



DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH  
Master Active Living Plan

# COVINGTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR



October 24, 2013 Draft



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chronic diseases are among the most common and costly of all health problems in the United States, but they also are among the most preventable. Lack of physical activity and poor nutrition, two modifiable risk factors for obesity, and tobacco use are responsible for much of the illness, suffering, and death related to chronic diseases. To help address these health issues, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW), which is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Through these programs, DeKalb County, Georgia is tackling public health threats throughout its region by creating a Master Active Living Plan (MALP). The integration of physical activity and other healthy behaviors into the daily routines of DeKalb County residents is the focus of this study. By planning communities with a deliberate focus on health, the health and quality-of-life of their residents can be improved.

To achieve these goals, subareas within DeKalb County have been organized, with this portion of

the study focusing on the area around Covington Road.

## Existing Conditions

Health related data featured in the report was derived from the Georgia Department of Community Health (DBOH), the DeKalb County Board of Health, the US Census Bureau and other reputable sources. Cardiovascular mortality was found to be the number one cause of death in DeKalb County, and residents of the Covington Road study area fell in the top 20% of the county for diabetes mortality. A summary table is provided below.

To plan for these health threats, among others, the study area's land use, urban design, transportation and demographic data were analyzed.

The study area includes a variety of land uses along the corridor. The primary existing land use within the study area is commercial, including large commercial parcels such as the Department of Juvenile Justice, Total Grace Christian Center, and several retail establishments. Other uses in the study area include: multifamily residential along Memorial Drive and Covington Highway;

numerous medium density single-family residential parcels throughout; Glen Haven Elementary School and Towers High School; and several undeveloped parcels.

DeKalb County's Comprehensive Development Plan has designated the majority of this area as Commercial Redevelopment Corridor, which is intended to promote the redevelopment of declining commercial corridors and to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors. Other future land uses include: Town Center to promote the concentration of residential and commercial structures; Suburban to recognize those areas of the county that have been developed in traditional suburban land use patterns while encouraging new development to have increased connectivity and accessibility; and Institutional to promote large areas for religious, civic, educational, and governmental purposes.

Over the next five years, growth in the market areas and DeKalb County is anticipated to pick up slightly (to an average of 0.6 to 0.7 percent per year).

Market research shows that residential target markets will include empty nesters, young profession-

### Key Health Statistics

Cardiovascular Mortality	Cancer Mortality (DeKalb County)	Mortality due to Respiratory Diseases (DeKalb County)	Injuries (motor vehicles, pedestrian, homicide) (DeKalb County)	Mental and Behavioral Disorders (DeKalb County)
#1 Problem in DeKalb County	#2 Problem in DeKalb County	#3 Problem in DeKalb County	#4 Problem in DeKalb County	#5 Problem in DeKalb County
Diabetes Mortality compared to DeKalb County	Homicide Mortality compared to DeKalb County	Asthma Mortality compared to DeKalb County	Higher infant mortality/lower birth weight compared to DeKalb County	Limited health/dental service area
top 20% in DeKalb County	middle 20% in DeKalb County	middle 20% in DeKalb County	yes	yes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Burden of Chronic Diseases and Their Risk Factors: National and State Perspectives 2004. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2004.

als, small families and workforce housing. Retail focus should be on attracting a business mix that will enhance residents' ability to make healthy choices such as fresh groceries, healthy restaurants, retailers in an attractive and a walkable environment. Potential office space uses include professional services (legal, financial, medical, dental, etc.). Ultimately, the study area's success at capturing demand will depend on implementing a comprehensive development program with a variety of residential and commercial uses.

The recommendations that follow have been developed to realize a vision that emerged from an open and inclusive planning process. Throughout the planning process, a deliberate effort was made to link the community vision and plan to the health goals of the Master Active Living Plan. To this end, the recommendations that follow meet community objectives while also addressing existing challenges to healthy living today. Some recommendations overlap because of their synergistic nature.

## Community Health Recommendations

### Cardiovascular Disease

- Build a Community Center for educational, physical and social activities (X-9)
- Develop a healthy community scorecard that DeKalb County can use to evaluate proposed development projects; provide incentives for "healthy" projects (O-10)
- Change local zoning to promote compact, mixed use development (O-2)
- Revise the zoning ordinance to permit more local gardens and farmers markets (O-2)
- Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-11)

- Hold more exercise/sports/activity programs at local churches/schools/community centers (O12)
- "Brand" study area as a "Healthy Community" (O-13)
- Organize a fresh food cooking club (O-14)
- Provide health education programs for all ages (O-15)
- Expand physical exercise programs at local schools (O-16)
- Provide low/no cost summer exercise programs for children (O-17)
- Build partnerships between DeKalb County Board of Health partnerships and local hospitals and medical centers to provide mobile health services to residents (O-18)
- Serve healthier meals to school children

### Cancer

- Provide a Community Center for educational, physical and social activities (O-9)
- Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-11)
- "Brand" the study area as a "Healthy Community" (O-13)
- Expand tobacco-free public sites (O-19)
- Provide health education programs for all ages (O-15)
- Respiratory Disease
- Host health education/service providers at a local church or community center (O-11)
- Hold exercise/sports/activity programs at existing churches/schools (O-12)
- Provide health education programs for all ages (O-15)



*People are most likely to get the required physical activity when it is incorporated into their daily routine*

- Locate schools, senior centers, day cares away from major highways
- Support the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (2009) (O-19)

### Injury

- Test paint of houses built prior to 1978 for the presence of lead dust (O-20)

### Pregnancy/Infant Mortality

- Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-15)
- Promote WIC - Women, Infant and Children Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (O-21)
- Serve healthier meals to school children
- Support Medicaid Programs
- Build more social connections

### Mental and Behavioral Health

- Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-15)
- Hold more jobs fairs (O-22)
- Create a more enjoyable and stimulating environment
- Support Medicare Programs
- Create more social connections

## Land Use Recommendations

- Strive to achieve the land use vision shown in the Framework Plan
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized commercial properties
- Create public parks/open spaces with active uses in new development and potential public improvement projects
- Provide appropriate transitions between higher-density development and existing single-family neighborhood
- Comprehensive Plan updates (O-1)
- Zoning code amendments (O-2)
- Amend subdivision regulations to require inter-parcel connectivity (O-3)
- Redevelop the Redan Road/Redwing Circle Area (O-4)
- Redevelop the Covington Drive/Midway Road Area (O-5)

## Urban Design Recommendations

- Require good urban design standards that promote health
- Support architectural standards that allow a variety of styles, but require good design
- Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles
- Incorporate parks and open spaces into existing areas and new development.
- Encourage an appropriate relationship between parks and adjacent development
- In the design of parks and open spaces provide facilities like paths, running tracks, playgrounds, exercise equipment, sports courts, and drinking fountains

Study Area Concept Plan



- Provide a location for “Saturday morning” farmer’s market.
- Encourage the creation of shared stormwater facilities and those integrated into parks
- Encourage child care centers, adult day care centers and in-home nursing care providers
- Promote the creation of community facilities, including health services, that are pedestrian accessible
- Plant shade trees along sidewalks and pedestrian walkways
- Encourage the relocation of overhead utilities to underground wherever feasible
- Zoning code amendments (O-1)
- Uniform sign program (O-2)
- Create a triangle park at the intersection of Redwing Circle and Covington Hwy (O-7)
- Create a triangle park at the intersection of Covinton Drive and Covington Hwy (O-8)

### **Transportation Recommendations**

- Ensure that the transportation system is balanced between vehicular and non-vehicular access and circulation opportunities
- For purposes of advancing healthy travel opportunities for nearby residents and area visitors, focus improvements that promote non-motorized access and circulation
- Incorporate complete streets principles that promote improvements that provide more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments within the context of a balanced transportation system
- Incorporate access management

- As the area grows, new interconnected streets must be created to provide more routes for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians
- Develop pedestrian-scale blocks in new development
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between cul-de-sacs and sidewalks or trails for more convenient access to these amenities
- Minimize dead-end streets
- Reduce the cross-section of Covington Highway between Redwing Circle and Midway Road, a distance of approximately 0.77 miles
- Construct a raised median with turn pockets in the current five-lane roadway segment between Redan Road and a new terminus of Redwing Circle at Covington Highway.
- Provide a multi-use trail in a ring fashion, extending along Covington Highway on the north side from Redan Road, continuing past Covington Drive to the intersection with Memorial Drive. Continue northward along the east side of Memorial Drive to Kensington Road.
- Complete the multi-use trail outside of the Covington Highway Corridor study area that is an integral part of the ring or loop trail system
- In order to create improved roadway geometry, realign Redwing Circle to the north prior to its current intersection with Covington Highway.
- Install a new traffic signal at the intersection of Covington Highway and Paul Edwin Drive
- Install a traffic signal at the intersection of Covington Drive and Covington Highway
- Install a new traffic signal at the Covington Highway/Midway Road intersection.

- Complete all sidewalks on both sides of roads unless a multi-use trail is recommended

### **Housing & Economic Development Recommendations**

- Encourage a mix of housing types and price points
- Incorporate principles of Lifelong Communities in new development
- Encourage inclusive home design practices
- Strive to attract target businesses to the study area
- Promote a variety of fresh food options in the study area
- Encourage study area businesses to be partners in promoting health initiatives
- Develop a branding and marketing campaign for the DeKalb County MALP Study Areas (O-13)
- Examine Lead Based Paint Risks (O-20)
- Recognize local restaurants that offer healthy dining options (O-23)
- Assess school lunch options and vending machine offerings (O-24)

This plan offers an aggressive but achievable future for the Covington Road study area. For its vision to become a reality there must be both short- and long-term commitments to its principles.

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**PART I: INTRODUCTION**

# 1.1 Overview

According to the DeKalb County Board of Health’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Report, 24 percent of DeKalb County residents are obese and 53 percent do not get the recommended level of physical activity. The Georgia Department of Community Health found that the State’s obesity rate doubled between 1997 and 2006 from 15 to 30 percent. Therefore, the US Department of Health and Human Services awarded the DeKalb County Board of Health a grant which was funded through the Affordable Care Act of 2010 and is a part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work program.

## Master Plan Goals

The goal of the DeKalb County Board of Health Master Active Living Plan is to improve the integration of physical activity and other healthy behaviors into the daily routines of DeKalb County residents. Recent research in the Atlanta region and nationwide has shown that the ways communities are built can directly and indirectly impact the health of their residents by encouraging or discouraging certain healthy behaviors. By planning communities with this in mind, the physical health of their residents can be improved and their overall quality-of-life improved.

With this in mind, this master plan is intended to be a proactive, community-based vision and blueprint for the Panola Road/Salem Road study area that will improve public health by achieving the following goals:

- Improving bike/pedestrian connections of activity centers to nearby neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other public facilities, and
- Encouraging development with an emphasis on mixed-use, compact development, inter-

connected streets, multi-modal accessibility, and increased public space.

These goals, along with community-specific aspirations that emerged from the public outreach process, have been instrumental in guiding the plan for the Panola Road/Salem Road study area.

## Study Area Overview

Located in the south central part of DeKalb County, the Covington Corridor study area consists of several activity centers that includes shopping centers, offices, church, schools and other institutional land uses, and houses. The study area extends along Covington Highway from the west side of I-285 to the northwest with Memorial Drive serving as the western boundary. The study area also extends along Covington Drive on the west side as well as a southern leg near I-285 that includes a portion of the Towers High School vicinity.

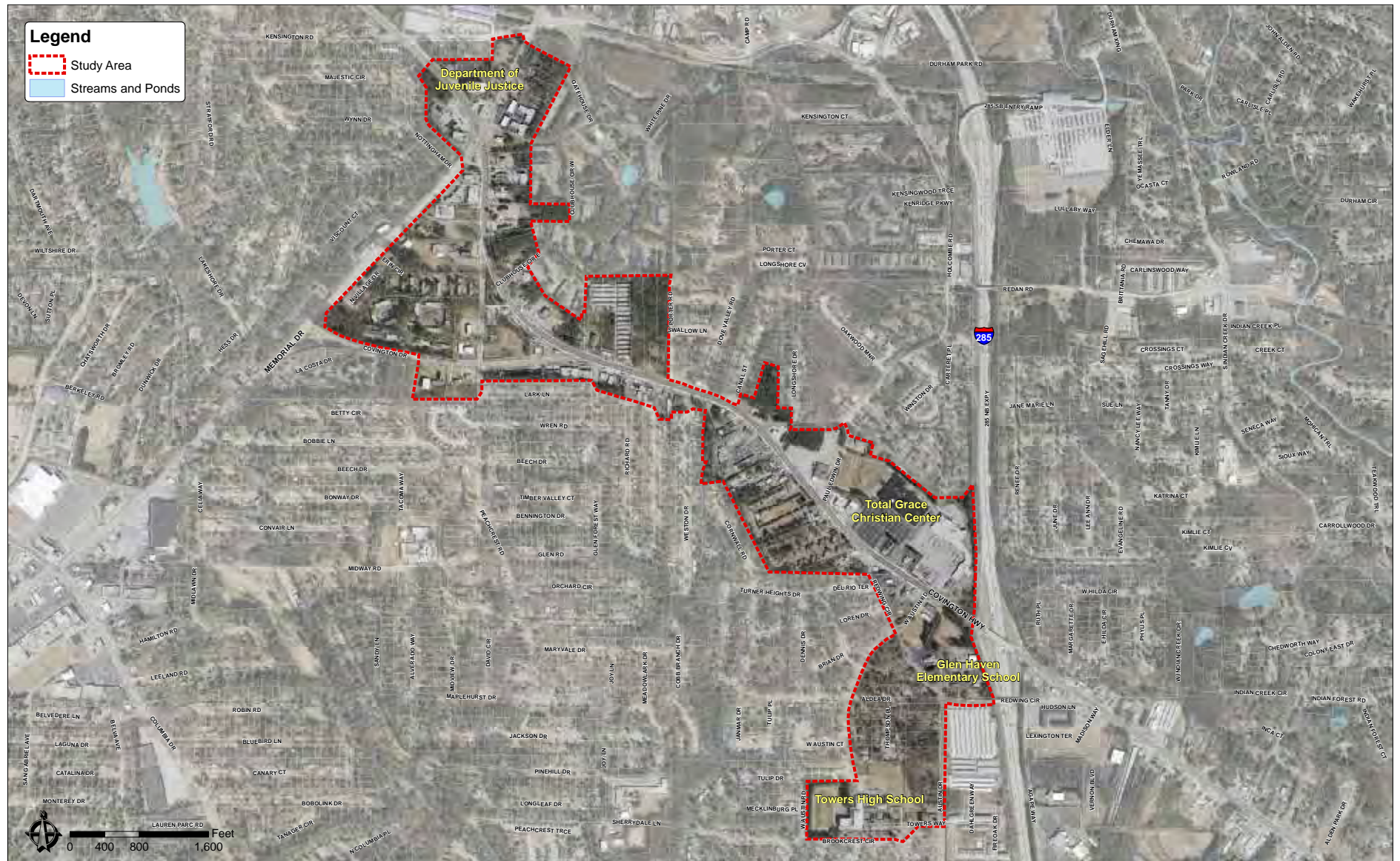


An active lifestyle can benefit both a person’s physical and mental health

	Healthy Food Access	Nutrition & Cooking Info	Physical Activity	Healthcare Access & Info	Substance Abuse	Safety	Air Quality	Social Connections
<b>Top Community Health Issues:</b>								
1. Cardiovascular Diseases								
2. Cancer								
3. Respiratory Diseases								
4. Injuries								
5. Pregnancy/Infant Mortality								
6. Mental & Behavioral Health Issues								
<b>Selected Recommendations</b>								
Bike Paths and Multi-Use Trails	*		*	*		*	*	*
Sidewalk Improvements & Streetscapes	*		*	*		*	*	*
Park Space, Dog Park & Exercise Equipment			*		*	*	*	*
Mix of Uses & Higher Density Activity Nodes	*		*	*		*	*	*
Local Health Education/Service Providers		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Community Gardening Programs	*	*	*			*	*	*
Farmers Market & Natural Food Stores	*	*					*	*
Social Center	*	*	*	*	*			*

*This table shows the top causes of mortality in the study area and how the plan incorporate features that reduce the factors that contribute to these. For example, poor food choices, physical inactivity, and limited access to healthcare can lead to obesity, diabetes, congestive heart failure, etc. - all forms of cardiovascular disease. The plan includes paths, sidewalks, gardens and social centers to promote healthy food access, physical activity, and health education opportunities that can reduce the incidence of this health problem as well as the other leading causes of death in the study area. Of note is that this table illustrates some but not all contributing factors and recommended healthy design solutions that are described in more detail in this report.*

Figure 1.1 Study Area Map



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**PART II: EXISTING CONDITIONS**

## 2.1 Community Health

DeKalb County Board of Health recently published the 2010 Status of Health in DeKalb Report: Opportunities for Prevention and Community Action that highlighted important trends in the health status of residents of DeKalb County. Data featured in the report were derived from the Georgia Department of Community Health (DBOH), the DeKalb County Board of Health, the U.S. Census Bureau and other reputable sources. A second source of data in this health assessment was derived from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's EJView. The internet-based mapping tool allows users to create maps and generate detailed reports based on the geographic areas and data sets they choose. EJView includes data from multiple factors that may affect public and environmental health within a community or region, including: demographic; health; environmental; and facility-level data. Geospatial data used in this assessment were largely derived from DBOH as well as from the GIS Department of DeKalb County Government, US EPA, and others.

A "high-level" health assessment was performed using these data sources to identify the most significant causes of mortality in the community. The results are presented in Table 2.1. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 present demographic and environmental statistics, respectively, that are applicable to the study area.

**Table 2.1 Key Health Statistics of the Covington Highway Corridor**

Cardiovascular Mortality	Cancer Mortality (DeKalb County)	Mortality due to Respiratory Diseases (DeKalb County)	Injuries (motor vehicles, pedestrian, homicide) (DeKalb County)	Mental and Behavioral Disorders (DeKalb County)
#1 Problem in DeKalb County	#2 Problem in DeKalb County	#3 Problem in DeKalb County	#4 Problem in DeKalb County	#5 Problem in DeKalb County
Diabetes Mortality compared to DeKalb County	Homicide Mortality compared to DeKalb County	Asthma Mortality compared to DeKalb County	higher infant mortality/lower birth weight compared to DeKalb County	limited health/dental service area
top 20 % in DeKalb County	middle 20% in DeKalb County	middle 20% in DeKalb County	yes	yes

**Table 2.2 Key Demographic Statistics of the Covington Highway Corridor**

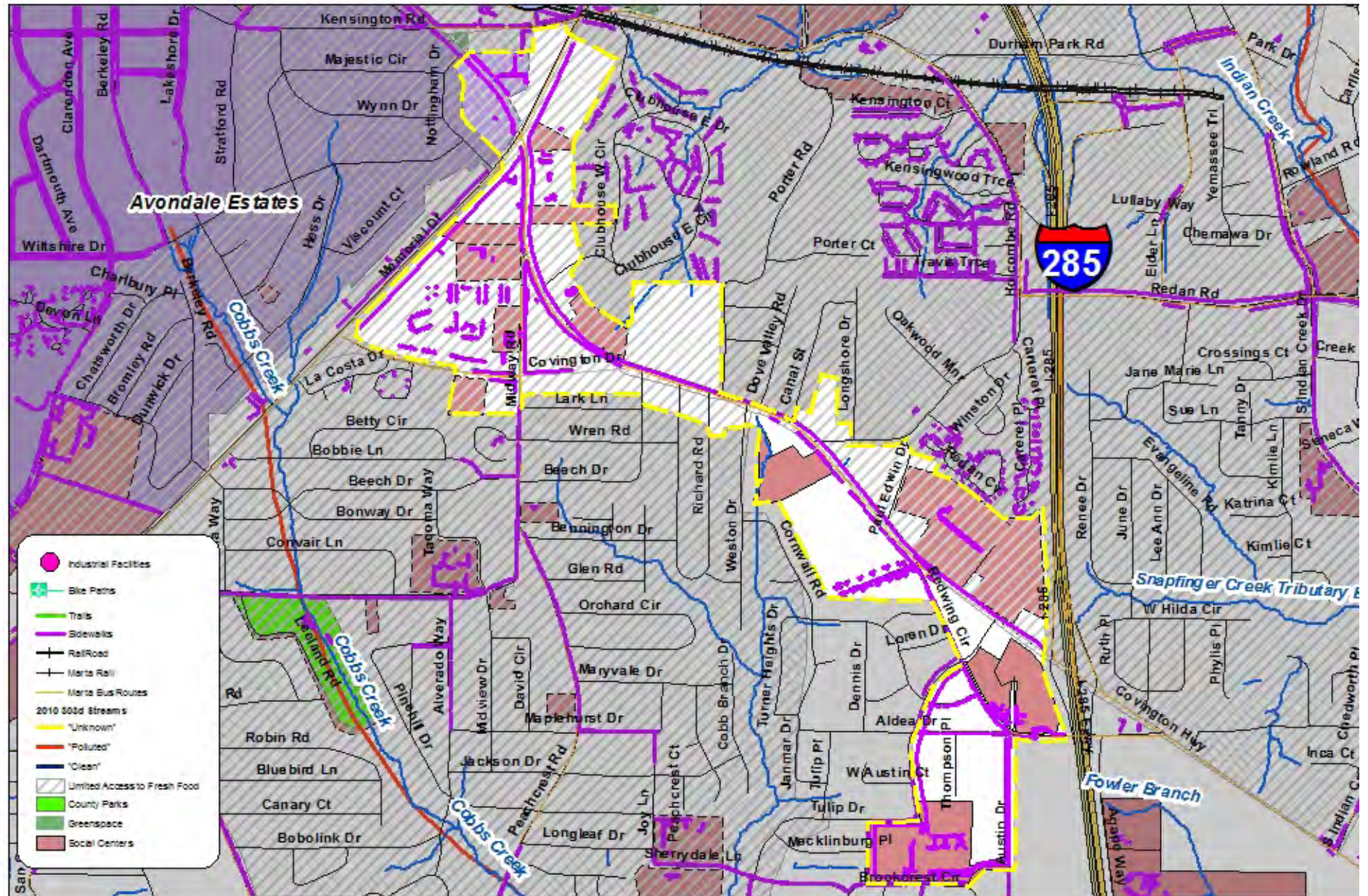
Demographic Statistics			
Significant population of minority/low-income (Environmental Justice Area)	approx. percent below poverty (2010 census)	> 30% rental units	approx. percentage less than high school education (2010 census)
yes	20-30	yes	20-30

**Table 2.3 Key Environmental Statistics of the Covington Highway Corridor**

polluted stream	ozone non-attainment 8 hr	PM 2.5 non-attainment	approx. respiratory risk
no	yes	yes	moderate

Figure 2.1 illustrates the health assessment elements within the study area. It is noteworthy that the majority of the area is located in a "food desert", an area identified as having few sources of healthy food. Other healthy design features missing from the study area included: parks, greenspaces, trails, community gardens, complete sidewalks, etc. There were identified social areas present in the study area, namely an elementary school, a high school, churches and a public library.

Figure 2.1 Covington Highway Corridor Health Assessment



## 2.2 Land Use and Zoning

### Existing Land Use

The study area includes a variety of land uses along the corridor. The primary existing land use within the study area is commercial, including large commercial parcels such as the Department of Juvenile Justice, Total Grace Christian Center, and several retail establishments. Other uses in the study area include: multifamily residential along Memorial Drive and Covington Highway; numerous medium density single-family residential parcels throughout; Glen Haven Elementary School and Towers High School; and several undeveloped parcels. Table 2.4 and Figure 2.2 provide more information about the existing land uses in the study area.

### Future Land Use

DeKalb County's Comprehensive Development Plan has designated the majority of this area as Commercial Redevelopment Corridor, which is intended to promote the redevelopment of declining commercial corridors and to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors. Other future land uses include: Town Center to promote the concentration of residential and commercial structures; Suburban to recognize those areas of the county that have been developed in traditional suburban land use patterns while encouraging new development to have increased connectivity and accessibility; and Institutional to promote large areas for religious, civic, educational, and governmental purposes. Please refer to Figure 2.3.

Table 2.4 Existing Land Use

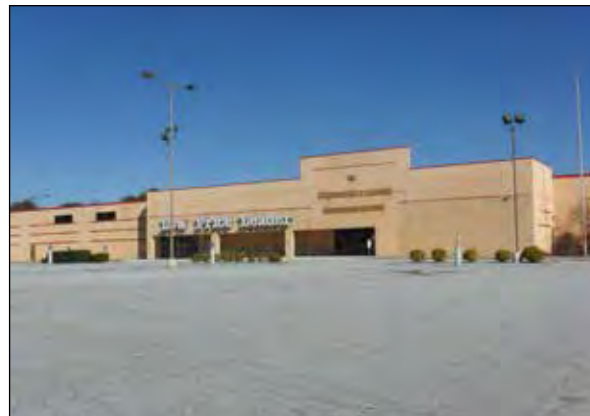
Existing Land Use	Parcel Count	Acres	Percentage
COMMERCIAL	104	190.16	50.7%
INSTITUTIONAL	4	35.04	9.3%
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	60	32.63	8.7%
MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL	288	55.15	14.7%
UNDEVELOPED	9	19.76	5.3%
STREET ROW	NA	42.13	11.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>374.87</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Existing Zoning

The primary zoning designations in the study area, as shown in Table 2.5, are commercial (C1 and C2), office-institution (O-I), and residential (R-75). C-1 (Local Commercial) is intended to provide convenient local retailing shopping and service areas, while C-2 (General Commercial) is intended to provide convenient general business and commercial service areas. O-I is intended to provide convenient areas for the location of office and institutional uses along with the development of cultural, recreational, educational, and health services facilities. R-75 is intended to provide for the protection of neighborhoods where lots have a minimum area of 10,000 square feet and provide for compatible residential infill development. The current zoning is mostly consistent with the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor character area designation with the exception of R-75,



A newly developed gas station with convenient store north of Redan Road.



Vacant big box commercial building at Covington Place Shopping Center



Total Grace Christian Center converted from a big box retail in a shopping area along the corridor



which only allows for detached single-family dwellings and some agricultural uses. A zoning map of the area is displayed in Figure 2.4.

**Local Commercial District (C1)** - Provides convenient local retail shopping and service areas within the county for all residents, designed to serve the convenience shopping and service needs of groups of neighborhoods.

**General Commercial District (C2)** - Provides convenient general business and commercial service areas within the county for all residents, designed to serve the general business and commercial service needs of the county.

**Neighborhood Shopping District (NS)** – Provides commercial use at the size and scale of neighborhood shopping centers and individual uses within said centers are compatible with the scale of adjoining neighborhoods.

**Office Institution District (OI)** – Provides provide convenient areas within the county for the location of office and institutional uses which are necessary for the residents and business and professional practitioners within the county, and provides provide locations for the development of cultural, recreational, educational and health service facilities for the county.

**Single Family Residential District (R100)** - Provides detached single family dwellings with some agricultural uses as follows: keeping pigeons; livestock; riding stable. These are uses and structures designed to serve the housing, recreational, educational, religious, and social needs of the neighborhood. R100 specifies neighborhoods within the county where lots have a minimum area of 15,000 square feet, and infill development in neighborhoods having 15,000 square foot lots in a manner compatible with existing development.

**Multifamily Residential (RM)** – Provides multifamily neighborhoods within the county at a density per acre designated in the comprehensive plan. Structures designed to serve the housing, recreational, educational, religious, and social needs of the neighborhood.

**Single Family Residential (R-A5)** – Provides for attached and detached single family dwellings for neighborhoods within the county where lots have an average area of no less than eight thousand (8,000) square feet; individual lots must have a minimum of six thousand (6,000) square feet.

**Table 2.5 Existing Zoning**

Zoning	parcel count*	acres	percentage
c1	42	89.56	23.9%
c2	27	33.73	9.0%
ns	3	2.77	0.7%
od	1	4.27	1.1%
oi	81	57.58	15.4%
r75	73	84.43	22.5%
rm100	1	6.82	1.8%
rm75	9	28.78	7.7%
rm85	225	21.56	5.8%
row (not zoned)	n/a	45.36	12.1%
total	462	374.87	100%

*\*Some parcels have multiple zoning districts*



*The study area has no quality parks within its boundaries*

Figure 2.2 Existing Land Use

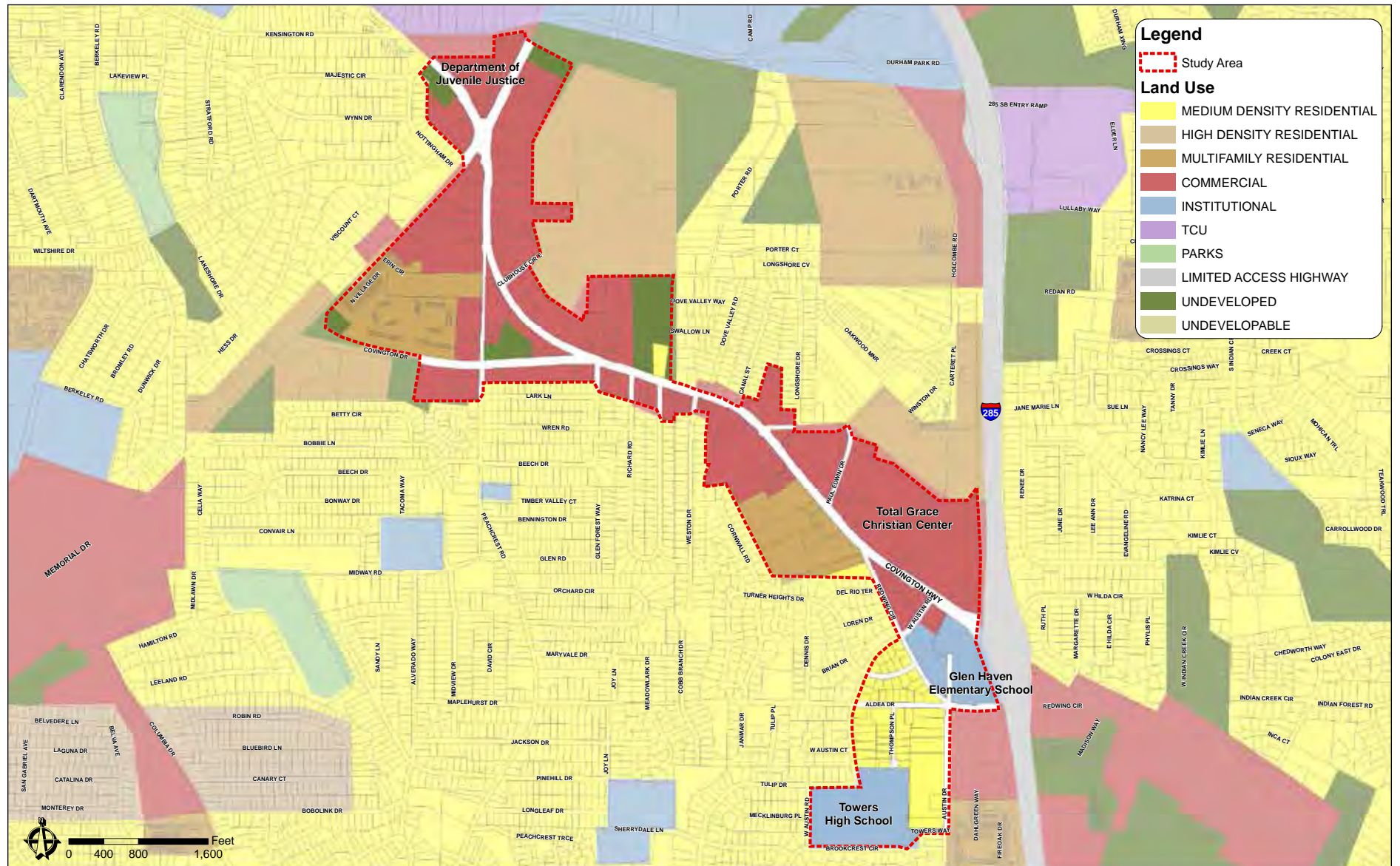


Figure 2.3 Existing Future Land Use/Character Areas

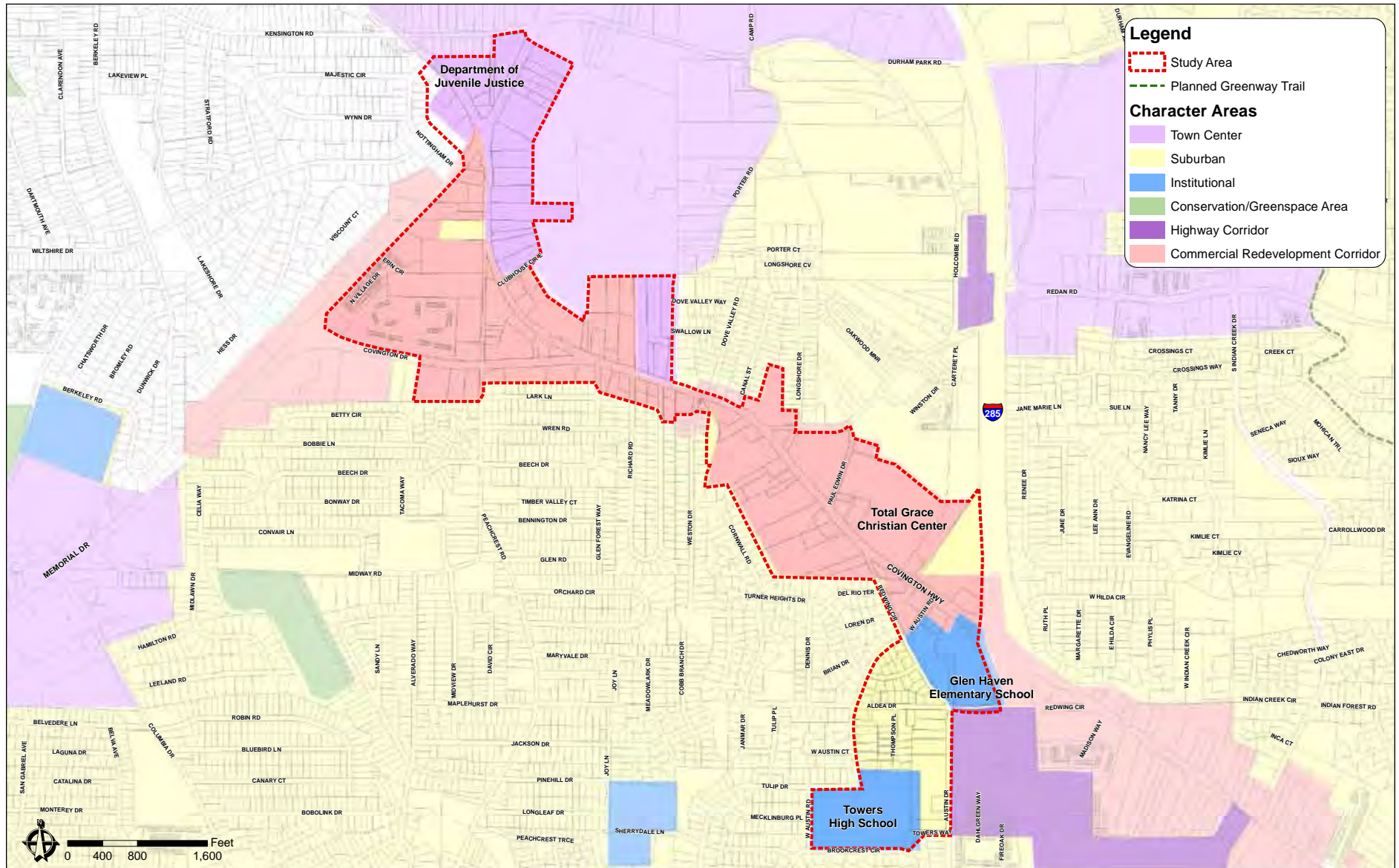
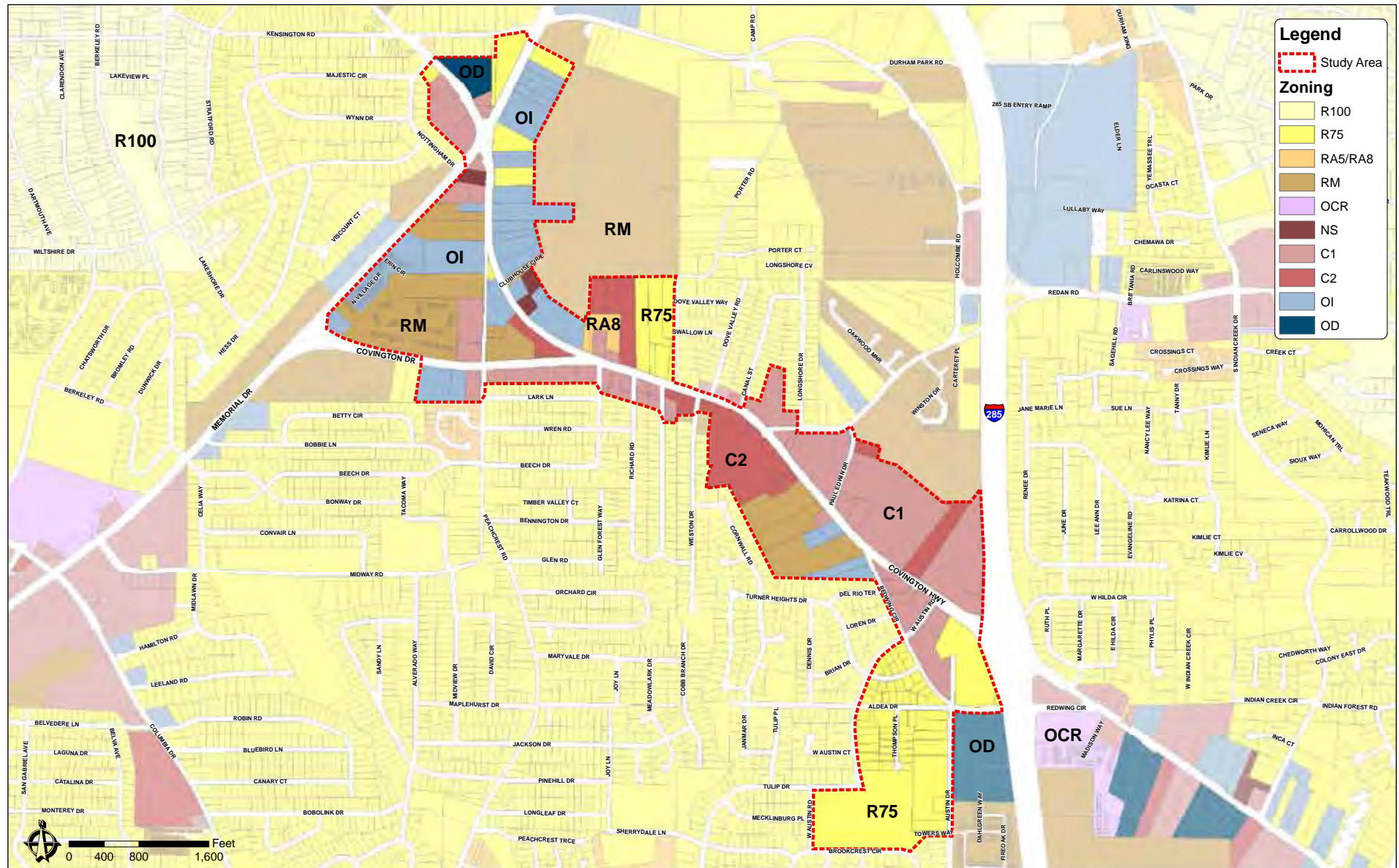


Figure 2.4 Existing Zoning



## 2.3 Urban Design

Urban design is a review of the collective patterns that define a community and the design opportunities that they represent. These patterns, as displayed in Figure 2.5, are formed by a variety of factors, largely based on the historic path that a community has taken and the imprints it has left along the way. Building styles, sidewalk layout, the relationship of buildings to the street and their angle and direction, and the placement of railroads are all important factors. In addition, the experience a place provides is defined by an interaction of these historic features with natural elements like trees, streams, and topography. These and other features work together to define “place” and establish physical character. This section examines several features of urban design and historic resources in the study area, including: Blocks & Street Patterns, Parcel Patterns, and Building Patterns.

### Block & Street Patterns

The study area consists of a main arterial (Covington Highway) and super-blocks that are somewhat connected to the surrounding modified street grid. Numerous curb cuts for parcels are located along Covington Highway. Overall,

the study area and its surroundings lack a hierarchy of connectivity, which discourages pedestrian and bicycle activities and leads to an auto-oriented lifestyle, contributing to poor air and water quality.

### Parcel Patterns

The study area consists of a variety of parcel sizes scattered throughout, including small single-family residential, medium sized commercial and office-institutional, and larger commercial and multifamily. A large portion of the parcels are narrow with frontage along Covington Highway and extend back to the study area boundary.

### Suburban

Except for the single-family residential area south of Covington Highway, there is hardly any building patterns in the study area. The other buildings that are located in the study area are generic, have large setbacks with surface parking in front, and do not define any space at all. Areas between parcels and at the back of parcels have wooded areas. Overall the area can be defined as low density development and lacks a sense of place.



*Auto-oriented commercial uses on large parcels are common in the study area corridor*

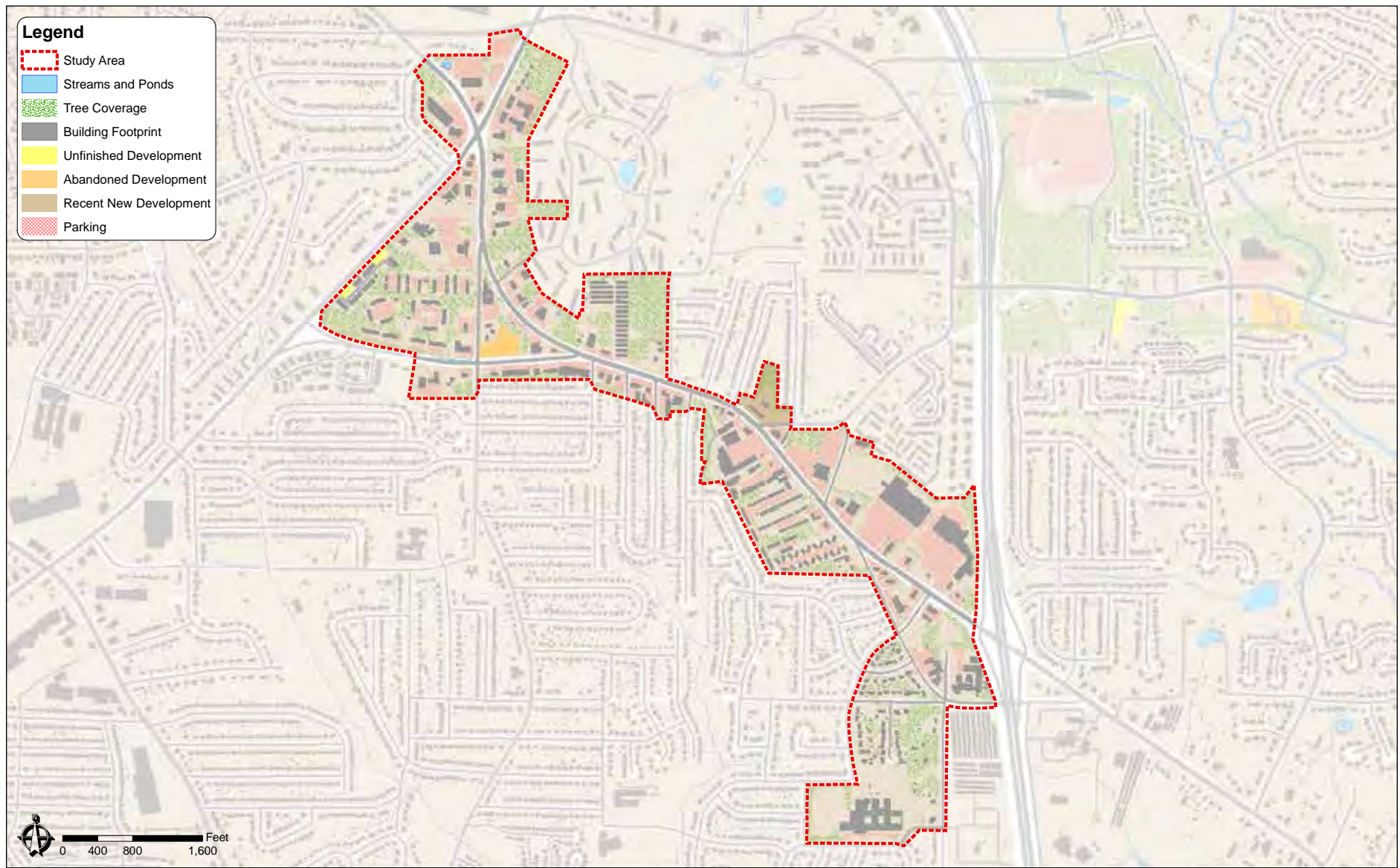


*Buildings are isolated and do not define space in the corridor area*



*Smaller streets in the study area lack connectivity and are hostile to pedestrians*

Figure 2.5 Urban Design Analysis



## 2.4 Transportation

### Roadway Access and Circulation

The existing Covington Highway Corridor study area features several roadways that (1) serve internal circulation needs for existing land uses, (2) connect the study area to the region, and (3) offer local collector functions. Roadways help define the MALP study area as well as serving circulation and connectivity functions. The study area is roadway boundaries and notable intersecting roads are noted below.

- Southeastern Boundary - I-285 Southbound Ramps
  - Redwing Circle
  - Paul Edwin Drive
  - Redan Road (extends east and northeast from Covington Highway extending to Holcombe Road)
  - Westin Drive
  - Richard Road
  - Covington Drive (extends from Covington Highway, crossing Midway Road to Memorial Drive)
  - Clubhouse Circle
  - Midway Road (Extends from Covington Highway south through Covington Drive)
- Northwestern Boundary – Memorial Drive
- Roadways intersecting with Redwing Circle:
  - W. Austin Road
  - Austin Drive

The adjacent interchange with Interstate 285 at Covington Highway provides the study area significant regional connectivity. Covington highway consists of two lanes in each direction plus a two-way center turn lane throughout the entire corridor and is designated as U.S. Highway 278. It is intersected by several roadways including those noted above as well as several driveways providing access into local businesses. Memorial Drive is a six-lane regional connector designated as State Route 154. It connects the study area with Decatur and Atlanta to the east and Stone Mountain to the west.

### Roadway Characteristics

General roadway characteristics along representative roadway segments within the study area including approximate roadway width, total number of lanes, and the presence of or lack of sidewalks are shown in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Indian Creek MARTA Station Study Area Roadway Characteristics

PRIMARY ACCESS ROADS	APPROX. ROADWAY WIDTH (FT.)	NUMBER OF LANES	SIDEWALKS (INDICATING SIDE OF ROADWAY)*
Covington Hwy. north of W. Austin Rd.	60	5	Both (Int. N)
Covington Hwy. north of Rewing Cir. (north of I-285)	62	5	Both (Int. N)
Covington Hwy. north Paul Edwin Dr.	62	5	B
Covington Hwy. north of Redan Rd.	62	5	B
Covington Hwy. north of Weston Dr.	62	5	B
Covington Hwy. south of Covington Drive	62	5	B
Covington Hwy. north of Covington Drive	64	5	B
Austin Rd. south of Covington Hwy.	22-26	2	B
Redwing Cir. (west of I-285) south of Covington Hwy.	24	2	S Only
Paul Edwin Dr. north of Covington Hwy.	20	2	None
Redan Rd. north of Covington Hwy.	27	2	N
Redan Rd. north of Paul Edwin Dr.	34	3	None
Weston Dr. south of Covington Hwy.	22	2	None
Covington Drive south of Covington Hwy.	22	2	Int. N Only
Midway Road south of Covington Hwy.	30	2	B
Memorial Drive north of Covington Hwy.	88	6	B

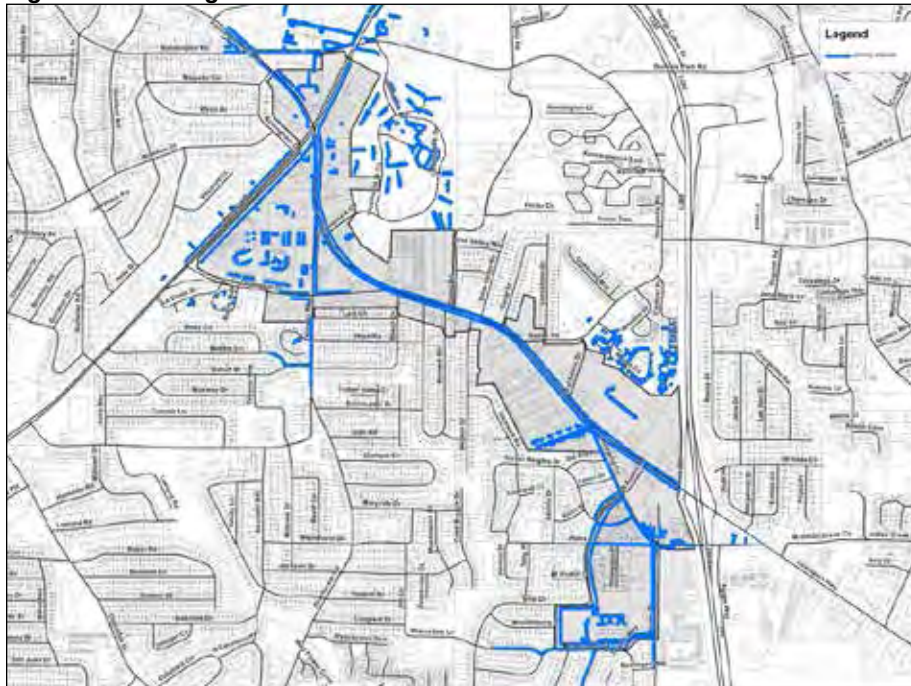
KEY:

- B* - indicates sidewalks on both sides
- Int.* - indicates intermittent or discontinuous sidewalks
- S* - Indicates south side of the road
- N* - Indicates north side of the road
- E* - Indicates east side of the road
- W* - indicates west side of the road

### Sidewalks

A more detailed assessment of sidewalks was conducted in order to identify where sidewalks currently exist or do not exist as identified in Figure 2.6. The blue lines depict where sidewalks currently exist.

**Figure 2.6 Existing Sidewalks**

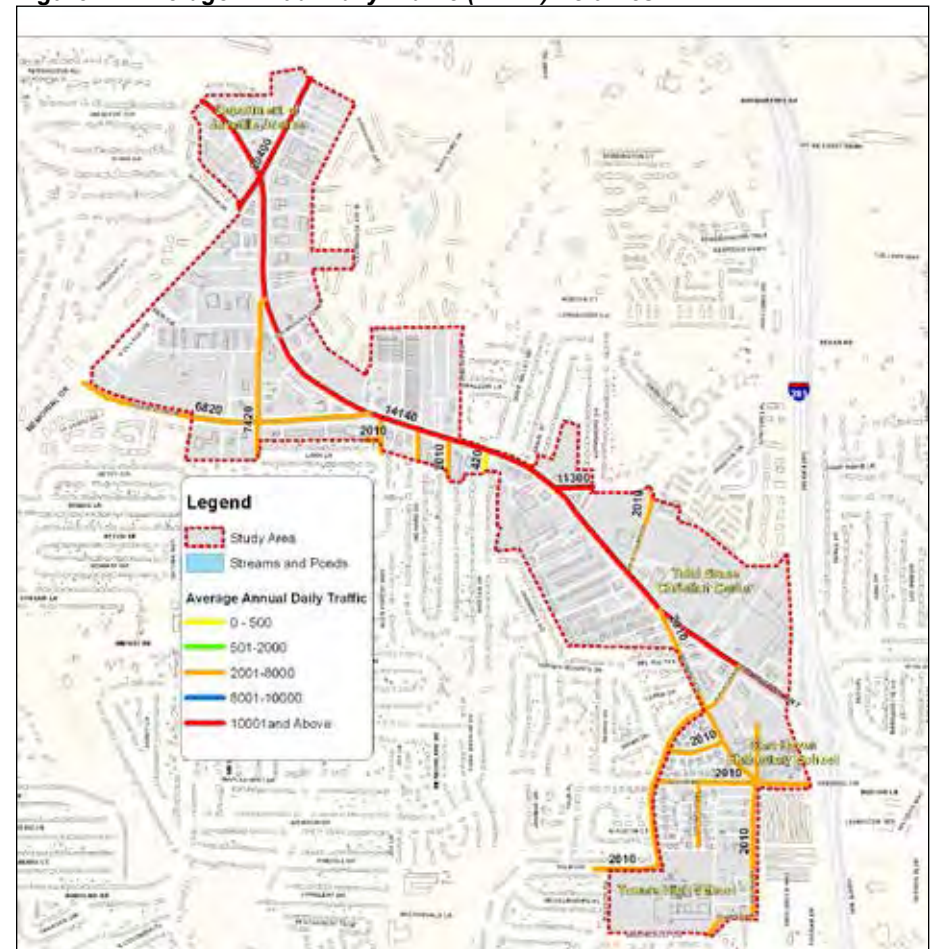


### Average Annual Daily Traffic

Average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes are presented in Figure 2.7. These data are based on Geographic Information System (GIS) files provided by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). They represent 2007 daily traffic volumes along the primary roadways within the study area. However, several smaller roadways indicate the same traffic volumes. This is because the character of the model that generated the traffic volumes is more regional in nature and cannot assign traffic accurately along smaller, local roads and should not be construed as accurate for purposes of this study. As shown, the traffic volume along Covington Highway within the study area is approximately

14,140. Memorial Drive has a traffic volume of about 20,400. Covington Drive indicates a daily traffic volume of approximately 6,820.

**Figure 2.7 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes**



### Roadway Level of Service

Roadway level of service (LOS) indicates the relative efficiency of the roadway system based on a ratio of the daily traffic volume along a roadway segment to the daily capacity of the roadway (the ability of the roadway to throughput a volume of traffic at a representative point along that segment). The capacity uses factors such as number of available lanes, roadway and lane width,



roadway condition and other factors. LOS A indicates free-flowing conditions with virtually no delay, while a LOS F rating indicates extreme congestion and delays.

Roadway level of service for select roadways within the Covington Highway Corridor study area are shown in Figure 2.8. As shown, all roadways within the study area operate at acceptable levels of service, with few delays other than those that would normally occur at intersections. Note that I-285 in the vicinity of the study area is operating at LOS D (minimally acceptable).

**Figure 2.8 Roadway Level of Service**

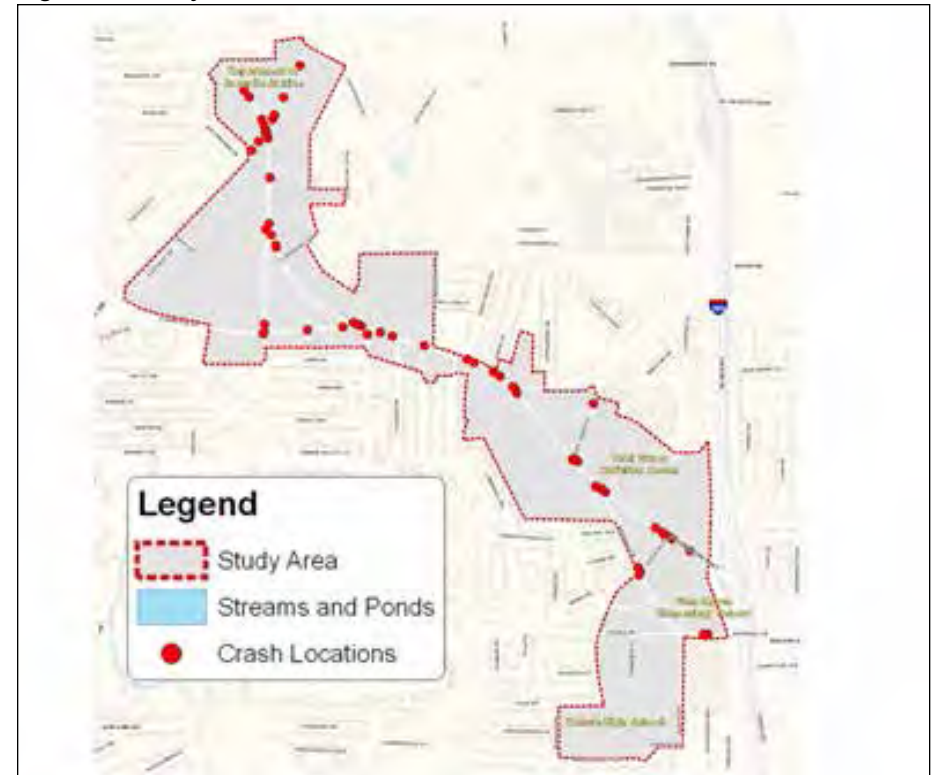


**Crash Locations**

The number and location of 3-year (2009-2011) crashes in the study area, gleaned from the ARC GIS files, are shown in Figure 2.9. This information is important in identifying operational or geometric (roadway or intersection design, sight distances, etc.) issues, often at intersections of streets or driveways, so that solutions can be examined which could reduce the crashes. As shown, higher crash locations are located at the intersections of Covington

Highway and Austin Road, Covington Highway and Covington Drive, and Covington Highway and Memorial Drive.

**Figure 2.9 Study Area Crash Location**



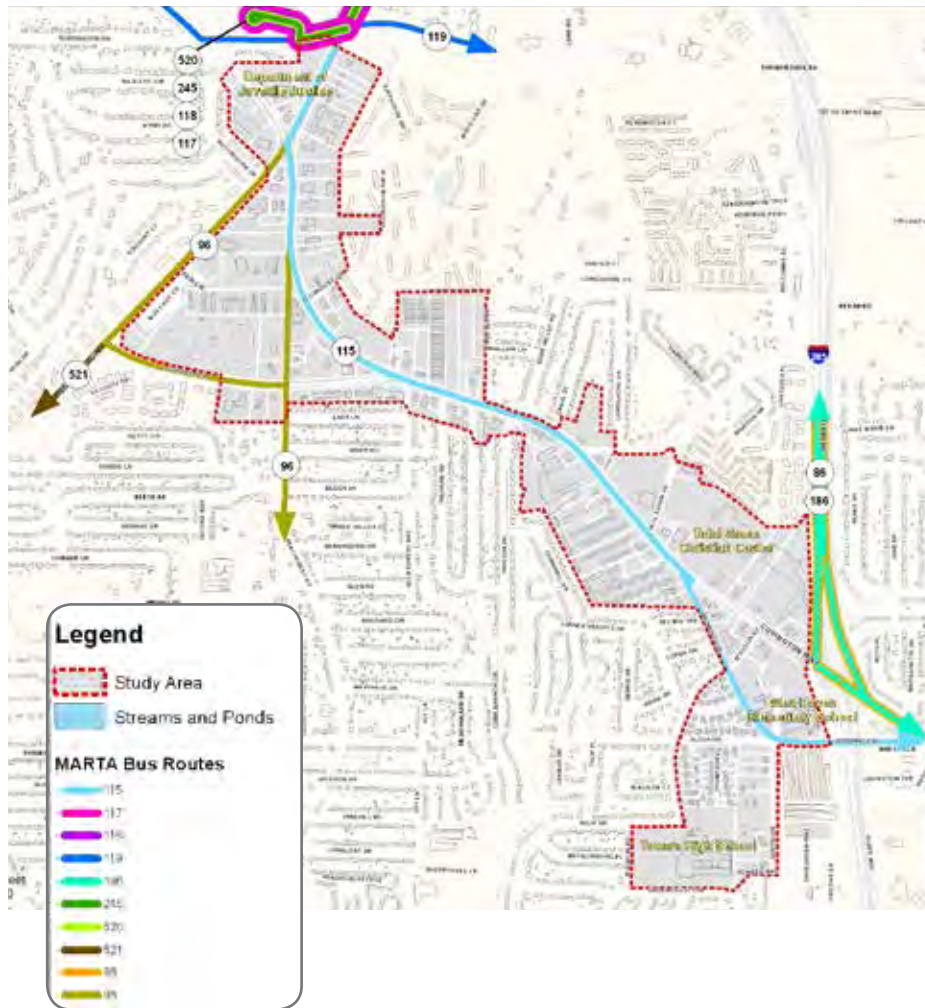
**MARTA Transit**

Regional rail transit is available at the Kensington MARTA station, located to the northwest of the study area near Kensington Road and Memorial Drive and at the Indian Creek MARTA station, located to the just to the east of study on the east side of I-285. MARTA bus service, as shown in Figure 2.10, is provided within or near the study area and include the #186 bus (shown in light blue) that traverses the majority of Covington Highway study area and then continues along Redwing Circle, accessing the east side of I-285. The #96 bus (light green) extends from Memorial Drive to Covington Highway and then south along Midway Road. The #119 bus (dark Blue) is located along Kensington Road to the north of the study area and the 86 and 186 buses (bright

## Existing Conditions

blue) extend from the Indian Creek MARTA station to and from the south along I-285 and Covington Highway east of I-285.

**Figure 2.10 Study Area MARTA Bus Routes**



October 24, 2013 - DRAFT

## Transportation Sustainability

*Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park—all without having to get in your car.”*

- Ray LaHood, U.S. DOT, Secretary of Transportation

Since World War II many communities have developed in a way that necessitates the use of an automobile for nearly every daily trip taken, leading to a sedentary lifestyle for both children and adults. Lack of sidewalks in suburban neighborhoods makes walking to schools, to sports activities and even visiting close-by neighbors dangerous. Removing the physical and financial barriers which limit recreational participation is paramount in helping residents to achieve healthy lifestyles and create meaningful community connections. The following describes common barriers to walking:

Common barriers to a sustainable and walkable community:

- Distance to daily destinations
- Lack of transportation choices
- Unsafe neighborhood conditions
- Unsafe traffic conditions
- Lack of time
- Poor health
- Lack of sidewalks
- Perceived lack of neighborhood physical activity opportunities
- Perceived lack of neighborhood safety

Using best practices in land use and transportation design promotes a healthy lifestyle. The physical attributes of streets have a significant impact on walking behavior. Sidewalk width, street width, street lighting, traffic volumes and speed, tree canopy, building height and weather all influence the walkability of a street. In addition to the design of streets, the layout of the street itself is also linked to physical activity. Connected street grids with more thru-routes are correlated with higher rates of walking and cycling

It is important to remember that every trip regardless of mode, begins and ends on foot. Studies have shown that transit use is associated with an increase in physical activity. Riders often weigh less and may even meet the 30 minute requirement per day of physical activity walking from home to a stop or station and from the stop or station to the workplace.

Looking through the lenses of transportation planning a sustainable transportation system should provide the following:

**Economic**

Efficient, fast and affordable mobility of people and goods

**Social**

Increased travel safety and public fitness opportunities; increased opportunities for quantity and quality interaction among community members

**Environmental**

Reduced air, noise and water pollution; more efficient use of land and resources; preservation of parks, natural habitats and farms.

At the present time, none of the areas reflect best practices for a sustainable community; however, the stakeholders who participated in this plan understand clearly what makes a sustainable, livable community and are eager to be part of the transformation that this plan recommends.

**Measuring the Livability and Sustainability of the Transportation Network**

Measuring the sustainability of a transportation network requires answers to the following questions and as noted in Table 2.7.

- Are “complete streets” or other traffic calming measures (e.g. reorient street geometry, lower speed limits) included in the community transportation network?
- Is there safe and ample pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure?
- Are the sidewalks wide enough (5’-6’ if buffer is provided; 8’ – 10’ without a buffer)?
- Do sidewalks include a curb ramp to the pedestrian crossing?
- Are there adequate buffers between the sidewalk and the street?
- Do the sidewalks meet the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act?
- Is access to bus stops and train stations pedestrian and bicycle friendly?
- Are bus stops sheltered?
- Is there appropriate seating at bus stops and train stations?
- Is there appropriate seating in parks?
- Do parks offer active living programs?

- Is transit oriented development available near train stations?
- Are land uses clustered and mixed to allow walking to different venues?
- What is the proximity of dwellings to transit, healthy food, parks and health care facilities?
- Do sidewalks connect parks to neighborhoods and employment centers?



*Accessibility to all users is critical to a sustainable transportation system (Courtesy Michael Ronkin)*

**Table 2.7 Transportation Sustainability**

Sustainability/Livability Attributes	Determination	Comments
Does the transportation network include "complete streets?"	No	All study areas have predominately four- lane facilities with center turn lane. All study areas reflect suburban, auto-oriented development.
Are traffic calming measures present?	No	In some areas, long blocks and low traffic contribute to speeding.
Are crosswalks present?	Some, very long blocks without crosswalks create a very dangerous situation for pedestrians crossing the 5-lane highway	While crosswalks are present at large intersections, they are badly needed in areas where blocks are long, particularly near residential areas and churches.
Are there adequate sidewalks in the study areas?	No; a number of dirt paths have been created by pedestrians going to bus stops	Sidewalks do exist in all study areas but rarely on both sides of the street. Some are wide and in good condition and others are narrow and not well maintained. Sidewalks are present on both sides of the roadway leading up to the Indian Creek MARTA Station, but few sidewalks link neighborhoods to the station. In some areas along Covington Highway no sidewalks exist near bus stops, and dirt paths have been created by pedestrians.
Are there adequate buffers between the sidewalks and the roadway?	Some	In some areas along Covington Highway narrow, non-vegetated buffers exist, but generally adequate buffers are not present in any of the study areas.
Is there appropriate seating at bus stops and shelters?	At shelters but not at stops	Along Covington Highway transit patrons were observed sitting on big rocks near the bus stop or leaning on trash cans.
Is transit oriented development present at the MARTA Station?	No	The parking lot at the Indian Creek MARTA Station provides a good opportunity for mixed use, high density residential. The parking lot is expansive and seldom full.
Are bike lanes available?	No, but opportunities exist with a road diet	Narrowing Covington Highway and adding a bike lane is one solution to this item.
Are multi-purpose trails located in the area?	No but opportunities exist	Opportunities exist to connect the Covington Corridor sidewalk network but building a multi-purpose trail connecting corridor to the Indian Creek MARTA station and to a proposed trail north of Durham Road. A multi-purpose trails could be built connecting with planned trails south of Flat Shoals Pkwy across the Community Achievement Center and on the east end of the study area near Chapel Hill Middle School.
Does the area invite walking and biking?	No but redevelopment along the corridor could attract proper economic development.	Covington Highway is ripe for redevelopment with abandoned and poorly maintained buildings. Family friendly retail and event development could make this a walking and biking destination. The Panola Road and Flat Shoals Pkwy study areas have nodes of relatively good service retail that could attract walkers and bikers when the pedestrian environment is complete and well buffered.
Are quality grocery stores within walking distance?	No	This is a common concern in each study area. Flat Shoals Parkway and the Panola Road areas do have chain grocery stores but the corridors do not invite pedestrians.
Are community gardens located in the area?	No	Community gardens were mentioned by stakeholders in each study area as something they would like to have in their community.
Are parks and open space easily accessible?	By car	

## 2.5 Demographics and Markets

The primary objective of the market analysis is to determine potential market depth for new residential, retail and office space in the Covington Highway Corridor study area over the next ten years. At present, the study area is characterized by aging commercial plazas freestanding retail, with several large vacancies and instances of non-retail uses in former retail space. Housing along the corridor is predominately apartments, but it is surrounded by single-family homes. Civic anchors include the Juvenile Justice Center on Memorial Drive and Glen Haven Elementary School and Towers High School near the Covington and I-285 intersection. It is easily accessible by both Memorial Drive and I-285 and is less than two miles from both the Kensington and Indian Creek MARTA stations.

The market analysis reveals an existing and growing level of potential market support for new residential and commercial space in the study area. A summary of each market segment and of local demographic trends are provided below.

### Market Area Demographic Trends

Table 2.8 identifies retail and residential market demographic data for the study area. The following figures show the geographic areas from which the large majority of potential retail customers and residents of new housing will emanate:

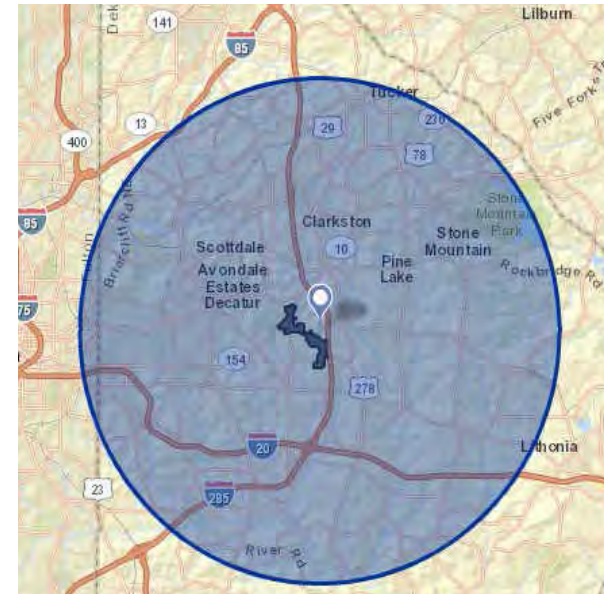
- Retail Market Area – a 7-to-10-minute drive from the study area; Residents will visit the study area for convenience-related goods and services as well as specialty shopping, dining and entertainment. (Please see Figure 2.11.)

- Residential Market Area – a 7-mile radius from the study area; Most potential residents of study area housing will move from within this area. (Please see Figure 2.12.)
- Demographic and socioeconomic trends for the market areas reveal that:
  - There is a considerable population base surrounding the study area. The retail market area is home to an estimated 84,000 residents and the residential market area to 457,000.
  - Both market areas lost population over the 2000 to 2012 time period, but are expected to add residents over the next five years. DeKalb saw a small population expansion since 2000, but lagged significantly behind metro Atlanta in terms of growth rate.
  - Growth in the market areas and DeKalb County is projected to be slow through 2017, with an average annual population growth rate from 0.60 to 0.68 percent.
  - Median income is \$39,300 in the retail market area and \$45,500 in the residential market area. Both are below the DeKalb median of \$49,600 and the metro median of \$54,600.
  - Age trends in the market areas are similar to those in the county and MSA. Like in the MSA, the share of DeKalb County's population over age 45 is expanding. This population segment grew from 28 percent of the MSA and the county in 2000 to 34 percent in 2010.
  - The majority of residents of both market areas are African American. White persons make up 18 percent of retail market area residents and 29 percent of residential market area residents.

**Figure 2.11 Covington Highway Corridor retail market area: 7-10-minute drive time**



**Figure 2.12 Covington Highway Corridor residential market area: 7-mile radius**



**Table 2.8 Demographic Snapshot: Market areas, DeKalb County and Atlanta MSA**

Demographic Indicator	Retail Market Area	Residential Market Area	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
Population				
2012	83,819	457,360	703,085	5,365,250
2017 (forecast)	86,330	472,257	726,991	5,650,874
Avg. Ann. % Change ('00 -'12)	-0.9%	-0.1%	0.5%	2.2%
Avg. Ann. % Change ('12 -'17)	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	1.1%
Households				
2012	30,618	178,642	273,761	1,970,820
2017 (forecast)	31,916	186,950	286,804	2,084,149
Avg. Ann. % Change ('00 -'12)	-0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	2.2%
Avg. Ann. % Change ('12 -'17)	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%
Average Household Size	2.61	2.50	2.52	2.68
Median Household Income	\$39,306	\$45,484	\$49,628	\$54,603
Median Age (Years)	35.3	35.1	34.4	35.0
Race				
Percent White Alone	18%	29%	35%	55%
Percent Black Alone	75%	63%	54%	33%
Percent Hispanic (any race)	3%	4%	10%	11%
Educational Attainment				
No High School Degree	17%	12%	13%	14%
High School Degree/ Some College	55%	46%	43%	46%
Associate Degree	6%	7%	6%	6%
Four Year Degree or More	23%	35%	38%	34%

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census; ESRI Business Information Solutions

- The substantial employment base in and around the study area will be another market for new retail and residential development. Approximately 2,400 people work within a mile radius of the center of the study area and an additional 11,400 work within 1.5 miles.

### Residential Market Overview

- Nationally, housing values are stabilizing and beginning to show appreciation in some markets. Foreclosures are down in most areas, which will reduce the housing supply and act to boost prices. In 2012, home sales grew by 9 percent and inventory fell by 8.5 percent, to the lowest level nationally since May 2005. Presently the market is driven by resales, with the number of new home sales either flat or declining. Overall, 2013 should be a year in which gradually improving housing fundamentals accelerate and begin to drive economic growth.
- Market home sales in DeKalb County increased by almost 20 percent over the last three years, while real estate owned (REO) sales fell by one percent. Record low mortgage interest rates are encouraging homebuyers, but the tight mortgage market and restrictive mortgage underwriting standards are limiting sales, particularly outside I-285, which is still regarded as a “difficult” market by real estate salespeople.
- The tight lending environment and unresolved issues related to foreclosures are a source of continuing demand for rental apartments, locally and nationally. The dynamic that began in 2010 remains in place: the increase in prospective apartment residents continues to outpace the number of new apartments completed. In metro Atlanta, Databank, Inc. shows apartment occupancy rates hovering in the low 90s and average rental rates at about \$760 for a two-bedroom unit. Both are the highest in four years.
- More than half (54 percent) of housing units in and near the study area (within a one mile radius of its center) are renter occupied. Housing types vary, including single-family detached homes (40 percent of the stock), small multifamily properties of 3 to 9 units (34 percent) and larger multifamily communities of ten or more units (19 percent). The vacancy rate is high at 17 percent, with the vast majority of vacant homes being rental units. Nearly three-quarters of housing was built before 1980, compared to 52 percent countywide.

### Retail Market Overview

- The national commercial real estate market is slowly recovering following declines in consumer spending and tightened lending markets. Nation-

wide, occupancy rates are increasing and positive absorption has continued, although market expansion is projected to continue at a slow pace as consumers remain cautious and spending makes incremental increases, according to the National Retail Federation. Recovery is strongest in top tier properties, while lower tier centers and unanchored commercial strips face the most difficult challenges.

- In metro Atlanta, the retail sector is improving as vacancy rates edge downward and absorption increases in response to lower lease rates. While the market has worked its way through an oversupply of mid-sized and larger boxes, there remains an abundance of small shop space in neighborhood and suburban markets.
- Northlake Mall, North DeKalb Mall and the Gallery at South DeKalb provide 2.3 million square feet of destination retail space within approximately a fifteen minute drive of the study area. Convenience shopping around the study area includes Kroger at Belvedere Plaza, Aldi and WalMart on Memorial Drive and Publix at Covington Highway and Hairston Road.
- The retail supply within the study area reveals private disinvestment along the Covington Highway corridor, with several vacant and potentially obsolete spaces. Large vacancies include a former Cub Foods and a nightclub, and a former Target is now in use as a church.

### Office Market Overview

- The Atlanta office market had a strong performance in 2012 with the positive absorption of 3.2 million square feet, the strongest seen in five years, while vacancy rates continued to fall and rents stabilized and even rose in some cases.
- A considerable share of leasing activity has come from relocations rather than expansions as Midtown, Buckhead and the Central Perimeter have

attracted tenants to Class A space from nearby Class B space and suburban markets.

- Momentum in the Central Perimeter submarket has been very strong in 2013, thus far absorbing 675,000 square feet of space. In the Northlake submarket, 300,000 square feet of office space are under construction.

In the study area, the most significant amount of office space is in the Department of Juvenile Justice building. The Georgia Department of Labor also has office space in the Pendley Hills Shopping Center. Other office space along Memorial Drive is limited to a few older, multi-tenant buildings built in the 1970s and 80s with modest vacancies. Tenants include a mix of law offices, medical offices, financial services and counseling/behavioral centers.

### Estimated Future Development Potential

Table 2.9 estimates the potential for new residential, retail and office space in the study area based on regional and local market characteristics, competitive supply and demographics and socioeconomic trends. Note that, due to their close proximity in Central DeKalb, these figures reflect potential demand for new space in the DeKalb County MALP Covington Highway Corridor and Indian Creek MARTA Station study areas combined. Land use recommendations for each study area were then prepared based on market analysis findings and other existing conditions, and according to the community's vision for each site.

Ultimately, the Covington Highway Corridor's success at capturing demand will depend on implementing a comprehensive development program with a variety of residential and commercial uses. In other words, a passive or segmented approach would result in the study area achieving only a fraction of its estimated potential.

**Table 2.9 Estimated Future Development Potential in Central DeKalb MALP Study Areas**

	10-Year Demand Potential	Opportunities	Constraints	Development Considerations
<b>Residential</b>	350 for-sale units and 500 rental units in the study areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing interest in living in mixed-use centers with access to jobs, shopping, entertainment and transit</li> <li>• Growing senior population with potential interest in down-sizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing market is still in recovery mode with resale prices and new home sales yet to rebound</li> <li>• Lack of visual appeal and recent investment in study area may limit developer interest</li> <li>• Slow population growth in DeKalb and residential market area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target markets will include young professionals, empty nesters, small families and workforce housing</li> </ul>
<b>Retail</b>	191,000 square feet of new retail space in the study areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong existing residential and employment base</li> <li>• Potential to recapture sales dollars currently leaving the market area</li> <li>• Redevelopment of existing, obsolete retail space may increase potential market support for new retail development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large vacancies and deteriorating retail space reflects ongoing disinvestment</li> <li>• Slow population growth in DeKalb and retail market area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on attracting a business mix that will enhance residents' ability to make healthy choices</li> <li>• Examples: fresh groceries, healthy restaurants, family activity center/playplace, recreation lessons, etc</li> </ul>
<b>Office</b>	50,000 to 60,000 square feet of new office space in the study areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily accessible to I-285 and Memorial Drive</li> <li>• Strengthening office markets in the Central Perimeter and Northlake areas may bolster demand for office space elsewhere in DeKalb County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kensington MARTA Station LCI Plan envisioned 2.7 million square feet of office space at Memorial Dr &amp; Kensington Rd, which constitutes a significant share of potential DeKalb County office demand over the next ten years</li> <li>• Not well-established destination for private office users</li> <li>• Lack of aesthetic appeal along Covington Highway corridor may limit interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential office space uses include professional services (legal, financial, medical, dental, etc.)</li> <li>• Additional office space demand may be supported in the study area depending on how office development in the Kensington area progresses</li> </ul>





**PART III: PUBLIC PROCESS**

## 3.1 Process Overview

As part of the planning and design process for the Board of Health Master Active Living Plan a variety of tools were used for the public participation portion. A series of public meetings, stakeholder interviews, design workshops, surveys and public presentations were conducted to gather input.

The various documents, organizations and media outlets used to notify the community of the public meetings and milestones for the project were the project website, press releases, community notices, project flyers, community associations, churches, community bulletin boards, home owner association newsletters, DeKalb County government website (One DeKalb), local newspapers, and MALP website.

The purpose of these meetings is to enhance the viability of DeKalb County by engaging healthy community design principles and concepts, best practices of sustainable development, urban design, active living, and lifelong community principles to connect residential areas to schools, parks, senior facilities and mixed-use activity centers.

### **Stakeholder Interviews: February 2013**

A series of one-on-one stakeholder interviews were conducted to gain more specific input on key issues in the study areas. These interviews included DeKalb County Commissioners, DeKalb County Department Directors and Staff, Representatives from MARTA, Neighborhood Leaders, and property owners. The discussions were informal and were used to identify current situations, initiatives and trends in the corridor.

### **Public Kick-Off Meeting: February 19, 2013**

A Public Kick-Off Meeting was hosted at Georgia Piedmont Technical College in Clarkston, Georgia on February 19, 2013. The meeting was well attended with people eager to learn about the

planning process. It began with an introduction of the project team and lead into a description of the specific study areas and the intent of the project. Lastly the attendees were divided into groups, for the break-out session period, and instructed to rotate to the various tables that were labeled as Land Use, Transportation, Marketing, and Health/Environment. Input and feedback was recorded by the respective table subject experts.

### **Workshop/Open House: February 20, 2013**

The Design Workshops and Open House was held on the second day of the three day series for each study area. Throughout the day stakeholders and citizens from the community joined the project team for an open house to refine ideas and review the draft concept plans.

### **Draft Plan Presentation: February 21, 2013**

The evening of the third day concluded with a public overview presentation of the designs and planning ideas developed during the week. There were Question & Answer Periods, along with more opportunities to see the draft concepts while actually viewing the maps



Stakeholders hear draft recommendations for the study area

### **Public Meeting Summary**

#### **Stakeholder's Meeting**

Tuesday, February 5, 2013  
6:30 PM – 9 PM

DeKalb County Planning & Development  
330 W. Ponce de Leon Ave, Suites 200  
Decatur, GA 30030

#### **Public Kick-Off Meeting**

Tuesday, February 19, 2013  
6:30 PM – 9 PM

Georgia Piedmont Technical College  
495 N. Indian Creek Drive  
Clarkston, GA 30021

#### **Workshop/Open House**

Wednesday, February 20, 2013  
4 PM – 8 PM

Georgia Piedmont Technical College  
495 North Indian Creek Drive  
Clarkston, GA 30021

#### **Draft Plan Presentation**

Thursday, February 21, 2013  
6:30 PM – 8 PM

Georgia Piedmont Technical College  
495 North Indian Creek Drive  
Clarkston, GA 30021

#### **Final Meeting/Plan Presentation**

Tuesday, March 12, 2013  
6 PM - 9:30 PM

Maloof Auditorium  
1300 Commerce Drive  
Decatur, GA 30030

## Project Website

A project website, [www.DeKalbMALP.com](http://www.DeKalbMALP.com), was developed at the onset of the project to provide information about the Master Active Living Plan, project deliverables, to support communication, be a repository of information about the management of the project, including meeting reports, presentations and maps. The website will be maintained throughout the project.

## Posted Public Meeting Notifications

The following media and community websites were used to communicate information of the DeKalb Board of Health Master Active Living Plan:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs106/1101171362853/archive/1112505082531.html>

<http://www.atlantabike.org/node/2297>

[http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1103469146579-1366/MALP\\_Public+Meeting+Flyer2.pdf](http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1103469146579-1366/MALP_Public+Meeting+Flyer2.pdf)

<http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/>

<http://clairmontheights.org/node/3200>

[http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/calendar/calendar.pl?style=Grid&calendar=OneDeKalb&view=Event&event\\_id=309](http://web.co.dekalb.ga.us/calendar/calendar.pl?style=Grid&calendar=OneDeKalb&view=Event&event_id=309)

<http://www.commissionerrader.com/event-details/events/dekalb-county-seeking-community-input-on-proposed-master-active-living-plan.html>

[http://www.crossroadsnews.com/view/full\\_story/21786853/article-Input-sought-for-Active-Living-Plan--?instance=news\\_special\\_coverage\\_right\\_column](http://www.crossroadsnews.com/view/full_story/21786853/article-Input-sought-for-Active-Living-Plan--?instance=news_special_coverage_right_column)

In addition, the following meetings were attended to make meeting announcements and to pass out flyers to the community members:

- DeKalb Legislative Community Cabinet Meeting, Hosted by Commissioner Stan Watson, March 02, 2013, Meeting Flyers Provided.
- Let's Move DeKalb, Seniors: Picture DeKalb Health. Hosted by Commissioner Lee May and S. Elizabeth Ford, Health Director. Announcement and Flyers Provided.
- State of DeKalb Town Hall Meeting, Hosted by Commissioner Lee May, March 09, 2013. Announcement and Flyers Provided.
- Easter Egg Extravaganza, Hosted by Commissioner Lee May, March 09, 2013. Announcement and Flyers Provided.

## Community Health Assessment Questionnaire

Purpose of this assessment was to identify the prominent medical conditions of the respondent, current basic health measurements, type of physical exercise, primary means of transportation, specifics regarding transportation practices and concerns, specifics regarding food choices and purchasing practices, levels of motivation regarding a healthy living style, three major problems to be solved, and finally some personal information about housing and longevity of residence in the community. A convenience sample of 20 adult community residences completed a 50-item survey. A major finding is that respondents appear to have a poor perception of “health” based on their inaccurate reporting of whether they were of normal weight, overweight or obese. Using BMI measurements, the citizens have gained weight over the last five years while they report a slight increase in physical activity.

### Typical Respondent

The typical respondent is described as follows: An African American adult who has lived in the community for over 15 years, and is a homeowner with one to three people in residence. The primary health problems are high blood pressure (hypertension) and high cholesterol. A measurement score of blood pressure is not provided. The person’s usual form of exercise is housecleaning and/or yard work, plus walking outside for at least one-half hour on most days. The car is the main mode of transportation. It is easy for the person to get to public transportation; however, (s)he prefers to use the car for travel. Although the family owns a bicycle, car travel supersedes bike travel.

The respondent highlights various features of the current community environment: poor light along the streets; pavement conditions unsafe for walking or bicycling. Car and truck speeds add to the unsafe conditions. Georgia sun, heat and humidity are not barriers to walking for exercise. In contrast, crime impedes physical activity. Bad air is fairly bothersome in terms of its effects on breathing while exercising outside. Sadly, crime, poor lighting and visibility, poor condition, and little to do in the park together characterize the few parks in existence. There are too few nice places to socialize with neighbors.

A healthy balanced diet is a priority for health. Food purchasing practices include reading labels when shopping regarding calories sources; sometimes buying processed food in bulk; and usually buying fresh fruits only in season because of the price. This person would buy more fresh food if available nearby. Food cooking habits include baking, broiling or grilling fish at least once a week; and snacking on vegetables or fruits rather than cookies or chips. (S)he acknowledges how to cook fresh vegetables, and believes there is a difference between fresh and canned vegetables in terms of nutrients.

### Methods

Representative of the study communities, a convenience sample of 20 adults served as voluntary subjects of this survey. The majority were recruited as attendees of a series of three public meetings sponsored by the DeKalb County Board of Health aimed as soliciting stakeholder input on developmental plans for a built community. A smaller number was solicited in the field at a local public library and at a small business in a Covington Highway mall plagued by numerous vacancies. Content for the 50-item questionnaire was selected by experts in the fields of health and urban planning.

Basic descriptive statistics were applied to data. Highlights of results are presented in tables 3.1 through 3.12. Please see the analysis of findings for the respective tables.

**Table 3.1 Top Medical Conditions**

56%	High blood pressure
39%	High cholesterol

Although high blood pressure (56%) was identified the main health problem, half of the respondent were unaware of the blood pressure reading. High cholesterol (39%) is likely to be much higher as some respondents believed that the condition was absent if statin medication was being taken.

**Table 3.2 Body Mass Index and Blood Pressure**

22%	Obese
50%	Overweight
27%	Normal
72%	Obese/overweight combo
72%	Inaccurately identified weight class
33%	Unaware of current BP reading

Body Mass Index was calculated via National Heart Lung & Blood Institute formula. For each respondent, the height and weight was entered into the formula producing a BMI where weight is divided by height squared. Gender was not entered into the equation. Each BMI fell into one of four categories: underweight, normal, overweight and obese. Compared to the 2007 DeKalb County BMI statistics, this sample shows an overall weight gain of 13.2% during the past five years. Obesity increased by 26%; overweight increased by 12.8%. Thus, this convenience sample provides evidence that there is dire need for a built healthy community.

**Table 3.3 Usual Form of Physical Exercise**

78%	Housecleaning/yard work
50%	Walking outside for half hour on most days

In 2007 the World Health Organization (WHO) promoted physical exercise for optimal health as follows: at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five days per week. Due to the continued explosion of overweight and obesity in the U.S. the new rule of thumb is seven days per week. Regular exercise improves cholesterol, reduces blood pressure, reduces or controls weight, reshapes body contour, increases muscle tone (heart and other organs), and reduces stress. Note that only half of respondents are making an earnest attempt to engage in this essential requirement for healthy living.

**Table 3.4 Transportation Issues**

100%	Family owns car
78%	Ease if getting to public transportation
28%	Prefer public transportation over car
50%	Family owns bicycle
22%	Prefer biking over car

The automobile continues to be the primary mode of transportation over public transportation and bicycle. Half of the respondents say that the family has a bicycle. Several respondents verbally commented on their preference of combining car with public transportation (MARTA or bus) and walking in order to achieve their daily exercise goals.

**Table 3.5 Safety of Streets and Roads**

72%	Poor lighting along my streets
72%	Street pavement unsafe to bike ride
72%	Sidewalk pavement unsafe to walk
72%	Vehicle speeds unsafe to bike or walk
67%	Street crime is barrier to walking for exercise

Several indicators of an unsafe environment were identified as significant barriers to physical activity. Note that these responses ranged 67% to 72%. Respondents verbally emphasized the need for community improvements in streets and roads for the goal of healthy living to be realized.

**Table 3.6 Environmental Conditions**

44%	Sun, heat, humidity - barriers to walking
44%	Bad air – barrier to walking for exercise

Lack of shade trees is counterproductive to goal of a healthy built community. Trees appropriately spaced allow some relief for the motivated walker or jogger, helping to regulate a safe body temperature during physical exercise. Air quality is a major public concern, as noted in HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010, 2020 and by nearly half of the community respondents. Breathing toxic particles floating about in the air further debilitate persons with asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD), and lung cancer. Poor air quality is a barrier to healthy people, particularly growing children and senior citizens.

**Table 3.7 Community Parks**

56%	Not enough parks in neighborhood
44%	Park unsafe due to crime, poor lighting/visibility
44%	Poor condition of park
67%	Lack of things to do in park

Parks rank high among amenities essential for healthy living among community respondents, yet respondents identified their lacking in number, their poor condition and safety features, and activity potential. Parks function as a gathering place for residents of all ages to actively engage in physical exercise and socialization. Summer's relief from the Georgia heat and humidity via green space and water sports is another significant feature of a built community.

**Table 3.8 Eating Healthy Foods**

100%	Want family to each healthy balanced diet
61%	Eat baked broiled or grilled fish once weekly
27%	No time/energy to cook healthy meals
27%	Canned vegetables as good for us as fresh
78%	Snack on veg/fruit rather than sweets/chips
22%	Do not know how to cook fresh vegetables

Poor eating habits of individuals and families promote overweight and obesity in children and adults. Chronic poor dietary intake causes malnutrition in infants and children, leading to multiple health problems. Inadequate knowledge of health products is evident in that a quarter of respondents acknowledge limited time/energy to cook health meals, particularly fresh vegetables. Faulty perception of nutritious foods is an underlying factor as evidenced by a quarter of respondents' misunderstanding that canned is equal to fresh vegetables in terms of nutrition value. In contrast, over half of respondents reported eating non-fried fish once weekly.

**Table 3.9 Purchasing Healthy Foods**

72%	Read food labels for calories sources
61%	Buy fresh fruits only in season due to price
83%	Would buy more fresh food if available nearby
83%	Would like to have backyard garden

Healthy eating means choosing low fat, low cholesterol, low sodium, low sugar, and high fiber foods. While respondents leaned heavily toward the intent to "smart buying," a relatively high proportion were either overweight or obese, and 56% identified high blood pressure as a health problem—an indicator of poor food choices. On a positive note, 83% of respondents want more fresh food via store or garden. A number of respondents were highly enthusiastic about a large community garden where persons of all ages could engage in growing and distributing its products.

**Table 3.10 Motivation**

50%	Need support from family & friends to engage in healthy living activities
50%	Do not need support from family & friend to engage in health living activities.

There was an equal split between respondents regarding their personal motivation to achieve goals of healthy living, such as daily physical exercise

combined with buying and eating for good nutrition and weight management. Successful approaches to smoking cessation differ among people-- some attacking the addiction independently while others seeking a supportive environment.

**Table 3.11 Top Three Problems**

1	More funding to help project get built
2	Safe places for neighbors to socialize
3	Easier access to supermarkets and fresh food

Ranking by respondents of ten top problems to be solved produced "more funding to help project get built" as number one priority! Respondents were highly enthusiastic about plans for developing a 'built community'; however, most questioned access to public and/or private financial investments to actually make the dream come true. Great concern was expressed for two features of healthy living: socialization of neighbors and access to supermarkets and fresh foods. Of a list of ten options, these three stood out among the rest.

**Table 3.12 Residence Information**

50%	Lived 15 years or more in community
72%	Own their homes
100%	1-3 persons live in home

Fifty percent of respondents lived in the Covington Highway and Indian Creek Marta Station study areas with the remaining living in areas nearby. The longevity of citizens living in their communities and owning their homes clearly shows commitment on their part to development and improvement of land use, medical services, shopping opportunities, and socialization in an attractive and safe environment.

Visual inspection of Atlanta hospitals and medical centers plus review of the list of DeKalb County Board of Health Centers indicate that there is an obvious void of immediate health services within these two communities.

## Conclusion

While limitations exist in this survey process, findings provide an obvious conflict as to what is now available/accessible to community residents and what is possible in the future. Unhealthy lifestyles lead to unhealthy conditions, many of which are costly in both quality of life and money. A major finding is that respondents have an inaccurate perception of "health." Thus, health education is essential in order to change unhealthy behaviors. Health education surfaces as a basic element in future development of a healthy community.



Most respondents felt walking in the study area was unsafe, as this photo shows



Many places are using vegetable gardens to provide fresh foods and strengthen community bonds



**PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 4.1 Overview of Recommendations

This section contains recommendations for the Covington Highway Corridor study area that will proactively shape the future character of the area and provide short and long-range actions to achieve the community's vision. Two types of recommendations are provided: Policies and Projects. Projects are followed by a project number that corresponds to Section 5.1: Action Plan.

Policies are general guidelines that provide direction to the implementation of the plan's vision. They often support recommended projects and should serve as the basis for future actions on the part of decision-makers.

Recommendations are based on a synthesis of the existing conditions assessment and community input, coupled with sound planning principles. They offer a visionary yet achievable blueprint for sustainable growth that will benefit the Covington Hwy corridor area for decades.

### Future Vision

The DeKalb Board of Health Master Active Living Plan is an unprecedented opportunity for the Panola Road study area and nearby neighborhoods to plan for the future as a healthy community and



one supports the ability of people of all ages and abilities to live in dignity. Sometimes also called a Lifelong Community, these places provide the needs of daily life within a compact, walker-friendly setting.

The framework plan identifies multifamily that should be senior housing to accommodate the aging population. The proposed commercial areas are mainly redevelopment sites that should be designed to create a safe and walkable area for all generations. The plan's main goal is to connect the existing school and parks to the community with proposed sidewalks and multi-use trails. The plan strives to ensure that future redevelopment benefits the area, surrounding communities, and the region.

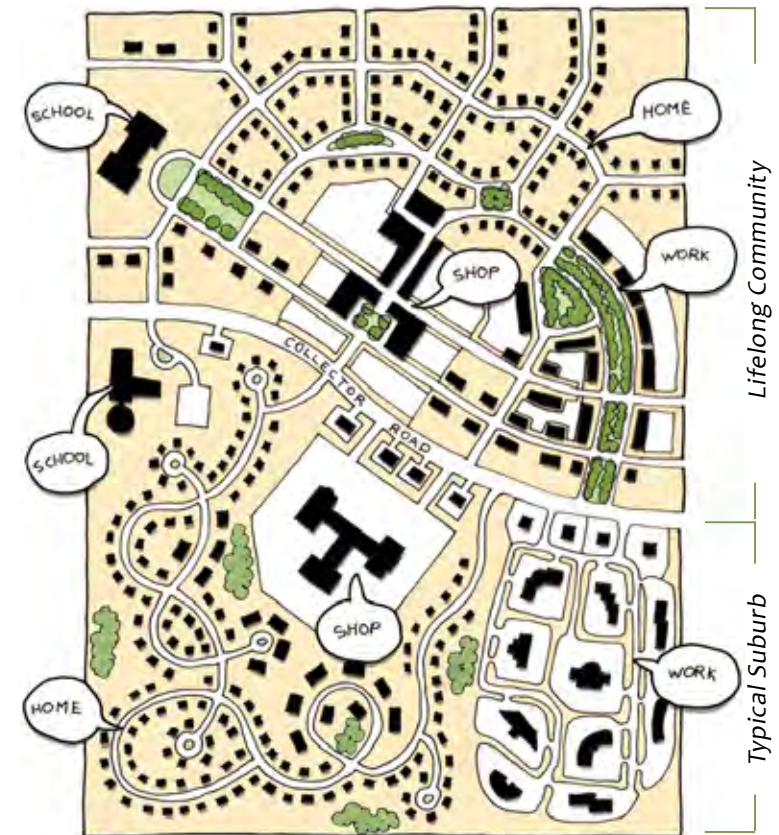
The recommendations that follow have been developed to realize a vision that emerged from an open and inclusive planning process. Central to this is the belief that poorly planned development practices must be shunned in favor of a thoughtful and integrated approach to land use, the environment, urban design, transportation, demographics, and most importantly, health. This builds on the strengths of the area to create a place for lasting economic, social, and environmental value.

*Healthy communities are Lifelong Communities, and all people of all ages and abilities to live life to its fullest (Image Source: Atlanta Regional Commission)*

## Supporting Healthy Communities

Throughout the planning process, a deliberate effort was made to link the community vision and plan to the health goals of the Master Active Living Plan. To this end, the recommendations that follow meet community objectives while also addressing existing challenges to healthy living today.

Table 4.1 presents the top six leading causes of death and related hospitalization in the community, factors that contribute to the priority health issues, and healthy design recommendations identified during the planning process.





**Table 4.1 The Relationship between Recommendations and Health**

Rank	Community Health Issue	Contributing Factors	Healthy Design Recommendations (Projects are greens, programs are blue, and policies are yellow)
1	<b>Cardiovascular Disease</b>		
	Overweight/Obesity Hypertension Heart Attack Congestive Heart Failure Stroke Diabetes Renal Failure	Inaccurate perception of health Poor food choices Lack of access to fresh food Overuse of Processed Foods Physical Inactivity High Stress Levels Tobacco Use/Exposure Lack of health education Limited access to health care	Build high-quality parks (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Improve access to existing parks (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Build bike paths/multi-use trails (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Build greenways (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Organize farmers markets (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Build complete sidewalk systems (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Locate stores closer together to promote walking (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Improve access from residential to commercial areas (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Encourage higher density, pedestrian friendly development at activity nodes (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Build a Community Center for educational, physical and social activities (X-9)
			Install more playground equipment, etc. at parks and along trails (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Build a community garden (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Encourage more natural food stores (e.g., Mini Whole Foods Store) (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Need enjoyable and stimulating place to walk (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-11)
			Hold more educational/sports/activity programs at local churches/schools/community centers (O-12)
			“Brand” study area as a “Healthy Community” (O-13)
			Organize a fresh food cooking club (O-14)
			Provide health education programs for all ages. (O-15)
			Serve healthier meals to school children
	Expand physical exercise programs at local schools (O-16)		
	Provide low/no cost summer exercise programs for children (O-17)		
	Build partnerships between DeKalb County Board of Health partnerships and local hospitals and medical centers to provide mobile health services to residents (O-18)		
	Develop a healthy community scorecard that DeKalb County can use to evaluate proposed development projects; provide incentives for “healthy” projects (O-10)		
	Change local zoning to promote compact, mixed use development (O-2)		
	Revise the zoning ordinance to permit more local gardens and farmers markets (O-2)		

**Table 4.1 The Relationship between Recommendations and Health (continued)**

Rank	Community Health Issue	Contributing Factors	Healthy Design Recommendations (Projects are greens, programs are blue, and policies are yellow)
2	Cancer		
	Prostrate	Lack of Physical Exercise	Build high-quality parks (see Urban Design Recommendations)
	Breast	Poor Food Choices/Sources	Improved access to existing parks (see Transportation Recommendations)
	Lung	Education	Build bike paths/multi-use trails (see Transportation Recommendations)
	Colon	Genetics	Build greenways (see Transportation Recommendations)
	Skin	Tobacco Use/Exposure	Organize farmers market (see Urban Design Recommendations)
		Lack of preventative testing/care	Build complete sidewalk systems (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Locate stores closer together to promote walking (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Provide improved access from residential to commercial areas (see Transportation Recommendations)
			Build a community garden (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Provide a Community Center for educational, physical and social activities (O-9)
			Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-11)
			“Brand” the study area as a “Healthy Community” (O-13)
			Expand tobacco-free public sites (O-19)
			Provide health education programs for all ages (O-15)
3	Respiratory Disease		
	Asthma	Poor Air Quality	Plant more trees (see Urban Design Recommendations)
	Bronchitis	High pollen	Encourage higher density, pedestrian friendly development at activity nodes (see Urban Design Recommendations)
	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	Food allergies	Host health education/service providers at a local church or community center (O-11)
	Flu/Pneumonia	Tobacco Use/Exposure	Hold educational/sports/activity programs at existing churches/schools (O-12)
		Poor sanitation	Provide health education programs for all ages (O-15)
			Locate schools, senior centers, day cares away from major highways (see Urban Design Recommendations)
			Support the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (2009) (O-19)

**Table 4.1 The Relationship between Recommendations and Health (continued)**

Rank	Community Health Issue	Contributing Factors	Healthy Design Recommendations (Projects are greens, programs are blue, and policies are yellow)
4	Injury		
	Motor vehicles	Falls	Improve lighting (see Transportation Recommendations)
	Pedestrian	Violence	Build more cross walks (see Transportation Recommendations)
	Homicide	Unsafe streets for cars, bikes, pedestrians	Build complete sidewalks (see Transportation Recommendations)
		Lead Poisoning	Build bike paths/multi-use trails (see Transportation Recommendations)
		Vehicle Accidents	Test paint of houses built prior to 1978 for the presence of lead dust (O-20)
5	Pregnancy/Infant Mortality		
	Childbirth Complications	Poverty	Build community garden (see Urban Design Recommendations)
	Low birth weight	Lack of prenatal care	Build high-quality parks (see Urban Design Recommendations)
	Premature Birth	Sexually Transmitted Diseases	Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-15)
		Overweight/obesity	Support Medicaid Programs
		Poor food choices	Promote WIC - Women, Infant and Children Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (O-21)
		Hypertension	Build more social connections
		Teen pregnancy	Local health education/(para) professional service providers (e.g., at church or community center) (O-15)
		Alcohol and Substance Abuse	Serve healthier meals to school children
		Tobacco Use/Exposure	
		Physical inactivity	
6	Mental and Behavioral Health		
		Stress Factors	Build high-quality parks (see Urban Design Recommendations)
		Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	Improve access to existing parks (see Transportation Recommendations)
		Alcohol and Substance Abuse	Build bike paths/multi-use trails (see Transportation Recommendations)
		Poverty/Unemployment/Debt	Build community gardens (see Urban Design Recommendations)
		Dislocation/Homelessness	Create a more enjoyable and stimulating environment (see Urban Design Recommendations)
		Poor Health Insurance Coverage	Host regular health education/(para) professional service providers at local church or community center (O-15)
		Social Stigma	Hold more jobs fairs (O-22)
		Lack of social support system	Support Medicare Programs
		Poor work productivity/low self-esteem	Create more social connections

## 4.2 Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

The Covington Highway Corridor study area offers an opportunity to proactively plan for a future in which healthy, active living is part of daily life. By creating development patterns that place different uses near one another, protect existing nearby neighborhoods, provide and expand park spaces, and include daily needs, the study area can become a focal point of healthy living that benefits existing and future residents.

### Land Use and Zoning Policies

#### *Strive to achieve the land uses shown in the Framework Plan*

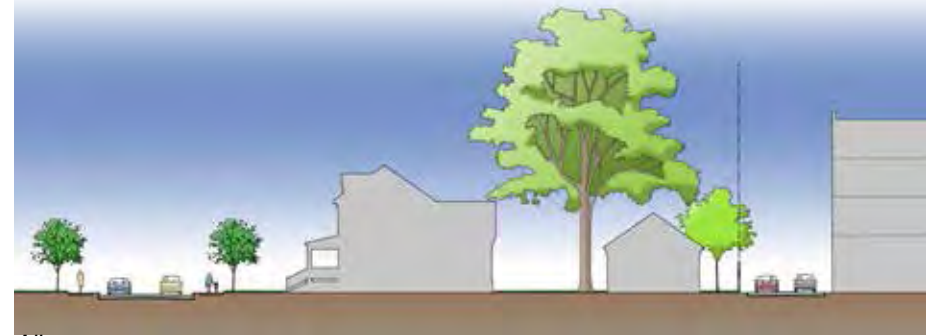
The Framework Plan, shown in Figure 4.1, reflects the general aspirations for how the study area corridor should develop/redevelop over the next 25 years.

The goal for this area is to revitalize underutilized commercial and multifamily properties into a mix of employment, housing, retail, civic, and open spaces, and make Covington Highway a multi-modal transportation corridor that promotes healthy living. It is designed to be:

- Compact: Offering different uses close to one another, preferably within a ten minute walk.
- Connected: Providing pedestrian, vehicular, bicycle, and transit facilities that allow easy access between uses.
- Complex: Striving for diversity in the mix of uses, economic resilience, the range of housing, and the design of buildings and public spaces. Failure to do this creates monotony, and places that are monotonous are not of lasting value.

**Table 4.2 Description of Typical Framework Plan land Uses**

Land Use	Primary Use	Max. Bldg. Height
Single Family Residential	Single Family	3 floors/35 ft
Multifamily Residential	Multifamily, townhouses	4 floors/50 ft
Commerical	Retail, offices	2 floors/ 30 ft
Mixed Use	Housing, offices, hotels, retial	4 floors/ 50 ft
Institutional	Governments, shurchs, schools	3 floors/42 ft
Park/Open Space	Public/private parks or open spaces	-



*Alley*



*Height transitions*



*Transitional Use (often townhouses or small lot single-family houses)*

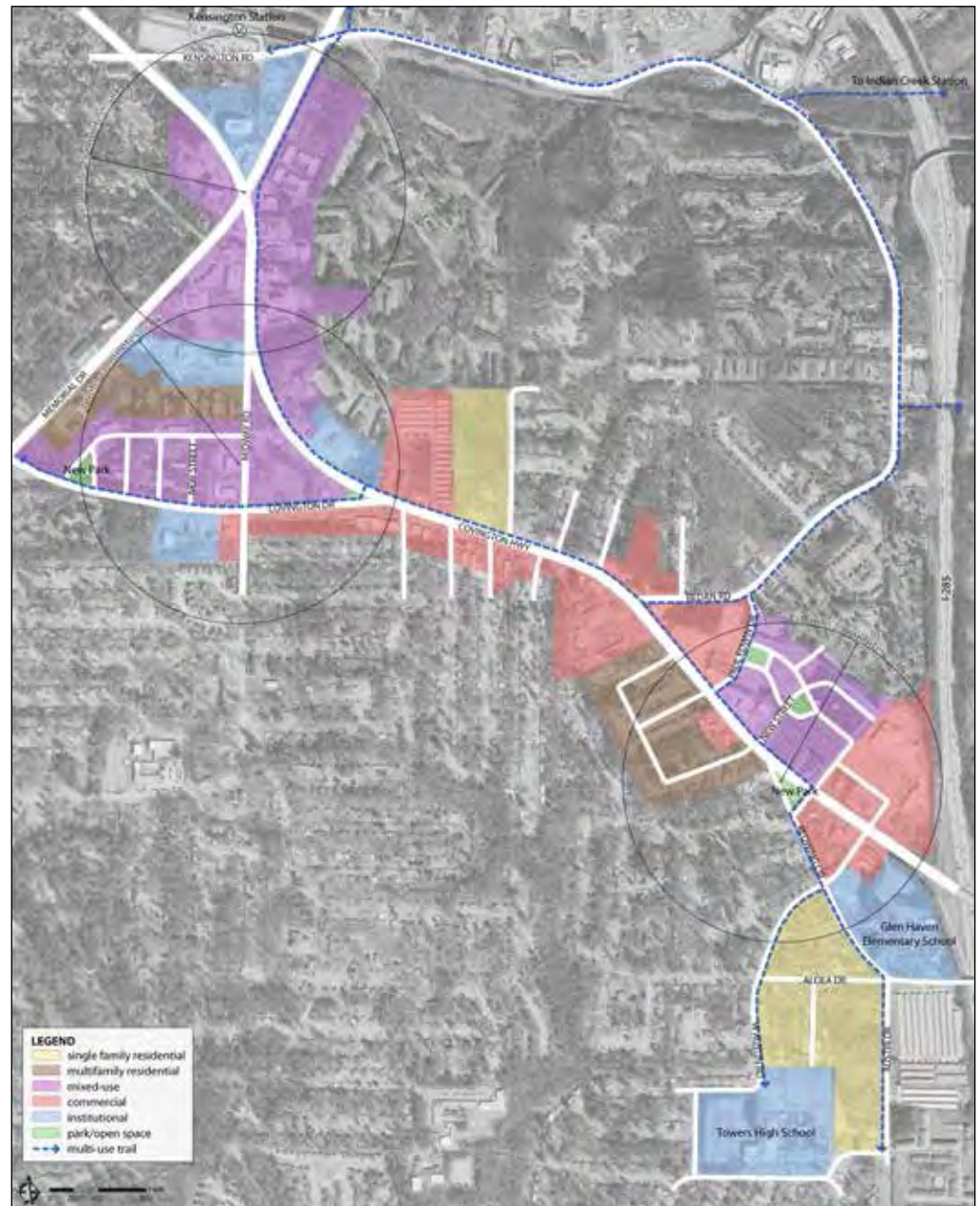


Higher-density, mixed land uses must be well designed to have a positive impact on Covinton Hwy corridor



The plan will improve accessibility and community health in the corridor area

Figure 4.1 Framework Plan



## Visioning Concept

Specifically, the land use vision calls for directing growth into walkable centers that can serve as focal points for nearby areas. Due to its large size, it is not feasible to expect the study area to have a single identity. However, by establishing different centers based on access, environmental factors, and location, it is possible to create a framework that can accommodate the range of development patterns desired by stakeholders.

Envisioned activity centers along the corridor include:

- The southern center, which is the area between Redan Road and I-285. This area focuses on redevelopment of large underutilized commercial properties and old apartment complexes into a higher-density, mixed-use village center.
- The middle center, which is the area around Covington Drive and Midway Road. It is envisioned as a neighborhood center with neigh-

borhood serving commercial and mixed residential.

- The northern center, which is the area around the Memorial Drive/Covington Hwy intersection that close to the Kensington MARTA station. It redeveloped, this area should feature transit-oriented development with a variety of uses.

These centers will be connected by an improved multi-modal Covington Hwy and a better connected transportation system around it.

### **Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized commercial properties**

In areas with vacant lots, dilapidated structures, parking lots, or otherwise underutilized properties, infill development should be constructed to follow the land use and urban design principles recommended by this study. New development will be a key ingredient in improving the corridor's fabric and connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods.

### **Create public parks/open spaces with active uses in new development and potential public improvement projects**

Parks or open space could include but not be limited to:

- Playground
- Community garden
- Walking trails
- Sport courts
- Rest area

### **Provide appropriate transitions between higher-density development and existing single-family neighborhood**

Several techniques exist for providing transitions between new development and single-family houses. Figure 4.2 on the next page shows options that should be explored individually or combined, especially as redevelopment occurs in or adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

## Land Use and Zoning Projects

### **Comprehensive Plan updates (O-1)**

Update the DeKalb County Comprehensive Development Plan to reflect the Master Active Living Plan vision.



*Buildings should face the sidewalks with doors, windows, and active uses*



*Pedestrian scaled signs are important elements of good urban design*



*Parks and open spaces should be incorporated with redevelopment*



*This concept plan is for illustrative purpose only and shows one of many possible options for development around the Indian Creek Station.*

### Redan Road/Redwing Circle Area Concept Plan

The concept plan covers the area from Redan Road south to W. Austin Road near I-285. It includes the existing multi-family parcels south of Covington Hwy and the outdated commercial areas on the north.

The plan shows a mixed-use activity center anchoring the area close to I-285. Area A between Redan Road and Paul Edwin Drive is a commercial block with buildings along the streets and parking in behind creating a walkable environment. It can be home to retail, professional offices, restaurant, and services.

Area B east of Paul Edwin Drive shows a mixed-use village with commercial along Covington Hwy which includes a grocery store. It then transitions to townhouses and single family lots in the back. Two parks anchoring the village and adjacent commercial block provides outdoor amenities to the community. The commercial shopping area between this area and I-285 is proposed to become a transit station according to the I-20 East corridor study.

Area C transforms the existing apartments into an mixed-income housing complex with a major park which includes a community garden, sports courts, pool and clubhouse.

Area D turns a suburban auto-oriented block into a pedestrian friendly commercial area with offices, services, a hotel, and a triangle pocket park. The park could be a location for a farmer's market and other community events

It is recommended that commercial and mixed use buildings throughout this area are three to four stories in height. Multi-family buildings are three to four stories. Maximum height for single family and townhouses is 35 feet.

Sidewalks are proposed for all new streets to encourage walking. As shown in the concept plan, multi-use trails are recommended for Covington Hwy, Redwing Circle, Redan Road and Paul Edwin Drive to connect all redevelopment areas .

In total, this concept plan includes 100,000 to 160,000 square feet of commercial space (including retail, offices, services, and restaurants), 300 to 400 multi-family units (which could be condominiums, rental units, townhomes, or elderly housing), and 30 to 50 single family houses.



*Potential mixed-use building along street with good pedestrian environment*



*Public parks/squares will provide amenity and encourage people to live actively*

Aerial view of Redan Road/Redwing Circle Area from northeast



Before

Aerial view of MARTA Station area from southwest



Before



After redevelopment



After redevelopment



### Covington Drive/Midway Road Area Concept Plan

The concept plan covers the area north of Covington Drive between Memorial Drive and Covington Hwy. It includes the triangle block east of Midway Road which has underutilized commercial properties and an unfinished development, and the area west of Midway Road is primarily occupied by an old apartment complex.

The plan shows a mixed-use neighborhood center at the eastern block. Mixed commercial and residential buildings are located along the edge of the block with parking arranged internally. A medical office is recommended due to the lack of existing facilities in the area. A pocket park is shown at the eastern corner. The existing church at the northern corner is preserved.

The western block shows primarily small lot single family homes and townhomes, with a community building at the corner of Covington Drive and Midway Road. Pocket parks are incorporated in the several locations to encourage outdoor activities.

Buildings in this area are set to be no more than 3 stories tall. Multi-use trails along Covington Hwy and Covington Drive connect this area with the rest of the corridor area.

In total, this concept plan includes 30,000 to 60,000 square feet of commercial space, 150 to 200 multi-family units, and 80 to 100 single family houses.



Aerial view of MARTA Station area from southwest



Before



After redevelopment

**Amend zoning to facilitate development/redevelopment according to the plan vision (O-2)**

Proactive, flexible zoning must be in place throughout the study area, and it should be crafted in such a way that recognizes the need for compact and well connected development that promotes health. The zoning change should include but not limited to the following:

- Allow a mixture of different uses.
- Allow small lot single family development.
- Provide design standards for new development.
- Require new development to include sidewalks.
- Provide incentives for housing, especially senior housing.
- Establish sign standards.

**Amend subdivision regulations to require inter-parcel connectivity (O-3)**

Requiring that any new development plan for inter-parcel connectivity in the subdivision regulations ensures a better connected and healthier area.

**Redevelop the Redan Road/Redwing Circle Area (O-4)**

Please see concept plan on page xx.

**Redevelop the Covington Drive/Midway Road Area (O-5)**

Please see concept plan on page xx.

## 4.3 Urban Design Recommendations

As public and private investment occur in the study area, attention to design will be critical to creating a place with a strong identity and lasting value. Central to this will be building on the area's history, while recognizing that its future must incorporate timeless place-making principles from the best town and city centers across the region and the nation.

### Urban Design Policies

**Require good urban design standards that promote health**

Basic elements of urbanism should be required for all new developments to facilitate pedestrian activity. These include:

- Buildings built close to the street.
- Buildings face the sidewalks with doors, windows, and active uses.
- Areas between the building and the street should be used for pedestrian purposes, such as outdoor dining, merchandise display, plazas, or landscaping.
- Inter-parcel connectivity with alleys, streets and paths should exist in a way that promotes walkability both for access and exercise
- Parking to the side or rear of the building.
- Pedestrian scaled signs.



One of the key elements of park design is to provide facilities to keep people active



Farmer's market provide great opportunity for people to access locally produced fresh food and get more active



Easy access to healthcare facilities is important to community health

- Do not build gated communities surrounded by fencing, or private streets that do not connect to surrounding streets.

These should be incorporated into the proposed overlay or form-based code.

**Support architectural standards that allow a variety of styles, but require good design**

Good design makes outdoor activities more desirable. People are more likely to choose an attractive walk along which they can appreciate good architecture and interesting street lives than driving. Overall, buildings should not be restricted to one particular architectural style. For all development, quality materials should be encouraged.

**Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles**

Design can support or discourage crime. Techniques that minimize opportunities for crime and support policing should be incorporated into new projects. Please see insert on next page for details.

**Incorporate parks and open spaces into existing areas and new development.**

Infill or development sites greater than ten acres can easily accommodate pocket parks or plazas. Typically, such only needs to be between five and ten percent of the site's area if designed well.

**Encourage an appropriate relationship between parks and adjacent development.**

New development adjacent to public spaces should front them with doors, windows, and walkways. Parking, loading zones, dumpsters, or similar uses should be minimized and hidden from view in these areas. New, publicly-accessible streets should be created to separate parks from new development where feasible.

**In the design of parks and open spaces provide facilities like paths, running tracks, playgrounds, sports courts, and drinking fountains**

People are more active in parks that include facilities like basketball and racquetball courts. Incorporating such active recreational areas is therefore essential. Provide drinking fountains to encourage consumption of tap water for dehydration. New playgrounds and facilities should also always be designed to reflect changing knowledge about injury prevention. Public spaces over one-quarter acre should be designed to accommodate public events.

**Provide a location for "Saturday morning" farmer's market.**

**Crime Prevention through Environmental Design**

The following summarizes elements of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles. It was compiled using information from wikipedia.com accessed on May 20, 2010.

*CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through design. Its strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts. Research into criminal behavior shows that the decision to offend or not to offend is more influenced by cues to the perceived risk of being caught than by cues to reward or ease of entry. Consistent with this research, CPTED strategies emphasize enhancing the perceived risk of detection and apprehension.*

Natural Surveillance

*Natural surveillance increases the threat of apprehension by taking steps to increase the perception that people can be seen. Natural surveillance occurs by designing the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility and foster positive social interaction among legitimate users of private and public space. Potential offenders feel increased scrutiny and limitations on their escape routes.*

- Place windows overlooking sidewalks and parking lots.
- Leave window shades open.
- Use passing vehicular traffic as a surveillance asset.
- Create landscape designs that provide surveillance, especially in proximity to designated points of entry and opportunistic points of entry.
- Use the shortest, least sight-limiting fence appropriate for the situation.
- Use transparent weather vestibules at building entrances.
- When designing lighting, avoid poorly placed lights that create blind-spots for potential observers and miss critical areas. Ensure potential problem areas are well-lit: pathways, stairs, entrances/exits, parking areas, ATMs, phone kiosks, mailboxes, bus stops, children's play areas, recreation areas, pools, laundry rooms, storage areas, dumpster and recycling areas, etc.
- Avoid too-bright security lighting that creates blinding glare and/or deep shadows, hindering the view for potential observers. Eyes adapt to night lighting and have trouble adjusting to severe lighting disparities. Using lower intensity lights often requires more fixtures.

- Use shielded or cut-off luminaires to control glare.
- Place lighting along pathways and other pedestrian-use areas at proper heights for lighting the faces of the people in the space (and to identify the faces of potential attackers).

Natural surveillance measures can be complemented by mechanical and organizational measures. For example, closed-circuit cameras can be added where window surveillance is unavailable.

#### Natural Access Control

Natural access control limits the opportunity for crime by taking steps to clearly differentiate between public space and private space. By selectively placing entrances and exits, fencing, lighting and landscape to limit access or control flow, natural access control occurs.

- Use a single, clearly identifiable, point of entry
- Use structures to divert persons to reception areas
- Incorporate maze entrances in public restrooms. This avoids the isolation that is produced by an anteroom or double door entry system
- Use low, thorny bushes beneath ground level windows.
- Eliminate design features that provide access to roofs or upper levels
- In the front yard, use waist-level, picket-type fencing along residential property lines to control access, encourage surveillance.
- Use a locking gate between front and backyards.
- Use shoulder-level, open-type fencing along lateral residential property lines between side yards and extending to between back yards. They should be sufficiently unencumbered with landscaping to promote social interaction between neighbors.
- Use substantial, high, closed fencing (for example, masonry) between backyards and alleys.

Natural access control is used to complement mechanical and operational access control measures, such as target hardening.

#### Natural Territorial Reinforcement

Territorial reinforcement promotes social control through increased definition of space and improved proprietary concern. An environment designed to clearly delineate private space does two things. First, it creates a sense of ownership. Owners have a vested interest and are more likely to challenge intruders or report them to the police. Second, the sense of owned space

creates an environment where “strangers” or “intruders” stand out and are more easily identified. By using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express ownership and define public, semi-public and private space, natural territorial reinforcement occurs. Additionally, these objectives can be achieved by assignment of space to designated users in previously unassigned locations.

- Maintained premises and landscaping such that it communicates an alert and active presence occupying the space.
- Provide trees in residential areas. Research results indicate that, contrary to traditional views within the law enforcement community, outdoor residential spaces with more trees are seen as significantly more attractive, safer, and more likely to be used than similar spaces without trees.
- Restrict private activities to defined private areas.
- Display security system signage at access points.
- Avoid cyclone fencing and razor-wire fence topping, as it communicates the absence of a physical presence and a reduced risk of being detected.
- Placing amenities such as seating or refreshments in common areas in a commercial or institutional setting helps to attract larger numbers of desired users.
- Scheduling activities in common areas increases proper use, attracts more people and increases the perception that these areas are controlled.

Territorial reinforcement measures make the normal user feel safe and make the potential offender aware of a substantial risk of apprehension or scrutiny.

#### Maintenance

- Maintenance is an expression of ownership of property. Deterioration indicates less control by the intended users of a site and indicates a greater tolerance of disorder. The Broken Windows Theory is a valuable tool in understanding the importance of maintenance in deterring crime. Broken Windows theory proponents support a zero tolerance approach to property maintenance, observing that the presence of a broken window will entice vandals to break more windows in the vicinity. The sooner broken windows are fixed, the less likely it is that such vandalism will occur in the future.

A weekly farmer's market could provide locally grown food not currently available in the area. Initially it could be in a parking lot or vacant area, but longer term a permanent space may be possible.

***Encourage the creation of shared stormwater facilities and those integrated into parks.***

Shared facilities can reduce the cost to individual developers and the amount of land dedicated to stormwater retention. In addition, they can often be designed as community assets and integrated into planned public spaces.

***Encourage child care centers, adult day care centers and in-home nursing care providers.***

A component of healthy communities is being able to serve people of different ages. Child care centers, adult day care centers, and in-home nursing care providers are essential to this.

***Promote the creation of community facilities, including health services, that are pedestrian and/or transit accessible.***

New community facilities should be located in areas where they are accessible to people without cars. Placing them in areas served by transit and quality pedestrian access will maximize their use.

***Plant shade trees along sidewalks and pedestrian walkways***

Shade trees will improve walking experience and create good streetscape .

***Encourage the relocation of overhead utilities to underground wherever feasible***

The county should work closely with utility companies to relocate utilities with streetscape improvements. Large scale developments should consider relocating existing and burying new utilities.

## **Urban Design Projects**

***Zoning code to amendment (O-1)***

To ensure that the proper regulatory framework is in place to support the redevelopment envisioned by this plan, zoning changes need to be made to promote good urban design. See land use and zoning projects for detail.

***Uniform sign program (O-2)***

The program is to develop consistent design for directional signage, GDOT signs, and county signs within the study area.

***Create a triangle park at the intersection of Redwing Circle and Covington Hwy (O-7)***

This park will be the center of the redevelopment near I-285. It can provide public gathering space for people of all ages. It will also stimulate development in the surrounding area. See *Redan Road/Redwing Circle Area Concept Plan* on page xx for reference.

***Create a triangle park at the intersection of Covinton Drive and Covington Hwy (O-8)***

This park will serve the neighborhood center area at the northern Covinton Hwy area. It can provide public gathering space for people of all ages as well as stimulate development in the surrounding area. See *Covington Drive/Midway Road Area Concept Plan* on page xx for reference.

## 4.4 Transportation Recommendations

As it transforms, the study area should continue to provide a range of transportation options. In addition to driving, the area should encourage bicycling, walking, and transit use. Smooth and speedy traffic flow should be provided along major arterials and collectors, but local streets should be more focused on responding to adjacent land uses and development patterns, rather than simply moving as many vehicles as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Upon review of the existing conditions elements of this study area and input through the public involvement process, several observations were made:

- In order to provide the most health-oriented environment within the Covington Highway Corridor area, several improvements are recommended. These recommendations are a result of an assessment of the study area existing conditions, presented earlier, public input, as well as opportunities for potential future land use redevelopment in activity or growth nodes that were identified in the corridor.
- Sidewalks are prevalent along both sides of Covington Highway but are absent or inconsistent along key streets intersecting with the highway.
- No provision for bicycle use is present along any of the study area roadways.
- Interconnectivity between the north and south sides of Covington Highway are limited to traffic signals at Redwing Circle, Redan Road and Memorial Drive. Thus, a distance along the corridor of approximately 1.0 miles between Redan Road and Memorial Drive does not accommodate non-motorized vehicle crossings. This may lead to pedestrians and bicyclists to travel circuitously to a signal location or take risks at non-signalized locations.
- Traffic along Covington Highway is moderate. This four-lane, with center turn lane facility amply accommodates the approximately 14,000 daily vehicle demand.
- Tower High School and Glen Haven Elementary School, located on the southeast side of the study area present opportunities, particularly for the high school, for connectivity to general Covington Highway/Redwing Circle/Redan Road activity area. This area may even more enhanced from a land use perspective as redevelopment occurs, thus potentially attracting even more interaction between the area and the high school vicinity.

- Redan Road is a primary link between Covington Highway and the Indian Creek MARTA station to the northeast. Currently, no sidewalks to trails are provided along this roadway.
- Covington Drive, extending from Covington Highway to Memorial Drive, represents a crucial link between these two roadways because it eliminates the need to travel the entire distance to the intersection of Covington Highway and Memorial Drive.
- Activity areas noted for potential redevelopment have been identified along Covington Highway. The first is located in the vicinity of Redwing Circle (extending on the north side between I-285 and Paul Edwin Drive, as well as on the south side between Redwing Circle and just northwest of Redan Road). The second is located in the triangular area further to the northwest and bound Covington Highway, Midway Road and Covington Drive. These potential redevelopment areas or nodes present opportunities for include pedestrian/bicycle friendly environments as well as providing the necessary vehicular access and circulation. Interconnectivity between both sides of Covington Highway is highly desirable.

The following recommendations are either policies which should be applicable for current and future development and physical improvements.

### Transportation Policies

- **Ensure that the transportation system is balanced between vehicular and non-vehicular access and circulation opportunities.** As the area grows, it should do so in a way that expands non-vehicular facilities and ensures that travel types are balanced with the land use vision.
- **For purposes of advancing healthy travel opportunities for nearby residents and area visitors, focus improvements that promote non-motorized access and circulation.** This can be for commuting as well as recreational purposes.
- **Incorporate complete streets principles that promote improvements that provide more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments within the context of a balanced transportation system.** Elements include streetscaping (furniture and landscaping), lighting, curvilinear walkways when possible, surface treatments that are aesthetically pleasing but practical for its use, etc.
- **Develop pedestrian-scale blocks in new development.** A system of small blocks is essential to encourage walking and provide multiple routes.

To ensure this, new developments should be divided into blocks having a maximum perimeter of 2,400 feet, unless environmental features make this unachievable.

- **Limit the number of curb cuts by implementing common-sense access management wherever possible and prudent such as shared driveways, and use of alleys and internal streets for access to contiguous land uses.**
- **As the area grows, new interconnected streets must be created to provide more routes for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.** In addition, where new streets are not feasible, connections between adjacent properties should be provided so people can drive, walk, or bicycle between them without going onto adjacent roads.
- **Minimize dead end streets.** Other than stub streets designed to one day connect to adjacent sites, cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets should be minimized to provide pedestrian connectivity and support multi modal travel.
- **Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between cul-de-sacs and sidewalks or trails for more convenient access to these amenities.** As the area grows, new interconnected streets must be created to provide more routes for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- **Require developments to install or upgrade adjacent sidewalks.** As development and redevelopment occurs, developers should be required to upgrade the adjacent sidewalks as follow:
  - State Routes: Minimum 5-foot landscape zone with breakaway trees; minimum 6 foot sidewalk
  - Other Routes: Minimum 5-foot landscape zone with canopy trees; minimum 6 foot sidewalk

## Transportation Projects

- **Reduce the cross-section of Covington Highway between Redwing Circle and Midway Road, a distance of approximately 0.77 miles.** This includes the reduction of the two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction. Also, replace the current two-way, center turn lane with a raised landscaped median with grass, bushes and break-away capable trees. This reduction will allow a new sidewalk with landscaped buffer on the south side of Covington Highway and a buffered (when possible) multi-use trail along the north side of the road, as described below. **(T-1)**
- **Construct a raised median with turn pockets in the current five-lane roadway segment between Redan Road and a new terminus of Red-**

**wing Circle at Covington Highway.** Two-lane operation will continue in this area in each direction (0.4 miles). **(T-2)**

- **Provide a multi-use trail in a ring fashion, extending along Covington Highway on the north side from Redan Road, continuing past Covington Drive to the intersection with Memorial Drive. Continue northward along the east side of Memorial Drive to Kensington Road.** Access could be provided directly to the Kensington MARTA station in this vicinity. **(T-10)**
- **The following portion of the multi-use trail is outside of the Covington Highway Corridor study area but is an integral part of the ring or loop trail system.**
  - From the southeast corner of Memorial Drive and Kensington Road, cross northward to the north side of Kensington Road. The trail would continue eastward along Kensington Road, providing access into the Camp Road vicinity, and then continue to Durham Park Road intersection where it would continue to the south side of Durham Park Road. The trail would split at this point. One route would continue to the east along Durham Park Road for access to the Indian Creek MARTA Station and eventual tie-in to a proposed Snapfinger Creek trail. The main ring or loop trail portion could continue along the north and east sides of the Kensington Road where it would continue southward along the east side of Holcombe Road to the Holcombe Road/Redan Road (east/west alignment) intersection. **(T-11)**
  - At the traffic signal, the trail would split again, providing access to the east along the north side of Redan Road to the MARTA Station and eventual tie-in to the proposed Snapfinger Creek trail. (Not included in this study.)
  - The loop trail would continue to the south from the Holcombe Road/Redan Road intersection, following the west side of Redan Road to complete the loop at Covington Highway. **(T-11)** Non-motorized travelers could access the commercial centers or redevelopment areas on the north side of Covington Highway via Paul Edwin Drive.
- Within the Covington Highway Corridor study area, the multi-use trail would be about 1.3 miles. Outside of the study area, in order to complete the trail ring, 1.7 miles of trail would be needed (not including the trails leading to connections with the proposed Snapfinger Creek trail.
- To the extent possible, the multi-use trail should meander slightly as opposed to a straight alignment. This will help to provide a more trail atmo-

sphere as well as landscaping within pockets or buffers adjacent to the road.

- **In order to create improved roadway geometry, realign Redwing Circle to the north prior to its current intersection with Covington Highway.** This would align with the driveway on the north side of road leading into the current (or former) Total Grace Christian Center. As this area redevelops, the signalized intersection with crosswalks will provide valuable connectivity between the two sides of Covington Highway. The current intersection of Redwing Circle and Covington Highway will be closed to traffic other than providing the southbound Covington Highway movement to southbound Redwing Circle via a single lane. Otherwise, access into land uses along Redwing Circle will be via the intersection noted above. **(T-3, T-4, T-5, T-6)**
- **Install a new traffic signal at the intersection of Covington Highway and Paul Edwin Drive.** This intersection would provide primary access between the two potential redevelopment areas to the north and south of



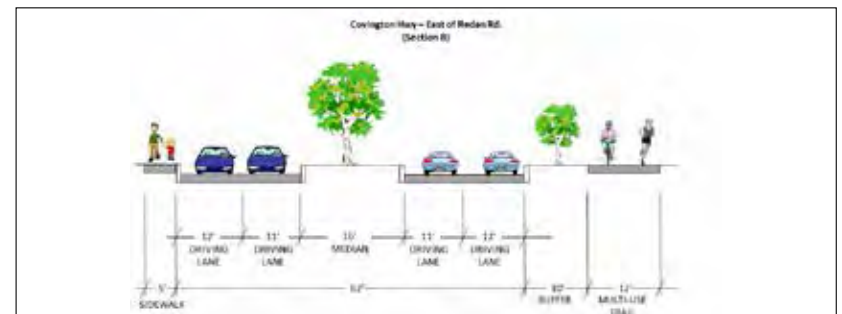
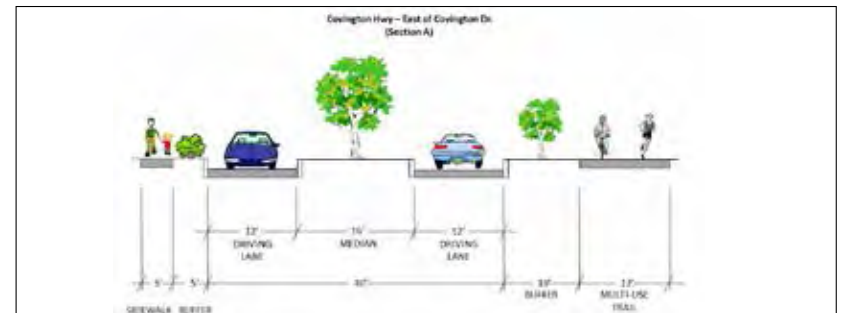
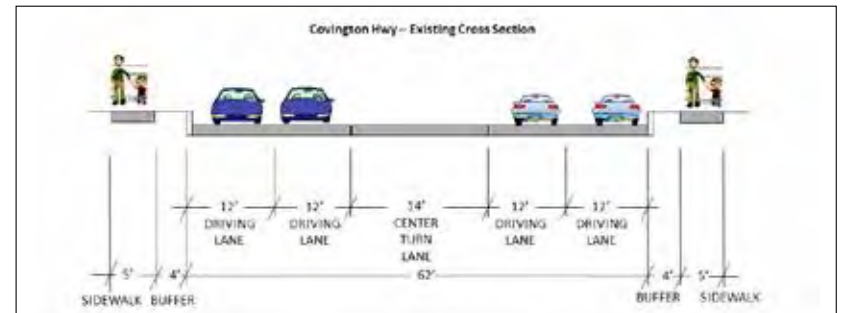
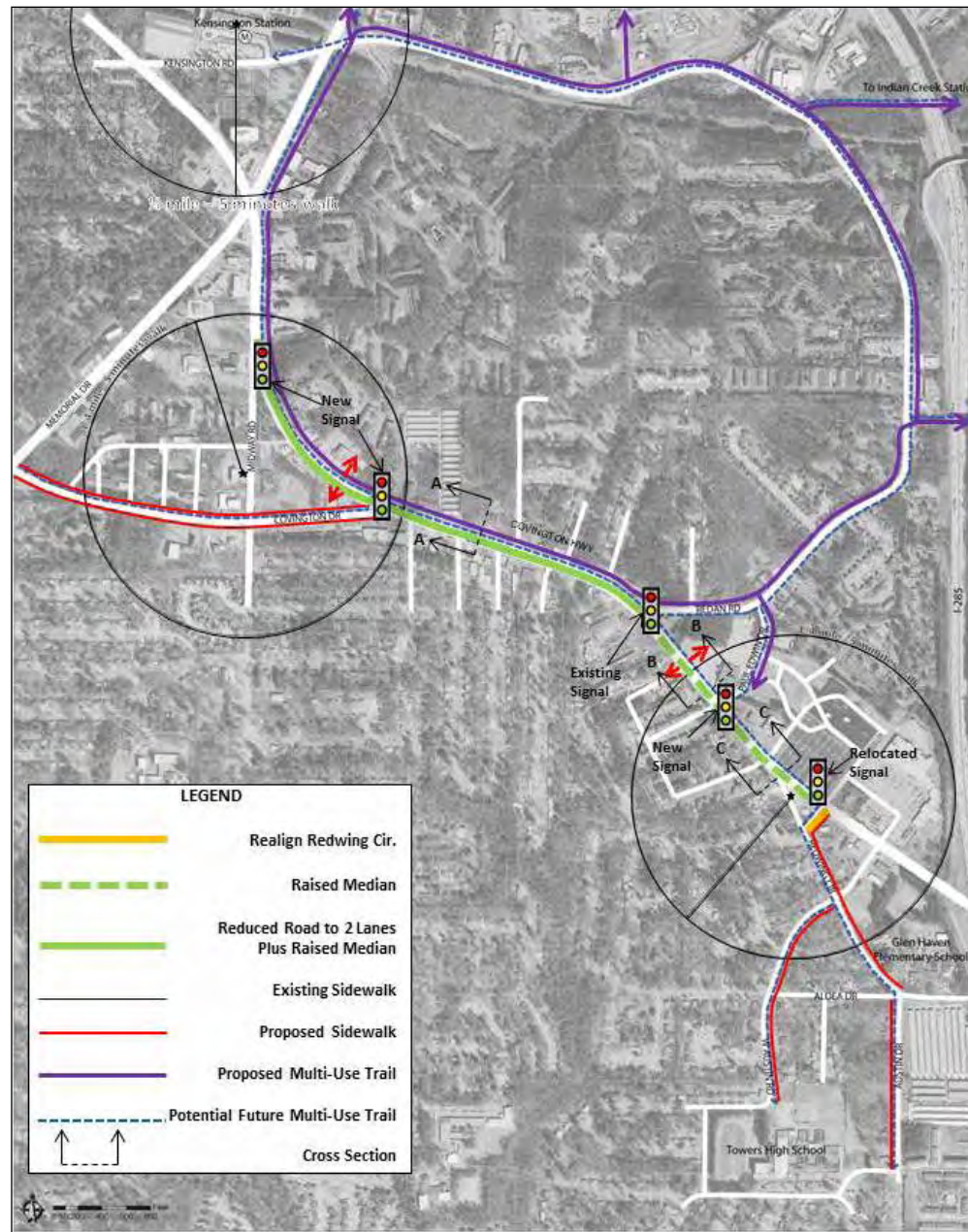
*New sidewalks will provide access from neighborhoods to existing areas*

Covington Highway. Because Covington Highway would be reduced to one lane in each direction at this location, it is conceivable that a traffic circle or roundabout could be implemented at this location. However, pedestrian movement would not be as secure as with a signal and sufficient gaps would have to occur from adjacent signals in order to provide safe crossing. **(T-7)**

- The traffic signal at Covington Highway and Redan Road would remain at its current location unless it would move slightly due to future land use development on both sides of Covington Highway.
- **Install a traffic signal at the intersection of Covington Drive and Covington Highway.** Due to relatively low volumes along Covington Drive, this signal may be pedestrian-only if signal warrants are not met. However, additional traffic may be generated by land uses in the triangular activity node, noted earlier. **(T-8)**
- **Install a new traffic signal at the Covington Highway/Midway Road intersection.** It is recommended that Midway Road be realigned slightly in order to approach the intersection at a 90 degree angle. This signal would provide improved access for residential communities south of Covington Drive. **(T-9)**
- Complete all sidewalks on both sides of roads unless a multi-use trail is recommended. In some cases, the current sidewalks may be widened to the preferred 12-ft. width to create a portion of the multi-use trail. This is only recommended where right-of-way, building, or roadway constraints prohibit the development of an adjacent trail with a buffer.
  - **Construct sidewalks along the west side of West Austin Road** between Tulip Drive and Redwing Circle (0.35 miles). **(T-12)**
  - **Construct sidewalks along the east side of Austin Road** between Towers Way and Redwing Circle (0.28 miles). **(T-13)**
  - **Construct sidewalks along the north side of Redwing Circle** between Austin Road and Covington Highway (0.27 miles). **(T-14)**
  - **Construct sidewalks along the north side of Covington Drive** between Memorial Drive and Covington Highway (0.6 miles). **(T-15)**
  - **Construct sidewalks along the south side of Covington Drive** between Memorial Drive and Covington Highway (0.6 miles). **(T-16)**



Figure 4.2 Project Recommendations and Associated Cross-Sections



## Illustration of Transportation Projects and Associated Cross-Sections

The Figure 4.2 illustrates many of the recommended transportation-related improvements noted above. These improvements address current and future needs. However, due to potential redevelopment opportunities in the study area, additional facilities such as sidewalks and trails may either not be depicted or are shown as a potential future facility.

In addition to the improvements, representative roadway cross-sections have been prepared in order to better visualize what a street may look like with the addition of new sidewalks, multi-use trails, landscaped medians or buffers between the road and pedestrian/bicycle facilities and/or revised travel lanes, as applicable. The cross-section location and directional view is identified in Figure 4.2.

## 4.6 Housing & Economic Development Recommendations

The market analysis identified potential levels of demand for new residential and commercial space along the Covington Highway corridor over the next ten years. The following recommendations suggest how new development can work to achieve the MALP goal of improving the integration of health and physical activity into the daily lives of residents. They reflect the comments and input received from local citizens and other stakeholders during the MALP community workshops.

### Housing & Economic Development Policies

#### *Encourage a mix of housing types and price points*

At present the study area and its immediate vicinity include a mix of housing types and price points, which should be preserved as revitalization occurs. While much of the new housing developed in the study area will target upwardly mobile households, affordably priced workforce housing should also be incorporated into the housing program. Policies to encourage mixed-income housing development include density bonuses and other inclusionary zoning regulations, and the encouragement of use of housing subsidies such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

#### *Incorporate principles of Lifelong Communities in new development*

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)'s Lifelong Communities Project identified strategies for creating communities accessible to all residents, regardless of age or ability. Housing strategies include:

- Providing density bonuses for developments that include affordable units for seniors
- Integrating housing options for older adults in existing neighborhoods
- Exploring the feasibility of tax exemptions/deferrals for older adults
- Offering home repair and modification programs/services for older adults
- Maintaining a database of housing that is accessible to persons with a disability
- Educating older adults about reverse mortgages

#### *Encourage inclusive home design practices*

Promote new residential development that is designed to be "visitable" to aging and disabled populations. According to the American Association of Retired Persons, a visitable home is one with: (1) a zero-step entrance at the front, back or side of the house; (2) doorways with at least 32 inches of clearance; and (3) at least a half bath on the main floor that can accommodate a wheelchair.

#### *Promote a variety of fresh food options in the study area*

Both the market study and the health assessment identified the need for improved access to fresh groceries along Covington Highway. A high-quality grocer is a key part of the target business mix, but other options may precede and/or supplement a traditional grocery store. These include a farmers market, community and backyard gardens, and/or regular stops by a mobile produce stand. For example, Riverview Farms operates a Farm Mobile that makes weekly stops to several locations in metro Atlanta to sell local produce, meats and breads. Grocery store alternatives could also offer free, simple, healthy recipes that could be prepared using items available for sale. Payments should be accepted via EBT and WIC. Along with providing access to fresh food, strong sales at such alternatives would also demonstrate demand for high-quality grocery store space on Covington Highway.

**Strive to attract target businesses to the study area**

Based on the market analysis findings and input from community members, Table 4.3 identifies the target business mix for the study area.

**Table 4.3 Covington Highway Target Business Mix**

Food	Natural foods store Farmers market Restaurants – healthy/natural food, casual/family dining, outdoor dining, deli, yogurt shop, juice bar/smoothie shop, coffee shop
Merchandise	Apparel Home goods (décor, linens, kitchen items, etc.) Sports equipment resale and rental Garden supply store with classes Children’s toys and games Cards, gifts, stationery
Services	Consumer services (dry cleaning, alterations, etc.)
Entertainment	Indoor recreation (skating, bowling, etc.) Recreation Center
Office/Services	Medical, legal, financial, insurance, dental and other services

**Encourage study area businesses to be partners in promoting health initiatives**

Stakeholder and community member input identified several ways new and existing businesses could support health and fitness. These include building design and signage that encourages the use of stairs versus elevators, employee walking programs and fitness center memberships. Study area businesses may also choose to sponsor local activities to promote wellness in the community.

**Housing & Economic Development Projects**

**Develop a branding and marketing campaign for the DeKalb County MALP Study Areas (O-13)**

Developing awareness of DeKalb County’s efforts to improve health and fitness opportunities will be crucial in gaining support from residents, businesses, potential investors/businesses and other local stakeholders. A successful branding program should clearly and succinctly communicate what the MALP means and what it will offer the community. The brand should serve as the basis for all marketing and public relations activities connected with the MALP. As implementation gets underway, development of new trails, parks and recreation space should be publicized, along with the start of any health-related programs. Community members should be able to see the MALP as a sustained effort to improve community health in which they can be excited to participate.

**Housing & Economic Development Programs**

**Examine Lead Based Paint Risks (O-20)**

Given the age of housing in and around the Covington Highway study area, lead based paint has the potential to be a health issue there. The DeKalb County Board of Health’s Lead Poisoning Prevention Program should work to inspect older housing developments in the area for lead based paint and to educate households about lead based paint risk.

**Recognize local restaurants that offer healthy dining options (O-23)**

As commercial revitalization begins, let residents know which restaurants along the Covington Highway corridor provide calorie information on menus and offer a selection of healthy meals low in calories, fat and sodium. One way to do this would be to develop a “Healthy DeKalb” logo that could be displayed in the restaurant’s window. Another option would be to produce a short “healthy dining guide” that identifies restaurants whose menus meet pre-determined health standards.

**Assess school lunch options and vending machine offerings (O-24)**

The foods available in schools should reflect the health and nutrition information children receive through community gardens and other educational programs. Evaluate the healthfulness of offerings in study area schools and re-adjust lunch menu and snack options to reflect a healthy diet for students and faculty. Replace high calorie, high sugar vending machine items with healthier snacks and drinks.

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**PART V: IMPLEMENTATION**

## 5.1 Action Plan

This Action Plan outlines the next steps after this Master Active Living Plan is adopted by DeKalb County. The Action Matrices, provided on the following pages, list all proposed projects, along with timelines, responsible parties, and cost estimates. The matrices are intended to serve as a blueprint for achieving the community's vision for the future.

Most recommendations are provided within an aggressive five year timeline, although some may extend beyond this time period if funding is delayed or not available. Projects in the near future represent those addressing areas with the most critical need, or those where public investment can spur private investment and promote public health. Longer-term projects are less urgent, but equally key to the ultimate success of this plan.

### Community Priorities

During the public outreach process it became evident that certain plan recommendations were of high priority to the community. These include:

- Multi-use trail loop portion within the study area (Redan/Covington west to Memorial Drive to Memorial Drive/Kensington Road intersection) (T-10)
- Sidewalks north side of Covington Dr between Covington Highway and Memorial Drive. Currently, no sidewalks are provided on either the north or south side of Covington Drive (T-15)
- New traffic signal at Covington Drive/Covington Highway intersection to alleviate mid-block crossings (T-8)

These projects are complicated endeavors that will require extensive coordination between DeKalb and other parties. The T-10 project needs to be extended outside the study area from the Covington Highway/Redan Road intersection to the Redan Road/Holcombe Road intersection via Redan Road. This area is currently without pedestrian/bicycle facilities, but through observation this area is highly used by pedestrians/bicyclist in an unsafe and inconvenient manner. Also, a portion of the T-10 project would require the lane reduction project noted in T-1. If the T-1 project is delayed for an extended period of time, the T-10 project could proceed adjacent to the current Covington Highway geometry.

### Health Focused Funding

The health focus of this study means that many of the recommendations contained within it may be eligible for target health-focused funding sources. The following list is a sample of funding sources that support health, agriculture,

obesity and community development projects. Each funder has its own special application process and focus. All of these sources support projects in Georgia.

#### **Catholic Health Initiatives**

[www.catholichealthinit.org](http://www.catholichealthinit.org)

#### **Johnson and Johnson**

[www.jnj.com/community/contributions/index.htm](http://www.jnj.com/community/contributions/index.htm)

#### **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

[www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org)

#### **WK Kellogg Foundation**

[www.wkkf.org/DesktopModules/WKF.00\\_DmaSupport/ViewDoc.aspx?-fld=PDFFile&CID=6&ListID=28&ItemID=5000508&LanguageID=0](http://www.wkkf.org/DesktopModules/WKF.00_DmaSupport/ViewDoc.aspx?-fld=PDFFile&CID=6&ListID=28&ItemID=5000508&LanguageID=0)

#### **Kresge Foundation**

[www.kresge.org/content/displaycontent.aspx?CID=59](http://www.kresge.org/content/displaycontent.aspx?CID=59)

[www.kresge.org/content/displaycontent.aspx?CID=88](http://www.kresge.org/content/displaycontent.aspx?CID=88)

#### **MacArthur Foundation**

[www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.948589/k.D3BA/Domestic\\_Grant-making\\_Program\\_Related\\_Investments.htm](http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.948589/k.D3BA/Domestic_Grant-making_Program_Related_Investments.htm)

#### **Hewlett Packard Foundation**

[www.packard.org/categoryDetails.aspx?RootCatID=4&CategoryID=217](http://www.packard.org/categoryDetails.aspx?RootCatID=4&CategoryID=217)

#### **USDA**

[www.crees.usda.gov](http://www.crees.usda.gov)

[www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/pdfs/13\\_afri\\_child\\_obes\\_prevent.pdf](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/pdfs/13_afri_child_obes_prevent.pdf)

#### **Farm to School Grants**

[www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2013/02/0020.xml&contentidonly=true](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2013/02/0020.xml&contentidonly=true)

#### **Sustainable Agricultural Grants and Research Grants**

Julia Gaskin, Georgia SARE Coordinator

[jgaskin@engr.uga.edu](mailto:jgaskin@engr.uga.edu)[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

#### **Kaiser Permanente**

Community Benefit and Community Relations, Nine Piedmont Center

3495 Piedmont Road, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30305, Phone 404-364-4852

[kpgagives.org/process.html](http://kpgagives.org/process.html)

**Aetna Foundation** (*Community Health Initiatives*)

[www.aetna-foundation.org/foundation/apply-for-a-grant/grant-guidelines/index.html](http://www.aetna-foundation.org/foundation/apply-for-a-grant/grant-guidelines/index.html)

**AFLAC**

[www.aflac.com/us/en/docs/GrantInquiryForm.pdf](http://www.aflac.com/us/en/docs/GrantInquiryForm.pdf)

**CSX Corporation**

[www.beyondourrails.org/community/npc](http://www.beyondourrails.org/community/npc)

**Health Care Georgia**

[www.healthcaregeorgia.org/Guidelines.cfm](http://www.healthcaregeorgia.org/Guidelines.cfm)  
[xnet.kp.org/communitybenefit/gep/grants.html](http://xnet.kp.org/communitybenefit/gep/grants.html)

**McKesson Corporation**

[www.mckesson.com/en\\_us/McKesson.com/Corporate%2BCitizenship/McKesson%2BFoundation/Granting%2BGuidelines.html](http://www.mckesson.com/en_us/McKesson.com/Corporate%2BCitizenship/McKesson%2BFoundation/Granting%2BGuidelines.html)

**Newell Rubbermaid**

[newellrubbermaidfoundation.org/foundationWhatWeFund.html](http://newellrubbermaidfoundation.org/foundationWhatWeFund.html)

**Norfolk Southern Corporation**

Grants are awarded to eligible organizations located within Norfolk Southern Corporation territory. Applications for 2014 funding will be accepted July 15-Sept. 30, 2013. For information about eligibility and application procedures, visit Norfolk Southern Foundation.

[www.nscorp.com/nscportal/nscorp/Community/NS%20Foundation/foundation.html](http://www.nscorp.com/nscportal/nscorp/Community/NS%20Foundation/foundation.html)

Deadline: July 15 – Sept. 30

**Rose Community Foundation**

[www.rcfdenver.org/grantee\\_services\\_guidelines\\_health.htm](http://www.rcfdenver.org/grantee_services_guidelines_health.htm)

**Sisters of St. Joseph Charitable Fund**

[www.ssjcharitablefund.org](http://www.ssjcharitablefund.org)

**State Farm**

[www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/grants/company/company.asp](http://www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/grants/company/company.asp)

Deadlines: March – June for next year funding

Sponsorships: <http://www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/sponsorships/sponsorships.asp>

**Surdna Foundation**

[www.surdna.org/what-we-fund/sustainable-environments/483.html](http://www.surdna.org/what-we-fund/sustainable-environments/483.html)

**Tenet Healthcare Foundation**

[www.tenethealth.com/TenetHealth/TenetFoundation/Contribution+Guidelines.htm](http://www.tenethealth.com/TenetHealth/TenetFoundation/Contribution+Guidelines.htm)

**United Health Foundation**

[www.unihealthfoundation.org/community\\_health.html](http://www.unihealthfoundation.org/community_health.html)

**Healthcare Georgia**

[www.healthcaregeorgia.org/Guidelines.cfm](http://www.healthcaregeorgia.org/Guidelines.cfm)

**Georgia Baptist Healthcare**

[www.gbhcs.org](http://www.gbhcs.org)

**Steps Toward Implementation**

This plan offers an aggressive but achievable future for the Panola Road/Salem Road study area. For its vision to become a reality there must be both short- and long-term commitments to its principles.

**Ongoing**

To ensure implementation, continued diligence will be required on the part of residents, businesses, DeKalb County, and others. These groups must monitor development and public improvements in the study area to ensure that they are consistent with the vision of the plan. A continuation of the open outreach process used during the planning process will be central to this effort. Additionally, County staff will be required to track projects and maintain milestone dates and deadlines to keep projects on schedule and moving toward completion.

**Short Term**

Short-term steps toward implementation include the zoning amendments and other administrative projects outlined in the action matrices.

**Long Term**

Realizing the plan's vision will also require a long-term commitment. The plan's vision cannot be achieved overnight, and if it is not consulted and reviewed regularly, it risks becoming obsolete. As DeKalb County moves forward with implementation, it is important to remember the following:

- **The Vision:** Of all of the components of this plan, the vision should be its most lasting legacy. The ideas in 4.1: Future Vision are the result of an inclusive public process. It is unlikely that the vision resulting from it will change significantly, even though the steps to achieving them may.
- **Flexibility:** While the vision is unlikely to change in the near future, it is critical that the community recognize that the ways in which the vision is

## Implementation

achieved can and will change. The addition or subtraction of policies or projects should not be viewed as a compromise of the plan, but rather its natural evolution in response to new conditions. Many of the assumptions used to guide this process, including the economic climate, costs, and development trends, are never fixed. DeKalb County must be prepared to respond to changes in order to ensure a relevant plan.

- **Development Guide:** One of the greatest long-term values of this document is that it lays out a detailed land use framework. Future development proposals should be reviewed for compatibility with the framework.

By being mindful of these, the Covington Highway Corridor Master Active Living Plan can guide positive change in and around the area for years to come.

### Action Plan Projects

The implementation plan summarizes recommendations related to the future build-out of the study area and the public improvements necessary to support quality development in the Covington Highway Corridor study area. Table 5.1 identifies the key transportation (“T”) improvement projects for the study area. These are separated into two groups: vehicular-related projects such as roadway and/or intersection improvement projects and pedestrian/bicycle improvements that respond to the community’s desire to create a healthier environment by providing improved walking and biking facilities. The tables provide information related to project phasing (by year) and order-of-magnitude costs associated with each project. Table 5.2 identifies other (“O”) proposed implementation program projects associated with land use, urban design, health and economic development elements of the plan.



**Table 5.1 Transportation Projects**

ID	Description	Improvement Type (TIP Designation)	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs	ROW Year	ROW Costs (1)	Approx. Length of Project (ft)	Cost per unit or Linear Foot	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs (1)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source & Match Amount
<b>VEHICULAR</b>														
T-1	Reduce cross-section of Covington Highway (2 lanes plus raised median) Redan Rd. to Midway Rd.	Roadway/Capacity Reduction or Conversion	2015	\$426,825.00	-	-	4065	\$700.00	2016	\$2,845,500.00	\$3,272,325.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$654,465.00
T-2	Raised median along Covington Hwy. between Redan Rd. and Redwing Circle	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2015	\$63,000.00	-	-	2100	\$200.00	2016	\$420,000.00	\$483,000.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$96,600.00
T-3	Realign Redwing Circle to Intersect Covington Highway at 90 degrees	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2015	\$9,240.00	-	-	220	\$280.00	2016	\$61,600.00	\$70,840.00	DeKalb	HOST / SPLOST	100% \$70,840.00
T-4	Close off portion of old alignment of Redwing Circle	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2015	\$3,000.00	-	-	400	\$50.00	2016	\$20,000.00	\$23,000.00	DeKalb	HOST / SPLOST	100%
T-5	New traffic signal at realigned Redwing Circle/Covington intersection	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2015	\$30,000.00	-	-	1	\$200,000.00	2016	\$200,000.00	\$230,000.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$46,000.00
T-6	Remove traffic signal at old Redwing Circle/Covington intersection	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2015	\$1,500.00	-	-	1	\$10,000.00	2016	\$10,000.00	\$11,500.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$2,300.00
T-7	New traffic signal at Paul Edwin/Covington intersection	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2014	\$30,000.00	-	-	1	\$200,000.00	2016	\$200,000.00	\$230,000.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$46,000.00
T-8	New traffic signal at Covington Dr./Covington Hwy. intersection	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2014	\$30,000.00	-	-	1	\$200,000.00	2016	\$200,000.00	\$230,000.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$46,000.00
T-9	New traffic signal at Midway Rd./Covington Hwy. intersection	Roadway/Operations and Safety	2014	\$30,000.00	-	-	1	\$200,000.00	2016	\$200,000.00	\$230,000.00	DeKalb / GDOT	HOST / SPLOST	20% \$46,000.00

**KEY:**

All cost estimates are in 2013 dollars

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

SPLOST: Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

TE: Federal Transportation Enhancement

PATH: Path Foundation

(1) Cost estimates are concept level; Right-of-way needs TBD

**Table 5.1 Transportation Projects (continued)**

ID	Description	Improvement Type (TIP Designation)	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs	ROW Year	ROW Costs (1)	Approx. Length of Project (ft)	Cost per unit or Linear Foot	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs (1)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source & Match Amount
<b>PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE</b>														
T-10	Multi-use trail loop portion within the study area (Redan/Covington west to Memorial to Memorial/Kensington)	Last Mile Connectivity/Sidepaths and Trails	2015	\$134,550.00	-	-	6900	\$130.00	2016	\$897,000.00	\$1,031,550.00	DeKalb / GDOT	TE / Safety / SPLOST / PATH	20% \$206,310.00
T-11	Multi-use trail loop portion outside of the study area (Memorial/Kensington east to Holcombe, south to Redan/Covington)	Last Mile Connectivity/Sidepaths and Trails	2014	\$175,500.00	-	-	9000	\$130.00	2015	\$1,170,000.00	\$1,345,500.00	DeKalb / GDOT	TE / Safety / SPLOST / PATH	20% \$269,100.00
T-12	Sidewalks west side of West Austin Rd. (Redwing to Tulip)	Last Mile Connectivity/Pedestrian Facility	2014	\$16,470.00	N/A	N/A	1830	\$60.00	2014	\$109,800.00	\$126,270.00	DeKalb	TE / Safety / SPLOST	20% \$25,254.00
T-13	Sidewalks east side of Austin Rd. (Redwing to Tulip)	Last Mile Connectivity/Pedestrian Facility	2014	\$13,410.00	N/A	N/A	1490	\$60.00	2014	\$89,400.00	\$102,810.00	DeKalb	TE / Safety / SPLOST	20% \$20,562.00
T-14	Sidewalks north side of Redwing between Austin Rd. and Del Rio Ter.	Last Mile Connectivity/Pedestrian Facility	2014	\$13,950.00	N/A	N/A	1550	\$60.00	2014	\$93,000.00	\$106,950.00	DeKalb	TE / Safety / SPLOST	20% \$21,390.00
T-15	Sidewalks north side of Covington Dr. between Covington Hwy. and Memorial	Last Mile Connectivity/Pedestrian Facility	2014	\$28,800.00	N/A	N/A	3200	\$60.00	2014	\$192,000.00	\$220,800.00	DeKalb	TE / Safety / SPLOST	20% \$44,160.00
T-16	Sidewalks south side of Covington Dr. between Covington Hwy. and Memorial	Last Mile Connectivity/Pedestrian Facility	2014	\$28,800.00	N/A	N/A	3200	\$60.00	2014	\$192,000.00	\$220,800.00	DeKalb	TE / Safety / SPLOST	20% \$44,160.00
<b>Totals (Vehicular and Pedestrian/Bicycle):</b>				<b>\$1,035,045</b>		<b>N/A</b>				<b>\$6,900,300</b>	<b>\$7,935,345</b>			<b>\$1,639,141</b>

**KEY:****All cost estimates are in 2013 dollars****GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation****SPLOST: Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax****TE: Federal Transportation Enhancement****PATH: Path Foundation****(1) Cost estimates are concept level; Right-of-way needs TBD**

**Table 5.2 Other Projects**

ID	Description	Cost	Starting Year	Responsible Party*	Funding Source
O-1	Comprehensive Plan updates	Staff Time	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-2	Zoning code amendments	Staff Time	2013	DeKalb County	n/a
O-3	Amend subdivision regulations to require inter-parcel connectivity	Staff Time	2013	DeKalb County	n/a
O-4	Redevelop the Redan Road/Redwing Circle Area	TBD	TBD	Private	Private
O-5	Redevelop the Covington Drive/Midway Road Area	TBD	TBD	Private	Private
O-6	Uniform sign program	5,000	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, GA Historical Society, Private
O-7	Create a triangle park at the intersection of Redwing Circle and Covington Hwy	\$3k - \$6k	2014	DeKalb County	Private, DeKalb County
O-8	Create a triangle park at the intersection of Covinton Drive and Covington Hwy	\$3k - \$6k	2014	DeKalb County	ARC Community Choices
O-9	Community Center	\$2.0 - \$3.0 million	TBD	Dekalb County	DeKalb County
O-10	Healthy community scorecard	\$5,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-11	Health education sessions	\$10,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-12	Exercise/sports/activity programs	\$10,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-13	Healthy community branding	\$15,000 - \$40,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County/Private	DeKalb County
O-14	Fresh food cooking club	\$10,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County/Private	DeKalb County/Private
O-15	Health education programs	\$10,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-16	Expanded physical exercise programs at local schools	\$20,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-17	Low/no cost summer exercise programs for children	\$20,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-18	Partnerships to provide mobile health services to residents	\$20,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-19	Expand tobacco-free public sites	\$5,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-20	Lead dust testing	\$15,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-21	WIC promotion and outreach	\$20,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-22	Job Fairs	\$10,000	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-23	Healthy Restaurant recognition Program	Staff Time	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County
O-24	School lunch assessment	Staff Time	Ongoing	DeKalb County	DeKalb County

\*DeKalb County refers to various County departments, subject to internal coordination

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**APPENDIX: MARKET ANALYSIS**