

Appendix C: WORKSHOP EXERCISE RESULTS

Austin, Minnesota

The Building Blocks workshop with Austin involved several exercises that helped define workshop participants' vision, goals, and actions they wish to take to revitalize the Oakland Ave area. The following appendix documents many of these activities that shaped the action plan developed through this planning process.

One Word About Austin

The workshop opened with an exercise that asked participants to share one word that captures what they love about Austin. The results are listed below:

- Supportive
- Diverse
- Library
- Opportunity
- Nature
- Green
- Streets
- SPAM
- Benevolent
- Familia (*Family*)
- Trabajo (*Work*)
- Mayor
- Community
- Hospitality
- Partners

What Could Equitable Development Look Like in Austin?

The technical assistance team gave a presentation describing some of the basic concepts and goals of equitable development initiatives. Workshop participants were then asked to respond to these ideas by sharing what they think equitable development could look like in Austin. Key points from this conversation are below:

- Collaborative - the whole community has buy-in
- Broad in scope
- Socio-economic equity
- Safe to bike & walk
 - Lack of lighting – should be well-lit at night
- Balancing impervious surfaces (pavement) with environmental sustainability



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- Awareness around proximity to environmental contamination (gas stations, chemicals, etc.)
- Try to create universal impacts, as much as possible
- Pedestrians and bicyclists seem out of place – Improve multimodal access and ways of getting around
- Access to entrepreneurial resources
- Remove blights and create attractive areas
- Welcoming for all
- Fun things to do
- Easy to navigate – area has signs to direct you (include different languages)

Needs:

- Engaging and interactive map designed by local artists or students that highlight business corridors and downtown amenities

Coming to Austin:

- Pedestrian corridor – widening to 8 ft on each street to accommodate bikers. Improvements to key intersections including bump outs to slow traffic and ease pedestrian crossings.
- STIP Program through MNDOT, funded by the state – Off-street sidewalk & bike lane

Opportunities and Challenges

Another small group exercise involved brainstorming and discussing opportunities and challenges that the community faces, specifically those related to the Oakland Avenue area. The small group then considered initial action ideas that could address these challenges and capitalize on these opportunities. The results of this exercise are summarized below:

OPPORTUNITIES

- Austin is ready for a makeover
- Already established mixed-use
- Centrally located
- Opportunity to incorporate downtown exploration
- Restaurants – Dairy Queen, Kenny's, McDonald's
- Vision 2020 Downtown Project success
- Empty lots ready for development
- Ripe for new identity
- Local arts



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- Bike paths established
- Affordable property
- Positive investments to build on
- Great place for expansion – Starbucks
- Thoughtful engagement to create change and communicate

CHALLENGES

- Lacks aesthetics
- Needs more natural beauty
- Funding
- Residents are resistant to change
- Green spaces are currently not connected
- Small lots
- Scared of change/Lack of creativity

INITIAL ACTION IDEAS

- Add an element of “beautification” along Oakland Avenue – planters, etc.
- Engage local youth – especially high school students.
- Use storytelling to preserve the past and use Austin's history to move into the future. Include a visual element to engage the public.
- Change zoning to encourage change.

Making Headlines

The final exercise on the first day asked participants to create an aspirational headline about something they would like to see happen in the Oakland Avenue area in the next 3-5 years. This exercise was meant to help participants to begin imagining specific actions that they would like to see completed, as well as to think about what partnerships or resources would make them happen. Submitted headlines are listed below:

- “50% of Austin Employees Now Bike to Work!”
- “Bi-Centennial of Austin will Close Down Oakland as Giant Festival that Celebrates Community, Activates Business in Corridor, and Draws Tourism to the Area”
- “SPAM-TASTIC Festival Comes to Downtown Austin”
- “Oakland Avenue Riverwalk”
- “Oakland Avenue Streetscaping Looks Amazing!”
- “Oakland Avenue Wins Award for Equitable Design”
- “You Don't Have to Go to Mexico When Mexico is Here in Austin”



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Asset Mapping

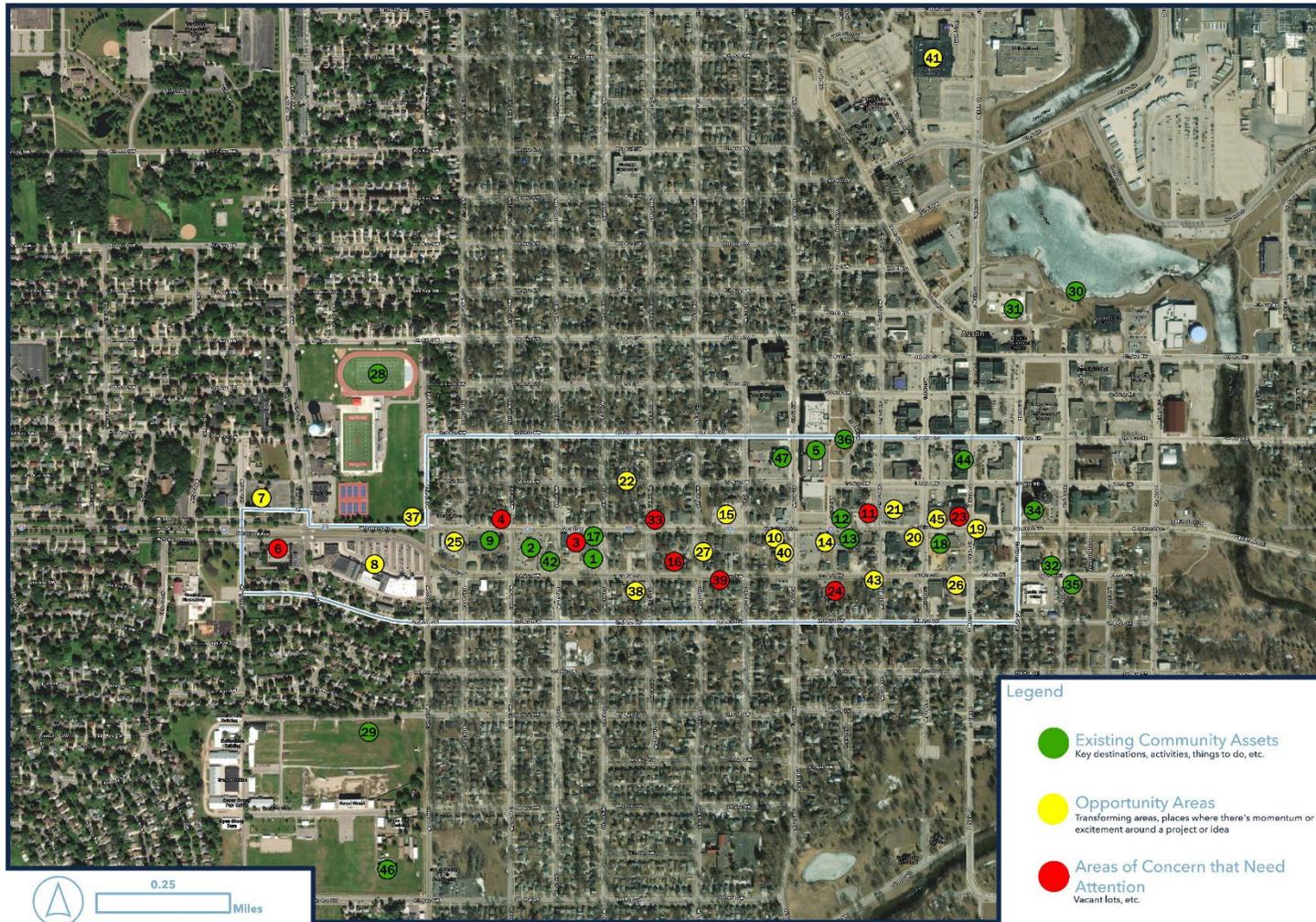
On the second day of the workshop, participants mapped and labeled existing community assets, opportunities, and areas of concern in the Oakland Avenue area. This exercise allowed for the exploration and discussion of assets and opportunities as preparation for action brainstorming and planning later in the workshop.

The maps created during this exercise are documented and summarized on the following pages:

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BUILDING BLOCKS | Austin, Minnesota

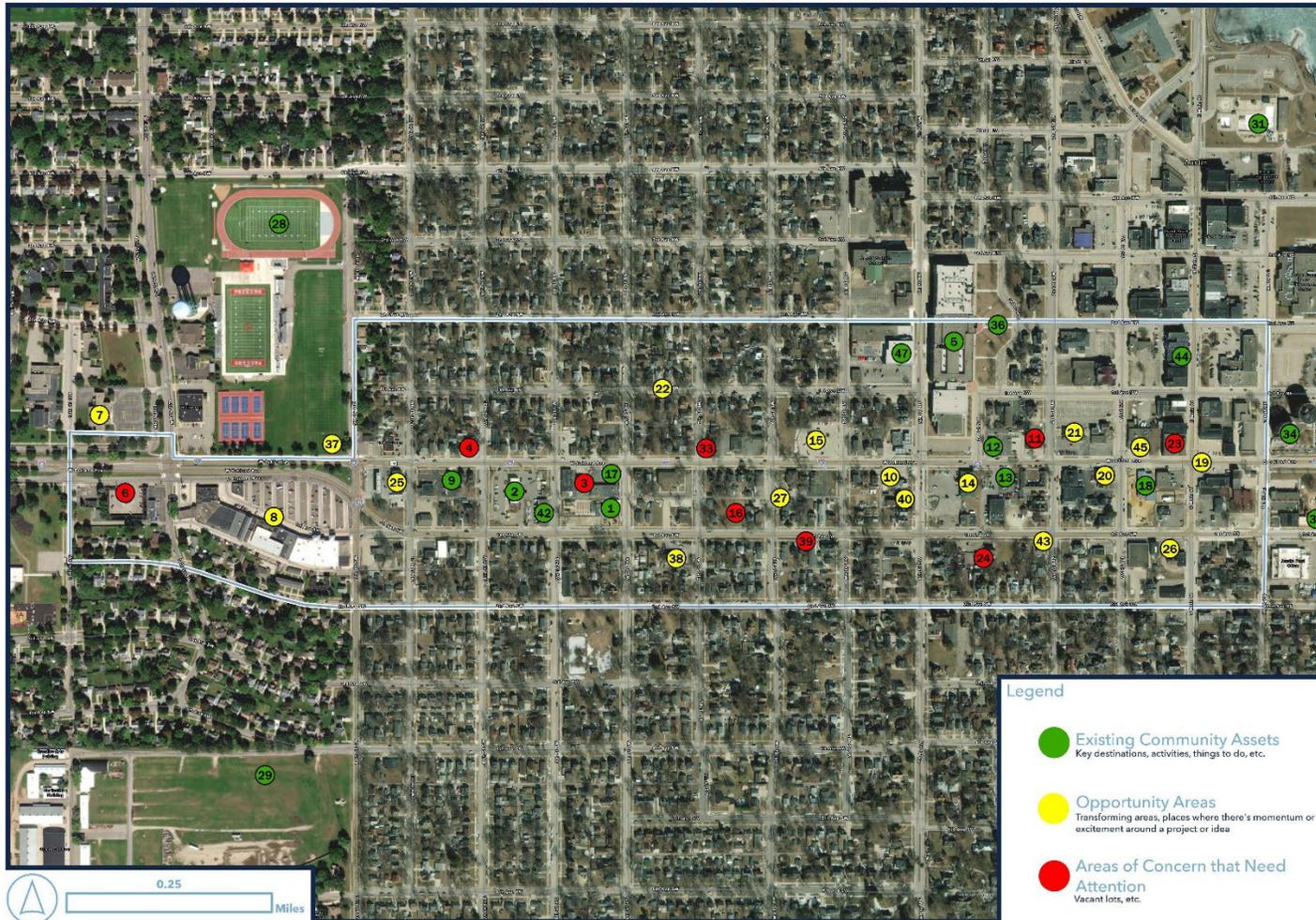


Smart Growth
BUILDING BLOCKS FOR
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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BUILDING BLOCKS | Austin, Minnesota



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Map Legend

Label	Type	Comment
1	Existing Community Assests	Berg's
2	Existing Community Assests	McDonald's
3	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Car wash behind nursery
4	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Camper
5	Existing Community Assests	High School
6	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Japan Panda/Sterling Motel
7	Opportunity Area	Mayo Building - being redeveloped as housing
8	Opportunity Area	Sterling Shopping Center
9	Existing Community Assests	Farmer's Insurance
10	Opportunity Area	Restaurant for sale
11	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Vacant wellness/chiropractor
12	Existing Community Assests	Taco John's - good design
13	Existing Community Assests	Kenny's
14	Opportunity Area	Dollar General
15	Opportunity Area	Godfather's - Big lot
16	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Demos/Vacant Lots
17	Existing Community Assests	Apollo Liquor (Sign)
18	Existing Community Assests	PBS Building
19	Opportunity Area	Two-way street being switched to One-way/green space added
20	Opportunity Area	Bank
21	Opportunity Area	City car wash - city owns parking lot behind
22	Opportunity Area	Bike boulevard possibilities



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23	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Dead zone needing to be activated to get people to walk from Main St
24	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Towing
25	Opportunity Area	Kwick Trip - wants to expand
26	Opportunity Area	Liquor store/apt/NAPA - needs attention
27	Opportunity Area	Alley - could be parklet? Esp. between 8th + 9th
28	Existing Community Assests	Athletic Fields - get community use; done in winter
29	Existing Community Assests	Fairgrounds
30	Existing Community Assests	Mill Pond
31	Existing Community Assests	City Pool
32	Existing Community Assests	Community Action Building
33	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	Ash trees coming out - no money to replace
34	Existing Community Assests	Street watchers/party vibes
35	Existing Community Assests	1st + 3rd apartments
36	Existing Community Assests	High School's green space
37	Opportunity Area	Could use green space more? Also, install bike fixing station
38	Opportunity Area	Tranny shop - visually a pro or con?
39	Areas of Concern that Need Attention	General home disrepair
40	Opportunity Area	Anderson Memorial potential sculpture park?
41	Opportunity Area	Hormel and associated challenges/opportunities
42	Existing Community Assests	African Grocery Store
43	Opportunity Area	Historical plaques that continue from Main + 4th. Connect through the whole area - bike trail to Nature Center
44	Existing Community Assests	Rydjor Bike Shop
45	Opportunity Area	Music Shop



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46	Existing Community Assests	Mower County Historical Society
47	Existing Community Assests	Macphil Center for Music

