NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE PLAN
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introduction

The Near West Neighborhood Land Use Plan is intended to help reverse residential decline, advocate for viable and attractive commercial corridors and further the goals of the Near Westside Quality of Life Plan. It is a guide for anyone making a decision about the use of a property. It is useful for property owners, developers, neighbors and neighborhood organizations, City staff, and City boards and commissions. This plan will be used to evaluate rezoning applications, to project future population and employment concentrations, and prioritize capital improvements.

This plan is a segment of the Comprehensive Plan for Marion County, Indiana. A comprehensive plan is required by state statute (Indiana Code 36-7-4-501 through 512) as a basis for zoning and must include objectives and polices for future land use development and development of public ways, places, land, structures and utilities. Marion County’s comprehensive plan is made up of over 130 documents, each adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission for the purposes of ongoing and orderly development and redevelopment of the county. For a summary of the plans that most directly affect the Near West, please see appendix A.

This plan is also an update and replacement of the Nearwestside Housing Improvement and Neighborhood Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission as a Comprehensive Plan segment on April 20, 1994 (94-CPS-R-2). Additionally, it replaces the land use recommendations of the Wayne Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan, adopted by the MDC as part of Indianapolis Insight, on May 3, 2006 (2006-CPS-R-004), where the study areas of that plan and this one overlap. It also replaces the recommendations of the West Washington Street Corridor Study and the Lafayette Road/Coffin Park Neighborhood Plan (90-CPS-R-4) for the parcels in the area of overlap between this plan and each of those two plans.

The neighborhoods included in this plan are:

- Fairfax,
- 500 View,
- Haughville,
- Hawthorne,
- Rainbow Ridge,
- Stringtown, and
- We Care

Some of these neighborhoods are among the oldest in Indianapolis. For a history of the area, please see appendix B.
Planning Process

In preparation for this plan a series of interviews and meetings were held throughout the winter, spring and summer of 2012. Residents, businesspeople and representatives of institutions and government agencies were asked to share their knowledge, concerns and dreams for the Near West neighborhoods. The information gathered in these sessions was presented in a kick-off meeting for the plan on October 25, 2012 at the Hawthorne Community Center.

Four Work groups were formed to delve into Near West’s issues. The work groups and their topics were:

- Neighborhoods and Housing
  - Housing rehabilitation
  - Code enforcement
  - Safety
  - Infrastructure
  - Historic preservation

- Transportation
  - Streets and sidewalks
  - Transit
  - Bicycling
  - Walking

- Environment, Parks and Recreation
  - Parks and recreation
  - Brownfields
  - White River
  - Eagle Creek and Little Eagle Creek

- Redevelopment
  - Redevelopment
  - Commercial streets
  - Land use and zoning
  - Streetscaping and urban design

The Work Groups met sequentially from December, 2012 through November, 2013. The work groups were expected to set goals and actions as they related to their topic; and to prioritize those goals and actions. A report was written for each work group summarizing their findings. The work group reports form the backbone of this plan document.
principles and objectives

The recommendations of this plan help to implement one or more of the following principles and objectives:

- Encourage and stimulate economic development
- Create job opportunities in the area
- Provide an environment where blight and deterioration can be more easily reversed
- Create opportunities to fund the construction of public improvements
- Protect the economic value of properties
- Stimulate an increase in the property tax base
- Phase out incompatible structures and land uses
- Improve the public face of Washington and Michigan streets through streetscaping, façade improvements, pedestrian amenities and stronger connections into the downtown
Housing Target Areas
housing and neighborhoods

Housing Rehabilitation

Rates of vacancy are high throughout the area. Many blocks have 25% or more of their residential structures sitting vacant. Although vacancy does not equal abandonment, it is often a first step down the road to abandonment.

The 1990s and early 2000s saw more houses being built in Indianapolis than there were households formed. With more residential units than were needed to house the city’s population, many houses were abandoned. The houses most likely to be abandoned were those that were:

• In poor condition
• Poorly located (for example: isolated, busy street, undesirable neighboring land use, unsafe area, few or poor neighborhood amenities, poor infrastructure)
• Functionally obsolete (not what the market was seeking)
• Financially disadvantaged (foreclosure, back taxes, liens, unclear title, estate issues, out-of-town ownership, speculator ownership, unresponsive ownership, high assessed value)

Potential solutions might fall into the following categories:

• Improve condition of the housing
• Improve neighborhood
• Improve marketability
• Clean up financial problems

Because the programs available to rehabilitate housing are unable to meet the demand for rehabilitation, priorities should be set. This plan recommends concentrating housing rehabilitation in target areas, so that the housing improvements will have a synergistic effect on each other.

Target areas were chosen based on combinations of:

• High vacancy rates,
• Poor building conditions,
• In or adjacent to areas with high homeowner-occupancy,
• Nearby new construction,
• Nearby amenities, and
• High visibility.

Subsequent study showed that these areas also have high rates of missing or deteriorated sidewalks.

A similar strategy was recommended in the 1994 Nearwestside Housing Improvement and Neighborhood Plan. Of the four target areas in that plan, three now show low rates of vacancy and high rates of homeownership. The fourth area has been included in the target areas recommended in this plan.
Nuisance Violations

Nuisance violations refer to violations of City health and property maintenance codes such as high weeds and grass, abandoned and unsafe buildings, accumulation of trash on private property, and inoperable vehicles. These types of violations detract from the overall character of a neighborhood and contribute to neighborhood decline.

In a survey of participants in this planning process, trash and high weeds and grass were the nuisance violations of greatest concern. The number of trash violations gives a sense of the extent of nuisance violations. In 2012 over 2,000 citations were issued for trash violations in the census tracts that contain the Near West neighborhoods. Practically every block had at least one citation. This is indicative of the severity and widespread nature of illegal dumping and unkempt properties in the area. It is also indicative of the willingness of Near West residents to do something about trash by reporting violations.

Recommendations for policies, programs and projects concerning nuisance violations are:

- Expanding options for trash disposal by expanding hours and allowable items of the Citizen’s Transfer Station program, increasing recycling and tox-drop opportunities and instituting free, household recycling.
- Posting of “No Dumping” as appropriate in problem locations.
- Publicizing the need for residents to report trash accumulating on private property to the Marion County Health Department’s Housing and Neighborhood Health section (221-2150).
- Publicizing the need for residents to report dumping of trash on public property through the Mayor’s Action Center (327-4MAC).
- Publicizing the need for residents to report high weeds and grass, abandoned and inoperable vehicles, and illegally posted signs to the Mayor’s Action Center (327-4MAC).
- Expanding the Adopt-a-Block program to include more blocks.

Violations of the zoning code also detract from the character of the neighborhood, as well as potentially causing ill will among neighbors. Some common examples of zoning code violations are illegal conversions of single-family houses into multi-family houses, backyard auto repair businesses, illegal conversion of houses into businesses, and posting of non-compliant signs. Residents should report suspected code violations to the Mayor’s Action Center (327-4MAC).

Strengthened enforcement, prosecution and penalties associated with nuisance violations are recommended.

Historic Resources

The Near West has a long development history. Businesses and homes started to pop up along the National Road (now Washington Street) as far back as the 1830s. The area has hundreds of homes and other buildings dating from the late 1800s through the 1920s.
The Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology developed an inventory of historic sites and structures for Wayne Township in 1993. This inventory lists sites and districts of historic significance and rates them, in descending order of significance, as outstanding, notable or contributing. Hundreds of structures in the Near West are rated as contributing. Thirty-two structures are rated as notable or outstanding. Among the structures listed as outstanding are the Dr. Henry Lohrman House on West 16th Street, the Pathology Building on the former Central State Hospital grounds, Link Belt Chain factory on South Belmont, School 30 on North Miley and the Duesenberg Factory, now part of the IndyGo headquarters. Methods for identifying historic properties have changed and improved in the 20 years since the inventory of historic sites and structures was done. Additional historic resources, unknown at the time of the original survey, may be waiting to be discovered in the neighborhood.

Christamore House, the Hawthorne Library building and the Pathology Building are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A section of the Haughville neighborhood is listed in the National Register as a historically significant area. The National Register of Historic Places is part of a federal program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archeological resources.

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places:

**Does**
- Give a property prestige and publicity. Provide protection for the property when part of federally assisted projects.
- Permit the owners of income-producing properties to use investment tax credits for certified rehabilitation.
- Allow owners of certain publicly owned or publicly accessible, non-income-producing properties to apply for federal rehabilitation grants.

**Does not**
- Prevent private owners from altering their property.
- Restrict the use or sale of the property.
- Establish certain times the property must be open to the public.

The Near West clearly has a notable architectural heritage. This heritage can be used to build pride in the area and to promote the area to others. Recommendations for policies, programs and projects concerning historic resources are:

- Nominating eligible structures to the National Register of Historic Places (to learn more, go to the National Park Service website at nps.gov/nr/about.htm or consult with the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation & Archeology).
- Calling attention to the area’s architectural heritage through events such as historic home or church tours. Consult with the organization Indiana Landmarks for technical assistance in holding a tour. Virtual home tours can be posted online on neighborhood organization websites and on realltourvision.com and historichometours.com.
• Calling attention to the area’s history through events such as a neighborhood history night or themed tour (like Irvington’s ghost tour). Consult with the organization Indiana Landmarks and the history programs of local universities for recommendations for speakers.

• Creating a walking or driving tour brochure. Tour routes could include historic churches, Christamore House, and historic structures at Central Greens. Consult with the organization Indiana Landmarks or the Ball State University’s historic preservation program for technical assistance.

• Consult with the Indiana Historical Bureau to erect historic markers telling of the area’s history. Currently, there are two historic markers in the area. One marker commemorates General Anthony Wayne for whom Wayne Township is named. It stands along Washington Street on the campus of Washington High School. The other marker commemorates Washington Baseball Park, once home of the Indianapolis Indians and the site of the first Negro National League game. It also commemorates baseball great Oscar Charleston. The marker is along Washington Street near the entrance to the Indianapolis Zoo, approximately in right field of the old diamond.

• Writing a history of the area. Indiana University’s Center for the Study of History and Memory and Indiana Landmarks are potential sources of technical expertise.

Public Safety

Crime is a significant issue in the Near West neighborhoods and was one area of focus in the recent update of the Near West Quality of Life Plan. This plan defers to the Quality of Life Plan on this issue. However, one particular aspect of public safety is important to include in this plan because of the way it relates to the other recommendations of the plan.

Crime Prevention Though Environmental Design (CPTED) employs physical design features that discourage crime, while at the same time encouraging legitimate use of the environment. It has been shown to greatly reduce crime in targets areas. The goal of CPTED is the reduction of opportunities for crime to occur. CPTED offers protection without resorting to a “prison camp” approach to security. For information on the components and philosophy of CPTED, see Appendix C.
transportation

A well-connected transportation system is an important asset to any urban community. A transportation system with a high level of connectivity will have many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead-ends. As connectivity increases, travel distances decrease and route options increase. Direct travel between destinations creates a more accessible system.

“Complete Streets” are another important transportation asset. A complete street is one where pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to move along and across it. Complete streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from bus stops in an environment that is sensitive to human scale.

As transportation and connectivity improvements are made they should be respectful of the existing context. Context-sensitive design incorporates elements such as livability, sense of place, human-scaled urban design, and environmental protection into transportation projects without sacrificing traditional objectives of safety, efficiency, capacity and maintenance.

The Near West is fortunate to have many components of a well-connected transportation system and Complete Streets; however, there is room for improvement. The Near West seeks to:

- Improve the walkability of the area
- Better connect the neighborhood to the Downtown
- Better connect the neighborhood to other job centers
- Have infrastructure that is more environmentally sensitive

Walking

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are commonplace in the Near West neighborhoods. However there are some notable gaps. Few sidewalks exist north of 16th Street. Provision of sidewalks is spotty in the area between 10th and 16th street west of Sharon Avenue. Sidewalks are missing on the west side of White River Parkway, along Vermont Street west of Warman Avenue, on Oliver Street and on many of the streets south of Oliver.

Gaps in the current sidewalk network create barriers to safe movement for pedestrians. New infrastructure and amenities could heighten the pedestrian experience, strengthening pathways among jobs, housing, and transit and promoting the economic viability of the area’s retail streets. Pedestrian crossings, signals, crosswalk treatments, way-finding signs, street lighting, street furniture and trash receptacles are all important parts of the pedestrian system.
The Department of Public Works adds sidewalks and crosswalks as money becomes available through its Capital Improvement Plan. Each year the City allocates funds from neighborhood bonds to fund the Sidewalk Program. Sidewalks are requested and prioritized in accordance with the City’s Sidewalk Retrofit Policy.

When new development or major redevelopment projects occur, the City’s zoning ordinances require the construction of sidewalks if they are missing from the parcel being developed.

Well built and maintained sidewalks can easily last 50 years, and many are still serviceable after 100 years. However, many of the sidewalks on the Near West are quite old and in need of repair.

Additional sidewalks are recommended for the following areas:
- St. Clair Street east of Belleview Place
- Walnut Street between Concord Street and Tibbs Avenue
- Garden Avenue from Rochester Avenue to Tibbs Avenue
- The west side of Tibbs Avenue between Washington Street and Walnut Street
- Tibbs Avenue from 16th Street to 22nd Street
- The west side of White River Parkway, including a crosswalk and other improvements at the intersection with New York Street
- The 500 View neighborhood in general

All intersections function as if there is a crosswalk whether the crosswalk is marked or unmarked. Marked crosswalks are important for safety as they alert motorists to the possible presence of pedestrians and help direct pedestrians, especially the sight impaired.

Crosswalks on major streets should be clearly marked for safety. Some crosswalks may be appropriate locations for enhanced treatments such as center medians or raised crosswalks. These enhancements improve safety by reducing vehicle speed at crosswalks and reducing exposure of pedestrians to vehicles. Center medians can improve crossing safety by providing a refuge space that allows the pedestrian to cross each direction of traffic separately. Center medians are installed only where pavement widths are sufficient. Raised crosswalks increase visibility of the crosswalk and decrease vehicle speeds.

The following crosswalks were identified for improvements:
- 10th Street and Belmont Avenue (near School #63)
- White River Parkway at 10th, New York, Oliver and Michigan streets
- Michigan Street at the Kroger grocery
- Harding and Oliver streets
- Tibbs Avenue and Michigan Street (near School #67)
- The offset streets along 10th Street

Sidewalk crossings of railroad tracks are in bad condition throughout the neighborhood and need to be improved and maintained.

Pedestrian traffic in the winter months will be encouraged by placing as high a priority on clearing of snow from sidewalks, crosswalks and bus stops as from streets.
Bicycling

The Regional Bikeways Plan envisions a safe network of bikeways, integrated with transit and motor vehicle routes, to provide access to home, work, education, commerce, transit and recreation within the Indianapolis region.

Three types of bikeways are proposed in the Regional Bikeways Plan: bike trails, bike lanes and side paths. Bike trails are separated from traffic and are not located in a street right-of-way. A bike lane is part of a street and is distinguished by pavement markings and signs for the specific use of cyclists. A side path is much like a sidewalk in that it is separated from motor vehicle traffic but is still within a street right-of-way.

One existing bikeway can be found in the Near West, the White River Greenway on the west bank of White River from Washington Street to New York Street.

Within the Near West, the Regional Bikeways Plan recommends:
- A greenways trail along Eagle Creek.
- A bike lane on Michigan Street from Eagle Creek east into the downtown.
- A greenways trail on the old B&O Railroad as far east as Tibbs Avenue.
- A bike lane on Tibbs Avenue connecting the B&O to Michigan Street.

This plan recommends implementation of the four bikeways listed above as well as the following bikeways:
- The B&O Railroad from Tibbs Avenue to Michigan Street
- Tibbs Avenue from Washington Street to Lafayette Road
- Concord Street/Kessler Boulevard from Vermont Street to Lafayette Road and beyond
- Holmes Avenue from Washington Street to Lafayette Road
- Belmont Avenue from Rhodius Park to White River Parkway
- Harding Street from Morris Street to New York Street
- Walnut Street from Concord Street, across Haughville Park, to Belmont Avenue
- Vermont Street from Tibbs Avenue to Holmes Avenue
- New York Street from Belmont Avenue to White River Parkway
- New York Street from Holmes Avenue to Central Greens
- Ohio Street from Holmes Avenue to Central Greens
- Washington Street from Tibbs Avenue to Holmes Avenue
- Warman Avenue from Washington Street to Morris Street
- Oliver Street from Belmont Avenue to Kentucky Avenue

Driving

As the Near West was originally developed, it was well-placed to take advantage of the city’s network of thoroughfares leading west out of the downtown. East/west movement across the neighborhood is still good.
Bikeway Recommendations

Indianapolis MPO Bikeway Plan:
- Near West Bikeway Recommendations
- Existing Bikeway
- Proposed 2016 - 2025
- Existing Greenway
- Proposed 2026 - 2035
- Proposed 2035+
The Near West is also connected to the region and nation by interstates. Interstates 70, which runs along the southern edge of the community, is accessed at Harding Street and Holt Road. Interstate 65 is nearby and can be accessed on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street at 10th Street.

North/south travel through the area is more difficult because few streets run continuously through the area. Creation of a north/south arterial to serve the neighborhood is recommended.

Proposed major realignment of 16th Street, Holt Road and Crawfordsville Road in the adjacent Town of Speedway may affect the Near West’s connectivity to the west. These realignments should be modified if it is determined that they will negatively affect the Near West.

Realignment of Tibbs Avenue as it approaches and intersects with Washington Street is recommended. Straightening out Tibbs Avenue could create a safer, 90-degree intersection with Washington Street, open street level views to Little Eagle Creek and add usable space to the Central State Hospital grounds. However realignment may be hampered by the presence of nearby burials and the need to provide access to the redevelopment in the southwest corner of the Central State Hospital grounds.

Accident rates can point out locations where street improvements, structural and/or operational, may be needed. According to 2009 traffic accident data, the streets in the Near West neighborhoods with the highest number of accidents were:
- 10th Street,
- Michigan Street,
- Washington Street, and
- 16th Street.

When the number of accidents is compared to the amount of traffic, the streets with the highest accidents rates were:
- 10th Street between Holt Road and the White River,
- Concord Street between 16th and Vermont streets, and
- Belmont Avenue between 10th and Michigan streets.

Belmont Avenue’s high rating can be largely attributed to the number of accidents at its intersection with 10th Street. To improve traffic safety further study of the streets segments in the second list is recommended.

The following streets and alleys are identified as needing repair. This is not a comprehensive list:
- Luett Avenue,
- Warman Avenue under the railroad,
- The north-south alleys between Tibbs and Holt in the Fairfax, 500 View and Rainbow Ridge neighborhoods, and
- Numerous alleys in the Haughville neighborhood.
### Traffic Counts

- 0 - 10,000 Vehicles
- 10,000 - 20,000 Vehicles
- 20,000+ Vehicles
- (#) Year of Count
- (E) Estimate

This map does not represent a legal document. It only is intended to serve as an aid in graphic representation. Information shown is not warranted for accuracy or merchantibility.
Transit

Routes
Five IndyGo bus routes directly serve the Near West. Three of the routes run east/west through the neighborhood, the #3 – Michigan Street, the #8 – Washington Street, and the #10 – 10th Street. One route, the #25 – West 16th Street, provides east-west service with a loop to the north. The #37 – Park 100 provides service along White River and then north-west along Lafayette Road. There is no north-south service through the Near West. A north-south route is recommended to connect the current routes. Extending the 20-minute headway service on the 10th Street route from Tibbs Avenue to Holt Road is also recommended.

Safety
On-bus safety is maintained in a variety of ways. All buses have eight cameras and two microphones and drivers are trained in security. A security firm, hired with federal grant money, has been providing off-duty IMPD officers to monitor bus stops in the downtown and elsewhere. IndyGo reports safety statistics on a regular basis.

Bus stops
Convenient and comfortable bus stops enhance the transit experience and encourage ridership. Upgrading of bus stops with benches and shelters is desired. Priorities for enhanced bus stops are stops with high numbers of boardings, and with existing sidewalks and curbs. However, there are many constraints. For example, on 10th Street the right-of-way is very narrow so there is little or no room for enhanced stops unless an adjoining business would volunteer to have the bench or shelter placed on its property. Also, enhanced bus stops are not typically located in front of single-family homes.

IndyGo offers an Adopt-a-Stop program. The adopter picks up litter and empties the trash can at the adopted stop (IndyGo supplies the adopter with trash bags). The adopter reports damage or other issues to IndyGo. In return, IndyGo provides the adopter with five one-day fare passes for fixed route service and furnishes the stop with a sign featuring the adopter’s name. People can volunteer to adopt a stop through IndyGo’s website.

IndyConnect
IndyConnect is a long-range transportation plan designed to connect people and places around Central Indiana. It is intended to provide transportation options – from local bus, rapid transit, and roadways to pedestrian and bike pathways – and connect people to jobs, healthcare, education and shopping. It would increase Central Indiana’s competitiveness and economic development opportunities while improving the environment, job growth opportunities and quality of life.

A plan endorsed by local elected officials and civic and business leaders in December 2011 suggests a phased implementation – beginning with a 10-year plan to be built in Marion and Hamilton counties. Additional counties could join during that time period and service would be extended within that county according to the plan.
Highlights of the proposed transportation plan include:

- **Bus**: Doubling of the current bus service in the first 10-years, with eventual expansion to nearly triple the current size. This means significantly less wait time between buses and longer hours of service, plus more direct routes. Also included is the addition of community circulators and express bus routes.

- **Rapid Transit Lines**: Five rapid transit lines could provide high frequency service to heavily traveled areas. Rapid transit runs every 5 to 15 minutes, may have dedicated lanes or rails, and controls traffic signals to reduce travel time. Rapid transit features frequent stops at upgraded transit stations with lighting, benches, and announcements so travelers know when the next vehicle is arriving. Light rail or bus rapid transit vehicles can be used to provide rapid transit service.

- **Bike and Pedestrian Pathways**: Plans call for hundreds of miles of trails and pathways that connect to buses, rail and roadways and fill gaps where connections are missing.

- **Roadways and Bridges**: Expanding, maintaining and improving the roadway and bridge system includes road resurfacing, bridge repairs, intersection and pavement improvements, as well as connectivity with walkers and bikers through new sidewalks and bikeways.

For the Near West, the most likely improvements would be:

- General improvements to the bus system such as:
  - Reduced wait times on the bus lines
  - Buses running until midnight on weekdays and 10 p.m. on weekends
  - More direct bus service and fewer required downtown transfers, due to additional cross-town routes outside of downtown Indianapolis
  - Seven-day-a-week service on most routes
  - Additional bus routes
  - Six express bus routes with direct service to major economic and commercial centers, including the Indianapolis International Airport and Park 100
  - High frequency bus service on 10th Street and from IUPUI to Park 100 via Lafayette Road
  - Implementation of the Blue Line rapid transit line in the Washington Street corridor

The Blue Line is proposed to run 23.5 miles within the existing right-of-way of Washington Street from Cumberland on the far eastside of the city to the Indianapolis International Airport on the west. The Blue Line route may go as far west as western Plainfield in a future phase.

The corridor is being studied for bus rapid transit. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) vehicles look, operate, and feel like a light rail vehicle. They are essentially light rail without the tracks. BRT provides faster service by limiting stops to enhanced passenger stations located near major activity centers along arterial roadway corridors. BRT runs on dedicated lanes and has traffic signal priority. Typically, stops are every 1/2 mile to 1 mile, fares are collected at the stations rather than on the vehicle, and boarding platforms are level with the bus floor.

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Stops have been tentatively proposed for Harding Street, Belmont Avenue, Tibbs Avenue and Holt Road.
environment and parks

Brownfields

With its history of rail lines and heavy manufacturing, it is no surprise that there are many brownfields in the Near West. Also, brownfields or potential brownfields often exist where there were once dry cleaners or businesses that handled petroleum products such as gas stations.

The City of Indianapolis, through the Department of Metropolitan Development, tries to find ways to get brownfield sites cleaned up and productively reused. “Clean” usually means clean to industrial standards. Covenants are often placed on remediated properties to forbid digging or use for growing food.

Individuals can assist in the effort to reuse brownfields by reporting suspected brownfields to the Department. Some sites may be able to be remediated quickly; others will take more time. Individuals and businesses should also be careful when acquiring non-residential property. If acquired without due diligence the new owner may be liable for unexpected and expensive environmental remediation.

Some brownfield sites are particularly difficult to reuse because of their combination of location and level of contamination. Different standards exist for how clean a brownfield site must be based on the future use. For example, a future industrial site does not need to be as clean as a future housing site. But a number of brownfield sites are not appropriate for reuse for industry or warehousing, despite that being their former use. These sites may be disadvantaged for industrial reuse because they are hard to access, can be accessed only through a residential area or are too small or awkwardly shaped to be efficiently redeveloped. The Department has begun to more actively search for solutions to these problem properties.

Some areas to be studied for alternative land uses have been tentatively identified:

- Ketcham Street between Walnut and St Clair streets
- Along the railroad tracks between Vermont and Ohio streets
- Intersection of Somerset Avenue and Wilcox Street

Possibly the most well-known brownfield site in the Near West is the Avanti site adjacent to Eagle Creek in the southwest corner of the area. It is the former home of a battery recycling operation, a lead smelter, and a lead oxide facility. Remediation of the site and its surroundings has been ongoing.
Green Infrastructure

The City has been applying green infrastructure practices to many of its recent projects. One of the most notable examples of green drainage infrastructure can be found in the Rainbow Ridge neighborhood of the Near West. The $5.5 million project re-established existing drainage infrastructure and built a new storm drainage system. To relieve the neighborhood flooding problems, the Department of Public Works removed failed drain pipes and added a hybrid ditch system. A hybrid ditch uses natural swales and perforated pipe to drain water away from yards and into the ground. During heavy rains, excess water that is unable to soak into saturated ground will flow into a traditional storm drain system. The system helps reduce flooding and provides treatment to naturally cleanse the water. This project re-established some roadside ditches while preserving as much off-street parking as possible. Flooding in streets, yards and other affected places should be dramatically decreased and surface and groundwater quality improved.

Eagle Creek and Little Eagle Creek

Eagle Creek and its tributary, Little Eagle Creek, run west of the Near West, creating a separation from the Garden City neighborhood and the town of Speedway.

Levees line portions of both streams but are missing in the area between the railroad tracks south of Washington Street and along Little Eagle Creek north of Cossell Road. The floodway, where water flows during a 100-year flood, is generally narrow along Little Eagle Creek north of Cossell Road. The floodplain, where water would sit during a 100-year flood, is roughly a block in width through this area. In the area between the tracks the floodway varies in width up to 600 feet. The floodplain varies from non-existent to a width of 400 feet.

Tree cover along the streams varies from none to well-wooded. Visual and physical access to the streams is limited.

Eagle Creek and Little Eagle Creek, as well as White River, are identified as conservation corridors in the “Greening the Crossroads” Plan developed by the Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI). This plan proposes to improve the environmental quality and livability of Central Indiana by developing a green infrastructure network of interconnected natural areas. Conservation corridors are the connectors in the landscape that provide for animal movement, seed and pollen dispersal, plant migration and, where appropriate, recreation.

Recommendations for Eagle and Little Eagle Creek include:
- forest and prairie restorations,
- exotic plant species control,
- reduction of mowing,
- improved storm water infiltration,
• tree planting along the streams to provide wildlife habitat, improved water infiltration and water quality in the creeks,
• tree planting in parks and on vacant parcels within the streams’ watersheds, and
• widespread environmental education.

White River

The White River is Indianapolis’s main waterway. It creates a distinct boundary along the east side of the Near West and separates it from Downtown. White River was bridged in 1834 as the National Road (locally known as Washington Street) worked its way across the Midwest. Through the years bridges were added at Oliver Avenue and New York, Michigan, 10th and 16th streets, helping connect the westside to the rest of the city.

Devastating floods hit in 1847, 1904 and 1913. The 1913 flood was part of widespread flooding throughout Indiana and Ohio. It swept away the Washington Street bridge and caused levees to fail along White River, Eagle Creek and Little Eagle Creek. Near downtown the water in White River was nearly 20 feet above flood stage. The Stringtown neighborhood was inundated. The response to the flood was the implementation of comprehensive flood control, which included earth levees, concrete floodwalls, and channel dredging and straightening.

White River State Park developed over a thirty-year period on the western edge of downtown Indianapolis along both banks of the White River. Between 1981 and 1986, the southeasternmost portion of Stringtown was demolished and White River Parkway and Washington Street were rerouted to provide space for the park. The portion of the park on the west side of the river contains the Indianapolis Zoo, White River Gardens and the White River Promenade.

The White River Promenade is a walkway threaded between the White River and the Zoo. It provides a pedestrian link between Stringtown and the old Washington Street bridge to Downtown. The walk celebrates Indiana’s history as a limestone-producing state. Huge blocks of limestone line the walk providing a separation from the zoo and framing views to the White River. A “rose window” and carved renderings of famous buildings built with Indiana limestone are featured along the walk. Sidewalks continue north along the river from the promenade past 10th Street. In 2013 a greenway trail was constructed south from the promenade along the river to Raymond Street.

Like Eagle Creek and Little Eagle Creek, White River is identified as a conservation corridor in the “Greening the Crossroads” Plan developed by the CILTI.

Recommendations for White River are additional tree planting along the river and the development of recreational nodes along the river such as a playground.
Parks
National standards have been established for the amount of parkland and the numbers of park facilities that ideally should be provided based on the size of the population. The Near West, with its scattering of small parks, generally compares well with the national standards, but has some obvious areas of need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Park</th>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>+/-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaines</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.9 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haughville</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorne</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianola</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentz</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olin</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanders</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.9 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringtown</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.15 miles per 1000 residents</td>
<td>2.67 miles</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>-1.67 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White River</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National standards do not tell the whole story. Location, distribution and access play a part in the demand for park space. These aspects, plus the local popularity of various sports, help determine if the need for park facilities is being satisfied.

The Near West is fortunate that the area’s parks are generally spread throughout the community. Most of the Near West is within walking distance of a park. However, some barriers, such as railroad tracks, high-traffic streets, and missing street connections, hamper easy access for some residents. The We Care neighborhood is one of two areas most notable for a lack of easily accessible park space.
All the nearby public parks are either on the other side of Interstate 70 or on the other side of busy Washington Street. The neighborhood has responded to this situation by providing its own park space. The neighborhood currently operates two small parks and a community garden.

The 500 View Neighborhood is the other area notable for a lack of accessible park land. Olin Park is on the other side of both 10th Street and the railroad tracks. Denver Park is over a half mile away from the central and western parts of the neighborhood. Vacant land in the 500 View Neighborhood is nearly non-existent, which makes the development of a new park difficult. The solution may be to find a way to ease access to Olin Park.

The area immediately north and west of the former Central State Hospital site also lacks easy access to a neighborhood park. However, this situation should change as redevelopment of the hospital grounds takes shape. Park space at Central State is currently in transition. It is possible that Max Bahr Park will be redeveloped for housing. However, other portions of the site will likely become park and open space, most likely the wooded space in the center of the site and the northwest quadrant of the ground. The charter school proposed for the southwest corner of the site is planned to include a track and football field that are intended to be open to the public.

Most of the area’s parks are easy to find; however, Haughville Park is set back half a block from Michigan Street and is easily missed. Lentz Park is located in the center of a block and is screened on the north, east and west by homes and churches. The park has a little street frontage to the south at the dead-end of Traub Avenue. Improving the visibility of these parks would increase their ability to serve the area.

The property at 641 Tibbs Avenue is recommended as a potential park. The site is an undeveloped 6.5-acre area on the south side of the proposed B&O rail-trail.

Immediately adjacent to the study area, 2.1 miles of trail recently opened along the bank of the White River, connecting White River State Park to Raymond Street. Trail mileage should see another increase in the near future. Design work for a trail along the Eagle Creek Greenway from Raymond Street to Eagle Creek Park was begun in late 2013.

Most of the recreation facilities that are lacking in the Near West – ball diamonds, football fields, soccer fields – are facilities that require a lot of space. The lack of these facilities goes hand-in-hand with the lack of larger parks to locate them in. Potential solutions are Sanders Park, which is being regraded and should soon be a more appropriate place for playfields, and the Central State Hospital grounds, where the northwest quadrant may be suitable for playfields.

Through the efforts of the Indianapolis Parks Foundation, Haughville Park is scheduled for improvements in the near future. The improvements include a large picnic shelter, additional play equipment, new sprayground, and a parking lot.
### Need and Supply of Recreation Facilities in Parks

Based on a population of 17,750 for the Near West neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Facility</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>1 per 2500 residents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Other playgrounds are located at the Hawthorne Center, Christa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more House and area grade schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor basketball courts</td>
<td>1 per 5000 residents</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+9.5</td>
<td>Some schools have outdoor hoops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball diamonds</td>
<td>1 per 5000 residents</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>Another baseball diamond is located at Washington H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball diamonds</td>
<td>1 per 5000 residents</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-.5</td>
<td>A football field is located at Washington H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football fields</td>
<td>1 per 20,000 residents</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-.9</td>
<td>A sprayground is located in Haughville Park. An indoor swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pool is operated by Indy Parks in Washington H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer fields</td>
<td>1 per 10,000 residents</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>A sprayground is located in Haughville Park. An indoor swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pool is operated by Indy Parks in Washington H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor swimming pool</td>
<td>1 per 20,000 residents</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-.9</td>
<td>A sprayground is located in Haughville Park. An indoor swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pool is operated by Indy Parks in Washington H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic shelters</td>
<td>1 per 5000 residents</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+2.5</td>
<td>Outdoor recreation is also available at the Hawthorne Center,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Centers</td>
<td>1 per 50,000 residents</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+.6</td>
<td>Christa-more House and area schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other recommendations related to park and recreation issues are:
- Planting of additional trees in the neighborhood’s parks
- Providing drinking fountains and a soccer field in Haughville Park
- Providing after-school programming, especially hands-on learning such as cooking or gardening classes, in locations throughout the neighborhoods.