



Over the Rhine

as a Living Neighborhood

Creators

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Course

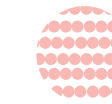
Principles of Planning Design Graphics II | PLAN1012 | Spring 2019

Thanks

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Introduction

Setting the story.

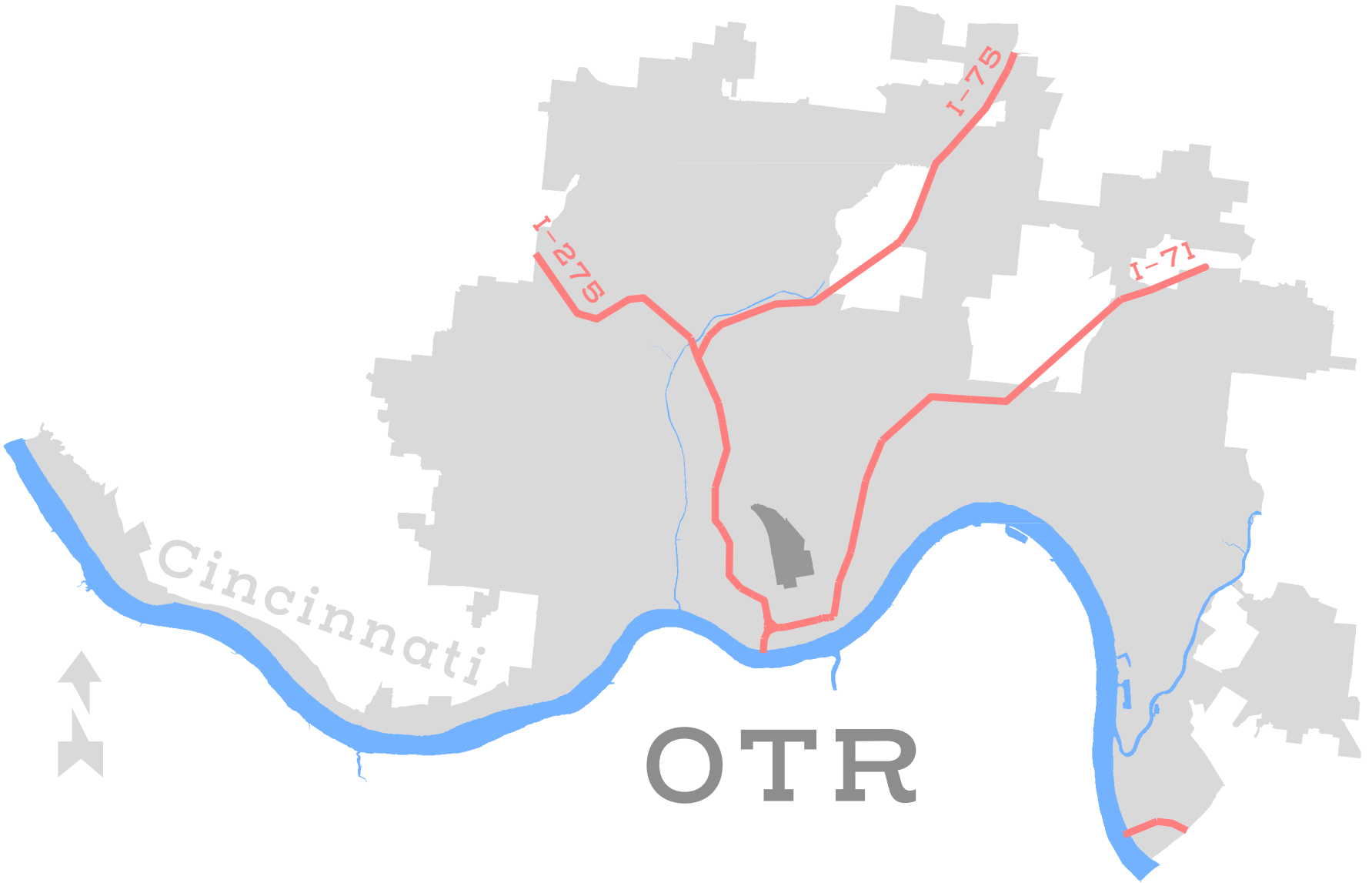
Over-the-Rhine (OTR) is a place of change, struggle, identity, and abandonment. A neighborhood belonging to several different populations. Built for activity. Built for density.

Migrants have settled in OTR for centuries. The neighborhoods close proximity to Cincinnati's downtown, the *Ohio River*, and the *Mill Creek* has shaped the physical and social environment. Few have stayed. Many have left.

Every person around Cincinnati has their own story or perception to share of OTR: the german heritage, beautiful architecture, the dangerous streets, the rioting, and the vibrant nightlife. At the beginning, it was confusing for us also.

Our story begins with a historical timeline of OTR, and highlights main events throughout the neighborhood's past. Then, we build on our own perceptions of OTR; built from walking around, visiting public spaces, and meeting people inside the neighborhood. Next, details on the structure of OTR is presented; created by map, cross-section, elevation, and perspective views. Followed by a data summary from *U.S. Census* and *American Community Survey*. Then, our analysis of the neighborhood's issues and opportunities, with recommendations.

OTR is a place of history, success, diversity, and people. A neighborhood with several different populations, and belonging to all. Built for you. Built for them.



Location

OTR sits between the high rise downtown and hills of *Clifton Heights*, and edged by *Interstate 71* and *75*. The neighborhood received its name from the bordering canal, which extended from the *Ohio River* and connected to *Mill Creek*. The German population that settled the area associated the canal with their native *Rhine River*.

OTR Locator Map
ESRI ArcMap, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

History

A look at the past.

Antebellum Period (1788-1860)

The city of Cincinnati was founded in 1788 along the Ohio River basin in southwest Ohio. In the early 19th century, the state of Ohio invested in the construction of canal systems. The best and cheapest form of transportation at the time. The Miami-Erie canal, in 1827, was one of the projects, and connected the cities of Cincinnati, Dayton, and Toledo. The canal bordered downtown Cincinnati along the east and north edges.

In the eighteen-thirties, a large number of migrating Germans arrived and began building on the land north of the canal. A plentiful number of labor jobs existed to support the growing population. In 1852, the construction of Findlay Market provided a open-market for farmers to provide fresh produce to residents. The market is Ohio's oldest continuously operated public house.

Industrial Period (1861-1960)

The U.S. Civil War ended in 1865, setting former African-American slaves free. Many former slaves migrated to Cincinnati, and landed west of the canal; a neighborhood called West End. In 1878, the famous Cincinnati Music Hall finished construction, and began bringing people from across the region into OTR.

At the start of the 20th century, OTR hit its peak population size of 45,000. Ethnic discrimination during World War II forced many

- 1788 Cincinnati founded.
- 1827 Construction of the Miami-Erie Canal.
- 40 German migrants begin arriving.
- 52 Findlay Market opens.
- 65 U.S. Civil War ends.
- 78 Music Hall begin operations.

Germans to begin leaving OTR in the nineteen-thirties and forties. A neighborhood built for high density was becoming largely vacant. In the nineteen-fifties, large numbers of Appalachians from Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee began arriving and settling in OTR. The neighborhood offered cheap housing and nearby labor jobs for a population coming from rural poverty.

Modern Period (1961-Present)

In 1962, the construction of I-75 cut through the African-American community in the West End neighborhood. Many found residency in OTR. The German population was nearly erased, but the Appalachian and African-American populations kept a half occupied neighborhood. However, as industrial jobs declined in Cincinnati



through the seventies and eighties, so did most the White population. Both headed for the newly built suburbs.

An activist leader and longtime resident named Buddy Gray defended OTR through the eighties and nineties. Any plan looking to preserve or develop parts of OTR were opposed by Gray and the neighborhood; believing investment would cause rents to rise for the poor until no longer being able to afford to live there. For more than two decades no investment occurred, but residents remained.

In 1996, Buddy was shot at his homeless drop-in center, and change in the neighborhood came from the loss of an important community member. Police brutality and civil unrest throughout Cincinnati escalated in 2001 after the shooting of a black teenager. Protesters marched through OTR, bringing damage to property and a negative city image.

In the mid-2000s, local private corporations began funding a local non-profit to begin investing and changing the image of downtown Cincinnati and OTR.

The Rhine in Retrospect
InDesign | Group effort

1900

40

50

60

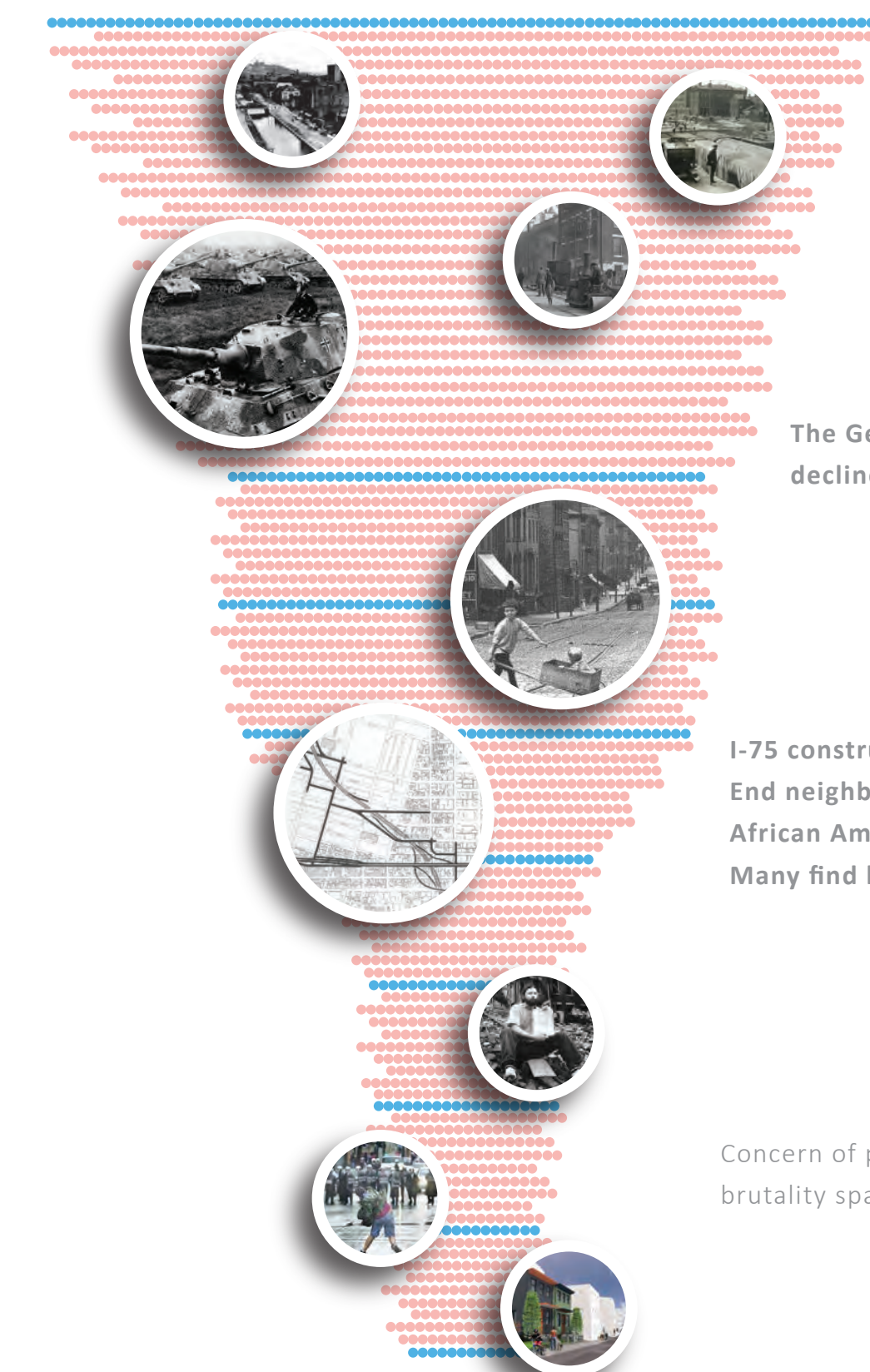
70

80

90

2000

10



Miami-Erie Canal removed.

Underground subway begins construction.

Subway abandoned. Central Parkway paved.

The German population declines during World Wars.

Arrival of Appalachian migrants.

I-75 construction through West End neighborhood displaces African American households. Many find housing in OTR.

Neighborhood leader, Buddy Gray, successfully fought to keep investment and preservation out.

Concern of police brutality spark riots.

Non-profit development company, 3CDC, begins investing in neighborhood.

Impression

Building our perspective.

By walking through the neighborhood, visiting public and private spaces, and meeting people in the community, our group began forming our own perspective of OTR. This section will showcase how we choose to represent the neighborhood during the process.



First Map

Having never studied Over-the-Rhine before, a “child-like” map displaying our first initial impressions of the neighborhood was created to get a sense of the area before diving into the specifics of OTR.

Building facade was focused on heavily, as well as parks, residential areas, and divide lines. The Liberty Divide was noticed very early on, as well as the commercial strips having the more vibrant buildings while north of Liberty had more of the duller buildings.

Impression Map of OTR
Hand-drawn | Group effort

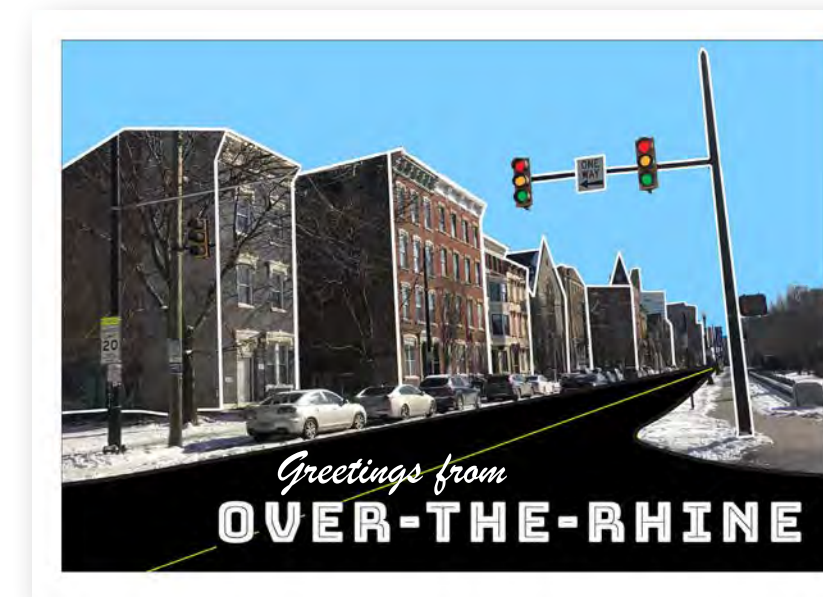
Postcards

This piece in the postcard collection highlights the landmarks of OTR in an abstract way with the basic colors of OTR found in design and architecture being represented.



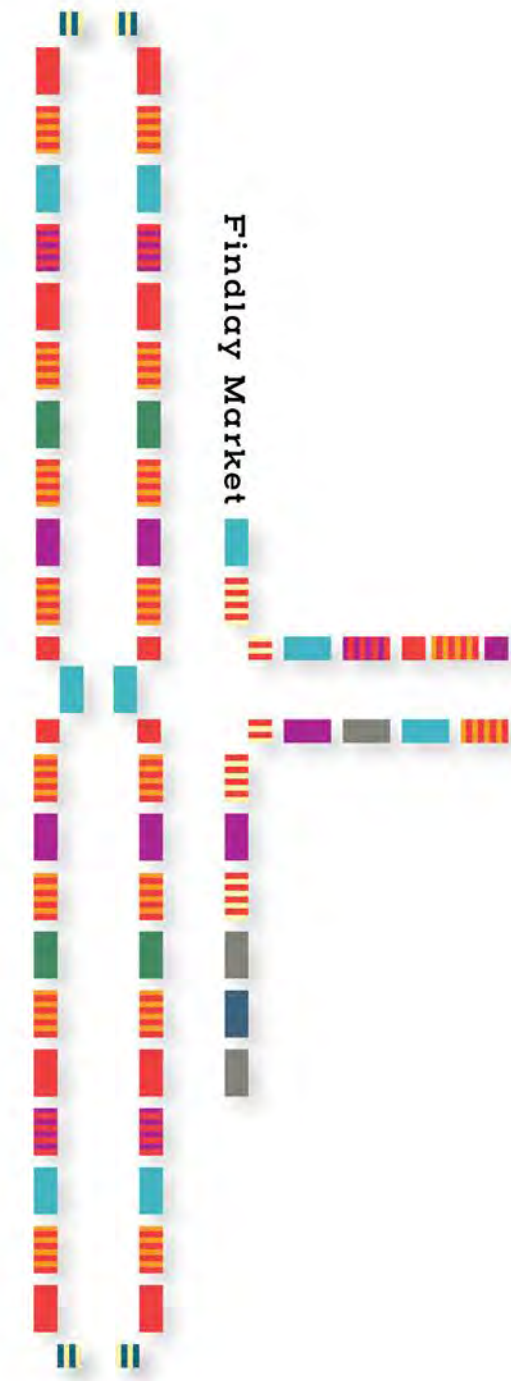
Looking at OTR in a more touristy perspective gave the understanding that the neighborhood is so dynamic. This image on the edge of Washington Park on Race Street gives the viewer a nice perspective of the park’s east edge, while also seeing the beautiful architecture Over-the-Rhine has to offer.

Greetings from Over-The-Rhine
Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator | Blake Woodruff (Left), Ryan Collingwood (Center), Kyle Gibbs (Right)



The buildings in OTR are frequently in one of three conditions. The person walking on the sidewalk first walks past a dilapidated building, an Italianate style structure that is boarded and abandoned. He continues walking by a newly constructed building, modern style with windows from top to bottom and vibrant. The last building has been redeveloped, an Italianate style structure with fresh paint and new life.





Minimal Maps

The layout to Findlay Market is represented by illustrating only the awnings to the store fronts. The market is an important landmark in OTR, and one of the most memorable experiences. Part of the experience is the activity and vibrancy of the market. People bounce from storefront to storefront, adding a welcoming buzz. At the entrance of each storefront is a brightly patterned awning, and these awnings set the scene for a warm and friendly environment.

In Awning (Left)
Adobe Illustrator, Google Maps | Kyle Gibbs

The map illustrates the location of steeple churches in OTR. A single gold path connects them together while forming the shape of each church.

Steeples (Right)
Adobe Illustrator | Blake Woodruff

OVER-THE-RHINE
Cincinnati



The People

An impression of OTR is not complete without getting to know the people. Paul has lived in OTR for three years, and shared some of his experiences. Every place you go in the neighborhood you are bound to find someone. It was built for people, and people enjoy being there. Every person has their own story and experience to share.

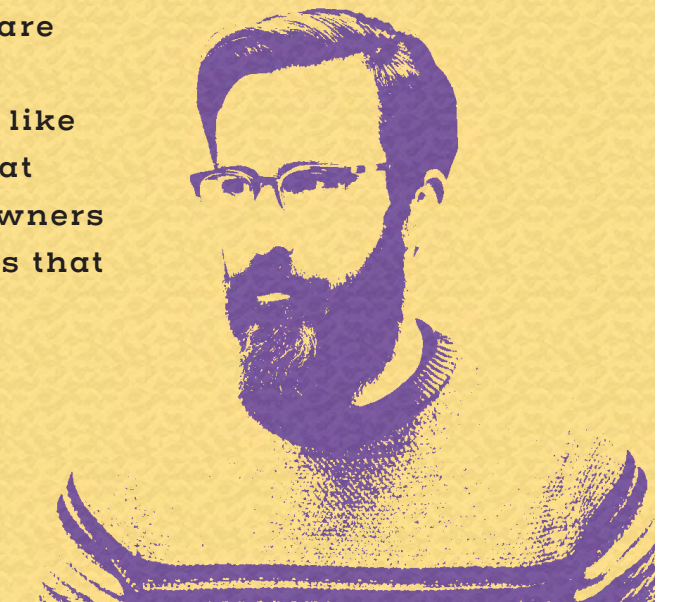
Souls of OTR
Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

“OTR appealed to me because it felt alive. I’ll always be happy with growing up in northern Kentucky but OTR offers something like that from a movie. The buildings and their **history**, the **pace** of people, and the **buzz** the main strips have on busy nights is **thrilling**.”

Crime and danger do happen, but if you’re aware and smart about situations then you’re fine. My family for the longest time refused to visit me, until I gave them the same treatment, and now they **won’t stop** coming up here. Just surround yourself with people and don’t make yourself available to danger.

Groceries suck here, like Findlay Market is more **novelty** than **viable**. My diet is sh***y and I eat out a lot, unless I want to hail a bus up to Kroger by campus and lug my bags around. Findlay Market does have vegetables and fruit, it’s probably more that I’m lazy and would rather grab tacos or a burger.

Something exciting is that my dad and I just opened our own brewery in Northside. Spaces in OTR are so **expensive** and really **small**, so Northside made sense, and it’s a super chill area; people are starting to call it “Under-the-Rhine”. It’s like the underground spot that strangers and out-of-towners miss, so the reputation is that this is where real **‘nations** go.”



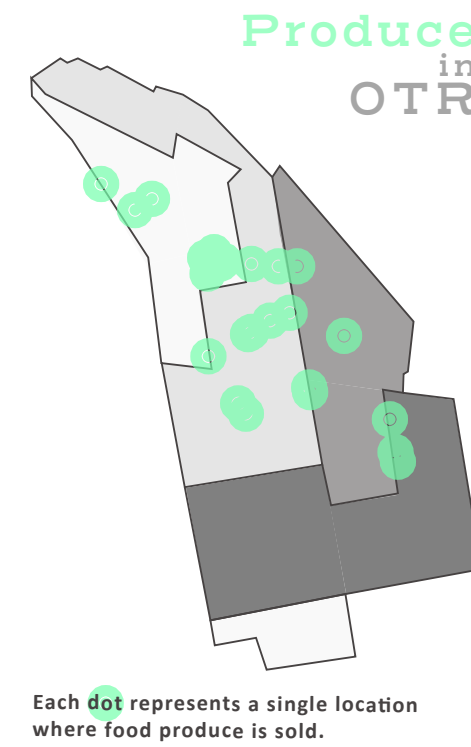
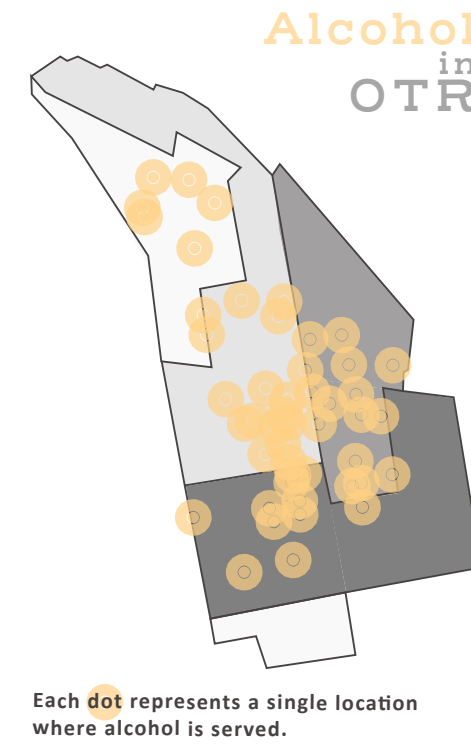
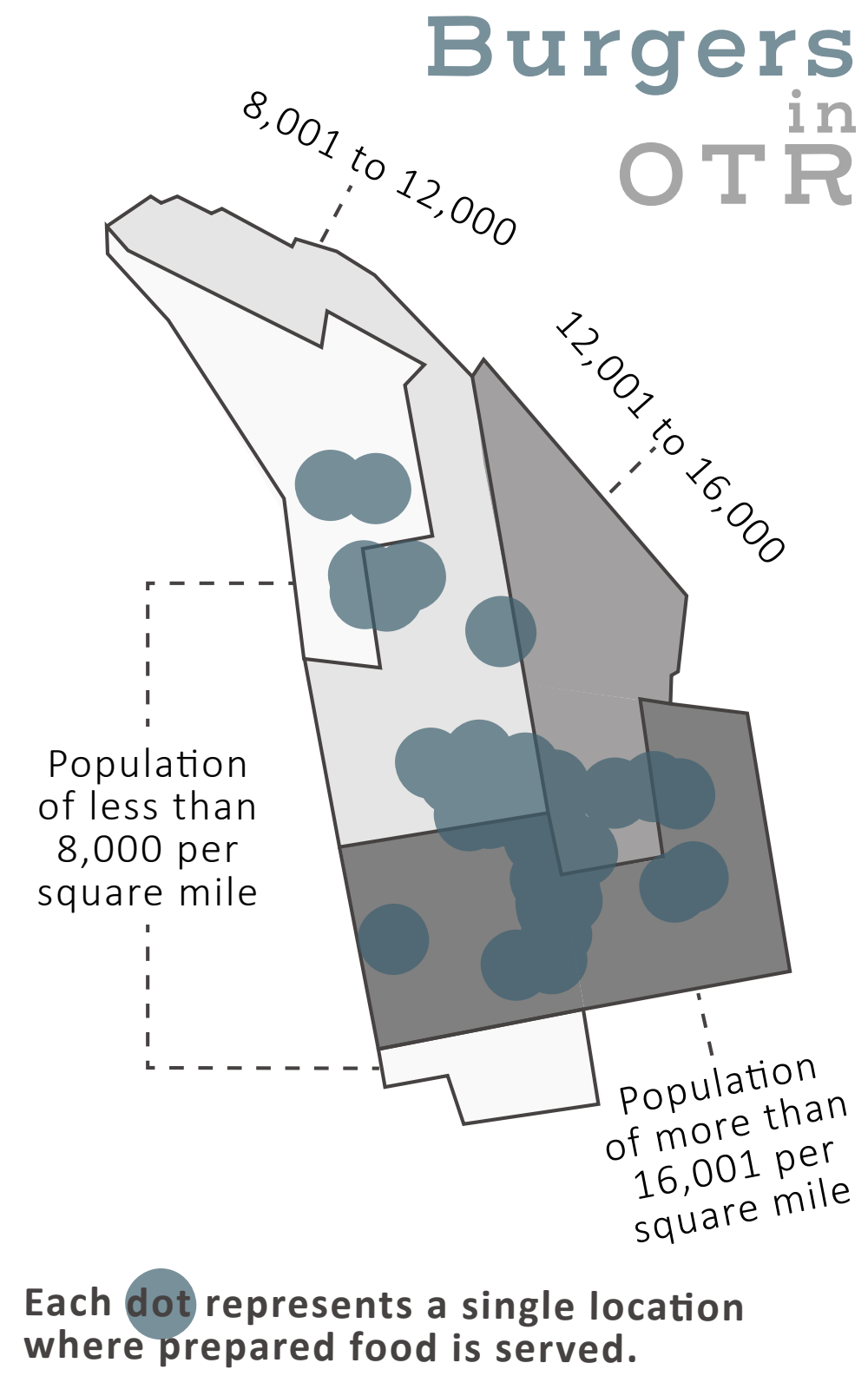
Senseability Maps

The idea behind this map was to explore the food desert in OTR, specifically the lack of green produce and the almost unnecessary amount of “restaurant” food and alcohol. The dots represent the location of each business which sells the corresponding item/product.

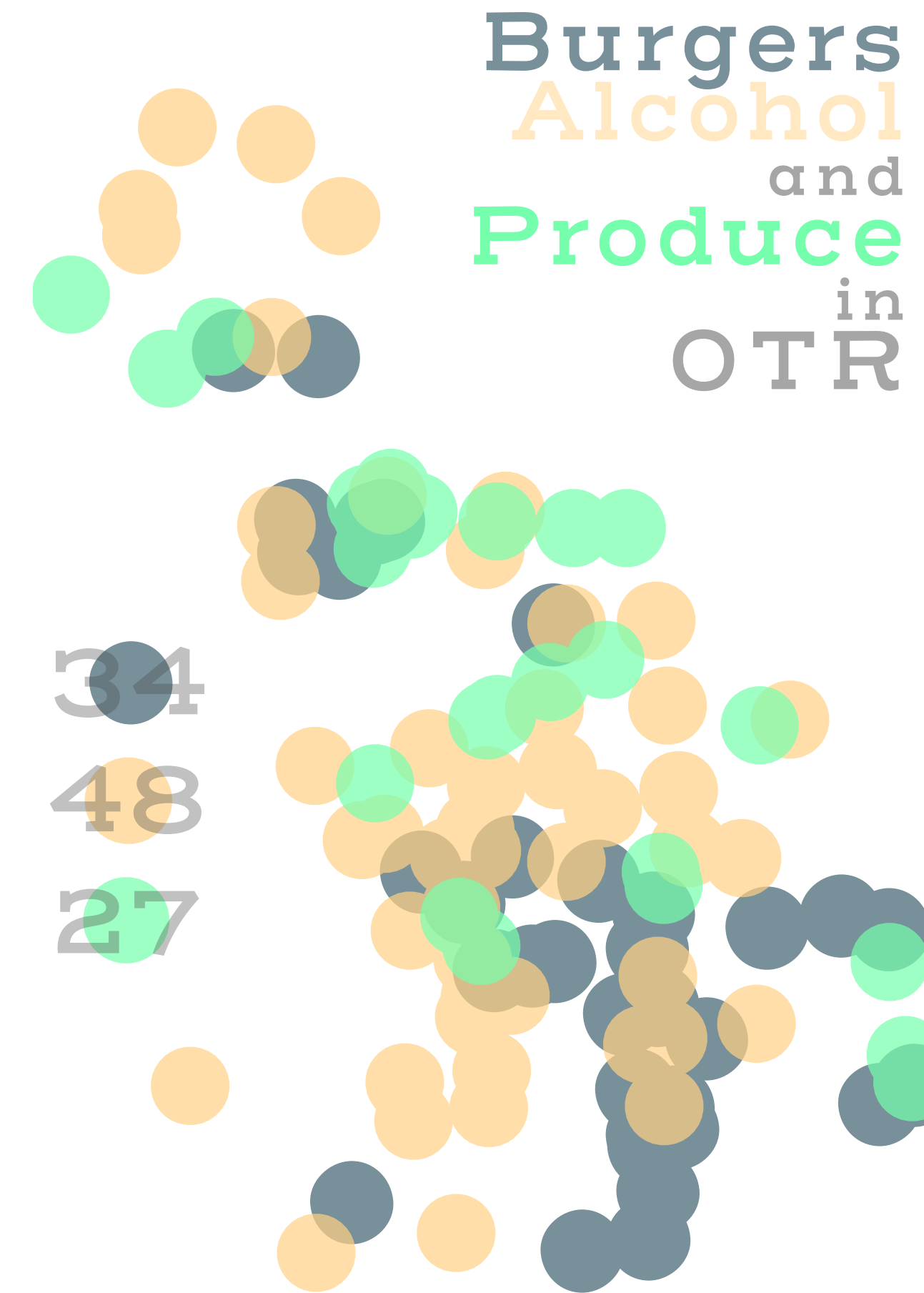
Burgers in OTR
Adobe Illustrator | Ryan Collingwood

Alcohol in OTR
Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

Produce in OTR
Adobe Illustrator | Blake Woodruff



Burgers, Alcohol, and Produce in OTR
Adobe Illustrator | Group Effort



Structure

Understanding the built environment.

To understand a neighborhood you must know its form. Our group created a series of maps, diagrams, and models to begin understanding the location of open spaces, the movement of people, the uses of land, nodal areas, and the streetscape.

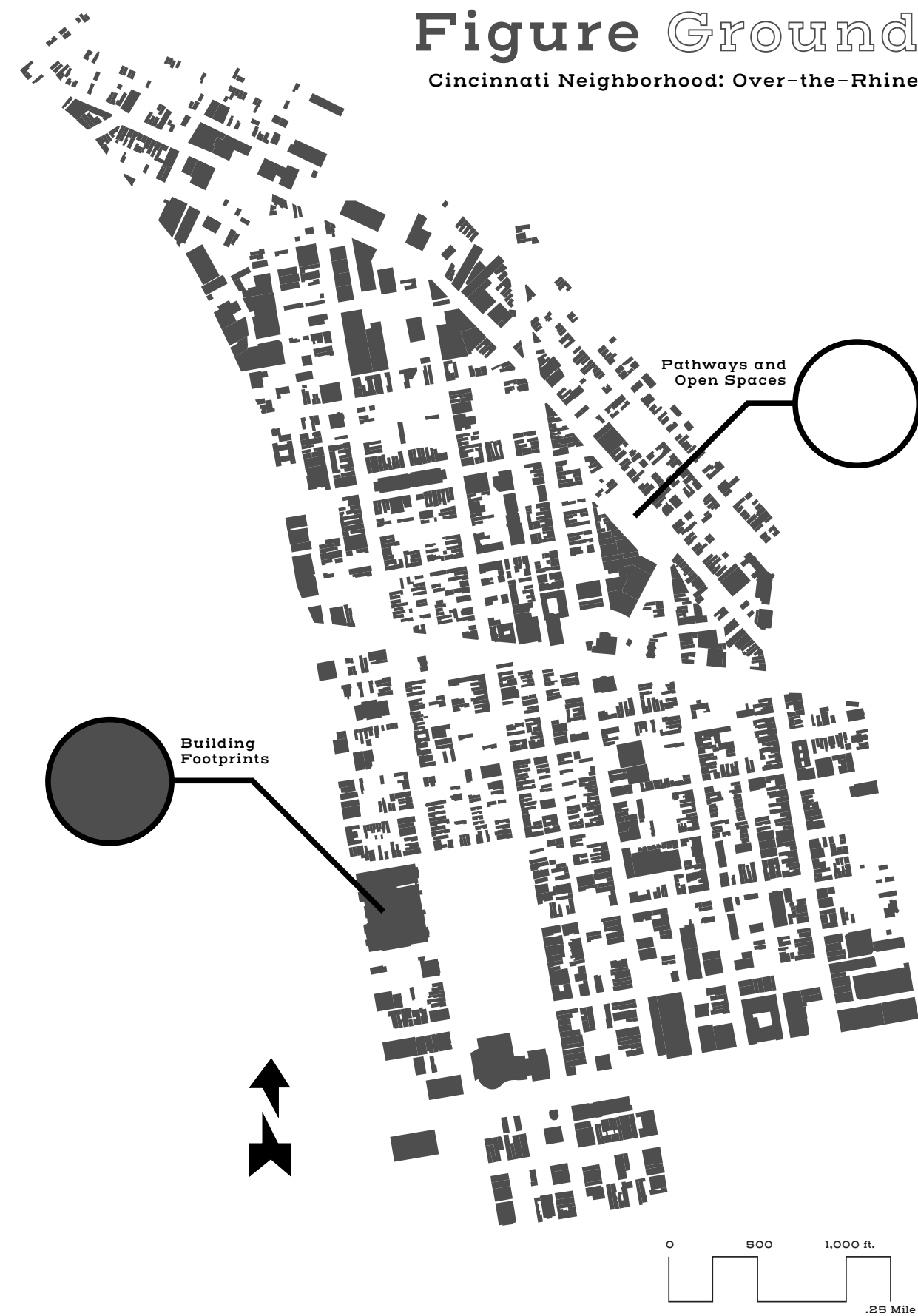


Figure Ground

Transitioning into the more analytical pieces of work, the most basic of all these is Over-the-Rhine's figure ground map. Highlighting open spaces (white) and building footprints (black), the contrast in colors tells a story of density and the maze of streets that Over-the-Rhine represents.

Figure Ground
ESRI ArcMap, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

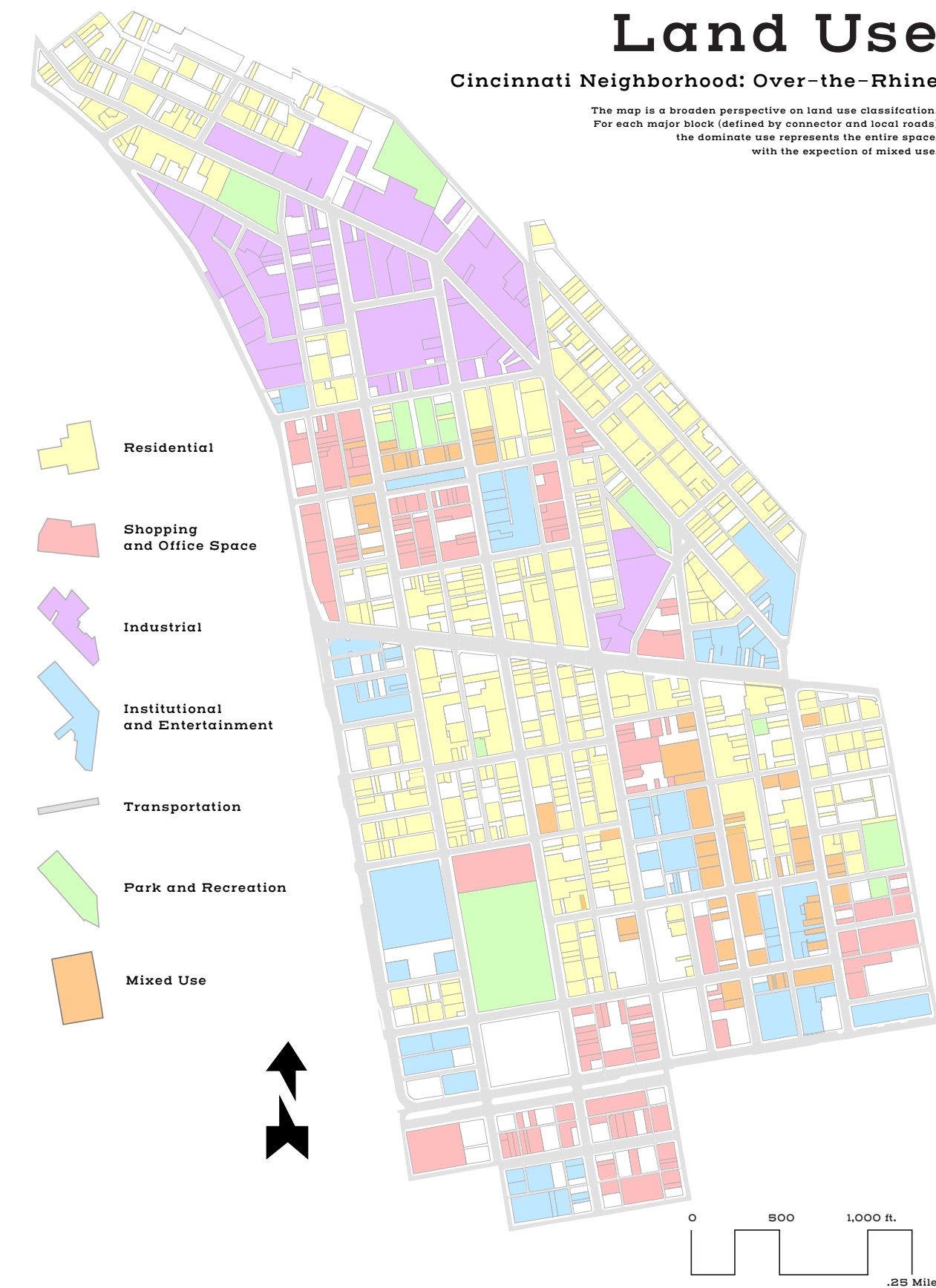
Linkages

Although OTR has this "maze of streets", it is a highly connected and highly effective. In a dense and populated area, an efficient linkage network is crucial in keeping flow and happiness within the community.

Looking at the map, full lines indicate larger roads, while dotted lines refer to smaller and less-used roads around the neighborhood. The varying size of circles throughout the map indicate larger and more-used intersections or smaller and less-used intersections. Finally, the three shaded areas on the map are walk sheds from three highlighted points in Over-the-Rhine.

Linkages
ESRI ArcMap, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs





Land Use

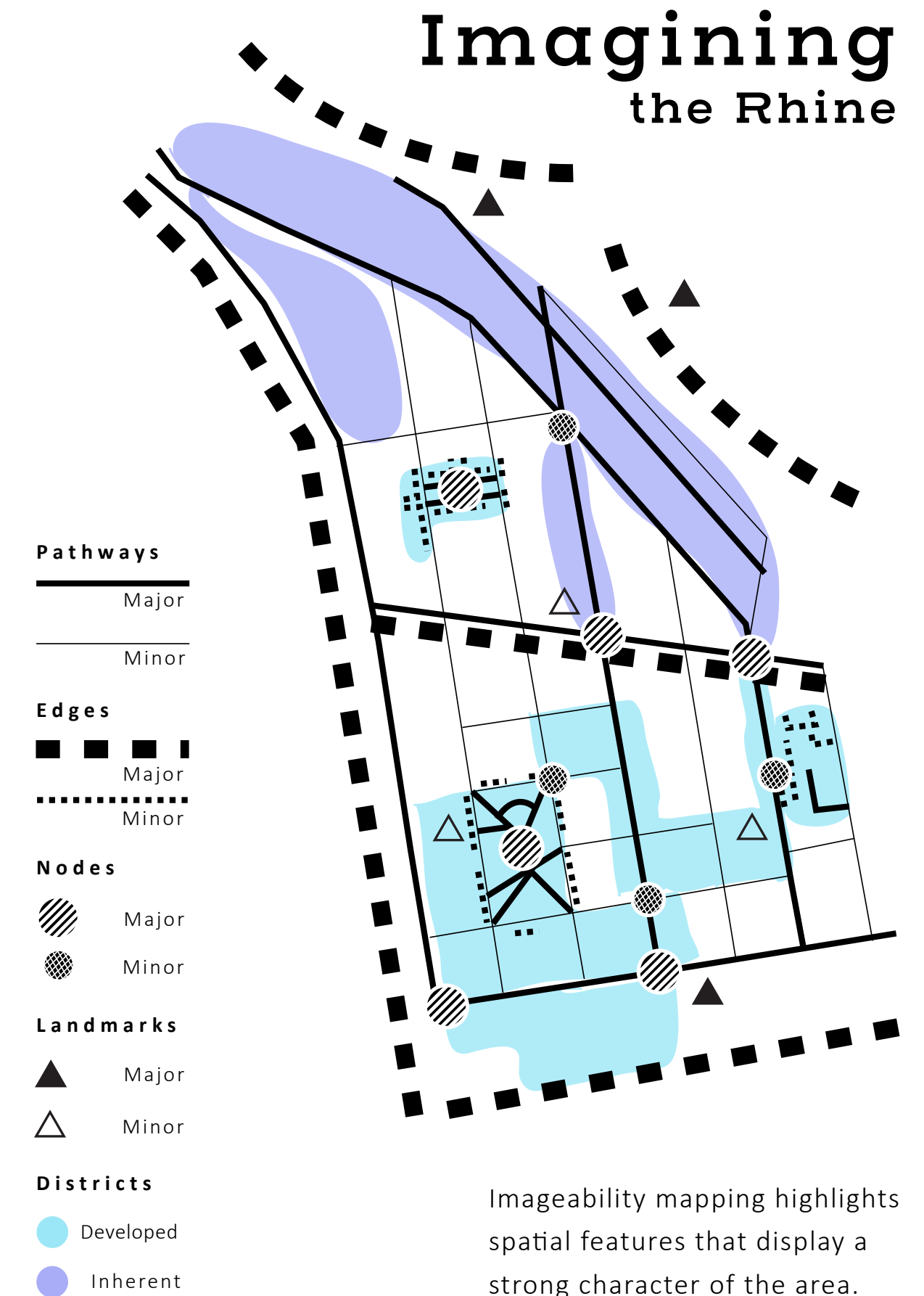
Over-the-Rhine is a very diverse neighborhood and has many uses to many different people. The map represents each block encompassing the main use in that given space. North of Liberty has predominantly residential and industrial use, while south of Liberty consists mainly of residential, institutional/entertainment, and shopping/office space use. As OTR continues to develop and change, it's land use will also continue to shift and adjust.

Land Use
ESRI ArcMap, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

Imageability

Wrapping up the set of analytical maps, an imageability map provides context of pathways, edges, nodes, landmarks, and districts in an area. In Over-the-Rhine, this means highlighting distinct features about the neighborhood in these five characteristics. Some key features north of Liberty consist of a large portion of the neighborhood has an inherent district and there are not many nodes. Key features south of Liberty consist of a lot of developed areas, a lot of nodes, and multiple landmarks. Overall, the map tells the story that OTR has many areas of activity. However, with multiple hard edges and disagreeable districts, the neighborhood is not one coherent unit.

Imagining the Rhine
Adobe Illustrator | Group effort



Imageability mapping highlights spatial features that display a strong character of the area.

Group Typology Areas

Cincinnati Neighborhood: Over-the-Rhine



Typologies

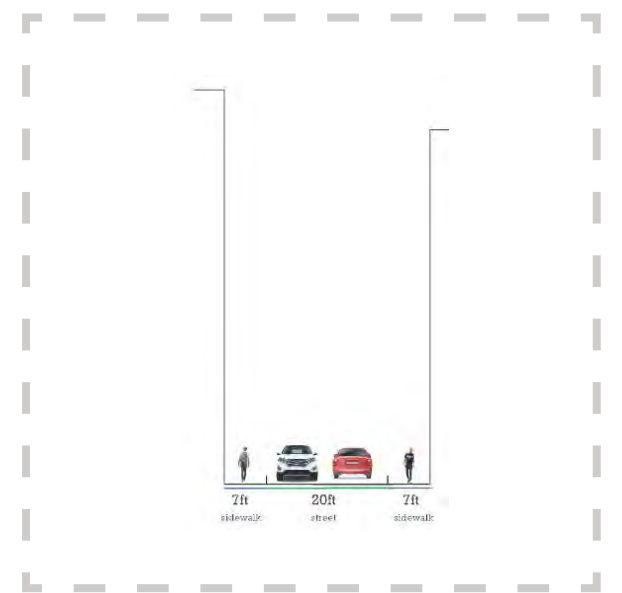
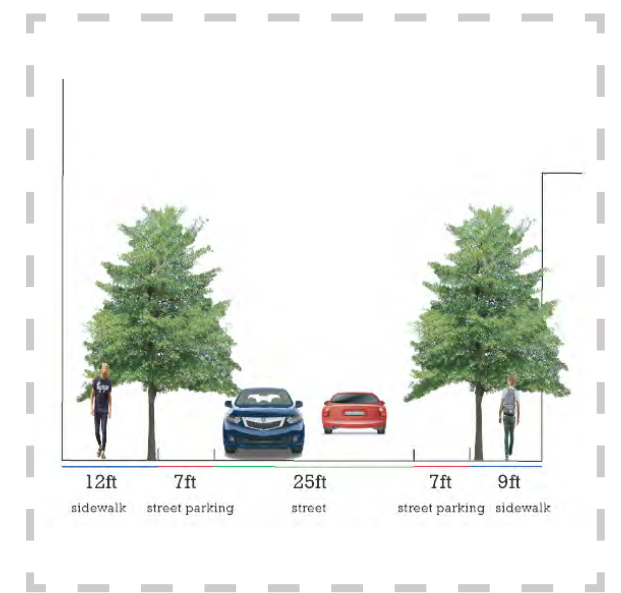
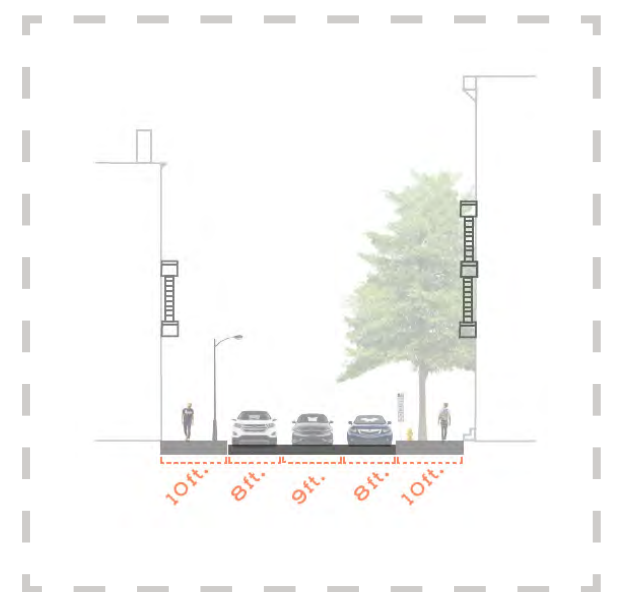
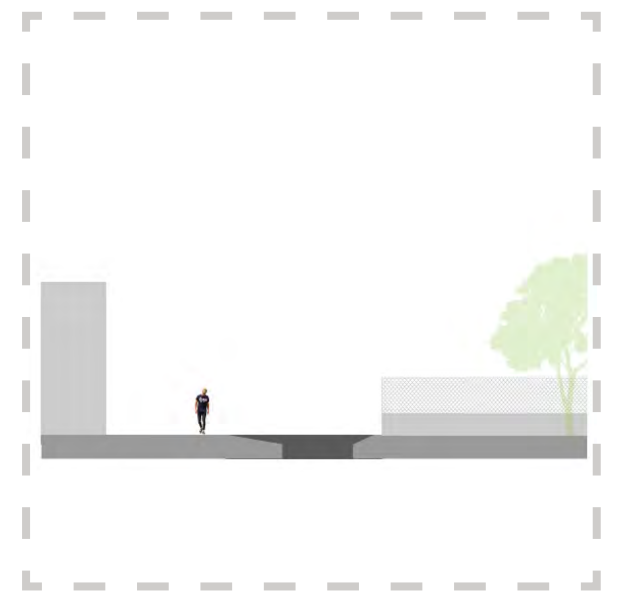
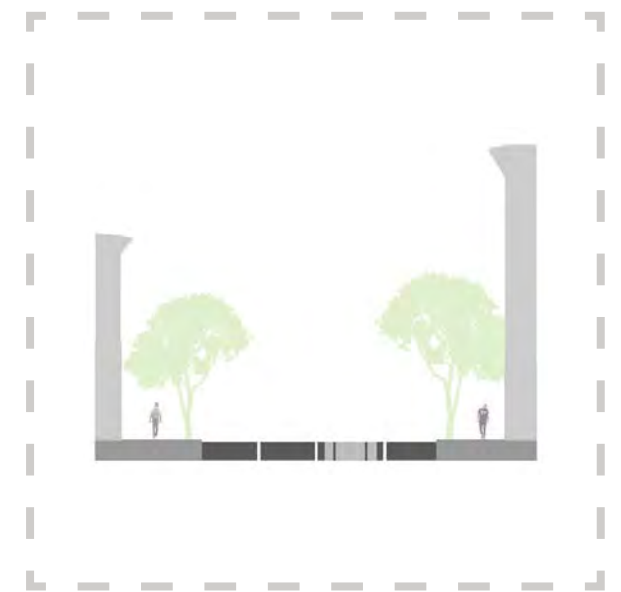
The purpose of the three group typologies was to gain insight into the design and layout of OTR streets, buildings, and infrastructure. As is visible there is a difference between street-widths and buildings heights which create a sense of an architectural identity for OTR.

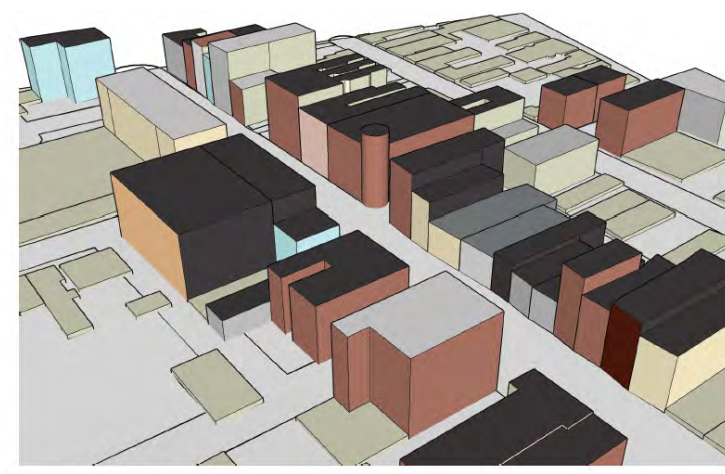
Group Typology Areas
ESRI ArcMap, Adobe Illustrator | Group effort

Rhinegeist District Cross-Sections (Top row)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Blake Woodruff

Pleasant St. District Cross-Sections (Center)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

Vine St. District Cross-Sections (Bottom)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Ryan Collingwood

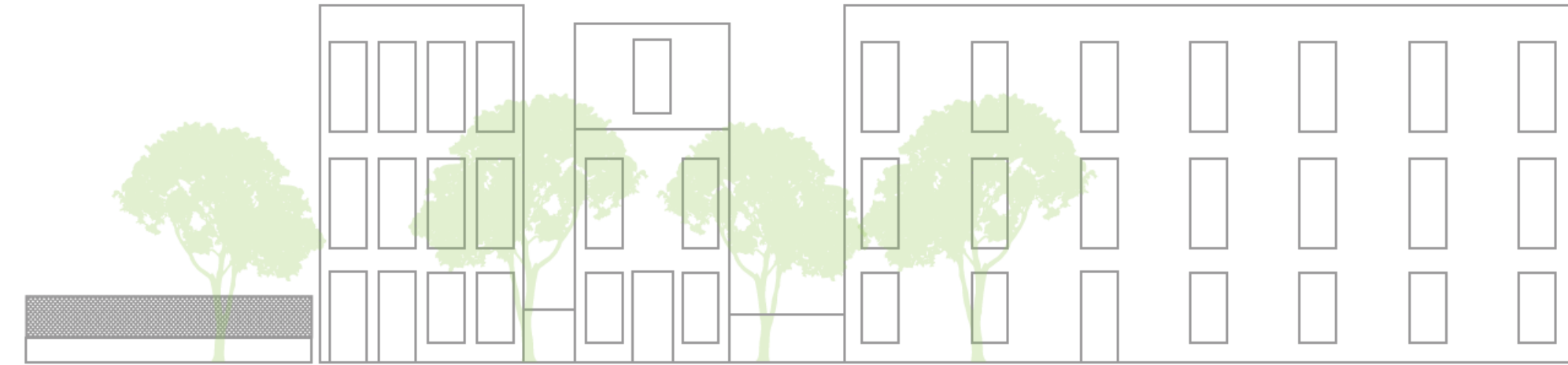




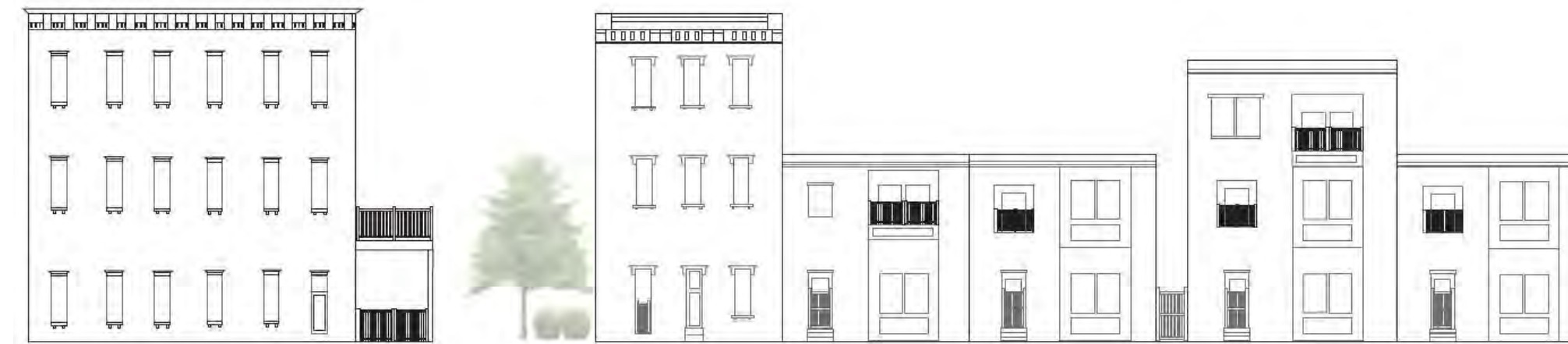
Pleasant St. District Perspective (Top)
SketchUp | Kyle Gibbs

Rhinegeist District Perspective (Left)
SketchUp | Blake Woodruff

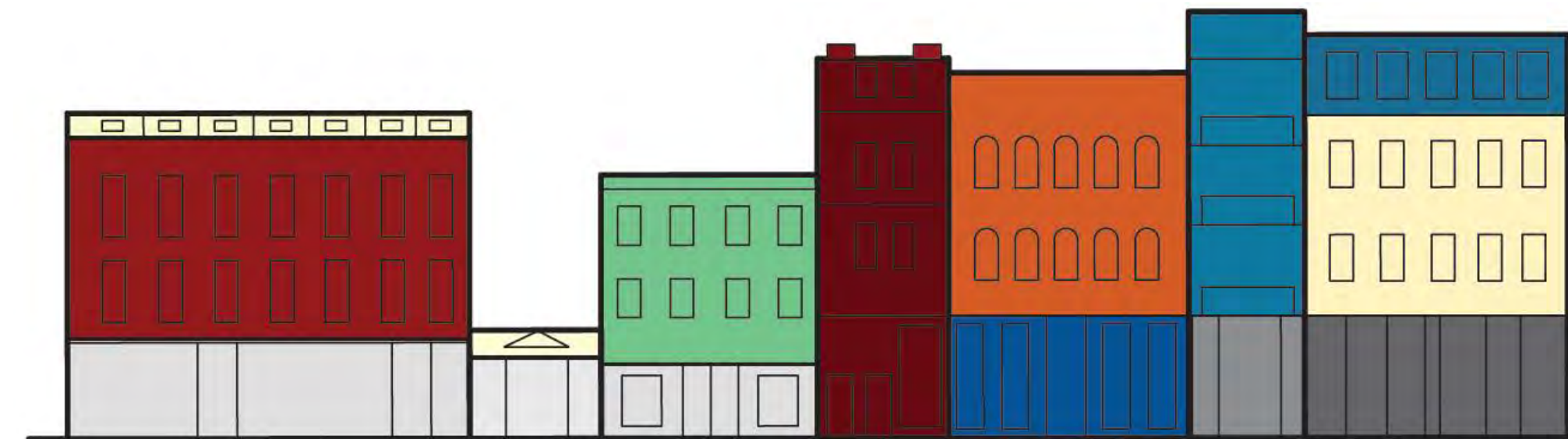
Vine St. District Perspective (Right)
SketchUp | Ryan Collingwood



Rhinegeist District Elevation (Top)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Blake Woodruff



Pleasant St. District Elevation (Center)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs



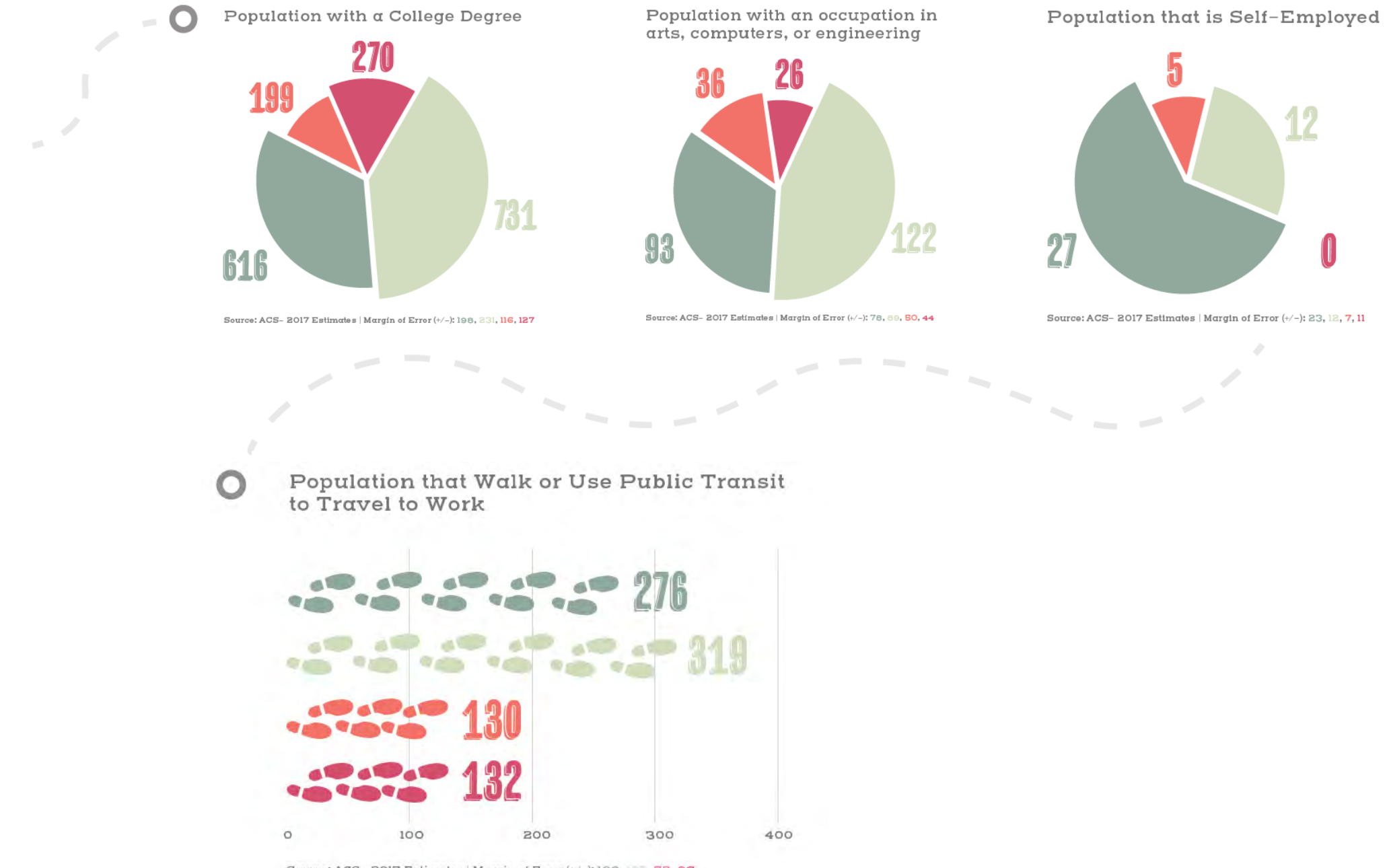
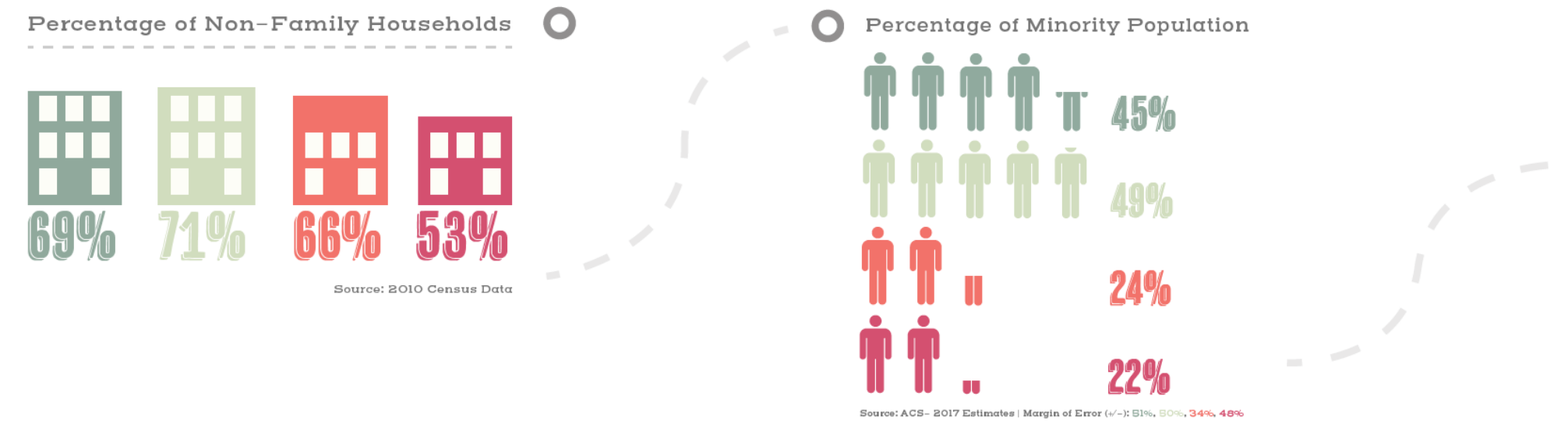
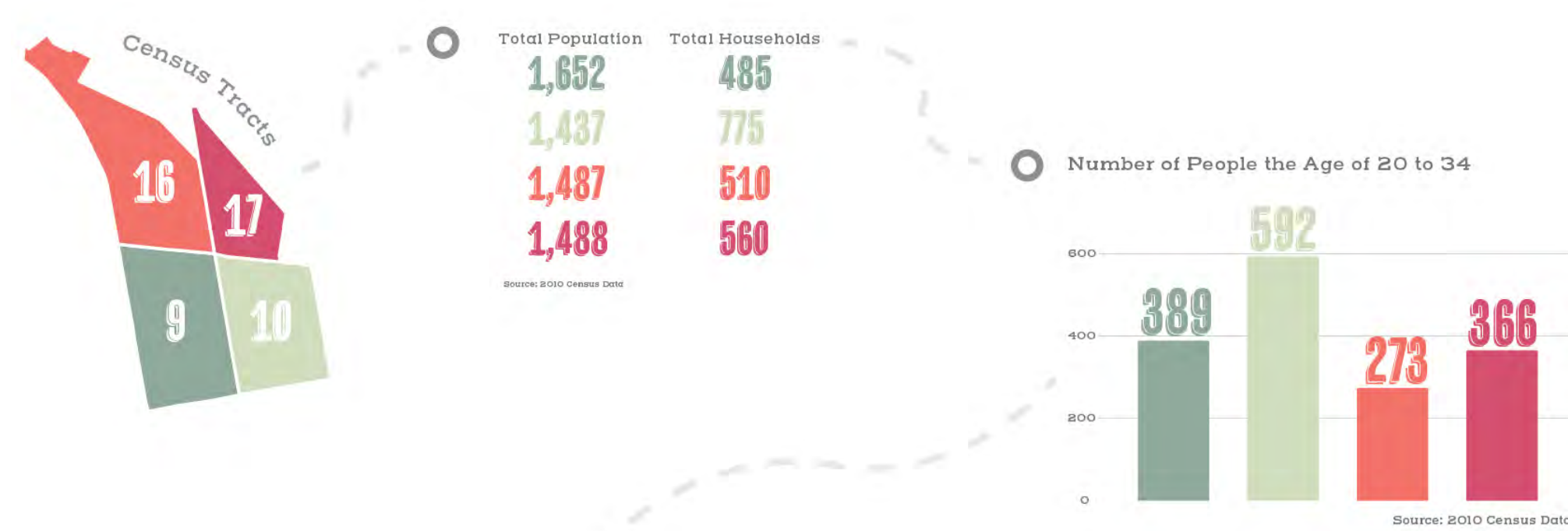
Vine St. District Elevation (Bottom)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Ryan Collingwood

Statistics

Exploring the data.

OTR is divided into four census tracts. The total population is 6,064, in 2,330 households. The population is evenly distributed across tracts 10,16, and 17.

The tract with the largest population has the fewest households, while the tract with the most households have the lowest population. Tract 10 has the most people in their twenties and smallest percentage of non-family households. Tracts 9 and 10 have the best mix of diversity.



The population with college degrees is unevenly distributed throughout OTR,; tracts 9 and 10 population have nearly three times more degrees than tracts 16 and 17. The population with speciality careers is further more uneven at four times more in tracts 9 and 10.

The data set provided moves past perspectives and begins to give a factual understanding to OTR.

The Rhine by the Numbers
Adobe Illustrator, InDesign | Group effort

SWOT Analysis

Our group conducted a SWOT analysis to gather details on Over-the Rhine's **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities**, and **threats**.

Topic questions included:

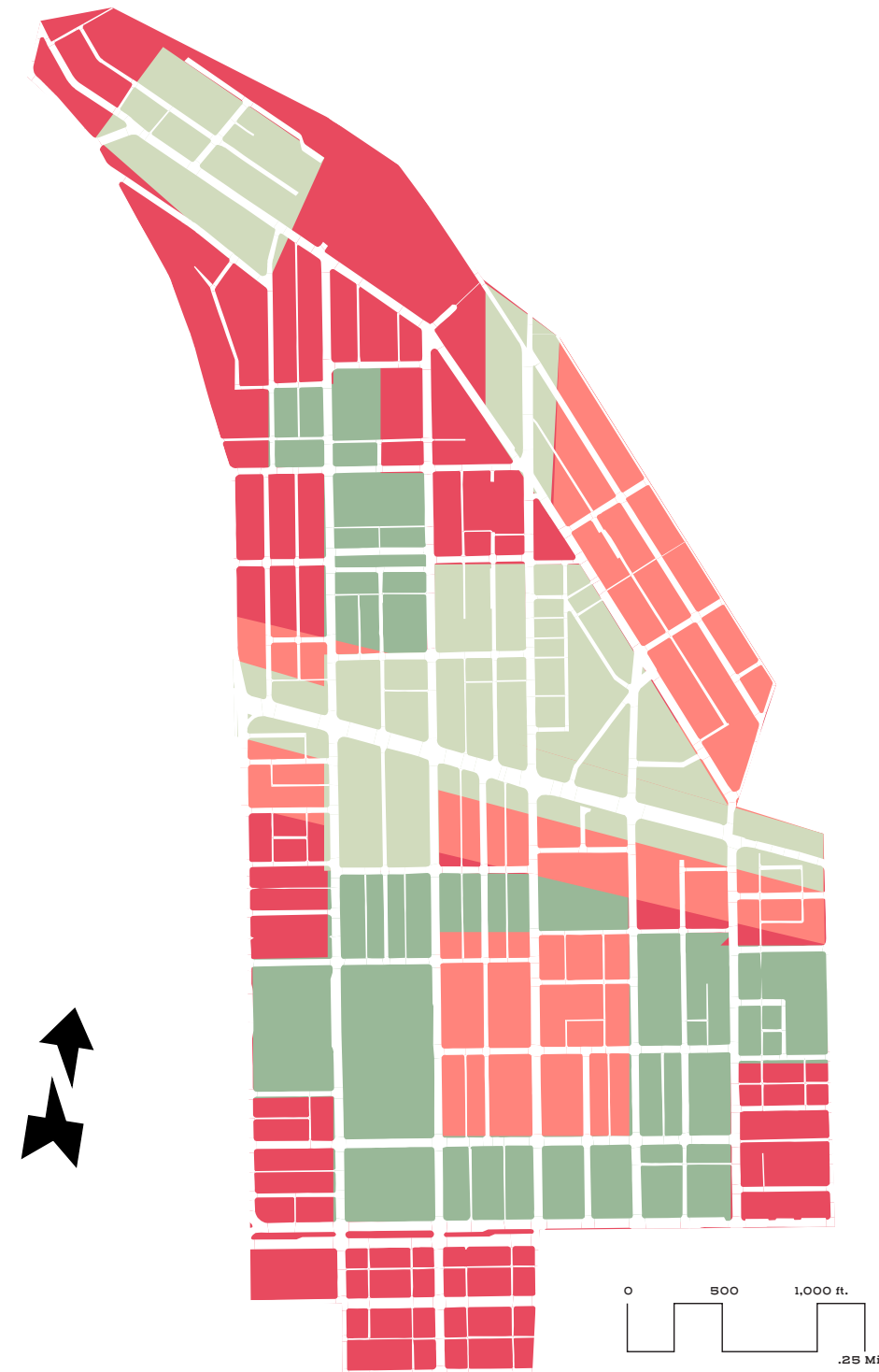
What are OTR's greatest strengths and inherent advantages?

What are the existing disadvantages that prohibits growth in the neighborhood?

What does OTR lack, and what qualities can be improved?

What imposes resistance to the neighborhood thriving?

SWOT Map
ESRI ArcMap Adobe Illustrator | Group effort



Strengths

- Street art murals
- Walkable fabric
- Community gardens
- Well distributed public parks
- Access to public transportation
- Historic Landmarks
- Attractive architecture
- Proximity to downtown
- High mixed use activity

Opportunities

- Vacant spaces to grow
- Inherent population
- Development demand
- Street car access
- Growing population
- Pedestrian focus

Weaknesses

- Monotonous commercial
- Minimal ordinary necessities
- Clustered vacancy
- Clustered development
- Low community involvement
- Negative perception
- Segregation
- Built barriers

Threats

- Demand for vehicles
- Public organization shortage
- Stigmatization
- Private development
- Declining inherent population

Overview of analysis

The objective is to present the five most significant issues or opportunities found in Over-the-Rhine from our research. The conclusion for each field is briefly described, and complimented with supported figures.

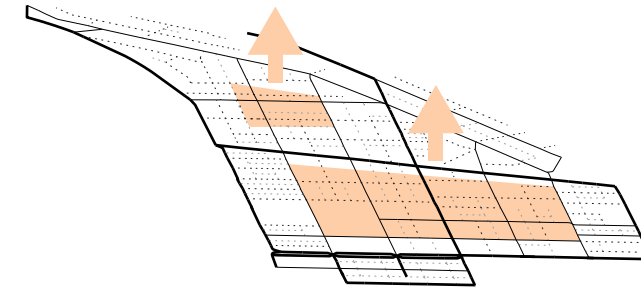


1. Vacancy

An abundance of empty space decreases vibrancy, surrounding uses, and safety, while providing available space for community growth.

○ **212**
Condemned Vacant Properties

○ **8**
Available



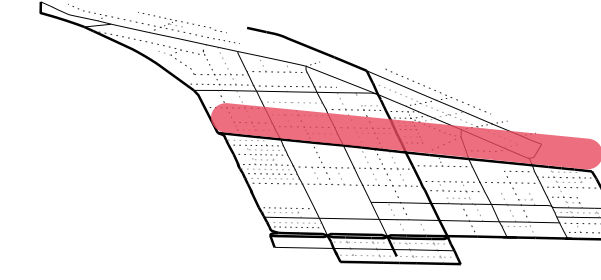
2. Development

Clustered pockets of development produces a vacuum of tourism, and raises the cost of living for areas outside of new investment.

○ **131**
historic properties redeveloped

○ **48**
new construction buildings

Average rent in Cincinnati
○ **\$974**
\$1613 is the average rent in Over-the-Rhine

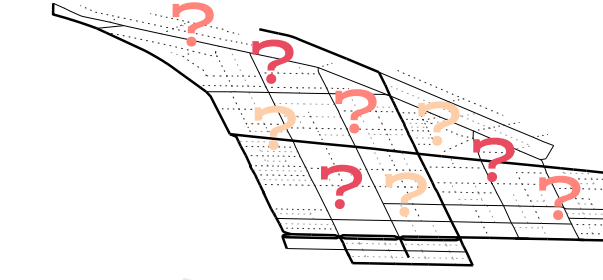


3. Walkability

Liberty Street is a physical barrier; limiting fluidity and perception through the neighborhood.

○ Liberty St. is **7** lanes wide

The median income north of Liberty is **\$12,000**
○ **\$37,000** to the south



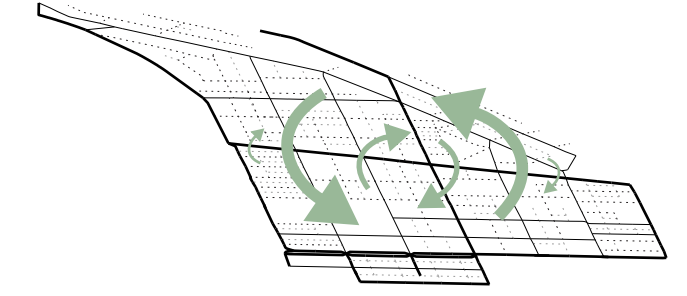
4. Accessibility

Limited distribution of ordinary services and facilities, low-income amenities, and inclusive employment.

○ **0** Laundry facilities

○ **1.2** of fresh produce markets are leaving

Travel time to work takes longer than 20 minutes for **40%** of the residents



5. Identity

Create a strong inclusive identity; driven by the diversity of history, architecture, art, and the people.

○ **54** art murals

○ Largest collection of Italianate architecture in the U.S.

○ Population of **6697**

Overview of Recommendations

The objective is to present five recommendations our group developed to improve the issues and opportunities we researched in Over-the-Rhine. A brief detail of the recommendation is included, as well as what issue or opportunity it applies to.

1.

Community Engagement

Establishing greater emphasis for inclusive activities and meetings. Directed towards building relationships among all status of residents, and the developers.

- Identity
- Development

2.

Add Low Income Amentites and Services

Establish a co-op, and begin funding projects to meet low-income residents wants and needs. Establish an iniative to help support inherent businesses in the neighborhood.

- Accessibility
- Development

3.

Activate Vacant Spaces

Find permanent or temporary uses to fill available vacant properties. Develop temporary uses to display potential of areas with a high concentration of condemned buildings.

- Accessibility
- Development
- Vacancy

4.

Soften Liberty Street

Redesign the 7 vehicle traffic lanes into more pedestrian focus; lessoning the barrier and adding fluidity to the north and south.

- Accessibility
- Walkability
- Identity

5.

Improve Streetscape

Adding native and sustainable green space, fresh paint on vacant buildings, and community clean-up events to beautify and promote social synergy.

- Walkability
- Identity

Proposals

Site solutions in OTR.

Based off our recommendations, each group member developed a site solution to address multiple issues and opportunities.

Mobile Laundromat

Problem

Over-the-Rhine (OTR) residents lack access to a public laundry facility. The new and redeveloped units have installed washer and dryer connections, however, the majority remain outdated with no connection. The nearest laundry facility is 2.3 miles away; a 10 minute drive for residents with access to a vehicle, 28 minute bus ride, or 41 minute walk.

Recommendation

Form a community-owned cooperative in OTR, to fund public laundry facilities. Members buy into the co-op at the same cost, and is given equal vote on development. The model gives equal ownership to residents in the community.

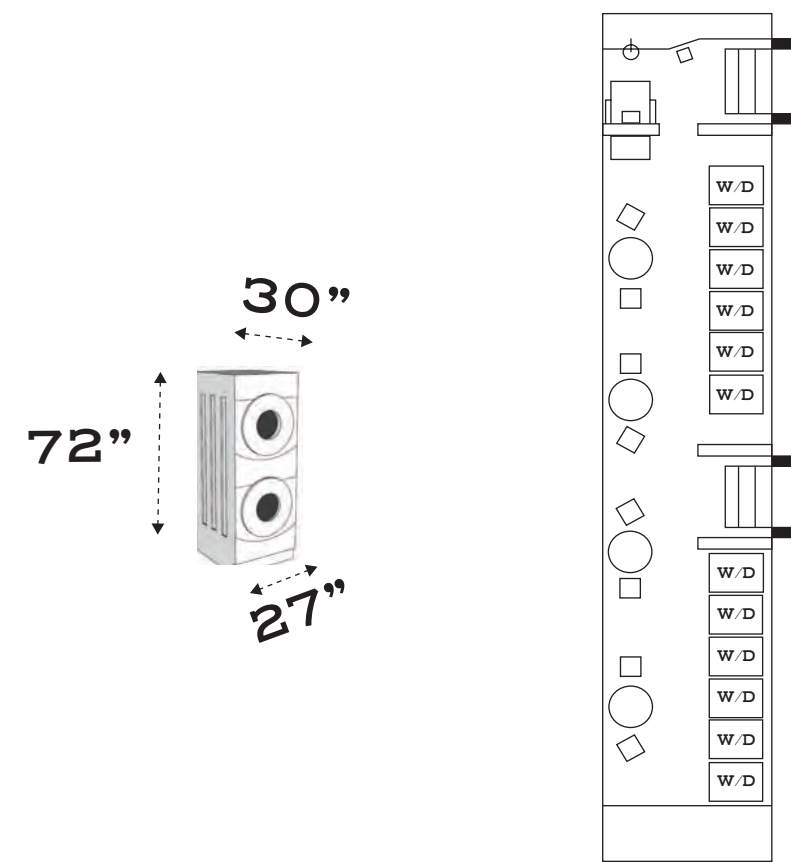
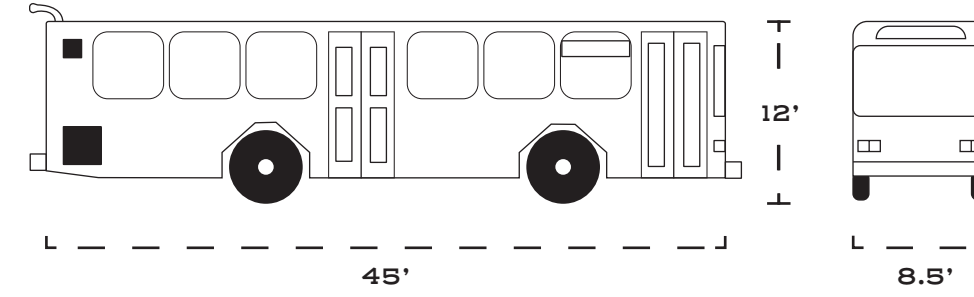
Proposal

Open mobile laundry facility.

Mobile Laundromat Elevation (Top)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

Stacked Washer and Dryer Model (Left)
SketchUp, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

Mobile Laundromat Plan (Right)
AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs



Purchase a retired Metro Bus

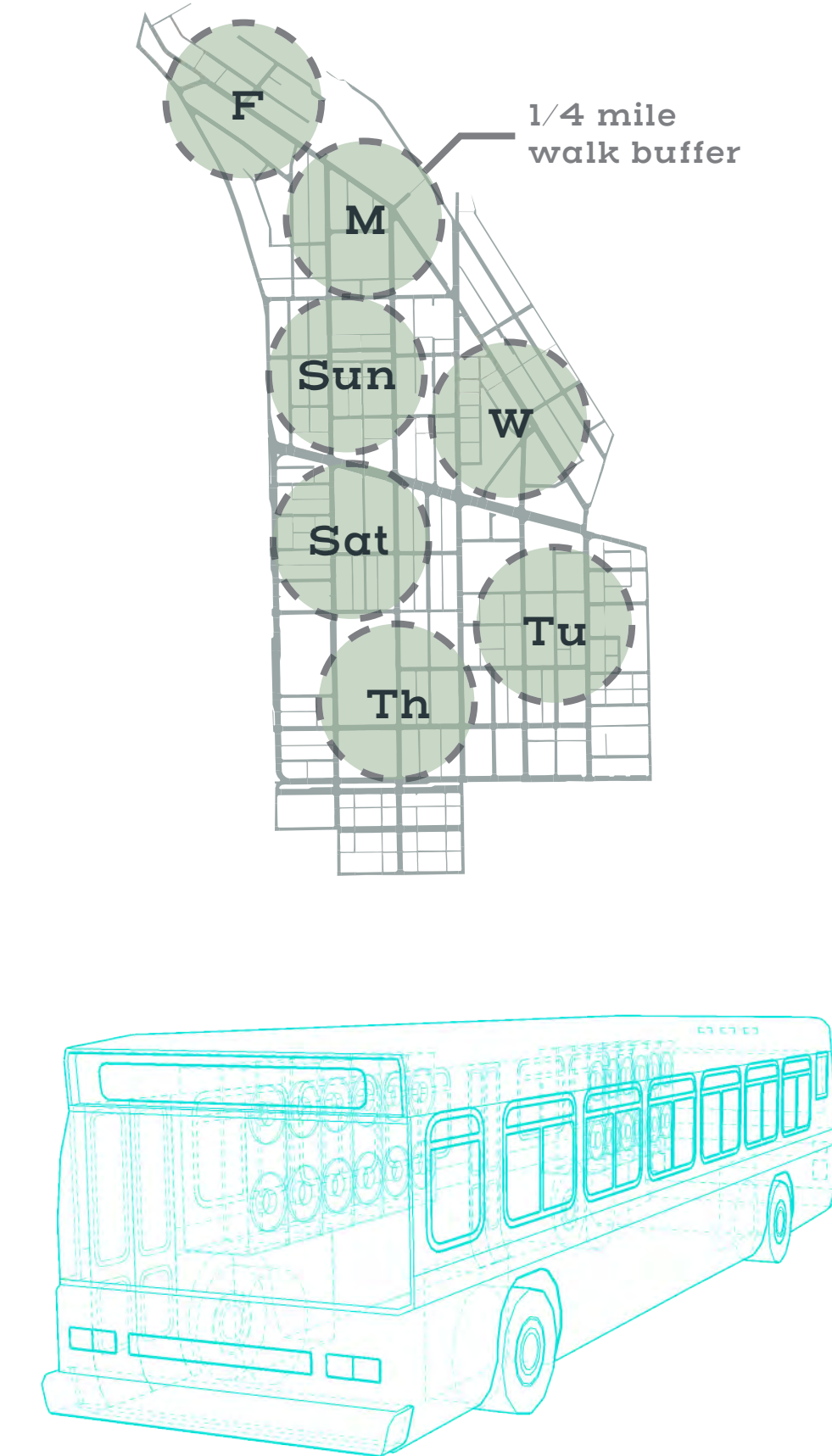
A bus provides the space for machines and seating, as well as the ability to move to different locations around OTR.

Redevelop bus into Laundry Facility

Along one side of the bus, twelve washer and dryer stacks fit. The other side holds four table and chair sets that residents can relax at. The fare machine at the front accepts the payments when residents enter. A shelving unit behind the driver seat has detergent, dryer sheets, and brewed coffee. Bus will connect to fire hydrants for water source, drain into sewage, and use solar panels to provide electricity.

Mobile Laundromat Site Map (Top)
ESRI ArcMap, Adobe Illustrator | Kyle Gibbs

Mobile Laundromat Model (Bottom)
SketchUp | Kyle Gibbs



Set locations

Each day of the week will have a routine location. Criteria: even distribution throughout OTR, access to fire hydrant and sewer drain, and activate vacant properties.

Set operations

Non-member washer and dryer load at cost, members receive two free weekly loads, free load available to homeless, all loads include products and services, and additional services scheduled: tutoring, healthcare, pet care, food pantry, community meetings, live music, art shows, book clubs, and open mic.

Longterm Objective

Using operation revenues, the co-op opens a permanent location in a vacant property to operate with the bus.

OTR Street Fest

Problem

Over-the-Rhine's identity has been lost and it is a crucial key to a cohesive and effective neighborhood. Lack of community engagement and community interaction is an important aspect in a neighborhood's identity. Vacant buildings, lack of effective spaces, and community identity are the main issues to be focused on in my proposed site analysis.

OTR Street Fest Map
ESRI ArcMap | Ryan Collingwood



Proposal

Two distinct "street fests", one on each side of Liberty St, incorporating community engagement. Having the community interact in a carefree and fun environment would improve identity, promote the vacant buildings around each site, and help the overall divide of Liberty St. In addition, healthcare stations, Kyle's laundry-on-wheels, and providing other low-cost amenities could help residents and people live a better life in Over-the-Rhine.

OTR Street Fest Models
SketchUp, V-Ray | Ryan Collingwood

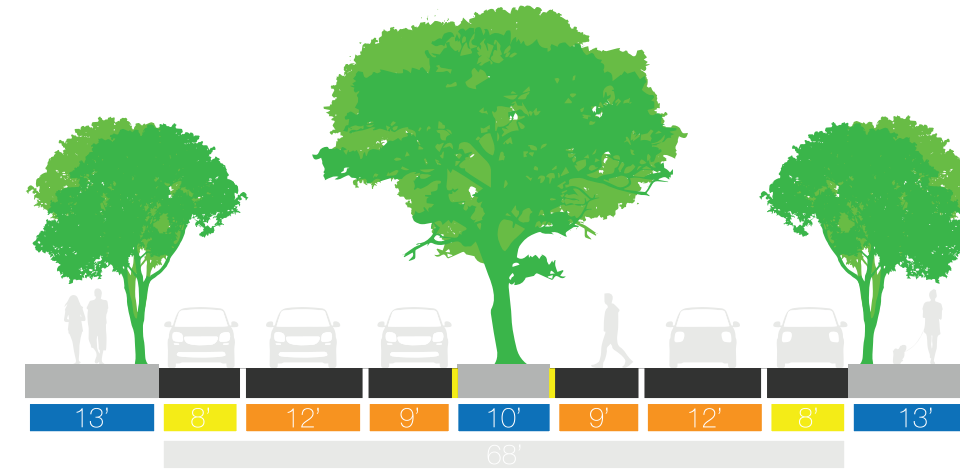
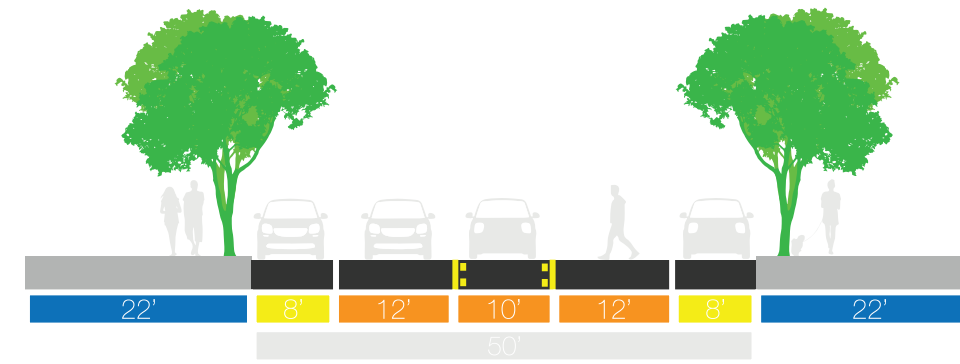
Liberty Street Redesign

Problem

Liberty Street divides Over the Rhine into Northern and Southern neighborhoods. This divide causes lack of development in the North, blocks accessibility between the two neighborhoods, and explodes community unity in Over the Rhine as a whole.

Proposal

Make Liberty Street a street which doesn't act as a boundary in the neighborhood, encouraging development to trickle over into the North. Decrease the feeling of uneasiness when crossing Liberty Street. Use empty spaces along Liberty Street to create a sense of community identity, therefore, unity.



Lane Revamp

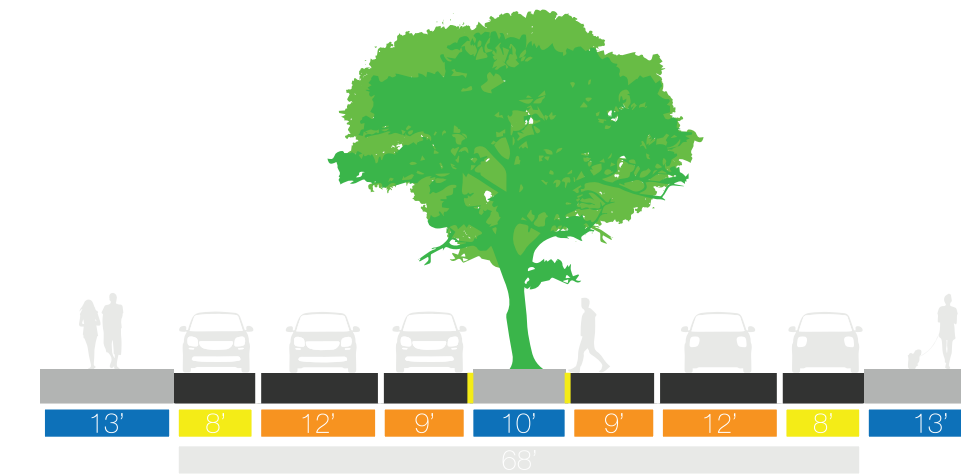
Decrease the number of lanes from 7 to 5, keeping parking, decrease the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph, and potentially add a bike-lane.

Streetscape

Add a median with trees, creating an enclosed space, potentially add more trees along sidewalk, and special objects to slow traffic near crosswalks

Liberty Redesign Cross-Sections

AutoCad, Adobe Illustrator | Blake Woodruff



Hybrid

Decrease the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph, add a median with trees, potentially add more trees along sidewalk, potentially add special objects to slow traffic near crosswalks.

Liberty Redesign Cross-Sections

AutoCad, Adobe Illustrator | Blake Woodruff

This solution creates a sense of needing to slow down with an enclosure of trees and buildings. With this in mind that will help pedestrians cross the street with confidence. This makes Liberty Street more of a landmark than a boundary/edge, therefore unifying the neighborhood. With neighborhood unity this will encourage development to trickle over Liberty into the northern neighborhoods of OTR.

Review

Sharing our final thoughts.

At the start of the project our group walked OTR, and we created a collection of words based off our initial perspective. Describing the people in OTR, the characteristics, and the identity of the neighborhood. It has been powerful to look back and notice the first impressions we got right, and more importantly, wrong. The greatest lesson from this project is being able to explain what, why, and how each characteristic in this wordle applies to the neighborhood.

OTR Wordle
Adobe Illustrator | Group effort



By examining and analyzing Over-the-Rhine for some time now, we have learned a lot about the neighborhood from top to bottom.

OTR is a complex but beautiful place that has a lot of things going for it. On the other hand, it also has many deep-rooted issues that will not go away overnight. With the good must come the bad, and OTR has its fair share of both.

Some of the positive takeaways of the neighborhood are the people. The people of Over-the-Rhine are kind-hearted and just want to see their neighborhood for what it could be. Another positive takeaway is the culture. The history still heavily influences OTR today, and it creates a diverse atmosphere for Cincinnati. For the bad, OTR has a huge identity issue. Without a cohesive unit in all corners, it makes it difficult to have a voice to get things done.

Accessibility is another huge issue. Lack of low-cost amenities throughout the neighborhood is something that is a necessity for residents of a densely-packed neighborhood.

In conclusion, Over-the-Rhine is a central neighborhood in Cincinnati that has historical, economic, and cultural significance in our area. Over-the-Rhine is such an interesting study area because of how the history of the neighborhood has shaped OTR into what it is today, as well as looking ahead to what the future may hold. The neighborhood’s potential is boundless, but the coming years will be crucial in determining Over-the-Rhine’s survival in the City of Cincinnati.

