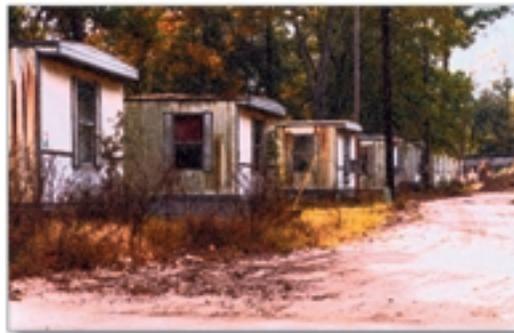


Recommendations continued

- Actively “land bank” parcels containing structures that cannot practically be rehabilitated (e.g., 75 percent physical depreciation) for demolition and redevelopment. Tax delinquent properties should also be examined as a source of “land bank” redevelopment opportunities.
- Do a windshield survey of existing violations of health and safety codes. Notify property owners of violations and step up code enforcement in a fair and consistent manner. Homes that are unlivable or health hazards should be vacated.
- Examine strategies for providing public transportation and for supporting/expanding private day care options in intown areas.
- Support the Housing Authority Board in programs aimed at dispersing public housing around the community.
- Investigate using the Hope VI Program to upgrade public housing and relocate some of it to Memorial Drive. (See Appendix.)



“If you live in public housing, you have a two-mile walk to the grocery store.”



Greenways, Parks and Open Space

Trees are one of Hinesville's greatest assets. Live oaks draped with Spanish moss are the one element most responsible for giving a sense of a "Southern coastal place." There is little evidence that new oaks are being planted and clear evidence that many are being lost to aging and urban development. While the city's commitment to tree planting with its new landscape ordinance is commendable, smaller short-lived ornamental trees are typically being used in new development projects. This will not produce the major and concerted effort required to begin the 80 to 100 year process of restoring native tree cover.

Hinesville residents complain of a lack of opportunities for passive outdoor recreation such as walking or biking. Interviews revealed that residents want more open green space that is not devoted to athletic activities. Trees and natural areas are a big part of the appeal of the Georgia coast, but new development in Hinesville threatens this important resource. The city is also hard to navigate for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Hinesville falls far below national standards for the amount of green space available per person. The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends that 10.5 acres of passive green space per 1000 people be set aside. In planning for long range recreational needs Hinesville should not only catch up with this standard for existing residents, but also plan ten to twenty years into the future to meet the needs of a growing population.

Greenways are linear parks or corridors of protected open space. They typically follow natural features such as rivers, streams, or ridgelines, provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages and at the same time give users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. Properly designed greenways can accommodate biking, skateboarding, walking and jogging. Greenways bring neighborhoods together and create a sense of community. These corridors also provide many benefits for wildlife.

There is plenty of opportunity to develop a greenway network in Hinesville. Most of the undeveloped property in Hinesville is located in wetland or tidal marsh areas, but there are also vacant lots and wide road rights-of-way that can be used for paths and trails. New road projects such as Frank Cochran Drive and the proposed bypass also offer the opportunity to incorporate trails and sidewalks. The beginning of a comprehensive greenway system for Hinesville and Liberty County is illustrated on the facing page.

It should be understood that not all greenway land need be bought outright by the city. Purchased or donated easements can be used to leave land in private ownership but allow trails to pass through. This can make a greenway system affordable. There are several viable funding sources for developing a greenway system including federal TEA funds and state funds available to Liberty County from the Governor's Greenspace program.

"People would love more trees in their neighborhoods and parks where their kids could play."



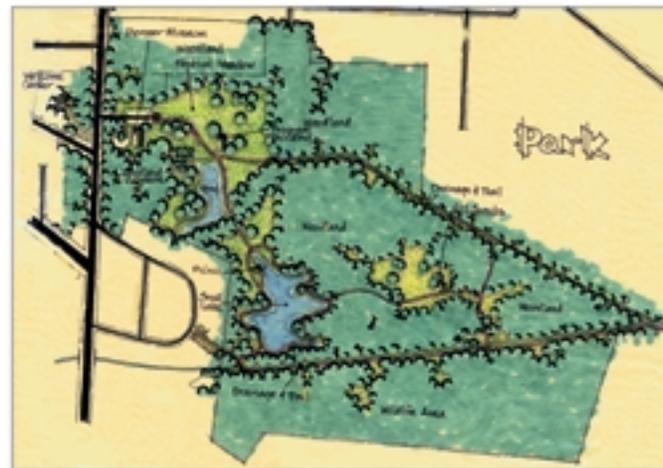
"As a visitor, I can tell you this is not a very bike-accessible place. It's scary to ride here."

Recommendations

- Perform an overall assessment of tree conditions and provide for appropriate horticultural maintenance of “heritage trees.”
- Develop a tree-planting master plan for the entire incorporated area to be used in coordinating street tree planting. It should be consulted in the course of road design and improvement.
- Review existing development regulations to see how they could be amended to promote planting of long-lived native species.
- Refine the proposed greenways system by identifying environmentally sensitive lands unsuitable for more intensive development, vacant parcels, and potential linkages between existing recreational facilities and other public destinations. Some opportunities include:
 - Ft. Stewart railroad rights-of-way, Frank Cochran, Memorial Drive (widen sidewalks as a part of the redevelopment scheme and make sure the proposed trolley has good pedestrian connections to neighborhoods at each stop), and
 - Linking Ft. Stewart to neighborhoods and services in a way that does not require driving.
- Explore alternatives for funding greenspace acquisition and designate a city/county coordinator.
- Encourage use of pocket parks, small squares and neighborhood-scale open spaces as the centerpieces of neighborhood infill projects. (One example might be a neotraditional redevelopment of the old middle school property near downtown, where the school building would be removed preserving the gymnasium as a fitness center and upscale townhouses could be built around the perimeter of the parcel with an interior “garden square.”)
- Create a regional park within Hinesville to serve as a passive recreation facility and hub of the greenway system. This park can also serve as an urban showpiece dignifying a major entry into the city and fostering a sense of place.
- Educate the community on the tax and legal benefits of donating conservation easements for both public and private greenspace preservation. Identify regional land conservancies that could accept easement donations.



This map indicates some potential opportunities for linking public facilities and destinations with a bikeway/greenbelt system.



This sketch illustrates elements that might be included in a regional passive park.



Gateways and Corridors

Substantial amounts of unattractive strip development currently exist along all of Hinesville's major highway corridors. Hinesville's coastal landscapes and historic buildings are rapidly being replaced by generic strip sprawl. This domination of automobile culture is typical of new development in most Georgia communities, but some new techniques have been developed for improving on this modern form of blight.

Residents complain about rush hour traffic on Hwy 84 and on routes leading in and out of Ft. Stewart. Many of the city's primary arterial roads feature center turn medians, often called "suicide lanes," that lead to traffic accidents and congestion delays. As new roads and bypasses are planned, the city has the opportunity to learn from past mistakes. For example, where Frank Cochran Drive is planned to connect with Hwy 84 at the Wal-Mart intersection, the city has the opportunity to work with DOT to improve one of its major gateways by installing a landscaped median along the new road.

The trend toward suburbanization of retail uses is evident with the movement of Wal-Mart further out of town and the general lack of retail uses in the commercial core. This outward movement of retail uses is also precipitated by the construction of major road improvements. In general, far too much land along major roadways in Hinesville and the surrounding county is zoned to allow commercial development. Continued sprawl of office and commercial uses, if left unaddressed, will surely undercut the city's efforts to promote neighborhood and downtown revitalization.

Recommendations

- Work with the county to reduce the amount of land currently zoned commercial along highway corridors.
- Limit future commercial rezonings to a few major intersections along major roadways and new "bypasses."
- Create development incentives to encourage new retail infill in existing strip centers. Where space allows, infill shops should be adjacent to the road creating shopping "squares" around internal parking lots. Older commercial buildings in these squares can then be updated with new architectural elements, awnings and signs. (See photographs.)
- Landscape roadside rights-of-way with trees to soften the harsh appearance of strip development. Where the right-of-way is not wide enough for streetscape improvements, seek easement donations from property owners (in exchange for free landscape improvements).
- Develop a phased program for converting "suicide lanes" into landscaped medians with periodic left turn lanes. (Although it would seem that removing the center turn lane would reduce traffic capacity, landscaped center medians handle just as much traffic, as long as they incorporate extra turn lanes at important intersections).

"There's just no good way to come into this town without going through Ugly, Uglier, and Ugliest."



"Every street in Hinesville is a commercial street. It's hard to find the neighborhoods. They are getting squeezed out and trampled over by commercial development."

Recommendations continued

- Give high priority to protecting residential neighborhoods along major roadways with landscaping and center medians: 1) wherever major roads pass through residential neighborhoods and 2) wherever the remaining tree canopy has not been destroyed.
- Consolidate curb cuts and align them with left turn lanes where possible. Minimize permitting of new curb cuts, provide incentives for closing existing cuts and require internal linkage of parking lots.
- Improve street lighting. Replace sodium vapor lights with more attractive streetlamp lighting where possible.
- Require sidewalks. These should be at least 6 feet wide and no less than 6 feet from the curb with street trees planted between the curb and sidewalk.
- Refine current sign regulations by reducing the number, height and size of on-premise signs and allowing only one freestanding multi-tenant sign per strip center. Require coordinating graphics and color schemes, limit off-premise signs (billboards), require existing billboards to be amortized over a reasonable period of time and establish strong controls on temporary signs.
- Establish maximum building setback requirements (e.g., 80 feet) to pull buildings closer to the street.



This drawing of the intersection of General Screven Way and Highway 84 shows how center medians could be used to enhance Hinesville's attractiveness. The yellow building footprints indicate new infill commercial drawn closer to the street to minimize the visual impact of parking lots.

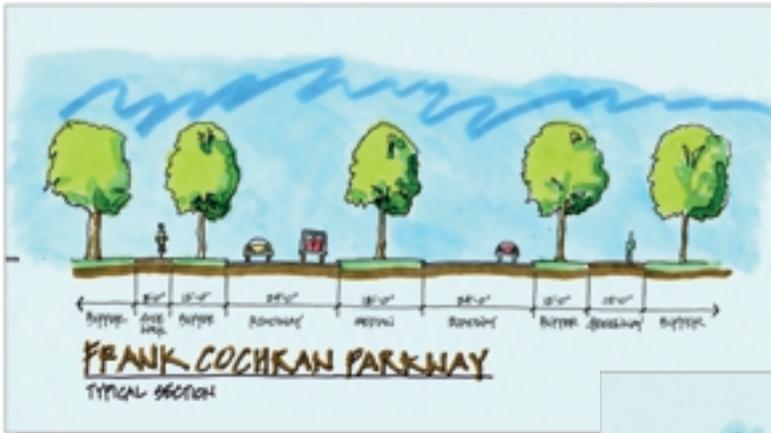


Examples of corridor landscaping from other communities.

Recommendations continued



- Replace minimum parking requirements with maximums. (Under current regulations most developments result in far too much asphalt.) Restrict parking to the sides and rear of commercial buildings.
- Prohibit deceleration lanes. They make it more difficult to do streetscape improvements as described above.
- Institute design standards requiring big box retail stores to break up their blank facades with windows and architectural accents.
- Design new bypasses as limited access or “parkways” to further avoid commercialization. These roadways should have very few curb cuts, substantial tree buffering, and limited signs and billboards.
- Work with the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) to develop an attractive design plan for Frank Cochran Drive into Ft. Stewart. In order to minimize commercial sprawl along this entryway, the four-lane might be constructed as a divided highway with a median, and all the widening could be located to the east in the vacant frontage lots that might otherwise develop commercially.



Revitalizing Intown Neighborhoods

The city has a limited number of older intown neighborhoods. These are located quite close to Ft. Stewart and could provide attractive, affordable homes for both military personnel and longtime Hinesville residents. These neighborhoods feature many of the positive aspects of the new neotraditional neighborhoods that are becoming popular around the country. They have magnificent trees, nice sidewalks and street dimensions and setbacks that encourage neighborly interactions. By making a public (and publicized) commitment to supporting and revitalizing these intown neighborhoods, the city can expand the customer base for downtown merchants and increase the tax base.

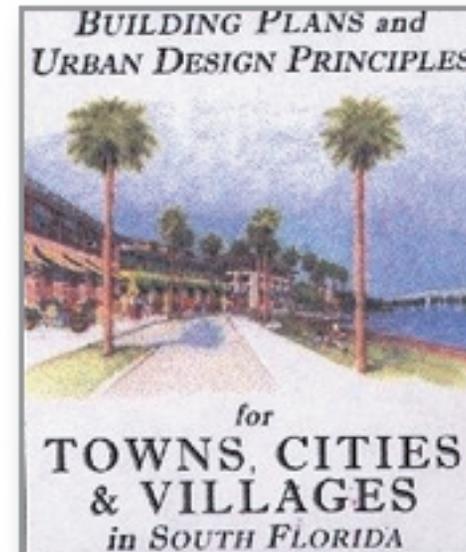
There are a significant number of underutilized buildings scattered around intown areas of Hinesville. The state, city, county, school board and hospital authority own a number of these buildings not being used to their full potential considering the infrastructure serving them. Careful choices for reusing vacant and underutilized facilities can support the revitalization of the intown area. Specific observations on intown areas that need special attention are included in the Appendix.

Recommendations

- Survey intown areas to identify vacant lots, structures that need to be demolished, and those which can be rehabilitated.
- Develop “small area plans” to guide redevelopment of intown areas. These should outline demolition of badly deteriorated units, replatting proposals, zoning changes and other public investments that are required to revitalize intown neighborhoods.
- Examine and revise city land use regulations to support and protect intown neighborhoods.
- Offer rehabilitation incentives or seek private development partners to rehabilitate some existing historic housing units. This would demonstrate to the rest of the development community the commercial viability of intown neighborhoods.
- Take decisive action against intown landlords in violation of existing building codes.
- Develop architectural design guidelines for infill housing in historic neighborhoods.
- Ensure that intown road design supports neighborhood character. Tree buffers, medians and other traffic calming measures should be applied on sections of arterial roads passing through residential zones.
- Offer incentives to encourage appropriate infill development in intown neighborhoods.
- Consolidate public uses on a smaller number of properties to free buildings and properties for private redevelopment while, at the same time, reducing local government overhead.
- Where intown properties are publicly owned, the city or county may use land cost write-downs, low-cost long-term leases or other public/private partnership approaches to encourage redevelopment of these properties.



Example of inappropriate infill development in Hinesville.



This publication addresses architectural styles and planning for revitalized existing neighborhoods. While focusing on South Florida, the ideas and building plans are easily transferable to Hinesville.



Examples of adaptive reuse from other communities.

“I’m a builder. My wife keeps wanting me to build her a new old house. I can imagine that something innovative could be done in these older neighborhoods. Upscale townhouses might appeal to some folks. I’d consider it.”

The following table lists major underutilized intown properties and suggests some possible adaptive reuses.

Property or Facility	Owned by	Possible Alternative Uses
Library	County	Community arts center, day care facility or swap for other Memorial Drive property closer to Liberty Center or Downtown
Old Hospital	Hospital Authority	Private high-tech medical offices, Dept. of Family and Children Services lease
Old Wal-Mart	Private	Teen activity center
Hinesville Middle School (Alternative School) including Bradwell Gym	Liberty County Board of Education	Neotraditional townhouse community with upscale amenities; After-school learning center
Manna House Building	County	Provide incentives to rehab and attract retail uses
Lot behind gas station	Private	City should "land bank" for E. Court St. future parking
Dept. of Labor Building	County	Provide incentives to rehab and use adjacent vacant lot and attract retail (outdoor dining opportunity)
Vacant lot adjacent to Dept. of Labor Building	City	Screened public parking or commercial business
Parcel on corner of Main St. and Memorial Dr.	Private	Possible parking or pocket park
Old Post Office	County	Keep as record retention center but convert parking lot to county employee parking
Historic Jail	City	DCA Regional Office
Voter Registration Building	County	Provide incentives to rehab and attract retail
Old State Patrol Headquarters	County	Welcome Center
Gas Building Annex	County	Remove as part of downtown master plan
Buildings along Court Street	Private	Replace with viable two story commercial buildings (except for filling station)
Baptist Church Parking Lot	Baptist Church	Possible land swap or partnership with the city

Hinesville Action Agenda

This section identifies the most immediate tasks required to implement recommendations in the previous sections. The Action Agenda is intended to help the city accomplish very ambitious goals for improving the community. It puts specific tasks into a logical order and appropriate time frame based on:

- 1) timing of related activities being carried out by Ft. Stewart and Liberty Center planners; 2) other preexisting community initiatives; 3) the city's priorities and;
- 4) the potential availability of funding and technical assistance.

The city and county may wish to amend some of these tasks into the short-term work program of their comprehensive plans, since doing so may provide support for related grant applications. A chart in the Appendix contains specific details on possible funding sources to implement these initiatives. The city is encouraged to contact Resource Team participants for follow up assistance and information.

Implementation Schedule

Action Item	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Key Deadlines	Other Suggestions
<i>Phase 1</i>				
Work with DOT on design of Frank Cochran Drive	City manager	N/A	Determine when DOT's construction drawings are due to be developed	Conceptual ideas should be negotiated before the construction drawing phase
Establish civilian/military housing task force	City/Military	N/A		
Continue Wright Army Airfield Initiative	Existing Partnership	N/A		
Conduct Senior Command Briefing on Memorial Drive/Liberty Center project	City/ DCA/ UGA representative	N/A	February 2000	
Conduct Market Niche Study for Downtown	City, Consultant	Downtown Revolving Loan Fund, LDF grant	Before Downtown Master Plan	
Establish Library Committee	MACC/City/Liberty Center planners	N/A		
Complete Courthouse Space Study	County/consultant	General revenue funds	Before Downtown Master Plan	County needs to provide to city as input for Downtown Master Plan

chart continued on next page

Action Item	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Key Deadlines	Other Suggestions
<i>Phase 1</i>				
Establish Arts Committee	City/county/non-profits/ churches/school board reps.	N/A		This group should also participate in planning new Community Arts Center
Determine and set up management structure for VA Repo/Neighborhood Revitalization Projects	City/county	To be determined based on organizational strategy chosen	LDF deadlines are April 1 and Oct. 1	LDF grants have paid for other Urban Redevelopment Plans
Discuss educational opportunities with school board	City/county	N/A		
Continue siting of regional park	City/county	N/A		Explore feasibility of sites currently under consideration
Secure funding for Trolley Demonstration Project	City/Ft. Stewart	To be determined		
Downtown/ Memorial Drive Master Plan	City	1. Dollar Homes Program 2. CHDO grant for housing predevelopment planning program	CHDO grant deadline is June, 29 2001	Up to \$200,000 available from Dollar Homes. Long lead time.
Survey/map dilapidated housing citywide	City	City general fund		Suggest using GIS
Notify property owners of code violations and upcoming rehabilitation programs	City	N/A		Public relations campaign may be needed
Begin seeking "brick and mortar" dollars for Memorial Drive/Liberty Center implementation	City	Downtown Revolving Loan Fund/TEA 21/SPLOST/ Other "smart growth" foundation grants		
Complete schematic design for Greenway/Pocket Parks	City/County Recreation Committee	LDF, Governor's Greenspace Funding		May need design consultant
Review and begin revising development regulations (corridors/infill/revitalization goals)	City/county	Foundation grants/ LDF		May need consultant

chart continued on next page

Action Item	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Key Deadlines	Other Suggestions
<i>Phase 2</i>				
Work closely with DOT on bypass design	City/county	N/A		
Initiate VA repo and public housing initiatives		Various DCA/HUD programs		
Begin implementing Downtown/Memorial Drive Master Plan	City	Downtown Revolving Loan Fund, Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, HOME program, SPLOST, Dollar Home Program Income		May need project management staff or consultant
Integrate Trolley System planning with Ft. Stewart/Liberty Center construction	City/military	N/A		May need consultant
Establish a Façade Grant Program and Adopt Design Guidelines for Downtown/ Memorial Drive	City	Local Funds		Downtown Design Guidelines available from UGA School of Environmental Design
Seek funding for corridor median improvements and greenway system	City	TEA 21, DNR grants, Governor's Greenspace funds		
Seek funding for Community Arts Center	City	National Endowment for the Arts, State programs		
Implement intown housing rehabilitation programs	City/Housing Authority/ Housing umbrella organization chosen	CDBG, DCA affordable housing projects		
Begin land banking lots with deteriorated housing	City	SPLOST, DCA Housing programs		
Rezone/replat intown neighborhoods as necessary	City	To be determined		Outside consultant may be required
Acquire land for regional park	City	To be determined		
Sell some public housing units to previous tenants	Housing Authority	DCA housing programs/ Federal Hope VI		
Work with private investors on high-tech "campus-like" projects along bypass	City/county/ Development Authority	DCA's EIP grant		

chart continued on next page

Action Item	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Key Deadlines	Other Suggestions
<i>Phase 3</i>				
Put employee parking management system in place downtown	City/downtown merchants	Chamber/general revenues		
Begin work on Community Arts Center	City	School Board/ Private Foundation grants/ CDBG		CDBG funding eligibility depends on building design
Begin Streetscape Improvements on Memorial Drive	City	TEA 21, SPLOST		
Partner on demonstration project in an intown neighborhood	City	Public Private/ Partnership		City may contribute public works or land buy-down
Construct pocket parks in intown neighborhoods	City	To be determined		
Continue implementing greenway system	City/County	Governor's Greenspace Funds/ recreation impact fees		
Start regional park improvements	City	To be determined		

Appendix

A) Land Use in the Memorial Drive Redevelopment Corridor

The Memorial Drive corridor is proposed for redevelopment, primarily for multiple-family residential development along with certain neighborhood commercial uses. Land along the redevelopment corridor is currently zoned C-2, General Commercial. The existing C-2 zoning does not permit residential use, and it generally is not conducive to the redevelopment scheme.

The Resource Team considered but rejected the idea of applying the current zoning code's Downtown Development (DD) zoning district to the redevelopment corridor. The city's Office Commercial (OC) district was also reviewed for compatibility but also was considered not entirely appropriate. A proposed zoning scheme needs to be prepared to support the redevelopment concept. Permitted uses should be predominantly multifamily residential, except for existing commercial lots and proposed neighborhood commercial areas. The front setback needs to be shallow—0 to 10 feet, which will require a revision to the general setback for arterials and collectors of 35 feet as currently established by Section 618, "Uniform Setback Requirement."

Existing Land Use Patterns

The Memorial Drive corridor extends from the Ft. Stewart entrance easterly to the city's traditional downtown and seat of government on Main Street. The majority of the properties fronting on Memorial along the corridor are in retail commercial and service commercial uses. The commercial uses range from community-serving establishments (such as automobile repair, taxi dispatching, automobile parts, office supplies, tailoring and alterations, and pawnshops) to neighborhood-serving uses such as dry cleaners, convenience marts, fast food restaurants and pizza delivery.

Some of the commercial buildings are relatively new and are in good structural condition; examples include Wedgey's restaurant, Domino's Pizza, the NAPA auto parts store and the dry cleaners at Welborn Street. Other commercial uses occupy older buildings that exhibit varying levels of structural deterioration and obsolescence. Given attractive market conditions, many of the commercial uses are excellent candidates for redevelopment.

The second but certainly less dominant use fronting along the corridor is public/semi-public. At the northwestern end of the corridor, Memorial Drive passes through vacant, wooded land inside the Ft. Stewart Reservation as it approaches the Post. At the southeastern end of the corridor are several public/semi-public uses, including the recently renovated county's Records Retention Center and the United Methodist Church, with Veterans Park at the corner on Main Street across from the Courthouse Annex. Midway along the corridor is a modern library between Gause and Welborn Streets.

Few residential uses front directly on Memorial Drive, although several major developments and a major mobile home park have primary access from Memorial. Residential uses fronting on Memorial include two deteriorated, vacant residences just west of the United Methodist Church, and a small (eight-unit) mobile home park across from the library. At the northwestern end of the corridor, Magnolia Plantation apartments access Memorial Drive on the north side across from Beverly Street, while the Beverly Street townhouses and Stewart Pines condominiums access Memorial on the south via Beverly Street. A major mobile home park accesses Memorial across from Griffin Street, and extends to the Magnolia Plantation development behind the commercial properties that front along the corridor.

Current Zoning Patterns

The majority of the corridor is zoned C-2, General Commercial. Magnolia Plantation, the Beverly Street townhouses and Stewart Pines condominiums are zoned R-TH for multifamily use. Additional multifamily zoned areas flank the corridor, including RA-1 south of the corridor, extending from Stewart Pines to the public housing development on Gause Street, and RA-1 north of the corridor between Rebecca Street and Strickland Road (on either side of West Washington Street).

Farther to the north and south of the corridor are single-family neighborhoods zoned primarily R-4, with scattered properties zoned RA-1 and DD on a case-by-case basis.

At the southeastern end of the corridor, properties at Memorial and Main, and extending south down Main and east along M.L. King Jr. Drive, are zoned C-1, Central Business District.

The entire corridor is located within the DD Downtown Development Overlay Zoning District. The opportunities for transitional and mixed-use development in the district are authorized through application on a case-by-case basis.

Potential Land Use

The Potential Land Use map (following page) illustrates a future land use pattern for the corridor. Economically viable residential uses are expected to remain, including the new Magnolia Plantation, Beverly Street townhouses and Stewart Pines, as well as the mobile home park east of Magnolia Plantation. Three commercial uses appear economically viable but are also well-located for potential redevelopment for multifamily housing in conjunction with neighboring properties — the Domino's Pizza establishment, the old supermarket just east of Domino's, and the small commercial center immediately west of the county's Records Retention Center. These three properties are shown as commercial uses on the Potential Land Use map, but may be redeveloped if economically justified.