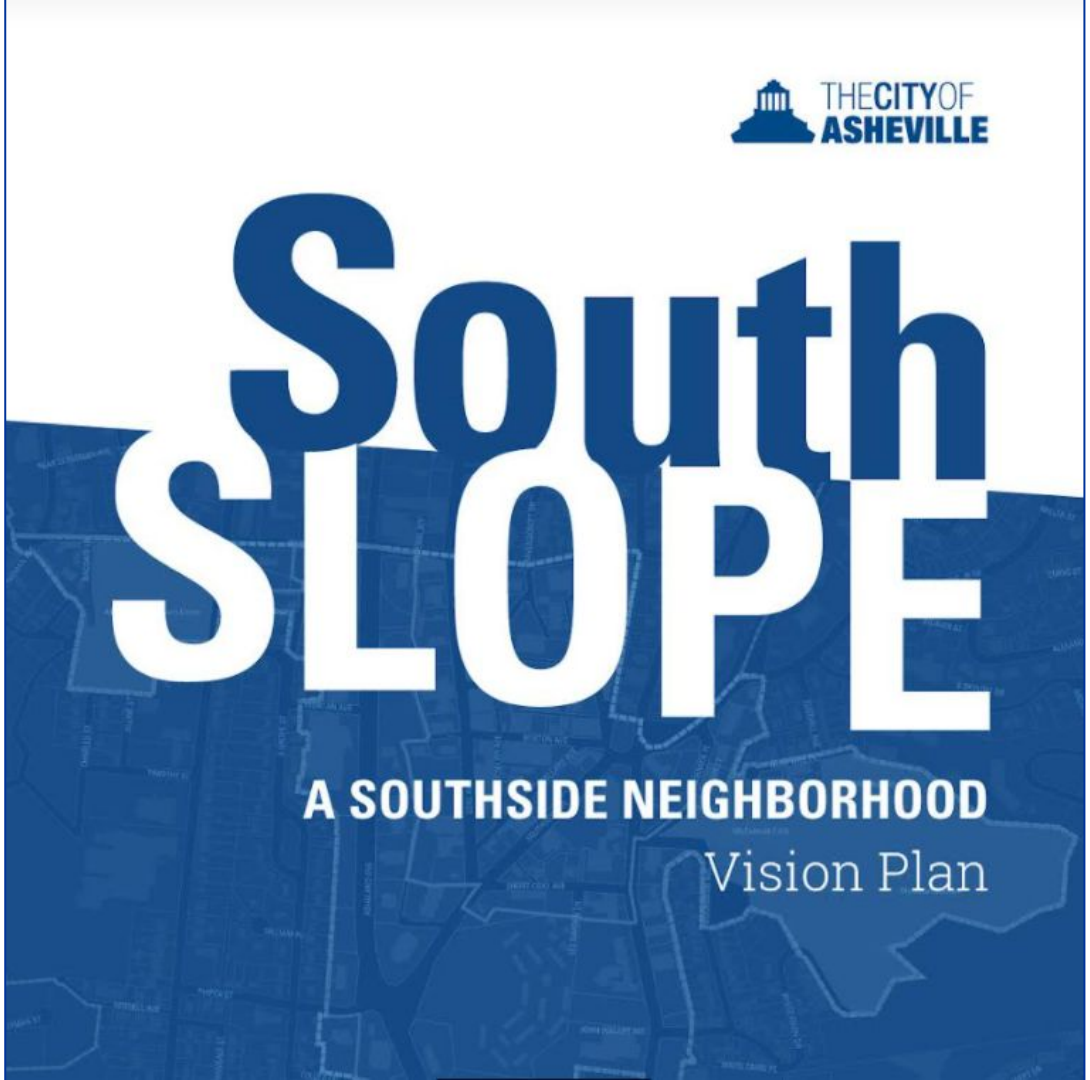
South Slope: A Southside Neighborhood Vision Plan

City Council

March 28, 2023

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



Key Takeaways

- The plan has five main themes, and ten key initiatives.
- The plan strives to build on the existing assets, guide future growth and connect and serve the surrounding neighborhoods.
- **The Vision:**

  The South Slope area is one of a **vibrant, safe, inclusive and welcoming** place for everyone. It is seamlessly connected to the surrounding community, downtown and adjacent neighborhoods through business and community relationships, green infrastructure and multimodal transportation connections. The streets are safe and walkable with accessible pedestrian infrastructure and amenities.
- Public comment supports many of the plan concepts and highlights some of the ongoing concerns with growth that are throughout our community.

Background

- The South Slope Vision Plan process was started before the pandemic. There were numerous meetings, a charette and an open studio on Coxe Avenue.
- An Advisory Committee gave feedback on the concepts and on the draft plan.
- The Draft plan was released at the end of February and received comments throughout the month of March 2022.
- Additional comment was received from adjoining neighbors in the Summer/Fall of 2022 resulting in the final document.

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Public Input



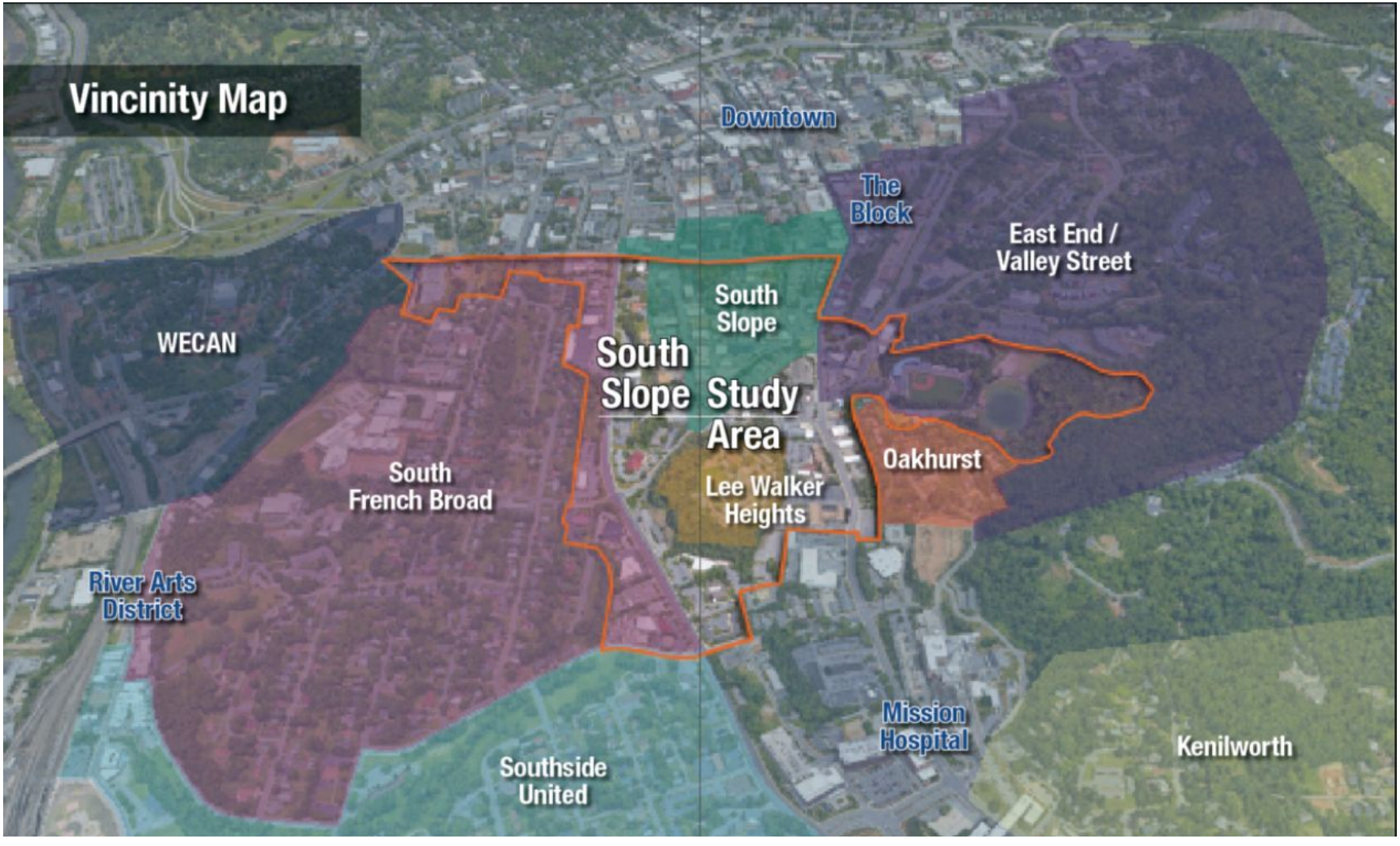




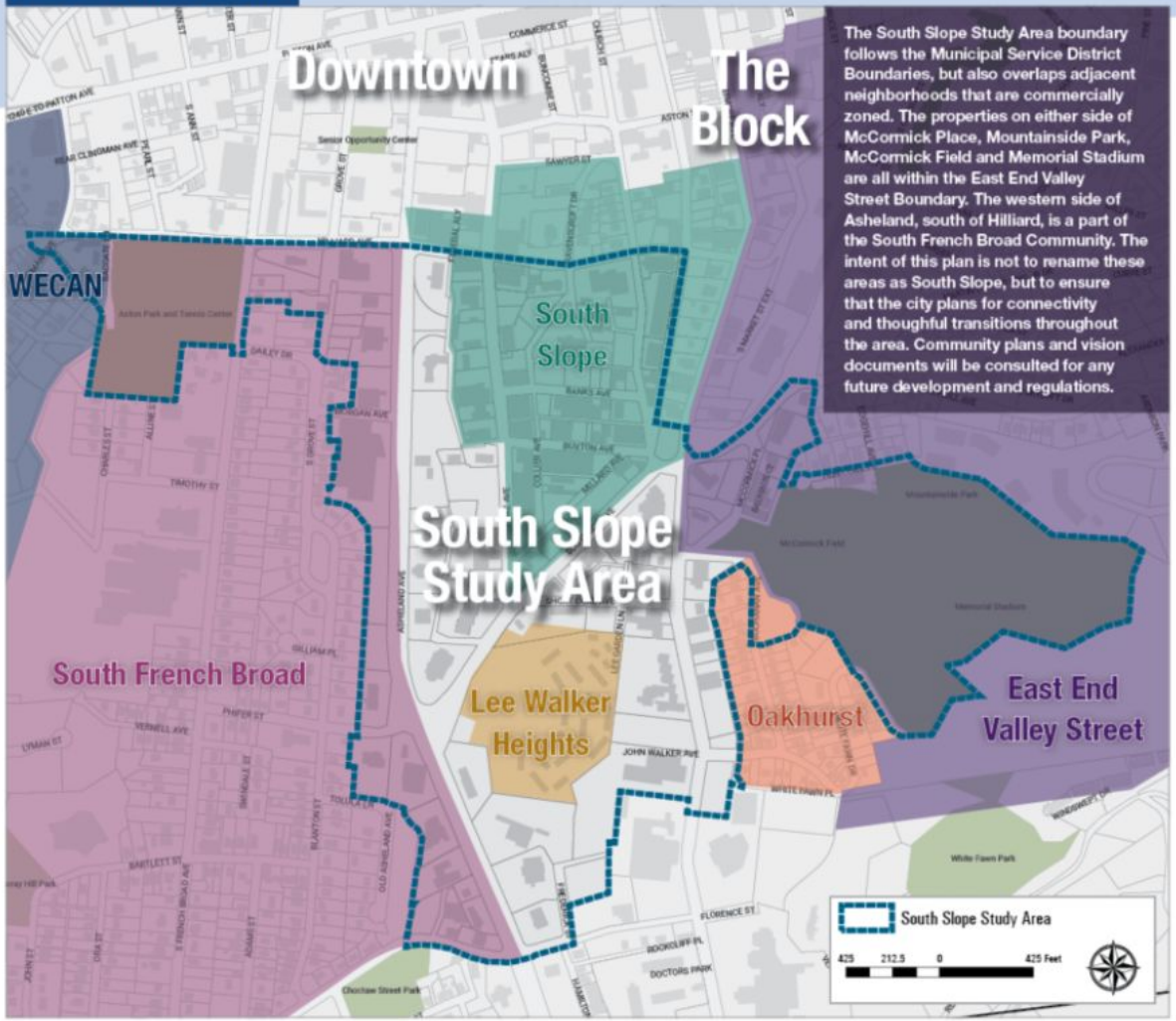







Vincinity Map
Downtown
The Block
East End / Valley Street
South Slope
WECAN
South Slope Study Area
South French Broad
Oakhurst
Lee Walker Heights
River Arts District
Mission Hospital
Kenilworth
Southside United

SOUTH SLOPE STUDY AREA MAP



The South Slope Study Area boundary follows the Municipal Service District Boundaries, but also overlaps adjacent neighborhoods that are commercially zoned. The properties on either side of McCormick Place, Mountainside Park, McCormick Field and Memorial Stadium are all within the East End Valley Street Boundary. The western side of Asheland, south of Hilliard, is a part of the South French Broad Community. The intent of this plan is not to rename these areas as South Slope, but to ensure that the city plans for connectivity and thoughful transitions throughout the area. Community plans and vision documents will be consulted for any future development and regulations.

Five Themes

- Quality Built Environment
- Unique and Inclusive Sense of Place
- A Strong Local Economy
- Multimodal Transportation
- Strategic Infrastructure and Natural Environment



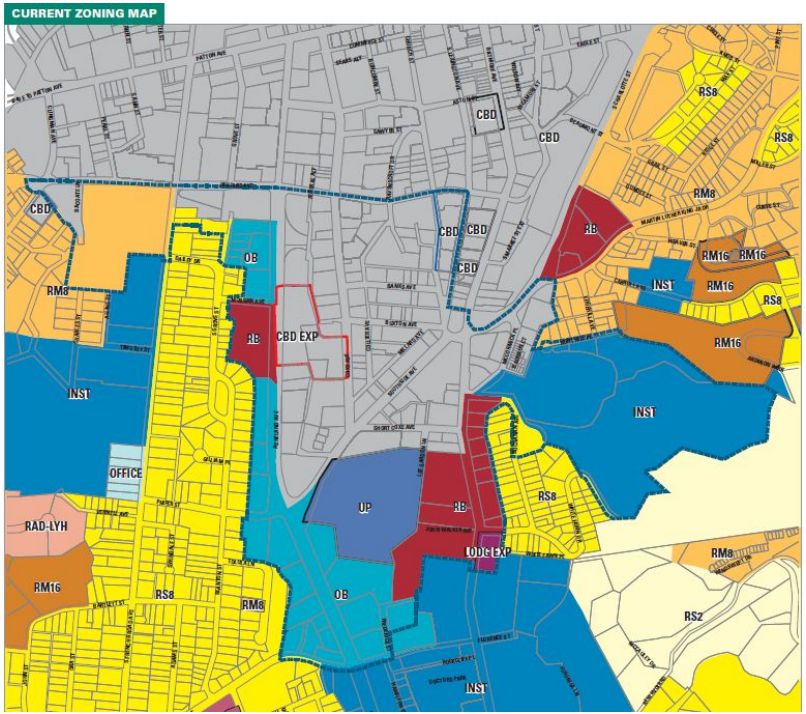
Ten Key Initiatives



Quality Built Environment

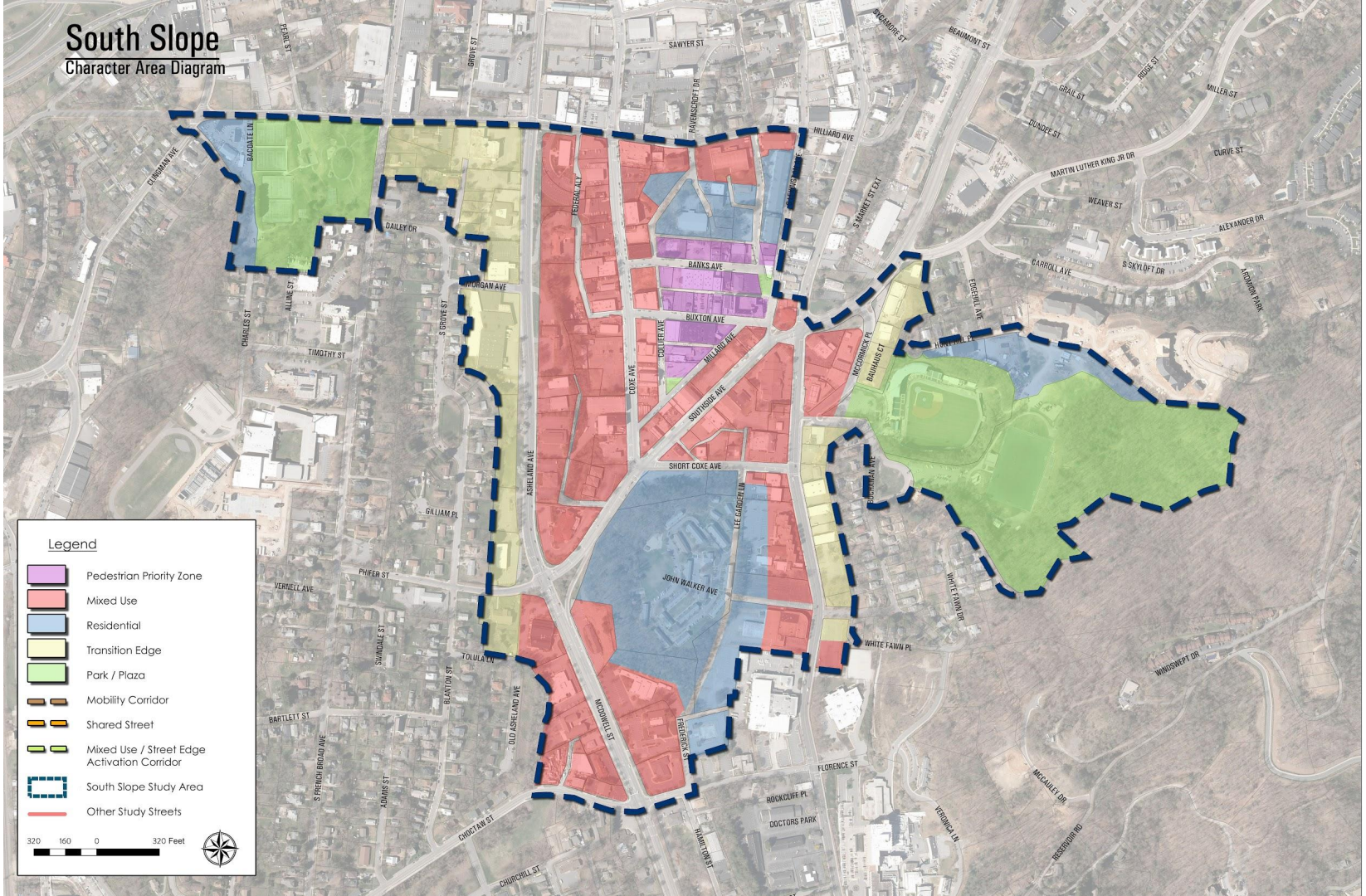
GOALS

1) Identify, respect, and celebrate the unique and historic character of areas within the South Slope.
2) Encourage and reinforce a more urban form.
3) Encourage uses that support local residents.
4) Improve the quality of the public realm.



South Slope

Character Area Diagram



Unique and Inclusive Sense of Place

1) Create social and economic connections within the South Slope and with surrounding areas.

2) Make the South Slope area a welcoming and inclusive place for all of Asheville's residents.



A Strong Local Economy

Goals:

1. Encourage a mix of businesses which include local services and maker-spaces.
2. Support existing businesses to thrive and grow to their fullest potential.
3. Support development of new and existing BIPOC owned businesses.
4. Continue to strengthen organizational supports for businesses and the district.
5. Ensure that public infrastructure provides ample multi-modal access and gathering spaces.
6. Encourage a mix of unit types and sizes to attract a diverse population to the area.
7. Encourage the production, preservation & protection of affordable housing for local residents and the business community.

Multimodal Transportation

Goals

1. Create Safe, Accessible, and Pedestrian Friendly Streets.
2. Pursue transportation improvements that promote public space and vibrant streetlife.
3. Provide safe connected bicycle facilities within and through the district.
4. Increase viability of alleys for access to reduce driveways on major streets and provide additional pedestrian connections.

Strategic Infrastructure and Natural Environment

Goals:

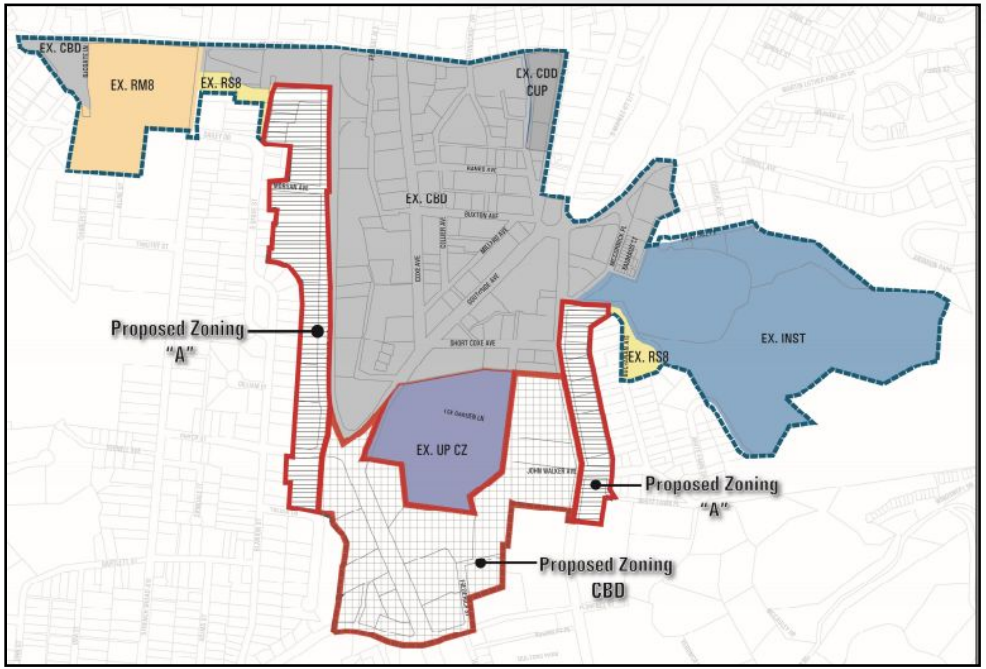
1. Implement Green Infrastructure to mitigate flooding and improve water quality.
2. Enhance the Urban Tree Canopy and Green Spaces.
3. Increase Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Production.
4. Build Streetscape infrastructure.

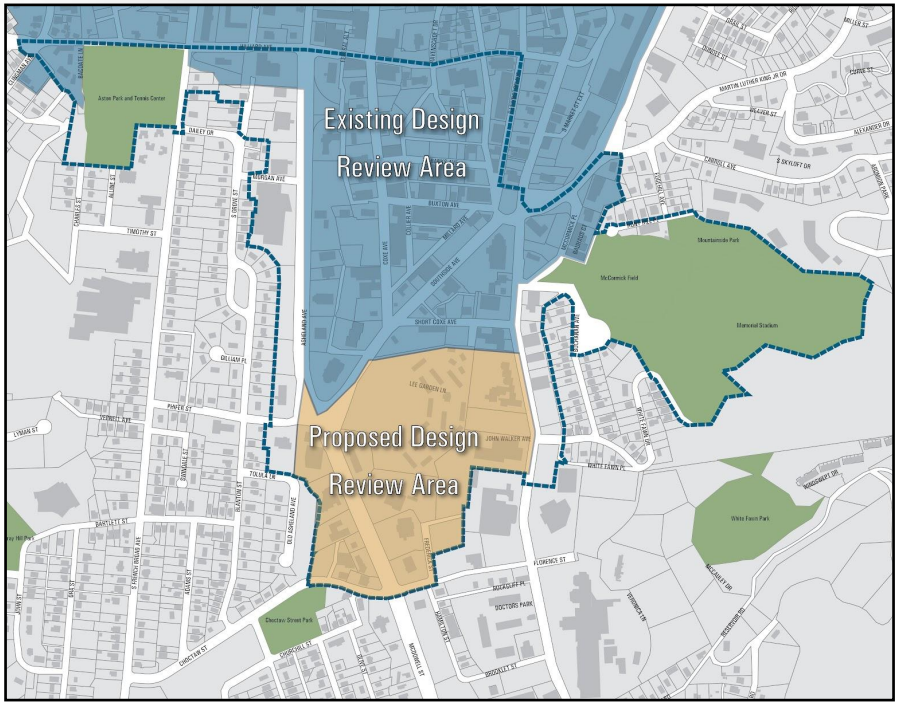


Ten Key Initiatives



Update Design Guidelines and Zoning to Achieve Community Goals



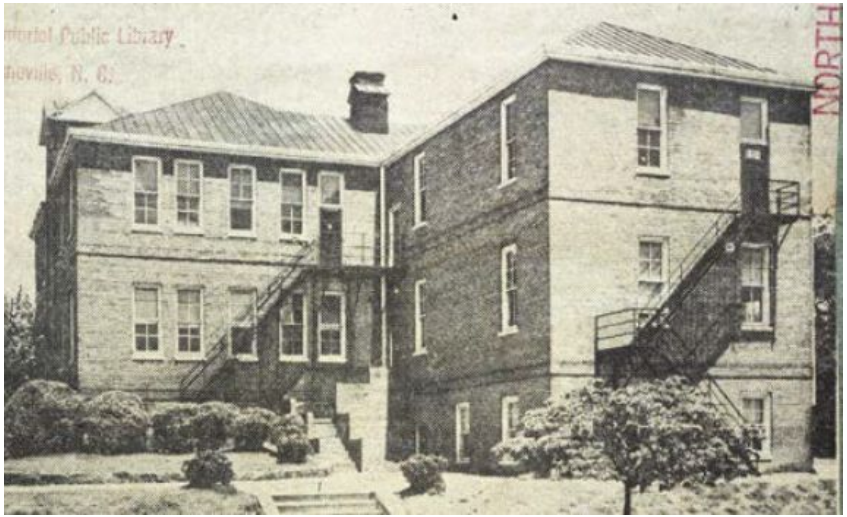


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Honor African-American History

1) Identify specific places that should be designated with public markers.
2) Coordinate with community leaders who are working on markers throughout the city.
3) Bring property and business owners together to discuss the potential for interpretive panels, signs, and/or plaques throughout the South Slope and Southside commercial areas.
4) Work with the Buncombe County Library and the African American Heritage Commission.
5) Explore the opportunity to work with Asheville City Schools and UNCA.





Develop City-owned Property for Affordable Housing and Job Creation





Enact Equitable Development to Benefit the Larger Community

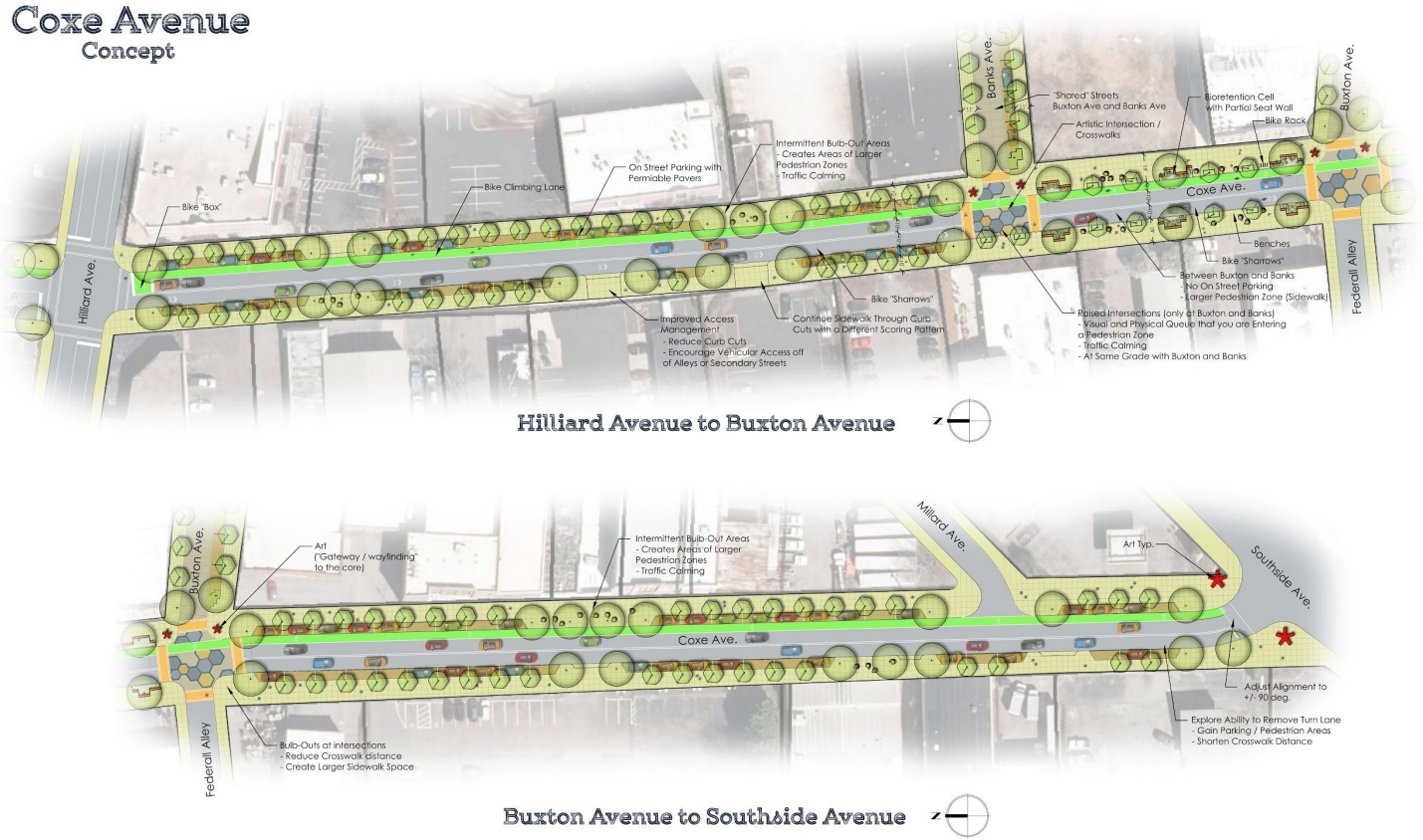
1) Develop mixed use projects that include both affordable residential and commercial spaces.
2) Expand existing affordable housing efforts including a Community Land Trust.
3) Engage anchor institutions and local businesses in voluntary buy, train and hire programs.
4) Support neighborhood preservation and capacity building efforts.



Southside Community Garden at the Arthur R. Edington Education & Career Center.

5) Identify opportunities for incorporating equitable development goals into broader City policies and other initiatives.
6) Look for opportunities to build relationships, partnerships and then projects between the South Slope Neighborhood Association, Southside Rising, East End/Valley Street Neighborhood and the Oakhurst Neighborhood.
7) Develop anti-displacement policies and strategies to counter the ever-increasing pressure on residents and businesses as the South Slope develops.

Make Coxe Avenue a Green Main Street



Alignment with City Plans

- The South Slope Vision Plan is aligned with both the Downtown Master Plan and the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan.
  - The DMP called for the development of small area plans, with attention to an urban design framework extending the sense of place and community.
  - There are a number of ways it aligns with the Living Asheville Plan including
    - Make Streets More Walkable, Comfortable and Connected.
    - Promote Small and Independent Business, Entrepreneurship and the Maker Economy.

Public Comment on the Draft Plan

- The Public Input site received close to 5000 comments from 276 participants. Many respondents live in or near the study area (43%).
- Much of the public comment reinforces the plan's strategies.
- The community cares deeply about the area being accessible through safe transportation modes, small local businesses and honoring the history of the area.
- The desire for a local grocery store and supporting local businesses/services was mentioned numerous times.
- Concerns about growth and tourism and the impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods are also reflected in the comments.

Public Comment on the Draft Plan

- Several neighborhoods were concerned about language in the plan around future rezoning near neighborhoods and/or the maps included in the plan.
- Staff worked with these 3 neighborhoods: South French Broad, East End Valley Street and Oakhurst during the Fall and Winter to make revisions to the plan that everyone could agree with.
- Language changes include clarification about the plan's boundaries, removal of language speculating on future zoning districts, an explanation of the potential height map and an explanation of how the rezoning process will work after plan adoption.
- Two key maps were revised to better reflect neighborhood boundaries.

Commission Reviews

- Downtown Commission reviewed the plan and voted to recommend adoption in June 2022 with a vote of 9-0.

- Planning & Zoning Commission voted to recommend adoption of the Plan on August 3, 2022 with a vote of 7-0.

Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends adoption of the plan.
- The plan will serve as a guide for future investment, policies and engagement with the community.
- Adoption of the plan does not commit the city to carry out specific projects or regulatory changes, but rather suggests an overall vision for the area.
    - Adoption of the plan will also give its recommendations more weight when considering capital improvements and other policy decisions.

Suggested Motion

- **Move to adopt the South Slope: A Southside Neighborhood Vision Plan** and find that the request is reasonable, is in the public interest, is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and other adopted plans, and meets the needs of the community in that the plan:
  1. Builds on the existing assets and history of the study area as a part of the larger Southside community;
  2. Creates a vision that values equity and inclusion and equitable development so that growth benefits the whole community;
  3. Provides a framework for future development of buildings and transportation infrastructure; and,
  4. Calls for the support of local businesses and the development of affordable housing.