PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

As Chattanooga enters the new millennium, the City is confronted with a tremendous opportunity and challenge to continue renewed growth, to extend revitalization efforts, and to enhance community pride. City leaders have recognized that a strong economy, healthy business district, and revitalized neighborhoods are integral to the image, identity, and future of Chattanooga. To that end, the City has launched redevelopment efforts targeting the riverfront, the downtown “Central Business District,” the Southside Business District, and now, Alton Park. A “citizens participation” process was used to identify the issues and opportunities available to strengthen the Alton Park community and thereby the City of Chattanooga.

The City of Chattanooga, along with other funding partners, (Hamilton County Government, Chattanooga Housing Authority, Lyndhurst Foundation, Inc., Community Impact Fund, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, and the Chattanooga Brownfields Program) authorized a planning study to develop a strategy, a plan of action, and a guide for “change” in Alton Park. The partnership allowed a grassroots approach in seeking a firm to conduct the charrette and develop a Master Plan.

The study area boundaries are Interstate 24 on the north, the State of Georgia line on the south, Chattanooga Creek on the east and Hawkins Ridge, Forest Hills Cemetery and the St. Elmo Business District on the west.
(Insert Boundary Map)
On September 27, 1999, the Mayor’s office and the Regional Planning Agency hosted a community meeting to discuss the redevelopment of Alton Park. Over 200 residents participated and voiced their concerns. Fifty persons who attended this initial meeting volunteered to serve on the Advisory Panel, which would oversee the planning process. Of these 50 persons, 25 committed themselves to serve on the consultant selection committee. A Request for Proposals was advertised and distributed nation-wide. After responses from various consultants were received, the residents were asked to participate on the selection committee. Unlike other communities where a committee of staff and elected officials often make the selection, the City used a grass roots committee of residents and business owner volunteers.

On a rainy Saturday morning in October 1999, approximately 25 residents and business owners listened to four consulting firms outline their strategy for Alton Park. The residents—not staff or elected officials—selected the team of A. A. Baker and Associates, Inc. The Baker Team presented a “coming home” theme. The founder of the lead firm is a native of Chattanooga, now operating out of Tampa, FL. Other members of the team included Stanley Love-Stanley, Turner Associates, Inc., and Jim Missouri, Consultant - all from Atlanta. Not only did the team stress homecoming as a theme but also crafted a process that was inclusive, hands-on, and consensus driven.

During December, the Consultant team met with the funders to clearly outline the scope of services and expectations. The following month, the team collected data and began research of all the previous studies and demographics of Alton Park. Simultaneously, the members of the team held a series of one-on-one interviews with the stakeholders. These interviews provided uninhibited input on specific issues relative to Alton Park. In the search to understand the neighborhood, the team members participated in a bus tour and neighborhood walk. A workshop was held with the Advisory Committee in December and then again in January. The issues were discussed and then validated during this process. The results of the validation process are as follows:
JOBS AVAILABILITY AND PROXIMITY

- Job Training
- Economic Development
- Business Networking/Job Fairs
- Apprenticeships
- Entrepreneurial Opportunities
- Access to Jobs

UTILIZATION OF VACANT PROPERTY

- Industry/Business Development
- Shopping/Grocery
- Convenience Store/Rental Services

SAFETY

- Community Policing
- Crime Watch
- Police Precinct
- Community Awareness
- Lighting/Vandal-Proof
- Neighborhood Partnership

RECREATION

- Boys/Girls Club
- Organized Sports
- Entertainment
- Arts/Cultural
- Amphitheater
- Performance/Competitive

HOUSING

- Affordable
- Quality/Long Lasting
- Senior Home Maintenance
- Rehabilitation
- Design Standards
- Building Codes
- Infill
PUBLIC FACILITIES

- Senior Center
- Multi-Purpose Bldg.
- Information Center

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Flooding Issues
- Traffic
- Water Supply and Adequate Treatment
- Sidewalks/Streets

TRANSPORTATION

- Route
- Public/Schools
- Truck Route
- Intersections
- Safety
- Access

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- After School/Tutoring
- Publicize in the Community
- Awareness
- Trade School/Career Center
- Continuing Education
- Computers

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Noise Pollution
- Water
- Flooding
- Sewer
- Air Pollution
- Ground Pollution

OVERALL GENERAL

- Black owned and operated
- Decreasing crime and drug activity
- Infrastructure
- Housing
• Accessible commercial
• Employment/economic development
• Programs/activities for young and old

Finally, a **four-day planning charrette** was scheduled for February 11, 12, 14, 15.

On Friday, February 11, the Kick Off meeting was held and attended by a collage of over 150 residents, property owners, business owners, industry representatives, government employees, and elected officials.

On Saturday, February 12, we got down to business. Over 100 stakeholders attended, each bringing their ideas, each plotting their ideas onto the maps, each creating their version of the Alton Park Vision.

The participants were divided into six groups to consolidate their issues and concerns. Each group then selected its “spokesperson” to present the group’s consolidated issues and concerns to the other participants.
On Monday and Tuesday, February 14, & 15, additional stakeholders participated in group discussions on specific needs for the community with the technical advisors from the City, State of Tennessee, U.S. Governmental Agencies, the public utilities sector, and various community service providers. Throughout the process, the level of participation was overwhelming. The goal of the Charrette process was to translate the issues into a viable Master Plan for redevelopment.

The following map is a composite of the various groups’ vision for Alton Park. The consultant took the common themes from the community sessions and combined them with the themes from the focus groups and technical staff meetings to create one consolidated map.
(Insert Consolidated Map)
ANALYSIS

The intent of this section is to fully understand the history, demographics, economy, and existing physical conditions of Chattanooga’s Alton Park community before proceeding to future revitalization. What was the original intent of the community? What led to its current development? What opportunities exist to enhance future revitalization efforts? To fully understand the Alton Park community, the consultants took over 90 photographs to document the existing conditions. The consultants also reviewed existing plans from other local studies and data of the existing land use, existing zoning, topography, flooding, transportation, and building conditions of both residential, industrial and commercial structures.

HISTORY

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, two adjacent farms occupied the terrain near Chattanooga Creek and Lookout Mountain, just outside the city limits of then Chattanooga. Initially, the community was known as “Oak Hill” due to the abundance of oak trees in the area, but later became known as Alton Park.

By 1901, the Alton Park community had over 500 inhabitants, most of which were Caucasians. This area became an attractive location for manufacturing. Alton Park had many traits suitable to economic growth, including availability of a fresh water supply, fuel from nearby natural coal deposits, and proximity to the City of Chattanooga.

The Chattanooga and Southern Railway delivered and transported freight and materials to and from Alton Park, and the city’s Rapid Transit line provided transportation for the workforce. The Chattanooga Cotton Oil Company was the first manufacturing facility to locate in Alton Park and had 75 employees.

In 1917, Alton Park was incorporated, and residents were pleased with the availability of paved streets, electricity, schools and sewers that were provided by the city’s annexation to Hamilton County. The charter provided tax incentives to encourage the growing manufacturing economy. From the 1920s to 1950’s, Alton Park continued to grow. Manufacturing companies continued to locate in Alton Park due to its transportation, utilities, and human resources. Chattanooga Coke & Chemical and Chattanooga Glass Company became major employers in the community during this time. Subsequently, other firms moved into the community, such as Velsicol Chemical Company and Bunge Foods.

Growth by the manufacturing sector occurred simultaneously with residential growth in the area. In 1954, Chattanooga Housing Authority constructed a new public housing development called Spencer McCallie Homes. This new concept of housing was created to provide housing accommodations for people displaced by the Urban Renewal associated with the construction of the local interstate highway system. McCallie Homes
was followed by the CHA’s construction of Emma Wheeler Homes, Maurice Poss Homes and Mary Walker Towers. Additionally, single family and duplex developments occurred in the neighborhoods of Oak Hill, Alton Park and Piney Woods. The net effect of this residential growth was the transformation of Alton Park from a majority white population to a predominately African-American during the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Over the years, Chattanooga’s economy had developed much like the northern cities, being heavily dependent on major industries. As the national economy slid into recession during the 1970’s, so did the industries of Chattanooga and Alton Park. There were layoffs, cut backs, and company closings. Many of the residents lost jobs and many of the homeowners who were aging lacked the means to maintain their homes. In addition, environmental issues surfaced in the community during the 1970’s, causing many residents to move out of the community. Many of these 1970’s issues continued through the late 1980’s. And, as a result, Alton Park was left in a deteriorated condition.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Alton Park is located south of downtown Chattanooga and has been considered a blue-collar community for years. Alton Park’s residential component is predominately single family. However, within this single family residential area are four public housing developments. These housing projects are Maurice Poss Homes, Spencer J. McCallie Homes, Emma Wheeler Homes and Mary Walker Towers. This concentration of public housing within Alton Park has had a significant impact on the perceptions of this community. Many residents and non-residents of this community expressed the sentiment that the public housing developments have provided a safe haven for those that have committed crimes. This perception, combined with the loss of employment base, has led to a steady outward flight of residents to other areas of Chattanooga.

The demographics in the area show signs of distress. There is high unemployment, a decreasing housing stock with many homes in disrepair, an aging population with decreasing income and continued out flight of the population base. According to a study completed by the Percept Group, Inc for the Bethlehem Community Center, the core population is in need of revitalization and redevelopment. The study focuses on the zip code immediately around the Bethlehem Center (Core Study Area). The study shows that the population decreased from 8,303 in 1980 to 4,907 in 1998. This is approximately a 41% decrease in resident population. The decrease is expected to continue through the year 2003 to only 4,075 residents. This number could be higher with the demolition of Spencer J. McCallie Homes that is currently underway.

On the other hand, the number of children under 16 is increasing at a rapid pace. The median age in this area is 33.2 compared to the U.S. average age of 36.2. This means that there is a need for activities and programs for teens and kids. In this core area, female heads of household with children under 18 years old is 76.5%. The U.S. average of female-headed households with children is 20.8%. This has a tremendous impact on the ability to work, earn a decent wage, and raises issues of daycare.
The 1990 census indicates that **93.5% of the residents in the core zip code are African American.** This number compared to the US average of 12% is staggering. **Over 60% of the residents do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.** The implication is that finding jobs and placement becomes more difficult in these situations. Clearly, there is a need for education and training within the Alton Park area. The lack of jobs also provides an indicator of the income level in Alton Park. Of slightly more than 1,900 households remaining in the community in 1998, three fourths fall in the bottom three income brackets. **In other words, 48.8% earn less than $15,000 and upwards of 63% earn less than $25,000.** The lack of income affects ability to maintain homes when repairs are needed.

In the core zip code (1990 data), **only 32% of the units were owner occupied and 68% renter occupied.** This number is the opposite of most neighborhoods and affects the level of pride within a community. The U.S. average is 64% for owner occupied and 36% for renter occupied. Homeowners generally take pride in their homes and do a better job of maintenance. Conversely, a landlord may not maintain close supervision on his property and allow the units to deteriorate at a faster pace than homeowners. In many cases, residents of renter properties have apathy toward proper property maintenance.

The zip code information revealed that 45.9% of the residents had no vehicle. The U.S. average number of residents without vehicles is 11.5%. **In this particular zip code, one out of every four employed persons uses public transportation.** This means that adequate public transportation is important and vital for community well being.

According to Chattanooga Police Department records, the Alton Park community has higher percentages of incidences of criminal activity than other areas of the city. At the time of this report, specific statistics were unavailable.

**LAND USES**

The Alton Park community consists of five primary land uses: Residential, Institutional, Commercial, Industrial, and Recreational.

**Residential**

Most residential land uses within of the Alton Park community lie predominately within five pocket areas intermixed with three major public housing sites. The residential development is primarily single family with a large insurgence of duplexes. The single-family areas show signs of neglect and need of general maintenance. Many of these small residential areas are
These Residential Pockets are:

- The area near Howard High School previously known as “Hooterville”, now called “Southside Gardens Neighborhood”
- The area called “Oak Hill”, located at the southern end of Alton Park Boulevard. The residences in this area are located below Hawkins Ridge to the Forest Hill Cemetery to Kirkland Avenue
- The “Alton Park” residential area in the “center” south of 38th street and west of Central Avenue
- The “Fagan/Polk/Dorris Streets” area east of Central Avenue, from Hamil Road to Franklin Middle School
- The “Piney Woods” residential area, from 51st and 52nd Streets south to the State Line.

As mentioned above, four public housing developments are located in the community. They are Maurice Poss Homes, Mary Walker Towers, Spencer J. McCallie Homes, and Emma Wheeler Homes. Maurice Poss Homes is located in the northern part of the study area at Market Street and Interstate 24 next to Howard High School. Mary Walker Towers is one block south of Maurice Poss Homes across from Howard High School. Spencer J. McCallie is located in the heart of the study area along 38th Street near Central Avenue. Emma Wheeler Homes is located in the southern part of the study area along Wilson Road. These public housing complexes have a tremendous impact on the community. Because they are built at a much higher population density than the homes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Institutional

There are numerous institutional land uses in Alton Park. Institutional uses are sometimes referred to as residential support uses. A neighborhood needs these types of uses as they provide services for the community. For example, some of these uses are places of worship, day care facilities, educational facilities, and public facilities i.e. (post office, schools, libraries, water plant, sewer plants, electrical generator facilities, police stations, and fire stations). The Alton Park community has an adequate amount of institutional uses to support its residents.
Commercial

Commercial uses provide a place for residents to shop for goods and services. In Alton Park, there is no major community shopping center. The closest locations are in St. Elmo on Tennessee Avenue (Winn-Dixie), on Broad Street (Bi-Lo), and off Rossville Blvd. (Food Lion). There are numerous smaller convenience stores and “mom and pop” operations in the neighborhood primarily along the 38th Street and Alton Park Blvd corridors.

Industrial

Unlike most communities, Alton Park has more than its share of industrial uses. Several of the city’s major employers are located in this community. These firms include Vesicol Chemical Company, Chattem Drugs, Ahlstrom Filtration, Astec Industries, Heatec Inc., Bunge Foods, and Wheland Foundries. Historically, the industrial uses have had a mixed impact on the residential neighborhoods in this community. Although industry provides opportunities for employment, they have also affected the environment. For years, Chattanooga Creek, as well as vacant lands, were used as dumping sites for many industries in the area. In addition, there have been many residential complaints due to the emission of fumes and odors from the industrial facilities. Because of the former manufacturing operations in the community, there are many closed plant facilities and vacant sites. Some examples of these “brownfields” in the community are the Anchor Glass Site and Tennessee Products site.

Recreational

The Alton Park community does not have many recreational opportunities. Today, there is only the Alton Park Recreational Center, which is sandwiched between two major industrial uses. The Bethlehem Center
provides some recreational opportunities for the residents but is a privately owned facility. A hidden treasure within the neighborhood is Chattanooga Creek, which has been partially remediated by Environmental Protection Agency.
(Insert Land Use Map)
ZONING

Zoning is used by local governments to guide the development pattern of a community. Zoning is a regulatory tool that establishes permitted uses and building standards (setbacks, distance between uses, height etc.). Primarily, the Alton Park community includes R-3 (residential) and M-1 (industrial) zoning districts. According to the history of this community, the local government provided incentives for industrial uses, thereby creating an imbalance of land uses. The large amount of industrial acreage divides the residential areas and causes a disjointed land use pattern. This is particularly acute in Alton Park where industrial zoning comprises approximately 70% of the zoning pattern of the community compared to only 30% residential zoning in the community. This is clearly shown by the following map.

The map also indicates a lack of commercial uses, although commercial uses are allowed in the industrial classification. The small amount of commercial zoning in Alton Park is located near Interstate 24. In addition, the low-density single-family residential areas have high-density zoning. As a result, a permit can be pulled to construct duplexes or multifamily immediately adjacent to single family uses. If not appropriately designed, this can cause problems relative to compatibility.
(Insert Zoning Map)
The following chart shows the permitted uses, and standards of the zoning districts in Alton Park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>TYPICAL USES</th>
<th>BULK STANDARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-1</td>
<td>• Single family dwellings, excluding factory manufactured homes</td>
<td>2.5 Story or 35ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schools</td>
<td>7,500 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parks, Day Care homes</td>
<td>60 ft. frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public Buildings</td>
<td>25 ft. front yard setback</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 ft. side yards and 25 ft. rear yard.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two parking spaces/unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-2</td>
<td>• Single family dwellings, excluding factory manufactured mobile homes</td>
<td>2.5 Story or 35ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two family</td>
<td>7,500 square feet for SF on sewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schools</td>
<td>9,500 square feet for two family dwelling unit on sewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parks, churches, day care homes, kindergartens, day care center.</td>
<td>Same setbacks as above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single Family–two parking spaces per unit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duplex - 1.5 spaces per unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-3</td>
<td>• Single family dwellings, excluding factory manufactured mobile homes</td>
<td>2.5 Story or 35 ft.* one lot or 7,500 sq. ft. plus 2,000 square feet of lot area for each additional unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Boarding houses, lodging houses and B&amp;B</td>
<td>All other permitted uses shall be 10,000 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schools</td>
<td>Front and rear yards not less than 25 feet and six ft. side yard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parks</td>
<td>Single Family – two parking spaces units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Golf Courses</td>
<td>Duplex - 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Churches</td>
<td>Multi Family – 1.23 parking space per dwelling unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Day care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-1 Commercial</td>
<td>• Motels, hotels, Restaurants, Automobile and boat service stations, dealerships, repair facilities (wrecked or inoperative vehicles being repaired must be screened (8ft.)) Church, Billboards and signs, Laundry and cleaning, Bus terminals, train stations, taxi, Drug stores, gift shops, camera, Banking, Bowling Alleys, billiard rooms, Theaters, Medical or dental offices, Offices, Mini warehouses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 2.5 Stories or 35 ft* Parking varies based on use. Yards of 25 feet shall be provided along any public street or right of way. Side yards with a minimum width of 10 feet and rear yards of not less than 25 feet depth shall be required where permitted C-1 use adjoins residential zones. Parking requirements vary based on proposed use. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C-2</th>
<th>Convenience Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bakeries, delicatessens, meat and fish markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barber shops, beauty shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health clinics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bowling alleys/billiard rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theaters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automobile/boats sales and service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoe repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals, clinics and social agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail laundry and dry cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurseries, florist, green houses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools, churches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mini-warehouses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dwellings – 7,500 plus 2,000 square feet for each dwelling unit over one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setbacks same as above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5 stories or 35 feet*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parking varies based on use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M-1</th>
<th>At least 1,000 feet from nearest residential zone:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blast furnace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boiler works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coal screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junk yards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ore production</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sawmills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stockyards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stone mills or quarries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contractors plants and storage yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recycling Processing Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 feet in height*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No minimum building site area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 feet front, rear, and side yards (for side and rear number related to when next to residential zone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parking requirement based on use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For every one foot over 35 ft. the building shall be set back one additional foot from all property lines. Liquor stores are special exceptions by the City Council in the C-2 zoning district.
ENVIRONMENT

The two primary natural environmental features of the Alton Park community are Chattanooga Creek and Hawkins Ridge. Chattanooga Creek wraps around the study area along the eastern and northern boundary. The 100-year floodplain follows the flow of the Creek. The floodplain limits development opportunities in this area but creates opportunities for recreation. Because of the natural topography, Alton Park has excellent views and vistas. Hawkins Ridge forms the western boundary of the study area. Along the Ridge, the slopes are 15 degrees and above. Although this provides great views, it increases development cost in these areas. The natural terrain and floodways of this community should be preserved.

The Alton Park community has other environmental concerns. The community is currently the focus of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Air Toxic Survey conducted by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Air Pollution Control Bureau. While this study is in response to the changes in Air Quality standards nationwide, this community has had a preponderance of air quality concerns raised over the years. The proximity of industry to residential areas have led to resident’s complaints in regard to air emissions and odors. Additionally, there are areas within this community that have documented evidence of soil and water contamination. These environmental factors will have a major impact on future development for this community.
(Insert Slope Analysis map)
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Alton Park Community has two major north-south transportation corridors. They are Broad Street which is a four-lane divided arterial and Alton Park Boulevard which a two lane collector. The other north-south road is Central Avenue. Central is a two-lane road that dead-ends north of 38th Street. There is one major east-west corridor - 38th Street. Each of these corridors is impacted by the numerous railroads that transverse the area. The railroads provide service to the numerous industries in the area. However, the railroad crossings continue to cause significant conflict with vehicular traffic.

An overpass located at the 3400 block of Alton Park Boulevard has caused transportation problems because of its low height. The City has consulted with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the railroad about alternatives for this overpass. In addition, there is conflict between automobile traffic and truck traffic related to the numerous industries in the community.

Pedestrian mobility is important to having a good community. The Alton Park community has few fully developed sidewalks and no existing bike trails or greenways that connect to the neighborhood activities. In addition, the community has open drainage ditches and some flooding problems. The city has partially developed a Safewalk within the neighborhood that allows children to move safely within the neighborhood.

CARTA provides affordable public bus transit to for the residents for employment and activities inside and outside the community. According to the 1990 census, a large percentage of the residents do not own their own vehicles and rely on public transportation. As a result, the Alton Park route is the most highly used route within the CARTA system. The residents use the system for trips to the doctor’s office, the grocery stores, visit relatives, schools, jobs and other basic necessities.
(Insert Existing Transportation Map)
BUILDING CONDITIONS

Alton Park is an older community with many older structures. As previously mentioned, much of the existing housing stock is in poor condition. There is evidence of housing stock deterioration on practically every street in each residential sector as the map indicates. Additionally, many of the units in the Spencer J. McCallie public housing development are currently in the process of demolition. According to a recent survey by Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC and Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon, Inc., the following housing conditions exist in the Alton Park community:

- Major Deterioration- major rehabilitation necessary (278 parcels).
- Dilapidated but inhabited –Extensive rehabilitation necessary (51 parcels)
- Dilapidated and abandoned-Extensive rehabilitation necessary may require demolition (69 parcels).

These numbers do not include the public housing developments. The housing conditions pose a safety hazard and loss of homeownership value. Thus, substandard housing should be removed from the community.

While the above focus has been on residential structures, there exist both industrial and commercial structures that substantially contribute to additional blight within this community.
(Insert Existing Conditions Map)
ECONOMIC PROFILE

While a market study was not undertaken as part of this effort, working knowledge of the local area and property value trends painted a clear picture. Several key indicators such as vacancy rates, vacant land parcels, decreasing taxable values, clearly indicate the declining stability of the area.

For Alton Park, increases in growth and development in surrounding communities have resulted in the decline of investment in Alton Park. The numerous industrial and manufacturing uses provide opportunities for expanded tax base and employment. However, the lack of new home construction in Alton Park encourages residents to live outside the community and drive in for employment. Alton Park needs to re-establish an economic and visual image of being a “TO PLACE” instead of a mere “THROUGH PLACE”.

Alton Park enjoys a variety of small “mom and pop” businesses, and retail and service establishments located primarily along Alton Park Boulevard and 38th Street. Typically, these businesses are family owned and provide few opportunities for hiring residents from the community. However, some do hire neighborhood residents. The much larger concern is the many major manufacturing, industrial, and distribution businesses throughout Alton Park. These businesses are perceived to have good pay but have hired few neighborhood residents. On the other hand, the employers say that the hired residents do not have good work habits (arrive on time and daily) or do not pass the drug screening.

Alton Park is an important community to the overall City. It is the front door for those entering from the south. It is also just south of the ever-expanding Southside Planning District. The number of business opportunities, location of public facilities, housing stock and recreation opportunities affords Alton Park the opportunity to redevelop itself.

Creating opportunities for new residential and mixed-use environments should encourage people to locate in the Alton Park area. Alton Park is ripe for redevelopment; but if action is not taken, the blighting conditions will continue to strengthen, leaving in their wake empty store fronts, dilapidated buildings, decay and declining revenues.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The preliminary look at the existing assets and development pattern of the community revealed several components of a good neighborhood. Redevelopment is a challenging process that builds on intrinsic qualities and assets of the community. It must also be predicated upon a clear articulation of the conditions and issues -- both positive and negative -- facing the community. An understanding of these factors facilitates the crafting of a precisely targeted Master Plan/Redevelopment Plan and program. Alton Park’s opportunities lie in her assets:

- Considerable vacant and underutilized lands.
- A tremendous amount of industrial and manufacturing /employment opportunities.
- Potential development core along Alton Park Blvd and 38th Street
- Fifty acres becoming available at the Spencer McCallie site.
- Alton Park Health Center within the core area.
- Good public schools and churches, library, post office and other public facilities.
- Proximity to a growing downtown business district.
- The greenway and safewalk development

Alton Park is limited by the following constraints:

- Environmental contamination.
- Incompatible land uses.
- Public safety, drugs, and crime.
- Inappropriate Zoning.
- Limited transportation network and available infrastructure.
- Lack of commercial economic development and job opportunities.
- Need for infrastructure improvements such as drainage, sidewalks, and lighting.
- Declining housing stock.
- Lack of shopping opportunities.
- Lack of activities for children.

The following graphic illustrates the opportunities and constraints in the Alton Park community. The assets are items to build a foundation while the constraints are areas for improvement to build a future.
(Insert Opportunity /Constraints map)
THE MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan is the primary guiding tool for revitalization of Alton Park. The Master Plan is predicated by the desire to create more economically productive land uses and to enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Alton Park community.

The Master Plan reflects the transition from existing community conditions to a conceptual development model to the actual implementation process. The crux of this Master Plan is presented as a Plan Map as well as in text form with recommendations for future land use, public improvements and private investment projects.


VISION AND GOALS

As a result of the Charrette process, an overall vision statement was developed. The adopted vision statement is as follows:

Alton Park, a town within a town, providing a safe place to live, to work and to play. A community of affordable but quality housing in a variety of styles, accessible commercial development meeting the needs of the residents, supportive services (health, educational, recreational, religious, and social services) conveniently located to residents.

In addition, the following more specific goals reflect the issues identified by the residents during the charrette. These goals are expanded into different strategies, which describe the methods for implementation. A detailed listing of strategies is identified in the implementation section of this document. The Goals are:

**HOUSING:** To increase the number of quality, diverse and affordable homes in Alton Park through rehabilitation, infill, and new construction.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** To increase business and job opportunities for residents of Alton Park, attract investments and create value through coordinated public/private initiatives.
RECREATION: To provide a variety of recreational activities with alternatives that are intergenerational (children, seniors, and adults). To provide programs and opportunities for young men and women to assume responsibility.

TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY: To increase the linkages between the residential areas and neighborhood activity centers for pedestrians, bikes, automobiles and mass transit.

IDENTITY: To improve the overall quality of life, and creates a unique identity that makes Alton Park a “Memorable Place”.

PUBLIC SAFETY: To create an environment that creates a sense of security for children, seniors and adults.

CODE ENFORCEMENT: To encourage land planning that supports the neighborhood character and improve the neighborhood’s appearance through a systematic yet sensitive code enforcement process.
MASTER PLAN COMPONENTS

Housing

Existing Conditions:
The existing single-family housing stock is older and requires maintenance. Many of the owners of single-family housing are now on fixed income, which makes rehabilitation almost impossible. The four Public Housing developments provide housing to more than 50% of the resident population within the community.

Short-term Objective(s):
- Continue with an infill program to construct housing to stabilize the community.
- Encourage new single-family homeownership.
- Increase code enforcement and awareness.
- Promote housing rehabilitation programs
- Encourage environmentally sensitive developments.

Long-term Objective(s):
- Assemble properties so that subdivisions can be developed.
- Knit residential areas back together within the community.
- Create homeownership opportunities within existing housing stock.
- Fund a housing rehabilitation program of forgivable loans and grants for existing homeowners.

Safe and affordable housing is the backbone of any neighborhood. Once you have stable residential areas, commercial uses tend to follow to serve residential demand. The construction of housing is both a public and private sector task.

The City’s 5-Year Consolidated Community Development Plan 2000 should be flexible regarding housing needs in this community. The planning charrette, clearly identifies the need to improve the existing housing stock and create additional infill opportunities throughout the study area. The Housing Authority, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, (CNE), Chattanooga CHDHO, and Habitat for Humanity must play a vital role.

The local government can assist the private sector by providing basic public services of sidewalks, curbs and gutters. The Police Department can take a more visible role in decreasing crime and the perception of crime in Alton Park. Highly visible “we care” projects such as beautification through tree planting and pedestrian streetlights is encouraged. The City can also offer some incentives for investment in the area that include waiver of impact fees, aggregation of parcels, land swaps, and zoning incentives.
Home Ownership

Programs to assist homeownership or home renovation must be established and active in the neighborhood. This program should provide for low interest loans or grants, down payment assistance, and lower than market interest rates. The programs must prepare the potential owners of the responsibilities of home ownership, and must assist them in becoming credit-worthy. This pre-established pool must be available to move into the homes once constructed. These type programs are used throughout the country to encourage infill and first time home ownership. The lending institutions are critical to this process.

In conjunction with the financial institutions, the private sector must be brought to the table and advised of the Master Plan and its implementation phases. The excitement and commitment of the lending institutions, the City, and non-profits must be instilled in the private sector. The risk of private contractor involvement in this neighborhood must be minimized while the return on their investment realized. The thought of being able to make a profit and finding readily available homeowners is the incentive builders need to enter the Alton Park market.

The City’s programs should provide special attention to existing homeowners to assist in home renovations. Rehab programs, which include forgivable loans, emergency home repair programs, and low interest loans must be established or expanded.

Public Housing

The CHA has completed a new agency plan, which covers a five-year period and focuses on housing needs in an area within the Alton Park community. Currently, four (4) public housing communities are within this area: Spencer J. McCallie Homes, Emma Wheeler Homes, and Maurice Posse Homes and Mary Walker Towers. The Housing Authority’s statistics and those obtained by this group support the need for more affordable housing in both the public and private sectors. An expanded need for more one, two, and three bedroom units are identified. Enhanced rental and ownership programs must be targeted to this neighborhood.

Spencer McCallie Homes is currently undergoing demolition. The redesign of Spencer McCallie Homes should include a comprehensive mixed-use site of retail space, multifamily, and single-family housing. This development concept should provide a smooth transition from retail to housing surrounded by greenways.

The City and Housing Authority need to work in partnership to understand and implement the changes that this redevelopment will create for the community, and its inhabitants, both new and existing. If not funded through a partnership arrangement, the CHA will continue its existing program of demolition, based upon their own assessments and gradually re-shape McCallie Homes without consistent input from the City. The two agencies, as well as other community stakeholders should be partners on all physical changes of this property.
Infill Housing

While much of the residential infill and new housing opportunities will be targeted at areas of existing residential uses, there are tremendous opportunities to develop vacant industrial tracts into new residential uses. Any future residential development must address environmental concerns such as flooding and topography as well as deal forthrightly with the environmental issues of soil and water contamination that have affected this community. The City’s new focus to facilitate the reclamation of vacant properties for residential use will be an asset the Alton Park community.

The following images are the Consultant team’s interpretations of the types of housing that were proposed by the community during the Charette.
Existing View of Ohls Ave.

The concept below suggests the idea of new construction of single-family homes along Ohls Ave that blend into the surrounding community. The homes have front porches to encourage residents to get out and meet their neighbors. This approach also provides “eyes on the street” to discourage criminal activities. These homes would be affordable and at the current density of the neighborhood.
The following graphical concept represents a more detailed concept of Ohls Avenue with Hawkins Ridge in the background.

The following photograph shows what can occur throughout Alton Park on vacant parcels. This local Chattanooga example provides a higher population density than a neighborhood of solely single-family structures yet complements existing single-family neighborhoods.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Existing Condition(s):
The residents of Alton Park have endured the impacts of the various industries in this community for years. This includes pollution of the air, water and ground. There has been conflict between land uses, the numerous railroad crossings, and heavy trucks. According to the residents, the Alton Park industries are not hiring local residents; there are no shopping opportunities; and no opportunities exist for African-Americans to go into business. The business owners expressed a conflicting viewpoint that job opportunities do exist. However, many residents will not work with consistency; many residents do not arrive to their jobs on-time; many residents leave their job after working a short time; and finally, many residents fail their drug screening. The Alton Park community has numerous commercial structures with no common theme or unified development pattern. The Alton Park community lacks a community form.

Short-term objective(s):
• Develop better partnerships between local industry and residents of the community for addressing employment needs.
• Provide training opportunities for skills development for residents.
• Develop streetscapes that provide a common theme, links various activities and beautifies the area with infrastructure upgrades.
• Initiate facade improvements for commercial buildings.

Long-term objective(s):
• Provide incentives for business startups and expansions
• Develop three Activity Centers within the community
• Integrate new resident-owned small businesses within larger activity centers along the Alton Park Blvd and 38th Street corridors, and the Anchor Glass site.

Employment Opportunities

The jobless rate is lower than it has been in years. Although these are the best of times, many people are not riding the economic surge that is occurring. During the interviews, workshops, and focus groups, the need for jobs and business opportunities was evident. In the African-American community, the jobless rate is often five times higher than in other communities. The problem is two-fold. On one hand there are numerous industries within the Alton Park community. These employers must be committed to hiring workers from within the community. On the other hand, the employers say that the workers must be dependable (arrive to work on time and daily) and must pass drug testing. To raise the level of employability of the residents a coordinated strategy must be developed. The employers must be contacted and a discussion held to determine their long term expansion plans. What are the skills necessary for employment with the firms? Once this is determined, a targeted training program should be coordinated with a vocational/technical school or other provider. A good potential facilitator of these processes would be the Alton Park Community Development Corporation.
Business Opportunities

The desire for African-American owned businesses is a noble goal. African-Americans are large consumers of goods and services. However, the monies spent are floating out of the community. A method for capturing those dollars is important to help improve local businesses, to assist in their expansion, and to help in their survival. A Business Incubator was suggested to provide low cost rents, accessibility to phones, faxes, copiers, and receptionist services, which are important ingredients for effective and long-term business growth. The financial community must become willing partners with the community by providing sound business planning opportunities for entrepreneurs. The Bethlehem Center Credit Union can facilitate this process by establish a revolving loan pool available to both new and existing business owners in Alton Park.

Activity Centers

There are three activity centers proposed in the Master Plan 38th Street, Alton Park Boulevard, and Anchor Glass. The first development should be a neighborhood activity center that caters to the needs of the residents in the core of the Alton Park community and should be located on the Spencer McCallie site across from the Bethlehem Center. The second activity center should be located at the intersection of 38th Street and Alton Park Boulevard. At both locations, a mixed-use concept is proposed to accommodate both commercial as well as residential usage. This type of development would be developed with a unified theme and a mixed-use zoning district. The proposal uses decorative lighting, underground utilities, canopies, glass, and heavily landscaped grounds.

Again any future development opportunities must address environmental concerns such as flooding and topography as well as deal forthrightly with the potential environmental issues of soil and water contamination that have generally affected this community.
Alton Park Boulevard at 38th Street looking north.

Looking north along Alton Park Boulevard showing Alton Park Church of Christ on the left and a new Community Clock Tower on the right. This new streetscape could have benches, broad sidewalks, delightful flags, banners, signs and water features to fill out a lively urban environment.
Existing commercial along South 38th Street.

The existing development can be upgraded by adding potted plants and improving the façade.
Existing commercial along the 38th Street.

Commercial rehabilitation along 38th Street.
Existing commercial along the 38th Street.

Commercial rehabilitation along 38th Street.
Conceptual view of the fully redeveloped South 38th Street Corridor looking southwest with Lookout Mountain in background. This new community commercial center will provide the small business entrepreneur with the facilities and support while at the same time provide goods/services to the Alton Park neighborhood. Included may be, business services, studio space for arts and crafts, photography, beauty salons, specialty bookstores, bakeries, and cafes.

From conceptual to a local example of an actual completed redevelopment taken from the successes in the Westside community.
The final and most ambitious activity center concept focuses on Anchor Glass. Once redeveloped, this site will serve as a regional activity center and attract persons from all parts of the City and surrounding states. The proposal takes advantage of the site’s history as the first glass company (for Coca Cola), the railroad tracts, railroad carts, and water features, to create a unique experience. Banners, flags, decorative lighting, and lush vegetation enhance the experience at this activity center. Inside the building is a mixed-use project, which allows a higher density/intensity of development. The proposed uses include an amphitheater for community performances, residential loft apartments, full service restaurants, office space, and incubator space, and an indoor community playhouse.

In the following images, the existing warehouse is converted to a much-needed use within the neighborhood. This old warehouse and others can be retrofitted to accommodate the needs of the residents. The flags add a festive flair to the shopping experience, the trees provide a soothing affect and buffers the automobile traffic from the patrons of the store. The utilities are underground and the simple lamps are accented with banners announcing community activities. Since this project involves the retrofitting an existing building that is currently privately owned, this project can only be accomplished in the long term with some assistance from the City (incentives) for private developers. In addition, any redevelopment concept must address the environmental issues surrounding the previous industrial use.

The employment opportunities, business opportunities, and activity centers combine to rejuvenate and invigorate Alton Park.
View of Anchor Glass facility looking south from 42nd Street.

In this concept, a new community commercial center will provide the small business entrepreneur with the facilities and support to create service to the Alton Park neighborhood. Included may be business services, studio space for arts and crafts, photography, beauty salons, specialty bookstores, bakeries, cafes and performance spaces.
RECREATION

Existing Condition(s):
There are limited recreational opportunities in Alton Park. The Alton Park Recreation Center is a very small park sandwiched between industries. The Chattanooga Creek is partially complete and is not easily accessible from the core neighborhood residents.

Short-term objective(s):
• Construct the Southside Regional Recreational Facility consistent with the Recreate 2008 Plan.
• Develop pocket parks throughout the community.
• Extend the Safewalk, and create tree-lined streets for pleasant walking experience.

Long-term objective(s):
• Extend the Greenway development along the Chattanooga Creek and evaluate potential opportunities to convert abandoned rail line to trolley or walking trials.

New residents locating to an area look for good schools, affordable housing, accessible shopping, and recreational opportunities. The recreational opportunities should serve both adults and children. Convenient and accessible recreation improves the overall quality of life within a neighborhood.

There are some common principles of recreation that have been distilled from experience through the years. These principles should be considered basic to the success of any community recreation planning effort:

• All people should have access to recreational activities and facilities
• Public recreation should be coordinated with other private community recreation opportunities to avoid duplication
• Public recreation should be integrated with all other public services such as education, health, and transportation
• Land should be acquired prior to development and dedicated to park and recreation uses.
Regional Recreational Facility

The Alton Park Master Plan incorporates the proposed Southside Regional Recreational facility. The blended solution to the Alton Park recreational needs is to have the swimming pool and multipurpose building located on 40th Street that serves the needs of both Alton Park and St. Elmo.

The second component is the competitive sports fields (baseball, softball, soccer) and outdoor courts (basketball/roller derby/tennis combination). The areas suggested for this recreational development include the former Charles A. Bell site and former the 36th Street landfill site behind the Franklin Middle School. The site can also incorporate a tot lot and a walking trial. The Charles A. Bell Building should be razed due to environmental concerns and a new building constructed to provide new value in this community.
The Plan suggests competitive sports for males and females and other programs for children that build self-esteem. Activities for children/teens include the following: computer classes, drama, dance lessons, youth leadership, and self-esteem. These activities could be programmed and implemented by a paid city staff and coordinated with volunteers.

The Plan also suggests activities for seniors. These activities include: exercise, diet, quilting/sewing, ceramics, cooking, and pottery classes. Intergenerational activities that pair children and seniors can help build needed friendship for both. The seniors should also be offered educational activities such as public safety, emergency aid, housing programs for seniors, social services, emergency numbers to call, and health education.

**Pocket Parks**

One goal of the plan is to put the “park” back into Alton Park. The plan takes vacant lots within neighborhoods and designates them as pocket parks. These parks do not have to be on the exact lots identified but they do provide opportunities for City acquisition. The purpose of a tot lot or pocket park is to provide an opportunity to relax from a hectic day. It is a passive way to commune with nature, take time to bond with a child or spouse or just read a book. Potentially, the small pocket parks are large assets to a neighborhood.

**Safewalk**

The Safewalk provides an opportunity for kids to walk safely from one location to another. The Safewalk is to be extended from Spencer McCallie to the Winn-Dixie Shopping Plaza behind the Hamilton County Administration building. The potential for connection to the Greenway and other parks should be investigated and added where feasible. The Safewalk can be considered both recreation and a form of transportation. In addition, to the Safewalk, the major roads are planned for beautification. **Once the trees are planted, decorative lighting installed, and sidewalks improved, these roads will provide a linear park-like setting.** These too can enhance the living environment and contribute to the quality of life.

**Greenway**

Chattanooga Creek has been polluted for years. However, through a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, the southern end of the Creek has been reclaimed and is now usable. The cleanup has resulted in a unique recreational opportunity for walking/strolling, picnicking, and even fishing. The Greenway should be extended north with several public access points along the way. This Creek can provide an amenity to the entire Alton Park community. With the proposed extension of Central Avenue Parkway, new opportunities for subdivisions with access to the Greenway will be created.
Rails to Trails

A long term strategy is to discuss with the railroad the viability of vacating unused tracks. These routes can be reused for safe walks or jogging trails. As industrial uses are concentrated, the various rail lines may not be necessary. Discussions, alternatives, and opportunities should be evaluated by the City to have donated or acquire unnecessary rail lines. Thereby the vacated tracks become recreational linkages between neighborhoods rather than dividers of neighborhoods.
(Insert Greenways Map)
Transportation

Existing Condition(s):
There are numerous conflicts between trains and cars, cars and trucks, trucks and neighborhoods, lack of sidewalks, need for expanded bus service.

Short-term objective(s):
- Improve the existing sidewalks and construct new ones.
- Work with CARTA on route and times.
- Resurface and improve certain roads.
- Improve pedestrian connections with beautification
- Identify a truck route for industry in the community.

Long-term objective(s):
- Remove or close vacated rail lines.
- Extend several neighborhood roads.
- Continue beautification of pedestrian linkages (walking, biking, Safewalk).
- Connect the Chattanooga Choo-Choo and redeveloped Anchor Glass properties with a train linkage.

Transportation is a vital service in urban areas. The transportation system is the framework upon which the City is built. The purposes of transportation are to enable people to move among various sections of the city for many purposes and to move goods. A good transportation system provides the means by which people can get to work, can shop, and can spend their leisure hours. Thus, the system should support the collective mobility goals of the people in the area. This section discusses the role of transportation in Alton Park relative to major roads, railroads, truck traffic, public transportation and parking.

Road Extensions

There are no four-lane roads within the Study Area. The major collectors in the area include Alton Park Boulevard, 38th Street, 40th Street and the southern portion of Central Avenue. Accessibility to local destinations and other areas of the city is an important component of a “good” neighborhood. Alton Park is developed essentially as a grid, which allows many route options and helps alleviate traffic congestion. However, pieces of the grid are incomplete in Alton Park or have been cut off by large industrial development. Several roads in the community should be extended to provide more connections between neighborhoods. In addition, pedestrian movement should be enhanced with additional connecting sidewalks and shade trees. As roads are improved, bike lanes should be included to encourage bike traffic. Bike racks should be strategically placed within the activity centers to allow for safekeeping. This can be part of the site plan approval for major developments within the activity centers or provided by the City.
One road proposed for extension is Central Avenue near the Charles A. Bell site. This road should be improved into a “parkway” with two lanes, turning lane and street trees.

The extension of this road provides two incentives. The road extension opens up land along Chattanooga Creek to residential development. The Creek also becomes an amenity encouraging residential subdivisions in a beautiful setting. The Greenway will provide immediate recreational opportunities. This is a great opportunity to expand the tax base with a variety of housing types and values. Secondly, the road provides the residents with an additional access to I-24. Currently, the only access to the interstate is via Alton Park Boulevard to Market Street.

**Railroads**

Alton Park is traversed by numerous railroads. The legacy of both Chattanooga and Alton Park is related to railroads. The history suggests that the founders provided incentives to businesses to locate in the area. The manufacturing firms took advantage of the transportation network. Although important for the movement of goods; today, the railroads cause significant conflict with vehicular traffic. For example, the railroad overpass near Alton Park Boulevard and 33rd Street has only a ten-foot clearance that causes truck accidents. Alternatives for the movement of the trains and trucks at his location should be evaluated. At other locations, the rail lines are at grade. Throughout the area, there is conflict between automobile traffic and trains.

The Master Plan proposes the vacating of certain unused rail lines. These rail lines can be used to complement the Safewalk, the Greenway, the new pedestrian-friendly streets, and the recreational plan. The idea is similar to the “rails-to-trails” approach which connects neighborhoods and provides another amenity that gives value to the neighborhoods and provides recreational opportunities.
In an earlier section, the Master Plan identified Anchor Glass as a potential community-wide activity center. A long-term consideration is the connection of this activity center with the Chattanooga Choo-Choo. Yes, the Choo-Choo is famous as a train depot and visitors can even sleep on railroad cars. However, a unique opportunity exists to activate a rail line for people to actually ride a train from the Choo-Choo to the Anchor Glass Activity Center. The center is proposed with a community theater, restaurant, offices, shops and the history of glass bottling and Chattanooga’s relationship with Coca-Cola. The details of the proposed center are provided in the Economic Development section under Activity Centers.

**Truck Traffic**

Due to the amount of industry in the Alton Park community, there is tremendous conflict between truck traffic and personal automobiles and pedestrians. The residents complain of the trucks using the neighborhood as a through route. This is particularly true for truck traffic along Alton Park Boulevard, which must use 33rd Street and Chandler Place as the route to avoid the low railroad overpass. An identified truck route is needed to shuttle large trucks from industrial plants to their destinations with minimal conflict with residential areas. There is also concern regarding the type of materials that are transported by the industries through the neighborhood. An identified truck route that travels through commercial areas with limited contact with residential areas is preferred.

**Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)**

The Alton Park area is served by public bus service through C.A.R.T.A. This is important in that many of the residents do not own an automobile. The Alton Park route has the highest passenger count in the City. Residents have raised concern about the hours of operation for the bus service. CARTA should undertake a survey to determine the percent of elderly, the percent of poor, or the percent of other market groups in the coverage area. Since the maximum acceptable walking distance to a bus stop is about a quarter of a mile, a half-mile band centered on the transit route establishes the coverage. The frequency of transit service is usually a policy decision. A survey of the ridership or a pilot bus or demonstration project after hours can determine potential ridership. A common starting point is thirty minutes between buses during peak periods and sixty minutes for the middle of the day and the evening. Various sizes of buses are available with capacities ranging from twenty to fifty-two seats.

The Plan proposes a series of mixed-use activity centers that are connected by a mixed-use spine. The most intense uses are proposed at the activity centers. The CARTA route should link these activity centers. New bus shelters should be developed and installed by CARTA to protect bus users from the weather.
Parking

A component of transportation deals with the parking of vehicles. The provision of adequate off-street parking is important to the successful operation of businesses. Along the mixed-use corridors, shared off-street parking should also be encouraged. Rather than all parking lots in front of each establishment, new development should include side or rear parking to help maintain the streetscape. In addition, central or mid-block parking would encourage consumers to walk along the roads and activate the streets.
(Insert Transportation Map)
RELATED SUB-COMPONENTS

In the creation of the Alton Park Master Plan, the community identified the following issues as vitally important. In the drafting of this document, the consultants present these issues as sub-components of the Alton Park redevelopment process. Each of these issues is interrelated to the four primary components discussed above. These issues are:

- Identity
- Public Safety
- Code Enforcement

IDENTITY

Existing Condition(s):

Currently, the Alton Park community does not have positive landmarks other than those associated with general blight. Vacant lands, open drainage ditches, overgrown lots, empty store fronts, dilapidated buildings, poor street lighting, and overall community decline suggests a lack of identity.

Objective(s):

- Create a distinct sense of identity for the Alton Park Community
- Develop a public facility which serves as the centerpiece of community activities

How does one know that they have reached the community of Alton Park? How do you create a feeling of community? How do you tie the various pieces of the quilt together and create a community? The Oak Hill & Piney Woods neighborhoods both have small entry landmarks. The Harris/Woods Park serves the same for the Southside Gardens neighborhood. There are entry landmarks to each of the 4 public housing neighborhoods. However, there exist no entry ways signifying the “Alton Park Community”!!

The Master Plans suggest the construction of five specific major gateways that will signify the “identity” of the Alton Park community at five points of entry into this community. These gateways combined with needed infrastructure improvements such as drainage, sidewalks, improved lighting, selected streetscaping and new developments within the core of this community will enable a new “identity” to exist for Alton Park much like that which now exist on the new “WestSide”.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Existing Condition(s):

According to Chattanooga Police Department crime statistics, the Alton Park community has some of the higher percentages of incidences of criminal activity than other areas of the city. Many residents and non-residents of this community expressed the sentiment that the public housing developments have provided a safe haven for those that have committed crimes. This perception was manifested by the comments of the charrette process.

Objective(s):
- Create sense of community policing and visibility
- Eliminate crime and drug activity throughout the community

Some positive accomplishments have occurred. The City Police Dept has established a mini-precinct in partnership with CHA at the Spencer McCallie site. In addition, the City in partnership with the Trust for Public Land has partially developed a Safewalk within the neighborhood that allows children to move safely within the neighborhood. This combination of enhanced police visibility and new infrastructure combined with high visibility lighting is a prototype of the effect that positive streetscaping can assist in enhancing public safety throughout this community. The Master Plan suggests the expansion of a police precinct concept and the Safewalk concepts to other areas within this community.

LAND PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

Existing Condition(s):

The Alton Park community has an imbalance of land uses. What exists now is a large amount of industrial use acreage that divides the residential use areas and causes a disjointed land use pattern. In addition, much of the residential areas have high-density zoning. As a result, a building permit can be pulled to construct duplexes or multifamily immediately adjacent to single-family uses. If not appropriately designed, this can cause problems relative to compatibility.

Compounding the land use problems of this community is the general condition of the structures. Many of the residential areas show signs of neglect and need of general maintenance. There is evidence of housing stock deterioration on practically every street in each residential sector. Both, industrial and commercial structures substantially contribute to blight within this community. These conditions pose a safety hazard and loss of homeownership value, a loss of tax base and overall community value.
Objectives:
- Encourage land use pattern which enhances residential and commercial developments
- Encourage effective code enforcement process

The Master Plan suggests a re-thinking of the development pattern of this community by providing a system of incentives, guidelines and requirements oriented toward redevelopment. The City’s land use structure, land development codes, and agency management tools must be changed to create a user-friendly environment for attracting new investment to Alton Park.
MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

HOUSING COMPONENT

- Initiate infill program to construct housing and stabilize the community.
- Assemble properties to establish residential districts separate from industrial areas.
- Encourage new single-family homeownership.
- Create homeownership opportunities within existing housing stock.
- Fund a housing rehabilitation program of forgivable loans and grants for existing homeowners.
- Create a program for increased code enforcement.
- Encourage environmentally sensitive development concepts.
- Knit residential areas back together within the community.
- Assemble properties so that subdivisions can be developed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT

- Develop streetscape to provide common theme, link various activities and beautify the area.
- Use streetscape to link the various activities.
- Initiate façade improvement for current commercial buildings.
- Establish three distinct activity centers.
- Provide incentive for business start-up and expansion.
- Encourage environmentally sensitive development concepts.
- Develop better partnerships between local industry and residents of the community for addressing employment needs.
- Provide training opportunities for skills development for residents.
- Integrate new resident-owned small businesses within larger activity centers along the Alton Park Blvd and 38th Street corridors, and the Anchor Glass site.

RECREATIONAL COMPONENT

- Implement Recreation Plan consistent with Parks and Recreation Department.
- Develop pocket parks throughout the neighborhood.
- Extend safewalk and create tree-lined streets.
- Extend greenway and walking trails along Chattanooga Creek.
- Evaluate potential conversion of rails to trails.
- Encourage environmentally sensitive development concepts.

TRANSPORTATION COMPONENT

- Improve existing sidewalks and construct new ones.
- Work with CARTA on route and times.
• Resurface and improve roads in community.
• Improve pedestrian connection with beautification efforts.
• Remove or close some rail lines.
• Extend existing neighborhood roads.
• Identify a truck route for industry in the community.
• Continue beautification of pedestrian linkages.
• Connect the Chattanooga Choo-Choo and redeveloped Anchor Glass Property with a train linkage.

IDENTITY

• Create a distinct sense of identity for the Alton Park Community.
• Develop a public facility which serves as the centerpiece of community activities.
• Establish gateways or entry features at strategic location within the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

• Create Sense of Community Policing & Visibility.
• Eliminate crime and drug activity throughout the community.
• Increase lighting in the neighborhood.

LAND PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

• Encourage land use pattern which enhances residential and commercial developments.
• Encourage effective code enforcement processes.
• Initiate rezoning to decrease the amount of industrially zoned land.
IMPLEMENTATION

The success or failure of the Alton Park Master Plan hinges on the ability of the City to stimulate re-investment, to undertake public improvement projects, and to engender community support. Chattanooga has taken its first steps by identifying Alton Park’s needs, evaluating alternatives, and preparing a Plan to guide its efforts into this new millennium. The City must recognize that its most important role in the implementation of the Plan is that of facilitator. While the Plan does not contain recommendations for land acquisition, the City’s responsibilities include being the catalyst to stimulate, market, and encourage both public support and private participation.

Preparation of a redevelopment plan is only the initial step. Success in implementation is directly related to the local effort expended to bring it to fruition. Redevelopment is rewarding but challenging, requiring a well-organized program to help achieve the desired results. Success in redevelopment must be earned through persistence and commitment.

PRINCIPLE ELEMENTS

There are four principal elements that are essential for the success of any redevelopment program. They are of equal importance and reflect the many “fronts” on which the redevelopment is implemented. Success must be achieved in all four.

- **Administration:** The framework for moving the program toward completion. This includes establishing an organization to ensure success by: creating and following detailed plans; engaging in appropriate permitting for development projects to proceed; monitoring code enforcement, plans, and financial measures; and finally, developing monitoring and evaluation procedures that enable the City to constructively critique itself, the Plan and the process.

- **Finance:** The heart of the redevelopment program. Without the lifeblood of dollars flowing through the program, plans will either go unimplemented or fail completely. Yearly budgeting, identifying funding sources, planning for capital improvements, phasing, and monitoring can help assure the resources necessary to produce and implement an integrated Finance Plan. Alton Park needs to be a part of the City’s Capital Improvements Budget.

- **Regulation:** A system of incentives, guidelines and requirements oriented toward redevelopment. The City’s land use structure, land development codes, and agency management tools will either create a user-friendly environment for public private partnerships or stall those efforts, reducing the financial potential and lessening the City’s ability to succeed.
Leadership: The soul of the program. Herein lies the commitment, determination, dedication, compromise and integration of all interests required to proceed to the desired future. Only through a sound public-private partnership, fueled by strong leadership from the City’s elected and appointed officials, can the overall Plan be successfully implemented. This leadership comes from both elected and non-elected positions and cooperative relationships with neighborhood associations, non-profits, staff, and residents.

All of these elements are interrelated. Chattanooga is fortunate to possess all of these elements—their use in the right combination will surely be the key to success.

FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Master Plan is action driven and geared toward achieving results. The City is well on its way to “change” in Alton Park. The following charts illustrate possible cooperative linkages and potential funding sources. The possible cooperative linkages are those agencies/departments that can be involved to implement the strategy. None of these strategies can be implemented in isolation. Several parties should be involved. The potential funding sources are simply that “potential.” The majority of these sources are grants and/or loan programs offered by the federal government. The City, non-profits, or agencies can pursue the funds to assist in implementation of the strategies. Potential funding sources continue to change. The City should pursue all potential funding sources to leverage local funds. In addition, as stressed throughout the Master Plan process, the residents must take an active role in reaching solutions to change Alton Park.
SAMPLE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS
FOR IMPLEMENTATION