Highland Park Neighborhood Plan
Neighborhood Assessment & Form-Based Overlay

By:
Gresham, Smith and Partners
Birmingham, Alabama

Prepared for:
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization
Birmingham, Alabama
City of Birmingham
BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

MPO and Advisory Committee Officers
Fiscal Year 2009

Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Randy Cole, Chairman       Shelby County Engineer
Doug Brewer, Vice Chairman  Mayor, City of Graysville
Thomas Henderson, Secretary  Mayor, City of Center Point

Transportation Citizens Committee (TCC)
Ouida Fritschi, Chairman   South/Southeast Jefferson County Representative
Doris Powell, Vice Chairman  City of Birmingham Representative

Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)
David Hunke, Chairman    Shelby County Planning Services Supervisor
Gregory Dawkins, Vice Chairman  City of Birmingham Traffic Engineer

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB)
(Staff to the MPO)
Charles Ball, Executive Director
William Foisy, Director of Planning
Darrell Howard, Principal Planner
Harry He, Transportation Engineer
Tom Maxwell, Senior Planner
Cissy Edwards-Crowe, Public Information Specialist
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION .............................................1
   - Scope of Neighborhood Plan ........................................ 1
   - Planning Area ..................................................... 1
   - How to Use this Document ........................................ 1

## 2. CONTEXT ..................................................3
   - Early History and Development of the Highland Park Neighborhood ........................................ 3
   - Changes in the Neighborhood ....................................... 4
   - Highland Park Today ................................................ 4

## 3. EXISTING CONDITIONS ....................................7
   - Urban Design ....................................................... 7
     - Streets and Blocks .............................................. 7
     - Buildings and Lots ............................................ 7
     - Public Spaces .................................................. 8
   - Planning and Development ........................................ 9
     - Land Use Plan .................................................. 9
     - Zoning .......................................................... 10
     - Infrastructure ................................................ 16
     - Real Estate Market .......................................... 18
   - Findings .......................................................... 19
     - Urban Design .................................................. 19
     - Land Use ....................................................... 19
     - Zoning .......................................................... 19
     - Infrastructure ................................................ 19
     - Real Estate Market .......................................... 19

## 4. VISION ....................................................21
   - Public Workshops .................................................. 21
   - Parks ............................................................ 21

## 5. FORM-BASED OVERLAY ..................................25
   - Introduction ..................................................... 25
   - Land Use Plan ................................................... 26
   - Regulating Plan ................................................ 26
   - Building Form Standards ....................................... 30
   - General Building Form Standards ............................ 30
     - Entries .......................................................... 30
     - Façades ......................................................... 30
     - Roofs ........................................................... 31
     - Structured Parking ........................................... 31
   - Landscape Standards ........................................... 39
     - Landscape Plan Requirements ............................... 39
     - Design Standards .............................................. 39
     - Landscaping for Surface Parking Areas .................... 39
     - Perimeter Planting ............................................. 39
     - Interior Planting .............................................. 40
     - Site Landscaping Requirements ............................. 40
     - Special Screening Requirements ............................ 40
     - Maintenance .................................................... 41
TABLES
Table 2.1 City of Birmingham Population .............................................. 4
Table 2.2 Census 2000 Data ................................................................. 5
Table 3.1 Highland Park Land Use Plan, 2008 .................................... 10
Table 3.2 Highland Park Zoning, 2008 ................................................. 10
Table 3.3 Highland Park Buildings, 2008 .............................................. 10
Table 5.1 Building Form Standards .................................................... 31

FIGURES
Figure 1.1 Highland Park Neighborhood ............................................ 2
Figure 2.1 Historic Districts ............................................................... 6
Figure 3.1 Figure Ground - Historic & Current ................................... 8
Figure 3.2 Existing Land Use Plan .................................................... 12
Figure 3.3 Zoning .............................................................................. 13
Figure 3.4 Four-Story and Taller Buildings ....................................... 14
Figure 3.5 Non-Historic Parcel Zoning .............................................. 15
Figure 3.6 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) .............................................. 17
Figure 5.1 Proposed Land Use Plan .................................................. 27
Figure 5.2 Regulating Plan ............................................................... 28
Figure 5.3 Regulating Plan and Existing Zoning ................................ 29
Figure 5.3a Form Sub-District - 0: Reserved Urban Residential ........... 34
Figure 5.3b Form Sub-District - 1: Limited Urban Residential ............ 35
Figure 5.3c Form Sub-District - 2: General Urban Residential .......... 36
Figure 5.3d Form Sub-District - 3: Limited Urban ............................. 37
Figure 5.3e Form Sub-District - 4: General Urban ............................. 38
Figure 5.4 Streetscape Recommendations ........................................ 43
1. INTRODUCTION

For nearly 125 years, the Highland Park neighborhood has been a wonderful place to live in the City of Birmingham. Although its role has changed over time within the expanding metropolitan region, the neighborhood’s unique physical features, strong identity and convenient location continue to attract new residents and visitors alike. The purpose of the Highland Park Neighborhood Plan is to take steps today to ensure the long-term success of Highland Park and its high quality of life.

Scope of Neighborhood Plan

In 2008, the Highland Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) and the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) teamed to develop a new neighborhood plan for the community. Specifically, the planning process called for a thorough neighborhood assessment and a review of the City’s Zoning Ordinance that would result in a series of principles and strategies to guide future change. By establishing a clear framework for development, the City, Highland Park’s residents and property owners and the development community could then work confidently toward a common goal – the neighborhood’s long-range vision.

The planning process also called for a high level of public outreach, involving as many public and private stakeholders as possible. To that end, the planning team organized a series of workshops, surveys, interviews and presentations to gather community input and feedback. At the completion of the planning process, the goal is for the City to approve the neighborhood plan and adopt its recommended zoning changes.

Planning Area

The Highland Park neighborhood lies south and east of Birmingham’s downtown area, adjacent to the popular Five Points South business and entertainment district. Highland Park encompasses approximately 240 acres of rolling terrain, bisected by Highland Avenue. The neighborhood is bounded on the west by US 31/US 280, the Elton B. Stephens Expressway/Red Mountain Expressway. The neighborhood extends as far east as the Highland Park Golf Course and is additionally bounded to the east by Highland Drive, 12th Avenue, Cliff Terrace and 38th Street. The northern boundary of the neighborhood is marked by University Boulevard and Clairmont Avenue and by Niazuma and Pawnee Avenues to the south (see Figure 1.1).

How to Use this Document

Government officials, property owners, developers, design consultants and other stakeholders will use this document to prepare improvement plans that are consistent with the community’s vision for the future of Highland Park. The standards and guidelines apply to all residential and non-residential new construction and improvements in the form-based overlay that require a building permit. To determine whether the overlay applies to a property, please refer to the regulating plan (see Figure 5.2).

To prepare a development proposal for a specific property, participants should first familiarize themselves with the overall intentions for the Highland Park neighborhood described in “Section 5: Form-Based Overlay.” Section 5 includes the goals of the overlay as well as a land use plan illustrating the community’s long range vision for Highland Park. The land use plan specifically identifies the appropriate location for residential, commercial, and park/open space uses in the neighborhood. This section also includes the regulating plan, building form standards, signage standards, landscape standards and series of street and transportation recommendations. The standards and guidelines apply to all properties in the Highland Park form-based overlay.

Applicants are encouraged to work with City of Birmingham officials early in the design and development process. City staff is responsible for approving plans and issuing the required development permits in the overlay district. The form-based overlay works in conjunction with the City’s base zoning districts and other development regulations. Anyone involved in the design or review of a development proposal should consult this document in combination with all other City laws, policies and standards governing development and physical improvements in Highland Park.
Figure 1.1 Highland Park Neighborhood
2. CONTEXT

Early History and Development of the Highland Park Neighborhood

The Highland Park neighborhood is a collection of several early streetcar suburbs laid out south of downtown Birmingham at the foot of Red Mountain. In 1884, Willis and John Milner, engineers for the Elyton Land Company (which later became Birmingham Realty), began subdividing a 1,500 acre tract of hilly woodlands known as South Highlands directly south of Birmingham. Their early plans included a boulevard with the central median reserved for rail service connecting downtown Birmingham to a pleasure-park lakeside resort, Lakeview Park, intended to attract potential lot purchasers. The resulting central artery, Highland Avenue, was plotted to follow the natural contours of the landscape and skirted three ravines, now Caldwell, Rhodes and Rushton Parks. The original mule-pulled railway (later converted to steam) provided service from the city center, across Southside to Five Points and then east to Lakeview Park, which became the Birmingham Country Club in 1905. As they developed Highland Avenue, the Milners also plotted out streets and lots for future residential development, again working around the challenges of the topography, resulting in circles and crescents that were ultimately connected back into the existing downtown grid. The area quickly garnered a reputation as a popular resort destination for Birmingham’s elite, a tourist attraction and one of the cleanest districts of greater Birmingham. With lots in place, development soon followed.

The earliest homes in the area were constructed during the late 1890s, but residential development and population of the area began on a much larger scale in the early 1900s. By 1900 there were only ten houses in the Highland Avenue district, and most were located in the northern section, closer to the existing residential development near Five Points. Lakeview Elementary School opened in 1902 and development along Highland Avenue gradually spread east. Due to its suburban, park-like character still relatively close to downtown and its proximity to the Birmingham Country Club, one of the city’s most elite institutions, Highland Park served as one of the City’s most prestigious addresses.

Local architects designed grand homes for the area’s elite on estate lots along Highland Avenue, while speculative and commissioned housing designed for the area’s middle-class began to fill in the back streets. Early construction centered on the Rhodes Park, Hanover Place and Country Club neighborhoods. Build-out accelerated between 1910 and 1920, and during this time the Milners plotted out additional roads and lots along the southern slope of Red Mountain, in the area now known as Milner Heights. Apartments also became fashionable during this time period, and Birmingham architecture firms began producing apartment building designs for the area as early as 1912. Integrating small apartment buildings into residential areas reflected a nationwide trend, and the buildings appeared in all the neighborhoods near Highland Avenue.

The 1920s was a boom time for Birmingham, and during this period the South Highlands district saw a large amount of residential development.
The Chestnut Hill area, which survives intact and accurately reflects its 1913 development plan with no commercial intrusions, is representative of the final and most intense surge of development in Highland Park preceding the 1930s depression. The eastern route of the streetcar line circled around the base of Chestnut Hill, and three sets of grand stone steps were constructed to provide access to the streetcar line from residences set higher up the hill along Highland Drive.

Table 2.1 City of Birmingham Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>26,178</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>38,415</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>132,685</td>
<td>245.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>178,806</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>259,678</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>267,583</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>326,037</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>340,887</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>300,910</td>
<td>-11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>284,413</td>
<td>-5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>265,968</td>
<td>-6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>242,820</td>
<td>-8.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes in the Neighborhood

In 1898, St. Vincent’s Hospital was established in a rented mansion in the Southside area. In 1900, St. Vincent’s moved to its current site at the northwest corner of Highland Park and opened its first new wing in 1910 to serve a rapidly growing patient and physician population. The arrival of St. Vincent’s marked the beginning of non-residential encroachment on the Highland Park area.

By the 1920s, Robert Jemison, Birmingham’s most important real estate developer, had acquired property on top of Red Mountain and created a series of subdivisions known as Redmont Park. This development included a 300 acre country club and golf course in Shades Valley which was to become the home of the Birmingham Country Club. In 1926, the Jemison Companies also began development of an extensive subdivision south of Red Mountain known as Mountain Brook. The increasing popularity of the newer subdivisions coupled with the move of the Birmingham Country Club resulted in a loss of prestige for the Highland Park area. The economic depression of the 1930s spurred further decline in the area, and many single-family homes were converted into apartments.

The continued development of outlying suburbs increased as preferences for suburban rather than urban living became more prevalent during the 1950s. Redevelopment of the Five Points business area during the 1950s further compromised the residential character of the area, particularly along the northern and western edges, which were further disrupted by the construction of the Red Mountain Expressway in the late 1960s. During the 1960s and 1970s, following a 1961 city-wide rezoning process, modern apartment buildings began to replace residences or older buildings in some areas of the neighborhood, further altering the character of the district.

Highland Park Today

Today, the Highland Park area is enjoying a renaissance due to the increased popularity of urban living and its historic housing stock. Older homes, once converted to multi-family rentals, are being restored as single-family residences, and although the older 1960s and 1970s apartments remain, newer, higher-density condominium buildings are also being constructed. The city around Highland Park is also undergoing a change. Young professionals and retirees are seeking to live downtown in increasing numbers, attracted by the amenities and convenience of an urban lifestyle.

Major revitalization efforts are underway in some areas of the city center. The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and its Medical Center are major city center employers. As the school and medical center embark on an effort to attract students, researchers and biomedical companies, expansion is inevitable. Closer to the neighborhood, the continued growth and facilities needs of St. Vincent’s places increasing pressure not only on parking, but on housing as doctors seek additional space for offices outside the hospital itself.

In 2002, the City of Birmingham embarked on a master planning process for the downtown area. The initial master planning process advisory report, completed by the Urban Land Institute, and the 2004 Master Plan Update both call for the integration of more residential opportunities into the downtown fabric. Highland Park’s proximity to downtown, the UAB campus
and medical facilities and the popular Five Points South and Lakeview business and entertainment districts make Highland Park an attractive residential option. Development pressures on the neighborhood, including demand for greater density in the form of apartments or condominiums, may increase as developers try to meet demand for housing in the urban core.

Most of the properties in Highland Park are included in one of five National Historic Districts: Chestnut Hill, Country Club, Rhodes Park/Highland Avenue, Milner Heights and Hanover Circle. National Historic Districts provide protection only for projects in which federal funds are involved. In 2003, in an effort to better protect the integrity of Highland Park, the City of Birmingham established the Highland Park Local Historic District, which mandates design review for all new projects in the neighborhood (see Figure 2.1).

Table 2.2 Census 2000 Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Data</th>
<th>Highland Park</th>
<th>Birmingham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>5,906</td>
<td>242,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Minority</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Hispanic</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Under 18</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Over 65</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Living in the Same House 5 Years Ago</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Living in a Different House 5 Years Ago</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with a High School Diploma</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with a Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Homes Owner-Occupied</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Homes Renter-Occupied</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income (1999 dollars)</td>
<td>$31,000</td>
<td>$26,735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.1 Historic Districts

[Map showing the location and boundaries of various historic districts in Highland Park, including Chestnut Hill National Historic District, Country Club National Historic District, Hanover Place National Historic District, Milner Heights National Historic District, Rhodes Park (Highland Avenue) National Historic District, and Highland Park Golf Course.]
Great urban neighborhoods like Highland Park are inherently full of vitality, diverse and unique, and owe much of their success to their rich history. Their ability to thrive in the future, however, depends largely on the decisions and experiences of the people who live, work and visit the neighborhood and the planning and development framework of the larger city. Describing and understanding the prevailing dynamic between individual decisions and experiences, on the one hand, and the planning and development framework, on the other, forms the basis of a good neighborhood plan.

Urban Design

In many respects, urban design is an umbrella term for all the individual decisions that result in the neighborhood one experiences. Urban design, at its best, creates a place that is comfortable and easy to enjoy, memorable and self-renewing. Although a large part of urban design is describing the physical components of a neighborhood, such as street widths and building heights, its real contribution comes when it addresses what works and what does not work for the people who live, work and visit the neighborhood. Observations and input collected at the Highland Park public workshops and through neighborhood surveys, discussed fully later in the report, begin to tell the story between the physical components of the neighborhood and everyday experiences.

Streets and Blocks

Any physical description of Highland Park needs to begin with the lay of the land or topography of the neighborhood. The knolls and ravines at the base of Red Mountain quickly became the street and block structure in Milner’s 19th century neighborhood plan – the circles, crescents and street offsets that make Highland Park so distinctive.

A hybrid of the city’s street grid to the north and what would become the curvilinear or picturesque street pattern of the suburbs to the south, Highland Park’s street network has frequent interruptions, by circles and parks, and terminations, street with street. Examples of the latter include 10th Avenue and 30th Street, 29th Street and Rhodes Circle, and 33rd Street and 31st Street by way of Hillside Avenue. Consequently, certain streets bear a disproportionate burden of circulation through the neighborhood, such as 28th and 31st Streets.

Of course, Highland Park’s street and block structure, predating growth to the south and expansion of the city’s road network, provides much of the neighborhood’s charm and delight. In public workshops and surveys, participants repeatedly mentioned the “historic,” “urban” and “residential” character as neighborhood strengths, traits directly attributable to Highland Park’s original plan. Conversely, participants also pointed to the amount of traffic and traffic speed on north-south streets as recurring issues in the neighborhood, underscoring how vulnerable Highland Park’s street and block structure is to its position in the larger city.

Buildings and Lots

To the extent the overall street and block structure compartmentalizes different sections of Highland Park, the arrangement and sizes of buildings and lots provides a counterpoint by creating a finer grain of experience that ties the neighborhood together. Shallow residential lots (90’-130’) and building setbacks (25’) fronting 28th and 31st Streets, for example, bridge the large block groupings that are Hanover Circle, Rhodes Circle and Chestnut Hill. Deeper lots (150’-200’) and setbacks (30’-50’) serve the same role along the north and south sides of Highland Avenue between the parks, although apartment buildings, townhomes and a variety of other non-residential building types have replaced many of the large single-family homes.

Within the larger block groupings, lot sizes, setbacks and building types vary on an almost block-by-block basis. While streets in Chestnut Hill are uniform, others like 13th Street and Cliff Road are prime examples of the diverse blocks one experiences over short distances on a single street in Highland Park. Even the experience of an area such as Milner Heights changes quickly as soon as one leaves the well-defined Milner Crescent.

The consolidation of lots throughout the neighborhood’s history, especially near the parks and the golf course, has also contributed to the eclectic mix of residential building types in Highland Park. While some two and three-story apartment buildings have significantly altered streetscapes in Highland Park through setbacks, building form and parking location, high-rise residential buildings have redefined the neighborhood’s skyline, views and sun exposure. The taller buildings also serve as landmarks in Highland Park and can support a variety of residential and commercial choices.
The unifying effect that certain lot patterns provide at the neighborhood scale translates into the “walkable” and “friendly” neighborhood descriptions from the public workshops and surveys. Similarly, many participants in the planning process cherish the “diverse” nature of Highland Park, which comes, in part, from the mix of lot sizes supporting different building types. The proximity of different building types, however, can also have a negative impact on adjacent properties, and participants discussed the daily nuisance of “out-of-scale” development, especially parking, and the destabilizing influence on single-family residential streets.

**Public Spaces**

On many levels, Highland Park is a diverse neighborhood, with its distinct topography, unique street network and multiple building types, yet it continues to convey a strong identity for residents and visitors. Certainly, the three historic parks play a vital role in establishing the neighborhood’s identity. However, their enduring value relies mainly on their integration into the neighborhood’s street network, which exposes everyone to the parks and establishes a shared experience.

Caldwell, Rhodes and Rushton Parks serve as landmarks, centers and gateways for Highland Park – orienting elements, collectors of activity and points of departure and entry. As centers and gateways, they complement the relatively broad Highland Avenue (100’ right-of-way) to offer a great contrast to the narrower residential streets (50’) radiating north and south from them. They also provide a general measure of increasing density across the neighborhood, east to west, from the Highland Park Golf Course to Red Mountain Expressway and Five Points South.

Underscoring the importance of public space in Highland Park, feedback from the public workshops and surveys consistently rated streets trees and parks as the primary asset of the neighborhood. As they did 125 years ago, these “natural” assets help balance urban living...
and continue to attract new residents. Supporting the long-term vitality of public space, in general, and the parks, more specifically, were also themes discussed at length in the workshops.

**Planning and Development**

The planning and development framework for any neighborhood is primarily about the interaction between the public sector (land use plan, zoning and infrastructure) and the private sector (real estate market). The extent to which these two players coordinate their plans and actions typically indicates how well a neighborhood manages change over time. Highland Park’s location in Birmingham, first as a leafy residential escape and then as a bulwark against approaching commercial development, has only heightened the relationship among these neighborhood variables.

**Land Use Plan**

Highland Park’s current land use plan map (1991) describes where to locate general land uses in the neighborhood, such as residential, commercial and parks and open space uses. Although it describes the long-term vision of the neighborhood, the land use plan for Highland Park is inseparable from the history of planning decisions made about the neighborhood and the changing city. Some of the major decisions include:

- Establishing larger lots, at the outset, along Highland Avenue, near the golf course and on Hanover and Rhodes Circles, originally to attract more affluent residents
- Developing Redmont Park and adjacent suburbs immediately to the south for a growing commuter population
- Locating St. Vincent’s Hospital at the intersection of Clairmont Avenue and US 31 and expanding over time
- Redeveloping the Five Points South area into a hub of commercial activity
- Building the Red Mountain Expressway

While there are still well-defined pockets of detached single family residences in the Chestnut Hill, Rhodes Park, Milner Heights and, to a lesser extent, Hanover Circle sections of Highland Park, the larger lots that were once some of Birmingham’s most prominent homes have become, because of their generous dimensions, the location of more dense residential living – mostly condominiums, apartments and townhomes. Consequently, residential land uses bisect the neighborhood into north (Low Density Residential Land Use Plan) and south (Medium/Medium High Density Residential Land Use Plan) along an east-west spine of higher density residential uses (High Density Residential Land Use Plan).

The land use pattern in the Country Club area and the neighborhood’s southeast corner also reflects the role that Niazuma Avenue plays as an important road across the mountain, especially for commuters between downtown and the suburbs to the south. The apartments (Medium High Density Residential Land Use Plan) adjacent to Niazuma Avenue fit that road’s function, but in turn, create less predictable environments for the single family properties immediately to the north along 13th Avenue, 31st Street, and parts of Cliff Road (Medium Density Residential Land Use Plan) and to the east (Low Density Residential Land Use Plan) in the Forest Park neighborhood.

Community institutions and parks are integral to the fabric of Highland Park. Lakeview Elementary School, St. Vincent’s Hospital and Independent Presbyterian Church were among the first institutions that complemented the neighborhood’s early residential development. St. Vincent’s and Independent Presbyterian (Public and Semi Public Land Use Plan) continue to anchor the west and east sides of Highland Park, although St. Vincent’s has completely redefined the northwest corner of the neighborhood through expansion.

The three historic neighborhood parks, Caldwell, Rhodes and Rushton (Parks and Open Space Land Use Plan), work in concert with Highland Park Golf Club to provide a clear and strong civic use structure for Highland Park. In contrast, because of its location immediately adjacent to Red Mountain Expressway and relative isolation from other uses, Underwood Park (Parks and Open Space Land Use Plan) contributes little to the neighborhood’s overall structure.

The other uses near Red Mountain Expressway, both office and apartments, parallel the land uses west of the highway and extending to the Five Points South district. The same may be said of the varied commercial uses along Clairmont Avenue and the emerging Lakeview district on Highland Park’s north boundary. In many respects, the uses associated with Red Mountain Expressway and Clairmont Avenue highlight Highland Park’s somewhat uneasy place in the city compared to its overwhelmingly residential character.
Zoning

While land use policies describe the desired future of a neighborhood and are advisory, zoning districts are regulatory and define what is permissible today – uses, densities and standards regulating the size and placement of buildings. Moreover, since communities typically update land use plans on an infrequent basis, 5 to 7-year intervals and often longer, zoning maps reflect more specifically the state of land development in a given neighborhood.

The zoning story for Highland Park is largely one of detached single-family residential districts (R-1 and R-3) and multiple dwelling and/or multi-family residential districts (R-4A, R-5, R-6 and R-7), with the latter accounting for approximately 45% of the nearly 240 acres in the neighborhood (see Table 3.2). Roughly the same relationship among single-family, multi-family and non-residential zoning districts exists for total building square footage in the neighborhood, although St. Vincent’s increases the non-residential component significantly (see Table 3.3).

### Table 3.1
Highland Park Land Use Plan, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential</td>
<td>58.02</td>
<td>24.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Density Residential</td>
<td>47.52</td>
<td>19.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-High Density Residential</td>
<td>46.39</td>
<td>19.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>27.19</td>
<td>11.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/Residential</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Residential Uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Business</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Commerce</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Institutional</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and Semi-Public</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>11.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping and General Business</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>2.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Open Space</td>
<td>13.77</td>
<td>5.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>238.97</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent in Residential --- 76.89%

Percent in Non-Residential --- 17.35%

Percent in Parks --- 5.76%

### Table 3.2
Highland Park Zoning, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Zoning</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-1 Single Family District</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-3 Single Family District</td>
<td>72.19</td>
<td>30.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-4A Medium Density Residential District</td>
<td>22.02</td>
<td>9.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-5 Multiple Dwelling District</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>3.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-6 Multiple Dwelling District</td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>21.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-7 Multiple Dwelling District</td>
<td>28.67</td>
<td>12.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Residential Uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-1 Neighborhood Business District</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2 General Business District</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-3 Community Business District</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-6 Health and Institutional</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>11.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OI Office and Institutional</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>3.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Open Space*</td>
<td>12.97</td>
<td>5.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>238.51</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent in Single-Family Zoning 73.31 30.74%

Percent in Multi-Family Zoning 108.81 45.62%

Percent in Non-Residential Zoning 43.42 18.20%

Percent in Parks* 12.97 5.44%

* Parks are not considered a separate zoning district by the City of Birmingham, but are listed separately in this table to give a better sense of their contribution to the neighborhood fabric, apart from the residential districts in which they are actually zoned.

### Table 3.3
Highland Park Buildings, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Zoning</th>
<th>Sq. Feet</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-1 Single Family District</td>
<td>17,222</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-3 Single Family District</td>
<td>880,987</td>
<td>26.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-4A Multiple Dwelling District</td>
<td>305,046</td>
<td>9.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-5 Multiple Family District</td>
<td>82,977</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Highland Park Neighborhood Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Zoning</th>
<th>Sq. Feet</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-6 Multiple Family District</td>
<td>627,880</td>
<td>19.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-7 Multiple Family District</td>
<td>405,362</td>
<td>12.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Residential Uses**

- B-1 Neighborhood Business District: 43,513 (1.33%)
- B-2 General Business District: 33,860 (1.04%)
- B-3 Community Business District: 7,099 (0.22%)
- B-6 Health and Institutional: 677,779 (20.77%)
- OI Office and Institutional: 182,047 (5.58%)

TOTAL: 3,263,772 (100.00%)

Percent in Single-Family Zoning: 898,209 (27.52%)
Percent in Multi-Family Zoning: 1,421,265 (43.55%)
Percent in Non-Residential Zoning: 944,298 (28.93%)

Indeed, if one subtracts St. Vincent’s from the non-residential category in both tables, two things occur. First, non-residential (i.e., retail, restaurant and office uses) plummets as a percentage of total neighborhood acres and building square feet to approximately 7% and 10%, respectively. Secondly, multi-family jumps to approximately 52% and 55% of neighborhood acres and building square feet. The new percentages underscore both the overwhelming residential character of Highland Park and the preponderance of multi-family residential uses in the neighborhood. They also highlight the challenges and opportunities facing the neighborhood as it seeks to preserve its historic character and maintain a high quality of life (see Figure 3.3).

Currently, higher densities in Highland Park are more about specific properties than given zoning districts. Floor area ratios (FAR) across residential zoning districts are fairly uniform with single-family districts at 0.28 and multi-family districts at 0.30. Non-residential districts have an FAR of 0.50. In addition, excluding St. Vincent’s Hospital, all but two of the ten buildings greater than 4 stories in height in Highland Park are near Caldwell Park (see Figure 3.4). Of course, the low multi-family FAR is due to the number of properties with two and three-story buildings and surface parking in the R-6 and R-7 districts. Depending on their ownership status and prevailing property values and rents or prices, many of these lower density properties present redevelopment opportunities.

In Highland Park, the standards that govern building size and placement, commonly referred to as zoning district bulk regulations, generally work hand-in-hand with the design guidelines for the local historic district. As mentioned earlier, most of the neighborhood, 160 of 240 acres, is in one of five National Historic Districts, and in 2003, the City established the Highland Park Local Historic District. Properties not included in the local historic district, primarily St. Vincent’s Hospital and property adjacent to Caldwell Park and the golf course, follow the City’s zoning ordinance only and not the historic design guidelines (see Figure 3.5).

As a consequence, the development approval process for projects in Highland Park follows two basic tracks, one for properties inside the local historic district and one for properties outside the local historic district. For properties inside the local historic district, the approval process involves a recommendation from the Highland Park Neighborhood Association and approval by Birmingham’s Design Review Committee and provides clear contextual parameters for residential and commercial additions and new construction. In the case of residential additions and new construction, for example, the historic design guidelines state that site plans, “must be sensitive to, and compatible with, adjacent properties and structures and must minimize changes to natural site topography” (Highland Park Historic Preservation Plan, p. 13).

Properties outside the local historic district follow the City’s standard development approval process, and do not have to meet a “compatibility” guideline with local context. Residential zoning districts in the City’s zoning ordinance allow building setbacks similar to historic building placements (25’ front setbacks and 5’ side setbacks), but the setback requirements are minimum distances permitting property owners to deviate from the historic pattern of the neighborhood. Additionally, in Highland Park, most properties outside the local historic district are zoned for high-density residential development (R-6 and R-7), allowing building heights up to 80’ in R-6 and limited in R-7 only by the width of the lot.

Finally, an important goal of a neighborhood plan is to understand how the current zoning map compares to land use policy. In Highland Park’s case, the two maps are largely consistent (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2), with smaller exceptions in the Country Club area (R-3 zoning versus Medium Density Land Use) and around Rhodes Circle (Contingency R-5 zoning versus Medium Density Land Use). Existing zoning in Highland Park, then, largely describes the build-out potential of the neighborhood. As discussed earlier, there are approximately 50 acres and 625,000 square feet of buildings in the R-6 district and 30 acres and 400,000 square feet of buildings in the R-7 district. Assuming 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit and a net to gross...
Figure 3.2 Existing Land Use Plan

EXISTING LAND USE PLAN

- Low Density Residential (RL)
- Medium Density Residential (RM)
- Medium-High Density Residential (RMH)
- High Density Residential (RH)
- Commercial/Residential (CR)
- Urban Residential Commercial (URC)
- Urban Service Commercial (USC)
- Urban Office Commercial (UOC)
- Office and Institutional (OI)
- Limited Business (LB)
- Shopping and General Business (SGB)
- Intensive Commerce (IC)
- Public and Semi-Public (PSP)
- Light Industry (LI)
- Parks and Open Space (POS)
- Transportation and Utilities (Trans)
- Neighborhood Boundary
Figure 3.3 Zoning

ZONING

- B1 Neighborhood Business District
- B2 General Business District
- B3 Community Business District
- B6 Health & Institutional District
- CB1 Contingency Neighborhood Business
- CO&I Contingency Office & Institutional
- CR5 Contingency Multiple Dwelling
- CR6 Contingency Multiple Dwelling
- M1 Light Industrial District
- M2 Heavy Industrial District
- O&I Office & Industrial District
- QB1 Qualified Neighborhood Business
- QB3 Qualified Community Business
- QO&I Qualified Office & Institutional
- QR5 Qualified Multiple Dwelling
- QR7 Qualified Multiple Dwelling
- R1 Single Family Residential
- R3 Single Family Residential
- R4A Medium Density Residential
- R6 Multiple Dwelling District
- R7 Multiple Dwelling District
- Neighborhood Boundary

Highland Park Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhood Assessment & Form-Based Overlay
Figure 3.4 Four-Story and Taller Buildings
Figure 3.5 Non-Historic Parcel Zoning

NON-HISTORIC PARCEL ZONING
B1 Neighborhood Business District
B2 General Business District
B3 Community Business District
B6 Health & Institutional District
CB1 Contingency Neighborhood Business
CO&I contingency Office & Institutional
CR5 Contingency Multiple Dwelling
CR6 Contingency Multiple Dwelling
M1 Light Industrial District
M2 Heavy Industrial District
O&I Office & Industrial District
QB1 Qualified Neighborhood Business
QB3 Qualified Community Business
QQ&I Qualified Office & Institutional
QR5 Qualified Multiple Dwelling
QR7 Qualified Multiple Dwelling
R1 Single Family Residential
R3 Single Family Residential
R4A Medium Density Residential
R6 Multiple Dwelling District
R7 Multiple Dwelling District
ratio of 0.85 for land, the average density today is roughly 15 dwelling units per acre in both districts. In comparison, allowable densities are 43 dwelling units per acre in R-6 and 87 dwelling units per acre in R-7. Current zoning will support a substantial amount of potential new residential development in Highland Park.

**Infrastructure**

Another key variable that determines the development potential of an area is the adequacy of available infrastructure, especially transportation and sanitary sewer. In older urban neighborhoods, like Highland Park, infrastructure systems can quickly become taxed as the city around them evolves and land uses within change. Certainly, streets and parking, the most visible of these systems, are often the first pieces in the infrastructure puzzle to exhibit stress.

The streets winding through Highland Park were originally designed to follow the existing topography, and to accommodate rail service to one of Birmingham’s earliest suburbs. Today, the neighborhood is anchored by Highland Avenue, a meandering boulevard that serves as the spine of the neighborhood. The typical section of Highland Avenue varies, but is generally pedestrian friendly. Wide, often seven-foot, sidewalks are shielded from traffic by planting strips. Two travel lanes, ranging from 12 to 16 feet in width, are separated by a center median. The median, which formerly provided passageway for the streetcars, is now attractively landscaped with mature street trees and other greenery. Most segments of Highland Avenue also include some variety of on-street parking. In most areas, parallel parking is accommodated in 8-foot lanes; angled parking is provided in other locations.

The neighborhood is crossed by a number of north-south thoroughfares, including 28th and 31st Streets. These north-south corridors often serve as cut-throughs for traffic headed from downtown Birmingham, south over the mountain, and they typically consist of a single, 14-foot travel lane. On-street parking is provided on both sides of the roadway, separated from sidewalks by planting strips. As these north-south thoroughfares approach more major intersections, such as with Highland Avenue or Clairmont Avenue, on-street parking is reduced to one side or eliminated altogether. Parking is also excluded in some areas where visibility due to the hilly topography is an issue. Many residential buildings in Highland Park were built when off-street parking was not a requirement. At that time, most in the City of Birmingham walked or made use of the mass transit system. For the few who had cars, private garages in the vicinity would deliver your car to your residence upon request. Currently the mass transit system in Birmingham has few riders, few people walk and many dwellings have more than one car. The result is extensive on-street parking along roadways that lack ample accommodations.

There are a number of circles and crescents that are a part of the Highland Park roadway network. These streets typically include a single, 14-foot travel lane with eight feet of on-street parking provided on both sides. Traffic on these streets is relatively low, compared with the major north-south thoroughfares, but parking can be an issue. Narrow alleys bisect the circles and crescents, as well as many of the other blocks, throughout the neighborhood. The alleys typically accommodate only one-way traffic and primarily serve as access for trash pickup and other services. The remaining streets in the neighborhood are similar in section to the more major thoroughfares, and include a single, narrower travel lane (usually 12 feet), with on-street parking, planting strips and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.

Most roadways in Highland Park are posted for on-street parking on one or both sides of the street. Off-street parking is concentrated in lots and parking garages near St. Vincent’s Hospital and Hanover Circle. One large lot associated with the Independent Presbyterian Church is located along Highland Avenue east of Rushton Park. Additional off-street parking is scattered around many of the more modern 1960s and 1970s apartment buildings in the neighborhood, but a majority of the homes and businesses are served by on-street parallel or angled parking.

Highland Park is a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, with sidewalks along both sides of a majority of the neighborhood streets. Sidewalks are wide and separated from traffic by planting strips and on-street parking, providing pedestrians with a comfortable environment in which to travel the neighborhood. Crosswalks are present at major intersections, but are not always well marked, particularly along less major roadways. There are no established bike lanes in Highland Park. With the exception of Highland Avenue and the major north-south roadways, traffic speed and volume are generally low enough to permit the shared use of the streets by both cars and bicycles, although the topography presents some challenge for bicyclists. Finally, the Birmingham Jefferson County Transportation Authority (BJCTA) operates a bus route down Highland Avenue (#12). The route provides a connection between Highland Park and Birmingham’s downtown area via 20th Street South.

In order to assess current traffic volumes and the availability of additional capacity, traffic counts were collected at 12 locations throughout the neighborhood (see Figure 3.6).
Figure 3.6 Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
The two-way average daily traffic (ADT) for Highland Park is 2,700 vehicles, which is well within an acceptable range for most two-lane streets. In general, traffic tends to be heavier on the southwest side of the neighborhood, particularly along 24th and 26th Streets and Niazuma Avenue. Traffic along 26th Street and Niazuma Avenue ranges from 10,000 to 14,000 ADT. Traffic volumes in this range are typically associated with arterial roadway systems, confirming the neighborhood perception that these routes are used as cut-throughs for “over the mountain” traffic. Traffic volumes along the western half of Highland Avenue are also relatively high, 12,700, but taper down to the 4,000 ADT range in the eastern half of the neighborhood. The major north-south routes through the neighborhood such as 28th and 31st Streets carry traffic in the 2,000 ADT range, which is not as high as expected given resident reports of heavy traffic and use of these streets as major cut-through routes.

In addition to traffic issues, there are a number of confusing and poorly signed intersections in the neighborhood that pose hazards, not only to cars, but to pedestrians. In some instances, a stop sign, a yield and a free-flowing right of way may be present at the same intersection. When not properly signed, cars and pedestrians are unsure of the appropriate time to proceed, increasing the potential for accidents. Intersections throughout the neighborhood could benefit from clear signage indicating traffic flow to better direct vehicles and pedestrians.

Parking is a problem in Highland Park. While there appears to be plenty of on-street parking options in the neighborhood overall, it is clear that there is not enough space to accommodate parked cars in many locations, particularly along Hanover Circle where residents compete for parking space with St. Vincent’s Hospital staff and visitors. Additional high parking demand occurs along some stretches of Highland Avenue, especially near the ROJO restaurant during peak dining hours, and along 26th Street near the Virginia Samford Theatre.

The City’s Traffic Engineering Department reported that there are no specific road improvement projects currently pending in Highland Park. The department receives occasional comments from residents about traffic volumes on Niazuma Avenue and complaints about speeding on 28th Street. In general, the City does not endorse speed humps or speed tables as traffic calming measures, though other strategies such as chicanes (offsetting travel lanes) and traffic circles are possibilities if funding is made available.

Sanitary sewer is an additional infrastructure component critical to a community’s growth potential. Jefferson County is the controlling agency for sanitary sewers in Birmingham, and has rehabilitated parts of the system in Highland Park over the past 10 years. The rehabilitation projects have focused on reducing groundwater infiltration and inflow into the sanitary system. In general, the County does not have the financial resources to rebuild the sanitary sewer system, which in Highland Park dates to the time of its original development.

Accordingly, the County reviews new development proposals on a case-by-case basis to determine potential impact on the sanitary sewer system. If the County estimates that a development will produce more than 2,500 gallons per day in sanitary discharge, then the County may require a more detailed study by the developer’s engineer. When the engineer’s study shows capacity problems, then the developer must pay for improvements to the system at the project as well as downstream. Highland Park’s sanitary sewer lines likely lie on steep grades that imply capacity due to slope. Areas with flatter grades, however, might encounter capacity problems due to sludge/grease buildup.

**Real Estate Market**

Finally, whether or not an urban neighborhood maximizes its total allowable development depends on many factors, not the least of which are prevailing property values and demand for apartments and condominiums. Of course, the community’s vision for the neighborhood also plays a significant role. To gauge the market for new development in Highland Park and to provide the neighborhood with better tools to manage total allowable development, several recent studies or plans and real estate professionals were consulted.

The studies and plans reviewed include the In-Town Transit Partnership Project (2005), Birmingham City Center Master Plan (2004), ULI’s Advisory Services Panel Report for Downtown Birmingham (2002), and UAB’s Master Plan (2001). Each of the planning documents emphasizes UAB-led growth of the city center as a dynamic, 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week place to live, work and play, and the importance of connections to surrounding neighborhoods such as Highland Park. Given downtown employment projections of more than 100,000 by 2030 (In-Town Transit Partnership Project, 2005), with more than half of that at UAB, and a relatively small supply of downtown housing options, Highland Park should remain a very desirable residential choice if it continues to offer a high quality of life.

Local real estate professionals echoed the role the neighborhood will continue to play supporting downtown Birmingham’s employment base and, more locally, St. Vincent’s Hospital, with 2,100 employees. The largest residential demand will likely come from “young singles and childless
couples” and “well-to-do empty nesters and retirees,” approximately 65% and 20% of potential households in the urban core (Birmingham City Center Master Plan, 2004; ULI’s Advisory Services Panel Report for Downtown Birmingham, 2002). “Traditional and nontraditional families” represent the smallest segment at 15% of the potential market.

Given the likely type of demand for housing, real estate professionals also identified the Caldwell Park area as the most logical place for additional high-density residential development coupled with neighborhood retail and restaurants. It was noted, however, that building higher density residential and mixed-use developments would likely require private solutions to address parking in the neighborhood, at least in the near future. Real estate professionals see other redevelopment opportunities such as additional retail and restaurants along Highland Avenue west of Rhodes Park, bed and breakfast/tea house establishments on either Hanover or Rhodes Circle and mixed-use development on Clairmont Avenue.

**Findings**

Following is a summary of the key findings from the assessment of existing conditions in the neighborhood.

**Urban Design**

- Highland Park has a distinctive street and block structure
- Fewer integrated streets results in certain neighborhood streets carrying a relatively disproportionate traffic burden
- Building and lot sizes help tie the neighborhood together, especially along 28th and 31st Streets and Highland Avenue
- Lot consolidation has supported a range of multi-family building types, especially near the parks and golf course
- Highland Avenue has enduring appeal and value, especially the street trees and parks

**Land Use**

- Low-density and medium/medium-high density residential uses bisect the neighborhood
- High-density residential uses along Highland Avenue serve as the neighborhood’s central spine

- St. Vincent’s Hospital has completely redefined the northwest corner of the neighborhood to the point of exclusion, including Underwood Park
- Land uses along Red Mountain Expressway and Clairmont Avenue highlight the uneasy relationship between the historic neighborhood and city

**Zoning**

- Highland Park is overwhelmingly residential with a preponderance of multi-family zoning
- All but two of the eleven buildings greater than four stories are near Caldwell Park
- The historic district guidelines provide strong contextual guidance; minimum standards in zoning ordinance do not
- Current zoning will support a substantial amount of new residential development

**Infrastructure**

- Traffic is highest along 24th and 26th Streets and Niazuma Avenue, carrying volumes five times the neighborhood average
- North-south streets carry relatively low traffic volumes
- A number of intersections have confusing signage
- Parking is especially problematic around St. Vincent’s Hospital and Caldwell Park

**Real Estate Market**

- Downtown and UAB will continue to make Highland Park a desirable location to live
- Largest potential new demand in urban core will be “young singles and childless couples” and “well-to-do empty nesters and retirees”
- Caldwell Park is the most logical area for future high-density residential development should it occur
4. VISION

In order to formulate land use and zoning recommendations to guide future development in Highland Park, the community first needed to establish its development preferences and goals for the future of the neighborhood. These goals and preferences are summarized in a vision statement that describes the residents’ desires for Highland Park. Community assets and values were evaluated in a two-part process that consisted of public workshops and a community vision survey.

Public Workshops

Two public workshops were identical in format, with one held from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and a second from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 6, 2008. Both workshops were held at the Highland Park Racquet Club. Participants first viewed a presentation outlining the goals of the neighborhood plan, the planning process and end products, and an overview of existing conditions including historical context, land use and zoning, transportation, utilities and neighborhood character. Following the presentation, residents broke into small groups, and using large-format aerial photographs and markers, mapped and discussed areas of neighborhood strengths, areas that need improvement, and ideas for future development.

Parks were mentioned most often as an asset of the neighborhood worth preserving. Residents value the size and location of Caldwell, Rhodes and Rushton Parks, as well as the street trees and medians present throughout the neighborhood. Neighborhood history and historical architectural styles are also valued assets of the neighborhood. Residents associate these traits with a “mature” neighborhood. The urban feel and walkable nature of Highland Park are strengths, as is the neighborhood’s proximity to the University of Alabama at Birmingham, downtown and adjacent neighborhoods with shopping and restaurants such as the Lakeview district and Five Points South. The Virginia Samford Theatre is a cherished cultural asset. Finally, high levels of neighborhood activity such as dog walking and talking with neighbors was identified as a strength that promotes neighborhood identity and community safety.

While residents attending the workshops were largely satisfied with their community, they identified four major areas for change or improvement: parks, safety, transportation and appropriate development.

Parks

The three parks, Caldwell, Rhodes and Rushton, serve as major focal points for the neighborhood, but according to residents, largely lack distinct identity. Residents called for a focused beautification effort, perhaps directed at giving each park a theme or purpose, but avoiding over-development of the parks.

Safety

While residents acknowledge that safety has improved in recent years, especially due to increased levels of neighborhood vigilance and activity, several areas were identified as needing additional attention. These included the area south of ROJO, along Clairmont Avenue, and the alleys throughout the neighborhood. Residents suggested additional lighting and increased patrols.

Transportation

Persistent speed and traffic problems occur along the major north-south streets in the neighborhood as non-residents use those roadways as cut-throughs to neighborhoods south of Red Mountain. The neighborhood has a number of confusing intersections that require better signage and sidewalk repair and better crosswalks are necessary in a number of locations. Parking is a persistent problem as well, particularly around St. Vincent’s Hospital.

Appropriate Development

Consistent with the findings of the neighborhood assessment, residents felt the 1960s and 1970s era apartment buildings throughout the neighborhood were incompatible with the historic architectural styles that dominate. Residents also dislike shotgun apartments and would like to see these renovated. Uses such as the Jefferson Center for Aging and Planned Parenthood were identified as somewhat out of place and occupying corners that might be ideal for restaurants or neighborhood service retail.

Newer condominium developments noted during the neighborhood workshop drew mixed reviews. Some residents actually preferred the density and scale of developments such as 2600 Highland and the Capri, but felt the design aesthetic (particularly of the Capri) was out of place. Some felt these developments were a missed opportunity for mixed-use, particularly at 2600 Highland, which is an ideal location for street-level
retail. Still others disliked both developments, citing size, density and appearance as inappropriate for the surrounding neighborhood.

When asked to consider preferences for new development, residents preferred single-family housing or neighborhood-scale retail and services such as dry cleaners, boutique shopping and restaurants. Favorited locations for this type of development included clustered at major intersections or along Highland Avenue, particularly where street-level retail with residential above could be incorporated. Residents emphasized a need for proper planning, location and design of any higher density developments to ensure they matched the neighborhood scale. A clustering of higher density options around the existing condominium towers like the Capri and 2600 Highland was also suggested as a way to give some areas of the neighborhood greater housing diversity and a more urban feel without detracting from the single-family areas.

Community Vision Survey

In order to gauge the opinions of a broader segment of the community than was present at the public workshops, an internet-based community vision survey was developed. The survey asked respondents to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood and to report on neighborhood satisfaction and the characteristics of the neighborhood they would most like to see preserved. Other questions about characteristics of the neighborhood respondents would prefer to change or improve and existing traffic and parking issues were designed to solicit input on potential for future development. Finally, residents were asked to contribute a vision statement for the community.

A link to the online version of the survey was distributed to the Neighborhood Association email list. Printed copies were provided at both public workshop sessions, and a PDF-format survey for printing was also made available for those who preferred to hand-write their response and/or lacked internet access. The survey was also advertised on flyers placed in many of the major condominium developments throughout the neighborhood. The response to the survey was extremely successful; 149 responses were received online and an additional 15 paper copies were submitted, for a total of 164 responses. Survey responses were extremely consistent with the opinions gathered at the public workshops.

Approximately 74 percent of respondents are between 35 and 64 years of age, and over 95 percent are neighborhood residents. Those that are not residents either work in the neighborhood, own a condo or other rental property, or are former residents who have recently relocated. Approximately 88 percent of survey respondents own their home, 12 percent are renters and over 50 percent have been in the neighborhood for over 10 years.

Neighborhood Strengths and Satisfaction

When asked about the strengths or things most valued about the neighborhood (respondents were asked to select three choices), 80 percent of respondents listed “parks and street trees,” and 74 percent selected “housing/architectural style.” Other responses, in decreasing order of preference, included “location/proximity to downtown” (60 percent), “diverse neighbors” (43 percent) and “sense of community” and “strong neighborhood identity” (36 and 32 percent respectively). “Commercial/retail presence” was only selected by 10 percent of respondents.

Terms frequently used to describe the neighborhood were similar to those used in the public workshops and included historic, walkable, convenient, diverse, beautiful, green, friendly and unique.

When asked about satisfaction with a variety of neighborhood characteristics, a majority of respondents were “very satisfied” with location and diversity of housing and the location of parks and green space. Most were “satisfied” with the quality and location of commercial activity, walking and bicycling conditions, traffic movement, visual quality of the neighborhood and safety. A majority of respondents reported being “uncertain” about their satisfaction with the availability of transit service. The largest numbers of respondents that reported being “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” fell in the traffic movement and availability of transit categories.

Respondents were overwhelmingly interested in preserving many of the same characteristics identified in the public workshops: the parks, green space and landscaping, historic architecture, affordability of housing, diversity and the residential character of the neighborhood.

Transportation Patterns and Issues

While the public workshops focused chiefly on traffic and parking issues, the survey also asked respondents to identify their primary modes of transportation. Approximately 97 percent of survey respondents use a personal vehicle most often for travel to work, school and other destinations. About 23 percent of respondents also reported walking as a frequently used mode. Bicycle was only selected by about 8 percent of survey respondents and less than one percent reported using public transit
as a primary means of transportation. Despite the lower percentage who report walking and biking, about 82 percent of respondents said they felt safe walking or cycling in the neighborhood.

Improved sidewalks were most commonly reported as an improvement necessary to make residents feel more comfortable walking or cycling, closely followed by improved lighting and pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Many respondents voiced a desire for usable bike lanes, but acknowledged that topography made this a challenging goal.

About 73 percent of respondents felt there was a need to reduce traffic speed on local streets for pedestrian safety. The major, north-south streets were reported as areas with major traffic problems, primarily because they serve as cut-through routes. Parking problems were reported in most areas of the neighborhood, but particularly along Highland Avenue near the parks and in the area surrounding St. Vincent’s Hospital.

**Development Preferences**

When asked what aspects of the neighborhood they would most like to enhance or change, respondents most commonly reported safety issues, traffic and parking issues, upkeep of the existing historic homes, and repair or removal of the more recent, lower-quality apartment buildings. While many respondents prefer protection from commercial encroachment, many also reported a desire for more small-scale commercial within the neighborhood such as boutique shopping, coffee shops, or casual restaurants, which is consistent with the opinions gathered at the public workshops.

Respondents were asked about the size, height, setback and location of parking of the existing housing stock and commercial buildings. In general, respondents liked the size, height and setbacks of the existing buildings in the neighborhood, but most were less satisfied with the location of parking.

Approximately 73 percent of survey respondents were in favor of new development being single-family housing, supporting the preferences expressed in the public workshops. About 50 percent also preferred mixed-use development. Apartments or condos, commercial or retail space and office space were less commonly selected (ranging between 10 and 20 percent of respondents). According to 66 percent of respondents, commercial or retail activity should be concentrated along major streets; 45 percent were also in favor of concentrating this type of activity at major intersections, while only 14 percent supported integrating commercial/retail uses with residential.

**A Community Vision for Highland Park**

Using the information gathered at the public workshops and through the survey, a multi-part vision statement was developed to describe how residents would like to see Highland Park in the future.

In 10 to 20 years, Highland Park will be a residential neighborhood much as it is today, with:

- A diverse, well-maintained and affordable housing stock;
- Ample commercial opportunities including shops, restaurants and services in attractive, properly-scaled storefronts located along major streets and at major intersections throughout the neighborhood;
- Well-maintained parks and green space;
- Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly transportation infrastructure with increased availability of public transit options; and
- A diverse, active and friendly resident population with a strong sense of community identity.
5. FORM-BASED OVERLAY

Introduction

In many respects, the word that best describes the Highland Park neighborhood, today and for much of its past, is “diversity,” and the community’s vision statement for its future echoes that rich history. Whether one is discussing the neighborhood’s location in the city, its housing or parks or streetscapes, Highland Park presents a diverse range of choices. And, because places that offer choices are often the most vibrant and successful, a neighborhood like Highland Park continues to attract generation after generation of new residents and visitors.

At a fundamental level, the Highland Park experience defies standardization and conventional notions of how to manage change in a neighborhood. Yet, the overwhelming sentiment in the neighborhood, captured at the workshops and through the surveys, is for Highland Park to be, “a residential neighborhood much as it is today.” Accordingly, managing change is of the utmost importance to the community. To help bridge change, on the one hand, and neighborhood character, on the other, more and more communities are turning to form-based development standards to complement their existing zoning ordinance.

“Neighborhood character” is an elusive term, and in the absence of clear standards and guidelines can be very difficult to achieve and maintain. Importantly, with their emphasis on the physical form of a community, or what one experiences on a daily basis, form-based development standards have become an indispensable zoning tool for pinpointing critical development decisions impacting a community’s character. As the sociologist Holly Whyte noted thirty years ago with regard to detailed zoning codes and what makes urban spaces successful, “ambiguity is a worse problem.”

The heart of the Highland Park Neighborhood Plan, then, is the proposed form-based overlay described in this section. The form-based overlay’s purpose is to implement the community’s vision, to the extent possible, captured in the neighborhood assessment. The form-based overlay for Highland Park includes the following key components:

- Regulating Plan: the map delineating the regulated area where the building form standards apply.
- Building Form Standards: regulations that control the placement, size and massing of buildings.
- Landscape Standards: regulations controlling landscape design and planting on private property, specifically parking areas, as they impact public spaces.
- Sign Standards: regulations controlling allowable sign sizes, materials, illumination and placement.

When adopted by the Birmingham City Council, the Highland Park form-based overlay will become an overlay zoning district. An overlay zoning district is a regulatory tool that guides the future growth and character of an area in a manner consistent with a specific community plan. The overlay district is placed “over” the base zoning in an area in order to modify the base zoning’s regulatory standards. Typically, an overlay district alters such standards as building placement, size and height, parking, access, landscaping and signage. The overlay district does not determine the use of the property. The use is governed by the underlying base zoning.

Implementing a community’s plan or vision for the future involves numerous decisions made by a wide range of people at different stages in the development process. These decision makers include property owners and tenants, developers, architects, landscape architects, engineers, traffic planners, design review boards and the municipal authorities responsible for issuing zoning and building permits. An overlay district helps to coordinate the decisions made by all these different participants and achieve the plan’s goals and objectives.

Importantly, this section also includes a set of streetscape and transportation recommendations. While the relationship between building and street and among buildings are critical to a neighborhood’s character, the design and function of the streetscape itself is absolutely essential to a successful community. Fortunately, as discussed in earlier sections of this document, streetscape design and transportation planning have played an important role throughout Highland Park’s history. The streetscape and transportation recommendations here build on that solid foundation and respond to some of the most pressing concerns in the neighborhood today, namely traffic, parking and future development.
Finally, what the form-based overlay for Highland Park does not include are architectural design standards. For properties in the Highland Park Local Historic District, the Birmingham’s Design Review Committee determines, based on the historic design guidelines, whether additions and new construction are compatible with the district’s character. For properties outside the local historic district boundaries, again, approximately 60 of the neighborhood’s 240 acres, excluding St. Vincent’s Hospital, the form-based overlay will serve as the primary control for additions and new construction.

**Land Use Plan**

Before turning to the form-based overlay, it is important first to express the community’s vision in the form of a plan. Such a plan, often referred to as a “vision plan” or “concept plan,” sets the stage for the subsequent regulating plan and building form standards. For Highland Park, the City’s neighborhood land use plan is an effective tool for capturing some of the community’s principal goals.

Reflecting the neighborhood’s strong desire to preserve its historic residential character, the proposed land use plan largely keeps in place the plan that has been in effect for Highland Park since 1991 (see Figure 5.1). Moreover, the proposed plan alters very little the range of residential land use categories applied to the neighborhood. For example, even though there are a number of multi-family buildings in the Rhodes Park area, the land use remains “Low Density Residential” around 10th Avenue in order for the community to decide first whether additional multi-family uses are appropriate in the future.

Since the land use plan works in tandem with zoning, the proposed changes target specific areas where maintaining or increasing density in the future will support the neighborhood’s long-range vision. The key proposed changes are as follows:

- Change from “Public and Semi-Public” and “High Density Residential” to “Medium-High Density Residential” properties along Highland Avenue between Cliff Road and 32nd Street. Comments received at the public workshops and in surveys support (1) focusing high density residential development in the Caldwell Park area, and (2) changing the character of the east side of Rushton Park. Adding an active use such as housing in place of the surface parking on Rushton Park’s east side will improve the park’s character.

- Change from “High Density Residential” to “Urban Residential Commercial” properties at the intersection of Niazuma Avenue and Highland Avenue, properties on 26th Street across from Underwood Park and properties on Highland Avenue west of Caldwell Park, to support the community goal of additional mixed-use opportunities.

**Regulating Plan**

Building on the land use plan’s description of the desired distribution of land uses and densities in the neighborhood, the regulating plan establishes a more detailed framework for specifically reinforcing the neighborhood’s character. Proposed as an overlay district on base zoning, the regulating plan organizes Highland Park by allowable building types, for example, house, townhouse or commercial building type, defining how buildings relate to one another and shape the community. It is important to emphasize that the building types represent building form primarily, and building use to a far lesser degree. For example, an office use, such as a law firm, may be in a building type such as a house or townhouse or a commercial building. What matters most for the regulating plan is the building type, its form and how that form impacts the neighborhood. As a consequence, the regulating plan effectively ties together the neighborhood’s basic set of planning tools – its land use plan, zoning and historic design guidelines, in support of Highland Park’s character.

The regulating plan (see Figure 5.2) for Highland Park consists of five form sub-districts (FSD). In terms of allowable building types, the “Reserved Urban Residential” form sub-district (FSD-0) is the most restrictive and “General Urban” (FSD-4) is the least.

- **Reserved Urban Residential (FSD-0):** a residential only sub-district with house and civic building types.
- **Limited Urban Residential (FSD-1):** a residential only sub-district with house, duplex, townhouse, low-rise apartment and civic building types.
- **General Urban Residential (FSD-2):** a primarily residential sub-district with house, duplex, townhouse, low and mid-rise apartment, mixed-use and civic building types.
- **Limited Urban (FSD-3):** a primarily residential sub-district with townhouse, low and mid-rise apartment, mixed-use and civic building types.
Figure 5.1 Proposed Land Use Plan
Figure 5.2 Regulating Plan

Regulating Plan
- Neighborhood Boundary
- Parks

Form Based Overlay Districts
- FSD-0 Reserved Urban Residential
- FSD-1 Limited Urban Residential
- FSD-2 General Urban Residential
- FSD-3 Limited Urban
- FSD-4 General Urban
Figure 5.3 Regulating Plan and Existing Zoning

REGULATING PLAN
- FSD-0 Reserved Urban Residential
- FSD-1 Limited Urban Residential
- FSD-2 General Urban Residential
- FSD-3 Limited Urban
- FSD-4 General Urban
- Parks
- Neighborhood Boundary

EXISTING ZONING
- B1 Neighborhood Business District
- B2 General Business District
- B3 Community Business District
- B6 Health & Institutional District
- CB1 Contingency Neighborhood Business
- CO&I Contingency Office & Institutional
- CR5 Contingency Multiple Dwelling
- CR6 Contingency Multiple Dwelling
- M1 Light Industrial District
- M2 Heavy Industrial District
- O&I Office & Industrial District
- QB1 Qualified Neighborhood Business
- QB3 Qualified Community Business
- QB5 Qualified Multiple Dwelling
- QR5 Qualified Multiple Dwelling
- R1 Single Family Residential
- R3 Single Family Residential
- R4A Medium Density Residential
- R6 Multiple Dwelling District
- R7 Multiple Dwelling District

Lakeview Circle 33rd Street
Cliff Road 34th Street
Altamont Road Highland Avenue
29th Street 13th Avenue
28th Street 13th Avenue
27th Street
Highland Avenue
31st Street
31st Street
29th Street
University Boulevard
Red Mountain Expressway
29th Street

University Boulevard
Red Mountain Expressway

Clairmont Avenue
30th Street
Highland Avenue
Milner Crescent
Hanover Circle
Niizuma Avenue
27th Street

Highland Park Golf Course

10th Avenue
Highland Park Neighborhood Plan

Building Form Standards

The intent of the sub-district building form standards (see Table 5.1) and general building form standards is to establish development parameters that reinforce the historic character of Highland Park. Most significant are the standards addressing minimum and maximum setbacks, building heights, entrances, façades, roofs, and parking access and parking location. Together, these standards reflect both the neighborhood’s traditional urban form and its expressions for future improvements (see Figure 5.3a-e).

General Building Form Standards

The following general building form standards complement the specific sub-district building form standards and apply to all sub-districts in the Highland Park form-based overlay.

Entries

- A principal building shall have its main entrance oriented to a public street and accessible from a public sidewalk or plaza. The front entrance must always be an open clearance. Secondary entrances and entrances accessed from interior courtyards are exempt from this requirement, but must not be used in place of the front entrance.

- Building entrances (excluding emergency egress) facing a public street shall be defined by at least one of the following: arcades at least 10 feet in depth; porches, stoops, or terraces at least 6 feet in depth; recesses not less than 6 inches; forecourts; or awnings.

Façades

- Window and door openings shall have a vertical orientation and vertical alignment between floors.

- All mixed-use and commercial building types shall have a discernible base, middle and cap defined by horizontal elements. Variations in materials and colors can help achieve this standard.
• The maximum length of an uninterrupted building wall shall be 30 feet. Offsets, projections and recesses not less than 4 inches in depth shall be used to break up building walls. Windows, doors or passageways shall be located a minimum of every 10 feet.

• For mixed-use and commercial building types, ground floor façades shall be not less than 40% or more than 90% clear glazing measured between 3 and 8 feet from finished grade. Additional floors beyond the ground floor shall not be less than 25% or more than 75% clear glazing.

**Structured Parking**

• The ground floor of any above ground parking structure shall have built-out space (e.g., retail, residential, office space) provided for a minimum of 75% of the street frontage.

• Parking structure walls must utilize materials, colors, and a pattern of openings consistent with surrounding buildings.

• Parking structure walls facing residential areas shall minimize openings to avoid noise and light impacts. This shall be accomplished with a 42 inch high solid wall on the exterior sides of each level measured from the finished floor elevation.

• Pole mounted light fixtures on upper decks of parking structures shall use full cut-off fixtures, have a maximum height of 16 feet and be located between internal parking rows rather than at the structure's perimeter.

• Lighting should be planned at the minimum level required for security of areas used only during peak hours (e.g., upper decks).

• Pedestrian circulation elements (stair towers, elevators) shall be located toward and accessible from public streets.

• Parking drives shall be located on side streets for corner lots.

• Parking structures built as a principal use must be of flat floor plate construction with a minimum floor to floor height of 12 feet.

• Underground parking may be built out to the property lot lines.

**Roofs**

• Pitched roofs shall be no less than 5:12, except that porches or attached sheds may be no less than 2:12.

• Flat roofs shall be enclosed parapets a minimum of 42 inches high.
### Table 5.1 Building Form Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form Sub-Districts / Building Types</th>
<th>Min. Front Setback</th>
<th>Max. Front Setback</th>
<th>Min. Frontage Enclosure</th>
<th>Min. Side Setback</th>
<th>Min. Rear Setback</th>
<th>Max. Building Height</th>
<th>Parking Access</th>
<th>Parking Location</th>
<th>Permitted Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSD-0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>35’ front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Building</td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>35’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSD-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>35’ front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex House</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>35’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>45’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Building</td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>45’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Apartment Building</td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>45’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Building</td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>45’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSD-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>35’ front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex House</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>35’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>45’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Building</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>60’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Apartment Building</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>60’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Building</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>70’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/ Office Building</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>60’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Building</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>20’</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
<td></td>
<td>60’ side, rear</td>
<td>rear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum frontage enclosure addresses the amount of a building façade required within the minimum and maximum setbacks.
## Table 5.1 Building Form Standards (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form Sub-Districts / Building Types</th>
<th>Min. Front Setback</th>
<th>Max. Front Setback</th>
<th>Min. Frontage Enclosure</th>
<th>Min. Side Setback</th>
<th>Min. Rear Setback</th>
<th>Max. Building Height</th>
<th>Parking Access</th>
<th>Parking Location</th>
<th>Permitted Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSD-3</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>35'</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>35'</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex House</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>35'</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Building</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Apartment Building</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Building</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/Office Building</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Building</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>front, side, rear</td>
<td>side, rear</td>
<td>According to Base Zoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Minimum front setback: Includes porches, stoops, terraces and other architectural features. Steps may extend to the front property line.
2. Minimum front setback: For corner lots in all sub-districts, the minimum front setback on secondary frontage is 5' and the maximum front setback is 20'.
3. Minimum and maximum front setback: For front yard modifications, see Article VI, Section 6 in the City’s Zoning Ordinance.
4. Minimum frontage enclosure: Excludes required setbacks and vehicular and pedestrian access, and for courtyard apartment buildings, the portion fronting the courtyard.
5. Minimum frontage enclosure: For corner lots, minimum frontage enclosure requirements only apply to primary frontage.
6. Maximum building height: For buildings greater than 50', an additional 10' setback from the front wall is required.
7. Parking access: Front access is permitted for mid-block properties that do not have alley access.
8. Parking location: For houses and duplex houses, garages must be recessed a minimum of 10' from the front wall of the building.
9. Parking location: See Article V, Section 3 in the City’s Zoning Ordinance regarding joint parking arrangements.
Figure 5.3a  Form Sub-District - 0: Reserved Urban Residential

**LEGEND**

- **a.** Minimum front setback
- **b.** Maximum front setback
- **c.** Minimum rear setback - principal building
- **d.** Minimum rear setback - accessory building
- **e.** Minimum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
- **f.** Maximum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
- **g.** Allowed parking location
- **h.** Maximum building height

ROW = Right-of-Way
Figure 5.3b  Form Sub-District - 1: Limited Urban Residential

LEGEND

a. Minimum front setback
b. Maximum front setback
c. Minimum rear setback - principal building
d. Minimum rear setback - accessory building
e. Minimum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
f. Maximum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
g. Allowed parking location
h. Maximum building height
ROW = Right-of-Way
Figure 5.3c  Form Sub-District - 2: General Urban Residential

LEGEND

a. Minimum front setback  
b. Maximum front setback  
c. Minimum rear setback - principal building  
d. Minimum rear setback - accessory building  
e. Minimum secondary frontage setback - corner lot  
f. Maximum secondary frontage setback - corner lot  
g. Allowed parking location  
h. Maximum building height  
ROW = Right-of-Way
Figure 5.3d  Form Sub-District - 3: Limited Urban

**LEGEND**

- a. Minimum front setback
- b. Maximum front setback
- c. Minimum rear setback - principal building
- d. Minimum rear setback - accessory building
- e. Minimum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
- f. Maximum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
- g. Allowed parking location
- h. Maximum building height

ROW = Right-of-Way
Figure 5.3e  Form Sub-District - 4: General Urban

**LEGEND**

- a. Minimum front setback
- b. Maximum front setback
- c. Minimum rear setback - principal building
- d. Minimum rear setback - accessory building
- e. Minimum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
- f. Maximum secondary frontage setback - corner lot
- g. Allowed parking location
- h. Maximum building height

ROW = Right-of-Way
Landscape Standards

The purpose of the landscaping standards is to enhance the physical appearance of buildings, their designated parking areas, and the positive impact of parking areas on adjacent land uses.

Landscape Plan Requirements

- All landscaping plans shall be drawn at an appropriate scale so as to convey the design intent to the appropriate planning and zoning authority.
- All submitted plans shall include: the title of development, name and address of owner/developer/agent; name and address of person/firm preparing the plans; date of preparation, scale, north arrow and dates of all revisions; a location map of site to nearest public street intersection; boundaries of property in concern; location and description of all adjacent properties, streets and easements; parcel identification and zoning classification; number of parking spaces; total square footage of impervious areas and landscaping; and the location and dimensions of entrance/exit points as well as doors, drives, walkways, paved areas, curbs, fences, drainage and other improvements affecting landscaping.
- The submitted plan should additionally illustrate where each plant is to be installed, include details for installing plant materials and a composite schedule which totals quantities and lists all plants by common name, size or specification and spacing.

Design Standards

- Only large trees, greater than 40’ in height at maturity, may be planted to comply with the requirements of this Subsection, except when site visibility at intersections or when overhead utilities prevent the use of large trees, in which case medium or small trees may be used.
- Large parking areas shall be designed as a series of smaller lots that provide space for not more than 100 cars. The smaller lots shall be separated by internal planting areas that form a perimeter which is at least 9 feet wide, planted with large trees and shrubs. These planted areas shall be counted as part of the 10 percent internal planting requirement for parking areas.

Landscaping for Surface Parking Areas

- These requirements apply to all areas (hereinafter referred to as parking areas) which are visible from public property, used for off-street parking, loading, vehicle maneuvering and the retail sale of motor fuels and are 4,000 square feet or larger. To determine the square feet of the paved parking and maneuvering areas use the formula provided in “Calculating Birmingham’s Minimum Landscaping Requirements,” available from the City of Birmingham’s Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits (PEP).
- These regulations shall apply to new parking areas and to any enlargement of parking areas that results in a parking area 4,000 square feet or larger. The enlargement shall require that the existing and new parking areas conform to the requirements of this Section. Multilevel parking structures are exempt from the interior planting requirements.
- Landscape plans shall be prepared by a registered landscape architect or a licensed landscape designer. All submitted plans shall bear the architect/designer’s seal, signature and State of Alabama registration number.
- All cuts and fills and/or terraces shall have sufficient vegetative cover installed so as to prevent erosion. The Highland Park neighborhood is within the Red Mountain slide zone and regulated by the Engineering Division of PEP, which requires affidavits from geotechnical engineers.

Perimeter Planting

- Perimeter landscape strips adjacent to public streets with four or more travel lanes shall be a minimum of ten feet in width, unless: (a) the strip includes a permanent finished wall no less than thirty inches in height; or (b) the required trees are planted in islands between the parking spaces. In such cases the perimeter landscape strip may be reduced to five feet in width.
- Perimeter landscape strips adjacent to public streets with less than four travel lanes shall be a minimum of five feet in width, unless: (a) the strip includes a permanent finished wall no less than thirty inches in height; or (b) the required trees are planted in islands between the parking spaces. In such cases the perimeter landscape strip may be reduced to two and one-half feet in width.
A perimeter landscape strip shall separate a driveway or parking area from an adjacent side property line by one of the following standards: (a) a five-foot (minimum) wide planting strip shall be provided if required trees are to be planted within the strip; (b) a three foot (minimum) planting strip may be provided to accommodate small trees and shrubs if site conditions prevent the use of large trees; (c) two adjacent properties may share equally in the establishment of a seven-foot (minimum) planting strip along the common property line. In instances where the common perimeter planting strip is part of a plan for shared access, each owner may count the respective area contributed toward that common planting strip toward the interior planting area requirements for the lot.

The perimeter planting area shall contain a single row of evergreen shrubs which are at least 18 inches in height at the time of planting and which shall be maintained at a height of 36 inches at maturity. Shrubs should be spaced to allow growth of species type. Deciduous trees shall be equal in number to one tree per 25 feet of public street frontage. Large trees shall be planted on 35 foot centers and small and medium size trees shall be planted on 25 foot centers.

The remainder of the perimeter planting area shall be covered by organic or mineral mulches, other shrubs, or groundcover plants. The use of concrete, asphalt or other impervious surfaces is prohibited.

A list of acceptable plant materials, minimum plant specifications, and planting details may be obtained (for use in your plan) from the City of Birmingham’s Urban Design Administrator.

**Interior Planting**

- Minimum landscaping requirements shall be calculated based on the guidelines presented in “Calculating Birmingham’s Minimum Landscape Requirements,” available from the City of Birmingham’s Department of PEP.
- The interior parking area planting requirement is in addition to the required perimeter planting. Gasoline service stations and automobile sales lots are exempt from the interior planting requirements.
- The interior islands shall be at least 9 feet by 18 feet, planted with a combination of large trees and evergreen shrubs. One landscaped island shall be required for each row of 12 contiguous parking spaces. Each landscaped island shall contain at least one large tree which meets the minimum requirements of this Section.

**Site Landscaping Requirements**

- The minimum landscaping requirement shall be calculated based on the guidelines presented in “Calculating Birmingham’s Minimum Landscaping Requirements,” available from the City of Birmingham’s Department of PEP.
- In addition to the parking landscaping, an additional 5% of the site shall be landscaped.
- To accomplish this requirement’s objective, the selected plant locations should be around the building or as landscaped buffers between the site and incompatible, less intensive adjacent uses.

**Special Screening Requirements**

- Dumpsters and other trash receptacles for all structures other than single-family or two-family residences shall be screened from public streets or properties which are zoned for residential use. Receptacles shall be below grade or shall be placed on a
concrete pad and enclosed by an opaque fence or wall at a height taller than the container. An enclosure shall have an opaque gate unless the service opening is oriented away from public streets or adjacent residential properties. The enclosure shall be built of wood, masonry or other permanent materials (when residential the enclosure must have a veneer similar to the dwelling’s veneer) and evergreen plants may be used in part to meet the requirement of opacity (see also Article VI, Section 5, subsection 11).

**Maintenance**
- The property owner shall be responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of all landscaping materials, barriers and irrigation systems required by this Section. All plant material shall be maintained in perpetuity in a healthy growing condition, replaced when dead and kept free of weeds, refuse and debris.

**Irrigation**
- All required landscaping shall be irrigated by an automatic irrigation system; except required interior landscaping within an existing parking area which is being landscaped to comply with the requirements of this ordinance. Pop-up heads or drip emitters shall be installed for shrub and lawn irrigation of areas next to buildings/structures, driveways, parking spaces and pedestrian walks.

All installation, spacing and maintenance of plant materials shall conform to the American Standard for Nursery Stock, latest edition, published by The American Association of Nurserymen and Standardized Plant Names latest edition, by The American Joint Committee on Horticultural Nomenclature.

**Sign Standards**
The purpose of the sign standards and guidelines is to encourage a more uniform and aesthetically pleasing appearance of signs in the Highland Park neighborhood, and provide signage that is complementary and well-integrated for pedestrians while also legible to vehicular traffic.

All signs will adhere, at minimum, to the standards laid out in Article VI, Section 9 of the City of Birmingham Zoning Ordinance, but are subject to the following additional guidelines and restrictions.

**Prohibited Signs**
- Animated, flashing, chasing, running or sequential signs are not permitted.
- All portable signs, as defined in the City of Birmingham Zoning Ordinance are not permitted.
- Pole banners and streamers, except decorative flags and bunting for celebrations, conventions and commemorations for a prescribed period of time when authorized by the City Council, are not permitted.

**Design and Materials**
- Signs shall be professionally designed and constructed using high-quality materials.
- Sign colors should be compatible with the colors of the building façade.
- A dull or matte finish is encouraged to reduce glare and enhance legibility.
- Signs should not obscure key architectural elements, doors or windows.
- Signs for multiple businesses shall be of similar material and design.

**Lighting**
- On- and off-premise signs shall be spotlighted, externally lit or back-lit with a diffused light source and should be shielded in accordance with Article VI, Section 9, Subsection 5 of the City of Birmingham Zoning Ordinance requirements.
- Backlighting should only illuminate the letters, characters or graphics on the sign, but not its background.
- Neon signs are discouraged.
- Pulsating, flashing, running or rotating lights are not permitted, other than signs depicting time, temperature and gasoline prices.
Streetscape and Transportation Recommendations

The following strategies, applied to specific streets throughout Highland Park, will help manage traffic and parking and maintain the neighborhood’s pedestrian character. All recommended improvements should only be implemented based on further engineering studies or engineering judgment. Furthermore, since the proposed actions and strategies addressing the public-right-of-way are dependent on site specific or area wide infrastructure design, construction and operation, the City of Birmingham will determine whether or not to implement these recommendations.

**Goal 1—Highland Park Neighborhood**

Enhance and preserve the unique character and pedestrian environment of the Highland Park neighborhood.

**Objectives**

1.1 Develop and implement a street tree, signage and lighting plan to reinforce neighborhood identity and traffic calming measures.

1.2 Improve and repair the sidewalk to City of Birmingham standards, particularly where sidewalks are cracked or broken.

1.3 Maintain existing on-street angled and parallel parking.

1.4 Maintain trees and median landscaping, replacing older trees as necessary to ensure a mix of mature and young trees along Highland Avenue.

**Goal 2—Highland Avenue**

Enhance the walking environment along Highland Avenue and minimize traffic impacts on pedestrians.

**Objectives**

2.1 Utilize signalization and signage where appropriate to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles at major or potentially-confusing intersections such as the intersection of Highland Avenue, Highland Drive and 33rd Street.

2.2 In keeping with Birmingham’s 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan, which designates Highland Avenue as a bicycle route, install signs designating the route as a shared travelway.

**Goal 3—University Boulevard/Clairmont Avenue South**

Provide safe and comfortable pedestrian connections to shopping and entertainment destinations along Clairmont Avenue and other adjacent neighborhoods.

**Objectives**

3.1 Study the impact of installing additional mid-block pedestrian crossings or additional crosswalks, particularly near the intersection of Highland Avenue and Clairmont where none currently exists.

3.2 Provide additional trees or landscaping in the planting strips between the sidewalks and the roadway to give pedestrians a greater sense of separation from traffic.

3.3 Install pedestrian scale lighting along University Boulevard/Clairmont Avenue adjacent to Highland Park to increase safety and enhance the pedestrian environment.

**Goal 4—28th and 31st Streets South**

Preserve the pedestrian and residential environment and minimize the frequency and speed of cut-through traffic.

**Objectives**

4.1 Encourage the installation of pedestrian bulb-outs at intersections to define on-street parking, calm traffic and decrease the width of pavement at pedestrian crossings.

4.2 Evaluate the use of chicanes, lateral shifts in the through lanes, at mid-block locations to reduce speeds. The curb extensions should be well planted and easily recognizable.

**Striped Chicane**
Figure 5.4 Streetscape Recommendations
4.3 Alternatively, use mid-block chokers or curb extensions if chicanes are found unacceptable to narrow the roadway.

4.4 Consider angled parking as another strategy to narrow the roadway and calm traffic.

4.5 Evaluate locating traffic circles at strategic intersections, such as 28th Street and 10th Court and 28th Street and Highland Court.

Goal 5—26th Street/Niazuma Avenue

Provide as comfortable a pedestrian experience as possible along the highest-volume corridor in the Highland Park neighborhood.

Objectives

5.1 Evaluate separating the sidewalk from the roadway with a planting strip in many locations along 26th/Niazuma to buffer pedestrians from high traffic volumes.

5.2 Maximize pedestrian safety at intersections such as Niazuma Avenue and 27th Place South and Niazuma Avenue and 29th Street using signals, sign and crosswalk markings to the extent possible.

5.3 Install pedestrian-scale lighting along 26th Street/Niazuma Avenue to create a more inviting pedestrian environment.

5.4 In keeping with the City of Birmingham’s 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan, which designates Niazuma Avenue as a bicycle route, install signs designating the route as a shared travelway.

Goal 6—Hanover Circle

Better manage the parking and traffic issues that occur on Hanover Circle due to its proximity to St. Vincent’s Hospital.

Objectives

6.1 Evaluate and consider closing off the 10th Avenue entrance to Hanover Circle to reduce use of residential on-street parking by hospital visitors.

6.2 Repave Hanover Circle with stamped concrete to improve the roadway surface without encouraging an increase in traffic or speed.

Goal 7—Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

Support a complete, safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle network on all streets throughout the neighborhood.

Objectives

7.1 Utilize signals and pavement markings to create safe pedestrian crossings.

7.2 Install lighting to improve pedestrian safety at night.
7.3 Work with the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization to update the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway plan to designate additional bicycle routes and greenway connections in the Highland Park area.

7.4 Install bicycle racks at the parks and other strategic locations to encourage bicycling as an alternative means of transportation.

7.5 Utilize wayfinding systems to better mark and indicate preferred routes between Highland Park and adjacent districts and neighborhoods such as Downtown, Lakeview, Five Points South and suburbs to the south.

Goal 8—Transit

Encourage the use of public transportation options from Highland Park to other destinations and reduce traffic and parking demands within the neighborhood.

Objectives

8.1 Coordinate with the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) to increase awareness of existing transportation options in the neighborhood, specifically the #12 Highland bus route, through advertising, fliers, and trip planning assistance.

8.2 Improve transit stops with well-designed shelters, route information and accessible landing areas.

8.3 Develop employer transit fare programs with major area employers, especially downtown employers such as the county, city and UAB.

8.4 Working in conjunction with studies already underway as part of the In-Town Transit Partnership, study the potential for decreasing the current one hour headways along the #12 Highland route to provide more frequent service. The In-Town Transit Partnership has developed a new transit plan for the downtown Birmingham area focusing on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Highland will serve as a neighborhood connector route, providing service to and from the main north-south spine of the BRT route along 18th Street.

Goal 9—Parking

Better manage the existing and future parking supply, given the constraints of parking in an urban neighborhood.

Objectives

9.1 Consider implementation of permitted on-street parking for those residences on Hanover Circle and other areas adjacent to St. Vincent’s Hospital to better manage parking supply between residents and hospital patrons.

9.2 Develop shared parking plans between existing entities, for example, St. Vincent’s Hospital or the Crescent office building and the Virginia Samford Theatre, and in conjunction with new development.

Car sharing (Zip Car) parking zone

Bus shelter
Project Approval Process

To ensure consistency with these standards and guidelines, the City of Birmingham’s Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits (PEP) will review all projects in the overlay district that require building and sign permits and that make modifications to landscaping and parking.

General Directions

- Other ordinances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with or are in conflict with the specific provisions of this ordinance are expressly superseded by this ordinance and are to be controlled by the provisions of this ordinance.
- Existing base district standards that are not varied by provisions set forth in this ordinance shall apply within the Highland Park form-based overlay district.

Approval Process

- The first step in undertaking a project in the Highland Park form-based overlay district is to contact the City of Birmingham’s Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits (PEP).
- PEP staff will provide the applicant with the published guidelines and standards (this document and any future amendments) for projects within the various sub-districts of the Highland Park overlay district. It is recommended that the applicant become familiar with the guidelines and standards prior to planning the project and before the development of any working drawings.
- In consideration of a proposal for property located in the Highland Park form-based overlay district, the property owner or his or her agent shall prepare a site plan and accompanying information for the Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits for review. The site plan shall be drawn to a scale no smaller than one inch equals 50 feet and shall show the following information:
  - All dimensions and distances, property lines, easements, landscaping and public and private rights-of-way.
  - Existing and proposed buildings and structures, including signs, trash, containers, fences, walls, light poles, power poles, outdoor utility, equipment and structures, and roof and ground mounted mechanical, appurtenance units.
  - Location, height, size, materials, color and lighting of all signs.
- Bodies of water, water detention areas, drainage structures and sanitary sewer lines and facilities and water distribution lines.
- Driveways, accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians, parking areas, existing and proposed parking spaces, access aisles and other vehicle maneuvering areas; along with all required landscaping.
- Sufficient information and detail to clearly demonstrate that all applicable requirements and standards of this Section are fully satisfied.
- The site plan shall be accompanied by:
  - A grading plan which shows all areas of cut and fill and the grade of all finished floor elevations in relation to the elevation of the public streets that adjoin the property.
  - A sign plan which shows compliance with the “Signage Standards” in this overlay district.
  - A landscape plan and an irrigation plan which shows compliance with the “Landscape Standards” in this overlay district.
  - An erosion and sedimentation plan which meets or exceeds the requirements of the City of Birmingham Soil and Erosion Control Ordinance.
  - Other plans or specifications necessary to show compliance with this Section.
- Once all site plan materials are complete, it is recommended that the applicant contact PEP to establish a meeting time to review the project and its concurrence with applicable regulations prior to applying for a building permit.

No structure or land shall hereafter be located, extended, converted, or structurally altered without full compliance with the terms of this Section and other applicable regulations.
Definitions

The following terms shall have the meaning provided herein. Terms not defined herein shall have the meaning provided in the City of Birmingham Zoning Ordinance and/or City Subdivision Regulations.

**Apartment Building:** A building with three or more dwelling units on one lot. Apartments may be owned (condominium) or rented (tenants).

**Arcade:** A covered walkway made by extending the upper floors of a building above the sidewalk while leaving the ground floor at or behind the sidewalk.

**Base:** The lowest of the three divisions of a building façade – base, middle and cap. The base is generally articulated by entries, stoops and porches, and in the case of commercial and mixed-use buildings greater than two stories, by the ground floor.

**Building Form:** The placement, size and massing of a building.

**Building Height:** The vertical distance from the grade to the highest point of the coping of a flat roof or to the deck line of a mansard roof, or to the average height between eaves and ridge for gable, hip and gambrel roofs.

**Building Type:** The specific placement and configuration of a building in relation to public and open spaces. Building type is primarily about building form and less about function or use.

**Cap:** The uppermost division of a building façade. For one-story buildings, a cornice is sufficient as a cap. For flat roof buildings, the height of the cap increases proportionately with the height of the building.

**Chicane:** A lateral or horizontal shift in the travel lanes of a roadway used to in traffic calming programs. Shifts in travel lanes can be created by shifting parking from one side to the other.

**Civic Building:** A building designed specifically for a public or semi-public function.

**Commercial/Office Building:** A building designed specifically for business uses, which often combines functions, such as offices on upper floors and retail or restaurants on the ground floor, in urban locations.

**Cornice:** A decorative architectural band that projects outward from a façade. Cornices are often a component of the Cap of the façade.

**Courtyard Apartment Building:** A building with three or more dwelling units on one lot that is defined by a forecourt with building wings flanking each side.

**Curb Extension:** A section of sidewalk extending into the roadway at an intersection or midblock crossing that reduces the crossing width for pedestrians and may help reduce traffic speeds (also referred to as a “bulb-out”).

**Duplex:** A building comprising two dwelling units either side-by-side or on two different floors.

**Façade:** Front or principal face of a building, any side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

**Floor Area Ratio:** The ratio of the total floor area of all structures on a lot to the total horizontal area of the lot.

**Forecourt:** An open area in front of a building’s entrance, created when the central portion of the façade is set back. Shallow forecourts are suitable for driveways.

**Frontage:** All of the property on one side of a street between two streets which intersect such street (crossing or termination), measured along the line of the street, or if the street is dead ended, then all of the property abutting on one side between a street which intersects such street and the dead end of the street.

**Frontage Enclosure:** The percentage of the lot width taken up by buildings within the required minimum and maximum setbacks.

**House:** A building that is not connected to another primary structure and is designed for or occupied exclusively by one family.

**Mixed-Use Building:** A building that includes at least 20% residential and 10% non-residential uses.
**Overlay District:** A set of regulations which add an additional layer of development standards to an underlying zoning district.

**Parapet:** A low protective wall or railing along the edge of a raised structure such as a roof or balcony.

**Primary Frontage:** The frontage providing the primary or most important approach or entrance to the building on the lot.

**Regulating Plan:** The map delineating the regulated area where building form standards apply in a form-based code.

**Secondary Frontage:** The frontage of a lot other than the primary frontage.

**Stoop:** A private frontage wherein the façade is aligned close to the front lot line with the first story elevated from the sidewalk sufficiently to secure privacy for the windows. The entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing, which may include a small weather covering.

**Terrace:** A private frontage wherein the façade is set back from the front lot line and the primary entrance(s) to the building(s) is accessible from a continuous platform parallel to and raised above sidewalk level.

**Townhouse:** A single family dwelling unit sharing a party wall with more than one of the same type.