



Cincinnati

MOVING MT. WASHINGTON

A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT FOR MT. WASHINGTON



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ON THE COVER: TAP panelists view the Beechmont Avenue
Business District in Mt. Washington. *(Author)*



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The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region, with members in 80 countries.

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About ULI Cincinnati

ULI Cincinnati is a non-profit real estate and land development organization. We provide our members with independent forums for discussion and debate about city building issues and best practices. ULI Cincinnati is the region's thought leader in promoting sustainable thriving communities. ULI Cincinnati pursues its vision by –

- Engaging people through active dialogue;
- Delivering unique experiences to a diverse membership;
- Capitalizing on ULI's global resources; and
- Building strategic relationships with regional stakeholders and leaders.

ULI District Council Leadership

Chris Dobrozsi

District Council Chair, District Council

Jim Zentmeyer

Co-Chair for Mission Advancement, District Council

Steve Kenat

Co-Chair for Mission Advancement, District Council

Kim Fantaci

Director, District Council

About the ULI Technical Assistance Panel

ULI Cincinnati is the local District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the premier research and education organization, with nearly 45,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. ULI is the world's thought leader in promoting sustainable, thriving communities. With approximately 270 members throughout the region, ULI Cincinnati pursues its vision by:

- Engaging people through active dialogue;
- Delivering unique experiences to a diverse membership;
- Capitalizing on ULI's global resources; and
- Building strategic relationships with regional stakeholders and leaders

ULI Cincinnati's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) brings expertise in real estate, urban planning, design, development, city government, and finance to provide analysis and recommendations to overcome land use planning and development challenges. For a TAP, ULI Cincinnati assembles an interdisciplinary team of established local, national, and technical professionals for a site/project review and brainstorming session.

The sponsor of the TAP will typically request the services of ULI to address a specific issue that may be evaluated using the expertise of a panel of experts over a day. After working with the appropriate District Council to refine the scope and challenge statement, the panel is selected, and a date is set. Next, the sponsor works within ULI guidelines to assemble appropriate background information and disseminate it to the panelists in advance of the site visit and review session.

Depending on the nature of the TAP topic, the panel may convene in advance of the working session,

possibly led by the sponsor to provide background and commentary. The panel will then convene. Depending on resources, availability, and the nature of the project, a TAP may meet for several hours for discussion and brainstorming or up to a couple of days on a charette-style convening. After the TAP, a report is prepared, either written and/or presented to the sponsor as a takeaway deliverable. In some instances, the report can be augmented with visuals, renderings, or preliminary concept plans to support the discussion findings and recommendations.

Technical Assistance Panel Process

The TAP process is outlined below.

- 1.) ULI Cincinnati representatives and the Mission Advancement Committee meet with the community organization and formulate the objectives and goals of the potential TAP.
- 2.) Background information is obtained for preparation for the panel. This often includes demographic data, past plans, community land use documents, maps, and other materials needed to help the panel of experts in assisting with enhancing the discussion and positioning the panel conversation to best advise a way forward.
- 3.) Sponsors are briefed and allowed to input desires and outcomes for the TAP process.
- 4.) A site tour is conducted by the TAP members prior to the full day session.
- 5.) Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in providing feedback to the panel at this time. Stakeholder feedback is crucial for adding context and understanding for the panel discussion. However, during deliberation, stakeholder comments are limited till after the panel has finished.
- 6.) Panel deliberations ensue. At this point, the panel meets, reviews observations and plots a course towards action in addressing the challenge statement.

7.) Recommendation are formed, action steps are developed and the report is developed to help guide the client organization in addressing the objectives laid out in the challenge statement.

Acknowledgments

On behalf of ULI Cincinnati, the panel would like to thank the sponsor organizations, HomeBase Cincinnati and Mt. Washington CDC, for this effort.

Special appreciation goes to Wendy O'Neal, the President of the Mt. Washington CDC as well as the members of the Mt. Washington CDC Board, for their work in preparation, support, and coordination leading up to and during the panel.

The panel would also like to thank the many community leaders, planning staff, and representatives from across the Greater Cincinnati region who shared their perspectives, experiences, and insights with the panel.

Technical Assistance Panel and Project Staff

Panel Chair

Steve Kenat

SHP Architects

Panel Members

Daniella Beltran

YARD + Company

Jeff Dietz

NorthMarq

Chris Dobrozsi

Neyer Properties

Mike Dooley

Bayer Becker

Travis Gysegem

The Catalytic Fund

Jeff McElravy

Colerain Township

Mary Jo Minerich

GBBN Architects

Kathleen Norris

Urban Fast Forward

Tom Rowe

Terrex Development & Construction

Jason Ulmenstine

J.S. Held LLC

Chauncy Walker

CW Development Group

Luke Warren

City Station

Rick Wheeler

KPFF Consulting Engineers

Scott Wolfe

City of Cincinnati

ULI Project Staff

Steve Kenat

Co-Chair for Mission Advancement Committee

SHP Architects

Jim Zentmeyer

Co-Chair for Mission Advancement Committee

Civil & Environmental Consultants

Kim Fantaci

ULI Cincinnati Director

John Yung

ULI Cincinnati Mission Advancement Committee

Member, Report Writer

Haile Foundation

Mt. Washington Stakeholders

Frank Busofsky

Damian Dotterweich

Sam Morgan-Jablonski

Frank Busofsky

Damian Dotterweich

Sam Morgan-Jablonski

Wendy O'Neal

Joe Sandmann

Mike Sieber

Katie Stefani

Nick Stone

Jerod Theobald

Jim Tucker



TAP discussion underway. Photo by Author



TAP panelist tour of Mt. Washington Business District. Photo by Author



Panelist walk along Beechmont Avenue. Photo by Author.

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The Mt. Washington water tower located at the southern edge of the business district.



PHOTO BY AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION

Lay of the Land

Perched on the eastern edge of Cincinnati, Mt. Washington exudes the timeless charm of a community that stands proudly independent of the city it is a part of. Its rich history, dating back to its plating in 1846 and subsequent city status in 1867, is a testament to its enduring spirit. Even after its annexation into the city in 1911, this 15,357-person community has retained its unique character, boasting a wealth of historic charm, eclectic businesses, and a prime location with housing still at affordable prices.

The community is tight-knit, with notable and eclectic locals such as Buddy, the charming bagger at the local Kroger. However, this idyllic community faces new challenges in growing and evolving today. The community is majority white with 87% of residents. African Americans come in second with 9.8% of

residents. Of the 7,165 households, families and non-families are almost evenly split, with 53% being family households, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

The median household income is \$62,463. 7.9% of families in Mt. Washington have income below the poverty level. Just under 47% of residents have a college degree or higher, with 18.9% having only a high school diploma or equivalent. Driving alone is the primary mode of transportation for resident workers, with just under 80% of residents. 8% of the community workers work remotely.

Housing vacancies are low, with about 7.6% of all housing units classified as vacant (out of 7,790). The community is primarily owner-occupied, with a 62.3% homeownership rate. The median home value is \$167,720. Average rents are \$739. The housing stock



Map of Cincinnati, Ohio with the Mt. Washington neighborhood boundary highlighted.



The entrance area of Stanbery Park. *Photo by Cincy Parks.*

in Mt. Washington is primarily single-family detached. Multi-family housing is a distant second, with the primary group in buildings with 10-19 units. Unlike most Cincinnati neighborhoods, which have mostly pre-World War II era building stock, the community's primary building boom seems to have occurred in the 1970s and 80s, when 34% of the buildings were built in the community. The 1950s were also a boom decade when almost a quarter of the community was built (23%). According to Census information, most residents have moved into the neighborhood within the last 15 years.

Its primary neighborhood business district, Beechmont Avenue, has seen better days. District-fronting businesses struggle, and Kroger, while an important asset to the community, does not contribute to the character of the walkable pedestrian district it inhabits. Mt. Washington Creamy Whip is a long-time neighborhood staple. The district sees an average daily traffic count of 23,475 vehicles. There is transit access via the local Cincinnati Metro #24 and #30 buses.

There is ample parking in and around the district, both on and off the street. On one side of the street, on-street parking is partially restricted during rush hour but is permitted all day on the other side. Most of the

community's population lives within a ten-minute walk of the district.

Stanbery Park is an undervalued gem just a few blocks away. It is an immense hilltop park on the community's northwest side, at 125 acres in size, and is proximate between Lunken airport and the business district. At the edge of its western slope, the Little Miami Trail meets the Lunken Trail, forming the eastern edge of the under-construction CROWN bike loop. It is used sparingly for community events, where the annual Pumpkin Chuck is a large draw.

With a total length of 34 miles, the CROWN trail, a combination of the Ohio River Way, Lunken Trail, Little Miami Trail, Wasson Way and Mill Creek Greenway, is a significant asset for the community. It has the potential to become a key connector for pedestrians and cyclists, linking downtown to Lunken, Hyde Park, Uptown and the Mill Creek Valley. City and regional leaders are actively planning and constructing key connecting pieces of the trail, such as the sixth phase of Wasson Way, the Beechmont Connector to Anderson Township, and the recent acquisition of railroad right-of-way for the eastern portion of the Ohio River Way.



CHALLENGE STATEMENT

The Mt. Washington TAP was intended to assemble a team of local and area experts to consider how Mt. Washington should approach the continued health, vitality and growth of their business district. A formal report including a road map and recommendations to assist the MWCDC in moving from vision to implementation was the goal.

- Attracting a more diverse range of businesses including amenities and business owners with novel, innovative and family-friendly ideas to Mt. Washington and more specifically the Mt. Washington Business District.
- Attracting and retaining a broad range of restaurants and entertainment retailers including an income and

generational diversity strategy that can take advantage of Mt. Washington's Central Entertainment District designation.

- Designing and implementing a more vibrant urban streetscape along Beechmont Avenue coupled with a traffic calming plan on Beechmont Avenue with pedestrian safety a priority.
- Recommendations for better and more attractive signage, façade improvements, wayfinding signage and/or storefront or building renovations that attract residents and non-residents of Mt. Washington to want to stop, stay awhile and return.



The Beechmont Avenue Business District during afternoon rush hour. *Photo by Author.*

- Identifying ways to fully integrate the transformative family-friendly bike and walking trails with Stanbery Park. The recently funded extension of the Little Miami Scenic Trail (the Elstun Connector) is a quarter-mile link that will join the trail network at Mt. Washington. Engage these initiatives to provide opportunities to brand the neighborhood as an outdoor destination.
- Identifying partnerships, resources, funding tools, incentives and strategies to assist in achieving goals and objectives.

Focus Issues

- State Route restrictions, challenges, changes and opportunities.
- Zoning restrictions, challenges, changes and opportunities.
- Providing examples from the Cincinnati area and/or similar neighborhoods
- Identifying priorities



An aerial of the Beechmont Avenue Business District from Google Earth.

OBSERVATIONS

The TAP panel commenced on the evening of Monday, November 13th. Stakeholders and panelists convened at 2020 Beechmont Avenue for a quick introduction briefing and a walking tour of the business district. Panelists heard from the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation (MWCDC) and observed the condition of the business district. Panelists were presented with visual materials outlining potential development sites in the district and area attractions from prior planning efforts

The panel convened for a full day on November 15, 2023. The morning conversation was dedicated to sharing observations from the earlier walking tour and developing a brief SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the business district. They are identified on the next page:



TAP Panelists are led by stakeholders on a tour of the Beechmont Avenue Business District. *Photo by Author.*

Strengths and Assets

Oxford Street
 Traffic volume
 Size of Business District
 Residential housing variety
 Residents of all ages
 Strong community bonds
 Unique and distinct community culture
 Kroger is proximate for pedestrians
 Location – near higher income communities
 Parking
 Diversity of income
 Walkable
 Building stock not considered historic
 Sands Montessori
 Mt. Washington Community Recreation Center

Opportunities

Slow down traffic
 Parking along the street
 Bike trail connection from Little Miami Trail through Stanbery Park
 Stanbery Park as destination and gateway
 Engage Kroger to act like a 'neighborhood grocery'
 Off Beechmont area
 Neighborhood identity
 Access to City resources
 Community Groups Working Group
 Engaging youth/ young professionals
 Events
 Trail improvement at Stanbery
 Key Bank building
 Property acquisition strategy in NBD
 Tower Optical Building
 Better bike parking at Kroger
 Ice and Beer House

Weaknesses and Challenges

Speeding
 Initiatives lack traction
 Few programming events in community
 Fragmented community groups
 Demographics
 The Community Council is not representative of the community
 Competing interests among NBD owners
 Urban Overlay District
 Business District mix
 Perception of not enough automobile parking
 Negative perceptions including schools

Threats

Overpromising through brand
 Small but vocal opponents to change

RECOMMENDATIONS: STAY THE COURSE

The TAP process identified several areas with inherent strengths in the Mt. Washington Community. This report recommends that the community continue to move forward in addressing these areas. A summary of what community leadership should continue building momentum on is below:

Traffic Calming

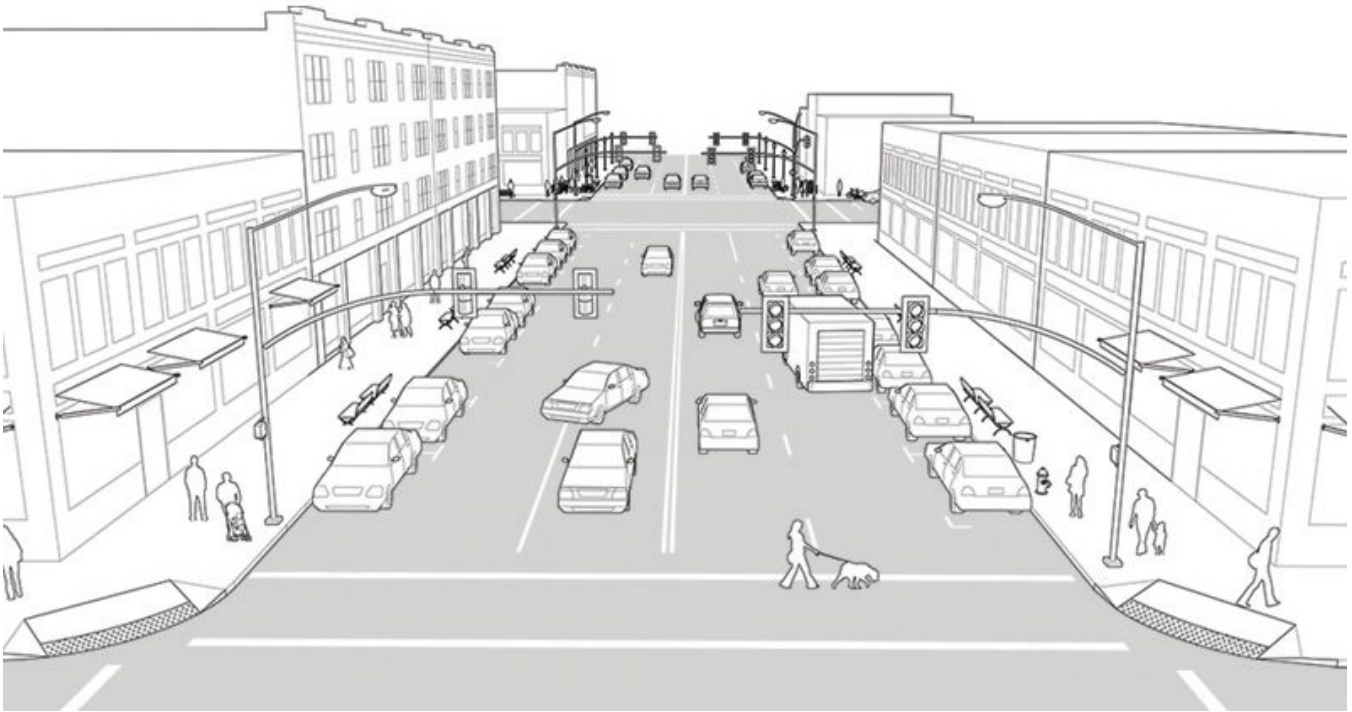
According to traffic data from the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governance (OKI), the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Beechmont Avenue corridor sees 23,475 vehicles travel daily through the Mt. Washington Business District. The corridor consists of four lanes, two in each direction.

At Corbly, a center turn lane is added heading north. There is on-street parking along the southeast side of the business district, and rush-hour restricted parking is available on the other side.

While the traffic volume is significant, the street is designed to maximize vehicular flow, with wider curb radii, making it easier for cars to make fast right turns. The corridor also lacks features to slow down vehicles that may exceed the posted speed limit of 25mph within the business district. This is unacceptable for pedestrian safety or creating an environment for business activity. NBDs thrive with slower traffic because they signal a safer environment to shoppers on the sidewalk. Street friction, such as on-street



The north end of the Beechmont Avenue Business District. *Photo by Author.*



Above: NACTO illustration of a six-lane road prior to traffic calming. Below: NACTO illustration of same road after calming measures such as bumpouts, bike lanes, median island and other features were introduced.





A contrast of corners. Right: Kroger grocery store entrance is off street facing parking. Left: Street facing corner of Kroger grocery store has no entrance or windows. *Photos by Author.*

parking, street trees, planters, and poles, helps narrow a driver's field of vision, causing slower and more cautious speeds. Narrowing streets either physically or with paint is also helpful as wider lanes tend to encourage speeding. Eliminating and narrowing lane widths to ten feet can also help slow drivers down. For turning, narrower curb radii at intersections force drivers to slow while turning, reducing the potential for blind collisions with pedestrians crossing the street at the turn.

“Beechmont Avenue feels like a chasm to cross during rush hour.” - TAP Panelist

Mt. Washington should prioritize designing and implementing a more vibrant urban streetscape along Beechmont Avenue, along with traffic calming and pedestrian safety. To that end, the community should work with the City's Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) to develop tactical and potentially permanent solutions for corridor traffic calming.

Temporary measures could include using paint, plastic bollards, parking curbs, and planters to narrow curb-turning radii at street corners, providing a buffer for pedestrians and making them visible to drivers, and slowing turning traffic.

An additional tactical implementation would be hardening center lines at intersections, forcing vehicles turning left to take those turns slower to reduce the chances of collision with pedestrians crossing legally on the left.

Finally, one easy implementation would be making on-street parking 24/7 instead of using the rush hour restriction, equalizing parking times for both sides of the street. This would be a tactical implementation that could happen immediately with signage alone.

More permanent measures could be explored with the City, including a variety of approaches. One would be to add curb bump-outs at intersections; another would be to convert intersection or mid-block crossings into raised pedestrian crosswalks. These act as natural

speed humps but also make pedestrians crossing the street more visible to drivers.

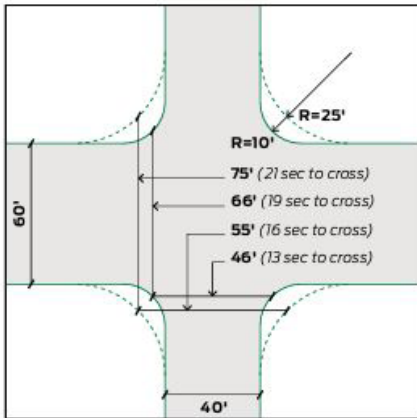
Longer-term solutions, such as making street parking permanent and reducing the number of lanes, widening sidewalks, and adding potential bicycle infrastructure beyond sharrows, would require further study by the City and community feedback. If temporary measures prove effective, permanent measures should be pursued.

District Facades and Signage

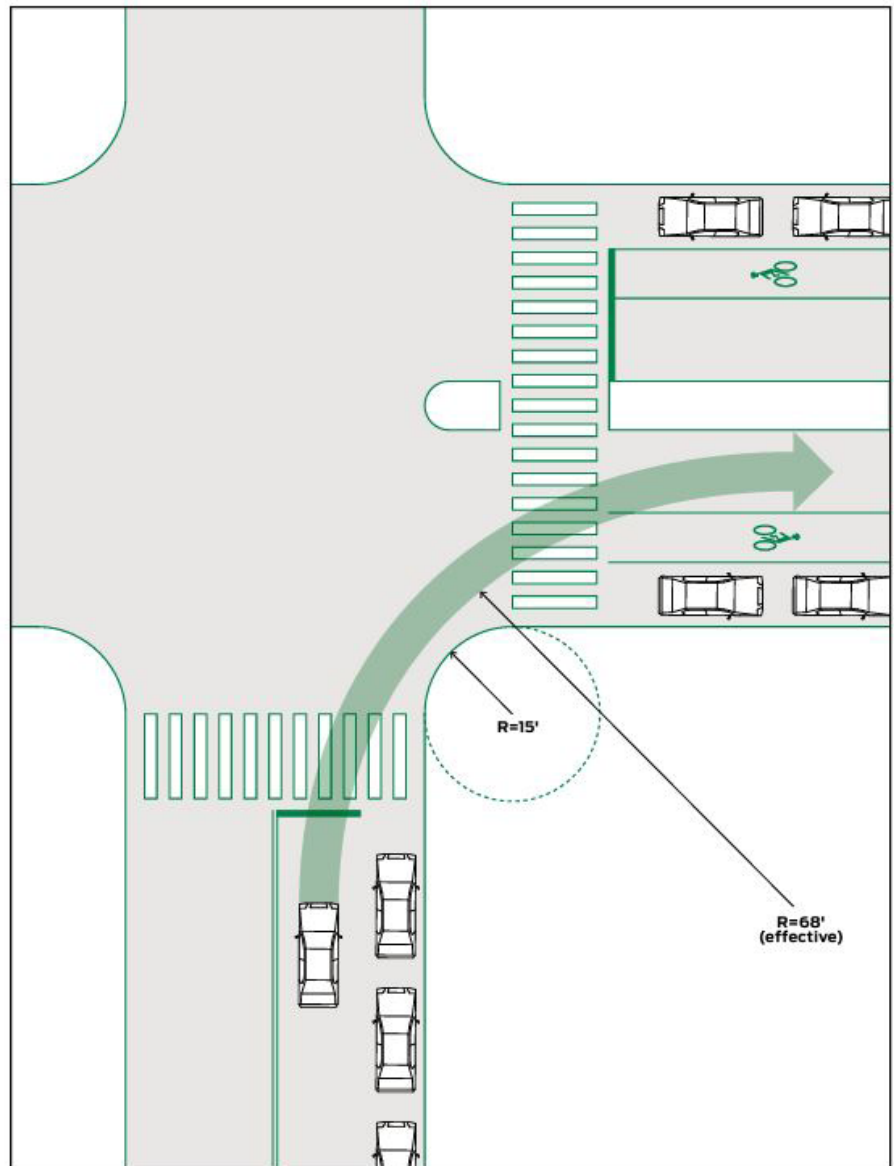
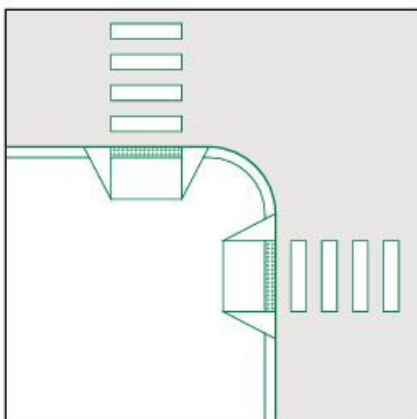
Community organizations should continue to work with businesses along Beechmont Avenue to improve the safety and appearance of the district. MWDC recently improved a parking lot behind businesses on the district's west side. This lot will allow multiple businesses to absorb parking needs.

Continuing this track, the community may also consider developing a façade improvement program

The size of the corner relates directly to the length of the crosswalk. Longer crosswalks take more time to cross, increasing pedestrian exposure risk and diminishing safety.¹



A smaller curb radius expands the pedestrian area, allowing for better pedestrian ramp alignment.



Graphic illustrating turn radius reduction from NACTO guidebook.

for commercial businesses. Improvements can address general repairs, such as restoring windows, street front entrances, and building signage. These types of programs have often been successfully utilized to help modernize older buildings and enhance the attractiveness of business districts.

The district also needs to invest in well-designed wayfinding signage. This signage should help potential district patrons find usually ample public parking and nearby attractions like Stanbery Park. Pedestrian-scaled signage is also a must to help guide visitors once they arrive.

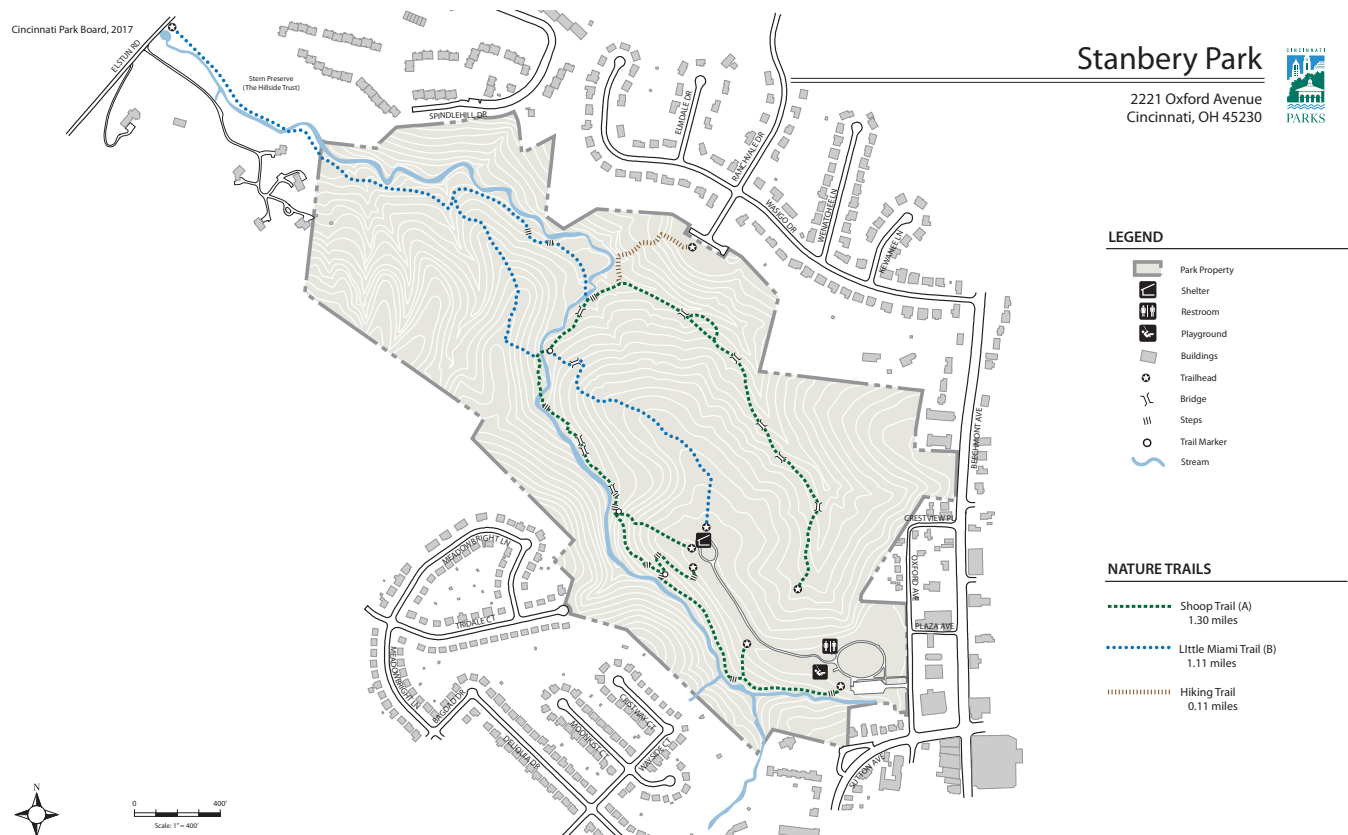
Finally, conversations should begin regarding zoning reforms around the district. The current zoning regulations for the district include an Urban Design Overlay District (UDO), which regulates building frontages and signage. Stakeholders frequently mentioned these rules were a challenge to making

improvements to buildings in the district. UDOs were established by the City with the intent to improve or preserve a community's appearance. Nuanced discussion on the neighborhood's challenges with the UDO between the City and community stakeholders, businesses, and other parties could lead to productive reforms.

Activate and Connect Stanbery Park

Stanbery Park is a hidden gem for Mt. Washington, but its condition betrays its potential as a marquee destination for the neighborhood. The community should continue identifying and pursuing ways to fully integrate the transformative family-friendly bike and walking trails with Stanbery Park.

Reimagining this park is not a new idea. Numerous studies have been conducted on it since the 2001



A map of Stanbery Park with trail network.



TAP panelists and stakeholders discuss Mt. Washington issues. *Photo by Author.*

master plan created by the Landscape Architecture firm Human Nature. Despite these plans, improvements to the park have been few and far between. Most significant is a small bandstand was added by the Parks Department a few years ago. The rest of the park remains mostly forested and features unofficial trails carved out by deer traversing the grounds.

The Human Nature plan called for developing a combination of mountain biking, hiking, and casual pedestrian trails throughout the park. A trail system

like this can accommodate diverse users, from athletes to parents with strollers. This tiered system should be implemented to accommodate them. It is even more essential today, given the park's proximity to the edge of the Little Miami Trail and the spur that now serves Anderson Township's slice of Beechmont, northwest of the community.

Programming is also a necessary component of park activation. Currently, the park hosts major community events such as the Pumpkin Chuck. While having more big events can be tempting, community organizations should also encourage smaller events. Movie nights, local plays, musical acts, and farmers' markets are among many options. The park should be programmed consistently with events at least two to three times a month, with goals for weekly programming throughout the warmer seasons.

Coalition Building

With a mix of seasoned leadership and new energy from impassioned residents, now is the time for MWCCDC to act. The organization should continue identifying partnerships, resources, funding tools,



Kids participate in the Pumpkin Olympics as part of the Pumpkin Chuck at Stanbery Park. *Photo by Nedra McDaniel.*



A diagram of what Community Development Corporations can do. *Illustration by CUDA Studio and Urban Fast Forward.*

incentives, and strategies to achieve its goals and objectives. The chart on the next page is an illustrated example of things Community Development Corporations can do to build capacity. Building coalitions is essential for the community to accomplish the initiatives outlined in this plan.

The organization should work to align with the Mt. Washington Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (MWCURC) and the Mt. Washington Community Council. Building out a constellation of partnerships from the ground up will help the community speak with a united voice, increasing its effectiveness in advocating for city, parks, and other regional organizational support. The next section will dive deeper into this.

Partnerships help build a funding strategy to advance the community and MWCDC goals. For example, a coalition of supporters is needed to advance

improvements to Stanbery Park, traffic calming on Beechmont, wayfinding signage, and façade improvement programs that directly benefit Mt. Washington. These partnerships reduce barriers, open new opportunities, and keep the community in the broader conversation.

Coalition building is needed to develop a practical real estate strategy for the retail corridor. The MWCDC should continue to identify potential real estate target opportunities and be prepared to help encourage acquisition by partner organizations. While site control is ideal, with limited funds, the organization should instead develop partnerships with the Hamilton County Land Bank, the City, or other trusted community developers to assist in a land acquisition strategy. This is especially critical for any key parcels in the business district and adjacent to Stanbery Park, where a missed opportunity for control would seldom happen again for another generation or longer.

CASE STUDY: College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation

Established in 1975, the College Hill Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CHCURC) is the community development organization for College Hill, a neighborhood located at the northern edge of Cincinnati. College Hill shares some similarities with Mt. Washington as both communities exist on the edge of the City and require navigating areas that are not as well connected to other parts of the City to get to them. For example, commuters must travel through a valley and up a hill to get to College Hill, like the drive over the Beechmont Avenue viaduct and through Anderson Township to get to Mt. Washington.

CHCURC spent years gathering resources, acquiring buildings, and developing plans to make their business district on Hamilton Avenue thrive. In the last decade, those long-awaited preparations have only started to pay off. That success was built on the combination of three key ingredients: partnership, resource, and leadership.

First, CHCURC built partnerships with the College Hill Community Council and the College Hill Business Association. They did this by encouraging their board members to serve on the boards and be active in the other two organizations. This cross-pollination of leadership allowed the organizations to better collaborate on events and community strategy while maintaining the overall vision for community success. Today, no action is taken by CHCURC, which does not already have buy-in and support from the other two organizations.

Second, CHCURC has accumulated resources from within and outside the community. They have successfully leveraged funding from community members who believe in and support their mission with funding dollars for many years. This has given

them a solid foundation to build staff. However, that is not the only funding source, as the organization is adept at assembling funding for major projects. For example, CHCURC, as of this report's writing, is working to acquire a shopping plaza on the south side of their business district, which was a key challenge and a major opportunity for the community. They worked with the City, LISC, HomeBase, and philanthropic organizations to assemble enough funding to purchase the property. Their next step is to identify potential intermediary uses while they pursue a developer for the site's eventual redevelopment.

Leadership is the third key ingredient and often one of the most important. It helps build consensus, raise support, and execute an effective community development strategy. CHCURC has had a series of excellent leaders over the past ten years, both from a board capacity and with its Executive Directors and supporting staff. Recruiting a great team starts at the beginning with building a great board but goes a long way as the organization evolves, something CHCURC has been able to develop over the past ten years and a model MWDC can look towards as guidance on their own path.



The College Hill community gathers at the annual tree lighting celebration. Photo by CHCURC.

ACTION ON DAY ONE

The MWCDC's most immediate need is a framework for immediate action by the organization and its partners. In response to that request, a list of actions was developed. The actions listed below are numerous; however, they are first steps in broader action that will advance the CDC, begin addressing challenges, and utilize present and future opportunities for growth and revitalization.

1.) Stanbery Park

Facilitate Internal Community Collaboration: To advance any improvements to the park, the MWCDC must develop a collaboration plan between the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation, the Mt. Washington Community Council, and the Mt. Washington Business Association (MWCURC). This step is the most critical to moving the plan forward. Without it, the organization will have limited impact and maximize frustration.

One avenue for the organization is to facilitate an open forum with the other groups. It may start small, with identified leadership, and should be mediated by a third party that can steer the discussion towards potential forward paths. This allows each organization to present its viewpoints, identifying potential collaborators and actionable outcomes.

The Mt. Washington Community Council is a membership organization that meets monthly to address community issues. Like other Community Councils in the City of Cincinnati, the MWCC is a recognized voice for the neighborhood. Collaboration and partnership with this group's elected board will help

advance the strategies in this report. Residents can pay to become members of the group. MWCDC members and their aligned residents and community members should maximize their participation in this group, both in and on the elected membership.

Build Relationships with Potential Partner

Organizations: MWCDC should continue to build conversations with organizations like the Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance (CORA) and aligned organizations in building their case for improving the park. Partner organizations should work with the Parks Department and their Board members to articulate needs, identify funding, and enact planned improvements to the park.

Stanbery Park is actually the gateway to the business district. It's where you want to start.- TAP Panelist

Determine Capacity and Resource for Park

Programming: By building partnerships within and outside the community, MWCDC can assess whether it can begin programming the park more regularly. But first, the organization must determine what types of activities it can do, the frequency of those activities and then empower the needed volunteers to help execute. The organization should also work closely with the Parks Department, which may be able to help with programming needs.

Promote the Park: MWCDC and partners should continuously promote the park. This includes discussion, posting flyers, or social media posts about events at the park. Social media posts mentioning

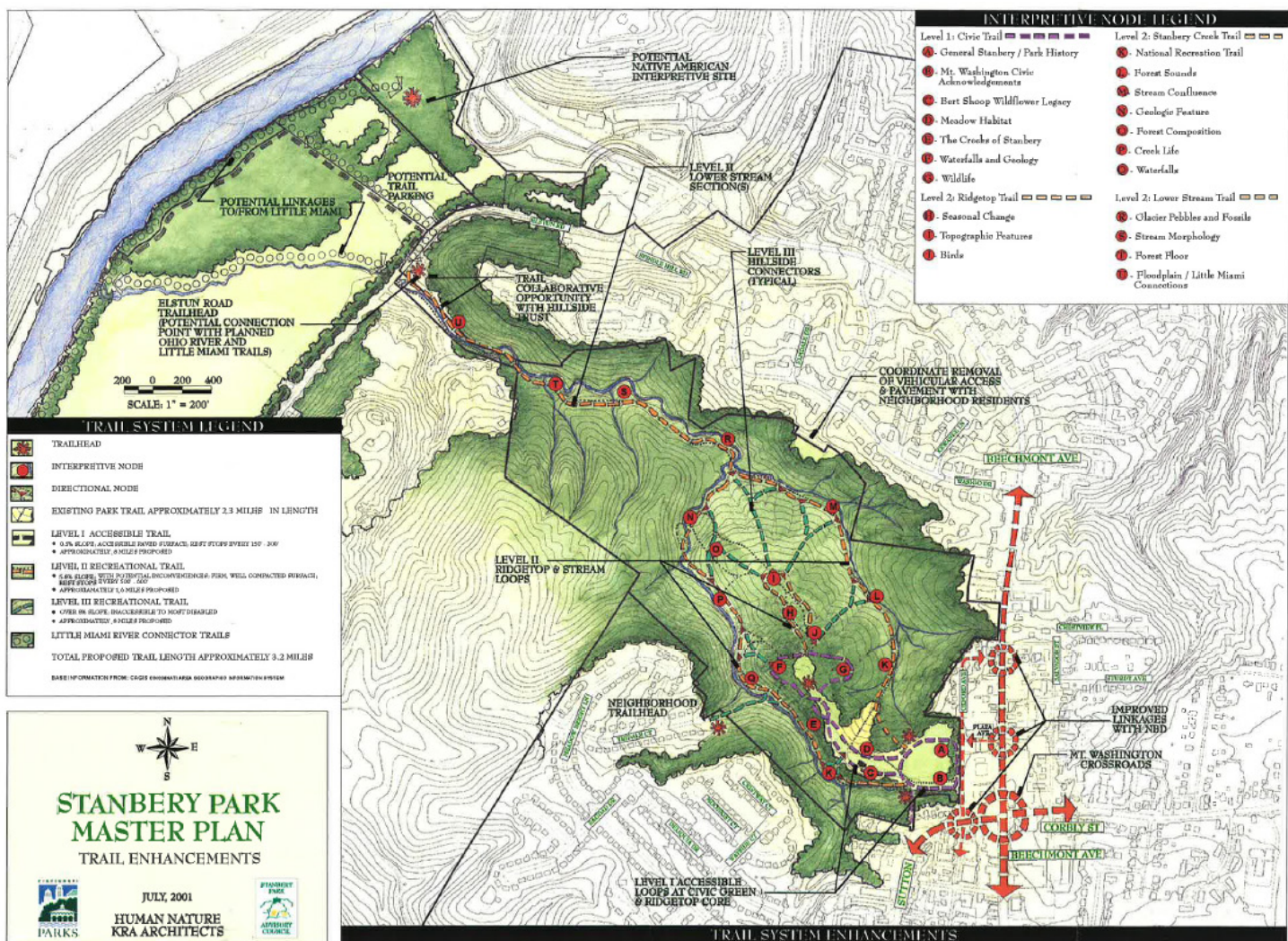
pleasant walks and activities at the park, along with tagging other organizations, can encourage sharing, which spreads social media reach. The objective here is awareness. If more people know about the park, consider it for leisure activities, and use it, then there will be more potential supporters of park improvements.

2.) Programming and Events

Explore Funding Opportunities: MWDC will need funding for programs and events. Fundraising is an essential tool for non-profit community organizations.

Potential avenues include leveraging support from within the community, applying for funding from partner organizations such as the City of Cincinnati, HomeBase, arts and performance-based non-profits, and philanthropic organizations such as Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation among others.

Understand Growth Goals: Additionally, programming and events should not be considered an end goal but a means to evolve and grow the organization towards its goals. Metrics should be incorporated to allow the organizations to evaluate event attendance, sales,



The 2001 Master Plan illustration of proposed trail networks by Human Nature.

and other metrics and compare those year over year to understand growth and better evaluate and evolve events that may not be as successful as anticipated. A tactical, pragmatic approach is needed.

Organize for Change: Events are an opportunity for community activation and broader goals for the MWCDC organization. They should be organized with intention, as they can help recruit new volunteers, gather support for initiatives, fundraise, or discuss collaborations.

Work with Cincy Parks to Promote Stanbery: Building partnerships with the Parks Department can go a long way. One such partnership is working with Cincy Parks to promote Stanbery Park through events or general traditional and social media channels.

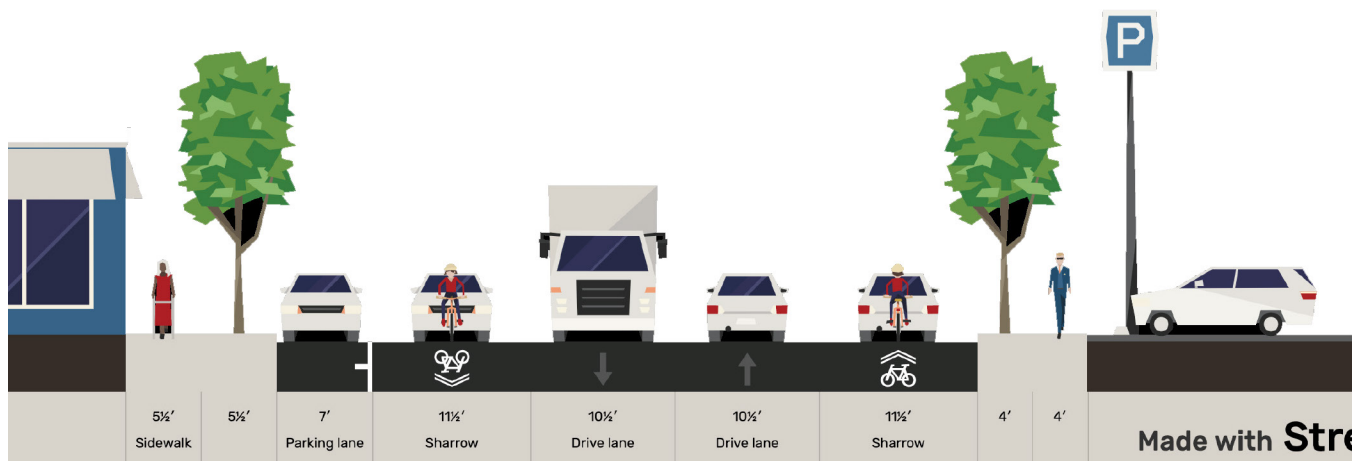
Welcome Food Trucks: Food trucks are a huge opportunity to boost programming. Food is typically a big draw for people, and food trucks are drawn to popular events. When possible, they should be permitted to be at Stanbery Park during events. Additionally, if the park starts to see more visitors, there is potential for food trucks to visit the park more often, outside of events, and offer amenities to park patrons.

3.) Property Acquisition

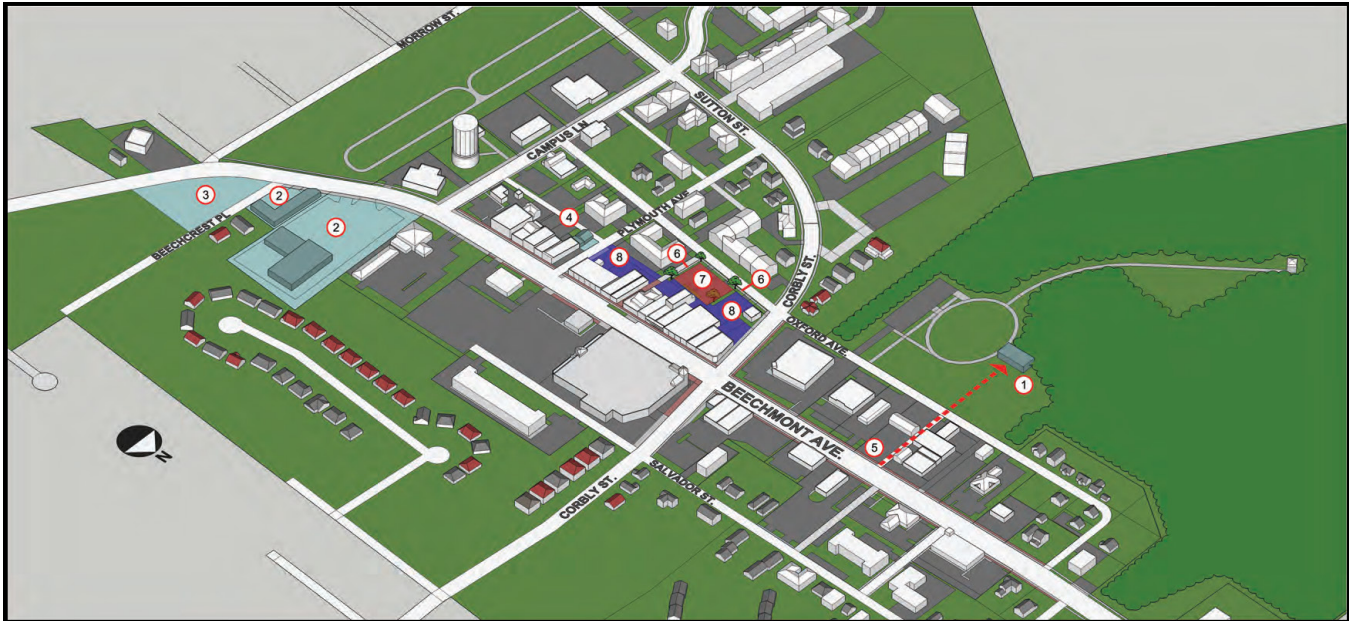
Identify Opportunities: The MWCDC should continue to look for property acquisition opportunities. While the organization may not be able to acquire property without expanding capacity over time, maintaining a watch can help partner organizations with more bandwidth, such as the City, the LandBank, or a partner developer, to act on behalf of the community.

Develop Relationships with Third Parties and Banks: To the point above, the MWCDC is strongly encouraged to develop relations with third parties such as the City, regional development agencies, and potential developers. These organizations can help with the acquisition and disposition of real estate and help the CDC ensure that development projects move forward within the community's goals. Banks are also important in providing funding, guidance, and partnerships to progress development activity.

Seek NBDIP Funds: Otherwise known as the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program, this city program allocates funds to community organizations based on a competitive application process. Mt. Washington should pursue funding through this program to improve the business district.



One of several proposed alternative calming configurations of Beechmont Avenue from the MWCDC Yard Reinvestment Strategy.



A diagram of potential sites from a recent neighborhood study.

Potential funding could go towards beautification efforts for the street, such as purchasing planters, benches, or other elements, wayfinding, or a façade improvement program.

Prepare to Negotiate: Real estate transactions are as much about negotiation as they are about capacity to purchase. The MW CDC must build relationships with potential sellers and be prepared for challenging discussions when those talks begin, focusing on the details. Partnerships with other organizations with real estate capacity can help guide community leadership, potentially increasing the chances of succeeding in accomplishing the CDC's real estate goals.

4.) Corridor and Traffic Calming

Talk to the City's Traffic Engineers: Any meaningful progress towards calming traffic along Beechmont starts with initiating the conversation with the City's DOTE. Partnerships with other City departments, the City Council, and the Mayor's office are essential to building support for pragmatic improvements around

mobility and pedestrian safety in and around Mt. Washington.

Focus on Pedestrian Safety: Mt. Washington community leadership should not ignore safety for people walking, biking, or otherwise accessing the community and business district outside of driving. This can be residents walking to stores or Stanbery Park or visitors walking from public parking to shopping and recreational destinations. Vehicular traffic traveling too fast in and around the business district, especially along Beechmont Avenue, should be calmed by implementing physical measures to narrow streets, widen sidewalks, and encourage drivers to take it slow.

5.) Zoning and Signage Restrictions

Work with the City Planning Department: Like the above recommendation for DOTE, community organizations like MW CDC should develop and encourage a working relationship with the City's Department of Planning and Engagement. This

department oversees the implementation of city plans and the development of new plans. It reviews any initiatives that go to the City's Planning Commission, such as changes to the Zoning Map.

Refresh Existing Plans: Plans, once written, tend to become dated as time passes quickly. The best plans are ones that are implemented and updated every few years. The community has several plans, including the last approved Neighborhood Plan in 2007 and the recent 2020 Reinvestment Plan. It is past time for the neighborhood to have a new plan that ties together the planning efforts of the communities past.

Review Stanbery Park Zoning: The community should review the zoning in and around the park. Specifically, areas zoned Community Commercial – Mixed (CC-M) should be changed to a zoning classification that allows more pedestrian-oriented businesses, such as the Community Commercial – Pedestrian (CC-P) zoning designation—potentially putting vehicle parking and drive-throughs in the rear of a building instead of on the side or front. The recently passed Connected Communities zoning changes could be helpful for Mt. Washington's business district. Still, its impact may be limited in the rest of the neighborhood due to the lack of frequent transit along the corridor outside of the NBD.

6.) Miscellaneous

Clarify and Promote the Entertainment District

Overlay: The Entertainment District overlay allows businesses within the boundary area to get a liquor license tied to food service. The number of licenses is based on the size of the district. So far, they have not been well utilized. This is part of the problem of promotion and tenant mix. The MW CDC can help spread awareness of the licenses and what they do to a broader audience. They can also use these licenses as incentives to lure in new businesses to the corridor.

Connect With Art Organizations: Art can significantly activate community business districts and parks. How can the community utilize art to increase interest in Stanbery Park and the Beechmont Avenue business district? Murals, sculptures, and performing arts are all part of the equation in creating an attractive and interesting place. Artworks mural program is a strong example of creating unique art in business districts with community support. Their program utilizes school students and volunteers to paint custom murals in designated locations. These locations are decided based on community funding commitments and building owners' permission.

Utilize the Water Tower as Brand and Story: The water tower is the neighborhood's most iconic landmark. Use it. The tower can be on banners, signage, and even merchandise. The tower and the fact that the community is in the highest part of the City. This fact can help cement a brand as something the community can look up to. Pun intended.



North sidewalk of Mt. Washington Business District. *Photo by Author.*



The Mt. Washington water tower on a fall day. *Photo by Author.*

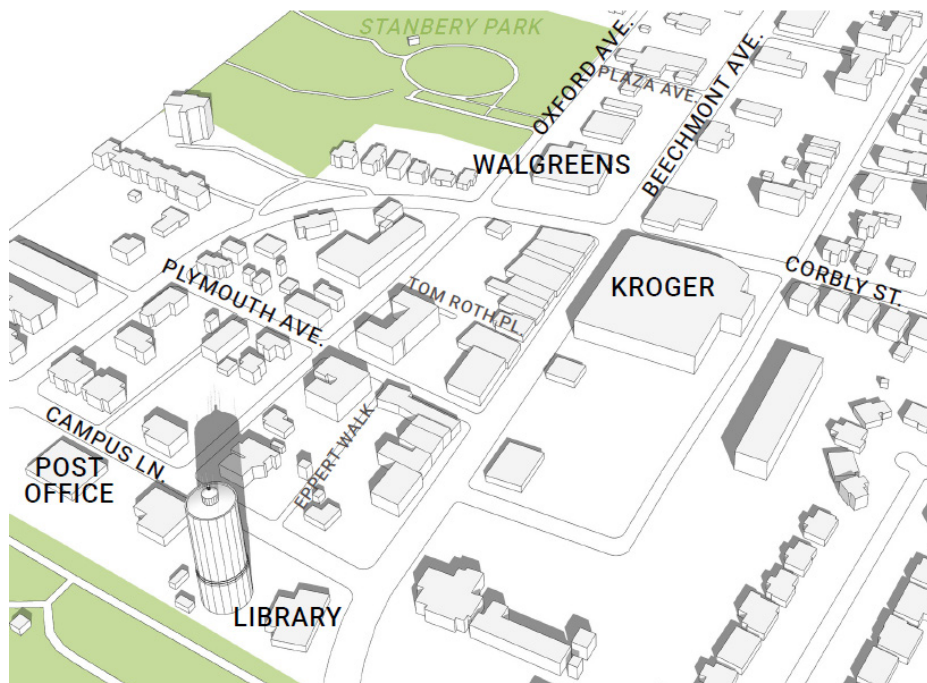
LET'S BEGIN

With every plan, there is the question of where to start. And then where to go, and then... and so on. This strategy was developed based on stakeholder input and expert real estate, planning, and community development knowledge. The matrix spanning the next few pages highlights this report's action items in an easy-to-reference chart. However, even within this framework, it is important to be prepared for revisions. Local factors may change, making an area proposed for later development into an earlier opportunity. Rigidity is not the goal – momentum is.

The chart outlines potential actors which are organizations, City departments and other agencies the MW CDC should engage with to begin working on the recommendations outlined in this report. It also identifies potential secondary groups. Cost is broken down by dollar sign amounts. One \$ means the initiative should be affordable and within \$1,000 or less to pursue for the group. Two \$'s means there may be more costs. Based on mission from the challenge statement, the recommendations were intended to be low to no cost for the CDC to implement initially.

Time frame outlines the expected time it would take to make the initial efforts. Finally, the Step One column outlines first actions intended to help get the CDC moving. A blank version of this chart is included in the Appendix of this report to help the CDC move forward if conditions on the ground change.

It is essential to start with the best opportunity and radiate out from there. Concentrate efforts and resources on a manageable target until signs of momentum are visible. Resist the temptations to jump from site to disconnected site. This, truly, is a marathon, not a sprint, with success measured over the years, not months. Good luck!



A map of the Beechmont Avenue Business District from the 2020 YARD & Co. Mt. Washington Reinvestment Plan.

	Action Item	Primary Actor to Engage	Secondary Actor	Cost	Time Frame	Step One
STANBERY PARK	Facilitate Internal Community Collaboration	MW Community Council	MW Business Association	\$	6 months to 1 year	Organize a forum of community leaders to develop shared vision, identify overlaps, build trust
	Build Relationships with Potential Partner Organizations	HomeBase	The Port	\$	1-3 months	Contact and connect with orgs to identify resources and opportunities for collaboration
	Determine Capacity and Resource for Park Programming	Cincy Parks	The City	\$	3-6 months	Connect with Parks department to ID opportunities
	Promote the Park	Social Media	Traditional Media	\$	Ongoing	Promote events via social media channels where possible

	Action Item	Primary Actor to Engage	Secondary Actor	Cost	Time Frame	Step One
PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS	Explore Funding Opportunities	The City's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)	HomeBase	\$	3-6 months	Connect with DCED and Homebase to explore funding opportunities
	Understand Growth Goals	Internal		\$	Ongoing	Develop metrics for framing growth successes
	Organize for Change	Internal		\$	Ongoing	Develop recruitment pitch to be used at events, meetings and on the street
	Work with Cincy Parks to Promote Stanbery Park	Cincy Parks	CORA	\$	3 months to 1 year	Convene a meeting with Cincy Parks and potentially CORA on looking at ways to advance park improvements
	Welcome Food Trucks	Cincinnati Food Truck Association	Cincy Parks	\$	3-6 months	Develop relationships with CFTA and explore opportunities for placement at events

	Action Item	Primary Actor to Engage	Secondary Actor	Cost	Time Frame	Step One
PROPERTY ACQUISITION	Identify Opportunities	DCED	The Port	\$	6 months to 1 year	Work with partner agencies to ID sites and discuss strategy
	Develop Relationships with Third Parties and Banks	Banks	Cincinnati Development Fund/LISC	\$	6 months to 1 year	Reach out to potential CDFI partners to discuss real estate tools
	Seek NBDIP Funds	DCED		\$	1 to 2 years	Explore opportunities to apply for funding that fit community needs
	Prepare to Negotiate	Internal		\$	Ongoing	Consult with real estate professionals on tips and strategies for negotiation
CORRIDOR AND TRAFFIC CALMING	Talk to the City's Traffic Engineers	DOT	Outside Expertise	\$	Ongoing	Meet with DOT to learn more about corridor data and discuss community concerns
	Focus on Pedestrian Safety	DOT	Outside Expertise	\$\$	6 months to 1 year	Discuss potential tactical implementations through Vision Zero

	Action Item	Primary Actor to Engage	Secondary Actor	Cost	Time Frame	Step One
ZONING AND SIGNAGE RESTRICTIONS	Work with the City Planning Department	City Planning		\$	1 to 2 years	Begin discussion with City Planning outlining concerns from local business
	Refresh Existing Plans	City Planning	Outside Expertise	\$\$	2 years	Work with City Planning to be in queue for neighborhood plan work
	Review Stanbery Park Zoning	City Planning		\$	1 year	Work with City Planning to identify vision for area surrounding Stanbery Park

	Action Item	Primary Actor to Engage	Secondary Actor	Cost	Time Frame	Step One
MISCELLANEOUS	Clarify and Promote the Entertainment District Overlay	Business Owners		\$	6 months	Develop language and promote information regarding benefits and how to apply
	Connect with Art Organizations	ArtWorks	Smaller arts collectives	\$	3-6 months	Connect with arts organizations to learn ecosystem and explore opportunities for the community across different arts mediums
	Utilize the Water Tower as Brand and Story	Branding Agency		\$\$	1 year	Connect with branding service to identify brand pillars, storytelling opportunities



Cincinnati

ULI Cincinnati
937 424 3310
cincinnati@uli.org

cincinnati.uli.org



knowledge.uli.org