

East 66th Street Implementation Plan

A TRANSPORTATION FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

JULY 2020

Hough Residents
Northeast Ohio Areawide
Coordinating Agency
City of Cleveland
MidTown Cleveland
Famicos Foundation
LANDstudio
Twelve Literary Arts
Lattimore Productions
Osborn Engineering
City Architecture



Acknowledgments

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E. 66th Street Stakeholder Group

- Councilman Basheer Jones (Ward 7)
- Director Fred Collier (City of Cleveland Planning Commission)
- Kim Scott (City of Cleveland Planning Commission)
- Carolyn Watts Allen (Resident)
- LaJean Ray (Fatima Family Center)
- Mansfield Frazier (Resident, Chateau Hough)
- Ron Calhoun (Resident, Ward 7 Observer)
- Erica Henkin (CSU - IoT)
- Kelle Deboth (CSU - IoT)
- BJ Ward (CSU - IoT)
- Lillian Kuri (The Cleveland Foundation)
- Nelson Beckford (The Cleveland Foundation)
- Keisha Gonzalez (The Cleveland Foundation)
- Lauren Hansgen (Dunham Tavern)
- Ray Leach (Jumpstart)
- Eric Herman (Cleveland Public Library)
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- Kathy Sonnhalter (Cleveland Public Library)
- Jeremiah Swetel (Cleveland Public Library)
- Jean McFarren (Cleveland Public Library)
- Christin Farmer (Birthing Beautiful Communities)
- Jazmin Long (Birthing Beautiful Communities)
- Bob Zimmer (Baseball Heritage Museum)
- Julia DiBaggio (Baseball Heritage Museum)
- Angela Bennett (Frontline)
- Sheila Wright (Frontline)
- Adam King (Property Owner)
- David Wilson (LANDstudio)
- Father Bob Marva (St. Agnes Our Lady of Fatima)
- Barbara Deutsch (Dunham Church)
- Rick Switalski (City of Cleveland)
- The Benford Family (Residents)

Project Team

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- Lexy Lattimore (Artist-Lattimore Productions)
- Daniel Gray-Kontar (Twelve Literary Arts)
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Project Introduction

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The East 66th Street Implementation Plan builds upon the 2012 League Park TLCI Plan - responding to changes in community priorities and focusing on initial infrastructure investments to support future development.

What was originally envisioned as a quick win turned into a much longer play. The 2012 League Park TLCI explored revitalization concepts for the western portion of the Hough neighborhood to plan for impacts that would result from the pending restoration of Cleveland's Historic League Park. Much of this redevelopment and neighborhood investment did not materialize following the celebrated restoration. The exception to this was the creation of Chateau Hough Winery at East 66th Street and Hough Avenue, a visionary project led by longtime Hough resident and champion, Mr. Mansfield Frazier.

In 2019, a series of planned institutional investments along the corridor helped to spur renewed interest in building from the strengths of the neighborhood. The Cleveland Foundation decided to build its headquarters at the intersection of East 66th and Euclid Avenue. The Cleveland Public Library decided to build a new branch library at East 66th and Lexington. The Dunham Tavern Museum decided to develop a new plan for its campus to expand community access and opportunities, and MidTown Cleveland commenced work on a Technology Center in the same block. The time was right to reconsider the East 66th Street Corridor and

ensure that the neighborhood would have a place at the table to envision the best way to leverage these investments.

This updated streetscape plan builds from the existing framework of the 2012 plan while focusing on new community-based implementation strategies. Charged with creating a "21st Century Street" that is safe,

connected and just for all, this implementation plan is aimed at strengthening sense of place and building community within the Hough neighborhood, focused along the East 66th Street Corridor. The planning team recognized that if our infrastructure is truly going to serve the city's neighborhoods equitably, the process of arriving at design solutions needed to change in a fundamental way.

TLCI OBJECTIVES

The East 66th Street Implementation Plan is funded through a Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) planning grant, awarded by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to the City of Cleveland. The objectives of the program include the following ideas:

- Develop transportation projects that provide more travel options through complete streets and context sensitive solutions, increasing user safety and supporting positive public health impacts
- Promote reinvestment in underutilized or vacant/abandoned properties through development concepts supported by multi-modal transportation systems
- Support economic development through place-based transportation and land use recommendations, and connect these proposals with existing assets and investments
- Ensure that the benefits and burdens of growth, change and transportation projects are distributed equitably by integrating accessibility and environmental justice into projects
- Enhance regional cohesion by supporting collaboration between regional and community partners
- Provide people with safe and reliable transportation choices that enhance their quality of life

Community Amid Coronavirus

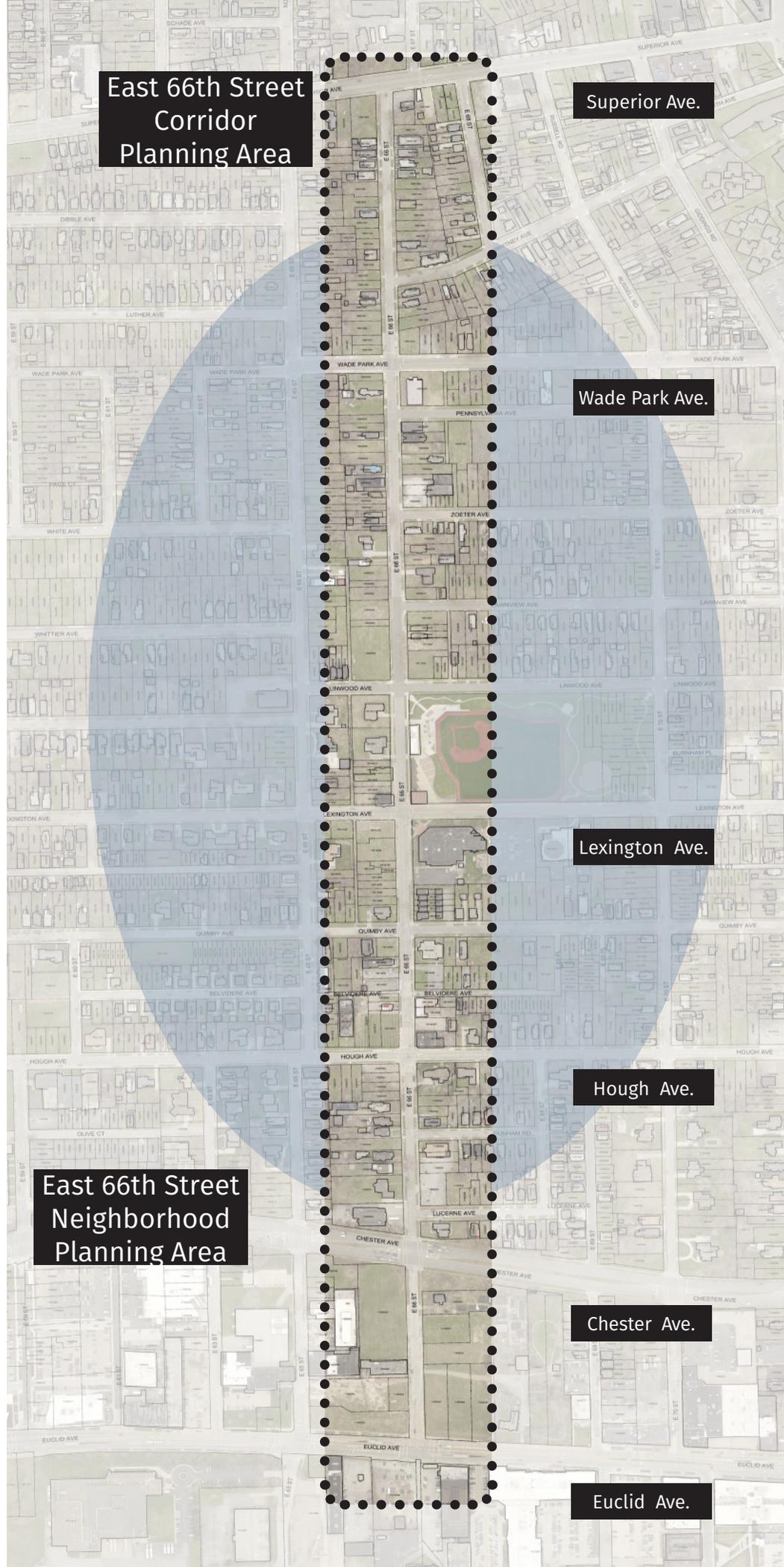
Project goals of an intensive community process were challenged with the onset of the Coronavirus in early March of 2020. Plans for community events were reconsidered and repositioned in favor of online outreach. The result, surprisingly, was a process that was more connected and more personal than most community plans. The project team was committed to exceeding expectations and improving connectivity despite the challenges of a worldwide pandemic.

The following materials document this process, from physical analysis to unique community engagement, to community-led visions.

PROJECT AREA

The East 66th Street planning area is a corridor approximately 1 mile in length that runs from Superior Avenue to the north to Euclid Avenue to the south, bridging between Cleveland's Hough and MidTown neighborhoods.

While the implementation portion of this update project is focused on streetscape improvements along this corridor, consideration has also been given to updating the neighborhood vision plan to reflect current issues and priorities. These considerations go beyond the corridor to reach into the greater neighborhood.



Project Statement

LEARNING FROM LOCAL INSIGHTS, SETTING NEW STANDARDS

“Create a national model public space that emphasizes seamless connectivity and accessibility - promoting physical, social, and technological links – with an overarching commitment to **justice** and **equity.**”

A planning process that is different - one that goes beyond church basement meetings and typical conclusions; one that recognizes the inherent racism built into the infrastructure of America's cities; one that raises the voices of those most impacted by this; and one that seeks to change the structures that have allowed inequities in neighborhood investment to continue for decades - formed the basis of the team's approach and will continue to inform decisions along the way.

A directive to develop a street that would represent a new prototype for neighborhood street design in the City of Cleveland has become an opportunity for real change. This is not just the design details, but how streets, corridors and neighborhoods are designed, built and maintained, and how the community is connected to the process.

To achieve this goal it has been crucial to set the stage and facilitate a more intentional planning process aimed at achieving different results. The team has been committed to open and honest dialogue, directly welcoming the community to participate in discussion and idea-sharing at any and all levels.

Intensive community engagement has been led by a team of local artists who brought a welcome new dynamic to the process. In support of this, community members who took on greater roles in the planning process were compensated for their time and commitment.

The City of Cleveland's vision for a 21st Century Street called for details grounded in a range of best practices:

- Smart Street design
- Green/Sustainable design
- Complete Street design
- Universal accessibility
- Vision Zero design
- Equitable design

These design considerations were then balanced with community priorities identified through early engagement activities to create areas of focus and guiding principles against which to test concepts.

Early on, emphasis was placed on justice as a key theme around which to base neighborhood transformation. It was determined that creating a new physical space was not enough to achieve the project vision; rather, justice and equity must be at the heart of every decision and detail.

A series of guiding principles became the basis for design discussions within the project team and the greater community. These are identified as follows:

Justice

How does it support economic justice, an end to oppression, anti-violence and community empowerment?

Existing Conditions / Updated Analysis

TRANSPORTATION & ASSETS

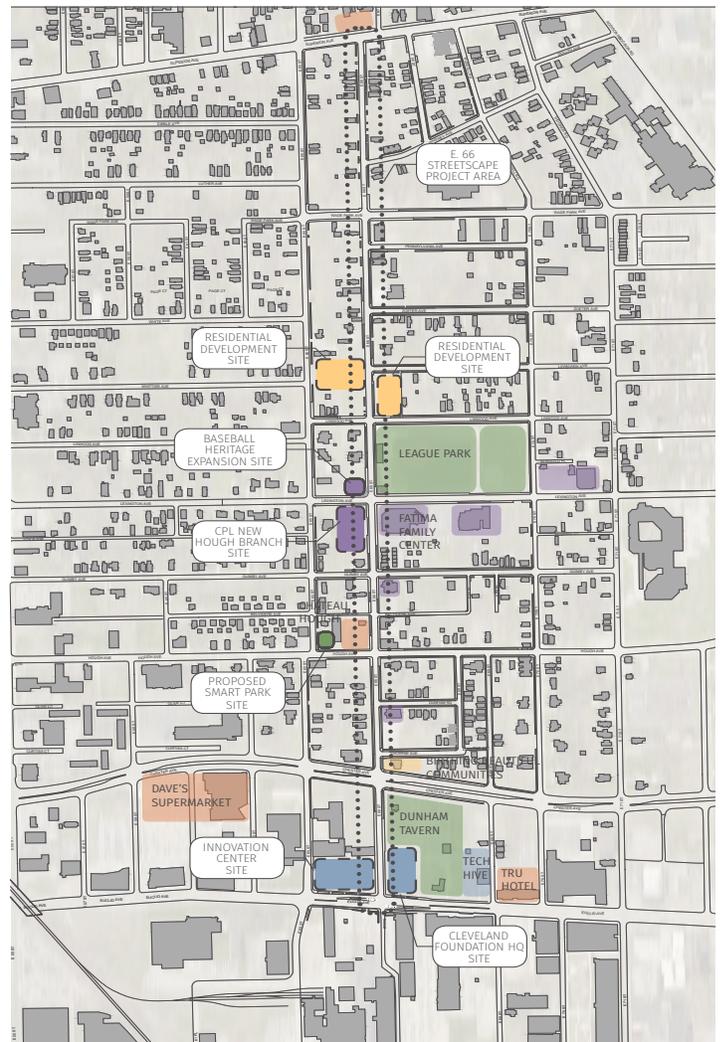
An updated look to the future of the district required a concise analysis of physical changes to the area that had occurred since the completion of the 2012 study. It was important to understand the current environment for transportation options, assets and investments, land use changes and vacancy/ownership patterns. Additionally, a comprehensive documentation of physical conditions along the East 66th Street Corridor was completed. This information highlighted important considerations for addressing neighborhood priorities.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



- The corridor and surrounding neighborhood are serviced by three Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority bus routes (Healthline, #38 and #3), positioning the neighborhood well for regional access. The East 66th Street Corridor plays a pivotal role in connecting these options safely and seamlessly, while supporting a wider range of transportation options.
- Traffic volumes are relatively low within the neighborhood, but Chester Avenue is a high-volume corridor of east-west movement. This is an important crossing point for neighborhood connectivity.
- The pedestrian network is in the worst condition of all transportation options- limiting opportunities for many residents.

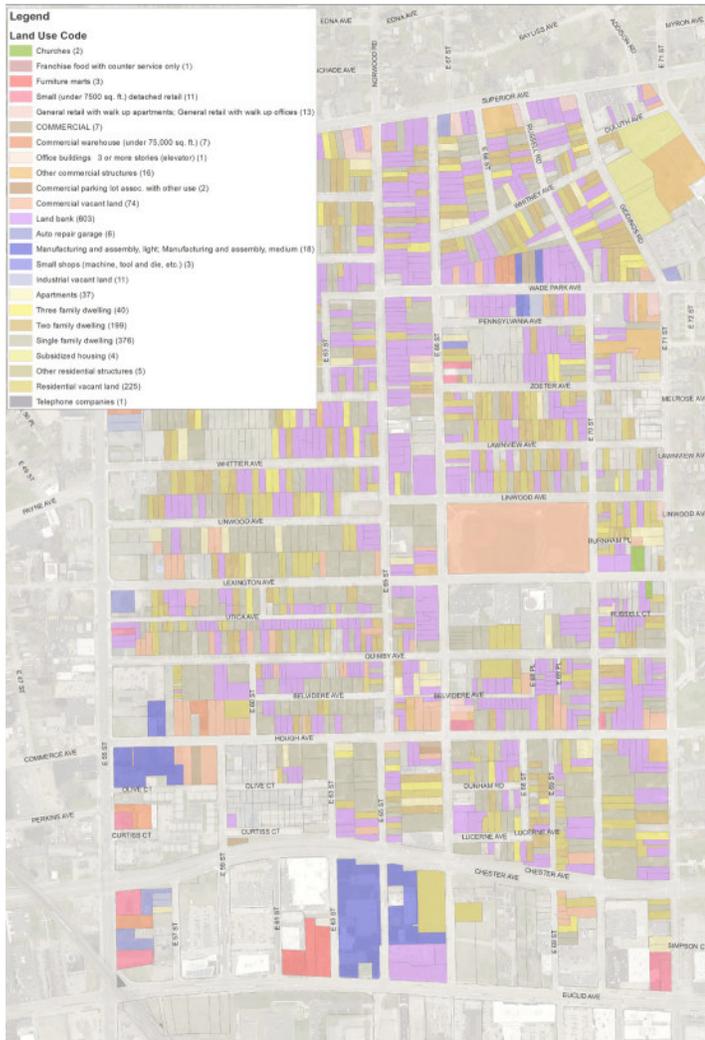
CORRIDOR ASSETS



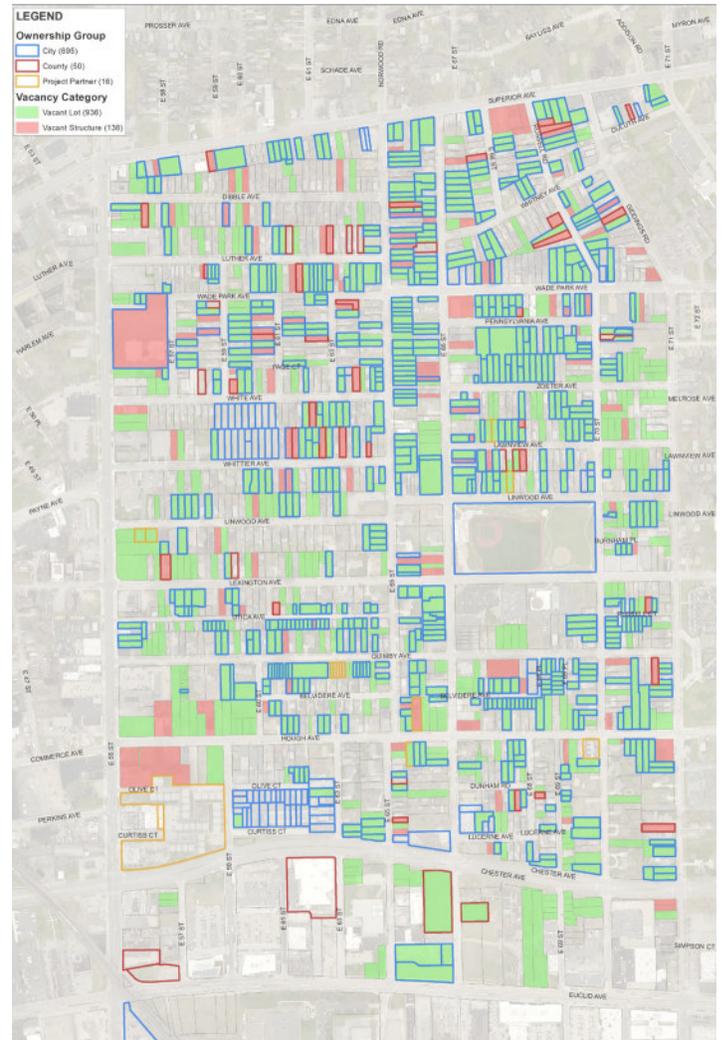
- New development is beginning to occur along the East 66th Street Corridor. Planned institutional investments will set the stage for additional residential and commercial development, and the large amount of vacant, landbank parcels provide opportunities for additional infill and growth.
- The historic commercial corridors of Hough Avenue, Wade Park Avenue and Superior Avenue remain better suited to accommodate future commercial development through their scale and higher traffic volumes.

LAND USE & VACANCY

CURRENT LAND USE



VACANCY



- City and County-owned land bank property (shown in light purple) accounts for the single greatest land use in the immediate neighborhood with 603 parcels. This is publicly-owned vacant land that can be utilized for redevelopment, and represents a tremendous opportunity for the community.
- Following are single family dwellings (376 parcels), residential vacant land (225 parcels) and two family dwellings (199 parcels)- emphasizing the residential nature of this part of the neighborhood.
- Increased institutional development will begin to change the dynamic along the corridor.

- The neighborhood within the study area and along the corridor is characterized by high levels of vacancy (30% of parcels or 42% of land area) with 936 vacant lots and 138 vacant structures.
- With a majority of these properties owned by the City of Cleveland (695), these vacancies present an unparalleled opportunity for resident-driven investment in housing, public spaces and other development throughout the neighborhood.
- A Ward 7 planning process has highlighted the need for a change in approach to how this land is developed - through fair land value and investment by local and minority-owned developer teams to truly benefit the residents of the neighborhood.

Community Engagement

NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES

Dear Reader,

We are humbled to write this introduction to the community engagement process for the Hough neighborhood's Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI). We write this overview in honor of the many Hough residents who have profoundly and uniquely shaped this engagement process. Together, we have spoken with youth, mothers, fathers, seniors, clergy, members of street organizations, entrepreneurs, artists, institutions, adults in their 30s/40s, leaders of neighborhood-based organizations, activists, and organizers. In light of the diversity of perspective, clear and common themes have emerged to shape this TLCI plan.

There are a number of frameworks and discursive practices that have guided our approach to this work. We have pulled from our respective disciplines in art-making, anthropology, social work, storytelling, and youth advocacy, as well as our experiences as residents in Cleveland neighborhoods like and unlike Hough.

Our process began in February of 2020 with a few clear values. First, we understood and emphasized that each resident is the expert of their own experience. Second, we knew the importance of seeking the voices of young people, drawing from their incredible power, ingenuity, and fresh views to guide this plan. Third, we were committed to a strengths-based

perspective, searching for the neighborhood's many assets. Finally, we grounded our journey in research and, to the best of our ability, employed an evidence-informed approach as we sought to contextualize resident feedback.

We were able to tease out community priorities using participatory design models, empowerment theory, asset-based community development (ABCD), an understanding of community trauma and healing theories, and youth organizing. Thematically, we heard calls for justice. Justice, in this case, looks like repairing the built environment, creating pathways for economic opportunities within the neighborhood, and activating social networks. Over the course of various focus group discussions (in which participants were compensated for their time), one-on-one interviews, public meetings, and youth design sessions, we learned that residents believe strongly in the power of their collective voice. This implementation process will be a success, they emphasized, if they are properly heard. It will fail if the collective vision they have created is dismissed by those who have the power to make this plan a reality.

Justice takes courage. We implore those who have the power to implement this plan to be courageous. The residents of Hough have laid forth a vision of equity, inclusion, and prosperity for their neighborhood. We have been asked throughout this process, "Can a TLCI really

address concerns for justice and equity?" Our response has been an unequivocal, yes!

When we address a crumbling built-environment and re-ignite social networks to do so, when we compensate residents for their expertise and talent, we know that we are beginning the necessary steps to heal neighborhood trauma, neglect, and injustice. We thank all of the Hough residents and the many collaborators and sponsors who made this work possible.

Onwards,

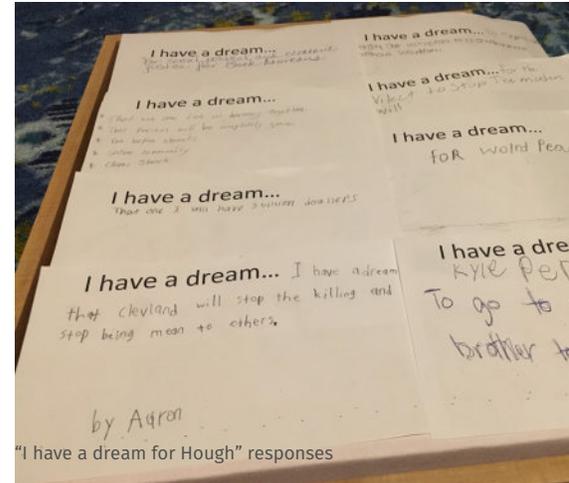
Lexy Lattimore and Daniel Gray-Kontar
Artists & Directors of Neighborhood Engagement

**"Build from the
experience of resident
experts."**

-Adam King - property owner
& East 66th Street Stakeholder
Group Member

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

| DATE OF ENGAGEMENT | COHORT | LEAD(S) |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| March 27, 2020 | Youth | Mary Barrett, Daniel Gray-Kontar, Lexy Lattimore, Bri Watts |
| April 24, 2020 | Youth | Mary Barrett, Daniel Gray-Kontar, Lexy Lattimore, Bri Watts |
| May 21, 2020 | Adult Neighbors | Joi Carter, Daniel Gray-Kontar |
| May 22, 2020 | Mothers | Mary Barrett, Daniel Gray-Kontar, Lexy Lattimore, Bri Watts |
| June 3, 2020 | Adult Women | Lexy Lattimore |
| June 4, 2020 | Mothers | Mary Barrett, Daniel Gray-Kontar, Bri Watts |
| June 16, 2020 | Youth | Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris, Mary Barrett, Daniel Gray-Kontar, Alex Pesta, Bri Watts |
| June 26, 2020 | E66 Street Residents (Only) | Lexy Lattimore & Keith Benford (E66 Resident) |
| TOTAL SESSIONS | | |
| 8 | | |



EXTENSIVE OUTREACH - BRINGING NEW VOICES TO THE TABLE

The engagement team conducted numerous community conversations, from group activities to surveys to individual conversations. The onset of a global pandemic early in the process brought additional urgency to these efforts - providing critical social connections as society withdrew from typical day-to-day life. Online meeting platforms enabled people who may have never connected in person to meet and develop deeper levels of understanding.

Early "I have a dream for Hough" activities with seniors and children in the neighborhood demonstrated the strong desire for a process and product that reflected some key themes: economic justice, the elimination of oppression, peace/anti-violence and rebuilding community.

Encouraged and supported by Ward 7 Councilman Basheer Jones, the engagement team initiated a series of conversations with young people to provide space for discussions about their lived experiences in

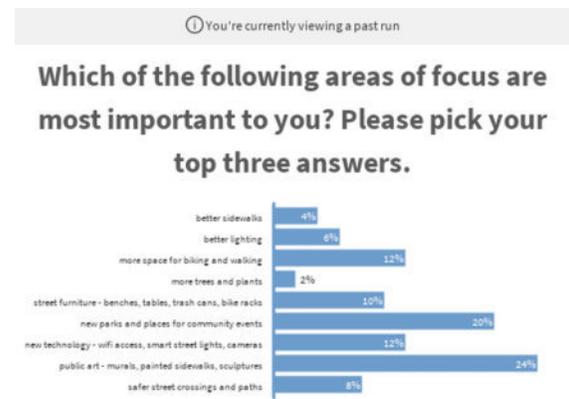
the neighborhood and their aspirations for the community. This resulted in a youth design session (detailed on the following pages) to create a vision for the East 66th Street Corridor and plans to create a Youth Advisory Board for the neighborhood.

The team created a survey that was distributed to 100+ area seniors, including residents at Eliza Bryant Village, to understand their thoughts on transportation, safety, neighborhood needs and more.

Additional focus group conversations as detailed above allowed the team to connect with many who are frequently left out of larger community conversations.

The team conducted three online community meetings to bring these various groups together and extend the conversation to all interested parties in the neighborhood.

The following pages detail these activities and the resulting neighborhood visions.



Interactive polling in community meetings



Youth design session

COMMUNITY MEETINGS - VIRTUAL BLOCK PARTIES AND KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

If this process was going to connect the community in new ways, a new meeting approach was needed. The team sought to create a casual environment that would allow people to have conversations and direct input into the design process.

A series of three virtual block parties and kitchen table conversations held on Friday evenings in May, June and July set a new tone. Check-in activities asked big questions and invited honest dialogue. Movement moments provided centering physical activities and energizing music. Virtual breakout rooms provided opportunities for small group discussions. Real-time surveys allowed participants to provide data on preferences and priorities in a fun format.

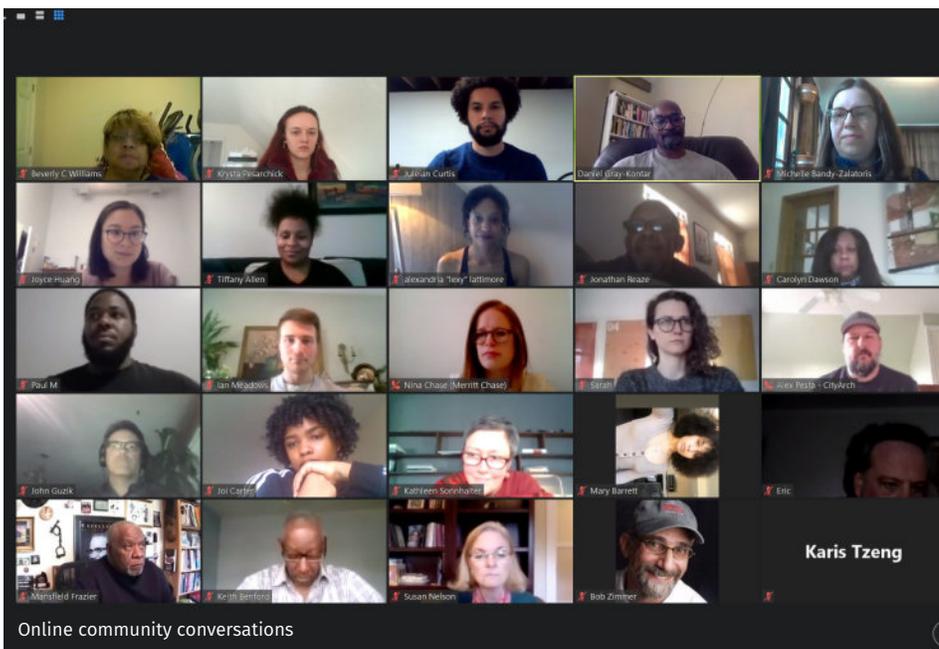
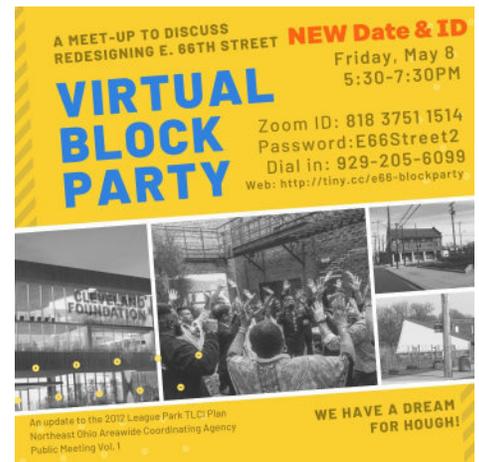
The different approach to these interactions changed the dynamic of public meetings, which have grown more contentious in recent years. Participants could make opinions known via a chat function in the meeting platform

at any time. Conversations were structured so that many had the opportunity to present and provide updates. The open nature of this approach reduced the feeling of an 'us vs. them' format, often prevalent in community meetings and allowed all involved to focus on discourse. This meant that the project team looked forward to connecting with the community and sharing time together in a way that built deeper understanding.

The first conversation focused on sharing priorities, concerns and aspirations for the neighborhood.

The second conversation included opportunities to review a set of initial design ideas and to weigh in on whether these were accurately reflecting the community's visions.

The third conversation provided a chance to review final concepts and discuss structures for moving forward with project development that will continue to empower residents.



Invitations for the three online community meetings

BUILDING CONSENSUS TO CRAFT A NEIGHBORHOOD VISION

| Theme | Youth | Adults | Mothers | E. 66th St. Residents |
|--|-------|--------|---------|-----------------------|
| A street that is designed to attract youth and families | X | X | X | X |
| A street that is designed to unify all of Hough | X | X | X | X |
| A street that invites intergenerational gathering | X | X | X | X |
| A street that is well-maintained | X | X | X | X |
| A street that does not feel like a concrete jungle | X | X | X | X |
| A street with parks with equipment that is regularly maintained | X | X | X | X |
| A street that feels like “Black Avenue” | X | X | X | X |
| A street with lots of murals, words of affirmation, and culturally-responsive images | X | X | X | X |
| A street with bright colors | X | X | X | X |
| Easy access to garbage cans along the street to encourage cleanliness | X | X | X | X |
| A street with tables and benches | X | X | X | X |
| Mounted barbecue pits | X | X | X | X |
| Walkable, with a section with limited car traffic | X | X | X | X |
| Bicycle paths | X | X | X | X |
| The return of a recreation center | X | X | X | X |
| A well-lit street | X | X | X | X |
| Opening up the use of League Park to the community | X | X | X | X |
| Police cameras along the street | | X | X | |

In the creation of a plan that would truly reflect the priorities and desires of the community, care was taken in conducting conversations with as many groups as possible. Information gathered from these conversations was compiled and analyzed to identify the areas of overlap. Of the many ideas discussed within these groups, the chart to the left reflects the primary areas of overlap.

This paints a clear and consistent picture of a neighborhood vision that focuses on unity and building a stronger sense of community - supported by spaces and details that help to bring people together. It's a place of peace and beauty; filled with art, history and cultural references.

These priorities span generations. They span socio-economic differences. They represent the path forward and they are the details from which this planning work has developed.



YOUTH DESIGN SESSION

On June 16 a group of young people from the Hough neighborhood under the leadership of the Twelve Literary Arts team came to the offices of City Architecture to work together on a plan to reflect their visions for the community.

The young people demonstrated incredible enthusiasm, creativity and thoughtfulness in creating a vision that would serve the needs of the neighborhood while providing daily inspiration to all.

The young people envision the corridor as a welcoming and connecting place that would unfold through a range of themes. Art and positive affirmations would be woven throughout the entire length. Exciting details like changeable ornamental lighting that could

create a rainbow along the street are balanced with pragmatic ones like the need for benches and trash receptacles at regular intervals. Activities are distributed and varied, to provide a lot of options for the community.

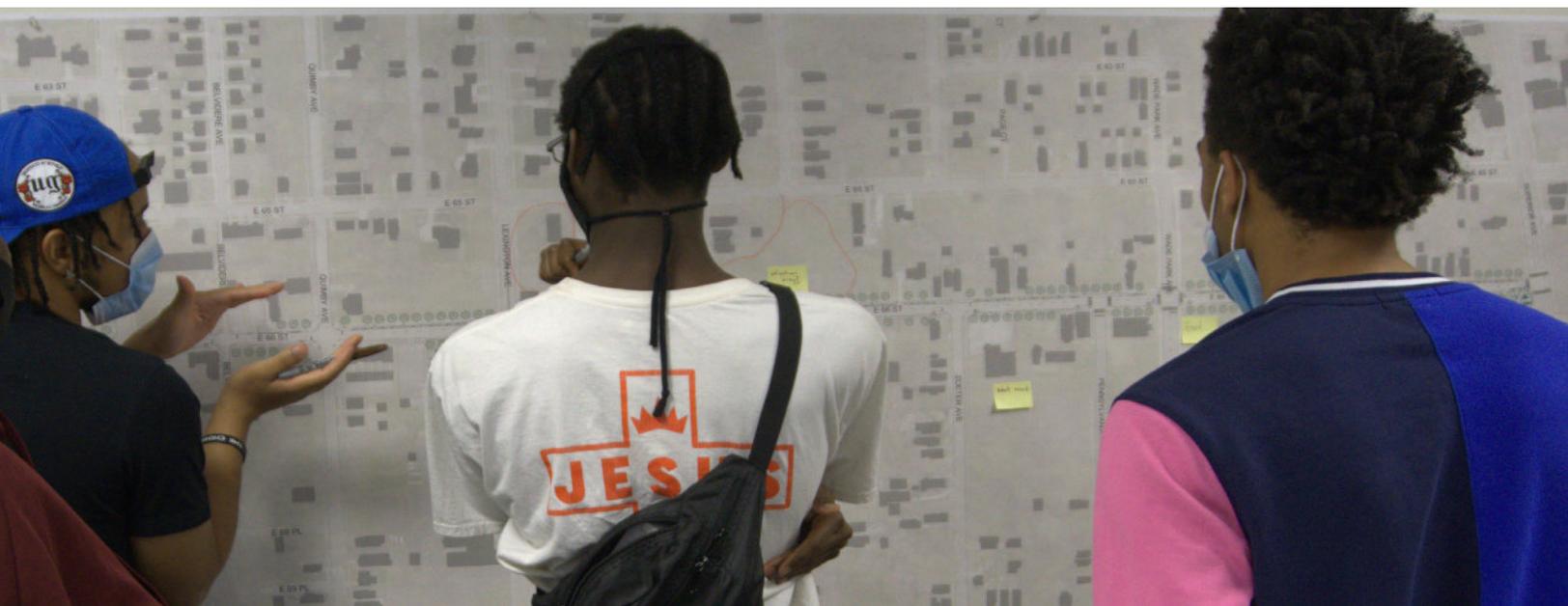
The block south of Superior Avenue is envisioned as a calm and peaceful place with park space that supports activities like meditation, yoga, reading and soothing music. This is the Chill Zone.

The next blocks south from Wade Park to Zoeter Avenue are focused on creative activities, with gallery and performance space, places to learn about and practice music, dance, hip hop and fashion design. This area would include commercial spaces to support these uses and

reactivate this section of Wade Park Avenue. Shipping containers in open spaces here could serve as mini galleries and be covered in murals. An abandoned playground area could be re-purposed to support a basketball court with bleachers that could transition to performance space for fashion and hip hop shows.

A space that could support food trucks in the near term could evolve into restaurant spaces as the area evolves. The group see the blocks between Wade Park and Zoeter Avenues as a potential spot for temporary street closures to support community festivals and events. This is the creative and inspirational zone.

The League Park area was seen as the heart of the neighborhood. Increased access to the park



is desired, as well as a reprogramming of Fannie M. Lewis Park to incorporate a range of new community spaces and amenities (a centering sculpture, pavilion, seating options, grills and a space to support larger group gatherings). This becomes a primary destination that draws from the greater community. This is the active sports and community gathering space.

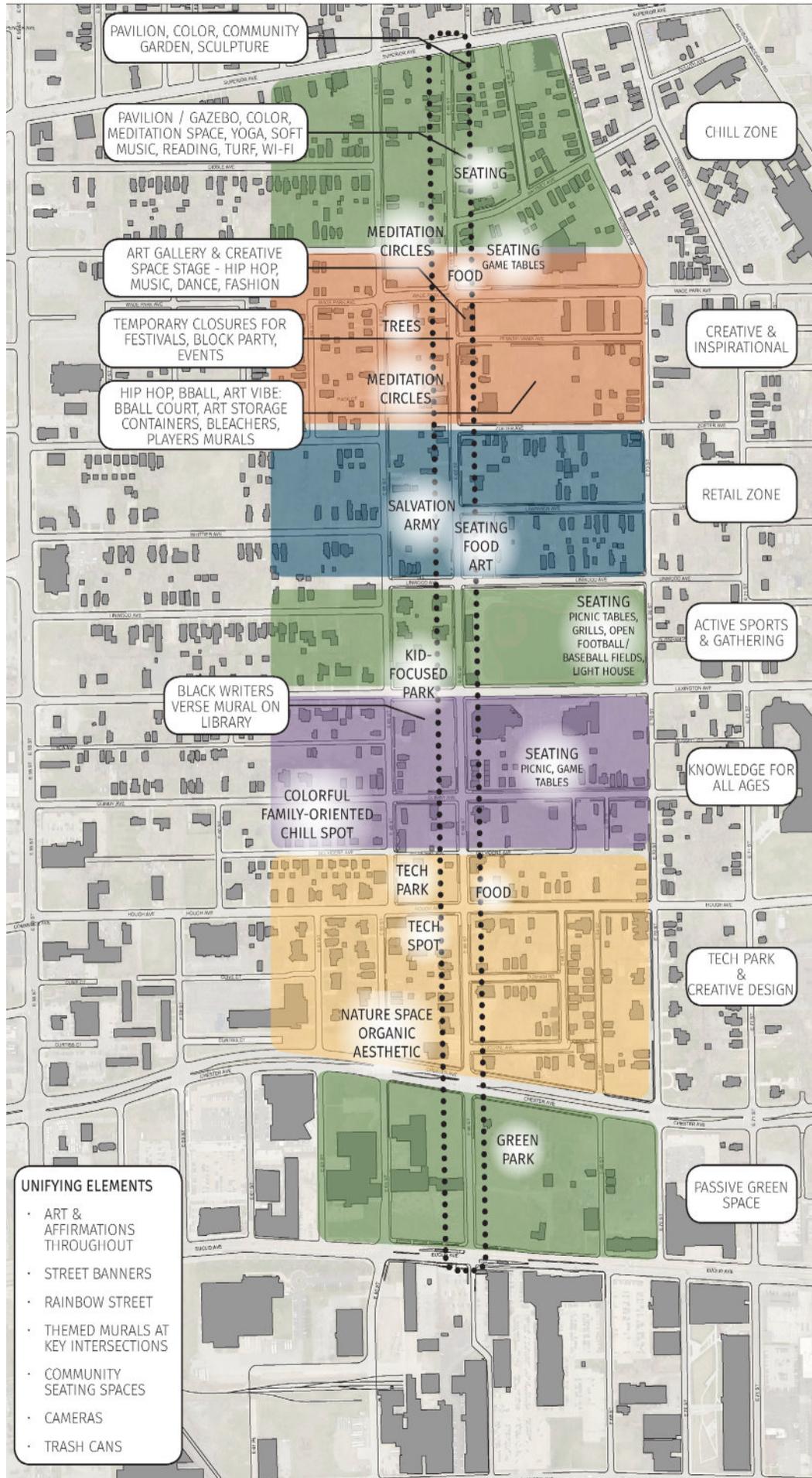
The blocks from Lexington Avenue to Quimby are envisioned as a place of knowledge and growth. The new library branch will be key to supporting this focus. Family-focused parks are located here, as well as art that celebrates Black writers, inventors and more. This zone celebrates Black innovation and knowledge for all ages.

The blocks between Belvidere and Chester Avenue are a transitional area focused on a balance of technology and the environment. Natural spaces blend with a smart park and the existing Chateau Hough vineyards. This future-looking part of the corridor explores new healthy possibilities for all at a key gateway to the neighborhood, and transitions to the new investments happening to the south.

The block between Chester and Euclid is seen as a place to connect with the larger community and a place to immerse oneself in nature. The new plans for the Dunham Tavern campus include a range of accessible green spaces, and community spaces. A park-like green path will provide connections to nearby amenities like Dave's Market. Community spaces will connect residents to The Cleveland Foundation's new headquarters. This is the Green Zone.

Artwork such as murals and banners along the length of the corridor would focus on positive examples from history in each of these general areas, to emphasize the theme.

In three hours this impassioned group of young people created an inspiring vision for the neighborhood that we hope to see brought to reality.



NEIGHBORHOOD VISION - YOUTH DESIGN SESSION SUMMARY MAP

Designs & Concepts

STREET

“Any light you can put on the street is good! There are lots of pockets of darkness.”

“I definitely want to have some more trees.”

“We need a bike lane and places to park our bikes.”

“(We need) a very walkable street - a place people will be inspired not to drive.”

“I think it’d be really nice for safety to have a hearing accessible crossing.”

- Hough resident statements

A design for a new, 21st Century neighborhood street prototype needs to be responsive to the community in new ways through layout and details. A rethinking of the right-of-way is required to shift the balance from primarily moving cars to safely accommodating a range of mobility options. To address the goals of the project, it was imperative to study a range of options and test them with the community to better understand preferences.

The conclusion is that a new design must do the following:

- Give greater priority to pedestrians, bicycles and alternate modes of transportation
- Improve neighborhood connections through access to internet, access to a variety of

transportation options, and access to amenities and cultural resources that support improved quality of life

- Provide additional safety features – enhanced lighting, smart signals, (touch free) pedestrian-controlled crossing, cameras, decreased crossing distances, traffic calming measures
- Increase universal accessibility through wider, unobstructed paths, materials that resist freeze-thaw cycles and support smoother movement, and details that support safe crossing for people of all abilities, with a goal of exceeding ADA and other industry standards
- Support a focus on history and heritage through public art that adds color and opportunities for a wide range of art media

EAST 66TH STREET EXISTING ROADWAY LAYOUT



CITY ARCHITECTURE

with a strong preference to showcase resident artwork and installations

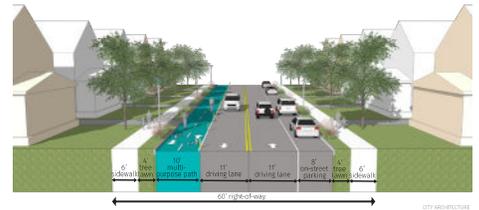
- Create sections of street that can easily be closed on a temporary basis to support regular neighborhood events and activities
- Include parking to support neighborhood activities, without allowing parking to dominate the neighborhood
- Provide new trees, flowers and easily maintained landscaping that add beauty and value to the street
- Incorporate a range of benches, trash cans, bus shelters and other street furniture, as well as flexible spaces for outdoor activities to bring back spaces for the community
- Create intersection details that prioritize

pedestrian movement at Chester Avenue to bridge the neighborhood divide that was created with Chester Avenue's construction

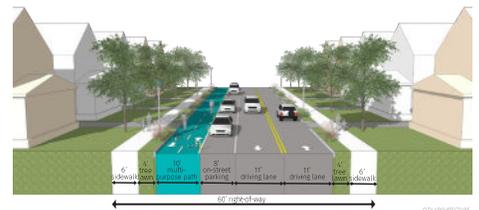
- Balance the street with the same level of detail in multiple locations and consider phasing – build equity into the details.

By developing a series of design options and seeking community feedback, six street design concepts were narrowed down to an ultimate preferred scenario. Key elements of this preferred design include a neighborhood path to support walking, biking and fitness activities, smart street lights and pedestrian path lights, green infrastructure and “street” trees in front yards to improve visibility and tree health.

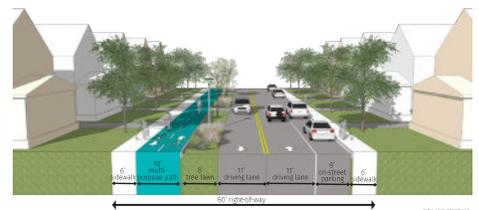
EAST 66TH STREET – ROADWAY CONCEPT 1



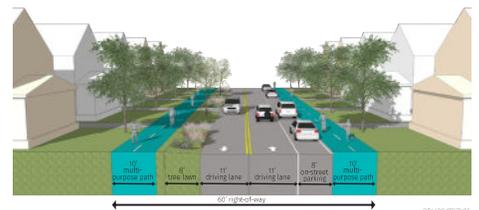
EAST 66TH STREET – ROADWAY CONCEPT 2



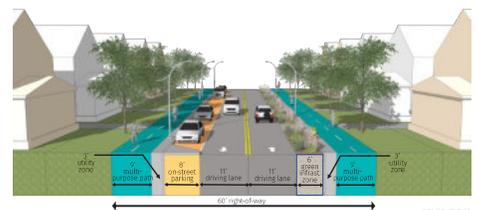
EAST 66TH STREET ROADWAY CONCEPT 3



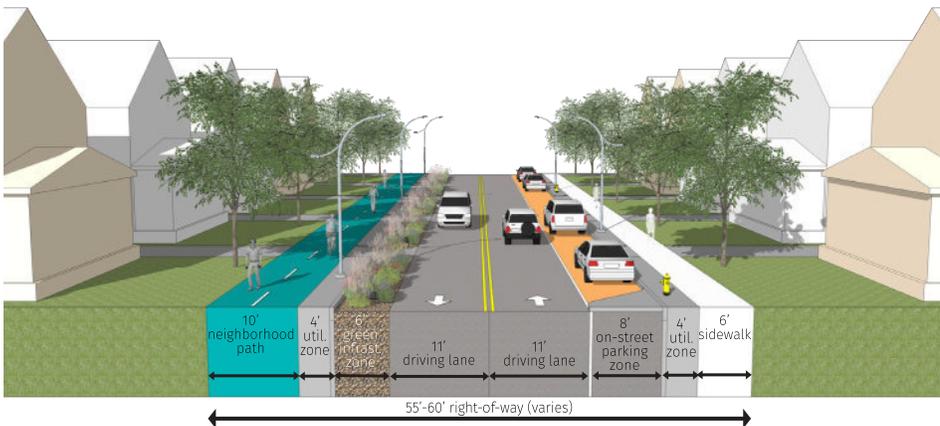
EAST 66TH STREET ROADWAY CONCEPT 4



EAST 66TH STREET ROADWAY CONCEPT 5



EAST 66TH STREET ROADWAY CONCEPT





Intersection of East 66th and Lexington

To advance the streetscape concepts toward implementation, the project team developed a set of conceptual design drawings for the entire length of East 66th Street. This package provides detailed layouts, material locations, street furniture locations and more.

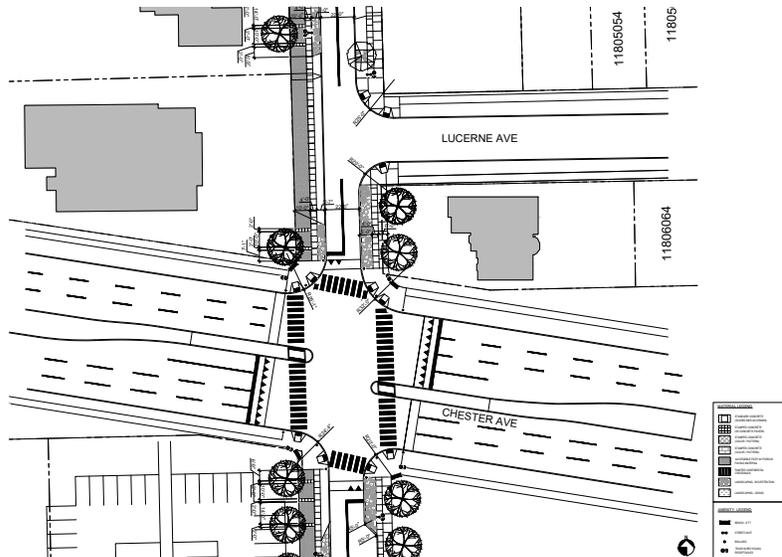
These drawings are the result of a community-focused conceptual design process, and while they incorporate details typical of a streetscape design package at this phase of development, it should be noted that there are additional elements that will be designed and further refined with the community as the project moves into subsequent implementation phases.

These include the following:

- Locations for public art (to include banners, sculpture, outdoor performance spots and murals)
- Individual art elements
- Special gateway signage and wayfinding
- Custom furniture elements
- Final paving patterns in feature areas
- Details to support temporary road closures for special events
- Special lighting
- Technology elements and access

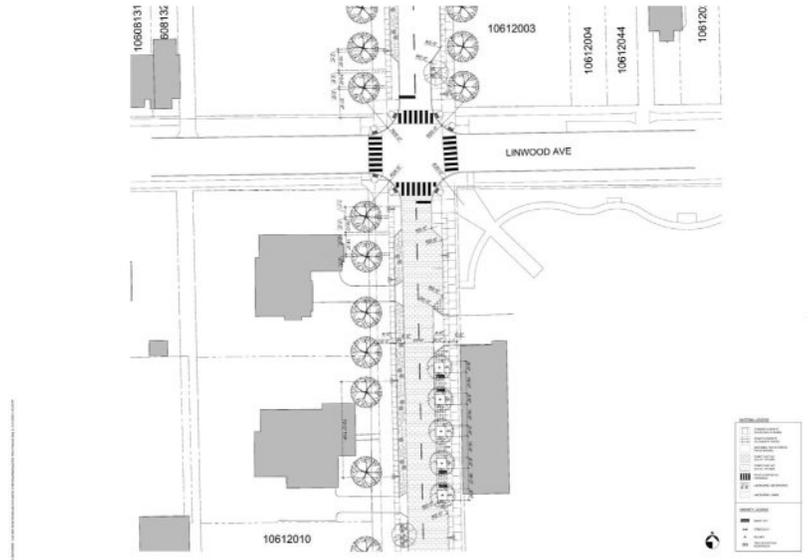
“I see it looking soft and elegant instead of like a concrete jungle, because how you plant your feet is how you feel. I see it elegant.”

- Hough Community Member, 2020

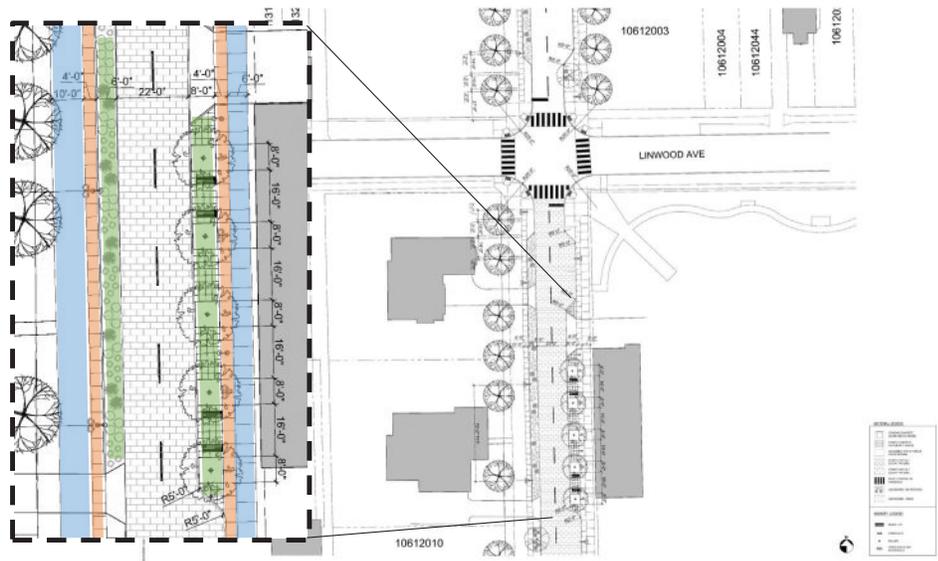


A redesign of the Chester Avenue intersection is a critical focus of this effort. Chester Avenue’s layout is a physical manifestation of infrastructural racism - cutting through a neighborhood to provide a seven lane, high-speed conduit between downtown and outlying suburbs. To change this dynamic the intersection must shift its balance. This means orienting new buildings to put front doors on Chester and prioritizing all modes of north-south movement. The design considers a speed table at this location to raise awareness of drivers; wide, marked crosswalks; the creation of a pedestrian refuge island in expanded medians; and pedestrian-activated controls for crossing. This is a critical neighborhood gateway.

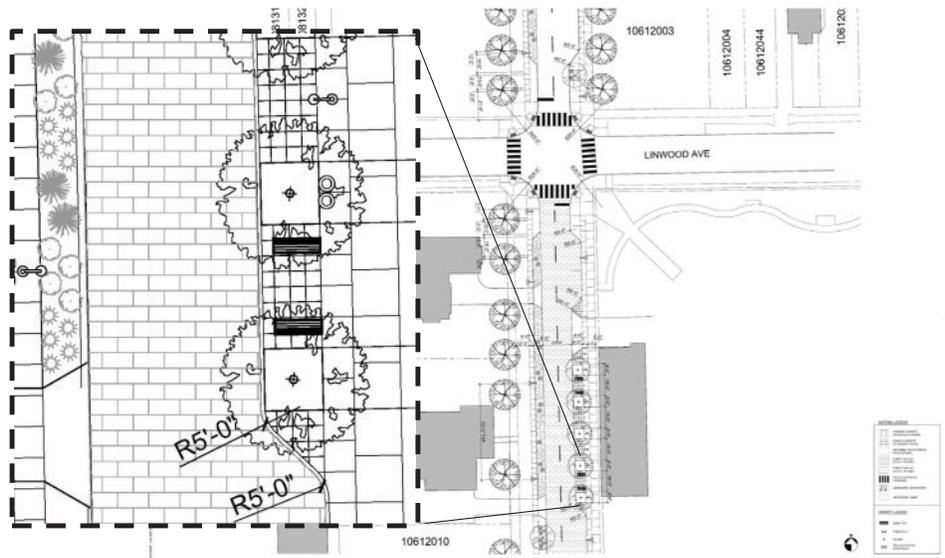
This plan shows the intersection of East 66th Street and Linwood Avenue at the northeast corner of League Park. It includes both the standard roadway layout north of Linwood as well as special paving and details in the League Park block. The intersection demonstrates an emphasis on pedestrian movement through the inclusion of wider, highly-visible crosswalks and bump-outs at the corners to shorten crossing distance. This is one of the locations along the corridor where the desire to temporarily close the street for special events has been noted.



A closer look at the block shows the street layout in more detail. The blue lines highlight the accessible neighborhood path on the left and the 6' wide sidewalk on the right. Special paving on the accessible path will provide a smoother surface, supporting increased mobility. The orange lines show the utility zones that organize the poles, hydrants, lighting and trash receptacles along the street, as well as underground utilities. The green lines highlight the landscape and amenity zone, where green infrastructure, some street trees and street furniture like benches and tables will be located.



A further zoom into the plans shows paving patterns and layout. While most parts of the street will utilize standard concrete in sidewalk areas, this block will also include special pavers within the sidewalk and roadway to emphasize the historic nature of the adjacent stadium. Street trees in this block utilize tree grates that can be customized to reflect community design ideas and incorporate smaller openings to support accessibility. These utilize recycled material and include details to adjust with tree growth. Seating in the amenity zone is spaced to allow comfortable conversations while supporting safe distancing, and is located to take advantage of shade once street trees reach maturity.





Designs & Concepts

NEIGHBORHOOD

The vision for the East 66th Street Corridor and surrounding neighborhood has evolved since the completion of the League Park TLCI plan in 2012. During this planning process three major themes emerged as areas with the greatest support from the community. The first is the development of a Black Avenue for Cleveland - a thriving hub of Black culture and business that would be a destination for residents and visitors alike. The second involves the creation of an Arts and Cultural District to jump start investment, create a strong identity and set up the corridor as a place where creative expression brings people from all neighborhoods together in new and affirming ways. The third is the creation of a network of parks and public spaces that support healthy movement and connect the community.

Considered together these ideas have the potential to build from the existing strengths of the neighborhood to create a place focused on growth, opportunity and beauty.

The community's vision of an innovative Black Avenue starts with a 21st Century Street, but builds on this with layers of arts and cultural development, adaptive public spaces and Black-owned businesses to create a thriving district. Commercial development is best focused around the neighborhood's existing commercial corridors: Hough Avenue, Wade Park Avenue and Superior Avenue. Clustering new commercial uses around these nodes will begin to build critical mass to better support independent and Black-owned businesses in this area. The concept and details for Black Avenue will

continue to evolve as the community defines its priorities together.

The development of an Arts and Cultural District in this area helps to bring immediate energy to the neighborhood through visual enhancement, setting the stage for longer-term infrastructure improvements and development projects. Murals, custom site furniture and the creation of an art park can be developed now, to continue the momentum of this neighborhood process. Abandoned and underutilized buildings can be re-purposed to provide space for visual art, fashion, photography, film and music studios. These spaces can offer programming for neighborhood youth who are searching for activities within the neighborhood. An arts master plan led by neighborhood artists is the

next step in further defining how this idea will build toward implementation.

Tying this together is the need to create a network of safe, healthy and connected community spaces. The area has been under-served by these amenities for too long and the loss of the recreational programming at the Salvation Army has created a noticeable gap in the community. The vision includes a series of smaller, adaptable parks that meet a range of neighborhood needs, new places for gathering as a community and a series of neighborhood paths that provide safe and accessible connections to these assets.

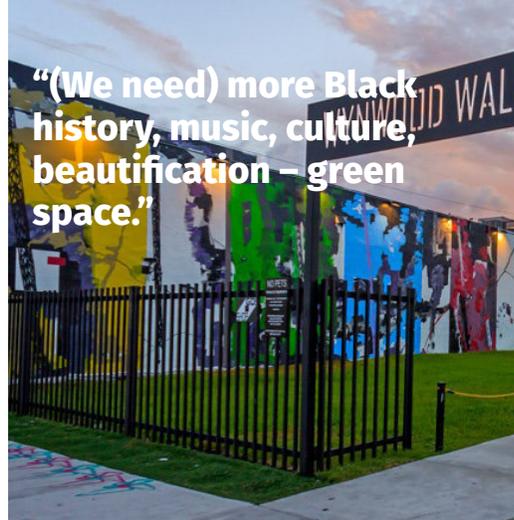
League Park remains the heart of this district, but it must be accessible to the community in new ways to truly serve in this role. Expanded access to League Park and the inclusion of additional amenities at the adjacent Fannie M. Lewis Park will go a long way toward serving the neighborhood with improved options for health, fitness and recreation.

Supporting all of these initiatives are the existing and proposed institutional anchors of the neighborhood. The intersection of East 66th Street and Lexington Avenue will continue to serve as a community hub, strengthened by the construction of the new Hough Branch of the Cleveland Public Library. This builds from programming at the Fatima Family Center, League Park and area churches to create increase activity and opportunities here.

Finally, all of this must be done in a manner that supports the residents who have invested in the community and who have remained through good times and bad. They have provided critical stability to the area and their investment should be protected. Infill development throughout should continue to include residential options that support a mixture of incomes. New housing options are currently underway and will add to the health of the community through continued investment and additional voices of leadership.

All of this work must be done in a manner that benefits the residents of Hough.

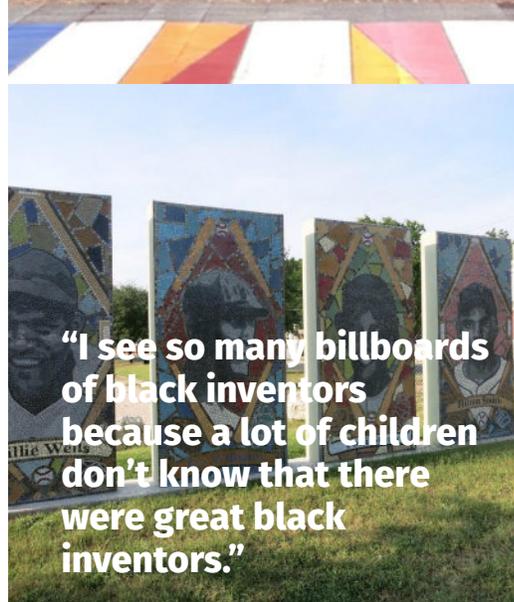
Resident voices - quotes from community conversations outlining a vision for Hough.



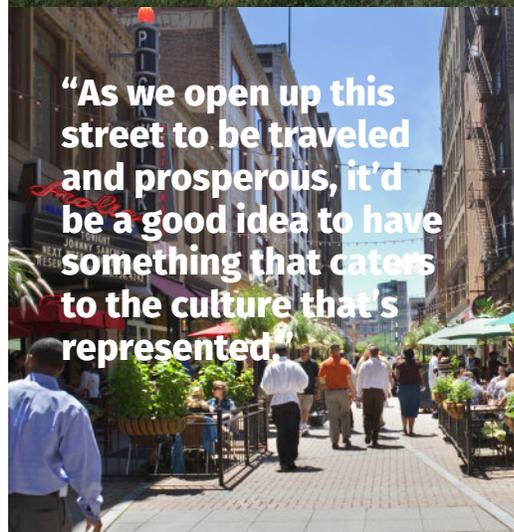
“(We need) more Black history, music, culture, beautification – green space.”



“The street should be a safe zone similar to the ‘Safe Zone Sundays’ idea at Kerusch Park.”



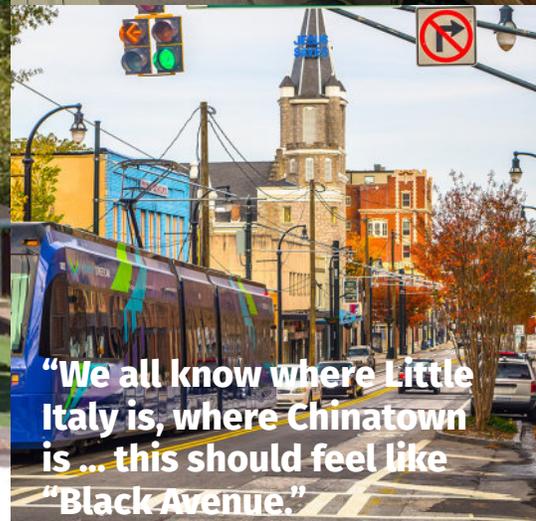
“I see so many billboards of black inventors because a lot of children don’t know that there were great black inventors.”



“As we open up this street to be traveled and prosperous, it'd be a good idea to have something that caters to the culture that's represented.”



“I would like to see arts, drama, and dance in the area.”



“We all know where Little Italy is, where Chinatown is ... this should feel like Black Avenue.”



“It's important to create a feeling where everybody comes together as one.”



“Affirmations. Yeah. And a lot of colors.”

NEIGHBORHOOD VISION PLAN

As described previously, this neighborhood vision is one that will continue to evolve through continued community leadership. Further conversations and design are required to develop an Arts District Plan and the details that will build a Black Avenue.

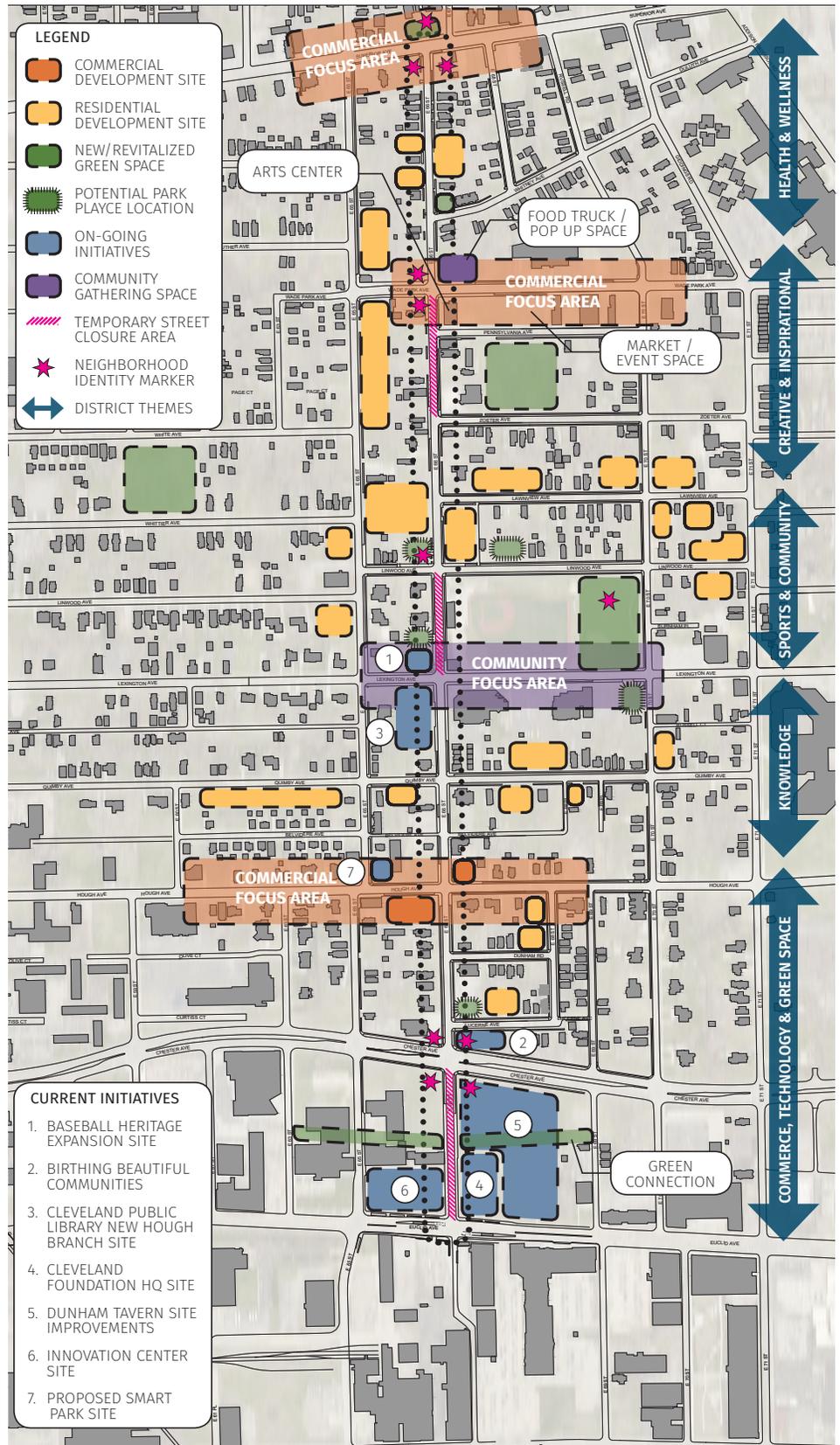
This vision plan sets a framework for neighborhood development based on a compilation of ideas that were provided by the community throughout the planning process, and recognizes the need to transform/adjust as new voices are added to the mix.

- The plan incorporates projects that are underway as well as opportunities for infill residential, commercial and green space development.
- Three commercial focus areas and one community focus area are identified.
- A series of blue arrows delineates themed districts along the corridor, with the intent that art and activities within these districts reflect these ideas.
- Neighborhood identity markers are located at key intersections, gateways and gathering spaces.
- Street closure zones reflect locations best suited for temporary closures to support community events.
- Streetscape improvements along the East 66th Street Corridor tie all of these pieces together.

This is the community's plan. It represents a collective vision created by resident experts.

"I see a mural with all of the great leaders. I see the coming together of children. I see athletics. **They are waiting for us to let them know that it's safe to come outside.**"

- Hough resident, 2020



LEAGUE PARK DISTRICT
NEIGHBORHOOD VISION PLAN

PARK PLAYCE CONCEPT



PARK PLAYCE OPTION A: PARKING LOT



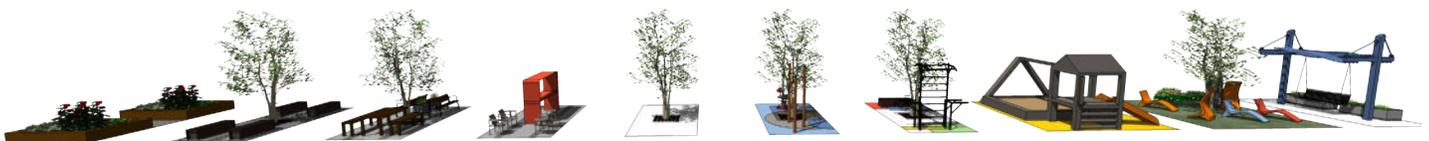
PARK PLAYCE OPTION B: PUBLIC SPACE / PLAY AREA



Activities around League Park, Fatima Family Center and neighborhood churches require larger amounts of parking for scheduled events. This parking would go unused, however, about 80% of the time. The community is greatly under-served in terms of parks and public space that are available for general use. We saw these two challenges as an opportunity to create a design solution that would respond to both.

The Park PLAYce concept creates an adaptive space that can provide a range of activities for day-to-day use (play areas, sports, community spaces, etc.), and that can transition to parking spaces for special events or time periods of increased parking demand.

A series of “plug & play” components are envisioned that will fit in the 10’x20’ ‘in between’ spaces to accommodate different seating options, raised gardens, play equipment, fitness equipment and more. This provides an opportunity for the community to determine the specific combination of pieces that make sense for each Park PLAYce location.



A SERIES OF “PLUG & PLAY” COMPONENTS

Moving Forward / Next Steps

PROJECT PROGRESSION

The inclusive process that guided the design of the new East 66th Street was intentionally different from previous and typical streetscape initiatives. Intergenerational resident voices are amplified through responsive design concepts and specific components. These voices must continue to influence this work's progression. This intentional process aims to shift power and establish a new manner in which community-led design process can shape public spaces.

East 66th Street's next steps will continue the commitment to be different by design. Traditionally, as projects evolve from planning / design to engineering / construction, there has been a noticeable "gap". This gap creates a disconnect between the community, who shaped the design, and the engineers that are finalizing design details.

The next steps for East 66th must focus on bridging this gap - creating two-way communication between the project's team and the residents.

Advanced Community Engagement & Empowerment

The design team, through the leadership of NOACA, City of Cleveland, MidTown Cleveland and the Cleveland Foundation, has committed to a continued dialogue between residents and the project-delivery team.

Advanced community engagement will include:

- Continued involvement of artist-led sessions
- Establishment of advisory committees (made up of a diverse group of residents)
- Regular "check-ins" throughout the process to better frame how public streetscape project progresses through city review and engineering process
- Partnering with LANDstudio to foster an artist selection process for public art installations along the streetscape - these installations are purposely NOT defined at the conceptual design package's completion - there must be additional process and time to curate a process that captures residents' vision of a "bright, colorful and cultural street that reflects US.

Continuing Momentum and Belief

The culmination of this conceptual design process is a recognizable enthusiasm and, more importantly, belief that positive change is coming. It is imperative that this momentum is perpetuated. Residents have shared the notion that this process is a "movement" and cannot "sit still". Policies, process and physical change must begin immediately to demonstrate voices are heard and to ensure people continue to support and stay engaged with the street's development.

Momentum can be strengthened by considering and launching the following lines of communications, frameworks and policies:

- Establish and activate a Youth Advisory Committee (underway)
- Ensure multiple Committees remain connected to each other and the process through liaisons and open lines of communication
- Retain project team (to ensure continuity) through full project development (design, engineering, construction and "post occupancy evaluation" to ensure the street performs for its users and neighbors)
- Launch public artist process with a focus on local artists that are connected to the community - coordinate these installations with the design team to create "functional" art as part of the landscape
- Create series of meetings and community events (virtual platform has been incredibly successful) to continue conversations focused on community building
- Align community meetings / discussions with City Hall processes and schedules - notably reviewing City of Cleveland Planning Commission meetings and Design Review meetings to further introduce the process to interested and active residents
- Utilize City Architecture as a community-City of Cleveland resource - mainly focused on how questions and inquires to the City could be framed to pique interest and elicit responses that address community questions
- Coordinate this work with institutions to establish community parking strategy to employ the Park PLAYce concept

Immediate physical change and placemaking initiatives:

Test ideas with NOACA's Street Supplies program - notably the creation of a dedicated / protected multi-purpose path that could be delineated within the current roadway / pavement

Partner with residents, notably Adam King, to create prototype park space that integrates multiple design considerations and components

Host events in temporarily closed portions of E66th street to foster the continued exchange of ideas and activate the roadway with resident events (food trucks, design activities, story-telling sessions, etc.)

Conduct "walk-audit" to study lighting levels and prompt repairs and replacements of fixtures to better illuminate the streets, sidewalks and intersections

Create art pieces that can be displayed along the corridor now - banners, yard signs, sculptures, poetry on sidewalks / walls, and other placemaking elements that echo and amplify resident voices

Install signage at the E66th and Chester Avenue intersection that calls attention to the neighborhood and sets the stage for future change and recognition

Add trash receptacles along the corridor and crack down on illegal dumping to address concerns about sanitation and neighborhood perceptions.