

# Cleveland Heights Noble Corridor Existing Conditions Report

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for FutureHeights, Inc.

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# Introduction

## Report Purpose & Scope

Initiated by FutureHeights, Inc., and in cooperation with the Noble Neighbors, the cities of Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland, and the Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope (NOAH), the Noble Corridor Plan is intended to improve quality of life in the Noble Corridor by promoting connectivity within and around the area, enhancing the sense of place, and laying the groundwork for equitable future development.

The Existing Conditions Report is an interim deliverable in the corridor planning process. By providing an assessment of current conditions within the Noble Corridor neighborhood, the Existing Conditions Report begins to frame options for the corridor's revitalization by identifying strengths and weaknesses, as well as issues and opportunities.

This existing conditions report analyzes the following characteristics: 1) land use, 2) building inventory, 3) community demographics, 4) the transportation system, and 5) property valuations. While focus is on Noble Road, the Existing Conditions Report includes an assessment of the surrounding area to understand the relationship between the corridor and the adjacent communities.

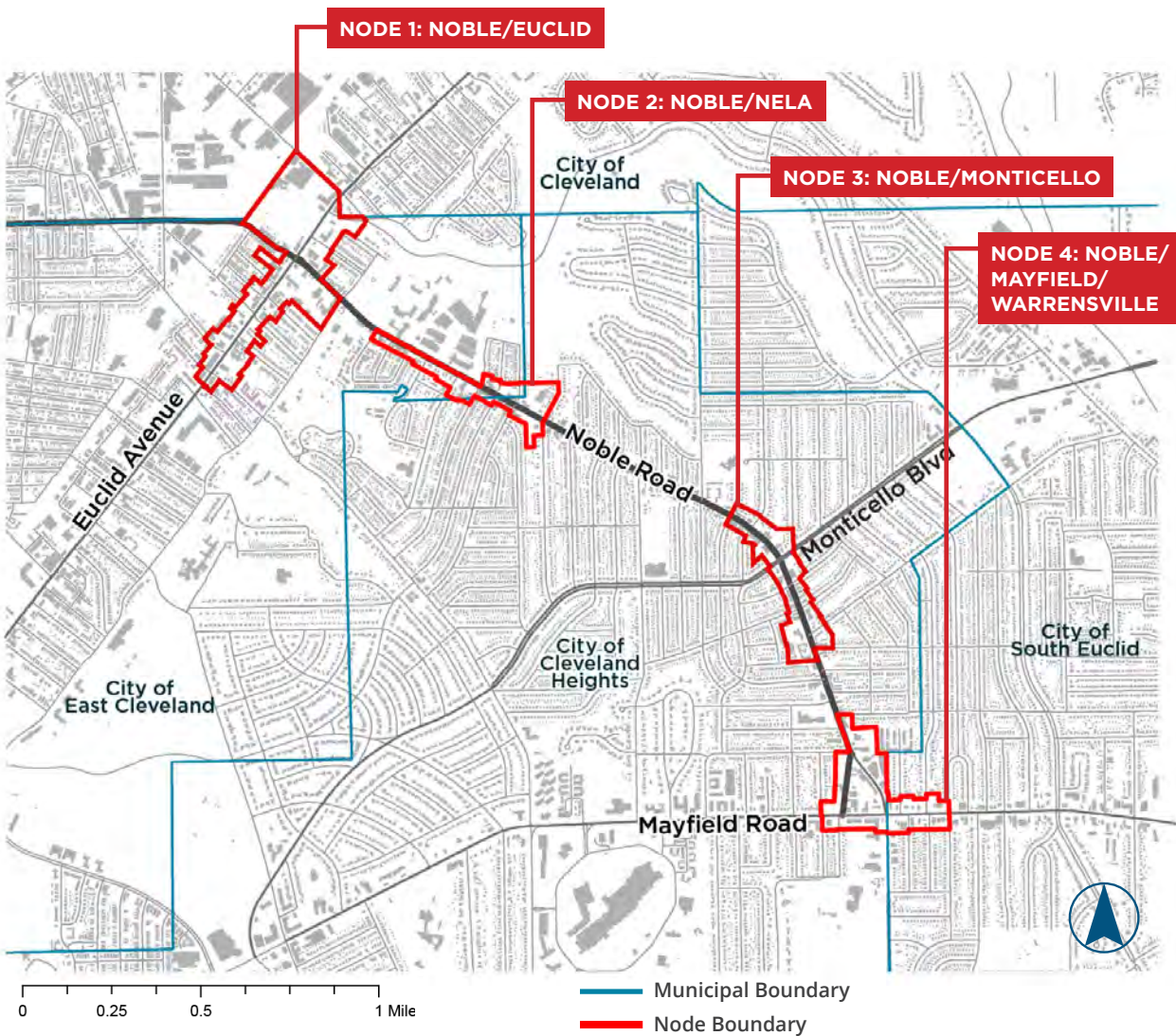
The assets and challenges presented in this document are observations made by the planning team. As the planning process progresses, input from stakeholders and area residents will add to the assessment of needs, challenges and opportunities facing the Noble Corridor.



**FIGURE 1, REGIONAL CONTEXT**

## Organization of Study Area

The study area for the Noble Corridor is 2.5 miles long, extending along Noble Road from Euclid Avenue on the northwest, to Mayfield Road on the southeast. Most of the corridor is located in the City of Cleveland Heights, with the northwest portion extending into the City of East Cleveland. Also, the eastern portion of the Noble/Mayfield/Warrensville Road commercial node is located in the City of South Euclid. Portions of the Cities of Cleveland and South Euclid abut the corridor to the north and east respectively. The Existing Conditions Report establishes four commercial nodes, which will be the focus of revitalization efforts in the Plan. These city nodes are: 1) Noble/Euclid; 2) NELA AREA; 3) Noble/Monticello; and 4) Noble/Mayfield/Warrensville.



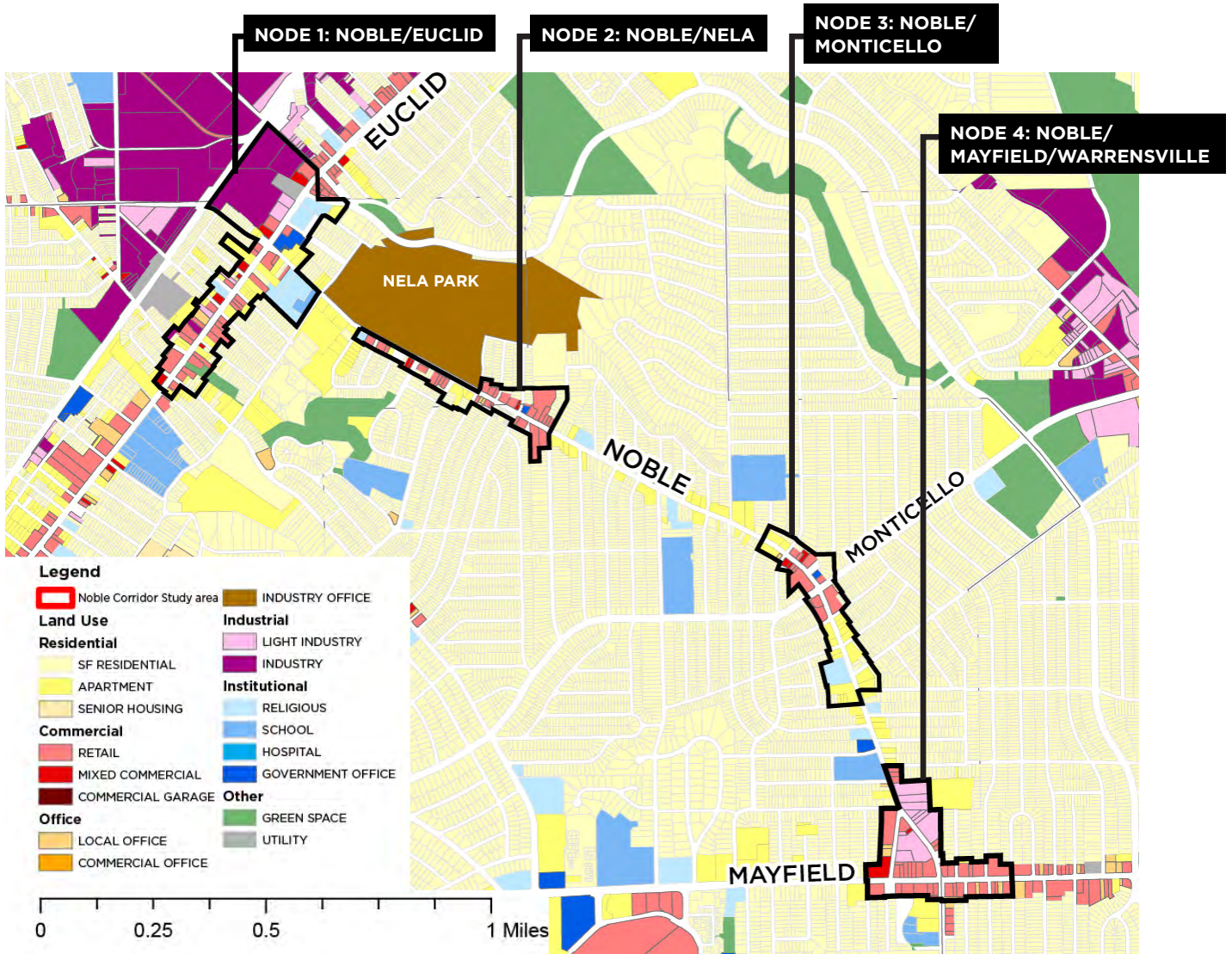
**FIGURE 2, NOBLE CORRIDOR STUDY AREA NODES**





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# Community-Level Analysis



**FIGURE 3, AREA-WIDE EXISTING LAND USE**

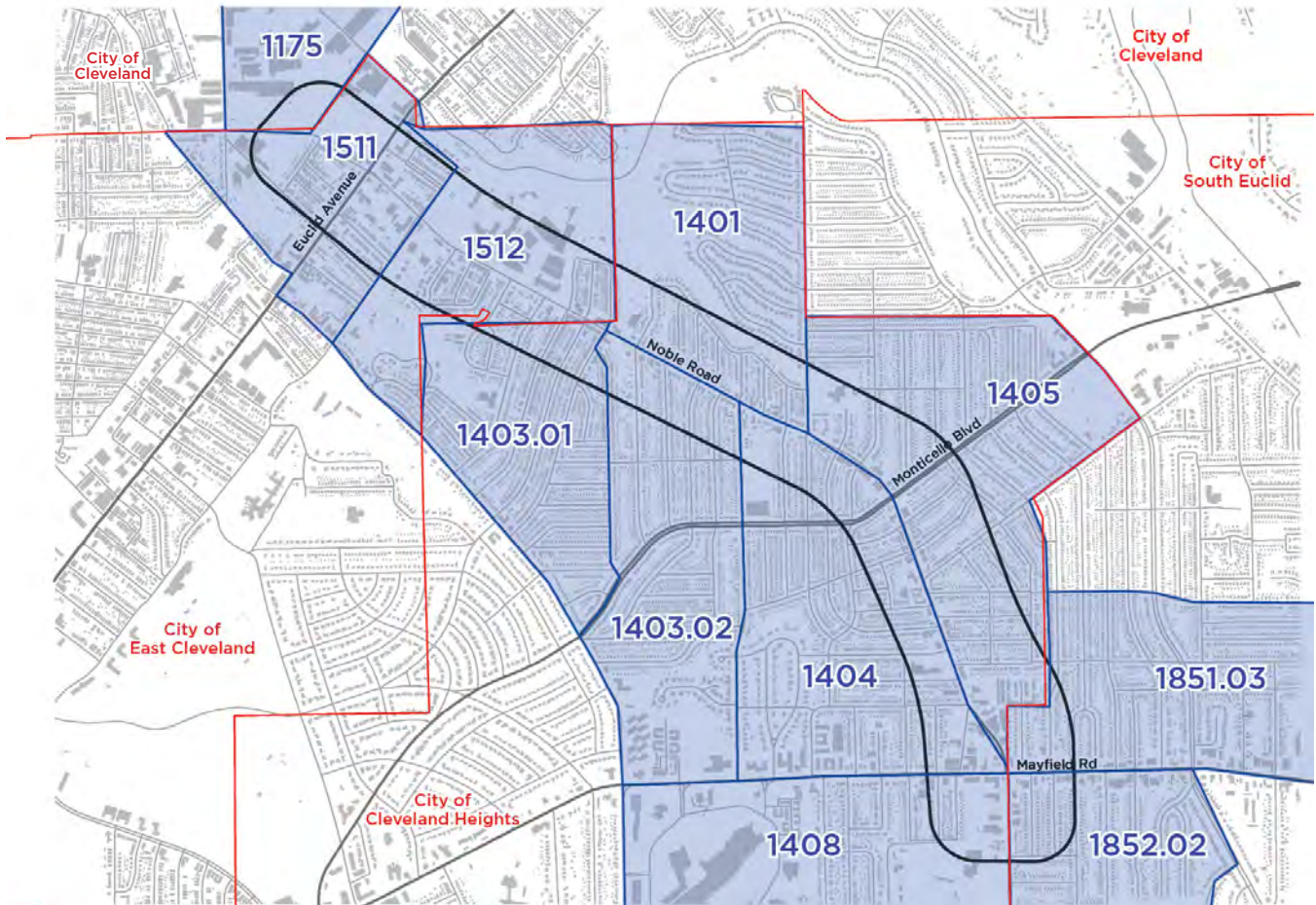


## Land Use

Three major thoroughfares intersect the 2.5-mile Noble Corridor: Euclid Avenue, Monticello Boulevard, and Mayfield Road. Commercial uses in the corridor are concentrated around these major intersections and near the Nela business campus. Parcels zoned for industrial uses are located where Noble Road intersects with Euclid Avenue and with Mayfield Road. The remainder of the study area is made up of residential and institutional uses, including schools and religious facilities. While detailed observations on land use within the four nodes are contained in a separate section of this Report, observations on the pattern of land use in the broader community are outlined below.

- The commercial nodes along Noble Road are well positioned to serve the adjacent residential neighborhoods. No other significant commercial areas are located in close proximity to these nodes to the east or to the west.
- Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road contain significant concentrations of commercial use. These commercial areas attract both regional and local retail expenditures and represent competition to the Noble Corridor.
- Both the Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road commercial areas are automobile oriented, whereas the commercial nodes along Noble Road are more pedestrian oriented. The presence of deteriorated and blighted properties along Euclid Avenue diminishes the appeal of this commercial area.
- The major retail shopping destinations for the area include Legacy Village in Lyndhurst and a Walmart Super Center on Warrensville Center Road. These locales do not represent major competition for Noble Road because it serves a different function. These places are retail destination whereas the Noble Corridor nodes serve a more service-oriented and convenience-based shopping function, in addition to some leisure-oriented uses such as eating and drinking establishments.
- Major areas of competition for the Noble Corridor commercial nodes are located to the south of Mayfield Road in smaller-scale, urban business districts, such as the Cedar-Lee district. This and other nearby urban business districts offer a greater range of businesses than the Noble Road nodes and allow for a more pedestrian-oriented shopping experience. These businesses are close enough to the neighborhoods adjacent to the Noble Corridor to serve as alternatives for convenience and leisure-oriented expenditures.

# Demographics



**FIGURE 3.1, Project Area Census Tracts**  North

In the fall of 2015, a class taught by Dr. Mark Chupp of Case Western Reserve University conducted a survey and analysis of demographic conditions in the Noble Neighborhood, which is defined as the five census tracts straddling Noble Road north of Mayfield Road within Cleveland Heights, 1401, 1403.1, 1403.2, 1405, 1404 (see figure 3.1). An excerpt from the study provides an overview of this demographic analysis below.

*As of 2010, Noble neighborhood had 12,500 residents, comprising 27.1% of Cleveland Heights' overall population. As illustrated in the following chart, the neighborhood has seen a population loss similar to Cleveland Heights as a whole, with the neighborhood's total population being down 16.58% since 1990.*

**POPULATION CHANGE BY YEAR**

	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1990-2010
Noble Neighborhood	14,972	14,158	12,490	-16.58%
Cleveland Heights	54,052	49,958	46,114	-14.69%

*Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015*

Neighborhood residents represent various races; however the community is primarily African American (67.8%) or White (27.1%). The neighborhood has seen an increase in its refugee population, specifically its Nepali population, due to a refugee services nonprofit (Us Together, Inc.) having relationships with landlords in the Noble neighborhood area, primarily on Noble Road.

The following table illustrates changes in demographic racial composition for the Noble Neighborhood and for Cleveland Heights. Since 1990, Noble neighborhood has seen a 54% loss in its white population, a 15% increase in its African American/Black population, a 21% increase in its Hispanic population, and a 47% increase in its Asian/Pacific Islander population (which may be correlated with local refugee resettlement services). There has been no increase in the area's American

Indian population. These numbers show that in 1990 the neighborhood had a near 50-50 split in its white and African American/Black population. Since then, the neighborhood has seen an out-migration of its white population and an in-migration of African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic individuals.

By contrast, Cleveland Heights has seen a sharp increase in its Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander populations (67% and 55%, respectively). Unlike Noble neighborhood, Cleveland Heights as a whole has seen a loss in its African American/Black, White, and American Indian population.

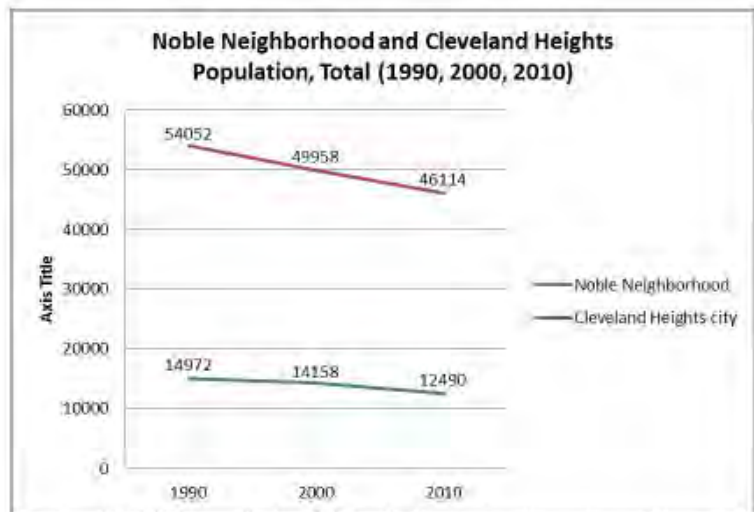


Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015

### RACIAL MAKEUP BY YEAR

Noble Neighborhood				
	1990	2000	2010	% Change
White	7,351	5,005	3,386	-54%
Black	7,394	8,853	8,467	+15%
American Indian	21	18	21	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	148	203	217	+47%
Hispanic	163	198	197	+21%
Cleveland Heights city				
	1990	2000	2010	% Change
White	32,534	27,100	22,986	-29%
Black	20,054	21,128	19,580	-2%
American Indian	96	87	74	-23%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,138	1,305	1,906	+67%
Hispanic	582	791	903	+55%

Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015

Since 2000, the Noble neighborhood has seen a 5.8% increase in individuals aged 60 and older, with this group now constituting 20.4% of the neighborhood. The neighborhood has seen a population loss for its 0 – 4, 5 – 17, 18 – 34, and 35 – 59 age cohorts.

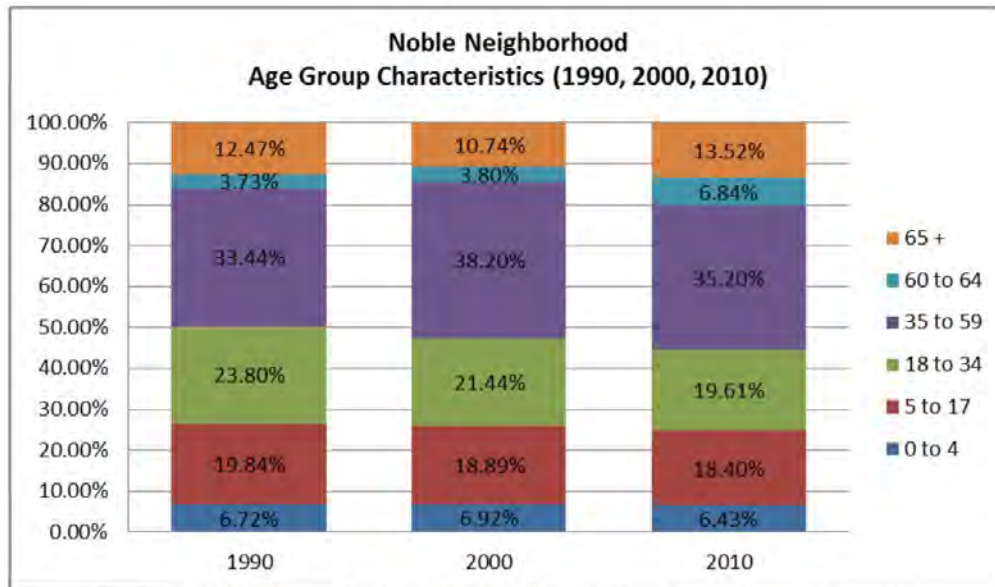


Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015

Since 1990, the neighborhood's poverty rate has increased to 16.5%, with approximately 2,190 individuals living below poverty level. Its child poverty rate has increased to 31.2% (nearly six times its 1990 rate) with approximately 973 children living below poverty level. Female-headed families with children under 18 living below poverty (more commonly referred to as single mother households) have increased from 72 households in 1990 to 182 households in 2010.

#### POVERTY RATE BY YEAR

Noble Neighborhood				
	1990	2000	2010*	
Poverty Rate	4.6	11.3	16.5	
Persons living below poverty	693	1,563	2,190	
Child Poverty Rate	5.7	17.6	31.2	
Children (aged 0-17) living below poverty	230	613	973	
Female-headed families with children < 18 living below poverty	72	155	182	

Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015

Finally, Cleveland Heights and Noble neighborhoods' median household income was also compared. Noble neighborhood, like Cleveland Heights, has seen a rise in median household income over the past 20 years. Prior to 2010, the median household income for the neighborhood surpassed that of Cleveland Heights. However, as of 2010, Cleveland Heights' median household income has risen to surpass that of the Noble neighborhood.

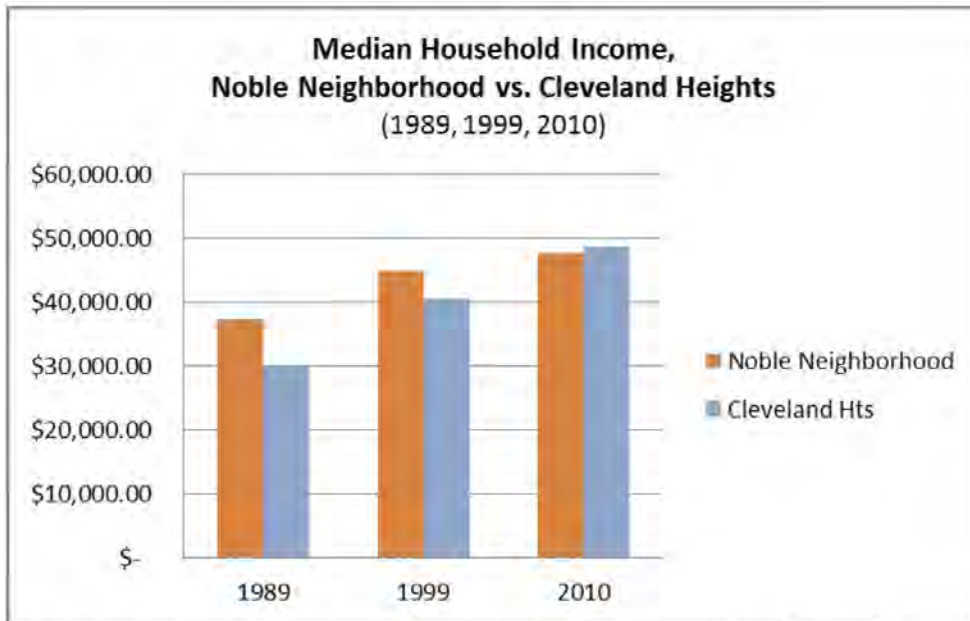


Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015

When examining individual census tracts within the Noble neighborhood, there is visible growth in median household income for most census tracts. Census Tract 1401.0 saw a rise in median household income between 1989 and 2000; however median household income for this census tract has since fallen. Unlike Noble neighborhood as whole, Census Tracts 1403.02 and 1404.0 continue to have median household incomes that surpass that of Cleveland Heights.

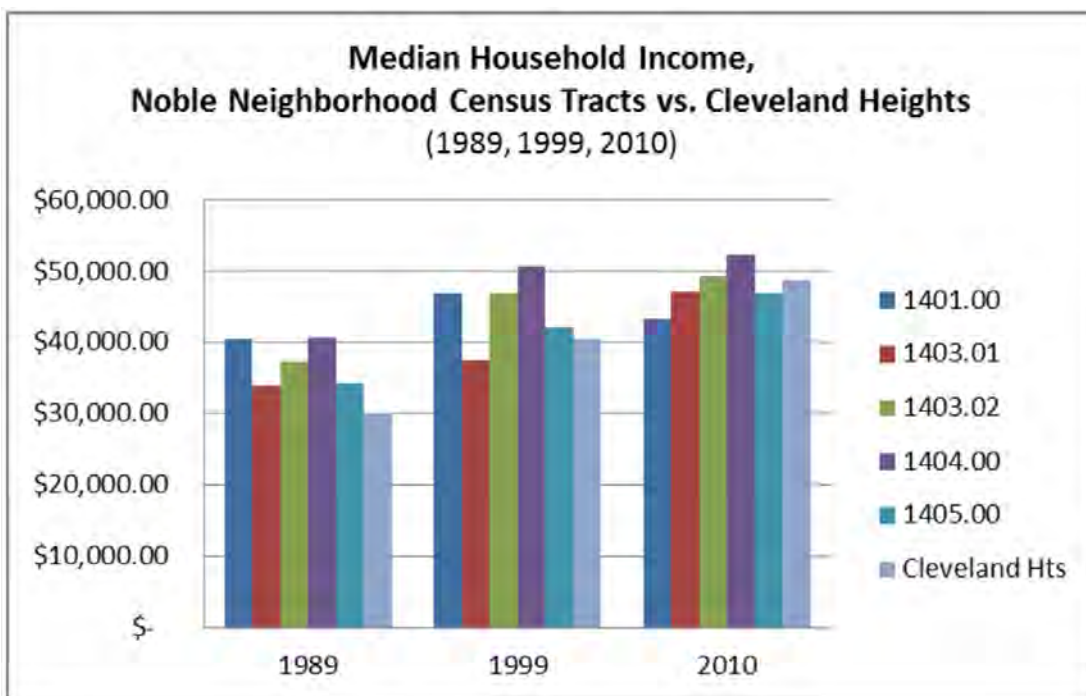


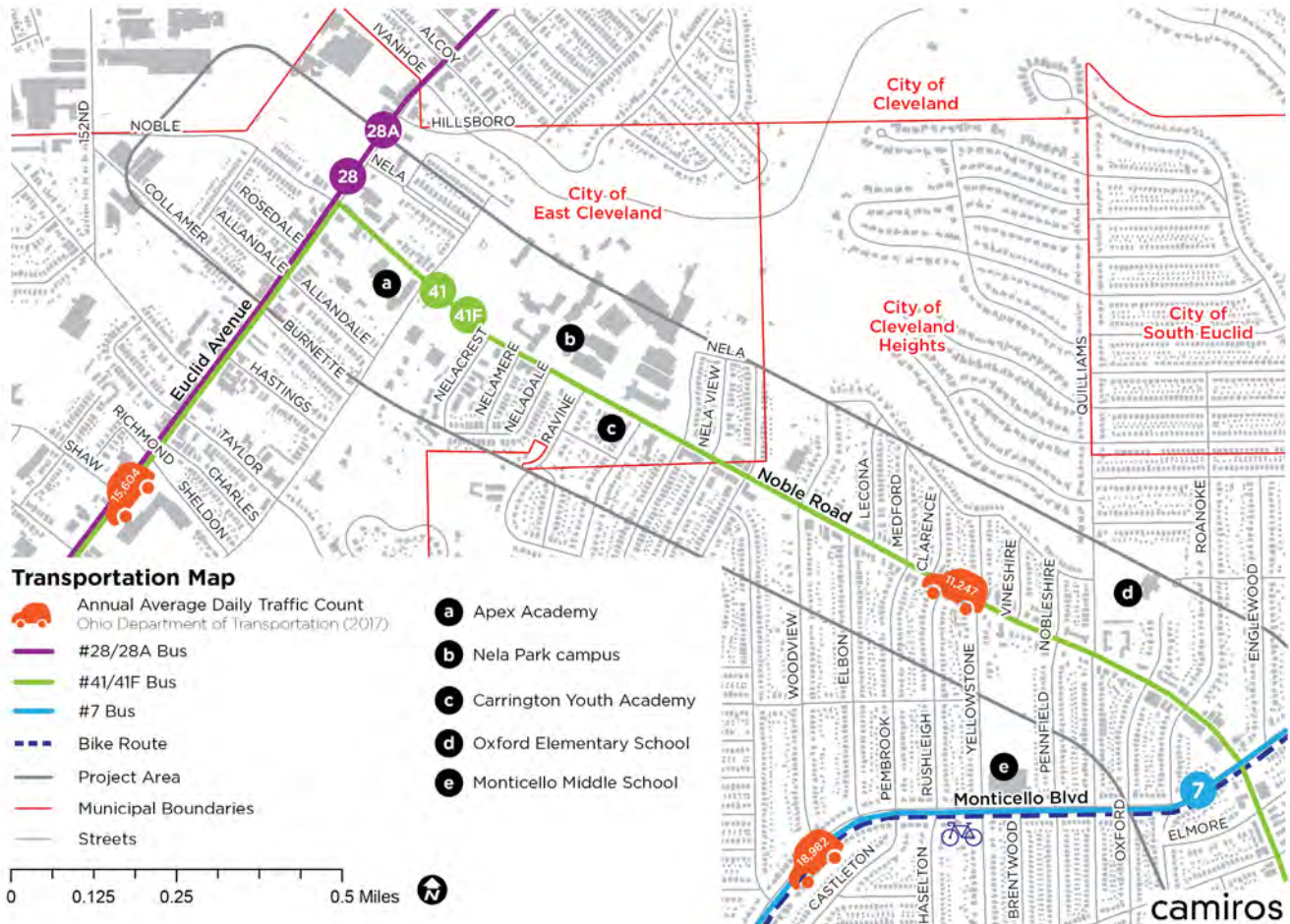
Chart from "Noble Neighborhood Community Assessment", Case Western Reserve Study, 2015



## Demographic Analysis Relevant Observations

- Overall, the Noble Corridor, as evidenced by demographic shifts within the Noble Neighborhood, has seen worrisome trends appear between 1990 and 2010 as shown in the decrease in population (16%) and an increase in the poverty rate (from 4.6% to 16.5%).
- The racial composition of the Noble Neighborhood has shifted between 1990 and 2010, becoming less white and more minority. This trend aligns with similar trends in Cleveland Heights and nationally, although the shift to minority residents is greater in the Noble Neighborhood.
  - » The largest percentage increases in minority population were for Asian/Pacific Islander residents (47%) and Hispanics (25%). Both these populations were small in 1990 and remain small despite the percentage increases.
  - » The largest shifts were the decrease in white residents (54%) and the increase in black residents (15%). In 1990 the white and black populations were roughly equal, whereas in 2010, the black population was more than double the white population.
- The Case Western study also identifies indicators of stability.
  - » The median household income continues to grow and is roughly equal to Cleveland Heights as a whole. It should be noted that the Noble Neighborhood had significantly higher median income than the city as a whole in 1990.
  - » The age of residents in the Noble Neighborhood is relatively stable, indicating that new residents are moving into the neighborhood to replace residents who leave.

# Transportation Network



**FIGURE 4, TRANSPORTATION NETWORK MAP - WEST**

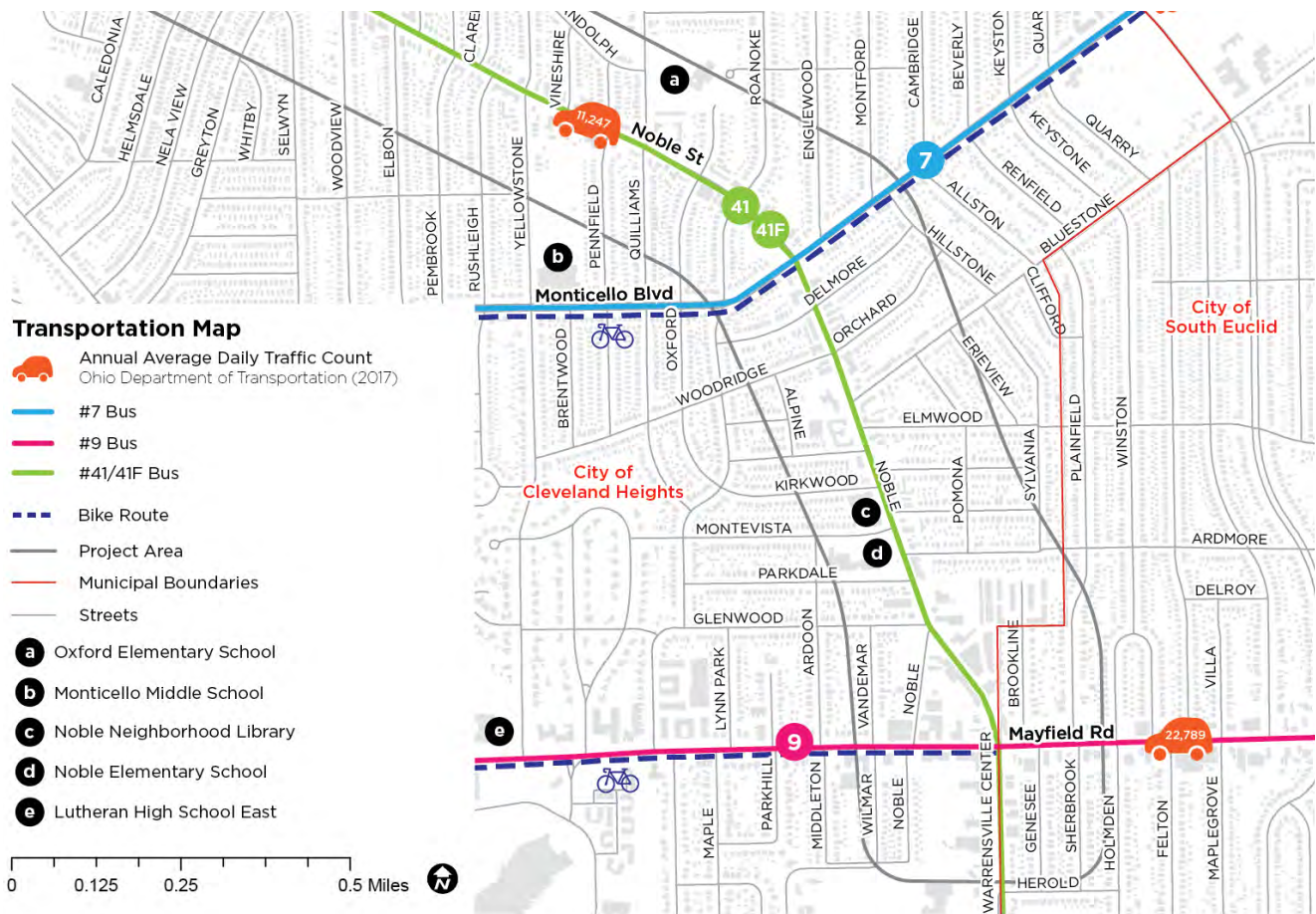
## Bus System

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) operates the 41-41F Bus route along Noble Road for the entirety of the Noble Corridor study area. The Noble Road route is a well-used route, connecting riders to the Stokes-Windermere RTA rapid train and bus stations in East Cleveland. Three other GCRTA bus routes serve the study area: (1) 28-28A - Euclid Avenue, (2) 7 - Monticello Boulevard, and (3) 9 - Mayfield Road.

While the GCRTA has seen drops in ridership over the past several years, these bus routes continue to provide residents and workers of the Noble Corridor with an affordable alternative to personal vehicle use.

## Bike/Pedestrian Connections

A basic system of sidewalks exists along the Noble Corridor to facilitate pedestrian mobility. However, the lack of pedestrian amenities and unappealing aesthetics of the Corridor are a disincentive to pedestrian activity.



**FIGURE 5, TRANSPORTATION NETWORK MAP - EAST** North

The absence of walk-to destinations/amenities also reduces pedestrian activity. Streetscape improvements such as street trees, landscaping, and benches would make the Corridor more appealing for pedestrians.

The study area contains two posted bike routes designated by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). These run along Monticello Boulevard and Mayfield Road. While the routes are not dedicated bike lanes, they are located on larger streets that have the street-width to accommodate both cyclists and drivers. Noble Road has a moderate level of traffic (11,247 ADT), which makes it suitable for bicycle mobility and the addition of a bike lane could increase overall activity along the Corridor.

**Vehicular Connections**

Noble Road functions as a “collector street,” connecting adjacent residential neighborhoods to regional arterials such as Mayfield Road, and Euclid Avenue, which connect to the broader region. According to the

Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), an average of 11,247 cars traffic Noble Road on a daily basis. Residents can reach destinations, such as University Circle and Downtown Cleveland, using city streets in 20 minutes or less. Residents can reach other regional destinations with relative ease as well, using Interstates 90 and 271. As the community works to attract investment along the Corridor, its proximity to the regional road network should be leveraged as a significant asset for the area.

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## Assessed Property Values



**FIGURE 6, ASSESSED VALUE MAP - WEST CORRIDOR**



Existing assessed property values were surveyed and analyzed to identify the areas of relative strength and weakness of properties along the corridor and within the four nodes. Areas of high assessed value often indicate real estate market strength, which usually translates into higher opportunities for attracting new market-rate investment, while areas of low assessed value often indicate likely challenges in attracting new investment. Sometimes low assessed value can be an indicator of deferred property maintenance and deterioration. However, both the City of Cleveland Heights and the City of East Cleveland have “Point of Sale” inspection processes that require building deficiencies to be corrected as part of the transfer of ownership process. The Point of Sale processes and requirements of the two cities differ, most notably in Cleveland Heights’ requirement for an escrow account to ensure the repairs are made. The Point of Sale process has helped maintain good building condition within the Corridor, although the process is not 100% effective in eliminating building deterioration.

Establishing assessed values in Cuyahoga County is the responsibility of the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer. The following excerpt from the Cuyahoga County Website describes how assessed values are determined.



**FIGURE 7, ASSESSED VALUE MAP - EAST CORRIDOR**



Under Ohio Law, (ORC 5713 and 5713.33) the County Fiscal Officer is responsible for the valuation of all real estate. There are two cycles performed to complete this task. One is the Sexennial Re-appraisal (every six years) and the other is a Triennial Update (every third year between Re-appraisals). 2018 will be the Reappraisal and 2021 will be a Triennial Update. A Sexennial Re-appraisal (last completed in 2012) requires all property to be personally viewed. Once viewed and the data is verified, an analysis of recent comparable sales is utilized to set market value on a parcel-by-parcel basis. A Triennial Update differs as it relates to scope and methodology. An update does not require a physical viewing of the property. Its purpose is to 'update' the values that were set during the prior Sexennial Re-appraisal. Valid arms-length sales are analyzed to determine the ratio between the sale amount and the certified value. Once determined, this 'factor' is applied to all Residential parcels for each distinct Municipality (or market area).

'Market Value' is defined as the price your property would likely sell for in an open and competitive market between a willing buyer and willing seller, neither being under any undue pressure, both having full knowledge of all relevant facts about the property and the uses to which it may be put. 'Assessed Value' on real estate is set at 35% of market value by the State of Ohio. Assessed Value is the value of taxable property to which the tax rate is applied to compute the amount of property taxes.

## Assessed Value Findings/Observations

Broad patterns in assessed value are illustrated in the assessed value maps of the East Corridor and the West Corridor. The values represented on the maps reflect assessed values by parcel, so larger properties will tend to have a higher value than smaller properties. As such, smaller single-family residential properties would tend to have lower values than larger multi-family residential and commercial properties. This is reflected on the two corridor-level assessed value maps, although there are exceptions. Exempt properties, such as public and institutional uses, are identified on the maps.

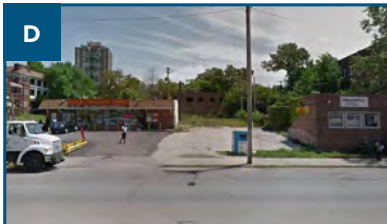
The assessed value analysis illustrates two major findings: 1) the property along Noble Road has higher value than the property located on the adjacent side streets, which is due primarily to the larger size of property and buildings along Noble Road; and 2) the value of property generally declines from south to north. Concentrations of higher value properties are located at: a) the Mayfield Road intersection; b) the Monticello Boulevard intersection; and c) and the Nela Park industrial complex. It is interesting to note that two key parcels of vacant land have much different assessed values. The vacant site at the northwest corner of Noble/Mayfield/Warrensville has much higher value than the vacant parcel a short distance to the north on the southwest corner of Noble/Glenwood. The property on Mayfield Road benefits from high levels of drive-by traffic, which creates commercial development opportunity and higher value. The property at Noble/Glenwood has less commercial development opportunity.



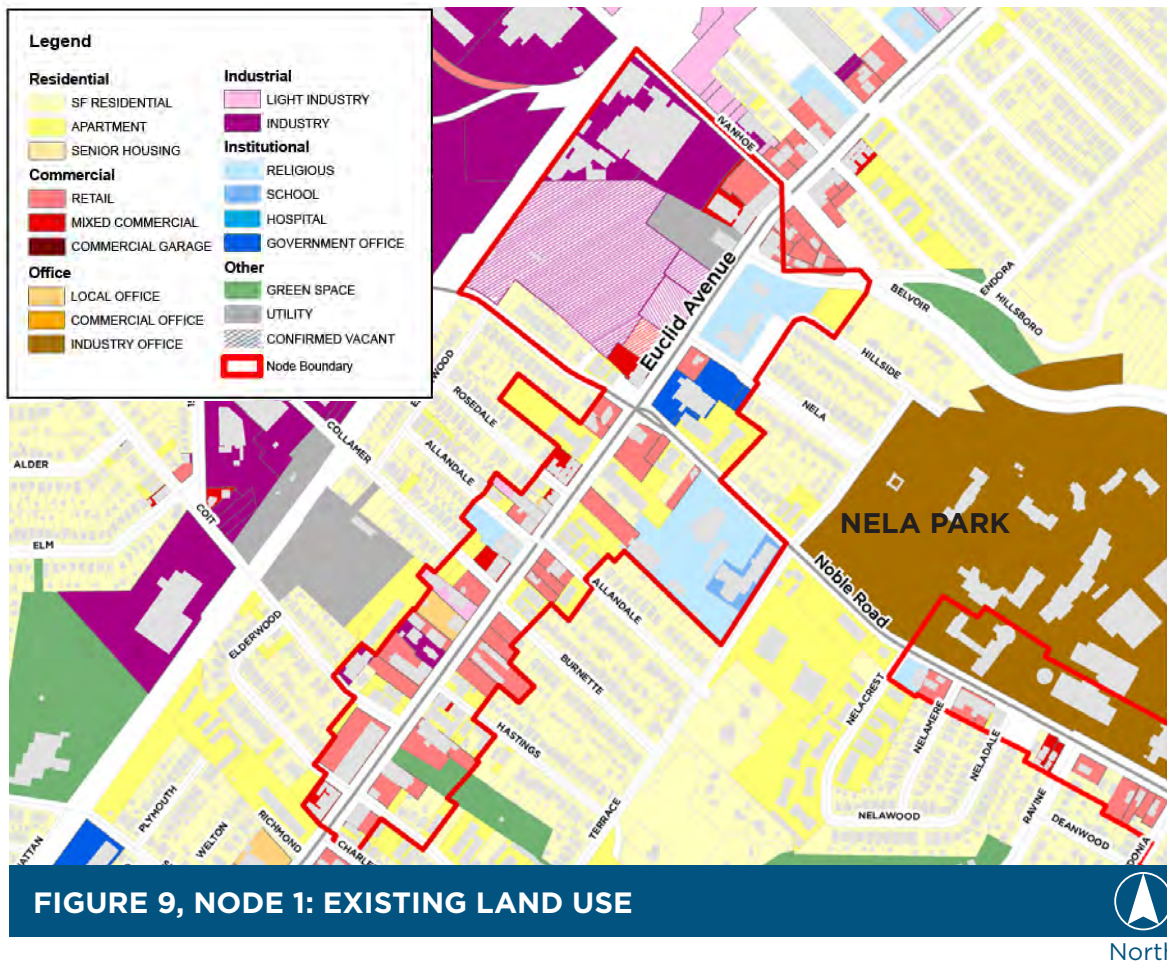
# Node 1: Noble Road & Euclid Avenue



**FIGURE 8, NODE 1: NOBLE ROAD & EUCLID AVENUE AERIAL**



*Images showing existing conditions in Node 1: Noble Road & Euclid Avenue*



**FIGURE 9, NODE 1: EXISTING LAND USE**



## Node 1: Existing Land Use

Node 1 is focused around the intersection of Noble Road and Euclid Avenue in East Cleveland. It is made up of 196 parcels across 41 acres of land. As one of two gateways to the Noble Corridor, this area will be vital to attracting future investment along Noble. Industrial, apartment residential, single-family residential, and retail land uses represent more than half of the node’s land area.

Much of this node is made up of commercial land uses, but the existing commercial buildings and units are among the most deteriorated of any located in the corridor. Because of the deteriorated buildings, property and infrastructure, investment and redevelopment will be inhibited. Improving property maintenance should be addressed in the plan’s recommendations.

The numerous vacant and underutilized properties in this node provide opportunities for redevelopment, although market conditions may not support new investment. A large vacant property zoned for industrial use at the node’s northeast corner should be explored as an opportunity site. Euclid Avenue is a regionally significant route and there may be demand for highway-oriented uses if the area were stabilized.

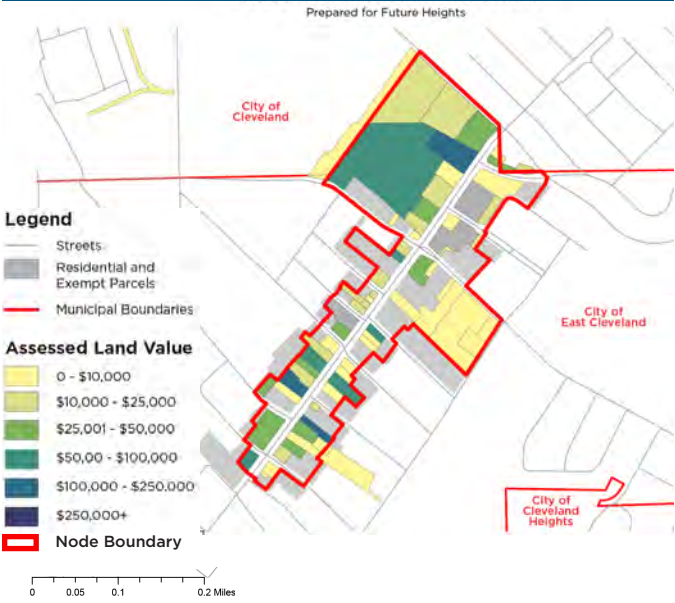
	Sq. Ft.	# of Parcels	Acres	
INDUSTRY	769,141	5	17.66	21.9%
APARTMENT	626,822	43	14.39	17.9%
S.F. RESIDENTIAL	512,787	85	11.77	14.6%
RETAIL	497,762	32	11.43	14.2%
RELIGIOUS	362,146	5	8.31	10.3%
RAILROAD	175,895	2	4.04	5.0%
PARK	104,229	2	2.39	3.0%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	102,802	8	2.36	2.9%
LIGHT INDUSTRY	101,603	4	2.33	2.9%
UTILITY	74,692	1	1.71	2.1%
GOVERNMENT OFFICE	70,440	3	1.62	2.0%
SCHOOL	50,228	1	1.15	1.4%
LOCAL OFFICE	28,586	2	0.66	0.8%
PARKING	27,276	3	0.63	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,504,410</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>

	Sq. Ft.	# of Buildings	
INDUSTRY	161,021	10	24.2%
APARTMENT	141,238	29	21.2%
RETAIL	120,504	24	18.1%
RELIGIOUS	65,928	34	9.9%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	64,542	7	9.7%
S.F. RESIDENTIAL	39,044	34	5.9%
SCHOOL	25,095	1	3.8%
GOVERNMENT OFFICE	17,568	1	2.6%
LIGHT INDUSTRY	16,977	2	2.6%
LOCAL OFFICE	6,392	3	1.0%
UTILITY	6,130	1	0.9%
PARKING	355	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>664,795</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100%</b>

Residential uses, including single-family and apartment, account for 27% of the node's total land area. The large apartment properties within the node occupy 14.4 acres and a substantial 18% of the node's area.

A total of 147 buildings are located in Node 1, with retail and residential structures tied for the largest quantity of buildings at 34 each. However, ten industrial buildings in the node occupy the largest land area of any single land use in the node.

**FIGURE 10, NODE 1:  
NON-RESIDENTIAL ASSESSED VALUE**



## Node 1: Assessed Value

The map of assessed values for Node 1 provides a detailed view of values around the Noble Road/Euclid Avenue intersection. Residential parcels have been excluded from this assessment to focus on commercial properties. Of the 69 nonresidential properties shown on the map, five parcels (all fronting Euclid Avenue) are in the highest value category. The largest parcel, located in the northeast corner of Noble/Euclid is a vacant industrial property whose relatively high value is based its size. Nine parcels fronting Euclid Avenue frontage are in the lowest value category. The pattern of assessed value in Node 1 suggests there is market weakness and that attracting new investment may be challenging.

# Node 2: Nela Area

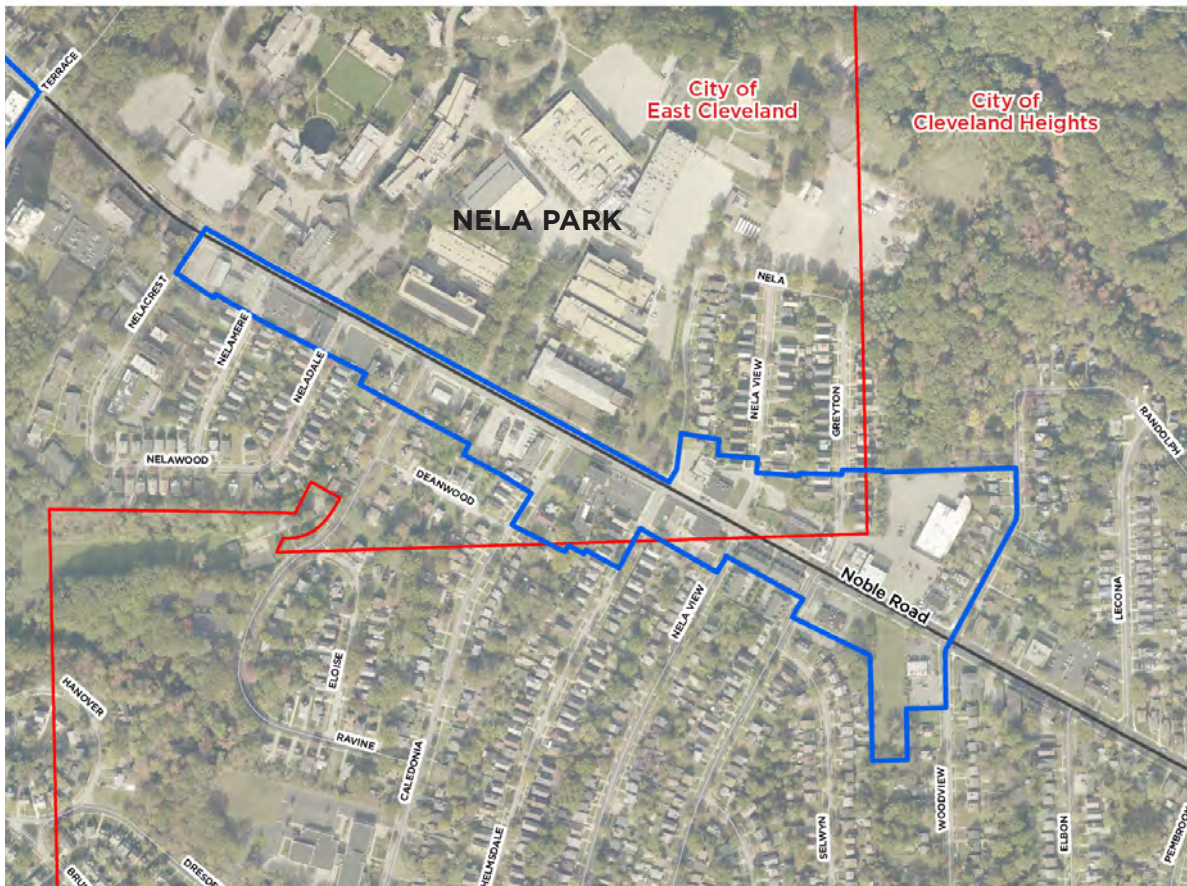
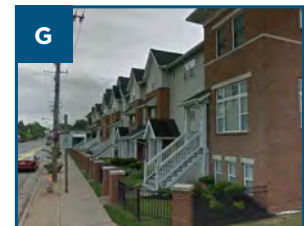
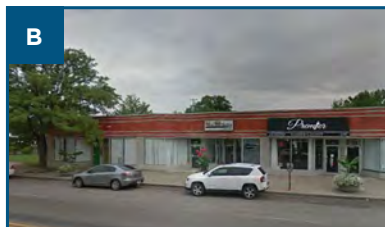
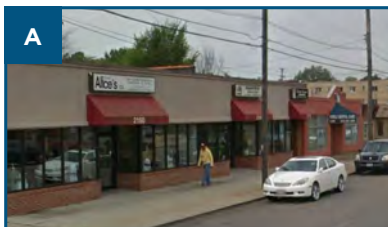
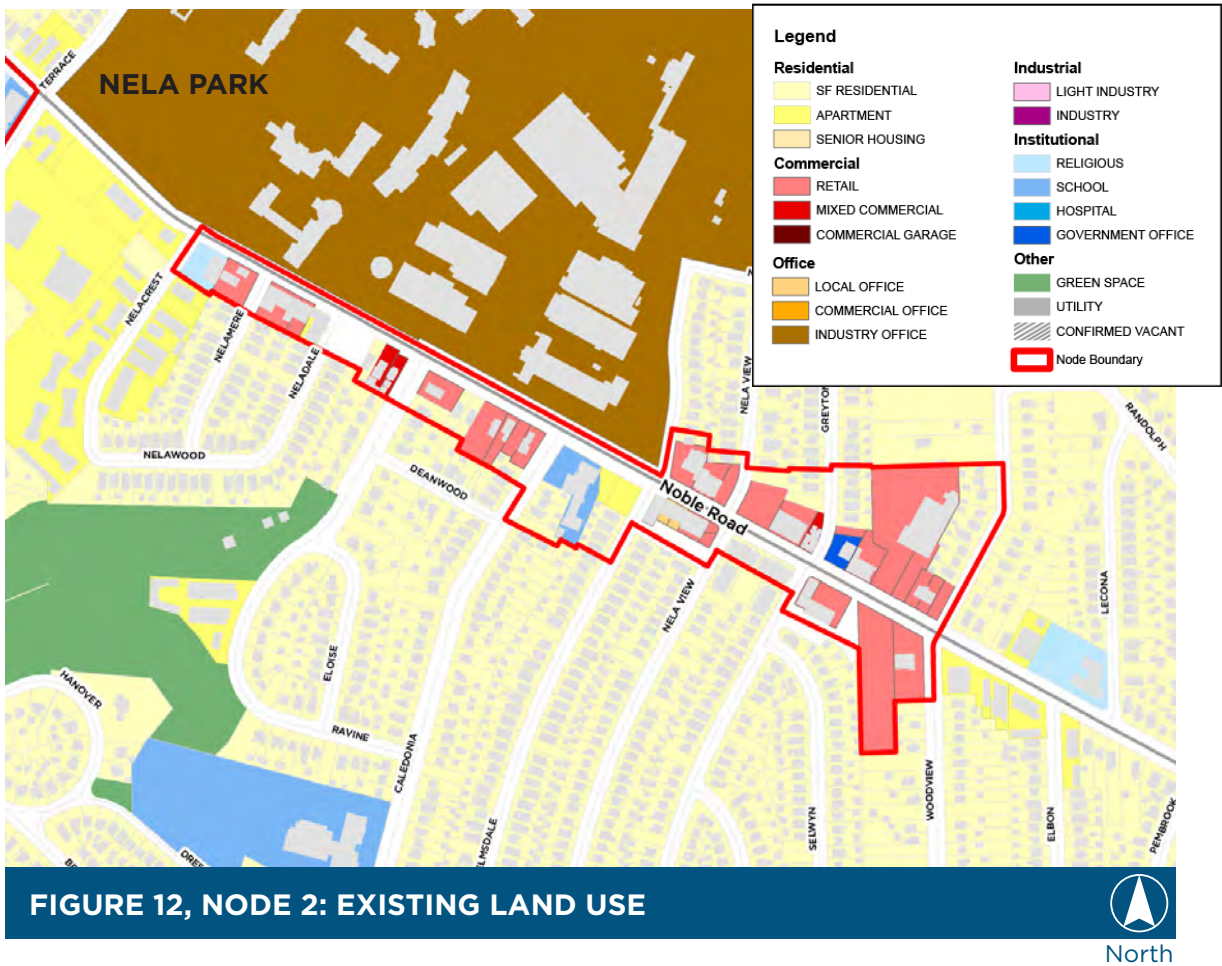


FIGURE 11, NODE 2: NELA AREA AERIAL



Images showing existing conditions in Node 2: Nela Area



## Node 2: Existing Land Use

Node 2, the Nela Area, is notable for its proximity to the GE Nela Business Park and because portions of the node are located in Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland, as shown on Figure 11. Nela Park occupies the northern portion of the east side of Noble Road, and is excluded from the Node because it does not function as part of the business district.

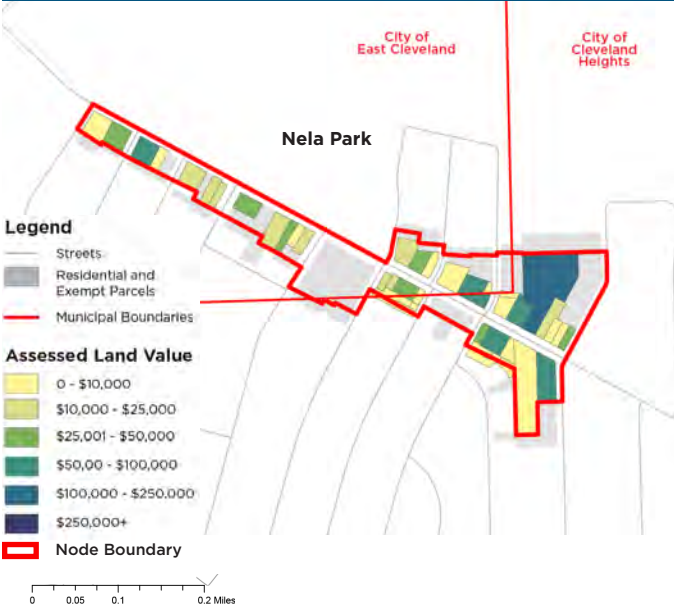
The Nela Area Node is quite linear, with no major intersections. Buildings within the Node generally form a consistent street wall, giving the area an intimate, “Main Street” type of character (photos A, B, C, D). The scale and orientation of the buildings makes portions of this Node quite pedestrian-friendly. The beautification of this Node through flower plantings is noticeable and helps brighten its appearance (photo E). The presence of utility poles/lines is a negative visual element that is present throughout the corridor. Given the absence of a major corridor to define the Node, the businesses along Noble Road appear to have evolved based on the presence of Nela Park.

	Sq. Ft.	# of Parcels	Acres	
S.F. RESIDENTIAL	386,559	72	8.87	39.5%
RETAIL	385,083	28	8.84	39.3%
APARTMENT	65,633	5	1.51	6.7%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	55,027	4	1.26	5.6%
PARKING	55,027	8	1.26	5.6%
RELIGIOUS	15,830	1	0.36	1.6%
GOVERNMENT OFFICE	8,945	1	0.21	0.9%
LOCAL OFFICE	6,560	2	0.15	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>978,663</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

	Sq.Ft.	# of Buildings	
RETAIL	86,196	15	44.8%
S.F. RESIDENTIAL	63,692	63	33.1%
APARTMENT	14,143	2	7.3%
LOCAL OFFICE	12,827	1	6.7%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	9,105	6	4.7%
RELIGIOUS	4,307	1	2.2%
GOVERNMENT OFFICE	2,190	1	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>192,459</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown on Figure 12, this Node contains a mix of land uses. Commercial use comprises most of the land area in the Node, but significant areas of residential and institutional use are also present. Prominent businesses include the Save-A-Lot food store (photo F), Nela Florist, Island Style restaurant and Premier Lounge. Institutional uses include the Carrington Youth Academy, a special educational facility, and two churches, the Gospel of Christ Baptist Chapel and the Central Bible Baptist Church. Residential uses include the city-sponsored townhouse redevelopment located between Nela View Road and Greyton Road (photo G).

**FIGURE 13, NODE 2:  
NON-RESIDENTIAL ASSESSED VALUE**



## Node 2: Assessed Value

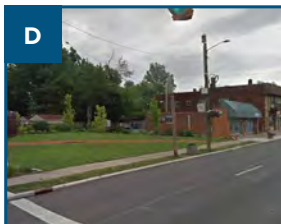
Figure 13 illustrates the range of assessed values within the node, which excludes residential parcels to focus on the commercial properties. Assessed values are characterized by an even mix of low and high value properties. The highest value property is the Save-A-Lot store located at the eastern end of the Node, which serves as an important retail anchor. While the Node’s appearance and mix of businesses suggest that it is healthy and vital, the value of property indicates that a strengthening of economic conditions is needed.



# Node 3: Noble Road & Monticello Boulevard



FIGURE 14, NODE 3: NOBLE ROAD & MONTICELLO BLVD AERIAL



Images showing existing conditions in Node 3: Noble Road and Monticello Boulevard



FIGURE 15, NODE 3: LAND USE



### Node 3: Existing Land Use

The existing land use pattern of Node 3 illustrates a concentrated retail area along Noble Road between Orchard Road and Roanoke Road, with residential and public/institutional uses on either side of this retail core. The retail core is relatively strong, containing a combination of national retailers (CVS Pharmacy) and local stores and service businesses (photos A, B & C). The street wall of the buildings within the retail core creates an attractive pedestrian scale in most of the Node. However, it should be noted that several vacant storefronts exist in the older, multi-tenant commercial buildings. Also, the northern edge of the retail core is defined by a vacant lot, currently maintained as open space as an interim use (photo D) Thus, while this Node is relatively attractive and appears vital, the presence of the vacant storefronts suggests that business climate is not robust.

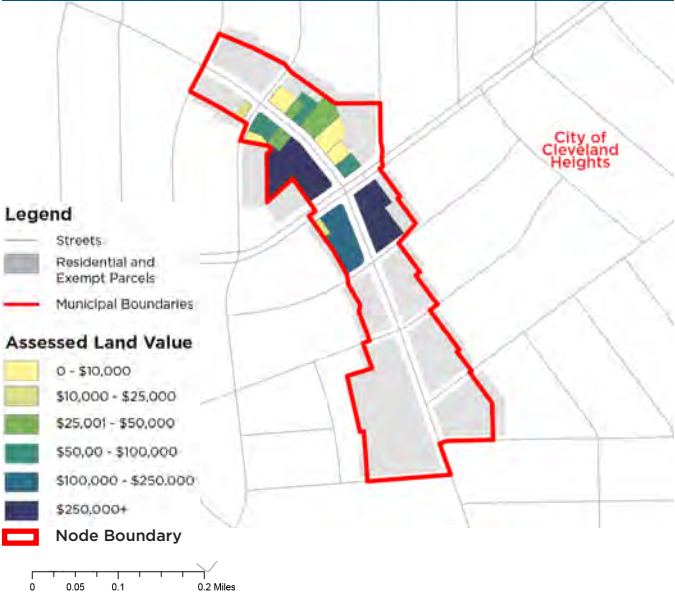
The mix of residential and commercial uses in the Noble/Monticello Node illustrates the mixed use nature of the Corridor. Node 3 contains a total of 95 buildings, 74 of which are classified as residential. The high proportion of residential apartment buildings (photo E) within this Node emphasizes how the image and

	Sq. Ft.	# of Parcels	Acres	
S.F. RESIDENTIAL	407,167	57	9.35	36%
APARTMENT	338,196	21	7.76	30%
RETAIL	219,116	10	5.03	19%
RELIGIOUS	105,914	1	2.43	9%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	23,433	3	0.54	2%
PARKING	21,835	2	0.50	2%
GOVERNMENT OFFICE	8,801	1	0.20	1%
LOCAL OFFICE	8,747	2	0.20	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,133,210</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

	Sq.Ft.	# of Parcels	
LIGHT INDUSTRY	70,939	10	42.59%
LOCAL OFFICE	3,818	2	2.29%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	11,207	2	6.73%
RETAIL	80,587	28	48.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,552</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

identity of the Corridor is defined by both the commercial nodes and the residential buildings located between the nodes. The relationship between the commercial and residential uses is symbiotic, with the residential buildings providing customers for the businesses and the businesses providing an amenity for the residents of these buildings.

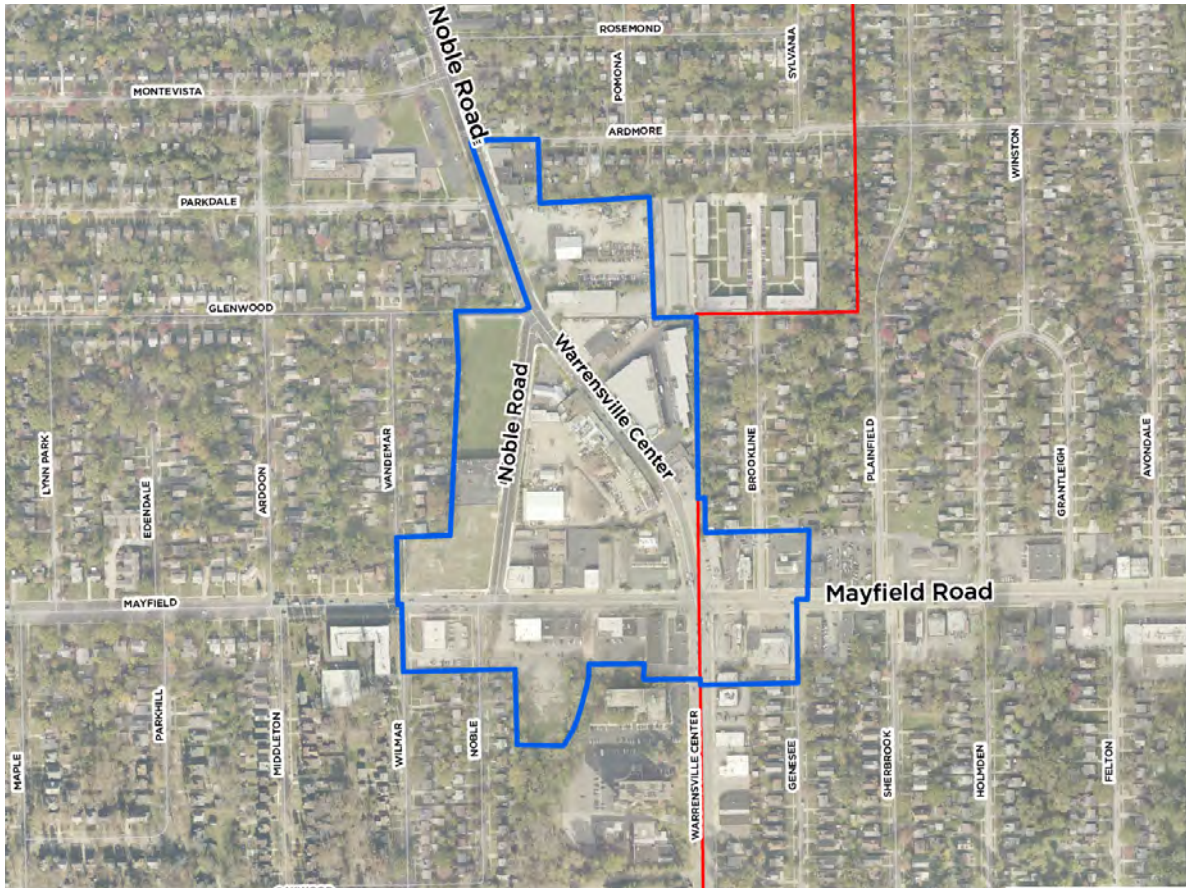
**FIGURE 16, NODE 3:  
NON-RESIDENTIAL ASSESSED VALUE**



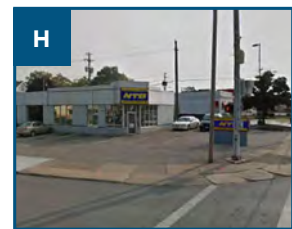
### Node 3: Assessed Value

Figure 16 illustrates the pattern of assessed value within the Node, with residential parcels excluded to focus on the commercial property. This figure illustrates that the higher value properties are located on the corner of Noble and Monticello, where higher visibility from bypassing traffic creates stronger business opportunities. Assessed values to the north of the intersection, occupied by a small-scale multi-tenant building, is clearly weaker. Increasing business activity beyond the key intersections along Noble Road is necessary to create a vital corridor.

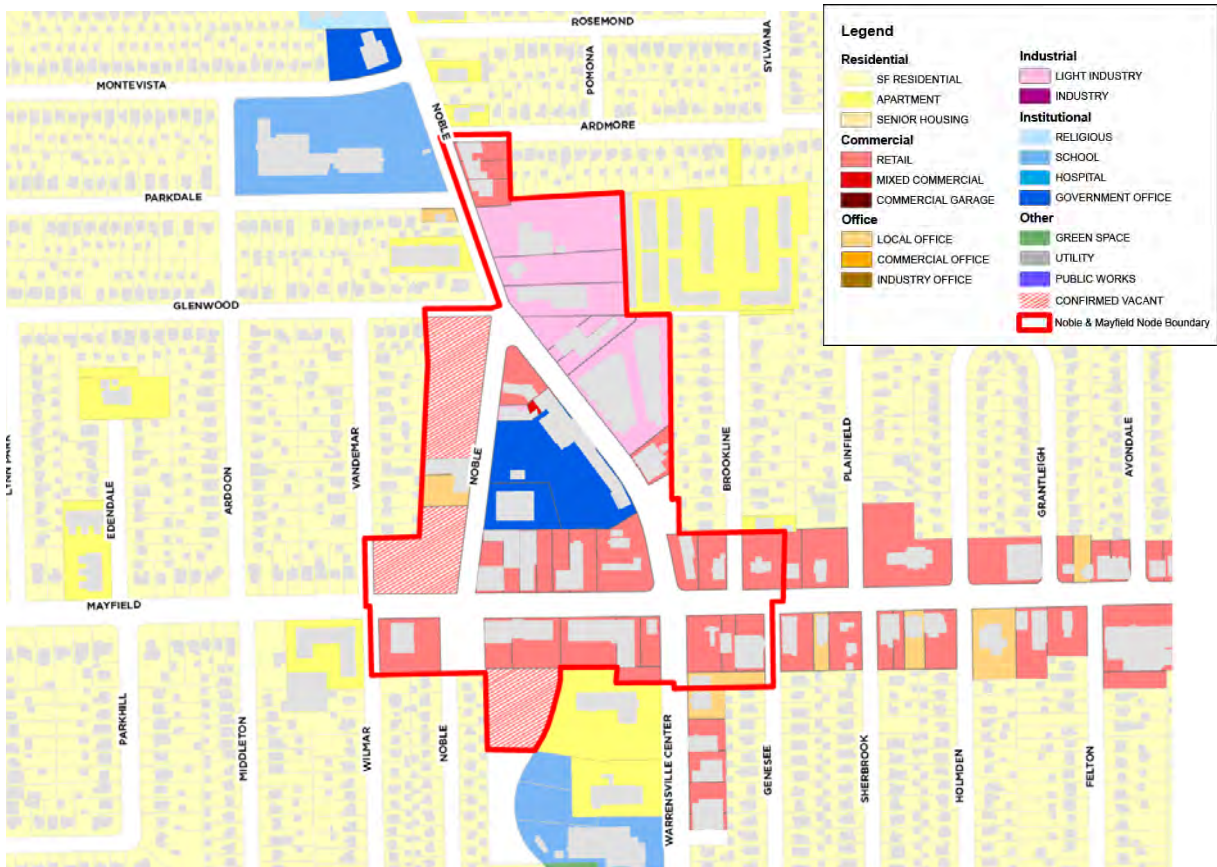
# Node 4: Noble Road, Mayfield Road & Warrensville Center Road



**FIGURE 17, NODE 4: NOBLE/MAYFIELD/WARRENSVILLE AERIAL**



*Images showing existing conditions in Node 4: Noble Road and Mayfield Road*



**FIGURE 18, NODE 4: EXISTING LAND USE MAP**   
North

### Node 4: Existing Land Use

Node 4 is the largest of the four designated nodes with an area large enough to constitute a district rather than a linear node. The area east of Warrensville Center Road is located within the City of South Euclid, while the remainder of the Node is located within Cleveland Heights.

As with the other three Nodes, this Node contains a mix of uses, but a mix unlike the other nodes. The Noble/Mayfield Node contains a significant proportion of light industry and heavy commercial uses, such as automobile repair. Some of the original development in the area was light industrial (photo A). Some recent new development has reinforced this quasi-industrial function, such as the Public Storage facility and the City’s public works yard (photo B). Two key vacant parcels exist, the parcel at the corner of Noble Road and Mayfield (photo C) and the parcel to the north at Noble Road and Glenwood (photo D).

	Sq.Ft.	# of Parcels	Acres	
RETAIL	658,981	36	15.13	33.5%
LIGHT INDUSTRY	427,639	10	9.82	21.7%
APARTMENT	328,278	3	7.54	16.7%
S.F. RESIDENTIAL	296,534	39	6.81	15.1%
PARKING	121,122	5	2.78	6.2%
LOCAL OFFICE	68,772	6	1.58	3.5%
MIXED COMMERCIAL	67,564	2	1.55	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,968,890</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

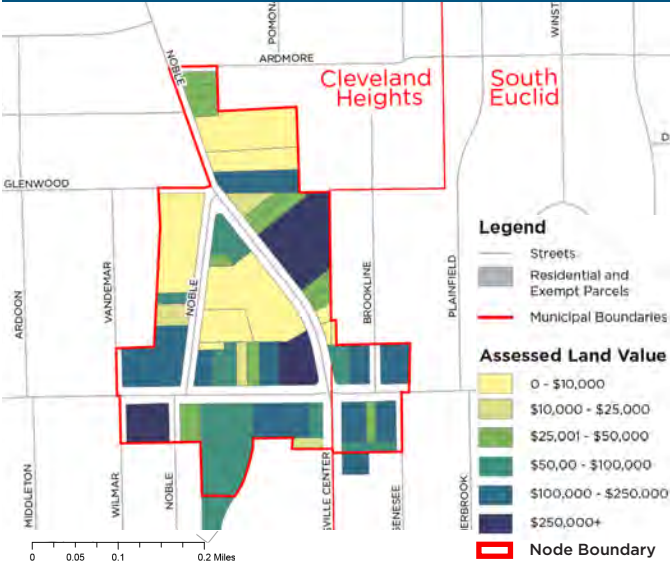
	Sq.Ft.	# of Parcels	
LOCAL OFFICE	24,510	1	33.1%
LIGHT INDUSTRY	5,991	9	8.1%
RETAIL	42,277	21	57.1%
UTILITY	1,325	3	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,102</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Development along Mayfield Road is largely underutilized. The area east of Warrensville Center contains uses that range from highly desirable (Fifth Third Bank) to borderline blighted (vacant building; photo G).

Overall, this Node represents the area with the most redevelopment/reinvestment potential. Mayfield Road is the strongest arterial road intersecting with Noble Road from the perspective of traffic volume (22,000 ADT) and business exposure. Noble Elementary School and the Noble Neighborhood Library are located immediately to the north. It is also located at the south end of the Corridor, where property values and household incomes are higher. There is also the opportunity to assemble a large redevelopment parcel that could accommodate a critical mass of retail as well as potentially compatible residential units. The two vacant parcels could be combined with the City's public works yard, which should be viewed as a redevelopment site. Obsolete commercial buildings along Mayfield could also be added to this new site, along with older industrial buildings to create a redevelopment parcel of considerable size as well as one with exposure to multiple streets.

This said, attracting quality redevelopment is likely to be a challenge. In discussions with commercial brokers representing sellers of property within the Node, little confidence was expressed for the prospect of attracting Class A retailers.

**FIGURE 19, NODE 4: NON-RESIDENTIAL ASSESSED VALUE**



### Node 4: Assessed Value

Figure 19 shows that the four most prominent commercial uses have the highest assessed value. These uses are Fifth Third Bank, BP Gas Station, Auto Zone and Public Storage. While three of the four uses are probably not how local residents would like the area defined, they are clearly well located in terms of market positioning. These uses do not necessarily prevent the attraction of other more desirable uses and should be viewed as strengths to build on. Most of the other uses have values that would allow them to be assembled into a redevelopment site, under optimal circumstances.



# Summary of Findings and Observations

The Noble Road Corridor serves as the focal point for the north of Mayfield portion of Cleveland Heights, and as such, defines the surrounding neighborhoods. These surrounding neighborhoods have many fine qualities, including good quality housing stock, affordable home prices, and good schools and parks. Equally important is the effective organization of the community, both governmental and civic. The City of Cleveland Heights is very engaged in promoting the well-being of this part of the City and has effective policies and programs to carry out this goal. In addition, residents of these neighborhoods are actively involved in taking steps to maintain a strong quality of life in the area.

The Noble Road Corridor Plan was undertaken to strengthen the commercial nodes along the corridor to serve as a stronger asset for the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Thus, the intent of corridor improvement is not only to improve the corridor itself, but to also strengthen the surrounding residential neighborhoods. This Existing Conditions Report focuses on conditions within the corridor, but also assesses the relationship between the Corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods.

To some degree, the Noble Road Corridor is a reflection of the surrounding neighborhoods. The commercial nodes are, for the most part, well-functioning and provide a range of goods and services for the area. The buildings are well maintained and do not exhibit deterioration or signs of neglect. There are a number of quality businesses within the nodes. Community-based beautification efforts in the form of flower planting in containers and in-ground beds have enhanced the commercial nodes, which indicate that the community cares for the appearance of the area. Like the commercial nodes along the corridor, buildings within the adjacent residential neighborhoods are attractive and well maintained. The neighborhoods show no obvious signs of deterioration or distress.

While both the commercial nodes and residential neighborhoods are well maintained and display no obvious signs of distress, a closer look at underlying conditions suggests that improvement is needed to reverse some negative trends. One such condition is declining property values. Camiros has been told by many stakeholders and interviewees that property values in the north of Mayfield area have been in decline for many years. By looking at houses for sale in the area on websites, one can see that home values are low as compared to the quality of the housing stock being offered. These home prices are far below the current cost of production or replacement.

Values for commercial property, including apartment buildings, tend to be based on income rather than qualitative factors and the value for commercial properties are also low. One measure of value relative to income is the capitalization rate, or “cap rate,” which is derived by dividing the property’s the annual income by its market value. The higher the cap rate, the greater the income produced relative to market value. High cap rates tend to exist in locations where property values are declining. The higher rate of income produced offsets the decline in market value for investors. Cap rates for income property along

the Corridor tend to be higher than properties in high demand areas. Cap rates for apartment buildings in areas of highest demand tend to be in the 5% - 6% range. Apartment buildings currently for sale along Noble Road in Cleveland Heights have cap rates in the range of 8% to 12%. Apartment buildings for sale in the portion of the study area located in East Cleveland have cap rates in the range of 14% to 17%. The same dynamic would apply to values for retail/commercial space.

Another sign of distress is vacant buildings or land. Within each of the commercial nodes there are several vacant storefronts/buildings that indicate low demand for space. Similarly, there are a few vacant lots within well-established neighborhoods, which resulted from the demolition of deteriorated houses. Since the cost of production is higher than current market values, there is no demand for these lots given existing conditions. Thus, both the commercial nodes and the residential neighborhoods are affected by vacant property due to low market demand.

The “mega-trend” causing weak market demand within the study area is the long-term loss of jobs within the Cleveland region, which resulted in declining population. This economic dislocation has affected many other large industrial cities such as Buffalo and Detroit and to a lesser extent, Chicago. This mega-trend is finally bottoming out, with stabilization and growth likely on the horizon.

The best way to summarize the key findings of the existing conditions analysis is to list both the assets/opportunities and the challenges affecting the study area, as provided below.

## **Assets/Opportunities**

**Stable Conditions.** The most important asset is the stability of the area. As discussed, there is little or no deterioration or blight to address within the study area. Because of this, efforts can be focused on strengthening and improving the area.

**Strong Stakeholders.** The reason for the stability of the area is the work of strong and effective stakeholders. These stakeholders include the City of Cleveland Heights and the City of East Cleveland, whose policies and programs have done much to stabilize the area. Both cities have “point of sale” programs that have been very effective in limiting building deterioration. East Cleveland has had to cope with more difficult challenges than Cleveland Heights in addressing deterioration, but East Cleveland is poised to be an effective partner in improving the Noble Corridor. In addition to units of government, the non-profit sector has also contributed to the stability of the area. FutureHeights, a non-profit community development organization, has a key role in working across municipal boundaries to address issues common to all communities in the area. Resident groups, most notably Noble Neighbors, is very active in organizing residents to partner with local government and non-profits to address issues facing the area.

**Noble Road is a Collector Street.** Noble Road is important to the movement of people within the broader area. Local residents use Noble Road to connect to Euclid Avenue, Monticello Boulevard, and Mayfield Road. There is also bus transit along Noble Road, providing connections to the region. Elevating the transportation function of Noble Road as a multi-modal corridor may represent an opportunity to increase its importance to the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Housing Quality.** High quality homes can be purchased in the area for a modest price. This creates a strong incentive for homeowners to commit to neighborhood improvement to maximize their investment.

**Welcoming Diversity.** Demographic trends have shown that communities in the area will become highly diverse in future decades. Successful communities will be those that manage this transition effectively. Both local government and residents in the area accept this trend and welcome the diversity.

**Retail Anchors.** While many residents interviewed have expressed disappointment in the mix of businesses within the commercial nodes, there are important retail anchors to build upon. The national retailers and service providers existing in the nodes include CVS Pharmacy, Save-A-Lot, Fifth Third Bank, and Auto Zone. Even Public Storage, which is a quality self-storage facility, should be viewed as an asset. The local merchants within the nodes benefit from the business these uses generate.

**Residential Use.** The combination of commercial and residential (multi-family) along the corridor creates a mixed-use setting. Accentuating the residential component represents an opportunity to increase activity along the corridor and expand the base of customers. Well-designed new residential development, and renovation of existing buildings, would also enhance the appearance of the corridor. Corridor improvement will require enhancement of both the commercial and residential components, so involving residential properties in the improvement process should be part of the strategy.

## Challenges

**Lack of Positive Brand.** Noble Road does not project a positive visual image. Its appearance is a bit “tired” and “old.” Residents and stakeholders report that the negative optics associated with Noble Road is a barrier to investment and community improvement.

**Creeping Disinvestment.** Lower rates of investment in local property have existed for many years throughout the area. However, disinvestment has been more pronounced in the northern part of the corridor. While stabilization efforts have prevented blight from taking hold, there is a clear need to counteract this creeping disinvestment from north to south.



**Intergovernmental Cooperation.** Successful corridor improvement will require cooperation between municipalities, particularly the Cities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights. The two communities share common interests in seeing corridor improvement take hold and will need to partner together to form an action agenda. Cleveland Heights has more financial capacity, due to a stronger tax base, and may need to take on more responsibility in this partnership.

**Activity Generators.** One of the hallmarks of successful commercial districts is a high level of activity. These are places where people want to be and spend time in. Retail uses, including eating and drinking establishments, are key activity generators, but other uses can play an important role. Public uses, including active parks and open spaces that are programmed for various events, can also generate activity. Transit, including multi-modal systems, can bring people to the area. The Noble Corridor suffers from a lack of activity, from a lack of uses and places that attract people. Since the Noble Corridor is not exclusively a commercial district, adding non-retail activity generators could be a way to increase vitality.



*Farmer's markets can be very effective special events to generate activity*

**Business District Organization.** A key factor in successful urban business districts is effective organization of businesses and property owners into an entity that can promote the district. A major competitor for convenience and leisure expenditures is the Cedar Lee Business District in Cleveland Heights. This business district benefits from the Special Improvement District created there to generate funds through a tax surcharge to enhance the area and engage in marketing/advertising. It should be noted that the City of Cleveland Heights plays an active role in the District, and may contribute funds. None of the four nodes within the Noble Corridor have created a special improvement district to enable coordinated actions to strengthen the business climate. The Cedar Lee Business District is successful and the burden of the tax surcharge to fund the District's operations is relatively easy to bear. In the commercial nodes along Noble Corridor, where many businesses are struggling, the burden of a tax surcharge is more challenging.



*The Cedar Lee Business District webpage is a starting point for business district promotion.*

**Corridor Appearance.** This topic is different from the **corridor brand** topic, discussed above. The brand can be comprised of many elements, including uses, experiences, and economics. **Corridor appearance** is purely visual. The Noble Corridor’s appearance is inferior to other urban business districts located in the broader area, such as the Cedar Lee Business District. Several factors contribute to Noble Road’s lackluster appearance. First and foremost, the absence of a special improvement district to fund street, sidewalk, and streetscape improvements/maintenance. Coordinated façade renovation is also needed. The Cedar Lee District has a plan for parking, including using Lee Road for on-street parking. Along Noble Road, the right-of-way area is not programmed to improve business activity, such as by providing on-street parking except in a few locations.



*Cedar Road; turn lanes, parking & plantings*



*Cedar Road; facades & streetscape*



*Noble Road; typical condition*

## Summary

The Noble Corridor displays a number of strengths and assets along with its challenges. The relative stability of the area provides a foundation upon which significant improvement can take place. The keys to improving the Noble Road Corridor are: 1) defining the right strategy; and 2) gaining a full consensus and commitment on the part of all stakeholders to implement this strategy. The consensus must include the City of East Cleveland and the City of Cleveland Heights, along with neighborhood groups such as Noble Neighbors. Acting together, these stakeholder can achieve a level of improvement in the Noble Corridor needed to bolster the adjacent residential neighborhoods.