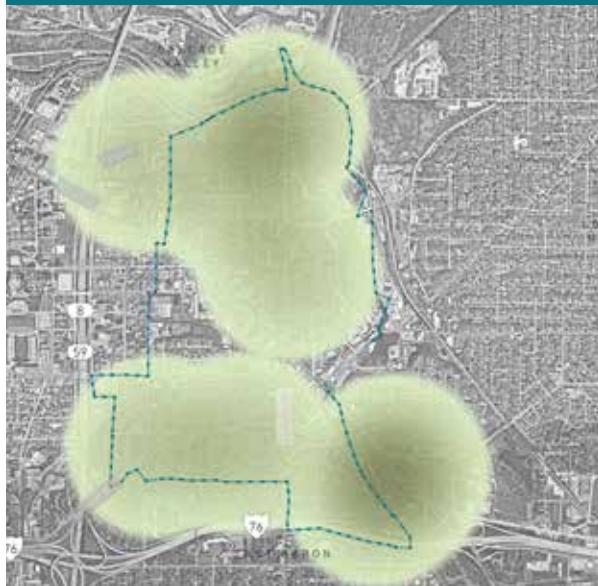


WHERE SHOULD WE FOCUS?

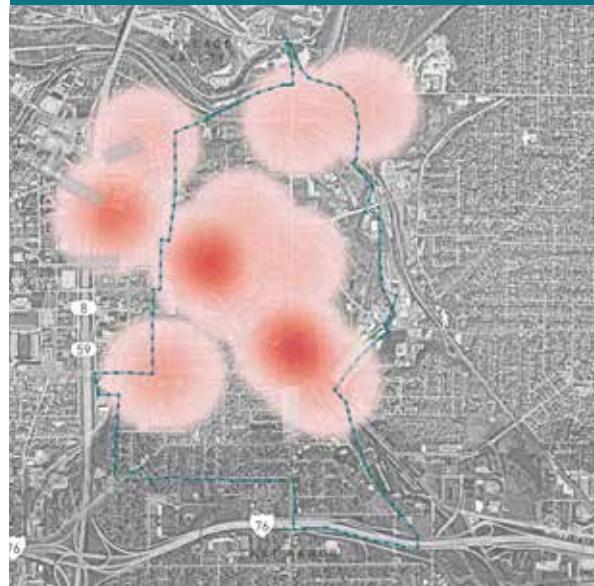


INTERACTIVE MAPPING EXERCISE RESULTS CONDUCTED DURING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 1 | JULY 11, 2018

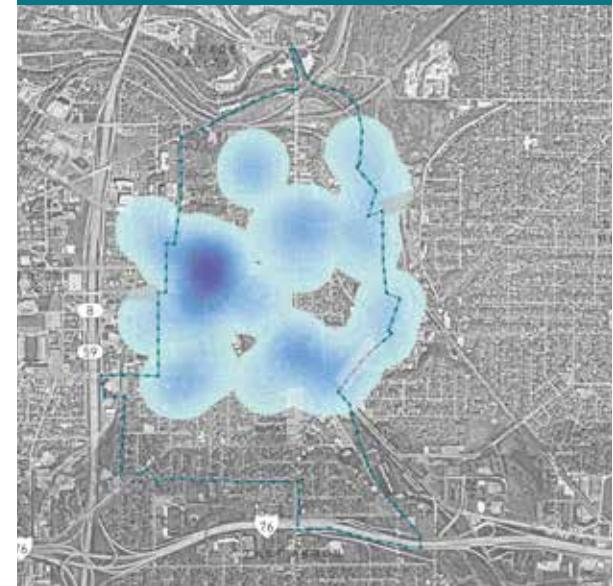
PLACES THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING



PLACES THAT DISCOURAGE WALKING



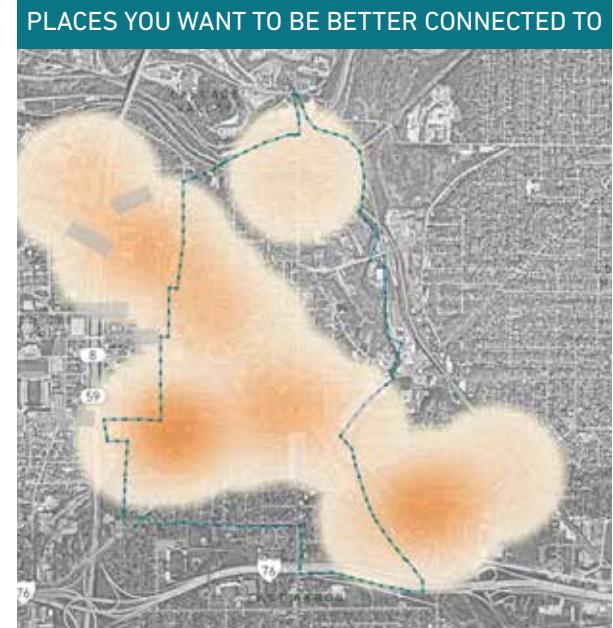
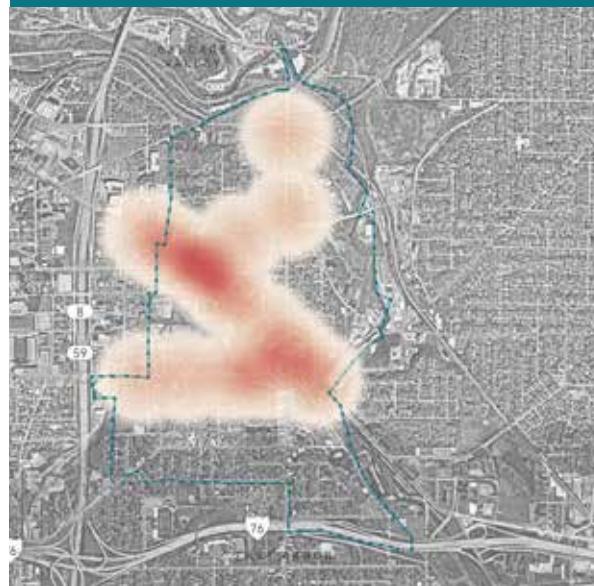
PLACES WHERE WE SHOULD FOCUS



PLACES THAT ENCOURAGE BIKING



PLACES THAT DISCOURAGE BIKING



COMMUNITY INPUT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY EVENT 2 | OCTOBER 2, 2018

The second community event was held during a Neighborhood Network Monthly Meeting at Family of Faith United Methodist Church. Beginning at 6 p.m. with a short presentation by the planning team, meeting attendees were invited to review the draft planning concepts and provide feedback at several stations. Following the planning team's activities, attendees participated in "On the Table" discussions, where they were able to talk about community issues with their fellow Middlebury neighbors. More than 60 people were in attendance and provided feedback at the stations or at the "On the Table" discussions.

The activities at the stations included a residential preference survey to distinguish which housing typologies would best fit in the neighborhood, the results of which can be found on the following page. Adapting Market Street to better suit all users was another important topic of the night. Attendees were given an opportunity to indicate which potential East Market Street reconfiguration they preferred. As shown on the following page, all of the options had more green dots than red ones, with option two being the most favored one of the three.

"Walkability. If it's easier to navigate through the neighborhood people will feel more connected."

"I would like to see new homes on vacant lots"

"It'd be great to set up our community to help businesses, especially small ones"

"E. Market is too wide and crosswalks are not placed well."

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

GREEN: LIKE → RED: DISLIKE →

SINGLE FAMILY



TOWNHOMES & APTS



MIXED USE



EAST MARKET STREET POTENTIAL RECONFIGURATION

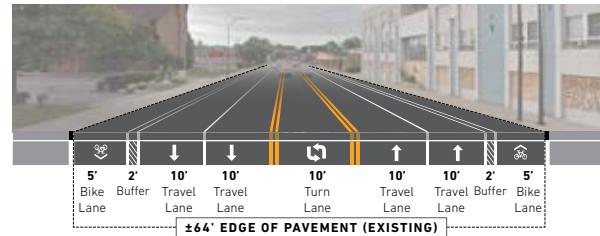
GREEN: LIKE → RED: DISLIKE →

OPTION 1: Center turn lane + north side parking



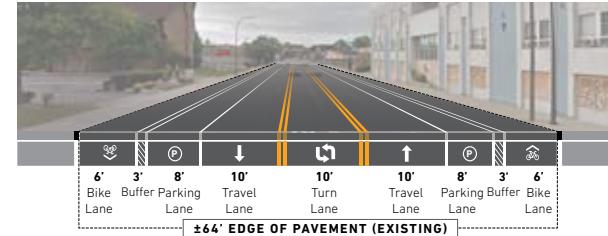
RESULTS 3 GREEN DOTS

OPTION 2: Center turn lane + buffered bike lanes



RESULTS 14 GREEN DOTS
 1 RED DOTS

OPTION 3: Buffered bike lane + on-street parking



RESULTS 11 GREEN DOTS
 1 RED DOTS

COMMUNITY INPUT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK MEETING | NOVEMBER 6, 2018

At the November 2018 Neighborhood Network Meeting, conducted by the What's Next Committee, neighbors and stakeholders participated in an exercise that cataloged the hierarchy of streets in Middlebury. Neighbors ranked the streets according to the importance of the connections they support and the intensity of development that should occur, and highlighted the streets to reflect a five-step hierarchy, with East Market Street at the top and quiet residential streets like Roselawn Avenue or Middlebury Avenue at the bottom.

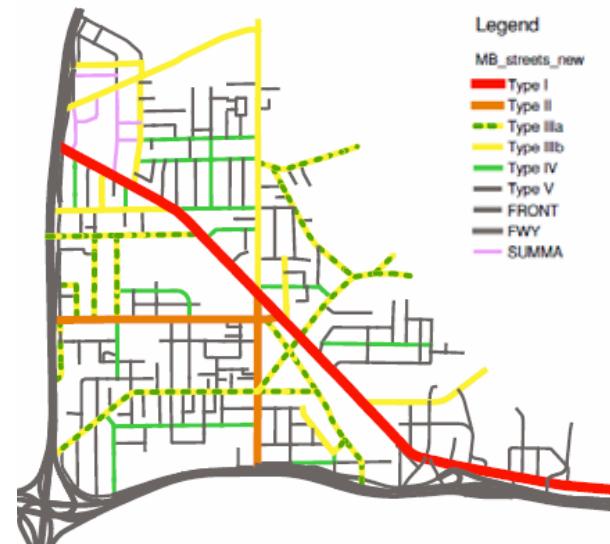
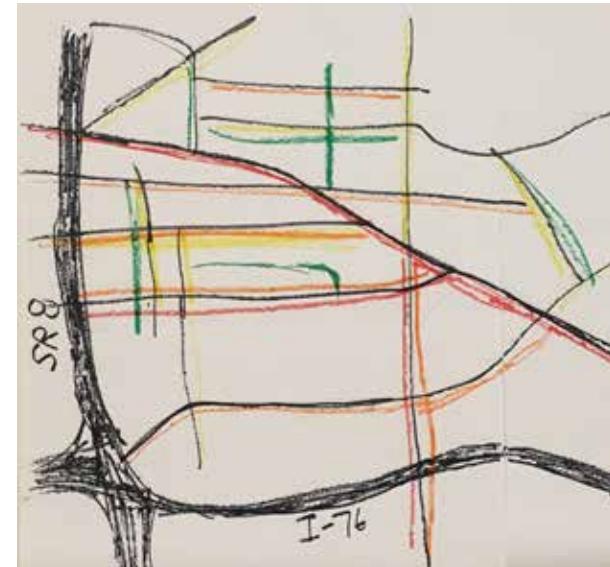
OPEN HOUSE | DECEMBER 4, 2018

The final community event was during the December Neighborhood Network Meeting at Family of Faith United Methodist Church. During this event, the planning team shared the final planning concepts with the community in a presentation and allowed time for questions and comments. The community was able to spend some time becoming familiar with the concepts by reviewing informational boards and were able to provide feedback through comment cards.

NOVEMBER 6 NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK MEETING



CORRIDOR HIERARCHY EXERCISE



DECEMBER 2018 OPEN HOUSE



SECTION 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS + ANALYSIS

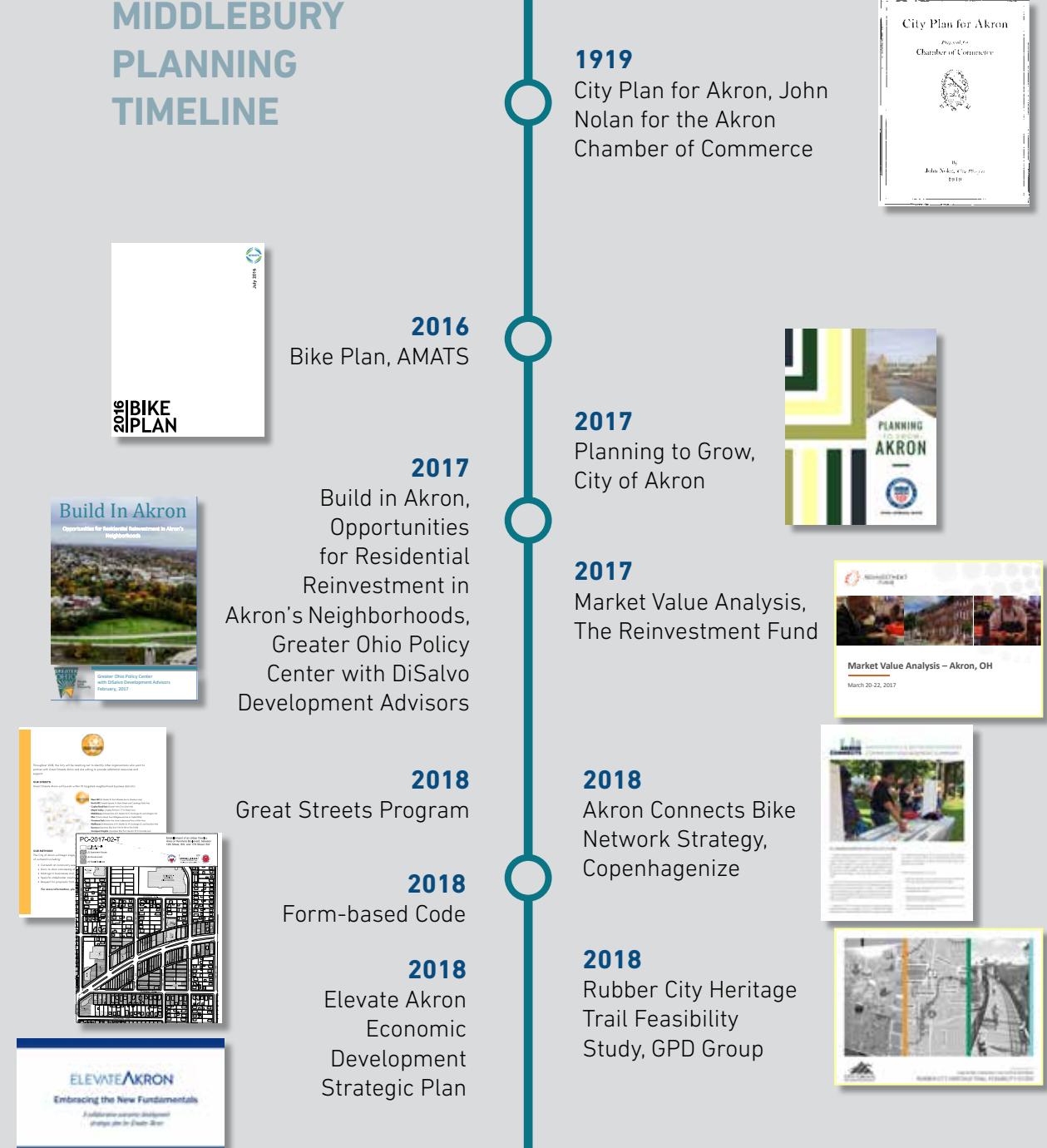
EXISTING CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Working with the City of Akron, The Well CDC, and other neighborhood partners, the planning team completed an existing conditions, data, and opportunity analysis to better understand the neighborhood and its people. The existing conditions include:

- > Review of policies, plans, and initiatives
- > Defining the study area
- > Community assets
- > Community partners and their respective programs and initiatives
- > Current physical development projects
- > Comparison of neighborhood demographics with Akron and Summit County

MIDDLEBURY PLANNING TIMELINE



EXISTING CONDITIONS

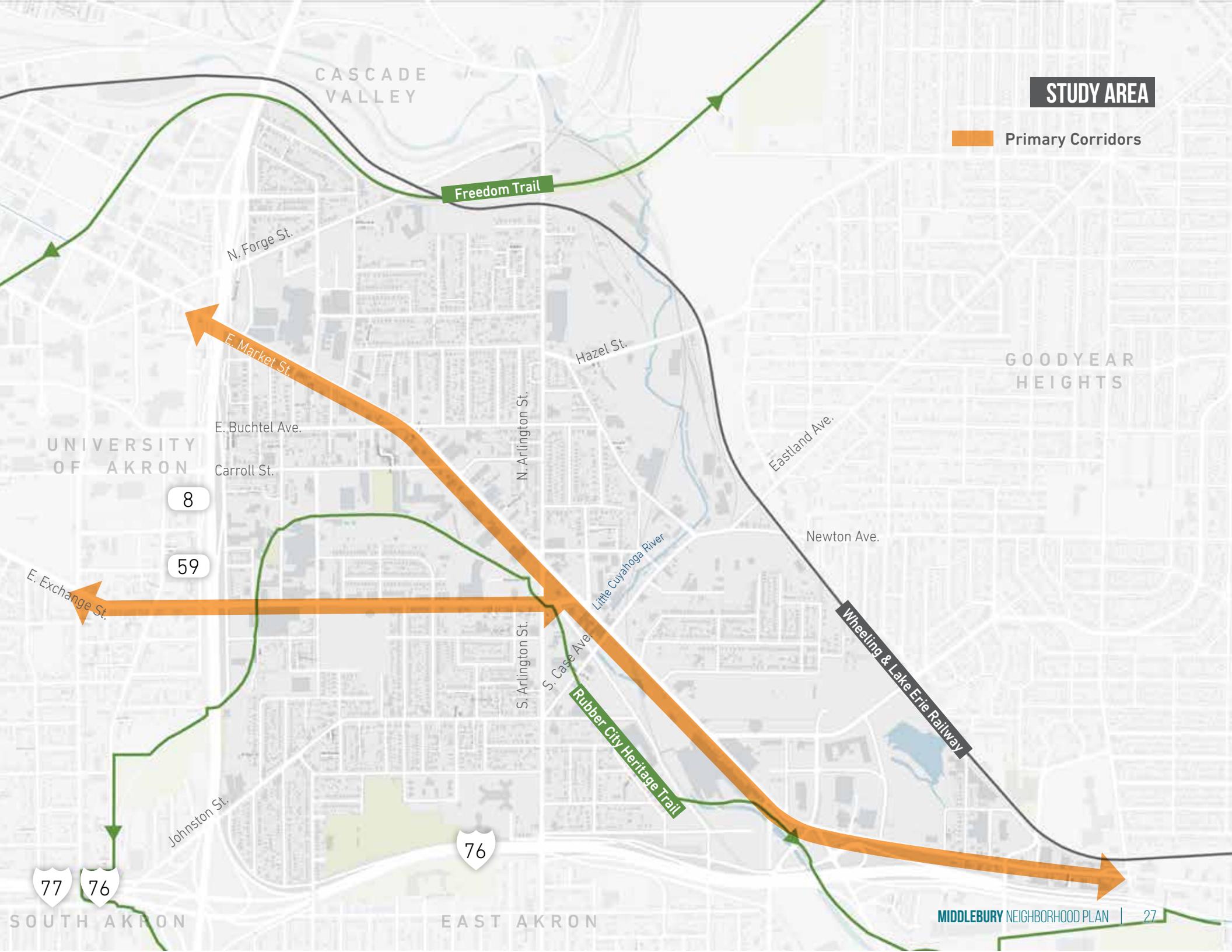
STUDY AREA

The neighborhood study area is bounded by Route 8 to the west, Interstate 76 to the south, the Freedom Trail to the north, and the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway to the east. Middlebury is adjacent to the University of Akron campus, located just across Route 8 to the west. Downtown Akron is also in close proximity to the study area within a little over 5 minutes drive time. The neighborhood is bisected by East Market Street, the primary corridor in the neighborhood, which connects Middlebury to several adjacent neighborhoods. Several east-west corridors also serve as key connections and include East Exchange Street, Carroll Street, and East Buchtel Avenue.



STUDY AREA

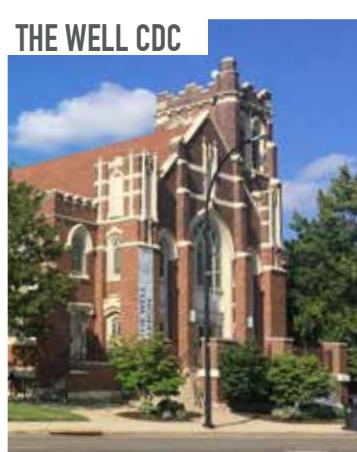
Primary Corridors



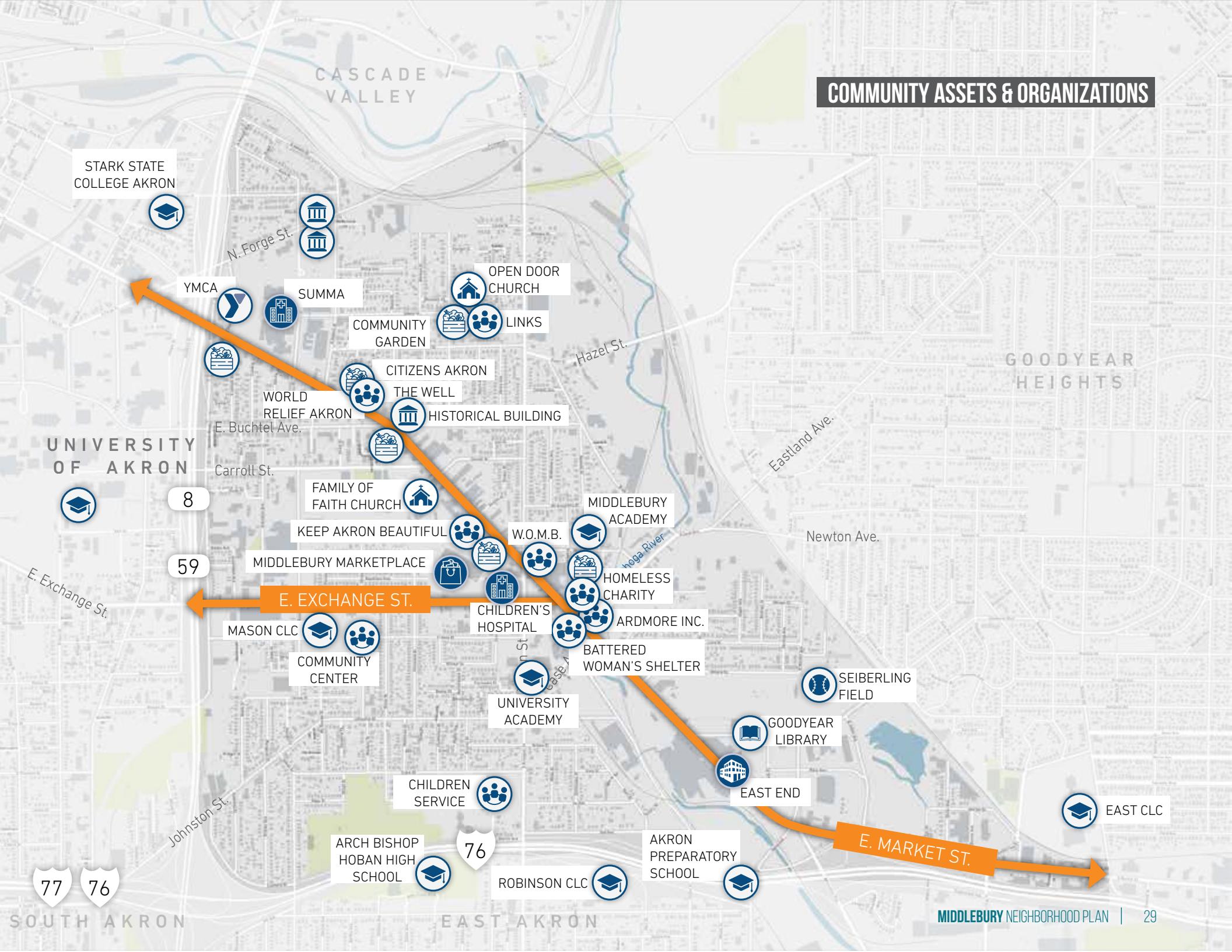
EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Middlebury is anchored by several major institutions, including The University of Akron, Summa Health System, Stark State College Akron, East End development, and the Goodyear Headquarters. While these institutions are large employers in the neighborhood, many community-based assets exist within the neighborhood and provide valuable goods and services to residents. Local retailers Compass Coffee, Rockmill Climbing, and The Bomb Shelter have taken advantage of adaptive reuse projects to set up permanent brick and mortar locations. The large Middlebury Marketplace serves as another hub for retail businesses, with Dave's Market being the major anchor store on the site. Service organizations and non-profits run community spaces, like the Battered Women's Shelter, Community Health Center, The W.O.M.B., Family of Faith UMC, and The Well CDC. While the community lacks greenspace and parks, there are several community gardens that make productive use of vacant lots. Several schools and community centers also call Middlebury "home," with Mason Elementary School and Mason Park Community Learning Center being the most prominent.



COMMUNITY ASSETS & ORGANIZATIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

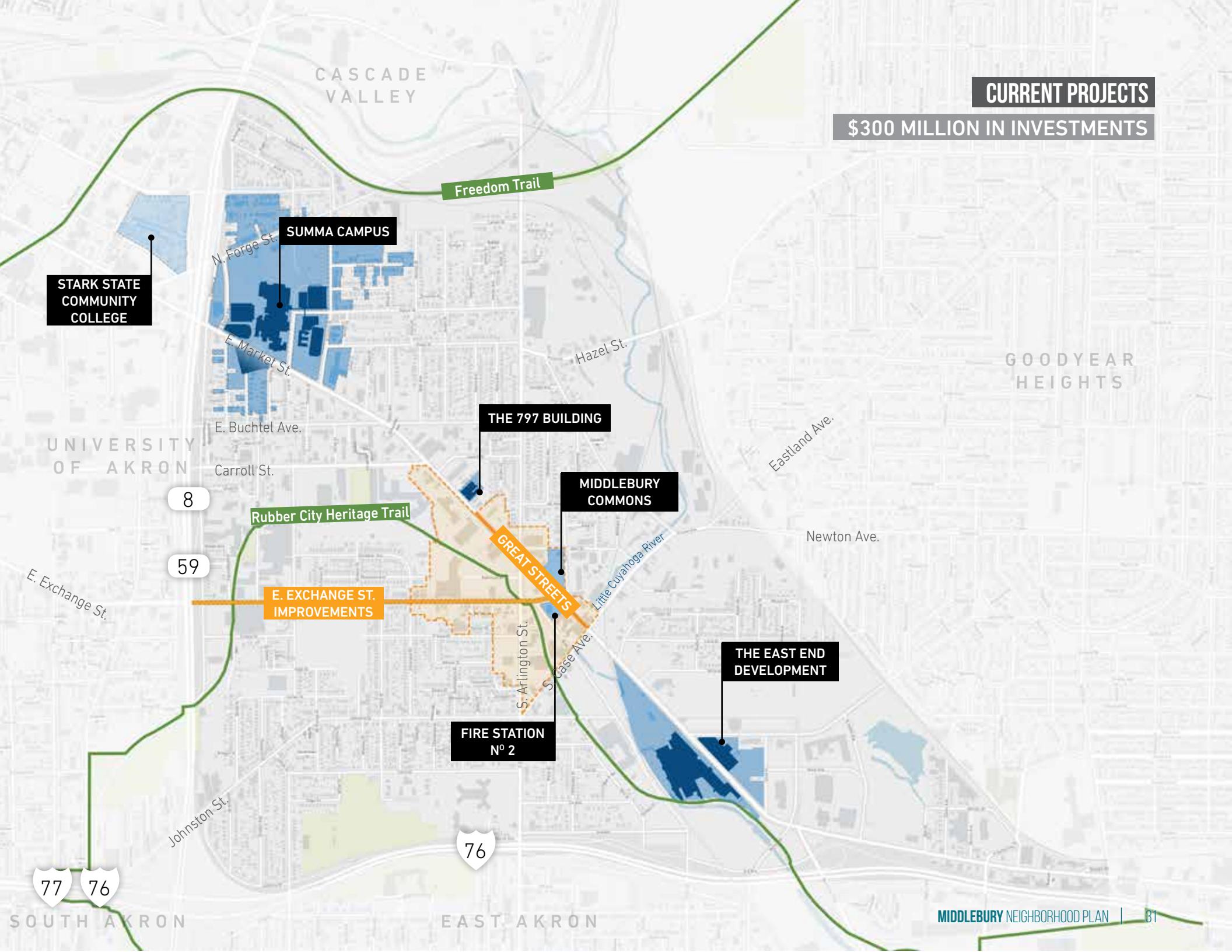
CURRENT PROJECTS

Middlebury is beginning to see some development interest and investment. Currently, there is more than \$300 million being invested in development projects along Market Street, including a rebuilt Fire Station N° 2, Middlebury Commons mixed-use development from EANDC, The 797 Building apartments, the continued development of the East End, and a proposed development near Summa Health. Several other projects are being implemented or have been implemented concurrently. These include Safe Routes to School road improvements on East Exchange Street, the Rubber City Heritage Trail alignment, East Market Street repaving, and Great Streets program investments on East Market Street. All of these projects will help to propel the neighborhood forward and will encourage further economic development. This Neighborhood Plan will work to ensure that this new investment leads to a prosperous future for all residents.



CURRENT PROJECTS

\$300 MILLION IN INVESTMENTS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON

The next two pages show a comparison of Middlebury to Akron and to Summit County, here are some key trends and takeaways:

- > The median household income in Middlebury is approximately \$13,000 and \$29,000 lower than Akron and Summit County, respectively.
- > Middlebury's unemployment rate is 10% higher than that of Summit County.
- > Overall, Middlebury has a more diverse population than both Akron and Summit County.
- > Most of the employees who are employed in Middlebury live elsewhere, with only about 63 individuals who both live and work in the neighborhood.
- > There are a high number of rental units in the neighborhood, with about 56% renter-occupied versus 18% owner-occupied. 26% of housing units in Middlebury are vacant.

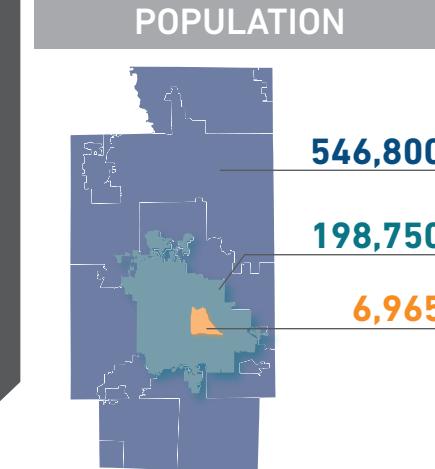
Information is presented using the following color code:

MIDDLEBURY

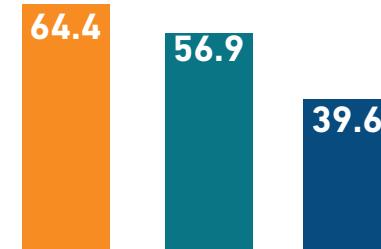
AKRON

SUMMIT COUNTY

PEOPLE



DIVERSITY INDEX



The Diversity Index represents the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. It ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

UNEMPLOYED POPULATION



Middlebury has almost double of the unemployed population rate than Akron and triple of Summit County

INFLOW/OUTFLOW OF WORKERS IN MIDDLEBURY (2015)



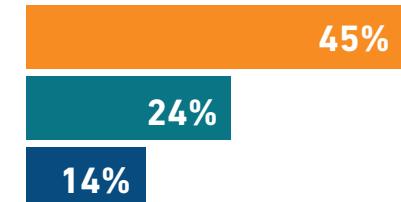
Source: ESRI, 2018

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

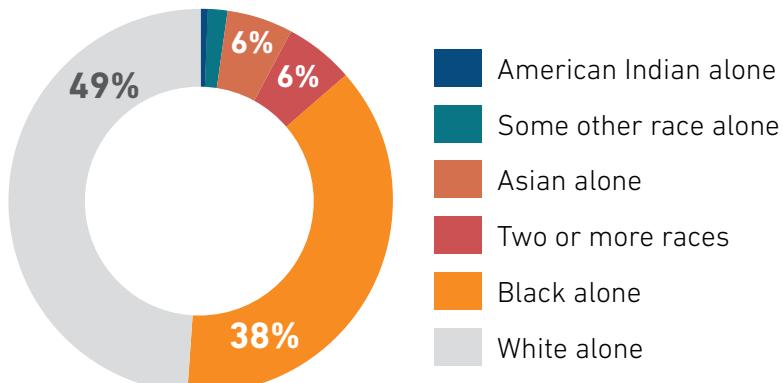


The median household in Middlebury income is close to half of the County

HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (2012-2016)



POPULATION BY RACE IN MIDDLEBURY



This graphic reinforces the diversity index by showing that less than 50% is white and 14% is other race than black and white alone.

MEDIAN HOME VALUE

\$\$\$\$\$ \$49,099

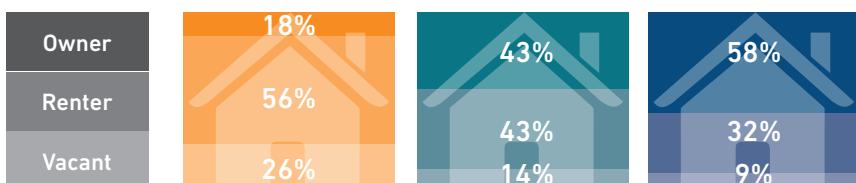
\$\$\$\$\$\$ \$88,818

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ \$152,150

Property values are much lower than the City and County values.

HOUSING UNIT SUMMARY

Middlebury presents a low ownership and a high vacancy rates.



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

High School or Less

79.3%

69.2%

58.8%

Associate's Degree or Higher

20.6%

21.3%

41.2%

Middlebury is a blue collar working class community presenting close to 80% of the population with high school or less education.

HOUSING

DECREASING PROPERTY VALUES



Property values have decreased to a place where quality renovations do not make sense from a traditional market perspective.



SLUMLORD CULTURE

Homeownership rests in the hands of individuals who do not live in Akron, Ohio. Predatory real estate investors look for depressed markets surrounded by wealth, similar to Middlebury, and hold property for higher future returns.

25%

LACK OF INVESTMENT

Homeowners who recognize the disinvestment around them, coupled with a decreased appraisal value, feel stuck because of the inverted housing market .

75%

LOST EQUITY

Three quarters of equity that could be recognized in Middlebury leaves the community.

Source: The Well CDC

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

There are many organizations located in or working in the Middlebury neighborhood to advance the neighborhood through various programs and initiatives.

Some of the highlights include:

- > Neighborhood Network (NN), a program of Habitat for Humanity of Summit County. The NN focuses on revitalizing the Middlebury and University Park neighborhoods in Akron by strengthening and connecting their assets, listening to the neighbors and advocating for equitable action that will improve the quality of life for all people that live, work or visit these communities.
- > The Well Community Development Corporation (CDC) works with like-minded partners to create affordable housing, a thriving economy, and place-making initiatives, while reinvesting worth, value, and dignity back into the individual lives and social health of the neighborhoods of Akron.
- > L.I.N.K.S Community & Family Services offers a Boys & Girls After-School Academy, which includes free tutoring, mentoring, a hot meal, and supportive services for families with students who are struggling academically.

> ASIA Inc. offers microfinancing and a micro-loan program to promote small business startups in the area. EANDC manages and implements development projects and also provides several free homeownership and financial courses.

> Summa Health System plays an important role in Middlebury, working through a number of initiatives to improve access to healthcare and wellness for residents of the neighborhood. Summa also supports economic development and neighborhood revitalization in Middlebury.

Many more programs exist in the neighborhood and contribute to a stronger and more sustainable neighborhood (see table page 35).

KEEP AKRON BEAUTIFUL



BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER



NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER



ARDMORE INC.

- + Congregate Housing & Shared Living
- + Employment Services

ASIA INC.

- + Microfinancing & Microloans
- + Health Programs
- + Interpreting & Translation Services
- + HAPI Fresh Farmer's Market & Garden
- + Food Assistance Programs

BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER & RAPE CRISIS CENTER

- + Sexual Assault Services
- + Free Therapy Services
- + Domestic Violence Services
- + Emergency Shelter
- + Education and Outreach
- + Legal Advocacy

BIG LOVE NETWORK

- + Akron City Repair
- + Community Organizing Training
- + Hands-on Sustainability Conference

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

- + Addiction Treatment Programs
- + Transitional & Permanent Housing
- + Prevention Programs

EANDC

- + Real Estate Development
- + Homebuyer Education
- + Energy Auditing Program
- + Financial Fitness
- + Middlebury Plaza, Arlington Veterans Apartments, and Middlebury Commons

OPEN DOOR ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

- + Sunday School & Sunday Service
- + Food Pantry/Bread & Pastry Giveaway
- + Men's Brunch

THE HOMELESS CHARITY

- + Homeless Housing Services
- + Transitional Support Services
- + Life and Job Skills Programs

THE WELL CDC

- + Community Tool Library
- + "60 for 60" Housing Campaign
- + Block Challenge
- + Akron Food Works Kitchen Incubator
- + Compass Coffee
- + Home Maintenance Classes

THE W.O.M.B.

- + Community Outreach & Voter Registration
- + The W.O.M.B. Community Garden
- + Expression Lounge/Open Mic
- + Stop the Violence Movement

WORLD RELIEF AKRON

- + Refugee Resettlement
- + ESL tutoring
- + Church Engagement
- + Women's Acclimation Group
- + Immigration Entrepreneurship Support

SUMMA HEALTH SYSTEM

- + Improving access to healthcare and wellness
- + Supporting economic development and neighborhood revitalization

FAMILY OF FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- + Sunday Services
- + Weekly Thursday Night AA Meetings
- + Free Community Lunch
- + God's Sheep Community Christmas Dinner for the Homeless
- + Host Neighborhood Network Monthly Meetings

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF SUMMIT COUNTY

- + Homeownership Program
- + Deconstruction Program
- + ReStore

KEEP AKRON BEAUTIFUL

- + Recycling and Trash Receptacles
- + Community Beautification & Landscaping

L.I.N.K.S. COMMUNITY & FAMILY SERVICES

- + Boys and Girls After School Academy
- + Community Garden
- + Beautification Projects/Community Reinvestment Group
- + Fatherhood Initiative Program
- + MEICHV Program/ Help Me Grow Program
- + Senior Activities Days

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

- + Neighborhood Network Monthly Meetings
- + Neighborhood Reborn (Exterior Home Repair, Beautification and Safety Improvement) Projects

SECTION 3:

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

THE FUTURE OF MIDDLEBURY

The Planning Framework is a high-level and broad strategy that addresses the Middlebury's contradictions, reinforces the Vision, and guide the Principles of this plan. It consists of two parts. The first part discusses areas of focus as it relates to the future of Middlebury. The second part discusses the physical characteristics of this community and is referred to as systems.

Transforming Middlebury into a community of choice will require improvements and investments on multiple levels. Much of this work is underway today, but it will take simultaneous and sustained efforts by residents, institutions, community leaders, and the public and private sectors. This planning framework considers:

Public realm and amenities - a network of leisure and functional semi-public and public spaces that promote social gathering and the exchange of ideas;

Mobility - a multimodal transportation system that responds to the needs of all residents of all ages and promotes walkability;

Housing - a market that is supportive of existing residents and is able to diversify the offering for a broader share of the market - affordable, workforce, students, market rate, etc;

Adaptive reuse - a sustainable response to the available underutilized and strategically located warehouse stock in the community;

Employment - an environment where it is possible to "live where you work" and "work where you live";

Anchor institutions - that are connected, invested and engaged in the community they are located within.

This multifaceted approach to neighborhood revitalization will set Middlebury on a path of inclusive recovery and growth.



PLANNING FRAMEWORK

MIDDLEBURY'S SYSTEMS

The planning team identified five different systems that are relevant to the character and identity of Middlebury Neighborhood. These systems are the natural corridors, the major corridors, the built environment, the nodes and gateways, and the residential neighborhoods.

NATURAL CORRIDORS

The recognized natural corridors are along the Freedom Trail, the Rubber City Heritage Trail, and the Little Cuyahoga River. They are a great amenity to the neighborhood and major opportunity for recreation and leisure. They also provide important connectivity to the rest of the city and to the region. These trails help connect residents to opportunities and will potentially draw visitors to the community.

MAJOR ROADWAY CORRIDORS

The identified major roadway corridors in, out and through the neighborhood are:

- > East Market Street
- > Arlington Street
- > East Buchtel Avenue
- > Carroll Street
- > East Exchange Street
- > Hazel Street
- > Johnston Street
- > Case Avenue
- > Goodyear Boulevard

These corridors serve as thoroughfares into the neighborhood and are important pieces in the citywide transportation network. However, they are auto-oriented, not pedestrian friendly, and have limited multimodal facilities. While some improvements are in place and underway, more needs to be done to connect people to places and provide opportunity for placemaking, maximize investment in public infrastructure, and promote people-oriented mixed-use development that complements adjacent neighborhoods.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment describes building disposition and setbacks primarily along the major corridors. In Middlebury, the way in which these corridors have changed over time to respond to automobile needs has resulted in an environment that is not pedestrian friendly and is detrimental to walkability because of large setbacks from the street and the preponderance of surface parking lots adjacent to sidewalks.

NODES & GATEWAYS

The gateways are the access points and mark the thresholds into the neighborhood, whereas the nodes are the intersections of the major corridors. They present opportunities for placemaking and to become vibrant places of activity that are pedestrian friendly, promote walkability and offer safe crossings.

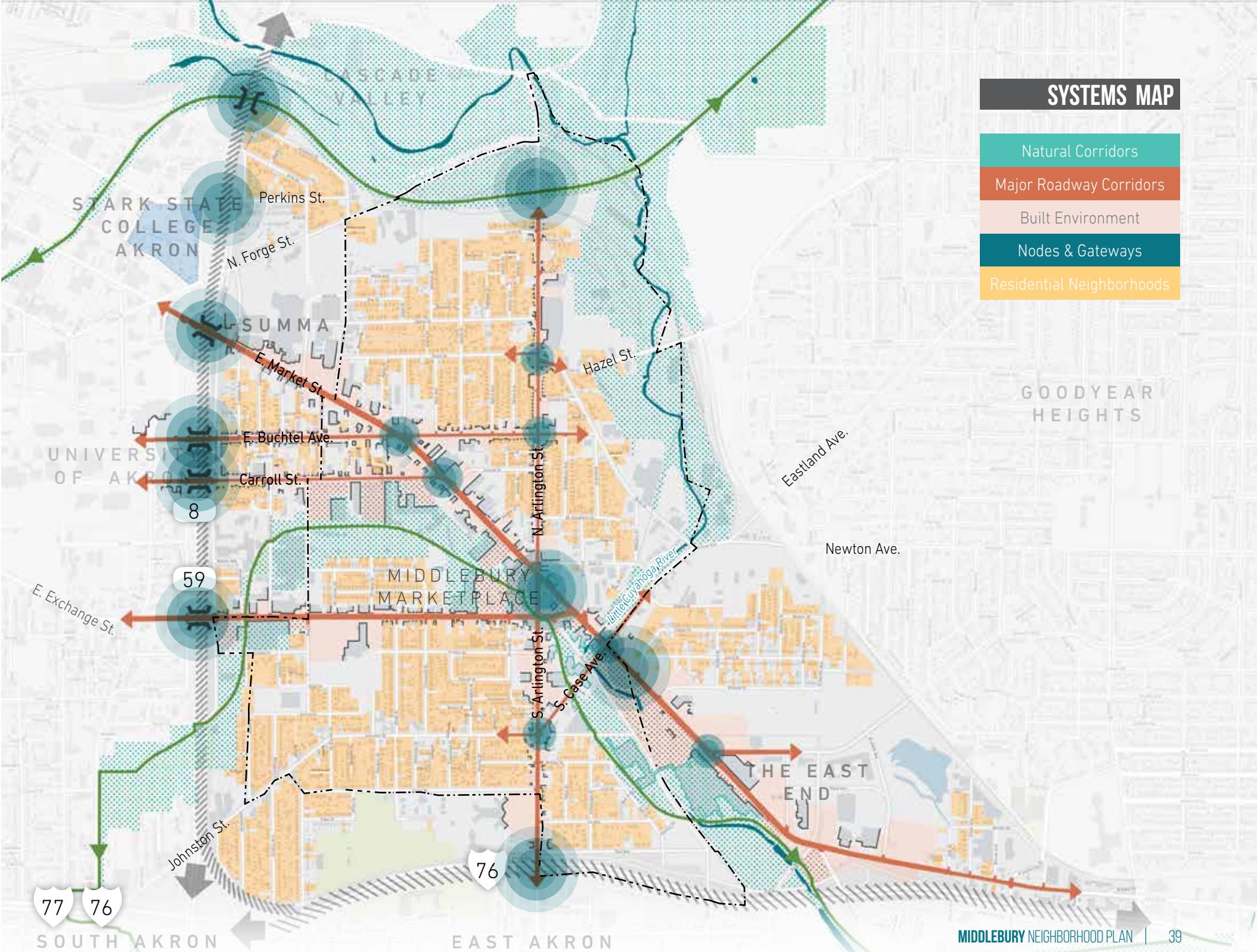
RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The neighborhoods in between and adjacent to these systems are primarily the quieter areas that are predominantly residential. However, these areas are often cut off from community assets and destinations. This lack of connectivity hampers the cohesiveness of the neighborhood and degrades quality of life and desirability of the housing stock.

Together, these systems create an understanding of how Middlebury functions, where improvements are required and what assets can be maximized to create a stronger future for the community.

SYSTEMS MAP

Natural Corridors
Major Roadway Corridors
Built Environment
Nodes & Gateways
Residential Neighborhoods



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

CONTRADICTIONS, VISION & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The five contradictions outlined by the What's Next Committee need to be squarely faced if Middlebury is to move forward and achieve the vision for the neighborhood. Middlebury enjoys many advantages, especially its proximity to centers of investment and wealth creation. But proximity alone will not translate into shared prosperity for Middlebury neighbors or the resurgence of this working-class neighborhood.

The planning team identified five principles to sustain the momentum begun by the collaborative efforts in the neighborhood. These principles directly correlate to the contradictions and the established vision.

Enhancing connectivity and integrating alternative transportation, improving access to parks and open spaces, promoting economic development through infill and adaptive reuse, strengthening the neighborhood core, and encouraging infill through a range of housing types are the necessary next steps.

1 ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

Create connections to local, neighboring and regional destinations through a multimodal system that responds to the needs of all residents and promotes walkability;

2 IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Build on existing assets and create a network of leisure and functional public spaces that promotes social gathering and community activities that support a healthy and safe neighborhood;

3 EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & REUSE

Respond to the available underutilized and strategically located warehouse stock in the community to uncover opportunities that are inclusive of an ethnically diverse and working-class neighborhood;

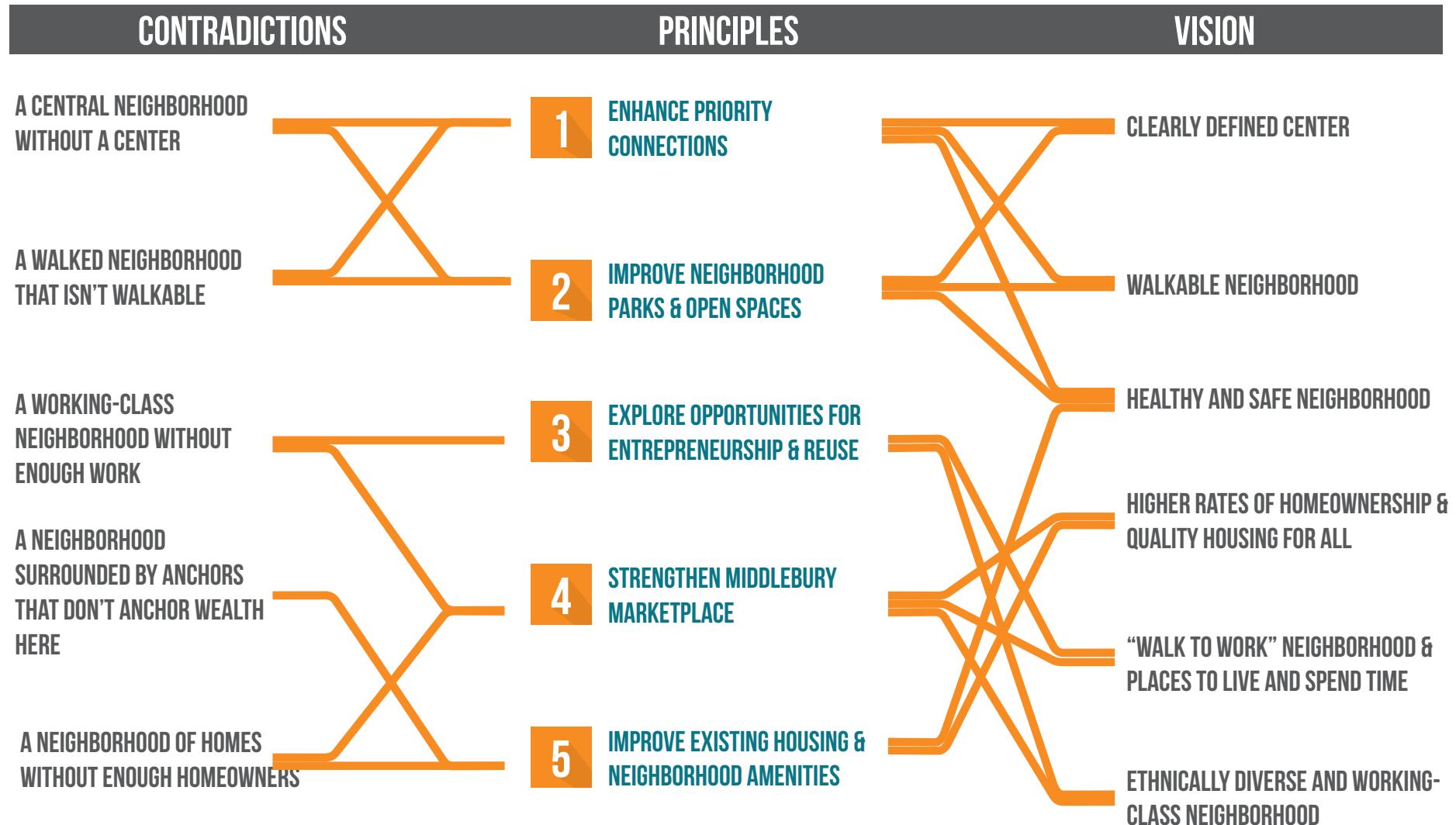
4 STRENGTHEN MIDDLEBURY MARKETPLACE

Create an accessible and clearly defined neighborhood center that fosters pedestrian and economic activity;

5 IMPROVE EXISTING HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

Respect Middlebury's historic building and block pattern, increase homeownership rates, and broaden the housing market by retrofitting the current zoning code to better match the needs of the neighborhood.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIVE CONTRADICTIONS, THE ESTABLISHED VISION FOR MIDDLEBURY, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN:



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

1| ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

The anchor institutions located at the margins of Middlebury do not participate in the daily life of the community and are mostly enclosed in their campuses. The anchors must be engaged in order to cultivate a sense of shared space and shared fate. Better connecting the anchors to the neighborhood would allow for more interaction between them and the community. It would also encourage their employees to patronize small businesses and to spend time in the neighborhood either during the lunch hour or after work. In order for that to happen a more pedestrian friendly environment is needed. Also the campus development/expansion should be better integrated to the neighborhood fabric to avoid the creation of a superblock or disconnected enclave.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Middlebury is served by numerous bus lines along several major corridors. Currently, Akron Metro RTA registered the following boardings in the neighborhood on an average weekday:

- > ~300 boardings on East Market Street
- > ~160 on South Arlington Street
- > ~100 boardings on North Arlington Street and Upson Street
- > ~30 boardings on Eastland Avenue
- > ~125 on East Exchange Street
- > Total of over 700 boardings in the neighborhood per weekday

For the longer connections, transit provides a good alternative for getting from place to place within the Market Street corridor and for making connections to the corridor from other neighborhoods. RTA has plans to improve the bus network system in Middlebury. These improvements include a transit hub at the triangle shaped site formed by the intersection of East Market, East Exchange, and Arlington Streets.

The top-right diagram shows existing routes, the bottom-right shows the improved network. By August 2019, there will be direct connections from Middlebury to: Downtown, the Arlington Street corridor, NE Summit County via SR-91, Ellet, Mogadore, Chapel Hill, and Romig Roads via Waterloo Road.

CURRENT BUS NETWORK



BUS NETWORK - AUG 2019



1 | ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

1| ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

TRAFFIC CALMING

Currently the major corridors in Middlebury prioritize the automobile over the pedestrian. These corridors vary in width but in general accommodate wide lanes of traffic, few center turn lanes, and minimal bike infrastructure. This tends to increase speed, create unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reduces the attractiveness of the streets.

Traffic calming has been proven to be an effective way to reduce traffic speeds, accidents, and fatalities. Common modifications include lane narrowing, bump-outs to shorten crosswalks, bicycle infrastructure, crosswalk improvements, on-street parking, and streetscape amenities. These enhancements help to increase livability, improve walkability, encourage new businesses, and increase property values. Taken together, traffic calming improvements create safer, more vibrant and accessible streets for all modes of transportation.

The average daily traffic in these corridors (see call-out numbers on next page showing the highest is 16,000) indicates that it is feasible to, when maintenance is required for existing streets, evaluate for traffic calming and/or restriping while still meeting the demands of existing traffic. In many instances, the streets are now striped to provide more lanes than are necessary for automobile traffic. Traffic

calming reduces the lanes of the street used for automobile traffic freeing up more space for bike lanes, shared center turn lanes, and other improvements. Crosswalk treatments and bumpouts also contribute to a more pedestrian friendly environment. These crosswalks increase visibility, make drivers more aware, and prioritize the pedestrian whereas bumpouts helps to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians.

BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Implementing bike infrastructure advances traffic calming. Creating a neighborhood bike network fosters healthy habits and contributes to the vitality of pedestrian friendly streets. The suggested bike network builds on existing efforts and should follow an all ages and abilities approach, in accordance with the Akron Connects Bike Network Strategy.

One such project will be implemented on East Exchange Street that includes a protected bike lane, parking on both sides, two lanes of traffic and a center turn lane. The East End area has recently successfully implemented a road reconfiguration along East Market Street to the intersection with Case Avenue. The approach for this area includes parking along the curb with bumpouts, bike lanes, two lanes of traffic and a center turn lane. This plan recommends expanding this road configuration to the intersection with Arlington Street.



ARLINGTON ST. TO STATE ROUTE 8



1 | ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

POTENTIAL BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

1| ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

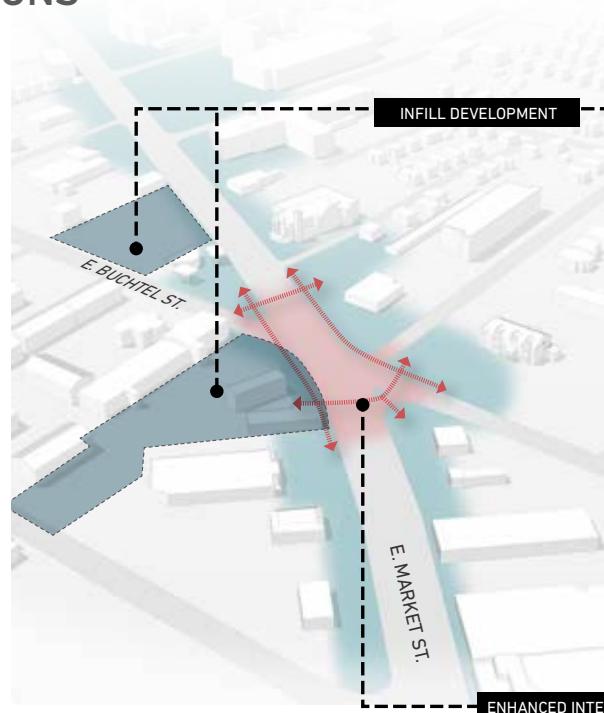
EAST MARKET STREET

East Market Street is slated for resurfacing and potential improvement in the near future. What happens to East Market Street between Arlington Street and State Route 8 will require further investigation. This Plan explores three options to reconfigure East Market Street in this area.

The existing configuration includes five lanes of traffic and an additional lane that alternates between a parking lane and travel lane. Option one keeps one lane of parking, four travel lanes and a center turn lane. Option two removes parking, adds a buffered bike lane, four travel lanes, and a new center turn lane. Lastly, option three is similar to the East End configuration with a buffered bike lane, parking, two travel lanes and a center turn lane. All options will require further community and stakeholder conversation, traffic study, and analysis. That interest should be formalized in a structured conversation devoted to ensuring that East Market Street continues to evolve into a well-designed, well-functioning multimodal urban street.

ENABLING NODES OF ACTIVITY

Today, East Market Street is focused on moving traffic through Middlebury, not bringing people to Middlebury. Rightsizing East Market Street will create a sense of place in the community, helping to turn it into a destination, not just a means of getting in and out of town. Since it



encourages walking, biking, and transit use, it supports business activities and the local economy as well as community livability. The intersection of East Market Street and East Buchtel Avenue, as well as other intersections along this corridor, can then be transformed into thriving nodes of activity. Enhancements should include adequate pedestrian friendly

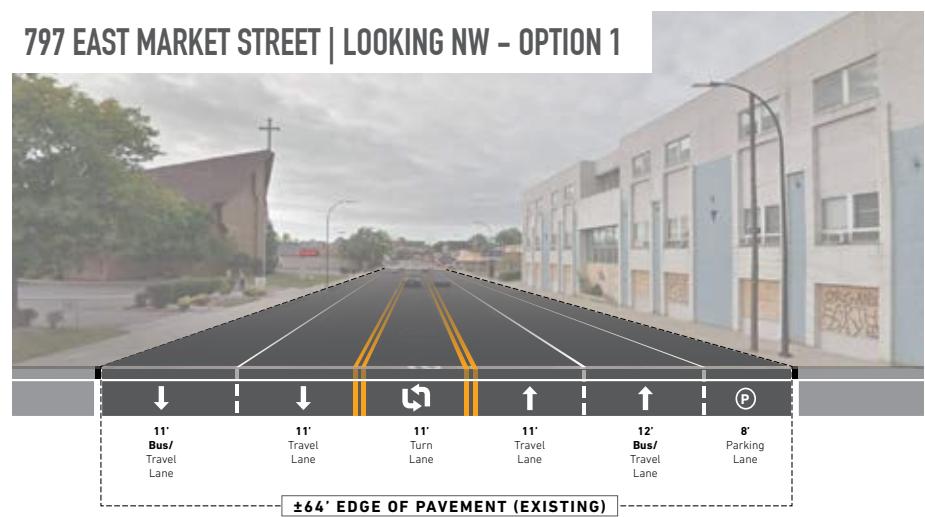
features such as special paving to clearly signalize crossings; streetscape components such as street trees, pedestrian lighting, furnishings, etc.; and identification of vacant or underutilized sites to promote infill development that contributes to the pedestrian experience, creating a safer and engaging public realm.

POTENTIAL MARKET STREET RECONFIGURATIONS

797 EAST MARKET STREET | LOOKING NW - EXISTING



797 EAST MARKET STREET | LOOKING NW - OPTION 1



797 EAST MARKET STREET | LOOKING NW - OPTION 2



797 EAST MARKET STREET | LOOKING NW - OPTION 3



BUS BOARDING ISLANDS



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

1| ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

GATEWAYS

There are nine identifiable gateways into Middlebury. Most of them are located along State Route 8, with one at the north crossing the Freedom Trail, one at the South crossing I-76, and one at the transition from the East End area. They are a combination of bridges, overpasses, underpasses, and trail crossings.

ART & LIGHTING



LANDSCAPE

STATE ROUTE 8 CROSSINGS

Middlebury should take advantage of the proximity to The University of Akron and Downtown. The State Route 8 crossings provide an opportunity to better connect the neighborhood to these destinations and sources of employment.

Often, place branding manifests in signage and environmental graphics, both of which contribute to a unified brand for a community. Another approach is using unique pedestrian lighting and landscaping.

All bridges and underpasses along this corridor need treatment including but not limited to lighting, signage, graphics, decorative fencing, and landscape. Together this creates a sense of place and contributes to the pedestrian comfort and perception of safety. East Buchtel Avenue, for example, is not only the entryway into Middlebury but also a gateway to The University of Akron. This would help to better engage the students and draw them into the neighborhood.

POTENTIAL EAST BUCHTEL AVENUE BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS



STATE ROUTE 8



CASCADE
VALLEY

FREEDOM TRAIL



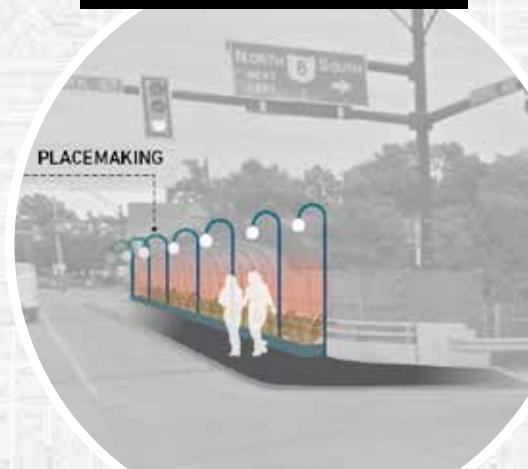
1 | ENHANCE PRIORITY CONNECTIONS

GATEWAYS

Nodes

Gateways

E. BUCHTEL AVE. BRIDGE



UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

E. Exchange St.

59

Rubber City Heritage Trail

DAVE'S
MARKET

E. EXCHANGE ST. UNDERPASS



SUPER GRAPHIC

76

EAST AKRON

Newton Ave.

THE EAST END BRIDGE



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

2| IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & OPEN SPACES

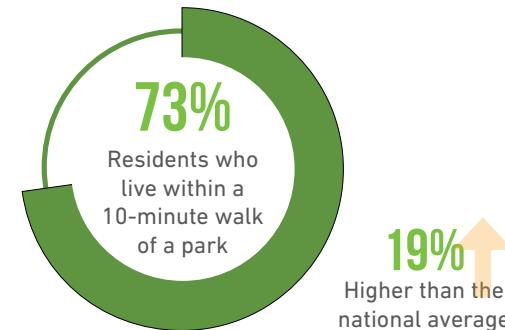
IMPORTANCE OF GREENSPACE

Middlebury is currently underserved by parks and open space, with only 36% of neighborhood residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park. This is about 50% lower than the City of Akron as a whole and 18% lower than the national average. Studies show that parks have numerous positive impacts on communities such as supporting public health and physical activity, improving nearby property values, mitigating negative environmental impacts, reducing air pollution, and stimulating tourism. Increasing access to and the acreage of parks and open spaces should be a priority moving forward.

EXISTING PARKS & OPEN SPACES

The neighborhood has a total of seven parks and open spaces, including city parks, small pocket parks and open spaces. In addition there are five community gardens, and the underutilized Little Cuyahoga river corridor. The Freedom Trail greenway also traverses the northern part of the neighborhood and is an important regional connector. Trailheads at North Arlington Street and Adams Street provide access to this greenway. The planned 6-mile Rubber City Heritage Trail will soon bisect Middlebury and connect multiple neighborhoods across Akron.

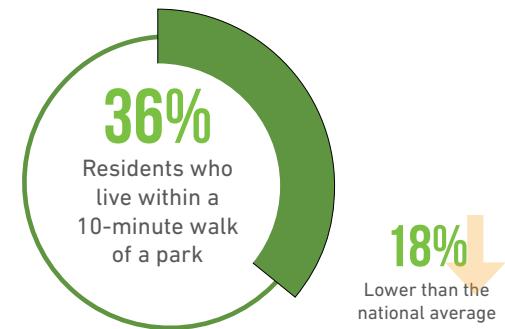
AKRON



3,337
Total park acreage

107
Parks within city boundaries

MIDDLEBURY



IMPACTS OF PROPOSED GREEN SPACE:

382
New people served by additional green space

143
New households served by additional green space

+8%
Increase in percentage of residents who live within a 10-minute walk of a park

2 | IMPROVE PARKS & OPEN SPACES



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

2| IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & OPEN SPACES

TRAILS, COMMUNITY GARDENS, & OPEN SPACES

Several community gardens already exist throughout Middlebury and provide a way for people to engage with the local food system, foster community connections, and offer a means for sustainable food production. The improvement of these existing gardens and possible acquisition of new vacant parcels for future gardens should be a priority.

Trails provide opportunities for recreation, active transportation, and connectivity between neighborhoods and destinations. The Freedom Trail and proposed Rubber City Heritage Trail are strong assets for Middlebury. Clearly marked trailheads and wayfinding signage are important aspects to encourage the use of these greenways. In the case where a trail crosses a street, there should be clear pavement markings and signage to ensure the safety of all users.

There is a desire among community members for gathering spaces. Any existing underutilized public spaces can be transformed into a plaza or open space by incorporating furnishings like seating, planters, lighting, and other pedestrian furnishings. These create a more welcoming atmosphere and are a best practice not only for plazas, but for the public realm and streetscape in general.

CELEBRATE THE LITTLE CUYAHOGA RIVER

A valuable natural resource for the neighborhood, the Little Cuyahoga River has a history as a means of production for industry and manufacturing. Today, it can serve a different purpose as a space for recreation and immersion in nature. The river daylights near the intersection of Case Avenue and East Market Street, which is an ideal location for an additional neighborhood open space. The City of Akron plans to restore parts of the Middlebury portion of the river, including at this location, to improve the riparian ecosystem, increase wildlife diversity, and increase flood prevention. The City plans include dam removal, wall removal, and extension of the riparian buffer toward North Case Avenue.

To further transform this space into one of recreation, intertwining multi-use paths, a foot bridge, and an overlook are proposed. These features will allow public access to the river and the restored riparian edge as well as provide opportunities for recreation and fitness. This new open space may also help to create interest in Middlebury's history and the importance of the Little Cuyahoga River for Middlebury's industrial past. These can be expanded upon through the use of educational signage and markers, like the existing Millstone Landmark on East Market Street.

POSSIBLE COMMUNITY GARDEN



TRAILS



OPEN SPACES



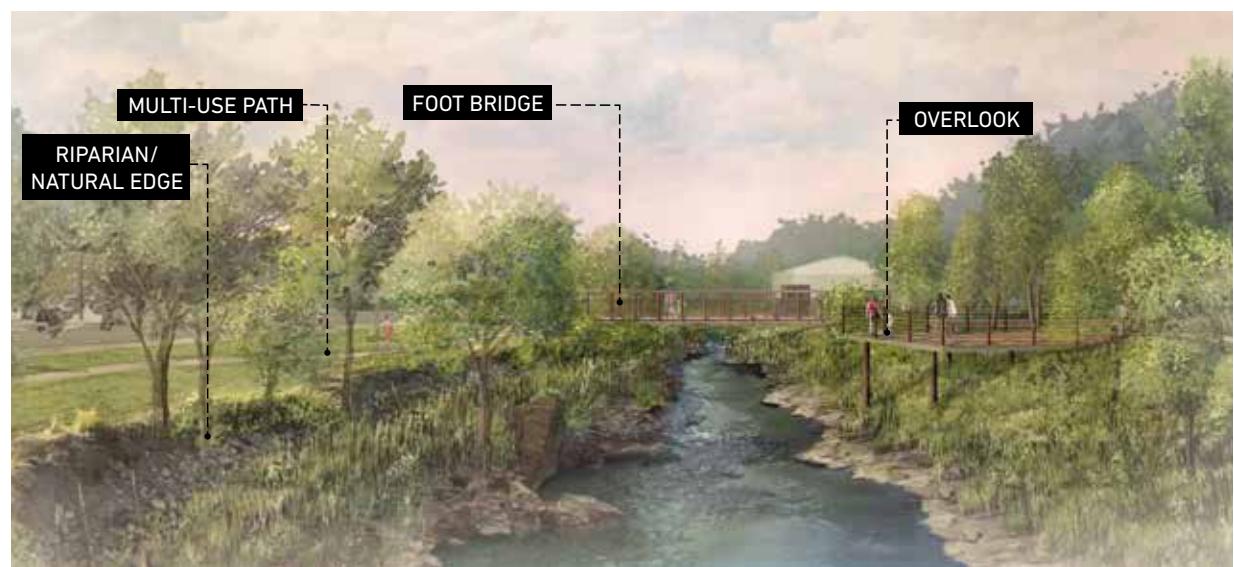
PATHWAYS



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



CELEBRATE THE LITTLE CUYAHOGA RIVER



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

3|EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & REUSE

This plan highlights opportunities presented by City owned properties, underutilized structures, and recently designated Federal Opportunity Zones. The City of Akron owns a number of properties in Middlebury at strategic locations that are suitable to promote an array of recreation, infill residential and job creation. There are many underutilized structures along both the Freedom Trail and Rubber City Heritage Trail. Recreational trails are known economic boosters to the community they are located. The neighborhood has the opportunity to capture trail users by establishing trail heads and complementary businesses geared toward these users to encourage them to spend time in the neighborhood.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF VACANT WAREHOUSES

Adapting and reusing buildings to transform them into more resilient, equitable, walkable, transit-oriented, and more public-oriented places is both socially and economically desirable. Middlebury has examples of vacant or underutilized properties that have been repaired. The Bomb Shelter and Rockmill Climbing are two examples of how to adequately repurpose/expand existing structures that serve a regional market and provide unique destinations in a neighborhood. The Bomb Shelter is a retro, antique superstore with 18,000 square feet of space filled with unique treasures and attracting vintage

enthusiasts from all over. Rockmill Climbing is a bouldering and climbing gym dedicated to attracting new people to the sport while also creating an experience that will draw climbers from outside the region. In addition, they host special events and are also the headquarters for Rock Candy, the colorful hand holds that are installed at climbing gyms around the world.

RETURN MIDDLEBURY TO WORK

The underutilized warehouse structures also present opportunities to return Middlebury to work. There are available programs through the federal government in collaboration with other organizations that advocate for small manufacturing businesses, and the integration of manufacturing into strong, walkable neighborhoods.

In October, the City of Akron, Summit County, and the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce outlined a new coordinated approach to regional economic development. The report, titled Elevate Akron, noted that the region's economic gains have been unevenly shared, that African Americans especially face continued barriers to full economic participation; that greenfield business attraction isn't working and that there should be a renewed focus on the urban core; and that 'mid-tech' work performed by skilled workers who don't necessarily have bachelor's degrees

can become a source of regional strength. It is also important that the neighborhood be rebranded as a place where work happens.

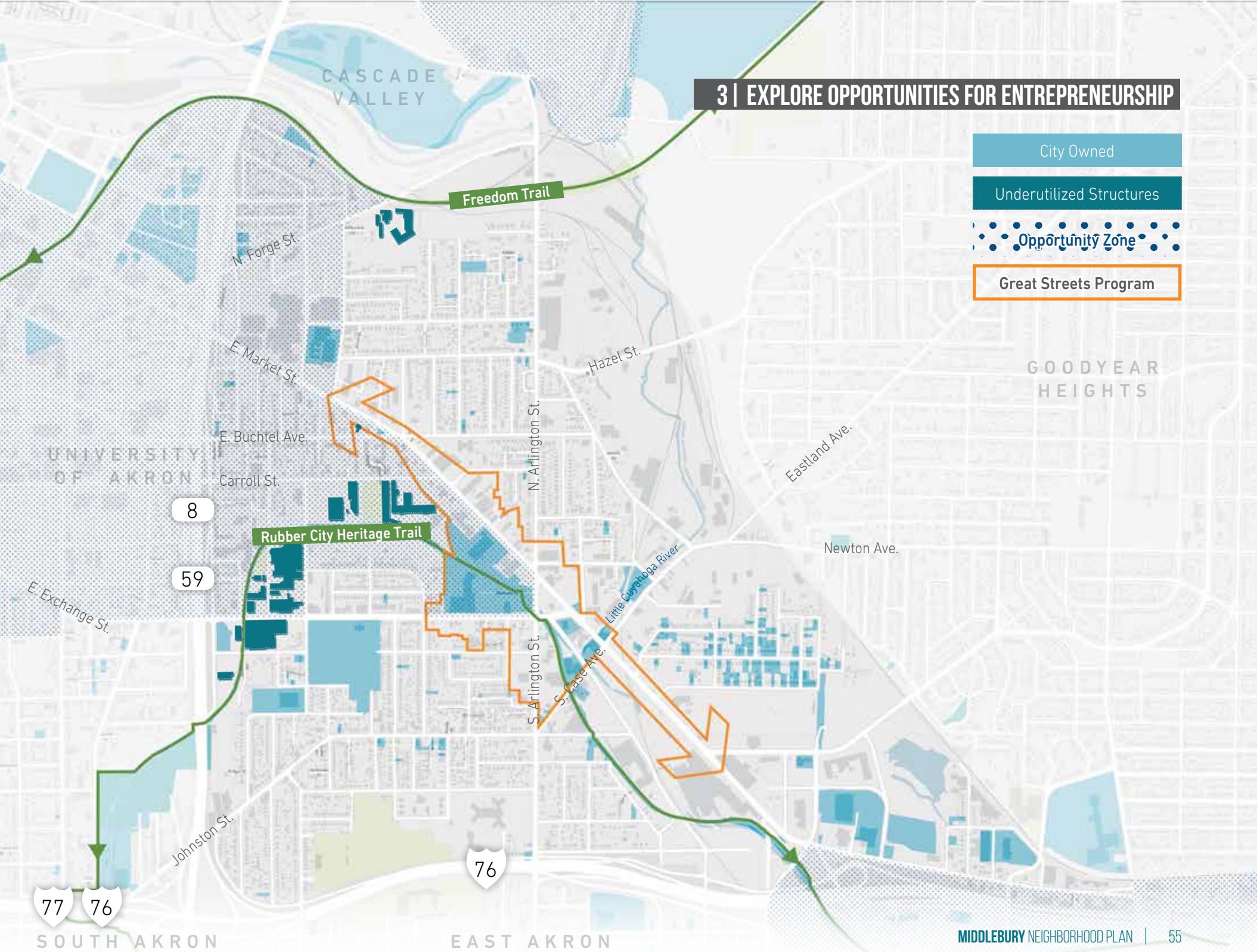
EXISTING VACANT WAREHOUSE



PATH TO RUBBER CITY HERITAGE TRAIL



3 | EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

3|EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & REUSE

Further discussions with economic development and workforce development stakeholders (City and County, ConXus, Stark State, University of Akron, and the Fund for Our Economic Future) are necessary to determine how Middlebury could be positioned as an emerging clean and light manufacturing center and take advantage of the opportunities identified in the Elevate Akron report.

The following are some studies illustrating similar conditions where warehouses were repurposed into hubs of job training, job creation, and community activity.

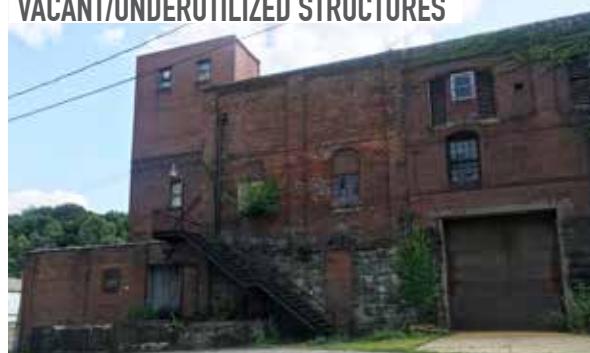
ADAPTIVE REUSE - RETAIL



ADAPTIVE REUSE - FITNESS



VACANT/UNDERUTILIZED STRUCTURES



YELLOW SPRINGS BREWERY, YELLOW SPRINGS, OH



Located adjacent to the Little Miami Scenic Trail, the Yellow Springs Brewery is housed in a 19th century industrial building. Due to its advantageous location, the brewery is able to benefit from the many visitors that use the trail. A study by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) found that trail users spend an estimated \$13 million per year during their trail visits. Nearly half of users surveyed spent money on food and meals and those users coming from outside the region spend additional money on lodging, staying an average of 2.4 nights. This all adds up to valuable economic impact for the region that is directly attributed to the trail system.

THE PLANT, CHICAGO, IL



What was formerly an abandoned 93,500 square foot pork processing facility in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago is now a collaborative community of food businesses referred to as The Plant. The businesses located in The Plant are focused on growing, producing, sourcing, and distributing food products. The Plant was founded on a model of closing waste, resource, and energy loops to foster sustainable food production. In addition to food businesses, programming is incorporated into The Plant's business model. A monthly farmers market takes place on-site that brings together tenants and neighborhood vendors. There are also various workshops, classes, and educational opportunities offered throughout the year. Although The Plant is still under construction, it is already 70% leased and has created approximately 85 full-time employee equivalent positions.

CLEVELAND CYCLEWERKS, CLEVELAND, OH



Located in a former 35,000 square foot rubber plant near the Gordon Square Arts District, Cleveland CycleWerks is a motorcycle manufacturing company. The space is large enough for the motorcycle factory, custom fabrication shop, and showroom. This is a good example of the transformation of an industrial space near a commercial neighborhood core. In this case, the new use of the space is still one of light manufacturing, which creates well-paying blue collar jobs for the neighborhood's residents. The addition of the showroom helps to draw non-residents to the facility and the neighborhood, where they can spend money.

HOBART INSTITUTE, TROY, OH



With over 90 years of welding training, the Hobart Institute is a 12+ acre campus that includes 350 weld stations, 21 classrooms, and a metal processing area. In 2016, the Institute opened the Next Generation Welder Learning Facility, which features state-of-the-art classrooms, quality testing labs, and a hands-on welding lab. Students who attend the Institute range from recent high school graduates to employees of Fortune 500 companies.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

4 | STRENGTHEN MIDDLEBURY MARKETPLACE

The area defined by the intersections of East Market, East Exchange, and South Arlington Streets is the heart of the community. The importance of this place was identified by neighbors and stakeholders in the planning for the 2016 Better Block event. As part of this neighborhood planning process, the area around Middlebury Marketplace was again recognized as a priority focus area for improvement.

Middlebury Marketplace is a tremendous community asset, providing retail offerings including Dave's Market. The design of Middlebury Marketplace, however, could be improved to better integrate it into the fabric of the neighborhood. The center is currently auto-oriented with its primary access off Arlington Street, lacking sidewalks. The property around this entrance is also currently vacant ground, further isolating the stores from East Market Street. This lack of connectivity and access hampers the all-important visibility that retail needs to thrive.

There are other assets and investments that will help transform this core area:

- > EANDC is investing in Middlebury Commons, a senior living apartment building at the corner of East Market and East Exchange Streets.
- > The City of Akron is rebuilding Fire Station No. 2

- > Akron Metro RTA is planning a transit hub along East Exchange Street where three lines will converge
- > The Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition is planning the Rubber City Heritage Trail which crosses at Arlington and East Exchange Streets and continues behind Middlebury Marketplace toward the west.
- > The W.O.M.B. Community Garden is located on East Market St. and provides a valuable service to the neighborhood.

Taken together, these assets and investments provide an opportunity to incrementally transform Middlebury Marketplace to strengthen it as the true core of the community.

1 | ENHANCE & ACTIVATE

To connect Middlebury Marketplace to the community investment taking place nearby, it should be a priority to formalize the pedestrian access along the entry drive off Arlington Street and improve the streetscape environment along the edges of the site. This pedestrian environment would be enhanced by adding a specialty paver intersection across Arlington Street to more directly connect to East Market Street. A parking area should also be added adjacent to the community garden that would eventually serve as a community trailhead for the Rubber City Heritage Trail. At this early stage, creating temporary programming (events, farmer's market, etc.) to activate the vacant lots would help bring the community together to start using this important space.

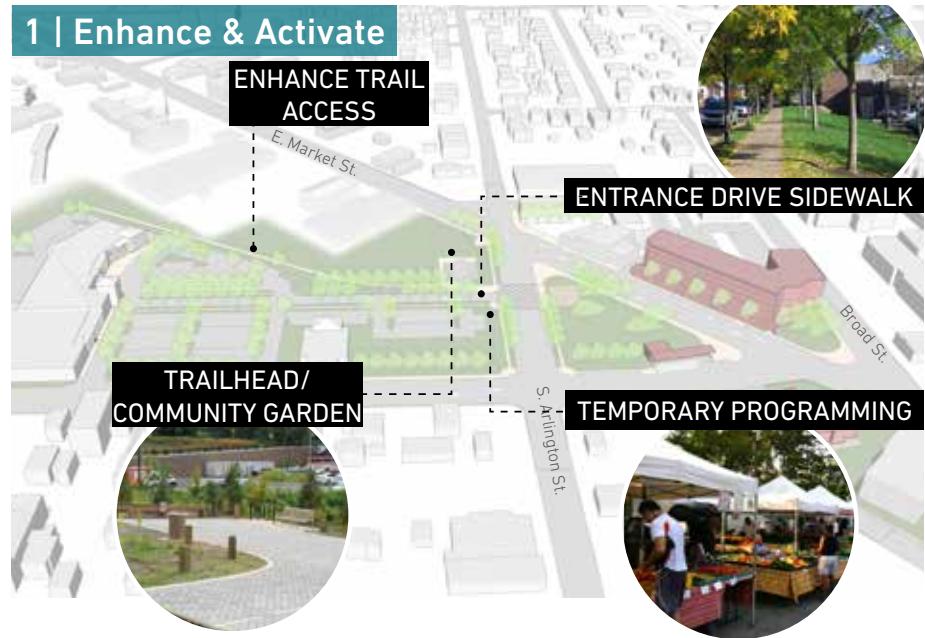
2 | INFILL

The second phase looks at opportunities to infill the vacant ground at the corner of East Exchange and Arlington Streets. These are envisioned as mixed use building sites that could be a combination of retail, office and residential. In this phase, it is likely that the RTA transit hub will be added to the edge of the triangle shaped site on East Exchange and East Market Streets.

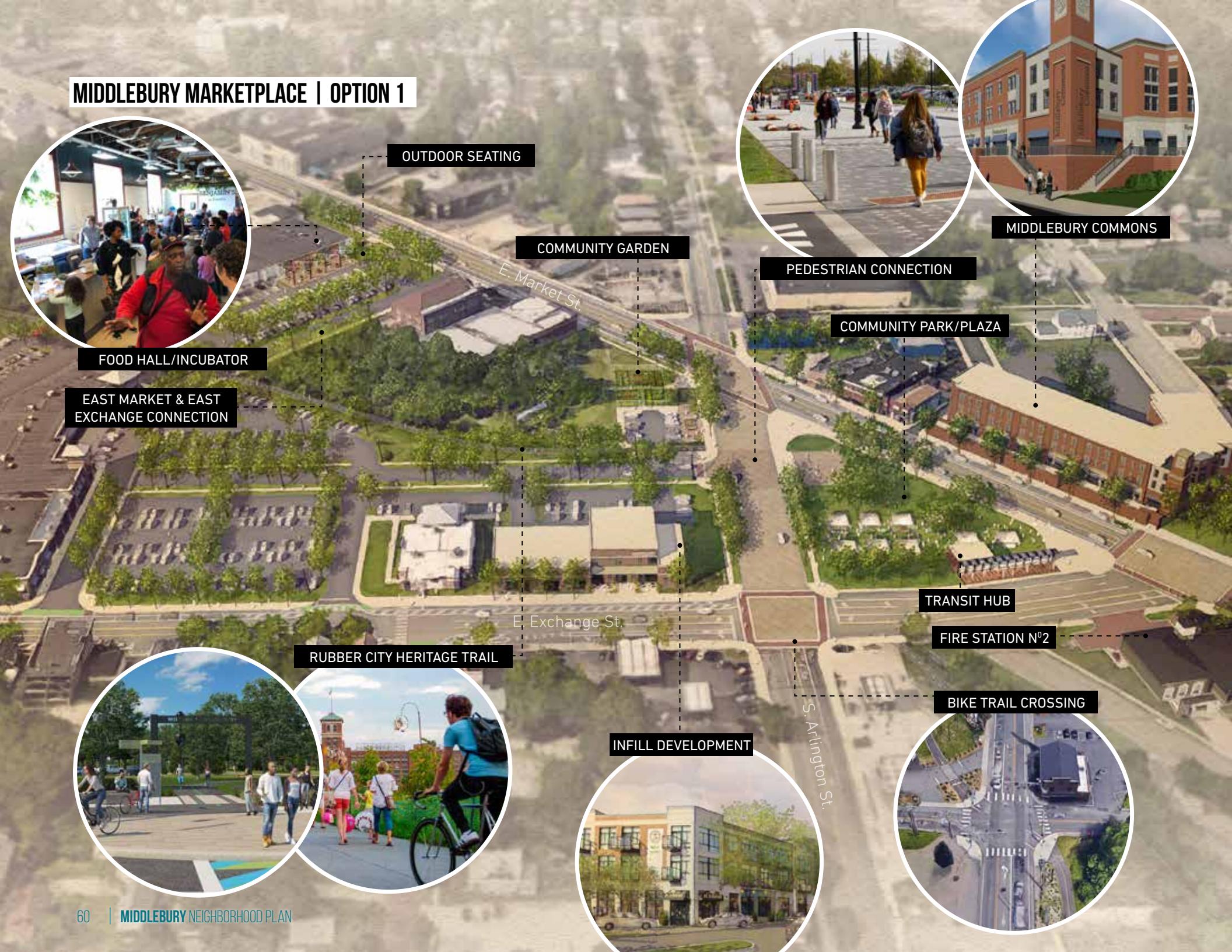
3 | REPOSITION

As market dynamics mature, phase three consists of repositioning Middlebury Marketplace by taking advantage of the City property west of the site to connect East Exchange Street to East Market Street and reuse the warehouse building as a food hall or job incubator. At this point the Rubber City Heritage Trail should be in place, providing regional access to this new neighborhood destination. The triangle shaped ground where the RTA transit hub is located could remain as neighborhood plaza/park space, or in a longer term vision could be additional infill development that brings buildings to the East Market Street edge. Either way, clear and direct access should be provided to East Market Street so that this retail core is visible to all surrounding corridors.

Both options are shown on the following pages and will provide a framework for transforming this critical part of Middlebury.



MIDDLEBURY MARKETPLACE | OPTION 1



MIDDLEBURY MARKETPLACE | OPTION 2



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

5| IMPROVE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

East Market Street stretches for about two miles across Middlebury. The development pattern along this corridor has changed over time as pedestrian scale buildings that framed the corridor gave way to an auto-oriented development pattern that set buildings back from the street edge and placed parking lots along East Market Street. To assess this condition, the planning team cataloged the areas that have remaining traditional building patterns and areas that have been altered for the automobile. This analysis considered contributing and non-contributing buildings, contributing and non-contributing frontage, and areas of surface parking.

For the purpose of this plan, the building frontage and building stock along East Market Street are grouped into "contributing" and "non contributing" based on their built form, architecture quality and placement. This analysis is divided into two categories:

- > **Building Frontage** - Examines the relationship between buildings and the street
- > **Building Stock** - Assesses the quality and use of existing buildings

BUILDING FRONTAGE

Contributing frontage has a positive relationship with the street by being built to the sidewalk edge with little or no setback or landscaped areas. This creates an inviting built

environment that helps to frame the street and provides storefronts and active first floor uses that engage pedestrians and encourage walkability.

Non-contributing frontage (red) refers to the sites with large setbacks or surface parking lots that break the rhythm and scale of the street. This creates an uninviting built environment for pedestrians. Most of the southern portion of East Market Street between State Route 8 and East Exchange Street and most of the northern portion between East Buchtel Avenue and Kent Street represent gaps in contributing building frontage and building stock. This focuses attention on portions of the corridor that would benefit from reinvestment that repairs the relationship between buildings and the pedestrian environment.

BUILDING STOCK

The building stock analysis categorizes the existing building stock as "contributing" (light green) or "underutilized/non-contributing" (red). A contributing building is considered one in good physical condition and containing a business/use that is in line with the neighborhood vision or serves a meaningful economic or cultural purpose to the residents of Middlebury.

An underutilized/non-contributing building is one that may be:

- > In a deteriorating physical state;
- > Vacant;
- > Lots that are not employed to their highest and best use;
- > And businesses that are operational but not necessarily in line with the neighborhood goals and vision, or do not serve a meaningful economic or cultural purpose to the residents of the area.

When looking at the overall length of East Market Street, the strongest concentration of contributing buildings is at the two ends of the corridor where two major anchor institutions – Summa at the north, and East End at the south – are located. In between there are few areas of contributing buildings, aside from the block of buildings that include the W.O.M.B. These gaps are uninviting and not conducive to pedestrian activities. This negatively impacts the perception of distance and safety.

POSITIVE CHANGE

There are recent and underway investments that are bringing contributing buildings to the corridor. The Well, the renovation to the 797 Building, and Middlebury Commons are all bringing active first floor uses back to East Market Street. This type and character of reinvestment and development should be encouraged to continue to activate East Market Street.

5 | IMPROVE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Contributing Frontage

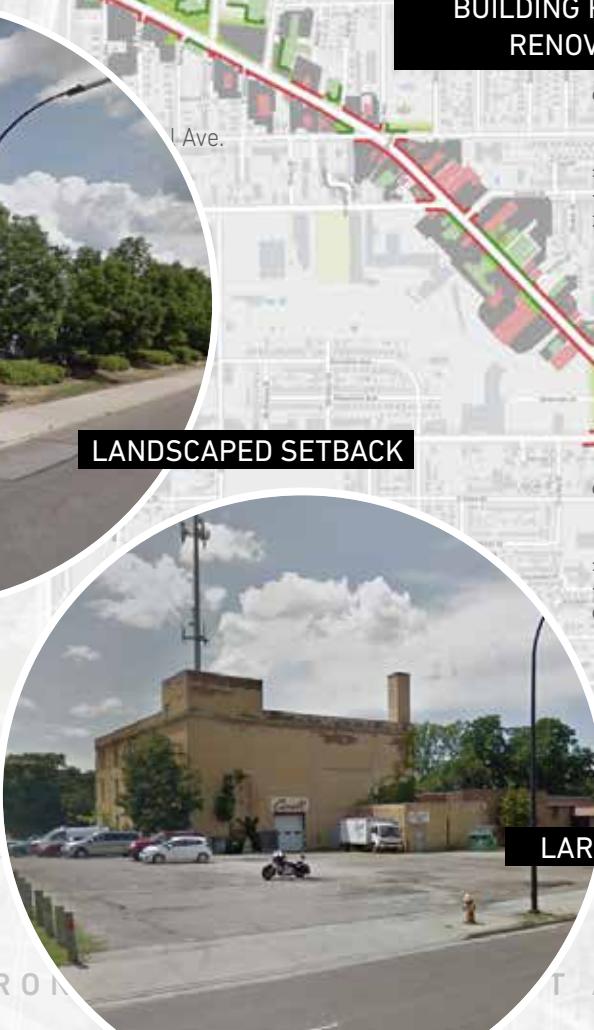
Contributing Buildings

Landscaped Setback

Non-Contributing Frontage

Non-Contributing Buildings

Parking Lot



LARGE SETBACK



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

5| IMPROVE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

Middlebury has a unique shape and structure to it, a legacy of the development patterns of Akron's industrial era. That structure sets Middlebury apart from most neighborhoods in Akron and is an asset to be built on. But that structure is poorly served by the current zoning code and the accumulated impact of development patterns that don't match the historic building patterns that used to exist along Middlebury's principal streets.

The City of Akron is proposing to establish city-wide Urban Overlay Areas to include Middlebury in the near future. One has already been instituted along Kenmore Boulevard. The top-right image shown the boundary for the Great Streets Program which could be used as the basis and expanded along East Market Street.

The purpose of establishing a form-based Urban Overlay Area is to preserve and enhance the architectural character of existing and new buildings in Akron's older urban neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are largely developed with century-old buildings established along the street front. Built before proliferation of the automobile, these neighborhood business districts thrived on local, pedestrian traffic. Current business development requirements of the zoning code, much of which was developed in the 1960s, require new development to have a "suburban"

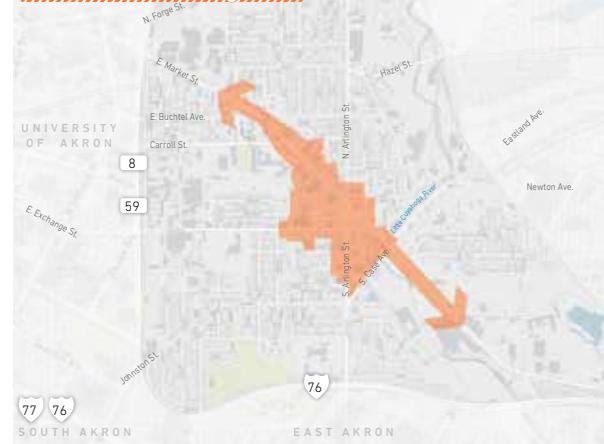
feel with an over-abundance of street-facing parking, deep-set buildings, and pole signage. While this style of development is compatible in some areas of Akron, it is a complete contradiction of how older, urban neighborhood districts were developed at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Urban Overlay would protect this important neighborhood business district by bringing use, parking, setbacks, and building design requirements in line with its traditional urban form. The new requirements are designed to be easily understood and attainable for current property owners and interested developers. Highlights of the proposed changes include:

- > Promoting walkability and desirable urban form by establishing setbacks that bring buildings to the sidewalk;
- > Restricting the height of new buildings to three stories;
- > Establishing building design standards for new construction that contributes in keeping with the neighborhood's current and desirable urban, walkable form;
- > Relaxing on-site parking requirements to require no amount of parking with new development and restricting the amount of parking to no more than what is currently required by code in other parts of the City;
- > Requiring any parking to be behind buildings;
- > Limit the number of drive-throughs.

POTENTIAL FORM BASED CODE OVERLAY

Great Streets Program



PANERA AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, COLUMBUS, OH



CVS IN A BUSINESS DISTRICT, WESTERVILLE, OH





- ① Setbacks that bring buildings to the sidewalk
- ② Regulate building height
- ③ Establish building design standards
- ④ Relax on-site parking requirements
- ⑤ Require any parking to be on the side or behind buildings

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

5| IMPROVE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

Applying an Urban Overlay Area to Market Street is an important first step for supporting reinvestment in Middlebury. But it is important that we carry that approach to promoting development to the rest of the neighborhood. There is an opportunity to support redevelopment in Middlebury that respects the existing historic neighborhood form by adopting a corridor-based form-based code for the entire neighborhood.

Older neighborhoods like Middlebury are a complex ecosystem of streets, with a clear hierarchy of rights-of-way supporting different mixes of uses and building types. Current zoning flattens the distinctions between streets and undermines longstanding patterns of development. There are important differences between the functions supported by Carroll Street and Arlington Street, for example, or Hazel and Johnston Streets, that are not recognized in the current zoning code.

The zoning code is poorly aligned with the existing structure of Middlebury. Many of the patterns that have historically prevailed in Middlebury—small multi-family apartments along tertiary corridors like Johnston Street, for example—are not allowed. Current zoning will prevent value created on East Market Street, where the market is already starting to pick up, from having beneficial impacts throughout the neighborhood.

Middlebury's historic structure is one of its assets, and the zoning should adapt to and strengthen it, rather than undermining it. Form-based codes (focused on regulating the mass and shape of buildings and how they structure public space) are the critical tool, applied in ways that mirror the hierarchy of streets.

The zoning map (on page 67) shows the residential and retail uses that are currently allowed. These regulations should be updated to support the neighborhood plan, promote appropriate density where it is suitable, and allow for a wider array of housing typologies that fits with the neighborhood character and are supported in the economic marketplace.

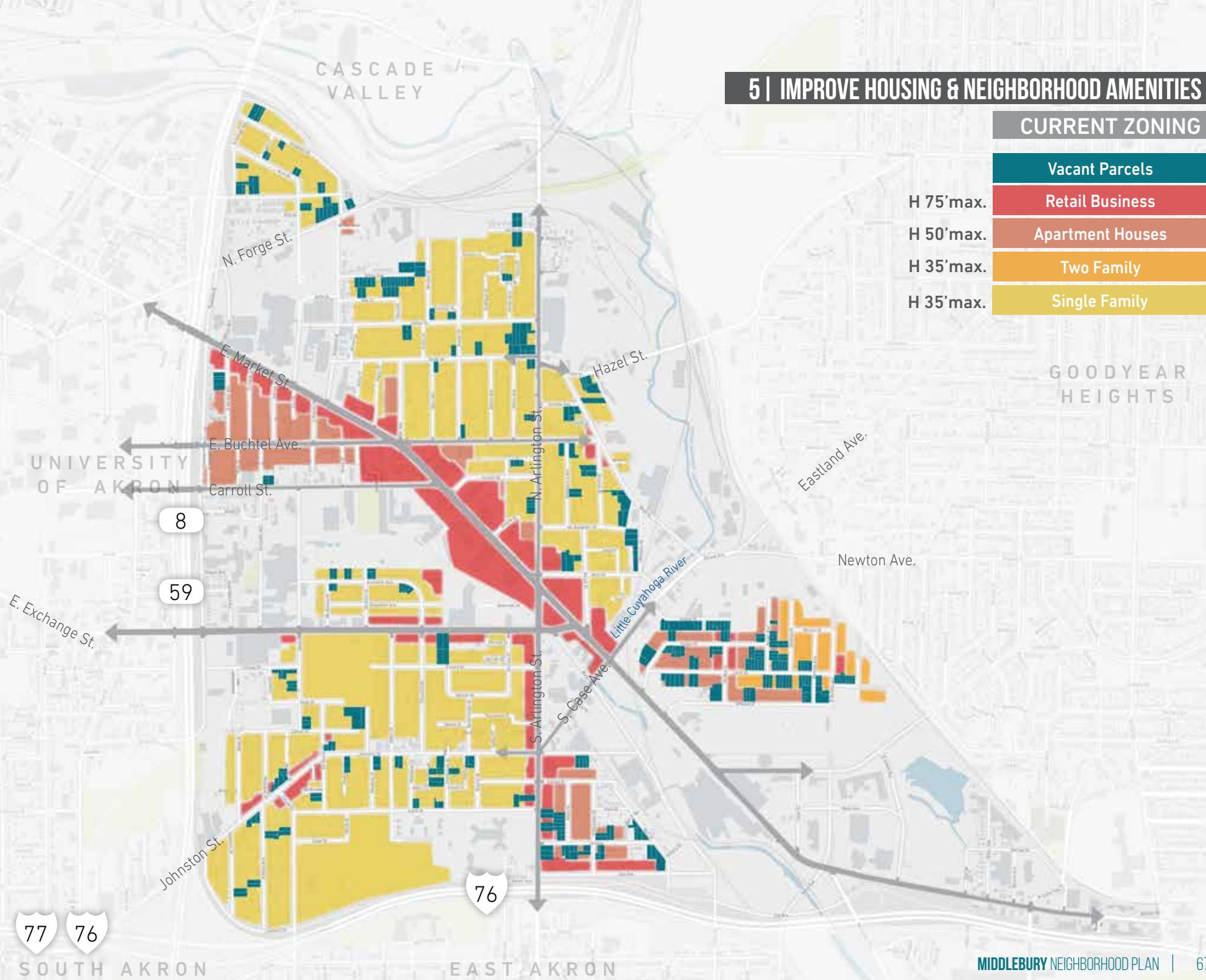
EXISTING REHAB HOUSING EFFORTS, MIDDLEBURY



5 | IMPROVE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

CURRENT ZONING

Vacant Parcels
Retail Business
Apartment Houses
Two Family
Single Family



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

5| IMPROVE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

RESIDENTIAL INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to continuing efforts to rehabilitate existing housing to support existing Middlebury residents, additional housing types should be supported in the zoning code.

The zoning framework outlined at right looks forward to a neighborhood with a wide mix of housing types, housing types that aren't currently being built here, for a number of reasons, particularly a poor market. In addition, land use regulations discourage small multifamily and mixed-use buildings that used to be common. There is also distrust among many, particularly homeowners, of multifamily housing, despite its importance in strengthening the neighborhood. In addition, there isn't a great deal of private development capacity able to leverage financing products designed for small multi-family housing.

Small lots are currently undervalued in the housing market, and in land use regulations. Walkable urban neighborhoods perform best when lot sizes are kept smaller so that they support the density required. The original plat lines should be maintained. Consolidation should be permitted only when it does not result in a loss of density (i.e., combining two lots enables a duplex). The sale of vacant land to neighbors should not trigger a lot consolidation, so that the land can easily be brought online (if the owner desires) when market demand returns.

Implementation of the this plan will require the exploration of easing the obstacles to small-scale infill housing and 'missing middle' options, including financing, land use and building regulations.

Informed by community input at the November Neighborhood Network meeting, this initial discussion of zoning changes looks to enable mixed-use development along the major corridors of East Market, East Exchange and Arlington Streets. Townhomes and apartments to promote denser development are encouraged along east-west corridors (primarily Hazel Street, Buchtel Avenue, Carroll Street, Johnston Street, Clark Street, and east of East Market Street and Case Avenue. In keeping with the existing neighborhood fabric interior to these corridors, infill single family homes should be encouraged.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING



5 | IMPROVE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

RESIDENTIAL INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

Single Family & Limited 2-4 Unit
Multi-family



Townhomes & Apartments



Mixed-use



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

5| IMPROVE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

NON-RESIDENTIAL INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

The street hierarchy mapped at the Neighborhood Network meeting can be the basis for a similar application in Middlebury. Starting with what stakeholders observed as the appropriate intensity and uses for each street, building standards can be developed that will support each street in Middlebury.

This zoning framework retains the historic structure of the neighborhood and provides opportunities for the neighborhood to meet the housing market in a flexible way, responding to demand across market segments. It makes room for the "missing middle" housing types--duplexes, courtyard apartments, townhouses, and so on--that have been and should be found through much of the neighborhood. Importantly, it can be applied to areas where uses such as clean and light manufacturing and food processing prevail, ensuring that such work spaces are tightly integrated into and support the neighborhood form. And it would enable a restoration of the density levels needed to support a walkable neighborhood business district.

For each street type, development standards would be created, describing the allowed uses, building types, height and massing, frontage, and so on: all the elements of a form-based code. But they would be applied comprehensively, across the entire neighborhood, ensuring that all of Middlebury would benefit from carefully crafted development standards.

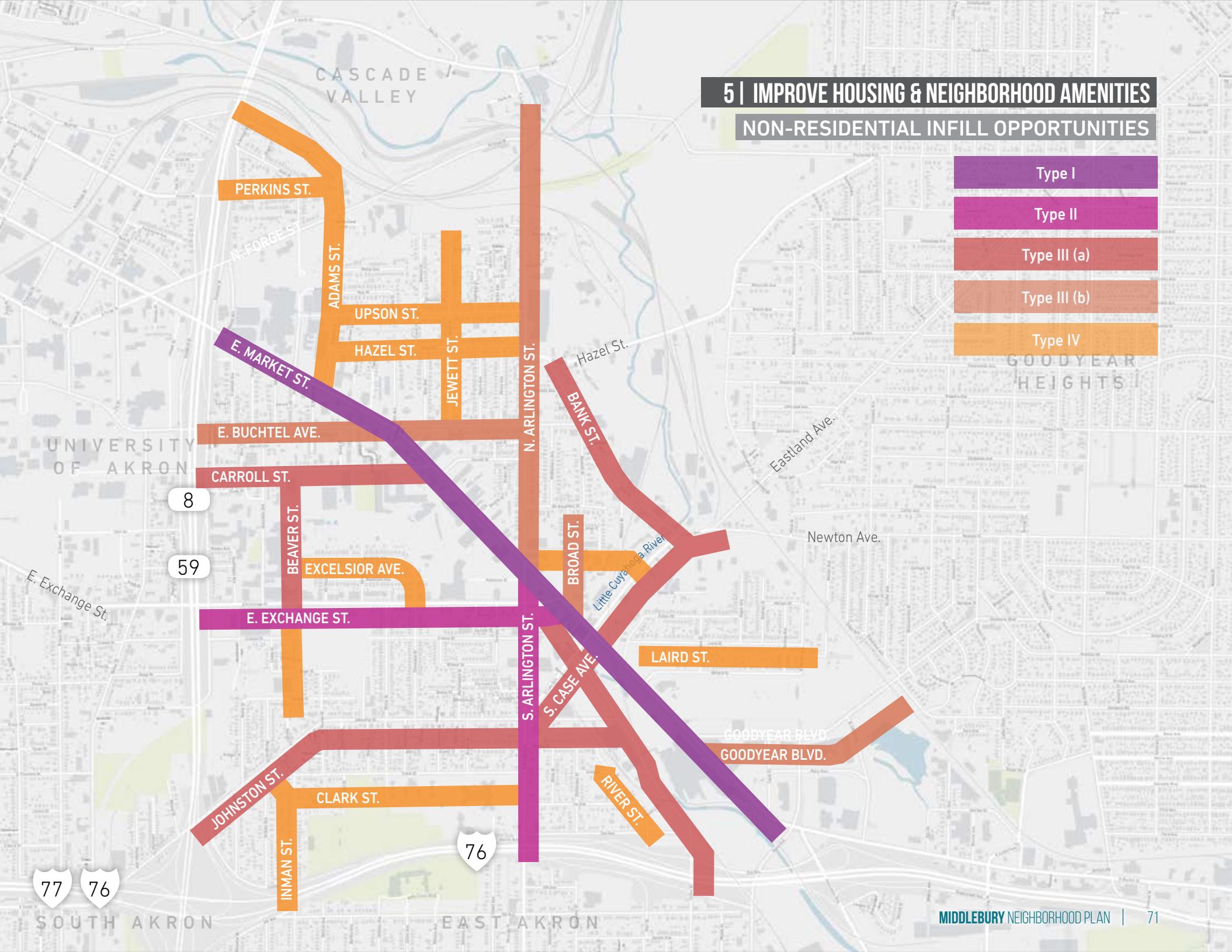
POTENTIAL MIDDLEBURY STREET HIERARCHY TABLE

TYPE	STREET	USES	HEIGHT
Type I	East Market St.	Multi-family, commercial, institutional, retail	3+ story
Type II	East Exchange St., South Arlington St.	Multi-family, commercial, retail, clean and light manufacturing (Exchange, west of Beaver only), limited single-family	2+ story
Type III (a)	Carroll St. (west of Market), Johnston St., Case Ave., Beaver St. (north of Exchange) Bank St., River St.	Clean and light manufacturing, food processing (Johnston), multi-family <20 units, retail, commercial, limited single-family	2-3 story
Type III (b)	East Buchtel St. (west of Arlington), North Arlington St., Goodyear Blvd., Broad St.	Multi-family <20 units, retail, commercial, limited single-family	2-3 story
Type IV	Kent St., Clark St., Hazel St., Upson St., Excelsior Ave., Beaver St. (south of Exchange), Laird St., Hart St., Inman St., Perkins St., Jewett St., and Adams St.	2-8 unit multifamily, single-family	2-3 story
Type V	All other streets	Single-family and limited 2-4 unit multifamily	1-2 story

5 | IMPROVE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

NON-RESIDENTIAL INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

Type I
Type II
Type III (a)
Type III (b)
Type IV



SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

To guide implementation of the Middlebury Neighborhood Plan, the planning team has taken each of the five planning principles and developed a set of strategic recommendations and matched it with a corresponding partner, funding source and timeframe.

This set of matrices will be used by the community to establish priorities, guide next steps and build coalitions to complete improvements, leverage incentives and programs, and create supportive policies. It is important to note that this plan has a mix of short-term wins and long-term objectives. Some solutions can be implemented today, and others may not be achievable until five or 10 years from now. Flexibility will also be key, as needs may change over time and other opportunities may arise that enable a project or improvement to move faster than previously expected. Taken together, this set of implementation tools will enable the neighborhood, community leaders, the City of Akron, and funding partners to work together to create sustainable and transformative change for all Middlebury residents.

MAINTAIN AND MONITOR MOMENTUM

The planning principles identified in the five contradictions and the vision statement emerged from a sustained period of community engagement with an intentional focus on collectively crafting a future for the neighborhood. That engagement should continue to ensure that those principles remain at the fore of discussions about change in the neighborhood.

The Middlebury What's Next Committee should provide an annual report to the community on implementation of the plan and how the neighborhood vision is being achieved. Include changes in key metrics that indicate progress, such as:

- > Progress on designing or implementing recommended physical improvements (streetscapes, traffic calming, trail connections, park spaces, etc.)
- > Progress in working with institutional partners and private developers to accomplish appropriate investments in the neighborhood
- > Progress in working with the City to create needed policy changes

- > Number of vacant parcels (Summit County Fiscal Office data)
- > Pedestrian-oriented buildings developed on key corridors (walk audits)
- > Homeownership rate (percent of single-family homes that are owner occupied, Fiscal Office data)
- > Mortgages closed (HMDA data)
- > Workers at key employers that live in Middlebury (survey of employers)

IMPLEMENTATION

FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a list of potential funding sources that could be applied to the improvements suggested in the Neighborhood Plan. The Implementation Committee should continue to work with the City and other partners to identify additional sources of funding for priority projects.

Great Streets Program

Great Streets is a City of Akron program that was launched within 10 targeted neighborhood business districts. The program seeks to empower, connect, and develop Akron neighborhood business district corridors through community engagement and targeted resources.

Middlebury, at the intersections of East Market, East Exchange, and Arlington Streets, was one of the 10 identified business districts.

City resources available to eligible business districts are aimed at promoting the pedestrian experienced and assistance to business owners to improve their properties:

- > Façade improvement grants
- > Creation of a revolving loan fund for small businesses
- > Community development corporation support funds
- > Street trees

Akron Parks Challenge Grant

The Akron Parks Challenge is a partnership between the City of Akron, the Akron Parks Collaborative, the Akron Civic Commons and the Knight Foundation. The goal is to engage neighborhoods in improvements to their public spaces to increase use and neighborhood vitality.

Reimagine the Civic Commons

The Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition received a \$5 million grant through the Reimagine the Civic Commons program to bring people together throughout Akron to share in and reimagine their civic space. Akron Civic Commons is a partnership between the JPB Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Kresge Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) uses federal grant funds to buy, fix up, and resell foreclosed and abandoned homes. The Housing and Community Services staff assists in the implementation of the NSP by conducting inspections of foreclosed housing units, preparing cost estimates for applicable properties and overseeing the contracts for lead remediation and rehabilitation work.

Through this program, the city will provide at least \$1,000.00 For down payment assistance. Assistance will be in the form of a second mortgage forgivable after 10 years.

Ohio & Erie Canalway, AMATS, Land & Water Conservation Fund, CleanOhio

Working in partnership with Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Summit Metro Parks, and other neighborhood and community organizations, the City of Akron will leverage the resources to develop and maintain the Rubber City Heritage Trail and Freedom Trail.

City Residential Tax Abatements

In 2017, the City of Akron initiated residential tax abatements for all new residential construction and significant renovations / improvements to residential properties located within corporation limits. The length of the abatement is 15 years from the date of the improvement(s) to the property.

City CIP Budget

The City of Akron programs public improvements through the annual Capital Planning budget.

	STRATEGIC & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME			
			IMMEDIATE (0-1 Years)	SHORT (1-3 Years)	MEDIUM (3-5 Years)	LONG (5-10 Years)
1	Enhance Priority Connections					
	Support traffic calming and bike lanes planned for East Exchange Street	Safe Routes to School, City of Akron, AMATS, ODOT, The Well CDC, Business Community, Metro RTA, Summit Bike Share, Mason CLC, Akron Public Safety, Neighborhood Network	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Explore the creation of a neighborhood bikeway system (augment with Akron Connects)	Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, Summit County Metro Parks, City of Akron, AMATS, ODOT, Business Community, Metro RTA, Summit Bike Share, Akron Public Safety		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Reconfigure East Market Street to safely accommodate all modes of transportation, on-street parking, and pedestrian crossings	City of Akron, AMATS, ODOT, Summa Health, Business Community, The Well CDC, Metro RTA, Summit Bike Share, Akron Public Safety, Big Love Network		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Add a transit hub on East Exchange Street	City of Akron, AMATS, ODOT, Metro RTA, Dave's Market, Business Community, Akron Public Safety		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Enhance State Route 8 crossings and underpasses to better connect with the University of Akron and Downtown	City of Akron, AMATS, University of Akron, Stark State, Summa Health, Downtown Akron Partnership, The Well CDC, Knight Foundation, ODOT, UA Landlords, The Chapel, Akron Police Department, Neighborhood Network, Big Love Network		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Identify sites for infill development to enable nodes of activity along East Market Street	City of Akron, The Well CDC, Neighborhood Network			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

IMPLEMENTATION

	STRATEGIC & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME			
			IMMEDIATE (0-1 Years)	SHORT (1-3 Years)	MEDIUM (3-5 Years)	LONG (5-10 Years)
2	Improve Neighborhoods Parks & Open Spaces					
	Continue to invest in public spaces and community gardens	Let's Grow Akron, Community Garden Volunteers, Big Love Network, City of Akron, Neighborhood Network, Summit County Metro Parks, The Well	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Incorporate Middlebury's history and celebrate its identity in public spaces	Summit County Historical Society, Lyle Jenkins, City of Akron, Neighborhood Network, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, Summit County Metro Parks, The Well, Big Love Network	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Celebrate the Little Cuyahoga River by providing amenity space to overlook and gather	Business Community, City of Akron, Big Love Network, Summit County Metro Parks, Akron Police Department, The Trust for Public Land, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, Summit County Historical Society		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Take advantage of and connect to the existing Freedom Trail and the planned Rubber City Heritage Trail access points	Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, City of Akron, Metro RTA, Emergency Services, ODOT, Summit County Metro Parks, AMATS, Business Community		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Design and construct the Rubber City Heritage Trail	Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, City of Akron			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	STRATEGIC & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME			
			IMMEDIATE (0-1 Years)	SHORT (1-3 Years)	MEDIUM (3-5 Years)	LONG (5-10 Years)
3	Explore Opportunities for Entrepreneurship (that builds on the needs of major anchors)					
	Identify underutilized and vacant structures for adaptive reuse	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Developers, Akron Public Schools, ConXus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Engage economic development and workforce development stakeholders to determine how Middlebury could be positioned as an emerging clean and light manufacturing center	City and County, ConXus, Stark State, University of Akron, and the Fund for Our Economic Future	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Take advantage of recommendations and opportunities identified in the Elevate Akron report	City and County, Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, The Well CDC, EANDC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Focus on new/emerging creative, knowledge, and clean and light manufacturing sectors	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Developers, Akron Public Schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Catalog and promote rehabilitation of underutilized structures along Freedom Trail and Rubber City Heritage Trail, leveraging the nearby anchor institutions	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Developers, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, Akron Public Schools, Conxus		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

IMPLEMENTATION

	STRATEGIC & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME			
			IMMEDIATE (0-1 Years)	SHORT (1-3 Years)	MEDIUM (3-5 Years)	LONG (5-10 Years)
4	Strengthen Middlebury Marketplace					
	Implement Phase 1 - Enhance and activate with formalized pedestrian access streetscape, trail access, community garden and programming	AMATS, City of Akron, Metro RTA, Business Community, Ohio and Erie Canalways Coalition, Let's Grow Akron, The W.O.M.B., Akron Public Safety, EANDC, Neighborhood Network, The Well CDC		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Implement Phase 2 - Infill site along East Exchange Street, build enhanced transit stop and public space and continue programming	Testa, Business Community, Metro RTA, City of Akron, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, AMATS, EANDC, The Well CDC			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Implement Phase 3 - Reposition by taking advantage of City property to connect East Exchange Street to East Market Street and reuse building according to market demands	Metro RTA, City of Akron, ODOT, Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, AMATS, Dave's Market, EANDC, The Well CDC			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

	STRATEGIC & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME			
			IMMEDIATE (0-1 Years)	SHORT (1-3 Years)	MEDIUM (3-5 Years)	LONG (5-10 Years)
5	Improve Existing Housing & Neighborhood Amenities					
	Redefine buildable lots to reflect the original platting of the neighborhood to support density.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Encourage rehab/improve/build new units to maintain the existing number of low income and supportive housing options indistinguishable from market rate.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Review zoning code to accommodate more density and housing types where suitable. Support existing hierarchy of streets with corridor-based zoning. Explore and ease obstacles to small-scale infill housing and 'missing middle' options, including financing, land use and building regulations. Cement neighborhood support for maintaining the neighborhood's historic development patterns.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Explore and ease the obstacles to small-scale infill housing and 'missing middle' options, including financing, land use and building regulations.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Encourage infill single family and limited 2-4 unit multifamily development on existing quieter neighborhood areas.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Encourage infill townhomes and apartments to promote denser development along east-west corridors. Mostly at Hazel Street, Buchtel Avenue, Carroll Street, Johnston Street, Clark Street, and east of East Market Street and Case Avenue.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Encourage mixed use development along East Market, East Exchange, and Arlington Streets.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Diversify the offering for a broader share of the market that wants to be in neighborhoods like Middlebury: affordable, workforce, market rate, student, market rate, etc.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Create options for existing residents to age in place or stay in the neighborhood by choice.	City of Akron, The Well CDC, EANDC, Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, Developers		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 5:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following definitions are helpful for understanding the discussion of plan analysis and recommendations.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

The repurposing or reinventing existing buildings for a new purpose.

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

enterprises such as universities and hospitals that are rooted in their local communities by mission, invested capital, or relationships to customers, employees, and vendors.

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

A transportation measure of the number of vehicles expected to pass a given location on an average day of the year.

CENSUS TRACTS

Small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county; they typically average about 4,000 inhabitants.

CONCENTRATED POVERTY

Describes areas where a high proportion of residents (usually 40% or more) are living below the federal poverty line.

GREENFIELD

Undeveloped real estate or land with little or no previous use; often they are used for light agricultural activity.

MARKET VALUE ANALYSIS

A data-based tool that identifies different types of markets and places where planning can stimulate private investment and community revitalization.

PLACEMAKING

A people-centered approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces, such as streets, sidewalks, parks, plazas, and buildings.

RIPARIAN EDGE

The transitional area between land and water, including the margins of streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands. They are often rich in biodiversity and play a crucial role in the protection of water quality and ecosystem health.

SHARROW

A double chevron road marking used to indicate a shared lane environment for bicycles and automobiles.

WALKABLE

Describes a built environment that supports and encourages safe, comfortable, and interesting urban walking trips.

WHAT'S NEXT COMMITTEE

A committee of community members that was formed after the 2016 Better Block event in Middlebury to develop a cohesive vision for the neighborhood.

WORKING-CLASS

Describes individuals in the labor force who do not have bachelor's degrees; this term also includes the unemployed who are actively searching for work.



THE WELL AKRON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



DANIEL HORRIGAN, MAYOR



MKSK