WESTWOOD NEXT DOOR

COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PLAN



1

OVERALL CONCEPT AND GOALS

Westwood/Highland Park is a neighborhood facing several issues. Analyses show that important uses for everyday needs are lacking, which include, in particular, green spaces as well as cultural and leisure facilities (see appendix Analysis). In addition, the public space currently does not offer any opportunities to compensate for these deficits as it is very much focused on car use. Numerous parking areas as well as insufficient pedestrian and bicycle connections shape the area, while places for the community are missing. This is not only problematic in the context of advancing climate change, but, in combination with the prevailing waste and safety problem, also leads to a lower quality of life for the neighborhood's residents.

Consequently, the envisioned intervention in the Westwood/ Highland Park area is characterized by a major shift from a car-oriented to a people-oriented urban design. Basis for this is the strengthening of connections within the neighborhood and beyond as well as the implementation of measures that counteract the currently existing deficits. All chosen interventions thereby propose sustainable solutions which also contribute to a more conscious lifestyle among the local residents. In accordance with the 15-minute neighborhood concept, measures are thus distributed in a decentralized manner, enabling residents to meet all their everyday needs within the shortest possible distance. This saves time, unnecessary trips by car and thus also emissions.

Throughout the planning process, attention is paid to the consideration of the ten Design Prin-

ciples, as suggested by the competition (see table). In doing so, however, the focus always lies on preserving the basic character of the neighborhood as well as on the interests and needs of the local population. For this reason, the vision of Westwood Next Door strives to connect with existing businesses as well as organizations and concentrates on making the most of existing stock. This is implemented primarily through cost-effective measures favoring anti-displacement and yet having the potential to bring about the needed change.

The Comprehensive Action Plan elaborates the actions which are defined as key to achieve the set objectives. These are subdivided into the categories of the Maker's Area, green spaces, mobility, public space, communication as well as further development and will be described in more detail on the following pages. Afterwards, an overview on the environmental assessment and benefits for the local community is given.

PRINCIPLES	
	Close to home
	People centered mobility & thriving streets
	Connected places
IV	A place for everyone
V	Clean construction
VI	Green energy and buildings
VII	Resource management
VIII	Green space, climate resilience & nature- based solutions
IX	Sustainable lifestyles
X	Green economy

KEY ACTIONS

2

As already mentioned, this chapter provides an overview of the planned key actions. To this end, each subsection, first, briefly identifies the addressed circumstances in the neighborhood and then details the resulting measures. The numbers added behind these measures thereby serve for their localization and are linked to the Strategic Framework (see appendix) as well as to the Implementation Plan.

A MAKER'S AREA



The lower Westwood/ Highland Park area is characterized by numerous local craft shops, including the Center Tool Rental, White Center Glass and several auto repair and cycling shops. To maintain the area's character and prevent displacement a Maker's Area with potential collaborations with local businesses and reuse of an old, vacant warehouse, is created. It provides the opportunity to strengthen the community and, additionally, creates new jobs for the local population.

The first step in establishing the Maker's Area is a collaboration between the City of Seattle and the Center Tool Rental (1). The passageway and parking lot on the north side of the tool rental are, in part, used to create a shared workspace or repair café with sheltered workbenches where rented tools can be used on the spot. This collaborative work can not only strengthen community relations but also slowly introduce the principle to the neighborhood's residents. A further cooperation with the Angle Lake Cyclery is possible where people can repair and work on their bicycles in consultation with the cyclery's employees.

The next step is to turn the back of the vacant warehouse (2) located at 17th Ave SW into a public recycling station, whereas the front of the building is transformed into a large Makerspace and Co-Working Office (see visualization Warehouse Makerspace). It focuses on guided and collaborative work, while the focus at the Tool Rental shifts towards more independent work. The creation of the Warehouse Makerspace is more complex and expensive since the entire building needs to be renovated with the use of eco-friendly materials. The main issue is its lack of windows which could be resolved by installing skylights made by TAM Skylights, a local, family-run business just a few blocks away.



After its realization, the public recycling station assists in eliminating the prevailing waste problem in the neighborhood. Households can bring certain amounts of waste that are difficult to dispose of, such as old clothing, electronic waste or furniture, free of charge. High-quality recyclable waste, which is retrieved at the station, can be sold and, in turn, compensate for the costs of operating the station. Moreover, such a station can ensure the controlled disposal of environmentally hazardous wastes like batteries and lacquers and, therefore, help the environment.

Work at the recycling station is closely linked to the Warehouse Makerspace located in the same building. Certain items, such as furniture, may be taken over, where people can then continue refurbishment or give a new purpose to unused

parts. Thereby, the Warehouse Makerspace represents a venue where people can share not only services and tools, resulting in people needing to buy less equipment, but also knowledge and skills contributing to the strengthening of neighborhood relations (see visualization Warehouse Makerspace). Accordingly, the location serves as a meet-up point for volunteers, local craftsmen and entrepreneurs. In combination with social support programs and charity activities, however, the operation can also involve disabled, jobless, or disabled people. Part of the Warehouse Makerspace includes a double-storey front of Co-Working Offices with adjustable room sizes. Those rooms can either be used as offices for local start-ups, conference facilities or spaces for public courses for e.g CV writing or preparation for interviews, offered by volunteers.

The adjacent Meineke Car Care Center (3), which is currently for sale, can be bought by the City of Seattle and, after the lease expiration of the contract, included into the Maker's Area. The for-

B ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACES

The Westwood/Highland Park neighborhood currently faces an undersupply of green spaces within walking distance, with the Roxhill and Westcrest Parks being the closest recreation opportunities. Concerning this matter, not only places to hang out, but also playgrounds and sports facilities are missing. To counteract these deficiencies, various green spaces for multiple purposes and uses are realized throughout the area. The decentralized distribution thereby not only promotes the implementation of the 15-minute neighborhood concept but also helps for the prevention of heat effects, due to the accompanying de-paving of surfaces and renouncement of building development. In view of the advancing climate change, this can be seen as more than just a side effect.

The new heart of the neighborhood and hence priority, is formed by the creation of the new Community Space *Thriving Root* on a currently vacant plot on 17th Ave SW near the Delridge Way SW (4). The area of 13,000 sq ft is assigned mer car center is turned into an exhibition space where residents can also get information on the work and opportunities the Maker's Area offers. The exhibition space is an area where items crafted in the Warehouse Makerspace can be displayed and sold, which helps to compensate for the operational costs. In addition, collaborations with e.g., the existing Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery, are possible. To further reinforce the community idea and support greening of the neighborhood, the free area in front of the former car center and Warehouse Makerspace is turned into a green common area with spaces for temporary art or gatherings.

In the long term, the building can be developed into a flagship for sustainability in the neighborhood by installing solar panels on the roof, planting of the facades and establishing a venue for urban production, providing more work opportunities for residents and shortening supply chains.

different uses in order to meet the interests of everyone in the local community (see visualization Community Space *Thriving Root*).

Around 6,500 sq ft of the area are designated for an urban community garden which includes several raised garden beds, a shed with the necessary equipment as well as a composting area. It offers everyone in the community who is interested in gardening, e.g. locals who do not own a private one, the opportunity to learn about growing vegetables or herbs and simultaneously serves as a place where people who share common interests can come together and exchange ideas. The compost is not only open to what accumulates in the garden but can also be shared by residents to promote further waste separation. All materials employed in the gardening area can be recycled and reused to minimize costs and be more sustainable. For example, milk crates can be used for the implementation of the raised garden beds. In addition to gardening, workshops and educational activities related to the environment can be offered. These are aimed at all interested parties but can also be created in cooperation with surrounding schools and daycares. All measures together thus make a significant contribution to raise awareness for a healthier, more sustainable and conscious lifestyle.

Next to the community garden, space is provided for a pocket park which includes a playground, a café with outdoor seating and an adjacent gathering area. The uses here correspond to the elimination of the analyzed deficiencies in the neighborhood and are arranged in a way that parents while e.g., sitting in the outdoor area enjoying a coffee, can keep an eye on their children playing. A food truck can serve as a café, while the outdoor seating consists of movable furniture. In that way, it can be implemented cost-effectively and put away easily when not in use. The free area is suitable for open air workshops or events, as for example in connection with community garden related activities or can just be a place to hang out. It is structured by movable landscape elements, such as planters or pallets and can thus be used according to the occasion. Thereby, it offers enough space for food vendors, small farmers- or flea markets on the one hand, but, on the other hand, also for the creation of plenty of comfortable seating areas. If needed, an extension at the café area is also possible, making it a completely flexible place for community gathering. The leasing of raised garden beds and the event space, workshops as well as the café all contribute to the financing of the whole area. To ensure that everything is maintained in good condition and to prevent misuse, it is also possible to lock the property.



In addition to the *Thriving Root* Community Space a total of four further green spaces are envisioned in the medium or long term (see appendix Strategic Framework). All of them are implemented on spaces which are currently used for parking and, therefore, include de-paving of surfaces related to a decline in car use. Care was taken to select parking areas that belong to public institutions, therefore increasing the chance for realization. As already mentioned, they thereby differ in their assigned uses to meet the requirements of the 15-minute neighborhood concept as well as citizens' interests. In this regard, (pocket) parks are envisioned on the lot of the Westwood Christian Community (5) as well as on parts of the parking space at the Westwood Village Shopping Center (6). The latter could be enhanced by exposing the Longfellow Creek that currently runs in a pipe underneath it and also connects directly to the planned mobility hub (see chapter New Mobility). Another playground is seen on parts of the current parking lot of the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses (7) as it is located within a calm single family housing area, while outdoor sports are possible at the parking of the Holy Family Church (8). This plot also directly connects to the repurposed alleyway (see chapters New Mobility, Upgraded Public Space) and is well suited for activities due to its screening from the street. Since it seems to be mainly unused, it can also be implemented earlier than the others and support the concept of greening.

When designing those green spaces, the integration of green stormwater infrastructure always needs to be considered. However, since the available open data is not sufficient for an assessment of suitable locations for stormwater management infrastructure, no more precise localizations are made.

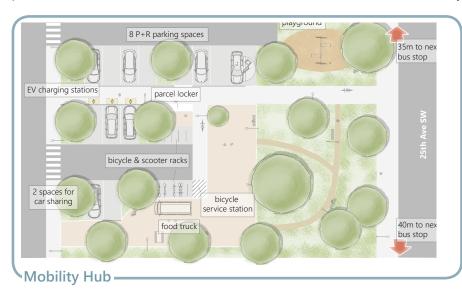
C NEW MOBILITY

Westwood/ Highland Park, like many other neighborhoods, is strongly oriented on car use with numerous parking areas as well as insufficient pedestrian and bicycle connections shaping the area. To reduce traffic-based GHG emissions, as desired by Seattle's Climate Action Plan, a shift away from private transport to alternative modes as well as electric mobility is urgently needed. Thus, the new mobility concept sets its focus on the expansion of public transport, cycling and walking in order to encourage the residents to change their mobility behaviour.

To accomplish that, two mobility hubs at major bus interchanges, one at the Westwood Village Shopping Center (9) and one at the Walgreens Drugstore (10) are established. This places them within walking distance for all residents in the neighborhood which is in line with the idea of the 15-minute neighborhood concept. Both of them provide park and ride facilities, car-, bikeand scooter sharing as well as electric vehicle charging. Display panels, which show the next possible connection, are installed to make the change between different means of transport as comfortable and comprehensible as possible. In addition, parcel lockers are integrated at both mobility hubs leading to reduced delivery traffic and allowing residents to pick up their deliveries. Furthermore, residents are enabled to send their packages to shops, institutions and businesses in the neighborhood, combining supply chains and reducing GHG emissions.

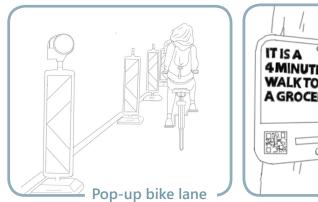
The mobility hub located at the Westwood Village Shopping Center is going to serve as the major public transportation hub for the entire area, since it's tied to the neighborhood's main bus connections as well as to Seattle's new bus rapid transit line. For this reason, the mobility hub supports not only multi-modality but also denotes high quality of stay, where people can not only wait for their connections, but also come together. This is realized by de-paving parts of the existing parking lot and replacing it with greening, seating areas, a playground as well as a possible space for a food truck (see visualization mobility hub). In the long term, when

> mobility in the neighborhood shifts away from cars to public transport, cycling and walking, a major area of the shopping center's parking lot (6) will be de-paved, exposing the Longfellow Creek underneath and creating a new, vast green space alongside the mobility hub with a high quality of stay due to its waterside location.





Next to public transportation, cycling and walking need to become more comfortable to foster sustainable mobility. Therefore, bicycle lanes all throughout the neighborhood are expanded and upgraded, creating a dense network which makes cycling safer and also more appealing (see appendix Strategic Framework). Special attention is given to connections with high traffic volume as well as the ones that link important uses within the neighborhood and beyond, such as the new mobility hubs, recreational areas or the adjacent White Center. Consequently, protected bike lanes are implemented on busy streets like the Delridge Way SW or 16th Ave SW, while on roads with lower traffic bicycle lanes with minor separation are installed. Completing the new network are neighborhood greenways, which through their prioritization of biking and walking further enhance safety and thus, encourage people to leave their cars at home. Since the implementation of protected lines in particular can be somewhat more complex, so-called pop-up bike lanes can help in the short term as they en-





sure quick and flexible realization (see visualization pop-up bike lane).

With regard to pedestrian traffic, there is a great need to create accessibility for all residents. Therefore, it is relevant to upgrade pedestrian connections accordingly, especially those identified as complementary green connectors (see appendix Strategic Framework). High potential is also seen in the network of alleyways, which cover the entire neighborhood. Currently they are used for residents' garages, waste collection or as a fire department access road. However, they can be transformed to create safe and attractive pedestrian connections.

Since offering upgraded infrastructure is not always enough to make people change their behavior, further elements are provided. These include extensive greening of street spaces (see appendix Strategic Framework), more crosswalks and bike racks as well as the general improvement of bus stops, by, e.g., adding roofing

> and seating. In addition, crosswalks as well as bus stops can be upgraded by murals and thus, enhance the neighborhood's identity. Further options include the installation of bicycle counters and "Walk your City" signs (see visualization Walk your City sign). These, together with all other measures, can increasingly motivate people to switch to more sustainable modes of travel.

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D UPGRADED PUBLIC SPACE

The Westwood/Highland Park area currently does not invite its residents to spend time on the streets. This correlates very closely, both, with the strong orientation towards car traffic and the lack of cultural or recreational offerings around. To eventually turn Westwood/ Highland Park into a thriving neighborhood, public space, in particular, must once again belong primarily to the people. In addition to upgrading the pedestrian and bicycle connections as well as the greening of road space, the implementation of small, low-cost measures is targeted. Due to the generous street space with numerous parking spaces and the currently unused odd-shaped lots along the Delridge Way SW, there is also plenty of potential for its realization.

An important step in this process is the creation of quality of stay. This will involve taking away some of the parking lots along the main arterial streets and replacing it with elements such as parklets or streateries. These provide seat-

ing, bicycle racks and greenery and thus invite people to linger. Alleyways, next to their new function as pedestrian connections, can likewise serve as recreational spaces by allowing locals to shape them as they desire. To show how such a transformation can take place, a showcase alleyway (11) is designed exemplarily. This could be initiated by the City of Seattle in collaboration with adjacent neighbors, repainting existing fences, installing planters and allowing space for temporary art. These can, for example, be contributed by local schools. In the long term, those alleyways can become an appealing extension of open space for neighborhood activities and a meeting space for residents where children can play safely. Extensive lighting, sports facilities like basketball hoops and roadside furniture are envisioned to be added as well.

In addition to street space, the odd-shaped lots (12) represent new meeting points by transforming them from unused spaces into miniature parks. This is possible through the implementation of seating, lighting and greening but can be even upgraded by combining them with elements such as public raised gardening beds, public bookcases or display stands (see visualizations Public bookcases, Public raised gardening beds). By integrating these into the public space design, linkages to other institutions and facilities in the neighborhood are created and additional attention and sensibilization to important topics generated. For example, the display stands can be made temporarily available to the Nepantla Cultural Art Gallery, therefore, exhibiting art in public spaces or be used for informational services.



Bookcases, on the other hand, can reduce consumption and lead to more sustainable lifestyles, as people can swap items with each other instead of buying new ones. The special feature of all the above-mentioned elements is that they can be placed anywhere in the neighborhood, due to their easy installation and small space requirements. This presents particular opportunities in blocks with many apartment buildings, since the residents there do not have their own gardens (13).

Next to these universally applicable features, special attention is given to the arrangement of community gatherings and celebrations. Because of the lack of recreational and cultural offerings in the neighborhood, temporary activities provide an easy chance to fill these gaps and increase the sense of community. Next to the existing Stay-Healthy Street at 17th Ave SW, especially the Cambridge St SW turns out suitable to be transformed into an occasional festival street (14), due to its convenient location and



conditions (see appendix Strategic Framework). The possibilities of street activation are thereby endless. Next to festivities such as flea- and farmers markets or play facilities for children, huge potential is seen in organizing cultural events which emphasize the diverse character of the neighborhood. Heritage days, street food festivals or dance courses, where people can learn about other countries and cultures, are not only fun but can also strengthen the community.

The inclusion of surrounding parking spaces is of particular relevance. Especially existing church

E ENHANCED COMMUNICATION

The City of Seattle offers a wide range of social, ecological and economic programs as well as funding opportunities that can be found on their website. Since the amount of information can be overwhelming, a Community Kiosk is implemented on an odd-shaped lot in front of the White Center Development Association (16, see visualization Community Kiosk), to encourage the citizens of Westwood/Highland Park to use and participate in the city's funding programs. In addition, it also provides an overview of new opportunities that are created in the area. People can get information about the new mobility, including car, bike and scooter sharing opportunities, new cycling or pedestrian routes that are created, local businesses that work with regionally and ecologically produced resources, the newly created Community Space Thriving Root or the Maker's Area.

and association parking, as for example marked along Cambridge St (15), offer plenty of space which usually remains unused for a large part of the time. With an ongoing decline in car use, these areas may be de-paved in the near future and allocated to other land uses, such as mixeduse developments, social housing or parks. Until then, however, residents can and should already benefit from these sites through temporary activities. Due to their public orientation, cooperation is also easier than with private actors and should be addressed by the city.



Neighborhood organizations or clubs get the opportunity to use the Community Kiosk to inform residents about their work and bring together like-minded people. They can also call attention to upcoming events that take place in the neighborhood or provide environmental education about climate change with its causes and consequences. The city itself can inform citizens about future development projects, circular economy, renewable energy, stormwater management and projects or funding opportunities that the City of Seattle provides in these areas.

While the actual kiosk exists to raise awareness for its offers, in the long term, all the information will be available on a digital information board as well as a neighborhood app. Such information boards will also be installed at the mobility hubs where people can use waiting periods to get informed.



F FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The City of Seattle is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. and, therefore, always in need of space for new housing development. As the concept of Westwood Next Door sets its focus on cost-effective and small-scale measures, no detailed plans are made in this regard. However, some areas are identified as suitable to meet the housing demand in the long term (see appendix Strategic Framework). Those are namely the property of the Westwood Village Shopping Center (17), the currently vacant lots at 20th Ave SW and SW 98th St (18) and the parking lots of the Holy Family Church (19). In addition, large parts of the commercial area along the Delridge Way SW are highly underdeveloped compared to what is permitted according to the new zoning. The properties are to be developed in such a way that they allow different uses on the ground

floor, while the upper floors are intended for (social) housing, contributing to a decentralized distribution of facilities. Along Delridge Way SW, the lower floors should remain commercial uses in order to keep its present function and character, while in new developments, especially the integration of public uses needs to be considered. This includes, for example, the implementation of daycare as the capacity of childcare facilities might be exceeded due to the resulting population growth.

All building should be done in the most sustainable way possible. This implies the use of environmentally friendly materials as well the integration of on-site energy generation, e.g. through solar cells on the roof.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3

This chapter evaluates the advantages resulting from the previously mentioned key actions. First, positive effects on the environment, especially in the context of Seattle's goals from the Climate Action Plan, are elaborated on. The benefits for the population are then explained with particular focus on anti-displacement as well as the strengthening of the community.

A ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

According to Seattle's Climate Action Plan (CAP) released in 2018, 50 percent of the city's GHG emissions stem from passenger vehicles. By expanding cycling infrastructure, installing mobility hubs at major bus interchanges with park and ride lots, charging infrastructure, racks for (electric) bike- and scooter sharing, as well as creating a walkable neighborhood by using and upgrading existing alley- and greenways, a reduction in GHG emission is to be expected. By offering and encouraging alternative modes of transportation and the reduction of parking spaces people shift away from car use towards transit, cycling or walking.

Energy that is used to heat and cool buildings accounts for 25 percent of Seattle's GHG emission. The Community Kiosk offers residents and businesses the opportunity to be informed about the city's vast array of funding programs to offset energy efficiency investments. The former warehouse is renovated in accordance with the CAP, with the installation of solar panels on the roof, planting of the facades and low energy use through extensive insulation and acts as a prime example for sustainable building renovation.

Waste management accounts for three percent of the city's GHG emissions, but Westwood/ Highland Park, in particular, deals with a garbage problem. Waste is reduced with the introduction of the recycling station in the Maker's Area, offering residents a space where they can find a new purpose for old items, creating an environmental consciousness and potentially ensuring the controlled disposal of environmentally hazardous waste. Organic waste is reduced by composting for the *Thriving Root* Community Space, which will then be used as fertilizer.

By de-paving about 38,750 sq ft of parking lots in the medium-term, de-paving about 170,000 sq ft in the long-term, including the exposure of the Longfellow Creek and, therefore, creating various new green spaces all throughout the neighborhood, the heat-island effect is combatted and new areas for green stormwater infrastructure are created. This results in the reduction of water runoff, risk of flooding and an improvement of general water quality. A total

B EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS

With local residents being at the focus point of Westwood Next Door, anti-displacement strategies are of vital importance when planning measures. By designing strategies that are, in medium-term, low-cost and forego new construction as well as involving residents, businesses and neighborhood organizations, displacement is countered as far as possible. Furthermore, the City of Seattle is encouraged to pursue a land pool policy, allowing it to act on behalf of its residents, counteracting the rise of land prices to create affordable social housing or other charitable facilities.

By creating spaces where residents can come together, get to know or learn from each other, a strong connection of the community is built. From the Community Space *Thriving Root*, where people share a common responsibility for the crops and plants, to the festival streets where locals and neighborhood organizations get the chance to bring people from all different backgrounds together and embrace their cultural features, as well as individual interests or concerns.

Opportunities for citizens to be creative, start a new job or business and become aware of their impact on the environment are established. The recycling station encourages locals to be more thoughtful about their environment and gives them the opportunity to rethink their behavof 650 trees are planted in the neighborhood, offering shading in public spaces but also for buildings, resulting in less need for air-conditioning, further reducing GHG emissions. In doing so, about 29,000 lbs of carbon dioxide can be saved each year, once the trees are fully grown (see appendix calculation).

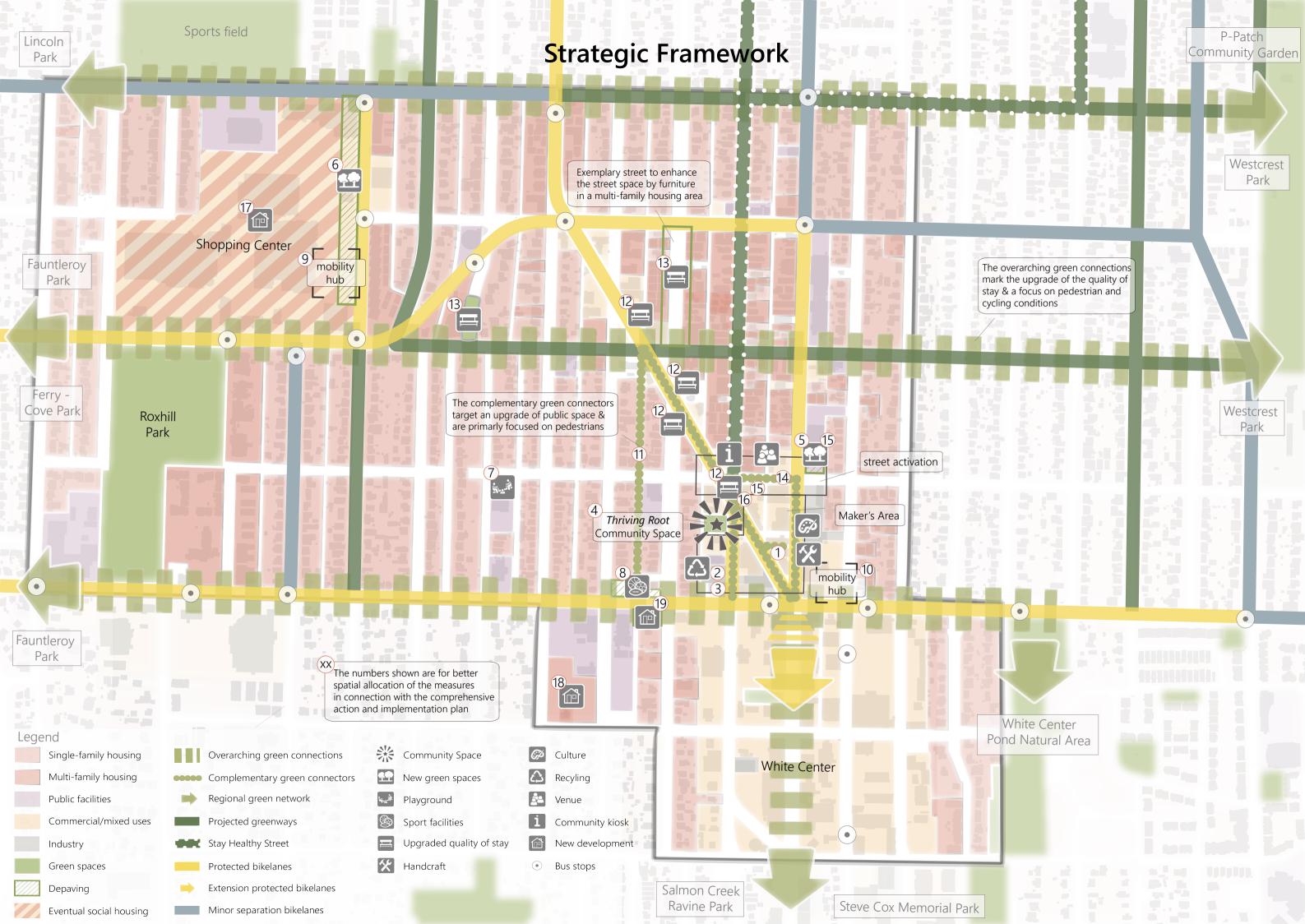


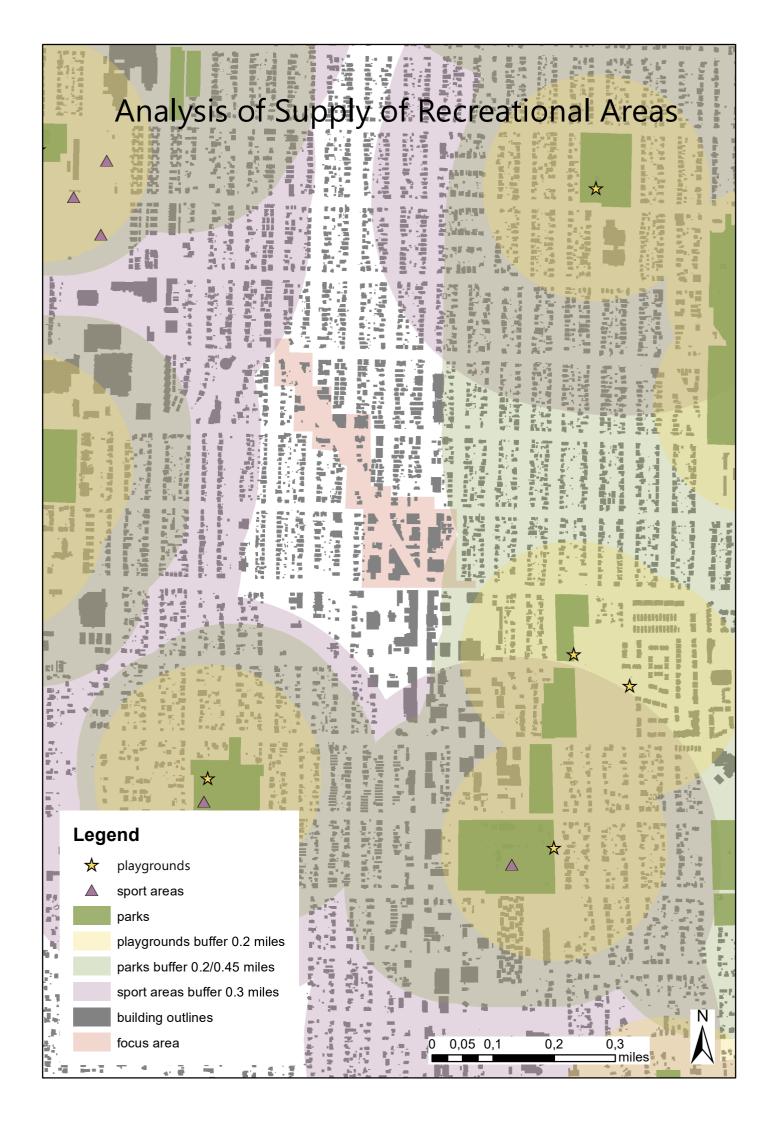
ior and learn what to improve. The Tool Rental Makerspace allows for personal creativity while the Warehouse Makerspace is suitable for the exchange of knowledge and skills. The adjacent Co-Working office provides local start-ups with affordable office space which is crucial for a business still at its starting point. Special attention lies on the inclusion of charitable organizations and the possibility for unemployed people, people with disabilities or the homeless to be given a chance to work at the recycling station or for craft work at the Warehouse Makerspace. Besides creating work opportunities for the currently homeless, helping them to find their way back into society, adding extensive lighting throughout the neighborhood and finding new uses for public spaces significantly increases the sense of security in the area. Road spaces become more vibrant and bustling with pedestrians, creating a secure atmosphere for walkers and cyclists.

The goal is to embed a healthy and sustainable lifestyle in the community by showing opportunities for alternative working environments and sustainable repurposing and renovation in the Maker's Area. People are encouraged to shift away from the car to public transport, walking or cycling by creating attractive mobility hubs and bus stops, as well as an extensive network of walking and cycling facilities.

APPENDIX

- I. Strategic Framework
- II. Analysis of Supply of Recreational Areas
- III. Calculation





Appendix Calculation

CO₂ savings through trees

650 trees x 45 lbs CO2 per year = 29,000 lbs CO₂ saving per year

In the area displayed in the Strategic Framework a total of about 650 new trees are planted along streets, in the new parks and community areas. Each tree is able to absorb around 45 lbs CO_2 per year once it is fully grown (cf. Viessmann 2021). Therefore, a total of about 29,000 lbs carbon dioxide can be saved each year.

Viessmann (2021): How much CO₂ does a tree absorb. Retrieved from https://www.viessmann.co.uk/heating-advice/how-much-co2-does-tree-absorb [retrieved on 12 June 2021]