



A MASTER PLAN FOR **MIDTOWN COLUMBUS**

for
The MidTown Project
September 30, 2005

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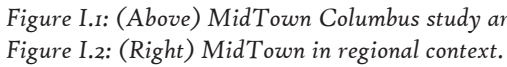
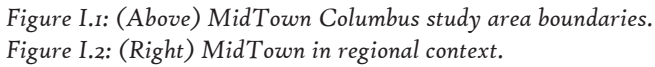
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OVERVIEW

I.

I.A Purpose

MidTown Columbus, Georgia is rich in diversity, history and culture. Within its boundaries are some of the region's notable parks, schools, civic and cultural institutions, retail tenants, and neighborhoods. MidTown has been traditionally a place of choice to live and do business in Columbus. However, recent development trends have left MidTown with vacant and underutilized properties, incompatible development patterns, and inconsistent transportation plans. Residents also cite a need for expanded and revitalized greenspaces and concerns for public safety.

This Master Plan analyzes MidTown's existing conditions; identifies revitalization opportunities and constraints; and provides recommendations to improve the quality of life for residents, employees, and business and property owners. The recommendations focus on MidTown's physical form, the functional and aesthetic character of its neighborhoods, transportation access and circulation, land uses, and commercial revitalization. Specific action items are supported by demand models and an economic feasibility analysis.

This report is supplemented by a separate

Technical Appendix document that incorporates background information, supporting data and more in-depth analysis of selected topics.

I.B Study Area and Context

The MidTown study area comprises approximately six miles in the heart of Columbus. It is bounded by I-185 on the east, the railroad tracks south of Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd. on the south, 10th Avenue on the west, and Talbotton Road/Edgewood Road on the north.

The goal of the MidTown Project is to develop and implement a long-range, comprehensive plan to reestablish this historic, suburban area as a community.

One guiding principle used in this study is that MidTown's Master Plan should be complementary rather than

competitive to plans underway in other parts of the County.

Uptown, Columbus' "Downtown" core, is progressing with a revitalization plan that focuses on the Riverfront, the Arts, and Entertainment/Night Life. Rehabilitation of its historic residences and commercial "Main Street", i.e. Broadway, and transformation of former industrial buildings into residential units and offices are in process. Uptown is capitalizing on its unique physical and historical attributes.

OVERVIEW

The South Columbus Revitalization and Community Investment Plan - created by a 600 resident participatory project - is guiding the revitalization of an area that extends from Ft. Benning to the Riverfront to Wynnton/Macon Road.

North Columbus is not defined by formal boundaries or community structure, but is associated with the location of new housing and commercial strip center development. Undeveloped land offers lower land/site development costs and larger space to attract “big box” retail tenants, but also cannibalizes commercial tenants from already developed areas such as MidTown.

I.C Project Process

This plan is the culmination of a multi-year effort begun by a group of private citizens and governmental representatives interested in the revitalization of MidTown. The resulting MidTown Project organization, in cooperation with the Historic Columbus Foundation, submitted a proposal to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Preservation Development Initiative (PDI) program. In 2003, MidTown was named a PDI demonstration site and an assessment report was completed in April of 2004.

Concurrently, the MidTown Project commissioned a team led by Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Associates to formulate a MidTown Revitalization Master Plan. Work on the Master Plan began in March, 2004.

The Master Plan process included three major phases: Inventory and Analysis; Vision and Plan

Formation; and Implementation/Document Preparation. In the Inventory and Analysis phase, the Consultant team evaluated existing conditions and potential constraints and opportunities. Individual and group interviews with community residents and stakeholders were also conducted during this phase.

The Visioning phase included public workshops and an extensive interactive Visual Preference Survey process to aid in the development of a concept plan. The Consultant team and project leaders also conducted a community outreach program to elicit input from representative portions of the Study Area. The Implementation phase then supported the concept with action item recommendations, economic feasibility analysis and cost estimates. The MidTown Project Steering Committee and Columbus Consolidated government officials and staff provided guidance throughout the process.

Several separate projects in MidTown were considered integral to this Master Plan. The Consultant team generated alternative plans (with community support) in response to two transportation proposals by the Georgia Department of Transportation: a modification to the intersection of Brown-Peacock Roads and Wynnton Road; and the proposed widening of Buena Vista Road from Ilges Road to Lockwood Court. The Consultant team was also commissioned by the Muscogee County School Board to develop a site plan and fiscal analysis for their property at the former Columbus Square Mall site at Macon and Rigdon Road. The recently constructed adjacent Columbus Public Library and city-owned property were also included in that plan.

“Focus not just on creating things but nurturing people.”

MidTown stakeholder comment



EXISTING CONDITIONS

II.

II.A Community Structure and Land Use

Community structure is determined by natural systems, street patterns, architectural character, land use distribution and public spaces.



Figure II.1: Topography and creeks/100-year floodplains.

Natural Systems

MidTown is situated on a ridge approximately 70 feet above Downtown Columbus and the Chattahoochee River. The topography is relatively level or gently rolling. The highest elevation occurs in northeast MidTown near the Country Club of Columbus (425'), with the lowest points in the southeastern and southwestern corners and along the two

major creeks (250'). Two creeks run north-south through MidTown: Weracoba, a section of which winds through Weracoba Park; and Lindsey Creek, which has been channelized in places into a concrete culvert for stormwater control. Floodplains of varying widths adjoin both creeks and influence surrounding land uses.

Physical Character and Patterns

The majority of MidTown was developed in the early twentieth century. Many character elements from that era remain today. Interconnected streets arranged in modified grid patterns form small-to-medium size blocks, ranging from 250' x 250', to 300' x 1200'. Exceptions, such as the Overlook neighborhood's winding dendritic form, generally occur in response to challenging topography.



Figure II.2 : Street patterns.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Due to the large proportion of single family homes, MidTown has a traditional suburban, small town character. Buildings - with the exception of the AFLAC building on Wynnton Road - are typically one to two stories in height. Though bound by these commonalities, individual neighborhoods have their own characteristic setbacks, house styles, and street dimensions.



Figure II.3: Auto-oriented shopping center on Macon Road (Left) contrasts to the village atmosphere of St. Elmo Shopping Center (Right).

Certain commercial areas have a small-scaled “village” atmosphere with some parking to the rear and storefronts along the sidewalk:

- Wynnton Road between Lawyers Lane and Cedar Avenue;
- 13th Street between 13th Avenue and 16th Avenue;
- and, at the north end of Weracoba Park near Garrard Street and 18th Avenue.

However, retail developments along Macon Road include individually styled, disconnected buildings with large street setbacks filled with surface parking. This portion of Mid-Town lacks any local character and resembles hundreds of other commercial corridors found across the country.

Existing Land Use (Figures II.4 & II.5)

MidTown’s roughly 3200 acres (6 square miles) contain a wide variety of land uses. Some mix of uses occurs along the transportation corridors, but most areas are homogenous in land use. MidTown has no vertically mixed sites, such

as a residential unit above a retail storefront.

Residential land uses, accounting for 62% of acreage, significantly exceeds the second largest category, Commercial/Retail, at 13%. Nearly all residential units are single family homes. Most commercial retail and office uses are found along the traveled arteries, particularly Wynnton-Macon Road. Two major pockets of Office land use and concentrations of employment are the AFLAC facilities on Wynnton Road and Brown Avenue, and the Medical Center just beyond MidTown’s northwest boundary.

Land Use	Acres	
Park	197.3	6.2%
Civic	235.1	7.4%
Low Density Residential	1,040.4	32.8%
Medium Density Residential	677.4	21.4%
High Density Residential	244.7	7.7%
Mix Office/High Density Residential	142.0	4.5%
Neighborhood Commercial	187.9	5.9%
General Commercial	210.8	6.7%
Industrial warehouse	130.0	4.1%
Vacant	103.5	3.3%
<i>Total</i>	3,168.9	

Figure II.4: Existing Land Use Summary - 2004.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

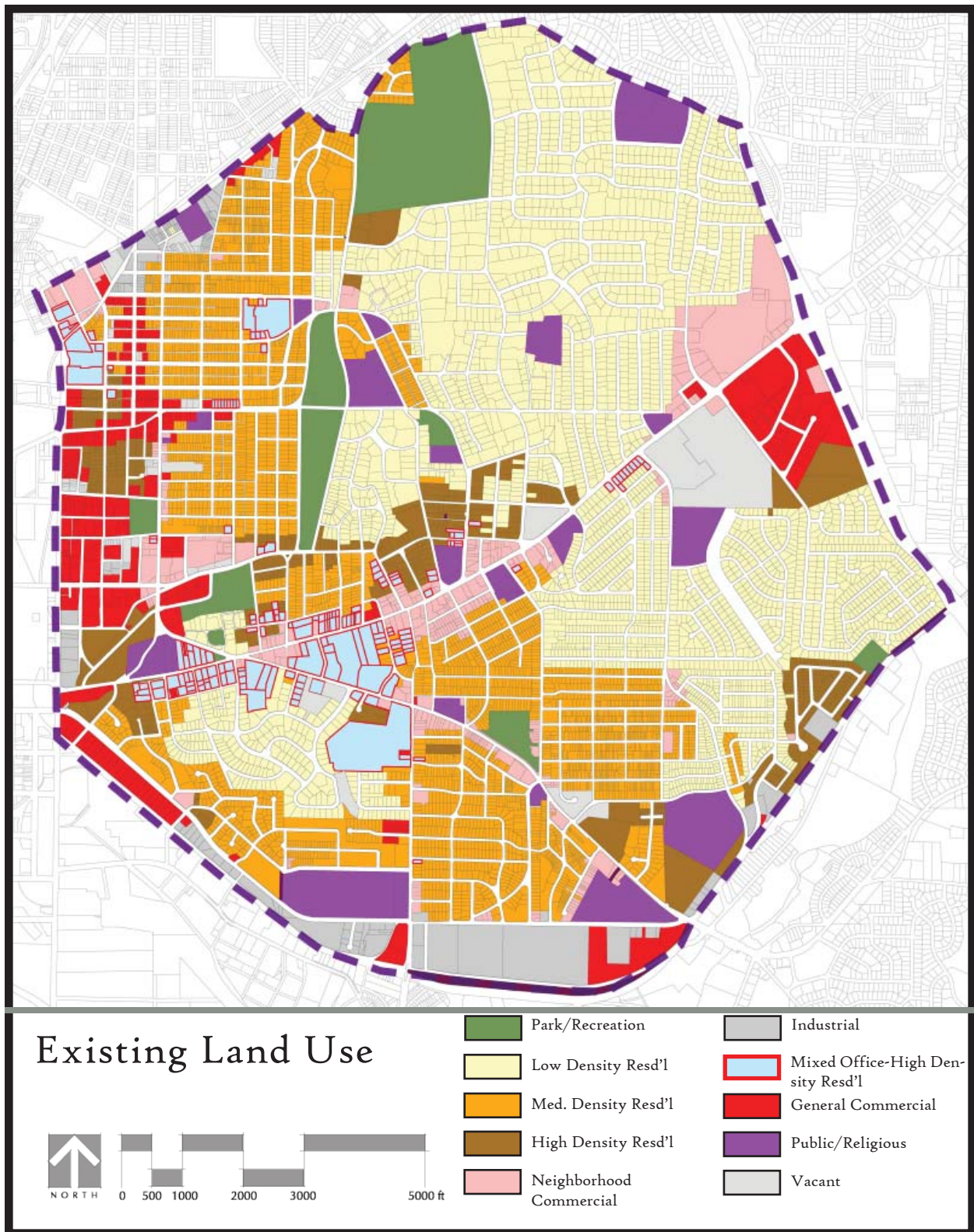


Figure II.5: Existing Land Use

EXISTING CONDITIONS

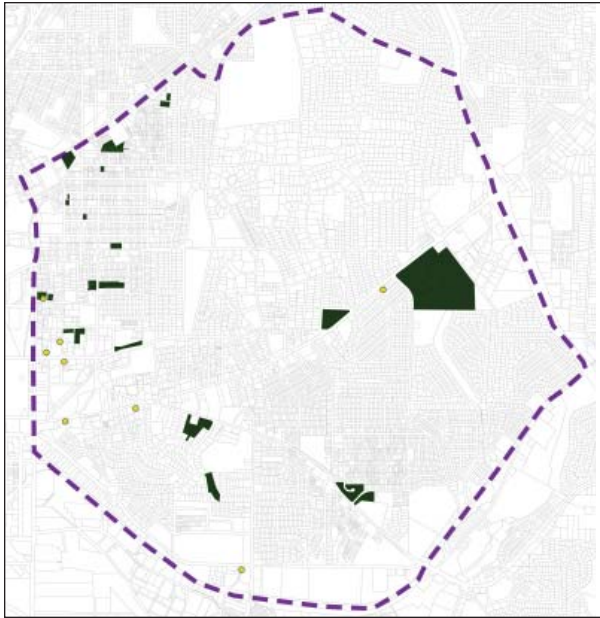


Figure II.6: Vacant & for-sale land, 2003.

Vacant land is scarce. Data from 2003 showed only 3.3 percent available, including the 70 acre former Mall site where the Columbus Public Library was recently constructed.

Public Realm

Parks, plazas, landmarks, trails, civic facilities, and streets/sidewalks are spaces that provide opportunities for community interaction and public gatherings. MidTown's most significant public spaces are its parks, particularly the well-designed, popular Weracoba Park. The MidTown area is home to nine public schools (Figure I.1), the new Columbus Public Library, and the Columbus Museum.

II.B Historic Resources

Columbus' rich heritage, extensive stock of surviving historic resources, and strong preservation ethic surpasses that of most communities.

The City of Columbus adopted its historic preservation ordinance in 1970, and revised the ordinance in 1996. Design guidelines supplement the ordinance. While both documents are well written and useful preservation tools, some updating and modifications could improve process effectiveness and accommodate the unique characteristics of the six districts. The City utilizes the International Building Code for code enforcement of historic and non-historic buildings.

MidTown features six National Register historic districts:

1. Dinglewood
2. Peacock Woods - Dimon Circle
3. Village of Wynnton
4. Weracoba - St. Elmo
5. Wildwood Circle - Hillcrest
6. Wynn's Hill - Overlook

Each National Register district is also a locally designated historic district. Weracoba - St. Elmo was the first designated district in 1994; all others were designated after 2000.

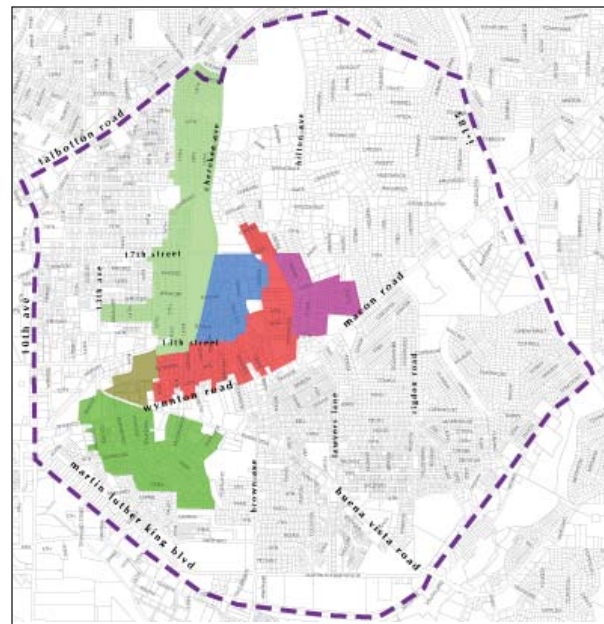


Exhibit II.7: Historic Districts.

MidTown also includes eleven individually designated National Register sites:

1. The Cedars – 2039 13th Street
2. Dinglewood – 1429 Dinglewood Drive
3. The Dismuke-Jarrell House – 1617 Summit Drive
4. The Elms– 1846 Buena Vista Road
5. Highland Hall – 1504 17th Street
6. Hilton – 2505 Macon Road
7. Old Dawson Place (Gordonido) – 1420 Wynnton Road
8. St. Elmo – 18th Avenue
9. The Woolfolk House – 1615 12th Street
10. The Wynn House – 1240 Wynnton Road
11. Wynnton Academy – 2303 Wynnton Road

II.C Transportation

Street Typology and Traffic Volume

Over 90% of street mileage within MidTown is in local streets. However, these local streets carry less than 10% of the total vehicle miles of travel, emphasizing their role for access rather than mobility. On the other end of the spectrum, Principal Arterials serve longer distance trips and high speed travel. Neither origin nor destination is typically within MidTown. Principal Arterials include I-185, Macon/Wynnton Road, Warm Springs/Talbotton Road and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. The major thoroughfares serving MidTown's constituents

are the Minor Arterials and Major Collectors. Key streets within these categories are Buena Vista Road, 13th Street, Brown Avenue, Rigdon Road and Hilton Avenue.

Within MidTown, the only multi-lane streets (more than two through lanes) are Macon/Wynnton Road, Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., and segments of 13th Street and Buena Vista Road. The low use of multi-lane streets and auxiliary turn lanes is feasible given MidTown's high level of local street connectivity.

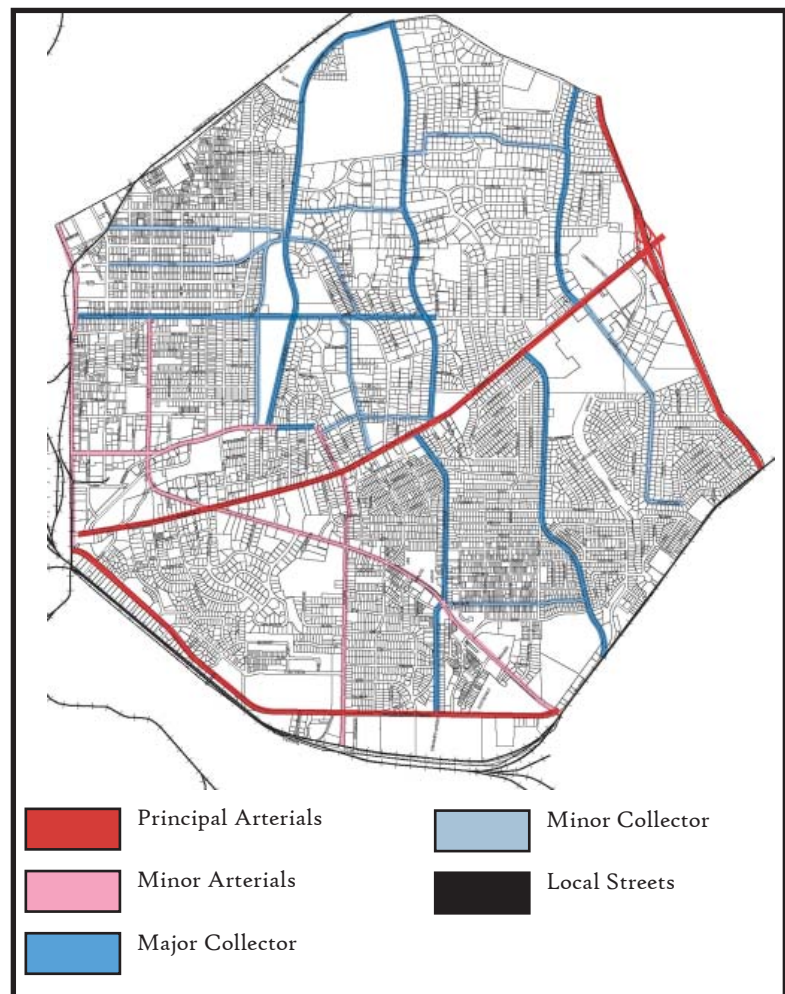


Figure II.8: Street Typology.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Street widths for the majority of MidTown's two lane roads fall into two groupings that support built-in traffic calming: 24'-28' pavement widths where one lane of through traffic must yield when parked cars are present; and 28'-30' wide streets that allow moving vehicles to slowly pass in opposite directions.

Almost half of MidTown's streets have unusually generous verge widths (planting strip between the sidewalk and curb) of 8'-14'. Even though an estimated one-third of MidTown streets have no sidewalk, these verge widths make possible future sidewalk and street tree deployment.

Vehicular traffic volume growth has averaged less than 1% annually over the last five years. Average daily traffic (ADT) volume tends to correlate with street typology. Ignoring I-185, the 40,500 ADT for Macon Road between Rigdon Road and the Interstate far exceeds the 11,500-25,000 ADT to the west on this same thoroughfare. Other significant traffic volumes are found on 13th Street (18,800), and to a lesser extent, Buena Vista Road (11,800-14,300). An anomaly exists with the low ADT figures (6,600-8000) for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. arterial.

Road Revision Projects

Concurrent to this study, two projects involving MidTown streets were proposed by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). The first called for a realignment, widening, and addition of left turn lanes at the Wynnton Road, Brown/Peacock Avenue intersection. The Historic Wynnton Council commissioned the Consultant team to develop an alternative plan that retains the realignment element but does not require the

widening of Wynnton Road for turn lanes.

A second, more extensive GDOT project concerned the proposed widening of Buena Vista Road from two lanes to five lanes between Overlook Drive and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Supported by strong local opposition to the plan, the Historic Wynnton Council commissioned the Consultant team to develop an alternative. The resulting plan accommodates existing traffic at a high level of service, handles vehicular growth projections, and incorporates community building and public realm features - such as sidewalks and vegetation - that were not included in the GDOT plan. Cost estimates for the alternative plan are less than the GDOT version.

The alternative plans for the Brown -Peacock intersection and Buena Vista Road enhancements are found Chapter IV.B.

Transit and Pedestrian Circulation

METRA buses service some portions of Midtown. Route 1 is the most extensive, running from the Macon-Boxwood-Ridgon-Ilges area, south on Lawyers Lane, west on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. and north on 10th Avenue. Route 3 traverses Buena Vista-Brown-MLK Blvd, and Route 6 follows Warm Springs-Talbotton Road.

No dedicated bike lanes exist in MidTown.

Sidewalks are found on at least one side of the majority of streets, but are generally narrow and in need of maintenance.

II.D Zoning and Regulations

Nine zoning districts are represented in MidTown: five residential, three business, and one mixed residential and business. Residential districts are generally found within existing neighborhoods. Business districts are centered on Macon-Wynnton Road and Buena Vista Road and at the western edge of MidTown. The one

mixed residential and business district, A-O (apartment-office) includes the AFLAC headquarters, scattered multi-family sites, and institutional uses around the Wynnton - Buena Vista intersection. With the exception of A-O, all zoning districts are single use.

Translating minimum lot area per family requirements in the zoning code, the maximum number of dwelling units/acre allowed with current zoning ranges from 4.35 - 7.26 in the single family only districts (R1A, R2, and R3) up to 18.15 townhomes/21.78 multi-family units in the R-4 district. A-O allows the highest density of units at 43.56/acre.

The Zoning Ordinance does not provide for design controls or guidelines, other than those applicable to historic districts. Consequently, many MidTown commercial areas are not only visually divergent internally, but are also inconsistent with the typical surrounding neighborhood fabric.

As of the date of this analysis, the Ordinance

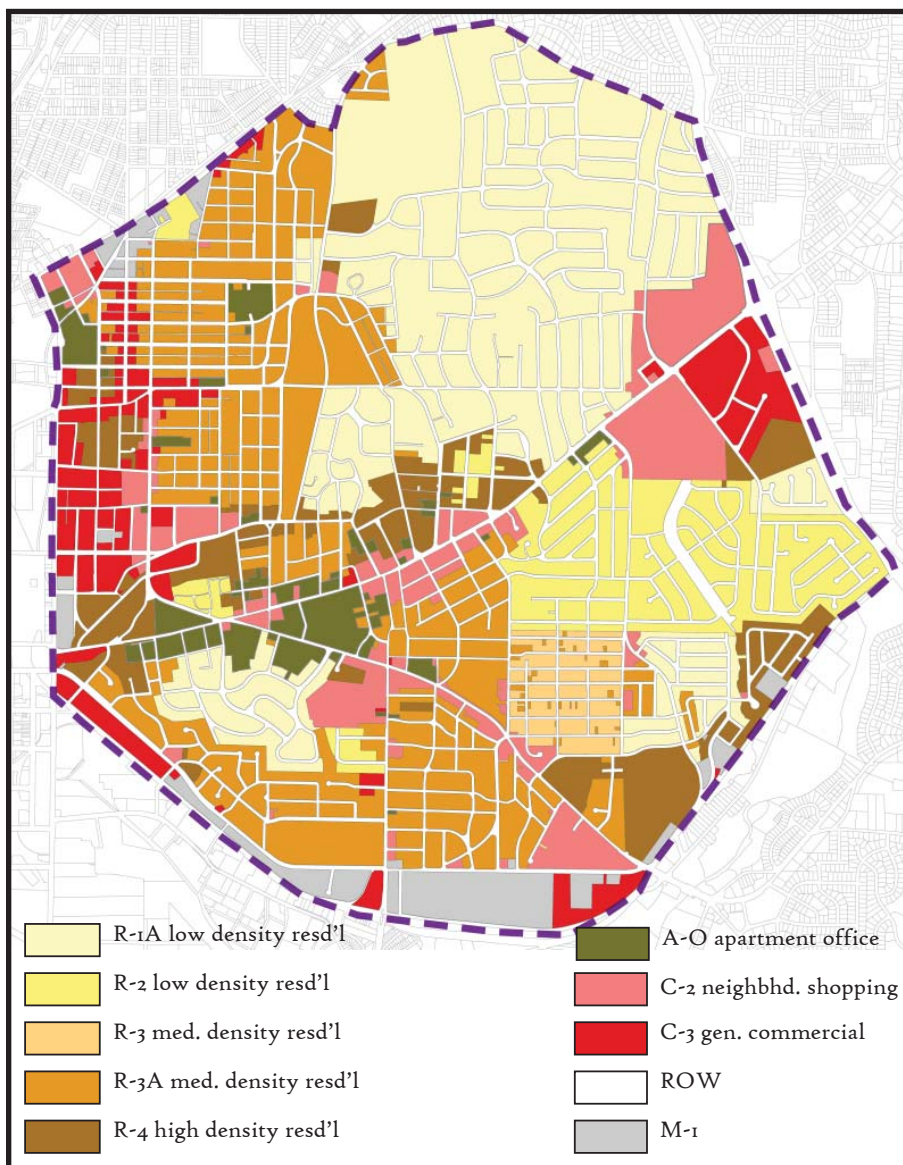


Figure II.9: Zoning Plan (2004).

EXISTING CONDITIONS

nance requires C-2 and C-3 Commercial zones to have 20 ft. minimum building setbacks, which is incompatible with Mid-Town's traditional sidewalk fronting retailers and creates the negative condition of parking lot placement between the building and street. Parking requirements in the Ordinance are typical of new, suburban areas but not historic neighborhoods. Multi-family housing requires 1.5 spaces/unit, while most retail requires 5.5 spaces per 1000 sq. ft. Food stores and restaurants require 10 spaces per 1000 sq. ft.

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan provides insight into the desired future land use for MidTown as determined through the County's Comprehensive Planning process. In the 2004 proposed update to the Land Use plan, uses are more concentrated, and residential density is lowered. Mixed Office-Commercial is concentrated in Wynnton Village and along Brown Avenue, while General Commercial is placed in the Cross Country Plaza-Ma-

con Road nexus to the east, and along 13th Street at the west. Mixed Residential-Office is concentrated around AFLAC and west on Wynnton Road, while another portion of Wynnton Road is returned to residential only zoning.

Other land use policy recommendations and goals in the Comprehensive Plan that are relevant to MidTown include:

- Protect older residential areas from

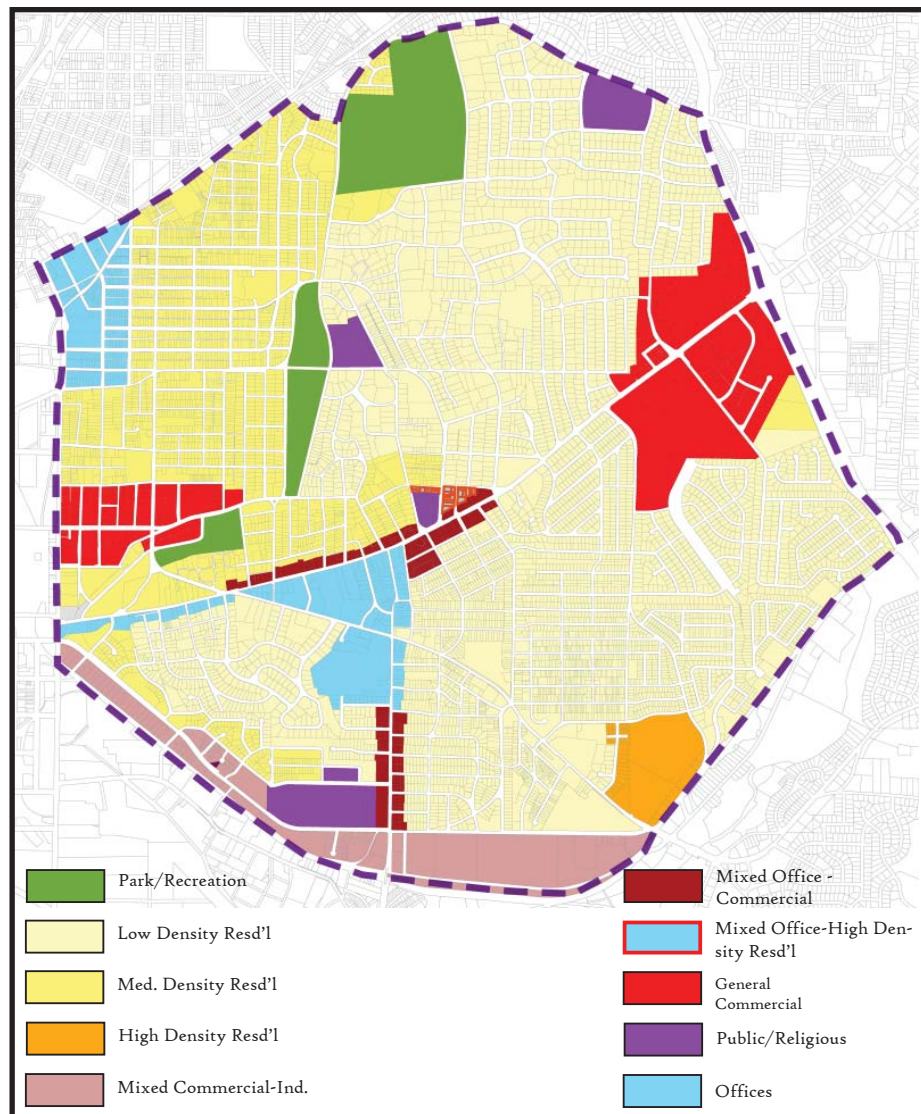


Figure II.10: Future Land Use - Comprehensive Plan Update.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

incompatible use encroachment.

- Protect historic resources.
- Promote industrial uses along Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
- Strengthen existing commercial areas and hold their boundaries.
- Focus redevelopment efforts on deteriorated areas of Talbotton, Warm Springs and Buena Vista Roads, 10th Avenue, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
- Concentrate office and services on Warm Springs Road.
- Increase housing options via new construction.
- Protect natural systems.
- Provide increased park space.

II.E Demographics & Market Conditions

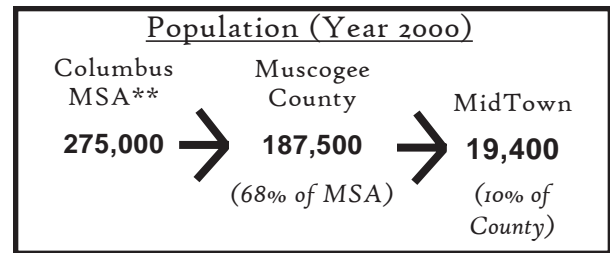
Demographics

Key demographic findings based on Census 2000 data for MidTown include:

- **Population:** 19,400 residents in 8500 households, a 10% decline from 1990 to 2000.
5-year forecast: No growth (20,600 residents in 9400 households).
- **Median Household (HH) Income:** \$14,000 - \$70,000.* Incomes increased in all census tracts from 1990 to 2000.
*5-year forecast: HH Incomes will rise faster than inflation (\$24,000 - \$76,000).**
- **Racial Composition:** 61% African-American, 37% Caucasian.
Forecast: Increasing age and diversity.

* Ranges provided are averages of five subsections of MidTown correlating roughly to market data sources.

** Metropolitan Service Area



Employment Trends

- **Job Growth:** 23,000 new jobs in the Columbus Metropolitan Service Area (MSA) from 1990 to 2000.
15-year forecast: 27,000 new jobs.
- **Strongest Employment Sector:** Wholesale & Retail Trade.
- *Nearby Ft. Benning is expected to add approximately 27,000 new residents to the region (5,000 soldiers, 10,000 family members and another 10,000 support personnel)*

Residential Market Conditions

- Strong new construction market in north Columbus; 1500 permits annually from 1990 to 2000, two-thirds were for single-family detached homes.
- **Rental Units in MSA:** 30,300;
Average Rent: \$500.
- **Average Housing Price** in Midtown (2003): \$62,320 - \$120,000.*

Retail Market Conditions

- **Retail Space in Muscogee County:** 4.9 million sq. ft.
- **Retail Space in MidTown:** 700,000 sq. ft. (14% of County)
- **Retail Rental Rates in MSA:** \$3 to \$21 per sq. ft.
- **MidTown Lease Rates:** \$5 to \$13 per sq. ft.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Commercial Office Rents:**
\$5 to \$12 per sq. ft.
- MidTown retailers are generating an average \$127 **Revenue per sq. ft.**
(Georgia average = \$197, and \$250 is considered investment grade.)

“The types of businesses that come in the future will define this area.”

MidTown stakeholder comment

Household Consumer Expenditures

- **MidTown Buying Power:** \$164 million expended annually by MidTown residents for eating out, apparel, leisure and entertainment, and household furnishings goods and services. This equates to \$17,400 per household, 30% less than the national average.
- Retail leakage is occurring (MidTown residents purchasing more than half of their goods and services from non-MidTown retailers).

Summary

Demographic and market factors that positively impact MidTown include:

- Increasing household incomes.
- Ft. Benning growth potential.
- Retail leakage capture opportunity.
- Aging demographics and income levels suggest opportunity in unmet supply of multi-family housing and low maintenance single family lots.

Market related challenges include:

- Small existing population base and flat non-military related population growth.
- Relatively low income levels make retail investment less attractive.
- Relatively low housing prices make investment less attractive to residential developers.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

III.

III.A Community Input

Community input was obtained through interviews, surveys, and workshops. Key findings from stakeholder interviews included:

MidTown's Positive Attributes

- Central location
- Major employers
- Regard for specific retailers
- New library
- Weracoba Park
- More people moving back

MidTown's Negative Attributes

- Deterioration, withdrawal of quality commercial businesses
- Crime perceptions
- Public school decline perceptions
- Housing decline in some neighborhoods



Figure III.1: One of the community workshops.

- Police service considered inadequate by some respondents

Many respondents believe that Macon-Wynton Road represents an economic and social separation of MidTown.

STAKEHOLDER DESIRED GOALS FOR MIDTOWN

BRING BACK QUALITY RETAILERS
(restaurants, movie theater, grocery)

*

ACHIEVE ECONOMIC VIABILITY FOR COMMERCIAL INVESTORS

*

REHABILITATE DECLINING NEIGHBORHOODS

(but retain general character)

*

MINIMIZE NORTH-SOUTH DIVISION

*

BENEFIT THE "AVERAGE HOMEOWNER"

*

ENGENDER SAME HIGH LEVEL OF ENERGY/COMMITMENT EMPLOYED TO REBUILD THE DOWNTOWN AND RIVERFRONT

Visual Preference Survey

The Consultant team developed and administered a Visual Preference Survey to gauge stakeholder's desired visual character for MidTown. Respondents rated nearly 100 photographs on a scale of -10 to

NEEDS ANALYSIS

+10 for their desired applicability in MidTown. Categories ranged from street character to housing styles. The survey was conducted at three meeting sites and was available on the internet. Over 250 surveys were completed, with 70% of respondents residents of MidTown. The highest and lowest scoring images with the lowest standard deviation (i.e. most consistency among respondents), are shown on the following pages. (*First number = average rating, Second number = standard deviation*). In some cases a simulation of an existing location within MidTown was tested to measure the reaction to potential modifications of that site.

STREETS: **POSITIVE**



STREETS: **NEGATIVE**



88% of respondents believe that Columbus should have Design Guidelines/standards for streets and architectural character. Desired characteristics appear to be:

- Street trees and amenities
- Buildings 2-4 stories in height framing road

- Curbed, 2-way streets with on-street parking
- Landscaped medians for 4 lane roads

A simulation of Hilton Avenue (below) in which only a landscaped median and paving treatment were added had the highest average score of any image in the Street Character category.



SIMULATION RESULT

PEDESTRIAN REALM: **POSITIVE**



PEDESTRIAN REALM: **NEGATIVE**



38% of respondents believe that sidewalks are inadequate throughout MidTown, while 28% believe the problem exists in specific locations. Desired pedestrian oriented improvements appear to be:

- Increase and improve sidewalks in residential and commercial areas
- Separate sidewalks from the road with a planting strip or tree well
- Provide a variety of paving treatments for sidewalks and crosswalks to accentuate and add interest

A simulation of the intersection of 13th Avenue at 17th Street (below) shows the dramatic positive effect of highlighting pedestrian crosswalks, adding street trees and framing/balancing the streetscape with more vertical buildings on the left side of the street.



SIMULATION RESULT

NEEDS ANALYSIS

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL: **POSITIVE**



COMMERCIAL/RETAIL: **NEGATIVE**



81% of respondents agree that infill should include mixed-use buildings.

85% agree that the highest intensity of development should occur along Macon/Wynnton Road.

62% do most of their shopping regionally, while 30% do most of their shopping within MidTown.

A simulation of Wynnton Road at Forest Avenue (below) resulted in the largest “before and after” positive change of any of the simulations.

Retail tenants desired (% of respondents selecting this type)

Locally owned businesses	92%	Small scale hardware stores	74%
Upscale restaurants/cafes	91%	Farmers markets	73%
Garden/flower shops	87%	Specialty retail	71%
Bookstores/coffee shops/newsstands	86%	Garden/flower shops	71%
Professional/personal services	78%	Grocery stores	69%



SIMULATION RESULT

HOUSING: **POSITIVE**



HOUSING: **NEGATIVE**



83% of respondents believe redevelopment/rehabilitation of MidTown neighborhoods should be a high policy priority for the City. 26% believe a need for multifamily housing is not being met in MidTown; 26% believe there is no need for multi-family housing.

Based on the results, quality, well maintained, single family and 2-3 story multi-family units are viewed as the preferred housing types for MidTown.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Workshop Summaries

Three community workshops focused on land use and desired locations for transportation/circulation improvements. Maps were created by consolidating the work of all subgroups. The first map, Susceptibility to Change, gauges the community's expectation for change in specific areas of MidTown.

The Residential & Civic Land Use map shows preferred locations for these particular land uses. While preferences tended to align with actual locations of housing types, participants were amenable to higher density housing alternatives along Macon-Wynnton Road, and on the far western and southern portions of the area.

While most parks/greenspace areas highlighted on the Parks & Greenspace map are existing parks and school athletic fields, new

greenspace sites are advocated for placement along Martin Luther King, Jr Blvd, within the old Columbus Square Mall site, and as pocket parks on small neighborhood sites.

The Streets, Parking & Mobility map provides direction for streetscape and non-vehicular circulation improvements. All major and minor arterials and transportation corridors in Midtown are considered candidates for streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

The Activity Node map identifies potential areas for desired concentrations of retail and mixed commercial centers. "SD" nodes connote centers with a broader regional customer base, while "N" nodes would serve local neighborhood needs. Nodes desired by participants in the third workshop are shown in red circles in Figure III.6. Attendees of that session live primarily between Macon Road, Brown Avenue and Rigdon Road.

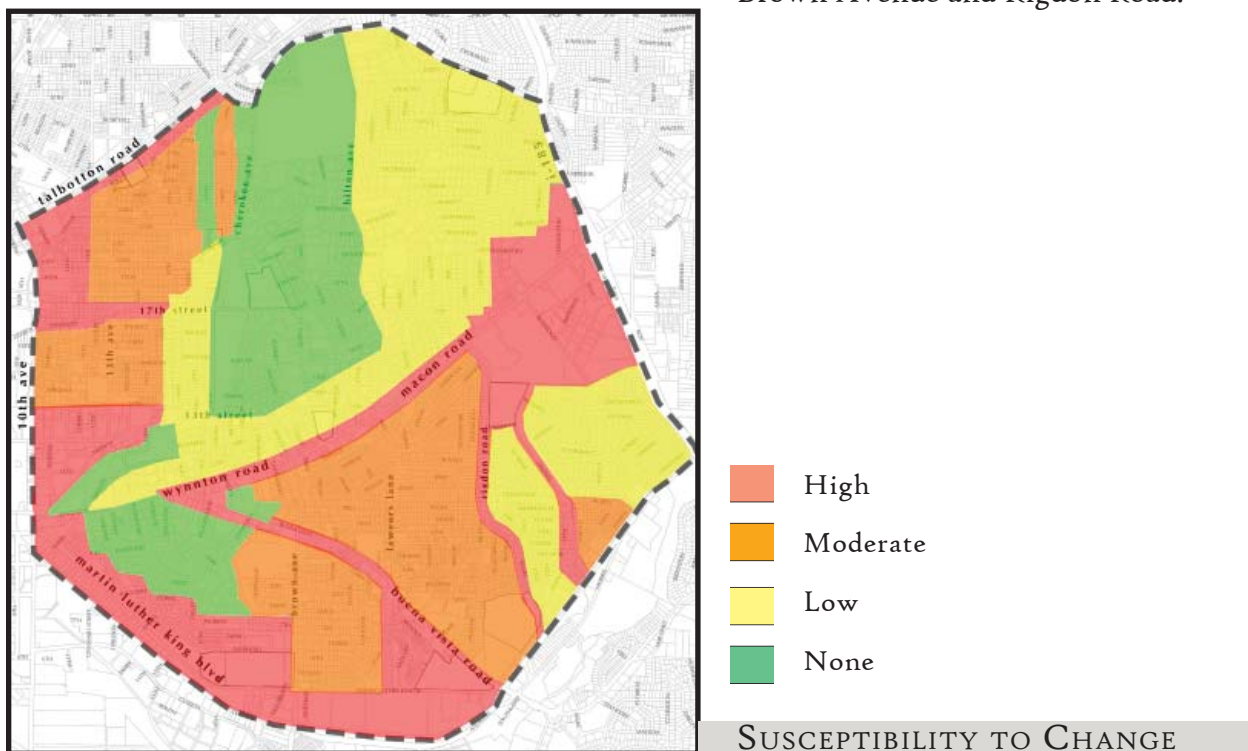


Figure III.2: Susceptibility to Change Synthesis Map.



RESIDENTIAL & CIVIC LAND USE

- Single Family
- Medium Density, Single Family + Multi-family
- Higher Density Multi-family
- Civic-Municipal Uses

Figure III.3: Residential & Civic Land Use Synthesis Map.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

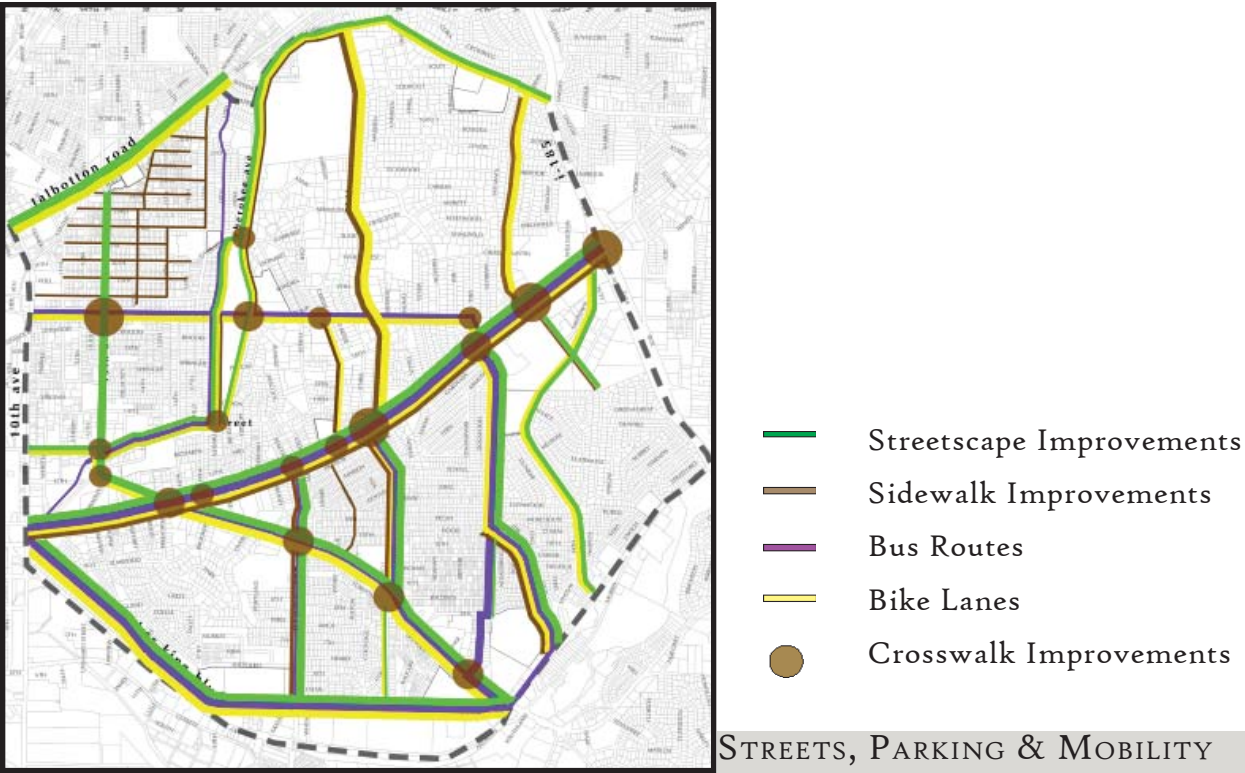
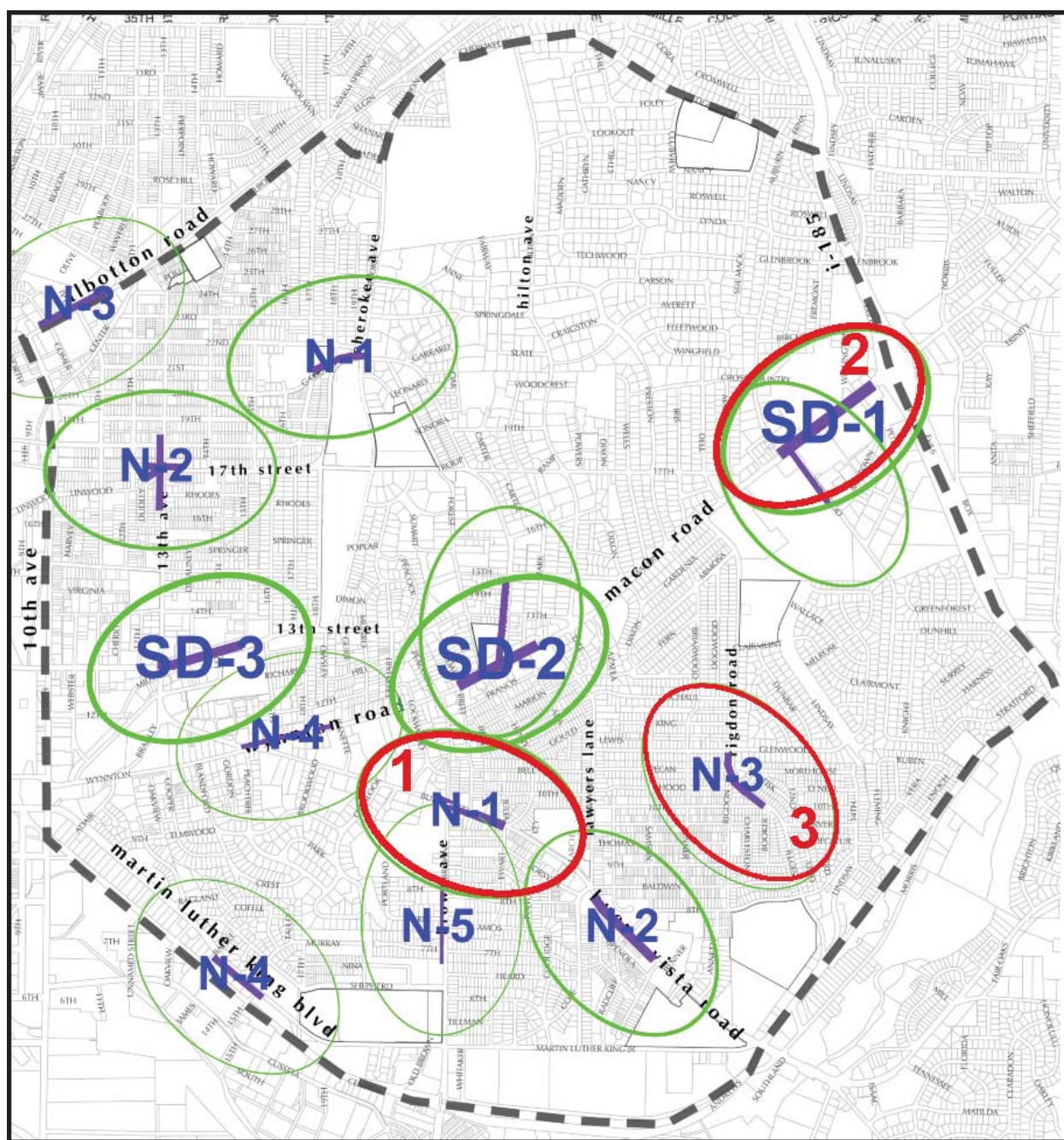


Figure III.4: Streets, Parking & Mobility Synthesis Map.



Figure III.5: Parks & Greenspace Synthesis Map.



ACTIVITY NODES

Numbered in order of stated importance/priority
Node linewidth equates to strength of consensus
by groups






-  Retail Frontage
-  Node Priorities (Workshops 1,2)
-  Node Priorities (Workshop 3)
-  Regional Community Node
-  Neighborhood Nodes

Figure III.6: Activity Nodes Synthesis Map.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

III.B Market Demand Potentials

Should recent trends continue, MidTown's commercial health is expected to remain stagnant or slowly deteriorate over the next twenty years. The following quantitative assessment of the commercial and housing market potential for MidTown assumes that proactive measures will be taken to reverse this trend.

Note: Demand forecasts are projections for the next five years.

Housing

Estimates for net new housing demand in MidTown

	<i>Moderate Growth</i>	<i>High Growth*</i>
<i>Units</i>	215 - 300	215 - 500

* A key assumption of the high growth estimate is that MidTown captures a strong share of the Ft. Benning housing need growth.

Commercial

Incremental retail space requirements

	<i>Moderate Growth</i>	<i>High Growth</i>
<i>Square Feet</i>	20K-25K	35K - 40K

While demand is found across all commercial categories, leisure/entertainment and food services (restaurants) are the two largest subgroups. A high growth scenario additionally shows potential for 30,000 sq. ft. for a multiplex cinema.

Employment

Employment is forecasted to increase within the Columbus MSA at approximately 1900 new jobs per year over the next ten years. A quarter of this growth is forecasted in professions typically leasing office space (finance, real estate).

Assuming historical vs. heightened capture rates, MidTown's Multi-tenant office space is expected to increase by **15K - 30K sq. ft.**

"There's not one great restaurant in town, but we've got lots of barbecue places."

MidTown stakeholder comment

III.C Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities and challenges relevant to the revitalization of MidTown include:

Opportunities

- Existing residential neighborhoods are generally an asset
 - their structure incorporates traditional community building elements: connectivity, small setbacks, architectural character, and mature vegetation
 - issues tend to involve specific properties and maintenance rather than the more difficult problems of inappropriate pattern

- Major redevelopment of the Columbus Square Mall site on Macon Road could be a development and population attracting catalyst
 - new library just completed
 - municipal entities need office space
 - good location for regional tenants
 - municipal ownership of large contiguous block of properties
- Committed stakeholders
 - community participants engaged and can aid implementation phase
- Certain commercial needs are not being met. Only 30% of surveyed respondents conduct most of their shopping within MidTown. Areas of need include:
 - restaurants
 - basic entertainment (movie theaters)
 - neighborhood services and goods
 - bookstore, coffee shops, bakeries
 - localized personal services
- Certain housing needs are not being met, including:
 - quality multi-family apartments and condominiums
 - empty nester, small lot single family and townhomes
- Historic district preservation guidelines are in place to retain valuable assets. Selected enhancements can strengthen their impact.
- Significant improvements can be made to streetscapes that involve pedestrian and building related elements
 - traffic congestion is not an overwhelming problem in MidTown, so pedestrian needs can be prioritized
 - few multi-lane roads exist that have significant architectural investment, making streetscape improvements less costly
 - can make a large difference with relatively low investment and in short time period
- Growth projections for Fort Benning offer near term opportunity to provide residential housing that will be in short supply.
- Localized investment on 13th Street by Jackson-Burgin offers example of activity node in process that may be duplicated (with other positioning strategies) within MidTown.
- The channelized, unattractive flood control technique deployed at Lindsey Creek can be transformed into an equally effective community amenity similar to Weracoba Park. Lindsey Creek also offers extensive greenway potential north to Columbus State University and south to the Riverwalk.
- The nonprofit Neighborworks Columbus and the Community Reinvestment department of the Columbus Consolidated government have/are working on rehabilitation and rebuilding of affordable single family housing in East Wynnton and East Highlands.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

MidTown's Strengths . . .



Figure III.7: Strong traditional residential street character.



Figure III.8: Quality and variety of housing styles.



Figure III.9: Local retail favorites.



Figure III.10: (Left) Major employer (AFLAC Headquarters). (Right) Prominence of Wynnton Elementary School.



Figure III.11: New Columbus Public Library will bring regional visitation.



Figure III.12: Weracoba Park offers variety of recreational and greenspace amenities.

... and Opportunities for Improvement.



Figure III.13: Lack of maintenance of some homes can blight neighborhoods.



Figure III.14: Poor multi-family options.



Figure III.15: Declining retail base.



Figure III.16: Approach to flood control does not enhance the neighborhood environment.



Figure III.17: Inhospitable and generic streetscape of Marcon Road.



Figure III.18: [They built it but they did not come] - an underutilized Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Constraints

- With the exception of Ft. Benning, growth in the region, particularly MidTown, is relatively flat. Commercial developer interest is more difficult to obtain.
- Correspondingly, average price points for housing are low, presenting challenges to garnering residential developer interest.
- MidTown retailer average sales per sq. ft. is low, making commercial sustainability an issue for retention.
- In Muscogee County, property taxes are frozen for residential properties until resale, and the Homestead Exemption accelerates for appreciation, resulting in insufficient municipal funds to invest in public projects.
- The MidTown community itself has perceptual and real divisions, generally centered on Macon Road. Differing priorities and attitudes may make implementation more difficult.
- Lack of vacant land makes redevelopment the only option. Must compete against lower land costs in greenfield development in north Columbus.
- Actual and perceived crime activity may thwart revitalization in certain segments of the Study Area.
- Current zoning codes do not allow the deployment of many traditional community building principles.

“The Good, the Bad, the Ugly”

Stakeholder description of MidTown



VISION & RECOMMENDATIONS

IV.

IV.A Vision

Quality Housing
Choices



Thriving, Sustainable
Commercial Base



Community
Cohesiveness,
Diversity



A VISION FOR MIDTOWN

MidTown is a small town in the heart of Columbus, a diverse and stable residential community, supported by commercial centers, greenspace, and civic amenities.

Walkable



Context Sensitive
Transportation
Systems



Greenspace & Civic
Amenities for All Ages



Historic Character



VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IV.B Recommendations

Goals and recommendations toward achieving a MidTown Vision are listed at the end of this chapter in Figures IV-23 through IV-27. Some of the recommendations are described in more detail in this section.

Goal #1:
RETAIL HEALTH &
SUSTAINABILITY
(Figure IV.23)

Concentrating retail activity into mixed-use regional and neighborhood serving nodes is

an essential element for retail sustainability. Nine commercial nodes are proposed (Figure IV.1). The short term implementation of several key nodes can provide the catalyst to the MidTown commercial revitalization effort. Four prioritized nodes are highlighted in this report.

Node #1, specifically the 70 acre parcel south of Macon Road, was studied by the Consultant team in a separate commission by the Muscogee County School Board. This site, with its large size, municipal ownership, location, and current nonproductive use, has the potential to be the foundation for Mid-Town's revitalization.

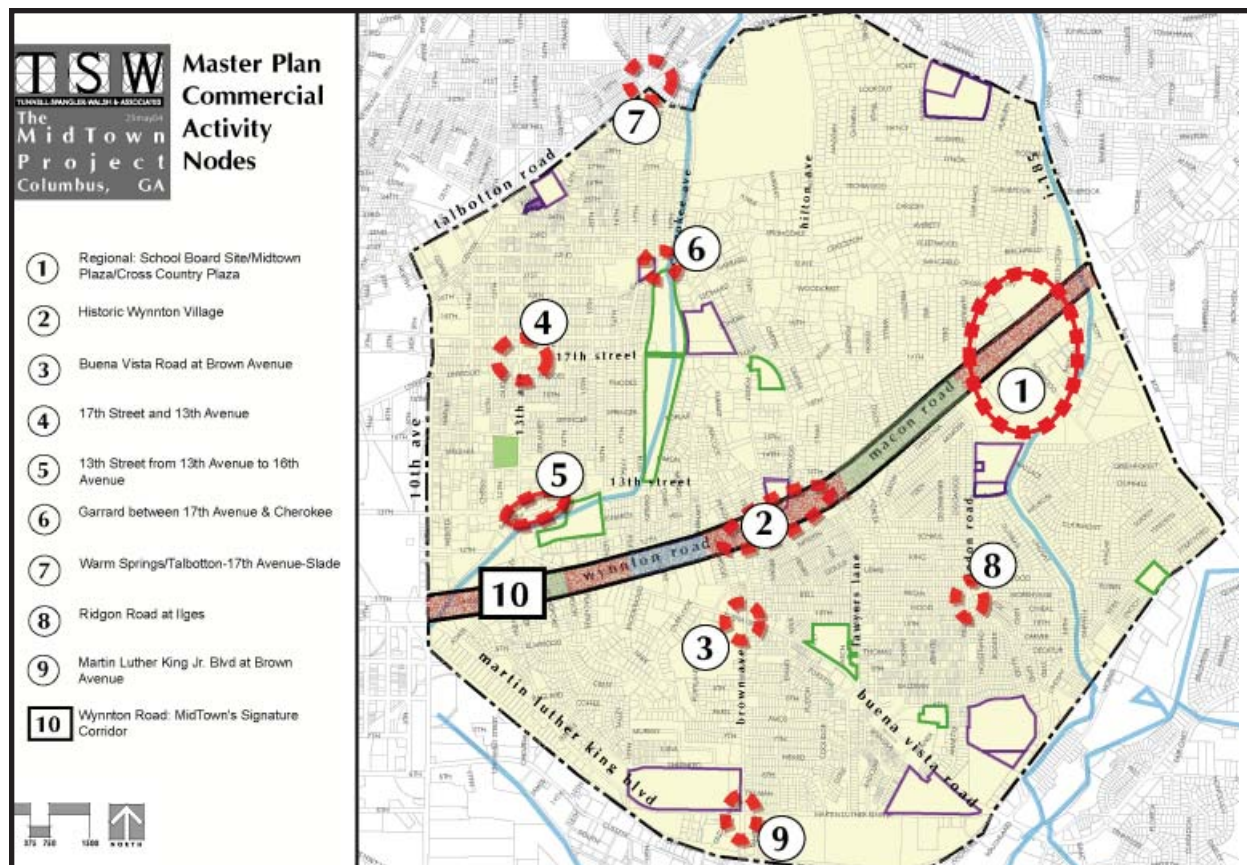


Figure IV.1: Proposed Commercial Activity Nodes and Character Segments of Wynnton Road.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Consultant Team's 2004 plan from the original commission is included in the Technical Appendix document, and is supported with an economic analysis. Based on subsequent stakeholder input, the Consultant team prepared an alternative concept plan (Figure IV.4) that remains under discussion as of the date of this report. The outcome will have critical implications for MidTown's ability to achieve its Vision. The specific plan chosen is not as important as is the retainment of the inherent community oriented principles that are also the framework for many of the

August, 2005 School Board Site Plan Elements

- * Columbus Public Library (existing)
- * 73 Single-Family Homes
- * 177 Townhomes/Live-Work
- * 110 Multi-Family Homes
- * 100,000 sq. ft. MCSD Offices
- * 25,000 sq. ft. City Offices
- * New Rigdon Road Elementary School
- * New Lindsey Creek Arboretum Park and Greenway

Figure IV.2 (Right): Vacant former Sears building on the School District site.

Figure IV.3 (Far Right): New Columbus Public Library, March, 2005. A 340 space parking lot has been constructed in front of the building.



Figure IV.4: August, 2005 Plan for the Muscogee County School Board and Library Site (Node #1).

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

recommendations in this Master Plan. Also, the strong residential focus and supporting amenities in the School Board site concept plan enhances MidTown's potential to capture a major share of the planned Ft. Benning personnel expansion.

Node #2 incorporates a linear site further west on Wynnton Road historically known as "Wynnton Village". This section still contains remnants of small-scale local business enterprises evoking a small town character, such as Dinglewood Pharmacy and Wynnton Hardware. Some newer enterprises, including a Burger King fast food restaurant, have adapted into former single family homes, but others are transforming the streetscape into a generic commercial franchise environment.

The goal for Node #2 is to recreate the historic, small-town commercial character. Strategies for achievement include:

- Require retail or mixed-use along Wynnton Road;
- Build upon civic spaces, such as the new magnet school - Wynnton Elementary;
- Address commercial creep into adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- Apply unique design guidelines for this section of Wynnton Road that include improved sidewalks with street tree planting buffers, buildings to the sidewalk, parking in the rear, and allowance of

residential over retail. Examples of specific recommended streetscape standards include the provision of 3 zones (landscape, sidewalk and street furniture), minimiza-



Figure IV.5: (Above Left): Burger King adapts to the local environment. (Right): Wynnton Elementary is a prime civic landmark in Wynnton Village.

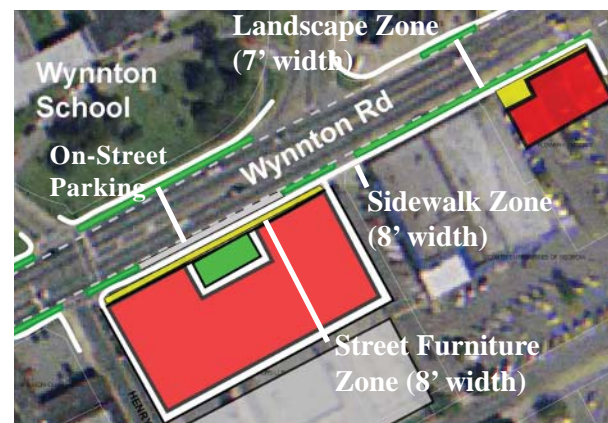
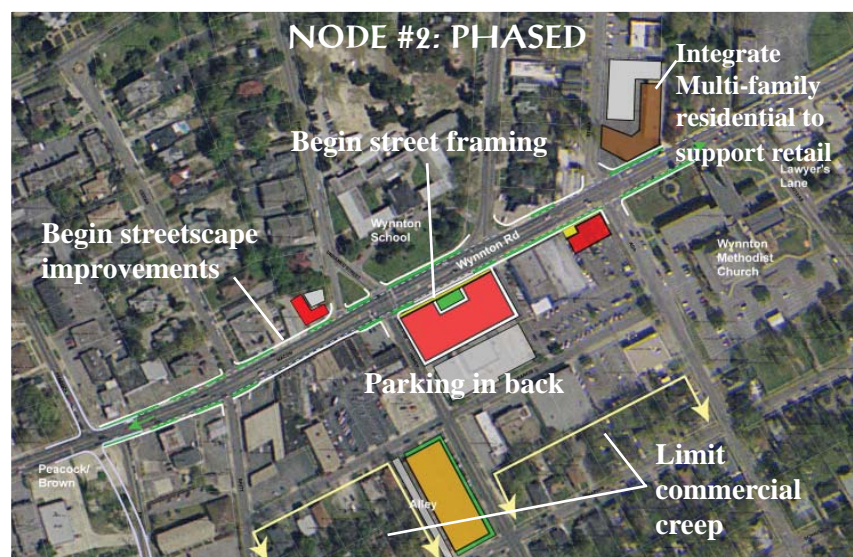


Figure IV.6: (Above): Focus on streetscape elements in the Phased approach. (Below): Phased concept for Wynnton Village Node.



VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

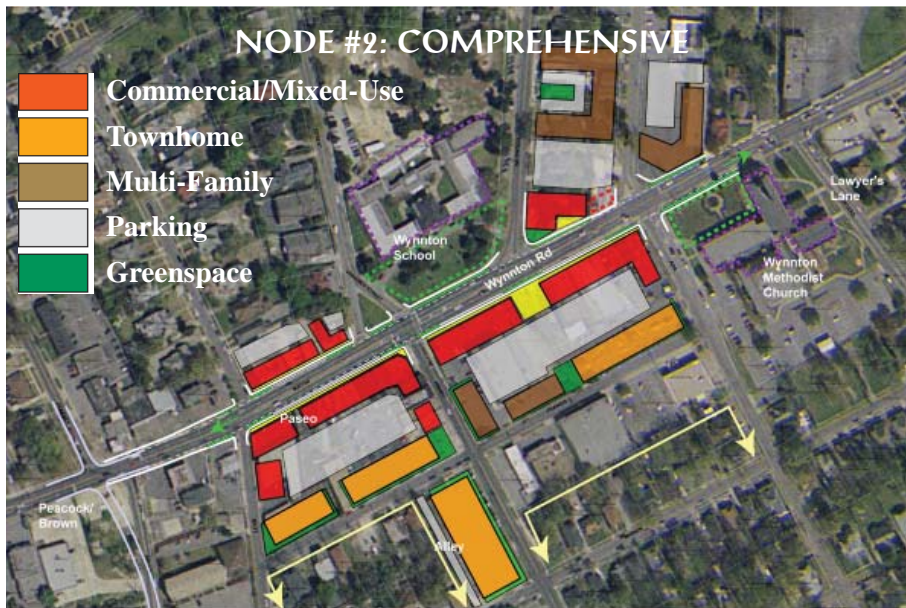


Figure IV.7: Comprehensive concept representing desired principles for Wynnton Village Node.



Figure IV.8: (Left): Corner of Forest Avenue and Wynnton Road today. (Right): Same location using Node #2 principles.

tion of curb cuts, and use of specific materials for sidewalk and crosswalk paving and street lighting. Examples of specific building oriented design guidelines include:

- Setbacks: 75% of building on Build-to line
- Height: 14' clear height ground floor (2 stories encouraged)
- Windows: Ground floor façade will have 60-90% fenestration
- Entrances: Functioning doors along Wynnton at intervals no greater than 60'

Two potential scenarios are provided as representations of the desired development for Wynnton Village. The Phased approach builds around some existing businesses, while the Comprehensive approach assumes a greater assembly of parcels could be obtained and redeveloped. Both concepts assume current tenants could remain if desired but with modifications to their building configurations and placement.

A visual representation is seen in the simulation for this area (Figure IV.8) that was included in the Visual Preference Survey.

Node #3, at Brown Avenue and Buena Vista Road, is already functioning as a limited but important neighborhood node for the adjacent community. Improvements can be made to further support residents and provide services to the AFLAC employees on the west side of Brown Avenue. This node also overlaps and can be coordinated with the recommendations for the Buena Vista



Figure IV.9: (Left): Existing retailers of Node #3 on northeast corner. (Right): Part of AFLAC facility complex.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Figure IV.10: Concept for Brown-Buena Vista Neighborhood Node.

Road enhancements. Residents strongly support the retainment of a grocery store at this location. (A Piggly Wiggly is currently located on the southeast corner.)

Principles incorporated in the Node #3 concept include:

- Pedestrian amenities including sidewalks on both sides of Buena Vista Road and landscape strip with street trees between the sidewalk and road;

- Buildings brought up to the sidewalk with parking in the rear;
- Residential units added within walking distance through infill.

Node #4 has the potential to spur revitalization of the East Highlands area in much the same manner that the School Board site plan implementation will energize the entire MidTown community. The five point intersection has some positive existing character elements, from the handsome architecture of the church on the northeast corner to the triangular shaped lot between Linwood and 17th Street. While adjacent residential neighborhoods and existing scale offer positioning as a neighborhood node, alternatives offer a more regional potential. Proximity to the more industrial areas of town and a prime location in a neighborhood where single family homes have/are reaching historic longevity may indicate positioning as an antique/home decorating/home services retail goods and renovation services center.

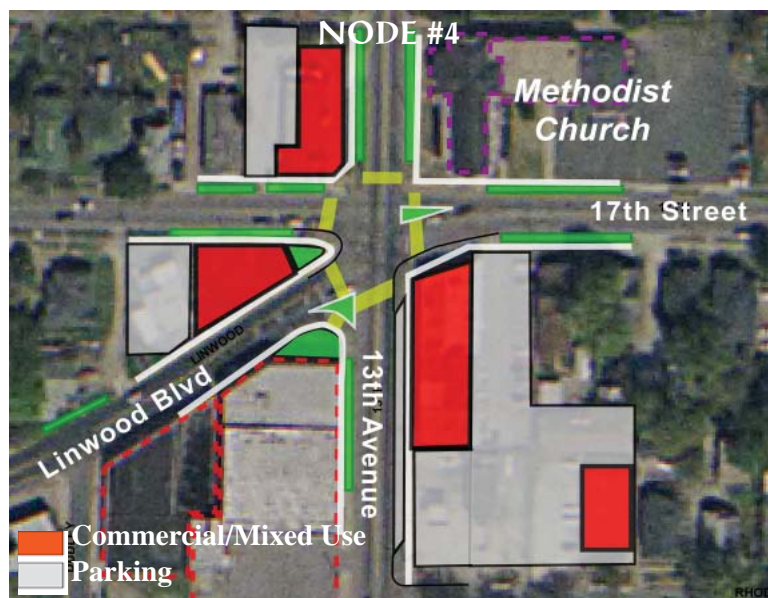


Figure IV.11: Node #4 concept plan.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Figure IV.12: (Left) Node #4 today and (Right) with plan principles implemented.

The Node #4 concept plan incorporates the same principles found in the preceding nodes. Participants in the Visual Preference Survey increased their rating of this intersection from -5 to +4 based on the addition of simple streetscape elements and the addition of a 3 story building on the northwest corner to frame the road.

Other Nodes - Two of the remaining nodes are already established and should be nurtured by incorporating the activity center principles when considering future development in the area. St. Elmo Shopping Center on Garrard (**Node #6**) is an established retail center that will be positively influenced by a planned residential development to the east. The Jackson-Burgin development on 13th Street (**Node #5**) has already been designed with Traditional Neighborhood Development principles and would be further enhanced with similar development on the north side of the street. This developer's self-funding of streetscape amenities along the south side of 13th Street may warrant priority of future municipal funds for streetscape improvements along the north side to support and sustain this promising commercial node.

Lastly, in order to effectively implement the recommended node concepts, the municipal zoning and regulatory land use ordinances (those in effect in 2004) will require modification.

Goal #2: PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS (Figure IV.24)

The linear Weracoba Park is a significant asset to MidTown and can be emulated to the east around Lindsey Creek. In addition to park amenities, the creek offers a potential greenway trail benefit of connectivity north to Columbus State University, and south to the boundary of MidTown (and eventually to the riverfront).

A portion of a proposed Lindsey Creek park system is incorporated in the School Board site plan (Figure IV.4). The MidTown Master Plan proposes the extension of that system to increase its benefit to a larger constituency of MidTown residents. The Lindsey Creek Recreation Area (Figure IV.15) would entail an approximately 2.5 mile long multi-use greenway trail and passive park running from the railroad tracks at the southern edge of MidTown and north to Columbus State University. Several active amenity areas are proposed along its path: at Decatur and Fleming Street; at I-185-Putt Road and MidTown Drive; and the Arboretum Park proposed behind the Columbus Public Library. More de-



Figure IV.13:
Lindsey Creek
today near Glen-
wood where it is
channelized into
an unappealing
concrete culvert.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

tailed parcel maps of the proposed greenway recreational system are found in the Technical Appendix document.

Another public realm recommendation involves the better utilization of public school grounds for community benefit. Opportunities exist at Hannan Elementary and Clubview Elementary in their underutilized grounds. Marshall Middle School and Carver High School could support neighborhood revitalization with more inviting and aesthetic exterior treatment. The chain link/barbed wire fence should be removed and landscaping added to the grounds to present a “park-like” face to the community.

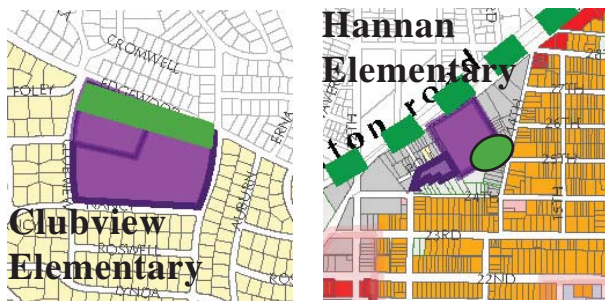


Figure IV.14: Opportunities (in green) for creating public amenities from underutilized school grounds.

Future park design should incorporate principles that promote usage, accessibility and safety. One important element involves “eyes on the street”, or the ability for many to observe activities within the park. A basic way to achieve this objective is to place perimeter roads around the park, with residential housing facing (not backing) the park. Weracoba Park incorporates this design, but others, such as Veteran’s Park, have limited accessibility due to private housing lining three sides of the park.



Figure IV.15: Proposed Lindsey Creek Recreation Area.



Figure IV.16: (Left): Perimeter streets and homes face Weracoba Park. (Right): Veteran's Park is only visible from Buena Vista Road.



Goal #3:
RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD
REHABILITATION &
PRESERVATION
(Figure IV.25)

Rehabilitating and preserving existing neighborhoods will involve regulatory changes and enforcement, and the active involvement of community residents.

Neighborhoods suffer from the practice of spot rezoning, when commercial activities “creep” into established residential areas. Minimization of this activity involves consistent enforcement of existing zoning, as well as the return of some commercially zoned properties back to their historical residential status. Figure IV.17 shows candidates for this action throughout MidTown. Approximately 55 acres have been identified: 15 are currently zoned as General Commercial, 21 acres as Neighborhood Commercial and 19 acres as Apartment-Office. This acreage is recommended for rezoning to mixed-use res-

idential (30 acres), medium-high density residential (24 acres) and 1 acre to low density residential. This action also supports the first goal of concentrating retail for maximum effectiveness and business sustainability.

Two additional factors often lead to neighborhood decline: the purchase of properties by absentee landlords with subsequent rental of single fam-

ily homes; and low enforcement

of building and property standards due to lack of appropriate regulations or inspection personnel. “Carrot and stick” strategies can be used by municipalities to address the first factor. For example, a ‘Homesteading’ program offers positive incentives by enabling the City to purchase abandoned/tax induced foreclosed properties and sell them to private owners for a nominal fee conditional upon renovation and occupancy time in the home. Providence, Rhode Island adopted such a program in the 1970’s. Other strategies are listed in Figure IV.25.

While legal challenges to regulations in these areas are not uncommon, many municipalities have pushed ahead with a variety of measures to stem the spiral of neighborhood deterioration. Examples include:

- The City of Lawrenceville, Kansas enacted the Rental Licensing and Inspection Program to regulate rental of dwelling units in single family neighborhoods. Rental property in single family zoned neighborhoods must maintain a valid license in compliance

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

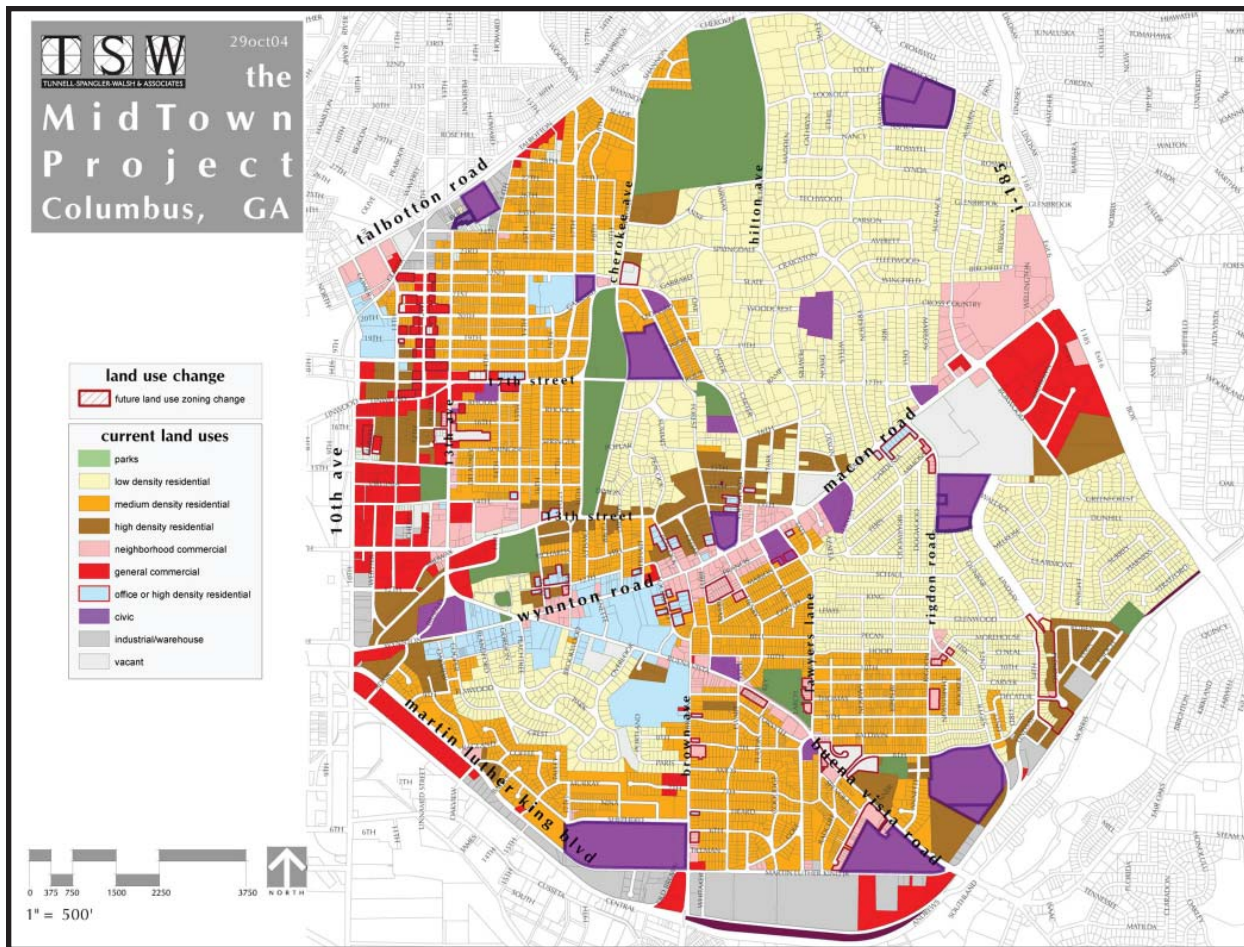


Figure IV.17: Parcels highlighted by red boundaries are recommended for change to residential and/or mixed use zoning to address commercial creep.

with City Ordinance 7326 and the Uniform Housing Code. Properties must meet standards for light, ventilation, heating safety, sanitary conditions, and space for human occupancy.

- The City of Alpharetta, Georgia adopted a property maintenance code that has been approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
- Cobb County increased fines last year of second and third time violators of the “junk car” ordinance. Austin, Texas, Beavercreek, Ohio and Sunnyvale, California have similar ordinances in this area.
- To address issues of too many occupants residing in single family homes, Cobb County, Gwinnett County and the City of Atlanta have enacted “multifamily use” ordinances. Atlanta requires a minimum of 150 gross sq. ft. for the first occupant, and 100 sq. ft. for all others. Cobb County requires at least 50 sq. ft. of sleeping space per person, excluding hallways, kitchen, storage and utility areas.
- The City of Chattanooga, Tennessee offers a Rental Housing Rehabilitation Program, whereby the City will make interest payments on construction loans for repairing

and maintaining rental properties with 51% affordable rental rates.

Neighborhoods can also be preserved by using historic district designations (for areas that comply). MidTown has employed this tool effectively for 6 districts. Other areas may be candidates for such measures dependent upon community support, such as a portion of East Highlands. (Over 2/3rds of the homes in East Highlands are now over 50 years old.) While state and national Historic District designations are one approach, the City could also adopt a Conservation District category, such as found in Nashville. Conservation zoning is a design review overlay zoning, but is less stringent than historic zoning. Conservation zoning would be used to regulate the following actions: new construction, building relocations, additions to habitable floor area, and demolitions. Unlike historic zoning, conservation zoning does not regulate alterations to buildings outside of these areas.

While Columbus has made strong progress in the identification and establishment of historic preservation areas within MidTown, it must also address the equally important issue of code enforcement. Columbus should adopt a tailored building code specifically for historic areas, rather than utilize Chapter 34 of the International Building Code. Such codes have special provisions for historic buildings that provide increased flexibility and responsiveness to unique conditions. Model codes to consider include those in Cincinnati, Maryland and New Jersey.

Detailed recommendations and strategies to further support Columbus' historic resources can be found in the Recommendations section of the Technical Appendix document.

Goal #4: TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS (Figure IV.26)

Achievement of Midtown's Vision will occur only if the Vision becomes a fundamental tenant of transportation planning. Context Sensitive road design practices support the Vision and should be employed. Proposed solutions to two corollary projects to this study, the Brown-Peacock-Wynnton road realignment, and Buena Vista Road enhancements, incorporate the principle of developing transportation strategies in context with existing neighborhood character.

The Consultant Team's first proposed alternative (Figure IV.18) to GDOT's Brown-Peacock-Wynnton intersection plan achieves the safety objective of aligning the two roads, improving the intersection for pedestrians, and incorporating left hand turn lanes on

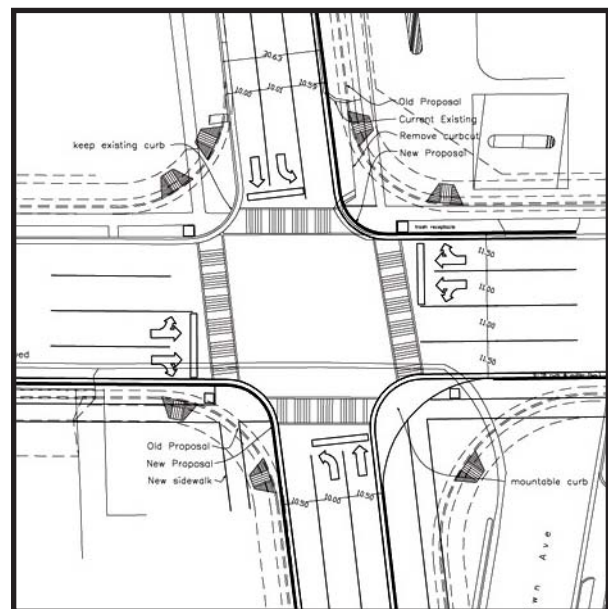


Figure IV.18: Proposed Wynnton Road - Brown-Peacock intersection improvement plan.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Brown and Peacock Avenues. Discussions between GDOT, the City and community representatives continue as of the time of this report.

The Consultant Team's proposed improvements to Buena Vista Road (Figure IV.19) are appropriate for traffic volume estimates/projections and the desire to retain community character. In this regard, significant streetscape enhancements are proposed that improve aesthetics and the ability of pedestrians to safely and conveniently use the corridor. A three lane roadway is recommended vs. GDOT's proposed five lane configuration. These actions will additionally support the viability of the neighborhood activity node (Node #3) proposed at Buena Vista Road and Brown Avenue.

In May, 2005, the Columbus Consolidated government passed resolution #140-05 that adopted the Consultant Team's 3-lane proposal for Buena Vista Road. A copy of the resolution is in the Technical Appendix document.

While plans for these two sites are important, decisions regarding Macon-Wynnton Road have and will effect MidTown's character to a greater extent. This is evident today by the contrasting environment of the "Macon"

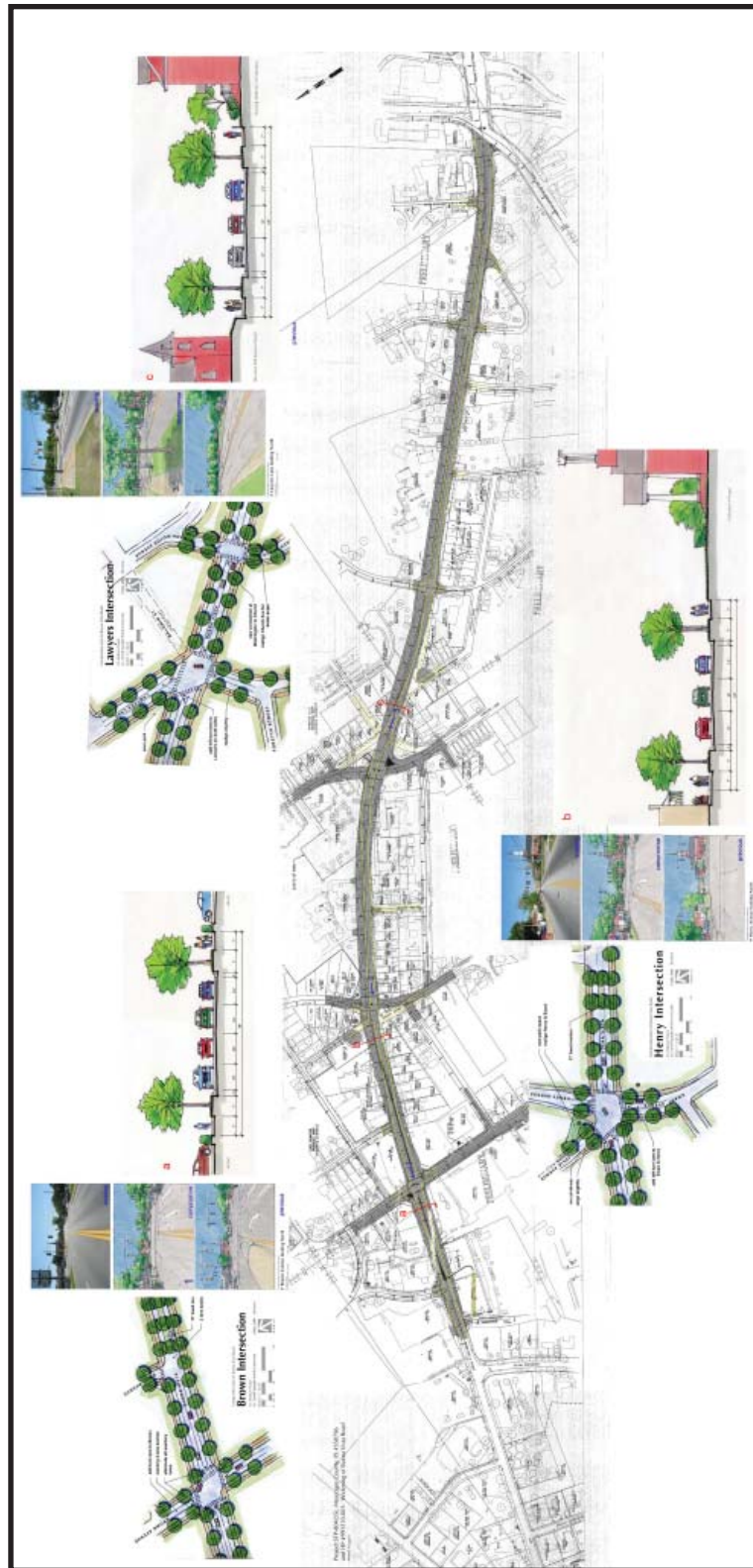


Figure IV.19: Consultant Team alternative road improvement plan for Buena Vista Road.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

portion of the streetscape vs. the “Wynnton” section. This road not only has an important functional purpose as MidTown’s main arterial; it inherently represents MidTown’s image to the road’s users. Thus, a proactive approach is needed to transform Macon-Wynnton Road into MidTown’s “identity street”. (The first principle of an identity street is a singular, recognizable name. The length of Macon Road - Wynnton Road within MidTown’s boundaries should be uniformly named Wynnton Road.)

Identity streets provide cognitive linkage, place association and memory through the sequencing of distinctly consistent, identifiable character zones and landmarks. Wynnton Road already has discernible, but fading, character demarcations that can be reinforced through the establishment of unique streetscape and land use guidelines and zoning for each “district”. Proposed “districts” are shown in Figure IV.20. Landmarks, including signature buildings, public art, greenspace or other memorable elements, can aid

in associating character with location. Existing landmarks along Wynnton Road include the Columbus Public Library, Wynnton School, AFLAC headquarters building, and The Columbus Museum. However, certain streetscape elements, such as lamp posts and street trees, should be consistent along the entire length of the Wynnton Road for continuity and consistency with MidTown’s Vision.

MidTown’s central role within Columbus dictates the need to accommodate some volume of through traffic. An ideal candidate for this purpose is the currently underutilized five lane Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. that runs east-west along the southern boundary of MidTown. Should the railyards west of 10th Avenue be moved in the future, this potential “parkway” could provide a highly efficient linkage from Uptown to the JR Allen Parkway, thus preserving the local character of Wynnton Road and Buena Vista Road.

A key challenge to the MLK Blvd. parkway

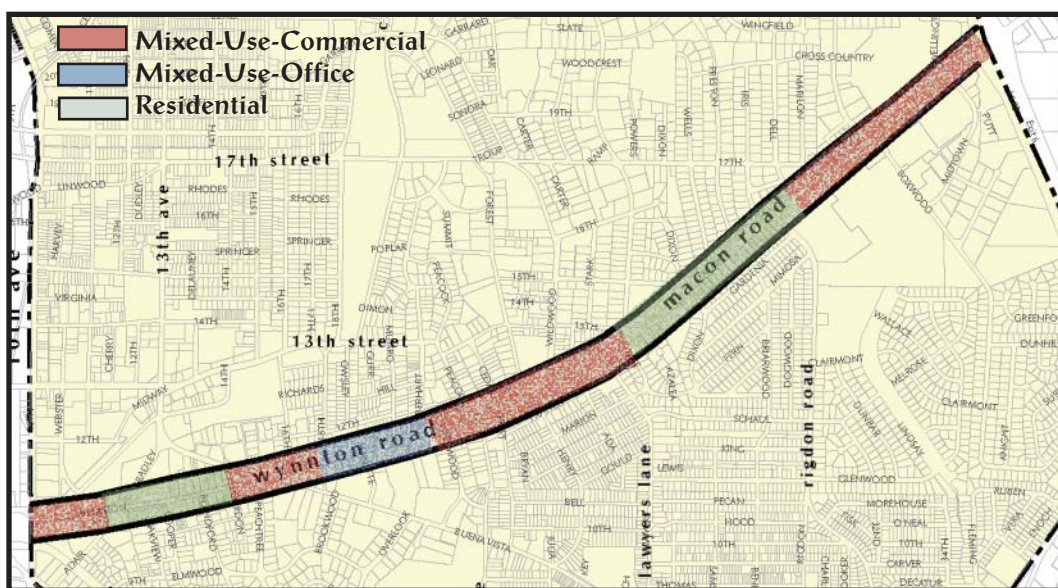


Figure IV.20:
Proposed
Wynnton Road
character
“districts”.

VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

proposal is the current problematic intersection of Buena Vista Road, Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, and Ilges Road. A functioning freight train rail line runs through this intersection, causing frequent backups and wait times for motorists attempting to traverse the intersection. Dependent upon the future plans for this rail line, an overpass could be considered. This would separate the transportation conflict and optimize traffic flow and safety for all parties.

Pedestrian oriented transportation must be supported and improved in MidTown. While new development can be directed with streetscape guidelines requiring sidewalks and vegetated buffer strips, existing areas must also be addressed. Nonvehicular trans-

portation alternatives are particularly essential to connect neighborhoods to the activity nodes proposed in Goal #1. Based on results from the community workshops, high priority locations for sidewalk enhancements and dedicated bicycle lanes are shown in Figure IV.21.

A key pedestrian improvement that will also support retail sustainability is a crossing plan from the north side of Macon Road to the Node #1 development proposed on the south side of Macon Road. The large number of housing units planned for that node, as well as users of the Columbus Public Library, could shop at Cross Country Plaza without generating increased traffic if this crossing were safe and convenient. While the narrow-

ing of Macon Road would most optimally achieve that goal, a pedestrian improvement plan is shown in Figure IV.22 that retains the existing right-of-way. Key actions involved in this improvement include:

- Retain the number of street lanes, but restripe to narrow through lanes to 11' wide, and the turn lane to 12'.
- Create three raised pedestrian islands.

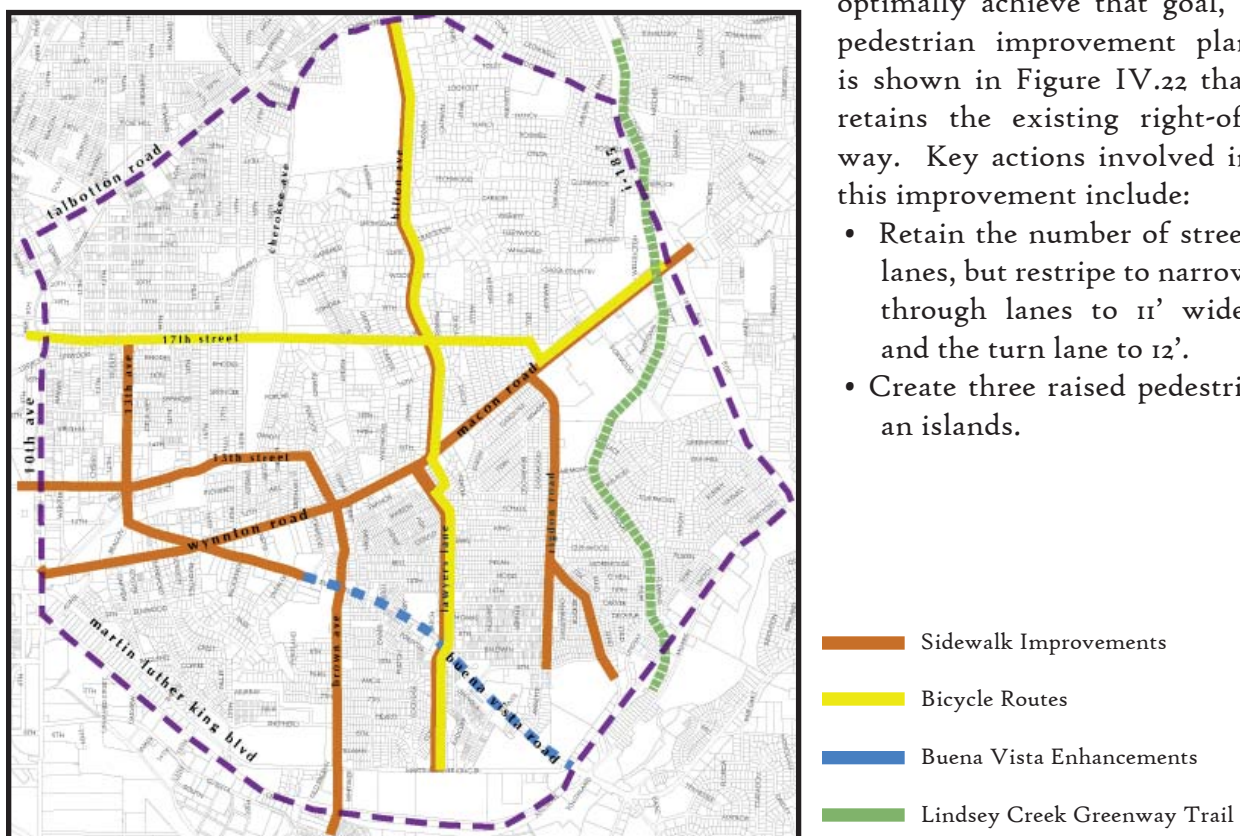


Figure IV.21: Proposed pedestrian and bicycle lane improvement areas.

- Create 8' wide curbed, landscaped medians in Macon Road for pedestrian refuge. Leave handicap accessible throughways where crosswalks intersect.
- Place 9 segments of stamped, colored asphalt crosswalks with reflective striping.
- Install pedestrian actuator signals (up to 9 possible).

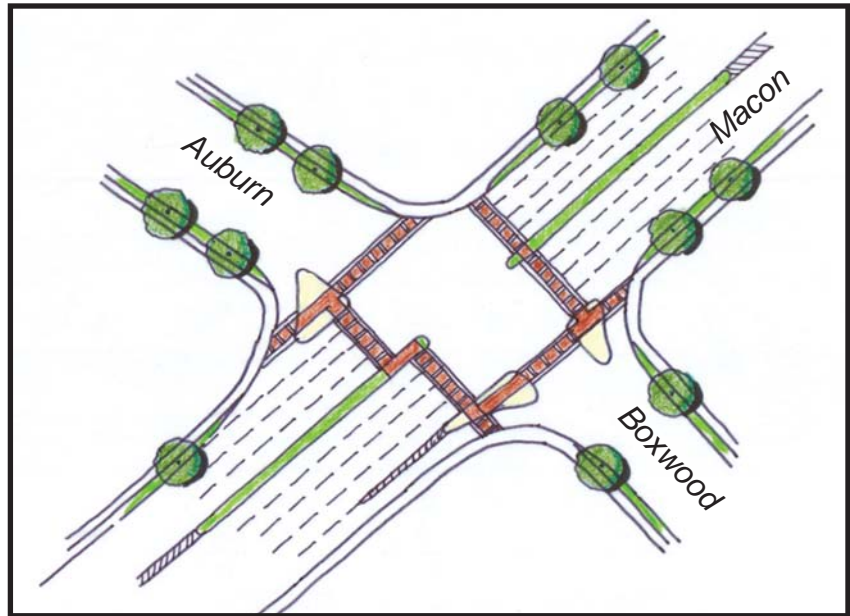


Figure IV.22: Proposed pedestrian crossing plan for Macon Road.

Goal #5:
MASTER PLAN SUSTAINABILITY
(Figure IV.27)

The MidTown Project Steering Committee requires a permanent successor organization to carry MidTown's vision forward and support implementation of the recommendations of the Master Plan. A model example is the Midtown Alliance in Atlanta, Georgia, a non-profit organization consisting of staff, volunteers and board members. Midtown Alliance advocates the business and resident interests of the Midtown community in Atlanta, and has been instrumental in its renaissance over the last five years. A similar type of organization dedicated to MidTown Columbus' interests could be equally effective in turning MidTown's Vision into reality.

"Anything that's built should be a benefit to the community and not just support those passing through".

MidTown stakeholder comment

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

1. GOAL: COMMERCIAL & RETAIL SUSTAINABILITY

Premise/Issue	Strategy/Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current retailers are underperforming: 20% vacancy rate; \$127 average revenue/sq. ft. vs. \$221 U.S. average. Commercially zoned acreage (515 acres) exceeds supportable demand absorption. Retail leakage is opportunity to capture local demand by offering distributed neighborhood oriented goods and services. MidTown retailers should offer distinction and/or convenience vs. competing with new retail power centers in North Columbus. Test case of reducing MidTown retail sq. ft. from 790,000 to 500,000 showed net gain of \$200,000 in property taxes to City due to increased valuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus in 9 Activity Centers, including 2 regional serving nodes, 7 neighborhood nodes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School Board/Library site - Cross Country Plaza on Macon Road (Regional Node) * Brown Avenue at Buena Vista Road * Wynnton Road between Hilton-Ada and Peacock-Brown * 13th Avenue at 17th Street (Neighborhood or Regional, dependent upon tenant positioning) * 13th Street from 12th to 16th Avenues (Regional) * Rigdon Road at Ilges Road * Garrard between 17th Avenue & Cherokee * Warm Springs/Talbotton at 17th Avenue & Slade * Brown Avenue at Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non Ft. Benning population growth is flat for MidTown. Off-base residential unit projections are 3K-4K to accommodate new Ft. Benning permanent personnel. 	<p>B CAPTURE SIGNIFICANT RESIDENTIAL PORTION OF PROJECTED FT. BENNING GROWTH TO SUPPORT MIDTOWN'S COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position School Board site to meet the multi-family housing needs. Position MidTown's existing neighborhoods to meet single family housing needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many node concepts and principles described in this report supporting commercial and community revitalization and sustainability cannot be implemented given current zoning codes and ordinances. Achievement of desired character is strongly dependent upon adherence to enforceable but flexible standards. 	<p>C REVISE ZONING & LAND USE CODES AND ENACT DESIGN GUIDELINES/ STANDARDS FOR MIDTOWN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a MidTown Overlay District to focus applicability only to selected portions of MidTown.

Figure IV.23: Commercial and Retail Sustainability Recommendations Summary

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

2. GOAL: PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS

Premise/Issue	Strategy/Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing functional but unappealing approach to flood control of Lindsey Creek offers major opportunity for community benefit, appeal and increased property values. Using greenspace to connect MidTown to points beyond serves as an alternative transportation source and anchors MidTown's positioning as central hub. Research shows properties in proximity to well designed greenspace amenities have higher values. Public greenspace counterbalances higher residential and commercial densities usually necessary for economic redevelopment. MidTown's park acreage is lower than national city averages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Parks as % of city area: 11% national avg, 6.2% MidTown. * Park space acres/1000 residents: 13.4 national avg, 9.4 MidTown. Public school outdoor space is generally underutilized and should be viewed as a community asset. 	<p>A CREATE GREENSPACE AMENITIES TO SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION AND CONNECT MIDTOWN TO OTHER DESTINATIONS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transform Lindsey Creek into a signature recreational greenspace amenity and trail system. Implement Phase III-Warm Springs Rail Line portion of the Columbus Alternative Transportation Plan - a pedestrian/bike trail system with amenities along an abandoned Norfolk Southern railway line. <p>B ADD, ENHANCE AND RENOVATE OPEN AND CIVIC SPACES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY INTERACTION, PRIDE, AESTHETICS, AND REVITALIZATION.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create pocket parks within new and existing neighborhoods using interior/"leftover"/foreclosed parcels. Potential area for neighborhood park: unused land south of Hannan Elementary School. Optimize school facilities and grounds for community benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Create public space in neglected portion of land fronting Edgewood Road on Clubview Elementary and Richards Middle School property. * Modify exterior conditions of Marshall Middle School and Carver High School to create more inviting environment for students and the neighborhood. * Provide after school hours for school gymnasiums, auditoriums and classrooms to accommodate drop-in recreation, community meetings and arts activities. Prioritize floodplains for land acquisition or easement purchase for parks/trails.

Figure IV.24: Public Realm Enhancement Recommendations Summary - Page 1

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

2. GOAL: PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS

- Weracoba Park is a well designed public space example.
 - "Eyes on the park" is important for safety and usage.
 - Poorly designed parks can be detrimental to adjacent neighborhoods.
 - Civic buildings are optimized when incorporated into the overall fabric of the community and are easily accessible.
- C PLAN & DESIGN PUBLIC SPACES USING PRINCIPLES THAT PROMOTE USAGE AND SAFETY.**
- Plan/design public spaces for usage and safety: pedestrian oriented roads along perimeter, front building facades facing park. Veteran's Park and Boxwood Park should modified where/when feasible.
- D ENHANCE THE PROMINENCE AND USAGE OF CIVIC BUILDINGS BY INCORPORATING THEM INTO A VIBRANT MIXED-USE SETTING.**
- Capitalize on the destination draw of visitors to the new Columbus Public Library by integrating this important civic amenity into a new live-work-shop activity center.
 - Incorporate the front landscape of Wynnton Elementary into a focal point of the proposed Wynnton Village node.

Figure IV.24: Public Realm Enhancement Recommendations Summary - Page 2

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

3. GOAL: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION & CHARACTER PRESERVATION

Premise/Issue	Strategy/Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spot retail penetration into residential neighborhoods creates instability and degradation of residential quality of life. Residential neighborhoods are not conducive to retail sustainability (lack of parking, signage restrictions, etc.). Poor retail performance, vacancies contribute to further neighborhood decline. Absentee landlords and high rental percentages of single family homes are detrimental to neighborhood stability and health. Issue in East Wynnton and East Highlands neighborhoods (e.g. 1/3 homes in East Highlands are rented). Historic zoning designations offer some protection. Policy tools can guide economic development when market driven activity is insufficient. 	<p>A LIMIT COMMERCIAL "CREEP" INTO EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt revised Land Use plan and minimize approval for spot rezoning requests. Notable problem areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Medical office and service businesses into the west side of East Highlands * Spot retail activity along Brown Avenue between Buena Vista Road and MLK Jr. Blvd. * North and south of Wynnton Road from Hilton/Tate to Peacock/Brown * West side of Rigdon Road facing the old mall site * Pastoral Institute between 20th and 22nd Streets <p>B ENACT/ENABLE POLICY TOOLS TO PROMOTE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION AND STABILIZATION.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingent upon community interest, expand Historic or Conservation District regulatory protections to select areas of MidTown not currently under special district designation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Portion of East Highlands immediately west of Weracoba-St. Elmo Historic District Promote the formation of homeowner's associations. Develop free model covenant and marketing materials for community use. Establish "Neighborhood Deputies Programs" to train residents to monitor code violations and complete forms for County submittal. Enact "Homesteading" program to encourage redevelopment of vacant properties. Enact regulations addressing the rental of single family homes, such as multifamily use and rental/inspection ordinances.

Figure IV.25: Residential Neighborhood Rehabilitation and Preservation Recommendations Summary - Page 1

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

3. GOAL: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION & CHARACTER PRESERVATION

<u>Premise/Issue</u>	<u>Strategy/Recommendations</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-family housing demand exists and is expected to increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Aging population, "empty nesters" and retirees * More singles, smaller families Multi-family rental units in MidTown are profitable and have lower vacancy rates than in Atlanta. Relatively low median income in MidTown (\$34,576 in 2003) indicates affordable housing options are necessary. Study participants indicated acceptance of high quality, distributed and appropriately scaled multi-family housing. 	<p>C SUPPORT AND ADOPT POLICIES THAT PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RANGE OF QUALITY HOUSING ALTERNATIVES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify zoning codes to allow residential units located above (vertical to) some commercial entities. Incent developers to allocate a percentage of units to workforce housing. Support nonprofit organizations providing quality workforce priced housing, such as NeighborWorks Columbus, with local funding. Avoid large concentrations of multi-family complexes. Integrate into mixed use activity centers and corridors. Implement architectural design guidelines and standards. <p>D REPOSITION 55 ACRES FROM COMMERCIAL USE TO MIXED-USE & RESIDENTIAL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change currently zoned General Commercial (15 acres), Neighborhood Commercial (21 acres) and Apartment-Office (19 acres) to Mixed Use-Residential (30 acres), Medium-High Density Residential (24 acres) and Low Density Residential (1 acre). <p>Note: This action also supports Goal #1 in reducing overcapacity of commercially zoned properties in MidTown.</p>

Figure IV.25: Residential Neighborhood Rehabilitation and Preservation Recommendations Summary - Page 2

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

3. GOAL: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION & CHARACTER PRESERVATION

Premise/Issue

- Districts and properties can lose their historic designations due to loss of physical integrity over time.
- Georgia's state historic designation program offers more benefits than national registration.

Strategy/Recommendations

E SUPPORT PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES THROUGH ADDITIONAL POLICY AND MONITORING ACTIONS.

- Maintain a Historic Resources Inventory for MidTown that is current, comprehensive, cost effective, accurate and available to the community.
- Maintain current registry status through consistent decisions by Board of Historic Architectural Review.
- Adopt new building code standards for historic buildings instead of using IBC-Chapter 34.
- Update the 2000 Design Guidelines to incorporate any unique elements in the six districts and add infill development guidelines.
- Revise existing Historic Preservation Ordinance for enhanced protection.
 - * Amend the Board of Historical Architectural Review (BHAR) provisions to enhance its effectiveness
 - * Amend provisions for designating historic districts and sites to strengthen the process and make equitable to all parties
 - * Amend the provisions for Certificates of Appropriateness to clarify issues, strengthen protections related to demolition and expand public participation
 - * Revise signage and COA provisions to make them user friendly and function more effectively
- Adopt new processes to more effectively implement the Ordinance.
 - * Restructure the BHAR staffing and approaches to administrative approvals
 - * Revise the COA application form and review process

Figure IV.25: Residential Neighborhood Rehabilitation and Preservation Recommendations Summary - Page 3

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

4. GOAL: TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

Premise/Issue	Strategy/Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDOT plans for MidTown focus on vehicular throughput and do not account for traditional community planning principles. • GDOT Buena Vista Road plan was based on inflated current usage estimates and traffic projections. • Macon-Wynnton Road's central location make it an important transportation artery. Opportunity exists to create a symbolic representation of desired MidTown character. • Recent trends for Macon-Wynnton Road development are not consistent with MidTown's vision. • Identity Streets provide cognitive linkage, place association and memory through inclusion and sequencing of distinctly identifiable character zones and landmarks. This road has existing elements that can be built upon. • Street experience is influenced by multiple factors beyond traffic throughput. 	<p>A ADOPT THE CONTEXT SENSITIVE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES FOR BUENA VISTA ROAD AND THE WYNNTON-BROWN-PEACOCK INTERSECTION AS PROPOSED BY THE HISTORIC WYNNTON COUNCIL & CONSULTANT TEAM.</p> <p>B TRANSFORM MACON-WYNNTON ROAD WITHIN MIDTOWN'S BOUNDARIES INTO MIDTOWN'S "IDENTITY STREET".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name the road within MidTown's boundaries one name: Wynnnton Road. Create gateway signs at I-185 and the Columbus Museum to signify MidTown boundaries. • Develop a series of distinct "character zones" along the corridor through rezoning, design and streetscape guidelines and preservation/creation of identifiable landmarks. • Prevent billboard placement and amortize existing billboards out of existence through a phased timeline. <p>C ESTABLISH ROAD TYPOLOGY WITH DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR MIDTOWN STREETS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and apply design guidelines for key arterial/collector corridors. Design standards should focus on: maximum intended size for each road, driveway width and access, parking location and design, cross-access between sites, building scale and setbacks, building materials, landscaping, sidewalks, lighting and signage. • Create landscaped medians and triangle/circles where roads are too wide for their adjacent use, and at angled intersections with expansive pavement. Example location is 17th Ave. at 28th. St. • Institute traffic calming management techniques at necessary locations, such as Hilton Avenue, Forest Avenue, and 13th Street between 13th Avenue and Maco Road.

Figure IV.26: Transportation Enhancement Recommendations Summary - Page 1

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

4. GOAL: TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

Premise/Issue	Strategy/Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MLK Jr. Blvd is currently underutilized. Current design and character is amenable to higher speed through traffic. MidTown's location dictates a role for through traffic. Wynnton-Macon Road and Buena Vista Road are incurring pressures to accommodate this use, which negatively impacts the surrounding neighborhood fabric. The County plans to sustain industrial use along MLK, Jr. Blvd. which is conducive to a through street positioning. 	<p>D DEVELOP MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD INTO A PARKWAY THAT EFFICIENTLY SERVES AND OPTIMIZES THROUGH-DESTINATION TRAFFIC FROM SOUTHEAST MUSCOGEE COUNTY TO UPTOWN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an MLK Boulevard/Parkway with limited intersections and curb cuts. Add combination landscaped median/turn lane. Modify traffic signaling and enhance intersection of MLK Blvd, Buena Vista Road and Ilges Road to incentivize usage of MLK. * Address traffic delays from train routes at the Buena Vista/MLK intersection. Consider overpass for improved safety and flow. In the long term, remove rail yards (as feasible), creating a more direct route from MLK to Uptown and resolving train intersection issues at MLK/Buena Vista. Allow higher speed limit on MLK than on Wynnton Road and Buena Vista Road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkability is an essential element for the creation and sustenance of communities. Non-vehicular transportation is becoming an increasing economic issue with rising energy costs. An estimated one-third of MidTown streets do not have adequate sidewalks; no dedicated bike lanes exist. 	<p>E IMPROVE/SUPPORT PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include pedestrian, transit and bicycle priorities in all transportation planning. Prioritize creation of bike lanes along Wynnton Road, 17th Street, Hilton Avenue and Lawyer's Lane. Include pedestrian and bicycle transportation requirements in the Design Guidelines described in 4.C. Consider establishment of a bus hub at the Brown-Buena Vista node to increase bus routes through MidTown. Significantly improve pedestrian crossing across Macon Road from the Library site to the commercial centers on the north side. Prioritize sidewalk enhancements along routes connecting proposed activity centers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Wynnton Road, Buena Vista Road, Brown Avenue * 13th Avenue from Wynnton Road to 17th Street * Rigdon Road and Ilges Road * 13th Street from 13th Avenue to 16th Avenue

Figure IV.26: Transportation Enhancement Recommendations Summary - Page 2

MIDTOWN PROJECT RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

5. GOAL: MASTER PLAN SUSTAINABILITY

Premise/Issue

- Master Plans are successful only if they are implemented.
- MidTown needs champions to compete against other parts of the region for development and to support the integrity of the master plan over time.

Strategy/Recommendations

A CREATE AN ON-GOING ORGANIZATION THAT ADVOCATES AND CHAMPIONS POLICIES AND ACTIONS THAT BENEFIT MIDTOWN.

- Form a permanent organization and staff with at least one full time employee to champion MidTown's interest, pursue the master plan recommendations, promote MidTown, and work with other organizations to complement each other's activities for the region's benefit.

Figure IV.27: Sustainability Recommendation Summary



IMPLEMENTATION

V.

V.A Action Plan and Phasing

The prior chapter listed numerous recommendations to achieve the MidTown Vision. The Action Plan prioritizes and categorizes those recommendations into Policy actions and Capital Project actions. The Policy Action Plan (Figure V.1 below) lists key policy and regulatory actions recommended for short term/Phase I implementation. Local

governments are typically responsible for these activities.

The Capital Project Action Plan (Figure V.2, next two pages) prioritizes, quantifies and categorizes those capital projects that are expected to have the most significant and immediate impact. (*Costs estimates of construction are for budgetary purposes only and do not include design and engineering fees*).

Key Policy Actions

Description	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell old Mall/School Board site property to various entities per concept plan 	MCSO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/implement new zoning overlay district and design guidelines for MidTown 	Consolidated Government/Planning Dept.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Form permanent MidTown nonprofit organization to champion and implement master plan * Create Retail Coordinator Position 	* MidTown Project Steering Committee * City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enact policy measures to minimize rental of single family homes 	Consolidated Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide incentives for new commercial and residential development within MidTown and Uptown and for re-investment by existing businesses 	Consolidated Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize approval of spot rezoning requests permitting commercial creep into residential neighborhoods 	City Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to modify existing property tax system 	Consolidated Government

Figure V.1: Phase I Policy Action Plan

IMPLEMENTATION

Key Capital Projects

Description	Location	Type of Improvement	Unit Type	Units	Priority Construction Costs (1)	Future Construction Costs (2)
Arboretum Park (3) School Board site, behind Library Park/ Greenspace \$4,680,000						
Lindsey Creek Recreational System		Park/ Greenspace	mile	2.5	\$2,446,500	\$2,357,250
Priority 1: Segment C	School Board site, east of Rigdon Road Elementary: Clairmont to Boxwood		linear foot	1,900	\$912,000	
Priority 2: Segment B	Clairmont south to Glenwood		linear foot	1,650	\$792,000	
Priority 3: Segment D	Boxwood to Wynnton (Macon) Road		linear foot	2,250	\$742,500	
Future: Segment E	Macon Road north to I-185		linear foot	1,500		\$540,000
Future: Segment F	I-185 to Edgewood		linear foot	1,800		\$270,000
Future: Segment G	Edgewood to Columbus State University		linear foot	2,300		\$345,000
Future: Segment A	South boundary of MidTown to Glenwood		linear foot	2,030		\$730,800
Wynnton Road Improvements		Streetscape/ Pedestrian			\$1,316,120	\$1,588,750
School Board Site Node	I-185 to Rigdon Road				\$851,720	
Avg. 7' Sidewalks - both sides - 6' Planting Strip			linear foot	6,000	\$252,000	
Street Trees - both sides			tree	120	\$72,000	
Pedestrian Lights - both sides			light	75	\$315,000	
Crosswalks - stamped colored asphalt			leg	13	\$18,720	
Landscaping			lump		\$50,000	
Gateway monuments/signs			sign	1	\$30,000	
North-south pedestrian road crossing			lump		\$114,000	
Wynnton Village Node	Ada/Stark to Britt/Cedar				\$464,400	
Avg. 5' Sidewalks, 3' Planting Strip, concrete sidewalks with paver edging			linear foot	2,600	\$124,800	
Paver crosswalks			leg	12	\$72,000	
Landscaping, pocket park fronting Wynnton School			lump		\$90,000	
Street Trees - both sides			tree	65	\$39,000	
Pedestrian Lights - both sides			light	33	\$138,600	

Figure V.2: Capital Action Plan - Priority Elements, Page 1

Key Capital Projects

Description	Location	Type of Improvement	Unit Type	Units	Priority Construction Costs (1)	Future Construction Costs (2)
Future: Rest of Wynnton Road	Sections not addressed from I-185 to 10th Avenue					\$1,588,750
Avg. 5' sidewalks, 3' planting strip			linear foot	2,600		\$78,000
Street Trees - both sides			tree	350		\$210,000
Pedestrian Lights - both sides			light	215		\$903,000
Landscaping			lump			\$50,000
Gateway monuments/signs			sign	1		\$30,000
Buena Vista Road Improvements		Traffic, Pedestrian, Streetscape			\$7,700,000	
17th Street-13th Avenue Node Streetscape Improvements		Streetscape/ Pedestrian			\$254,200	
Avg. 5' sidewalks, 3' planting strip- both sides			linear foot	2,500	\$75,000	
Street Trees - both sides			tree	60	\$36,000	
Pedestrian Lights - both sides			light	30	\$126,000	
Crosswalks - stamped colored asphalt			leg	5	\$7,200	
Landscaping			lump		\$10,000	
Future: 13th Street Node Streetscape	north side of road, 13th Avenue to 16th Avenue	Streetscape/ Pedestrian		1,500		\$148,560
Sidewalk Improvements		Pedestrian		2,700	\$599,040	
Avg. 4' sidewalks, 3' planting strip- one side of street	Brown Avenue-Wynnton to MLK		linear foot	4,800	\$115,200	
Avg. 4' sidewalks, 3' planting strip- one side of street	Rigdon Road-Wynnton 8th Street		linear foot	5,400	\$129,600	
Avg. 4' sidewalks, 3' planting strip- one side of street	Lawyers' Lane-Wynnton to Buena Vista		linear foot	3,600	\$86,400	
Avg. 4' sidewalks, 3' planting strip- one side of street	13th Avenue-17th Street to Wynnton		linear foot	4,600	\$110,400	
Traffic Calming: Speed humps	Hilton and Forest Avenues	Pedestrian	unit	6	\$57,600	

(1) Includes 1.2x contingency factor. Does not include design/engineering fees. Excludes utility burying (typically \$275/linear foot)

(2) Includes 1.2x contingency factor + 1.25 inflation factor. Does not include design/engineering fees

(3) Cost taken from MCSD original economic analysis study

Figure V.2: Capital Action Plan - Priority Elements - Page 2

V.B Commercial and Business Strategies

The market demand analysis showed that MidTown can support approximately 38,600 square feet of additional (or ‘incremental’) commercial retail space. As noted in Chapter IV, three potential nodes are recommended as priority locations for new commercial and residential development: (Note: Stakeholders desire the commercial space shown on the School Board Node #1 site plan to be a longer term development.)

- Brown Avenue and Buena Vista Road
 - includes the northeast and southeast corners opposite the AFLAC properties. A small Piggly Wiggly supermarket currently occupies one corner with a commercial strip center on the other.
- Historic Wynnton Village
 - includes various commercial parcels around the historic Wynnton School on Wynnton Road, roughly from Ada/Stark to Cedar/Britt Roads.
- 13th Avenue at 17th Street
 - includes the commercial cluster at this five-way intersection of 13th Avenue, 17th Street and Linwood Boulevard.

The concept plans for these nodes (described in Chapter IV) illustrate potential layouts that meet relative retail industry standards (50-70 foot store depths, buildings placed close to sidewalks and roadways to encourage pedestrian activity, rear service access, provision of nearby parking, etc.). The supportable square footage was defined by two factors: the amount of “available sales” that could be captured by suitable retailers, and a level of potential sales per year (sales pro-

ductivity) that would warrant investment by property developers. An average sales productivity of approximately \$200 per square foot per year was used as a basis for determining how much space could be added.

As the quality and breadth of retail offerings is enhanced by incremental/new retail uses, neighboring retailers can benefit through increased sales levels brought by more customers and higher spending potential. Thus, a portion of the incremental sales increase will be accrued by existing establishments. This suggests that the total amount of ‘supportable space’ that is newly constructed should be less than the total ‘incremental supportable space’, since some of the potential incremental sales would go to existing retail businesses. Preliminary analysis suggests that approximately 18% of the total sales generated in this retail plan (or just under \$1 out of every \$5) would be spent at existing retail businesses.

For purposes of a conceptual merchandising analysis, space allocations were assumed for each priority node; final retail layouts would be subject to a more detailed ‘test fit’ of each site according to the square footage and layout requirements of specific tenants and owners. The suggested allocations of net new space (i.e. space in addition to existing) by commercial cluster are:

Location	Square Footage
Wynnton Village (incl. 6775 sf of improved existing)	13,225
13 th Ave. at 17th St.	7,275
Brown Ave. at Buena Vista Rd	<u>9,100</u>
Subtotal General Retail	29,600
New restaurants in 13th Street node (supports this commercial node already in process)	<u>9,000</u>
Total Retail Space	38,600

The concept plans also recommend the inclusion of net new residential uses in these nodes:

Location	Units
Wynnton Village	
- Townhomes	10
- Apartment/Condo	37
13 th Ave. at 17th St.	
- Apartment/Condo	18
Brown Ave. at Buena Vista Rd	
- Townhomes	6
- Apartment/Condo	<u>14</u>
Total New Housing Units	85

The following merchandising/store mix scenarios for the three districts should be considered preliminary, and subject to more detailed market testing, site capacity considerations and determination of owner priorities. Also,

since some current owners may or may not have the financial capacity to renovate or construct these types of commercial projects to realize the plan, other layout forms may be more easily implemented. The Consultant Team's store mix suggestions for each node are:

Wynnton Village

The Wynnton Village "Phased" retail concept involves both new space and conversion/demolition of existing commercial space into housing. Net new commercial space of 13,500 sq. ft. is derived from the replacement of the Eckerd's store with a multi-tenant building; retention of Wynnton Hardware, and replacement of several marginal or inconsistent buildings with larger retail structures or new housing. Merchandising suggestions include:

- Drugstore 6,500 sf
- Women's Hair Salon 2,000 sf
- Specialty Gifts 1,500 sf
- Card Shop/Gifts 800 sf
- Specialty Foods/Gourmet/
Kitchen 1,500 sf
- Bank/ATM 1,200 sf
13,500 sf

Equally important for the Wynnton Village node will be its aesthetic character, both in building architecture and adjacent streetscape. Through the use of tailored design guidelines, this node should take on the most historic character atmosphere of all the nodes recommended for MidTown.

13th Avenue at 17th Street

This node includes approximately 12,850 sf of existing space; the projected supportable re-

IMPLEMENTATION

tail square footage totals just over 20,000 sf, for a net new square footage of 7,275 sf. The suggested merchandise mix for this location includes:

• Coffee/Bakery	2,500 sf
• Fast Food/Carry-out (2 @1,500 sf)	3,000 sf
• Gifts/Antiques	<u>1,775 sf</u>
	7,275 sf

In addition, the vacant buildings on the southwest corner offer the potential for building the antique/home restoration commercial positioning of this node with appropriate new retail tenants. These buildings are already well placed and could be economically renovated rather than replaced.

Brown Avenue at Buena Vista Road

As a true neighborhood commercial node, suggested stores for the Brown and Buena Vista cluster should complement the proposed expanded grocery store replacement for the current Piggly-Wiggly building. Potential retail tenants could include:

• Women's Hair Salon	1,500 sf
• Men's Barber Shop	950 sf
• Nails/Personal Care Salon	750 sf
• Cellular Phone Store	1,200 sf
• Café/Diner	2,500 sf
• Laundry/Cleaners	<u>2,200 sf</u>
	9,100 sf

13th Street (13th Avenue to 16th Avenue)

This proposed commercial node, anchored by the recently constructed Jackson Burgin retail center, is the recommended candidate for 9,000 sf of supportable dining demand in MidTown (or 2-3 additional restaurants and

cafes). This particular node is deemed to be of importance to MidTown, but was not listed as a priority node because its formulation is well underway by the private sector and shows promise of economic sustainability. However, this node would be further supported with the addition of more restaurant tenants. More quality dining options was listed as the primary desired use by MidTown residents in the community input process.

V.C Commercial Implementation Strategy

This preliminary implementation strategy is guided by the fact that—beyond the School Board/Library site—there is no single site in Midtown large enough to concentrate the apparent market opportunities in residential and commercial development. Moreover, unless contiguous parcels can be assembled to provide a sufficiently large site, the commercial and residential potentials will be scattered across several nodes or locations. This is likely to complicate leasing efforts—particularly for retail and restaurants—as the lack of anchor(s) and concentration or clustering opportunities for similar retailers may reduce the overall marketability of those locations readily available for redevelopment.

This preliminary implementation strategy is intended to address a number of issues related to revitalization and redevelopment in Midtown, including “barriers to entry” facing potential retailers, potential investors and developers and property owners. Three of these issues are:

- Centralized Contact, Coordination and the Need for Retail Prospecting

There is no central point of contact in Midtown today that can provide current market information or documentation of available space or merchandising strategies for interested parties who might potentially consider a retail location in Midtown. The suburban shopping mall or single-owner project has centralized leasehold control, and has the ability to centrally direct store placement and retail mix and can carry out a planned retail strategy. In contrast, urban commercial districts are comprised of multiple property owners with differing priorities, investment timetables and capacities and strategic interests. To compete with the mall (for national credit tenants, which are the most appealing to sources of financing), Midtown needs a centralized source of information, market data and coordination of retail recruitment efforts.

- Recognition of Midtown as a Priority Economic Development Area

Midtown is not perceived as a priority economic development area by the City in the view of property owners, small businesses, developers and investors. Stakeholders cite limited funding and assistance programs for small businesses and property owners, confusing/contradictory regulatory processes and requirements, and allocation of limited and competing City incentives. Experience in other cities suggests that there is a powerful message in simply stating that Midtown is a priority area for redevelopment, and then directing public policy and processes to back up that commitment.

- Incentives to Encourage Strategic Development

Many cities have determined that financial or other incentives are an appropriate tool to redirect development trends, counter blight and decline or address vacancies. Such incentives range from subsidizing new building construction in targeted areas to incentivizing affordable housing provisions. In Columbus, existing communities like Midtown or Uptown are competing for the same consumer dollars, as are the newest-format retail centers in outlying locations. As such, it can be difficult to recruit retailers or restaurateurs with sufficient strength and capital to serve as regional draws. Market forces alone cannot accelerate strategic outcomes, and can take years longer than changes generated by selective use of development incentives. While the Midtown and Cross-Country shopping centers provide for convenience and service retail goods, moving Midtown's commercial mix to the next level of retail evolution will require a proactive approach including public and private sector actions.

In order to address these issues and challenges to commercial sustainability, three key actions are proposed:

1. CREATE A RETAIL COORDINATOR POSITION FOR MIDTOWN
2. DIRECT COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE MIDTOWN DEVELOPMENT
3. ENACT SELECT INCENTIVES AND FINANCING TOOLS TO CATALYZE PROJECTS AND LEVERAGE INVESTMENT

IMPLEMENTATION

These components are interdependent and will occur over a number of years. The Retail Coordinator position should be created immediately, while the generation and implementation of comprehensive development policies will be a long term process.

1. RETAIL COORDINATION & PROSPECTING

An individual focused on retail coordination and retail prospecting is crucial to the implementation strategy. The position should evolve into a full-time and a part-time position, each focusing on specific aspects of retail development in Midtown.

If funding is unavailable for this position within MidTown's future permanent organization, the Retail Coordinator could initially be staffed by reallocating time from one (or more) existing persons within the Uptown Columbus, Inc. organization or the City. The Coordinator's role is to focus on partnerships with the City, Muscogee County and private leaders to address policy, zoning, code and incentives programs that will benefit retail recruitment. By contrast, the Retail Prospector role is a part-time position (2-3 days per week) focusing on 'cold calling' of retail tenant prospects. The Retail Prospector would serve as a link between property owners and commercial brokers but does *not* replace the broker and their role in completing the lease transaction. Because Columbus is a smaller sized city, it is recommended that Uptown Columbus, Inc. be the resident organization for the Retail Coordinator and Retail Prospector. Working closely with the City, it can structure partnerships with other entities (such as Columbus State University, local museums, the Chamber of Commerce, the

Convention and Visitors Bureau, Muscogee County Government, the State of Georgia) whose mandates reach beyond these areas. The services involved could be structured as a contract program funded by a combination of public and private funding provided by those who would benefit from a successful retail program – the City, and Midtown (and Uptown) property owners and developers. Initially, the City should take the lead in helping fund the Coordinator and Prospector roles.

The Retail Coordinator will:

- Serve as a centralized contact for information on retail in Midtown;
- Provide a central resource for collection, maintenance and distribution of market data on Midtown and Uptown retail space inventory, including lease terms and expiration dates, landlord provisions such as tenant improvement allowances, base building improvements, rent concessions or other leasing incentives;
- Proactively seek prospective tenants that reinforce overall positioning strategies for Midtown;
- Serve as the advocate and representative of Midtown retail development efforts in public policy discussions, hearings, meetings and presentations, and with the media;
- Monitor and communicate (to the business community) the use and availability of available incentives and business support services;
- Work with the City as a partner, policy advocate and problem solver in addressing comprehensive issues such as zoning and code conflicts;

- Monitor and work closely with the City on ongoing planning and development affecting retail as part of the Coordinator's advocacy role, including future land use plans and zoning code revisions.

The Retail Prospector will:

- Lead and/or organize retail recruitment efforts, including cold calls on local/regional/national retail tenants, networking with brokers/tenant representatives and property owners and developers;
- Develop a campaign to market Midtown as a retail destination, initially to reinforce its reputation as a revitalizing district with specialty sub-districts, but also to announce and market newly opened or well established enterprises.

2. PUBLIC POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE MIDTOWN DEVELOPMENT

The City should work with Midtown (and Uptown) property owners and investors, and other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce to develop a Midtown Development Policy (as well as directed actions at all levels of City government) that articulates Midtown Columbus as one of the priority economic development areas of the City.

Other suggested actions to be addressed by the City include:

- Streamline any cumbersome policies and regulatory practices at every level of Consolidated Government;
- Incorporate policies that foster a concentration of retail along selected streets or nodes in Midtown (as presented in

this plan) into long-range planning for future public buildings and private-sector development;

- Enforce ordinances related to codes to ensure public health and safety, and effectively manage and maintain the public realm to generate repeat shopping behavior;
- Take leadership roles in police enforcement practices on Wynnton Road, resolution of code conflicts, and capital investments in infrastructure.

3. INCENTIVES & PROGRAMS TO CATALYZE PROJECTS AND LEVERAGE INVESTMENT

The first two recommendations can be implemented relatively easily and at modest cost. The third is more complex, but could begin with a case study methodology of incentives used and their results from comparative communities.

The primary purpose of incentives is to cause a business and/or property owner to commit to/invest in a specific location in which they would not have otherwise. In the case of financial incentives, the recipient's decision is usually determined by the amount of financial risk that it mitigates. From the provider's standpoint, the purpose may be:

- To attract one or more tenants that provide a leasing attraction for other operators that do not receive incentives;
- To build momentum or accelerate the pace of leasing;
- To create enough 'critical mass' of retail to begin to attract new/additional shopping expenditures; or
- To moderate or redirect a downward development trend.

IMPLEMENTATION

For Midtown, each of these could apply to certain kinds of tenants. While there may be only limited market demand for apparel tenants, unmet market demand for other retailers, e.g. restaurants and leisure & entertainment tenants, has the potential to create/reinforce the destination nature of selected locations in MidTown such as the 13th Street corridor.

In Chicago, the City determined that it was critical that the first Nordstrom department store in the region be located downtown on Michigan Avenue, and justified millions of dollars in subsidies to the company based on anticipated revenues resulting from the other retailers (and the rent and sales tax they would generate) that would follow. While subsidies of this scale are not recommended for MidTown, financial incentives to a key tenant is a proven strategy for commercial sustainability and should be considered.

If MidTown's retail mix is left to market forces only, the unmet market demand from nearby and close-in residents is unlikely to be met within MidTown and the recommended commercial nodes are less likely to come to fruition. Financial incentives provide reduced financial risk for tenants and landlords and attract other retailers that may take longer to become established and draw stabilized customer bases.

Lastly, if the goal is to attract lost retail sales back to MidTown and strengthen retail performance, experience in other cities suggests that a selected mix of risk mitigation and time will be necessary to meet the goal of more stores and more shoppers. It is through the use of development incentives that will

alter the undesirable trend of MidTown's declining competitive commercial position, and provide enough time for higher risk, but viable retail uses to become established.

The Consultant Team suggests the following development incentives and recognizes that these may not be feasible at this time, either due to funding constraints and/or limited support by public/private partnerships and authorizing entities. These examples should not necessarily be considered specific recommendations for implementation, but rather serve as a basis for creative strategies and approaches for MidTown.

- Development Density Bonuses
In many cities, non-cash development incentive tools are used to encourage developers to include less profitable uses such as workforce/affordable housing, civic/cultural uses or indirect-benefit commercial categories such as department stores in mixed-use projects. Density bonuses in selected locations in MidTown may have the potential to cover the 'costs' of lower investment returns generated by needed, but less profitable land uses such as retail, or on particular sites in which an upzoning might offer leverage to encourage inclusion of less economic uses.
- Federal Transportation Enhancement Funds (TEA-21)
Madison, WI, Providence, RI and other cities have used transportation enhancement funds for light rail, multi-modal facilities and/or bus way corridors to pay for streetscape improvements and landscaping. Incorporating Great Streets standards (supported by TEA-21 funding) in MidTown would improve the quality

of transportation projects and foster consistent use of design standards over time.

- Parking Authorities

Parking authorities can use public bonding powers to finance construction and operation of parking facilities. The financing gap resulting from the cost to construct structured parking in Mid-Town and the very limited opportunities to generate revenue (today) will thus require non-commercial sources to justify private investment in mixed-use projects and provide off-peak/shared parking for nearby commercial and retail uses. For example, Portland, OR has used its Parking Authority to finance garages used by shoppers as well as by office workers, and parking fees cover the costs associated with bond financing and garage management costs.

- TIF (Tax Increment Financing)

TIF is the most commonly used financing source for mixed-use and retail development incentives across the United States. TIF funds have been used in other cities to finance numerous programs—ranging from façade improvement grants and subsidized loans, public improvement programs (such as Great Streets), management and coordination (Dallas), rental subsidies and tenant improvement costs, and public space improvements. In Georgia, TIF's are called Tax Allocation Districts (TAD's), which are authorized under the Redevelopment Powers Act, Chapter 44, Title 36. A TAD derives its funding from the increase in the redevelopment area's ad valorem taxes levied by the city, county and school system. Increased tax revenues generated from new development within the boundaries

of the District can then be used to pay for infrastructure costs associated with new development or public improvements. This is not an increase in tax rate. A TAD merely collects the difference (or increment) between the previous taxes and the current higher taxes due to new development. Georgia law requires that a Redevelopment Plan be created of a specific geographic area and then adopted by the governing body before a Tax Allocation District can be established.

- Fee Waivers and Tax Freezes

A number of cities have developed programs that waive development and other fees as an incentive to develop particular uses or densities. While not substantial enough to redirect a development decision, fee waivers provide financial benefits against front-end costs. In Columbus, tax reimbursements could potentially be used to benefit property owners.

It should be noted that MidTown is competing not only with other regional municipalities, but with greenfield development within Muscogee and adjacent counties. In addition to incentives applicable only within the established areas of the County (i.e. Uptown and MidTown), the Consolidated Government should also consider measures that discourage continuing outward development and sprawl, such as limiting provision of water and sewer infrastructure in greenfield areas.

IMPLEMENTATION

V.D Economic Impact Analysis

ERA has estimated the potential economic impacts of the redevelopment and revitalization initiatives identified in this study that would accrue to the Columbus Consolidated Government or other public entities if these initiatives are enacted. Economic impacts include:

- Temporary construction jobs and income associated with construction of uses such as new housing or commercial development.
- Permanent employment, wages, and wage taxes generated by new commercial retail and restaurant uses.
- New, permanent residents attracted to new housing.
- Expected benefits accruing to Columbus Consolidated Government, the School District, and/or the State of Georgia, in the form of retail sales tax receipts and annual property tax revenues.

Assumptions used for this analysis can be found in the Technical Appendix document. The economic impact analysis models two development scenarios:

1. *Moderate Growth*, assuming no expansion of Ft. Benning, thus limiting new residential and commercial development opportunities; and
2. *High Growth*, assuming full expansion of Ft. Benning and the resulting greater population and employment growth across the region.

Moreover, this analysis assumes that the program scenarios outlined below can be developed *anywhere* in Midtown. However, as an

anchor or catalyst site, the Columbus Public Library site is likely to accommodate a substantial portion of the residential uses in either scenario.

Market demand analysis suggests the following development potential under these scenarios:

Land Use	Moderate	High
General Retail	16,100 s.f.	37,100s.f.
Restaurants	6,500 s.f.	9,000 s.f.
Professional Office	14,800 s.f.	29,60 s.f.
Multi-family	100 units	150 units
Townhouses	200 units	250 units
Single-family	50 units	150 units

The potential economic benefits for each scenario are summarized below. Supporting quantitative tables can be found in the Technical Appendix document.

Moderate Growth

- **\$22.9 million in temporary construction income** generating more than 110 temporary construction jobs (assumes seven years to buildout).
- **\$3.8 million in annual permanent wages** for more than 125 full-time jobs associated with new development. Employment includes about 30 new retail jobs and 30 restaurant jobs. In addition, 70 office jobs would be created with 14,800 sq. ft. of office space. New employment generated by commercial retail uses in the Moderate Growth scenario could be expected to generate about \$229,400 in annual wage taxes for the State of Georgia.

- **\$4.9 million in annual retail spending** in retail stores and restaurants assuming stabilized occupancy levels of 93% and 97%, respectively, and annual sales levels ranging from \$200 to \$300 per sq. ft.
- **\$342,000 in annual retail sales tax receipts**, with roughly \$146,600 accruing to the State of Georgia and \$195,400 accruing to the Columbus Consolidated Government. This assumes that the sales tax rates of 3% (state) and 4% (County) remain constant.
- **700± new, permanent residents** in 350 new housing units. Assuming annual average incomes of \$50,000 per year and average household spending levels on various categories of retail, could be expected to generate more than **\$3.7 million** in annual retail spending, irrespective of location.
- **\$1.6 million in annual property taxes** assuming that current property tax rates across the taxing entities (i.e., \$17.91 per \$1,000 of assessed value in Urban Services District #1, \$0.25 for the State of Georgia, and \$23.37 for the MCSD) as well as equalization ratios of 100% remain constant. Potential annual property tax revenues generated by redevelopment or revitalization in Midtown include: \$698,000 to the USD #1; \$9,700 to the State of Georgia; and \$910,000 per year accruing to the Muscogee County School District.

High Growth

- **\$38.9 million in temporary construction income** generating almost 170 temporary construction jobs (assumes eight or more years to buildout).
- **\$7.6 million in annual permanent wages** for more than 240 full-time jobs associated

with new development. Employment includes 65 new retail jobs and 40 restaurant jobs. In addition, 140 office jobs would be created with 29,600 sq. ft. of office space. New employment generated by commercial retail uses in the High Growth scenario could be expected to generate about \$455,500 in annual wage taxes for the State of Georgia.

- **\$9.5 million in annual retail spending** in retail stores and restaurants assuming stabilized occupancy levels of 93% and 97%, respectively, and annual sales levels ranging from \$200 to \$300 per sq. ft.
- **\$666,400 in annual retail sales tax receipts**, with roughly \$285,600 accruing to the State of Georgia and \$380,800 accruing to the Columbus Consolidated Government. This assumes that the sales tax rates of 3% (state) and 4% (County) remain constant.
- **1,000± new, permanent residents** in 550 new housing units. Assuming annual average incomes of \$50,000 per year and average household spending levels on various categories of retail, could be expected to generate more than **\$5.9 million** in annual retail spending, irrespective of location.
- **\$2.9 million in annual property taxes** assuming that current property tax rates across the taxing entities (i.e., \$17.91 per \$1,000 of assessed value in Urban Services District #1, \$0.25 for the State of Georgia, and \$23.37 for the MCSD) as well as equalization ratios of 100% remain constant. Potential annual property tax revenues generated by redevelopment or revitalization in Midtown include: \$1.23 million to the USD #1; \$17,300 to the State of Georgia; and \$1.61 million per year accruing to the Muscogee County School District.

V.E Funding Sources

Section V.C listed several incentives directed at the commercial retail implementation strategy. This section describes more options for funding the various recommendations identified in this master plan.

The primary funding source for many of the projects is typically a municipality's operating budget. In the case of the Columbus Consolidated government, this option is severely limited due to the stipulations of its local property tax system. While the Georgia Supreme Court recently upheld the City's property tax assessment freeze, the Consultant Team strongly recommends pursuit of modifications to this structure, which is crippling local government's ability to not only provide catalyst funds for revitalization programs, but also to meet the basic service needs of its citizenry. Columbus' slow growth rate particularly aggravates the effect of a residential property tax freeze and escalating homestead exemption, as turnover is low and revaluations occur infrequently.

Greenspace/Open Space/Parks and Greenways

1. Land Acquisition and Greenspace Construction Funding Sources

- Issuance of bonds by City/County or Authority
- Sales Tax: Typically a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for specific tenure with dedicated percentage going to open space acquisition (or other identified specific capital project).
- Real Estate Taxes: Must be placed on all real estate transactions to generate

enough funding to be effective.

- Partnerships with private, nonprofit land trusts: This generally involves situations where the land trust handles the administration and initial acquisition of property under pressure for development, with the understanding that the municipality will later acquire the property from the trust.
- Foundation and affinity group funding: Private foundations have awarded grants for open space and greenways in a variety of communities. Some of these foundations include the American Greenways Eastman Kodak Awards and the REI Environmental Grants. The PATH Foundation in Georgia funds multi-use greenway trails and the Trust for Public Land and the Blank Foundation sometimes fund urban park projects. Many foundations will only award grants to private nonprofit organizations.
- Piggybacking on Indirectly Related Federal/State Funds: Greenspace projects can often be funded by extracting portions of grant money already allocated to other programs. This is particularly true regarding water quality restoration, flood control and environmental related projects. For example, 319 grants are available from the Georgia Environmental Protection Department and can be used for nonpoint source water quality restoration or demonstration projects. This could be a prime opportunity for the funding of the Lindsey Creek restoration.
- Individual contributions to construction: Individuals in the community contribute to the construction of the project, as residents in High Point, North Carolina

helped to fund a greenway project with \$5000 from its “Buy-a-Foot” campaign, in which linear greenway feet were sold for \$25/ft.

- Private/corporate donations for development and construction of site: An example here is the Swift Creek Recycled Greenway in Cary, North Carolina, whereby a total of \$40,000 in donated construction materials and labor made this trail an award-winning demonstration project.

2. Maintenance of Greenspace Amenities

- “Friends” nonprofit organization partnerships: Ranges from voluntary additional upkeep to contractual “takeover” of management of specific parks.
- Corporate Sponsorships: Ongoing revenues can be generated for maintenance by a judicious use of corporate funding in exchange for specific marketing rights. These are most successful in high traffic spaces.
- Fee-for-Use and income generating activities: Specialized facilities and programs generate revenue to maintain and provide full range of services. While common methods include charging for reservation of facilities for private functions and out-of-district charges, some municipalities have created or entered partnerships for new programs for profit making purposes. Consideration may be given to constructing an event facility at the Lindsey Creek Recreation Center available for rental.

Community Redevelopment and Revitalization

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant Program: Funds aimed at community revitalization and economic redevelopment. Unfortunately, these funds are limited and have already been allocated for prior projects within Columbus.
- Section 108 Loan Guarantees: The loan guarantee provision of the CDBG program, this is one of the most potent public investment tools HUD offers to local governments. It provides communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities and large-scale capital projects. Local governments borrowing funds guaranteed by Section 108 must pledge their current and future CDBG allocations to cover the loan amount as security for the loan.
- Small Business Administration (SBA) provides grants, loans and technical assistance to small businesses.
- Business Improvement District (BID), Community Improvement District (CID) - *both terms are used interchangeably in Georgia*: A limited amount of additional taxes are authorized for select portions of an area that provides a funding pool for infrastructure projects that will benefit the area. The funds can also be used for such functions as public safety and trash pickup. While MidTown’s commercial areas may not be strong enough today to support a BID (as exists in UpTown), this may be a tool for future consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)**
Financing: Banks can improve their CRA rating by making loans and investing in community development and providing financial services to low and moderate-income neighborhoods and individuals. The rating can be used by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency when considering a bank's application for new branches, mergers, or other corporate activities.
- **Opportunity Zone Tax Credit Program:** A Georgia program enacted in 2004, the OZTC is intended to encourage development and redevelopment in smaller geographic areas than are served by existing economic development programs. This act allows the maximum job tax credit allowed under law and expands the definition of "business enterprise" to include businesses of any nature. Some locations within MidTown may meet the criteria stipulated for use.
- **Governor's Discretionary Fund:** Administered by the Office of the Governor, State of Georgia, this fund provides funding for special needs or situations that are not necessarily covered by other state programs. Incorporated municipalities, counties and authorities are eligible to apply.
- **Quality Growth Grant Program:** State financial incentives are provided to assist communities in implementing quality growth initiatives. Eligible activities include projects that promote infill housing, and the preparation of local ordinances and regulations that support quality growth strategies.

Streetscapes/Infrastructure

- **Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA),** formerly known as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21): SAFETEA is a federally funded program that promotes diverse modes of surface transportation. For MidTown, streetscape projects that enhance pedestrian and bicycle use would be candidate projects for this funding source.
- **U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Grants for Public Works and Development of Facilities.**
- **Municipal Bonds** are the primary funding source for new roadway and streetscape projects.
- **Georgia Department of Transportation**

Historic Preservation

- **Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit:** The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is available for buildings that are National Historic Landmarks, that are listed in the National Register, that are determined as being National Register eligible and/or that are contributing to National Register Historic Districts and certain local historic districts. Properties must be income producing, such as office, retail, hotel and apartment projects, and must be rehabilitated according to standards set by the Secretary of the Interior. A federal tax credit worth 20 percent of the eligible rehabilitation costs is available for qualified buildings and projects. Eligible project costs generally must exceed the value of the building itself (not including the land) at the be-

ginning of the project. Most rehabilitation costs are eligible for the credit, such as structural work, building repairs, electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, roof work and painting. Certain types of project costs are not eligible for the credit, such as acquisition, new additions, furniture and landscaping. The IRS also allows a separate 10 percent tax credit for income-producing buildings constructed prior to 1936, but not listed in the National Register.

- **Historic Preservation Fund Grant - Certified Local Government (CLG) Program:** The CLG program provides funding to enable local communities to develop programs and participate in the state's preservation process. CLG grants are funded with money appropriated from Congress for preservation efforts through the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). CLG grants require a cash or in-kind service match from the community. Eligible grant projects include, but are not limited to: training for local preservation commissions; completing or updating surveys of historic resources; producing historical walking or driving tour brochures, videos or other educational materials; preparing preservation plans; and preparing National Register of Historic Places nominations. Only cities and counties officially designated as a CLG by the State can apply for these grants. CLG communities must have a legitimate historic preservation program, such as historic zoning and a preservation commission.
- **Save America's Treasures Programs:** These funds are appropriated by Congress and the program is administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Grants are limited to the preservation and conservation of nationally significant historic and cultural resources. These resources include historic districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects. Funding cannot be used for activities such as property acquisition, historic sites surveys, long-term maintenance, interpretive programs and construction of new buildings. Grants range between \$250,000 and \$1 million, and require a dollar-for-dollar non-federal match.
- **Georgia Heritage Grants:** Initiated in 1994, these state grants provide funding to municipalities or nonprofit organizations for the preservation of Georgia Register-eligible historic properties.
- **Georgia State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property:** Administered by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Georgia Department of Revenue, this program provides property owners of historic homes - who complete a DNR approved rehabilitation - the opportunity to take a 10% of expenditure state income tax credit up to \$5000. Properties must be eligible or listed in the Georgia Register of Historic Places and rehabilitation work must be in accordance with the DNR's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- **State Preferential Property Tax Assessment Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property:** Also administered by the Geor-

IMPLEMENTATION

gia Department of Natural Resources, this program allows freezing of property tax assessments for 8.5 years at the pre-rehabilitation assessment value.

Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Associates (TSW), based in Atlanta, has developed a regional reputation for creating and designing successful livable, walkable communities. In addition to managing the project, TSW's focus was on land use, form, conceptual development and overall design.

Economics Research Associates (ERA) - their Washington D.C. office - provided the demographic, market and economic data, models and projections necessary to support an achievable revitalization program for MidTown Columbus.

Anton Nelessen & Associates (ANA), based on Princeton, New Jersey, is nationally known and respected for their surveying and workshop methodologies that translate public needs and wants into community visions. ANA developed the Visual Preference Survey and conducted a workshop session.

Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart (GJ), based in Orlando, Florida, is a full service urban planning, design and transportation planning firm. GJ provided expertise regarding vehicular circulation and was instrumental in the two auxiliary road projects affecting MidTown.

Caram & Associates, a planning firm led by Ralph Moore, was instrumental in generating broad based constituency involvement in the MidTown Project process.

The Walker Collaborative (Phil Walker), in Nashville, Tennessee, has extensive experience in "Main Street" revitalization and provided historic resource assessment and recommendations.