

Northwest Neighborhood Plan

City of Homestead

NORTHWEST
NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN

Planning & Zoning
Board

5/16/2007



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"We must balance our growth with our quality of life; and we must balance the new with the old, and the newer population of east Homestead with the older population of west Homestead."

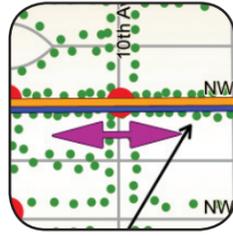
- State of City Address

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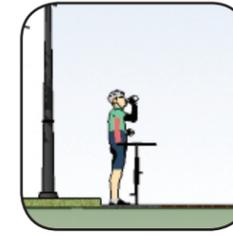
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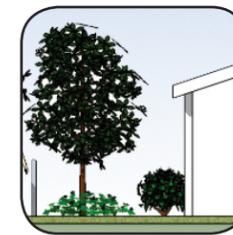
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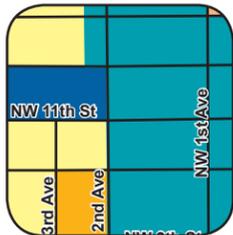
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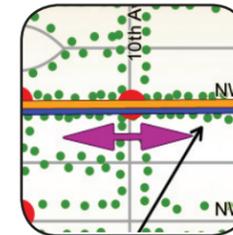


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Section 1 - Executive Summary

The Northwest Neighborhood Plan provides a set of strategies for the enhancement of Homestead's Northwest Neighborhood.

This planning effort was undertaken because of existing conditions and potential changes related to the following factors:

- increased development pressure;
- non-conforming residential uses; the imminent relocation of Homestead Hospital from the neighborhood;
- protection of existing and stable single-family areas; and,
- the need to address health and safety issues.

Demographic, socioeconomic and housing data from the 2000 Census reveals a working class neighborhood made up largely of workers in agricultural and construction employment, significant internal geographic differences in terms of housing types and homeowners/renters and overcrowding in a significant number of the neighborhood's housing units. The neighborhood includes many well-kept and attractive residential and commercial properties providing a strong base for continued success.

However, important challenges include:

- the relocation of Homestead Hospital and potential impacts to the surrounding area;
- potential building heights in non-residential areas adjacent to residential uses;
- non-conforming single-family lots with future development potential; disinvestment and code violations in some parts of the Neighborhood;
- much of the multifamily housing stock consists of non-conforming structures;
- need for improved neighborhood connectivity and safety measures; and,
- disorderly and unsightly parking problems near the Homestead Hospital site on some multifamily properties.

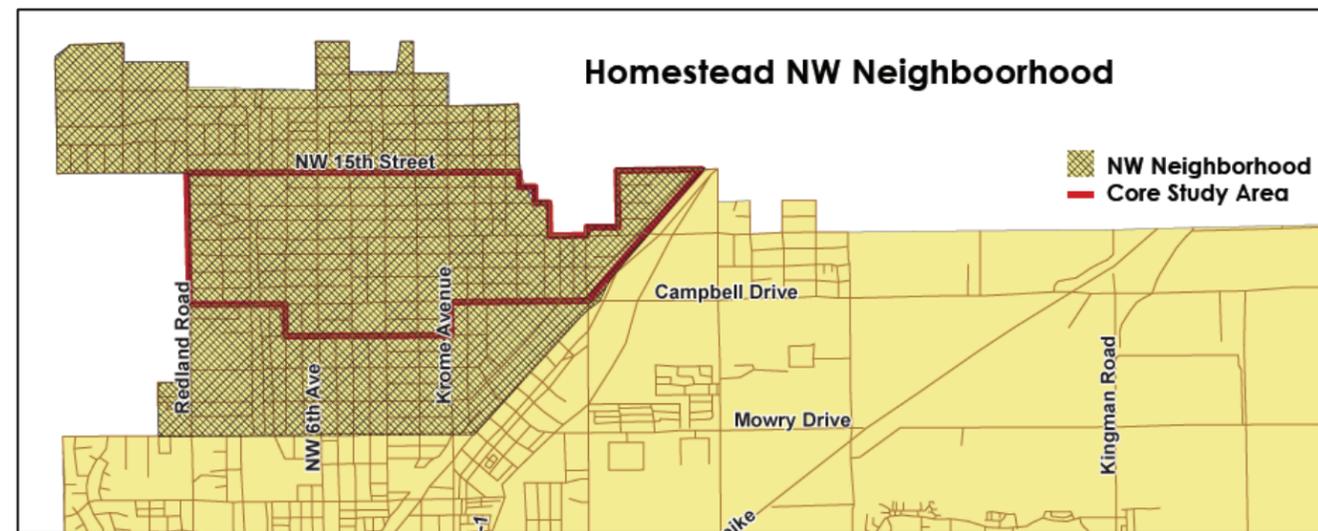
Key neighborhood features include three public parks, Redondo Elementary School and Homestead Middle School, with a magnet high school anticipated on the current site of Homestead Hospital.

Two current public projects are opportunities for meaningful improvement of the Northwest Neighborhood. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan calls for major improvements at each of the neighborhood's three parks, as well as a long term program to redevelop City streets as linear parks. Additionally, the City's Transportation and Transit Master Plan (TTMP) includes several important recommendations for neighborhood improvements.

The Northwest Neighborhood Plan carefully considers both strengths that the area possesses, as well as the challenges that must be addressed to make lasting improvements in the Northwest Neighborhood. In consideration of all these factors, implementation of the Northwest Neighborhood Plan will require a series of actions to create an effective and positive change in the character and dynamic of the area.

This plan includes a set of recommendations addressing the following:

- Development/Redevelopment Standards, responding to issues such as lot sizes, potential future uses near the Homestead Hospital site, non-residential building heights and land use compatibility
- Housing Certification Program
- Bikeway Network
- Streetscape Plan
- Aesthetic Program, including neighborhood entry signage, parking standards, code enforcement and landscape requirements
- Connectivity/Safety Plan, with recommendations regarding traffic calming, sidewalks, connectivity between the area now known as Duplex City and the rest of the neighborhood and solutions where parking problems exist
- Neighborhood Identity Initiatives, particularly encouraging a neighborhood association and signage to identify the Northwest Neighborhood



Northwest Neighborhood Map

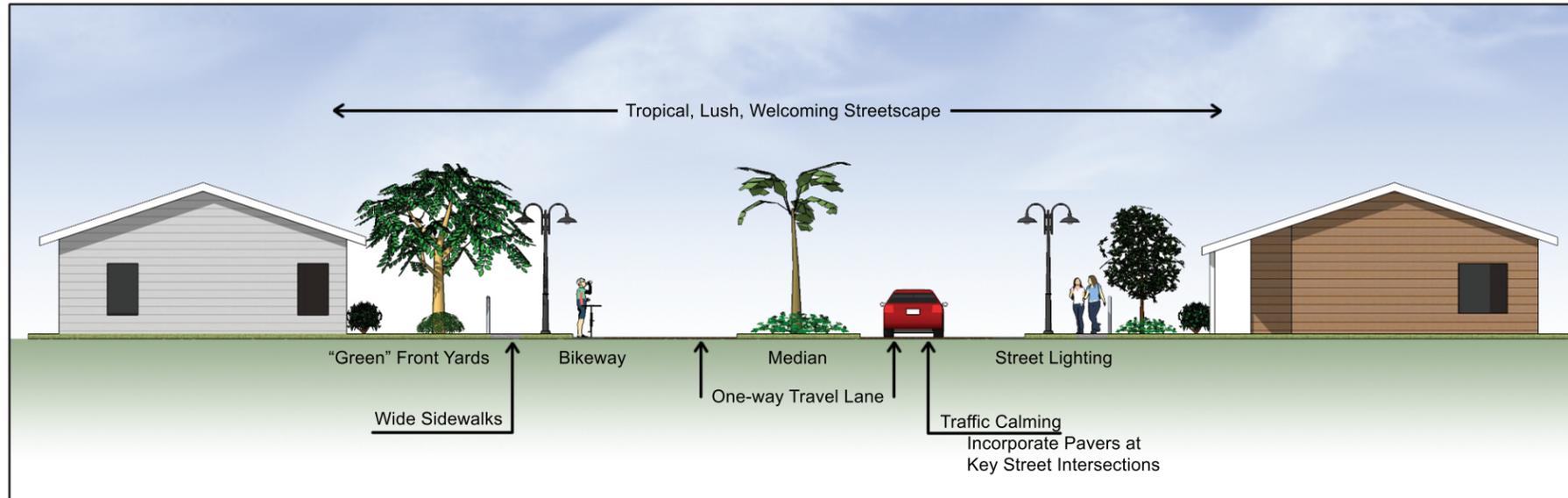


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Section 1 - Executive Summary



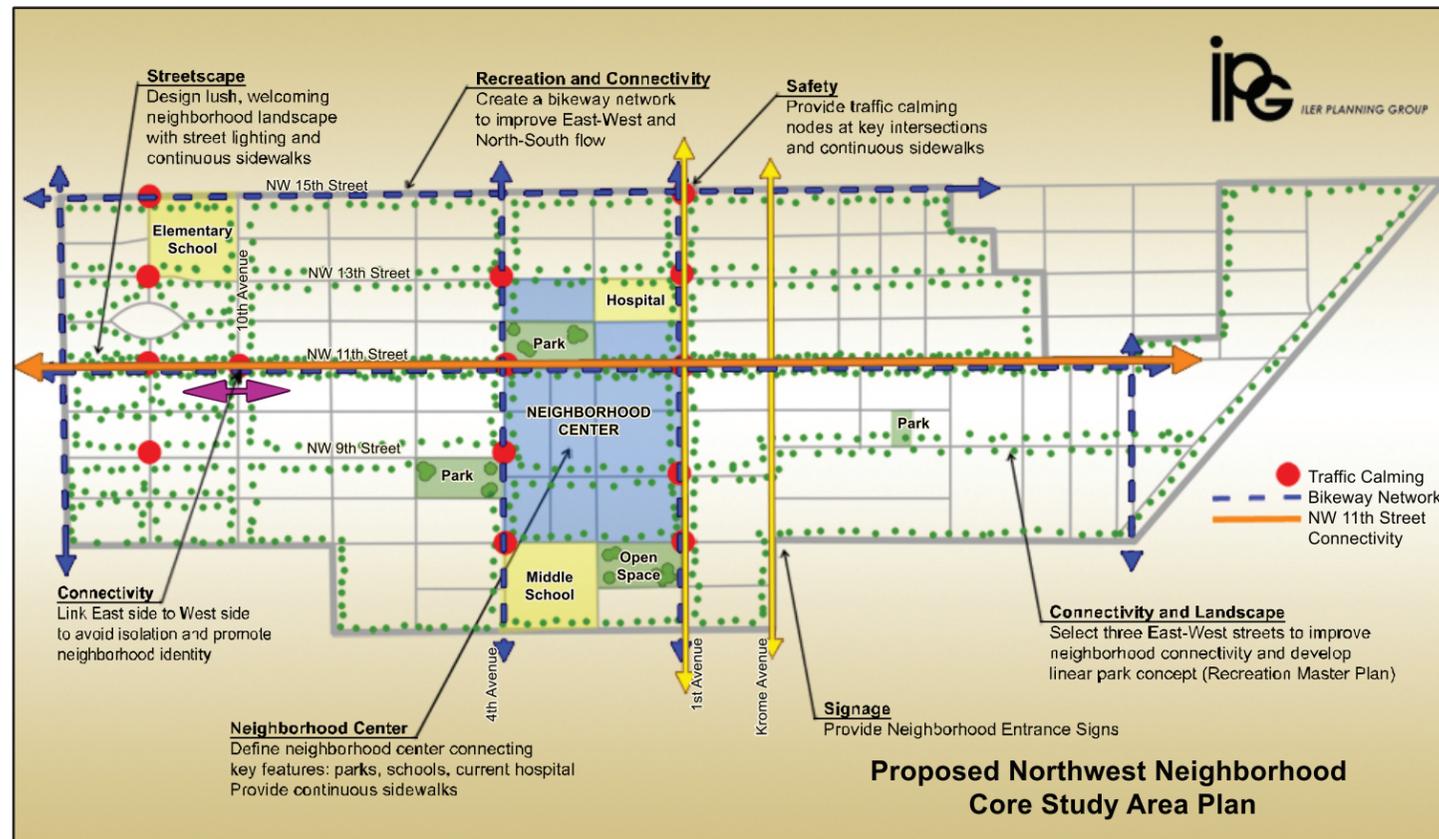
Conceptual Cross Section - 1st Avenue

These graphics present a summary of proposed design recommendations for the Northwest Neighborhood Plan

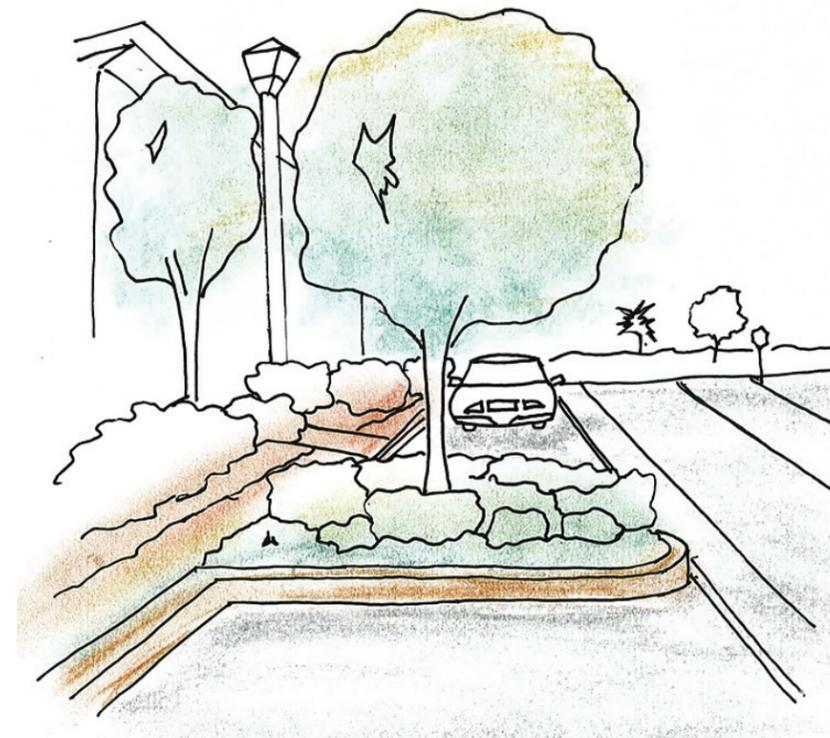


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Summary of Design Recommendations



Proposed bulb-out design to enhance streetscape and provide parking

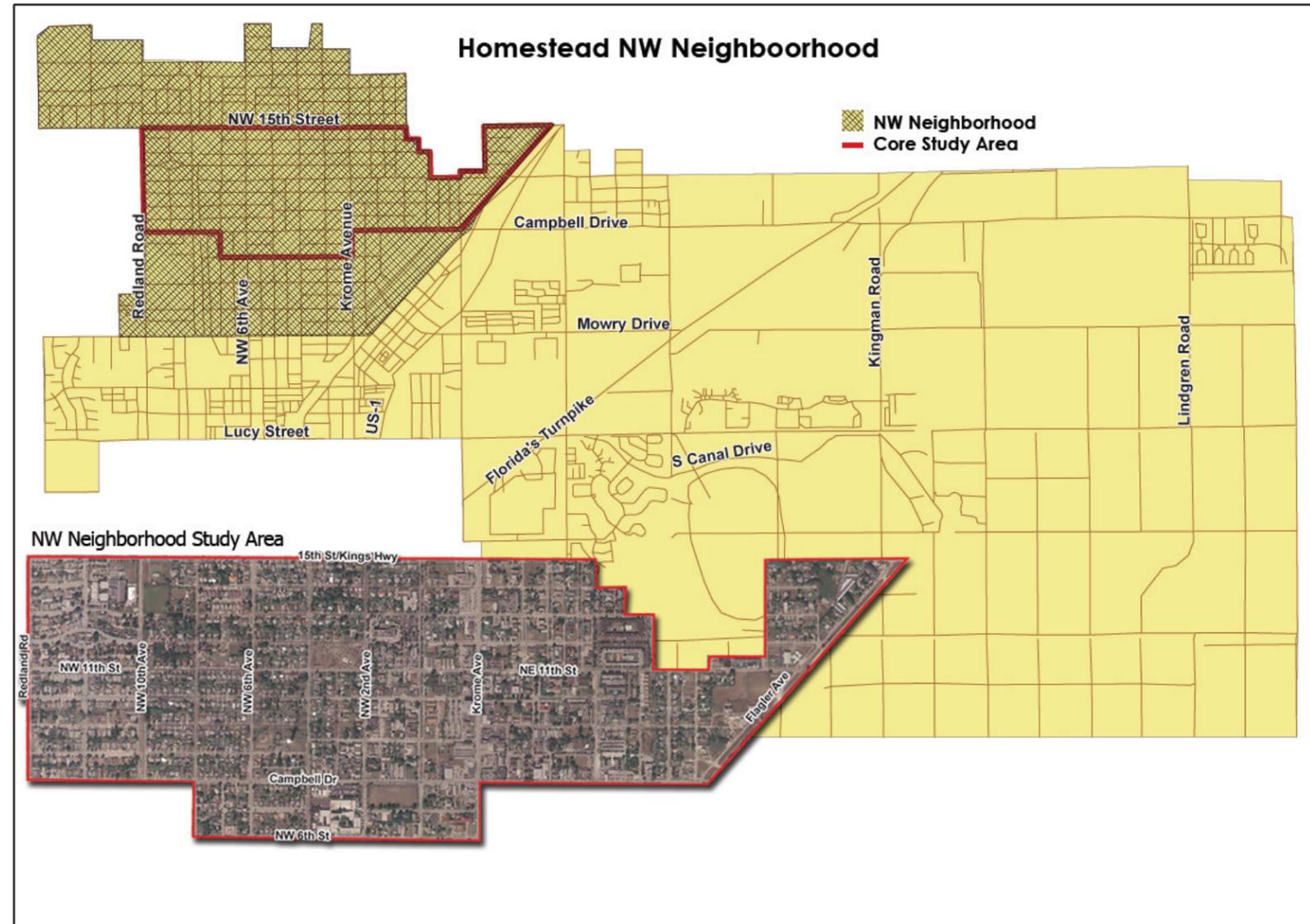


Section 2 - Introduction

Homestead's Northwest Neighborhood in the western half of the City, generally north of Mowry Drive and west of Flagler Avenue. Because of the availability of data the geographic focus of community resources and concerns, however, this Plan focuses on a core study area that generally lies east of Redland Road, west of Flagler Drive, south of 15th Street/Kings Highway and, except for a small section including Homestead Middle School, north of Campbell Drive. The boundaries of this core study area are shown on the map to the right, and contain approximately 577 acres. However, the recommendations of the Neighborhood Plan will affect the entire Northwest Neighborhood.

The purpose of this neighborhood plan is to provide a blueprint and a set of strategies for the enhancement of the City of Homestead's Northwest Neighborhood. The Plan will focus on a limited number of identified issues, as set out in Section 3, and on a defined geographic area defined above.

On June 28, 2005, the Homestead City Council (sitting as the Council of the Whole) directed its staff to draft an ordinance to impose a moratorium on the issuance of development orders and development permits for the City's Northwest Neighborhood. This direction was in recognition of the need for a Northwest neighborhood plan and adoption of implementing regulations for the neighborhood plan. The scope of the moratorium was later limited to exempt several types of uses. The need for the plan was based on several factors, including: the existence of a large number of non-conforming residential uses in the neighborhood; the imminent relocation of Homestead General Hospital from the neighborhood to another area of the City; recently increased development pressure and development interest in the neighborhood; and, the need to address health and safety issues.



City of Homestead & NW Neighborhood Study Area

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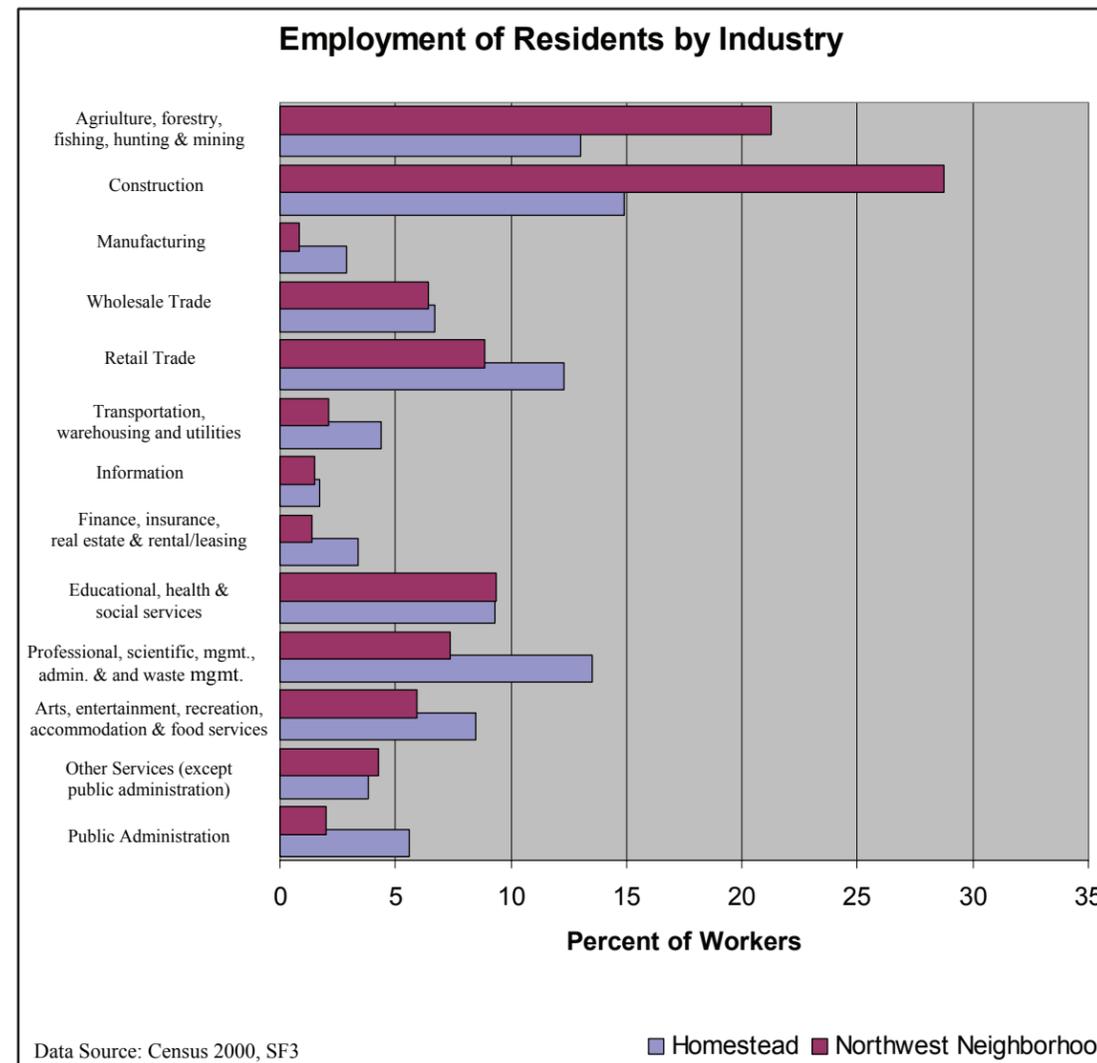
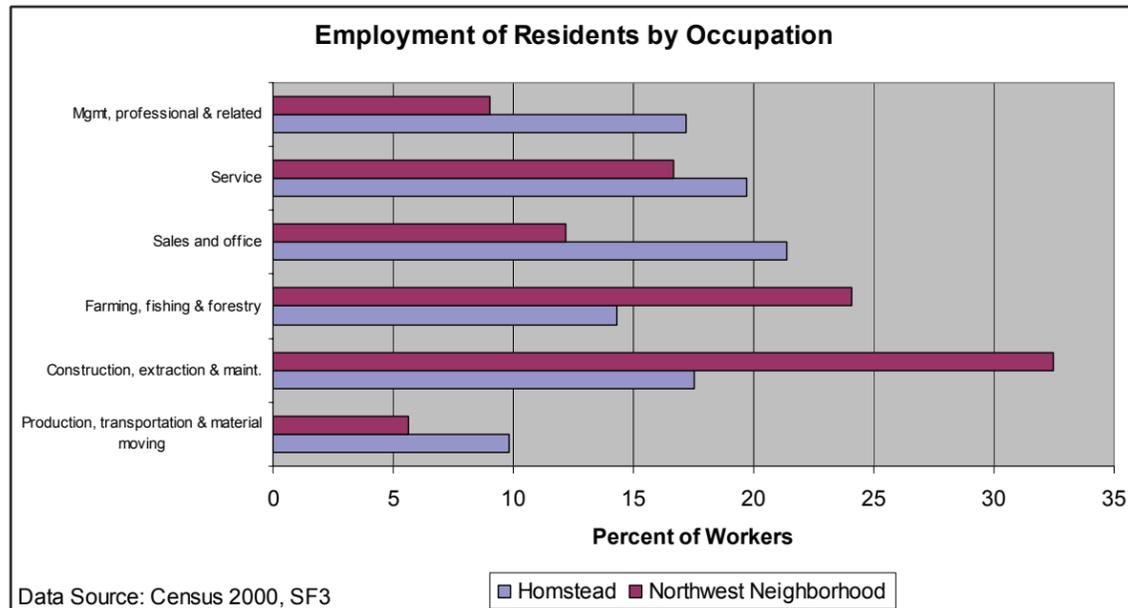
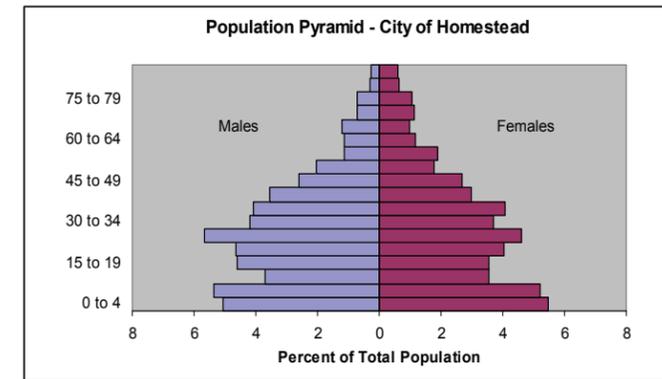
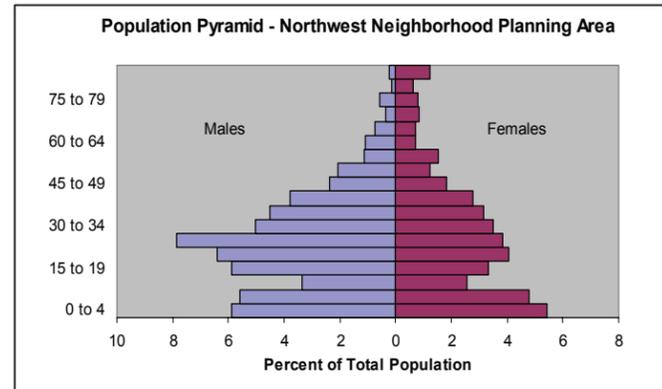


Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Demographic, Socioeconomic and Housing Data

Demographics

According to the 2000 Census, the Northwest Neighborhood core study area had a population of 8,512 people in 2,291 households. In 2000, the Northwest Neighborhood made up approximately 26.7% of the City of Homestead's population, and contained approximately 23.1% of the City's housing units. A higher percentage of its population was White (70.0%) compared to the City (61.0%), and a significantly lower percentage were Black or African American (12.1% in the Northwest Neighborhood versus 22.6% in the City of Homestead). In terms of ethnicity, 68.16% of Neighborhood residents in 2000 were Hispanic, compared to 51.83% in the City.

A comparison of the population pyramids for the Neighborhood and the City shows substantial differences. As can be seen, males greatly outnumber females in the Neighborhood, especially between the ages of 15 and 44. This contrasts sharply with the population pyramid for the City, which shows a much more even male/female balance.



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Demographic, Socioeconomic and Housing Data

Socioeconomic

The Census data also shows markedly different employment patterns for Neighborhood residents compared to City residents. First, the Neighborhood unemployment rate of the civilian labor force in 2000 was lower, at 8.8% compared to the City's 10.3%. Also examination of employment by both industry and occupation shows that residents in the Northwest Neighborhood relied much more heavily than City residents on jobs in construction and the primary economic sector (agriculture, forestry, mining, etc.). Neighborhood workers seem to have far lower rates of employment in the professional, management and similar occupations and industries, which is an important consideration as the City's economy continues to shift somewhat away from agricultural operations to a more diverse economic base.

Household income data from the 2000 Census – adjusted for inflation since the original data was gathered for 1999 – shows that the Neighborhood generally has a higher percentage of households in the middle income ranges than the City as a whole, with far less in the upper ranges. Also, while the City has a higher percentage of households making less than \$12,807, the Neighborhood has slightly more in the \$12,807 - \$19,209 range. In terms of poverty, in 2000 the poverty rate in the Northwest Neighborhood was slightly higher than the City's rate, 32.5% compared to 31.8%.

Housing

Data gathered from the 2000 Census shows that in 2000, there were a total of 2,566 housing units within the Northwest Neighborhood Plan boundaries, 275 of which (10.7%) were vacant. This vacancy rate is slightly higher than the 9.6% for the entire City. Of the 2,291 occupied units, 500 (21.8%) were owner-occupied while 1,791 (78.2%) were renter-occupied. Housing tenures are thus much different than the

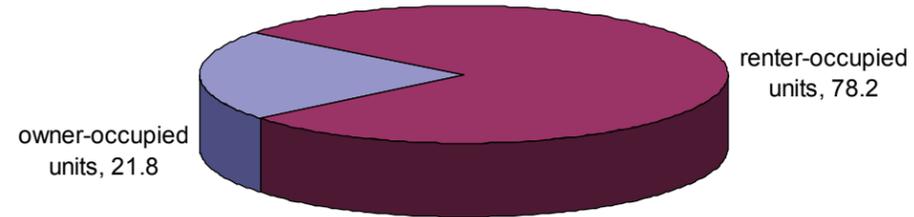
City as a whole, where 36.0% of households owned their own home in 2000, and 64.0% rented.

Very detailed data is available from the 2000 Census from the "long form" questionnaire, which was sent to a sample of approximately 1/6 of households. The smallest geography at which this data is reported is the block group, and the Neighborhood Plan boundaries nearly coincide with block groups 111004 and 112022 – those block groups extend only slightly outside the area to include an area outside the City, generally south of NE 15th Street, north of NE 11th Street, east of NE 3rd Terrace and west of NE 8th Street. Because this unincorporated area is very small relative to the size of the combined block groups, the data can be considered to fairly represent the characteristics of the Northwest Neighborhood's core study area.

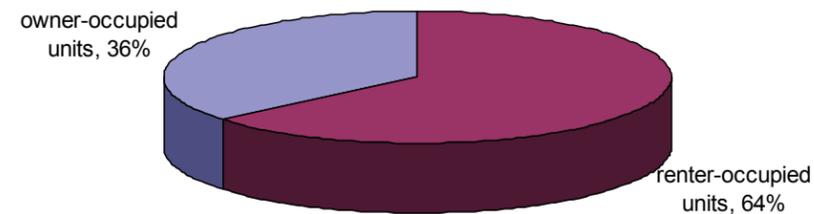
The long form data shows that the Northwest Neighborhood has a housing stock that differs substantially from that of the City. While the percentage of single-family units is similar to that of the City, 22.5% of the Neighborhood's housing units were part of a duplex, compared to only 9% in all of Homestead. The data also shows that the City had somewhat higher percentages of other types of multifamily units relative to the Neighborhood. It is important to note that the regulations of the R-2 zoning district under which most duplexes



Northwest Neighborhood: Housing Tenure



City of Homestead: Housing Tenure



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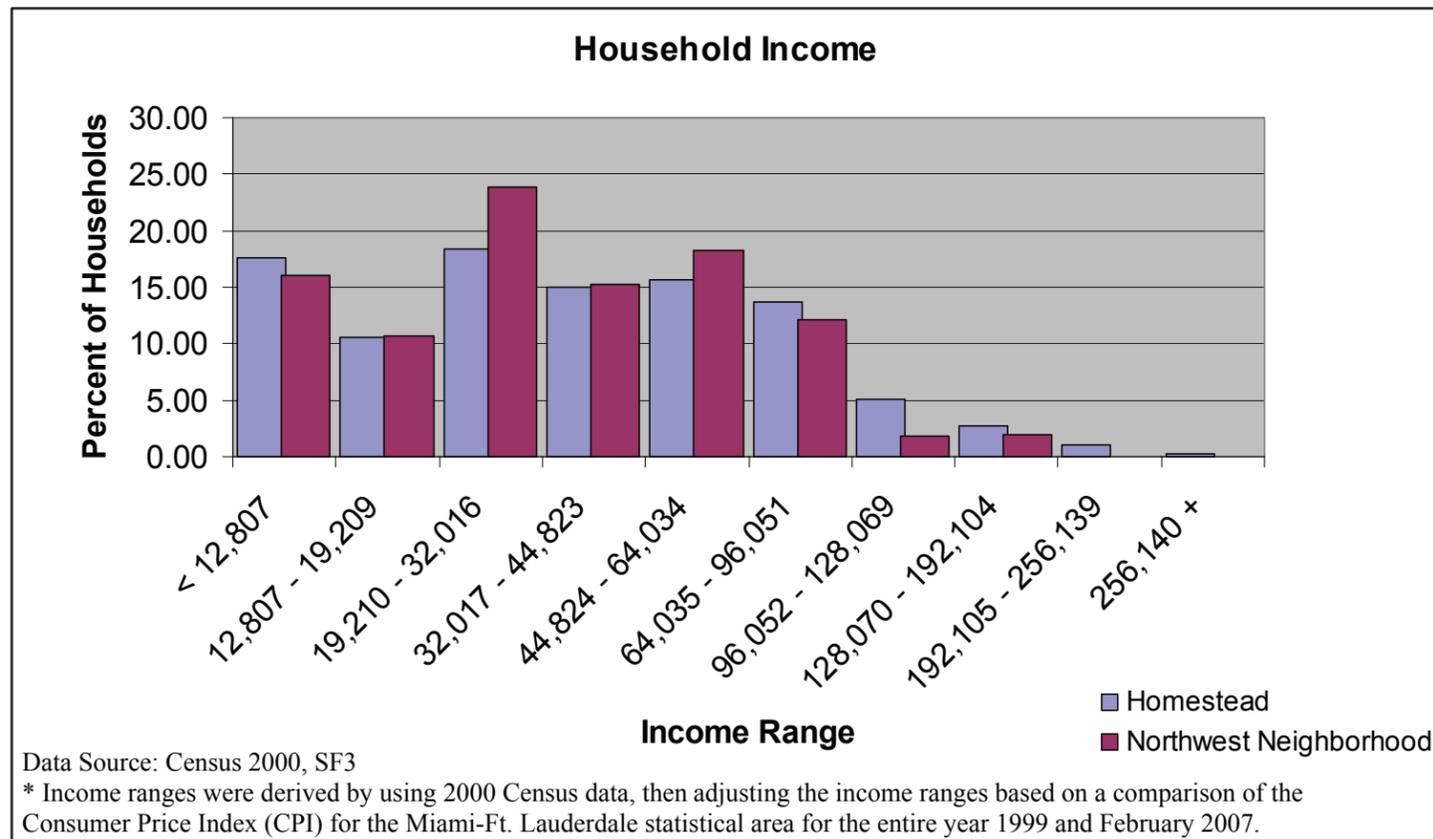


Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Demographic, Socioeconomic and Housing Data

were developed have been changed, and most such uses are now non-conforming.

The 2000 Census data also demonstrates that the Neighborhood's housing stock was generally older than that of the City. In 2000, 52.4% of the City's units had been constructed since 1980, compared to only 22.5% in the Northwest Neighborhood. Given the rapid construction activity that has been occurring and continues to occur in the eastern part of the City, the aging of the Neighborhood's housing relative to that of the City continues to increase.

Additionally, overcrowded housing conditions appear, based on the 2000 Census data, to be a much more significant issue in the Northwest Neighborhood than in the overall City. 40.8% of Neighborhood Households in 2000 had more than one person per room. The comparable number in the City was 28.62%. Housing that has more than one person per room is one of the criteria for substandard housing. The data also shows that in 2000, 24.4% of Neighborhood households had more than 1.5 persons per room, which is the definition of severe overcrowding. In Homestead generally, the percentage of units with more than 1.5 persons per room was 16.43%.



Summary

The picture painted of the Northwest Neighborhood by the 2000 Census data is of a mostly working class area tied to Homestead's traditionally agriculture-based economy and to the burgeoning construction industry. A major factor in the composition of the Neighborhood appears to be the presence of a substantial number of farmworkers or perhaps former farmworkers (24.1% of the residents in 2000 worked in farming, fishing or forestry occupations) transitioning to other industries. The Neighborhood's housing stock is split between many homes that are in good shape and contribute to Neighborhood stability, and a number of units badly in need of rehabilitation or replacement. Similarly, the evidence strongly shows that housing conditions for many residents is poor and needs to be remedied.



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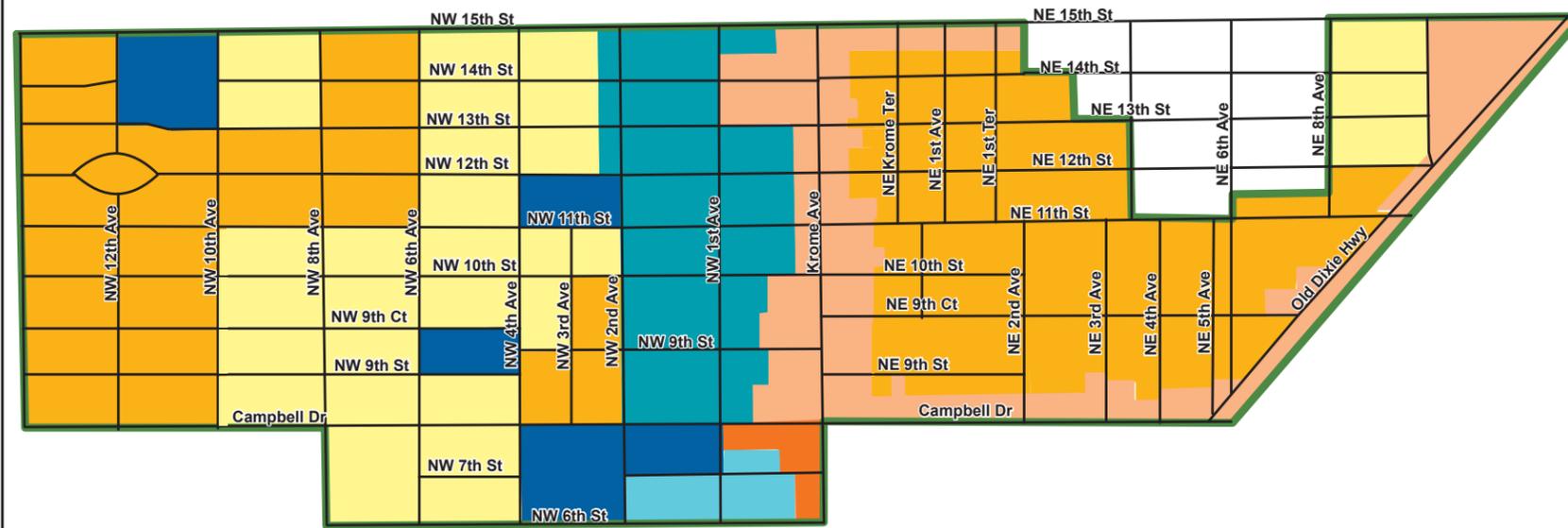


Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Existing/Future Land Use and Zoning

As the Northwest Neighborhood is nearly built-out, the existing land use follows a pattern that closely resembles the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) shown on this page. Key public facilities and the current site of the Homestead General Hospital have been identified earlier in this document. Generally, medium density residential uses are located at the east and west extremes of the Neighborhood Plan boundaries, and light commercial on either side of Krome Avenue, both as designated on the FLUM. Much of the area near the hospital designated for Professional Mixed-Use (PMU) on the FLUM is still in single-family residential use, particularly north and east of the hospital, and a substantial number of the parcels south of the hospital are in medium density residential use. Some parcels, particularly immediately south of the Hospital, have been converted to medical offices in accordance with the land use designation. Also, the area generally east of Homestead Middle School designated Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) on the FLUM is predominantly used for medium density residential with a limited number of non-residential uses. Otherwise, the area between the medium density uses on the west and the PMU area to the east are in low density, single-family use, consistent with the FLUM, and there are three blocks to the north of the Middle School with medium density residential land uses, also consistent with the FLUM.

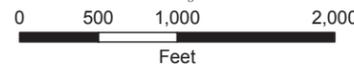
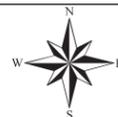
In terms of vacant land, James Archer Smith Park is shown on the Existing Land Use Map as vacant, however it is used as a park and will undergo improvements, as discussed elsewhere in this document. Similarly, a large parcel to the east of the Middle School is also shown as vacant. This parcel is publicly owned, and its *de facto* use is open space for the Middle School. Beyond this, there is significant vacant land near Old Dixie Highway, which is designated for Medium Density Residential (MRU) on the FLUM, and some small, scattered parcels in various land use designations.

Core Study Area Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use

- Institutional Use (ISU)
- Low Density Residential Use (LRU)
- Medium Density Residential Use (MRU)
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)
- Professional Mixed-Use (PMU)
- Light Commercial Use (LCU)
- Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU)
- Other**
- Core Study Area Boundary

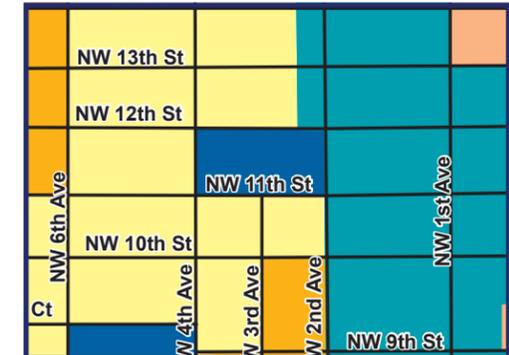


Note: Map not official. For presentation purposes only.

Prepared By:



As noted elsewhere, duplexes in the Neighborhood have been previously developed under the R-2 zoning district, the regulations of which have been altered and rendered such uses non-conforming. R-2 zoning developed with duplexes predominates in the western area of the Neighborhood coincidental with the MRU land use category, and is also present on some lots in the LRU category and in the MRU area east of Krome. However, the predominant zoning district in the MRU area east of Krome, and on residential parcels north and east of the Middle School and south of the Hospital campus is R-3. B-1 and B-1A predominate in the Krome Avenue Corridor and on several parcels within the PMU land use category, particularly those immediately south of the Hospital site. R-1 zoning is applied nearly exclusively on parcels within the LRU land use, as well as on a significant number of scattered properties in the MRU land use east of Krome Avenue. The Government (G) zoning district is applied to the schools, parks and other govern-



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Existing/Future Land Use and Zoning

ment-owned land within the Neighborhood.

Generally, the single-family uses within the LRU future land use comprise stable neighborhoods and well-kept properties. Some concerns have been identified in these areas, however. One such concern is that there are a number of platted but non-conforming lots. These platted lots are sometimes substantially smaller than the now-required minimum lot size. In some cases, however, one residence now sits on two or more of these non-conforming lots. Where this situation exists, some owners may wish to demolish an existing house and then to build one house on each lot. This could establish some homes on lot sizes out of character with the surrounding properties. There is also concern that demand for multifamily units may create pressure to convert some single-family lots to multifamily uses. Further, some single-family areas abut the PMU and Light Commercial Use (LCU) future land use categories near the Hospital site and along Krome Avenue. Future building heights in these non-residential areas could be as high as six stories. Besides these concerns, the character of these single-family areas could be enhanced through small changes, such as removal of unsightly chain link fences on private properties, and wider sidewalks with improved shading in the public ROW.



A windshield survey revealed significant disinvestment issues in parts of the Neighborhood's multi-family areas, which generally are those areas designated MRU on the FLUM. There also appear to be significant Code violations occurring, including vehicles parked on lawn areas and loose trash in front of some properties. These issues

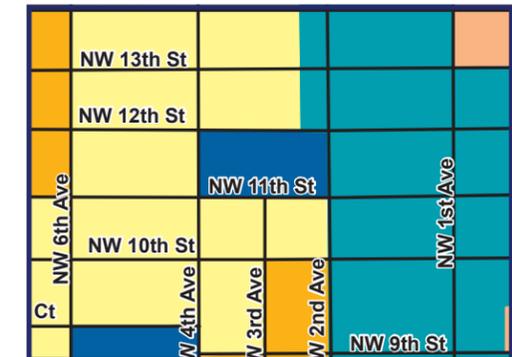
seem to occur particularly in parts of the MRU area in the western section of the Neighborhood. In addition, landscaping and other streetscape elements are sparse in front of many of the Neighborhood's multifamily properties.

Overall, there are a few key issues with respect to land use and zoning. In particular, the imminent departure of Homestead Hospital from the Neighborhood creates land use issues not just for the Hospital site, but also for the area immediately around the Hospital where many residential uses have converted to medical-related uses. Also of concern

are potential building heights where non-residential future land use and zoning categories are adjacent to single-family uses, as well as a number of platted, non-conforming lots in single-family areas with future development potential. Other issues concern disinvestment and code violations in parts of the Neighborhood, and that much of the multifamily housing stock consists of non-conforming structures.



Top: Chain link fence across driveway.
Left: Trash in front of property and vehicles parked in lawn areas.
Below: Sparse landscaping and streetscape elements.



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Key Neighborhood Features

When considering the Northwest Neighborhood and its potential, it is important to consider several key features. First, the Neighborhood contains two public school campuses – Redondo Elementary School and Homestead Middle School. Redondo Elementary is located in the north-western part of the Neighborhood, on the south side of NW 15th Street between NW 10th Avenue and NW 12th Avenue. The Middle School is on the south side of Campbell Drive, east of NW 4th Avenue and west of NW 2nd Avenue. The Elementary School has an enrollment of 923, approximately 35% more than the number of student stations. Homestead Middle School has an enrollment of 1,129, which is less than its student capacity.

In addition, there are three public parks within the Neighborhood boundaries: James Archer Smith Park located between NW 2nd and 4th Avenues and between NW 11th and 12th Streets (5 acres); Wittkop Park situated between NW 4th and 6th Avenues and between NW 9th Street and NW 9th Court (4 acres); and Mistretta Park between NE 9th Court and NE 10th

Street, just east of NE 1st Avenue (1.04 acres). Additionally, a vacant, publicly owned parcel sits to the east of the Middle School and serves as open space for the students there.

The campus of Homestead General Hospital sits to the northeast of James Archer Smith Park. A substantial number of uses in the vicinity of the Hospital have been converted to medical offices to take advantage of its proximity, and the Professional Mixed-Use (PMU) land use category has been created specifically to allow and facilitate this. The Hospital is set to vacate this site in the near future which, as discussed elsewhere, is a critical consideration in forming the recommendations of the Northwest Neighborhood Plan. However, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools 2006-2010 Five Year Capital Plan includes scheduled funding of \$12,000,000 in fiscal year 2006-2007 to establish an 800-student capacity medical technologies high school on the current Hospital campus.

The Neighborhood also includes a large segment of the commercial corridor along Krome Avenue north of the historic downtown. The uses along Krome both north and south of the Neighborhood's boundaries form a primary commercial corridor for the City.



Top: Campus of Homestead General Hospital.
Above: Medical Offices in the vicinity of Homestead General Hospital.
Left: Commercial Corridor along Krome Avenue (north of downtown).



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Key Neighborhood Features

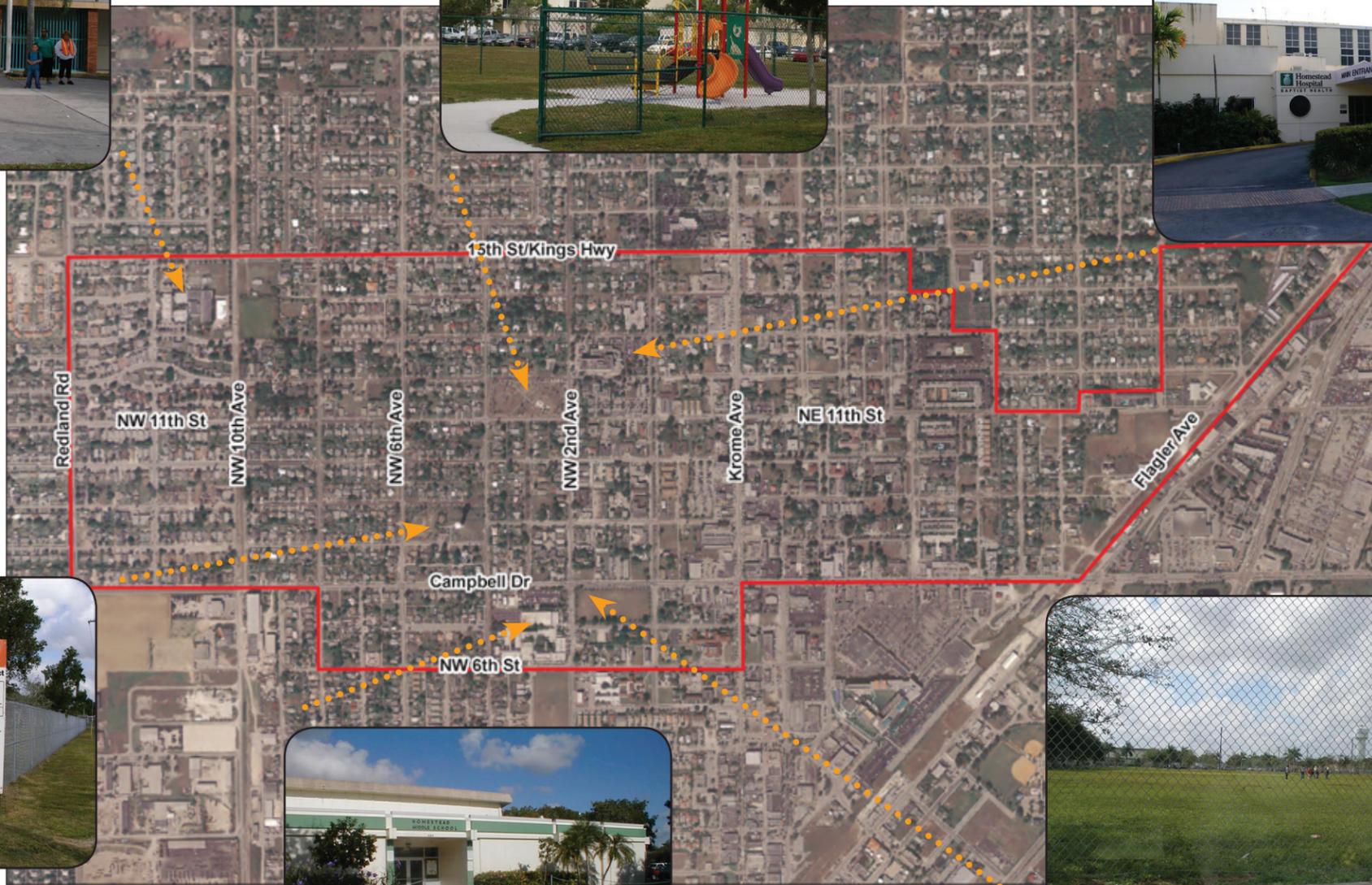
Rendondo Elementary



James Archer Smith Park



Homestead Hospital



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Wittkop Park



Homestead Middle School



Open Space Adjacent to
Middle School

Key Neighborhood Features Map



Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Neighborhood Connectivity

In terms of connectivity, the Northwest Neighborhood has some distinct advantages. In particular, the Neighborhood has a nearly complete grid of streets, which in most cases provides multiple routes between any two points. This means that most streets see only light traffic, and not many wide, high vehicular traffic streets are necessary. Major exceptions include, of course, Krome Avenue and Campbell Drive – otherwise, large high-volume streets are on the exterior of the Neighborhood (i.e. Redland Road). One major impediment to roadway connectivity within the Neighborhood, however, is the railroad right-of-way (ROW) that exists along the west side of NW 10th Avenue. This means that east-west roads between Campbell Drive north to NW 15th Street do not connect to one another across the ROW, which therefore actually create a barrier.

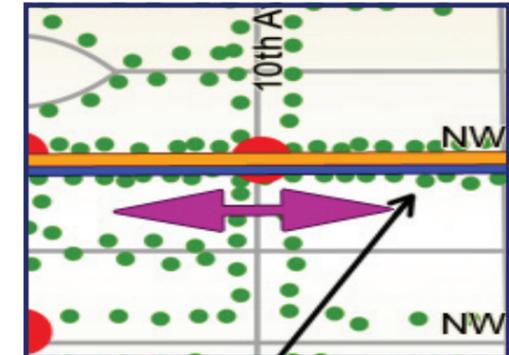
No existing vehicular level of service (LOS) deficiencies have been identified, with major streets including Krome Avenue, Campbell Drive and NW 15th Street operating at or above the adopted LOS, according to the City's Comprehensive Plan. However, Campbell Drive and Krome Avenue are also projected to deteriorate to LOS F by 2015.

While vehicular connectivity is generally good, however, opportunities exist to improve connectivity for other modes of transportation. Several of the Neighborhood's streets lack sidewalks, while others are missing sidewalks in some sections. Missing sidewalks occur even where care has previously been taken to provide boulevards with planted medians in wide ROWs.

While vehicular connectivity is generally good, however, opportunities exist to improve connectivity for other modes of transportation. Several of the Neighborhood's streets lack sidewalks, while others are missing sidewalks in some sections. Missing sidewalks occur even where care has previously been taken to provide boulevards with planted medians in wide ROWs.



*Top Right: Railroad right-of-way (ROW) along NW 10th Avenue.
Bottom Right: Some neighborhood streets were planned with planted medians in wide ROWs.
Above: Several neighborhood streets lack sidewalks.
Right: Sidewalks are laid in sections and not connected.*



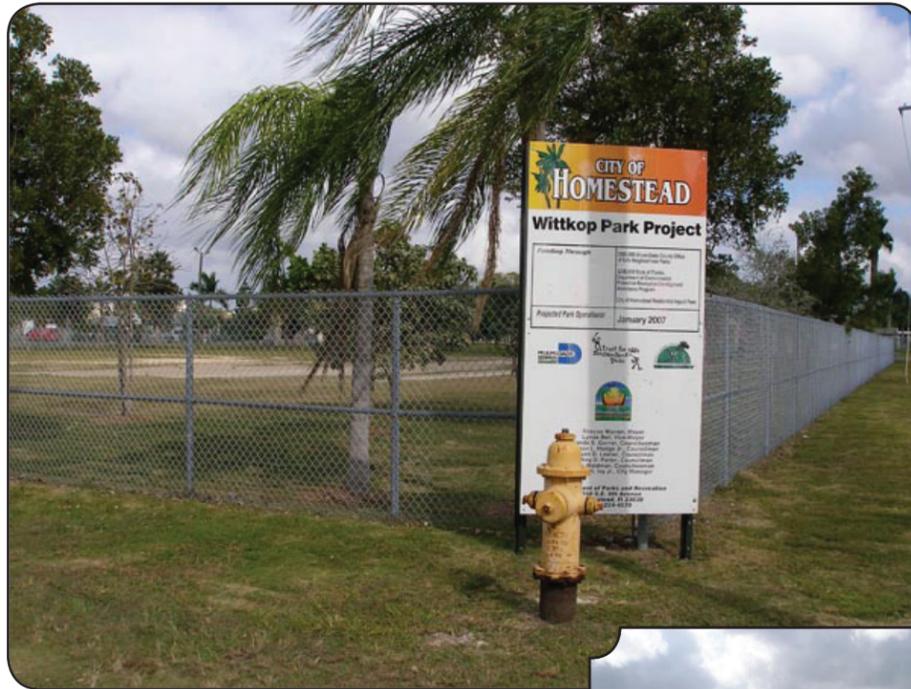
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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Neighborhood Connectivity

Additionally, the three public parks in the Neighborhood – James Archer Smith Park, Wittkop Park and Mistretta Park – could be more integrated into the private uses in the Neighborhood. As noted in the City’s 2004 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the six foot high chain link fence around Wittkop Park, besides being unsightly, also restricts access from the Neighborhood. The Parks Master Plan also points out that Wittkop Park currently lacks sidewalks around its perimeter. All three of these parks are set to undergo substantial improvements in the near future in accordance with the recommendations of the Parks Master Plan. These improvements represent an important opportunity to ensure that these public spaces are more closely woven into the fabric of the Neighborhood.



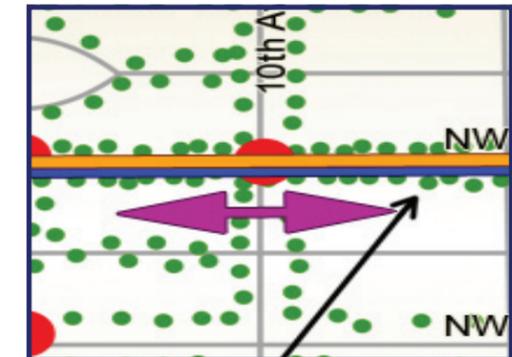
*Below: Some areas of the NW Neighborhood are completely void of landscaping and streetscape elements.
Bottom: Other areas of the NW Neighborhood have well developed landscape and streetscape elements in place.*



Even where sidewalks are present along streets, effective connectivity may be hindered by the lack of an inviting streetscape. In such cases, people are less likely to feel safe and to be comfortable walking, and thus less likely to do so. While there are many places in the Northwest Neighborhood where streetscape elements are well done, other areas lack these elements altogether.



*Top: Wittkop Park surrounded by six foot chain link fence.
Left: Lack of sidewalk surrounding Wittkop Park restricts access and reduces aesthetic appeal of the park.*



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Current Projects



It is essential to coordinate the Northwest Neighborhood Plan with other public projects that are advancing in order to achieve maximum benefits from implementation. The City of Homestead has recently completed two major planning efforts with direct and substantial bearing on the Northwest Neighborhood: the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Transportation and Transit Master Plan.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes recommendations that would substantially remake much of the City of Homestead's public spaces. Recommendations that would have the most immediate impact upon the Northwest Neighborhood are for extensive changes and improvements at the Neighborhood's three public parks: James Archer Smith Park, Wittkop Park and Mistretta Park. Development of master design plans for these facilities are already underway. For James Archer Smith, the Parks Master Plan also recommends a number of new facilities (play space, picnic tables and benches, shade trees, parking spaces, a playground, walking paths, a water fountain, picnic pavilion/shade structure, irrigation facilities and new grass). At Wittkop, recommended new facilities include open play space, basketball courts, tennis courts, a racquetball court, children's playground, picnic tables and benches, shade trees, new shaded sidewalk/walking trail, enhancements to the Water Tower with public art, limited parking spaces,



travelers.

The City also recently completed its first comprehensive Transportation and Transit Master Plan (TTMP) to improve future mobility within the City. The TTMP provides for several minor transportation infrastructure improvements in the Northwest Neighborhood. The most significant of these for the purpose of this master plan are to add missing sections of sidewalk on the west side of Homestead Middle School and on NE 2nd Avenue north of Campbell Drive. Other projects include improving Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access ramps for sidewalks at non-signalized intersections on NW 15th Street west of Krome Avenue, signalization improvements at the Krome Avenue-NW 15th Street intersection and resurfacing the intersection of Campbell Drive and Redland Road.



Additionally, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools 2006-2010 capital budget includes \$12,000,000 for a medical technologies high school on the current campus of Homestead General Hospital, which is relocating to the eastern part of the City.

improvement to the existing children's play area, water fountain and picnic pavilion/shade structure. For Mistretta Park, the recommendations include renovation of the existing playground and picnic pavilion/shade shelter, creation of a walking path, a water fountain, new picnic tables and benches, shade trees, parking spaces and resurfacing of the basketball court. Beyond these individual park improvements, however, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends that the City redevelop existing streets, avenues and boulevards as linear parks. This means that every street within the Northwest Neighborhood would eventually be transformed to become more lush with landscaping and more oriented toward pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Parking

A windshield survey of the Northwest Neighborhood demonstrated that parking is a very important issue that must be addressed for the future success of the Neighborhood. The area surrounding the Homestead General Hospital receives more automobiles than the available parking spaces can accommodate. The result is that vehicles are parked along the sides of the streets around the Hospital and adjacent to James Archer Smith Park. Many of these vehicles park in an unorganized fashion, partially or wholly on grass swales, utility strips and on sidewalks. This causes aesthetic issues while the cars are there and, because of damage to grass and other areas not designed for parking, after the vehicles leave as well.



Shown: Homestead General Hospital creates an overflow of cars parking in the surrounding area. The result is vehicles being parked without order, often on grass swales, utility strips and sidewalks.



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Parking



Above: Disorderly parking on grass swales will cause damage to grass and surrounding areas not intended for parking.
Below: On-street parking found on Krome Avenue provides a buffer for pedestrians and helps to calm passing traffic.

Some residential parts of the Neighborhood also have significant parking issues, primarily involving vehicles parked on lawn areas. The situation also creates undesirable aesthetic impacts, and discourages investment in Neighborhood properties by both current and prospective property owners.



Above & Left: Undesirable aesthetics and discouraged residential investment are results of significant parking constraints within Homestead's Northwest Neighborhood.



The streets in the Northwest Neighborhood have the potential for a substantial amount of on-street parking. Along Krome Avenue, on-street spaces currently not only contribute to meeting the parking needs of many businesses, but also buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic and have a traffic-calming effect on Krome.

Some of the parking to occur along the roadway near the Hospital functions basically as on-street parking, and could be a benefit if the spaces were properly paved and marked.



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Identified Issues, Opportunities/Constraints

Homestead's Northwest Neighborhood has tremendous opportunities and strengths as the City embarks on a new era. At the same time, however, there are significant challenges that the Neighborhood must overcome to reach its full potential. The Neigh-

...As the City embarks on a new era... There are significant challenges the Neighborhood must overcome to reach its full potential.

borhood is fortunate to have three public parks and two public schools – and the possible addition of a third at the current campus of Homestead General Hospital – within its boundaries. The City's recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the improvement projects to the Neighborhood's parks that are going forward and will greatly enhance these public areas as valuable assets to the community. The parks and public school should and will inspire a sense of civic pride in the residents, and they should form the physical and civic core of the Neighborhood and a beginning point for a greater sense of Neighborhood identity. This means ensuring that every person living in the Northwest Neighborhood has safe and convenient access to these public places.

Currently, parts of the Neighborhood have substantial physical barriers to this Neighborhood core. Those living in the area now known as Duplex City – west of NW 10th Avenue – lack convenient access to Wittkop and James Archer Smith parks, which are just a few blocks away. For example, someone at NW 11th Avenue and NW 10th Street



wishing to go to a park would have to use Campbell Drive or NW 15th Street, due to the fact that the east-west streets do not connect across the railroad tracks along NW 10th Avenue. Campbell Drive and NW 15th Street are significantly higher traffic streets than those in between, making the journey less safe and contributing to a sense of isolation from the remainder of the Neighborhood. For the same reasons, those residents west of the railroad tracks are far less likely to walk or ride bicycles Downtown or to commercial establishments on Krome north of Downtown. Those on the east side of the railroad tracks are similarly cut off from the Elementary School.

Connectivity within the Neighborhood also could be improved in other ways – most notably by providing adequate facilities for non-motorized transportation. Significant parts of the Neighborhood are lacking in sidewalks, landscaping and other streetscape elements that facilitate walking, bicycling, etc. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends that all of Homestead's streets be redeveloped as linear parks. This, of course, is a long-term plan. For this Neighborhood Plan, it is appropriate to identify which Neighborhood streets should receive priority in this effort in order to make the most immediate impact on improving connectivity and forming the backbone of a stronger pedestrian system that can be built upon in the future.



The Neighborhood's parks should be usable public spaces that foster a sense of civic pride, and also an aesthetic example for the other properties in the Neighborhood. To a large extent, fencing around the parks stands in the way of both of these goals.

While the City discourages the use of chain link fences on private property, it must set the aesthetic example by not using it on its own properties. To the extent the parks must be fenced at night, access points must be placed such that the park is as useable as possible when the gates are open. For example, James Archer Smith Park has paths that begin in the corners and cross like an "X" in the middle. In that case, there should be gates in the corners so that pedestrian or bicyclist can use the park and the paths as a cut-across.



Also an asset to the Neighborhood's future development are a number of relatively wide rights-of-way (ROW), several of which have wide swales and a number of which include planted medians. These wide ROWs present a multitude of opportunities to improve the network of sidewalks and other non-motorized transportation facilities, improve



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Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Identified Issues, Opportunities/Constraints

aesthetics and shading through ROW landscaping and address parking issues with on-street spaces. As noted earlier, while sidewalks are lacking in some areas, this Plan includes recommendations to prioritize sidewalks, bicycle lanes and other non-motorized infrastructure first to improve connectivity to the maximum extent possible by focusing on selected streets.

The Neighborhood further boasts many stable residential areas with properties well-kept by their owners. The aforementioned public parks and streetscape improvements will work as an incentive for continued upkeep of, and investment in, these properties. These areas, however, do face a threat from a force that can also be an opportunity: development pressure. Currently, the low density and single-family character of most of the land in the Low Density Residential Use (LRU) future land use category have been well-established. There is pressure to redevelop some of these properties to multifamily uses. This is due largely to pressure for increased residential density attendant with development pressure in southern Miami-Dade County as a whole.

Additionally, a significant number of the single-family lots are smaller than today's standards, and thus non-conforming. In some cases, a current house along with its yard sits on more than one lot. Currently, a house such as this could be demolished, and new houses built on each lot, which may result in effective lot sizes significantly smaller than those of neighbors. The threat in these scenarios comes not from increased densities per se, nor from additional multifamily development in the Northwest Neighborhood, but rather that these could substantially alter the established character of the Neighborhood's most stable residential areas. Over time, these areas have established a pattern that gives them a sense of place, and should be enhanced and strengthened while preventing changes that would be out-of-character with existing development. The Future Land Use Map shows that the LRU areas within the Neighborhood have clear boundaries well-defined by existing streets, rather than a pattern of scattered lots with different future land uses. This is an asset to the integrity of these areas. In this context, it is recommended that language be added to Future Land Use Element (FLUE) of the City's Comprehensive Plan to prohibit piecemeal future land use amendments changing the LRU designation.

Also of serious concern is that lots in the LRU land use designation that are adjacent to non-residential future land uses – namely the Light Commercial Use (LCU) and Professional Mixed-Use (PMU) – could see building heights on the adjacent lots of up to 6 stories. These heights could be incompatible with mostly single-family character in the LDU designation, and potentially threaten the viability of some single-family uses.

At the same time, the Neighborhood includes areas that have experienced disinvestment, the effects of which are visible in the form of structures clearly in need of repair and a general lack of upkeep on many properties. The most acute of these problems occurs in the area now known as Duplex City – east of Redland Road, west of NW 10th Avenue, north of Campbell Drive and south of NW 15th Street. In this area, Code violations appear to be occurring regularly, particularly parking vehicles within the



Infill housing project recently developed in the Northwest Neighborhood



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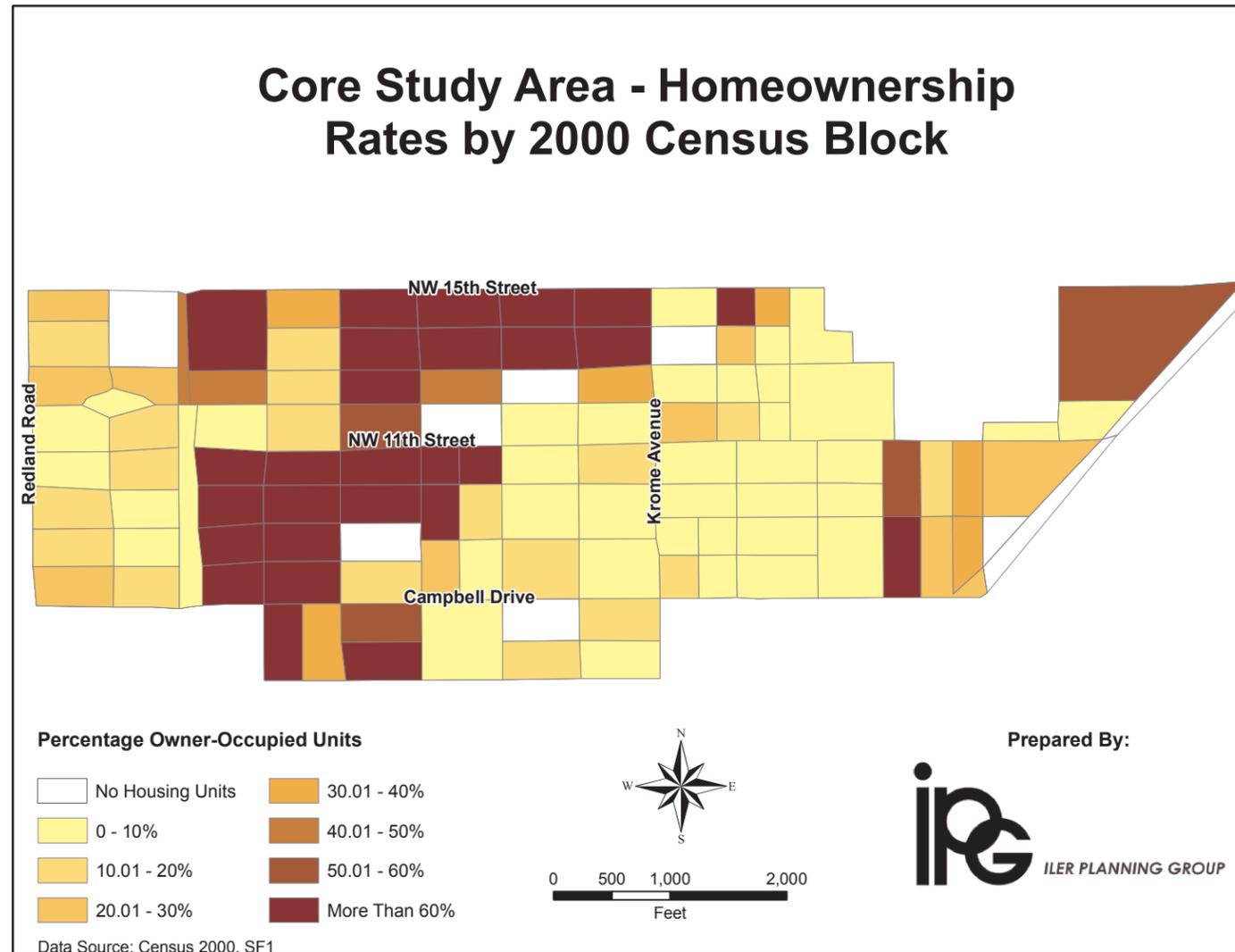


Section 3 - Existing Conditions & Analysis - Identified Issues, Opportunities/Constraints

front setback, which is prohibited in the R-2 zoning district applicable to the entire Duplex City area. These issues stem to a large extent because the area has been physically marginalized through isolation from the remainder of the Northwest Neighborhood and, in fact, from the rest of the City. While the Northwest Neighborhood Plan recommends remedies to re-establish connectivity, the marginal areas must also to a degree overcome the current stigma that exists because of previous disinvestment to attract reinvestment and, to an extent, redevelopment.

Also likely related to lack of upkeep in some areas of the Neighborhood is the low rate of homeownership among Northwest Neighborhood residents. The 2000 Census information presented earlier shows that homeownership rates of Neighborhood residents (21.82%) were substantially lower than those reported for the entire City (36.0%). While homeownership certainly is not appropriate for all households, it does have a number of important benefits both for individual households and for the community. Homeowners can help to maintain Neighborhood stability because they have a longer term stake in its success. For most households that own their own home, it is their most valuable asset. This means that homeowners in the Neighborhood likely also have their most important investment there, which is an incentive not only to care for their own property but to care about the success of the Neighborhood, as well. At the same time, owning one's home provides strong protection from being priced out of his/her existing neighborhood, which can happen to renters as an area improves or as overall real estate prices rise. Policies should be adopted with the aim of bringing the Neighborhood's homeownership rate closer to the City's. Beyond this, however, homeownership should be extended geographically to include all parts of the Neighborhood.

The Northwest Neighborhood will soon lose one of its most valuable assets – Homestead General Hospital. The Hospital will move to a new facility in the eastern part of the City. Fortunately, it appears that the campus will be converted to an 800 student station medical technologies high school, which is expected to become a new and important community asset. The Hospital's departure nonetheless raises important land use issues in the vicinity of the Hospital campus, where a number of houses have been converted to medical offices as facilitated by the designation of a Professional Mixed Use (PMU) future land use. When the Hospital is no longer present, the economic rationale for some of these facilities' location there will have disappeared. A large number of the properties in the PMU land use category still remain in their previous use, in most cases single-family. However, the PMU land use has allowed a functional mix of uses to be included, including office uses, that are



“...homeownership rates of Neighborhood residents (21.82%) were substantially lower than those reported for the entire City (36.0%).”



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strategically located near the commercial in Downtown and north on Downtown on Krome Avenue, while also serving as a buffer area between these commercial uses and single-family residential areas. The City should ensure that the available uses of PMU properties are of sufficient variety to ensure the future viability of these areas. Also, while conversion of single-family uses within the

PMU is allowed, it is intended that residential and non-residential uses coexist in this area, and for this reason it is important that existing residential uses be adequately protected from proposed non-residential buildings next door, particularly when significant height is proposed. Further, protection of the stable single-family areas to the west of the PMU requires that the City take care to keep future land use boundaries as contiguous as possible.



A need for traffic calming on some streets has also been identified, particularly on Campbell Drive and NW 15th Street where the uses are largely residential in character, yet a wide paved area and relatively deep setbacks encourage a sense by drivers that higher speeds are appropriate. Traffic calming recommendations have been included in the Neighborhood Plan as well.

Finally, parking is an aesthetic issue both in the area now known as Duplex City with a large number of cars parked on lawns, and around the parks and Hospital. The conversion of the Hospital to a high school will likely mean the immediate vicinity continues to have parking issues. This conclusion is based on an examination of aerial photos showing that the Hospital campus currently has approximately 130 off-street parking spaces. The City's Code requires one parking space per each four seats for any type of school, which would result in 200 spaces for the planned 800 student station high

school. More realistically, however, conservatively assuming a high school staff of 50 that all drive to work and that only 30% of the high school students drive, nearly 300 parking spaces would be needed to accommodate them. Clearly, overflow parking can be expected to continue with the site utilized as a high school.

In both the Duplex City and Hospital areas, the City can make significant strides toward improving aesthetics by formalizing many of the spaces along the sides of streets by paving and marking them, as well as adding streetscape elements as recommended elsewhere. The City also should amend the Code of Ordinances to make it a code enforcement violation to park a car on a lawn area, then aggressively enforce this provision. Currently, the Code does not disallow parking on grass lawns. In the R-2 district applicable in the Duplex City area, the Code does currently forbid parking within the front setback – and this must be enforced strictly to improve the aesthetic and functional situation.

As shown above, the Northwest Neighborhood faces significant challenges over the coming years. Even more so, however, the Neighborhood has tremendous strengths, and these must be harnessed and nurtured with smart, targeted investments and other initiatives. With this discussion in mind, the recommendations contained in the next section are designed to point the way forward to the Northwest Neighborhood's success and thriving for many years to come.

Identified Issues Summary:

- Need for traffic calming
- Imminent relocation of Homestead General Hospital
- Appearance of some existing areas, particularly some multi-family areas within the neighborhood
- Need to protect stable single-family neighborhoods
- Non-conforming lot sizes
- Streetscaping/improved landscaping on major roads
- Building heights near single-family neighborhoods
- Compatibility/transitioning between uses
- Landscaping
- Neighborhood Connectivity
- Parking



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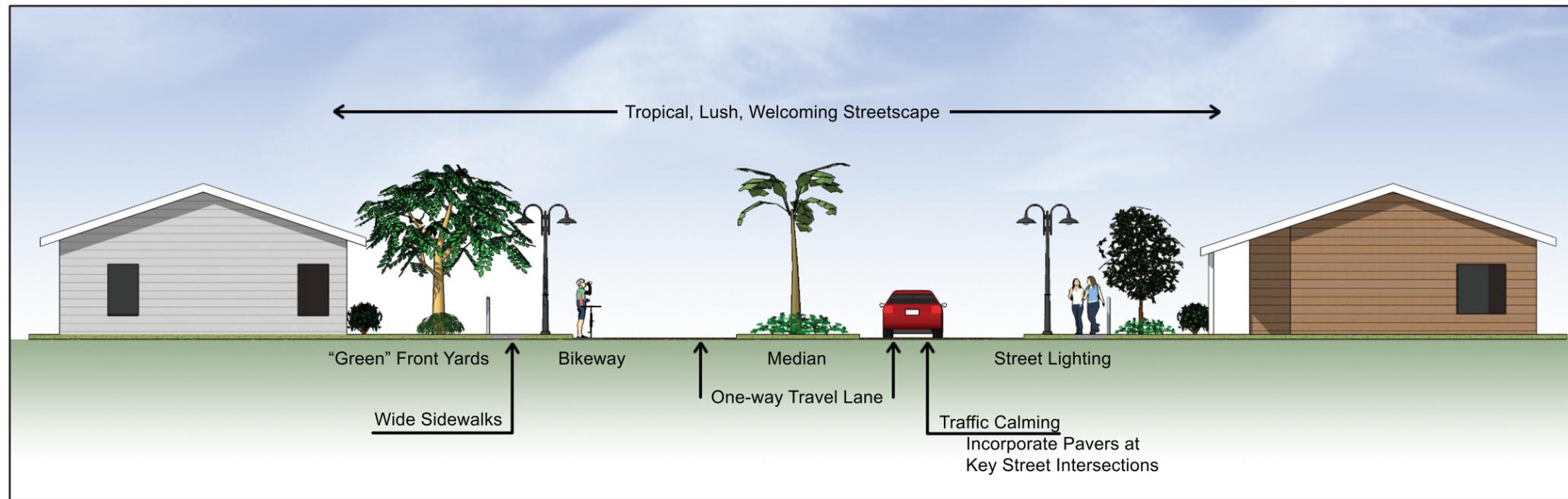


Section 4 - Recommendations

The implementation of the Northwest Neighborhood Plan will require a series of actions to create an effective and positive change in the character and dynamic of the area. These actions need to include the following recommendations based upon the analysis developed in this plan.

Development/Redevelopment Standards

- Amend the City's Code to require the combination of lots in the Low Density Residential Use (LRU) land use that do not meet the minimum lot size requirement and which are under the same or related ownership as of the effective date of the regulation, prior to issuance of a permit for development/redevelopment. Non-conforming, contiguous lots under the same ownership should be required to be combined to meet the current minimum size or reduce the degree of non-conformity to the greatest extent possible. The current administrative variance process to reduce lot sizes for meeting urban design guidelines may be used to determine the minimum lot size.
- Add a policy in the Future Land Use Element (FLUE) of the City's Comprehensive Plan to prohibit piecemeal changes to the LRU future land use designation (changes that would leave LRU areas without clear natural or man-made physical boundaries from other land uses).
- Examine, following the relocation of the Homestead Hospital, the potential for conversion of medical offices to other office uses, or for the conversion of properties back to residential uses. Also consider the possibility of office/residential mixed-use in order to provide additional potential customers for Downtown businesses and increase attainable housing opportunities.
- Revert, if feasible, those parts of the Professional Mixed-Use (PMU) future land use category west of NW 2nd Avenue to the LRU future land use in order to maintain clear boundaries between the LRU and non-residential uses.
- Adjust the Code to require that proposed non-residential buildings adjacent to a property with a Low Density Residential (LRU) future land use shall step down to a maximum of 3 stories adjacent to the LRU property.
- Forbid using the waiver of plat process when proposing to create smaller lots within the Northwest Neighborhood. Any requests to create smaller lots should proceed through



Conceptual Cross Section - 1st Avenue



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the full platting process.

- Amend the Code to allowing the following additional uses in the B-1A zoning district where the future land use is Professional Mixed Use (PMU): artists studio; bake shop, retail only and employing under five (5) persons; barber shops; beauty shops; book stores, except adult book stores; cigar and cigarette shops, retail only; clothing stores; computer software development; cosmetics, perfumes and toiletries stores; florist shops, no outside nurseries; importers/exporters, office only; jewelry stores; leather good stores; photographers, photograph galleries; post offices; and, travel agency. To the extent that any of these additional uses constitute retail uses, the Code should specify that within the B-1A district they shall be limited to a maximum of 2,500 square feet of floor area.
- Add language to the Code allowing the City to impose additional buffering requirements where a proposed non-residential structure within the PMU future land use over 2 stories would be located adjacent to an existing single-family home. The additional buffering should be adequate to screen the proposed non-residential structure from view of the existing single-family home.

Housing Certification Program

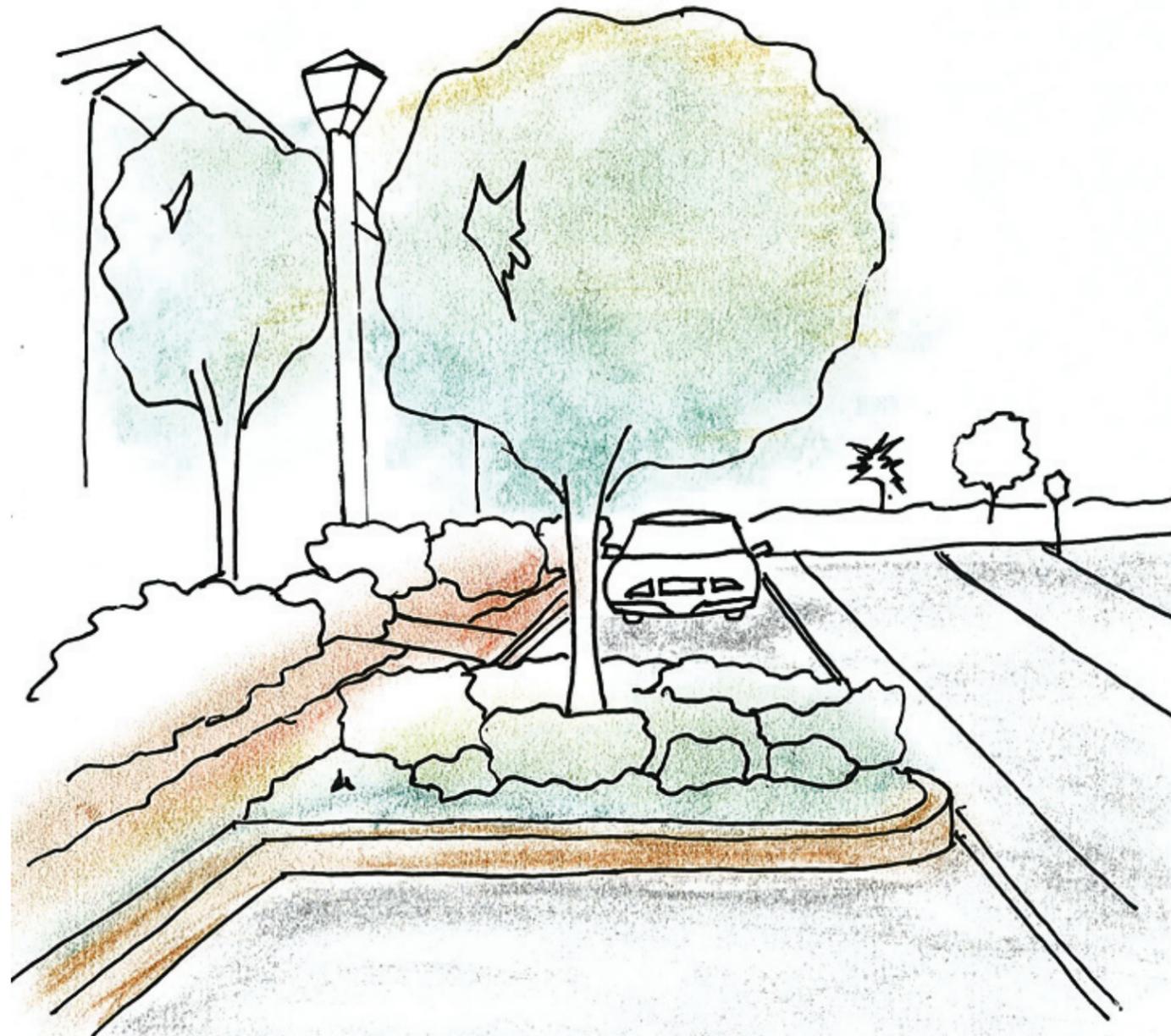
- Implement an annual certification program for multifamily residential units within the Neighborhood to ensure these units meet minimum housing conditions for occupancy.

Bikeway Network

- Provide a bikeway network that will improve east-west and north-south connections between different parts of the Neighborhood, as illustrated on the graphic Summary of Design Recommendations.
- Define Neighborhood edges.
- Connect the existing park system to enhance recreational opportunities.
- Design bikeways on NW 1st Avenue, NW 11th Street, NW 15th Street and other streets as shown on the graphic Summary of Design Recommendations.

Streetscape Plan

- Design lush, welcoming Neighborhood streetscape.
- Provide incentives for planting trees in front yards.
- Incorporate street lighting.
- Install “bulb-outs” with trees in the area now known as Duplex City to improve aesthetics and encourage investment in private properties.
- Analyze the opportunity for on-street parking along portions of NW 1st Avenue.



Proposed bulb-out design to enhance streetscape and provide parking



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Aesthetic Program

- Encourage the Beautification Committee to prioritize the Northwest Neighborhood for landscaping and other aesthetic initiatives.
- Provide Neighborhood entry signage at the Neighborhood's major gateways, with priority for the following streets: Krome Avenue; 15th Street; Campbell Drive; NW 1st Avenue; and, NW 11th Street connecting the east and west sides of the railroad tracks.
- Change the Code to explicitly state that parking on any lawn areas is a Code violation.
- Increase Code Enforcement, focusing on open trash, aesthetically undesirable parking practices and landscaping requirements. Enforce Code provisions aggressively, but maintain flexibility with owners attempting to make improvements.
- Require as a condition for permits for work on existing structures or sites \$5,000 or greater to meet the minimum landscape code.
- Prioritize streets within the Neighborhood to begin implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan concept of redeveloping all Homestead streets as linear parks.
- Establish standardized locations for trash receptacles where multi-family residential areas currently lack such designated facilities.
- Increase education of residents and property owners in the property maintenance requirements of the City Code.

Connectivity/Safety

- Provide traffic calming at key intersections.
- Improve east-west flow by connecting NW 11th Street in the area now known as Duplex City across the railroad tracks. This connectivity will include both vehicular and pedestrian (sidewalks) connections. Also, this crossing point will incorporate traffic calming (pavers) and aesthetic design features such as landscaping, lighting and signage.
- Establish a sidewalk program to provide pedestrian safety and walkable streets. Prioritize building of sidewalks by street as part of implementing the "streets as linear parks" concept of the recently-completed Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Formalize next-to-street parking in the area now known as Duplex City and near the Hospital site by paving and marking where cars currently park in the grass or dirt/gravel areas.

Neighborhood Identity

- Facilitate the establishment of a Neighborhood association by, for example, providing meeting space, identifying business and Neighborhood leaders to begin the effort, etc. Examples of possible activities are Neighborhood cleanup days; advising the City on development and redevelopment proposals; and advocating investment in the Neighborhood.
- Include the name of the "Northwest Neighborhood" on new streets signs when they are erected in the area.

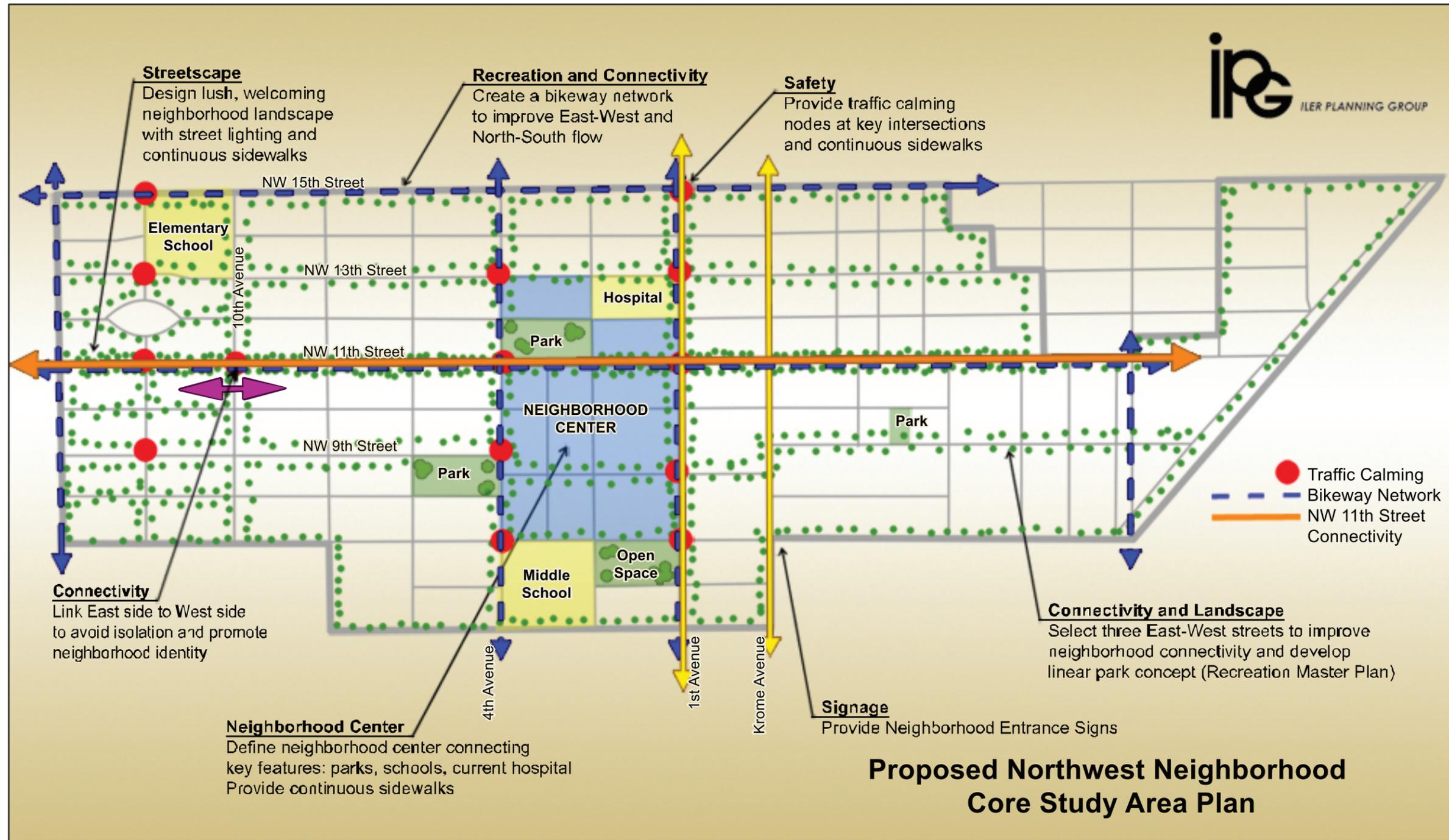


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Summary of Design Recommendations



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