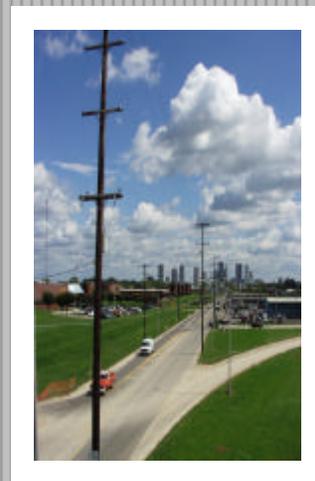


# McKinley Avenue Corridor Plan

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# McKinley Avenue Corridor Plan

City of Columbus  
Department of Trade and Development  
Economic Development and Planning Services  
109 North Front Street, Ground Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215



City of Columbus  
Michael B. Coleman, Mayor

Department of Trade and Development  
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September, 2000

If you have questions or comments about this document or if you would like to obtain a copy, please visit the office website at [www.columbusinfobase.org](http://www.columbusinfobase.org) or contact the Planning Office staff at 614.645.8502.

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*Decker Construction*

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*City of Columbus, Traffic Engineering and Parking*

## From the Mayor

Dear Citizens:

I am pleased to present the McKinley Avenue Corridor Plan that was developed through the collaborative efforts of your city staff, elected officials, neighborhood business owners, property owners, and the members of the McKinley Avenue Employers Association. The Plan represents an important step forward in our efforts to implement the goals of the Neighborhood Employment Districts Initiative (NEDS) and bring growth and prosperity to Columbus.

The McKinley Avenue Corridor has been officially designated as one of five Neighborhood Employment Districts. These districts were established through the *Neighborhood Employment District Initiative* to stimulate economic development within the Columbus central city. To help achieve that mission, this plan includes a number of key goals to increase commercial and industrial investment, enhance the image of the neighborhood as a place to do business, enhance the area's existing job base and to make the heart of our city a better place to live and work.

In my first State of the City Address, I said that, "a great city tends to its neighborhoods," and as we move forward, initiatives like this will be great tools in our mission. I thank you for your interest in this effort, and urge you to be actively involved in building your neighborhoods quality of life and economic vitality.

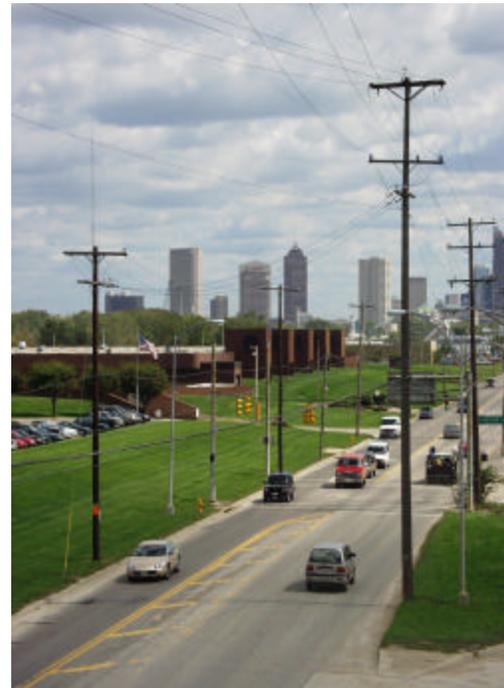
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Holcomb", written over a horizontal line.

Michael  
Mayor

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*McKinley Ave. from the Grandview Ave. Bridge*

## Introduction

The McKinley Avenue Corridor Plan is both a statement of values and an agenda for action. Its recommendations are based upon a strong collective vision and a common concern for the general welfare of property and business owners that live and work along McKinley Avenue. The Plan is also a guide for decision-makers. Used as a tool, it can help to preserve and enhance the viability of the McKinley Avenue Corridor as a vibrant manufacturing and employment district.



McKinley Ave., west from Grandview Ave. Bridge

The McKinley Avenue Corridor has been designated as one of five Neighborhood Employment Districts (NEDS) within the city of Columbus. These districts were established through the Neighborhood Employment District Initiative, a comprehensive and collaborative strategy designed to stimulate economic development within the city's central core. The City's Department of Trade and Development, the Columbus City Council, the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce and the Columbus Urban Growth Corporation, working together as partners in the NEDS effort, developed a broad vision and eleven key goals for the program in March of 1999:

*Columbus urban core neighborhood employment districts will be thriving business environments, conducive to private investment, employment growth and job opportunities for local residents.*

- *Increase commercial and industrial investment*
- *Increase number of jobs, thereby reversing the long term trend of job outmigration*
- *Increase labor participation rate*
- *Improve networking with existing business base*
- *Enhance physical environment*
- *Reduce the amount of vacant, underutilized and/or brownfield industrial and commercial sites*
- *Enhance the image of the core central city as a place to do business*
- *Retain existing job base*
- *Build wealth and population*
- *Facilitate cooperative planning between residential and business neighbors*
- *Encourage employment of local residents*

## The Corridor Plan Process

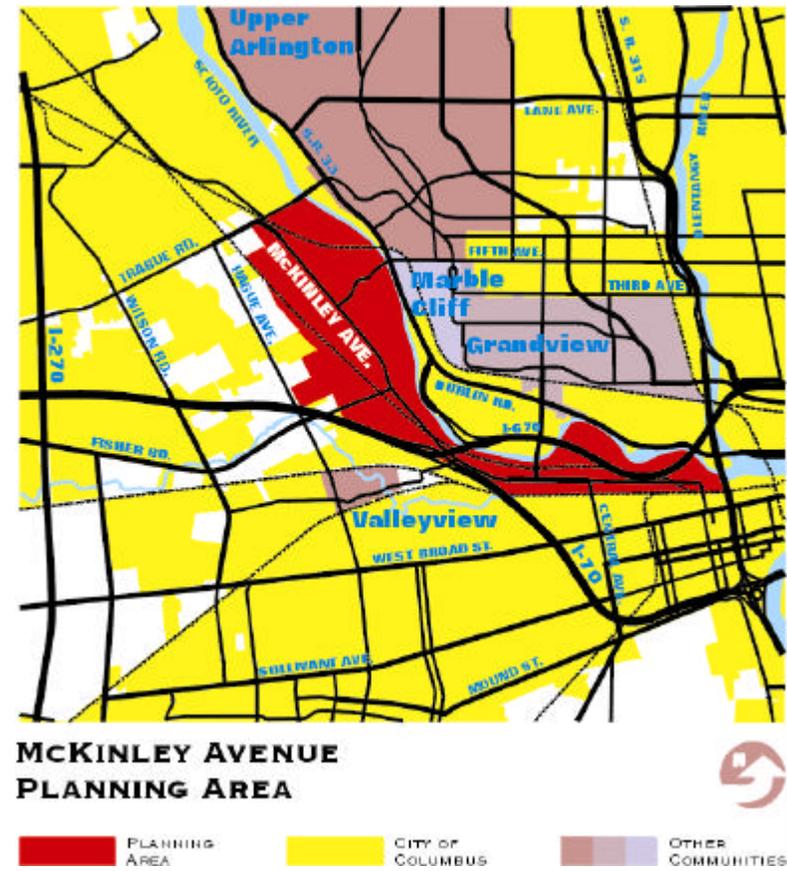
To implement the NEDS initiatives within the McKinley Avenue Corridor, a planning process was initiated in the spring of 2000. A working committee comprised of local business and property owners, city staff, community leaders and members of the McKinley Avenue Employers Association met monthly to discuss economic development goals, zoning and land use issues, infrastructure, and other common concerns. Through its discussions, the group developed a focus for the Plan and a simple strategy for positive change. The recommendations that were generated have been organized into five general, or “subject” categories: Identity and Character; Zoning and Land Use; Streets and Traffic Circulation; Stormwater Drainage; Crime and Vandalism.

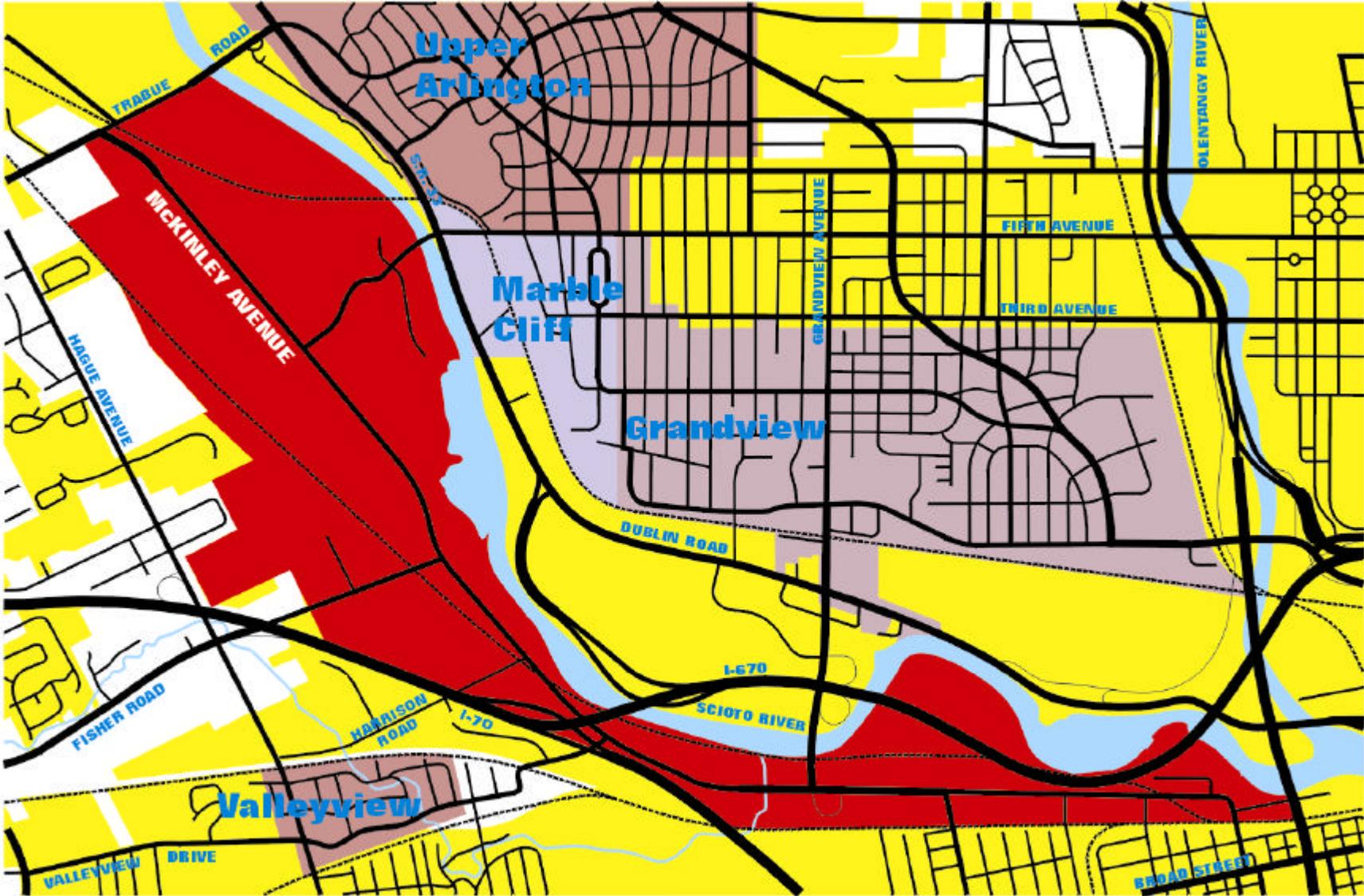
## McKinley Avenue Profile

With approximately 70 local, regional, and national businesses and more than 5,000 total employees, the McKinley Avenue Corridor has gradually become one of the most productive employment districts within the downtown urban core. Its resident businesses and industries generate more than 500 million dollars in annual sales, and they provide Columbus with more than 100 million dollars of taxable personal income. Half of these companies have been in operation at their present locations for more than ten years; most are planning to expand. Generally, the McKinley Avenue Corridor is healthy, although infrastructure improvements, preservation of the *Manufacturing (M)* zoning, and new economic development initiatives will be needed to facilitate continued growth and prosperity.

## The Planning Area

Located just 1.5 miles west of downtown Columbus, the McKinley Avenue Corridor is accessible from Interstate 270, Interstate 70, West Broad Street and State Road 33. The 4.5 mile thoroughfare is bounded by Souder Avenue at the east end and Trabue Road to the west.





**MCKINLEY AVENUE  
PLANNING AREA**



## Identity and Character

Although not unattractive, McKinley Avenue is not scenic. The roadway is flanked by gravel parking lots, above-grade electric and telephone lines, outdoor storage areas, concrete block buildings and a significant amount of commercial signage. Yet, these physical characteristics are typical of older urban corridors and not inappropriate for large industrial properties. With regard to the McKinley Avenue Corridor, functional requirements have, and should, dictate design.

The McKinley Avenue Employers' Association serves as the collective voice for McKinley Avenue businesses and it is perhaps the most recognizable component of the Corridor's identity. Through its promotion of local interests and by actively recruiting new business development, the Association has increased the public's awareness of the Corridor and it has successfully cultivated an attractive climate for economic development.

## Recommendations

- Continue to promote job growth and development; market the McKinley Avenue Corridor as a vibrant manufacturing and employment district.
- Target capital improvements funding for projects that enhance the function and appearance of the McKinley Avenue streetscape.
- Increase the visibility of the McKinley Avenue Employer's Association through the Chamber of Commerce and the city's Business Development Office.

*Arrow Concrete, McKinley Avenue*



*Kokosing Construction, McKinley Avenue*



*Buckeye Auto Parts, McKinley Avenue*

## Land Use and Zoning

The planning area contains more than 1000 acres of property. Parcels vary significantly in configuration and size, though many fall within a range of two (2) to fifteen (15) acres. Most tracts have been developed with light industrial, manufacturing, and heavy commercial businesses, including industrial equipment and automotive parts suppliers, heating and ventilating contractors, chemical manufacturers, builders, asphalt paving and concrete contractors, metal fabrication companies, the city's Police Academy and the headquarters of the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA). However, a few large lots have been recently improved with apartments and condominiums. These uses have been problematic at times, particularly for the businesses that generate heavy truck traffic, noise, odor, dust and/or fumes. Neighborhood residents frequently complain about such impacts, and solutions to these problems are typically expensive and difficult to achieve.

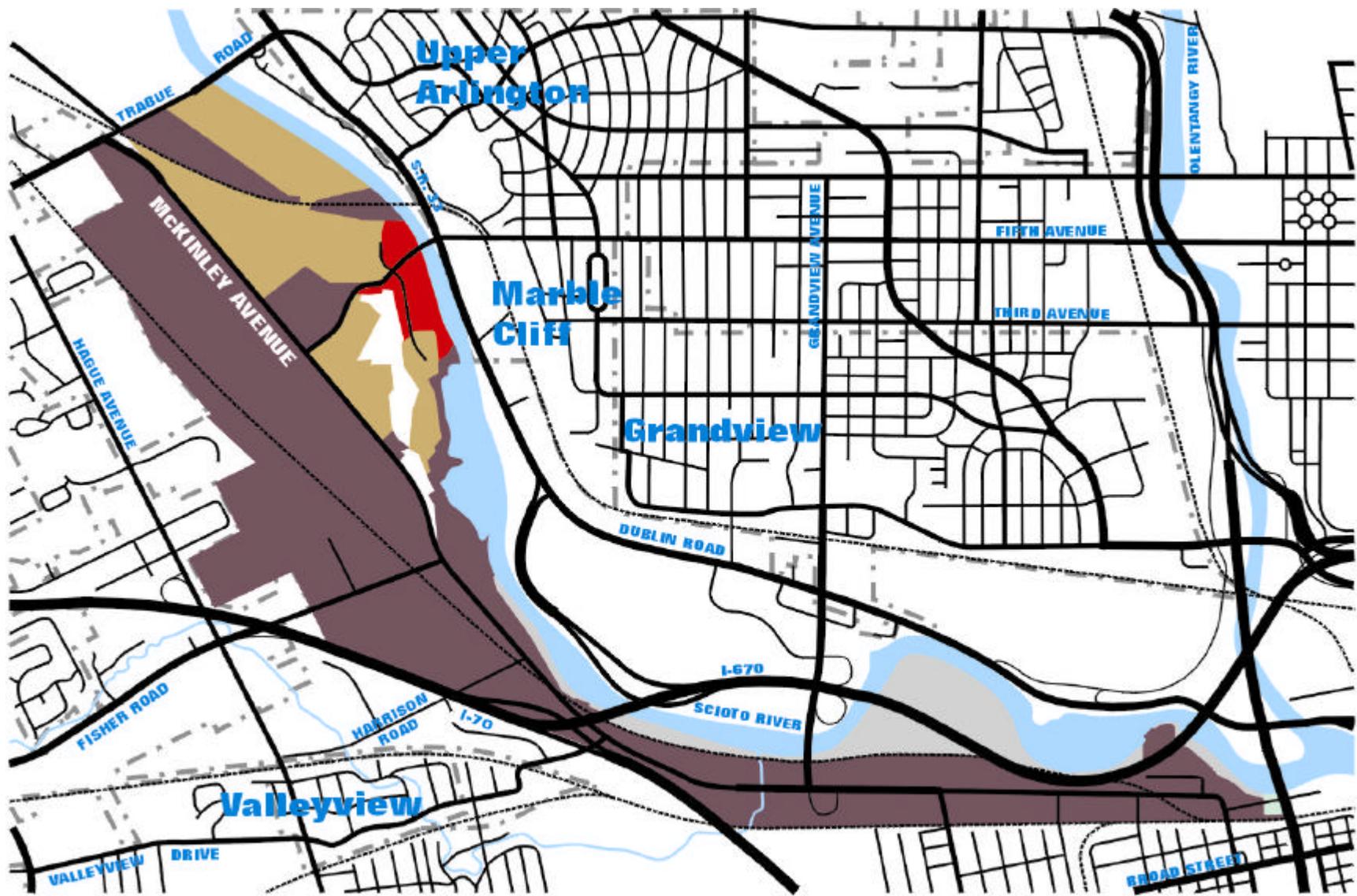
Years ago, a northern portion of the planning area was actively quarried. The activity has since been abandoned, and much of that property remains undeveloped. There are some additional vacant tracts of land along the south side of McKinley Avenue; these properties abut steep highway embankments and/or railroad tracks and therefore possess little development potential. The Scioto River floodplain also extends into the north side of the planning area, though the recent construction of a floodwall will alleviate some of the seasonal problems.

Continued growth within the corridor may be difficult to accommodate. The environmental and geographical limitations noted above are significant, and because the planning area's periphery has already been developed, the incorporation of additional property may be cost prohibitive.

The entire south side of McKinley Avenue lies within the *Manufacturing* (M) zoning district. The northern side is similarly classified, except for the residential and mixed-use developments at Fifth Avenue, Lake Shore Drive and Trabue Road. Because the (M) classification has been applied to so much area, because it permits a wide variety of land uses, and because it is consistent with the established character of the corridor, preservation of this district is strongly recommended.

## Recommendations

- Preserve the current mix of manufacturing and industrial uses through retention of the *Manufacturing* (M) zoning classification, as shown on the zoning map (following page). Permit *Commercial Planned Development* (CPD) districts for supporting businesses and accessory uses where appropriate.
- Confine residential development to the existing residential zoning districts. Apartments and condominiums, in particular, have significantly reduced the inventory of viable industrial property and have therefore limited opportunities for local business expansion.
- Preserve the neighborhood park. It is an important neighborhood amenity and could be further developed into a recreation area for local business employees.
- Where new development occurs, require screening, landscaped buffers and/or deep building setbacks to ensure that adjoining land uses are not adversely affected.



**MCKINLEY AVENUE  
ZONING MAP**



## Streets and Traffic Circulation

McKinley Avenue functions as a collector street. It provides direct access to properties and it channels vehicles to major thoroughfares such as Dublin Road and West Broad Street. The roadway was recently widened to three lanes west of Grandview Avenue; the section between Souder Avenue and Central Avenue will be similarly improved within the next few years. Flow is generally heavy, particularly during rush hours.

There are traffic signals at all of the major intersections except Souder Avenue. This has been problematic for local employees driving to and from work and the eastbound buses and heavy trucks that must stop and wait for a gap in the flow. A recent study concluded that a signal is warranted; the city's Division of Traffic Engineering has prepared a cost estimate and has committed to installation during the year 2001. Several local businesses have expressed an interest in contributing resources to the project to speed implementation of the device.

Congestion is most apparent near Grandview Avenue. The combination of heavy traffic and four roadway lanes can make ingress and egress difficult, especially for bus drivers exiting the COTA terminal. During peak periods of flow, COTA drivers may be unable to enter McKinley Avenue for several minutes or more. These delays are more than an inconvenience – they can disrupt route schedules and significantly increase operating expense.

Most portions of the corridor are adequately illuminated, although additional streetlights are needed between Harrison Road and Trabue Road. New lights will likely be installed between Souder Avenue and Central Avenue when the roadway is widened.



*View south, Grandview Avenue intersection*

*COTA buses waiting to enter McKinley Avenue*



*View east, Trabue Road intersection*





*McKinley Avenue at Grandview Avenue, view east*

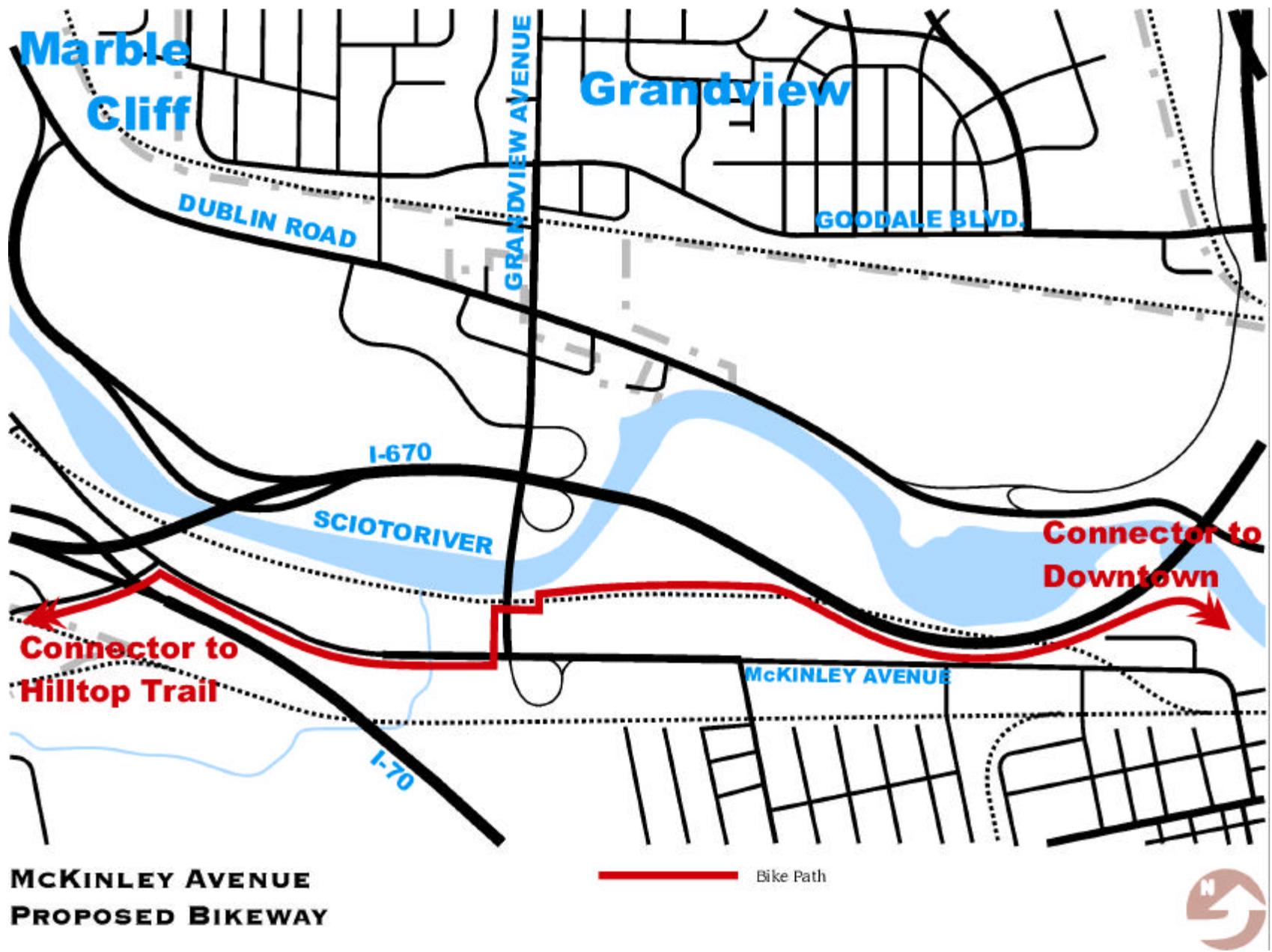


*McKinley Avenue at Harper Avenue, view east*

The city of Columbus and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) have proposed a bikeway along McKinley Avenue in accordance with MORPC's plan for a regional bikeway corridor between Dublin and Grove City. A small segment of the bikeway has already been constructed between Central Avenue and Harper Road; preliminary plans for an additional section between Souder Avenue and Central Avenue are currently being reviewed. The McKinley Avenue Employers Association, though supportive of bikeways in general, has expressed concern about the heavy truck traffic, narrow roadway lanes and shallow building setbacks and has therefore not endorsed the plans for dedicated bike lanes along McKinley Avenue. The Association would instead prefer an alternative strategy that incorporates some physical separation between the bikeway and roadway.

## Recommendations

- Expedite the design and construction process for the proposed traffic signal at Souder Avenue. Partner with local corporations to accelerate the project schedule and seek funding assistance to reduce cost.
- Install additional streetlights along McKinley Avenue in accordance with the Division of Electricity's current lighting standards and material and installation specifications.
- Complete the proposed roadway widening between Central Avenue and Souder Avenue.
- Improve access to McKinley Avenue for COTA buses.
- Accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic with a bikeway between Harper Avenue and Souder Avenue.



**MCKINLEY AVENUE  
PROPOSED BIKEWAY**

## Stormwater Drainage

The Franklinton floodwall will eliminate much of the floodplain that exists within the planning area. When complete, this public improvement project will protect more than 6,000 commercial and residential structures from intermittent flooding and it will ease the zoning and construction restrictions that have limited growth and redevelopment. However, the McKinley Avenue roadway still lacks adequate provisions for stormwater drainage. Storm sewers have been planned for the segment between Central and Souder, but no improvements have yet been targeted for the section north of Harper. This area is poorly drained and should be thoroughly studied.

### Recommendations

- Assign priority status to the storm sewer improvements planned for McKinley Avenue between Souder Avenue and Central Avenue. Accelerate the construction schedule, if possible.
- Monitor problem areas. Encourage property owners to complete *Stormwater Questionnaires* and submit them to the city's Division of Sewerage and Drainage.
- Anticipate future growth and expansion within the planning area, coordinate storm sewer improvements with new road construction and/or widening.
- Reduce and channel runoff from parking lots with landscaped islands, curb, grass filter strips and drainage swales.

## Crime and Vandalism

Despite the vigilant efforts of local law enforcement, theft and break-ins are still costing businesses thousands of dollars each year. Materials and equipment stored outside at night are especially vulnerable. Property owners have been working to improve security in a variety of ways, and the city's Division of Police has responded by deploying additional officers, but these actions have not deterred crime to any significant extent. An alternative strategy may be necessary, such as the creation of a private security force. With broad participation, the personnel costs would be relatively low – and by pooling resources, local business owners would save both time and manpower. In addition, such an effort would improve communication among the local businesses and facilitate a stronger relationship with the city's Division of Police.

### Recommendations

- Consider hiring a private security force for portions of the McKinley Avenue Corridor. Share the personnel costs among local business and property owners, coordinate the effort with the city's Division of Police.
- Monitor buildings and outdoor storage areas that are vulnerable through video surveillance, install motion/sound detection equipment to assist security personnel.
- Encourage property owners to keep materials and equipment indoors and screen outside storage areas with opaque fencing.

# Appendix

## McKinley Avenue Employers

*Abbott Foods, Inc.*

*ABC Concrete Forms*

*Airtron Heating and Cooling*

*A. J. Asphalt Maintenance & Paving Co.*

*Alban Equipment*

*All Foreign Used Auto Parts Inc.*

*Anderson Clark - BCT of Central Ohio*

*Arrow Concrete*

*Best Foreign Used Cars*

*Buckeye Auto Parts of Columbus Inc.*

*Capitol Drywall Supply*

*Central City Auto Parts*

*Central Ohio Meat Company*

*Central Ohio Transit Authority*

*Columbus Heating and Ventilating*

*Columbus Hi-Lo Inc.*

*Columbus Ohio Pattern Inc.*

*Columbus Police Academy*

*Columbus Stone Center Inc.*

*Colvin Gravel Company Inc.*

*Decker Construction Inc.*

*Edison Automotive Inc.*

*Edwards Insulation Company*

*Edwards Steel – Structural Division*

*General Maintenance & Engineering*

*GFS Chemicals, Inc.*

*Glenco Construction Company*

*Graves Fence Company*

*Griffin Pavement Striping Inc.*

*Gudenkauf Corporation*

*Harry Wellnitz Company*

*Hite Parts Exchange*

*Industrial Aluminum Foundry*

*J. J. Hammond Company*

*J. W. Groves & Sons Inc.*

*Kokosing Construction Company*

*M & M Door Company*

*M & W Trucking and Garage*

*Mid-Ohio Electric Company*

*Miller DP Trucking Inc.*

*Modlich Stoneworks*

*Monesi Truck & Equipment Repair*

*Mongavero Machinery Company*

*Mount Carmel Health Systems*

*National City Bank*

*Ohio Gas & Appliance Company*

*Phillips Oil Company Inc. of Ohio*

*R A McGovern Equipment Company*

*Randall & O'Reilly Inc.*

*Re-Construction Inc.*

*Spray A Tree Inc.*

*Sun Haven Glazing Systems*

*Sutton & Associates Inc.*

*Trio Insulated Glass*

*The Werner Company*

*The Ross Willoughby Company*

*Tolliver & Curl Paving Contractors Inc.*

*Twiss – DePuy Paving Inc.*

*United States Postal Service*

*Universal Building Technology Inc.*

*Universal Fabricating & Const. Services*

*Uvonics Inc.*

*Ward Trucking Corporation*

*W. K. Enterprises Inc.*

*Woody's Auto Salvage*

*Zimmerman Wooden Boat Works*