

VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE BIRMINGHAM PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020
7:30 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/111656967> or dial: **877-853-5247 Toll-Free, Meeting Code: 111656967**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the regular meeting of **July 22, 2020**
- C. Chairpersons' Comments
- D. Review of the Agenda

- E. Study Session Items
Rules of Procedure for Study Sessions: Site Plan and Design Review, Special Land Use Permit Review and other review decisions will not be made during study sessions; Each person (member of the public) will be allowed to speak at the end of the study session; Each person will be allowed to speak only once; The length of time for each person to speak will be decided by the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting; Board members may seek information from the public at any time during the meeting.
 - 1. **Review of Key Themes in Draft Master Plan Document**

- F. Miscellaneous Business and Communications:
 - a. Communications
 - b. Administrative Approval Correspondence
 - c. Draft Agenda for the next Regular Planning Board Meeting **(August 26, 2020)**
 - d. Other Business

- G. Planning Division Action Items
 - a. Staff Report on Previous Requests
 - b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting

- H. Adjournment

Notice: Due to Building Security, public entrance during non-business hours is through the Police Department—Pierce St. Entrance only. Individuals with disabilities requiring assistance to enter the building should request aid via the intercom system at the parking lot entrance gate on Henrietta St.

Persons with disabilities that may require assistance for effective participation in this public meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at the number (248) 530-1880, or (248) 644-5115 (for the hearing impaired) at least one day before the meeting to request help in mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.

Las personas con incapacidad que requieren algún tipo de ayuda para la participación en esta sesión pública deben ponerse en contacto con la oficina del escribano de la ciudad en el número (248) 530-1800 o al (248) 644-5115 (para las personas con incapacidad auditiva) por lo menos un día antes de la reunión para solicitar ayuda a la movilidad, visual, auditiva, o de otras asistencias. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020

Held Remotely Via Zoom And Telephone Access

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on July 22, 2020. Chairman Scott Clein convened the meeting at 7:35 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; Student Representative Rachel Hester

Absent: Student Representative June Lee

Administration: Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Eric Brunk, IT Manager
Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner
Laura Eichenhorn, Transcriptionist

07-86-20

B. Approval Of The Minutes Of The Regular Planning Board Meeting of July 8, 2020

Motion by Mr. Boyle
Seconded by Mr. Koseck to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting of July 8, 2020 as submitted.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Nays: None

07-87-20

C. Chairperson's Comments

Chairman Clein welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being held under the guidance of the City Attorney and City administration to ensure compliance with Governor Whitmer's executive orders. Chairman Clein then reviewed procedures for the meeting.

07-88-20

D. Review Of The Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

07-89-20

E. Study Session Items

1. Glazing Requirements

City Planner Dupuis reviewed the item and Kreg Hatfield, from Guardian Glass, was present to answer questions.

Mr. Hatfield explained that:

- All manufacturers calculate VLT and reflectivity percentages in the same way.
- Most people would be unlikely to notice the difference between 66% and 80% VLT.
- When glass gets into the range of 40-50% VLT it tends to begin to look less clear. Tinting would reduce the VLT even further.
- The glass make-up at the Brookside development and the glass make-up at the Daxton Hotel have identical coatings on the glass. The difference is that the Brookside development used a basic clear glass while the Daxton used a low iron glass. The Brookside glass has a VLT of 68% and the Daxton has a VLT of 70% because removing some iron makes glass a bit more clear.
- Glass can be rated in terms of reflectivity both from the inside-out and from the outside-in. It is important to keep those percentages about the same.
- For basic, first floor applications the ordinance should include language about prohibiting tinted glass. There would be no way for property owners to meet the proposed ordinance requirements if they have both tinted glass and low-e coating.
- There would likely be no need to mention low iron glass because it would meet ordinance requirements should a property owner choose to use it. Low iron glass tends to cost significantly more than regular clear glass. It also tends to be a bit more efficient in terms of retaining the heating and cooling of the building's interior.
- Clear glass tends to have a bit of a green hue versus low iron glass. For protection three coats of silver were added to the library windows' glass, and those layers of silver also add a bit of a greenish hue. If the library had used low iron glass with the same layers of silver the green tint would still be present but not as substantially.
- Low iron glass is widely enough available that no property owners would have a difficult time sourcing it should it be required by ordinance. Cost would be the biggest reason not to require low iron glass via ordinance.
- He has not heard of any municipality requiring low iron glass in their ordinances.
- Any glass sample from an architect submitted to the City should specify whether it is low iron glass.
- The Brookside development is the best example of what kind of glass would be permissible under the proposed ordinance language. Brookside's glass is regular clear glass and not low iron.

Mr. Share said the Board should probably not require low iron glass, especially in a time when the City is trying to help retailers weather the financial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In reply to Mr. Koseck, Planning Director Ecker stated that the ordinance does not specify how many feet from a window shelving must be placed. She said there could be some value in adding that to the ordinance.

City Planner Dupuis said it might also be worthwhile to consider a vertical height limit for shelving if a horizontal one is added.

Mr. Koseck suggested that some of the language could be clarified in Article 3, Section 3.04 of the ordinance. He said 'bronze' should probably be struck from that section.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce concurred with Mr. Koseck regarding removing the word 'bronze'. She said she agreed that it might be useful to have a horizontal distance requirement for how far shelving must be from a window. She said a typical aisle's width might be the appropriate distance. She said it would also be helpful to know the cost difference between low iron and clear glass.

City Planner Dupuis asked how the Board might want a horizontal distance requirement to deal with retail items displayed in a window.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said that if retailers displayed their merchandise attractively in their windows she would be supportive of that.

Mr. Williams said the Board should come up with language regarding displaying merchandise in windows and shelving before it goes to a public hearing.

In reply to Chairman Clein, Planning Director Ecker said that the ordinance's current restrictions against shelving in the windows work well and are generally enforceable. She said that any examples that seem to be in egregious violation of that standard tend to have existed before the ordinance went into effect.

Mr. Jeffares recommended the Board conclude its discussion about glazing without trying to presently integrate new topics. He noted the Board had been studying glazing for months and had worked hard to prepare for the review, and thought the other topics being raised deserved a similar amount of thoroughness at a future date.

Mr. Koseck said he would be fine with Mr. Jeffares' recommendation that questions of shelving and merchandising in windows be discussed further at a later date.

The Board asked Planning Director Ecker to add 'no tint' and 'low iron glass' to the definition of clear glazing, with the understanding that 'low iron' could possibly be removed after discussion at the public hearing.

Motion by Ms. Whipple-Boyce

Seconded by Mr. Koseck to set a public hearing on August 26, 2020 to consider Zoning Ordinance amendments to Article 3, Section 3.04(E), Article 4, Section 4.90(A) and Article 9, Section 9.02 to change the Clear Glazing standards and definition to require low iron glass, no tint, to relax the Visual Light Transmittance requirements and to add reflectivity requirements.

Mr. Share said he was in favor of moving the topic to a public hearing and not in favor of mandating low iron glass.

Motion carried, 6-1.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Whipple-Boyce, Koseck, Williams, Boyle, Clein, Jeffares

Nays: Share

Mr. Boyle echoed Ms. Whipple-Boyce's previous statement that the Board should have comparative costs for low iron and clear glass to review. He said the Board should be aware how a low iron requirement might be layering on costs to development in the City.

Chairman Clein thanked Mr. Hatfield for sharing his expertise with the Board.

2. Solar Panel Review Process

City Planner Dupuis reviewed the item.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said she recently encountered a large solar battery in some work she was doing in another community, and cautioned that the Board might not want to allow any and all ancillary equipment for solar panels to be outside the home given the potential range of sizes.

Mr. Williams said he was fine with solar panels but might be less fine with ancillary equipment on the side of a home given that it might be more prominent in a neighbor's view.

City Planner Dupuis asked if Mr. Williams would prefer the ancillary equipment to be mounted only to the rear of the home, or to possibly be screened in some way.

Mr. Williams said he was not sure what the best approach would be. He said he thought it would depend on the house, the location of the neighboring properties, and the type of equipment.

Planning Director Ecker said that moving the equipment to the rear of a home would have the benefit of being further from a neighbor's yard because of the greater required setback. She noted that, in contrast, equipment on the side of a home might be only five feet from the property line.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce agreed that placement would depend on the size of the equipment. She said that a small electric meter or connection into the house to the battery need not be limited to the rear or interior of a home, whereas larger equipment should be. She said that the Board could likely specify appropriate locations with more information on the most commonly used kinds of equipment.

City Planner Dupuis said he could find pictures of the City's most recent solar panel approvals to provide the Board with a better sense of the size of the ancillary equipment.

Mr. Jeffares noted how helpful it was to have Mr. Hatfield consulting the Board during their glazing discussion, and said it would be equally helpful to find someone as well-versed in solar power technologies. He observed that the Board was doing some guesswork in the current discussion and thought it would be better to get more specific answers. He said that consulting with someone knowledgeable in the field would have the additional benefit of informing the Board on how the technology is trending, so they could factor those considerations into the ordinance language as well.

Mr. Williams agreed with Mr. Jeffares. He said that the proposed language regarding ancillary equipment was likely too vague and should be clarified before being advanced to a public hearing.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said she could email City Planner Dupuis some contact information for someone who might know more about solar power technology.

07-90-20

F. Miscellaneous Business and Communications:

a. Communications

b. Administrative Approval Correspondence

City Planner Dupuis explained that the owners of 266 Elm Street wanted to remove the patio in the rear of their building, to replace it with exposed aggregate, to add eight planters, and to replace the rear fence. He noted that the exposed aggregate would go all the way to the rear fence which would result in the removal of some amount of landscaped area.

Consensus of the Board was to grant administrative approval for the plans.

c. Draft Agenda for the next Regular Planning Board Meeting (August 12, 2020)

- **Master Plan Draft Review**

d. Other Business

07-91-20

H. Planning Division Action Items

a. Staff Report on Previous Requests

b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting

07-92-20

I. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Jana L. Ecker
Planning Director

DRAFT



August 6, 2020

Planning Board Members
City of Birmingham
151 Martin St.
Birmingham, MI 48012

1st Draft Master Plan Workshop, August 12, 2020 Planning Board Meeting

Dear Planning Board Members,

Enclosed you will find the brief presentation concerning *Master Plan Themes* our team has assembled based on the approved review process that City Commission and Planning Board spent considerable time formulating during the early summer months.

MASTER PLAN THEMES

The following themes permeate the Master Plan, establishing the purpose for key objectives and specific recommendations. These themes form a foundation upon which the Master Plan operates. City Commission has affirmed the Master Plan's themes, which will direct the Planning Board's review of plan details and specific recommendations to the consultant team.

1. **Reinforce neighborhood identity.** Neighborhoods [or planning districts] are organizational touchstones for the community, helping to orient and relate households, institutions, amenities like parks and schools, and businesses.
2. **Encourage neighborhood social systems.** Residents new and old have reported disappointment in a lack of new relationships with neighbors, a national and local issue alike. While planning cannot direct societal change, traditional structures of neighborhoods, once existing in Birmingham, can be re-established or encouraged through land-use and investment in streets and parks.

3. **Retain diversity of age and family structure in neighborhoods.** Birmingham's population is well distributed in terms of age and family structure. This contributes to school stability and support for neighborhood institutions and businesses, all of which benefit from diverse population segments.
4. **Expand the range of housing options across the City.** Focused on increased lifestyle choice and attainability, expanding housing options has been requested by current seniors, young families, and singles in the community. While the location and extent of new housing is a neighborhood-level Master Plan discussion, the goal of more housing options is the theme throughout the plan.
5. **More closely regulate housing to retain neighborhood scale and intensity.** Most redevelopment within neighborhoods has been identified as out of scale - too large. While individual expression in housing style should be allowed, the scale and intensity of new housing should better match that of existing homes.
6. **Gracefully absorb projected population growth.** The City is growing; how that growth is accommodated is a key decision for the City's future. Should little or no new housing be provided, housing costs will surely increase. Should unrestricted housing be allowed everywhere, the character of neighborhoods will likely suffer. A balanced approach is recommended, accommodating most new growth in mixed-use districts and the remainder along major streets. However, the amount of new growth to absorb is a question for the community at large.
7. **Provide equal access to civic amenities and quality infrastructure across the City.** Residents in each area of Birmingham should have safe and convenient access to parks, schools, services; walking, biking, and driving routes; well-maintained streets, sewers, and stormwater systems.

8. **Encourage multi-modal movement throughout the City, especially in the form of walking and biking.** Prioritize street improvements, aside from issues of unimproved streets, to establish safe and convenient walking and biking routes throughout the City. Generally, this includes implementing the multi-modal plan with minor adjustments.
9. **Reinforce or establish unique identities for Birmingham's mixed-use districts.** Active mixed-use areas are generally limited in successful size between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in length. Downtown exceeds this size, with north Old Woodward expressing a different character and south Old Woodward underperforming. Establishing identities for each area is intended to provide residents and visitors with unique experiences to increase the success of each district and the City overall.
10. **Promote private development in underperforming mixed-use districts through public investment.** Zoning allowances in the Triangle and Rail districts, as well as the South Woodward Gateway, have not resulted in the growth anticipated. Lack of public parking and pedestrian-friendly streets are significant impediments in most places. Zoning and the character of streets and alleys are contributors in others. To boost private investment, and subsequent increased tax revenue, the City should invest in public infrastructure.
11. **Actively support sustainable development practices and operation of businesses.** Birmingham's natural resources and beauty are assets to all residents. The City should protect these assets, especially the Rouge River watershed, through sustainable development practices on the part of the City, residents, businesses, and developers.
12. **Bridge the Woodward Divide.** Big Woodward divides the City, as many regional thoroughfares have done throughout the US. Birmingham should bridge this divide by reducing Woodward's car-centric design, improving safety of all users, and influencing public perception that Woodward is within Birmingham, it does not simply pass through.



SCHEDULE SUMMARY

To position this meeting in terms of future review efforts, below is a snapshot of the Draft 1 Review schedule approved by City Commission in June 2020:

Master Plan Review and Adoption, 2020 - 2021		
Action	Meeting(s) / Time Period	Outcome(s)
1st Draft Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm and continue process for completing review of 1st draft Prepare neighborhood packets for additional public input on neighborhood proposals Focus on themes and key objectives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PB study session 6/10/20 CC / PB joint meeting 6/15/20 PB review meetings 3 – 5 (1 + 2 completed), 8/20 through 11/20 CC review meeting for direction on proposed revisions to 1st draft per PB recommendation, 12/20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad consensus on Themes and Key Objectives revisions to draft plan by PB and CC
Prepare 2nd Draft: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant team prepare revisions to draft Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Draft Master Plan, delivered to City approx. 2/1/21
Option - Conduct Additional Public Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive draft 2 website Neighborhood meetings Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City receives additional public input related to revised draft plan to use in reviewing 2nd draft



<p>2nd Draft Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on outstanding strategic issues concerning themes and key objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. PB review meetings 1 - 45. CC / PB joint meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City finalize 2nd draft and distribute to adjoining and other entities consistent with MI Planning Enabling Act for their review
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MEETING PROCESS

The Planning Board meeting process was approved to be conducted as follows:

- Consultants will briefly summarize the Themes, 10 minutes.
- The Planning Board will welcome public comment on Themes, approximately 30 minutes or so.
- The Planning Board will discuss recommendations concerning the Themes.

Please let us know if you have any questions; thank you.

Regards,

Matthew Lambert

Cc: Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Bob Gibbs, Gibbs Planning Group
Sarah Traxler, McKenna



THE
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Master Plan Themes

PLANNING BOARD MEETING · AUGUST 12, 2020

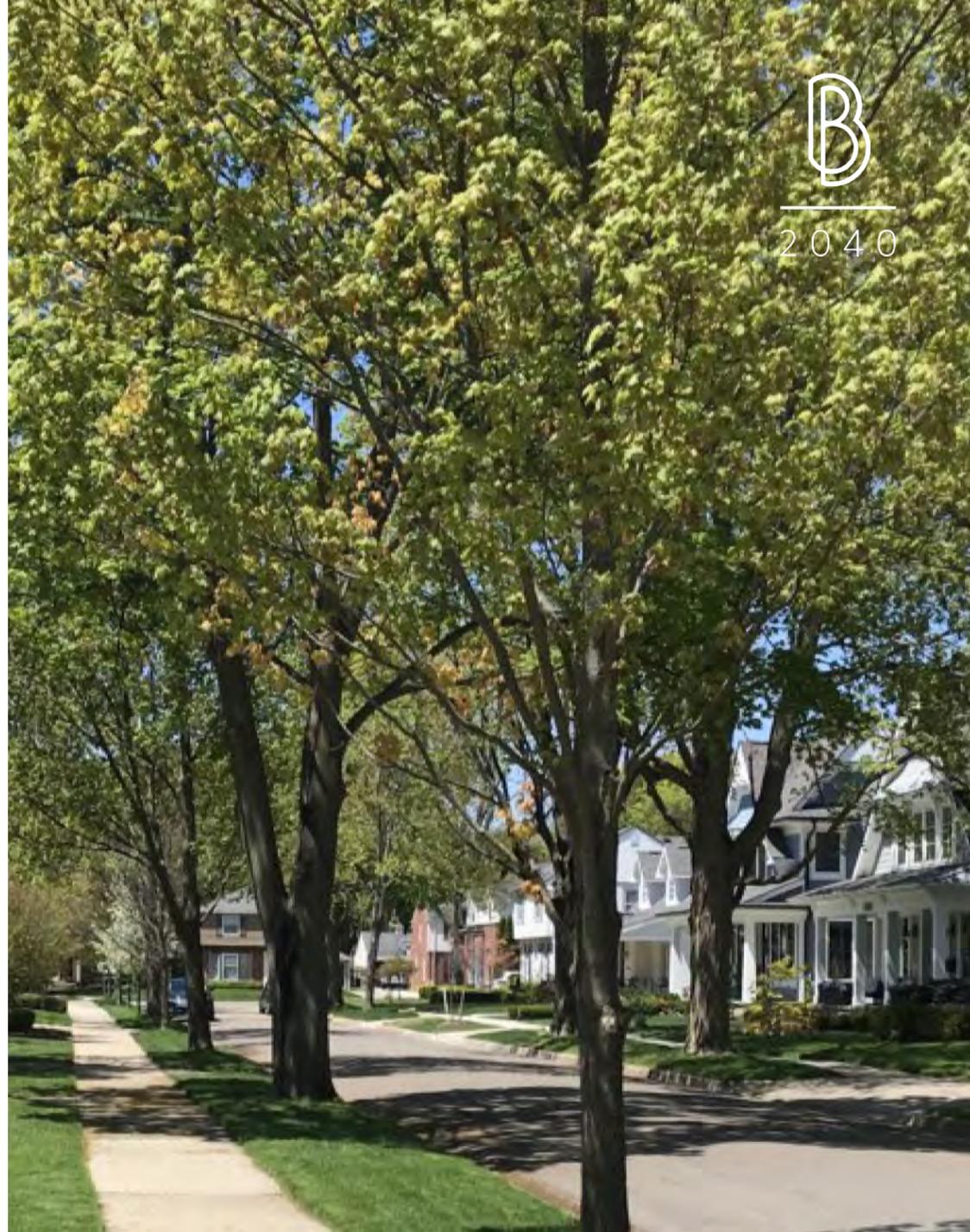
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1. Reinforce neighborhood identity

Neighborhoods are organizational touchstones for the community, helping to orient and relate households, institutions, amenities like parks and schools, and businesses.

Key Components:

- Establish official neighborhood boundaries
- Define neighborhood structure to assist future decision-making
- Evaluate regulations per-neighborhood
- Evaluate programs per-neighborhood



2. Encourage neighborhood social systems

Residents new and old have reported disappointment in a lack of new relationships with neighbors, a national and local issue alike. While planning cannot direct societal change, traditional structures of neighborhoods, once existing in Birmingham, can be re-established or encouraged through land-use and investments in streets and parks.

Key Components:

- Focus land-use on neighborhood structure
- Encourage small neighborhood retail destinations
- Ensure neighborhoods have access to parks
- Improve streets and sidewalks to encourage walking and biking to neighborhood destinations

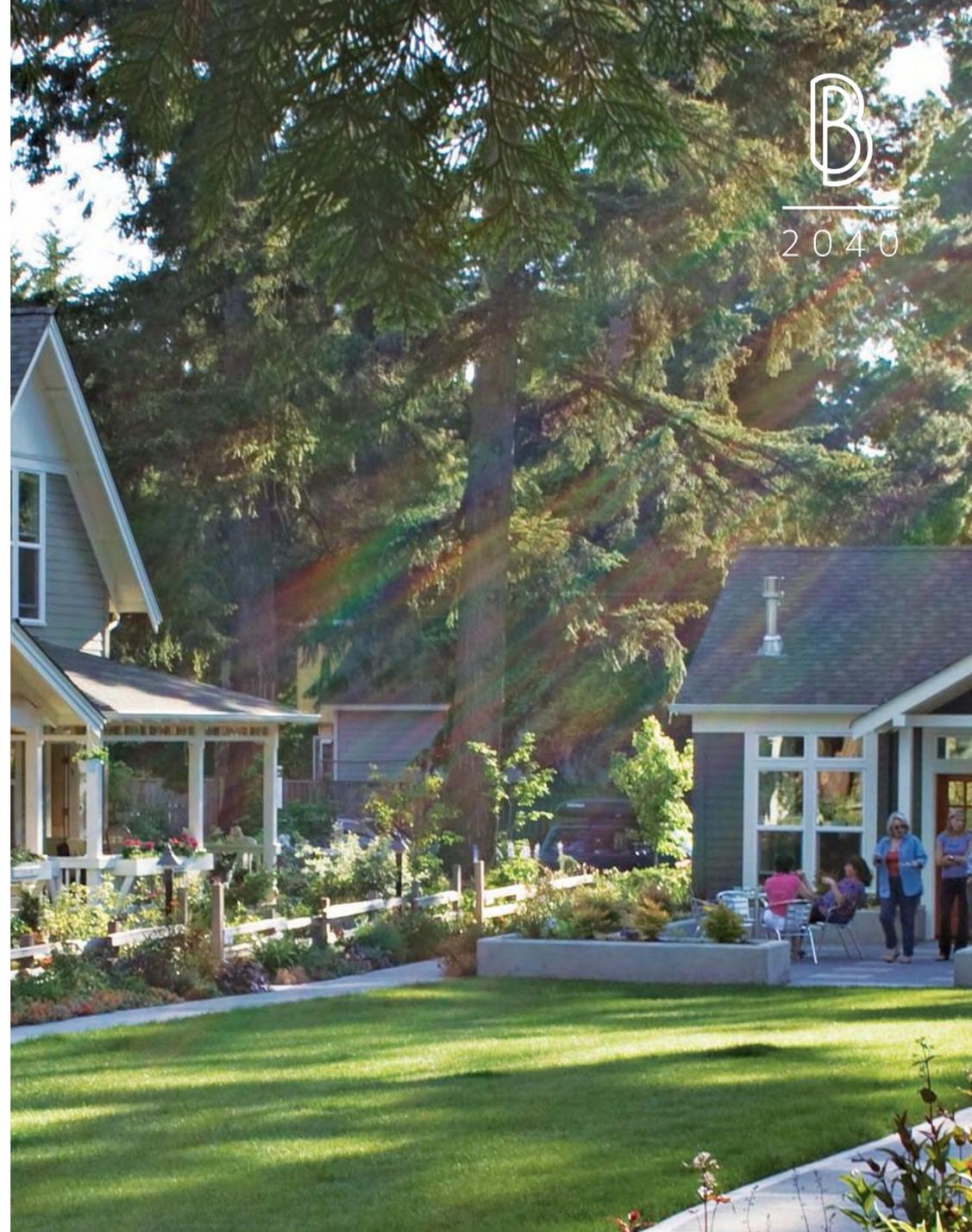


3. Retain diversity of age and family structure in neighborhoods

Birmingham's population is well distributed in terms of age and family structure. This contributes to school stability and support for neighborhood institutions and businesses, all of which benefit from diverse population segments.

Key Components:

- Retain older adults with smaller, low-maintenance housing in their neighborhood
- Retain families with both more housing availability and price-point diversity
- Retain younger adults with some additional attached and multi-family housing options
- Retain neighborhood character and stability by ensuring new housing is located and designed to enhance neighborhood identity



4. Expand the range of housing options across the City

Focused on increased lifestyle choice and attainability, expanding housing options has been requested by current seniors, young families, and singles in the community. While the extent of new housing is a neighborhood-level discussion, the goal of more housing options is a theme throughout the plan.

Key Components: *(in addition to Theme #3)*

- Increase multi-family housing in mixed-use districts, especially downtown
- Carefully add Missing Middle housing along major and secondary thoroughfares
- Allow accessory dwelling units, adding housing and secondary income while retaining character

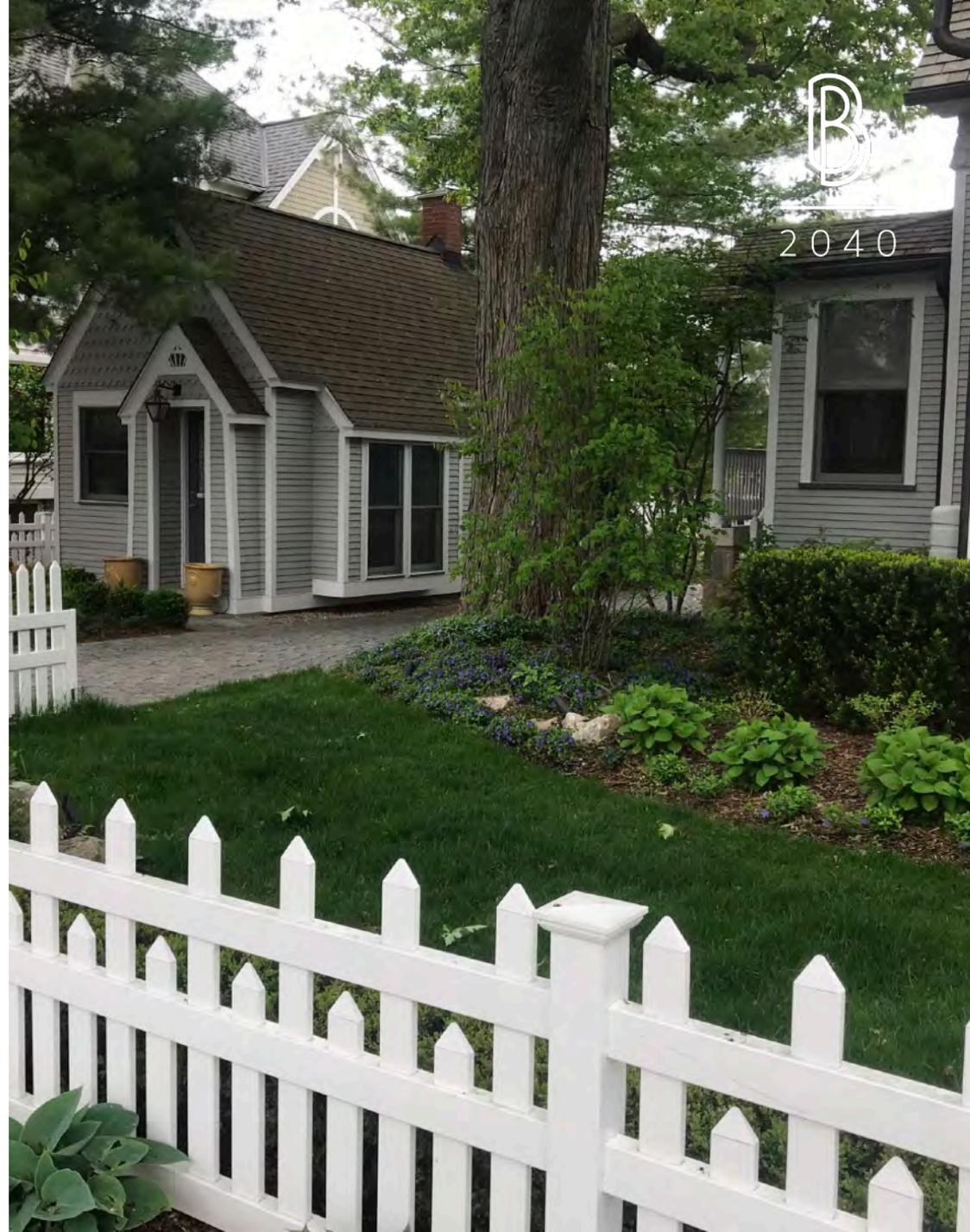


5. More closely regulate housing to retain neighborhood scale and intensity

Most redevelopment within neighborhoods has been identified as out of scale - too large. While individual expression in housing style should be allowed, the scale and intensity of new housing should better match that of existing homes.

Key Components:

- Revise zoning to align standards (allowances) with the existing character of homes in each neighborhood, such as building height, setback, and lot coverage
- Limit increased housing intensity to seams and mixed-use districts, not within neighborhood fabric
- Incentivize renovation of existing homes as well as additions which retain the neighborhood scale



6. Gracefully absorb projected population growth

The City is growing; how that growth is accommodated is a key decision for the City's future. Should little or no new housing be provided, housing costs will surely increase. Should unrestricted housing be allowed everywhere, the character of neighborhoods will likely suffer. A balanced approach is recommended, accommodating most new growth in mixed-use districts and the remainder along major streets. However, the amount of new growth to absorb is a question for the community at large.

Key Components: *(in addition to Themes #3 and #4)*

- Concentrate most growth in mixed-use districts through future land-use
- Distribute growth of a lower scale along neighborhood seams, responding to context, through future land-use
- Retain the character of existing neighborhood fabric through future land-use



7. Provide equal access to civic amenities and quality infrastructure across the City

Residents in each area of Birmingham should have safe and convenient access to parks, schools, services; walking, biking, and driving routes; well-maintained streets, sewers, and stormwater systems.

Key Components:

- Evaluate access to amenities on a per-neighborhood basis, investing in areas of need
- Evaluate flooding and stormwater solutions on a per-neighborhood basis, investing in areas of need
- Evaluate streets, sidewalks, and crossings on a per-neighborhood basis, investing in areas of need



8. Encourage multi-modal movement throughout the City, especially walking and biking

Prioritize street improvements, aside from issues of unimproved streets, to establish safe and convenient walking and biking routes throughout the City. Generally this includes implementing the multi-modal plan with minor adjustments.

Key Components:

- Prioritize ped/bike improvements along an the neighborhood loop
- Increase safe crossings of larger roads such as Maple's pedestrian refuges and new safe Woodward crossings
- Ensure bike routes have adequate facilities and connect to routes and trails in surrounding communities
- Provide quality bus shelters



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9. Reinforce or establish unique identities for Birmingham's mixed-use districts

Active mixed-use areas are generally limited in successful size between 1/4 and 1/2 mile in length. Downtown exceeds this size, with north Old Woodward expressing a different character and south Old Woodward underperforming. Establishing identities for each area is intended to provide residents and visitors with unique experiences to increase the success of each district and the City overall.

Key Components:

- Re-brand districts to change perception over time
- Establish different standards for each district, diversifying intensity, character, and businesses
- Ensure each has amenities (parks, public art), quality streetscapes, adequate parking, and use diversity

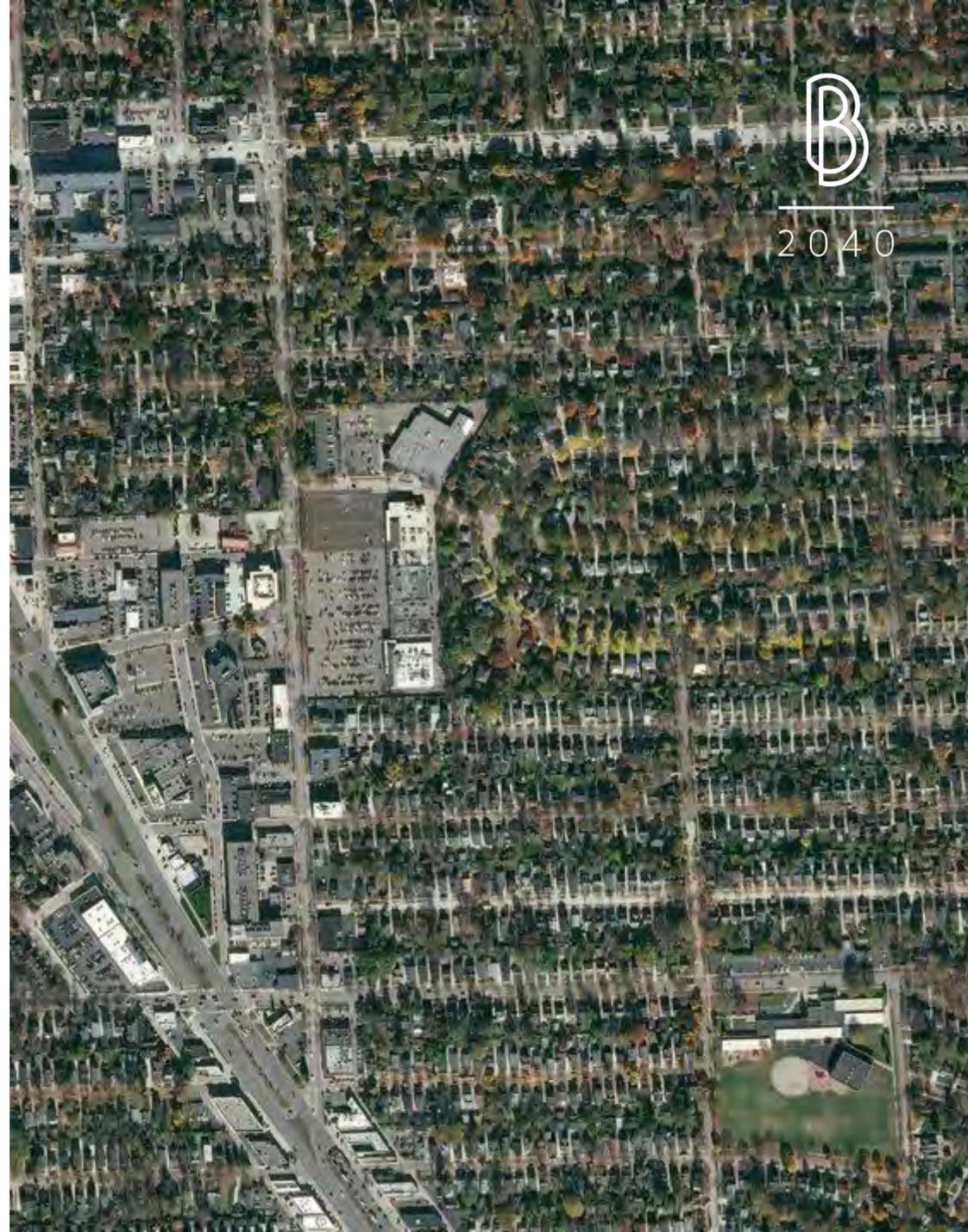


10. Promote private development in underperforming mixed-use districts through public investment

Zoning allowances in the Triangle and Rail districts, as well as the South Woodward Gateway, have not resulted in the growth anticipated. Lack of public parking and pedestrian-friendly streets are significant impediments in most places. Zoning and the character of streets and alleys are contributors in others. To boost private investment, and subsequent increased tax revenue, the City should invest in public infrastructure.

Key Components:

- Add public parking in the Triangle district
- Add public parking in the Rail district
- Improve streetscapes in the Rail and Triangle districts
- Improve alleys and neighborhood sleeves in the South Woodward Gateway

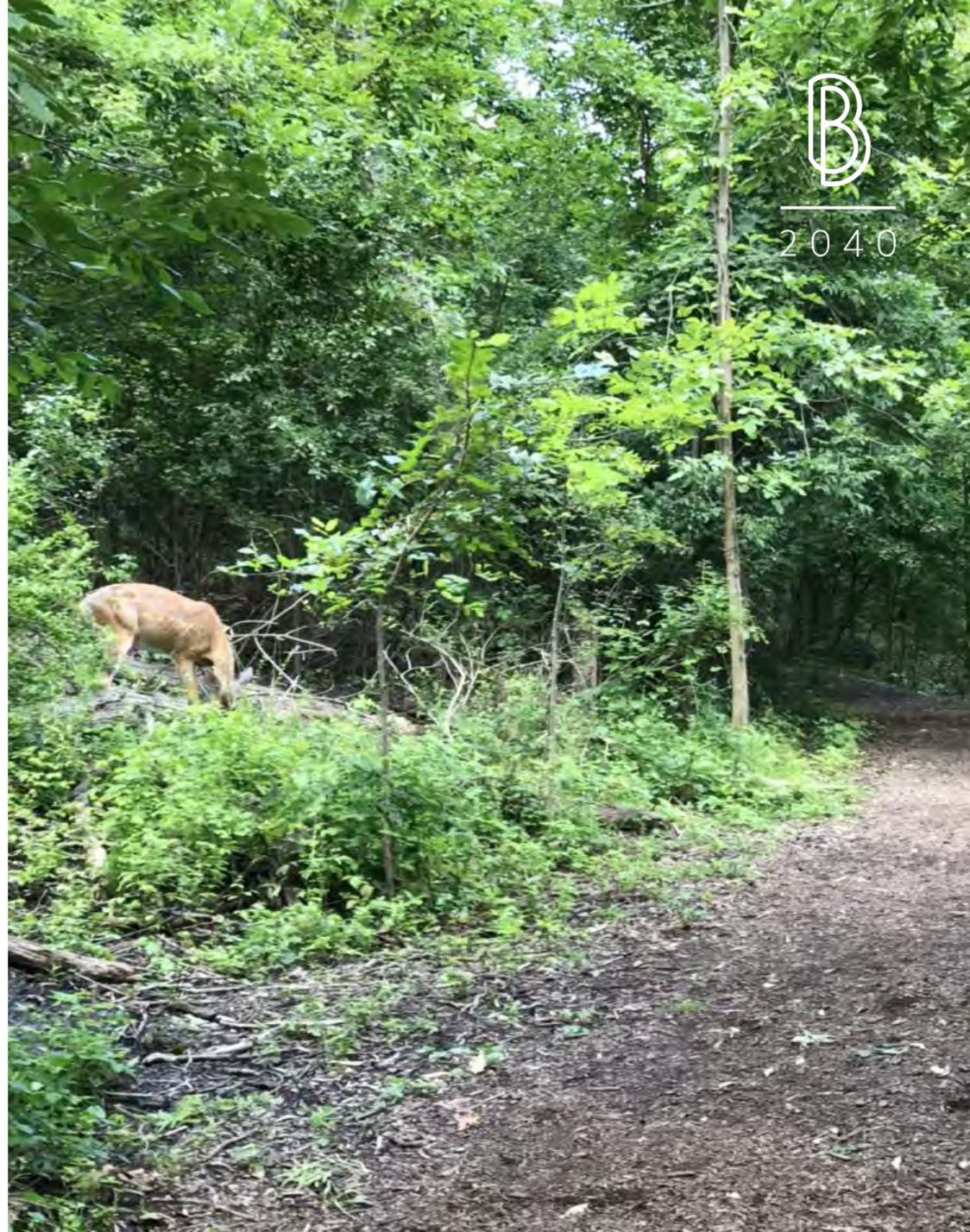


11. Actively support sustainable development practices and operation of businesses

Birmingham's natural resources and beauty are assets to all residents. The City should protect these assets, especially the Rouge River watershed, through sustainable development practices on the part of the City, residents, businesses, and developers.

Key Components:

- Repair degraded river banks along the Rouge River
- Reduce stormwater run-off with neighborhood-scale treatment and stricter development standards
- Improve recycling availability, investigate composting
- Incentivize sustainable business practices such as compostable containers, recycling, and composting
- Improve municipal practices both in facilities and operations



12. Bridge the Woodward divide

New: *Big Woodward divides the City, as many regional thoroughfares have done throughout the US. Birmingham should bridge this divide by reducing Woodward's car-centric design, improving safety of all users, and influencing public perception that Woodward is within Birmingham, it does not simply pass through.*

Key Components:

- Advocate and fund if necessary a reduction of travel lanes, lane widths, and speeds through the City
- Improve the Woodward streetscape, especially in the South Woodward Gateway
- Add numerous safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings
- Invest in the Triangle district to grow a downtown area that spans Woodward
- Reimagine Big Woodward intersections at Maple and at Old Woodward





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