



# Neighborhood Main Streets

A Plan for Revitalizing Milwaukie's  
Neighborhood Commercial Areas

June 2012



**MILWAUKIE**  
*Dogwood City of the West*

**HORIZON**  
Planning



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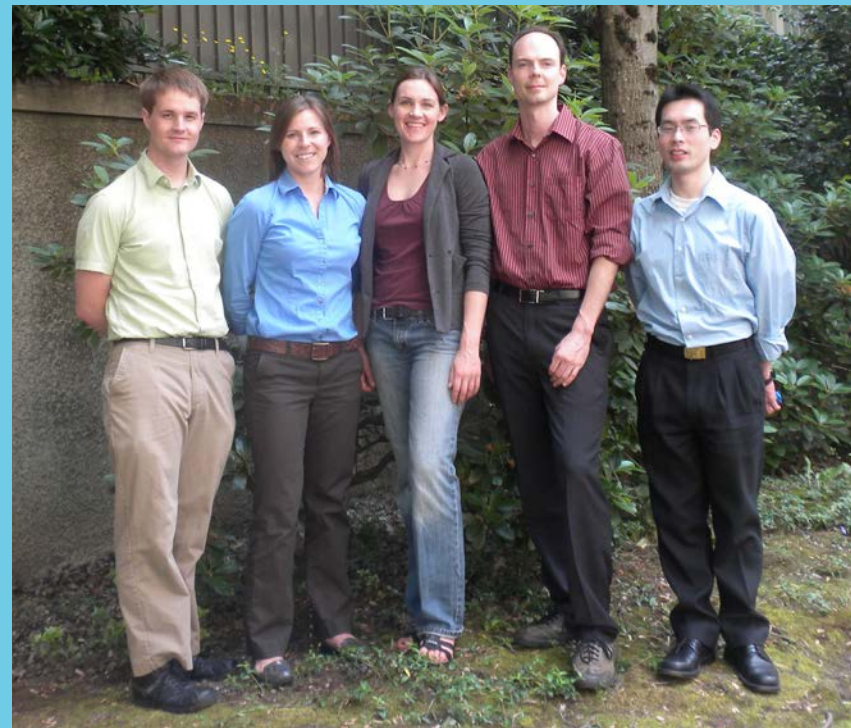
All who participated in our survey, interviews, Walking Tours, Workshop, and Open House  
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Lewelling NDA  
Hector Campbell NDA

## **Others:**

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Sincerely, Horizon Planning

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# Preface

*Neighborhood Main Streets: A Plan for Revitalizing Milwaukie's Neighborhood Commercial Areas* is a result of a partnership between the City of Milwaukie Planning Department and Horizon Planning. From January to June of 2012, Horizon Planning, a group of five students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning graduate program at Portland State University, developed this plan as a culmination of their studies.

The impetus for the project came from requests by Milwaukie residents for more walkable, vibrant commercial areas in their neighborhoods. The City was aware that the current zoning code was an obstacle to the development of “neighborhood main streets,” so the planning department sought out students at PSU to conduct public outreach, and to create a plan for two of Milwaukie’s commercial areas.

Horizon Planning set out to work with residents and business owners in these neighborhoods and deliver the following:

1. A Community Vision outlining the public’s shared vision for the commercial areas
2. A set of zoning recommendations that would shape new development into what the community desires
3. A transportation analysis and recommendations to improve access to and within the commercial areas
4. A market analysis and economic development recommendations to catalyze investment in the commercial areas

The *Neighborhood Main Streets Project* process was designed around two main objectives: Achieving community support and designing easily-implemented recommendations. This plan contains recommendations for the City and the community to transform their commercial areas into true “neighborhood main streets.”

Supporting documents with detailed information can be found on the City of Milwaukie website. These include a full Existing Conditions Report, a Public Involvement Report, and Final Recommendations







# Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Neighborhood Main Streets Project* was to assist the City of Milwaukie, its residents, and its business owners in developing a vision for their neighborhood main streets, then to devise collaborative solutions to reach that vision.

Horizon Planning worked closely with the community to shape a vision for the culture and identity of the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas. The project team also investigated barriers to achieving that vision, and finally, identified implementation recommendations and strategies that are appropriate for Milwaukie's neighborhood main streets.

Public involvement activities included:

- Stakeholder Interviews (13 participants)
- Survey (101 responses)
- Focus Group (20 participants)
- "I Want . . ." Posters (five locations)
- Walking Tours (19 participants)
- Visioning Workshop (16 participants)

This outreach resulted in a Community Vision Statement:

**"In the future, the commercial areas on 32nd and 42nd Avenues in Milwaukie are Neighborhood Main Streets. They are hubs of activity—places where local residents gather to shop, dine, and socialize. Tree-lined streets and attractive storefronts create a pleasant environment, and a mix of small-scale and locally-owned businesses fit in well to their established residential neighborhoods. Connections to these main streets from the surrounding areas allow people to safely and easily reach their destinations whether on foot, by bicycle, or by car."**

The Vision also includes three major goals for neighborhood main streets:

**Goal 1.** A Vibrant, Local Economy

**Goal 2.** Safe, Accessible Streets

**Goal 3.** Neighborhood Scale-Identity



## Recommendations

Horizon used the Community Vision Statement and goals as a framework in developing alternatives and recommendations. These were presented to the public at an Open House for comment before final presentation to the City.

### Goal 1. A Vibrant, Local Economy

#### Priority Recommendations

- Create a new neighborhood commercial zone with uses that are specific to Milwaukie's small-scale commercial areas
- Fill vacant storefronts with nontraditional uses such as co-working spaces, business incubators, cooperatives, or temporary pop-up shops
- Start a seasonal farmer's market on under-utilized parking lots

#### Other possible solutions

- Promote buy-local campaigns and community events for the neighborhood main streets
- Provide technical assistance to current and prospective business owners

### Goal 2. Safe, Accessible Streets

#### Priority Recommendations

- Improve walking and biking connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- Make sidewalks on the neighborhood main streets safer and more comfortable

#### Other possible solutions

- Improve pedestrian crossings at key intersections
- Add bike parking and identify on-street parking options in the future

### Goal 3. Neighborhood-Scale Identity

#### Priority Recommendations

- Establish Development Standards in the new commercial zone to ensure that new construction projects are pedestrian-scale
- Encourage the creation of places for people to gather
- Expand the new commercial zone along 42nd and 32nd Avenues

#### Other possible solutions

- Implement a Storefront Improvement program
- Reinforce the identity of the neighborhood main streets
- Encourage businesses to convert excess parking spaces to other uses



# CHAPTER

# 1

## Introduction

Walkable, vibrant communities have emerged as desirable places for people to live across the country. This is especially true for the city of Milwaukie, Oregon. While the City's reviving town center has retained its historic walkable character, the majority of Milwaukie's residents live in neighborhoods to the east of the town center which are physically isolated by Highway 224 and railroad tracks. The character of these areas is suburban, with mostly single family residences on a sometimes-disconnected grid. While these neighborhoods do contain some small businesses, they lack some basic goods and services and have limited gathering places for neighborhood residents.

In recent years, residents from these neighborhoods have expressed interest in being able to bike and walk to businesses that are part of an attractive, small-scale commercial area. Two specific commercial areas, along 32nd and 42nd Avenues, have received particular attention from residents, planners, and the city council (see map on page 11). These are Milwaukie's "neighborhood main streets."

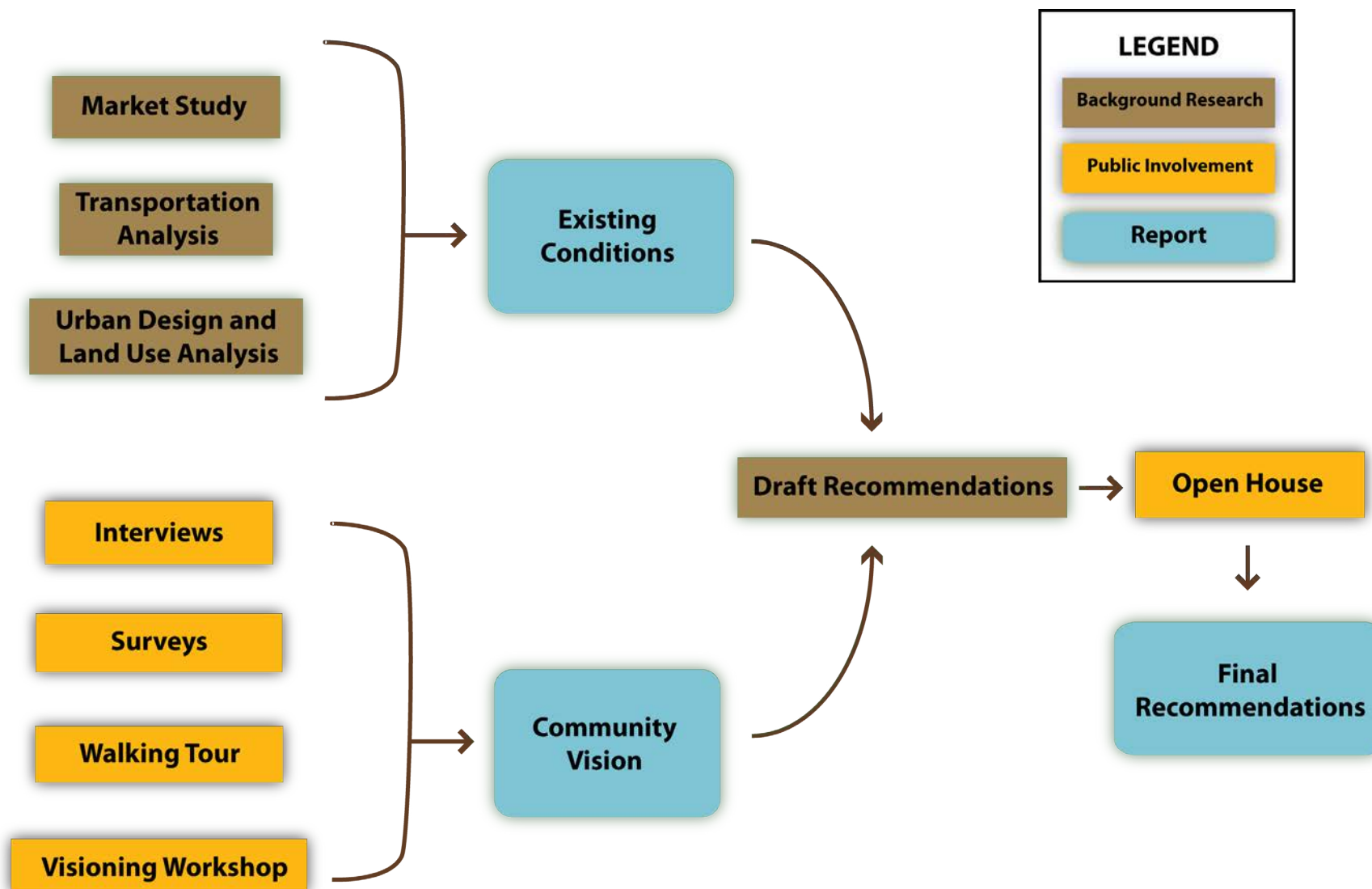
Horizon Planning undertook the *Neighborhood Main Streets Project* between January and June of 2012. The group began by studying existing conditions and simultaneously conducted public outreach activities for the purpose of creating a shared community Vision. This Vision guided the development of recommendations, which Horizon presented to the community at an Open House in order to vet the ideas and identify priorities. Final recommendations were presented to the City Council and City Planning Commission, and the project is now in the hands of the Milwaukie Planning Department and the stakeholders who participated in the process.

▼ Project flyers advertising public outreach events





## ▼ Diagram of Project Approach





# CHAPTER 2

## Project Context

### History

Milwaukie is a small city on the Willamette River just south of Portland, Oregon. A suburb of Portland, it boasts just over 20,000 residents and encompasses about five square miles. Most of Milwaukie's neighborhoods outside of its downtown developed during the suburban boom following World War II.

In the past, businesses along 32nd Avenue, formerly known as “Main Street Ardenwald,” included a piano shop, a grocery store, a blacksmith, a barber shop and beauty store, a garden supply store, and Renard's Hardware. The commercial area has seen decline since the 1960s, though businesses such as Lisac's Fireplaces and Stoves, which serves customers throughout the region, have held strong.

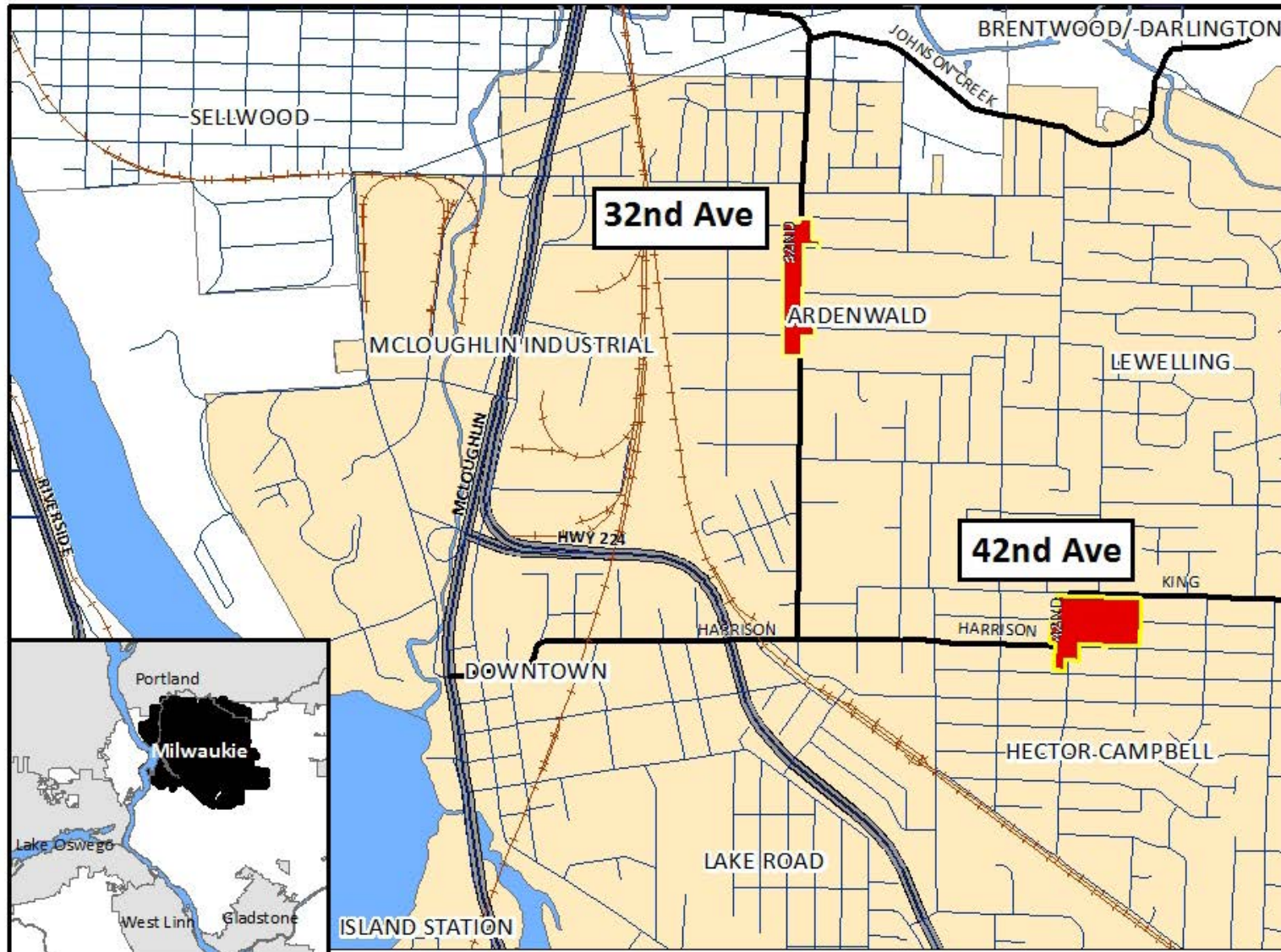
The commercial area on 42nd Avenue came to life in 1959 with the opening of Dieringer's shopping center. Half of the building was used for a grocery store, with the other half devoted to smaller uses. The center had three entrances and was surrounded by ample parking spaces. A few smaller businesses opened west of the site along 42nd Avenue. The shopping center struggled in its later years as larger commercial competitors opened nearby, and by the 1990s, the building had become outdated. After sitting vacant for several years, Safeway built a store on the site in the mid-2000s, and the remainder of the site was developed into small commercial strips.



Source: Gene Dieringer via the Oregonian.

▲ Shopping center built in 1959 at 42nd Ave. and King Rd.

## ▼ Project Focus Area in Milwaukie, Oregon

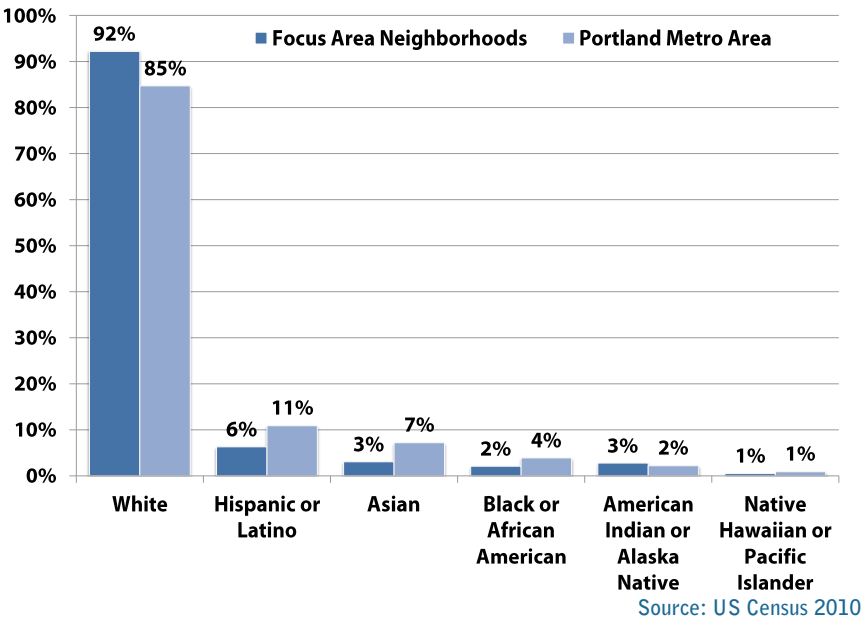




## Demographics

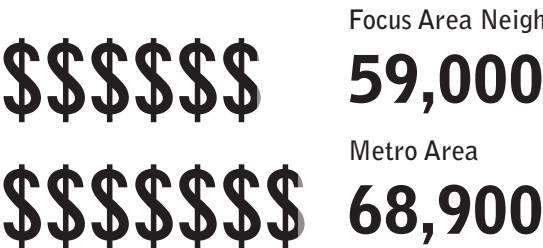
Three neighborhoods surround the two commercial areas: Ardenwald-Johnson Creek, Hector Campbell, and Lewelling, which are the project’s focus area neighborhoods. These three neighborhoods contain 10,661 residents.

▼ Race Distribution of Focus Area Neighborhoods and Metro Area



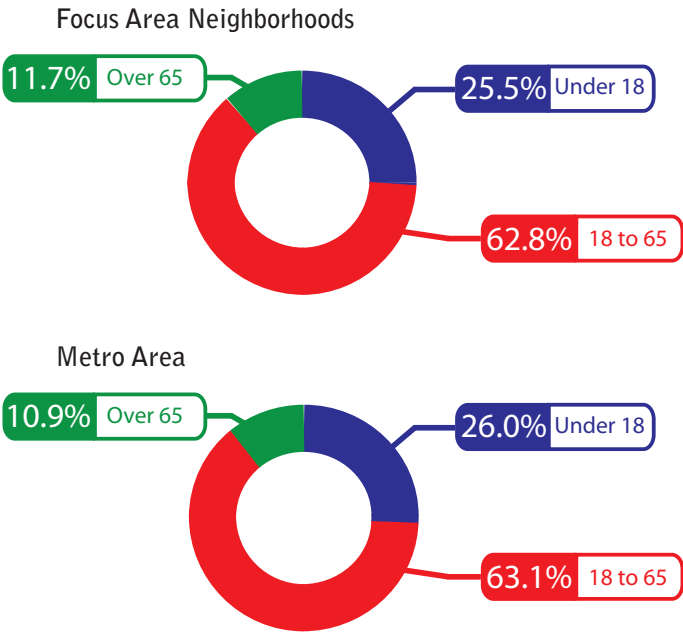
▼ Household Median Income

Milwaukie has a larger share of middle income households compared to the metro area, and a lower median income.



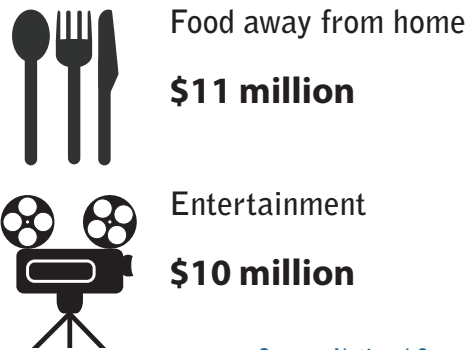
Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates

▼ Age Distribution



Source: US Census 2010

▼ Annual spending of Focus Area Residents on:



Source: National Consumer Expenditure Survey

## Commercial Areas

The 32nd Avenue commercial area (zoned C-L) is comprised of just six businesses along 1,050 feet (0.2 miles) between Olsen St. and Floss St. The look and feel of the street is dominated by residential structures, with six commercial buildings located at intersections along the street. The 2010 population of the 32nd Avenue market area is 4,475.

The 42nd Avenue commercial area (zoned C-G) is composed of about 38 businesses along 750 feet (0.15 miles) of 42nd Avenue from Jackson St. to King Rd. A large portion of the district is occupied by the King Road Center, a Safeway-anchored development with five buildings and entrances on both 42nd Avenue and King Road. The look and feel of the 42nd Ave. study area is primarily commercial due to the presence of signage and the large commercial buildings in the King Road Center which differ in style and scale from the surrounding residential areas. The 2010 population of the 42nd Avenue market area is 10,661.



For more information on project context see the Existing Conditions Report available on the City of Milwaukie website.

### Current Businesses in the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas

#### 32nd Ave. Businesses

Lisac's Fireplaces and Stoves  
Art House Coffee Shop  
Eric's Market  
Cheryl's Canine Styling  
Luther Davis Auto Repair  
Barb's Catering



#### 42nd Ave. Businesses

Safeway  
Super Burrito plus  
Snap fitness  
7-Eleven  
Safeway Gas Station  
Premier Auto Wholesale  
Papa Murphy's pizza  
Jasmine Nails  
Nisbett Jeweler  
Marian Prayer Center  
Professional Hair Salon  
American Family Insurance  
Mailhouse Plus  
Harrison Mart Gas Station  
Clackamas Book Exchange  
Alteration services  
B&J Coin Laundry  
Cedar Chiropractors  
Pete Anderson Realty  
Community Club Center  
West Coast Tae Kwon Do  
Off the Top Hair Salon





# CHAPTER 3

## Existing Conditions



Horizon Planning began its work with a study of existing conditions in the commercial areas that included an analysis of land use, zoning, transportation networks, demographics, and market potential. Horizon found both challenges and opportunities for creating walkable, vibrant neighborhood main streets. Some of these represent aspects that the City or community can change, and others represent realities that impact the potential for change, either positively or negatively. Although some challenges will be difficult to overcome, the analysis demonstrates that the commercial areas have the potential to be more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly.



## Challenges

### Inadequate Zoning Standards

The zoning codes for these two commercial areas (C-L on 32nd and C-G on 42nd) differ from each other, but neither is conducive to creating neighborhood-serving walkable main streets. On 32nd Avenue, eating establishment are not permitted under any circumstances. On 42nd Avenue, the zoning code allows a variety of businesses but contains no standards that encourage or require pedestrian-scale development. In addition, the City itself has commented that the code is “complicated, inconsistent, and cumbersome.”

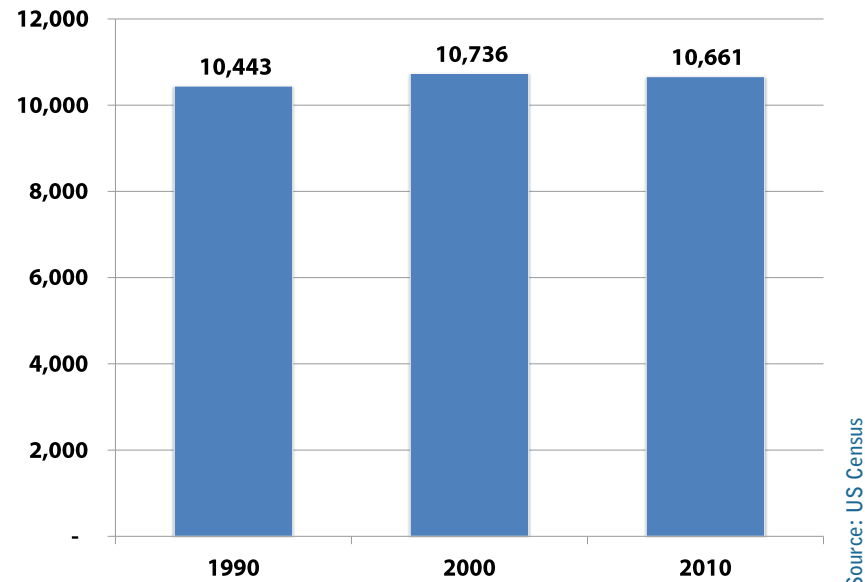
### Slow population growth

In the past two decades, the population of Milwaukie has remained stable while Portland and other parts of the region have grown. Thus, there has been little pressure for increased commercial development. Looking toward the future, population projections for the study area show very little growth. While this may change, the fact remains that the lack of population growth in these neighborhoods makes them a less attractive investment for developers and businesses.

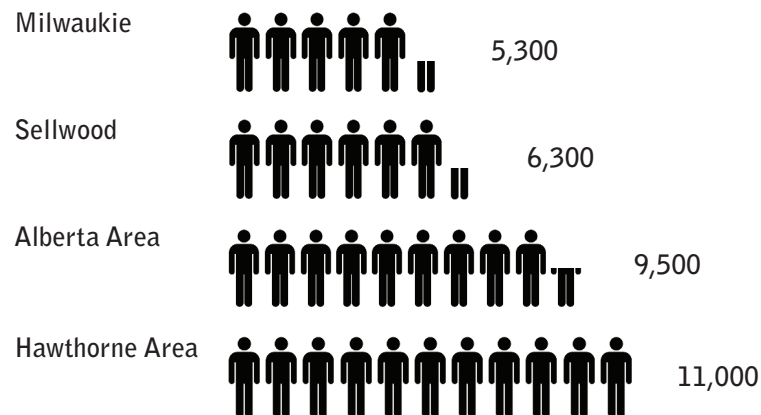
### Modest residential density

These commercial areas are neighborhood-serving, meaning the main source of customers are people who live in close proximity. These areas are not and likely will not become destinations for residents throughout the region, so the number of people living near these businesses is very significant. Vibrant commercial main streets elsewhere in the region are surrounded by much higher residential densities. Milwaukie’s density is average for the region, but is low enough to limit the number and types of businesses that will be able to operate there profitably.

Population of neighborhoods surrounding 32nd and 42nd Avenues, 1990-2010.



Persons per square mile of the surrounding neighborhoods of selected commercial areas





## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Challenges



#### Auto-oriented development

The recent development of the King Road shopping center at the corner of King Road and 42nd Avenue, while an improvement over what was previously there, is auto-oriented and does not contribute to a main street environment. The shopping center is surrounded by ample sidewalks, but none of the buildings are oriented toward them - instead they face the large parking lot.



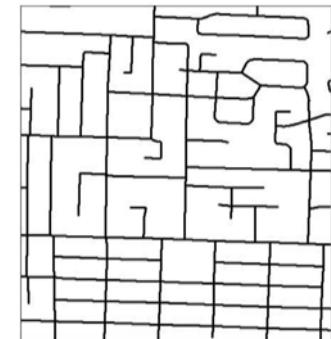
▲ Auto-oriented development along 42nd Ave.



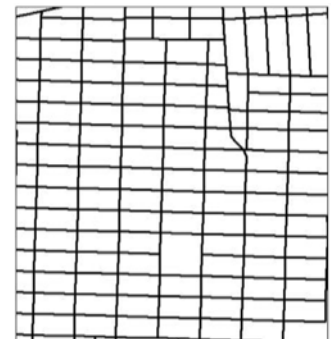
#### Poor pedestrian and bicycle connectivity

A dense, well-connected street network gives bicyclists and pedestrians a wide range of options when choosing a route. However the street network surrounding the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas is fairly fragmented, with many long blocks, dead ends, and 3-way intersections. Overall sidewalk coverage within the areas is quite low - near 40% for both areas. Few cross streets have consistent sidewalk coverage, and while these local streets carry low volumes of vehicle traffic, the lack of sidewalk infrastructure is a deterrent to many residents wishing to walk to the commercial areas.

◀ Sidewalks abruptly end



Street connectivity of Milwaukie neighborhoods (above) versus Sellwood neighborhood (below)



### **Narrow right-of-way on 32nd Avenue**

Main streets should be pedestrian friendly, which means wide, comfortable sidewalks and safe crossings. Currently, the sidewalks on 32nd Avenue are just 5 feet wide on average, with no planting strip or other kind of buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway. Pedestrians on these sidewalks walk very close to automobile traffic and even have a difficult time passing each other on such a narrow sidewalk. On-street parking is also a common feature of main streets, but 32nd has only two on-street parking spaces. The current width of the street, including sidewalks, is an average of 36 feet. An additional four feet is part of the legal right-of way, making the total 40 feet. But even with 40 feet, there is simply not enough room to create a street wide enough to include vehicle lanes, sidewalks, buffers, and on-street parking spaces.

### **Limited or less-than-ideal spaces for new businesses**

Available space for new businesses is limited, and the spaces that are available are not ideal for restaurants or other desired uses because of size, ceiling height, or level of visibility from the street. For some spaces, like the building on 32nd Avenue and Malcolm Street, a lot of work would be required to transform the space into a desirable place for customers to visit.

### **Absence of active business association or alliance to promote local businesses**

The only business organization that serves these commercial areas is the North Clackamas



▲ Existing 32nd Ave.

▼ Narrow sidewalks on 32nd Ave.

Chamber of Commerce, which serves a large area of Clackamas County. No businesses in the two commercial areas are part of this organization or any other business alliance or association. Without such an organization, any coordinated action to promote businesses or the commercial area in general will be difficult to carry out.

### **Spread-out commercial uses on 32nd Avenue**

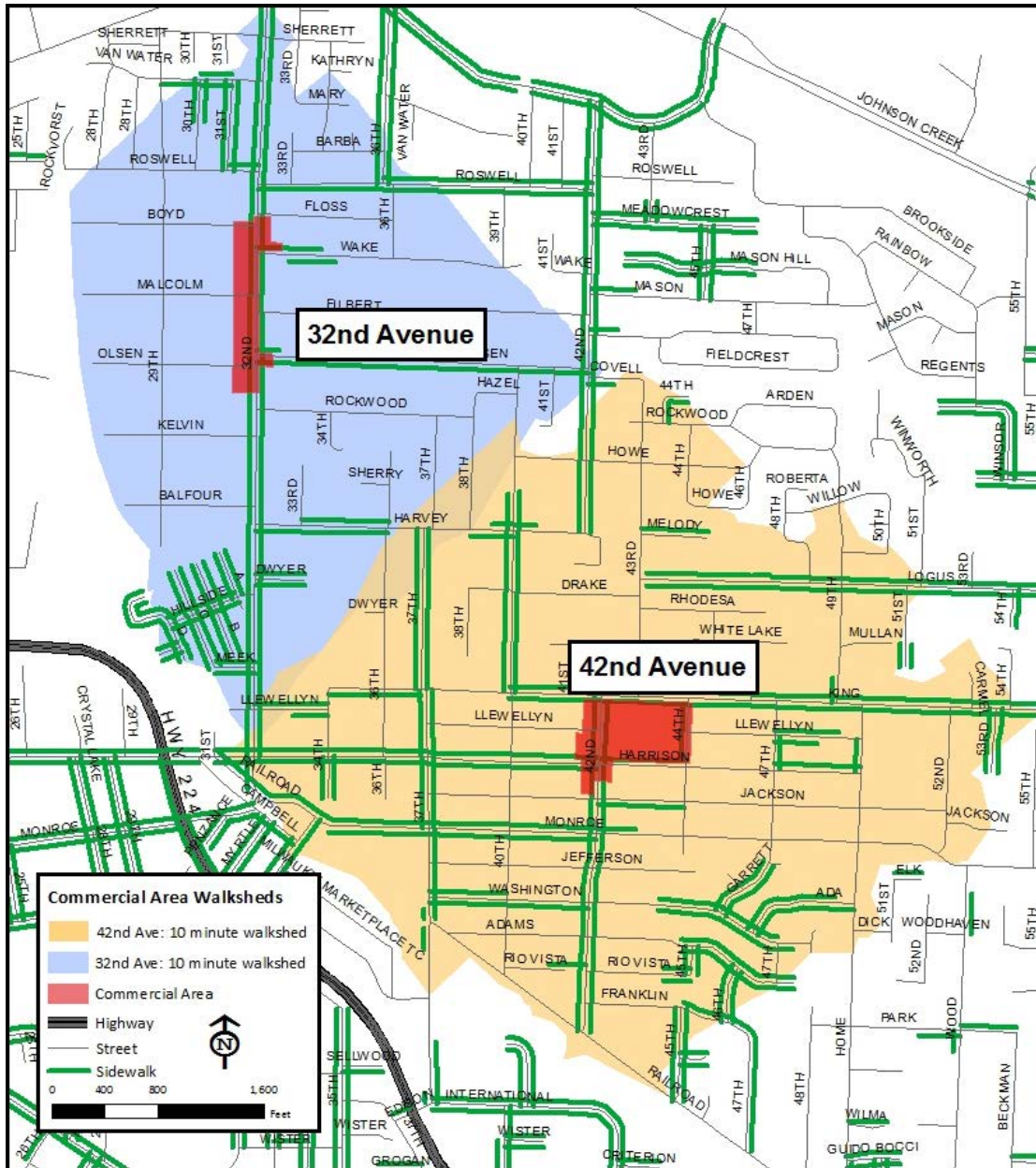
A concentration of activity is key for a vibrant main street. The few businesses that exist on 32nd are spread out along a few blocks, with single family homes in between. The lack of compactness spreads out street activity and makes people walk longer distances to go from business to business.





## EXISTING CONDITIONS

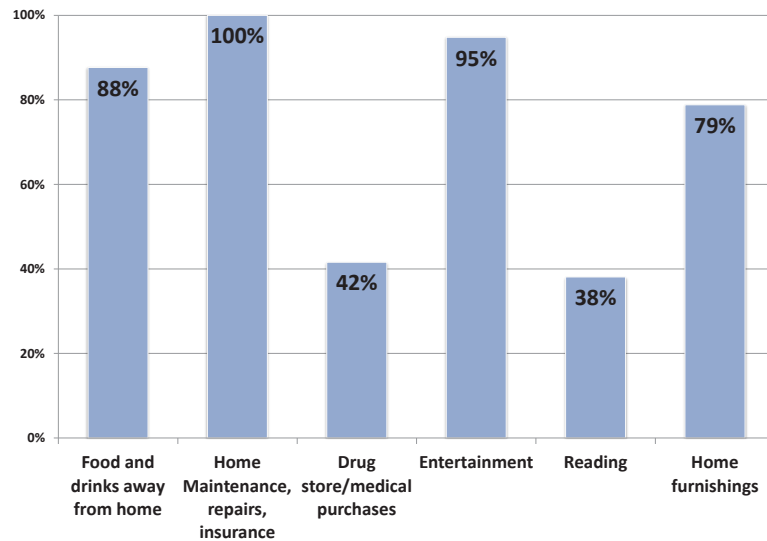
### Half-mile/10 minute walksheds of 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas



## Opportunities

**Thousands of people within walking distance**  
What is unique about the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas compared to others in Milwaukie is that they are completely surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Even though the surrounding neighborhoods have just moderate population density, a significant number of people live within walking distance (1/2 mile) of the commercial areas. For the 32nd Avenue area, 2,831 are within a half mile, and for the 42nd Avenue commercial area, 3,887 are within a half mile. Additionally, over 3,000 employees work within the three surrounding neighborhoods. The largest employer is the Providence Milwaukie Hospital on 32nd, where employees could be a source of customers for businesses on both 32nd and 42nd.

▼ Percent of household spending that occurs outside the 32nd and 42nd Avenue neighborhoods



Source: Consumer Expenditure Survey and Urban Land Institute

**Unmet demand for restaurants and other services and retail goods**

An analysis of consumer spending within the market areas of 32nd and 42nd Avenues shows that a lot of spending that could be captured by local businesses instead occurs outside of the neighborhood (see chart above). The two commercial areas lack many goods and services such as banking, entertainment, pet supplies, hardware, gardening supplies, and crafts. The analysis also indicates that the neighborhood could clearly support more restaurants than the three that are currently in operation. New businesses have the opportunity to reduce the leakage of dollars outside the neighborhood.

**Pedestrian scale development already in place**

On both 32nd and 42nd Avenues, there exists older development that is pedestrian scale —built to the sidewalk, low-rise, with large windows. These structures represent main street-style development and form the building blocks of a successful, walkable commercial area.

▼ Current existing pedestrian scale development





## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Opportunities



#### ▲ Existing home-based businesses

##### **Abundance of home-based businesses**

There are about 270 licensed home occupations in Milwaukie. The prevalence of home occupations not only reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of Milwaukie residents, but could also indicate the shortage of local office or commercial spaces. Some of these home-based businesses owners may be ready to expand into a commercial space if it becomes available close to home.

##### **City funding program for small scale pedestrian improvements**

Through the Walk Safely Milwaukie program, which began in 2010, the City of Milwaukie provides funding for small projects throughout the city to improve pedestrian safety. The Neighborhood District Associations first identify needed improvements and then apply for project funding. This resource could be used for projects in or near the commercial areas.

##### **Active community and civic organizations**

The commercial areas are surrounded by three Milwaukie neighborhoods which boast very active Neighborhood District Associations. These groups, some of which have non-profit status, manage a community garden and sponsor events such as concerts in the park, neighborhood picnics, and youth reading programs. Each year, the City of Milwaukie grants the NDAs \$4,000 for projects and programs. Other community organizations and events in Milwaukie include a recently formed Food Co-op, a weekly bicycle riding group called Bike Milwaukie, Celebrate Milwaukie Inc, which organizes the downtown farmers market, and a First Fridays program in downtown Milwaukie.

##### **High-volume transportation corridors**

Both 32nd and 42nd Avenues are fairly busy roads with a lot of vehicle traffic and frequent bus service. The King-42nd-Harrison corridor, which carries over 11,000 vehicles per day, is the main east-west connection through the City. 32nd Avenue is one of the only north-south corridors in the City and is a major connector to Southeast Portland. With so many people passing through each day, the visibility of businesses in these areas is high.

##### **Proximity of Springwater Corridor Multi-Use Trail**

The 20-mile Springwater Corridor paved trail connects Central Portland, Southeast Portland, Milwaukie, and Gresham. It is a widely-used path for both recreation and bicycle commuting. The 32nd Avenue commercial area is just a half mile walking or biking distance from the Corridor. The trail is also an important part of the pedestrian bicycle network for the Ardenwald neighborhood, spanning the 99E Expressway and connecting the Ardenwald neighborhood to the Sellwood neighborhood.

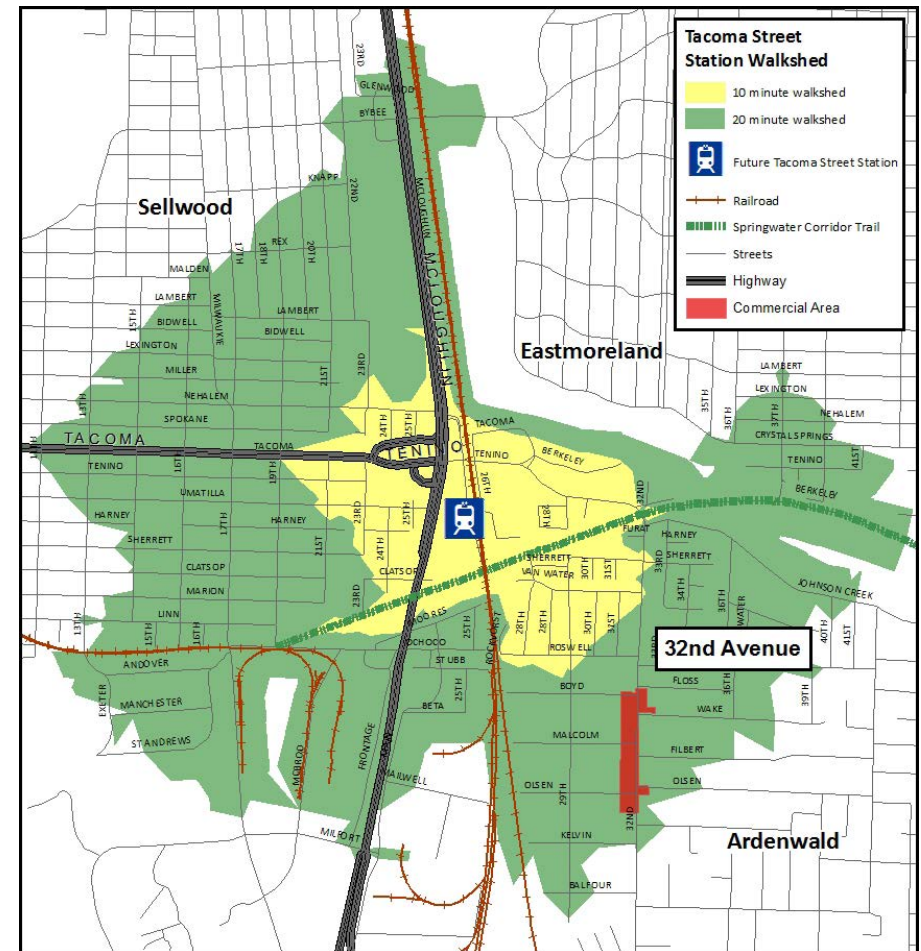
### Future light rail station

In 2015, the Tacoma St. MAX station will begin operating. This new transit connection may create opportunity as the station is within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile walking or biking distance from the 32nd Avenue commercial area. Increased foot traffic from commuters using 32nd to get to the station could add potential for businesses. The light rail line also may attract more residents to the relatively affordable Milwaukie area—people who could increase consumer demand for more businesses in the two commercial areas.

### Rendering of Tacoma Street Station.



### Walkshed of planned transit station at Tacoma Street.



For more information on Existing Conditions see the Existing Conditions Report available on the City of Milwaukie website



# CHAPTER 4

## Community Visioning

### Public Involvement

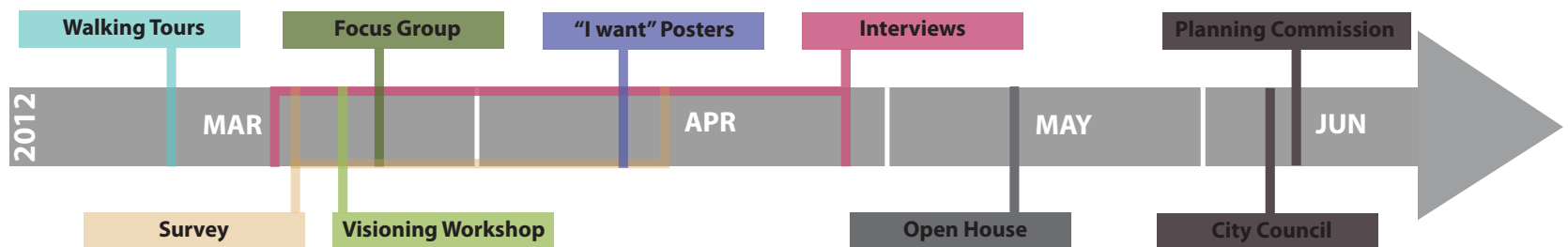
Public involvement has been a key component of the *Neighborhood Main Streets Project*. The Vision for the neighborhood main streets is based completely on input from community members in Milwaukie. The impetus for the project itself came from informal discussions with the public about the desire to see more diverse and accessible commercial uses. Horizon reached hundreds of Milwaukie residents and business owners by being active in the community and offering a variety of ways to participate.

In addition to the activities and events described here, Horizon Planning members attended monthly Neighborhood District Association (NDA) meetings for the Ardenwald, Hector Campbell and Lewelling neighborhoods to share project progress. Updates were also provided through the project website, hosted on the City of Milwaukie's website, as well as mentioned in the Milwaukie Pilot newsletter and Twitter updates.

Horizon used the following methods to engage the community in a visioning process to imagine what types of businesses and activities should be on their neighborhood main streets and how the main streets should look and feel.



Timeline of Public Involvement

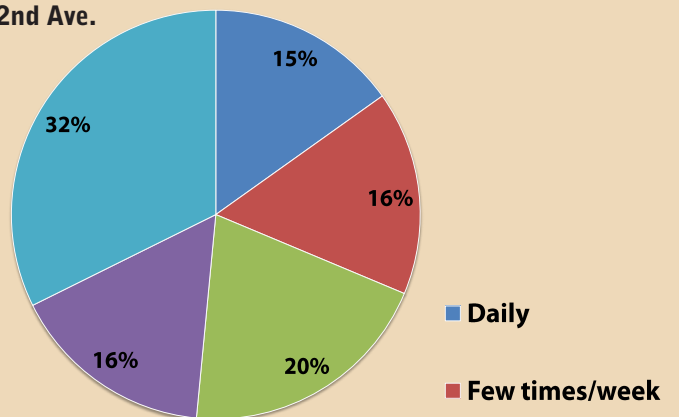


## Survey

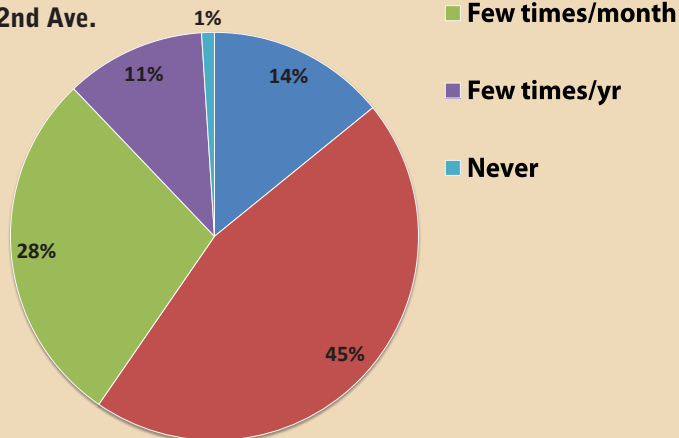
An online survey solicited initial input from the community regarding the project. Question topics included preferences about types of business, frequency and mode of travel to existing businesses, barriers to walking and biking, and willingness to see commercial redevelopment. The survey was available on the project website for approximately one month, with paper copies available at NDA meetings and the Workshop. It yielded 101 total responses.

Q. How often do you visit?

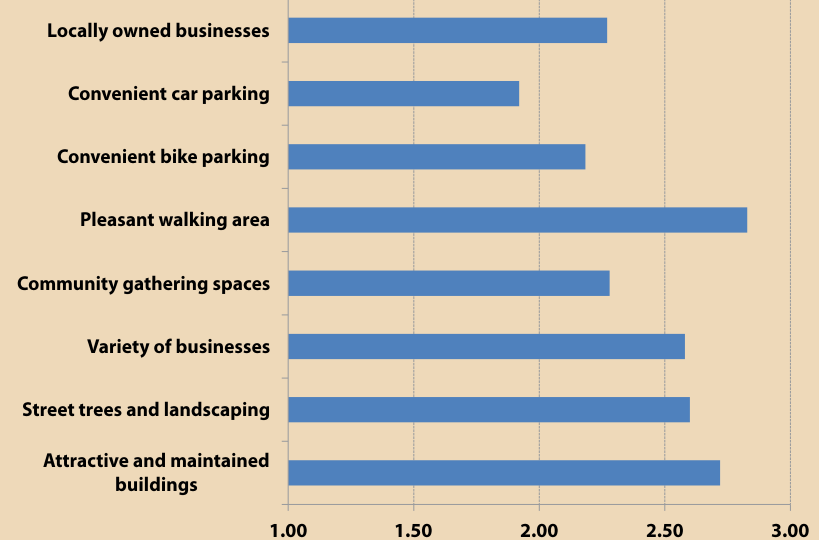
32nd Ave.



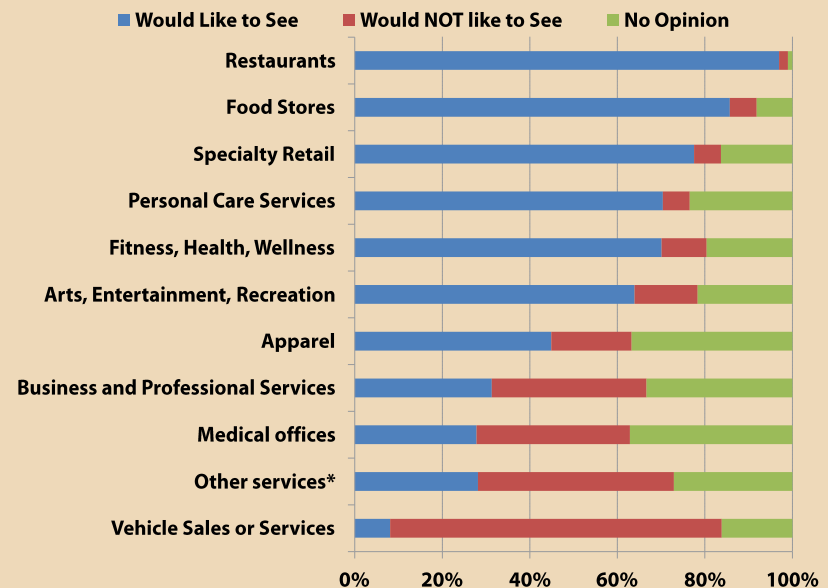
42nd Ave.



Q. How important are the following characteristics in your vision? (3 = very important, 1 = not important)



Q. What kinds of businesses would you like to see in the commercial areas?



\* Other services defined as appliance/electronics, repair, laundry/dry cleaning.



## Walking Tours

The purpose of the Walking Tours was to allow residents to point out specific strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations of the commercial areas with an emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian environment and urban design. Twelve residents attended the 32nd Avenue tour and seven attended the 42nd Avenue tour.



### Participants Prefer...

- Wider sidewalks
- More street trees
- Buildings that abut the street
- Local serving businesses
- Sidewalks for safe connections to the neighborhood
- Parking on-street or behind the building

## Workshop

The purpose of the Visioning Workshop was to obtain more nuanced input from community members about the strengths and weakness of the current commercial areas and the types of uses and businesses the community wants and does not want in the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas. Sixteen people participated in the two-hour Workshop.



### 32nd Ave Strengths

- Stable neighborhood
- Existence of sidewalks
- Residential-commercial mix
- Greenery
- Lisac's is a regional draw

### 32nd Ave Weaknesses

- Busy traffic
- No identity in commercial area
- Poor building appearance
- Lack of bicycle access
- Limited space for parking

### 42nd Ave Strengths

- Restaurants
- Availability of parking
- Community center is active
- Safeway design is attractive
- Potential for growth
- Lots of traffic – good visibility

### 42nd Ave Weaknesses

- Not designed for pedestrians
- Bad circulation in parking lot
- Confusing intersections
- Lack of greenery
- Used car lot is an eyesore

## Focus Group

Project team members attended a resident association meeting at Hillside Manor, a Clackamas County Housing Authority property, to ensure the involvement of these residents in the project. The purpose of the focus group was to find out what residents do and do not like about the two commercial areas, and to ask what types of uses residents would want to see in each area. There were approximately 20 residents in attendance.

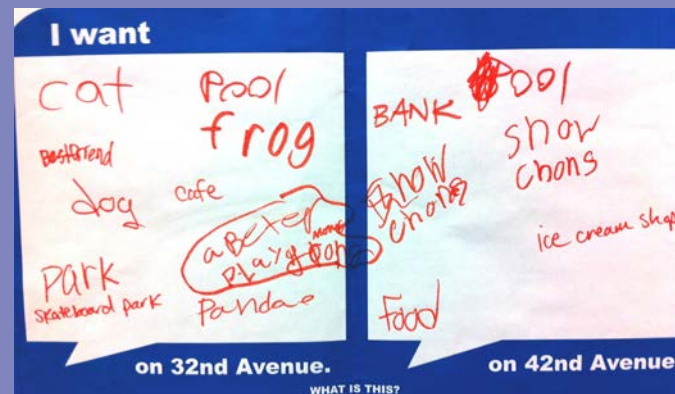


### Residents want...

- Restaurants
- Craft store/fabric store/art supplies
- Dairy Queen/ice cream
- Sushi restaurant
- Book store
- Medical clinic/urgent care
- Farmer's market /produce market
- Companion animal clinic
- Computer repair

## "I want..." posters

"I Want . . ." posters were hung at five locations in Milwaukie to reach specific groups that were otherwise unrepresented, namely families and children. The posters simply asked residents what they want on 32nd and 42nd Avenues and provided ample space for written responses. Two of the five posters put up yielded results: The poster at Hillside Manor, and the one at Ardenwald Elementary.



### Placed at:

- Ardenwald Elementary School
- Linwood Elementary School
- Hillside Manor
- Laundromat on 42nd Ave.
- Art House Cafe

## Interviews

The project team conducted interviews with 13 individuals, mostly business owners from the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas. The purpose was to better understand the hopes and concerns of small business owners.

### Residents want...

- Activities for children
- Pedestrian-friendly environment
- Neighborhood serving businesses

### Business Owners are...

- Supportive of pedestrian improvements
- Protective of parking for customers
- Supportive of a more pleasant streetscape
- Unsure about future commercial area growth



## Neighborhood Main Streets Community Vision Statement

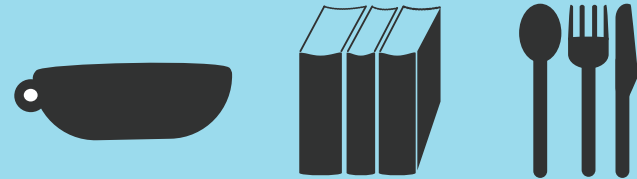
The Community Vision is a synthesis of the input from the community. It includes a statement about the future of the neighborhood main streets along with three goals that further articulate the Vision.

### Vision Statement:

“In the future, the commercial areas on 32nd and 42nd Avenues in Milwaukie are Neighborhood Main Streets. They are hubs of activity - places where local residents gather to shop, dine, and socialize. Tree-lined streets and attractive storefronts create a pleasant environment, and a mix of small-scale and locally-owned businesses fit in well to their established residential neighborhoods. Connections to these main streets from the surrounding areas allow people to safely and easily reach their destinations whether on foot, by bicycle, or by car.”

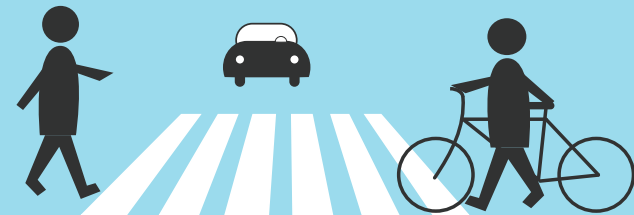
### Goal 1: A Vibrant, Local Economy

- A. A variety of locally-owned, small businesses meets everyday shopping and convenience needs for residents of immediate neighborhoods.
- B. A few specialty retailers draw in customers from outside the neighborhood.



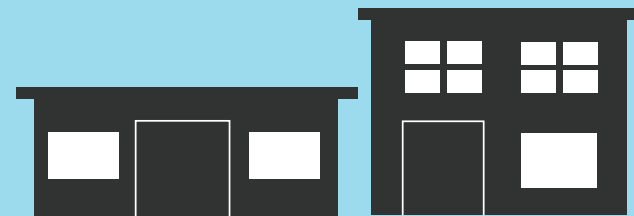
### Goal 2: Safe, Accessible Streets

- A. Sidewalks, crossings and street lighting on the Main Streets create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians.
- B. Streets in and around the area offer safe routes for walking, driving, bicycling, and public transportation.
- C. Adequate parking serves businesses without overwhelming the pedestrian environment.



### Goal 3: Neighborhood-scale Identity

- A. Businesses are oriented along a main street, whose small scale and design blend easily into the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- B. Places are available for residents to gather, such as a park, community center, cafe, or pub.
- C. Street trees, bio-swales, and landscaping increase the attractiveness of the area.



For more information on community outreach see the Public Involvement Report available on the City of Milwaukie website.





# CHAPTER 5

# Recommendations

The Vision Statement established the framework for Horizon Planning in the development of alternatives and recommendations to achieve the community's vision for the neighborhood commercial areas. These recommendations include changes to the City's zoning code, including allowed uses and standards for new commercial development. There are also recommendations for changes to the City's Transportation System Plan, and suggested transportation projects that the community can support through programs like Walk Safely Milwaukie. Finally, there are recommendations for economic development strategies on which the City and community can work together, to support existing businesses while encouraging new economic activity.

These recommendations were shared with the public at the Open House, which was attended by over 30 residents and property owners. This feedback was used to prioritize the recommendations, which are organized around the Vision's three goals:

1. A Vibrant, Local Economy
2. Safe, Accessible Streets
3. Neighborhood-Scale Identity



## GOAL 1: A VIBRANT, LOCAL ECONOMY

- A. A variety of locally-owned, small businesses meets everyday shopping and convenience needs for residents of immediate neighborhoods.
- B. A few specialty retailers draw in customers from outside the neighborhood.

### Priority Recommendations:

**Create a new Neighborhood Commercial zone with uses that are specific to Milwaukie's small scale commercial areas**

This new zone would permit the kinds of uses the community supported, such as eating establishments and mixed uses. It would also limit or prohibit the uses the community had some reservations about, such as vehicle sales and liquor sales.

- ▼ Eating establishments would be allowed in the new zone



- ▲ Vacant commercial spaces
- ▼ New Commercial Zone Uses

Allowed Uses	Uses Allowed with a Conditional Use Permit
Second Floor Housing/Mixed Use	Single-family residential
Commercial Recreation	Multi-family residential
Eating Establishments	Townhouse
Financial Institution	Senior and Retirement Housing
Office, Professional and Administrative	Automobile Service Station
Personal/business services	Commercial School
Repair, maintenance or service	Drive-thru
Retail Trade	High Impact Commercial
Theater	Liquor/wine store
Child Care	Vehicle Repair
Community Service Uses	Agricultural/horticultural
Parks/Plazas/Open Space	
Prohibited Uses: Adult entertainment, Vehicle Sales, Self Storage	



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 1: A Vibrant, Local Economy



▲ Examples of food co-operatives

▼ Example of parking lot converted to Farmers Market



### Fill vacant storefronts with non-traditional uses such as co-working spaces, business incubators, cooperatives, or temporary “pop-up shops”

Milwaukie is full of entrepreneurs, evidenced by the prevalence of home occupations in the city, and it's important to have spaces for these businesses to expand and grow. In Co-working spaces, entrepreneurs can rent cubicles or small offices in a shared office building, which reduces overhead costs. It also allows for expansion and a chance to network with other entrepreneurs. Similarly, a business incubator is an enterprise that offers reduced rent to promising start ups.

Cooperatives and community-owned or nonprofit businesses are another possibility, such as the Food-front co-op in Northwest Portland or TaborSpace Coffee House in Southeast Portland, where a nonprofit coffee shop shares space with a church. Finally, short term and free or reduced price lease agreements could be offered to “pop-up shop” businesses, artists, or community members to run seasonal retail businesses or show artistic displays.

These kinds of community-driven solutions would fill up vacant spaces and keep more spending local, boosting the Milwaukie economy. Temporary uses would showcase the commercial space, bring more activity to the neighborhood, and reduce the prevalence of empty windows and the negative impact they have on neighboring businesses.

### Start a seasonal farmers market on under-utilized parking lots

Temporary uses like farmers markets will help to activate under-utilized front parking lots that currently detract from the pedestrian shopping experience on 32nd and 42nd

Avenues. Besides offering local access to fresh produce, it would also offer social opportunities for neighborhood residents to gather, a key amenity the community desired in its neighborhood commercial areas. One business owner on 32nd Avenue has expressed interest in holding a farmers market in his parking lot. Milwaukie has a successful long-running farmers market downtown, managed by Celebrate Milwaukie, Inc, that could be a potential partner or resource.

### **Additional Recommendations:**

#### **Provide economic development technical assistance to prospective business owners**

There are many barriers to starting a new business, including finding the right location, securing a loan, and obtaining the appropriate permits and licenses. City staff or a business association could provide information and services that would make it easier for entrepreneurs to start new businesses, particularly in the small-scale neighborhood commercial areas. Information provided could include:

- Vacant lands inventory
- Commercial building/space inventory
- Step-by-step guide to permitting and licensing
- Local market and demographic information
- Excerpts from the community Vision outlining the types of businesses and designs people desire

#### **Promote buy-local campaigns and community events for Neighborhood Main Streets**

Residents, business owners, and the city could work together to promote buy-local campaigns and community events. This would help support existing businesses in the commercial areas and offer opportunities for residents to gather.

### **Next Steps**

**For the City:** Adopt new Neighborhood Commercial zoning category; Develop technical assistance information for prospective business owners.

**For the Community:** Support new businesses and community events.

**For Commercial Property Owners:** Consider inviting flexible uses like co-working or pop-up shops.

**For Business Owners:** Consider organizing to promote the business district; Invite food carts and farmers markets to utilize parking lots during non-peak hours.



### GOAL 2: SAFE, ACCESSIBLE STREETS

- A. Sidewalks, crossings and street lighting on the Main Streets create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians.
- B. Streets in and around the area offer safe routes for walking, driving, bicycling, and public transportation.
- C. Adequate parking serves businesses without overwhelming the pedestrian environment.



#### Images of Existing Issues: ▶

1, 2, & 3. Narrow sidewalks or lack of sidewalks

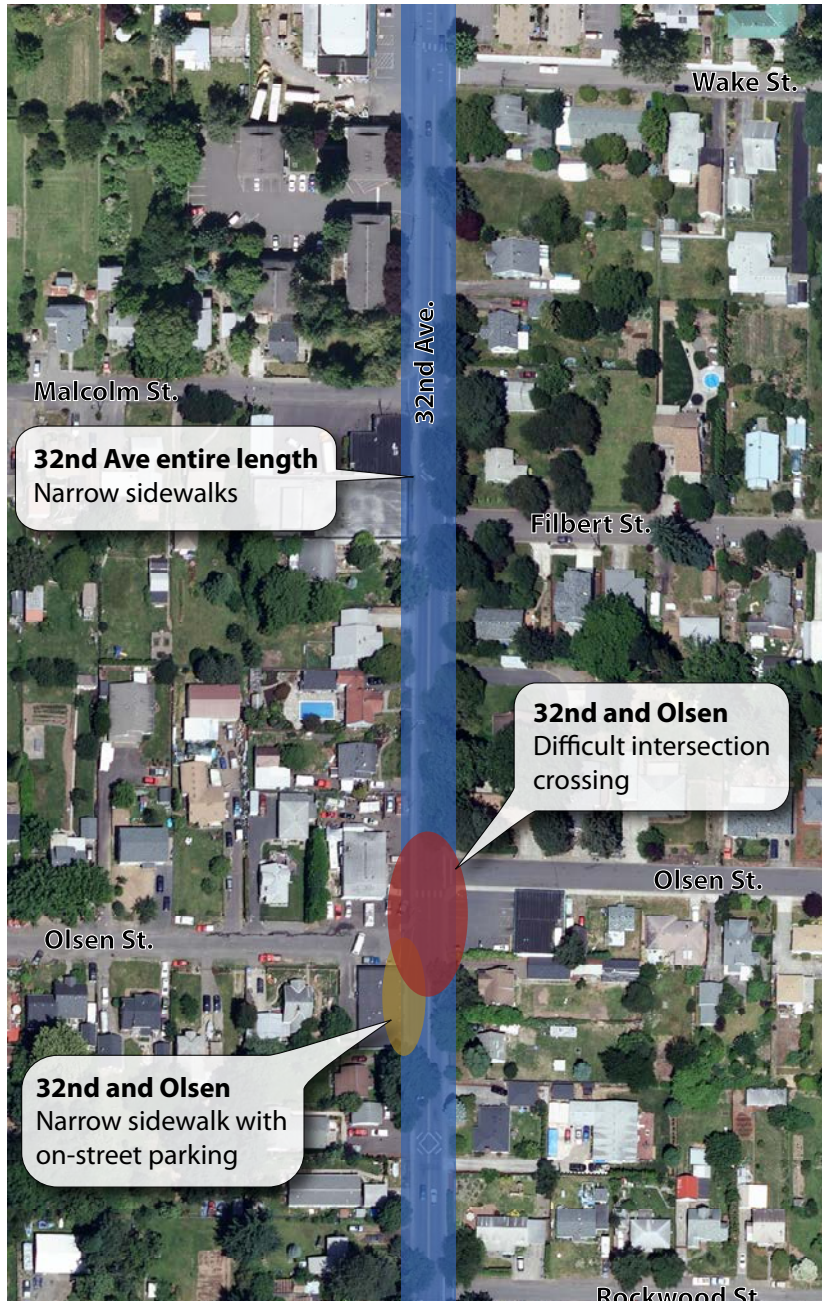
4. Unmarked crossings for pedestrians

5. Unclear connection to Springwater Trail





▼ Identified Transportation Issues of 32nd Ave.



▼ Identified Transportation Issues of 42nd Ave.

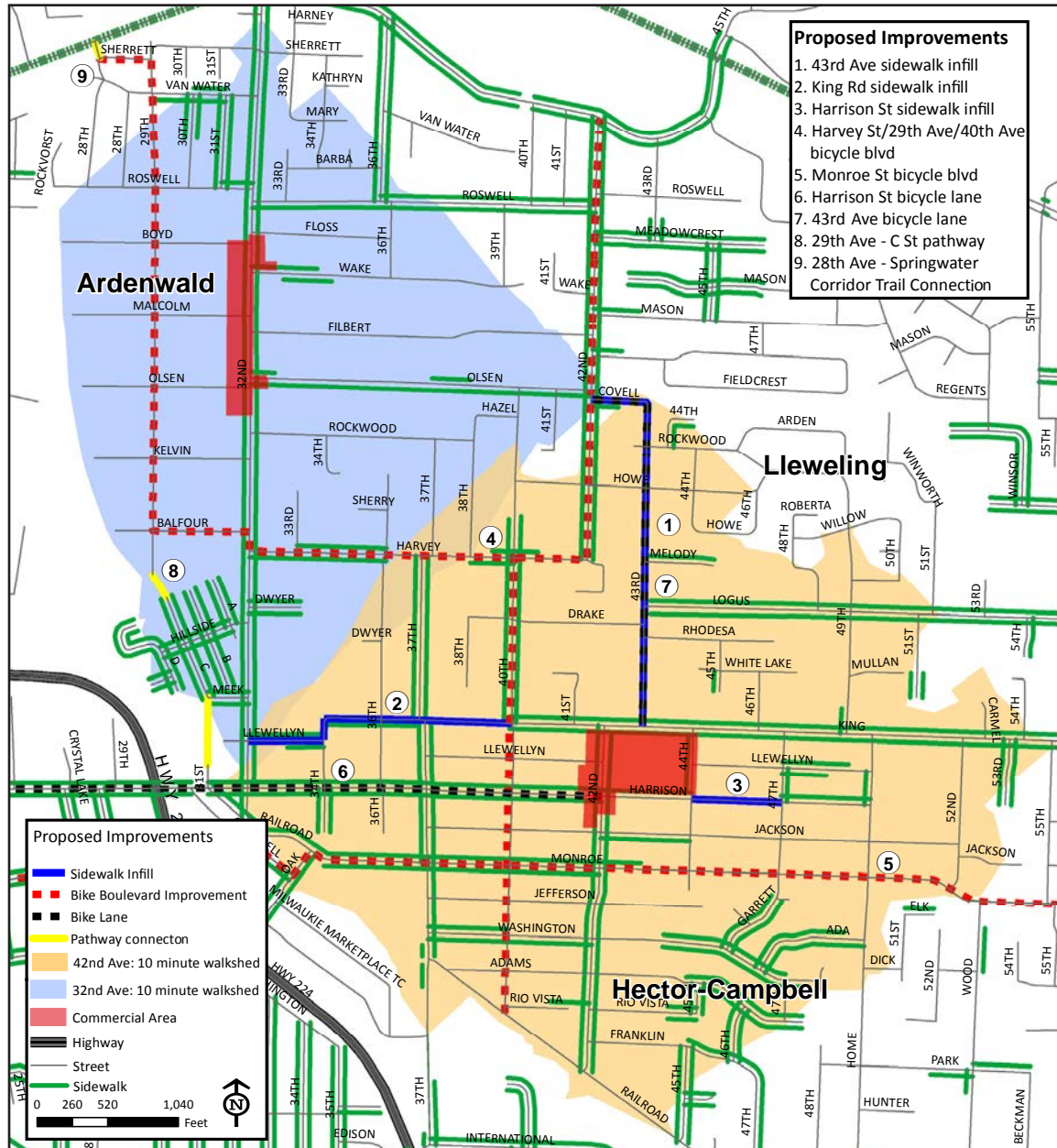




## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 2: Safe, Accessible Streets

#### Proposed Connections within the surrounding neighborhoods



#### Priority Recommendations:

##### Improve walking and biking connections to surrounding neighborhoods

Approximately half of our survey respondents (47%) indicated that incomplete or damaged sidewalks are a significant reason they do not walk to the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas. Projects that fill gaps in the sidewalk network will help increase the accessibility of the neighborhood commercial areas.

Recommended projects include:

- 43rd Avenue: King Rd. to Covell St.
- Harrison Street: 44th Ave to 47th Ave.
- Llewellyn St. /34th Ave./King Rd. connection: 32nd Ave. to 42nd Ave.
- 29th Ave. to C St.: bike/pedestrian pathway connection

Enhancing bike routes can also increase access and safety for bicyclists accessing the neighborhood commercial areas. Bicycle facility improvements could be added to the following routes:

- Bike Boulevard: Monroe St., 42nd Ave. to Linwood
- Bike Boulevard: 40th Ave./29th Ave./Harvey St. route
- Bike Lane: Harrison St. (42nd Ave. to Downtown Milwaukie)
- Bike Lane: 43rd Ave. (Covell St. to King Rd.)

All of these improvements can also help connect the commercial areas to nearby destinations, such as Ardenwald Elementary, the future MAX station, Downtown Milwaukie, and Clackamas Town Center.



▲ Example of lane striping.

### Make sidewalks on the Neighborhood Main Streets safer and more comfortable

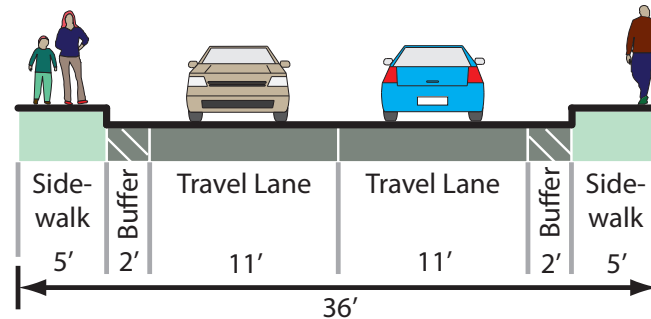
Approximately 30% of our survey respondents noted the volume of traffic in the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas as a deterrent to walking or biking. Narrow sidewalks without a buffer between pedestrians and traffic also made people feel unsafe, particularly along 32nd Avenue. Horizon recommends that the City look into possible buffering options between the sidewalk and the street.

#### Possible Improvements Include:

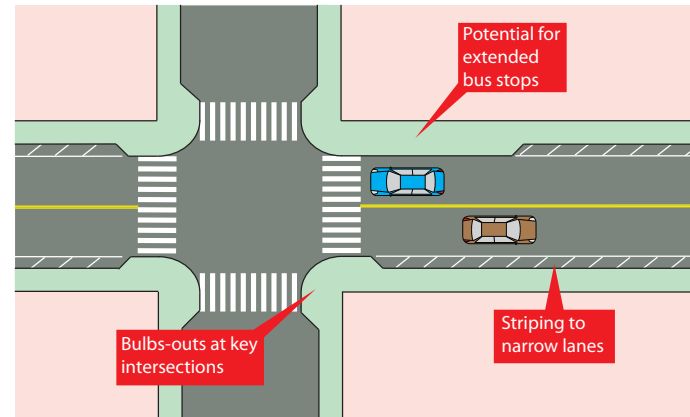
- Narrowing travel lanes to 11 feet on 32nd Avenue with striping or temporary planters to buffer pedestrians from traffic.
- Installing further traffic calming measures, such as corner bulb-outs.



▲ Current width of 32nd Ave



▲ Conceptual diagram of street with striping buffer



▲ Conceptual diagram with striping and bulb-outs



### Additional Recommendations:

#### Improve pedestrian crossings at key intersections

Innovative crossing solutions can decrease pedestrian crossing distance, increase visibility of pedestrians, and help slow traffic, thereby increasing pedestrian safety, a major concern for residents near these commercial areas.

Possible Improvements Include:

- Corner bulb outs
- Pedestrian refuge islands
- In-pavement warning lights
- Painted, textured, and/or raised crosswalks
- Improve the intersection of 42nd Avenue and Harrison with pedestrian-activated crossing signals

#### Example Photos:

1. Curb bulb-out at intersection

2. Pedestrian refuge island and mid-block crossing

3. In-pavement warning lights

4. Painted crosswalk

5. Pedestrian-activated crossing signal



Source: <http://sfcitizen.com>

Credit: Frank Chan

Source: <http://www.greensocal.net>



Current bike parking at Safeway at 42nd Ave. ▲  
Example of a bike corral in parking lane. ►

**Add bike parking and identify on-street parking options in the future**

To promote bicycle travel to commercial areas, bicycle parking must be available, convenient, and secure. Cyclists will not choose to visit businesses without secure and safe parking options. The racks at Safeway are the only bicycle racks in both commercial areas.

There is currently little need for additional vehicle parking in the commercial areas, but as these commercial areas become stronger, more options may be needed. On-street parking can provide a barrier between pedestrian on the sidewalk and moving traffic, and placing it on alternating sides could help to slow traffic.

Possible Improvements Include:

- Installing bicycle racks in the sidewalk at 42nd Avenue and Harrison St. and Llewelyn St.



- Constructing in-street bicycle parking areas to serve a number of businesses. These should have several bicycle racks and be separated from on-street parking with reflective poles and curbs to prevent vehicle encroachment.
- Consider adding on-street parking to more parts of 42nd to prevent spillover parking onto residential streets
- Consider adding signage to identify on-street parking areas and limit parking duration

**Next Steps**

**For the City:** Re-prioritize and add new projects to the Transportation System Plan; Seek out funding opportunities for infrastructure improvements; Install bicycle racks on 42nd Ave.

**For the Community and NDAs:** Focus Walk Safely Milwaukie funds on Neighborhood Main Street projects; Advocate for bike and pedestrian safety improvements.



### GOAL 3: NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE IDENTITY

- A. Businesses are oriented along a main street, whose small scale and design blend easily into the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- B. Places are available for residents to gather, such as a park, community center, cafe, or pub.
- C. Street trees, bio-swales, and landscaping increase the attractiveness of the area.

#### Priority Recommendations:

**Establish Development Standards in the new Neighborhood Commercial zone to ensure that new construction projects are pedestrian-scale**

Standards that promote pedestrian-scale development can encourage a safe and comfortable walking environment, and help the commercial areas fit into their residential neighborhood settings.

Some examples of development standards include:

- Limit building heights to 3 stories and new commercial uses to 10,000 square feet
- Establish maximum distance of 5 feet that buildings can be set back from the sidewalk
- Require parking to be located on the side of or behind commercial buildings
- Require ground floor window and door openings for at least 30% of the front of buildings, with exceptions for using murals on walls facing side streets
- Allow green roofs, planters, balcony plantings, courtyards, and parking area landscaping to count towards landscaping requirements

Examples of pedestrian-scale development ►





▲ Example of sidewalk seating

### **Encourage the creation of places for people to gather**

Through a combination of regulations and programs the city can encourage the development of more businesses and spaces for Milwaukie residents to gather and interact in their own neighborhoods.

Some examples of ways to create places to gather include:

- The new Neighborhood Commercial zone will allow eating establishments and farmers markets in the commercial areas, which could serve as gathering places.
- The Milwaukie Community Club Center on 42nd Avenue could expand the number and type of activities it hosts and become more involved in the neighborhood.
- When adding services like parks and libraries, the City should consider locations within the neighborhood main streets.

### **Expand the commercial zone along 32nd and 42nd Avenues**

Although there are currently vacant storefronts in both the 32nd and 42nd Avenue commercial areas, there is limited vacant land to allow new commercial activity to grow in the future. Expanding the commercial zone is supported by residents and property owners in the areas as a way to encourage new economic activity in the areas.

Recommended areas for expansion (see map on following page):

- North on 32nd Ave. to Roswell St. The intersection has strong sidewalks and Roswell St. connects to Ardenwald Elementary and the surrounding neighborhood. There are also a number of vacant parcels on the north east side of the intersection that create opportunity in the future for new small-scale commercial development.
- Northeast corner of 32nd Ave. at Olsen. Rezoning this property would create potential for commercial activity on all four corners of the intersection. This would help increase visibility and access to the commercial area.
- South on 42nd Ave. to Monroe St. The uses that would be captured in the zone include the community center, a home business, which fit into the uses people want to see in neighborhood commercial areas. It also includes a church and its parking lots, and zoning them as commercial would allow temporary uses like farmers markets or food carts to use the parking lots when the church is not. This expansion would also help to establish 42nd Ave. as a cohesive commercial corridor, rather than just a node.

Other areas to Consider:

- North on 32nd Ave. to Van Water
- The east side of 32nd Ave.
- Along King Rd. east of 44th Ave.
- Along Harrison St. west of 42nd Ave.



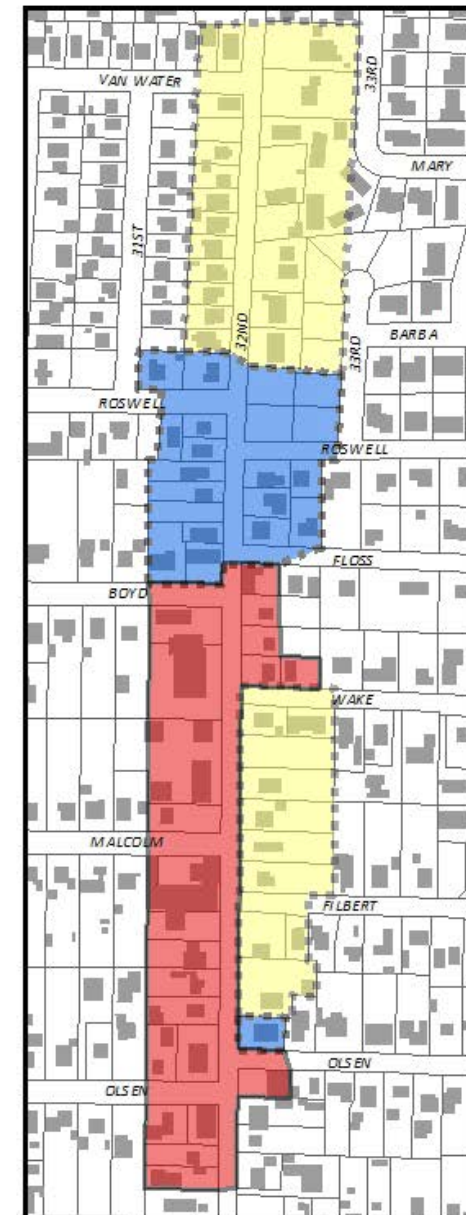
### Goal 3: Neighborhood-Scale Identity

▼ Potential commercial zone expansions

**42nd Avenue**



**32nd Avenue**



### Expansions to Commercial Zones



### **Additional Recommendations:**

#### **Implement a Storefront Improvement program**

Similar to the downtown program, small low interest loans and/or grants could be available to businesses to make facade improvements to their commercial buildings. This could help breathe new life into some of the area's older commercial buildings, while making it easier for entrepreneurs to open new business in vacant or under-invested spaces.

#### **Encourage businesses to convert excess parking spaces to other uses**

A city-sponsored program could use small grants or regulatory incentives to encourage existing business and property owners to convert portions of their front parking lots into outdoor seating, bicycle parking, or landscaping. Such a program could help bring more life and activity to the neighborhood main streets and sidewalks.

#### ▼ Example of active storefront facades



▲ Example of improving storefront with outdoor seating

▼ Under-utilized parking spaces can house bicycle parking, outdoor seating, or food carts.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 3: Neighborhood-Scale Identity



▲ Examples of neighborhood signage

#### Reinforce the commercial identity for the neighborhood commercial areas

Creating and reinforcing a specific identity or “brand” for each neighborhood commercial area can increase community pride, boost local business recognition, and establish an identity for the neighborhood main street.

Examples of building identity include:

- Banners or signs to denote the “main street” boundary so people know when they are entering the area
- Murals on blank building walls that reflect the character of the neighborhood
- Consistent use of streetscape elements like street lighting, trash cans, planters or benches that give the area a distinctive character
- Events like farmers markets, festivals, and street fairs to promote the districts while adding activity to the area.

#### Next Steps

**For the City:** Adopt new Neighborhood Commercial zone; Consider expanding the façade improvement program to include neighborhood main streets; Explore a parking lot conversion program.

**For the Community and NDAs:** Support existing and new local businesses.

**For Business Owners:** Organize and work with the city to fund signage and other streetscape elements that promote the commercial areas; Consider starting an annual community festival or street event focused on the neighborhood main streets; Add bicycle parking, landscaping, and outdoor seating in front of businesses

For more information on specific recommendations and rationale see the Final Recommendations document available on the City of Milwaukie website







# CHAPTER 6

## Looking Ahead

Many Milwaukie community members have united around the desire for more active and pedestrian-friendly commercial areas. While the zoning recommendations from Horizon can provide the right tools to shape future development, residents and business owners themselves will be indispensable in carrying out the vision for neighborhood main streets on 32nd and 42nd Avenues.

### Action Items for the City:

#### Short Term

- Adopt the new zoning standards for the neighborhood main streets
- Provide additional market information for prospective business owners
- Install bicycle racks on sidewalks on 42nd Avenue
- Improve signage at Springwater connection
- Investigate sidewalk buffering options on 32nd Avenue

#### Long Term

- Explore a parking lot conversion program
- Re-prioritize and add new projects to the Transportation System Plan
- Seek out funding opportunities for infrastructure improvements
- Consider creating a storefront improvement program



### Action Items for businesses and property owners:

- Organize and work with the city to fund signage and other streetscape elements that promote the commercial areas
- Add bicycle parking, landscaping, and outdoor seating in front of businesses
- Invite food carts and farmers markets to utilize parking lots during non-peak hours
- Start an annual community festival or street event focused on the neighborhood main streets
- Invite flexible uses like co-working spaces, co-ops or pop-up shops
- Organize to promote the business district through a business alliance and/or buy-local campaigns

### Action Items for the Community and Neighborhood District Associations:

- Support existing and new local businesses
- Organize community events
- Focus Walk Safely Milwaukie funds on Neighborhood Main Street projects
- Advocate for bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements





