

Section 2: Visioning

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The public reviews the Draft Concept Plan at the September 29, 2004, Community Meeting

2.1 PUBLIC PROCESS

The public participation process consisted of a one year period of community workshops and meetings, a project website, and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders running from October 2003 through October of 2004.

Interviews

One-on-one interviews were utilized to better understand existing conditions and obtain a general direction for the area's future. Interviews were conducted in-person and over-the-phone with a variety of constituencies, including:

- Residents
- Business owners
- Columbia County officials
- Potential investors
- Commercial property owners
- Developers
- Real estate agents

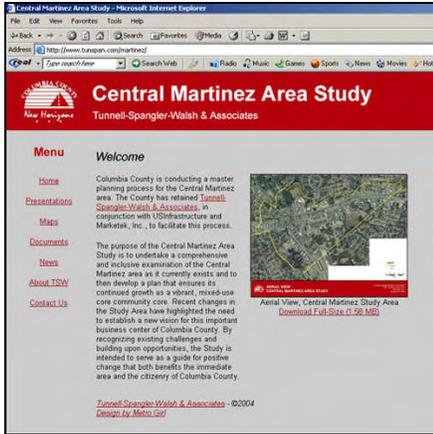
The consultant team used these interviews to gain local perspective and ensure that the study adequately addressed the issues important to the residents, businesses and property owners of Central Martinez.

Community Workshop and Public Meetings

The primary tool for achieving public participation was a Community Workshop held on March 30, 2004. A meeting announcement was delivered via post to all property owners within the Study Area.

The March 30 Workshop focused on developing a general vision and character for the Study Area. It included a review of existing conditions, review of the on-line Image Preference Survey results, and a brainstorming session to identify the area's future character, with a focus on:

- Residential land uses
- Parks and open space
- Civic facilities
- Pedestrian improvements
- Vehicular transportation improvements
- Retail mix



A project website was used to facilitate the public process

- Community design.

Nearly 30 stakeholders participated in this process.

Following the Workshop, the consultant team synthesized results into the Draft Concept Plan. The Draft Concept Plan was presented to the community at a May 10 Public Meeting. At this meeting stakeholders provided feedback to the consultant team and revisions were made accordingly.

The Final Concept Plan was presented to the community and endorsed at a September 29, 2004, Community Meeting.

Project Website

A key public involvement tool was the project website. The website was used to post Workshop results, distribute documents, administer the Image Preference Survey and solicit community feedback. The website was accessed at:

www.tunspan.com/martinez.

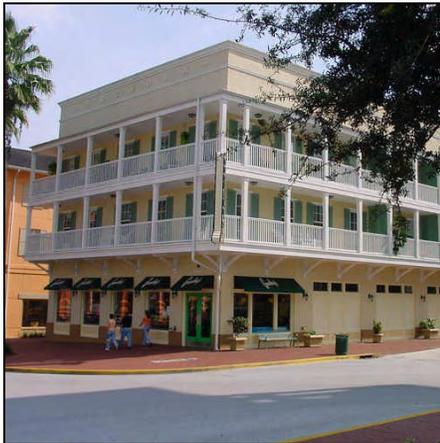
2.2. IMAGE PREFERENCE SURVEY



Commercial/Mixed-Use score of -3.06

A key visioning tool of the Central Martinez Area Study was the use of an Image Preference Survey (IPS). Using an on-line format accessed via the project website, the public was given the opportunity to score a variety of images for their level of desirability for the future of Central Martinez. Categories included Commercial/Mixed Use, Residential, and Public Spaces. Possible scores ranged from -5 (extremely undesirable) to +5 (extremely desirable). A score of 0 indicated no preference.

The IPS was available to take from January 1, 2004, to May 9, 2004. During this session 57 people took the survey. Following the Workshop, the IPS was again made available based on community demand and ran from May 11 to June 1, during which time an additional 12 people took the survey, for 69 total respondents.



Commercial/Mixed-Use score of +3.14

Following the survey, the most and least appropriate images were identified by taking the average (mean) score for each image. At the Workshop, people were asked why they scored the images the way that they did. The following is a summary of the results.

Survey Results

Commercial/Mixed Use Character

Interviews conducted prior to the Workshop suggested a strong-desire to revitalize Central Martinez with new commercial or mixed-use buildings. Upon being shown a series of different buildings, respondents rejected both urban and suburban buildings equally. At -3.06, the lowest-scoring image was the strip center on Washington Road that contains Martinez Gold, followed by the K-mart on Washington Road, at -2.26. The next lowest-scoring images were two urban scenes in Fort Worth, Texas (-2.00), and Boston, Massachusetts (-1.89). This lack of support for both suburban buildings and intensely urban ones supports the notion of Central Martinez as a “small town” environment. It also suggests that it should have traditional styling and lush landscaping.



Commercial/Mixed-Use score of +2.71

The most desirable commercial or mixed-use building was a three-story mixed-use building in Celebration, Florida, with a score of +3.14; this quality stucco building included awnings and storefronts at street level and was wrapped by a gracious wooden balcony on the upper stories. The second-highest scoring image, at +2.71, was a two-story brick and stucco building surrounding a town green. The third and fourth highest scoring were new two and three story, traditionally styled mixed-use buildings. In all cases, their traditional architecture, low-scale, pedestrian orientation, landscaping, small town feel, and small-scaled retail made them highly desirable for Central Martinez.



Residential score of +2.64

Residential

Central Martinez currently has few residential options other than single-family homes and townhomes. The IPS and public comment suggest a desire to enhance these residential options with smaller lot single-family homes, townhomes, and even above-shop lofts, provided that they are well-built buildings that complement, rather than detract from, the quality standards of Columbia County. To this end, the least desirable residential image was a poorly built multifamily complex, at -3.63, followed by a mid-rise multifamily building, at -3.44. The former building does not reflect the quality of residential buildings in Central Martinez, while the latter is too urban.

The most desirable residential image, with a score of +3.56, was a large lot single-family home in another part of the county. While this image may have been the highest scoring, Workshop participants expressed a preference for this housing type as the type of choice for Columbia County, but not necessarily the Study Area. The second highest scoring image, at +2.64 and also in Columbia County, was more desirable for the Study Area itself. This image showed small lot single-family homes fronting a park. Also desirable were images of other small lot single-family homes and townhomes. These housing types are consistent with the feeling of a small town established by the Commercial/Mixed-Use survey results.



Public Spaces score of +3.71

Public Spaces

The Study Area currently lacks significant parks and open spaces, but survey participants would like that to change by increasing quality green spaces. To this end, only two images of public spaces were deemed inappropriate, and both were in Central Martinez. The lowest-scoring image, at -3.77, was Oak Street. Its lack of sidewalks and barren streetscape were viewed as undesirable. Washington Road scored slightly higher, at -1.66, likely owing to the presence of sidewalks along the road. However, its negative score suggests that many believe it could and should be improved.

The most desirable open space image was a playground, at +3.71, followed by a green park at +3.59. Participants liked the trees and facilities, and saw them as important amenities for the residential uses envisioned for Central Martinez. The third highest-scoring image was a fountain surrounded by small mixed-use buildings, at +3.45. Participants liked the fountain and sense of activity, but also that it provided a focal point for their community. Interestingly enough, the fourth highest scoring image, at +3.38, was not a traditional park at all, but a tree-lined sidewalk with café dining.



Public Space score of +3.38



Public Spaces score of -3.77

Image scores also suggest the impact that various levels of public and private investment can have on people’s view of the area. As previously indicated, Oak Street scored -3.77 in its current form. When sidewalks and trees were added the score jumped to $+2.02$. With the addition of buildings and café dining, the score rose to $+2.52$. This suggests that sidewalk improvements alone can only achieve a certain level of revitalization – it takes appropriate land uses to create a truly compelling public realm.

General Findings

The images selected as most desirable represent places from around the nation. Regardless of origin, all share several things in common. Most notable is that all represent a small-town environment; workshop participants rejected images of center cities and suburban areas equally. Furthermore, all shared a common respect for the pedestrian, landscaping, and human-scaled buildings.



Public Spaces score of +2.02

Results suggest that the residents, businesses, and property owners of Central Martinez and Columbia County are yearning for a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented community center. Unlike many other Georgia counties, Columbia County never had a significant historic downtown area. There is no courthouse square, town green, or row of historic commercial blocks. There is currently no place that adequately represents the heart and soul of Columbia County, but the opportunity exists to recreate such a place in Central Martinez.



Public Space score of +2.52



Market Village in Smyrna, Georgia, represents many of the qualities envisioned for Central Martinez. Like Central Martinez, it was once a part of a suburban commercial strip, but has slowly transformed into a town center over the past ten years

2.3 VISION

The vision for Central Martinez is of an economically strong and vibrant center for Columbia County. With its many trees, wide sidewalks, safe streets, and bicycle facilities, Central Martinez should encourage walking, bicycling, and “park once” shopping, while ensuring that regional and local automobile traffic moves in a safe and efficient manner. Parks and open spaces should be provided throughout.

Central Martinez should include a variety of land uses, with higher intensity mixed uses focused near Washington Road, transitioning to less intense uses as the distance from it increases. Bobby Jones Expressway should serve highway-oriented needs, while professional and offices uses should occur along Davis Road, Martinez Boulevard, and Bobby Jones Expressway. Single-family and multifamily areas should be preserved, but housing options should be enhanced through the addition of new small lot single-family, townhomes, and live-work areas. The streets in all areas should connect to reduce travel distances and pressure on key roadways. Residential and commercial uses should be located in such a way that complements one another, and bars and similar loud business should not be located near single-family homes.

In its current commercial centers, Central Martinez should provide a variety of uses to serve the needs of Columbia County. In addition to practical, but auto-oriented, big box retail uses along Bobby Jones Expressway, the area should include unique pedestrian-scaled retail uses along a “Main Street” setting at the intersection of Washington and Davis Roads, in an area to be known as “Martinez Town Center.” These should include quality restaurants and unique shops that contribute to a trendy, upscale and fun destination for both residents and visitors. High quality, loft-style apartments and condominiums should be provided above shops and within walking distance of them.

All buildings should appear inviting towards the street. The desire to create a destination with a strong sense-of-place requires that buildings front streets with dignity by including entrances that open onto newly built wide sidewalks.

Landscaping should be provided throughout Central Martinez. In both commercial and residential areas, green sidewalks and well-planted parking lots should provide shade and comfort. In key locations, new parks and plazas should further promote the feeling of a green town environment.



Consultants review the results of the Community Workshop and identify common themes

2.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

During the Workshop, participants were divided into groups and given maps of the Study Area. They were asked to discuss general ideas and use tracing paper to create goals and concepts for desired land-uses, streetscape and transportation improvements, etc. Each group was independent of others to ensure unique ideas.

Following the workshop, these pieces of tracing paper and comments were synthesized to identify common themes. From these themes, the following goals and objectives were identified.

Goal 1:

Distinguish Central Martinez by creating a unique destination.

Workshop participants expressed a desire to create a unique retail and entertainment destination that would allow Central Martinez to successfully compete with nearby activity centers.

Objectives:

- A. Utilize community design to create something “special.”
- B. Clean up major entrances to improve curb appeal.
- C. Provide a broad mix of everyday and destination retailers.
- D. Increase restaurant and entertainment options.
- E. Support a cohesive retail district, rather than a collection of disparate retailers.
- F. Capitalize on location and access.
- G. Ensure quality architectural design and building construction.
- H. Complement Evans, don’t compete with it.

Goal 2:

Provide a balanced, economically viable mix of uses.

Workshop participants expressed a desire for a range of land uses in Central Martinez. The size of the Study Area allows it to support a variety of land uses ranging from conventional highway-oriented commercial uses, to pedestrian-oriented mixed-use buildings.

Objectives:

- A. Preserve churches and public uses.



A key goal of the Study is to improve the pedestrian experience, which is today marked by missing sidewalks and land use patterns that discourage walking

- B. Create a town center for Columbia County.
- C. Promote a quality office environment.
- D. Increase housing options.
- E. Locate housing where it will not be negatively impacted by businesses.
- F. Reflect the highway orientation of key streets.
- G. Retain the ironworks.
- H. Provide pocket parks.
- I. Protect nearby neighborhoods.
- J. Limit automobile businesses.

Goal 3:

Provide a transportation system supporting desired land uses.

Transportation improvements should reflect and support desired land uses through a multi-modal approach. In areas envisioned as mixed-use, a pedestrian and bicycle orientation should prevail, while auto-oriented zones should support both automobile and pedestrian facilities.

Objectives:

- A. Support an interconnected street network.
- B. Provide access to the town center.
- C. “Green” key arterials.
- D. Provide sidewalks on all streets.
- E. Create an on-street greenway network for cyclists.
- F. Improve traffic and intersection operations.
- G. Improve street aesthetics.
- H. Upgrade signage and lighting.

Goal 4:

Ensure adequate water and sewer facilities to support future growth.

- A. Limit shorter term, high-density development to areas with existing water and sewer service.
- B. Work with developers to extend sewer infrastructure to new projects.



The Concept Plan calls for Central Martinez to differentiate itself in the greater Augusta marketplace by creating a unique, pedestrian-oriented, small town environment, such as this photo of Birkdale Village, near Charlotte

2.5 CONCEPT PLAN

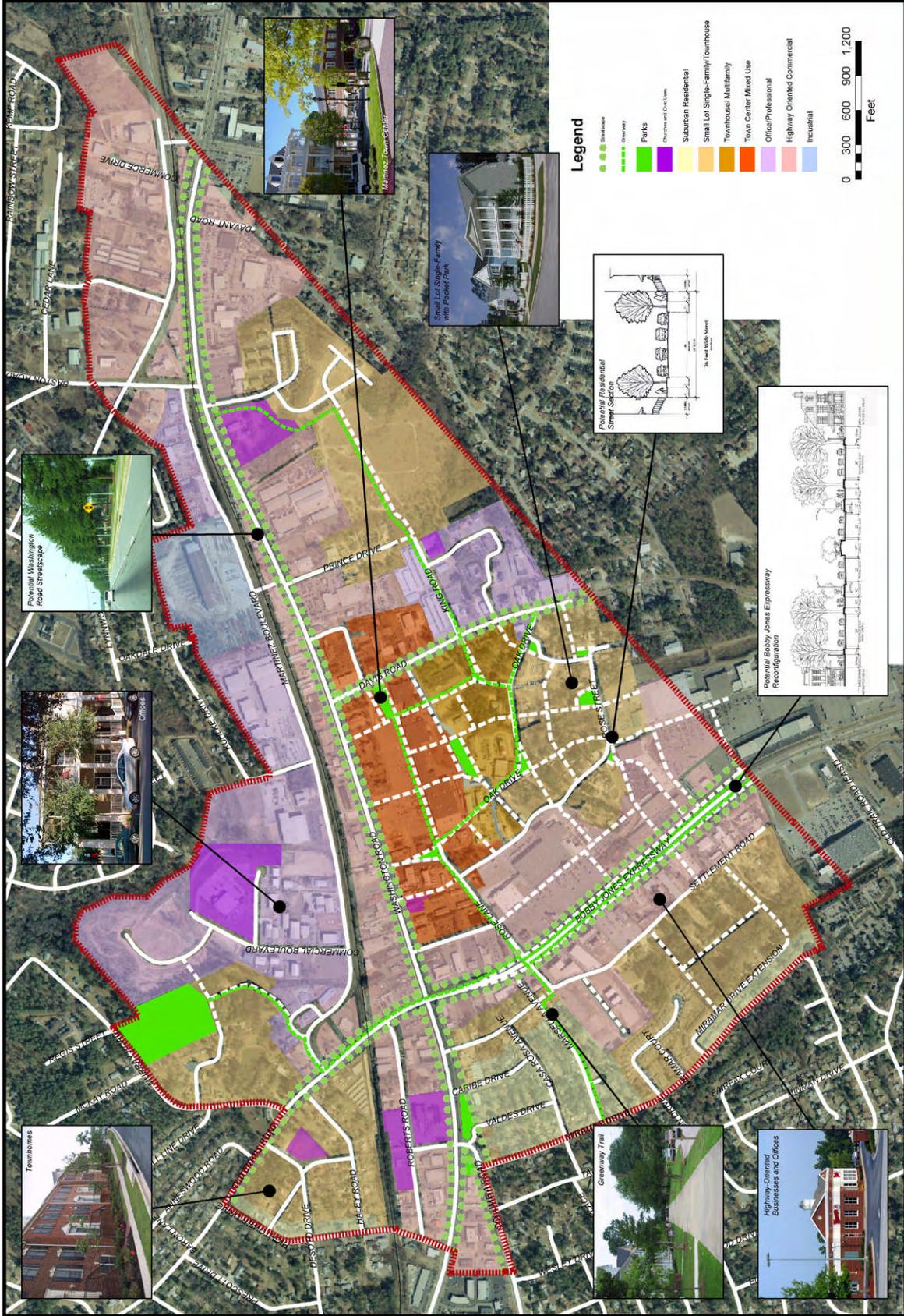
Central Martinez represents an auto-oriented, pedestrian-hostile collection of uses and buildings organized with little regard for other uses or the surrounding community. The area was developed in a manner typical of most American suburban development in its assumption that all access would be by car.

Today, the implications of this community pattern are great. Pedestrians cannot safely and conveniently access nearby uses, traffic is forced onto a few main roads, buildings are spread apart and fail to create a sense of place, and the public realm is grossly neglected by buildings that turn their back on anything other than their parking lots. Most significantly, these conditions are placing Central Martinez in a tenuous market position, for it cannot directly compete with newer centers and be successful.

As the area ages both physically and demographically, and real estate trends nationwide focus more on walkable, mixed-use communities, the failure of Central Martinez to break away from this outdated model and emerge as a true community represents the greatest threat to the area's long-term vitality.

The long-term economic and social vitality of Central Martinez requires a reconceptualization of the area from a collection of single, disconnected uses, to a cohesive, mixed-use and mixed-income walkable community based on the time-honored principles of good community design. The Concept Plan represents just recommendations for achieving such a reconceptualization, and includes recommendations necessary to achieve it. Central to the Concept Plan is the Concept Plan Map, which represents a "master plan," suggesting how the community's vision could be achieved in a way that respects sound urban design and market realities.

The following pages contain details of the Concept Plan, including specific projects and policies necessary to make it a reality. Components of the Concept Plan are divided into functional categories for ease in understanding. Section 3: Implementation includes specific details on implementation, funding and timing of the projects and policies defined herein.



Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Associates
with USInfrastructure and
Marketek, Inc.
September 28, 2004

**CONCEPT PLAN
CENTRAL MARTINEZ AREA STUDY**





The revitalization of Central Martinez will be a long-term process requiring significant public support

Overview

As stated in the Introduction of this document, this study is a unique effort to affect change in a suburban environment experiencing real and perceived deterioration. The issues, problems and opportunities discovered through the inventory and public participation processes vary widely in scope, as does the sheer geographical extent of the Study Area. Much debate can be found regarding the ability of our physical environment (alone) to “create a community”. Certainly, economic factors must be accounted for and factored into such goals. For this reason, policy recommendations and ideas presented herein will attempt to enter this realm, realizing this study will be a catalyst to future efforts.

It must also be recognized that Central Martinez is not a single, homogeneous site “ready to clear and start over.” With a large investment base, consideration must be given to working within the existing framework of many portions of the Study Area. As above, many of these recommendations will focus more on policy than design.

However, we believe the physical environment can be modified in many ways to substantially improve quality of life and promote economic revitalization. Such an assumption is supported by many of the improvement suggestions made during the public participation process. Seemingly small physical changes, such as landscaping and cleaning up roadways, were viewed by interviewees as positive steps towards creating pride in the area, which will support its economic viability. The dramatic change in image rating improvement in the IPS of Oak Street further supports this point. Over time, modifying current land use patterns to bring supply more in-line with demand will likely create greater quality in the built environment and positively influence residents’ quality of life. As an example, the revitalization of a single retail center into a successful community center can be a tangible model for developers and the County to affect change at similar sites.

The key to promoting long-term success in Central Martinez is to recognize that the area is too large and diverse, from a transportation and land-use perspective, to operate as a single “place.” It contains important roads, including Bobby Jones Expressway and Washington Road, that serve transportation roles extending beyond the immediate vicinity and are, therefore, appropriate for certain highway-oriented land uses. The area also contains existing industrial and professional facilities that represent long-term investments. Finally, most people will not walk more than one-quarter mile to access goods and services. Therefore, this distance becomes a key component of identifying the pedestrian-oriented core envisioned by the community.

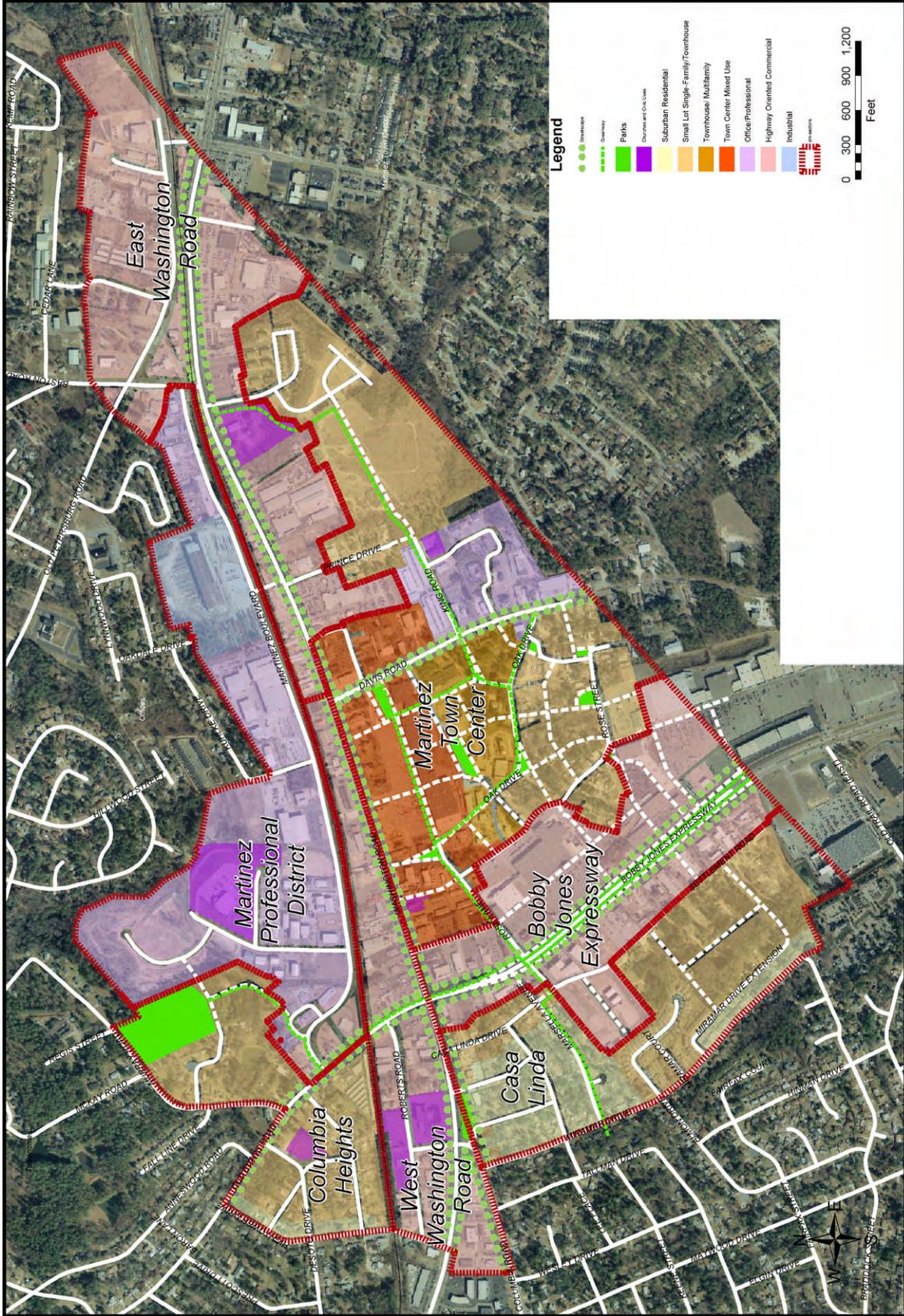
The Concept Plan recognizes opportunities to create seven distinct sectors, as shown on the next page. These include:



Traditional neighborhoods are based on the one-quarter mile walking radius, with density decreasing as the distance from the center increases

- **Martinez Town Center**, a medium-to-high-density, mixed-use neighborhood centered on Washington and Davis Roads that will serve as the retail and civic center for Martinez, while providing new housing options.
- **Bobby Jones Expressway**, a low-density, landscaped highway-oriented commercial corridor fronting a new boulevard.
- **East Washington Road**, a low-density commercial district east of Davis Road that concentrates car dealerships and auto-facilities.
- **West Washington Road**, a low-density commercial district west of Davis Road that includes a mix of highway and neighborhood-oriented uses.
- **Martinez Professional District**, a medium-density, employment district along Martinez Boulevard that could include live-work uses.
- **Casa Linda**, a medium-density townhome and small lot single-family neighborhood that provides a transition between neighborhoods to the north and west and commercial and professional areas to the south.
- **Columbia Heights**, a medium-density townhome and single-family neighborhood that provides a transition between neighborhoods to the west and the commercial and mixed-use core of Central Martinez.

Each sector is differentiated by transportation facilities and land use patterns.



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September 28, 2004

**CONCEPT PLAN: SECTORS
CENTRAL MARTINEZ AREA STUDY**





Streets in Central Martinez should be pedestrian friendly to encourage walking from neighborhoods to the future Town Center

Street Patterns

The Concept Plan creates an interconnected street network by proposing a variety of new streets in the Martinez Town Center. In addition to serving as a framework for redevelopment, these streets will enhance the transportation system. Increasing route options and accessibility will allow local trips to avoid high-traffic roads, such as Washington Road and Bobby Jones Expressway, thus improving traffic operations along these corridors.

Proposed Street Typologies

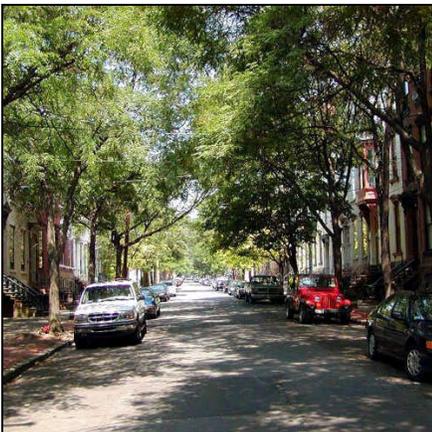
New streets will be divided into three types: *neighborhood streets*, *shopping streets*, and *service streets*. Increased network capacity will mean that new streets can be of modest, as shown in the table below. Said standards will balance vehicular needs with those of pedestrians and bicycles. They will also be compatible with land uses, such as “Main Street” retail or residential neighborhoods.



On-street parking is essential on shopping streets if sidewalk-oriented retail is to succeed

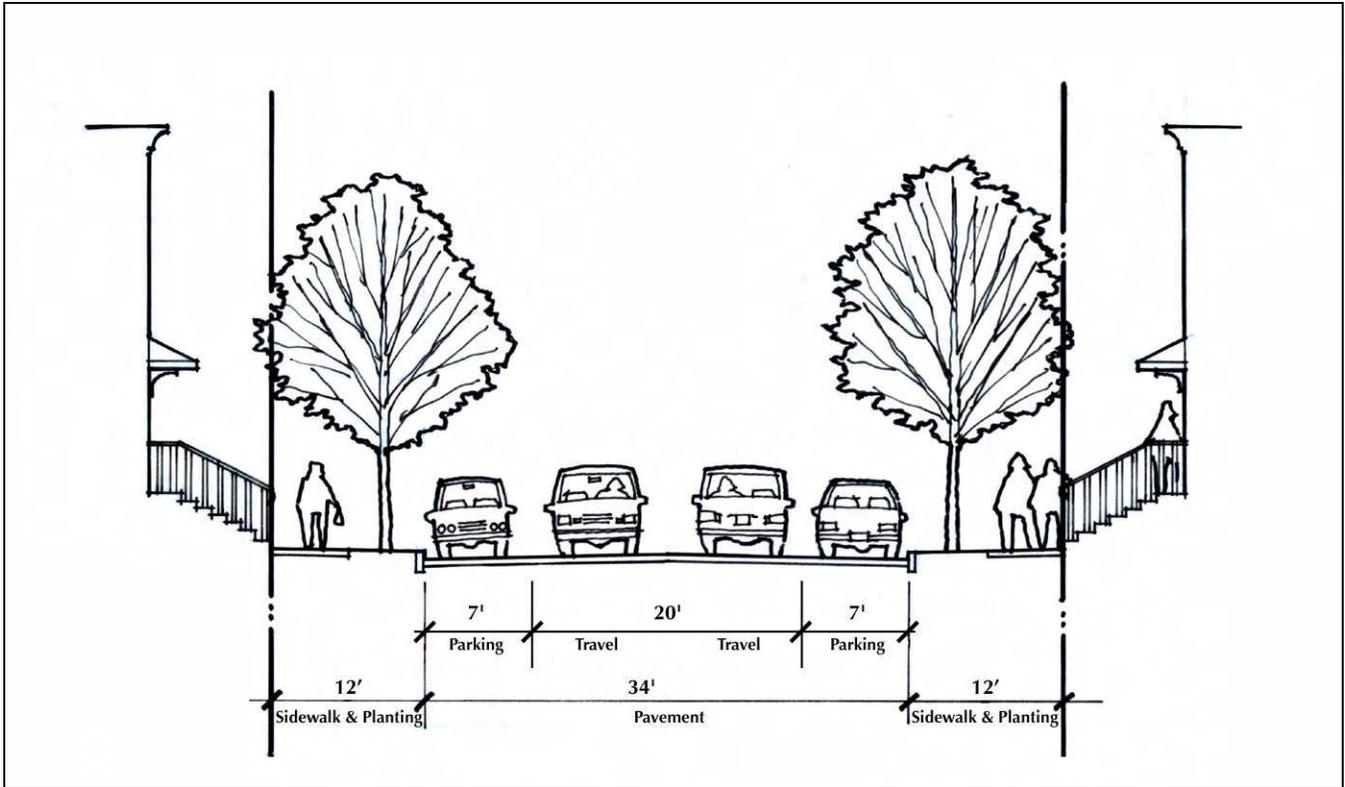
Newly Constructed Street Typologies

	Neighborhood Street	Shopping Streets	Service Streets
Standard Travel Lane width*	10 feet	10 feet	12 feet
Maximum Number of Travel Lanes	2	4	2
Standard Posted speed	25 mph	25 mph	25 mph
On-Street Parking	Optional	Required	Optional
Standard Parallel Parking Width	7 feet	8 feet	Not allowed
Angled Parking Width (60 degree)	Not allowed	20 feet	Not allowed
Sidewalks	Both sides	Both sides	One side
Minimum Sidewalk Planting Zone Width	7 feet	5 feet	5 feet
Minimum Sidewalk Clear Zone Width	5 feet	10 feet	6 feet
Standard Curb Radius*	15 feet	20 feet	20 feet

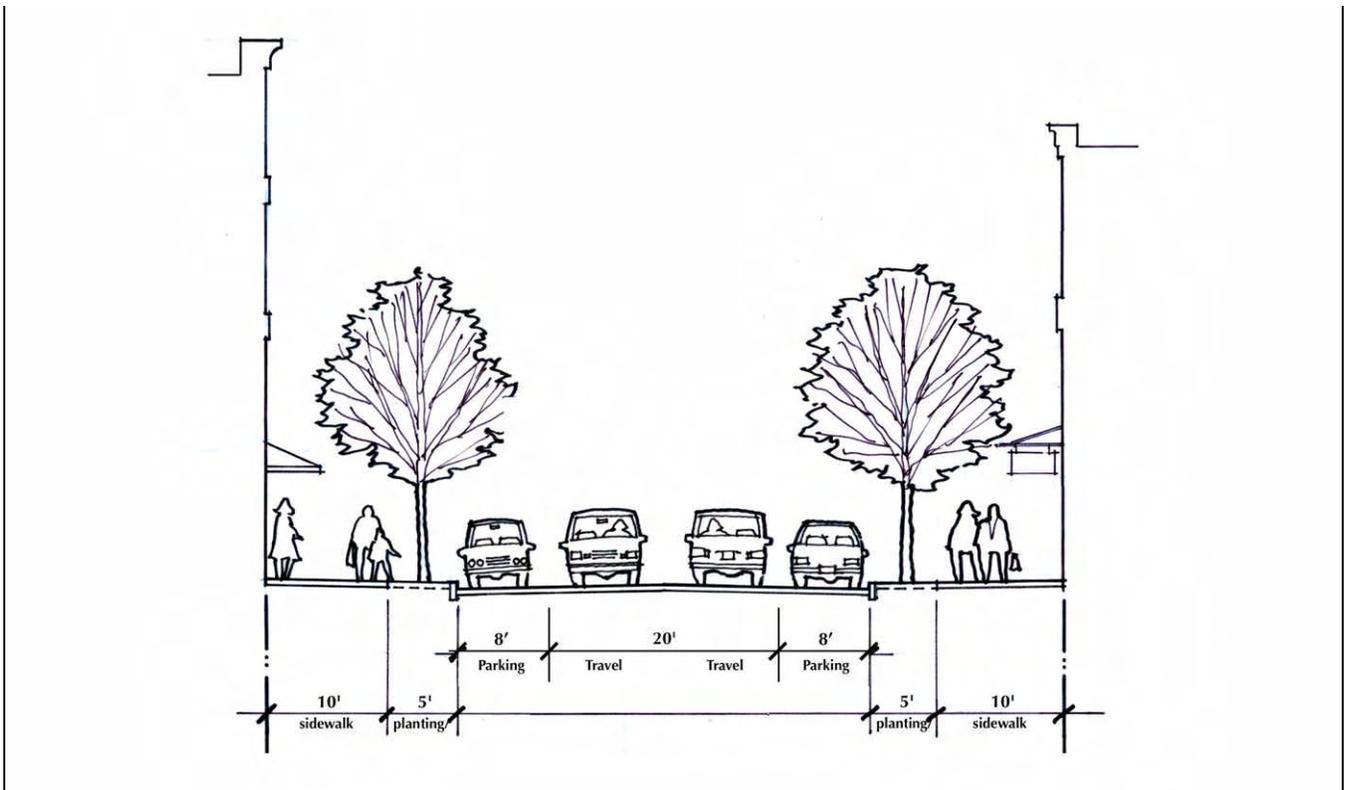


Neighborhood streets can provide convenient parking for guests

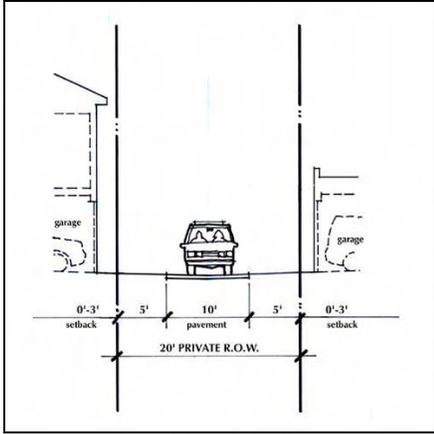
*Where tractor-trailers and other large trucks are expected to be standard users, provisions should be made to ensure safe operations.



One possible neighborhood street section, showing two ten-foot travel lanes, two seven-foot parallel parking lanes, and ten-foot sidewalks, which include a seven foot Planting Zone and five foot Clear Zone



One possible shopping street section, showing two ten-foot travel lanes, two eight-foot parallel parking lanes, and fifteen-foot sidewalks, which include a five foot Planting Zone and ten foot Clear Zone.



Proposed residential alley section, showing 20 feet right-of-way with ten feet wide central paved area

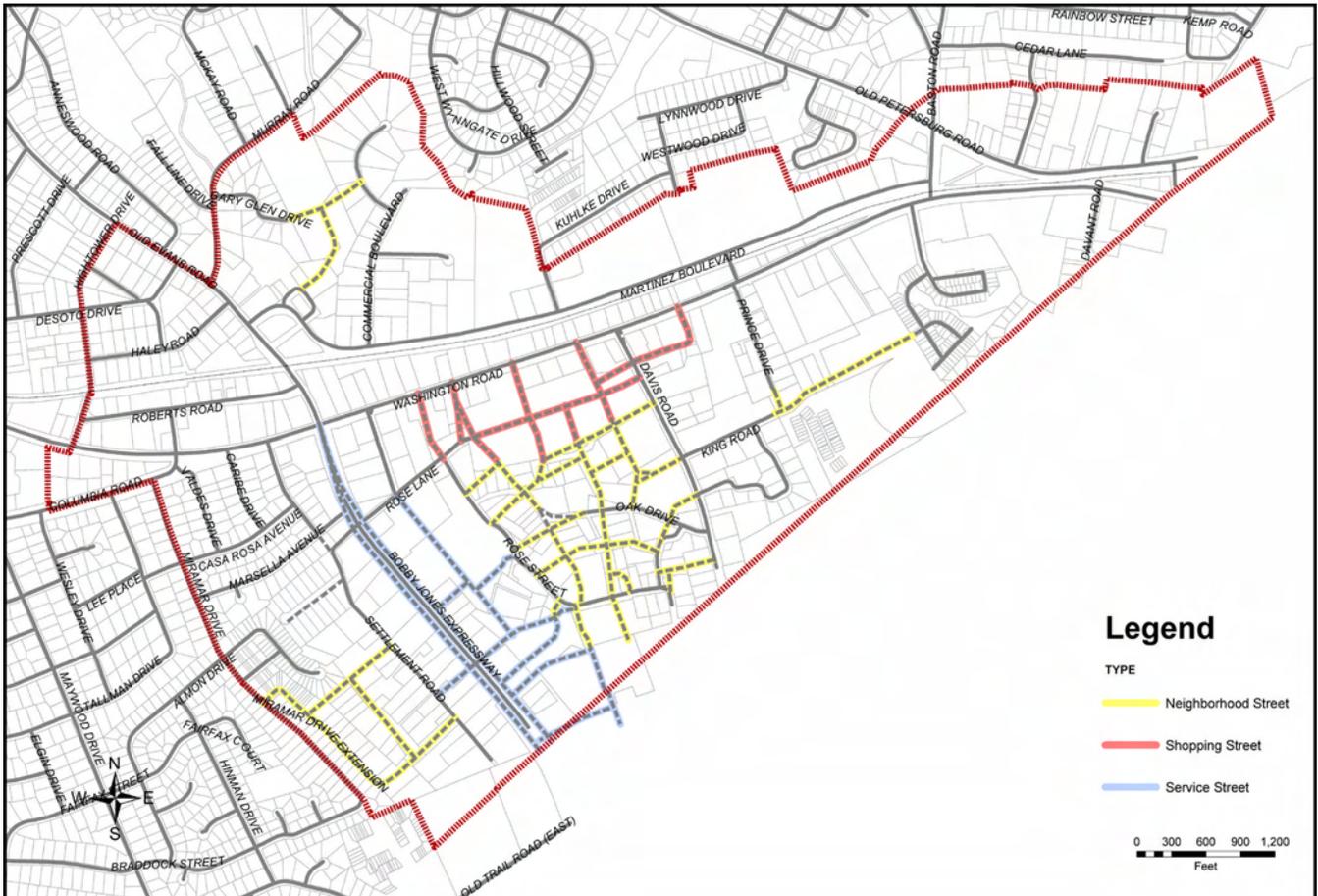
In addition to these three typologies, private alleys are proposed to provide access and discrete locations for back-of-house services. Alleys must be provided within all townhome developments to eliminate the need for garages facing the street. In addition, they should be utilized as much as possible in commercial and mixed-use areas.

Residential Alleys should have a standard private right-of-way of 20 feet, with a one-direction, ten feet wide central paved area. Buildings should be set back an additional distance on either side to allow for adequate car turning movements.

Commercial Alleys should be similar to *service streets*, except that sidewalks should not be provided.

Proposed Street Development

Because the current system limits accessibility to key development sites and includes significant deficiencies that should be addressed in a pro-active manner, that responds to current ownership patterns, these new street typologies are organized into two categories: Newly Constructed Streets and Formalized Streets.



Map showing the proposed long-term street network in Central Martinez by typology, with existing streets as solid lines and proposed streets dashed



In Glenwood Park in Atlanta, new streets are narrow to slow cars and discourage cut-through traffic



This Formalized service street in Gaithersburg, Maryland, runs through a parking lot but will one day include widened sidewalks fronted by buildings

Newly Constructed Streets should be built as part of a public-private partnership supporting redevelopment and should include:

- A 1,600 linear feet east-west *shopping street* extending Rose Lane from its current terminus to Davis Road.
- A 1,450 linear feet east-west *service street* running from Settlement Road, across Bobby Jones Expressway via a new signalized intersection, to Rose Street.
- 18,200 linear feet of *neighborhood* and *service streets* in the redeveloped area behind the West Town Shopping Center (K-mart shopping center).
- A 700 linear feet *neighborhood street* extension of Gary Glen Drive.
- An 850 linear feet *neighborhood street* running from Shaw Street to the proposed Gary Glen Drive extension.
- 4,100 linear feet of *neighborhood streets* in the Settlement Road area.

Formalized Streets are *service streets* created from drives in new or existing parking lots. They are intended to provide a long-term framework for organizing development, while improving transportation choices. In addition to the standard requirements for *service streets*, Formalized Streets include:

- **Five feet wide planter islands with trees where sidewalks are not provided**, which could define the streets spatially.
- **Buried site utilities underneath said streets**, rather than randomly scattered across the parking lot. By locating utilities underneath the street, rather than haphazardly across the site, it becomes possible to incrementally redevelop without tearing up the entire site, and, therefore, interrupting utility services for the existing component.

Over the long-term, private Formalized Streets are envisioned for transformation into full-fledged *shopping* or *neighborhood streets* as redevelopment of the adjacent parking lots is realized. Proposed Formalized Streets include:

- Two 500 linear feet north-south streets running from Washington Road to the Rose Lane extension in the West Town Shopping Center.
- A 1,600 linear feet north-south extension of Oak Street from Rose Lane in the Lowes shopping center.
- A 350 linear feet east-west street from Bobby Jones Expressway to the Oak Street extension in the Lowes shopping center.



At the Edgewood Retail District in Atlanta, the City required new streets to divide parking lots into blocks

- A 450 linear feet east-west street from the Oak Street extension to Rose Street in the Lowes shopping center.

Policy Recommendations

In addition to these new streets, Columbia County must institute changes in its county code to support future connectivity as new development occurs.

Policies regarding new streets include:

- Encouraging new developments to construct the above-referenced streets or portion thereof when such are shown on their development site.
- Prohibiting cul-de-sacs and other permanent dead-ends.
- Prohibiting gating of streets.
- Encouraging new large developments to include provisions for current or future connectivity to adjacent parcels, regardless of whether such parcels are developed.
- Limiting new block lengths to a maximum of 800 feet, but an average of between 400 and 600 feet within a development or subdivision.
- Requiring that surface parking lots be subject to maximum block size requirements and that new streets through them, whether public or private, be treated in the manner recommended above for Formalized Streets.

These policies could be incorporated into proposed zoning for the Study Area. Please see Section 3: Implementation for funding sources and proposed time lines.