

The Bearden Village Opportunities Plan

Prepared by the
KNOXVILLE KNOX COUNTY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

January 2001





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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MPC would like to thank the residents and business owners of Bearden, who, through survey responses and attendance at public meetings, have given us critical insight in preparing this plan.

We also express our special thanks to Finbarr Saunders and Terry Faulkner for their dedicated work and community involvement.

This report was prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

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Bearden School, circa 1910.

The Growth of the Bearden Village

Bearden village has been in existence more than 200 years, and, though once considered an outlying suburb of Knoxville, it is now a thriving inner-city community where many people live, shop and work. In its earliest years, Bearden was centered on Weisgarber Road and Fourth Creek (now Northshore Drive). It was a prosperous farming

community and center of commerce, with its own public services, including a railroad station and post office. In the early 1900s, Bearden became more of a residential community as its agricultural role diminished, while its village characteristics of localized services, grid pattern streets and urban atmosphere remained.

“

*The Village of Bearden
is not enrolled among
the great places of earth,
but this little place
has a part in the
great drama of
American history
and some of the great
principles of earth have
been here exemplified.*

”

John B. Creswell
Bearden Historian and Minister
1899





Today, Bearden's residential fabric consists of apartments, condominiums, starter and more expensive homes, which attract students, new families, empty nesters and retirees. The commercial district contains a mix of about 400 businesses, including small, privately-owned stores,

large franchises and diverse specialty shops. The transportation network is a grid of residential streets surrounded by a major arterial, Kingston Pike, at the southern edge and an interstate highway to the north.








The Bearden Village Opportunities Plan study area is bounded by Tobler Lane and Forest Glen Drive to the east, I-40 to the north, Northshore Drive to the west and the Southern Railway line and Kingston Pike to the south.

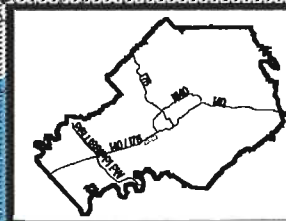
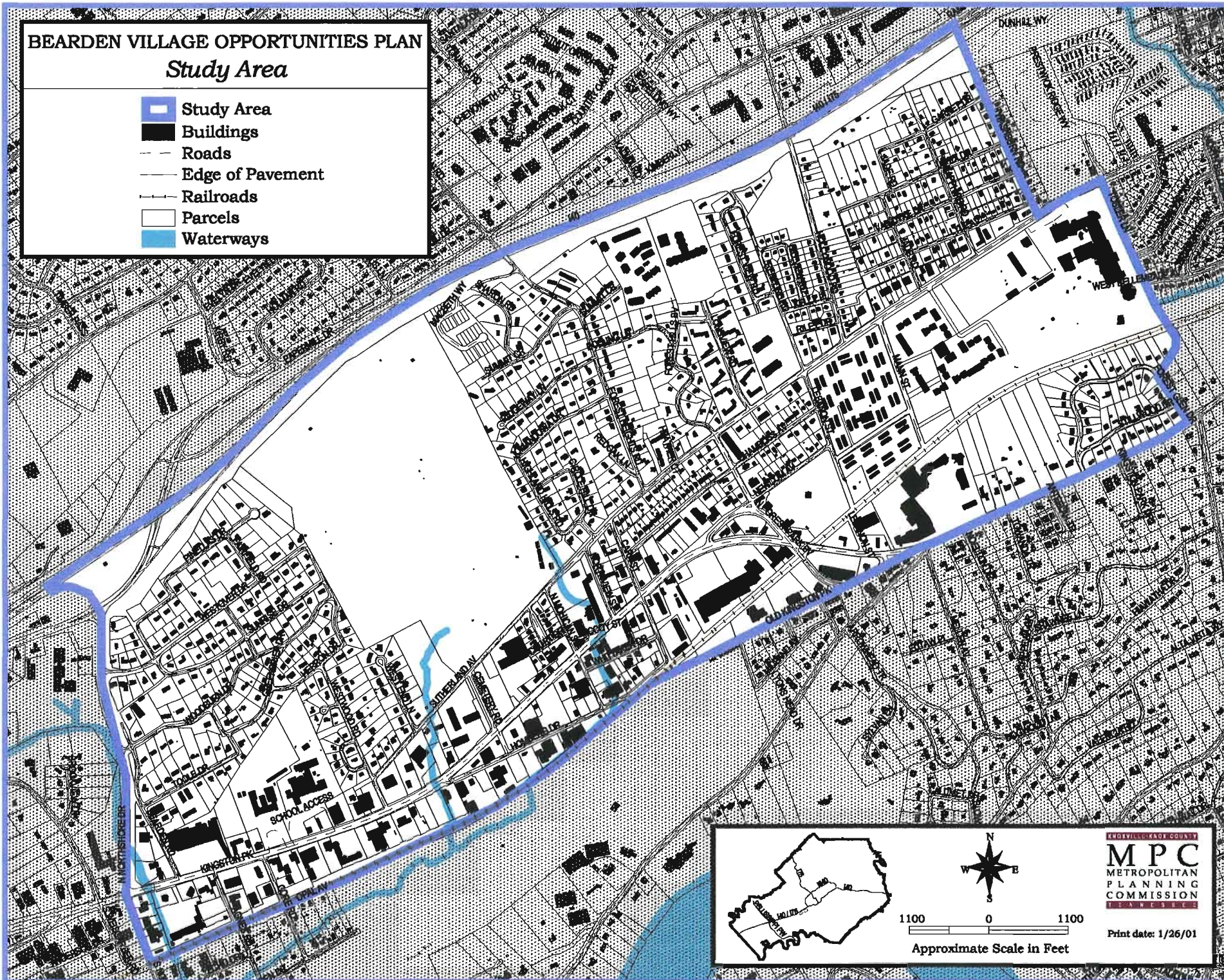
It was identified in the Metropolitan Planning Commission's (MPC) West City Sector Plan (1996) as a "special planning opportunity area."



BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Study Area

-  Study Area
-  Buildings
-  Roads
-  Edge of Pavement
-  Railroads
-  Parcels
-  Waterways



1100 0 1100

Approximate Scale in Feet

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The Urban Village Concept

Through the planning process, the consensus among Bearden community participants was to build upon existing physical assets to more fully achieve a true urban village form. An urban village is characterized as a complete and integrated community of housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks and civic facilities within easy walking distance of each other. Many of the day-to-day services and needs of businesses and residents are met within the village itself. Commercial uses are integrated into residential and office areas by mixing the types of building tenants within existing

structures. For example, commercial and retail occupants may be found on the first floor of a building, while office and residential uses occur on subsequent floors. Buildings typically are small in scale, within close proximity to streets with sidewalks, and parking lots are oriented toward the backs of buildings. The primary modes of transportation within a village are walking and bicycle travel. These urban village characteristics are critical elements of the recommendations and implementation tools presented in the Bearden Village Opportunities Plan.



“
A
growing movement
to replace charmless
suburban sprawl
with civilized,
familiar places that
people love.

”

Time magazine article
on the New Urbanism



The Planning Process

The Bearden Village Opportunities Plan was developed with the input of a very involved community. MPC held several meetings for the general public and businesses throughout the planning process to gather citizens' concerns and to receive feedback on policies and recommendations. During the last public meeting,

participants were surveyed to determine the desired future course for their community. Discussion of the issues, concerns and development preferences led to a consensus, with the community desiring a strengthened Bearden, one in which the forms and functions of a true urban village are realized.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED BY RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS

Positive Aspects

- Central location
(near Downtown,
Interstate, shopping)
- Diverse services
- Architectural variety
- Presence of small,
locally-owned businesses
- Mature trees and landscaping

Weaknesses to Overcome

- Not pedestrian friendly
- Visual clutter of signs/utilities
- Substandard/vacant properties
- Cut through traffic/congestion

Vision for the Future

- Continuous pedestrian/
greenway linkages
- Shopping village atmosphere
- Enhanced landscaping
- Successful merchants association
- Sense of place and community
- Enhancement of the unique
urban character
- Architectural harmony
in commercial and
office development





The Land Use Plan

The study area encompasses varied land uses ranging from commercial to single-family residential. The mix of uses is one of the area's great assets; however, instead of having these uses adjacent to one another, the plan recommends mixed uses within buildings, adding density and diversity in the community. This can be achieved by promoting commercial/retail use on the first floors of structures and office/residential on subsequent floors. This would result in additional people living and working in the area as well as more walking and social interactions within the village.

Bearden's residential sections are a mix of older, established neighborhoods and medium density apartment complexes. Their character should be retained through redevelopment that is appropriate with the existing style and scale of the neighborhood.

Two new parks are proposed to enhance the recreational facilities in the area. Additionally, sidewalk and greenway extensions should link all parklands in the area.

COMMUNITY GOALS

This plan focuses on identifying opportunities and recommending solutions to achieve three community goals:

1

Enhance pedestrian activity and access, while minimizing the negative effects of vehicular traffic on neighborhoods and pedestrians

2

Enhance the sense of place and community.












3

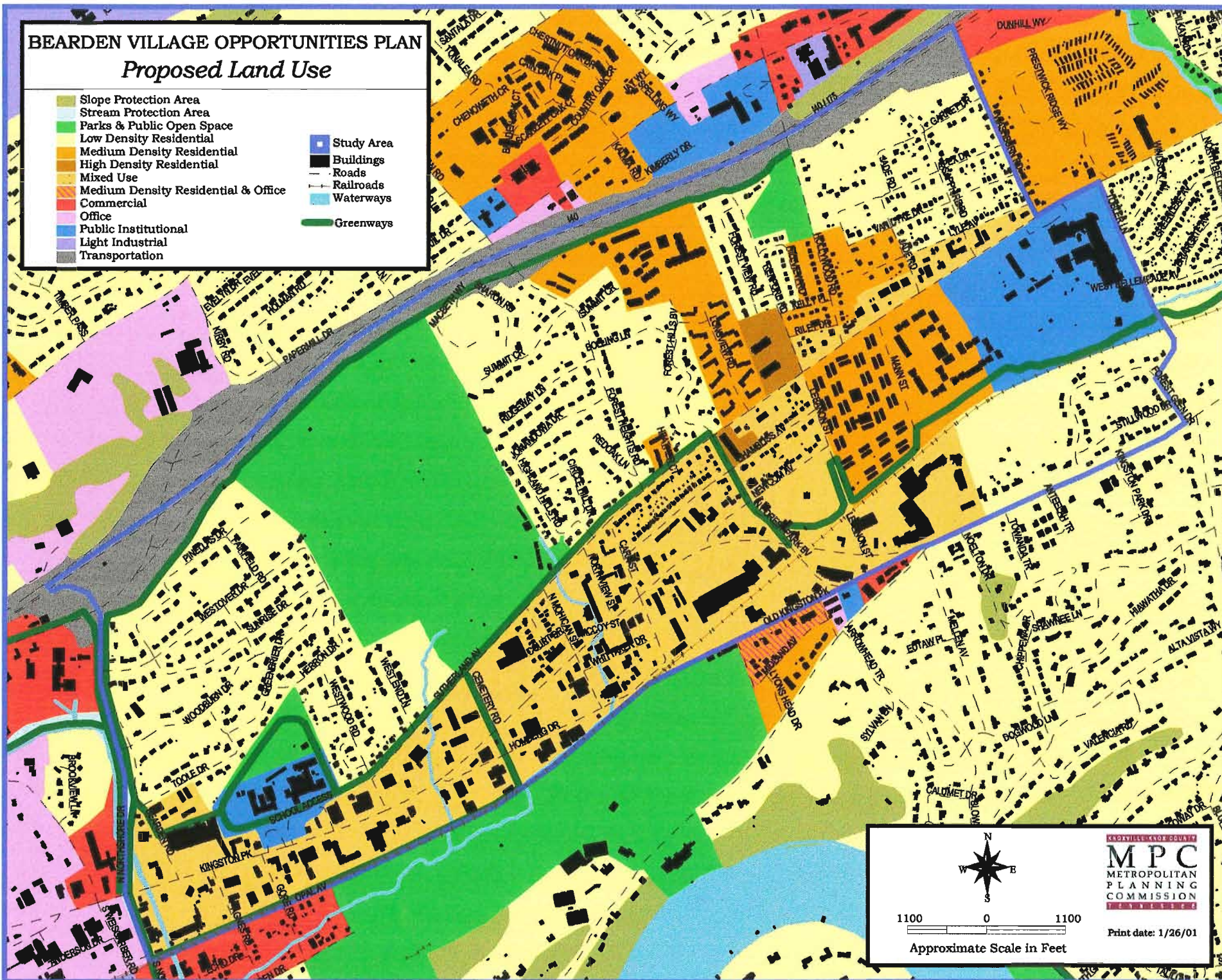
Build upon Bearden's urban character and unique atmosphere by promoting appropriate development.



BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Proposed Land Use

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Slope Protection Area |  Study Area |
|  Stream Protection Area |  Buildings |
|  Parks & Public Open Space |  Roads |
|  Low Density Residential |  Railroads |
|  Medium Density Residential |  Waterways |
|  High Density Residential |  Greenways |
|  Mixed Use | |
|  Medium Density Residential & Office | |
|  Commercial | |
|  Office | |
|  Public Institutional | |
|  Light Industrial | |
|  Transportation | |



Approximate Scale in Feet

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The Pedestrian Plan

Bearden's major attraction is its existing urban character and development, but a major obstacle to better use these resources is a lack of pedestrian linkages and accessibility. Residents would like to see Bearden as a pleasant place to walk, where streetscapes are lively and friendly, and where

roadways and adjacent sidewalks accommodate walkers, bikers, buses and cars. To accomplish this vision, the recommendations (at right) address pedestrian safety and the need for the community to become proactive in promoting pedestrian ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build sidewalks and greenway linkages on the main north/south connectors between Sutherland Avenue and Kingston Pike and further to Homberg Drive.

- Establish pedestrian crosswalks with controls at all signalized intersections on Kingston Pike and Sutherland Avenue.

- Provide sidewalks and paths between adjacent shopping centers, neighborhoods and businesses.

- Encourage the private sector to construct or improve sidewalks with all redevelopment or new development.

- Ensure all roadway construction projects include provisions for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.



BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Pedestrian Plan

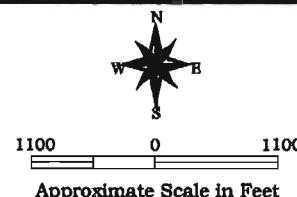
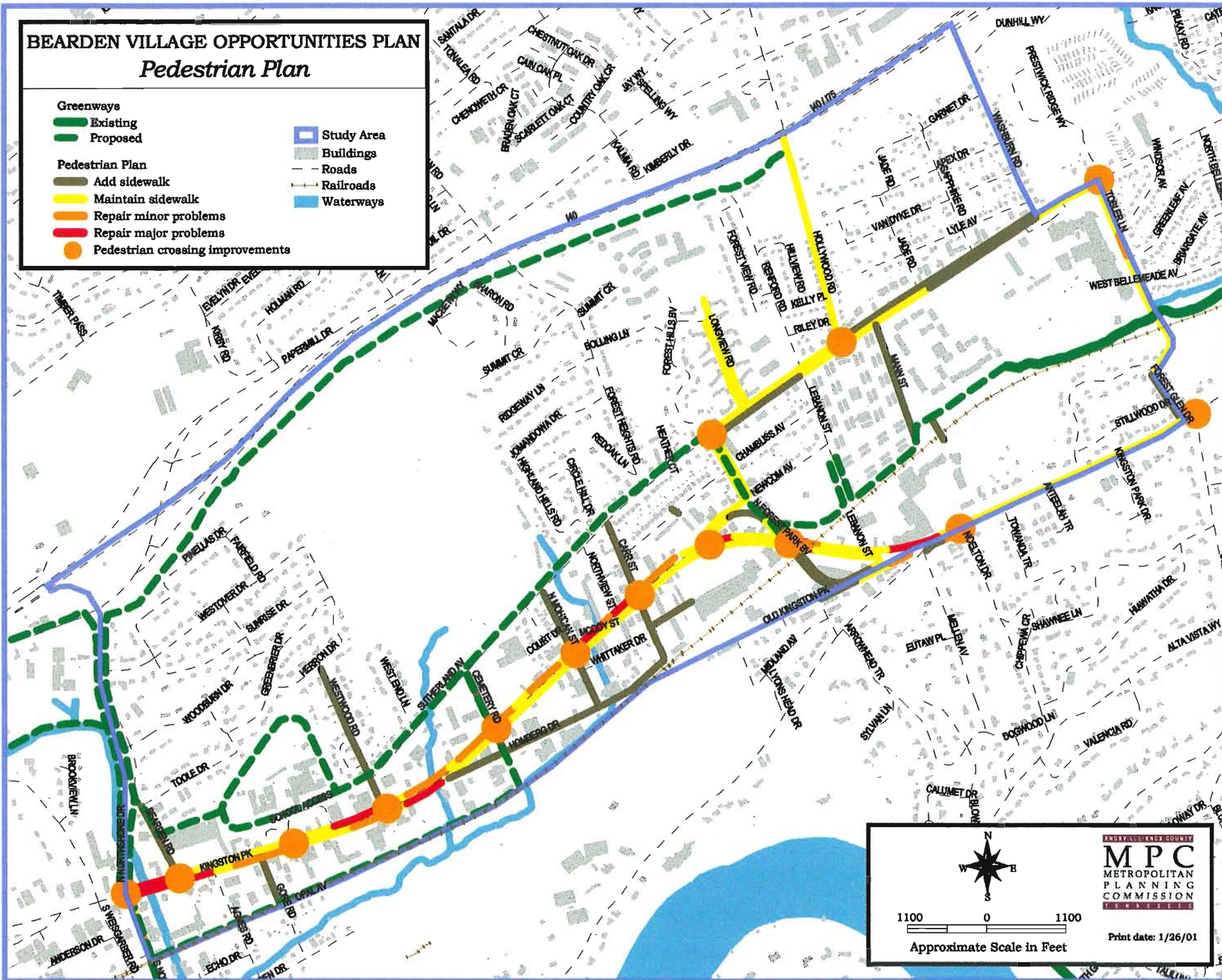
Greenways

- Existing
- Proposed

Pedestrian Plan

- Add sidewalk
- Maintain sidewalk
- Repair minor problems
- Repair major problems
- Pedestrian crossing improvements

- Study Area
- Buildings
- Roads
- Railroads
- Waterways



KNOWLEDGE COUNTY
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The Parks and Greenways Plan

Bearden village has several pocket parks, a high school campus and greenway connections that offer a variety of recreation spaces and uses. The area is fortunate to include the western terminus of the Third Creek Greenway, which extends approximately 4 miles east to The University of

Tennessee campus and Knoxville's downtown waterfront. Within the next few years this greenway will be extended to Bearden Elementary School along Sutherland Avenue. Long-term plans include westward extension to the Jean Teague Greenway and southward to Lakeshore Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Connect the Third Creek Greenway to the Jean Teague Greenway/ John Bynon Park along Sutherland Avenue and through Bearden Elementary School. Also extend it south to Lakeshore Park along Northshore Drive.

- Create a passive neighborhood park on Hollywood Road, south of I-40.

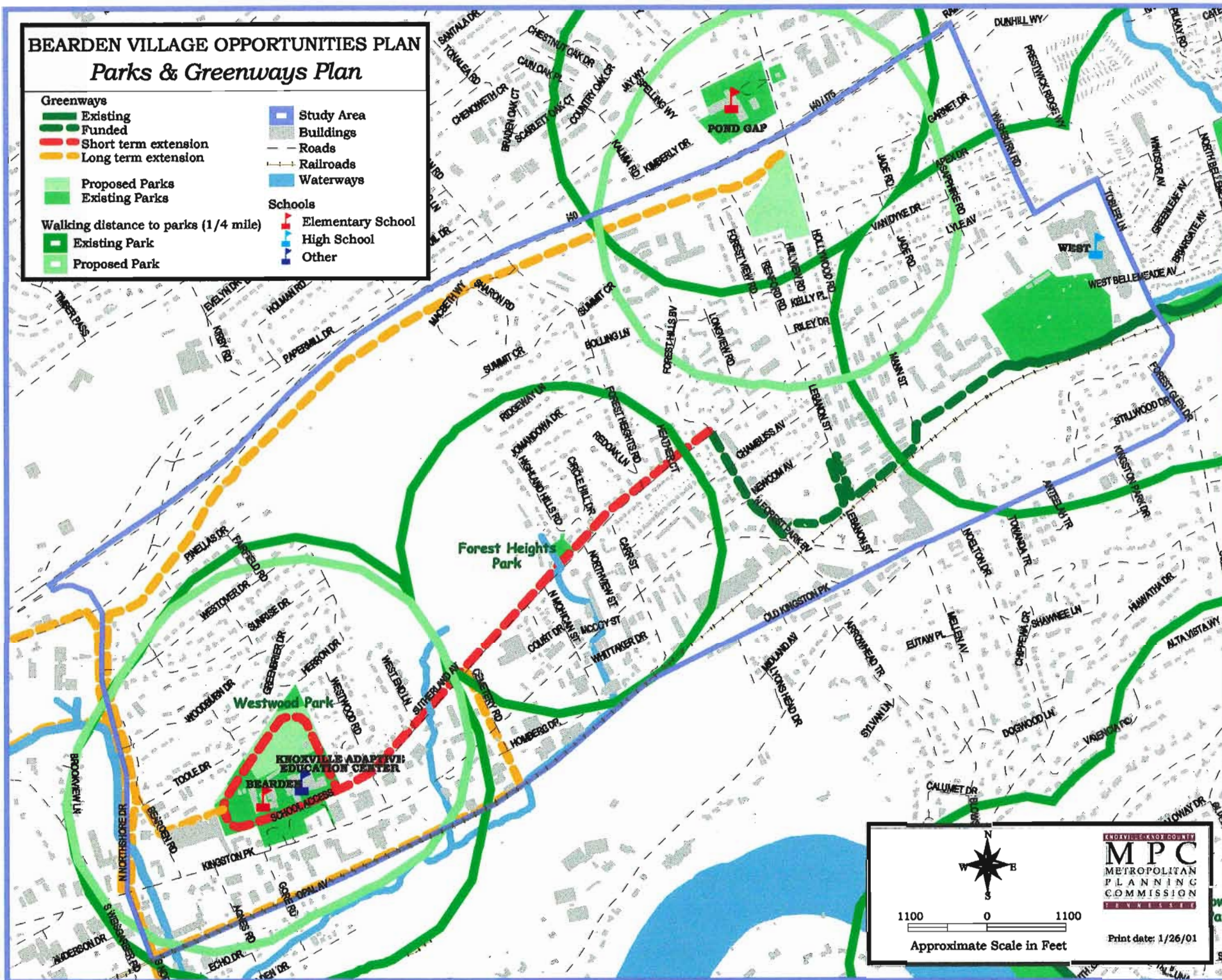
- Enhance Westwood Park by constructing a greenway trail around Bearden Elementary School and improving the existing recreational facilities.



BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Parks & Greenways Plan

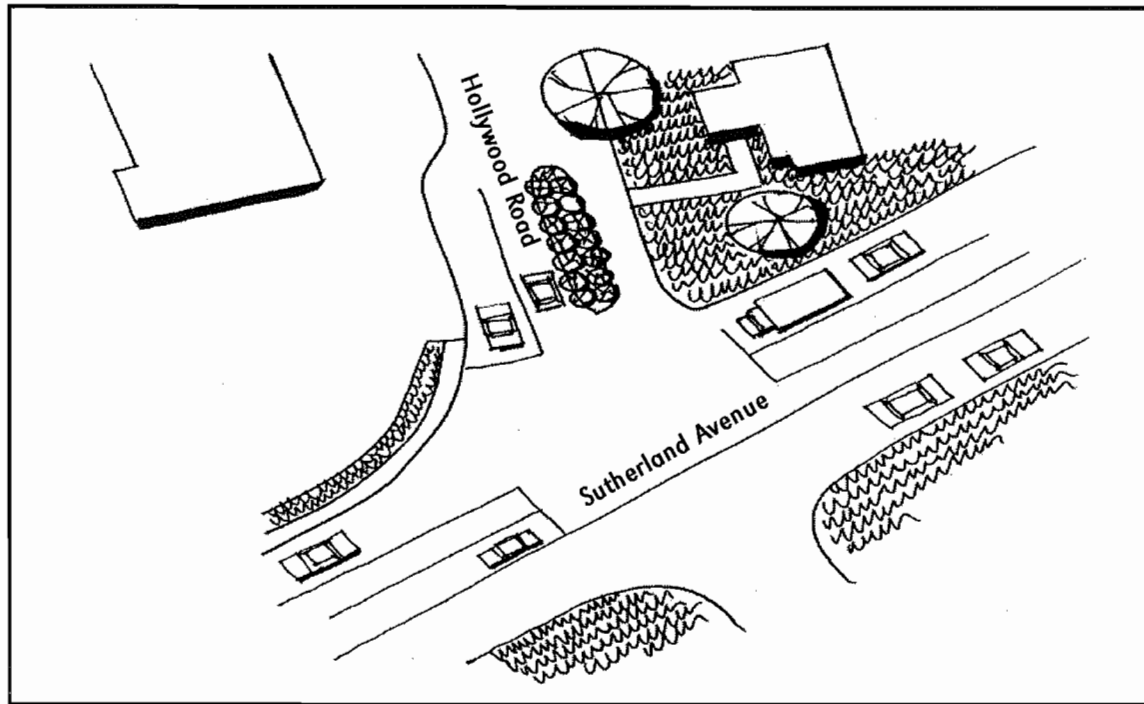
- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| Greenways | Study Area |
| Existing | Buildings |
| Funded | Roads |
| Short term extension | Railroads |
| Long term extension | Waterways |
| Proposed Parks | Schools |
| Existing Parks | Elementary School |
| Walking distance to parks (1/4 mile) | High School |
| Existing Park | Other |
| Proposed Park | |



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Approximate Scale in Feet

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The Transportation and Drainage Plan

Since the majority of the study area is located south of an interstate highway and north of a major arterial, the neighborhoods and businesses are affected by vehicular congestion, cut through traffic and noise pollution. The community is concerned about the safety of children, the elderly and general pedestrian traffic in the commercial and residential neighborhoods.

Another major concern is truck traffic on Hollywood Road. This street is not a designated truck route,

but trucks continue to use this road despite posted signs prohibiting such traffic. The neighborhood has expressed noise and safety concerns to local officials, and there has been an increase in enforcement and truck routing signs, however, truck traffic is still excessive. This area is currently part of a neighborhood revitalization program where homes are being restored. This investment needs to be sustained to help reestablish older neighborhoods, and traffic control efforts should demonstrate that added support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Add medians to the intersections of Hollywood Road at Sutherland Avenue and at Papermill Drive to prevent twin trailer trucks from traveling on Hollywood Road. *(see sketch, at left)*
- Improve visibility of truck routing signs and increase enforcement.
- Develop a functional plan for intersection improvements at Northshore Drive and Kingston Pike to present to neighborhoods and the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT).

Noise levels are also a major concern within this area because of interstate highway widening and the removal of vegetation that served as a natural noise barrier.

- Continue to encourage TDOT to place noise barriers along the northern fringe of the study area as I-40 is widened.








Hollywood Road, Bearden Road and Homberg Drive flood frequently. Heavy rains make these streets impassable, changing travel patterns and creating safety hazards.

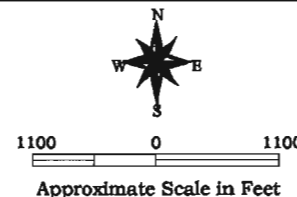
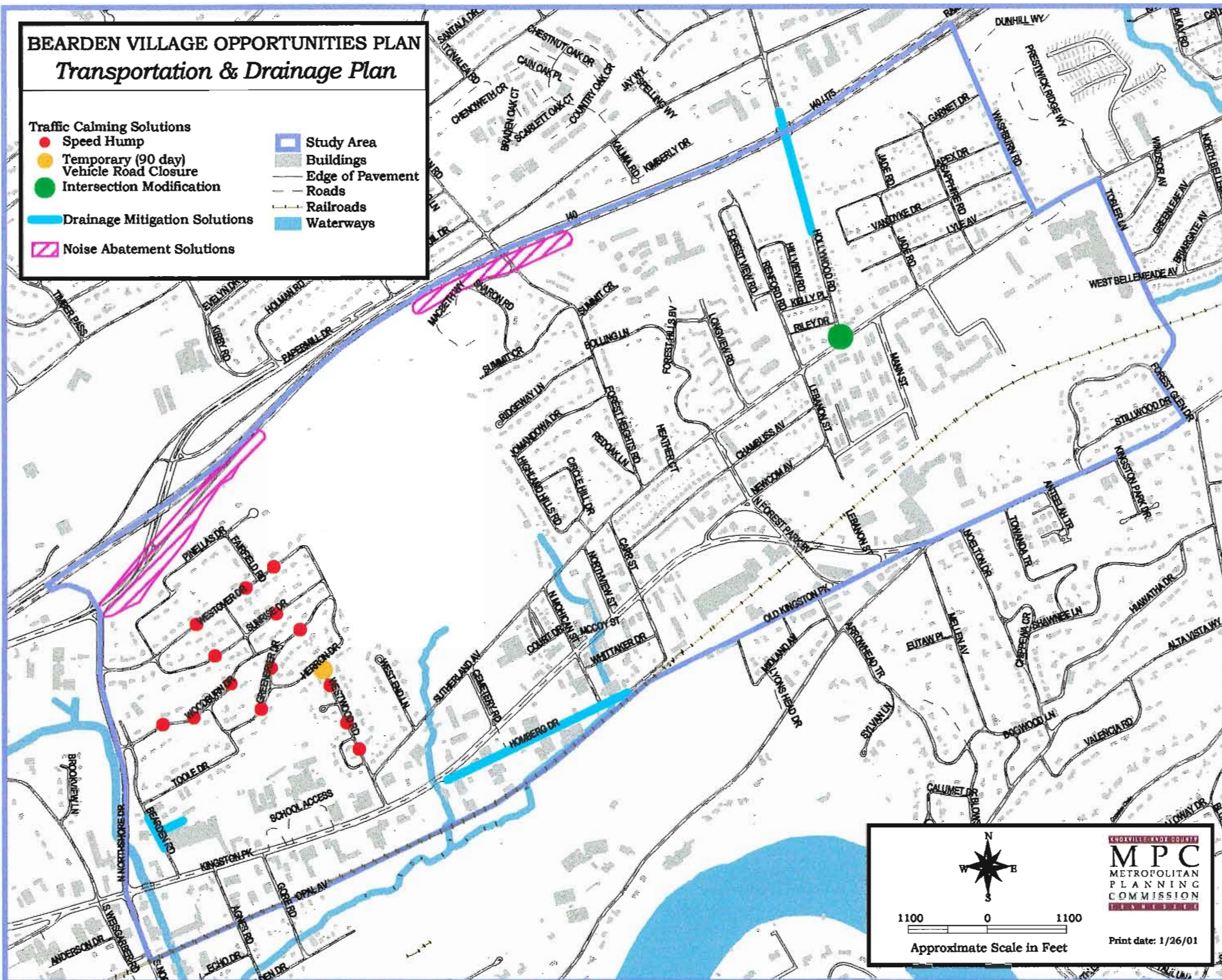
- Implement long-term drainage improvements for flood prone areas.



BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Transportation & Drainage Plan

- | | |
|---|--|
| Traffic Calming Solutions |  Study Area |
|  Speed Hump |  Buildings |
|  Temporary (90 day) Vehicle Road Closure |  Edge of Pavement |
|  Intersection Modification |  Roads |
|  Drainage Mitigation Solutions |  Railroads |
|  Noise Abatement Solutions |  Waterways |



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Transit-Oriented Development

The Forest Park Boulevard/Kingston Pike corridor contains neighborhood shopping services, medium density residential districts, heavily traveled transit routes, and greenway connections all within a quarter of a mile. These types of uses and activities make the area suitable for implementation of Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Under this design principle, an enhanced transit center could be developed, serving as the Bearden community's core or "town" center. In addition to basic transit

services, the center might include facilities for day care or medical practices. It might also add open space and park elements to draw pedestrian traffic from surrounding neighborhoods. Further, an effort to achieve TOD features might require reconfiguration of hazardous road intersections (such as Forest Park Boulevard and Newcom Avenue) and provisions for additional pedestrian ways and controlled signals.
















“
*A transit facility
need not be just a
place for transportation
but can also become
a setting for
community interaction
and a place
that accommodates
a diversity of people.*

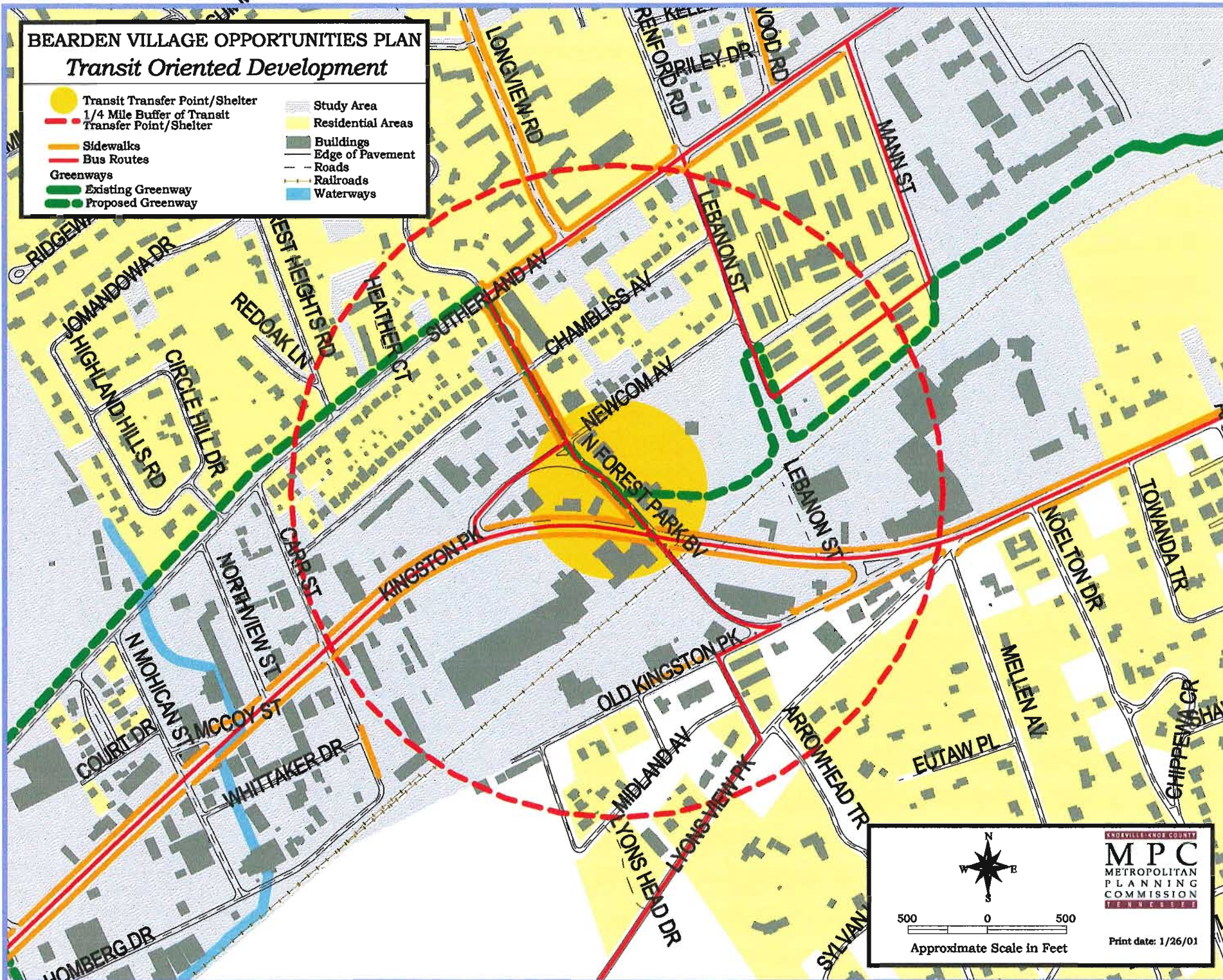
”

*The Role of Transit in Creating
Livable Metropolitan Communities,
Transit Cooperative Research Program*

BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Transit Oriented Development

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Transit Transfer Point/Shelter |  Study Area |
|  1/4 Mile Buffer of Transit Transfer Point/Shelter |  Residential Areas |
|  Sidewalks |  Buildings |
|  Bus Routes |  Edge of Pavement |
| Greenways |  Roads |
|  Existing Greenway |  Railroads |
|  Proposed Greenway |  Waterways |



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Approximate Scale in Feet

EDGEVILLE AND COUNTY
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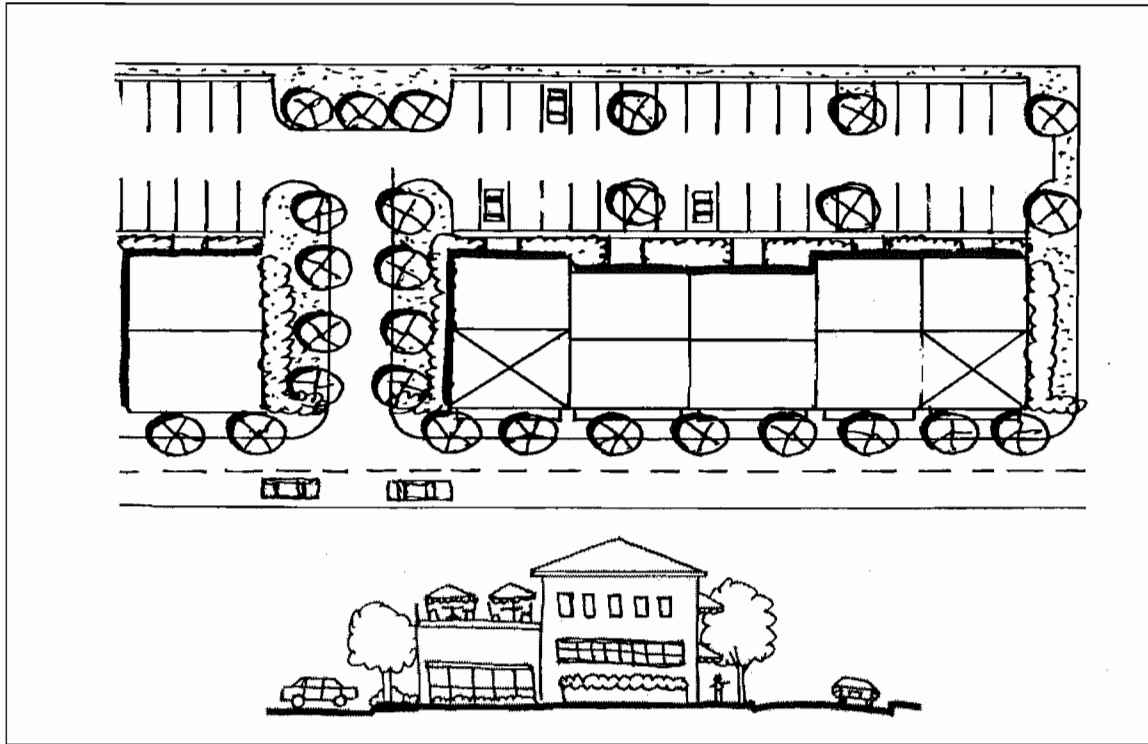
Kingston Pike at Lyons View Pike: What it looks like now.



Kingston Pike at Lyons View Pike: What it could look like in the future.

The community is concerned about traffic congestion at the intersections of Kingston Pike at Northshore Drive and Lyons View Pike. The Tennessee Department of Transportation will reconstruct the intersection of Lyons View Pike and Kingston Pike within the next five years. During that project, implementing landscaping, public open space and appropriate signage could help this intersection become the gateway to Bearden and ease traffic congestion along this eastern border.





Urban Design

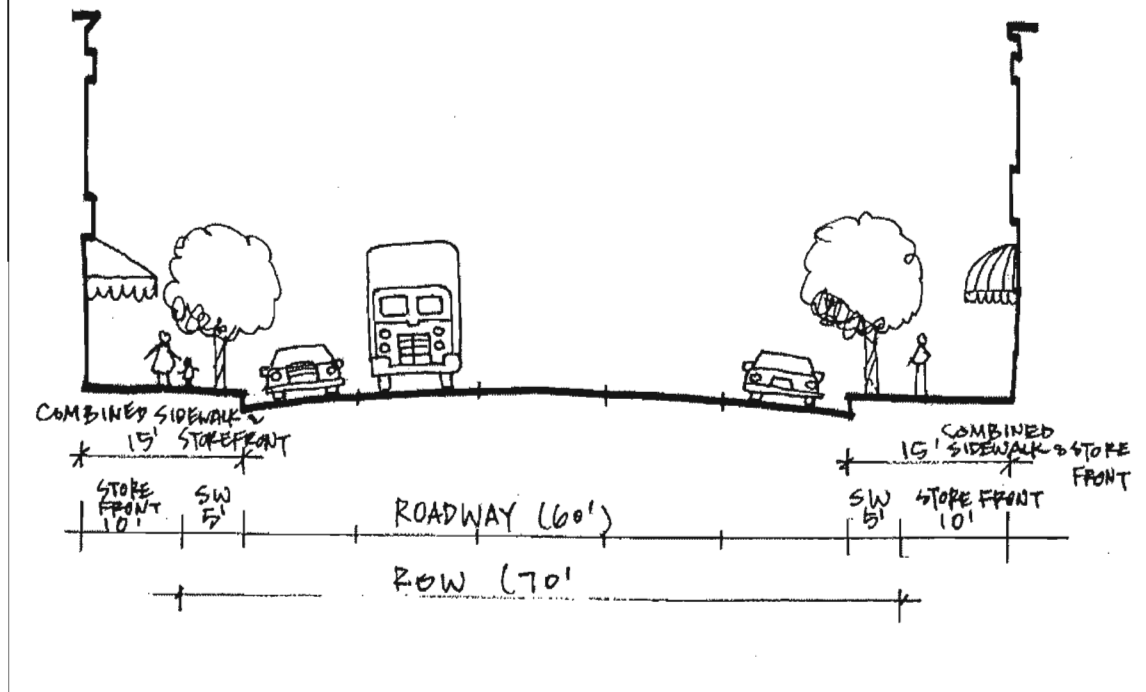
Typically, urban villages have public spaces, distinctive architectural styles and overall patterns that reflect local environments, history and culture. During the planning process the Bearden community expressed an interest in establishing a set of development patterns that identify the village and its history. To achieve this goal, building facade and architectural guidelines, sign and building size standards and building placement regulations are needed. For example, guidelines might require that

buildings front on streets, with parking lots toward the back of the building, formal landscaping that is native to the area, open public spaces and plazas and visually pleasing storefronts and streetscapes. The recommendations (at right) include examples of design characteristics preferred by the Bearden community. These design elements will have to be defined further if an overlay or other zoning district is implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Buildings front on the street and sidewalk, with parking oriented toward the back.
- Buildings face the street, with formal entrances at the front and adequate pedestrian shelter/cover.
- Formal landscaping is placed along streets and within parking lots.
- Signs are uniform in size, shape and materials and are mounted on the buildings.
- Sidewalk widths are at least 8 feet in front of buildings.
- Public open spaces and plazas are integrated into the development.



Kingston Pike • Proposed Commercial Street Cross Section

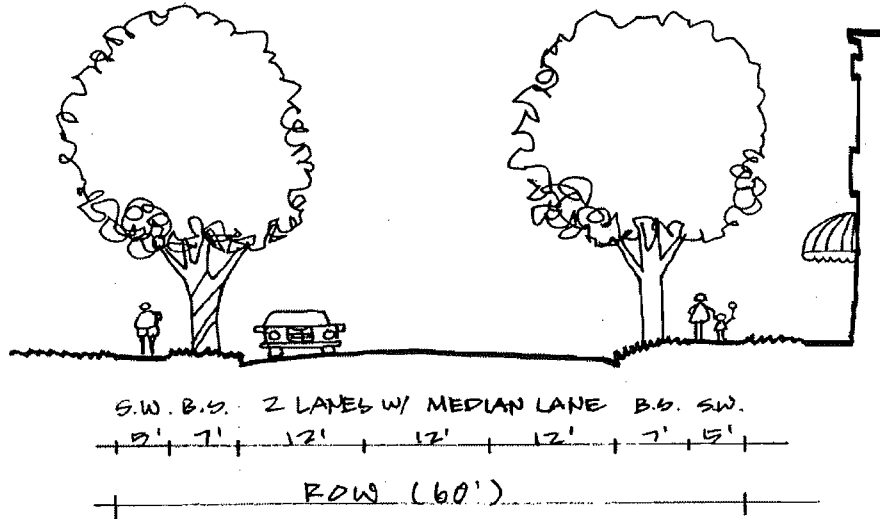
Streets and Sidewalks

Throughout the planning process the community expressed a desire to create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and to enhance Bearden's image. Currently the streetscapes are not uniform among streets and there are inadequate sidewalk connections or pedestrian ways. Recommended streetscape scenes will present a coherent image for the Bearden community, provide a more

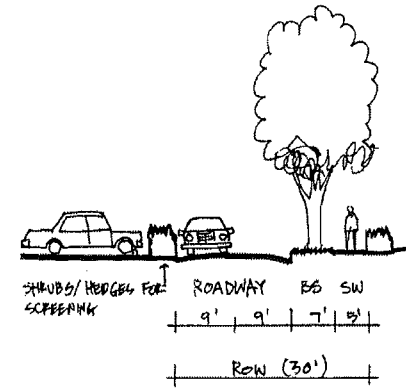
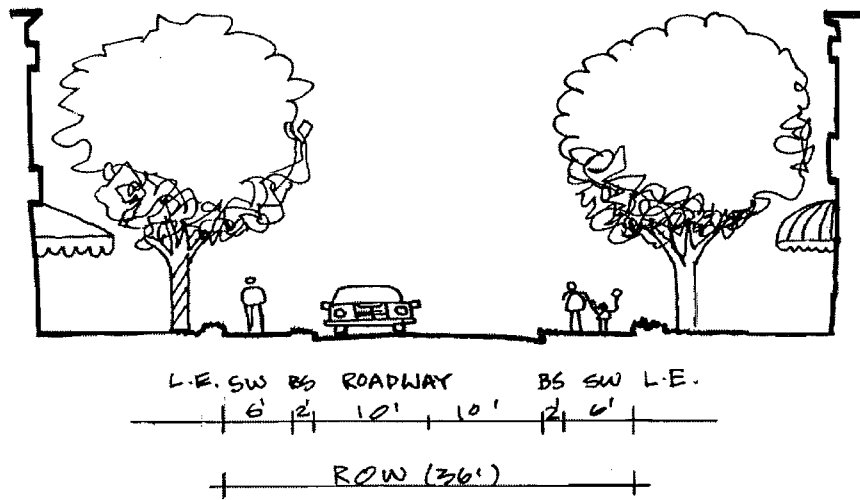
comfortable and safe street environment for pedestrians and improve the maintenance and general appearance of the area. Proposed streetscape cross sections include buffer strips containing street trees and landscaping, generous sidewalks, street furniture, textured paving at crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, and placement of utilities underground.



Sutherland Avenue • Proposed Street Cross Section

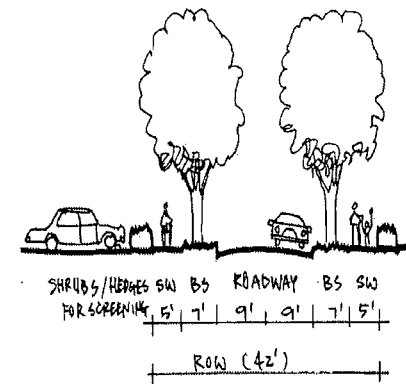


Homberg Drive • Proposed Street Cross Section



North/South Residential
Proposed Street Cross Section

(includes Mohican Street,
Bearden Road, and
Westwood Road)



North/South Residential
Proposed Street Cross Section

(includes Carr Street,
Newcom Avenue and
Northview Street)





Opportunity Districts

The commercial districts within Bearden have distinct characteristics and functions. For instance, the Homberg Drive area has unique restaurants, salons and specialty boutiques, while the Sutherland Avenue corridor has small ethnic groceries and local farmers' markets. Because of these differences, this plan recommends specific redevelopment

opportunities and design scenarios for four distinct commercial areas. The plan will create continuity within the uses and building facades as well as bring a sense of identity to these areas. These opportunity districts incorporate the development concepts recommended in this plan and serve as a model for Bearden's urban village atmosphere.



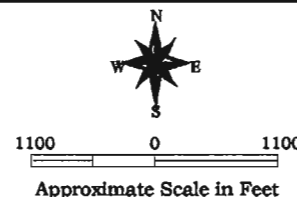
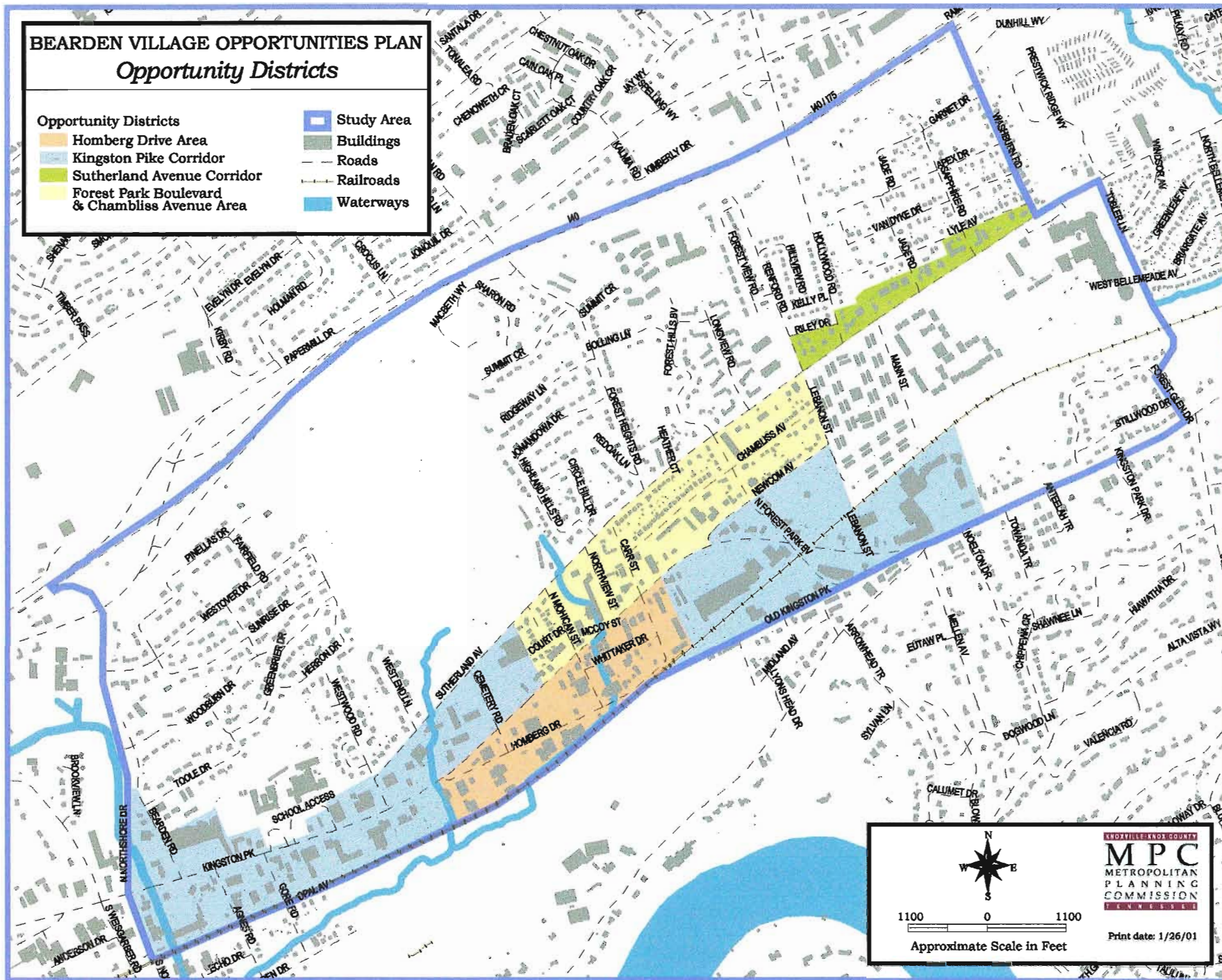
BEARDEN VILLAGE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Opportunity Districts

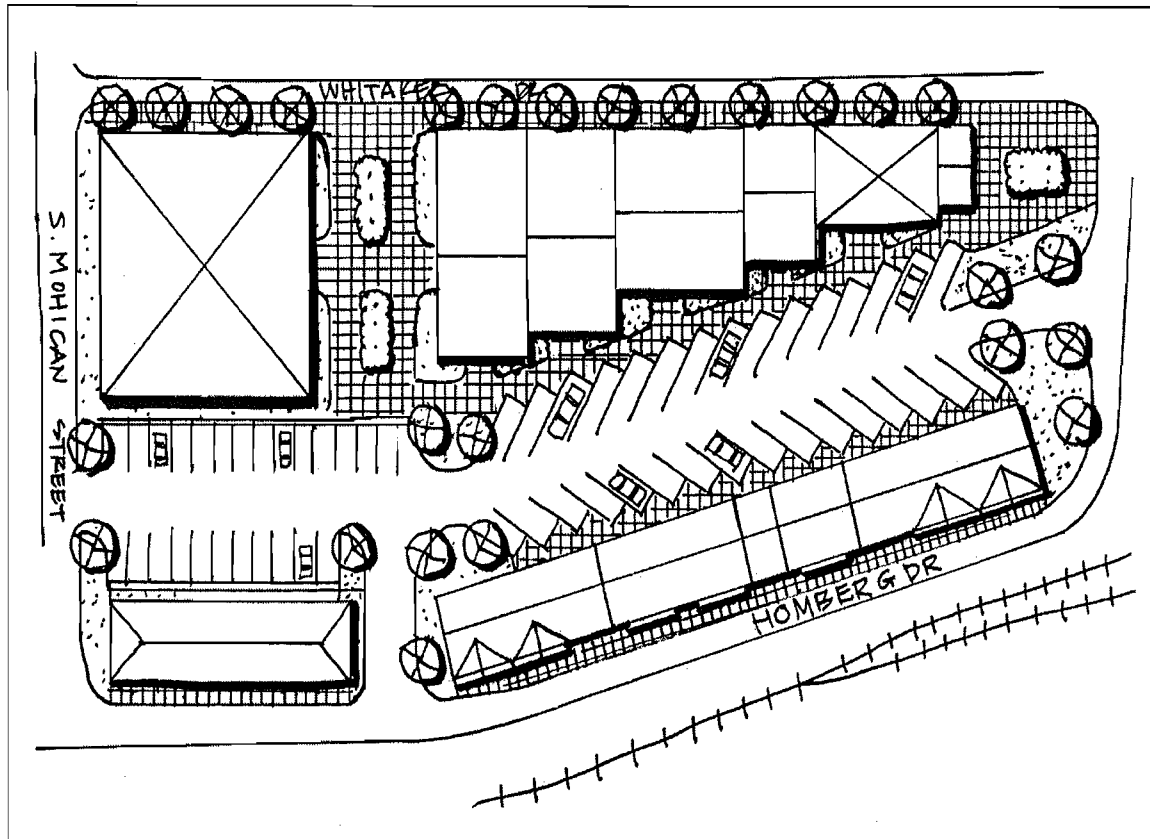
Opportunity Districts

- Homberg Drive Area
- Kingston Pike Corridor
- Sutherland Avenue Corridor
- Forest Park Boulevard & Chambliss Avenue Area

- Study Area
- Buildings
- Roads
- Railroads
- Waterways



LEO TITTLE-KNOX COUNTY
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Homberg Drive Commercial District

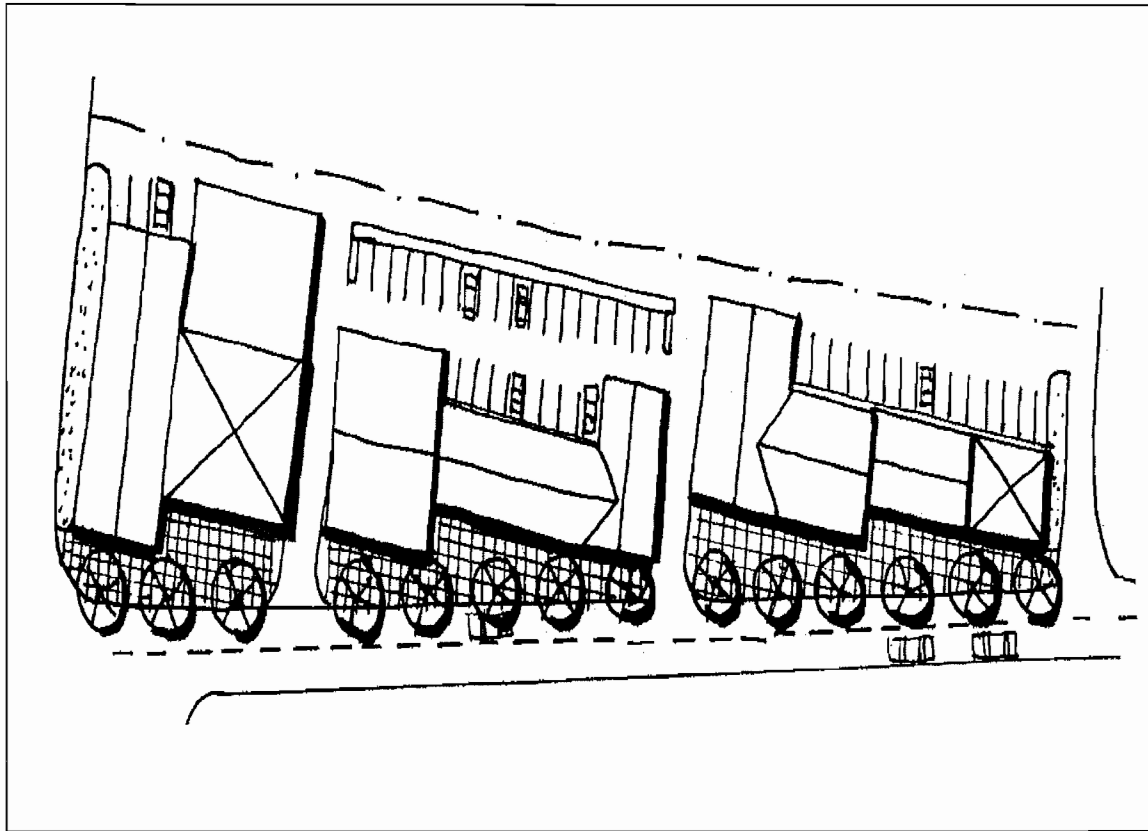
The Homberg Drive commercial district contains a mix of uses from small specialty boutiques to art supply stores. The buildings are generally small in scale with several parking lots throughout the area. The district's close proximity to residential areas, its potential to contain mixed uses through varied building occupants and its access to Kingston Pike

make this area ideally suited as another local town center. Further, creating sidewalks and public spaces, such as plazas and outdoor cafés, could enhance the pedestrian environment. By promoting mixed use development, residents in the area can enjoy a shopping, dining and entertainment setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Centralized parking behind or to the side of buildings.
- Building orientation toward the street.
- Mixed uses with retail on bottom floors of buildings and offices/residential uses on subsequent floors.
- Identified walkways that cross vehicular lanes with changes in paving material, signs or built elements, such as canopies and arches.
- Pedestrian amenities such as lighting, seating, shelter and landscaping.
- Consistent building form and height regulations.
- Small public open spaces incorporated into development areas.





Sutherland Avenue Commercial Corridor

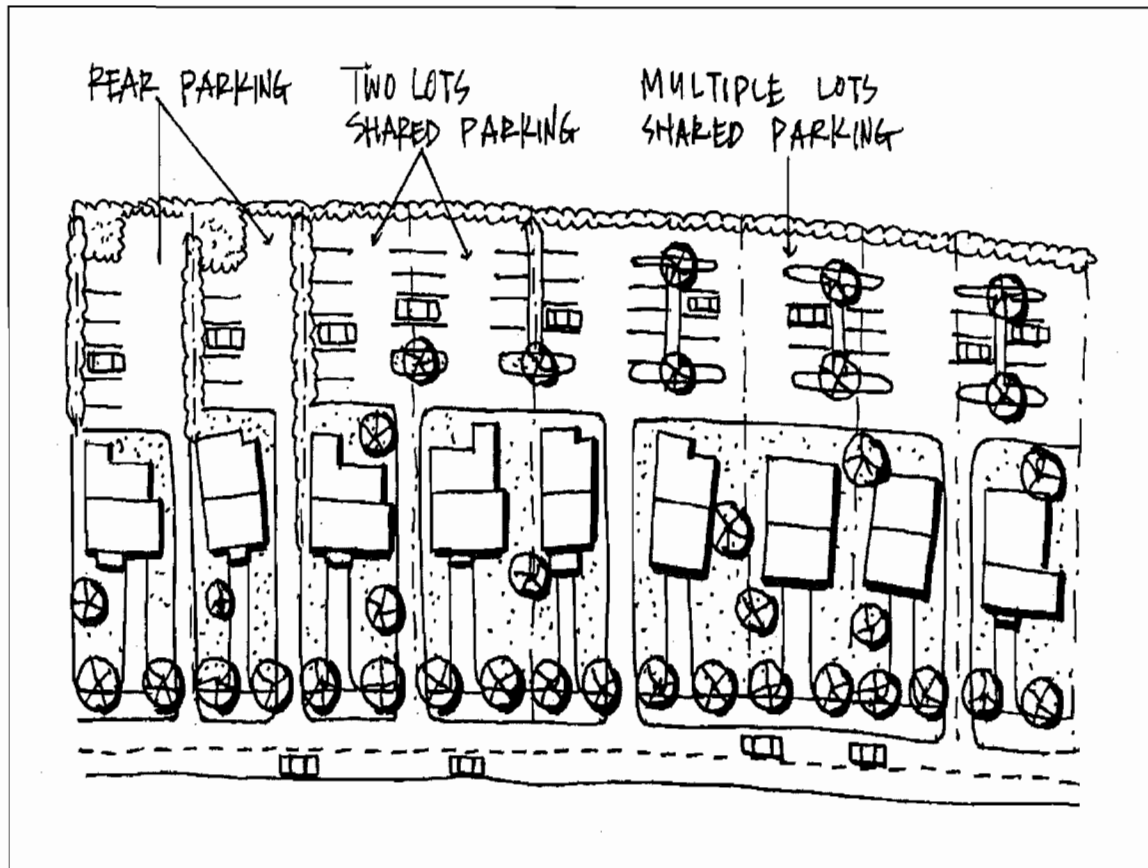
The Sutherland Avenue commercial corridor contains specialty grocery stores, gas stations and low- to medium-density residential dwellings. There is a lot of activity within this area because of the residential units, the mix of commercial stores and the activities of students at West High School and The University of Tennessee Married Student Housing complex.

Creating a safer, pedestrian-friendly environment, improving the visual appearance and controlling vehicle access would enhance pedestrian activity and increase the sense of place within this corridor. Additionally, consistently orienting building locations and improving facades along the street would complement the streetscape improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parking to back of buildings
with buildings fronting
on sidewalks.
- Mixed use with
commercial/retail
on first floors of buildings
and office/residential uses
on subsequent floors.
- Consistent signage,
landscaping and
facade requirements.
- Vehicular access control
into developments.





Forest Park Boulevard / Chambliss Avenue

The development occurring between Sutherland Avenue and Kingston Pike, east of Carr Street and west of Lebanon Street is a mix of office and residential uses. Most of the 1940-1950s homes have been converted into small-scale businesses, including legal and medical offices and veterinarian

practices. These home conversions serve as an appropriate buffer between Kingston Pike and the single family residential section north of Sutherland Avenue. These areas should be preserved and the small-scale character maintained.

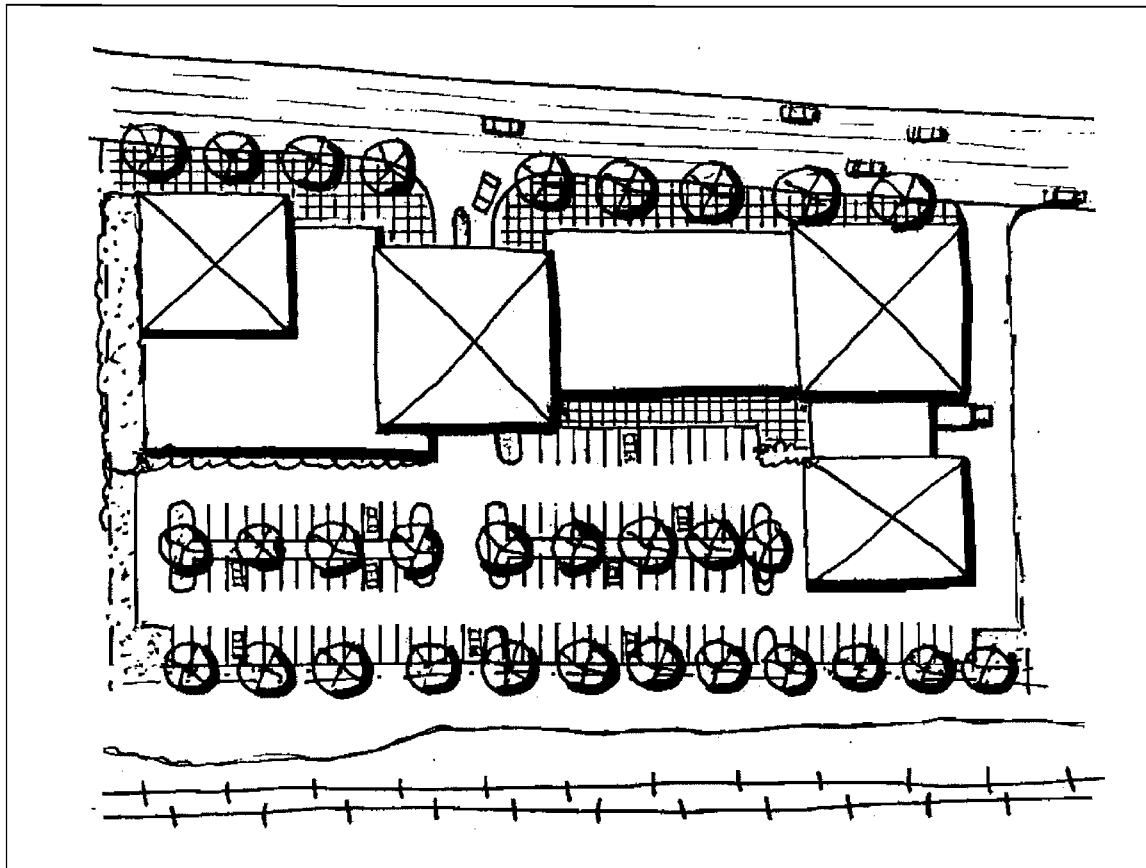


RECOMMENDATIONS

- Require parking to the side or back of buildings with green space and sidewalk connections in front of businesses.

- Business conversions should not greatly disrupt the facades or overall structure of buildings.

- Establish sign requirements that maintain the small-scale character.



Kingston Pike Commercial Corridor

Development along Kingston Pike east and west of the Homberg Drive corridor consists of offices and larger-scaled commercial centers containing fast food restaurants and strip malls. However, most of these establishments are stable commercial

centers and complete redevelopment does not seem likely within the next 5 years. For these areas to become more pedestrian friendly and fit into the urban village theme, the recommendations (at right) should be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Orient buildings toward sidewalks with parking at back of buildings.
- Incorporate mixed use between floors of buildings with commercial/retail on first floors and office/residential on subsequent floors.
- Require formal tree plantings along sidewalks and within parking lots.
- Reduce parking requirements.



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
LAND USE PLAN		
• Revise One Year Plan to reflect the development plan.	MPC and City Council	Immediate
• Determine if there is a desire to develop a Mixed-Use Zoning District and a Corridor Overlay Zone with criteria for implementation of mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development in the study area.	MPC	Short Term
PEDESTRIAN PLAN		
• Develop a five-year capital improvements program to replace, repair and add new sidewalks according to the plan.	City of Knoxville	Short Term
• Develop a five-year capital improvements program to ensure that all signalized intersections are equipped with pedestrian signals (actuated), crosswalks and accessible curbs.	City of Knoxville	Short Term
• Seek private funding opportunities for pedestrian connections to shopping areas as indicated on plan.	Residents, Private Businesses	Long Term
• Establish an ordinance that provides pedestrian access and safety in all new developments.	Private Businesses, MPC	Long Term
• Ensure that all new roadway construction includes adequate provisions for pedestrian and bicycle needs. This includes separating roads from sidewalks with green space, and adding landscaping, bike lanes and benches.	MPO, City Engineering, TDOT	Ongoing
RECREATION PLAN		
• Extend the Third Creek Greenway west to Jean Teague Greenway and south to Lakeshore Park.	City Parks & Recreation Department	Ongoing
• Acquire land for a passive park on Hollywood Road south of I-40.	City Parks & Recreation Department	Short Term
• Provide additional recreation space and facilities at Westwood Park .	City Parks & Recreation Department	Short Term
TRANSPORTATION AND DRAINAGE PLAN		
• Seek local support and approval for modifying the intersection of Hollywood Road at Sutherland Avenue with an intersection median.	City Engineering, City Council, Residents and Businesses	Short Term
• Add additional truck routing signs and increase enforcement for trucks using Hollywood Road illegally.	City Engineering, City Police	Short Term
• Develop a functional plan for improving congestion at Northshore Drive and Kingston Pike.	City Engineering, MPO	Short Term
• Continue to advocate implementing noise barriers along the northern fringe of the study area with the widening of I-40.	Neighborhood Organizations, Business Associations, TDOT, MPO	Immediate
• Implement long-term drainage improvements for flood-prone areas.	City Engineering, Business Associations	Ongoing



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS . . .continued

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
OPPORTUNITY DISTRICTS		
• Determine if there is a consensus among property owners to develop an overlay district(s) or implement a mixed-use zone within the study area.	Homeowners & Business Associations	Immediate
• Develop guidelines and design standards for an overlay district or a mixed-use zone.	MPC, City Community Development Department, Homeowners and Business Associations	Short Term
• Ensure that development standards within the new zone are followed.	Chosen entity	Ongoing
OTHER		
• Organize an official Bearden Village Merchants Association (BVMA).	Businesses, MPC	Immediate
• Formalize a Bearden Community Association (BCA).	BVMA, Homeowners Associations	Ongoing
• Prioritize desired issues and improvements for implementation.	Bearden Community Association	Short Term

