

RESOLUTION NO. 16-\_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS**, in 1989 the City Council of the City of Huntsville (the "City") adopted a comprehensive land use plan under Ordinance No. 63-93, as amended, known as "The Zoning Ordinance of the City of Huntsville, Alabama" (the "Zoning Ordinance"); and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 2013 the City started the process of developing, and after conducting numerous public hearings, is close to completing the "Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Huntsville", also known as The Big Picture, for adoption by the City Council of the City in 2016 (herein referred to as the "Master Plan"); the Master Plan has been developed in cooperation with community stakeholders and the citizens of Huntsville evaluating numerous community characteristics such as: neighborhood stability, transportation networks, commercial corridor strength and weaknesses, public and open space opportunities, and the overall quality of life conditions of Huntsville; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1983 the City developed the "Cummings Research Park Master Plan", as amended, (herein referred to as the "Cummings Research Park Plan"); the Cummings Research Park Plan was developed in cooperation with the Cummings Research Park Board, Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce, and various corporate partners in Cummings Research Park to ensure a healthy environment within the park and surrounding area; and

**WHEREAS**, Cummings Research Park is divided by Research Park Boulevard into two sections, Research Park West and Research Park East; and

**WHEREAS**, in developing the Master Plan and Cummings Research Park Plan the City of Huntsville determined that portions of Cummings Research Park have experienced a decline, particularly in Research Park East, exhibiting deteriorating conditions hindering potential redevelopment opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Huntsville Department of Urban Development has developed and prepared the "Research Park East Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan 2016" (herein the Research Park East Plan") which is attached hereto as Attachment A, and incorporated by reference as if set out fully herein, and is on file with the City Clerk; and

**WHEREAS**, property identified on Exhibit A to the Research Park East Plan which is incorporated by reference as if set out fully herein (herein the "Plan Area") is located within the boundaries of the Master Plan and Cummings Research Park Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Research Park East Plan and the boundaries of the Plan Area have been developed pursuant to Chapters 2 and 3 of Title 24 of the Code of Alabama 1975; and

**WHEREAS**, the Research Park East Plan sets forth the Plan Area and makes findings that the Plan Area contains blighted properties and other blighting factors that mandate renewal and redevelopment, and

**WHEREAS**, the Research Park East Plan contemplates that the City acquire, by contracting to purchase, obtaining options to purchase, or by exercising the power of eminent domain, properties identified in the acquisition area set out in Exhibit B to the Research Park East Plan which is incorporated by reference as if set out fully herein (the "Acquisition Area"); and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City deems it necessary and in the public interest that the Research Park East Plan be adopted and approved to establish and undertake those urban renewal and redevelopment activities in the Plan Area as described in the Research Park East Plan.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Huntsville, as follows:

## **ARTICLE I**

### **FINDINGS**

The City Council of the City of Huntsville makes the following findings as the basis for the undertakings on its part herein contained:

1.1 That the Plan Area described in the Research Park East Plan is an area which is blighted, contains blighting factors, or is in the process of becoming blighted.

1.2 That the Plan Area described in the Research Park East Plan contains areas, buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangements or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use, obsolete layout, diversity of ownership or unusual conditions of title and underutilization, which, in combination with these and other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.

1.3 That over the past five years, the Plan Area has experienced a dramatic decrease in property values; increases in property vacancies; business relocations; and a tremendous increase in crime related activities with The Madison Square Mall area alone has experiencing a seventy (70%) decrease in property values due to blighting conditions.

1.4 That in 2015, the Plan Area logged 1,475 "Calls for Service" by the Huntsville Police Department necessitating excessive and disproportionate expenditure of public funds for crime prevention.

1.5 That property vacancy rates in the Plan Area are also at an all-time high and as shown in the Research Park East Plan City evaluations of vacant structures/units for the Priority 1 Zone (defined therein) were determined to be at 85% (only 15% occupied) with additional Plan Priority Zones having experienced similar blighting conditions on a varying scale.

1.6 That the blighting factors existing on the Plan Area impair economic values and tax revenues and, if the Plan Area is not renewed and redeveloped, constitute a threat to the health safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the City.

1.7 That the Research Park East Plan will not result in the relocations of any permanent residents in the Plan Area.

1.8 That the renewal and redevelopment of the Plan Area will prevent and reduce the causes of blight and blighting factors in the Plan Area and that such redevelopment and renewal activities are public uses and purposes for which public money may be spent and private property acquired.

1.9 That the implementation of the Research Park East Plan will provide needed public improvements such as streets, utilities, lighting, sidewalk and curb improvements, parks, plazas, and landscaping creating an attractive environment for pedestrians and the general public.

1.10 That the implementation of the Research Park East Plan will promote sound growth of the community and stimulate construction and general economic activity for furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Zoning Ordinance, Master Plan, Cummings Research Park Plan, and Research Park East Plan.

1.11 That the implementation of Research Park East Plan will assist in the conservation and rehabilitation of the Plan Area and will assist in the elimination and prevention of blight and blighting factors as hereinabove enumerated.

1.10 That the renewal and redevelopment of the Plan Area is for a public use and that the necessity for said renewal, redevelopment and implementation of the Research Park East Plan is in the public interest.

1.11 That the Research Park East Plan conforms with and implements the Zoning Ordinance, Master Plan and Cummings Research Park Plan.

1.12 That the renewal and redevelopment of the Plan Area, in accordance with the Research Park East Plan as hereby adopted and approved by this Resolution, in addition to eliminating blighting factors in the Plan Area, will have a favorable impact upon the

reduction of blight, blighting factors and the causes of blight beyond the boundaries of the Plan Area.

1.13 That it is necessary and in the public interest that the City acquire or cause to be acquired such part or all of the real property in the Acquisition Area set out in Exhibit B of the Research Park East Plan, as it deems necessary, convenient or proper to implement the Research Park East Plan as an urban renewal and redevelopment project pursuant to Chapters 2 and 3, Title 24 of the Code of Alabama 1975, and to provide for the renewal of said property pursuant to this Resolution.

## ARTICLE II

### ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH PARK EAST PLAN

The Research Park East Plan is hereby adopted and approved by the City Council of the City as follows:

2.1 That the provisions of the Research Park East Plan shall apply to the Plan Area.

2.2 That to implement the Research Park East Plan, the City through the office of the Mayor may negotiate contracts with such redeveloper or redevelopers (the "Redeveloper") as it deems necessary, convenient and proper to develop all or any part of the Plan Area in accordance with the requirements set out herein and in the Research Park East Plan. Any contract with a Redeveloper shall be subject to the approval of the City Council of the City and shall amend the Research Park East Plan. This Resolution does not create any partnership, joint venture or principal-agent relationship between the City and any Redeveloper.

2.3 That the City shall proceed to implement the Research Park East Plan in accordance with all of the terms and provisions set forth therein, including but not limited to, the development of the Research Park East Plan in accordance with any applicable land use plan, the imposition of building requirements, the provision of public improvements, acquisition of property, and the demolition and removal of improvements and the disposition of property as set forth therein.

2.4 That it is necessary and expedient and in the public interest for the implementation of the Research Park East Plan, that the City acquire by purchase or by the exercise of its right of eminent domain the fee simple title in and to all of such interests in the property in the Acquisition Area as it deems necessary, convenient and proper to carry out the purposes of the Research Park East Plan.

2.5 That the City has determined to acquire by purchase or by condemnation the property, or any portion thereof, in the Acquisition Area for the purposes set out herein, and to take all actions

necessary to carry out and effectuate the terms of the Research Park East Plan.

2.6 That the various departments of the City are directed to perform any and all actions necessary, advisable, convenient or expedient to the implementation of the Research Park East Plan and the implementation and effectuation of the purposes of the Research Park East Plan, as consistent with applicable Alabama law.

### ARTICLE III

#### MISCELLANEOUS

3.1 The article and section headings herein are for convenience only and shall not affect the construction hereof.

3.2 If any section, sentence, paragraph, clause, phrase or word of this Resolution or the attached Research Park East Plan is for any reason held or declared to be unconstitutional, inoperative or void, such holding of invalidity shall not affect the remaining portions of this Resolution and the attached Research Park East Plan, and they shall be construed without such unconstitutional, invalid or inoperative part therein, and the remainder of this Resolution and attached Research Park East Plan shall be deemed and held to be valid as if such parts had not been included therein.

3.3 By adoption of this resolution, the City Council intends that the City of Huntsville shall exercise all powers and authority granted by and consistent with the provisions of Chapters 2 and 3 of Title 24 of the Code of Alabama 1975, and all other provisions applicable by state law.

**ADOPTED** this the 11th day of February, 2016.

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President of the City Council of the  
City of Huntsville, Alabama

**APPROVED** this the 11th day of February, 2016.

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Mayor of the City of Huntsville,  
Alabama

ATTACHMENT A



**HUNTSVILLE**  
The Star of Alabama

**RESEARCH PARK EAST**

**Urban Renewal  
and  
Urban Redevelopment Plan**

**2016**

Prepared by the  
Department of Urban Development

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# RESEARCH PARK EAST URBAN RENEWAL/REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

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# RESEARCH PARK EAST

## Urban Renewal and Urban Redevelopment Plan

### INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the City of Huntsville, in cooperation with the Huntsville Planning Commission, Community Stakeholders, and the citizenry of Huntsville (*thru numerous Public Engagement Meetings*), undertook the process of developing a Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Huntsville. The Comprehensive Master Plan, referenced herein as *The Big Picture*, focused on the overall condition of the community in various aspects. *The Big Picture* evaluated several community characteristics such as: neighborhood stability, transportation networks, commercial corridor strength/weakness, public and open space opportunities, and the overall quality of life conditions of Huntsville.

In addition to *The Big Picture*, the City of Huntsville also began the process of updating the *Cummings Research Park Master Plan* in 2015. Cummings Research Park (CRP) is well known as the primary economic driver for Madison County and surrounding areas of North Alabama. As the second largest Research and Development Park in the United States, Cummings Research Park provides over 35,000 direct jobs and supports over 38,000 indirect jobs in the research and development business sector. Cummings Research Park is divided into two (2) sections – Research Park West and Research Park East, with Research Park Boulevard being the divisor of the two sections. As the economic engine of North Alabama it is critical that Huntsville maintains a healthy environment within the park and the surrounding area. The updating of the *Cummings Research Park Master Plan* was developed in cooperation with the CRP Board, Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce, and the various corporate partners located within Cummings Research Park.

Through the process of developing these updated master plans, it became evident that portions of Cummings Research Park possessed new development and redevelopment potential, but has experienced significant decline in areas, predominantly in Research Park East, that has created overall deteriorating and deteriorated conditions within the area. These conditions must be addressed for the overall sustainability of Research Park and the Huntsville community.

This Research Park East Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan (*the Plan*) addresses recommendations regarding redevelopment, rehabilitation and conservation of the Research Park East area. As a part of the Plan's adoption process, a public hearing of the Plan will be scheduled by the Huntsville City Council to consider and approve the Plan's recommendations.

# URBAN RENEWAL/REDEVELOPMENT STATUTES

In undertaking the Plan, the City evaluated the Plan Area to determine if it qualifies as an urban renewal/redevelopment project area under *Ala. Code 1975 §24-2-1, et seq* (Redevelopment Projects) and *Ala. Code 1975 §24-3-1, et seq* (Urban Renewal Projects). Determining whether an area is blighted is a key issue of these statutes.

Blight is defined in multiple ways. Blight may be buildings or improvements that are underutilized, dilapidated, obsolete, overcrowded, faultily arranged or designed, or are lacking of ventilation or light. Blight can also be deleterious land uses or obsolete layouts, aging infrastructure, economically depressed areas, high vacancies, diversity of ownership or unusual conditions of title, underutilization or any combination of these or other factors, considered detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.

The objective of an Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan is to correct blighted conditions, adverse land use patterns and depressed economic conditions through implementation of a variety of conservation, rehabilitation, acquisition, clearance and redevelopment actions designed to provide a sound economic and physical environment. Through evaluation of the Research Park East area, it has been determined that blighting factors exists that are impairing the safety, health, morals, and economic stability of the community.

Over the past five years, the Plan Area has experienced a dramatic decrease in property values; increases in property vacancies; business relocations; and a tremendous increase in crime related activities. The Madison Square Mall area alone has experienced a 70% decrease in property values due to blighting conditions (**Priority 1 Zone –see Exhibit D**). In 2015, this same area experienced 1,475 “Calls for Service” by the Huntsville Police Department. Property vacancy rates are also at an all-time high for the area. City evaluations of vacant structures/units for this Priority 1 Zone were determined to be at 85% (*only 15% occupied*). The additional Plan Priority Zones (**see Exhibit D**) have experienced similar blighting conditions on a varying scale.

If the Plan Area is not renewed and redeveloped, the current conditions will further the spread of blight and constitute a threat to the health, safety, morals, and/or welfare of the residents of the City of Huntsville.

## **PLAN AREA DESCRIPTION**

The Plan Area consists of approximately 500 acres. Current land use within the Plan Area is a mixture of commercial/retail, research related office, educational, and manufacturing use. The Plan Area is generally bounded by University Drive on the north, Wynn Drive on the east, Interstate 565 on the south and Research Park Boulevard to the west. **Exhibit A** (the Plan Area) illustrates the exact boundary and properties to be included within the Plan Area.

## **URBAN RENEWAL/REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Research Park East Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan outlines realistic proposals to effectively deal with the future of the Plan Area. The Plan is based on the analysis of existing blight conditions, needs and potentials, and a process of local government oversight and community involvement. By means of significant public and private redevelopment and rehabilitation, it is designed to revitalize the Plan Area by incorporating the overall vision of both *The Big Picture* and *Cummings Research Park Master Plans*. The implementation of the Plan will provide for new commercial opportunities, new public recreation and entertainment options, and opportunities for urban style living and working environments.

These development initiatives may establish, in the future, a modified land use plan within the Plan Area to more particularly identify the development of urban style neighborhoods, commercial developments, medical services, research and development areas, university-oriented business, and public open space/entertainment options within the Plan Area. Implementation of the Plan will revive the Research Park East area and adjacent areas by providing a vital, stable, and attractive environment that will become a more contributing part of the City of Huntsville.

The Plan includes public improvements such as, roadway improvements, pedestrian facilities, lighting and landscaping, pedestrian facilities, utility upgrades, public parks, and recreation improvements as well as the acquisition, demolition and resale of blighted property to be redeveloped for both public and private uses appropriate to the Plan Area. All private redevelopment activities within the Plan Area shall conform to all regulations and limitations of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Huntsville.

This Plan is intended to eliminate blight and prevent future blighting conditions which have created, contributed to, or perpetuated the blighting factor and deterioration of the Plan Area.

The Plan is also intended to insure the orderly improvement of the Plan Area in accordance with the City's overall planning objectives and in accordance with *Ala. Code 1975 §24-2-1, et seq* (Redevelopment Projects) and *Ala. Code 1975 §24-3-1, et seq* (Urban Renewal Projects).

## **PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The Plan has been undertaken within the policy framework of a Goal Statement, supported by the overall planning objectives for the City of Huntsville. This policy framework provides direction regarding development patterns, land use, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, utilities, open space, and aesthetic enhancements for the Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan.

### GOAL STATEMENT

The Research Park East Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan's predominant goal is to transform the Plan Area into a more economically viable, physically attractive, people desirable, fully developed, and functional part of the community in and around Cummings Research Park.

### PLAN OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the Plan Area's Goal Statement, the following set of Plan Objectives are recommended:

- Prevent the continued development or spread of blight and deteriorating conditions;
- Eliminate blight; blighted and deteriorated conditions; and blighting and deteriorating influences of improved and unimproved property;
- Eliminate under-utilization, obsolete layout, diversity of ownership, defective or unusual conditions of title;
- Restore the economic vitality of the Plan Area through a mix of compatible and appropriate land uses such as residential, office, retail, services, parks and institutional uses;
- Promote sound growth of the community;
- Promote and improve on a rational and efficient traffic system to facilitate traffic flow and access to both public and private facilities while maintaining a balance between vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle modes of travel;

- Promote and assist with the development of new urban centers, neighborhoods, commercial development, and business environments that will further strengthen Cummings Research Park, adjacent neighborhoods, and the University of Alabama at Huntsville;
- Provide public improvements such as streets, utilities, lighting, sidewalks, parks, plazas, landscaping, sidewalk amenities, entertainment venues, and other applicable public infrastructure to create a safe and attractive environment for the overall community;
- To revitalize and improve the appearance and conditions of properties along and within the Research Park East Area;
- Promote and assist in residential development within the Plan Area by establishing an environment for viable mixed-use urban style neighborhood projects of high density and design quality with all appropriate amenities to provide long term stability for the Huntsville community, including Cummings Research Park;
- Provide governmental and other institutional uses that are contextually sensitive to the Plan Area's goal;
- Provide public open space opportunities which are lacking within the Plan Area to allow for recreation opportunities for the general public;
- Effectively address the physical attractiveness of building facades, streets, sidewalks, lighting, signage, landscaping, parking areas, utility services, and private and public exterior spaces;
- Provide adequate and updated infrastructure that readily meets the demands of renewal and redevelopment efforts;
- Promote and assist in the development of areas within the Plan Area that will create placemaking nodes within the Plan Area that ultimately encourages the redevelopment of areas surrounding these type node centers.

## **URBAN RENEWAL/REDEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN**

The Action Plan focuses on steps that assist in achieving the overall Plan Objectives. As the implementation of Research Park East Renewal/Redevelopment Plan proceeds, additional actions may be identified to fully implement the Plan. The following are the current recommended Action Plans:

- Undertake infrastructure improvements to upgrade streets, drainage, water, sewer, gas, electrical, telephone, sidewalks, curbs and to bury or relocate unsightly overhead utility service where deemed necessary by the City to promote redevelopment;

- Evaluate the possible creation of an Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Zoning Overlay District to assure that new construction and improvements to existing buildings are in accordance with the Plan and overall vision of the City;
- Use the full range of urban renewal/redevelopment tools (acquisition by purchase or eminent domain, clearance, redevelopment, rehabilitation, renovation, conservation and mitigation) to eliminate and prevent blight and to successfully implement the Plan;
- Subdivision of properties that are challenged in development and/or redevelopment due to the size and nature of the property by means of constructing new public rights-of-ways to better facilitate future development and/or redevelopment of property;
- Construct new pedestrian-friendly streets and walkways as deemed necessary, provide resurfacing to existing streets, construct streetscapes to visually improve pedestrian facilities within the Plan Area, eliminating unnecessary curb cuts, installing landscaping and improving lighting, and/or providing planting areas adjacent to streets;
- Eliminate underutilized surface parking fields to promote better overall density and economic vitality within the Plan Area;
- Provide for improved vehicular and pedestrian connectivity within the Plan Area to enhance the overall connectivity to surrounding areas such as neighborhoods, employment centers, and educational institutions to promote revitalization within the Plan Area;
- Create public/private partnerships to encourage architectural and landscape improvements within redevelopment opportunities;
- Create a more urban environment by encouraging a mix of land use and replacing underutilized parking areas with new infill construction;
- Control trash accumulation, outside dumpsters, poor site maintenance, and outside storage through code enforcement and possible new regulatory tools;
- Improve public health, safety, and welfare within the Plan Area by targeting areas with a history of crime and illegal activities;
- Develop covenants for the disposition of land which is acquired by the City and sold to the private sector for redevelopment;
- Encourage utility providers to replace overhead utilities with underground service and screen or relocate to utility substations;
- Prepare detailed design drawings for certain components of the Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan such as urban parks/plazas improvements, corridor roadway improvements, intersection improvements, and landscaping within public areas;

- Implement a regular review, update and refinement of the Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan to meet changing conditions and needs;
- Develop and enter into specific redevelopment project agreements with private entities to correct current blight conditions and implement the goals and objectives of the Plan.

### ACQUISITION PLAN

The implementation of the Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan will require the acquisition of blighted property as authorized by *Ala. Code 1975 § 24-3-2*. The City shall purchase or acquire by exercise of legal means those blighted properties set out in the Acquisition Area (**Exhibit B**) as it deems necessary, convenient, and proper to carry out the purpose of the Plan. In addition, the City will enter into a contract with such redevelopers as it deems necessary, convenient, and proper to develop all or any part of the Plan in accordance with the requirements set out herein.

The Plan is being conducted in accordance with the State of Alabama's Urban Renewal and Redevelopment statutes (*Ala. Code 1975 § 24-2-1 et seq and § 24-3-1 et seq*) and involves the acquisition of blighted properties to implement the Plan. The City endeavors on a continuing basis to keep all persons and businesses affected by a proposed acquisition informed of the process and procedures.

Accordingly, the City may acquire such blighted properties by fee simple or any interest therein, and the existing structures thereon may be demolished as appropriate for redevelopment and implementation of the Plan. Other properties may be acquired in order to implement the Plan upon a finding by the City Council of Huntsville that it is necessary and desirable and in the public interest to do so, and upon such finding, such other properties shall constitute a part of and an amendment to the Acquisition Plan.

The City's property acquisition shall be undertaken in conformance with all applicable federal and state statutes, codes, and regulations. The timeframe for acquisition of parcels may vary because of acquisition requirements, the results of tests, studies and evaluations, the willingness of owners to convey, necessity for litigation, obtaining clear title and/ or the availability of funds. In addition, acquisition priorities should be reviewed continuously in light of changes in the availability of funding or development opportunities that may arise as the Plan progresses.

These properties may be acquired in full or part as necessary to construct initial public improvements and create redevelopment opportunity as identified in the Plan's Objectives and Action Plan. The Plan has specifically identified the following blighted properties which are to be included in the Acquisition Area as shown on **Exhibit B**. The properties (*PPINs*) to be included are: 7228, 42533, 18267, 18272, 18279, 18321, 20984, 27587, 27319, 27327, 27362, and 543452. The acquisition of these properties have been deemed necessary to begin the initial phases of the Plan.

As soon as feasible, owners will be notified of the City's interest in acquiring the real property and the basic protections involved, including the City's obligations to secure an appraisal. Before the initiation of negotiations for property acquisition, the real property to be acquired will be appraised (except on donated property given a written release for appraisal). The City will follow applicable federal and state laws and regulations in setting the standards for appraisers and appraisals. In addition, all appraisers will be required to be "MAI" designated appraisers.

Upon establishment of an amount the City believes is just compensation for the real property, the City will make a written offer to the property owner to acquire the property. Along with the initial written purchase offer, the property owner will be given a written statement of the basis for the offer of just compensation. The City will make reasonable efforts to contact the owner or the owner's representative to discuss its offer to purchase the property, including the basis for the offer of just compensation, and explain its acquisition policies and procedures.

The City will not advance the time of condemnation unjustifiably or defer condemnation or the deposit of funds with the court with the intent or purpose of coercing or inducing an agreement on the price to be paid for the property. If an agreement with the owner cannot be reached, the City's acquisition plan includes utilizing the eminent domain powers as provided by the Ala. Code 1975 , Title 18, Eminent Domain and as limited by § 24-3-2 (d).

## DISPOSITION PLAN

This section of the Plan provides a basis for the management of property between acquisition and the time of property disposition. It also addresses the disposition of land by lease or to public or private parties for redevelopment in accordance with provisions of the Plan and any necessary contractual agreements with the City of Huntsville.

The Plan currently identifies properties that are to be used for public purpose and public improvements. These parcels or portions of a parcel may be disposed of at use value by sale, lease, conveyance, or other means to provide for the full implementation of the Plan. These parcels, which may be subdivided or combined, may be more precisely described through future surveys as the City of Huntsville may deem necessary. Any disposition of non-public land within the Plan Area will be on the basis of affording maximum redevelopment opportunity, consistent with the needs of the City of Huntsville as a whole and the objectives of the Plan.

Proposed property acquisition creates the potential for managing property between the date of acquisition and the date of disposition or demolition. Management activities will include advice and counsel to tenants and owners, and procedures for rental and/or maintenance of buildings and land between the time of acquisition and final disposition.

It is the City's intent to demolish or cause to be demolished a blighted structure as soon as possible after acquisition. The Huntsville Police Department will be alerted of vacant properties and the City will request that the acquisition area be patrolled frequently to keep vandalism under control. To assist in keeping accidents and vandalism to a minimum "No Trespassing" signs will be placed on each parcel that has been acquired by the City of Huntsville as needed.

The City, in disposing of the land in the Plan Area will, in its contractual agreements, deeds or other instruments, include such terms and conditions to insure redevelopment of the Plan Area is in accordance with the Plan. Such conditions will be contained in contractual agreements, deeds, covenants or other instruments. In all instances, the improvements to be constructed in the Plan Area will be constructed in accordance with applicable local codes and ordinances and the requirements of the Plan.

## RELOCATION PLAN

The acquisition, demolition, and construction proposed in the Research Park East Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan shall be undertaken in stages with an aim to minimize the disruption to existing businesses and establishments when possible. The City shall work in good faith with a property owner on providing a reasonable timeline to allow owner/tenants to relocate so long as the timeline does not adversely affect the overall timeframe of the Plan. There are no permanent residents in the Land Acquisition Areas.

## PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Implementation of the Plan shall occur over time and as funding permits. Although the Plan recognizes that additional public improvements may be identified in the future to fully realize the maximum benefits of the Plan, the City of Huntsville, through evaluation and assessment of the Plan Area, has developed an initial priority list of public improvements and acquisitions for implementation of the Plan. **Exhibit B** and **Exhibit C**, respectively, depicts the land acquisition and public improvement areas for the Plan's implementation to create a catalyst for private reinvestment and rehabilitation within the Plan Area. These areas have been identified as providing the most beneficial return in reversing and preventing the further spread of blight within the Plan Area. Funding limitations will prohibit the simultaneous implementation all aspects of the Plan. Therefore, an evaluation was made to determine a priority focus and strategy for which implementation should be executed as funding allows.

The following projects are recommended at this time for implementation:

- Creation of a "Lot and Block" Street Network in the northwestern portion of the Plan Area to create more density and improved utilization of existing properties;
- Sanderson Road Extension (S.R. 255 to Old Monrovia Road);
- Improvements to Bradford Drive;
- Improvements to Old Madison Pike;
- Improvements to Wynn Drive;
- Streetscape Improvements within the Plan Area;
- Redevelopment of the Wynn Drive/Bradford Drive intersection to provide alternate uses that will enhance the livelihood of the Plan area;
- Redevelopment of the University Drive/Sparkman Drive area to uses that add community value to nearby neighborhoods and the University of Alabama Huntsville

## PRIORITY ZONES

Implementation of the Plan shall occur in multiple phases and as available funding permits. In an effort for the Plan to deliver the maximize benefit to the community, Priority Zones have been created to structure the initial application of resources for implementation. The current recommended Priority Zones for implementing the Plan are illustrated in **Exhibit D**.

## **ECONOMIC MARKET POTENTIAL**

Since 2013, the City of Huntsville has been conducting a Comprehensive Planning process, more commonly known as *The Big Picture*. One of the goals of *the Big Picture* effort has been to identify strategies for maintaining and improving market performance, particularly among its large stock of aging retail and commercial centers, known often as “greyfields”. Several key commercial greyfield corridors were identified as needing some level of catalyzed reinvestment and blight reversal. The Research Park East area was foremost among them.

Left unattended, declining centers are not only in and of themselves sources of blight, but they cause blight to spread to other commercial properties, as well as into surrounding neighborhoods. To prevent widespread disinvestment, *the Big Picture* planning effort recommended proactive approaches to dealing with areas that were showing signs of blight. The Research Park East area was seen as critically important because of its central location relative to the market area, its proximity to major employment and educational centers, the number of households within standard 1/5/10 mile radii, and the amount of commercial square footage that lined Research Park East.

Redevelopment efforts can ensure that blight does not take hold, or spread into surrounding areas within the community while also providing a safe and secure environment. This Plan offers an opportunity not merely to eliminate existing blighted areas and revitalize a declining corridor; it offers a chance to restore and improve the quality of life for all those who live, work and play in Huntsville and Madison County.

## **MARKET AREA AND TRENDS**

### POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The primary market area for the Plan Area encompasses all of the City of Huntsville, and Madison County. The surrounding counties of Limestone, Jackson, Morgan, Marshall and

Lincoln (TN) create a secondary market area in terms of support for employment, shopping and recreation.

The population of the City of Huntsville is growing steadily, and more rapidly than any other major city in Alabama. The redevelopment of the Research Park East area is critical in continuing this trend for the future. The following table outlines this growth over the past decade:

**POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS, City of Huntsville**

	2010	2015
<b>Population</b>	<b>180,105</b>	<b>191,141</b>
<b>Households</b>	<b>76,990</b>	<b>82,337</b>
<b>Average Household</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.24</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>37.9</b>

Rapid growth has been driven by several factors, but predominant among them has been unprecedented job growth, and an excellent but affordable quality of life.

Household income in the City of Huntsville in 2015 averaged \$69,696 (see table below). In the next five years, average income is projected to rise to \$77,578. The largest household income segment is the households with an annual income between \$25,000-\$49,999 (24.6% of all households in the City). Of all households, 21.5% have incomes exceeding \$100,000.

**HOUSEHOLD INCOMES, City of Huntsville**

Annual Household Income	2015		2020	
< \$15,000	14.0%		12.9%	
\$15,000 – \$24,999	12.2%	26.2%	9.0%	21.9%
\$25,000 – \$49,999	24.6%		24.0%	42.8%
\$50,000 – \$74,999	17.7%		18.8%	
\$75,000 – \$99,999	10.0%		10.6%	
\$100,000 – \$149,999	11.6%	31.5%	13.3%	35.3%
\$150,000 +	9.9%		11.4%	
<b>Average Household Income</b>	<b>\$69,696</b>		<b>\$77,578</b>	

## TYPES OF URBAN RENEWAL/REDEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

In order to fully implement the Research Park East Renewal/Redevelopment Plan redevelopment, major rehabilitation and conservation/minor rehabilitation initiatives must be undertaken. Following is a description of the various components that comprise the actions needed in each category of renewal treatment.

### REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment is the type of renewal action recommended for the Priority 1 and Priority 2 areas with the Plan. Redevelopment requires acquisition, and in most cases, demolition of structures to fully implement the Plan. Redevelopment activities include part or all of the following activities:

- Acquisition, relocation and clearance of blighted properties;
- Re-platting of parcels;
- Major infrastructure improvements;
- Street redesign and some street closures;
- Development of parking structures and redesign of surface street parking areas;
- Construction of public facilities such as the urban park/plaza;
- Landscape and streetscape improvements to provide aesthetic and visual enhancements;
- Application of zoning regulations and design standards;
- Creation of covenants for land transferring in ownership.

### MAJOR REHABILITATION, REUSE AND INFILL

Rehabilitation is a less intensive renewal initiative. It is geared to improving existing buildings to make them greater contributors to the revitalization of the area, as well as proposals that include infill development. Rehabilitation is the type of renewal action recommended for the Priority 3 and Priority 4 areas with the Plan. However, in some cases rehabilitation of existing structures is not possible.

The City-supported rehabilitation, reuse and infill initiatives that may be undertaken within the Plan Area may include:

- Investigating with property owners how the exteriors and interiors may be improved;
- Creating a façade rehabilitation program, particularly for contributing structures;
- Identifying potential in-fill sites for new development;
- Undertaking minor to moderate infrastructure, landscape and streetscape improvements;
- Applying revised zoning regulations and design standards.

### CONSERVATION / MINOR REHABILITATION

Conservation, combined with minor rehabilitation actions, is recommended for buildings in which some actions are necessary in order to enhance a building's potential. In these areas, actions should strive to preserve existing appropriate uses and correct potentially blighting conditions. Buildings suitable for conservation and minor rehabilitation are primarily located within the Plan Area, but outside of the identified Priority Zones. Conservation and minor rehabilitation, undertaken primarily with private and/or non-profit funding, may include:

- Continuing preventive maintenance and upkeep;
- Undertaking minor structural and façade rehabilitation;
- Enforcing property maintenance codes;
- Addressing minor infrastructure improvements;
- Providing landscape and streetscape improvements as aesthetic and visual enhancements;
- Applying revised zoning regulations and design standards.

## **SOURCES OF FUNDING**

The Plan will be primarily implemented by funds provided through the City of Huntsville's Capital Improvement Plan. At the time of this Plan, the City has no definitive financial plans, budgetary designations or reserve fund commitments to utilize local or municipal funds to implement the Plan. However, due to the large number of improvements required and the financial resources available, local officials, in order to implement all aspects of this Plan, should they vote to do so, will need to pursue a wide variety of financial sources.

Potential sources of financing may include various local revenues, if available and not committed to other uses, as well as outside funds (i.e., grants). The source of funds needs to be appropriately matched with each activity in order to determine the most feasible and efficient method of financing. In this manner, local officials can identify the most beneficial funding source for each activity and thereby enable the City to maximize the utilization of available revenues.

# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

## ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF PLAN

The Huntsville City Council will hold a public hearing on the Research Park East Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan to present publicly the intentions of this Plan. Based upon a favorable hearing, the City Council will adopt the Plan to allow for implementation.

The Plan may be modified, changed or amended at any time by the City of Huntsville following appropriate public hearings that would address any proposed amendment. The Plan shall also be amended to include specific redevelopment project plans as those projects occur. Any amendment to this Plan will require the approval of the Huntsville City Council.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Given that Research Park has been a dynamic part of the community for over 50 years, it is imperative that the *Research Park East Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan* be implemented to ensure that all of Research Park and the surrounding area remain a vital part of the North Alabama economy. The necessity for a healthy, safe, and vibrant environment of the Plan Area is critical.

The Plan Area is the cornerstone of the Huntsville community. The development of a plan of action for accomplishing the recommendations of the Research Park East Urban Renewal / Redevelopment Plan is essential for successful implementation. Some of the more important actions that are needed following the adoption of the Plan by the City Council are:

- Officially designate the city official responsible for administration, management and coordination of the Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan;
- Begin appraisal and acquisition activities;
- Begin detailed engineering design of infrastructure improvements;
- Review of Current Zoning Ordinance to possible include amendments to the Cummings Research Park District standards and/or add a Zoning Overlay District;
- Investigate the option of establishing a Tax Increment Financing District for the Plan Area;

- Create an initiative to respond to economic opportunities related to the overall renewal of the Plan Area including potential development opportunities, new retailers, rehabilitation of existing structures or spot clearance and redevelopment of properties; and,
- Identify private development opportunities and partners to aide in the financial implementation of the Plan.
- Schedule and implement a regular review and update of the Urban Renewal / Redevelopment Plan.

Exhibit A  
THE PLAN AREA

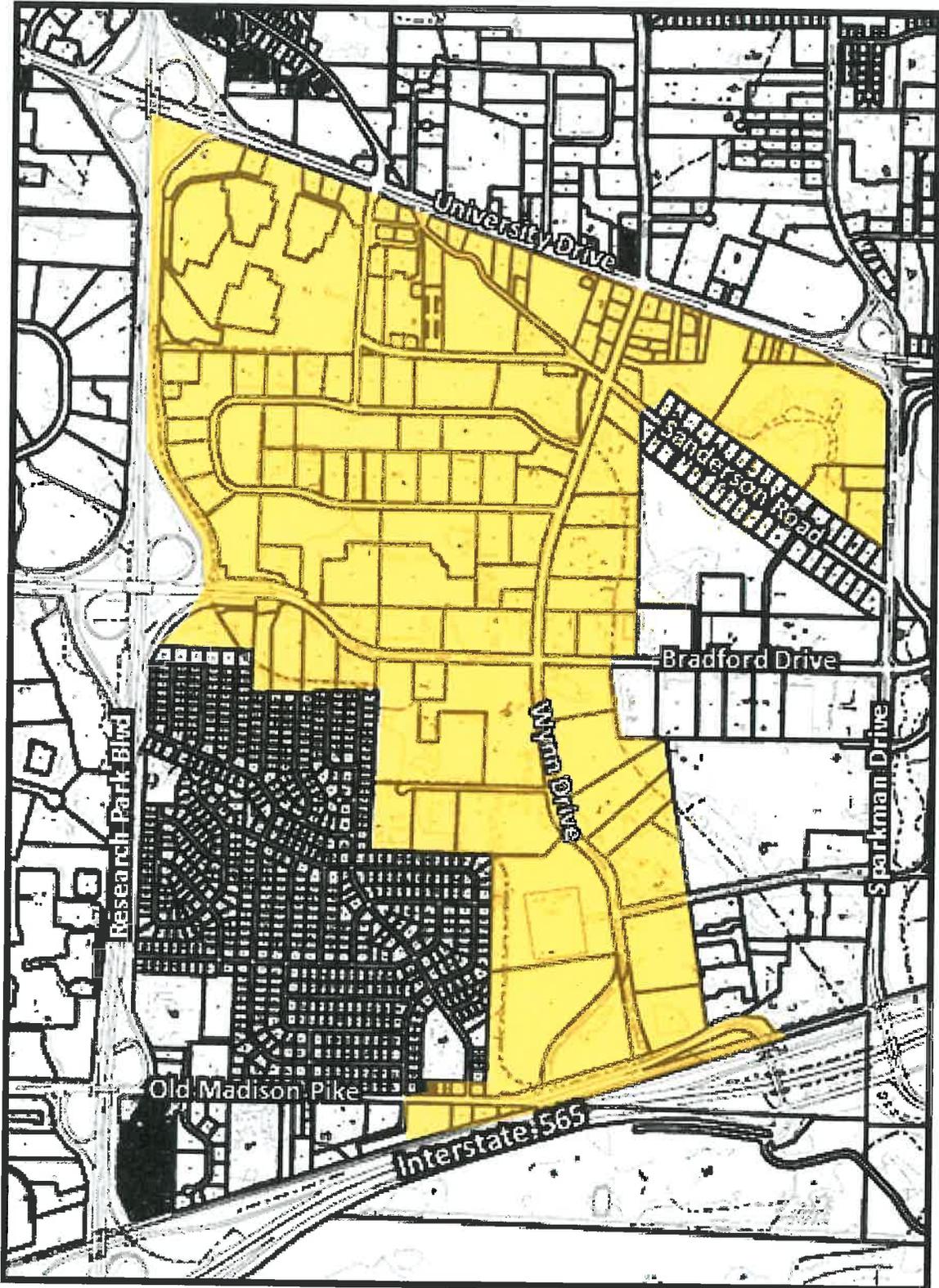


Exhibit B  
ACQUISITION AREAS

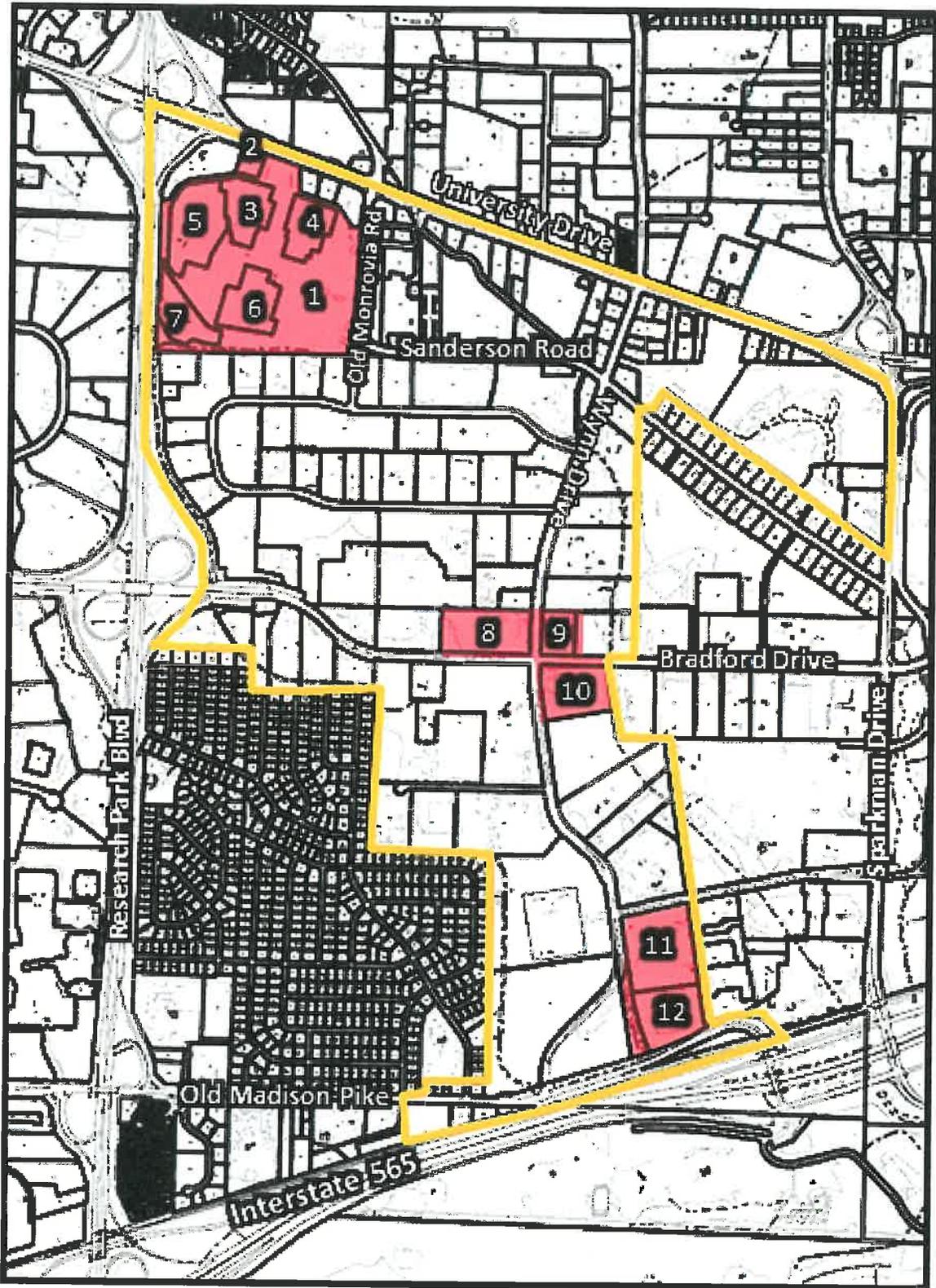


Exhibit C  
PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT LOCATIONS

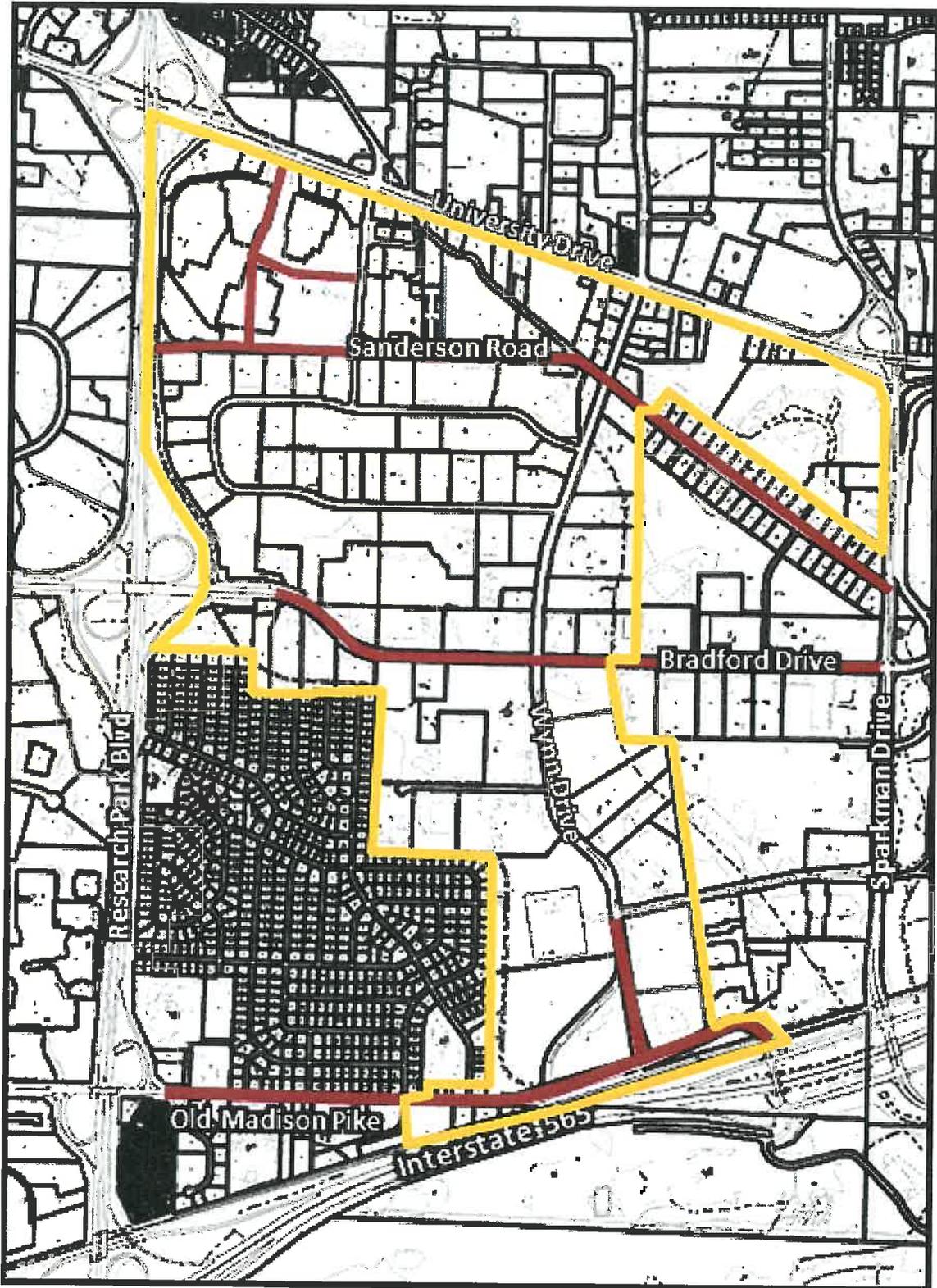


Exhibit D

PRIORITY ZONES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

