North Hill
neighborhood action plan
June 2015
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The North Hill Neighborhood Plan was developed through the collective efforts of the City of Spokane, the neighborhood, and their representatives. A special thanks to everyone in the neighborhood who contributed their time and effort to the development of this plan.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the City of Spokane partnered with neighborhood leaders to develop a long-range plan for Spokane’s North Hill neighborhood. The North Hill Neighborhood Plan is a 20-year visioning and conceptual document. This plan implements the goals and policies of the City’s comprehensive plan through an emphasis on public safety, crime prevention, economic development, improving connectivity, and preserving the neighborhood character.

The North Hill neighborhood planning process is part of a larger planning effort being led by the City, in partnership with neighborhood leaders, stakeholders, and members of the public. When approved, the plan will guide the envisioned future of the neighborhood through the vision, goals, and actions of interested and engaged residents. Ideas presented in this plan will require further analysis and capital projects will require funding for implementation.

PLANNING PROCESS AND NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

The planning process for preparing the neighborhood plan was composed of three meetings, depicted below.

- **Context and Visioning**: The initial workshop consisted of identifying existing opportunities, challenges, and the future vision and goals.

- **Plan Development**: At the second meeting, the planning team worked with neighborhood representatives to refine the unified vision and goals and identify the projects, priorities, and strategies needed to implement the desired vision of the neighborhood.

- **Plan Approval**: The third meeting was an open house where participants made recommendations for priority projects. The Plan Commission and City Council will review/approve the plan in the spring of 2015.
II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE AND VALUES

PLANNING AREA

The North Hill neighborhood boundaries are Francis Avenue on the north, Division Street on the east, Ash Street on the west, and Courtland and Cora Avenues on the south. Low-density residential is the largest land use type in the North Hill neighborhood, allowing between four to ten units per acre. Along the neighborhood’s eastern edge, the predominant land use is General Commercial, which allows a wide range of commercial uses as well as higher-density residential. The northern neighborhood boundary, along Francis Avenue, allows office uses. Other arterials within the neighborhood – Wall, Wellesley, Monroe, and Rowan - have some areas of small business and retail uses. The Garland Neighborhood Center is located in the southern portion of North Hill and includes commercial, office, and residential uses, as well as land designated for higher-density residential surrounding the Garland Business District.

HISTORY

The Monroe Street Hill once marked the northern border of the city. With the development of a street railway system in the early 1900s, North Hill began to transform from a forested rural community into a residential neighborhood served by businesses, schools, churches and parks. Many homes were built in North Hill during the early 1900s near streetcar lines along Howard and Madison Streets. Styles include Craftsman bungalows, cabins, Tudor and Swiss Chalets and two-story farmhouses. More contemporary homes and low-rise apartment buildings were built throughout the 50s, 60s and 70s in the northern part of the neighborhood. Infill housing and new businesses continue to transform this diverse neighborhood.

The Garland Business District began in 1910 with the building of the street railway system, particularly the Post Street line. By the late 1920s, the district started to take shape. Three buildings in particular are eligible for the Historic Register. The Masonic Lodge, built in 1922, is an example of late Romanesque revival style with gabled parapets, round arches and decorative motifs in the brickwork. In 1935, the Milk Bottle was built as part of the Benewah Creamery Chain. The Garland Theater, which opened on Thanksgiving Day in 1945, is an example of Art Deco architecture. The theater had almost 1,000 seats and a gift shop. At the time, it was considered a very modern movie house. In 1954, the theater installed a wide screen, stereophonic sound system, new seats and curtains for $20,000. A digital projector was recently installed that allows for the showing of modern films, as well as preserving the ability to show 16 mm. films. The theater was listed in the National Historic Register in 2015.
In 2007, the Garland Business District was incorporated as a non-profit corporation to foster economic development and support locally-owned businesses. Some businesses in the Garland District still have their original neon signs dating back to the 1950s.

Parks also began to develop in the early 1900s. B.A. Clark Park at Division and Garland was named for B.A. Clark, the Supervisor of Playgrounds who helped execute the Park Fund to partially implement the Olmsted Brothers firm’s recommendations in 1913. History of the neighborhood’s largest park, Franklin Park at Queen and Division, records that the grading and planting occurred from 1910 to 1912. Ruth Park was adjacent to the Byrne’s Addition School, built in 1910. Dr. Patrick S. Byrne donated the land for the school in 1908. Ruth Park is named after Dr. Byrne’s daughter, Ruth.

The history of the neighborhood is partially reflected in the construction of the three public elementary schools: Madison, Willard and Ridgeview. The first, Frances Willard Elementary School, opened in 1908 as a small brick building with four rooms, and quickly tripled in size by 1911. The old Willard Elementary School building was replaced in 1980, with the new school facing Longfellow Avenue. Byrne’s Addition School, at Whitehouse Street and Dalke Avenue, was renamed Madison School in 1915. A new Madison School opened four blocks to the south in 1949 adjacent to Franklin Park. Following a successful bond initiative, a third elementary school was added to the neighborhood when Ridgeview opened in September 1953 as Ridgeview Primary School, which then rapidly expanded over the next few years. Ridgeview was demolished and rebuilt in 2006.

**ASSETS**

The North Hill neighborhood benefits from several major assets, some of which may serve as the basis for future improvements.

- The neighborhood has a range of commercial services along the major arterials that run through the neighborhood.

- The southern bluff offers panoramic views of the city. It is also a gateway feature for the neighborhood, creating a physical separation from Downtown Spokane and areas to the north. The bluff serves as a wildlife corridor and presents an opportunity for public enjoyment. Because of its unique character, it needs to be protected.

- The primary housing type of the neighborhood is single-family, complemented to a lesser degree by apartments and duplexes. Good quality schools, churches, businesses, and several popular parks are within the neighborhood.

- North Hill is a bikeable and walkable neighborhood, and is accessible by car and transit to and from Downtown and other parts of the city.

- North Hill, with its trees and wildlife, provides convenient access to nature within an urban setting.
OUR NEIGHBORHOOD VALUES

Our neighborhood values reflect a sense of pride and commitment by those who live and work in North Hill:

The North Hill Neighborhood is a stable, thriving neighborhood that is a safe place for residents to live, learn, work and play. We value safety, livability, education, connectivity, and prosperity for those who work and live here. Our well-maintained residential areas provide affordable, quality, safe homes and a sense of pride for our families, singles, and retirees. We welcome and support ethnic, family, socio-economic, and cultural diversity through the housing options, community activities, and accessible transportation options available to our residents.

Our neighborhood-friendly businesses and services are sources of jobs and goods utilized by the neighborhood. Transportation options – including walkable and bikeable streets, easy access to public transit, and safe pathways and corridors – allow our residents and others to use these services and those of adjoining neighborhoods. The vibrant Garland Business District offers valued services in a welcoming atmosphere and serves as a source of commerce, culture, and neighborhood pride. Our other commercial areas, including those along Division Street, Francis Avenue, North Wall Street, and West Rowan Avenue, offer a diverse array of services for the neighborhood and the city.

The neighborhood’s reputation for safety and civic engagement motivates like-minded individuals to invest in the area and continue to make it a viable, thriving neighborhood. Our southern bluff, with its scenic view and unique nature as a wildlife and natural corridor, is valued and cared for as a prominent feature of our neighborhood. Our parks, pathways, businesses, public areas, and schools are cared for and are interconnected, which invites positive interactions between residents and business owners.
III. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

North Hill neighborhood’s vision, goals, objectives, and implementation strategies were derived from neighborhood residents, business owners, and City staff at the neighborhood planning workshops.

VISION

The vision statement describes how the community imagines the character and future pattern of physical and social development for North Hill. The vision summarizes all of the neighborhood values, assets, and dreams for the future.

North Hill strives to be a thriving, safe, and connected neighborhood, offering its residents a high quality of life and its businesses a prosperous future. Our neighborhood is welcoming, livable, and affordable, and our homes, schools, parks, and businesses are connected by walkable and bikeable streets, with easy access to public transit, the southern bluff, and adjoining neighborhoods. Our neighborhood is economically strong, founded on the vibrant and historic Garland Business District and our many commercial areas and businesses that serve residents and visitors from throughout the city. From Cora/ Courtland to Francis, Ash to Division, residents are proud to call North Hill home and are committed to its bright future.

PRIORITIES

The neighborhood has several key priorities:

- **Support the Garland Business District**: 1) Establish a district design identity and improve the existing image of the area; 2) Provide a better shopping environment with consumer amenities, landscaping, and improved signage; and 3) Retain the friendly character of the neighborhood merchant.

- **Reduce Crime**: 1) Provide adequate lighting throughout darkened neighborhood areas, arterials, parks, and the southern bluff; and 2) Explore other solutions such as improved building maintenance.

- **Improve Public Safety**: 1) Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety along the auto-oriented major arterials in the neighborhood; 2) Address the issue of missing sidewalks; and (3) Address dangerous crossings along Monroe and Wellesley.

- **Preserve the Neighborhood Character**: In order to protect the unique character of the neighborhood, a combination of thoughtful site planning and cohesive development and design will be necessary.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives articulate the direction for future policies, projects, and programs to fulfill the vision and priorities. The goals are divided into four major categories. Connectivity, Safety, Livability, and Vibrant Community. Following each goal are corresponding objectives to pursue over time.

CONNECTIVITY

C-1: Active Transportation

Improve connections between all parts of North Hill and adjacent neighborhoods with continuous sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and pathways.

C-1.1: Continue to work with the City on development of the Master Bike Plan and Pedestrian Plan to identify preferred bike routes, missing sidewalks, and connections to transit routes.

C-1.2: Improve access to public transit to link North Hill homes, parks, schools, the business district, and Downtown.
SAFETY

S-1: Crime Prevention  Continue to make the North Hill Neighborhood a safe place for residents and visitors.

S-1.1. Advocate for increased and enhanced lighting on major arterials, along the bluff, public spaces such as parks, and darkened areas.

S-1.2  Encourage neighborhood safety programs, such as Block Watch, to promote a safer neighborhood.

S-2: Traffic Safety  Improve street safety, slowing traffic and reducing conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

S-2.1: Work with the City to develop a prioritized list of traffic calming measures and explore implementation as a part of street improvements.

S-2.2: Work with Spokane Public Schools to identify Safe Routes to Schools.

LIVABILITY

L-1: Sense of Place  Enhance North Hill’s visual identity as a vibrant, family-friendly, and historic neighborhood with welcoming public spaces and streets.

L-1.1: Establish gateways and “welcome to North Hill” signs consisting of physical elements and landscaping that create a sense of place and a distinctive identity.

L-1.2: Recognize the importance of street trees and continue to protect the tree canopy within the neighborhood.

L-1.3: Promote the preservation of the neighborhood’s heritage and cultural resources through interpretation, public art, and thoughtful design.

L-1.4: Explore opportunities to protect the character of the southern bluff.

L-1.5: Support programs and neighborhood events that strengthen the sense of community, build trust, celebrate different cultures, and create positive experiences.
VIBRANT COMMUNITY

V-1: Improved Retail Areas  Develop partnerships and programs to improve economic development in neighborhood retail areas.

   V-1.1: Enhance the Garland Business District by creating complementary aesthetics for street furnishings and lighting.

   V-1.2: Encourage and educate neighborhood property owners on opportunities to maintain and improve their properties.

V-2: Local Economy  Encourage locally owned businesses that provide viable shopping in the neighborhood.

   V-2.1: Encourage special events and activities that attract people and business development.

   V-2.2: Create a supportive environment where local businesses thrive.

Historic Garland Theater  Ferguson’s Café and the Milk Bottle
IV. PRIORITY PROJECTS

The North Hill neighborhood identified a variety of projects that address the neighborhood’s collective vision and goals. The prioritized projects are those that are most likely to contribute to the neighborhood vision and priorities. As part of a long-term plan, these projects will take time to complete and some will require significant effort to secure resources that are not yet available. Others will require ongoing discussion with a variety of partners. The project types identified below address broad project categories. Following the project descriptions, there are two components that provide additional project detail.

- **Project Matrix**: Identifies top priority projects, partnerships, and additional information.
- **Prioritized Project Toolkit**: Provides examples of project elements.

**PRIORITY PROJECTS OVERVIEW**

1. **GARLAND DISTRICT PLAN COORDINATION**

   The Garland District is a source of commerce and culture and has significant historic importance for the neighborhood and city. Neighbors and business owners are developing a plan for the Garland Business District to strengthen opportunities for businesses and improve the appearance of the street front. As part of the planning effort, the plan will identify street and landscape improvements and gateways as well as details of street furniture, improved lighting, and a possible activity area.

2. **CRIME REDUCTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

   The North Hill neighborhood strives to be a safe neighborhood and should continue to coordinate with established resources to engage residents and business owners in crime prevention efforts. A high neighborhood priority is for improved lighting along major arterials, in parks, and within other potential high-crime areas.

3. **IMPROVING PUBLIC SPACES**

   Creating welcoming and safe public spaces and park improvements will address neighborhood-wide connectivity and safety concerns and encourage greater community engagement. Proposed improvements to Franklin Park, Ruth Park, and B.A. Clark Park include enhanced lighting, sidewalk and trail connections, and additional park amenities such as benches and trash and recycling containers. Well defined seating areas, and multi-purpose open spaces for informal play provide opportunities for building community.

   An activity area, or designated public street, could be closed temporarily to motor vehicle traffic for public events and activities throughout the year. Ideally, the activity area should be located in a location that can accommodate heavy foot and bicycle traffic. One potential location for this area could be along Lincoln Street north of Garland. Gateway features at key entry points to the neighborhood would welcome visitors and residents.
4. TRAFFIC CALMING AND CONNECTIVITY

North Hill is served by a well-defined north/south and east/west grid of local and arterial streets. While this grid pattern provides efficient and direct transportation routes, straight and uninterrupted streets can also encourage speeding and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Several streets are in need of enhanced pedestrian facilities and traffic calming – or slowing – including Garland, Wellesley, Rowan, Wall, and Monroe. Intersection “bulb-outs,” or curb extensions, are an effective means of creating shorter crossing distances for pedestrians while slowing motorists. Typically, these are designed for local streets. For collector or arterial streets, traffic calming could include street medians and pedestrian refuges, pedestrian crossing signals, or changes to signal timing.

In addition to these enhancements to pedestrian facilities, improvements to bicycle facilities and the city bicycle network will improve connectivity to adjacent uses and neighborhoods. A future north/south bicycle route was identified on Cedar Street to serve cyclists on a less busy, local street west of Monroe. In addition, an east/west bike route along Longfellow would connect three schools. Ultimately, the City will need to conduct further analysis to prioritize street improvements and determine the appropriate design techniques to calm traffic, and the neighborhood will provide feedback on this process.
5. SOUTH BLUFF PRESERVATION

The south bluff encompasses the steep hillside on the south of North Hill that separates North Hill from the Emerson-Garfield Neighborhood. The south bluff is prized by locals, but it is recognized that part of the bluff is in private ownership. The neighborhood will seek partnerships with public and private property owners to identify appropriate opportunities to preserve public views, open space, wildlife corridors, and the general character of the bluff. The neighborhood would like to develop a formalized plan for the preservation of the bluff.

PROJECT MATRIX

The matrix that follows shows a range of solutions to improve the connectivity and livability of the North Hill Neighborhood. The North Hill neighborhood will work closely with the City and other neighborhoods to pursue near-term strategies to attract desired development within the neighborhood and improvements that protect the neighborhood’s quality of life. Implementing these projects will require additional discussion, resources, and ongoing coordination with the City. This is not a finite list, but rather, a starting point for neighborhood betterment.

The matrix describes each project’s purpose, potential partners, and additional information about possible funding opportunities and treatment details.
## PROJECT MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Priority Projects</th>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garland District Plan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Support Garland District efforts to develop a revitalization plan.</td>
<td>Garland District, Neighborhood Council, City</td>
<td>The plan will address items such as sidewalks, awnings, building fronts, lighting, street furniture, planting, and gateways. The neighborhood will support the District’s effort to seek grants and funding from the City and/or other sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Develop an activity area connecting to Garland to support active public spaces and increase neighborhood amenities.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, Garland District, City</td>
<td>Identify a suitable location for the activity area or street for shared pedestrian activity with slowed or temporarily restricted automobile use. Activities could include a farmers market, street fair, crafts fair, bicycle competitions, or other neighborhood-oriented activity. A potential location is on Lincoln Street north of Garland.</td>
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<td><strong>Crime Reduction and Public Safety</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Install pedestrian-scale lighting at preferred locations.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, City</td>
<td>Major street segments lack appropriate lighting for pedestrian safety. These include segments of Garland and the intersection of Monroe and Wellesley. Standard street lighting may be appropriate, except that period street lighting is anticipated along Garland. Lighting should also be improved at other darkened or high-crime areas of the neighborhood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Engage neighbors in crime prevention programs.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, Police Department, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)</td>
<td>This includes education on Block Watch and neighborhood observation patrols, dialogue with the Neighborhood Conditions Officer, and other safety programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Improving Public Spaces</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Improve the safety and functionality of neighborhood parks.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, City Parks Department, City</td>
<td>Coordinate with the Parks Department on improvements to Franklin Park, Ruth Park, and B.A. Clark Park, to include pedestrian-scale lighting, sidewalk and trail connections within and to/from the parks, benches, trash/recycling containers, and multi-purpose open spaces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Complete pedestrian improvements.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, City; Property owners</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Develop an activity area to support active public spaces.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, Garland District, City</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Provide gateway features at key entry points to the neighborhood.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, City</td>
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**Traffic Calming and Connectivity**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Provide traffic calming on primary streets, including Monroe, Rowan, Wellesley, Wall, and Garland.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, City</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Coordinate with the City on the Master Bike Plan and Pedestrian Plan, and work with the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) to improve neighborhood-wide connectivity and active transportation.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, City, Spokane Transit Authority</td>
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**South Bluff Preservation**

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Develop a preservation plan for the bluff.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Council, property owners, City</td>
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PRIORIT PROJECT TOOLKIT

As a means to implement the priority project list, the project priority toolkit (starting on the next page) includes a variety of potential treatments and suggestions for new facilities that can improve connectivity and livability throughout North Hill. The toolkit should be used by the neighborhood as a source of ideas and inspiration, and as a menu of potential solutions to consider when working with the City towards project planning, design and implementation. The toolkit has five general categories and includes between two and six individual elements/features described and illustrated for each project type.
Potential Arterial Streetscape Improvements

**IN-GROUND PLANTERS**
Streetside planters provide a needed buffer between pedestrians on the sidewalk and arterial street traffic. Street trees can be incorporated within the planter system.

**PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING**
Pedestrian-scaled lighting along arterial streets increases the perception of safety and encourages use of the street after dark. Like other street furniture, lighting also alerts drivers to the presence of pedestrians in an area.

**SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS**
Widened sidewalks help pedestrians feel less exposed to vehicular traffic, revitalize commercial corridors by encouraging pedestrian use, and improve overall street safety.

**FURNISHINGS ZONE**
The street furnishings zone should include a range of elements to make the street more livable, vibrant and inviting to pedestrians. Elements such as benches and seating, bicycle racks/corals, bollards, kiosks, public art, signage, transit shelters and waste bins are found in the furnishings zone. Elements should be located at predictable places such as at corner locations on short blocks, and at mid-block locations on longer blocks.

**PARKLETS**
Reconfiguration of several parking spaces into dedicated pedestrian gathering spaces can offer respite and diversity of seating.

**LANDSCAPED MEDIANS & PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLANDS**
Medians planted with drought-tolerant perennial species and street trees collect and store stormwater, provide mid-block crossing refuge for pedestrians, humanize the scale of a wide street, encourage vehicles to use appropriate speeds, reduce the urban heat island effect, and beautify the streetscape environment.
Potential Traffic Calming Improvements

**PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLAND**
Refuge islands provide pedestrians a safe area to stop before finishing crossing a road. They also reduce the average crossing time and make drivers more aware of pedestrians. The refuge area can include planting materials, signage, and lighting.

**BULB-OUT CROSSWALK**
Bulb-outs, also known as curb extensions, enhance pedestrian safety by increasing pedestrian visibility, shortening crossing distances, slowing turning vehicles, and visually narrowing the roadway.

Potential Bike Route Elements

**SHARROWS**
Painted ‘sharrows’ - or shared lane pavement markings - are bicycle symbols that are placed in the roadway lane indicating that motorists should expect to share the lane with bicycles and vice-versa.

**RESIDENTIAL BIKE LANES**
Bike lanes through residential areas should connect to “sharrow” routes that have less vehicular traffic.

**ADVISORY BIKE LANES**
Advisory bike lanes give bicyclists space to ride, but are also available to turning or passing cars. They are used on low-volume, narrow streets.

**BIKE ACTIVATED SIGNAL**
These signals are located curbside for easy access to bicyclists. They can be used at street crossings that lack traffic signals.

**NON-MOTORIZED CROSSING**
A raised median with cut-outs that allow bicyclists to pass through and restricts vehicles to right turn only.
Potential Park Improvements

**PAVED PATH LINK**
Multi-use trail segments provide pedestrian and bicycle connections through unimproved right-of-ways, alleys, etc.

**PATHWAY/PERIMETER LIGHTING**
Pathway lighting should be considered for safety and visibility purposes along new pathway links and along the perimeter of public streets.

**SEATING AND AMENITIES**
Seating can be integrated into other park features such as a low wall, or can be stand alone. Trash and recycling containers, decorative planters, drinking fountains and signage should be clustered together to create an inviting and complete setting.

Potential Activity Area Amenities

**REMOVABLE BOLLARDS**
Removable bollards can be placed to create safe places for pedestrians and help indicate boundaries of an activity street. These can be installed and removed before and after events to temporarily restrict motor vehicle traffic.

**ABOVE GROUND PLANTERS**
These planters help to beautify the streetfront while adding a boundary between sidewalks or activity areas and the street. Planters can also be moved as needed to accommodate different event sizes and needs.

**DECORATIVE SURFACES**
Decorative street surfaces include contrasting materials such as pavers or paint to help define pedestrian crossings and activity spaces. The contrast in texture or color helps define areas that are safe for pedestrians, while alerting motorists to take extra caution when approaching.
SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The North Hill Neighborhood Action Plan is a visioning and conceptual document. This plan guides the neighborhood’s collective vision and goals and conveys to the City our neighborhood’s priorities. North Hill neighborhood will work with the City as implementation opportunities arise.

Projects highlighted in this plan need the commitment of many to make them happen. They will need further analysis, time, and effort to build the partnerships and secure resources that are not yet available. Capital projects will require additional discussion, resources, and ongoing coordination with the City.

Implementation is already underway to address some of the priorities in this plan. Thanks to special project funding, traffic calming projects are underway on Garland Avenue. Also, new trees and plants are being placed in the Garland District.

Other opportunities will arise over the years to come. Join your neighbors in search of opportunities and the effort that it will take to make them happen. To stay connected, attend North Hill neighborhood council meetings, monitor our website, and sign up for the neighborhood’s electronic newsletter. Together we can make North Hill’s vision of a thriving, safe, and connected neighborhood a reality.