



# The Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## A vision for sustainable living and mobility

August 2012



Pfaffmann + Associates | Studio for Spatial Practice  
with: 4ward Planning | Fitzgerald & Halliday

# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

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- Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
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# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

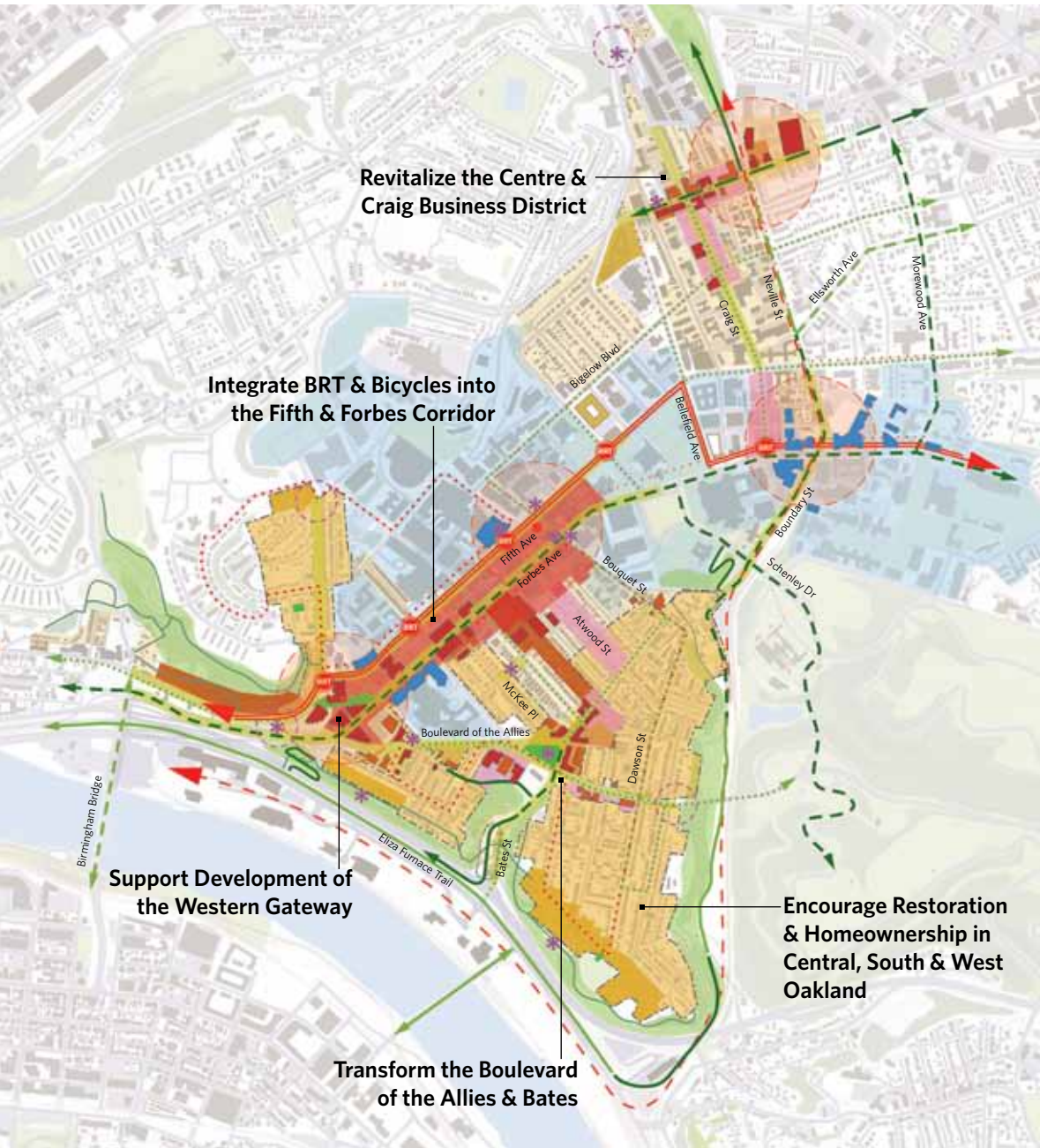
## Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 A Vision for Sustainable Living and Mobility.....	7
1.2 Ten Big Changes for Oakland.....	8
1.3 36 Hours in Oakland: Envisioning Oakland in 2025.....	10
1.4 Oakland 2025: A Plan Overview.....	12
1.5 A Sustainable Foundation for Oakland’s Future.....	14
<b>2.0 Context &amp; Community Process.....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 A Rich History of Oakland Planning.....	18
2.2 Oakland’s Community Alliances.....	20
2.3 Community Process Summary.....	22
<b>3.0 Plan Themes &amp; Program Initiatives.....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Introduction and Themes.....	29
3.2 Housing.....	30
3.3 Transportation.....	44
3.4 Business & Development.....	60
3.5 Open Space & Art.....	66
3.6 Community Building.....	72
<b>4.0 Plan Recommendations by Neighborhood.....</b>	<b>76</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	76
4.2 Central Oakland Priorities.....	78
4.3 South Oakland Priorities.....	80
4.4 West Oakland Priorities.....	82
4.5 North Oakland Priorities.....	84
<b>5.0 Urban Design Focus Areas .....</b>	<b>87</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	88
<b>A. Corridor Connections</b>	
5.2 Fifth & Forbes Multimodal Corridor.....	90
5.3 Remaking the Boulevard of the Allies.....	96
<b>B. Development Hot Spots</b>	
5.4 North Oakland Neighborhood Business District .....	98
5.5 West Oakland Gateway Development.....	104
5.6 Bates/Semple/Zulema Gateway.....	110
5.7 South Craig Innovation Area.....	116



Oakland 2025 Plan

- MOBILITY
- Transit: Fifth/Forbes BRT line
  - Transit: BRT stations
  - Transit: consolidated shuttle loops (3)
  - Transit: Downtown circulator loop
  - Transit: mobility hubs
  - Bicycles: proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes
  - Bicycles: proposed off-street trail
  - Bicycles: existing on-street markings or dedicated lanes
  - Bicycles: existing off-street trail
  - Bicycles: existing on-street route
- HOUSING
- Existing residential areas
  - Homeowner preservation priority
  - New market-rate housing development
  - Corridors for apartments & student housing development
- BUSINESS + DEVELOPMENT
- Oakland Business Improvement District
  - Neighborhood business district
  - Existing institutions
  - Proposed mixed-use development
  - Proposed building renovation
  - Proposed institutional development
- OPEN SPACE + ART
- Renovated and expanded parks
  - Hillside restoration
  - Streetscape improvements
  - Trailhead neighborhoods
  - Public art
  - Gateway beautification
  - Walking trails



Key Recommendations: Oakland 2025

Oakland 2025 Master Plan  
Section 1: Executive Summary

1.1 A Vision for Sustainable Living and Mobility

The goal of Oakland 2025 is twofold: to guide and support Oakland's continuing growth as the region's center of innovation and technology and support the quality of life in Oakland's four major residential neighborhoods.

Built on a Strong Foundation

*The Future of Oakland (2003)*, and other plans that proceeded it, made great strides by detailing key transformative projects, such as the transformation of Schenley Plaza and rebuilding the Boulevard of the Allies Portal Bridge. These projects were successfully implemented with the collaborative efforts of Oakland's committed stakeholders.

Process and Civic Engagement

This plan was born from an extensive year-long community process that started before the consultants were hired. This allowed the planning team to dig deep into the physical and socio-economic issues that are driving change in Oakland. The engagement process featured hands-on "walkshops" in each neighborhood and a week-long "pop-up" storefront that allowed stakeholders to drop in, interact and add to the plan as it was being developed.

People Make the Neighborhood

Today in 2012, Oakland is at a tipping point as demographic and socio-economic data show that for Oakland to thrive as a desirable place to live and work, transportation and housing must be developed in a carefully coordinated manner. Oakland's economic engine must translate into better connectivity and improved neighborhood livability.

Mobility Affects Livability

Oakland 2025's core vision is about creating vibrant, diverse residential neighborhoods that are connected to high-quality multimodal transportation systems, that support and grow Oakland as the region's innovation hub. Without a strong set of innovative public/private initiatives to diversify and improve housing stock and related transportation improvements, Oakland risks becoming less desirable as the location of one of our country's most important innovation centers. The wise investments in housing and transportation that are embodied in this plan are necessary foundations for positive change in Oakland.





# Ten Big Changes for Oakland

Hundreds of good ideas emerged from the community process and are embodied in the detail of the Oakland 2025 Plan. Here are the ten most important recommendations:

- 1 Increase the number of people who both live and work in Oakland.
- 2 Increase the average age of Oakland residents to support a diverse, sustainable neighborhood.
- 3 Establish model multi-modal ‘complete streets’ linked to enhanced transit systems.
- 4 Foster unique, diverse neighborhoods and businesses.
- 5 Create a sustainable mix of residential living options (new, rehab, infill) for a variety of users.
- 6 Build up social networks and community social capital.
- 7 Increase access to parks, open space and trails.
- 8 Promote a strong Oakland residential “brand” to attract new residents.
- 9 Create strong leadership capacity to implement components of the 2025 plan.
- 10 Develop an effective and proactive design and development review process.

## Key Oakland 2025 Projects

Supplementing the “Ten Changes for Oakland”, the planning team proposed four urban design focus areas that are strategically important and timely. These conceptual proposals focus on core principles of transportation and housing development. Some of these concepts will require targeted land acquisition strategies to begin implementation, while others can be initiated immediately through dialogue, education and advocacy. Most importantly, these components of the Oakland 2025 Plan build on the idea that transformative projects, carefully woven into the neighborhood’s historic fabric, can radically shift perceptions about Oakland as a place to live. They are summarized below.



### North Oakland Business District

This area has been overlooked as a development area that connects Oakland and the Baum/Centre Corridor. Its historic relationship to the East End, Polish Hill and the Hill District, gives it a unique opportunity to provide state-of-the-art, mixed-use, high-density development. The proposed design also enhances the pedestrian streetscape, provides necessary services for the dense residential population, and makes the most of North Oakland’s multimodal connectivity.



### Western Portal Development

The Western Portal is currently considered to be on Oakland’s periphery, but by 2025, it will be an important development node connecting Oakland’s core to Uptown and the Southside. As the Oakland 2025 Plan was developed, a proposal for the Portal was presented to the City for development review. The Oakland 2025 Plan concept builds on the developer’s proposal by suggesting improved access to and through the site; it also locates a BRT multimodal station in the proposed garage. The development of this important, high-visibility gateway merits strong collaboration between and support by all stakeholders.



### Bates/Boulevard/Zulema Park

The Bates Street intersection has been studied for decades. The Oakland 2025 Plan envisions a bold transformation, recognizing that small changes to Bates Street will never fully solve the challenges of this important arrival point in Oakland. Zulema Park



and intersection improvements should become an anchor for new development—part of a long-term commitment to redeveloping the entire area. Further study will be needed by economic development and transportation planners to guide the transformation. Doing nothing is not an option for the health and safety of the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Fifth and Forbes Multimodal Corridor

The Fifth/Forbes corridor is the heart of Oakland, home to major educational, medical and arts institutions. It is also the primary business district for the neighborhood. Oakland 2025 planning team recommends that the Fifth/Forbes corridor be transformed into a pair of complete multimodal streets incorporating premium transit and new separated bike lanes. The recommendations build on the current Port Authority proposals for Bus Rapid Transit from Downtown to Oakland, and integrate emerging best practices for urban bicycle infrastructure. It is critical to create a pedestrian, bike and transit friendly environment in the core of Oakland that accommodates but de-emphasizes the use of automobiles. Improving mobility in the corridor will also set the stage for the development of additional institutional uses, retail and student housing.

### Making Oakland 2025 Happen

The Oakland 2025 Plan is grounded in market research and benchmarks that are appropriate, feasible and achievable. The Oakland community will use an implementation worksheet that outlines the projects, large and small, comprising the entire Oakland 2025 plan. Organized by the the five planning themes used to facilitate community input in each of Oakland’s neighborhoods, the worksheet will reflect priorities established during the plan launch and will be continually updated and available on OPDC’s website.

The challenge for Oakland and its regional partners is to further prioritize major programmatic and funding recommendations as an outgrowth of this plan and related programs. Like the *Future of Oakland* implementation checklists, the worksheets will provide a way of tracking, grouping and prioritizing the many elements of the Oakland 2025 Master Plan.





1.4 Oakland 2025: A Plan Overview



To help define Oakland’s future, The Oakland 2025 Master Plan engaged all of Oakland’s community members, institutions, partners and public agencies in a process of comprehensively re-imagining the neighborhood’s future. Starting with the premise that Oakland’s future health requires holistic and visionary, yet implementable and market-based solutions, Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC) invited all of its community partners to create a roadmap for the neighborhood’s future. The goal for Oakland 2025 is to create a set of actionable steps for Oakland stakeholders to embark upon and realize these planning priorities.

The Steering Committee selected a fifteen-year timeframe (2010–2025) to allow enough time for longer-term projects to be developed and implemented. By the same measure, the plan would not extend too far into the future as to be unrealistic. Strong, thoughtful, proactive communities constantly plan; Oakland 2025 provides recommendations for implementation now, a vision for the future, and a solid framework for future revisions.

From the outset, the consultant team, community groups and stakeholders were all encouraged to “think big” and integrate transportation planning and economic development into all aspects of the planning process. “Raising the bar” and painting a compelling vision for Oakland’s future were important products of the plan and tools to enact a process of “mind-shift” among leaders and members of the Oakland community. Without a clear vision for Oakland’s future, tested and vetted through stakeholder discussion and economic analysis, Oakland 2025 would not have the requisite ownership and buy-in to succeed. With clear, pragmatic vision and creativity, Oakland 2025 provides a template for positive change.

While all of Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods contribute to the City’s economy and overall vitality, Oakland’s position as ‘a city within a city’ makes it unique to Pittsburgh and the metropolitan region as whole. With three major universities, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and three distinguished cultural institutions, Oakland is a center of the state and region’s cultural and knowledge-based economies. It is Pittsburgh’s second largest employment center with a high concentration of health and education sector jobs. Oakland’s 52,000 workers comprise over one-fifth of Pittsburgh’s total job market.

Likewise, the Carnegie Museums of Art and Science, Phipps Conservatory, and Nationality Rooms of the Cathedral of Learning are frequently cited on top ten lists of things to do in Pittsburgh, making Oakland a “first day” destination for Pittsburgh’s 3.9 million annual visitors. Not only does this affirm the neighborhood’s singular economic status, but it means that changes in Oakland are highly visible and have significant multiplier effects within the city and region as a whole.

Geographically, Oakland is comprised of a distinct commercial core that is surrounded by four mostly residential areas: West, Central, North and South Oakland. Each possesses distinct neighborhood identities, geography, and community leadership. Several contain neighborhood retail, commercial and institutional districts of their own. As a result, while the Oakland 2025 Master Plan is a series of neighborhood plans, it is also a comprehensive urban plan that integrates a series of interconnected parts. Its scope addresses thematic topics, neighborhood geographies, and individual project opportunities.

While Oakland has a tremendous draw as an employment center, a hub of university and civic institutions, and as a place with residential offerings unique to Pittsburgh, it also endures the pressures of being a destination and regional center: heavy commuter and university event traffic, a housing market dominated by student rentals and land speculation, and inadequate resident-serving amenities within the local business districts where offerings tend to be geared to the student population. Improving public transportation and the quality/availability of housing are perennial concerns frequently cited as ongoing challenges for Oakland. It has meant that Oakland is no longer seen by many as an attractive place to live despite its proximity to parks, jobs and urban amenities.

The primary goal (and the most difficult challenge) for the Oakland 2025 Master Plan is to address and solve Oakland’s persistent challenges. Years of planning studies have identified Oakland’s strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The key is how best to put forward an implementable roadmap for change.

The Oakland 2025 planning process revealed that transformations in the realm of housing and transportation were the key catalysts for neighborhood change. Unless Oakland is seen as a competitive, viable housing option for a diverse group of Pittsburgh residents, the

neighborhood will never be able to realize its potential as a sustainable mixed-use neighborhood where residents can walk to work and take full advantage of Oakland’s parks and cultural treasures. Improvements to the residential quality of life can only take place if changes to transportation that improve the neighborhood’s walkability, safety and quality of life are also implemented.

Because Oakland’s issues are so complex and multilayered, the Oakland 2025 Master Plan has three groupings of plan recommendations. The plan is organized by functional topics or themes, which include housing, transportation, business and development, art and open space, and community building. To make sure that this plan addresses local neighborhood concerns, we have also integrated and organized the plan recommendations by neighborhood or geography. Finally the Oakland 2025 Master Plan establishes a set of project-based recommendations for key urban design focus areas. Next steps and implementation are integrated throughout each section. This gives users of the Oakland 2025 plan many ways to absorb and synthesize the solutions that follow.

1.5 A Sustainable Foundation for Oakland’s Future



Without a sustainable foundation, this vision of Oakland for the year 2025 cannot and will not be implemented. To ensure that the Oakland 2025 Plan would be tailor-fit to Oakland’s unique conditions, relevant to a range of stakeholder groups and unlikely to remain “on the shelf” gathering dust, several important practices were put into place by the project’s steering committee and consultant team. Through the different approaches described below, it has been our intent that this plan will take root quickly and deeply, helping to guide community leaders, neighborhood organizations and city agencies in making meaningful improvements throughout Oakland over the next decade and beyond.

One of the most important steps towards developing a sustainable vision was the decision to begin Oakland 2025 planning with an extensive community process engaging hundreds of residents and partners from all over the neighborhood in structured group discussions about the past, present and future of Oakland. This process resulted in a rich trove of data and community feedback, helping to inform the planning team’s later work. But perhaps more importantly, the process was an opportunity for community members from North, South, Central and West Oakland to meet one another, find common ground and hopefully lay the groundwork for future collaboration and resource-sharing. The process was also intended to help empower citizens to continue being actively engaged in improving their neighborhood by leading and participating in a set of prioritized, early-action projects. These ongoing projects are helping to enhance the neighborhood even before the Oakland 2025 Plan is published.

The Oakland 2025 Master Plan is also informed by past plans for Oakland, ranging from comprehensive community plans, to housing strategies to a recently completed plan for “innovating” Oakland’s central business district. There is no shortage of planning recommendations for Oakland. There is also a great deal of consistency in terms of identifying key structural issues to address so that Oakland can become more competitive and attractive to a diverse community of people, while also supporting the needs of existing homeowners. Key structural issues generally fall into the realm of housing and transportation; thus they are the primary focus of the recommendations that follow. Related quality of life concerns, including improvements to open space, accommodating public art and improving community dynamics (safety, communication, etc.) are also important topics within the Oakland 2025 Plan. Oakland’s future health as a neighborhood depends on implementing a series of

interconnected strategies for improving the residential housing market, creating a multimodal transportation system and enhancing the local quality of life. But above all, merging transportation planning and housing development efforts is essential for strengthening Oakland and accommodating sustainable, long-term residential growth.

Our planning team helped to ensure that Oakland 2025 recommendations are implemented by coordinating and cross-pollinating with other concurrent planning projects: the City of Pittsburgh’s MOVEPGH planning effort and Think Bike! workshop, the Port Authority’s Bus-Rapid Transit plan and community planning for the future reuse of Schenley High School. Planning team members also met with several local developers actively engaged in, or with an interest in, development projects in Oakland. These conversations reinforced our understanding that there is a strong market for a more diverse range of housing “products” in the neighborhood, but the developers identified key impediments to new development in Oakland, as well.

Another way that the planning team ensured the sustainability and viability of the Oakland 2025 Master Plan is by grounding recommendations firmly in demographic and market-based data. As part of the consultant team, 4ward Planning analyzed socio-economic trends for Oakland, the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area to identify market opportunities and challenges associated with residential and commercial conditions throughout Oakland, but particularly in areas where out-migration and disinvestment has been the greatest. This analysis also touched on the important linkages between housing, transportation and overall quality of life. By emphasizing the significant daily influx of commuters into Oakland, the data also helped to underscore a need to integrate housing and transportation planning, and also work towards a future where Oakland’s labor force is able to walk, bike or use some other form of transit to get to their workplace.

Finally, the planning team structured the Oakland 2025 Plan with the intent of making it accessible to a broad audience: community members, neighborhood organizations, institutional partners, developers, and agencies. Thematic recommendations provide a strategic framework approach while also calling out specific, focused project recommendations. The planning team worked to shape a vision for Oakland as a diverse neighborhood including all of North, South, Central and West Oakland under one coherent umbrella. However, to support the

efforts of active community groups, and help facilitate the plan’s implementation, recommendations are also represented within the focused context of each the four neighborhood sub-areas. Finally, illustrated urban design recommendations for targeted development focus areas are included for key locations most needing a transformative vision for change. A wide range of stakeholders will need to be engaged in making some of these visions a reality, and some of these proposals could take a decade or more to become reality. If implemented, however, radical improvements to the key focus areas will help to change people’s perceptions about Oakland and make the neighborhood a more sustainable place to live, work and play.





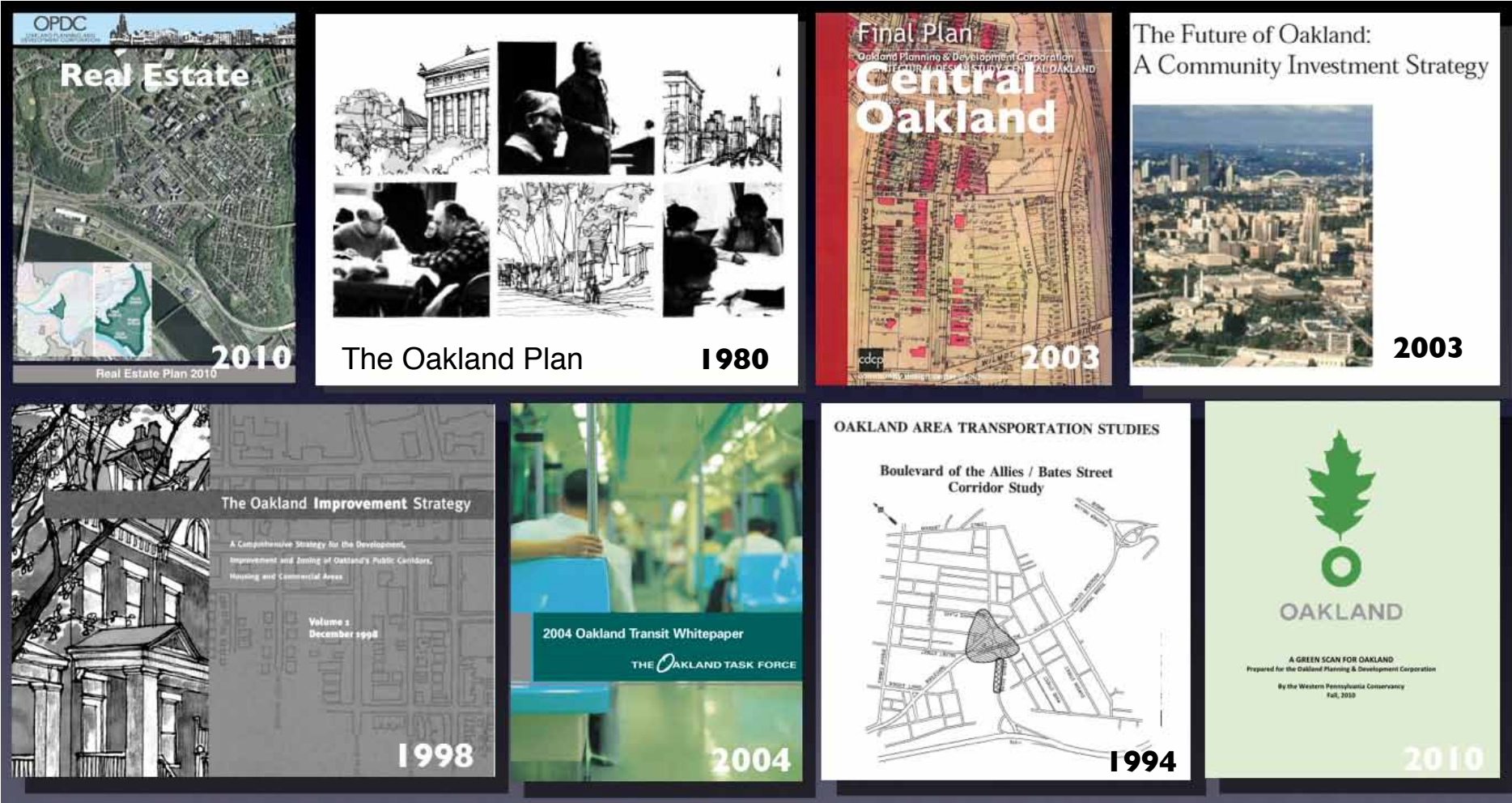
# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## Section 2: Context and Community Process

The success of the Oakland 2025 Master Plan depends upon collaboration and collective problem solving. Thus, multiple constituencies and stakeholder groups were involved throughout the planning process. By bringing residents and institutional leaders together for dialogues and design sessions, the process was deliberately organized to integrate issues across disciplines and allow disparate constituent groups to address areas of common concern. By this logic, Oakland 2025 should not be viewed solely as a resident-driven plan, nor one that is biased toward developer or institutional interests. In addition to creating a forward-thinking vision for the future of Oakland, the planning process itself was also intended to strengthen community connectivity, leadership and organizational capacity.



# Oakland 2025: Built on a Strong Foundation



## 2.1 A Rich History of Oakland Planning

The work of Oakland 2025 is deeply rooted in the numerous plans that preceded it. Oakland is a complex neighborhood and its well-established history of planning continues to shape its improvement and development. The ideas reflected in this plan build upon and synthesize the recommendations of many earlier plans. As will be seen below, much has been accomplished as a result of previous planning efforts, though many of Oakland’s structural challenges persist today.

Franklin Toker’s portrait of Pittsburgh describes the forces behind Oakland’s development as “an attempt at the end of the nineteenth century to create a new face for Pittsburgh when the city had so decayed that it required a shimmering alter ego miles away.” While Toker notes that there was likely no map or document that can describe the inception of Oakland, he cites an 1890 newspaper account of Andrew Carnegie, gazing down upon the future Oakland library site as the “Promised Land.” Indeed, the visionary, reform-minded spirit of the City Beautiful movement is clearly represented in the grand civic buildings, parks and monuments at the core of Oakland today. The park bequeathed by Mary Schenley and the Boulevard of the Allies designed by Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. epitomize the rich legacy of urban planning that led to Oakland’s current form. Likewise, the Beaux Arts Classicism of the Carnegie Library and Museum and the Soldiers & Sailors Memorial, inspired by the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, reflect a desire on the part of Pittsburgh’s industrial leaders “to create a civic center,” or Acropolis, at the heart of Oakland.

While much has changed in the decades since, this vision of Oakland as an Enlightenment ideal – a center of arts, knowledge and culture – continues to inform our understanding of what Oakland is and influences all plans for its future. More than any other Pittsburgh neighborhood, Oakland has been continuously studied, planned and intensively developed, following the recommendations of past plans. In many respects, Oakland is a product of planning. It will continue to be improved and renewed through implementing the Oakland 2025 Master Plan and future planning efforts as well.

In the 1960s, regional and city leaders created *The Oakland Study: A Plan for Pittsburgh’s Cultural District* in recognition of and to guide the rapid growth in educational, health and cultural resources. In the late 1970s, Oakland community members created *The Oakland Plan*

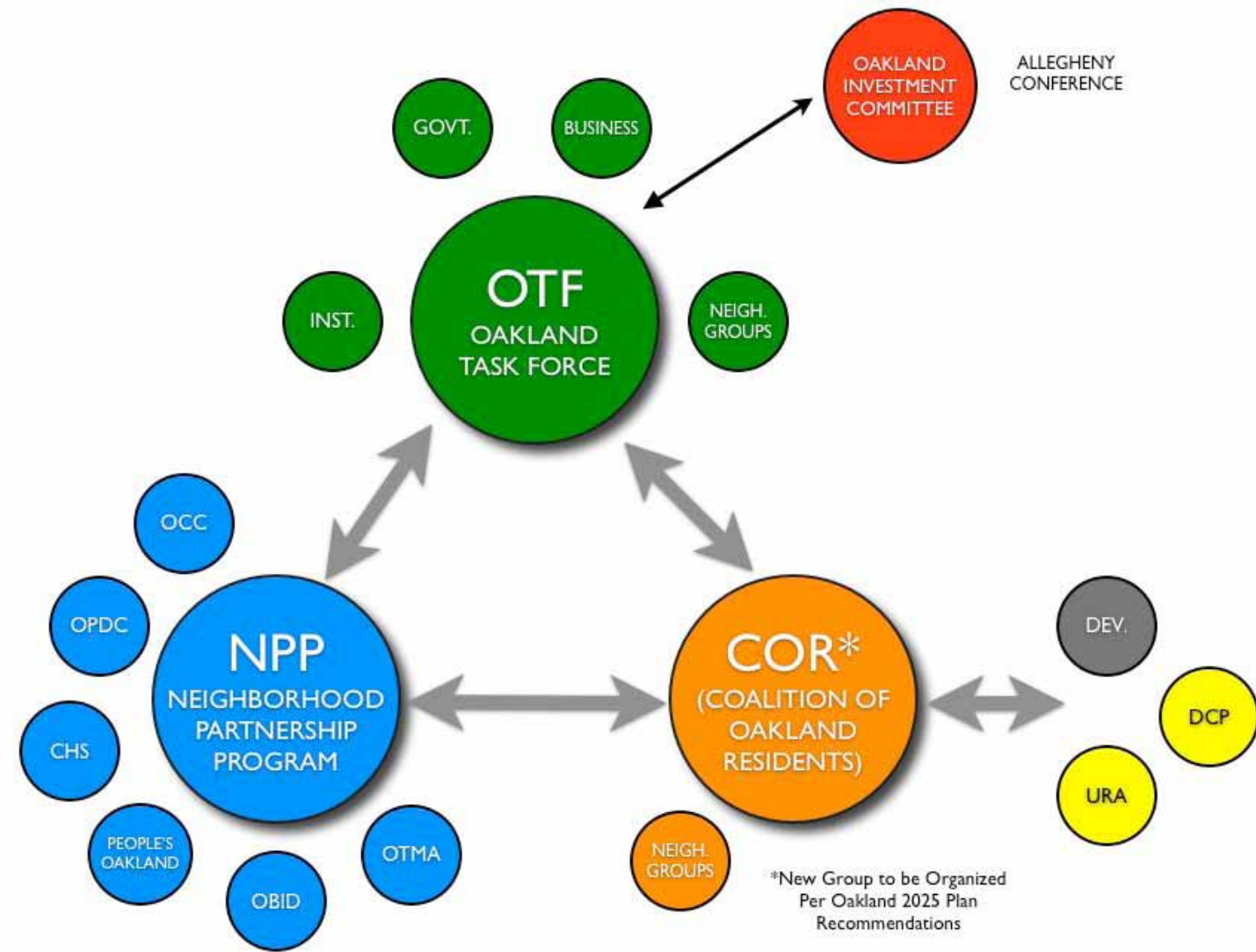
in response to rapid institutional growth and its encroachment on Oakland’s residential areas. The planning process contrasted with those before it that had been drawn up by professional planners or civic agencies without input from people living and working in Oakland. *The Oakland Plan* was led by a community organization and involved members from all sectors of the community: residents, institutions, businesses and employees. It became a policy workbook guiding future investment and establishing boundaries of institutional expansion.

The development guidelines described in *The Oakland Plan* have held true, although many persistent challenges remain today. Over the past thirty years, numerous other planning studies have been completed, but none have been as comprehensive or had as much citizen involvement; the strategies that followed focused on specific topics and resulted in positive change. *The Oakland Improvement Strategy*, published in 1998, targeted four topics: housing, code enforcement, public corridors/gateways, and zoning. Many of the recommendations were implemented: new zoning districts and a revised zoning map, additional on-campus university housing units, streetscape and pedestrian safety enhancements in the commercial core, the creation of a business improvement district, gateway improvements, and code enforcement advocacy.

Five years later, the Oakland community and institutional leadership joined with Pittsburgh’s regional development leaders to create *The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy*. The strategy built upon Oakland’s various plans for transportation, institutional master plans, etc. and guided critical investments to move projects forward. Streetscape enhancements to the Fifth and Forbes corridors, Schenley Plaza and the Boulevard of the Allies Bridge reconstruction were successfully implemented through infusions of capital and cooperation amongst Oakland partners and various public agencies as a result of *The Future of Oakland*.

The Oakland 2025 Master Plan continues and builds upon this long-standing tradition of planning in Oakland. Like the 1979 *Oakland Plan*, it keeps public participation at its core. By involving all Oakland partners and public agencies to imagine Oakland’s future and identify concrete strategies to realize it, the Oakland 2025 Plan is both a neighborhood based plan and a comprehensive master plan.





## 2.2 Oakland's Community Alliances

Oakland's institutions and community groups are significant assets. These groups have a long history of working together to advocate for and implement changes in the neighborhood. With their connection to political leadership and the philanthropic community, they have been instrumental in making projects (such as the new Schenley Plaza and business district pedestrian safety enhancements) happen in Oakland. The community's key players are invaluable neighborhood resources and a wellspring of technical, organizational and human capital. No plan for Oakland can be developed without acknowledging their involvement and building upon their support.

### The Oakland Task Force (OTF)

The Oakland Task Force is a consortium of 26 Oakland business, institutional, government and community groups that has been working in the neighborhood for the past 30 years. A true asset, this unique umbrella organization provides a forum to support the exchange of information and ideas, advocate for projects, resolve disagreements, foster consensus and build relationships. The main mission of the OTF is improving quality of life in Oakland for all stakeholders.

As the interface between institutions, public sector and community-based organizations, the OTF leads initiatives and has an established track record of bringing institutions and neighborhood groups together around areas of common concern. Most OTF members were represented on the Oakland 2025 planning team. Throughout the Oakland 2025 process, the planning team met regularly with the OTF to provide updates, discuss recommendations and validate ideas. The OTF will guide the plan's implementation.

### The Oakland Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP)

The Oakland Neighborhood Partnership Program is a coalition of six organizations collaborating to provide a comprehensive program of community development services to the Oakland community. The partnership is comprised of the following groups:

- Community Human Services
- Oakland Business Improvement District
- Oakland Community Council
- Oakland Planning and Development Corporation
- Oakland Transportation Management Association
- Peoples Oakland

The Oakland NPP is made possible through funding from the Pennsylvania State Neighborhood Assistance Program and commitments from Dollar Bank, PNC Bank and UPMC Health Plan. The partnership enables each organization to continue its current activities with secure funding, while also partnering on large-scale initiatives to deliver comprehensive and coordinated community development services. The shared core programs are intended to make improvements in the areas of health, human services, education, community engagement, housing, greening and transportation. Each NPP member was part of the core planning team for the Oakland 2025 Master Plan.

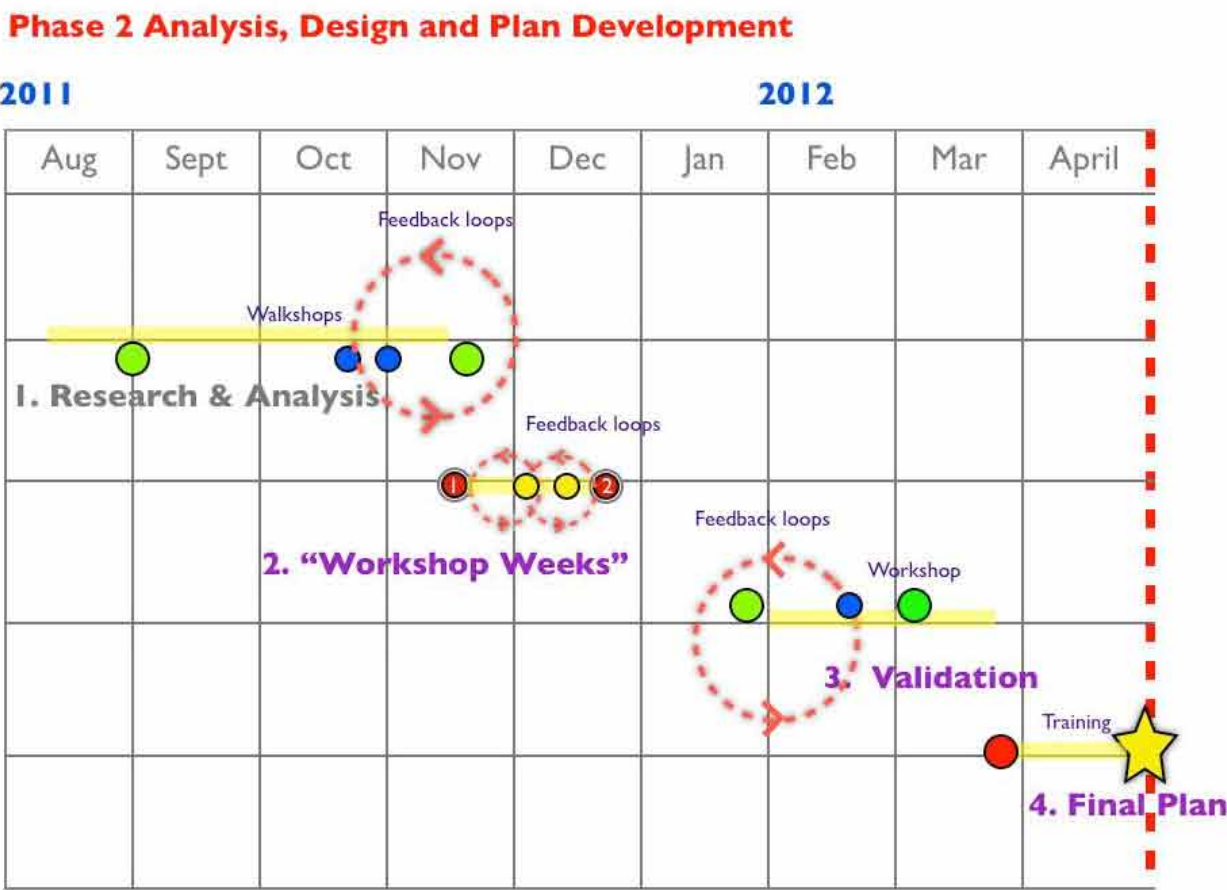
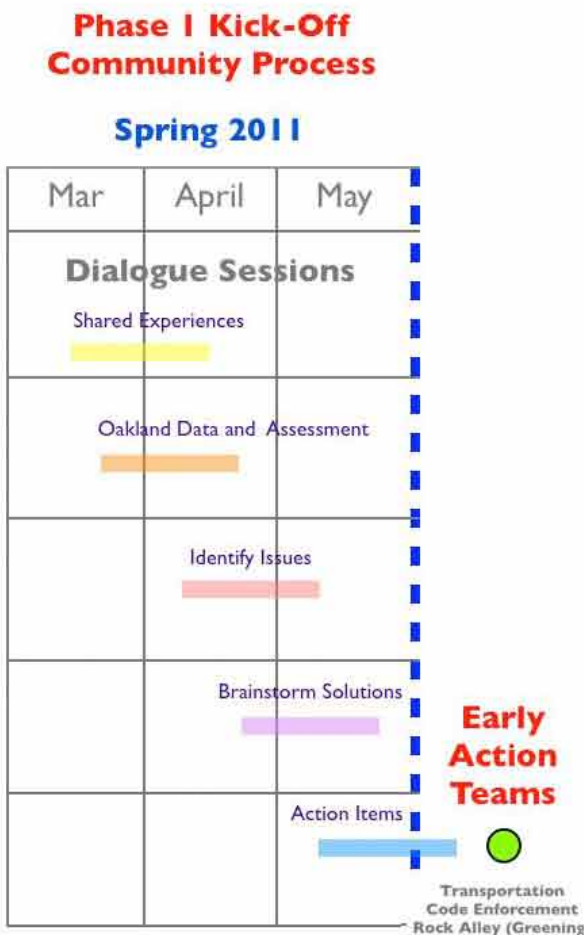
### The Oakland Investment Committee

The Oakland Investment Committee is a special committee of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development working on issues related to Oakland. The Allegheny Conference is a private, nonprofit organization serving as a mechanism for the region's private sector leaders to direct their energy and resources toward improving the 10-county region of southwestern Pennsylvania.

### The Coalition of Oakland Residents (COR)

The Coalition of Oakland Residents is proposed in the community building section of this report as a cohesive community decision-making and advocacy structure representing the interests and needs of all of Oakland's residential neighborhoods. The newly formed coalition replaces the Oakland Community Council (OCC) to bring together and give voice to Oakland's numerous residential groups.

Mission statement of COR: *We are a centralized voice for the residents of Oakland. Our goal is to improve life in Oakland by promoting communication and exchanging information among residential groups and by advocating on their behalf to entities that impact those groups.*



Oakland 2025 Planning Process Timeline

## 2.3 Community Process Summary

To give as many people as possible a chance to have their voices and ideas reflected in the Oakland 2025 Master Plan, OPDC and the consultant team developed an extensive, multi-phased community-based public participation process. This included several months of internal pre-planning in 2010, a public participation process in the early months of 2011 and a series of design workshops later in the fall of 2011. The pre-planning workshops identified issues and established early action group items, while the second phase of community workshops served to brainstorm urban design and policy solutions. Once a set of potential design ideas and solutions was established, the planning team went through an extensive validation and stakeholder review process in the first half of 2012 with individual community, institutional and developer groups to prioritize and test ideas in the plan.

The Oakland 2025 team also communicated extensively with other planning teams working in Oakland to discuss approaches, collaborate solutions, and to test and synthesize ideas. The team met with staff from Pittsburgh’s planning department to discuss and coordinate with PLANPGH, the city’s ongoing comprehensive planning effort. The planners also integrated Innovation Oakland’s creative signage, wayfinding, public art and greening projects for Oakland’s central business district and neighborhood gateways into the 2025 Plan. The Port Authority and their transportation planning consultant, Parsons Brinkerhoff, met with the team to discuss how to best integrate public transportation, bicycle lanes and Bus Rapid Transit thinking into the plan. Many institutions also shared their master plans to help inform the planning effort.

### Phase 1 Community Process

The Oakland 2025 planning partners launched the community discussions in March 2011 with a kick-off event where community members were invited to sign-up for a dialogue group. In Phase 1, OPDC, with the support of Everyday Democracy, a national leader in the field of civic participation and community change, engaged residents in conversations about what is working, what is not and how to improve everyone’s quality of life.

Over 200 people attended the event and 84% signed up for a dialogue group. Community members engaged in 11 dialogue groups of 8-12

diverse people each that met for five 2-hour sessions. All groups were convened by a pair of trained, impartial facilitators using a common discussion guide with information about the neighborhood and key questions for each session. In total, there were approximately 55 sessions, resulting in over 100 hours of community dialogues.

The progression of sessions was as follows:

- Session One—Participants got to know one another by learning how group members are connected to Oakland and discussing their experiences.
- Session Two—Participants assessed and then learned about Oakland’s community qualities by reviewing neighborhood census data relating to demographic and socio-economic attributes, grading various community assets and developing a vision for Oakland’s future.
- Sessions Three and Four—Participants explored a variety of topics of importance to the Oakland community and discussed ways that the group can work together to make progress in those areas.
- Session Five—Participants reviewed information from the four previous sessions to identify issues of high importance to the group and brainstorm action ideas. Action ideas are solutions developed by utilizing a community asset to address a local community need.

When participants were asked to describe their connections and experiences in Oakland, participants unanimously commented on the convenience of Oakland to local amenities. Many of the groups expressed appreciation for the accessibility of transportation, businesses, green spaces and parks, and educational, cultural and medical institutions. Despite concerns about transportation cuts, many participants described Oakland as a “walk-able” neighborhood.

Another common observation related to Oakland’s diversity. Many people feel that Oakland is known for having a population that is made up of various ages and races/ethnicities. Oakland is also comprised of a diverse collection of local institutions and businesses. Many of the dialogue groups commented on how diversity gives Oakland a metropolitan feel while also acknowledging tensions between different populations that are not limited to racial issues. Conflict was noted to exist between different community groups, such as home-owners and students, educational institutions and home-owners, and landlords and renters.



Conflicts between community groups highlight larger challenges experienced in Oakland. Common concerns include:

- › Connecting the transient student population to the larger community, and retaining younger populations after college.
- › Absentee landlords’ lack of maintenance of rental properties.
- › The police department’s responsiveness to residential concerns regarding noise, trash and loitering.
- › Better integrating North, South, West and Central Oakland into a more cohesive Oakland with effective means of communication.
- › The stability of small business and job growth.
- › The involvement of large institutions in future development.
- › The need for better traffic safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, addressing transportation cuts and improving parking.
- › The need for educational and other programs for children to help attract families.
- › Improving green spaces and walking paths.

In the final session, dialogue circles were encouraged to develop their vision for Oakland and create action ideas to meet the needs identified in previous sessions. Despite the noted areas for improvement, Oakland residents felt that there is opportunity for growth and positive change. Many of the visions reinforced Oakland’s unique qualities: its diversity and convenience to business, green spaces and institutions, and its metropolitan lifestyle. Dialogue participants envisioned Oakland as a sustainable community investing resources in housing, transit, bike lanes and social opportunities for including/retaining new families and diverse groups from different socio-economic, racial and generational backgrounds. Vibrant, green, affordable and unified were common terms used to describe the future Oakland. The following list of ideas was presented and put to a vote at the May 2011 Action Forum.

**Transportation and Pedestrian Safety**

- › Coordinate with Oakland community organizations to approach institutions and public agencies about merging their resources to create an Oakland bus loop for students, residents, employees and visitors.
- › Improve pedestrian safety at intersections and main streets throughout Oakland, enforce traffic laws and raise awareness about bicy-

cling, public transit and walking to make these transportation modes safer and more popular.

**Neighborhood Quality and Investment**

- › Re-activate the Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force and engage more community members to participate to help enforce codes on negligent landlords, housing violations, parking violations, litter/trash, etc. Engage local political officials in this effort through a community walking tour. Encourage residents to actively use the City 311 line.
- › Encourage investment in the housing market through a residential facade grant program, a house tour, resources/organizations to assist existing owners in making home repairs, home purchase incentive programs, etc.
- › Organize residents to work with police, institutions, student groups, community organizations and other agencies to address excessive noise, underage drinking and nuisance bars in residential parts of the neighborhood. Change the perception of Oakland as a 24/7 party area for underage drinking.

**Community Beautification, Greening and Public Spaces**

- › Connect West Oakland, South Oakland and the central business district with the Eliza Furnace Trail and Second Avenue. Improve city steps and trail connections throughout the neighborhood and promote their active use by leading tours, events, clean-ups, etc.
- › Develop a series of community beautification initiatives to help improve the community image by cleaning and maintaining open green spaces and installing signage and other improvements at neighborhood gateways.

**Strengthen and Unite the Oakland Community**

- › Help community groups exchange information and connect to local resources (funding, meeting space, etc.), community members, and leaders. Support community groups through securing resources, providing fiscal conduit services, website hosting, community organizing, etc. Provide an Oakland-wide forum to bring all groups together in a structured way.
- › Survey neighbors and residents on their preference for an online community forum or printed newsletter to raise awareness about

**Community Process Photos**



Phase 1: Community Dialogue Session



Phase 2: Community Meetings



Phase 2: South Oakland Walkshops



Phase 2: Storefront Charrette



local events, services and initiatives in Oakland. After data is collected, move forward to implementation.

- › Help connect organizations, residents, students, employees and visitors through a series of community-uniting events such as block parties, pot luck dinners, a student off-campus living “handbook,” a student welcome wagon, a community fair, etc.
- › Engage existing coalitions and partnerships of organizations and institutions on a branding campaign to promote Oakland’s assets.

Dialogue participants were later reconvened in a forum to plan actions to move Oakland closer to a community vision that works for everyone. At the Action Forum, community members were invited to vote on community project ideas recommended by the dialogue groups. The top three action ideas or community projects were announced and participants were given time to join an action group. The selected action ideas were:

- › Create a loop bus to connect Oakland’s neighborhoods.
- › Re-activate the Oakland Code Enforcement Task Force and strategize code enforcement.
- › Develop trails to connect West Oakland, South Oakland and the central business district with the Eliza Furnace Trail and Second Avenue.

While planning a loop bus continues to take time and is included in the Oakland 2025 recommendations, the trail development and code enforcement groups have made great strides since the Action Forum. Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project has strong leadership, active participation from neighborhood residents, and has achieved results. Oakwatch meets monthly with enforcement officials to prioritize problems and strategize solutions. The trail development action team dubbed itself “Rock Alley” and is making progress toward the creation of a new trail and is expanding its focus to include other greening initiatives throughout the neighborhood.



**Phase 2 Community Process**

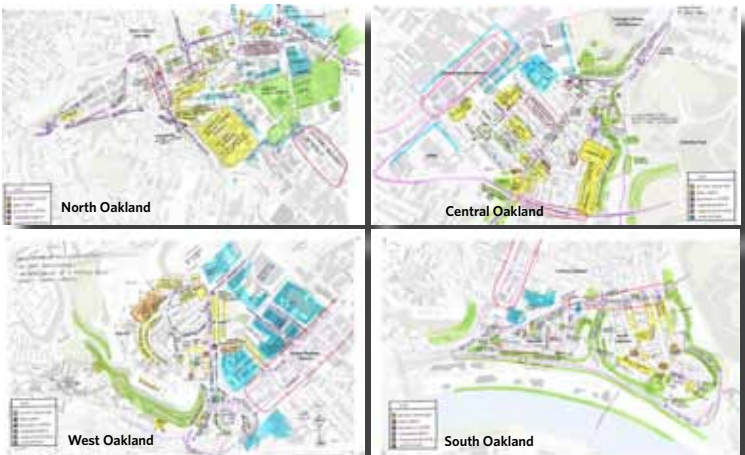
In August of 2011, OPDC and its partners brought a team of planning consultants to the table to build on the dialogues and community data collected during Phase 1 of the planning process. The planning team included a partnership of Pfaffmann + Associates PC and Studio for Spatial Practice LLC, two urban design and architecture firms with expertise in community planning. To ensure the feasibility of planning recommendations, the team also included transportation planners Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. and 4ward Planning, a firm specializing in market and economic analysis. The consultant team was tasked with:

- Formulating plan recommendations with alternative design solutions addressing urban design and development, transportation, neighborhood amenities/services, green infrastructure, cultural heritage and diversity, community health, access to education and employment, and infrastructure and facilities
- Coordinating Oakland 2025 plan recommendations with concurrent projects, including Innovation Oakland, the Port Authority’s Bus Rapid Transit study, and the City of Pittsburgh’s PLANPGH and MOVEPGH planning efforts
- Engaging community members in discussions about design options
- Completing the final Oakland 2025 plan document

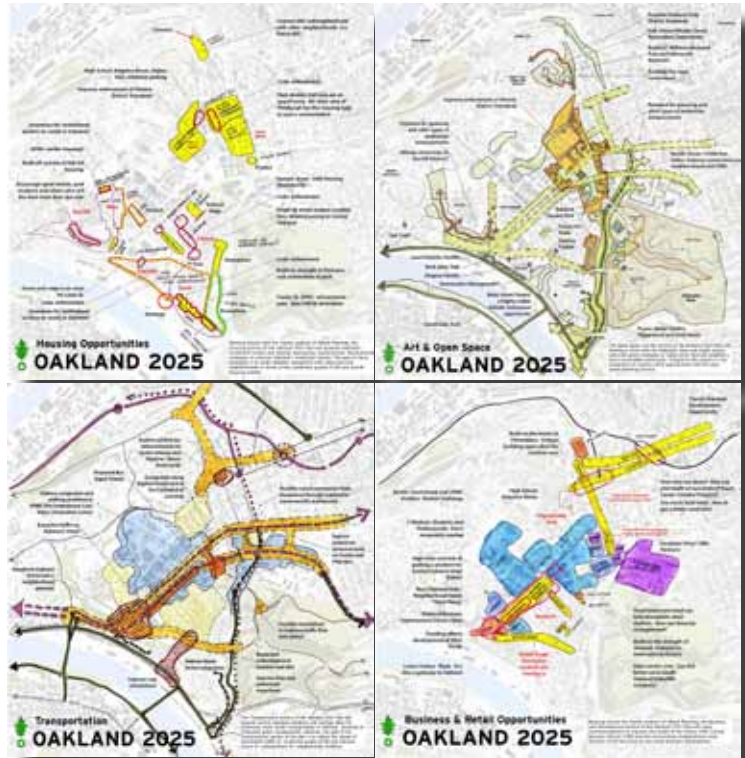
The Phase 2 community process was extensive unto itself, complementing the dialogue-driven Everyday Democracy planning process with a series of additional outreach events. There were many different opportunities for community members to learn about the project, contribute opinions and insight, and review the emerging plan recommendations.

**Neighborhood Walkshops**

The community process began with a series of five “walkshops” through the Central Oakland, South Oakland and Oakcliffe, North Oakland and West Oakland neighborhoods. Participants walked, rode bikes and climbed down hillsides, guiding the consultant team to neighborhood highlights, challenges and opportunity areas. The walkshops provided an informal venue for residents to share stories about living in their neighborhood, articulate community needs and values, and provide insight about social dynamics specific to the area.



Walkshop Summaries and Theme Maps



Oakland 2025: Reconnect with the Plan Process  
“Reconnect” was the first large-scale public meeting, in fall 2011, as part of the Phase 2 planning process. General information about the Oakland 2025 planning process was provided and community members were invited to stay involved with the project. At five themed tables, the consultant team collected feedback about preliminary analysis related to: Community Building, Open Space & Art, Transportation, Housing, and Business & Development. There were also tables where people could learn more about concurrent planning projects. Local institutions and organizations, such as Bike Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Library, also had tables where they offered information about the services that they provide in Oakland.

**Design Workshops**

Four design workshops were held in North, Central, South and West Oakland as opportunities for community members to work with the consultant team to create design concepts from the ideas identified during community dialogue sessions, neighborhood walkshops and the Reconnect meeting. The consultant team worked on-site in each Oakland neighborhood for a full day, developing alternative design concepts and discussing them with community members during evening workshop sessions. Each workshop addressed the following thematic topics, building on past analysis and commentary: Community Building, Open Space & Art, Transportation, Housing, and Business & Development.

**Storefront Residency**

After the neighborhood-based design workshops, the consultant team set up shop in a storefront in Central Oakland where design concepts were further developed and refined, based on community input. Workshop participants and other neighborhood stakeholders were invited to visit the storefront to collaborate and interact further with the consultants. Over four days, the team compiled the planning concepts developed for each of the four neighborhoods into a cohesive vision for all of Oakland, organized by theme. The team also identified six key geographic areas meriting additional urban design study:

- The Fifth and Forbes multimodal corridor
- The intersection of Boulevard of the Allies and Bates Street
- The North Oakland neighborhood business district
- The West Oakland gateway redevelopment area

- The South Oakland Bates/Zulema/Semple neighborhood redevelopment area
- The South Craig/Forbes Avenue Innovation District

**Oakland 2025: See the Plan Take Shape**

The storefront residency culminated in one final public meeting where the emerging planning concepts were presented to the public. After a slideshow, during which urban design analysis, market research and transportation precedents were presented, the consultant team engaged attendees in one-on-one discussions about the thematic planning proposals. The community feedback was used to further refine the planning recommendations.

During the Phase 2 community process, six urban design and development priorities clearly emerged for all of Oakland:

- Better transit access and neighborhood connectivity
- Increased multi-generational housing options
- Safer, greener “complete” streets with emphasis on reduced autos and parking
- Expanded access to parks and trails
- Revitalized neighborhood business districts
- Maintain and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods

The recommendations included in this document are each driven by these priorities. All six priorities should be pursued concurrently for Oakland to reach its potential as a diverse and vibrant neighborhood of choice for people of all ages and backgrounds.





# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## Section 3: Plan Themes and Program Initiatives

### 3.1 Introduction and Themes

To structure the plan and organize the community process, the Oakland 2025 planning team first developed a series of themes for the plan, and goals for each plan theme. The themes included the following:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Business and Development (including retail)
- Open Space and Art
- Community Building

Because housing and transportation were at the core of Oakland 2025 they were given special attention in terms of market, technical and policy analysis.

Goals for each theme are described below:

#### Housing Goal

Provide innovative, sustainable housing choices for diverse new residents who are attracted to Oakland's vitality and amenities, many of whom choose to live where they work. Do this through rehab, conservation and innovative new housing choices and financing incentives.

#### Transportation Goal

Establish a transportation network that will be highly multimodal (serving pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users equally as well as automobiles) with strong neighborhood connections that are well designed, safe, and accessible. Automobile traffic and parking demand will be lowered if more people live where they work.

#### Business & Development Goal

Foster local, unique, diverse mixed-use businesses and development in targeted core areas that grow from Oakland's innovation economy and support the neighborhood health.

#### Open Space & Art Goal

Integrate green infrastructure (trails, parks, trees, stormwater catchment) and public art into all economic development initiatives, large and small.

#### Community Building Goal

Reinforce neighborhood identity and increase social capital through community consensus, social networks, stewardship, gathering places, increased connectivity, and communication/access to information.



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 3.2 Housing

### Housing Goal

*Provide innovative, sustainable housing choices for diverse new residents who are attracted to Oakland's vitality and amenities, many of whom choose to live where they work.*

*Do this through rehab, conservation and innovative new housing choices and financing incentives.*

### Introduction

Working closely with the market analysis of 4ward Planning, the housing portion of the Oakland 2025 Plan evaluated Oakland's residential market and developed appropriate public/private development strategies to improve it. The goal is to make Oakland competitive with other East End neighborhoods in terms of the residential quality of life and overall housing market.

### Summary of Plan Recommendations

- Diversify and stabilize Oakland's housing
- Address student rentals
- Create new green infill
- Develop/maintain affordable workforce housing
- Provide professional live/work opportunities
- Rehabilitate and preserve existing homes
- Implement employer assistance programs, rehabilitation design and funding assistance
- Develop retirement living options (CCRC)

### Housing Analysis: Introduction

Compared with other Pittsburgh neighborhoods, Oakland's housing market is characterized by conditions that present unique opportunities but also significant structural challenges. The growth of the nearby universities has created a strong, consistent demand for lower-quality student rental housing with dramatic effects on the for-sale housing market. As a result, there have been price pressures on all forms of residential real estate in the neighborhood. This has sparked multifamily unit conversions and contributed to a decrease in owner-occupied home ownership throughout all of Oakland. For homeowners looking to buy a single-family home, competition with investors (and their typical cash offers) has proven to be an impediment to owning a home in the neighborhood. For developers, potential investors and community groups looking to invest in the market, land and property acquisition costs are relatively high, there are fewer developable sites, and even fewer properties sit on the multi-list signifying that Oakland's market moves quickly.

### Demographics

Oakland's universities and research institutions have had a profound effect on the neighborhood's demographics, housing market, workforce and real estate trends, and are likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The large and growing presence of area institutions (along with their growing reputations, nationally and internationally) has influenced a relatively steep increase in the formation of non-family households and young college age residents (18 to 24 years old) in Oakland over the 2000 to 2010 period.

As a socioeconomic cohort, non-family households tend to be highly transient, of lower-income means, and more interested in rental housing than owner-occupied housing. The concentration of this group in Oakland, has influenced local real estate development and revitalization patterns, resulting in a proliferation of multifamily unit rental properties, owner-occupied unit conversions, and an increase in retail and service establishments closely associated with "Generation X and Y" consumers. At the same time Oakland has experienced a steady and significant out-migration of family households, particularly those headed by persons between the ages of 35 and 54 years of age.

This pronounced out-migration is likely a causal factor associated with a similarly steady decrease in the share and number of owner-occupied housing units in Oakland. Based on analyses of the household change by income, out-migration of family households over the past ten years appears to have been concentrated among households earning less than \$40,000 annually. Real estate data trends support the conclusion that this phenomenon is closely linked to a combination of higher land costs and reduced quality of life associated with changes identified above.

If current trends are allowed to continue, the persistent problem of too many renter-occupied housing units and too few affordable owner-occupied housing units (particularly, those in areas suitable for families with young children) will continue to negatively impact the neighborhood. Not only does this lead to neighborhood housing disinvestment in student rental areas, but the lack of quality housing options also raises prices and demand in areas that are not dominated by student rentals. Such an imbalance, long-term, will not support socioeconomic diversity or economic development, put Oakland at a competitive disadvantage compared with other employment centers, and in turn increase pressure on wages and salaries.

### Market Opportunities

While there are many challenges in Oakland, there are also positive economic trends that should be seen as opportunities for Oakland as it looks to develop its housing market. These include:

- A steady increase in the share of households earning more than \$75,000 per year
- Attraction of major high tech employers to Oakland
- Increased opportunities for local entrepreneurs as discretionary income has increased
- Civic and real estate improvements initiated by local universities and institutions

The key for new housing initiatives is to build on these strengths.





Rental Market Analysis

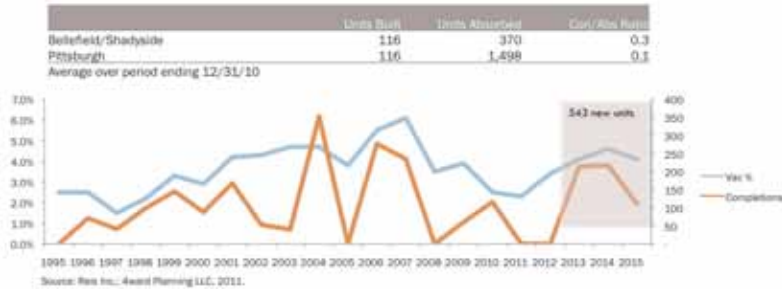
According to projection data provided by ESRI for 2010, there were 8,928 housing units located within Oakland, representing 2.7 percent of Pittsburgh’s total housing stock. In 2010, Oakland had an estimated vacancy rate (10.5 percent) lower than that of the city (12.0 percent). Oakland’s housing stock is largely composed of multifamily units (77 percent), compared to the relatively modest share of multifamily housing stock citywide (28 percent). Accordingly, 74 percent of Oakland’s housing stock was renter-occupied in 2010, compared to less than half citywide.

The rental demand pressures within the Bellefield/Shadyside multifamily submarket (a market area developed for this report which includes Oakland), for example, are significant, as measured by average rental rates per square foot relative to multifamily average rental rates per square foot citywide. Specifically, the average annual price per square foot paid for multifamily rental housing is greater in the Bellefield/Shadyside submarket than in the city of Pittsburgh and, of greater significance, increases disproportionately as the bedroom unit count increases—making familysize housing far more expensive, relatively, than housing for typical non-family households.

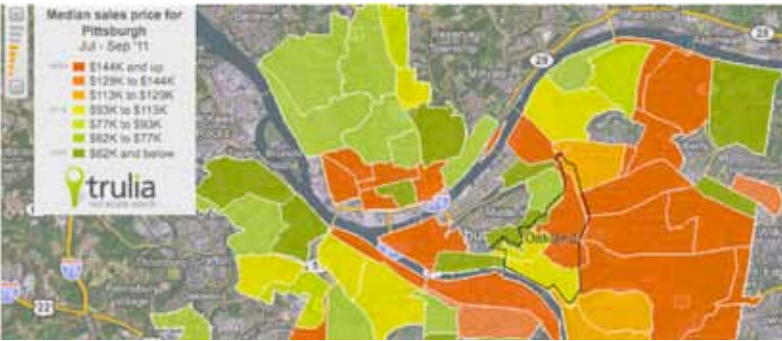
In 2010, all of the 116 new multifamily units built within the city of Pittsburgh were located within the Bellefield/Shadyside submarket area. Reis Inc., commercial real estate market analysts, projects that an additional 543 multifamily units will be constructed within the Bellefield/Shadyside submarket by 2015. The adjacent table demonstrates that in 2010, multifamily unit absorption far outpaced multifamily unit completions—an indication of strong demand for rental units.

Single Family Market Analysis

According to data provided by Trulia.com for third-quarter 2011, the median sales price for homes in Pittsburgh was \$139,000, representing a seven-percent increase over the previous year’s third-quarter median price and a substantial 24 percent increase from five years prior. While there were far too few housing sale transactions within Oakland to meaningfully compare median sales values to those of the city, the market analysis examined third-quarter 2011 sales data via Trulia.com. The lower median sales prices of South and West Oakland suggest that there may be market opportunities for individuals and families priced out of other East End neighborhoods.



Multifamily Construction and Absorption Comparison, 2010



Median Sales Prices:, Pittsburgh Neighborhoods



Home Sales Trends: Selected Neighborhoods

Compared to other Pittsburgh neighborhoods, Oakland tends to have fewer properties listed on the real estate multi-list than would expected for a neighborhood of its size and density. This supports the assertion that single family housing supply is tight.

Oakland’s Household Consumer Market Profiles

According to the 2011 Claritas PRIZM market segmentation system for zip code 15213, the following five consumer market groups are the most common in Oakland:

- 16-Bohemian Mix: Upper middle age family mix, liberal, median income \$54K, family mix, college graduate, ethnically diverse, mostly renters
- 66-Low Rise Living: Lower middle aged, mostly with kids, economically challenged, transient, renters, median income \$24K, service professions
- 54-Multi-Culti Mosaic: Lower middle age family mix, 35-54, homeowners, working class/service mix, median income \$35K, some college, ethnically diverse
- 31-Urban Achievers: Lower mid income without kids, median income \$35K, renters, college grad, ethnically diverse
- 59-Urban Elders: Downscale older, without kids, median income \$24K, renters, mostly retired, ethnically diverse

This reflects what is intuitively known about the neighborhood: Oakland is ethnically diverse; it is an attractive place for seniors because of its walkability; it is home to nearby service workers; and the market has many students who tend to be transient and renters.

[Note: The numbers preceding each segment name are merely for identification. They do not reflect any type of ranking or preference. While over five dozen segment names exist, it should be noted that the Claritas PRIZM system does not cover every household type that in fact exists in Oakland today.]

This list of Oakland’s top consumer market segments is also interesting for what it does not contain. Tech-savvy young professionals, new retirees, and diverse upper middle-income families are not well represented

in Oakland’s common household market segments. Given Oakland’s proximity to jobs, transportation, parks and cultural amenities, there may be opportunities to attract these types of households as part of new housing market initiatives. Potential market segments for Oakland’s new housing initiatives might include the following:

- 04-Young Digerati: Wealthy younger family mix (25-44), mix of renters and owners, median income \$85K, graduate degree, ethnically diverse
- 14-New Empty Nesters: Older retirees with no interest in rest homes, active, median income \$71K
- 29-American Dreams: Urban, median income \$55K, family mix, college Grad, ethnically mixed, homeowners, professional
- 40-Close-in Couples: Ethnically diverse, empty nesters, 55+, median income \$40K, mostly retired, high school grad

While the market will ultimately determine what amenities, and housing products will best attract consumers in these market segments, amenities such as proximity to shops, parks, restaurants tend to attract these consumers.

Housing Market Recommendations

Analysis demonstrates the growing need for more and better quality housing units—particularly for units to accommodate families (e.g., three bedrooms) and young professionals. The key in any new multifamily development is how to diversify this supply to make sure that this new housing appeals to broader market segments, including working professionals and families, and individuals who may be looking for high quality, medium-term housing.



Strategy: Shift Student Rental Market

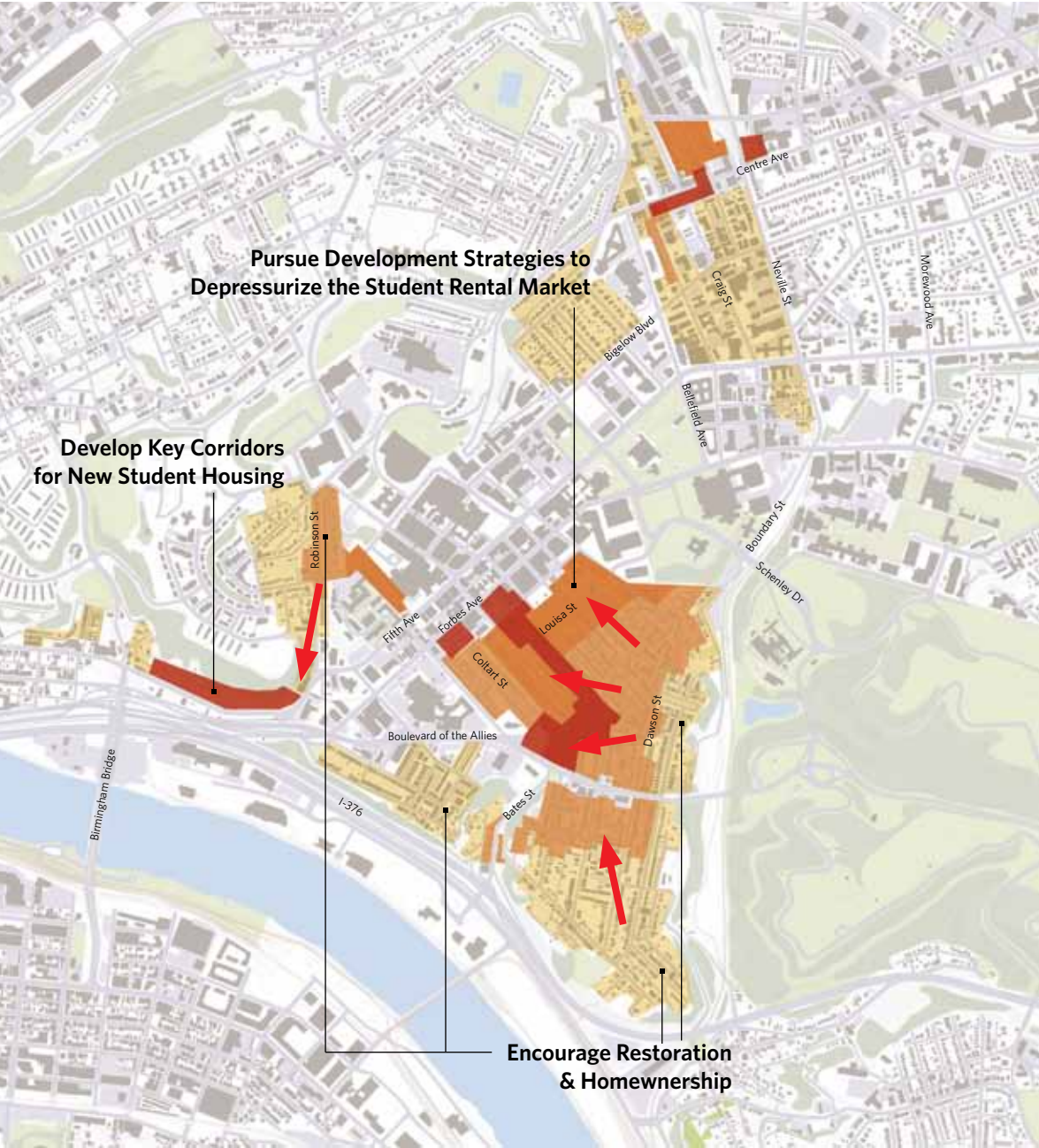
The goal for Oakland 2025’s housing plan is to pre-serve Oakland’s single family housing districts in por-tions of South, West and Central Oakland by shifting the student rental market back to the Fifth-Forbes and Uptown Corridors. Accomplishing this requires several strategies, including:

- 1. Shaping market demand to allow potential home-owners to compete in Oakland’s single-family residen-tial market.
- 2. Increasing multifamily rental supply in targeted areas in Oakland.

Students desire housing closer to the Oakland’s core business district. Increasing rental units in this area will provide a much needed relief valve in terms of the total number of residential apartment units and the associated stresses that student rentals have placed on existing residential areas, especially in terms of single family unit conversions, code violations, and parking. It also provides units closer to institutions and universities.

While demand for rental housing in Oakland is so strong that it will not relieve all the pressure on the residential markets, new high-quality rental units will provide working professionals and families with viable housing options—something currently in short supply in Oakland. Risk is lower with these unit types com-ing to market first. It gives developers and the market a chance to experiment and validate assumptions, to determine what works out and what amenities are needed. As demand stabilizes, developers will be able to develop the for-sale market products.

- Existing Residential Areas
- Areas Currently Dominated by Student Rental Housing
- Corridors for New Student Housing Development
- Areas likely to Remain Oriented to Student Housing



Proposed Student Housing Strategy

Strategy: New Housing Markets

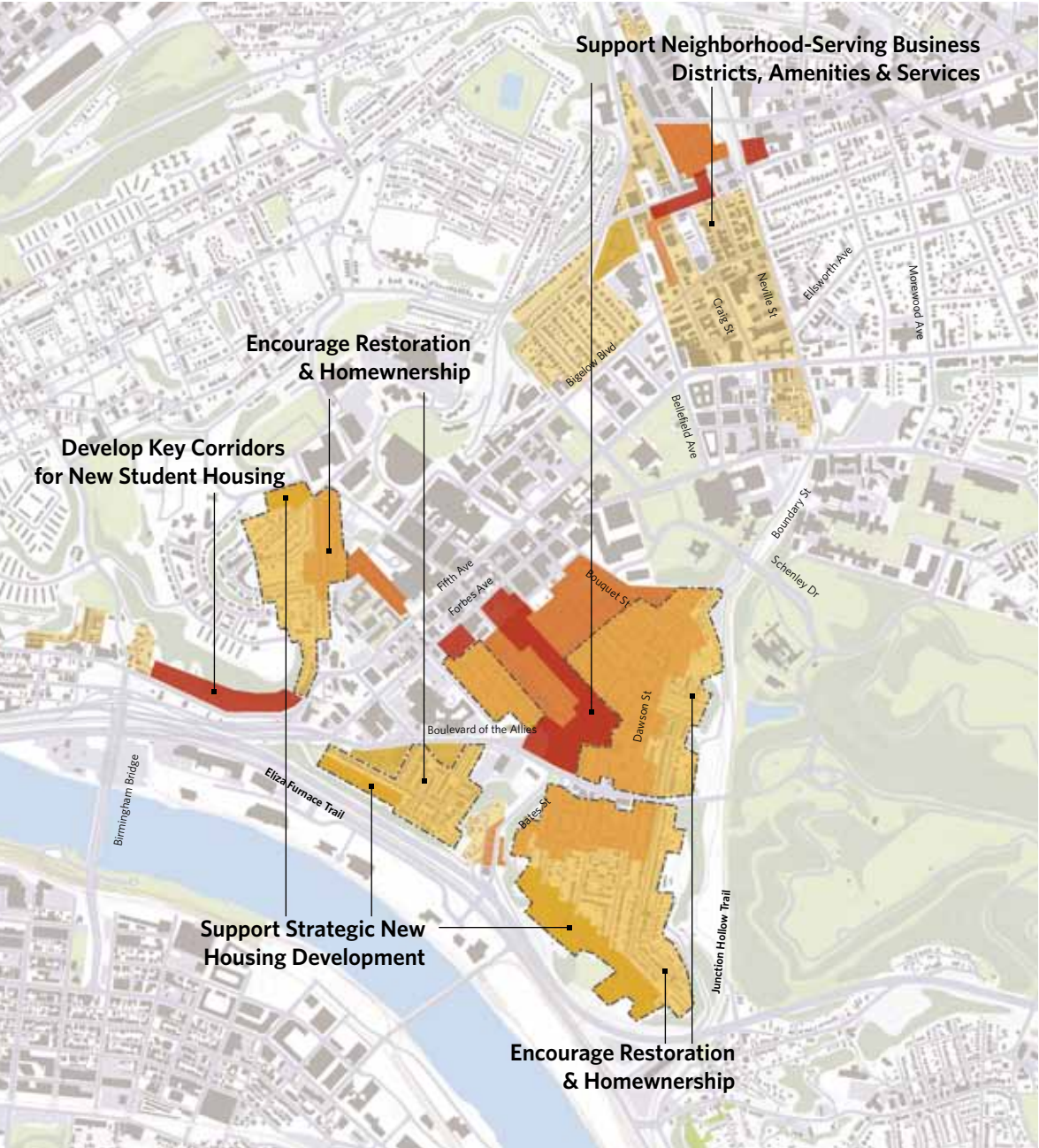
The Oakland 2025 planning process identified several areas for new multifamily housing development:

1. The core business district along Forbes Avenue
2. Fifth Avenue hillside toward the Birmingham Bridge
3. Semple/Zulema/Boulevard of the Allies
4. Centre/Craig, with potential tie to transit oriented development

To achieve the target goal of increasing the number of workers living in Oakland by 7%, approximately 1,500 additional housing units will need to be added to Oakland’s housing stock. Focusing increased density in core areas will support existing densities elsewhere. The type of housing units which will be most market receptive over the coming ten years, whether rental or for-sale, will have the following characteristics:

- ▶ Although one- and two-bedroom units will likely have the strongest demand, at least 25 percent of all new units (rental and for-sale, each) should contain three bedrooms.
- ▶ Units should be 800 to 1,400 square feet in size, with an average two-bedroom unit comprising 1,100 square feet.
- ▶ Energy-efficient appliances and building systems will be a must, particularly for improved market-ability
- ▶ Close proximity (within a five minute walk) to public space amenities, convenience retail and dining
- ▶ Close proximity (within a five minute walk) to public transit or a large employment center

- Existing Residential Areas
- Existing Student Rental Areas
- Homeowner Preservation Priority
- New Market-Rate Housing Development
- Corridors for Apartments & Student Housing Development



Proposed Housing Development and Homeowner Expansion Strategy



Housing Policy Strategies

While supply side strategies are critically important in opening up new market choices and shifting perceptions of Oakland as a viable place to live, they are only part of an overall housing strategy. To date, supply-only strategies failed to address the systemic issues of Oakland’s housing challenges and have not been large enough in scale. Housing policy strategies will also be needed to intervene in the market and make Oakland more attractive for individual homeowners, and also give them necessary tools to compete in and navigate Oakland’s housing market. To encourage new homeownership, Oakland’s leaders need to address quality of life issues and provide incentives to purchase and live in Oakland.

The Oakland 2025 planning team identified the following areas as key housing policy strategies:

- Employer assisted housing
- Code enforcement and community stewardship
- Land banking and property transfers
- Renovation and weatherization
- Quality of life improvements
- Residential branding and marketing
- Encourage innovative housing types in Oakland

Employer Assisted Housing

A critical demand-side strategy is to create an employer assisted housing (EAH) program. Benchmarked on several comparable examples, the Oakland EAH program would focus on a live near work theme. Ideally, all Oakland institutions and nonprofits would provide this benefit to their employees per the University Circle model in Cleveland. The program would offer funding incentives (down payment assistance/ grants/forgivable loans).

By assisting employees to buy or rent homes close to work or transit, employers help reduce the long commutes that contribute to employee stress and fatigue, traffic congestion, and regional air pollution. Stress related to housing instability and distance from schools/childcare can further undermine worker productivity. In many cities nationwide, participating companies find EAH to be a cost-effective and hassle-free way to improve workforce retention, recruitment and morale.

While Oakland boundary and eligibility requirements would need to be determined with input from employers and community members, potential demonstration areas could include Parkview and Dithridge.

A successful program will need to include a strong and compelling marketing component to let people know about the benefit and encourage its use. The program could provide homebuyer education and could also provide incentives for existing employees living within the designated geography to improve their homes.

- Cleveland’s University Circle neighborhood is very similar to Oakland and provides an excellent model. They offer incentives for employees to rent in their district as well.
- Penn Home Ownership Services—University Circle modeled their program after this well-known program in West Philadelphia.
- Chicago’s Metropolitan Planning Council is a national leader and provides assistance regarding EAH nationwide.
- In Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Medicine offers grants for downpayment and settlement costs as part of their EAH program.



Employer Assisted Housing Benchmarks

Code Enforcement and Community Stewardship

Improving code enforcement and community stewardship is another key housing strategy. Contrary to many assumptions, many families live happily in Oakland and the neighborhood is safer in many respects than certain other city neighborhoods. The fact remains, however, that Oakland’s image is negative in terms of prospective home buyers. Some existing residents feel “stuck” rather than remaining because it is their first choice. A renewed effort to address code enforcement concerns and improve living conditions is having a significant positive impact.

Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project has mobilized citizens to take action to advocate for proper enforcement of building codes, noise/disruptive behavior, traffic/parking, trash, health codes, fire regulations, and zoning. The group identifies high priority issues and works with enforcement agencies, elected representatives, and organizations to target everyone’s limited resources to solve pressing problems first and then move to the next concern. Oakwatch is seeing results and will keep the momentum going.

Related to code enforcement and to community building, OPDC is working with Pitt student government leaders and community residents on programs, materials, and strategies to get at the heart of issues with students living off-campus. The student-resident relations project includes ideas such as events for students to meet residents, distributing information on basics of off-campus life such as trash set-out schedule, and education regarding the neighborhood (that non-students live there), etc.



Oakwatch Code Enforcement Project

Land Banking and Property Transfers

Continued land assembly and new home construction/rehabilitation is essential to supply-side strategies. OPDC will continue to acquire properties from the city’s Treasurer’s Sale and assemble sites to develop new for-sale homes. These projects and those of private developer partners also can include renovations for sale to homeowners. These developments will provide both market rate and affordable purchase options.

We will advocate for good design and appropriate mix/rent rates for new rental options. This will create a shift in the market away from poor quality student housing to well-maintained rentals for young professionals to show that investing in Oakland makes sense for a wide variety of market segments. Incentives by employers may make sense here if needed to spark some of these developments. New affordable rental development using low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) and other tools will also be an important supply strategy. The community should investigate other types of investment incentives or zoning incentives to encourage existing property owners to reinvest in aging rental properties.

A critical component of the supply-side strategies is getting properties into the hands of new homeowners. One of Oakland’s challenges is land assembly given the investor-dominated market. Oakland needs a program to purchase options from existing homeowners so that the community is given first opportunity to purchase the home from them or their estate. Homeowners will be offered competitive purchase prices and the homes will be in the pipeline for the EAH program.



Benchmark: Cuyahoga Land Bank



Innovative Housing Opportunities

As established by the socioeconomic trends identified in this plan, the future health of Oakland is dependent on a more diverse and slightly older population base. The demand by baby boomers for alternative 50+ and retirement options is growing. They often want to stay in the city or move back in as empty nesters and not retire to suburban, gated communities. A study commissioned in part by The Benedum Foundation and the Pittsburgh Foundation in 2010 confirms the importance of Boomers on the local economy. In a given market, “. . . a target segment of 1,250 boomers born between 1955 and 1964 whose incomes is above \$70,000 per year will have a net positive impact on the region. . . .”

It is Oakland’s challenge to provide the kind of housing choices that will attract them to Oakland to invest and become involved. Most will work or volunteer well past retirement age making them valuable additions to neighborhoods in need of stability and balance.

50+ Intergenerational Communities

The consulting team talked to Campus Continuum, a Boston consulting firm that specializes in this market and acts as matchmaker between developers and higher education. They explained their approach:

“We ask our academic partners to provide faculty-like access to their programs and facilities, assist us in marketing to older alumni and other prospective residents not affiliated with the school, and to nominate a Dean of Programs. We and other partners provide everything else necessary to bring the project to fruition. No significant capital investment is required from our academic hosts. Colleges obtain annually recurring revenues from these projects. If the community is built on campus-owned land, the college receives additional compensation either via a sale, long term ground lease or equity, as preferred by the institution.”

During the workshops, many residents responded enthusiastically to this idea and identified the former Syria Mosque and Schenley High School sites as locations to be explored for this concept. It is important to emphasize that the market Oakland will attract is highly educated, focused on self-improvement, and supportive of volunteering in the arts and culture of the area.

Continuous Care Retirement Communities (CCRC)

As Boomers age to their 70s and beyond, options in the city for continuous care retirement options are almost non-existent. Many current retirees end up leaving the city for “semi-isolated” communities such as Oakmont (Longwood) or Masonic Village (Sewickley). The demand for a true CCRC community in Oakland with its great health care resources is consistent with the need to grow and diversify Oakland’s residential neighborhoods. The former Syria Mosque site would make a great location for such a facility, if designed to accommodate independent living, assisted living and full nursing care.

Trailhead Neighborhoods

Another priority for Oakland in 2025 is to retain and attract younger post-graduate residents in their 20s and 30s. Choosing to stay in the city, and Oakland in particular, will be driven by access to green space and trails, in addition to the arts and technology culture of Oakland’s institutions. They seek compact living quarters; are less dependent on the auto; and are more accustomed to using bikes and transit.

The consultant team had conversations with residents of Panther Hollow and learned about the unique history of the Italian-American immigrant community, which is slowly dying out. Speculative, absentee landlords pose a threat to the long-term viability of this unique place.

As a major connector for access to the Allegheny Passage and the Eliza Furnace Trail, this verdant and historic neighborhood is ready for a major initiative to revitalize itself as new generations of homeowners discover it as a place to be right on the trail the way golfers like to be right on the green. The small enclave is always threatened by big development ideas that would destroy the peaceful hollow with parking and high-density student ghettos. Some of the buildings in the Hollow have great architectural integrity and were likely built by Italian stonemasons working on the Oakland Civic Center or the bridges overhead.

In 2025, Panther Hollow can be imagined as a place where you live as an avid biker, hang out in a coffee shop and repair shop and are engaged in the academic community nearby. Carnegie Mellon plans development in the northern end of Panther Hollow. A proposed circulator system that might parallel the trail and run on Boundary up to North Oakland along Neville is a great opportunity if designed with sensitivity to the neighborhood and natural environment.



Intergenerational Opportunities: Syria Mosque & Schenley HS



Senior Housing Benchmark, South Hills High School



Oakland Square Historic District

Quality of Life Improvements

Schools, parks and amenities drive housing demand. While Oakland does not have a neighborhood primary school, this is the case for many city neighborhoods that attract new young families. School quality and school choice are major factors in housing investment decisions. Oakland does have a middle school and high school in the neighborhood, Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy. Oakland families currently take advantage of the various quality charter and magnet programs available throughout the city. Oakland is a vibrant neighborhood for home-schooling families and is also conveniently located to many private schools.

The strategies described in the community building section will also be important to creating demand for housing in Oakland. A positive, creative, active, and engaged group of neighbors will make the neighborhood an attractive place.

Renovation and Weatherization

OPDC will continue the successful residential façade improvement grant program and seek to expand the pool of funds to be able to incentivize more renovations. It may make sense to target the program as well as other physical improvements (home repairs, landscaping, streetscape improvements, tree planting, new green spaces) on selected blocks (through a “model blocks” program) near other investments/anchor redevelopments.

Residential Marketing and Branding

Just as Lawrenceville’s 16:65 Design Zone brand gave a two-mile stretch of Butler Street a coherent identity and Regent Square’s connection to Frick Park established a strong residential identity, developing a residential marketing and branding campaign for Oakland could define the identity and benefits of living in Oakland. Such an undertaking would have to be developed if an employer assisted housing program were put into place. It could help to establish Oakland’s core residential values and establish a set of neighborhood identities. Local housing development organizations could supply materials to realtors and various departments in the institutions to show that Oakland is a viable residential option.



Housing Preservation

Existing Historic Resources

Oakland has significant concentrations of historic resources including three National Register Historic Districts (Schenley Farms/Oakland Civic Historic District, Schenley Park, and Pittsburgh Public Schools Thematic Group) and three local historic districts (Oakland Civic Center, Schenley Farms and Oakland Square). Additionally, there are a number of individually-listed national resources (such as Phipps Conservatory), City-designated local landmarks (such as the Panther Hollow and Schenley Bridges and Phipps Conservatory), and historic resources identified through the Historic Plaque Program of Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF).

Community Preservation Goals

Historic preservation is valued in Oakland. Through the workshops, charrettes and community meetings a series of preservation-related goals were identified:

- › Strengthen the neighborhood’s small town feel
- › Keep families in Oakland
- › Promote homeownership
- › Use historic neighborhoods to attract and retain residents and businesses
- › Address vacant buildings and avoid demolition of historically significant buildings
- › Provide and promote education and funding for renovation, façade improvements and weatherization

A number of preservation strategies can help to address these community concerns. Some are traditional preservation planning approaches, such as identifying and designating historic resources, encouraging the application of preservation tax incentives, and façade improvement programs. Others are less “top down” or more community driven and recognize that non-preservation professionals can advance the conservation of their neighborhoods and diverse histories.



Schenley Farms Historic District



Oakland Civic Historic District



Oakland Square Historic District

National or Local Designation? There’s a Difference:

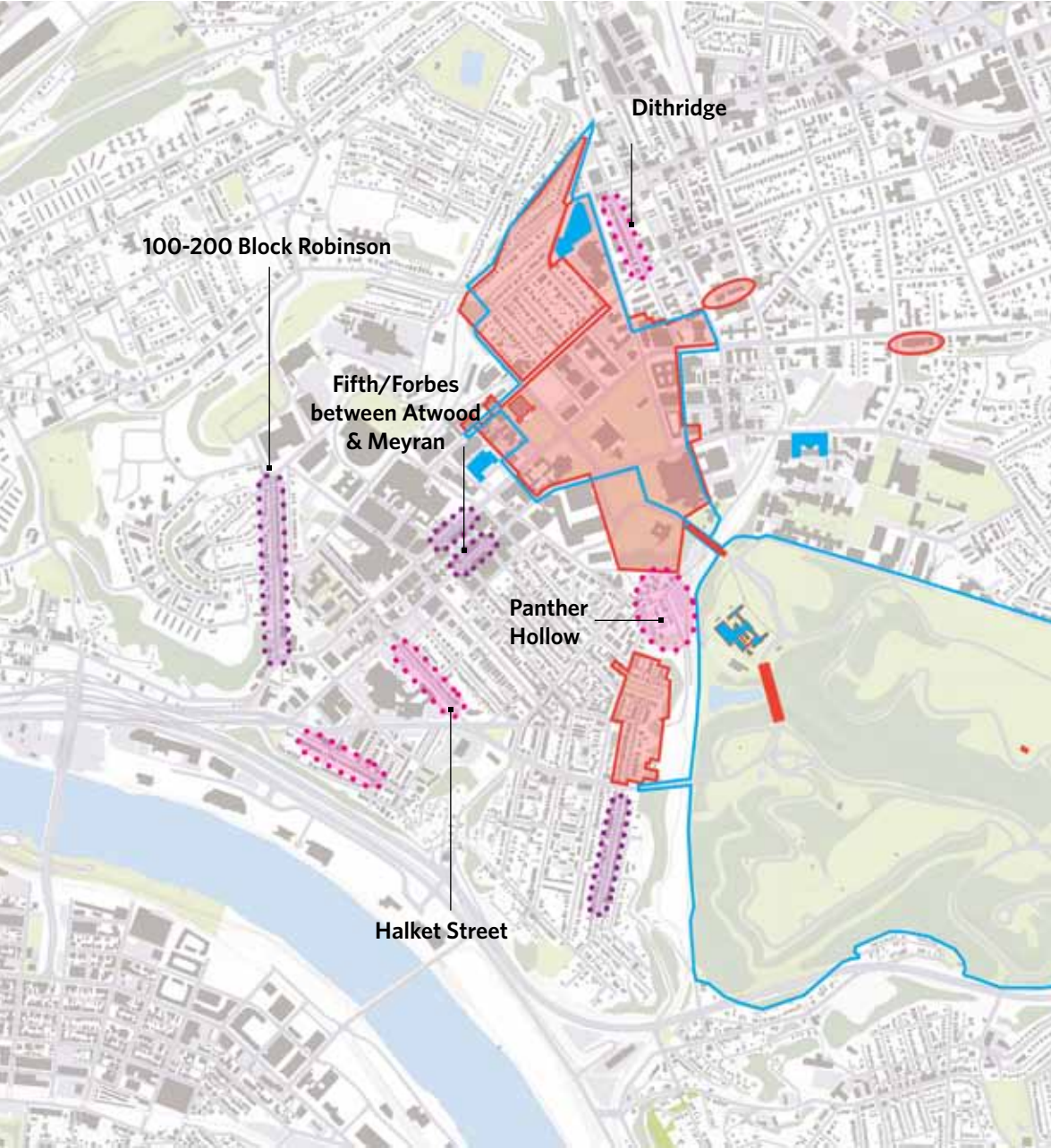
There are generally two types of historic resource designation: National Register and Local. While both recognize the significance of a particular place, and can be rallying points for further planning efforts, there are substantial differences between the two.

**National:** In short, despite the common misperception that listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) will protect a historic resource, this level of designation is largely honorary and does not limit an owner’s modification or maintenance of a property (unless federal funding, licenses or permits are involved).

**Local:** Local designation is far more effective at preventing inappropriate changes to historic resources by requiring exterior modifications to be approved in advance by a local historic and architectural review board (in Pittsburgh, this is the Historic Review Commission).

**PHLF:** One additional note: Even though PHLF’s Historic Plaque Program is administered locally, it is solely honorary and offers no protection from alteration or demolition.

- National Register Designation (Buildings and Districts)
- Local Historic Designation (Buildings and Districts)
- Potential Preservation Focused EAH Areas
- Potential Model Blocks





## Oakland 2025 General Preservation Strategies

The Oakland 2025 planning process identified the following preservation strategies as part of a community conservation plan.

### Develop a Comprehensive Survey

Building upon recent (but incomplete) surveys, develop plans for a comprehensive inventory of Oakland’s historically and culturally significant resources; highlight assets and opportunities.

### Promote Historic District Designations

Promote the creation of historic districts for resources related by common themes or geographic proximity (with emphasis on local designation followed by National Register listing). Potential historic districts to include:

- › Apartments on McKee Place—Early twentieth century apartment buildings with deep setbacks on McKee Place at Louisa. This has the potential to maintain a diverse housing stock and provide opportunities for individuals and families who are not in a position to buy a home.
- › Bellefield—Early twentieth century apartment buildings
- › Neville Street—Post-World War II apartment buildings (including Neville House at 552 North Neville)
- › Oakland Square Expansion—Recommended in PreservePGH to include properties along Dawson Street from Oakland Avenue to Semple Street

### Support Streetscape/Façade Renovation Incentives

Continue successful OPDC residential façade improvement program and build on similar existing commercial programs.

### Encourage Asset Retention and Selective Infill

Develop renewal and infill strategies in keeping with positive neighborhood characteristics, such as style, massing, setbacks, materials. Modeled on ELDI’s market-rate prototype housing in East Liberty.

### Explore Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs)

Explore legislative requirements to permit neighborhood conservation districts, especially when more familiar preservation tools such as landmark or district designation are not applicable or desired. Typically

developed as overlay zoning districts, NCDs are intended to encourage the continued vitality of older residential areas, to promote the development of a variety of new housing of contemporary standards in existing neighborhoods, and to maintain a desirable residential environment and scale. Regulations tend to be simpler and more lenient than those for historic districts.

### Engage in Proactive Advocacy

Develop strategies for anticipating future preservation opportunities and threats so that the community can respond proactively as advocates for reuse.

### Utilize Blighted and Abandoned Property Legislation

Explore the application of state laws recently enacted for Pennsylvania’s communities to address the problem of vacant, abandoned and blighted private property as outlined in *Quick Guide: New Tools to Address Blight and Abandonment* (Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, February 2011).

### Employer-Assisted Housing Programs for Preservation

Explore strategic alliances to develop EAH programs to encourage housing conservation in targeted neighborhoods. As mentioned in the housing policy section, employer-assisted housing programs offer incentives for neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. They can also be a powerful preservation tool that can benefit specific historic neighborhoods. For example, a key driver in the establishment of Washington University’s EAH program was the desire to “permanently stabilize” specific neighborhoods near the St. Louis campus. Their program offers forgivable loans to qualified employees who purchase an owner-occupied 1-4 family building. Employees receive the lesser of 5% of the home’s purchase price or \$6,000.

Potential preservation-oriented EAH neighborhoods

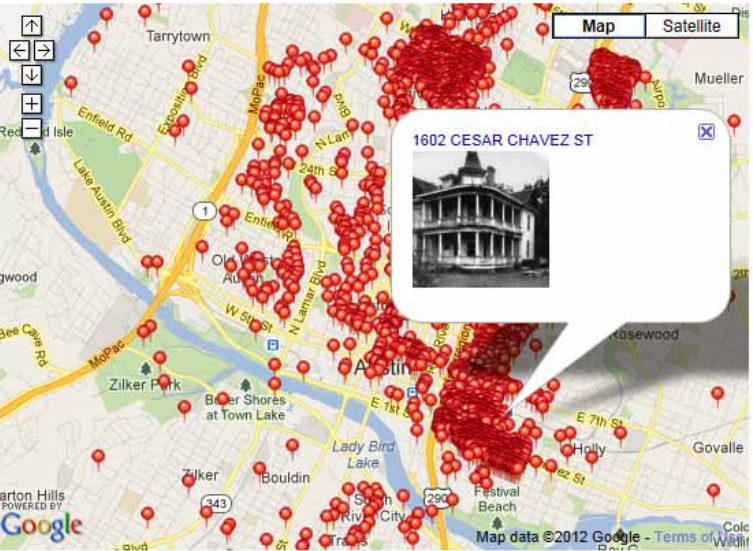
- › Panther Hollow neighborhood
- › 200 block of Dithridge Street. This “fraternity row” has both location (proximity to Pitt’s campus and the nearby Schenley Farms historic district) and sound architectural bones to make an EAH program attractive.
- › West and Central Oakland neighborhoods, including 200 and 300 block of Halket Street across the street from the Magee Women’s Hospital.

### Update on Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

In July 2012, the Pennsylvania Legislature established the Historic Preservation Incentive Act—a state historic preservation tax credit program that closely mirrors the federal tax credit program (which offers a 20 percent tax credit for certified rehabilitation projects).

The state law provides a 25 percent tax credit for the rehabilitation of certified historic structures (as defined under the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program), with a cap of \$500,000 for an individual project and a limit of \$3 million for the first year of the program.

The program is not available to private homeowners. Qualifying properties must be used for income-producing purposes, including commercial, industrial, agricultural, rental residential or apartment use.



A screenshot from the Austin Survey Wiki showing historic and cultural resources identified by community members

## Community-Based Preservation Initiatives

### Community-Identified Resources

Explore ways for community members to continue to identify resources that are historically and culturally significant to them. Examples include the Austin Historical Survey Wiki or interactive public engagement products such as MetroQuest.

Unlike typical preservation surveys, which can be seen as top-down or outsider-created, tools like these emphasize local knowledge that can then be combined with the expertise of planners and preservationists to improve the transparency, accuracy, currency and breadth of survey information. This approach often identifies resources that might fall outside standard historic preservation criteria, but nonetheless are important to a neighborhood’s history and sense of place.

### Model Blocks

This conservation-based revitalization tool can take two forms:

- › Identify existing blocks in each neighborhood that are positive models of rehabilitation, conservation of building types, home ownership, retention of architectural details, etc. Target assistance to these areas to support and refine ongoing revitalization efforts and to promote similar efforts in adjacent neighborhoods.
- › Identify blocks in each neighborhood that have the potential to become positive models of neighborhood revitalization. Target public infrastructure, housing and community development resources (rehabilitation grants, public infrastructure improvements and blight removal).

The goal is to provide a visible and concentrated neighborhood revitalization initiative that can serve as a catalyst for further private investment and change in surrounding blocks. Activities can be linked to job training, job placement, homeownership counseling, and other special services.

Potential Model Blocks:

- › Parkview, south of the Boulevard of the Allies
- › 100 block of Robinson Street
- › Forbes Ave. between Atwood and Meyran (cornice lines, rhythm)
- › Fifth Avenue between Atwood and Meyran (a model of rhythm, massing, character with cornices creating an important edge)



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 3.3 Transportation

### Transportation Goal

Establish a transportation network that will be highly multimodal (serving pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users equally as well as automobiles) with strong neighborhood connections that are well designed, safe, and accessible. Automobile traffic and parking demand will be lowered if more people live where they work.

#### Introduction

The transportation portion of the Oakland 2025 Plan investigated current planning initiatives and existing ideas for improving multi-modal transportation in Oakland. Focusing on innovative green transportation solutions, the proposed improvements are designed to reduce the impact of automobile traffic on residential quality of life, improve access to transportation for residents and improve mobility options for students, workers and visitors.

#### Summary of Plan Recommendations

- ▶ Implement BRT in the Fifth and Forbes corridor with strong neighborhood feeder connectivity
- ▶ Create a unified shuttle system linked to BRT stations
- ▶ Create “mobility hubs” at key BRT stations with integrated car sharing, secure bicycle parking and on the neighborhood edges, commuter intercept parking
- ▶ Create dedicated east-west bicycle lanes through the Fifth and Forbes corridor
- ▶ Improve connections to existing trails
- ▶ Improve parking management; expand permit parking area; amend permit policy (# of permits/unit)
- ▶ Explore the possibility of creating a Downtown-Oakland circulator loop through Junction Hollow

#### Analysis

Oakland has intense transportation demands, with the second largest commuter influx in the region after Downtown Pittsburgh. Oakland’s daytime population has over 38,000 workers, 40,000 students, 24,000 residents, and 12,000 daily visitors.<sup>1</sup> Movement in Oakland is frequently congested because of the neighborhood’s large daytime population and its diverse users and destinations. The quality of infrastructure for various modes of transportation varies greatly in Oakland, with each having a distinct set of issues and challenges.

#### Walking

Oakland scores 83 – “very walkable” – on the Walk Score (walkscore.com) rating system because of the density of neighborhood land uses. The Walk Score does not account for accessibility, quality of connections, topography or safety of the pedestrian environment. Making Oakland more walkable will help to minimize air pollution, improve residents’ health, increase property values and encourage community vibrancy. Although pedestrian improvements have recently been made in the Fifth and Forbes corridor, there is room for further improvement in this area as well as in other major corridors like Bates Street and the Boulevard of the Allies. Current walking issues and challenges include:

- ▶ Discontinuous and unsafe sidewalks along Forbes Avenue and the Boulevard of the Allies at the western end of the neighborhood
- ▶ Long, unsafe pedestrian crossings on the Boulevard of the Allies
- ▶ A need for additional curb bulb outs and planting buffers at locations with heavy pedestrian traffic on Fifth and Forbes Avenues
- ▶ Insufficient corner curb ramps connecting each side of the street
- ▶ A limited number of pedestrian signal heads
- ▶ Unsafe conditions created by counter-flow bus lanes adjacent to narrow sidewalks on Fifth Avenue
- ▶ Businesses allowing vehicles to park on sidewalks, requiring pedestrians to enter the street
- ▶ A lack of street trees and understory planting in major corridors
- ▶ Safety—between 2001 and 2009, there were five pedestrian fatalities in the study area

#### Cycling

Oakland has a lack of dedicated cycling infrastructure. Recent additions of bicycle lanes and shared lane markings in the surrounding communities have created safer cycling paths to Oakland, but currently all improvements stop at the edge of Oakland, providing no safe cycling path through the neighborhood. Of all neighborhoods in Pittsburgh Oakland may have the largest unmet demand for cycling infrastructure because of its educational institutions, large student population and relatively flat topography. Current cycling issues and challenges include:

- ▶ A complete lack of cycling infrastructure in the core of Oakland
- ▶ A lack of secure bicycle parking at some destinations
- ▶ Poor connections to the existing adjacent trail network
- ▶ A lack of bicycle rental opportunities
- ▶ Safety—between 2001 and 2009, there was one cyclist fatality in the study area

#### Public Transit & Shuttles

Oakland today is well served by public transportation, with bus routes connecting Oakland to Downtown Pittsburgh, numerous surrounding neighborhoods, outlying municipalities and the Pittsburgh International Airport. According to the Port Authority of Allegheny County, around 23,000 people commute to Oakland by bus daily during the school year.<sup>2</sup> The majority of routes serving Oakland travel on Fifth and Forbes Avenues and are part of the larger Downtown-Oakland-East End corridor. According to the Port Authority of Allegheny County approximately 68,000 or 24% of the Port Authority’s total ridership moves through this corridor on weekdays.<sup>3</sup> A study is currently exploring options for implementing bus rapid transit through this corridor as a means to improve efficiency, encourage higher ridership and improve the transit user experience. In addition to public transportation, Oakland is also served by overlapping networks of institutional and university shuttles. These shuttles facilitate commuting by students and connect institutional campuses and their off-site parking facilities, however they are not accessible to the general public. Current transit issues and challenges include:

- ▶ Oakland lacks premium transit service (e.g., dedicated rights-of-way, bus rapid transit)
- ▶ Buses must compete with automobile traffic except on Fifth Avenue moving east-bound



<sup>1</sup> 2004 Oakland Transit Whitepaper, The Oakland Task Force

<sup>2</sup> 2004 Oakland Transit Whitepaper, The Oakland Task Force

<sup>3</sup> Pittsburgh Bus Rapid Transit Forum, Port Authority of Allegheny County

- Many bus stops are too small to accommodate peak pedestrian volumes and lack shelters and other amenities
- Shuttle services are only accessible to some users and duplication of routes and service leads to overall inefficiency
- Port Authority service cuts have resulted in a loss of public transportation service in some residential areas and crowding on some main routes

#### Automobiles & Parking

Oakland is dominated by large scale automobile arterials including Fifth and Forbes Avenues, the Boulevard of the Allies, Bigelow Boulevard and Centre Avenue. The western edge of the neighborhood is also adjacent to I-376 with a pair of separated half interchanges connecting to the interstate at Bates Street and the western end of the Fifth and Forbes corridor. In the core of the neighborhood Fifth and Forbes act as a one-way pair running east-west through the neighborhood. The Boulevard of the Allies is an alternate east-west route, which connects to I-376 via Bates Street and to Schenley Park and Squirrel Hill to the east. The narrow Bates Street valley and its connection to the Boulevard of the Allies is one of the most problematic and congested intersections in the neighborhood. Both public and private parking garages and surface lots are distributed around the institutional uses and UPMC has a number of off-site lots accessed by shuttle services. However, developing a more coordinated intercept parking system integrated with transit investments should be explored. Most residential areas have on-street permit parking, but some uncontrolled areas create an influx of commuters onto small residential streets and should be addressed. Current automobile issues and challenges include:

- One-way streets make wayfinding difficult and lengthen trips within the neighborhood
- Congestion occurs at key connections to I-376 including Bates, Fifth, Forbes and Craft
- Cut-through traffic impacts narrow residential streets, especially in West and South Oakland
- Permit parking is inconsistently managed and is absent in some residential locations
- Intercept parking on the neighborhood periphery is lacking

#### Oakland 2025 Transportation Recommendations

For Oakland to strengthen its position as a national leader in health care, research and higher learning, it must embrace a multi-modal transportation system that prioritizes safety, human health and environmental sustainability over car-carrying capacity.

#### Complete/Living Streets

Emerging best practices in transportation design increasingly emphasize the related concepts of “complete” and “living” streets. *Complete streets* are designed to safely accommodate all modes of transportation including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This is in contrast to streets where automobile movement is privileged above other modes of transportation. Over the last decade the concept of complete streets has influenced transportation planning and policy with many local, county and state governments adopting new complete streets policies and design manuals. More information on complete streets can be found on the website of the National Complete Streets Coalition, an organization advocating for the integration of the complete streets concept into transportation policy.

The concept of *living streets* builds on the idea of accommodating all modes but actively privileges pedestrians, cyclists and transit users in response to the larger goals of community health and environmental sustainability. In addition to safely accommodating all modes of transportation, a living street also typically includes green infrastructure to manage and treat stormwater, street trees and understory landscaping and a full range of street furniture to support pedestrian activity. *The Model Design Manual for Living Streets* developed by Los Angeles County in 2011 proposes the following goals for living streets:

- Serve the land uses that are adjacent to the street; mobility is a means, not an end
- Encourage people to travel by walking, bicycling, and transit, and to drive less
- Provide transportation options for people of all ages, physical abilities, and income levels
- Enhance the safety and security of streets, from both a traffic and personal perspective
- Improve peoples’ health

- Create livable neighborhoods
- Reduce the total amount of paved area
- Reduce water runoff from streets into watersheds
- Maximize infiltration and reuse of stormwater
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollution
- Reduce energy consumption
- Promote the economic well-being of both businesses and residents
- Increase civic space and encourage human interaction

*The Model Design Manual* also provides a series of performance measures for living streets:

- Street fatalities and injuries decrease for all age groups
- The number of trips by walking, cycling, and transit increases
- Vehicle travel is reduced
- Prevailing speeds of vehicles on local streets decrease
- Street water runoff is reduced
- Water quality in rivers and the ocean improves
- Retail sales and tourism increase
- Resident satisfaction increases

Oakland 2025 recommends the adoption of the living streets approach as a basis for designing and evaluating new transportation improvements. Although Oakland already has a large number of pedestrians and very high transit usage, numerous places in the neighborhood have been designed to privilege or exclusively accommodate automobile movement. Sidewalks are often too narrow for pedestrian volumes, transit is forced to compete with other modes and cyclists lack safe dedicated paths to move through Oakland. Major corridors through Oakland also lack trees and understory landscape treatments. Adopting living streets standards for new transportation investments is key to supporting the larger goals of the Oakland 2025 plan to improve the quality of life of residents, students, visitors and workers, and improving the economic performance of the neighborhood’s business districts.

<sup>4</sup> About MOVEPGH, Pittsburgh Department of City Planning, <http://planpgh.com/>

#### Innovative Approaches to Evaluating Transportation Investment

More holistic methods of evaluating future transportation investments will be needed to ensure projects support a living streets approach. Oakland should adopt performance measures that strike a balance between personal mobility and other community goals such as economic development, quality of life, environmental sustainability, and social equity. For future transportation investments Oakland 2025 recommends using a “Quality of Service” (QOS) method of measuring the success of transportation system changes, rather than the conventional automobile-oriented “Level of Service” method. Quality of Service metrics should be used to place a greater emphasis on living streets goals, something that conventional LOS cannot do. Measures can include: transit frequency, vehicle loading, delay probability, pedestrian density, quality of the environment, etc. Oakland needs a refined set of street design guidelines that stratify streets according to their function *and* their context in the neighborhood. A street classified as an arterial changes in character over its length. Roads ought to be analyzed on a segment by segment basis in relation to its context so that appropriate design guidelines can be prescribed.

Living streets and quality of service metrics also reflect the anticipated direction of the transportation component of the City of Pittsburgh’s first comprehensive plan, *MOVEPGH*. The stated direction of *MOVEPGH* follows a similar approach to that advocated here: “As more people move to Pittsburgh’s urban core, enhanced transit, walking and biking options will be required in order for improvements in safety, capacity and efficiency to be achieved. For the City of Pittsburgh to manage and accommodate a population increase, all transportation modes must be considered as future options for getting to work, school, and play. In short, MOVEPGH will set the foundation for Pittsburgh’s 21st century transportation needs by moving people, not just cars.”<sup>4</sup>

#### Conceptual Transportation Master Plan

The following pages describe a conceptual Transportation Master Plan for Oakland, including a set of somewhat interdependent transportation improvements for the neighborhood, some of which could be implemented in the short term, while others could take a decade or more to put in place. Strategies for transit, corridor improvements, and bicycle infrastructure are followed by specific goals and recommendations for the Fifth and Forbes corridor and the intersection of Bates Street with the Boulevard of the Allies.



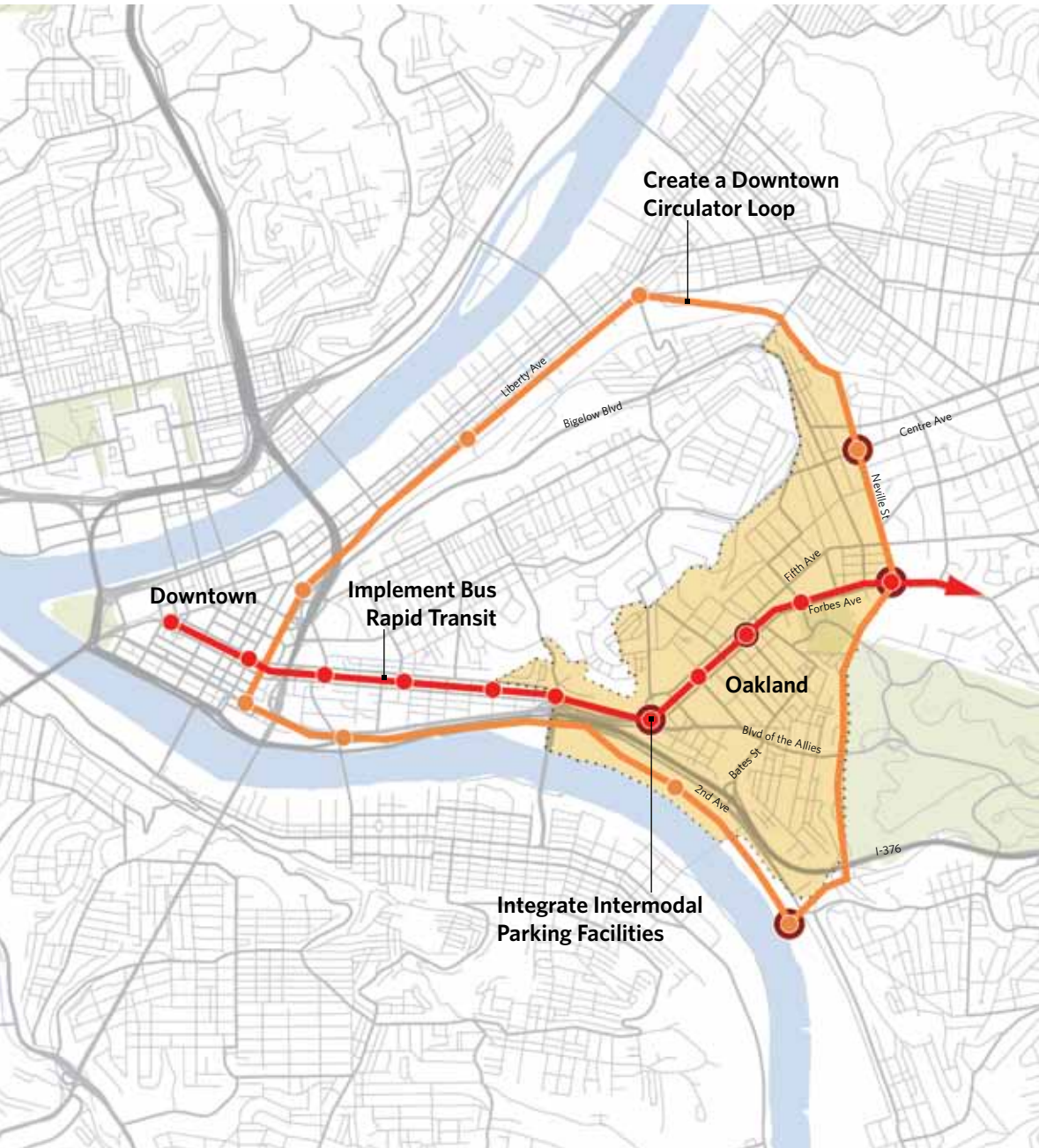
Expand Connections to Oakland

**Bus Rapid Transit**  
Oakland is well served by local bus lines, but lacks premium transit facilities with a dedicated right-of-way. A high end Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT) along the Fifth/Forbes corridor should be integrated with the existing bus service to create a much needed premium link between Oakland and Downtown. Frequent, fast BRT service linking key destinations will encourage motorists to abandon their cars in favor of a bus and reduce vehicular traffic enough that space in the corridor can be allocated to other modes of transportation. Two scenarios for accommodating BRT are explained later in this chapter.

**Downtown Circulator**  
In addition to BRT, the creation of a 2-way fixed-guideway Circulator Loop could connect Oakland to Downtown, Lower Lawrenceville, the Strip District, the Pittsburgh Technology Center and ALMONO site. It would run along Second Avenue, through the Technology Center and Junction Hollow to Oakland. After intersecting the BRT at Carnegie Mellon’s campus, it would enter North Oakland on Neville Avenue and connect to Lower Lawrenceville and the Strip District via the Neville Street Busway ramp. The loop would then cross through Downtown along Ross Street.

New transportation links to Oakland should be paired with a range of mobility improvements within the neighborhood designed to increase transportation options and reduce automobile traffic in the long term. Neighborhood scale improvements to transit, major corridors and bicycle infrastructure all play a part in this strategy and are discussed on the following pages.

- Fifth/Forbes BRT Line
- Downtown Circulator Loop
- Major Transit Station
- Major Transit Station with intermodal parking



Proposed Transit Connections

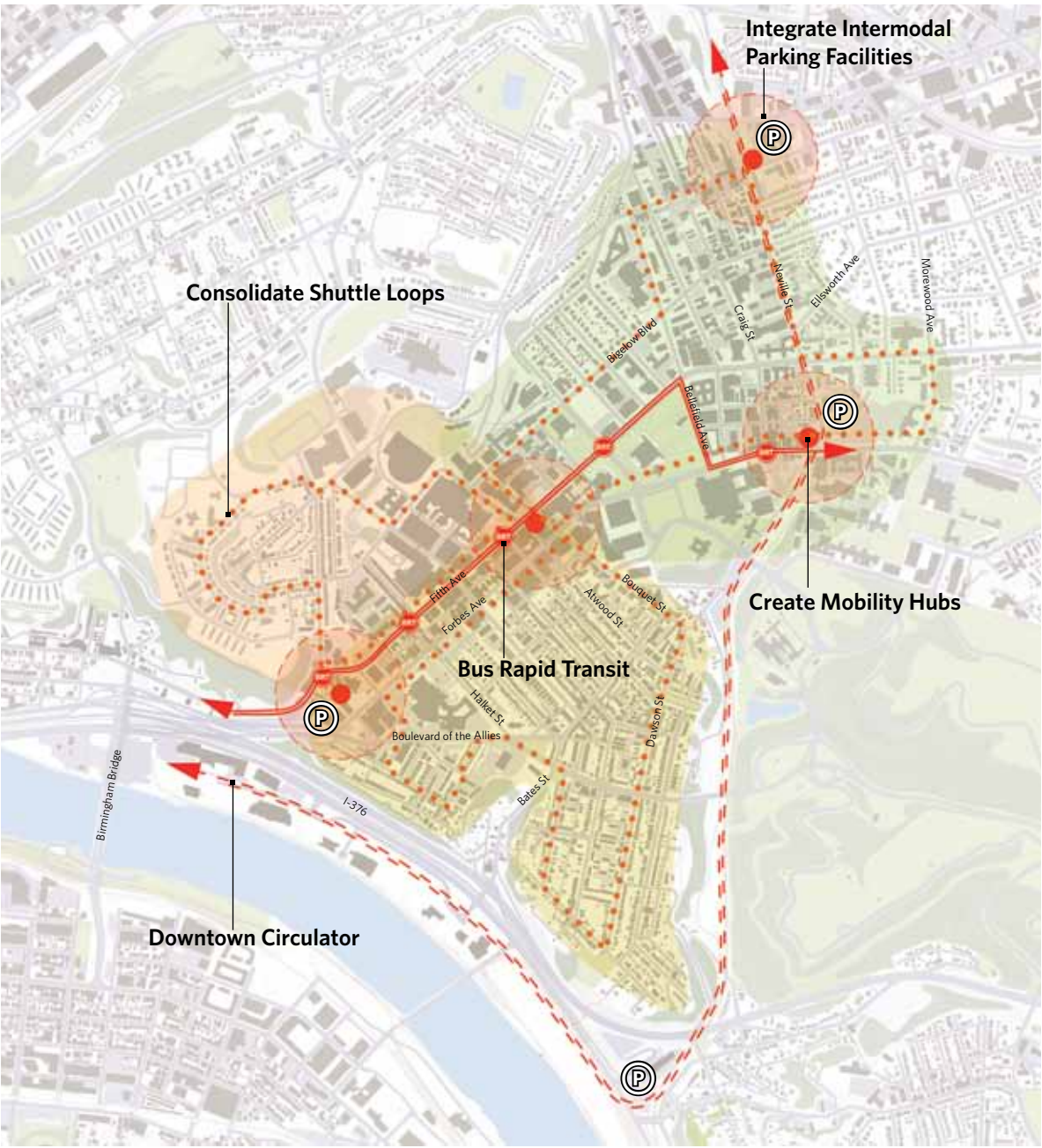
Provide New Transit Options

**Unified Local Shuttle Circulator System**  
Consolidate the many institutional shuttle services and local bus routes into a unified transit circulator system operating within two or more transit service areas. This system would provide more easily understood options, increased efficiency, greater access for more segments of the community, and reduced negative impacts (traffic, congestion and pollution). Shuttles should serve workers, students, visitors and residents, connecting local destinations to regional transit. Shuttle routes should overlap at key BRT or Circulator stations.

**New Mobility Hubs**  
Expand options in the transportation system with a network of new mobility hubs linking multiple modes of sustainable transportation. Mobility hubs should connect BRT stations to the local circulator system while also providing car and bicycle sharing services, secure bicycle parking, taxi service, wayfinding and traveler information, WiFi access, and intermodal parking facilities. Significant development sites at either end of Forbes Avenue and the Centre/Neville intersection are ideal candidates. A minor hub with less parking could be provided in the center of Oakland.

**Intermodal Parking Facilities**  
Major institutional employers attract a high percentage of traffic from outside of Oakland. On the neighborhood edges, “intercept” parking structures should be constructed and integrated with mobility hubs to provide convenient transfers to existing (and proposed) transit services. Along the Downtown Circulator route opportunities exist to create intermodal parking facilities on the ALMONO site and potentially in the upper Strip District.

- Fifth/Forbes BRT Line
- BRT Stations
- 3 Consolidated Shuttle Loops
- Shuttle Service Areas
- Downtown Circulator Loop
- Mobility Hubs
- Intermodal Parking Facilities



Proposed Transit Improvements



Improve Major Corridors

Transform the Fifth and Forbes Corridor

The Fifth and Forbes corridor is currently dominated by automobile traffic, limiting the efficiency of other transportation modes in Oakland’s core. While recent pedestrian enhancements have improved the situa- tion, a more holistic approach to transforming both corridors should be the long-term goal. Oakland 2025 proposes reorganizing space within the existing street rights-of-way on Fifth and Forbes to safely accommo- date pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and premium public transportation. Two possible scenarios are presented on the following pages.

Transform Bates and the Boulevard of the Allies

Oakland 2025 proposes reconfiguring the The Bou- levard of the Allies and Bates Street corridors into complete streets and mitigating congestion at their intersection. The intersection of the Boulevard, Bates and Zulema is reconceived as a major gateway to the neighborhood with an expanded public park sur- rounded by new mixed use development.

Green Key Corridors

Coordinated street tree planting and new ornamental planting should be implemented on key corridors in the neighborhood including, but not limited to those discussed above. Best management practices for stormwater management should be integrated into new streetscape planting designs.

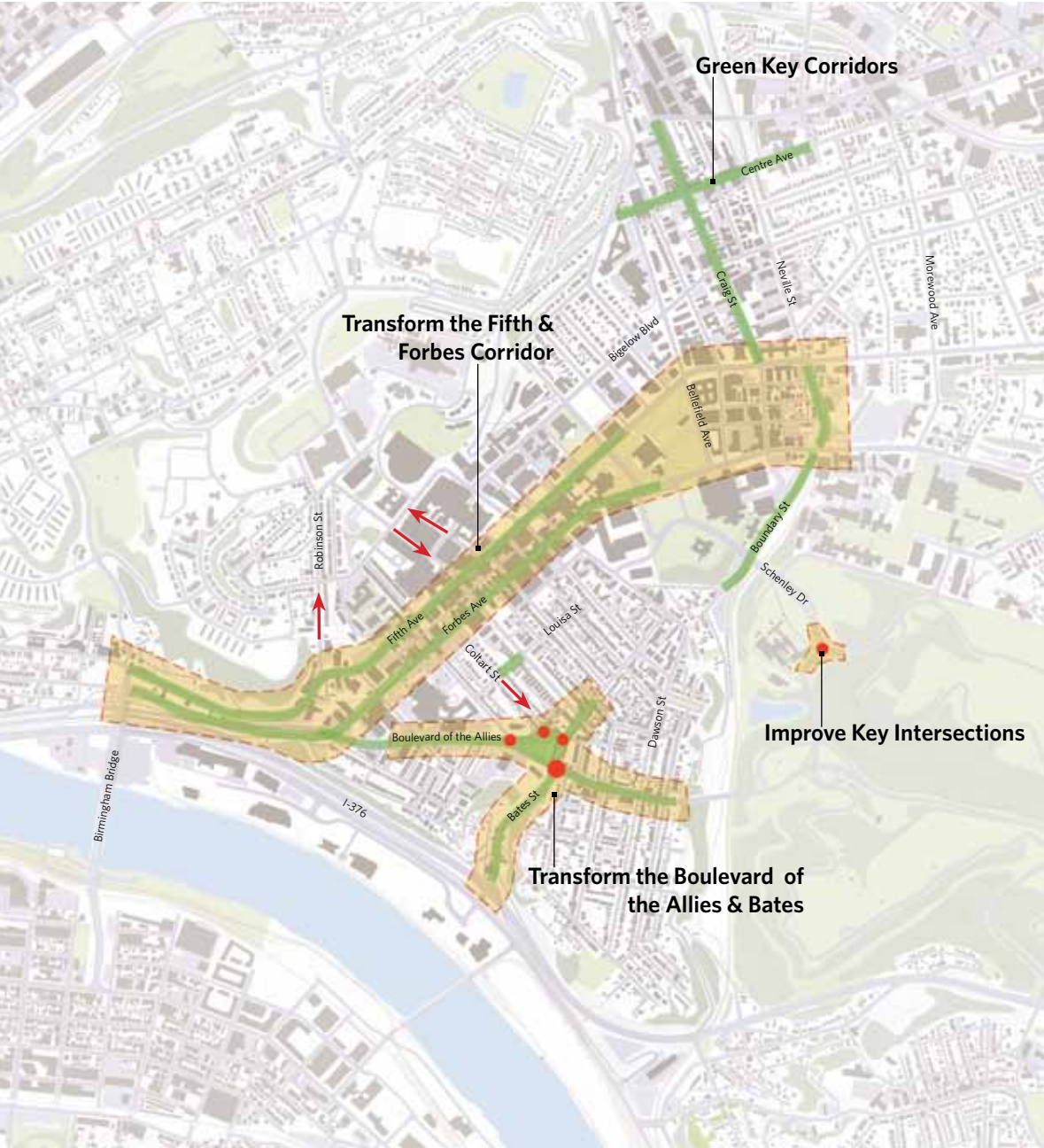
Supporting Efforts

- Use intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technology to improve efficiency
- Manage parking comprehensively to improve utilization
- Expand residential permit parking and improve operations
- Improve neighborhood wayfinding
- Evaluate minor directional changes to mitigate cut-through traffic on key residential streets (Coltart, Robinson, Bates)

- Major Corridor Improvements

Streetscape Improvements
- Intersection Improvements

One-Way Conversions



Proposed Corridor Improvements

Connect Bikes through Oakland

Forbes Avenue Cycle Track

Recent additions of bicycle lanes and shared lane markings have created safer cycling paths to Oakland, but currently all improvements stop at the edge of Oakland, providing no safe cycling path through the neighborhood. Oakland 2025 proposes the creation of a pair of bicycle lanes on Forbes Avenue physically separated from traffic, known as a “two-way cycle track.” The Forbes cycle track would act as a cycling spine through Oakland connecting the neighborhood to existing bicycling infrastructure to the east and west. Guidance for cycle track standards and imple- mentation can be found in the recently published *NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide*. Similar strategies could also be applied to Schenley Drive and potentially Morewood and Centre Avenues.

Improved Trail Connections

Oakland is also adjacent to the heavily used Eliza Furnace and Junction Hollow trails. Another key bicycle infrastructure recommendation is to improve connections from the neighborhood down to the two trails and to improve the connection between them as illustrated at right.



NACTO-compliant two-way cycle track, M Street, Washington, DC

- Proposed Forbes Ave two-way separated cycle track

Proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes

Proposed off-street trail
- Existing on-street markings or dedicated lanes

Existing off-street trail

Existing on-street route

New connection to trails



Proposed Bicycle Improvements



Fifth & Forbes Corridor

Reimagining how the Fifth and Forbes corridor could better accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and transit is a key recommendation of Oakland 2025, and should be a major effort moving forward. Today the Fifth and Forbes corridor is dominated by automobiles, a one-way pair through the core of Oakland. Both streets also carry large volumes of bus traffic, with buses moving both with traffic and in a dedicated east-bound counter-flow bus lane on Fifth. Existing transit stops and transit right-of-way provision is lacking given the number of riders and Oakland’s role as a regional job center and educational hub. While new bicycle facilities reach the edges of the corridor, there remains no safe route for cyclists through the core of Oakland. Both streets have large numbers of pedestrians including transit users, students, and retail patrons. Street level uses vary significantly between the two streets. Forbes contains diverse retail and restaurant uses in the center, with institutional uses at either end. Fifth has limited retail and is largely dominated by large-scale institutional uses throughout Oakland. This difference creates higher volumes of pedestrians on Forbes Avenue.

A variety of concurrent studies are examining transportation options for the Fifth and Forbes corridor. *MOVEPGH* is the transportation component of the City of Pittsburgh’s first comprehensive plan. *MOVEPGH* has just begun to study possible transportation solutions for Oakland and the larger city. In addition, *Get There PGH* is studying bus rapid transit (BRT) options for the Fifth and Forbes corridor from Downtown Pittsburgh through Oakland. *Innovation Oakland* is examining streetscape, wayfinding and public art in the corridor. Finally the *ThinkBike Workshop* led by the The Pittsburgh City Planning Department and the Dutch Cycling Embassy explored options for separated cycle tracks through the corridor.

The Oakland 2025 team collaborated with the various projects underway to generate design goals and a pair of scenarios for the Fifth and Forbes corridor that can help guide future planning that will be necessary to determine the improvements to implement.

Transportation Goals for Fifth & Forbes

- › Make Fifth and Forbes complete streets that safely accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and premium public transportation.
- › The design of Forbes should support its role as a pedestrian-oriented retail street
- › Restore an intuitive two-way street network to the degree possible
- › Create premium bus rapid transit (BRT) through the Fifth and Forbes corridor connecting to Downtown
- › Integrate BRT stations into the streetscape and into buildings
- › Create a continuous separated bicycle route from one end of the Fifth and Forbes corridor to the other
- › Maintain some street parking and automobile access for businesses
- › Green the Fifth and Forbes corridor with new street trees and ground level plantings where possible

Challenges

- › Consensus will be required among multiple stakeholders and planning studies
- › Implementation time frames may not align for BRT, pedestrian and bicycle improvements
- › Narrow section of Fifth Avenue between Craft Ave and McKee Pl constrains possibilities for additional transportation modes
- › Highway entrances and exit ramps at the western end of the corridor are designed to work with the current one-way-pair configuration
- › Forbes is currently a PennDOT-controlled road, while Fifth is owned by the City of Pittsburgh.

Fifth & Forbes Corridor: Existing Conditions



Forbes Avenue corridor looking east



Fifth Avenue corridor looking east



Narrow Section of Fifth Avenue corridor looking east



Existing sections looking east



Fifth typical (east of McKee)



Forbes typical

Fifth & Forbes Corridor Existing Conditions

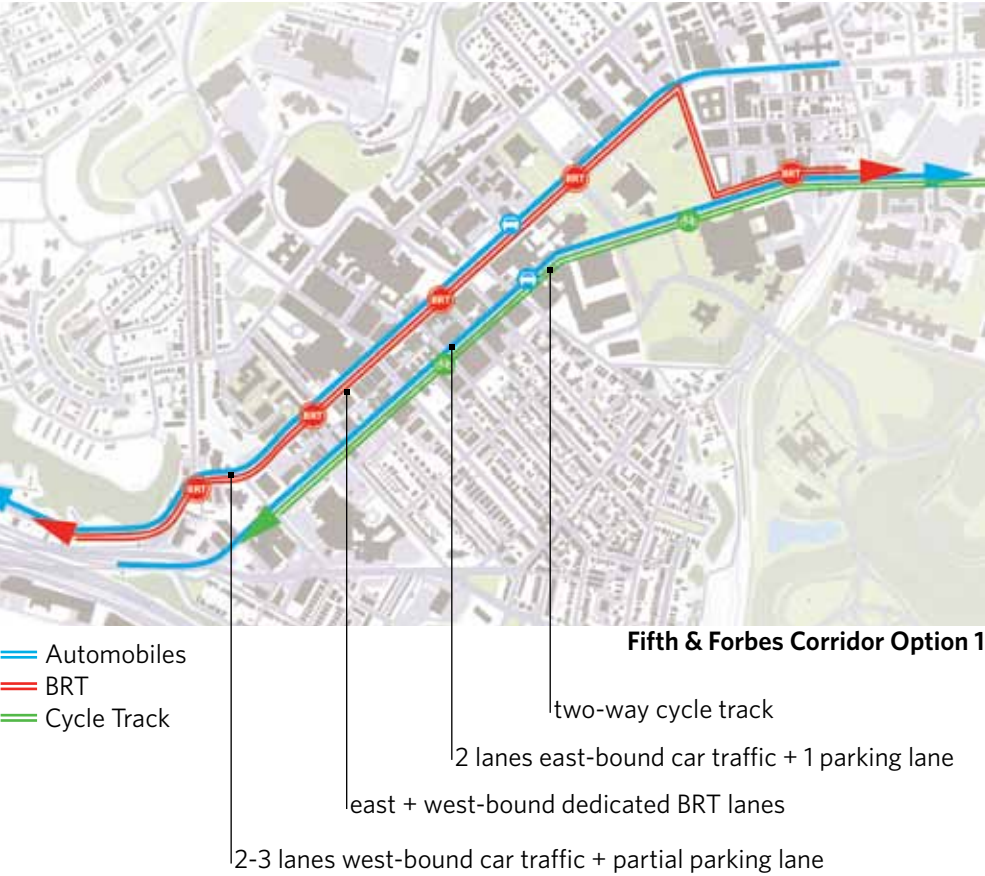


Fifth & Forbes Corridor: Option 1

This option maintains Fifth and Forbes as a pair of one-way streets and introduces dedicated space for both bus rapid transit on Fifth and separated bicycle lanes on Forbes. On Fifth a new dedicated lane is added next to the existing counter-flow bus lane to create a pair of BRT lanes on the south side of Fifth. BRT stations would be accommodated through a combination of widened sidewalks and median islands, which would require the right-of-way to be widened slightly at station locations. West of McKee, Fifth would have two lanes for car traffic. On Forbes the southern-most lane is converted into a two-way cycle track while the rest of the street is maintained in its current configuration. The cycle track could be implemented independently from the BRT system, however in any scenario it will require all buses to be relocated to Fifth because of conflicts with transit riders at stop locations.

This scenario is likely the easiest to implement because it requires the least amount of reconfiguration to the corridor and the surrounding streets. However it does not succeed in restoring a two-way street network.

An alternate version of this option would be to transform both Fifth and Forbes into two-way streets, with Fifth having two lanes west-bound and one east-bound, and Forbes having a single lane in both directions. This configuration is desirable because it creates a less confusing and less “highway-like” street pattern in the core of the neighborhood. While potentially resolvable, a two-way scenario is complicated by conflicts between car turning movements and the BRT lanes. The possibility of making both streets two way should be further explored at the next level of design.



Pros

- Easier to implement as this proposal is more similar to current traffic flows
- Both directions of BRT and cycle track flow are accommodated on the same street, Fifth and Forbes respectively, rather than being split
- Parking lane and curb bumpouts on Forbes can be maintained

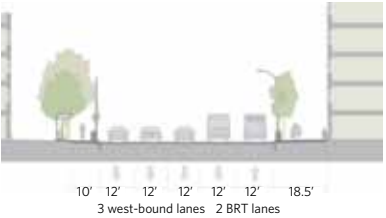
Cons

- Both Fifth and Forbes still act as major one-way through streets, maintaining a “free-way effect”
- Two-way BRT traffic requires complex signal patterns for cars crossing bus lanes
- BRT station locations require limited right-of-way expansion

Fifth Ave

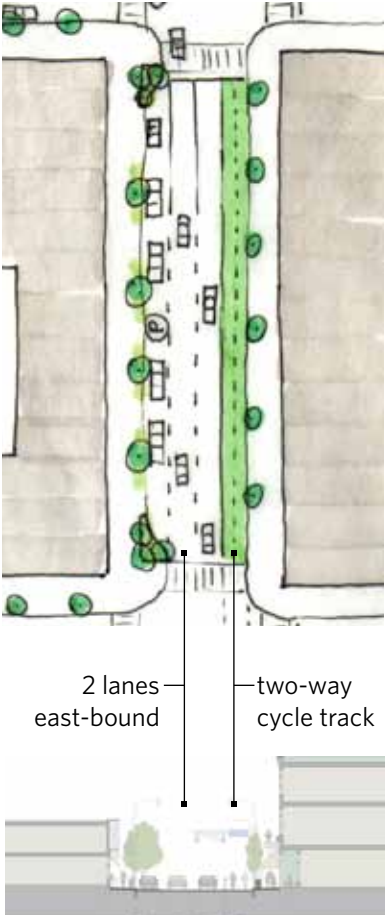


Fifth at station (east of McKee)

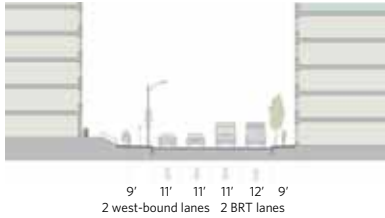


Fifth typical (east of McKee)  
All sections looking east

Forbes Ave



Forbes typical



Fifth typical (west of McKee)



Option 1: Forbes Avenue corridor looking east



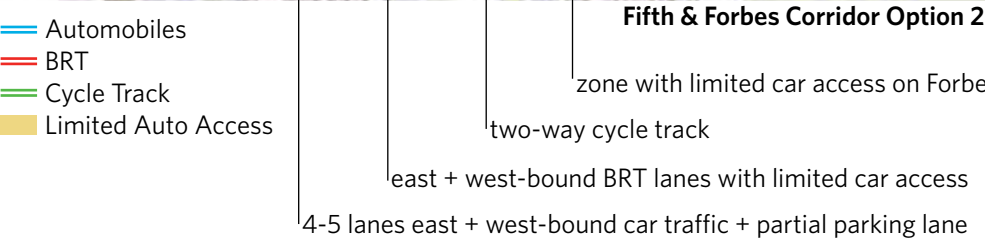
Option 1: Fifth Ave corridor looking east



Fifth & Forbes Corridor: Option 2

This option treats Fifth as a two-way automobile oriented street and transforms Forbes into a primarily pedestrian, bicycle and transit oriented corridor. On Fifth the counter-flow bus lane is removed and Fifth is transformed into a two-way street with a shared turn lane when space allows. While Fifth would primarily serve vehicular traffic, Forbes would be transformed into a slower pedestrian-oriented environment, with dedicated bicycle lanes, shared BRT lanes and limited two-way automobile traffic. BRT stations would be accommodated through a combination of widened sidewalks and median islands, but would not require an expanded right-of-way. The BRT lanes on Forbes could be treated as a shared continuous two-way street or automobile access could be discontinu-ous to limit automobiles to local traffic in the core zone between Halket and Bigelow where the density of pedestrian activity, retail and university uses are highest. Some, but not all, of the existing on-street parking in this zone could be maintained.

This scheme more radically transforms the corridor, putting transit, bicycle lanes and slow speed traffic in close proximity to retail and university functions, while maintaining Fifth as a higher speed through street. A limited comparison could be drawn to the traffic character and function of Penn and Liberty Av- enues in the Strip District. If this scheme is pursued further it is important to ensure that the business district remains active and accessible for all modes of transportation. Current highway on and off ramp con- figurations on the western end of the corridor present a significant challenge to the implementation of this scheme. A conceptual strategy for routing automo- bile traffic from Forbes and, if needed, bus traffic to Fifth is shown on the following page.



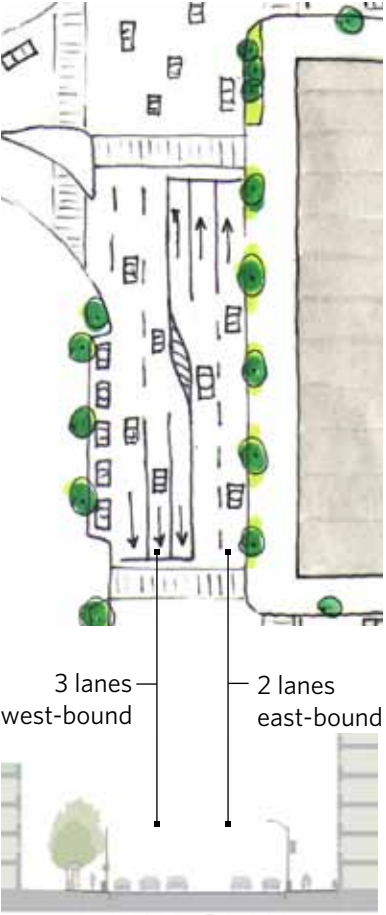
Pros

- >Returns both Fifth and Forbes Ave to two-way streets
- Fifth Ave becomes an efficient street for through traffic while Forbes becomes a slower speed pedestrian and transit-oriented street with limited car access
- BRT and bicycle lanes are closest to highest levels of pedestrian activity

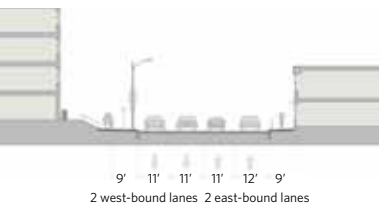
Cons

- Portal area requires major crossover for buses and cars to access highway ramps
- Forbes Ave has limited car and loading access and loses some parking both of which could be detrimental to some businesses
- BRT is mixed with automobile traffic in some blocks

Fifth Ave

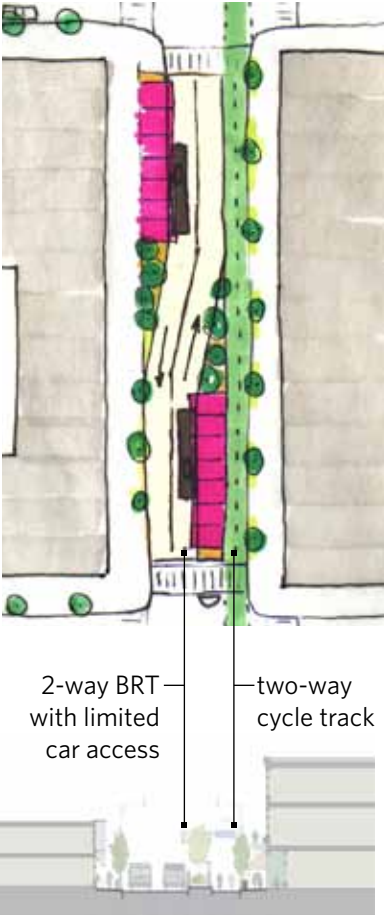


Fifth typical (east of McKee)



Fifth typical (west of McKee)  
All sections looking east

Forbes Ave



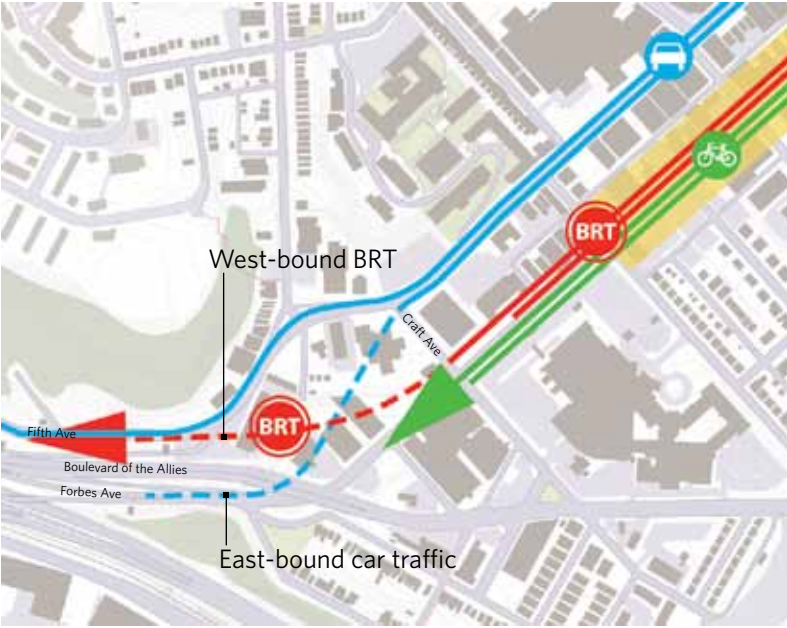
Forbes at station



Forbes typical



Option 2: Forbes Avenue corridor looking east



Fifth-Forbes Portal Crossover



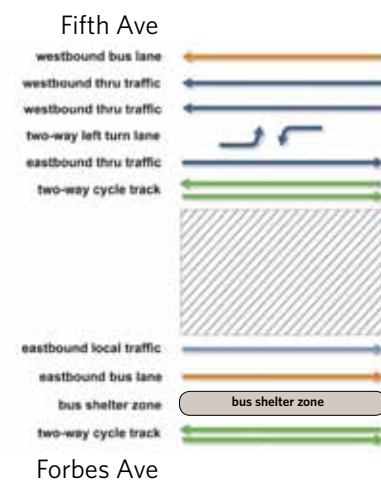
Fifth & Forbes Corridor: ThinkBike Workshop

The ThinkBike Workshop was a collaborative work session led by cycling infrastructure experts from the Dutch Cycling Embassy and City of Pittsburgh Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner Stephen Patchan, held June 21 and 22, 2012. A diverse group of stakeholders generated a range of options for inserting separated cycle tracks into the Fifth and Forbes corridor. Five conceptual alternatives were proposed, two of which are illustrated at right.

The two scenarios illustrated show variations on the Oakland 2025 options for the Fifth and Forbes corridor, both showing a two-way cycle track on Forbes Avenue. However the ThinkBike scenarios explored alternate means of accommodating BRT and adjusting street directions. The ThinkBike scenarios can inform the next stage of planning for the Fifth and Forbes corridor.

Option B “Placemaking” is the most bicycle friendly option adding cycle tracks on both Fifth and Forbes. The design splits BRT between Forbes and Fifth, maintains Forbes as a one-way street flowing east, while transforming Fifth into a two-way street. This scenario also transforms the existing Fifth Avenue bus lane into a two-way cycle track. Option C “Island in the Stream” is similar to the Oakland 2025 option 1, placing BRT on Fifth Ave and transforming the southernmost lane of Forbes into a two-way cycle track. This scenario also maintains the one-way pair configuration and creates a west-bound cycle track on Fifth for part of its length.

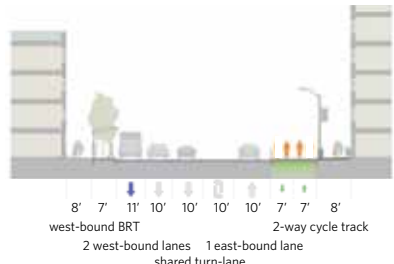
Option B: “Oakland Placemaking”



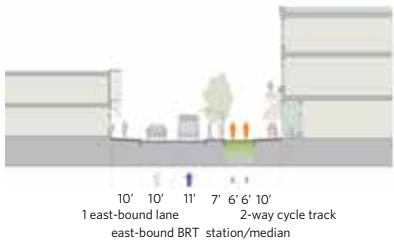
Fifth at Atwood



Forbes at Bouquet

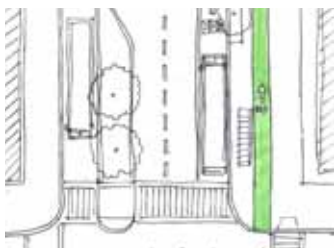
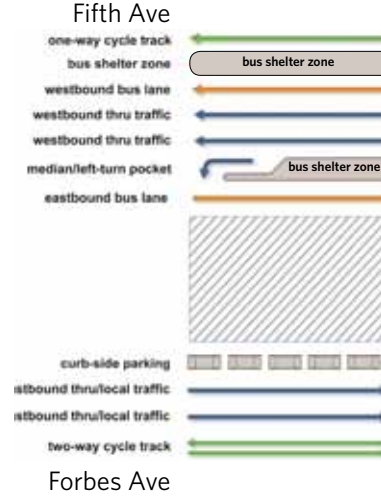


Fifth typical (east of McKee)



Forbes typical

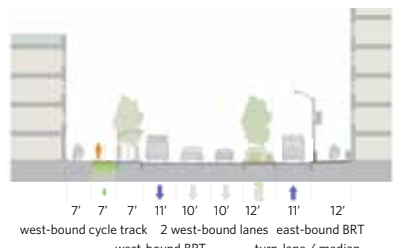
Option C: “Island in the Stream”



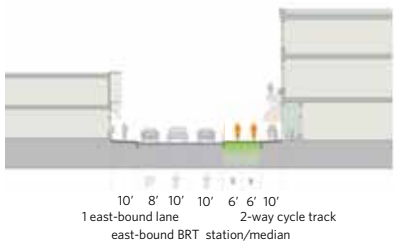
Fifth typical (east of McKee)



Forbes at Bouquet



Fifth typical (east of McKee)



Forbes typical

Bates Street and the Boulevard of the Allies

One of the most challenging areas of Oakland’s urban fabric and transportation systems is the Bates/Boulevard of the Allies intersection. Never designed for a major off ramp from I-376, Bates Street has continued to be a key problem in getting traffic in and out of the neighborhood. During the planning process, South and Central Oakland residents consistently identified a lack of pedestrian safety crossing the Boulevard as a major issue to address. Oakland 2025 explored a range of scenarios for reconfiguring the Bates/Boulevard intersection with the two preferred schemes shown at right. Both schemes expand Zulema Park, add planted medians to the Boulevard of the Allies and integrate sites for new mixed-use housing development along Bates.

Option 1, which could be considered the short-term solution, modifies Bates to be one-way into the neighborhood and makes minor modifications to Zulema and Coltart. Option 2 proposes a grade-separated solution with the Boulevard of the Allies on a bridge over Bates with slip ramps parallel to the boulevard connecting the two. This is complemented by a new roundabout at Zulema and Bates and planted medians on both streets. In any scenario, bicycle infrastructure on Bates and Zulema should be added, and pedestrian crossings at all of the intersections around the triangle should be improved. Safety improvements should be made to existing pedestrian crossings at Craft, Ward and Dawson in conjunction with the creation of a planted median on the Boulevard.



Grade-separated scenario for Bates and the Boulevard



Option 1: Bates and the Boulevard: at-grade solution



Option 2: Bates and the Boulevard: grade-separated solution



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 3.4 Business & Development

### Business & Development Goal

*Foster local, unique, diverse mixed-use businesses and development in targeted core areas that grow from Oakland’s innovation economy and support the neighborhood health.*

#### Introduction

The Business and Development portion of the Oakland 2025 Plan makes recommendations to improve the health of the Fifth/Forbes commercial core and the surrounding neighborhood retail districts. It also addresses non-retail business development in Oakland.

#### Summary of Plan Recommendations

- Improve mixed use retail nodes that support residential renewal
- Develop small business incubators (Melwood, second floors in the Fifth/Forbes corridor)
- Encourage institutions to support local businesses
- Leverage the capital of nearby cultural institutions and open space
- Encourage public-private-institutional development partnerships
- Identify supply chain opportunities (laundry/medical labs)

### Business and Development Market Analysis

#### Introduction

The health of retail and business districts is closely linked to the overall health of a community, especially it’s residential districts. The quality and proximity of neighborhood retail, jobs, open space and schools are determining factors in attracting residents to a given community. While Oakland is a competitive and highly desirable place to work, the neighborhood has endeavored to become equally competitive in terms of attracting new homeowners and residents. A stronger, more diverse residential market will provide renewed economic opportunity for retail/service businesses. A key challenge for community leadership has been to use the relatively strong job base as a tool to leverage improvements in neighborhood housing and retail.

Oakland is fortunate to have strong institutional support for retail, workforce and property development. The University of Pittsburgh, for example, has done much to support the development of retail in the commercial core. Likewise, Carnegie Mellon University has been responsible for establishing corporate and institutional partnerships that have brought major employers to Oakland.

Oakland is also unique in that it has a business improvement district. Since 1999, Oakland’s Business Improvement District (OBID) has worked to recruit new businesses and market the neighborhood, as well as support existing business through cleaning services, public safety efforts and beautification projects. OBID is currently working on a series of wayfinding, smart streets, public art and neighborhood branding efforts known as Innovation Oakland.

#### Oakland’s Workforce Trends

Oakland’s highly concentrated employment in the health care and higher education sectors bodes well for the foreseeable future, not only for Oakland, but also for the Pittsburgh region. These industries employ a breadth of skilled workers and have been a source of regional growth over the past several decades. While the two sectors will remain dominant, Oakland’s leaders also must examine opportunities for diversifying its employment base beyond what presently exists. Professional, scientific, information technology and technical services, for example, significantly lag the healthcare and education sectors as a percentage

of total employment. While these additional sectors may not transform commercial real estate demand, it is also likely that they could contribute to a stronger, more economically diverse Oakland.

#### Transportation and Oakland’s Workforce

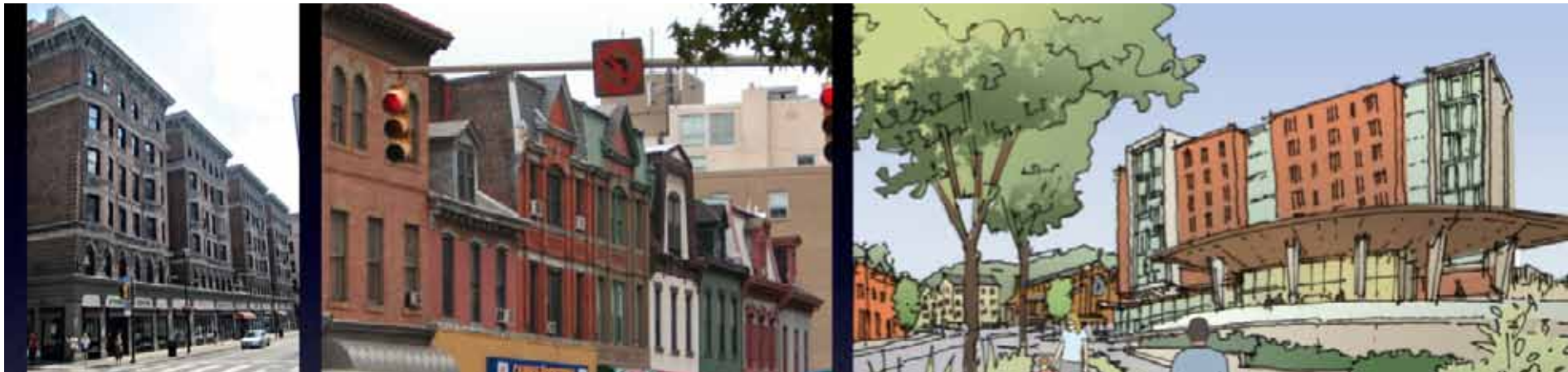
Oakland’s institutions and leaders should also be concerned by the fact that approximately nine out of ten primary workers commute into Oakland. The cost of commuter travel (in both fuel and time) penalizes both employee and employer, resulting in higher labor turnover and/or increased pressures on wages and salaries—outcomes to be avoided if the region is to remain competitive nationally. Increased traffic and congestion also negatively affect pedestrian safety, the neighborhood’s walkability, and Oakland’s residential quality of life.

#### Employers and Transportation:

Oakland’s businesses and employers need to continue to work with the neighborhood’s transportation planners and advocates to improve the quality of life for commuters, students and neighborhood residents since a safe, healthy transportation system benefits all communities.

Founded in the late 1990’s the Oakland Transportation Management Association was established with the goal of encouraging sustainable transportation choices by commuters, working to reduce congestion in Oakland, and improving the quality of the pedestrian environment. In response to evidence linking employee health and air pollution, OTMA has established a variety of transportation initiative to reduce dependence on the automobile, including shared vehicle and parking management, ridesharing, transit information sharing and public transportation advocacy.

Expanding and continuing OTMA’s programs, combined with innovative new programs currently being planning (such as Innovation Oakland’s smart parking and interactive transit rider information) have the potential to improve quality of life for all of Oakland’s users. The connection between employers and Oakland’s unique transportation community should continue to develop and expand.





Oakland’s Neighborhood Service Retail

During the planning process, the Oakland 2025 planning team met with a number of local business owners as well as the leadership of Oakland Business Improvement District. The team learned that demand for retail is strong in Oakland, and often Oakland is the “first stop” for retailers looking to come to Pittsburgh, after examining the area demographics. Unlike many other national university districts, however, it has been difficult to get unique, local retail to flourish in Oakland. Retail districts in Oakland face a series of challenges including:

- A perceived lack of parking despite nearby garages, and lots
- Higher rents, which encourage chain retailers, especially restaurants
- Monocultures of students and institutional employees which create patterns similar to downtown; summers and Sundays for example are very slow business times
- Institutional employee, full-time resident and student markets are all significantly different and do not necessarily reinforce each other
- Many retailers interviewed also noted that the half-hour lunch breaks of major employers appeared to discourage lunchtime shopping

There are no full-service grocery stores within a mile of the Cathedral of Learning (approximate center of Oakland). The closest medium-sized grocery store is the IGA Market on Forbes Avenue. The closest full-service Giant Eagle grocery store is located approximately 1.32 miles from Central Oakland. Given Oakland’s population, size and density, the area is under-served by full-service grocery stores.

Oakland’s Retail Districts by Neighborhood

- Fifth/Forbes Core: High rents, chain retailers, difficult parking, slow weekends and summers, challenges attracting hospital workers
- Semple/Bates: Neighborhood-serving, smaller footprints, vacancies
- Boulevard: Auto-dominated, parking difficult, needs better retail mix
- South Craig: Chains moving in, fewer goods and services
- Craig/Centre: Ethnic and small businesses, vacant sites, run-down
- Atwood & Bouquet: Unique restaurant district, trail-head opportunity
- West Oakland: Lacks neighborhood retail or ‘third places’



North Craig Street historic retail precedent



Giant Eagle site, North Oakland



Auto-centric retail, Boulevard of the Allies

Commercial Development Market Analysis

The Oakland 2025 planning team also interviewed developers and brokers to understand Oakland’s commercial real estate markets. The team learned that current and projected demand for office and research space in Oakland is fairly high but tightly focused around the universities and UPMC. Large-scale office and research development is limited by high land acquisition prices and the costs of securing financing and developing structured parking. Land owners overvalue land transactions making development difficult even in tight pro forma scenarios. The stalled Sterling Plaza expansion site and the Western Gateway Portal demonstrate these challenges.

Because of the presence of institutions and businesses it is also assumed that the private market does not need subsidy or support. This has left Oakland without public subsidies or tax increment financing to support land acquisition or parking infrastructure, for example.

Commercial Development Opportunities

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for new commercial development in Oakland. While large companies, such as Google in Bakery Square, are expanding beyond Oakland’s borders, there are opportunities for smaller startups in Oakland. These include vacant upper floor development within the Fifth/Forbes Corridor, and infill opportunities near the Carnegie Mellon campus and along North Craig Street.

The Pittsburgh Technology Center and ALMONO site (Hazelwood) as well as the Fifth/Forbes Corridor (Uptown) and the Baum/Centre Corridor (Shadyside/Bloomfield/East Liberty) provide outlets for development that cannot be accommodated in the core university areas. The Carnegie Mellon Master Plan envisions new on-campus or “next to campus” opportunities along the South Craig/Forbes/Panther Hollow area. Smaller scale live/work mixes along Filmore/Winthrop are anticipated as well as further north to Centre/Craig and even Melwood Avenue at Baum/Centre.

There are also a number of developable parcels, such as the Western Gateway Portal, Lower Forbes Avenue, North Craig and Centre, and the Boulevard of the Allies which will be discussed in detail in the Urban Design focus areas to follow.

Transportation Impacts

Mitigating the impact of the automobile on infrastructure and encouraging mode shift to enhance the pedestrian experience is important to business development in Oakland, as are specific projects below.

Circulator Project

The Downtown-to-Hazelwood Circulator (via Boundary Street right-of-way) could be a key opportunity to connect and prioritize development opportunities and reduce the parking and traffic impacts on Central Oakland. If this plan is prioritized to support multimodal hubs along its path, the North Oakland area will benefit as well as the Bouquet/Boundary Street neighborhoods.

Bus Rapid Transit

Proposed bus rapid transit could help strengthen retail development in Oakland’s commercial core, by better connecting Oakland to Pittsburgh’s East End neighborhoods, and improving the pedestrian environment of the Fifth/Forbes corridor.

Total Development Capacity

As part of its market analysis, the team analyzed development capacity for Oakland. Figures include retail, office and housing units that could be developed in Oakland (see more on page 65).

Neighborhood	Retail capacity (sf)	Office	Dwelling Units
North Oakland	50,000	377,000	510
West Oakland/ Uptown	2,500	633,750	457
Central Oakland	27,500	520,000	385
South Oakland	40,000	50,000	312
TOTAL	120,000	1,580,750	1664

New development capacity by Oakland neighborhood



General Development Strategies

The following general strategies will guide commercial development in Oakland:

Prioritize Redevelopment Opportunities

Strategize locations of near- intermediate- and long-term development/redevelopment opportunities and what types of development products are appropriate. Timeframes include:

- Near Term (Now–2015)
- Mid Term (2015–2020)
- Long Term (2020–2025)

Encourage Mixed-Use Redevelopment

Wherever possible mixed-use development should be pursued over single-use parcel development in Oakland. With single-use parcel development land uses become a “this or that” choice; investment returns and tax revenue per square foot of land area are relatively low. By comparison, mixed-use development (i.e., housing and retail, or retail and office) generates better tax yields per square foot and allows property owners to maximize their dollar return on land area.

Advocate for Design Excellence; Good Design Matters

Good design can be a powerful business advantage and a way to attract young, creative workers. Oakland’s civic leadership needs to continue to advocate for good design and establish design guidelines and review protocols. This may include a development review committee.

Facilitate Site Acquisition

Many of Oakland’s most difficult to redevelop sites have complex ownership structures, and will require help assembling and banking land for redevelopment that would otherwise be developed in a piecemeal fashion. Assembling land before a project is announced will help larger, more transformative projects to move forward.

Integrate Open Space Improvements into New Development

Many recent studies show that small urban parks increase social and economic benefits to the host community. New development guidelines should require or encourage open space amenities to

be incorporated into new development plans. Pedestrian trail and bike infrastructures and connections should be supported wherever possible.

Encourage Start Ups and Spin-Offs

Incubators, spin-offs and other supply chain opportunities (business clusters) that build on Oakland’s educational and medical institutions and existing businesses should be encouraged. These types of business and development projects have the potential to create market niches and establish a vibrant culture of entrepreneurship in Oakland.

Site-Specific Recommendations

Bates/Boulevard of the Allies Redevelopment

Containing approximately five acres, this site has good arterial access and walkability for establishing a neighborhood shopping area (50 to 75 thousand square feet, including a 35 thousand square foot full-service grocery with adjacent convenience retailers and service businesses). The long-term redevelopment of the Bates/Boulevard portal might focus on the old Isaly’s building as existing office uses are relocated north of Boulevard. Near/mid-term opportunities for new housing development may exist at Bates.

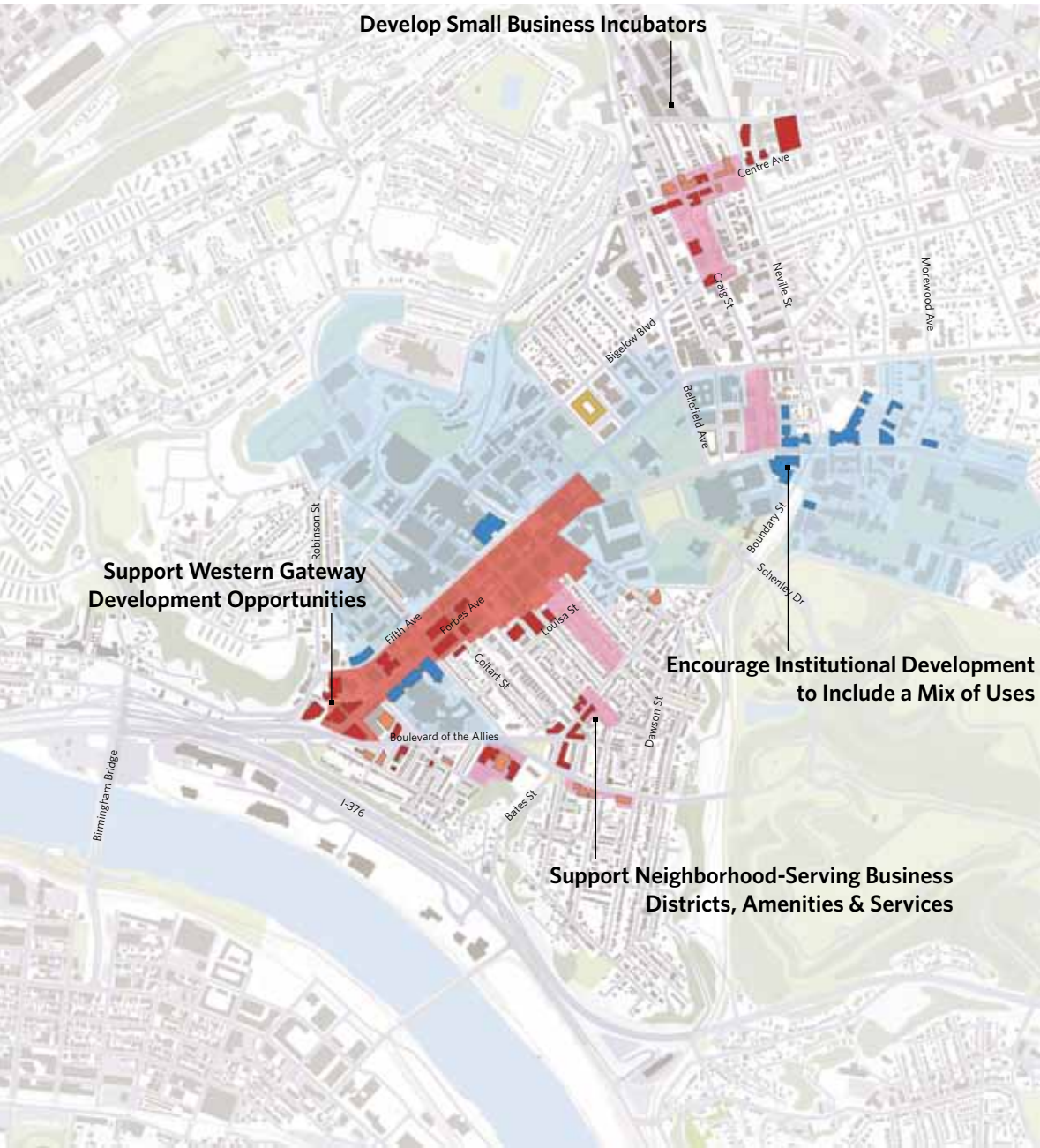
Louisa and Semple

OPDC is renovating the city-owned facility at Louisa and Semple Streets to use for programming. Long-term, 2022 or later, we envision the site as a larger mixed-use development opportunity, with multiple floors providing new quality office and or residential space. The fire station is an important asset to the Central Oakland community; any development should either maintain the fire station or ensure that a fire station remains in Central Oakland. In the shorter term, this area is a key part of the Louisa Street open space and arts corridor vision.

Development Opportunity Areas

- › Fifth/Forbes commercial core: Lower Forbes: new commercial and mixed-use residential
- › Innovation Oakland infrastructure project (including wayfinding/ digital information systems/ district branding and identity)
- › Western Gateway portal (Fifth/Forbes): Based on recommendation from Innovation Oakland specific to the Boulevard Bridge wall
- › Bates/Semple neighborhood retail
- › Atwood Street restaurant row
- › Bouquet/Joncaire district
- › Trailhead neighborhood retail/restaurant
- › Boulevard neighborhood retail (Isaly’s, Gulf, Auto, convenience retail)
- › Craig/Centre business district
- › BRT-related retail (Robinson/Children’s/CMU)
- › Busway/Centre mobility hub development

- Oakland Business Improvement District
- Neighborhood business district
- Existing institutions
- Proposed mixed-use development
- Proposed building renovation
- Proposed institutional development





# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 3.5 Open Space & Art

### Open Space and Art Goal

*Integrate green infrastructure (trails, parks, trees, stormwater catchment) and public art into all economic development initiatives, large and small.*

#### Introduction

Oakland 2025 includes a vision for Oakland’s open and public spaces as well as green strategies (or a ‘green print’) to establish a more sustainable community. Throughout the process, the team sought to integrate creative artful opportunities into the open space recommendations.

#### Summary of Plan Recommendations

- Create, improve and connect trails
- Beautify streetscapes
- Restore hillsides
- Improve and add parklets into the neighborhood
- Establish and enhance community gardens
- Reinforce cultural destinations
- Improve neighborhood gateways
- Use public art to reinforce neighborhood identity

#### Introduction

Oakland is home to some of Pittsburgh’s most celebrated and popular parks and institutions. Where else but in Oakland can you live within walking distance to dinosaurs, Schenley Park and Pittsburgh’s main library? Yet in spite of the presence of the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Phipps Conservatory and other cultural treasures, much of Oakland lacks public art and the colorful gateway plantings found in other neighborhoods. Residents also maintain that there are not enough open spaces that improve the residential quality of life and encourage new residents. The community dialogue process revealed a need for better connections.

The following recommendations identify specific opportunities for using art, greening and open space to enhance and reinforce Oakland’s unique character, history and culture. Recommendations are provided for Oakland as a whole and also at the scale of each sub-neighborhood area.

#### General Recommendations

##### Create a Trail Network Crossing Neighborhood Boundaries and Connecting to the City’s Existing Trail and Park System

Oakland has direct access to the Eliza Furnace Trail, but it is somewhat remote to access from many parts of North, South and West Oakland. Oakland would benefit from a comprehensive green network, including tree-lined streets, hillside greenways and trails, artful storm water gardens and refurbished city steps, better connecting the different Oakland communities. This network would also extend and connect to nearby neighborhoods: Polish Hill and Lawrenceville to the north, the Hill District and Uptown to the west. Pieces of this network exist currently, but together they could comprise a unique civic amenity making Oakland very attractive as a green place for people to live, work and play.

##### Use Public Art to Reinforce the Presence of Cultural Destinations Within the Community

Create opportunities for artist outreach and collaboration, between institutions and local community groups, to work on murals, mosaics, gardens, stairway improvement projects, gateway landscape designs and other types of public realm enhancements. The Charm Bracelet

Project ([charmbraceletproject.org](http://charmbraceletproject.org)) similarly seeks to make lasting connections between Northside institutions and the community at large, and it may provide a precedent for ways that art and open space can meaningfully be integrated into Oakland residents’ everyday lives.

##### Restore Hillside Ecologies by Controlling and Removing Invasive Species

This is an important action to take along Oakland’s steep southern and eastern edges; along more internal hillsides such as those above Schenley Farms and below the VA Hospital, and the green slopes connecting Oakland to the Hill District; and along highly visible traffic corridors, such as the Bates Street valley and the hillside east of Bigelow Boulevard between Centre Avenue and the Bloomfield Bridge. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) identified the Bates Street corridor as a priority area for hillside conservation efforts in “A Green Scan for Oakland,” a set of green infrastructure recommendations prepared for OPDC in 2010. The WPC is beginning hillside restoration work along both sides of the Bates Street valley, from Second Avenue to the Boulevard of the Allies, in the fall of 2012. At the time of this writing, support for the project is growing, property owners in the Bates Street valley are becoming more involved and fundraising is well underway. The project is anticipated to last for two years.

##### Plant Trees to Beautify Streetscapes in Business Districts and Residential Areas

Oakland overall has very low street tree canopy coverage, a fact that has been identified in both the WPC’s “Green Scan” and in The Pittsburgh Urban Forest Master Plan, commissioned by Tree Pittsburgh and completed in 2012. Street trees make pedestrian environments more attractive and safe, providing shade, helping to remove air pollution and improving public safety by slowing cars and buffering pedestrians from traffic. They also increase adjacent property values. There are several ways that additional trees can be introduced into Oakland.

Perhaps the most challenging streetscapes to tackle are the Fifth/ Forbes corridor, where cars, trucks, busses, bicyclists and pedestrians currently compete for limited space in the public right-of-way and underground vaults leave little room for trees. However, as major transportation initiatives—such as bus-rapid transit, dedicated bike lanes and even light rail—are proposed and implemented within these





corridors, it is important that street trees are intentionally included as part of the overall streetscape cross section. Other major corridors that would benefit from new street trees include Craig Street, Centre Avenue, Bates Street and Boulevard of the Allies.

More street trees and planted curb bump outs should also be brought to residential areas to help slow traffic and contribute to neighborhood greening. Where sidewalks are very narrow, and where utility lines make it difficult to plant curbside trees, private homeowners should be encouraged to plant trees in their front yards. Two priority areas for tree planting are identified in this report: Robinson Street and Louisa Street where city steps connect down to Coltart Street.

**Provide Green Infrastructure to Clean and Capture Stormwater**

As recommended in “A Green Scan for Oakland,” capturing storm water at key locations, such as the Boulevard of the Allies, will help to mitigate hillside erosion and reduce the volume of stormwater that currently flows into Pittsburgh’s overburdened sewer system and rivers. There are numerous ways to bring green infrastructure into business districts and residential areas. Engineered tree pits can capture water at high volume areas and parking lots can be used for long-term greening and storm water management. Homeowners can help reduce stormwater runoff by planting trees on their property, installing green roofs (where appropriate), limiting the coverage area of paved surfaces and using rain barrels.



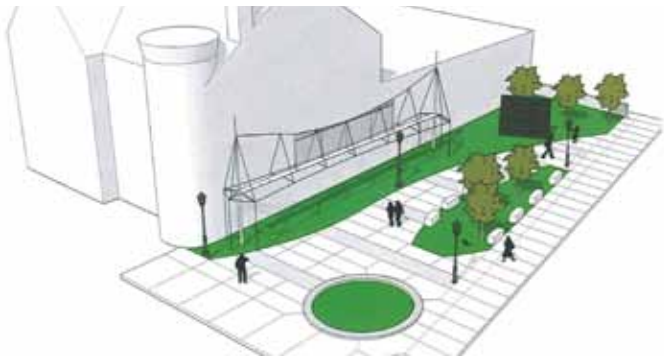
Burrows and Dunbar, West Oakland



Panther Hollow Trail Connection, Boundary Street



Pumping station, North Oakland



Innovation Oakland, Forbes and Bouquet Plaza, ARUP

**Central Oakland**

**Context**

Because Central Oakland is the heart of Pittsburgh’s “second downtown,” much of the open space and art in the neighborhood is of an institutional or civic scale: the outdoor sculptures on the University of Pittsburgh campus, the Cathedral of Learning’s International Classrooms, Schenley Plaza, etc. Oakland 2025 recommends that these amenities be complemented by a series of more intimately-scaled open space and public art interventions that would strengthen the neighborhood’s identity, support the needs of long-term residents and help to attract new homeowners as well.

**Implement Innovation Oakland Recommendations**

The experience of visiting Oakland would be improved if major neighborhood gateways were well-marked; if there were pedestrian-scaled, interactive, information hubs in the heart of the district; and if it were easy for people to find and discover new destinations. These improvements, along with a robust multi-modal transportation network, would help reduce pressures on peripheral neighborhood streets and make the commercial core, in particular, a more pleasant and “world class” place to work, visit and explore. This is the goal of Innovation Oakland, with the initial project being rolled out in 2012.

**Transform the Louisa Street Staircase into an Outdoor Gallery and Community Space**

The staircase is located where the steep hillside caused Louisa Street to become a staircase. The staircase could become a public place filled with art installations, landscape elements and outdoor seating areas at the top and bottom landings. The stair passage itself could be enhanced through simple landscaping and a creative paint job.

**Strengthen the Identity of the Boundary Street Neighborhood**

The Boundary Street community, located on the western edge of Panther Hollow, is a unique place because of its Italian heritage, its connections to the Eliza Furnace Trail and Schenley Park, its green hillsides and its proximity to numerous Oakland institutions. A combination of gateway signs and landscaping could help to strengthen the neighborhood’s presence and support its role as a trailhead community.

**North Oakland**

**Context**

Parts of North Oakland have good access to Schenley Park, the green lawn at the base of the University of Pittsburgh’s Cathedral of Learning, and the open space within Carnegie Mellon’s campus. There are currently no public playgrounds or parklets within the neighborhood or the Craig Street business district for residents’ use and enjoyment.

**Create New Neighborhood Parklets**

Provide new pedestrian-oriented parklets, with opportunities for public art, along rejuvenated and redeveloped Centre Avenue and Craig Street corridors. There may also be opportunities to create public plazas, with interactive digital art (see the Innovation Oakland Plan) as part of future multi-modal transit stops.

**Activate the Pumping Station Lawn**

The underutilized lawn in front of the Herron Hill Pumping Station, located on Centre Avenue between North Dithridge and Dollar Streets, could be transformed into community space by providing shade trees, additional plantings, benches, etc. This location, near the busy Craig and Centre Avenues intersection, apartment buildings and Schenley Farms residential area, will experience transformation in the coming years as Schenley High School and the empty corners at Craig and Centre are redeveloped.

**Beautify the Harris Park Gateway**

As recommended in the Innovation Oakland Plan, a neighborhood gateway should be created at Harris Park, where Bigelow Boulevard meets Craig Street. Thousands of cars pass through this intersection every day along with an increasing number of pedestrians and bicyclists. Landscape improvements and possibly a neighborhood identity sign would help to transform this underappreciated triangle of land into a green oasis among the billboards and traffic.



West Oakland

**Context**  
West Oakland has a community garden, a playground on Dunseith Street and available vacant land on Burrows Street. It is directly adjacent to the Oak Hill neighborhood and the green slopes of the Hill District. At times, there is heavy traffic on Robinson and Terrace Streets due to commuters and the nearby universities, hospitals and Peterson Events Center. West Oakland also would benefit from strengthening its identity as more than a through-route—as a unique community and a quality place to live.

**Create a Community Gateway at Robinson and Terrace Streets**  
This intersection is a central place for West Oakland community members—Friendship Community Church is located at the southwest corner and a community-based coffee shop is proposed for the northeast corner. This “crossroads,” The Corner, would be an ideal location for a creative intervention to help to strengthen the neighborhood’s identity, and also calm traffic. Gateway improvements might include street trees, a neighborhood identity sign, an eye-catching vertical element and/or colorful crosswalk markings across the surface of the Robinson and Terrace Street intersection.

**Strengthen Connections to Oak Hill and the Hill District**  
There are open space resources in the Hill District that could be utilized by West Oakland residents if pedestrian connections were improved. For example, Kennard Playground, with its playground, ball field, tennis court and BBQ area, is located just half a mile from the Robinson and Terrace Street intersection. Improve the city steps connecting West Oakland to Oak Hill and the Hill District and create a greenway trail along the southern slope of the Hill, linking West Oakland to Landslide Farm and Kirkpatrick Street.

**Develop Vacant Land on Burrows Street Into a Community-Supported Use**  
During the Oakland 2025 planning process, several ideas were discussed as possible future uses for the vacant land on Burrows Street, such as a ball field, a basketball court or an expanded community garden, but there was no clear consensus on the matter. Continue community discussions to identify the best future use of this parcel, which is located close to the heart of the West Oakland community.

South Oakland and Oakcliffe

**Context**  
South Oakland is essentially split into two by Bates Street. The area to the west, called Oakcliffe, includes parks that are heavily impacted by traffic, the Lawn and Ophelia and Niagara parklets. The eastern part of South Oakland hosts Frazier Playground with its well-established park, ball field and field house.

**Support Rock Alley Trail & New Connections to the Eliza Furnace Trail**  
The Rock Alley Trail, if implemented, would create a footpath to directly connect from Lawn Street, in Oakcliffe, to the Eliza Furnace Trail. The steepness of the hillside edge will require numerous switchbacks and landings to traverse the hillside safely, providing ample opportunities for art installations and planting areas along the hillside trail. The Rock Alley Trail could become part of a broader network extending west to Uptown and east to Schenley Park. Visit rockalley.org for more information about the proposed trail and other possible trail access routes. Also see the Greenway recommendation below.

**Create a Continuous Greenway Extending Along the Entire Southern Edge of South Oakland**  
The Rock Alley Trail would comprise the western edge of a South Oakland greenway trail. The greenway would wind along Lawn Street, connect to the hillsides above Bates Street, wrap around Wakefield and Frazier Streets, link to the hillside below the Boulevard of the Allies and continue north into Central Oakland. The greenway could celebrate Oakland’s diverse past with historic markers commemorating Andy Warhol’s house, Willie Stargell’s house, Forbes Field, etc., and also provide inspiring views and unique satellite public art opportunities along the way.

**Strengthen and Enhance Existing Community Open Space**  
A large number of children and youth live in South Oakland. Frazier Playground and its field house are valuable resources that could use maintenance, landscape improvements and public art to strengthen the local community’s identity. Most importantly, local youth need space – a recreation center or other public venues – supporting the needs and interests of teenagers and young adults. There is also interest in expanding the community garden to build community pride and improve access to healthy produce. Explore ways to bring funding resources to support youth programming and improve youth-oriented park infrastructure.

Recommendation Summary

- 1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails**
  - a. Connect to other neighborhoods, trail networks, parks
  - b. Create trails within Oakland to celebrate local heritage
  - c. Clean up and repair city steps within the neighborhood
- 2. Streetscapes**
  - a. Green major corridors for stormwater management, beautification and air quality improvement
  - b. Green neighborhood streets for traffic calming, beautification and higher property values
- 3. Hillsides**
  - a. Clean up hillsides along highly-visible road corridors: remove invasive species, plant suitable hillside trees
- 4. Parklets**
  - a. Provide passive open space near business districts
  - b. Restore existing parks
- 5. Community Gardens**
  - a. Support and maintain existing community gardens
  - b. Create additional community gardens where appropriate
- 6. Playgrounds**
  - a. Renovate existing playgrounds
  - b. Provide playgrounds / facilities suitable for older kids
  - c. Create alternative playgrounds for people of all ages
- 7. Stormwater Management**
  - a. Use landscape-based solutions to mitigate stormwater issues and control run-off
- 8. Gateways**
  - a. Beautify neighborhood gateways through landscape, neighborhood identity signage and public art
- 10. Public Art**
  - a. Create public art opportunities to express neighborhood identity and celebrate local history—coordinate with Innovation Oakland implementation

Hillside Restoration

Streetscape Improvements

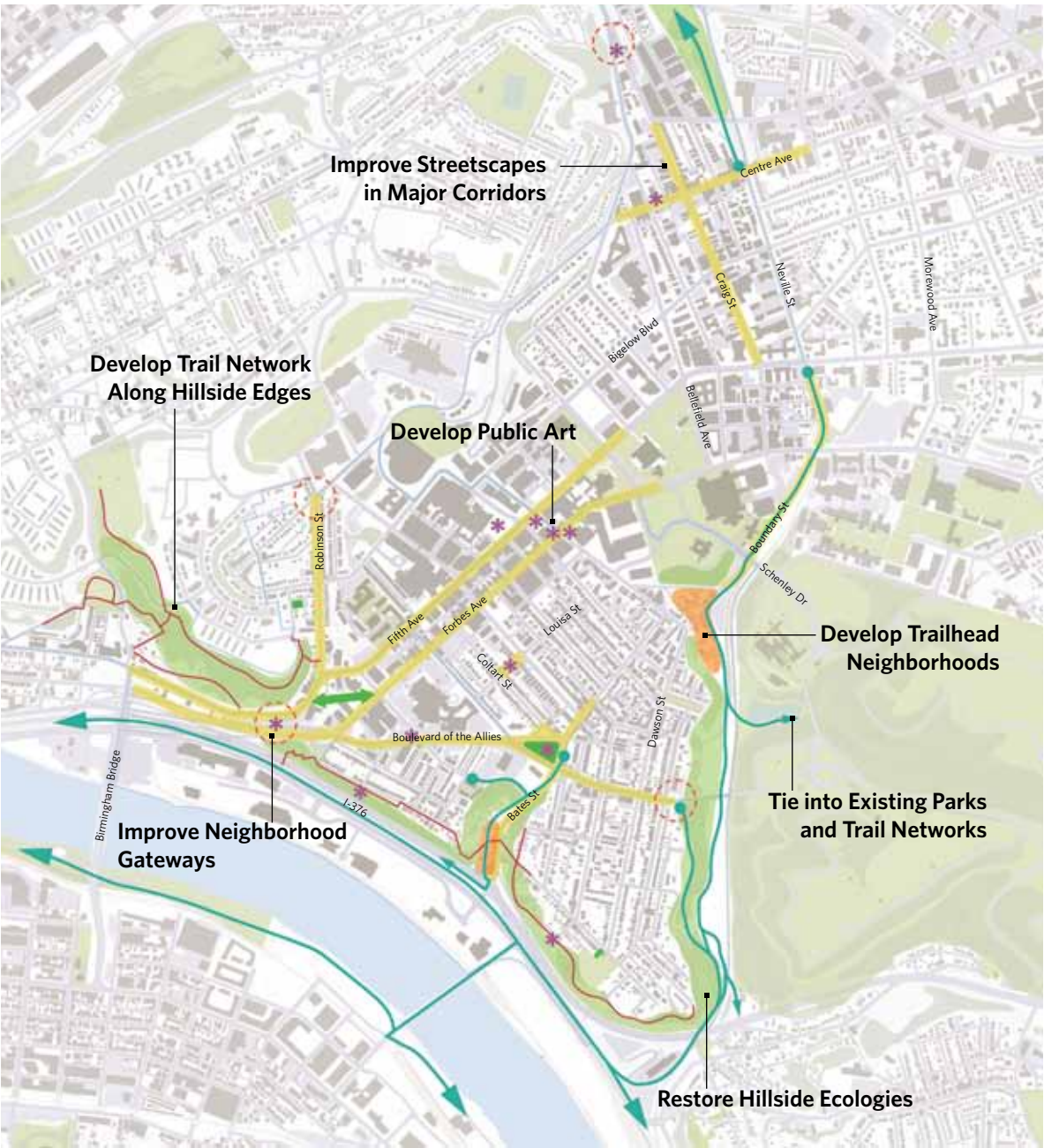
Trailhead Neighborhoods

Public Art

Walking Trails

Bike Trails

Gateway Beautification



Proposed Open Space Improvements



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 3.6 Community Building

### Community Building Goals

*Reinforce neighborhood identity and increase social capital through community consensus, social networks, stewardship, gathering places, increased connectivity, and communication/ access to information.*

#### Introduction

The Community Building Working Group developed ideas to improve the quality of life in Oakland, bring people together, and improve services for neighborhood residents. While parts of Oakland have some of the highest real estate markets in the city, other areas have high concentrations of poverty and high demand for social services.

#### Summary of Plan Recommendations

- ▶ Strengthen connections to local institutions/programs
- ▶ Create mulit-generational open spaces
- ▶ Improve access to social services
- ▶ Create neighborhood “third places”
- ▶ Support immigrant communities
- ▶ Support local youth programs
- ▶ Build a strong communication network
- ▶ Improve community development & design review processes

#### Community Building Introduction

Oakland is brimming with social capital—the concept that social networks have value. Oakland residents praise their neighborhood’s convenience to local amenities, a highly diverse community, and parks and open spaces that welcome pedestrians and cyclists. Oakland’s history is intertwined with Pittsburgh becoming a major city and has always served as a destination neighborhood within Pittsburgh. Its architecture reflects the diversity of people who have called this neighborhood home throughout the years—from Italianate rowhouses to streetcar-era suburban cottages, Oakland’s buildings reflect that the neighborhood has been home to a wide range of groups and social networks.

Oakland community members are engaged, passionate, and care about the evens that go on around them. This fact is evident in local community groups such as Oakland Community Council, Bellefield Area Citizens Association, Oakcliffe Housing Club, and Schenley Farms Civic Association. It is further underlined by the participation of over 350 community members in the various dialogues, “walkshops,” design workshops, and public meetings for Oakland 2025. The information gathered from Oakland community members and stakeholders during this process is at the very core of the Oakland 2025 Plan. It demonstrates a community which is committed to making a stronger, more vibrant Oakland. Oakland will realize the Oakland 2025 vision through a well-organized, engaged, and cohesive community decision-making and advocacy structure.

Successful implementation of the recommendations that follow is critical to realizing recommendations in the other sections. Oakland has a solid foundation of partnerships and collaborations through which many projects have come to fruition and have the ability to steward the Oakland 2025 Plan. The Oakland Task Force, a partnership of Oakland institutions, businesses, community groups, public agencies, and city government focused on improving Oakland, will provide leadership for plan implementation and continue to be a monthly roundtable to discuss proposed projects, share information, and address issues/opportunities of common concern. The Oakland Neighborhood Partnership Program is an initiative of Oakland’s community-based organizations and social service providers to provide a comprehensive program of community development services to the Oakland community.

#### Coalition of Oakland Residents: Ensuring Resident Engagement

To ensure that residents have a voice in leading the plan and a strong forum for advocacy, a top priority for the Oakland 2025 Plan is to create an alliance of neighborhood associations that is representative of all residential areas in Oakland and has a well-defined, transparent leadership structure. Neighborhood leaders will convene to create a structure that ideally will include a monthly roundtable of neighborhood delegates to review development proposals and discuss plan implementation priorities. On a quarterly basis or at minimum three times per year, the alliance will host larger neighborhood-wide community meetings to present information to the Oakland community about development projects, progress on plan implementation, new programs, and other topics of interest. At the quarterly meetings, community members will have the opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in conversation with each other about these topics. Together, the roundtable and the community meetings will provide the opportunity for effective community engagement and participation in community affairs.

Critical to the success of these efforts are strong communication and community organizing. OPDC has a strong organizing program and will work with other organizations throughout Oakland to provide community organizing capacity to ensure the success of the neighborhood alliance. In addition to outreach, effective communication tools will be employed so that community members are aware of issues and opportunities. All means available will be utilized: print, email, web, mobile applications, social media, flyering, door-knocking, and word-of-mouth.

In order to successfully advocate for development projects that are an asset to Oakland and support the community vision, the community will create design standards. They will be used by the community when working with developers, planners, and other partners and officials. This tool will take the Oakland 2025 vision a step further to include recommendations on massing, materials, streetscape, parking, etc. With visuals in-hand, it will be much easier to discuss details and to communicate effectively.







The Hello Neighbor Project



Trash Cleanup, Oakland



Oakcliffe resident meeting

**Community Based Code Enforcement**

Other community actions serve to build social capital and increase community connectedness while also addressing issues of concern. Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project is an example of community members coming together to take action, become more educated, and build relationships with enforcement officials to improve quality of life in the neighborhood. This resurgence in activism on code violations has shown results—tougher housing court sentences, more remediated properties, increased university police presence, and a marked reduction in late night disruptions. Through the Oakland Green Team, citizens are mobilizing to plant new street trees, build new community gardens, create new trail connections, remove invasive species to beautify hillsides, and designate new greenways. The Oakland neighborhood alliance will be the forum to allow additional initiatives, led by community members, to emerge, grow, and flourish.

**Promoting Civic Values and Community Stewardship**

Creating an environment where college students and long-time residents coexist effectively has long been a challenge in Oakland. The Oakland 2025 Plan recognizes that there will continue to be demand for rental housing in the neighborhood and identifies locations that are appropriate for this density. The plan also recognizes that existing rental housing throughout Oakland’s neighborhoods will not be eliminated and that efforts to improve relations between renters and long-time residents are helpful. Recent efforts regarding student-resident relations show promise. Community members, student leaders, and university officials have joined forces to educate students that Oakland is a neighborhood with long-time residents and to develop creative programming to increase connectedness between the two populations. A position housed at OPDC will work with student government leaders and university officials to implement programming and create educational tools to improve relations between students living off campus and their permanent resident neighbors.

**Welcoming Newcomers and Serving Community Needs**

Throughout the process, community input included the need to ensure access to social services and support local youth with services and programs. Oakland is home to many immigrants, for whom English is not their native language and who experience other challenges as they settle into life here. Reaching out and supporting these immigrant communities help to build additional community connections, neighborhood stability, and social capital. While specific recommendations for social services, youth services, and immigrant outreach are beyond the scope of this master plan, we do recommend as a short-term implementation item that community leaders develop a more detailed strategy.



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## Section 4: Plan Recommendations by Neighborhood

### 4.1 Introduction

The following recommendations are organized by Oakland’s four neighborhoods and reflect the concerns and input of the Oakland community during the Phase 1 and Phase 2 dialogue sessions.

Organizing issues by geography helps to show how Oakland 2025 connects works at a fine-grain neighborhood level. It also helps show how the plan recommendations relate across neighborhoods and themes.

### Oakland Neighborhoods

#### MOBILITY

- Transit: Fifth/Forbes BRT line
- Transit: BRT stations
- Transit: consolidated shuttle loops (3)
- Transit: Downtown circulator loop
- Transit: mobility hubs
- Bicycles: proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes
- Bicycles: proposed off-street trail
- Bicycles: existing on-street markings or dedicated lanes
- Bicycles: existing off-street trail
- Bicycles: existing on-street route

#### HOUSING

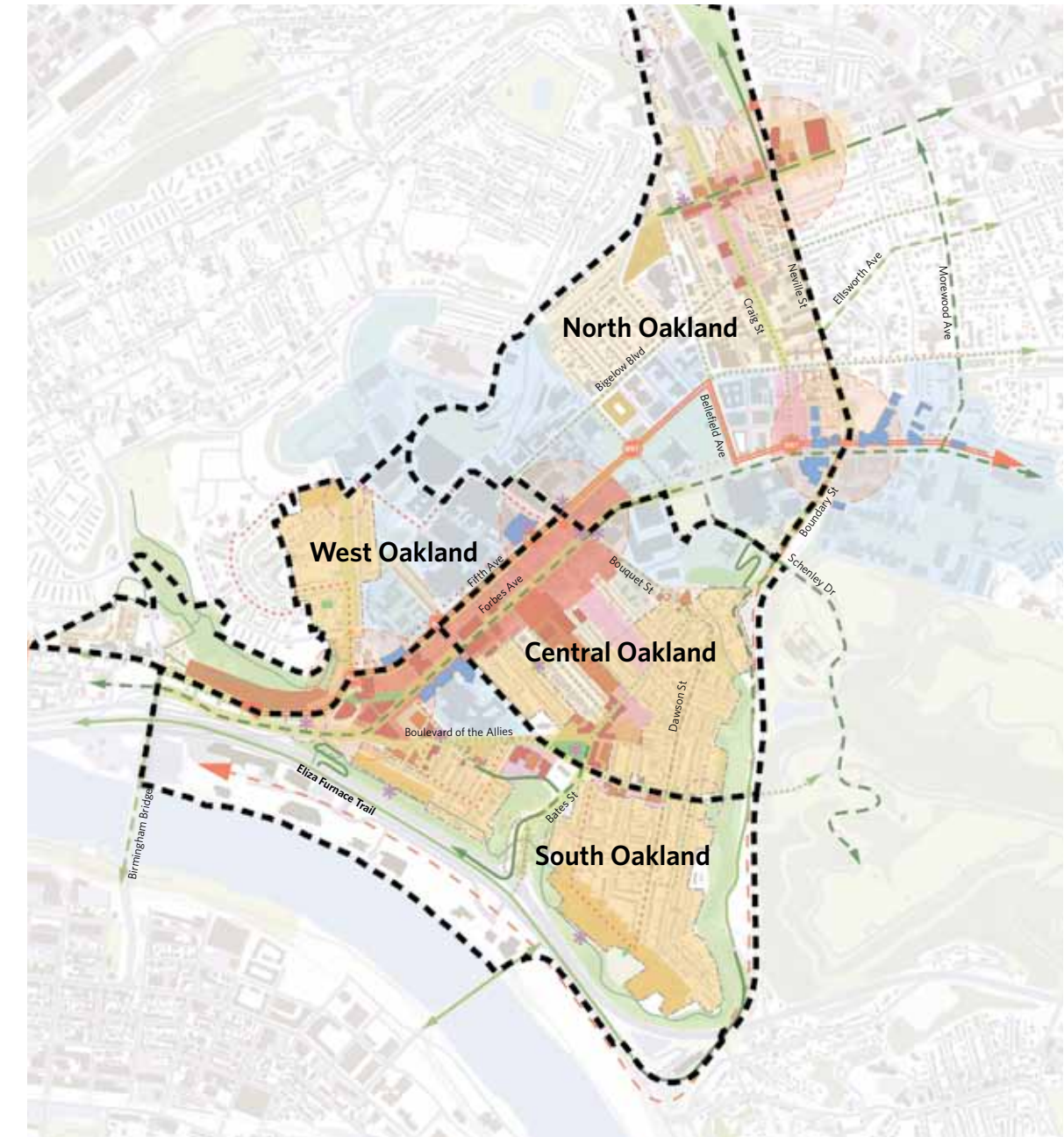
- Existing residential areas
- Homeowner preservation priority
- New market-rate housing development
- Corridors for apartments & student housing development

#### BUSINESS + DEVELOPMENT

- Oakland Business Improvement District
- Neighborhood business district
- Existing institutions
- Proposed mixed-use development
- Proposed building renovation
- Proposed institutional development

#### OPEN SPACE + ART

- Renovated and expanded parks
- Hillside restoration
- Streetscape improvements
- Trailhead neighborhoods
- Public art
- Gateway beautification
- Walking trails





# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 4.2 Central Oakland Priorities

Central Oakland, the community’s institutional core, includes the University of Pittsburgh and Carlow University with Carnegie Mellon University on its eastern edge. This area also includes major sections of neighborhoods occupied by student housing and a shrinking mix of young and old residents around Oakland Square at the edge of Panther Hollow. The development of the commercial core is being transformed by Innovation Oakland’s (OBID) ongoing work to strengthen design through technology. Future development of the BRT and its related research and higher quality student housing blocks will be key to its future and the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Oakland Neighborhoods

- MOBILITY
- Transit: Fifth/Forbes BRT line

Transit: BRT stations

Transit: consolidated shuttle loops (3)

Transit: Downtown circulator loop

Transit: mobility hubs

Bicycles: proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes

Bicycles: proposed off-street trail

Bicycles: existing on-street markings or dedicated lanes

Bicycles: existing off-street trail

Bicycles: existing on-street route
- HOUSING
- Existing residential areas

Homeowner preservation priority

New market-rate housing development

Corridors for apartments & student housing development
- BUSINESS + DEVELOPMENT
- Oakland Business Improvement District

Neighborhood business district

Existing institutions

Proposed mixed-use development

Proposed building renovation

Proposed institutional development
- OPEN SPACE + ART
- Renovated and expanded parks

Hillside restoration

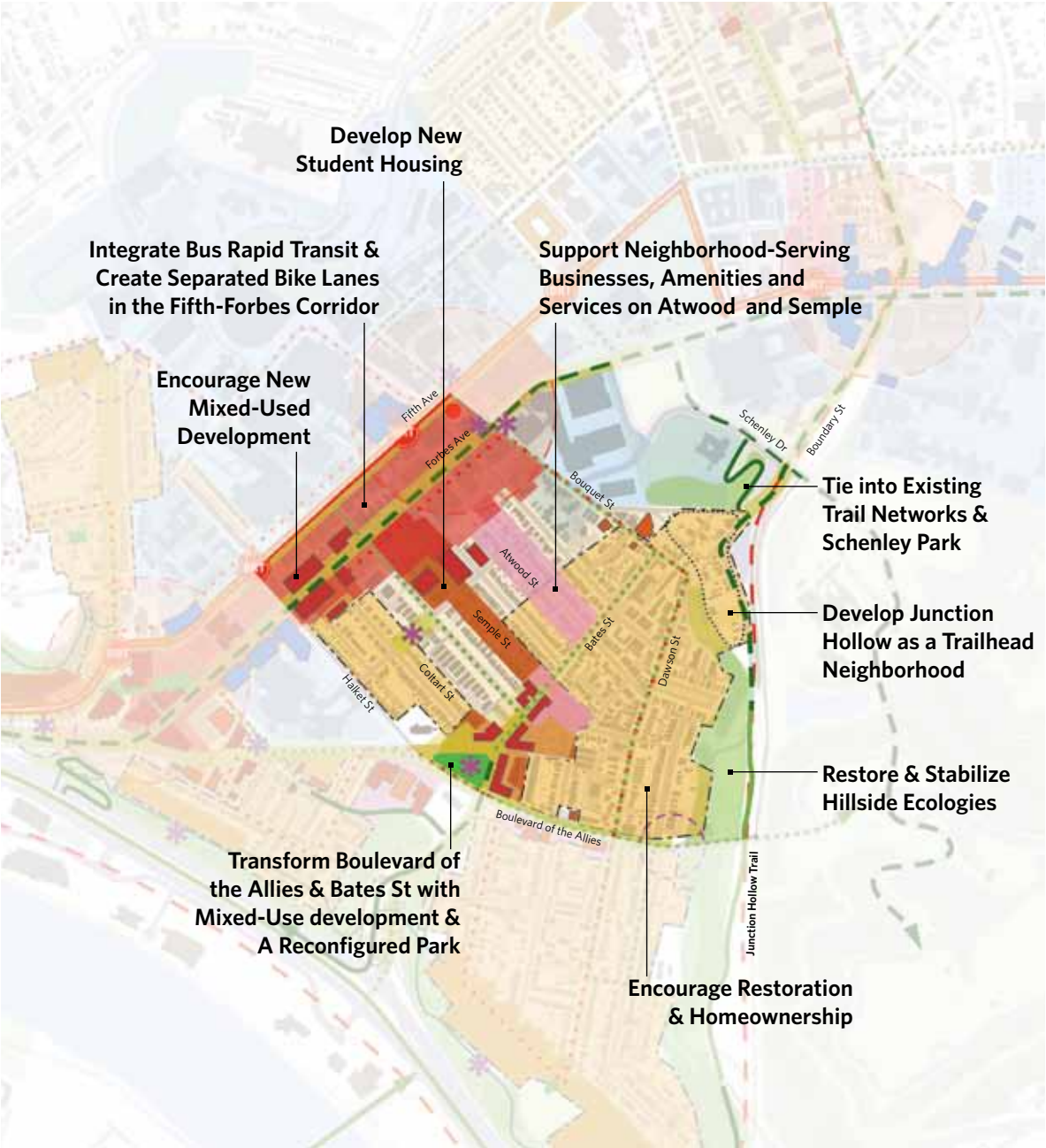
Streetscape improvements

Trailhead neighborhoods

Public art

Gateway beautification

Walking trails



Key Recommendations: Central Oakland



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 4.3 South Oakland Priorities

With it’s hillside views, portal connections, and potential connections to parks trails, the South Oakland neighborhood should be preserved as vibrant community for single families. The Oakland 2025 plan proposes number of housing, and open space strategies to strengthen the residential neighborhood. Developing neighborhood serving retail and neighborhood third places is also a key part of an overall housing strategy for the neighborhood. The master plan for neighborhood also recognizes that small changes to Bates Street will never fully solve the problem of this arrival point in Oakland. It is recommended that the triangular Zulema Park become an anchor for new development and intersection improvements. This will require a long-term commitment to redevelopment of the entire area and further study by economic development and transportation planners.

### Oakland Neighborhoods

- MOBILITY
- Transit: Fifth/Forbes BRT line
- Transit: BRT stations
- Transit: consolidated shuttle loops (3)
- Transit: Downtown circulator loop
- Transit: mobility hubs
- Bicycles: proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes
- Bicycles: proposed off-street trail
- Bicycles: existing on-street markings or dedicated lanes
- Bicycles: existing off-street trail
- Bicycles: existing on-street route
- HOUSING
- Existing residential areas
- Homeowner preservation priority
- New market-rate housing development
- Corridors for apartments & student housing development
- BUSINESS + DEVELOPMENT
- Oakland Business Improvement District
- Neighborhood business district
- Existing institutions
- Proposed mixed-use development
- Proposed building renovation
- Proposed institutional development
- OPEN SPACE + ART
- Renovated and expanded parks
- Hillside restoration
- Streetscape improvements
- Trailhead neighborhoods
- Public art
- Gateway beautification
- Walking trails



Key Recommendations: South Oakland



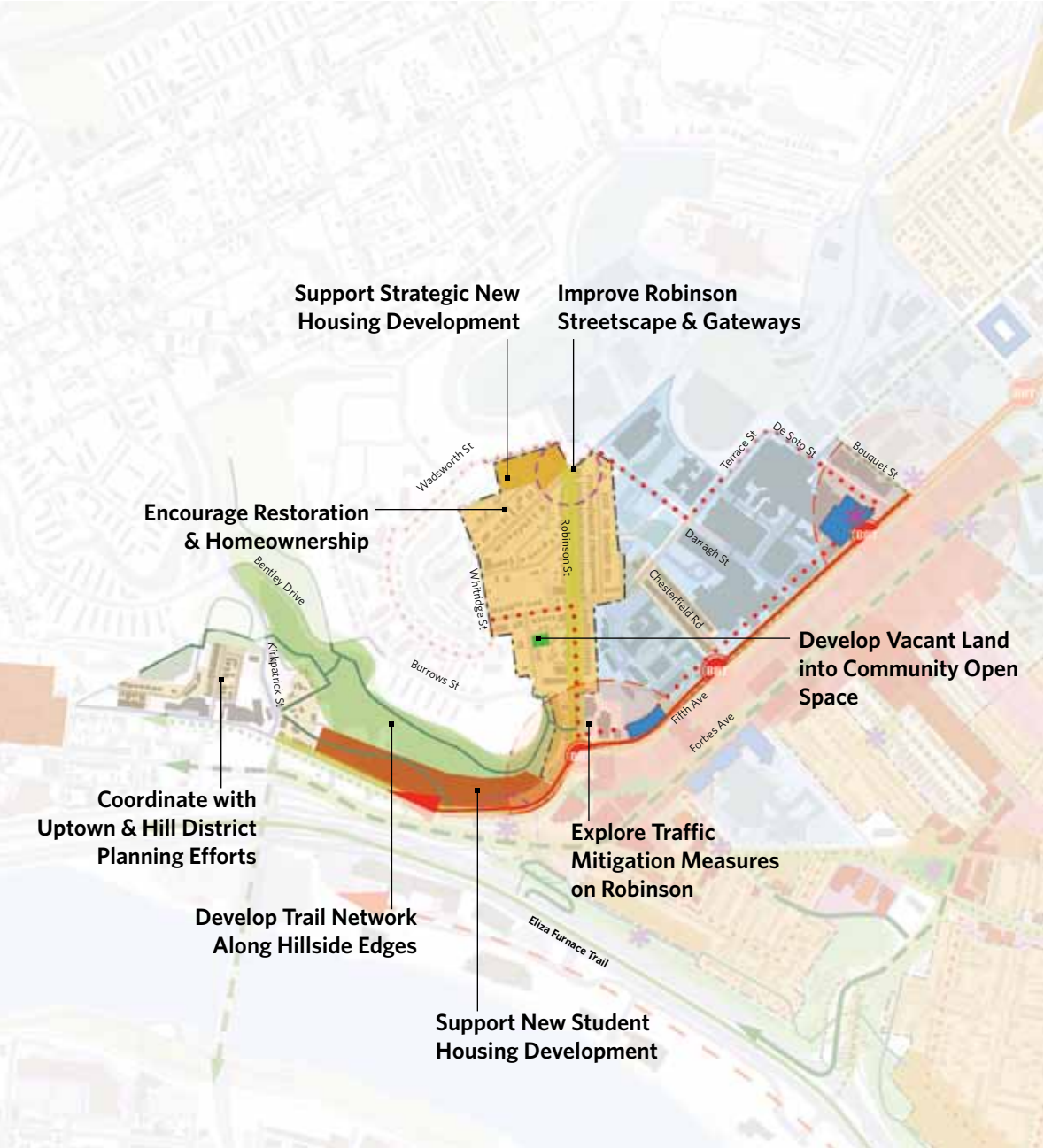
# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 4.4 West Oakland Priorities

West Oakland’s borders are being transformed by development on the east and new development of Oak Hill on the west. The southern entry to West Oakland also forms the main western entry to Central Oakland and contains large underdeveloped parcels that will bring positive change to the neighborhood if properly designed and connected to the residential streets and Uptown. Emphasis is on families, professional staff and older students to support a walkable neighborhood, reducing impact of traffic on residential streets. Rehabs, new infill and neighborhood public open space highlight changes in 2025 for West Oakland.

### Oakland Neighborhoods

- MOBILITY
- Transit: Fifth/Forbes BRT line
- Transit: BRT stations
- Transit: consolidated shuttle loops (3)
- Transit: Downtown circulator loop
- Transit: mobility hubs
- Bicycles: proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes
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Key Recommendations: West Oakland



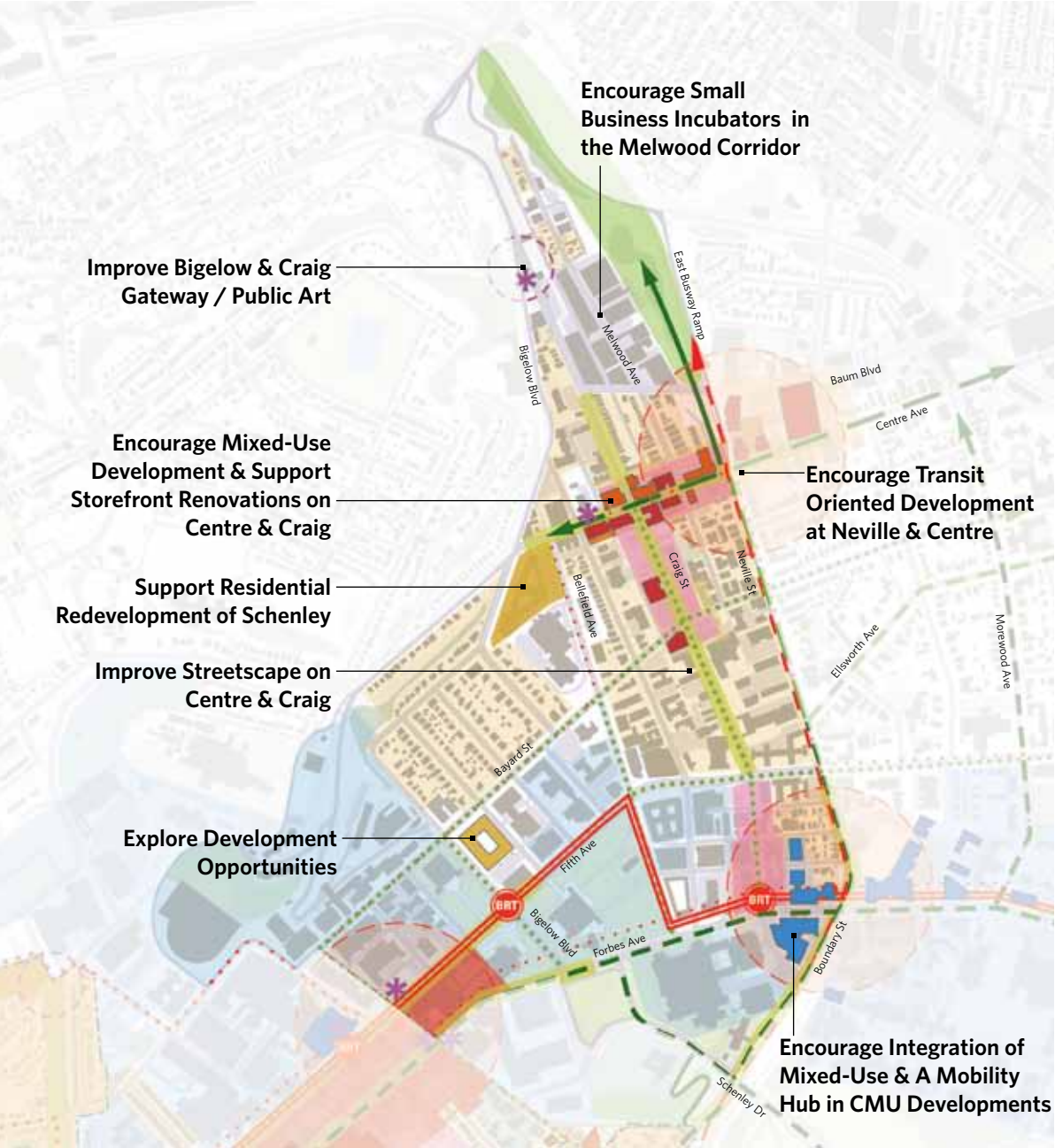
# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 4.5 North Oakland Priorities

The North Oakland business district has been overlooked as a prime connector development area between Oakland and the Baum/Centre corridor and even East Liberty. Its historic relationship to the East End, Polish Hill and the Hill District gives it a unique opportunity to provide state-of-the-art, mixed-use, high-density development supported by new connections along a new circulator system through Panther Hollow/Boundary/Neville connecting to the East Busway. East-west connections along the Baum/Centre corridor to East Liberty are also opportunities. The reuse of Schenley High School and multigenerational housing development mixed with strong, local, international-flavored retail is a key to its future.

### Oakland Neighborhoods

- MOBILITY
- Transit: Fifth/Forbes BRT line
- Transit: BRT stations
- Transit: consolidated shuttle loops (3)
- Transit: Downtown circulator loop
- Transit: mobility hubs
- Bicycles: proposed on-street markings or dedicated lanes
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- Gateway beautification
- Walking trails



Key Recommendations: North Oakland





# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## Section 5: Urban Design Focus Areas



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.1 Urban Design Focus Area Introduction

### Overview

The purpose of creating focus areas is to prioritize and highlight key physical, economic and transportation planning components of the Oakland 2025 Master Plan. Each of the focus areas uses the information collected from the fall 2011 neighborhood walkshops and workshops. Following the workshops, the planning team conducted over a dozen key institutional, development and civic stakeholder discussions to confirm, clarify and validate the proposed focus areas and collect additional information. The results confirmed that there is broad consensus on the geographic areas as well as the supporting themes outlined in this summary.

Oakland 2025 organized the urban design focus areas around two corridors and four gateways/development opportunities:

### Corridors

- I: The Fifth & Forbes Multimodal Corridor
- II: Remaking Boulevard of the Allies & Bates

### Gateways

- A. North Oakland Neighborhood Business District
- B. West Oakland Gateway Redevelopment
- C. South Oakland Bates Zulema Semple Neighborhood Redevelopment
- D. South Craig/Forbes Innovation District

Based on the input and discussions, three of these have a special economic development focus:

1. Remaking Boulevard of the Allies & Bates
2. North Oakland Neighborhood Business District
3. West Oakland Gateway Redevelopment

### Focus Area Components

- Socioeconomic and transportation analysis
- Zoning/land use considerations
- Relationship to recent/concurrent plans (MovePGH, BRT, institutional master plans)
- Planning team SWOT analysis drawn from Neighborhood Needs workshops
- Supporting information: precedents, trends, stakeholder interviews
- Thematic integration drawn from Goals & Opportunities lists
- Urban Design Vision
  - Enlarged plan of each focus area
  - Bird's eye overview and streetview vignettes
- 2025 Plan timeline and implementation framework
- Strategy for potential follow-up projects

North Oakland business district

South Craig/Forbes innovation district

Fifth/Forbes multimodal corridor

Western Gateway portal

Bates/Zulema/Semple neighborhood

Boulevard of the Allies and Bates





# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.2 Fifth and Forbes Multimodal Corridor

The Fifth and Forbes Corridor is the heart of Oakland, home to major educational, medical and arts institutions. It is also the primary business district for the neighborhood. Oakland 2025 recommends that the Fifth and Forbes corridor be transformed into a pair of complete multimodal streets incorporating premium transit and new separated bike lanes. The recommendations build on the current Port Authority proposals for Bus Rapid Transit from Downtown to Oakland, and integrate emerging best practices for urban bicycle infrastructure. It is critical to create a pedestrian, bike and transit friendly environment in the core of Oakland that accommodates but de-emphasizes the use of automobiles. Improving mobility in the corridor will also set the stage for the development of additional institutional uses, retail and student housing. A pair of detailed transportation options for the corridor are proposed in the transportation section of this document.

This corridor is designed to allow the Innovative Oakland corridor to “plug-in” to the 2025 Master Plan. As a result, parts of this plan, are a a work in progress, especially proposals for new development and final transportation recommendations. The development of this corridor’s brand and urban design guidelines require a long-term development monitoring and review process that encourages and incentivizes higher quality architecture and streetscapes.

### Key Opportunities

- ▶ Integrating premium transit and separated bike lanes into the corridor
- ▶ Streetscape Improvements
- ▶ Mixed-use development sites in the western end of the corridor
- ▶ Integrating neighborhood amenities and mobility hubs into new institutional development
- ▶ Improving wayfinding and strengthening neighborhood identity through signage and public art



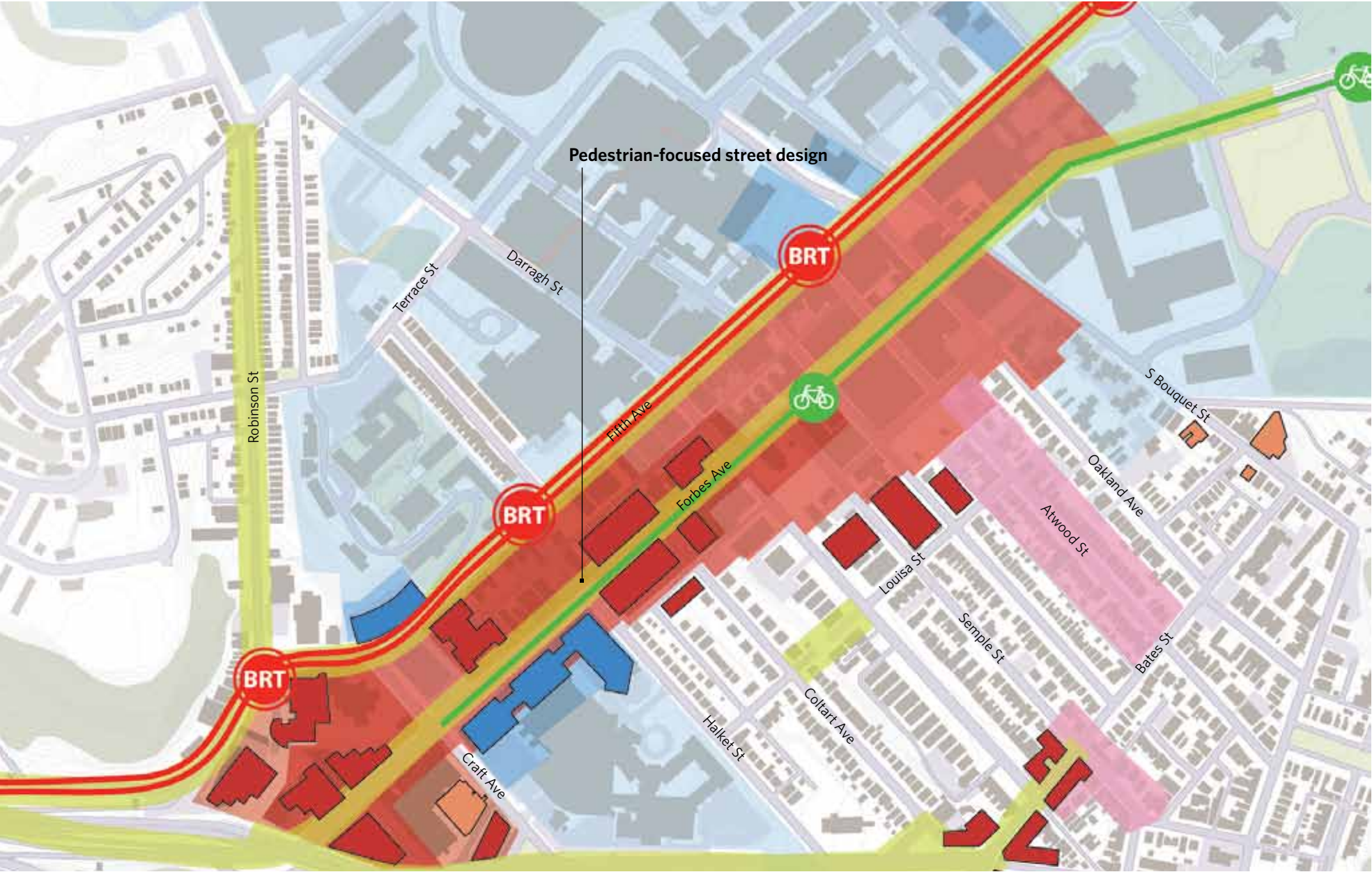
Fifth/Forbes Corridor Existing Conditions

### Design Guidelines

- ▶ Urban design overlay similar to Downtown for lower (western) Forbes
- ▶ Establish façade build-to-line, requiring new buildings along Forbes to follow the street while creating strategically located public open space
- ▶ Massing: Interpret rhythms and breakdown of massing (model: Iroquois Building)

### Urban Design Challenges & Opportunities

- ▶ Integrating bicycle lanes and improved transit service while maintaing vehicular access and parking
- ▶ Implementing a comprehensive solution for Fifth and Forbes with mixed ownership and maintenance - Forbes is a state route while Fifth Avenue is a city street.
- ▶ Multiple landowners resistant to land assembly for larger projects
- ▶ Above grade parking garage (UPMC Magee Master Plan envisions a parking garage atop the existing underground garage at the corner of Forbes and Halket)
- ▶ County Health Department site redevelopment (proposed office/hotel)



Fifth/Forbes Business District and Development Plan



# Fifth Avenue

The adjacent before and after images show the potential for implementing bus rapid transit on Fifth Avenue, including a potential station between Atwood Street and Oakland Avenue. Also shown is the potential impact of redeveloping the Children's Hospital site with a new large scale medical facility. A key factor for successfully integrating BRT into Oakland is the design of high quality stations with a strong architectural identity and well integrated landscape elements.



Precedent



Fifth Avenue: Existing Conditions



Fifth Avenue: Proposed Eye-Level View



# Forbes Avenue

The adjacent before and after images show the potential for integrating new bicycle infrastructure on Forbes Avenue using a separated two-way cycle track. Also shown is the potential impact on future development of urban design guidelines that ensure active ground floor uses along sidewalks and massing strategies designed to breakdown large scale new development. Finally the impact of new street trees and understory plantings to create a more pedestrian friendly streetscape is illustrated.



Precedent: Historic Iroquois Block



Forbes Avenue: Existing Conditions



Forbes Avenue: Proposed Eye-Level View



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.3 Remaking the Boulevard of the Allies

### A Brief History of the Boulevard of the Allies

Noted landscape architect and planner Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. first envisioned what is today the Boulevard of the Allies. As part of his 1911 plan, *Pittsburgh: Main Thoroughfares and the Down Town District*, Olmsted proposed building a new, high-level parkway along the Monongahela hillside to improve access from Downtown to the rapidly developing East End. The proposed parkway was part of a series of recommendations to create “a more orderly and systematically planned development of the controllable physical features of the Pittsburgh Industrial District.”

His plan built on the tradition of scenic boulevards envisioned two decades earlier by Pittsburgh’s famed city planner, Edward Bigelow, which included Grant Boulevard (now Bigelow Boulevard, completed in 1900) connecting Downtown to Schenley Park and William Pitt Boulevard (now Beechwood Boulevard) and Washington Boulevard linking Highland Park to Schenley Park.

Open to traffic in 1922, the boulevard extended initially only to Forbes Avenue in West Oakland. Traffic congestion there was immediate—as were calls to alleviate the problem by building a viaduct over Forbes Avenue and extending the boulevard eastward to Craft Avenue. This was completed in 1928. Two years later, the boulevard was extended further east through South Oakland by widening what were then Emily and Wilmot Streets (including the area where Bates Street enters the neighborhood). Acknowledging the automobile-dominated culture at hand, city officials hailed the newly completed, three-mile long, unobstructed roadway for its ability to allow “motorists [to] make the entire trip from downtown to Schenley Park without traveling over any streets that include trolley tracks.”

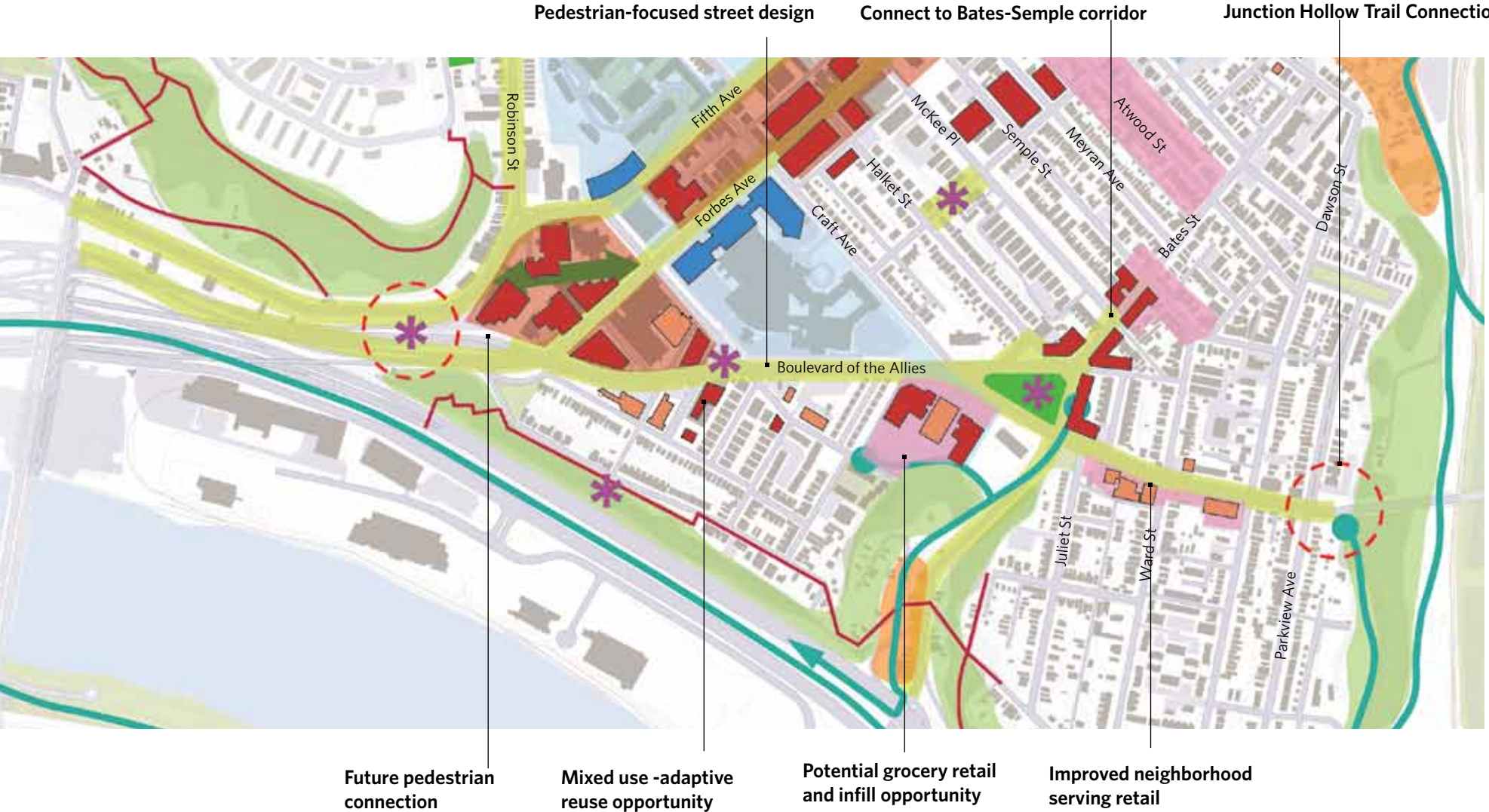


Boulevard of the Allies Existing Conditions Map

### Remaking the Boulevard of the Allies

The Oakland 2025 plan encourages the continued efforts to green and improve pedestrian safety along the Boulevard of the Allies, in the overall effort to realize its original vision as verdant urban boulevard. While much additional design and study need to be completed, potential improvements to the Boulevard could include a planted median, upgraded pedestrian crosswalks, and improved connections to existing parks and trails.

Since the Boulevard has many underutilized historic buildings, there are also opportunities for mixed use adaptive reuse developments. The goal for these improvements is to enhance pedestrian safety and quality of residential life.



Boulevard of the Allies Proposed Development Plan



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.4 North Oakland Neighborhood Business District

North Oakland’s business district has struggled to develop even as adjacent residential areas have become more desirable. Institutional growth has occurred in the area (UCPCLASS, Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, religious institutions) over the last decade.

The district contains a mix of 25 to 30 existing businesses.

### Future of the Business District

With a large range of neighborhood service retail, the North Oakland Business District serves students, ethnic minorities, and residents of surrounding neighborhoods, including the Hill District. The next 15 years may bring change in the form of new development. Current trends include a new CVS and proposed apartments catering to students. New development is limited to sites that are available to combine into larger parcels. Many of the smaller retail footprints are very small and attached to an older large residence, common to many Pittsburgh business districts that grew from residential origins.

Development interests will likely result in additional proposals for single use retail or residential. For a diverse and healthy growth of the district in the coming decade, design and zoning standards should be refined to encourage mixed-use projects with reduced parking requirements. The current proposal for Centre Avenue by Polaris Development will result in ground level parking at the street for an entire city block. Likewise, the proposed CVS is expected to be a standard single-story suburban box with little recognition of its urban context. Few of the recent urban chain pharmacies have been very successful additions to urban neighborhood fabric, despite zoning requirements for rear parking and street front glazing.



North Oakland Existing Conditions Map



North Oakland Redevelopment Plan



Developing the right mix of urban design guidelines and refined zoning standards/incentives would help this neighborhood evolve successfully. This will require capacity building and advocacy from within the neighborhood and business/landowner stakeholders. There is currently no business association. In reviewing the focus, geographic area and mission of the Oakland BID, it does not appear to be the right match for this district to be included. A separate organization with some technical assistance from OPDC and OBID to get off the ground is desirable.

#### Key Opportunities for the Craig Centre District

- Streetscape Improvements
- Advocate for appropriate building massing
- Streetface Design Incentives and Guidelines--refer to Lawrenceville as a case study
- Retail Façade Design Assistance Program
- Multimodal Transportation Hub Opportunity: Incorporate Bus/BRT Circulator Station at Neville/Busway Ramp

#### Historic/Contributing Asset Buildings

- King Edward Apts (Legume) (214 N Craig & Bayard)
- Colonnade (Centre Ave)
- Pump Station (Art of lighting/use outdoor space?)
- Tamarind (257 North Craig)
- Bayard Manor Mixed Use (great model)
- Melwood & Centre Block
- Expansion of Sterling Plaza, limited by perceived/real need for structured parking. Expansion needs to be more innovative, mixed use if possible. What kind of incentives/guidelines would move this site in the right direction?



Mixed-Use Building Precedent: Oberlin East College Street



Reinforce Existing High Density Mixed-Use - Craig Street



< Existing Conditions

North Oakland: Proposed Aerial View



**Centre Avenue**

The adjacent before and after images show the potential for the Craig-Centre corridor to be a pedestrian friendly, neighborhood serving retail district, on par with other Pittsburgh retail districts. The key to new development should be a focus on mixed use, design quality, and higher use/higher density modes of development.



Reinforce Existing High Density Mixed-Use - Centre Avenue



Craig Street and Centre Avenue: Existing Conditions



Craig Street and Centre Avenue: Proposed Eye-Level View



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.5 West Oakland Gateway Redevelopment

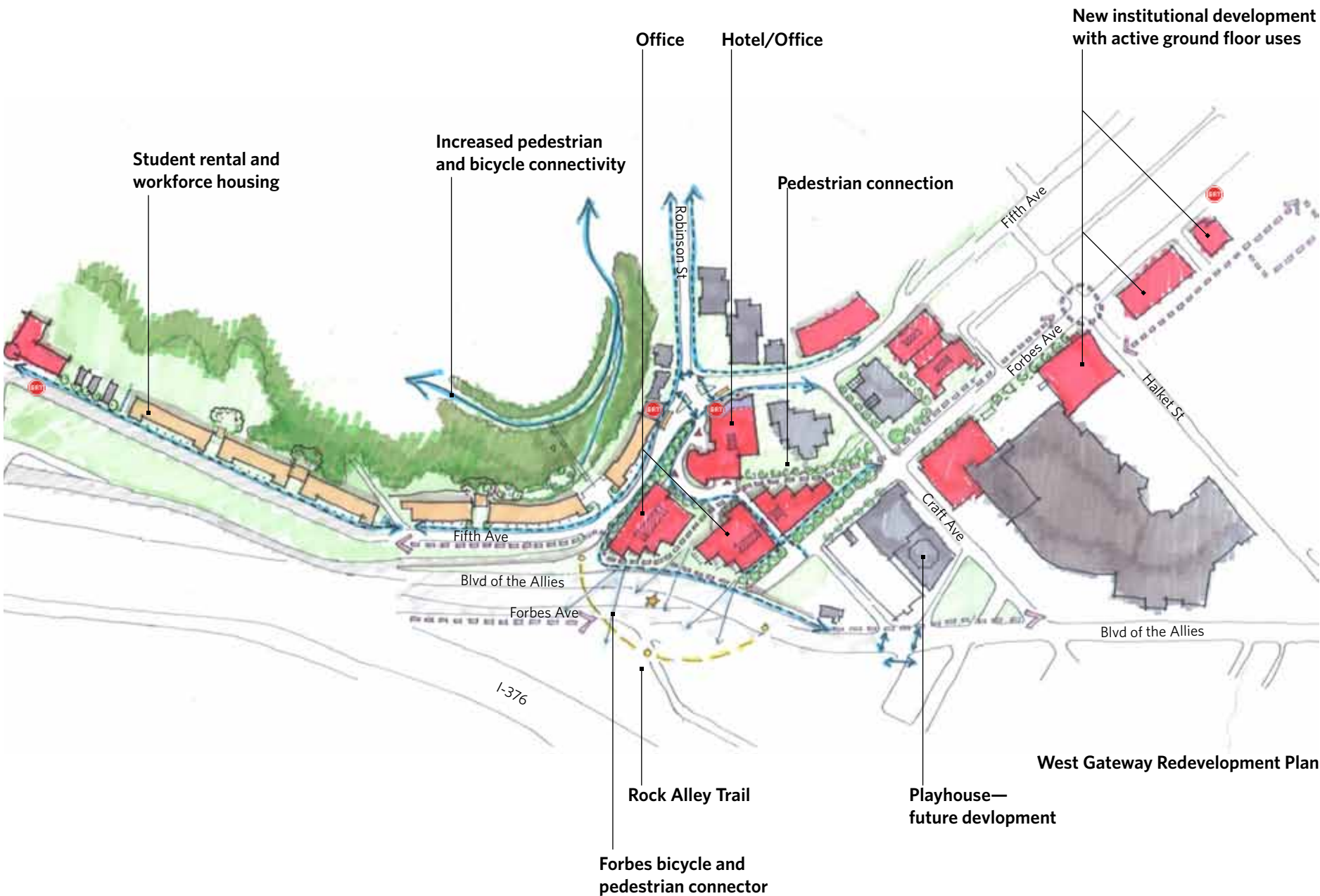
The twelve-acre site also known as the Oakland Portal has been studied extensively over the last decade. In 2005, a Pfaffmann + Associates’ study commissioned by OPDC illustrated ways to maximize development opportunities for this key western gateway to Oakland. The study encouraged landowner collaboration to allow higher density, higher quality development. Since 2005, the ownership in the core area has changed hands and a number of proposed development partnerships failed to materialize. Currently, most, but not all, of the development area is controlled by one developer. Studies for a shared use garage to support higher density development have been abandoned due to lack of public subsidies for structured parking. As a result, incremental development is underway.

The completion of the Boulevard of the Allies Bridge signaled the completion of a major regional transportation investment to start the redevelopment of the gateway. This was followed by two residential projects by LW Molnar Associates. The first (completed spring 2012) is a four-story rental apartment building with views of the Monongahela River and the South Side Slopes, consisting of 47 units built over a structured parking garage. A second similar building is envisioned. Both structures appear to be addressing student housing demand.

Plans for the second phase of the project are currently before neighborhood organizations and the City of Pittsburgh for review. Molnar indicates that their company is proposing three office towers, with one to include a hotel, for the main site located between Forbes and Fifth Avenues. Included in those plans are suggestions for widened sidewalks, landscaping and bicycle infrastructure along Fifth Avenue. Future plans for the hotel and office buildings should be developed in a comprehensive manner to avoid suburban style space planning and design.



West Oakland Gateway Existing Conditions Map



West Gateway Redevelopment Plan



**Historic/Contributing Asset Buildings**

- Coffey Building (former Lamar Headquarters)
- Robinson rowhouses
- Pasquarelli Plumbing Garage (2640 5th Ave) at Robinson

**Key Opportunities**

- Forbes Avenue redevelopment terminus
- Potential pedestrian connections along Fifth Avenue
- Improve pedestrian connections to South Oakland under and over the new Boulevard of the Allies bridge
- BRT multimodal station at Robinson/Fifth area
- Safe pedestrian connections from South to West Oakland
- Intermodal Intercept Garage

**Public Art and Wayfinding Opportunities**

- Innovation Oakland: Welcome to Oakland public art wall; streetscapes, BRT station
- Public open space should be part of projects that involve public funds (TIF/RCAP etc.)



LW Molnar Associates Master Plan



BRT Hub Opportunity



< Existing Conditions

West Oakland Gateway: Proposed Aerial View



**Western Portal**

The adjacent before and after images illustrate how the Western Gateway Portal can radically transform one’s experience of Oakland as one enters Oakland’s Central business district from Downtown and Uptown. High quality, mixed-use redevelopment, coupled with an improved streetscape and pedestrian improvements, can radically transform Oakland’s entryway experience. The key to successful redevelopment will be to encourage multi parcel development over piecemeal redevelopment and focus on design quality.



Mixed-Use Building Precedent: University of Minnesota Stadium Village Flats



Fifth Avenue and Robinson Street: Existing Conditions



Fifth Avenue and Robinson Street: Proposed Eye-Level View



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.6 Bates/Semple/Zulema Gateway

As mentioned in the Transportation section, one of the most challenging areas of Oakland’s urban fabric is the Bates Street/Boulevard of the Allies intersection. Like the Western Portal, the need for an integrated land-use and redevelopment plan at this gateway is critical to the long term economic development and health of Oakland.

Never designed for the volume of traffic that it carries, Bates Street is a serious continuing problem in getting traffic in and out of Oakland. This problematic corridor has degraded neighborhood quality of life and deterred diversified housing investment beyond student-focused speculation. Earlier proposals to accommodate the Mon Fayette Toll Road illustrated the significant impact of an expanded four-lane connection up to the Boulevard of the Allies. Attempts to develop better alternative solutions that didn’t just pump traffic up Bates Street through the dense student-housing district were never developed.

Very conceptual studies were conducted in-house at the Department of City Planning (Hassett, Reppe) that looked at a grade-separated solution. A grade separation alone does not solve the problem of diffusing traffic but, rather, further concentrates traffic up Bates, damaging the opportunities for revitalization of Central/South Oakland neighborhoods on both sides of the boulevard and Bates.

During the workshops, the planning team developed a series of bold alternatives based on the idea that doing little or nothing (i.e., cleaning up the intersection that is there now), will not encourage high quality development that is needed to connect the surrounding pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.



Bates/Semple/Zulema Existing Conditions Map



Option 1



Option 2



One can imagine that if the planners of the Boulevard of the Allies could have known that Interstate 376 would be built 25 years after the Boulevard of the Allies, Bates could have been widened and configured into a four-lane “City Beautiful” urban boulevard arriving in a formal oval or roundabout near Schenley Plaza. That option has been cut off by subsequent development in the 1960–70s with the University of Pittsburgh’s academic expansion at the former Forbes Field site.

This left the planning team with a set of solutions that are focused on diffusing traffic in four directions:

1. Boulevard of the Allies east—to shift traffic toward the northern and eastern ends of Oakland (Phipps/ CMU/ Museums/ Library/ North Oakland)
2. Boulevard of the Allies west—to shift traffic toward Magee, Halket, and beyond (West Oakland/ UPMC)
3. Bates Street to McKee Place—for western Central Oakland neighborhoods and the commercial core
4. Bates Street—for the Schenley Plaza area and eastern Central Oakland neighborhoods

These potential road network configurations have been conceptualized in two options for the Bates Street/Boulevard of the Allies intersection. Each aims to address the chronic congestion at this location, safely accommodate bicycles and pedestrians, and maximize opportunities for redevelopment.

It should be emphasized that it is beyond the scope of this plan to develop these two concepts to a point where they can be fully validated functionally. Further work is recommended to plan and design a solution that merits further advocacy and redevelopment planning (traffic modeling, land acquisition, rights of way, geometric alignments and grade issues). This is a major regional economic development proposal and not a stand-alone transportation project.

**Boulevard of the Allies/Bates Street Options**

**Option 1: “Do Almost Nothing”**

This concept does little to address the traffic and pedestrian connections for the long-term health and growth of Oakland. It calls for some basic beautification of surroundings, which would make the wait in a car more pleasant, but would do little to improve mobility, safety and pedestrian/bike connectivity for more walkable, desirable neighborhoods. Land uses would not change significantly, other than a small amount of new replacement housing along Zulema Park and eastward from the corner of Bates and the Boulevard.

**Option 2: “Bates Portal Bridge and Roundabout”**

This concept depicts a modern roundabout at the intersection of Zulema and Bates. In order to keep this roundabout within the minimum dimensions for an urban single lane configuration (130-foot inscribed diameter), the Bates and Boulevard of the Allies intersection would likely need to be grade separated. Under this configuration, northbound traffic on Bates would pass beneath the Boulevard of the Allies and proceed through the roundabout. Northbound traffic on Bates destined for Boulevard of the Allies would use ramps to negotiate the grade separation. The spacing and operation of traffic signals at Halket and McKee are critical to the operation of the roundabout. Traffic must not be allowed to queue into the roundabout. It may also be necessary to realign Coltart St to intersect with Zulema.

A more detailed traffic engineering analysis is needed to determine the geometric requirements and to prove operational feasibility. Additional comprehensive development planning and engineering is also needed to identify issues related to constructability, right of way impact, environmental impact, and construction cost.





**Bates/Boulevard of the Allies Portal**

The adjacent before and after images illustrate how boulevard greening efforts and pedestrian enhancements are essential design strategies in improving the everyday experience of Bates and Boulevard of the Allies and the character of the South Oakland neighborhood. These improvements have the power to give the corridor a sense of scale, place, and walkability, which in turn will make it safer for drivers, employees and residents.



Mixed-Use Building Precedent: Columbus South Campus Gateway



Zulema and Bates Streets: Existing Conditions



Zulema and Bates Streets: Proposed Eye-Level View



# Oakland 2025 Master Plan

## 5.7 South Craig Innovation Area

Carnegie Mellon’s Master Plan envisions growth in a very focused area around Forbes and South Craig up to Winthrop. Future development at Forbes next to the Carnegie Museum will result in 835,000 square feet of new development. Opportunities to integrate multimodal stations for the BRT and the proposed circulator on Boundary Street, make this one of the most important intersections in Oakland.

Economic development will be driven by Carnegie Mellon’s space demands for institutional and collaborative multi-tenant research and office space, and for partners that desire to be “on campus” or right next door.

**Issues to consider**

- › Relationship to Fifth/Forbes Multimodal Corridor
- › Integrating flagship BRT station with development along the southern side of Forbes that can connect BRT, circulator, trail and pedestrian connections
- › Changing the zoning in the area behind Craig Street from Forbes to Winthrop (EMI in Carnegie Mellon’s master plan). Large Carnegie Mellon buildings along Forbes (gas station site, then on Morewood Gardens parking)
- › EMI changes can be controversial: Carnegie Mellon acquired parcels up to Winthrop.
- › Carnegie Mellon supports the scale and unique, local businesses of the business district
- › Benchmark an appropriate level of development (between large floor plate buildings and smaller commercial spaces along Craig Street)
- › Boundary Street: Carnegie Mellon parking and trail development



Bates/Semple/Zulema Existing Conditions Map

- › Panther Hollow trailhead neighborhood
  - Institutional relationships and investments
  - Parking (University of Pittsburgh: 150 spaces?)
  - Residential stabilization, renewal and infill strategies (possibly including employer assisted housing)

**Next Steps**

- › Develop new advocates and capacity
- › Recruit small businesses at Bouquet (bike shop, etc.)
- › Identify incentives (Pitt/CMU EAH’s; rehab assistance)
- › Track landownership trends and make key acquisitions
- › Develop events to promote history and trail connections



Source: Carnegie Mellon University Institutional Master Plan

New 10-Story Mixed Use Building (435,00 s.f.)