

ROSA PARKS - CLAIRMOUNT

Neighborhood Framework + Land Stewardship Plan

Planning + Development Department
City of Detroit August 2019



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION FRAMEWORK + LAND STEWARDSHIP PLAN

ROSA PARKS - CLAIRMOUNT

CITY OF DETROIT

MAYOR MICHAEL DUGGAN

PLANNING + DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

MAURICE COX, DIRECTOR

AUGUST 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF DETROIT

Planning & Development Department (PDD)

Department of Neighborhoods (DON)

Housing & Revitalization Department (HRD)

Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA)

General Services Department (GSD)

Department of Public Works (DPW)

Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)

Mayor's Office, Jobs & Economy Team (JET)

Detroit Police Department-Neighborhood Police Officers (DPD-NPO)

Buildings, Safety, Engineering, & Environmental Department (BSEED)

Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD)

Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT)

Public Lighting Authority (PLA)

Detroit City Council District 5, Council President Pro Tem Mary Sheffield

Detroit City Council At-Large, Office of Council President Brenda Jones

Detroit City Council At-Large, Office of Council Member Janeé L. Ayers

City Planning Commission Staff (CPC)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Karasi Development Group

Herman Kiefer Development (HKD)

HKD Neighborhood Advisory Council

Central Detroit Christian CDC

Brothers Always Together

Detroit Historical Society

Gladstone Block Club

Piety Hill Block Club

Virginia Park Block Club

J. Walker Williams Recreation Center

Virginia Park Community Plaza

Henry Ford Health Systems

The many community residents and groups who provided their thoughts and feedback throughout this process

The interns who supported community events, research, graphics, and edits to this work

CONSULTING PARTNERS

Gensler

Hood Design Studio

JFM Consulting Group

Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants

Streetsense

CONTENTS

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2	VISION + MISSION	11
3	FRAMEWORK GOALS	13
4	COMMUNITY INPUT	15
5	EXISTING CONDITIONS	25
6	NEAR-TERM ACTIONS + IMPLEMENTATION	55
7	LONG-TERM VISION	85
8	CONCLUSION	113







EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Rosa Parks–Clairmount Framework addresses a community with a rich legacy and a promising future. Residents value their neighbors and the history of their neighborhood but feel challenged by the prevalence of vacant land in the area and its effect on safety, walkability, and cohesion.

This framework, in alignment with corresponding efforts being pursued by the City of Detroit, seeks to: showcase community identity in the physical environment through historically-informed urban design; build continuity through innovative low-cost land stewardship; stabilize neighborhoods through targeted housing improvements and redevelopment; and increase walkability and connectivity through enhanced pedestrian and cycling networks. It does so through three strategies: Landscape, Mobility, and Housing + Economic Development.

The aim of this framework is defined by the following guiding principles:

BUILD ON STRENGTH. *GROW WITH WHO + WHAT IS ALREADY PRESENT.*

HONOR COMMUNITY LEGACY, PAST + PRESENT. *RESPECT THE STORIES OF RESIDENTS + THEIR COMMUNITY.*

MAKE VACANT LOTS WORK FOR RESIDENTS. *EMPOWER RESIDENTS TO TRANSFORM VACANCY INTO OPPORTUNITY.*

CULTIVATE FRONT DOOR ACCESS TO COMMUNITY ASSETS. *LOCATE GOODS + SERVICES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE.*



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF PROPOSED VIRGINIA PARK COMMUNITY PLAZA PROMENADE

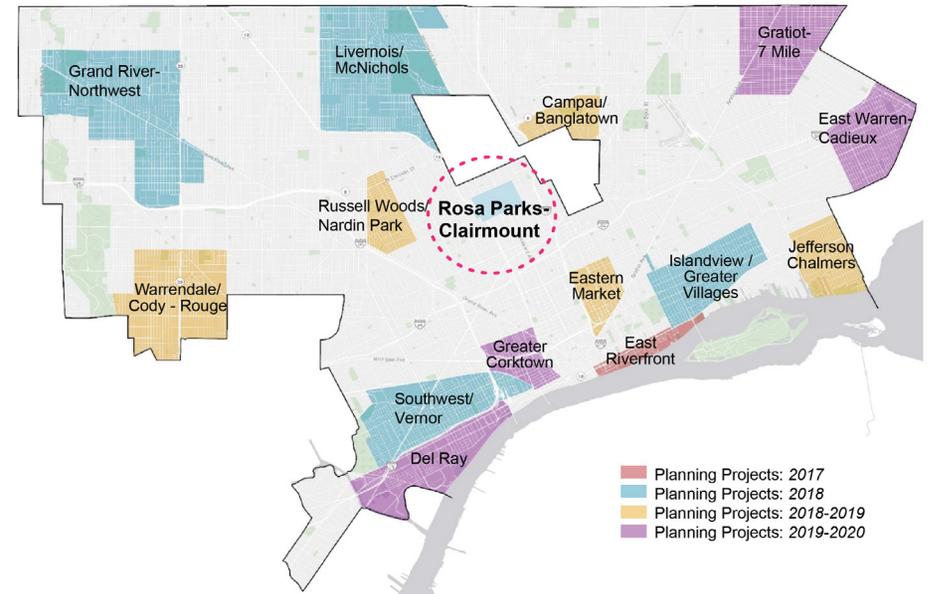
THE NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK AREA

This framework encompasses a Neighborhood Framework Area of 385 acres north of New Center, approximately bound by Clairmount Avenue to the north, Virginia Park Street to the south, Woodward Avenue to the east, and Rosa Parks Boulevard to the west. The Neighborhood Framework Area sits 4 miles from downtown, about a 10 minute drive via the M-10 freeway that bisects it.

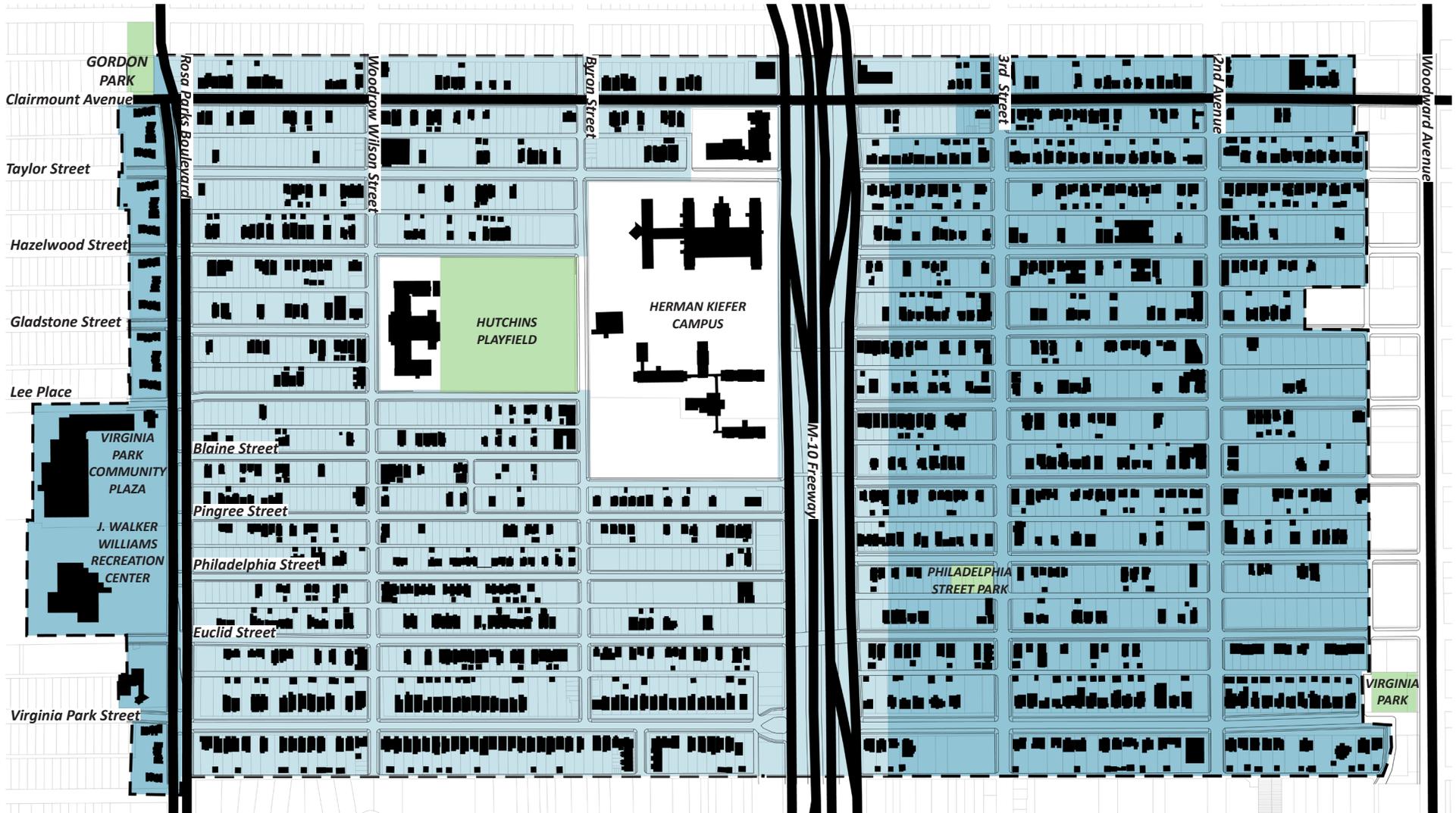
The Neighborhood Framework Area is structured by Rosa Parks Boulevard, Clairmount Avenue, and Woodward Avenue, linking two commercial corridors across the M-10 freeway. Rosa Parks Boulevard has historic significance as the site of the former 12th Street corridor. Gordon Park sits at the corner of Rosa Parks Boulevard and Clairmount Avenue, marking where the 1967 Uprising began.

Within the Neighborhood Framework Area sits the 38 acre Herman Kiefer campus, composed of nine structures situated on a larger site of lawn and surface parking. The campus is currently under redevelopment by Herman Kiefer Development, LLC. Also within the Neighborhood Framework Area is a superblock adjacent to Rosa Parks Boulevard hosting the Virginia Park Community Plaza shopping center, the J. Walker Williams Recreation Center, Virginia Park Medical Center, and the Virginia Park Meadows senior apartments.

The Neighborhood Framework Area contains the Land Stewardship Area, roughly the portion between Rosa Parks Boulevard and the M-10 freeway. The Land Stewardship Area represents Herman Kiefer Development's scope of obligations arising from the Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) process.



NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK PLAN PIPELINE 2017-2020



NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK AREA LAND STEWARDSHIP AREA

ROSA PARKS - CLAIMOUNT NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK AREA

WHY THIS PLACE?

The Neighborhood Framework Area hosts a variety of assets within its bounds:

- The community's traditions of business excellence, civil rights advocacy, and resident organizing;
- The work of committed block clubs;
- The resident-owned Virginia Park Community Plaza and the City's J. Walker Williams Recreation Center;
- Over 110 structures that may be rehabbed in its housing stock; and
- The forthcoming Herman Kiefer campus redevelopment and its related investments.

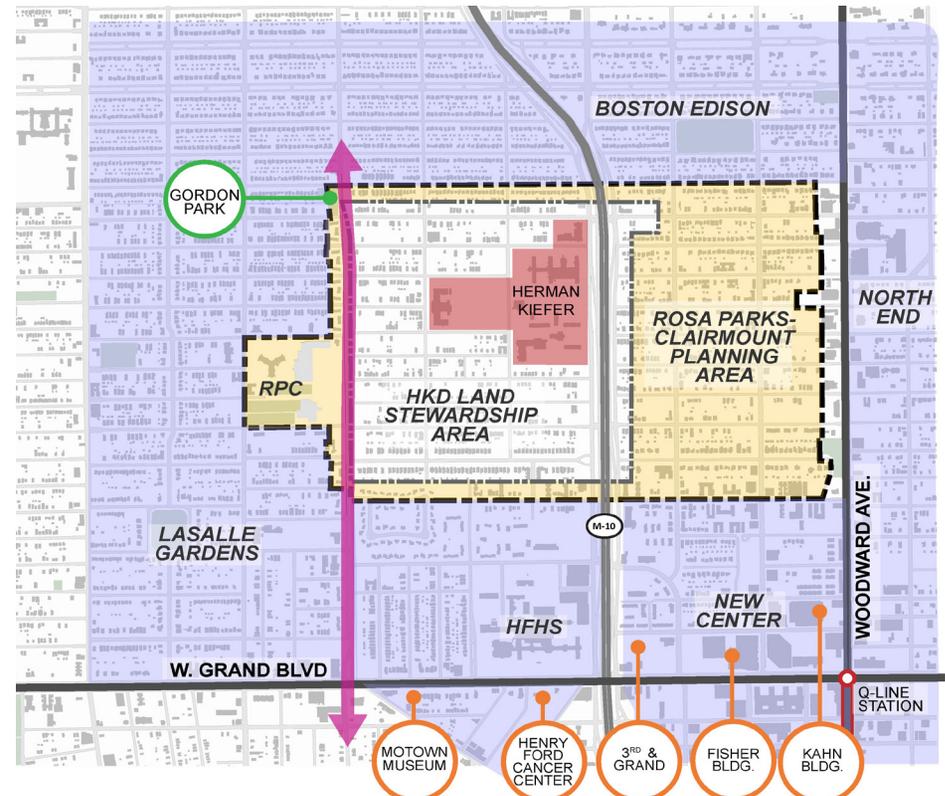
Additionally, the Neighborhood Framework Area overlaps with or is proximate to many outlying assets, including:

- The historic Boston Edison and Virginia Park neighborhoods;
- The Woodward Transit Corridor and Q-Line;
- The Henry Ford Health System campus; and
- New Center.

In consideration of the location and proximity of these assets, this framework lays out the area's potential for improved residential conditions and population growth as the rationale for the City's investment and support.



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF THE HERMAN KIEFER CAMPUS REDEVELOPMENT (SOURCE: HKD)



MAP OF COMMUNITY ASSETS WITHIN OR PROXIMATE TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD FRAMEWORK AREA

WHAT WE HEARD: COMMUNITY INPUT

The City of Detroit and its consultant partners hosted a passionate group of residents and stakeholders through four community forums to create a shared understanding of existing conditions and possible futures for the area. Participants gave insight on local history and identity, spoke to priorities and needs, and helped surface potential solutions. These forums, in addition to meetings with block clubs and weekly office hours, were crucial in the delineation of the framework's three strategies.

This process ran simultaneously to a newly-implemented CBO process, the City's first, between Herman Kiefer Development and residents via a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC). The resulting agreement, the Neighborhood Benefits Provision (NBP), includes commitments by Herman Kiefer Development to rehabilitate vacant structures, maintain lots, engage residents in workforce development initiatives, and provide community programming.

Takeaways from these processes include:

PAST

- The intertwined histories of **12th Street** and **Rosa Parks Boulevard** should be commemorated.
- The **historic architecture** of the area should be maintained.

PRESENT

- **Residents value their neighbors.**
- **Safety** is a major concern and should be a top priority.
- **J. Walker Williams Recreation Center + Virginia Park Community Plaza** are community anchors that could host a future civic node.
- **Hutchins Playfield** should serve as space for recreation while acknowledging its history.

FUTURE

- Future development should be managed equitably to ensure **resident preservation** and **development without displacement**.
- **Retail** is desired along Rosa Parks Boulevard to have goods and services available close to home.
- More **walkable destinations** are desired.
- The community needs development for **children** and **seniors**.



RESIDENTS ENGAGED IN A VARIETY OF VISIONING ACTIVITIES OVER FOUR FORUMS

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF LOW-MOW LOT STRATEGIES

The Landscape Strategy builds cohesion by restructuring open space, facilitates safe passage of residents to assets and employment centers from the north to the south, elevates and beautifies vacant lots with land-based ventures, and celebrates community identity through historical markers and commemorative sites.

The strategy has three priority areas:

- **Parks + Open Space** -- public space improvements along key north-south streets from Clairmount Avenue to Virginia Park Street;
- **Land Stewardship Plan** -- activations of vacant lots for land-based ventures, safety, and visual legibility across the landscape; and
- **The Legacy Loop** -- a pedestrian-friendly circuit linking historic markers and community assets from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Woodward Avenue.

MOBILITY STRATEGY

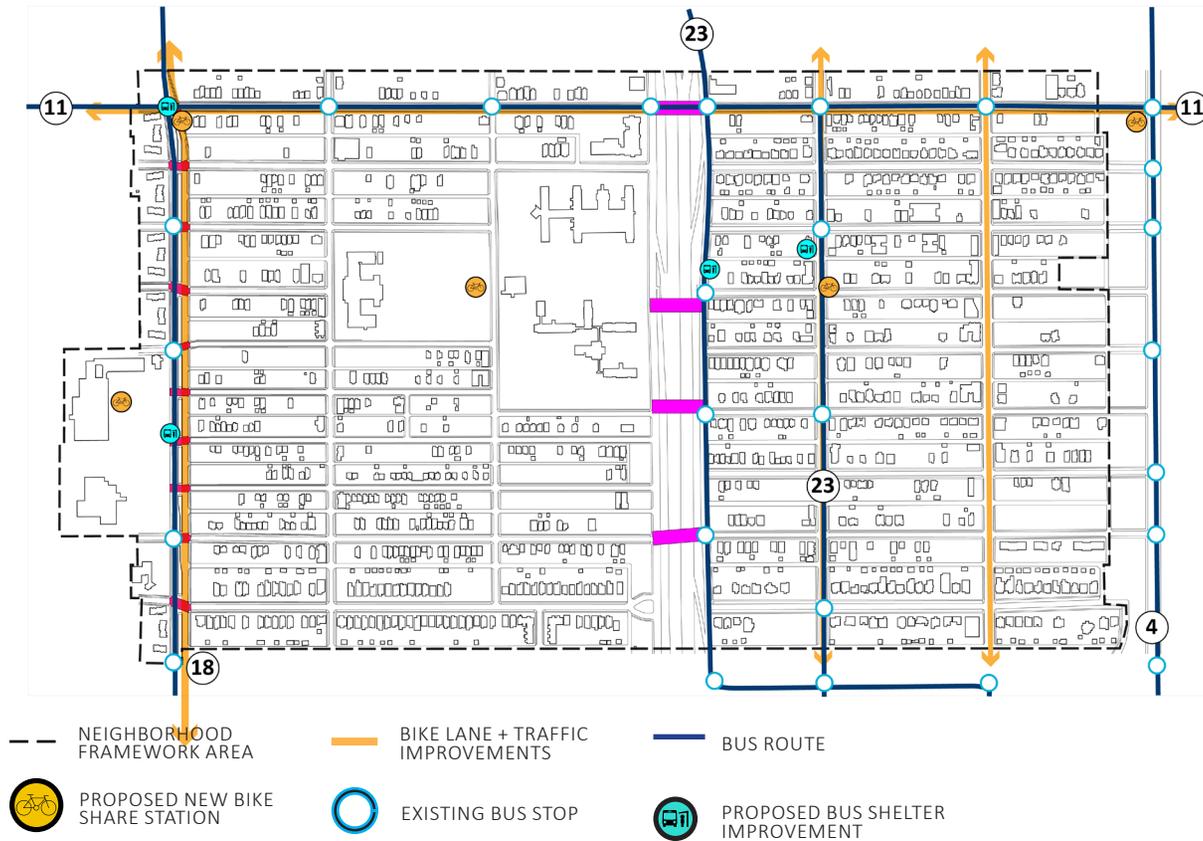


DIAGRAM OF MOBILITY STRATEGY IMPROVEMENTS

The Mobility Strategy improves residents' connections to employment centers, goods and services, and amenities through the area and improves capacity and safety for travelers on foot, bike, and bus.

This strategy has four priority areas:

- **North-to-South Connections** -- streetscape improvements to improve access to Grand Boulevard and New Center along Rosa Parks Boulevard, 2nd Avenue, and 3rd Street
- **East-West Connections** -- streetscape improvements to link community assets at Virginia Park Community Plaza, the Herman Kiefer campus, and Woodward Avenue;
- **Capacity + Safety** -- expansion of cyclist and transit infrastructure along key corridors and sidewalk and street tree improvements throughout; and
- **Grand Boulevard Intersection** -- realignment of Rosa Parks Boulevard at Grand Boulevard to open community to two-way travel and create bus routes to the south.

HOUSING + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



CONCEPTUAL VIEW OF RUTH ELLIS CENTER ON CLAIRMOUNT AVENUE OPPORTUNITY SITE

The Housing + Economic Development Strategy stabilizes existing housing stock to retain and attract residents, aligns with the redevelopment of the Herman Kiefer campus, strategically focuses redevelopment efforts at and along key sites and corridors, and facilitates opportunities for retail and land-based ventures in the area.



CONCEPTUAL VIEW OF MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING ON 801 VIRGINIA PARK STREET OPPORTUNITY SITE

The strategy has four priority areas:

- **Housing Rehabilitation** -- stabilization and preservation of publicly-owned structures and redevelopment support for privately-owned structures;
- **Herman Kiefer Development** -- alignment Herman Kiefer Development's neighborhood revitalization efforts;
- **Opportunity Sites** -- support for development at Clairmount Avenue and Virginia Park Street Opportunity Sites; and
- **Commercial Opportunities** -- Zoning support for land-based ventures on vacant lots and development support for retail in Virginia Park Community Plaza.

OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITY AREA	NEAR-TERM	LONG-TERM
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY		
Parks + Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect neighborhood across Rosa Parks Boulevard to J. Walker Williams Recreation Center and Virginia Park Community Plaza with new Virginia Park Community Plaza Promenade Restore Gordon Park, 3rd Street and Philadelphia Street Park, and Hutchins Playfield, and expand MLK Plaza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and build gateways at Rosa Parks Boulevard and Clairmount Avenue, Rosa Parks Boulevard and Pingree Street, and Rosa Parks Boulevard and Grand Boulevard Study prospects for a linear park or development on parcels along the eastern side of Rosa Parks Boulevard.
Land Stewardship Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement low mow regime Establish pilot tree nurseries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand tree nurseries as appropriate Connect nursery trees to neighborhood and city projects Establish long-term planting design strategies
Legacy Loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add 12th Street signage to Rosa Parks Boulevard Design and build protected bicycle lanes, landscaped medians, and enhanced crosswalks to Rosa Parks Boulevard Support community-led activations of outdoor program spaces on vacant lots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibilities of public art, art houses, and community houses Uncover historic Virginia Park Street brick pavers Redesign park with historic Algiers Motel footprint
MOBILITY STRATEGY		
North-to-South Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add protected bike lanes to Rosa Parks Boulevard Reconfigure Rosa Parks Boulevard at Grand Boulevard into a two-way intersection Reconfigure Rosa Parks Boulevard south of Grand Boulevard into a two-way street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore closure of northbound Rosa Parks Boulevard lanes for potential linear park or development on parcels across from Virginia Park Community Plaza Convert 2nd Avenue and 3rd Street to two-way traffic, adding bicycle lanes and implementing streetscape improvements
East-West Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement crosswalk improvements across Rosa Parks Boulevard at Blaine Street, Pingree Street, and Euclid Street Replace sidewalks and plant street trees to support Herman Kiefer campus connection to Rosa Parks Boulevard and Clairmount Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring Clairmount Avenue to Complete Street standards with protected bike lanes and sidewalks Implement pedestrian bridge improvements across the M-10 Freeway at Clairmount Avenue, Gladstone Avenue, Pingree Street, and Euclid Street
Capacity + Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand bike share system to add stations at Virginia Park Community Plaza, Rosa Parks Boulevard at Clairmount Avenue, Peaches and Greens, Woodward at Clairmount, and Herman Kiefer campus Improve bus shelters at Virginia Park Community Plaza, Rosa Parks Boulevard at Clairmount Avenue, and M-10 Service Drive on both sides of the M-10 Freeway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility and implementation partner for regional microtransit system Streamline and consolidate bus transit routes to match streetscape improvements Complete comprehensive sidewalk repair and replacement program
HOUSING + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY		
Housing Rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct targeted board-up and rehabilitation of single-family homes and duplexes Assess feasibility of rehabilitation for priority multi-family structures, engage private owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release targeted RFP for rehabilitation of publicly-owned multi-family structures Focus code enforcement tools towards redevelopment of privately-owned multi-family structures
Herman Kiefer Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist HKD efforts to improve neighborhood spaces and infrastructure Support HKD efforts for brokering an operator and activating the Herman Kiefer campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus new mixed-use development efforts on connecting Herman Kiefer campus to Rosa Parks Boulevard and Clairmount Avenue
Opportunity Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support ongoing development on Clairmount Avenue site Release RFP for development on Virginia Park Street site 	
Commercial Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Virginia Park Community Plaza to increase retail mix Market Virginia Park Community Plaza for enhanced retail and community center activities Prepare land-based ventures for conditional use applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add outlot development in Virginia Park Community Plaza's Rosa Parks Boulevard frontage Reconfigure Virginia Park Community Plaza parking lot to replace impervious surfaces, add trees and landscaping, and support outdoor pop-up markets Explore infill commercial development opportunities throughout community