

FINAL PLAN REPORT

THE FORMER OAKTREE SITE REVITALIZATION PLAN

NOVEMBER 2021



Project Team

Project Leadership

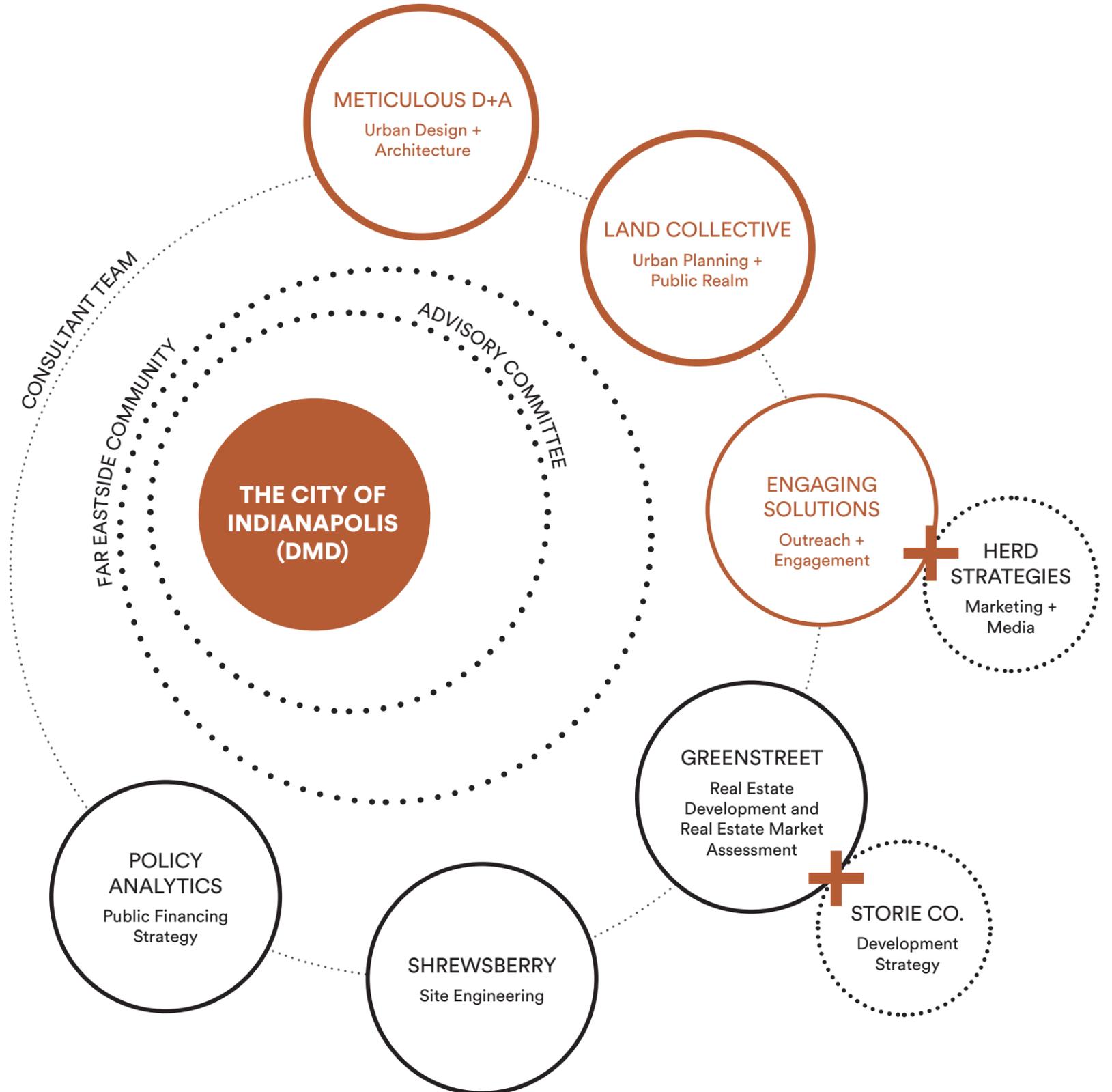
Meticulous Design + Architecture is serving as Prime Consultant on behalf of the **City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development**, alongside **DAVID RUBIN Land Collective** as co-lead.

Engagement

Engaging Solutions is leading the engagement strategy supported by **Herd Strategies** for marketing and public relations, in coordination with the Department of Metropolitan Development.

Technical Experts

Greenstreet, Ltd. and **Storie Co.** are providing expertise in real estate development and market analysis, **Shrewsberry Associates** is providing site engineering services, and **Policy Analytics** is leading the strategy for public financing.



The former Oaktree Apartment site was once part of a bustling residential and commercial area in the Far Eastside of Indianapolis. Neighborhoods and apartments sprouted in the area during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s during the post-war housing boom. Residents and visitors were attracted to major employers and services available in the area. Over time, like many places in Indianapolis and across the country, changes in employment, residential, and retail trends contributed to a decline and disinvestment in some of the area's buildings. The Oaktree Apartments was one of the apartment complexes that suffered decline.

The City of Indianapolis took ownership and demolished the apartment complex in 2018 and 2019 and embarked on this planning process for redevelopment of the 19-acre site. This process took several months and was centered on a public engagement approach. This plan seeks to unite the needs and desires of the Far Eastside community with realistic market and redevelopment scenarios. This process prompted fond memories along with ideas and enthusiasm for the site's future. The plan sets out community values and overarching aspirations. Simultaneously, the plan will help define the design and the implementation steps needed to make the vision a reality.

Thank you to the community, the Advisory Committee, city staff, and the consultants that made this plan a reality.

Carmen L. Lethig, AICP
*Administrator, Division of Long Range Planning
City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development*

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01: VISIONING

THE FORMER OAKTREE SITE REVITALIZATION PLAN

PHASE 1 REPORT | MAY 28, 2021



01: VISIONING

This report represents documentation of initial takeaways as the community envisions a future for the former Oaktree Apartments site. The vision that has begun to take form for this opportunity site has been distilled from initial data collection and review, on-the-ground exploration by the design team, and most importantly, conversations with Far Eastside residents and key stakeholders. The information collected sets the course for forthcoming concept development, with the goal of ensuring recommendations for the site are ultimately a reflection of the Far Eastside community. Five key vision elements have come forward through community conversations, stakeholder input, and other explorations: a place of belonging; upward mobility; identity + expression; connectivity; and flexibility + adaptability. These themes will help guide the technical analysis and concept development that will come in the second phase of this project, and ultimately the development of the site master plan in Phase 3.

It is important to note that this phase represents only the beginning of the project team's outreach and engagement with Far Eastside residents. Throughout the planning and design process, as more resident and stakeholder voices are captured through on-going dialogue, the established vision will need to adapt and evolve to ensure that it is inclusive of the breadth and diversity of the Far Eastside community.

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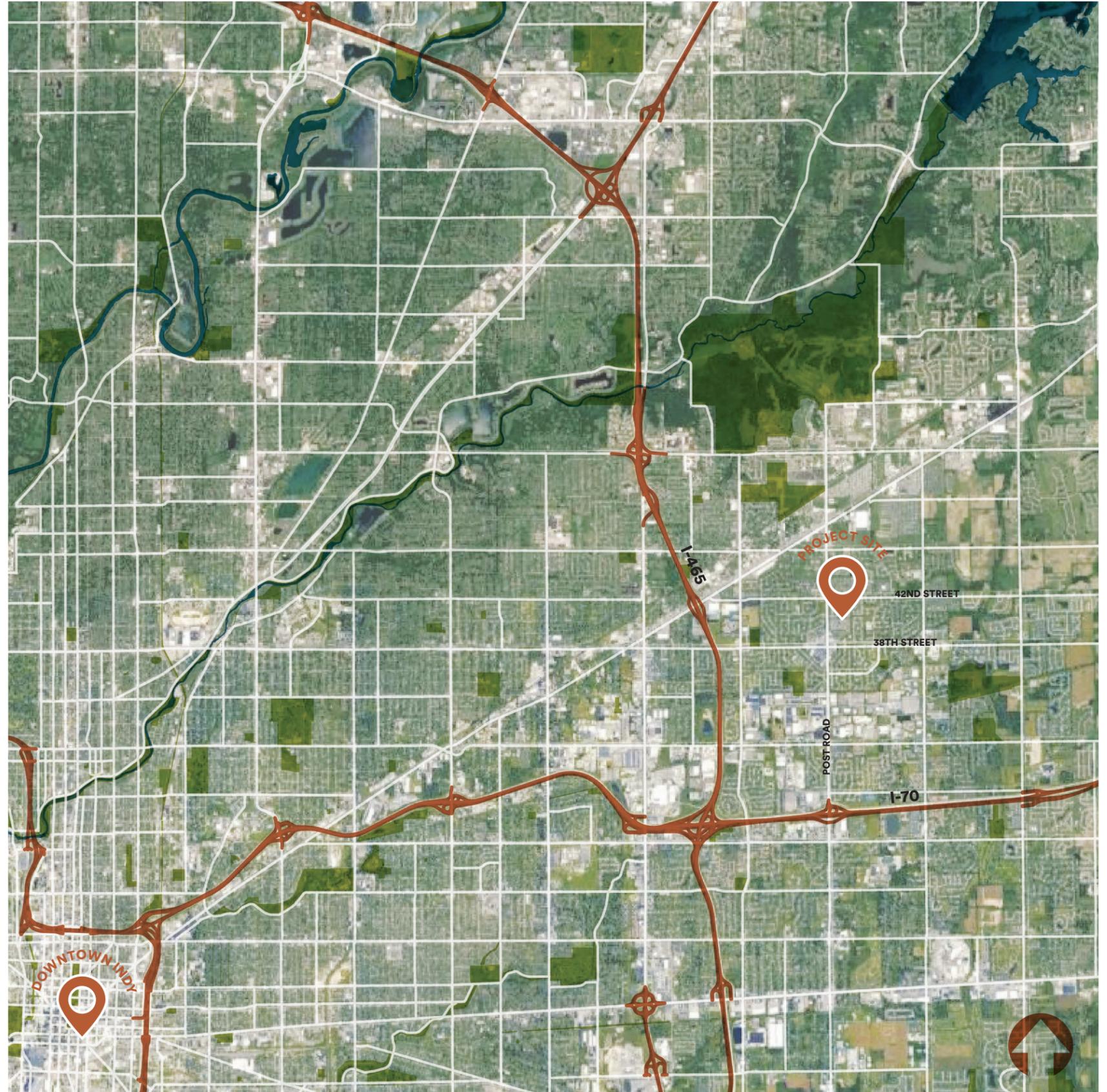
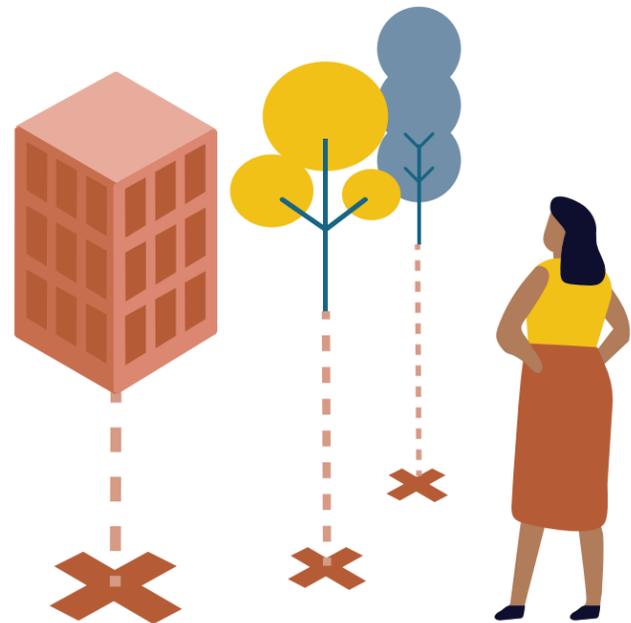
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INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

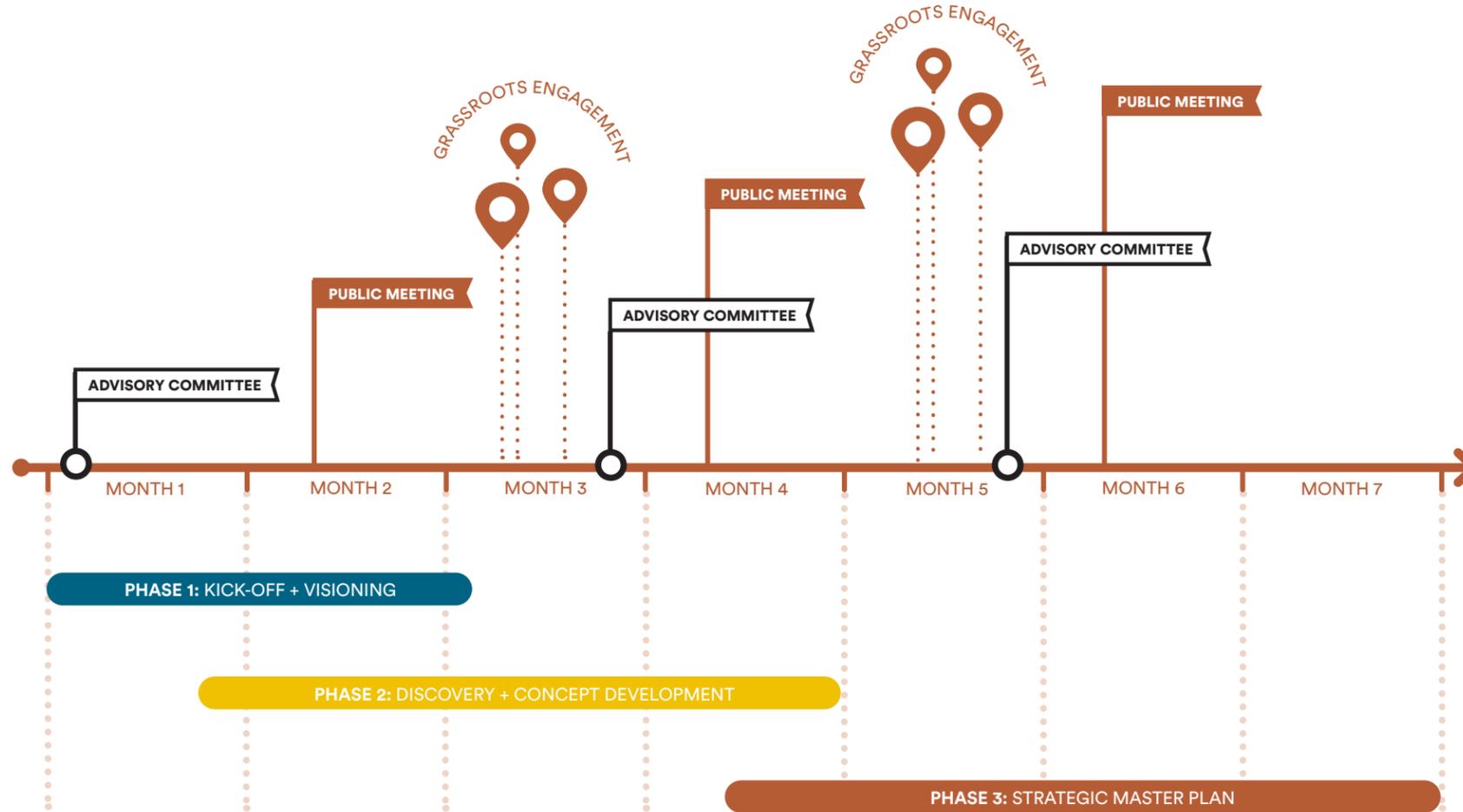
On behalf of the City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development, the project team, led by Meticulous Design + Architecture and DAVID RUBIN Land Collective, is working to create **a community-driven, implementation-minded vision to guide future development of the former Oaktree Apartments site**. The revitalization plan that results from this planning and design process will serve as a roadmap for the City to shepherd the site's reuse and ensure that its development reflects and prioritizes the needs of existing Far Eastside residents and stakeholders.

Formerly a sprawling 300+ unit low-rise apartment complex, the 19-acre site is located on the east side of Post Road, between 38th Street and 42nd Street. The City of Indianapolis acquired the property through eminent domain and the Oaktree Apartments were demolished in 2019 after decades of disrepair and unsafe conditions, including unaddressed damage from a tornado strike in 2008 and multiple fires. The site now represents an opportunity to transform what was once a hot spot for crime, drug trafficking, and prostitution to a catalyst for community-driven change on the Far Eastside.



Process / Project + Engagement Timeline

The planning and design process to develop the Former Oaktree Site Revitalization Plan is structured in three phases, outlined below.



Each phase of the planning and design process will include an advisory committee meeting and a public meeting. The purpose of these key checkpoints is to ensure the project team’s ideas and assumptions are aligned with community needs and values, and to identify opportunities for further refinement. Between each set of meetings, additional grassroots engagement will ensure the process is reflective of the full breadth and diversity of the Far Eastside community.

1. Kick-off and Visioning – This initial phase was focused on establishing strategies and procedures to be employed throughout the planning and design process, engaging in dialogue with residents and stakeholders about their vision for the site, data collection, and initial study of the existing conditions of the site.

Key Tasks/Deliverables:

- Data collection
- Establish vision, goals, and strategies

2. Discovery and Concept Development – During Phase 2, the project team will conduct a thorough quantitative analysis of the site and its surrounding context to better understand potential opportunities and constraints for future development. This information will be synthesized with the vision established in Phase 1, as well as continued dialogue with the community, to develop an initial concept for the former Oaktree Apartments site.

Key Tasks/Deliverables:

- Market and gap analysis
- Analysis of existing plans and initiatives
- Existing conditions analysis
- Initial concept development

3. Strategic Master Plan – The third and final phase of the planning and design process for the former Oaktree Apartments site will result in a master plan for future development, as well as a roadmap for implementation.

Key Tasks/Deliverables:

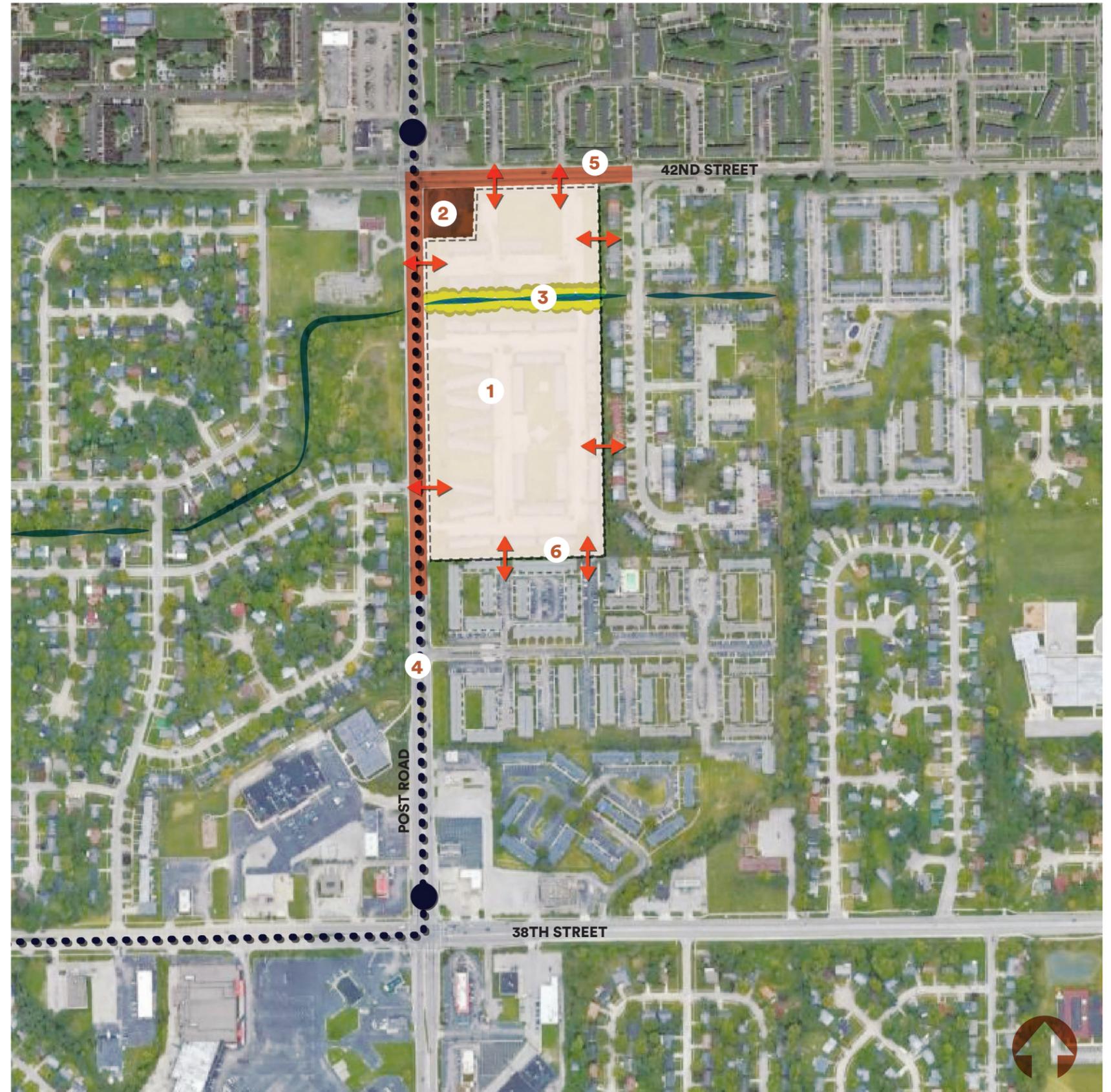
- Master plan development and finalization
- Redevelopment plan
- Implementation plan

PRELIMINARY SITE STUDY

Site Tour Observations

The project team kicked off this initial visioning phase with a client kick-off meeting and an in-depth site tour and discussion on April 5th, 2021. The summary below outlines the team's key observations.

- 1 The opportunity of the site as a 'blank canvas'** – One of the most immediately apparent observations of the project site is the potential of a large, unimproved site. With few physical features within the site itself to impact development, it truly is a 'blank canvas' for the Far Eastside community to envision a new future for 19 acres of their community fabric.
- 2 Constraint of the corner parcel** – The project site is disrupted at the corner of 42nd Street and Post Road by a small parcel with different ownership. The building on the corner is set back from the street frontage, with excessive parking in front of the building and significant curb cuts along both streets. This presents a challenge to the creation of a continuous street-wall and pedestrian-friendly environment along the edge of the project site. Additionally, it limits the opportunity to establish a visible gateway at 42nd Street and Post Road.
- 3 Responding to the creek** – The northern portion of the site is bisected east to west by an unburied creek. Rather than seeing this feature as a constraint, the project team has recognized the creek as a potential opportunity to respond positively through design. While the creek will present a challenge to connectivity between the north and south portions of the site, improving visibility and access to the creek could present benefits through improved environmental vibrancy, recreation, and identity.
- 4 The opportunity of the Purple Line** – The upcoming implementation of the Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Route will drastically improve access to opportunity for Far Eastside residents by improving speed, convenience, and comfort of connectivity to employment, education, healthcare, shopping, and recreation. In particular, the route will connect residents to the major economic centers of downtown Indianapolis and the City of Lawrence.
- 5 Lack of walkability both immediate to the site and throughout the community** – The pedestrian environment of both the site and the Far Eastside community are negatively impacted by a number of factors. Wide streets, high vehicular speeds, unsafe crossings, inconsistent and poorly maintained sidewalks, and inadequate transit facilities compromise both comfort and safety for pedestrians. Immediately adjacent to the site, Post Road and 42nd Street are both impacted by all of these issues. Along 42nd Street in particular, the sidewalk ends completely mid-way along the edge of the site.
- 6 Connecting beyond the site to adjacent uses** – Due to the pattern of development throughout much of the Far Eastside, there is a significant lack of connectivity between individual apartment communities and residential subdivisions. Combined with the vehicular-oriented nature of commercial uses throughout the community and the noted lack of pedestrian safety and comfort, this creates a sense of isolation between uses. Reaching beyond the boundaries of the site and forging new connections could create a more welcoming and community-oriented condition to the built environment.



Demographic Snapshot

Geography: Data was collected from a radius representing a 15-minute walk from 42nd Street and Post Road.

Population: About 9,000 people live nearby, within a 15-minute walk of 42nd Street and Post Road. This area’s population shrank slightly from 2000-2010, but has since rebounded in the following decade, with further growth expected by 2025. The outcome of this redevelopment plan may significantly affect these numbers.

Households: These 9,000 people live in 3,230 households for an average household size of about 2.77, significantly larger than Marion County (2.44) or the metro area (2.53).

Income: A median household income for homes nearby of \$27,033 is significantly lower than Marion County (\$49,406) and the metro area (\$61,272). This area is also losing ground, with incomes rising slower than the county and metro.

Education: Educational attainment rates nearby reflect the younger household makeup either unemployed (22% for those over 16) or in lower wage industries including the service sector. The share of adults over 25 without a high school diploma is about double Marion County’s, at 23.7% to 12.1%, while the share with a four-year degree or more (10.2%) is only a third of Marion County’s (32.3%).

Overview: The immediate neighborhood is made up of significantly younger and poorer households than Marion County. Many larger, renting households face significant barriers to wealth building with so many mouths to feed. Disinvestment and limited access to economic opportunities holds back the potential of a young, working age population trying to make ends meet.

Market Scan

Residential

Rental homes dominate the area, with numerous apartment complexes nearby. 57% of nearby units are rented, with 26% vacant, leaving only 17% owner-occupied. Of the owner-occupied homes, over 80% are valued below \$150,000, compared to just 40% for the metro area. This has limited the ability for local residents to build wealth and is the result of significant landlord ownership of most properties nearby. Some communities are well-maintained and are at an affordable price, but signs of disinvestment have become the norm, culminating in the taking of the Oaktree property itself.

Commercial Retail and Office

There is not significant leasable office space nearby. With the exception of some large occupier-owned properties including the Federal Accounting Service building at Post Road and 56th Street, the office market shows little activity beyond some services including tax preparers etc.

The successful retail centers nearby do well by catering to the high traffic counts on major thoroughfares including gas stations, convenience stores and fast food on Post Road, Pendleton Pike, and 42nd Street. Beyond these auto-oriented uses, there are a significant number of ethnic markets providing various goods and services to the local community, likely revealing an untapped potential for entrepreneurship with the right support.

There is a noted shortage of supermarkets, durable goods, and nearby recreation. Further research and engagement with the community is necessary to understand the numerous gaps in goods and services to local residents.

ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

Stakeholder + Community Engagement Overview

The engagement for this initial phase of the Former Oaktree Site Revitalization Plan included both an Advisory Committee meeting and a Public Meeting. Both meetings followed a similar structure, with an introduction to the project and overview of the planning process followed by discussion centered around community reflections about the history of the Oaktree site as well as hopes for its future. Both meetings were held virtually due to public safety concerns surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. The public meeting was bilingual with a fully translated presentation and live interpretation in Spanish, and was broadcast to a wider audience using Facebook Live. The meeting was advertised through print flyers, social media, and postcards that were mailed to households within a half-mile of the site. A press release was also issued in advance of the meeting. In addition to these two meetings, project team members attended and spoke to residents at the April 20th meeting of the Far Eastside Community Council meeting.

Advisory Committee Members

- Cheria Caldwell, Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
- Miriam Acevedo Davis, La Plaza
- Leila Darden, Far Eastside Community Council
- Moise Duge, Haitian Association of Indiana
- Geoffrey Fenelus, Promise Pr
- Mike Howe, Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
- La Keisha Jackson, City-County Councillor, District 14
- Maggie Lewis, Boys and Girls Club
- Tanya Johnson, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church
- Ericka Miller, City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works
- Stacia Murphy, Develop Indy
- Marty Posch, Finish Line Youth Foundation
- Cameron Radford, IndyGo
- TD Robinson, Mt. Parn Baptist Church
- Derris Ross, The Ross Foundation
- Diane Schussel, Central Indiana Community Foundation/Glick Fund
- Emily Scott, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Chalanta Shockley, Far Eastside Resident
- Annie Smith, Central Indiana Community Foundation
- Darlene Watts, Far Eastside Resident

Public Engagement Summary

There were robust discussions about topics that ranged from residents' lack of participation in the public meeting, to the need for a swimming pool. Residents reminisced about the past and envisioned how the Far Eastside can be the "best neighborhood in Indianapolis."

Residents spoke about a vibrant, robust community. They recalled how people depended upon each other. They recalled black-owned business on major corridors in their community. Some boasted that they are still residents of the Far Eastside.

Some residents are concerned that many residents are not going to participate in future public meetings regarding Oaktree. They noticed the lack of Hispanic and African Americans in the meeting. They also noticed a large contingency of stakeholders, which for some is problematic. One noticeable comment about stakeholders: **"With all due respect, get out in the public and let the residents see you so they can get to know who you are and the role you play in the development of Oak Tree land. Not just virtual only."** However, others were encouraged by the stakeholders' presence and how they are engaging the residents. Some residents stated they are happy to see Meticulous as part of the stakeholder group.

Residents are looking for the same opportunities, experiences, and resources other residents have in different neighborhoods across Indianapolis. For example, they spoke about affordable housing, having an art center and artist spaces, spaces for families, a library, green spaces, and sustainable business opportunities on the site that is being revitalized. While some residents commented that they don't want resources, other residents feel that resources are welcomed, and necessary.

What we Heard

“A space for art would be lovely. Anytime I hear spoken word or go to first Friday, I have to go downtown. We have so much talent on the Far Eastside.”

“How can you ensure that the current residents and past residents will have a voice and say so on this matter?”

“We need a place where people can bring their skills/products and market them.”

“We want our people to have what they need to enjoy and thrive.”

“Affordable townhouse or condos....This site can be mixed use and include housing, library, pool, small restaurants, greenspace, safe place for families, etc.”

“Get the food trucks off every corner with a place to eat.”

“Get out in the public and let the residents see you so they can get to know who you are and the role you play in the development of Oaktree land.”

“The goal is to keep people here but also add people who doesn't live here. The goal is to make this neighborhood one of the best neighborhoods in the city of Indianapolis.”



Lessons Learned

- More residents must attend the public meetings.
- A variety of outreach tools and are needed to increase public participation.
- Stakeholders should be more visible in the community and not just during the public meetings.
- Residents are excited about stakeholder involvement in the public meetings.
- Residents are willing to take a leadership role in the public meetings and in promoting the public meetings.
- Stakeholders should leverage residents' talents to help engage more residents.
- Residents are proud of the Far Eastside and they are willing to engage stakeholders and each other to make it the best community possible.
- Residents want resources in their community that are not just "handouts."
- Residents want resources that help create sustainable opportunities.
- There are many similarities and differences identified in the one-word exercises between stakeholders and residents.

PROJECT VISION

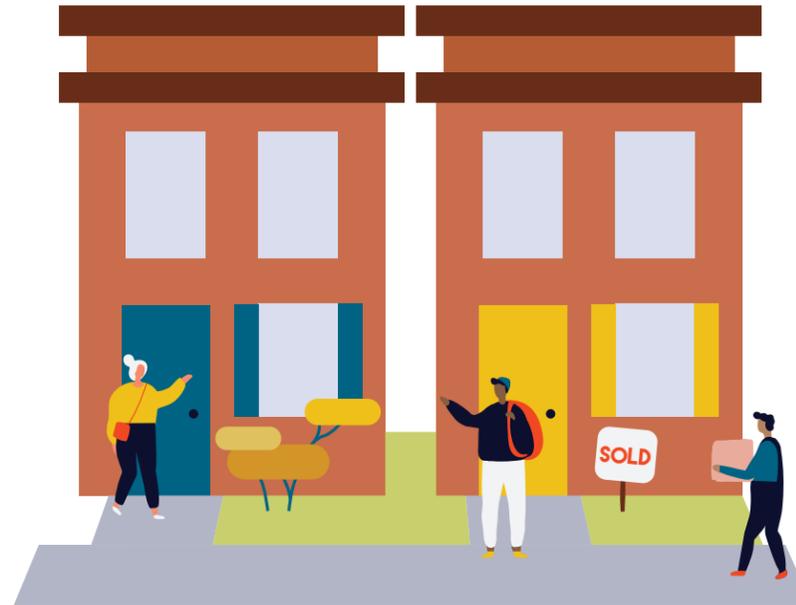
A launching point for dialogue and design

Through dialogue with Far Eastside residents and stakeholders and observations of physical elements of the site and its surrounding context, five key themes have come forward to drive the initial vision for the Former Oaktree Apartments site. While the vision for this project will continue to evolve as additional engagement with the community and analyses are conducted, these five themes will serve as the launching point for future dialogue and concept development.



A Place of Belonging

During the first public meeting, residents expressed the need for a place where residents of the Far Eastside can gather and ‘just be’. With a noted lack of nearby libraries or other similar institutions where residents, and especially youth, can spend time outside of home and work free-of-cost, the site is envisioned as a place where the community can come together and feel a sense of belonging.



Upward Mobility

Access to affordable home ownership, especially for first-time homeowners, was identified by key stakeholders as a critical element to promoting upward mobility for existing residents of the Far Eastside. Through the inclusion of a diverse range of housing types and costs within the project site, future development can provide an opportunity for multi-generational wealth-building for Far Eastside residents.



Identity + Expression

The future development of the former Oaktree Apartments site should feel inherently ‘of’ the Far Eastside, regardless of the uses it includes. It should be a place in which Far Eastside residents see themselves reflected, and the existing community should have an active role in defining this. Opportunities for creative expression should be a core driver of the development, resulting in a place that is for and by the Far Eastside community.



Connectivity

Any design for future development should consider connectivity beyond the boundaries of the project site. An improved pedestrian environment and multi-modal connectivity to adjacent and nearby parcels, the broader Far Eastside community, and the city beyond will ensure that Far Eastside residents have greater access to opportunity and fully integrate the site into its surrounding context.



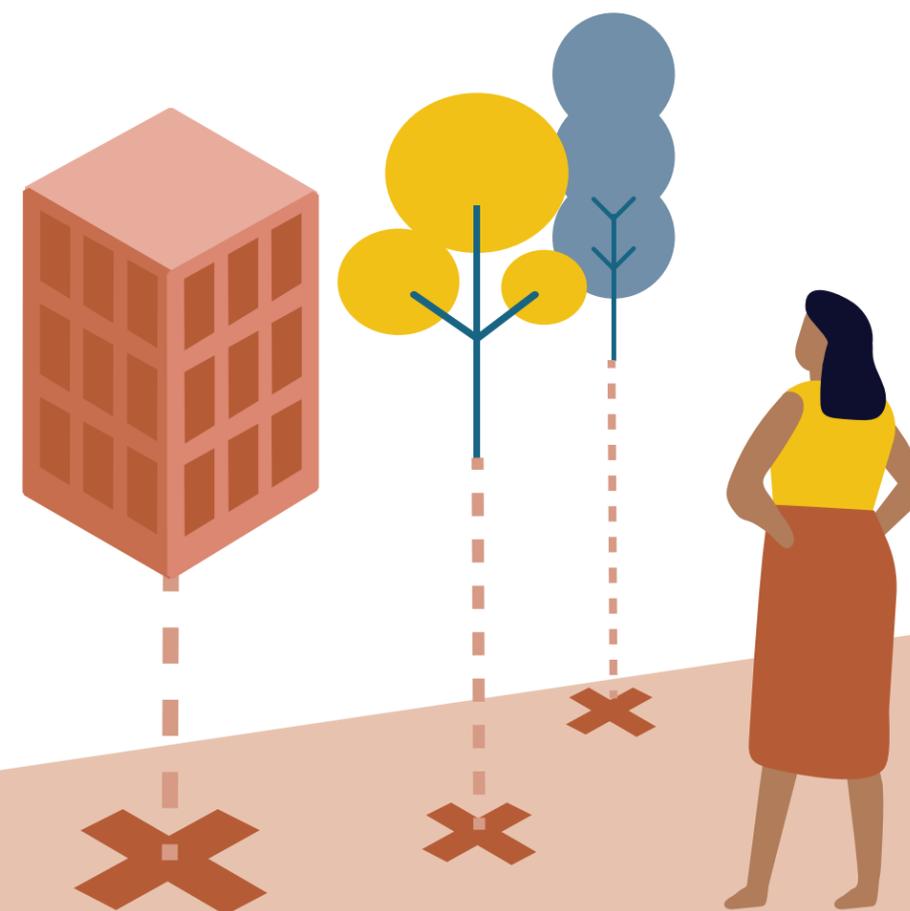
Flexibility + Adaptability

To ensure that the future of the project site is economically resilient and does not repeat its own history, it is critical that future development represents a diverse range of uses and meets a wide range of community needs. Spaces within the development should be flexible and adaptable, and designed in such a way that they can grow and evolve with the Far Eastside community.

02: DISCOVERY + CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

THE FORMER OAKTREE SITE REVITALIZATION PLAN

PHASE 2 REPORT | JULY 23, 2021



02: DISCOVERY + CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Building on the visioning and goals defined in Phase One, this document represents the initial concepts envisioned with the residents, key stakeholders, and the city for the future development at the Oaktree site. The concepts and key takeaways documented in this report are directly influenced by the data provided by existing city plans and initiatives, initial market and policy assessments, and input from the community and Advisory Committee. These concepts are basic frameworks for development; they represent the major priorities of the community that are achievable within the built context, and are reflective of the market conditions of the Far Eastside neighborhood. Three key development frameworks emerged through engagement with the community and design exploration: ‘Neighborhood Heart’, ‘Community Empowerment’, and ‘Business Destination.’ These concepts provide possibilities for future massing, but are intentionally not prescriptive in design. These initial concepts will help guide further policy and market studies in Phase Three, and will be the basis for the final masterplan document.

During Phase Two, the design team realized that the original number of community touch-points was not adequate to achieve the inclusive planning and design process that the Far Eastside community deserved. Together with the city, the design team held Community Conversations with the LatinX and Haitian Creole populations to ensure that voices from many different backgrounds were heard. This program will carry through to Phase Three, and the design team will continue to adapt to the needs of the community we are serving.

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EXISTING PLANS + INITIATIVES

Building on Previous Work

Consideration of previous planning initiatives and policies ensures that new processes will be in alignment with City priorities, and that previous findings are carried forward. The following document review includes summaries of existing plans and initiatives, as well as key considerations.

Key Considerations Moving Forward

Improving connectivity for all modes of transportation, but especially for pedestrians and bicyclists, should be prioritized.

The presence of a bus rapid transit (BRT) station directly adjacent to a property represents a critical opportunity to integrate transit oriented development (TOD) principles, and provides an anchor for the recommended District Center station typology.

Even with the strong existing network of community members and businesses and an expanding public transit system in the Far Eastside neighborhood, many residents still face barriers in accessing opportunities.

Many of the needs and concerns that have been expressed by the community during this planning process are echoed in documents that are a decade-plus older. Concerns such as a lack of grocery stores, parks, and places to gather are long-standing issues, rather than transitory.



Stakeholders consider and discuss assets and challenges facing the Far Eastside during a 2019 focus group meeting for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Economic Inclusion Agenda.

“The Far Eastside has a strong existing network of residents, institutions and community-oriented organizations and businesses... Leveraging the potential for partnerships between residents, organizations, and businesses can help to connect existing and future jobs to Far Eastside residents.”

- Economic Inclusion Agenda for the Far Eastside, 2020

“Higher density and building heights should follow nearby BRT stations... [District Centers] will be less focused on the experience of visitors, instead requiring cleanliness, safety, and high-quality pedestrian amenities for residents and workers.”

- Transit Oriented Development Design Guidelines, 2018

Purple Line Transit Oriented Development Strategic Plan, Anticipated Adoption 2021

This plan establishes policy guidelines that support land use and development patterns that complement the implementation of the Purple Line BRT (bus rapid transit) route. The 42nd and Post transit stop has a typology of “District Center” (DC), which are walkable areas of multiple city blocks serving as cultural and commercial hubs for multiple neighborhoods. A mix of office, retail, entertainment, and residential with high densities at the center is recommended. Development opportunities include infill, redevelopment, dense residential properties, employment near transit stations, neighborhood retail, and a focus on walkability and placemaking.

Purple Line Transit Impact Study - Baseline Report, 2020

The Transit Impact Study (TIS) was conducted to help IndyGo better understand and quantify the changes that may take place along the Purple Line BRT route. The standard TIS focuses on five core project characteristics: physical scope, capital costs, transit service levels, operations and maintenance costs, and ridership. In addition to the above, the TIS for the Purple Line includes an analysis of other attributes, such as demographics, population, economic characteristics, housing, crime, commute mode share, and physical development. Over time, IndyGo will conduct periodic “snapshot” analyses of key attributes and conduct an “after” study approximately five years after the initiation of revenue service.

Economic Inclusion Agenda for the Far Eastside, 2020

The Economic Inclusion Agenda is a work plan that prioritizes and guides coordinated investment and programmatic activity by aligning workforce and economic development efforts with the culturally-rooted capacities and programs of community-based organizations. The strategies defined in the Economic Inclusion Agenda document are organized around economic and workforce development that centers people, place, and businesses, with a special focus on where these three areas intersect. These strategies are designed to uplift existing residents and businesses, align the economic efforts with community values and interests, and ensure collaboration with and accountability to the Far Eastside Community.

Inclusive Incentives, A Roadmap for Economic Development in Indianapolis, 2019

The inclusive incentives policy represents a shift in the City’s economic development incentive programs to support more equitable economic opportunity and reduce racial disparities in access to opportunity and career pathways. The policy includes four key pillars to supporting opportunity (business growth, skills development, physical investment, social capital and support systems), and differentiates certain sectors as “opportunity industries” that typically provide higher paying jobs to those without a four-year degree. This policy also amended the tax abatement and training grant programs, outlined the need to develop a land strategy for publicly owned land, and recommends the creation of a “community impact network”.

North Post Road Redevelopment Area, 2019

In 2018 the North Post Road Redevelopment Area (RDA) was created in response to declining property values, as well as numerous code enforcement and health violations. Proposed redevelopment activities include land acquisition, blight elimination, land disposition, environmental remediation, site preparation, and investments in public infrastructure. In 2019 the neighborhood of Brentwood, also known as Towne and Terrace, located immediately east of the site, was added to the RDA.

Transit Oriented Development Design Guidelines, 2018

The study area falls within the purview of the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Design Guidelines due to the proposed Purple Line running adjacent to the site. The TOD Design Guidelines are an educational resource that informs on the concepts of TOD, bus rapid transit (BRT), urban design, and provides references for TOD implementation.

Indianapolis-Marion County Pedestrian Plan, 2015

The City’s pedestrian plan establishes a long-term vision for a more walkable and healthier Indianapolis. The plan establishes clear, equitable, data-driven priorities for future investments in walking projects and programs, making the community safer and more accessible for all. Recognizing that previous policies were having a low impact per dollar spent, the Pedestrian Plan marked a shift in funding distribution to prioritize areas based on safety, health, and equity. The site is in the top tier (Tier 1) priority geography for pedestrian investments, and two projects from the “Top 100 Priority Projects” are located within a half mile of the project site.

MARKET ASSESSMENT + GAP ANALYSIS

Demand

The area around the former Oaktree Site has suffered from decades of disinvestment, resulting in a significant concentration of impoverished neighborhoods cut off from economic opportunities. A broader mix of incomes would help provide a basic threshold for market-based services to function, while a stronger social support system would help stabilize the neediest of residents and businesses.

Residential

There is a significant need for subsidized, affordable housing nearby. There are over 2,300 cost-burdened households in nearby census tracts (3308.03, 3308.04, 3308.05, 3308.06), who pay more than 30% of their incomes on renting or ownership costs. Support for new-construction market rents and home sales is currently non-existent, since the going prices nearby are much lower than what is required for new construction to be feasible.

Retail

While there is a need for more retail and commercial services nearby, the current purchasing power and challenging environments for businesses to operate will make this a later-phase step, if it is feasible at all. Numerous retail shopping centers nearby are mostly vacant and in a state of disrepair, revealing a challenging retail market.

The recent closure of a nearby Kroger (6108 E. 46th Street, closed in 2018) and Walmart Neighborhood Market (8010 E. 38th Street, closed in 2019) due to poor financial performance (*IBJ, 2021*) illustrate the challenges ahead.

Nearby, however, are some grocery options including smaller ethnic markets, the planned Indy Fresh Market at 38th Street and Sheridan, ALDI, and Save-A-Lot on Pendleton Pike to the north. While none of these are directly walkable from the former Oaktree site, Indy Fresh Market will be a short ride down the Purple Line.

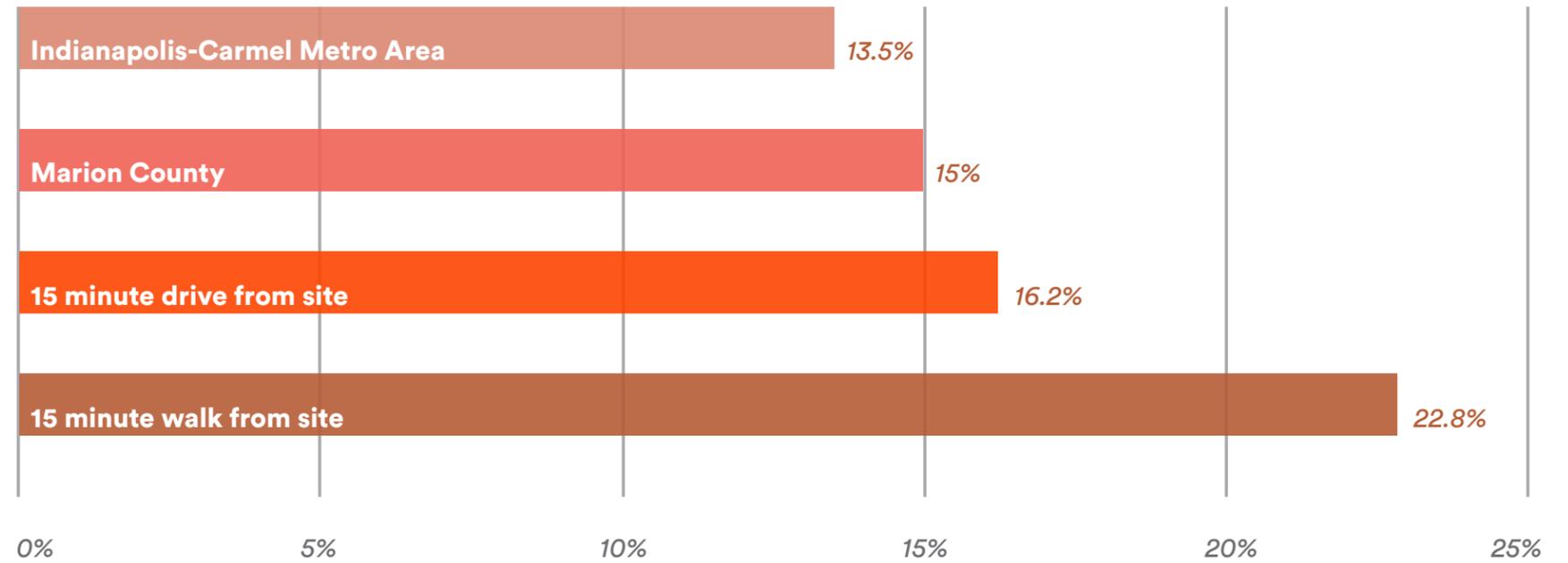
Plaza Urbana and some of the other older retail buildings nearby may provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs, but they will need support.



HISTORIC DISINVESTMENT

Some nearby communities have been neglected by out of town owners. The community has expressed concern that the future development on the Oaktree site does not repeat what has happened in the past.

Source: Mark O’Neill



2020 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Residents near the former Oaktree site have faced numerous barriers to economic mobility. Residents living within a 15 minute walk or drive from the site have a higher rate of unemployment, compared to the unemployment rate of Marion County and the Indianapolis-Carmel metro area.

Source: Esri

Office and Industrial

Employment-related uses are the most promising prospect for redeveloping a significant portion of the site. The light industrial and distribution markets are doing relatively well in Central Indiana, and some users may prefer this site with the right incentives.

Nearby light industrial and commercial parks have aging buildings, so a sizable parcel with transit access, as the Oaktree site has, may be attractive. This taxable use opens the door for important financing tools including Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

Public + Social Service Uses

While not driven by the market, numerous public and non-profit uses could play an important role in stabilizing the area and sparking development on the site.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Successful redevelopment of this site will need to be a significant catalyst that carefully builds demand and the market for new housing and services aimed at all incomes. But this will be an arduous task requiring implementation by a community development corporation that currently does not exist. Funding and capacity for such an organization will be critical as part of a public-private partnership to rebuild the market in this area.

Case Study: Jobs, Training, and Food Access on East 38th Street

Cook Medical, in partnership with Goodwill Institutes, will open a new manufacturing plant near the former Oaktree Site at East 38th Street and Sheridan. A new 14,000 square foot full-service grocery store will be built nearby, and will be operated by local entrepreneurs.

The redevelopment offers many benefits to the community:

- \$3.6 million investment and 15-20 jobs at Indy Fresh Market
- A rent-to-own model for two local entrepreneurs to expand their existing Wall Street Market, with training and other support in operating Indy Fresh Market
- Food access on a prominent transit corridor
- Training and support for employees from Goodwill's wrap-around services
- Curriculum development with Martin University in IT, HR, supply chain, and entrepreneurship



PHYSICAL CONTEXT + CONDITIONS

Making connections beyond the project boundary

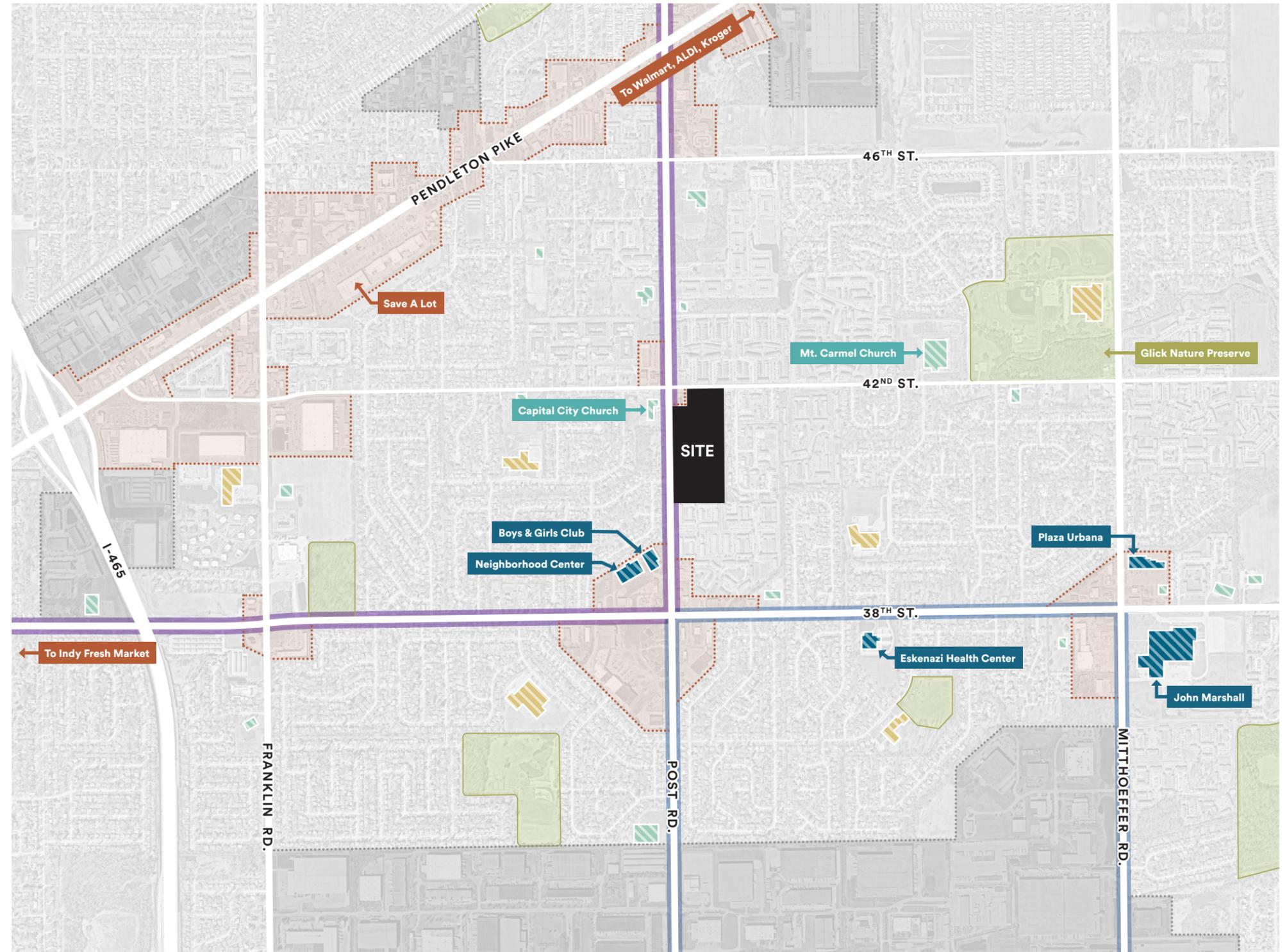
While much of this document focuses on the improvements that can be made within the project boundary line, it is important to recognize its position within the larger urban fabric. Connectivity, both physically and emotionally, to community assets within the Far Eastside neighborhood is an essential component of a vibrant development that is loved by the people who live and work around it.

Commercial activity

The site sits between two zones of commercial activity: Pendleton Pike to the north, and the intersection at 38th and Post Road. The engagement process has revealed the need for grocers and restaurants beyond the fast-food restaurants that are typical in the neighborhood. The Purple Line adjacent to the site on Post Road connects the two existing commercial and industrial zones, and provides a potential opportunity for greater commercial vibrancy on the site.

Community Assets

There is a strong network of community-oriented businesses and organizations in the Far Eastside. The Boys and Girls Club, La Plaza, Plaza Urbana, CAFE, and others offer many community services that the Oaktree development should aim to support and complement. Through the engagement process, resources like career advancement training and access to small business capital and legal resources were identified as needed social services in the community. Leveraging the local resources already in place, the Oaktree site has the opportunity to fill some of the needs of the neighborhood.



TRANSIT	
	IndyGo Purple Line
	IndyGo Route 87

KEY ZONES	
	Commercial Zone
	Industrial Zone

KEY TYPOLOGIES	
	Community Assets
	Schools
	Parks
	Churches

Assessing the Housing Opportunities

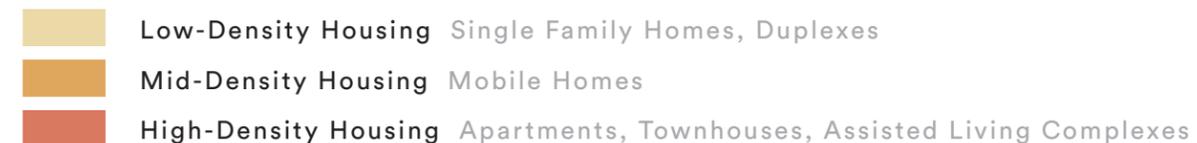
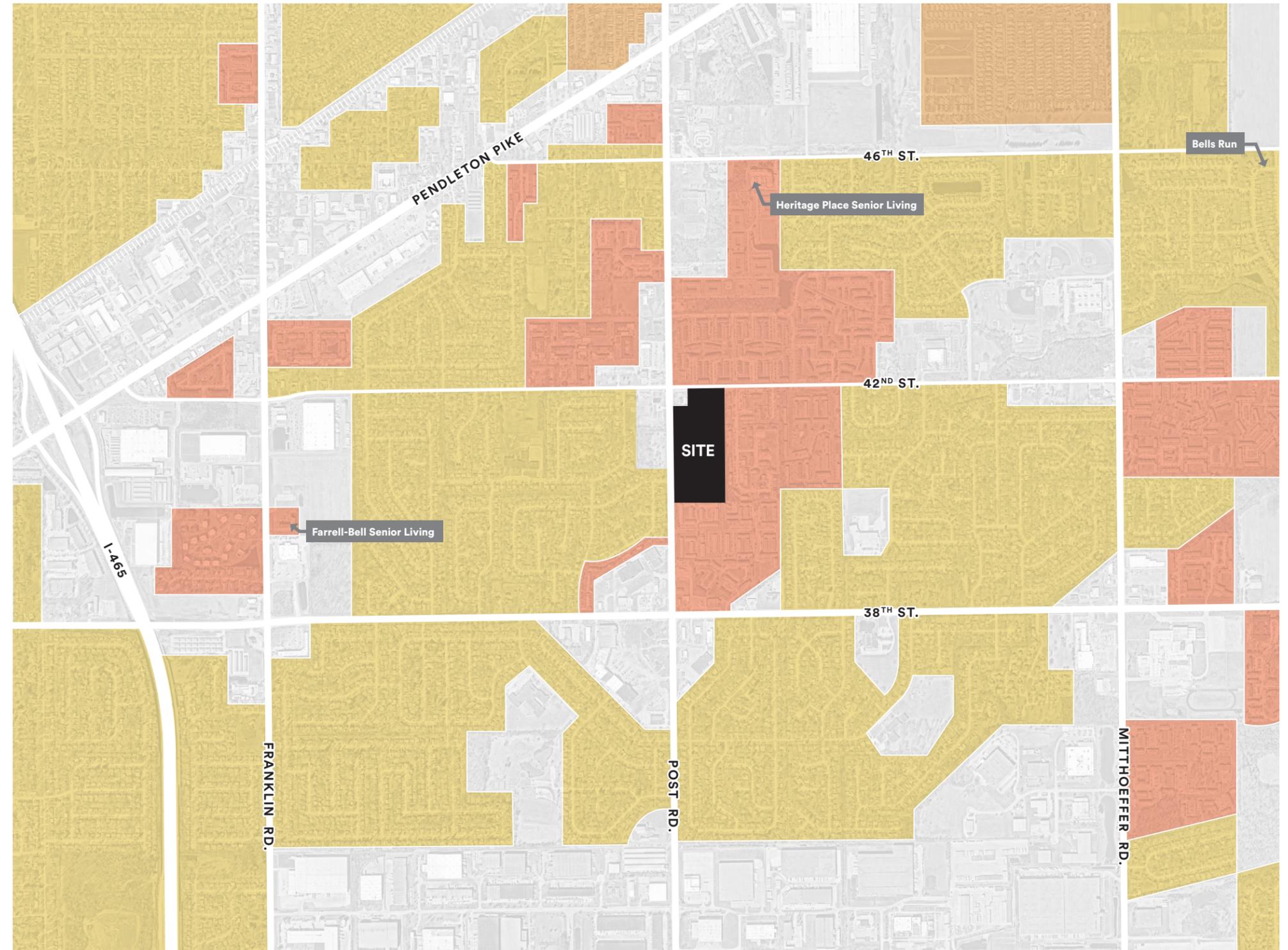
The Far Eastside began as a suburban upstart community during the post-war housing boom in 1960. Over the following decade, the former rural landscape was transformed into subdivisions of new single-family homes, apartment complexes with shared greens, and large shopping centers at key intersections. Proximity to primary corridors and employment opportunities made the Far Eastside a highly desirable neighborhood to reside in. Once the nearby manufacturers started shuttering doors in the 1980s, the Far Eastside saw a sharp decline in employment and, in turn, quality of life for residents.

Homes, No Owners

Single-family housing tracts make up the majority of the residential stock within this study area. All of these subdivisions are relatively similar in style and quality, with modest homes and good sidewalk networks. While a large offering of houses creates the opportunity for ownership, only 17% are owner-occupied, with high vacancy and rental rates. The houses are also less valuable than those in other areas of Marion County, which has limited the ability for local residents to build wealth. Arbor Homes has a new development on 46th Street east of Mitthoeffer Road, the only new builds in the area.

High Density, Not High Quality

There are a substantial number of apartment complexes in the study area. These complexes, while providing many units for prospective renters, are not considered to be desirable by most Far Eastside neighbors. Much like the former Oaktree apartments, a lack of proper maintenance and upkeep by inattentive out-of-state landlords has led to conditions that are neither safe nor acceptable. A small amount of new high-density living has been added to the community at the Farrell-Bell and Heritage Place living centers, which cater to seniors.



CONCEPT WORKSHOP TAKEAWAYS

Overview

Meticulous Design + Architecture organized and led a 2-day Design Concept Workshop with the client, DMD, and multiple consultants to begin defining the high-level design direction for the Oaktree Redevelopment master plan. The nineteen acre site is located on 42nd Street and Post Road and is currently empty with a few large growth trees and a small stream called Field Creek bisecting one-third of the site. The main objective of the workshop was to begin analyzing the visionary aspirations of the Far Eastside community through intentional discussions and graphic design charrette exercises. Our goals were to identify top priorities that needed to be addressed for a successful master plan, identify gaps in research, potential opportunities and constraints and explore both functional and aspirational design solutions. A 7-page agenda asking specific questions ranging from why the area declined over the years to present day wants and needs of the Far Eastside community sparked lively conversations within the group. Seven ‘Guiding Design Principles’ were chosen over the two day period to drive the design direction into Phase Three. Going forward, the Client, Design Team and Consultants remain steadfast in our determination to create a design that honors the Far Eastside residents’ hopes, dreams and desires while also satisfying market demands and requirements needed for a successful RFP process.

Guiding Principles

Be a catalyst for empowerment and authentic identity in the community

Create opportunity for ownership and wealth-building

Establish community buy-in

Create physical and emotional connections to the site and neighborhood

Ensure an inviting, safe, and accessible environment

Preserve and enhance the site’s natural amenities

Create a legacy project that balances spaces for living, mixed-use commercial, and civic engagement

Exercise 1 Overview:

The Big What, Why, Who and How - What are we trying to accomplish? What is the need and why does it matter?

To breathe “life” back into the Oaktree site and spark renewed interest in the Far Eastside was the overwhelming takeaway from this first exercise. Establishing trust, transparency and physical/emotional connections beyond the site boundary was deemed critical to a successful project.

Exercise 2 Overview:

What practical services, features and attributes should be included in the development?

Balancing the need for basic services in addition to aspirational desires that empower all ages was considered the highest priority. Creating a mixed-use development that offered Far Eastside residents’ stability, safety, community, and opportunities for growth stood out as being essential for long-term sustainability.

Exercise 3 Overview:

Get Out Your Pen – It’s Time to Draw!

Workshop participants were asked to draw a master plan diagram of what they envisioned for the site after hearing the community’s wants and desires. Many ideas were presented, but all layouts created a flexible outdoor space or “heart” that could be programmed for different events and community gatherings. The intent was to create ONE community that connects to the surrounding neighborhood.

Exercise 4 Overview:

Future Pull / Crystal Ball: Envision a New Tomorrow

This exercise was rolled into the above charrette for time purposes. Breaking down barriers by creating ONE community was the “future pull” and overall vision for a new tomorrow.

Exercise 5 Overview:

SWOT (Strengths / Weakness / Opportunities / Threats)

Participants broke into smaller groups and discussed the SWOT themes. The most important findings of each theme were the following. 1) Strength - proximity to Purple Line and making Field Creek a feature; 2) Weakness – Lack of safety and no surrounding connectivity; 3) Opportunities – Catalyst for future investment and establishing community pride; 4) Threats – Disconnected reinvestment area and fear of gentrification.

Exercise 6 Overview:

Don’t Hold Back Any Thoughts

Participants were asked to name the top 3 priorities they most wanted to see implemented in this project. 1) Create a “resiliency hub”, a place that sprouts a new tomorrow; 2) Maintain an authentic identity that elicits pride of place; and 3) Create a development that balances needs, wants and desires of the Far Eastside community.

ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

Stakeholder + Community Engagement Overview

Phase Two of the Oaktree Site Revitalization Plan included three major engagement activities: Advisory Committee meeting 2, Public Meeting 2, and Community Conversations 1 and 2. All three engagement activities followed a similar structure with an introduction to the project purpose, project process, site analysis, an introduction to the five project vision statements, and an introduction to the potential uses for the site. This was followed by a discussion centered around the community's priorities for the site regarding residential, commercial, and civic spaces. Both meetings were held virtually due to pre-existing Covid-19 planning. The public meeting was bilingual with a fully translated presentation and live interpretation in Spanish and was broadcast to a wider audience using Facebook Live. The Community Conversations were hosted in person at La Plaza and C.A.F.E. with the intention of having a cultural and language-specific focus group to receive feedback from the LatinX and Haitian population on the Far Eastside. Both the public meeting and Community Conversations were advertised through print and electronic flyers. Team members also attended the Far Eastside Community Council meeting on June 22nd, and C.A.F.E.'s food distribution on June 28th and July 12th.

Advisory Committee Members

- Cheria Caldwell, Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
- Miriam Acevedo Davis, La Plaza
- Leila Darden, Far Eastside Community Council
- Moise Duge, Haitian Association of Indiana
- Geoffrey Fenelus, Promise Pr
- Mike Howe, Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
- La Keisha Jackson, City-County Councilor, District 14
- Maggie Lewis, Boys and Girls Club
- Tanya Johnson, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church
- Ericka Miller, City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works
- Stacia Murphy, Develop Indy
- Marty Posch, Finish Line Youth Foundation
- Cameron Radford, IndyGo
- TD Robinson, Mt. Paren Baptist Church
- Derris Ross, The Ross Foundation
- Diane Schussel, Central Indiana Community Foundation/Glick Fund
- Emily Scott, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Chalanta Shockley, Far Eastside Resident
- Annie Smith, Central Indiana Community Foundation
- Darlene Watts, Far Eastside Resident

Public Engagement Summary

During Advisory Committee Meeting 2 and Public Meeting 2, there were robust discussions about the types of residential units the community would like to see at the Oaktree site. During these conversations, several concerns were raised regarding the placement of apartments on the site. Currently, on the Far Eastside, there are approximately 23 apartment communities - many have a negative history of "slumlords", lack of ownership, are typically rented by lower income individuals, and are lacking resources and services to accommodate the influx of residents in those developments. **During the Advisory Committee meeting, the community was not opposed to smaller-scaled apartments, potentially owned by local landlords, that provide clean, safe, and dignified housing for residents.**

Many comments continued to echo the need for a safe environment that could deter crime, address major community issues like poor access to fresh food, and for a place where residents could feel pride. The community asked that the site help restore the Far Eastside to the vibrancy of a few decades ago. Additionally, the community noted the desire for the development to be free of absentee landlords, and for it to be a beacon of innovative and creative solutions to the existing problems of the neighborhood.

It was noted by the design team during both the Public Meeting and the Advisory Committee meeting that the development at Oaktree will not be able to single-handedly revitalize the entire Far Eastside neighborhood, nor will it be able to solve many of the long-standing issues, such as racism, crime, and historic disinvestment; that the community has noted during the engagement process. The future development can only be the beginning catalyst that engenders future empowerment through public-private partnerships.

The LatinX and Haitian Community Conversations echoed the same sentiments from the public meeting. The need for security, updated infrastructure, including city lights and safer streets, and additional police presence on the site. Both groups noted a need for art spaces, educational advancement for children and adults, and attractions that bring non-residents to the Far Eastside. Both Haitian and LatinX groups wanted greater access to food - through a grocer, farmers markets, and/or space for a small business to sell goods. Both groups also did not believe apartments were needed on site, and questioned the need for residential space in general. Overall, community members in all three engagement activities noted a desire for a safe space where individuals could actualize their talents, be surrounded by the arts, and feel a sense of community belonging and pride.

What we Heard



Lessons Learned

Crime, and the perception that the neighborhood is unsafe, was a major point of concern for residents. The masterplan should consider well connected sidewalks and pedestrian safety, street lighting, and other safety measures.

Apartment buildings on site are a nuanced topic - many residents fear that a new apartment complex on the Oaktree site will be a repeat of history. During future engagement activities, the design team should talk through the community’s objections and provide examples of properly maintained and appropriately scaled apartment complexes.

Educational opportunities such as skills training, tutoring services, business attainment, and immigration services were desired. The design team will continue to right-size expectations of built infrastructure and agency involvement.

Food access, either a grocer or a weekly farmers market, continued to be a primary aspiration for the community. The design team will need to set realistic expectations for the possibility of a grocer on this development.

MAIN TYPES OF USES FOR THE SITE

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR DESIGN

The engagement process has identified the desire for a diverse mix of housing types, commercial uses, and civic amenities. The goal for this phase of the project was to determine the right mix of uses for the site without defining the specific percentages or typologies of each use. The term ‘building blocks’ allowed community members and stakeholders to envision the type of use and potential layout of the site from a conceptual standpoint.



Residential

The residential ‘building block’ encompasses single-family homes, townhomes, multi-family, and mixed-use buildings at a variety of price points from affordable to market-rate. Residents and members of the Advisory Committee expressed interest in building market-rate affordable single-family homes and townhomes. There is a strong preference for home ownership. Although there was some initial push-back from the Advisory Committee about apartments within the development, quality senior-living apartments and appropriately-scaled complexes owned by community-minded landlords were seen as suitable for the site.



Commercial

Many residents and members of the Advisory Committee expressed interest in creating a mixed-use commercial environment that offered opportunities for employment, empowerment, and business ownership. Retail establishments that sell consumer goods and services are wanted by the community. There was a strong desire to create flex and entrepreneurial spaces that allow for small business start-ups. Additionally, there is an opportunity for a large employer or light industrial company to occupy a portion of the site, providing jobs and anchoring the site with a major use. .



Civic

As noted in the Phase One report, a place for gathering, to “just be”, that is flexible and adaptable is desired by the community. Families want a space to take their children, and recreation and arts-related programs are desired for all age groups. Knowledge-sharing and training can also be part of civic spaces. It is important to note that there are many successful organizations providing community resources in the neighborhood, and the Oaktree development should aim to complement these existing assets rather than compete with them.

POLLING DATA FROM PUBLIC MEETING

RESIDENTIAL

Townhomes and mixed use were the most popular typologies

- Townhomes: 42%
- Mixed Use: 33%
- Single Family homes: 25%
- Apartments: 0%
- *12 voted



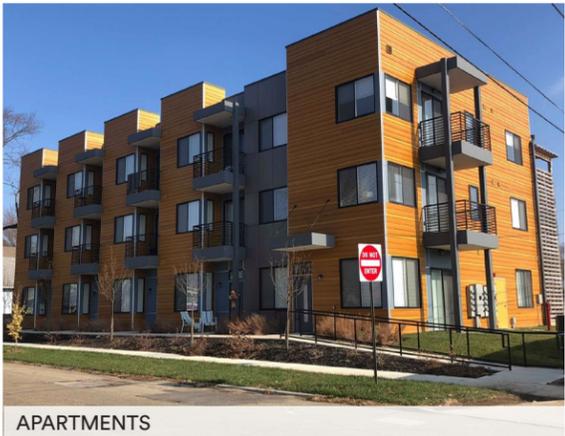
SINGLE FAMILY HOMES



DUPLEXES



TOWNHOMES



APARTMENTS

COMMERCIAL

Shopping was the most popular type of commercial space

- Shopping (food, clothing, etc): 67%
- Restaurant: 8%
- Entertainment: 8%
- Financial Service: 8%
- Office space: 0%
- *12 voted



GROCERY STORE



RETAIL



RESTAURANT/ENTERTAINMENT



OFFICE SPACE

CIVIC

Recreation and outdoor flex space were the most popular civic uses

- Outdoor Flex Space: 44%
- Recreation: 38%
- Education: 13%
- Farmers Market: 6%
- Performance: 0%
- Makerspace: 0%
- *16 voted



OUTDOOR FLEX SPACE



FARMERS MARKET



PERFORMANCE SPACE



RECREATION



MAKER SPACE

DISCOVERY SYNTHESIS

DESIGN PARAMETERS FOR THE FUTURE MASTERPLAN

The goal of the masterplan, and the consequent RFP, is to provide a plan for the future development at the Oaktree site that is both economically achievable for a developer and emotionally resonant with the community members. These five takeaways were developed using the data collected from the existing conditions and assets inventory, the concept design workshop, the engagement process, and the market analysis, and will help guide the next phase of planning and design.



Need for mix of housing types

The need for affordable housing has been repeated by many throughout the engagement process. While many residents have mentioned the desire for home ownership, a mix of housing types and price points will be required for a successful development. Most likely, market forces in the neighborhood will result in housing on this site falling within the affordable housing price point. Residents have noted a largely negative perception regarding affordable housing, and the design team will continue to show examples of clean, safe, and dignified affordable housing during Phase Three.



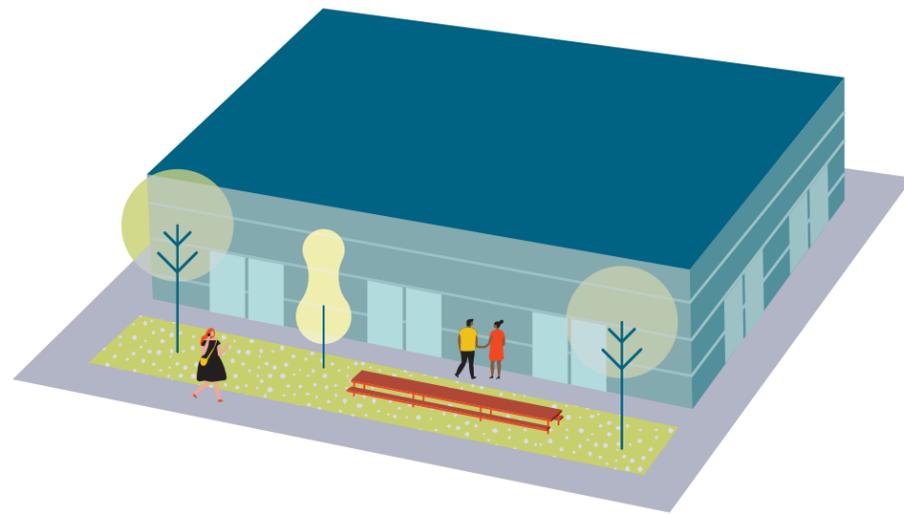
Multi-family housing needs to be contextual

Members of the public and the Advisory Committee have expressed concern about bringing apartment complexes to the Oaktree site. For the most part, they were concerned about repeating mistakes of the past development. There is also a high concentration of existing apartment complexes in the neighborhood. However, the design team noted that specific demographics, such as seniors, could benefit from apartment-style housing. Additionally, smaller complexes owned by local landlords that are safe and clean were not seen as problematic by the community. Any future apartment buildings will need to respond to adjacent uses and typologies in design and scale.



Opportunity for modest amount of retail

Although retail was one of the most desired uses by the community, and the need for fresh food was discussed during both phases of the process, it will be challenging to establish a large amount of retail on the site. Any retail that is proposed should face one of the main thoroughfares - most likely Post Road due to the proximity to the Purple line and the other commercial activity on the road to the south. There are a few existing ethnic markets in close proximity to the site, and the Indy Fresh Market is accessible with the Purple Line. The design team will continue to emphasize the need for connectivity beyond the project bounds, and ideally a modest amount of retail can be feasible with a phased approach.



Employment-related use is promising

A mid-sized or large employer occupying a significant portion of the site could bring jobs and opportunity to the area, and will help to activate the site with people during working hours. This use would also be a good match with the financing model TIF, which could help fund other developments on site. There are examples for this type of partnership in Indianapolis, for example, Cook Medical and Goodwill. At the Oaktree site, office or light industrial space paired with affordable and safe housing could be successful.



Civic space should not be undervalued

Civic space offers opportunities for everyone; it is best described in flexible terms for diverse programming that has the capacity to reflect the breadth of the neighborhood and their aspirations. Civic space is not typically reflected in a developer's pro forma, but adds unquantifiable value in the increase in repeat visitation by diverse constituency. For instance, improving the creek and providing gathering space around it will be an attractive addition to any housing or retail space adjacent to it. Ephemeral experiences - farmer's markets, performances, education, knowledge transfer and training - are all civic events that bring people back again and again.

SITE CONCEPTS

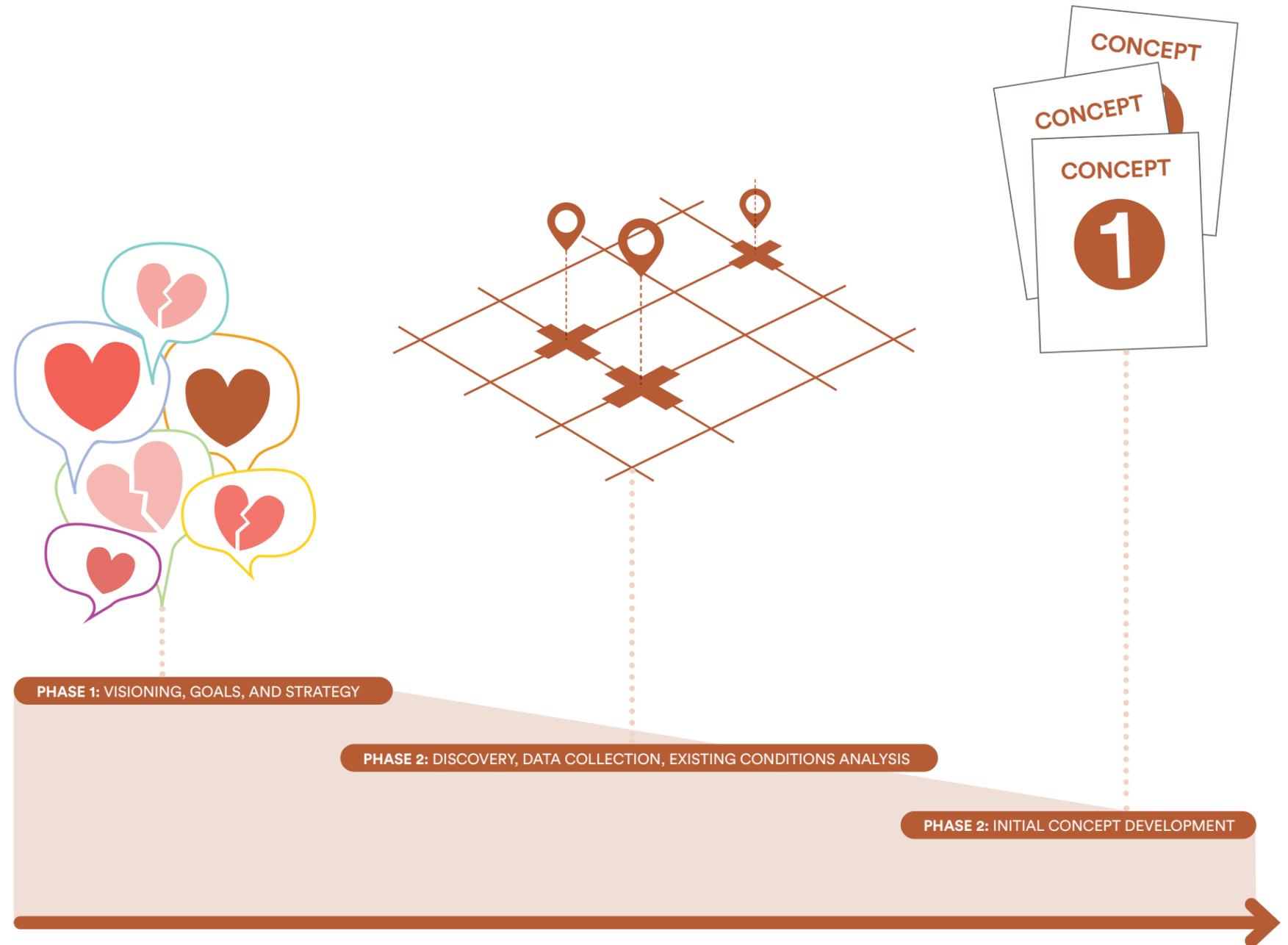
Overview

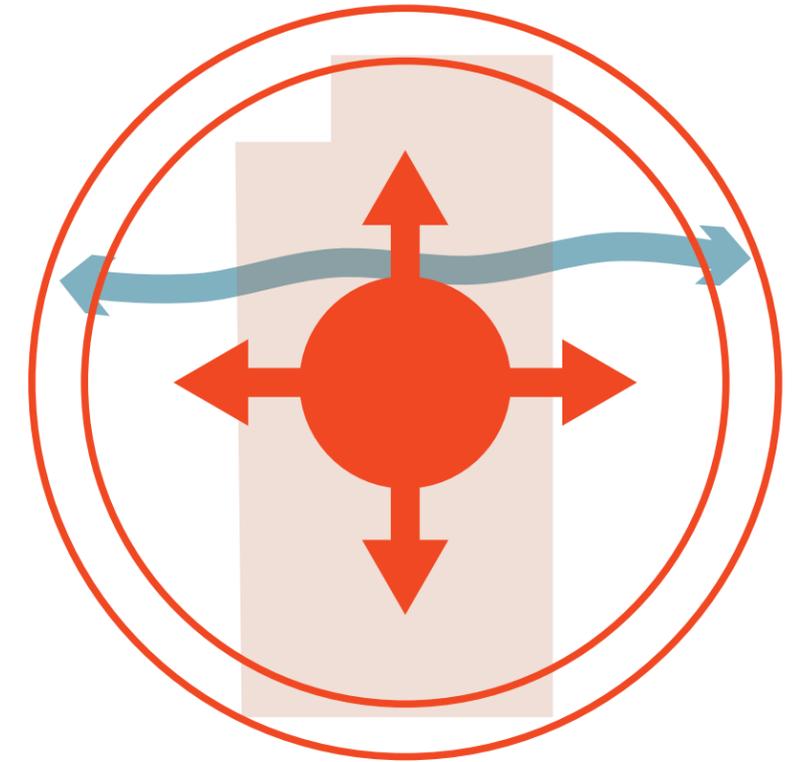
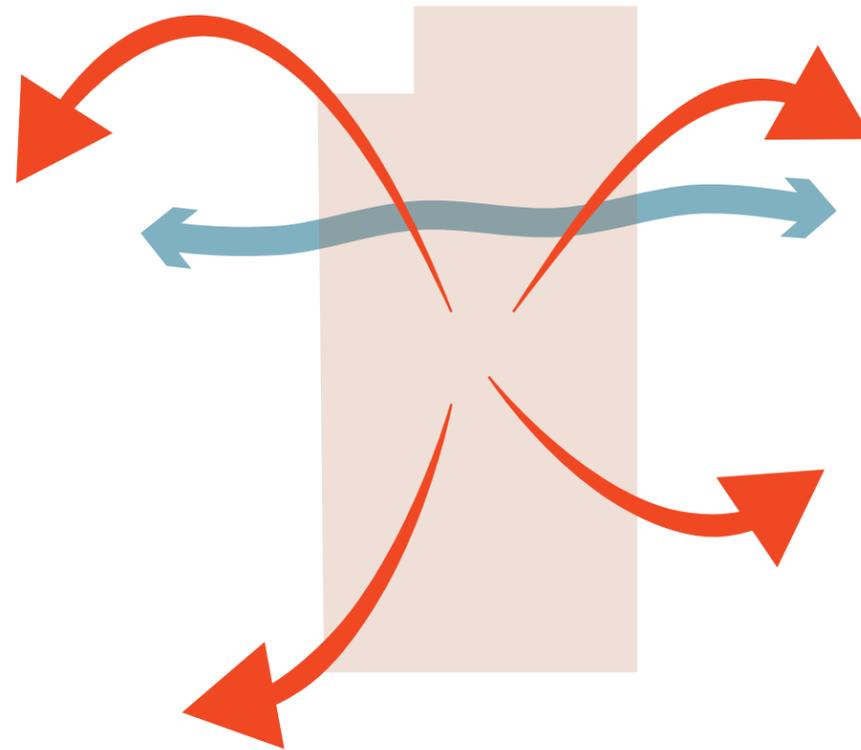
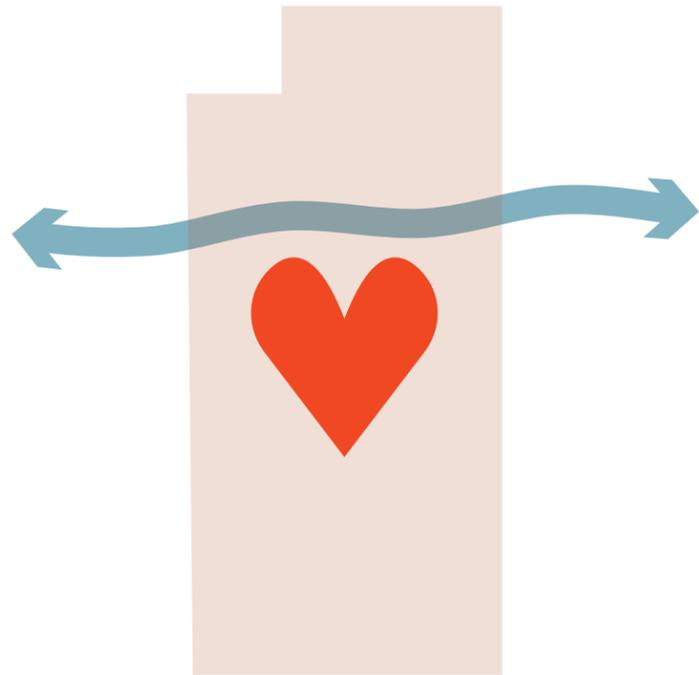
Much like a narrowing tunnel, the design process for the Oaktree Revitalization project started quite broad with the goals and vision statement, and as the process progressed, these ideas became more focused and site-specific. In the first phase of the project, the public meeting and community conversation focus groups allowed residents to voice their needs, wants, and desires for the future of the Oaktree site. Their voices framed the main visioning themes for the project: a place of belonging; opportunity creation; identity + expression; connectivity; and flexibility + adaptability.

Equipped with that knowledge, the design team and members of city agencies participated in a two-day concept design workshop, in which existing assets and barriers to design were inventoried and analyzed, preferred uses and services noted by the community were discussed, and consensus was built around seven guiding principles for the future development. Later, these vision themes and guiding principles were vetted by community members and stakeholders.

As the metaphorical tunnel narrowed, the design team asked the public to respond to preferred uses on the site. This data, paired with the market analysis, contributed to the initial concept development. The three site layouts speak to the major vision themes voiced by the community, and each prioritize varying amounts of commercial, employer-use, or civic space. Moving into Phase Three, the market and policy analysis will further build on the initial concepts documented here.

During the public meeting, the team received feedback from the community that the high level bubble diagrams were difficult to understand for the lay person. The design team intentionally kept the diagrams at a high level, noting that the market and policy analysis conducted in Phase Three will provide more concrete percentages for each type of use. Moving forward, the design team will strive to have a variety of imagery to explain design ideas.





Neighborhood Heart

The neighborhood heart provides a community-minded place to live and gather on the Oaktree site. It prioritizes the vision theme “a place of belonging,” which gives residents a place to come together and enjoy the neighborhood feel of the new development. This concept has a variety of housing types, and would cater towards families and multi-generational living spaces. This scheme could be complemented by spaces for recreation or the arts.

Community Empowerment

The community empowerment concept focuses on opportunity creation and creative expression. This concept promotes entrepreneurship and provides space for small business. The mix of housing types allow for different types of people and incomes to occupy the neighborhood, with a large central green space along the Creek. Complementary uses in this scheme could be civic space dedicated to career training, business advancement, and learning.

Business Destination

The business destination scheme enjoys a vibrant live/work/play community. The relationship between the large employer and the retail activates the site with people from the Far Eastside community and beyond. This concept emphasizes the desire for the site to be flexible and adaptable and create opportunity. Complementary civic spaces in this scheme could include makerspaces and spaces for learning.

SITE CONCEPTS

Neighborhood Heart

This concept grew out of the vision statement “a place of belonging.” It provides a neighborhood-feeling development that connects with the existing residential fabric of the adjacent area, and has two public spaces for people to come together and connect: the creek walk and the open space associated with the civic building along Post Road. There is a small amount of retail in this concept, which fronts Post Road and is connected to the Purple Line bus stop. A mix of housing types allows for various incomes and age groups to call this neighborhood home.

Key Elements

Highest amount of residential, compared to other concepts

Civic space connects to large public space centered within residential zone

Mix of housing types with various densities. Higher density housing faces closer to 42nd Street and Purple Line bus stop. Housing becomes less dense at southern end

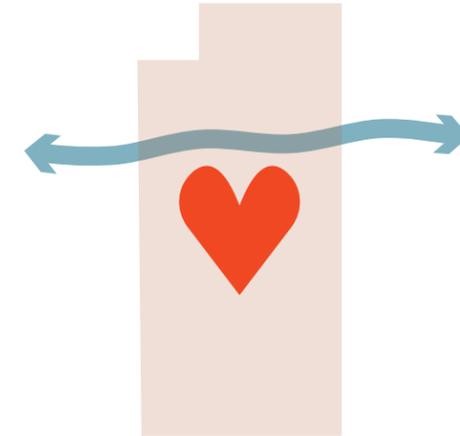
Bike or walking trails connect the civic and public spaces with the creek walk, the Purple Line bus stop, and adjacent parks

Main north-south road on eastern side of development connects 42nd street to E 39th Place, and back to Post Road

Smaller roads are right-turn only at Post Road and at 42nd Street

Fewer roads through the site calms traffic





Considerations

The neighborhood heart concept is more inward-focused in nature than the other two concepts. It caters to residents living within or around the Oaktree site, providing gathering spaces that are bordered by residential units, which adds to the semi-private public space feel.

Consideration 1 – This development may not attract visitation from non-residents, due to the amount of retail and civic space. The priority of this development would be to create a safe, clean, and dignified neighborhood for the residents.

Consideration 2 – The only major north-south connection through the site occurs on the eastern edge, otherwise, the connectivity occurs mostly in the east-west directions. This will most likely slow traffic in the residential zones.

Consideration 3 – In order for the creek to be an attractive amenity for the neighborhood, the residential units will need to have a relationship with the creek. The homes, townhomes, or apartment buildings should have windows that look onto the creek, and should not treat it as back of house.

Consideration 4 – Although the civic space is centered within the southern portion of the development, and ideally will be used by residents of the adjacent homes, it may need to be closer to the Purple Line BRT station.

Consideration 5 – Walking or biking trail connections past the project limit lines are aspirational. Ideally, at some point in the future, the creek walk could become an amenity enjoyed throughout the neighborhood. The creek would need to be improved, and trails would need to be cognizant of private property.



Community aspirations that most closely aligned with the Neighborhood Heart scheme included home ownership, access to fresh food and grocers, and spaces for kids and families to gather. Although a grocery store may not be feasible in the near future due to market conditions, there are opportunities to partner with local food entrepreneurs on site, and the Purple Line connects Oaktree to the future IndyFresh market.

SITE CONCEPTS

Community Empowerment

Spaces for small business entrepreneurship and creative expression are the focus for this site concept. Higher density housing is situated around the busy streets and retail areas, and a smaller civic space located on Post Road spills out onto a larger open public space adjacent to the creek. If small businesses and/or a mid-sized employer occupy the retail areas, there could be opportunities for agency involvement to provide training, educational and financial resources for career and business advancement. The civic space could also provide arts programming, catering towards both residents and those coming from farther away.

Key Elements

Retail and/or employer-use spaces on busy Post Road

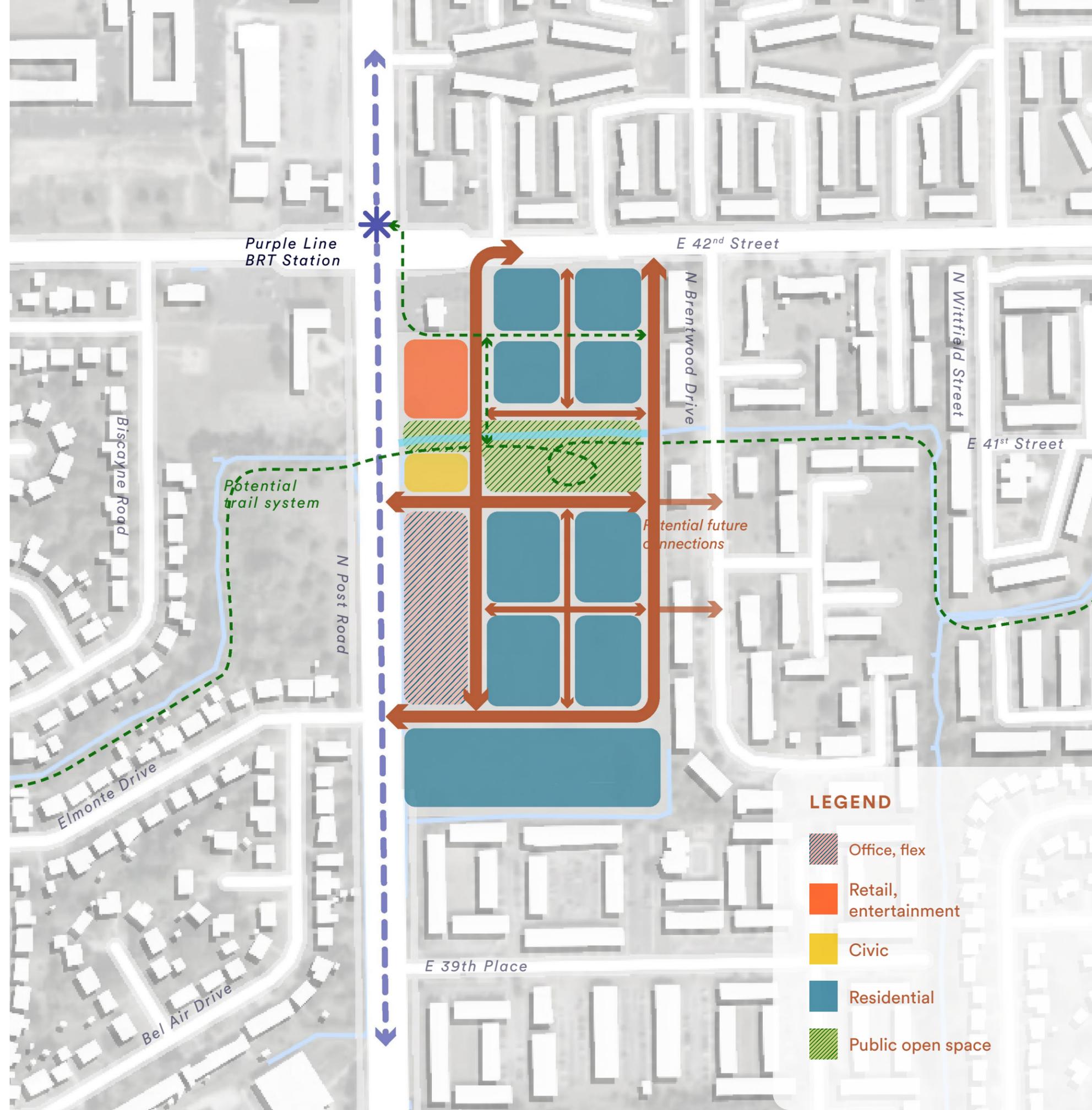
Residential zone on east and south sides of parcel, closest to existing homes

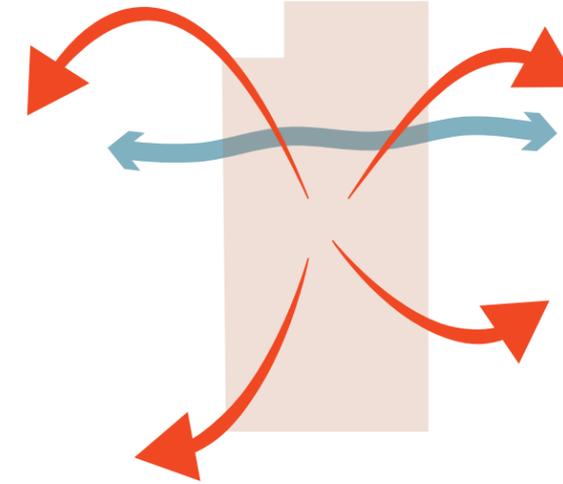
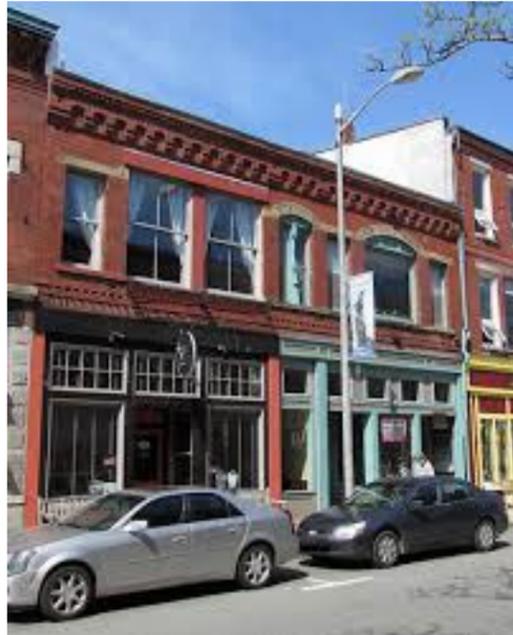
Mix of housing types with various densities. Higher density housing faces closer to 42nd Street and Purple Line bus stop. Housing becomes less dense at southern end

Small amount of civic built space along Post Road, but larger amount of open public space adjacent to the creek

North-south vehicular connections occur at multiple points within the development

Bike or walking trails connect the civic and public spaces with the creek walk, the Purple Line bus stop, and adjacent parks





Considerations

Like all of the schemes, the community empowerment concept can only provide the built framework that agency and community involvement can insert itself into it. The development will not be able to provide the empowerment itself. With that in mind, this concept provides space for small business startups that have graduated to needing brick and mortar retail space, and envisions the civic space as providing career and business training and arts spaces. This type of use will most likely require a public-private partnership.

Consideration 1 – The amount of retail and/or employer-use shown on this scheme may not be sustainable in the current market.

Consideration 2 – The large central green space adjacent to the Creek will need to be maintained either by the owner of the civic space, or by the housing management organization. This scheme shows the largest amount of public space next to the Creek, and the developer will need to plan for its longterm maintenance.

Consideration 3 – The north-south street directly to the east of Post Road should be right turn only on 42nd Street, due to the busy and often-times unsafe intersection at 42nd and Post Road.

Consideration 4 – Walking or biking trail connections past the project limit lines are aspirational. Ideally, at some point in the future, the creek walk could become an amenity enjoyed throughout the neighborhood. The creek would need to be improved, and trails would need to be cognizant of private property.

^
The community’s desire for entrepreneurial start up spaces and mixed-use buildings could be reflected in the Community Empowerment site concept. Spaces for business and local empowerment can extend past architectural insertions, for instance open flex space can hold farmer’s markets, craft fairs, and other events.

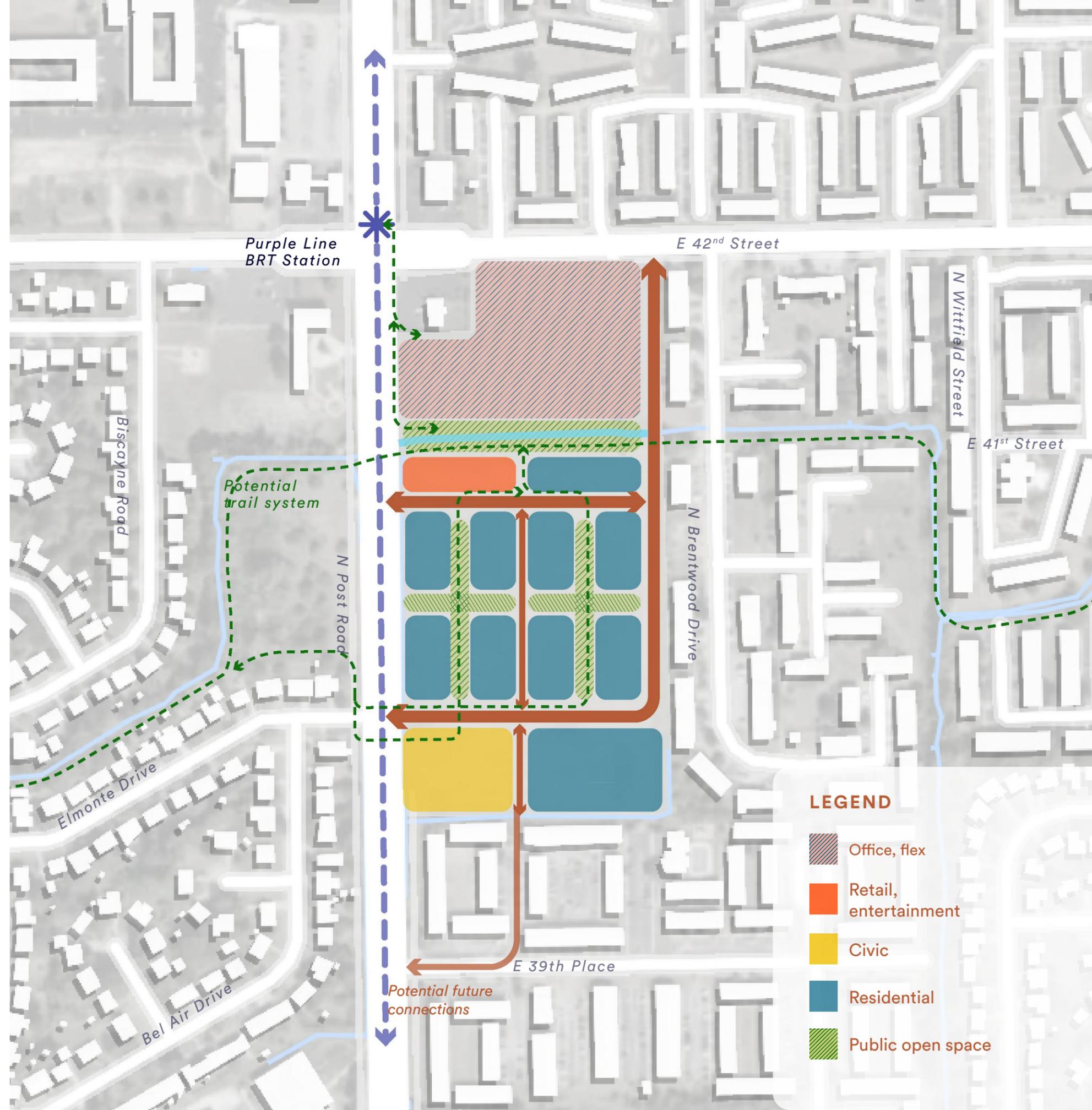
SITE CONCEPTS

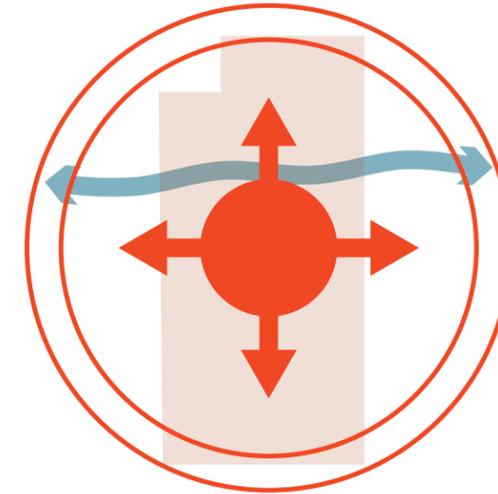
Business Destination

A large employer occupies one-third of the site in this scheme, activating the retail across the creek. Proximity to the Purple Line BRT stations allows easy access for workers. The public space around the creek could have tables and chairs, providing lunch time eating space. The retail has frontage both along Post Road and the east-west road to the south. Housing with semi-private public green space is located in the middle portion of the site, and the civic space is located to the south, closer to the Boys and Girls Club and C.A.F.E. and La Plaza.

Key Elements

- Large employer occupies one-third of the site
- Modest amount of retail is set opposite the creek, with frontage along Post Road
- Large amount of civic space is located on the southern end of the site
- Semi-private public areas adjacent to residential units provides shared gathering space
- Bike or walking trails connect the civic and public spaces with the creek walk, the Purple Line bus stop, and adjacent parks
- Main north-south road on eastern side of development connects back to Post Road





Considerations

This concept hinges on the ability to attract and retain a large employer or business to occupy the space. The retail space in this scheme could cater to workers, for instance, it could be a restaurant or cafe that serves lunch. The design of the office or industrial space will need to be sensitive to the surrounding homes. Loading areas and parking should be hidden, the design of the exterior should be inviting, and the building should have a relationship with the creek.

Consideration 1 – If a large employer or business is unable to be retained, this concept is not feasible.

Consideration 2 – The retail may not have enough frontage along Post Road. Ideally, the East-west street receives enough traffic for the retail to stay active. However, Post Road will always be the busiest street, and the retail may need to be reconfigured.

Consideration 3 – Either the management agency or the residents living in the housing units on the southern portion of the site will need to maintain the semi-private public space.

Consideration 4 – The civic space may be located too far away from the BRT station. Walkability and programmatic use will need to be considered when locating this element.

Consideration 5 – Walking or biking trail connections past the project limit lines are aspirational. Ideally, at some point in the future, the creek walk could become an amenity enjoyed throughout the neighborhood. The creek would need to be improved, and trails would need to be cognizant of private property.



The employer or business on site could help sustain the retail located on Post Road across the creek. For instance, a local restaurant could serve as a daytime lunch spot for employees. Much like the Cook Medical and Goodwill partnership, the organization that occupies the space on site could provide training and resources to the local community.

03: MASTER PLAN

THE FORMER OAKTREE SITE REVITALIZATION PLAN

PHASE 3 REPORT | NOVEMBER 05, 2021



03: MASTER PLAN

As the final installment of the Oaktree Revitalization Plan, the Phase Three report synthesizes the work done in the previous two phases, as well as the qualitative and technical data collected in this phase of work. The final plan was vetted by the community during each step of the process: as the three initial concepts in Phase Two, during the Advisory Committee, and during the Public Meeting in this phase. The plan and massing are still high level, they provide insight into potential locations for residential, commercial, and civic zones. That said, the plan is still flexible enough to absorb fluctuations in market conditions, input from developers, and new community endeavors. The massing model hints at how the space may look once built out, but is intentionally not prescriptive in design.

This report also includes a section for project parameters. Like traditional design guidelines, these parameters provide a framework for developers to insert their visions, while still maintaining the community's best interest. Three categories of parameters have been developed: design - related to the physical expression of the space; policy - related to decision-making for the development; and stewardship - related to the long-term maintenance of the property. As the plan is intentionally high level, the parameters speak to some of the more specific concerns the design team heard from the community. The parameters are not intended to be burdensome to developers, but instead endeavor to create a development that responds to both the financial and social bottom lines.

The future development will need to meet the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) National Objective, which dictates that the uses primarily benefit low and moderate income individuals. The uses defined in the plan meet these criteria.

A revenue capacity analysis is also included in this report, which outlines the type of financing that could be leveraged. As the project moves from master planning into the RFP, it's important to note that community engagement does not have to end. Temporary uses of the site will keep neighbors feeling positive momentum, and the community can be kept abreast of plans throughout the next stages of the process. Although the final report marks the end of the design team's involvement, this is just the beginning of the progress that will be made at Oaktree. This document will continue to guide the future development towards an equitable and community-minded solution.

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ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

Stakeholder + Community Engagement Overview

Phase Three of the Oaktree Site Revitalization Plan included two major engagement activities: Advisory Committee Meeting #3 and Public Meeting #3. Both engagement activities followed a similar structure as past meetings, with the overarching goal of sharing project progress and gathering community input. The design team noted and asked participants to elaborate on any additional thoughts they would like included in the final report and RFP.

Advisory Committee Members

- Cheria Caldwell, Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
- Miriam Acevedo Davis, La Plaza
- Leila Darden, Far Eastside Community Council
- Moise Duge, Haitian Association of Indiana
- Geoffrey Fenelus, Promise Pr
- Mike Howe, Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
- La Keisha Jackson, City-County Councilor, District 14
- Maggie Lewis, Boys and Girls Club
- Tanya Johnson, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church
- Ericka Miller, City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works
- Stacia Murphy, Develop Indy
- Marty Posch, Finish Line Youth Foundation
- Cameron Radford, IndyGo
- TD Robinson, Mt. Paren Baptist Church
- Derris Ross, The Ross Foundation
- Diane Schussel, Central Indiana Community Foundation/Glick Fund
- Emily Scott, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Chalanta Shockley, Far Eastside Resident
- Annie Smith, Central Indiana Community Foundation
- Darlene Watts, Far Eastside Resident

Public Engagement Summary

Overall, the design team received positive feedback on the concept plans. One of the comments heard was **“this is exactly what we asked for.”** The employment opportunities in the office/flex space were particularly praised by the community, as well as the possibility for one or two community civic spaces. The masterplan did not detail the types of residential units in each zone, so there may have been more push-back had the plan gotten into that level of detail. The project parameters focused on multi-family housing, maintenance, and upkeep were meant to alleviate some of the community’s concerns about repeating past mistakes in the new development. It will be important, moving forward, to have open dialogues with the community about their specific concerns regarding multi-family housing. **To the design team, it seemed that many of their concerns were related to upkeep, safety, and the need for mixed-income homes rather than a fear of multi-family housing specifically.** For example, when senior apartments were discussed, there was a positive reaction.

Throughout the Oaktree process, it was a challenge to hear from different voices in the community. When reviewing meeting attendance, it became clear the same individuals attended both the advisory and public meetings, and attendance usually did not exceed 20 participants. The design team employed multiple strategies to get higher attendance, such as: attending community events and meetings to share information regarding upcoming Oaktree public meetings; requesting that Advisory Committee members share public meeting information; having one-on-one meetings; collaborating with La Plaza and C.A.F.E. to host Community Conversations to gather the input of the LatinX and Haitian/Creole populations. During Phase Three, a third Community Conversations event was canceled by the outreach partners due to issues with lack of attendance, especially around the Labor Day holiday. The LatinX and Haitian/Creole facilitators noted that inclusion of the community in city/state projects or decisions were atypical in those cultures, and was a possible reason why participation was limited in meetings.

While there were consistent attendees that assisted in moving the dialogue forward throughout the three stages of the project, often the community leaders, rather than the community members, had the highest participation in the meetings. While having the investment and interest of leaders is critical to a project’s success, it can also limit the diversity of thought. This dilemma is not exclusive to this project, but may result in issues regarding community member support later in the process.

What we Heard

“I would like a sliding scale for rent so that the area can remain affordable, with incorporation of an anti-displacement policy in the RFP.”

“I would like to see a design standard for how the buildings are developed from a policy standpoint, similar to downtown”

“Maybe we could have some murals showing the Far Eastside history”

“A lot of community pride, possibly having a Far Eastside museum. Work with a historical society or Fort Benjamin and speak about the history of what the area is/was”

“Relocating a signature restaurant”

“Will there be thought given to affordable childcare so parents can be comfortable leaving their children?”



Lessons Learned

- The chosen developer should incorporate the Far Eastside Quality of Life plan created by the community into the future development
- With any positive development, there will be concerns about displacement. A successful project will perform both financially and socially. It will be important that the future development has clear policies and outreach related to anti-displacement in the neighborhood.
- The community expressed concern about undesirable businesses occupying the retail spots. DMD noted that many of those businesses will already be prohibited based on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) National Objective(s) requirements.

CONCEPT SYNTHESIS

Final masterplan zones

There are three major zones in this plan. North of the creek is the office/flex zone that offers the type of the employment opportunities the community voiced as a desire during the previous two phases. Along Post Road is the commercial and civic zone oriented to the most trafficked part of development. The interior of the site is dedicated to housing, sheltering it from the busiest parts of the development while still providing access with a new network of streets.

Intentionally high level, this plan gives direction to developers when siting various uses. The densest parts of the development are situated near the busiest roads - Post Road and 42nd Street. This plan was used to calculate percentages of each use, which informed the financing models.

Key Elements

Office/flex space dedicated to employer(s) occupies northern portion of site.

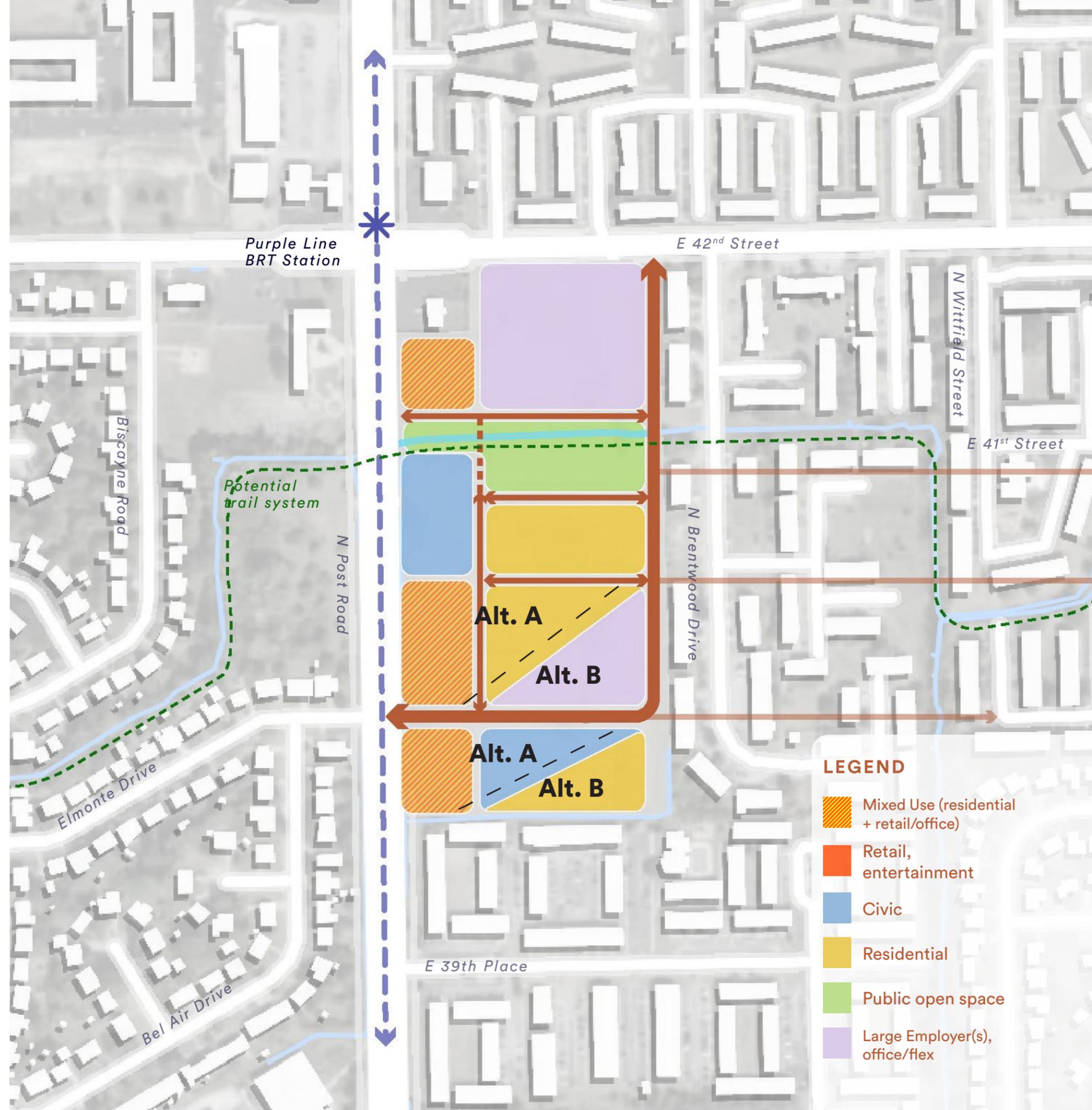
Retail corridor along Post Road adjacent to Purple Line.

Civic space has prime location on Post Road, with ability to offer programs that connect to public open space along creek.

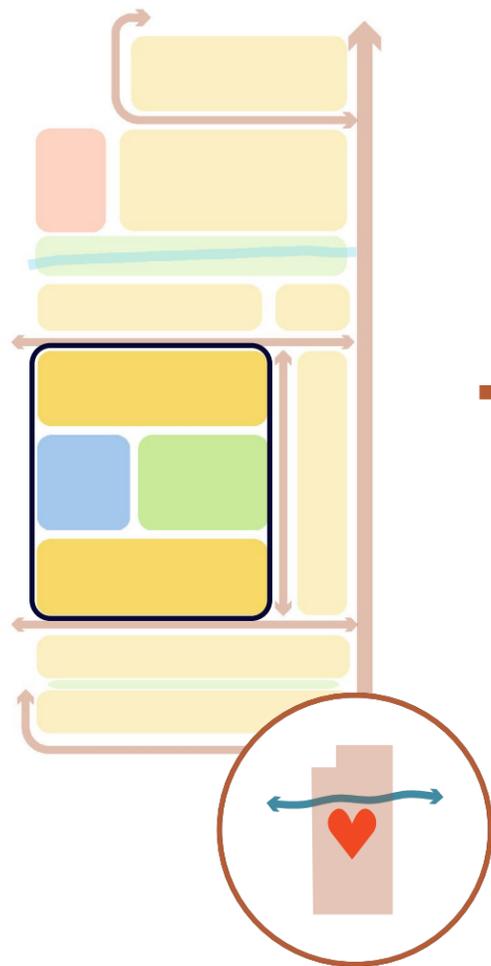
Residential zone occupies interior of site. Mix of housing types with most dense housing facing open space next to creek and closer to Post Road.

Alternative A provides more housing along with resident-oriented civic space on southern end of site.

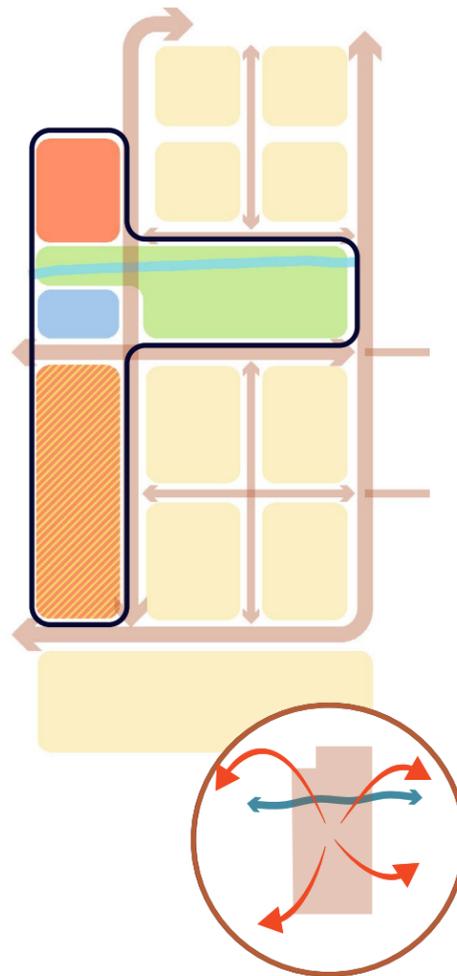
Alternative B provides more employer-oriented space that capitalizes on major road connecting to both 42nd Street and Post Road. Housing fills in southern end of site.



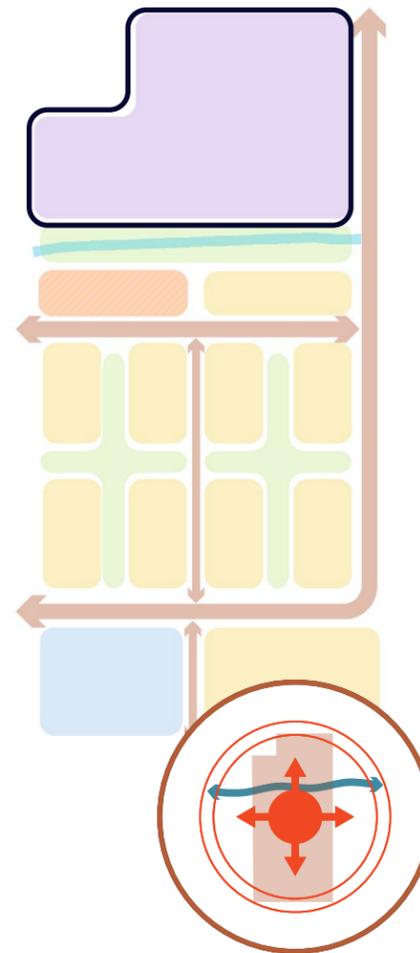
Neighborhood Heart



Community Empowerment



Business Destination



+

+

Hybridizing the Phase Two Concepts

The final master plan is a synthesis of the three framework designs conceived during Phase Two. The strongest elements from each concept, based on community and advisory committee feedback, market and policy feasibility, and fundamentals of urban planning, were used to inform the final plan. The strongest component of the Neighborhood Heart concept was the residential zones bordering a community-oriented civic space. On the final masterplan, Alternative A most closely shows this feature. In the Community Empowerment scheme, a vibrant retail and mixed-use corridor along Post Road, as well as the civic space connected to the public space around the Creek informed the final plan. Lastly, both the final masterplan and the Business Destination concept show a large employer space occupying the northern portion of the site.

Considerations

The goal of the plan is to have enough description to give the city and developers guidance on future uses, without being so prescriptive that it precludes opportunities in the future.

Consideration 1 – The amount of retail and commercial space shown on the plan may be hard to sustain. Ideally retail is situated close to the Purple Line in order to capture the expected high ridership, and those who may not have access to vehicles. The Purple Line also provides a connection to other complementary businesses and services, such as the Ross Foundation, CAFE, and La Plaza.

Consideration 2 – Based on CDBG National Objective(s), at least 51% of the housing will need to be for households below 80% AMI. The first buyer and home developments will need to meet these requirements, but if any of them are sold after that, they will not need to meet the CDBG requirements.

Consideration 3 – The project is not just limited to the contract limit line. Thinking beyond the physical bounds of the site will ensure its long-term success. The road network is drawn as extending beyond the site, with the hope that this development will catalyze future positive change in the neighborhood. When that happens, there should be a connected street grid. Additionally, visibility into and out of the site, especially for the green space, will help foster a safe environment for residents and visitors. Windows and inviting storefronts on the retail corridor will encourage visitors and the community’s sense of safety.

Consideration 4 – In the future, if the retail spot at the northwestern part of the site is acquired, along with the Town and Terrace housing, the master plan thinking should extend to those properties. Ideally, the revitalization of this project can uplift well past the Oaktree site.

Consideration 5 – In some of the Phase Two concepts, the green space was situated in the residential zone, giving it a semi-private feel. In the final masterplan, the green space is intentionally expanded along the Creek, and placed next to a civic space, so that everyone feels welcome. This could be the place for expressing the Far Eastside’s unique identity, whether through community art, pop-up events, or even performances. If neighbors feel ownership over the space they are more likely to help care for it.

Consideration 6 – Flexibility and adaptability have been guiding principles for the entirety of the project. While Alternatives A and B have been vetted by the community, the design team, and the city, there is room for change in the future. Ultimately, the development should have a mix of uses, cater to a mix of incomes, and provide places for Far Eastsiders to live, work, shop, and play.

MASTER PLAN

Final Masterplan Massing

While the 2D masterplan provides insight into the zones dedicated for each use, the 3D massing model gives a more realistic view of the spatial considerations of the site. As the massing model shows, the heights of the buildings should not exceed four to five stories, however the building footprints and articulation shown here are just for visualization purposes. Future development should give priority to contextually-appropriate architecture styles, as well as continuous sidewalks, street tree planting, and adequate lighting. Zoning codes and the Purple Line Transit Oriented Development Strategic Plan offer complete recommendations on massing for this area.

Key Elements

Taller buildings are shown with setbacks for upper floors to create a human-scaled experience on the sidewalk.

Sidewalks are continuous and extend to every street in the new development for pedestrian safety.

Street trees and buffer plantings provide a welcoming pedestrian environment.

Although the buildings occupied by an employer are shown as one mass, it could be broken up into multiple buildings. Regardless of the use, buildings should have architectural articulation and windows on the street level.

Residential buildings can vary in density and style. The densest development should be prioritized along Post Road, closest to the Purple Line.

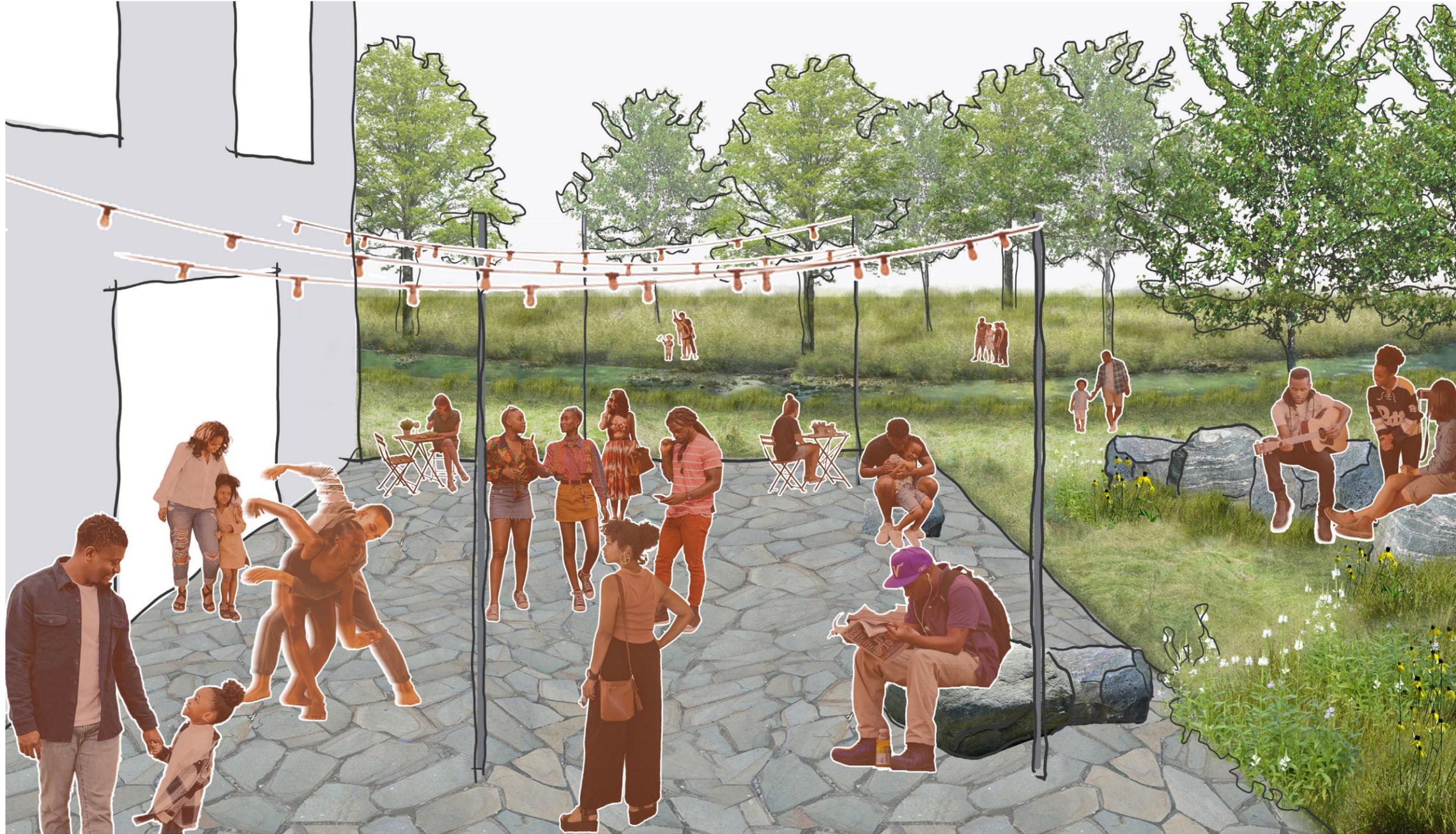




Alternative Concept Design

Alternative B replaces the second office/flex space in the interior of the site with more housing, and swaps out the residential zone to the south with a secondary civic space. Two alternatives allows a flexibility of uses, especially if one use, such as the large employer, is not able to be garnered for the site.

MASTER PLAN



Gathering space along the creek could provide the meaningful and authentic place of belonging that the community desires. Here, a plaza space doubles as a performance theater, a cafe space, a spot to read the paper, and a place to walk in nature. Open public space can serve multiple functions and cater towards a diverse constituency. The future development should view the creek as an asset, building space for creative expression and engagement around it. Landscapes are more likely to be cared for if they are loved in the hearts and the minds of those living and working around it. A space that is of and for the community, along with adequate maintenance from the city or surrounding property owners, will be the keys to its success.

Community aspirations for the site



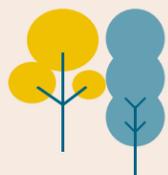
Residential:

- Opportunities for home ownership
- Senior housing
- Mixed income diversity



Commercial:

- Opportunities for local entrepreneurship, training, and financing
- Opportunities for temporary pop-up business spaces
- Grocery store / restaurants
- Goods and services (household items, clothing, electronics, beauty supply stores, salons)
- Entertainment (performance, theater)
- Financial services



Civic spaces and community services:

- Childcare facilities
- Farmers market
- Public art / performance space or stage
- Library / knowledge hub / skills and vocational training / career resources
- Innovation hub / makerspace / art classes
- Recreational activities / sports facility
- Community Pool

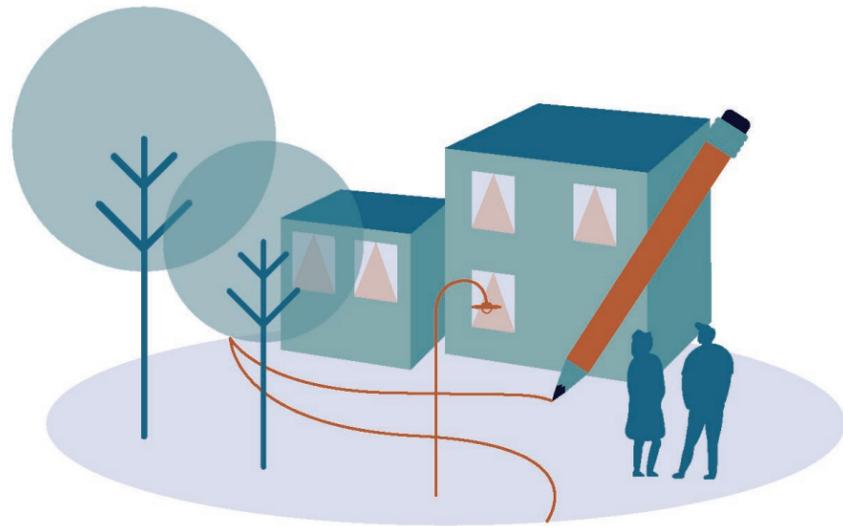


The elements noted here represent aspirations that we heard from the community. While it most likely will not be possible to provide all of these elements in the future development, it is important to note that these uses have already been vetted and approved by the community. Including these in the development plan will be a big plus for the community, and ideally will be incentivized, or at the very least, encouraged in the RFP.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

Ensuring the community’s main concerns are represented in the final development(s)

In addition to the wish list items detailed on the previous page, the project parameters are recommendations that aim to alleviate some of the community’s main concerns. Ideally, these parameters will become requirements of any future development. These parameters are meant to encourage developers to think about both the numbers, and the community’s best interest, when responding to the RFP.



Design Parameters

Design parameters have to do with the physical space, they incorporate classic urban design frameworks and complement guidelines already adopted in Indianapolis’ Transit-Oriented Design document, as well as other city planning documents. These guidelines are meant to ensure that the physical constructs are responding to the context, safety, and connectivity.



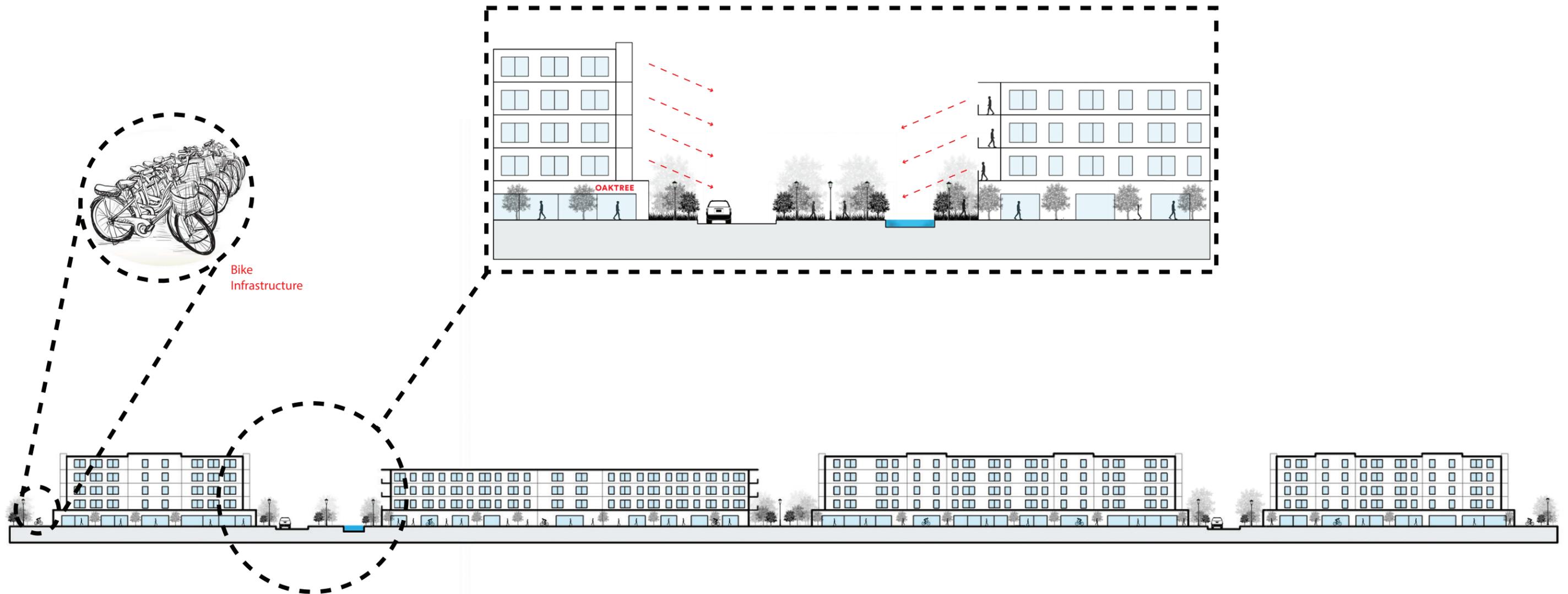
Policy Parameters

The policy parameters aim to ensure that the community has a voice in the future development. One of the major concerns the design team heard throughout the planning process was that Oaktree must not repeat the mistakes of its past. Promoting community participation in decision making, and requiring property owners and managers to keep clean and safe buildings and landscape, will aid in the success of the development.



Stewardship Parameters

The stewardship parameters work in lock-step with the policy parameters: if the community feels that they have a voice and a degree of ownership in Oaktree, they are more likely to care for the property. At the same time, the developer and property managers must express their commitment to the success of the site by having a long-term maintenance plan.

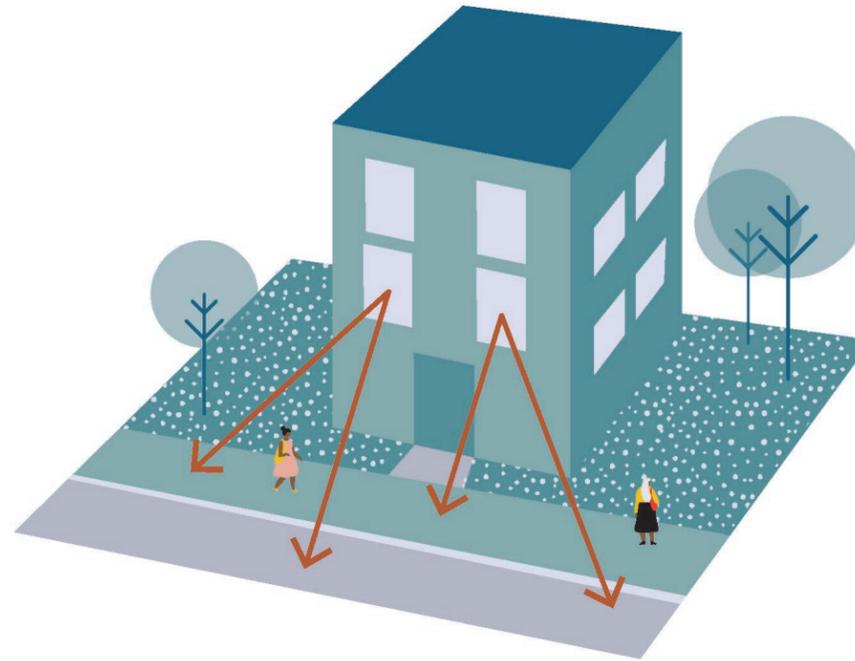


Design guidelines, shown above, should be applied across the site. Regardless of the type of use, the basic principles like adequate street lighting, street trees, visible bike infrastructure, and engagement with the sidewalk are relevant.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: Buildings should engage with the street at a pedestrian scale

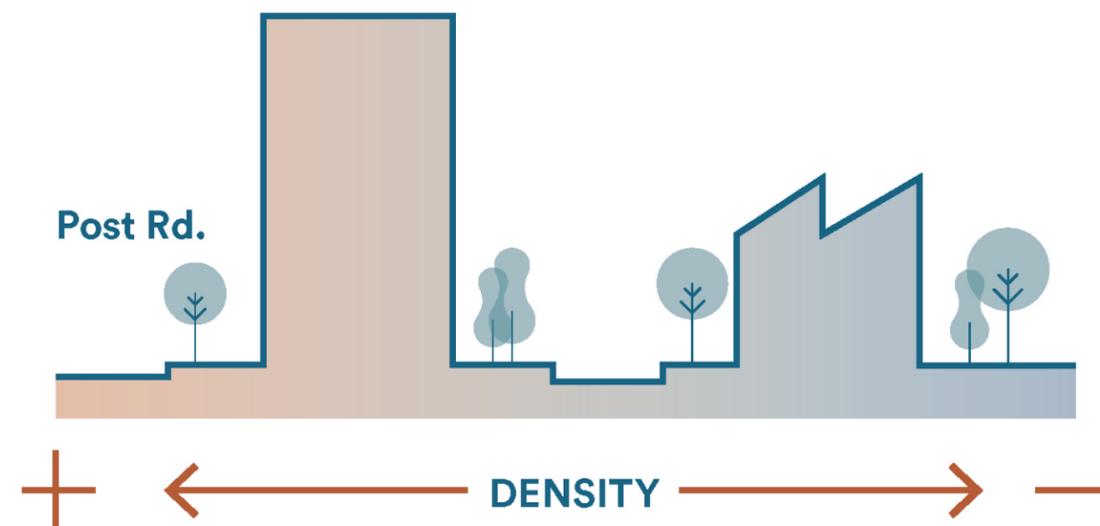
The plan's intention is to create a vibrant and friendly urban streetscape that engages pedestrians at the street level. Building entrances should be well marked and visible, signage should be clear and graphically compelling, and street blocks should be short and walkable. Additional building and sidewalk amenities like awnings, streetlights, trees, planters, seating, and attractive window displays all contribute to an enhanced pedestrian experience.



< In the most basic sense, the term “eyes on the street” speaks to the concept of windows and doors facing the street, allowing the residents to keep an eye out for their neighbors. Neighborhood safety is not just about crime, but also about the camaraderie of shared interests such as jobs, economic security, neighborhood beautification projects, and other issues.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: The highest density of the development should be along Post Road and the Purple Line

To improve walkability and convenience for residences and pedestrians, the plan proposes a strong urban edge along Post Road. Locating residences, civic, and commercial uses close together provides greater resource efficiency and continuity between the different uses. Additionally, by creating a strong urban edge adjacent to busy Post Road, there is a noise and physical buffer for the quieter interior site uses.



< While the plan is flexible and adaptable, it is best if the most trafficked uses are located near Post Road and 42nd Street. This includes the commercial buildings, the office/flex space, and any higher density housing. The civic space is also located along Post Road, so that users of the Purple Line have easy access to the community amenity.

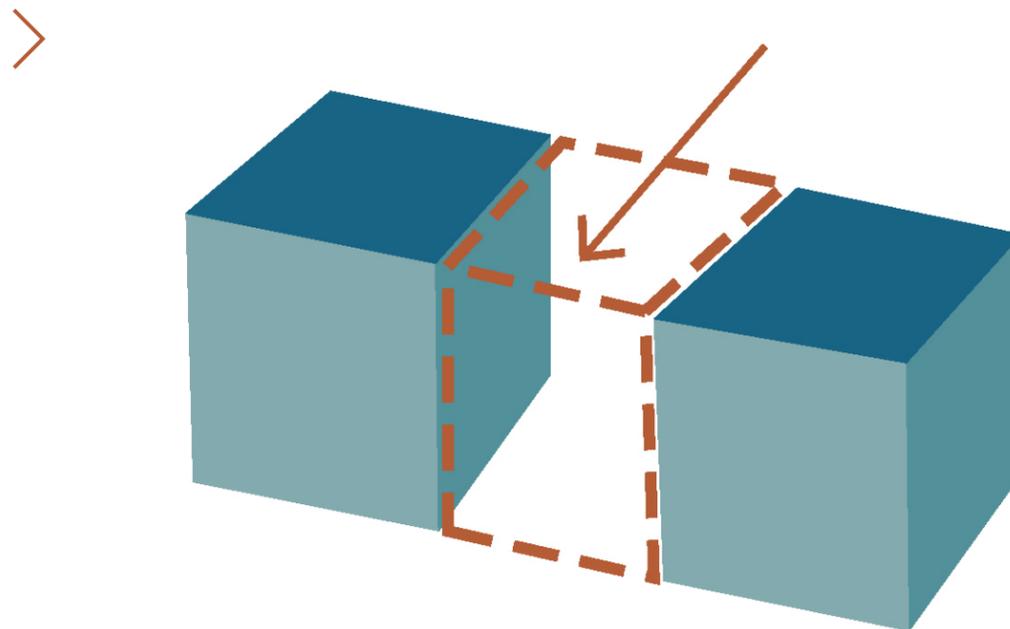
The new designs should look for cues in the surrounding neighborhood or good examples throughout Indianapolis. The goal is for the development to feel of the Far Eastside, while still providing new and well-designed architecture.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: Buildings should respond to the surrounding context in design and scale

The intention of the plan is to create an aesthetically pleasing architectural expression that relates to the surrounding vernacular, and too, sets the stage for future developments. The new buildings should reflect a contemporary architectural style that complements neighboring buildings design and scale, and should resonate with the Far Eastside community.

Consistent street walls create a legible pedestrian experience. When there are large gaps between buildings, or too much variation in setback, the street starts to feel disordered or unclear



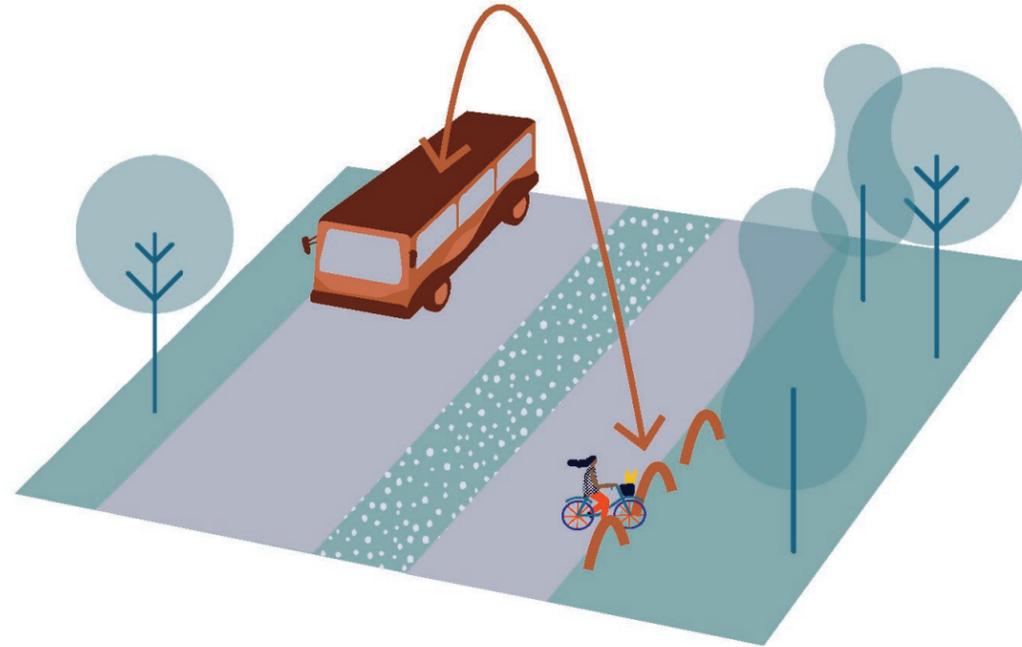
DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: Building heights should be relatively consistent, without major gaps in the street wall

Buildings along Post Road should be similar in height. Some height differences are welcomed for aesthetic purposes, but major gaps are to be avoided. As safety is an important factor in the design approach, there are intentional gaps at street intersections and public green spaces to allow for greater visibility. Providing a welcoming but safe environment is at the heart of the master plan design.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: **Bike infrastructure should be highly visible and located near the Purple Line**

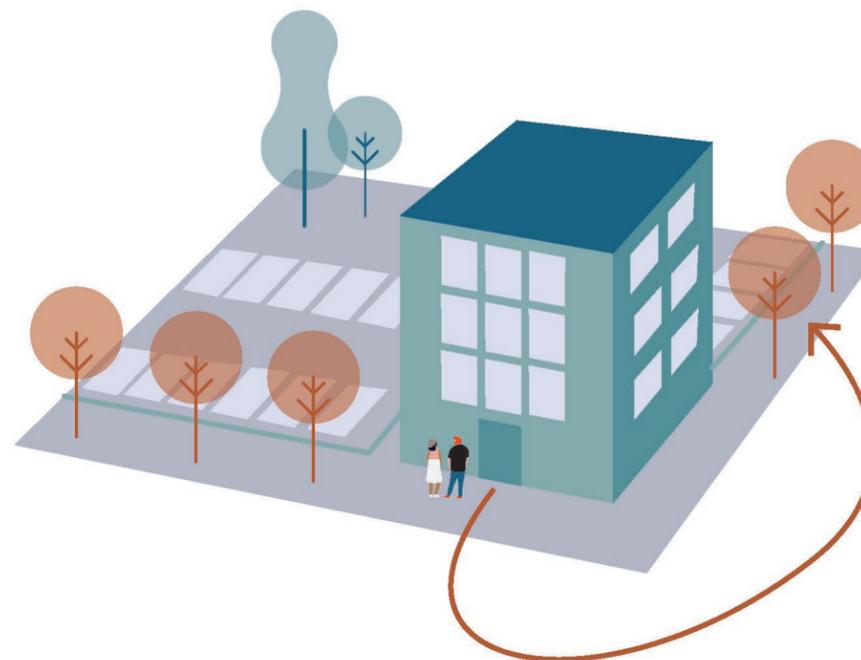
The Purple Line is coming to the corner of Post Road and 42nd Street in 2023, which will connect the Oaktree site to surrounding neighborhoods and downtown. The Oaktree site should encourage a pedestrian and bike-friendly landscape that encourages multi-modal transportation. In addition to vehicle parking, bike parking should be located at major corners, especially near the Purple Line.



< Bike parking should be highly visible, so that cyclists can find it and so that it feels safe to park their bike there. Locating near the Purple Line will help encourage multi-modal transportation.

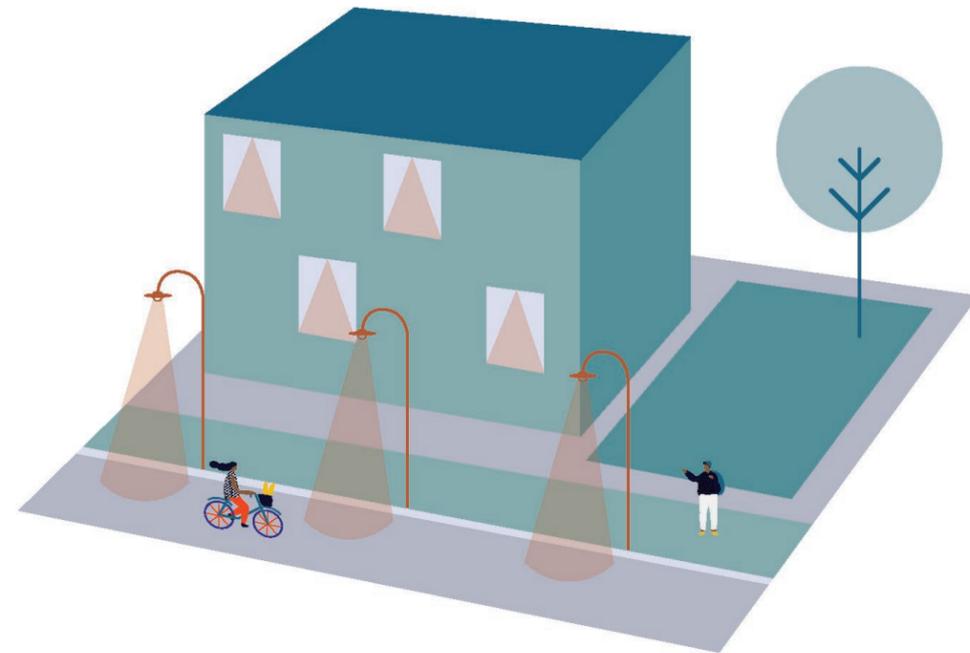
DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: **Surface parking should be buffered by architecture or vegetation**

To enhance the quality of life for all Oaktree residents and visitors, surface parking lots should be buffered with local vegetation, or where possible, it should be concealed behind buildings. While parking should never be hidden, the pedestrian environment should be prioritized over the vehicular environment.



< Large surface parking lots that are not buffered from the sidewalk detract from the consistent street wall. Vegetation such as street trees help create vertical articulation.

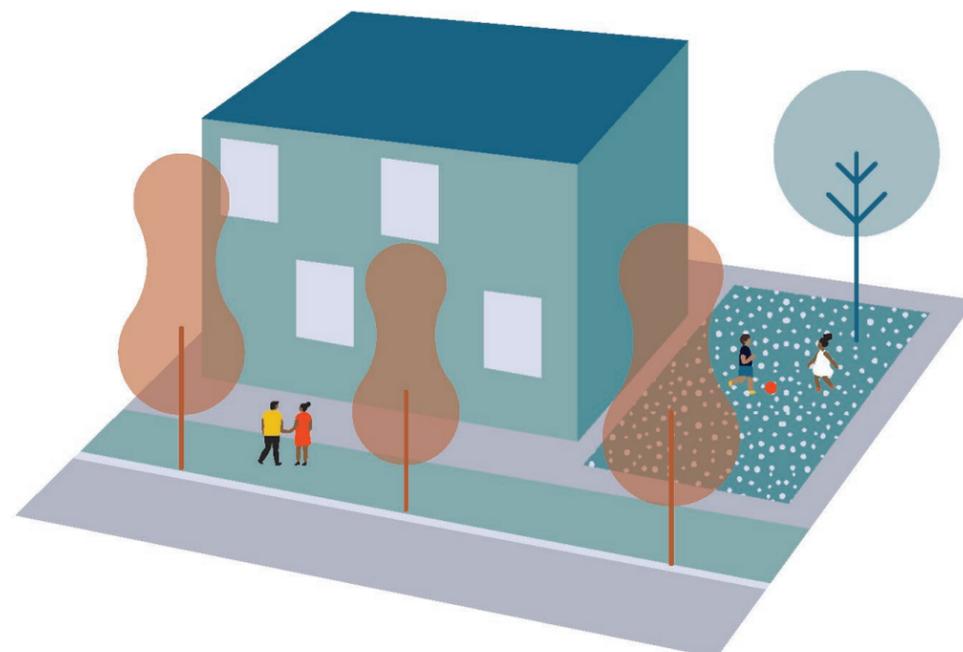
Lighting can help people feel a sense of safety, and it can also be used as a placemaking element. Accent lighting around main entrances and in special public spaces contributes to the sense that one is entering into a new, different space.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: Streets and building exteriors and interiors should be sufficiently lit

Ample street and interior lighting contribute to a sense of safety in public spaces. Lighting should be placed on all building facades and at main entrances. City standards will dictate the level of lighting required on each street, but it is important that any pedestrian areas associated with the development are comfortable environments. Scale of poles and consistency of lighting can help people feel welcome.

Street trees are just one way to create a welcoming pedestrian environment. Adequate lighting, continuous and well-maintained sidewalks, windows and doors on the street level, and consistent street walls all contribute to pleasant landscapes.



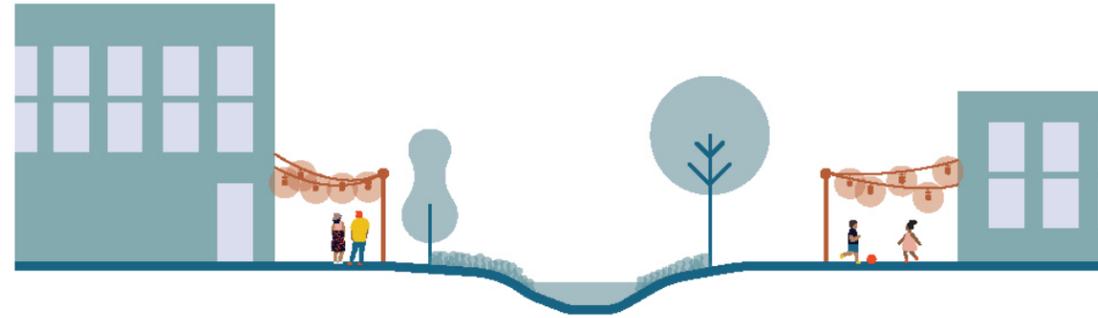
DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: Street trees should be placed at consistent intervals, especially along major corridors

Trees buffer street noise, slow traffic, and provide added safety to pedestrians on sidewalks. Trees and planting soften the hardscape of buildings and pavement, offering pedestrians a more relaxed and natural feel as they move along a busy street. Along with increasing the well-being of humans, trees provide important ecosystem services such as absorbing CO₂, providing habitat and food for animals, and absorbing stormwater. Placing them at consistent intervals will promote the well-being of human, and non-human, occupants of the site.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: The creek should be treated as an asset, and adjacent buildings should engage with it

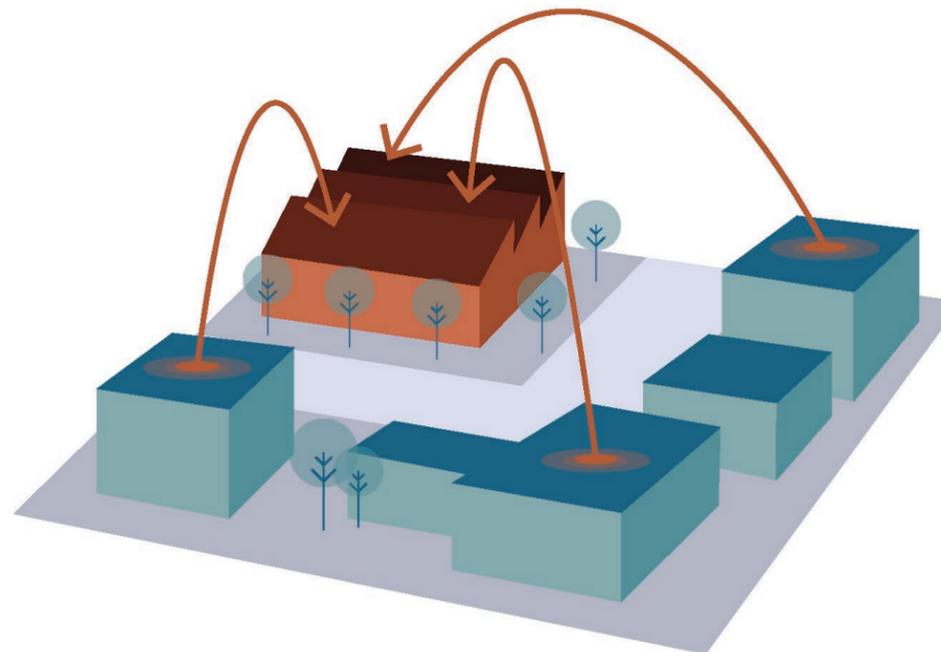
The creek that runs east-west across the Oaktree property should be treated as a natural amenity for the site and should be enhanced for social and environmental performance. The masterplan proposes a walking/ biking trail to run alongside the creek, as well as an adjacent public space. Buildings should treat the creek as another front edge, rather than a back of house. Possible uses for the public space and creek edge include outdoor recreation space, outdoor public art, performance space, outdoor dining, or picnic space.



< The creek may require remediation before it is suitable to be used as a public space. The creek edge should be soft, in order to allow natural flooding and stormwater absorption. This planning process did not fully research all environmental and permitting requirements for construction in and near the stream. Due diligence is required by the new owners and/or developers of the site.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION: Large employers should have a commitment to local hiring and job training

To encourage job opportunities and wealth building in the Far Eastside community, large employers should commit to hiring locally and providing on-site job training for employees, if needed. The master plan aims to elevate and empower the residents of the Far Eastside, and the community consistently voiced the need for local jobs that hire local people. Local job opportunities, along with training and education, is an important step in helping Far Eastside residents work towards a resilient future.



< Case studies such as the partnership between Cook Medical and Goodwill Institutes show that commitments to local hiring can work. This example provided new jobs to local residents, fresh food access, and support for two local entrepreneurs.

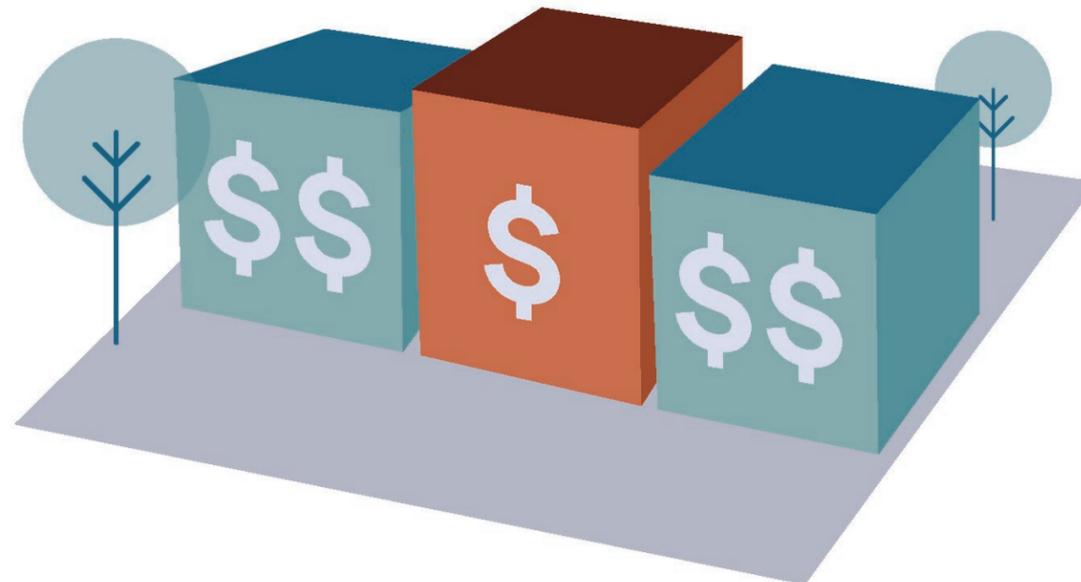
The city should review methods to ensure that this type of association remain effective. The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) often works with nonprofits that support tenant rights. On some projects, this is a requirement for applicants. The city could have a similar requirement on the RFP, or could explore other strategies for enforcement.



POLICY RECOMMENDATION: An owner's/tenant's association should be formed to set maintenance standards

Forming a community association that enforces key bylaws and standards and expectations of future landlords and property owners will help ensure the long-term sustainability of the Oaktree development. The intent is to put in place the necessary systems that will insist on maintaining upkeep and site maintenance year-round.

During the engagement process, there were dual concerns of the development not being affordable to current residents, and that the past decline of the neighborhood over the decades has resulted in unsafe and run-down multi-family housing units. Mixed income communities can be more stable and help remove any stigma connected to subsidized housing when it is not differentiated.



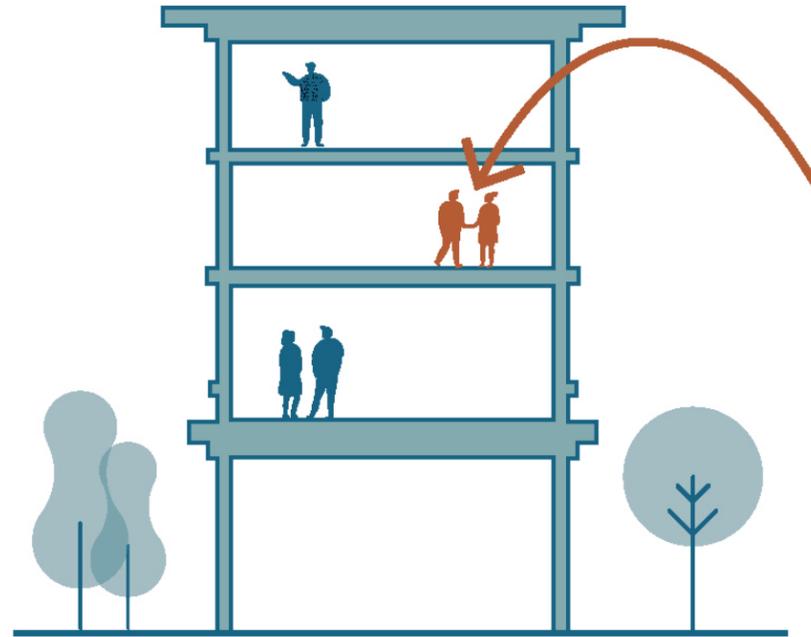
POLICY RECOMMENDATION: The development should promote a mixed-income community

Affordable housing should be included in the master plan, but a mixed income development provides resiliency and diversity. Multiple housing types allow for various incomes and age groups to call this site home. Affordable housing should be blended with market rate housing, in order to provide a unified and inclusive development.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

POLICY RECOMMENDATION: **Tenant eviction prevention plans should be encouraged and/or incentivized**

Eviction should be treated as a last resort for property owners. The best solution includes working with the individual tenant to keep them in the home to reduce disruption and setback, and to devise a payment plan that works for both the owner and the tenant. At times, eviction will be necessary, but property owners and landlords could be incentivized to use other strategies before exploring eviction.



< The IHEDA incentivizes property owners to think critically about eviction prevention plans before applying for their tax credits. DMD could explore a similar incentive system in their RFP.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION: **A new, and affordable, childcare facility should be prioritized on the site**

Access to affordable and high-quality childcare, particularly for infants and toddlers, was voiced as a need throughout the engagement process. Parents and other caretakers need better access to childcare to unlock economic mobility and health benefits for themselves and their families. When determining civic and commercial uses for the site, childcare facilities should be prioritized.



< Even though there are daycare facilities currently present in the neighborhood, people still expressed the need for childcare in public meetings. This need is complex, and could be related to supply issues, quality issues, or other barriers to access. This study did not go into further analysis about this issue.

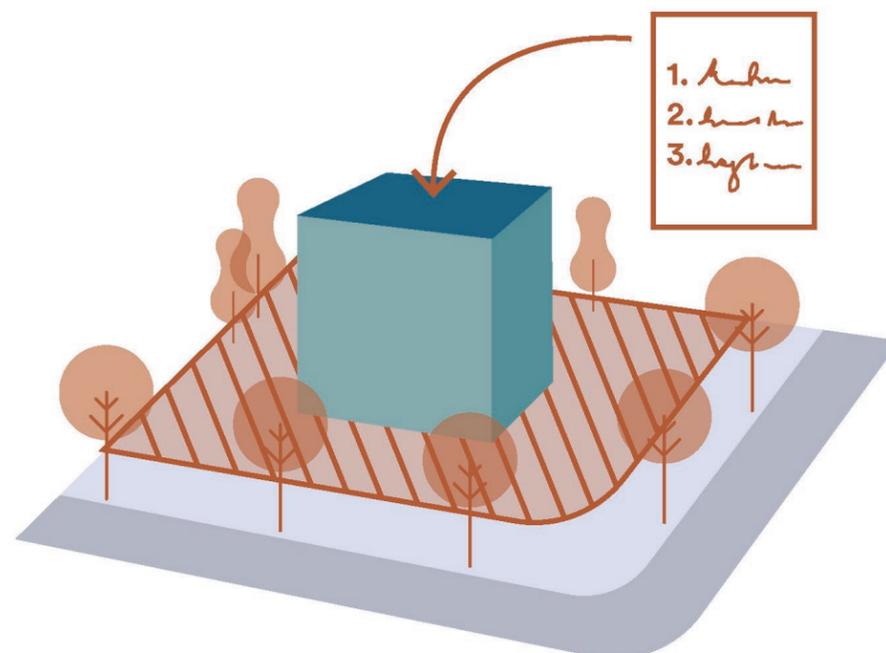
A space that is loved in the hearts and the minds of the community is more likely to be taken care of. However, the community alone can not be responsible for keeping up the landscape. The future owner and/or developer should review the strategy for long-term upkeep of public spaces, especially if the city is unable to contribute funds or a workforce to solely maintain it.



STEWARDSHIP RECOMMENDATION: The creek and surrounding green spaces need long-term maintenance

Landscapes are living systems that require maintenance in order to properly function ecologically and socially. Nothing, building or landscape, is maintenance-free. Any public space on the site will need to be preserved and maintained.

The city's enforcement department will require that property owners maintain their holdings. The RFP could also require maintenance plans from developers to show that they will set aside money for upkeep.



STEWARDSHIP RECOMMENDATION: Property owners should have a long-term maintenance plan for their properties

Property owners, especially owners of multi-family, commercial spaces, and office/flex spaces, are required to maintain the property grounds and keep buildings up to code. The developers and property owners should have a maintenance plan that outlines the capital reserves they plan on keeping for upkeep and repairs. The plan could also include the strategy they plan on using to make repairs and how their customer service for tenants works. This puts the onus on the developer to think critically about their long-term maintenance plan for the property.

REVENUE CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Overview

The redevelopment of the former Oaktree Site could catalyze reinvestment in the Far Eastside, and provide much needed community amenities, housing, and services. The implementation of the redevelopment plan will require the city to leverage the resources necessary to fund public infrastructure improvements and to attract private investment. The purpose of the revenue capacity analysis is to evaluate the potential revenue capacity of the planned development scenarios, and to identify resources that could be deployed by the city for the plan's implementation.

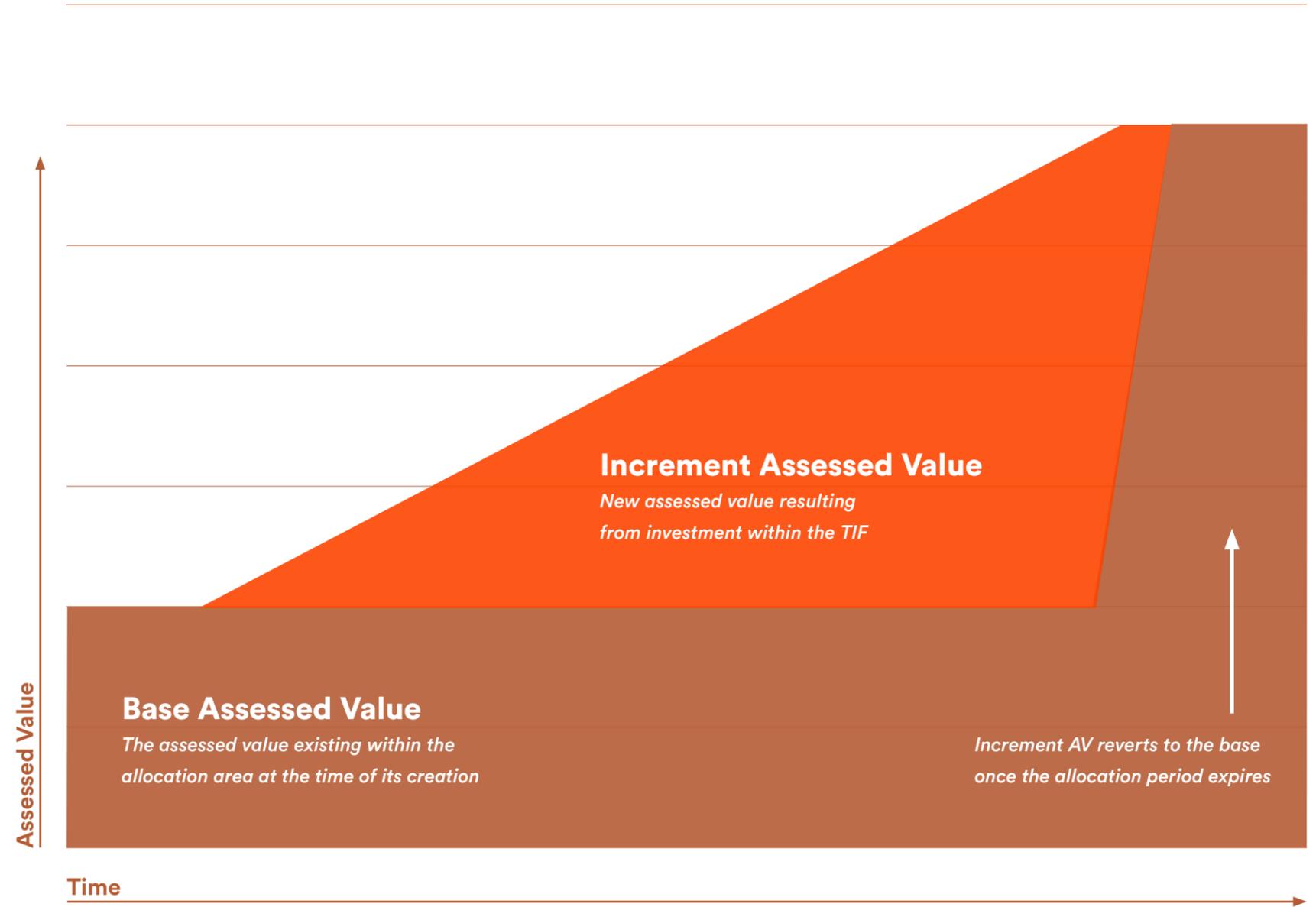
Tax Increment Financing Analysis

What is a TIF District?

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a widely-used economic development and redevelopment tool available to local government. TIF operates by “capturing” the property tax revenues produced by new private sector investments within a defined and locally approved geographic area. Those captured revenues are then spent on economic development and redevelopment-related initiatives that directly benefit the area. TIF revenues are commonly used to secure debt financing to improve the physical infrastructure within the district and surrounding the TIF area. TIF's are statutorily required by the state to meet certain criteria and must be approved by the local governing body before a TIF is put in place.

The Lifecycle of a TIF District:

- 1 When a TIF is established, the existing assessed value is designated as the “base.”
- 2 The assessed value from new commercial and industrial investment is allocated to the “increment.” The resulting property tax revenue is used to fund development-related projects.
- 3 The assessed value from residential development does not contribute to the TIF increment.
- 4 At the end of TIF's 25-year lifespan, all assessed value reverts to the base, increasing the tax base of local government units.



Tax Increment Financing Framework

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a common economic development and redevelopment tool used in Indiana. TIF operates by “capturing” the property tax revenues produced by new private sector investments within a defined geographic area. Those captured revenues are then spent on economic development and redevelopment related initiatives that directly benefit the area.

Allowable TIF Revenue Uses

The use of TIF dollars is limited by state statute to economic redevelopment related expenditures that serve or benefit the allocation area. Allowable uses include:

- 1 Acquisition of land and right-of-way.
- 2 Payment of principal and interest on bonds related to economic development or redevelopment purposes.
- 3 Funding of infrastructure improvements that are physically within or connected to the allocation area.
- 4 Funding of certain workforce training expenses.

TIF Limitations

The use of TIF dollars is closely regulated by law. Limitations to TIF revenue capture and spending include:

- 1 TIF funds cannot be used for operating expenses (salaries, marketing, etc.) of the City or the Redevelopment Commission.
- 2 Redevelopment Commissions must release assessed value back to taxing units that would produce revenues in excess of 200% planned expenditures and debt service.
- 3 In most cases, only incremental revenues produced by commercial and industrial property is allowed to be captured. Any increase in assessed value from residential property accrues to the tax base of local taxing units.
- 4 TIF funds cannot be spent on projects that are not associated with the redevelopment area.
- 5 New TIF districts expire 25 years after the first debt payment is made.

REVENUE CAPACITY ANALYSIS

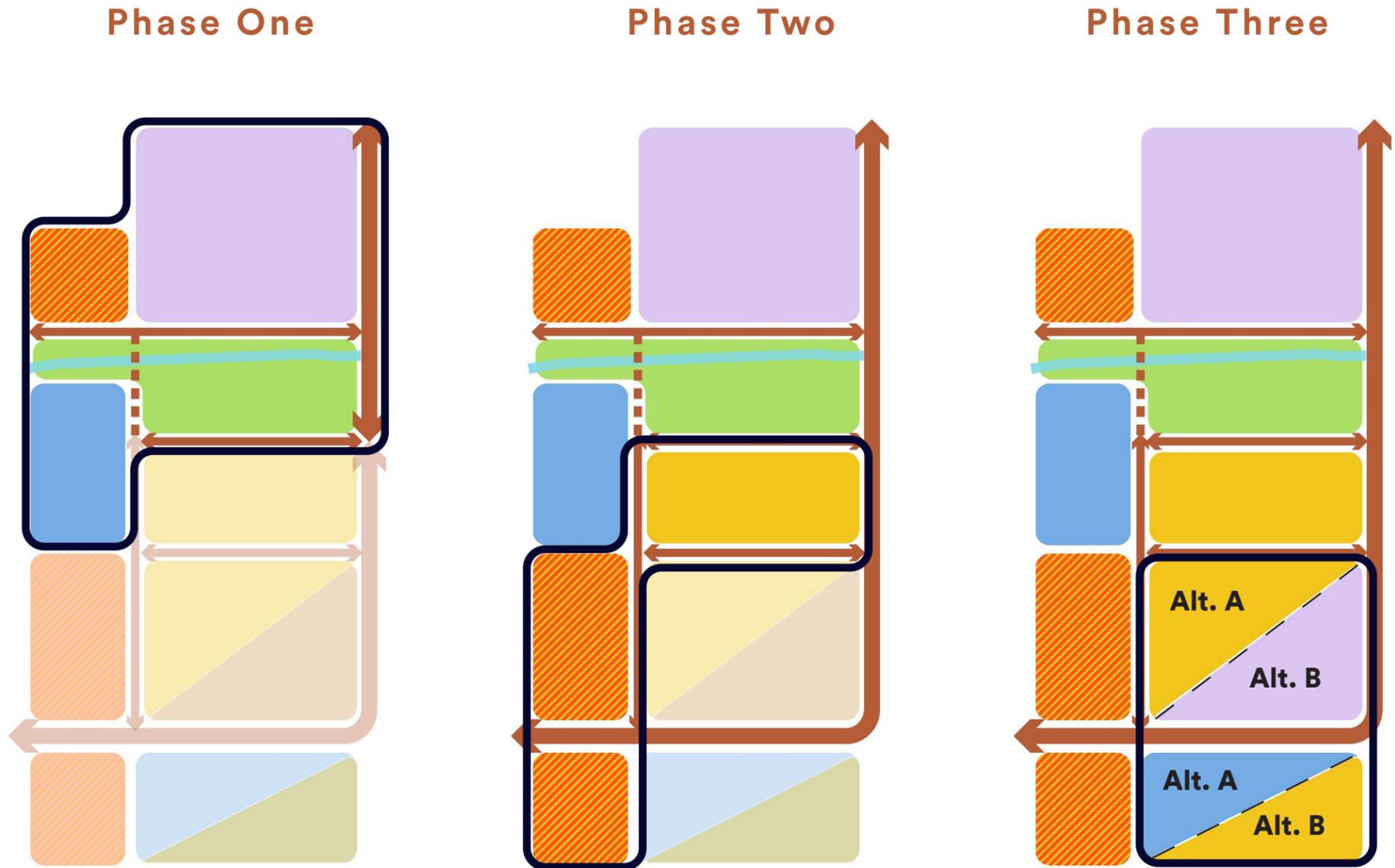
Phasing Assumptions

The redevelopment of the former Oaktree site will likely not occur at one time, but will be phased over time. Phasing assumptions have been developed for this analysis to provide estimates of the revenue capacity for each phase. The phases listed here are based on the concept synthesis plan. The city and developer, however, should not treat Phase One as the true starting point for physical change on the site. Interim temporary installations such as sports fields, pop-up events, and community gathering spaces are relatively inexpensive but can signal to the community that more change is coming. Pop-up markets can also help establish the site as a place to meet needs while allowing entrepreneurs a chance to develop business concepts before they are ready for a brick-and-mortar space. Continued engagement with the community should drive temporary uses for the site.

Phase One – Includes the redevelopment of the creek area, a commercial and mixed use area north of the creek, and a public use facility. Phase One assumes that the office/flex space will act as a catalyst for the northern portion of the site, providing daytime activity in the area and customers for the commercial space on Post Road. Construction of a public space around the creek also occurs within this phase, which is paired with a community-oriented civic space. Phase One aims to activate the site with an intentional mixed use development.

Phase Two – Includes the development of mixed use buildings fronting Post Road and the first phase of residential units. For the financial analysis, the homes here were assumed to be residential townhomes. Phase Two continues to fill out the site leading with the highest density along Post Road, and moderately dense townhomes in the core of the site. The goal of the first two phases is to work from north to south, west to east to create a continuous development without major spatial gaps.

Phase Three – varies depending on the design alternative chosen. Alternative A includes the development of a small commercial/industrial employer and additional residential units (the financial analysis assumes these are townhomes). Alternative B assumes the development of an additional civic/public space and multi-sector apartments.



Fiscal Capacity Projections

As shown, the Oaktree redevelopment could generate between \$700k and \$1.1M in annual TIF revenue. These resources could be leveraged to provide between \$8.5M and \$13.1M in funding for projects on the site.



	Alternative A (Commercial Focus)	Alternative B (Residential Focus)
Multi-family Residential Space	188,000 sq. ft.	501,600 sq. ft.
<i>Assessed Value</i>	\$21.3M	\$39M
Commercial Space	23,400 sq. ft.	23,400 sq. ft.
<i>Assessed Value</i>	\$2.2M	\$2.2M
Industrial Space	86,600 sq. ft.	38,500 sq. ft.
<i>Assessed Value</i>	\$8.9M	\$4M
Total Assessed Value	\$32.4M	\$53.2M
Annual TIF Revenue Capacity	\$715K	\$1.1M
Bonding Capacity	\$8.5M	\$13.1M

Revenue Capacity

The redevelopment of the former Oaktree site as planned would generate increment assessed value in the range of \$32 million - \$53 million, depending on the land use configuration and intensity. This investment would provide the ability to raise between \$8.5 million - \$13.1 million in resources through bonding to fund infrastructure and economic development incentives.

Bonding Capacity by Development Phase (millions)

The Oaktree redevelopment will likely occur over time. The first phase of proposed investment could generate an estimated \$2.8M in capital proceeds to facilitate the site redevelopment.



Bonding Capacity

Bonding capacity becomes available over time as development phases are completed. The development included in Phase One would generate an estimated \$2.8 million in bond proceeds. The Phase Two development would generate \$4.2 million in bond proceeds. The Phase Three development generates \$1.5 million in bond proceeds in the Commercial Focus scenario (Alternative A), and \$6.1 million in the Residential Focus scenario (Alternative B).

ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES

In addition to tax increment financing, the city could deploy additional funding sources for the Oaktree redevelopment, or pursue Federal or State grant opportunities. A summary of potentially available resources is provided below.

Stormwater Fees

Stormwater user fees (SUF) provide revenue exclusively dedicated to stormwater management. Stormwater fees provides a stable and flexible revenue stream through a flat rate typically used with residential property or a variable rate typically used with non-residential property. The variable rate is relative to the impervious area on a given parcel, while the flat rate is based on stormwater funding needs.

Stormwater funds are typically programmed in the City’s capital budgeting process, but could be utilized for eligible projects on the Oaktree site.¹

Economic Improvement District (EID)

EID’s are a partnership between local property and business owners with municipalities or private developers to fund the maintenance or development of property within the EID. An EID is funded through an additional special assessment, paid alongside property taxes within the district. The funds generated must be used for projects that benefit the community and provide additional public utility². Complete requirements and provisions are found in IC 36-7-22.

American Rescue Plan (ARP)

The American Rescue Plan is a federal program intended to provide relief from the economic implications of COVID-19. ARP dollars distributed to local governments are intended for a variety of uses, including addressing the negative economic impacts of COVID-19, and are invested in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure³.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

CDBG’s flexible funds are provided to eligible participants based on population data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. These funds are especially provided to projects focusing on providing affordable housing to low-income persons. CDBG funds require that the project benefit low and moderate-income persons or address urgent community development needs⁴.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

The HOME program is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HOME funds provide the largest grants specifically for creating affordable housing for low-income people. Funds can take the form of grants, direct loans, loan guarantees, or other forms of credit enhancements but require a 25 percent match from eligible sources.⁵

Indiana Redevelopment Tax Credit

The Indiana redevelopment tax credit is a credit against the Indiana income tax for approved grantees. The redevelopment site on which a vacant complex of buildings was demolished in an effort to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community can qualify for the tax credit. If the redevelopment site is part of a regional development authority’s development plan, the tax credit percentage is capped at 15%. Sites that are not part of a development plan are capped at 10%. A complete list of qualifications and factors for approval can be found under IC 6-3.1-34.

¹ Zhao, Fonseca, and Zeerak, “Stormwater Utility Fees and Credits: A Funding Strategy for Sustainability,” Sustainability 11, 5.

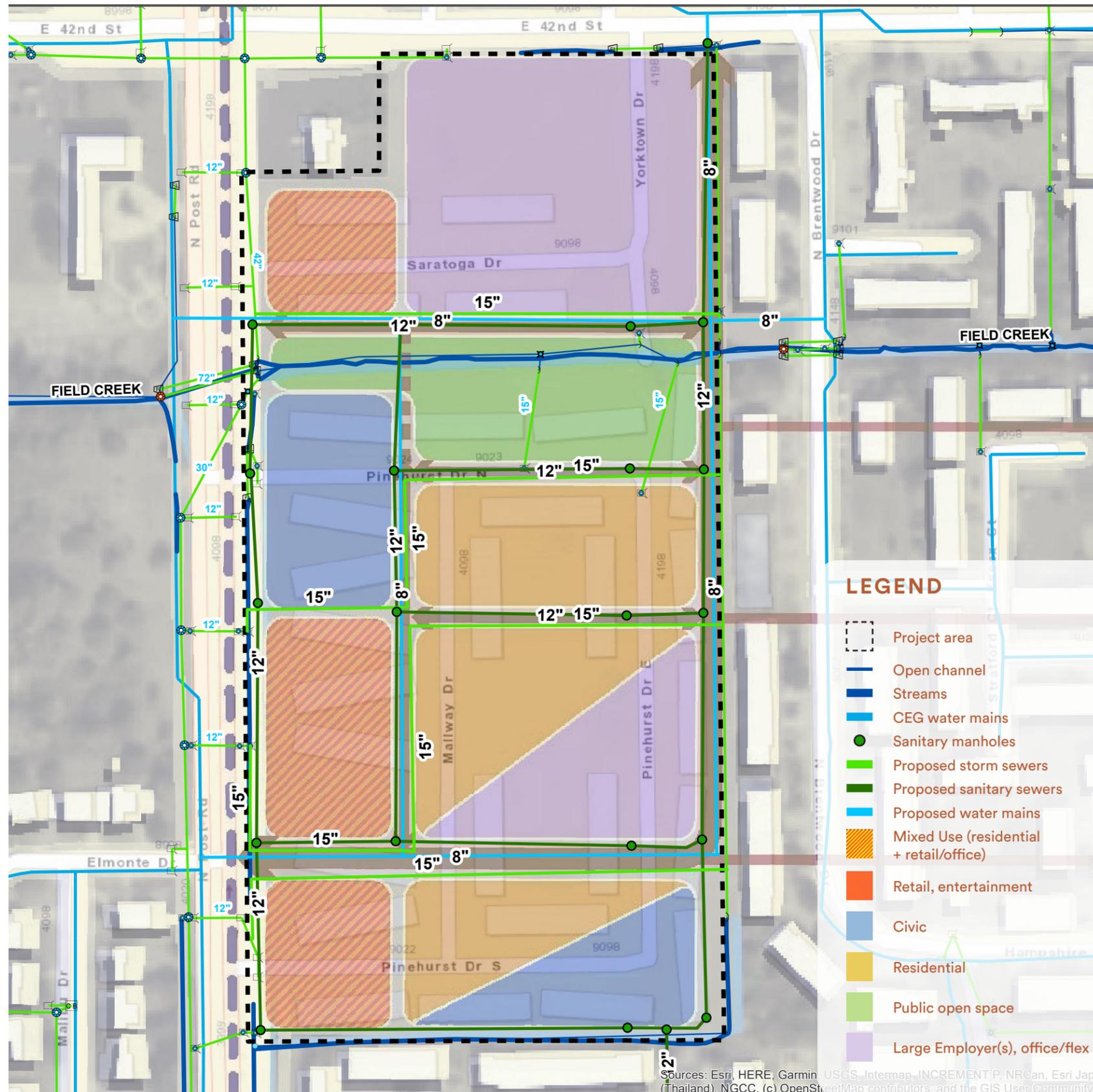
² Claybourn, “New Economic Improvement District Rules in Indiana,” Jackson Kelly PLLC, 1.

³ Department of Commerce, “Economic Adjustment Assistance,” American Rescue Plan

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Community Development Block Grant Program,” CDBG | HUD.gov, 1.

⁵ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “HOME Investment Partnerships Program,” HOME Investment Partnerships Program | HUD.gov, 1.

PROPOSED UTILITY CONNECTIONS



Site Utilities

As discussed in the Phase One report, the availability of utilities at the Oaktree site is an essential component of the upgrades to the project area. As this was the location of the now-demolished Oaktree Apartments, potable water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater exist on this site and in the surrounding area. As the configuration of the proposed improvements differs from the Oaktree Apartments, the size and alignment of the new utilities for this project area will differ from the existing ones. Therefore, the existing utilities will have to be removed, and new piping will have to be placed. Access roads will also have to be constructed as part of the upgrades, to facilitate ingress and egress to the new buildings.

Preliminary sizing of these utilities is based on an understanding of the functions of the designated spaces within the revitalized project area, using design standards established by the Indiana Administrative Code (IAC). It is envisioned that these new sanitary, storm, and potable water lines will connect with the nearby facilities. Based on the available GIS information for the project area, the general topography of the site naturally slopes south. Therefore, new storm and sewer lines will be designed to connect these larger storm and sewer lines located in the southern portion of the site. As the potable water lines are pressurized, there is no directional constraint in their installation. Connections to the existing potable water lines are proposed to the north on 42nd Street and to the west on Post Road to create a loop which will prevent water stagnation.

Key assumptions made in this planning-level design area:

- 1 Adequate pressures exist in the water lines to facilitate proper potable water conveyance
- 2 Soil conditions facilitate the installation of buried piping (potable water, storm, and sanitary)
- 3 Existing utilities that the new pipe connect to are in proper working condition, and as such do not have to be replaced.