

KENNEDY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COUNCIL Kennedy Heights Business Complex *Feasibility Study*

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Retail Supply and Demand

Under-Supply

Lawn and Garden Equipment
Special Food Services
Used Merchandise Stores
Food & Beverage Stores
Grocery Stores
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores
Auto Dealers
Auto Parts
Drinking Places

Over-Supply

Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores
Home Furnishings Stores
Health & Personal Care Stores
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores
Shoe Stores
Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores
Department Stores (Excluding Leased Depts.)
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores
Book, Periodical, and Music Stores
General Merchandise Stores
Electronics & Appliance Stores

Analysis:

The above listed "Under-supplied" retail categories represent potential voids or underserved markets within the 10-minute drive time trade area. These uses are not necessarily recommended and (many) may be undesirable based on the desired community character and vision for redevelopment. Neighborhood serving specialty & ethnic food vendors, cafes, used books & music, and arts and crafts oriented merchandise could be successful and be complimentary to the community based on current community goals.

Many potential uses within broad categories listed under "Over-Supply" column could be successful within the framework of a strategic and complimentary tenant strategy that brings complimentary retail and service providers together within a concentrated geographic and thematic district.

Corridor Character Assessment

- Automotive-oriented, unfriendly to pedestrians
- Vacancy
- Deteriorated Building Stock
- Lack of Investment, Maintenance & Upkeep
- Vehicular oriented Signing
- Poor Neighborhood Linkages



Market Findings

Initial Market Findings

Commercial District

- The commercial market potential of Kennedy Heights is limited by a lack of north-south transportation linkages. (Competing local districts benefit from relatively better connectivity)
- Vacant & deteriorated properties, un-buffered parking and service areas, and a lack of property maintenance and upkeep have created a negative perception of the commercial district.

Trade Area

- 75% of all housing in the 5-minute drive area is in the \$50,000 to \$150,000 dollar range. Only 6.3% of the 5-mile area housing supply is in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 dollar range. Homes in this range attract young families, singles, and working class families.
- Substantial projected gains in median household income, combined with increasing household sizes suggest increased demand for consumer goods and household conveniences & amenities.

Revitalization of Commercial Parcels

- Future commercial and retail spaces should be geared toward neighborhood service uses which benefit from local walk-up and drive-by patronage.
- The Arts Center, park (and potential new school) could anchor arts, cultural, and recreation-oriented uses with the district.
- Future new uses could include:
 - Live-work spaces (as part of mixed-use projects),
 - Cafes and specialty food vendors,
 - Book sellers,
 - Music-related venues,
 - Galleries and instructional spaces

Redevelopment Trends

Opportunities for redevelopment along the Montgomery Road Commercial Corridor and surrounding area could include mixed-use models which provide housing, shopping, and leisure activities catering to families, young professionals, and empty-nesters seeking the convenience of urban/metropolitan living and the unique ambiance and suburban qualities of the local area. Successful strategies for revitalization of depreciated commercial and residential properties in first and second-ring suburbs such as Kennedy Heights often focus on a combination of the following themes:

- Alternative housing types to attract empty nesters, young professionals, and working families seeking larger homes & amenities
- Greater demand for urban conveniences & cultural amenities (“Live, Work, Play, Learn”)
- Reinvention of aging, second tier commercial properties for community-based cultural and recreation amenities
- Faith-based investment in senior housing, religious & social services, and recreation amenities

Keys to Revitalization

- “Make no small plans” – Substantial change demands substantial investment
- Leverage existing community strengths to capitalize on new potentials:
 - Arts Center!
 - Cultural Diversity
 - Cooperative Energy
- Invest in housing (to meet current and future demand, support future retail, and increase income diversity of community)
- Implement appropriate zoning and design controls
- Enforce existing building codes - lack of maintenance & repair of private properties has a negative influence on perception of business district.
- Employ a flexible tenanting strategy that builds off of the arts center, possible school, and business complex.

Community Character Models

Community Character Models

The following commercial districts exemplify different patterns of commercial and mixed-use development. Each of the following places a strong emphasis on pedestrian convenience, linkages, and amenities. Design guidelines and zoning controls have been strategically implemented within each district although they vary widely in the character and identity which they foster. While the preferred pattern of future development may more closely resemble a more traditional urban commercial shopping district such as Mariemont's, design guidelines and zoning controls within the Kennedy Heights Business district could borrow from any of the following examples:

Mixed Use Districts

- Mariemont, Ohio - Green Space as Anchor
- Pedestrian-Oriented Shopping Districts
- Suburban Corridors (Blue Ash, Ft. Thomas)
- Eclectic Mixed Use Districts (O'Bryonville, Ludlow Gaslight District)

Implementation

Context for Redevelopment

Successful Neighborhood Business districts are a lot like gardens. To reach their full potential they require some heavy lifting and a light touch. Experimentation must be balanced with careful forethought and planning. Seeds planted in one plot sometimes flower in an unexpected location. And cultivation and feeding is an ongoing task.

Many factors outside the borders of Kennedy Heights influence economic conditions and the potential for redevelopment within the community. The Montgomery Road corridor is the common tie that binds each adjacent community as they vie for reinvestment in commercial and residential properties. As in Kennedy Heights, residents and business patrons in Pleasant Ridge and Silverton have a wide array of alternatives in shopping, dining, and entertainment in just a 10 minute drive-time radius. In order to attract new businesses, residents, and investment, each of the three communities must concentrate on the unique qualities and competitive advantages that they possess. In order to compete with regional shopping and entertainment destinations, each of the three communities will have to attract patrons from the surrounding neighborhoods and the region at large.

The nearby Oakley Business District provides one excellent model of how a small neighborhood business district can exploit its unique opportunities. Like each of the three afore-mentioned communities, Oakley experienced its initial growth and development as a result of the expansion of rail and streetcar lines. Homes were built for middle-income and working class families that depended upon the local grocer and a diverse array of local businesses to meet their weekly consumer demands.

The advent of the automotive society, regional shopping center, and “big box” retailer caused a gradual decline of the neighborhood business district. The neighborhood grocery was ultimately replaced by a national pharmacy store and a retail distribution center. Retail businesses that did not offer one-of-a-kind products or exceptional customer service were slowly replaced by regionally branded, automotive-oriented businesses that benefited from through-traffic and were not dependent on neighborhood residents or local businesses for success.

Implementation

Without question, the rebirth of the Oakley business district has been influenced by the strong demographic and consumer base of the more affluent neighborhood of Hyde Park. Private developers have recognized the potential market for new housing and a significant number of new market-rate housing units have been developed in and around the community – some in the place of former single-family tracts. Coupled with the recent development of major regional shopping centers to the north (Center of Cincinnati) and South (Rookwood Commons & Pavilion) along the Madison Road corridor there has been an explosion of investment in new businesses over the last five years. The businesses found there today are strategically positioned to draw from the eclectic niche of trendy home furnishings and decor retailers which anchor the district. These core retailers (including *Voltage* and *Bona*) provide the brand identity that has in large measure fueled additional storefront development and new construction to the north of Brotherton Road. New businesses include the development of restaurants, specialty retailers, professional, and medical offices.

If Oakley can do it – Why not us?

Much of the physical transformation of the Oakley Business District has occurred in just the last five years. Like Oakley, Kennedy Heights benefits from close proximity to more affluent neighbors. The neighborhood business district is less than three miles from I-71 and the Kenwood Towne Center and less than a mile from the Ridge and Highland Area Interchange. In recent months, several community development initiatives are currently pending, have begun, or have been announced for both within and adjacent to the business district. These include:

- *The development of the Kennedy Heights Arts Center*
- *The Columbia Township Comprehensive Plan including the redevelopment of the Ridge and Highland Avenue Commercial Area.*
- *The Expansion and Renovation of Nativity School and Church Facilities*
- *The proposed development of the former Crest Hills / Ridge Club site.*
- *The construction of a new Montessori School on the grounds of the current Pleasant Ridge Elementary Site.*
- *The construction of a new neighborhood elementary school in either Kennedy Heights or Silverton*

Implementation

Collectively, these initiatives present a unique opportunity to leverage individual investment and improvement projects into more meaningful and strategic investment within the adjacent communities.

The founding, growth, and development of the Kennedy Heights Arts Center has already had a dramatic influence on both the cultural and physical perceptions of the Kennedy Heights Business District. It is a testament to the catalytic impact that one project, borne from a committed group of community activists, can have. There is tremendous potential for the Arts Center to partner with community council and interested stakeholders to develop additional outreach programs and sources of funding for improvements that benefit the business district and community at-large. Partnering initiatives could include the development of shared parking facilities, performing arts, and events spaces on and around the Arts Center campus.

While each of the several vacant or under-utilized properties within the business district could ultimately contribute to the successful implementation of the community vision, The Arts Center, the three properties immediately across from the Arts Center, the Kennedy-Montgomery Building, and the former furniture store / grocery site present the greatest apparent opportunities for new development that meets community goals for the establishment of new housing and community serving commercial uses.

The quality and character of redevelopment of these properties will be dependant upon the ability of the community to partner with the City of Cincinnati, not-for-profit organizations, the School Board, private investors, and neighboring communities to meet the challenges that must be overcome.