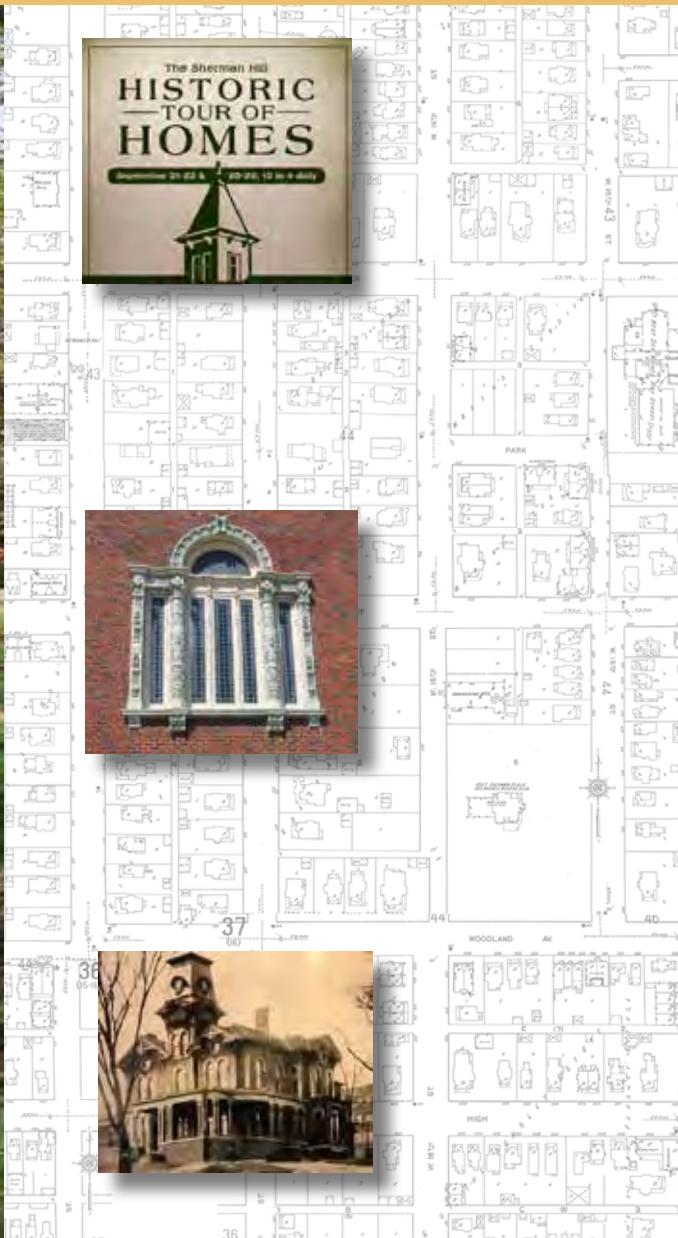


# SHERMAN HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



2017 Plan Update

Adopted July 24, 2017

# Acknowledgements

The Sherman Hill Neighborhood Plan Update was produced through an ongoing partnership between the City of Des Moines and Iowa State University's Department of Community and Regional Planning. Under the guidance of Dr. Jane Rongerude, a group of 14 graduate students conducted neighborhood outreach efforts, directed focus group sessions and stakeholder meetings, identified action items and potential resources, and drafted the initial plan. The final document was written by Dr. Jane Rongerude, Laura Peters, and Nicholas Williams. The Sherman Hill Working Committee provided valuable plan feedback on behalf of the Sherman Hill Association.

## *Iowa State University Planning Team*

Dr. Jane Rongerude, Professor	
Rachana Awale	Samuel Merced-Matos
Zahnluk Bose	Allison Riley
Ivan Gaikowski	Helina Sarkodie-Minkah
Brandon Geber	Amelia Schoeneman
Ruth Hulstrom	Nikole Self
Dustin Ingram	Theodore Sullivan
Elliot Klimowski	Nicholas Williams

## *City of Des Moines Community Development Staff*

**Phil Delafield**, Director

**Chris Johansen**, Neighborhood Development Administrator

**Laura Peters**, Assistant Planner  
Project Manager, Graphic Design & Layout

**Anu Minhas**, Assistant Planner  
Project Assistance

## *Sherman Hill Working Committee*

Deb Copeland	Martha Green
Judith Hainut	Rob McCammon
Judy McClure	Jack Porter

## *Plan Approval:*

Sherman Hill Association - May 11, 2017  
Neighborhood Revitalization Board - June 7, 2017  
Plan & Zoning Commission - July 6 , 2017  
City Council - July 24, 2017  
Polk County Board of Supervisors - August 22, 2017

# Contents

2	<b>Acknowledgements</b>
4	<b>Introduction</b>
	Neighborhood Planning in Des Moines
4	<b>Background</b>
	Sherman Hill Planning Area
	History of Sherman Hill
	National Register of Historic Places
	Revitalization of Sherman Hill
	Oakridge Community
14	<b>Existing Conditions</b>
	Demographics
	Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District
	Land Use and Zoning
	Historic District
24	<b>The Planning Process</b>
	Neighborhood Engagement
	Steering Committee
	Oakridge Outreach
26	<b>Neighborhood Priorities</b>
	Housing
	Aesthetics
	Transportation & Safety
	Growth & Development
	Cohesive Community
47	<b>Implementation</b>
48	<b>Conclusion</b>
49	<b>Appendix</b>
56	<b>References</b>

# Neighborhood Planning in Des Moines

The process of neighborhood planning in Des Moines has its roots in the Housing Improvement and Neighborhood Revitalization Report prepared by the consultant team Stockard & Engler in 1989. The report addressed growing concern over Des Moines' continued loss of population to surrounding suburban communities throughout the forty years immediately following World War II. As this suburbanization continued, the city's centrally located neighborhoods experienced ongoing decline and deteriorating housing stock (Stockard & Engler, 1989). Uncertain of the future viability of these neighborhoods, the City recommended the establishment of a new neighborhood-driven planning process aimed at combating disinvestment while simultaneously fostering community strength and vitality. The new process marked the beginning of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

Today, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program works to promote stability and improved quality of life in each of Des Moines' 54 neighborhoods through a collaborative, neighborhood-specific planning process. The program is coordinated by the Neighborhood Development Division of the Community Development Department of the City of Des Moines.

## Sherman Hill Planning Area

The Sherman Hill neighborhood is bound roughly by Interstate 235 to the north, Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to the west, Ingersoll Avenue to the south, and 15th Street to the east (see Figure 1). With its proximity to downtown, Sherman Hill is a highly desirable neighborhood for Des Moines residents who wish to live near where they work and play. Like many similar urban communities, the neighborhood has benefitted from periods of growth and development and endured the challenges of suburbanization and disinvestment. Sherman Hill's rich history spans from the early days of Des Moines through the urban renewal and white flight of the 1960s, to its recent rebirth as a thriving urban community committed to preserving its historic built environment.

Closely intertwined with Sherman Hill in both history and geography is the Oakridge Neighborhood, a subsidized housing community for approximately 1,000 residents. Oakridge is adjacent Sherman Hill, but located outside the formal boundaries of the neighborhood. While Sherman Hill features stately Victorian-era homes, Oakridge was constructed in the late 1960's to provide affordable housing to low-income residents. By all outward appearances, these two neighborhoods are vastly different. However, the urban form of each was significantly impacted by the history of urban renewal in Des Moines.

Furthering this connection is the geographic "island" in which these two neighborhoods reside. The automobile-centric corridors of Interstate 235, MLK Jr. Parkway, and Keo Way have created barriers that significantly limit pedestrian connectivity to other residential and commercial areas in Des Moines. As such, the future success of one neighborhood contributes greatly to the success of the other.

Sherman Hill and Oakridge each boast their own unique assets and face their own set of challenges. However, the quality of life for residents of each neighborhood is impacted by shared needs for strong schools, adequate infrastructure, enhanced safety, multi-modal transportation, and quality recreational spaces. As a result, the Oakridge neighborhood has been included in a common planning area for the purposes of this Plan document and here forth referred to as “planning area”. The intent of the Sherman Hill Neighborhood Plan is to provide action items that address these shared needs as well as concerns unique to Sherman Hill residents.

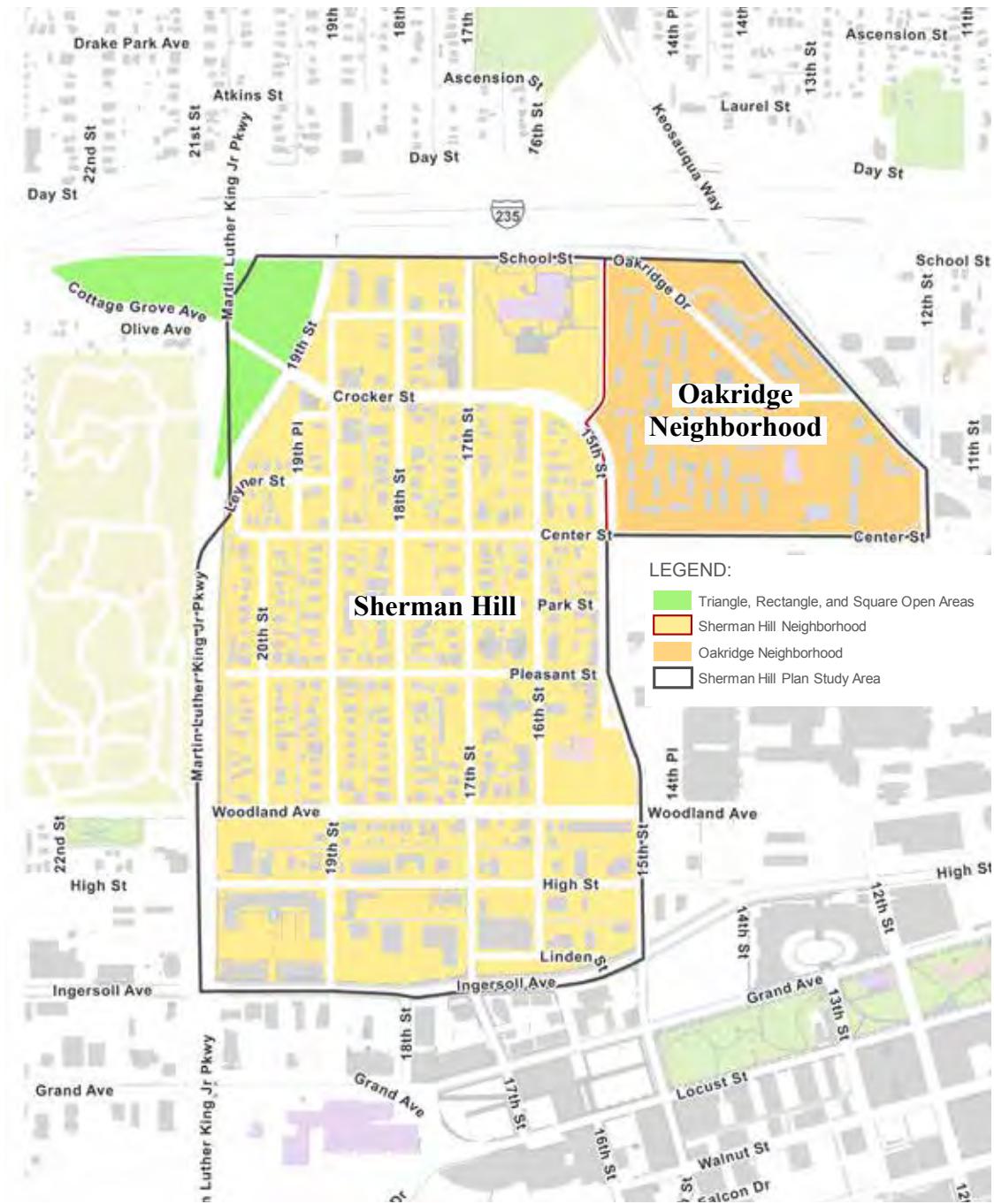
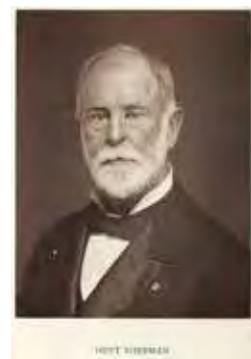


Figure 1: Sherman Hill Planning Area

# History of Sherman Hill

Sherman Hill is one of Des Moines' oldest neighborhoods, dating back to 1850 when Hoyt Sherman, the first postmaster of Des Moines, purchased five acres of land located at what is now the corner of 15th Street and Woodland Avenue. As a successful banker, businessman, and lawyer, Sherman completed construction of his elaborate Italianate palazzo in 1877. The home would later be expanded upon to include the city's first public art museum and auditorium. Today, Hoyt Sherman Place stands as a historic landmark for which the neighborhood was named.



Most of the land in Sherman Hill was platted for development from 1877 to 1882, following construction of the Sherman residence. As Des Moines experienced substantial growth during the late nineteenth century, early pioneers settled into this stylish western suburb located on wooded bluffs overlooking the city. Prominent business leaders and politicians moved into the area, including Henry Wallace, founder of Wallace's Farmer; the Younkers brothers; U.S. Senator Lafayette Young; and African American bandleader T. Fred Henry. However, Sherman Hill was not an exclusive community, as evidenced by the diversity of housing types. Wealthy families constructed large and ornate homes in a variety of Victorian styles, including Queen Anne, Italianate, Eastlake, and others. Lower income families were also welcomed and settled into smaller, more modest Victorian cottages that are intermingled throughout the neighborhood. While size and scale varied, houses were unified through their common architectural elements including gable roofs, porches, and decorative millwork.

As Des Moines continued to grow into the early 1900's, apartment living became widely accepted as a way to circumvent increasing housing costs within the city. During this time, the neighborhood evolved from one of single-family homes into a truly urban neighborhood with multi-family buildings, including double-houses and apartment buildings. These structures were primarily constructed of brick, whereas the early single-family homes were typically wood frame. The Lexington Apartments (1721 Pleasant Street) was constructed in 1906 and at five stories it is considered Des Moines's first "high-rise" apartment building. Numerous multi-family units were constructed by 1920. From the 1880's to the 1920's, the neighborhood thrived with a diversity of residents, including families and single residents with a variety of income ranges.

Left: Sketch of the Sherman house prior to the building of Hoyt Sherman Place.



Right: The 1400-seat auditorium at Hoyt Sherman Place was constructed by the Des Moines Women's Club in 1923.



The history of Sherman Hill follows the same progression as many American urban neighborhoods, where growth is followed by disinvestment, and finally, revitalization and renewal. Growth stagnated in post-WWI years, and disinvestment began shortly after. This was also the era of “white flight” when wealthier families left Sherman Hill for the new suburbs to the west. Compounding this movement was the practice of redlining and mortgage discrimination, commonly practiced against minorities, immigrants, and even young families. Redlining prevented potential home owners from purchasing and insuring property in many areas of Des Moines, including Sherman Hill. As such, people were forced into the rental market, adding to the demand for apartment units. Slowly, Sherman Hill transitioned from a neighborhood of owner-occupied homes to one dominated by investment properties and rental units. Single-family residences were divided into smaller apartments, and the once grand porches and verandas were enclosed to maximize rental potential. Properties fell into various states of disrepair and neglect by absentee landlords. By the end of WWII, the landscape of Sherman Hill changed significantly from its heyday at the turn of the century. The neighborhood was distressed.

The 1960's proved to be another critical period in the history of Sherman Hill. The first phase of construction for Interstate-235 was completed in 1961. While most of Sherman Hill was spared from demolition, the freeway isolated Sherman Hill from its neighbors, with whom they shared parks and historical fabric. At this same time, the City also began implementing wide-sweeping urban renewal projects aimed at eliminating areas deemed as slum and blight. Demolition was the mind-set of the time, and single-family houses in the neighborhood were torn down to make way for new, “modern” apartment buildings. Unfortunately these large structures with mansard roofs ignored historic architectural forms in the neighborhood and further contributed to its decline. Demolition extended outside of this neighborhood as well. The Center Street neighborhood, located immediately east, was once a thriving hub of African American culture in Iowa, and was especially known for the lively jazz clubs that brought nationally renowned musicians to Des Moines. Although the Center Street neighborhood had declined in the previous decade, the commercial district extending from Keo Way west to 15th Street still served many of the residents living in Des Moines at the time. The entire Center Street district, with the exception of two structures, was demolished in the name of urban renewal. In its place today are the expansive Unity Point (Methodist Hospital) parking lots, the Oakridge Neighborhood, and strip commercial development along Keo Way.



Left: Photo of the thriving Center Street commercial district.

Right: House at 1423 Center Street, which served as a temporary office for the Oakridge Urban Renewal project.

The neighborhood officially adopted the Sherman Hill name in the early 1970's. Up until this time, the general area was referred to as "Oakridge" because of the wooded hilltop in which it was located. However, with construction of the Homes of Oakridge completed in 1970, it was often confusing to differentiate the new housing development from the existing neighborhood. "Sherman Hill" came to be, and with that, so did a renewed sense of urgency to preserve and protect the neighborhood from further decline.

In 1977, residents banded together to form the Sherman Hill Association, Inc. (SHA). This newly formed neighborhood organization was created with the purpose of restoring the quality of life and historic character of the neighborhood through education, preservation, and community action. SHA successfully added Sherman Hill to the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1979, and the neighborhood was designated as one of the first local historic districts in Des Moines in 1982. The Sherman Hill Association completed two neighborhood master plans, the first in 1981 and the second in 1990, that helped guide its focus and activities for its first two decades. In 1993, SHA was officially recognized as a neighborhood association by the City of Des Moines, and in 1999, the neighborhood completed the first Sherman Hill Neighborhood Action Plan as part of the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The plan provided a solid foundation for building a sense of community and place for the residents of Sherman Hill. Since the adoption of that plan, Sherman Hill has continued to focus on preserving the historic character of the neighborhood.

Since the formation of the SHA and the enactment of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, residents and businesses have returned to Sherman Hill and the neighborhood has experienced a resurgence in prosperity. While the neighborhood has continued the tradition of being a residential neighborhood for downtown Des Moines' workforce, many residents also work out of their homes, providing retail goods and services to their surrounding neighbors and beyond. SHA continues to work closely with neighborhood residents and city officials to identify potential improvements which highlight the neighborhood's historic contributions to Greater Des Moines and improve the quality of life in Sherman Hill.



Annual events hosted by the Sherman Hill Association include a Historic Home Tour and Halloween on the Hill, which have raised awareness of Sherman Hill's revitalization efforts. Other events, including Jazz in July and Movie in the Park, are also sponsored by the neighborhood to build community and promote quality of life in Sherman Hill and the surrounding area.

# National Register of Historic Places Listings

Sherman Hill features some of the region's most important historic Victorian-era architecture. As such, the Sherman Hill Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Six properties are also individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These include:



Henry Wallace House, 756 16th St.  
Listed May 1993

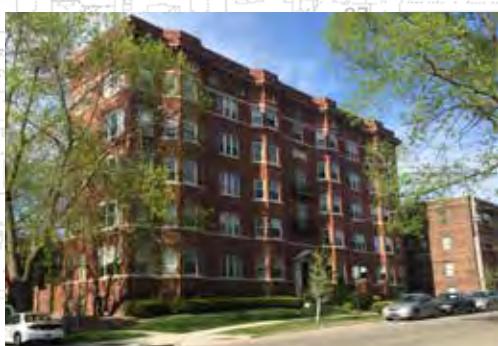
Henshie-Briggs Row House, moved to  
1614 Woodland Avenue from its original  
location at 106 High St. Listed August 2001



Maish House, 1623 Center St.  
Listed April 1977



F.A. Benham House, 716 19th St.  
Listed November 1998



The Lexington, 1721 Pleasant St.  
Listed December 1976



Hoyt Sherman Place, 1501 Woodland Ave.  
Listed September 1977

# Revitalization of Sherman Hill

Sherman Hill has experienced a remarkable renaissance over the past 35 years. After decades of decline and disinvestment, neighborhood residents came together in the early 1980's to improve negative perceptions of the area, reduce crime, and save properties from further demolition. Their efforts led to an improved quality of life in Sherman Hill and a renewed interest in historic preservation. New residents have since flocked to Sherman Hill, drawn by its historic charm and desirable location. Restoration of these historic properties continues today, while infill housing constructed in the last decade serves as a testament to the growing demand for living in Sherman Hill. Looking forward, the future of Sherman Hill is strong.



The Wallace House, constructed in 1883, was restored in 1988 and today serves as a museum. The house had been divided into nine apartment units and sat vacant for nearly 20 years.



Multi-family housing units have been renovated throughout Sherman Hill, with some apartment buildings converted to upscale condominiums. The Wellsport Portwell Flats were restored in 2012.

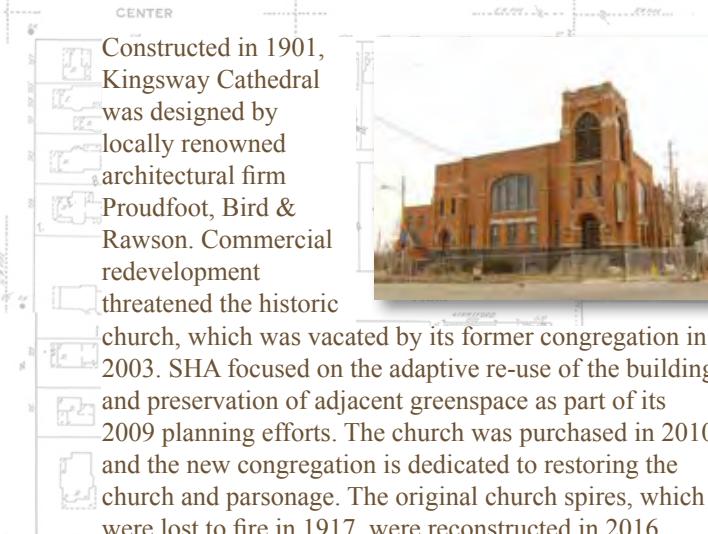




Beginning in the 1940's, many single-family homes in Sherman Hill were converted into multi-family apartment units as residents moved west and investors purchased properties. These homes have been slowly converted back to their original density.



Small-scale mixed use commerical/residential properties are scattered throughout Sherman Hill. Renovation of the former H&H Grocery was completed in 2016, with a focus on sustainable design and energy efficiency.



Constructed in 1901, Kingsway Cathedral was designed by locally renowned architectural firm Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. Commercial redevelopment threatened the historic church, which was vacated by its former congregation in 2003. SHA focused on the adaptive re-use of the building and preservation of adjacent greenspace as part of its 2009 planning efforts. The church was purchased in 2010 and the new congregation is dedicated to restoring the church and parsonage. The original church spires, which were lost to fire in 1917, were reconstructed in 2016.



Sketch of Oak Hill in 1885, as published in the Persinger Times Christmas edition.

# Oakridge Community

Adjacent to Sherman Hill and within the same Census tract is the Oakridge Neighborhood, a 17-acre non-profit affordable housing community with 339 units and approximately 1,000 residents including more than 600 children. Oakridge provides low income households with “a safe, secure neighborhood with supportive housing, dynamic programs and essential services to build and develop the strengths of children, adults and families moving them to sustained self-sufficiency and self-reliance.” (Source: Oakridge Neighborhood website).

In the mid-1960s, the Oakridge Area Urban Renewal Project razed many of the buildings in the predominantly African-American community from the Center Street neighborhood adjacent Sherman Hill. While many of the demolished buildings were rated as deficient, they were affordable, and the Project led to the displacement of over 180 people. In 1966, representatives from the Des Moines Area Council of Churches began to discuss the construction of a housing community that could serve the needs of low-income families in Des Moines, including those displaced by the Oakridge Area Urban Renewal Project.

Two years later, ground was broken for the Homes of Oakridge and the project was completed in 1970. Initially, the neighborhood confronted a series of challenges including a low-occupancy rate, but an application for tax-exempt status and changes in leadership marked a turning point. With the support of local community organizations, the neighborhood received donations, improved its leadership, and expanded opportunities for residents.

Over time, an array of support services was added to meet the changing needs of residents, including work-readiness training, childcare, and afterschool programs. The neighborhood also added a variety center and playgrounds, and more recently, a community center and multi-unit building for residents of age 55 and older. The demographics of the neighborhood have shifted during the past two decades, and Oakridge is now home to a large population of immigrants and refugees. As these changes occurred, the community evolved to offer a range of immigrant services, including on-site English and citizen classes. Today, Oakridge Neighborhood is the most ethnically diverse community in Des Moines and a hub of community supportive services that are open to the entire city.



# Planning Area Demographics

Understanding the demographic composition of a neighborhood often helps to understand issues, identify trends, and develop priority areas. Demographic information helps to track changes over time and plan ahead for anticipated needs. Having a full understanding of who lives in the Sherman Hill planning area will aid the Sherman Hill Association, Oakridge Neighborhood, City leaders, service providers, and other partners in understanding the breadth and complexity of area needs and priority areas so that resources can be adequately targeted to help accomplish goals and action items.

The Sherman Hill planning area is divided into two census block groups (the smallest geographical unit in which the Census Bureau tracks sample data), as shown in Figure 2. The block group north of Center Street includes the Oakridge Neighborhood. The block group south of Center includes the remainder of Sherman Hill, with the exception of the primarily commercial area between High Street and Ingersoll Ave, from 15th Street to 19th Street. While it is not possible to fully separate Sherman Hill and Oakridge census information and still provide valid estimates, it is useful to break down the differences between block groups. While the block group north of Center skews information for both Sherman Hill and Oakridge, the block group south of Center may be a fairly representative depiction of Sherman Hill as a whole.



Figure 2: Planning Area Census Blocks

The demographic data presented in this plan was extracted from a variety of data sources. The information was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2010-2014, 5-year Estimates for Polk County Census Tract 27, Block Groups 2 & 3. The 2010 Decennial Census was also used as a data source. All information specific to Oakridge was collected from the independent 2016 Oakridge Demographic Study and is presented here to help portray the varied conditions within the planning area.

The Sherman Hill neighborhood is one of the City's smallest neighborhoods at approximately three-tenths of a square mile, and Sherman Hill is also the City's most dense neighborhood outside of nearby downtown and the East Village. According to the 2010 Census, the total population of the planning area is 2,308. The area south of Center is home to 1,332 residents, and the area north of Center is home to 976 residents. With significant infill development having been constructed in recent years, the current population total and density are even greater today than they were just ten years ago. This trend of growth will continue for the foreseeable future.

with more construction on the horizon. The upcoming 2020 Census will be helpful to gain a better understanding of population growth in the Sherman Hill planning area. Managing this growth to make sure needs of current and future residents can be met will continue to be of high importance.

The planning area is more diverse in population than Des Moines as a whole, with the northern census block accounting for much of the diversity (see Figure 4). Overall, the planning area has a much higher percentage of Black residents, while the city has a larger percentage of residents who are Asian or of Latino/Hispanic ethnicity. Racial and ethnic diversity is often viewed as one cornerstone of a vibrant, urban neighborhood. In the planning area, much of the diversity is the result of the Oakridge population, where 96% of residents are non-white.

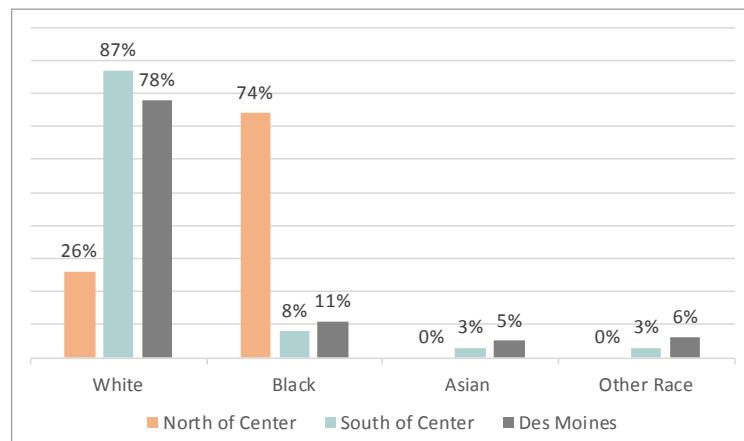


Figure 4: Planning Area Diversity  
(Source: US Census, American Community Survey)

Figure 5 compares the age cohorts within the planning area and the city of Des Moines. The planning area has a larger percentage of 20-39-year-old residents, while Des Moines has a larger percentage of residents over the age of 65. Younger, working age people are most likely to call Sherman Hill home. Oakridge neighborhood, with an average resident age of 22, also accounts for a large proportion of children under 14 years of age. In contrast, the area south of Center includes relatively few children.

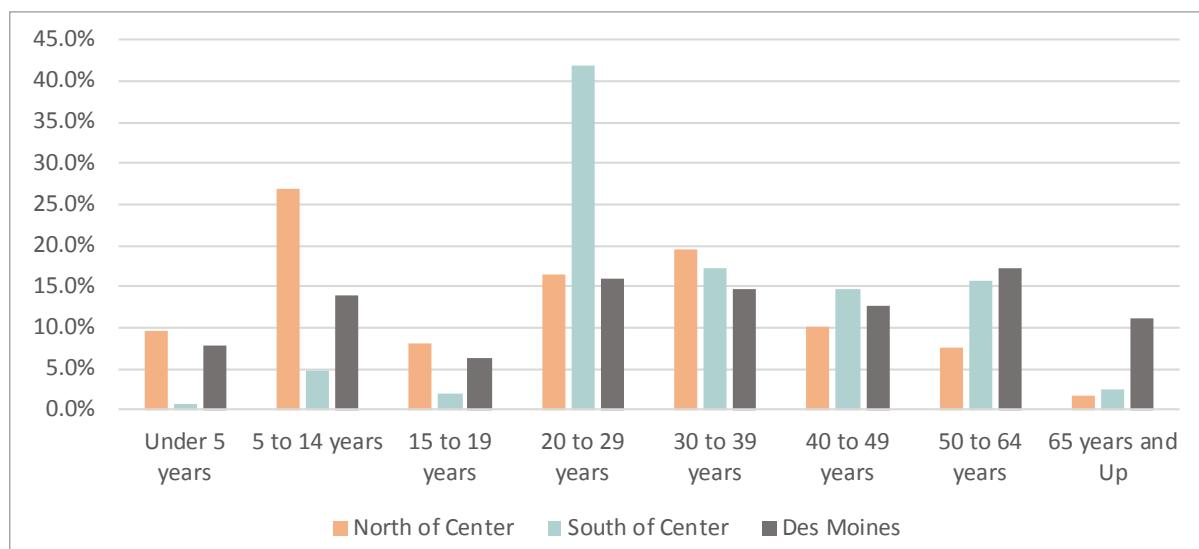


Figure 5: Planning Area Age Cohorts  
(Source: US Census, American Community Survey)

In 2014, the median income in the planning area was \$39,480. The median income in the area south of Center is \$44,741, which is slightly less than the city average of \$46,430. The median income north of Center is significantly less at \$19,608. This data skewed lower because of Oakridge, where the average household income is just \$17,526, and unemployment is high (46%). The unemployment rate in the planning area overall was approximately 5% lower than the estimated 8% unemployment rate for the city in 2014. The about-average median income factored with a low unemployment rate again points to a high percentage of young professionals living in the neighborhood.

Figure 6 shows how people living in the planning area and Des Moines get to and from work. The planning area has a relatively higher portion of residents who walk to work, bike to work, and work from home than the City as a whole. However, there is still a very large portion (70%) of residents in the planning area that drive alone to work.

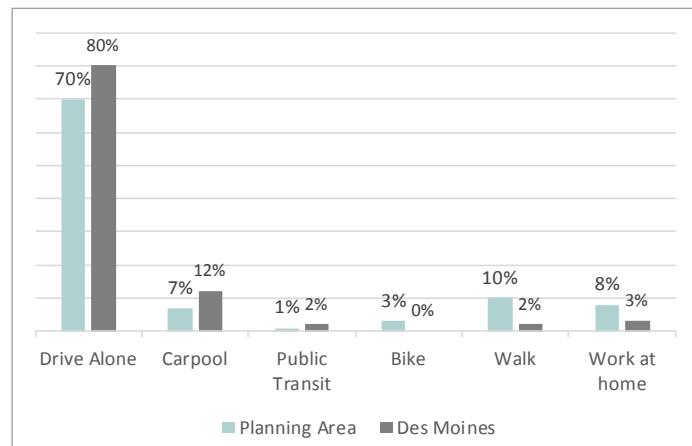


Figure 6: Modes of Transportation  
(Source: US Census, American Community Survey)

Sherman Hill benefits from a diverse housing stock. As illustrated in Figure 7, the planning area has more renter-occupied housing units than owner-occupied units. Including the 338 rental units at Oakridge, there are 896 rental units (84%) in the planning area and 174 owner-occupied units (16%). The city as a whole reports 61.7% of its housing units are owner-occupied. The larger percentage of renters is also reflected in the planning area's diversity of residential housing types relative to Des Moines. Figure 8 shows that while Des Moines' residential structures are approximately 66% single-family detached homes, only 14% of the planning area's residential units fall into that same category.

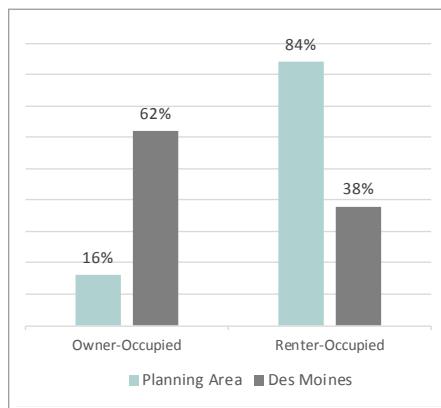


Figure 7: Renter and Owner-Occupied Housing Units (Source: US Census, American Community Survey)

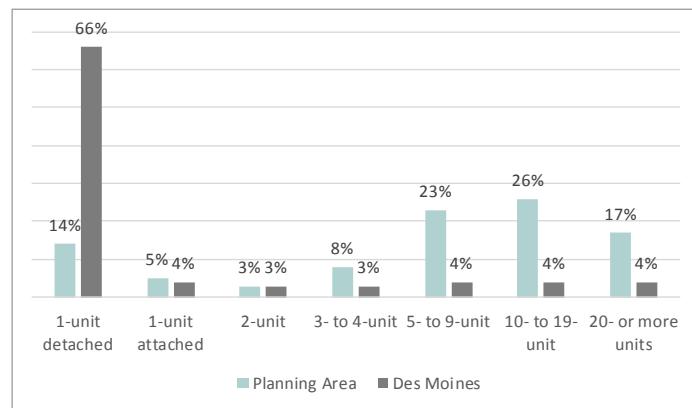


Figure 8: Residential Structures  
(Source: US Census, American Community Survey)

The planning area's housing units have an 82% occupancy rate, compared to the city's 91% occupancy rate (see Figure 9). The lower occupancy rate may be a reflection of the high percentage of rental units and the mobility of renters. The planning area also has a lower average monthly rent than Des Moines. Renters in the planning area pay an average of \$612 per month whereas the average rent for the city of Des Moines is \$734. The block group north of Center Street has a median rent of \$554. Again, this data is impacted significantly by Oakridge, where the median rent is \$202. The area south of Center Street has a median rent of \$714, which is likely indicative of rents throughout Sherman Hill, but remains below the city average. Conversely, the median home value in the planning area is \$160,348, which is 36% higher than the overall city median home value of \$117,600.

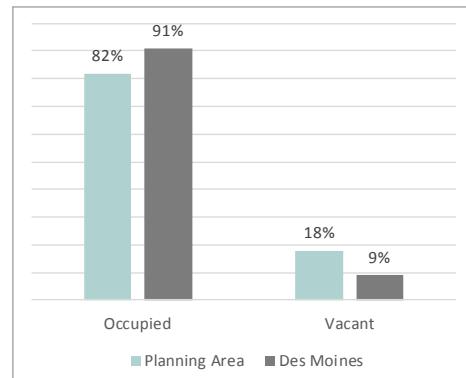


Figure 9: Occupancy Rate  
(Source: US Census, American Community Survey)

Several key take-aways can be drawn from this demographic analysis. While the demographic and socioeconomic differences between Sherman Hill and Oakridge are obvious, there are more subtle complexities within Sherman Hill that offer additional planning insight. The high concentration of young professionals in Sherman Hill is likely a result of two factors: the proximity to the re-energized downtown and Ingersoll Avenue corridor, and the large number of rental units currently available within Sherman Hill. Engaging a young, transient population can be challenging, but this population also offers many opportunities to support neighborhood events, activities, and venues that promote arts, culture, and recreation. Young renters are often future home-owners in an urban neighborhood. Continuing to plan and support multi-modal transportation options will also be important for the neighborhood with this population. While segments of the planning area may not be able to afford cars, millennials and younger generations have demonstrated an increasing desire to work from home and not to own cars.

With its wide diversity of housing options, Sherman Hill remains a highly desirable and affordable neighborhood for many. A market study may be warranted to better assess future housing needs as development continues, taking into consideration new housing units being planned or constructed both downtown and along the Ingersoll corridor. More research may also be needed to determine how the City and Sherman Hill can better attract and retain families in the area, especially those with children. Vibrant urban neighborhoods like Sherman Hill thrive by including amenities and opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds. This plan endeavors to assist Sherman Hill in its efforts to capitalize on its many assets and to identify potential barriers as it strives to become an even more inclusive and vibrant historic urban neighborhood in the future.

# Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District

Chapter 386 of the Iowa Code allows commercial and historic residential areas of Des Moines to create a Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) to increase capital funds for expenditures beyond what the City of Des Moines allots in their Capital Improvement Program (CIP). These funds can be applied toward physical improvement projects as well as marketing and branding activities.

The process for enacting a SSMID requires a petition with signatures from 25% of the property owners within the district. The petition is submitted to City Council and followed by public comment periods before City Council votes on whether to approve the new district. Once established, a SSMID levies a tax above the standard tax base with a maximum levy rate of \$3.50 per \$1000 assessed property value. SSMID-funded project must benefit all affected property owners.



Sherman Hill currently has two SSMIDs (Figure 10), which levy a tax of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in the district. From July 1, 1998 through June 30, 2018 the funds have been dedicated for the installation, maintenance, and utility usage of historic street lighting. In addition to the levied tax, Hoyt Sherman Place put forward a one-time contribution toward the cost of the new street lighting. The City of Des Moines also contributes an annual replacement credit, which is equal to the utility and maintenance of costs of the replaced lighting.

With these SSMIDs nearing expiration, residents are in the process of updating the neighborhood's capitol improvement district. The Sherman Hill SSMID board is planning to expand the breadth of projects to which this funding can be applied in order to finance some of the action items found later in this document.

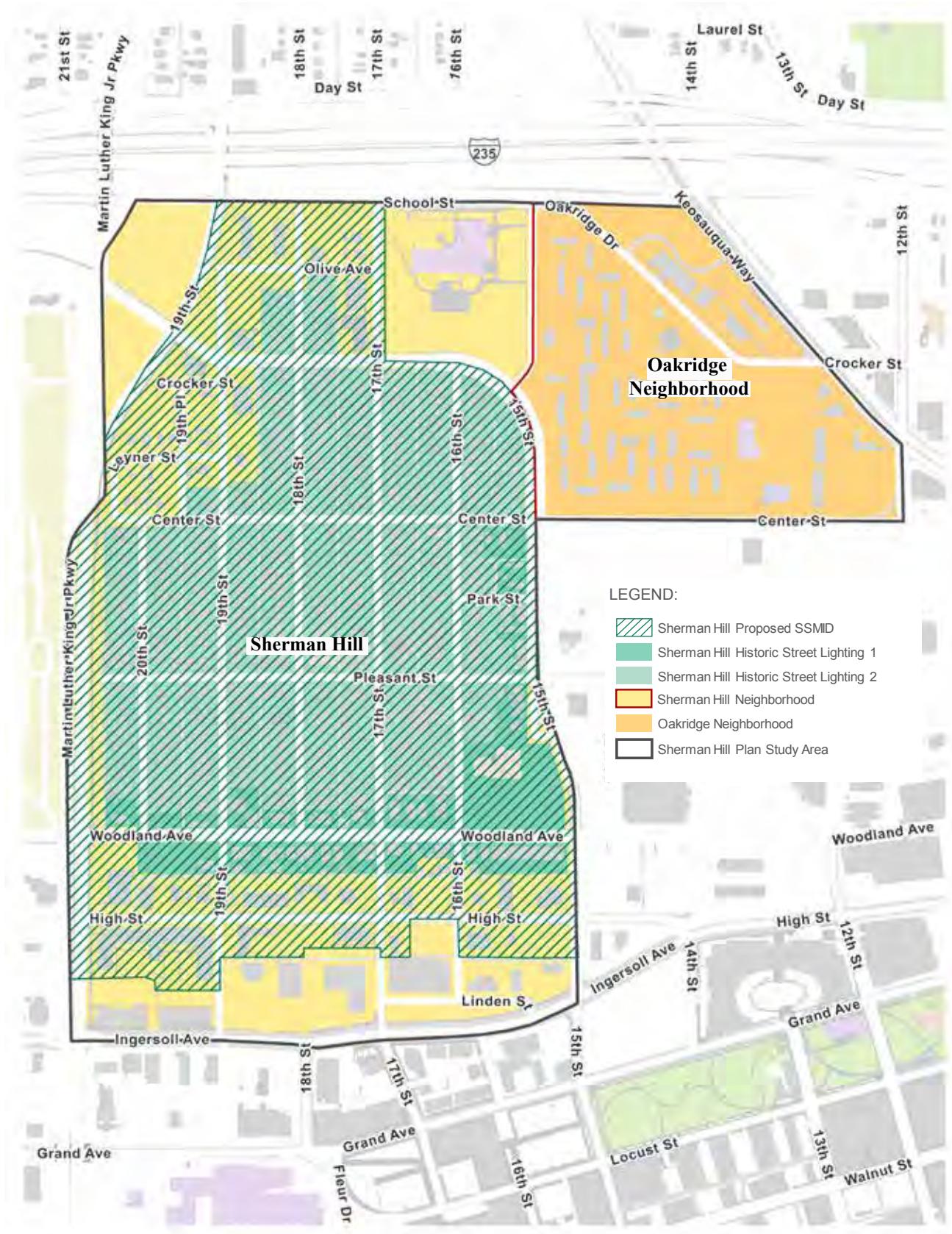


Figure 10: Sherman Hill SSMD District

# Land Use and Zoning

## RESIDENTIAL

In the planning area, there are a total of 1,311 residential properties as per the 2014 Census Data. Of the total, 246 units (19%) are single-family homes and 1065 units (81%) are multi-family; both single-family and multi-family housing are distributed throughout the planning area. Much of the residential housing stock in the neighborhood was built prior to the 1940's, attesting to the neighborhood's historic significance within Greater Des Moines.

The age of the housing stock is as follows: 774 units (59%) were built in 1939 or earlier; 125 units (10%) were built between 1940 and 1969; 217 units (17%) were built between 1970 and 1989; and 195 units (15%) were built between 2000 and present.

Due to the community's strong commitment to maintain the area's historic character, many structures within the neighborhood have undergone careful restoration over the past four decades.

## COMMERCIAL

There are a wide variety of commercial land uses in the Sherman Hill neighborhood. Currently, most significant commercial zoning exists in the southern portion of the neighborhood between Woodland and Ingersoll Avenues, the northwestern portion west of 17th St and north of Crocker St, and the eastern border along Keosauqua Way and north of Center St. Respectively, the southern portion contains zoning for general retail and highway-oriented commercial (C-2), Central Business District Commercial (C-3A), and Neighborhood Pedestrian Commercial (NPC), the northwestern contains both NPC and Commercial Residential, and the eastern portion only contains C-2. There are, however, many businesses and organizations scattered throughout the central residential part of the neighborhood, many located within neighborhood homes.

There are more than 45 organizations within the planning area, with around two-thirds (29) of them located within the commercial zones listed above, with the remainder scattered throughout the residential portions. Of the organizations identified, there are 16 service (dining, public services, etc.), 11 retail (grocers, shops, etc.), six religious, five arts, four medical, two community, and one uncategorized.

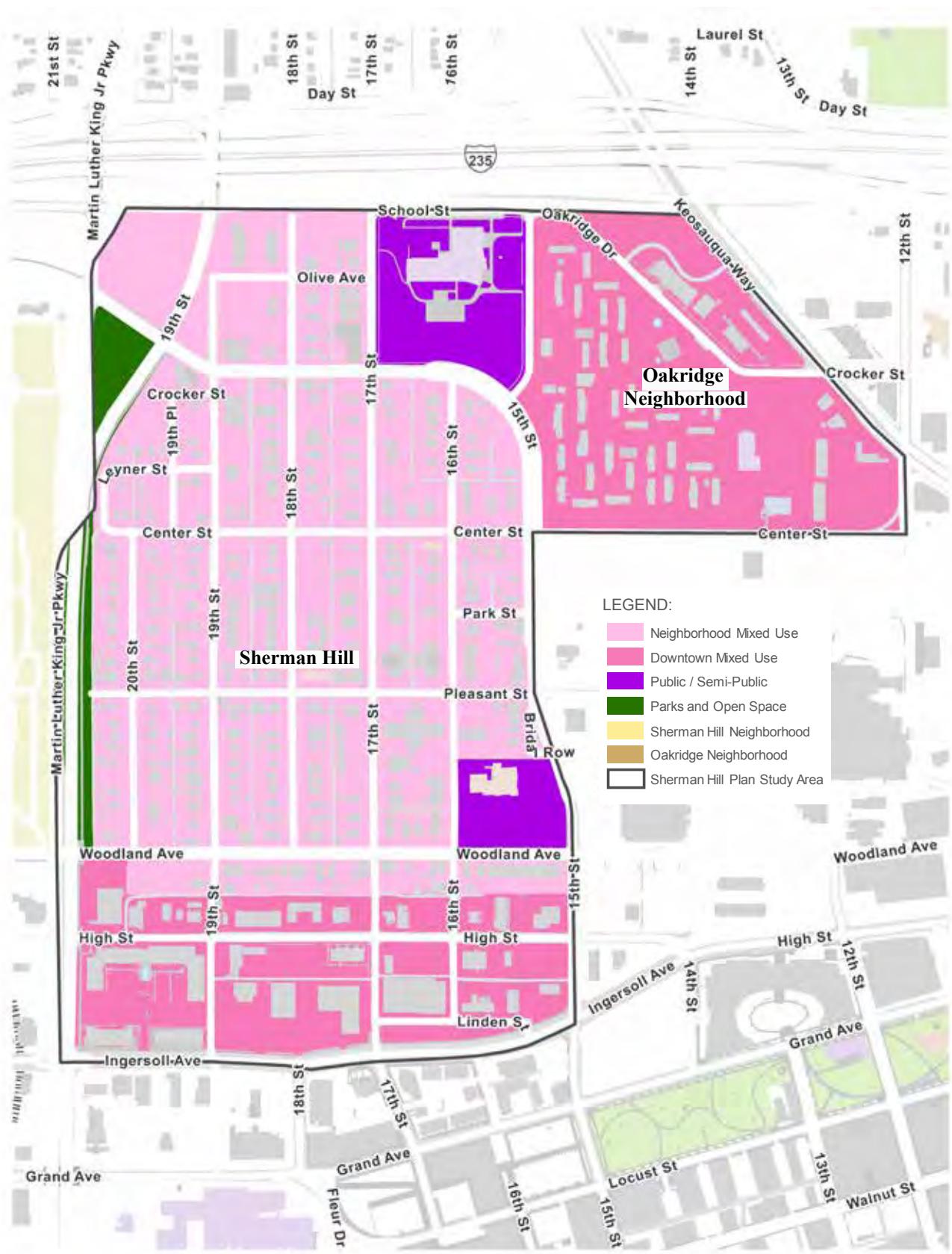


Figure 11: *Plan DSM* Future Land Use Map for the planning area.

# Historic Districts

The Sherman Hill neighborhood boundaries currently encompasses two historic districts: the National Historic District created in 1979 and the local historic district created in 1982. These districts highlight the historic and architectural importance of Sherman Hill to the Greater Des Moines region. To quote the National Register of Historic Places Nomination: “The Sherman Hill area is one of Des Moines’ oldest residential suburbs, and today contains the city’s highest concentration of late 19th and early 20th Century domestic architecture. Unlike other potential historic districts in Des Moines, particularly Terrace Hill and Owl’s Head, which are and have historically been more exclusive areas, Sherman Hill appears to have been from the earliest development a neighborhood open to a range of incomes -- as reflected in the variety of its building stock.”

Figure 12 shows the historic districts. The area colored in green encompasses the national district, while the hatched area outlines the the local district. Areas not included in either historic district include the Ingersoll Avenue commercial corridor and Edmunds Elementary. The local historic district designation helps to preserve the character of the community through design guidelines and materials requirements for rehabilitation projects, new construction, and fencing. Property owners taking advantage of historic tax credits, which are available to residential and commercial properties located within the historic districts, must also comply with Secretary of the Interior’s standards for updates. No historic structure can be demolished unless all alternative avenues have been explored.

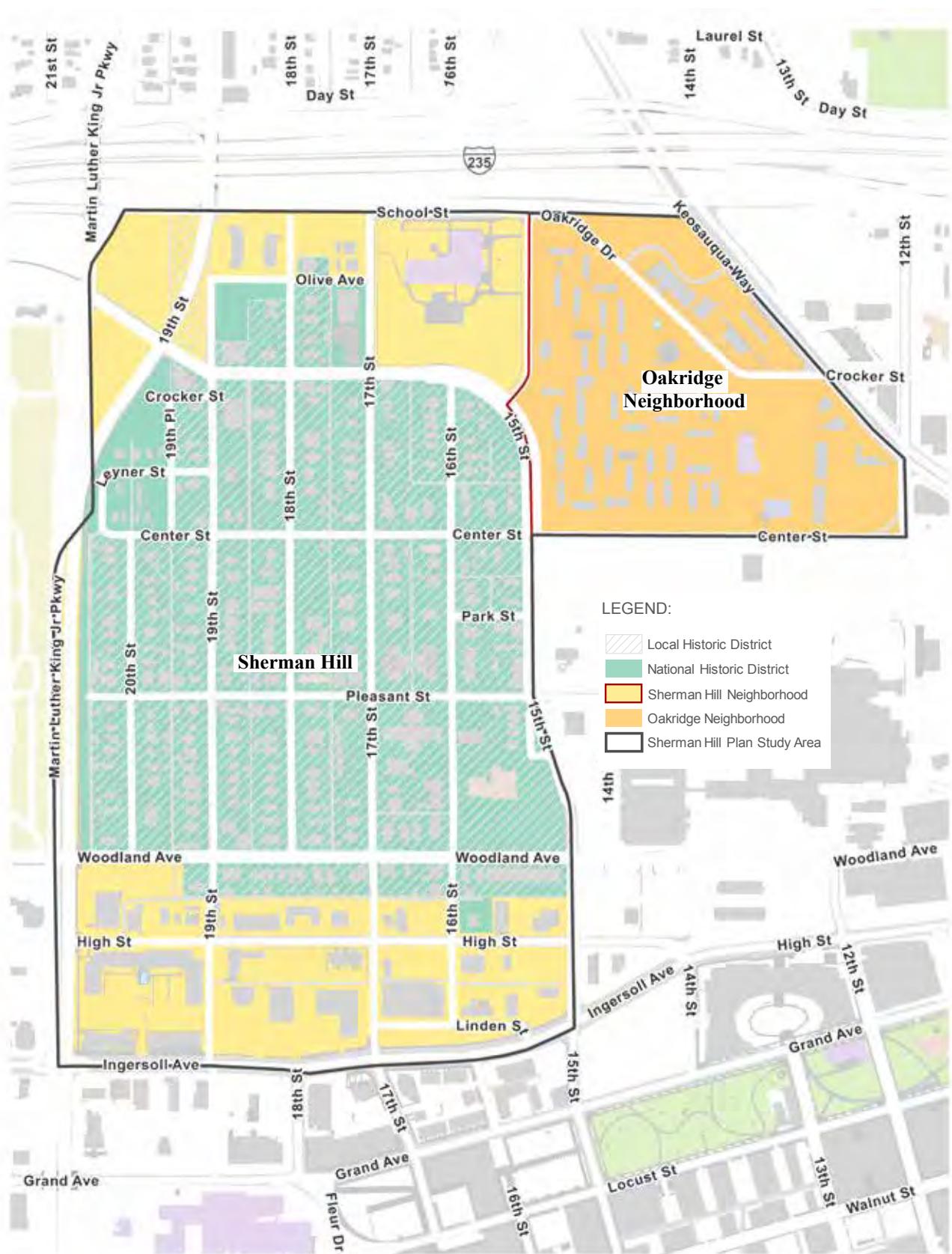


Figure 12: Sherman Hill Historic Districts

# The Planning Process

All neighborhood plans in Des Moines begin with a partnership between a designated neighborhood association and the City, and this plan was no exception. The aim of the neighborhood planning process is to extend outreach beyond the neighborhood association leadership, however, to engage the full range of voices of those affected by the neighborhood's well-being. This includes property owners and renters, long-time residents and newcomers, single person households and families with children, affluent households and those who are socially and economically marginalized, neighborhood businesses and organizations. The objective is to facilitate dialogue and information-sharing among all stakeholders, hopefully generating agreement on plan objectives and creating a clear path of action.

This type of engaged approach to planning requires reaching across differences such as age, race, ethnicity, national origin, language, sexual orientation, and household income and finding the shared interests and common concerns. This cannot be accomplished with a handful of public meetings. It means talking to property owners, business owners, service providers, and consumers of goods and services offered within the neighborhood. It requires research, outreach, and multiple conversations held in multiple venues.

The Sherman Hill planning process engaged a diverse body of stakeholders, united in their interest to maintain Sherman Hill's status as a thriving and desirable community in the heart of Des Moines and united in their need to work together to make that vision a reality. Face-to-face engagement resulted in 308 one-on-one conversations with neighborhood stakeholders and the combined attendance from formal meetings totaled 317 and included 111 community stakeholders representing 33 different businesses, public agencies, and neighborhood-serving organizations. As a result of the passion many residents felt about their neighborhood, the process was not smooth or easy, but participants remained engaged. The action items presented in this plan are a direct result of their hard work and dedication.

The Sherman Hill process began August 27, 2016 with a meeting that included the planning team and members of the SHA Board and ended on December 8, 2016 with a public presentation of the draft plan. It included three components: Neighborhood engagement, Steering Committee meetings, and outreach to Oakridge. These three elements integrated neighborhood residents, neighborhood users, and public agencies and service providers.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

During the three and a half month-long planning process, the planning team engaged the community through resident surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, workshops, stakeholder work sessions, and public meetings. They completed 157 door-to-door surveys with neighborhood residents, 65 surveys while canvassing community gathering locations, and held individual interviews with neighborhood leaders. Neighborhood residents also had the opportunity to participate in the planning process through monthly meetings with the SHA. Each meeting was held on a Thursday evening at a public venue in or directly adjacent to the neighborhood. The planning team used these meetings to update neighborhood residents about the progress of the planning process, present data, set priorities, and discuss issues of concern; however, they also used them as workshop sessions where participants provided feedback through interactive exercises.

Neighborhood/Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The City of Des Moines and the Department of Community and Regional at Planning Iowa State University are working together to help improve your neighborhood. Please take a minute to fill out this survey and tell us about the improvements you would like to see in the community where you live.

Check THREE neighborhood services from the list below that are most IMPORTANT to you (these may or may not currently be offered in your neighborhood):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime prevention                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Art and cultural events               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth leadership & engagement opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational programming              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community building                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health services                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming new neighbors                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Health clinics                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services for seniors                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with home maintenance and repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood development/preschool       | <input type="checkbox"/> Wifi or Internet access               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth programs                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list): _____            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Immigration services                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list): _____            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job training                                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support for local businesses                |  |

Check the THREE options from the list below that you think are the biggest PROBLEM for your neighborhood:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> How the neighborhood looks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant and abandoned properties              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The condition of neighborhood parks                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of affordable housing                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of green space   | <input type="checkbox"/> Crime and safety                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need more recreational/sports facilities                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of community gathering spaces           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The condition of infrastructure<br>(sidewalks, streets, curbs, sewer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment opportunities in the area         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic   | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of education in neighborhood schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle and pedestrian safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Activities for youth                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to public transportation                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support for neighborhood businesses  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alley upkeep  | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors who don't help each other out      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree maintenance on private property                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash and debris on streets and sidewalks    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing and properties in need of maintenance                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list): _____                   |

What neighborhood activities would you participate in or attend? (Check all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural events                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood clean up | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational events               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Night Out    | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming newcomers               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilding Together   | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood website/newsletter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movie in the park     | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood association meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jazz in July          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trash Pick-up day     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                     |

What are three STRENGTHS of your neighborhood?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are three WEAKNESSES of your neighborhood?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things you would like to see CHANGED in your neighborhood? (Be specific if possible)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in the neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware that there is a neighborhood association that represents your neighborhood?

- Yes     No

If you would like more information about upcoming events in your neighborhood including neighborhood association meetings, please provide us with your name and contact information:

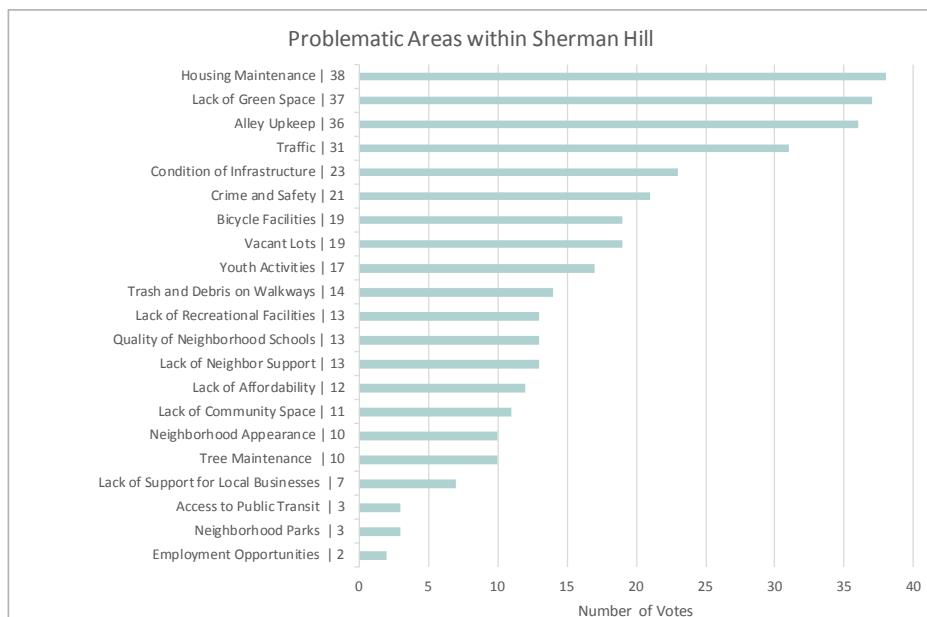
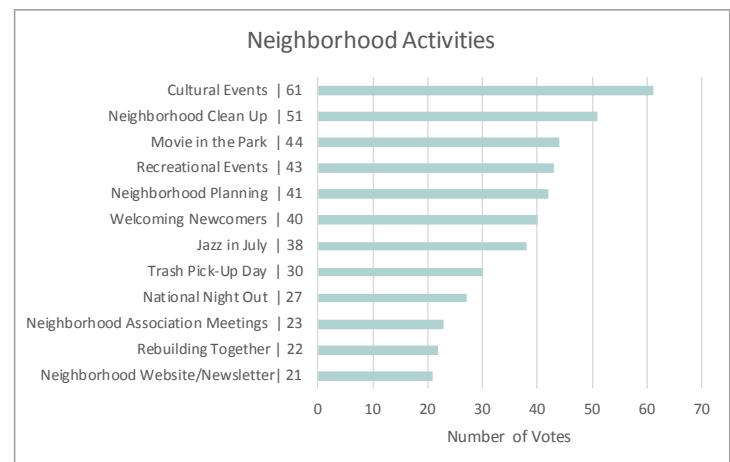
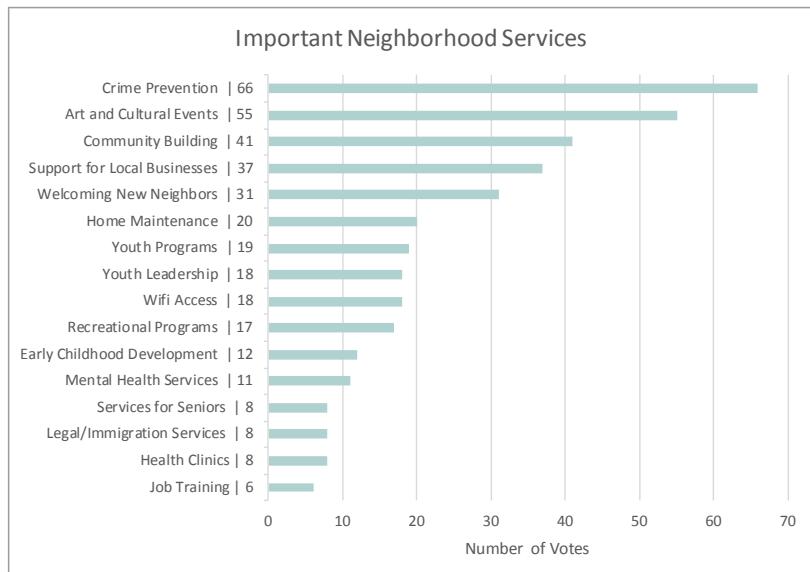
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU!!!

Neighborhood Survey, completed by 222 residents of Sherman Hill.



Neighborhood survey responses

## **STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE**

The planning process included a Steering Committee, also known as a stakeholder group. While some Steering Committee participants also participated in the monthly SHA meetings, the intent of the Steering Committee is different. These meetings brought stakeholders to the table to lend insight into neighborhood issues and to collaborate on potential action items, but more importantly to create a network of resources that would support the continued revitalization of the neighborhood.

Participants in Sherman Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Update Steering Committee included city staff, neighborhood residents, business and property owners within and adjacent to the neighborhood, and key non-profit organizations and service providers. This committee proved to be a diverse group of people, which added to the variety of perspectives, and therefore, more fully addressed the needs of the community.

The committee met four times. The first meeting identified three planning priorities areas for Sherman Hill. They were (1) cohesive community, (2) traffic and safety, and (3) growth and development. Each of the following meetings identified action items and potential resources related to one priority area. Over the course of these meetings, participants formed new partnerships, identified resources to address neighborhood concerns, and committed to the implementation of specific action items. This work was critical to the successful development of many of the plan's action items.

## **OAKRIDGE OUTREACH**

Because the Oakridge Neighborhood has a shared history with Sherman Hill, shares an elementary school with the neighborhood, and is located directly adjacent to the neighborhood, we engaged with Oakridge residents to build an understanding of where they go to carry out their daily rounds and how they use the infrastructure and city services that serve the neighborhood. The planning team approached this work with the goal of understanding how residents use and perceive both Oakridge and neighboring Sherman Hill.

Over the course of eight trips to Oakridge, the planning team conducted surveys, workshop activities, and small group meetings. They asked questions that explored residents' activities, skillsets, concerns, and use of city services. They also created activities that specifically engaged young people. Their outreach resulted in 74 completed surveys and 12 cognitive maps. While those who engaged with the planning team had important things to say about topics related to the Sherman Hill plan such as barriers to health services, bus access, and pedestrian safety, some of the issues they raised were outside the scope of this plan. A separate report highlighting Oakridge data is available in the Appendix.

# Neighborhood Priorities

The plan identifies five issue areas as priorities for the neighborhood. They include housing, aesthetics, transportation and safety, growth and development, and community cohesion. These issue areas draw from the neighborhood's strengths and assets as well as its challenges.



## Strengths

- Historic character
- Diversity of housing
- Resident dedication
- Proximity to downtown



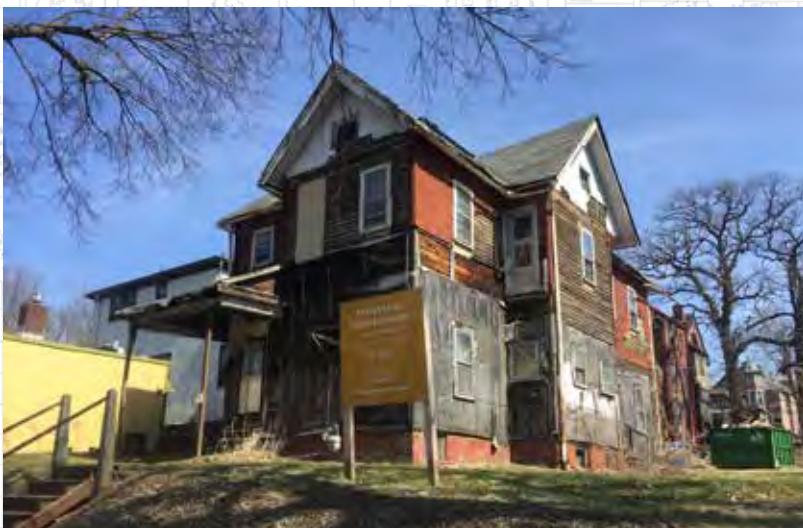
## Challenges

- Reaching out to new residents and businesses
- Communication between neighbors
- Downtown growth
- Increased traffic to downtown

The following section lists the five priority issue areas followed by action items, potential partners, and time frame for the issue areas. Each priority issue is further broken down into sub-areas, or strategies, with a list of action items. Each action item has been prioritized for implementation: "Short" indicate that an action item should be implemented within a year of the plan's approval, "Medium" indicates that the item should be implemented within two to five years, and items identified as "Long" should be implemented within five to ten years.

Finally, each action item has a partner or group of partners who are likely to be critical for implementation. These partners were often engaged in the planning process. They will help address the challenges listed above and help connect the neighborhood with the resources necessary for implementation. The Sherman Hill Association, working with residents of the Sherman Hill neighborhood as well as city staff, will provide guidance and support for implementation of the plan.

# Housing



# Priority Area: Housing

Sherman Hill is unlike any other part of the greater Des Moines area. The neighborhood is known for its tree lined streets and beautiful, historic homes. This historic character contributes to a sense of place and strengthens the overall appeal of the neighborhood; however, it is just one aspect of why housing matters in Sherman Hill. Residents speak highly of the historic nature of homes, the diversity of housing stock, the proximity to downtown, and the opportunities for families in the neighborhood. They are concerned about historic preservation, housing quality, housing affordability, and protections for renters.

Thriving urban neighborhoods include a diversity of housing types and take steps to maintain high quality units at different levels of affordability. Sherman Hill benefits from the diverse range of housing options that are available in the neighborhood. Since the implementation of the neighborhood's last plan began, new construction of multifamily dwellings has taken place along the peripheries of the neighborhood, a number of subdivided homes have been restored to single-family dwellings, and historic homes have been relocated to Sherman Hill from other parts of the city. Although home values have continued to increase in Sherman Hill at rates higher than the city as a whole, the larger than average stock of rental units and the proximity of Oakridge have protected the affordability of the neighborhood as well. Today, Sherman Hill is a community where young professionals just starting their careers can find low cost apartments with desirable amenities, a family can find a home where property values will continue to grow over time, and a senior citizen with a fixed income can find an affordable unit in a secure building.

The housing issue area includes three sub-areas: (1) promote diverse, high quality housing; (2) education; and (3) tools and networks.

## **Objective Statement:**

*Preserve the historic character of the neighborhood while improving existing housing stock through rehabilitation, repair, and development in order to maintain the neighborhood as an attractive place to live for a diverse array of people and families.*

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Promote High Quality Housing</b>	Support development of, and access to, quality housing affordable to all income levels.	SHA, City of Des Moines Community Development	Long
	Provide trainings for landlords and renters on landlord responsibilities and tenant rights	SHA, Legal Aid, Iowa Landlord Association, Oakridge Neighborhood	Short
	Hold an annual weatherization drive	Green Iowa AmeriCorps, Habitat for Humanity, City of Des Moines, MidAmerican Energy, SHA, Des Moines Rehabbers Club	Short
<b>Education</b>	Partner with preservation-focused groups such as the Des Moines Rehabbers Club to provide maintenance workshops.	SHA, Historic Preservation Commission, Rehabbers Club	Long
	Distribute historic design guidelines – including those for rehabilitation, new construction, and fences- to new residents, realtors, and potential developers. Include guidelines on SHA and City websites.	SHA, City of Des Moines Community Development, Historic Preservation Commission	Short
	Provide educational programs for property owners on existing historic preservation requirements, historic rehabilitation tax credits, and historic neighborhood design guidelines.	SHA, City of Des Moines Community Development, Historic Preservation Commission, State Historic Preservation Office	Medium
	Hold workshops for first time homebuyers or potential homebuyers about the lending process and how to establish a credit history.	SHA, Neighborhood Finance Corporation, Neighborhood Investment Corporation	Medium
<b>Tools and Networks</b>	Add a rehabilitation resource directory to the Sherman Hill Association website.	SHA, Neighborhood Investment Corporation	Short
	Work with existing trade apprenticeship programs to promote historic preservation and maintenance.	SHA, Central Academy, DMACC, Building Trade unions	Medium
	Establish tool and resource library and/or network for rehabilitation work.	SHA, The Kathedral, Habitat for Humanity	Medium

# Infrastructure & Aesthetics



# Priority Area: Infrastructure & Aesthetics

The residents of Sherman Hill value the visual appeal of their neighborhood. The historic streetlights, converted vacant lots, and unique garden spaces contribute beauty, but also bring people together. Social capital in a neighborhood is fostered through the development of physical connections that provide opportunities for people to encounter one another and build a shared identity. This type of infrastructure provides physical and aesthetic connections for the community.

Sherman Hill benefits from its proximity to downtown and the walkability of the neighborhood. A higher percentage of residents in Sherman Hill walk or use bikes to get to work than any other part of the city outside of downtown. As a result, a complete street and sidewalk network is essential for neighborhood well-being. Improved landscaping would contribute to the aesthetics of the neighborhood, but also contribute to traffic calming and pedestrian safety.

Physical infrastructure can also contribute to community character. Many residents value the historic streetlights and the brick sidewalks and alleyways of the neighborhood. Infrastructure can also define a neighborhood, providing a visual identity through gateways and boundaries that indicate that this part of the city is unique, for example, the masonry wall along Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway which creates the western boundary of Sherman Hill. Adding playspaces or additional greenspaces to the neighborhood would benefit neighborhood residents and add a uniquely Sherman Hill space to the parks portfolio of Des Moines. The aesthetics issue area includes three subareas: (1) street and sidewalk improvements; (2) beautification; and (3) gateways, boundaries, and playspaces.

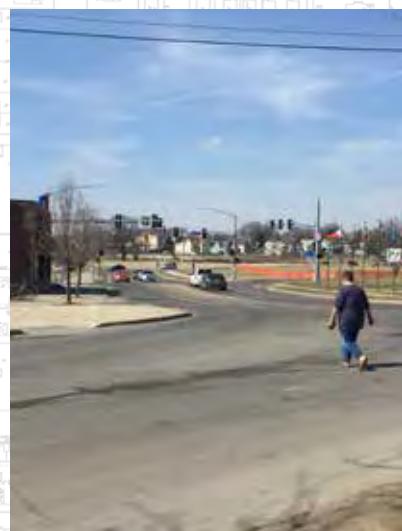
## **Objective Statement:**

Foster social capital, sense of place, and livability in Sherman Hill through infrastructure and aesthetic improvements.

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Street and Sidewalk Improvements</b>	Participate in the Adopt-A-Street program to address street appearance issues including litter, alley maintenance and plantings on Crocker and 15th.	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood, City of Des Moines Public Works and Parks & Recreation	Short
	Inspect sidewalks for continuity and condition; remediate any missing or problem areas.	City of Des Moines, Property owners	Medium
	Work with the City of Des Moines to develop policies to preserve brick sidewalks and alleys.	SHA, City of Des Moines	Short
	Investigate and address water pooling issues on the streets between Center and Woodland.	SHA, City of Des Moines Public Works	Medium
	Extend boulevard and tree plantings on Crocker.	City of Des Moines	Long
<b>Beautification</b>	Enhance landscape buffers around parking lots.	SHA, City of Des Moines, Property owners	Short
	Coordinate with the City of Des Moines to promote SCRUB events and notify residents of opportunities to dispose of debris and yard waste.	SHA, City of Des Moines Public Works and Neighborhood Inspection Division	Short
	Develop new banner program for Historic streetlights.	SHA, Sherman Hill SSMID Board	Medium
<b>Gateways, Boundaries, and Playspaces</b>	Create neighborhood gateways that include monument signage and greenery at key neighborhood entrance points.	SHA, City of Des Moines Community Development, Historic Preservation Commission	Long
	Continue expansion of wall along Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway to improve noise barrier and aesthetics from Center to Leyner.	SHA, City of Des Moines, Iowa Department of Transportation, local businesses	Long
	Remove chain link fences obstructing access to UnityPoint and Edmunds Elementary.	UnityPoint, Oakridge Neighborhood, SHA, Des Moines Public Schools	Short
	Have the open spaces and playspaces at Edmunds Elementary designated as public parks, and enhance their connectivity to the neighborhood.	Des Moines Public Schools, City of Des Moines Parks & Recreation, SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood	Short

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	Create a friends group to the spearhead creation, programming, and maintenance of a neighborhood park at Edmunds Elementary School.	SHA, City of Des Moines Parks & Recreation, Oakridge Neighborhood, The Kathedral, Willkie House	Medium
	Ensure that the parcels known as the Rectangle, Square, and Triangle parcels remain dedicated to public use. (Figure 1 )	SHA, The Kathedral, Oakridge Neighborhood, City of Des Moines Community Development, City of Des Moines Parks & Recreation	Long

# Transportation & Safety



# Priority Area: Transportation & Safety

Sherman Hill is a compact, walkable neighborhood with easy access to many of the city's amenities. For residents, this means short distances and easy commutes to the places where they work, live, and play; but it also means undesirable traffic and congestion on many neighborhood streets. Safety can be a concern as bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians struggle to share the roads. Finally, due to the dense nature of this urban neighborhood, the lack of garages, the high proportion of multi-unit housing, and the number of commercial and retail businesses, parking is often an issue.

Businesses such as Smokey Row, Gateway, and Ancient Ways are critical to the character of the community and a source of neighborhood pride. However, as businesses in the neighborhood grow and development continues to occur around the periphery, traffic concerns grow as well. Residents want to protect the walkability of their community, ensuring that people walking to work, families taking an evening stroll, and children walking to school have safe passage and pleasant walkways.

In 2008, the City of Des Moines adopted a complete streets policy to ensure that streets are not only planned to accommodate those in an automobile, but that the transportation needs of all people are considered, no matter their age or mode of transportation. A street becomes complete when it meets the needs of all users. Such an approach requires planning and design that keeps people and not just cars in mind. Being near the hub of public transportation in Des Moines, the Sherman Hill neighborhood has an opportunity to promote transportation options beyond cars by enhancing multimodal transportation opportunities. Multimodal refers to transportation planning that accounts for more options than cars and also considers the connections between these modes of transport. In Sherman Hill, the possibilities in this area could include improving bus shelters, adding B-Cycle stations and bike routes through the neighborhood, and redesigning major arterials to function as complete streets.

The transportation issue area includes four subareas: (1) traffic; (2) parking; (3) walkability; and (4) multimodal transportation.

## **Objective Statement:**

To improve transportation options while providing safe and efficient passage for all people utilizing any mode of transportation

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Traffic</b>	Participate in City of Des Moines Transportation Master Plan's planning process and public meetings in upcoming months.	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood	Short
	Coordinate with the City to conduct speed and traffic studies along 15th, Crocker, and Woodland.	City of Des Moines, Iowa Dept of Transportation, Des Moines Police Department	Medium
	Coordinate with the city to identify opportunities for traffic calming in the neighborhood, especially along 15th, Crocker, and Woodland	City of Des Moines, Iowa Dept of Transportation, Des Moines Police Department	Long
	Consider alternative designs for crosswalks to promote traffic calming and pedestrian safety.	SHA, City of Des Moines, Oakridge Neighborhood, Des Moines Area MPO	Long
<b>Parking</b>	As future development occurs or is planned, study impact on parking options within the neighborhood, especially near neighborhood activity hubs.	UnityPoint, City of Des Moines, Oakridge Neighborhood, Kum & Go, Hoyt Sherman, SHA	Short
	Work with local businesses to study and evaluate ways to alleviate parking congestion on neighborhood streets.	SHA, Gateway Market, Smokey Row	
	Consider implementation of parking permits on residential streets, with emphasis on 19th Street and 20th Street north of Woodland.	City of Des Moines	Medium
	Utilize opportunities for shared parking with Unity Point and future peripheral developments.	UnityPoint, Kum & Go, SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood	Medium
<b>Walkability</b>	Improve pedestrian infrastructure along Crocker Street.	City of Des Moines	Short
	Participate in Connect Downtown public input period and integrate ideas and concepts.	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood, City of Des Moines	Short
	Improve crosswalks at school crossings.	City of Des Moines, Des Moines Area MPO, Iowa DOT, Des Moines Public Schools, Oakridge Neighborhood	Medium

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	Work with the City of Des Moines to implement the Safe Routes to School Program at Edmunds Elementary	City of Des Moines, Iowa Bicycle Coalition, Des Moines Area MPO, Iowa DOT, ISU Extension, Des Moines Public Schools	Medium
	Evaluate pedestrian crossing times at MLK Jr. Parkway, Ingersoll Avenue, & Keosauqua Way to ensure safe passage.	City of Des Moines	Medium
	Improve major pedestrian crossings in the neighborhood.	City of Des Moines, SHA Oakridge Neighborhood	Long
<b>Multimodal Transportation</b>	Participate in DART Forward 2035 public meetings and incorporate their recommendations into the neighborhood plan.	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood, DART	Short
	Support the City of Des Moines' Bicycle and Trail Plan's bike lane implementation throughout the planning area, beginning with Crocker.	SHA, City of Des Moines, Des Moines Bicycle Collective, Des Moines Area MPO	Medium
	Evaluate the need for bus shelters throughout the neighborhood, with special consideration for adding a shelter to the bus stop on 15th Street and Center Street.	SHA, DART, SSMID	Medium
	Encourage local employers to provide incentives for employees to use alternative modes of transportation, including participating in DART's Employer Support Program.	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood, Local employers, DART, Downtown businesses	Medium
	Expand access to alternative forms of travel (e.g. bike racks, park-and-rides, bike and car-share stations) for employees, neighborhood visitors, and residents.	City of Des Moines, DART, Des Moines Bicycle Collective, Downtown businesses	Long
	Implement complete streets throughout planning area, beginning with 15th and Crocker.	City of Des Moines, Des Moines Area MPO	Long
	Evaluate intersection visibility, safety, and design solutions at 15th, Woodland, 19th, 20th, Crocker, and High.	SHA, City of Des Moines, DART, Des Moines Bicycle Collective, Des Moines Public Works	Long

# Growth & Development



# Priority Area: Growth & Development

Supporting local businesses is a priority for the residents of Sherman Hill. The economic expansion of the downtown area presents the potential to increase economic activity within the neighborhood. Increased traffic, if properly planned for, can provide an opportunity for local businesses through increased exposure and an expanded customer base. While neighborhood businesses serve many of the community's needs, there is room for growth. Increased support for entrepreneurs and new business development would contribute to the cultural vibrancy and economic health of the neighborhood and increase access to essential goods and services for all residents.

Peripheral development offers another set of opportunities and challenges for the neighborhood. Both Sherman Hill and the City of Des Moines have grown in population over the last 15 years. In response to this growth, there has been a push for redevelopment and revitalization in and around downtown Des Moines. New development and redevelopment surrounding the Western Gateway Park in particular has created pressure on the Sherman Hill neighborhood as has the presence of many large downtown employers near the eastern edges of the neighborhood, such as UnityPoint and the future Kum & Go corporate campus. Open communication between the city and developers and the SHA, Sherman Hill residents, and the Oakridge Neighborhood is essential to ensure that all parties are considered as this area continues to grow.

New development and growth both within and adjacent to the neighborhood should enhance the community character. Infill on vacant or underutilized properties and the relocation of historic buildings from elsewhere in Des Moines provide opportunities for preservation-oriented development within the neighborhood. Peripheral development should be designed with the neighborhood's historic character in mind, providing an interesting and deliberate transition from the historic character of Sherman Hill to surrounding areas.

The growth and development issue area includes three subareas: (1) economic development; (2) peripheral development; and (3) infill development.

## **Objective Statement:**

To promote sustainable and historically compatible development and growth, within and surrounding the neighborhood.

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>	Work with the Greater Des Moines Partnership to update their directory of businesses to include neighborhood businesses and link to the directory on the SHA webpage.	SHA, West Side Chamber, Greater Des Moines Partnership	Short
	Create and promote a “Shop Sherman Hill day.” Encourage local businesses to offer special promotions and foster interaction among neighborhood residents as part of this campaign.	SHA, West Side Chamber, Smokey Row, Gateway Market, other local businesses	Short
	Establish a business incubator program to support emerging entrepreneurs, especially minority and low-income entrepreneurs.	Oakridge Neighborhood, Neighborhood Investment Corp, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Solidarity Microfinance, DMACC, Polk County, Wallace Centers of Iowa	Short
	Identify opportunities to create temporary pop-up retail and market spaces for established and new entrepreneurs in underutilized properties such as parking lots and vacant buildings	SHA, City of Des Moines, Solidarity Microfinance, Oakridge Neighborhood	Medium
	Sponsor pop-up galleries and rotating displays of featured artists in neighborhood businesses and storefronts.	SHA, Metro Arts, Smokey Row, the Kathedral, Hoyt Sherman Place, Mainframe Studios, Gateway Market	Short
<b>Peripheral Development</b>	Invite local businesses and organizations to advise/serve on the SHA Board, and request SHA representation in return.	SHA, Neighborhood businesses and organizations	Short
	Work with the City of Des Moines to develop design standards and form-based code for peripheral development south of Woodland, north of 15th and Crocker, and west of 20th. These standards should be sensitive to Sherman Hill’s community character.	SHA, City of Des Moines Community Development, Historic Preservation Commission	Short
	Maintain communication with developers and property owners regarding the progress of nearby new developments and their potential impacts on the neighborhood.	SHA, Kum & Go, relevant development teams and property owners, Historic Preservation Commission.	Long

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Infill Development</b>	Attend City meetings to offer input on proposed Form-based code and design guidelines	SHA	Short
	Engage with local developers to explore infill concepts that are consistent with the community character, such as relocating homes into the neighborhood or adaptive reuse of vacant structures.	SHA, City of Des Moines Community Development, Developers	Medium

# Community Cohesion



# Priority Area: Community Cohesion

Sherman Hill has existed as a residential community in the heart of Des Moines for well over a century. During this time, a broad range of diverse populations have called Sherman Hill home as demographics in the city and the neighborhood have shifted and changed. As the areas immediately surrounding Sherman Hill continue to grow, the neighborhood will likely continue to change. Diversity provides strength and resilience to a community, but it can also create challenges for community cohesion as established residents struggle to understand and build connections to their new neighbors. Building stronger community networks fosters communication among residents, neighbors, developers, stakeholders and businesses. It builds a stronger community.

The long history and high capacity of SHA makes it an important presence in Sherman Hill. Members often care deeply about the neighborhood, contributing volunteer hours and other resources to make the organization and its events successful. Despite the many successes of SHA, at least a quarter of the people surveyed were unaware that it existed, while others had been active in the past, but stepped away in more recent years. Continuing to strengthen and develop SHA and expand its membership will help assure that this critical Sherman Hill institution stays relevant well into the future.

Community programs provide opportunities for residents to interact in the community that they share, building connections to each other and to the place they call home. They can engage youth, identify community needs, and improve neighborhood capacity. SHA currently sponsors a number of beloved and successful community programs such as Halloween on the Hill and Doors on the Past. Joining with new partners will make it possible to expand that programming both to build on the success of current events connected to the historic character of the community and to meet the needs of Sherman Hills' expanding and changing population.

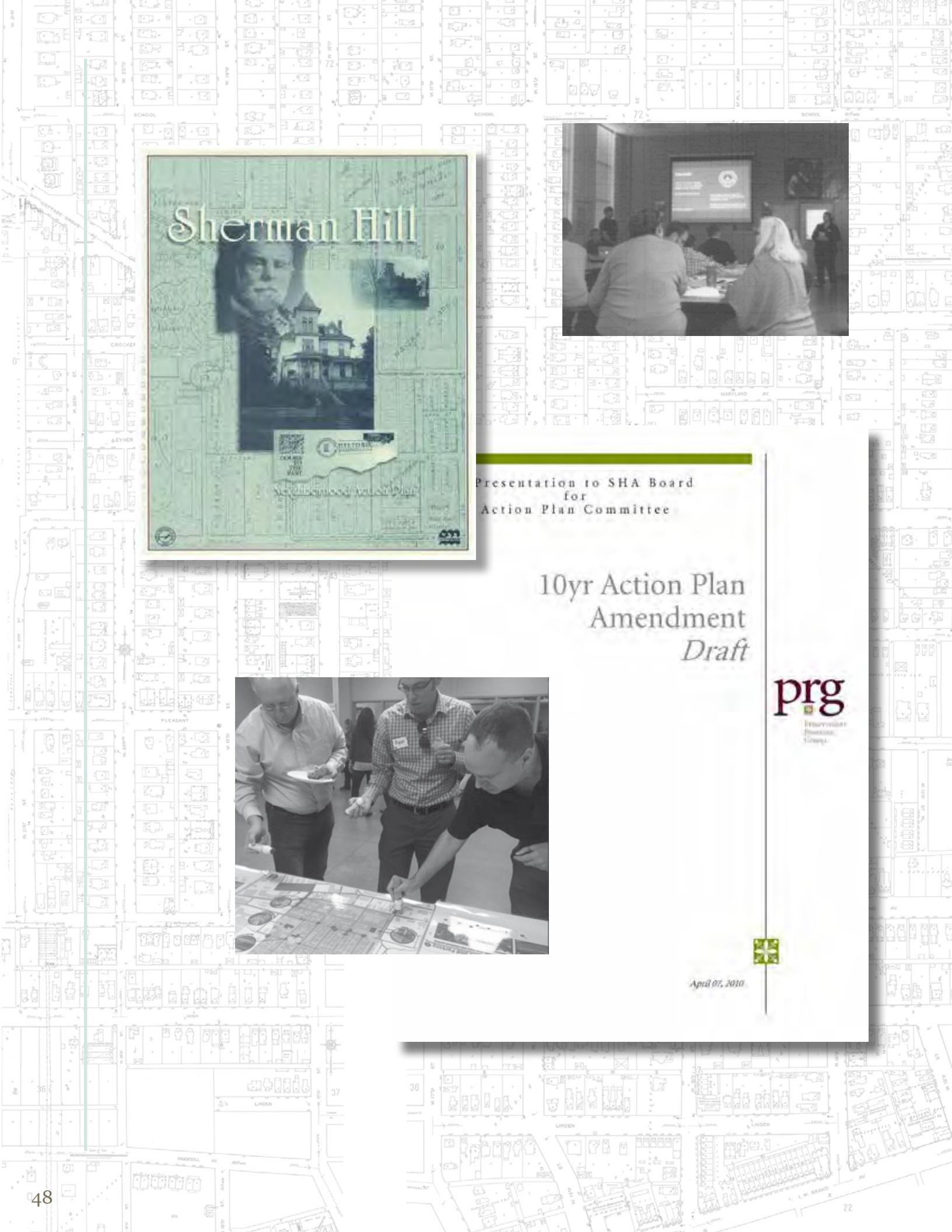
The community cohesion issue area includes three subareas: (1) enhance community networks; (2) strengthen SHA; and (3) support community programming.

## **Objective Statement:**

Sustain and expand a positive neighborhood environment in which all residents and visitors to the neighborhood feel included, valued, and encouraged to participate in neighborhood life.

Subarea	Action Items	Partners	Timeline
<b>Enhance Community Networks</b>	<p>Create multilingual welcome packets that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherman Hill history</li> <li>• SHA membership information</li> <li>• Local businesses information</li> <li>• Neighborhood Based Service Delivery police information</li> <li>• Historic District design guidelines</li> <li>• Tenant rights information</li> <li>• City and community services, including adult education</li> </ul>	SHA, Landlords, Realtors	Medium
	Encourage SHA members to serve as mentors or volunteer at Edmunds Elementary School.	SHA, Edmunds Elementary School, The Kathedral	Short
	Host regular social meetings with business and community organizations that focus on community development and building partnerships.	SHA, West Side Chamber, Neighborhood businesses, Neighborhood service providers	Short
<b>Strengthen SHA</b>	Create a committee responsible for welcoming new residents, businesses, and prospective developers; and distributing multilingual welcome packets.	SHA	Short
	Broaden the range of represented groups at SHA quarterly meetings by actively recruiting and including each of the following groups: homeowners, renters, neighborhood businesses, and other neighborhood organizations.	SHA	Medium
	Dedicate one SHA Board position to a representative of Oakridge	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood	Short
<b>Support Community Programming</b>	Continue to support and promote Halloween on the Hill, Doors to the Past, and other social activities.	SHA, Local businesses	Short
	Support and maintain a unified Neighborhood Based Service Delivery district that includes both Sherman Hill and Oakridge.	City of Des Moines Police Department, SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood	Short

Subarea	Action Items	Partners	Timeline
<b>Support Community Programming, cont.</b>	Expand existing recreation leagues and facilities to serve Sherman Hill and Oakridge.	SHA, City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation, Oakridge Neighborhood, Edmunds Elementary School, Willkie House	Short
	Support and promote a community needs health assessment that includes both Sherman Hill and the Oakridge Neighborhood.	SHA, Oakridge Neighborhood, UnityPoint, Drake University	Medium



# Implementation

The implementation of this plan will require continued collaboration among multiple partners including the City of Des Moines, SHA, neighborhood residents, local businesses, community stakeholders, and other organizations. In particular, the implementation process will require the engagement of key stakeholders, such as Oakridge Neighborhood, the Kathedral, Edmunds Elementary, Hoyt Sherman Place, UnityPoint, Gateway Market, Smokey Row, and Kum & Go.

In order for the plan to be most effective, implementation will require:

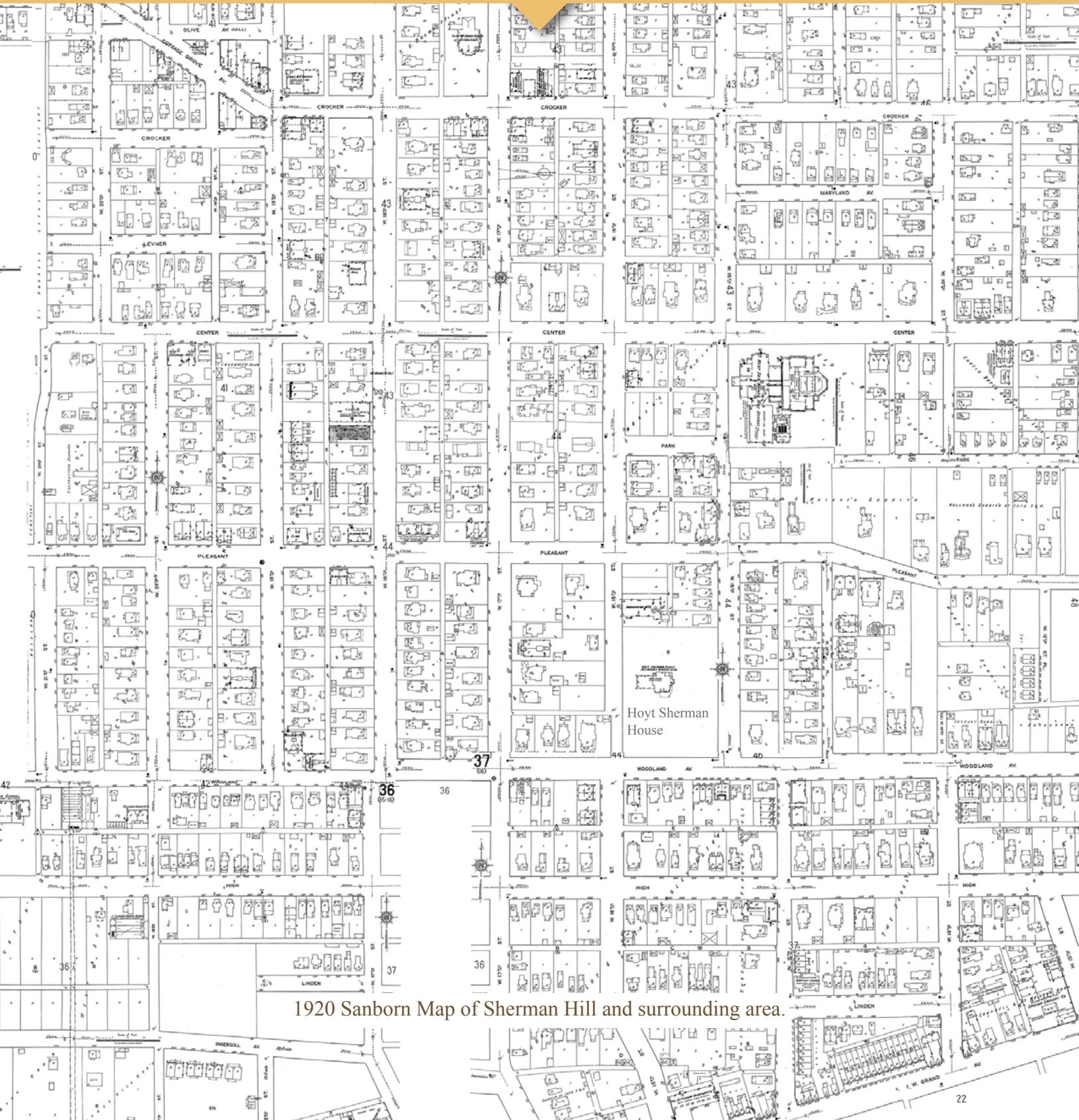
1. Capacity building within the Sherman Hill Association and among residents of Sherman Hill.
2. Integration of broad-based resident participation throughout the implementation of action items.
3. Effective communication between the SHA and residents of Sherman Hill, the City of Des Moines, and other partners and stakeholders.
4. Opportunities for building relationships across differences and developing a sense of a shared future among diverse stakeholders.
5. Technical assistance and financial support from the City of Des Moines.
6. Partnerships between the neighborhood and other stakeholders including community businesses and nonprofits.

This plan is intended to serve as a guiding document and also as a reference point for addressing the specific needs of the residents of Sherman Hill. The action steps set forth in this plan, if implemented collaboratively and in a timely manner, will aid in preserving the historic character of Sherman Hill and in fostering a cohesive, vibrant urban community. Progress will require strong leadership, particularly within the SHA. It is possible that not all action steps within the plan will be feasible as conditions in the city and the neighborhood change over the next decade. Ongoing assessment and adjustments are a necessary part of implementation. SHA and staff from the City of Des Moines will cooperate in monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation process and making adjustments to the plan as needed.

## CONCLUSION

Through a collaborative, inclusive, and participatory process, the 2017 Sherman Hill Neighborhood Plan has combined the opinions, needs, and concerns of neighborhood residents, businesses, and other stakeholders into a shared vision of a common future and a pathway for action. The process confirmed what many already knew: that the SHA, the residents of Sherman Hill, and other community stakeholders have a strong desire to continually improve on the neighborhood's strengths. Sherman Hill will strive to maintain and promote its historic heritage and contribution to the City of Des Moines while simultaneously working to incorporate elements of community cohesiveness and inclusion in its future planning and development. As Des Moines confronts change, Sherman Hill will aim to meet the demands of a changing community, aspiring to retain its historic significance and character while working to improve the quality of life of its diverse array of residents.

# Appendix



1920 Sanborn Map of Sherman Hill and surrounding area.

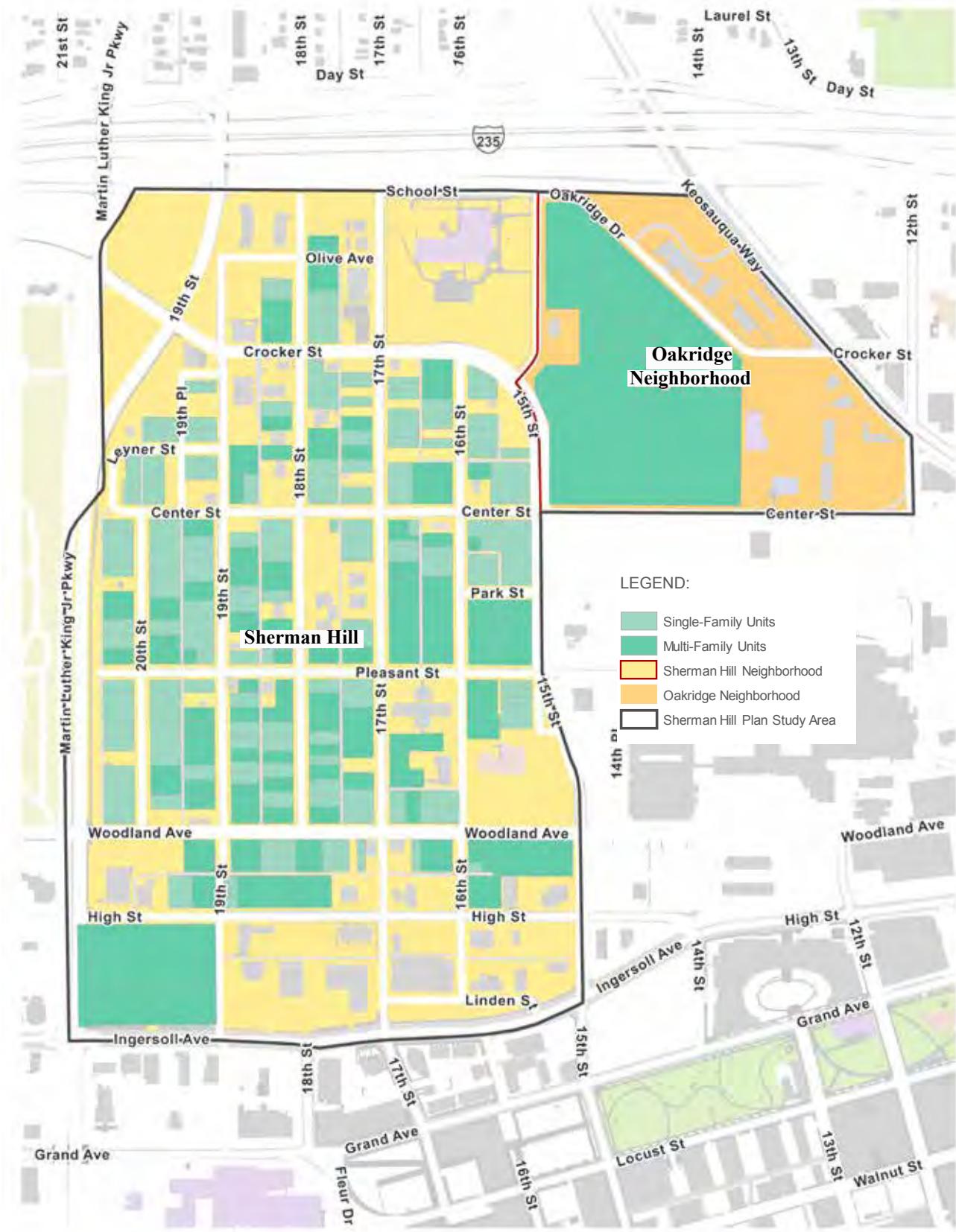


Figure 13: Residential Units

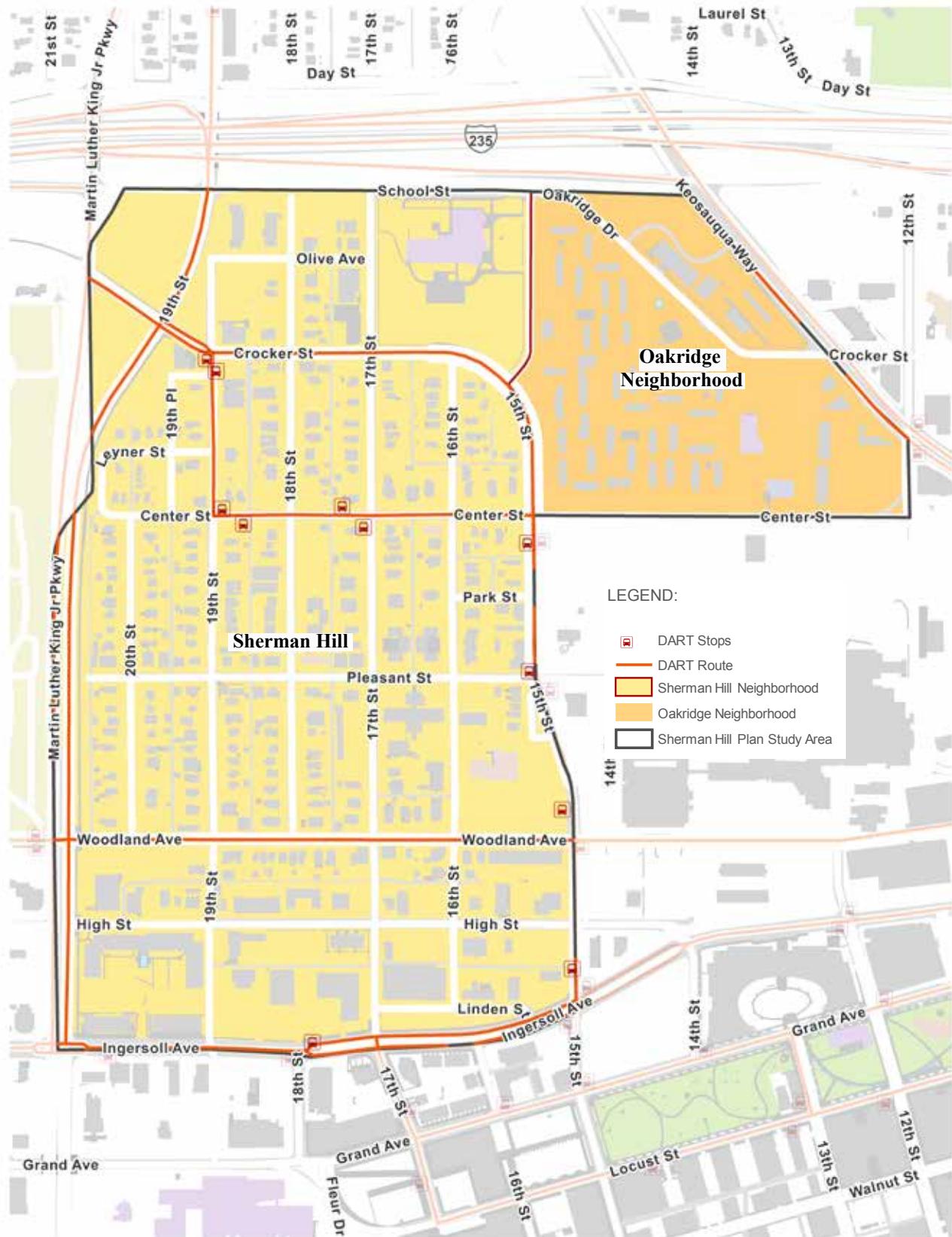


Figure 14: DART Routes

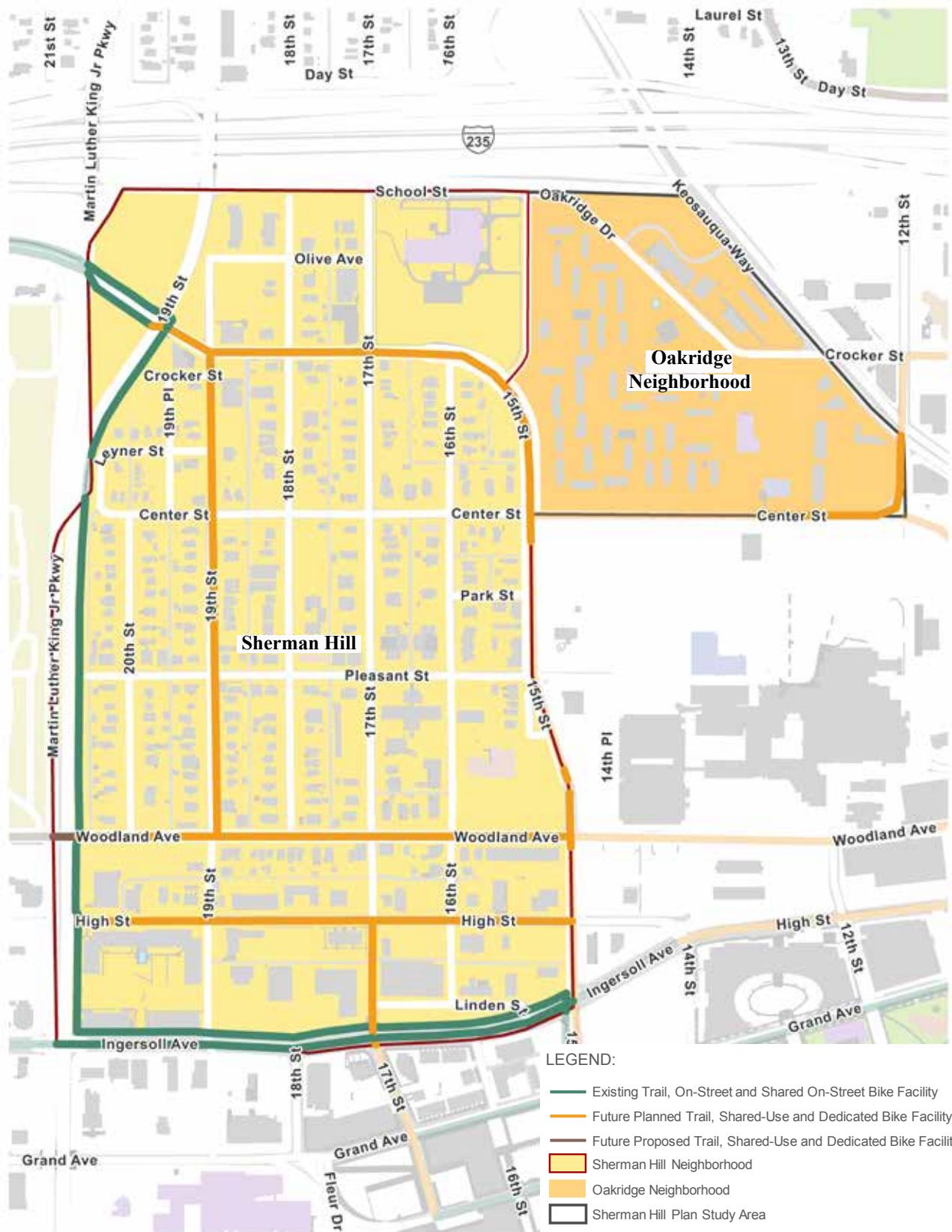


Figure 15: Bicycle Facilities

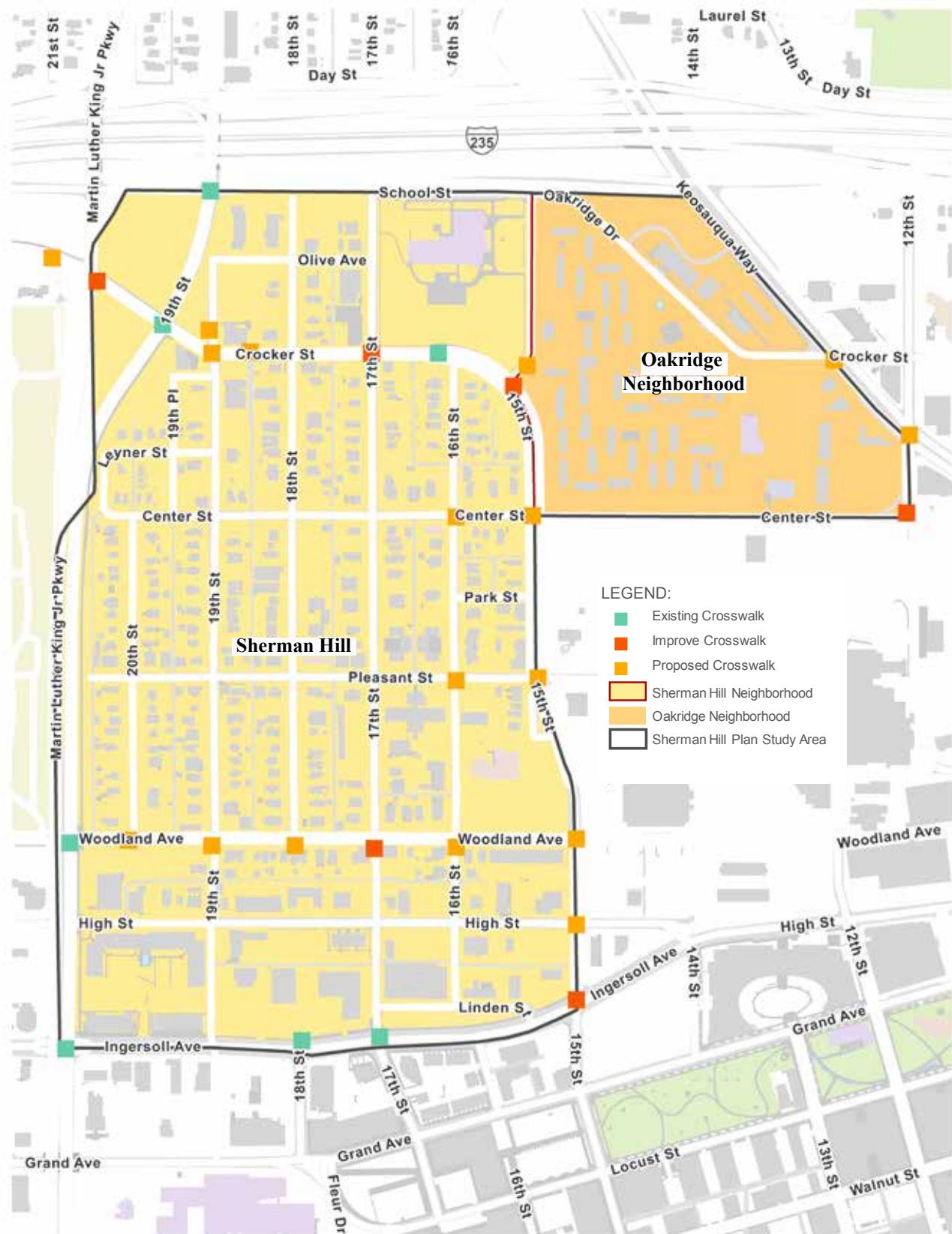


Figure 16: Crosswalks

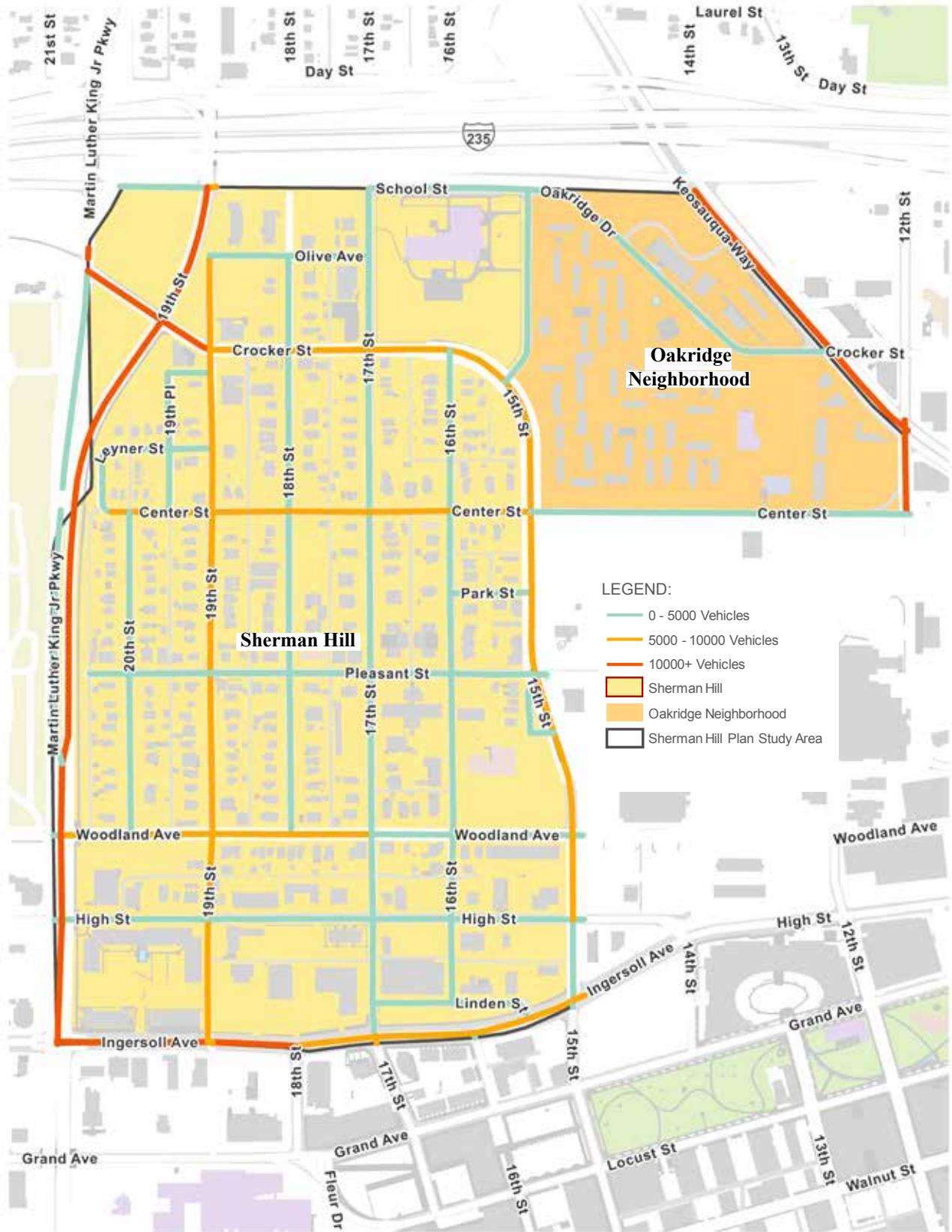


Figure 17: Traffic Volumes

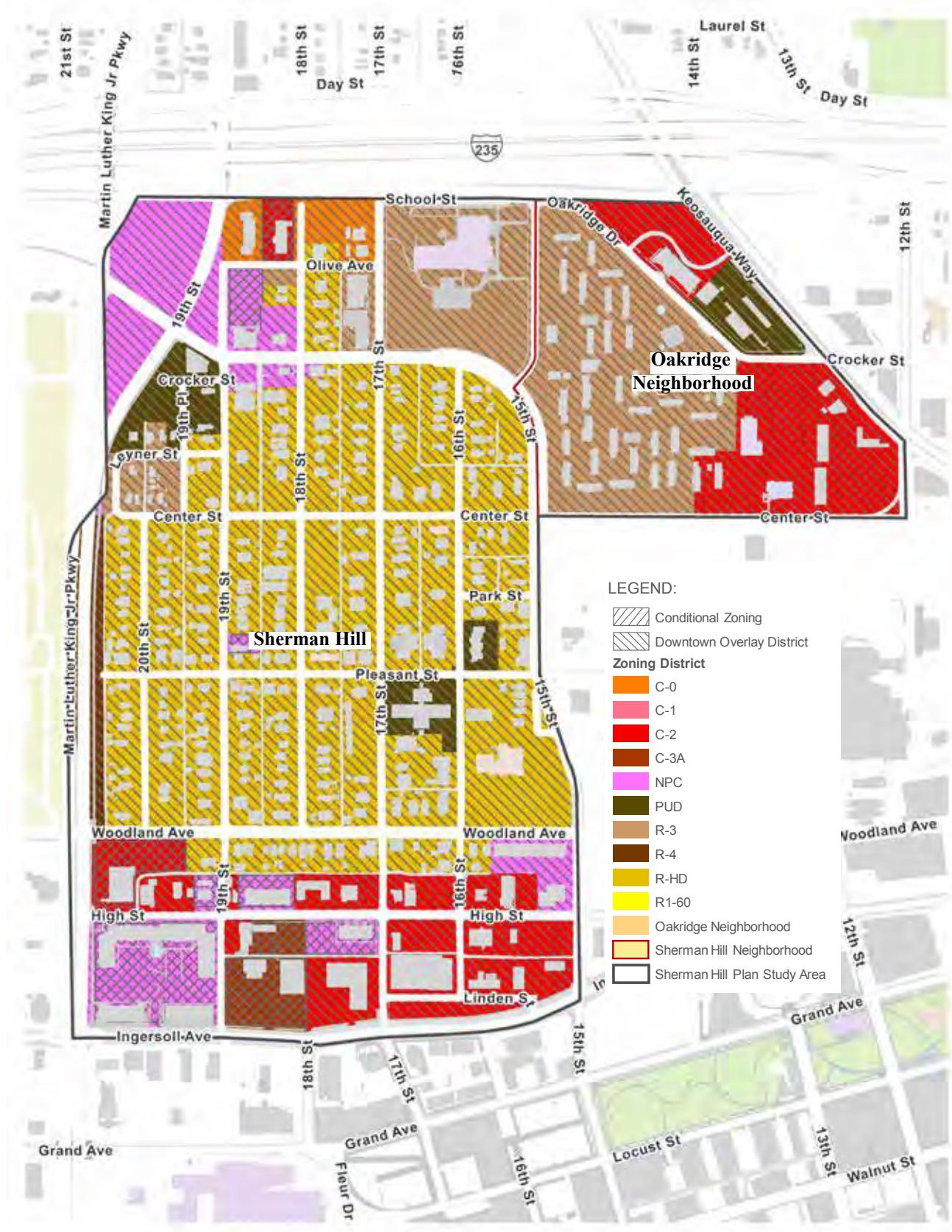


Figure 18: Zoning Map

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