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# RELAUNCH THE PIKE

## *Montgomery Road Redevelopment Plan*



HAMILTON COUNTY  
Planning + Development

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Large private landowners like UDF and Xavier University with a stake in the corridor; “Good Bones” of historic structures like the public library and City Hall; A new hike and bike trail; Up and coming residential neighborhoods; New city leadership and a new community group engaged in the future- All bode well for the City of Norwood’s Montgomery Road Corridor.



Image of Corridor

The *Montgomery Road Redevelopment Plan* is an action plan designed to recommend short term, low-cost improvements, and medium term more capital intensive improvements to guide the revitalization of the corridor and continue to attract and encourage the right kinds of private investment in a manner that reflects the aspirations and pride of the City of Norwood.

The recommendations of this plan center around four main areas:

## **INVEST IN AREAS WITH EXISTING MOMENTUM**

The plan identifies the area between City Hall and Victory Park as the highest priority investment area. These investments will build on ongoing or planned private sector activity in this area. Secondary target areas include near the Wasson Way, near the Library, at the Hudson Avenue intersection, and at the UDF home office location.

## **POLISH THE GEM OF THE HIGHLANDS**

Deferred maintenance- particularly south of Monroe Avenue- has created a worn out, tired appearance that is not attractive to private investment. Minor upgrades such as new street signs, painting of all metal utility poles, trimming and replacement of street trees, and painting crosswalks and lane markings at signalized intersections could provide an inexpensive refresh to this area.

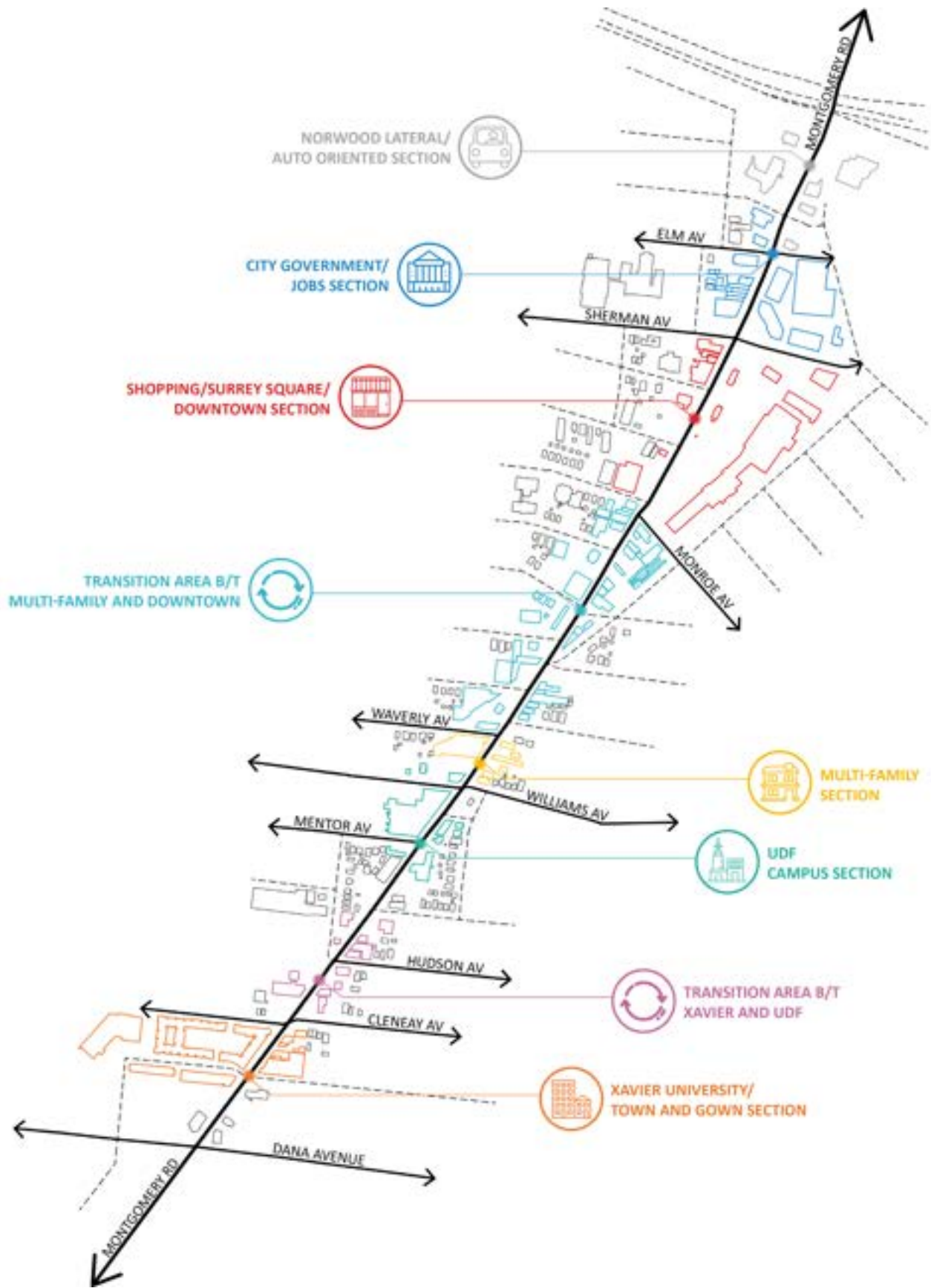
## **EMPHASIZE EAST/WEST PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS**

Making Montgomery Road more of a community connector rather than a barrier to east/west movement of pedestrians and cyclists is a priority of the plan. Some destinations like the Library and Off-Pike Market are on the west side of the corridor while others like Kroger are on the east side. The steering committee targeted several intersections for interventions that would help pedestrians safely cross Montgomery Road.

## **CREATE A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Analysis of the corridor revealed that it has sections of unique character. Not only does this strategy help segment the corridor into sections that can be addressed on a priority basis, it can give the corridor more character. Breaking down the Montgomery Road Corridor into more manageable chunks can serve as a guide for future development. This plan aims to emphasize these areas and strengthen their identity into nodes. Eight sections were identified:

- Xavier University/Town and Gown Section
- Transition Area between Xavier and UDF
- UDF Corporate Campus Section
- Multifamily Section
- Transition Section (with small auto oriented node)
- Shopping/Surrey Square/Downtown Section
- City Government/Jobs Section
- Norwood Lateral/Auto oriented Section



Section/Node Map

## INVEST IN AREAS WITH EXISTING MOMENTUM

Even as this plan was getting underway, significant private investment was happening in the corridor. These investments might seem small or isolated when viewed individually, but by building a unified narrative out of all the pieces, the momentum is apparent. Focusing on three corridor locations that currently have the most activity and potential, can lead to more opportunities for redevelopment.

### CITY HALL TO SHERMAN AVENUE INTERSECTION

The first location is near the Sherman Avenue intersection. Transformations are on their way at the former Fidelity Building and Bluebird and Anna’s restaurants. It is also newsworthy that these investments are coming from local entrepreneurs. Pete Ventura has found success investing in the housing stock in Norwood. He has gone to the next level in redeveloping the Fidelity Building into an event center. Raymond Gordo, a former line chef under Jean Robert and owner of Gordo’s, and Will DeLuca, former Norwood council member and owner of Betta’s Italian Oven, are coming together to remake the Bluebird Restaurant into The Pike Cafe which is envisioned to fill the current void of a modern brunch locale for Norwood.

There is opportunity to build on these two great success stories by activating the City Hall plaza and Heritage Park just south of City Hall. Already cosmetic improvements have freshened the interior of City Hall and food truck Fridays at this location have been successful. During the course of creating this plan, the City of Norwood was awarded a \$100,000 grant to transform Heritage Park into an outdoor dining location that could help nearby restaurants provide safe eating areas during the pandemic.



Redevelopment of Former Fidelity Building

Exploiting the underutilized Central Parke parking deck could also help this section of the corridor. The deck has plenty of free parking and the upper deck could even host outdoor events.

The City is working with ODOT on better signal timing in this area. Medium term coordination with ODOT is also planned to make changes inside the right-of-way including landscaped medians.

## VICTORY PARK VICINITY

The second location is Victory Park and the former Markethouse/Safety Lane building. A significant amount of community interest and energy is focused on the handsome former Markethouse/Safety Lane building and Victory Park. The proximity of Victory Park to the energy around the Sherman Avenue intersection also seems to make this area a logical place for investment and reinvention. The City is in talks with potential vendors that could utilize the Markethouse/Safety Lane building. Short term actions at Victory Park include filling the pool, removing security fence, trimming/removing trees and landscaping. These improvements could open up the park and have it ready to complement operations in a repurposed Markethouse/Safety Lane building.



Aerial Image of Victory Park

In order for Victory Park to fully reach its potential, a landscape architect should be hired to develop a professional design for its rehabilitation. The City will also need to address perceived safety issues in the park. Other jurisdictions have used programming of events to help create an inclusive space where all feel safe using an activated park. By keeping the park safe, clean and programmed, it can become a strong asset to the Montgomery Road Corridor.



The potential exists for activating the area just south of the park. Several properties along Mills Avenue including Norwood Brake Auto Repair and the parking lot associated with the Ohio Media School building (4411 Montgomery Road) are for sale. The redevelopment of these properties could complement an updated Victory Park.



Rendering of Pedestrian Friendly Intersection of Lawrence Avenue and Montgomery Road

Ultimately, the City should work to connect Victory Park to City Hall with pedestrian oriented development. In the short term, this may include working with US Bank to eliminate a driveway cut and support the revitalization of the historic buildings in the block from Sherman Avenue to Lawrence Avenue.

## WASSON WAY

The third location with the most short term energy and potential is where the Wasson Way intersects with Montgomery Road. The Wasson Way is a big deal outside the City of Norwood. A group of dedicated trail enthusiasts have made their vision a reality through dogged determination and millions of dollars of government investment. Even though the length of the trail is modest today, short term plans will soon have the trail extend from the Village of Fairfax to Children’s Hospital. In fact, extensions of the Wasson Way were recently awarded \$3.8 million of OKI Transportation funds. With the trail on the southern edge of the Montgomery Road Corridor, it sometimes is an afterthought for Norwood, but property values of the homes in southeast Norwood are sure to appreciate with their proximity to this valuable asset. Spreading the impact of the Wasson Way to other parts of Norwood should be part of all future planning efforts.



Wasson Way Phases Map

The buzz around trails is for real. Other jurisdictions like Milford and Loveland have leveraged their trailheads into downtown revitalization. Although not directly related to the Wasson Way, the pending relocation of the Joseph Auto Group’s Volkswagen dealership to the former Norfolk Southern yard will bring investment to this area and remove an eyesore. Xavier University already has trails that extend from the Wasson Way north to Mentor Avenue and the HCDC campus. Opportunities for extension of this trail further north along an abandoned rail right of way should be evaluated. The short term challenge of developing a safe crossing of Montgomery Road will continue to focus community energy on this area of the corridor.

## SECONDARY TARGET LOCATIONS

Other secondary target areas include near the Library, at the Hudson Avenue intersection, and at the UDF home office location. Planned improvements and possible expansion of the Library could spur more investment in this area. Xavier’s plans to improve the entrance to Norwood Plaza combined with activating the fire museum could energize the area around the Hudson Avenue-Montgomery Road intersection. UDF plans to consolidate and upgrade its facilities near the Williams Avenue/Montgomery Road intersection could also be a catalyst for other public and private investment.

## POLISH THE GEM OF THE HIGHLANDS

### IMPROVE BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Norwood has been fiscally behind the eight ball since the primary employer in the community, General Motors, left in the late 1980s. Deferred maintenance became a way of life and it shows in parts of the corridor that have not been redeveloped- particularly south of Surrey Square. Basic right-of-way maintenance of the area from Monroe Avenue south to the southern corporate limits could send a signal that it's a new day for this part of the corridor.



City of Montgomery, Ohio

Basic right-of-way maintenance should include:

- Refresh of all street signs- potentially hang from traffic signal cross arms
- Add new speed limit signs. A quick inventory of the corridor revealed one 25 MPH sign at UDF southbound and one 25 MPH northbound at Surrey Square
- Painting of all metal utility poles (check with Duke Energy on replacement schedule)
- Trimming of all street trees (and replacement of those that have outgrown their tree well)
- Painting of crosswalks and lane markings at all signalized intersections (even though paint does not last as long as thermoplastic- it can be a cheaper short term option)
- Consider the use of banners along targeted parts of the corridor that have momentum and prominence like the Sherman Avenue intersection and Wasson Way

## ADDRESS THE PRIVATE/PUBLIC EDGE

The private sector also plays a role in the appearance of the corridor, but currently there is no concerted effort or organization that can tie the businesses and property owners in the corridor together. A spectrum of options exists on how to develop an entity that is focused on the marketing, upkeep, advocacy and beautification of the corridor. The range extends from forming a committee inside an existing organization like Norwood Together or the Norwood Chamber of Commerce, to setting up a Special Improvement District (SID), or somewhere in between with the formation of another non-profit with a mission specifically focused on the Montgomery Road Corridor.

A Special Improvement District (SID) could provide the most comprehensive way to assure that the corridor is kept clean, that streetscape plantings are universally maintained, and trash cans are emptied more frequently. The SID could also manage a planter program and facade improvements. The SID would also create an organization made up of stakeholders that would be dedicated to the corridor. The challenge to creating a SID is that it requires a majority of property owners to support increasing their own property taxes.

City of Cincinnati neighborhoods often create a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to coordinate development and marketing in their business districts. Pleasant Ridge CDC and Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation are two nearby models that have had success finding funding for redevelopment and staff to program events that have created thriving business districts. CDCs inside the City of Cincinnati have the benefit of Cincinnati funded programs- specifically the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NDBIP) which has helped fund capital improvements in these areas. CDCs in the City of Cincinnati have also found success obtaining grants and assistance from partners like LISC. Although Norwood Together is technically a CDC, it may not have the focus or funding necessary to act like a City of Cincinnati neighborhood CDC.

Perhaps the easiest place to lay the foundation of the more structured solutions of a new CDC or a SID would be to start an initiative or committee within an existing organization. The Norwood Chamber of Commerce has the benefit of longevity, a strong membership base and staff that could help house a group committed to the betterment of the Montgomery Road Corridor. Norwood Together is a newer organization with a broader mission for the City. A strong volunteer group exists, but with no staff, the day to day operations of a Montgomery Corridor group may be beyond its existing capacity.

No matter the entity that is selected to coordinate the businesses in the corridor, one of the first tasks would be to upgrade the edge between the Montgomery Road right-of-way and private properties. The images on the following page show instances where design and maintenance have been lacking and where both private property owners and city government would need to come together to work on improvements.

Example: Private Sector Edge Treatment

Unappealing edge between parking lot and sidewalk. Easy short term solution of planters or planting strip between parking stops and sidewalk.



Example: Thin Planting Strips

Thin planting strips between the sidewalk and curb are notoriously hard to maintain and end up creating debris in the right-of-way. The City of Norwood should fill these spaces with concrete as a short term improvement.



Example: Chain Link Fence

Chain link fence should not be allowed to front the corridor.



### DEMOLISH EYESORES

Several vacant or underutilized properties along the corridor have been purchased by large local land-owners with stakes in the corridor. The current condition of these properties does not match the City or the community's vision for the corridor. By asking these property owners to demolish these eyesores, the City will send a strong signal that positive change is happening.

The Joseph Group should be asked to tear down the current structures from the Norfolk Southern Yards. UDF indicated that they have plans to tear down the structures on the former Best Auto Body property. This should be encouraged to happen as soon as possible. Xavier University has no immediate plans for their Norwood Plaza property but seemed willing to consolidate curb cuts and enhance landscaping at the site. Creative uses of these sites before their redevelopment could include hosting the Off-Pike Market, seasonal sales (xmas trees, spring flowers, etc.) and food trucks.

The City of Norwood should also work with private property owners to remove abandoned or damaged signs (for example Little Caesars, Norwood Plaza, and Quality Inn).



Sign at former Quality Inn Hotel

The short term improvements will go only so far. The pavement on Montgomery Road is in need of deep rehabilitation. The recently passed Metro sales tax created additional funding for roads used by Metro buses- like Montgomery Road. The street rehabilitation project should include concrete bus pads at stops and potentially traffic signals (This is further explored in medium term improvements).

## EMPHASIZE EAST/WEST PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Time and time again the steering committee discussed the issue of making Montgomery Road more of a community connector rather than a barrier to east/west movement of pedestrians and cyclists. Some destinations like the Library and Off-Pike Market are on the west side of the corridor while others like Kroger are on the east side. The steering committee targeted several intersections for interventions that would help pedestrians safely cross Montgomery Road.

Sherman Avenue is a major connector between the Surrey Square shopping center and the Civic Center (High School, Middle School, Health Department, YMCA and Post Office). Sherman Avenue also is a major east/west connector in the study area. This road has relatively high traffic counts. The current crossing at Montgomery Road is intimidating to pedestrians with the equivalent of seven lanes of traffic to cross. There are many turning movements at this intersection as well. This plan recommends using bump outs to reduce the distance pedestrians must travel to cross this intersection. Ensuring pedestrian signals provide enough time for crossing should also be confirmed.

Bump outs are also suggested at the Mills Avenue crossing of Montgomery Road. This is another important intersection that links neighborhoods on the westside of Montgomery Road to the Surrey Square Shopping Center. Victory Park is also located on the northwest corner of this intersection.

The Public Library is another destination that families and children want to access by foot or by bike. Although there is no connecting intersection immediately at the Library location, a minor realignment of the Ashland Avenue/Wanda Avenue intersection could create a good east/west pedestrian crossing that is relatively close to the Library. This section of the Corridor has not been widened so pedestrian crossing distances are only 50 feet, therefore, bump outs may not be required.

Williams Avenue is another major east/west connector in the corridor. Currently a pedestrian crossing does not exist on the southern side of this intersection. This is also an important intersection due to the location of Williams Elementary.

In the southern part of the corridor better crossings are possible at a reconfigured Ivanhoe/Hudson Avenue intersection where a possible connection to the Xavier Wasson Way bike spur exists. The offset at the Cleneay Avenue intersection makes it awkward for both vehicular and pedestrian movements. The Wasson Way crossing could use a pedestrian refuge where the center turn lane currently exists. Norwood should coordinate with the City of Cincinnati on the design and implementation of this crossing.

## CREATE A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Montgomery Road Corridor stretches one and a half miles from the Norwood Lateral to the North to the Wasson Way bike trail (just North of Dana Avenue) to the South. Analysis of the corridor revealed that the corridor has sections of unique character. This plan aims to emphasize these areas and strengthen their identity into nodes. Eight sections were identified:

- Xavier University/Town and Gown Section
- Transition Area between Xavier and UDF
- UDF Corporate Campus Section
- Multifamily Section
- Transition Section (with small auto oriented node)
- Shopping/Surrey Square/Downtown Section
- City Government/Jobs Section
- Norwood Lateral/Auto oriented Section

The southern section of the Montgomery Road Corridor offers the most immediate opportunities for large scale redevelopment. The section contains two local land owners, Xavier University and United Dairy Farmers (UDF), that have a significant stake in the Corridor and Norwood in general. Although the area from the southern border of Norwood to Hopkins Avenue (over to Floral Avenue) is part of a federally designated “opportunity zone,” the potential capital gains tax benefits are not impacting the timing of the UDF and Xavier development plans.

### XAVIER UNIVERSITY/TOWN AND GOWN SECTION

Xavier already has invested heavily on the west side of the corridor from the Wasson Way to Cleneay Avenue. University Station is successfully providing the modern apartments that college students prefer over dorm rooms. The development also includes medical, health and research uses that are good for Norwood’s earnings tax receipts.



Xavier Apartment Development

Details of the Xavier developments include a 480 bed apartment building completed in 2014, a CTI Clinical Trial and Consulting Services office building, a more recent four-story housing complex with 49 units that include 128 beds across a mix of units, ranging from efficiencies to up to five bedrooms (Business Courier October 2019).



Investment also includes a \$54 million multipurpose Health United Building (HUB) developed by Tri-Health and Xavier University that will house classrooms and a fitness and recreation center on campus.

The next frontier for Xavier is the old Norwood Plaza site. An interview with Xavier leadership revealed no immediate plans for the site. Once a long term lease expires, Xavier will likely demolish the retail buildings but maintain the garage building on the northeast corner of the site for equipment storage and other similar uses.

When Xavier is ready to develop the site, this plan suggests integrating residential uses with the neighborhood (single family) at Ivanhoe and Wayland Avenues. In the short term, Xavier leadership indicated a willingness to enhance the landscaping along Montgomery Road and consolidate curb cuts. Xavier is also willing to link Hudson Avenue to the bike trail spur on the west side of the Norwood Plaza parking lot. This plan also recommends the removal of the Norwood Plaza sign.

### Proximate to Xavier Opportunities

Pond Realty (aka Joseph Group) owns about 5 acres south of Lexington Avenue. Stones Lanes owns 2 acres on the north side of Lexington Avenue. Development of these properties would be a good match along Montgomery Road to the University Station development. During the development of this plan, the Joseph Group was planning on moving the Volkswagen dealership to the Pond Realty site. If and when this happens, the existing VW dealership may be a redevelopment target for Xavier. Upon redevelopment, the Cleneay Avenue/Montgomery Road intersection should be straightened. All of these development sites should consider how to leverage the unique asset that is the Wasson Way by emphasizing pedestrian safety, limiting curb cuts and enhancing landscaping.

### **TRANSITION AREA BETWEEN XAVIER AND UDF**

The area north of Norwood Plaza to Mentor Avenue has good potential to become a walkable section of the corridor. The uses just north of the Ivanhoe Avenue intersection are active and in good condition. The Naegele properties could also contribute to the revitalization of this section. UDF's recent purchase of the Best Auto Repair site also bodes well for future investment in this area.

The plan recommends establishing a "parkway" section along Montgomery Road between Hudson Avenue and Wayland Avenue. Enhanced landscaping and streetscaping around the Norwood Fire Museum, New Vision Missionary Baptist Church, Autozone, and Core Clay could create a visual break from the buildings and parking lots that make up most of the corridor.

## UDF CORPORATE CAMPUS SECTION

United Dairy Farmers' (UDF) historic home is located on Montgomery Road. It was here that Carl Lindner, Sr. started a pickup milk business. This initial step led to his son eventually becoming one of the richest people in the world! The UDF holdings in this area include a retail store, dairy processing plant, and home office. UDF has recently expanded their real estate holdings along Montgomery Road and is considering expansion/enhancement.



UDF Corporate Office

There is a great opportunity to partner with UDF on their plans. Parking is limited in this part of the corridor and UDF's recent acquisitions are some of the most rundown properties in the corridor. At a bare minimum, this plan calls for UDF to demolish structures on these parcels and prepare them for development. Parking is an issue in this section and enhancement of parking could include a new lot across from Mentor Avenue and the existing UDF property at 4001 Montgomery Road.

Building on the history and appeal of UDF could benefit the corridor and Norwood. It is not too much of a stretch to suggest that a museum to Carl Lindner Jr.'s legacy would be quite appealing to a wide group of Greater Cincinnatians. Thinking of this area as a "corporate campus" could make this an important, unique destination for Norwood. Norwood may want to consider a zone change for this area to a Planned Unit Development (PUD). The PUD could support a more cohesive appearance and the consolidation of some buildings and functions. Design considerations such as murals, building materials, and streetscaping could also be included. There is a good opportunity to create outside seating so customers can enjoy an ice cream along Montgomery Road.

Design will be critical to such an idea being leveraged to most benefit. The former Best Automotive Repair Shop building could be expanded south in a zero-lot line way (traditional Main Street/form based codes, etc.) as a compliment to the Naegele one story building on the westside of Montgomery Road.

## MULTIFAMILY SECTION

This plan proposes a block of dense housing from Williams Avenue to Waverly Avenue. The addition of Carpenter Flats Apartments complements the existing housing on the east side of the corridor. Rezoning to solidify this non-retail part of the corridor should be considered.

## TRANSITION SECTION (WITH SMALL AUTO ORIENTED NODE)

The section from roughly Waverly Avenue to Monroe Avenue has a hodgepodge of uses and building conditions. The area is impacted by the old CN&L railroad right of way that divides parcels into odd shapes which limits the ability to develop them. This section can be broken down further into subsections that have unique characteristics that could help activate them and contribute to the overall Corridor.

### Lafayette Intersection

The intersection of Lafayette Avenue, Cameron Avenue and Montgomery Road is especially unusual. Hopkins Avenue is also close to this intersection and it appears the six traffic signals located here work in coordination making for long, frustrating light cycles. Lafayette Avenue is used by locals to bypass congestion on Montgomery Road. The current configuration creates a very challenging environment for pedestrians particularly on the east side of Montgomery Road. There are many potential solutions for this location including the extension of Hopkins Avenue and the realignment of the Ashland Avenue/Wanda Avenue intersection. The plan suggests using a tactical urbanism intervention to temporarily close Lafayette Avenue near Montgomery Road to develop a temporary park and improve pedestrian accommodations.

### Auto-Oriented Cluster

The properties on the west side of the corridor from Waverly Avenue to Hopkins Avenue may be challenging to develop as ownership is hidden in LLCs. The plan recommends preserving the eastside street-wall from Slane Avenue and Delaware Avenue. Auto-oriented uses are a necessary land use in corridors like Montgomery Road. Modern, well maintained uses like Kroger Gas, Carstar, and KOI Auto Parts can contribute to the overall function of a corridor. Concentrating these uses at Wanda Avenue and Ashland Avenue may be a good way to cluster their often negative impact to pedestrian oriented uses. The nearby historic Hopkins Avenue rail station building should be preserved.

### Norwood Library

The Library Facilities Master Plan calls for the expansion of the Norwood Library. However, activating unused space in the existing building could result in a lack of enough dedicated parking. Private parking lots surround the Library. The Library explored buying the parking lot of the church to the west. The property is for sale, but in addition to the parking lot, it includes the old church building which is not compatible with library use. There are opportunities for the Library to enhance landscaping and highlight the beautiful building (perhaps with uplighting). A side benefit of additional parking is that it could remove the need for the existing driveway onto Montgomery Road.

## Block South of Surrey Square

River City Mortgage and Farber Dentistry could develop their parking lots on the east side of the corridor between Ashland Avenue and Monroe Avenue. Another option for these parking lots is for the City to acquire them as municipal lots. The A&B Locksmith is also a potential redevelopment site. On the west side of the corridor the ownership is in a bunch of LLCs that might be challenging to work with, but the existing streetwall of buildings should be preserved.

## SHOPPING/SURREY SQUARE/DOWNTOWN SECTION

The north portion of the corridor has been transformed by modern development. Although much of it is more suburban in nature than “The Pike” days, most of it is in good condition. The southwest corner of Sherman Avenue will soon join these solid properties through the redevelopment of the Fidelity Professional Building (Ventura Building Group).

Norwood Together and Off-Pike Market have spent significant time reimagining Victory Park. Reusing the Markethouse/Safety Lane Building could help activate the park. Opening the park up (trimming trees, regrading, etc.) could also help enhance the park and make it a green oasis in the middle of an area full of pavement and buildings.

Surrey Square Shopping Center is a well maintained, vibrant part of the corridor, but many members of the Norwood community wish it better fit in with the more pedestrian oriented vision for the Montgomery Road Corridor. Several specific recommendations were identified during the planning process. Perhaps the biggest complaint about Surrey Square is the large parking lot. Better landscaping, pedestrian access, traffic flow and development of outparcels were all suggested as ways to mitigate the impact of the ocean of asphalt. A suggestion to create a drive aisle parallel to Montgomery Road may reduce pedestrian conflicts with the drive aisle in front of the store fronts. In response to COVID-19 , better outdoor dining areas in the southern part of the shopping center was also recommended.

## CITY GOVERNMENT/JOBS SECTION

The area north of Sherman Avenue quickly turns into a large office park on the east and local government buildings on the west. The earnings tax associated with the office building is an important piece of the revenue that pays for city services. City Hall is an important historic building that should be preserved. The modern police and fire stations may have passed their useful lives and redevelopment is an opportunity.

The importance of the Sherman Avenue intersection cannot be overstated. Many civic uses exist to the west including the high school, middle school, health department, YMCA, and post office. A cohesive campus plan could better take advantage of how these sites represent and serve the citizens of Norwood.

To the east are additional office, light industrial and retail uses. Some of these areas have redevelopment potential. Looking for a way to knit them into the broader fabric of the community should be a goal of the City.

## NORWOOD LATERAL/AUTO ORIENTED SECTION

The section of the corridor closest to the Norwood Lateral has more of the character associated with an interstate interchange. Restaurant, office and hotel uses with large parking lots and limited pedestrian amenities are compatible with this type of area. Maintaining beautification efforts and supporting these uses as appropriate should continue.

The number of traffic signals and width of pavement seem over engineered for the current volume of traffic in this area. Temporary changes should be tested to evaluate traffic impacts. Redevelopment of the Quality Inn or other sites may warrant the use of the existing infrastructure.

# CHAPTER 1

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### EXPERIMENT! ACTIVATE! (TACTICAL URBANISM)

Tactical urbanism includes low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment intended to improve local neighborhoods and urban gathering places. Tactical urbanism has gained popularity in recent years as it allows plans to be tested in the real world faster and cheaper than was typical. This comes in recognition that bureaucracies often move slowly and municipal budgets often don't have the capacity to implement capital intensive projects without help from state and federal resources.

Many local community development corporations have embraced tactical urbanism as helping the community discover untapped locations by creating demand in places where market forces may be failing. Tactical urbanism also has an entrepreneurial angle that allows "temporary" or low-cost businesses- like food trucks- to develop a following and then make the leap to brick and mortar restaurants.

During the course of this study several areas were identified that could be locations of tactical urbanism interventions. Off-Pike Market's use of the Victory Park/Markethouse/Safety Lane area is a good example of activating a space with vendors and a farmers market to attract people to a space. This plan recommends using the successful and known Off-Pike Market to test the activation of other spaces around the Montgomery Road Corridor. In addition to the Off-Pike Market, food trucks, concerts/live music, movie nights, and cruise-ins all can either help complement the Off-Pike Market or work as their own individual event. Potential locations for these events are listed on the following page:

- **Heritage Park** - use existing driveway for food trucks and show movie on side of the nail salon building.
- **City Parking Deck** - food trucks and large vehicles may not be able to enter the garage, but if enough vendors could make it to the top, a cool street party with views of the entire City could happen.
- **Central Parke Fountain Site** - this high visibility site has built in features like step seating and landscaping to warrant a tactical urbanism event to explore the possibilities. The addition of street trees along the Sherman Avenue side of the site could help provide much needed shade.



Conceptual Design of Heritage Park

- **Intersection of Lafayette Avenue and Montgomery Road**- A temporary closing of a portion of Lafayette Avenue combined with the former railroad right of way could create a brand new “park” space. If this temporary effort is successful, it could lead to a more permanent intervention.



Conceptual Design of Intersection of Lafayette Avenue and Montgomery Road

## MONTGOMERY ROAD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

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- **Prentiss and Lindley Avenues**- The one block area near the intersection with Williams Avenue is a unique opportunity to establish another park/public space at this prominent intersection. Hosting a street party and working with the owners of the block between Prentiss and Williams could help explore future possibilities.
- **Fire Museum at Ivanhoe Avenue**- another potential street closure that could create a minipark with plenty of parking in Norwood Plaza. Maybe make a big wheel course in Norwood Plaza parking lot? What kid doesn't like firetrucks? The City could bring down an ambulance and a firetruck for a meet and greet.



Historic Fire Truck in Fire Museum

*Street-plans.com* has resources on tactical urbanism including the helpful *Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials and Design*. These resources can be used by the City and Norwood Together as they implement this plan.

Another way to activate these spaces is to add public art. Murals are a form of public art that has become very popular in Greater Cincinnati and other regions. Murals not only provide a splash of color that enlivens an area, they also can pay tribute to something unique and local. Recently, the City of Norwood appointed an art committee to review the installation of murals in the city.

Possible mural locations include:

- UDF Freezer wall
- Miller Brothers paint building



POLICY CHANGES

Zoning Changes

TRIM THE GENERAL BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICT
Add Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay to General Business around the “Civic Center” area west of Montgomery Road from Maple Avenue to Lawrence Avenue
Add “Mixed Use” overlay to the area along Montgomery Road from Courtland Avenue to Waverly Avenue
Change the area along Montgomery Road from Waverly Avenue to Prentiss Avenue from General Business to the R-3 multifamily district
Encourage the formation of the UDF “corporate campus” from Williams Avenue to Mentor Avenue by adding the Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay to UDF properties
Add “Mixed Use” overlay to the area from Mentor Avenue to the southern edge of the corridor. Also, near this location, some properties currently zoned General Business along Ivanhoe Avenue may be more appropriately zoned the R-3 multifamily district. Consider also changing the industrial zoning west of Norwood Plaza to the Office District to better reflect the possible uses Xavier University might consider for this area

Changes in retail and consumer preferences have reduced the need for commercially zoned property. Grocery store consolidations, online retail, and the current impacts of COVID-19 put big box retail particularly at risk. Residents looking for improved quality of life are attracted to walkable, local businesses. Given these trends, this plan recommends significantly reducing the current amount of General Business District (GBD) zoning. Existing properties that are built to the sidewalk and those that would compliment these existing buildings should be protected with a new mixed use district overlay zone.

The overlay zone could also help strengthen design considerations in areas that could be more pedestrian oriented. The sections identified by this plan as transitioning could benefit from these additional guidelines that would include design elements like amount of clear vision glass on first story facades, limited amounts of signage, building materials, etc.

This plan recommends that several properties south of Waverly Avenue be changed from GBD zoning to the Multi-Family District (R3) to better match the existing uses.

The City currently has a Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay zone that is designed to help provide development flexibility on larger sites that have a unified appearance. The University Station development used the PUD overlay. This plan identified other areas that have common ownership but have been developed in different stages which has resulted in a lack of cohesion and overall design. Two of these areas are the “civic” area near Maple Avenue that includes the police and fire stations, City Hall and Heritage Park (and other public buildings heading west on Sherman Avenue) and the UDF home office near Williams Avenue. Designating these areas a PUD and encouraging the property owners to develop a master plan for their sites could improve the appearance and linkages at the sites.

One small area of zoning cleanup should also be considered. The zoning west of Norwood Plaza that is currently General Business District (GBD-PUD) should be changed to the Office District (O-PUD) to better reflect the likelihood of its development as something aligned with Xavier University.

Sometimes a historic district designation supplements a zoning code. During the course of this plan an evaluation of the appropriateness of such a designation was being evaluated. A historic designation could be a substitute or complement to the overlay zone discussed in this section of the plan.

## Small Business Initiatives

ATTRACT SMALL BUSINESSES
Consider creating a tax incentive program targeted for small businesses
Work with HCDC business incubator to locate “graduates” to brick and mortar spaces in the Montgomery Road Corridor
Coordinate with Xavier University’s Sedler Family Center for Experiential Learning in Business to fill existing vacant spaces in the corridor
Create a permit ombudsman position that could help entrepreneurs navigate the permit process that they may not be familiar with
Promote available properties and lease rates on the City website

Norwood has a history of using tax incentives to attract businesses and development to the City. The recent successful developments along the Norwood Lateral, notably Paycor, have been based on tax breaks. A high quality city not only needs these large businesses but also smaller businesses. Several City of Norwood initiatives should be considered to help small businesses locate and thrive in Norwood.

Norwood could consider creating a tax incentive program targeted for small businesses. The City should coordinate with HCDC, a resource for small businesses located in Norwood, to develop such a program. HCDC also has a business incubator located in Norwood. The incubator offers a pipeline of entrepreneurs who may want to take the next step in their business to a brick and mortar space in the Montgomery Road Corridor. Xavier University’s Sedler Family Center for Experiential Learning in Business could be another source of new businesses that can fill up existing vacant spaces in the corridor.

Another tactic that could help facilitate new businesses coming to the Montgomery Road Corridor is the creation of a permit ombudsman position that could help entrepreneurs navigate the permit process that they may not be familiar with. The City could also promote available properties and lease rates on the City website.

## Work with Other Public Entities

Given Norwood’s relatively limited resources to fund capital improvements, the City should look to other public partners that may have their own resources.

ODOT- Several stakeholders indicated that in the past ODOT was a stumbling block to some of the enhancements that are proposed in this plan. All indications are that is no longer the case. The City of Norwood is working with ODOT on two projects in the Montgomery Road Corridor including signal timing and pedestrian safety measures. The City of Norwood should continue to work closely with ODOT and apply for grants as appropriate.

Metro- Three bus routes use the Montgomery Road Corridor including the 4, 51 and Metro+. The Metro sales tax was passed in the Spring of 2020. This should provide the stable funding needed to enhance existing services. Norwood should coordinate with Metro about possible enhancements.

Library- The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County recently adopted a facilities master plan in 2019. The plan outlined improvements to the Norwood branch. The City of Norwood should keep open lines of communication with the Library to make sure these improvements take place. According to the library website, the improvements to the Norwood branch are scheduled for 2025-2026. (see appendix for specific library recommendations)

## Other

Several other policy changes should be considered to help spur investment in the corridor. A “carrot and stick” approach has been used by other jurisdictions to encourage property owners to improve their buildings. The City could require owners of vacant buildings to register and pay a fee. Vacant buildings can be public safety hazards and require inspection. Enforcing a property maintenance code is another way the City can proactively work with property owners to take care of their buildings. A locally funded incentive program for facade improvements is another way to help improve the appearance of the corridor.

During the course of preparing this plan other individual items like updating parking meters to accept credit cards and use a mobile app, hiring a professional city planner to help write and manage new aspects of the zoning code and creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district along Montgomery Road to help pay for public improvements were identified. There is potential to have workers and visitors park at Central Parke garage (owned by the City of Norwood) and walk across Montgomery Road to help ensure surface lot spaces are available.

## MEDIUM TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Recommendations that may take more capital and more time to implement are identified in this section. Further refinement of these recommendations should take place in preliminary engineering studies. These studies will provide the opportunity to incorporate landscape design and other design details that are beyond the scope of this plan.

The Montgomery Road pavement needs- at a minimum- to be resurfaced. This plan recommends a complete rehabilitation of the roadway. This project will open the door to potential changes in how the right-of-way is striped, the installation of planted medians, and intersection upgrades. This will also be the opportunity to refresh the infrastructure with new curbs, rebuilt stormwater catch basins, consolidated driveways, and other utility upgrades like water, gas, and sewer. A slight expansion in project scope could also include the first 50 feet of side-streets. Detailed recommendations for right-of-way changes are included below and in the maps in the Appendix.

### Reconfiguring the Right-of-Way (ROW)

Some items to consider when resurfacing or rehabilitating Montgomery Road are on street parking, traffic signal timing and medians. On street parking protects pedestrians, helps zero-lot-line businesses with limited parking, and can act as traffic calming. More uniform signalized intersections can lead to better traffic flow, less frustrated/aggressive driving, and safer intersections for pedestrians.

Norwood has been awarded ODOT safety funds to study in greater detail some of the proposals within the right-of-way suggested by this plan. These further studies will help set the stage for the funding of the construction of these improvements.

#### XAVIER UNIVERSITY/TOWN AND GOWN SECTION

Enhance and expand landscaping at Norwood Plaza site

#### TRANSITION AREA BETWEEN XAVIER AND UDF

Continue three-lane section with center turn lane and planted median with permanent on street parking

Incorporate landscape buffer in front of Naegle parking lot

Create “parkway” feel from Wayland Avenue to Hudson Avenue by enhancing and adding landscaping

#### UDF CORPORATE CAMPUS SECTION

Continue three-lane section with center turn lane and planted median with permanent on street parking

#### MULTIFAMILY SECTION

Continue three-lane section with center turn lane and planted median with permanent on street parking

**TRANSITION SECTION (WITH SMALL AUTO ORIENTED NODE)**

Begin three-lane section with center turn lane and planted median with permanent on street parking south of Monroe Avenue

Reconfigure Ashland Avenue to line up with Wanda Avenue and add pedestrian crosswalks

Reconfigure Lafayette Avenue intersection. Evaluate full or partial closure of Lafayette Avenue. Tighten curb radius at Cameron Avenue to increase pedestrian safety

Consolidate curb cuts at Little Caesars

Add a crosswalk at southern Slane Avenue to use pedestrian refuge in the median

**SHOPPING/SURREY SQUARE/DOWNTOWN SECTION**

Construct planted median where not needed for left turn lane

Bumpouts at pedestrian crossing where appropriate

Relocation of Metro Route 51 Stop from Montgomery Road to Sherman Avenue for better pedestrian access to Kroger

**CITY GOVERNMENT/JOBS SECTION**

Consider making Maple and Elm Avenues two way- add left turn lane where necessary

Consider Fire Department preemption of signals at Maple and Elm Avenues to allow apparatus to enter Montgomery Road. At least an emergency vehicle exit sign

Add on street parking protected by bump outs to the east side of Montgomery Road between Elm and Maple Avenues

Replace right turn lane on Sherman Avenue westbound with on street parking

At Norwood City Hall, there are both cobra head streetlights and “gas lights.” Removal of cobra head lights and dramatic up lighting of the building could provide better impact

**NORWOOD LATERAL/AUTO ORIENTED SECTION**

The traffic signal at Frisch’s does not seem warranted- temporarily switch to flashing yellow on Montgomery Road and flashing red at Frisch’s driveway. Permanent change is recommended at this location to remove the traffic signal and poles and perhaps repurpose to another location

The southbound right turn lane in front of Quality Inn should temporarily be turned into on street parking. Long term may depend on Quality Inn redevelopment

Construct planted median where not needed for left turn lane

# MONTGOMERY ROAD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

## TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short Term

IMPROVE MONTGOMERY ROAD (SHORT TERM)		
Montgomery Road Signal Timing	2020	ODOT/City/TEC
Design for Pedestrian Crossings	Winter 2021	ODOT/Barge Design
South Corridor Facelift – New signs, painted street poles, refreshed road markings	2021	City of Norwood Public Works
IMPROVE VICTORY PARK		
Fill the pool, remove security fence, trim/remove trees and landscape	Now	City of Norwood
Move storage out of market house	2021	City of Norwood
Obtain grant to hire landscape architect	2021	City of Norwood
Hold programs in the park	2021 Ongoing	City of Norwood Recreation
HOLD TACTICAL URBANISM EVENTS		
Heritage Park Movie Night	Schedule Monthly/Quarterly in 2021	Norwood Together in Partnership with City
Top of the Highlands rooftop party on parking deck		
Food Truck Final Friday at Central Parke Fountain		
Off-Pike Market at Lafayette Ave Intersection		
Public Safety day at Fire Museum		
DEMOLISH EYESORES		
UDF/Best Auto Body	Spring 2021	UDF
Norwood Plaza sign and entrance	Spring 2021	Xavier University
Norfolk Southern Yards	Spring 2021	Joseph Group

Medium Term

IMPROVE MONTGOMERY ROAD (MEDIUM TERM)		
Pavement Rehabilitation Project	Prelim engineering 2021	TEC
	SCIP/LTIP Application Fall 2021	TEC
	Construction 2024	TBD
Private/Public Sector Edge Treatment	Spring 2021	Norwood Together
	Spring 2022	City of Norwood/SID
Abandoned Sign removal	Spring 2021	Building Department
CONNECT TO THE WASSON WAY		
Wasson Way crossing of Montgomery Road	Spring 2021	Wasson Way/City of Cincinnati
Wasson Way North Bike Connection	Multiple phases	Norwood Together
OTHER		
Formation of Special Improvement District (SID)	Spring 2021	Norwood Together/City of Norwood
Victory Park- implement landscape plan	2022	City of Norwood
Support Norwood Library Expansion	2021 Ongoing	Norwood Together/City of Norwood

# CHAPTER 2

## BACKGROUND

The Montgomery Road Corridor Plan is a grassroots effort that originated as a key recommendation of the 2019 Norwood Quality of Life Plan. The Quality of Life Plan was developed by a group of Norwood residents with the help of LISC of Greater Cincinnati. With assistance from LISC, Interact for Health and the Community Building Institute (CBI) of Xavier University (XU), these residents organized themselves as Norwood Together [www.norwoodtogether.org](http://www.norwoodtogether.org) with their goal of “growing and building equitable economic and community development in Norwood.” Their vision for Montgomery Road is to become again “the heart of a thriving, walkable community.” One of their strategies was to convene and survey key stakeholders, conduct market research and analysis, assess physical, policy and funding needs and create a strategic plan for redevelopment of Montgomery Road. This plan attempts to implement that strategy.

### HISTORY

Historically, Norwood had been a thriving city with a strong industrial base including the General Motors Fischer Body plant which 50 years ago employed 5,000 workers building the iconic Chevrolet Camaros and Pontiac Trans Ams. Other prominent manufacturing companies, including U.S. Playing Card and Weir-Kilby, had major plants in Norwood. Montgomery Road was the heart of the City then with retail shops and business offices lining the street on both sides. However, in 1987 the last Camaro rolled off the assembly line and General Motors shut down the plant as part of a major reorganization and reaction to the increasing popularity of cars made by foreign automakers. Eventually, U.S. Playing Cards and Weir-Kilby, as well as others, moved their manufacturing plants to other locations and Norwood was declared in fiscal emergency multiple times most recently in October 2016.



## TRANSITION

It has been a long hard slog, but clearly Norwood is starting to pull out of this seemingly unending emergency and is now beginning to move forward. The first new Mayor in 16 years was sworn in at the beginning of January 2020 and he has brought on board a new administrative team. And the elected and administrative leadership have a highly motivated and organized citizens group in Norwood Together with which to collaborate. Other vital stakeholders in this planning initiative include institutions like Xavier University and UDF. XU owns the old Norwood Plaza site which is now used for extra parking but will undoubtedly be redeveloped in the future. UDF's home office and ice cream plant are located in the corridor.

Part of the “New Norwood” includes the recent redevelopment of several old factory sites. Development of these sites, known as “brownfields,” have used public private partnerships. One example is Linden Pointe on the Lateral where the Port Authority assisted with clean up through a \$750,000 grant. The U.S. Playing Card site is next through a planned redevelopment by PLK. Other former manufacturing sites now have hotels, restaurants and retail shops on them. Norwood now has three big consumer attractions: Rookwood Commons, Rookwood Exchange and Rookwood Pavilion. New office complexes have gone up, too, and companies like CDK Global and Paycor recently set up shop in the city.



U.S. Playing Card Site

# CHAPTER 3

## RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS

### NORWOOD QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

In 2019 Norwood Together adopted a Quality of Life Plan with many Goals and Strategies that are applicable to Montgomery Road Corridor. These recommendations form the backbone or justification for many of the recommendations of this plan including:

- Create opportunities and spaces for residents to connect through programming such as pop-up art galleries and community gardens
- Support new and current businesses by leveraging public and private resources
- Maintain a diverse and high quality rental stock
- Decrease the percentage of vacant properties
- Beautify public spaces with murals, public art, and updated and well-maintained signs & plantings
- Improve and revitalize Norwood’s parks and community center, prioritizing Victory Park because of its central, highly visible location
- Make Norwood’s roads safer, finding new funding sources for street repairs and maintenance and prioritizing Montgomery Road
- Empower people to “polish the Gem of the Highlands” through education, outreach and community clean- up events
- Encourage walking and biking so people take advantage of Norwood’s infrastructure

### More Third Places and Potentially One Iconic Space

The Norwood Quality of Life Plan emphasizes the need for more opportunities to connect with neighbors. These can be traditional third places like coffee shops and bookstores. They also can be the iconic places that many of Cincinnati’s most popular pedestrian areas have. Nearby examples include Mt. Lookout Square, Oakley Esplanade, and Hyde Park Square. There are several locations in Norwood that have the potential to serve as this type of location, but all of them are not ideally suited for this purpose. Iconic places are not a requirement to successful pedestrian oriented business districts. Places like Hamilton Avenue in Cincinnati’s Northside neighborhood does not have an iconic center.

## MONTGOMERY ROAD SMALL BUSINESS PLAN (HCDC 2019)

Also in 2019 HCDC developed the Montgomery Road Small Business Plan. Through interviews with local businesses the plan confirmed the strengths of the corridor which primarily focused on its proximity to important parts of Greater Cincinnati.

Xavier University anchors the southern portion of the corridor. The corridor is also served by three interstate interchanges: I-71 Dana/Montgomery, I-71 Smith/Edwards, and Norwood Lateral/Montgomery Road.

The recent community energy around the Off-Pike Market and Norwood Together were also seen as strengths.

Perceived weaknesses focused on the City of Norwood government which was seen as unresponsive and unable to maintain basic infrastructure.

The plan included data collection and analysis that was very useful to the Montgomery Road Corridor Plan. Information on Land Use (Auditor code based), Building Conditions and Zoning were used to inform this plan.

The Building Condition data was especially important as it identified a cluster of deteriorating properties between Hopkins and Delaware Avenues. It also found that the active UDF properties were some of the properties in the best condition in the corridor. The analysis also classified Norwood Plaza as deteriorating.

# CHAPTER 4

## DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

### TOPOGRAPHY

The City of Norwood’s nickname is “The Gem of the Highlands.” It comes by this honestly- the city sits between two natural boundaries that limit east/west connections.

Ross Run forms a steep valley along the west side of Norwood resulting in only two routes traversing the grade. Duck Creek formed the eastern boundary to Norwood but is now buried under I-71 which also limits access in a east west direction. Only Williams Avenue, Smith Road and Robertson Avenue connect to the east over I-71. Only Dana Avenue (in the City of Cincinnati) connects all the way east to west across the southern extents of the City of Norwood. Other important east/west roads include Sherman and Hopkins Avenues.

The Norwood Lateral forms the northern boundary of the study area and is traversed north/south by Section Avenue, Wesley Avenue and Forest Avenue.

The Wasson Way, a former Norfolk Southern (N&S) railroad, is now a east/west hike/bike facility at the southern boundary to Norwood.

Importantly, only Montgomery Road provides a north/south connection into Norwood from the south (technically some connections into Xavier University).



Topographic Map

## RAILROADS

Railroads, importantly the Wasson Way (N&S), but also the old Cincinnati- Lebanon and Northern (CL&N) had a big impact on the land use in the Southwest quadrant of the study area. As one can imagine, industrial uses clustered along the railroads. A few remnants of these uses exist today.

## STREET GRID

Many midwestern towns (see downtown Cincinnati) were platted in a rectilinear grid-often with north/south and east/west roads. The study area has elements of a north/south and east/west grid pattern but it is highly modified due to some of the topographic and railroad constraints identified in this plan. The “Presidential Streets” are a good example of how the alignment of the CL&N shifted the grid 45 degrees resulting in non right angle intersections that create traffic challenges but urban design opportunities.

Post World War II development often included the consolidation of grid streets into so called “super blocks” where large single use developments could occur with accompanying parking. Surrey Square, Norwood High School/Middle School and Central Station/Central Parke use this model and are more suburban in style and create boundaries for pedestrian movement.

Traffic calming on Montgomery Road may push intra-Norwood traffic to other north/south roads.

Modifications to strengthen the east/west connections of Williams and Sherman Avenues could help create nodes at their intersections with Montgomery Road, but could also increase traffic on these primarily residential streets (similar to Markbreit Road in Oakley).

## CURRENT VACANCIES

An inventory of vacant properties recently completed by the Norwood Police department did not identify any notable cluster of vacant properties in the corridor.

## PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

An analysis of property ownership in the corridor identified major land owners to be Xavier University, UDF, the City of Norwood, Brixmore Properties, and Naegele Properties. Most other owners only own one or two parcels.

## CURRENT ZONING (HCDC)

Like many local jurisdictions, Norwood's original zoning map was likely put in place during a period of growth. Now that Norwood's population has decreased from those high growth days, it may make sense to right size the amount of commercial zoning in the corridor. This follows a strategy to attract high quality tenants by reducing supply of commercial locations and thus increasing demand for the remaining commercially zoned areas. In many areas, the depth of the General Business district zoning might not match the current market along Montgomery Road which is more suited to smaller businesses than large big box or interstate commercial development.

Specific locations where zoning changes from General Business to other districts include:

- The Civic Center area west of Montgomery Road from Maple Avenue to Lawrence Avenue
- The mixed use transition section from Courtland Avenue to Waverly Avenue
- The multifamily area from Waverly Avenue to Prentiss Avenue
- The UDF "corporate campus" from Williams Avenue to Mentor Avenue
- The mixed use area from Mentor Avenue to the southern edge of the corridor. Here, some properties currently zoned General Business along Ivanhoe Avenue may be more appropriately zoned multifamily. When making these wholesale changes, it may also make sense to change the industrial zoning west of Norwood Plaza to Office to better reflect the possible uses Xavier University might consider for this area.

## PARKING

Like many of the issues in the corridor, the two halves of the corridor- north and south have different characteristics related to parking. The northern half's more suburban nature has led to an abundance of private surface parking lots- particularly at Surrey Square and north of City Hall. The civic center also creates access to several publicly owned surface lots. The Central Parke garage has an estimated 1400 spaces alone.

The southern half of the corridor has many surface lots, but most of them are privately owned and often located away from parking demand. Often too these surface lots are the most desirable locations for redevelopment. During stakeholder interviews, participants identified two locations, UDF and the Public Library, that need more dedicated parking. Both entities are planning on expansions, but parking could be a limiting factor. It is also interesting to note how limited the parking is near the Naegele and Jordan one story stores while just three blocks away are the over 1100 spots in Norwood Plaza and adjacent lots. These lots are almost exclusively used for Xavier basketball games and other XU events.

# CHAPTER 5

## TRANSPORTATION/ROW ANALYSIS

### ACCIDENT DATA

ODOT traffic accident information was downloaded from 2017-2019 and depicted on a corridor map. Although very few accidents resulted in a severe injury, several intersections are “hot spots” for accidents in general. The Montgomery Road intersections with Maple Avenue, Sherman Avenue, Courtland Avenue, Williams Avenue and Cleneay Avenue were locations of clusters of accidents.

### TRAFFIC COUNTS

The OKI traffic count map tool and ODOT’s Transportation Information Management System (TIMS) were referenced to obtain traffic count data for the corridor. Counts generally range from around 17,000 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) in the southern portions of the corridor to around 20,000 ADT around Sherman Avenue. Sherman Avenue has some of the highest ADT of any cross street with Montgomery Road. Traffic counts on Sherman Avenue are around 8,000 ADT. Williams Avenue east of Montgomery Road has an ADT of near 5,000.

These counts help justify some of the recommendations for reducing the number of travel lanes in the corridor. A similar road, Springfield Pike in the City of Wyoming, actually has slightly higher ADT than Montgomery Road and has recently been reduced from a four lane to a three lane section.

For comparison, roads like Dana Avenue and Madison Road have similar traffic counts to Montgomery Road. Interstate grade roads often have much higher traffic counts. For instance the Norwood lateral has an ADT around 65,000 and I-71 in the vicinity of Norwood 135,000 ADT.

There often is a counterintuitive nature between traffic and economic development. Many stakeholders complained about the traffic on Montgomery Road, but traffic is the lifeblood of economic development. Businesses use ADT statistics to identify locations where they want to be. Even mom and pop businesses like visibility. It is a careful balancing act to make streets and intersections safe for pedestrians and to keep traffic flowing so customers can get to businesses.



## CROSS SECTIONS

As noted throughout this report the right-of-way in this corridor is significantly different north and south of Monroe Avenue. In the northern section the right of way is around 90 feet whereas to the south the right of way can be as little as 60 feet. A traditional main street often has wider sidewalks, on-street parking on both sides of the street, and travel lanes in between. This is the recommended cross section in the corridor south of Monroe Avenue with a travel lane in each direction and a center turn lane or median. The large amount of right-of-way north of Monroe Avenue allows greater flexibility. In certain places such as in front of Surrey Square, on street parking may not be the preferred use of the right-of-way. Other uses such as a bus lane, enhanced landscaping or even pedestrian plazas could be considered.

## INTERSECTIONS

Montgomery Road bisects Norwood in a diagonal fashion in a southwest to northeast direction. Many of the intersecting streets run in a due east/west direction. This characteristic plus the impact of the CL&N railroad have created many non standard intersections and offset intersections. The most unusual intersections in the corridor are located at Lafayette Avenue/Cameron Avenue and Ivanhoe Avenue/Hudson Avenue. The offset at Cleney Avenue also should be improved.

## TRANSIT

Three Metro bus routes (Routes 4 and 51 and Metro Plus) use Montgomery Road. According to the Better Bus Coalition Route 4 (Montgomery Road) is the 4th busiest bus route in the system. The Surrey Square bus stop is the busiest stop on the route outside of downtown. The Metro Plus route provides “express” service to downtown Cincinnati. Route 51 is a crosstown route which also serves the corridor.

# CHAPTER 6

## RECOMMENDATIONS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE

### INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS OUTSIDE THE STUDY AREA

Several unusual intersections outside the study area have impacts on how the corridor functions and particularly east/west movement through Norwood. Although not formally part of the recommendations of this plan, future improvements to the Hopkins/Huston/Lowry, Elm/Section/Allison, and Sherman/Smith/Robertson intersections could help overall traffic flow in Norwood.

Review of the City of Norwood Zoning map also revealed some areas that could be subject to further study and possible change. Multifamily zoning is allowed in part of the “Presidential Streets” and all the way back to Allison Avenue on the west side of the corridor. There are areas that might be considered “spot zoning” along Cameron and Williams Avenues. It appears that there is plenty of room for a better transition from Montgomery Road into neighborhoods and to help create or reinforce activity nodes.

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# ABOUT THIS PLAN

## STEERING COMMITTEE

### City of Norwood

Tom Perry, Assistant to the Mayor

Catherine Fitzgerald, HCDC- Economic Development consultant

### Norwood Together

Mary C. Miller, President

Sarah Allen, Program Director, Center for Great Neighborhoods

Hillary Canan, Mercantile Library

Ben Eilerman, Development Project Manager, Over-the-Rhine Community Housing

David Thompson, Vice President for Affordable Housing, The Model Group

### Xavier University

Liz Blume, Executive Director, Community Building Institute (CBI)

Sean Comer, Government Relations Director

Emma Shirey, Community Building Associate (CBI)

### UDF

Tim Kling, Director of Real Estate

### Small Business Representative

Ty Velez, AJ's Cheesesteaks

## STAFF

### Hamilton County Planning & Development

Steve Johns, Planning Services Administrator

Yajie Hu, Associate Planner

Dean Niemeyer, Principal Planner

## FUNDING

Funded through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Administrative Funds

## PROCESS

June 2020 Hamilton County Planning+Development Grant Awarded

June 29, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting

July 2020 Stakeholder Interviews

July 30, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting

August 2020 Stakeholder Interviews

September 10, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting

October 15, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting

November 19, 2020 Public Open House

December 15, 2020 Virtual Open House

January 19, 2020 Presentation to City Council Economic Development Committee (scheduled)

February 3, 2020 Presentation to Planning Commission (scheduled)

February 23, 2020 Adoption by City Council (scheduled)

CENTRAL ZONE

**NORWOOD**

MAJOR RENOVATION + EXPANSION  
INCL. ACCESSIBILITY

**NEXT GEN**



26 THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI AND HAMILTON COUNTY FACILITY MASTER PLAN, PART II

Completed in 1907, the Norwood Branch Library is one of seven remaining of the original Hamilton County area libraries, built with funds provided by the Andrew Carnegie Foundation. In 2001, the Italian Renaissance style structure received a number of improvements, including the restoration of some of the building's original architectural elements. However, the facility is need of major HVAC, electrical, lighting, and telecommunications/data updates. The interior layout is not flexible and responsive to fluctuating service needs. By way of a retro-fitted concrete ramp off the street entry, public entry and main level public service is currently accessible. However, the lower level and upper level, which is currently blocked off and unused, are not. Public service is currently consolidated to the main level. Minimal opportunity for expansion is available on site. Its prominent location in Norwood and limited opportunity for space available elsewhere in the area make it a great candidate for a thorough renovation. It is served by three metro routes. Though parking is limited, community input suggests that an improved library at this location will still be visited by residents who will find parking on street or nearby.

The Norwood Branch Library's Area of Dominant Influence is the largest in this planning zone, and contains a population of 23,657. The lower level houses this branch's dedicated meeting room, which has a 50-person capacity, and is not presently accessible. This branch predominantly serves adults and families.

**COMMUNITY INPUT**

- Delineate space by activity with particular focus on technology and meeting rooms
- Maintain historic elements
- Utilize outdoor spaces more effectively while increasing parking

**RECOMMENDATION**

As a Design Project, it is recommended that the Norwood Branch Library undergo a major renovation and small expansion. This is intended to recapture the upper level and give full accessibility to

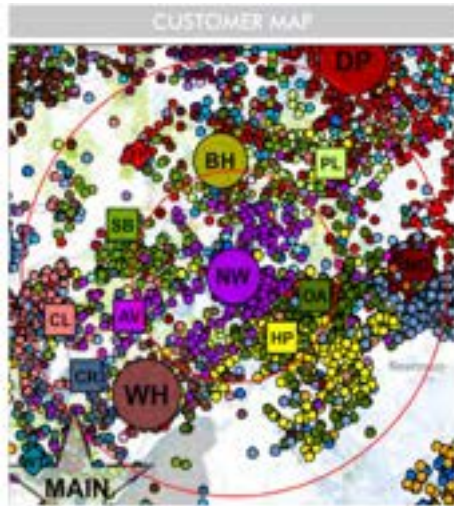
all three levels by incorporating an elevator tower. New ADA restrooms would be added as well. This will increase usable square footage to around 13,300 SF to 16,300 SF (see facing page).

**LONG-TERM VISION**

Beyond the recommendations of this FMP, as additional funding becomes available, the Library may seek to expand this branch even further. With present site restrictions, that would likely be at a new location elsewhere in the community. This site has significant parking constraints, and therefore should consider expansion opportunities for parking, should they arise.

Norwood and its surrounding communities are seeing new developments in residential zones as well as areas like the Montgomery Corridor Project. The new Quality of Life Commission is also diligently striving to increase the quality of life of every citizen in Norwood via improvements to community elements such as public spaces. There is also a new mixed-use development planned for the former U.S. Playing Card site. The Library remains active and responsive as a long-standing member of an ever-growing community and will consider these and other surrounding developments as it engages in opportunities for growth.

APPENDIX A - NORWOOD BRANCH LIBRARY AND THE FACILITY MASTER PLAN



NW - NORWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

	Branch	Type	Strategy	Distance
OA	Oakley	NBHD	Strategic Investment	2.1 mi
AV	Avondale	NBHD	Capital Maintenance + Strategic Investment	2.1 mi
BH	Bond Hill	NEXT GEN	Strategic Investment	2.4 mi
HP	Hyde Park	NBHD	Capital Maintenance + Strategic Investment	2.7 mi
WH	Walnut Hills	BIG NEXT GEN	Major Renovation + Expansion incl. Accessibility	2.8 mi
SB	St. Bernard	NBHD	Strategic Investment	3.0 mi

PROJECT DATA	
Usable Building Area	10,240 SF
Total Proposed Library	13,300 SF - 16,300 SF
Existing Site	16,250 SF
Added Parking Area	5,000 SF

OVERVIEW OF LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

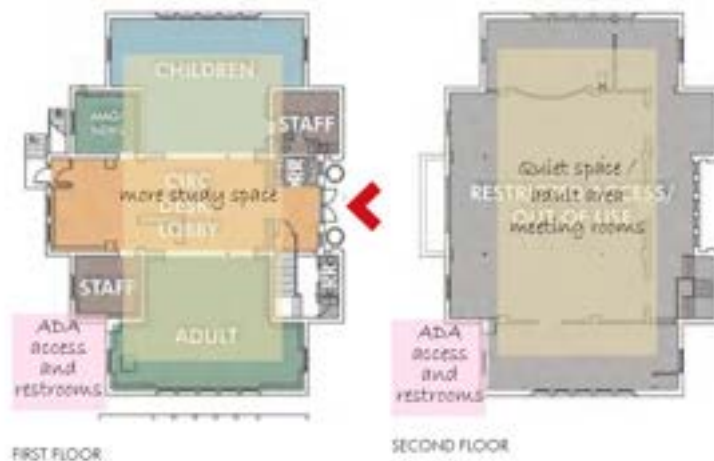
MAINTENANCE NEEDS: painting, elevator, lighting, fire, furniture, ductwork, accessibility, signage



Site plan. There is a possibility of leasing the parking area west of the current site

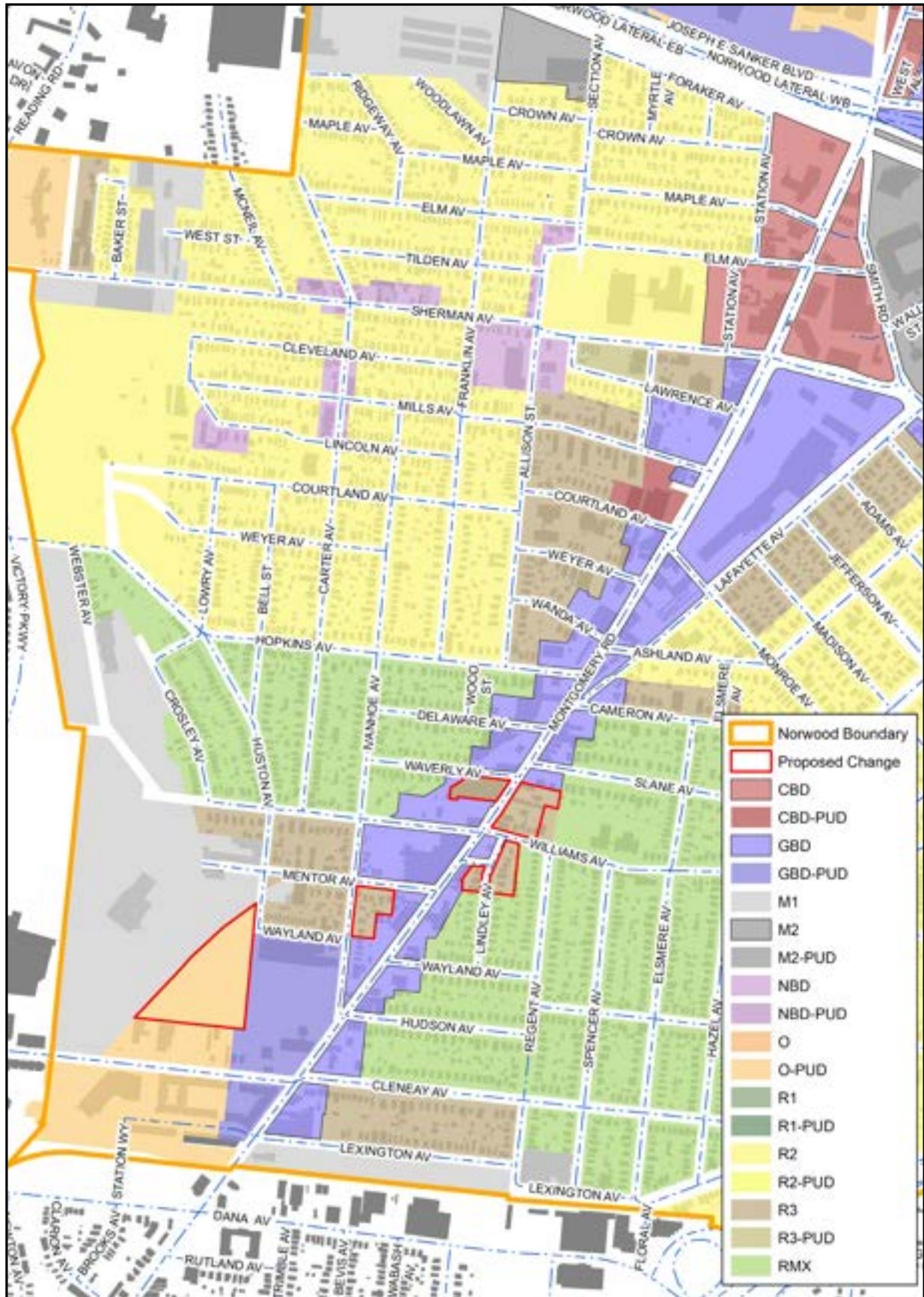


Precedent project: Paris-Bourbon County (KY) Public Library recently completed an addition to a Historic building



Floor plans

APPENDIX B - PROPOSED ZONING MAP

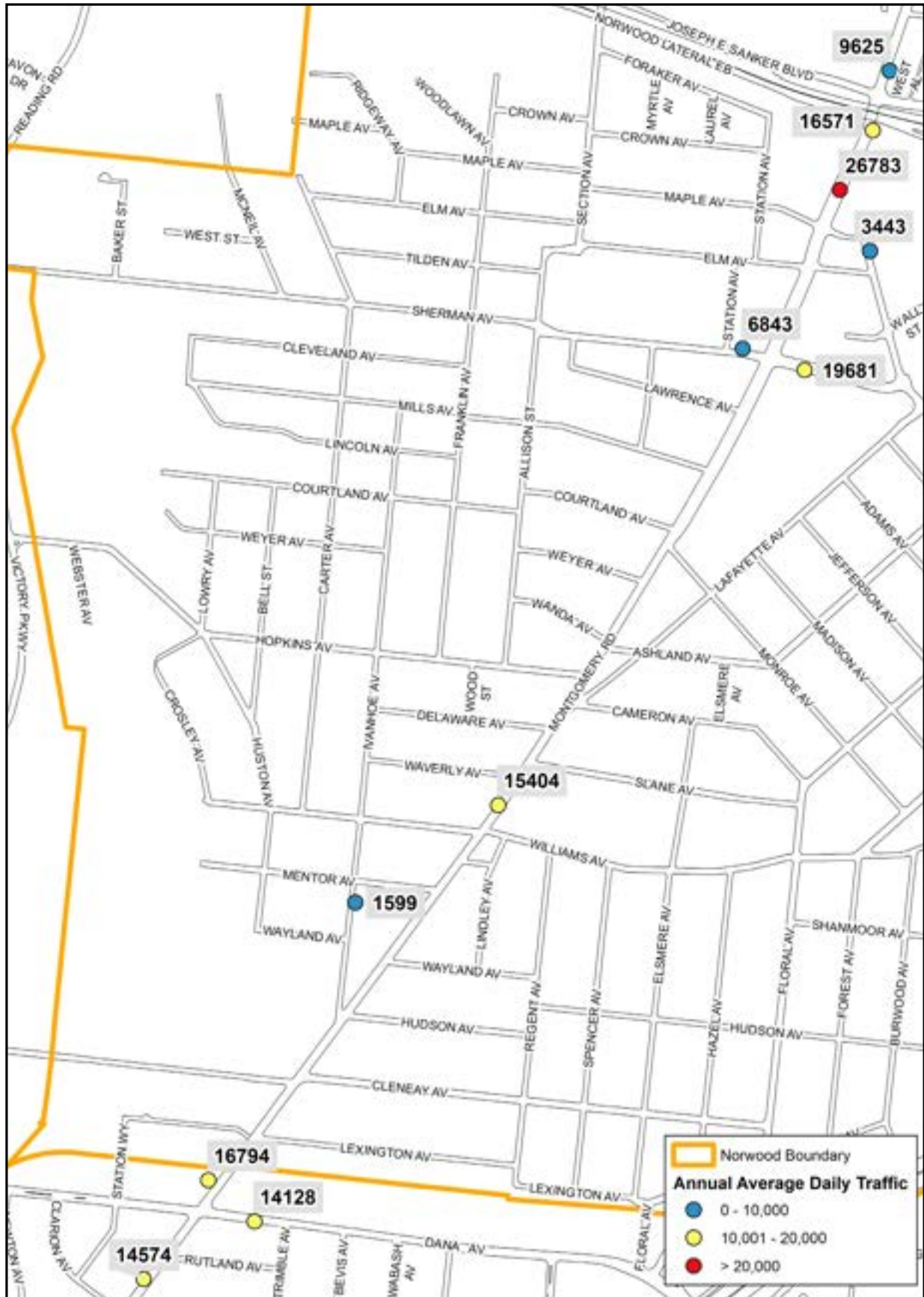




APPENDIX C - TRAFFIC ACCIDENT MAP



APPENDIX D - TRAFFIC COUNTS



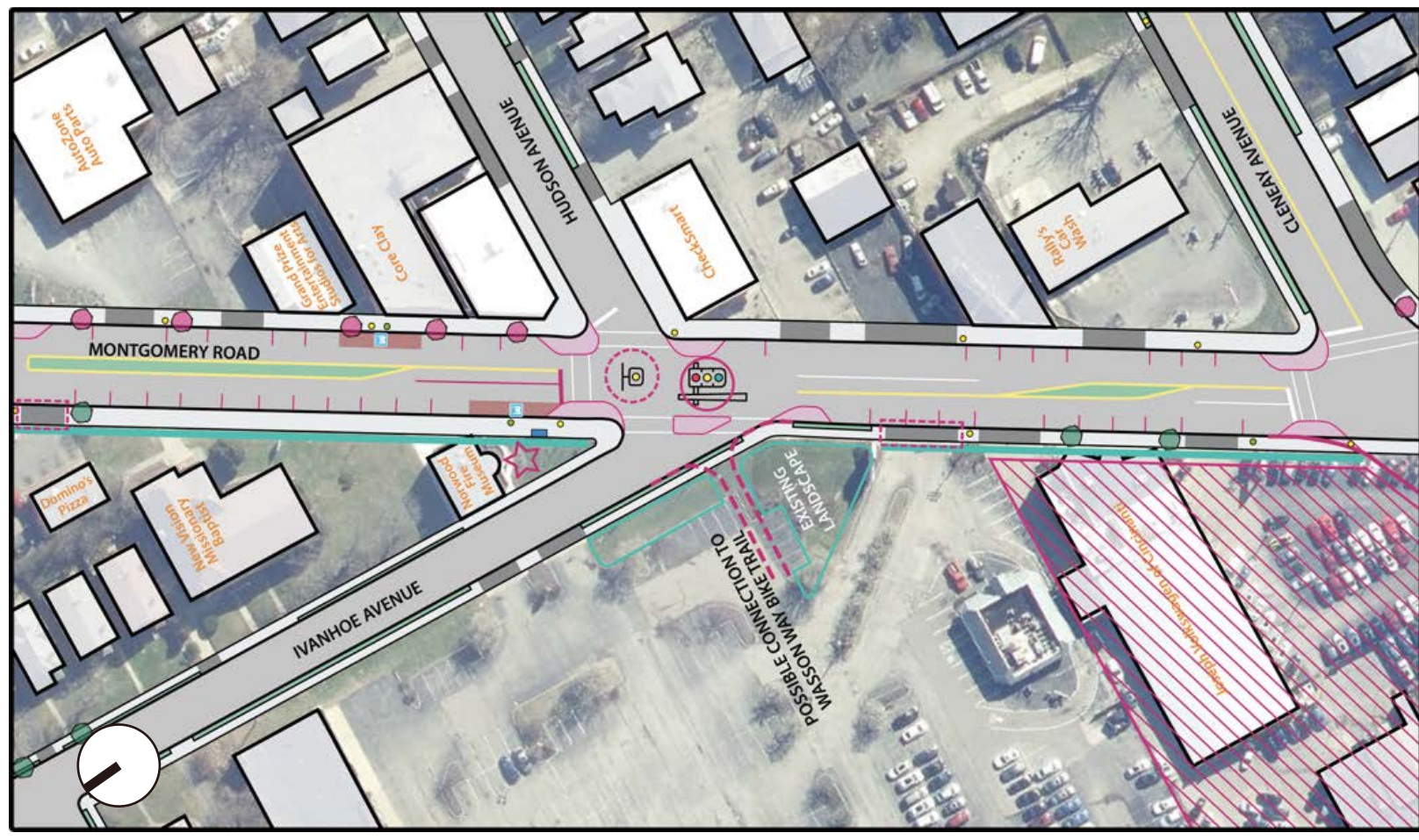
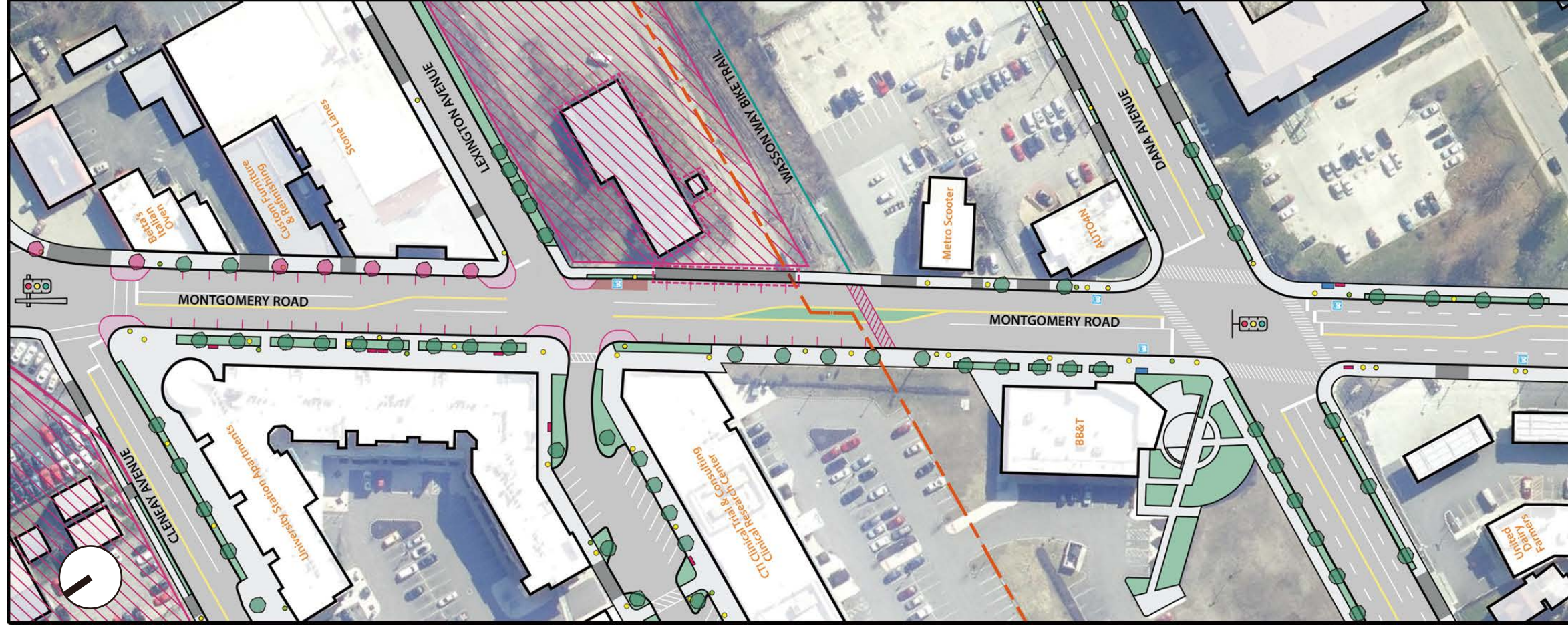
APPENDIX E - CROSS SECTION MAPS

EXISTING CONDITION

- Decorative Street Light
- Cobra Head Street Light
- Trash Can
- Wire Strung Traffic Light
- Pole Mounted Traffic Light
- Flash Light
- Street Tree
- Curb
- Shelter
- Bench
- Bus Stop
- Permanent Parking
- Temporary Parking

PROPOSED CHANGES

- Add
- Remove
- Mural Wall
- Streetscape
- Bump Out
- Green Median
- Street Line
- Bike Trail
- Bus Pad
- Street Tree
- Tactical Urbanism Event Area
- Permanent Parking
- Temporary Parking
- Redevelopment Opportunity
- Redevelopment Opportunity or Public Parking

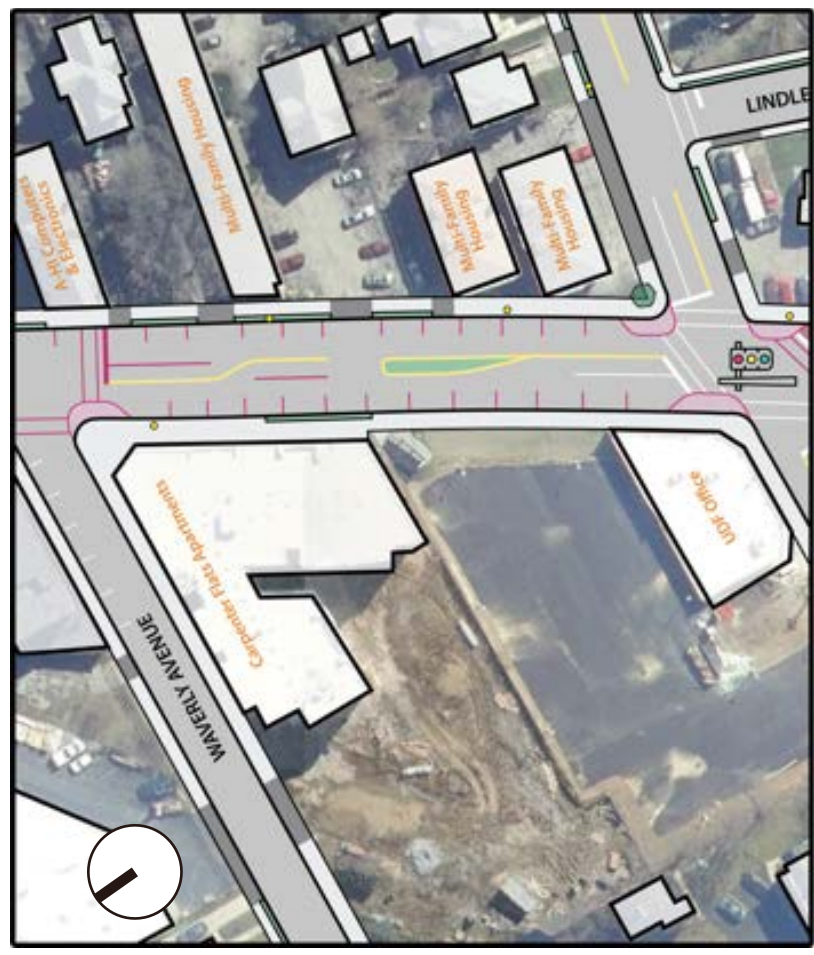


Transition Area between Xavier and UDF

APPENDIX E - CROSS SECTION MAPS

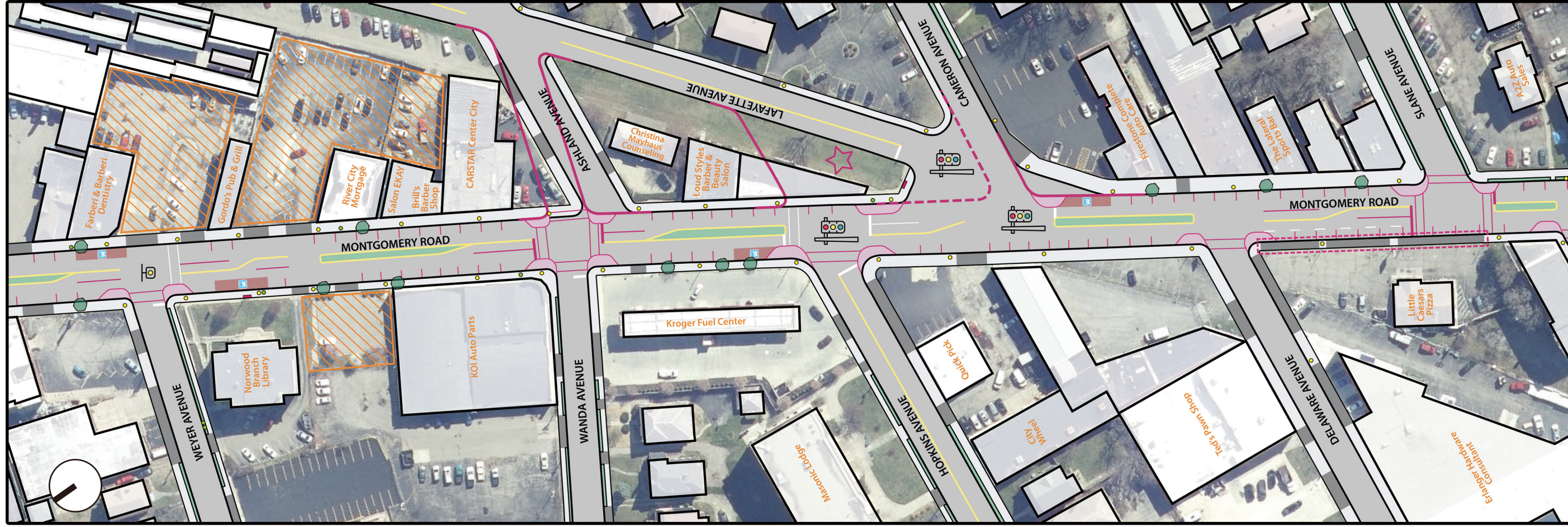


UDF Corporate Campus Section

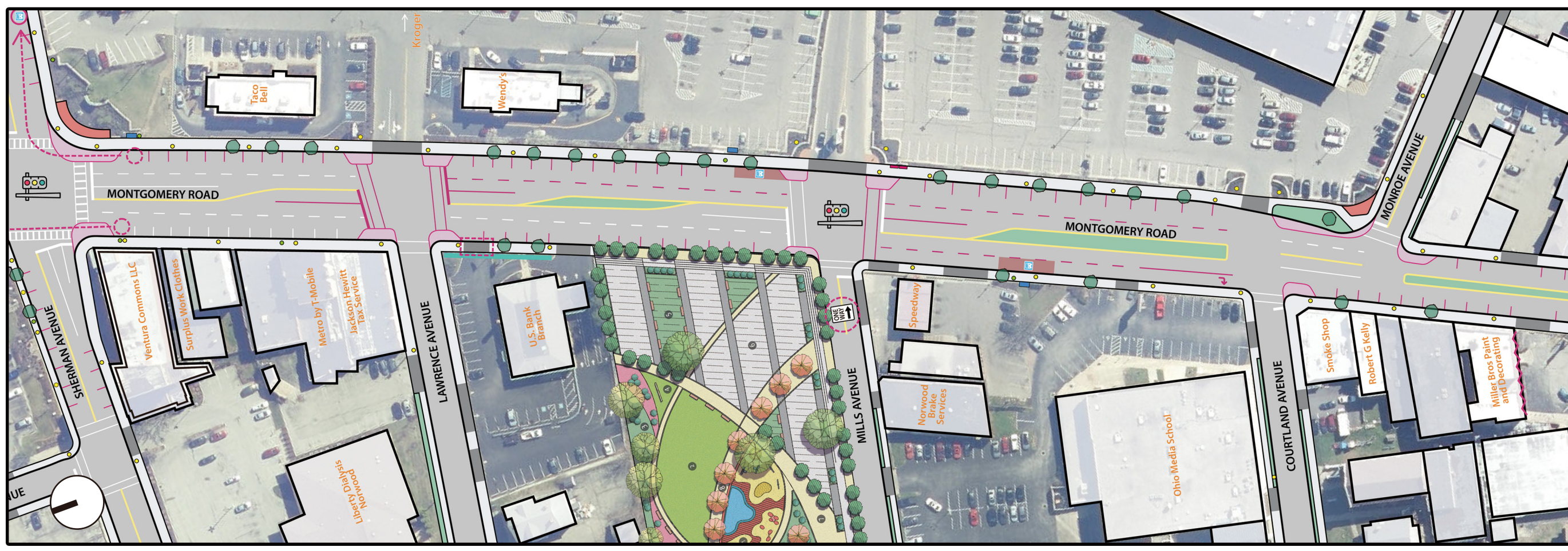


Multifamily Section

APPENDIX E - CROSS SECTION MAPS

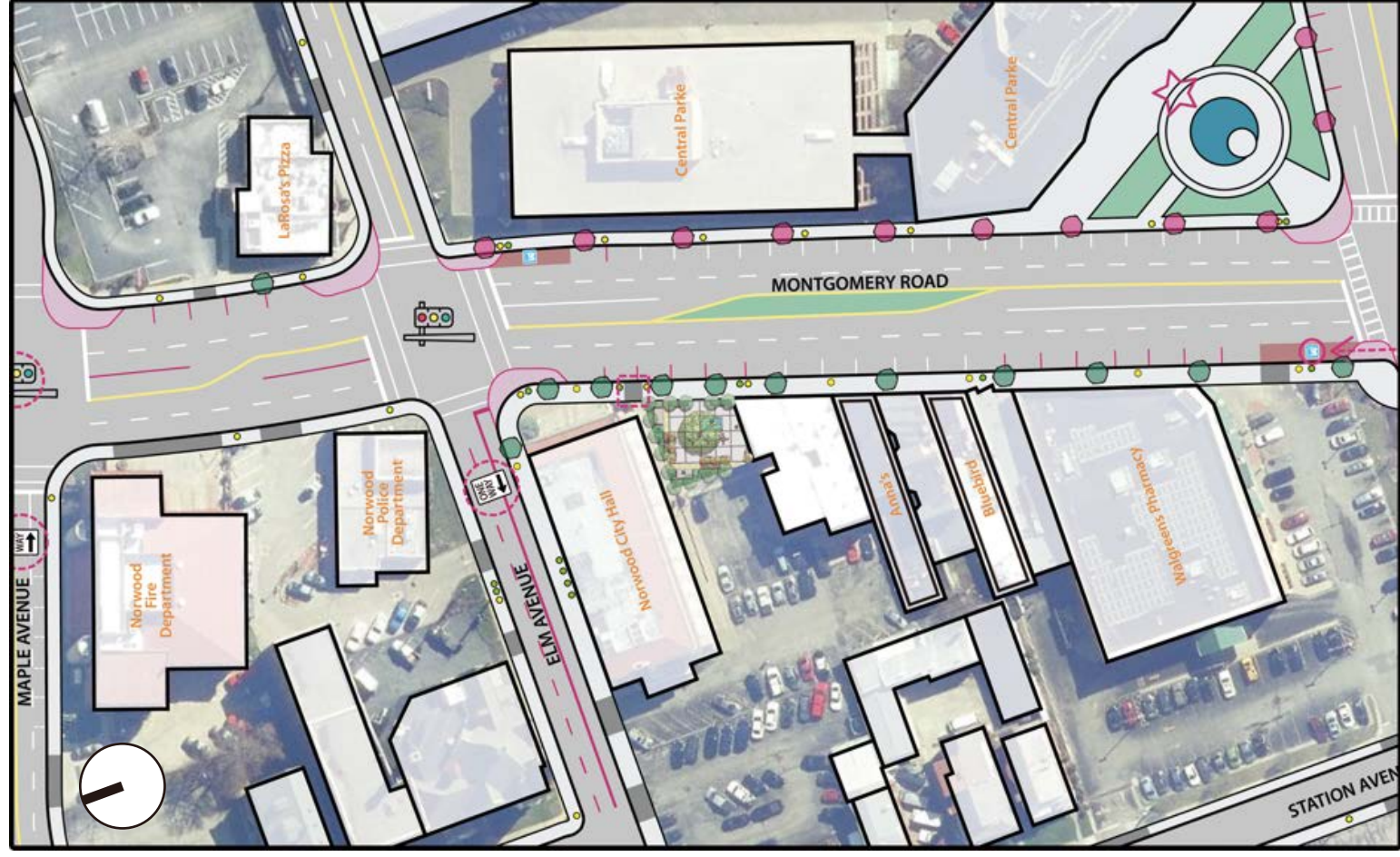


Transition Section (with small auto oriented node)

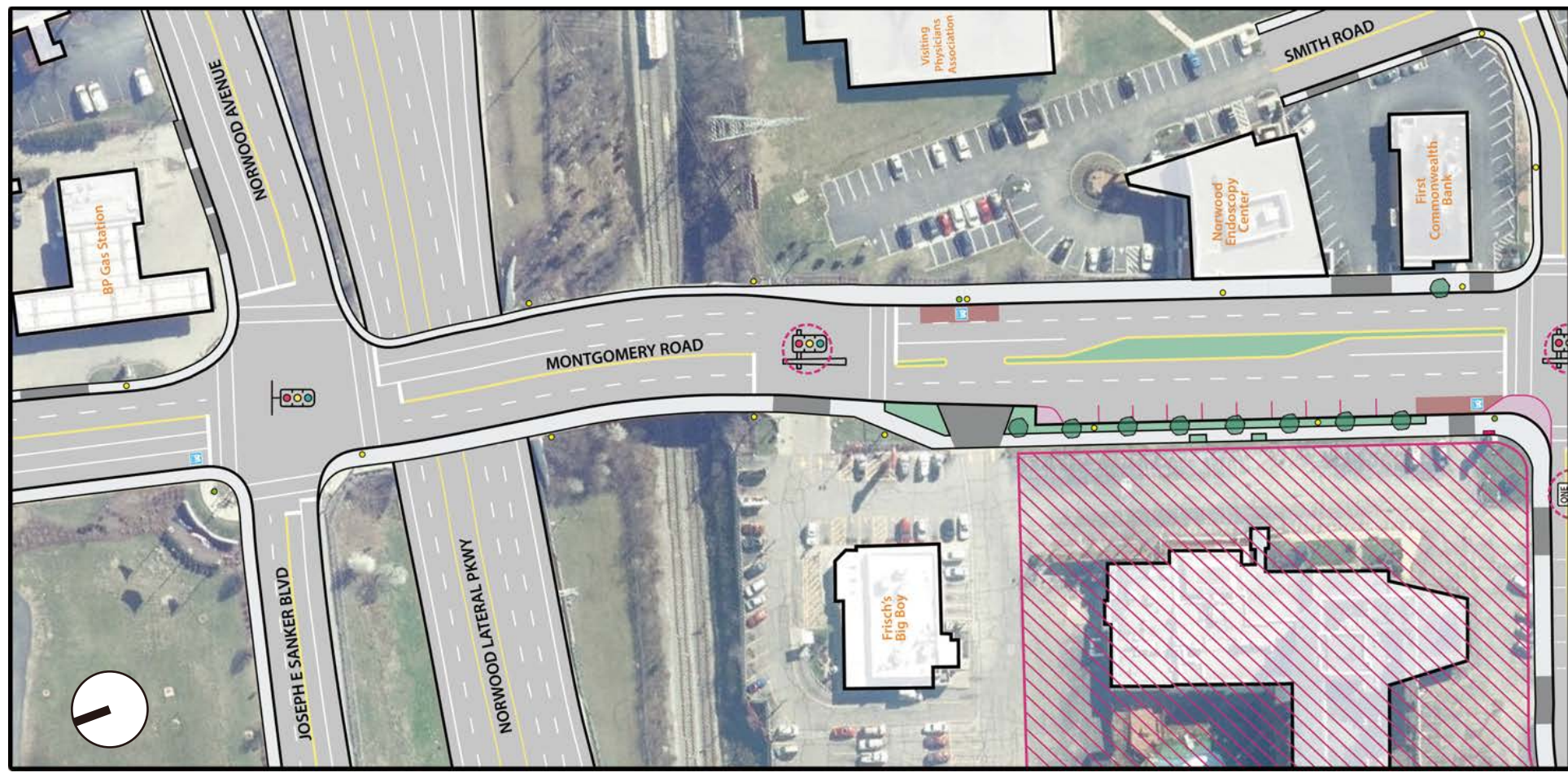


Shopping/Surrey Square/Downtown Section

APPENDIX E - CROSS SECTION MAPS



City Government/Jobs Section



Norwood Lateral/Auto Oriented Section



HAMILTON COUNTY  
Planning + Development