

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020**

City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on February 12, 2020. Chairman Scott Clein convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Scott Clein; Board Members Robin Boyle, Stuart Jeffares, Bert Koseck, Daniel Share, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams; Alternate Board Members Jason Emerine, Nasseem Ramin

Absent: None

Administration: Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner
Laura Eichenhorn, Transcriptionist

Master Planning Team:
Robert Gibbs, Gibbs Planning Group
Sarah Traxler, McKenna

01-19-20

B. Approval Of The Minutes Of The Regular Planning Board Meeting of January 22, 2020

Mr. Share asked that "under those circumstances", in the third paragraph on page three, be changed to "despite these circumstances".

**Motion by Ms. Whipple-Boyce
Seconded by Mr. Koseck to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting of January 22, 2020 as amended.**

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Whipple-Boyce, Koseck, Share, Clein, Williams

Nays: None

Abstain: Boyle, Jeffares

01-20-20

C. Chairperson's Comments

Chairman Clein explained that the evening's meeting would be a review and discussion of the Vision section of the draft master plan. He asked that comments during the evening remain focused on the Vision section as there would be opportunities to discuss further sections of the draft master plan at future Planning Board meetings. He explained that Ms. Traxler would be presenting this first part of the draft master plan, and that both Board members and the public would have the opportunity to ask questions and give comments. Chairman Clein emphasized the preliminary nature of the draft, explaining that it will very much remain a work in progress over the next several months while the master planning team solicits and integrates feedback from Birmingham residents regarding the draft's proposals.

01-21-20

D. Review Of The Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

01-22-20

E. Study Session Items

1. Review of Draft Master Plan Document – Section A. Vision

- **A.1 Premises** (pages 1-26)

Ms. Traxler presented the research methodology of the draft master plan process and the draft's first premise.

Chairman Clein requested Ms. Traxler pause her presentation between each premise to allow for separate discussion of each one. Chairman Clein then invited discussion of the first premise.

Chairman Clein asked Ms. Traxler if 'polycentricity' included an exploration of Birmingham's relationship to adjacent communities that consider Birmingham's downtown their downtown as well.

Ms. Traxler stated that most of the draft's narrative regarding the downtown focused on the downtown as a regional job center. She said the draft focused less on how visitors from other local communities engage the downtown retail environment. Ms. Traxler said she would take the Chairman's question back to the master planning team for further consideration.

Mr. Share said he was hesitant to assert that Birmingham should 'lead by example', as he said that the City's master plan should focus on Birmingham's needs, and that he was not aware of Birmingham being given a charge to lead other local communities in any particular way.

Ms. Traxler said that if one of the goals of the master plan is to alleviate some of the development pressure on Birmingham, then Birmingham will somewhat naturally fall into a leadership role as it focuses on creating "successful mixed-use districts, vibrant neighborhoods, innovation in pedestrian and micro-mobility, and [...] sustainable practices." She said this was the result of

Birmingham's well-maintained inter-neighborhood connections, which sets Birmingham apart from many other cities both locally and nationally.

Seeing no further discussion of the first premise, Chairman Clein invited Ms. Traxler to continue with the second premise.

Ms. Traxler presented the second premise.

Chairman Clein invited discussion of the second premise.

Mr. Williams said the goal of neighborhood associations should be to act as a conduit for citizen feedback to the City regarding development projects. He said the process should be systematic, and that information regarding new projects and proposals should be sent from the City to the neighborhood associations to solicit and gather feedback from the residents. Mr. Williams suggested this could be an easier way to gather resident feedback since some residents might not be comfortable speaking at City meetings in front of the developers proposing the project. Mr. Williams said the largest challenge facing the City vis-a-vis neighborhoods is how to incentivize people to get involved over the long-term. He added that the draft's recommendation to consolidate some neighborhoods is a useful one.

Chairman Clein suggested that it may be more beneficial to set up planning districts through which the City could solicit feedback on projects. He ventured that neighborhood associations are set up to convey information to the neighborhoods, not to solicit information from the neighborhoods. Chairman Clein cited a Detroit attempt a number of years prior to set up neighborhoods in a similar manner to the one being proposed in this master plan draft, which he said was unsuccessful because neighborhoods tend to exist organically and to resist government restructuring and definition. He said that Detroit eventually shifted its attention from neighborhoods to planning districts, and that was more successful.

Mr. Williams said he had no particular preference between neighborhood associations and planning districts. He said the goal was for citizens to have some systematic way to regularly receive information and regularly provide feedback at the local level.

Mr. Share agreed with Mr. Williams. He added that residents often do not get involved with local politics because they trust the City government, and that is part of the appeal to Birmingham for many residents. He said many residents only commence engagement with the City when an approach is taken that they disagree with.

Seeing a pause in Board comments, Chairman Clein asked for public comment.

Andrew Wandyez said he did not know the majority of his neighbors despite living in the Poppleton Park neighborhood his entire life.

Katie Pierce said the people make up the neighborhoods, not the types of homes or the stores in the neighborhood. She said she did not feel sufficiently prepared to comment on premise two since the bulk of the neighborhood discussion would occur in later chapters. She said she was concerned that associations might lead to different groups of residents playing by different rules

from each other, which she said would not be fair. Ms. Pierce noted that many in the City believe that one of Birmingham's largest assets is its community spirit, and she said she was concerned that dividing the City into regimented neighborhoods could diminish that asset.

Chairman Clein asked Ms. Pierce whether:

- The plan should work on improving public engagement.
- There should be neighborhoods of similar shapes and sizes to facilitate discussion and feedback regarding planning City parks and similar projects.

Ms. Pierce said the planning districts could be one useful approach. She also suggested that there could be ambassadors interested in specific aspects of City life in Birmingham, such as walking the City or trying the City's restaurants, and that the ambassadors could facilitate relevant outings that would increase public engagement. She said she did agree that more community engagement would be beneficial.

Paul Regan said:

- He was concerned about the draft's focus on a public intervention into the more private neighborhoods. He was unclear where the charge came from for the master planning team to focus on social engineering, and said he wondered where the questions came from that were included on the surveys sent out to the residents as part of this process.
- The drive towards rezoning into higher density neighborhoods and making Birmingham more affordable bespeaks a drive to change the architectural layout and makeup of the City. This is related to a strong emphasis on commercialism throughout the draft master plan.
- The emphasis on commercialism within the draft master plan was alarming, citing allowing more public parking in the neighborhoods and the idea of mixed-use developments in neighborhoods as examples.
- He would encourage citizens to push back on the introduction of commercialism into neighborhoods.
- Demolitions are too regular of an occurrence in Birmingham and they, followed by the development that occurs on those sites, contribute to the lack of a sense of community. Incentivizing remodeling instead of demolition would better serve the goal of building and maintaining community. To this end, more support should be given in the plan to current Birmingham residents who want to remain in their homes.

Michael Poris said it would be more useful to have a discussion after a review of the entire draft master plan, citing concern that the current conversation was too detailed without actually being based on the proposals made in the draft's subsequent chapters.

Chairman Clein advised Mr. Poris that the entirety of the draft master plan is available online via thebirminghamplan.com. He said that the purpose of the evening's discussion is clarifying the vision behind the plan in order to provide the basis for all future discussions of the plan. He said that the City will then be able to return to the vision over the next twenty years to measure how different planning ventures align with, or diverge from, that basis. Discussing the lengthy draft in parts seemed like the only way to ensure that the draft is generally headed in the direction the residents want to see.

Mr. Poris said that if the proposed physical neighborhood definitions and proposed neighborhood centers were included in the current discussion that there would likely be less apprehension from the public on the topic.

Jim Arpin asked whether the City or the master planning team had looked into creating benchmarks for the master plan goals based off of other similar municipalities' best practices.

Ms. Traxler said she thought it was a good point and that benchmarks should be incorporated into later chapters.

Mr. Boyle confirmed that research on other communities' best practices is routinely brought in to inform City planning discussions on a variety of topics.

Ellie Noble echoed Mr. Share's earlier point, stating that she got involved in the Quarton Lake Neighborhood Association when a school redistricting proposal arose that she did not agree with. She explained the neighborhood association started from there and then became social, but that the momentum can only be maintained by people willing to organize events. Ms. Noble also cited Ms. Pierce's suggestion regarding ambassadors, adding that there could be golf or park outings organized similarly.

Cindy Rose noted that the City government cannot be expected to legislate relationships among neighbors. She said that creating both places and processes that allow for citizen engagement will have a longer lasting impact than relying on government-encouraged individual ambassadors to maintain community interest. Ms. Rose said the plan will do the most good if it focuses on the physical characteristics within the City that would promote such engagement. She also agreed with Mr. Share that the majority of residents likely have such faith in the City government that they feel no pressing need to get involved.

Ms. Traxler reminded the board and the public that one of the proposals in the draft plan is to fund a position that would interface between the neighborhood associations and the City government in order to facilitate regular communication.

In reply to Ms. Whipple-Boyce, Ms. Traxler said:

- Part of the goal of the neighborhood resegmentation would be to make sure each one is well-served in terms of City amenities. The Torry neighborhood is one neighborhood that currently does not have a park within walking distance, and that having more evenly geographically distributed neighborhoods could let the City know when more development is merited in an area.
- Neighborhood associations could possibly be tasked with making smaller-scale decisions such as choosing whether to allow on street parking within a neighborhood. Discussions around neighborhood destinations, parks within walking distance, density of zoning within neighborhoods, and neighborhood public art are other topics neighborhood associations could have input on.
- When a development is proposed in Ann Arbor, it has to be presented to a neighborhood meeting before it ever makes it to the City's Planning Board. Birmingham could consider implementing a similar process to increase community development.

Mr. Jeffares said markets, churches, and schools have proven to be better places to meet other members of the Birmingham community than the neighborhoods necessarily have been. He said that goes to the master planning team's point that creating small neighborhood centers would better facilitate communal interactions between neighbors. He added he agreed with Mr. Williams' point from past meetings that schools should be kept in mind as part of what makes a neighborhood and as a regular neighborhood gathering place.

Mr. Williams agreed, noting that a school redistricting issue is what started the Quarton Lake Neighborhood Association. He said the schools are a large motivator in why families move to the community, that the school system maintains the age diversity in Birmingham, and getting feedback from the school communities will be an essential source of useful input for this process.

Mr. Share said that the City and the master planning team is somewhat mixing land use planning and community organizing in this master planning process, which is lending itself to a lack of clarity regarding strategies and goals. He said clarifying the difference in strategies and goals that result from applying each of the two frameworks to the master planning process would be of benefit. He also said encouraging neighborhoods to have clear and celebrated identities based on physical aspects will be a more reachable goal than trying to define neighborhoods based on the people who live there, since residents move in and out of neighborhoods over time.

Mr. Koseck said the plan dives much too far into the social aspects of the community. He said the emphasis on delineated neighborhood groups could also lead to inter-neighborhood competition and tensions. He said he has heard similar concerns from other residents as well.

Ms. Traxler suggested that moving forward the master planning process would benefit from distinguishing between the physical and social structures and what the boundaries between those are. She noted that Birmingham has a long standing history of districts which provide the foundation for the City's zoning.

Chairman Clein summarized that serious concerns were raised regarding the the draft's seeming presumptions around who various community members will interact with and how. He noted that significant infrastructure considerations, including items like improved streets, were not discussed. He also said that the City must decide whether it wants to incentivize renovations and small additions and disincentivize tear downs. He said that if the City does want to pursue that, it should be included in the premises.

Mr. Williams added that aging in place ties into the question of renovations, additions, and teardowns and is another important planning topic in Birmingham.

Chairman Clein invited Ms. Traxler to present premise three.

Ms. Traxler presented premise three.

Larry Bertolini said the City will have a difficult time encouraging renovations or additions to homes with significant depreciation when developers can extend lucrative offers for the lot the home is located on. Mr. Bertolini also asked Ms. Traxler to provide more background information on the public support for affordable housing in Birmingham.

Chairman Clein noted that Birmingham is not looking to create affordable housing in the City, which he explained is a term with a specific legal definition. He clarified that the City is looking to increase the range of housing that is accessible to a wider variety of individuals. He invited Ms. Traxler to provide further clarity regarding that aim.

Mr. Regan stated that 30% of the Central Birmingham Residents Association residences are multi-unit. He opined that the City has plenty of areas with dense residential zoning. Mr. Regan also stated that the City's zoning ordinances encourage the building of large, uniform homes on small lots, and that the City will not achieve different outcomes unless its ordinances are changed.

Susan Post agreed with Mr. Share's earlier comment that many residents do not feel the need to engage in local politics because they have trust in the City's government. Ms. Post stated that had been the case for her up until some of the changes in the downtown's development. She said her largest concern is the disappearance of trees and other greenspace within the City, and that concern brought her out to her first Planning Board meeting this evening. She cited Tim Horton's and All Seasons as two locations without any greenery on the sidewalks. Ms. Post said the increasing height of the buildings in the downtown are also making the City darker at the street level. She said that she has been a lifelong resident, and that these issues brought on the first time she has felt mistrust in the stewardship of the City.

Andrew Wandyez asked whether Birmingham has ways to protect historical homes, and if not whether that would be included as a consideration in the master plan. He said he did not see the sense in building large homes on small lots that are out of character with the other homes in the City.

Mr. Regan suggested that Birmingham should build a bridge or bridges between the east and west sides of Woodward, and said that would have an immense positive impact on the City. He said it would have improve many issues Birmingham is trying to resolve in other ways, such as locating more parking for visitors to the City.

Christine Boyle said the bridge that adjoins the two sides of Somerset Mall in Troy was essential to the mall's continued success. She agreed with Mr. Regan that something like that could work over Woodward in Birmingham, but acknowledged the cost would likely be prohibitive if bridges were built at each of the most desired crossing points. Ms. Boyle said the speed limit on Woodward in Birmingham should be lowered to 35 m.p.h., like in Ferndale, and the time allotted to pedestrians to cross Woodward should be extended. Both would encourage more pedestrian and multi-modal access between the east and west sides of Woodward. She finished by saying that she is also concerned with the large home demolitions and developments others mentioned, and that she sees those shifting the character of the City in some disconcerting ways.

Ms. Pierce noted the number of comments from residents this evening expressing concern regarding home demolitions and builds. She asked if those concerns are being addressed in the master plan, and if not if there was a separate team in the City exploring those issues.

Chairman Clein explained the master plan asserts the planning vision of the City, and then the City, through board meetings and public discussions, proceeds to align its ordinances with that vision.

Mr. Boyle said that the City does not have the authority to reduce the speed on Woodward, but that mentioning it as a goal in the plan can help the City advocate for that in dialogue with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Mr. Williams said that if a speed limit of 35 m.p.h. on Woodward is good enough for Ferndale, it is good enough for Birmingham.

Mr. Boyle asked that Mr. Williams' comment specifically be added to the record.

Ms. Rose said that she is in favor of the neighborhood seams as laid out in the draft and is in favor of increasing density. Ms. Rose opined that a positive outcome of the 2008 recession was that families who could not have otherwise afforded Birmingham were able to move in and join the community. She said that diversity has had a positive impact on the City. She said creating more housing that young families can live in would be a huge boon to the City.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce noted that the presentation of premise three asserted the majority of survey respondents found their neighborhoods to either be getting better or not changing. She noted that differed significantly from the comments heard so far during the evening's meeting. Ms. Whipple-Boyce asked Ms. Traxler to discuss that seeming discrepancy. Ms. Whipple-Boyce also explained that the seeming discrepancy goes to Mr. Share's earlier point that the people who are motivated to engage in City discussions tend to be the ones with concerns. Other residents, however, more comfortable with the City's changes, may be staying home and not participating out of trust in the municipal government. This difference in approach can lead to an overrepresentation of some views in these discussions, and an underrepresentation of other views.

Ms. Traxler stated:

- The question appeared on the first survey released to Birmingham residents, which was conducted in May 2019.
- This survey was the longest, broadest, had the highest number of responses versus subsequent surveys issued.
- The particular question Ms. Whipple-Boyce referenced was a multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank question, reading: "My neighborhood is:
 - A. Becoming much better.
 - B. Becoming a little better.
 - C. Not changing.
 - D. Becoming a little worse.
 - E. Becoming much worse."
- The overall breakdown was the 9.5% of respondents selected A., 38% selected B., 37% thought C., and 16% selected D. and E. combined. The most infrequent selection was E.
- Different age groups selected different answers with more frequency. Older respondents tended to think their neighborhood was becoming worse, and younger respondents tended to think their neighborhood was either becoming a little or much better.

- A division of responses by neighborhood is also available to anyone interested.

Mr. Jeffares explained that while he supported renovations and additions, in some cases homes have experienced so much deferred maintenance that it would be nearly charity to try and buy the home and preserve it. He said that while large, new developments may not always be desirable, sometimes the amounts that a developer can pay for a lot will allow that homeowner to move into assisted living or into their next residence with much more financial security than they would have otherwise had. Mr. Jeffares also noted that housing diversity allows for more families with school-aged children to live in the City which in turn helps maintain the vitality and diversity of the City.

Seeing no further comment, Chairman Clein invited Ms. Traxler to present premise four.

Ms. Traxler presented premise four.

Mr. Regan said:

- The most important goal of Central Birmingham Residents Association is protecting single family home values.
- A commercial property developer, a commercial property owner, and a business owner have very different interests. Commercial property owners want to build for office use, not retail. Mr. Regan asserted that brick and mortar retail is no longer a viable business model.
- He likes the idea set forth in the draft of a double-sided commercial district that begins just north of 14 Mile on Woodward with walkways in between. He said there could be accessible housing on the interior side, and that the single family homes further in would be buffered from the commercial aspect.

In reply to Mr. Wandyez's question regarding increasing trees in Birmingham, Chairman Clein explained there is a Parks and Recreation Plan that deals with the topic in part. Chairman Clein also said that the City could consult experts to plant larger and more viable trees in the downtown.

Mr. Wandyez said he liked the idea of small neighborhood commercial centers and suggested one would be well placed at the intersection of Lincoln and Eton.

Mr. Regan complemented Ms. Traxler and the master planning team on the proposal to expand the commercial area along S. Old Woodward.

Mr. Bertolini said it is sad when century-old trees are cut down without consideration.

Mr. Williams opined that live-work scenarios have not been very successful, and would not advocate for their expansion. He said:

- The River Rouge watershed is the most underdeveloped asset the City has. He would be in favor of developing it but not paving it.
- The City should take more responsibility for the environmental impact of City owned properties, like the parking structures, dumping in the River Rouge which creates problems.

- He agreed with Mr. Regan that the proposal to create a commercial district between Lincoln and 14 Mile along Woodward would be beneficial and would allow for protection of the neighborhoods to the east and west. Expanding commercial can be positive, but protecting the neighborhoods must be done simultaneously and should be done with input from the neighborhood associations.

Mr. Share stated that he did not think it was appropriate for the master plan process to seek to “incubate civic organizations”. He said that Birmingham could explore creating an ordinance similar to Bloomfield Township’s for determining required tree replacements on both private and public properties. For the master plan, however, Mr. Share said that it would be most appropriate to say that the City wants to maintain the tree canopy, and to allow for further specification within the ordinance.

Mr. Koseck said that the City should not only maintain the tree canopy, but should seek to enhance it. He said the City should be replacing any street trees cut down from City property. He said he was unsure what ‘natural systems’ and ‘sustainability’ meant in this premise, and that he would like to see those terms defined. Mr. Koseck said it would be worth considering requiring that when houses are sold they are brought up to code, which might reduce the need for teardowns.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said:

- The idea of small commercial neighborhood centers is often remarked upon favorably by residents. While she may not know all her neighbors, she does know the ones who tend to frequent the same spaces she does, such as markets or schools. The neighborhood centers would yield the same social outcomes the markets or schools have, but for a broader range of people. Interactions will stem naturally from neighbors crossing paths more frequently in places close to their homes, and will be more productive than trying to manage the social interactions in Birmingham in other ways.
- More community education is needed to explain that there are sometimes essential reasons for trees to come down, including disease or posing a danger to the residents or property nearby. She had to take home a 100-year-old silver maple in the rear of her home, and that the tree was dead and hollowed out which made it dangerous to leave standing.
- It would be very helpful to have more data on the number of children using the Birmingham school system. The music classroom at her children’s school had to be divided into three classrooms to provide more room for children, yet Mr. Jeffares stated that at the time of the last millage vote 80% of Birmingham residents did not have children in the schools. She would like to know more about how these facts should impact discussions around maintaining the numbers of students in the Birmingham school system.

Mr. Jeffares said the River Rouge is an incredible asset and that paving the path along it would make it more accessible to people in wheelchairs, parents with strollers, seniors, and other people with a variety of mobility considerations.

Chairman Clein said this discussion regarding resiliency had insufficient focus on infrastructure and climate. He acknowledged that it is not the master planning team’s charge to do an infrastructure study, but he said that a master plan cannot be done without commenting on the interaction between land use and infrastructure.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce asked Ms. Traxler whether the master planning team is following the discussions of the Ad Hoc Unimproved Street Study Committee (AHUSSC), which will be making recommendations for street improvements in the near future.

Ms. Traxler said the master planning team has been following the work of the AHUSSC, and that they expect to integrate the recommendations the AHUSSC makes into the master planning discussion.

Planning Director Ecker told the public that copies of the written recommendations and illustrations presented this evening were available at the front of the room for the taking.

Chairman Clein stated that the next Planning Board discussion of the draft master plan would be March 11, 2020, when the Board would be discussing neighborhood components.

Ms. Traxler stated that as these discussions progress she would be noting topics that need additional testing and public input. There would also be opportunity for additional in-person meetings, a drop-in clinic, a roundtable discussion, and a targeted survey.

Chairman Clein noted that everything from the evening's discussion would be minuted and submitted for approval by the Planning Director and Board members.

Planning Director Ecker confirmed for Chairman Clein that these minutes, once approved, could be posted to thebirminghamplan.com so they could be easily accessed by interested parties. She said that any resident interested in submitting feedback on this evening's topic could either email her at jecker@bhamgov.org or submit feedback on thebirminghamplan.com before March 11, 2020, and she would be sure to include the comments in the Board's agenda packet for its next draft master plan discussion.

In reply to Mr. Koseck, Ms. Traxler said potential cultural or civic additions to the City would be recommended for individual neighborhoods as part of the neighborhood plan. She said adding parks, sculptural gardens, expanding NEXT, and other similar opportunities are all ripe for further discussion.

Planning Director Ecker stated that each City Board has been provided with copies of the draft master plan and has been directed to provide feedback on the aspects of the draft that relate to their particular charges.

Chairman Clein invited a final round of public comment before closing out the evening's meeting.

Mr. Regan said:

- Birmingham boards could stand to have more regular inter-board communication because it often seemed to him that the boards are out of sync with each other.
- Parking would need to be discussed as part of the draft master plan, though he acknowledged that maybe parking was scheduled for a future evening's discussion.
- It is possible to build a City whose upkeep and maintenance the residents cannot afford. He said he would like to see more discussion on the upcoming bond vote for the schools.

Mr. Boyle thanked the public for coming and asked them all to return and bring a neighbor.

Mr. Arpin said that if the number of residential units are increased in a building, there will need to be an attendant **respective** increase in infrastructure serving the building and parking.

01-13-20

F. Miscellaneous Business and Communications:

a. Communications

b. Administrative Approval Correspondence

c. Draft Agenda for the next Regular Planning Board Meeting (February 27, 2020)

- Dick O'Dow's at 160 W. Maple with a SLUP Amendment request to add outdoor dining in the alley at the back of the restaurant temporarily for the 2020 season
- 2101 E. 14 Mile, development of a new single story medical office building, returning for Final Site Plan Review
- 35001 Woodward, postponement of the Preliminary Site Plan for the Hunter House site from tonight's meeting
- 469-479 S. Old Woodward rezoning request

d. Other Business

01-14-20

G. Planning Division Action Items

a. Staff Report on Previous Requests

b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting

01-15-20

H. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Jana L. Ecker
Planning Director

Premises from Section A: Vision Birmingham Draft 2040 Master Plan

1. The Region is becoming poly-centric.

PRINCIPLES

1. Birmingham is part of a larger region which influences the City and the City influences in return.
2. Birmingham should cooperate with regional planning and initiatives, doing its part to complete natural and mobility systems that should pass through the community.
3. Birmingham should lead by example, demonstrating successful mixed-use districts, vibrant neighborhoods, innovation in pedestrian and micro-mobility, and a focus on sustainable practices, all supported by a strong community spirit.

2. Birmingham should continue to define and support its neighborhoods and mixed-use districts.

PRINCIPLES

1. Birmingham should have a legible and defined city structure.
2. Birmingham's neighborhoods should have clear and celebrated identities.
3. Birmingham's neighborhoods should increase in sociability and mobility.
4. Birmingham's mixed-use districts should develop as neighborhoods that mix businesses and residences.
5. Birmingham's mixed-use districts should have unique identities yet function together as a mutually supportive system.

3. Birmingham should build upon its' successes.

PRINCIPLES

1. Birmingham should retain its' age and family diversity in order to support schools which play a key role in the City's success.
2. Birmingham should invest in its existing parks and find opportunities for new parks for neighborhoods which lack them.
3. Birmingham should continue to invest in Downtown while also investing in the Triangle District to alleviate excess pressures in Downtown and provide diverse experiences for residents and the region.
4. Birmingham should maintain its tree canopy and invest in its future resiliency to protect resident health, property values, and the environment.
5. Birmingham should maintain its narrow residential street standards which contribute to the safety of all roadway users and support the tree canopy.
6. Birmingham should invest in multi-modal infrastructure to support roadway users of all types and abilities, and to reduce traffic and parking pressure.
7. Birmingham should retain diversity in age and family composition to increase neighborhood activity and sociability.
8. Birmingham should encourage and support high quality maintenance of residential, commercial, institutional, and City properties.
9. Birmingham should allow more diverse housing options in locations specifically chosen to enhance neighborhood character and identity.

4. Birmingham should focus on its' future resilience.

PRINCIPLES

1. Birmingham should provide more housing options to retain its age and family diversity and ensure an enduring social ecosystem.
2. Birmingham should provide space to incubate less established civic organizations and support its' older adult population.
3. Birmingham should encourage and support a diverse business environment of established, young, and emerging companies and sole proprietors.
4. Birmingham should provide space to support businesses of different sizes and price points throughout its mixed-use districts.
5. Birmingham should locate recreational, civic, and commercial destinations within walking distance of most homes to support community physical and social health.
6. Birmingham should provide places for people to live, work, recreate, relax, and be entertained, within relatively close proximity to each other.
7. Birmingham should improve the quality of the Rouge River watershed.
8. Birmingham should support and invest in its citywide tree canopy.
9. Birmingham should reduce the broader environmental impact of its homes, businesses, transportation systems, and municipal operations.
10. Birmingham should gather input from a citywide constituency in addition to those who normally show up in opposition to change.
11. Birmingham should provide more ways for residents to voice their opinions in regular decision-making.