

A Plan for High Street:

CREATING A 21ST CENTURY MAIN STREET



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CAMPUS PARTNERS
*for Community Urban
Redevelopment, Inc.*

A Plan for High Street: Creating a 21st Century Main Street
was prepared by Goody, Clancy & Associates, of Boston, Mass.,
under contract with Campus Partners. Funding to create the plan was
provided by The Ohio State University through Campus Partners and by
the City of Columbus. Work was conducted in 1997 and 1998 with a draft
of the plan disseminated in August 1998 for review and comment. Revisions to the
draft plan incorporated actions affecting High Street undertaken in 1999 and 2000.

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August 2000

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Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment, Inc.
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What is Campus Partners?

In January 1995, The Ohio State University (OSU) incorporated Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment as a non-profit community redevelopment corporation charged with developing a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan and implementation program and promoting positive change in the University District.

Campus Partners is currently working with the city, university, and community on a series of neighborhood revitalization initiatives; examples include:

- Enhancing the delivery of a wide array of public services;
- Implementing a university-sponsored homeownership incentive program to encourage faculty and staff members to buy homes in the district (program began June 1, 1998); and
- Working with the Campus Collaborative as partners to improve elementary and secondary education, employment opportunities, and other health and human services.

Campus Partners is governed by a 15-member Board composed of university trustees, city officials, faculty and administrators, and representatives of the neighborhoods, the student body and the wider community.



What is This Document?

Campus Partners' 1996 *University Neighborhoods Revitalization Plan: Concept Document*, which was officially adopted by The Ohio State University and the City of Columbus as the basis for planning and revitalization in the University District, offered a comprehensive, revitalization framework for the entire University District. That framework set the stage for this document, which articulates a vision and frames an action plan to guide revitalization of High Street, the University District's Main Street. A companion document, *Development and Design Guidelines*, represents a major implementation step related to this *Plan For High Street*.

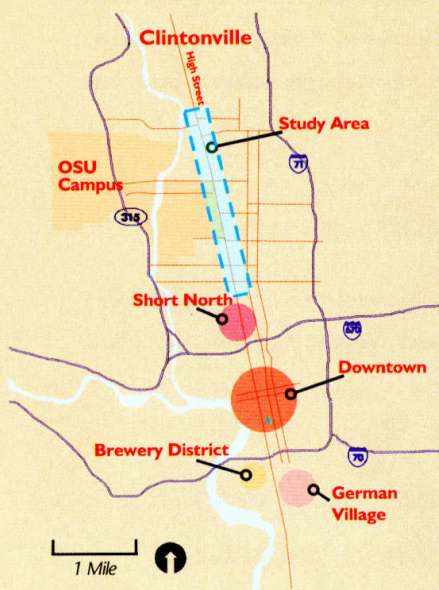
Mission Statement

The *Plan for High Street* focuses on the diverse roles High Street will play in achieving the University District's rich and diverse potential. The mission has four major areas of focus:

- *Restore High Street as the symbolic heart of the district, providing a variety of public places for people from all walks of life to gather.*
- *Re-establish High Street as a vital Main Street for the district, providing a dynamic mix of retail, entertainment and services.*
- *Create a place for new economic opportunities, providing jobs and other public benefits to adjacent neighborhoods.*
- *Reinforce High Street as an environment that supports learning, providing settings and activities that draw Ohio State students, faculty and staff to the district.*

In carrying out this mission, it is critical to bear in mind two constant goals:

- *The mantra for planning and implementation is "start with students."*
- *All revitalization efforts should strengthen the bond between university and community.*



1 OVERVIEW

High Street is the Main Street of Columbus' University District - a highly diverse urban community of nearly 50,000 people that displays some of the greatest strengths and most challenging problems found in America's cities. The district offers many personalities as it extends from the urban liveliness of the Short North to the stable residential character of Clintonville. Over roughly two miles, High Street embodies these personalities and takes on the richness, layered complexity, and challenges of a great urban Main Street. *A Plan for High Street* represents a vision, urban design framework, and implementation strategy to capture the street's promise as the vibrant commercial, cultural, and civic center of a vital community: a 21st century Main Street.

The *Plan*, prepared in close cooperation with a diverse Advisory Steering Committee, is a critical element in a broad initiative spearheaded by Campus Partners and the City of Columbus, in collaboration with the community, to restore the University District as a place of choice to live, work, learn, and invest. Campus Partners, working with the city, launched a two-year planning process in 1995 that culminated in the widely distributed *University Neighborhoods Revitalization Plan: Concept Document*. Columbus City Council and The Ohio State University's Board of Trustees adopted that report in 1997. This *Plan* establishes a framework to implement one of the *Concept Document's* recurrent themes: reclaim High Street's role as the vital heart of a healthy, diverse community.



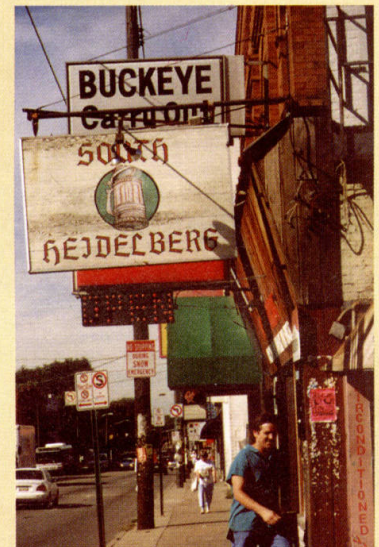
Many handsome buildings on High Street house vital businesses serving the university community...however, portions of the street's proud building stock have disappeared or deteriorated.

Why Revitalize High Street?

High Street served as the Main Street for a vigorous University District for more than a century. The Street provided a place where these neighborhoods shopped, saw films, danced, held weddings, worked, visited lawyers and dentists, went out for Sunday dinners, attended churches, and carried out much of the rest of their economic and social lives. In the process, High Street also provided a face to the world for the district's growing university and healthy neighborhoods. As High Street and the University District struggled with the challenges that drained urban areas following World War II and faced the added stress of the Vietnam-era riots, the street lost much of its economic base and ability to serve the district's needs. With many new choices, the University District forgot its Main Street. The face High Street offered the world grew troubled.

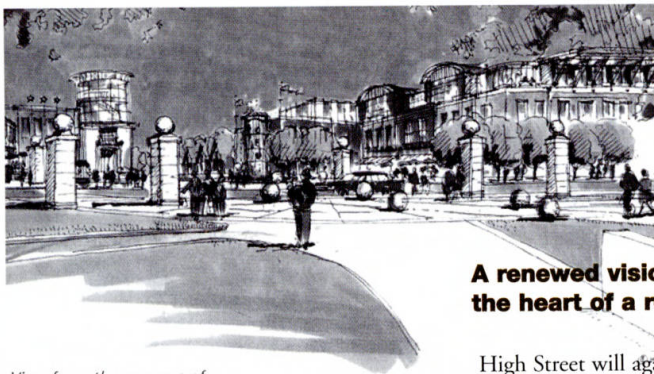
The cost of not acting to reverse these losses is significant. The decline in the share of students living near the campus will accelerate and university faculty and staff will not return to live in the district. Potential business and employment will be lost, together with related fiscal benefits. Blight and crime will continue to spread. These trends will translate into diminishing quality of life and the city will lose the benefit of a vital University District.

The future does not need to be bleak. High Street is still the heart of the University District; approximately 70% of its traditional Main Street building stock is in place. Though economically weakened, the street's promise is intact. A concerted effort to address the spectrum of challenges facing the street will bridge the gap between the University District's potential - suggested by resources such as a great urban university with close to 65,000 students, faculty, and staff - and the legacy of years of disinvestment.



The blocks to either side of 15th Avenue represent the most vital part of High Street (above).

Five blocks to the south, bars predominate and other types of businesses that High Street and the surrounding community need have left (below).



A renewed vision of High Street: a 21st century Main Street, the heart of a revitalized University District

View from the campus of the proposed University Square, a vital new focal public space for the University District, located at the traditional front door to the university: 15th Avenue and High Street.

High Street will again play its traditional role in the University District's life, but in a manner that meets the needs and aspirations and enhances the quality of life of a diverse community entering the 21st century. This Main Street will be a new common ground, addressing the aspirations and needs of the full University District community, as:

- **A commercial center of choice:** a street that mixes stores, services, entertainment, housing, and offices and draws people back to shop, live, study, and work along High Street.
- **A front door to the university and neighborhoods:** a street that blends old and new, history and neon, conveying the diverse district's quality and character.
- **A place of enterprise:** a street that invites investment, provides jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, and generates fiscal benefits.
- **A place of celebration and community:** a street that invites students, residents, university faculty and staff, visitors and others to enjoy the district's public life.

High Street will again play its traditional role in the University District's life, but in a manner that meets the needs and aspirations...of a diverse community entering the 21st century.

New Economic Benefits for High Street

- \$70,000,000 to \$100,000,000 in private investment.
- \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 in local payroll and property tax revenues.
- 500 to 900+ jobs, many entry level.
- 250 to 500+ new housing units (in part replacing 100 to 150 units to be displaced by new development) to supplement the district's older housing stock.

To achieve its full potential in each of these dimensions, High Street will be a traditional Main Street: an enjoyable place to stroll, lined with pedestrian-oriented uses, served by lively public spaces, and enriched with a streetscape that conveys the street's special character. High Street will be a showcase for preservation of the district's landmarks, and like earlier Main Streets, a showcase for cutting-edge new design conveying the district's vitality. Leading a new national generation of 21st century Main Streets, High Street will be competitive at local and regional levels, invigorated with a mix of large and small destinations, including entertainment and retailers. Many will be long-established; others will be new to High Street. They will be drawn from national and local bases and serving neighborhood as well as regional markets. High Street will be a Main Street that works - supported by the parking, vehicular access, and servicing infrastructure that is essential for its success.

How will High Street be revitalized? Key actions required to transform High Street into a 21st century "college town" Main Street

Five essential elements form a cohesive strategy for recapturing the street's vitality and integral role in the lives of the district's residents. This strategy, based in part on market assessments that identify substantial investment potential along High Street, lays the groundwork for a "virtuous cycle" in which improvements create additional opportunities, building increasing prosperity. These five elements, to be implemented by Campus Partners, the university, the city, property owners, and the larger community, represent pieces of a puzzle - not fully effective in isolation, but all required to realize the vision:



1 Take Tangible Steps to Protect and Enhance High Street's Urban Fabric

...create Development and Design Guidelines and a commercial zoning overlay to insure that investments ranging from signs to new buildings contribute to positive and mutually beneficial change. Extend benefits, similar to the city's Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) program, to accelerate the pace of private investment in the roughly 1,300,000 square feet (sf) of existing space. This space would continue to house locally owned businesses, entrepreneurial start-ups, basement bars, funky music stores, ethnic restaurants, and other uses that make High Street unique.

1. Design Guidelines and a healthy commercial climate will help to maintain and enhance High Street's urban fabric and traditional High Street buildings.



2 Form a Parking Management Entity

...manage the district's parking as a system and sponsor approximately 1,500 to 2,100 new parking spaces to serve development and reduce existing severe shortages. Implement critical traffic circulation measures including reopening local streets, restoring curbside parking, and establishing an enhanced 11th Avenue connection to I-71 to make High Street a convenient and competitive commercial district.

2. A proposed parking structure at 11th Avenue to support redevelopment would be an early parking management priority.



3 Establish a Special Improvement District

...organize property owners and businesses to better manage the commercial district in a manner that promotes essential maintenance, security, and marketing to keep pace in a highly competitive, ever changing, retail climate.

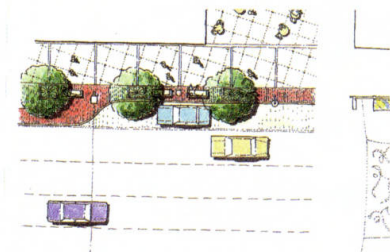
3. The nearby Short North has established a Special Improvement District, an essential step for High Street in the University District.



4 Support Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities

...energize High Street with a lively "University Gateway Center," transforming the street's most troubled area into a regional destination whose 400,000 to 600,000 sf of retail, entertainment, office, and housing will draw students, residents, visitors, and others back to High Street. Foster redevelopment of additional under-utilized and inappropriately developed sites to eventually create 280,000 to 440,000 sf of retail, entertainment, housing, office, and other uses at additional strategic locations.

4. The University Gateway Center represents a significant strategic redevelopment opportunity, potentially drawing large numbers of people from the University community and region to High Street.



5 Improve the Public Realm

...enhance the street's public realm with new pedestrian lights, street trees, pedestrian crossings, and similar streetscape improvements. Explore the creation of a "University Square" at 15th Avenue that crosses High Street, providing a much-needed gathering place at the point of greatest pedestrian activity, reinforcing the traditional campus gateway, and providing new links to the Wexner Center. Reinvigorate the bonds between the university and High Street with enhanced pedestrian crossings and improvement to the university's High Street edge.

5. An improved public realm will offer an appropriate setting for revitalization.

2 THE CONTEXT FOR REVITALIZATION

High Street is poised for broad resurgence. The district's economic resources are vital. The street's Main Street is largely intact. The university and community leadership share common perspectives on directions for change. A series of recent studies, including this one, have identified strong demand for new investment.



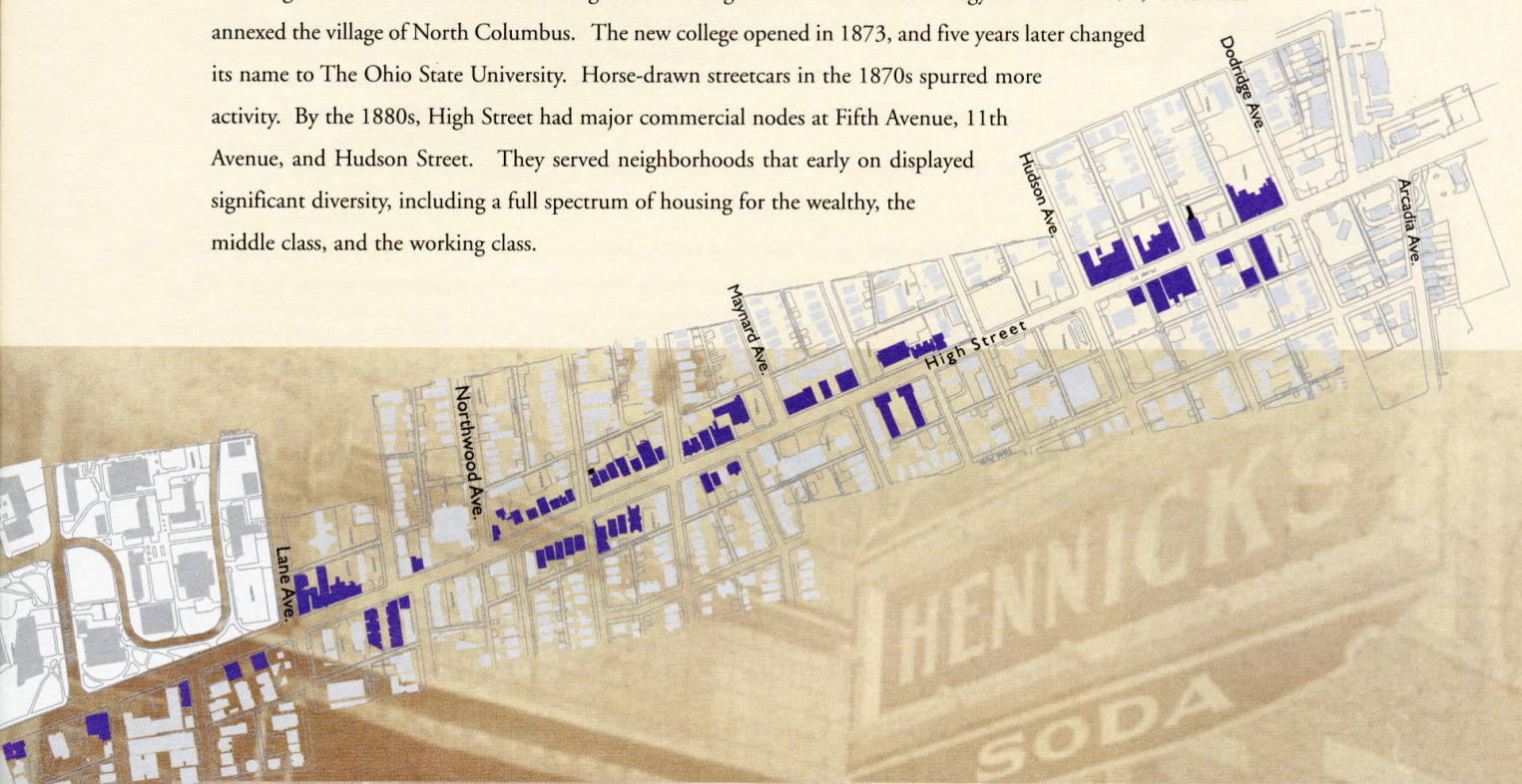
The prevalence of pre-World War II building stock, indicated by the blue tone, reflects High Street's historic character.



Evolution of the University District and High Street: Rise and Decline of an Urban Main Street

Initially an Indian trail, High Street became the city's main north-south road when Columbus was incorporated in 1812. By the early 1860s, the city's northern boundary had extended to Fifth Avenue, now the southern end of the University District. The only settlement between Columbus and Worthington was the village of North Columbus, which had been platted in 1852 in the area of High Street and Hudson Street.

Farmland soon gave way to urban growth, however, when the Ohio General Assembly in 1870 identified the site for the new Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College between High Street and the Olentangy River. In 1871, Columbus annexed the village of North Columbus. The new college opened in 1873, and five years later changed its name to The Ohio State University. Horse-drawn streetcars in the 1870s spurred more activity. By the 1880s, High Street had major commercial nodes at Fifth Avenue, 11th Avenue, and Hudson Street. They served neighborhoods that early on displayed significant diversity, including a full spectrum of housing for the wealthy, the middle class, and the working class.



Long's Bookstore moved to its present location in 1909. The formal entry to the university campus at 15th Avenue appeared in 1918. As the university's enrollment grew to 18,000 in the 1930s, a campus commercial district flourished. Theaters were built, including the State Theater – now the Newport Music Hall. By 1948, High Street was a bustling Main Street with three of Columbus' busiest commercial centers: Fifth Avenue, 10th Avenue to Norwich Avenue, and Tompkins Street to Dodridge Street.

The last half of the 20th century was less kind to High Street and its neighborhoods. Following World War II, thousands of veterans swelled the enrollment of Ohio State, creating an enormous demand for student housing. This housing demand was intensified as the Baby Boomers headed to college in record numbers in the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the University District's middle income families followed the national trend of moving to the suburbs. The homeownership rate in the University District dropped from 50% in 1950 to about 12% today as many grand old houses were replaced with high-density student apartments. In the Weinland Park neighborhood, developers in the late 1970s renovated earlier "streetcar" apartment buildings and created the city's highest concentration of Section 8 subsidized housing units for low income families. High Street, too, felt the changes. The variety of retail establishments which served the neighborhoods began to disappear as customers were drawn to suburban shopping centers and eventually to "big box" retailers. Auto-oriented, suburban-style construction began to erode High Street's urban character. The lack of parking, inadequate building stock, and a decline in the appearance of the area discouraged new investment in High Street.

upper income residents. All along the street, portions of once vibrant shopping and entertainment areas have eroded. Deteriorated buildings, fast food restaurants, and parking lots have replaced handsome turn-of-the-century buildings. A recent survey indicated that potential students who chose not to attend OSU cited the condition of High Street and adjacent neighborhoods as a significant reason.

Why Now?

Three trends starkly reinforce the urgency of making improvements along High Street:

- More than one billion dollars of state-of-the-art retail, entertainment, and housing is in design or construction in Columbus' suburbs at the close of the century, representing a new generation of more powerful suburban competition in places like New Albany, Polaris, and Easton.
- Student automobile ownership – now roughly 70% - continues to grow, and with it the ability of students to support alternative commercial areas.
- The rise of new technologies – particularly the Internet – threatens to shrink the number of viable Main Street and suburban commercial areas alike.

At the same time, a unique confluence of national and local forces has set the stage for revitalization:

- Campus Partners and the university are moving forward to retain existing, and draw new, residents to adjacent neighborhoods with homeownership assistance for university faculty and staff and other initiatives.
- A partner organization, Campus Collaborative, is mounting educational and social outreach programs throughout the district.
- The city is investing in the district's infrastructure.
- Local and national retailers, entertainment uses, and other commercial activities are seeking urban venues to an extent unprecedented in recent decades.
- Many in the Columbus region are joining the national rediscovery of the benefits of urban living.

High Street's Role

in Making the University District a Place of Choice

Comparable districts - such as Columbus' Short North, Denver's "LoDo", Chicago's Near North Area, and Boston's South End - offer clear examples of the critical roles that revitalized Main Streets are playing in making urban neighborhoods competitive as places of choice to live, work, study, celebrate and invest:

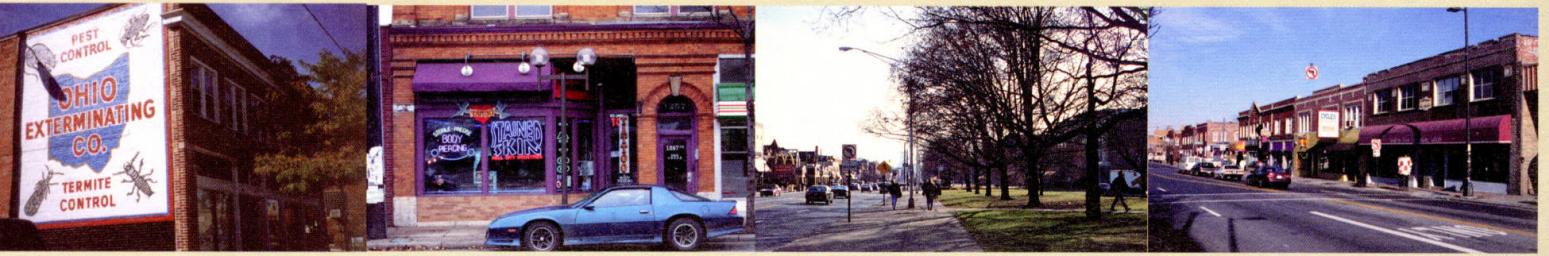
- The return of walkable streets - a mix of shops, cafés, entertainment, public spaces, and other active uses within a short walk from residential streets has proven a powerful lure to draw new residents.
- New commercial investment, together with the resulting new customers and employees, have brought back economic resources that in turn have been used to create handsome streetscapes, new parks, and other benefits.
- Revived tax bases have allowed local governments to invest more back into these districts.
- Existing residents have benefited as job opportunities appeared for the first time in decades, many available at entry levels.

Increased commercial densities – achieved both through construction of larger new buildings and filling vacant buildings – have been essential to achieving these benefits. No longer the beneficiaries of captive nearby markets, 21st century Main Streets have struggled to create a critical mass and diversity necessary to sustain vibrant commercial districts. In turn, this struggle for sustainable density has reinforced the ability to enhance walkable streets, economic resources, tax bases, and job opportunities.



Lack of parking, small buildings and sites, and other obstacles have prevented High Street from drawing the kinds of new investments in retail, entertainment, office, and other uses that are customarily adjacent to a major university.

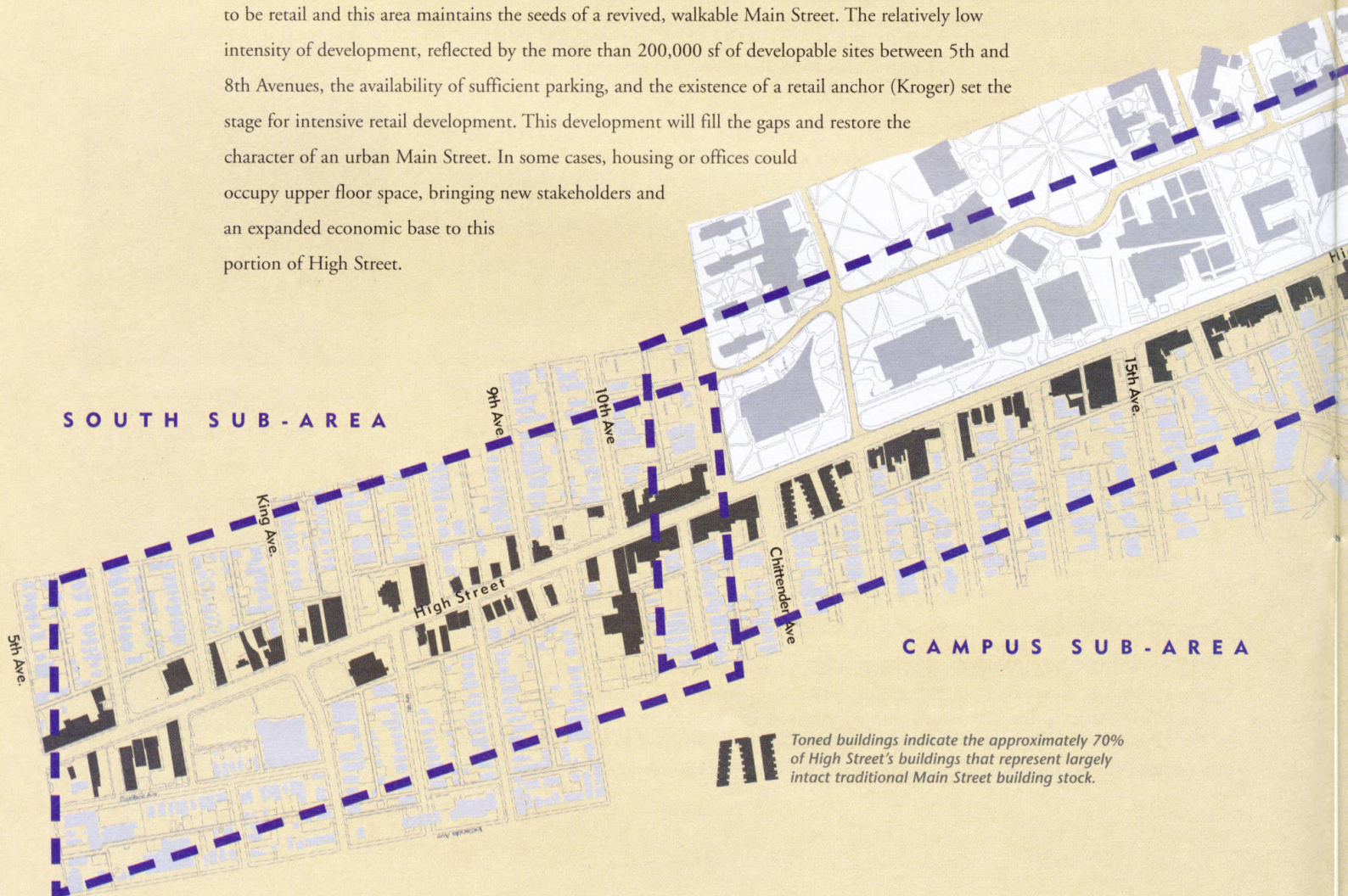
**Existing Conditions:
Opportunities for Urban Renaissance Along High Street**



Views of South Sub-area...and the Campus Area Sub-area

High Street's resurgence will play out in different ways in the three distinct sub-areas, each with a visible personality and each representing different opportunities:

The "South Sub-area," beginning at the edge of the Short North, is the area most eroded by strip development. Yet this area, which serves some of the district's most diverse neighborhoods, also includes handsome older buildings and has benefited as galleries, cafés and other businesses have begun to spill over from the Short North. Notably, more than 50% of the street frontage continues to be retail and this area maintains the seeds of a revived, walkable Main Street. The relatively low intensity of development, reflected by the more than 200,000 sf of developable sites between 5th and 8th Avenues, the availability of sufficient parking, and the existence of a retail anchor (Kroger) set the stage for intensive retail development. This development will fill the gaps and restore the character of an urban Main Street. In some cases, housing or offices could occupy upper floor space, bringing new stakeholders and an expanded economic base to this portion of High Street.



Toned buildings indicate the approximately 70% of High Street's buildings that represent largely intact traditional Main Street building stock.

The "Campus Sub-area" fronts the length of the OSU campus and is the street's most intensely developed portion, enjoying some of Columbus' highest pedestrian traffic levels and bordered by some of the region's densest neighborhoods. Still, with a ratio of building floor area to site area (FAR) of roughly 1.1, this sub-area has roughly half the density of many comparable urban commercial districts. North of East 11th Avenue, the street benefits from a largely intact stock of buildings at the sidewalk's edge with pedestrian-oriented uses. Intermittent intrusions by fast food restaurants, convenience markets and other suburban-styled buildings offer redevelopment opportunities for new destination retailers to draw business to High Street. The most significant development opportunity is near 11th Avenue, a gateway to the university and the district. Despite strong regional access, boarded-up windows and a concentration of bars currently mark this area. Investment in this area has been limited by a severe lack of parking that to varying degrees affects all of the Campus Sub-area. The impact of this shortage has been to reduce business levels considerably below what could normally be anticipated in a comparable urban commercial district.




NORTH SUB-AREA



Views of North Sub-area

The "North Sub-area" largely serves stable residential neighborhoods and boasts one of the region's major concentrations of ethnic restaurants and markets. The historic commercial node of old North Columbus between Hudson and Dodrider offers visually striking evidence of High Street's history. While approximately 70% of the traditional building stock is in place--the highest concentration in the University District--there are jarring contrasts between intact historic commercial blocks and adjacent strip commercial redevelopments across the street. Recent market pressures have led to development of several hundred feet along High Street of one-story, largely neighborhood-serving, strip retail over the last decade. Development pressures continue, suggesting that it will be a significant challenge to ensure that development pressures result in reuse of older buildings, rather than their demolition.

Traditional building stock largely in place ... and seriously eroded

-  Gap
-  Weak edge
-  Strong edge





Stakeholders agree that "planning should start with students, and serve residents"

Views of Stakeholders:

Consensus Around Core Elements of Revitalization

Decades of tumultuous change across the University District have contributed to a tradition of activism, with more than a dozen active community organizations. People from many walks of life have contributed for years to planning and improvements for High Street and the district.

This activism has appeared at times to promote alternative visions for High Street. However, interviews with more than sixty highly diverse stakeholders at the start of this project - local residents, merchants, property owners, preservationists, senior university faculty and staff, students, senior city planning and traffic staff, and many others - conveyed a remarkable consensus around six core goals for High Street:



National retailers can complement local retailers.

1. "Start with students." Students make the University District unique. Development should fill the gap in critical retail and services available to students - and the rest of the district's residents. The needs of students and the larger community overlap, particularly in the Campus Sub-area.
2. High Street is one of Columbus' "great walkable streets." The opportunity to gather outside at cafés and a great public space was the single element most often noted as missing. Curbside parking is necessary to buffer pedestrians from fast moving traffic. The quality of buildings and the public realm should be enhanced. However, High Street should "not be sanitized. It should maintain a funky, diverse character."
3. There is a synergy between local and national retailers. National franchise retailers are welcome - their role as destinations that draw others to High Street is well understood - as long as the street maintains a large presence of mom and pop retailers, small business start-ups, bars, niche music stores, and diverse other uses. Revitalization should address the needs of smaller retailers (parking, maintenance, security, façade and signage improvements) as it encourages development.
4. Provide new opportunities for every segment of the district's community. Revitalization will bring new business opportunities that should provide jobs to residents, entrepreneurial opportunities for small and minority businesses, and a more inclusive High Street which reflects the diversity of its neighborhoods.
5. Blend old and new. Preservation of High Street's historic legacy - particularly as exemplified in landmark buildings like the Newport - is a high priority. However, respect for preservation is fully compatible with well executed, exciting, high quality, new design - of buildings, signs, streetscape, and other elements.
6. Strengthen the bond between the university and community. High Street should be a "seam between the university and the community" with highly visible pedestrian crossing points, uses along the campus edge which engage High Street, and strong connections to the neighborhoods.

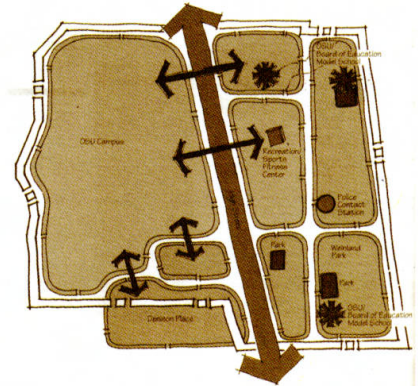


1995 community meetings reviewed opportunities to link High Street more closely to the community.

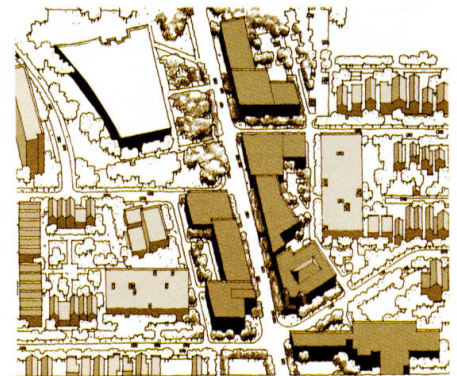
**Recent Planning:
Setting the Stage for Change Along High Street**

The District's activism has spurred broad participation in a series of community planning efforts:

- The 1987 University District Organization's **Community Directions: A Policy Plan for the University District** addressed challenges to neighborhood quality of life created by student overcrowding and advocated for public improvements along High Street visible today. This report, adopted by City Council, represented a critical step in responding to deteriorating conditions. The 1990 University Community Business Association's **Proposals for Change** identified many key issues that drive High Street planning today: "appearance ...guidelines," a "Neighborhood Development Office," improvements for High and Pearl Streets, curbside parking and new parking structures (including two sites recommended in this Plan), and expansion of the adjacent Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization districts.
- The university took a significant step toward a commitment to help address conditions along High Street with the formation of Campus Partners in 1995. Working closely with the city, Campus Partners launched a district-wide revitalization initiative, led by EDAW Inc., a nationally prominent planning and design firm. More than 400 neighborhood residents and leaders were deeply involved in planning and drafting recommendations. The final **University Neighborhood Revitalization Plan: Concept Document** was distributed in 1996 and identified more than 250 recommendations, framed around a vision of the district as "...a high quality 'city-within-a-city'," enriched by a High Street that is "safe, livable, and commercially viable." The City Council and the University Trustees officially adopted the Concept Document's findings in 1997 and urged Campus Partners to move forward with implementation.
- The Concept Document emphasized High Street's role in reversing the district's "...momentum of decline...accelerating toward a rapid downward spiral..." The report noted that "vital, active, and diverse commercial uses are essential to attracting new residents to the University District..." and that High Street is "...in a stage of slow decline..." in which "the synergistic mix of retail uses that would...draw shoppers is absent." Key recommendations included: developing a mixed-use center in the vicinity of 11th Avenue, an "arts gateway" at 15th Avenue, and an "international village" at Lane Avenue; adding retail, office, and housing between 12th and 15th Avenues; providing significant parking, circulation, and public realm improvements; and creating a Special Improvement District (SID).
- In 1995, Campus Partners invited an Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel, consisting of national leaders in planning and urban real estate, to assess the project's preliminary findings. The panel reinforced the "urgent" nature of improving High Street, voiced concern at the perception that the university was turning the focus of campus activity away from the street, and recommended expanding the scale of proposed new retail and entertainment development at 11th Avenue and High Street.



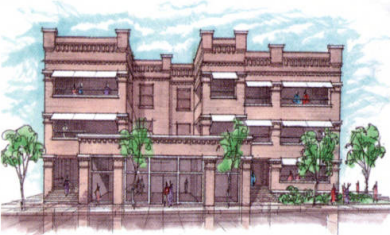
A 1995 Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel of national leaders in planning and real estate expressed serious concern at decline along High Street and confidence that overcoming obstacles such as a lack of parking would unlock significant new investment.



The 1996 Concept Document reported "the synergistic mix of retail uses that would... draw shoppers is absent" and proposed a major mixed-use center at 11th Avenue to reverse this trend.



More than 20,000 sf of new retail projects are underway already, suggesting the demand for space when lack of parking, poor appearance, and other key issues are resolved.



A new Blockbuster Video, together with new housing, is supporting renovation of a grand apartment house.



Urban Outfitters renovated an older building, replacing a solid wall facing High Street with a wall of glass and handsome graphics.

Real Estate Markets: Potential For New Vitality

Market Demand

Modest signs of new vitality are already appearing along High Street: cafés and handsomely restored façades north of Lane Avenue; outdoor tables in the Campus Sub-area; avant-garde clothing stores and art galleries in the South Sub-area. Innovative signs and restored storefronts are appearing across the district. Three national retailers, including Urban Outfitters and Blockbusters, have undertaken projects in the Campus Sub-area.

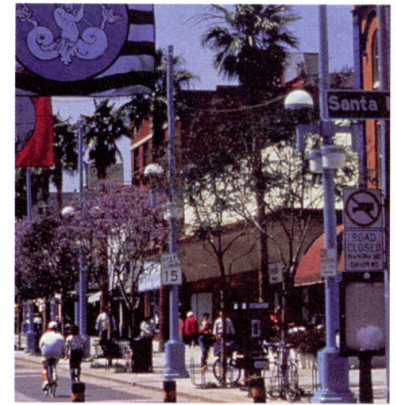
These positive signs reflect the findings of four sets of nationally recognized real estate professionals, who over the past three years have identified significant unmet demand for a variety of uses along High Street. Robert Charles Lesser and Co. and Boulevard Strategies produced a quantitative market assessment based on extensive market research for the Concept Document. The ULI panel assessed market opportunities based on this research and on its extensive experience with similar urban contexts.

Gibbs Planning Group and Hunter Interests, who contributed to this *Plan for High Street*, worked with existing data, conducted extensive interviews, and contacted potential national and local tenants to prepare qualitative assessments of potential demand for a variety of uses. They report that providing parking and appropriate sites would unlock extensive new investment:

- The most extensive demand is for a wide variety of retail and service uses for students, others in the university community, local residents, and the larger region.
- There is significant demand for entertainment uses, integrated closely with retail, to serve similar markets.
- Housing to serve the university community and a growing market for others, who want to live near the university, downtown, and the Short North, is in high demand.
- There is interest within the University in locating operations on High Street that would benefit from increased public exposure or that require new office space and which in the process would draw students and others to the street.

Examples of potential retail and entertainment uses:

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| • aerobic studio | • dance clubs | • live music clubs |
| • arts cinema | • electronics | • music related stores |
| • billiards parlor | • fresh produce | • restaurants and cafés |
| • brew pubs | • full service bookstore | • software |
| • clothing stores
(from trendy to sports
wear) | • grocery store | • sporting goods |
| | • home furnishings,
specialty furniture | • video |



Examples of a new generation of urban retail and entertainment in places as diverse as Madrid, New York City, and Santa Monica.

All of the real estate professionals have indicated that while the region has experienced suburban retail overbuilding, the close-in urban market is under-served, in keeping with a strong national trend toward revived interest in urban retailing. For example, the recently completed nearby Lennox Town Center experienced considerable excess demand for its 325,000 sf of retail and entertainment space.

Gibbs and Hunter indicate demand for additional space exists all along High Street, but varies greatly in its scale and character in each sub-area:

- **South Sub-area.** Specific projections for this area were not prepared; however, based on a field assessment of potential sites, the team projects that 60,000 to 120,000 sf of new retail could be developed. The intensity of development will be limited by the need to provide three surface parking spaces per thousand square feet of retail space in an area that will not sustain the levels of pedestrian activity found in the Campus Sub-area. Considerable demand has been identified for housing and an assessment of potential sites indicates a capacity for 80 to 150 new housing units (at roughly 1,000 to 1,250 sf per unit). Upper floors over street-level retail may accommodate small amounts of office space.
- **Campus Sub-area.** Demand has been identified for 290,000 to 350,000 sf of retail and entertainment in addition to three recently announced projects in the sub-area. Housing demand should reach 160 to 300 units (at roughly 1,000 to 1,250 sf per unit, while 100 to 150 units of existing housing will be demolished to accommodate development). A portion of this program could be part of a mixed-income housing development (containing approximately 15 to 20% lower-income tenants) to build a bridge to neighborhood revitalization. The Concept Document calls for 400 new housing units near High Street serving a mix of incomes. University-related demand for 50,000 to 100,000 sf of office space has been identified.
- **North Sub-area.** Specific market demand projections have not been developed for this area. Gibbs and Hunter both observe that neighborhood-generated demand continues to attract new retail, café, and restaurant investment to this area, a pattern which should continue and be accelerated as the Campus Sub-area is revitalized and public realm improvements are made in this sub-area.



At least 1,300,000 sf of existing High Street buildings will remain even if all projected new development occurs.

Summary of Development Projections

Uses	Proposed Development
South Sub-Area	
• Retail, restaurants, entertainment	60,000 to 120,000 sf
• Housing	80 to 150 units*
• Office	Small amounts on upper floors
Campus Sub-Area	
• Retail, restaurants, entertainment	290,000 to 350,000 sf
• Housing	160 to 300 units*
• Office	50,000 to 100,000 sf

*1,000 to 1,250 sf per unit, approx. 100-150 existing housing units will be replaced



Harvard Square (left), like State Street at the University of Wisconsin and Telegraph Avenue at Berkeley, is an example of a vital university community commercial district. An arts cinema (right) could draw 750,000 to 1,000,000 people per year.



Where Should New Development Be Located ?

In the South Sub-area, transforming the Kroger Store into a highly competitive "superstore" format of 60,000 sf or more would serve as an anchor for the area. Most additional new retail should be located within walking distance of this anchor (roughly 1,000 ft.) The new Kroger store, and other retail, would face the street with pedestrian-oriented retail. The housing market in this area is strongest in the blocks immediately adjacent to the Short North and a major new mixed-use development near 9th Avenue.

In the Campus Sub-area, all four market assessments have noted the desirability of a major mixed-use project, focused around retail and entertainment, near 11th Avenue. This recommendation is based on four key considerations:

- This portion of the Campus Sub-area has experienced the most visible disinvestment and its blight is undermining the street's market potential;
- 11th Avenue provides access to the regional highway system and is an important gateway;
- The area's proximity to both downtown and the Short North will draw visitors, but a location further to the south would be too far from the densely populated student core market; and
- This area offers a site sufficiently large to accommodate the critical mass of new development (more than 200,000 sf) and additional parking required to create a regionally competitive draw for High Street.

The market is strong enough to support a second, smaller, mixed-use development at 15th Avenue, where High Street retail rents currently peak. Additional new destination retail should be located at strategic points between 11th and 15th Avenues - particularly at corners - to draw activity to a variety of points. The area around Lane Avenue, which will have excellent regional access, represents a particularly strong area for more intense development including retail, housing, and/or office if a sufficient redevelopment site can be assembled.

In the North Sub-area, development is likely to be infill in nature and should focus on rehabilitation of older buildings and redevelopment of low-density strip commercial and fast food restaurant sites.



Newport Theater: High Street can build on its already vital arts scene, which also includes the Wexner Center and other on- and off-campus venues.

4 THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Renewed Vision:

Urban Design Principles for a 21st Century Main Street

A series of core Urban Design Principles that address and integrate the many facets of the street's rich and varied personality provide the structure for a renewed vision of a 21st century Main Street that reinvigorates the street physically, socially, and economically.

High Street should be:



A common ground

Viewed as a common ground...

- offering a mix of uses and public spaces that draw together the full spectrum of the District's community, along with visitors, to shop, learn, eat, play, browse, live and work along the street and in the District.



A walkable street – even "fast food" can be pedestrian-friendly

Enjoyed as a walkable street which invites pedestrian use...

- lined by uses that engage pedestrians and generate activity day and evening;
- enlivened by outdoor public places where people can sit and eat, people watch and meet friends, read or enjoy the weather, and which should be enhanced with public art and innovative and appropriately-designed street furniture and other pedestrian amenities;
- enhanced by extensive visibility into street level interiors for shopping and browsing;
- promoted by accessible parking at curbside and in well-located parking places, opened streets for circulation, pedestrian crosswalks, and traffic; and
- supported by essential infrastructure, public services, maintenance, management and security.



High Street's diversity is a source of significant economic opportunity

Enriched by diverse economic opportunities...

- with a wide variety of new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities that reflect the diversity of the University District's residents;
- with new retail and entertainment uses that draw the university community, residents and visitors to the District and which enhance the viability of existing businesses;
- with sufficient density to support social and economic vitality; and
- with housing options in new and rehabilitated buildings that draw a diverse population to the district.



Nearby housing

Linked to adjacent neighborhoods...

- by design, materials, and massing of buildings which relate visually to the existing neighborhood residential community;
- by appropriate façades and use of rear-side and alley façades on commercial buildings;
- by enhanced pedestrian connections from neighborhoods, appropriate transitional markers or developments from commercial to neighborhoods, appropriate businesses and uses which serve the full spectrum of the District's population, and innovative landscaping to create a seam from neighborhoods to street to campus;
- by creation of enjoyable public spaces;
- by well-maintained alleyways and rear service and parking areas that are safe, sanitary, and visually appropriate; and
- by promoting well-maintained adjacent neighborhood streets through increased and routine public services, private investment, and rehabilitation.



New and historic buildings (Boston)

Enhanced by both traditional and cutting edge design...

- reusing and rehabilitating the street's notable and contributing older buildings to preserve and strengthen the historic fabric of High Street's 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings and where appropriate seeking new uses for existing buildings that convey High Street's historic character;
- promoting new architecture that expresses the district's spirit, imagination, and energy, and that adds to the street's traditional rhythm of facades and pedestrian-enhancing experiences in places where these qualities are currently lacking; and
- utilizing high quality details, materials, and construction.



Denver's "LoDo" district is marked by a distinctive public realm

Enlivened by a distinctive public realm...

- expressed in appropriate and durable private sector signage and other graphic identification and design details which convey the District's unique and diverse population and personality; and
- enhanced by distinctive and appropriate street furniture and well-maintained art.

Revitalization Opportunities



Old Gas Station Site

The former gas station, a handsome and visible element of High Street's history, could be recycled as a café with outdoor dining—a campus model employed in other reviving older urban areas. Reuse should preserve the building's quirky, early 20th century automobile era, character.



A series of critical redevelopment opportunities have been identified along High Street. The most significant, a mixed-use "University Gateway Center," fills a critical void - a major destination that would serve retail, entertainment, housing, and office needs and aspirations of the university community and the larger Columbus region currently not met along High Street. Campus Partners would take an active lead in launching this project.

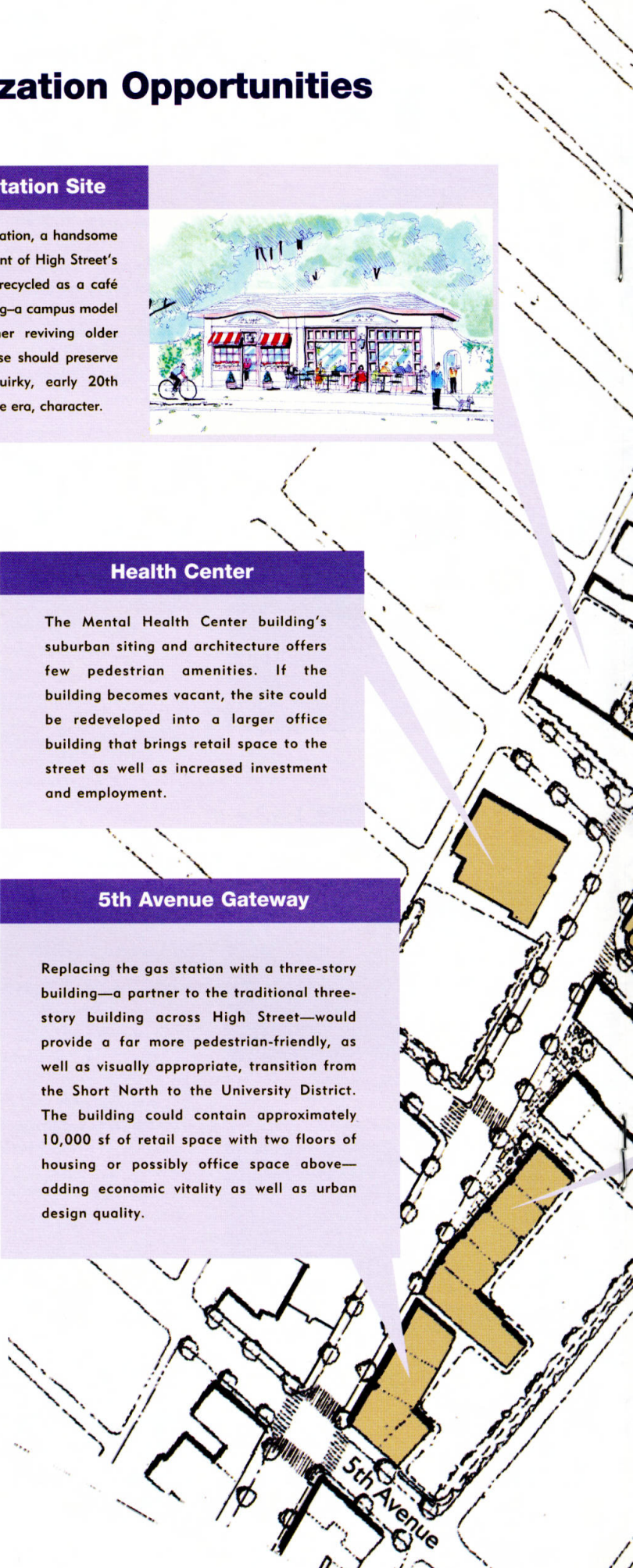
More than twenty additional sites have been identified between 5th Avenue and Norwich as strategically located redevelopment opportunities. These projects would fill gaps where the street's Main Street character has eroded, restoring the essential urban character of a walkable street; introduce destination retailers as "stepping stones," drawing new vitality to points along the street; and contribute to creating a variety of large and small public spaces. Most of these projects would replace much smaller buildings such as strip convenience retail - providing an economic stimulus for privately sponsored redevelopment. Campus Partners would not necessarily take the lead in redeveloping these sites, but instead could work with private owners, providing technical and other assistance. In some cases, financial incentives may be necessary to encourage appropriate urban redevelopment.

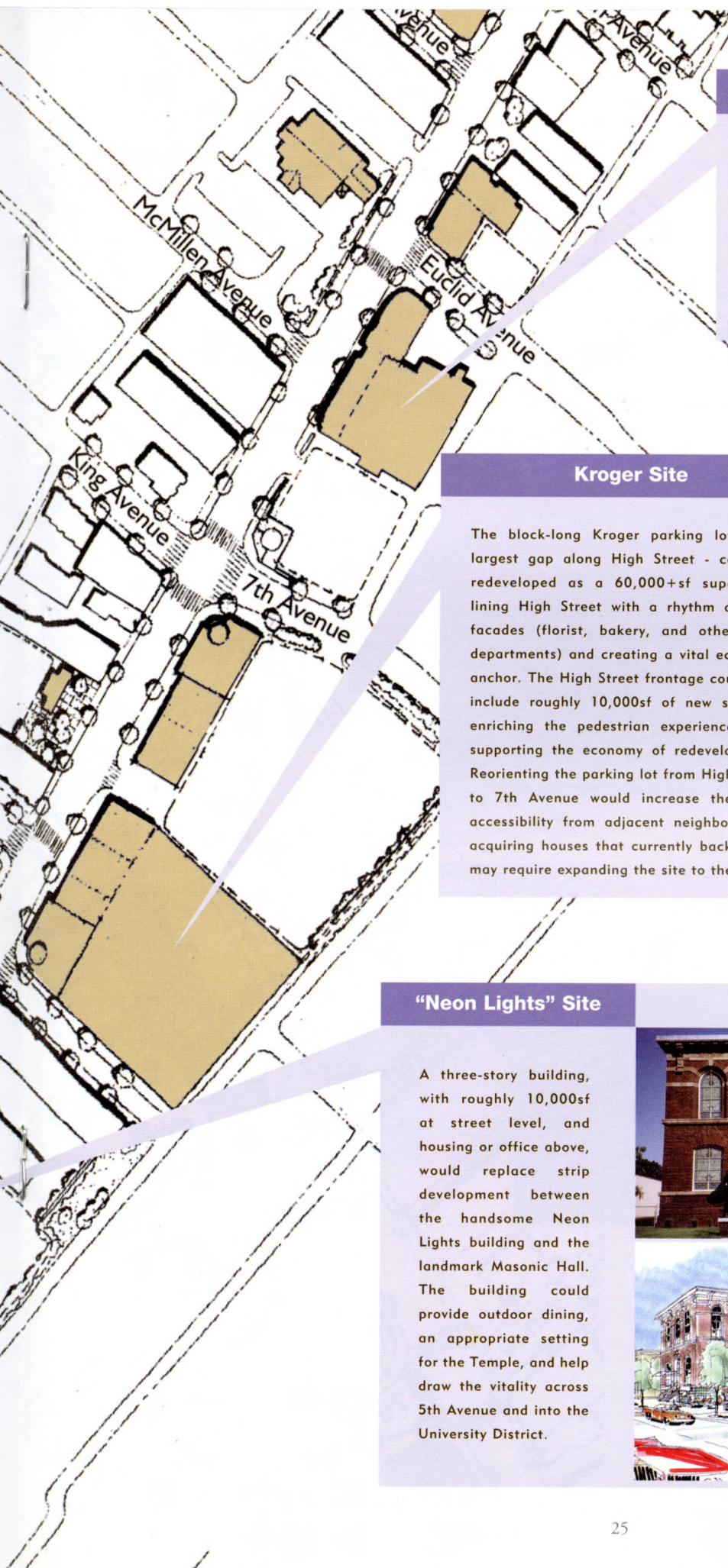
Health Center

The Mental Health Center building's suburban siting and architecture offers few pedestrian amenities. If the building becomes vacant, the site could be redeveloped into a larger office building that brings retail space to the street as well as increased investment and employment.

5th Avenue Gateway

Replacing the gas station with a three-story building—a partner to the traditional three-story building across High Street—would provide a far more pedestrian-friendly, as well as visually appropriate, transition from the Short North to the University District. The building could contain approximately 10,000 sf of retail space with two floors of housing or possibly office space above—adding economic vitality as well as urban design quality.





CVS Site

The "CVS" site currently turns a blank wall to High Street across a 40' setback. Filling in this setback with approximately 7,000sf of retail facing the street would extend a walkable Main Street to Euclid.

Kroger Site

The block-long Kroger parking lot - the largest gap along High Street - could be redeveloped as a 60,000+sf superstore, lining High Street with a rhythm of store facades (florist, bakery, and other store departments) and creating a vital economic anchor. The High Street frontage could also include roughly 10,000sf of new stores - enriching the pedestrian experience while supporting the economy of redevelopment. Reorienting the parking lot from High Street to 7th Avenue would increase the site's accessibility from adjacent neighborhoods. This redevelopment approach would require acquiring houses that currently back onto the parking lot. Kroger's parking requirements may require expanding the site to the south across a vacated 6th Avenue.



"Neon Lights" Site

A three-story building, with roughly 10,000sf at street level, and housing or office above, would replace strip development between the handsome Neon Lights building and the landmark Masonic Hall. The building could provide outdoor dining, an appropriate setting for the Temple, and help draw the vitality across 5th Avenue and into the University District.





**Euclid Avenue
to 10th Avenue**

8th Avenue Site

New retail buildings, with 10,000 to 15,000sf, possibly in conjunction with the existing "Cousins" building or activity, could reinvigorate this area.



Library

The suburban siting of the library, a key community resource that will need expansion at some point, interrupts a walkable street. Expansion could reorient the building along the sidewalk and transform the landscaped area into a much-needed park.





9th Avenue East and 10th Avenue West Sites

Replacing the strip retail on the west side with 25 to 35 units of housing (again, possibly with ground floor retail) would reinforce this residential area.

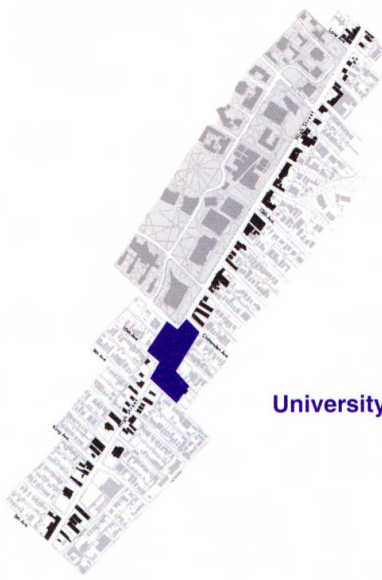
Replacing visibly deteriorated houses, suburban apartments, and a fast food restaurant with 25 to 35 units of housing, possibly with street level retail, would fill the last gap on the east side. This housing would help build the image of a major residential area near downtown, the campus, and the Short North.



"Avalon" Site

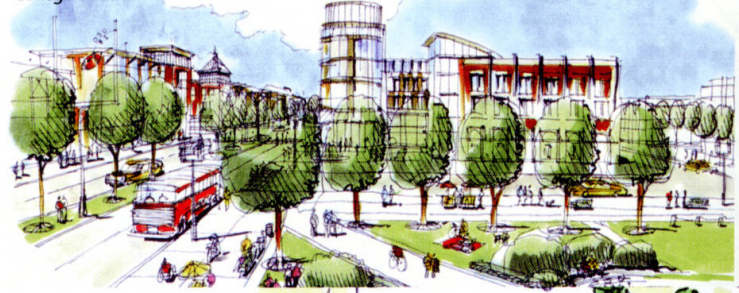
A small building with up to 3,000sf of retail, adjacent to (or an expansion of) the building housing "Avalon" would fill another gap along the street's east side.





University Gateway Center

View of the Gateway Center, looking south from the OSU College of Law.



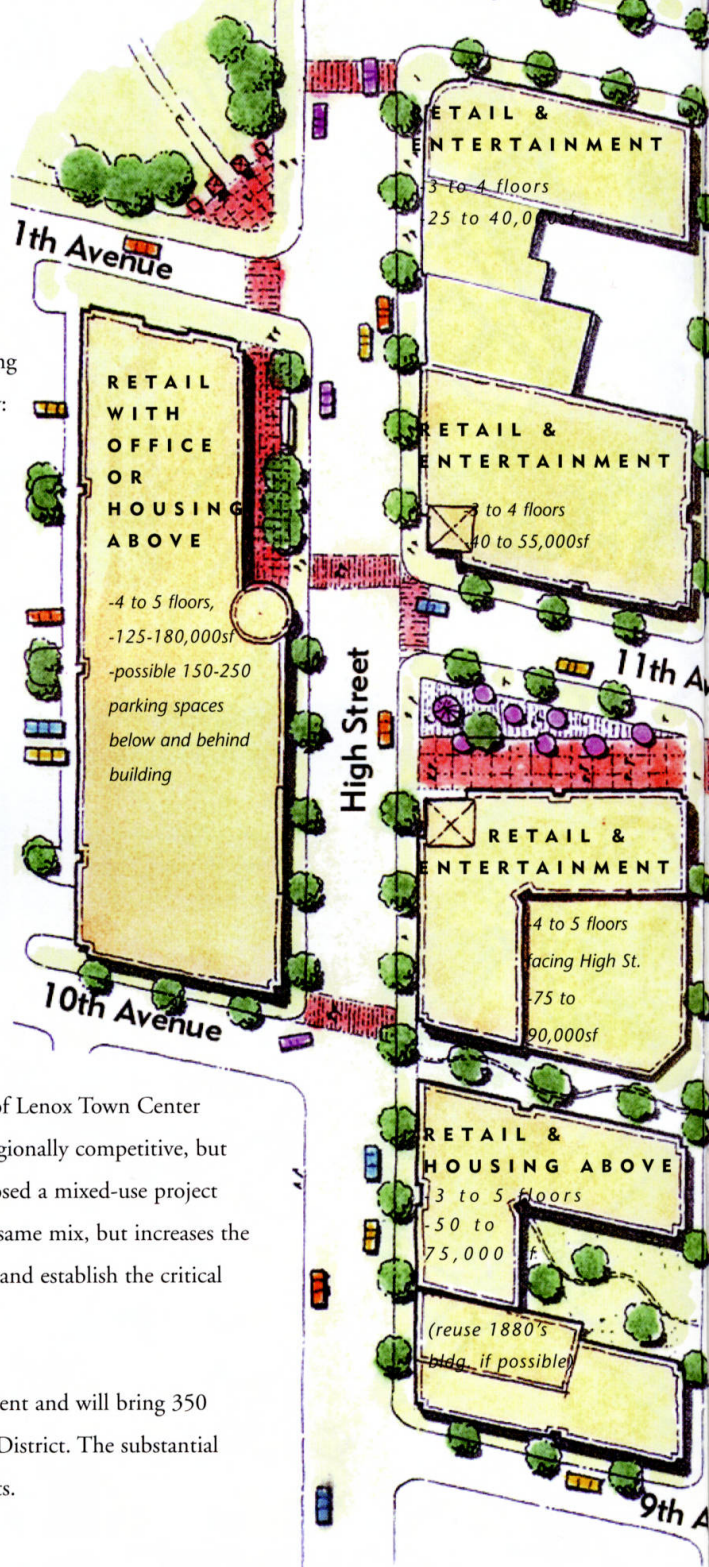
First proposed in the *Concept Document*, this large mixed-use development will constitute a critical step toward recapturing High Street's commercial vitality. Following an intensive 6-month national competition, a development and design team – led by The Druker Company – has been designated to initiate development of the University Gateway Center. This development will bring immediate, as well as enduring, benefits to High Street and the University District by:

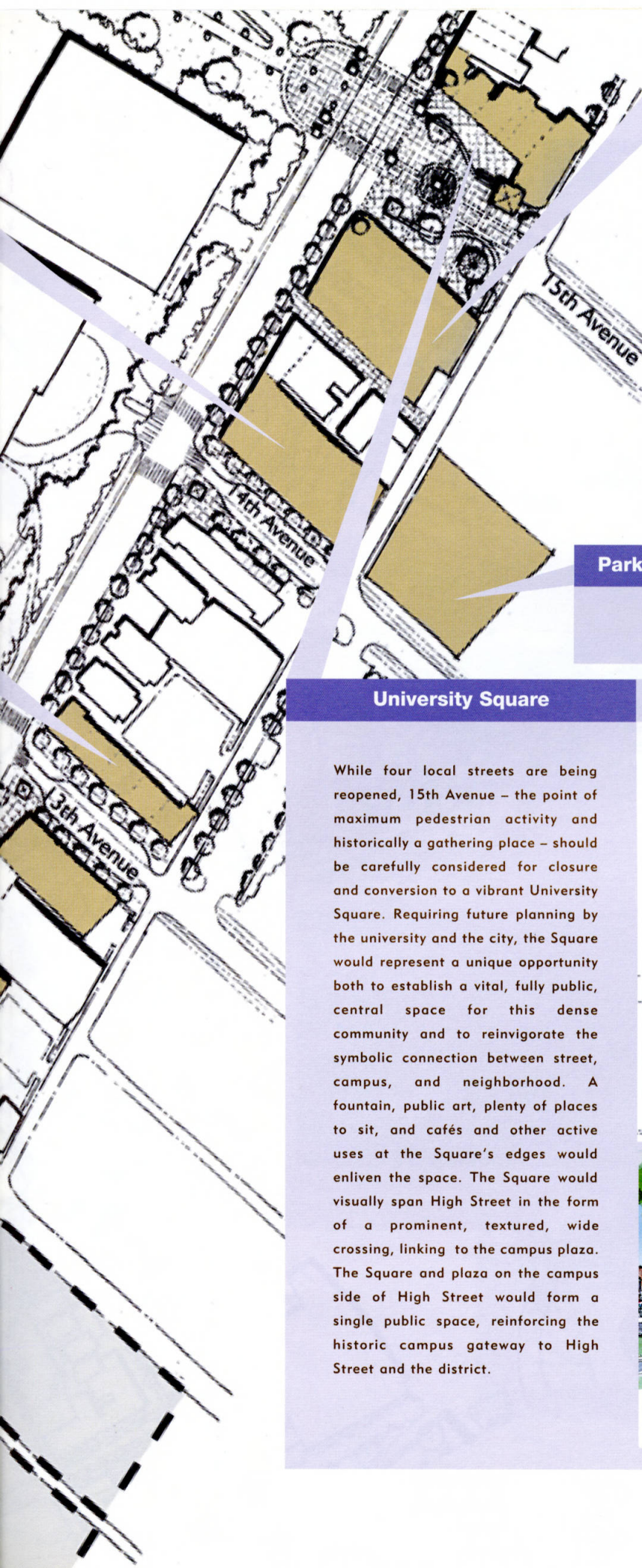
- Creating a significant retail and entertainment anchor for High Street, geared to students and residents, but also appealing to broad regional audiences;
- Offering housing options currently lacking in the University District;
- Building a prominent, symbolic complex that puts High Street and the University District on people's mental maps; and
- Re-establishing stronger connections between the university and the district by locating activities that appeal to the university community and university-related offices on High Street.

Located at 11th Avenue, which has been recommended in the *Concept Document* and this *Plan* to become a two-way connector to I-71, the Center will have strong regional access and presence. For example, the Center could include a tall glass beacon that glows at night, signaling the district and university's presence from the Short North, downtown, and I-71.

The Center will have half to two-thirds the retail and entertainment square footage of Lenox Town Center and possibly more than the Lane Avenue Shopping Center, a scale sufficient to be regionally competitive, but appropriate to the scale and character of High Street. The *Concept Document* proposed a mixed-use project including retail, entertainment, office, and housing. The current plan maintains the same mix, but increases the building area to 450,000 to 600,000sf to take advantage of growing market support and establish the critical mass required to create a lively pedestrian-oriented environment.

At this scale, the Center will represent \$40 million to \$60 million of private investment and will bring 350 to 700 jobs to High Street - more than half representing new jobs to the University District. The substantial majority of these jobs will provide entry-level opportunities for residents and students.





“Long’s” Site

The current Long’s Bookstore building does not make full use of its immensely strategic site and potential to command the district’s highest commercial rents. Restoration or expansion of the (potentially very handsome) building or development of a significant new building of 30,000 to 45,000sf (possibly housing Long’s—the sign itself is a landmark) together with cafés, restaurants, and other retail would form an important anchor and active edge to the Square. Across the square, 5,000 to 15,000sf of retail and cafés could be added to the buildings to further enliven the Square.

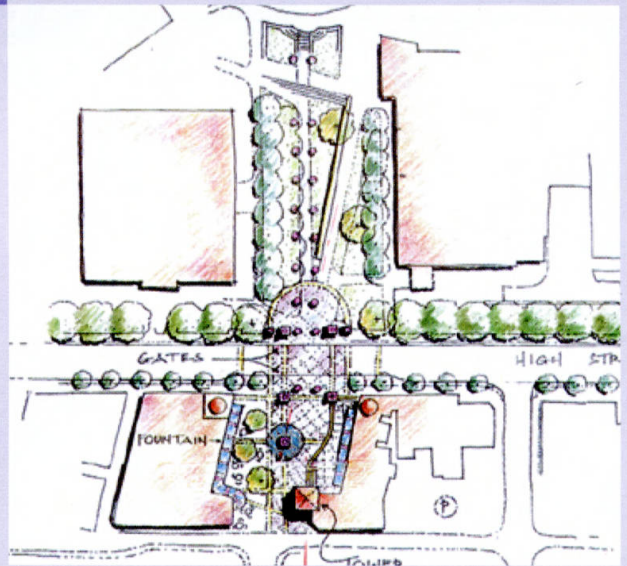


Parking

A parking structure could accommodate 160 to 300+ spaces in three to five levels, serving new and existing development between 13th and 16th Avenues.

University Square

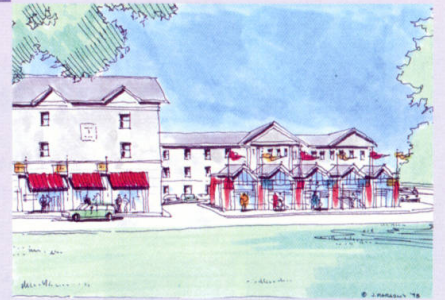
While four local streets are being reopened, 15th Avenue – the point of maximum pedestrian activity and historically a gathering place – should be carefully considered for closure and conversion to a vibrant University Square. Requiring future planning by the university and the city, the Square would represent a unique opportunity both to establish a vital, fully public, central space for this dense community and to reinvigorate the symbolic connection between street, campus, and neighborhood. A fountain, public art, plenty of places to sit, and cafés and other active uses at the Square’s edges would enliven the space. The Square would visually span High Street in the form of a prominent, textured, wide crossing, linking to the campus plaza. The Square and plaza on the campus side of High Street would form a single public space, reinforcing the historic campus gateway to High Street and the district.





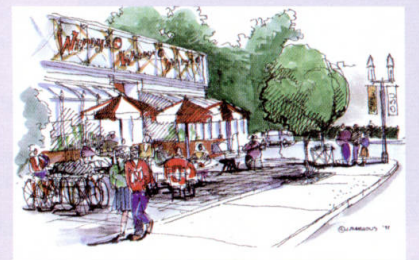
“Stater” Site

Parking located above a small below-grade mall fronts the Ohio Stater Inn. Creating a glass "cap" for the mall would create a second story at street level, visually connecting the mall to the street and increasing the leasable area. Opening the end wall facing the street to retail uses would also be desirable. The area involved would be less than 10,000sf, but would help bridge a two-block gap in a walkable street.

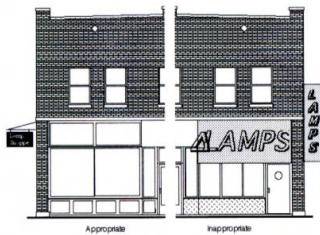


“Wendy's” Site

The current Wendy's could eventually be rehoused as the first floor of an 8,000 to 12,000sf building. The drive-through could reappear after 18th Avenue is reopened. The upper floors could contain Wendy's seating or limited office or housing. In the interim, the site's landscaping should be replaced with outdoor dining at the sidewalk so that the site became an event along – rather than an interruption to – a walkable High Street. Smaller pedestrian-oriented signs should replace the highway scale sign.



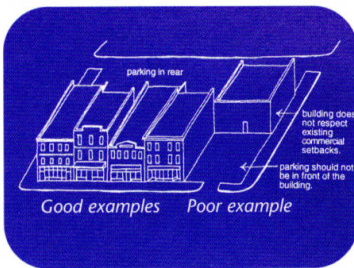
Development and Design Guidelines



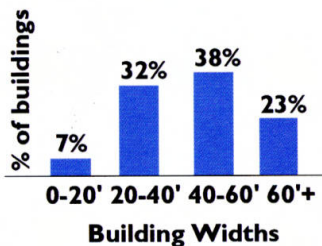
Like the guidelines that enriched Columbus historic districts such as German Village and the Short North, Development and Design Guidelines for High Street, which are being issued as a separate document, insure a new level of quality and appropriateness for private investment. Unlike guidelines for those historic districts, however, guidelines for High Street have a more diverse focus:

- as preserving and reinforcing the street's important historic heritage;
- encouraging economic revitalization;
- fostering new design that expresses the district's creativity and energy.

Guidelines for High Street focus directly on encouraging economic revitalization and enhancing the quality of design while fostering exciting new design, as well as preserving the street's important historic heritage



Sample design guidelines



Building widths represent an important part of High Street's architectural vocabulary; most buildings are less than 60' wide, which means that pedestrians experience a great deal of variety as they walk along the street.

These Guidelines address the full spectrum of investments that will shape High Street's future – including issues of use as well as design:

- Fostering design excellence in a manner that reinforces High Street's Main Street qualities.
- Encouraging appropriately intense development that reinforces the largely intact walkable Main Street, using traditional urban models that reinforce the street's character and quality.
- Insuring that the sidewalk edge is lined with retail stores and similar uses that engage passing pedestrians.
- Encouraging private, as well as public investment, to contribute to the district's stock of outdoor dining areas and other places to gather outdoors along the street.
- Melding preservation of historic resources and sensitivity to traditional design qualities with innovative design of buildings, façades, signs, and other elements.

The University Area Review Board will administer and interpret the Guidelines. Campus Partners and community organizations have worked with the city to secure a new commercial zoning overlay - a partner to the residential overlay that discouraged overbuilding in the neighborhoods. The importance of these guidelines is underscored by the experience of recent decades, in which commercial investment along High Street in the district has, in fact, eroded the street's tight and fragile urban fabric, discouraging pedestrians from enjoying the street.

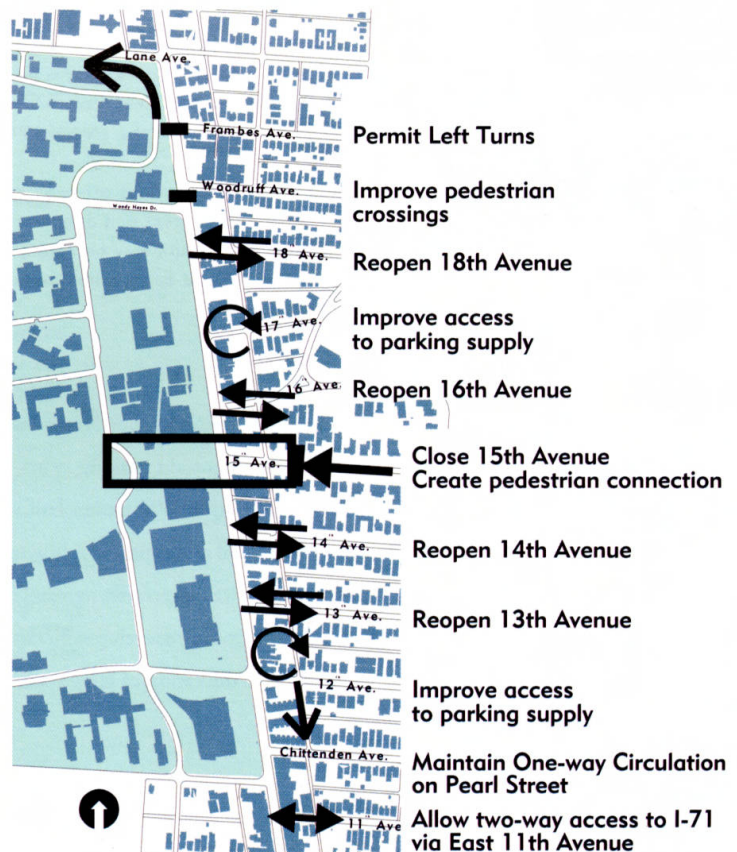
Pedestrian Movement, Traffic Circulation and Parking Improvements

Parking and traffic circulation recommendations are focused on the Campus Sub-area, where current conditions (addressed in the Concept Document) pose significant obstacles to revitalization:

- Unlike the rest of High Street in the district, this area faces a severe parking deficit, projected at roughly 50%, or 1,000 spaces, during peak periods; removal of curbside parking has aggravated this shortage and deprived local businesses of their most convenient customer parking.
- Most existing and potential future parking is accessed via Pearl Street; the earlier closing of four local streets has obstructed access from High Street to this parking.
- While regional access via Lane Avenue to Route 315 is being addressed, more convenient, well-designed access from I-71 via 11th Avenue is also critical to provide strong regional connections to the University District and High Street.
- The quality of the pedestrian experience suffers from overly narrow sidewalks (even after the city's widening), insufficient crossings between the east side and campus, and a lack of buffering from fast moving through traffic--particularly buses.
- Pearl Street is often congested beyond capacity at critical times of the day as drivers searching for parking and service trucks obstruct each other; this congestion is worst at 15th Avenue, precisely where pedestrian traffic is heaviest.

Key Traffic Circulation Improvements

- Reopen local streets at 13th, 14th, 16th, and 18th Avenues to provide access (largely via right turns in and out) to parking along Pearl Street and to improve connections to adjacent neighborhoods. These streets would have parallel curbside parking. Replace all lost parking with curbside or new off-street parking.
- Explore closing 15th Avenue at Pearl Street to create the University Square in conjunction with proposed redevelopment. Divert traffic to a number of local streets. While closing any street raises questions, the benefits of creating a notable new public space at this point could be very significant; 15th Avenue represents the traditional gateway to the campus, this stretch of High Street boasts some of Columbus' most intense pedestrian activity; joining the Wexner Center more directly to High Street would benefit the district as well as the Center.
- The **Concept Plan** recommended that every pedestrian crossing point receive special textured paving to slow traffic. Given high installation and operational expenses, priority should be given to providing a wide pedestrian crossing at 15th Avenue (minimum 120'). Second priority would be the pedestrian crossings at Woodruff, Frambes, 11th Avenue and Lane Avenues.
- Create two-way access to I-71 via 11th Avenue, including an appropriate new streetscape and zoning to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment along this gateway street.





Currently through-traffic moves well along High Street, an important artery carrying traffic between the north and downtown. Almost all of the intersections in the University District operate at "level of service B" or better (delays at intersections are minimal; levels "C or D" are considered acceptable for most urban streets). High Street's through lanes generally operate with excess capacity during both the a.m. and p.m. peak periods. This high level of service sets the stage for improvements that support the street's district-serving Main Street role. The key improvements proposed to resolve the most significant traffic and parking issues are described on the adjacent diagram.

A preferred approach, along with two alternatives, to parking have been analyzed:

- Preferred.** The long-range goal is to provide as much curbside parking as possible (approximately 150 to 250 spaces on both sides of the street), including dedicated parking on the east side of High Street and off-peak curbside parking along the west side. This curbside parking would be made possible by removing the left turn lane where possible. Wider sidewalks and "bump-outs" at corners will accommodate new seating and landscaping. Off-peak curbside parking would be provided on the west side of High Street. This approach would allow parking when it is most needed, during the afternoon peak hour along the east side of the street, to accommodate people who want to shop on their way home. Slight sidewalk widening, together with bump-outs at corners would provide additional space for pedestrians and amenities like benches and trees. Achieving this goal will require resolving complex left turn issues at Woodruff and 12th Avenue to free up the left turn lane.
- Alternative A** assumes that left hand turns onto the OSU campus must be preserved at 12th Avenue and at Woodruff for a period of time, thus requiring a left turn lane in lieu of dedicated curbside parking. This Alternative would limit dedicated parking, together with wider sidewalks and bump-outs, to the six blocks between 12th and 18th Avenues.
- Alternative B** provides off-peak curbside parking in lieu of designated parking (approximately 150 to 250 spaces) and does not widen sidewalks. If dedicated parking is achieved in the future, bump-outs may be added at the intersections. New tree pits, paving, lighting, and other elements would be installed under the assumption that the sidewalk would not be widened at a future date.

Proposed Parking Strategy

Curbside parking

- Off peak parking 75 to 125
- Dedicated parking 75 to 125

Structured and surface parking

- Surface parking lot
- Underground garage
- Parking garage

Note: all parking spaces calculated at 22' per space; spaces set back 50' from corners; clear zones at bus stops and fire hydrants.

While neither the South nor North Sub-areas appear to face significant parking shortages, each sub-area presents important parking issues. Proposed development in the South Sub-area would generate a net demand of up to 500 spaces—half associated with housing and half with retail and related development. New retail development will require nearby surface parking to be competitive. Meeting this need may require cooperative agreements among different property owners to share use of parking or aggregating sites for redevelopment. In the North Sub-area, new public parking will likely be required to support rehabilitation of large older buildings.

As noted above, the parking shortage in the Campus Sub-area – projected at roughly 1,000 spaces—is not only harming current businesses but is also blocking significant new investment. The requirements of the Gateway Center and additional potential development would theoretically add demand for an additional 1,600 or more parking spaces. Overlapping demand by office (week-day peak use) and entertainment (evening and weekend peak use) will decrease the actual demand by as much as several hundred spaces. Nevertheless, that combined number of spaces required to meet current demand and unlock development could exceed 2,000 or more spaces. An analysis of potential sites for new parking and the likely number of new curbside parking spaces indicates that approximately 1,600 to 2,250 new parking spaces can be created in the Campus Sub-area. Additional parking locations should be identified if demand warrants.

Potential Parking Supply

New on-street spaces:

Curbside or dedicated parking
(off peak or dedicated) 150 to 250 spaces

(Lost spaces at
reopened streets and 15th*) -50 to -60 spaces

Spaces to be provided by a parking entity:

Surface Spaces 100 to 210 spaces

Associated with new housing 500 to 550 spaces

Proposed parking structures
(at 11th and 14th) 850 to 1250 spaces

* Reopening local streets and closing 15th Avenue will displace approximately 50% of the curbside parking located at these streets; the addition of curbside parking and new facilities will result in a significant net increase in parking within a half block walk of each of these intersections.

Projected South to Campus Sub-area Parking Requirements (spaces per 1,000sf)*

Use	
Destination retail	4
Entertainment	4
Food Market	4
New Housing	2
New Office	2.5
Other Retail	3
Other Upper Floor Uses	2

* Parking requirements based on likely demand during peak periods (eg. evenings and weekends for retail, weekdays for office, evenings for housing)

Projected Campus Sub-area Parking Requirements (spaces per 1,000sf)*

Use	
Destination retail	3
Entertainment	4
Food Market	4
New Housing	1.5
New Office	1.5
Other Retail	2
Other Upper Floor Uses	2

* See note above. Parking requirements are unusually low in the Campus Sub-area due to the intensive levels of pedestrian activity.

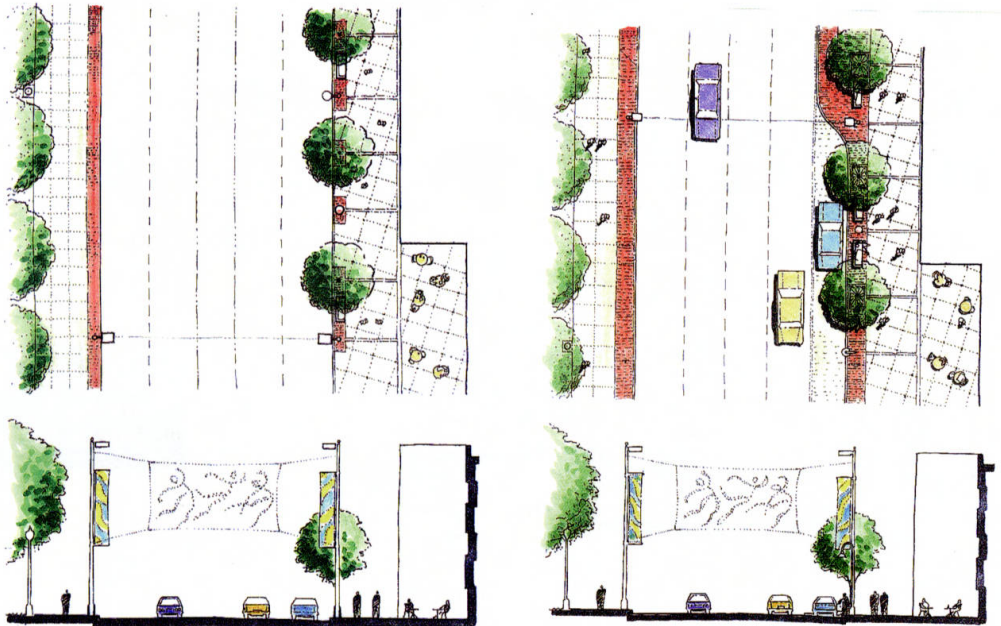
Public Realm Improvements



Wider sidewalks, larger grates for street trees, and new street furniture will provide an appropriate setting for revitalization (view of the Campus Sub-area).

High Street's public realm will draw people to sit alone or interact, to shop or eat outdoors, to stroll or speed by on roller blades, and to watch the theater of the street. The public realm will also respond to specific challenges: masking eroded points where buildings no longer define the sidewalk edge; replacing dead trees and providing tree grates sufficient to support mature trees; providing benches, trash receptacles, and other elements required to furnish a well-used "college town" Main Street. While the eclectic mix of signs and buildings that crowd the east sidewalk in the Campus Sub-area is invigorating, the sidewalk is narrow and often overcrowded.

Public realm improvements will convey the special character of a University District, create a setting appropriate to a leading university and uniquely vital urban neighborhood, and capture the special qualities of each of High Street's sub-areas:

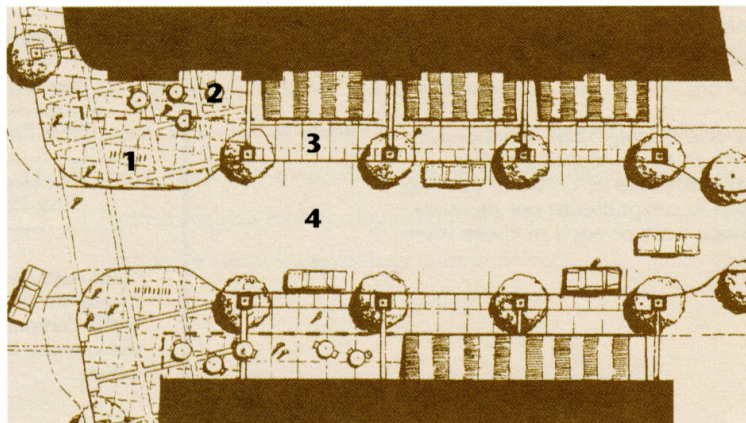


Left: Proposed improvement if sidewalks cannot be widened.

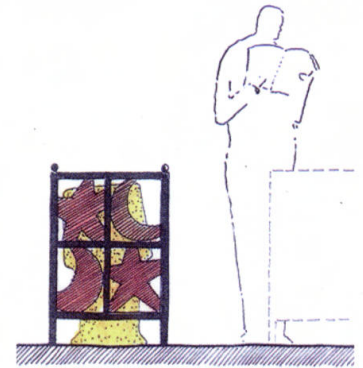
Right: Proposed improvements with sidewalk widening.

Typical street reopening

- 1 Extend existing paving pattern
- 2 Encourage optional 15' set back for outdoor public spaces (match house setbacks if possible)
- 3 Align walk with existing residential walks
- 4 Two-way street with parallel parking



- The Campus Sub-area's crowded sidewalks should be widened by up to two feet (in conjunction with creation of dedicated parking), expanding the available walkway by 20-30% and inviting larger numbers of students and others to use the street. This additional width would be paved with brick and would accommodate signs, lights, street furnishings and larger tree grates. Elsewhere in the district, a continuous 2- to 3-foot band of bricks should follow the curb line to accommodate light stanchions and signs and to separate pedestrians from moving cars. The existing concrete and brick paving pattern in the Campus Sub-area would be extended across the intersections at newly reopened streets. If the present sidewalk width must be maintained (see Parking and Traffic Circulation), healthy trees would be kept in place and new ones located in larger tree grates at wider intervals, in keeping with the street's informal character. A policy to remove handbills from inappropriate locations and out-of-bounds newspaper vending machines should be enforced on a daily basis. Already narrow sidewalks in parts of the North Sub-area should be protected from further narrowing by maintaining tight turning radii in conjunction with street improvements. All street furniture, signs, and landscaping should be located to encourage pedestrians to walk near storefronts – where they can enjoy and support High Street's vitality – rather than at the street edge.



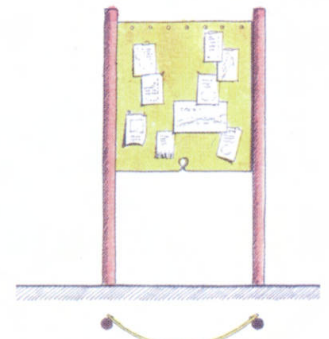
Vending box screens will help to limit clutter in the public realm and create a unique identity for High Street.

- In the South and North Sub-areas, low brick walls (3'-4') and increased landscaping should screen parking lots that face the street and reinforce the streetwall.

- Consistent and well designed street furnishings, including benches at bus stops and in public spaces, painted steel screens to hide newspaper vending boxes, and low profile bicycle racks near cross walks, would convey a consistent University District character. In the Campus Sub-area, sturdy, unique kiosks to hold notices can convey the area's campus-oriented character and limit the problem of handbills posted indiscriminately.

- Historic white on blue street signs would further communicate the district's consistent identity. In addition, street names could be integrated with the facades of new corner buildings.

- Mast arms throughout the district would support traffic signals to help eliminate overhead wire clutter. Lighted street name signs for major streets, streetlights, and possibly public art elements would be incorporated into the mast arms.



Custom designed bulletin boards control handbills while celebrating communication in the Campus Sub-area.

- As proposed by the Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center, street trees would be located to fill gaps in the street wall. Spacing can vary from 30 to 45 feet to maintain continuity along the street, while responding to the character and uses of adjacent buildings. New tree grates would be large enough to accommodate and support mature trees (minimum 16sf).

- The Short North pattern of alternating pedestrian-level lights and streetlights would extend throughout the district. The design of the pedestrian fixtures enhances the quality of the pedestrian environment. The Short North pedestrian fixture would be extended to the southern edge of the Campus Sub-area. On the east side of High Street in the Campus Sub-area, the existing streetlights have a highway scale and appearance that bears no relation to the district. A special new pedestrian fixture (see illustration on previous page) should be used on the east side and the handsome OSU acorn luminaire should be used along the campus edge. In the North Sub-area, the Design Center's proposal to return to simple and historically appropriate acorn pedestrian lights is appropriate. A unifying color should be considered for all street fixtures including benches, trash receptacles, light standards, and utility boxes in each of the sub-areas.

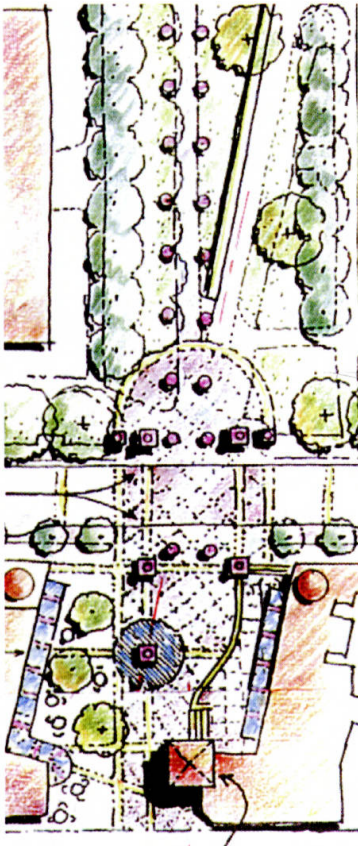
- Opportunities for public art exist throughout the University District. Functional elements of the streetscape such as bus shelters, parking lot screens, and benches provide excellent opportunities. The selection process for all public art along High Street should emphasize functionality and a high level of craftsmanship. Light banners stretched across High Street, reminiscent of the illuminated arches that once spanned other portions of High Street, could offer an opportunity to light up the street with designs cast in light that can literally dance across the banner. These designs can change for different sub-areas, or be consistent across the district. Bus shelters and benches in the Campus Sub-area represent a highly visible way to convey the Campus Sub-area's unique spirit. Creative signs offer wonderful opportunities to transform High Street into a "museum of neon."



This side alley, linking parking supply to High Street, could be transformed with neon lights, special paving, and new retail uses. The campus building on the west side of High Street offers a striking terminus to the view.

- Special opportunities exist to enhance the pedestrian environment, such as converting the small alley linking Pearl Street to High Street between 14th and 15th Avenues into a pedestrian way with lighting and possibly outdoor tables, in the process linking parking to High Street.

- The University Square, described in detail above ("Chittendon Avenue to 15th Avenue") would create a signature public space for the University District.



Opportunities to Enhance the Campus Face to High Street

Revitalization of High Street offers a series of opportunities for the university to re-engage High Street, reintegrating the daily life of the campus and street - in the process forging a stronger bond between the campus and University District. In one sense, revitalizing High Street is about rebuilding the kind of close physical and functional relationship that characterized High Street for students and residents alike. Vietnam era riots led the university to begin turning its back on High Street. Over the years, campus expansion toward the west has further weakened the university's historic connections to the street.

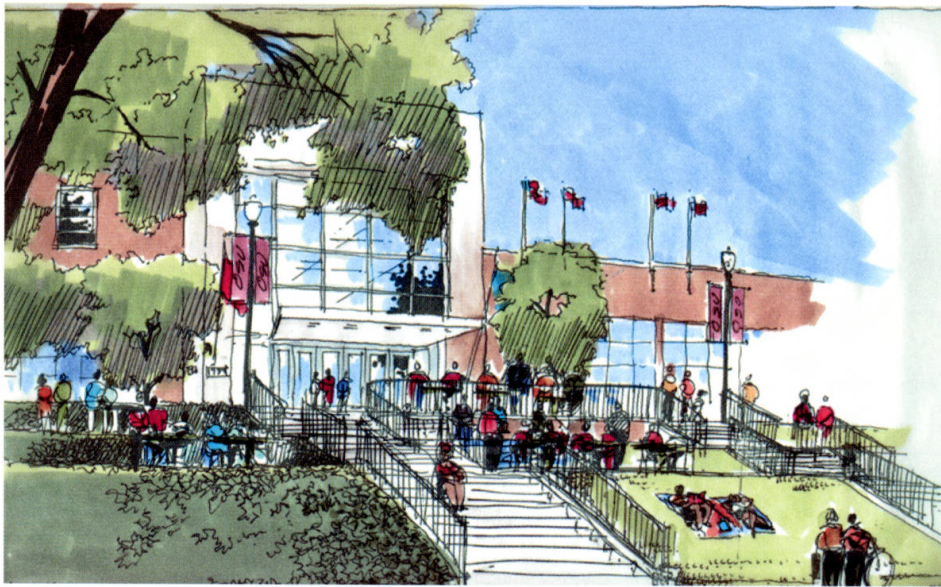
Enhancing High Street will foster the kinds of activities along the street that will draw members of the university community back to live and spend more time in the University District, in turn enhancing the district as an environment for learning. Recommendations for consideration by the university include:

- Filling the gaps in the campus' gracious, classic green edge by, for example, replacing the planters and service docks adjacent to the Wexner Center and Mershon Auditorium with lawns and trees.
- Placing benches, formally designed to enrich the dignified lawns, along High Street for students to gather.
- Redesigning the campus plaza at 15th Avenue in a manner that integrates with the new University Square proposed across High Street.

Revitalization of High Street offers a series of opportunities for the university to re-engage High Street, reintegrating the daily life of the campus and the street...

- Marking the northern and southern arrival points to the university (and Campus Sub-area) with handsome signs and landscaping and possibly formal gateposts.
- Using special landscaping to announce points of entry to campus facilities along High Street such as the classically designed formal entrance to Sullivant Hall.
- Commemorating the university's history along High Street by, for example, erecting a "Chic" Harley monument at the site of the historic Ohio Field.
- Locating food vendors at 15th Avenue and other high pedestrian traffic points to animate the campus side and draw the university community to High Street.
- Reopening the High Street doors of buildings such as the College of Law.
- Identifying synergies between the Wexner Center and other campus facilities with entertainment and other new uses along the east side of High Street.

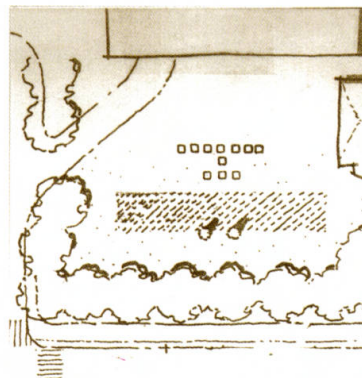
- Taking advantage of the Ohio Union's potential to build a unique bridge to the east side of High Street and the larger community by, for example, allowing a food court to spill out onto a landscaped dining terrace facing High Street and locating uses at the Union that would benefit from more public visibility.
- Creating a high quality streetscape along the newly widened Lane Avenue to insure that this heavily used street will form an appropriate gateway to the campus, University District, and High Street.
- Implementing recommendations noted elsewhere, including new street lighting, paving and a handsome new building or landscaping at Lane Avenue.



A series of dining terraces stepping down the slope in front of the Ohio Union would draw the university community to High Street.



The gracious lawn and majestic trees of the campus edge should be reestablished in front of the Wexner Center to create a unified image for the University.



A landscaped "Chic" Harley monument could commemorate the historic Ohio Field along High Street.

would diminish the quality of the pedestrian experience. Parking is so vital to the underlying health and vitality of High Street that its location, pricing, enforcement and quality must be carefully managed as a system if the area is to become and remain truly competitive.

Structured parking within this market has an estimated construction cost of roughly \$12,000 per space. With an annual operational and maintenance expense of approximately \$500-\$600 per space, it is clear that for parking to be moderately priced to support the existing and proposed investment, significant capital subsidies will be necessary. Perhaps 50% or more of the capital costs will need to be funded by sources other than user fees.

Recommended Actions and Necessary First Step: Given the costs of building and operating parking facilities, it is clear that a parking management entity will be necessary to provide essential parking. During the next 12 to 24 months, Campus Partners, the city and other community stakeholders should complete the necessary reviews and feasibility analysis to:

- Determine the parking entity's nature, form, geography, and composition.
- Identify the sources of necessary funding. These sources should include, but not be limited to: tax increment financing from the Gateway project and other new developments, the district's existing meter revenue, revenue from new meters, increased meter fees, parking improvement assessments on benefiting properties, payments-in-lieu-of providing parking for enhanced development rights to property owners, developer contributions, existing/increased fine revenues, residential street permit revenues, city and university contributions, and user fees of various sorts.
- Define the responsibilities and authority of the parking entity and its relationship to other organizations.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000 (to initiate implementation strategy)

Source of funds: Campus Partners \$25,000
City of Columbus \$25,000

Form a Special Improvement District

To be competitive, High Street's public environment must be kept both clean and safe. Graffiti, filthy sidewalks, and public disorder portray an environment about which people no longer care. Uncared for urban environments turn away customers, discourage investment, and invite crime.

Nationally, over 1600 Business Improvement Districts (or BIDs, the national counterpart to Ohio's Special Improvement District, or SID) are successfully helping to manage urban retail environments, particularly with regard to enhanced "clean and safe" services. These BIDs frequently expand their services to include marketing and merchandising assistance, special event coordination, business retention and attraction, and even services for the homeless.



Achieving the full scope of this Plan will require creating between 1,450 and 2,000 new off-street parking spaces.



Property owners in the Short North have formed a Special Improvement District (SID).

SIDs are formed by action of the City Council upon petition of the affected property owners. A SID would represent a commitment on the part of property owners to effectively assess themselves to manage the corridor and to provide enhanced clean and safe services. A SID would also provide property owners with a stronger voice in making decisions affecting High Street's future.

Recommended Actions and Necessary First Step: As soon as possible, Campus Partners, working closely with the affected property owners, should perform the necessary analysis to assist property owners in preparing a business plan for the SID, and in submitting the required petitions to form the University District High Street SID. The products of this effort should:

- Establish the levels, costs, and methods of service enhancements to be provided by the SID;
- Define the most appropriate method of property owner assessment;
- Establish an appropriate and adequate initial geographic service area for the SID;
- Prepare the necessary property owner petitions; and
- Define the most appropriate management structure for the SID.

Estimated Cost: \$60,000

Source of Funds: Campus Partners \$60,000

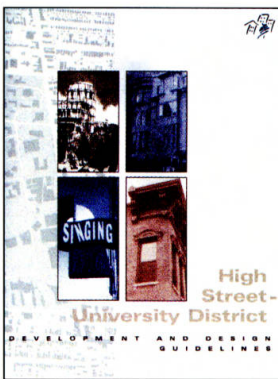
Protect and Enhance High Street's Urban Fabric Design Guidelines and Review

Reinforcing and enhancing the character and quality of High Street's urban fabric is critical to achieving core goals for High Street: a more vital pedestrian environment, preserved historic character, expanded economic viability, maximized public and private fiscal benefits, and strengthened adjacent neighborhoods.

The primary tools to ensure that new investment promotes High Street's essential Main Street character are Development and Design Guidelines, issued by Campus Partners as a companion to this report, and design review. The draft guidelines are being reviewed by the University Area Commission and the city's planning office.

Recommended Action and Necessary First Step: The city should adopt legislation which will expand the jurisdiction of the University Area Review Board and should adopt the proposed *High Street-University District Development and Design Guidelines* as part of a mandatory design review and approval process.

Estimated Cost and Source: Existing resources.



Development and Design Guidelines are being prepared for High Street in the University District.

Façade/Building Improvement Incentives

As has been successfully demonstrated in portions of the city's NCR (Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization) areas, providing incentives through attractive financing for improvement of urban buildings (in accordance with appropriate design standards) can help stimulate almost immediate improvement in the character of older urban commercial areas. Such efforts can be even more effective when combined with a comprehensive and coordinated set of revitalization tools and strategies. Although not currently designated throughout its length as an NCR District by the city, the University District portion of High Street will require such building improvement incentives to spur early improvement and to further promote the use of the new design guidelines.

Recommended Action and Necessary First Step: Establish a series of NCR-like façade and building improvement incentives for the full length of the University District High Street Corridor.

Estimated Cost and Source: Existing resources.

Support Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities

University Gateway Center

This study has reaffirmed, and expanded upon, the recommendations of previous consulting efforts that a significant, mixed-use redevelopment - the "University Gateway Center" for working purposes - should be undertaken in the area of 11th Avenue and High Street. (Campus Partners used data and analysis from this *Plan* to help prepare a Request for Qualifications and a Request for Proposals to select a preferred master developer for the University Gateway Center in 1999.) This project will require considerable land assemblage (see diagram in margin) and must be carefully managed by Campus Partners, or a close affiliate, due to:

- The required scope of the land assemblage;
- The critical nature of the project's use mix and design characteristics;
- The need to coordinate its implementation with the other critical High Street improvement measures and to conduct ongoing negotiations and coordination with the master developer;
- The need to carefully undertake large scale acquisition and relocation services; and
- The project's relationship to a large-scale parking structure.

Campus Partners (or a related affiliate) is clearly in the best position to oversee this effort and coordinate the involvement of the numerous parties who will be involved with the Gateway project's successful implementation.

Recommended Action and Necessary First Step: Campus Partners and the city should continue to support the University Gateway project by completing land acquisition and funding public improvements.

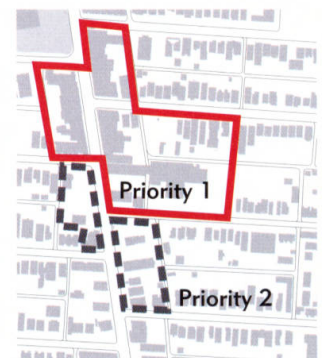
Estimated Cost: \$90 million to \$100 million for development of the Gateway project.



Providing financial incentives would encourage preservation of High Street's handsome Main Street building stock.



The Gateway Project, looking north from 9th Avenue.



A recommended land assemblage area has been outlined for the Gateway project within this Plan. Additional properties may be required in order to accomplish the needed redevelopment of properties to the immediate south.

Source of Funds: Campus Partners \$16 million to \$18 million for land acquisition
 City of Columbus \$5 million for infrastructure improvements
 Developer \$50 million to \$60 million for construction
 Other \$16 million for parking facility

Additional Strategic Redevelopment Opportunities

Many of the additional strategic projects identified in this report will likely be undertaken primarily by private initiative, responding to existing, unmet market demands. Where appropriate, Campus Partners could provide technical or other types of assistance. In limited cases, financial incentives may be appropriate for a particularly desirable project. On virtually all of these sites, the recommended redevelopment provides a substantial increase (usually at least several times the existing square footage) in the amount of building area currently located on the site. Most of this new development potential is only unlocked if the parking entity is able to provide essential facilities. In effect, cooperation between property owners, potential developers, and Campus Partners will create the ability to achieve significant new value along High Street.

Recommended Action and Necessary First Step: Proceed with targeted next phase development efforts related to unique opportunities and begin discussions with property owners.

Estimated Cost and Source: Existing resources or \$50,000-\$200,000 to initiate subsequent strategic redevelopment projects.



Potential new strategic redevelopment, mixing new and existing buildings, along High Street.

Improvements to the Public Realm

High Street is limited in its ability to draw people and investment by the poor condition of much of its streetscape. There are no public places for people to gather. Trees that should enrich the visual environment and provide shade in summer are missing or stunted. Current public signage and street furniture fail to convey the unique character of the entire district and each of its sub-areas; public art does not convey the presence of a vital arts community on campus and throughout the University District's neighborhoods. The public realm recommendations, closely coordinated with formation of a SID, will address this condition.

Recommended Action and Necessary First Step: In close cooperation with Campus Partners, the special improvement district and other stakeholders, the city should prepare more detailed recommendations for improvements to the public realm and then initiate design and preparation of construction documents for landscape and other streetscape elements. Streetscape enhancements performed in connection with the University Gateway Center should help define these new standards.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000 - \$100,000

(for more detailed design)

Source: City, assessments, OSU, others.



Lower Downtown in Denver offers wonderful examples of using a sports tradition to inspire lively public art.



New pedestrian lights, benches, and landscaping will enhance High Street.



Campus, community, and business leaders at an impromptu late afternoon meeting along High Street to review a building plan.

Acknowledgements

The Ohio State University through Campus Partners contributed \$150,000 and Columbus City Council appropriated \$50,000 for the development of this High Street Plan. In addition, numerous offices, associations and individuals devoted their time and energy to the production of this Plan in 1997 and 1998. While the following list is not complete, it recognizes the broad public participation by the University District's diverse stakeholders:

The City of Columbus staff members of the Department of Trade and Development and the Division of Traffic Engineering and Parking, Neighborhood Design Assistance Center, and other offices

University Community Business Association

University Area Commission

University District Organization

The Ohio State University Office of University Architect and Physical Planning

Professor Dale Bertsch and the students of Ohio State's City and Regional Planning 853 course

The Campus Partners Student Advisory Board which sponsored two public forums for students and a forum on opportunities for minority businesses on High Street.

Advisory Steering Committee

The Advisory Steering Committee met more than a dozen times and provided direction on all phases of the project, recommendations, and work products. This list includes each member's affiliation at the time of service on the committee.

Pasquale Grado, *chair of the Steering Committee*
Executive Director, University Community Business Association

Richard Bausman, *Acting Director, University District Organization*

George A. Bavelis, *President, Pella Company*

Ben Brace, *Special Assistant to the Vice President for Business and Finance, The Ohio State University*

Jack Brown, *Ohio Office, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*

Patricia Brown, *Godman Guild*

John Carney, *President, OSU Undergraduate Student Government, 1996-98*

Toni Cheek, *property owner*

Bill Courson, *formerly City of Columbus, currently Campus Partners*

Susan DeLay, *Neighborhood Planner, City of Columbus*

Don W. DeVere, *Executive Director, Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center*

Kathy Eshelman, *President, University Community Business Association, and President and owner, Grade A Notes*

Kathleen M. Fox, *neighborhood resident*

Debra A. Gallagher, *President, University Community Association and President, University District Organization*

Wayne Garland, *President, Buckeye Real Estate*

Shane Hankins, *Undergraduate Student Member, Campus Partners Board of Trustees*

Jean Hansford, *Senior Campus Planner, The Ohio State University*

Steven M. Hotz, *undergraduate student, The Ohio State University*

Ron Hupman, *Second Vice President and Zoning Committee Chair, University Area Commission*

Stephen R. McClary, *Administrator, Planning Division, City of Columbus*

Betsy Meleski, *NCR Coordinator, City of Columbus*

Jenny Nelson, *undergraduate student, The Ohio State University*

Frank Petruziello, *Member, University Area Review Board*

Howard Skubovius, *President, University Area Commission*

Scott Solomon, *Oxford Realty*

Steve Steidle, *Skyline Chili*

Richard Talbott, *President, Inn Town Homes and Apartments*

Daniel Thomas, *City of Columbus*

Doreen Uhas-Sauer, *Member, University Area Commission, and Member, Columbus Historic Resources Commission*

Tim Wagner, *President, Dennison Place Association, and First Vice President, University Area Commission*

Paul Young, *Professor of Architecture, The Ohio State University*

Dave Younger, *Division of Traffic Engineering and Parking, City of Columbus*

Consultants

Goody, Clancy & Associates, Boston, Mass. (prime consultant and urban design, planning); David Dixon FAIA, Christine Cousineau, Herb Nolan ASLA, Rob Chandler AIA, David Curran and Stephen Peretto (graphic design), Scott Schiamberg

Gibbs Planning Group, Birmingham, Mich. (retail planning); Robert Gibbs, Charles Wilson

Hunter Interests, Inc., Annapolis, Md. (development strategy, real estate); Donald Hunter, Ernie E. Bleinberger

Kathy Mast Kane, Columbus, Ohio (historic preservation)

Rizzo & Associates, Boston, Mass. (traffic and parking); Rick Bryant, John Dobie, Sam Park

John Margolis, Boston, Mass. (illustrations)

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A terra cotta OSU representation of Ohio State football legend "Chic" Harley at the former University Cinema along High Street, a visible symbol from High Street's past of its future vitality and unique, university-inspired character.