

The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy



Summary of Recommendations

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Oakland Investment Committee

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Recommendations

The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy

The goal of *The Future of Oakland* is to support the continuing growth of Oakland as:

- an international center for research, education, healthcare, and culture
- a magnet for technology-based entrepreneurial activity
- an outstanding mixed-income urban residential neighborhood
- a cosmopolitan commercial district with local character
- a place that nurtures and celebrates creativity and diversity
- a destination for local, national, and international visitors

In short, to make Oakland a Great Place.

In January 2002 the Oakland Task Force developed a list of projects for the future of Oakland in the following five categories: Quality of Life, Appearance, and Amenities; Development; Housing; Retail; and Transportation.

Many of the projects overlap in these five categories and also fulfill more than one aspect of the goal for Oakland. One example is Schenley Plaza, which is both a quality of life and a transportation project. Some projects, such as light rail transit, will require additional studies. Some projects can proceed immediately, such as improved housing code enforcement. Others are longer term, such as a neighborhood elementary school. All are important. However, not all can be tackled at once. All of the projects are detailed in the Recommended Projects section at the end of this report.

Given the variety of the projects, a central task of the Oakland Task Force was to review each one and to develop a coordinated strategy, or road map, which funders and implementers, both public and private, can use to focus investments in the near term while understanding how all projects fit within the overall strategy. The intent is to maximize the impact of each individual project through its synergy with other projects.

The means to accomplish this maximum impact is through four initiatives which have emerged from the Oakland Task Force's planning process for *The Future of Oakland*. Each initiative is a combination of projects, programs, and studies. All are essential as part of the larger strategy for *The Future of Oakland*.

- 1 Create a Sense of Place in Oakland
- 2 Make it Easier to Get Into and Around In Oakland
- 3 Stimulate Neighborhood Revitalization
- 4 Foster Technology Development

These four initiatives are summarized in the text below and are located geographically on maps which follow.

Initiative 1 – Create a Sense of Place in Oakland

There is no central “there” in Oakland, no town green, no central gathering place, and no sense of arrival.

The following projects, when combined, will make a “there” in Oakland:

- redesign and program Schenley Plaza as an active public plaza and gathering place, including new traffic patterns and parking management programs
- upgrade the appearance and function of three of the gateways to Oakland (Western Gateway below Craft Avenue, Southern Gateway at Bates Street, and Northern Gateway at North Craig Street)
- make Forbes Avenue into a pedestrian-friendly traditional, commercial main street that links the universities and Schenley Plaza
- upgrade streetscapes in the retail areas and attract new businesses consistent with market studies and retail recruitment strategies already completed with particular emphasis on Forbes Avenue
- expand the Oakland Business Improvement District (OBID) to include the Atwood Street, North Craig Street/Centre Avenue, and South Craig Street business districts
- create a “Cultural Trust” type of organization to energize, promote, and market the cultural attractions and night life of Oakland
- develop a pedestrian plan for Oakland that prioritizes pedestrian safety and addresses “pedestrian cold spots,” improves dangerous intersections, and helps people get around on foot with way finding signage

Initiative 2 – Make it Easier to Get Into and Around In Oakland

Oakland is the third largest commuter destination in Pennsylvania, after downtown Philadelphia and downtown Pittsburgh. With 50,000 workers, students, visitors, and patients arriving every day, access to Oakland is of paramount concern.

There are perceptions of both traffic congestion and “nowhere to park” in Oakland. In fact, the traffic and parking problems in Oakland pale by comparison with most downtowns. Nevertheless, there are internal mobility problems within Oakland which are susceptible to remediation within a coordinated transportation strategy.

Attraction of new technology development is highly dependent on a public transportation system which is ubiquitous and easy to use (such as frequent internal shuttles) and traffic and parking systems which are efficient and easy to navigate.

Retention of students post-graduation is also dependent on outstanding public transit from Oakland to other parts of the city. Their principal means of exploration while students is on public transit. Once students explore the region, they are more likely to want to stay.

The projects listed below will make it easier to get into and around in Oakland:

- develop rapid transit service from Downtown to Oakland, including ultimately the extension of light rail transit from Downtown to Oakland
- increase direct bus routes from other regional areas to Oakland
- develop fringe/intercept parking facilities for commuters
- develop a bike trail head near Schenley Plaza and bike lanes on arterial streets
- develop an integrated multi-modal strategy for managing traffic, transit, bicycles, and pedestrian needs on Fifth and Forbes Avenue in the heart of Oakland and for addressing traffic “hot spots,” particularly lower Bates Street at the Boulevard of the Allies, Forbes/Fifth as one or two way streets, and Bigelow Boulevard/ Bellefield area traffic circulation
- determine the feasibility of a universal shuttle bus system for Oakland, including connections to the riverfront and other key areas, such as fringe/intercept parking
- develop a comprehensive parking management plan for Oakland that would maximize the use of spaces

Initiative 3 – Stimulate Neighborhood Revitalization

Many of the residential neighborhoods of Oakland are in stress, especially Central Oakland, not only from the pressures of off-campus student housing and absentee landlord neglect, but also from the lack of significant new investment in housing. Retaining current residents and attracting new families and workers to live in Oakland requires upgrading of the housing stock and investing in neighborhood amenities.

The following projects, when combined, will stimulate neighborhood revitalization:

- develop high quality single-family and multi-family housing in Central Oakland through the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, in a mix of rehab and new construction
- strengthen existing and develop new housing financing programs to provide incentives for purchasing homes in Oakland, to provide financing assistance for facade improvements, and to finance Oakland Planning and Development Corporation's purchase of additional homes as they come on the market.
- strengthen the code enforcement program in residential neighborhoods
- provide incentive programs for rental property owners to improve their properties
- begin a planning process with the Pittsburgh Public Schools for the location and construction of a new elementary school in Central or South Oakland

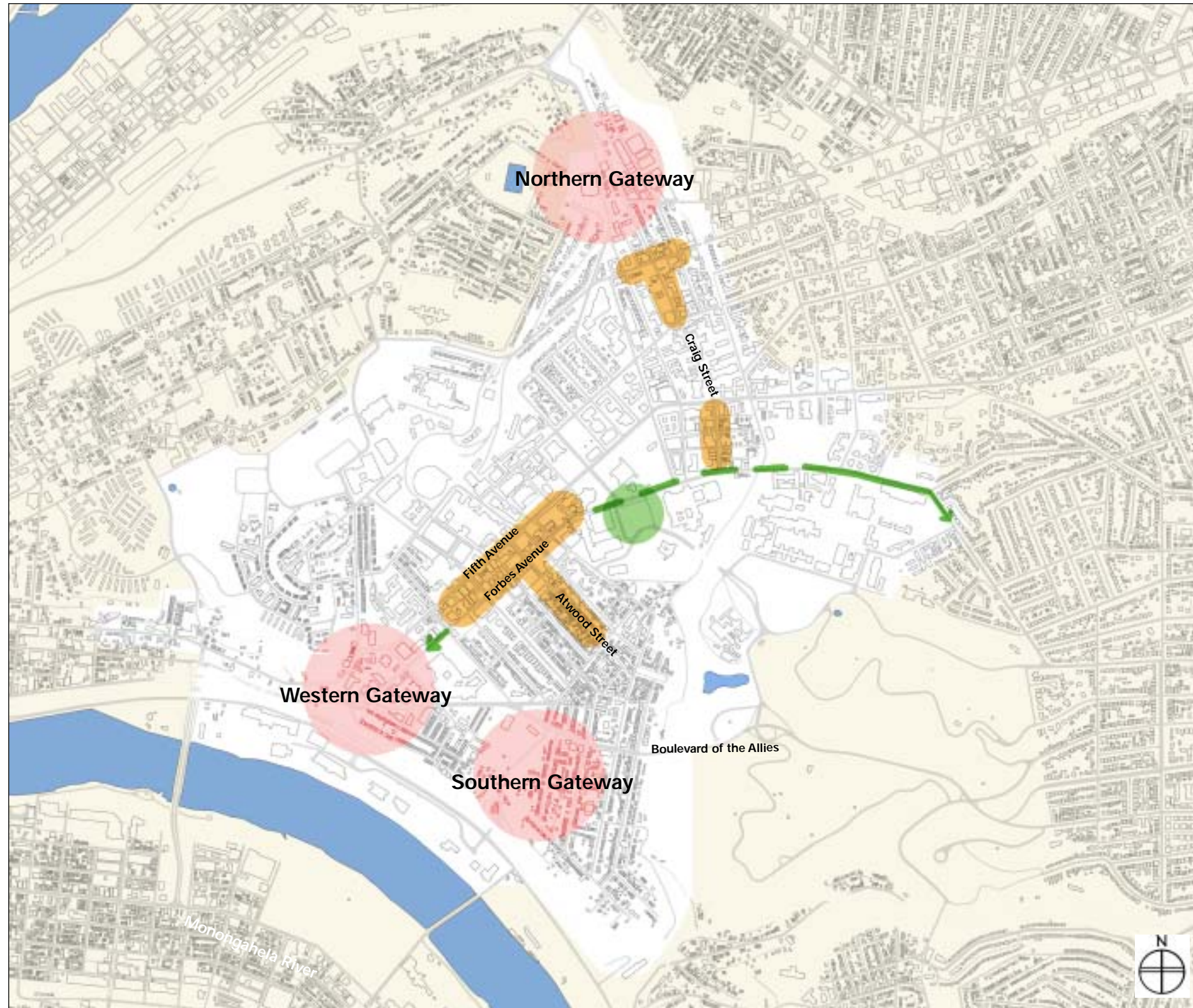
Initiative 4 – Foster Technology Development

Oakland is the economic wellspring of the future economic growth of the region because of its concentration of researchers at the universities and hospitals, and the potential for spin-off companies. Experience teaches that spin-off companies tend to locate near the talent and laboratories of the researchers, and that existing technology companies from outside the region are also attracted to locations near researchers and universities.

These private development efforts need to be coordinated with the plans of the major institutions in Oakland because the growth and strength of the research universities and hospitals are essential to new technology development.

These projects below, when combined, will foster technology development:

- conduct a financial feasibility analysis of the Western Gateway opportunity area and consider urban design and development connections to vacant properties at the Boulevard of the Allies and Craft Avenue
- conduct a land use, urban design, and development feasibility study for Junction Hollow with the residents and property owners to identify development opportunities
- conduct a land use, urban design, and development feasibility study for technology development in North Oakland in the area of North Craig Street and Centre Avenue
- conduct a land use, urban design, and development feasibility study for technology development for the multi-block area bounded by Fifth/Forbes and Bellefield/South Craig
- explore the feasibility of developing a university inn and conference center with associated retail and restaurants
- coordinate technology development efforts with plans being developed for the vacant Hazelwood LTV site and the Baum Boulevard/Centre Avenue corridor



Schenley Plaza

- Redesign and program Schenley Plaza as an active public plaza and gathering space
- Redesign and program new traffic patterns and parking management



Gateways

- Upgrade the appearance and function of the three gateways to Oakland:
 - Western Gateway below Craft Avenue
 - Southern Gateway at Bates Street
 - Northern Gateway at North Craig Street



Business Districts

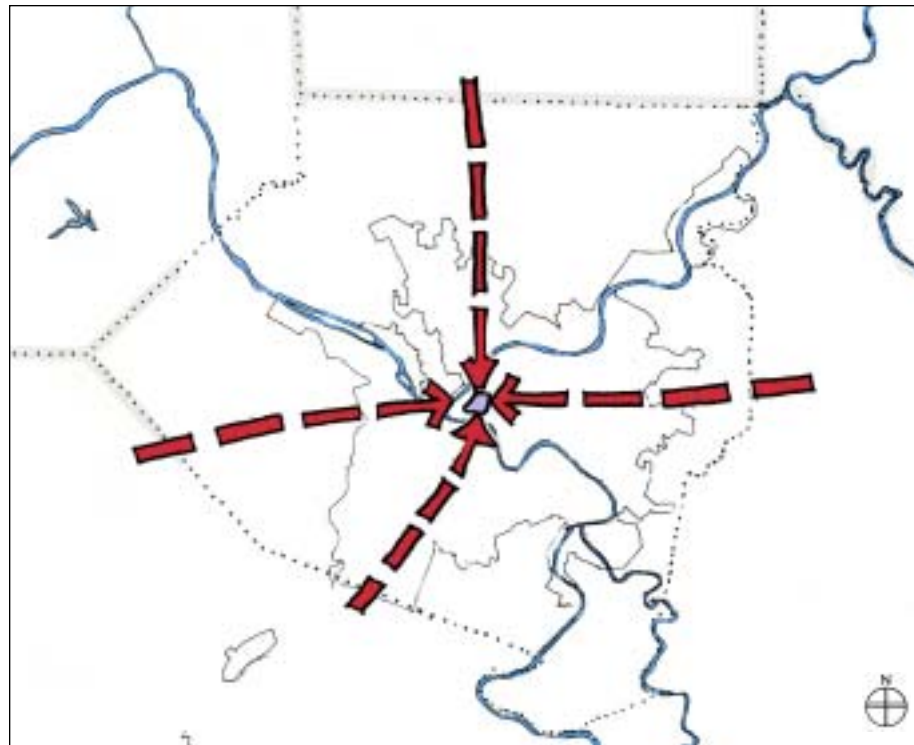
- Upgrade streetscapes in the retail areas; attract new businesses consistent with market studies and retail recruitment strategies already completed, with particular emphasis on Forbes Avenue
- Expand the OBID to include the Atwood Street, North Craig Street/Centre Avenue, and South Craig Street business districts



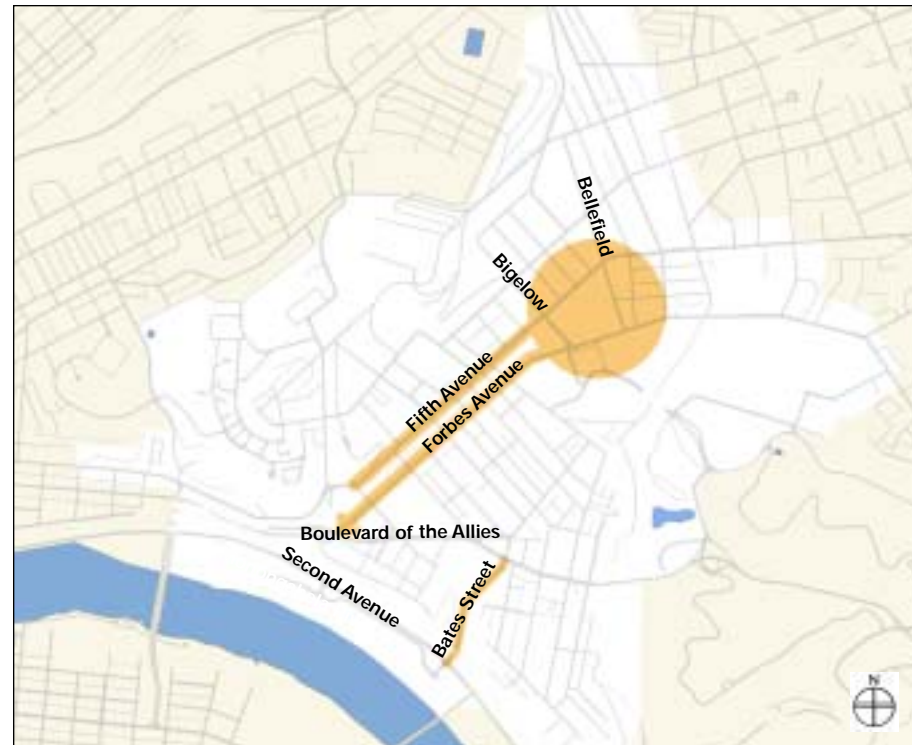
Connector

- Make Forbes Avenue into a pedestrian-friendly traditional commercial main street that links the universities and Schenley Plaza

Create a Sense of Place in Oakland



Regional Connectors



Hot Spots



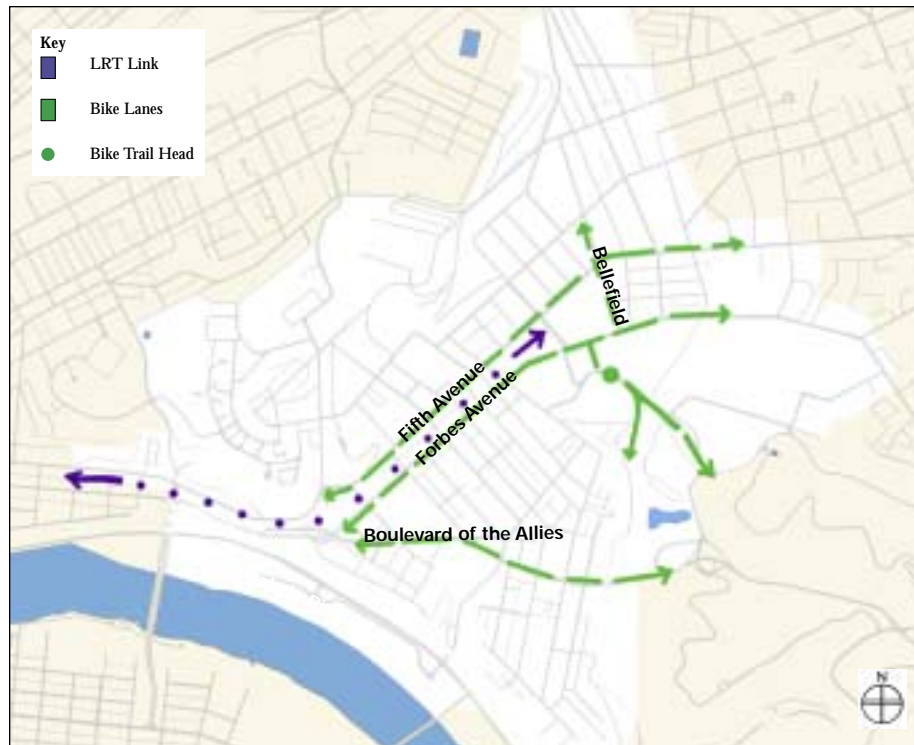
Regional Connectors

- Increase direct bus routes from other regional areas to Oakland

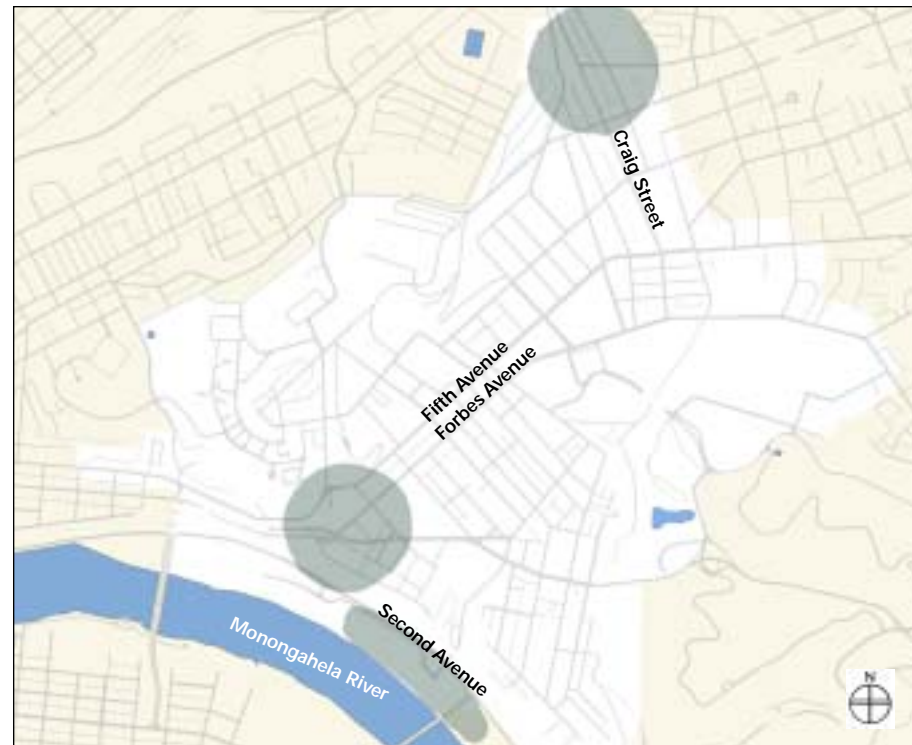


City Connectors

- Develop a light rail extension from Downtown to Oakland
- Determine the feasibility of a shuttle bus system for Oakland with connections to the riverfront and other key areas
- Develop a bike trail head near Schenley Plaza
- Develop bike lanes on arterial streets



City Connectors



Parking



Hot Spots

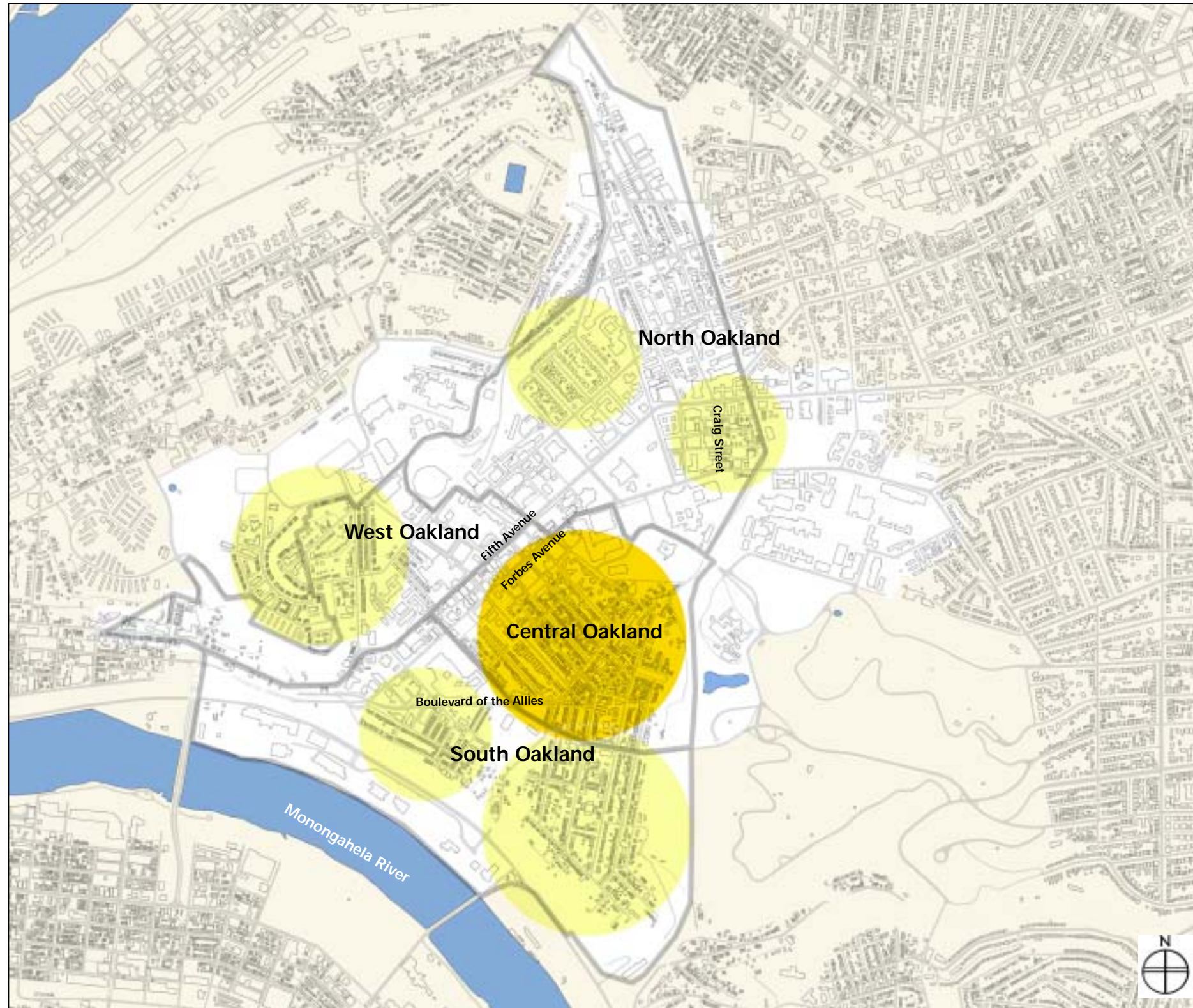
- Develop an integrated multi-modal strategy for managing traffic and addressing the following traffic "hot spots":
 - Bates Street at the Boulevard of the Allies and I-376
 - Fifth/Forbes Avenues as one or two way streets
 - Bigelow Boulevard/Bellefield area traffic circulation



Parking

- Develop fringe/intercept parking facilities for commuters
- Develop a comprehensive parking management plan for Oakland

Make it Easier to Get Into and Around In Oakland



Central Oakland

- Develop improved single-family and multi-family housing for renters and homeowners in Central Oakland through rehab and new construction



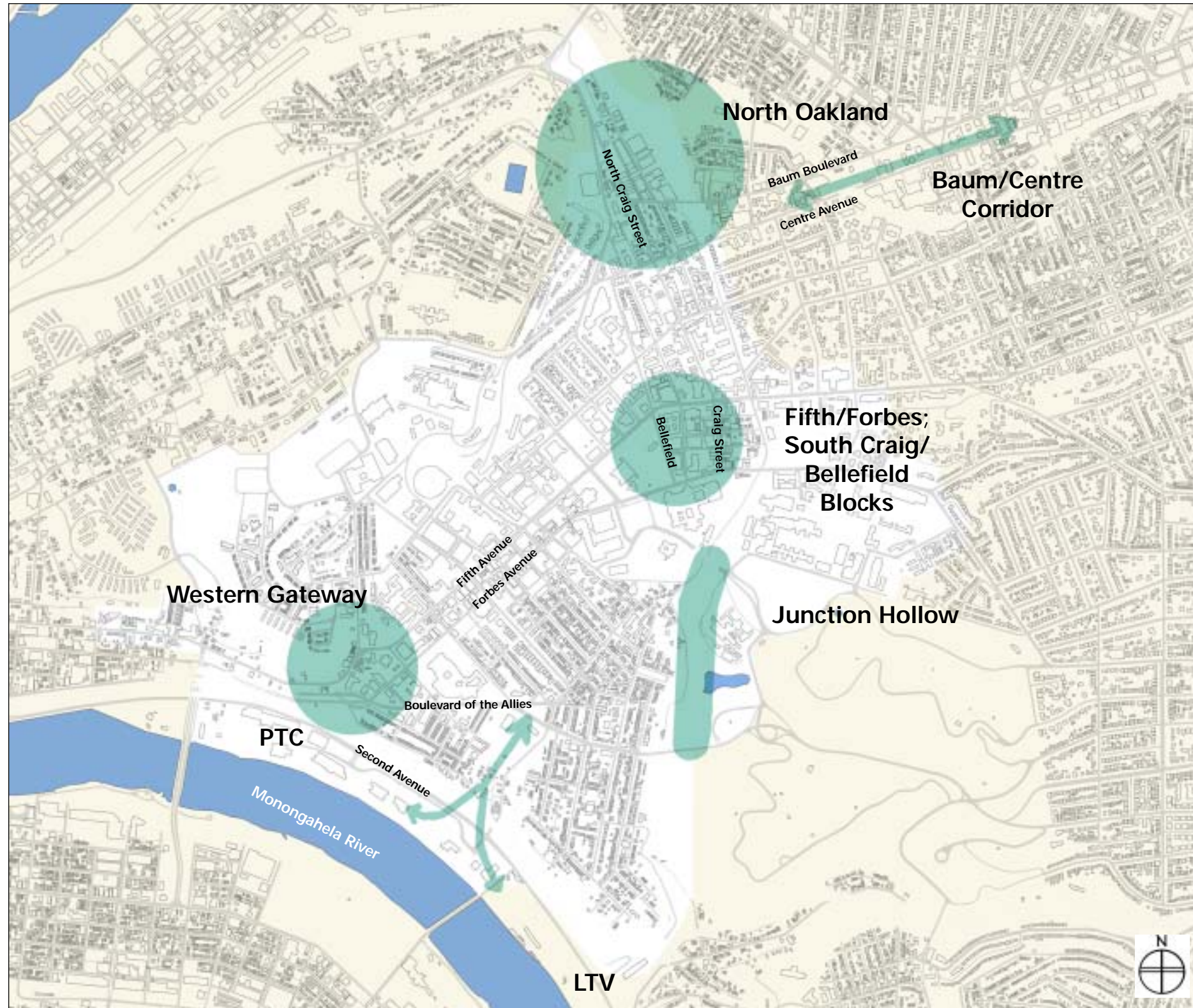
Housing Programs

- Strengthen existing housing improvement programs through the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation, including rehab and new housing project funding
- Strengthen the code enforcement program in residential neighborhoods
- Provide incentive programs for absentee landlords to improve their properties



Neighborhood boundaries according to Department of City Planning

Stimulate Neighborhood Revitalization



Potential Technology Development

- Conduct appropriate land use, urban design and development feasibility studies for:
 - Western Gateway
 - Junction Hollow
 - North Oakland
 - Fifth/Forbes, South Craig/Bellefield Blocks



Links

- Coordinate technology development efforts with other emerging initiatives:
 - Pittsburgh Technology Center (PTC)
 - Hazelwood LTV Site (LTV)
 - Baum Boulevard/Centre Avenue Corridor
- Create a shuttle bus system to connect the technology developments

Foster Technology Development

The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy

Recommended Projects

	Project/Activity	Time Horizon	Funding Type	Cost Range	Comments
A	Create a Sense of Place in Oakland				
1	Redesign and Programming of Schenley Plaza as Oakland's new town square				
1.a	Plaza Design Consultant	Immediate	Private	\$\$	Funding is in place; preparing to release RFP for schematic design
1.b	Plaza roadway reconfiguration design work	Immediate	Public	\$\$	
1.c	Plaza Reconstruction Gardens, kiosks, lighting, restrooms, chairs/tables, lawn, demolition, construction, etc.	Mid-range	Public/Private	\$\$\$\$	
1.d	Plaza roadway reconfiguration construction	Mid-range	Public	\$\$\$\$	Coordinate with "hot spot" transportation study
2	Western Gateway Improvements				
2.a	Western Gateway Bridge design recommendations and design monitoring	Current	Private	\$	Currently working with PENNDOT on design of new bridge
2.b	Western Gateway Bridge improvements beyond PENNDOT's bridge and ramp design	Mid-range	Public	\$\$\$	
3	Southern Gateway Improvements -- Bates-Allies park				
3.a	Bates-Allies gateway park predevelopment activities	Immediate	Public/Private	\$\$	Currently underway
3.b	Bates-Allies gateway park construction	Immediate	Private	\$\$	To proceed upon completion of property acquisition
4	Reconfigure Fifth and Forbes Avenues to allow Forbes to be a pedestrian and retail friendly main street and to improve pedestrian safety on Fifth				
4.a	Develop consensus on options and undertake a traffic study as needed	Immediate	Private	\$	Coordinate with hot spot study and Eastern Corridor Transit Study
4.b	Design and Engineering	Mid-range	Public	\$\$	
4.c	Construction	Long-range	Public	\$\$\$\$	
5	Streetscape improvements on Forbes Avenue, from Craig to Margaret Morrison Streets				
5.a	Streetscape design	Immediate	Private	\$	

Cost Range Key:

Less than \$100,000 \$
 \$100,001 - \$999,999 \$\$
 \$1 million - \$5 million \$\$\$
 \$5 million and above \$\$\$\$

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Recommended Projects

5.b	Streetscape construction	Mid-range	Public	\$\$\$	
6	Streetscape improvements to Oakland commercial corridors: Forbes Ave., Fifth Ave., Atwood St., S. Craig St., Centre Ave./N. Craig St. (Northern Gateway)				
6.a	Commercial corridors streetscape design	Immediate	Private	\$	Coordinate with wayfinding system
6.b	Commercial corridors streetscape construction	Long-range	Public	\$\$\$	
7	Forbes Avenue retail development	Mid-range	Private	\$	Market studies and retail recruitment strategies completed
8	Integrate Atwood, N. Craig/Centre, and S. Craig Streets in Oakland Business Improvement District	Immediate	Private	\$	
9	Create promotional organization for Oakland				
9.a	Explore the feasibility of a Cultural Trust organization	Immediate	Public/Private	\$	
9.b	Conduct a one time benchmarking symposium	Immediate	Public/Private	\$	
9.c	Establish an annual outdoor festival in Oakland	Immediate	Public/Private	\$	
10	Community gardens				
10.a	Garden planning, site location	Immediate	Private	\$	
10.b	Garden construction, maintenance	Mid-range	Private	\$	

Cost Range Key:

Less than \$100,000 \$
 \$100,001 - \$999,999 \$\$
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The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy

Recommended Projects

B	Make it Easier to Get Into and Around in Oakland				
1	Develop rapid transit service between Downtown and Oakland				
1.a	Develop bus rapid transit service	Immediate/ Mid-range	Public	\$\$	
1.b	Develop light rail transit	Long-range	Public	\$\$\$\$	
2	Increase direct bus routes from additional regional areas to Oakland	Mid-range	Public		
3	Transit promotion and marketing	Immediate	Public/ Private	\$\$	
4	Develop fringe/intercept parking facilities for commuters				
4.a	Fringe parking facility predevelopment/leasing, site planning	Mid-range	Public/Private	\$\$	
4.b	Fringe parking facility construction, management	Long-range	Public/Private		
5	Develop a bike/blade trail head near Schenley Plaza	Immediate	Public/ Private	\$	
6	Construct bike lanes on arterial streets	Mid-range	Public	\$	
7	Multi-modal transportation strategy and traffic hot-spot study	Immediate	Private	\$	
8	Address the Bates/Boulevard traffic "hot-spot"				
8.a	Bates/Boulevard intersection design	Immediate	Public	\$\$	
8.b	Bates/Boulevard intersection construction	Mid-range	Public	\$\$\$	
9	Address the Lower Bates traffic "hot-spot"				
9.a	Bates/2 nd Ave/Parkway interchange design	Current	Public	\$\$	In City budget for 2003 completion
9.b	Bates/2 nd Ave/Parkway interchange construction	Long-range	Public	\$\$\$\$	
10	Boulevard of Allies Redesigned as a true boulevard				
10.a	Boulevard of Allies Design	Mid-range	Public	\$\$	
10.b	Boulevard of Allies Reconstruction/Streetscaping	Long-range	Public	\$\$\$\$	
11	Tech corridor shuttle service				
11.a	Tech corridor shuttle service feasibility	Immediate	Public/Private	\$	
11.b	Tech corridor shuttle service operating program (3 years)	Mid-range	Public/Private	\$\$\$	

Cost Range Key:

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The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy

Recommended Projects

12	Parking management program				
12.a	Parking management plan	Immediate	Private	\$	
12.b	Parking management program implementation	Mid-range	Private	\$\$	
13	Pedestrian safety				
13.a	Pedestrian safety plan	Immediate	Public/Private	\$	
13.b	Pedestrian safety improvements, way finding system	Immediate	Public/Private	\$\$	
14	Carpool/Vanpool marketing program (3 years)	Mid-range	Public/ Private	\$	
15	Create model bus stations to improve transit experience				
15.a	Model bus station design	Immediate	Public	\$	
15.b	Model bus station construction	Mid-range	Public	\$\$\$	

Cost Range Key:

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The Future of Oakland: A Community Investment Strategy

Recommended Projects

	Project/Activity	Time Horizon	Funding Type	Cost Range	Comments
C	Stimulate Neighborhood Revitalization				
1	Improve Central Oakland housing through rehab and new construction				
1.a	Schenley Overlook housing plan	Immediate	Private	\$	
1.b	Schenley Overlook housing predevelopment activities	Immediate	Public/Private	\$\$\$	
1.c	OPDC housing operations (3 years)	Immediate	Private	\$\$	
1.d	S. Oakland neighborhood stabilization plan	Immediate	Private	\$	Focus of plan is 15 units on Frazier
1.e	Schenley Overlook housing development	Mid-range	Public/Private	\$\$\$	
1.f	S. Oakland neighborhood stabilization development	Mid-range	Public/Private	\$\$\$	
1.g	Chesterfield Road housing plan	Mid-range	Private	\$	
1.h	Chesterfield Road housing development	Long-range	Public/Private	\$\$	
2	Strengthen existing and develop new housing programs				
2.a	Oakland employer home purchase incentive program	Immediate	Private	\$\$	Current
2.b	Residential façade improvement program	Immediate	Public/Private	\$\$	Current
2.c	Senior home purchase program	Mid-range	Private	\$\$	
3	Central Oakland neighborhood streetscape improvements	Immediate	Public	\$	
4	Strengthen existing code enforcement efforts	Immediate	Private	\$	
4.a	Community code enforcement liaison (3 years)	Immediate	Private	\$\$	
5	Rental property improvement program	Immediate/ Mid-range	Private	\$\$\$\$	
6	Incentives for rental property owners to improve their properties, such as a facade improvement program	Immediate	Private	\$\$	
7	Comprehensive community organizing (3 years)	Immediate	Private	\$\$	
8	Neighborhood elementary school planning	Mid-range	Private	\$	

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Recommended Projects

	Project/Activity	Time Horizon	Funding Type	Cost Range	Comments
D	Foster Technology Development				
1	Development Opportunity Analyses				
1.a	Financial feasibility analysis of Western Gateway with urban design/development analysis of Craft/Boulevard of Allies	Immediate	Private	\$	Initial urban design study is complete
1.b	Master planning study of Junction Hollow to identify development opportunities	Immediate	Private	\$	Coordinate with planning for Hazelwood LTV site
1.c	Land use, urban design and development feasibility study of North Oakland in area of N. Craig Street	Immediate	Private	\$	Coordinate with Baum/Centre Corridor Study
1.d	Land use, urban design and development feasibility study of multi-block area bounded by Fifth/Forbes and Bellefield/S. Craig	Immediate	Private	\$	
1.e	Technology-related development project construction	Mid-range Long-range	Private	\$\$\$\$	
2	University inn/conference center				
2.a	Explore the feasibility for university inn/conference center with retail	Mid-range	Private	\$	
2.b	University inn/conference center development	Long-range	Private	\$\$\$	
3	Design standards for development				
4	Feasibility study of potential for-profit real estate partnerships between institutions and private developers				
5	Oakland business marketing program				
5.a	Develop Oakland business marketing materials	Mid-range	Public/Private	\$	
5.b	Implement Oakland business marketing program (3 yrs.)	Long-range	Private	\$	

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