

The background of the slide is a faded, light-colored map of the Lonsdale neighborhood. The map shows a grid of streets with various colored areas representing different land uses: green for parks or open space, yellow for residential areas, and blue for water bodies or parks. The map is oriented with North at the top.

Lonsdale Neighborhood Plan

November 2005

**Prepared by:
Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission**

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Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission
Mark Donaldson, Executive Director

Adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Commission November 10, 2005. Adopted by
Knoxville City Council November 22, 2005 as part of the *Lonsdale Redevelopment and Urban Renewal Plan*.

This plan is a result of a team effort, including the following:

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April 19, 2005

New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

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Lonsdale Neighborhood Plan

Introduction

This brief document is a summary of the concepts presented in the Central City Sector Plan, recommendations from recent Empowerment Zone planning and a neighborhood charrette conducted on April 19, 2005, in which various issues and planning proposals were outlined. The plan was conceived with various Empowerment Zone programs in mind, including the creation of a Lonsdale commercial center and housing development and rehabilitation.

As part of the design charrette held in April 2005, the participants took time to identify what they saw as significant problems and opportunities facing the neighborhood. These issues are outlined as follows:

Needs:

- Traffic calming
- Pedestrian-oriented lighting along streets and alleys; and in public spaces
- Quality recreational spaces
- Buffers between residential and industrial properties
- Gateways (for example, wrought iron arches) to define the neighborhood and pedestrian-oriented space

- Defining on-street parking along Texas Avenue and other streets
- Restrict truck routing, especially along Texas Avenue
- Code and design standards for infill housing
- Continuous sidewalks, especially along Texas Avenue

Opportunities and assets to build upon:

- Churches and their potential for recreation and other social and related ministries
- Infill housing opportunities
- Potential for “Superblock Parks” (Lonsdale School/Park and Sam E. Hill School/Park)
- Truck routing around neighborhood via Johnston & Tennessee Avenues
- Medium intensity uses (not single family housing) may be possible as a transition between I-275/Johnston Street area and the neighborhood
- Mixed use development (for example, residential above retail in commercial core area)
- Redevelopment on ridge (replat and new road system)
- Creeks banks as potential greenways
- Gap Road extension to Texas Avenue
- Greenway buffer around the neighborhood



The manufactured house on the left is an example of infill housing that is out of character with other houses on the block.














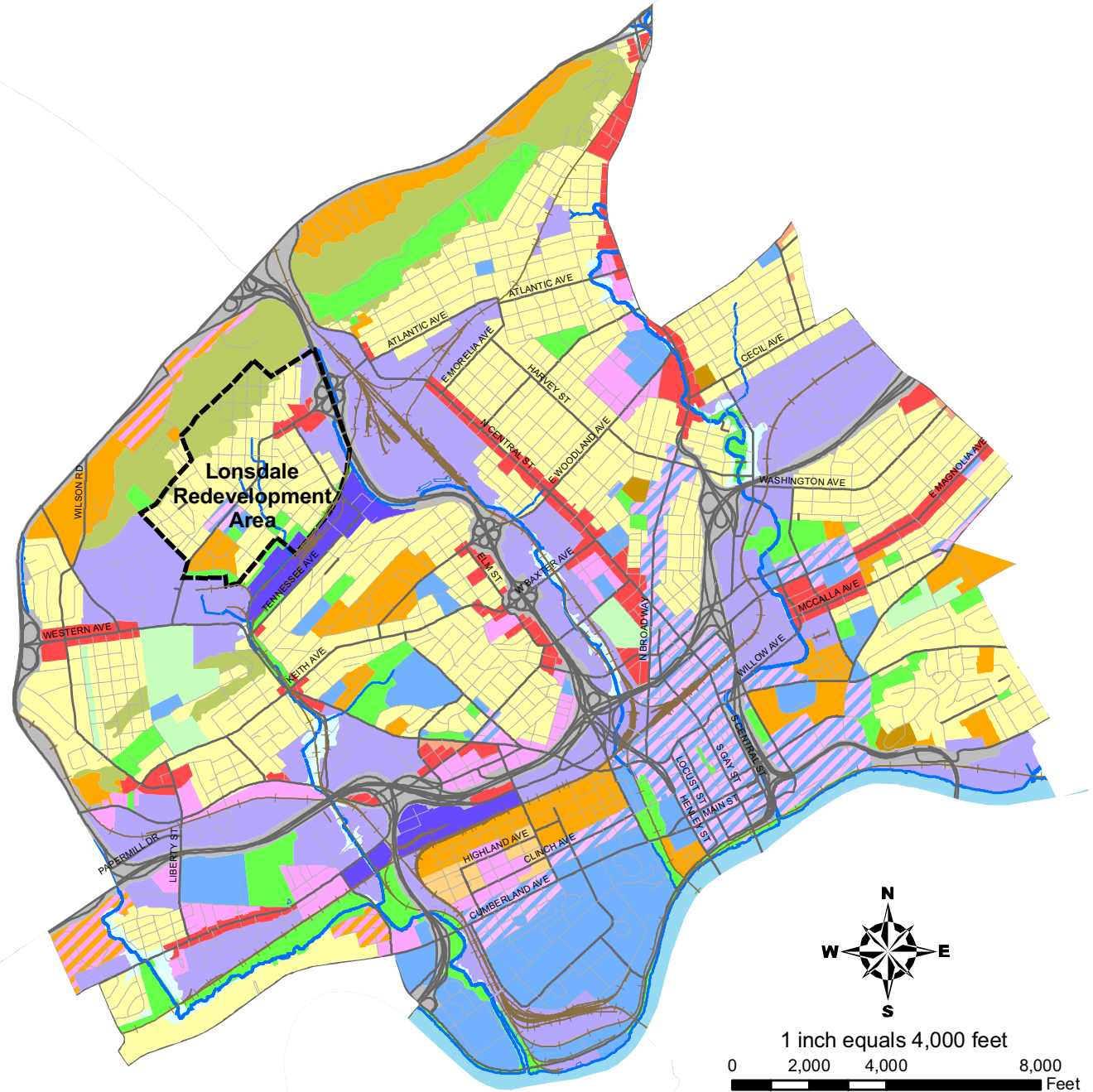
Craftsman and Folk Victorian style homes are the typical architectural forms of early Lonsdale. Infill development should complement the features of such architecture. A separate document, Heart of Knoxville Infill Housing Guidelines, has been prepared to assist in the creation of more specific guidelines for Lonsdale.

Proposed Land Use

Source: Central City Sector Plan, 2003

Legend

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Slope Protection Area |
|  | Low-Medium Density Residential |
|  | Medium Density Residential and Office |
|  | Parks and Public Open Space |
|  | Stream Protection Area |
|  | Other Open Space |
|  | Agricultural/Rural Residential |
|  | Low Density Residential |
|  | Medium Density Residential |
|  | High Density Residential |
|  | Mixed Use |
|  | Commercial |
|  | Neighborhood Commercial |
|  | Office |
|  | Public Institutional |
|  | Light Industrial |
|  | Heavy Industrial |
|  | Technology Park |
|  | Business Park |
|  | Transportation |



Proposed Land Use

The proposed land use plan for the Lonsdale area (see the map on the opposite page which has been extracted from the Central City Sector Plan), includes the following concepts:

- the conservation of the low density residential area, largely defined as the neighborhood north of the AmeriSteel industrial yards
- a mixed use area along Texas Avenue between Sherman and Stonewall Streets (adjacent to the newly renovated Lonsdale Homes)
- a greenbelt and open space system, separating the neighborhood from the adjacent industrial uses
- the ongoing use of Lonsdale Homes as a medium density residential component of the neighborhood
- the conservation of the slopes on Sharps Ridge.

Lonsdale residents pointed out that new single family housing and commercial/industrial development has not always been compatible with the historic setting and architectural features of the neighborhood. Sector plan policies were outlined to conserve and strengthen the character of existing residential neighborhoods. In the case of Lonsdale, these include:

- Infill development shall be compatible in scale, setbacks, foundation height and architectural style with surrounding housing.
- Incompatible nonresidential uses, such as strip commercial, manufacturing and wholesale uses, should not be expanded into existing neighborhoods. Further,

elimination/relocation of those uses to appropriate zones should be encouraged through the Empowerment Zone and other revitalization programs.

These policies are important because Lonsdale residents have expressed concerns: (1) that modular forms of housing and the orientation of such housing on lots in the neighborhood have not been in keeping with the that historic setting, and (2) that further industrial expansion into the neighborhood will negatively impact Lonsdale's stability.

An example of the kind of condition that is sometimes seen along Lonsdale streets is depicted in Figure 1. That type of infill development should

be avoided. The historic housing forms, with their porches, steeper roof pitches and several feet of foundation height, should be used as a basis of infill housing design (see the photographs on page 3).

In-fill development should be designed in a complementary manner to older homes. On occasion such bad examples as this have occurred in older neighborhoods. Problems with some in-fill housing:

- the setback is too deep
- the scale does not complement adjacent houses
- the roof pitch is too shallow
- there is no front porch
- parking in the front yard, rather than off the alley

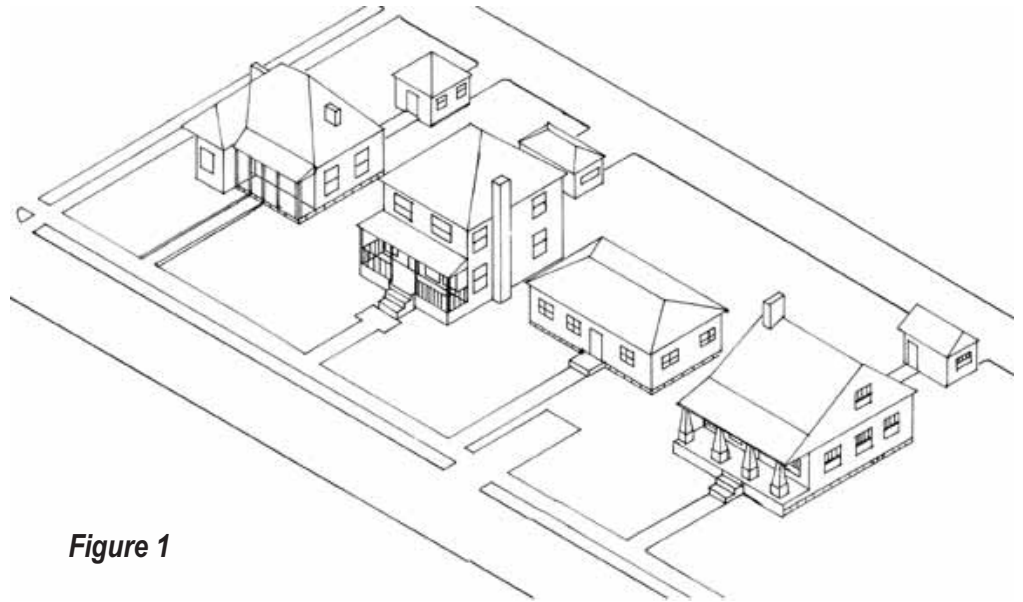


Figure 1

Figure 2

Proposed Neighborhood Commercial Center



A Mixed-use Commercial Center

The concept for the mixed-use center in Lonsdale is depicted in Figure 2. This concept has been refined through more recent Empowerment Zone planning. The mixed-use center is conceived to include commercial uses at ground level with apartment or office uses on second stories. Additionally, a public square is recommended to be located across Texas Avenue from the commercial center. The square can serve some of the recreation functions that were lost as part of Lonsdale Homes redevelopment. However, it is

not recommended that it be developed for active recreation uses such as court spaces for basketball and similar court games. (Other spaces within the neighborhood are recommended for those purposes; see the following pages.) Townhouses and office uses can be placed around the square, building in a security network in that the residents will be looking over the park.

As part of Empowerment Zone planning, a proposal was put together for the development by a Lonsdale Task Force (see Appendix A.)



An example of a pedestrian-oriented shopping center.

Lonsdale Neighborhood Center (Key for Figure 2):

1. Commercial Center: 20,000 square feet at ground level is depicted here. A tower or another similar feature should be constructed on axis with Gap Road and the Lonsdale Green.
 2. Corner Uses (Mixed Use): commercial, office, or civic functions should be on the first floor with housing above.
 3. Lonsdale Green: a passive park framed by street trees and town homes, should be surrounded by one-way through streets that have on-street parking to slow traffic allowing for pedestrian accessibility.
 4. Town homes with garages accessible from the alley produces separation of different uses and private space for the individual units.
 5. Library or other publicly oriented civic use should be on this site.
 6. Brittany Daniels Memorial Park: dedicated to a young lady who was killed in 1996. Incorporate seating and landscaping for public use and remembrance. It should be screened from the adjacent parking by a low brick or other decorative wall.
 7. Church expansion area
- The nature of this development should be oriented to pedestrians and consist of retail, restaurants, offices, commercial businesses, and /or residential units. In order to make pedestrians safer and to calm traffic, on street parking is recommended.

Other Park Improvements

The greenway concept of the sector plan should be expanded to include a buffer between AmeriSteel, Northwest Industrial Park and the neighborhood. The greenway should be extended through an open space system that protects the steep slopes of Sharps Ridge. In realizing this objective, a “greenbelt” will surround the neighborhood, providing recreation, environmental protection (for example, erosion control on the ridge) and buffering from uses

that are incompatible to the residential setting. Greenways should also be created along the creeks providing a link to the schools and parks.

A “super block park,” combining Lonsdale Elementary School and Lonsdale Park should be created. Steps are underway to vacate Bragg Street and combine these two assets together. Furthermore, the City’s Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and Knox

County School Board have begun to discuss the creation of a new gymnasium/public recreation center as an expansion of Lonsdale Elementary School. The concept for the new Lonsdale Neighborhood Park is depicted in Figure 3.

The recreational facilities that were lost in Lonsdale Homes renovation need to be replaced. One potential site is part of the greenway near AmeriSteel.

Figure 3



Proposed Neighborhood Park (Key for Figure 3):

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Proposed Community Center Adjacent to School (based on Christenberry Heights Recreation Center model) | 2. Bubbler Fountains or “spray park” | 4. Reuse as public facility (potential Senior Center) |
| 3. Playgrounds | 5. Renovate Picnic Area and Shelter | |

Transportation Improvements

Citizens have been very concerned about alleviating truck traffic in the neighborhood, providing better sidewalk connections and creating gateways, separating the neighborhood from surrounding land uses. In response to those concerns, the following are proposed:

- providing truck routes using Johnston Avenue and an extension of Tennessee Avenue and the new alignment off of Texas Avenue into AmeriSteel as the sole means to reach industrial operations
- providing gateways to the Lonsdale neighborhood along Texas Avenue west of Johnston Street and at the western edge of Lonsdale Homes. These gateways should include traffic calming devices and such features as the obelisks (used in Fort Sanders) or wrought iron arches that clearly note that a pedestrian district is being entered and define the neighborhood as a special district.
- a continuous sidewalk, separated from the roadway, should be built on at least one side of Texas Avenue, providing access to the new Lonsdale commercial center and the transit stops along the avenue



The obelisks pictured above denote the entrance to the Fort Sanders neighborhood and clearly define the neighborhood as a pedestrian district. Such a design is one possibility for Lonsdale's gateways.

- other streetscape improvements should include street trees along Texas Avenue and other streets of the neighborhood
- Gap Road related improvements: there should be improvements to route the traffic around the proposed park at Ohio Avenue, providing a clear view of the proposed Texas Avenue connection. This linkage has potential significant implications as future development is undertaken north of Texas Avenue.

A Range of Empowerment Programs

In addition to the commercial center development, other Empowerment Zone programs should be directed to the neighborhood. These include:

- the blighted property removal program
- the housing rehabilitation program
- the infill housing program

With the level of investment that has gone into the renovation of Lonsdale Homes and that will be directed to the commercial center, it is recommended that these programs be used comprehensively in the vicinity of Stonewall, Texas, Minnesota and Ohio Avenues. Furthermore, it is recommended that consideration be given to a comprehensive program that would link all the Empowerment Zone and all related city programs together in this area with the request for proposal process that addresses these comprehensively.

Concepts for Improvements

Legend

- Commercial and Mixed Use
- Greenway and Park System
- Lonsdale Homes
- Industrial
- Infill Housing and Rehabilitation
- Possible Extension of Redevelopment

Redevelopment Area and Related Problems

The City, Empowerment Zone planners and KCDC staff worked with the community in creating the concepts for the plan. One of the major implementation measures is the creation of a redevelopment area. This area is depicted to the left. The redevelopment area will allow the commercial center development steps to proceed, such as land assemblage of the vacant and underutilized parcels along Texas Avenue, the creation of infill housing programs and a means to establish the open space buffer around the neighborhood.

An additional portion of the redevelopment area is the substantially undeveloped area north of

Ohio Avenue (see Appendix B.) Many of the roads and alleys that appear on plats have never been developed in this area (see Appendix C.) Furthermore, there are infrastructure problems in terms of storm drainage. It is an area where tax delinquencies run extremely high.

To remedy this situation, it is recommended that the City explore a long-term program of redeveloping this section of the neighborhood by addressing the following:

- examining a road system that runs with the topography rather than against the hillside
- an evaluation of the infrastructure needs of the area, including storm drainage, water and sanitary sewer

- an evaluation of maintaining the existing homes that are in good condition by routing the new street system to take those into account
- the creation of greenway spaces along the creeks that run down from Sharps Ridge
- an examination of a tax increment financing mechanism that could pull this area together as a comprehensive redevelopment area over the next 15-20 years.

Concepts for Neighborhood Improvements

1. Continued renovation to Lonsdale Homes
2. Mixed-use development proposal (see Figure 2)
3. Johnston Street improvements such as street trees, other landscaping and building rehabilitation programs.
4. Arched gateways or similar “Welcome to Lonsdale” entries (separating trucks from the neighborhood)
5. Lonsdale Park renovation (see Figure 3)
6. Primary sidewalk and street improvements (continuous sidewalks, street trees, and selected areas for on-street parking)
7. Recommended new route to serve pallet company and adjacent industrial properties
8. Potential expansion of redevelopment area (consideration of medium intensity housing).

Other Concepts:

- There is a need for screening or relocation of commercial uses that do not serve neighborhood needs; such uses as towing service and junk yards.
- Some portions of the redevelopment area, such as the intersections of Minnesota Avenue and Johnston Street with Heiskell Avenue, are zoned for neighborhood-serving commercial uses. As improvement programs are developed, particularly the Lonsdale Commercial Center and Heiskell Gateway concept, residential re-zoning should be considered. No housing rehabilitation should be undertaken on property which is not zoned for residential purposes.

The Next Steps

The following are the significant initial actions to implement the Lonsdale Neighborhood Plan. The various agencies that have assisted in the development of this plan, the City and its various departments, Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC) and the Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), should pursue the following recommendations and continue to work with Lonsdale residents and property owners to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

Lonsdale Improvement Task Force

- Establish a task force to facilitate implementation of the plan. Members should include City, KCDC and MPC staff.

Commercial Center

- Secure the commercial redevelopment site, clear for development purposes and proceed with the request for proposals.
- Following selection of the developer and development plan for the commercial site, create a master plan for the development of the adjacent block between Texas and Ohio Avenues, including the Gap Road connection and proposed park.
- Create street and sidewalk improvement program for the two block area, including: sidewalks/crosswalks, on-street parking, street trees, bulb-outs, and other traffic calming measures.

Infill Housing

- Continue to work with the East Tennessee Community Design Center and University of Tennessee's School of Architecture in developing infill housing plans.
- Acquire strategically located parcels for infill development, looking to the vacant land at the corner of Minnesota Avenue/Stonewall Street and the Connecticut Avenue area as initial focus sites.
- Use The Heart of Knoxville Infill Housing Guidelines as basis for design decisions and developing prototypes for infill projects.
- Consider a design review board, composed of design professionals and City and MPC staff, to approve infill housing plans.

Parks, Greenways and Other Public Open Space

- Continue to improve Lonsdale Park for multiple purposes, emphasizing a park design that has flexibility in the use of the playfield for passive and active recreation (that is, seasonal use for some field sports).
- Initiate discussion with Ameristeel to create greenway buffer around neighborhood; determine ownership patterns, create greenway design alternatives, and make trail connections to the Second Creek Greenway.

Hillside Improvement Program

- Complete a background study of drainage, topographic and street system constraints that inhibit development north of Ohio Avenue.
- Create alternatives for a better hillside road and drainage system, including re-platting/redevelopment options and the protection of steep slopes, creeks and drainage ways through a greenway system.
- Outline potential redevelopment financing programs.

Other Considerations

- Establish truck routes that discourage rigs and trailers from using Gap Road and the central portion of Texas Avenue.
- Create neighborhood gateways at Texas Avenue. (Consider a design competition or a charrette in doing so).
- Examine the One-Year Plan and zoning to make recommendations for future land use changes.
- Continue to identify derelict properties and code issues and proceed with redevelopment and enforcement programs.

Appendix A: Proposal for the Lonsdale Commercial Center, April 23, 2004

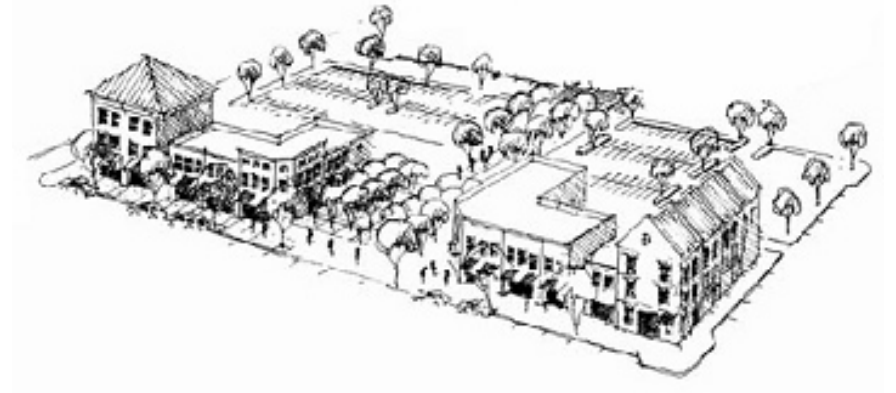
Summary Of Recommendations

The Lonsdale Task Force recognizes that the success of retail development can be best assured by a central location along Texas Avenue. The recommended site is the block, bounded by Texas and Minnesota Avenues and Sherman and Stonewall Streets. There are several reasons in recommending this site: a multi-million dollar renovation at the adjacent Lonsdale Homes; additional rehabilitation and infill housing that can be accommodated on the surrounding blocks; and improvements in schools, parks and streets that can complement this commercial project. This location offers the potential to create a neighborhood commercial center within the heart of the residential area and with the greatest opportunity to provide a customer base within easy walking distance.

The Task Force recommends that the commercial development be created in a mixed-use setting, allowing for opportunities for retail development at ground level with office and/or residential uses on upper levels.

The highlights of the recommendation are as follows:

1. The development of a retail center on Texas Avenue between Sherman Street and Stonewall Street with the opportunity for upper-story mixed uses
 - a. The land area for this center should be approximately 4.2 acres (the total area within the block)
 - b. The grocery store should be in the range of 5,000 to 10,000 square feet, capable of carrying most day-to-day goods.
 - c. An additional 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of building space should be created for neighborhood-serving commercial and office uses; those preferred by Northwest Zone Area Council participants are:



Commercial Uses:

- Fabric store
- Family restaurant
- Pizza Parlor
- Deli
- Barber/beauty shop
- Video Store
- Dry cleaning service
- Sports grill that offers entertainment and recreation

Office Uses:

- Payment center to pay utility bills, phone bills and the like
 - Business incubator training office
 - Vocation center for GED classes
 - Satellite health care facility
 - Community meeting space
- d. Opportunities for office uses can be considered as part of second story development

Background And Public Participation

The Lonsdale Task Force held an initial meeting on September 23, 2003 to discuss the development of a commercial center within Lonsdale. Ideas and recommendations developed by the Empowerment Zone (EZ) Northwest Zone Area Council (ZAC) specifically for a neighborhood commercial center within Lonsdale were reviewed. A public meeting was held on October 6, 2003 to gather citizen input on the location of and services to be included as part of the commercial center. The Task Force recommended that the staff of MPC and the City's Department of Development conduct further study of the existing conditions of Lonsdale and the redevelopment tools needed for neighborhood vitality.

Staff from MPC and the City's Department of Development worked together for three months to study the entire Lonsdale neighborhood in relation to the EZ-driven proposed neighborhood commercial center. This study included the existing conditions regarding vacant properties, building conditions, delinquent property taxes, road conditions and environment constraints. The staff also looked to the recently adopted Central City Sector Plan for concepts and proposals that would positively affect Lonsdale. These include the following neighborhood revitalization proposals: a new mixed-use neighborhood commercial center, architecturally appropriate infill housing and rehabilitation of existing housing, development of parks, and a greenbelt buffer surrounding the adjacent industrial areas and streetscape improvement that would include sidewalks, street trees and traffic calming. The Central City Sector Plan proposes a mixed-use district in the area adjacent to the Lonsdale Homes (currently under extensive renovation.) Texas Avenue would serve this mixed-use development and would be anchored by a newly constructed neighborhood-serving grocery that would be located on Texas Avenue between Sherman and Stonewall Avenues.

The Lonsdale Task Force met again on January 22, 2004 to review maps and related material developed by staff that shows the existing conditions

and the plan proposals for Lonsdale. In turn, the Task Force recommended that the mixed-use commercial center be located on Texas Avenue between Sherman and Stonewall Streets. A second public meeting was held on February 17, 2004 to give residents of Lonsdale another opportunity to comment on the services and the proposed location of the commercial center. The public was in favor of the Texas Avenue location. They agreed that the center should front Texas Avenue, but expressed the need for improvements to Texas Avenue. The public was enthusiastic about the proposed mixed-use development that could combine commercial uses with office and residential. This planning process has been community driven with the EZ Northwest ZAC being instrumental in providing a voice to and hearing Lonsdale citizens.

Site Plan Characteristics

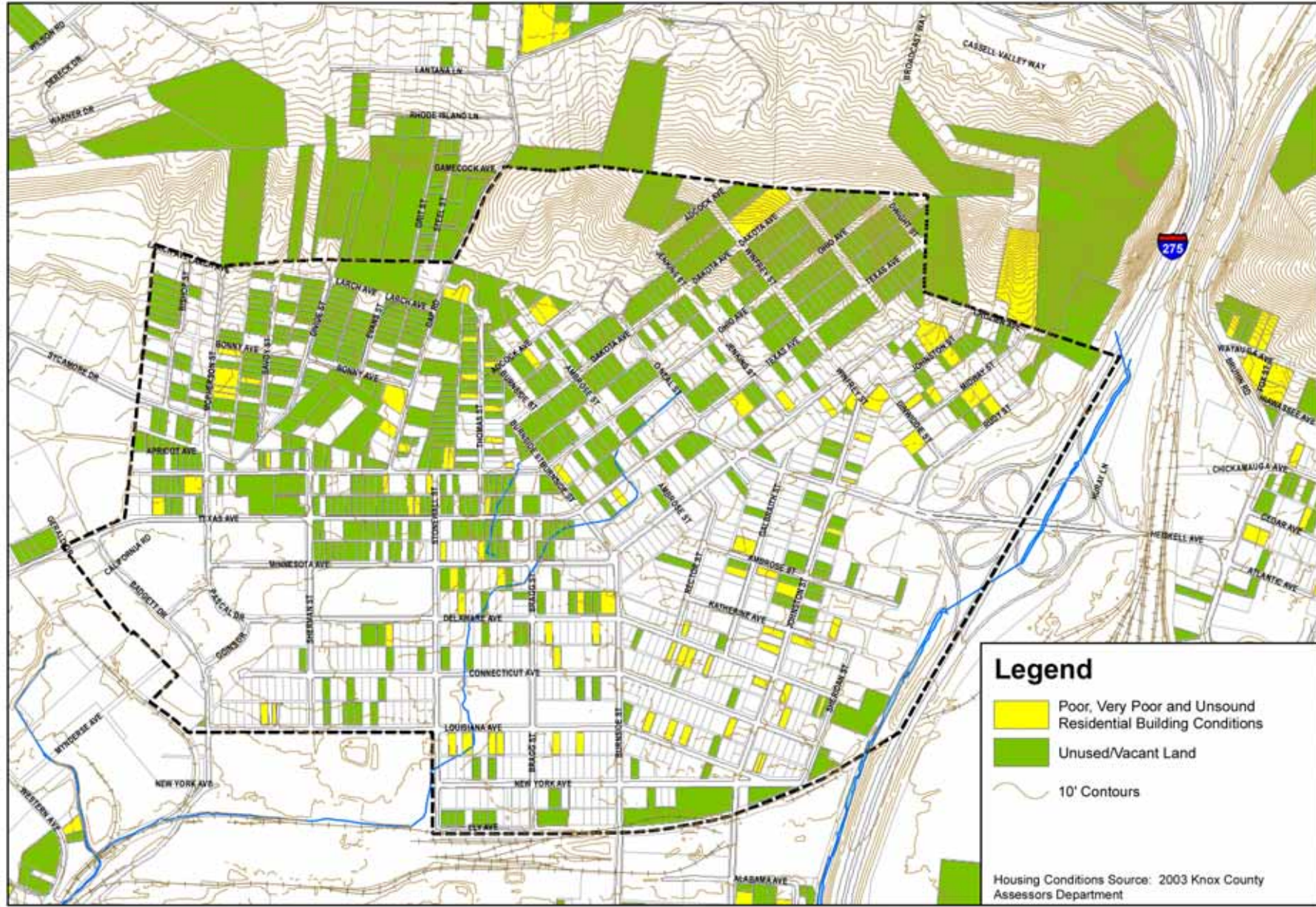
The principles that should be used in guiding the development of this area are outlined below:

- Provide the opportunity for mixed-use, multi-story development: the proposal process that is used to select a potential developer should recognize the opportunity for a vertical mix of uses with retail at ground level and apartments or office uses on upper level(s). In addition to creating slightly higher intensities of uses in the area (thereby offering more immediate support to the commercial enterprises), the presence of people living above stores offers a public safety dimension to the development (providing residents a view of what is happening on the sidewalks and street).
- Create a pedestrian-friendly setting for the development: wide sidewalks (10 to 14 feet in width) should be constructed in front of the commercial development. Street trees should be planted along the block. Traffic calming measures should be incorporated into the design (including on street parking, initially and such features as raised or textured crosswalks as the park and other housing is developed).
- Off-street parking should be located to the side or behind the retail development.

Recommended Items To Be Included In The Request For Proposals

1. The potential developer should be required to provide a narrative description of the strategy that they will use to insure that EZ minority-owned businesses are utilized in the project (addressing such aspects as construction contracting, operations and ownership).
2. A statement that tells the potential developer that \$35,000 per job creation may be available to the developer as a subsidy from EZ funds.
3. The developer should be encouraged to create a mixed-use development by stating that preference will be given to such proposals (an allocation of EZ or other housing program funding should be considered in fostering the residential portion of the mixed use development).
4. The potential developer should illustrate through a conceptual site plan the components of the proposed development, including the types of uses, the square footage for each commercial or office establishment, the proposed layout of buildings, parking, sidewalk and landscaped areas.

Appendix B: Implications for Housing Improvements and Open Space



Appendix C: Current Road System

