

RESOLUTION NO. 24148

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE
AVONDALE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Avondale Neighborhood Plan, in accordance with the Strategic Neighborhoods Initiative, is the result of a collaborative, four (4) month planning process involving representatives from the Avondale neighborhood, churches, the Hamilton County Commission, the Chattanooga City Council, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency and other community stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the Plan identifies challenges and opportunities facing Avondale; and

WHEREAS, the primary objectives of the Plan are to protect the integrity of single-family residences, renew and encourage growth in existing commercial nodes, beautify residential and commercial neighborhoods, attract new industry to the neighborhood and protect the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Plan proposes certain transportation improvements be implemented to improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic circulation and safety through and within the study area; and

WHEREAS, the Plan suggest examining the appropriateness of R-2 and R-3 zoning through a comprehensive zoning study; and

WHEREAS, the Plan recommends the exploration of innovative programs that promote renovation and owner-occupancy of existing duplexes; and

WHEREAS, the Plan represents the community's vision for the future of the area and serves as a blueprint for future development and capital improvements in the Avondale neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, this Plan is a policy, and as such, does not guarantee the funding for projects or other recommendations contained therein;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, That the Avondale Neighborhood Plan, a copy of which is attached hereto, is hereby adopted.

ADOPTED: July 13, 2004

/pm



Avondale Neighborhood Plan

LAND USE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

DRAFT June 14, 2004

The Avondale Neighborhood Plan emerged from a series of visioning sessions held in coordination with community stakeholders and the City of Chattanooga's Department of Neighborhood Services. This document serves as a condensed collection of land use recommendations in narrative and illustrative formats.

The Plan functions as a general policy guide for future community improvements and zoning requests, however, it is NOT a guarantee for future funding or zoning. Area residents must continue working in conjunction with each other, their elected officials and government agencies to fully realize the vision and initiatives set forth by the plan. The local government must still approve funding for the recommended capital improvements.



LAND USE PLAN

This section contains the recommended land use plan for Avondale in illustrative and narrative formats. The land use recommendations are based upon comments and ideas received from the various stakeholders in the neighborhood. This valuable input, coupled with a detailed survey and analysis of the study area form the base the land use plan is build upon.

A land use plan serves as a guide for future growth and development in Avondale in a manner that will help improve the long-term livability of the community. The attached future land use map shows the preferred future land use patterns for the Avondale neighborhood using the following land use classifications:

- Single Family Residential
- Light Residential Mix
- Medium Residential Mix
- High Residential Mix
- Light Business Mix
- Medium Business Mix
- Heavy Business Mix
- Office / Residential
- Heavy Industrial

The land use map should be used in conjunction with the text. The classifications are meant to be broad enough to provide flexibility in the implementation of the neighborhood plan while at the same time offering clear direction in making informed zoning decisions. Residential uses may be compatible with all classifications listed above with the exception of "Heavy Industrial".

Avondale Neighborhood Land Use Plan Categories

Single Family Residential

Light Residential Mix

Single-family dwellings dominate, some exceptions made for townhouses, patio homes and two-family dwellings

Medium Residential Mix

Single-family dwellings, townhouses, patio homes, two, three and four family dwellings

High Residential Mix

Single family dwellings, townhouses, patio homes, two, three, four and multi-family dwellings

Light Business Mix

Neighborhood Commercial, Office Limited Residential, or similar uses

Medium Business Mix

Convenience Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Office, Residential, or similar uses

Heavy Business Mix

Convenience Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Region-Serving Planned Commerce Center, Office, Residential, Light Industry, Warehouse, Wholesale, or similar uses

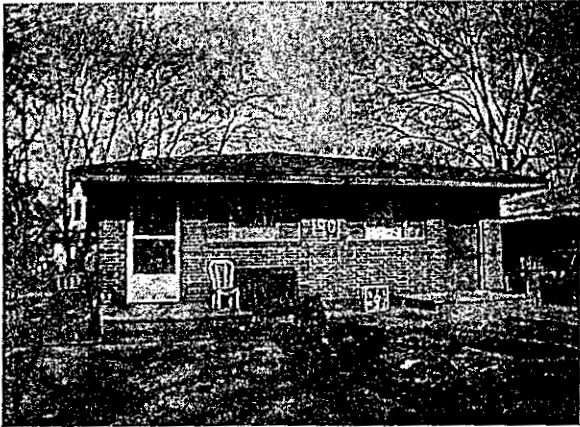
Office / Residential

Offices, any residential

Heavy Industrial

Manufacturing & processing

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES



Avondale duplex

Residential Issues

Residents expressed particular concern about the continued viability of single-family residences. The number one concern voiced by neighborhood residents was the proliferation of duplex housing at the expense of single-family residences.

Within the Avondale community, the 1961 City Zoning Ordinance designated almost all of the residential parcels R-2 or R-3. This zoning designation allowed the construction of numerous duplexes among existing single-family homes. This trend continued unabated until the early 1970's when the minimum lot size requirement for duplexes was increased.

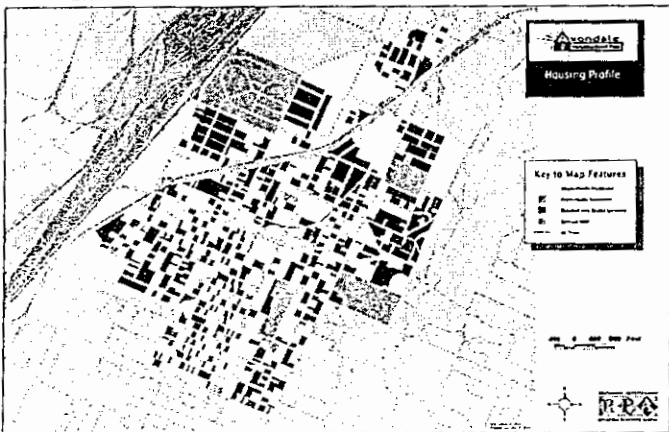
Lots of record: Lots existing prior to the increase in minimum lot size for duplexes are still eligible for duplex construction at the older 7500 sq. ft. standard.

569 lots total are potential duplex sites.

The pace of duplex construction eased somewhat as developers sought larger parcels for new construction. Today, there are around three hundred duplex structures within the study area boundary. Area residents, however, still believe continued duplex construction in Avondale comes at the expense of single-family housing. Given the current R-2 zoning ordinance requirements for new duplex construction, there are over 550 lots of record that *could* potentially be developed into duplexes for a total of over 1100 additional dwelling units.

In general, area homeowners hold negative opinions of duplexes due to the inherently low rates of owner-occupancy. Residents also note that most of the duplexes are held by absentee owners who fail to properly maintain their properties. According to the City's Department of Neighborhood Services' data, over 65% of the codes violations recorded in the last three years were given to non-owner occupied properties.

Although duplexes are often viewed in a negative light, most stakeholders felt that if properly sited, planned and managed, multi-family developments are preferred to a scattering of duplex dwellings. The North Chamberlain Avenue Apartments were often cited as a preferred model for multi-family development. Additional multi-family dwellings *may*



Potential Duplex Sites (in black)

be considered for the light-residential mix zone in the southwest corner of the study area if appropriate lot consolidation occurs.

However, residents were generally leery of additional densities in the neighborhood. Appropriately, the Chattanooga Housing Authority (CHA) is planning a selective "de-densification" in the community. CHA applied for a demolition grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to remove the Reverend Johnson apartments on Dodson Avenue and portions of the Harriet Tubman Development near Southern Street. Ultimately, CHA hopes to complete the demolition work by late 2004.

Since housing is a top concern of community stakeholders, the Regional Planning Agency hosted a "housing roundtable" on May 5, 2004 to bring together organizations that employ varying approaches to provide affordable housing. The discussion panel consisted of representatives from organizations ranging from the Chattanooga Housing Authority and Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise to the Avondale Neighborhood Association and Habitat for Humanity. Some of the recommendations from that meeting are included in the plan.

Residential Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 – Protect the integrity of single-family residences.

- Discourage excessive variances for duplex construction.
- Examine the appropriateness of current R-2 and R-3 zoning through a comprehensive zoning study.
- Explore innovative programs that encourage renovation and owner-occupancy of existing duplexes.
- Utilize the Chattanooga Housing Roundtable participants in crafting innovative solutions to housing issues in the community.
- Use substantial vegetative buffers to protect residential areas from the scale, noise and lighting impacts of



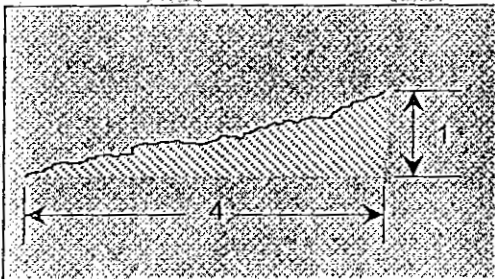
R-1 zoning is rare in Avondale. Even though the total area zoned R-1 is less than 1%, single-family uses account for nearly 55% of all land area in Avondale.

R-2 zoning is abundant in Avondale. Of all residential parcels, almost 93% are zoned R-2.

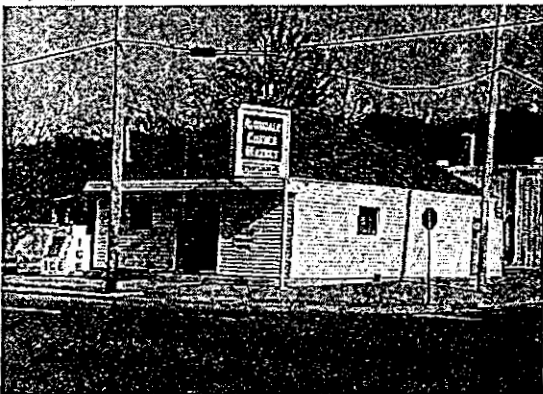
new commercial or industrial development.



Abandoned Belt Railway right-of-way



Steep slopes are those with a rise to run ratio of 1 to 4 (25%) or greater.



Goal 2 – Pedestrian Connections. Maintain and enhance Avondale’s established grid network of streets and sidewalks.

- Encourage new development to incorporate sidewalks and/or pedestrian access.
- Investigate the acquisition and use of the abandoned Chattanooga Belt Railway as a “safewalk”.
- Extend existing sidewalks to serve schools, transit stops and commerce centers.

Goal 3 - Beautification. Encourage beautification and clean-up of neighborhoods.

- Notify the City of Chattanooga Department of Neighborhood Services of trash and dumping violations.
- Hold a community clean-up and beautification day

Goal 4 – Environmental Protection Minimize the negative impacts of new residential development on the environment.

- Ensure that development in areas with steep slopes conform to current city, state and federal legislation.
- Develop a formal relationship between the Neighborhood Association and the Department of Public Works, Storm Water Management Section to monitor flooding and runoff issues.

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Commercial and Office Issues

Planning session participants indicated dissatisfaction with the range of commercial services available to them. In particular, residents frequently mention the lack of gas stations and a convenient grocery store.

While stakeholders cite a lack of commercial services, the study area contains three existing commercial development nodes. Potentially, a fourth node is located at the old Buster Brown site on North Chamberlain Avenue.

Commercial and Office Focus Areas

Focus Area 1 centers on the region between the Johnson Homes site and the intersection of Wilcox Boulevard and Dodson Avenue. Most residents referred to this area as the "heart of Avondale". The area does approximate the geographic center of the study area. Revitalization efforts within Avondale should begin here.

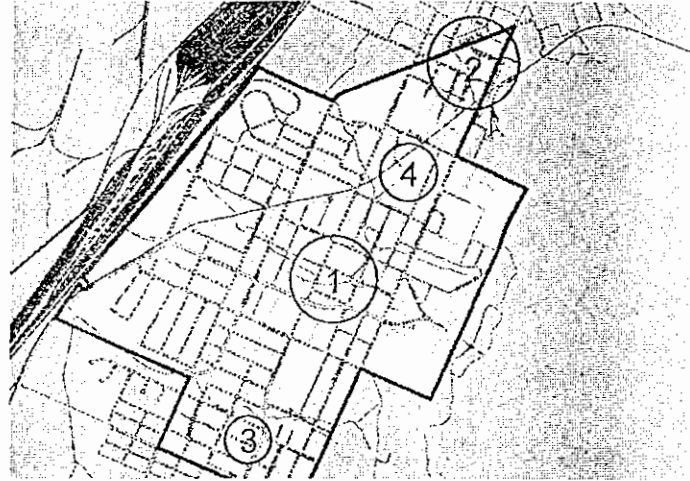
Strengthening the social, physical and economic value of this area is very important to the health and vitality of the neighborhood. Since there is a fairly well established history of multi-family housing in the area, a mixed-use commercial-residential center is appropriate.

Development should maintain a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere of moderately dense housing such as townhomes, single-family houses and multi-family dwellings coupled with commercial opportunities of reasonable scale. Appropriate uses might include: restaurants, shops and neighborhood services.

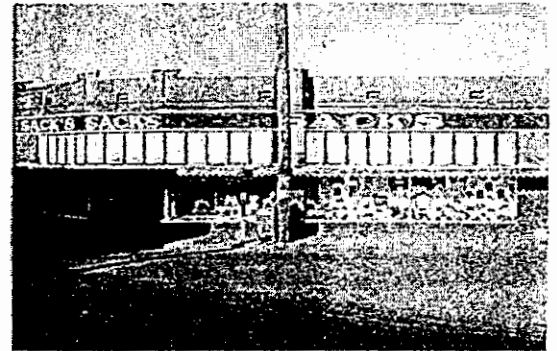
To minimize the impact on residential areas, the intensity should gradually lessen toward Bradt Street. The use of natural and planted vegetative buffers is needed to shield the residences on Bradt Street from undue impact. On the eastern side of Dodson Avenue, land use intensities should moderate toward Arlington Avenue. Single-family residential use should be maintained east of Arlington Avenue.

The abandoned Chattanooga Beltway rail line could potentially be acquired for reuse as a safewalk and serve as a pedestrian conduit to and through the commercial-residential center.

Focus Area 2 includes a long-established commercial corridor along Glass Street between Dodson Avenue and North Chamberlain Avenue.



Focus Areas



Glass Street commercial node circa 1930's.

According to property tax records, this development began in earnest around 1920.



Glass Street

Unfortunately, many of the storefronts are now underutilized or vacant altogether. There is, however, still a viable infrastructure that could once again support a vibrant commercial district. Recently, developers announced plans to operate a cooperative grocery store in an old furniture showroom at the corner of Glass Street and Dodson Avenue. If the store proves to be successful, it would serve as the southern anchor for the district.

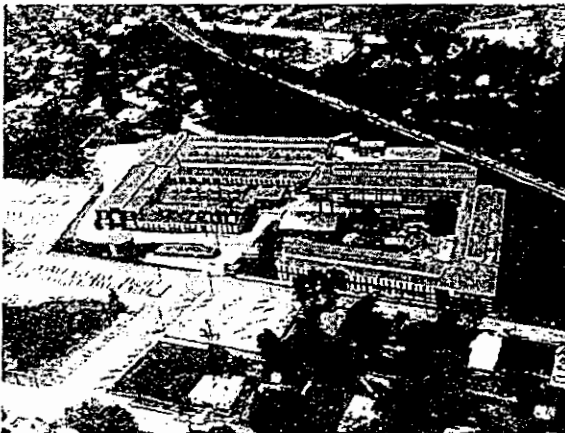
The *Medium Business Mix* designation is most appropriate for the area of Glass Street. Less intense residential uses should be maintained south of Glass Street in the vicinity of Crutchfield and Cheek Streets.

As redevelopment occurs, care must be taken to preserve the look, feel and scale of the district. Existing structures should be renovated instead of razed. Because the Glass Street district lies on the boundary between Avondale and East Chattanooga, both neighborhood associations should coordinate any redevelopment activity in the area.

Focus Area 3 lies along Dodson Avenue south of Wilson Street to the southern edge of the study area at Citico Avenue. Consisting primarily of "strip" retail development, the area is appropriate for the *Medium Business Mix* classification. The commercial uses should remain in a scale compatible with the surrounding residential areas. West of Dodson Avenue, the abandoned Chattanooga Belt Railway line could serve as buffer between more intense commercial uses and residential areas.

Focus Area 4 consists of the old Buster Brown Apparel manufacturing site on North Chamberlain Avenue. Built in phases starting in the early 1900's, the structure originally housed United Hosiery Mills. Buster Brown operated the plant for many years until 1998 when all operations ceased.

Although a carpet installation firm currently occupies the property, only a portion of it is actually used. The site offers over twenty acres of



Buster Brown site

underutilized property in several tracts that could be used for a multitude of purposes. Since the area has a long history of manufacturing, there is ample precedent for intense uses at the site. For this reason, a *Heavy Business Mix* designation is appropriate.

Still, care must be taken to avoid excessive impact on adjacent residential areas. To accomplish this, surrounding land use intensity should "step down" to lighter uses. Higher intensities should not extend south of Gilbert Street.

The current owners indicated interest in adaptive reuse proposals. Use as retirement housing has already been suggested by one developer. Ideally, any new uses will utilize the existing structures.

Commercial Area Goals and Strategies

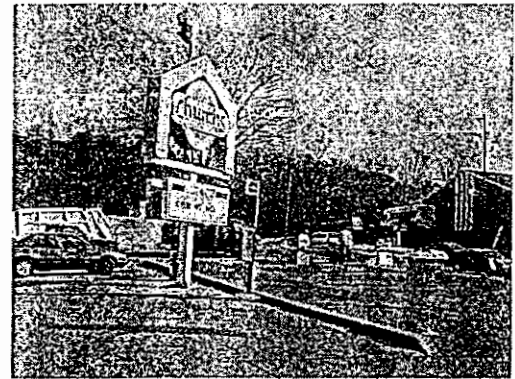
Goal 1 – Renew existing commercial nodes.

- Form a merchant's association within Avondale that will seek to improve depressed and blighted commercial areas.
- Utilize the East Chattanooga/Glass Street shared parking overlay to increase the number of parking spaces available to merchants and customers.

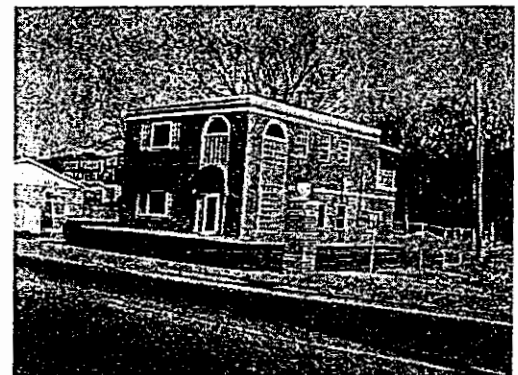
Goal 2 – Growth. Encourage the growth of existing businesses and the establishment of new businesses in designated commercial nodes.

- Concentrate commercial development in existing commercial areas and along Dodson Avenue, rather than expanding into residential areas.
- Form partnerships with the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce and the Chattanooga African-American Chamber of Commerce.
- Aggressively market vacant commercial properties.

Reuse. The Buster Brown site has over 80,000 sq. ft. of vacant office space.



Existing commercial development



New commercial development

Goal 4 – Beautification and Signage. Improve the attractiveness of gateways and commercial nodes.

- Work with the City of Chattanooga Wayfinding Committee to ensure a coordinated signage system.
- Apply select streetscaping to main commercial focus areas.
- Consider gateway improvements on Wilcox Boulevard and Dodson Avenue.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Industrial Land-Use Classifications

For the purposes of this plan, industrial uses are included in two land use categories:

Heavy Business Mix

Light industry, warehouse, wholesale or similar uses

Heavy Industrial

Manufacturing and material processing

Industrial Issues

Industrial uses occupy less than 6% of the total land area in Avondale. The lack of industrial employment is a concern to the community. Many stakeholders expressed the need for more employment opportunities outside of the service sector. Although the closure of the Buster Brown plant left Avondale without a large employer, several smaller firms maintain facilities in the area. Recently, a developer expressed interest in locating a warehousing operation on Holtzlaw Avenue near the Norfolk Southern Classification Yard.

Since industrial activities are generally more intense in nature, they should be screened and buffered as much as possible from surrounding less-intense uses. Preferably, industries should be concentrated near the rail yard and away from residential areas.

Outdoor salvage and material processing operations should particularly be monitored for undue environmental impacts on the surrounding area.



Industrial Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 – Attract new industries to Avondale

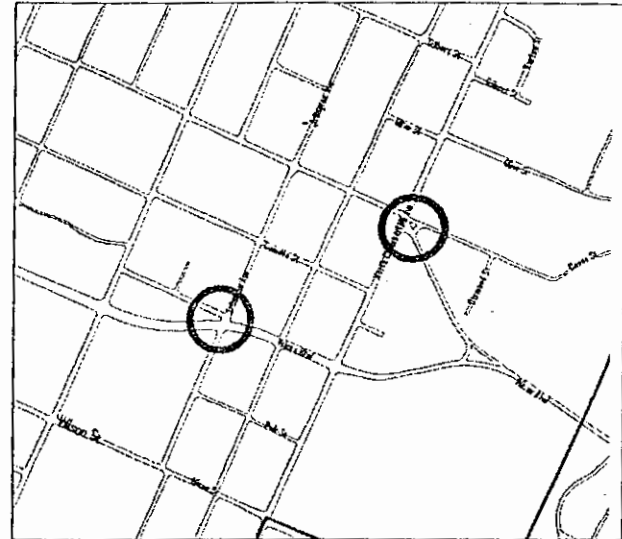
- Promote the area's access to rail transport.
- Use the Buster Brown campus as an incubator for small manufacturers.
- Provide new (or maintain existing) infrastructure to accommodate new growth.

TRANSPORTATION / CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GOALS

Background

Avondale is a neighborhood with over a century of history and well-established infrastructure. As such, the transportation and capital improvement recommendations included in the plan are generally broad in nature.

- **Goal 1 / Street Safety:** Improve key problem intersections and provide traffic calming where appropriate.
- **Goal 2 / Rail Improvements:** In the event rail use increases, coordinate with rail operators to improve existing trackage to provide grade separations where possible and improvements to at-grade intersections where not.
- **Goal 3 / Pedestrian Connectivity:** Provide a network of sidewalks and greenways that provides access to residential neighborhoods, commercial nodes, schools, and community assets. Utilize railroad ROW when possible. Repair and extend sidewalks as identified in the plan document.
- **Goal 4 / Tunnel Improvements:** Provide bus shelters and free CARTA service through tunnel. Add bicycle safety devices.
- **Goal 5 / Gateways:** Provide signage, streetscaping, and other improvements to



Problem Intersections



Wilcox Tunnel

community gateways at both ends of Wilcox Blvd and Dodson Ave.

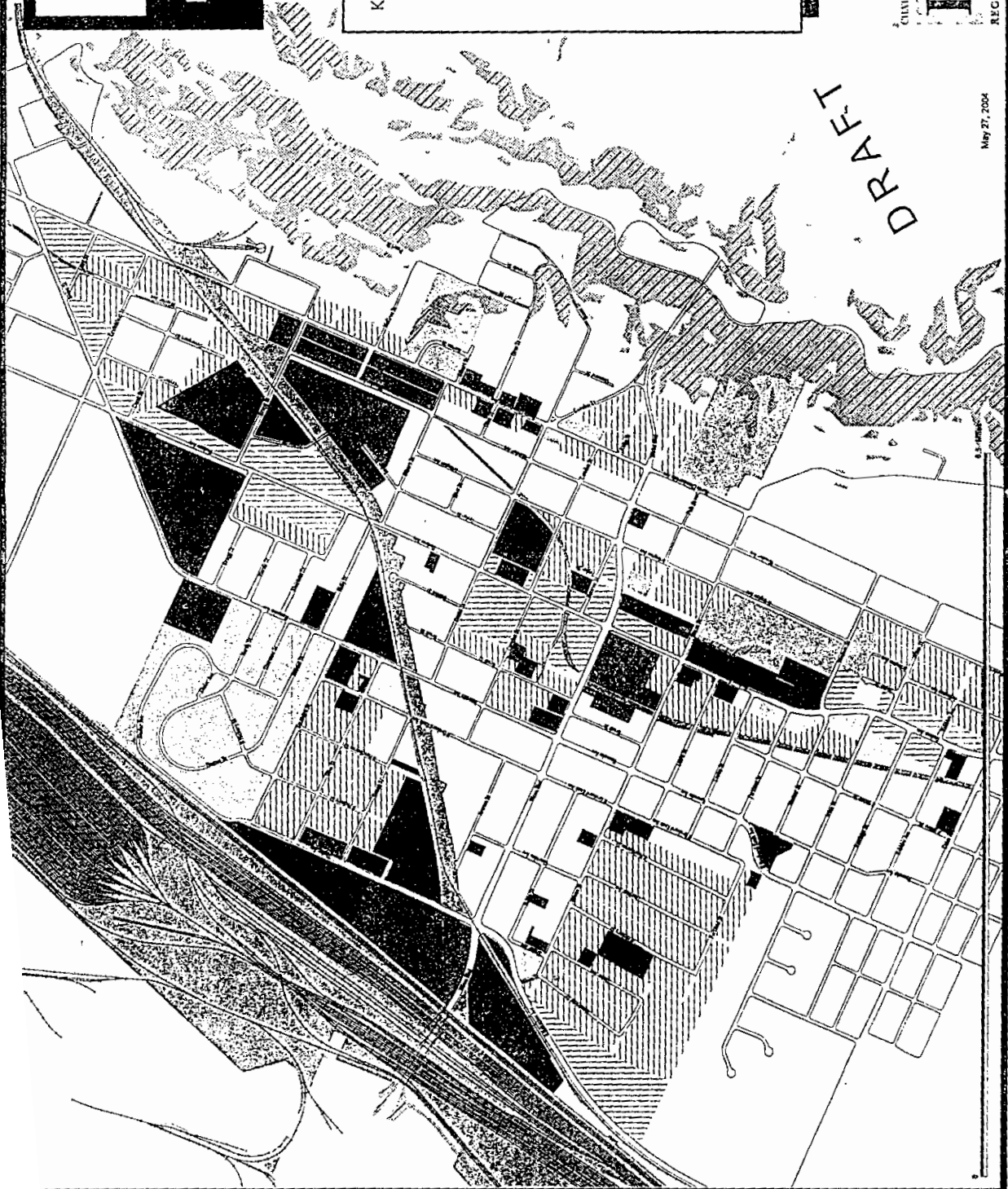
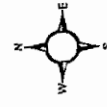
- **Goal 6 / Stormwater:** Identify, repair, and maintain problematic stormwater infrastructure as identified in the final plan document.
- **Goal 7 / Streetscaping:** Provide streetscaping and appropriate street furniture at commercial nodes.

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Key to Map Features

- Avondale Land Use
- Single Family Residential
 - Light Residential Mix
 - Medium Residential Mix
 - High Residential Mix
 - Light Business Mix
 - Medium Business Mix
 - Heavy Business Mix
 - Office / Residential
 - Office District
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Institutional
 - Recreational
 - Steep Slopes
 - Steep Slopes > 25%
 - Railroad ROW
 - RR Track



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May 27, 2004