

MLK, Jr. Boulevard and Montgomery Street Corridor

Urban Redevelopment Plan

*Prepared by: Savannah Development and Renewal Authority in conjunction with the City of Savannah
Bureau of Public Development and the Metropolitan Planning Commission
10/12/2002*

Adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, December 12, 2002

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents the culmination of a 16-month community planning effort initiated by the City of Savannah's Department of Neighborhood Planning and Community Development to craft a redevelopment plan and to establish an urban redevelopment area for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (MLK) and Montgomery Street Corridor, south of Gwinnett Street. The Savannah Development and Renewal Authority (SDRA) assumed the lead role in the planning effort at the direction of the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah in October 1999. This report documents existing conditions and recommends strategies that can be pursued to aid in revitalization by establishing a short- and long-term program to promote and develop the study area in accordance with the community's vision and expectations.

Located at the western gateway to Savannah's historic downtown area, the study area includes portions of eight neighborhoods encompassing MLK and Montgomery Street from Gwinnett Street to the north to 52nd Street to the south (Map 1-A).

One of Savannah's and the region's most significant assets, MLK and Montgomery Street have been important arteries of industry and trade for Savannah and the southeast since the Colonial days; the center of commerce to the African-American community during segregation; and, a thriving business and residential community of individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures from the 1920s until its decline in the 1970s.

In the 1960s and 1970s, inappropriate development and demolition along MLK and Montgomery Street affected such notable landmarks as the Union Train Station and the Railroad Roundhouse Complex. The Union Train Station, which housed the north-south rail passenger transfer station, was demolished to make way for the construction of the I-16 flyover ramp. Today, the Corridor north of Gwinnett Street is experiencing a revival with recent hotel development and planned public infrastructure and parking improvements. This recent development has spurred reaction from the community to ensure creation of a broader vision and plan for the future.

The proposed *Urban Redevelopment Plan (Plan)* was developed with extensive input from property owners, residents, and business owners along the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor, as well as from interested citizens. Social concerns and community visions were assessed through a series of community forums, charettes, public meetings, and work sessions through processes known as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and "visioning." Survey data was collected with the assistance of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and Savannah State University (SSU). The end result of the process was the creation of redevelopment strategies as a part of the proposed plan addressing land-use and zoning, economic and business development, urban design, public relations, public safety and housing issues.

The Phase II Advisory Committee, guided by the staff of the SDRA, the City of Savannah Department of Planning and Community Development and the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), has played a major role in providing leadership and guidance throughout the planning process.

It is anticipated that private development, assisted with public efforts, will redevelop and restore lost vitality to the study area. The *Urban Redevelopment Plan* has been prepared to assist with revitalization efforts by ensuring the community that redevelopment will take place within an established set of planning objectives in accordance with urban design standards and zoning regulations.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Between 1995 and October 1999, the City of Savannah, MPC and SDRA coordinated several planning processes to determine redevelopment strategies for MLK and Montgomery Street north of Gwinnett Street. These efforts paved the way for the redevelopment effort south of Gwinnett Street.

- *December 1995:* The City of Savannah approved the re-zoning plan prepared by MPC with assistance from their MLK/Montgomery Advisory Committee and LDR International;
- *December 1995:* MPC completed an Existing Conditions survey and report;
- *April 1997:* SDRA commissioned LDR International to identify and prepare physical development scenarios and strategies, along with management and marketing strategies to encourage new private investment;
- *December 1997:* The City of Savannah adopted the Cuyler-Brownsville Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan. As a strategy to encourage redevelopment of the Cuyler-Brownsville neighborhood, the plan called for SDRA to extend the scope of the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor revitalization planning south of Gwinnett Street to Victory Drive creating Phase II of the redevelopment planning effort;
- *September 1999:* The City of Savannah's Department of Neighborhood Planning and Community Development formally initiated the planning process for Phase II, Gwinnett to Victory Drive along the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor. The effort was launched with the formation of the Phase II Advisory Committee to guide the preparation of an Urban Redevelopment Plan and the designation of the Corridor, south of Gwinnett Street, as an Urban Redevelopment Area;
- *October 1999:* The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah approved SDRA's revitalization and streetscape plan for the MLK and Montgomery Corridor north of Gwinnett Street to River Street (Phase I). At this time, Council extended the boundaries of the revitalization area to include south of Gwinnett Street to 52nd Street along the Corridor formalizing the Phase II effort.

In October 1999, SDRA and the City embarked on the planning process for Phase II while simultaneously moving forward with implementation of Phase I of the effort. Phase I implementation included updating the existing conditions data from River Street to Gwinnett Street, moving forward with the design development and engineering phase of streetscape improvements from River Street to 52nd Street, and developing a façade improvement loan program for business and property owners located on MLK from River Street to Anderson Street.

Over the next 16 months the Phase II Advisory Committee grew to include 163 business and property owners, community residents and interested citizens. Subcommittees were formed to address issues and opportunities in the areas of business and property development, urban design, public relations, land-use and zoning, housing, and public safety.

To further the subcommittee efforts and to verify the eligibility of the study area for designation as an Urban Redevelopment Area in accordance with state Urban Redevelopment Law, partnerships were formed with SCAD and SSU to assist with data collection and analysis. Three comprehensive surveys were conducted south of Gwinnett Street to assess residential and business conditions and needs, and to assess physical conditions of private property and public infrastructure in the planning area. SCAD, SSU and the City of Savannah's Department of Planning and Community Development conducted analysis of the data.

To guide the redevelopment planning efforts it was important for the community to join together in creating a vision of the Corridor's future. Formation of this vision is discussed in Chapter 3.0.

3.0 VISIONING PROCESS

The word “vision” is defined as a mental image or picture produced by the imagination. To provide guidance and direction to the redevelopment planning efforts the community joined together in creating an image of the Corridor’s future—a vision.

To guide the creation of this vision, SDRA coordinated with MPC’s comprehensive planning division to host a series of work sessions with Phase II Advisory Committee members, citizens and community leaders during the redevelopment planning process. Over a three-month period, a series of goals were developed along with a vision for Phase II and a combined vision for Phase I and Phase II of the Corridor:

Vision for Phase II of the Corridor:

The vision for Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Montgomery Street Corridor from south of Gwinnett Street to 52nd Street is that of a historic and diverse community of neighborhoods that welcomes people of all age, ethnic, and income groups who are attracted to the area for its architectural and cultural heritage, boulevard appearance and vibrant urban experience.

Goals for Phase II of the Corridor:

- *To provide a safe, clean and attractive area where businesses are welcome and residents feel at home;*
- *To preserve and enhance educational, cultural and religious institutions as part of a vibrant mix of uses resulting in a re-emergence of the Corridor(s) as a center of entertainment, retail, and cultural activity for both residents and visitors;*
- *To promote opportunities for new residents while preserving and enhancing life for existing residents and ensuring that all residents will have access to affordable housing, commercial opportunities and entertainment options for everyone;*
- *To preserve and expand economic opportunities for existing minority and small businesses while attracting new investment;*
- *To create a multi-modal Corridor that is more accessible and pedestrian friendly and that also complements diverse retail establishments;*
- *To serve as a showcase of restored historic buildings and new development compatible with the character of the area.*

While individual goals and methods of addressing issues may vary, it was determined that a comprehensive, unified vision that included the area north of Gwinnett Street should be developed to unite revitalization efforts along the Corridor and build on the successes of Phase I. A joint work session was held with business, property owners and community representatives of both Phase I and Phase II segments of the Corridor in August 2000 to develop a combined vision for MLK and Montgomery Street from River Street to 52nd Street.



Corridor Vision, Phase I and Phase II:

The vision for Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Montgomery Street from River Street to 52nd Street is that of a historic and diverse community which welcomes all people to the area for its commercial activity, architectural and cultural heritage and boulevard appearance in a vibrant urban setting.

This blending of ideas and core values was used to guide the redevelopment and revitalization strategies proposed in this document.

4.0 CURRENT REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

In 2000, a number of private and public ventures were initiated along or adjacent to the Corridor both north and south of Gwinnett Street. This section is intended to record and examine the private and public initiatives that impact the redevelopment strategies proposed in this document.

While giving a renewed vitality and strength to the Corridor, some of the current and planned private and public developments have given urgency to the effort to establish a vision and plan for future development. The demolition of the Star Theatre and the Dearing Chevrolet Building on MLK, between December 1999 and March 2000, sparked an outcry from the community to halt senseless demolition and to enact mechanisms to protect the fragile Corridor from further loss of historic fabric. As of the writing of this report, the City Preservation Officer has inventoried buildings along MLK and Montgomery Street from River Street to Victory Drive, and City Council has added 44 of those structures to the Historic Buildings Map. An inventory of buildings south of Victory Drive to 52nd Street is underway. This designation offers the protection of a 12-month stay on demolition permit requests in the hopes that buildings will be saved from destruction. Currently, no design guidelines or review process exists south of Anderson Street along the Corridor to guide future new construction or renovation of existing structures.

4.1 PRIVATE INITIATIVES

Private investment in property rehabilitation and development along the Corridor totaled more than \$35 million between January 2000 and July 2001, while more than 50 new businesses opened their doors. The majority of this growth was experienced north of Gwinnett Street.



Development efforts initiated by SCAD have brought hundreds more students to MLK with the opening of new dormitory space behind the Visitor's Center, and a performing arts center at 217 MLK. The renovation of the Neal Blun property at MLK and Exchange Street to house the school's computer and video arts programs proposes to bring 1,500 more students to the Corridor. The opening of the Courtyard by Marriott at the corner of MLK and Liberty Street and the development of the Radisson Hotel at Bay

Street and MLK will bring more visitors and more tourist opportunities, as will the planned development of the Battlefield Park Heritage Center at MLK and Harris Streets.

Montgomery Street experienced a residential renaissance in 2000 with the completion of upscale condominiums north of Gwinnett Street. And, several multi-use residential, commercial and office developments are planned south of the I-16 flyover on MLK between Alice and Huntingdon Streets, while several rehabilitation projects are in motion for the Corridor north of Gwinnett Street.

4.2 PUBLIC INITIATIVES

4.2.1 Five-Year Parking Plan

In 1999, the City of Savannah completed a study of existing parking conditions in downtown Savannah, north of Gaston Street. The study noted that a deficit of 1,500 parking spaces currently existed north of Gaston Street between MLK and East Broad Street. The study predicted that this deficit would increase by 2005 to 2,500 spaces. To address this growing concern, the City adopted a five-year parking plan in June 2000. The plan includes construction of two new parking facilities at the perimeter of downtown to supplement existing core parking; the restoration of Ellis, Orleans, Elbert and Liberty Squares; the

creation of a working downtown transportation system; the protection of neighborhood integrity; and adjustment of parking rates to reflect market-based pricing.

Building on this plan the City of Savannah tasked SDRA in February 2000 with assisting City staff with identifying concerns and crafting recommendations to improve downtown parking. SDRA's Parking and Transportation committee, a 21-member committee comprised of downtown business and property owners, citizens who are primary users of downtown parking, and representatives of the City's Parking Services Department, spearheaded the effort.

As a part of the process, the committee evaluated the success of SDRA's *1994 Parking Improvement Recommendations for Downtown Savannah* and developed recommendations for further improvement. The updated strategies, *2001 Parking Improvement Recommendations for Downtown Savannah*, provide a comprehensive approach to addressing parking and transportation needs jointly.

The City's five year parking plan does not specifically address parking needs south of the I-16 Flyover. To adequately address projected growth in the study area, the *2001 Parking Improvement Recommendations for Downtown Savannah*, request that the City actively consider alternatives to parking decks south of Gwinnett Street to service the projected growth and the inevitable over-flow of on-street parkers into peripheral residential neighborhoods.

4.2.2 Cuyler-Brownsville Redevelopment Plan

In November 1999, the City of Savannah adopted a master plan for phase 1 of the Cuyler-Brownsville revitalization effort. The master plan includes the addition of parks, streets, lanes, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees and refurbished sidewalks. The City is currently partnering with the Neighborhood Improvement Association in the development of six infill units representing a public-private investment of \$568,000. This first building phase, along with future units, is being marketed to potential homeowners. Additional residential development is occurring with Mercy Housing and North South.

4.2.3 Streetscape Improvements, Phase 1 & 2

The SDRA in conjunction with the City of Savannah's Bureau of Facilities Maintenance launched two streetscape improvement efforts for MLK. Phase 1 includes two projects, the refurbishment of the existing medians south of Gwinnett Street between Gwinnett and Exchange Streets; and the installation of a new median between Oglethorpe Avenue and Liberty Street and the development of a "model block." Phase 2 includes comprehensive streetscape revitalization along MLK from River Street to 52nd Street.

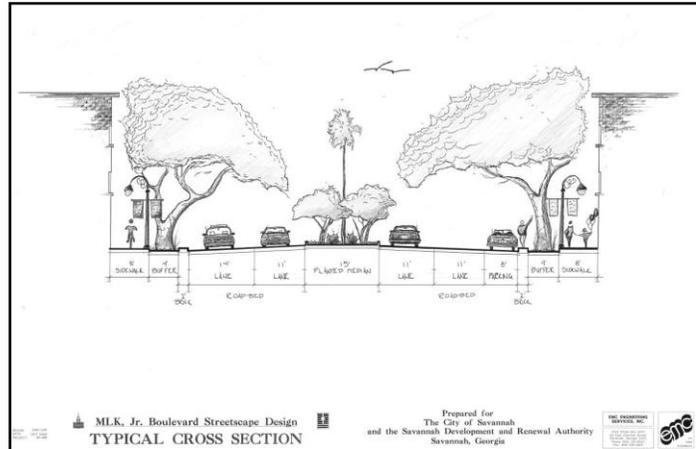
4.2.3.1 Phase 1

- *Median Refurbishment:* This project was coordinated by the Division of Park and Tree and included installation of an irrigation system from Gwinnett Street to Exchange Street and the planting of 165 crepe myrtle trees, 25 Chinese Fringe trees, and 8 Quercus Virginiana trees, interspersed with Camellia, Lantana, yellow African Iris, and white African Iris. A border of Liriope was planted from 37th Street to 45th Street. This project was funded by \$370,000 of Capital Improvement Funds.
- *Median Installation:* This project was funded through proceeds from the sale of Liberty Lot 1, at the corner of MLK and Liberty Street, to the McKibbin Corporation for the development of a Courtyard by Marriott Hotel. A total of \$300,000 from the sale has been earmarked for development of a median and a "model streetscape block" from Liberty Street to Oglethorpe Avenue, along with a Transportation Enhancement grant of \$150,000. Construction is scheduled for completion by Spring 2002. The median was designed by EMC Engineering and is consistent with the comprehensive streetscape design for the Corridor.

4.2.3.2 Phase 2

- *Comprehensive Streetscape Project:* With the adoption of SDRA's Revitalization Plan in 1999 and the expansion of the boundaries to extend from River Street to 52nd Street along the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor, the Mayor and Aldermen set in motion the long-awaited streetscape improvement planning efforts.

In January 2000, the City's Bureau of Public Development established a Streetscape Team and named a project manager to carry out the design and engineering process for implementation of a streetscape plan. The team was tasked with developing a Request for Proposals (RFPs) and moving forward with selecting a design and engineering



team to conduct the design development and engineering phase of the streetscape project. The RFP was advertised in May of 2000 and proposals were received from four firms.

During this time, the Streetscape Team moved forward with the planning stages for Phase 1 of the streetscape improvements south of Gwinnett Street. Three public meetings were held to offer the public an opportunity to comment on the plantings to be used for refurbishment of the existing medians and the construction plans for the new median planned between Oglethorpe Avenue and Liberty Street.

In preparation for the comprehensive streetscape project, public input was also received at these meetings regarding preferences for streetscape elements such as sidewalk materials, lighting styles, waste receptacles, and plantings for the Phase 2 process. To aid in the design development process, SDRA coordinated the update of the existing conditions report developed by MPC in 1995. With the assistance of SCAD, MPC and City staff, the update, mapping and survey were completed in June 2000.

In August 2000, the Mayor and Aldermen of Savannah approved the Streetscape Team's recommendation of EMC Engineering Services, Inc. to conduct the design and engineering phase of the project at the cost of \$190,000. These funds were made available through state appropriation.

The comprehensive streetscape project (Phase 2) will include traffic calming measures in the form of medians, pedestrian crosswalks, sidewalks, curbing, ornamental lighting, waste receptacles, plantings, the removal or relocation of overhead wiring, and the designation of potential park and monument or statuary sites.

Seven public meetings were held to allow for input into the design and engineering phase of the streetscape project between August 2000 and May 2001. Final plans, construction documents, and a cost analysis are expected by Fall 2001. At that time, the plan will be presented to the Mayor and Aldermen for adoption and implementation. Various funding sources for the implementation of this comprehensive effort are included in the Financial Tools and Strategies Chapter, 12.0, of this report.

4.2.4 I-16 Flyover

The *Revitalization Plan* for the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor, adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen in October 1999, initiated SDRA's efforts to pursue a study to determine the feasibility of removing the Flyover. The Flyover has become a real and perceived social, physical, and economic barrier along the Corridor. The combined Corridor Vision developed over a three-month period in 2000, calls for a "*boulevard appearance in a vibrant urban setting.*" Participants in the visioning process determined that the Flyover physically separates the Corridor to the north and to the south. Additionally, recent sales of smaller lots south of the Flyover have been in the range of \$10 to \$12 a square foot, while land sales north of the Flyover have been in the \$25 to \$30 per square foot range. In November 2000, the SDRA Board of Directors and Historic Savannah Foundation adopted Resolutions supporting the removal of the I-16 Flyover and supporting the re-establishment of green-space and/or development opportunities in its place. The Resolutions suggested that a feasibility study be commissioned. The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Georgia chapter chose to address the possibility of future development at the site of the Flyover as their Conference Legacy Project for 2001.

4.2.5 Downtown Transfer Center

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) plans to construct a major transit center downtown. Various sites throughout downtown are currently under consideration, including several along MLK. This intermodal-transfer center is intended to be a multi-use facility, providing a center for bill payments, public parking, and CAT offices in addition to its public transportation function.

4.2.6 Battlefield Park Heritage Center

In the past 11 years, the City of Savannah and the Coastal Heritage Society have spent more than \$15 million to renovate the passenger station, train shed, and to restore the Railroad Repair Shops at the Railroad Roundhouse site. First envisioned in the 1960s as a community resource, current plans include development of an interpretive park, amphitheatre, and expanded visitors center.

4.2.7 Kayton-Frazier Homes

Managed by the Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS), Kayton-Frazier Homes is located along MLK on the western boundary of the study area. Together, Kayton and Frazier Homes consist of 400 public housing units.

Revitalization and renovation efforts began in 2000 with an investment of \$147,000 by HAS to install a brick and iron fence buffer along MLK. The 164 units comprising Kayton Homes are currently undergoing a \$6.5million renovation. Efforts were made in 2000 to include the youth of Kayton-Frazier in holiday decorating activities for the Corridor. The Kayton-Frazier "Mob Squad" participated in SDRA's Adopt a Block program and decorated the fence separating the housing from the Corridor with garland and bows for the holidays.

4.2.8 Streetcar Trolley

The City of Savannah and Coastal Heritage Society were awarded \$300,000 in 2000 for the restoration of historic streetcars and the development of a streetcar demonstration project. Three cars were acquired, one a Savannah original. The City is currently negotiating with Norfolk Southern Railroad to secure use of the River Street rail tracks to begin operation of a streetcar system in Savannah. CAT has commissioned a study to determine the type of trolley system and potential routes. Preliminary routes for the trolley include River Street, the Railroad Roundhouse site, and the Westside of MLK, north of Gwinnett Street.

4.2.9 Façade Improvement Program

Two low-interest loan programs are available to assist with façade improvement to properties along MLK. The first program was funded through Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) in 1995 and is available for properties along MLK between River Street and Gwinnett Streets. The second program was funded in January 2000 through the sale of the Liberty Lot to McKibbin Corporation and is available for properties along MLK between River Street and Anderson Street. Both programs offer loans at a fixed rate of 3.5%.

Development of design guidelines and a review process for the Corridor, south of Anderson Street is integral to the redevelopment efforts. Once established, the guidelines and review process will allow for extension of the façade loan programs south of Anderson Street.

4.2.10 CDBG Corridor and Neighborhood Revitalization

The City of Savannah's Economic Development Department is responsible for developing strategies to revitalize commercial corridors within the CDBG target areas. Along with this effort, they administer the Weed and Seed program to "weed" out crime and drugs, and "seed" neighborhoods with prevention, intervention and neighborhood revitalization activities. In collaboration with the SDRA, the City is currently embarking on a program to develop strategies to revitalize the commercial Corridors located within the Weed and Seed target area. The study area is included in that target area.

4.2.11 Greater Downtown Savannah Image Advertising Campaign

In October 2000, SDRA launched its first image development campaign for Greater Downtown Savannah. The campaign was designed to promote shopping, dining and touring within Greater Downtown Savannah, specifically SDRA's two focus areas—the Corridor and the Broughton Street Redevelopment Area. SDRA's Board of Directors committed \$12,000 towards the campaign. The campaign, which ran from October to December 2000, included three months of 60-second radio spots on *WSOK*, *LOVE 101*, *98.7 The River* and *Cat Country*. Print media advertising began in mid-October with co-op advertising opportunities in the *Savannah Morning News*, *Diversions*, the *Business Report and Coastal Family* and *Freedom's Journal*. The campaign has developed into an annual effort enlisting the support of the business sector in collectively promoting *Greater Downtown Savannah...the Spirit is Back!*

4.2.12 Adopt-a-Block, Adopt-a-Lot, Adopt-a-Storefront Promotion

As a part of SDRA's holiday decorating efforts for Greater Downtown Savannah, an annual Adopt-a-Block, Adopt-a-Lot and Adopt-a-Storefront program was created to involve all segments of the community along the Corridor. Twelve businesses and community organizations participated in the effort by decorating electric poles, medians, parks, vacant structures, lots, and fencing along MLK with volunteers from the SDRA, SCAD, Windsor Forest High School, and the Downtown Business Association. Participants included Connor's Temple Baptist Church, Thankful Baptist Church, First African Baptist Church, Yamacraw Village Youth Group, Kayton-Frazier "Mob" Squad, Courtyard by Marriott, Popeye's Famous Fried Chicken, the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, Burger King, Cann Park Neighborhood Association, Cuyler-Brownsville Neighborhood Association, and St. Philip's AME Church. This program continues in 2001.

4.2.13 Graffiti Abatement Efforts

Between July 2000 and January 2001, with funding from the City of Savannah and donations from Corridor businesses, B&B Paints and Thrifty Supply Company, SDRA coordinated a community volunteer graffiti abatement program in conjunction with the Savannah Police Department. The volunteer effort removed or masked graffiti from 47 sites in Greater Downtown Savannah. Five of those locations were within or adjacent to the study area.

As result of the success of the volunteer effort, the City of Savannah assigned graffiti removal and abatement activities to the Property Maintenance Department in August 2001. To assist with this effort the Department has contracted out for graffiti removal services.

To continue efforts in assisting property and business owners with graffiti removal, SDRA, in July 2000, implemented a program with funds from the City of Savannah to reimburse business and property owners within Greater Downtown Savannah, north of Gaston Street, for the purchase of removal and abatement materials or products. This program encourages property and business owners to take ownership of the problem and remove graffiti from their own properties.



5.0 HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW

In 2000, the City's Preservation Officer documented contributing properties south of Gwinnett Street to Victory Drive for inclusion in the City's Historic Buildings Map. This information is the basis for the architectural overview section of this document. A comprehensive list of contributing structures is located in Appendix F of this report. Further research is recommended as a part of the redevelopment strategy to document the rich and diverse architectural history of the Corridor from Victory Drive to 52nd Street.

This Chapter documents the development of the study area through its history and its architecture.

5.1 HISTORIC OVERVIEW-GWINNETT STREET TO 52ND STREET

West Broad Street, as MLK was originally known, was named in 1791. It separated the outer region of the West Common from the neighborhoods of Yamacraw, St. Gall's and Ewensburg; these outlying suburbs were incorporated into the Ward system and called Oglethorpe Ward in 1787.

By 1799, the street extended from the Savannah River to South Broad Street (Oglethorpe Avenue) and by 1801 it extended to Liberty Street. Prior to 1870, Gwinnett Street formed the southern city limits and the boundary between the five-acre garden lots and the larger farm lots. West Broad Street was located on top of the western edge of the bluff on which Savannah was founded. The land significantly sloped away from West Broad Street to the west. In the 19th century, much of the sloping land was filled to the level of the street. West Broad Street was one of the first paved in the city due to its significance as a transportation corridor between the Central of Georgia Railroad and the River. It has been paved at various times in wood plank and brick. The brick was removed in 1922.



Pursuant to the U.S. Public Housing Act of 1937, the State of Georgia enacted a state Housing Act. The Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) was organized in early 1938. Along the western side of MLK, Kayton Homes was constructed in 1962 and has 164 housing units and Frazier Homes in 1968 with 236 units.

The Street began as a residential street in the 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1883, the City of Savannah extended its limits south to Victory Drive. In 1901, the corporate limits of the City of Savannah were extended south to 52nd Street and west to Hopkins Street—what today is known as Cann Park neighborhood. Sanborn maps dated 1909 through 1913 show West Broad Street ending at 42nd Street and Montgomery Street ending at King Street. Beyond these dead-ends was the Seaboard Railroad complex which included a locomotive house, a machine shop, a forge shop and the Seaboard planing mill.



According to the Savannah City Directory, 11 businesses existed on MLK, between Gwinnett Street and Waldburg Street; and two businesses existed on Montgomery Street, between 31st street and 42nd Street, in 1910. Of the 11 businesses on MLK, five were owned and operated by African-Americans—including two pharmacies, a school and an insurance company. Of the two businesses on Montgomery Street, Julian McCord, an

African-American, owned the Home and Nursery. By 1930 the number of African-American owned businesses along MLK had grown to 13, along with two churches and one school.

According to local accounts, West Broad and Montgomery Streets were extended through the former Seaboard Railroad complex and the Cleary Farm to Orchard and 48th Streets by the mid to late 1930s. Cann Park sat between 45th and 46th Streets, at Bulloch and Stevens Streets as it does today. Savannah's African-American rising middle class—educators, doctors, ministers, dentists and those in public and governmental service—resided in the neighborhood. The park became the site of baseball, football, and basketball practices and games held by Georgia Technical College, now SSU, and community teams.

By 1950, the number of African-American owned businesses along MLK, south of Gwinnett Street had grown to 54; while seven African-American owned businesses existed along Montgomery Street. Names still recognizable today, began to appear in city directories of the period—Carver Savannah Bank, Savannah Tribune, Kozy Korner, Critz Buick Company, Savannah Pharmacy, Beaver's Barber Shop, St. Matthews Episcopal Church, and Tremont Temple Baptist Church. The Sears and Roebuck Company built its warehouse on the east side of Montgomery Street between Jasper and 48th Streets and the Neal Blun Lumber Company was established at the southern terminus of both streets, diverting traffic west onto Acacia, Amarantha and Whatley Avenues. It was also during this period following the Second World War that Montgomery Street began to resemble the stretch of auto-oriented businesses present today. By 1950, 11 auto-oriented businesses were present along Montgomery Street. By 1970, that number had grown to 31.

By 1970, the City Directory had ceased to distinguish ownership by race, but many more recognizable names appeared including Bolton Street Baptist Church, Thankful Baptist Church, Savannah Branch of the NAACP, The Herald, Toomer Realty Company, Porzio's Restaurant and Adler's Liquor Store.

Today, MLK and Montgomery Street pass through three separate Historic Districts between Gwinnett Street and Victory Drive—Victorian Historic District, Cuyler-Brownsville Historic District, and Thomas Square/Streetcar Historic District

5.2 ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW—GWINNETT STREET TO VICTORY DRIVE

5.2.1 Victorian Historic District

From Anderson Street North to Gwinnett Street, MLK forms the western edge of the Victorian District. While the streetscape along both MLK and Montgomery Street have been badly eroded by demolition for parking lots and inappropriately sited commercial uses and modern buildings, the inner portions of the blocks still retain historic residential structures that date between 1873 and the early 1900s.

The residential architecture located in the portion of the Victorian District included in Phase II features the decorative details of the Carpenter Italianate style. Examples include 1312 MLK, built for Charles Brannen, an employee of the Savannah Furniture Company, and 903-905 Montgomery Street, built for William Kavanaugh in the 1880s, and later converted into a duplex. This style is also exhibited in row houses such as 408-412 West Duffy Street (1880's) and 402-410 West Park Avenue (1885). 413-415 West Waldburg Street, built for Josiah and William Gnann, wheelwright and blacksmith, represent earlier styles. This duplex is in the vernacular Greek Revival style. 909 Montgomery Street is the only shotgun style house located along the Corridor, built in the 1870s and subsequently converted to commercial use.



Commercial establishments are represented by the ubiquitous corner store such as James T. Shruptrine's store at 324 West Bolton Street (1884) and the Robinson Building (1912), built by Elias Robinson who was in shoe sales and dry goods.

Unfortunately, the Victorian District has experienced a number of inappropriate alterations over the past fifteen years along with the demolition of at least half a dozen historic structures.

5.2.2 Cuyler-Brownsville Historic District

The study area passes through the Cuyler-Brownsville Historic District south of Anderson Street. In 1886, Meldrim Ward was created. Named for Judge Peter Wiltberger Meldrim, Meldrim Ward is located along West 33rd and West 34th Streets. Beginning about 1884, Judge Meldrim developed wood-frame, one-story row houses with folk Victorian trim at this site to provide housing for African-American laborers. This development continued into the early 1900s.

South of Kline Street, the residential housing stock changes from row houses to single detached residences. The peak period of development was between 1910 and 1920. Built in 1914 and 1915, three residences, 1901, 1905 and 1907 MLK, are excellent examples of Colonial Revival two-story, side-hall-plan houses. The Realty Investment Corporation built two of these houses.



Historically, this area was residential. The historic commercial buildings were corner stores with residences above such as 1813 MLK, owned by the Orsini family of grocers, 2321 MLK (ca. 1915), the Silverstein Grocery and later the Peter Elliott soda shop, and 2515 MLK, a drugstore for W.O. Cubbedge. These owners lived above or next to their stores.

Along MLK and Montgomery Street are a few examples of masonry, attached, one-story commercial buildings built during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Examples of these commercial buildings are located on Montgomery Street near the intersection of West 41st Street. The stores consist of three storefronts—each divided into three bays—with parapets and Folk Victorian elements along the cornice, arched windows and door surrounds. At the corner of 37th and Montgomery Streets, in an altered condition, is the remnant of Bennies' Market which advertised that “*this store is a tree, not a branch,*” an eloquent tribute to the independent corner stores that characterized these neighborhoods for so many decades. This store later became the well-known restaurant Porzio's.

At the corner of Victory Drive and MLK a remnant of an early tile roofed gas station remains. Just west of MLK is the Cuyler School, the first school building constructed (1914) in Savannah for African-American children. At the time, it was the only school that employed African-American teachers. Cuyler School was the only African-American high school in Savannah from the late 1920s to 1950 when Alfred E. Beach High School was opened. The school closed in 1975 and is now the headquarters of the Economic Opportunity Authority. It has served as the meeting location for the Phase II Advisory committee throughout the redevelopment planning process.



5.2.3 Thomas Square/Streetcar Historic District

The third Historic District through which the study area passes is the Thomas Square/Streetcar Historic District. This district is a collection of historic intact residential, commercial, and community landmark buildings located in a neighborhood just south of the Victorian Historic District. The area that was to later become the district was originally identified on General Oglethorpe's 1733 plan for Savannah as 'farm lots.'

According to the National Register nomination form for the district, the electrification of the streetcar in 1888 played a significant role in the development of district. The A&B Belt Line provided transportation south of the mid-19th century developed area of the Victorian Historic District and resulted in the construction of rail-related buildings in the neighborhood. Housing stock in the district consists of a variety of types and styles built from the late 18th to early 20th century. Styles include Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Italianate, Neoclassical Revival, Colonial Revival, Beaux Arts and Craftsman. The styles are found throughout the district. The commercial buildings within the district serviced the neighborhood and most of the owners lived above the storefronts. The commercial buildings in the district were historically located at intersections of major streets.

Today, inappropriate setbacks and strip shops erode the edge of the district contained in the study area. At least nine historic structures are left, including the 38th Street School. Architect G.L. Norman designed this handsome Classical Revival building.

6.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

To meet the requirements for designation as an Urban Redevelopment District for the study area, Section 36 Chapter 61 of the Georgia Annotated Code (the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Act) requires that a predominance of the buildings or improvements in the study area be classified as being “blighted” or in slum condition and that the rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment of such are is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the municipality or county.

This section examines the state of the social, economic, and physical health and welfare of the Phase II portion Corridor through its land uses, businesses, and people.

6.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The study area extends the length of 27 city blocks and includes portions of eight neighborhoods. Its neighborhoods, officially designated by the City of Savannah’s Department of Community Development and Planning, include: Laurel Grove, Kayton-Frazier, West Victorian, Cuyler-Brownsville, Metropolitan, Cann Park, Jackson Park, and Bingville (Appendix Map C). MLK and Montgomery Street serve as the “spine” of the study area and link its various neighborhoods.

6.1.1 Description of Areas Identified Within the Corridor

Because the study area is expansive, a general description is provided by “area” for the zoning portion of this document. Although the Existing Land Use Map (Appendix Map A) reveals an array of land uses throughout the study area, there are subtle characteristics that distinguish one area from another. These characteristics can include types of land uses, types of adjacent land uses outside the study area, lot sizes, setbacks, architecture, and roadway classifications. The identification and analysis of these characteristics can assist with the creation of appropriate land use policies and zoning regulations.

Four distinct areas have been identified within the study area. Four east-west roadways divide these areas: Gwinnett Street, Anderson Street, 37th Street, and Victory Drive.

- *Area I (Gwinnett Street south to Anderson Street):* Area I includes portions of the Laurel Grove, Kayton-Frazier, and West Victorian District neighborhoods.

With regard to land use, the area west of MLK Boulevard (the Laurel Grove and Kayton-Frazier neighborhoods) includes social institutions such as the EOA/Head Start Building on Anderson Street (formerly the Cuyler Street School), the YMCA on May Street, several religious institutions, Gadsen Elementary School, Kayton-Frazier Homes (a public, multi-family housing development with 400 residential units) and undeveloped parcels adjacent to I-516 that appear to be used for storage of construction materials. Laurel Grove and Kayton-Frazier contain the largest properties within the study area. The portion of Kayton-Frazier Homes within the study area was previously Screven, Marshall, Elliot and Wylly Wards. Only portions of Elliot and Wylly Wards remain but the grid pattern of streets and lots prevalent in the remainder of the study area was largely removed from this neighborhood. East of MLK is the West Victorian neighborhood. The lots within this area are much smaller and narrower, a pattern that has been largely maintained since its subdivision in the 19th century. It is adjacent to the southern boundary of the city’s Landmark Historic District, which is experiencing a thriving revitalization. The West Victorian neighborhood is the only area within the study area that currently has design review, demolition and building relocation standards for historically rated structures.

- *Area II (Anderson Street south to 37th Street):* Area II includes portions of the Cuyler-Brownsville and Metropolitan neighborhoods. West of MLK is the Cuyler-Brownsville neighborhood, a

predominantly residential area that the City has targeted for an infill-housing program that will occur in three phases. The infill-housing program is being carried out in conjunction with its own redevelopment plan that was adopted in 1998 by the Mayor and Aldermen. The creation of a master plan for Cuyler-Brownsville is in development and is being overseen by the City's Department of Housing. Because the master plan will also encompass a portion of the study area, it is critical that it integrate the results of this redevelopment plan.

Area II contains a variety of housing types including single-family detached dwelling units and multi-family dwellings such as apartments and boarding homes. Businesses are largely neighborhood-oriented and include uses such as barber and beauty shops, small restaurants, and convenience stores. There is also a concentration of auto-oriented uses such as car sales lots, auto repair shops and detailing businesses that are mostly located on Montgomery Street. Because of a lack of design guidelines, the traditional pattern of development that was established when this area was first developed (e.g., the placement of buildings adjacent or close to sidewalks and parking—if any—in the rear of the building) has been diminished. This pattern is continued into Area III and is most evident on Montgomery Street.

- Area III (37th Street south to Victory Drive): Area III includes portions of the Cuyler-Brownsville and Metropolitan neighborhoods.

Area III is very similar to Area II in terms of land use. However, it contains the only recreational space within the study area—Wells Park (also referred to as Wells Square). Further south, along Victory Drive is Rockwell Park. Because it is sandwiched by MLK and Montgomery Street and lacks recreational equipment or benches, it functions as green space rather than as a park.

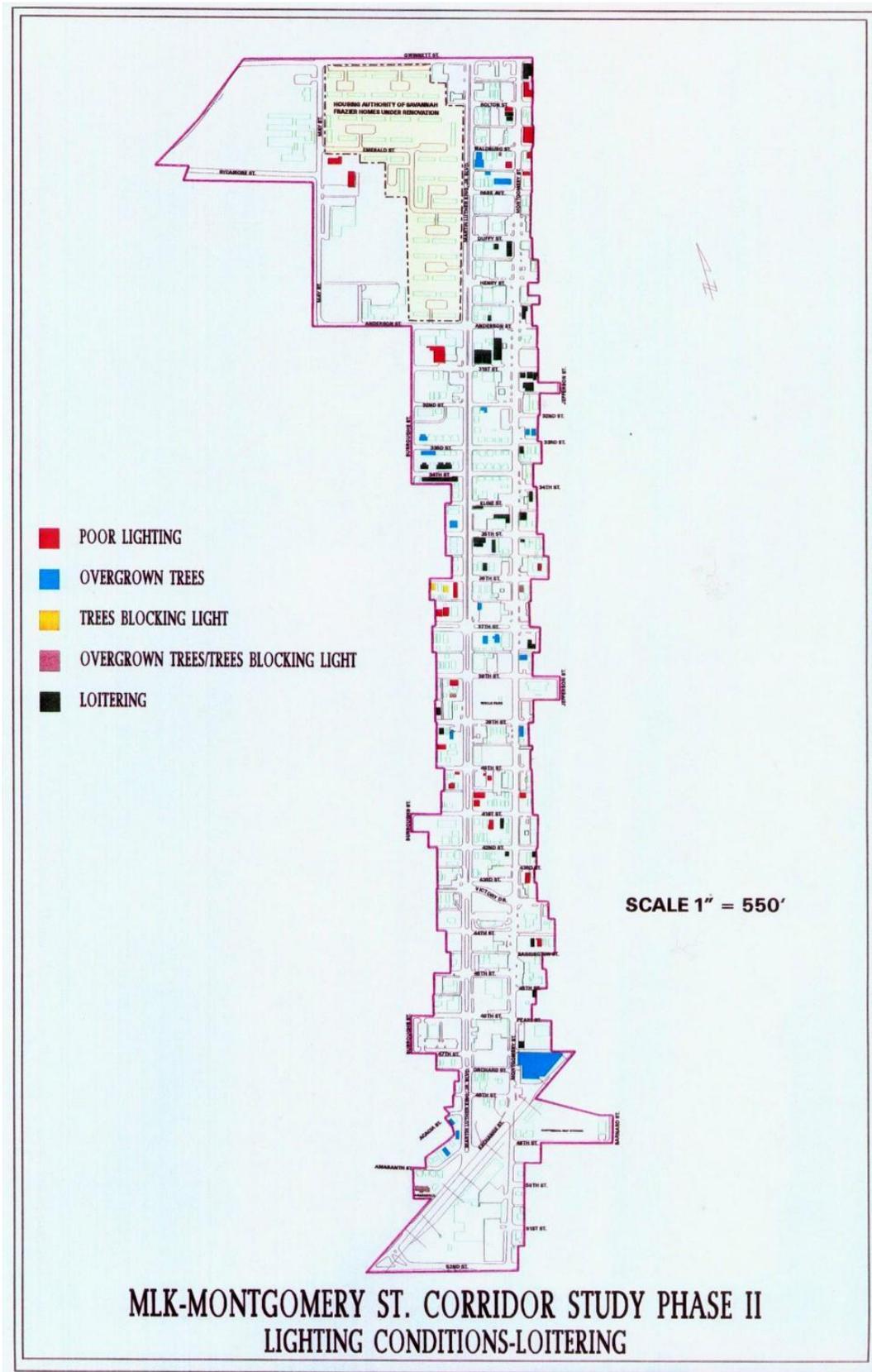
There are several vacant lots scattered throughout this area, including one at the southeast corner of 37th Street and MLK. This property shares a half-block with three other properties, two of which are vacant deteriorating buildings. Because of its highly visible location, this half block (consisting of four lots) has tremendous redevelopment potential.

- Area IV (Victory Drive south to 52nd Street): Area IV includes portions of the Jackson Park, Cann Park and Bingville neighborhoods.

The 1953 City and Vicinity Map of Savannah reveals the continuance of the grid pattern and small lots that are prevalent north of Victory Drive. However, because many of the existing structures within this area were developed or redeveloped in the mid to late 20th century, its physical appearance is in sharp contrast to the remainder of the structures. Small lots have been recombined into larger lots, the intensity of the types of land uses is greater, and there are fewer residences than in other areas. The land use pattern also varies from the other areas because the residential lots in Cann Park and Jackson Park were designed to have homes facing the side streets instead of MLK. Additionally, because of the larger lots, some land uses such as McDonald's, Salvation Army, and Discount Auto Parts encompass entire blocks. Because these buildings front Montgomery Street, the rear of these buildings can be seen from MLK. This is not typical of the study area.

The CSX Railroad transects this area just north of the Neal Blun Building at Exchange Street. The former Blun complex, now owned by SCAD, is currently under renovation and will eventually house the computer and video arts program for the college. As has occurred downtown, it can be anticipated that the surrounding neighborhoods will become desirable for student housing. Approximately 1,500 students are projected to use this facility.

Map 6-A



6.1.2 Transportation

The study area is served by a multi-modal system of transportation. These modes include:

- ***Roadways:*** The study area has an excellent roadway system. MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street are the major roadways. These north/south arterial streets connect the various neighborhoods and provide direct access from downtown to mid-town. Numerous east/west arterial streets transect MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street, including Anderson Street, Gwinnett Street, 37th Street and Victory Drive. From Gwinnett Street, direct access is available to I-516, southbound, just west of the Corridor. An off-ramp from I-516 is also available at Gwinnett Street for northbound traffic.
- ***Public Transit:*** The Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) provides daily bus service throughout the study area. Bus stops are marked with signage and there are no shelters available to keep riders from being exposed to weather conditions. Only three benches are available for bus patrons the entire length of MLK. Many study area residents identified lack of shelter at bus stops as a concern. The residential survey conducted by SSU in the fall of 2000 determined that 21% of study area residents use CAT as their primary means of transportation.

The proposed inter-modal transportation/transfer center (CAT Transfer Center), anticipated to be located north of Gwinnett Street along MLK, will provide needed shelter and convenient access for study area residents and visitors. Additionally, the streetscape improvements planned for the Corridor recommend the installation of shelters at all bus stops along the Corridor.

- ***Bikeways:*** The study area has an existing bikeway and several proposed bikeways. The existing East-West Bikeway is located on 52nd Street. It extends from U.S. 17 (Ogeechee Road) to Savannah State University and is a shared lane facility. The Chatham County Bikeway Plan, produced by the Metropolitan Planning Commission in September 2000, proposes three additional bikeways that would fall partially within the study area. The West Gwinnett Corridor Bikeway would extend from Winburn Street (west of I-516) to Drayton Street, ultimately connecting to the Henry/Anderson-Thunderbolt Corridor. This bikeway would begin at May Street, in the Kayton-Frazier neighborhood, and would extend 7.6 miles east to the Town of Thunderbolt. Sections of Montgomery Street, Pearl Street and Exchange Street, located in the southern portion of the study area, also have proposed bikeways. These routes would target SCAD students by connecting the college's various campus buildings, including the Neal Blun complex. SCAD is also studying the possibility of a bike route along Montgomery Street. However, such a route must be coordinated with the City.

In support of implementation of the Bikeway Plan, Chatham County has adopted a policy to ensure that all new roadway projects will be designed with bicycle accommodations unless it is determined that such accommodation is not feasible. The proposed CAT Transfer Center will need to provide accommodations for bicycle travel. Bicycle racks have already been added to a number of CAT buses. Such a requirement would suggest that bicycle paths be considered to and from the Transfer Center along MLK.

- ***Railway:*** The CSX Railroad (also referred to as the CSX Liberty Street Lead) transects the southern half of the study area at Exchange Street, adjacent to the Neal Blun complex. This railway connects industries west of downtown to industries along the Savannah River, east of downtown. Typically, only two train trips occur on a given day. However, because the railway cuts through residential areas, including the study area, there is potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflicts as well as traffic delay. (Chatham County Intermodal Freight Study: Draft Final Report, May 13, 1998, TranSystems Corporation).

- *Streetcar Trolley*: Negotiations are now underway with Norfolk Southern Railroad to use their existing tracks to bring streetcar trolley service to Downtown Savannah along the westside of MLK and down River Street. The Coastal Heritage Society has acquired three trolleys, including one original Savannah trolley and efforts are currently underway to renovate them. It is proposed that these trolleys would use overhead electrical connection, which is consistent with streetcar use historically.

Any land use and zoning decisions within the study area should be cognizant of the existing and proposed transportation systems, including pedestrianism.

6.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

The purpose of this section is to identify and assess current land use and zoning issues within the study area and to provide guidance as to how the community should proceed with redevelopment efforts.

The study area was developed and partially developed over the course of the past century. An expansive area, the physical composition of the area varies in terms of land use and zoning. As a result, the area has developed in a hodgepodge manner, which has led to a lack of physical cohesiveness. The reasons for the lack of cohesion are varied but can be attributed, in part, to the failure of newer development to adapt to the existing neighborhood in terms of land use and design, partially due to inappropriate zoning and the lack of design standards.

To ensure that future development will occur in a comprehensive, compatible manner, it is necessary to examine the existing land use patterns and zoning districts to determine their effect on the redevelopment process as well as to offer recommendations that will take this vibrant, historic area into the 21st century.

6.2.1 Land Use

Land use is the manner in which land is occupied or utilized and is expressed by a broad land use designation such as residential, commercial, or industrial. An inventory of existing uses, as shown in Map 6-A, identifies the type, extent, distribution and intensity of uses or activities located on each lot within the study area. This inventory can help guide current land use policy decisions because it provides an understanding of the physical composition of an area. It can also assist with comprehensive future land use planning that may lead to changes in existing land use policies, including zoning regulations (Zoning, Development, and Planning Terms, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 491/492, 1999).

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for the City of Savannah (Zoning Ordinance), adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen in 1960, regulates land use. The Zoning Ordinance establishes zoning districts and land development standards in accordance with state law and should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Savannah (Comprehensive Plan) that was adopted in 1993.

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of Savannah over a 20-year period and is required by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The Comprehensive Plan must include inventories, analyses, and recommendations for the following required elements: population, economic development, natural resources, historic resources, community facilities, housing and land use. These various elements are implemented through a variety of means. In the case of the land use elements, the Zoning Ordinance (referred to in some communities as the Land Development Code) is the primary method for implementation. However, the existing Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance are not strongly linked. Also, the land use element contains an existing land use map and a future land use map (for year 2025), however, no goals, objectives or strategies are provided to guide land use decisions. The future land use map, therefore, tends to show how the city is “expected” to grow rather than reflect how the community should grow. For the study area and the full length of the Corridor, it is

recommended that a separate land use plan be developed and adopted by the Mayor and Aldermen as a small area supplement to the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of the adopted land use plan will be carried out through various policy mechanisms, including the Zoning Ordinance.

The concepts of land use and zoning will be further discussed in Subsections 6.2.1 and 6.3, respectively.

6.2.1.1 Existing Land Uses

Two maps are provided within this plan that depict existing land uses. The map provided as Map 6-A shows land uses based upon existing structures, including vacant lots. Its land use categories are based upon the land use classifications contained in the Physical Inventory Survey conducted by SCAD preservation students in June 2000. Most data within this plan is based upon this map. Table 6-A shows the distribution of uses in accordance with this map. Appendix Map A is parcel-based and contains land use classifications that are consistent with those published by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) except where otherwise noted. **This map was produced subsequent to the Map provided in Appendix C** in anticipation of the creation of a land use plan that would be linked to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, a different classification system was required. Information contained in the Land Use and Zoning section is based upon Appendix Map A.

**TABLE 6-A: Existing Land Uses by Type of Structure (As noted on Map 6-A)
(Based on Physical Inventory Survey Land Use Categories)**

Existing Land Use Classification by Structure	Number of Structures	Percentage of Structures
Residential	231	58.7%
Commercial	108	27.5%
Industrial	4	1%
Institutional	21	5.3%
Public	2	<1%
Recreational	2	<1%
Mixed Use	25	6.4%
Total	393	100%

As of August 2000, 448 properties or lots of record were confirmed to exist within the study area. If these lots are further subdivided or recombined, this number will change. Each lot has been categorized by its existing land use. Because the Chatham County Property Appraiser’s Office uses a different land use classification system that is unrelated to land use planning, the land use categories used within this plan, in most cases, will not be consistent.

Table 6-B lists the various classifications of land uses, the definition of the classification, and the number of properties falling within each classification. The land use classifications and definitions are consistent with those published by DCA, and shown in Appendix Map A, except where otherwise noted. To understand how each lot was classified, an explanation for each land use classification is provided within the table. Land uses were identified by a windshield survey that was conducted by members of the Phase II Land Use/Zoning/Community Enhancement Subcommittee.

**TABLE 6-B: Existing Land Uses (As noted on Appendix Map A)
(Based on State Comprehensive Plan Land Use Classifications)**

Land Use Classification	Definition	Number of Lots
Residential—Single-Family Detached	A detached dwelling designed to house one family. A platted lot is normally associated with each dwelling unit.	68
Residential—Multi-Family	Two or more attached dwelling units, including apartment buildings, garden apartments, and condominiums that are located on only one platted lot.	90
Public/Institutional	Includes public and private land uses that have a public or quasi-public function such as local and federal government buildings, police and fire stations, schools, libraries, places of worship, cemeteries, hospitals, military uses and prisons. Publicly owned facilities that would be more accurately placed in another land use classification (e.g., parks, recreational facilities, general offices that may contain government offices and landfills) are not included in this category.	60
Commercial—Office	Includes land dedicated to non-industrial business uses that are predominantly office use.	3
Commercial—Retail	Includes land dedicated to non-industrial business uses that are predominantly retail and service oriented.	141
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	Includes land dedicated to such uses as public transit stations, railroad facilities, lift stations, communications towers, airports, port facilities, and power generation plants.	0
Industry—Light	Includes land dedicated to such uses as warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, manufacturing facilities, factories, processing plants, and other similar uses.	13
Recreation—Active	Includes land dedicated to uses such as playgrounds, parks that include recreational equipment and/or overnight facilities, golf courses, and recreational centers that may be under public or private ownership.	3
Mixed Use	Includes land, public or private, that is shared by two or more land use categories.	17
Undeveloped	Includes undeveloped land or land that was developed for a particular use that has been abandoned and/or its structures have been vacated for some time. This category includes woodlands or pastures (not in agriculture crop, livestock or commercial timber production), undeveloped portions of residential subdivisions and industrial parks, water bodies (e.g., lakes and rivers). For the purpose of this study, structures that are vacant and that are in a deteriorated condition are designated in accordance with the land use category for which the last use was apparent or for the use in which the principal structure was constructed.	53
Total Lots	=====➔	448

6.2.1.2 Analysis of Existing Land Use Categories

The various land use categories based on State Comprehensive Plan land use categories within the study area are described below. The percentage provided for each land use classification refers to the percentage of land area that the particular classification comprises.

- Single-Family Detached Residential – 15%: Sixty-eight single-family detached residences are scattered throughout the study area. Most are located on the western side of MLK Boulevard or the

eastern side of Montgomery Street. Likely, because of their location between two major arterial roadways, a number of single-family residences located on the blocks between MLK Boulevard and Montgomery Street have either been demolished to allow the development or expansion of commercial and institutional uses or converted into more intensive uses.

- Multi-Family Residential – 20%: Multi-family residential housing is the predominant type of housing within the study area. Ninety properties are identified as multi-family residential. Many of these residences were originally constructed to house two dwelling units (duplexes), but some have been converted into apartments or boarding homes.
- Public/Institutional – 13%: Numerous public and institutional uses are scattered throughout the neighborhood. However, the area between Gwinnett Street and 33rd Street is the most institutionally-oriented of all the sections of the study area and includes buildings such as Gadsen Elementary, the EOA/Head Start Building, the YMCA and several churches. The private St. Paul's Boys Academy (formerly the 38th Street School) located on 38th Street is one of the most architecturally outstanding and historical buildings within the area. The Neal Blun complex, now owned by SCAD, anchors the south end of the study area.
- Commercial—Office – less than 1%: Only three lots within the study area are devoted exclusively to office use. Professional offices can serve as a transitional use between more intensive commercial uses and the predominantly residential neighborhoods. The co-existence of residential and office space within the same building may also make ownership of large, Victorian-era residences more economically viable.
- Commercial—Retail – 32%: Commercial uses are found throughout the study area and are located on 141 lots. Montgomery Street is more of a commercial corridor than MLK Boulevard. Most commercial uses are locally owned and neighborhood-oriented, such as convenience stores, beauty and barbershops, and auto repair. A few national retailers such as McDonald's, KFC, and Discount Auto Parts are also located within the study area. Auto-oriented businesses such as repair, parts, and used car sales appear to be the most predominant type of business and are found mainly on Montgomery Street or one of its side streets.
- Light Industry – 3%: Several light industrial uses exist within the study area including a warehouse adjacent to the CSX Railroad (formerly the Sears warehouse and service center), a mini-storage warehouse located at the corner of Montgomery Street and 49th Street (formerly part of the Starland Dairy) and an ironworks located on Burroughs Street.
- Recreation – less 1%: Wells Park, located on the block surrounded by MLK Boulevard, 38th Street, Montgomery Street, and 39th Street, is the only park within the study area and contains approximately 1.5 acres. Playground equipment and a basketball court are available. Nearby recreational opportunities exist outside of the study area, including Forsyth Park, Myers Park, and the park proposed for Phase I of the Cuyler-Brownville revitalization.
- Mixed Use – 4%: Only 17 lots contain a structure in which two or more land use classifications occur in conjunction. Ten lots contain a commercial use that includes a single-family residence. Five lots contain a commercial use that includes multi-family dwelling units. Two lots contain an institutional use that shares its structure with multi-family dwellings.

- *Undeveloped – 12%:* Fifty-three undeveloped lots are located throughout the study area. Some lots are used as parking areas. Because these lots are small and typically are not adjacent to another vacant lot, they may be difficult to redevelop under existing land use regulations.

6.2.2 Zoning

The application of appropriate zoning is an integral part of the redevelopment process for the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor. It will determine what type of specific land uses will be allowed and the development standards that will be required. In essence, zoning can help to carry out a portion of the vision established for the study area by the redevelopment plan and the proposed land use plan. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to examine the existing zoning for the study area and determine what must be done to further the vision and goals for redevelopment. Recommendations for further study and action will also be provided.

6.2.2.1 What is Zoning?

Zoning was established in the City with the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance more than four decades ago. The purpose of the ordinance is to regulate development. Generally, the Zoning Ordinance designates zoning districts through an official zoning map, establishes the allowable land uses within each district, and prescribes development standards.

A zoning district is created and applied to an area based on “*a unique character identifiable from surrounding areas because of distinctive architecture, streets, geographic features, culture, history, activities, and/or land uses*” (Zoning Development and Planning Terms, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 491/492, 1999). Zoning districts, therefore, establish the specific land uses to be allowed within a given district (e.g., a bakery, apartment building or auto repair shop) and provide development standards (e.g., minimum lot size, setbacks, and dwelling unit density) that are unique to the district.

Typically, the array of allowed land uses within a particular zoning district are uses that are compatible with each other and that embody the purpose of the district. To further ensure compatibility, performance standards are sometimes applied. Performance standards are designed to regulate the manner in which a particular use operates in order to limit nuisance effects such as noise, traffic, odor, and visual impact and can be specific to the use rather than the district. The zoning ordinance also regulates items such as parking, buffering and screening, signage and within some districts, design review and the relocation and demolition of historically rated structures.

6.2.2.2 Zoning-Related Goals Identified in the Redevelopment Plan

In order to attain the vision for the redevelopment of the study area, participants in the redevelopment plan process identified six goals. Although it could be said that all of these goals have a relationship to zoning, four have a direct relationship. They are:

- *To preserve and enhance educational, cultural and religious institutions as part of a vibrant mix of uses resulting in the reemergence of the Corridor(s) (study area) as a center of entertainment, retail, and cultural activity for both residents and visitors;*
- *To promote residential opportunities for new residents while preserving and enhancing life for existing residents and ensuring that all residents will have access to affordable housing, commercial opportunities and entertainment options for everyone;*
- *To create a multi-modal corridor that is more accessible and pedestrian friendly and that also complements diverse retail establishments; and*

- *To serve as a showcase of restored historic buildings and new development compatible with the character of the area.*

6.2.2.3 Existing Zoning Districts within the Study Area

Currently 14 zoning districts exist within the study area allowing a range of uses from single-family residential to industrial uses. Map 6-B shows the existing zoning districts. When the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1960, much of the study area had already been developed. A zoning map from that period shows that the area had only six zoning districts (R-4, R-6, RM-25, B-C, B-G and I-L). These zoning districts reflected the existing land uses within the study area at that time. All six of the original districts remain and eight additional zoning districts have been added. The zoning districts and their purpose are listed in Section 6.2.2.3.1.

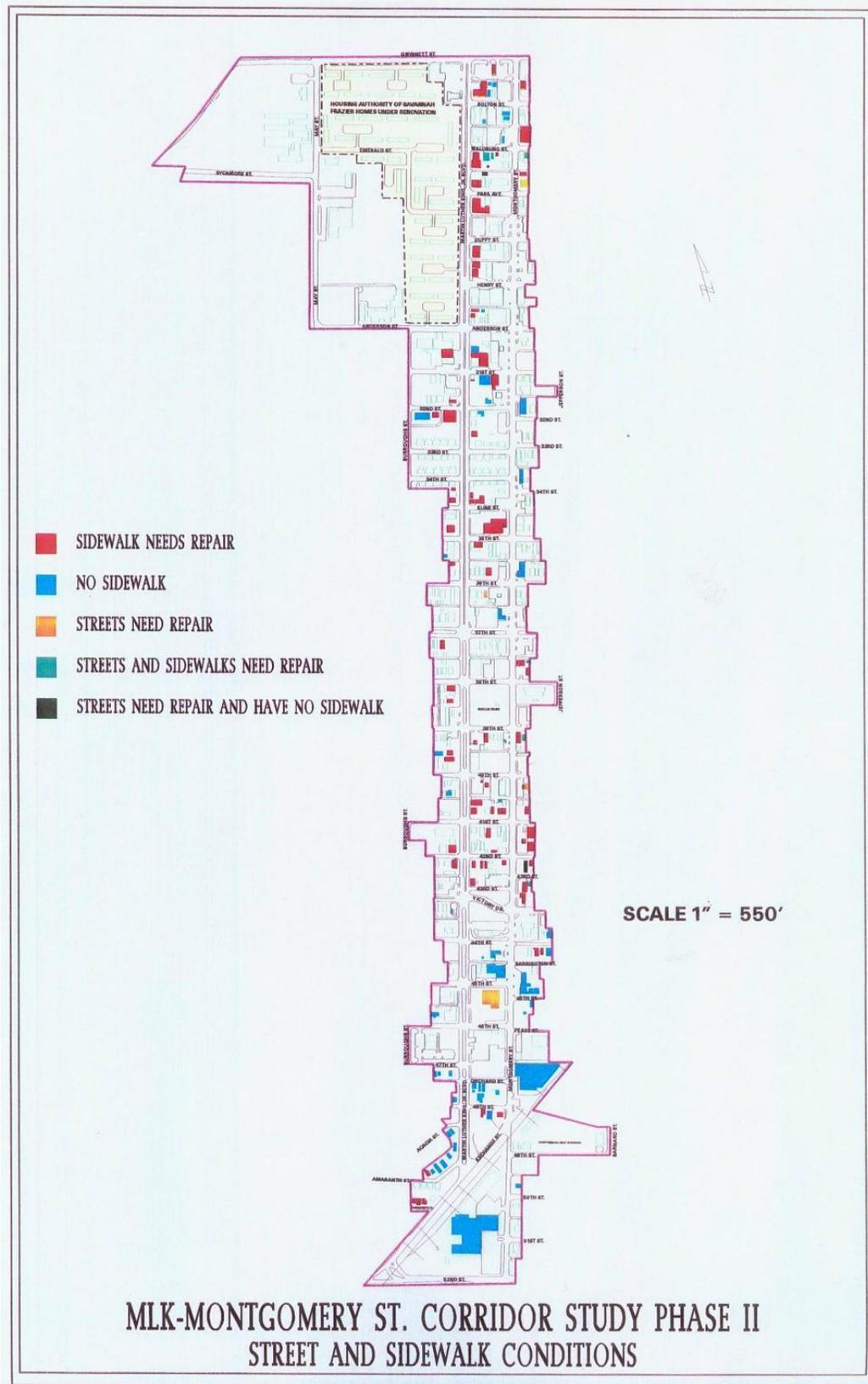
6.2.2.3.1 Identification of Existing Zoning Districts and Their Intent

The study area zoning districts and the intent of each district, according to the Zoning Ordinance, are as follows:

- *B-C (Community Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to provide community-shopping facilities consisting of a wide variety of sales and service facilities at locations that will be accessible to a market area containing 35,000 to 70,000 people.
- *B-G (General Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create and protect areas in which heavy commercial and certain industrial-like activities are permitted.
- *B-N (Neighborhood Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to provide convenient shopping facilities consisting of convenience goods and personal services in neighborhood market areas from 3,000 to 5,000 people.
- *I-L (Light Industrial)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create and protect areas for those industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odors, smoke and dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods or to the other uses permitted in this district.
- *I-L-B (Light Industrial Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create and protect areas for those industrial/business uses which do not create excessive noise, odors, smoke and dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding residential neighborhoods permitted in this district.
- *P-B-G (Planned General Business)*: See definition of B-G (General Business).
- *P-R-B-1 (Planned Residential Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which certain types of convenience shopping-retail sales and service uses can be established and at the same time prevent nuisances or hazards created by vehicular movement, noise or fume generation or high-intensity use detrimental to adjacent residential development.
- *P-R-I-P (Planned Residential Institutional Professional)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential, institutional and professional uses can be intermixed and simultaneously achieve a healthful living environment.

- *PUD-IS-B (Planned Unit Development-Institutional/Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create institutional, professional, office, residential townhouses, apartment rowhouses, and/or condominium units on a lot or tract of land less than three (3) acres. The net dwelling unit density is established at the time of rezoning. The density to be established shall be recommended by the Metropolitan Planning Commission, but shall not be more than twenty-four (24) units per net acre.
- *R-B (Residential Business)*: The purpose of this district shall be to create an area in which residential uses, institutional uses, professional uses and certain types of convenience-shopping-retail sales and service uses can be intermixed and at the same time prevent the development of blight and slum conditions. This district shall only be established in those older sections of the community in which by custom and tradition the intermixing of such uses has been found necessary and desirable, and in those areas where it is found necessary and desirable to create a transition zone between an “R” district and a “B” or “I” district.
- *R-4 (Four-Family Residential)*: The purpose of this district shall be to maintain dwelling unit density to not more than twelve (12) dwelling units per net acre of residential land in order to protect the property in this district from the depreciating effects of more densely developed residential uses.
- *R-M (Multi-Family Residential)*: The purpose of this district shall be to provide areas for multi-family development and compatible non-residential development. The net dwelling unit density for this zone shall be established at the time of rezoning. The density to be established shall be recommended by MPC, but shall not be more than forty units per net acre. In establishing a density for a R-M district, MPC shall consider the following conditions, among others:
 - The traffic that will be generated by the proposed development in comparison to uses permitted under the existing zoning classification;
 - The capacity of water and sewer systems to accommodate the proposed development; and
 - The compatibility of the development with the surrounding land uses.
- *R-6 (One-Family Residential)*: The purpose of this district shall be to maintain single-family dwelling density to not more than six (6) single-family dwellings per net acre of residential land, in order to protect the property in this district from the depreciating effect of more densely developed residential uses.
- *3-B*: The Zoning Ordinance does not provide a definition of this district. It is located within the Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District.
- *3-R*: The Zoning Ordinance does not provide a definition of this district. It is located within the Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District.

Map 6-B



6.2.2.3.2 Existing Zoning Districts and Their Allowed Land Uses

Appendix B provides four land use schedules or charts that list the allowed land uses within the various zoning districts. (Note: These schedules are separated because of the format of the Zoning Ordinance. These uses are subject to change.)

A review of these schedules reveals that some zoning districts and allowed uses in the study area are contrary to the vision and goals for redevelopment. A few of the concerns are highlighted below:

- Zoning Districts that Allow Uses that are Contrary to the Vision: Based on the existing zoning districts, some allowed land uses are contrary to the vision established for the study area. For example, there are two light industrial zoning districts, I-L and I-L-B. While some of the allowed uses within these districts appear appropriate for the study area such as food stores, retail stores and offices, others appear to be incompatible. For example, the I-L district allows warehousing, truck terminals, horse stables, the raising of commercial and non-commercial livestock and poultry, and adult entertainment establishments. Neighborhood uses such as food stores, retail stores, and offices are allowed in other districts already established in the study area such as the less intensive B-N, P-R-I-P and R-I-P districts.

Similarly, the B-C and B-G districts allow uses that appear to be incompatible with the character of the study area (or portions of the study area). These uses include warehousing, building contractor yards, drive-in restaurants, manufactured home sales, major automobile repair shops, and adult entertainment establishments. An examination of the remaining districts may also reveal inconsistencies with the vision and goals.

Section 6.2.2.3.7 mentions several uses that residents and business owners would like to see in the study area. Development of land use plan will further help to identify additional uses. The application of performance standards would allow a greater array of land uses. That is, standards can be established so that the operation of a particular use that may not be desirable on its face can be made more desirable and compatible with the neighborhood. Standards could include limitation of the hours of operation, distance from residences, limitation of size, and visual buffering. Such measures can help eliminate potential nuisances (e.g., noise, odor or traffic) and allow a greater array of business operations that can serve the day-to-day needs of residents and workers within the study area.

- Allowed Uses vs. “Non-Conforming Uses”: Some uses that may be desirable and support the vision for the Corridor are currently not allowed. The most glaring example is the inability for new residences to be established within portions of the study area, including the B-C, B-N and I-L-B zoning districts. Interestingly, the I-L district does allow single-family residences despite its industrial nature.

Residences that were established in these districts prior to zoning are “non-conforming” or “grandfathered” uses. A non-conforming use is one “*that lawfully occupied a building or land on the effective date of [the zoning ordinance and subsequent amendments] and that does not conform to the use regulations of the district in which it is located*” (Zoning Development and Planning Terms, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 491/492, 1999).

As no new residences can be constructed within these districts, this is contrary to the goal that encourages the promotion of residential opportunities for new residents and accessibility of affordable housing. Additionally, by denying an expanded residential base, businesses within the study area draw from a smaller customer base. As a result, some businesses may have to be more

specialized and offer goods or services that will attract customers from beyond the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor.

- Lack of Performance Standards for Some Uses: Some allowed uses have performance standards and others do not. Performance standards are designed to regulate the manner in which a particular use operates in order to limit nuisance effects such as noise, traffic, odor, and visual impact. Such standards may include a limitation in size of the use or its hours of operation, distance from residential uses, or a requirement that it be located on certain roadways such as an arterial street.

Some uses that may initially be thought of as undesirable for the study area can be made more compatible with performance standards. By allowing a greater array of land uses, such standards can further the goals of expanding economic opportunities, attracting new investment, and providing more commercial and entertainment options for residents, workers, and visitors.

- Uses Not Included in the Land Use Schedules: Since the Zoning Ordinance is over 40 years old, there may be uses that are not identified in the land use schedule that may be appropriate for the study area and further the goals established as part of the vision. The various home occupations that are currently allowed, for example, could be expanded to encourage telecommuting. Telecommuting is defined as “[an arrangement in which a worker is at home or in a location other than the primary place of work and communicates with the workplace and conducts work via wireless or telephone lines, using modems, fax machines, or other electronic devices in conjunction with computers” (Zoning Development and Planning Terms, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 491/492, 1999). Recommendations for strategies and incentives to encourage technology-based development and/or uses are included in Chapter 12, *Financial Tools and Strategies*, of this plan.

Allowing some home-based occupations may encourage the rehabilitation of larger residences into an owner-occupied residence/office. By allowing this type of use, rehabilitation of aging structures can be made more affordable and desirable. It can also help to re-establish a strong residential base and provide neighborhood businesses with additional patronage.

6.2.2.3.3 Existing Zoning Districts and Their Development Standards

Development standards establish the site requirements for new development or the expansion of existing development. Standards include minimum lot size, setbacks for the front, side and rear yards, height, building coverage, and density for residential dwellings.

Due to the numerous zoning districts and their different orientations (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use), study area development standards vary. As a result, an inconsistent physical pattern of development has emerged along the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor. A few of these inconsistencies are noted below:

- Minimum Lot Size: Minimum lot sizes within the study area vary. In the B-C zoning district, for example, there is no minimum lot size. In other districts, there are minimum lot sizes for some uses but not others. For instance, the I-L district requires a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet for a single-family residence but no minimum lot size for a non-residential use. Establishing appropriate lot sizes for new development is critical to preserving the character of MLK and Montgomery Street. For example, several auto repair shops within the study area lack sufficient land area to conduct business completely on-site. As a result, some shops are conducting repairs within public rights-of-way. An appropriate minimum lot size for new repair shops, along with other appropriate performance standards, could prevent this from reoccurring.

It should also be noted that by not establishing a *maximum* lot size, the physical character of the study area could also be compromised because land can be aggregated to achieve the desired lot size for a particular use. This may also encourage the demolition of historic, architecturally appealing structures if a particular use, for example, requires an entire block for its operation. This has already occurred within the study area. Though the 3-B and 3-R districts, both located within the Planned Victorian Neighborhood Conservation District, do not have a maximum lot size requirement, standards exist within these districts to discourage the relocation or demolition of historic structures for land aggregation.

- ***Setbacks:*** Setbacks determine the minimum distance that a structure must set back from a property line. The structures within the study area, particularly along MLK and Montgomery Street north of Victory Drive, are typically located adjacent to sidewalks, thereby creating a continuous blockface. The required front yard setback varies according to street classification. With regard to side yard setbacks, the requirement varies from no requirement to 50 feet. Rear yard setbacks range from five to 50 feet. Because these setbacks may be too great and vary, an inconsistent pattern of physical development is encouraged that is contrary to the historical pattern of development.
- ***Height:*** The maximum height requirement for the study area varies from no maximum height to 50 feet. Non-habitable portions of a structure (e.g., spires, cupolas, and chimneys) are included. Because there are a number of zoning districts, there is an array of height requirements that could potentially create a physically inconsistent appearance. A maximum height should be required to ensure that a human scale will be maintained along the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor.
- ***Building Coverage:*** Building coverage refers to the percentage of a lot that is covered by the principal and accessory structures. Within the study area, the maximum allowed building coverage ranges from no limitation to 70 percent, depending upon the type of use. Buildings that are four or more stories in height and house at least 11 multi-family dwelling units have a maximum building coverage ranging from 25 to 35 percent. As the number of units increases, the coverage decreases.

A building coverage percentage that is too minimal “wastes” land area and can encourage an overly large parking area, for instance. A percentage that is too large could encourage a density that is too great for the study area (if the use is residential), diminish green space, and prevent all or some required parking from being located on-site. To encourage physical consistency throughout the study area, the existing building coverage requirements should be re-examined.

- ***Density:*** Density relates only to residential uses and determines the number of dwelling units that are allowed on a net acre. A net acre is the gross land area minus “car area” (i.e., streets, driveways, parking spaces and unloading areas).

The density of the study area ranges from four dwelling units to 60 dwelling units per net acre. Density has a relationship to lot size, lot coverage, and height. Any change to those standards should recognize the effect on density.

It is critical that development standards be reviewed along with the development of design standards (to be discussed in Section 6.2.2.3.4) due to their relationship to each other.

6.2.2.3.4 Existing Zoning Districts and Design Standards

A relationship exists between development standards and design standards. However, while development standards relate to physical location and density of development, design standards are “[a] set of guidelines regarding architectural appearance of a building, or improvement, that governs the alteration,

construction, demolition, or relocation of a building or improvement” (Zoning Development and Planning Terms, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 491/492, 1999). Typically, design standards are enacted as part of a conservation or overlay district.

Only the 3-R and 3-B zoning districts located in the Victorian Planned Neighborhood Conservation District currently have design guidelines and relocation and demolition standards for historically rated structures. The City Historic Preservation Officer is responsible for these reviews. In some instances, MPC may also be involved in the review process within these districts if the development is new or is an expansion of an existing development. The criteria for review are listed in the following paragraph.

A site plan must be submitted to MPC for review and approval for new development or expansion of an existing development located within a Planned or “P” district, within a PUD (Planned Unit Development district), or located on an arterial or collector roadway. Group developments (more than one principal use on the same lot) also require site plan submittal.

Only those arterial and collector roadways shown in Section 8-3025(e) (*Regulations as to Use, Street Classification Map No. 1 of Chatham County, Sheet 1*), of the Zoning Ordinance are subject to review. Properties on the following roadways would require a site plan review: MLK, Montgomery Street, Gwinnett Street, Park Avenue, Anderson Street, Henry Street, 37th Street, and 52nd Street.

Under Section 8-3030 (*Planned Development District*) of the Zoning Ordinance, a visual compatibility review is required to ensure that new development will be compatible with adjacent and surrounding development in terms of building orientation and scale, exterior materials, roof shape, window and door openings, fences, landscaping, buffers, driveway and parking orientation, architectural style, and signage. However, because the physical and architectural integrity of portions of the study area have already been compromised, enforcing Section 8-3030 can be problematic. Therefore, design criteria that are much more specific (as in the Planned Victorian Neighborhood Conservation District) will be necessary.

Across the country, the adoption of design standards by local government is gaining popularity as citizens have become more vocal about the loss of their neighborhood character because of the failure of new development to adapt to its physical, natural and historical surroundings. Appropriate design standards can ensure that this will not continue along the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor. In turn, such standards can protect and increase property values, promote pedestrianism and interaction among residents and visitors, and encourage heritage tourism. Savannah’s Landmark Historic District is an excellent example of the benefits that can be gained from design review.

A critical component of the process of enacting design guidelines is an education process. At times, as has occurred in other communities, such guidelines are viewed as an imposition upon private property rights as well as a burdensome delay in the development process. Therefore, it will be necessary to hold workshops to discuss this possibility with property owners. The redevelopment strategies proposed with this plan include the development of comprehensive design guidelines and the implementation of a review process for the study area. Consideration will also be given as to the type of review that may be required (i.e., staff vs. a board review), what aspects of design will be reviewed, the length of the review process, and the review cost (if any).

6.2.2.3.5 Existing Zoning Districts and Demolition and Relocation Standards

The recent demolition of the Star Theatre and the Dearing Chevrolet Building (located in Phase I of the Corridor study), sparked an outcry from the community to halt future demolitions of historic structures and enact mechanisms to protect the further loss of such buildings. The City Historic Preservation Officer has identified 119 structures within the study area from Gwinnett Street to Victory Drive that qualify for “historic” status based on the U.S. Secretary of the Interior criteria. To prevent their demolition, these

buildings must be placed on the City's Historic Buildings Map and a historic conservation overlay district created. Both steps will require adoption in the form of an ordinance by the Mayor and Aldermen. Once adopted, these historic structures will be protected for a 12-month period once a demolition permit is requested. During the stay of demolition, efforts are made to mitigate the potential destruction, including the possibility of relocation. A survey of the area south of Victory Drive to 52nd Street is underway.

6.2.2.3.6 Other Concerns Relating to the Existing Zoning Districts

Zoning also encompasses issues such as screening and buffering, parking, signage, landscaping, non-conforming uses, and variances. To ensure that the most appropriate standards are in place to encourage redevelopment of the study area, these issues must also be addressed. However, they (along with items previously mentioned) should be included in a land use and rezoning plan separate from this redevelopment plan so as not to delay its adoption. A land use and rezoning plan will require recommendation from the MPC Board and adoption by the Mayor and Aldermen.

6.2.2.3.7 Opinions and Concerns of Residents and Business Owners with Regard to Existing and Future Land Use

In May and October 2000, as a part of the redevelopment planning process, two groups of students from SSU conducted surveys of residents and business owners within the study area. The purpose was to obtain their opinions on a variety of subjects relating to the existing physical, economic, and social conditions within the area, including land use-related issues. This section references those opinions relating to land use.

- *Residential Responses:* In October 2000, students enrolled in the Business Research and Marketing class at Savannah State University conducted a survey of residents within the study area by mail, telephone and personal interviews to gather opinions on a variety of issues. Of the 350 surveys mailed to residents in the study area, 143 responses were received. It is unknown if respondents were concentrated in one area or if they were disbursed throughout the study area. Such information could help to better understand the nature of the responses.

The survey did not reveal a strong relationship between what respondents like and dislike about their neighborhood and land use and zoning. That is, particular land uses (except for schools) and current zoning conditions were not identified as reasons for liking the study area. With regard to what residents like the most, affordability was cited. The numerous housing options available (i.e., detached and attached single-family housing, multi-family housing, and boarding homes) could account for this. Interestingly, "quietness" is also noted as another favorable factor. This may be because much of the business activity is small-scale and fairly neighborhood and day-time-oriented (especially north of Victory Drive). Proximity to schools, including SCAD, and "convenience" are also listed among the five most likeable aspects of the neighborhood.

Aspects of the neighborhood identified as undesirable also have an indirect relationship to land use and zoning. The top five issues identified as unfavorable aspects of the study area include: crime, drugs, noise, traffic, and unfriendly people. Without additional study, linking these aspects to land use and zoning would be speculative. However, it can be said that because the character of the study area fluctuates between predominantly residential and predominantly commercial throughout the various phases, the residential locale of the respondent may account for how the surrounding area was viewed.

With regard to future improvements for land use and zoning, comments were minimal. The repair of the existing housing stock and the addition of more recreational opportunities within the study area are desired by some respondents. When asked about the types of housing options most desired, the majority, not surprisingly, express the desire to see more single-family home ownership (53%). Other

types of desired housing options include single-family rental units (23%), apartment rental units (18%), duplex rental units (3%), and boarding homes (2%). When asked about recreation, respondents identified five types of park activities that would be desirable within the study area. They include: a playground for children (49%), a passive park (20%), athletic ball fields and courts (15%), bike and walking trails (6%), and picnic areas (6%).

- *Business Owner Responses:* In May 2000, graduate students enrolled in the applied statistics class in the Master of Public Administration program at SSU prepared a “needs assessment” survey of business located within the study area. Of the 85 businesses within the area, 67 business owners responded to the survey. (Note: *The study area boundaries were revised following the completion of the “needs assessment.” According to the Existing Conditions Summary Report, November, 2000, 121 commercial and industrial businesses were identified.*)

Of the existing businesses responding to the survey, the most predominant types of businesses were: vehicle-related establishments such as auto sales, auto repair, auto parts, auto detailing, and gasoline sales (28%); personal care establishments such as beauty salons, barber shops, and nail salons (16%); and restaurants, including national fast-food chains and locally-owned establishments (15%).

Business owners expressed a desire to see other businesses locate within the study area. Desired businesses include a grocery store, more food establishments (including more “up-scale” restaurants), a bakery, an ice cream parlor, and more fast food restaurants. Drug stores, pharmacies, clothing boutiques, professional offices (i.e., medical, legal, insurance and real estate), laundromats, dry-cleaning, and a video store were also mentioned.

Although business owners cite a number of concerns related to the existing state of the study area based on ten “conditions” provided by the survey, the availability of parking was the foremost concern. While the survey reports that all businesses have parking for their customers, it suggests that not enough parking is available. Currently, no off-street public parking facility exists within the area. Given that portions of the study area were developed before the predominance of the automobile, its numerous small lots, and the dependence of on-street parking as the only choice for public parking, the assumption that there is not enough parking, is likely true. Because this issue has not been further studied, it is difficult to make recommendations without further understanding the true nature of the lack of parking. However, public/private parking lots may be one way to remedy this problem as will encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation. The parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance should also be reviewed to identify standards or the lack of standards that may be unnecessarily complicating the current parking situation (e.g., the number of spaces required based on the use and the size of parking spaces and driveway widths that may be excessive). North of Gwinnett Street along MLK and Montgomery Streets, parking will be impacted by the implementation of the *City of Savannah’s Five Year Parking Plan*. This parking plan includes the building of a 900 space parking deck at Liberty Street and Harris Streets. The planned streetscape improvements to MLK indicate an increase in the number of designated on-street spaces within the study area. However, no public parking opportunities are planned within the study area. SDRA’s *2001 Parking Improvement Plan for Downtown Savannah* requests that considerations for parking issues and/or needs affecting the Corridor, south of Gwinnett Street, be included in the Five-Year Plan.

The survey notes that crime, traffic, and trash/litter were also among the top four concerns for business owners. They cite public transportation, “feeling of community,” street conditions and traffic conditions as positive aspects or “strengths” of the study area.

6.2.3 LAND USE AND ZONING STRATEGIES

In terms of land use and zoning, a comprehensive future land use and rezoning plan should be prepared following adoption of the redevelopment plan. Involvement from study area residents and business owners, institutions, neighborhood associations, and other interested stakeholders will be necessary to ensure a shared vision for the future redevelopment of the Corridor.

The following strategies could potentially serve as the foundation for creating the land use and rezoning plan:

- Maintain Mixed-Use Nature of Land Uses: Historically, the Corridor has always been the home to a varied mix of land uses and should remain so. However, the types of uses should be compatible with each other as well as with the vision for redevelopment.
- Reevaluate Zoning Districts: With 14 zoning districts in the study area, tracking which uses are allowed, where they are allowed, and what their development standards are can be difficult. An evaluation of these districts and their permitted uses can address the confusion that some developers experience when trying to determine what they can develop and how it must be developed. The results of this evaluation may determine that certain permitted uses are not be compatible with the vision for the study area such as warehouses, horse stables, and adult entertainment stores.
- Evaluate the I-L, I-L-B, B-C and B-G Zoning Districts: These districts are inappropriate for the study area because they allow too many intensive uses that do not complement the area nor support the vision for its redevelopment. A more thorough review of these uses and the zoning districts is warranted.
- Consider “Cluster Areas”: By clustering certain uses such as entertainment, automobile, or neighborhood conveniences, residents and visitors can choose from a number of options within a concentrated area. An entertainment cluster or zone could include uses such as a movie theater, jazz club, arcade, coffee shop, and ice cream shop. The close proximity to such uses could encourage residents and visitors to spend more time and money in a particular cluster. Each use, on its own, may not be as successful if not located within a cluster.
- Reevaluate Development Standards: In order to return the study area to an environment that is human-scale and pedestrian-friendly, that encourages interaction among residents, workers and visitors, and that creates a “sense of place,” development standards such as lot size, setbacks, height, building coverage, and dwelling density must be revised. Such standards should recognize the historic physical pattern of the area, yet provide some allowance for uses (e.g., a grocery store) that are needed to ensure that the day-to-day needs of residents can be met.
- Create an Overlay District with Design Guidelines: The creation of an overlay district is the method by which design guidelines can be adopted. Such guidelines will ensure that new development and rehabilitative work on existing structures will not compromise the historic and architectural character of the study area. Design guidelines can help protect and boost property values. Through the implementation of design guidelines, design compatibility can be ensured for both new construction and rehabilitation, historically contributing buildings can be saved from immediate demolition, and programs such as the Façade Improvement Program (FIP) Loan Fund can be expanded to include areas of the Corridor that not eligible to receive FIP funds such as Montgomery Street and MLK south of Anderson Street.

- *Adopt Performance Standards:* To allow a mixture of land uses that support the day-to-day needs of residents, encourage investment, and attract visitors, some degree of performance standards will be needed to ensure that such uses complement each other and are compatible with the surrounding area. The adoption of performance standards is tied to issue of land use only and should not be confused with design standards. The degree to which such standards should be pursued must be addressed by the land use and zoning plan. A purely performance-based approach to zoning is not recommended because it could be confusing to the public and require a great deal of staff time to determine if a use is be allowed. A strictly performance-based approach would allow most any land use within the study area as long as it complies with the performance standards adopted for a particular use. However, the inclusion of some sort of modified performance standards would be helpful as it relates to hours of operation, limitation in size of the use and distance from residential use for some types of commercial enterprises that operate in or adjacent to residential areas. Additionally, the standards can serve as a mechanism to prevent potential nuisances to the surrounding neighborhood such as noise, pollution, and traffic.
- *Retain the 3-B and 3-R Zoning Districts:* Because the 3-B and 3-R districts are located within the Planned Victorian Neighborhood Conservation District, they should remain within that district. Any adjustments to these zones should be within the context of the existing conservation district and considered with the assistance of the West Victorian Neighborhood Association.

6.3 CONDITIONS OF EXISTING STRUCTURES

The purpose of this section is to identify and examine the condition of existing structures and infrastructure within the study area. The identification of the condition of structures in the study area will help to determine the level of blight and deterioration.

Section 36, Chapter 61 of the Georgia Annotated Code (The Georgia Redevelopment Powers Act) requires that a predominance of buildings or improvements located within the boundaries of a proposed Urban Redevelopment Area, be classified as “blighted” or in slum condition. For purposes of this report, the Georgia Annotated Code defines “slum area” as an area which “by reason of the presence of a substantial number of slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures; predominance of defective or inadequate street lay-out; faulty lot layout in unsafe conditions; deterioration of site or other improvements; tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land; the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; by having development impaired by airport or transportation noise or by other environmental hazards; or any combination of such factors substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a municipality or county, retards the provisions of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use.”

As a part of the redevelopment planning process, preservation students in the research and survey class at SCAD, along with staff from the SDRA and the City’s Department of Engineering Services, conducted a physical inventory and survey in June 2000 and in March and April 2001 of existing conditions within the study area. 393 structures were surveyed as a part of the report. The City’s Department of Community Planning and Development provided data input and analysis.

The categories used to describe the structural conditions are based on the criteria set forth by the Code Enforcement Division of the Inspections Department of the City of Savannah. A detailed listing and map of conditions is included in Appendix D and E. The categories used to describe the structural conditions are explained below:

- Standard: No problems.
- Minor Substandard: Building has chipped or peeling paint, broken windows, shutters which are broken or in need of paint, curling roof shingles, or requires fascia repair and needs eave work.
- Moderate Substandard: Buildings needs a complete repainting; extensive replacement of shingles, siding or wood; or has damaged or unsafe steps, defective porch, or three or more minor defects.
- Major Substandard: Building has defects in a major component of the building such as a sagging or cracked load-bearing wall, a serious defect in the foundation, missing steps, caved-in roof, deteriorated windows, major replacement of wood siding or shingles needed.
- Dilapidated: Two or more major defects.

A total of 393 structures were surveyed in the study area. Of those 393 structures, 228 (58%) were in standard condition. The remaining 165 (42%) structures were deemed to be substandard. Of the 165 structures categorized as substandard, 18.6% were considered minor/substandard; while the remainder (11.7%) were considered moderate/substandard, major substandard (10.3%) and dilapidated substandard (3.3%). The following sections break down the structural conditions by use.

6.3.1 Residential Structure Conditions

As a part of the physical assessment and inventory, 231 residential structures were surveyed within the initial study area. Results indicate an almost 50/50 even split between residential structures that are in standard condition and those in substandard condition. In further analysis of the structural conditions based on an aggregate total of minor/moderate and major/dilapidated structural conditions 34.6% of the total residential structures surveyed were considered to be minor/moderate substandard, while 15.6% of the total structures surveyed were considered to be major/dilapidated.

6.3.2 Commercial Structure Conditions

Of the 108 commercial structures surveyed 73.1% were determined to be in standard condition and 26.9% were categorized as substandard. A further breakdown of the substandard conditions based on minor/moderate and major/dilapidated substandard conditions indicated that 20.4% of the total commercial structures surveyed were considered to be in minor/moderate substandard condition while 6.5% of the total commercial structures were deemed to be in major/dilapidated substandard conditions.

6.3.3 Non-Residential Structure Conditions

The category Non-Residential includes all institutional, public, recreational, and mixed- use structures. Fifty-four structures in the study area represent this category. The majority of the structures (63%) were categorized as standard while 37% were considered to be substandard. Further analysis based on minor/moderate and major/dilapidated substandard conditions, found 31.5% of the total non-residential structures surveyed in minor/moderate substandard condition and 5.6% in major/dilapidated condition.

6.3.4 Kayton-Frazier Homes (Housing Authority of Savannah—HAS)

Managed by HAS, Kayton-Frazier Homes is located along MLK on the western boundary of the study area. HAS is an autonomous government agency that is governed by a board appointed by the City of Savannah. HAS is not supported by local tax dollars. The agency operates on rental income and federal subsidies.

Together Kayton and Frazier Homes consist of 400 public housing units, of which 236 units are located in Frazier Homes, and 164 units located in Kayton Homes. Of the 236 units located in Frazier Homes, 228

or 96.6% units are in standard condition, and eight or 3.4% units are vacant. All 164 units in Kayton Homes have undergone a \$6.5 million renovation. Ten of the Kayton Homes units are currently under lease. As a part of the improvements to the property, a \$147,000 brick and iron fence buffer was added along MLK in 2000.

The redevelopment strategies included with this plan support Phase II Advisory committee recommendations to explore options to develop single-family and multi-family residential dwelling units similar to the Hope-6 project being implemented for Garden Homes.

6.3.5 Infrastructure Conditions and Threats

Maintaining and improving the infrastructure in the study area is important not only for aesthetic reasons, but also for the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the citizenry. A solid and well maintained infrastructure increases the vitality and appearance of the Corridor. However, challenges exist to meeting such a goal in the study area. In evaluating the infrastructure on or near the 422 parcels (this figure includes vacant lots as detailed in Appendix K) within the study area, several major threats to the physical infrastructure were identified including:

- Litter
- Speeding
- Sidewalk repair
- Areas prone to flooding
- Suspected drug activity
- Loitering

Table 6-C and Appendices F through J illustrate the various infrastructure challenges in the study area and offer graphic illustrations of these concerns.

TABLE 6-C: Infrastructure Conditions and Threats

INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS & THREATS	# OF PARCELS AFFECTED	% OF TOTAL PARCELS
Total Parcels Surveyed	422	-----
Sidewalks Need Repair	90	21.3%
No Sidewalk Existing	64	15.2%
Streets Need Repair	13	3.1%
Flood Prone Areas	65	15.4%
Poor lighting	64	15.2%
Overgrown Trees	47	11.1%
Trees Blocking Light	14	3.3%
Speeding	101	23.9%
Hazardous Traffic Area	41	9.7%
Street Signs Needed	22	5.2%
Screening/Buffering Needed	39	9.2%
Littered/Overgrown Areas	194	46%
Suspected Drug Activity	56	13.3%
Loitering	80	19%

Data Analysis provided by the Departments of Community Planning and Development, and Engineering 2000-2001.

Many of the infrastructure conditions noted above—sidewalk and street improvements, traffic calming measures, drainage, and street signage—will be addressed in the comprehensive streetscape

improvements proposed for MLK from River Street to 52nd Street, and in the proposed development of design guidelines and a design review process for the area south of Anderson Street. Additional attention and resources must be given to policing initiatives such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in addressing lighting, overgrown vegetation, and appropriate screening and buffering techniques. The redevelopment strategies recommended in this plan propose moving forward with streetscape initiatives for Montgomery Street as well. Suspected drug activity, loitering, littering and overgrown areas signal deeper social issues for the communities and neighborhoods involved.

While the many long-term residents add a stable economic and social presence, the existence of single-family, multi-family and mixed-use housing in the study area presents a unique challenge. A lack of civic pride is prevalent and could be associated to the heightened instance of renter-occupied rather than owner-occupied homes in the study area. More than half the residences in the study area (52%) are renter occupied. And, almost one-fourth of the residences are either partially occupied or totally vacant, while the remaining one-fourth of residences are owner occupied. 34.6% of the residential structures surveyed in this report were considered in substandard condition.

Reestablishing civic and community pride is integral to the redevelopment effort. Improving the public infrastructure, addressing issues of crime and loitering and pursuing opportunities for rehabilitation of substandard housing and commercial structures are key components of the revitalization strategies.

6.3.6 Estimated Rehabilitation Costs for Substandard Structures

A major goal of the redevelopment plan is to bring all structures up to standard condition. Of the 231 residential units surveyed, 116 were considered in substandard condition. Thirty-six of those structures were categorized as major/dilapidated. Of the 108 commercial structures surveyed, 27 were considered in substandard condition. Five of those structures were categorized as major/dilapidated. Rehabilitation of these buildings, both residential and commercial, along with new construction, serves as a major cornerstone for the redevelopment plan.

Utilizing a formula developed by the City’s Housing Department, costs for rehabilitation have been determined for residential properties in the study area.

Table 6-D represents the estimated rehabilitation costs for substandard residential units in the study area ranging in condition from minor to dilapidated/condemned. The preliminary cost for residential rehabilitation is estimated to be approximately \$1,830,000.

TABLE 6-D: Rehabilitation Costs for Residential Units

CATEGORY	ESTIMATED COST PER RESIDENTIAL UNIT	NUMBER OF UNITS	TOTAL REHABILITATION COST FOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS
Minor Defects	\$5,000	47	\$235,000
Moderate Defects	\$15,000	33	\$495,000
Major Defects	\$25,000	26	\$650,000
Dilapidated/Condemned	\$45,000	10	\$450,000
Total Estimated Rehabilitation Cost	==>	116	\$1,830,000

Formula courtesy of the City of Savannah Housing Department.

Rehabilitation of commercial buildings is more difficult to estimate because of the complex nature of the scale of the buildings and various materials used in the facades within the study area. Students from the

Preservation Planning class at SCAD, along with SDRA staff, surveyed the façade conditions of the 27 study area structures considered to be substandard. *Means Cost Data* was used to estimate the price of repairs for one square foot of the façade for each of the four conditions based on materials. Façade rehabilitation for structures made of concrete block was estimated at \$9 for minor condition, \$13 for moderate condition, \$17 for major condition and \$21 for severely dilapidated condition. Façade rehabilitation for structures made of masonry or frame construction was estimated at \$14 for minor condition, \$18 for moderate condition, \$22 for major condition and \$26 for severely dilapidated condition. These figures were multiplied by the area of the facades to obtain a figure for rehabilitation of the facades. Tables 6-E and 6-F represent examples of estimated rehabilitation costs for typical commercial structures found within the study area—a single story commercial façade of concrete block and a two-story commercial structure of masonry and frame—based on the building’s condition, square footage, dimensions of façade and materials.

TABLE 6-E: Rehabilitative Costs: One Story Example

Material	Square footage	Dimensions	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severely Dilapidated
Concrete Block	1300	108ft in length 12 ft in height	\$9/square foot	\$13/square foot	\$17/square foot	\$21/square foot
Estimated Rehabilitation Cost	=====>	=====>	\$11,664	\$16,848	\$22,032	\$27,216

TABLE 6-F: Rehabilitative Costs: Two Story Example

Material	Square footage	Dimensions	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severely Dilapidated
Masonry/ Frame	1032	43ft in length 24 ft in height	\$14/square foot	\$18/square foot	\$22/square foot	\$26/square foot
Rehab Cost	=====>	=====>	\$14,448	\$18,576	\$22,704	\$26,832

The total cost of façade rehabilitation for the 27 substandard commercial structures identified in this study is estimated at \$316,176. A detailed breakdown of commercial façade rehabilitation estimates is included in Appendix E.

7.0 BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of this Chapter is to identify and assess the existing conditions and needs of businesses and residents located in the study area and their perceptions of the strengths, weaknesses and threats facing the area.

7.1 BUSINESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As a part of the redevelopment planning process, graduate students enrolled in the applied statistics class in the Master of Public Administration program at SSU conducted an assessment in May 2000 of the needs and conditions of the businesses located within the initial study area. Of the 85 businesses located within the study area, 67 participated in the survey. *(Note: The study area boundaries were revised following the completion of this survey, 121 businesses exist within the revised boundaries.)*

Of the 67 businesses surveyed, the majority (70%) were African-American owned. Of the African-American owned businesses, 71% were owned by men. The majority (79%) of the owners were over the age of 35. The predominant businesses within the study area were vehicle sales/maintenance, barber shops/beauty salon, and restaurant.

These establishments serve patrons who live in the study area, outside the Corridor and outside Savannah providing a service as well as an employment base for the area. Four full-time employees and two part-time employees were indicated, on average, per business surveyed. Five businesses reported having ten or more employees.

Businesses participating in the survey provide a somewhat stable picture of the economic and financial condition of the existing businesses within the study area. The majority of the businesses surveyed (52.2%) have operated for 10 years or longer. Nearly one-third of businesses surveyed have operated for 20 years or more. Seventy-five percent of the businesses surveyed were financed with personal funds. Only 17% of the respondents reported receiving funds from local banking institutions. Eighty-three percent of the respondents have no intention of leaving the study area in the foreseeable future, and 73% of the survey participants reported that business was either good or excellent over the last year. Most importantly, over one-third (36%) of the respondents plan on expanding their businesses in the near future.

When asked whether their businesses needed assistance with the areas of funding/financing, marketing, computers/technology, human resources/employment or taxes/legal, participants indicated that technology and financing were the primary needs of businesses in the study area. Of the businesses surveyed, only 16% reported that they had attempted to obtain financing for renovations or expansions. Of those businesses, only five were successful in obtaining financing. Thirty-four respondents (51%) reported they needed technology/computer assistance.

In addition to financial and technology issues for businesses in the study area, a need for technical assistance in the areas of employment/human resources issues and tax/legal issues was also identified. Forty-five percent of the respondents viewed employment/human resources issues to be a problem area for them while nearly 30% of the respondents stated they needed assistance with taxes or legal issues.

7.1.2 Business Community Perception of the Study Area

The following sections discuss responses received when survey participants were asked to rate streets, sidewalks, lighting, trash/litter, parking, public transportation, traffic, crime, housing, and a “feeling of community” in the study area using a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest score possible.

7.1.2.1 Streetscape Conditions

When asked to assess the streetscape conditions (i.e., streets, sidewalks, lighting, trash/litter) within the study area, respondents expressed the least satisfaction with the proliferation of trash and litter in the study area. Nearly 60% of the respondents classified trash/litter conditions as either fair or poor. Nearly half of the respondents felt the streets and lighting were in good condition while only 40% stated the sidewalks were in good or fair condition. In terms of transportation-related issues (parking, public transportation, and traffic), the respondents were generally satisfied; however, most businesses reported that parking is a problem for their customers, but nevertheless, gave an approval rating of 95% for the public transportation system and an 85% approval rating for traffic conditions in the study area.

7.1.2.2 Quality of Life

For the purposes of this study, “quality of life” conditions were quantified as concerning crime, housing, and a feeling of community. Most respondents (55%) classified crime as a major concern. A like number of respondents felt that housing was a major issue impacting their respective businesses. A multivariate analysis based on age, gender, location of residence, business type or current relocation plans were used to determine the respondents’ viewpoint concerning crime. Respondents indicated that they were “concerned about crime regardless of their demographic characteristics or business characteristics.” Respondents reported similar feelings on the issue of housing as well.

Respondents also reported strong ties to the community. Eighty-five percent of the respondents expressed a strong feeling of community, which no doubt can be attributed to the long tenure of many of the businesses in the study area.

7.2 RESIDENTIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As a part of the redevelopment planning process, students with the Business Research and Marketing class at SSU conducted a residential survey to address the needs and perceptions of the residents in the study area. Residents were asked to give their opinions in relation to public safety, housing development, commercial and business development, and neighborhood conditions.

A three-pronged approach was used to elicit responses from neighborhood residents – mailings, telephone calls, and direct on-site interviews with residents. Initially, 350 surveys were mailed with only 17 responses. Using information from city directories, all listed telephone numbers in the neighborhood were contacted at least twice yielding an additional 43 responses. In the personal interview phase, the students canvassed the targeted neighborhoods with a neighborhood representative and received another 83 responses, for a total of 143 completed surveys.

In addition to the questions pertaining to their perception about neighborhood conditions, residents were also asked their age, income level, means of transportation and home ownership status. Of the 143 respondents, 86.7% were African-American; 76.3% earned less than \$25,000 per year; 70.0% rent their homes; 21.7% are age 65 or older; and 21.0% use CAT as their primary means of transportation.

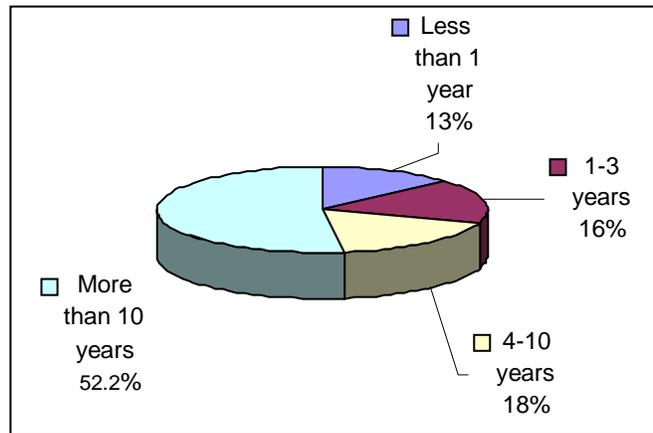
7.3 CONCLUSIONS RESULTING FROM NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

An important element in understanding the perception of neighborhood residents and the business community toward the study area is to know what attracted them to the area originally, and why they continue to stay.

The majority of the businesses surveyed (52.2%) have operated for 10 years or longer within the study area while nearly one-third have operated for twenty years or more. (Figure 7-1) The majority of residents responding to the survey indicated that they had lived in their neighborhoods an average of 13.6 years, while 78% of residents responded that they had no plans to relocate. Affordability topped the reasons that residents were originally attracted to their neighborhoods.

FIGURE 7-1: Business Tenure

The top three qualities identified by residents regarding their neighborhoods were friendliness, convenience and affordability. The top three dislikes identified were crime, drug traffic, noise and city services related to roads, parking and lighting. To improve their neighborhood, residents want to improve and renovate homes, preserve trees and historic homes, increase police protection, improve roads and playgrounds, and target litter.



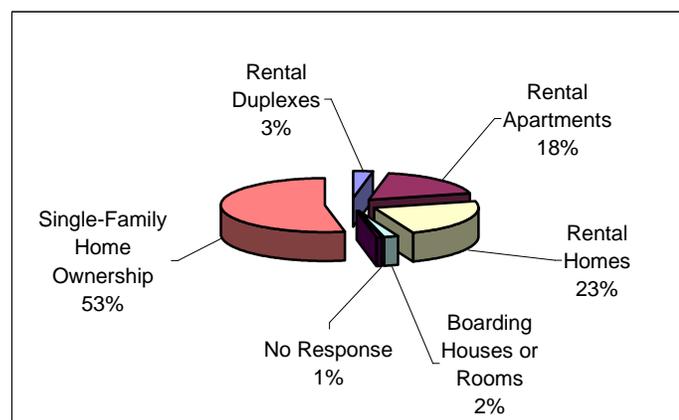
The respondents to both needs surveys also articulated several hopes for the economic development of the study area. Many of the businesses are not only concerned with their own businesses but also with more economic development taking place in the study area. Thirty respondents reported that new retail services are needed in the service area while 25% stated new service oriented businesses were needed. Many respondents would like to see a new major grocery store. Others reported a need for more restaurants and bakeries as well as better access to drugstores, pharmacies and upscale clothing boutiques. The availability of professional services in the study area, such as law firms, doctor’s offices, insurance firms and real estate services are also mentioned. Other service oriented business types such as laundry and dry cleaning stores as well as video rental outlets were also desirable to respondents.

Residents indicated that neighborhood businesses have had a positive impact on their neighborhoods. Residential respondents suggested more grocery stores, pharmacies, medical offices, daycare centers and bookstores/video outlets as expanded business uses for the study area. Additionally, residents indicated that additional recreational parks, including children’s playgrounds and open spaces with benches and gardens, were desirable.

A major concern throughout interviews was the need for improving the aesthetic nature of the area. One respondent stated, “*The City needs to improve the way the area looks in general...It looks bad and will hurt our ability to attract new businesses in the area.*” Inclusion in the revitalization process is also a key concern as business owners and managers hope that they and other groups such as neighborhood organizations are involved in the process.

FIGURE 7-2: Desired Housing

Unification of merchants in the study area, increased opportunities for African-American owned businesses, and the creation of a merchant’s association for Corridor and/or study area businesses were indicated as prime interests. Eighty-five percent of the respondents stated they would be interested in joining and/or receiving information on joining a merchant’s association.



Housing availability, affordability, and condition was indicated as a major concern for area residents and businesses. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents to the residential survey indicated that they were renting their homes. More than half the residential respondents (53%) indicated that they would like to see more single-family home ownership. (Figure 7-2)

By addressing the issues of crime, trash and litter, abandoned buildings, run-down housing, and encouraging and facilitating new and existing business development, along with encouraging opportunities for single-family home ownership, respondents believe the economic viability and livability of the study area will improve.

8.0 DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS OF GENERAL AREA

U.S. Census data for 2000 currently provides only limited information regarding race and population, while Census data for 1990 provides a more detailed picture of the study area in several categories. Only comparable tract information, however, was available to offer a comparison of 1990 and 2000 Census data.

In order to better understand the demographics of the study area, SDRA compared four of the eight neighborhoods included in the study area utilizing 1990 Census data provided by the City's Department of Planning and Community Development and the Metropolitan Planning Commission.

TABLE 8-A: 1990 U.S. Census Figures

Neighborhood	Metropolitan	Cann Park	Feiler Park	Cuyler-Brownsville	City
Population	2478	1113	522	3448	137,560
Number of Households	715	447	175	1384	51,890
Average House Hold income	\$18,477	\$21,201	\$20,731		
% Below poverty level	33.9%	20.4%	32.6%	48.1%	22.6%
Black	2459	1070	446	3440	
White	16	16	69	8	

Based on the numbers in Table 8-A the following general assumptions can be made: A large number of African-Americans resided in the study area in 1990; the majority of the study area, except for the Cann Park Neighborhood, was below the poverty level for the city in 1990.

Utilizing population data from the 2000 U.S. Census, seven Census Tracts—12, 13, 17, 18, 23, 24, and 28—were used to draw general conclusions about changes that have occurred over the last ten years.

Over the last ten years, an 8.4% decrease in population has occurred. In 1990, the Census indicated that the population for the 7 tracts was 11,851. In 2000, the Census indicates that the population has decreased to 9,936. The area is predominately African-American (73.3%) with 10.4% of the population being white. However, the 2000 Census data indicates an increase in the number of whites by 52% (1,034) and a decrease in the number of African Americans by 22% (8,695). The remaining residents indicated in the 2000 Census tracts including the study area represented American Indian and Alaskan Native (10), Asian (39), Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders (1), Hispanic/Latino (112), and other races (56).

Once comprehensive data is available from the 2000 U.S. Census, further comparisons can be made.

9.0 CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

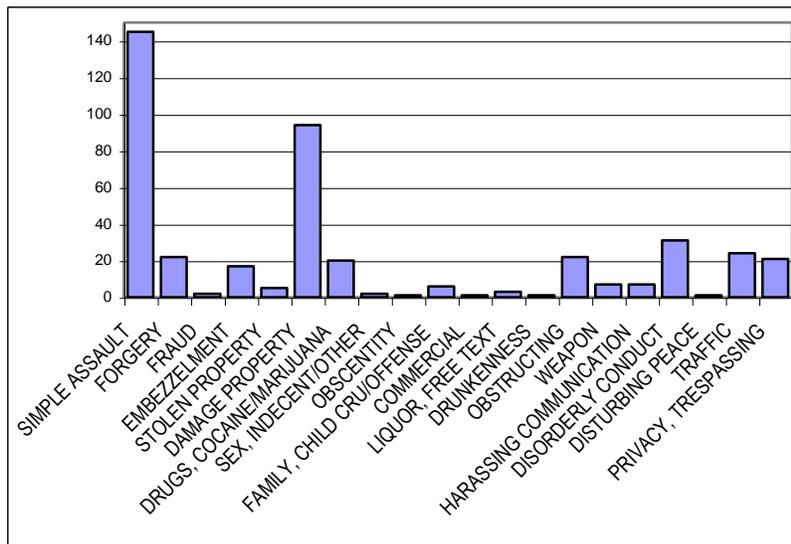
The issue of crime and public safety is always a concern for inner-city residents and businesses. In order to ensure a vibrant and safe community the issue must be addressed. The issue of crime and public safety is a concern for all city residents and businesses. The perception of an area as being unsafe can hinder efforts toward revitalization. To illustrate where criminal activity has occurred in the study area, the Savannah Police Department (SPD) provided statistics on reported crimes that took place during 2000 from January 1-December 31, 2000. This section describes the type and frequency of crimes reported. This section also offers insight on effective tactics that focus on preventative rather than punitive measures in combating crime and its effects.

9.1 CRIME STATISTICS

According to SPD, 306 Part I crimes and 432 Part II crimes were committed within the boundaries of the study area in 2000.

The SPD categorizes a crime as either a Part I or Part II crime. Part I crimes are categorized as the major felony offenses of homicide, kidnapping, sexual assault, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, arson, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. Part II crimes consist mainly of lesser felonies and misdemeanors such as simple assault, forgery, embezzlement, stolen property, damaged property, child abuse and narcotics possession.

FIGURE 9-1: Breakdown of Part II Crimes



The most reported crime in 2000 was simple assault with 145 incidents constituting one-third (33.5%) of the Part II crimes reported in 2000. In 2000, 94 incidents (22% overall) involving some sort of property damage (i.e., vandalism, graffiti) were reported, while narcotics possession, child abuse, embezzlement, forgery, disorderly conduct and obstruction of justice comprised another third of all Part II felonies reported. (Figure 9-1)

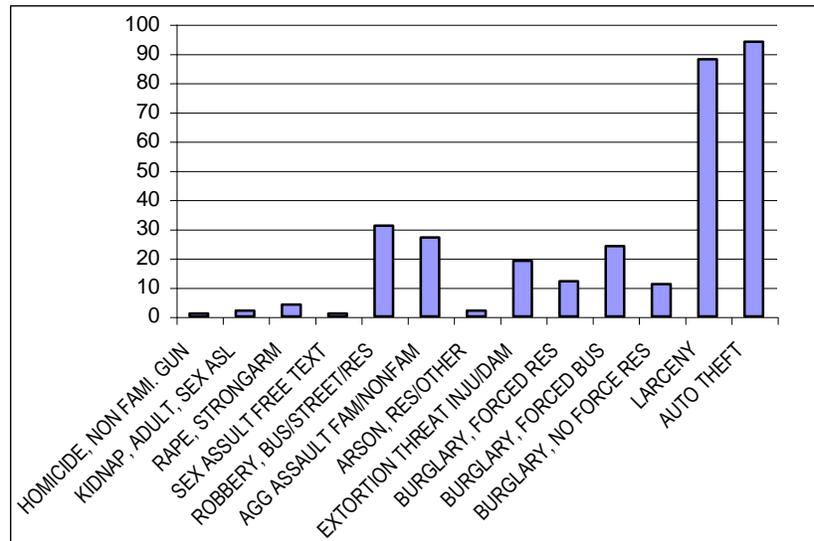
Crimes against persons (homicide, rape, kidnapping, etc.)

constituted a small number of the reported Part I offenses. Overall, crimes against persons constituted 27% (85 out of 306 reported incidents). Auto theft (30%); larceny (26%); burglary (15%); robbery, (10%), and extortion (6.2%) topped the list of crimes reported in 2000. (Figure 9-2)

Twenty-seven incidents of aggravated assault (9%) were reported, while homicide, kidnapping, sexual assault and rape comprised a combined total of 2.6 % of the total Part I crimes reported in 2000.

However, crimes against property reported in the Part I category leads categories considered to be crimes against persons. Arson, burglary, larceny, and auto theft constituted 72% (221 out of 306 reported incidents) of the reported offenses within the study area. A closer analysis of the larceny incidents shows 43 out of 80 larceny incidents (53%) were auto related (i.e., stealing auto parts, auto burglary). Auto thefts constituted the largest portion of crimes reported in the study area with 92 incidents (30%) reported in 2000. When combining the auto related larcenies with the number of auto thefts reported in the study area, auto related crimes constitute 44% of the Part I offenses reported in 2000.

FIGURE 9-2: Breakdown of Part I Crimes



A noticeable pattern is indicated relating to where crime takes place. According to figures from the SPD, the Kayton-Frazier Homes, Montgomery and 34th Streets, MLK and 40th Street, Montgomery and Pearl Streets all have higher concentrations of crime incidents reported. The times of day when Part I major felony crimes occur are similar to other areas of the city. They are as follows:

- Assaults – 4 p.m.-12 p.m.
- Homicides – all times
- Rape – 4 p.m.-12 p.m.
- Residential Burglary – 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Commercial Burglary – 10 p.m.-4 a.m.
- Auto Theft – 8 p.m.-2 a.m.
- Larceny – all times

These statistics indicate a need for more preventive measures in the study area. Fifty-five percent of the respondents to the residential survey conducted in the study area by SSU in fall 2000 indicated that crime was their number one concern. Eighty-five percent of the respondents to the residential survey stated that they would be interested in joining and/or receiving information on joining a merchant’s association. An alliance of area stakeholders an existing or new merchants or businesses association can work in cooperation with increased law enforcement presence to have a substantial impact on criminal activity as well as negative perceptions about the Corridor.

9.2 CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Decisions regarding the use and management of the physical environment can have a broader effect on security throughout a neighborhood. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a program designed to view crime prevention through design and management of the physical environment of buildings, residential neighborhoods, and business areas with the eventual impact of reducing crime and the fear of crime.

The physical conditions survey conducted by SCAD in June 2000 identified inadequate lighting as a concern within the study area. Due to placement or blockage of the light fixture by a tree, 15.2% of the parcels surveyed have poor lighting. During the past year, SPD has made a correlation between inadequate lighting and crime. Dark streets give several advantages to criminals. Illicit activity is harder to observe, and darkness makes it easier for a criminal to gain control of a victim. Litter, overgrown grass, shrubbery, and unkempt lots topped the list of concerns in the study area with an overwhelming 194 of the 422 parcels surveyed reported as overgrown, unkempt, and litter strewn. Not surprisingly, loitering was reported on 80 of the 422 parcels surveyed, while suspected drug activity was reported on 56 of the parcels surveyed. (Table 6-C: Infrastructure Conditions and Threats, pp 37)

The CPTED strategies of addressing the issues of inadequate or poorly placed lighting and overgrown vegetation, while promoting appropriate screening and buffering techniques, along with enhanced property maintenance enforcement should be incorporated into any new design strategies for new and existing development within the study area. Additionally, adoption by the City of the International Property Maintenance Code would further strengthen compliance and enforcement initiatives.



Another crime prevalent in the study area is graffiti. This form of vandalism is a visible blight to our downtown community. In 2000, SDRA launched a unique community volunteer effort to abate graffiti within Greater Downtown Savannah. Within a six-month period graffiti was successfully removed or masked at 47 sites along MLK, Montgomery Street and throughout the historic district. Volunteers from the Downtown Neighborhood Association, Historic District Residents Association, Hunter Army Air Base, SCAD, Windsor Forest High School, and Keep Savannah Beautiful joined SDRA in dedicating their Saturdays to participate in this community program. Corridor businesses, Thrifty Hardware Company and B&B Paints joined with Mopper-Stapen Realty, Home Depot and the City of Savannah to support the effort through material or cash donations.



As a result of the success of the volunteer effort, the City of Savannah has assigned graffiti removal and abatement efforts to the Property Maintenance Department. Additionally, with funding allocated through the City of Savannah, SDRA has implemented a graffiti reimbursement program to continue the abatement effort downtown in 2001. The program allows SDRA to reimburse property and business owners for the purchase of graffiti removal and masking products such as paint, chemical solvents and resistant coatings. Keep Savannah Beautiful was also provided funding by the City of Savannah to develop a comprehensive marketing plan to educate the community about graffiti removal and assistance efforts.

The desire of business owners to join or form a merchants association should be further explored to allow for a unified voice against issues of suspected criminal activity, property maintenance and enforcement. Additionally, an association would encourage a network to allow businesses to interact regarding issues of importance to business development and neighborhood revitalization.

The continued efforts of the SPD to provide community policing programs such as COPs—Community Oriented Policing, the COMPSTAT program, to track and target criminal activity, and the newly initiated walking beat officers—should be encouraged to extend to areas south of Gwinnett Street, along the Corridor. Additionally, recent discussions regarding the implementation of an Ambassador Program for downtown Savannah should be further explored and expanded to include areas south of Gwinnett Street.

Crime prevention today benefits from two strategies for protecting neighborhoods from crime and the fear of crime – prevention and punishment. Prevention is the preferred method of solving the issue of crime. While this redevelopment plan and strategies cannot address all of the social issues affecting the study area, we can begin to rebuild the neighborhood character and civic pride necessary to sustain a strong and vibrant community.

10.0 REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The purpose of this Chapter is to present a range of possible strategies that can be explored to further the revitalization efforts in the planning area. An accompanying work plan of the proposed strategies is included in Chapter 11 of this document. The information contained in these two Chapters is intended to guide the staff and community in the area of planning. Any future policy, land-use or programmatic change proposals resulting from these strategies will require Council approval prior to implementation.

As a part of the redevelopment planning process, residents, business and property owners within the study area came together to create a vision statement to serve as a guide for redevelopment. The established vision recognizes the appeal of the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor as a historically, architecturally, and culturally diverse area whose residents, business owners and visitors include people from all age groups, income level, and ethnic backgrounds. So that this vision can become a reality redevelopment strategies were developed at a series of public work sessions with study area residents, business and property owners, community and civic leaders, organizations, and institutions during the planning process.

Members of the Phase II Advisory Committee along with other community and civic leaders were engaged to craft the strategies that could be used to aid the revitalization process. In two public planning sessions, staff facilitated a SWOT analysis to determine key issues facing the revitalization. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis was used in identifying core issues in the planning areas of urban design, public relations, public safety, land use and zoning, economic development, and housing. Staff and the Phase II Advisory Subcommittees further developed the core issues into overall goals with measurable objectives. Specific strategies to achieve the objectives were then formed.

10.1 URBAN DESIGN

10.1.1 GOAL: Promote compatible and appropriate land uses.

Objective 1: Establish design guidelines for new construction and rehabilitation for new and existing businesses in the study area by December 2003.

Implementation Strategy: Complete the inventory of buildings eligible for the City's Historic Buildings Map, south of Victory Drive along the Corridor and develop design guidelines for the Corridor, south of Anderson Street.

Objective 2: Review land use policies and determine which policies can aid in the revitalization of the Corridor.

Implementation Strategy: Pursue the creation of a Historical Improvement District through a new overlay district and implement performance based zoning for non-conforming uses for the study area. Also identify possible enhancement and expansion of greenspace in the area, especially on Montgomery Street.

10.1.2 GOAL: Improve streetscape.

Objective 1: Implement the recommendations of the Streetscape Improvement Plan to improve streetscape by 2007.

Implementation Strategy: Encourage public and private parties to buy into the streetscape design and improvements. Involve appropriate public agencies, private and community-based organizations in the process.

Objective 2: Remove or relocate overhead wiring, improve lighting for pedestrians and vehicles, and enhance pedestrian safety with crosswalks and widening medians. Identify sites for potential historical monuments and markers.

Implementation Strategy: Engage the technical advice of the various engineering departments of all major utilities as well as city technical staff to determine the feasibility of removing or relocating the overhead wiring and new lighting.

10.1.3 GOAL: Initiate a streetscape planning process for Montgomery Street.

Objective 1: Seek funding sources to initiate streetscape planning effort for Montgomery Street.

Implementation Strategy: Use new and existing resources expand the Streetscape Plan to include Montgomery Street and intersecting blocks.

Objective 2: Initiate community visioning process for streetscape improvements to Montgomery Street.

Implementation Strategy: Draw on partners through City of Savannah, SCAD, business, residents and property owners to develop comprehensive vision for improvements from River Street to 52nd Street.

10.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS

10.2.1 GOAL: Renew faith, interest and involvement in community and revitalization efforts from groups within and outside the area.

Objective 1: Enhance opportunities for community and civic involvement.

Implementation Strategy: Increase the involvement of adjoining neighborhood associations with the assistance of community leaders, the ministerial association, and agencies such as the Community Services Division of the City of Savannah. Also create programs that will increase interaction among, business and property owners as well as residents.



10.2.2 GOAL: Encourage greater support from area churches and civic organizations.

Implementation Strategy: Promote youth involvement through churches and other civic organizations. Develop community projects such as “adopt a block” to increase visibility and involvement from the community. Heighten awareness of property maintenance programs.

10.3 PUBLIC SAFETY

10.3.1 GOAL: Create a safe area with a positive image that will aid the revitalization process.

Objective 1: Reduce the overall crime rate by five percent annually.

Implementation Strategy: Facilitate community involvement through various existing programs administered by the Savannah Police Department, the City of Savannah’s Economic Development Department, Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement Divisions such as CPTED, Crime Stoppers and graffiti abatement.



10.3.2 GOAL: Increase the involvement of neighborhood residents and businesses.

Objective 1: Incorporate programs that will increase cooperation among area merchants, residents and area law enforcement agencies.

Implementation Strategy: See implementation strategy for Objective 1.

10.3.3 GOAL: Increase positive opportunities for youth in study area

Objective 1: Facilitate the implementation of programs that will create opportunities for positive youth interaction in the study area.

Implementation Strategy: Facilitate the involvement of various youth organizations such as the Youth Futures Program and Kayton-Frazier's "Mob Squad" in community projects such as graffiti abatement and civic art programs.

10.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

10.4.1 GOAL: Develop or modify programs to aid in facilitating business development and ensuring business retention along the Corridor

Objective 1: Assess current business development programs offered.

Implementation Strategy: Coordinate with the City of Savannah's Economic Development Department to create and/or modify programs and tools to aid in facilitating business development and retention. Expand outreach to existing businesses to highlight various programs for business development. Implement tracking program for business prospects. Also track economic and business trends through a formal tracking system for gross retail sales.

Objective 2: Strengthen awareness of available resources for existing and potential business owners within the study area.

Implementation Strategy: See implementation strategy for Objective 1.

10.4.2 GOAL: Provide opportunities for business and property development and expansion

Objective 1: Provide technical assistance to new or existing property owners to prepare them for obtaining financial assistance for business start-up or assistance.

Implementation Strategy: Develop incentive programs, grant incentives, create step financing mechanisms to improve credit worthiness, utilize and expand the City Microloan program organize stakeholders for joint investment opportunities along the Corridor. Also expand the boundaries of the Façade Improvement Program Loans and amend the current policy and procedures manual to allow greater uses.

10.4.3 GOAL: Develop new initiatives that will foster an improved business climate along the Corridor and facilitate new business development.

Objective 1: Help 15 new or existing businesses obtain financial assistance for business development or improvement from 2001-2005.

Implementation Strategy: Through coordination with the City of Savannah's Economic Development Department, assess the study area's current economic conditions, identify challenges to creating and sustaining businesses and identify opportunities for growth. Identify opportunities for business clusters to complement and support existing businesses. Promote cultural history and assets of the Corridor to the community.

Objective 2: Facilitate the opening of at least 10 new businesses from 2001-2005.

Implementation Strategy: Advocate and create incentive to encourage placement of businesses that provide needed services to the Corridor. Maintain database of worker skills and retail space.

Promote programs that encourage home-based businesses along the Corridor. Encourage displaced business on Broughton Street to re-locate to the Corridor.

10.4.4 GOAL: Increase the involvement of the traditional banking community in business and commercial investment along the Corridor.

Objective 1: Encourage stronger relationship between local banking institutions and business and property owners.

Implementation Strategy: Use the tenets and provisions of the Community Reinvestment Act to spur investment from major banking entities in Savannah and encourage these banking institutions to be more responsive to the needs of the targeted community. Pursue the possible creation of a business and/or development Loan Pool for the Corridor with major banking institutions. Encourage banks to establish branches along the corridor to increase interaction with the community.

10.5 HOUSING

10.5.1 GOAL: Create an area free of substandard residential units

Objective 1: Facilitate the development of at least 10 infill residential units and the rehabilitation of 10 existing residential units from 2001-2005.

Implementation Strategy: Identify sub-standard housing that could be rehabilitated and locations where in-fill residential development could occur.

10.5.2 GOAL: Facilitate opportunities for homeownership with existing residents

Objective 1: Increase the number of homeowners along the Corridor by fifteen percent by 2005.

Implementation Strategy: Working jointly with HAS and the City of Savannah, identify and market existing programs that help existing residents make transition from renters to homeowners. Partner with HAS and the City of Savannah in pursuing ways to improve public housing and opportunities for single-family home ownership.

10.6 LAND USE AND ZONING GOALS

10.6.1 GOAL: Create a land use plan for the Corridor.

Objective 1: Create a land use plan for the Corridor that will: 1) carry out the vision for the Redevelopment Plan in terms of land use, and 2) provide a foundation for any changes to existing land development policies, such as zoning.

Implementation Strategy: Seek assistance of all interested stakeholders after the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan by the Mayor and Aldermen in a process to be led by staff from MPC, the City's Department of Community Development and Planning, and SDRA.

Objective 2: Link the land use plan for the Corridor with the City's Comprehensive Plan in order to guide and ensure that future policy decisions (such as rezoning requests) will be consistent with the established vision identified in the Redevelopment Plan.

Implementation Strategy: Seek adoption of the Corridor land use plan as a small area study to the City's Comprehensive Plan. MPC staff, the MPC Board, and the Mayor and Aldermen will be responsible for this objective.

10.6.2 GOAL: Establish an environment within the Corridor free of incompatible and inappropriate land uses.

Objective 1: Evaluate the existing zoning for the Corridor and recommend changes that will support the vision for redevelopment in terms of land use and development standards. Identify

other zoning-related areas such as parking, buffering, and signage that may currently aid the development of incompatible and inappropriate land uses. Recommend changes, if necessary.

Implementation Strategy: Establish a Land Use and Zoning Committee to evaluate existing uses and development standards to determine necessary changes, if any. Encourage participation by Corridor residents and business owners, local design professionals, Historic Savannah Foundation, college students (particularly those pursuing design-related and public policy degrees), and interested citizens. Seek assistance from applicable City departments such as Traffic Engineering, Park and Tree, and Inspections.

Objective 2: Maintain mixed used nature of the Corridor through the pursuit of appropriate zoning (including development standards, performance standards, and design guidelines). Consider clustering of business types such as entertainment, automobile or neighborhood conveniences as recommended in the Revitalization Plan for Phase I of the Corridor.

Implementation Strategy: See Implementation Strategy for Objective 1.

Objective 3: Evaluate the number of zoning districts to ensure that the districts complement each other in terms of allowed land uses and development standards to 1) help create physical unity; 2) create less confusion for those interested in investing in the area regarding what can be developed and how it can be developed; 3) reduce the number of variance requests that often result because some applicable zoning requirements are inconsistent with the historical pattern of development within the Corridor.

Implementation Strategy: See Implementation Strategy for Objective 1.

Objective 4: Eliminate zoning districts (such as the I-L, I-L-B, B-C, and B-G districts) that allow intensive, incompatible land uses and inappropriate development standards that do not serve the vision for redevelopment.

Implementation Strategy: See Implementation Strategy for Objective 1.

Objective 5: Pursue greater use of performance standards to allow an array of land uses that will support the day-to-day needs of Corridor residents and workers, yet prevent potential nuisances that may otherwise occur.

Implementation Strategy: See Implementation Strategy for Objective 1.

10.6.3 GOAL: Preserve the historical and architectural character of the Corridor.

Objective 1: Reevaluate existing development standards and design guidelines, then create (where necessary) and seek enactment of new or amended standards and guidelines by the Mayor and Aldermen to ensure that infill development and rehabilitative work on existing structures will not compromise the historical and architectural integrity of the Corridor.

Implementation Strategy: Establish a Land Use and Zoning Committee to evaluate existing uses and development standards to determine necessary changes, if any. Encourage participation by Corridor residents and business owners, local design professionals, Historic Savannah Foundation, college students (particularly those pursuing design-related and public policy degrees), and interested citizens.

Objective 2: Include structures identified between Gwinnett Street and Victory Drive as "historic" on the City's Historic Buildings Map. Complete survey of possible historic structures from Victory Drive to 52nd Street and pursue inclusion onto the Historic Buildings Map.

Implementation Strategy: Completion of historic structure survey by the City Historic Preservation Officer. Qualified buildings should then be presented to the MPC Board for

recommendation to the Mayor and Aldermen for consideration of placement onto the City's Historic Buildings Map.

Objective 3: Establish demolition and relocation standards for areas of the Corridor that currently have none.

Implementation Strategy: Establish a Land Use and Zoning Committee to evaluate existing uses and development standards to determine necessary changes, if any. Encourage participation by Corridor residents and business owners, local design professionals, Historic Savannah Foundation, college students (particularly those pursuing design-related and public policy degrees), and interested citizens. Survey demolition and relocation standards currently used by the City in the Landmark, Victorian, and Cuyler-Brownsville historic districts as well as ordinances from other municipalities to determine the most appropriate process.

Objective 4: Hold an educational workshop (or workshops) for Corridor property owners to: 1) explain the purpose of design review and demolition and relocation standards, and 2) obtain feedback after a draft of potential design guidelines and demolition and relocation standards is available.

Implementation Strategy: Applicable City staff, including MPC, HSF, and SDRA, should present this information to the public. Coordinate with Historic Savannah Foundation to ensure duplication of process and/or over-lap of study areas does not occur as guidelines are developed for other historic neighborhoods downtown. Utilize SCAD's Preservation Department students in the development of the guidelines.

Objective 5: Retain the existing design guidelines for the West Victorian neighborhood to avoid the possibility of two design review processes within the Victorian District.

Implementation Strategy: Maintain status quo. Any change within this district should be within the context of the entire district. Coordinate with HSF regarding their neighborhood design review initiatives.

Objective 6: Review potential for expanding redevelopment designation to include portions of MLK and Montgomery Street, north of Gwinnett Street

Implementation Strategy: Begin surveys of area to determine eligibility for redevelopment designation.

11.0 WORK PLAN

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
URBAN DESIGN	
Goal: Promote compatible and appropriate land uses.	
Complete the inventory of buildings south of Victory Drive for the City’s Historic Buildings Map along the Corridor	SDRA/SCAD/MPC/HRB
Incorporate urban design techniques such as landscaping for public housing developments and the surrounding neighborhoods	SDRA/SPD/ HSF/HAS
Consider establishing a Historical Improvement District as an over-lay district for the planning area	SDRA/MPC/ HRB/HSF
Incorporate performance-based zoning for non-conforming uses in the planning area	SDRA/MPC/City Of Savannah
Designate areas that allow for development of incubator site to assist business development	SDRA/MPC/City Of Savannah/Entrepreneurial Center/Chamber Of Commerce
Complete the development of design guidelines for MLK and Montgomery Street, south of Anderson Street and Commercial Façade Renderings.	SDRA/HRB/SCAD/HSF
Aggressively market Façade Improvement Loan Programs	SDRA
Include Montgomery Street in the design guidelines process	SDRA/SCAD/MPC/HRB/HSF
Enhance existing green-space for recreation on MLK while identifying opportunities for additional green-space development on Montgomery Street	SDRA/Park And Tree
Goal: Improve streetscape.	
Support the implementation of the Streetscape Improvement Plan	SDRA/City Of Savannah/ Stakeholders
Support implementation of the plan by removing or relocating overhead wiring, and improving lighting for pedestrians and vehicles	SDRA/BPD/Stakeholders
Encourage public and private parties to “buy into” the streetscape design and improvements	SDRA/City Of Savannah
Enhance the gateways into the area as part of the overall plan and identify potential new gateways along the study area	SDRA/ Park And Tree
Identify potential sites for historical monuments and markers that would enhance gateway opportunities and reflect	SDRA/ Monument Commission

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
the history and values of the Corridor	
Use the resources of the urban forestry program to enhance and maintain the area tree canopy	BPD/Park And Tree/GA. Urban Forestry Commission
Goal: Initiate a streetscape planning process for Montgomery Street.	
Seek funding sources to initiate streetscape planning effort for Montgomery Street from River Street to 52nd Street	SDRA/BPD
Support incorporation of the intersecting blocks between MLK and Montgomery Street in the master planning process for MLK Streetscape Improvements	SDRA/BPD
Initiate community visioning process for streetscape improvements to Montgomery Street	SDRA/BPD
PUBLIC RELATIONS	
Goal: Renew faith, interest and involvement in community revitalization efforts from groups within and outside the area.	
Develop a video history of cultural heritage to educate the general public about the area	SDRA/ PIO/Civil Rights Museum
Develop symbols and/or logos on stickers, posters and banners to convey community spirit and vision (<i>i.e., The Spirit is Back</i>)	SDRA/BPD/PIO/SCAD
Increase the involvement of adjoining neighborhoods	SDRA/CPD/Community Services/NIA/Civil Rights Museum
Heighten interaction with the Ministerial Alliances	SDRA/ Community Services/ Corridor Churches/ Ministerial Alliance
Goal: Encourage greater support from area churches and civic organizations.	
Link church leadership to community leadership in redevelopment processes	SDRA/ Community Services/Youth Futures/ Economic Development Dept.
Promote youth involvement through churches and other civic organizations	SDRA/Community Services
Develop community projects (such adopt-a-block) that will increase visibility and involvement on the Corridor	SDRA/SPD/Community Services
Organize at least two annual cultural/community events to increase interaction with residents and business owners along the Corridor	Community Services/SPD/ SDRA/Civil Rights Museum
Create annual awards/recognition programs as an incentive to encourage business, property owners and residents to take pride in their community by maintaining their property	SDRA/City Of Savannah
Heighten awareness of existing property maintenance codes	SDRA/BPD

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Link Greek Letter and civic organizations with redevelopment efforts through mailings, etc.	SDRA/Community Services/SPD
Encourage residents and property owners to maintain and improve their properties	SPD/Property Maintenance
PUBLIC SAFETY	
Goal: Create a safe area with a positive image that will aid the revitalization process.	
Incorporate the Savannah Police Department's Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) program into streetscape and design programs	SPD/SDRA/MPC/HRB/ SCAD
Enhance existing parks and create more green-space through preservation, protection, extension and improvement of green-space and tree lawns	Park And Tree
Create more pedestrian crossings across medians especially in the area south of Gwinnett Street (Streetscape improvements project)	Facilities Maintenance Bureau
Orient MPC staff and the Historic District Board of Review staff regarding CPTED	SPD/MPC/HRB
Increase Code Enforcement Division staffing	City Of Savannah
Support the City's Adoption of the International Building and Maintenance Property Code	SDRA/Community Stakeholders
Increase enforcement of code violations against abandoned, boarded-up buildings that contribute to litter, crime and decay in the area through enhanced code enforcement staffing	City of Savannah: BPD/SPD/SFD
Goal: Increase the involvement of neighborhood residents and businesses.	
Aggressively market the Crime Stoppers Program to residents and businesses along the Corridor	SPD
Heighten the visibility of law enforcement in the area	SPD
Increase the cooperation between the area residents and merchants and SPD	SPD/Community Services
Implement programs for immediate removal of graffiti and other property crimes	SPD/KSB/City Of Savannah
Conduct workshops on CPTED quarterly for area residents and businesses	SPD
Engage residents to assist SPD in identifying potential pockets of criminal activity	SPD/Community Services

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Goal: Increase positive opportunities for youth in study area.	
Facilitate the involvement of various youth organizations such as the Youth Futures Programs and Kayton-Frazier in projects such as graffiti abatement and civic art programs	City Of Savannah/ Community Services/ Cultural Affairs
Encourage the involvement of community organizations with youth from their neighborhoods	Community Services/ Youth Futures/ G-CAPP
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Goal: Develop or modify programs to aid in facilitating business development and ensuring business retention along the Corridor.	
Strengthen awareness of the available resources that help facilitate business development along the Corridor to existing and potential business owners through marketing of existing resources and tools and development of new resources and tools.	SDRA/City Of Savannah
Create and/or modify programs to aid in facilitating business development and retention along the Corridor	SDRA/Economic Development Dept./ CPD/SBAC
Outreach to 5 existing businesses each month to inform/discuss various programs available for business and property enhancement to aid in business retention.	SDRA
Implement Goldmine prospect tracking program in SDRA offices to enhance follow-up capabilities with recruitment prospects.	SDRA
Formalize process with City to track gross retail sales.	SDRA/City Revenue Dept.
Goal: Provide opportunities for business and property development and expansion	
Target new or existing business and property owners to undergo extensive technical assistance and training that will better prepare them for financial assistance	Economic Development Dept./Savannah Entrepreneurial Center/ New Legacy CDC
Explore creation of incentive programs to aid in business start-up or expansion and in property rehabilitation	SDRA/BETA
Create a step financing mechanism that allows entrepreneurs with imperfect credit worthiness, to incrementally increase their eligibility for higher loan amounts	Economic Development Dept./CCC/SDRA

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Utilize the City's Microloan program as a step-lending program, and expand this loan fund to reach more entrepreneurs and increase the impact on the Corridor	SDRA/Economic Development Dept.
Organize stakeholders (e.g., churches, business owners, city government, property owners) in order to pool human and capital resources to pursue joint investment opportunities for business/commercial development along the Corridor	City Of Savannah/ Community Services/ SDRA/SBAC/New Legacy CDC
Develop one-time grant incentive opportunity for select small businesses, identified through a business needs assessment, as providing a needed and unique service previously not available along the Corridor	City Of Savannah/ Community Services/ Economic Development Dept.
Expand the eligible area for the Façade Improvement Program Loan to Montgomery Street: pursue enhancement of Façade Loan with match from banking industry; amend the existing policies and procedures to allow for more flexibility in use of the program as an incentive. Re-capitalize loan fund as necessary to allow for expansion south of Gwinnett once design guidelines and review process are developed.	SDRA/MPC/HRB/SBAC/CPD/City Of Savannah
Goal: Develop new initiatives that will foster an improved business climate along the Corridor and facilitate new business development.	
Assess the Corridor's current economic conditions, identify challenges to creating and sustaining businesses, identify opportunities for growth	SDRA/CPD
Identify opportunities for business clusters to complement and support existing businesses	SDRA/Economic Development Dept./ Chamber Of Commerce
Promote cultural history and assets of the Corridor to the community	SDRA/City Of Savannah/Cultural Affairs/ Economic Development/CVB/Civil Rights Museum
Advocate for, and create incentives to encourage businesses that provide needed amenities in the community, e.g. grocery and drug stores	SDRA/Economic Development Dept./ Chamber Of Commerce/ New Legacy CDC
Maintain a database of available space and property	SDRA
Maintain database of worker skills	Eco. Development Dept./DFACS/Chamber/ SBAC

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Organize the existing business and property owners into a formal entity that will serve as an on-going mechanism to gauge satisfaction of services, protection, etc. and to serve as advocates for potential business development and neighborhood sustainability. (Association)	Economic Development Dept./Community Services/DBA/Chamber Of Commerce
Offer special incentives/breaks for new business and property owners along the Corridor that provide needed services to the area. Offer the same to existing business and property owners that are looking to expand certain specialized retail services	Economic Development Dept./SDRA/SBAC
Promote programs that encourage home-based businesses along the Corridor.	Economic Development Dept./G-CAPP/New Legacy CDC
Develop a program to encourage displaced businesses along areas such as Broughton Street to locate on MLK or Montgomery Street	SDRA
Goal: Increase the involvement of the traditional banking community in business and commercial investment along the Corridor.	
Encourage a stronger relationship between local banking institutions and the business and property owners along the Corridor	SDRA/City Of Savannah/ SBAC/Chamber Of Commerce
Use the tenets and provisions of the Community Reinvestment Act to spur interest in investment from major banking entities in Savannah	SDRA/Economic Development Dept.
Pursue the possible creation of a business and/or development Loan Pool for the Corridor with major banking institutions in Savannah	SDRA/SBAC
Encourage banks to establish branches along the Corridor, which will encourage entrepreneurs and the public to seek services of financial institutions, and in turn require banks to be more responsive to the needs of the targeted community	SDRA/Economic Development Dept./ Chamber Of Commerce
HOUSING	
Goal: Create an area free of substandard residential units.	
Identify substandard housing for rehabilitation/encourage rehabilitation programs in neighborhoods that have a proliferation of substandard housing. Focus on areas that do not have a housing redevelopment plan in place (i.e.,	SDRA/CPD/Housing Dept./HAS

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Metropolitan neighborhood).	
Identify locations where in-fill residential development could occur and encourage opportunities to develop mixed or multi use space with upper floor residential in commercial structures	SDRA/CPD/Housing Dept./HAS
Facilitate coordination of housing development activities of the major housing organizations (HUD, HAS, City Housing Department, Local CDCs, etc.)	Economic Development Dept./Housing Dept./HAS
Encourage private developers to consider residential development for the area with a mixture of housing types for all income levels	Housing Dept.
Advocate for housing programs that will contribute to the vibrancy along the Corridor	Housing Dept/SDRA/ EOA/SEGA/HAS
Goal: Facilitate opportunities for homeownership with existing residents.	
Identify and market existing programs that help existing residents make transition from renters to homeowners	Housing Dept./SDRA/ EOA/SEGA/NIA
Coordinate activities with major housing organizations that provide incentives to developers that could construct or rehabilitate housing in the area	Housing Dept./SDRA/ EOA
Encourage opportunities for mixed-use development with ground-level commercial/retail and upper floor residential space.	SDRA/Economic Development Dept.
LAND USE AND ZONING	
Goal: Create a land use plan for the Corridor.	
Seek support of interested stakeholders after adoption of redevelopment plan by the Mayor and Aldermen.	MPC/SDRA/CPD, Business and Property Owner
Implement performance based zoning that will complement commercial development while protecting the neighborhood residential fabric of the planning area.	MPC/SDRA/CPD
Link the land use plan for the Corridor with the City's Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency in future policy decisions.	MPC/SDRA/CPD
Identify sites for and funding for appropriate large-scale commercial development.	SDRA/MPC/CPD

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Goal: Establish an environment within the Corridor free of incompatible and inappropriate land uses.	
Establish a Land Use and Zoning Committee to evaluate existing uses and development standards to include stakeholders such as residents, property owners, business owners, and design professionals to participate in planning process for Land Use Plan	SDRA/MPC/CPD
Consider modifying the current BC 1 zoning classification allowable uses for the area south of the flyover to Gwinnett to include: Gas stations with performance standards; Charitable institutions; Assembly halls; Free standing churches with performance standards; Parking with performance standards; Hotels and motels with performance standards	SDRA/MPC/HRB
Pursue greater use of performance standards to allow an array of land uses that will support the day-to-day needs of the Corridor residents and workers, yet prevent potential nuisances and maintain the mixed use nature of the Corridor with the pursuit of appropriate zoning	CPD/SDRA/MPC
Pursue the development of minimum standards for use and maintenance of vacant lots for parking similar to the standards created for the Broughton Street Redevelopment Area	SDRA/MPC/HSF/HRB/ CPD
Conduct parking study of area south of Gaston Street to 52 nd Street along the Corridor to determine current and projected parking patterns and develop recommendations as an addendum to the City's 5-Year Parking Plan.	Parking Services/Bureau of Management and Financial Services
Goal: Preserve the historical and architectural character of the Corridor.	
Re-evaluate the number of zoning districts to ensure complementary land uses and development standards – eliminate or modify zoning districts that allow intensive, incompatible land uses and inappropriate development standards that do not serve the vision for redevelopment.	MPC/SDRA/CPD

Strategy	Potential Agencies And Partners
Re-evaluate existing development standards and design guidelines and seek enactment of new or amended standards if needed	MPC/HRB/CPD/SDRA/ HSF
Include structures identified as “historic” between Gwinnett Street and Victory Drive on the City’s Historic Buildings Map	SDRA/MPC/HRB
Establish demolition and relocation standards for areas of the Corridor that currently have none	MPC/SDRA/HRB
Hold educational workshops for Corridor property owners to explain design review, demolition and relocation standards after initial drafting of design guidelines	SDRA/MPC/HRB
Review potential for expanding Redevelopment designation to include portions of the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor, north of Gwinnett Street	SDRA
Ensure an area free of substandard Commercial Facades	City/SDRA

AGENCY LEGEND

Abbreviation	Agency/Partner Name
BETA	Business Education Technology Alliance
BPD	City of Savannah Bureau of Public Development
CCC	Consumer Credit Counseling
CHATHAM COUNTY	Chatham County Commission
CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM	Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum
COMMUNITY SERVICES	City of Savannah Department of Community Services
CPD	Community Planning and Development
CULTURAL AFFAIRS	City of Savannah Cultural Affairs Commission
CVB	Convention and Visitors Bureau
DFACS	Dept. of Family and Children's Services
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPT.	City of Savannah Office of Economic Development
ENTREPRENEURIAL CENTER	Savannah Entrepreneurial Center
EOA	Economic Opportunity Authority
G-CAPP	Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention
HAS	Housing Authority of Savannah
HOUSING DEPT.	City of Savannah Housing Department
HRB	Historic Review Board
HSF	Historic Savannah Foundation
MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE	Savannah Ministerial Alliance
MONUMENT COMMISSION	City of Savannah Monument Commission
MPC	Metropolitan Planning Commission
NIA	Neighborhood Improvement Association
PARK AND TREE	City of Savannah Park and Tree Department
PIO	City of Savannah Public Information Office
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	City of Savannah Property Maintenance Division
REVENUE DEPT.	City of Savannah Department of Revenue
SANITATION	City of Savannah Dept. of Sanitation
SBAC	Small Business Assistance Corporation
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SEGA	Southeast Georgia Partners for Homeownership
SDRA	Savannah Development and Renewal Authority
SFD	Savannah Fire and Emergency Services Department
SPD	Savannah Police Department
YOUTH FUTURES	Youth Futures Authority

12.0 FINANCIAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

A number of innovative approaches exist to fund the various strategies articulated in this document. The tools and strategies identified in this chapter are intended to introduce only some of the possible approaches that could be used to further the Corridor revitalization efforts. Many of these strategies are based on building successful public-private partnerships to address the issues and concerns that have been identified in this plan. Any future policy or land-use change proposals resulting from pursuit of these strategies will require Council approval prior to implementation.

12.1 FINANCIAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE PURSUED OR ENHANCED FOR BUSINESS AND/OR PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

12.1.1 Bank Partnership Strategies

- Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Opportunities: The passage of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) in 1977 gave cities counties a mechanism to tackle economic development challenges within their inner city neighborhoods and communities.

Many in the Banking community responded to the CRA by forming Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to address the investment needs of low to moderate income communities and to assist small business owners and prospective business owners obtain capital or credit to support their businesses. Both Bank of America and Wachovia have formed such CDCs. These programs are best accomplished through alliances with community-based groups, public sector agencies and neighborhood organizations and can offer opportunities to strengthen the availability of programs to aid residents and business owners in the study area.

- Bank Loan Pool for Property Development: Financial institutions can play a major role in the revitalization and redevelopment efforts. Bank Loan Pools are currently being used to leverage private investment for building and property rehabilitation through current Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) programs in Savannah.

By exploring ways to expand the current CDFI participation to include the particular needs of the redevelopment area, interior and exterior renovation and rehabilitation, and new construction loan funds could be made available to business and property owners in the study area.

- Match of Façade Improvement (FIP) Funds: SDRA has joined with the SBAC to pursue programs with the local banking industry to enhance SDRA's two FIP loan programs. One potential program, would solicit participating banks to match approved FIP loans with a dollar for dollar low interest loan. SDRA's current maximum loan amount is \$30,000. Typical loans are for \$12,000 to \$25,000. A bank match would provide additional funding mechanism to aid in façade and/or property development along the Corridor. In such a scenario, the SBAC would serve as the loan-servicing agent administering the repayments of both the FIP and the matching bank loan program.

12.1.2 Façade Improvement Program Improvement Strategies

An integral part of the current redevelopment strategies is the City of Savannah's investment in the two Façade Improvement Programs for MLK, River Street to Anderson. These low interest funds are currently available at an interest rate of 3.5%. Since the inception of the two programs, \$62,000 in public sector investment has been leveraged with private sector investment to improve 3 building facades along MLK.

Funded by the City and administered by SDRA, these programs were established to stimulate new investment, provide an economic incentive for renovating building facades, and to encourage quality design and construction that enhances the historic character and appearance of the focus areas.

To encourage more widespread use of the CDBG-funded FIP program, the proposed redevelopment strategies recommend providing more flexibility in the uses of the fund. The strategy recommends amendment to the FIP program policy and procedures to allow the following eligible uses:

- Lanes
- Minor maintenance improvements (downspouts, drainage systems)
- Roofs

Additionally, the strategy recommends re-capitalization of the funds to expand the programs south of Gwinnett Street to 52nd Street.

12.1.3 City of Savannah Programs

The city of Savannah currently offers several programs to aid in the start-up or expansion of businesses through reduced rate loans, lower equity requirements, long-term repayment plans and lower collateral requirements.

- Micro Loan Program: This program provides small loans, under \$5,000, to entrepreneurs who do not have access to funding through traditional lending sources.
- MLK Revolving Loan Program: This program offers loans for the start-up and expansion of small businesses. These loans range from \$1,000 to \$150,000. Since the program began in 1996, this program has provided more than 27 loans for the start-up and expansion of small businesses in Savannah's inner-city. The \$1.5million in loans leveraged more than \$3million in private sector funding while creating 89 jobs.
- BILF (Business Improvement Loan Fund): This program works in partnership with the banking community to maximize the resources available to commercial property owners, business owners, and community development corporations for the rehabilitation of commercial buildings within a defined target area. The maximum loan amount is \$150,000.

These programs are administered through the City of Savannah's Economic Development Department.

12.2 FINANCIAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE PURSUED FOR STREETScape AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

12.2.1 Business Improvement Districts

Since the early 1990s, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have been used as a financial tool to assist with redevelopment activities in urban areas.

These self-help ventures are organized by property owners and implemented by local governments, which work jointly to identify and develop a business improvement area. These districts are designed to supplement city services through an increase in property tax assessment that is paid by the property owners. The additional annual assessment is used to provide specific services to the defined area such as improvement subsidies, enhanced maintenance, and increased security.

Since property owners are paying for the BID through annual assessments, they are involved in determining the needs of the district and how the additional resources are expended.

12.2.2 Community Improvement Districts

Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) are a variation of BIDs. CIDs are also supported through an additional assessment placed on the property owner to help provide certain services within a set geographical boundary. However, CIDs can also provide a mechanism to finance capital projects. In the redevelopment area, this could include streetscape and public infrastructure improvements.

The City of Savannah, SDRA, and Savannah Waterfront Association have explored the feasibility of establishing one or more BID or CID districts in downtown Savannah. Meetings and task force sessions indicated a strong interest in enhanced services for safety and maintenance from business and property owners downtown. The establishment of an ambassador program to aid tourists, visitors and locals with hospitality, community and safety information has also received high marks along with infrastructure improvements and enhanced streetscape.

12.2.3 Tax Increment Financing

Cities and counties throughout the country have been using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund public improvements. TIF districts may fund water and sewer lines, streets, lighting, parking lots, land procurement, and necessary planning and engineering.

Once the Mayor and Aldermen designate the proposed redevelopment area as a blighted or deteriorating area, as defined by the Georgia Redevelopment Law, the first step for establishing a TIF district would be to establish a base assessed property valuation for the area. Local Governments continue to collect the property taxes from the base assessed valuation within the designated TIF district; but, any taxes derived from an increase in the assessed values would be applied to a special tax increment fund to support the public investments and improvements in the TIF district.

The central motivation to establish a TIF district is to allow jurisdictions to provide significant capital for redevelopment activities. As a result of the improvements, jobs are created and sales taxes and property tax base are increased. The TIFs also serves as a catalyst for growth by attracting other firms and raising the general value of property both inside and outside the TIF. This helps to create additional tax revenues from the purchase, income, and consumption generated by workers who are employed by the new businesses.

Through this approach, improvements can be made to the redevelopment area without burdening the property owner with an additional tax. If implemented successfully, it can help to establish a strong unifying force to form public-private partnerships to address urban problems and to revitalize downtown.

In order to establish a TIF district in Georgia, a local referendum must be held.

12.2.4 Grants

The redevelopment strategy also recommends exploring opportunities to secure funding from the private sector. This would include foundations and other entities, which support economic development, beautification and streetscape improvements in support of revitalization efforts. One useful example is identifying resources to conduct a comprehensive study of tree species that would flourish in Savannah's unique urban environment. Securing funding for the tree study should involve partners such as the Savannah Tree Foundation, the Beehive Foundation, Keep Savannah Beautiful, and other environmental groups. Through these types of creative public-private partnerships, a wonderful opportunity exists to secure additional resources for our community.

Designation of the study area as an Urban Redevelopment Area also opens the door for Community Development Block Grant Funding, Local Development Fund and Quality Growth funding opportunities

through the Department of Community Affairs. Additionally, the Economic Development Administration has funds through their Economic Adjustment Program that can aid in commercial redevelopment. These funds can be used for façade improvement, installation of a park or playground and commercial development and revitalization activities.

12.2.5 Tea-21 Enhancement Funds

Federal Transportation Enhancement Act funds are a source for streetscape amenities and infrastructure improvements. The City of Savannah has already applied for \$150,000 of T-21 funds for the 2001 year to aid in the streetscape improvement efforts.

A comprehensive application or series of applications for T-21 funds needs to be prepared to cover phased implementation of the overall streetscape improvement plan from River Street to 52nd Street.

13.0 REDEVELOPMENT AREA DESIGNATION

To qualify under the objectives set forth by Section 36, Chapter 61 of the Georgia Annotated Code (The Georgia Redevelopment Powers Act), an area must be officially designated and must meet a definition of a slum, blighted, deteriorated or deteriorating area under State or local law. Additionally, the public improvements throughout the area must be in a general state of deterioration. Pursuant to OCGA 36-61-7, the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah must make the following findings:

- (1) A feasible method exists for the relocation of families who may be displaced from the Urban Redevelopment Area in decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations within their means and without undue hardship to such families.

Response:

The City of Savannah's Anti-Displacement Plan contains a feasible method to address relocation of families that may be displaced as a result of redevelopment activities.

- (2) The Urban Redevelopment Plan must conform to the Comprehensive Plan for the City and Chatham County.

Response:

The Plan conforms to the Comprehensive Plan for the City and Chatham County, and, the Plan is recommended in and consistent with the City's HUD mandated Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan, as amended. Additionally, the Plan is consistent with, and recommended by, the implementation strategies of the Cuyler-Brownsville Redevelopment Plan which was adopted by Mayor and Council in 1997.

- (3) The Urban Redevelopment Plan will afford maximum opportunity for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the study area by private enterprise.

Response:

A comprehensive, community-based planning effort guided the crafting of the Urban Redevelopment Plan. Through this planning effort a vision for revitalization was crafted; and goals, objectives, and strategies were identified to aid in Corridor revitalization. Through the continued involvement of the community, the Urban Redevelopment Plan will afford the maximum opportunity for rehabilitation and redevelopment by private enterprise.

Once an area has been properly designated by Resolution as a slum or blighted area under these provisions, the City may continue to assist activities that are designed to address a condition that caused the decline of the area even if the area has been brought to a point where it could no longer meet the tests for physical evidence of blight.

Typical activities designed to address slum and blight include:

- Acquisition and clearance of real property, and rehabilitation or demolition and removal of buildings and improvements, to otherwise remove or prevent the spread of slums or deterioration, or to provide land for needed public facilities,
- Installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other necessary improvements,
- Revitalization through voluntary or compulsory repair and rehabilitation of buildings or other improvements, and

- Disposition of any property acquired in such urban redevelopment area, including sale, initial leasing or retention by the municipality, at its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban redevelopment plan.

As a part of the redevelopment planning process for the study area, 393 structures were surveyed for their physical condition. Of the 393 total structures surveyed, 42% were categorized as in sub-standard condition.

Further supporting the designation as an Urban Redevelopment Area is the inconsistent condition of the physical public infrastructure—sidewalks, street lighting, drainage, and streets. The existing conditions survey indicates a need for immediate improvement to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the community. (Table 6-C: Infrastructure Conditions and Threats, pp. 37) The lack of home ownership and the existence of numerous vacant lots in the study area more than likely contribute to the lack of civic pride and is overwhelming evidenced through increased amounts of litter and unkempt properties. Of the 422 parcels surveyed, 194 suffered from litter and overgrown vegetation. The existing conditions survey reported that loitering was present on 80 parcels in the study area, while drug activity was suspected on 56 of the parcels surveyed. Crime statistics for 2000 show 94 incidences of property damage through vandalism and graffiti in the study area.

Once designated as an Urban Redevelopment Area, the City will be able to access funding and enact zoning regulations to address the blight affecting the study area. The strategies and funding mechanisms identified and articulated in this document will enable the community to move forward with specific activities to revitalize and sustain the study area. However, in order for Mayor and Council to be able to utilize the full powers granted under the Urban Redevelopment Law, a land-use strategy will need to be developed and approved by Council. The first step in this process is the development of a land-use and zoning study of the area. Metropolitan Planning Commission has agreed to undertake this part of the process.

14.0 CONCLUSION

Like many urban neighborhoods across the country, the MLK and Montgomery Street Corridor, south of Gwinnett Street has suffered from the out-migration of residents and businesses. However, the study area, as this plan has described, has many assets not often found in similar neighborhoods.

The redevelopment strategies recommended in this plan are intended to present various programs and tools that can be used to reverse the decline of the study area's economic viability through a program of public improvements and private reinvestment as well as new investment. Any policy or land-use change proposal resulting from the strategies presented in this document will require approval of Council before it can be implemented.

Revitalization of the study area will be challenging to accomplish given the magnitude of the economic and physical decline, the declining home-ownership and residential base, and the potential difficulty in securing the resources needed to implement the proposed strategies. The prospects for implementation of the programs and strategies, however, are good.

Whether or not the study area can be revitalized in accordance with the vision set forth by the many community participants depends on several factors—designation of the area as an Urban Redevelopment Area; the availability of resources, both people and funds, the support and involvement of the many partners identified in the proposed Work Plan, and the continued commitment and support of the public and private sectors in accomplishing these goals.

15.0 APPENDICES