

High-Potential City-Owned Properties Along Major Transit Corridors

Assessing the potential of leveraging City-owned properties to encourage **transit-oriented development** throughout Cincinnati.

CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 7, 2024

Presentation Outline

→ Defining Terms: Transit Corridors & Transit-Oriented Development

→ TCs & TOD in Cincinnati: Background and Timeline

→ The Report: Identifying High-Potential City-Owned Properties Along Major Transit Corridors

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Methodology for Identification

Tier Ranking System

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Additional Considerations & Funding Opportunities

→ Next Steps: RFP/Qs and Beyond

Defining Terms: What is a Transit Corridor?

- According to the National Association of City Transportation Officials, transit corridors (“TCs”) are **thoroughfares that promote economic development around high-quality public transit service**. High quality public transit service can include light rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit, nonstop bus service, etc.
- TCs also foster an environment in which transit service is directly **complimented by high-quality pedestrian infrastructure for both walking and biking**.



Proposed TC plan in Atlanta

Defining Terms: What is Transit-Oriented Development?

- Transit-oriented development (“TOD”) is **dense, walkable, and mixed-use development** that is **in proximity to a transit corridor or transit system**.
- According to the Federal Transit Administration (“FTA”), successful TOD promotes:



Neighborhood Revitalization



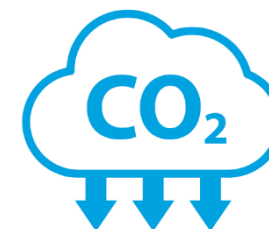
Increased Public & Private Investment



Increased Ridership for Transit Systems



Improved Air Quality



Reduced CO₂, Increased Health Outcomes, & Other Environmental & Social Benefits through Reduced Reliance on Personal Automobiles



More Affordable Housing



Economic Returns for Surrounding Businesses & Landowners



Congestion Relief



Improved Safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists

TCs & TOD in Cincinnati: Background and Timeline

May 2020

Issue 7 passes overwhelmingly, approving a 0.8% countywide sales tax increase and providing needed funding for the expansion of transit service and investment in transit-related infrastructure.



October 2020

Responding to the passage of Issue 7, major regional stakeholders send a letter to City Council requesting a zoning study of TCs in Cincinnati – both the BRT and 24-hour Metro routes – in order to plan to “update and improve the zoning with a more transit-oriented development pattern.”

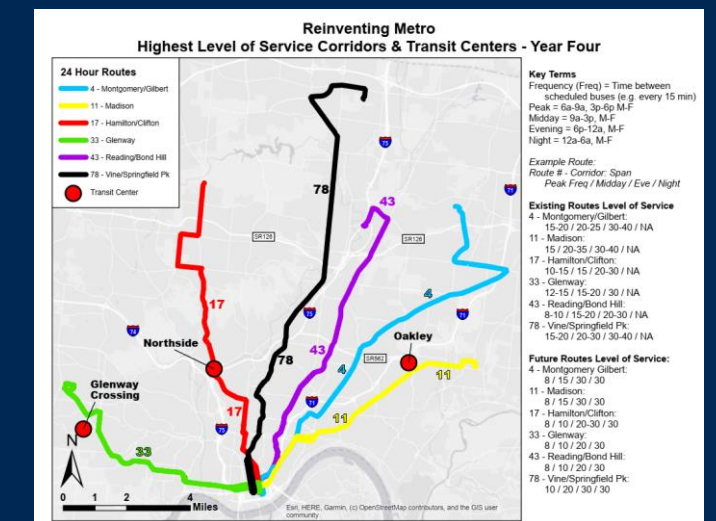
The letter was signed by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky African American Chamber of Commerce, Homebase, LISC Greater Cincinnati, The Port, Urban Land Institute Cincinnati, Urban League of Greater Southwest Ohio

May 2021

In response, ULI Cincinnati executes and ultimately presents a report to City Council outlining the importance of TOD. The findings further the discourse around our transit infrastructure and inspires the City to continue looking into potential zone changes and incentives that would inspire successful TOD.

May 2021

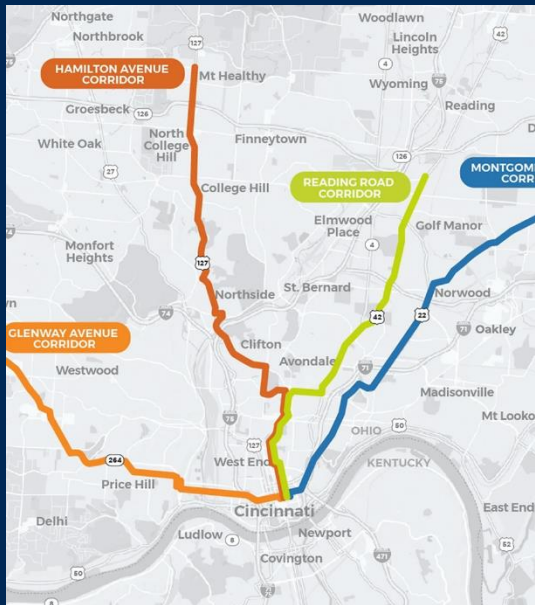
SORTA rolls out it’s first seven 24-hour bus routes under Phase I of Reinventing Metro, helping to define Cincinnati’s existing transit corridors.



TCs & TOD in Cincinnati: Background and Timeline

September 2022

SORTA launches a study to identify potential Bus Rapid Transit corridors in Hamilton County.



December 2022

Responding to Cincinnati’s housing crisis and ongoing research on TOD and land use reform, the Dept. of City Planning & Engagement begins initial engagement on what would become “Connected Communities,” a proposed land use policy reform that places emphasis on TOD.

January 2023

SORTA announces Hamilton Avenue and Reading Road as the region’s first planned Bus Rapid Transit corridors., further defining and strengthening Cincinnati’s major transit corridors.

TODAY’S PRESENTATION

March 2023

Prompted by ongoing research, engagement, and potential policy reforms surrounding land use reform and TOD, City Council requests a report on opportunities for reuse of vacant or underutilized City-owned parcels located along or near transit corridors.

January 2024

In concurrence with the Mayor, the City announces the final iteration of the proposed “Connected Communities” land use policy reforms, which will go before Council and Planning Commission in the coming weeks.



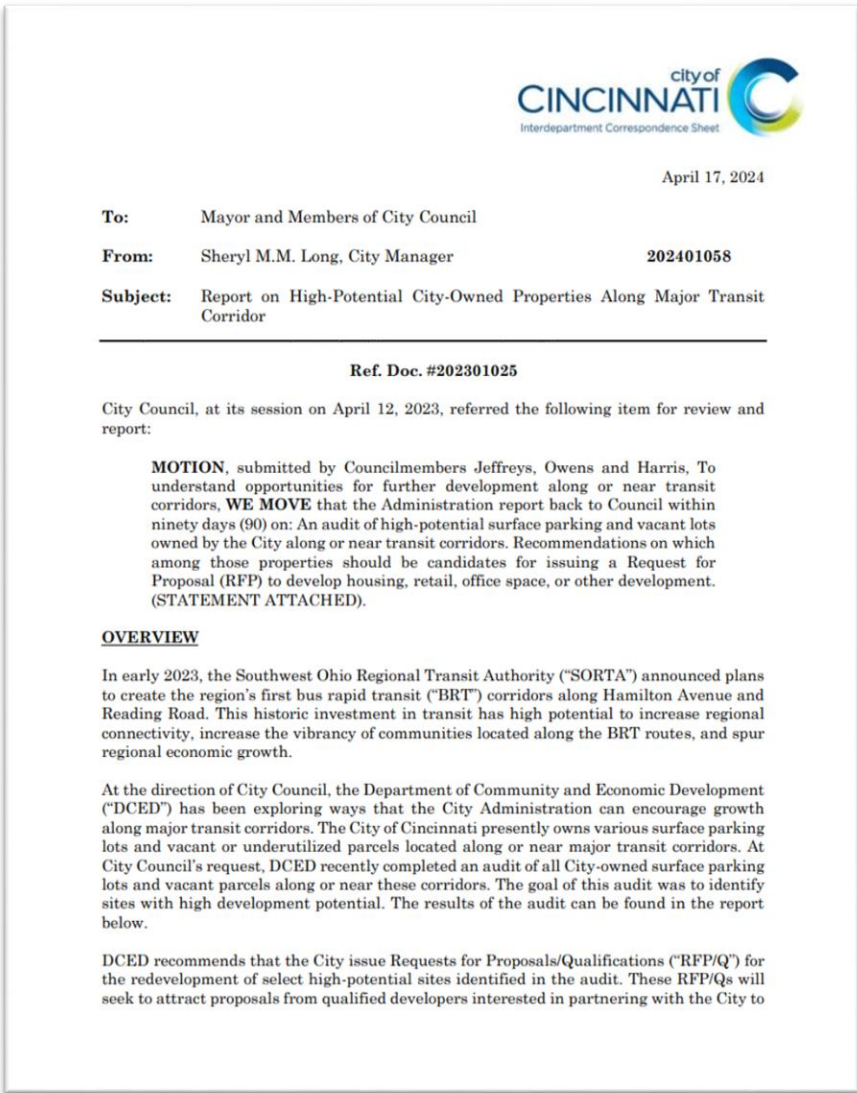


Introducing the Report

Report on High-Potential City-Owned Properties Along Major Transit Corridors

(referred to hereafter as “The Report”).

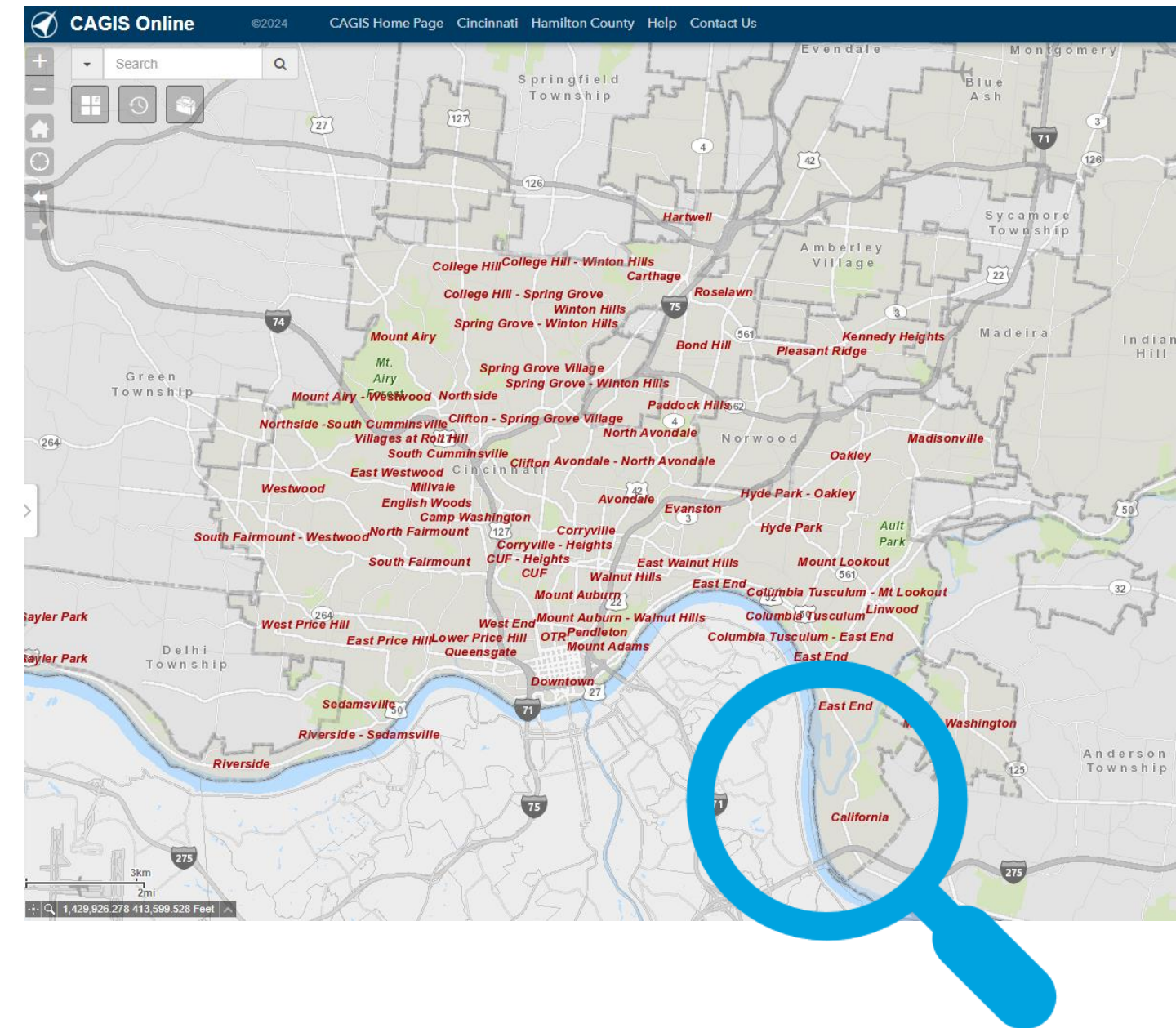
- The City owns parcels across all 52 neighborhoods.*
 - Most of these parcels serve a **municipal purpose**, however, the **City does control some that could be considered either entirely vacant or underutilized.**
 - The City also owns numerous surface parking lots that could be redeveloped into a higher and better use.
- SORTA operates several 24-hour Metro bus routes in Cincinnati, along TCs.
 - Some of the City’s vacant or underutilized parcels and surface parking lots are **located along these routes and are primed for redevelopment.**



***Note:** The City owns & controls comparatively fewer parcels than the hundreds of the Hamilton County Landbank, which primarily acquires and disposes property for the purpose of strategic redevelopment.

The Report: Methodology for Identification

- At the direction of City Council, DCED worked with the Department of City Planning & Engagement to create a CAGIS overlay highlighting all 24-hour Metro bus routes in Cincinnati.
- ***The CAGIS overlay was then used to identify all City-owned parcels located along or within roughly a block of the 24-hour Metro routes.***
- Adjacent and adjoining multi-parcel properties were considered single “sites” for the purposes of the property audit.





The Report: Tier Ranking System

- Sites were sub-categorized into 3 separate “tiers” ranging from most “developable” to “least developable.”
- Sites with existing development rights or with future planned redevelopments were excluded.
- To determine tier rankings, *sites were assessed on a variety of factors including location, size, site condition, current zoning designation, current use, and current market demand.*

Tier 1 Sites –
Most Potential for Redevelopment

Tier 2 Sites –
Redevelopment May be Challenging

Tier 3 Sites –
Highly Unlikely to be Developable

The Report: Tier Ranking System (cont'd.)

Example Property: 680 Evans Street

Neighborhood: Lower Price Hill

Description:

Sizable portion of land in Lower Price Hill with favorable zoning for future manufacturing use.

However, ***additional site context reveals that it is part of a larger, existing GCWW facility***, making redevelopment of the site highly unlikely.

FINAL DESIGNATION: TIER 3

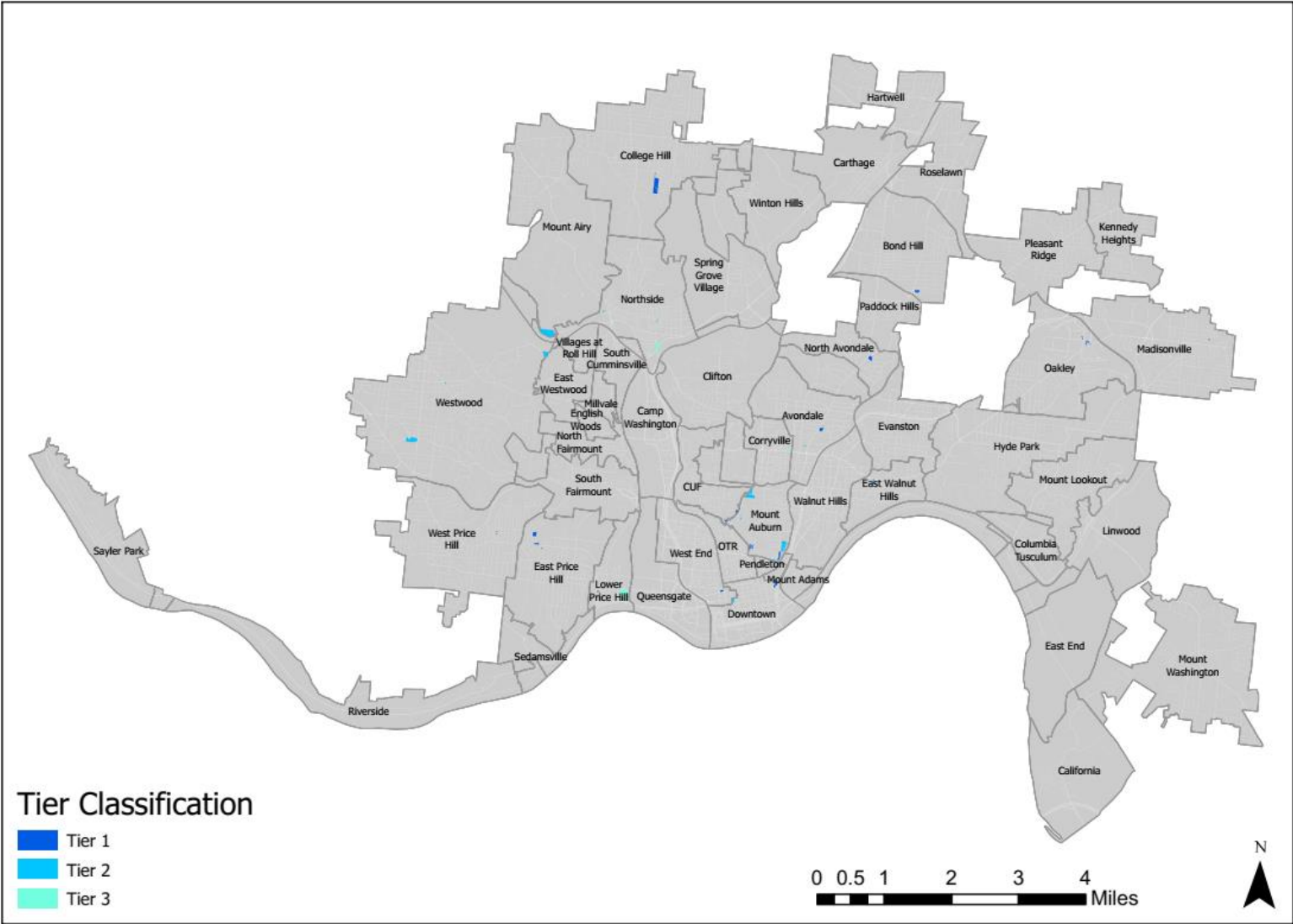




The Report: Findings and Recommendations

Citywide Maps of Identified Sites

Tier Ranking for City-Owned Parcels Along Major Transit Corridors



Map A: Full-City Map View.

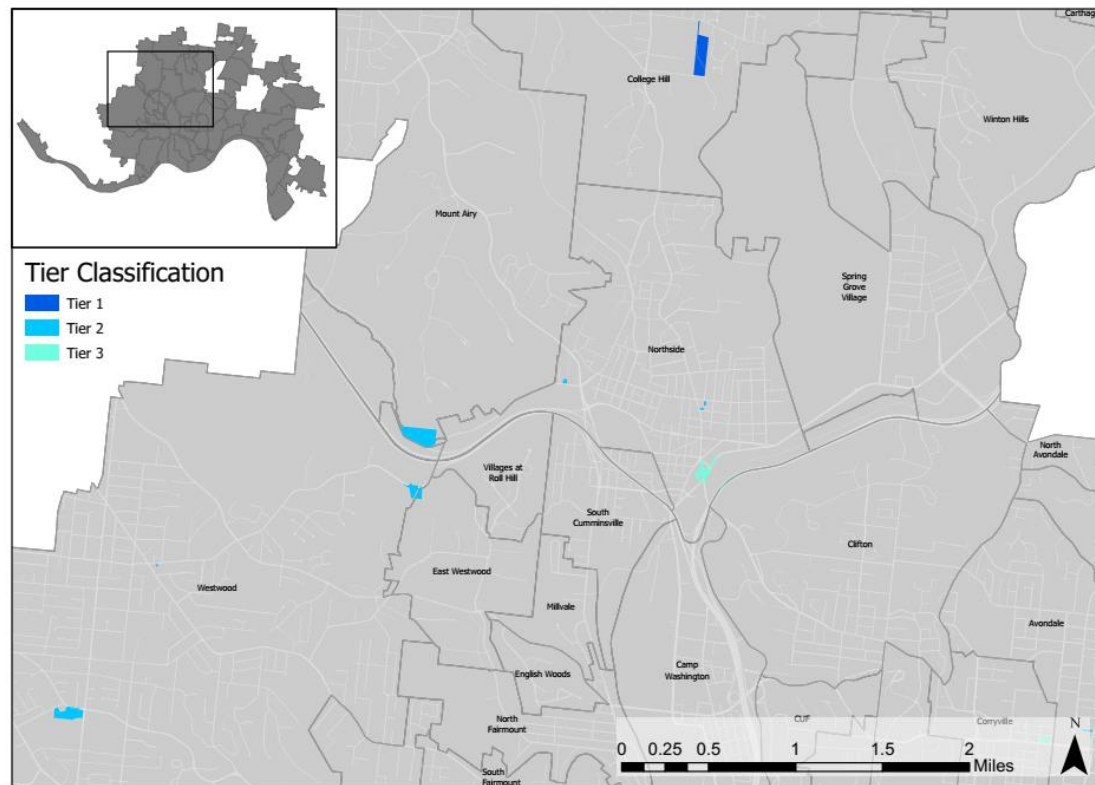
Identified High-Potential City-Owned Properties Along Major Transit Corridors



The Report: Findings and Recommendations

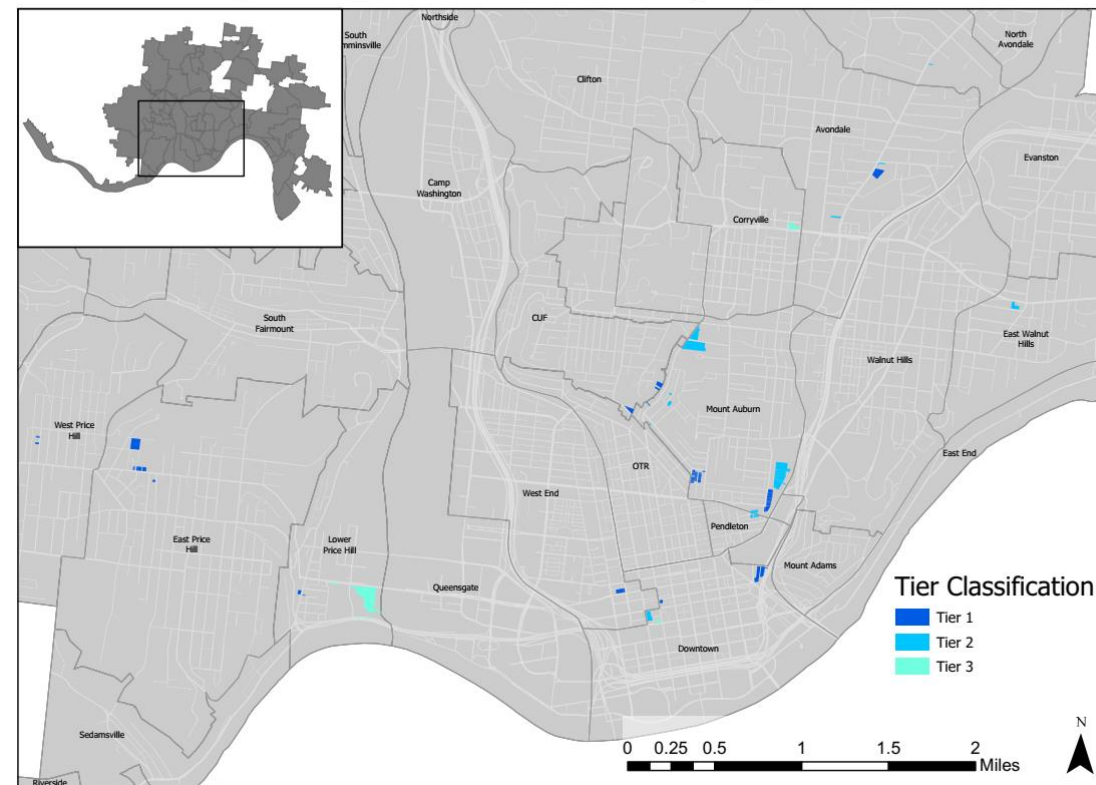
Citywide Maps of Identified Sites

Tier Ranking for City-Owned Parcels Along Major Transit Corridors



Map B: Upper-Left Section Map View.
*Identified High-Potential City-Owned
Properties Along Major Transit Corridors*

Tier Ranking for City-Owned Parcels Along Major Transit Corridors



Map C: Lower-Center Section Map View.
*Identified High-Potential City-Owned
Properties Along Major Transit Corridors*

Tier Ranking for City-Owned Parcels Along Major Transit Corridors



Map D: Upper-Right Section Map View.
*Identified High-Potential City-Owned
Properties Along Major Transit Corridors*

The Report: Findings and Recommendations

Overall Breakdown



48

Total Sites Identified

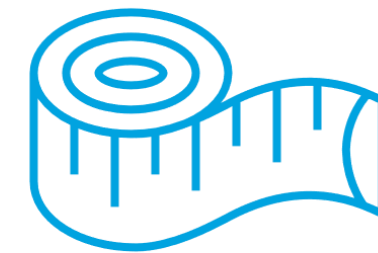


Located across:

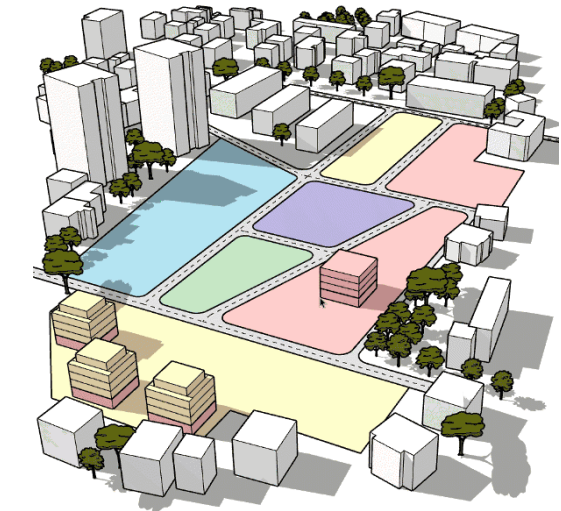
20 different neighborhoods!



~ 73.804 acres
Total Land Identified



~ 1.538 acres
Average Size of Identified Site



18
Different Zoning Designations
for Identified Sites

SF-2
Most Common Zoning
Designation of Identified Sites

The Report: Findings and Recommendations

Breakdown by Tier

Tier 1 Sites –
Most Potential for Redevelopment

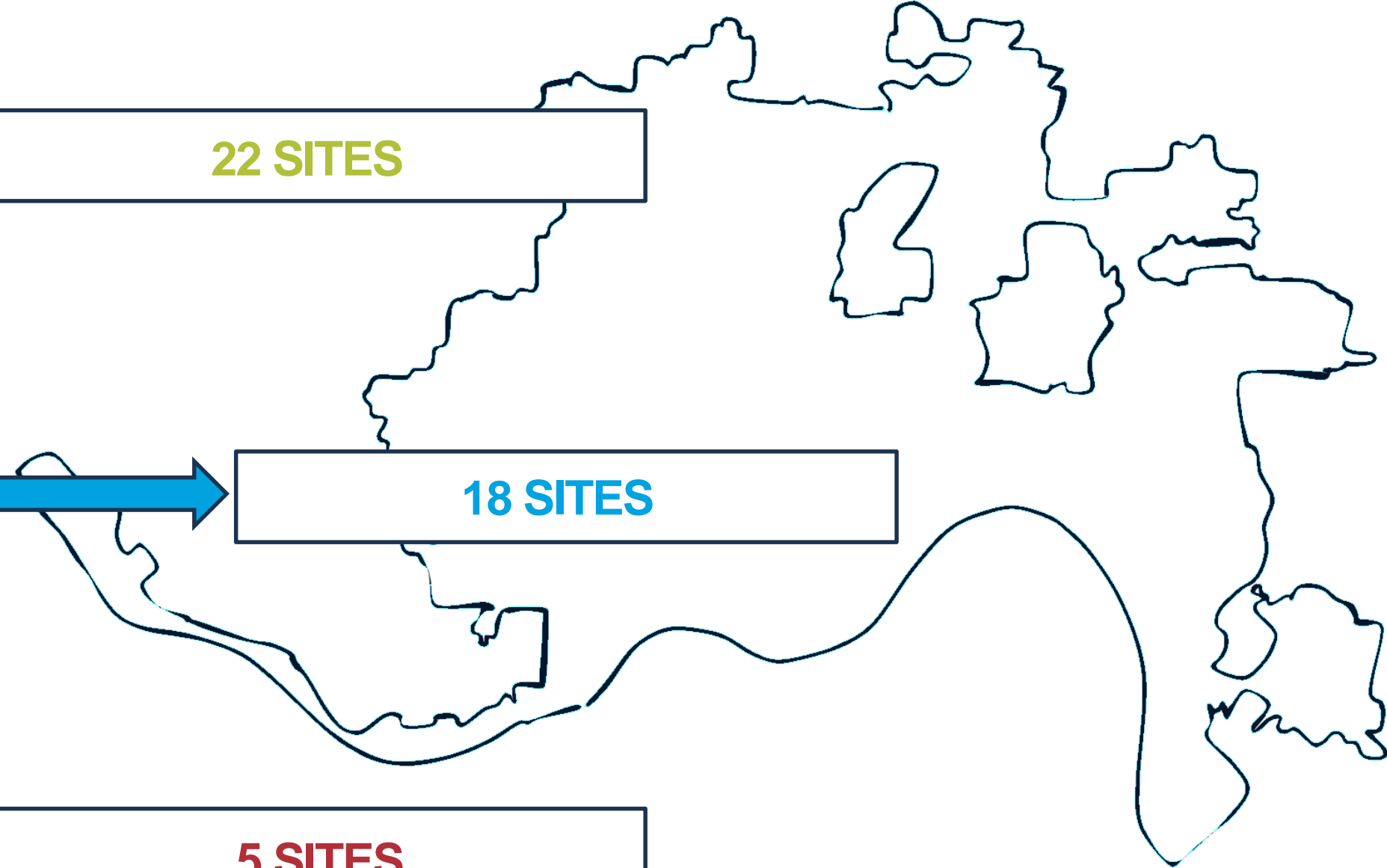
22 SITES

Tier 2 Sites –
Redevelopment May be Challenging

18 SITES

Tier 3 Sites –
Highly Unlikely to be Developable

5 SITES



Note: 3 SITES were excluded due to existing rights or planned redevelopment

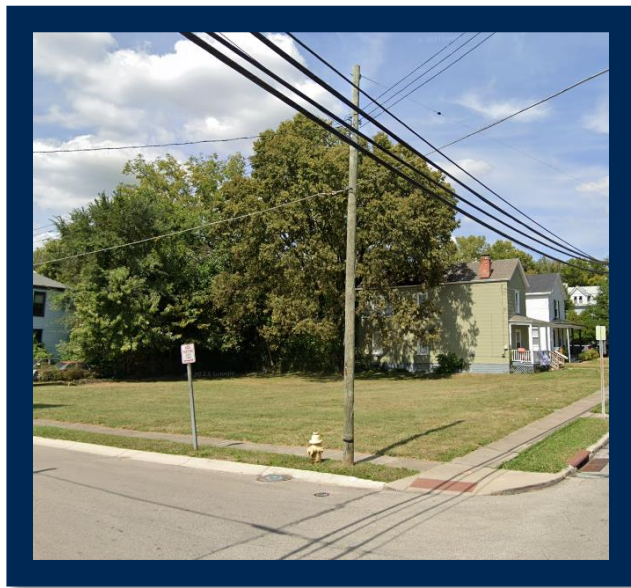


The Report: Findings and Recommendations

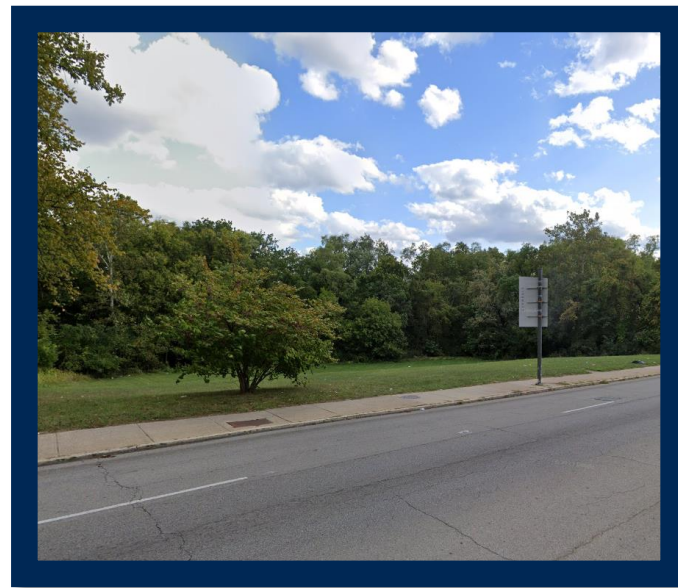
Tier 1 Site Highlights

(ie. identified sites DCED is especially excited about!)

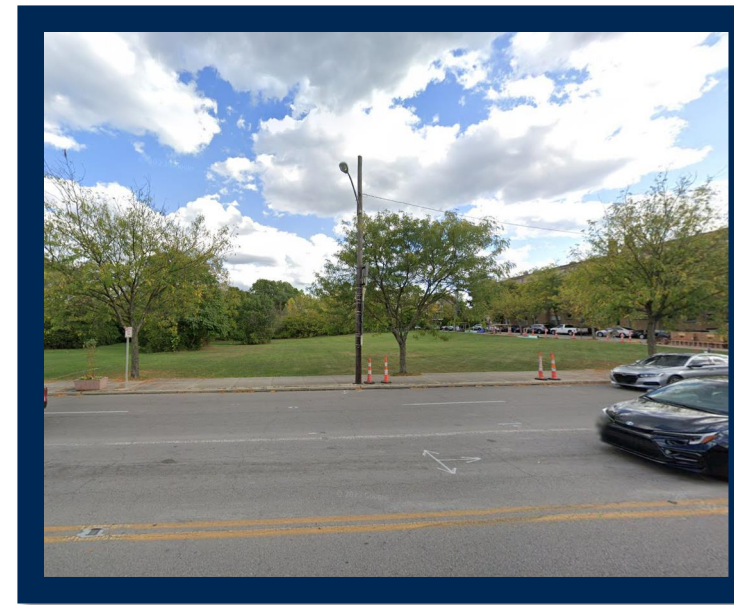
DCED further analyzed Tier 1 sites to determine which could be most readily released for RFP/Q to maximize impact. Following this analysis, **DCED recommends that the City Administration consider the release of RFP/Qs for redevelopment of the following:**



5103 Kenwood Road*
Madisonville



3362 Reading Road
Avondale



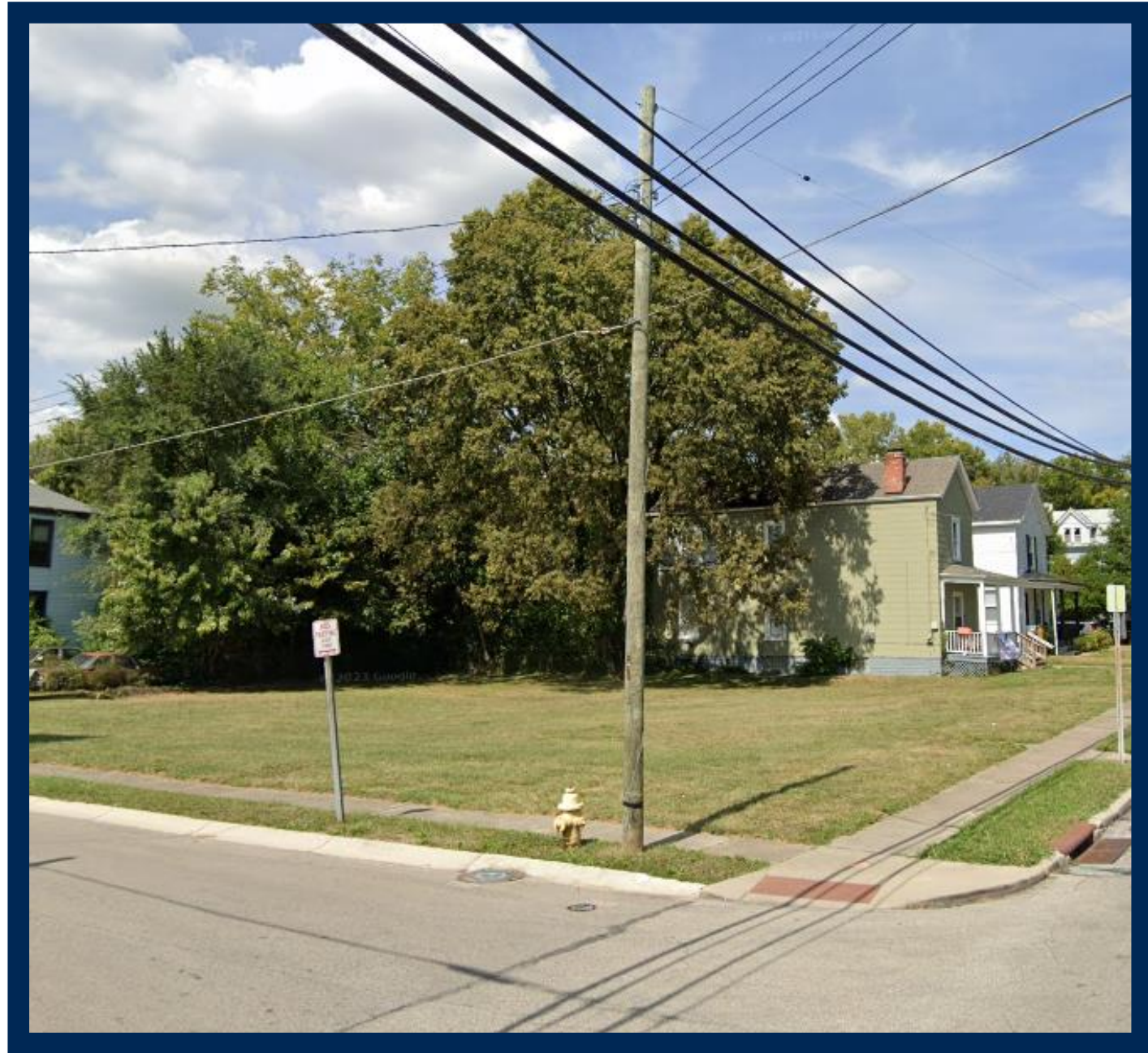
3916 Reading Road
North Avondale



Hughes St. & Schiller St.
Properties OTR/Mt Auburn

*RFP/Q already planned for release in the coming months

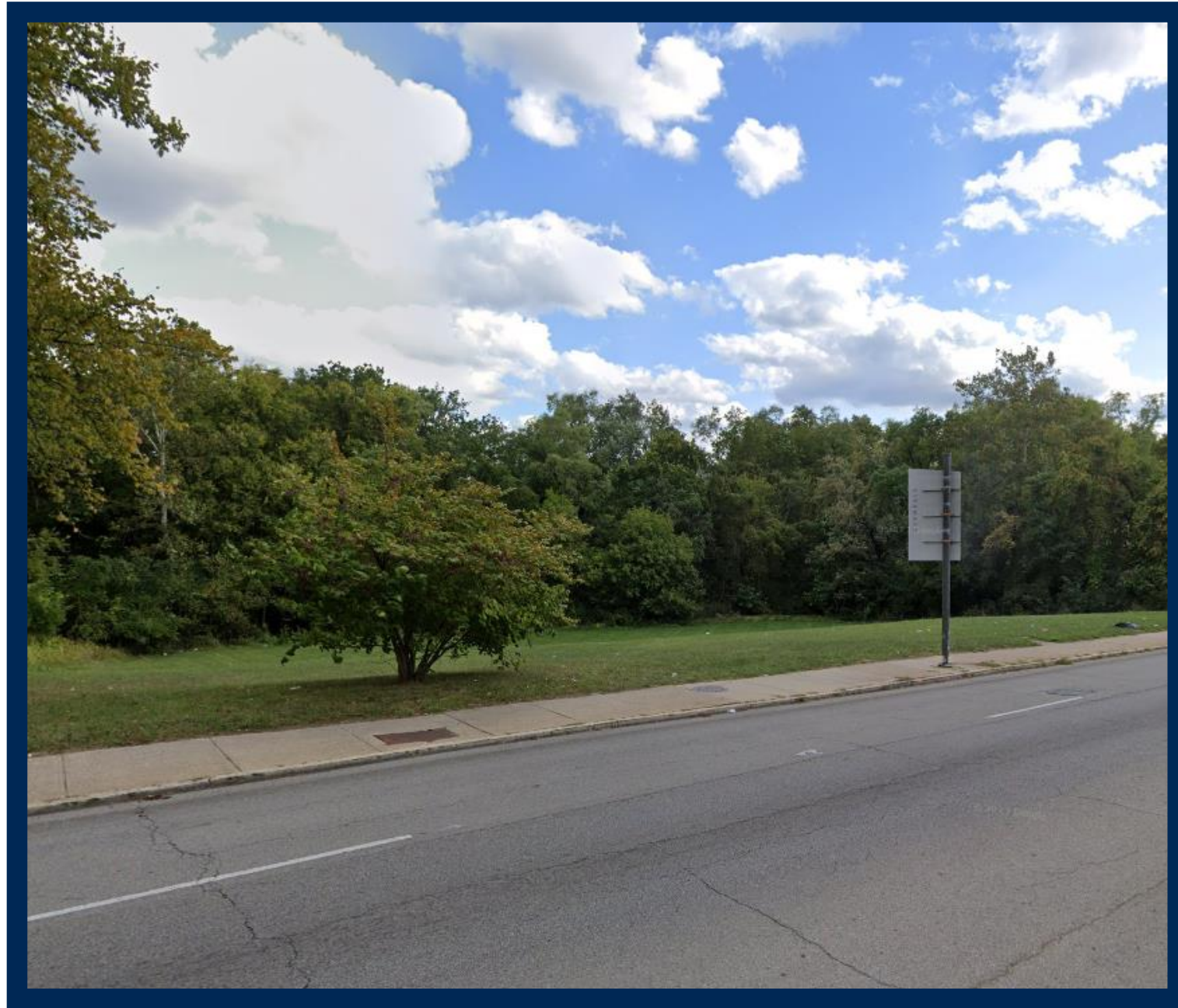
The Report: Findings and Recommendations



5103 Kenwood Road

- Located in Madisonville on the corner of Kenwood Road and Sierra Street
- Currently a vacant lot, formerly used by DOTE for aviation purposes
- Currently zoned as T3N – T3 Neighborhood
- Approximately 0.211 acres
- Planned RFQ release coming later this year

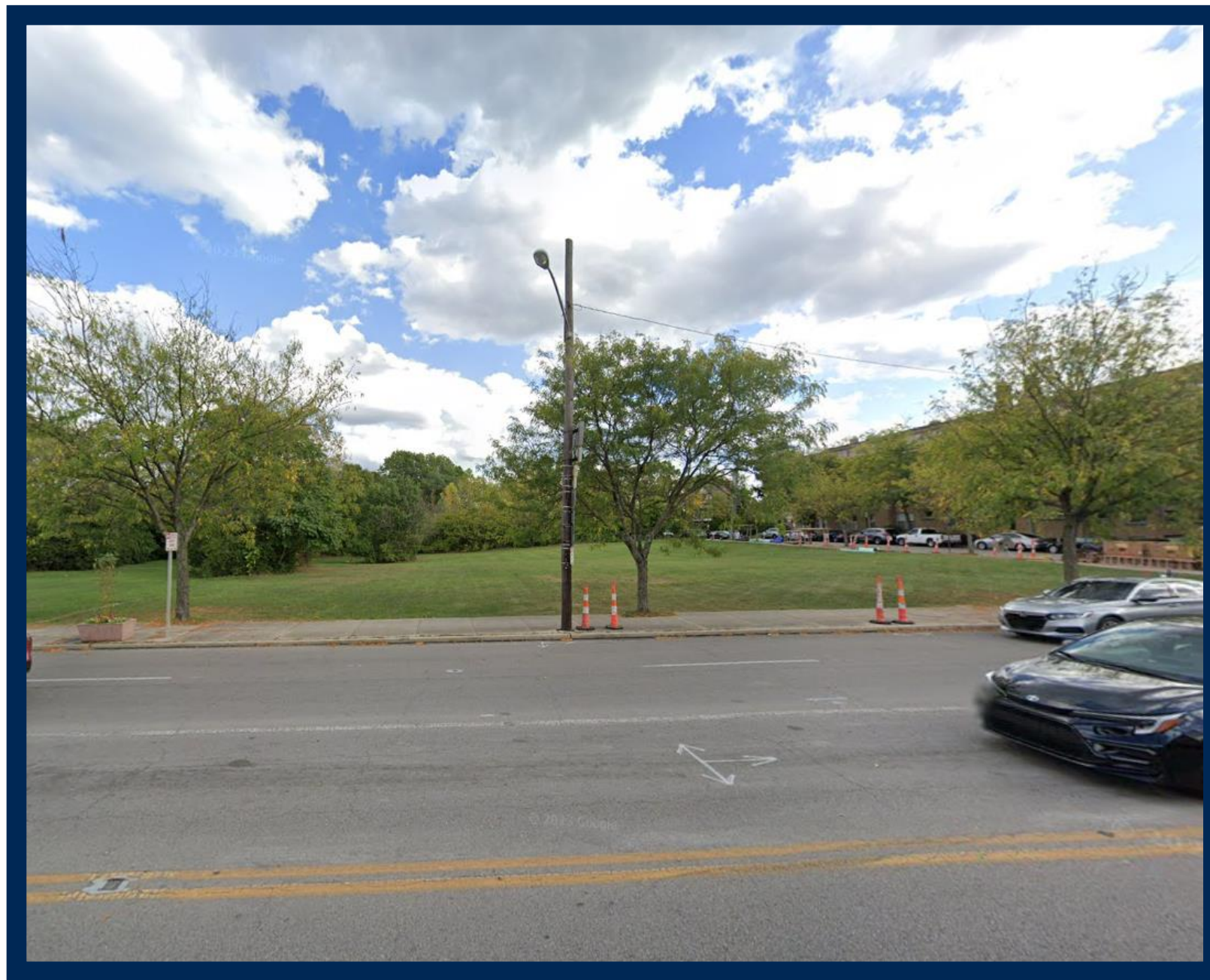
The Report: Findings and Recommendations



3362 Reading Road

- Located on Reading Road across from Hale Avenue in Avondale
- Currently a vacant lot controlled by DCED
- Currently zoned as RM-1.2 – Residential Multifamily
- Approximately 1.476 acres

The Report: Findings and Recommendations



3916 Reading Road

- Located at the intersection of Reading Road and Paddock Road in North Avondale
- Currently vacant lot controlled by DCED
- Currently zoned as CN-P – Community Neighborhood – Pedestrian
- Approximately 1.827 acres

The Report: Findings and Recommendations



Hughes Street & Schiller Street Properties

- Collection of multiple parcels bounded by Schiller St. to the south, Mulberry St. to the north, Main St. to the west, and Sycamore St. to the east
- Hughes St. runs through the middle of the site
- Located in Over-the-Rhine Statistical Neighborhood Area and Mount Auburn Community Council Boundary
- Parcel conditions vary; most parcels are entirely vacant while some at the southwest corner of the property contain existing CRC basketball courts
- Remainder of the properties controlled by DCED
- Most properties zoned as SF-20 – Single Family, with some zoned as RM-0.7 – Residential Multifamily
- Approximately 1.962 acres



The Report: Additional Considerations & Funding Opportunities

Federal Loan Programs

- DCED is aware of several federal loan programs available through the US Department of Transportation designed specifically to provide funding to transit-oriented development projects, including:
 - ***Transportation Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act*** *(up to \$70 billion in lending capacity)*
 - *Up to 49% of eligible costs can be funded*
 - ***Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing*** *(\$35 billion in revolving loan authority)*
 - *Up to 75% of eligible costs can be funded*
- DCED encourages qualified developers interested in pursuing future TOD projects in the City to work with the Administration to leverage this historic amount of federal funding and local support for this kind of development.



Next Steps: RFP/Qs and Beyond

Stakeholder Engagement and Public Input

- As the City Administration moves to issue RFP/Qs for these select high-potential sites, DCED believes it is imperative to ***conduct robust engagement*** with our most critical neighborhood stakeholders.
- The City should solicit feedback from the public throughout the development process via community engagement sessions, public forums, and stakeholder meetings.
 - ***These engagement opportunities should specifically target residents, business owners, and other key stakeholders such as community development corporations and non-profit organizations.***
- By fostering inclusive dialogue and collaboration, the Administration can ensure that development initiatives reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

The Stakes: Capitalizing on Historic Opportunities

With historic investments in transit infrastructure like Bus Rapid Transit and planned land use reforms such as Connected Communities in the pipeline, Cincinnati faces significant opportunity to realize a vision of transit-oriented development that will help:

- **Increase neighborhood vibrancy** through the creation of much needed housing stock and new mixed-use development
- **Combat climate change** by reducing reliance on personal automobiles for transportation
- **Increase overall regional connectivity**
- Spur new and sustainable **economic growth**

By looking into exciting new uses for these High-Potential City-Owned Properties Along Major Transit Corridors, DCED can “meet the moment” and capitalize on these opportunities in the best interest of Cincinnati’s residents.



Thank You.

HIGH-POTENTIAL CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES ALONG MAJOR TRANSIT CORRIDORS

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MAY 7, 2024