

North Side Planning District

The North Side Planning District consists of three neighborhoods and part of an industrial district. Brier Hill, North Heights, Wick Park and the northern section of the Riverbend Industrial Park are contained in this cluster. Traces of Youngstown's early settlement, economic, industrial and cultural history are scattered through these neighborhoods.

Location

The North Side Planning District is bounded by the Mahoning River on the west, the City of Girard and Liberty Township on the North, Crab Creek on the east and the Madison Avenue Expressway on the south. The District occupies parts of both Mahoning and Trumbull Counties.

Neighborhoods

1. Brier Hill

The Brier Hill neighborhood grew on the homestead of early Youngstown industrialist and Ohio's Civil War governor, David Tod. Tod's mines provided coal for his mills and subdivision of his land provided housing for the miners and iron workers that provided muscle for such enterprises. Brier Hill grew as an unincorporated village inside Youngstown Township until it was absorbed by the City in stages between 1880 and 1900.

The rapid expansion of industry was a pull factor for the entire Mahoning Valley and Brier Hill served as an entry point for early immigrants, Welsh, Irish, Italian and African American as they, like the raw materials they processed, coalesced and became the strength of a rapidly growing industrial region. The coal mines that fueled the iron industry are long gone and the old rooming houses are either razed or in various stages of disrepair.

Brier Hill has the last working vestige of Youngstown's steelmaking past, V & M Star, a pipe producing mini-mill located in the buildings of the former Brier Hill Works of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company. The chaos that spawned Brier Hill is still evident in its current land use. Brier Hill contains a mixture of residual ethnic influences (churches and stores), industry, public housing and vast tracts of open land that were once residences. As the population of Youngstown moved up and out, much of Brier Hill was simply left behind.

2. Wick Park

What Brier Hill was to the working class, the Wick Park neighborhood was to the wealthier residents of Youngstown. During Youngstown's preindustrial days, transportation was primarily on foot or horse drawn. Initial residential development was clustered in what would become the downtown. Wealth was irrelevant to residential location because the village had to be walkable. As transportation improved, the upper classes could afford, financially and timewise, to move away from the densely populated core. This movement, blocked by the steep ridge to the south, was towards the north away from the noise and grime of the mills and commerce. Migration originally proceeded up Wick Avenue to Madison and flowed towards the park and continued up Fifth Avenue.

Wick Park, a gift to the City from the family whose name it bears, was designed as an open space with horse trails. It straddled the City's northern border in 1880 and by 1890 was entirely within the city limits. The area adjacent to the park and on Fifth Avenue north of the park was the domain of Youngstown's rich and famous. The trappings of wealth faded with distance from Wick Park and Fifth Avenue. Working class apartments and houses filled in the residential land between Wick Avenue and Elm Street, and along the hillside above Andrews Avenue. Many residential structures still remain with uses ranging from funeral homes to group homes, while much of the northern extent of Fifth Avenue retains its status with an active upper end real estate market.



North Side

3. North Heights

The North Heights neighborhood grew as demand for housing for all classes expanded with Youngstown's industrial base. The bulk of the neighborhood came into the City as part of the 1929 annexation with the rest of Youngstown Township.

Wealthy residents took advantage of the prestige of Fifth Avenue and frontages along Crandall Park and the Henry Stambaugh Golf Course. The working class resided along the hillside that rose from the Crab Creek industrial district up to Ohio Avenue while middle class residents filled in between.

Conditions

Population

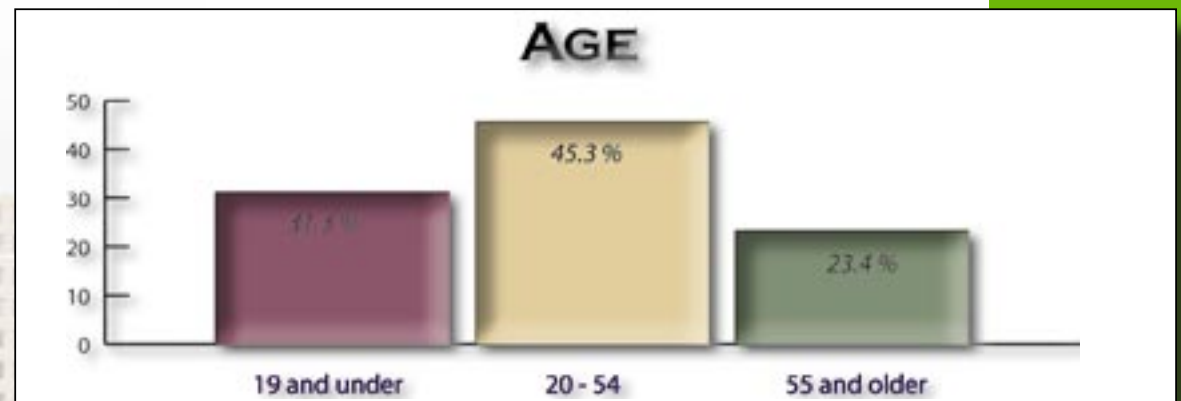
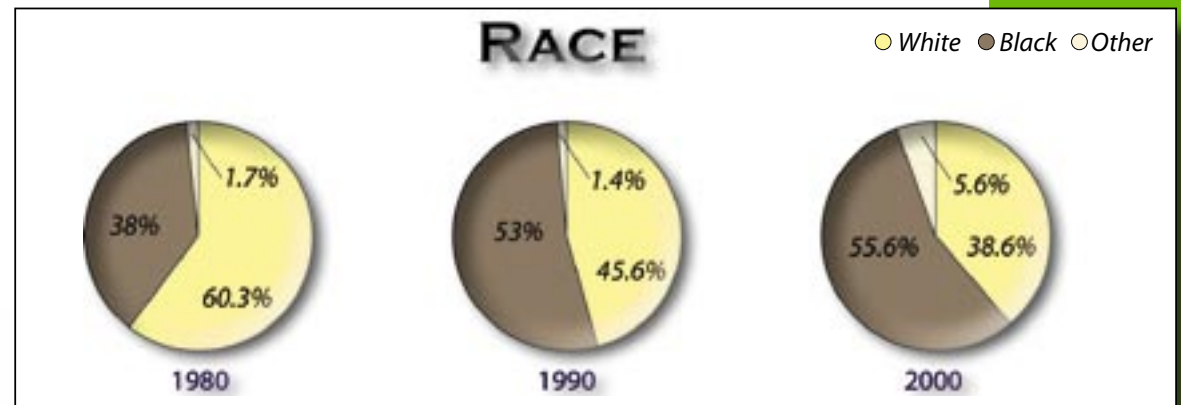
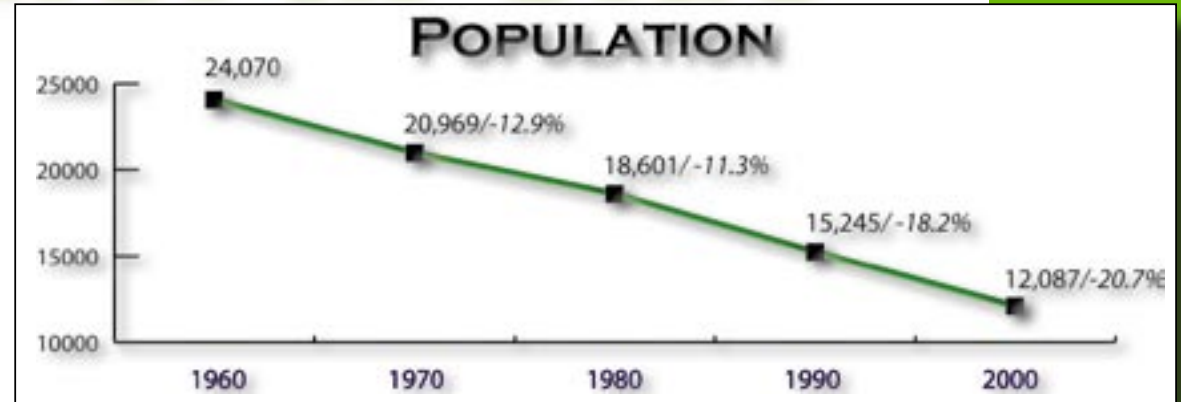
The North Side, like the City has experienced an average of 16% population decline every ten years for the past 40 years and over half its total population. It is anticipated that this trend will slow and the population will stabilize.

Race

The racial make up the North Side has changed over time as well. Twenty years ago 60.3% of the population was white and now minorities make up the majority population at 61.2%.

Age

The majority of the population of the North Side is between 20 and 54 years old. An important factor to consider is that a large percent of the 23.4 % of the population over the age of 55 years old are over the age of 65.

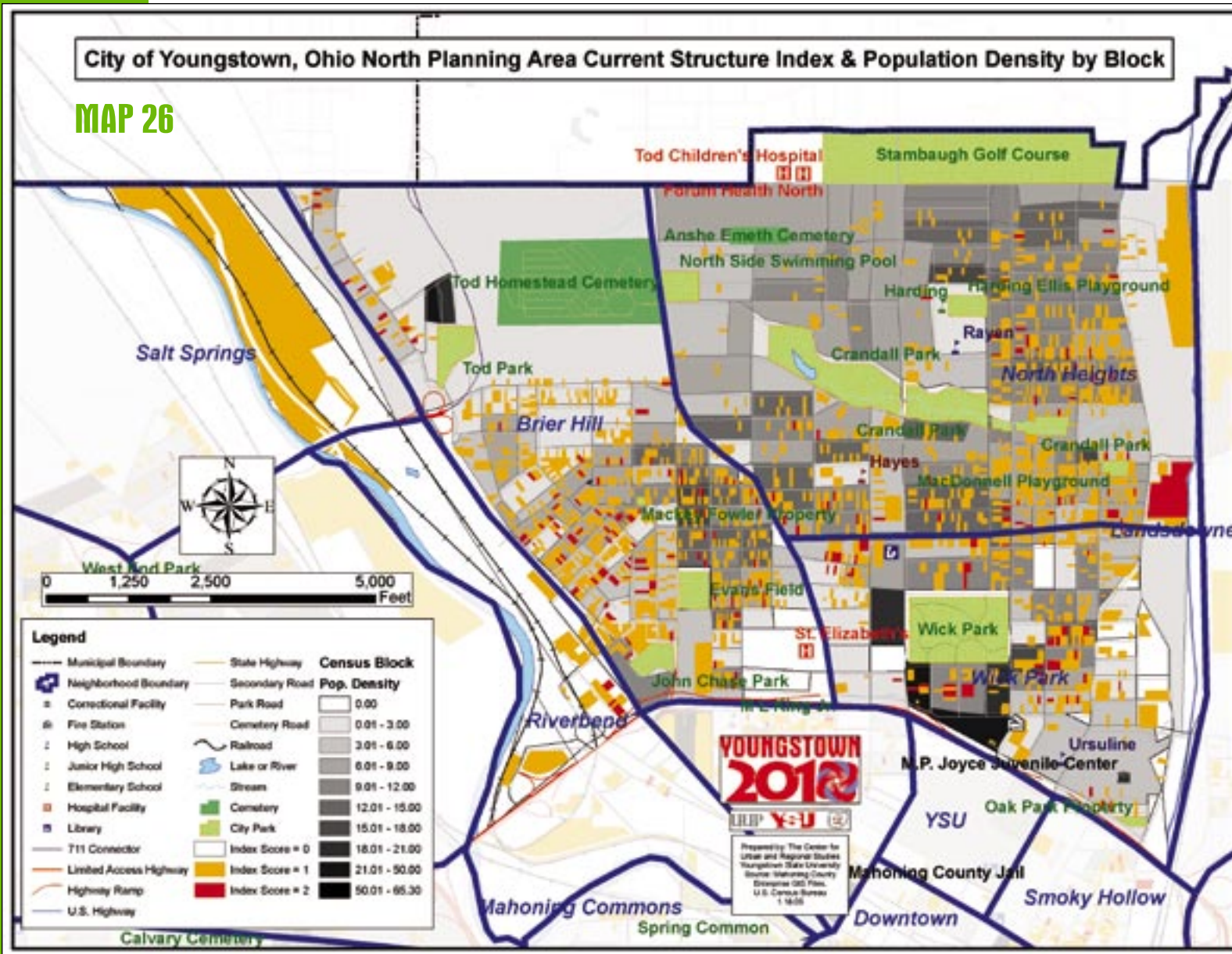


Housing, Vacant and Abandoned Properties

Chapter 4 chronicles what has been left behind by suburban flight and deindustrialization. Housing has been particularly impacted, as housing stock that once held in excess of 170,000 people now contains only 82,000 (see section 4.4 Housing). Excess housing is both a liability to existing neighborhoods and an opportunity to find alternative uses for surplus residential land.

Over time many units have been removed from the City's housing stock, but removal has lagged behind the rate of disinvestment and abandonment. Youngstown has been left with nearly 3,500 housing units in excess of what the current population can support. This agglomeration of economically nonviable housing induces further blight and abandonment. Patterns of blight and disinvestment are not geographically uniform.

Neighborhoods have been impacted dramatically differently. Patterns of stable housing, blight, disinvestment and open space are all evident in the North Side district (see Map 26). All North Side neighborhoods show signs of blight, but there are heavy concentrations throughout Brier Hill, in the Wick Park and North Heights neighborhoods east of Elm Street.



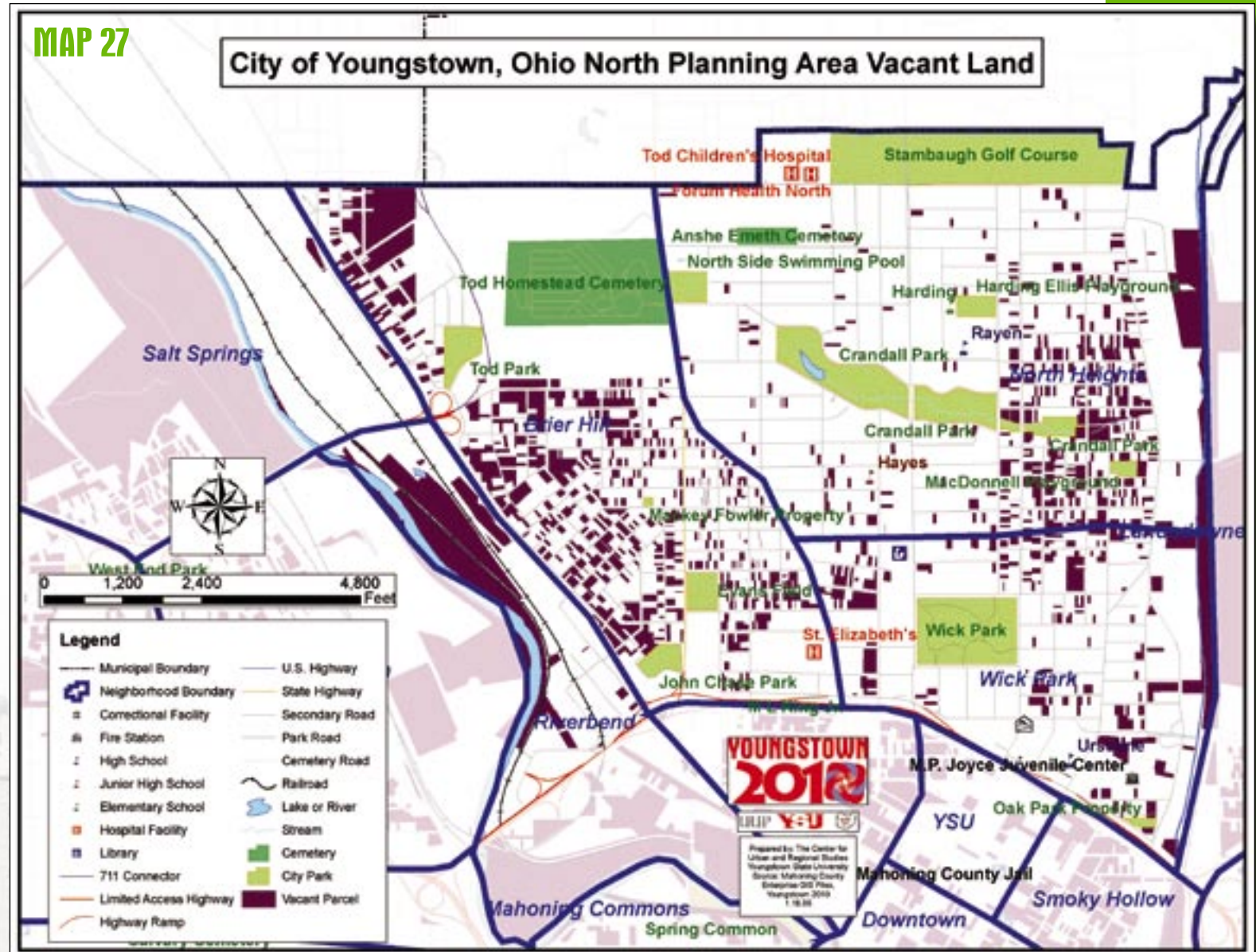
NORTH SIDE

North Heights west of Elm Street is relatively stable. Population density ranges from relatively nonexistent in northern Brier Hill and along the Andrews Avenue corridor to relatively dense around YSU.

Years of disinvestment have also left clusters of vacant land, both from removed structures and land never developed, throughout the North Side (see Map 27). Patterns of vacant land tend to match the patterns of blight, providing graphic evidence that excess housing and unchecked blight lead to eventual abandonment and removal.

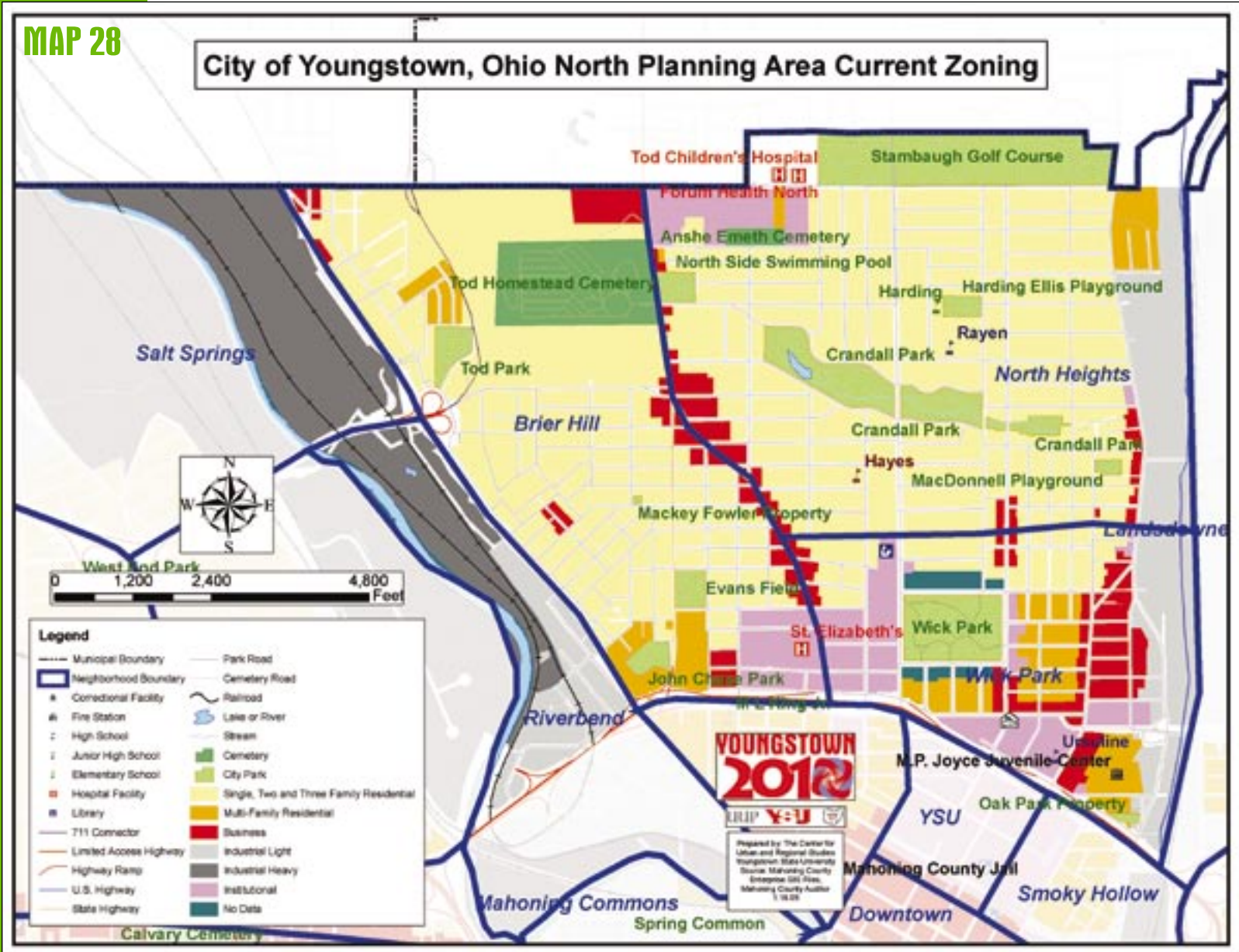
Northern Brier Hill demonstrates the ultimate result, nearly total disinvestment. Other sections of Brier Hill are following the same path. Sections of the North Side east of Elm Street show the same pattern. Between Belmont Avenue and Elm Street, the majority of land is in use.

The patterns of blight and abandonment on the North Side show problems and opportunities.



Current Land Use Plan

Current land use on the North Side is the result of history and the 1951 and 1974 plans. Land use was codified in the 1969 zoning ordinance, as amended, which yielded the official map (see Map 28).



Commercial use is directed along the Belmont corridor and the Logan/Wick corridor where it had naturally evolved prior to the 1951 plan. Small neighborhood business agglomerations were found along Elm Street and in Brier Hill where they had developed to serve the dense populations of these old ethnic and working class neighborhoods. Time and deindustrialization would weed out both the population and the business it supported.

Industrial land use was reserved for the district's major water courses the Mahoning River and Crab Creek. Smoke belching steel producing industries with their related coke batteries, finishing mills and slag dumps lined the Mahoning River. Crab Creek was dominated by metal manufacturers although it also had its share of environmentally destructive industry.

The North Side District has always been endowed with dedicated recreation/ open space. Although such land use was not a category under the 1951 plan, parkland gifts from early industrialists ensured recreational opportunity for north side residents. Wick Park, Crandall Park and the Henry Stambaugh Golf Course bear the names of these philanthropic community leaders. These facilities combined with Brier Hill Park, Tod Park, Evans Field, Chase Park, North Side Swimming Pool and the facilities at Harding Elementary and The Rayen School provided substantial outdoor recreational opportunities for north side residents.

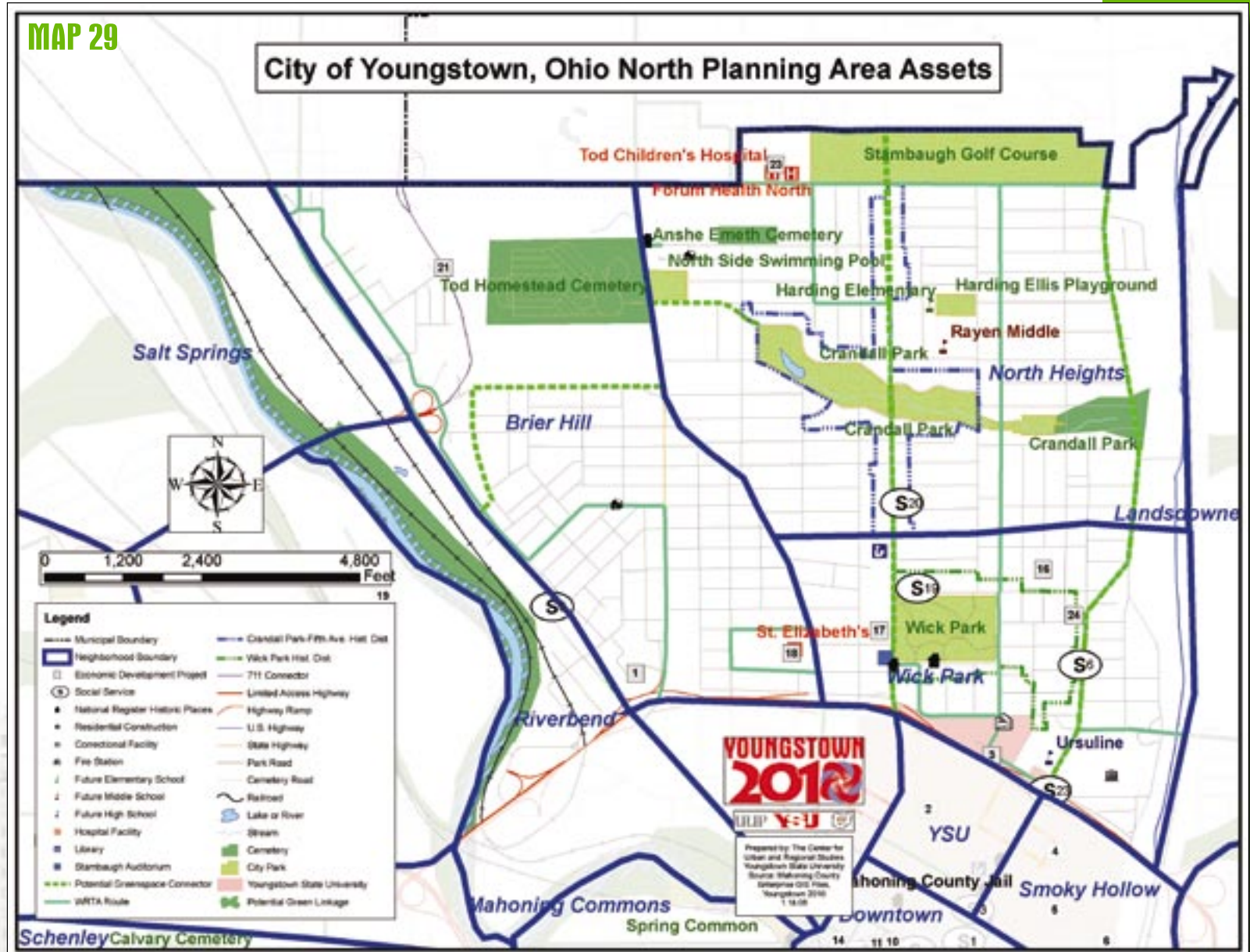
Assets and Resources

The North Side District is currently endowed with a number of ongoing projects, resources and assets that play into the new land use plan (see Map 29). The new Harding Elementary School is already open, while The Rayen High School will be replaced with a new middle school.

Ursuline High School is considering a major renovation project, and in conjunction with Youngstown State University's Centennial Master Plan, should help to stabilize and revitalize the southern edge of the North Side Planning District. The two major medical facilities that remain inside the City are located on the North Side. The Humility of Mary Health Partners (HMHP) and Forum Health still maintain a presence, HMHP's St. Elizabeth Medical Center and Forums Tod Children's Hospital and North Side Hospital. Both facilities have invested significantly in their existing facilities, however both have also significantly suburbanized.

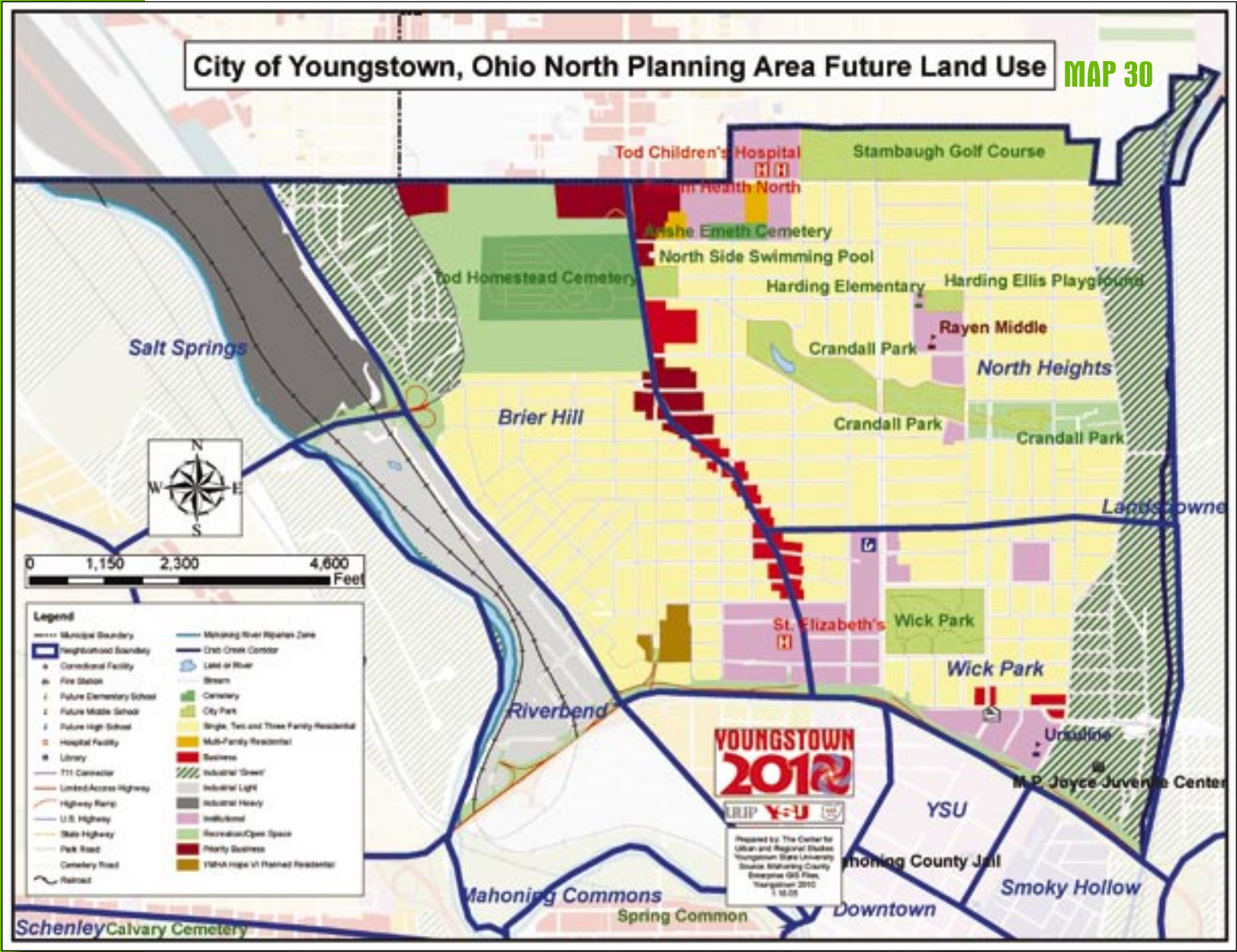
The Youngstown Fire Department operates Station 7 on Madison Avenue and this station along with Station #1 downtown and Station #3 on the West Side provide fire protection to the North Side.

The City's Park and Recreation Department operates Wick Park, Crandall Park, Stambaugh Golf Course, North Side Swimming Pool, Brier Hill Park, MacDonnell Playground and Harding Ellis Park on the Northside. Taken together with the water course of the Mahoning River, Crab Creek and Crandall Run and the vast expanse of Tod Homestead Cemetery, the North Side has a substantial green infrastructure ready to be linked into the green network.



The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan

The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan makes extensive use of the industrial green land use classification to return opportunities for sustainable development to the North Side (see Map 30). The amount of residential and commercial land is reduced as overall greenspace and institutional space are increased.



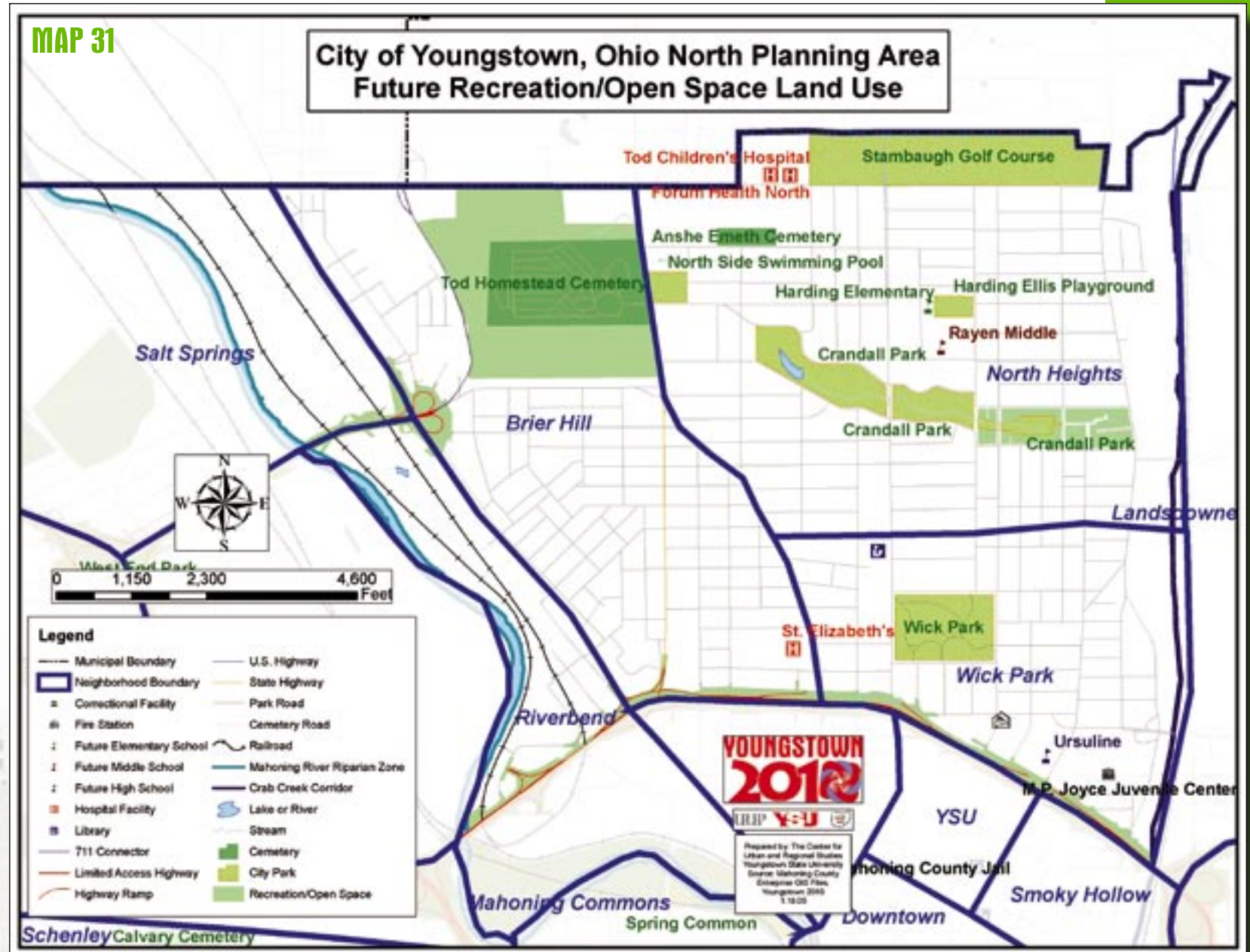
North Side

Recreation and Open Space

The North Side is well endowed with a substantial green infrastructure. This infrastructure forms the foundation of the North Side's recreation and open space plan (see Map 31).

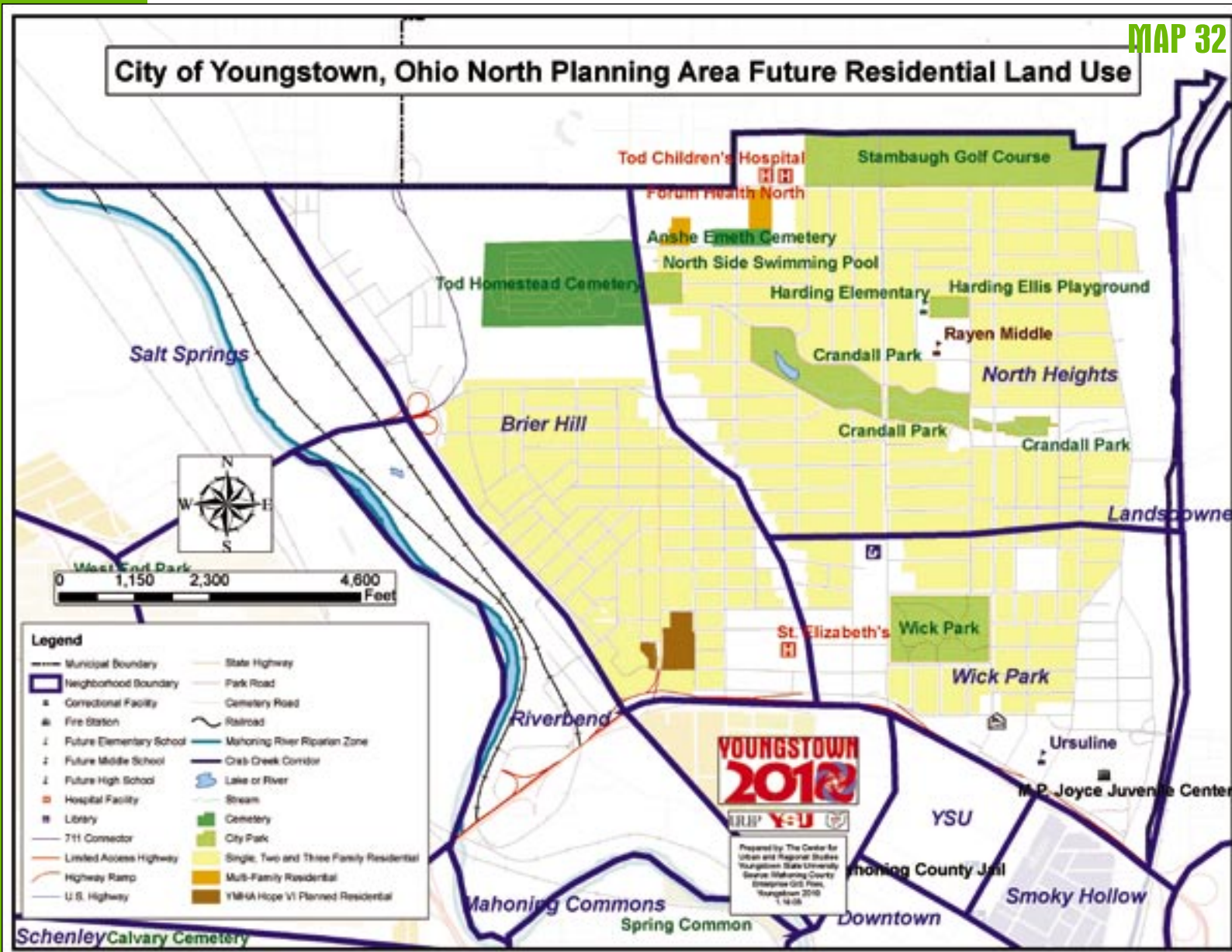
In addition to the existing green assets, the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan calls for the extension of Crandall Park by reclaiming Crandall Run and linking it to the key Crab Creek watercourse. The plan calls for keeping as much of the open space around Tod Homestead Cemetery as green as possible, while recognizing its location along major transportation links will lead to development pressures.

The plan also calls for restoration of green space along the Mahoning River and beautification projects along the 711 Connector and Madison Avenue Expressway as part of ODOT's construction and renovation projects. ODOT, the City and YSU have collaborated to make this a reality and expansion and maintenance of these projects is essential.



Residential

The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan leaves residential as the dominant land use on the North Side (see Map 32). The North Heights neighborhood remains predominantly low density residential with higher density uses adjacent to the Jewish Community Center on Gypsy Lane and behind the Union Square Plaza at Belmont and Gypsy.



Residential land from the 1951 and 1974 plans has been removed from the Brier Hill neighborhood to better utilize the new 711 Connector – Gypsy Lane freeway exit and to gain a land use buffer around V & M North Star Steel. Residential land has also been reclassified between Wick Avenue and Andrews Avenue to create new opportunities in the former Wick Six /Ursuline High School area.

The Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority (YMHA) Hope VI project (see Figure 2) is an example of a planned residential neighborhood by an independent development group that fits nicely within the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan and its goals and objectives. The majority of the Hope VI project is within the North Side Planning district. The plan offers a variety of uses and will require the overlay zoning statute.

FIGURE 2

**ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
YOUNGSTOWN'S NEW NEIGHBORHOOD**

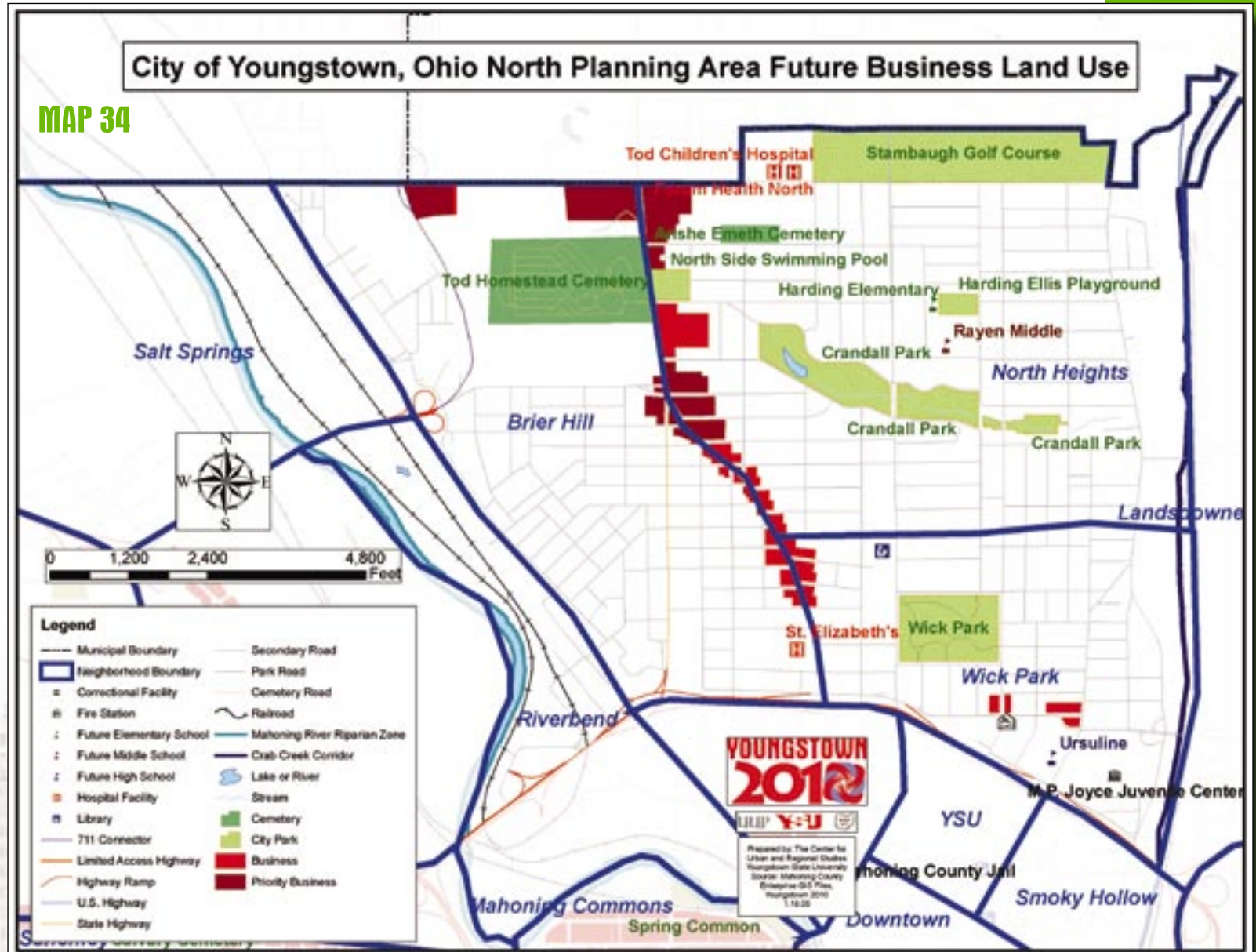


North Side

Commercial

Commercial land use on the North Side remains focused along the Belmont Avenue corridor in the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan (see Map 34). Three priority commercial clusters have been identified, two along Gypsy Lane. Belmont and Gypsy Lane, the major entry way into the City from Liberty Township, has a long history of commercial development on both sides of the city limits. Currently two national chain pharmacies, a gas station and the Union Square Plaza are operating at this intersection.

The new exit at Gypsy Lane and the 711 Connector provides new development opportunities for Youngstown, Girard and Liberty. The south east corner of this exit has been set aside for commercial development. The opening of this long awaited transportation improvement will provide increased access to Forum Health's Northside and Tod Children's Hospitals that should not only support commercial activity at the exit but will also increase traffic flow through the Belmont - Gypsy priority commercial cluster.



Industrial

Industrial land use on the North Side actually expands due to former residentially zoned land finding its way into the new industrial green classification (see Map 35).

Industrial green land use along the entire Crab Creek corridor and extending into the old Wick Six Auto Dealer agglomeration is a step toward making former polluting industrial and nonviable commercial and residential areas part of the 'gray to green' shift.

The same transformation is used in extreme northwest Brier Hill. The land between US 422 and the new 711 Connector is also shifted to industrial green. Land between the Mahoning River and US 422 keeps its heavy and light industrial classification, although the restoration project for the Mahoning River and reestablishment of the riparian zone could call for a more substantial greening of this corridor.

