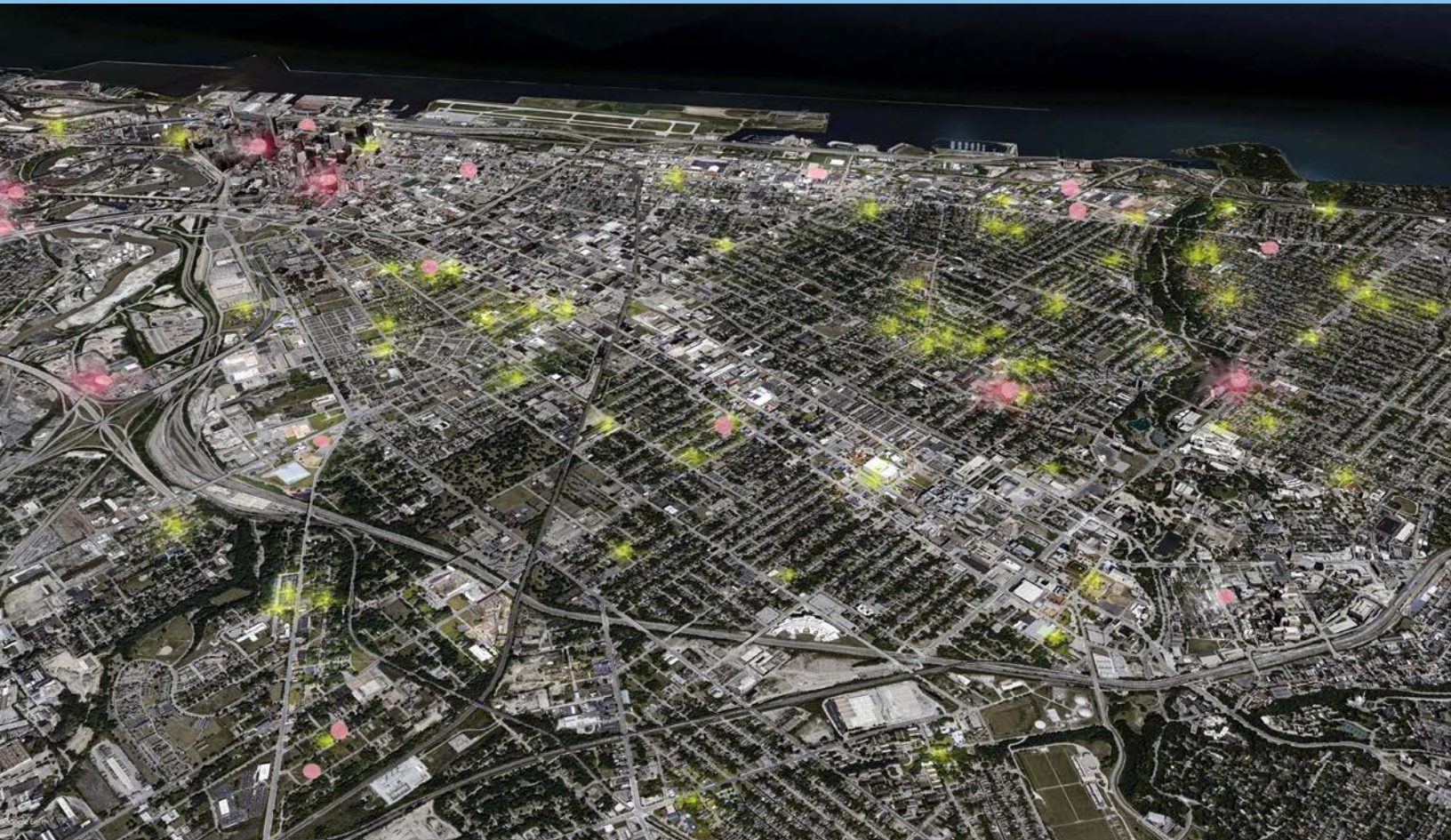




Community Design Charrette

Designing the Food Economy

Cleveland, Ohio - March 2022





Cleveland Urban
Design Collaborative

Community Design Charrette

4-6 March 2022

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I. Executive Summary

In March of 2022, graduate students from Kent State University's College of Architecture and Environmental Design and the professional design staff of the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) conducted a community design charrette in Cleveland's MidTown neighborhood.

A charrette is a short, collaborative session in which a group of designers drafts a response to a design challenge. Charrettes are used to generate design ideas quickly while integrating ideas from a diverse group of stakeholders.

The charrette team looked at ways to make the local food economy more visible while improving infrastructure and community amenities. Students looked at neighborhood conditions, land use patterns, and local zoning. Students also researched census data, crime reports, the real estate market, the community transportation network, and local food-related businesses. Students recognized MidTown's potential and also its challenges, including the need for job opportunities and training, safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists, and a stronger regional identity.

During the four-day charrette process, the students generated design ideas for the Carnegie Avenue corridor through the MidTown area.

Ideas include:

- Small-scale wayfinding measures and materials.
- Mid-scale ideas for connections, retail development, parking, green space, intersection improvements.
- Large-scale, overarching framework for an urban food district.

The design ideas refer to and support previous neighborhood plans and generate new visions from them. Students envision a future food economy through flexible production spaces in the neighborhood. Residents, employees, and visitors can walk safely and barrier-free, with access to retail and restaurants, open spaces and green spaces, and active and dynamic urban life. The food district become a magnet for further investment.

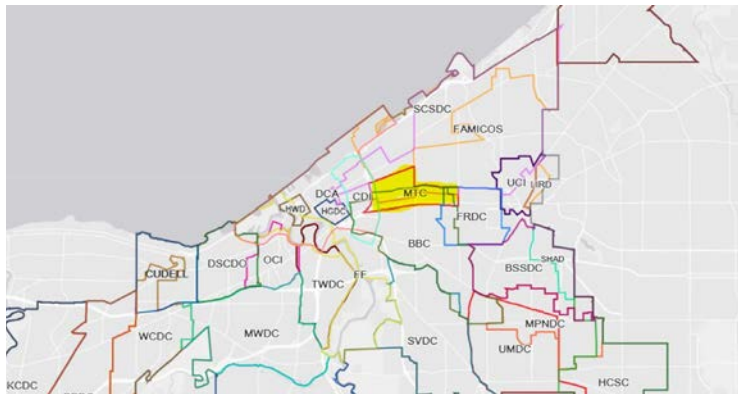


Sketch of study area for the charrette, focused on Cleveland Central Kitchen and the surrounding area.

II. Background

Context

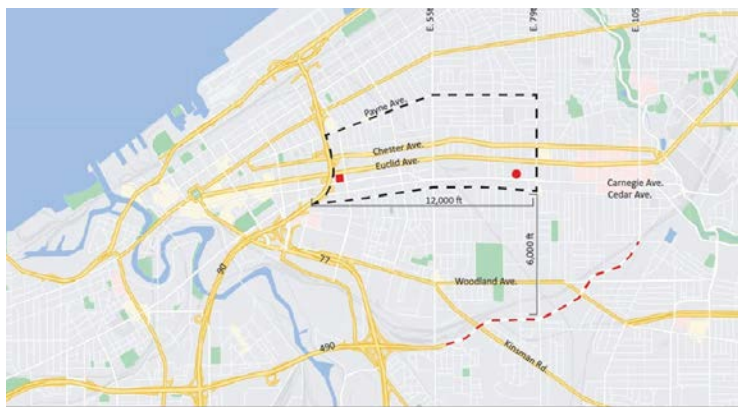
Cleveland, Ohio, was an industrial powerhouse in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Since then, the city has experienced decades of job losses, disinvestment, and depopulation. Poverty, food insecurity, and hunger are significant problems in the city. Located east of Downtown Cleveland, MidTown extends west from the Innerbelt trench to E 79th Street, from Cedar Avenue north to Payne Avenue. MidTown overlaps with several other neighborhoods including AsiaTown, Hough, Central, Fairfax, and Downtown.



Regional Context



Neighborhood Context



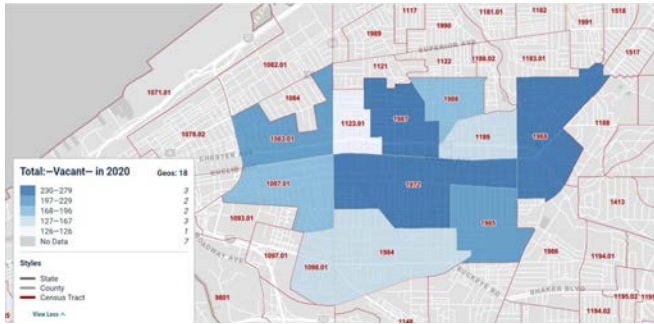
Site Context

Area Inventory

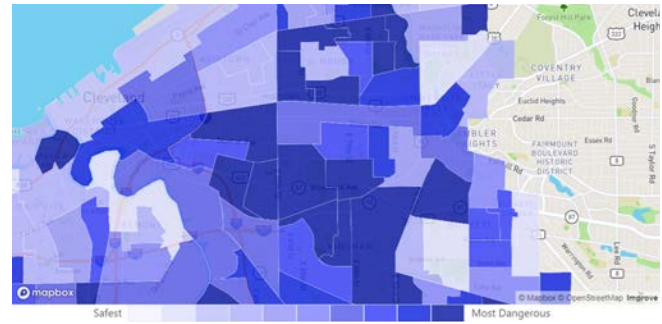
The study area has a high percentage of vacant lots household below poverty level, higher crime rates, and more crashes along commercial corridors than some of the surrounding neighborhoods. The study area also has historic buildings with redevelopment potential.



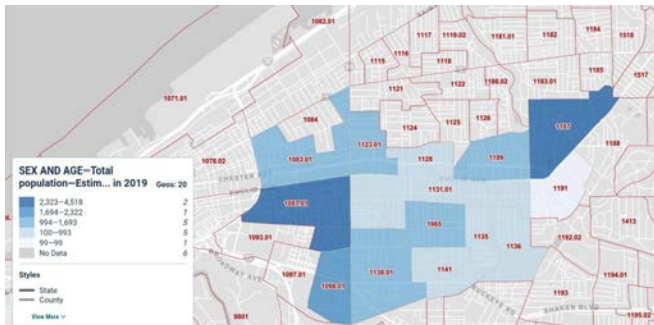
Car accidents along Carnegie Avenue



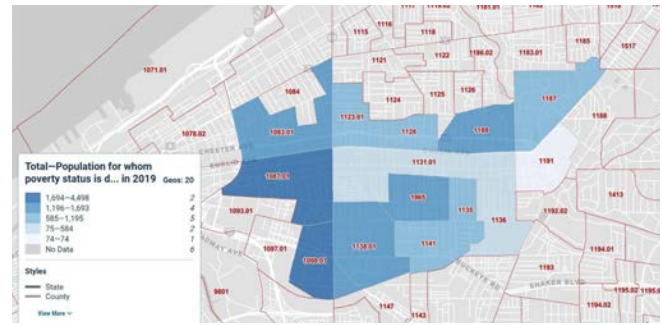
Vacancy



Crime reports



Population



Households under poverty level



Warner and Swasey Building, Carnegie Avenue, Cleveland

Previous Plans and Development Efforts

Health-Tech Corridor (HTC)

The Cleveland Health-Tech Corridor (HTC) is one of the fastest-growing jobs hubs in Northeast Ohio. The HTC is a 1,600-acre area spanning Cleveland's east side, connecting Cleveland's vibrant Downtown to the cultural hub of University Circle.

Cleveland Innovation District

Midtown continues to build on the success of the Cleveland Health-Tech Corridor by creating a new center for Cleveland's innovation economy adjacent to the future Cleveland Foundation headquarters on Euclid Avenue and East 66th Street.

Carnegie Avenue Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) Plan

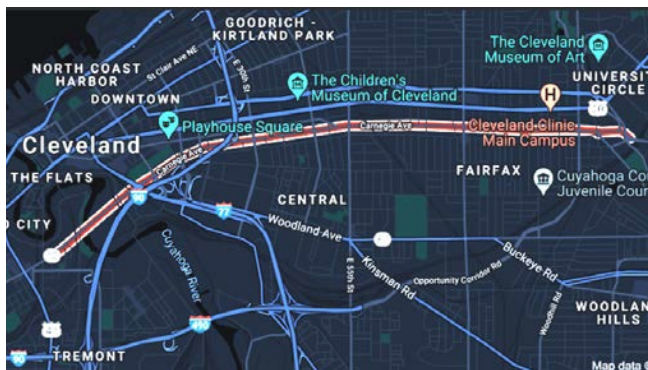
Carnegie Avenue has a high volume of commuter traffic. The TLCI plan envisions more robust and safer connections through MidTown and surrounding areas for people of all ages and abilities. The plan also identifies future development opportunities and streetscape improvements.



Cleveland Health-Tech Corridor



Cleveland Innovation District along Euclid Avenue, linking Downtown to University Circle.

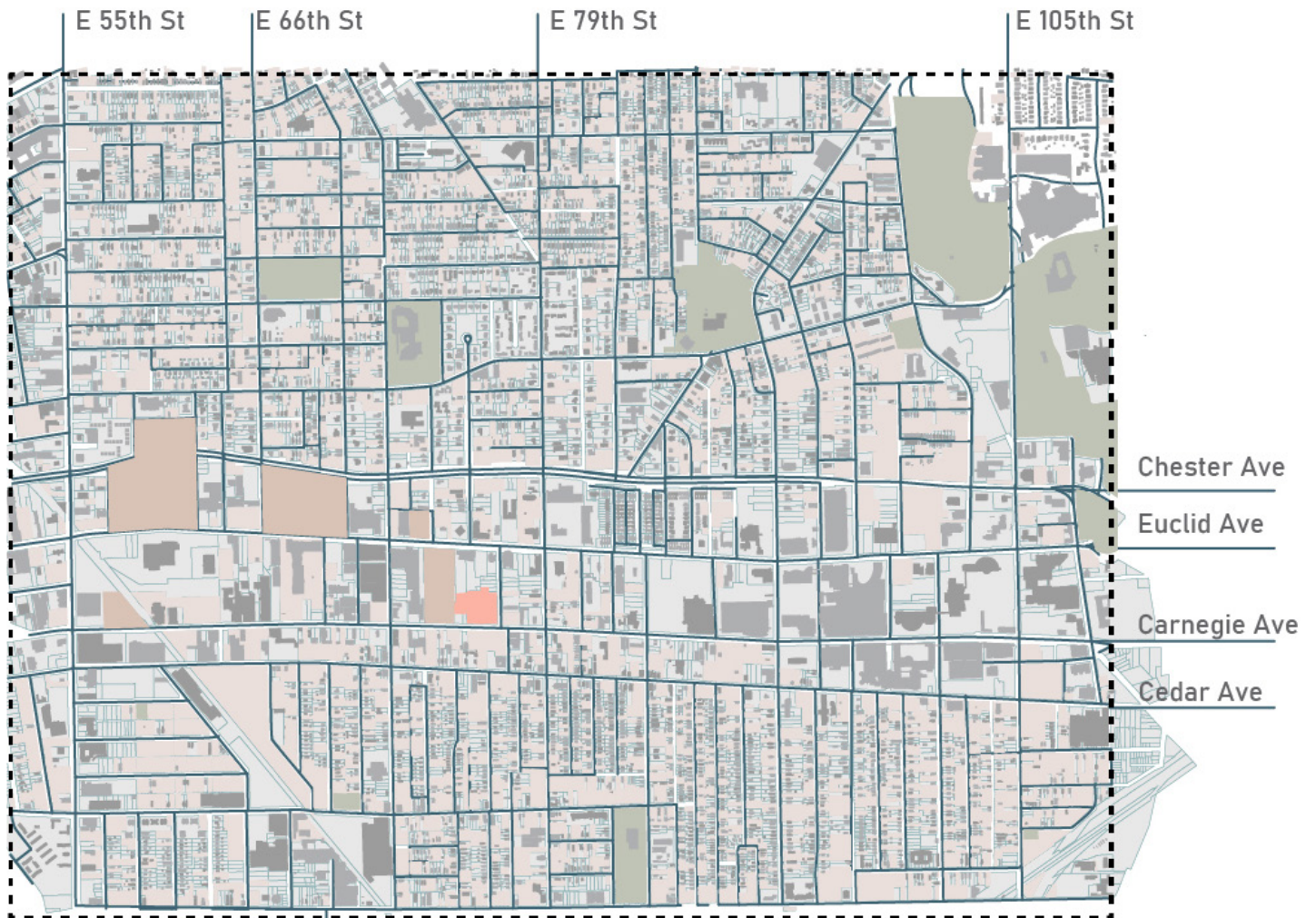


ABOVE Cleveland Innovation District and green space linking the Cleveland Foundation's new headquarters with the surrounding area. (Merritt Chase)



LEFT Context map and development diagram from Carnegie Avenue Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative plan.

Study Area



- Bus (Formal System)
- New Developments (Midtown)
- Vacant Land
- Cleveland Central Kitchen
- Buildings
- Green Spaces

III. Developing the Food Economy

Existing Food Economy

Supermarkets are essential in urban neighborhoods. Many Cleveland residents lack access to a full-service grocery store but Dave’s Market & Eatery and Aldi have made significant investments in their MidTown locations, which are well-served by public transit.

Cleveland has a long tradition of urban agricultural practices. From the Great Depression through to the present day, urban farms and community gardens have provided fresh produce and other needed goods for neighborhood residents. Community gardens enable residents connect with their neighbors through shared spaces and collective action.



LEFT Public education event in a community garden.

UPPER RIGHT Historic photo of former Pick-N-Pay grocery in the MidTown neighborhood.

LOWER RIGHT Urban farm in the Ohio City neighborhood.

Vision for the Future

Although Cleveland's heavy industries have been declining since the 1970s, the city's food sectors are expanding. Legacy food producers like Pierre's Ice Cream in MidTown and Orlando Baking Company and Miceli dairy Products along Opportunity Corridor have been joined by newer initiatives like the employee-owned Green City Growers Greenhouse, a state-of-the-art facility that produces hydroponically-grown lettuces and specialty greens year-round. Cleveland Central Kitchen is a food hub and business incubator that helps local entrepreneurs and home-based business owners grow their ideas and products into commercially viable enterprises; and a proposed plant-based foods business accelerator.

We envision a future where job training and employment opportunities are accessible to all. Entrepreneurs are nurtured from home-based businesses and local food start-ups to become national/international food companies with robust local supply chains and food distribution networks. Food manufacturing operations can be reinforced in urban neighborhoods through flexible production spaces. Spaces and places for food production can be designed as urban infrastructure, encompassing all stages of the food supply chain: growing food/urban farming, food processing/making; shared kitchens and production spaces, food retail; and food waste recycling/composting.

We envision a food district centered on Cleveland Central Kitchen that will:

- Grow existing food production facilities
- Stimulate creative businesses that focus on food production, packaging, research, and development.
- Create an identity for the neighborhood through lighting, signage, and streetscape elements that elevate food production activities and make them legible.
- Safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrians while enabling the flexible movement of products and materials.
- Create alternative paths for moving through the neighborhood on foot and by bicycle.
- Promote interaction and activity through different/complementary uses, day and night.
- Enable neighborhood spaces to function as centers of interaction, public use, and programming.

NEIGHBORHOOD FOOD FUTURES

LARGE SCALE LEGACY BUSINESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Orlando Baking Company
- Miceli Dairy Products Company
- Pierre's Ice Cream
- Cleveland Tofu / Cleveland Produce Terminal
- Hillcrest Food Service (food distributors)
- Food Tech Innovation Hub



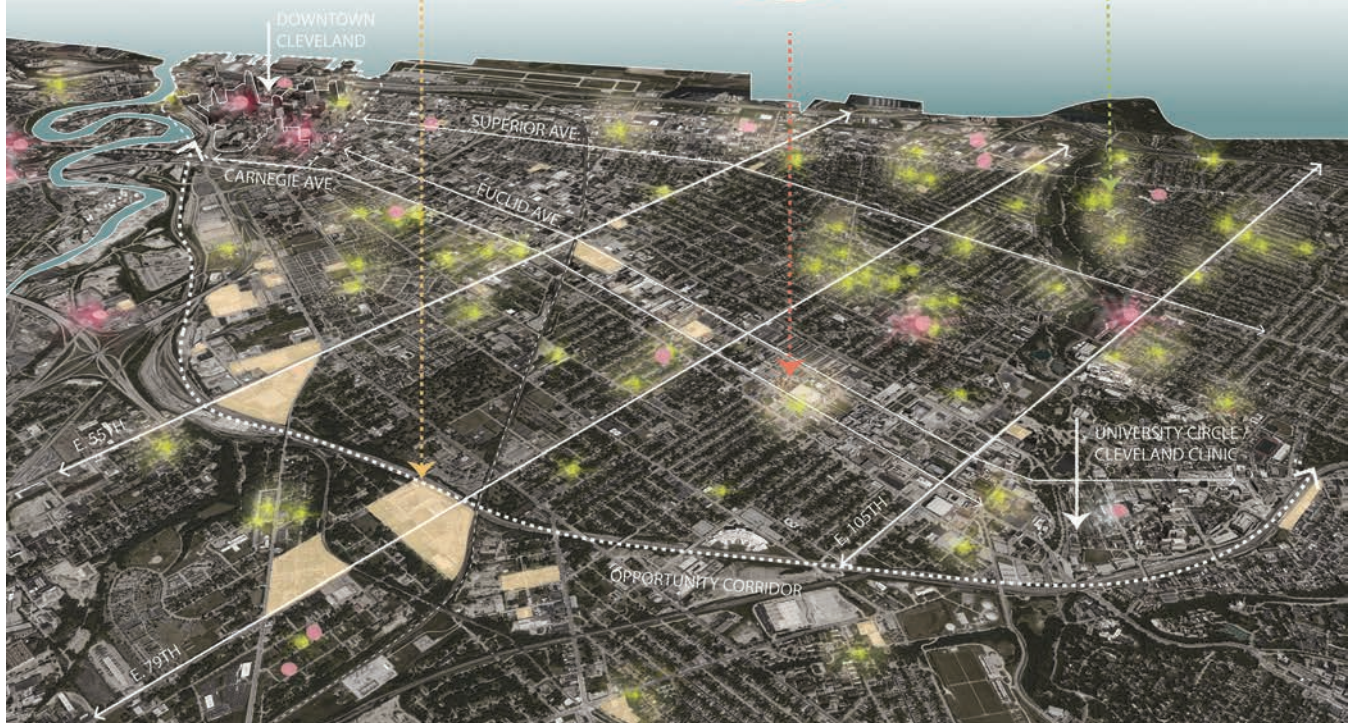
SMALL SCALE, GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES :

- Chateau Hough & Biocellar
- Yellow House Farm at Dunham Tavern
- Reimagining a More Sustainable Cleveland (Vacant land reuse initiative)
- Home-based businesses
- Farmers markets
- Urban Farms



MID SCALE PILOT PROJECTS AND EMERGING MODELS

- Cleveland Central Kitchen Food Hub (Business Incubator)
- Rid-all Green Partnership
- Green City Growers Commercial Greenhouse (employee owned cooperative)
- Urban Ag Innovation Zone



IV. Charrette Process

Charrette Goals

The charrette explored Cleveland’s established and emerging food sectors and discovered new ways for food related-investments to enhance city neighborhoods. Cleveland Central Kitchen and MidTown Cleveland were key charrette partners, helping the charrette team understand and respond to community needs and opportunities.

The goals of the charrette are:

- Highlight the presence of food-related businesses on Cleveland’s east side and identify opportunities for business expansion in ways that benefit nearby neighborhoods
- Create a complete neighborhood with convenient shopping, appealing parks and green spaces, walkable streets, and a strong sense of identity.

Community Engagement

The team scheduled met with community members to learn about their needs and priorities. On the first day, the students visited Cleveland Central Kitchen and learned about the neighborhood’s history, background, culture, and existing plans from MidTown staff. The students toured the Central Kitchen’s facilities and learned about its business vision. They also toured neighborhood.

On the second day, with the help and support from MidTown, students hosted a pin-up to discuss ideas in progress at Angie’s Soul Café. Then the students consolidated community interest points, adjusted their previous thinking, and sketched design ideas. On the third day, the team sequenced and structured their efforts and presented them to the community stakeholders.



Charrette Schedule

Friday, March 4th

1-2:30pm Intro Stakeholder Conversation
Central Kitchen Facility Tour

3-5pm Neighborhood Tour

5:30-9pm Working Dinner / Develop preliminary concepts

Saturday, March 5th

8:30-noon Work session / Draft design alternatives

12-1:30pm Compile design ideas for review

2-5pm Public drop-in session, Angie's Soul Cafe, 7815 Carnegie Avenue

5-10pm Work session / Begin drafting final presentation work

Sunday, March 6th

10am-3pm Work session / Refine final presentation work

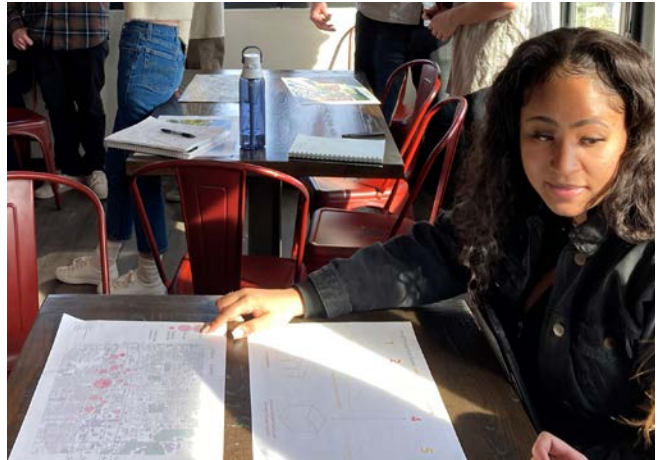
3-4:30pm Preview of ideas with partners & community members

Tuesday, March 8th

11am-12pm Review work with MidTown staff and community partners



MidTown Presentation at Cleveland Central Kitchen



Drop-In Session at Angie's Soul Café



Cleveland Central Kitchen Tour



Neighborhood Tour



Drop-In Session at Angie's Soul Café

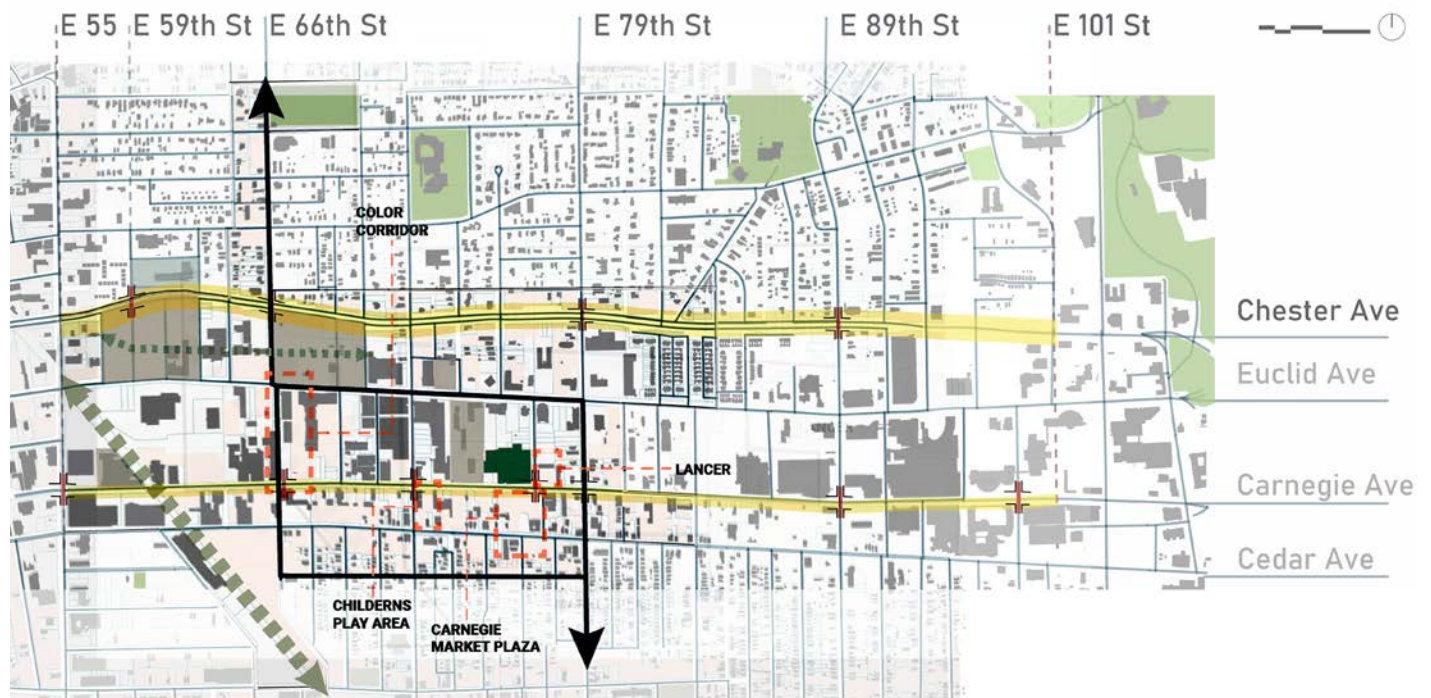


Drop-In Session at Angie's Soul Café

V. Planning Framework

Infrastructure

The charrette team identified a framework of infrastructure investments, primarily for Carnegie Avenue, E. 79th Street, and E. 66th Street and development concepts for sites between Euclid and Cedar Avenues.



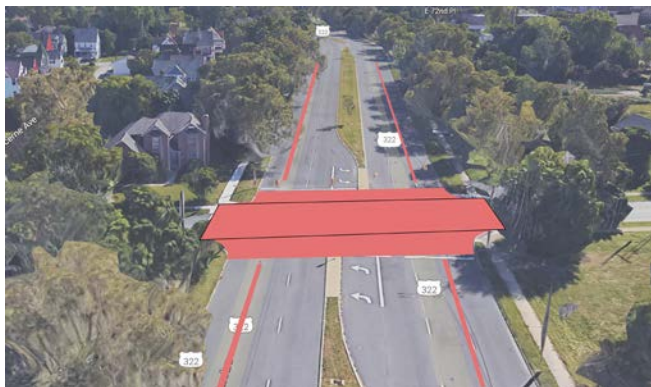
Traffic Management Toolkit

Narrowing the width of Carnegie Avenue to two vehicle travel lanes would create space for on-street parking and bike lanes. This would also reduce the distance a pedestrian needs to walk to cross the street.

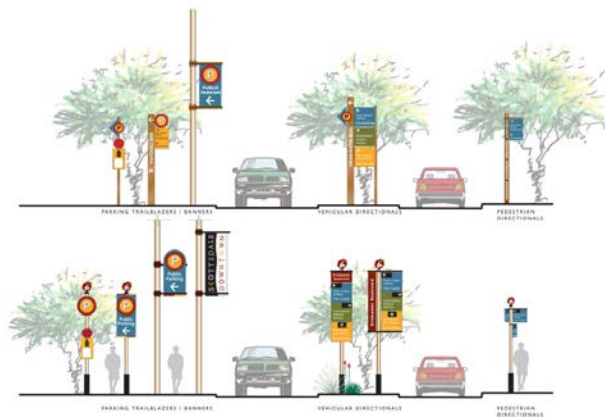
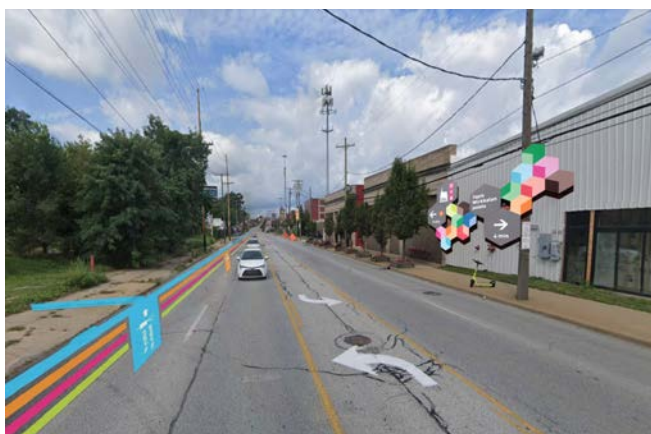


(NACTO)

Speed tables and more prominent crosswalks with pedestrian signals at main crossing points would improve pedestrian safety at intersections and mid-block crossings. Decorative pavement in crosswalks would help to slow traffic and be more noticeable to drivers.



Wayfinding signage and design elements would guide people to key destinations and enhance their experience of the neighborhood.

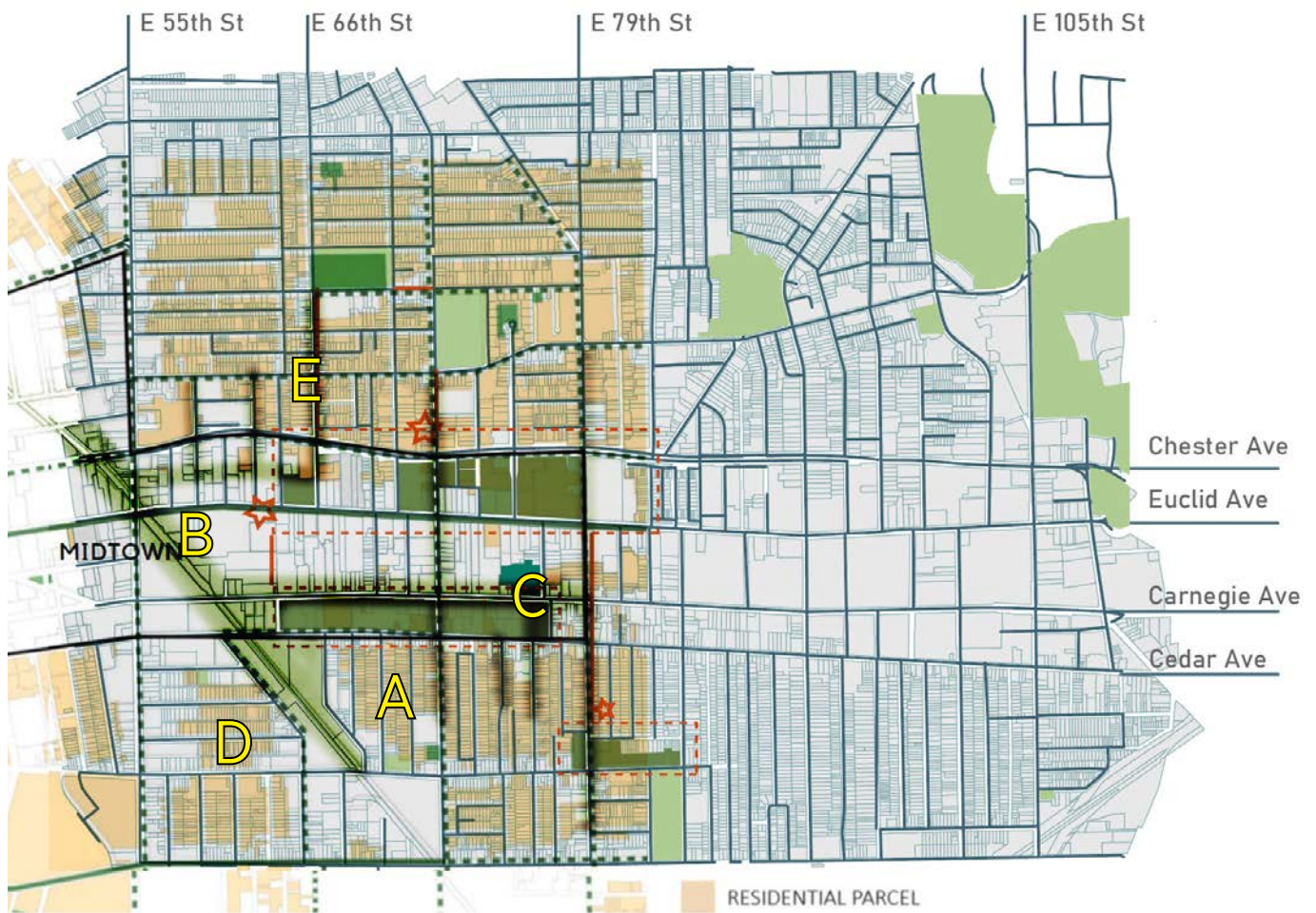


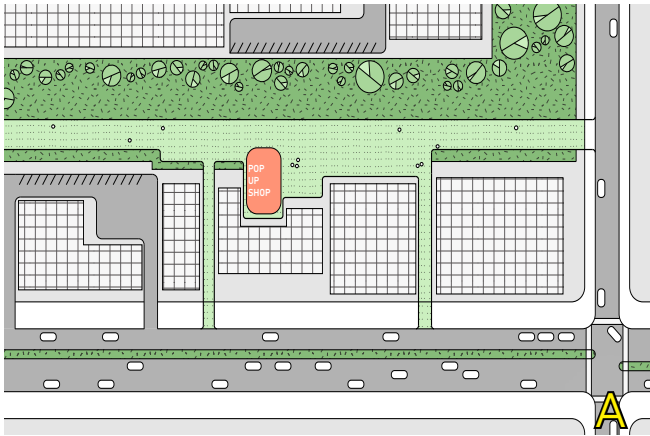
(JRC Design)

Landscape Improvements

Landscape improvement strategies include:

- Designing off-street pedestrian passages and semi-public spaces (A, B, C)
- Connecting neighborhoods by pleasant street tree linkages and under-bridge opening (D, E)
- Adding green pocket space for vibrant urban life, according to block typologies (F).





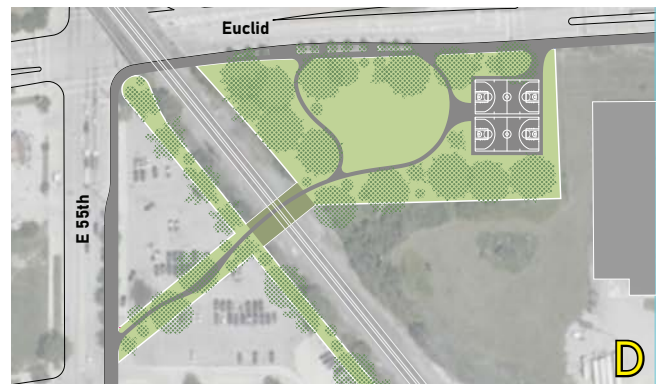
Off-street pedestrian passage and public space.



Walking paths will connect the Cleveland Foundation's new headquarters to its surroundings, (Merritt Chase)



Off-street pedestrian passage.



Neighborhood connection under the rail bridge.

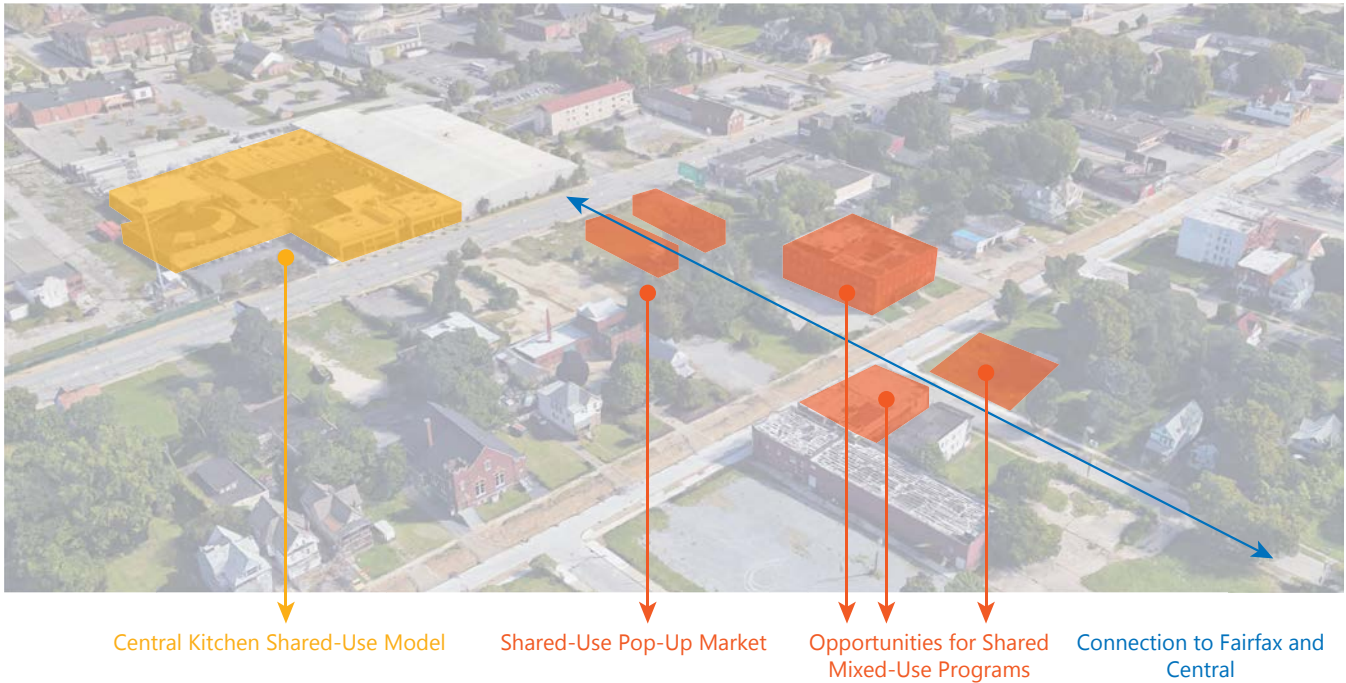


Example of a small-scale landscape to enhance the pedestrian experience.



Seating creates places for people to gather.

Building Opportunities



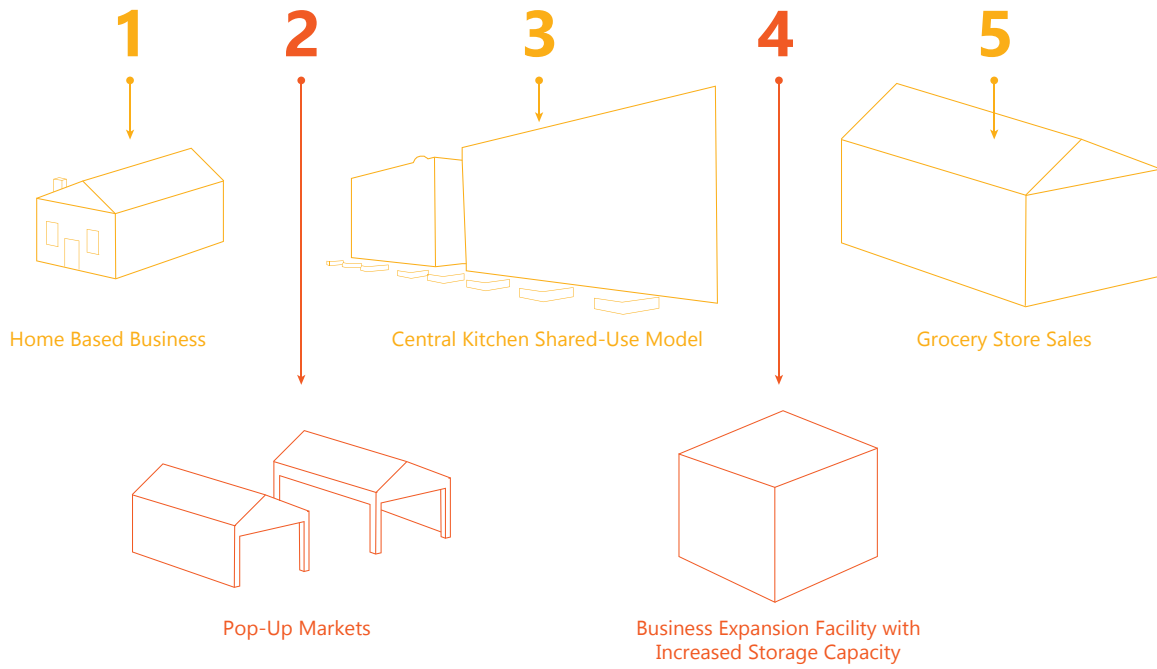
With Central Kitchen as the anchor for a food district, community members can understand and participate in the complete food chain, from production to distribution and consumption. A new foodscape of public spaces and plazas could provide places for workers and residents to interact. The food district could also include vertical farming, shared facilities for food processing and preparation, and food-related retail.

Vacant buildings and lots can be transformed into urban farms, edible gardens, market and food truck plazas, retail space, classrooms, and recycling/composting facilities. This food hub district will activate the surrounding neighborhoods, giving MidTown and Cleveland a stronger identity that celebrates the growing food economy.

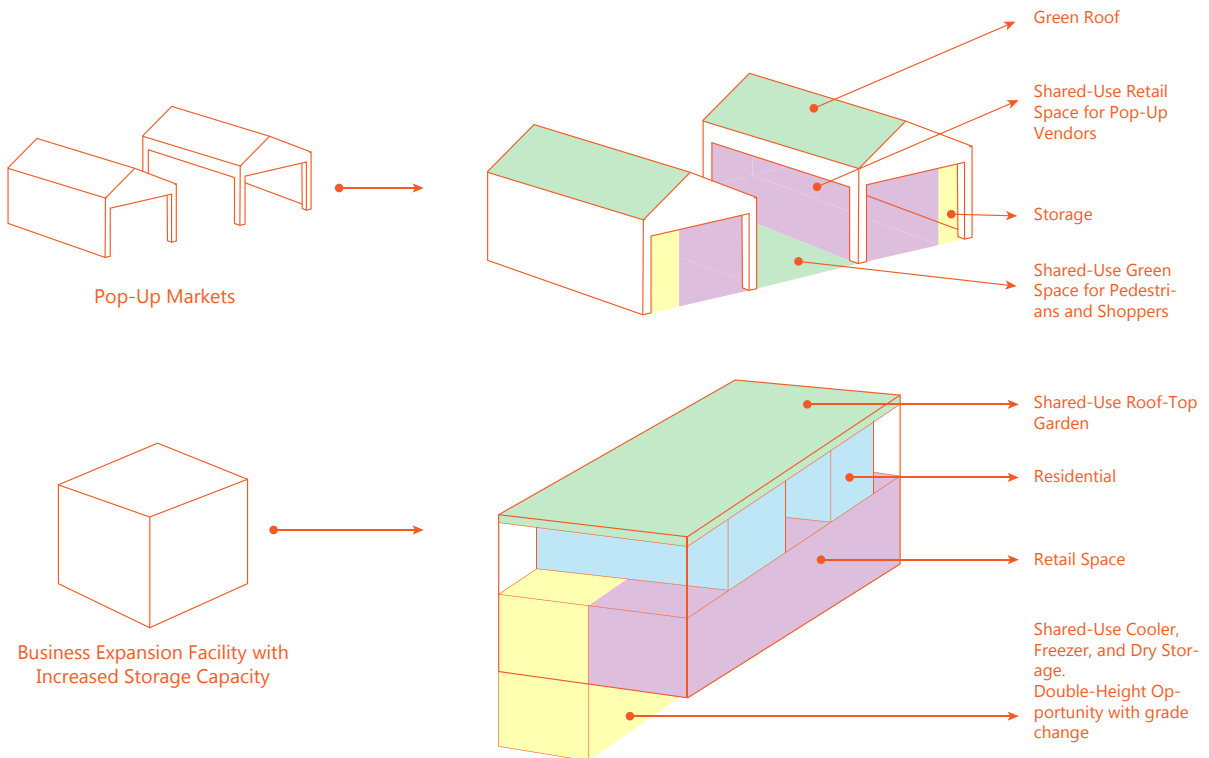
RIGHT Examples of a shared spaces for food production and community use.



Food Production Scales: **what exists, what could be**



Mixed and Shared-Use Typologies: **what could be**



VI. Focus Areas

Focus areas include proposals for four potential development sites:

1. Color corridor linking Cleveland Central Kitchen and Carnegie Avenue to Galluci's Market, the new Cleveland Foundation headquarters, and Chateau Hough;
2. Carnegie Market Plaza, where products from Central Kitchen start-ups can be sold
3. Lancer Hotel site, a privately owned property and potential expansion area for food-related businesses in the district; and
4. E. 79th Street, connecting to Opportunity Corridor.



Site Connections

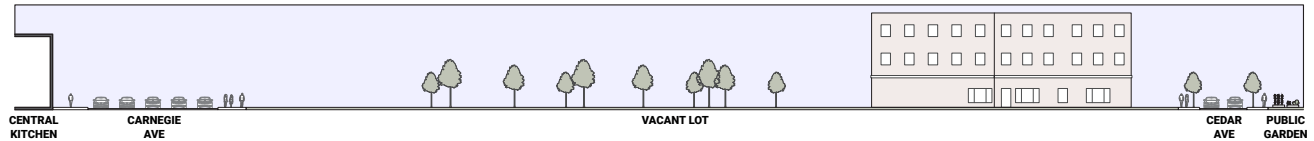
The charrette team analyzed an important connection into the neighborhood, linking to an existing community garden on Cedar Avenue through a large vacant lot immediately across the street from Cleveland Central Kitchen. The vacant lot could be redeveloped as Carnegie Market Plaza, featuring pop-up markets and park space. Pavilions on the vacant site could be used for pop up markets

that feature products from start-up food businesses in Cleveland Central Kitchen. Park space would provide places for children to play, something residents identified as an important need. Traffic calming measures are needed to allow for pedestrians to safely cross Carnegie Avenue, between Cleveland Central Kitchen and Angie's Soul Café to the new market plaza across the street.

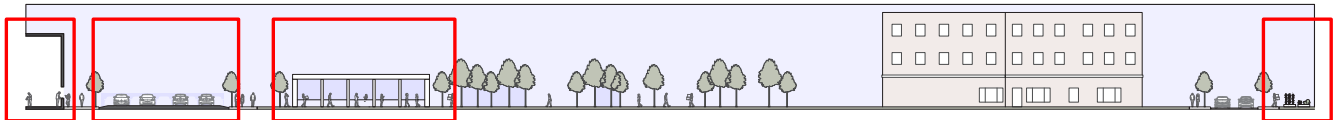


Diagram of three focus areas: (1) Color Corridor; (2) Carnegie Market Plaza; and (3) Lancer Hotel site

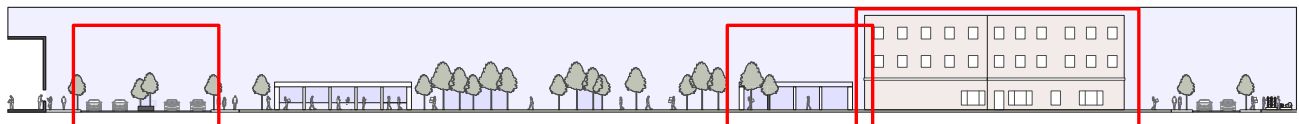
0. CURRENT SECTION



1. IMPLEMENT SPEED TABLE. PAVILION SERVICES CENTRAL KITCHEN AND PUBLIC GARDEN.



2. IMPLEMENTING GREEN MEDIAN. VACANT BUILDING CAN ACT AS STORAGE.



Sections from Cleveland Central Kitchen south through the proposed Carnegie Market Plaza, to an existing community garden on Cedar Avenue.

Color Corridor

Color Corridor is a proposal for a linear public space that connects Euclid and Carnegie Avenues at E.66th Street, adjacent to Gallucci's Market. This connection can celebrate the neighborhood's food identity and provide a pedestrian-only passage and public space to bring the residents of the Fairfax and Hough neighborhoods together.

Decorative pavement defines the space as a pedestrian linkage. The façades along the corridor could feature murals and art installations by local artists. In addition to being a shortcut for pedestrians, the color corridor could also supports public space functions, temporary events, and pop-up shops, and offer a shaded passage during hot weather.

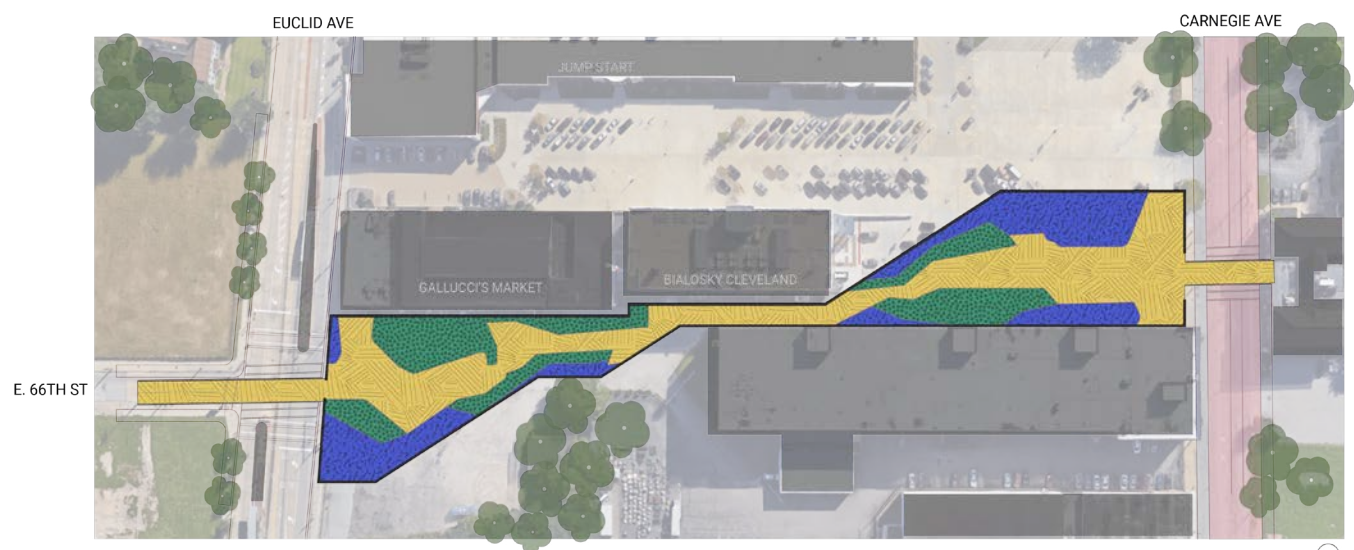
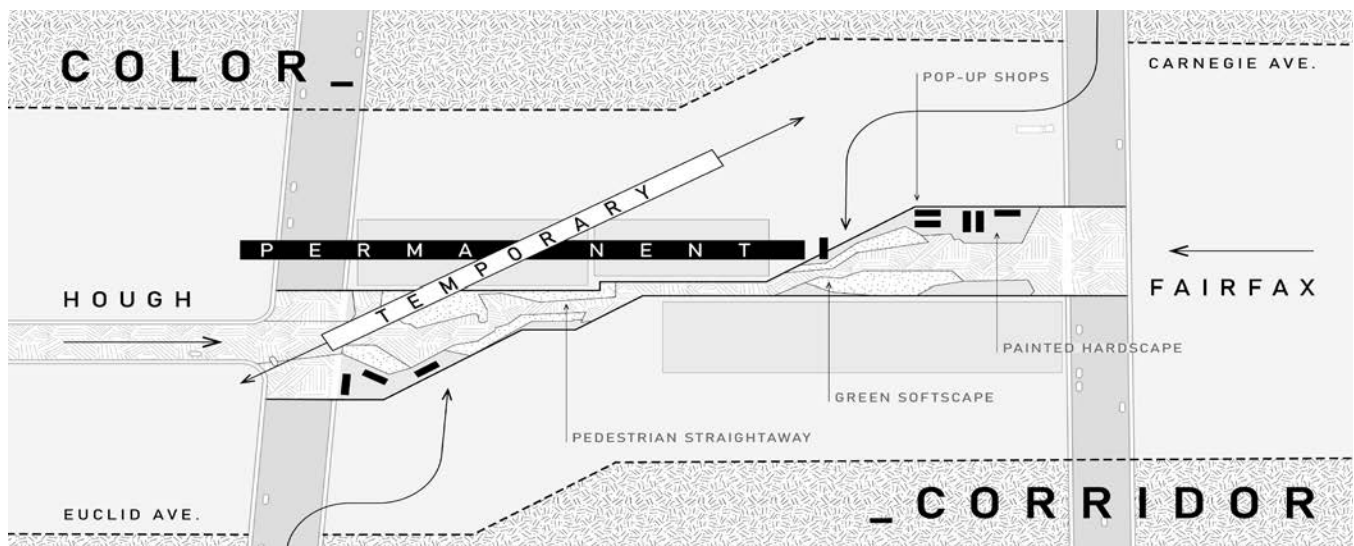
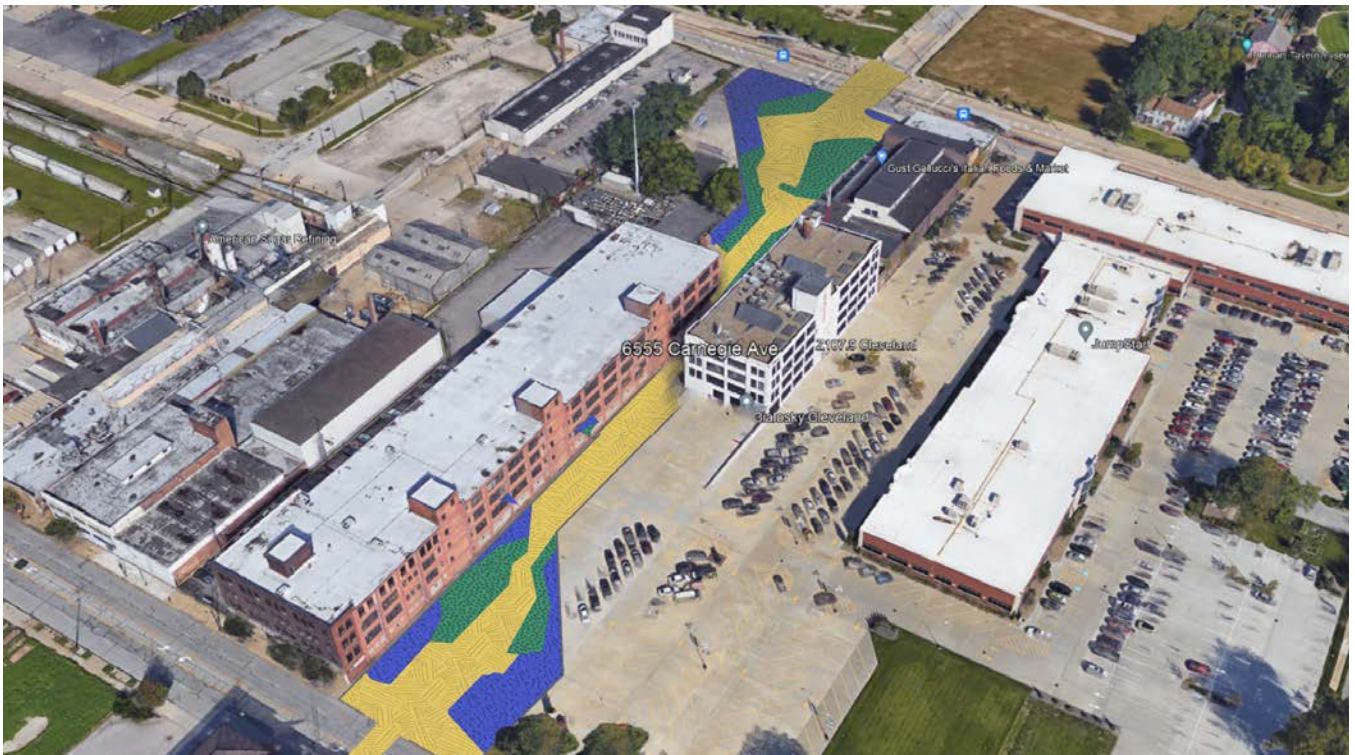


Diagram and plan of Color Corridor

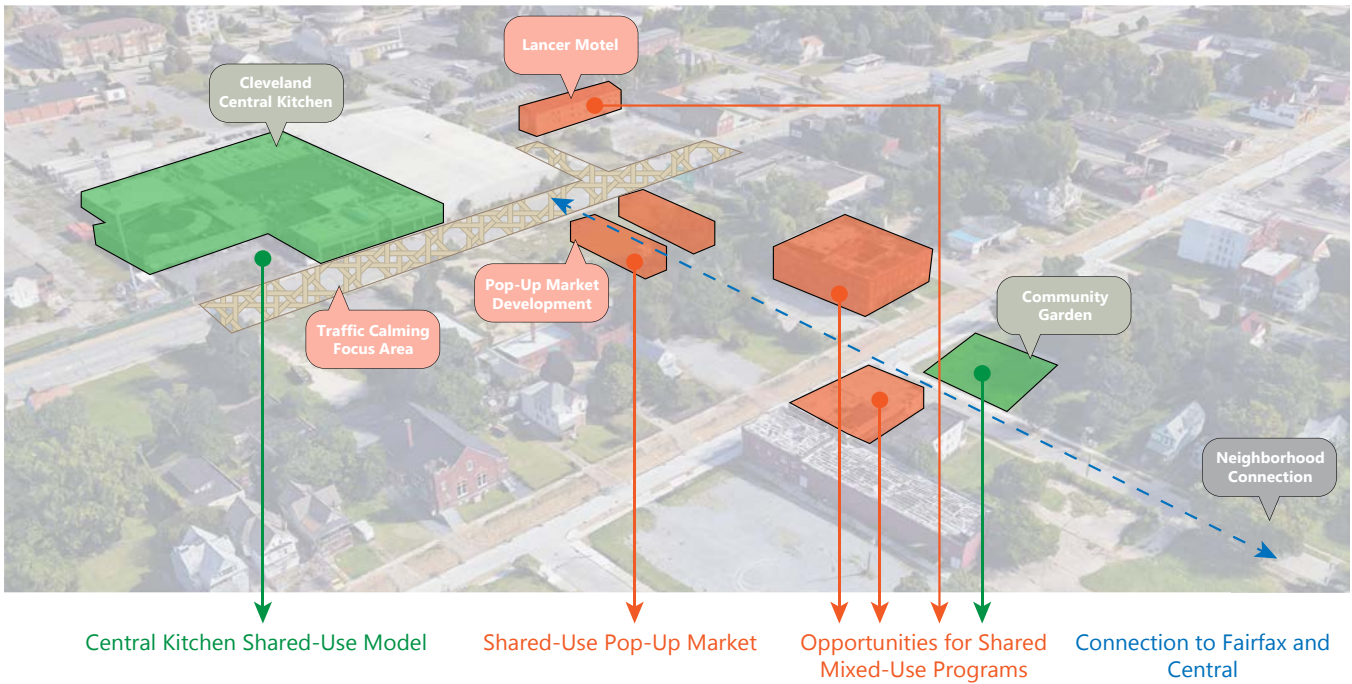


Colorful pavement defines a pedestrian passage between Carnegie and Euclid Avenues at E. 66th Street.



The color corridor could serve as both a connection and a community gathering space.

Carnegie Market Plaza



The charrette team proposes a Carnegie Market Plaza across from Cleveland Central Kitchen. The plaza would connect the Central Kitchen to Cedar Avenue and the Fairfax neighborhood, offering a spacious green space and a public market area.

The plaza provides a large grassy area in the northern portion, which features play structures and seating designs based on the MidTown logo. The plaza would also provide market spaces for vendors and parking spaces for visitors.

The plaza includes a pavilion with operable garage and hangar doors that can be closed in the winter months and opened during the summer. The spaces under the pavilion roof will be versatile and flexible.

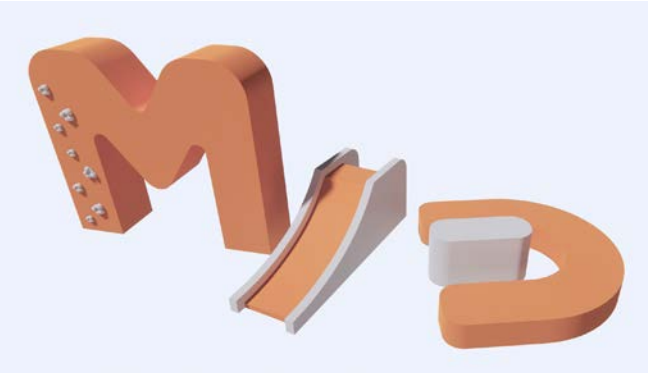
The pavilion ceiling could be made of glass so it functions as a greenhouse for growing food and keeping the space warmer during wintertime. Vendor spaces could be included within the pavilion structure by reusing shipping containers.

The Carnegie Market Plaza would link to an existing community garden on Cedar Avenue and offer a safe pedestrian route between Carnegie and Cedar Avenues.





Shipping-Container Retail in Carnegie Market Plaza



Interactive play structures and wayfinding elements



Green space within Carnegie Market Plaza

Lancer Property Redevelopment

The Lancer Hotel is a privately-owned property adjacent to Cleveland Central Kitchen, across the E. 77th Street. If the property were sold, it could be developed for other programs. This space could provide an opportunity for the Central Kitchen to expand.

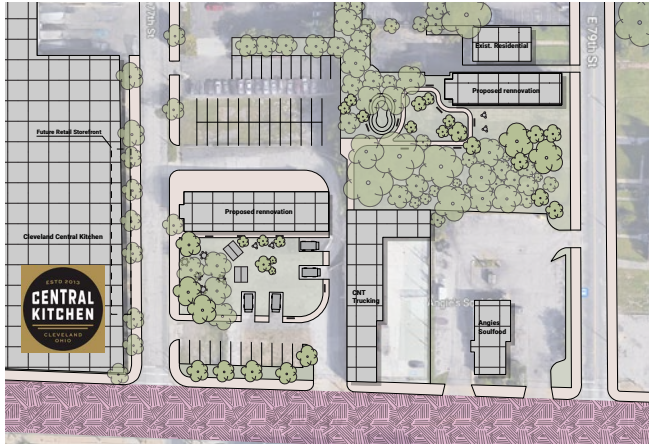
The charrette team proposes a series of storefront for the Central Kitchen along the E. 77th Street façade. Street trees would soften the building's appearance and improve the pedestrian experience.

The site of the Lancer Hotel could include parking and a park for food trucks and events,

expanding access for businesses in the Central Kitchen storefronts. The charrette team created two design alternatives. Conceptual Design A retains the Lancer Hotel building, at least in the short-term, and uses the space in front of the hotel for parking and outdoor dining. The hotel building could also be remodeled and retained for the long-term for housing, live/work space, or classrooms for worker training. In Conceptual Design B, the Lancer Hotel would be demolished and the site is used for parking, green space, outdoor dining, and possible future expansion space for Cleveland Central Kitchen.



Signage and façade treatments for Central Kitchen storefronts



Conceptual Design A The existing Lancer Hotel building remains and is converted for housing, live/work, and classroom space.



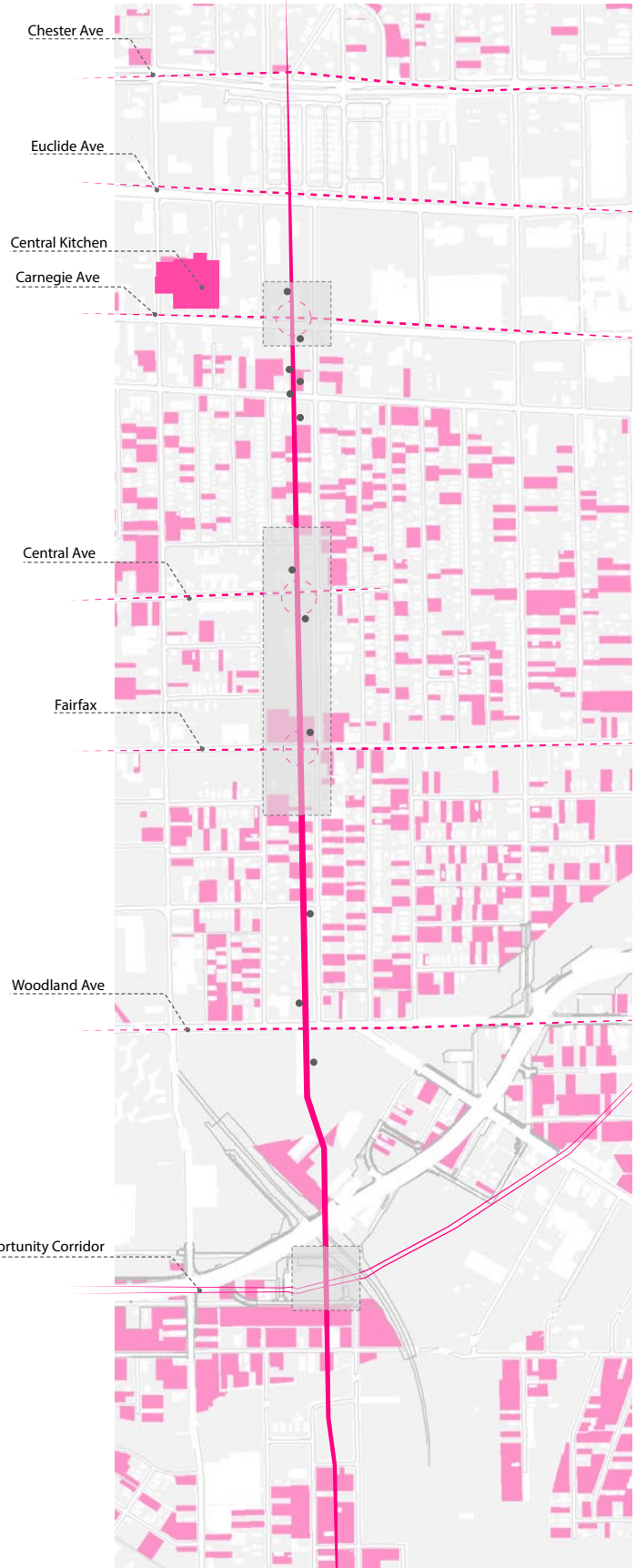
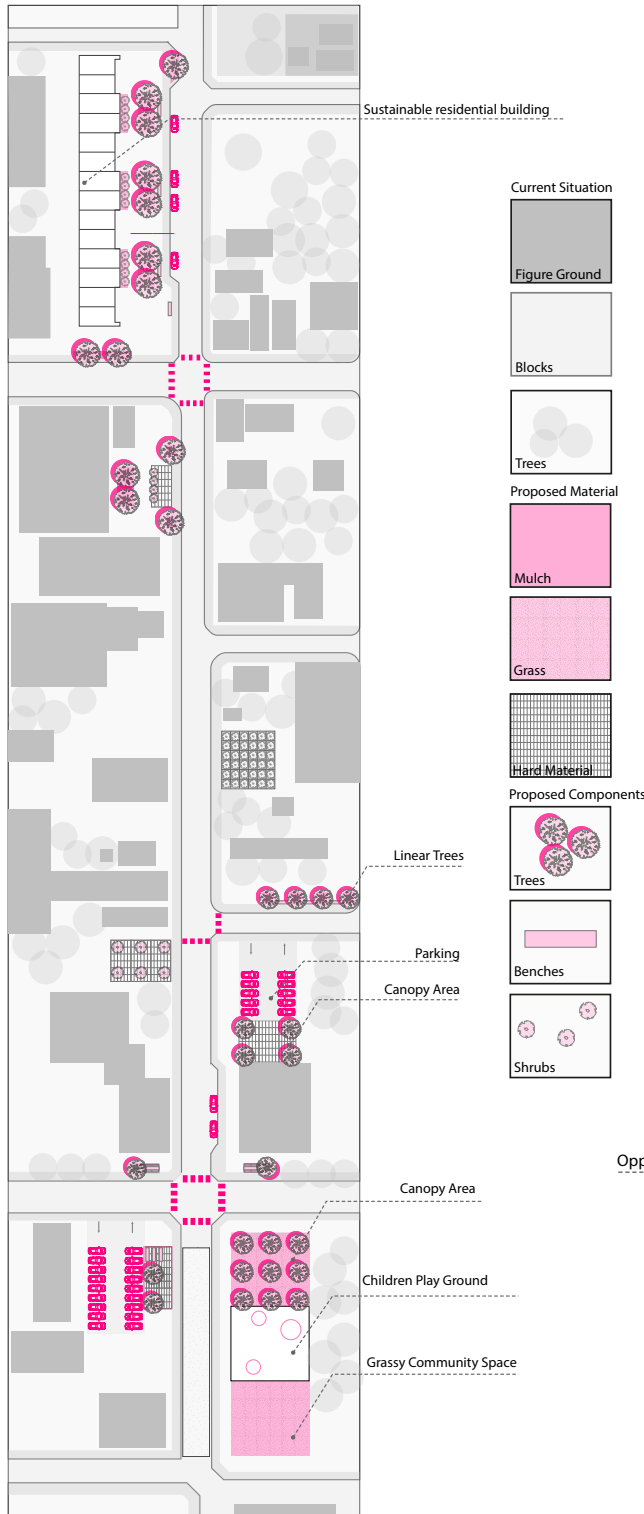
Conceptual Design B The existing Lancer Hotel building is demolished and the site is developed for community use and the expansion of Cleveland Central Kitchen, including a future plant-based food accelerator.



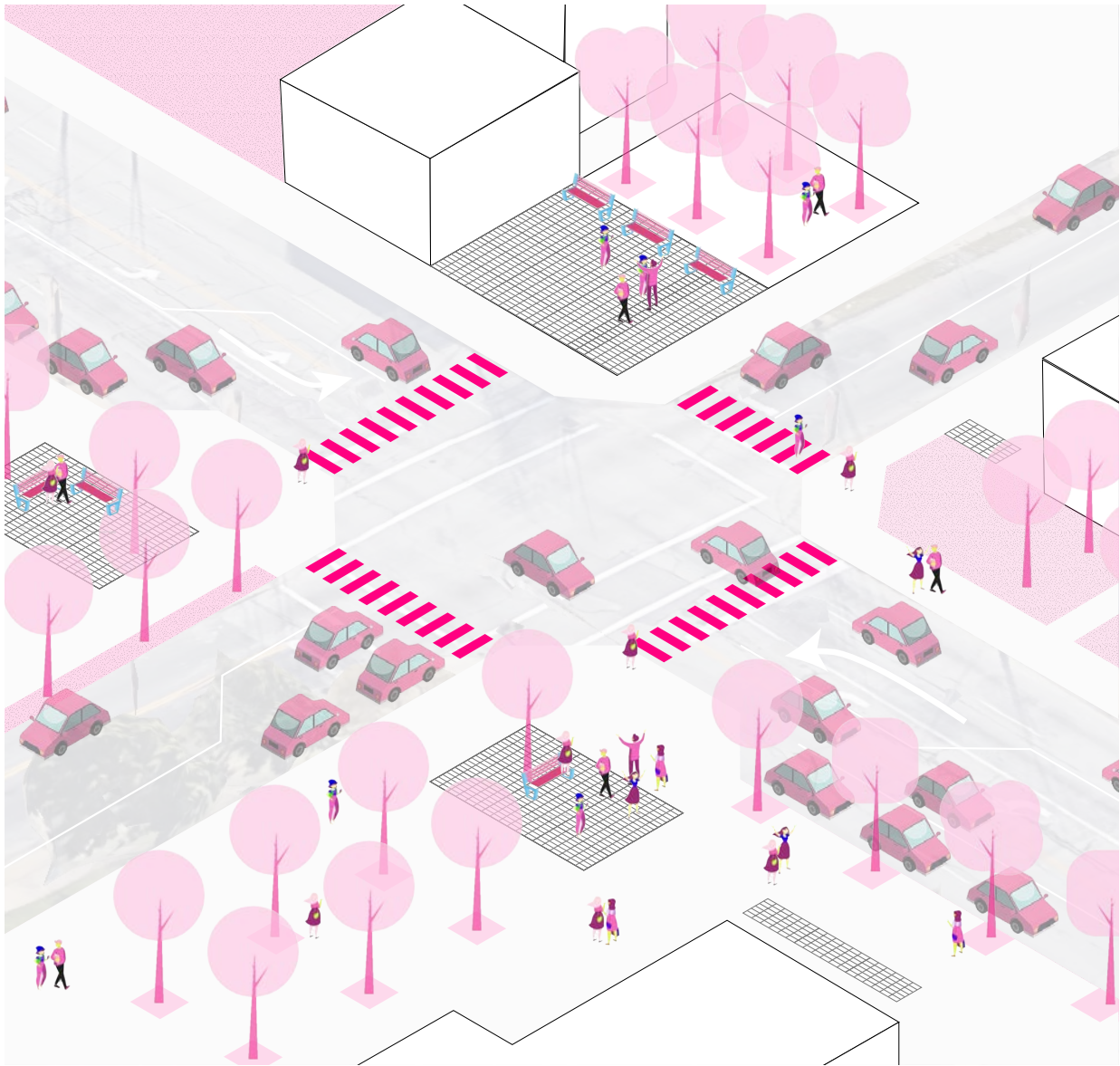
Food Truck plaza, Conceptual Design A

79th Street Interventions

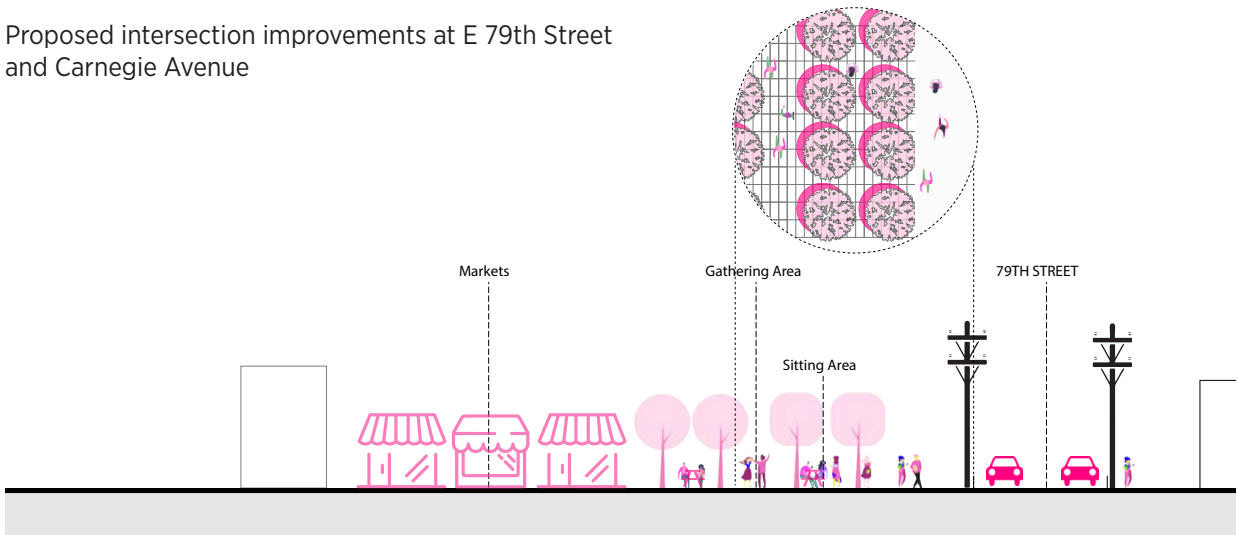
E. 79th Street connects the Cleveland Central Kitchen and the surrounding neighborhoods to legacy food businesses and food distribution infrastructure along Opportunity Corridor.



Overall plan and context, E 79th Street



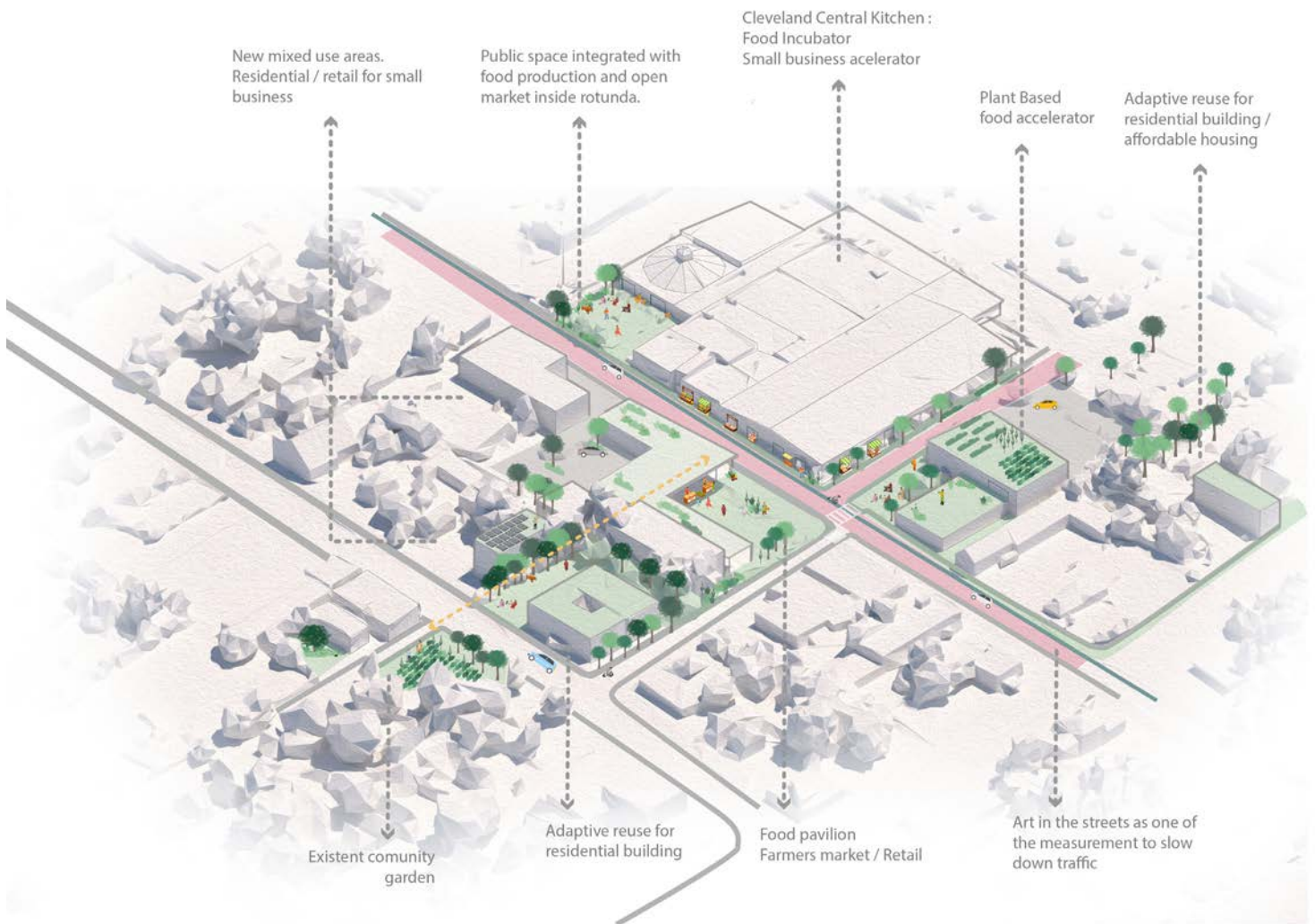
Proposed intersection improvements at E 79th Street and Carnegie Avenue



VII. Conclusion

The Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative has been working with community development corporations, government agencies, and residents over the past decade to stabilize neighborhoods, promote equitable reinvestment, and envision a hunger-proof city.

At this moment, when the American Rescue Plan Act is providing unprecedented financial support to help cities recover from the pandemic, we can envision an expanded food system that offers opportunities for improved nutrition, job creation, and community wealth building. It's not about getting back to where we were before the pandemic. We need transformative ideas for a healthier, more equitable, and resilient city grounded in and thriving food economy.



Special Thanks:



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Cleveland Urban
Design Collaborative

2022 Community Design Charrette



College of Architecture and Environmental Design
