

# *Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan*



Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission  
2006

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Reneé Kesler, Chairperson.....	City of Knoxville
Sam Anderson .....	City of Knoxville
Jeff Archer .....	Metropolitan Planning Commission
David Brace .....	City of Knoxville
Mark Brown .....	Vice Mayor of City of Knoxville
Mike Carberry.....	Metropolitan Planning Commission
Terrence Carter .....	Partnership for Neighborhood Improvement
Gordon Catlett.....	Knoxville Police Department
Mark Donaldson .....	Metropolitan Planning Commission
Rogers Doughty .....	City of Knoxville
Buz Johnson .....	Metropolitan Planning Commission
Zimbabwe Matavou .....	President of the Black Business/Contractors Association
Alvin Nance.....	Knoxville's Community Development Corporation
Sterling Owen, IV .....	Knoxville Police Department
Deborah Porter.....	Partnership for Neighborhood Improvement
LeRoy Thompson .....	BDT Development Corporation
Dan Tiller.....	Knoxville's Community Development Corporation
Anne Wallace .....	Metropolitan Planning Commission
Angela Mayes, Steering Committee Recorder.....	City of Knoxville

### Special thanks to the volunteers:

Brian K. Ewers AIA .....	Dollar & Ewers Architecture, Inc.
Sara Hedstrom, ASLA .....	Carol R. Johnson Associates
Don Horton, AIA .....	McCarty Holsaple McCarty, Inc.
David Watson.....	East Tennessee Community Design Center

On the cover:

A streetcar line on McCalla Avenue served Park City and Burlington neighborhoods in the early 1900s.

Historic photographs are courtesy of the  
McClung Historical Collection of the Knox County Public Library System.

This plan was prepared for the City of Knoxville's Community Development Division and made possible by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Empowerment Zone program.

# *Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan*

Prepared by the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission

This plan was adopted by:  
Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission on January 11, 2007  
Knoxville City Council on February 13, 2007



<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Chapter 1:</b>		
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>	
Purpose, Boundary, Planning Process, Steering Committee, Public Participation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Zoning Design Overlay or Form-based Zone for the Area</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Banners</li> <li>• Street Trees</li> </ul>
<b>Chapter 2:</b>		
<b>IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH .....</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Chapter 3:</b>		
<b>INVENTORY &amp; ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>7</b>	
Recommendations discussed in the Inventory & Analysis		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Walter Hardy Park Rehabilitation</li> <li>• Williams Creek Greenway and Recreational Trail</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of Odd Fellows Cemetery</li> <li>• Master Plan Chilhowee Park South</li> <li>• Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Neighborhood Outreach Opportunity</li> <li>• Additional Parks in Burlington</li> <li>• Park Opportunities in Burlington Commercial Area</li> <li>• ‘Park City’ Park Master Plan</li> <li>• Land Use Principles</li> <li>• Zoning Changes</li> <li>• Sidewalk on Hembree Street and continue around Austin-East High School</li> <li>• Sidewalk on MLK adjacent to 2619 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue</li> <li>• Sidewalk on Hill Street across from Marriott Hotel</li> <li>• Extend bike lane down Harriet Tubman Street</li> </ul>		3. UNION SQUARE PARK.....40 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park recommendations</li> <li>• Housing Adjacent to the Park</li> <li>• Possible-Short-term Actions</li> </ul>
		4. SOUTH CHESTNUT STREET .....42 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rezoning</li> </ul>
		5. SOUTH CHESTNUT GREEN .....42 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with the Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum</li> <li>• Creating the ‘Green’</li> </ul>
		6. TRAFFIC CALMING.....43 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic Calming Plan</li> </ul>
		7. WALTER P. TAYLOR HOMES.....43 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing a Plan</li> <li>• Development Pattern</li> <li>• Road Pattern</li> <li>• Capital Improvement Program</li> </ul>
		8. LINDEN AVENUE AND PARKVIEW AVENUE .....44 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Conservation Overlay</li> <li>• General Rezoning</li> </ul>
<b>Chapter 4:</b>		
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS BY FOCUS AREA .....</b>	<b>33-48</b>	
1. FIVE POINTS COMMERCIAL AREA .....	33	9. AUSTIN HOMES.....47
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Gateway Monument/Signage</li> <li>• Utility poles</li> <li>• Alley access</li> <li>• Commercial Buildings/Properties</li> <li>• Five Points Intersection</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• ‘Park City’ Banners</li> <li>• Street Trees</li> </ul>		10. HARRISON STREET AND WILSON AVENUE.....47
2. BURLINGTON COMMERCIAL AREA.....	38	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Façade Program</li> </ul>		
		<b>Chapter 5:</b>
		<b>CORRIDORWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>
		<b>‘HEART OF KNOXVILLE’ RESIDENTIAL ZONING CATEGORY</b>
		OUTDOOR VENDING
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economical Alternative</li> <li>• Enforcing Zoning</li> </ul>
		EXTENDING THE FIVE POINTS REDEVELOPMENT AREA

**LIST OF MAPS**

- Existing Parks and Park Service Area .....13
- Existing Land Use ..... 17
- Zoning.....19
- Vacancy Status & Programmed Housing Lots .....21
- Housing Conditions .....23
- Sidewalks .....29
- Transit Routes .....31
- Concept Plan for a  
Redeveloped Five Points Intersection.....36
- City of Knoxville's Facade Program for the Burlington  
Commercial Area Boundary .....38
- Chestnut Street/Curie Place:
  - 1931 Lot Configuration ..... 41
  - Existing Lot Configuration .....41
  - Proposed Lot Configuration.....41
- Traffic Calming Proposal for the Five Points  
Redevelopment Area .....45

# Executive Summary

## POLICIES

This plan is to be used as an implementation tool to assist the City of Knoxville and its steering committee in their efforts to further revitalize the Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue (MLK) corridor. The plan lays out five policies:

**Policy 1:** Maintain the steering committee after adoption of the plan to ensure adequate project oversight.

**Policy 2:** Seek neighborhood input when implementing projects, and utilize neighborhood residents, businesses, and resources.

**Policy 3:** Evaluate the plan on at least an annual basis to determine if it needs to be amended.

**Policy 4:** Be proactive in neighborhood code enforcement rather than being reactive.

**Policy 5:** Evaluate existing and proposed budgets and programs to ensure they are able to implement portions of this plan.

## FOCUS AREAS AND THE ACTION PLAN

There are approximately 50 recommendations in the plan, spanning from short term to long term action items. The more immediate action items are listed under the 10 focus areas and include:

### 1. Five Points Commercial Area

- Create a gateway monument at the corner of Ben Hur and MLK
- Remove wooden utility poles
- Improve alley access
- Implement a façade improvement program
- Create a focal point
- Improve the sidewalks
- Install ‘Park City’ banners
- Plant street trees

### 2. Burlington Commercial Area

- Designate the area as a redevelopment area
- Implement the façade improvement program
- Develop a design overlay or form-based zone
- Foster sidewalk improvements
- Install banners
- Plant street trees

### 3. Union Square Park

- Create infill housing
- Revise the lot configuration
- Close Curie Place
- Redesign the park for passive recreation
- Improve alley access
- Improve public safety

### 4. South Chestnut Street (MLK to Ulster Avenue):

- Rezone from commercial to low-density residential
- Foster infill housing and lot configuration

### 5. South Chestnut Green (Ulster Avenue to Graves Street)

- Close a portion of South Chestnut Street
- Develop a passive “green”
- Partner with the Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum
- Create a new “T” intersection

### 6. Traffic Calming

- Improve pedestrian safety around Union Square Park with tabled intersections, landscaped islands and a small roundabout

### 7. Walter P. Taylor Homes

- Create a phased redevelopment plan
- Apply for federal funds
- Request Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding to improve the road pattern



### **8. Linden Avenue and Parkview Avenue**

- Create a Neighborhood Conservation or Infill Housing Overlay
- Rezone from R-2 to R-1A or a new zone based on lot width and size

### **9. Austin Homes Site**

- Develop a more intense residential or office use on the vacant site.

### **10. Harrison Street and Wilson Avenue**

- Rezone from C-1 to R-1

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

Other recommendations for sites and streets outside the focus areas are outlined below. More detail about the following projects can be found in *Chapter 3, Inventory and Analysis*. Please note that the programs and capital improvement projects in *Chapter 4, Recommendations by Focus Area*, are considered to be the highest priority action items.

### **Parks and Open Spaces**

- Open the southern portion of Chilhowee Park to the neighborhood by removing the fencing along MLK Jr Avenue and designing it in a way that could accommodate festival interest and still serve as a neighborhood park/open space
- Rehabilitate Dr. Walter Hardy Park and Odd Fellows Cemetery
- Develop new parks in Burlington residential and commercial areas
- Create a park master plan for all of the areas recreational facilities and open spaces

### **Sidewalk Improvements**

The following are recommended to connect residents to schools, parks, transit and commercial areas:

- Complete sidewalk system along MLK Jr Avenue (between Cherry and Harrison Streets)
- Add sidewalks along Wilson Avenue (Cherry Street to Fern Street)

- Complete sidewalks along Selma Avenue (from Cherry Street to Castle Street)
- Add sidewalks along Castle Street
- Add sidewalks along Houston Street

### **Bike Route/Walking Trail Recommendations**

- Add bike lanes or designated “share the road” bike signs along MLK Jr Avenue; mark the existing and future lanes with the bike lane symbol
- Clean up Odd Fellows Cemetery and create a walking trail system
- Initiate greenway acquisition along Williams Creek, starting with Cherry Street/Lay Avenue
- Add bike lanes along Harriet Tubman/Winona Streets, linking Harriet Tubman and Caswell Parks

### **Bus System Recommendation**

- Work with KAT to create a transit shelter at Magonia/MLK Jr/Kirkwood

## **CORRIDORWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS**

General recommendations that are not site-specific or not within the focus areas are outlined below and more detail can be found in *Chapter 5, Corridorwide Recommendations*.

- Develop a new residential zoning category that incorporates the principles contained within the *Heart of Knoxville Infill Housing Guidelines*
- Create economical alternatives to existing outdoor vending and enforce codes that regulate vending activities
- Expand the Five Points Redevelopment Area boundary when additional infill lots are needed



# Chapter 1:

# Introduction

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan is to serve as an implementation tool for continuing the revitalization of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor. There are many physical development improvements that are needed in this area along with programs to meet the social needs. The scope of this plan only deals with the physical environment, including specific recommendations for the area's parks, land use pattern, public facilities, and transportation system.

## **BOUNDARY**

The Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue (MLK) Corridor comprises 1,196 acres or 1.86 square miles. MLK runs approximately three miles through the center of the study area in an east-west direction. Generally, the study area is bounded by the alley just south of Magnolia Avenue on the north side, Holston Court to the east, Skyline Drive to the south, and Austin Homes to the west. The study area also consists of the Five Points redevelopment area, Burlington commercial area, eight parks, two schools and one recreation center.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

### **Steering Committee**

A multi-disciplinary steering committee was formed to guide the development of this plan. The committee met several times to review data, public input comments, draft recommendations

and other material as the plan progressed in its development. Even before the plan was completed the committee started to implement projects, such as code enforcement, installation of 'Park City' banners, design of neighborhood gateway enhancements, and street trees.

### **Public Participation**

On February 16, 2006, Mayor Bill Haslam hosted a public meeting at Austin-East High School to discuss the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan. Staff from the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) presented a PowerPoint presentation on background information. Afterwards, people sat at tables where volunteers from the city, the East Tennessee Community Design Center, and the Partnership for Neighborhood Improvement facilitated group discussions about the importance of maintaining single-family neighborhoods, traffic calming measures, the need to create gateways into the community, strategically placed neighborhood banners, and ways to improve the physical environment of Burlington and Five Points commercial areas. This public input was summarized by MPC staff and presented to the steering committee for their review and evaluation.



## Chapter 2:

# Implementation Approach

During public meetings, steering committee meetings, non-profit meetings, and intergovernmental meetings, staff quickly learned that people wanted a plan containing a strong implementation component. In addition to having detailed recommendations, staff felt that the city should adopt the following policies to ensure that the corridor continues its revitalization.

### **POLICY 1. Maintain the steering committee after adoption of the plan to ensure adequate project oversight.**

**EXPLANATION:** The steering committee has been successful in implementing several projects to date. The cross-departmental representation of this body is invaluable, since very few of these projects could be implemented solely by one department, division, or individual. In addition, since issues arise over time that cannot be reflected in the plan, the steering committee would have the ability to resolve them. The steering committee also should review publicly funded projects in the area.

### **POLICY 2. Seek neighborhood input when implementing projects, and utilize neighborhood residents, businesses, and resources.**

**EXPLANATION:** It is important for neighborhoods to establish a sense of ownership and pride. When a neighborhood is actively involved with implementing projects, there is more pride in the community over the long run.

In addition, since the city has limited resources, city departments should do everything they can to encourage citizens to empower themselves. Sometimes the resources that are needed from the city are leadership, recognition, facilitation, and collaboration.

### **POLICY 3. Evaluate the plan on at least an annual basis to determine if it needs to be amended.**

**EXPLANATION:** A process is needed to amend this plan, because no plan can fully predict future social, economic, and market demands. The steering committee should evaluate the validity of the plan as time passes. Also, MPC could evaluate any land use recommendations during its annual One Year Plan process. However, MPC's evaluation should not be the only means of updating, since there are many other factors besides land use that contribute to revitalizing neighborhoods.

### **POLICY 4. Be proactive in neighborhood code enforcement rather than reactive.**

**EXPLANATION:** Today the codes enforcement system is complaint-driven or reactionary - residents must complain about violations if they want to improve their neighborhood conditions. This system does not facilitate the revitalization of disenfranchised neighborhoods because these areas often have a high rental rate, people are not aware of codes, people feel uncomfortable

reporting a neighbor, or they are just hesitant about contacting their local government. As a result, the city needs to make code enforcement a more proactive program, especially in areas where there has been recent investment.

**POLICY 5: Evaluate existing and proposed budgets and programs to ensure they are able to implement portions of this plan.**

**EXPLANATION:** There are several non-profits receiving city funds to carry out housing programs. We need to ensure that these organizations are coordinating their efforts in one area; collectively developing infill housing can change a block within a neighborhood. In addition, there should be budget allocations for sidewalk, street, or park space improvements directly adjacent to these infill lots.

## Chapter 3:

# Inventory and Analysis

### RECENT AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

Over the last couple of years the corridor has seen significant physical investments such as Five Points Village Plaza, renovated Hardy Buildings, infill housing, Save-A-Lot grocery store, and the demolition of the older portion of Austin Homes. In upcoming years, investments are planned for other significant areas such as the Knoxville Botanical Gardens, Walter P. Taylor Homes, out-parcel retail development within the Five Points Village Plaza, and more infill housing.

### EXISTING PLANS

This section summarizes the seven revitalization plans that have been completed over the last 17 years. This plan utilized and expounded upon many recommendations found in the previous plans below.

- *Profile Report and Preliminary Strategy Options – Five Points Revitalization Area (1989)*

The plan outlined the need for better “image building” by implementing guidelines and more active code enforcement. Another improvement included making the streets more pedestrian friendly through physical design. Additional programs were recommended, including developing a model block of housing, encouraging more institutional uses in the commercial area, creating a neighborhood convenience center, assisting existing businesses, and creating an economic incubation program for new business development.

- *The Five Points Small Area Plan (1993)*

The plan is organized by goals, objectives, and actions for crime prevention, education, land use, community development, housing, commercial development, fire safety, public improvements, and urban design.

- *Five Points Request for Proposal (1997 & 2003)*

In 1997, a request for proposal (RFP) was released for the development of a grocery store in Five Points. There was inadequate response at this time and it was amended and released again in 2003. The RFP outlined recommendations that the community wanted, eventually led to the development of the new Five Points Village Plaza.

- *Five Points Redevelopment Plan (2000)*

A comprehensive redevelopment plan was developed for a portion of the Five Points Redevelopment Area; the plan included topical areas such as housing redevelopment, commercial redevelopment, crime, job training, and social services.

- *Our Community, Our Vision (2001)*

The Black Business/Contractors Association put together a plan for improvements that would complement the work outlined in the Five Points Redevelopment Plan. One of the main points was to redevelop the commercial area of Five Points as a “village.”

- *Central City Sector Plan (2003)*

MPC sector plans focus on physical development; consequently, land use, transportation and community facilities are

key elements. Specific recommendations pertaining to the study area included land use recommendations, park improvements, infill housing character, and the renovation of Walter P. Taylor Homes.

• *One Year Plan (2006)*

The One Year Plan is designed to be the basis for land use regulations and short-term public improvements. Specific changes to the 2006 One Year Plan included a change in the proposed Medium Density Residential designation to Low Density Residential adjacent to MLK between Harrison Street and Chilhowee Park. In addition, the north side of MLK in the commercial area was changed from General Commercial to Mixed-Use (Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Office, or General Commercial). These recommendations were adopted by MPC on March 9, 2006 and City Council on April 25, 2006.

These One Year Plan changes to the area north of MLK and east of Harrison Street are incorporated into this plan.

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CORRIDOR**

In 1890, streetcar lines were created along Park and McCalla avenues, enabling the creation of a new area called Park City. The electrically powered trolley lines were envisioned by a Chattanooga attorney, William McAdoo, who founded the Knoxville Electric Street Railway in 1889. His company made the development of Five Points, Burlington, and adjacent neighborhoods possible. Park Avenue (later renamed Magnolia Avenue) ended at Lake Ottosee, long since called Chilhowee Park. Park City became an incorporated municipality that was annexed by Knoxville in 1917.

Prior to the creation of the streetcar, this area was open countryside, dotted with farms that lined Rutledge Pike (which ran along what is



A trolley line once connected Park City and Burlington with downtown.



now referred to as McCalla and Martin Luther King, Jr. avenues) and Armstrong Ferry Pike (now Holston Drive). Those two pikes split at the enclave of businesses and houses which became Burlington, a point which was also at the end the McCalla trolley line.



Horses and cars used to race at Speedway Circle. Around 1950 it became a subdivision.

The largest attraction in Burlington was the Speedway Circle, first designed as an equestrian race track, then a car oval, and now as it sits today in its original configuration, a single family subdivision. In 1911, Speedway Circle welcomed Knoxville's first airplane, which landed in the grassy area of the oval. The circle was owned by Cal Johnson, a black businessman who typified the increasingly affluent black middle-class Knoxville in the late 19th century.

## **PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

The MLK corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods include much of what was historically known as 'Park City,' an appropriate name for a municipality that included several large parks. Among the early parks were Caswell Park, Chilhowee Park, and Union Square. Park Avenue (now Magnolia) terminated at Chilhowee Park, which was originally a destination for swimming, boating and such field sports as baseball.

In 1929, when Knoxville's first park plan was created, the playgrounds and gymnasiums at schools were considered to be an extremely important component of the park system. The grounds of Austin High (now Vine Middle), Park Lowery, Fair Garden and Eastport schools provided recreation opportunities within walking distance of many residents. However, as inner city schools began closing or losing enrollment, the community lost their associated recreational amenities.



Chilhowee Park was Park City's main attraction, providing recreation for people from Knoxville and beyond.



In the last half of the 20th century, several parks were added to the community. Among these are Linden Avenue Park, Walter Hardy Park and Harriett Tubman Park.

**GAINS AND LOSSES**  
— with some significant losses —  
are the themes that describe the  
development of the MLK-area  
park system.

### **National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Standards**

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) develops standards for different kinds of parks in form and function. Parks can be designed differently as long as they are serving their target population. For example, a pocket park can take the form of a green or a square. Below is a general description of pocket, neighborhood, community, and regional parks, and examples of such parks within the corridor.

### **POCKET PARKS, GREENS AND SQUARES**

These small parks are usually less than a few acres in size with passive elements such as sidewalks, fountains, gazebos, benches, and landscaping. Some open space can be provided for informal play.

**Typical Facilities:** Little to no facilities

**Service Area:** 1/8-mile radius

**Population Served:** 100-500

**Acres Required:** .25-.5 acres per 1,000 people

**Corridor Pocket Parks:** Union Square Park (Chestnut Park) and proposed South Chestnut Green.

Specific recommendations for these parks can be found in this document.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

A neighborhood park provides recreational opportunities for all ages. They may be located adjacent to elementary schools or linear parks, but when possible they should be separate facilities.

**Typical Facilities:** Play apparatus for all ages of children, multi-use paved surfaces, picnic areas with shelters, informal ball fields, walkways, tennis courts and landscaping.

**Service Area:** 1/4-mile radius in urban areas

**Population Served:** 1,000 to 5,000

**Acres Required:** 2-5 acres per 1,000 people

**Corridor Neighborhood Parks:**



• **Linden Avenue Park:** The park is two acres and has a shelter, picnic tables, playground, open space and one basketball court.



• **Eastport Park:** The park is five acres and has a picnic table, shelter, playground, one baseball/softball field, and one basketball court. Use

of Eastport Park and the old Eastport school building should be incorporated in any kind of master plan development for the Walter P. Taylor Homes site.

### COMMUNITY PARK

A community park provides recreational facilities for people of all ages. It should be located on arterial streets and accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Typical Facilities:** Swimming pools, lighted athletic fields and tennis courts, pedestrian and exercise trails, large picnic areas with shelters, landscaped areas to buffer developments, and natural areas.

**Service Area:** ½-mile to 3-mile radius

**Population Served:** whole community

**Acres Required:** 5-8 acres per 1,000 people

**Corridor Community Parks:**



#### • Harriet Tubman Park/Vine Middle School Grounds

The park is four acres and has four shelters, picnic tables, playground, horseshoe pit, paved trails, four tennis courts, and four outdoor basketball courts. The park is ideally situated in the community for active recreational uses such as basketball, which sometimes causes large social gatherings and excessive noise that would be inappropriate for neighborhood parks. If additional basketball courts are needed to serve

the community this would be the ideal location for them. The adjacent school grounds also provide a running track and soccer/football field.

### OTHER CONTRIBUTING OR POTENTIALLY CONTRIBUTING OPEN SPACES

There are other open spaces that can contribute towards the “Park City” park system. While these open spaces do not fit the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) definitions and standards, they do fill a role in the community. Like many of the parks within the corridor, these open spaces could be used more effectively. They include Dr. Walter Hardy Park; Williams Creek; Confederate, Mt. Calvary, and Odd Fellows cemeteries; the southern portion of Chilhowee Park; and The Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum. More details about these spaces follow:



**Dr. Walter Hardy Park:** The park is three acres and has a picnic table, shelter, amphitheater, benches, and memorial trees. Some of the facilities at Walter Hardy are deteriorated and in need of rehabilitation such as the amphitheater and benches.

**Proposed Williams Creek Greenway and Recreational Trail:** Williams Creek starts near MLK and meanders south to its termination at Fort



Loudoun Lake near KUB's Mark Whittaker Water Plant. There are many vacant parcels along the creek characterized with steep slopes, flooding issues, and heavy vegetation.

A greenway trail should be established along Williams Creek to help improve water quality, mitigate flooding issues, and increase ownership and responsibility as well as recreational opportunities for area residents. This greenway would connect the river to Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue.

#### **Odd Fellows Cemetery and Adjacent Open Space**

**System:** Adjacent to Walter Hardy Park are three contiguous cemeteries: Confederate, Mt. Calvary, and Odd Fellows. Specifically, the Odd Fellows Cemetery is in need of complete rehabilitation and a continued maintenance program. A more open setting – that is, removal or “limbing up” of many trees – is needed to improve the aesthetics and sightlines in the cemetery and provide better security.



The cemetery is an unrealized historical and cultural asset.

Over the long term there could be an opportunity to coordinate these three cemeteries with Dr. Walter Hardy Park and a redeveloped Walter P. Taylor Homes site into one harmonious trail system that would become an asset to ‘Park City.’



Poorly maintained, the Odd Fellows Cemetery is currently viewed as a liability by the neighborhood.



# Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan

## EXISTING PARKS AND PARK SERVICE AREA

1 inch equals 1200 feet

01,2002,400

Approximate Scale in Feet

Print Date: October 10, 2006

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY

M P C

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

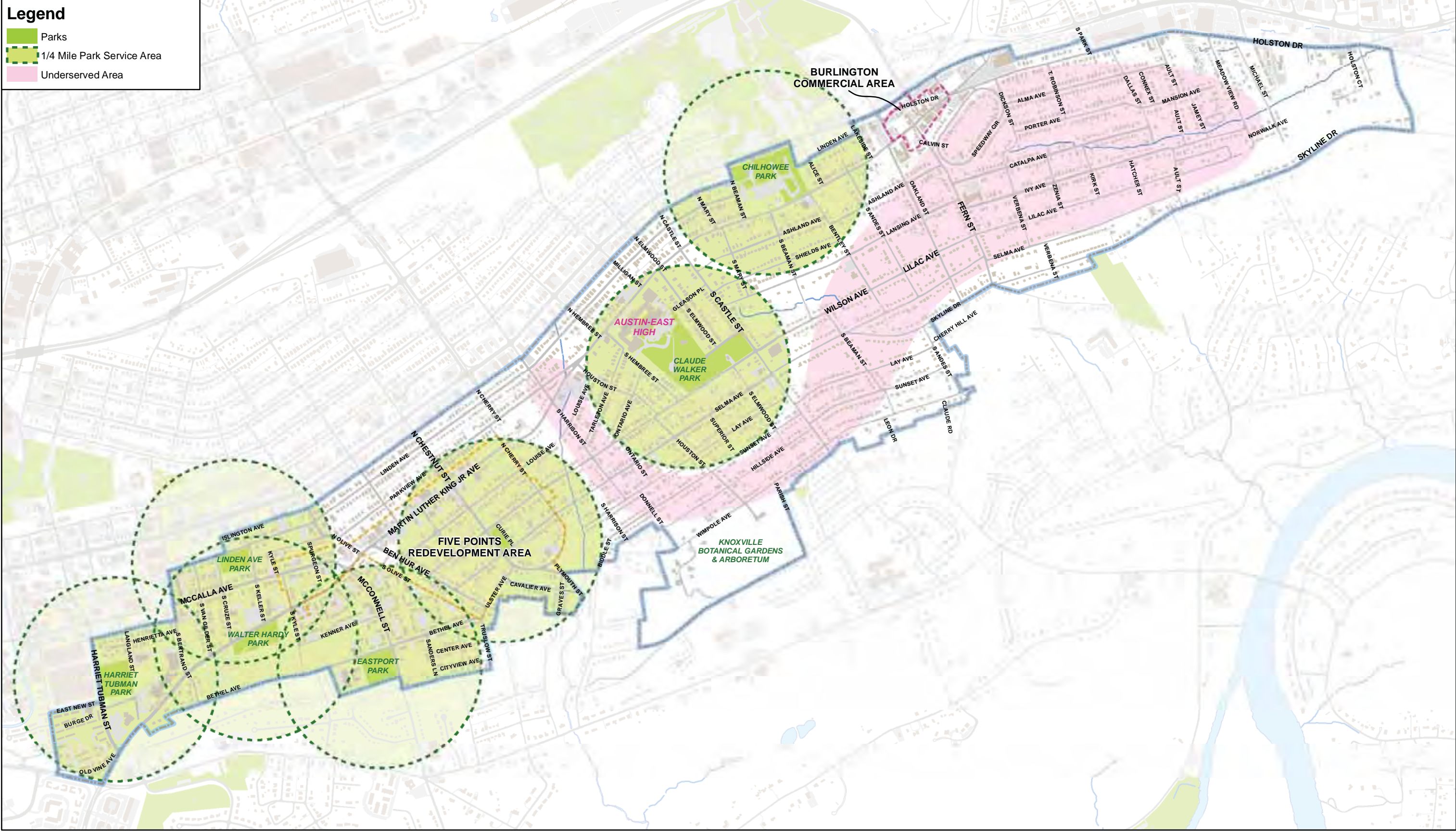
TENNESSEE

Legend

Parks

1/4 Mile Park Service Area

Underserved Area





**Chilhowee Park:** Chilhowee Park is an 80-acre venue that can accommodate indoor and outdoor multiple events. It has a 4,500 seat amphitheater, suitable for concerts. The Jacob Building is a two-story exhibition hall, approximately 57,000 square feet in size, suitable for trade shows, meetings and performances.. Directly adjacent to the park is the Knoxville Zoo, a 53-acre rolling terrain zoo with 230 species of animals; it draws an annual attendance of 400,000 people.



Chilhowee Park's southern portion is closed off from the neighborhood. A master plan could encourage a better use.

The southern portion of Chilhowee Park, which is the portion located within the study area, is a partially paved open space used for additional staging and parking for larger event, such as the Tennessee Valley Fair and Honda Hoot. This portion is connected to the main portion of the park through a pedestrian tunnel under Magnolia Avenue.

Chilhowee Park was historically used as a recreational park for the larger community. The park has since changed in nature by focusing on large regional events. There is an opportunity to master plan the portion of the park south of Magnolia Avenue so that it has the ability to serve as a festival and park site for the community during non-event times. Considerations for master planning the site

should include:

- Opening the park to the public during non-event times
- Improving pedestrian access to the site from the surrounding neighborhood
- Improving amenities and surfaces to host regional events

#### **Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum:**

Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum is a 44-acre site formerly known as Howell Nurseries. This 200-year-old plant nursery on the southern edge of the MLK corridor at 2743 Wimpole Avenue is being renovated with winding sidewalks and gardens to serve as a tourist attraction and neighborhood asset.

MPC staff has met with the Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum Board and learned that they are interested in creating better access to the site and reaching out to the surrounding neighborhoods. One possible outreach project is the development and maintenance of the “green” on South Chestnut.

#### **ADDITIONAL PARK NEEDS**

##### **Burlington Community**

The portion of Burlington, east of Chilhowee Park has always been underserved by parks. Redevelopment in the corridor should address this need through the development of neighborhood and pocket parks which are needed within walking distance of area residents.

##### **Burlington Commercial Area**

Another opportunity exists with the development of a small park in the Burlington commercial area; this could be tied in with a formalized space for vendors, or even a special transit stop.

### **'Park City' Master Plan**

A park master plan should be developed for all Park City's parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces. The area has a diverse park system compared to other parts of the city, and a well coordinated and expanded park system is a key to revitalization efforts.

### **LAND USE PATTERN**

The most predominant land use within the corridor is single-family residential, comprising approximately 43 percent of the land. Uses associated with an employment base such as commercial, industrial, office, and wholesale comprise less than three percent of the land. The Five Points and Burlington commercial areas are excellent examples of nodes that should be maintained, and expansion of commercial uses outside these two areas should be discouraged. A breakdown of existing land use within the corridor follows:

LAND USE	ACRES
Agriculture/Forestry/Vacant Land	161.7
Commercial	21.2
Industrial (Manufacturing)	0.3
Multifamily Residential	35.3
Office	9.0
Private Recreation	2.7
Public Parks	65.0
Public/Quasi Public Land	134.6
Right-of-Way/Open Space	241.3
Rural Residential	3.0
Single-Family Residential	509.1
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	2.4
Under Construction/Other Uses	9.9
Wholesale	0.9
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	<b>1196.3</b>

The following principles should be used in determining a future land use pattern within the corridor:

- Multi-family housing should be located on thoroughfares or facing parks/open spaces.
- Duplexes should be located at the ends of the blocks or facing parks/open spaces.
- Commercial uses should be located only along MLK and concentrated in the Five Points and Burlington commercial areas.

### **Zoning**

The majority of the corridor is zoned low density residential. There are areas where commercial uses have degraded adjacent residential development, such as South Chestnut Street (between Wilson Avenue and MLK) and at the intersection of Harrison Street and Wilson Avenue. In addition, the area north of MLK and east of Kyle Street should be rezoned from R-2 to R-1A, reflecting the current single-family nature of the area.

### **HOUSING**

Approximately 21 percent or 732 of all single-family properties within the corridor are vacant. Of these vacancies, 430 are empty lots and 302 are lots with vacant houses. Approximately 61 percent of the single-family residential vacancies are located west of South Castle Street, towards the existing Five Points Redevelopment Area boundary.

The corridor contains a mixture of housing types and conditions. Most houses (86 percent or 2,100 of the total single-family housing units) are in good to fair condition according to the 2005 Knox County Assessor's data. Only 335 single-family residences are rated as poor, very poor, or unsound. In contrast, there are no houses rated excellent within the corridor.




# Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan

## EXISTING LAND USE

**1 inch equals 1200 feet**

0 1,200 2,400


















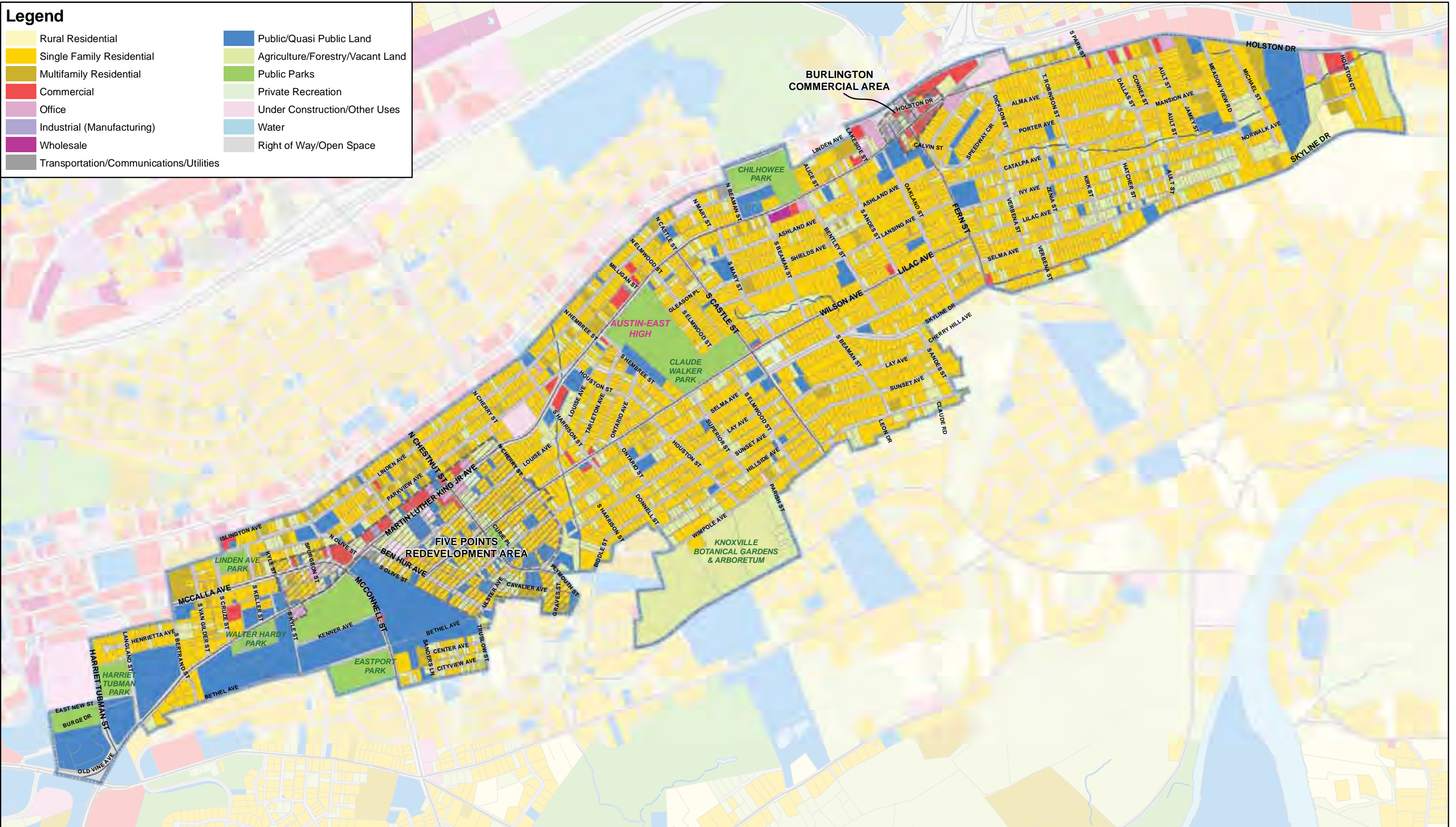
Approximate Scale in Feet

Print Date: October 10, 2006



## Legend

- |   |   |   |                                  |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Rural Residential                       |  | Public/Quasi Public Land         |
|  | Single Family Residential               |  | Agriculture/Forestry/Vacant Land |
|  | Multifamily Residential                 |  | Public Parks                     |
|  | Commercial                              |  | Private Recreation               |
|  | Office                                  |  | Under Construction/Other Uses    |
|  | Industrial (Manufacturing)              |  | Water                            |
|  | Wholesale                               |  | Right of Way/Open Space          |
|  | Transportation/Communications/Utilities |   |                                  |






# Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan

## ZONING

**1 inch equals 1200 feet**

0 1,200 2,400



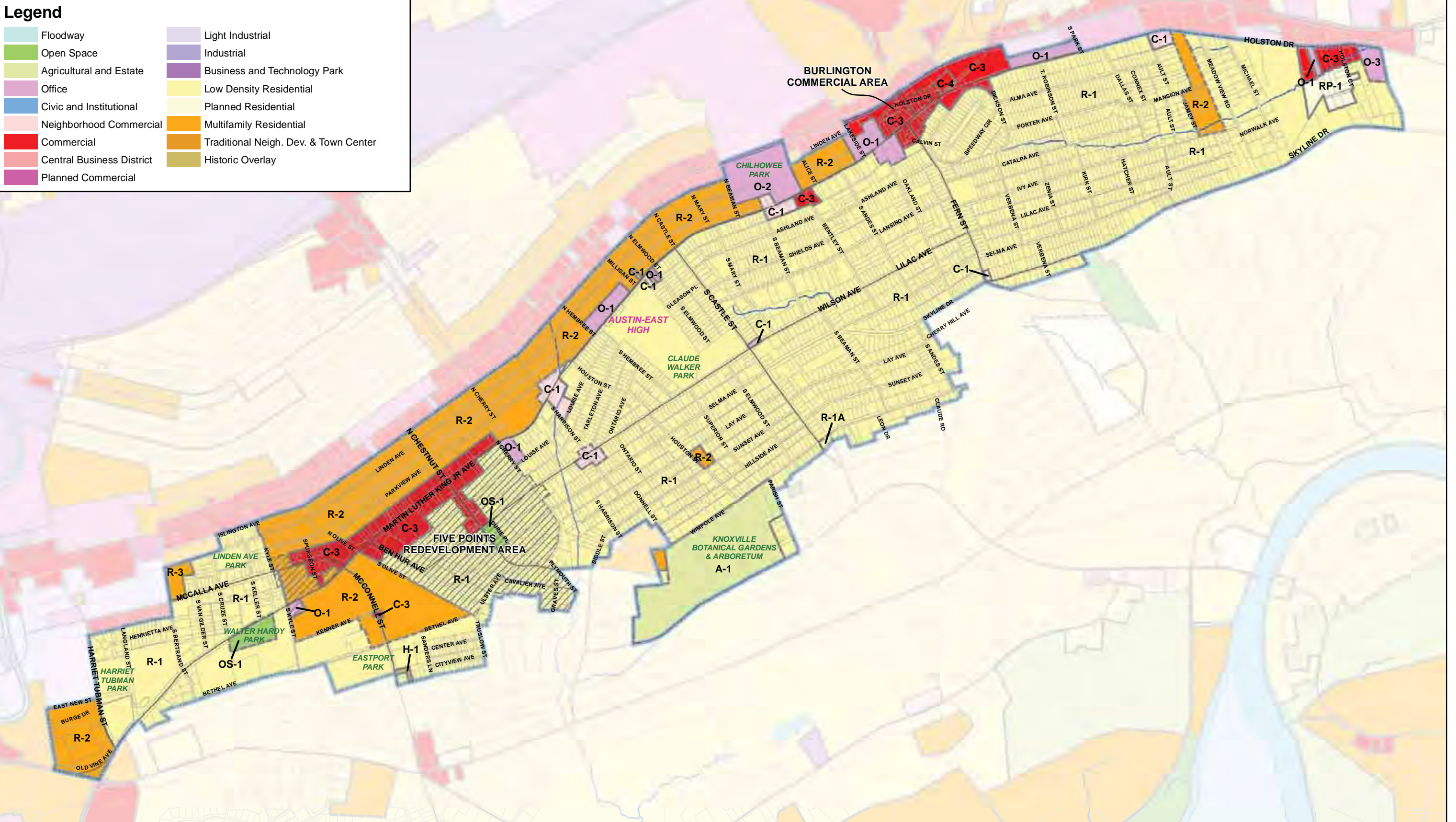
Approximate Scale in Feet

Print Date: October 10, 2006



## Legend

- |                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Floodway                  | Light Industrial                      |
| Open Space                | Industrial                            |
| Agricultural and Estate   | Business and Technology Park          |
| Office                    | Low Density Residential               |
| Civic and Institutional   | Planned Residential                   |
| Neighborhood Commercial   | Multifamily Residential               |
| Commercial                | Traditional Neigh. Dev. & Town Center |
| Central Business District | Historic Overlay                      |
| Planned Commercial        |                                       |






## VACANCY STATUS & PROGRAMMED HOUSING LOTS

**1 inch equals 1200 feet**

0 1,200 2,400



Approximate Scale in Feet

Print Date: October 10, 2006



KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY  
M P C  
METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION  
TENNESSEE

## Legend

-  Community Development Programmed Housing Lots

 City Real Estate Property

**Vacancy Status**

 Vacant Commercial

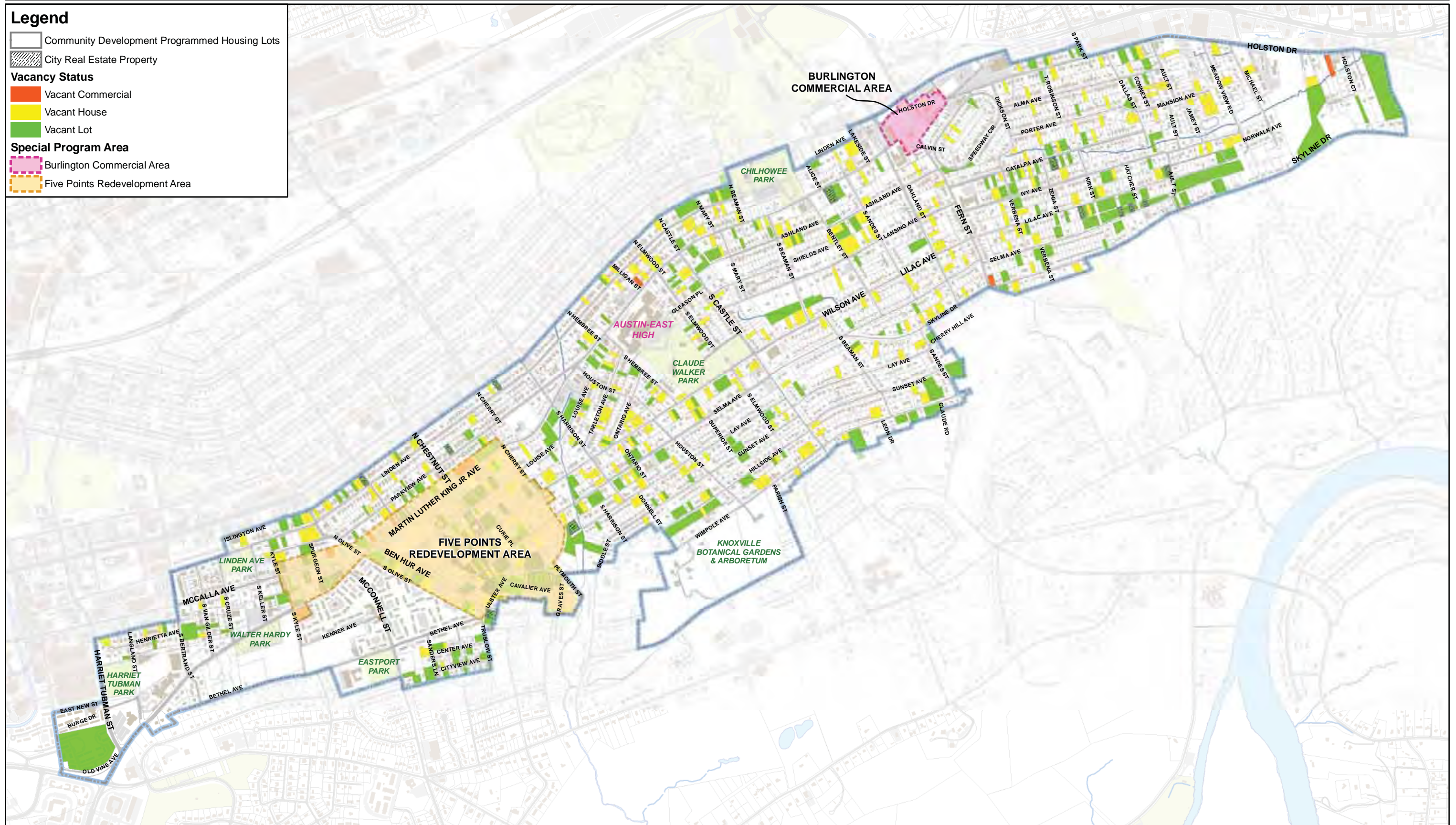
 Vacant House

 Vacant Lot

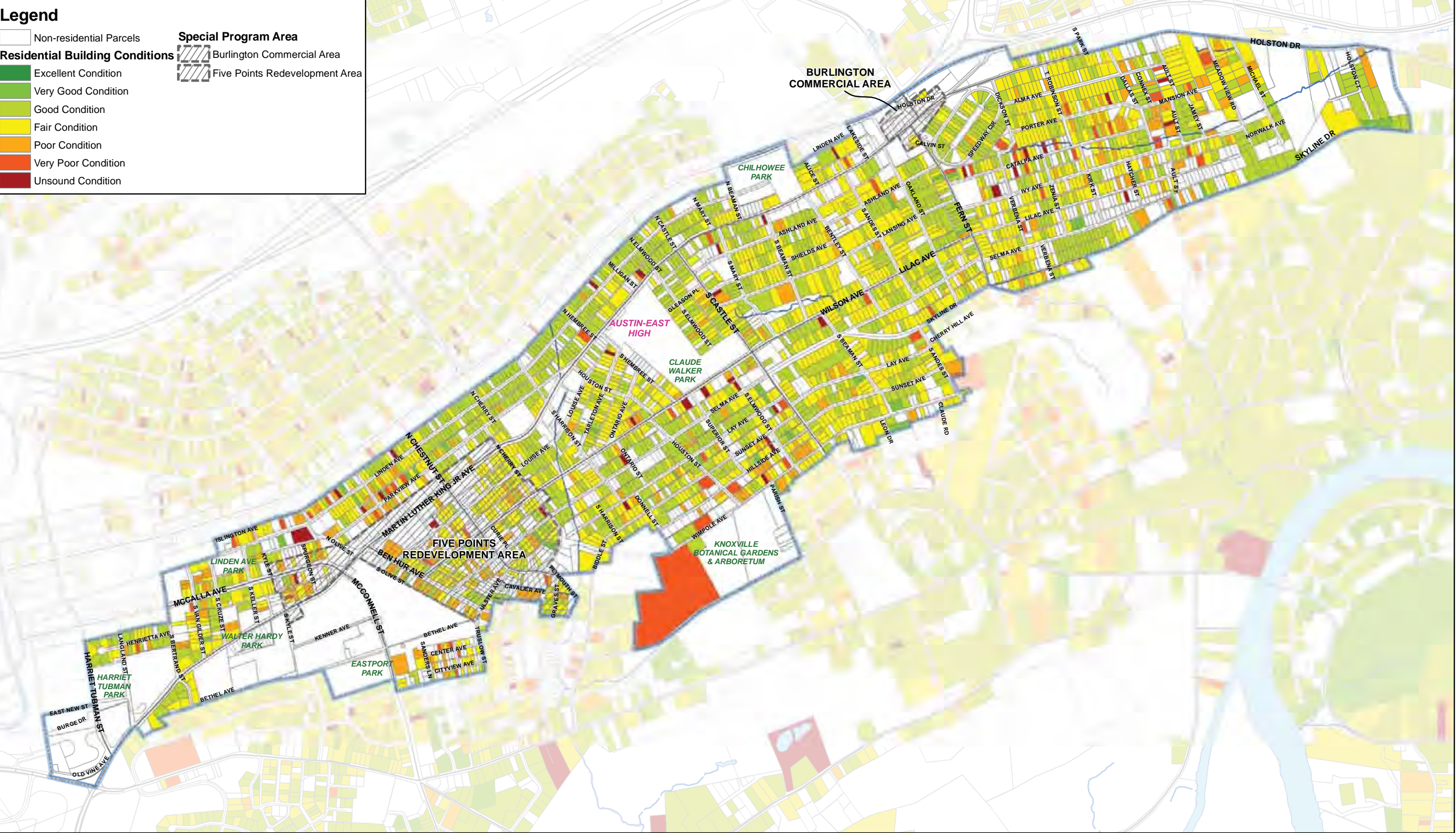
**Special Program Area**

 Burlington Commercial Area

 Five Points Redevelopment Area









There is a geographic correlation between vacancies and poor housing conditions. Concentrations of these two data sets can be found immediately adjacent to the Five Points redevelopment in an east and north direction. In addition, there is another area found north of Skyline Drive.

After reviewing the housing data, staff recommends that the Five Points Redevelopment area be extended east to Castle Street, west to incorporate all the residential development perpendicular to MLK, and north to Linden Avenue.

## **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **The Corridor's Commercial Vacancies**

There are only 22 commercial properties that appear to be vacant within the corridor. These are concentrated in the Burlington commercial area, where there are 12 vacancies out of a total of approximately 30 commercial buildings.

Although Magnolia Avenue is located outside the corridor, it does have a significant impact on commercial development because of its proximity. Magnolia serves a broader market than MLK, including not only the commercial needs of neighborhood residents, but also passers-by. The commercial development of the avenue can be traced to the time after World War II, when the avenue was designated the major highway heading east. Retail and motel uses developed along this highway, taking advantage of the heavy regional traffic. Today, retail uses, restaurants, and small offices line the avenue in a typical strip commercial pattern.

The Magnolia Avenue Corridor Plan will look at issues associated with Magnolia in greater depth. This plan is scheduled for fiscal year 2006-2007.

## **INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC USES**

### **Schools and Community Centers**

The corridor is served by Vine Magnet Middle School and Austin East Magnet High School. Both have a steady enrollment and are projected to continue with a slight increase over the next ten years.

### **Dr. E. V. Davidson Community Center**

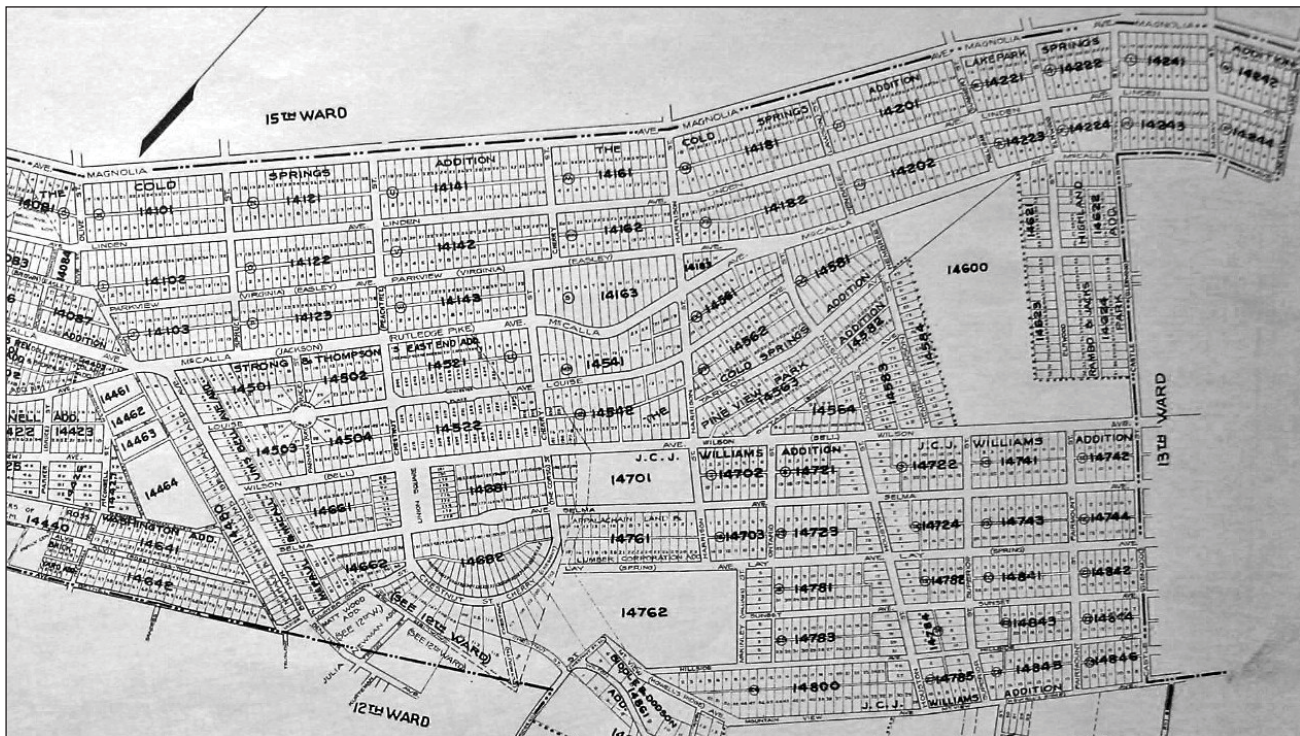
This recreation center, formerly the Eastside YMCA, has been recently renovated and updated with a new roof, better heat and air conditioning system, and new paint. It features a large gymnasium, indoor pool, fitness room, community room, and kitchen.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Road System**

Most of the street layout consists of blocks that are approximately 900 feet in an east/west direction and approximately 300 feet in a north/south direction. MLK serves as a major collector with an average daily traffic count of 4,368 vehicular trips per day in front of Vine Middle Magnet School, 7,929 vehicular trips per day in front of Austin East Magnet High School, and 6,333 vehicular trips per day just west of the Burlington commercial area. South Chestnut serves as a minor collector with an average daily traffic volume of 4,561 just south of Wilson Avenue and 5,032 just south of MLK. Magnolia Avenue serves as the closest arterial street with 17,800 vehicular trips per day. Historically, many of the residential streets were originally developed as dirt roads.

When the Five Points area was originally platted, there were many uniquely designed public right-of-way features, such as a roundabout at Nelson Circle, recessed parking



This 1931 Ward Map shows the original platting and road alignments in the eastern portion of the study area

areas on Louise and Selma, Union Square that was to be surrounded by houses on small lots, and a 90 degree intersection at Chestnut and Cherry Streets.

### Sidewalks

Like most areas in Knoxville, many streets within the corridor do not have sidewalks. The sidewalks along MLK serve as the best example of a complete linear system within the corridor. The only missing portion of sidewalks along MLK is the stretch near the Serenity Shelter property at 2619 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue. Knoxville Area Rescue Mission (KARM) has expressed interest in finishing the sidewalk system on MLK and in front of this facility. At the same time, an existing problem should be addressed at their driveway apron where vehicles currently bottom out due to the steep angle.

Recent activity in the Five Points Redevelopment Area has resulted in more sidewalks being added to the residential street system. Strategically, sidewalks should be established where new infill or major rehabilitation is occurring in the residential areas, particularly in Five Points.

One problem in the older residential areas is that there are sidewalks present, but property owners do not keep them clean and free of vegetative growth.

Currently, Hembree Street is scheduled for new sidewalks. Future sidewalk construction in the corridor should focus around transit routes, schools, and gaps in the current sidewalk system.

Although outside the corridor, sidewalks on Hill Street across from the Marriott Hotel should be completed to provide a stronger connection from Burlington to downtown.





The only bike lane is on a small segment of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue near Vine Magnet Middle School.

Other sidewalk additions should be made along Wilson Avenue, Selma Avenue, Castle Street and Houston Street.

### **Bike Routes/Trails**

A bike lane on MLK runs from the western boundary of the study area (Austin Homes) to Dr. Walter Hardy Park; however, there are no connections to bike friendly streets. A future project should include extending the bike lane (or use “share the road” bike signs) east on MLK. In addition, Harriet Tubman Street should be viewed as a key connection that links Caswell Park, Harriet Tubman Park, Vine Magnet Middle School, and Hardy Park.

Today, there are no existing greenway trails in the corridor. However, Williams Creek can serve as an ideal greenway trail that links MLK to the river. The greenway and design of the trail can incorporate vacant properties along the creek corridor that have not been developed due to flooding issues.

In addition, a walking trail should be developed that connects the Confederate Cemetery, Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Odd Fellows Cemetery, and Hardy Park to MLK and its existing bike lane.

### **Bus System**

There are four bus routes provided by Knoxville Area Transit (KAT): the cross-town loop, Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue route, Dandridge Avenue route, and Magnolia Avenue route. Currently there are no planned changes to the bus routes for this corridor. KAT has identified an opportunity to provide a new bus shelter in the Magnolia/MLK/Kirkwood vicinity.





# Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM: SIDEWALKS

1 inch equals 1200 feet

01,2002,400

Approximate Scale in Feet

Print Date: October 10, 2006

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY

M P C

METROPOLITAN

PLANNING

COMMISSION

TENNESSEE

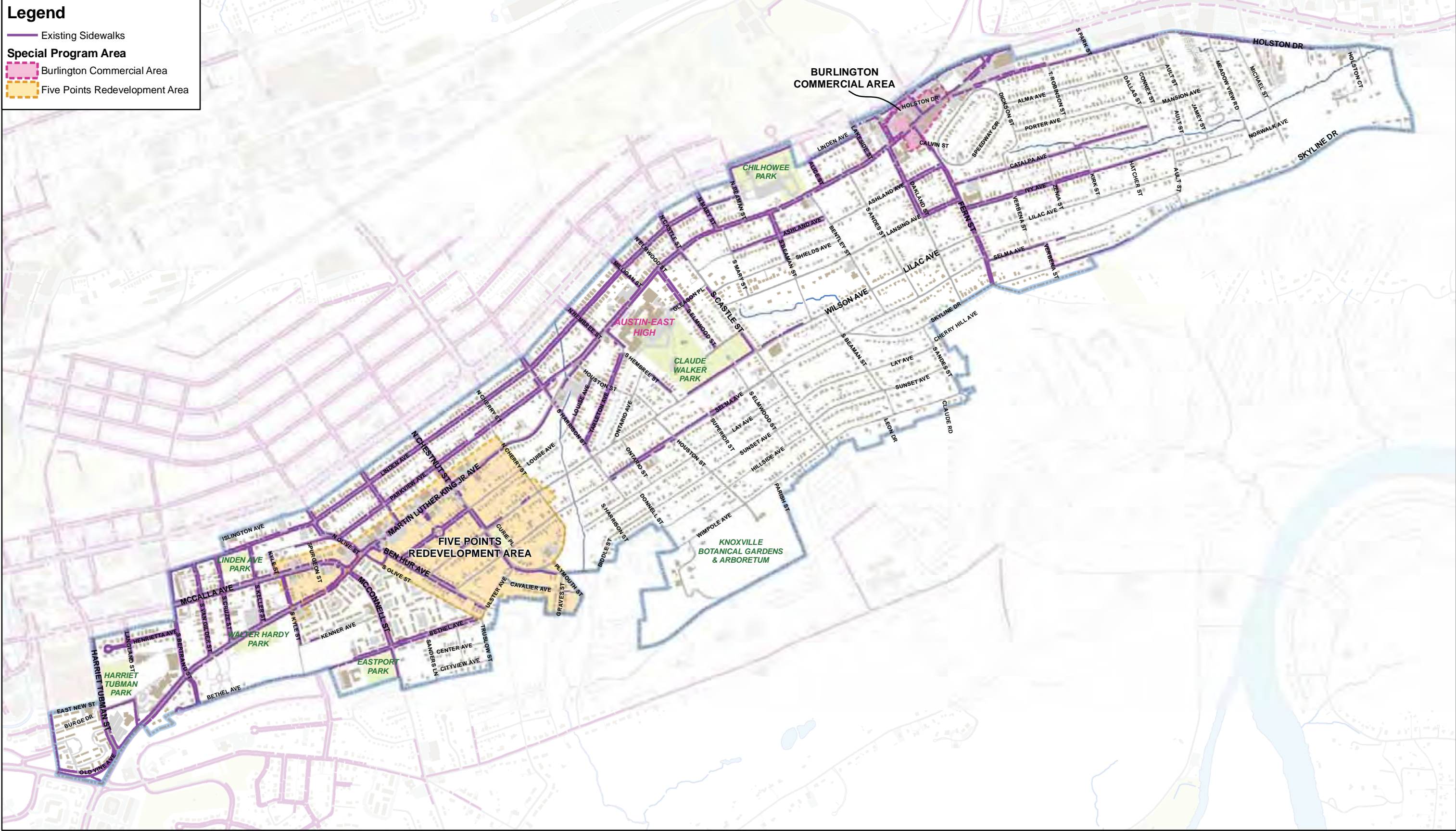
Legend

Existing Sidewalks

Special Program Area

Burlington Commercial Area

Five Points Redevelopment Area






## Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan

### TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM: TRANSIT ROUTES

**1 inch equals 1200 feet**

0 1,200 2,400





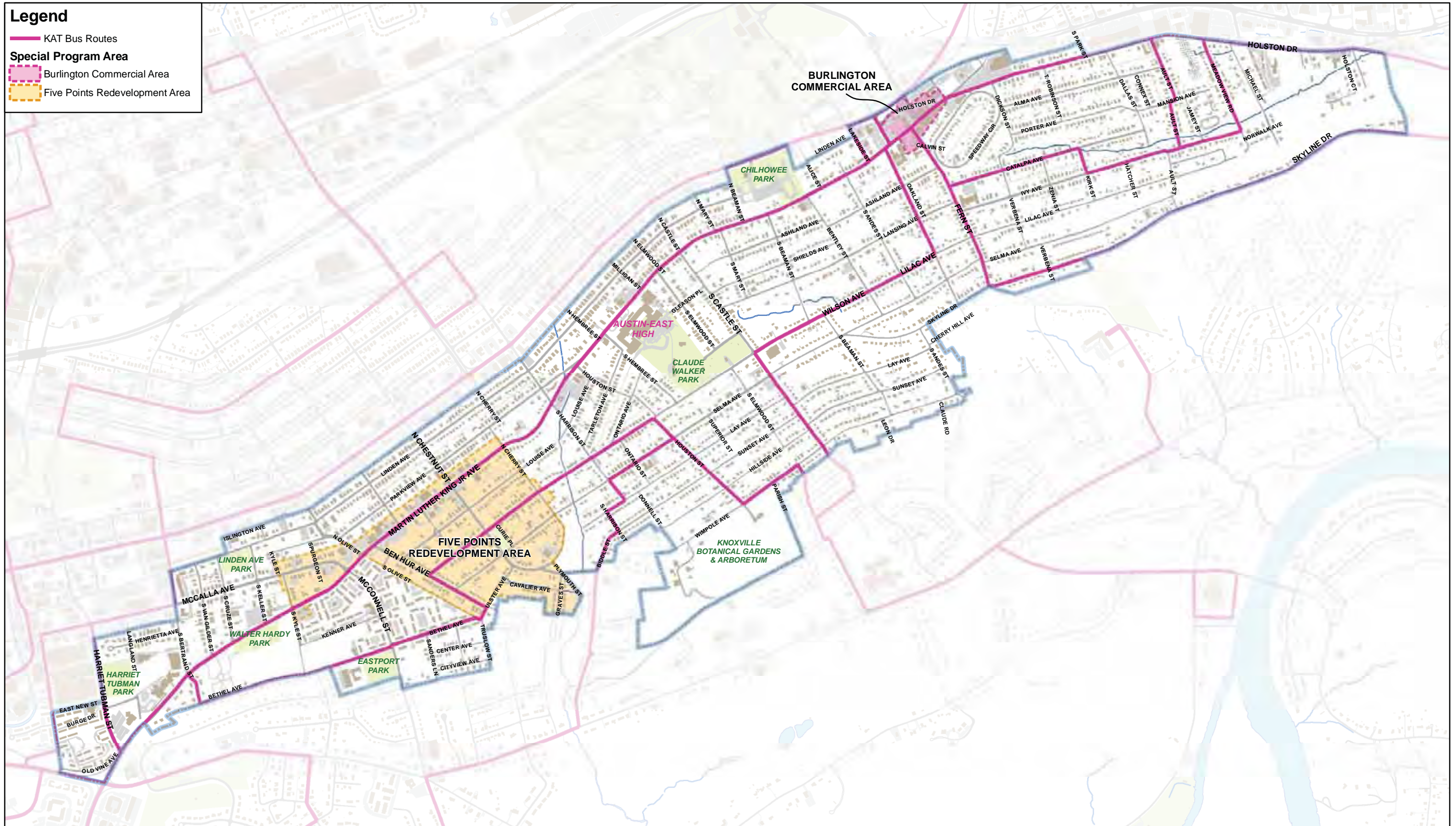
Approximate Scale in Feet

Print Date: October 10, 2006



## Legend

 KAT Bus Routes  
**Special Program Area**  
 Burlington Commercial Area  
 Five Points Redevelopment Area





## Chapter 4:

# Recommendations by Focus Area

During the planning process, it became clear that there were focus areas that the community wanted to address in more detail. These detailed areas include:

1. Five Points commercial area,
2. Burlington commercial area,
3. Union Square Park (Chestnut Park) and fronting parcels,
4. South Chestnut Street properties (MLK to Ulster Avenue),
5. South Chestnut Green (Ulster Avenue to Graves Street),
6. Traffic Calming
7. Walter P. Taylor Homes,
8. Linden and Parkview Avenues,
9. Austin Homes, and
10. Harrison Street and Wilson Avenue.

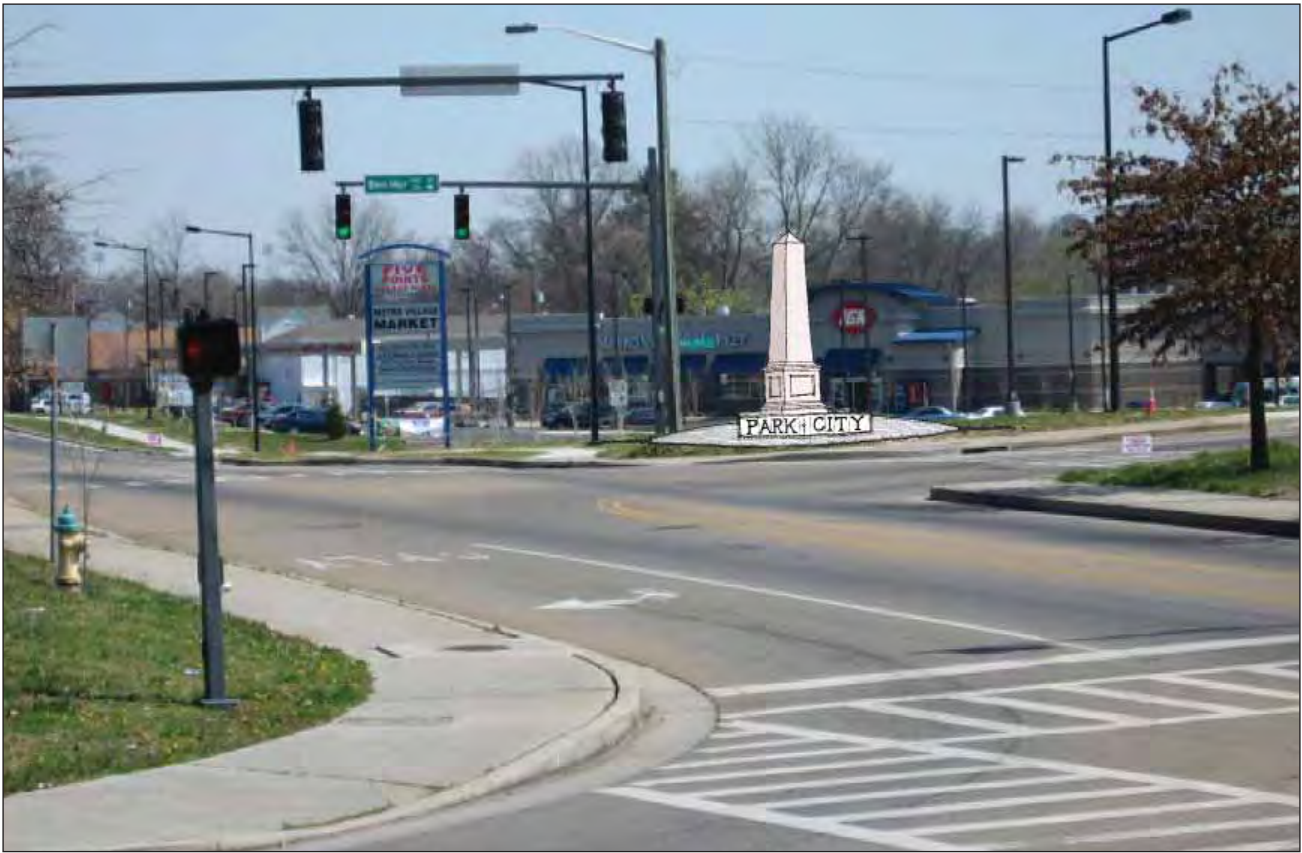
### 1. FIVE POINTS COMMERCIAL AREA

Recently, the area has seen a significant reinvestment with the long anticipated opening of the Five Points Village Plaza, which represents a \$6 million investment. The plaza contains a 20,000 square-foot Metro Market grocery store and 12,000 square feet of separate retail space, including tenants such as Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, J-R's House of Fashion, and a Knox County Clerk satellite office. In addition, two out-parcels associated with the plaza are expected to be developed as either restaurant or office space.

### Gateway Monument/Signage

At the corner of the Five Points Village Plaza where Ben Hur and MLK intersect is a highly visible green space that the community wants to develop with a gateway monument or signage.





At the city's request, the East Tennessee Community Design Center designed a gateway monument for the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ben Hur avenues.

In years past, there was an angel sculpture at this corner. The East Tennessee Community Design Center has drafted alternatives, including an obelisk (a four-sided pillar that gradually tapers as it rises and terminates in a pyramid). The area around the obelisk should be landscaped, including lighting, signage, and flowering plants. The design features of this monument also should be incorporated in other neighborhood gateway areas, like at the South Chestnut "Green."

### Utility Poles

In preparation for the opening of the plaza, KUB (Knoxville Utility Board) upgraded the wooden utility poles to black metal and placed power lines along the alley, north of MLK. This change, along with the steering committee decision to add 'Park City' banners to the existing black metal poles, has enhanced the aesthetics of the public right-of-way. However,

a few unsightly wooden poles in the area still remain and should be removed or replaced.



New utility poles and banners are aesthetic improvements.





An above-grade alley on the north side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue is difficult to access.

### Alley Access

The alley that runs parallel to MLK to the north is vastly underutilized, mainly because it is approximately eight feet higher in elevation than the adjacent commercial parcels. As a result, the businesses have large curb cuts and front yard parking (often extending into the sidewalk area and surrounded by fencing for security).

### Commercial Buildings/Properties

Although, the commercial area contains a variety of architectural styles and uses, the businesses should be trying to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. In order to help with this goal, the City of Knoxville's Community Development Office is providing an incentive program to improve the façades of certain types of buildings within targeted redevelopment areas. By bettering the appearance of building façades, the program serves to improve the economic viability of these areas. Better aesthetics increase property values, improve the marketability of space within the buildings and draw business and residents to the area. The first buildings to utilize the city's new program were the Hardy Buildings at 2202 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue. More information about this program can be found at <http://www.ci.knoxville.tn.us/development/>

The development of commercial and other higher intensity projects should be undertaken



The city's façade improvement program could benefit this older Five Points building.

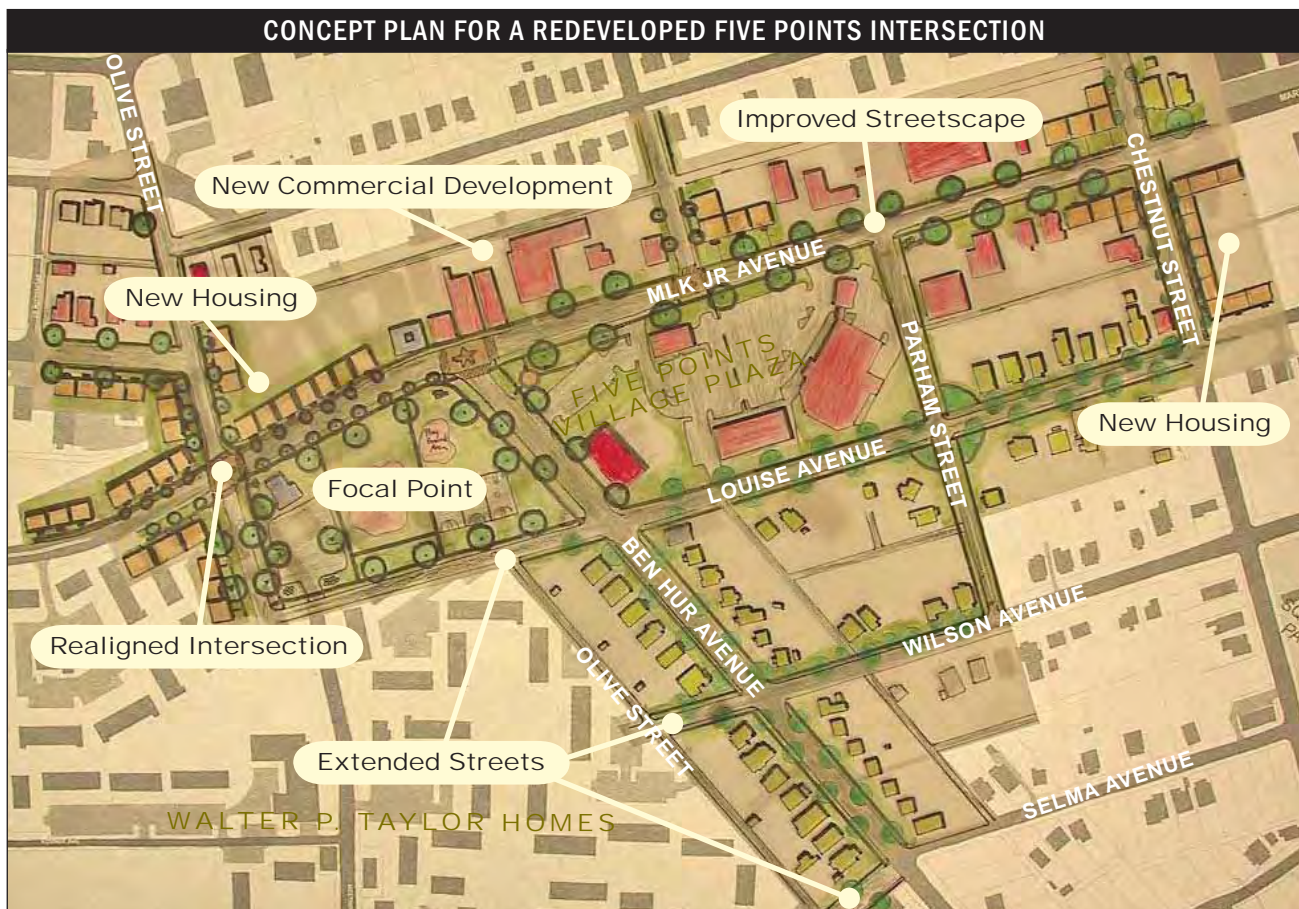
(1) to respect the adjacent residential areas, and  
(2) to maintain a pedestrian-friendly setting along the avenue. In order to do so, the following policies and principles should be used by staff and the steering committee to foster appropriate development and review project designs:

- Curb cuts should be avoided to maintain continuous sidewalks. Parking should be accessed off the alley and be located behind or to the side of new or renovated buildings.
- A landscaped buffer should be provided along the alley to provide a screen toward adjacent residential properties.
- Lighting of buildings and parking areas should be of a pedestrian-scale (that is, tall poles and elevated fixtures should not be permitted).
- Where buildings are setback from the sidewalk, lawns, shrubs and trees should be used in landscaping the front yards.

### Five Points Intersection

The name Five Points comes from the original alignment of McCalla, Olive, and Vine streets, which all came to one intersection where Olive Street and MLK meet today. The alignment of this old intersection gave an identity to the neighborhood and served as a focal point that was recognized by neighborhood-serving commercial businesses, such as the pharmacy that was in the flat iron building at McCalla and Vine. About 20 years ago the intersection was realigned to today's current configuration.

When the Walter P. Taylor Homes site is rehabilitated or redeveloped, a community focal point, such as a park, realigned intersection, or a notable development should be part of the master plan. A concept for the Five Points intersection redevelopment is shown below.





## Sidewalks

There is a sidewalk currently on the north side of MLK, but the design of the sidewalk is less than ideal; there is no separation from the street, no green space, no trees, parked cars right up to the sidewalk, and chain link fencing. All these factors make for an unfriendly pedestrian experience.



This MLK, Jr. Avenue right-of-way is pedestrian-unfriendly with no separated sidewalks, grass, or trees.

## Park City Banners

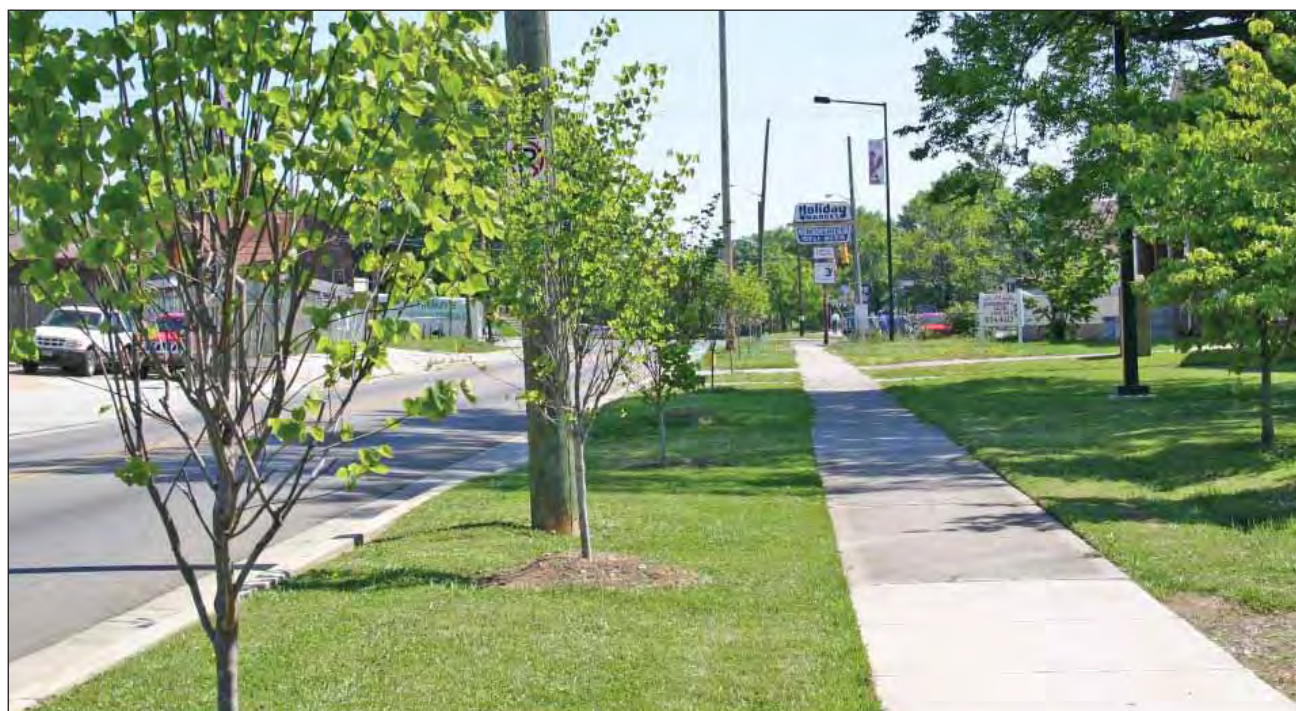
Early on in the planning process, there was significant interest in improving the entryways to Five Points. In response to this strong interest, MPC staff developed proposed banners



designs for these entryways. After review, the steering committee preferred the *Park City* banner option, which recaptures the historical name of the area.

The city's Public Service Division installed approximately 25 banners along MLK in time for the plaza's grand opening. It is anticipated that the use of pole banners within the *Park City* community will grow significantly over the next few months and years,

the first phase was to support the Five Points commercial development. The wide public right-of-way, newly installed "cobra" light poles, quality sidewalks and good site distance along MLK create a pedestrian experience that bodes well for the installation of banners and their intended branding affect.



The south side of MLK, Jr. Avenue has been redesigned to make walking safe and pleasant.



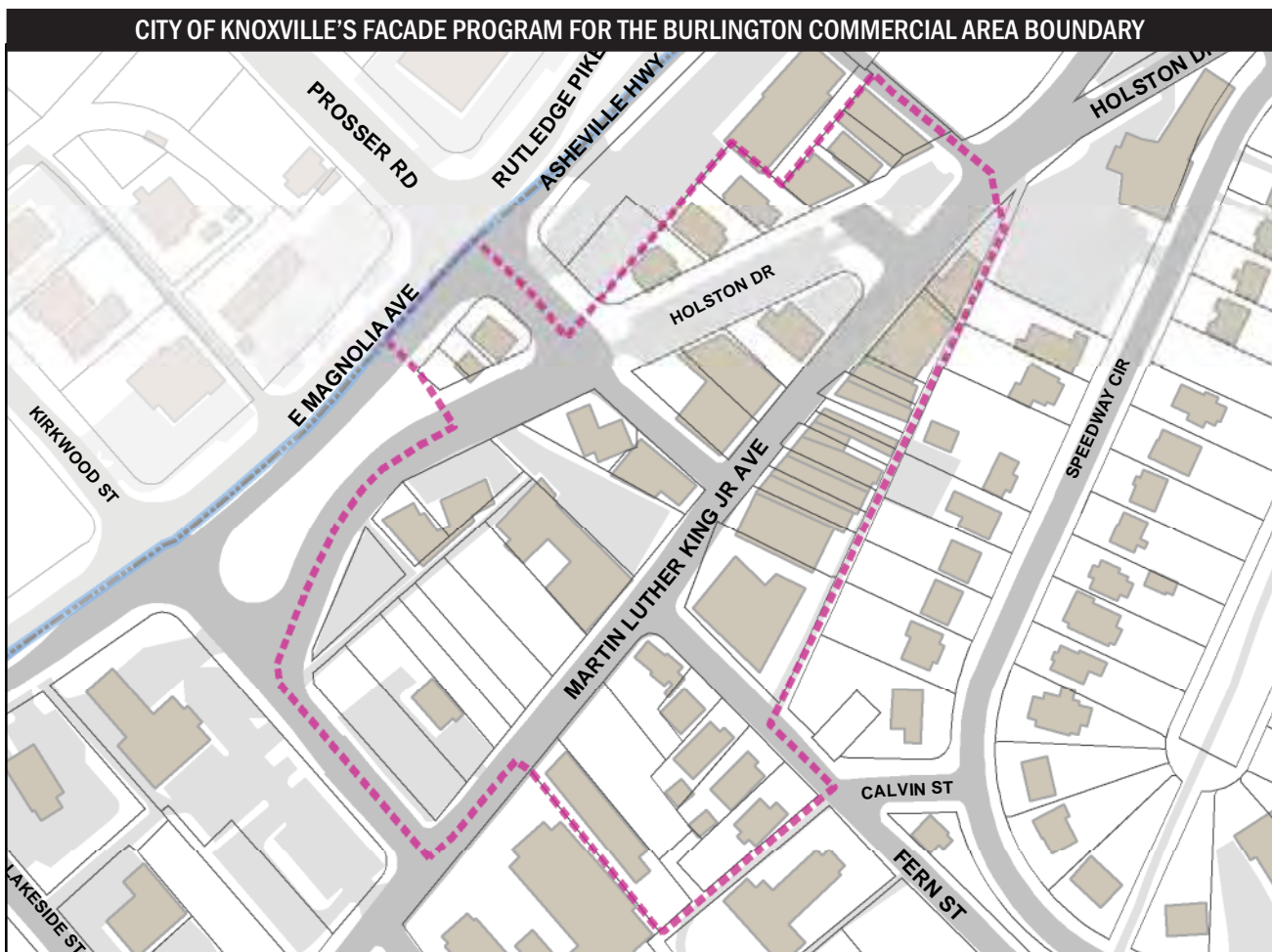
### Street Trees

The Public Service Division also planted 15 redbuds along MLK in anticipation of the plaza's opening. Through our meetings with the neighborhood, MPC staff learned that the community would like redbuds as their signature tree, and the flower of the tree is incorporated into the Park City banner design. While redbuds serve as a decorative tree, they are also an understory tree that ultimately needs shading. As a result, native shade trees that are identified in the *Knoxville-Knox County Tree Conservation and Planting Plan* should be planted near the redbuds. The redbuds should be located in highly visible areas such as the Five Points commercial area, while other residential streets should be installed with more native shade trees.

### 2. BURLINGTON COMMERCIAL AREA

Burlington has gone through significant change over the years with most of it related to transportation. Speedway Circle was originally designed as a horse track; later the track was converted into a speedway for cars, and then finally subdivided for single family residential units. The biggest impact on Burlington was the construction of Magnolia Avenue and Asheville Highway, which negatively impacted the commercial area because the new development along these roads was automobile-oriented, reflecting the changing society.

Today, the Burlington commercial area is still characterized by small slot buildings, usually one story in height and often found in a state of



disrepair. Some still have original architectural details intact. Enough of the historic character and layout of the area remains to be conserved and built around. The area's original design elements that are still there today include sidewalks, on-street parking, and tightly spaced, small-scaled buildings. One of the area's biggest attractions is an outdoor flea market located in a parking lot at the terminus of MLK.

The Burlington commercial area has not seen significant investment in the building stock through the years. Recently, a Save-A-Lot grocery store opened; during a public meeting, however, the community voiced concern about how the building is oriented on the site. City Community Development staff should meet with representatives of Save-A-Lot to discuss the unsightly appearance of the cardboard recycling bundles visible from MLK.

### **Facade Improvement Program**

The city has a façade improvement program set up for this area to help preserve and enhance the unique architectural look of the buildings. In addition, the city should pursue the establishment of a redevelopment area that would help to revitalize the commercial area.

### **Develop a Zoning Design Overlay or Form-Based Zone for the Area**

There are design dilemmas associated with a business locating on parcels sandwiched between MLK and Magnolia. Issues to be addressed include where to locate dumpsters, recycling materials, loading docks and even where to locate front doors. Also current zoning regulations do not encourage what the community likes about the Burlington commercial area, its scale, orientation, walkability, and compactness.

Further details of this recommendation should be prepared as part of the Magnolia Avenue Corridor Plan, which is scheduled in the 2006-2007 budget year by MPC and possibly AIA's (American Institute of Architects) East Tennessee Chapter.

### **Sidewalks**

The Burlington commercial area is partially characterized by narrow sidewalks, with utility poles placed in a chaotic manner. The wooden utility poles are out of scale with the surrounding development, and they are not contributing with recent city efforts to improve the aesthetics of the area with its façade program. In addition, the poles detract from Burlington's single most important asset, its walkability and the pedestrian scaled nature of the area. The city should work with KUB to clean up the utility pole placement pattern and to install pedestrian-oriented lighting.

### **Banners**

At this time banners are not appropriate in the Burlington commercial area due to the over-abundance of wooden utility poles. The sheer number of utility poles and tight sidewalks creates a cluttered feeling in the area, and adding banners would further diminish the pedestrian experience.

A more immediate option may be to establish gateways into the commercial area by installing columns and/or period-style pole banners at the intersection of MLK and Fern Street and at the intersection of MLK and Holston Drive.

Since the area was never part of 'Park City' and the city does not have the resources to add a significant number of parks to the area, its uniqueness as Speedway Circle should be marketed and branded.

### Street Trees

The use of street trees within the Burlington commercial area is not feasible at this time due to a lack of appropriate tree well locations. One long-term option involves removing the existing on street parking lane and extending the sidewalk width by about six feet. This added space would allow for an improved pedestrian experience through wider sidewalks, street tree wells, and period lighting. The single largest barrier to an improved Burlington streetscape is overhead utility services cluttering the streetscape.

### 3. UNION SQUARE PARK

Union Square Park, sometime referred to as Chestnut Park, is a small park about an acre in size with basketball courts, playground equipment, and a shelter. Historically, the park has served as a social gathering place for young

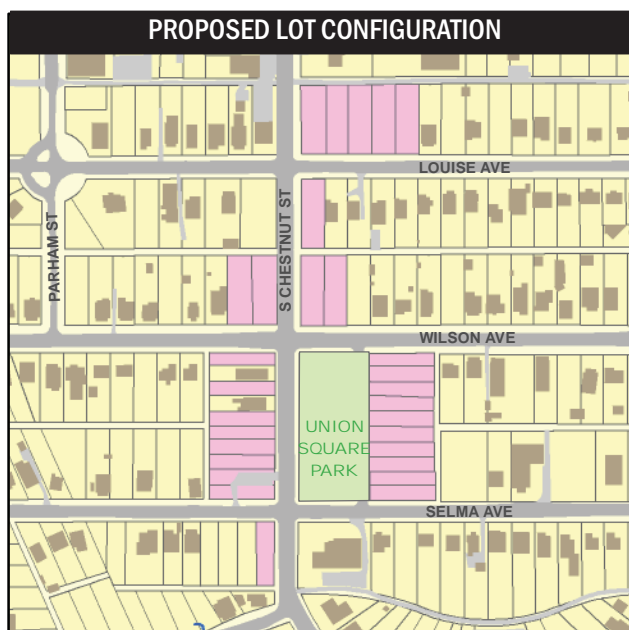
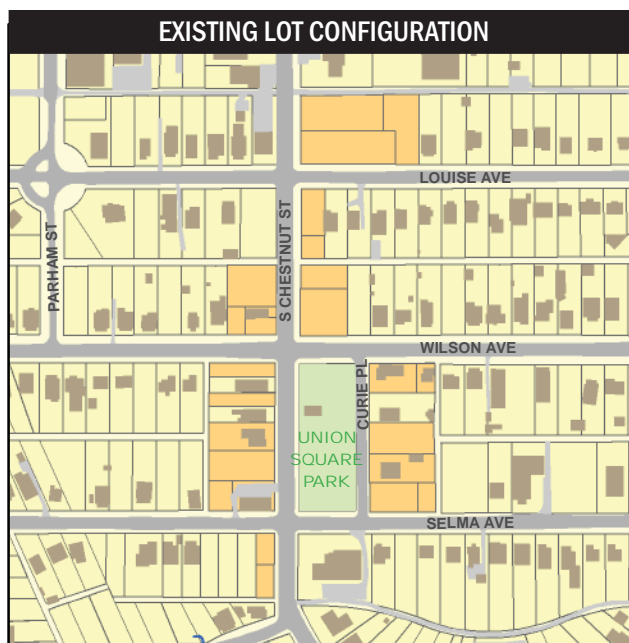
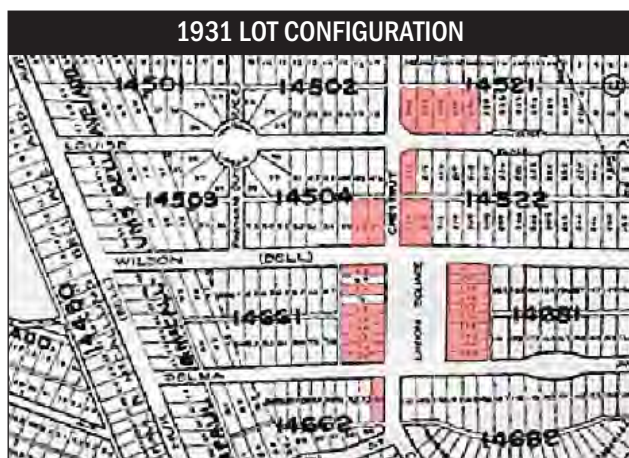
adults from the neighborhood; this can be seen on a warm summer evening where hundreds of people often gather in and around the park. Such crowds place a heavy burden on adjacent property owners who must deal excessive noise, litter, and public intoxication, essentially at their front door. These negative influences have led to high residential vacancies and inhibit nearby families with children from utilizing the park. The houses that remain have front yard chain link fences, no parking signs, and guard dogs to protect their private property from the activity in and around the park.

Through the years, parcels and development have lost their orientation towards the park. Originally, parcels along Curie Place and Chestnut Street were platted as narrow shot-gun style lots, each street containing ten lots. Today, there are five lots with three houses on Curie



Union Square Park (Chestnut Park) should be designed with large open spaces that offer flexible uses for recreation.





Place, while original parcels at the end of the street have been subdivided to create addresses on Wilson and Selma avenues.

### Park Recommendations

Due to its size and adjacent housing, Union Square Park should be maintained as a passive park. To accomplish this, the basketball court area should be reclaimed as lawn or similar space. In addition, the playground equipment should be moved closer to the center of the park, away from the busiest nearby intersection.

### Housing Adjacent to the Park

The future layout of the parcels immediately surrounding the park should be similar to its historical past, with narrow lots facing the park. In addition, since these houses are served by an alley, there is no need to keep Curie Place. This area would be better served as additional greenspace that would complement new infill development. The new infill development would also increase the safety of the park by creating more “eyes on the park.” It is very important that any new development here is owner-occupied housing.

### Possible Short Term Actions

On a short term basis, enforcement of current laws (parking, open container, littering, and noise) could be enforced to alleviate the unnecessary burden placed on existing residents immediately surrounding the park. In addition, changing the no overnight parking hours along Curie Place to begin at 6 p.m. rather than 8 p.m. could be a short term solution to dealing with the problems along the street.

#### 4. SOUTH CHESTNUT STREET (MLK TO ULSTER AVENUE)

This focal area contains nine publicly-owned vacant lots. Many of these lots have lost their original layout.

The area was first platted for residential uses. Over the past couple of decades, it has changed to commercial uses. Some of these commercial establishments, such as bars and night clubs, discouraged new residential investment on the street. In the future, the area should be maintained as a residential zoning district, allowing commercial development to only occur on MLK.

##### Rezoning

In order to foster low density residential development, a general rezoning should be pursued, changing the current General Commercial (C-3), found on South Chestnut between MLK and Wilson Avenue, to a single family zone. MPC's East City Sector Plan and One Year Plan also have called for this area to be rezoned. This recommendation was echoed during the public meeting where people wanted to preserve and enhance the single-family nature of the area.

##### Infill Housing

The table on this page describes how the future residential infill lots should be oriented.

##### Sidewalks

South Chestnut should have sidewalks on both sides of the street along with a tree lawn area planted with native trees.

#### LOT ORIENTATION PLAN FOR S. CHESTNUT STREET

Lot Address/ID	Ownership	Recommended Change
2517 Louise Avenue	KCDC	Replat these 3 lots for future infill development that will orient towards Louise Avenue.
116 S. Chestnut Street	Habitat	
122 S. Chestnut Street	Habitat	
310 S. Chestnut Street	KCDC	Combine these 2 lots into 1 lot for future infill development that will orient towards Louise Avenue.
Parcel 082NC001	KCDC	
319 S. Chestnut Street	Private	Replat these 4 lots to form 2 lots that will orient towards Wilson Avenue.
321 S. Chestnut Street	KCDC	
323 S. Chestnut Street	KCDC	
2431 Wilson Avenue	KCDC	Combine these 2 lots into 1 lot for future infill development that will orient towards Selma Avenue.
601 Wilson Avenue	KCDC	
609 Wilson Avenue	KCDC	

#### 5. SOUTH CHESTNUT GREEN (ULSTER AVENUE TO GRAVES STREET)

This focal area contains nine vacant lots on the bend of South Chestnut Street. The lots that are bound between South Chestnut Street and Cavalier Avenue have access issues to Cavalier because of a ravine that runs parallel to the road.

An opportunity exists to create another pocket park or "green" at the intersection of South Chestnut, Plymouth, and Cherry streets. Today, there is a city-owned triangular shaped parcel in the middle of these three streets that is not being used and serves as a highly visible and blighted piece of property at one of the key gateways into the neighborhood. Historically, there was only one road that met with Cherry/ Chestnut, located at today's Plymouth Street right-of-way location, as shown in the 1931 ward map.



The South Chestnut Green should be located on vacant city land between South Chestnut and Plymouth streets.

### **Partnering with the Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum**

The Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum Board has expressed interest in partnering with the neighborhood and city to rehabilitate this triangular property.

### **Creating the “Green”**

Create a public green space at the south end of S. Chestnut Street where Plymouth Street intersects S. Chestnut Street. There is an opportunity to adjust the right-of-way in this area to increase motorist and pedestrian safety, while at the same time creating an attractive neighborhood gateway.

## **6. TRAFFIC CALMING**

A traffic calming plan is needed to address speeding and pedestrian safety along South Chestnut Street, especially near Union Square Park. A variety of solutions was analyzed including engineering, education, and enforcement.

## **7. WALTER P. TAYLOR HOMES**

Walter P. Taylor Homes is the largest complex of public housing located in the study area. The complex was built in the late 1960s; its layout, scale, and materials present a drastic change in the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. The complex has 500 units with 270 for elderly use.

Generally, the elderly units are one-story and multifamily units are two-story. The multifamily units contain dual colored brick facades with small stoop porches and mint green or cream on the non-brick surfaces. Many units also have clothes lines which are visible from the street. The area is well landscaped with wrought iron fencing, street trees, shrubbery, and flower plantings.

During the development of this plan, MPC staff met with KCDC’s executive staff and their consulting team led by Turner Associates, Architects & Planners, Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia. Turner was hired to develop a database for KCDC’s housing stock and a financial plan for Walter P. Taylor Homes. At this time, KCDC is considering writing a Hope VI application or developing a phasing plan to rehabilitate the Walter P. Taylor site.



### **Implementing a Plan**

- Develop a phased redevelopment plan for the site
- Request Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding for street extensions
- Apply for federal funds in the future

### **Development Pattern**

Model the redevelopment after the Mechanicsville project with public spaces, traditional housing design, alleys, street connectivity, sidewalks, and pedestrian-scaled street lighting.

### **Road Pattern**

Extend Selma, Louise and Wilson avenues through the new development to connect to the neighborhood. Also, utilize some of the 704 vacant residential structures and lots found within the corridor to replace any additional housing stock needed. Any redevelopment plan should take into account the Eastport Park/old Eastport school building and the adjacent open spaces system (three cemeteries and Walter Hardy Park).

## **8. LINDEN AVENUE AND PARKVIEW AVENUE**

Linden and Parkview avenues are residential streets with primarily single-family residential structures along them. They were originally part of two well designed subdivisions, the Cold Springs and Lakewood Park Springs additions, were created along Linden, Parkside, McCalla, Louise and Tarleton avenues. Tree-lined sidewalks were created along each of the blocks, providing easy access to the nearby trolleys and parks. Those public improvements formed a setting for housing development which

spanned several decades before most of the neighborhood was completed. This expanse of time resulted in a broad range of architectural styles: East Lake, Queen Ann, Folk Victorian, Four Square, Craftsman, and the various Revival styles (particularly, Tudor and Dutch Colonial) are represented from the pre-World War II era. A few Minimal Traditional and Ranch House styles are found along a two block stretch which was created following the war. Although most of the housing is single-family detached, an occasional duplex (often designed in Four Square appearance) and apartments (typically executed in a Revival style) are found in the east end of the potential district.

### **Neighborhood Conservation Overlay**

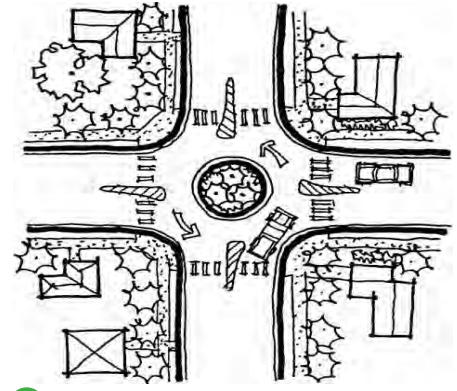
In order to preserve and enhance this area, a Linden Avenue and Parkview Avenue Neighborhood Conservation Overlay should be pursued.

### **General Rezoning**

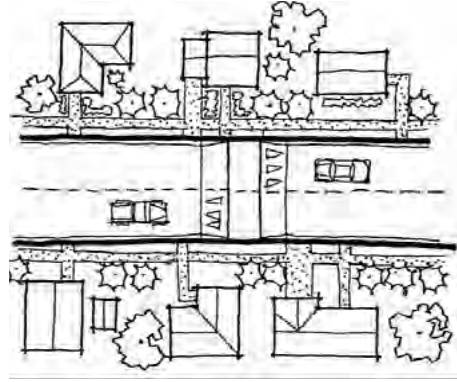
First, however, a general rezoning should occur, changing the zoning from R-2 to R-1A, which will help preserve the existing single family nature of this area. The residential properties east of Kyle Street on Linden and Parkview avenues are zoned R-2 (General Residential District), all the way to Chilhowee Park, and on the east side of the park this same pattern continues for a short distance between Linden Avenue and MLK. R-2 zoning should not be applied to a single-family residential area that is struggling to maintain its sustainability. Maintaining this zoning can result in an increased number of absentee landlords and continued disinvestment in the corridor.



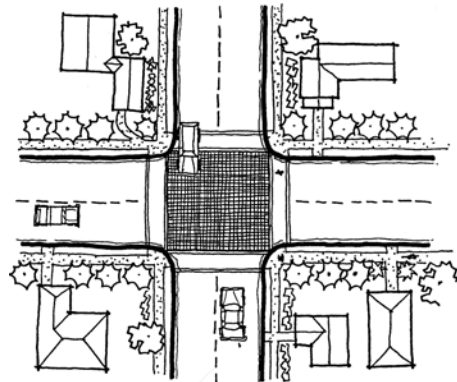
# TRAFFIC CALMING PROPOSAL FOR FIVE POINTS REDEVELOPMENT AREA



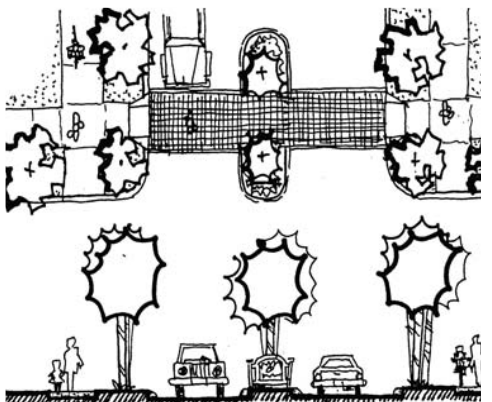
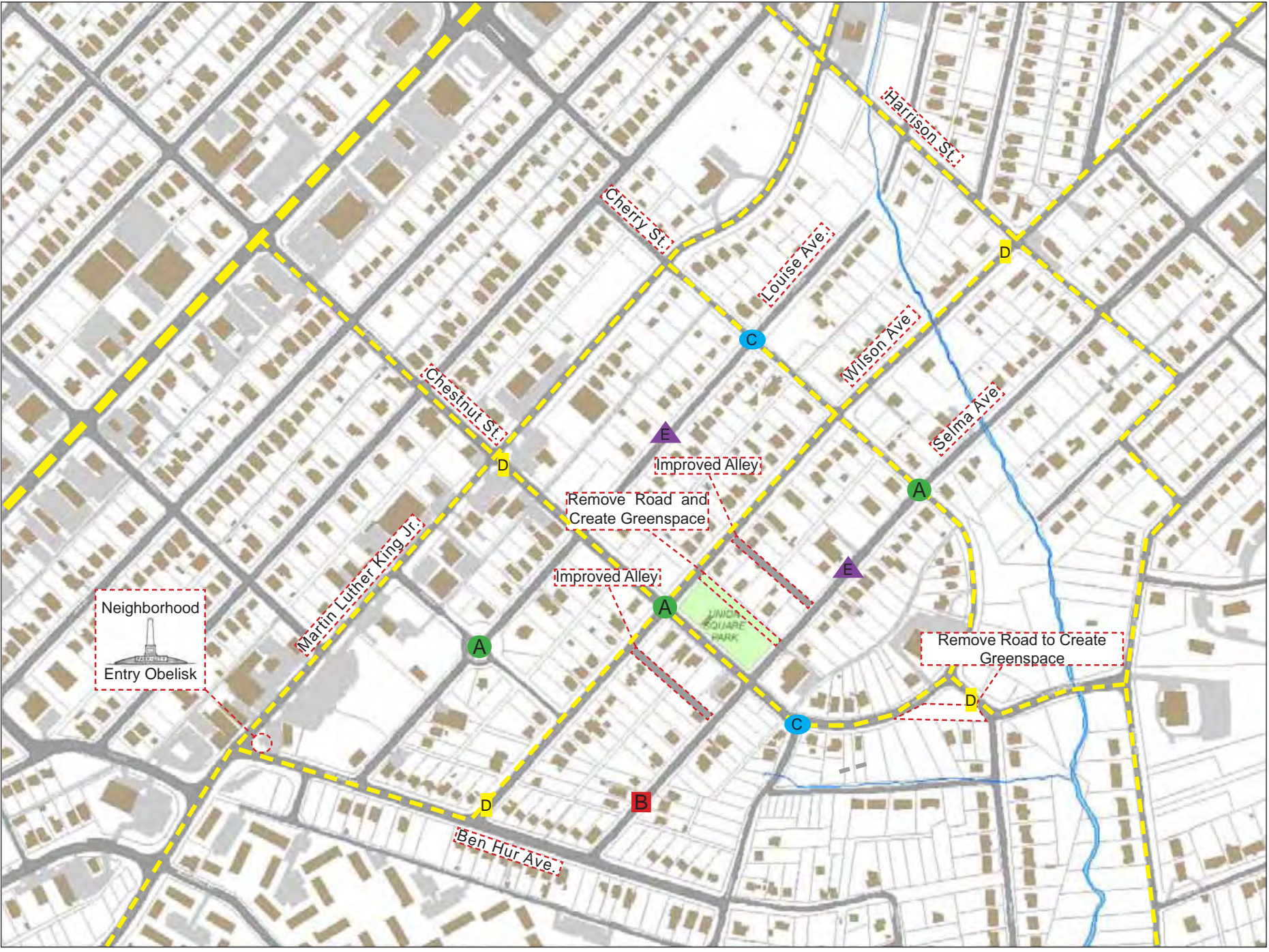
**A** Traffic Circles:  
Parham St. + Louise Ave.  
Wilson Ave. + Chestnut St.  
Selma Ave. + S. Cherry St.



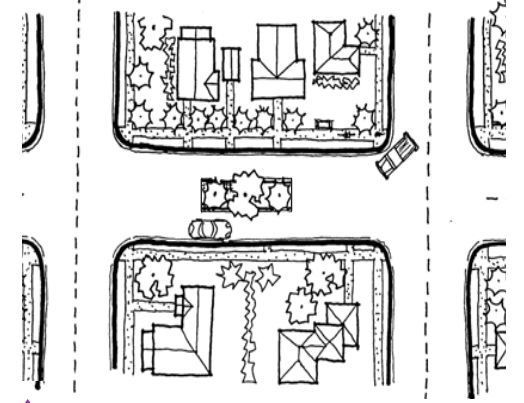
**B** Speed Hump:  
Selma Ave. (Between Ben Hur Ave. + S. Chestnut St.)



**C** Raised Intersections:  
Louise Ave. + S. Cherry St.  
Ulster Ave. + S. Chestnut St.



**D** Entrance Treatments:  
S. Chestnut St. @ Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.  
Wilson Ave. @ S. Harrison St.  
Wilson Ave. @ Ben Hur Ave.  
S. Chestnut St. @ Graves St.



**E** Median Treatments:  
Louise Ave. (Between S. Chestnut St. + S. Cherry St.)  
Selma Ave. (Between S. Chestnut St. + S. Cherry St.)

Arterial Roadway

Neighborhood Collector

Residential Streets







When the Austin Homes site is redeveloped, an existing grade separation from the street should allow for taller buildings than those on adjacent properties.

### **9. AUSTIN HOMES**

In August 2004, KCDC demolished 23 of the oldest apartment buildings containing 150 units within the Austin Homes Site. As this was being planned, there was some community opposition towards the demolition of the 63 year-old structures, but the buildings would have been difficult to renovate, and the layout did not integrate well with the surrounding neighborhood.

The site should be developed with residential or office uses in the future. A mix of the two uses is also possible. In addition, due to the site's elevation and proximity to downtown, there is opportunity for more vertical development.

### **10. HARRISON STREET AND WILSON AVENUE**

Commercial uses at the intersection of Harrison Street and Wilson avenues are having a negative impact on the neighborhood. One solution is to implement a general rezoning for the area specified, changing it from C-1 to R-1, which will help preserve the existing single-family nature. R-1 is consistent with the zoning pattern along Wilson Avenue and South Harrison Street.



The Harrison Street and Wilson Avenue intersection should be rezoned to residential so that commercial uses are contained in the Five Points and Burlington commercial areas.





## Chapter 4:

# Corridorwide Recommendations

### **‘HEART OF KNOXVILLE’**

#### **RESIDENTIAL ZONING CATEGORY**

A new zoning category that meets the intent of the recently adopted *Heart of Knoxville Infill Housing Design Guidelines* and codifies them should be developed. The City of Knoxville’s zoning ordinance does not adequately address older urban neighborhoods and infill development is often out of character with the surrounding houses. Recently, MPC completed infill guidelines to assist city-aided infill projects. By creating a new zone that addresses urban residential development, MPC would be codifying the principles as outlined in the completed infill guidelines.

#### **OUTDOOR VENDING**

A concentration of outdoor vending exists along MLK in Five Points and Burlington commercial areas. This makes for an inhospitable entryway into the neighborhoods and results in discouraging new investment within the community. In addition, questions about the legality of these sales have been raised: Are the vendors paying taxes? Do they have permission from the property owner? Are they in violation of the zoning code?

#### **Economical Alternative**

Develop an economical alternative for vendors who want to progress into legitimate businesses. This could be done by developing a public marketplace for vendors to operate in a legal manner, such as a city-operated facility which

gathers vendors under one roof. One ideal location for this could be in Burlington, where there is an existing outdoor flea market.

#### **Enforce Zoning Code**

The entire Five Points commercial area is zoned C-3 (General Commercial District), which prohibits outdoor display of merchandise. Stepped up enforcement is needed in this and other areas of the city to control such issues.

#### **EXPANSION OF THE FIVE POINTS REDEVELOPMENT AREA BOUNDARY**

Extend the Five Points Redevelopment Area boundary to encompass the Walter P. Taylor Homes, the remaining single-family residential to the north and west and the housing to Castle Street. The expansion of the boundary should be done when additional housing stock is needed and appropriate resources are secured.





KNOXVILLE • KNOX COUNTY

M P C

METROPOLITAN  
P L A N N I N G  
C O M M I S S I O N

T E N N E S S E E

Suite 403 • City County Building  
400 Main Street  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902  
8 6 5 • 2 1 5 • 2 5 0 0  
F A X • 2 1 5 • 2 0 6 8  
w w w • k n o x m p c • o r g