



MARCH 2013

MT. AIRY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

SETTLED IN

MT AIRY

1806

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES (GRANTS / LOANS)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD>

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/D01/PlanningPrograms/Pages/Funding.aspx>

Division Of Planning

Urban Paving Program

Safety Program

OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY

<http://development.ohio.gov/>

Community Development Block Grant

Neighborhood Revitalization Grant Program

CINCINNATI DEVELOPMENT FUND

<http://www.cincinnati-developmentfund.org/index.asp>

Build Cincinnati Fund

Regional Development Fund

CINCINNATI NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICTS UNITED

<http://www.cnbd.org/NBDIP.lasso>

Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP)

CITY OF CINCINNATI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

http://www.choosecincy.com/services/Neighborhood_Business_District_Improvement_Program

Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP)

INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS INC.

<http://www.investinneighborhoods.com/default.lasso>

Neighborhood Support Program

Neighborhood Business District Support Program

FINANCE FUND

<http://www.financefund.org/>

Economic Development Grants

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (CONTRIBUTORS)



We would like to take a moment to recognize the Mt. Airy C.U.R.E. team and the residents of Mt. Airy who participated in the revitalization strategy design process. These individuals provided their time and valuable direction in an effort to mold this strategy into a vision that they can consider their own:

- Dave Bennett
- Linda Bennett
- Pat Brand
- Judy Henderson
- Gerald Fortson
- Ron Harris
- Mark Menkhaus
- Corless Roper
- Cindee Walsh
- Yogi Wess
- TJ Bates
- Captain Paul Neudigate
- Patty Auciello
- Phil Auciello
- Tom Hamons

1 VISION STATEMENT & TABLE OF CONTENTS

MT. AIRY 2020 VISION STATEMENT

Mount Airy with its iconic water tower is one of Cincinnati's great family neighborhoods.

Only minutes from downtown, this diverse area is home to Mount Airy Forest – Cincinnati's largest park - and an urban oasis. Picnic spots, hike and bike trails and wonderful play areas are only a few of the spectacular amenities available to all.

A range of housing including lovely old homes, apartment living and condos pairs with good schools, churches and a real sense of community.

A compact walkable business district with friendly spots to grab a glass of wine or cup of coffee, encounter neighbors and accomplish every day errands with ease from a range of small shops for excellent quality of life.

Cincinnati has many wonderful neighborhoods but none more pleasant and accommodating than Mount Airy.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1)	INTRODUCTION	2
2)	OPPORTUNITIES	3
3)	PHASE 1	5
4)	PHASE 2	7
5)	PHASE 3	9
6)	PHASE 4	11
7)	BRANDING & SIGNAGE	13

Mt. Airy *Cincinnati's Green Heart*

Mt. Airy has historically been characterized by tidy homes, well kept yards, and families with children. Schools, churches, and a walkable neighborhood business district along Colerain Ave all served as the community heart and regular destinations for the residents of Mt. Airy. Children could walk to and from school, lifestyle amenities were locally available, and neighbors could encounter each while getting a haircut or grabbing a sandwich.

The neighborhood has always had two significant identifiers: the hidden loveliness of Mount Airy Forest, tucked away along Colerain Avenue, and the imposing grandeur of the Water Tower, a gateway icon like none other in the city.

But even in solid communities with exceptional assets, time erodes, and Mt. Airy has not been immune to the effects of this.

City wide, demographics have shifted and population has fallen throughout the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century. Walkable business districts have been sacrificed to the high speed demands of automotive efficiency. Home ownership trends have changed, often to the detriment of community fabric.

In Mt. Airy, the impact of these wider trends is most obvious in the business district. Once a compact neighborhood serving retail area, populated with a variety of retail, dining and practical lifestyle suppliers, it has suffered a severe decline in tenant mix and aesthetic appeal. Currently characterized by high vacancy, high speed traffic, and a general deterioration, the district is now mostly just a pass through for motorists on their way to someplace else.

Personal safety, both real and perceived, is a widespread concern, and crime statistics do reflect a negative trend. This further hampers efforts to lure both resident and visiting shoppers.

There are still many strengths and assets in Mt. Airy on which to build revitalization efforts. First, the business district is virtually the only commercial corridor for a mile or more in any direction (Figure 1). This makes Mt. Airy the default business district for a relatively large and populous area (Figure 2).

Additionally, the next closest retail areas are almost entirely auto oriented. Much of this development is larger (some very large) stores fronted by acres of surface parking. While these offer many useful products, they do not offer the warmth and walkability of a human scale neighborhood business district. Thus, the Mt. Airy business district, though distressed, is still unique both in location and built form. This is a significant point of differentiation and a strength on which to build.

Moreover, several of Mt. Airy's key community anchors (Fig. 2) are proximate to the business district, and speak to area's familial heart. Many of these also are housed in beautiful structures that are visual landmarks, and continue to engender a unique sense of place.

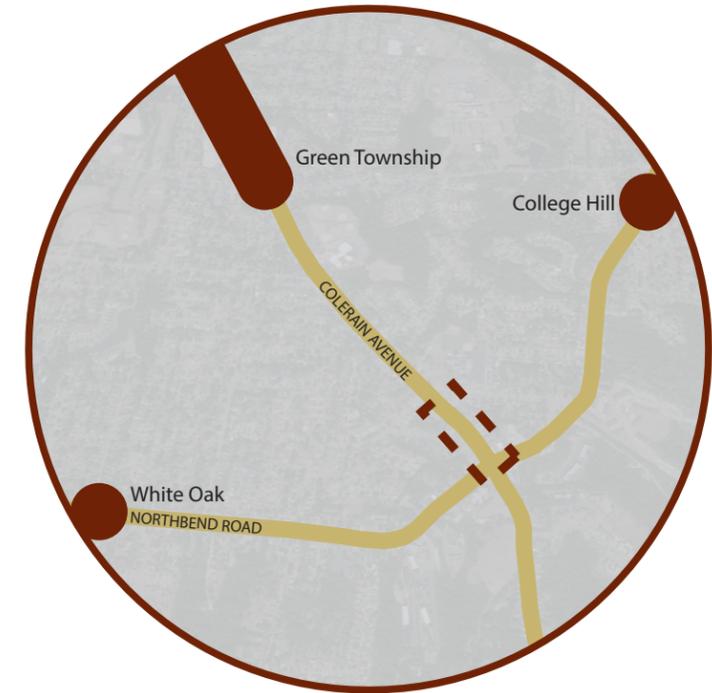


Fig. 1: Closest business districts to Mt. Airy (+1 mile)

And then there's that forest - the largest park in the City of Cincinnati and within walking or easy driving distance of the business district. Not only an asset for the residents of the community, the forest is potentially an asset for the community itself, bringing a continuing stream of visitors who might welcome a functioning business district where they could stop for lunch, visit unique shops or add a few items to the picnic basket.

Lastly of course, there's the historic Mt. Airy water tower serving as an iconic and uniquely beautiful gateway into the neighborhood business district.

Good housing, unique features, lifestyle amenities – substantial assets on which to begin rebuilding a strong community. But the challenges are also substantial, and many of the solutions will come slowly. Following the steps outlined in this plan, the leadership of Mt. Airy is envisioning a to-do list for most of the next decade.

So let's start.



FIG. 2: COMMUNITY ANCHORS
1. Little Flower Elementary School
2. Mt. Airy United Methodist Church
3. Water Tower
4. Colerain & Shepherd Recreational Area

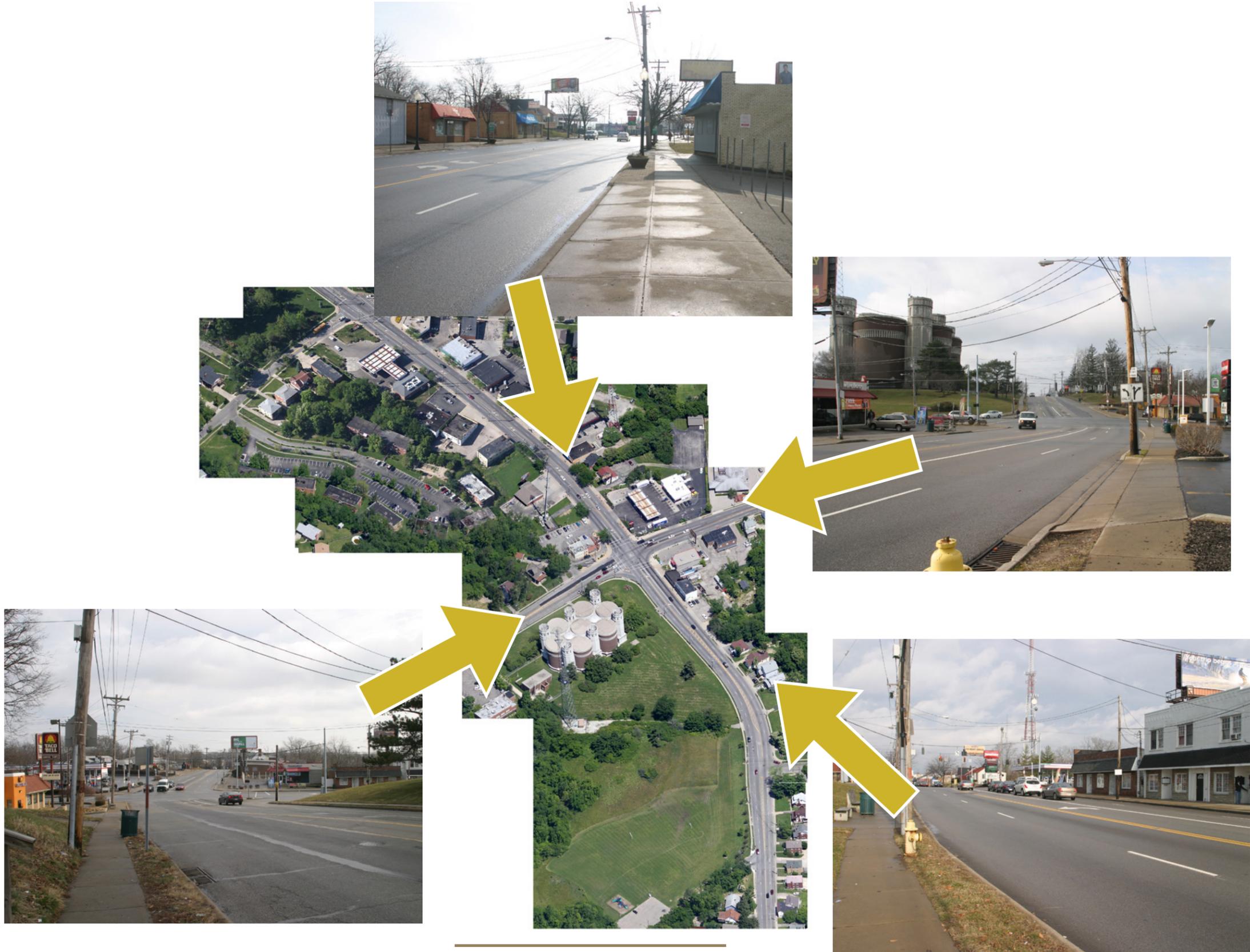
DEMOGRAPHICS (1 Mile Radius)

Total Population 11,456
Median Age 33.2
Age 19 years or less 3,675 (32.1%)

Age 20 to 64 years 6,355 (55.5%)
Age 65 year and older 1,426 (12.5%)
Total Retail Expenditures \$89.1 mil

Households 4,816
Median Household Income \$37,074
Traffic Count 37,000 cars/day

OPPORTUNITIES (EXISTING CONDITIONS)



PHASE 1 CENTRALIZED PARKING/ GATHERING

With the existing building on this centrally located site available, it opens the opportunity for a much needed parking/central gathering space. By providing visible, accessible and safe parking, the passing motorists will be encouraged to stop and visit the shops and businesses.

PHASE 2 STREET EDGE IMPROVEMENTS

While the existing structures in the business district are in good condition, there is an opportunity to update the facades and storefronts. Upgrading the facades allow property owners to attract the caliber of tenant the district desires. Also, infilling access points to create a unified street edge will encourage traffic into desired areas and help eliminate the pockets for unwanted activity.

PHASE 3 NEW RETAIL

This partially vacant property allows the greatest opportunity to reinstall a solid street wall on the west side of the street and begin to bring a cohesiveness to the retail district.

PHASE 4 ADDITIONAL RETAIL

By bringing the retail to the street and continuing the street wall, it will add to a greater sense of community and add value to the surrounding commercial and residential properties.

ON-GOING

With the addition of traffic calming measures and the restoration of round the clock on street parking, concerns about traffic speed and pedestrian safety can be addressed progressively. This in turn will reinforce the pedestrian friendly aspect of the area and add walkers and shoppers to be eyes on the street, further enhancing safety.



In this phase, the greatest impact is going to come from community led initiatives. Some of these may seem small, but will accumulate to be important building blocks for business district revitalization.

First, there needs to be a vision of what the future should look like. Then comes a strategy to achieve that vision, and the process of building support within the community. Real progress is going to require a coalition of business and property owners, tenants and homeowners, young and old, fostered by constant communication and a shared commitment to the future of Mt. Airy.

Start with safe and clean – something valued by residents and visitors alike. The current deteriorated appearance of the business district signals that community self esteem is low and engagement lacking, discouraging participation by the many while encouraging bad behavior by the few.

Begin with a simple community initiative such as sidewalk plantings and litter patrol. While there may be help (at some cost) from the city or the Park Board, assume that in this phase, improvements must be community led. The baseline is to establish a cared for and walkable one block public realm. The walkability of the Mt. Airy business district is one of its advantages over neighboring commercial developments; strengthening the pedestrian experience will support this differentiation and lay the groundwork for future efforts.

Concurrently the community needs to be working on a long term vision and a business recruitment and retention strategy. As the appearance of the district begins to improve, interest in storefronts will begin to rise and community leaders need to prepare for that now.

With these initiatives underway, the community can build on the branding suggestions herein, and begin early stage branding and marketing.

Even though walkability is the focus, it is important to remember the car. Though the business district historically was supported by the immediate neighborhood, population density has gone down in Mt. Airy. There just aren't enough people nearby now to support a retail strip more than 1000 feet long.

Meanwhile, the Colerain Avenue corridor has become more heavily traveled. Mt. Airy has the chance to offer better parking as a proxy for density. This will get some of those passing motorists out of their cars and into the shops by offering a visible, accessible and safe place for them to park.

The major project in this phase should be to acquire the Klosterman dry cleaning site, demolish the existing structure and create a central parking location, brightly lit and well maintained.

This site, almost certainly contaminated by decades of service as a dry cleaning plant is also at the very center of the business district. The building cannot be repurposed, and in its present condition contributes to the negative appearance of the district overall. Demolition would achieve several important purposes:

- Kick off the process of revitalization
- Offer parking to support incoming businesses
- Offer an opportunity for decorative landscape at the Colerain boundary
- Remove blight

The community also should not wait to begin the long term negotiations required to change traffic and on street parking patterns. These will be time consuming and only by starting now will there be meaningful progress within any reasonable time frame.

Six key objectives would be:

- Work with CPD on consistent enforcement of speed limits
- Increase pedestrian safety
- Enhance walkability
- Remove the requirement for peak hour parking restrictions
- Adjust curb configurations to aid in traffic calming
- Plan for a signalized mid block crossing

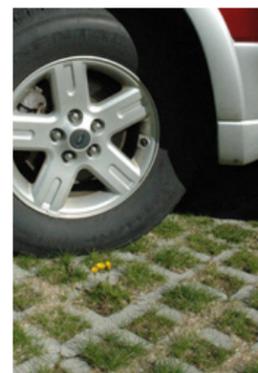
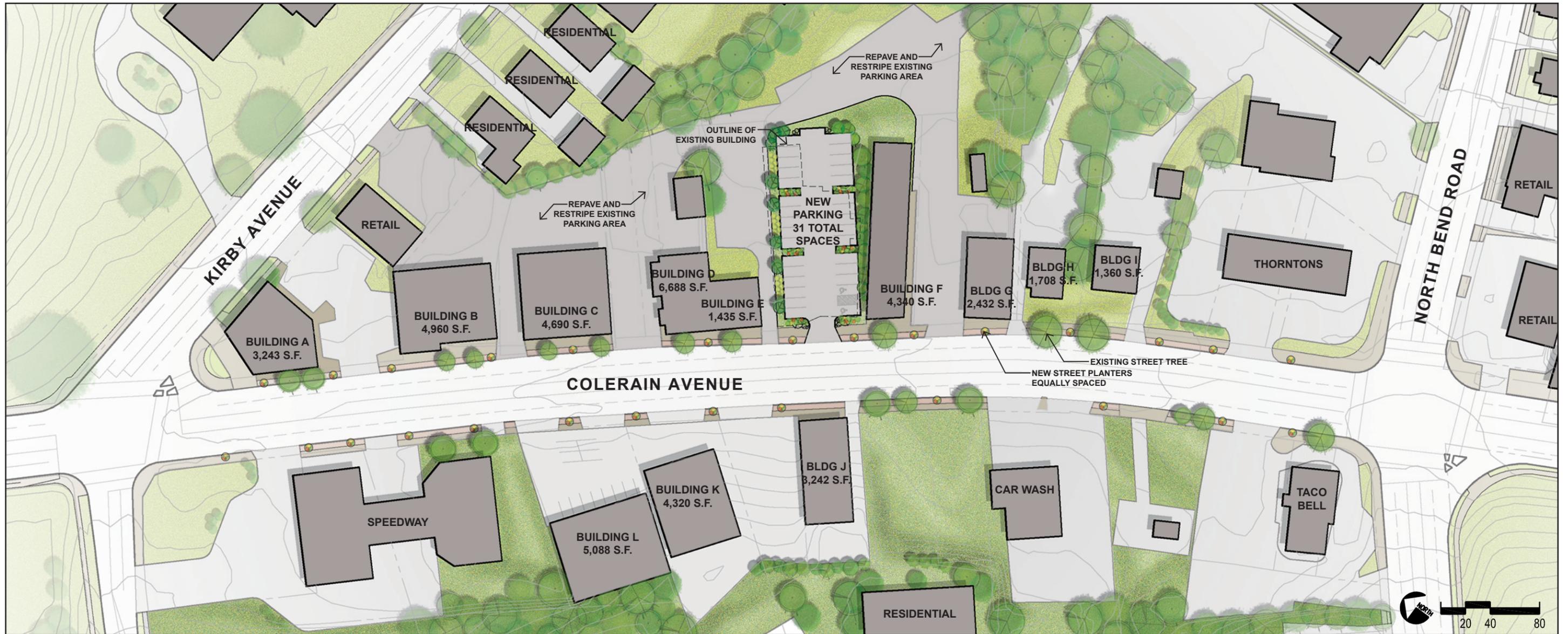


Current parking availability (yellow) is irregular and confusing for visitors to the district

COLERAIN AVENUE RETAIL SQ.FT. SUMMARY

PROJECT PHASE	TOTAL SQ. FT.	PROJECT CHANGE
Existing Retail SQ.FT.	49,838 SQ.FT.	N/A
Phase 1 Retail SQ.FT.	43,506 SQ.FT.	-6,332 SQ.FT.
Phase 2 Retail SQ.FT.	43,506 SQ.FT.	-6,332 SQ.FT.
Phase 3 Retail SQ.FT.	43,729 SQ.FT.	-6,109 SQ.FT.
Phase 4 Retail SQ.FT.	41,846 SQ.FT.	-7,992 SQ.FT.

PHASE 1 (CENTRALIZED PARKING/GATHERING)



BEST PRACTICE IMAGERY

There are two overarching tasks in this Phase, likely to happen concurrently with much of the work in Phase 1, but important enough to be called out on their own.

In order to begin re-tenanting the business district, existing storefronts, both interior and exterior, will have to be upgraded. Their current state is too poor to attract the caliber of tenant the district will require to reestablish itself as a safe, interesting, and useful place to visit.

However, much of this work will be at the initiative and expense of property owners. They need confidence in the revitalization process and to be able to see the potential for greater financial return from additional investment.

It would be helpful to seek some resource to cover, at least partially, the cost of these exterior and interior renovations. Even the most engaged owner may have only limited funds to commit when income has historically been low.

Concurrently, a design standard for the district should be developed. This is especially true if some level of funding is made available the community has the right to put in place guidelines for façade renovation, signage and other dominant visual elements.

Once good storefronts are available, the next task is to tenant them, benefitting both the property owners and the district overall. A retail strategy, developed with property owners, serves both as an important tool in confidence building and in helping to ensure the right retail mix.

Successful leasing is a proactive process. The right tenants will not simply appear – they must be identified and courted. Ideally at this stage the community can find the means to assist with tenaning, perhaps through a coordinated recruiting effort underpinned by community based attraction and retention grants.

The second task of importance, also involving multiple property owners, is to infill some of the multiple access points to the parking behind the buildings on the east side of Colerain with some simple non-structural solutions.

At present these not only break the pedestrian momentum of the block, they create pockets for unwanted activity and encourage traffic into the unmanaged area behind. As infill opportunities, they could instead serve to enhance the streetscape with greenery, street furniture, bike racks or other visual improvements, further sending the signal of a community in the process of positive change.

By the end of the first two phases, likely to be not earlier than late 2015, the community should have a new parking lot, improved street plantings, a higher level of engagement and a retail vision. Key property owners will be engaged, and have begun both interior and exterior renovations. New businesses will be scouting and filling these more attractive spaces, attracting customers and adding new life to the district. Mt. Airy will be on its way back to reclaiming its position as one of Cincinnati’s stronger communities.

SAMPLE RETAIL GAPS

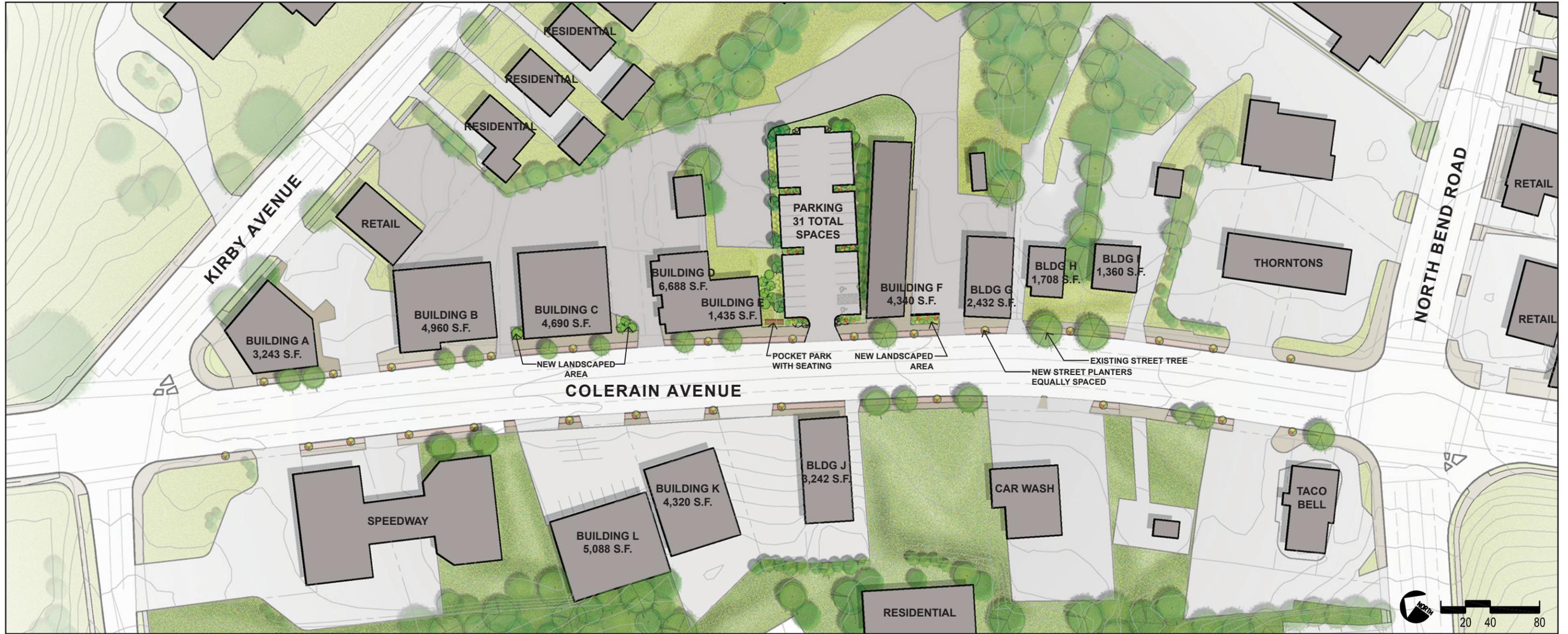
CATEGORY	NEAREST LOCATION	DISTANCE
COFFEE	Starbucks: 3491 Northbend Rd.	1.5 miles
	College Hill Coffee Co: 6128 Hamilton Ave.	1.8 miles
WINE	Piazza Discepoli Wine and Food Merchants: 5872 Cheviot Rd.	1.9 miles
	Marty’s Hops and Vines: 6110 Hamilton Ave.	1.8 miles
DELI	White Oak Delicatessen: 6035 Cheviot Rd.	2.1 miles
CAFE/RESTAURANT	Bacalls Cafe: 6118 Hamilton Ave.	1.8 miles
STOREFRONT FITNESS (Yoga/Pilates)	3 Legged Dog Yoga Collective: 4575 Hamilton Ave.	2.9 miles
PIZZERIA	Larosa’s: 5806 Cheviot Rd.	2 miles
ICE CREAM SHOP	UDF: 6813 Hamilton Ave.	2.7 miles
	Graeters: 9356 Colerain Ave.	3.8 miles
ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE RETAILERS	Neighborhood bar, craft store, hardware store, library	

* When identifying possible tenants for the business district, it’s important to look at what is not currently available in the community. In Mt. Airy, there are many community serving retail categories that are presently not available in and around the neighborhood.

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PHASE 2 (FACADE IMPROVEMENTS)



BEST PRACTICE IMAGERY

By late 2015 or early 2016, community initiatives should have resulted in a district that not only feels safer, cleaner and more walkable, but which also has sidewalks increasingly populated with pedestrians.

New business recruitment should be underway. Improved facades and retail spaces and a clear community vision of what is wanted will begin to pay off in new businesses filling prime spots. A coffee shop or small restaurant could be attracting not only neighborhood customers but also perhaps some of the visitors for whom Mt. Airy Forest is an irresistible draw.

Now progress can begin on the western side of the block.

The greatest opportunity is presented by the hardware store site. If the community can gain control in Phase 1, it can be held, actively or passively, for development into a higher and better use in Phase 3.

At present, the western side of the block is almost entirely made up of buildings separated from the street by parking lots which severely diminishes pedestrian friendliness. Not only do the street-facing lots implicitly signify cars as top priority, they also destroy the natural and easy relationship between pedestrians and businesses, make displays impossible to see, and diminish safety by taking eyes off the street.

Moreover, since most buildings on the east side are built to the sidewalk, a similar built form on the west would bring more cohesiveness to the retail district. The two sides needn't mirror each other exactly, but should reflect similar appeal and friendliness.

The construction of a new building with parking in the rear - another visible sign of progress - will reinstall a solid street wall, and enhance the reemerging sense of a coherent and viable business district. The addition of up to 3 new retail storefronts will add volume and enable the community to beef up the retail mix, and the potential appeal to even more customers, enhancing everyone's chance to succeed.

In this phase the vision developed by community leadership in the earlier period will prove to be an important tool.

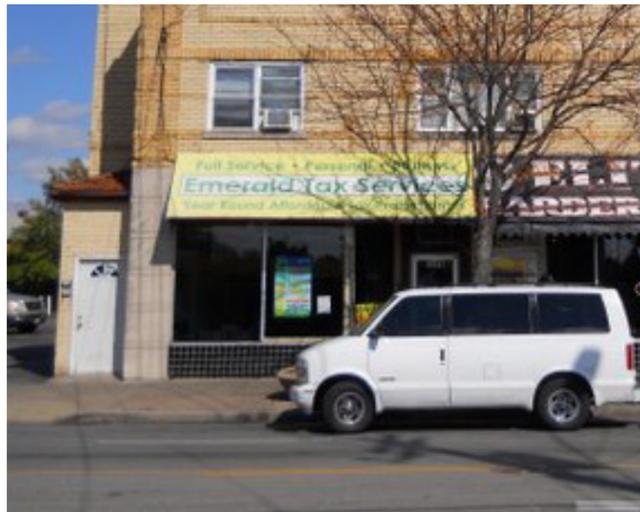
- That vision will now inform decisions about
- The preferred developer for the hardware store site
 - The form of the development
 - Configuration
 - Design
 - Location of parking
 - The retail mix of the development
 - Desirable tenants as defined by the community

Identifying and recruiting a preferred developer will also carry with it a higher level of responsibility for Mt. Airy leaders. An interested investor can be expected to have a profit motive. They therefore will be extremely focused on issues of safe and clean and complimentary business mix.

Traffic calming also will be of primary concern, especially since for the west side to succeed, pedestrians must be able to cross from the east side. By this phase the community should have obtained a signalized mid block crossing, and the right to redesign curbside parking in the business district.

Overall, an incoming developer will need to be assured that this is an objective oriented community, moving forward not only in the business district but in the surrounding residential area as well. And they will require solid evidence demonstrating this momentum.

By the end of Phase 3, likely to commence not earlier than 2016, and complete by 2018, the community will have added the new construction of up to 3 additional storefronts to the west side of the business district and will begin to have enough variety and density to once again be sustainable.



FORM BASED CODE

The City of Cincinnati is in the process of developing and implementing a new zoning method, Form Based Code (FBC). While currently FBC is being tested in four target neighborhoods which do not include Mt. Airy, the eventual goal is to make this new tool available throughout the city.

Traditionally, zoning has dictated and limited what type of activity can occur on a given piece of land. Among the shortcomings of this method, currently in use throughout the city, are that it has no power to influence what a development actually looks like when complete, nor does it generally allow for multiple uses within a single building or site.

As a result, projects can ignore the existing built form of the neighborhood, and the community's wishes, as long as a proposed use is within zoning guidelines. Form Based Code not only helps to ensure that new construction complements its surroundings, it also addresses these concerns, facilitating walkability and the revitalization of neighborhood business districts and encouraging community participation in setting standards for future development.

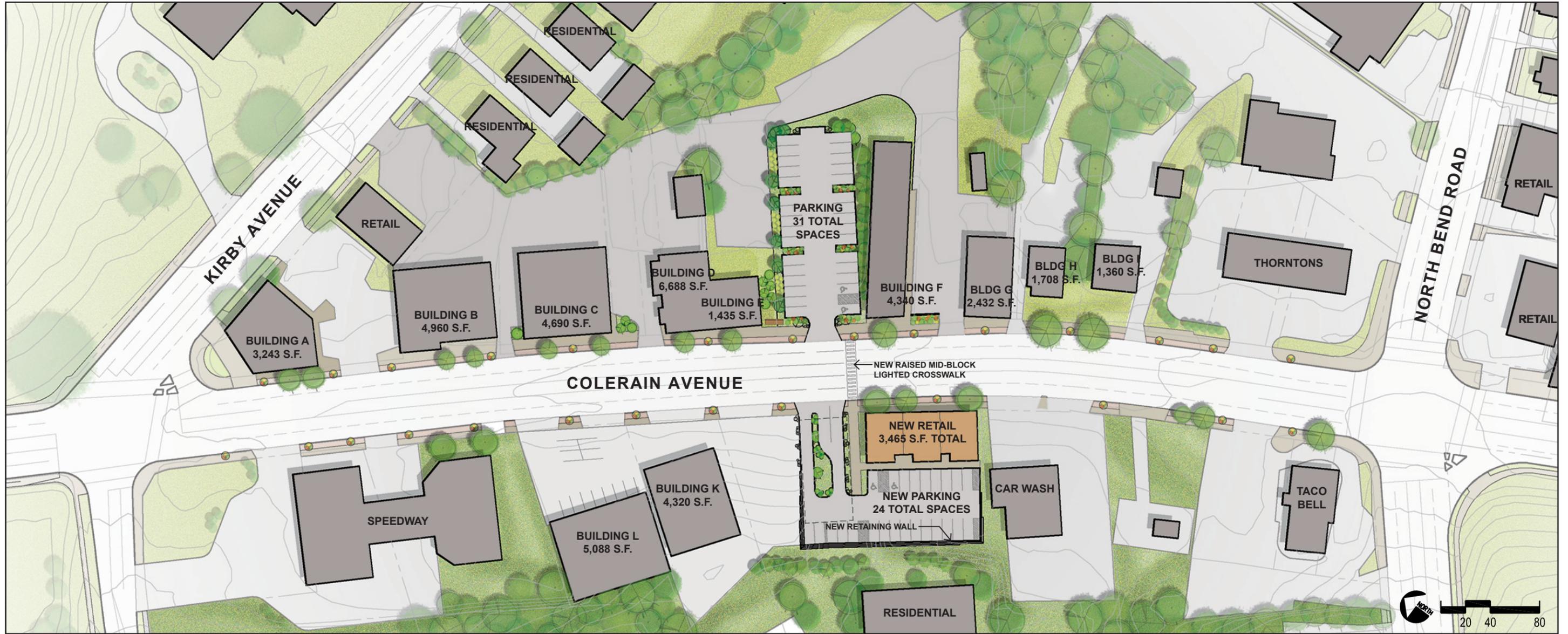
Ideally new construction in Mt. Airy would apply the principles of Form Based Code, at least in such matters as relationship of the building to the sidewalk and the placement of parking. This will protect and build upon the existing good of the business district and help to give Mt. Airy a unique character as a neighborhood.



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PHASE 3 (NEW RETAIL)



BEST PRACTICE IMAGERY

By this point, likely to begin sometime around 2018, Mt. Airy will be well on its way towards a retail district that is safe, clean, and attractive to customers and potential tenants alike. The east side of the street will boast a centralized parking lot, renovated buildings and storefronts, and streetscape improvements, while the west side will be home to a newly constructed commercial building at the southern end.

The final piece of the revitalization strategy should focus on finishing out the west side of the streeby adding new construction and expanded parking to replace the current strip center. Once again, a commercial developer will be required as a partner for building out this phase. The current land owner may wish to participate or to divest his holdings, so the community should ensure there is a strong and continuing dialogue to protect their vision.

The objective will be an aesthetically pleasing completion of the western street wall. Visitors to the business district will be able to shop and dine on both sides of the block, and crossing between the two sides of the street will be made safe by a midblock crossing and traffic calming measures. Ample parking will be available in both the lot created in Phase 1, and those behind the new buildings on the western side.

By 2020, the revitalization strategy will add an estimated seven new store fronts to the business district. Mt. Airy’s business district will be well positioned to serve as a modest regional destination, for visitors to the Forest, as well as an everyday hub for the immediate neighborhood.

This should in turn contribute to a greater sense of community and add value to surrounding properties, both commercial and residential. If housing demand, in its turn, increases, then new customers are being created for the business district, further securing its future.

Community revitalization though, is an unending process. Communities require revitalization because, at an earlier time, everything looked like it was in good shape, and would stay so forever. But without constant attention, time erodes.

By 2020 Mt. Airy has an opportunity to again be a community on the rise. Through the process of regaining that standing, relationships will be fostered, leaders developed and goals achieved. Then in 2021, those assets must be put to work again, ensuring that momentum is sustained. But the vision will be clear, the tools will be in place, and the way forward will be along a smoother, more walkable path.

GROW YOUR OWN

One of the best ways to preserve the unique character of a neighborhood business district is to populate it with unique businesses. In repopulating the business district, Mount Airy is likely to have greater success by stepping past chains and reaching out instead to independent operators with vision and energy.

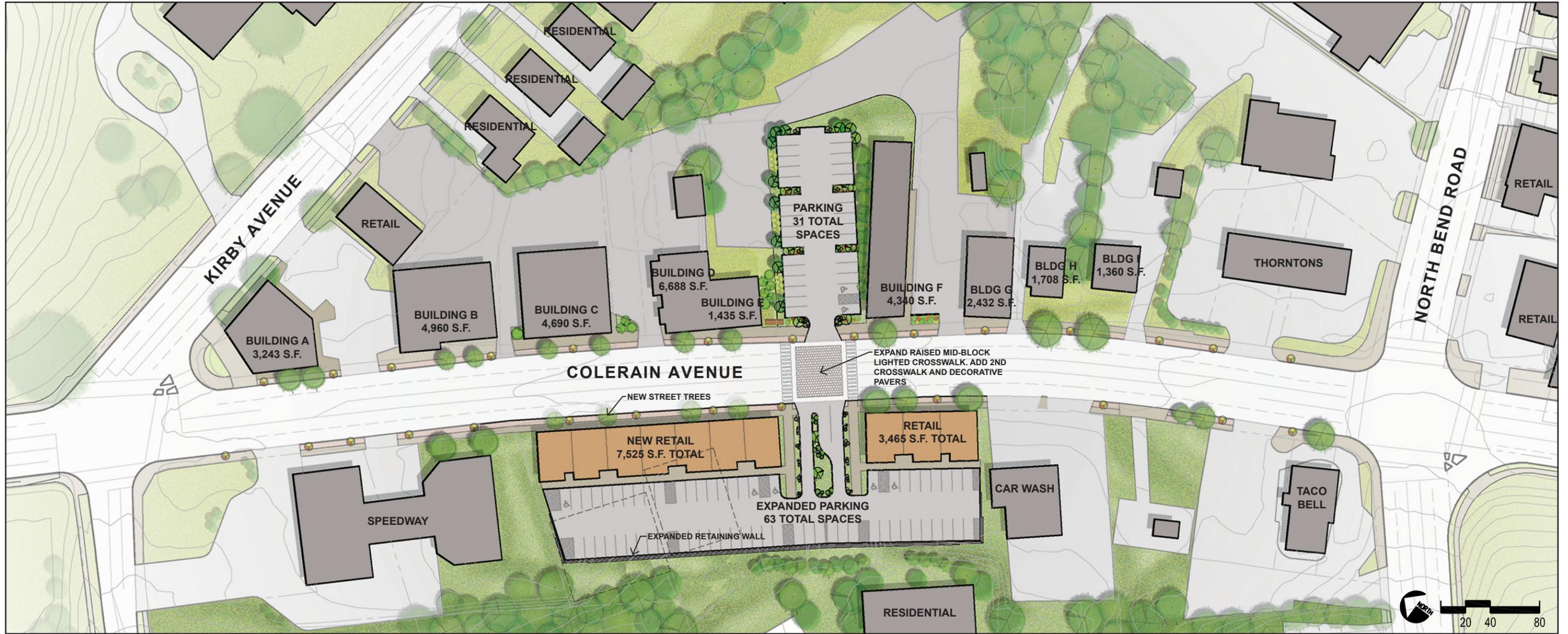
Local owners – either from within the neighborhood or the surrounding communities - know their community, establish solid relationships with their customers, often pay a little better and retain earnings at home. Unlike chains, independent businesses are comfortable in the smaller footprints of a neighborhood business district. They are more accepting of non standard shop design, more receptive to customer input and more invested in the success of the community overall.

Why could the local coffee shop or yoga studio not be truly local? Supported by friends and neighbors, these merchants will invest both in their owns dreams and those of the community, and properly supported, they’ll be there for the long haul.



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BEST PRACTICE IMAGERY

BUILDING A BRAND FOR MT. AIRY

Branding is, in simplest terms knowing what you're selling, who wants to buy it, and why. It is not signage, public relations or marketing. These are important tools to help disseminate information about the brand itself. But the brand has to be working before it is promoted or the promotion will be wasted.

Successful branding creates understanding, and assists in decision making by establishing points of distinction and appeal in the consumer's mind: This (product) is the most (or sometimes unhappily the least) desirable thing to want.

A well regarded brand, consistently delivered, brings customers in. However, the reverse is also true. A damaged brand, one negatively perceived, keeps customers away. At the moment, Mount Airy is a damaged brand.

Attached are some examples of possible logos and gateway structures. But before the community of Mt. Airy makes a significant investment in producing these items, it might be wise to engage in some problem solving. A range of issues identified elsewhere in this report, most notably safe and clean and the lack of appealing businesses in the business district need to be addressed first. Before Mt. Airy announces itself widely as a lively and desirable community, the community needs to make sure that it really does stand tall for visitors and residents alike.

Simply put, make sure you've painted a good picture before you put your name on it.

BRANDING STRATEGY AND ESSENTIALS

A brand is a guarantee, built on a vision, wholly integrated and with a delivery requirement. Delivering on that guarantee is what delivers a continuing stream of satisfied customers and builds esteem.

Here is a possible future vision:

"Mount Airy with its iconic water tower is one of Cincinnati's great family neighborhoods.

Only minutes from downtown, this diverse area is home to Mount Airy Forest – Cincinnati's largest park - and an urban oasis. Picnic spots, hike and bike trails and wonderful play areas are only a few of the spectacular amenities available to all.

A range of housing including lovely old homes, apartment living and condos pairs with good schools, churches and a real sense of community.

A compact walkable business district with friendly spots to grab a glass of wine or cup of coffee, encounter neighbors and accomplish every day errands with ease from a range of small shops for excellent quality of life.

Cincinnati has many wonderful neighborhoods but none more pleasant and accommodating than Mount Airy."

This promises a family atmosphere, park, a neighborhood feel, independent merchants, diversity and beauty. It suggests that in addition to ordinary visits this area is worth a special trip. It identifies the target customer as one valuing unique, small, and family oriented businesses. It implies walkable, pretty and safe.

This is not, however, the present state of Mt. Airy.

If what the consumer knows, or believes they know, is good, then knowledge supports the brand. If they have a bad perception, knowledge damages the brand. So getting the right word out is essential. However, the right word must also be true. Misrepresentation may attract consumers once, but not only will they not return, they will spread the word that others should never even set out.

Existing brand knowledge of Mt. Airy is too negative. So it is better to keep heads down and do the work necessary to change the story, then build a positive message based on change and improvement. Then spread the news.

Uniqueness is also important, though not sufficient as a standalone quality. A place can be uniquely bad and thus have no appeal. It can be uniquely good but inaccessible to the right customer. Mt. Airy has reasonable potential to stand out in the marketplace. Mt. Airy can genuinely position itself as a unique area with the addition of public safety, cleanliness, aesthetic and pedestrian improvements and a thriving business district, good family housing and the forest.

Lastly, a brand has to meet a customer's real or perceived needs, tying to experience and to emotion. It must sell something targeted customers want, and generate excitement about buying it. Since no place can be every place, the first step to relevance is defining who you want to be relevant to. Mt. Airy's largest group of target customers, historically and prospectively, is families. The primary product is a family neighborhood with good amenities, including a small but thriving business district equipped to meet a range of everyday needs.

At present, Mt. Airy has diminished relevance to these customers, offering too little in the way of everyday amenities, special offerings and quality of life enhancement.

STEPS ALONG THE WAY FORWARD:

In the present state

- Appeal as a neighborhood is weak
- Strength as home to the forest is underplayed
- Neither ordinary nor special is well delivered
- Unique is weak
- Walkable, pretty and safe are weak
- There is not a range of offerings in food and drink
- Retail mix is poor

To change that embrace a vision, begin reclaiming esteem, and maintain that thru regular, clear and inclusive communication.

Be clean, safe and active, continuously attentive to the quality of neighborhood experience to ensure that it is good and getting better.

Recruit good businesses, those which fit the business district the community wants, not the one it presently has. Select only those which will fit the community's vision and help build momentum for the Mt. Airy brand.

Seek out community influencers and ensure that they are accurately aware of the improved current state and regularly informed about future plans.

Continuously highlight current activities and positive change - first locally and then to a wider constituency.

Be consistent and determined. Start with small steps until improvement begins to be apparent, and progressively build brand recognition, community identification, gateway identifiers and other brand elements into phases as the picture improves and customers increasingly find Mt. Airy a rewarding community in which to live work and play.



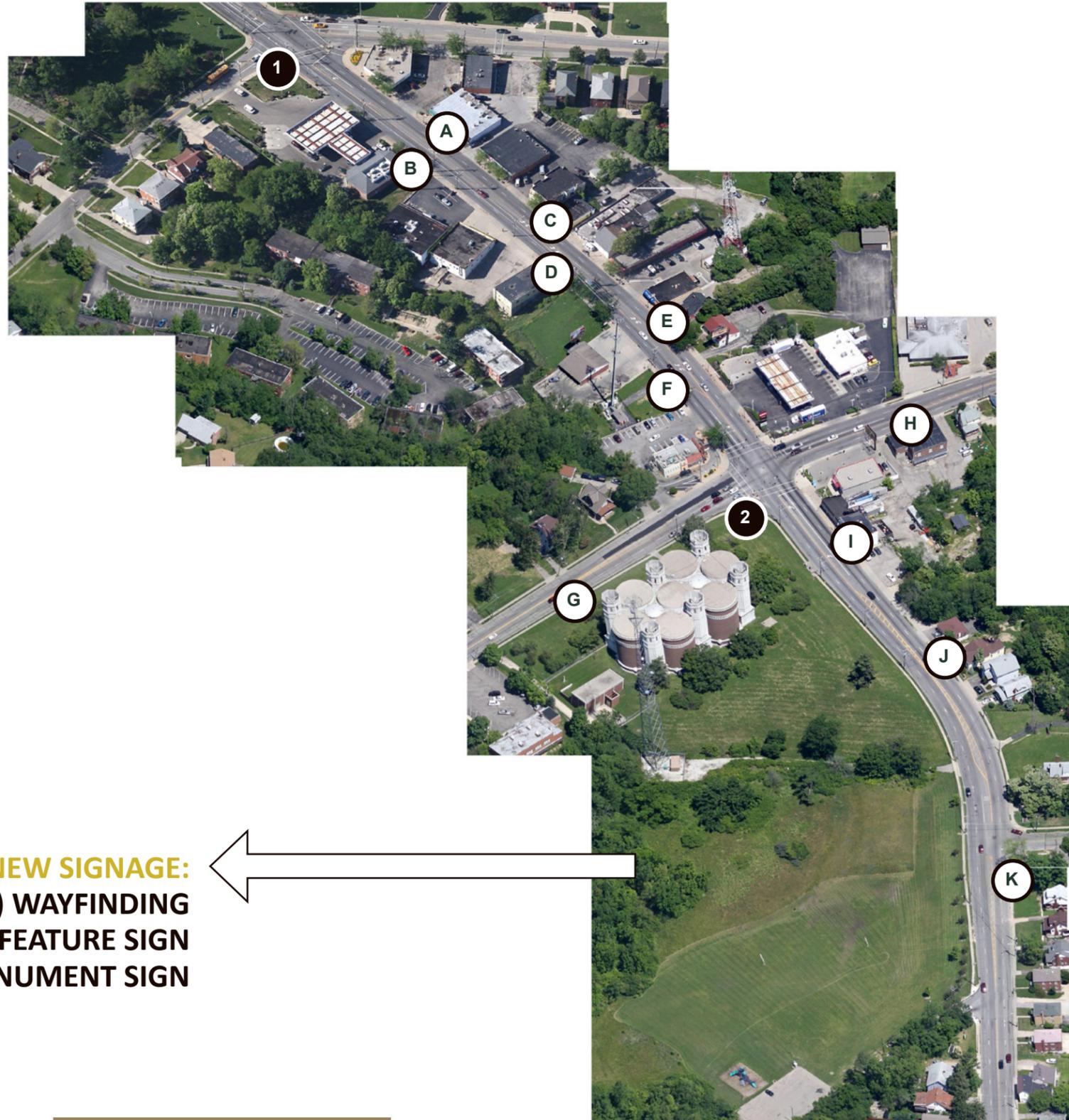
CURRENT SIGNAGE:



In conjunction with the phased redevelopment of the Mt. Airy land, now would be a great opportunity to begin to redevelop the Mt. Airy brand. A fresh logo and successful environmental signage will provide strong visual impact to residents and those just passing through.

Unifying the community with a fresh brand and an organized wayfinding system will callout prominent retailers, parking, Mt. Airy attractions and add to the overall personality of the community.

It is important for the Mt. Airy brand to match the progress mapped out in the four phases of the potential development plan. The current signage blends in and is hidden by parked cars. Improving Mt. Airy's signage visibility, consistency and style will significantly contribute to the pedestrian friendly business district we are striving to create.



PLACEMENT OF NEW SIGNAGE:
A-K) WAYFINDING
1) ENTRY FEATURE SIGN
2) MONUMENT SIGN

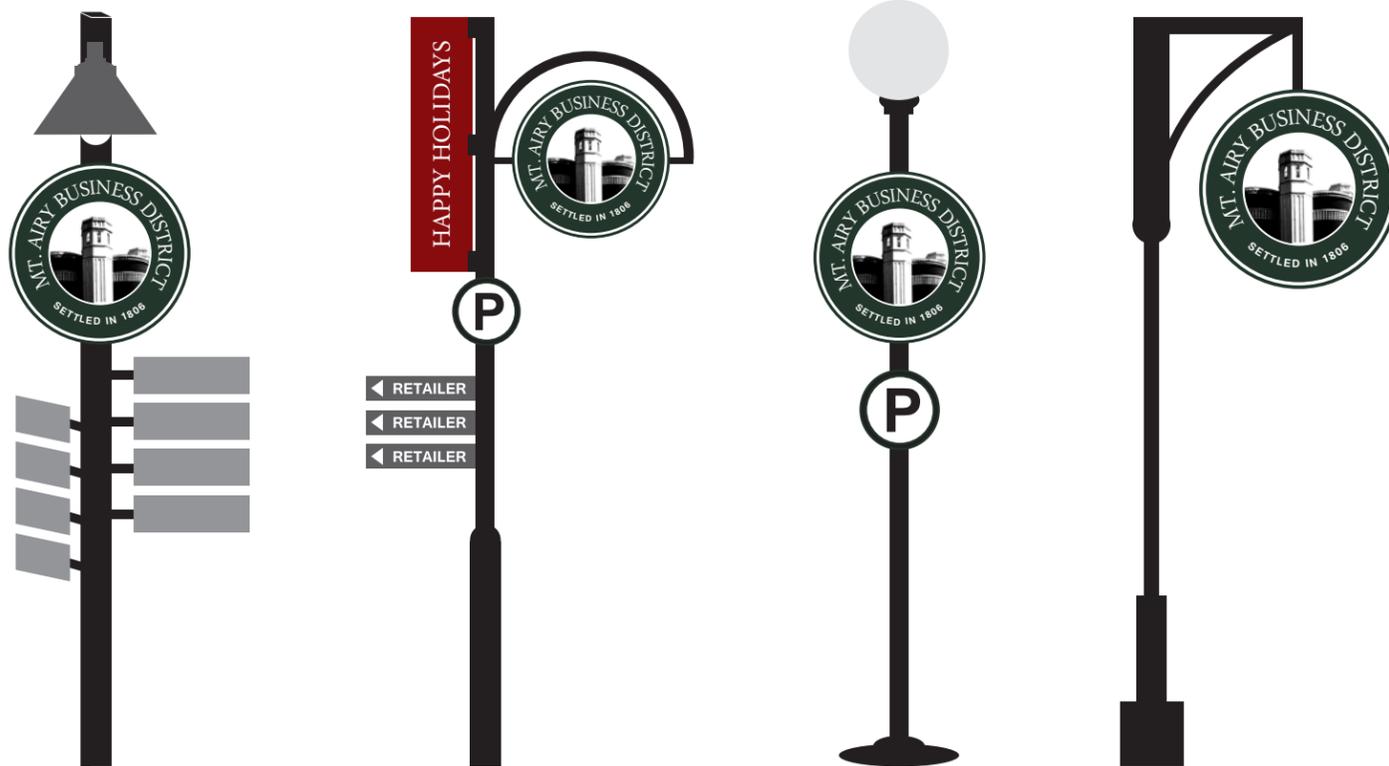
LOGO DEVELOPMENT:

- graphically communicate the neighborhood
- carry elements of the logo through the signage system to create an overall theme and style for the community

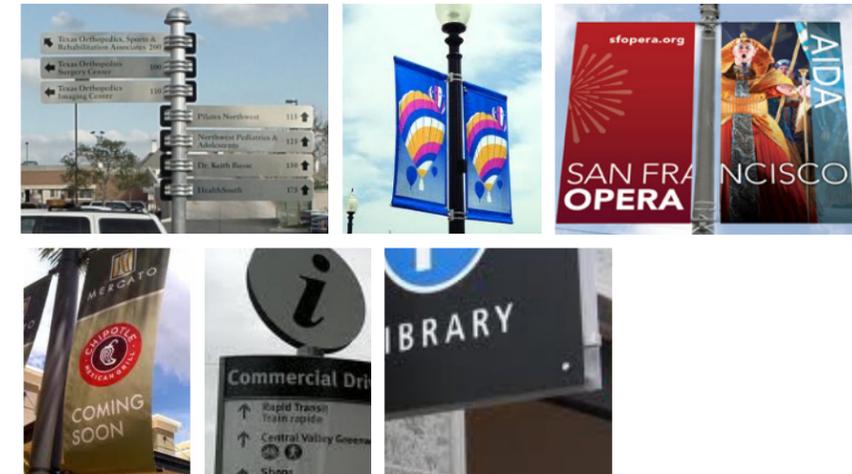


A-K) WAYFINDING:

- navigation signage developed to call out each district, specific retailers and public parking lots



IDEA STRATEGY FOR POLE SIGN MATERIALS



[In addition to providing direction a uniform wayfinding system can attach banners to advertise events and holidays.]

1) ENTRY FEATURE SIGN:

- permanent ground welcome sign



IDEA STRATEGY FOR ENTRY FEATURE SIGN MATERIALS



[The plan suggests entry feature signs on the border of each of Mt. Airy's high traffic roads, serving as the initial face for the community. It is important for the style to match Mt. Airy aesthetic and be extremely clear, bold and visible.]

2) MONUMENT SIGN:

- neighborhood identification sign positioned in prime location for traffic and visibility



IDEA STRATEGY FOR MONUMENT SIGN MATERIALS



[The style of the natural materials selected for the Mt. Airy monument sign reflect the proposed new brand and relate to the surrounding area.]



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