



GATEWAYS TO THE CITY

The concept of highlighting the entry into a city or district is critical for its public image. Developing a sense of civic pride and identity is an important tool for marketing the city within the greater region. If a city demonstrates pride in itself and its inhabitants, not only will the residents feel an obligation for the upkeep and appearance of their surroundings, but visitors will feel more comfortable and welcome, and will be more likely to return. University Heights' borders with Cleveland Heights, South Euclid, Beachwood and Shaker Heights have the tendency to blur with one another. As a means of reconciling this problem University Heights has erected a series of decorative signs to announce when one is entering or leaving the city.

These signs are a wonderful starting point and essential for promoting the city. However, a series of opportunities exist to create true gateways along major routes into University Heights. It is important that each of these gateways be designated with a similar set of treatments that will be immediately apparent to the passer by as representative of University Heights. The intersections of Cedar and South Taylor Roads, Cedar and Warrensville Center Roads, Cedar and Green Roads, and Warrensville Center Road at Fairmount Circle are the key places that these gateways should be erected. The existing signs found at the entries to the city along the neighborhood residential streets are also very important for the community, and should continue to be maintained in addition to new, larger gateway opportunities.

The following map addresses areas in need of gateway / identification elements.



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CHARACTER OF THE CITY

GATEWAYS

DRAWING KEY
 COMMUNITY
 GATEWAYS
 CIVIC IDENTIFICATION
 POINTS



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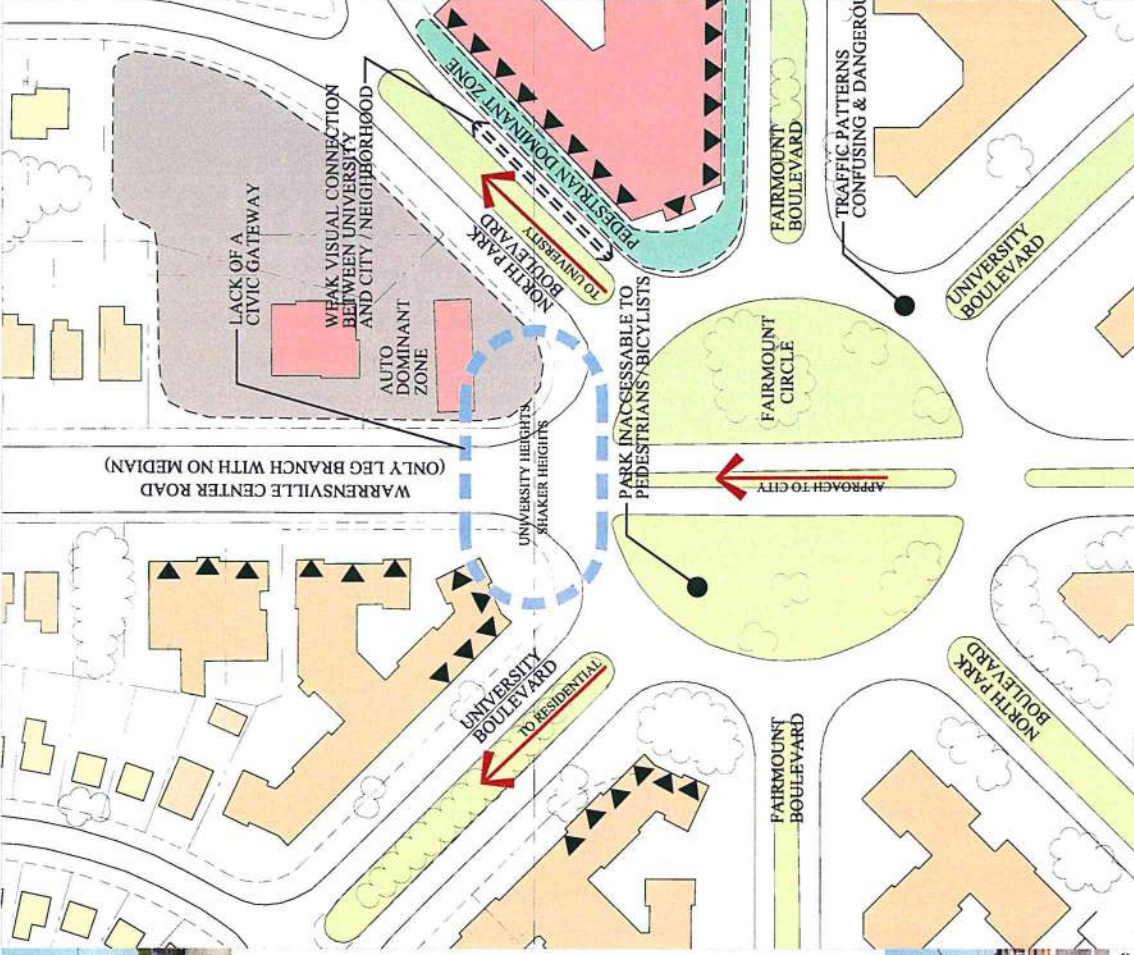


The Fairmount Circle Gateway

Fairmount Circle has the greatest potential to become a visually unique and commercially strong gateway into the City of University Heights. Although the majority of the circle falls within Shaker Heights, the defined open space serves as an identifiable physical link between the two cities. Surrounded by large, multi-family buildings and retail, Fairmount Circle maintains a sense of place unlike any other public open space within the city. However, the property bordering the circle in University Heights falls short of truly addressing and defining the space. An important visual axis is created along North Park Boulevard between John Carroll University and Fairmount Circle. The placement of a gas station at the intersection of Warrensville Center Road and North Park Boulevard does not address the circle, frame the view to John Carroll, or provide a feeling of arrival as one enters into University Heights. Eight roads lead out of Fairmount Circle and all, except Warrensville Center Road as it enters University Heights, have a green, tree-lined median. This section of Warrensville Center Road, despite the fact that it leads to the civic heart of University Heights, is the only road out of the circle that does not provide a sense of arrival. Additionally, while Fairmount Circle represents the opportunity for a truly unique gateway and a well-defined public space, it lacks pedestrian scale and accessibility.



Northwest Corner



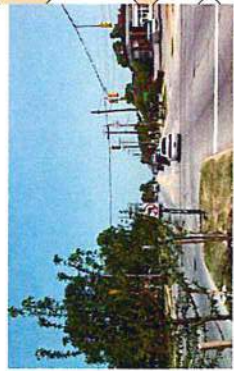
Northeast Corner



Northpark Boulevard Looking Towards John Carroll University



Duplexes along Warrensville Center Road



Warrensville Center Road from Fairmount Circle



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CHARACTER OF THE CITY

THE FAIRMOUNT CIRCLE GATEWAY

- DRAWING KEY**
- ▲ WELL-DEFINED STREET EDGE
 - △ LESS-DEFINED STREET EDGE
 - AUTO-DOMINANT ZONE
 - PEDESTRIAN-DOMINANT ZONE
 - SINGLE FAMILY
 - DUPLEX
 - MULTI-FAMILY
 - MIXED USE
 - COMMERCIAL
 - CIVIC
 - INSTITUTIONAL
 - PARKS/OPEN SPACE



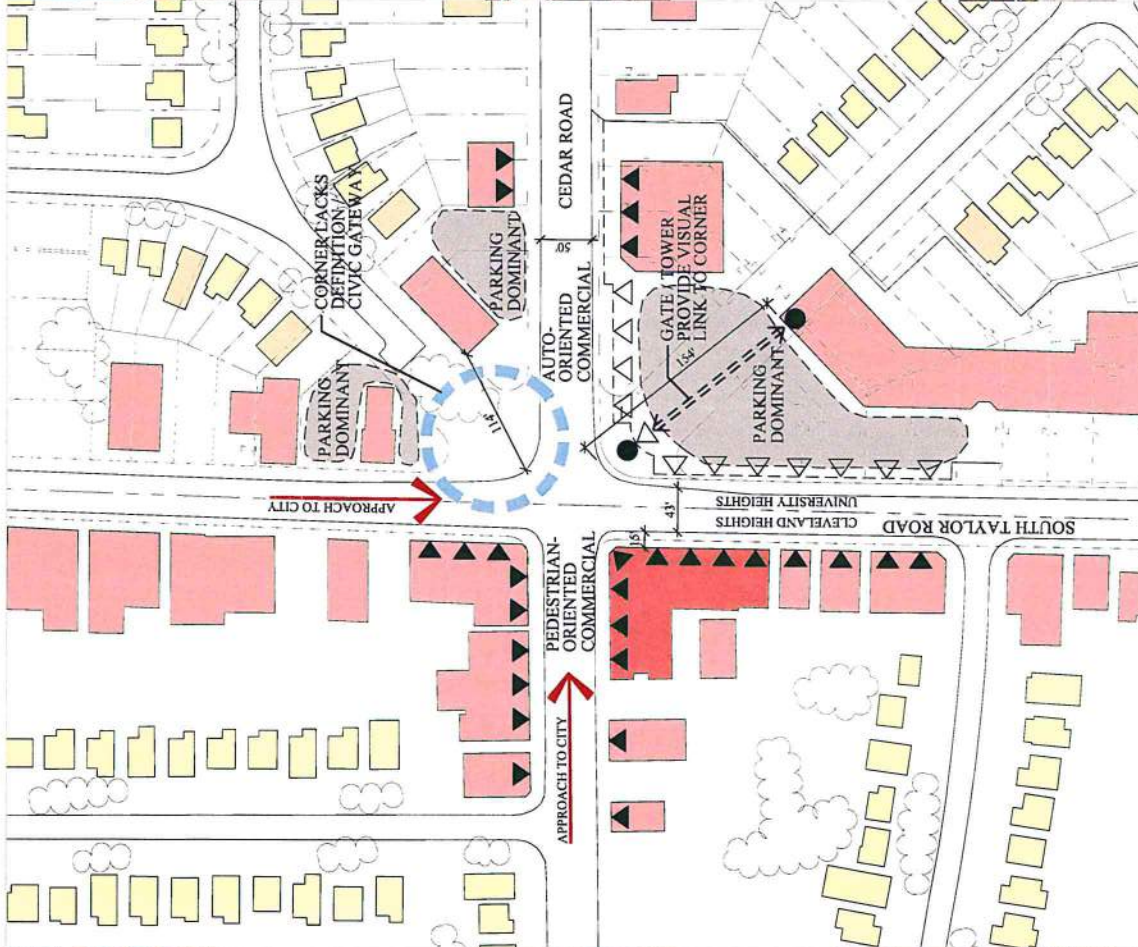
The Cedar / Taylor Gateway

The Cedar Taylor intersection represents the most identifiable gateway to the city's western border from Cleveland Heights. Currently the intersection is characterized by a variety of commercial uses, including a combination of older, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses and newer auto-dominated uses. The University Corners shopping plaza, the newest redevelopment of the southeast corner, is planned to merge modern retailing within an older storefront context. It steps back and places a parking lot between the storefronts and the street with landscaping, fencing, and brick piers at the corner making an attempt to recreate the strong street edge established by the buildings on the Cleveland Heights side of the intersection. However, with virtually no relation to the street of any of the businesses on the northeast quadrant of the intersection, the fencing at University Corners cannot stand on its own to represent a meaningful entry to the city. Without creating a sense of place, there is no feeling of arrival as one leaves Cleveland Heights and enters University Heights. This lack of pedestrian activity and scale is much more apparent as one passes from University Heights into Cleveland Heights due to the way that the buildings on the Cleveland Heights corners frame the street. Redeveloping the northeast quadrant of the intersection with new buildings directly addressing this important edge of the city will begin to rectify the problems the area has in serving as a true community gateway. To accomplish this objective the creation of a physical symbol such as coordinated signage and public art will announce one's arrival and celebrate this gateway into University Heights.





Northwest Corner



Northeast Corner



Approach From the West



Approach From the North



Southwest Corner



CHARACTER OF THE CITY

THE CEDAR / TAYLOR GATEWAY

- DRAWING KEY**
- ▲ WELL-DEFINED STREET EDGE
 - △ LESS-DEFINED STREET EDGE
 - AUTO-DOMINANT ZONE
 - SINGLE FAMILY
 - DUPLEX
 - MULT-FAMILY
 - MIXED USE
 - COMMERCIAL
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The Cedar / Warrensville Gateway

The Cedar/Warrensville Road intersection welcomes residents and introduces visitors to the heart of University Heights' primary commercial district. As such, it provides one of the best opportunities to convey the spirit and character of the community. Currently, this intersection is dominated by the automobile. Building configurations place parking along the main streets, diminishing the intimacy, vitality and welcoming environment that this place could have. Projects currently under construction and planned for the area around this important intersection have the potential to balance the vehicular environment with the needs of the pedestrian. The University Square shopping center will do much to highlight this as a destination. Likewise, potential plans for the redevelopment of Cedar Center would enable the development of a true mixed-use district for the city with reconfigured commercial space, integrated residential units and public spaces. This has the potential to highlight the City of University Heights as a truly groundbreaking community within the Cleveland area.

From a purely physical standpoint, however, the edges of this intersection need greater definition. Signage, street trees, landscaping, lighting and the inclusion of pedestrian amenities can do much to enhance the experience and create a true civic gateway. Creating an atmosphere where the importance of the pedestrian is immediately apparent is an excellent method of calming traffic, while providing an inviting atmosphere necessary for the success of a town center. Long-term goals should include roadway reconfiguration. A landscaped median along Warrensville Center Road would provide a place of shelter for those unable to cross the full width of the street in one light, while creating a sense of entry that hints at the tranquility and beauty within the city's neighborhoods. While the University Square project creates a renewed sense of street edge, its setback diminishes this effect. A series of layered edge elements would help to strengthen this corner. These could take the form of a row of closely spaced street trees (18'-24'), ornamental fencing, or even an out-parcel building at the corner to provide a more continuous retail street frontage.

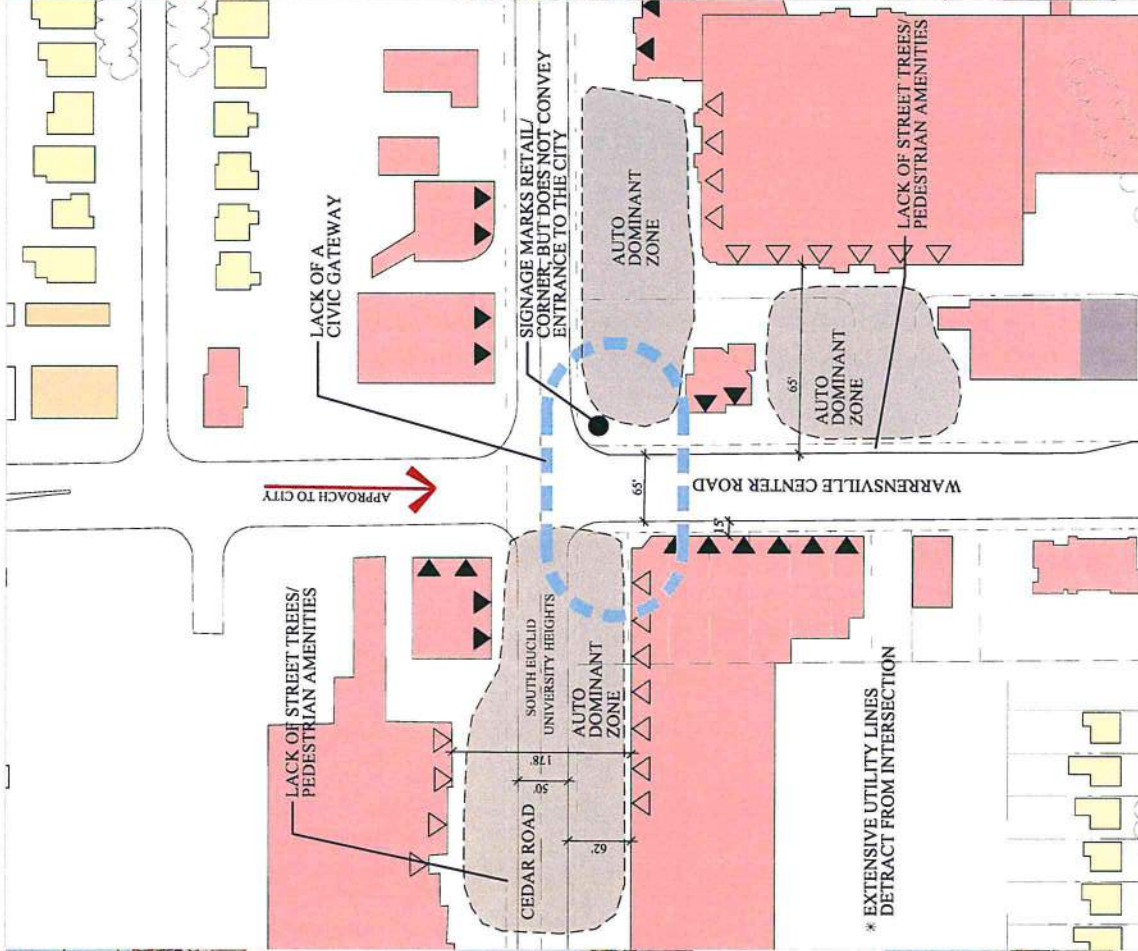


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Northwest Corner



Cedar Center



Southwest Corner



Northeast Corner



Approach From the North



Southeast Corner

CHARACTER OF THE CITY

THE CEDAR /
WARRENSVILLE
GATEWAY

DRAWING KEY

- ▲ WELL-DEFINED STREET EDGE
- △ LESS-DEFINED STREET EDGE
- AUTO-DOMINANT ZONE
- SINGLE FAMILY
- DUPLEX
- MULTI-FAMILY
- MIXED USE
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The Cedar / Green Gateway

The Cedar/Green intersection represents the strongest challenge to the creation of a sense of arrival at University Heights' gateways. Gas stations occupy the prime properties on three of the four corners of the intersection. To further increase the domination of the automobile in this part of the city, small shopping plazas, separated from the street by parking lots, occupy the fourth corner and properties immediately adjacent to the corners. It is at this point within the City that University Heights blends into the context of its neighboring municipalities the most, making this the least defined gateway.

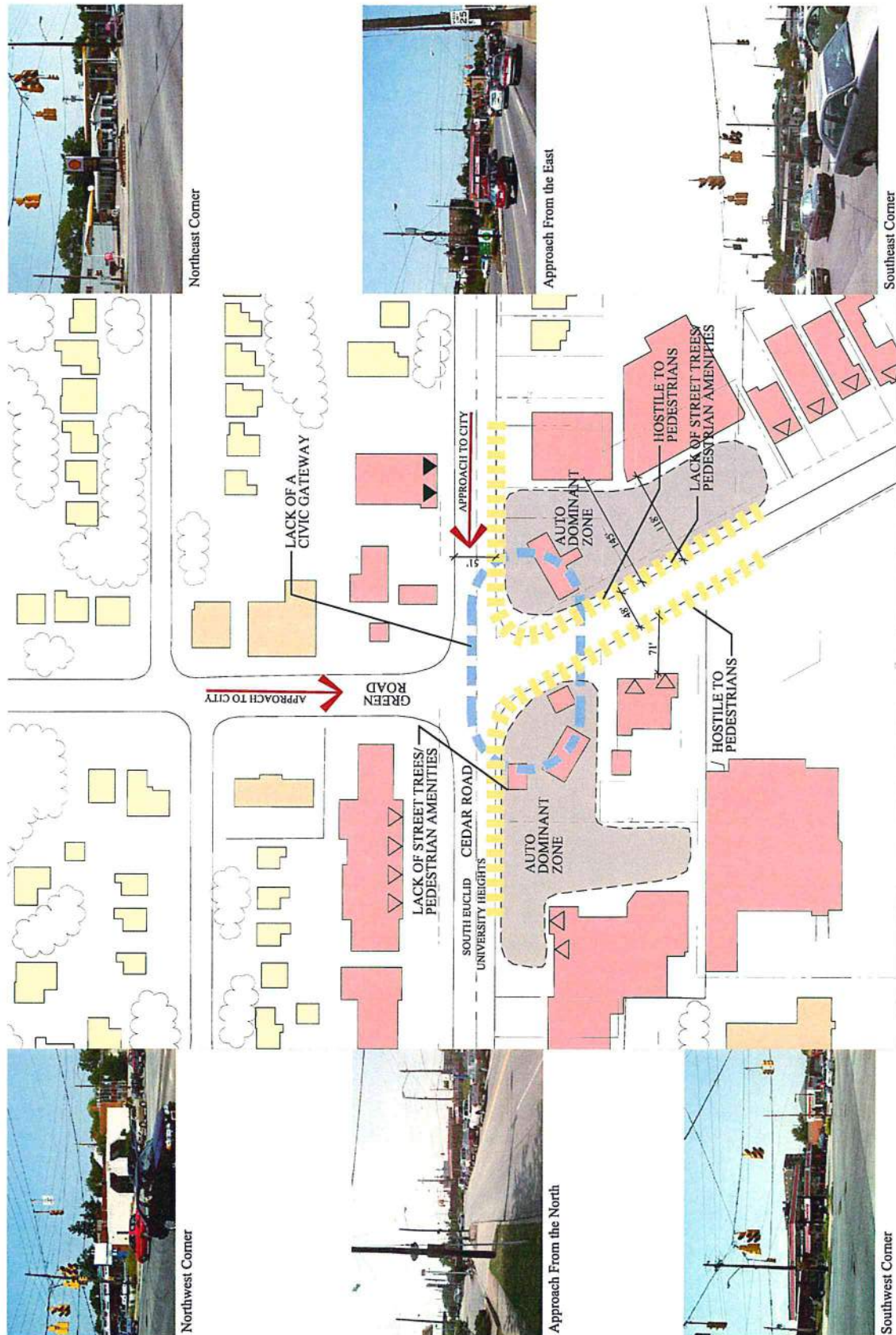
The Cedar / Green gateway is essentially characterless, and could be anywhere within either University Heights or any of its surroundings. There is little to nothing for an individual to identify with located in this district. Although the district has many valueable and unique uses and businesses, the physical structure and overall appearance of the area is placeless.

An ideal solution to resolving this gateway would be the replacement of the gas stations on the southern corners of the intersection with something that would create a greater sense of entry and exit as one passes into and out of University Heights. However, the addition of a series of pedestrian scale elements that can bring a sense of order to the street would be recommended as a more immediate solution. Gateway elements, acting as a portion of a city-wide identification package, should be placed at the corners in front of the gas station entrances. These elements can be made up of, and supplemented by, different types of signage, landscaping, new street trees, ornamental fencing, and public art to create a truly unique and eye-catching symbol of what University Heights represents.



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Northeast Corner



Approach From the East



Southeast Corner



Northwest Corner



Approach From the North



Southwest Corner

CHARACTER OF THE CITY

THE CEDAR / GREEN GATEWAY

- DRAWING KEY**
- ▲ WELL-DEFINED STREET EDGE
 - △ LESS-DEFINED STREET EDGE
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PRIMARY ACTIVITY CENTERS

The small size of University Heights, mixed with its tightly-knit and neighborhood-oriented city form, has resulted in a number of other important characteristics of the city. As the single-family homes have been constructed throughout various time periods, the resulting neighborhoods can be immediately distinguished by the architectural style of their homes, relationships to surrounding institutions, and patterns of their streets. These tend to reflect changes in planning philosophies and values. The older portions of the city tend to place compact housing so that it faces and frames an activity center, particularly as it relates to institutions and greenspace. This can be seen at Claridge Oval, John Carroll University, and to some extent at Fuchs Mizrachi School. Neighborhoods that have been built-out at later times have a tendency to place activity centers behind housing, making it more hidden. This is seen at Lauree P. Gearity Elementary School, Bellefaire, and Purvis Park. In terms of usability and visibility, the older patterns are the most effective.

In spite of these differing patterns and relationships, the city has retained a liveable, walkable and neighborhood-friendly atmosphere. The resultant sense of community is further enhanced by the ability for residents to walk from their homes to a series of recreational, retail, business, and entertainment venues.

These are very important concepts from the vantage point of creating an ideal urban community. The level of connectivity between different entities within the city, and their connections back into the residential neighborhoods, are of vital importance to the success of the city and its neighborhoods. Traditionally, the street network that makes up the city and the idea of a five-minute walking distance, measures this. The five-minute walk is typically thought to be about a quarter of a mile. When University Heights is analyzed in this manner, and quarter mile radii are taken from such neighborhood institutions as schools, retail centers, and recreational venues, a great deal of the city's neighborhoods lie within five minutes of these various neighborhood amenities.

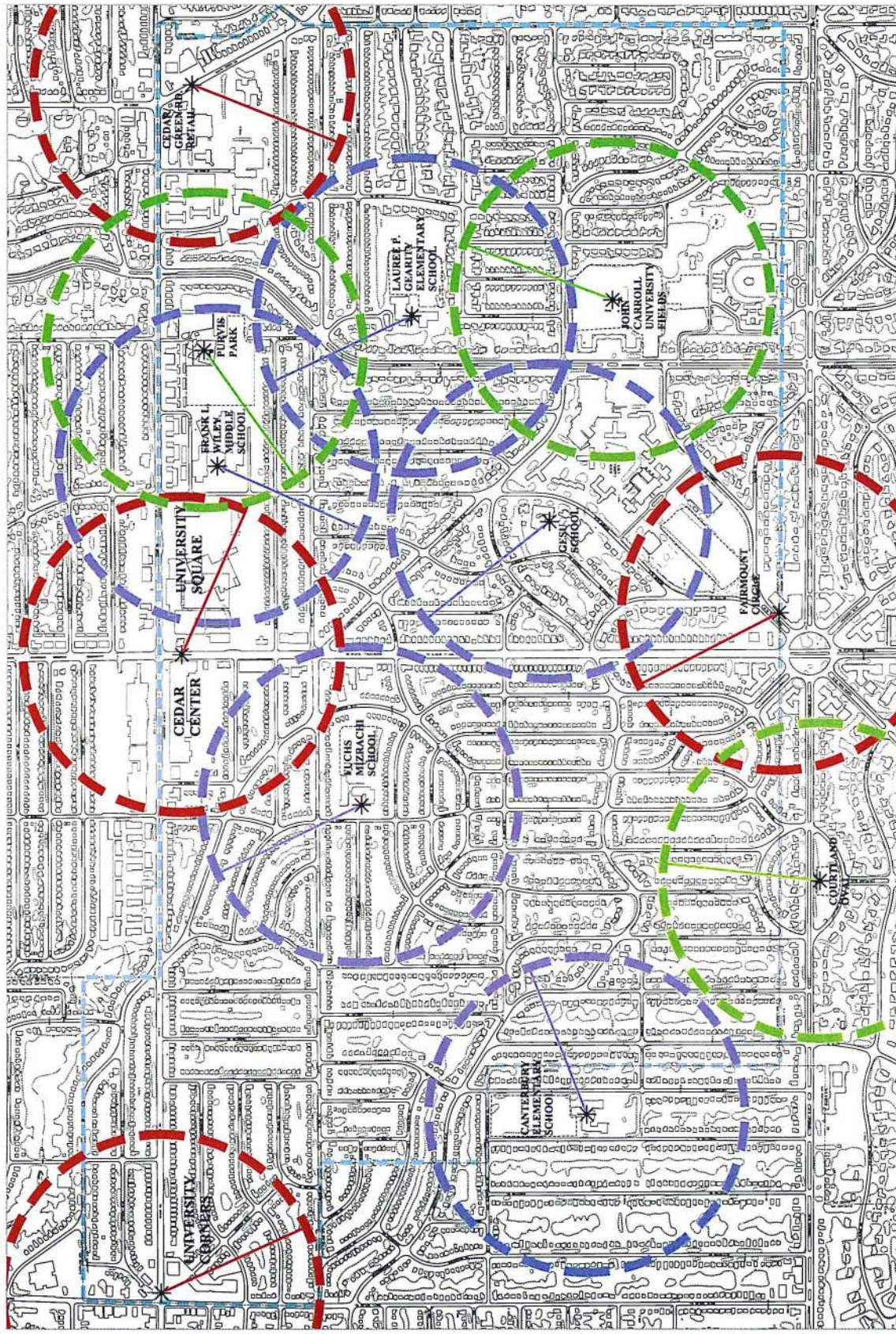
PRIMARY ACTIVITY CENTERS

EVALUATING THE 5
MINUTE (1/4 MILE)
WALK



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PRIMARY ACTIVITY CENTERS

EVALUATING THE 5
MINUTE (1/4 MILE)
WALK

CIRCLES REPRESENT A 1/4
MILE, 5 MINUTE, WALK

3/4 OF THE CITY IS WITHIN
A 5 MINUTE WALK FROM AT
LEAST 1 NEIGHBORHOOD
AMENITY

THE ENTIRE CITY IS WITHIN
A 10 MINUTE WALK FROM AT
LEAST 1 NEIGHBORHOOD
AMENITY

DRAWING KEY

- RETAIL CENTERS
- SCHOOLS AS CENTERS
- PARK/RECREATION
CENTERS



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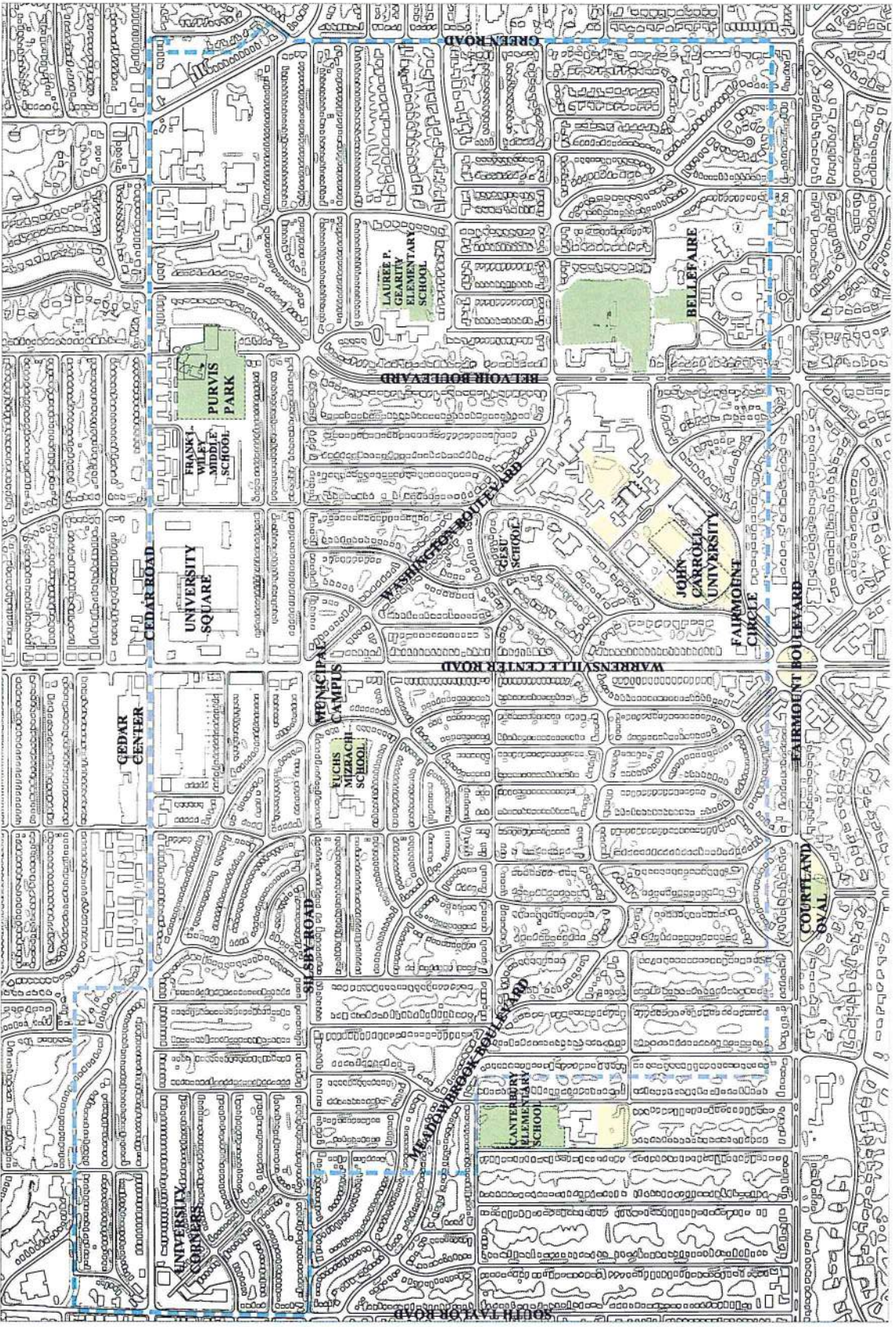
PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

In a well populated and compact city like University Heights, public open space is an extremely important part of the community. Public open space can be classified into two categories, active and passive, reflecting the type and intensity of use. Active open space is park space that is programmed for a specific, usually recreational function, such as tennis courts, baseball fields, and soccer fields. Passive open space, on the other hand, consists of such things as neighborhood pocket parks and public plazas where one can read a book, walk a dog, eat outdoors, or play a game of catch. It is this second type, the passive spaces, that University Heights is severely lacking. The quads at John Carroll University represent the city's best example of passive open space. Characteristics of these should be applied to the design of new passive spaces throughout the City. The quads within the University are well defined, provide an appropriate visual break from the surrounding architectural fabric, are easily accessible, and designed to meet the needs of their primary user. The schoolyards, with their ball fields and playgrounds, are an excellent example of the city's active open space. The most recent addition to the city's public parks, the Purvis Park pool and tennis courts, create highly valuable active park amenities that the city can offer to its residents.

An abundance of accessible and proximate public open space is important for many different reasons. Public spaces serve as important places for social interaction, fostering a stronger sense of community. Additionally, in dense neighborhoods like those in University Heights, public space serves as an extension of one's yard. The compact lots upon which many of the houses within the city are built do not leave a great deal of yard space for their residents. Parks can serve residents' needs for larger expanses of open land, where families gather, kids can play and people can walk their dogs. However, to be truly successful, these parks should be located throughout neighborhoods where they are convenient for residents to get to, and safe for everyone to use.



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PUBLIC PARKS/ OPEN SPACE

PASSIVE OPEN SPACE:
18.9 ACRES
 ACTIVE OPEN SPACE:
32.2 ACRES
 TOTAL OPEN SPACE:
51.1 ACRES

DRAWING KEY
 PASSIVE OPEN SPACE
 ACTIVE OPEN SPACE

NORTH

0 200 400 800 1600

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MUNICIPAL FACILITIES ANALYSIS

An analysis of the City's municipal facilities was an important component of the study, as the facilities and the ability to provide services represent a key element in the overall quality of life of University Heights. To complete this analysis a series of meetings and interviews were conducted with public officials and department heads; and tours were completed of each of the cities' facilities to assess their general condition and functional viability.

An initial meeting with the Mayor and the directors of the Police Department, Fire Department, Law Department, Service Department, Finance Department, Building Department and the City Engineer provided an opportunity for a general discussion on the nature and level of services provided, challenges in delivering these services given the cities' existing physical infrastructure, opportunities for improvement and key issues facing the city.

The current municipal facilities are grouped on a 2.3 acre municipal campus located centrally at the intersection of Silsby and Warrensville Center Roads. The property includes a historic City Hall building with an attached fire station, a police station, and a service building with associated covered and uncovered material and parts storage areas. The Building and Finance Departments are located in an adjacent house. The City Hall was constructed in the early 1900's, the Fire Station in 1940 with an addition in 1969, the Police Station in 1953, and the Service Department facilities in the 1940's through the 1960's.

Municipal Campus

A general assessment of the overall campus is that it is too small as currently configured for the multitude of uses accommodated there. The placement of buildings and functions do not enable it to act as a cohesive whole with significant congestion and operational conflicts. There is insufficient yard area to provide for city vehicles, storage, and circulation. Parking is inadequate to accommodate both employees and visitors and except at the intersection around City Hall, the site lacks proper landscaped areas to communicate a civic image and dignity. While located in a fairly prominent location in the heart of the city, the constricted layout of the campus prevents it from being utilized as the public center of city government.



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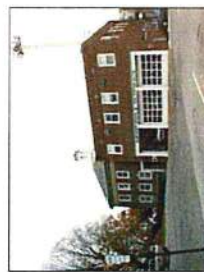
City Hall



The City hall building represents an important architectural icon and a valuable historic structure. Although the building appears to be in sound physical condition, from a functional standpoint, however, the building needs significant work. The main entrance to the building feels like a back door, leading to an extremely tight lobby. Offices are cramped, with little storage space. As mentioned previously, not all of the City's departments fit within the building, with the Finance and Building Departments located in a nearby house. This can reduce the efficiency of providing services. A lack of good meeting space within City Hall prevents it from serving as a community gathering space for larger meetings and presentations. Council chambers, although reasonable in size, is functionally obsolete by today's standards for a city of this stature. Such things as lack of flexibility, inadequate storage, and outdated furnishings, fixtures and equipment are of concern in running the business of the City. Issues of accessibility are a concern, exacerbated by the tight spaces within the building. While a chair lift is available, this is not an optimal solution. The only handicapped accessible restroom is located on the second floor of the building. Window unit air conditioners are inefficient and distracting, particularly in Council Chambers, where they make a considerable amount of noise.

A comprehensive overhaul and expansion of City Hall space is recommended for improving the efficiency, functionality, accessibility and preservation of this important civic building.

Fire Department



The Fire Department is connected to City Hall and utilizes some space within the building, such as the Fire Prevention office which is located in the basement. While the overall condition of the facility is adequate, it does have its share of challenges. In terms of size and function, the ladder truck may not fit in the station as currently configured depending on the size of the truck ultimately purchased, and a repair bay is badly needed. The location of the facility is good in terms of access and the ability to control nearby traffic lights. The inability to do training or drills on the tight municipal campus site forces the department to conduct these types of exercises elsewhere. Bathrooms are in poor condition, particularly in the dorms, and the air conditioning is inadequate.

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While a series of upgrades could address several of the facility's physical and functional problems, a better solution would consider the creation of a new Safety Department, combining Fire and Police facilities.

Police Department

The Police Department is in the greatest need of a complete overhaul. Inadequate facilities compromise the department's ability to provide acceptable levels of service. The building is insufficient in size, poorly organized to operate properly, and physically obsolete to meet today's public safety needs. Holding cells for detainees are too small and no longer meet State code requirements. Additionally, the number of cells should be doubled. The overall layout of the facility is poor and creates inefficiency in day-to-day functions. This includes the relationship between the sallyport and the garage, a layout that prevents personnel from transporting and processing prisoners smoothly. As with the other facilities in the campus, the air conditioning and other systems in the building are in poor condition.

A new facility should be strongly considered if the City intends to maintain an acceptable level of police service.

Service Department

University Heights' Service Department is located to the rear of the municipal campus, adjacent to Saybrook Road. The facility handles a variety of issues including building and vehicle maintenance, trash collection, recycling, leaf collection, snow removal, park maintenance, and minor street and sewer repair. The Department's facilities are extremely limited in terms of both indoor and outdoor space as part of the municipal campus, and cannot effectively accommodate current or additional department needs. The existing building lacks space for staff meetings and training and facilities for female employees. The approximately 500 tons of road salt stored on-site are not covered, significantly reducing effectiveness and creating a condition of non-compliance with EPA Phase II requirements.

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High Quality Of Service

A significant amount of the department's outdoor storage is located on Saybrook Road, a residential street, and on adjacent property leased from Fuchs Mizrachi School. Both visually and functionally this is an inappropriate condition.

Comprehensive Overhaul

Due to the variety of uses that are incompatible with general City Hall functions, and the severe lack of space on the property, the Service Department would best be considered for relocation to a different site that would allow the expansion of facilities and storage. This would also increase the level of service that would be able to be provided to the community and accommodate potential growth.

Expansion

It is both remarkable and commendable that University Heights is able to provide the quality level of service to the citizens within the constraints of it's facilities.

None the less, it is thought clear from this analysis that the municipal campus and the variety of functions housed there need to undergo a comprehensive overhaul.

Current Municipal Standards

Expansion is critical to continue to meet the needs of the community that will properly maintain the cities' aging infrastructure as new development in a manner consistent with current municipal standards.

Conclusion



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