



**WEST BLVD**  
Neighborhood Coalition

# Designing Neighborhoods, Making Communities

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**The West Boulevard  
CNU Legacy Charrette**

*Panay'23*



# Executive Summary

It was a pleasure and an honor for Torti Gallas + Partners to offer our advice and participatory planning and design services for the West Boulevard Legacy Charrette in support of CNU 31 in Charlotte. The people of Parker Heights, Pinecrest, Reid Park, Arbor Glen, Barringer Woods, Revolution Park, Westover Hills, and in particular the stakeholders and leadership in the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition were an astounding team of committed citizens and activists working to honor proud legacies in the community and make a better future for their next neighborhood generations.

**The major issues and themes of the workshop and ongoing efforts include catalytic development and community oriented and inclusive improvements centered on:**

- Safety and security related to
  - › Speeding traffic on the Boulevard,
  - › Illicit activity in hidden “no-mans” lands immediately off of the Boulevard
- New development that is measured and transparent, involves community input, and includes opportunity for long-time residents and their families - ADDification in lieu of Gentrification
- Community support infrastructure with a physical home location and key service providers like the YMCA and Atrium Health, local library system, community gardens, and community centers
- Year-round, affordable, and healthy food options based in community cultivation, production, and retail distribution centered on the Three Sister’s Farm and Market
- A neighborhood framework that supports multi-generational quality of life from early childhood learning, to active and engaged teenagers, students, young families, mature adults, and seniors
- Policy positions that promote equitable TOD and fair property taxation
- Private Sector partnerships for positive real estate development that includes equitable economic development
- Open space, recreational, pedestrian, and trail infrastructure that connects to larger parks networks, future TOD, and the broader city
- A committed sense of community history and heritage that hears and respects all voices and is more nuanced and inclusive than has traditionally been felt.





**Strategic and surgical physical planning has been designed to address the “big idea” concerns through specific proposed interventions, chiefly:**

- A “Complete Streets” Transformation of West Boulevard
- Sidewalks buffered from moving traffic, street trees planted at regular intervals, bicycle infrastructure for commuters and recreators, narrowed travel lanes, planted medians (boulevard the Boulevard!), shortened crosswalk distances (tighter curb radii and improved intersection infrastructure)
- Largely based on the West Boulevard Playbook
- Completed in increments, over time
- Improvements extents:
  - › Along West Boulevard from Tyvola Road to the I-77 interchange
  - › for two blocks north and south of the Clanton Road - West Boulevard intersection
  - › for two blocks south of the Remount Road - West Boulevard intersection and north on Remount Road to the Remount light rail station
- Urban Main Street improvements on West Boulevard one block east and west of the Clanton Road intersection: street trees in tree grates or tree wells, café zones, specialty hardscape (pavers, brick, or similar)
- Urban Main Street improvements on West Boulevard one block east and west of the Remount Road intersection: street trees in tree grates or tree wells, café zones, specialty hardscape (pavers, brick, or similar)
- Better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along West Boulevard underneath I-77 including possible partial embankment excavation to facilitate pathway width and buffering from moving traffic; coordinated with city, state, and federal agencies (Federal Highway Administration standards)
- City agency coordination, particularly the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- State agency coordination, particularly the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) - possible transfer of state road purview to city street purview
- Use the East Boulevard improvements as a template for details and approvals process strategies.



**Summary Recommendations Diagram**

**Not to Scale**

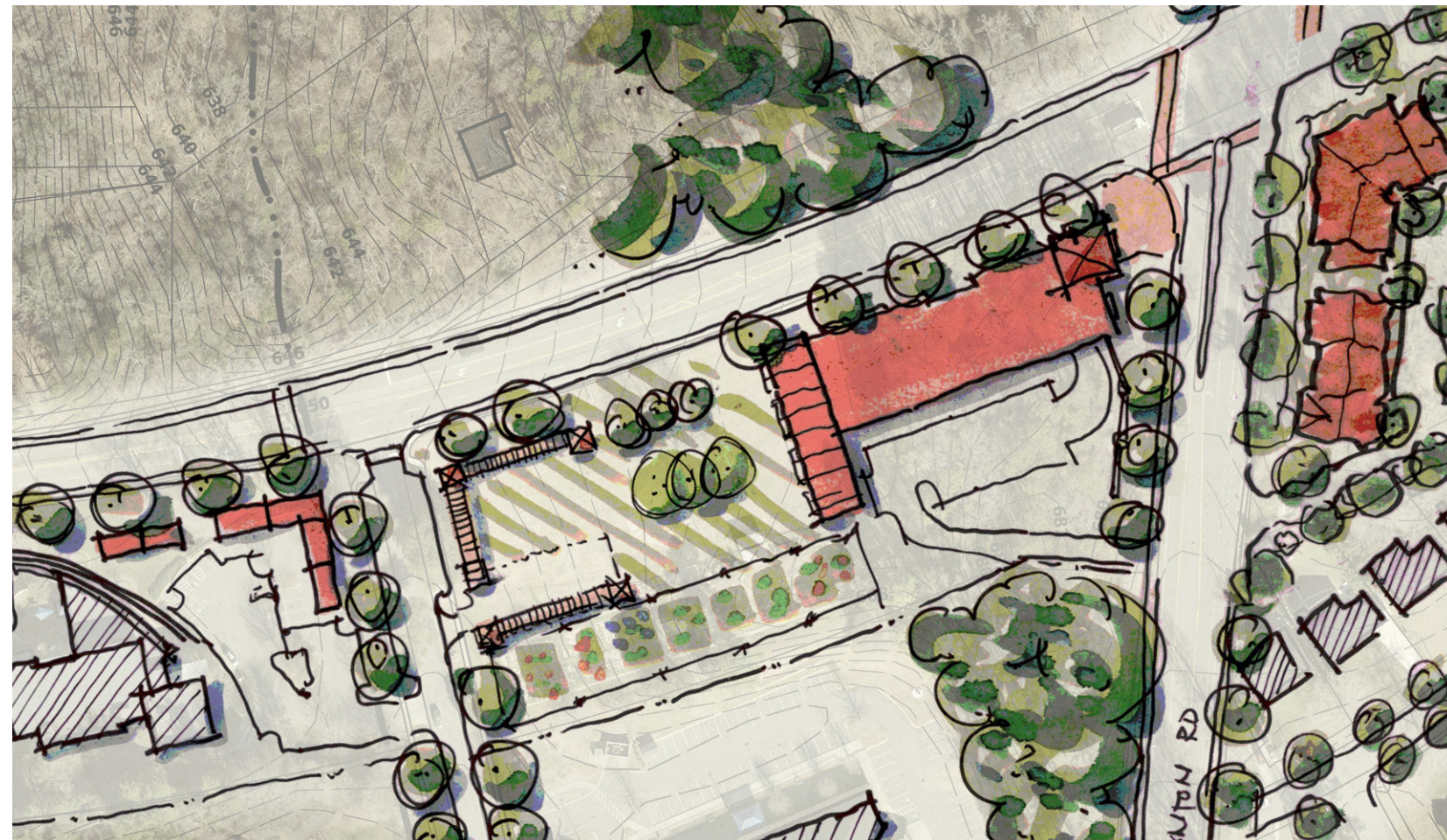


**The reimagining of a focused area around the intersection of West Boulevard and Clanton Road, identified as a cultural and community resources hub, including:**

- Street and intersection improvements as identified above
- Adaptive reuse of the library, to be programmed and themed in support of the Healthy Communities and Sustainable Food Production and Service goals of the overall study area
  - › Community meeting space for education, service, and community directed commerce associated with the urban farm and market
  - › Conditioned greenhouse space
- Infill development at the library parking lot to make an edge to the streets - West Boulevard and Romare Bearden Drive
- Outside Community Event Space for Three Sisters Farm, edge to streets
- Three Sisters trees and next generation Three Sisters trees - three distinct tree species to evoke Three Sisters companion planting theme
- Three Sisters Market
- Community Campus
  - › YMCA expansion
  - › “Five Points” intersection improvements at northeast corner of West Boulevard and Clanton Road/Donald Ross, plaza improvements
  - › Atrium Health (in progress)
  - › Yoga Studio/Juice Bar
  - › New Library
- Donald Ross Realignment to Ashley Road and Ashley light rail station
- Mixed-Use, neighborhood scale and context sensitive development of the Marsh Properties
  - › Built to the Street edge
  - › Ground floor community-serving retail
  - › Pedestrian friendly
  - › Parking accessed from the inner block, to promote a human centered streetscape
  - › Connectivity to the neighborhood
- School drop-off and pick-up traffic control and mitigation on Walton Road at the Parker School



**Aerial View of Three Sister's Market, Expanded YMCA, and Potential Development. Looking South**

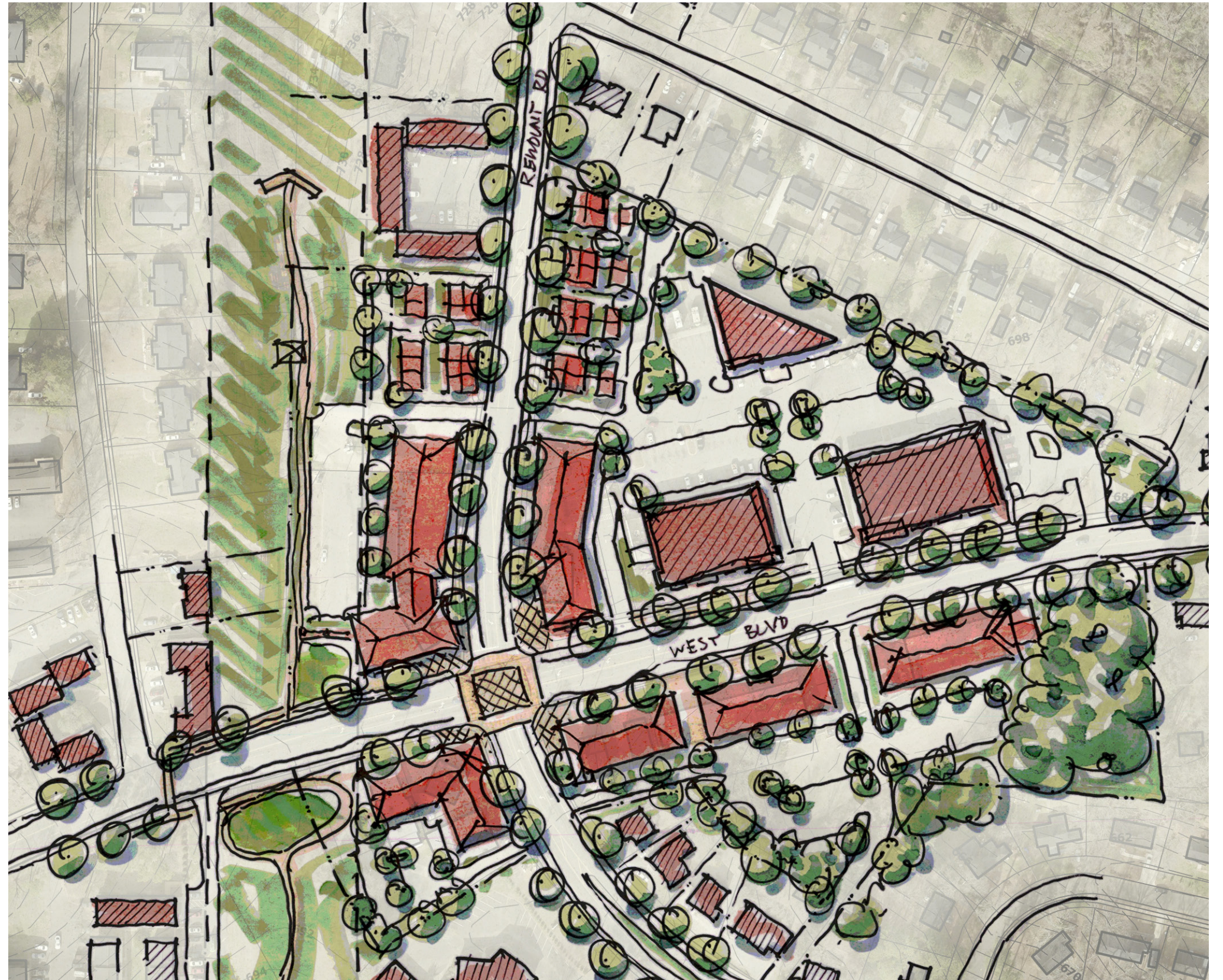


**Plan of Development Recommendations for Three Sisters Site**



**The reimagining of a focused area around the intersection of West Boulevard and Remount Road, identified as a business incubator and housing opportunities hub, as well as the shortest linkage to the planned light rail TOD infrastructure, and including:**

- Utility greenway connection south to the Irwin Creek Greenway and north to Remount light rail station
- Intersection, plaza, and streetscape improvements start at West and Remount, extends east, west, north, and south
- Mixed-use, ground-floor retail, with residential above for buildings to frame the street and support pedestrian, bike, and multi-modal connectivity on West Boulevard
  - › Redevelop city owned retail strip at southeast corner of West and Remount first, move east from there on the south side of the street
  - › “Golden Wok” at southwest corner of West and Remount as a secondary priority
  - › Gas station site at northwest corner of West and Remount as the next priority
  - › Northeast corner last, incorporating new space for Nick’s Restaurant, and to reinforce and support City West Commons
- Extend neighborhood scale community development north on Remount to Parker Heights Apartments, on both sides of street, with incremental and infill housing typologies, including townhome and duplex home-ownership opportunities
- Ensure a mix of housing opportunities across a spectrum of
  - › Incomes
  - › Tenures (ownership or rental opportunities)
  - › Housing typologies
  - › Family and household-sizes
  - › Target age ranges (young families to age-in-place in the neighborhood housing for community seniors)



**Potential Redevelopment and Street Improvements at West Blvd and Remount Rd**



# A Community-Based Approach

- Charrettes | Community Meetings | Workshops
- LISTEN!!! LISTEN!!! LISTEN!!!
- Establish and Catalyze Momentum for Transformation
- Analyze/Understand the Place, People, Challenges and Opportunities
  - History and Culture
- Form Consensus with Stakeholders, Residents, Clients and Public Officials

**Create a Shared Vision  
with the Community**



The West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition,  
in partnership with the Congress of New  
Urbanism is holding a 3-day Charrette

Come by/"Drop-in" and share feedback on  
placemaking designs and plans to revitalize West  
Boulevard!

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**March**

**28th Day 1: Charrette Kick-off**  
6pm - 8pm: Meet the Team, Understand the  
Process, Begin Critical Conversations

**29th Day 2: "Drop -Ins" + Placemaking**  
9am - 12pm: Drop-In & Share Feedback  
1pm - 5pm: Drop -in & Share Feedback  
5pm - 6:00pm: Placemaking Discussion  
6:00pm - 8pm: Public Input Session  
(Neighborhood Associations encouraged to  
attend)

**30th Day 3: Final Presentation**  
9am - 12pm: Final feedback Drop-Ins  
6pm - 8pm: Final Presentation

**Greater Mount Sinai Baptist Church**  
**1243 West Blvd.**  
**Charlotte, NC 28208**  
Food and childcare provided each evening

**WBNC Legacy Project**  
**3- Day Charrette**

[www.westblvdc.org](http://www.westblvdc.org)



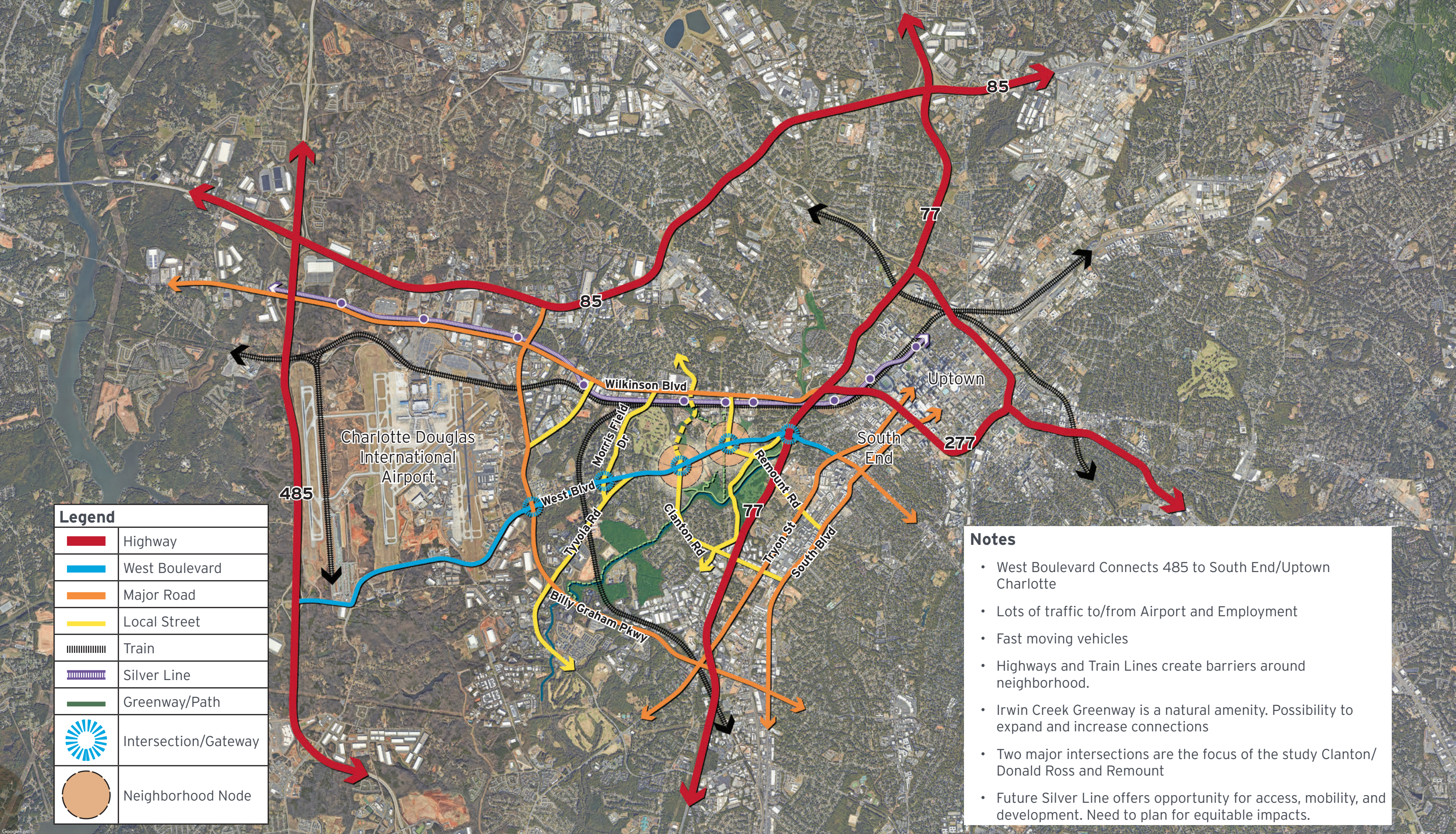


# Charrette and Process



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CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM



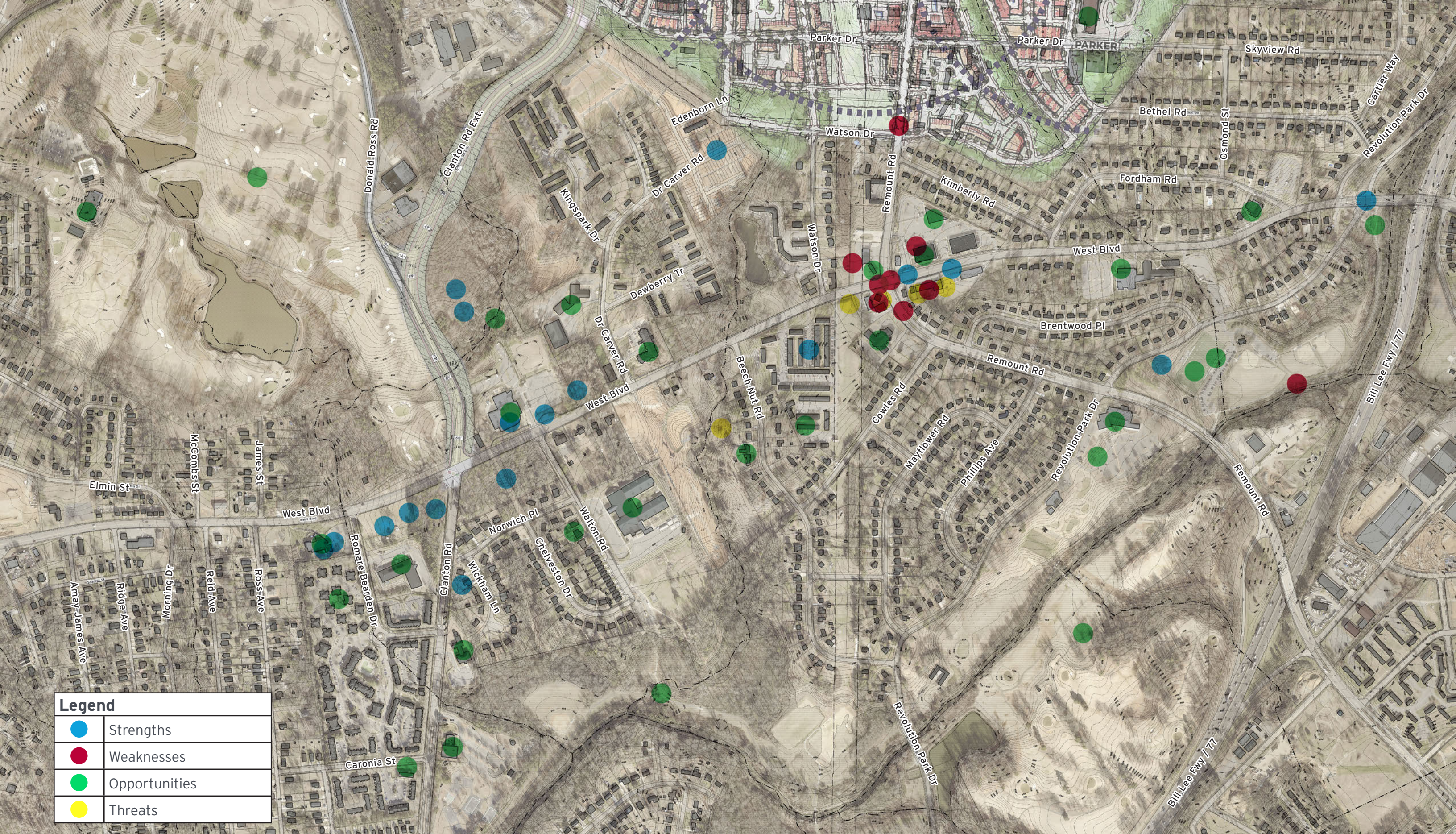


Legend	
	Highway
	West Boulevard
	Major Road
	Local Street
	Train
	Silver Line
	Greenway/Path
	Intersection/Gateway
	Neighborhood Node

- Notes**
- West Boulevard Connects 485 to South End/Uptown Charlotte
  - Lots of traffic to/from Airport and Employment
  - Fast moving vehicles
  - Highways and Train Lines create barriers around neighborhood.
  - Irwin Creek Greenway is a natural amenity. Possibility to expand and increase connections
  - Two major intersections are the focus of the study Clanton/ Donald Ross and Remount
  - Future Silver Line offers opportunity for access, mobility, and development. Need to plan for equitable impacts.

# Regional Context Diagram





Legend	
<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Strengths
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Weaknesses
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Opportunities
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	Threats

# What We Heard: Neighborhood Opportunities and Challenges





## What We've Heard

- Opportunity Needs to Be Shared and Prioritized for Long Term Residents
- West Boulevard is Unsafe
- Safety and Security
- Shared Development Opportunities
  - Cultural and Institutional
  - Service Related
  - Affordable Housing
  - Health and Food Related
  - Market Driven - But Shared
- Policy Changes:
  - Equity
  - Taxation
- The Time is Now





## What We've Heard

- Preserve the history and legacy of the community.
- Support for residents that want to stay in the area. Help build generational wealth - maintain ownership for future generations.
- Tax break for long term residents.
- Prevent existing local businesses from being pushed out of the community
- Incubator businesses to help support local entrepreneurs
- Mix of uses at the intersections of West Boulevard and Clanton Road and West Boulevard and Remount Road - Provide easy access to education, job training and job opportunities
- Easy access to health care and healthy foods





## What We Recommend

- Connectivity
  - Traffic Calming - Cars, Pedestrians, Nature and Bikes
  - Greenway Connections
  - Streetscape Changes Now and Over Time
- Policy Suggestions
  - Traffic Partnerships
  - Development Partnerships
  - Property Taxation
  - Safety and Security
- Measured Development
  - Public - Private - Non-Profit
  - Community Based
- Cultural: Reflect the Traditions and Histories that Have Been Ignored or Overlooked



# SPECTRUM:

REGION		DWELLING
NATURAL SYSTEMS	Ecology	Geography • Flora & Fauna • Climate
	Water	Hydrology • Consumption • Infrastructure
	Food	Growth • Distribution • Consumption
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Shelter & Form	Urban Fabric • Architectural Character • Massing • Tectonics & Structure
	Energy & Resources	Waste Management • Materials • Energy Use • Energy Generation
	Mobility	Destinations • Networks • Hubs & Modes • Parking & Storage
PEOPLE	Economy	Retail • Manufacturing • Service Economy
	Education & Awareness	Demographics • Development Process • Policies & Initiatives • Sources of Information
	Traditions	Religious Customs • Recreational Customs
	Health & Happiness	Values • Standard of Living • Well-Being



Spectrum creates a framework for sustainable communities through three distinct platforms:

**Natural Systems** | **The Built Environment** | **People**

This tool encourages comprehensive discussions on what the community's current needs and assets are and how these can be addressed and enhanced in the new vision.





# TRANSFORMATION THEMES FROM THE SPECTRUM

## Principles

1. Greenway Connections
2. Healthy Food Options
3. Streets as Places, not as Thoroughfares
4. Safety and Security
5. Development that Meets the Needs of the Community
6. Opportunity without Displacement
7. Health and Wellness
8. Multigenerational Housing and Neighborhood
9. Honor the History of the Less Told Stories

## West Boulevard

NATURAL SYSTEMS		Ecology
		Water
		Food



BUILT ENVIRONMENT		Shelter & Form
		Energy & Resources
		Mobility



PEOPLE		Economy
		Education & Awareness
		Traditions
		Health & Happiness



## ADDification



# ALTERNATIVE: ADDification™

## So Long-Term Residents Can Also Benefit From Transformation

Participate in Wealth-Building **Community Benefits**  
**Value Culture/Health/Education** Expand Incomes **VALUE**  
Positive Human Development **Build First** **Cultural Preservation**  
**NO Displacement** **Mixed Income Housing** **Homeownership**  
**Phased Redevelopment** Permanently Affordable Housing  
Participate in Economic Expansion



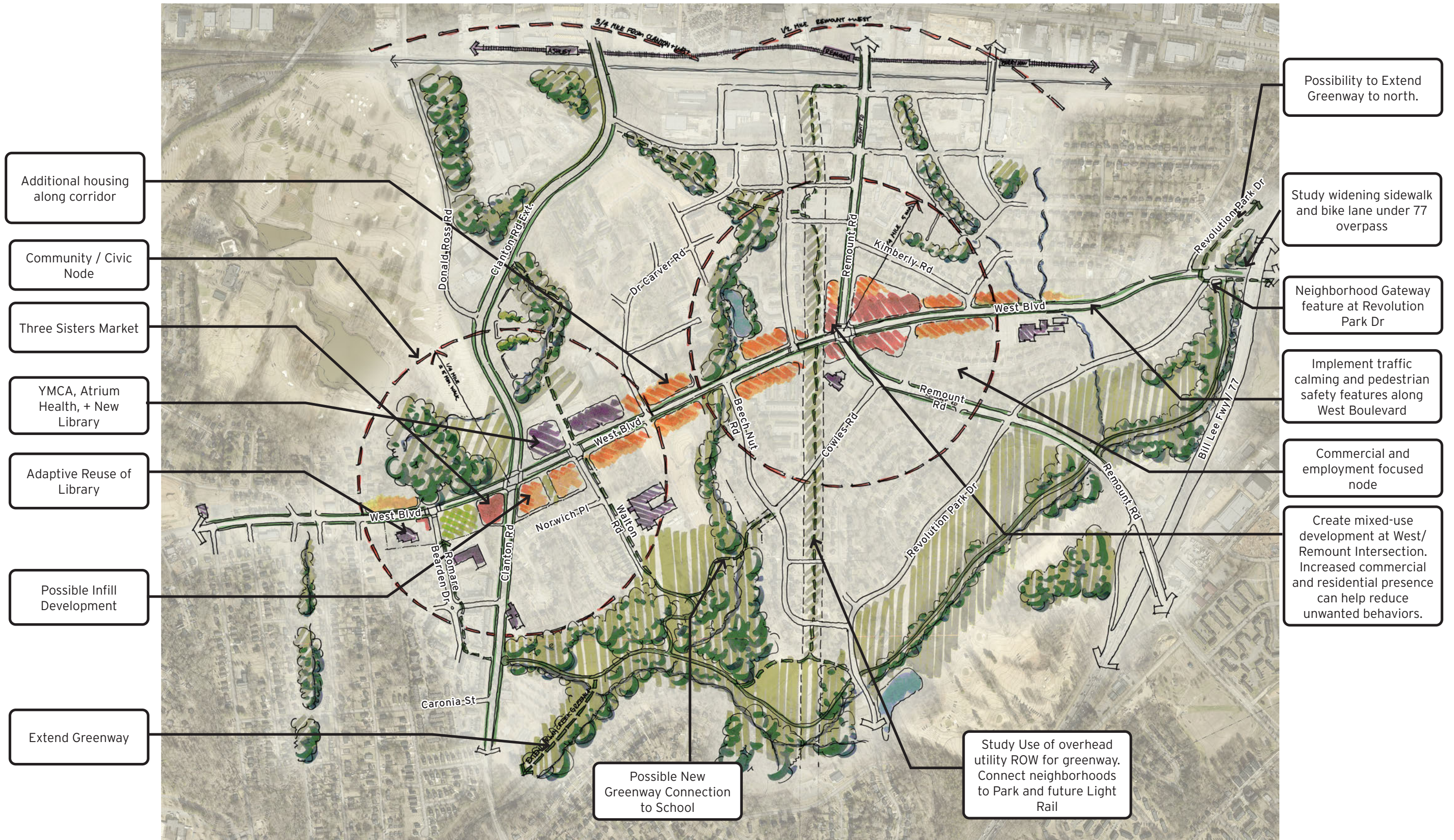
# WIN - WIN of ADDification™

## So Long-Term Residents Can Also Benefit From Transformation

- Revitalization at a Slower Pace
- Partnerships: The Community with Private and Public Resources

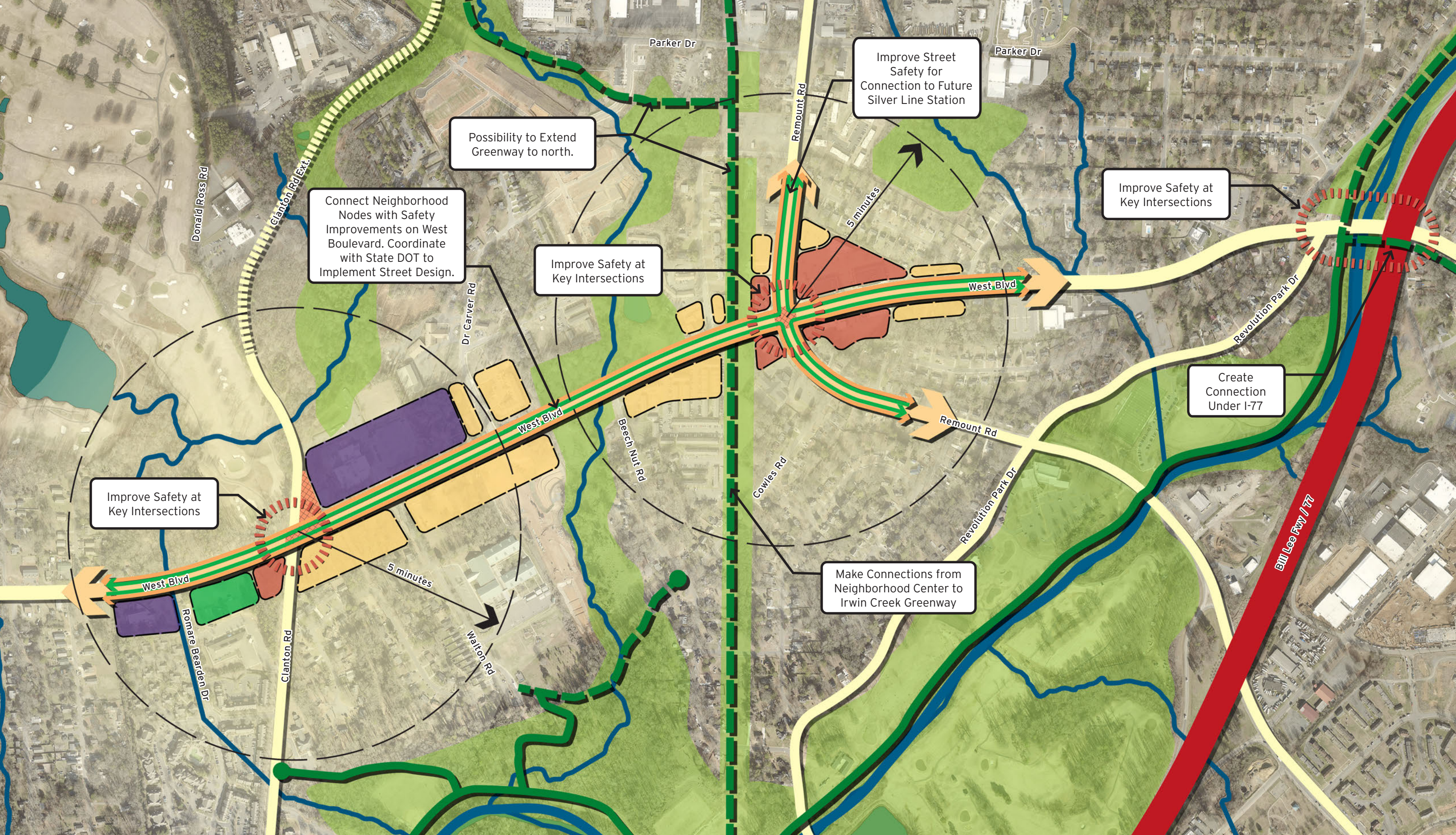
Improves the Chances for Long-Term Residents to Stay + Benefit





# Overall Neighborhood Diagram





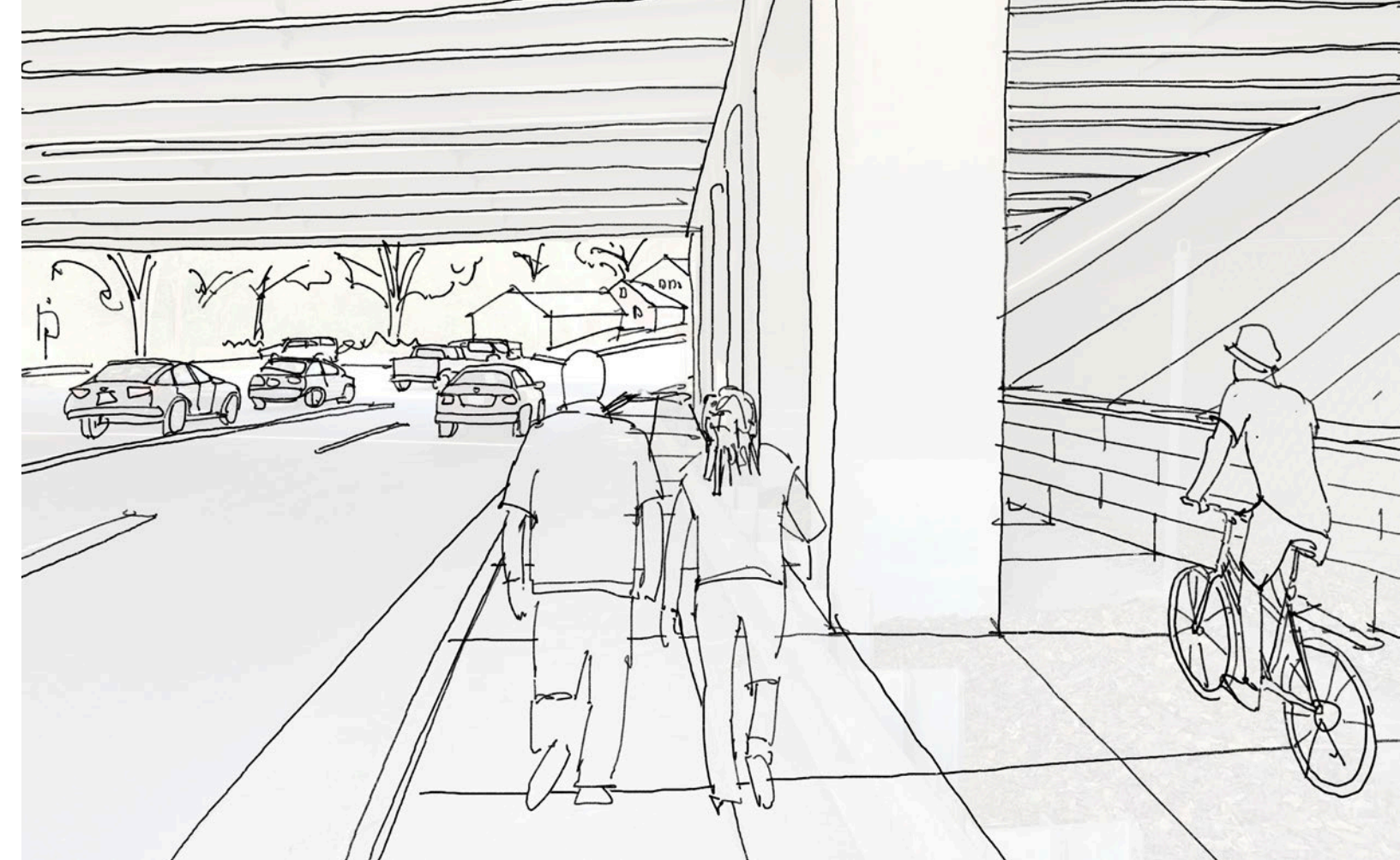
# Summary of Opportunities and Recommendations





# West Boulevard: Traffic Calming and Shared Mobility





Improving Safety and Connectivity at I-77 Underpass



Activating Underutilized Utility ROW

# Greenway Connectivity and I-77



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Future YMCA Expansion should Shape new Public Spaces

Reconfigure Intersection to Promote safety and Community Focus

Three Sisters Market

Plant "Next Generation" of Three Sisters Trees

Formalize Green Space for community events

Study infill opportunities for additional Aquaculture/ Aquaponic Systems

Adaptive Reuse of Existing Library Building

Promote context-sensitive infill that respects existing neighbors.

Engage with City to study traffic impacts of School

TO IRWIN CREEK GREENWAY

# Three Sisters Market Area Plan





Pilonon

# Three Sisters Market Area Perspective



TORTI  
GALLAS +  
PARTNERS

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Study Use of overhead utility ROW for greenway. Connect neighborhoods to Park and future Light Rail

Implement traffic calming and pedestrian safety features along Remount Road

Parking lots located behind buildings.

Implement traffic calming and pedestrian safety features along West Boulevard

Incorporate intersection design and creative placemaking to improve street safety and promote community identity.

Promote variety of housing types and opportunities within neighborhood. Including mix of affordable and home-ownership opportunities.

Redevelop and/or Improve properties at intersection of West Boulevard and Remount Road.

Parking lots located behind buildings.

Active, occupied, and lived-in buildings create informal surveillance and promote neighborhood safety.

# West Boulevard and Remount Road Area Plan





*Planum '23*

# West Boulevard Perspective



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CONGRESS FOR THE NEW URBANISM



# Implementation

**The ongoing proposition, promotion, and advocacy for policy changes at the local, state, and regional level to facilitate desired transportation infrastructure, taxation, equity, and healthy community outcomes while also attracting resources to implement catalytic projects.**

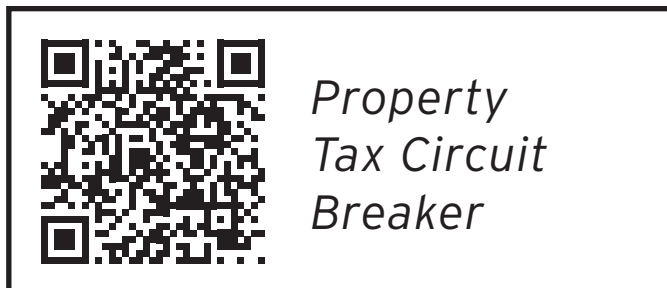
**Recommendations are broadly grouped into three categories: Transportation, Taxation, and Land Use and Zoning**

- **Transportation**

- › Remain engaged and influential in the shaping of the City's Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) plan for the CATS LYNX Blue Line and light rail infrastructure and station area plans
- › Work with NCDOT for streetscape improvements, operation, and maintenance of a multi-modal, safe, and pedestrian-friendly West Boulevard corridor
- › Work with City Planning, Public Works, and Transportation Departments for streetscape improvements, operation, and maintenance of a multi-modal, safe, and pedestrian-friendly West Boulevard corridor

- **Taxation**

- › Property tax "circuit breaker" for existing homestead owners pressured by escalating property assessment values  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property\\_Tax\\_Circuit\\_Breaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property_Tax_Circuit_Breaker)



- › Clarify net neutral City revenue from property tax adjustments to not overburden owners with rapidly escalating property values
- › Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts for this purpose have been established in other Dillon's Rule states (Virginia) where the state legislature and constitutional culture limits local policy innovation not otherwise explicitly granted in state legislation  
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title58.1/chapter32/section58.1-3245.2/>



- › Tax break consideration for existing community business assets feeling the pressure of gentrification, particularly for community owned and operated businesses at the western end of the corridor; similar to the Freeport Exemption in Texas  
<https://www.keatax.com/what-is-a-freeport-exemption-in-texas/>



- **Land Use and Zoning**

- › Grandfathered zoning and land use for existing and valued but otherwise non-compliant properties under the revised Uniform Development Ordinance (UDO)
- › Mandatory community outreach and engagement requirements for new development entitlements
- The possible application and use of Addification and Spectrum tools for analysis and initiative testing around equity and opportunity in the face of neighborhood and community gentrification pressure



Target a wide range of timelines for the incremental completion of key components of catalytic projects. Examples of projects that can be completed within the following timeframe are:

<b>3 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant next generation of three trees at Three Sisters Urban Farm</li> <li>• Promote policies regarding tax breaks, homeownership, and local business preservation</li> </ul>
<b>6 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies that promote/support the history, legacy and culture of the neighborhood</li> <li>• Implement Placemaking Markers</li> </ul>
<b>1 Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Health Care Facility: Atrium Health</li> <li>• Traffic calming at key intersections and focus areas on West Boulevard</li> </ul>
<b>3 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three Sisters Food Co-op and Healthy Options Grocery Store opens</li> <li>• Library Relocation Complete</li> <li>• Additional traffic calming and streetscape improvements on West Boulevard</li> </ul>
<b>5 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YMCA Expansion</li> <li>• Further additional traffic calming along West Boulevard</li> <li>• Mixed-Use development along West Boulevard at Remount and Clanton Roads</li> </ul>
<b>10 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of traffic calming along West Boulevard</li> <li>• Further mixed-use development along West Boulevard</li> </ul>
<b>20 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light rail line at Wilkinson Boulevard complete</li> <li>• Equitable TOD development along light rail line, particularly at station area plans</li> </ul>