

West Side Planning District

The West Side Planning District contains, overall, the most recently developed neighborhoods in Youngstown. There are a total of five west side neighborhoods; Belle Vista, Kirkmere, Salt Springs, Schenley and Steelton. Kirkmere and the southern half of Schenley are predominantly post WW II developments, Belle Vista and the northern half of Schenley are from the 1930s and 1940s, Steelton is an early mill worker neighborhood and Salt Springs is overwhelmingly industrial.

Location

The West Side Planning District is defined by water courses and the city limit. The Mahoning River separates the West Side from the North Side. Mill Creek is the border between the West Side and the South Side. Weathersfield Township and the City of Girard border the north, Austintown Township the west and Boardman Township the south. Canfield Township shares a four corners relationship with the West Side, Austintown and Boardman.

Neighborhoods

1. Belle Vista

The Belle Vista neighborhood grew along the north side of Mahoning Avenue as the City spread westward. The section closest to the Mill Creek confluence is an extension of Steelton cut off by I-680 and initially grew with the Carnegie Steel Company's Ohio Works. This section of Belle Vista was part of the City before 1900.

The section of the neighborhood between Belle Vista and Hazelwood came into Youngstown between 1900 and 1910. This neighborhood was more substantial than its eastern counterpart and developed along with the middle class in Youngstown.

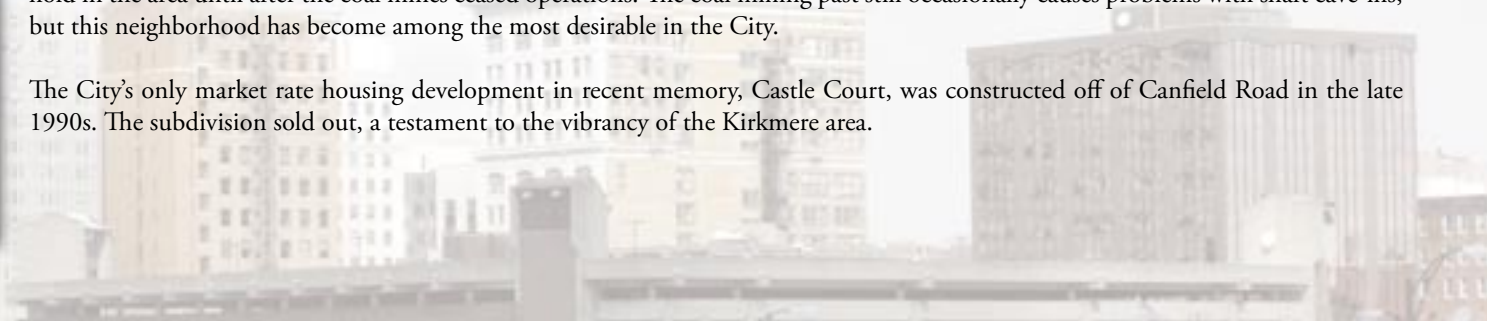
The remainder of the neighborhood has the characteristics of the Belle Vista – Hazelwood section within three blocks of Mahoning Avenue, but north of that becomes more post-war in nature. This western section of the Belle Vista neighborhood has commercial and light industrial development along Meridian Road and Industrial Road. Mid-twentieth century housing, fans out south of Mahoning Avenue giving way to post war developments, and in scattered locations even more recently constructed units, where the neighborhood abuts Mill Creek Park and the Kirkmere neighborhood.

2. Kirkmere

The Kirkmere neighborhood was extensively developed following World War II to fill the need for veterans housing. Named after the major arterials that border it, Kirk Road and Meridian Road, and with local streets named after WW II military engagements, this middle class neighborhood remains one of Youngstown's strongest.

Initially settled along Bears Den Road because of the proximity to Mill Creek and the park, residential development hesitated to take hold in the area until after the coal mines ceased operations. The coal mining past still occasionally causes problems with shaft cave-ins, but this neighborhood has become among the most desirable in the City.

The City's only market rate housing development in recent memory, Castle Court, was constructed off of Canfield Road in the late 1990s. The subdivision sold out, a testament to the vibrancy of the Kirkmere area.



3. Salt Springs

Salt Springs is a neighborhood with a mix of land uses. The residential section, just north of SR 711, was formerly part of the Steelton neighborhood, and the older mill housing between Salt Springs Road and the CSX rail line has suffered because of its isolation. This area has scattered structures in various states of disrepair, vacant lots and a concentration of salvage yards. The other side of Salt Springs Road has newer multi-family dwellings between I-680 and the ravine that separates the residential areas from the industrial park.

The majority of the Salt Springs neighborhood was used as a slag dump to handle the waste products generated by the Ohio Works' four blast furnaces. Yesterday's waste products are today's raw materials, and as slag became the preferred aggregate for asphalt paving, the slag piles were 'mined', the cleared land purchased by the City, and the whole dump area became a successful brownfield redevelopment project, the Salt Springs Industrial Park.

The residential sections were part of the City by 1910; the industrial park area was absorbed in 1929.

4. Schenley

The Schenley neighborhood mirrors many of the traits of its neighbor to the north, the Belle Vista neighborhood. Early development began along Mahoning Avenue and spread south. Like Belle Vista, the earliest settlement began at the Mill Creek/Mahoning confluence. The section between Mill Creek and Belle Vista one block south of Mahoning was in the City by 1900, the rest of Schenley was part of the 1929 annexation.

The sections farthest west off of Mahoning have a mix of pre and post war middle class housing. Housing adjacent to Mill Creek Park is more substantial and exhibits a mix of historic and modern structures. The Mill Creek Park influence makes this the highest value housing in the Schenley neighborhood.

5. Steelton

The Steelton neighborhood is the oldest on the West Side and grew with the Ohio Works. The Carnegie Iron and Steel Company (U.S. Steel) built much of the original housing stock to accommodate its growing work force. Much of this turn of the 20th century housing stock still exist in Steelton, and in general is well maintained.

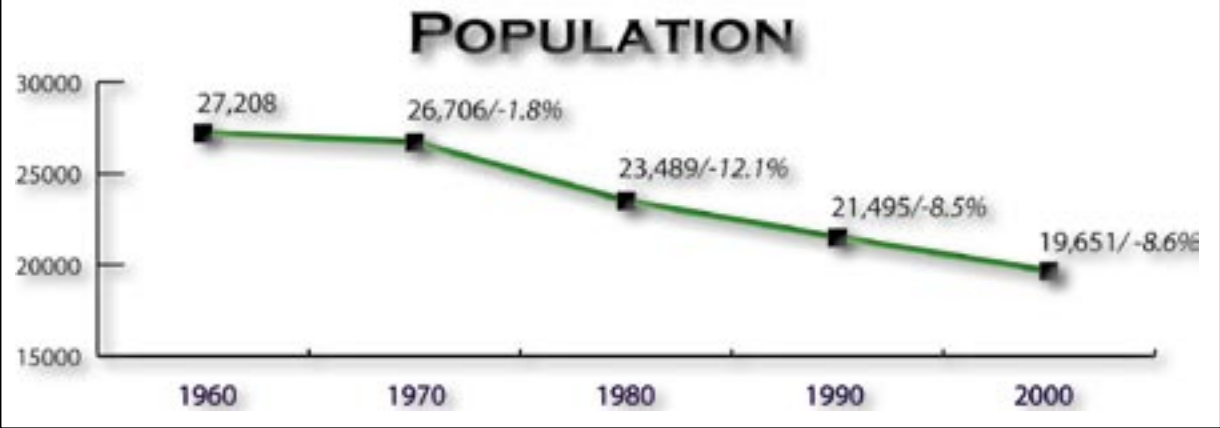
Steelton grew during a period of eastern European immigration to the Mahoning Valley, and this heritage is visible on the built environment. Significant sacred landmarks dot the Steelton neighborhood proudly displaying their Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, Serbian and other ethnic lineages.

When the Ohio Works closed and the blast furnaces were felled and caught on footage that still appears regularly in stories concerning deindustrialization and the rust belt, the Steelton area was left with an industrial desert, which U. S. Steel cleaned and passed on to the City. This brownfield has evolved into the Ohio Works Industrial Park, still being developed. This site, with its river frontage, has the opportunity to be one of the greenest of the new industrial green areas.

Steelton came into the City in two steps. The majority of the residential area was part of the City of Youngstown by 1900. The Ohio Works and the Carnegie housing were absorbed by 1910.

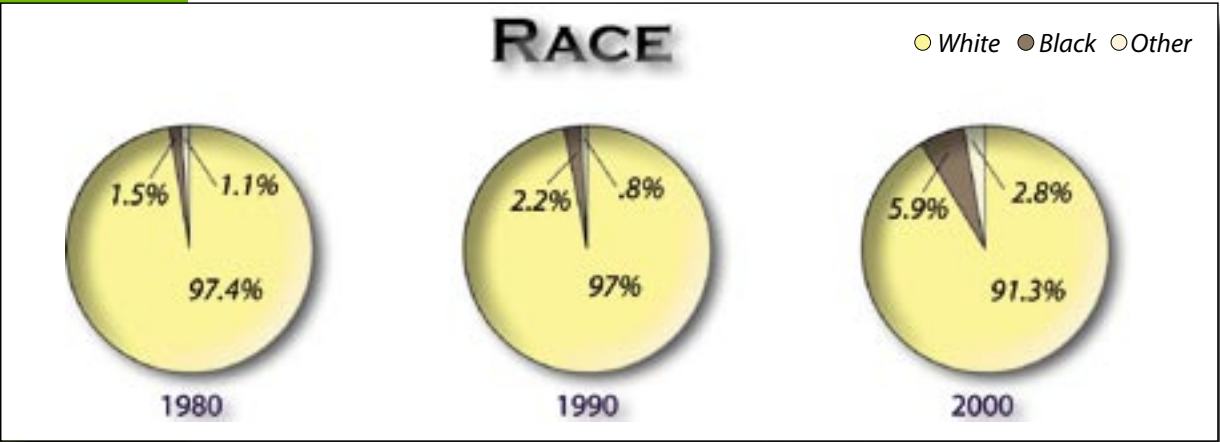


Conditions



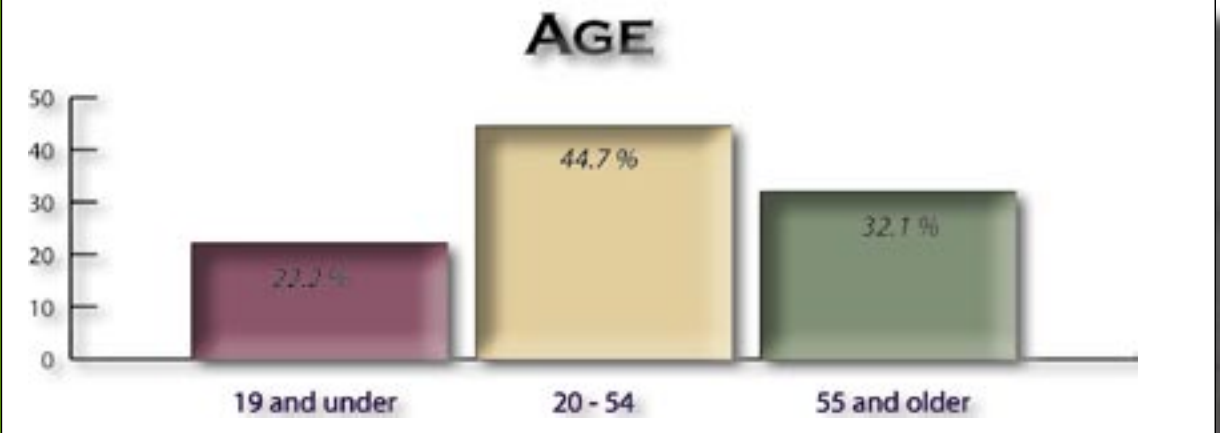
Population

The West Side of the City has been more stable than the other sides of town experiencing only an average of 7.75% population decline every ten years for the past 40 years.



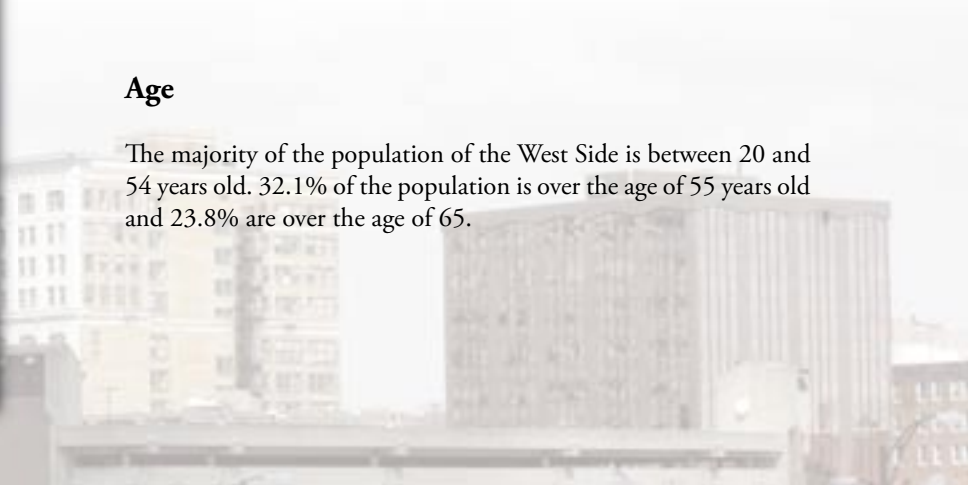
Race

The racial make up the West Side of the City has remained predominately white over time.



Age

The majority of the population of the West Side is between 20 and 54 years old. 32.1% of the population is over the age of 55 years old and 23.8% are over the age of 65.

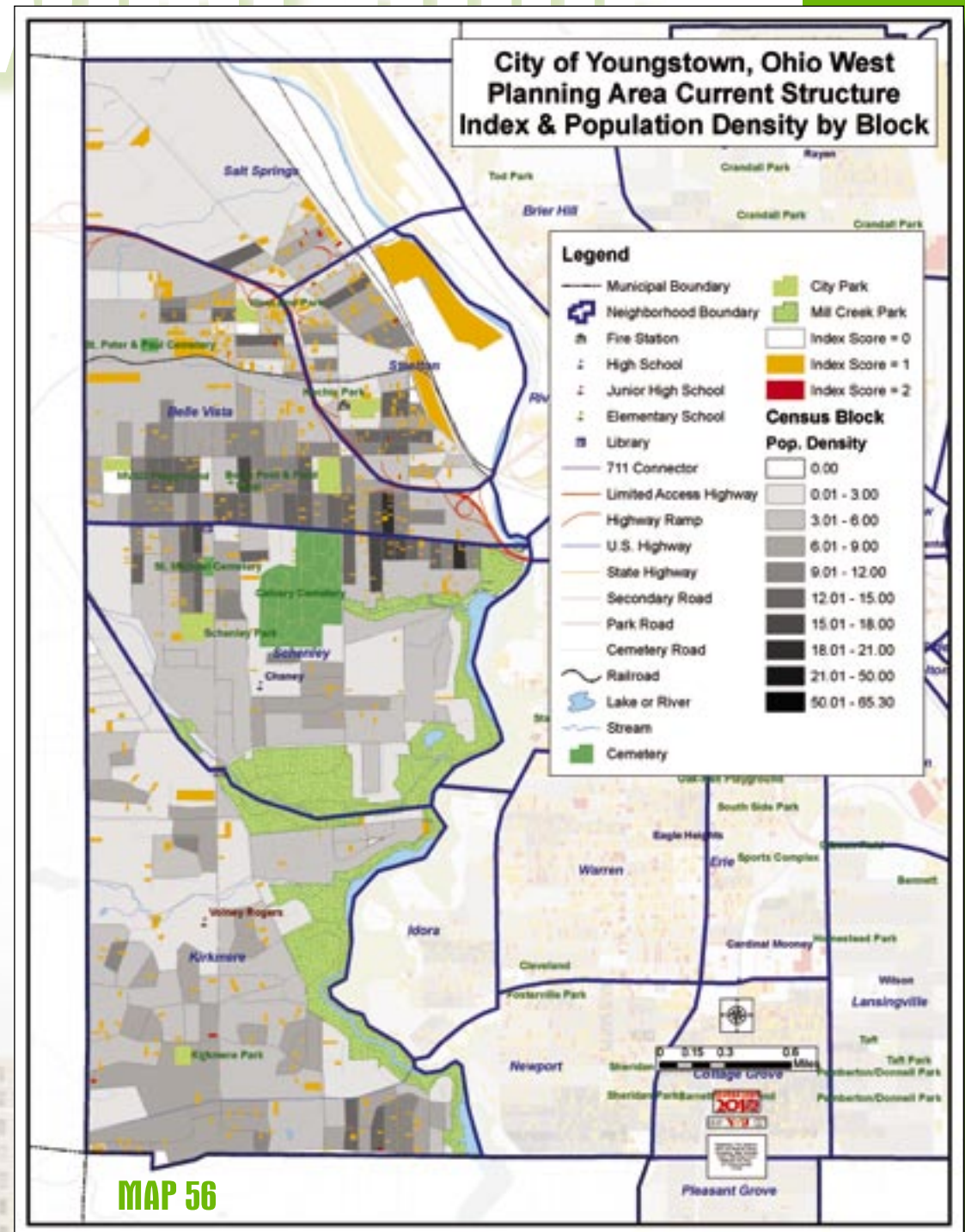


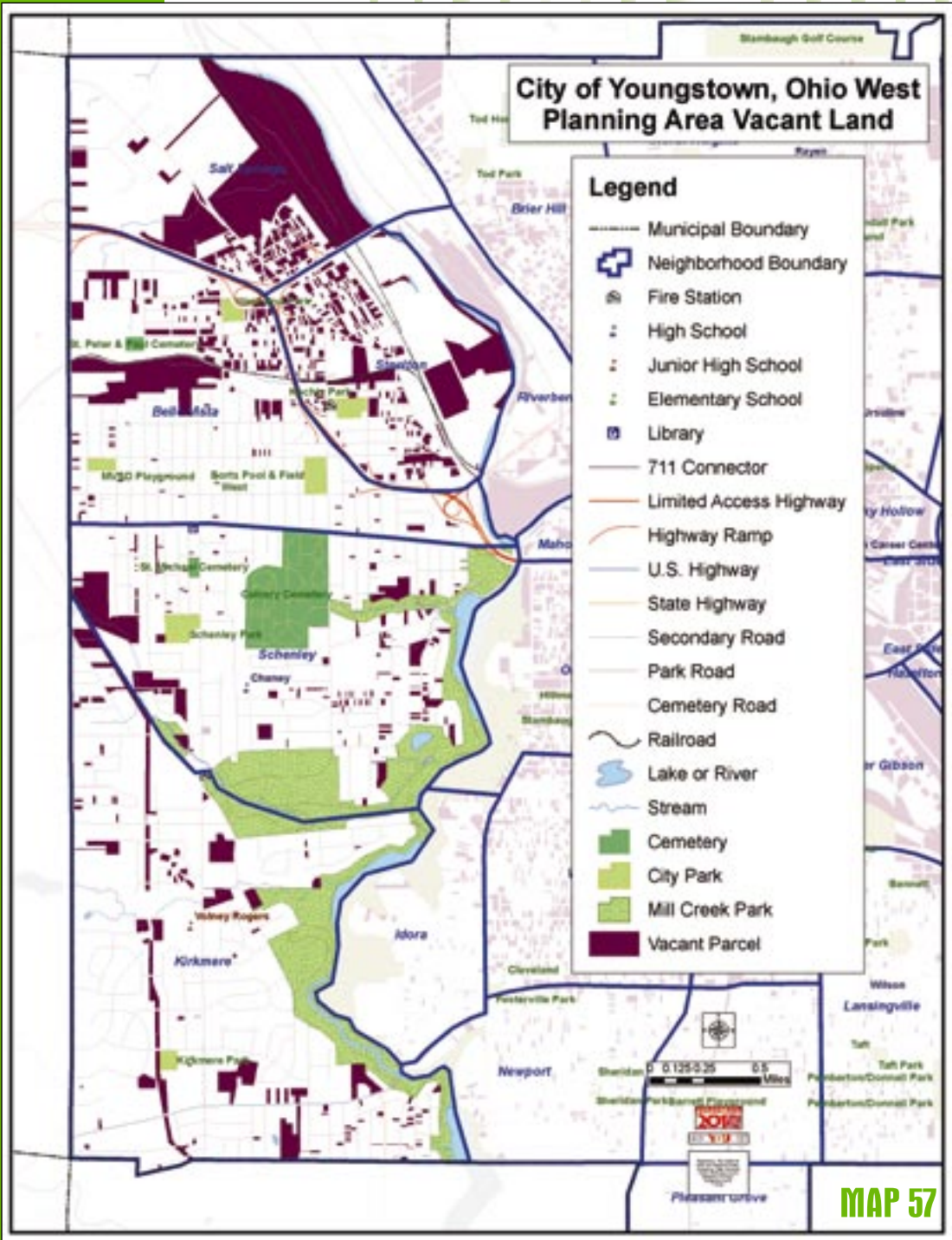
Housing, Vacant and Abandoned Properties

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. The West Side shows substantially less blight (see Map 56) than the North, South and East Sides. Population remains relatively densely settled along the Mahoning Avenue corridor and in the post WW II Belle Vista, Schenley and Kirkmere neighborhoods.





The relatively light occurrence of blight is a mixed blessing. Where blight does show up is in the oldest West Side neighborhoods radiating off of Mahoning and along Canfield Road by Mill Creek Park. Experience on the other sides of town has shown that the older core neighborhoods are the first to deteriorate and blight spreads swiftly from these seed areas.

Vacant land on the West Side (see Map 57) tends to exist along rail lines or in large undeveloped parcels. There is some disinvestment in the old Steelton neighborhood. Maintaining the West Side is a major planning priority.

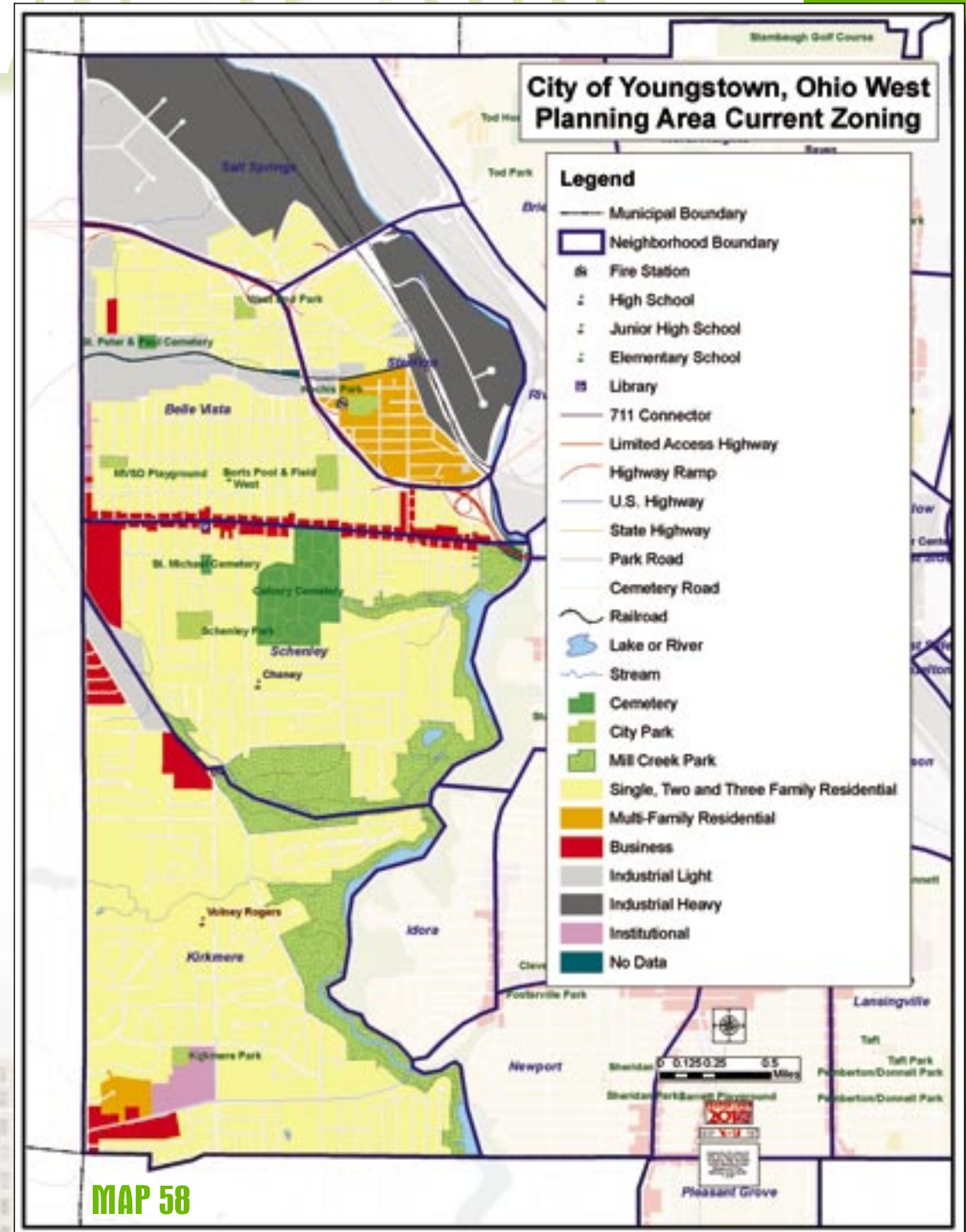


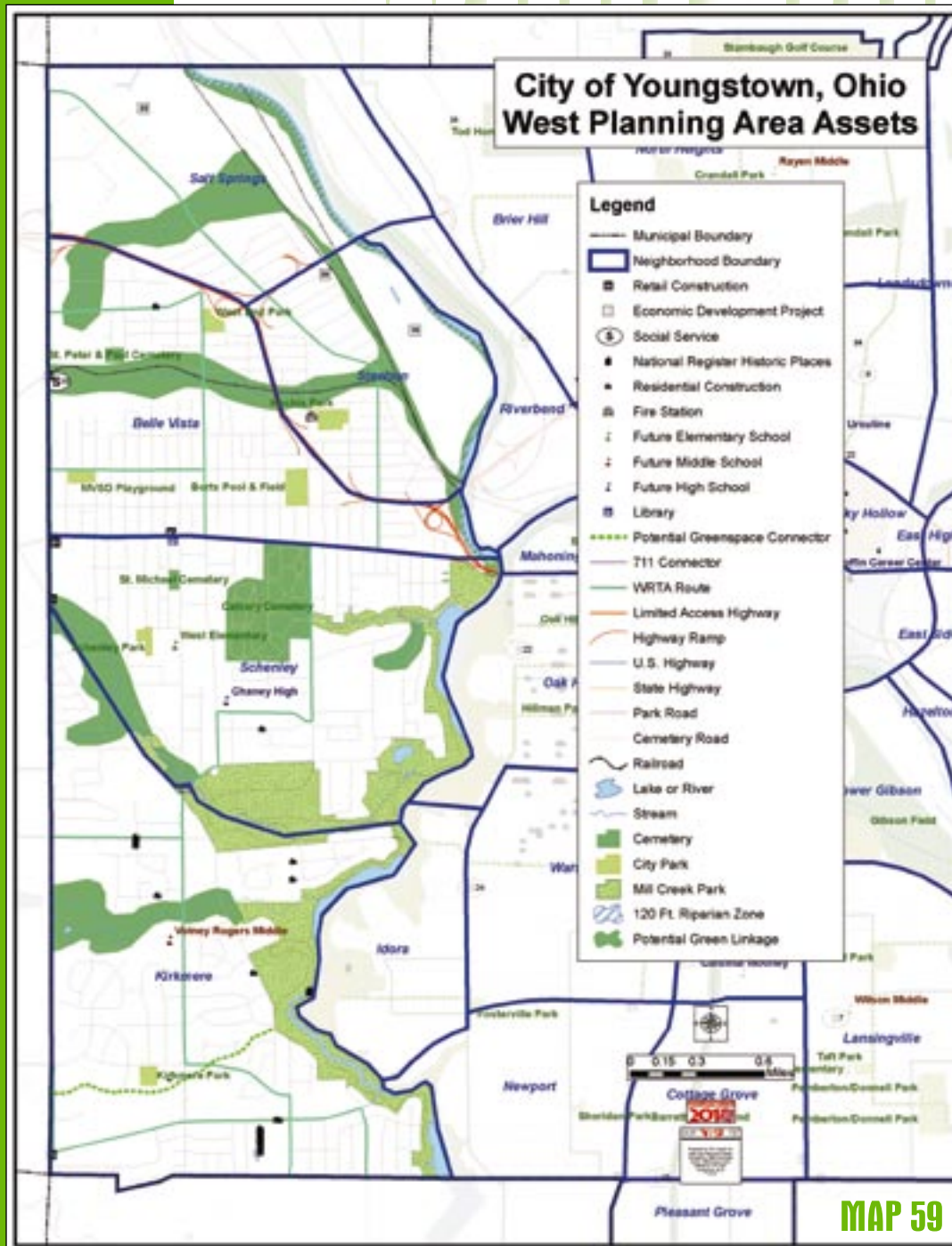
Current Land Use Plan

Current conditions in the West Side Planning District demonstrate a more modern look than the rest of the City. Still a creation of the 1951 and 1974 plans, the later development period meant that much of this district was able to take advantage of the suburban influences in the 1974 update without being overburdened with extensive pre 1951 development.

The current zoning (see Map 58) shows that south of the Mahoning Avenue commercial corridor, the West Side is predominantly residential. There is also a vibrant commercial cluster at Cornersburg.

There is substantial residential north of Mahoning, but with large industrial corridors, zoned for both heavy and light industry. The industrial zoning is a remnant of the past and an opportunity for the future.





Assets and Resources

One of the greatest assets on the West Side is that it has weathered the deindustrialization process basically intact, and has adapted to its losses more graciously than elsewhere. Much of this is due to the fact that overall, the West Side was stronger at the start, but being in better condition as the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan begins is an asset that cannot be understated.

The West Side has several other assets (see Map 59) beyond its relative well being. The Youngstown City School District has four school projects scheduled. The new West Elementary is under construction and the old school is scheduled to be demolished and the site converted to park space. The foundation work for the Chaney High School expansion is underway. Both Volney Rogers Junior High School and Kirkmere Elementary are scheduled for replacement.

The majority of Mill Creek Park's recreational opportunities are located on the West Side, and the Mill Creek tributaries of Axe Factory Run and Bears Den Run offer linkages to the Mahoning Valley green network. Two Mahoning River tributaries run from Austintown through Belle Vista, Salt Springs and Steelton providing more linkage possibilities.

The City of Youngstown has two fire stations on the West Side. The new Station #3 located on Belle Vista near the Y & A Rail Road tracks provides coverage to the northwest side. Station #15 located at Schenley and McCollum serves the southwest.

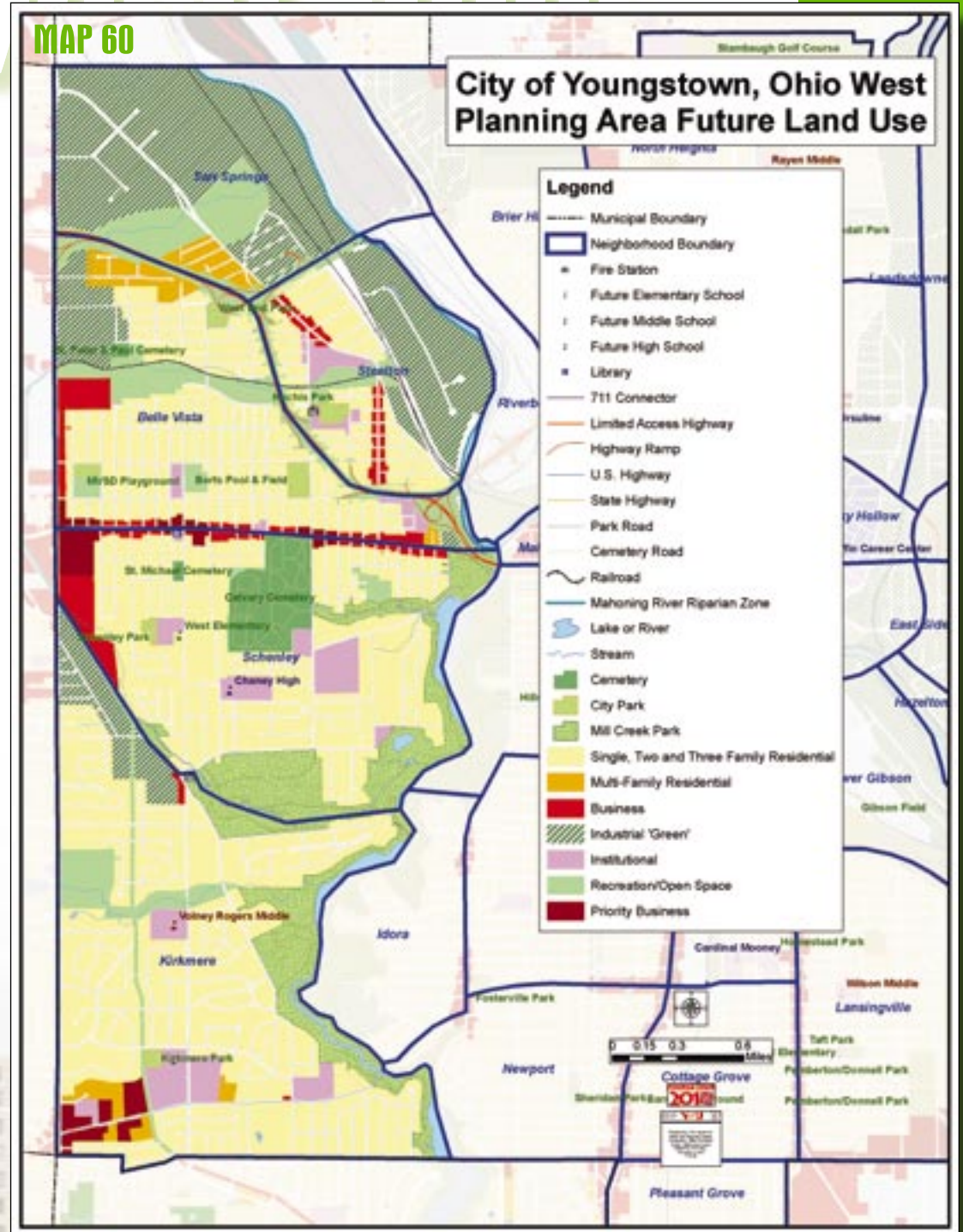
The Youngstown Park and Recreation Department operates Borts Pool and Playground, Kochis Park, Schenley Park, Kirkmere Park and MVSD Park on the West Side. When combined with Kramer Fields, West End Girls softball park, Mill Creek Park and green network linkage opportunities, the West Side is well endowed with usable green spaces.

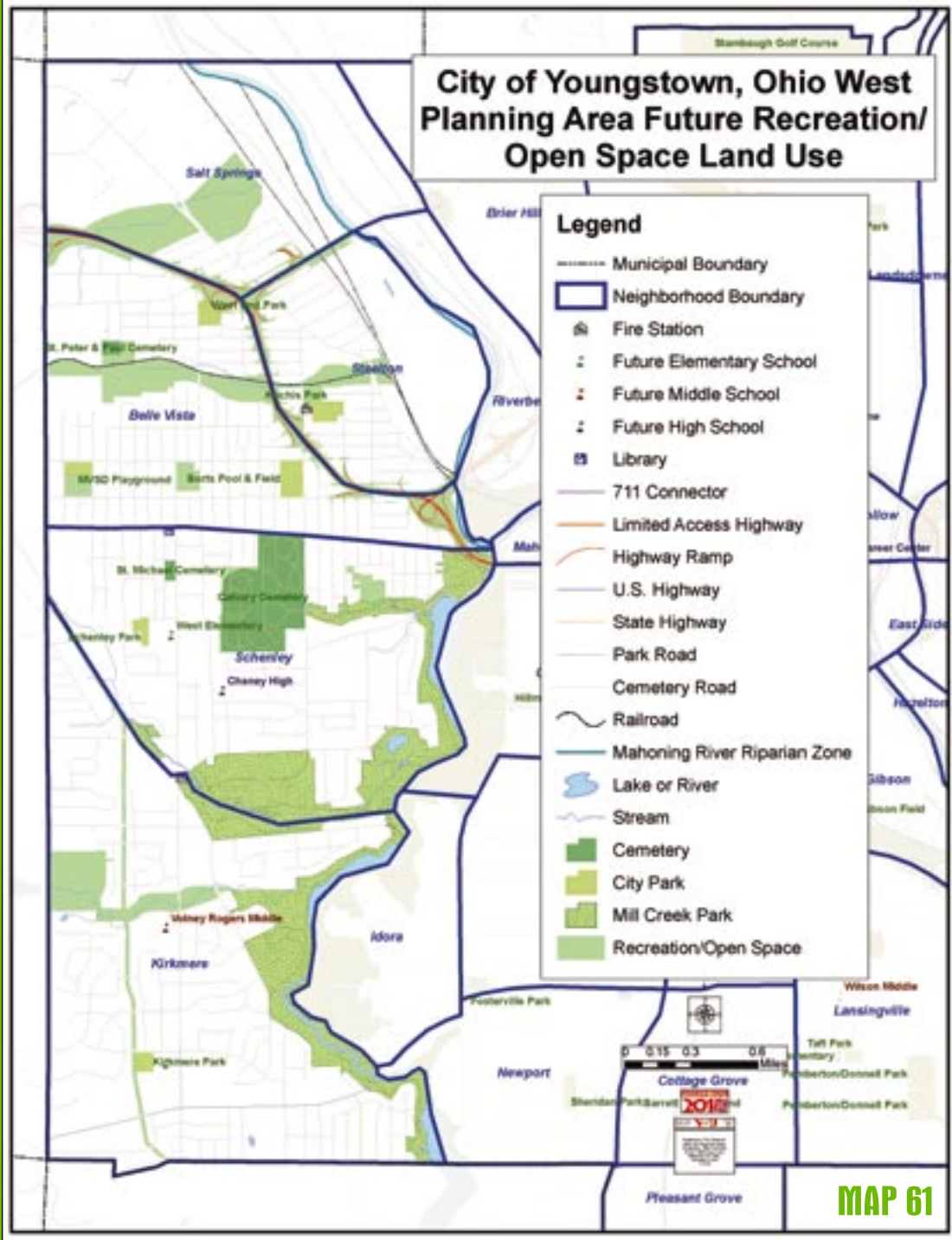
Chapter 7 — Planning Districts

MAP 60

The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan

Other than shifts in industrial classifications and the removal of minimal surplus residential, the West Side Planning District is the least changed by the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan (see Map 60).





Recreation and Open Space

Recreation and Open space is well distributed across the West Side Planning District (see Map 61). The presence of Mill Creek Park with its Frederick Olmstead designed Lakes Glacier and Cohasset, trails and stone bridges, the Fellows Riverside Gardens and Davis Visitor's Center, the Wick and Kirkmere Recreation Areas and Pioneer Pavilion with its historic iron furnace give the West Side the direct advantage of the premier regional park.

The City's Borts pool and playgrounds complement the Mill Creek advantage. The demolition of the old West Elementary School will yield a new green open space.

Other new open space recommendations for the West Side involve linkages to the Mahoning Valley Green Network. The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan recommends that hike and bike opportunities be established along the riparian zones of Axe Factory Run and Bears Den Run. These will link Mill Creek and Austintown Township. Using the old rail road right-of-way that extends from Canfield Road to Industrial Road as a hike/bike trail will provide a north/south linkage across the stream trails.

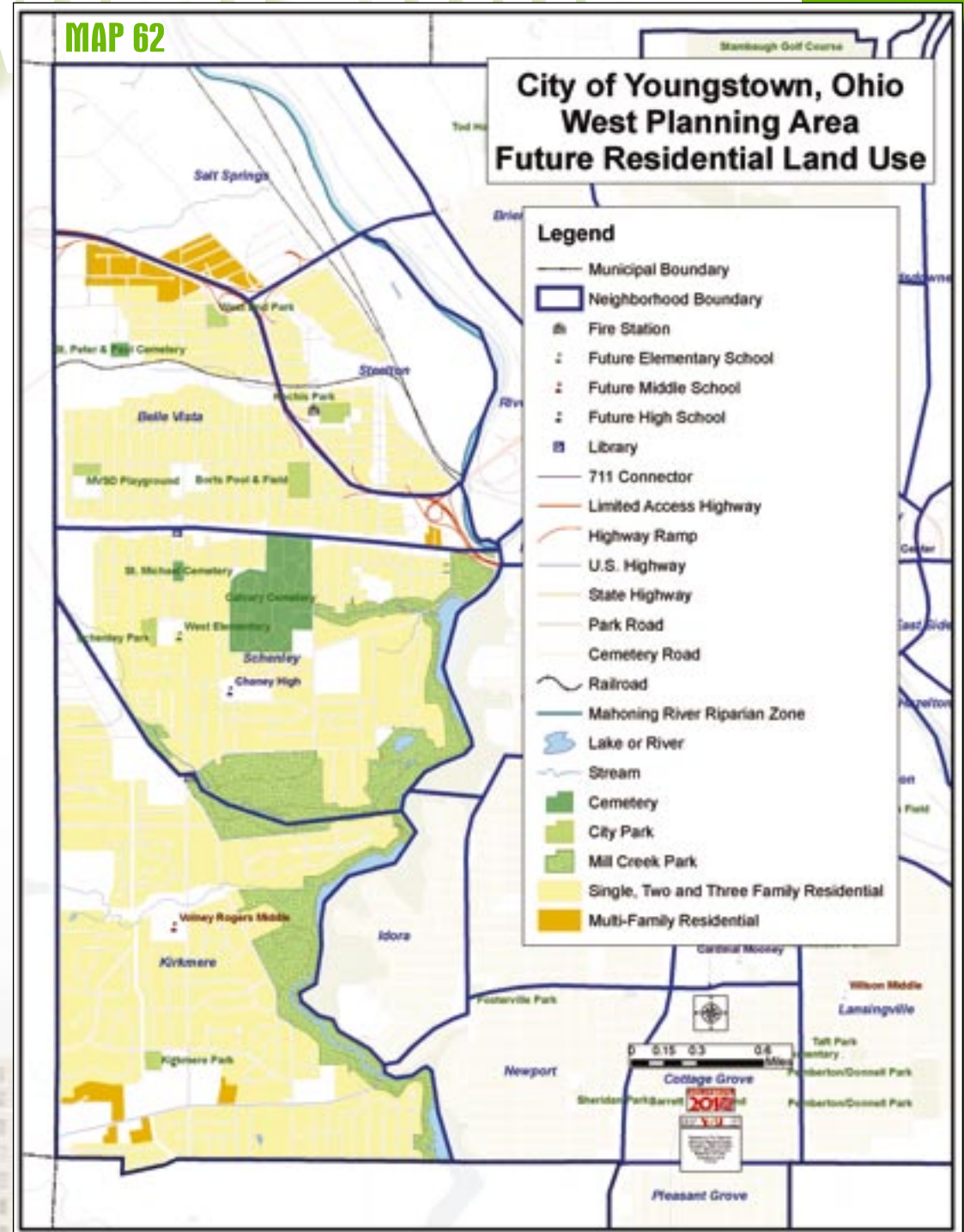
Farther to the north, the open space along the Youngstown and Austintown rail road tracks provides another bike/hike opportunity that connects Austintown to the Ohio Works Industrial Park and the Mahoning River creating another regional green network linkage. The ravine, for the most part pristine, that divides the Salt Springs Industrial Park from the residential district already provides a park-like setting that could easily contain a hike/bike trail and other recreational opportunities once again connecting the West Side and Austintown to the regional network.

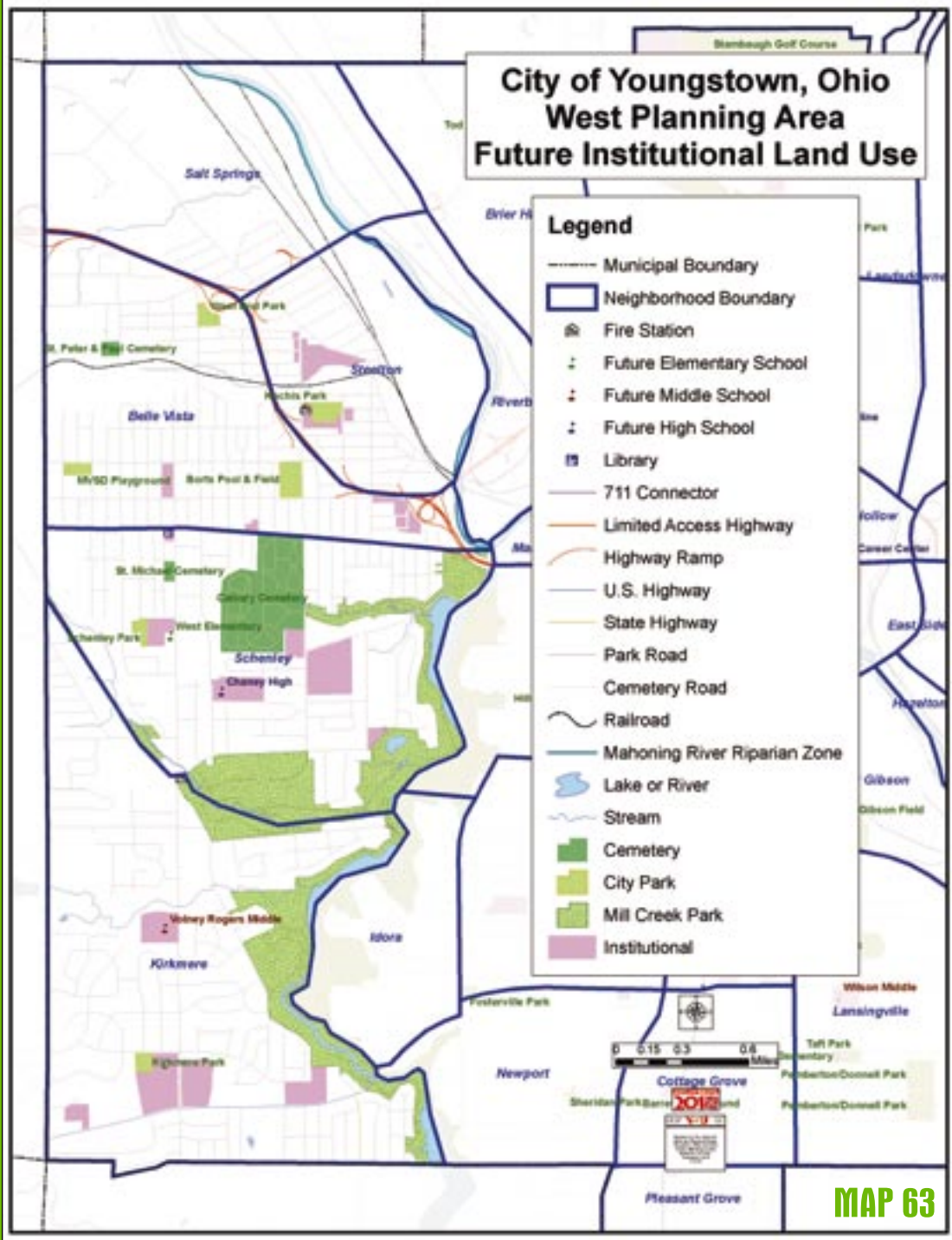


Residential

The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan proposes minimal changes to the existing residential land use on the West Side (see Map 62). The most notable of these is removing the truncated section of the old Salt Springs neighborhood east of Salt Springs Road and north of SR-711 from the residential use category. This area, which has already lost much of its housing stock and has scattered nonconforming commercial and industrial uses is being shifted to the new industrial green classification.

Other sections being removed from residential land use are undeveloped areas along riparian zones or other green corridors that are being shifted to the recreation/open space use.





Institutional

The amount of institutional land use on the West Side is being adjusted to match the current reality (see Map 63). The only institutional use in the existing zoning map was in the vicinity of Kirkmere Elementary School.

The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan reclassifies the spacious church and school complexes scattered across the West Side as institutional. Some large undeveloped City owned properties also fell into this classification.



Commercial

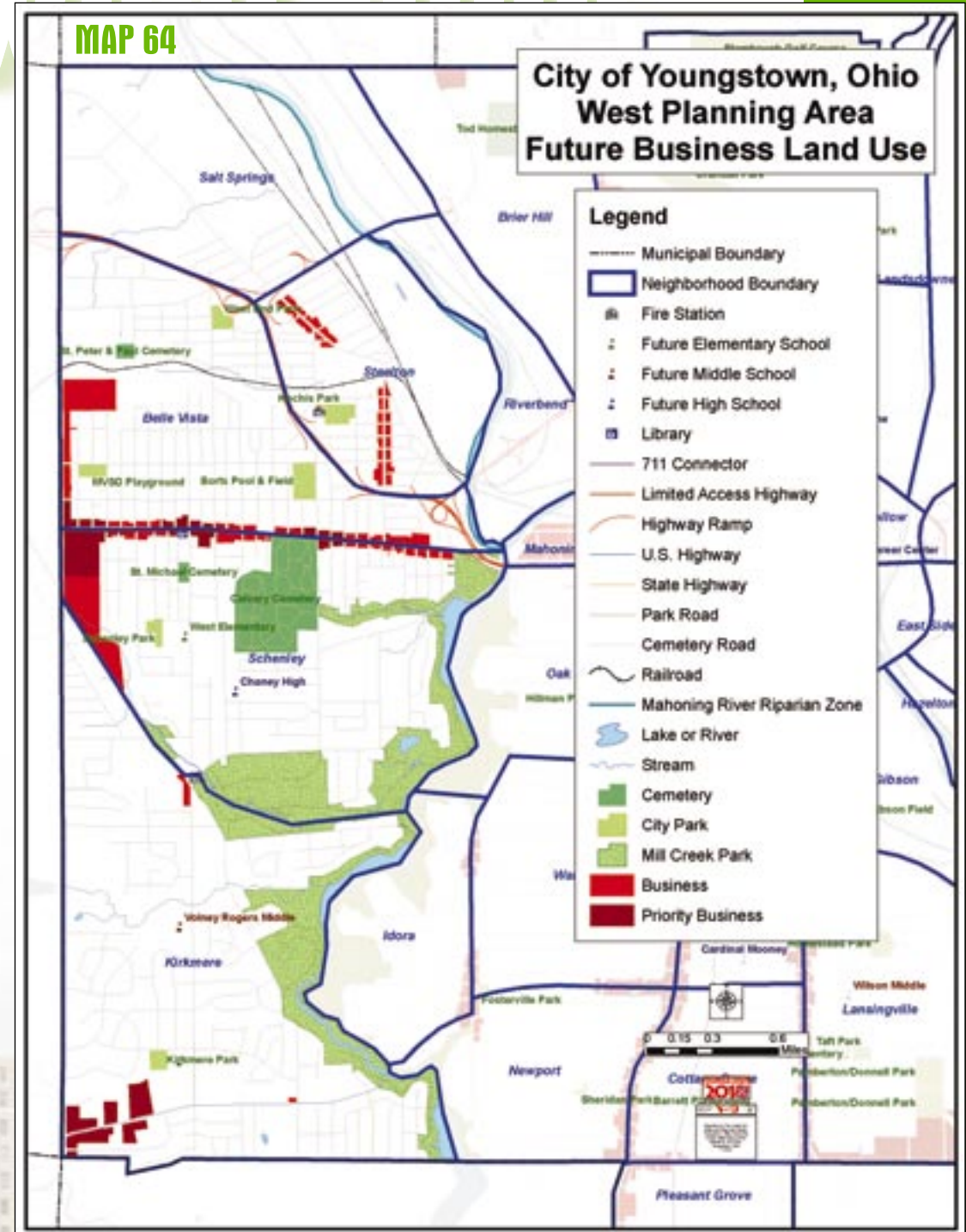
The amount of commercially classified land on the West Side remains relatively constant (see Map 64). The goal was to make the amount and location of commercial use in the plan match existing reality and reasonable future expectations.

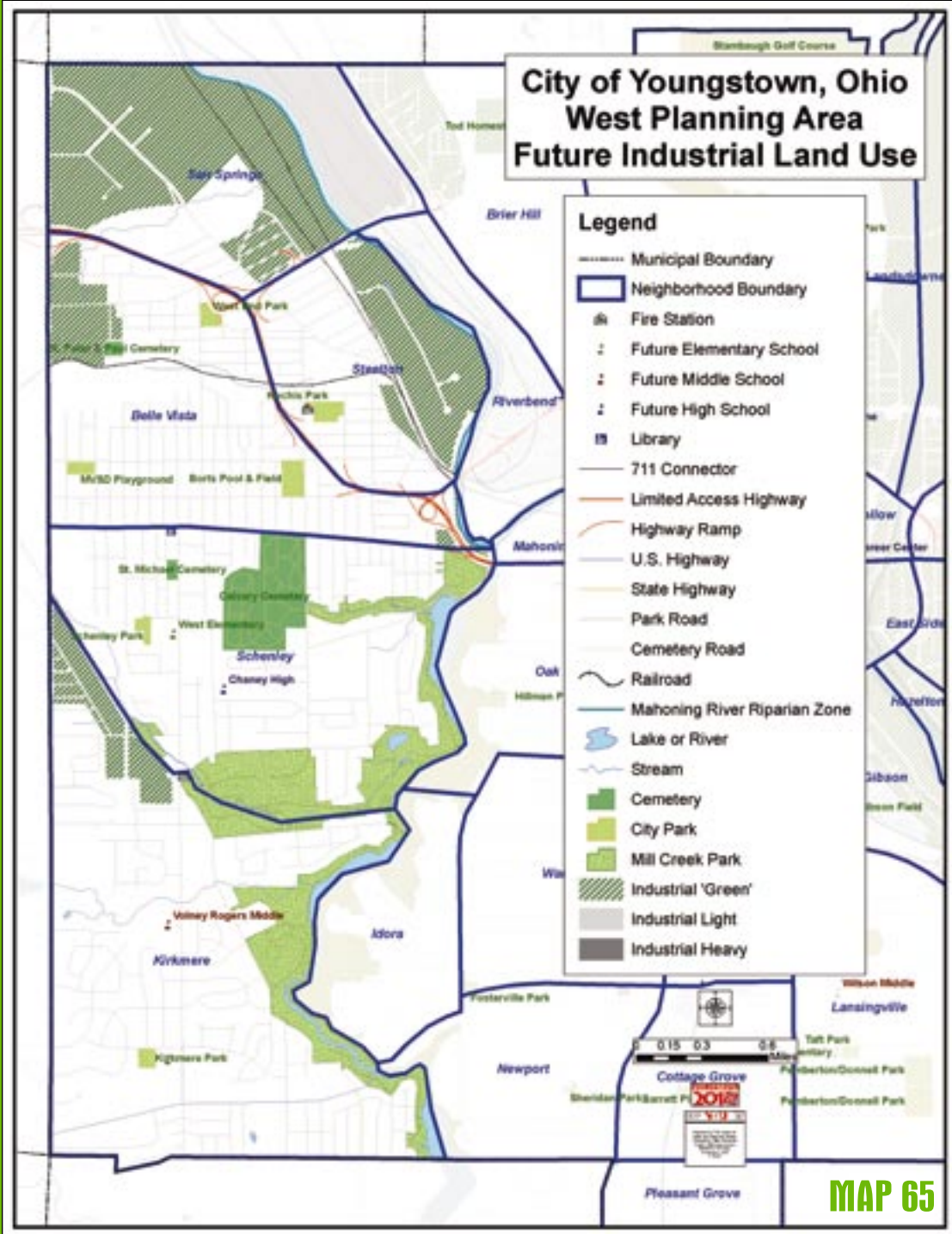
The existing retail strip along Steel Street and Salt Springs Road in Steelton is now officially classified commercial. The small strip along Steel Street in the Belle Vista neighborhood has been reclassified as residential. The north side of Industrial Road has been shifted from industrial light to commercial. The City side of Meridian Road from Mahoning to the rail road tracks is now completely commercial.

The Mahoning Avenue strip remains commercial, but key intersections have been bumped up to the priority business classification. The priority business designation indicates locations where revitalization efforts will be concentrated first.

Priority locations along Mahoning Avenue are at Meridian, including the Mahoning Plaza, between Rhoda and Hazelwood, including the West Side Branch of the Public Library, and between Fernwood and Portland.

Other priority business clustered on the West Side are located in the Cornersburg area, one at Meridian/Tippecanoe and the other a disjointed extension of the first farther east abutting the St. Christine complex.





Industrial

Under the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan, there is no longer any heavy or light industrial classification on the West Side. There is in total more industrial land, but it is all in the new industrial green category (see Map 65). As was mentioned in the residential section, the truncated portion of the old Steelton neighborhood now in Salt Springs has been shifted to industrial green.

The Ohio Works Industrial Park had previously been classified for heavy industrial use, but industry in the park meets green credentials. When the Mahoning River is cleaned, the riparian zone reestablished and landscaping takes place, the Ohio Works will join the City's other industrial parks as premier brownfield reclamation projects.

The Salt Springs Road Industrial Park is moved from light industrial to industrial green because it meets the requirements. The former light industrial clusters at the I-680/Meridian Road exit and on the west side of Industrial Road are shifted for the same reason.

