

4.6 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

One of the primary goals of this plan is to improve mobility in the area by enhancing vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit connectivity. Recommended improvements in this section encompass a variety of mobility options to provide for safe and efficient access for residents, businesses and visitors within the Latonia area.

4.6.1 Winston Avenue Findings

Winston Avenue was identified as needing modifications to increase pedestrian safety throughout the course of the Latonia Small Area Study. Comments received through key person interviews, surveys, Task Force discussions, and the first public meeting indicates there is a desire for safer and more inviting facilities for all users. The following paragraphs describe data collection efforts, analysis, and recommendations for Winston Avenue between Howard Litzler Drive and 39th Street.

Traffic Counts were conducted on the Winston Avenue corridor between June 29 and July 1, 2010 to gather information about traffic activity and capacity within the area. The intersections between Howard Litzler Drive and Ritte's Corner were shown to operate within their capacity constraints utilizing the current lane configuration and no significant congestion was observed. The current Winston Avenue configuration provides for vehicular mobility in the form of two travel lanes in each direction with a center turn lane (Figure 4.6.2 on page 67).

Capacity analysis was conducted for the three primary intersections at Howard Litzler Drive, 43rd Street, and 39th Street to evaluate the feasibility of a lane reduction along the length of this roadway. This analysis indicated Howard Litzler Drive was the primary constraint on the corridor as it experienced the highest volume of traffic within the corridor. Furthermore the intersection with Howard Litzler Drive is anticipated to operate at approximately 78



Figure 4.6.1: Winston Avenue in Latonia

percent of its capacity if Winston Avenue were to be reduced to a 3-lane section. This analysis provides a reserve capacity of 22 percent which would provide some room to accommodate additional growth and seasonal variations in traffic.

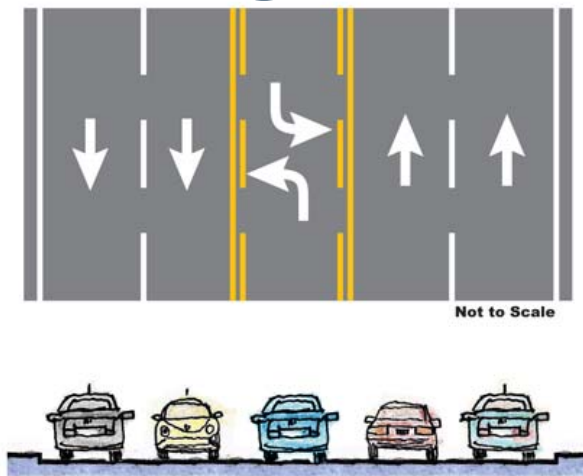
A review of historical growth rates on Winston Avenue was also conducted throughout the analysis phase of the plan. This review indicated that Winston Avenue volumes were relatively consistent throughout the 1990s remaining between 13,400 and 13,900 vehicles per day. During the late 2000s a significant increase in traffic to 18,000 vehicles per day was observed; however, this volume has remained consistent over the last four years.

Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

This plan recommends that a road diet on Winston Avenue be achieved in the early phases of implementation. A road diet entails reconfiguration of travel lanes and other vehicular roadway elements to allow for amenities like bike lanes, non-traversable medians, on-street parking, landscaping, and walkways. Typically the number of lanes and/or the widths of lanes are reduced. These reconfigurations result in additional space for other forms of mobility, a reduction in traffic speed, and provide an overall increase in safety for all users of the roadway. Another benefit of a road diet is the promotion

Existing Configuration



Potential Configuration

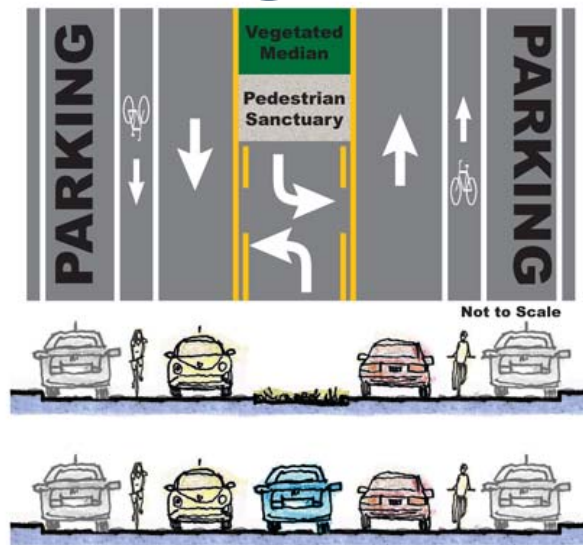


Figure 4.6.2: Winston Avenue Road Diet

of better land use organization due to the ability of the newly scaled pathway to provide more pedestrian centered development. Road diets also have the potential to reduce induced traffic demand, promote greater driving attentiveness, and promote cycling activity and safety via the addition of bicycle lanes. Providing dedicated left turn lanes at intersections can improve vehicular safety and can enable a more efficient usage of the roadway. National research has suggested that crash rates may be reduced by 20 to 50 percent with the conversion to a three-lane cross-section as displayed in Figure 4.6.2 above. These benefits would coincide with and compliment recommendations made previously for the creation of a destination. Those recommendations can be found in section 4.8 Latonia Plaza Redevelopment. Even with a reduced number of travel lanes some reserve capacity would remain in the corridor to serve minor fluctuations in traffic.

While the intersections would operate within capacity, some minor increase in delay and reduction in travel speeds over the existing conditions would be expected to occur. The

Task Force was made aware of these potential issues throughout the course of their monthly meetings. The group decided that some delay would be acceptable and would likely help to create the sense of a “destination” with the Latonia Plaza redevelopment detailed in Section 4.8.

It should be noted that TANK routes 9 and 25 could impact smooth operations of a three-lane roadway section, as stopped buses would block advancing traffic. Bus pull-outs would be an ideal element of the redeveloped roadway configuration to address this issue. However, the presence of bus pull-outs have the potential to create further operational problems for the transit buses, increasing delays for both motorists and busses. Ideas such as rerouting transit operations into the redevelopment area should also be considered by the strategic action committee.

As part of the effort to determine what could happen on Winston Avenue, the City developed more detailed simulation models for the corridor to fully evaluate traffic operations. The existing

condition and proposed configuration with the road diet were both modeled using current traffic volumes so that an accurate comparison could be made. Despite the overall delay increasing throughout the corridor, City staff believes the road diet could work if some other minor traffic improvements such as signal timing or installing/ extending turn lanes were made. Implementing the road diet would increase pedestrian safety by minimizing the number of lanes they would need to cross. Before the implementation of the road diet, future traffic projections would need to be modeled to see if a reconfigured roadway could handle the additional demand.

The Task Force recognizes a coordinated effort of the strategic action committee, the City, and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will be necessary to realize this recommendation. It is also acknowledged that some increase in delays and reduced travel speeds are acceptable as potential benefits like increased mobility for other users and creating a destination in Latonia outweigh the potential negative impacts.

4.6.2 Wayfinding

Wayfinding refers to a coordinated collection of signage that assists travelers in locating and navigating to amenities and attractions within an area. Often, wayfinding efforts begin on the periphery of an area via gateway identifiers and help direct patrons through the necessary paths to key community destinations. A large number of vehicles travel in the vicinity of Latonia everyday along routes such as I-275 and Madison Pike. Many of these passersby may not even know they are near Latonia. A wayfinding system would both assist in directing people to local attractions within the area as well as help

promote amenities within the neighborhood that might otherwise go unrecognized.

Short Term 0-5 Years

Interstate Signs - Listing Latonia’s attractions and appropriate businesses on information signs (Figure 4.6.3) along I-275 is one of the first items that can improve wayfinding and serve as advertisement for Latonia and its amenities. Average daily vehicular traffic counts (Table 4.6.1) indicate periphery locations outside the neighborhood experience several thousand vehicles travel nearby on a daily bases. While some of these vehicles undoubtedly enter Latonia, a significant number likely do not. Interstate amenity signs indicate to drivers on



Figure 4.6.3: Interstate Wayfinding Signs

I-275 that Latonia has a variety of businesses and attractions they may want to utilize. The strategic action committee should work with local businesses and amenities within Latonia to better promote the area through interstate signage.

City-wide Wayfinding - The Latonia strategic action committee should work with the City of Covington to develop a city-wide wayfinding system. This system could consist of a standardized set of signs directing people to and from attractions throughout the Latonia area. Ideally, this system would distinguish Latonia from the rest of Covington and aid in giving the

Table 4.6.1: Average Daily Vehicular Traffic Near Latonia

Count Location	Year of Record	Traffic Volume
I-275 East of Taylor Mill Road	2008	102,748
I-275 Between Madison Pike & Taylor Mill Road	2008	107,042
Taylor Mill Road north of I-275	2008	23,617
Madison Pike at Kyle’s Lane	2007	21,580
Madison Pike north of James Avenue	2007	18,509



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Figure 4.6.4: Example of City-wide Wayfinding Signs

neighborhood its own identity. The system could include large gateway monuments, banners, and directional signs, along with directions for how to leave the area after a visitor has completed their trip. This sign system not only assists visitors in finding and returning from attractions but promotes and advertises the community itself and, if well design, can help beautify the community with identifiable signage. An example of a city-wide wayfinding system utilized by the City of Decatur, Alabama can be found in Figure 4.6.4.

City Partnerships - Latonia should work towards a partnership with its neighboring cities, Fort Wright and Taylor Mill, to locate signs for Latonia attractions in strategic locations such as Taylor Mill Road and Madison Pike within those cities. Latonia would, in turn, need to provide reciprocity to these cities, likely in the form of signs promoting their unique activities. Signage for amenities in one city should not compete with a similar amenity located outside

its borders. Ideally neighboring cities will be seeking a different tenant type than Latonia, and the cities should look to work together in seeking complementary businesses along their borders.

Gateways - Construction of prominent gateway features at the entrances of Latonia could be another element in the wayfinding system, which could provide better definition of the Latonia neighborhood and its boundaries. Proposed gateways include adding features within the vicinity of 1) Winston Avenue and Howard Litzler Drive, 2) Decoursey and 47th Street, 3) James Avenue/East 30th Street and the railroad underpass, 4) Madison Pike as it enters the residential area shortly south of the KY 17 and KY 16 split, and 5) Madison Pike at Latonia Avenue (Map 4.6.1). Prominent signs welcoming people to Latonia should be surrounded where possible with pleasant landscaping.



Map 4.6.1: Potential Gateway Locations

Implementation of a wayfinding system will best be achieved on a City-wide basis. The strategic action committee should discuss its wayfinding needs with the City of Covington and work towards potentially becoming a pilot neighborhood for a larger Covington system.

4.6.3 Parking Findings

Several parking issues were identified through the course of this study. The most frequently identified was the lack of parking availability for residents and businesses within the Ritte’s Corner area. Available parking is utilized for a variety of reasons including residential, employee, consumer, and school related parking activities. Currently time restricted parking is available at Ritte’s Corner allowing a maximum of two hours parking, thus helping to increase turnover and access to businesses. The time

restricted parking creates a difficult situation for area residents who may not have access to off-street parking.

Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

Off-Street Parking - The issuance of residential parking permits may be a practical approach to ensuring that area residents are provided adequate parking capacity. Shared use parking at local churches, schools and businesses could provide another means to offer additional parking and meet long term daily demands. These options should be investigated in more detail with the strategic action committee during the implementation phase of the study. Construction of a parking structure located within the Latonia Plaza redevelopment area or Ritte’s Corner might provide part of the solution to Latonia’s parking needs. Construction of

such a structure would likely require public/private partnership funding to be fully realized within the study's planning horizon.

On-Street Parking - In addition to parking availability, safety issues have been identified as a consequence of designated parking spaces blocking available sight distance at stop controlled intersections. This study recommends an area-wide parking restriction within 25 feet of any intersection. This restriction would help to increase available sight distance and safety at intersections throughout the study area. The City should also consider increasing this 25 foot distance on major collector arterial streets, or areas with documented safety problems. One location identified during the study to be considered for greater restrictions is East 40th Street and Decoursey Avenue. This area is impacted by traffic from the Twin Oaks Golf & Plantation Club and Rosedale Manor, which draws significant traffic to the area.

4.6.4 Freight Findings

As identified in the Existing Conditions Report, freight traffic from the Mobil Terminal north of the study area and Lally Pipe and Tube, on Locust Pike in Taylor Mill, regularly travel through Latonia on to access I-275. Currently, all freight traffic is routed through the five leg intersection at Ritte's Corner. Heavy truck traffic moving through this intersection from Winston Avenue to the south on Decoursey Avenue must negotiate a sharp right turn of approximately 45 degrees. As a result, trucks frequently over track onto the adjacent sidewalk and evidence of contact with existing utility poles have been identified (Figure 4.6.5). This over tracking creates maintenance issues with sidewalks and utility poles and poses a serious hazard to pedestrians as well.

These turn movements also require large trucks to travel slowly, which often results in intermittent periods of delay at and around this



Figure 4.6.5: Utility Damage in Ritte's Corner

intersection. In order to avoid this maneuver, some northbound trucks have been observed to turn right onto Southern Avenue, rather than using Decoursey Avenue. This route creates additional problems in the area such as semi trucks operating in areas not intended or constructed for such heavy usage. The residential areas on Southern Avenue and within the vicinity of Holy Cross School are generally the most affected by this alternate route.

Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

This study recommends improving the intersection at Ritte's Corner to allow for smoother freight operations. Improvements to the intersection should include minor changes at the southeast corner of Winston Avenue and Decoursey Pike, including the relocation of the utility pole on the corner which has been hit by turning trucks (Figure 4.6.5). Redesign of the corner may also be warranted, however, any redesign of the pedestrian area must not negatively impact the Korean War Memorial Park. Changes to the intersection may provide an easier turning path for truck traffic, relieving some of the associated congestion.

Long Term 12-20+ Years

Longer term improvements to east-west mobility south of the study area could also reduce the amount of freight traffic traveling through Ritte's Corner. Improvements to KY 177 such as a connection Wilder or access to I-275 could alleviate some of Latonia's transportation issues. However, these improvements would need to be part of solutions to transportation issues that extend beyond the scope of this study because they lie outside the study area and time constraints. While this study recognizes a need for these improvements, it also acknowledges that adequate resources are not likely to be secured within this planning period.

4.6.5 Transit Findings

The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) currently operates three routes (numbers 7, 9, and 25) along Winston Avenue and through the Latonia area into Northern Covington. Latonia is well served by transit options and no additional routes are recommended at this time. Future study may be required if increases in demand warrant new transit options.

Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

Improvements to transit assets within the study area could increase the number of people accessing the Latonia area. In order to achieve higher ridership two improvements have been identified. The first is to construct a bus shelter at Ritte's Corner to help riders identify Ritte's Corner as a prime destination within the heart of Latonia as well as to provide an identifiable safe haven for riders waiting for a bus. Secondly, a Park-and-Ride location is proposed within the Latonia Centre commercial area of Winston Avenue to serve commuting traffic into and out of downtown Covington. This facility could have the impact of bringing people to shop and eat who normally would not enter the area.

4.6.6 Church Street

Ongoing

The Existing Conditions Report revealed a potential safety hazards concerning student pedestrians in the vicinity of the Holy Cross School. The school operates in structures on the east and west side of Church Street and students frequently cross the street when changing between their classes. The Task Force discussed the issue and worked with staff to identify a wide range of potential solutions. Some suggestions include:

- Traffic calming measures to improved pedestrian safety such as reduced pavement widths and a raised crosswalk at primary crossing locations.
- Temporary closures of Church Street dependent upon the time of day. This would likely be accomplished most effectively through the use of removable barriers/bollards to provide the ability for a single street to serve both peak period pedestrian activities and peak period vehicular demands.
- Permanently closing Church Street between Southern Avenue and 36th Street, in front of Holy Cross High School.

Any combination of these recommendations as well as other alternatives could serve to increase pedestrian/student crossing safety and to work toward providing a more contiguous campus. This study is not able to address this issue in further detail due to the need for a detailed analysis of Church Street.

This study recommends a more thorough analysis of potential alternatives and impacts of changes to Church Street. This analysis should include discussions with and input from pertinent stakeholders and residents in the area. Completion of such an analysis should

be conducted before a final decision regarding improvements to Church Street is made. Issues pertaining to the closure of Church Street need to be fully evaluated before moving forward with any recommendations as numerous issues are prevalent regarding safety on the street and mobility within the neighborhood. Several issues have been identified that should be addressed prior to the selection of any alternative. These include:

- The impact of street closures on emergency services, including potential increases in response time to areas of city.
- The impact of closure on residential travel patterns, including existing volume of traffic on the roadway and evaluation of travel time and distance adjustment likely to be required of those who frequent the area.
- Bike and pedestrian access for area residences through Church Street.
- Available alternative routes to residents and emergency services in the event of closure.

4.6.7 Miscellaneous Mobility Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

The following miscellaneous transportation issues have also been identified through the course of the study. These recommendations should be implemented as soon as time and funding permits.

- Install a stop sign to control the westbound movement at East 40th Street and Huntington Avenue and create an all-way stop control for this intersection. This area was identified in the Existing Conditions Report as a problem intersection by TANK bus drivers due to restricted visibility and poses a general driving hazard for motorists. The movement at this intersection is currently uncontrolled and sight distances are significantly restricted

by the grade of the approach and a retaining wall. This causes safety concerns for those traveling through the intersection, particularly from northbound Huntington Avenue. Discussion with the Task Force indicates that significant revision to the existing street network and/or at-grade rail crossing location is undesirable. However, a need was identified to upgrade the existing at-grade crossings throughout the study area and provide a more fluid crossing point. This recommendation includes the need for reevaluation of approach grades at some of the intersections within the study area.

- Currently Winchester Street provides access between East 33rd Street and James Avenue (Figure 4.6.6 below). This street is intended as a one-way egress emergency route for the neighborhood immediately south of the Marathon Depot. Winchester Street is intended to be utilized when a stopped or slow moving train blocks the at-grade crossing at East 33rd Street. However, the one-lane roadway is often used by residents to provide two-way access across the railroad tracks regardless of whether or not



Figure 4.6.6: Winchester Street

- trains are present. It is recommended that Winchester Street be widened and brought up to all appropriate roadway standards, providing a minimum of 14 foot pavement width, to allow for two vehicles to pass each other. Providing full access to this roadway will provide greater connectivity and create a safer roadway for residents south of the depot.
- Increasing opportunities for bicyclists within the neighborhood is another recommendation of this study that seeks to enhance the study's goal of increasing mobility for all users. Using bicycles for transportation has been found to promote healthier lifestyles, reduce CO2 emissions into the atmosphere, and helps to reduce delay associated with vehicular congestion. It is recommended that routes identified on the Recommended Bike Routes (Map 4.6.2 on page 74) be identified with "Share the Road" signage within the study area (Figure 4.6.7).



Figure 4.6.7: Share The Road Signage

- Several comments were received throughout the planning process indicating the Rogers Street and Madison Avenue intersection is in need of modification. This study recommends removing 25 feet of on-street parking within the vicinity of the intersection. This will serve as a primary means of improving sight distances and increasing safety. If conditions do not improve in the intersection after implementing parking restrictions further detailed study may be warranted in the future.

Mid Term

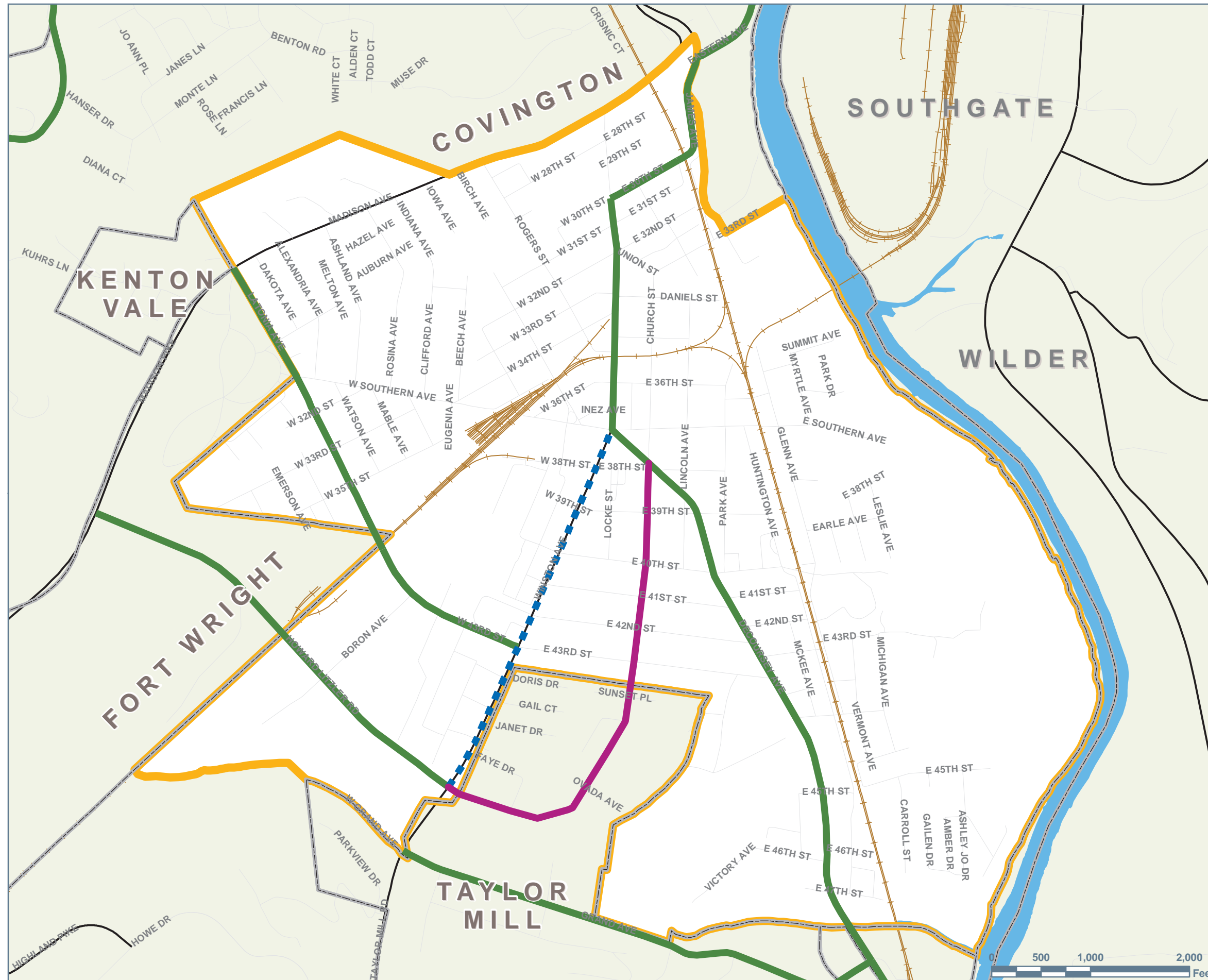
5-12 Years

As identified previously, adequate parking availability is a critical issue that needs to be addressed to satisfy existing demand as well as to accommodate future business and residential growth. To meet these needs, two improvements are recommended to increase the amount of parking and the utilization of those areas.









To achieve this purpose, it is recommended that additional parking lots be constructed in residential areas where vacant land or condemned properties exist. These areas should be identified by the strategic action committee as part of the housing plan addressed in section 4.2 The Market – Housing, Commercial, and Industrial. Creation of these lots during the implementation phase should be pursued by the City and other local community groups. The minimum size anticipated to be necessary to provide parking is 5,000 square feet. In many cases this will likely involve combining two or more properties. Parking lots located within residential neighborhood provide an opportunity to utilize green infrastructure techniques discussed in section 4.4 Green Infrastructure, such as the use of pervious pavement and landscaped areas which are designed to filter water from paved areas. The strategic action committee should work with SD1 to determine the most appropriate and effective best management practices for each specific parcel.

Additionally, the feasibility of a local transit or trolley service should be explored with TANK to connect the activity centers found at Ritte's Corner, Holy Cross School, and elsewhere. These locations are equipped with available surface parking lots along the Winston Avenue Corridor. Examples of successful local trolley service can be found in Frankfort and Lexington, Kentucky. By increasing the existing parking infrastructure and providing the needed connections between available parking areas and activity centers, the future development and vitality of the study area can be achieved.

Map 4.6.2 Recommended Bike Routes



Legend

-  OKI Recommended Routes
-  Kenton County Primary Route
-  Potential Bike Lanes
-  City boundary
-  Study Area
-  Railroad
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways



Source: LINK GIS Date: October, 2010

