

American Planning Association *Great*

Places in America 2011
Questionnaire for Submission

As part of the American Planning Association's *Great Places in America* program, we are requesting your help in gathering additional information on the suggested place in your community. **We strongly encourage planners, city officials, business leaders, and important civic group leaders to collaborate in completing this questionnaire.** It is important that you provide very specific and detailed information, as the responses to this questionnaire will not only inform the selection of the 2011 designees, but also will be used to prepare a news release and a profile on APA's website should your place be selected for designation.

As a guide, we are suggesting that the responses to the first six questions be about 3,000-6,000 words in total. Any supporting supplemental material should be sent to us on a CD formatted as a Word document, PDF, or JPG.

In addition, we need to have a signed permission-to-use form for each individual photo provided with the suggested place. Please see the separate form attached. All photos sent should be high resolution, i.e. as 300 dpi or 600KB-1.2MB files. Maps of areas should be sent as TIFF files, also at a resolution of 300 dpi.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Denny Johnson at djohnson@planning.org.

Please submit your completed questionnaire to Denny Johnson, Public Affairs Coordinator, at djohnson@planning.org. Send supplemental materials on a CD to:

American Planning Association
Attn: Denny Johnson, Public Affairs Coordinator
1030 15th Street N.W.,
Suite 750W
Washington, DC 20005-1503

1.0 Location, physical features, design, characteristics, and on-going maintenance. (Suggested word length for Section 1.0 responses: 500-1000 words total.)

1.1 Size of the designated place (number of blocks for streets; square area for neighborhoods and public spaces).
240 acres, over 60 square blocks.

1.2 Describe the special physical, geographical, or other distinguishing features or attributes of the area and that contribute to the area's uniqueness and strong sense of place. Please be specific.

The area now known as Highland Park neighborhood, conveniently located less than two miles south of downtown Birmingham, was originally densely forested. It began to be developed when its central artery, Highland Avenue, was carved out by the Elyton Land Company, the original developer of the city of Birmingham, through the hilly contours of the land at the base of Red

Mountain to make way for a streetcar line to the nearby resort of Lakeview Park. It winds through the entire length of the neighborhood overlooking three parks nestled into its curves, which are below street level with steep hillsides that slope down to the bottom, allowing anyone on Highland Avenue to view the parks from above. The curvilinear nature of the avenue, which avoids the grid pattern so prevalent in many cities, gives rise to many streets which are not straight (including two characteristic ‘crescents,’ Milner and Lakeview, which are true crescents), and which add to the neighborhood’s visual appeal. Many of these streets are variously sloped, enabling people driving, cycling, or walking around the neighborhood to have many fine views and vistas. The area still has a thick tree cover which is visually pleasing, provides a heat shield, and encourages a great deal of outdoor activity.

1.3 How well maintained and safe is the place? For example, if there are vacant lots, are they kept clean and well groomed?

The neighborhood is well maintained by the city and by its residents. The neighborhood email list acts as a neighborhood watch, distributes any alerts from the city or county, and also acts a forum to locate lost and found pets and disseminate important information.. Several local crimes in surrounding neighborhoods have been solved recently with citizen input. We have regular contact with the Southside Precinct and our regular beat officers.

1.4 Describe the natural and man-made amenities of the place, such as public art, street furniture, recreational facilities, special landscaping, views, and so forth.

Natural amenities: Three public parks along Highland Avenue located below street level, with WPA-era original stone walkways and walls. They were originally slated for development but were later sold by Elyton Land Company to the city of Birmingham in 1913-1914.

Caldwell Park: Renovated in 2007, to ADA specifications, the original stone in the walkways was recycled and reused in the park renovation. Benches, trash cans, and landscaping were added.

Rhodes Park: Unique historic stone aggregate walls are inlaid with Moravian tile from the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works in Doylestown, PA. (photo of tile on CD) (buckscounty.org) The park was restored by the neighborhood association in 1996, which raised over \$150,000 in this effort. The central concrete flower bed, which was buried under dirt, was replaced, together with concrete benches (photo on CD). A wrought- iron ornamental urn was donated by a local law firm for the center of the bed. (photo on CD) The east and west banks were replanted with native species, and the stone walkways were cleaned and repaired. Wrought-iron benches were donated by *The Birmingham News* and dedicated to Rufus Rhodes, one of its founders. (photo on CD)

Rushton Park: The park has a large children’s play area restored by the neighborhood after being damaged by a falling tree, a basketball hoop at the south end of the park, and wrought-iron picnic tables (photo on CD), benches, and trash cans added by the neighborhood. The park has received a number of restoration and beautification awards (see list on CD).

Highland Avenue: See also #1.2. A raised median, bulbouts, and diagonal parking slots were added in the 1970s (See #4.2). It is distinguished by three sets of unique stone steps connecting it to the street above which were added in 1913-14 and which are all on the National Register.

Public Art: There is a modern sculpture in front of St. Vincent’s Hospital as well as an outside chapel. (See photos on CD). There are two large monuments in Rushton Park, a large granite monolith with a bronze sculpture, and a red granite monument at the south end of the park with an art deco feel. (Photos on CD)

Street furniture: Wrought-iron benches and trash cans were installed by the neighborhood along Highland Avenue and in the parks, and ornamental/protective wrought-iron bollards were added to all three parks. (See photo #051 sent 2/24/11 and see photos of Rhodes Park on CD).

Highland Park celebrates Birmingham’s industrial history by using beautiful wrought-iron signage to decorate the main entry points into the neighborhood (see above). We also designed

five wrought-iron signs using Arts & Crafts fonts designating each of our historic districts. (Photo of Rhodes Park/Highland Avenue sign on CD)

Special Landscaping: There is an award-winning streetscape down Highland Avenue. (See list of awards on CD). A special city crew is assigned to maintain it. It also has sprinklers.

Views: There are many views and vistas throughout the neighborhood, many of them because of the hilly terrain. Photos of the following views are on the CD:

View of the median down Highland Boulevard with an unbroken row of crape myrtles (many planted by the NA). This treescape received a Birmingham Tree Commission award (see list of awards on CD).

View of Highland Golf Course (an historic course dating back to 1903), with a small lake (once the Lakeview Park resort), and hilly terrain, left natural for wildlife.

View across Rushton Park to the Independent Presbyterian Church, which rises like a great English cathedral with its beautiful aged stone and stained glass windows (photo sent March 1).

Aerial view across city looking east, with part of Highland Park in the foreground. (photo on CD). There are other spectacular views e.g. from the 7th floor of St. Vincent's Hospital North Tower, and from the ten-story condominiums Park Tower, the Claridge, and Hanover Place.

Recreational facilities: All three parks allow the visitor to walk and enjoy nature while in an urban setting. They are used for walking, running, Frisbee throwing, exercising dogs, sunbathing, and socializing. as well as for various festivals and events (Do Dah Day, Alabama Symphony Sounds for Summer, c. 2001-2009, etc.). Rhodes Park is used for smaller events such as weddings, and Caldwell Park is the venue for bigger events, and is also adjacent to the Virginia Sanford Theatre which is one the city's oldest and continually operating stages for both local and nationally acclaimed actors. There is also a swimming pool in Underwood Park, just outside our boundary.

2.0 Notable, memorable, and defining characteristics.

Please elaborate on your response to Question 2 in the preliminary suggestion for streets and neighborhoods or Question 3 for public spaces.

2.1 Has this neighborhood, street, or public space been a trendsetter for the community, city, region, or state? If so, describe how, including examples.

Highland Park has been an exceptional neighborhood right from the beginning when it was one of the earliest residential neighborhoods to be developed south of the city center. The unique character of Highland Avenue and the parks along it, with Highland Golf Course and Racquet Club at its eastern end, and entertainment districts to the west and north, together with the award-winning streetscape that runs along almost its entire length, cause Highland Park to stand out above other historic neighborhoods in Birmingham. (See edited (for length) comments from residents – #2.3, 2.4 – with unedited comments in Addendum at end of application)

---Highland Park was the first neighborhood in the city to have its main thoroughfare designed around the contours of the terrain and not on the more usual grid pattern.

---Highland Park was where many of the early industrialists, businessmen, leaders, and philanthropist built their homes once they moved away from the oppressive center.

---Highland Avenue benefited from large-scale beautification efforts under Mayor George Seibels in the 1970s and, as a result, became the first example of traffic-calming in the city with single lanes, a raised landscaped median, widened sidewalks, bulbouts, street trees, and furniture.

---We also set the standard for neighborhood entry signs by designing them in wrought-iron with gold lettering. This design was adopted by several other neighborhoods. (See photo #051 sent 2/24/11).

---Highland Park has also led the way in protecting single-family residential buildings with a large-scale downzoning effort involving 50 properties, and in fighting zoning challenges which threatened its largely residential character. (See #4.4)

---Highland Park has hosted Do Dah Day street festival since 1979. It is the largest single-day event in the state of Alabama.
---Highland Park was the first neighborhood in the city to develop a neighborhood long-range plan, involving both regulatory and nonregulatory aspects.
---And it is the first entity to achieve enactment of a Smart or Form-based code both in the city of Birmingham and in Jefferson County, and one of few entities statewide.

2.2 Have there been any notable "firsts" to take place in the neighborhood, on the street, or in the public space? If yes, please describe.

Highland Park:

---is the site of the first streetcar line in the city built to develop a resort area to which locals could escape from the unhealthy air and heat associated with early Birmingham's industrial activity.
--- had one of the first tourist attractions in the city, Lakeview Park, at the eastern end of Highland Avenue (now Highland Golf Course).
---is one of the oldest and most intact neighborhoods in the city
---- was the first neighborhood to have its main thoroughfare designed around the contours of the local terrain and not on a grid pattern.
--- has the oldest golf course in the state and the only one with a view of the city skyline.
---- is the site of the first example of traffic-calming in the city. (See #2.1.)
--- was the recipient of the first ever award from the Birmingham Historical Society for a park restoration (Rhodes Park). (See list of awards on CD.)
---- was the first neighborhood in Birmingham to do a detailed long-range plan.
---- was the first organization of any kind to get a form-based or Smart code passed into law in the city of Birmingham or in Jefferson County, and one of only a few in the state.

Postscript: The very first football game (February 22, 1893) between Alabama and Auburn Universities (which is one of the nation's great rivalries) was played a few yards outside Highland Park's north-east boundary. An historic marker can be seen on the site. (*Wikipedia, Iron Bowl*)

2.3 Provide two or three personal stories or anecdotes that illustrate what sets the suggested neighborhood, street, or public space apart from other places, whether in the same city, region, or state as the candidate area. Include or cite newspaper articles if applicable.

These stories are from Highland Park residents and one former resident:

Vickie B.: I remember walking to UAB classes, taking our grandchildren to play in Rushton Park, seeing a man skate down Highland Avenue with a green parrot on one hand and a red parrot on the other, seeing a dog pull a man on a sled in the snow... also, having a heart attack during a walk and having a neighbor take me to the ER.

Elizabeth R.: What makes Highland Park stand out to me is the proximity to the city while maintaining an old-style suburban neighborhood feel... its diversity of people, races, and levels of income, which makes it very 'urban' in my opinion... One of the things that makes it different than modern suburbia, to me, is that there is a true sense of community. Neighbors watch out for each other.

Linda N. I remember the bagpiper practicing on the golf course, and how I'd rush out to follow him when I heard him from my apartment windows.

Leah S. I love the shady trees that hang over the sidewalk ... I love the calming feeling of green... I love that the streets aren't in a grid but meandering. I have always felt a connection to

this neighborhood... I was born here, attended high school here, moved back here in 1985. As I think on this, I can see that the neighborhood is in my very marrow.

2.4 Describe the elements that help make the neighborhood, street, or public space attractive to people. What draws people—whether visitors, residents, or workers—to the place (i.e. ground-level retail, restaurants, storefronts, etc.)?

You will see from these comments from residents that walkability, convenience, affordability, friendliness, sense of community, open public spaces, beauty, connection to others, etc. are what draw people—and will continue to draw people—to this neighborhood.

Bob B.: Highland Park's main appeal is walkability. From our house we can walk to shops, restaurants, and grocery stores in four different neighborhoods. When we were actively contemplating a move to the West Coast, we were hard-pressed to find properties that have the high degree of walkability we enjoy where we live now.

Vickie B: The people here are very friendly....On our walks we can smile and speak to people and they smile and speak back... We were attracted to this area because of the convenience, beautiful neighborhood, and economical housing costs. The neighborhood has a diversity of housing pricing which enables all ages and incomes to live side by side in harmony.

Scott T: We stay because of the relationships and community we have here...People in other neighborhoods fill this need by joining clubs and organizations and driving places. All we have to do is walk to the park.

Betsy C.: Highland Park neighborhood is a jewel for anyone who enjoys parks, golf courses, theatre, art fairs, restaurants, and concerts.

Eve P: We chose Highland Park 22 years ago for many reasons. The varied architectural styles, front porches, and sidewalks all appealed to us. But mostly, we were looking for an urban neighborhood with a diverse economic and ethnic population. Our neighborhood is like a diverse Mayberry. Porch sitting is a verb on our street. When we sit on our porch, we expect to be joined by our neighbors. Living far away from family, our neighbors have become our family. We have a neighborhood supper club, and we have neighborhood block parties one or two times per year.

2.5 List three specific and definable characteristics that distinguish the neighborhood, street or public space from other neighborhoods, streets, or places in the community. What makes your suggested place different and *memorable* from other places in your community.

Walkability and accessibility. The broad inviting thoroughfare of Highland Avenue with its necklace of three below-grade parks nestled into its curves, its streetscape, and landscaped median draws residents and nonresidents alike to stroll, walk their dogs, jog or lounge or attend events in the parks.

Diversity. The mix of housing types from high rise to midrise to courtyard apartments to condos and single-family homes and a 22 different historic home styles leads to an attractive degree of diversity among residents of all kinds (race, ethnicity, economic, age, education).

Urban Oasis: It has a unique balance between denser urban uses and abundant civic open space. You can turn off a busy street on either side or end of the neighborhood and immediately find yourself in a tree-lined urban oasis.

2.6 How does the place reflect local culture or flavor?

Highland Park fosters a strong sense of place through its enduring and distinctive public spaces—the neighborhood parks and the streetscape, in particular—which make it a safe and wonderful place for pedestrians and bicyclists, and its proximity to the city center minimizes dependence on long commutes and automobile trips. The result is a place that attracts generation after generation of investment in the neighborhood, with a strong and committed group of leaders and high levels of community involvement.

3.0 Important leaders and community engagement.
(Suggested word length for Section 3.0 responses: 500-1000 words total.)

3.1 Who were the most influential persons in shaping the suggested neighborhood, street or public space? Please list and provide a short description of what they did, and the impact, changes, or outcomes that were a result of their efforts. Consider persons (distinguished or lesser known) such as elected officials, architects, designers, planners, developers, business people, community leaders, and citizen activists. Include or cite newspaper articles or other sources if applicable.

Henry Caldwell, president of Elyton Land Company, the original developer of Birmingham who, with Willis Milner, planned and laid out Highland Avenue. He was the third mayor of Birmingham briefly. Caldwell Park and Caldwell Avenue are named for him. He gave Highland Avenue its name. (“*History of Highland Avenue*” by W.J. Milner, included in “*Early Highland and the Magic City, 1884-1893*” by Lyn Johns, The Journal of the Birmingham Historical Society, Vol. VI, #2, July 1979.)

Willis J. Milner, COO of Elyton Land Company and a civil engineer who designed Highland Avenue (see article above) and platted the area to the south of the avenue, now the location of Milner Crescent and Milner Street, which are named after him, as is the Milner Heights ND.

John T. Milner, Willis’s brother, who supervised the construction of Highland Avenue.

Early prominent businessmen and industrialists who built homes on Highland Avenue, most of which are still standing. They have contributed to the lasting and distinctive character of Highland Park, e.g. James W. Donnelly, (industrialist, developer, and civic leader) who built the Donnelly House, now an event house. William James Rushton, for whom Rushton Park is named; Eugene Enslen, (president of the Jefferson Savings & Loan Association) who built the Enslen House (NR, 1975); Rufus N. Rhodes, (one of the original owners of *The Birmingham News*), for whom Rhodes Park is named and who built a mansion near the park (no longer standing); and A. B. and J. H. Loveman (brothers who owned Loveman’s, a major downtown department store), built the two mansions named for them (see photos submitted with first application).

Distinguished Birmingham architects responsible for many of the buildings built in Highland Park, at least two of them building their own houses in the neighborhood: e.g. William Weston, William Warren (built his house on Milner Street in 1922 and his family lived there for 70 years), Warren, Knight & Davis, Harry Wheelock, William Leslie Welton (master of Craftsman architecture), and Charles H. McCauley (built his house on Lakeview Crescent).

1970s: Mike Kirk, principal, Environmental Design Collaborative, Inc., designed and built the median and streetscape along Highland Avenue, and effectively kept it pedestrian friendly.

City Councilor Angi Proctor who was instrumental in the construction of the Highland Avenue Streetscape. Margaret Cotten, President of Highland Park NA, 1975-1978, prominent neighborhood leader and activist. She was a member of the Zoning Advisory Board for many years, and was noted for fighting for preservation in the neighborhood.

Alice Bowsher, architectural historian and preservationist, and former director of the Birmingham Historical Society, which fought for preservation in Birmingham before it was fashionable She researched and wrote the first application for a national district in Highland Park (the Rhodes Park National District in 1977, expanded to include Highland Avenue in 1982). Under her leadership the

Society prepared an extensive 70-page report, one of the first of its kind in Birmingham, entitled “*Southside-Highlands Report: Architectural and Historical Resources, Preservation Recommendations.*” (heaviestcorner.org) It was prepared for the City of Birmingham and the Alabama Historical Commission. It identified preservation priorities and threats to structures within the original area known as “South Highlands,” which the authors state “contained some of the finest residential, religious, and commercial properties in the city.”

Marjorie White, director, Birmingham Historical Society, 1976-present. Premier historian of the city of Birmingham. She has been a valuable resource in Highland Park’s ongoing preservation efforts and has encouraged us with a number of preservation awards (See list on CD). She also commissioned a survey of all the architectural styles in Birmingham (*A Guide to Architectural Styles from Birmingham Homes*) and was the coeditor of *Designs on Birmingham* (See #7.7 for details). For many years, the Society ran an annual bike ride to Highland Avenue, highlighting the history of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood residents who bought, lived in, and lovingly restored early mansions which had fallen into disrepair, having been variously used as doctor’s offices, a commune, the home of the Birmingham Ballet, a school for problem children, and apartments.

More recently, Councilor Valerie Abbott (Council representative for District 3, which includes Highland Park, member of the Birmingham Planning Commission, and chairman of the City Council Planning & Zoning Committee) who has supported Highland Park in all its zoning and preservation challenges; the Regional Planning Commission of Great Birmingham (which made it possible for us to do our long-range plan and facilitated the *Building Communities* grant); the Birmingham Planning Commission which supported and approved our long-range plan; the Alabama Historical Commission (which assisted with National Register applications and trying to save the Otto Marx mansion); and the Birmingham Historical Commission (which delayed the demolition of the Otto Marx mansion)

Philip Morris, an architectural writer, former executive editor, *Southern Living* and former editor-at-large, Southern Progress Corporation, who conducted tours through Highland Park to educate urban studies students to the challenges of an urban neighborhood.

Alison Glascock, president of the Highland Park NA, president of the Red Mountain Community, and member of the Citizens Advisory Board, who has led the neighborhood since 1998, during which time major zoning cases have been successfully fought, the Highland Park Local Historic District was implemented, and the Highland Park long-range plan was enacted.

3.2 What past or present neighborhood, business, civic or other groups have had a prominent or leading role within the suggested neighborhood, street or public space? Describe their role and contributions. Include specific examples.

Highland Park Neighborhood Association, 1975-2011

Highland Park Planning and Zoning Committee, 1995-2011

Highland Park Beautification Committee, 1995-2011

Also see #3.1 above for the role of the historic and planning commissions.

Rhodes Park received grants from Hill Crest Foundation, Meyer Foundation, St. Vincent’s Foundation, and Hugh Kaul Foundation for the restoration of the park from 1996 to 2006, as well as \$25,000 in state funds for historic parks.

**4.0 Role of planning and planners (past and present).
(Suggested word length for Section 4.0 responses: 500-1000 words total.)**

4.1 Provide a summary timeline of major events and decisions that contributed to development of the area – origin, transitions, planning decisions, etc.

1884, Subdivision of 1500-acre tract of land, purchased by the Elyton Land Company (ELC), south of city of Birmingham known as South Highlands begins, including the design and layout of Highland Avenue, (most significant thoroughfare in the city).

1885, Mule-drawn streetcar service begins along Highland Avenue leading to lot development and building of the first homes. The streetcars were electrified shortly thereafter.

1888, Oldest house (Queen Anne style) still standing built (See photo #0067 sent 3/1/11).

1880-1930, Early development of Highland Park takes place, in two phases.

1913-14, all 3 park properties sold to city of Birmingham by ELC.

Post-World War II, apartments built and houses turned into apartments to accommodate returning servicemen.

1961, City of Birmingham Zoning Ordinance, the first modern zoning guidelines enacted, which was extensively amended in 1991.

1994, City of Birmingham Local District Ordinance enacted, enabling a number of neighborhoods to establish local historic districts with design review guidelines.

2010, Highland Park Form-based Overlay Ordinance enacted into law.

4.2 Provide the date and principal author or planner of the earliest available plan that addresses or encompasses the suggested neighborhood, street, or public space. Describe any subsequent plans or planning-related initiatives affecting the suggested location. Please include a short discussion about their significance. Include important or interesting details if possible.

Early Development:

Elyton Land Company: Highland Park was planned from the beginning in 1884-85, one of two early neighborhoods to be developed on the south side of town. Highland Avenue was its central feature, with first mansions built along the avenue, then smaller houses being built on the arteries branching out from it. It was developed by the Elyton Land Company, the company that developed the city of Birmingham.

Henry M. Caldwell was president of the company (1875-1895), its second and longest serving president. He worked with Willis C. Milner, the COO and a civil engineer, to plan and design Highland Avenue, and Milner's brother, John T. Milner, then engineered the road. Under his direction, the area which is now Highland Park and the Highland Park Golf Course (then Lakeview Park, a resort) was developed and the long, winding boulevard, to which he gave the name Highland Avenue, was designed and constructed.

The Olmstead Brothers came up with a comprehensive plan for our parks in 1925, but it was deemed too expensive and was never implemented. (See *Designs on Birmingham*, #7.7)

The easternmost part of Highland Park, the Country Club district, was later developed by Robert Jemison, a major developer of early Birmingham.

Planning-related initiatives

1975 – Highland Avenue, Environmental Design Collaborative, Inc. (Mike Kirk, principal) provided landscaping, irrigation, lighting, and other site amenities (Cost \$1,500,000.00) as part of Mayor George Seibels' beautification and infrastructure improvement initiative.

The EDI also developed a master plan for Caldwell, Rhodes, and Rushton Parks.

1980 – EDI designed Highland Avenue Street Tree Plan. (Cost \$200,000)

2006-2010 – Highland Park Long-Range Plan developed. The regulatory portion, the Neighborhood Form-Based Overlay District, was enacted into law in May 2010 by the Birmingham City Council.

4.3 What role have the local planning department or city officials played in the development of the suggested neighborhood, street, or public space?

Every member of the city's Planning Division has played an integral part in all our planning and zoning efforts for the past ten years or more. They gave permission for our downzoning initiative and forgave many of the usual fees; the director of the Planning, Engineering & Permits Department gave permission for the long-range plan to go forward. From then on, the entire city planning staff were involved until its completion. They drafted the Form-based Overlay ordinance, through its many drafts, and presented it to the planning commissions and to the City Council.

4.4 How have citizens been included and engaged in planning efforts or related initiatives or programs?

Downzoning initiative, Phases I & II, 1999 and 2000. Over 50 residents gave permission for their properties to be downzoned back to single-family.

Neighborhood long-range plan. Close to 200 residents and several developers completed surveys on the neighborhood and participated in community workshops and meetings.

Highland Park Planning & Zoning Committee initiated and implemented the long-range plan which developed the Neighborhood Form-Based Overlay District, which was enacted into law in May 2010 by the Birmingham City Council. It also meets with residents and developers on every zoning request and makes recommendations to the full neighborhood association.

Highland Park Beautification Committee has planted hundreds of trees, organized cleanup days, installed benches and trash cans along Highland Avenue and in the parks, coordinated graffiti cleanup, and much more.

Highland Park Design Review Committee reviews and recommends changes to the facades of buildings in the neighborhood to the downtown Design Review Committee.

4.5 Describe what current changes are underway and what effects are these changes having on the place? Describe any major obstacles that have been addressed or are currently being addressed by the community. Be specific and include examples if possible.

Because of its proximity to downtown Birmingham, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and popular commercial districts, the neighborhood continues to experience both higher density residential and commercial development pressures. Two new condominium buildings near Caldwell Park, in particular, signaled the growing threat of more intense development to the neighborhood's quality of life. The neighborhood responded to the development pressures by creating a long-range plan and form-based overlay district which together establish clear standards for new development that are consistent with the neighborhood's historic character and future goals. Another major challenge over the past 10-15 years has been protecting our residential zoning from efforts to change it to business or commercial zoning. One big zoning case, involving a single-family mansion, ended up at the Alabama Supreme Court, with the decision 5-1 in favor of the neighborhood (*Pollard et al. v. Unus Properties, LLC and City of Birmingham v. Unus Properties, LLC, 2004*).

5.0 History, early development, highlights from the past.
(Suggested word length for Section 5.0 responses: 500-1000 words total.)

5.1 List any local, state, national, historical, or other special designations or awards and the respective dates given in honor of the suggested neighborhood, street, or public space.

The five national districts in Highland Park are listed on the original application and the five complete applications are on the CD. They can be found on the websites of the Birmingham History Society and of the Alabama Historical Commission. All 10 other awards (5 for beautification/tree planting, 3 for preservation, 1 for landscape, and 1 for neighborhood of year)

presented to Highland Park were sent as part of the original application and are also included on the CD.

5.2 List and describe any current or upcoming anniversaries or annual events for the suggested place including dates and sponsors of such anniversaries or celebrations.

Caldwell, Rhodes, and Rushton Parks are very popular venues for organized events, such as fundraisers, reunions, weddings, and picnics, for people from all over the city and beyond.

Annual Events:

Caldwell Park: Every May Do Dah Day (20,000-40,000 attendance, raises money for the Humane Society and canine rescue groups. It is the largest single-day event in the state of Alabama. (dodahday.org); Also every May, Episcopal Place's Gumbo Gala raises funds for the facility's programs. It is a church-supported senior living facility for people with low income. (episcopalplace.org); The Bravo! Arts Festival featured a diverse line-up of local performing arts groups in Birmingham including the Alabama Ballet, the Alabama Symphony, Opera Birmingham, Birmingham Children's Theatre plus theatre organizations who used the theatre on a regular basis like Red Mountain Theatre and Norton Dill Productions. It had to be discontinued because of lack of funding.

Other events: e.g., AIDS Walk. CROP Hunger Walk. Alabama Hospice Services event are just some examples..

Rhodes Park: Also hosts Do Dah Day. A favorite location for weddings, and also Unity Church's annual Blessing of the Animals service.

Rushton Park: Hosts the Independent Presbyterian Church's spring and fall festivals for their day school and other children in Highland Park. Also popular for children's birthday parties and picnics and family reunions.

The *Vulcan/Mercedes marathon*, half-marathon and other races take place through the neighborhood every February.

6.0 How does the suggested Great Place exemplify planning best practices? (Suggested word length for Section 6.0 responses: 500-1000 words total.)

6.1 Provide a description of any planning tools used (i.e., historic preservation ordinances; specific-area plans; relevant sections of comprehensive plans; public investments or bond approvals; business improvement districts; tax increment financing; zoning districts or overlays; design guidelines; special-use guidance or ordinances; revitalization efforts; etc.) and a short discussion about the results these requirements have had in helping shape how the area has developed, changed, or evolved. Include specific dates and examples if possible.

Building on the rich planning legacy of Highland Park's visionary founders, neighborhood residents and city officials have used a wide range and evolving set of planning tools to manage change in the neighborhood over the past 40 years. Some of the key tools used are:

City Beautification and Infrastructure Improvement Initiative: Highland Park benefitted in 1975 and 1980 from city investment in the restoration of Highland Avenue's streetscape.

City Zoning Ordinance: In 1999-2000, the neighborhood worked with city officials to downzone 55 properties to single family uses.

Local Historic Districts: The City of Birmingham's local historic district ordinance, enacted in 1944, enabled several neighborhoods to form their own local design review districts, including Highland Park in 2003. These guidelines help protect the visual appearance of the neighborhood's many historic properties.

Highland Park Long-Range Plan and Form-Based Overlay: In 2008-2010, the Highland Park Neighborhood Association led the preparation of a long-range plan that updated land use policy

last changed in 1991 and resulted in a form-based overlay district that was adopted by the city Council in May 2010.

6.2 Describe what efforts are underway to make the street, neighborhood, or public space more environmentally sustainable, including having a smaller carbon footprint. Please include specific examples of practices or steps being proposed and taken.

The most essential sustainable aspect of Highland Park is its close-in location with short distances to jobs, health care, essential amenities such as grocery store and drug store, car repair, exercise and healthcare facilities, and entertainment.

Bicycle racks are present throughout the neighborhood and there are bicycle lanes nearby. Some residents walk and ride to work. We also have a bus service connecting us to downtown and to other neighborhoods and a commercial area to the east, with one route traveling the entire length of Highland Avenue.

Porous pavement to assist in water retention was used for the walkways when Caldwell Park was renovated in 2007.

We have planted over 2,500 trees and shrubs in the past 20 years, including 38 trees in the medians of two prominent streets in the past two years (the tree planting along Highland boulevard received an award from the Birmingham Tree Commission). Tree planting is an ongoing effort, using only drought resistant, low maintenance, native species, such as oaks and crape myrtles. The neighborhood is covered with trees which act as a heat shield.

When Rhodes Park was restored, a sprinkler system was installed. A sprinkler system is also currently being installed in Caldwell Park with an automatic control timed to come on in the cooler parts of the day. There are also sprinkler systems along Highland Avenue.

6.3 What 'Smart Growth' principles and practices are used, whether to increase density; reduce use of private cars and expand use of transit or non-motorized travel options; reuse existing buildings; encourage mixed-use development; or other measures? Include a short description including specific examples.

The Highland Park neighborhood's many enduring efforts to preserve its quality of life demonstrate the very best in Smart Growth principles and practices. For nearly 125 years, generations of residents, property owners, and city officials have kept the neighborhood a vibrant and dynamic place to live in the heart of Birmingham by reusing, restoring, and redeveloping buildings, parks, and streets. Examples of reuse abound in Highland Park including reinvestment in the hundreds of homes that compose the five National Historic Districts in the neighborhood, the three neighborhood parks, and the Highland Avenue streetscape.

Much of the neighborhood's success revolves around the diversity of land uses and housing choices found throughout Highland Park. The mix of uses occurs both vertically and horizontally, with local retail, restaurants, and services on the ground floor of several apartment buildings. Across the neighborhood, Highland Park offers a wide range of amenities (for full list, see #7.3)

Highland Park fosters a strong sense of place through its enduring and distinctive public spaces. The great public spaces and mix of uses in the neighborhood make Highland Park a safe and wonderful place for pedestrians and bicyclists, and the neighborhood's proximity to the city center minimizes dependence on long commutes and automobile trips. The result is a place that attracts generation after generation of investment in the neighborhood, with a strong and committed group of leaders and high levels of community involvement.

6.4 Is there affordable housing located within the borders of the suggested neighborhood or adjoining the suggested street? If yes, please describe type and amount of

affordable housing, and the plans, programs, regulations, ordinances, or other initiatives undertaken to bring about the affordable housing.

There is a wide range of purchase prices from \$42,500 to \$785,000 for condos and from \$110,000 to \$550,000 for single-family homes (These only reflect 2010 and 2011 sales). (See #7.2 for more details). Apartment, condo, and house rental rates range from about \$400 for a modest, one-bedroom apartment to as much as \$2,500 for a high-end house or condo. This affordability is often cited by residents as one reason they gravitated to Highland Park (See #2.3 and #2.4). (*Note:* The higher range of the housing prices has been lower since 2008, with the start of the economic depression). Highland Park has several Section 8 apartments for people with low income. There is also Episcopal Place which offers affordable housing for people with low incomes who are disabled and/or elderly, and a large turn of the century mansion that was restored by a church group for women recovering from substance abuse.

6.5 What planning principles are embodied by the designated street, neighborhood or public space, and how do these principles contribute to the area's outstanding qualities and characteristics.

Meaningful public participation, clearly defined goals and objectives, preserving the integrity of the natural and built environments, and recognizing the long-term consequence of present actions are *four key planning principles* that have shaped the Highland Park neighborhood.

Strong and active neighborhood participation based on clear goals has guided many of the most important public and private development decisions in Highland Park. The results of those efforts can be seen throughout the neighborhood, from the careful restoration of historic homes to the stewardship of its parks. In many respects, meaningful public participation has been the linchpin of the neighborhood's success.

Because the original neighborhood plan wrapped around the ridges and swales of Red Mountain's base and buildings terraced down the slopes, the preservation of the natural and built environments has also been a consistent theme throughout Highland Park's history. Today, concern over new development such as mid- and high-rise buildings focuses primarily on maintaining the delicate balance established decades ago. By consistently taking the time to understand the consequences of present actions, Highland Park has built a neighborhood with the timeless and memorable qualities of great public space in a beautiful natural setting.

6.6 Give a brief summary of the major or most significant planning lessons learned or involved with the neighborhood, street, or public space

The most significant planning lesson of the Highland Park neighborhood is the importance of a committed group of citizens to the long-term viability of an urban neighborhood. The most recent planning effort undertaken by the neighborhood, the Highland Park Neighborhood Plan, illustrates the community's creative response and determination to finding a new way to manage change. Rather than continuing to fight each new development proposal, the Neighborhood Association instead chose to establish new form-based standards that clearly identify an acceptable range of development that fit its historic character.

The neighborhood plan is just the latest of many actions the community has taken to ensure its long-term success. Time and again, the community, primarily through its neighborhood association, has been able to galvanize public involvement in the planning process. Without the steadfast commitment of neighborhood leaders across generations, Highland Park would not be the singular neighborhood it is today.

7.0 Additional information (useful, but not required).

To assist APA staff and contributing authors and editors in developing a technical-oriented report about places selected for designation, answers to the following to, and sources of information for the following questions:

7.1 For neighborhoods, population density and demographic breakdowns (using U.S. Bureau data)

The U.S. Census data for 2000 shows the following for Highland Park:

Total population: 5,906; minority 13.8%; Hispanic 1.5%; Under 18 7.1%, Over 65 11.4%.

Median Household income: \$31,000

Percent of homes owner-occupied 24.8%; renter-occupied 75.2%

Residents with high-school diploma 92.6%; with bachelor's degree 50%

Living in same house 5 years ago 31.6%; living in different house 5 years ago 68.4%

It is the most densely populated neighborhood in the state of Alabama.

7.2 For neighborhoods and streets, average home prices and rents

There is a wide range of purchase prices in Highland Park from \$42,500 to \$785,000 for condos and from \$110,000 to \$550,000 for single-family homes (These only reflect 2010 and 2011 sales). Apartment, condo, and house rental rates range from about \$400 for a modest, one-bedroom apartment to as much as \$2,500 for a high-end house or condo.

Average sale prices:

2010: Condos, \$240,093; Homes, \$306,259

2011: Condos, \$214,771; Homes, \$214,667*

*Through 2/28/11

7.3 For neighborhoods and streets, a list of the various uses occurring within the designated area and approximate percentages of each use

The Highland Park Land Use Plan, 2008, shows the following:

Residential 76.89%. Non-Residential 17.35%. Parks 5.76% (13.7 acres)

Residential is broken down into:

Low Density, 24.28% (58 acres). Medium/ Medium High Density 19.89% (47.52 acres)

High Density, 11.38% (27.19 acres)

Office & Institutional (hospital): 2.34% (5.59 acres)

Refer to Highland Park Neighborhood Plan for more information and for Land Use map, page 12, zoning map, page 13, etc. (On CD)

Highland Park has the following amenities:

Single-family residential, medium- and high-density residential apartments and condos.

Retail businesses: Highland Market convenience store, Sheraton laundromat, Eva Bank, Chevron service station, a storage facility. Just outside neighborhood boundary Piggly Wiggly grocery store, CVS drugstore, Forest Perk Coffee Shop, dry cleaners, and Los Amigos Mexican Restaurant. Restaurants (Rojo, On Tap, Moe's BBQ, and Slice in Highland Park); Many others close by in Lakeview Entertainment District (part of it in Highland Park) and Five Points South restaurant and entertainment district.

Car repair: Clairmont Auto Service, on Highland Park's northern boundary.

Art Gallery: Clay Scot Art Gallery

Theatre: The Virginia Samford Theatre, adjacent to Caldwell Park, originally the Little Theatre and UAB's Town and Gown Theatre, located in a restored building

Beauty Salon: Triple Platinum Salon, on Highland Park's northern boundary.

Exercise facilities: Personal trainer, Pilates, and St. Vincent's Hospital gym

Medical facilities: St. Vincent's Hospital, a catholic hospital, and professional office buildings; Hanover Health & Rehabilitation, a rehab facility near the hospital, and another nursing home on 10th Avenue South, also very near the hospital. UAB Hospital, ranked among top 20 hospitals in the country, is just a few blocks away.

Senior facilities: The Greenbriar at the Altamont (a former apartment building from the 1930s, see photo on CD) encompassing apartments, assisted living and full nursing care; Episcopal Place, a church-supported living facility for seniors on limited incomes and younger people with disabilities

Sports facilities: Highland Golf Course and Highland Racquet Club.

Churches: Unity Church and bookstore, Independent Presbyterian Church, Christian Science Church, St. Symeon American Orthodox Church and First Lutheran Church

Professional offices: Christy Cobb, engineers; 3 law offices

Schools: Red Mountain Community School and Independent Presbyterian Church day school (Avondale Elementary School, a public school, is about 2 miles away.)

Donnelly House and Gardens, a wedding and event facility

The Women's Club State HQ on Niazuma Avenue (the former home of Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black), headquarters for women's clubs statewide

The Jefferson County Office of Senior Citizens

The former Lakeview Elementary School is now a series of business offices and a law office.

7.4 Estimated number of annual visitors of a public space or estimated annual traffic counts for streets

Traffic counts were performed at 15-minute intervals over a 24-hour period by Gresham, Smith and Partners, the consultant firm which authored our Neighborhood Plan. See Figure 3.6 in the plan for the counts (on CD).

They range from 1,600 to 6,000 vehicles per day on the smaller streets to from 10,500 to 20,000 vehicles per day on the larger and boundary streets.

We also attract annual visitors to the many events that occur in our neighborhood as well as people who visit us to use our parks.

Some examples:

Past attendance at Alabama Symphony Orchestra *Sounds for Summer* concerts in Caldwell Park (c. 2001-2009) – 3-5,000 per concert (many of them walked to the event from around the neighborhood)

Attendance at Do Dah Day, 20-40,000 each year

Attendance at other fundraisers (e.g. AIDS Walk, Hunger Walk, Gumbo Gala, etc.), weddings, and reunions, etc. – estimated several thousand per year.

7.5 Types of transit modes and connections, and accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, other non-motorized users (especially for streets and neighborhoods)

Highland Park is served by two bus routes. One, #12, starts downtown and traverses the entire length of Highland Avenue and connects Highland Park to the next neighborhood to the east. The other, #44, route starts downtown and connects the western side of the neighborhood to neighborhoods and a commercial area to the east.

The neighborhood is very pedestrian oriented: We have bulbouts along Highland Avenue limiting traffic to one lane in each direction, and frequent pedestrian crossings as well as bike racks and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. Strong neighborhood opposition a few years ago to fight a proposed elimination by a developer of one section of bulbouts along the avenue to speed up traffic was successful and the City of Birmingham backed off its plan.

7.6 List of functions occurring at the public space, along the street or in the neighborhood each year (i.e. markets, rallies, parades, festivals, protected habitat, community events, etc.)

Note: The parks in our neighborhood are such popular places to hold events that several years ago we had to negotiate some guidelines with the Park and Recreation Department for the use of our parks. No other neighborhood does this. (See CD for copy of guidelines)

Events in Highland Park

Annual Do Dah Day parade in May. Parade marches along Highland Avenue. Booths and music in Caldwell and Rhodes Parks. (dodahday.org)

Annual Gumbo Gala fundraiser for Episcopal Place each May. (episcopalplace.org)

Alabama Symphony Orchestra *Sounds for Summer* Series (c. 2001-2009) (Art Garfunkel performed at the first concert in Caldwell Park in 2001). The series finally moved as space became too limited.

Magic City Smooth Jazz Festival in Caldwell Park, July 4, 2010 and 2011.

Weddings in Rhodes and Caldwell Parks.

Family and high school reunions in Rushton and Caldwell Parks.

Variety of fundraising events, such as AIDS Walk, CROP Hunger Walk, etc. in Caldwell Park.

Blessing of the Animals in Rhodes Park (Unity Church)

Independent Presbyterian Church spring and fall festival for children (Rushton Park and one block of 31st Street)

Vulcan/Mercedes marathon, etc. Every February the race runs through Highland Park..

Neighborhood block parties.

Annual Halloween block party on 32nd Street South.

Neighborhood yard sales.

7.7 Please provide a list of supplemental sources of additional information about the previous questions, such as archival sources, historians, community organizations or persons who have been instrumental in planning and shaping the designated area.

*These items are on the CD (Sent UPS 6/1/11)

National Register applications

Rhodes Park/Highland Avenue ND, 1977, expanded 1982), prepared by Alice M. Bowsher, Executive Director, Birmingham Historical Society.*

Chestnut Hill ND, 1987 (preparer, Linda Nelson, Preservationist, Operation New Birmingham; Shirley Qualls, historian.*

Country Club ND, 2003, prepared by Jeff Mansell, Mansell & Co., Christy Anderson, Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, AL,*

Hanover Circle ND, 2003, prepared by Jeff Mansell, Mansell & Co., Christy Anderson, Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, AL.*

Milner Heights ND, 2003, prepared by Jeff Mansell, Mansell & Co., Christy Anderson, Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery, AL.*

Highland Park Neighborhood Plan prepared by Gresham, Smith and Partners, Birmingham, AL*

Highland Park Neighborhood Form-Based Overlay Ordinance*

Highland Park Neighborhood Form-based Overlay Appendices*

Books

A Guide to Architectural Styles from Birmingham Homes, Birmingham Historical Society, Birmingham, AL, 2003

A History of the Elyton Land Company and Birmingham, Ala., by H. M. Caldwell, Birmingham Publishing, 1892,

A History of Birmingham and its Environs by George M. Cruikshank, The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, 1920, Vol. II (information on Henry Caldwell)

Birmingham, special limited edition, The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, 1920 (Dr. Henry M. Caldwell)

Designs on Birmingham, A Landscape History of a Southern City and Its Suburbs, Philip A. Morris and Marjorie L. White, Editors, Birmingham Historical Society, 1989

The Book of Birmingham and Alabama, published by The Birmingham Ledger, 1914 (obituary of Henry Caldwell).

Arts and Crafts Design in America by James Massey and Shirley Maxwell, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1998, pp. 20-21 (features Rhodes Park)

Birmingham's Highland Park by Richard Dabney (Highland Park resident), Arcadia Publishing, 2006)

Journals/Articles

Early Highland and the Magic City, including Willis J. Milner's "History of Highland Avenue," by Lyn Johns, The Journal of the Birmingham Historical Society, Vol. VI, #2, July 1979.

Highland Avenue and the Dummy Line by Martha Milner Benedict, unedited typescript, 1971

Town Within a City: The Five Points South Neighborhood: 1880-1930, by Ann M. Burkhardt, Alice M. Bowsher, Editor, Special Issue of The Journal of the Birmingham Historical Society, Vol. 7, #3 and 4, November 1982. (Covers some of early history of South Highlands and Highland Park)

The Role of the Elyton Land Company of Birmingham during the Depression of 1873-1879, www.samford.edu/schools/artsci/davis

DesignAlabama article on Highland Park and the form-based overlay*

Archival sources

Birmingham Historical Commission

Birmingham Historical Society (www.bhistorical.org) and its Journal

Birmingham Public Library Archives

Jefferson County Historical Commission

Historians: Marjorie White, director, Birmingham Historical Society, see books above

Cathy C. Adams, author, *Worthy of Remembrance, A History of Redmont*, 2002, published by Redmont Park Historic Park Foundation (references to Henry Caldwell and Willis J. Milner)

Preservationist: Linda Nelson (Chestnut Hill ND preparer and Executive Secretary, Jefferson County Historical Commission)

Architectural writers: Alice Bowsher, (see references in text)

"*Southside-Highlands Report: Architectural and Historical Resources, Preservation Recommendations.*" (heaviestcorner.org)

Philip Morris, architectural writer and preservation resource.

7.8 Please provide links to maps, graphs, charts or other visual materials specific to the designated place and the salient characteristics, qualities, features and traits that contribute to its unique sense of place and selection as one of the Great Places in America. All images sent should be high resolution, i.e. as 300 dpi or 600KB-1.2MB files. Maps of areas should be sent at TIFF files, also at a resolution of 300 dpi.

Disk:

5 National Register applications

Highland Park Long-Range Plan

Building Communities Grant application

Highland Park Neighborhood Plan Form-based Overlay ordinance and appendices

DesignAlabama article on Highland Park Neighborhood Plan (includes several photographs of the neighborhood, including an aerial view looking north and east)

Guidelines for the use of our parks

Maps/charts

Some maps were sent with original application and these and several more can also be found in the Highland Park Neighborhood Plan on the CD.

Photos:

The Greenbriar at the Altamont, a senior complete care facility, originally apartments.

Outdoor art: St. Vincent's sculpture and outdoor chapel: Two monuments to William James Rushton, for whom the park is named, in Rushton Park; Ornamental urn, aggregate stone walls with embedded Moravian tile, period lights, benches donated by *The Birmingham News* in honor of one of their founders, Rufus Napoleon Rhodes; Historic sign designating Rhodes Park/Highland Avenue National District located on Highland Avenue at the south end of Rhodes Park.

Views:

Aerial view of city showing Highland Park buildings in foreground

Views of Highland Golf Course

Highland Avenue boulevard paralleling Highland Golf Course with avenue of crape myrtles planted in the median.

View of Highland Park streetscape and neighborhood entrance sign at west entrance to neighborhood (See photo sent 2/24, #051 with caption)

Newspaper clippings

Rufus to the Rescue (fundraising tool for Rhodes Park) (on CD)

Building Communities grant received (on CD)

Highland Park neighbors vote to buy new trash cans (on CD)

Highland Park Plan Adopts Tougher Design Rules (on CD)

Highland Park Plan receives APA award (emailed with application June 2, 2011)

Addendum

Full unedited comments from neighborhood residents about living in Highland Park appear below. Comments from residents about desirability of living in Highland Park in response to a request as to what drew them to Highland Park and what keeps them here.

I am a Highland Park person through and through, being the fourth generation of my family to live here. I cannot imagine living in another neighborhood. We are close to everything within the inner rim of the City of Birmingham. Close to UAB, 5 Points, Lakeview, fine dining, great architecture, neighborhood churches, the golf course, and the many diverse people who live in or visit our enviable neighborhood.

I am not just the author of "Birmingham's Highland Park"--I have spent the majority of my 62 years connected to this wonderful neighborhood. Richard D.

For me, Highland Park's main appeal is walkability. From our house we can walk to shops, restaurants and grocery stores in four different neighborhoods: Five Points, Lakeview, English Village, and Forest Park. When we were actively contemplating a move to the West Coast, we were hard-pressed to find properties that have the high degree of walkability we enjoy where we live now.

Of course, other pluses of our neighborhood are the diversity of housing (historical homes, single-family dwellings, high-rises and apartments/condos); proximity to downtown and the airport; our three parks; and nearby cultural attractions such as the Virginia Samford Theatre.

Good luck with the application. Bob B.

I will add to that: the diversity of people: There are lots of young people, particularly UAB students, lots of middle-aged professional couples (straight & gay), and many elderly people. The mix is lively and comfortable. Susan H.

Bob and I have lived in Highland Park about 17 years. We were attracted to this area because of the convenience, beautiful neighborhood, and economical housing costs. We really didn't realize exactly how convenient, beautiful and economical it would be.

We are very close to downtown Birmingham (walking or riding the Dart is easy), Brookwood Mall, and the Summit. We are within easy walking distance of two grocery stores and one boutique grocery store. I can't even begin to count the restaurants--fast food, gourmet and lots in between. There are coffee houses and pubs nearby. There are great boutique stores like Zoe's plus a variety of other interesting stores.

We are walkers, and we are able to walk from a couple of blocks to nine miles (round trip) in the neighborhood--safely and (mostly) on sidewalks. The people in the Highland Park neighborhood are friendly. On our walks we can smile and speak to people and they smile and speak back. We do not have a pet, so we particularly enjoy the people who are walking their dogs and know quite a few of them (the dogs) by name. We are fortunate to have Do Dah Day (a benefit for the Humane Society) as a yearly event in our neighborhood. We also help host the Vulcan and Mercedes Runs. We are within easy walking distance of a number of churches, two libraries, the post office, Five Points South and Lakeview entertainment districts, our doctors' offices, hospitals, and we can walk to our fitness center! The Highland Park Neighborhood Association is very active, striving to keep the area as historically pure as they possibly can. The association has been able to have a bank, a restaurant, and will have a drugstore come into the area using a different, more neighborhood-friendly design than they originally proposed. The association has also been effective in seeing that new construction in residential areas blends in with the surrounding neighborhood.

We live next to Rhodes Park, the central park of three green city parks in the neighborhood. These parks and the street medians are beautifully maintained by the city of Birmingham and the Highland Park Neighborhood Association. Each park is unique. Caldwell can be an entertainment park with a symphony concert or a Gumbo Boil or Do Dah Day; Rhodes joins Caldwell on Do Dah Day. In addition, Rhodes has weddings, parties, and neighbors who gather in the evenings with their dogs. Rushton Park has play equipment for children. Our neighbors take a great interest in their surroundings and we enjoy the flowers and trees that shade the sidewalks. Changing seasons are a treat in Highland Park. We visited here first in autumn when the trees were a gorgeous red, yellow, and brown. Spring shows up with Tulip trees and azaleas. Winter has seen skaters going down the street on Highland Avenue and sledgers going down the hill at Rhodes Park. The summer is lovely with crape myrtles. Oh, and did I mention the Highland Golf Course? Highland Park borders on other lovely neighborhoods: Forest Park, Redmont, and Five Points South. The neighborhoods and their associations work actively with each other helping the entire district.

We have been able to downsize to one car because of the convenience of being able to get to almost anywhere in the Birmingham area in less than 15 minutes. The neighborhood has a diversity of housing pricing which enables all ages and incomes to live side by side in harmony. The Virginia Samford Theatre is in the neighborhood and the Alys Stephens Performance Theatre at UAB is within easy walking distance. There is a senior living apartment building as well as a nursing home. Near the senior living apartment is a Lutheran school. When we walk, we meet seniors, young parents with jogging strollers, college-aged students and business people also out for a stroll around the neighborhood.

Attending UAB classes and walking to school, taking my grandchildren to ride the Dart and to play on the equipment at Ruston Park; seeing a man skate down Highland Avenue with a green parrot on one hand and a red parrot on the other (more than once!); seeing a dog pull a man on a sled in the snow (also down Highland Avenue); sidewalk seating at Rojo having Latin food and people watching, finding golf balls in the grass outside Highland Golf Course. Also, having a heart attack during a walk and having a neighbor take me quickly to the UAB emergency room. We have condo parties at Park Tower, watch the fireworks on top of Red Mountain from our perch across from Western Supermarket. In the park, we've had Shakespeare in the park, Gumbo

Boils, weddings, symphony concerts, and other entertainment benefits. What a great place to live.
Vickie B.

What makes Highland stand out to me is the proximity to the city while maintaining an old-style suburban neighborhood feel. I also think that it distinguishes itself from other areas of the city with its diversity of people, races and levels of income, which makes it very *urban* in my opinion. One of the things that makes it different than modern suburbia, to me, is that there is a true sense of community. Neighbors watch out for each other, because we know that what is good for others, is in our interests as well. If I was still living in Birmingham, I would not choose any other place to live.

Elizabeth R.

I have always felt from the very first month of living at Episcopal Place a sense of living in a neighborhood where you meet and greet each other, then through talking during events, or just walking about become acquainted and learn about each other, which I feel is what a true neighborhood is all about, it's not an area where you do not even know who lives next door.

There does not seem to be any of the usual prejudices often found in other neighborhoods. I feel we look out for each other and care about what is happening in our area. I feel safer here for this reason and enjoy living at Episcopal Place because it feels more like home.

The homes, parks and entertainment areas are well maintained and in fairly good repair, some of the sidewalks need some repair. We are within 12-15 minutes of any dining choice you would enjoy as well as varied types of entertainment, yet you have a sense of privacy when that is needed.

I do not know if this is helpful or useful in any way but from a former young girl and woman reared in a rural mining area this is unbelievable joy to have all of this in one neighborhood. Pam C.

Highland Park has done it right. It has diverse housing options fit for almost any economic level. It has sidewalks and porches encouraging pedestrian use and neighbor interaction. It is a mixed use neighborhood to make it a truly walkable neighborhood. I can walk to many restaurants, a grocery, vet, hospital, doctors office, swimming pool, bank, even auto parts store is within walking distance...and of course choice of 4 parks.

All the features mentioned above drew us to the neighborhood. We stay because of the relationship and community we have here. There is something special about sharing public space open with your neighbors that fills a primal need that I think is wired into all of us ...we are social beings need that connection to others. People that live in other neighborhoods have to fill this need by joining clubs and organizations and driving to designated meeting places. All we have to do is spontaneously walk to the park.

My anecdote: When my daughter was very young we went to visit one of my friends who lives in Hoover. They had a large yard that took many hours to maintain and could only be used by the family and a select group of friends that happened to visit. My daughter looked out that back and saw the large yard and play equipment and said "look mamma, they live in a park". If they could only be so lucky as to truly live in a park as we do. Scott T.

Beauty. I love Highland Avenue with its median and beautiful landscaping. I love the shady trees that hang over the sidewalk and street throughout the neighborhood. I love the calming feeling of green. I love that the streets aren't in a grid but meandering.

History and continuity. I love that my house is 85 years old. I love that my house on Lakeview Crescent is on the same alley as my dad's "growing up" house on Highland Drive. I love that I live blocks from the hospital where I was born and less than a mile from my old high school.

I love the variety of architecture in styles of homes and old apartments. I love that so many buildings are beautiful brick or stone. I love that the old buildings are substantial.

Community. I love that I can walk to shop and to eat. I love that the neighborhood attracts like-minded people.

I have always felt a connection to this neighborhood. I am drawn to the charm and sense of history. Here's my personal history with the neighborhood.

I was born at St. Vincent's, just a few blocks from Highland Park. In the early 1960s, I spent a lot of time with my grandparents when they lived on Highland Drive. They moved from Highland Drive in 1964 or 1965. In the 1970s, I went to High School at John Carroll on Highland Avenue. In those days, we parked in the median. At the sidewalk in front of the school was a Ginkgo Tree and all freshmen had to write an essay about that ginkgo tree. I remember the tree but not my essay. We had gym classes in Caldwell Park and at Christmas Time the French Club walked over to the Mary Lewis Home and sang carols with the residents. Then in 1985, I moved back to the neighborhood when I moved into Highland Garden Apartments overlooking Rhodes Park. As I think on this, I can see that the neighborhood is in my very marrow. Leah S.

Highland Park is an inclusive eclectic community which has its standards benefiting renters and homeowners alike. A community in the best sense of the word, looking out for its neighbors, property and, of course, pets. I moved to the neighborhood thirty years ago when it was the most fun place to live in the city and remain here, as I've "matured," among other things because it's still fun as well as the answer to question one. Thanks for doing all that you do. David P.

Highland Park is full of beauty and architectural character, yet it boasts an extremely low cost of living compared to similar historic urban neighborhoods in other cities! Highland Park neighborhood is a jewel for anyone who enjoys parks, golf courses, theatre, art fares, restaurants and concerts. Betsy C.

I was attracted to Highland Park because I was fortunate to buy a townhouse (or as I like to call it, my tree house), which is on a hill overlooking beautiful and lush Rushton Park. Birmingham Parks and recreation keeps my "front yard" in perfect condition. Not a stray leaf in sight.

I am less than ten minutes from anywhere I want to be: airport, downtown, Homewood, Mt. Brook, Forest Park and any other happening neighborhood. I am one mile from three of the best restaurants in our city, all James Bear award winning chefs. No neighborhood has more park facilities, three to be exact, playgroup and picnic areas. The area is conducive to today's healthy lifestyle, however, should that fail, there are three major hospitals all in 5 mile radius. We have a very active neighborhood association which keeps us constantly informed and is very effective in communicating to its residents and controlling city crime.

We chose Highland Park 22 years ago for many reasons. The varied architectural styles, front porches, and sidewalks all appealed to us. But mostly, we were looking for an urban neighborhood with a diverse economic and ethnic population. Our children have grown up with neighbors from as far away as Israel and Belgium. They played sports in the neighborhood leagues with children from the projects and children from the most prominent families in Birmingham. If we had chosen the suburbs, their exposure to people of different economic and educational backgrounds would have been very different. They would have been looking down, instead of eye to eye.

We have stayed because our neighborhood is like a diverse Mayberry. Porch sitting is a verb on our street. When we sit on our porch, we expect to be joined by our neighbors. Living far away from family, our neighbors have become our family. We have a neighborhood supper club, and we have neighborhood block parties one or two times per year. We have lived here for 22 years, and there are many families in the neighborhood who have been here longer. We have stayed in touch with the families who have moved away. It is very common for a couple to buy a small house in our neighborhood, then move next door or around the corner to a larger house when their family grows.

Our houses are very close to each other, and with no garages we all park on the street. We therefore see each other as we come and go. When the kids go out to play, we sit on our porches and visit as we watch them. This is how my husband's business got its start. It grew from a conversation with a neighbor (Eric S.) as they were watching the kids play. Eric had been to a Gene Therapy meeting where a discussion took place about a particular problem affecting gene therapies as a whole. My husband is a biochemist, and when he heard the problem he thought he might be able to solve it. After many years of research, they are now in clinical trials at UAB treating head and neck cancers and have dosed the first 2 patients.

Two years ago, when my mother was no longer able to climb the stairs of her home in North Carolina, I moved her into a retirement community 2 blocks from our home in Highland Park. She has loved being able to walk from her apartment to the park and sit and people watch. She also loves to walk to Rojo, a neighborhood restaurant, for a coke. Do Dah Day passes by her front door, and the events in Caldwell Park are close enough that we can push her in a wheelchair. Bill works 1 mile in one direction of our home, I work 1 mile in the other. We plan to stay here until we can no longer handle the stairs. Eve P.

In addition, we need to have a signed permission-to-use form for each individual image provided with the suggested place. See separate attachment for this form (make additional copies as needed).

We will submit photo release forms after being further advised by Mr. Johnson.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and returning it to APA.