of Pittsburgh – Beechview Branch, Friends of the Beechview Library, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Catherine's of Siena Church, and St. Pamphilus Church.

The schools, churches, and library are among the valuable local assets that make Beechview such a livable neighborhood and give it a sense of community cohesion. Beechwood Elementary School, South Hills Middle School, and Brashear High School provide a full educational experience for the children and youth of the community. **"Beechview is one of a few neighborhoods where kids can go to school pre-K through graduation all in the community."** Beechwood Elementary School is one of the best performing schools in the City and is growing fast due to the number of new families, many of them immigrants, with children in Beechview. The school building, built in 1922, is also listed on the National Register as a historic site.

The neighborhood churches play an important role in the life in the community. In addition to tending to their congregations, the churches reach out to the community at large with community events and provide much needed community space for community members and for meetings. **"If it weren't for church basements, nothing would get done in Beechview."**

In the absence of a community center, the Carnegie Library – Beechview Branch helps to fill that gap. Located on Broadway Avenue right next to the Belasco T stop, the library serves Beechview as well as neighboring areas in the City and suburbs, and provides a range of programs for all ages.

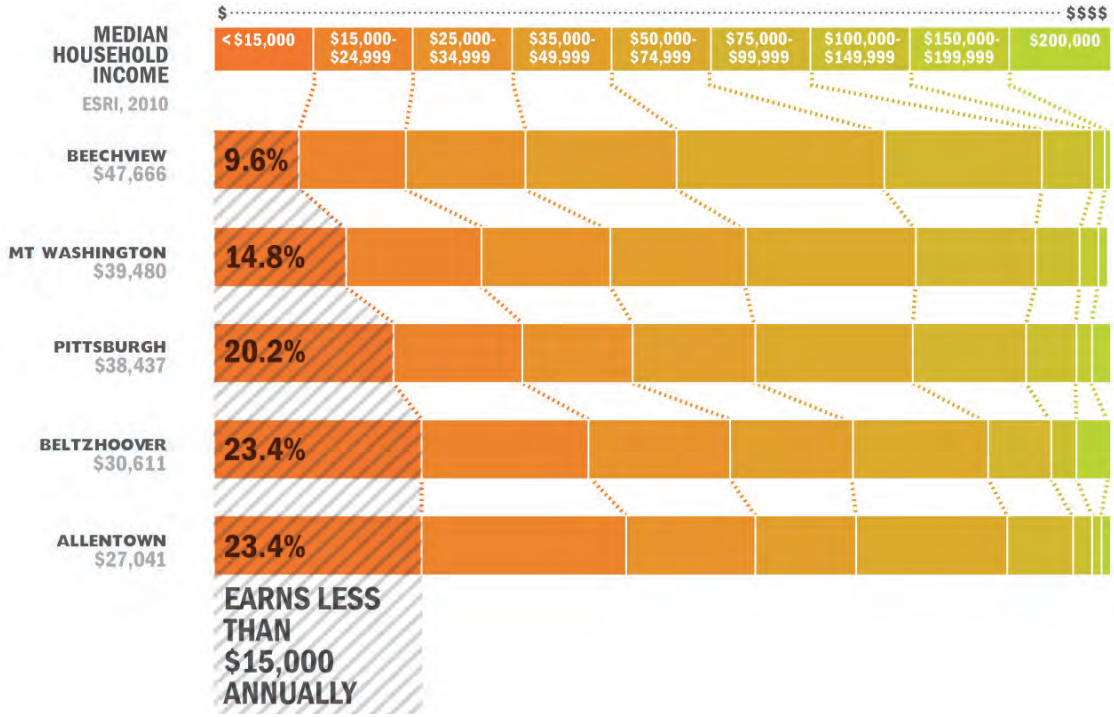


Figure 12. Comparison of Median Household Income in SMART TRID Study Area in 2010
Source: ESRI

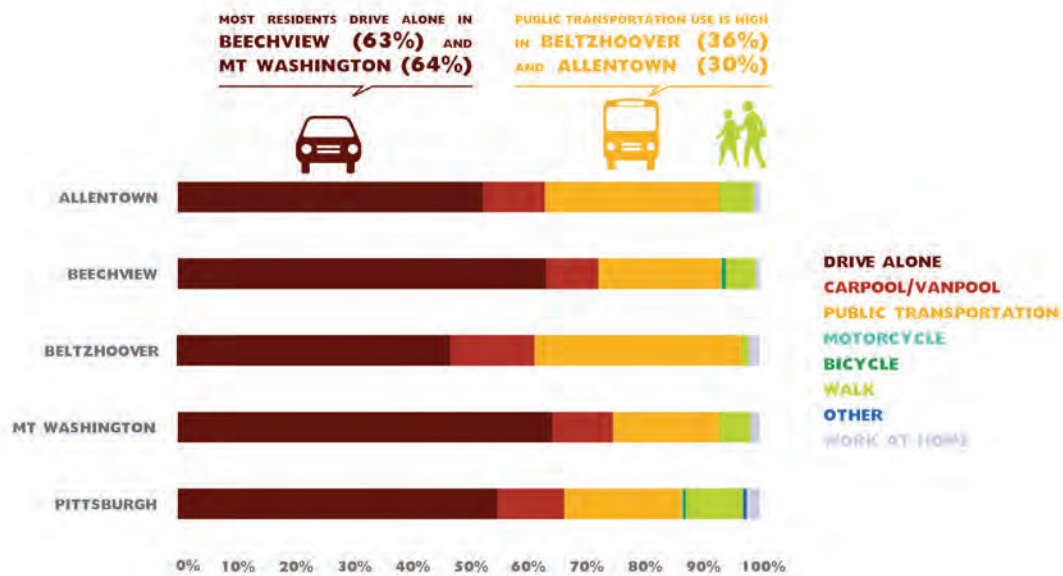


Figure 13. Comparison of Commute Mode in SMART TRID Study Area in 2008
Source: PGHSNAP

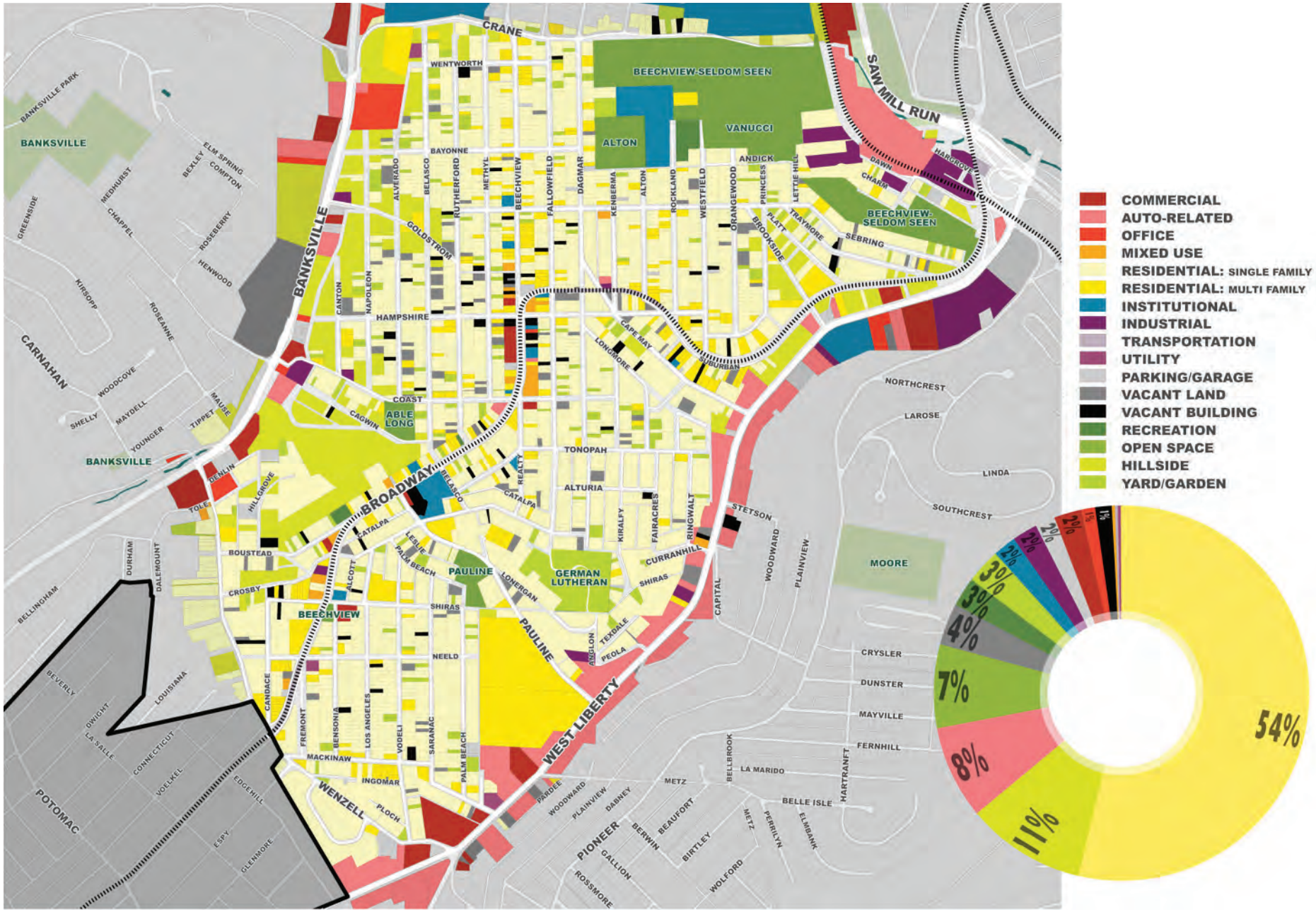


Figure 14. Land Use Map
Source: Field Survey, 2010

Vacant land

Vacant buildings

Partially vacant buildings

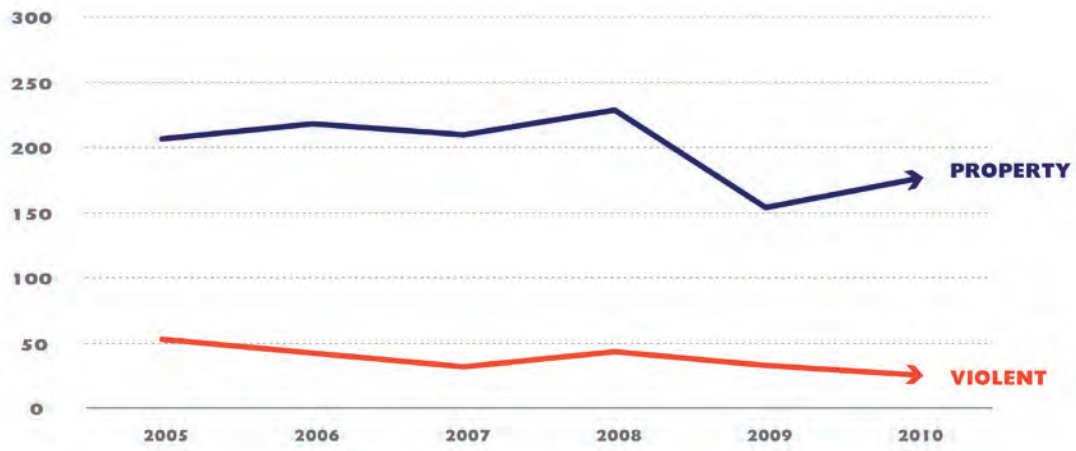
Vacancy

There are relatively low rates of vacancy in Beechview; 1% of the parcel area hosts vacant buildings, 1% contains partially vacant buildings, and 4% of the parcel area (equivalent to 21 acres) consists of vacant land. The largest parcel of vacant land (8 acres) is located on Banksville Road but is only partly developable due to steep slopes. The rest of the vacancy is scattered throughout the neighborhood, mostly in the form of vacant land. Although the vacancy rate is not high and Beechview overall is stable and intact, the distribution of vacancy throughout the neighborhood has an impact on most of the study area blocks.

The highest concentration of vacant buildings is located along Beechview Avenue and Broadway Avenue around Hampshire, a very visible location within the neighborhood's commercial corridor and an entry point for riders on the T. Many of the partially vacant buildings, which are mostly mixed use buildings with ground floor commercial space and residential upper floors, are also located on Broadway and Beechview Avenues. This concentrated vacancy in such a prominent location, coupled with the accompanying maintenance and nuisance issues, inhibits the revitalization of the community's commercial district and potentially limits transit use.

Figure 15. Vacancy Map
Source: Field Survey, 2010

Vacant building on Beechview Avenue near Broadway



*Part 1 Crimes include the most serious offenses:
homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

Figure 17. Crime Trends, 2005-2010
Source: City of Pittsburgh

Crime

Beechview residents expressed concern that crime in the neighborhood has increased and identified Broadway and Beechview Avenues and the staircase at Cape May Avenue as the worst areas. Crime and safety issues, both real and perceived, affect local residents' quality of life and their use of the commercial area and transit. Residents expressed concern about using transit at night because they did not feel it was safe, and the stairs that connect the neighborhood to the T stops on Broadway are dark and poorly maintained.

An analysis of crime data from 2005 through 2010 was used to determine the types of crimes affecting Beechview and where they occur most frequently. The data is organized in two categories: crimes against property, which include theft, motor vehicle theft, arson and burglary; and crimes against people, which include assault, robbery and rape. Property crimes are more common in Beechview than crimes against people; there were 126 incidents of reported property crimes, mainly theft and burglary, versus 30 incidents of reported crimes against people, mainly robbery and assault, in 2009. To place these figures in perspective a comparison of crime rates for serious crimes shows that Beechview, with a rate of 2.8 per 100 people in 2008, was below both the national rate of 3.7 incidents per 100 people and the citywide rate in Pittsburgh of 4.9 per 100 people. Serious crimes include: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Mapping crime data from 2009 confirms that there are hotspots for criminal activity on Beechview and Fallowfield Avenues around Broadway where there is concentrated vacancy, on Cape May Avenue around the stairs that lead up to Suburban Avenue, and along Suburban Avenue, which dead ends and faces the rail tracks. The concentration of criminal activity in what is the heart of the community warrants special attention, as reducing crime and its perceived magnitude will be a key piece in the revitalization of the neighborhood and helping it achieve its commercial potential.

Broadway Avenue

Banksville Road

West Liberty Avenue

MARKET CONDITIONS & POTENTIAL

Commercial Market and Potential

Commercial activity in Beechview is concentrated along three main corridors, each of which has a very different character. Broadway Avenue north of Coast Avenue offers Main Street-style shopping similar to Brookline Avenue with restaurants, retail, and services soon to include a new charcuterie and the IGA supermarket. Another cluster of businesses, including Davio's and Lunardi's restaurants, is found farther south on Broadway, just past Boustead Street.

In contrast to Broadway Avenue's pedestrian-scaled character, the two other commercial corridors, Banksville Road and West Liberty Avenue, are wide, high capacity roads with an auto-oriented character, ample surface parking, and little in the way of pedestrian amenities. Banksville Road has a range of commercial uses, including restaurants and retail, while West Liberty Avenue is dominated by auto-related businesses, mainly car dealerships. Vehicles travel at relatively high speeds on Banksville Road and parts of West Liberty Avenue.

Of the 115 businesses counted in the field survey, over a third of them, totaling 42 businesses, are auto-related. Services account for 21% of the businesses, and include professional and medical offices, contractors, realtors, and funerary services. Other businesses in the study area include restaurants (16%) and retail stores (10%). Almost all of the vacant commercial spaces, which account for 7% of the commercial uses, are located along Beechview and Broadway Avenues.

Aside from the forthcoming IGA supermarket, residents have several other options for groceries in Banksville, Dormont, and Mt. Washington. Competition for consumer dollars includes shopping districts in Downtown Pittsburgh, the Strip District, Carson Street, and South Side Works off of Carson Street, as well as the large shopping centers, such as South Hills Village and the Parkway Center Mall, outside of the City limits (see Figure 23).

Figure 20. Commercial Uses
Source: Field Survey, 2010

Trade Area

To identify potential unmet demand from the neighborhood, Real Estate Strategies (RES) measured spending potential in Beechview based on a transit-oriented trade area, which includes Beechview and also a portion of the adjacent Borough of Dormont. Dormont has retail and commercial establishments at the intersection of Broadway and Potomac Avenue and extending to and along West Liberty Avenue around the intersection with Potomac. Residents of Beechview reported that they shop in Dormont, as well as at retail stores along Banksville Road; hence, these establishments are capturing some of the expenditures of Beechview residents. As delineated and illustrated in Figure 22, the trade area's southern boundary is McFarland Road, the point where the T enters a tunnel. The T emerges near Mount Lebanon, which has its own shopping district and is considered to be a different trade area. RES used the trade area and data describing the characteristics of households living Beechview and the types of expenditures they make to estimate consumer spending patterns in the area.

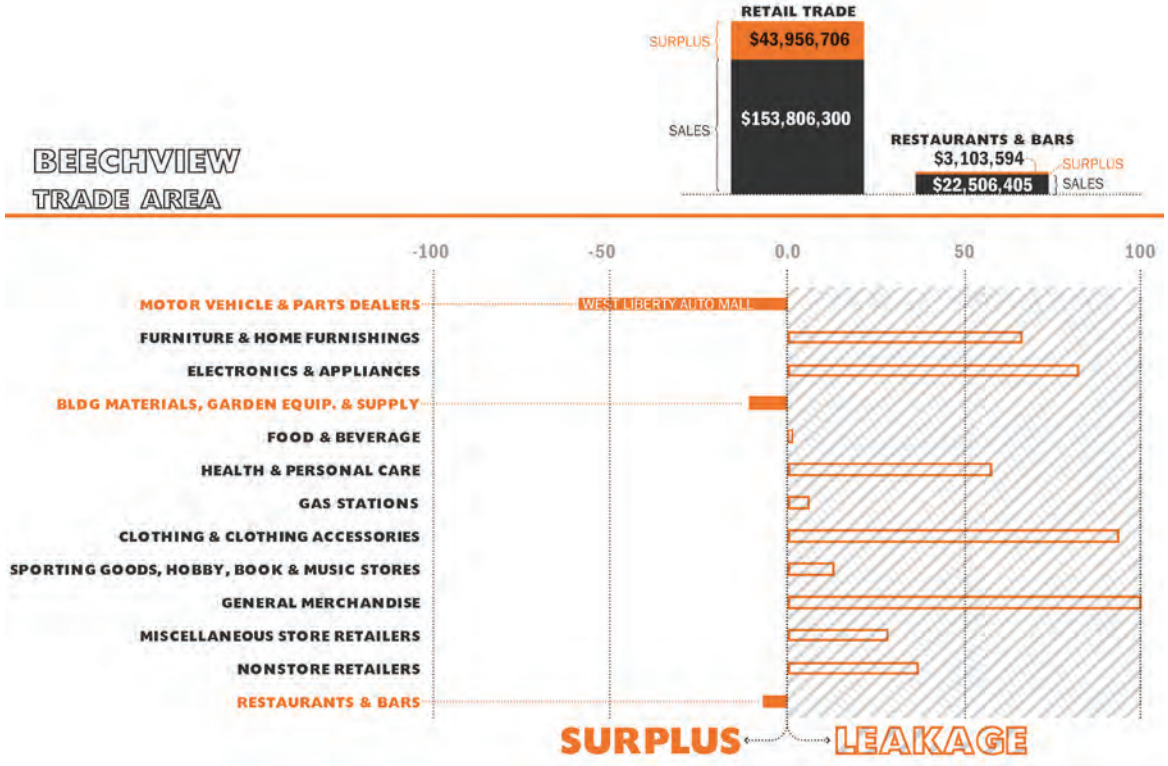


Figure 21. Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Subsector
Source: RES, ESRI, Infogroup

Retail Leakage Analysis

RES analyzed retail expenditure patterns within the trade area, including demand (retail potential) based on expenditures made by residents in the trade area and supply (retail sales) by establishments located in the trade area. Areas along West Liberty Avenue in the delineated trade area contain large concentrations of motor vehicle and parts dealers, and there are additional such establishments at other locations. These businesses were not considered in estimates of total demand and demand for particular goods and services.

The estimated trade area spending potential (demand) for retail trade and food and drink, excluding motor vehicles, totals $102.9 million. Retail sales in the trade area total about $73.3 million. Therefore, there is a gap of $29.7 million of retail expenditures that residents are making outside of the delineated trade area. This "leakage" could support other retail establishments in the trade area, most notably at establishments that might be attracted to locations along Broadway in Beechview. Subsectors with leakage include, in descending order, general merchandise, clothing and clothing accessories, electronics and appliances, furniture and home furnishings, health and personal care, internet retail, miscellaneous store retailers, hobby and leisure items, gas stations, and food and beverage.

It should be noted that these estimates were prepared while the Foodland store was still operating in Beechview and would include expenditures made at that store. Therefore, it is likely that grocery store expenditures are overstated because sales previously at the Foodland are being made elsewhere, and many undoubtedly are made by trade area residents outside of the delineated area.

Housing Market and Potential

Beechview is a stable community of older homes that are predominantly one- to four-family structures. The estimated homeownership rate in Beechview in 2010 is 65%. As with other areas of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, the Beechview residential market area, defined by RES on the basis of postal zip codes[8] from which prospective owners and renters might move, is losing households, and this trend is projected to continue. From 2010 to 2015, ESRI data projects a loss of 1,101 households, from an estimated 42,272 households during 2010 to a projected 41,171 households in 2015.

The main driver of demand for housing is household growth. In the delineated market area there is no overall growth to drive demand. However, prospective purchasers from other South Hills neighborhoods reportedly are attracted to the value perceived in purchasing a home in Beechview. Moreover, there is a very limited supply of rental housing in multifamily buildings, including properties reserved for seniors, and very few subsidized housing developments in the suburban portion of the market area.

There are some changes in the number of households in different income bands and age cohorts, and some of these may create demand for housing units in Beechview. While there are large losses of households with incomes below $35,000 and in all age cohorts, there also are increases in the number of households with incomes ranging from $50,000 to $74,999 in virtually all age cohorts. Some of this change may be the result of inflation and so-called "bracket creep," rather than an actual increase in affluence. However, for Beechview the growth in the number of younger households in this income band might increase the number of first-time homebuyers who could be attracted to the neighborhood. Similarly, there are increases in the number of households 65 and older in higher income bands. These households might seek senior housing in Beechview if such a property were available. Finally, some households in the income band from $50,000 to $74,999 in all age cohorts could be interested in renting multifamily units offered in Beechview, taking advantage of the availability of the T in the neighborhood.

The Pittsburgh rental market is very tight, and the vacancy rate is even lower in the Beechview residential market area. Vacancy rates generally range from zero to 4.1 percent. Rental rates at the end of 2010 for units at multifamily rental properties in the residential market area ranged from $476 for a studio to $1,500 for a 3-bedroom apartment. Rents typically include cold water, sewer, and trash collection.

ESRI estimates that almost 32% of Beechview's housing units were renter-occupied in 2010. In addition to apartments in multifamily and mixed-use buildings, single-family homes in the neighborhood are being offered for rent. Beechview is a particularly affordable part of the market area. Units located near

8 The zip codes included in RES's defined residential market area include 15210, 15211, 15216, 15220, and 15226.

The housing stock in Beechview varies greatly.

the intersection of Broadway and Hampshire Avenues are rented by the building's owner for an average of $500 per month, including all utilities for units that have not been renovated. For renovated units, rents average $500 per month, plus gas and electric. The property is always 100 percent leased.

RES contacted developers and managers of senior housing properties located in Beechview and the broader residential market area. Properties typically are fully leased or report having one vacancy in the process of being filled off of a waiting list. The majority of interviews conducted were with managers of subsidized senior properties. Tenants at these properties pay 30 percent of adjusted income for rent; as a result, units can be rented to seniors with extremely low incomes.

Beechview offers a broad range of housing types and styles for sale. Some homes are newer single-family properties; others are older homes that have not been upgraded recently. Based on the 2000 Census, 65.6% of the housing units in the neighborhood were single-family detached homes, while an additional 19.5% of units were in two-to-four family structures. Because of issues with foreclosures, Beechview census tracts were eligible for the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), even though the neighborhood is not eligible under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Under URA's direction, vacant foreclosed and abandoned homes in Beechview have been acquired, rehabilitated, and sold to new owners. The program has been successful in stabilizing blocks that could have been adversely affected by vacant, deteriorating homes. Units offered for sale generally have sold quickly.

Trulia.com statistics indicate that the median asking price for homes offered for sale in Beechview was $85,164, as of April 27, 2011. The median sale price during the time frame from January through early March 2011 was $56,250, which represents an increase of 2.3% from the same time frame during 2010, but is a 14.8% decline from the 2006 median sale price of $66,000. While detailed data are not available, the total number of home sales has remained fairly constant during this five year period.

Apart from new construction, the housing stock citywide is old; the 2009 American Community Survey reported that the median year housing units in the City were built was 1941, which means that half of the City's units are now at least 70 years old. In Beechview, all of the properties are aging; the property completed most recently, Greenbriar Village, was completed in 1970. Age coupled with building condition data confirm that many housing units in the study area are physically and/or functionally obsolete, requiring rehabilitation to bring them up to modern standards.

RES's full residential market analysis is included as an Appendix to the plan. Development scenarios for the determined market potential in Beechview are explored in the recommendations section.

2.1 Repair Broadway's potholes and restripe crosswalks

Broadway Avenue is the heart of the neighborhood, and it must be maintained to prevent interruption in mobility in the area. The focus needs to be on repairing potholes on an annual basis and developing a maintenance plan for the crosswalk and lane striping on the roadway so it is clear to drivers and pedestrians. The poor road conditions on Broadway Avenue are not only unattractive but also dangerous to both drivers and pedestrians. Drivers must swerve around potholes and ruts next to the T tracks. Pedestrians trying to cross the street have to keep an eye out for drivers avoiding potholes and are further disadvantaged by faded or nonexistent crosswalks, making those on foot even less visible to drivers.

2.2 Introduce lighting in the neighborhood, along steps, and along Broadway Avenue

Poor lighting has been cited as a reason residents do not use transit at night and is of particular concern along the many staircases in the community, which feel dark and isolated. Pedestrian-focused lighting along Broadway Avenue would enhance the attractiveness of the commercial district and increase visibility and safety for shoppers and T riders. For the staircases, lighting not only increases visibility and safety, but is also an opportunity to add visual interest and point the way to and from Broadway Avenue. In addition to overhead lamps, LED lighting can be embedded in the steps themselves or along the railings, or glow in the dark phosphorescent paint could be used to play up the steps as a fun and beautiful feature of the neighborhood. Where there is adequate sun, solar-powered LED lighting can be considered, as it is less expensive and offers more flexibility in the placement of the lights when compared with traditional lighting because it avoids the need to hook up to the existing power infrastructure.

Curb extension and rain garden in Portland
Source: www.portlandonline.com

Green street in Portland
Source: www.dutchdialogues.com

2.3 Integrate new trees on residential streets and rain gardens along the corridor

Beechview owes its stunning views and lush woodlands to its topography. Trees are plentiful on the hillsides where it is too steep to build, but along the residential streets of the neighborhood they are less evident. The most street trees in the neighborhood are found along Broadway Avenue in the commercial district north of Coast Avenue and along Beechview Avenue. Street trees enhance the experience of the street by making it more aesthetically pleasing and thus encouraging foot traffic. They also add value by providing shade, stormwater absorption and air filtration, and increasing property values. In commercial corridors, this can translate into more attractive sites for retail development.

The dramatic topography makes controlling stormwater runoff all the more important, which can be done through planting more street trees and creating rain gardens. Rain gardens are planted depressions specifically designed to capture and retain stormwater, letting it soak back into the ground rather than taxing the sewer system. Creating rain gardens along Broadway Avenue, which runs along the highest point in the neighborhood, could minimize the flow of stormwater down the slopes and be part of a planting strategy that contributes to the branding of the corridor, enhances the streetscape, and provides traffic calming benefits.

Figure 31. Proposed Speed Tables to Connect the Sidewalks and Transit Stops
Above: Proposed transit improvements, Below: Existing platform and roadway

PROMOTE WALKING AND BIKING IN BEECHVIEW

One of the goals of this project is to make Broadway Avenue more livable. This can be accomplished by increasing the amount of "people" activity by making it easier and more pleasurable for people to walk and bike in the area.

2.4 Integrate pedestrian crossing signage

One of the challenges faced in the neighborhood is simply crossing the street. Pennsylvania State law requires drivers to yield to pedestrians at crosswalk locations. However this was rarely observed on Broadway Avenue. An effective method to make drivers aware of pedestrians is through signage. This can be accomplished with standard signage from the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. Consideration should also be given to additional signage that makes drivers aware that Broadway Avenue is a pedestrian-friendly street and that they should reduce their speed accordingly. This can be in the form of stand-alone signs or incorporated with other neighborhood branding signage.

2.5 Connect the sidewalks with T station stops with speed tables to slow traffic

Riders accessing the T at Shiras, Boustead, Belasco, Coast, and Hampshire encounter a number of challenges. The "stations" at these locations are essentially raised concrete islands that provide little to no protection from vehicular traffic that drives by on both sides of the island. It is also difficult to access the islands as a pedestrian. There is no crosswalk between Broadway Avenue sidewalks and the islands, vehicular traffic uses the space between the

Bicycle parking in downtown Pittsburgh
Source: www.bike-pgh.org

2.7 Introduce bicycle parking near Fallowfield Station and at the Library

One of the successful components of a bicycling community is having enough bike parking. Bicyclists need a place to park their bike in order to encourage them to visit businesses and restaurants. In addition to improving the on-street bike infrastructure on Broadway, more bike parking should be constructed in the area. Standard bike parking should be located in places with enough sidewalk space on Broadway Avenue. More concentrated bike parking stations should be considered at Fallowfield Station and the Library. With a vacant lot located next to the Fallowfield Station, consideration should also be given to reusing this lot for a future bike sharing station.

2.8 Plan for a bicycle network in Beechview

The recommended bike lane on Broadway Avenue will serve as a distinct facility in Pittsburgh and will provide access to the businesses and institutions along Broadway. However, it is necessary to think about how a bike lane on Broadway Avenue could be part of a larger bike network that connects not only to Beechview, but the surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

The challenge with creating a bike network in Beechview is the steep grade of many of the residential streets. These grades are obviously a tremendous challenge for bicyclists, and any bike network must minimize the exposure to segments that have grades steeper than 5%. The map shows the proposed bike network in Beechview with suggested bike routes that would connect to Banksville, Brookline, and Dormont.

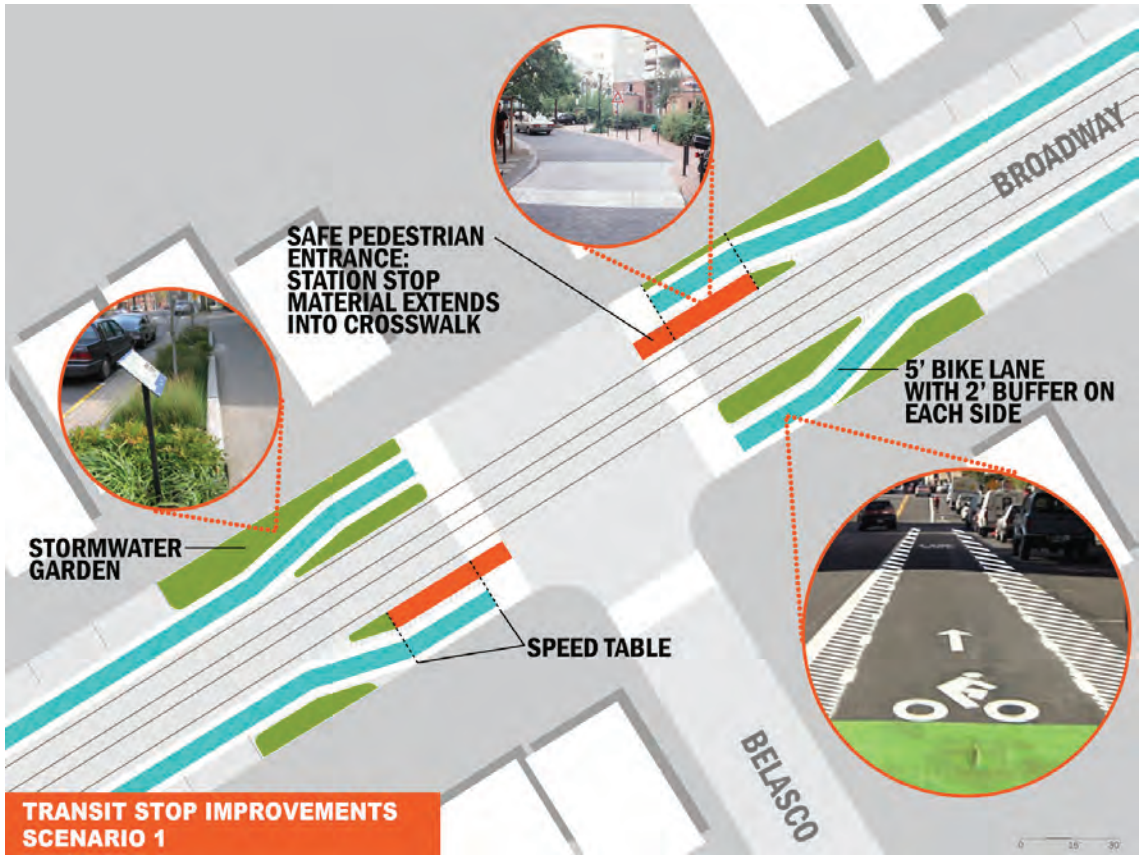


Figure 34. Broadway Avenue Improvements - Scenario 1

Figure 35. Scenario 1 Buffered Bike Lane

Scenario 1: Stripe bicycle lanes on Broadway and restrict traffic to share the lane with the T

With proper design and safety standards, LRT, bicycles, and other traffic can co-exist safely along Beechview and without disrupting current LRT operations. The first alternative requires removing the outside travel lane, having vehicles share a travel lane with the T, and providing a buffered bike lane between the travel lane and the parking lane.

This design is similar to the initial recommendation in the *Active Allegheny Plan*, with the exception of the buffer, which is created by providing less width for the travel, bicycle, and parking lanes. The *Active Allegheny* alternative should also be considered.

This design would slow vehicular traffic, provide a buffer for bicyclists from the trolley tracks, moving vehicular traffic, and open doors of parked cars, and allow space for vehicles to pull over if they are disabled or need to allow emergency vehicles to pass. The cost of the project is limited to re-striping the roadway.

This concept, however, does not provide a mechanism to physically prevent vehicles from using the bike lane, either for driving or to double park. Enforcement would be necessary to help prevent these actions. The other drawback to this solution is that vehicles looking to park on Broadway will need to cross over the bike lane.

Scenario 2: Extend sidewalks on Broadway and create a new bicycle lane protected from auto traffic by a floating parking lane

There also exists the opportunity to create a much more innovative bicycle facility and increase space for pedestrians. This can be accomplished by flipping the bike lane and the parking lane, which would create a protected bike lane between the parking lane and the sidewalk. This would create the opportunity

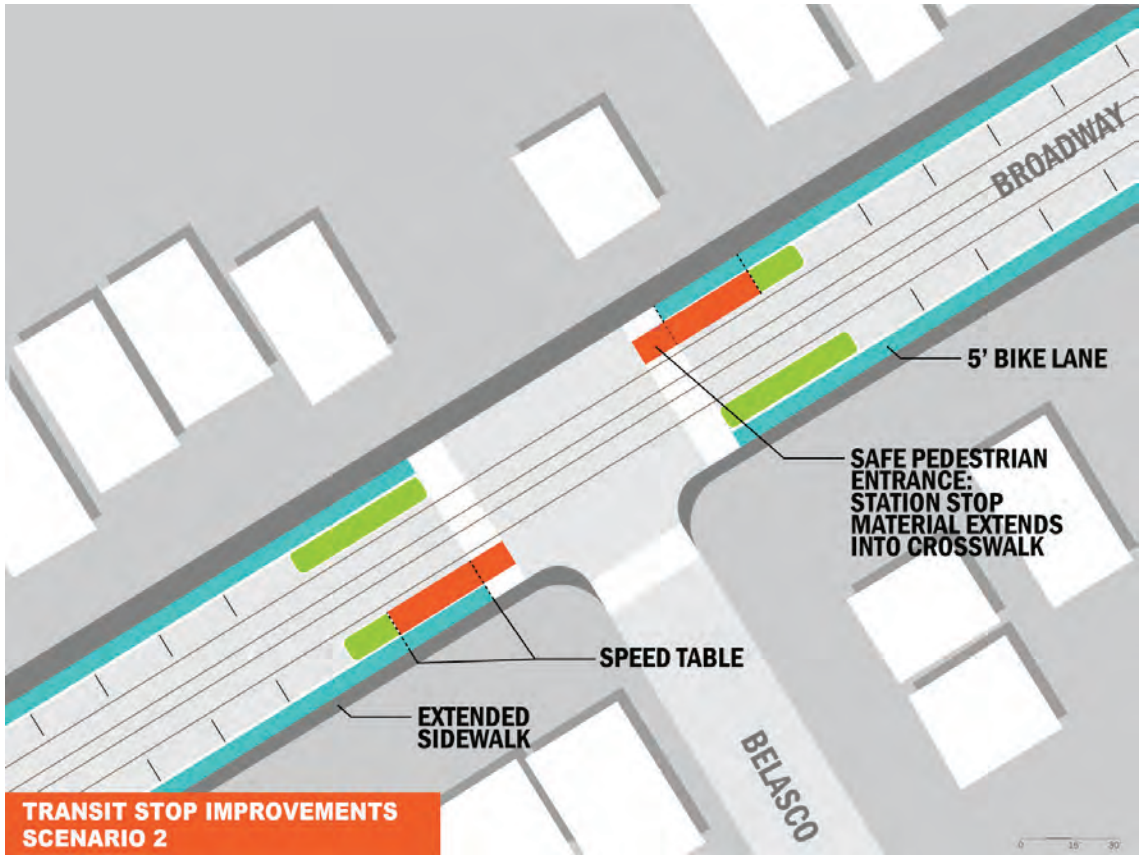


Figure 36. Proposed Broadway Avenue Improvements - Scenario 2

Figure 37. Scenario 2 Bike Lane Buffered by Floating Parking Lane

to increase the width of the sidewalks on each side of the street by two feet. The *Active Allegheny Plan* discusses the potential for this design, but does not include the discussion of the additional pedestrian space.

This design would slow vehicular traffic and create a bicycle facility that would encourage activity and be perceived as safe by the majority of potential bicyclists. It would also improve pedestrian safety and increase the amount of space for pedestrians that could be used for landscaping or sidewalk cafes.

This design involves moving the curbs which could result in substantial costs because of the need to work with the utilities. A special snow plow will be required to remove snow from the bike lane. Also, this design does not provide space for vehicles to pull over if they are disabled, which would force the T to be stuck behind them.

This design could also be completed without moving the sidewalks in. By not touching the curbs, the cost would be significantly reduced, but no additional pedestrian space at sidewalk level would be created. Dedicated spaces for loading would be necessary, and centralized loading zones should be installed to accommodate this demand.

Example of bike lane buffered by floating parking lane in Minneapolis
Source: Sam Schwartz Engineering

Figure 38. Proposed New Plaza at Broadway and Beechview Avenues

Above: rendering of new plaza and kiosk
Below: existing traffic triangle and parking lot

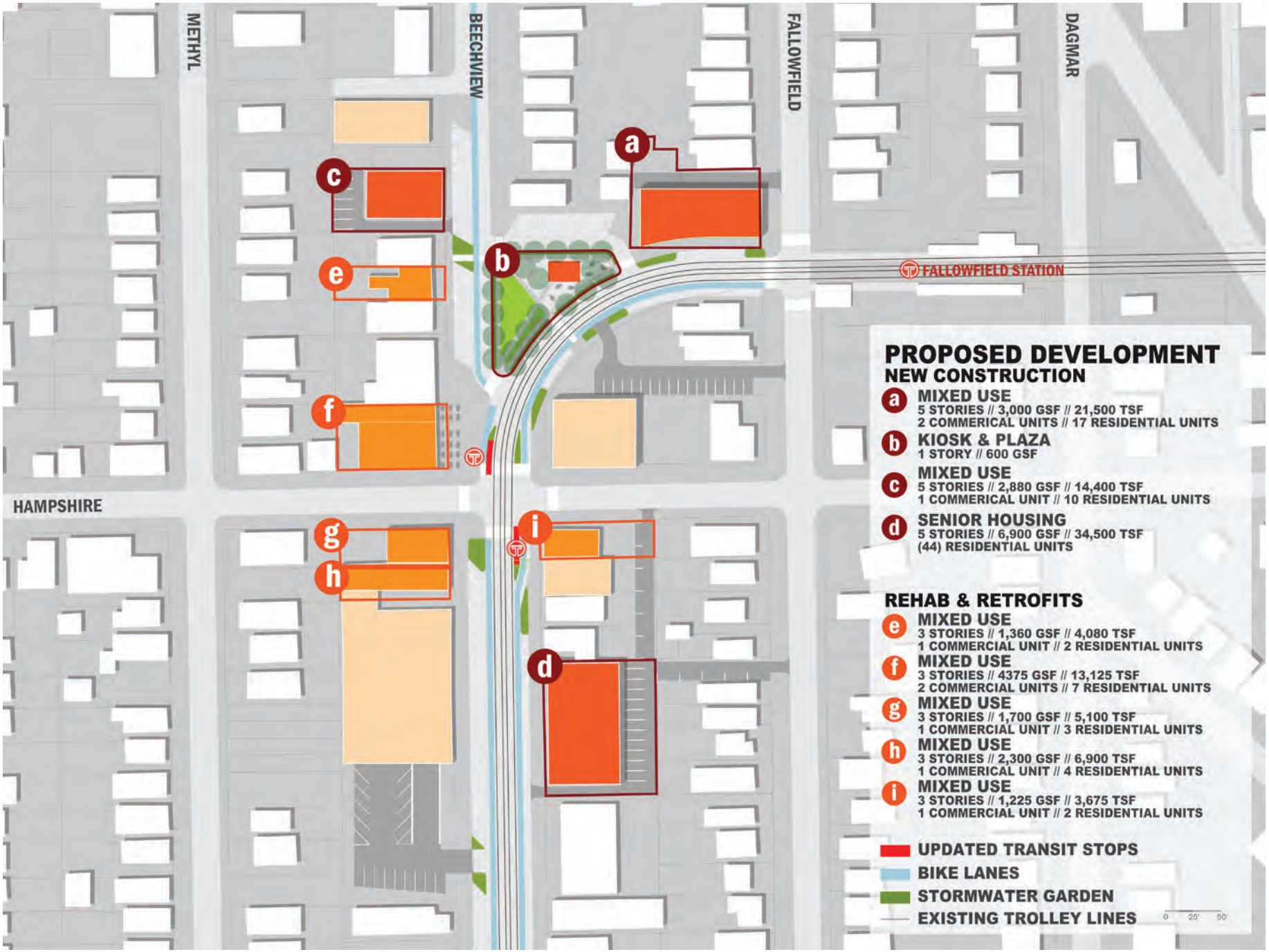


Figure 41. Proposed Development