



Summary Report
Phase III Implementation Plan
Truman Parkway Focus Area



Victory Drive Corridor Study

December 14, 2016



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Prepared in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

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I. Executive Summary

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Victory Drive Corridor Study is a multi-phase planning study led by the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) and championed by several local advocacy groups. Completed in February 2015, Phase I established the overall project goal “to preserve, revitalize and maintain Victory Drive’s historic, commemorative landscape and prominence as a signature boulevard.” The Phase I study included a high-level assessment of the entire 20-mile US 80/Victory Drive Corridor between Ogeechee Road and the south end of Tybee Island.

Each subsequent phase of the Victory Drive Corridor Study will investigate the sub-areas identified and preliminarily assessed in Phase I. Other key areas of this ongoing study include efforts to increase public-private collaboration, the development of implementable plans incorporating sensitive urban design solutions, and strategies that balance transportation and land use demands of the contemporary street.

Phase III of the study, initiated in July 2016, studied in greater detail the Victory Drive sub-area 4, an approximate .8-mile long section of the corridor from Bee Road to Skidaway Road. This phase of the study, centered around the Truman Parkway Interchange, offers recommendations focusing on potential policy changes aimed at restoring “Victory Drive to its former grandeur by re-establishing the integrity of the historic landscape and improving the safety and function for all users through context-sensitive strategies”, as stated in the Phase III focus area goal statement.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING, LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

For many years transportation planning occurred in relative isolation from other community planning activities. However, in recent decades, there has been increased recognition of the need for and importance of integrating transportation planning with land use and urban design decisions. The Federal Highway Administration has embraced this approach and is encouraging states and local transportation planning agencies to pursue an integrated planning process.



“The role of transportation professionals is evolving and more frequently requires them to understand how transportation investments can be consistent with the principles and practices of land use planning and development. At a minimum, the coordination of land use and transportation requires that those concerned with the well-being of a community (or region, state or nation) assess and evaluate how land use decisions effect the transportation system and can increase viable options for people to access opportunities, goods, services, and other resources to improve the quality of their lives. In turn, the transportation sector should be aware of the effects the existing and future transportation systems may have on land use development demand, choices, and patterns.

Coordinating (or integrating) land use and transportation planning and development is commonly considered today as one facet of “smart growth”, sustainable development, new urbanism, or other similar concept. These share policies, principles, and strategies intended to preserve and even enhance valued natural and cultural resources and facilitate “healthy”, sustainable communities and neighborhoods. These approaches also tend to foster a balance of mixed uses (including housing, educational, employment, recreational, retail, and service opportunities) which recognize the importance of spatial or geographic proximity, lay out, and design of those uses. In addition, the consideration of long term and broader (even global) impacts of land use decisions on our natural and human-made environment, including transportation systems and facilities, is critical to these concepts, as well.

While State Departments of Transportations, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), local agencies, and others involved in the transportation planning process have flexibility in meeting that factor, its implementation does require communication and interaction between transportation agencies and those involved with developing and implementing plans for growth, economic development, and similar issues and concerns impacting land use. Most likely, that effort will involve the comparison of transportation plans to other plans and, to some degree, coordinated crafting of local and regional land use/economic development strategies, policies, and plans with pertinent transportation studies, plans, and programs.

This FHWA website offers many, and we hope, useful resources, website links, and other information, including FHWA/USDOT program information, tools and techniques, and examples and case studies, which address the growing demand for delineating the interrelationships between land use and transportation. The information here will help transportation and land use professionals, elected officials, stakeholders, and the public to more successfully coordinate land use and transportation.”
(http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/land_use/)

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community involvement continues to be an important component of the Victory Drive Corridor Study, as it has been in previous phases. The process continued with a similar approach as was utilized during earlier phases. In August 2016, early in the Phase III planning process, the project team conducted a multi-day workshop which included a series of focus group meetings with key stakeholders in the project area. The purpose of this first round of meetings was to gather initial input from the

community about issues, concerns, and ideas to explore as a part of our process. The project team met with a variety of stakeholders including City of Savannah and MPC staff, GDOT representatives, Chatham Area Transit, Healthy Savannah, Savannah Bicycle Campaign, elected officials, commercial property owners, and neighborhood leaders. On August 25, a community meeting was held in the evening with more than 100 people attending. Written feedback (comment cards) was received from 45 of the meeting participants.

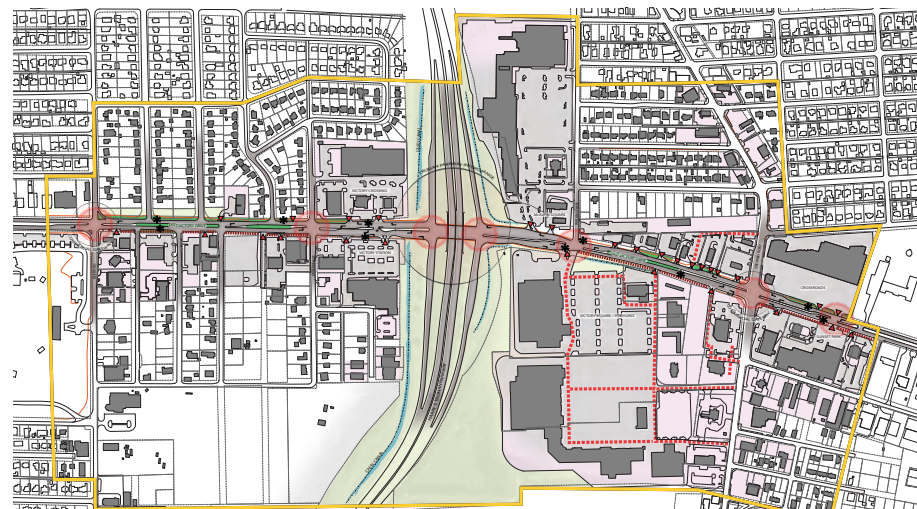
In September, a series of meetings was held with both property owners and neighborhood leaders to share very preliminary draft report recommendations and obtain initial comments. This was followed in November with another round of stakeholder meetings – similar to the August process – and concluded with a second community meeting on November 17. Written feedback, via another set of comment cards and an online survey, was again received from many of the meeting participants. While there was broad general support for the draft recommendations there was a wide range in responses received. These extend from strong support for improvements and for the recommendations to strong opposition to many of the proposed improvements and recommendations. A detailed summary of the comment cards received during both community meetings is included in the Appendix.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND KEY ISSUES

Victory Drive / US-80 is a historic, and in sections, truly beautiful road linking a number of Savannah’s historic neighborhoods to the west with Tybee Island at its eastern terminus. Victory Drive is an urban arterial, a state route, a US Highway and a hurricane evacuation route. Victory Drive has also been designated a Canopy Corridor and a Community Gateway in prior transportation planning studies.

The Phase III focus area is approximately one mile long and stretches generally from Bee Road east to Skidaway Road. This is an area that has historically been an entertainment and commercial/retail destination, and it is envisioned to remain a very active one for the foreseeable future. Over the years, as commercial retail development expanded in this area and with the advent of the Truman Parkway and its associated interchange, this section of Victory Drive has become increasingly congested and is often difficult to traverse during peak periods. With the addition of turn lanes, the historic median landscape has been impacted causing the loss of many of the double row of memorial palms.

As has been the approach with the prior phases of the Victory Drive Corridor Study, this report organizes the summary of existing conditions and the proposed recommendations into three broad, general categories: Transportation, Landscape / Environment, and Land Use / Urban Design. The key issues for this section of the corridor included the following:



TRANSPORTATION

- Traffic Congestion Throughout Study Area Corridor
- Crash Frequency
- Lack of Alternative Parallel Routes
- Hurricane Evacuation Route
- Incomplete Sidewalk Network
- Non-Compliant Accessible Intersections
- Some Degraded Bus Stop Facilities
- Victory Not Safe for Bike/Pedestrian Crossing of the Truman

LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

- Landscape Framework Only Partially Intact. Framework Includes:
 - Live Oaks in Tree Lawns
 - Palms & Azaleas in the Median
- Age of Live Oak Canopy
- Lack of Live Oak Canopy at Truman Interchange and Skidaway Road
- Median Condition / Plantings Vary
- Limited, Poor Maintenance
- Isolated Flooding
- Casey Canal and Open Drainage Ditches Poorly Maintained

LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Truman Parkway Bisects and Interrupts the Victory Drive Corridor
- Change in Scale from Residential to Commercial Development
- Evolution of Scale of Commercial Development to the Modern Suburban Big Box

FOCUS AREA VISION AND GOAL STATEMENT

Vision –

The Truman Parkway Focus Area of Victory Drive will be a beautiful commemorative landscape, an important Community Gateway and Canopy Road corridor, while also functioning as a modern major boulevard.

Goal Statement –

The project aims to restore Victory Drive to its former grandeur by establishing a landscape consistent with the corridor’s historic framework and by improving the safety and function for all users through context-sensitive strategies. These strategies include: promoting corridor safety and mobility for all users; balancing regional mobility with improved access to commercial development; enhancing the character of the landscape and historic tree canopy, community gateway and memorial boulevard.

FOCUS AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for the Phase III Focus Area’s Implementation Plan are guided by the corridor-wide Vision Statement established in Phase I as well as by the Focus Area Vision and Goal Statement outlined above. The recommendations are organized by the three thematic areas of transportation, landscape/environment, and land use/urban design.

The focus and intent of these recommendations is to restore and protect Victory Drive as a community asset. This includes a focus on: landscape framework, safety and mobility, and access to commercial development. The following is a summary of the recommendations included in the report.

TRANSPORTATION

- A. Implement Complete Streets Concepts
- B. Improve Traffic Flow via Access Management
- C. Maintain and/or Reestablish Local Street Network
- D. Increase East/West Travel Options
- E. Analyze Alternative Interchange Treatments at Truman Parkway
- F. City to Evaluate Street Abandonment Policy/Process
- G. Provide for Increased Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to and Through the Study Area
- H. GDOT Study Possibility of Reducing the Speed Limit to 35mph.

LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

- A. Establish Historic Landscape Framework
- B. Implement Median Improvement Program
- C. Conduct Tree Condition Assessment within the Public Right-of-Way
- D. Identify Potential Additional Green Space Opportunities Along the Corridor
- E. Create Landscape Gateway Zone at Truman/Victory Interchange
- F. Provide Tree Lawns and Sidewalks
- G. Screen Surface Parking Lots from Victory Drive
- H. Improve Stormwater Management Through the Corridor
- I. Establish a Non-Profit Advocacy Group - Friends of Victory Drive

LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- A. Establish a Victory Drive Frontage Zone; Recognize the “Main Street” Prominence of Victory Drive
- B. Encourage Mixed-use Redevelopment

Note that implementing some of these recommendations will require the cooperation and participation of some of the commercial property owners abutting Victory Drive. Given that the stated goals for this focus area include improvements which would enhance the area for all users from the larger community and that these recommendations, if implemented, could impact some adjacent properties, the report suggests that consideration be given to defining a series of potential incentives to offset or reduce any impacts on these adjacent commercial properties. These incentives could include: an expedited permit review process; a property tax credit or abatement; increased density / lot coverage and/or building height; reduced parking requirements; stormwater credits for green infrastructure and/or other actions.

KEY ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

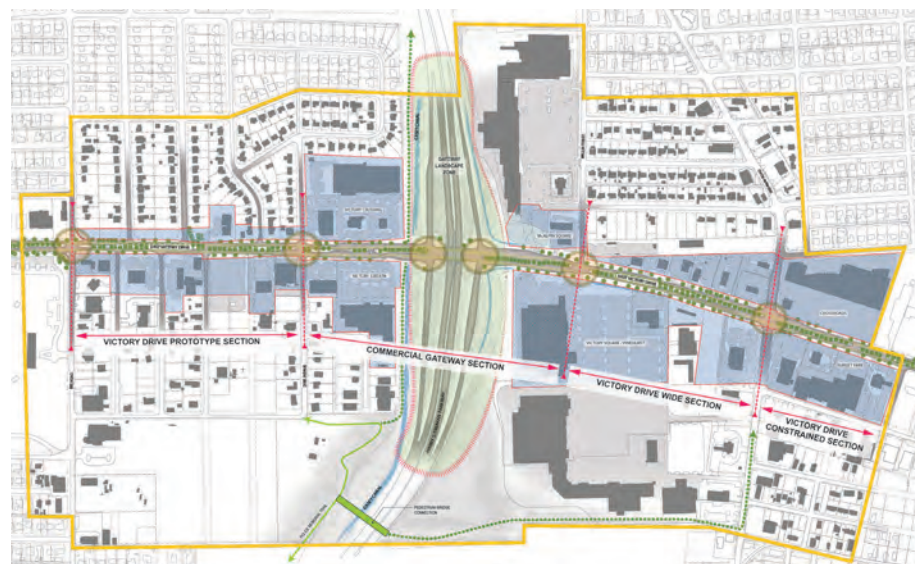
The recommendations include a number of actions that the City can choose to initiate within the public realm. The City, working in partnership with GDOT, can emphasize the importance of implementing the complete streets actions which will provide improved safety and access for all users, especially pedestrians, within the corridor. The landscape median improvements should be initiated immediately along with exploring the concepts of a landscape gateway at the Truman Parkway and a multi-use trail extension both along the Casey Canal and over the Canal and the Parkway to provide improved north-south and east-west bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

In addition, the City should explore how best to partner with the commercial property owners to achieve the recommendations which will require their participation. One possible tool that has been discussed is an overlay district. This overlay district would not impact the underlying, existing zoning and could include key transportation and land use recommendations contained in this report. Those key elements include access management, landscape and Victory Drive frontage recommendations. The report recommends that an incentive program be developed as an integral element of any potential overlay district. Should the City choose to pursue the overlay district, additional thought should be given to whether some or all of the requirements of the overlay district would be optional or mandatory.

CONCLUSION

This focus area is unique within the 20-mile-long Victory/US-80 corridor and as such it possesses both unique challenges and unique opportunities. This area is, and will remain, an important commercial/retail node. It is however currently congested and lacks the visual cohesiveness of the memorial landscape that is present in other segments of Victory Drive. The opportunity exists to improve both the safety and mobility and the landscape framework of this area and thereby improve all users' experience and access to and through the area.

The vision of reestablishing Victory as a "Great Street" along its entire length is achievable, as is the goal of enhancing the Bee to Skidaway Focus Area as an important and desirable commercial destination. That vision, however, can only be achieved through a series of collaborative partnerships. The partners will need to include the City, the County, GDOT, commercial property owners and, potentially, a Victory Drive Conservancy organization.



II. Introduction

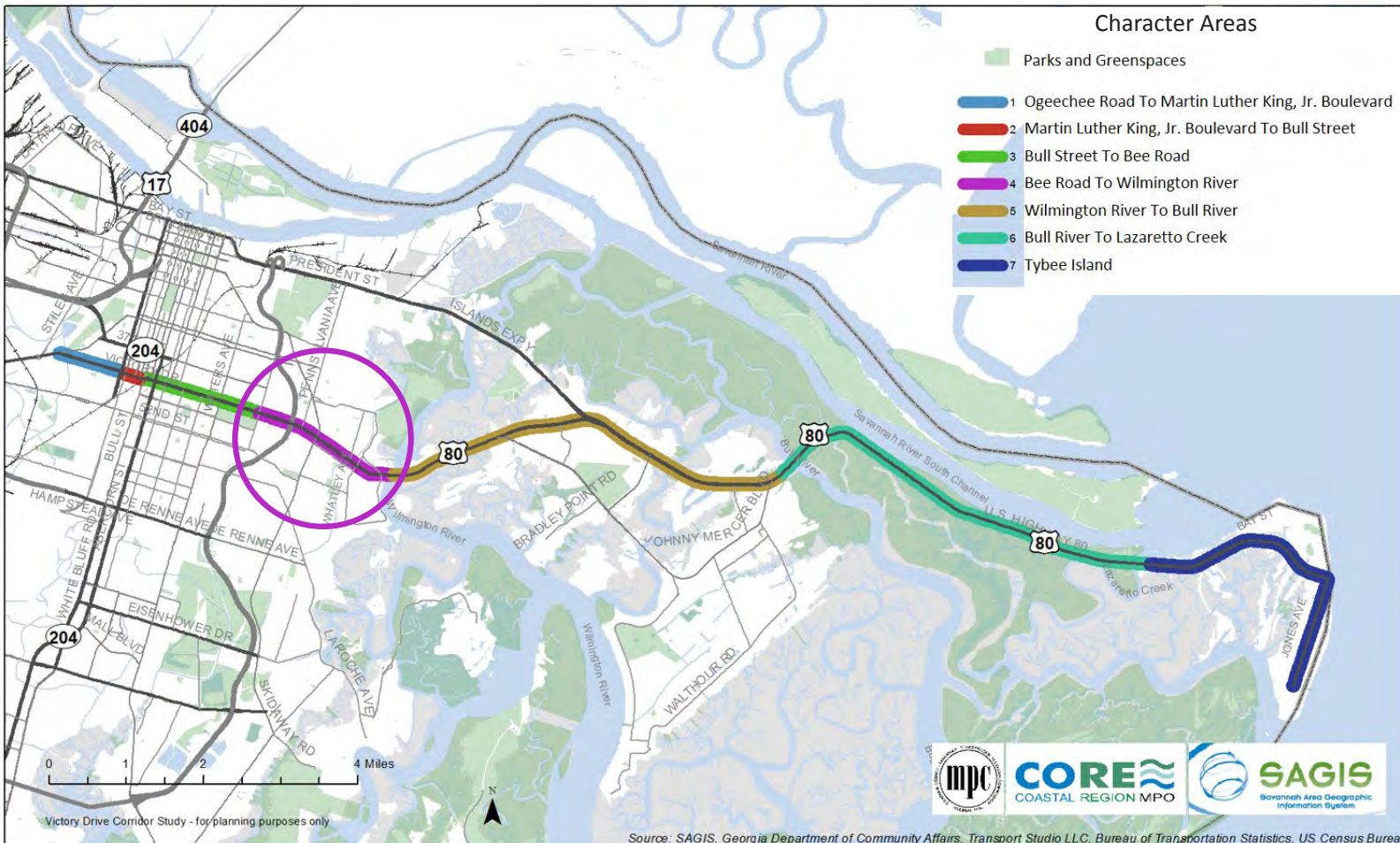
VICTORY DRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY OVERVIEW

In early 2014, the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), partnered with several local advocacy and business groups to initiate a multi-phase planning study of the Victory Drive Corridor. Completed in February 2015, Phase I included a high-level assessment of the entire Victory Drive/US 80 Corridor between Ogeechee Road and the south end of Tybee Island. A copy of the Phase I report is available on the MPC website at:

<http://www.thempc.org/docs/lit/corempo/studies/victory/phase1/reports/findings.pdf>

The subsequent Phase II focus area report is also available online.

The Victory Drive Corridor Study is conducted by the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission on behalf of the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO), with the goal “to preserve, revitalize and maintain Victory Drive’s historic, commemorative landscape and prominence as a signature boulevard. Through a public-private collaboration, this study seeks to develop an implementable plan incorporating context sensitive solutions to balance the transportation and land use demands of a contemporary street.”



PHASE I VISION & GOAL

The Phase I Summary Memorandum defined the following overall study goal:

“The Victory Drive Corridor Study aims to preserve, revitalize and maintain Victory Drive’s historic, commemorative landscape and prominence as a signature boulevard.

Through a public-private collaboration, this study seeks to develop an implementable plan incorporating context sensitive solutions to balance the transportation and land use demands of a contemporary street.”

The Phase I Summary Memorandum outlined the following 21st Century Vision for Victory Drive:

As a restored, revitalized and fully modernized “Great Street,” the Victory Drive / US-80 boulevard and parkway shall:

Be unified through a common theme dedicated to the veterans of all American wars,

Be a continuous beautiful but evolving landscape,

Offer amenities which support all users, where practical, including pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles and public transportation,

Provide a fully functional infrastructure system to include stormwater management and coordinate above and below ground utilities, and

Be regulated by a unified, multi-jurisdictional code.

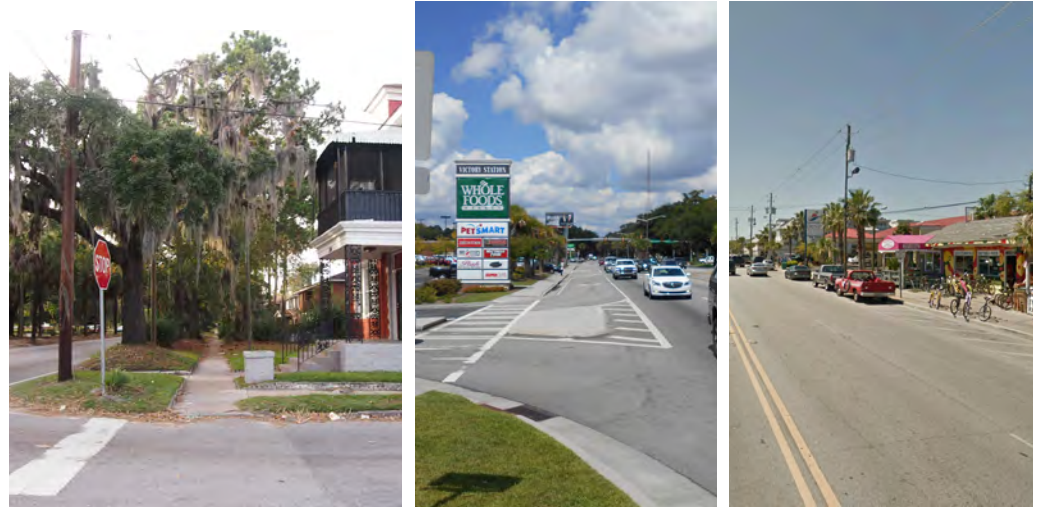


PHASE I

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

Phase I encompassed a high-level overview of the entire 20-mile corridor – stretching from Ogeechee Road, at the western end, to Butler Avenue on Tybee Island, at the eastern end. The corridor undergoes dramatic changes in character as one moves along it; from the developed, urbanized western end, across residential island developments, through a national monument and coastal marshlands out to the barrier island beach village that is Tybee Island. Phase I addresses specific opportunities within the study area according to the following themes—**traffic and transportation, landscape and environment, , and land use and urban design.**

During Phase I, seven distinct character areas were identified within the corridor. The current Phase III focus area falls within the Bee Road to Wilmington River character area. Community feedback identified a number of key issues during the Phase I study. Many of these same issues were explored in greater detail during this Phase III study.



CHARACTER AREA 4: BEE ROAD TO WILMINGTON RIVER COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

TRANSPORTATION

- Major congestion
- Bike travel at a minimum
- Truman Parkway is a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists
- Traffic signal timing is too short
- Lack of access management
- Pedestrian lawlessness

LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENTAL

- Potential to restore framework
- Degradation in commercial area
- Flooding

LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Heavily commercialized
- Illegal signage
- Inconsistent building setback

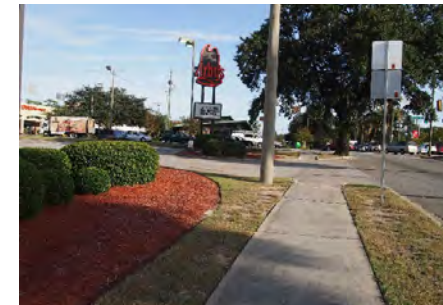


PHASE I CONCEPTUAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were the recommendations for the Bee Road to Wilmington River character area based on the needs and issues documented in Phase I's high-level assessment.

- ① Create connections to the Truman Linear Park Trail along the Casey Canal.
- ② Explore alternate east/ west bicycle facilities on Rowland Avenue and 52nd Street.
- ③ Explore non-standard paths, such as boardwalks, to work around canopy trees.
- ④ Coordinate signal timing to encourage east/ west movement.
- ⑤ Explore potential for single point urban interchange (SPUI) at Truman Parkway.
- ⑥ Improve pedestrian and bicycle crossing at Truman Parkway.
- ⑦ Explore the potential to return the live oak framework to the commercialized district streetscape.
- ⑧ Implement development standards to control future commercial development.
- ⑨ Enforce restrictions on temporary signage and jaywalking.

- ⑩ Address localized flooding issues and enhance existing swale network with stormwater BMP's and a path network for a functional linear system.
- ⑪ Provide sidewalks on the south side of Victory Drive between the commercial district and the Wilmington River bridge. Return bicycle connections to Victory Drive at the Wilmington River bridge.
- ⑫ Create pocket parks and/or trail connections at Placentia Canal and Casey Canal corridors



Truman Parkway acts as a barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians. Potential connections should be explored to connect the western neighborhoods to the commercial district.

Each commercial development currently maintains its own prototype landscape standards. Regulations should implement a unifying theme for the Victory Drive Corridor.



III. Focus Area Existing Conditions

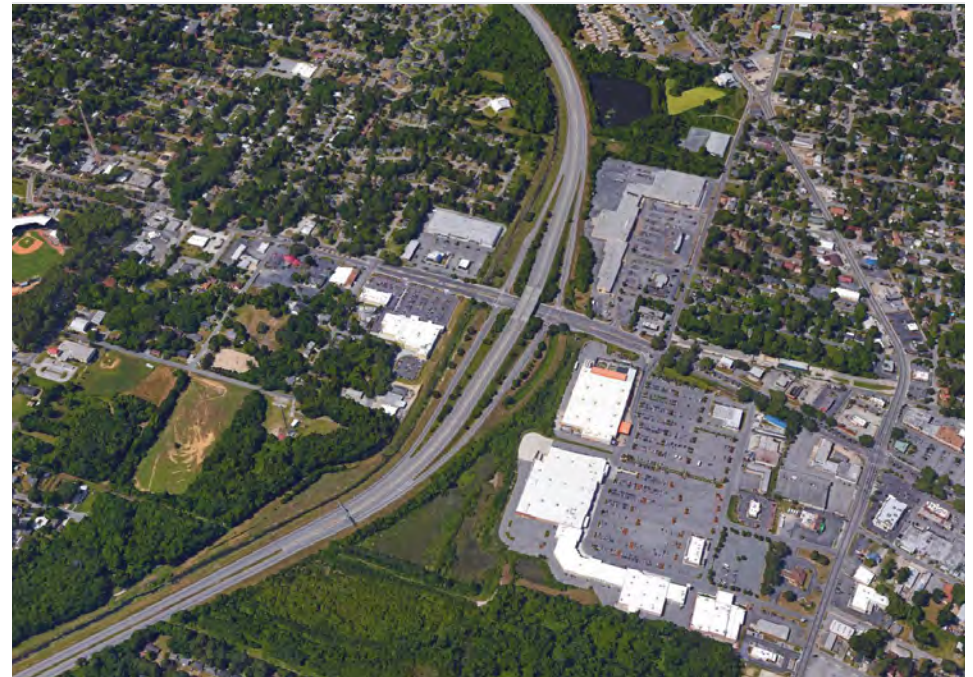
PHASE III FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW

The Phase III focus area of Victory Drive stretches across a one mile section of the corridor largely characterized by commercial development. For decades, this area of Victory Drive has served as an entertainment, commercial retail and service destination to Savannah residents and visitors alike. The corridor continues to develop in this fashion today and will likely continue to evolve as an important commercial node in the years to come.

The Truman Parkway interchange is another key feature of the focus area. First opened to traffic in the 1990's, the parkway serves as a limited access facility, providing improved north-south capacity through the eastern section of the City.

Running parallel and immediately adjacent to the Truman Parkway is the Casey Canal. This is an important piece of the City's stormwater infrastructure for this area. It is also an important potential green/open space opportunity.

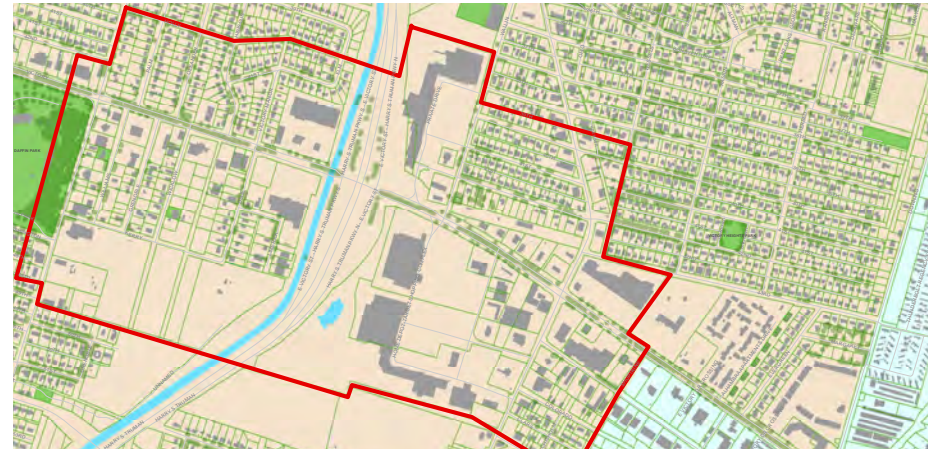
This section of Victory Drive has sidewalks along most of its length - although there are some notable gaps. There are no bicycle facilities currently available along this section of the corridor. Chatham Area Transit (CAT) currently operates two bus routes through the area.



PLANNING PROCESS

The Bee Road to Skidaway Road focus area study followed a structure similar to Phases I and II. This process as documented in this report included the following steps:

- Preliminary mapping and data collection using Savannah Area Geographic Information System (SAGIS) information.
- Review of other relevant planning reports and studies.
- Site visits, during which the study team assessed the focus area, documented existing conditions and conducted team work sessions.
- A summary of existing conditions and key issues.
- Three rounds of meetings with multiple stakeholders and two community meetings.
- Preliminary recommendations organized by traffic and transportation, landscape and environment, land use and urban design. These were presented to various stakeholders and at open community meetings.
- Summary report including final recommendations of the above items, and final presentations to the MPO and MPC.



SUPPORTING PLANS AND STUDIES

There have been a number of related prior plans and studies which relate to this focus area and these include:

- Amenities Corridor Resolutions and Designations, 2003
- 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan ,2004
- Congestion Management Process, 2004
- Tricentennial Plan, 2006
- Context Sensitive Design Manual, 2007
- CORE Connections Framework Mobility Plan (2035 LRPT), 2009
- Congestion Management Process, 2009
- Total Mobility Plan (2040 LRTP) and Thoroughfare Plan, 2014

Note that there are also a number of GDOT policies and guidance that will impact the corridor including “Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control”.

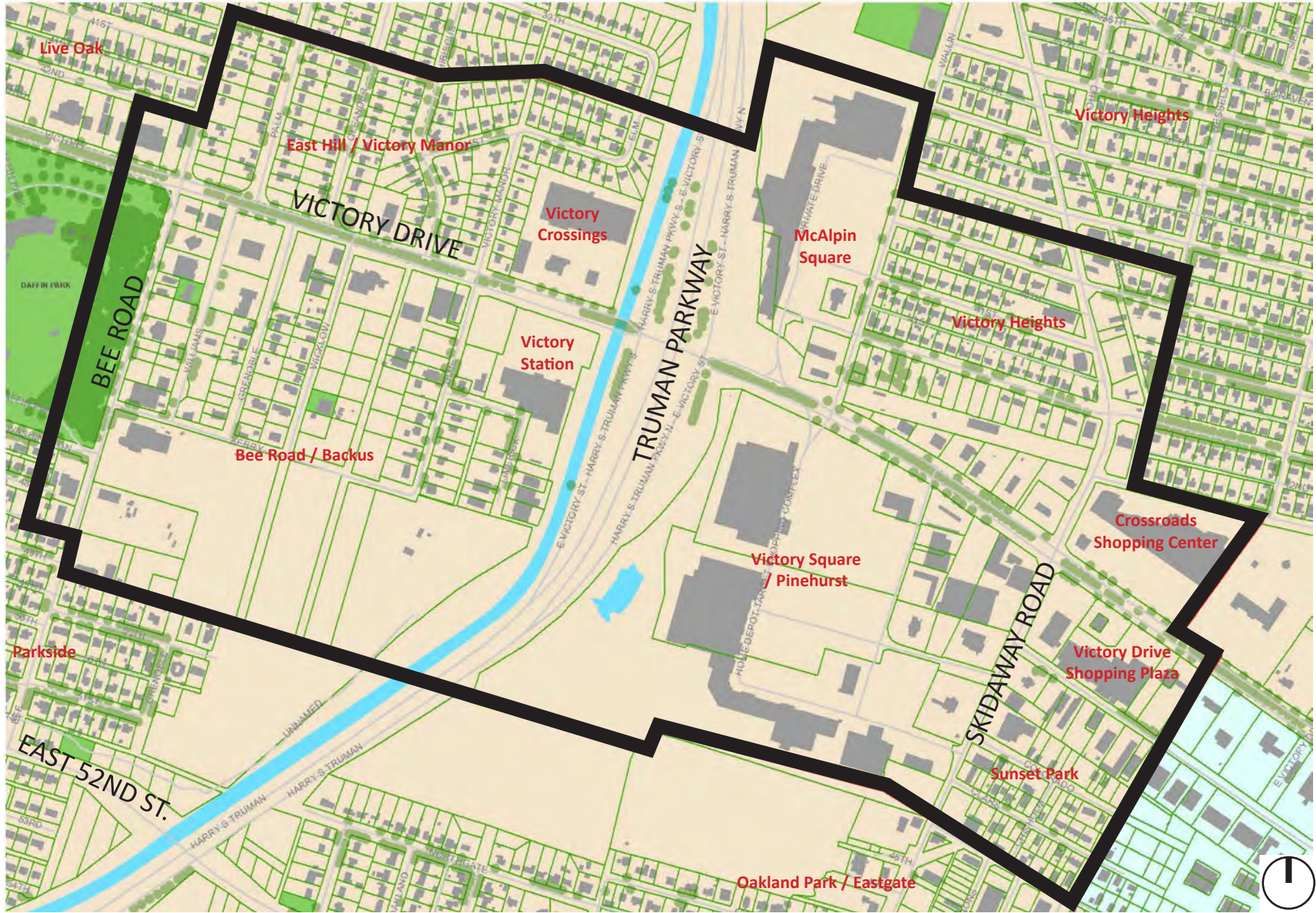
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following maps document existing conditions within the focus area and are organized by the three thematic areas: transportation; landscape and environment; and land use and urban design.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

STUDY AREA



EXISTING CONDITIONS - TRANSPORTATION



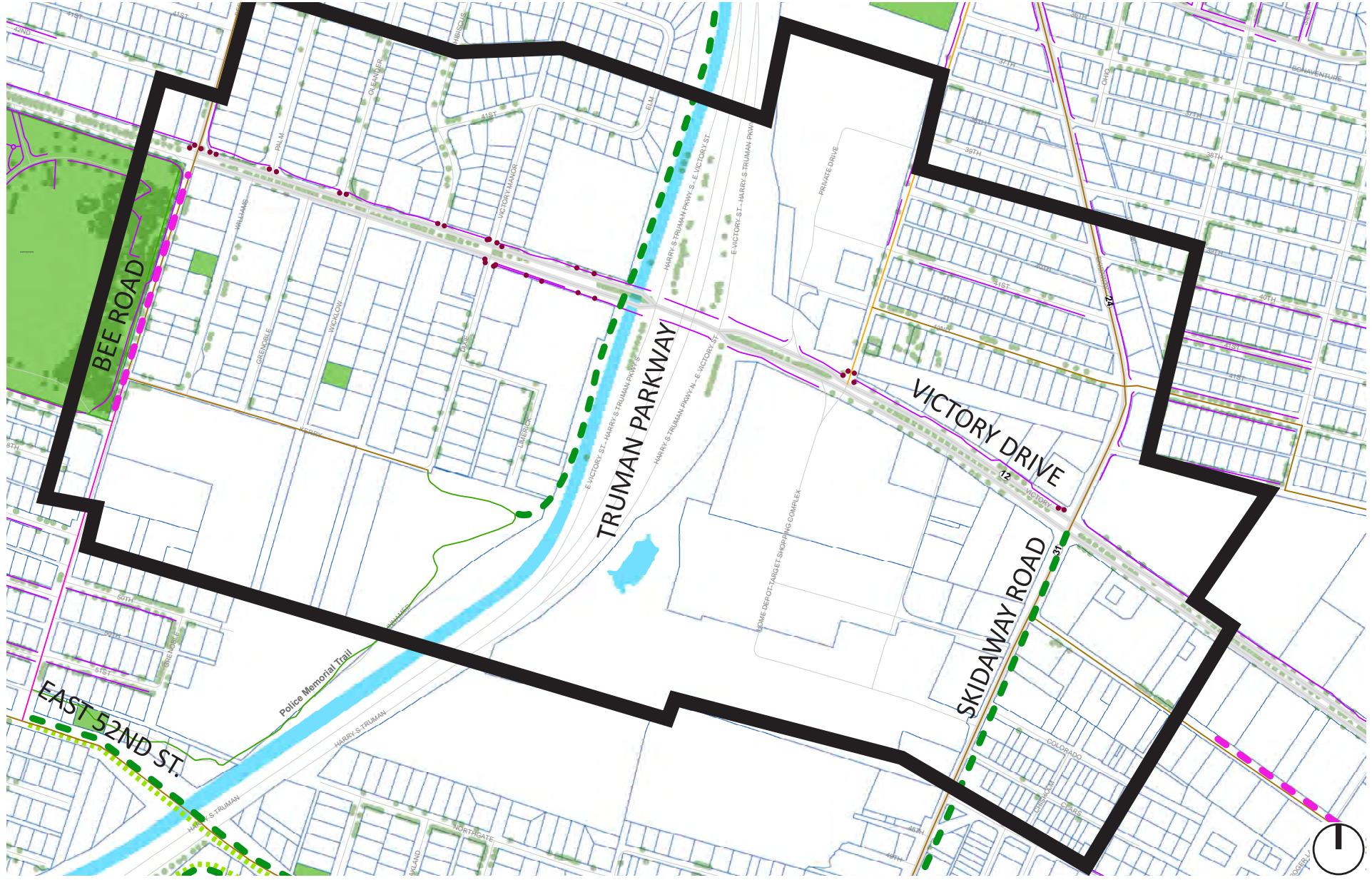
EXISTING CONDITIONS - TRANSPORTATION INTERSECTIONS

- Stop
- Traffic
- Yield
- Flashing Crosswalk
- None
- Mobility Ramps
- Pavements
- Buildings (2013)
- Parks and Greenspaces
- Water



EXISTING CONDITIONS - TRANSPORTATION

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION



EXISTING CONDITIONS - TRANSPORTATION

BIKE FACILITIES

Facility Type or Treatment

- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Paved Shoulder
- Existing Shared Lane
- Existing Shared-use Path
- Existing Wide Curb Lane
- - - Recommended Bike Lane
- - - Recommended Narrow Paved Shoulder
- - - Recommended Paved Shoulder
- - - Recommended Shared-use Path
- - - Recommended Wide Curb Lane



EXISTING CONDITIONS - LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT



EXISTING CONDITIONS - LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING TREE CANOPY WITHIN RIGHT-OF-WAY

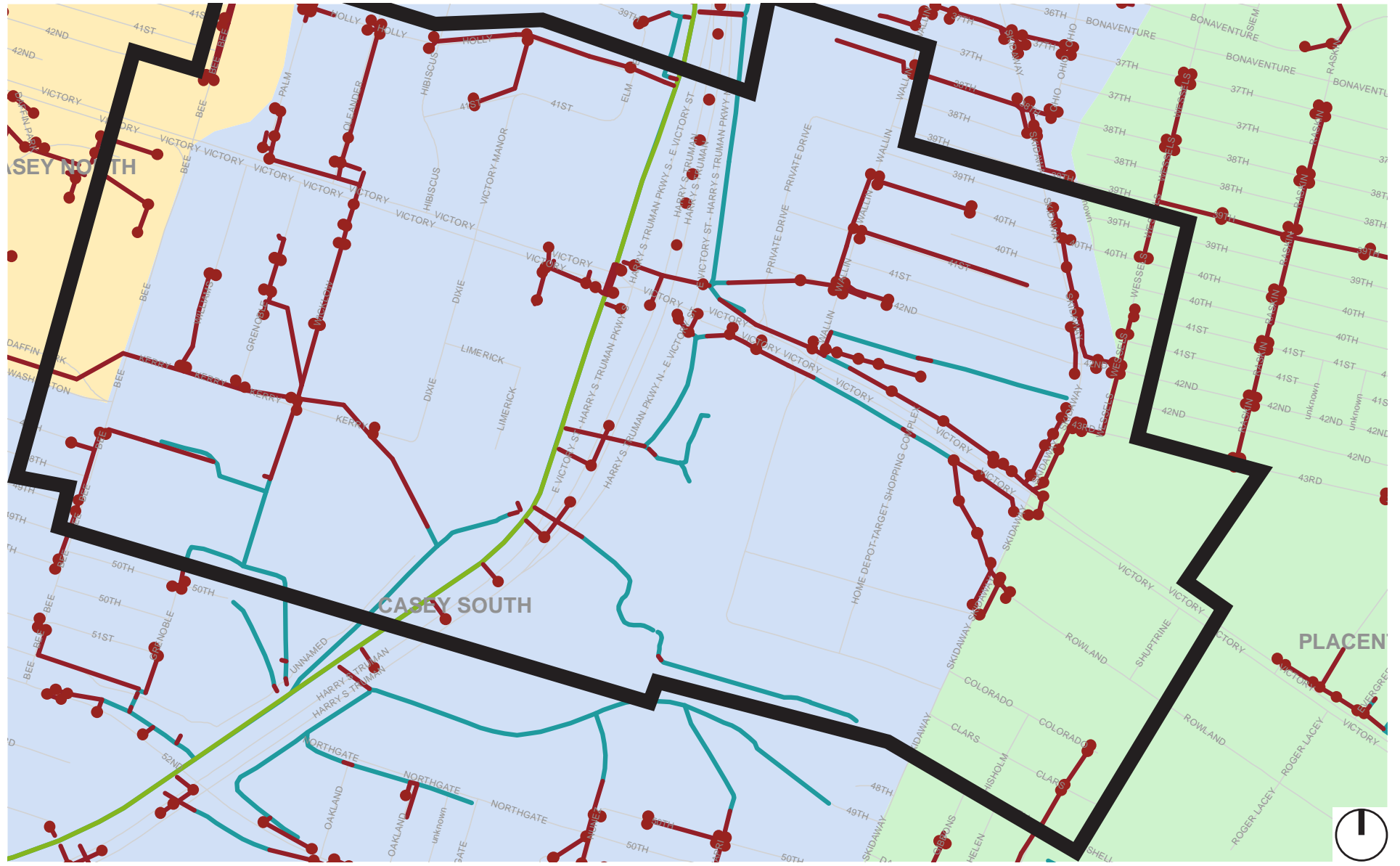
- Parcels
- Trees (Sav public)
- Parks and Greenspaces



EXISTING CONDITIONS - LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE



- Stormwater Inlets (SAV)
 - Stormwater Conduit Lines (SAV)
 - Stormwater Canals (SAV)
 - Maintained Ditches (SAV)
- Stormwater Drainage Basins**
- Casey North
 - Casey South
 - Placentia







EXISTING CONDITIONS - LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

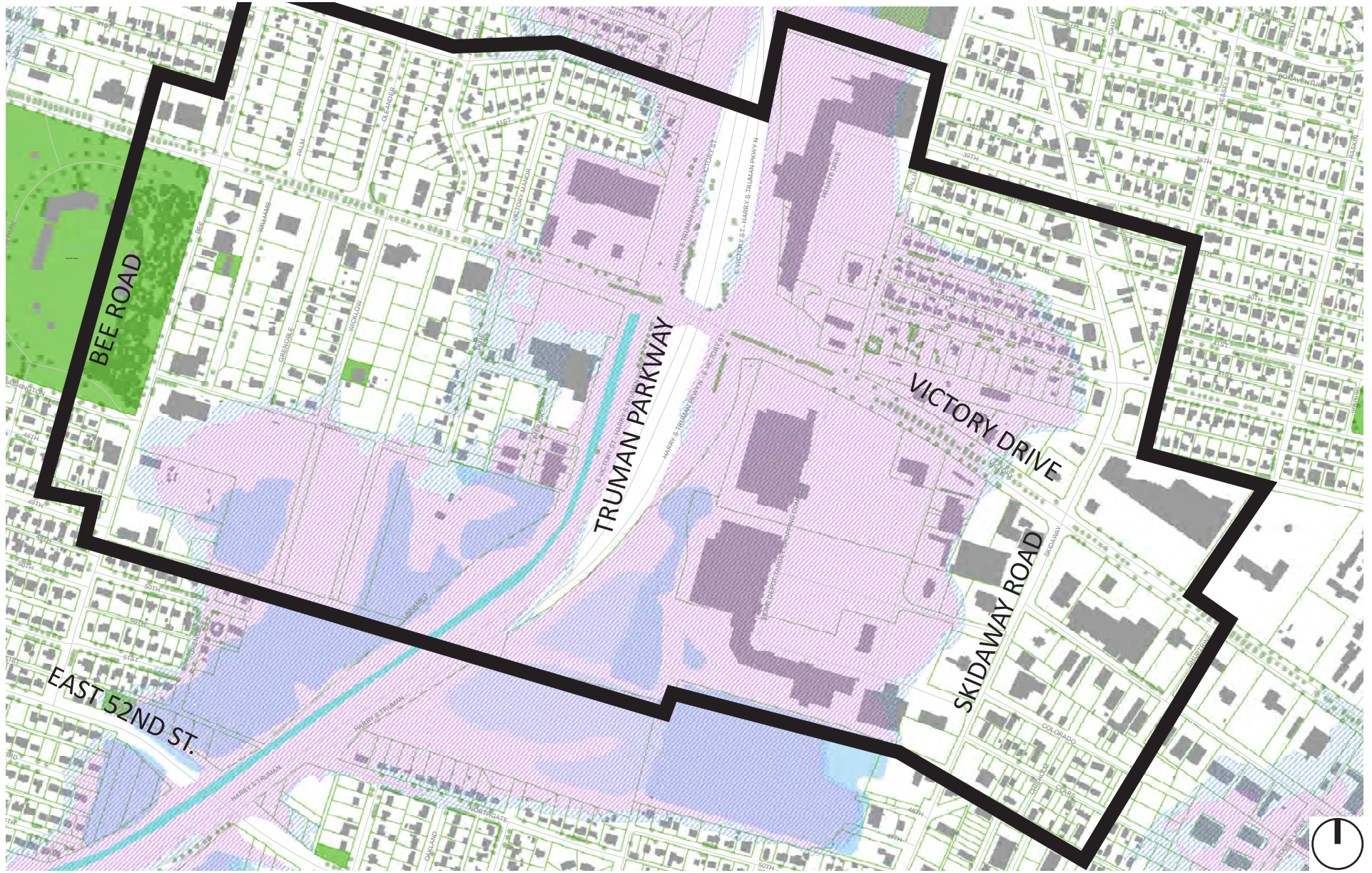
ENVIRONMENTAL

Special Flood Hazard Areas

-  100 Year Flood
-  500 Year Flood (0.2 PCT chance flood hazard)

Wetlands

-  Freshwater Emergent Wetland
-  Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
-  Riverine
-  Trees (Sav)

































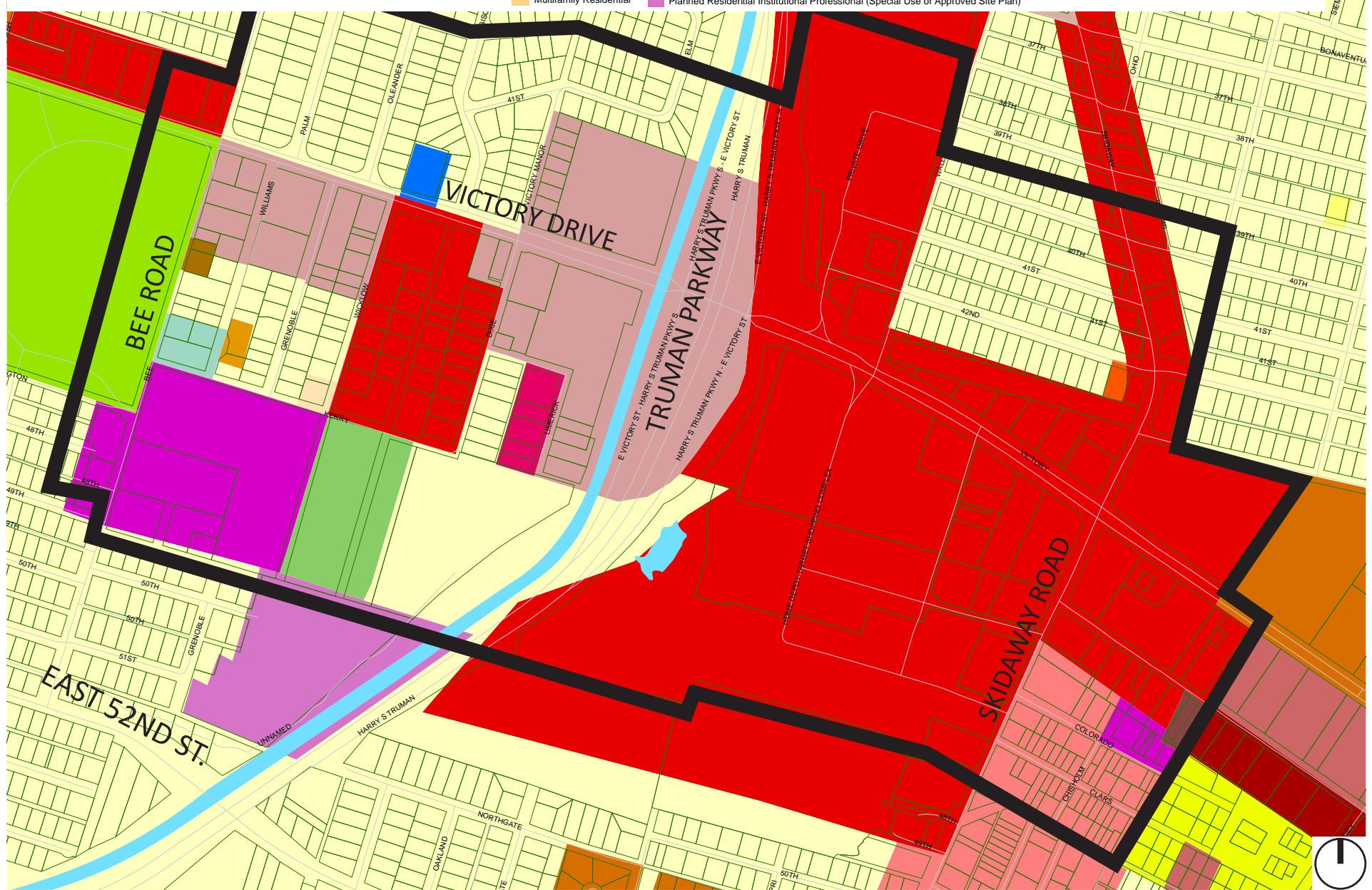
EXISTING CONDITIONS - LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN



EXISTING CONDITIONS - LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

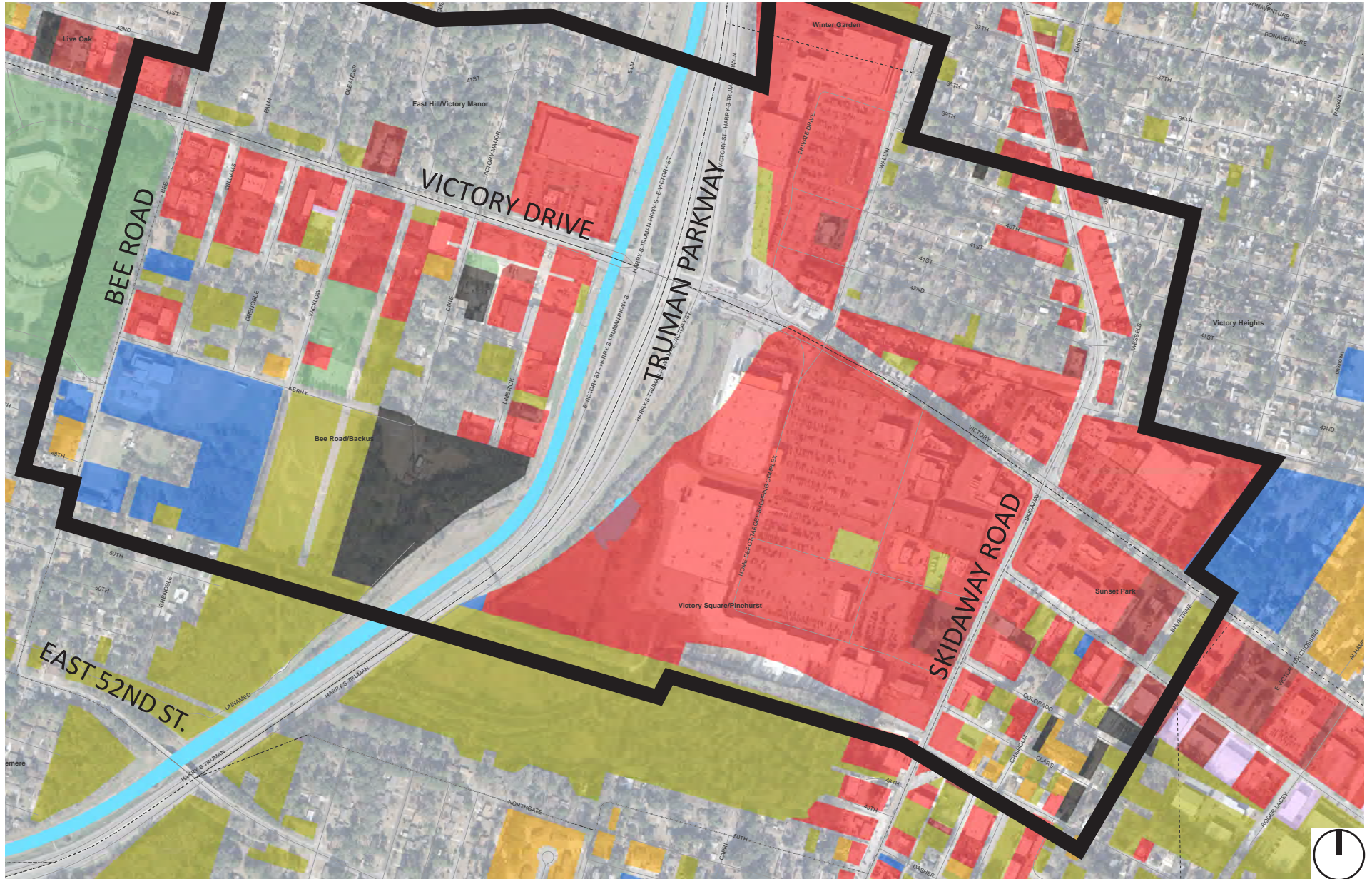
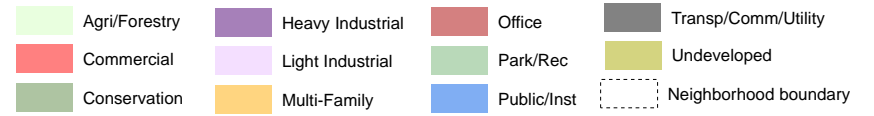
CURRENT ZONING

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  Agricultural Conservation |  Planned Development for Nonconforming Uses |  Multifamily Residential - 25 units per net acre |  Planned Unit Development Institutional - amended |
|  Business |  Planned Four Family Residential |  Office Institutional |  Planned Unit Development Multifamily |
|  Community Business |  Planned Highway Business |  One Family Residential |  Recreational Conservation |
|  Four Family Residential |  Residential-Institutional-Professional |  One and Two Family Residential |  Residential |
|  General Business |  Planned Light Industrial Transition |  One Family Semi-Attached Residential |  Residential Business |
|  Highway Business |  Planned Multifamily Residential - 12 units per net acre |  Planned Business |  Residential Mobile Home |
|  Light Industrial |  Planned Neighborhood Business |  Planned Community Business |  Two Family Residential |
|  Multifamily Residential |  Planned Residential Institutional Professional (Special Use or Approved Site Plan) | | |



EXISTING CONDITIONS - LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

EXISTING LAND USE



STUDY AREA HISTORY

The area of Victory Drive located between Bee Road and Skidaway Road, in contrast to some of the corridor's other more residential stretches, has historically been a vibrant entertainment and retail zone. From bicycle racing facilities in the late 1800's to drive-in theaters, hopping night clubs, family restaurants and automobile dealerships this segment of Victory Drive has served the residents of Savannah as a commercial destination for decades.



Georgia Historical Society
Drive-in theater on Victory Drive



Drive-in theater circa 1946



Georgia Historical Society
Club Royal - Former Victory Drive Plaza



Club Royal



Beautiful Victory Drive

Savannah, Georgia



Georgia Historical Society
Victory Drive @ Skidaway Road



Georgia Historical Society
Johnny Harris Restaurant @ Bee Road

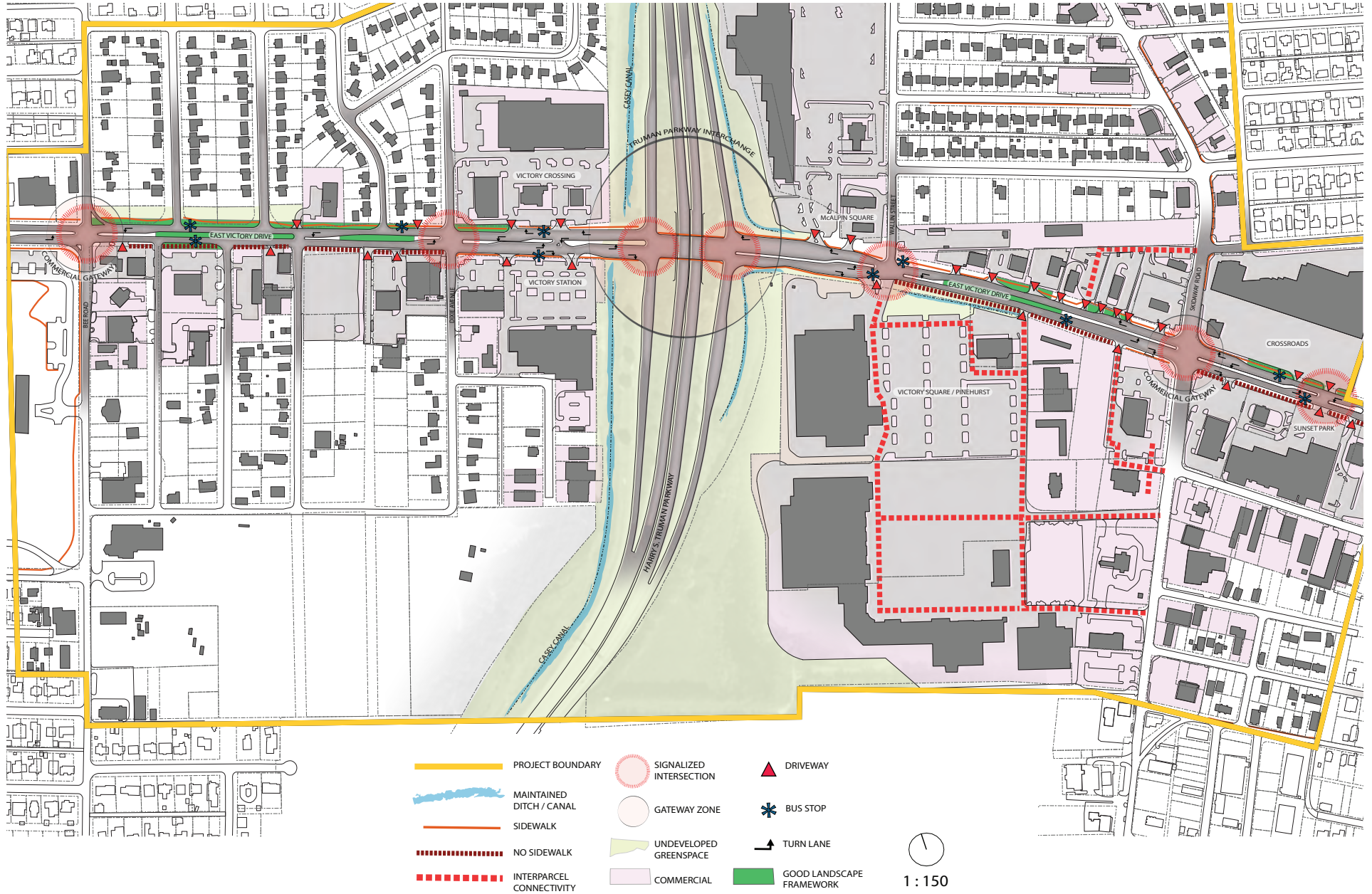


Backus car dealership



Backus car dealership

EXISTING CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community involvement continues to be an important component of the Victory Drive Corridor Study, as it has been in previous phases. The process continued following a similar approach as earlier phases and is outlined below.

August

At the beginning of the planning process, the project team conducted a multi-day workshop which included a series of focus group meetings with key stakeholders in the project area. The purpose of this first round of meetings was to gather initial input from the community about issues, concerns, and ideas to explore as a part of our process. The project team met with the following stakeholders:

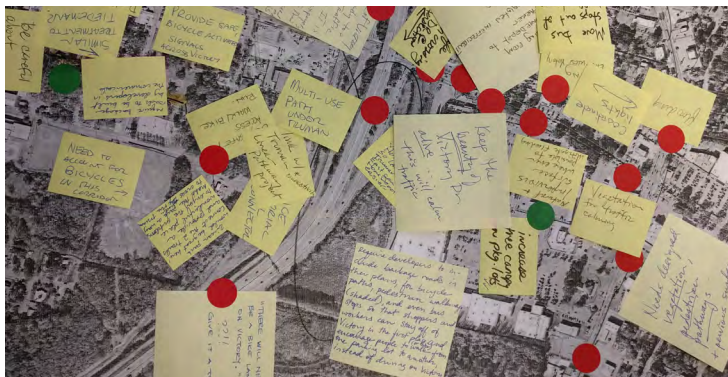
Agency Stakeholder Meetings

- City of Savannah / MPC Staff
- GDOT
- Multi-Modal providers / advocates – Chatham Area Transit, Healthy Savannah, Savannah Bicycle Campaign

Community Stakeholder Group Meetings

- Elected Officials
- Commercial Property Owners – Letters were mailed to all commercial property owners, according to tax records, adjacent to Victory Drive within the study area with an invitation to the focus group meeting. Twenty-eight people attended.
- Businesses Owners / Managers – Letters were mailed to the physical address adjacent to Victory Drive with an invitation to the focus group meeting. Three people attended.
- Neighborhood Leaders - Invitations were sent to the association presidents of neighborhoods in and adjacent to the study area.

On August 25, a community meeting was held for all interested members of the community. According to sign-in sheets from this meeting, 113 people attended. In addition to a wealth of comments provided at the meeting, 45 surveys were



completed either at the meeting or via an online comment form.

September

During the August meeting with the commercial property owners, a request was made for additional meetings in the process. Therefore, the project team held a series of six smaller meetings in September. The content and format for each of these meetings was the same. The intent of these meetings was to provide the property owners the opportunity to review and provide comment on the very early drafts of the study recommendations. The project team met with the neighborhood leaders as well.

November

Following development of the draft recommendations, a similar process as was followed in August was repeated here. The project team met again with the agency stakeholders and community stakeholders listed above, including two small group meetings with the property owners.

On November 17, a second community meeting was held and attended by 75 members of the community. In addition to comments provided at the meeting, 82 surveys were completed either at the meeting or via an online survey.

Summary:

- 22 stakeholder group meetings
- 2 community meetings held
- 127 comment forms received

A detailed summary of the comments received during both the August and November community meetings is located in the appendix.



SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Following the data collection phase, the team analyzed the existing conditions findings and compiled a list of key issues that exist in the focus area. These existing conditions and key issues inform the goal statement and the implementation plan recommendations that are proposed in the next section.

TRANSPORTATION

- Within the focus area, Victory Drive is a four-lane divided Urban Principal Arterial Street. The corridor is on the National Highway System (US 80) and designated an Evacuation Route. The posted speed limit is 40 miles per hour.
- Travel lanes are approximately eleven-feet wide (two lanes in each direction). The median width varies from approximately eight to twenty feet (measured curb-to-curb). Several sections of street lack curb and gutter east of Bee Road and west of Skidaway Road.
- Median and sidewalks are poorly maintained, many segments lacking curbs where new commercial development has not recently occurred.
- Congestion is most severe at the Truman Parkway interchange and surrounding intersections, Wallin Street, Skidaway Road. Several intersections operate at a level of service E or F.
- Alternate east-west routes across the Truman Parkway are limited. A dedicated east-west multi-purpose pedestrian and bicycle path has not yet been studied.
- Interrupted sidewalks on the south side of Victory Drive create incomplete pedestrian connections. Consistent worn paths demonstrate desire routes.
- Most intersections are not fully ADA compliant and lack sidewalks, curb ramps, tactile warning strips and/or crossing signals.
- The intersection of Victory Drive and Wallin Street (including the Home Depot driveway) operates at a level of service E on all approaches. Queuing at this intersection interferes with traffic progression on Victory Drive. The substandard spacing between Wallin Street and the Truman Parkway ramp intersections contributes to overall congestion in this area.
- Savannah Regional Transportation Program (SRTOP), a partnership of City of Savannah and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), will assess potential improvements to the corridor intersections including revisions to the traffic signal coordination.

- Chatham Area Transit (CAT) runs two transit lines through the study area and the corridor includes several transit stops with varying degrees of accessibility and degraded amenity issues.
- The City of Savannah Traffic Engineering's proposed intersection improvements at Skidaway will create a fully ADA accessible intersection.



LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

Over the years palm trees and several Southern Live Oaks have been removed and not replaced.

- Medians range from sparsely vegetated, somewhat vegetated with periodic small groupings of azaleas, to heavily vegetated and creating site line issues.
- Medians lack mulch and appropriate groundcover, contributing to soil erosion. Understory plantings should withstand foot traffic, hold the soil, be easy to rake and / or blow clean and require less man hours for maintenance personnel.
- As a result of routine overlay paving, the median's original granite curbs are no longer functional.
- East of the Truman Parkway Interchange, 25% of existing sidewalks are buffered from traffic by tree lawns. West of the Truman, where sidewalks exist only on the north side of the right-of-way, 40% of sidewalks have adjacent tree lawns.
- There is minimal canopy coverage at the Truman Parkway Interchange and the intersection with Skidaway Road.
- Many older Live Oaks in the corridor express root dominance over the shrub planting areas.
- While not a system-wide priority flooding area for the city, residents and property owners report localized flooding, particularly east of the Truman Parkway Interchange and also between Dixie Avenue and Bee Road.
- Much of the Focus Area lies within both the 100 and 500 year flood zone.
- The Casey Canal is a major regional stormwater facility which runs parallel to the Truman Parkway. In addition to serving as important stormwater conveyance infrastructure, the canal represents an important open space opportunity.
- On the southwest side of the Truman Parkway, open drainage easements run parallel to Victory Drive.



URBAN DESIGN / LAND USE

- From Bee Road to Dixie Road, Victory Drive retains the characteristics and feel of the historic corridor with respect to general building scale placement and form. The landscape framework of the corridor is the most intact in this area.
- From Dixie Road to Skidaway Road, the scale and intensity of commercial development changes to a larger, more regional suburban commercial scale and form.
- Sidewalks are approximately five to six-feet wide but are not continuous on both sides of Victory Drive. Cyclists and pedestrians share the sidewalks due to the lack of continuous facilities or dedicated bicycle routes.
- The lack of intersecting streets and street grid on either side of the Truman Parkway Interchange contributes to the lack of safe alternative routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Some outparcel infill development has occurred within the larger commercial developments.
- The Truman Parkway Interchange at Victory Drive bisects the historic corridor and serves as a gateway for those arriving to the commercial node from points north and south.
- The largest concentration of commercial development within the Focus Area lies between the Truman parkway and Skidaway Road. This is also the most congested area of Victory Drive within the Focus Area.





KEY ISSUES AMONG EXISTING CONDITIONS

TRANSPORTATION

- Traffic Congestion Throughout Study Area Corridor. Causes Include:
 - Truman Parkway Interchange
 - Destination Retail
 - Numerous Driveway Access Points
 - Substandard Signalized Intersection Spacing
 - Wallin & Skidaway Intersections
- Crash Frequency
- Lack of Alternative Parallel Routes
- Hurricane Evacuation Route
- Incomplete Sidewalk Network
- Non-Compliant Accessible Intersections
- Some Degraded Bus Stop Facilities
- Victory Not Safe For Bike/Pedestrian Crossing of the Truman

LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

- Landscape Framework Only Partially Intact. Framework Includes:
 - Live Oaks in Tree Lawns
 - Palms & Azaleas in the Median
- Age of Live Oak Canopy
- Lack of Live Oak Canopy at Truman Interchange and Skidaway Road
- Median Condition / Plantings Vary
- Limited, Poor Maintenance
- Isolated Flooding
- Casey Canal and Open Drainage Ditches Poorly Maintained

LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Truman Parkway Bisects and Interrupts the Victory Drive Corridor
- Change in Scale from Residential to Commercial Development
- Evolution of Scale of Commercial Development to the Modern Suburban

IV. Implementation Plan Recommendations

FOCUS AREA VISION AND GOAL STATEMENT



VISION

The Truman Parkway Focus Area of Victory Drive will be a beautiful commemorative landscape, an important Community Gateway and Canopy Road corridor, while also functioning as a modern major boulevard.

GOAL STATEMENT

The project aims to restore Victory Drive to its former grandeur by establishing a landscape consistent with the corridor's historic framework and by improving the safety and function for all users through context-sensitive strategies. These strategies include:

- Promoting corridor safety and mobility for all users*
- Balancing regional mobility with improved access to commercial development*
- Enhancing the character of the landscape and historic tree canopy, community gateway and memorial boulevard*

FOCUS AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for the Focus Area's Implementation Plan are guided by the corridor-wide Vision Statement established in Phase I as well as the Focus Area Vision and Goal Statement on the previous page. The recommendations are organized by the three thematic areas of transportation, landscape, and urban design. The following basic rationale and assumptions underlie the implementation approach recommended on the following pages:

A. Restore and Protect Victory Drive as a Community Asset:

- Landscape Framework
- Safety and Mobility
- Access to Commercial

B. Potential Implementation Strategies:

- Inter-Governmental Partnerships
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Stewardship Organization
- Regulatory Framework

TRANSPORTATION

A. Implement Complete Streets Concepts

1. Provide sidewalks along both sides of Victory Drive*
2. Provide pedestrian lighting along both sides of Victory Drive*
3. Provide fully functional, four-way accessible crosswalks at all signalized intersections
4. Explore alternate, parallel routes for bicycles off of Victory Drive
5. Provide benches and shelters at major transit stops
6. Adjacent local road network shall accommodate people on foot, on bicycle, and in cars and trucks (as stated below in C.1.)*

B. Improve Traffic Flow via Access Management

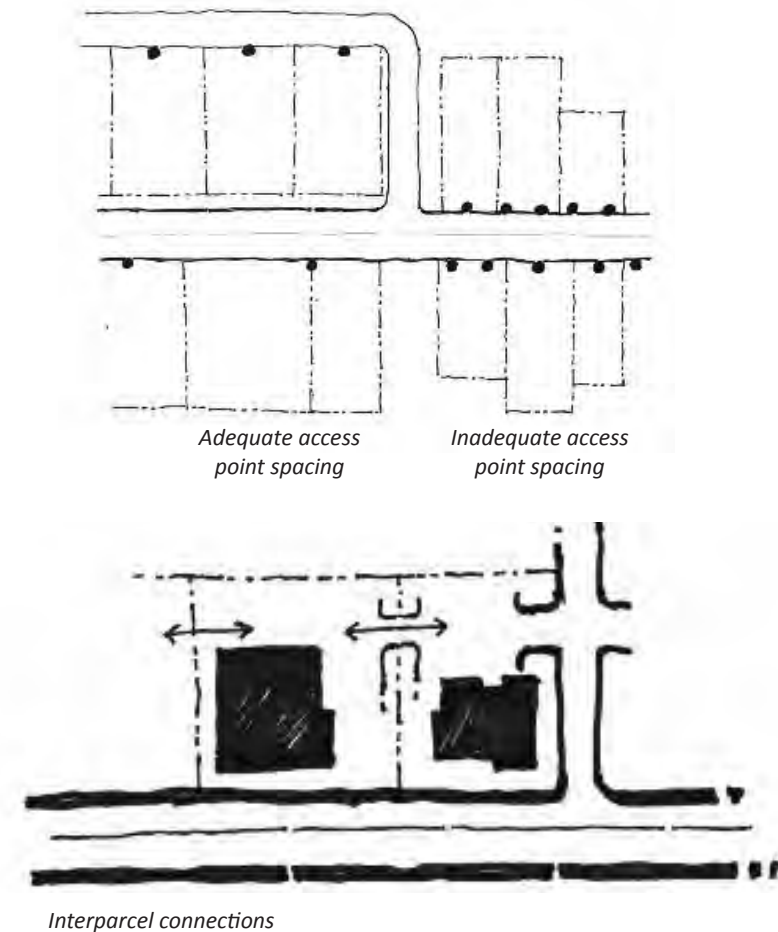
1. Develop and adopt an Access Management Policy for the Corridor
2. Manage the location and spacing of driveways/access points
3. Manage median opening and intersection spacing

C. Maintain and/or Reestablish Local Street Network

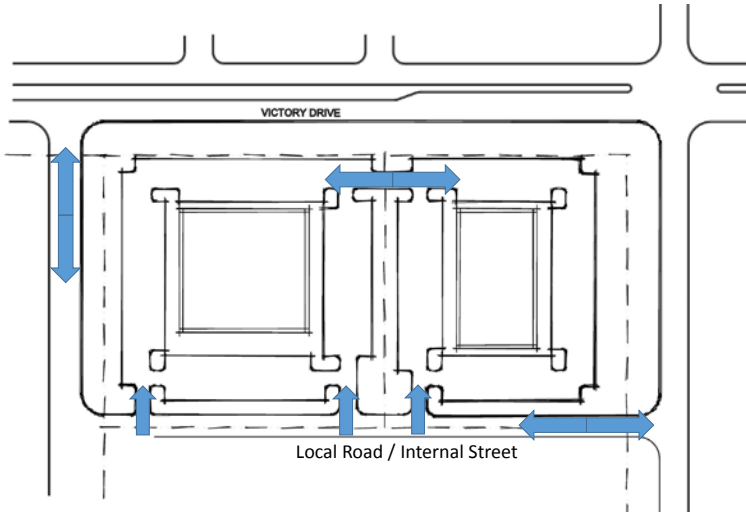
1. Provide for local road network adjacent to Victory Drive that accommodates cars, pedestrians and bicycles*
2. Continue/connect to existing street network*
3. Provide for future connections to adjacent parcels*

Note that interparcel connections and shared access improve safety and minimize both impacts on historic landscape, and the need for turn lanes on Victory Drive.

* Potential incentive where commercial property involved



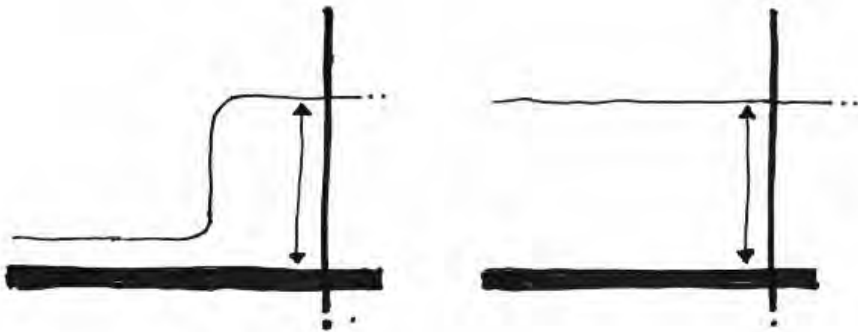
TRANSPORTATION (CONT.)



Access management example

D. Increase East/West Travel Options

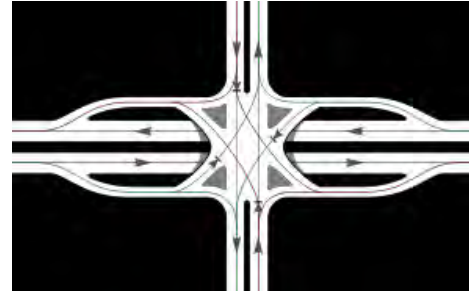
1. As major redevelopment occurs, additional context sensitive roadway connections across the Truman Pkwy should be explored.
2. Previous recommendations that provide for through connections across Skidaway Rd should be implemented.
3. Provide for local road network adjacent to Victory Drive that accommodates cars, pedestrians and bicycles. (See C.1.)*



Adequate spacing of local roads adjacent to Victory Drive

E. Analyze Alternative Interchange Treatments at Truman Parkway

1. These could include Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) and Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)



SPUI



DDI

F. City to Evaluate Street Abandonment Policy/Process

1. Include relevant agencies and Departments in the process, including: MPC, Mobility and Parking Services, Traffic Engineering and Real Property Services

G. Provide for Increased Bicycle and Pedestrian Access to and Through the Study Area

1. Provide east-west multi-use trail connectivity over the Casey Canal and Truman Parkway, connecting neighborhoods to the commercial core*
2. Provide multi-use trail(s) along the Casey Canal connecting the Police Memorial Trail to points north
3. Provide for local road network adjacent to Victory Drive that accommodates cars, pedestrians and bicycles. (See C.1.)*

H. GDOT Study Possibility of Reducing the Speed Limit to 35 mph.

* Potential incentive where commercial property involved

LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

A. Establish Historic Landscape Framework:

1. Plant palms and live oaks where possible based on the historic framework*
2. Reestablish the median where possible; replant existing gaps in the median landscape



1919 Proposal Drawing by Mr. William O'Driscoll Rockwell, City Engineer (October 16, 1919, The Savannah Press)

B. Implement Median Improvement Program:

1. Utilize the current Park & Tree median prototype installed between Bull and Drayton Streets
2. Coordinate with GDOT; install City irrigation system in median
3. Reestablish granite median curb

C. Conduct Tree Condition Assessment within the Public Right-of-Way:

1. Identify specimen and exceptional trees
2. City to address trees requiring removal and/or maintenance pruning
3. Implement routine corridor maintenance program

D. Identify Potential Additional Green Space Opportunities Along the Corridor

E. Create Landscape Gateway Zone at Truman/Victory Interchange:

1. Develop Landscape Improvement Plan for Gateway Area
2. City to Partner with GDOT and Chatham County to implement the plan
3. Apply for GDOT Gateway Grant funding

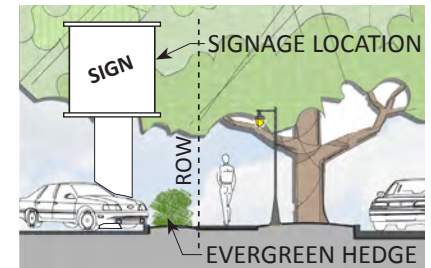
F. Tree Lawns and Sidewalks:

1. Provide tree lawns and sidewalks per the appropriate prototype section

G. Screen Surface Parking Lots from Victory Drive:

1. Utilize evergreen hedge plant material in a staggered double row
2. Utilize City Approved Plant List for hedge material
3. Shrubs to be maintained at an average height of 30"-36"

4. In compliance with the existing ordinance, an evergreen hedge shall act as visual buffer between Victory Drive and adjacent parking spaces. The hedge shall not obstruct views of building facades or business signage. Sign location and design shall comply with the existing ordinance.



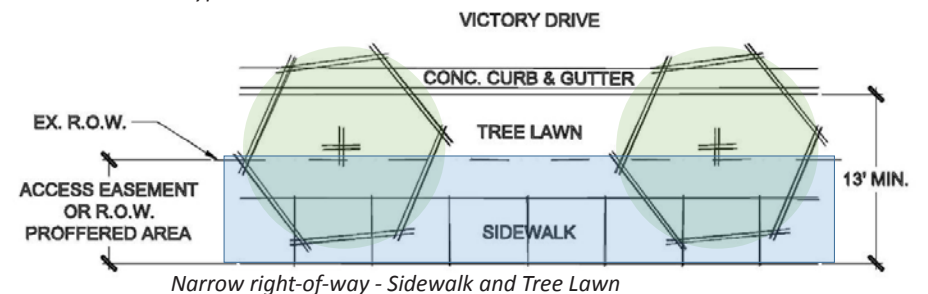
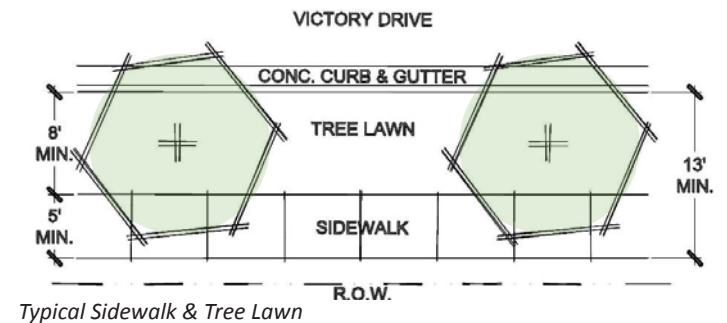
H. Improve Stormwater Management Through the Corridor:

1. City to initiate a corridor-wide stormwater master plan
2. City to utilize, wherever possible, Green Infrastructure Concepts and other Best Management Practices (BMP's) within the ROW
3. Adjacent commercial properties shall also implement, wherever possible, Green Infrastructure Concepts and other Best Management Practices. Property Owners who exceed current minimum requirements may be eligible for additional incentives *

I. Friends of Victory Drive:

1. Establish a non-profit, public-private partnership organization dedicated to the improvement, preservation, advocacy and support of the Victory Drive/US-80 corridor

* Potential incentive where commercial property involved



LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

A. Victory Drive Frontage - Recognizing the “Main Street” Prominence of Victory Drive

1. **Building Orientation:** Primary entrance of new buildings face Victory Drive, with direct pedestrian/sidewalk access from the Victory Drive sidewalk.
2. **Parking:** If parking is provided in front of the building, the parking area shall be a maximum of one bay (2 parking rows) deep. If parking is not placed between the building and Victory Drive the existing building setback shall apply.
3. **Service & Loading:** All service and loading areas shall not face Victory Drive and shall be outside of the Frontage Zone.

Landscape Framework: An 8’ minimum tree lawn and a 5’ minimum width sidewalk shall be provided along the Victory Drive frontage within the public ROW. If the existing ROW is inadequate, the adjacent property owner shall dedicate the necessary additional ROW and construct these improvements. In exchange the property owner will be eligible for incentive(s) such as those described below.*

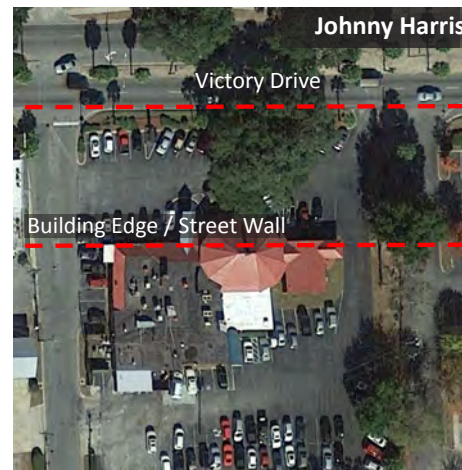
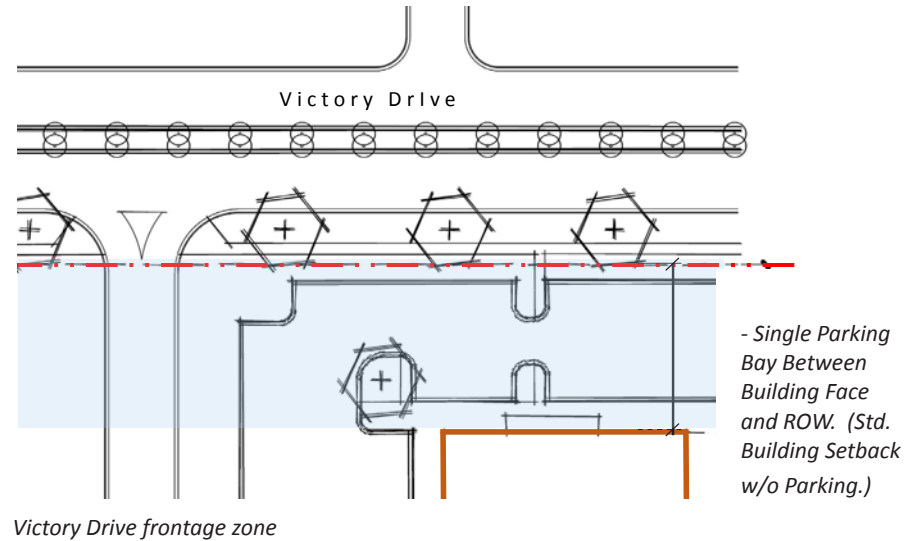
B. Encourage Mixed-Use Redevelopment

Research consistently shows that neighborhoods that mix land uses, make walking safe and convenient, and are near other development allow residents and workers to drive significantly less if they choose. In fact, in the most centrally

located, well-designed neighborhoods, residents drive as little as half as much as residents of outlying areas.

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/mixed-use-trip-generation-model>

* Potential incentive where commercial property involved



Recognizing the “Main Street” prominence of Victory Drive

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNER INCENTIVES

Commercial property re-zonings, new building permits and/or major site plan revisions which incorporate the Study Area recommendations should be eligible for a range of specific incentives. The incentives should be proportional to the extent of the proposed impacts. These incentives could include:

1. Expedited Permit Review Process
2. Property Tax Credit / Abatement (3-5 year)
3. Increased Density / Lot Coverage and/or Building Height
4. Reduced Parking Requirements
5. Stormwater Credits For Green Infrastructure

In addition to and/or in lieu of the above, there may be, in some cases, the potential for public/private cost-sharing for major community infrastructure elements (i.e. Multi-use Trails, Stormwater Infrastructure, Public Streets, etc.)

RECOMMENDED PUBLIC ACTIONS & INVESTMENTS

TRANSPORTATION

- Construct Complete Streets Sidewalk & Intersection Improvements
- Develop and Adopt Access Management Policy
- Upgrade CAT Bus Stops
- Implement Parallel Bike Routes
- Explore / Implement Increased East-West Travel Options
- Analyze Alternative Interchange Treatments
- Review/Revise Street Abandonment Policy Process
- Provide Multi-use Trail North-South Along Casey Canal
- Provide Multi-Use Trail Connection East-West Over Casey Canal and Truman Parkway

LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT

- Develop a Stormwater Master Plan
- Implement Victory Median Enhancement Program
- Complete Victory Tree Inventory and Condition Assessment

LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Establish Victory Drive Regulations & Incentives (Overlay District?)

OVERLAY DISTRICT

Definition by Department of Community Affairs, Georgia:

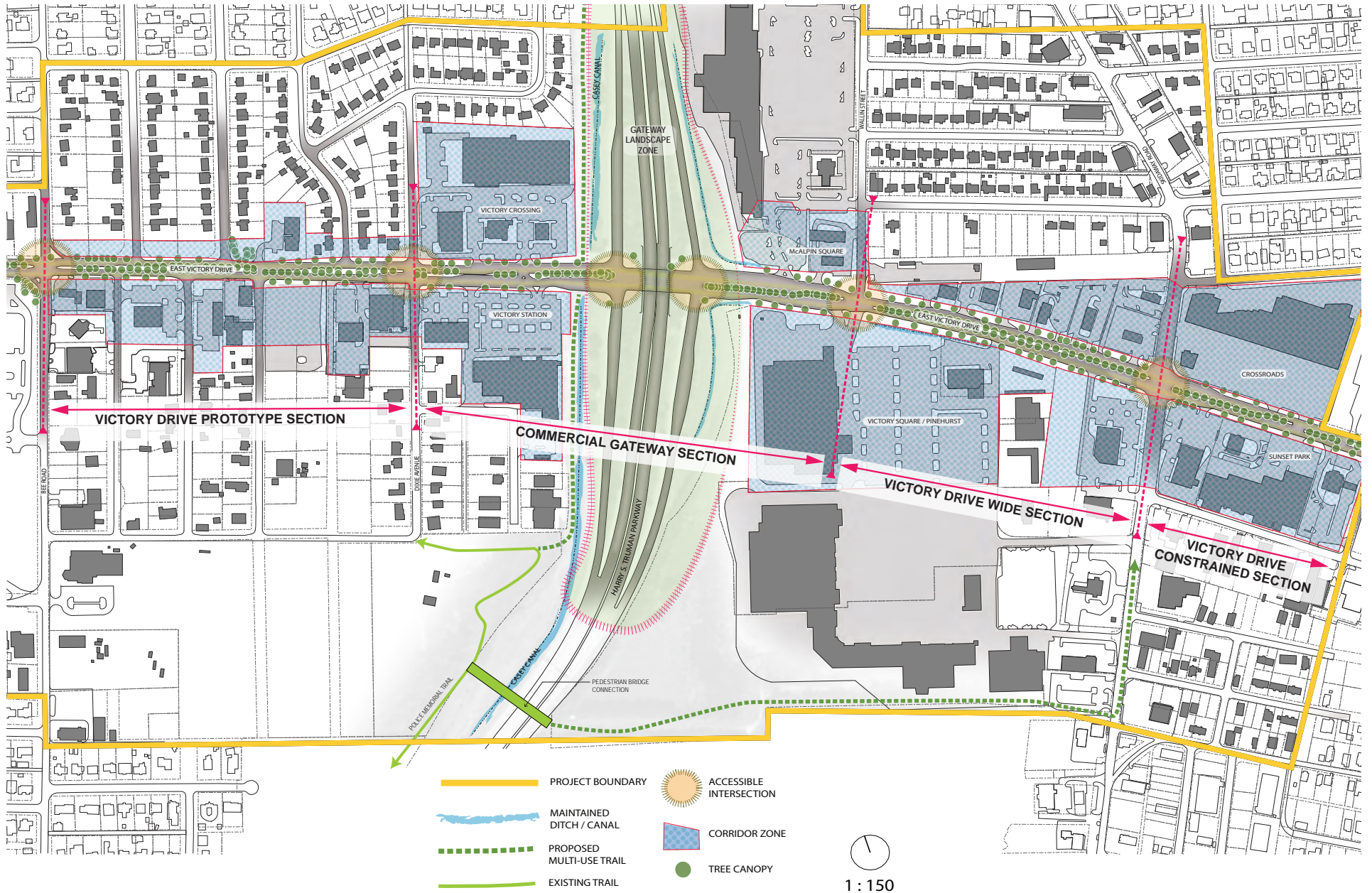
An overlay district is used to establish alternative land development requirements within a specific area of your community that requires special attention, such as an environmentally sensitive area or rapidly developing strip corridor. ... The overlay is usually superimposed over conventional zoning districts. It consists of a physical area with mapped boundaries and written text spelling out requirements that are either added to, or in place of, those of the underlying regulations.

https://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/OverDist.pdf

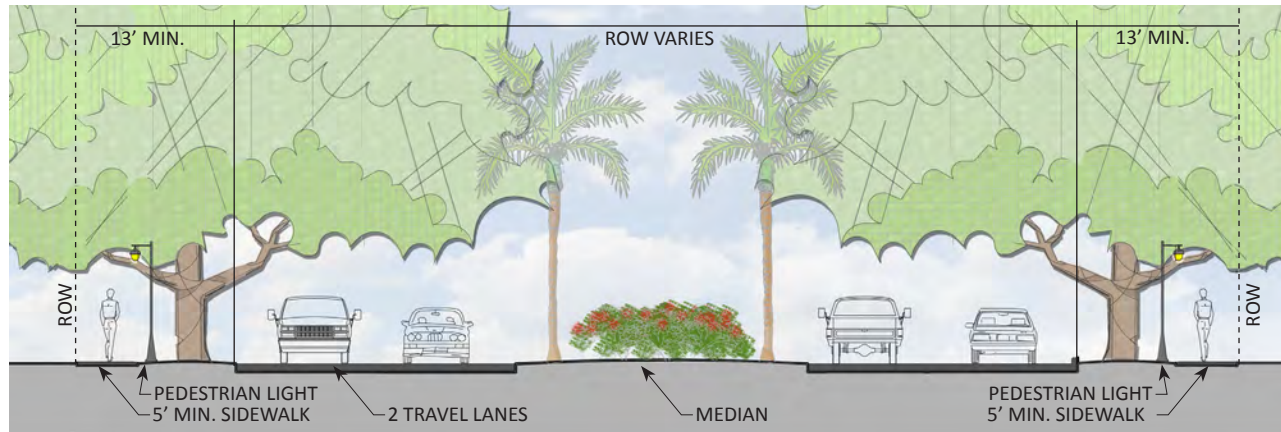
POTENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT COMPONENTS

- **TRANSPORTATION**
 - Access Management Plan:
 - Interparcel Connections
 - Driveway Design
 - Driveway Location
 - Internal Streets
- **LANDSCAPE / ENVIRONMENT**
 - Landscape Framework / ROW
 - Stormwater Bonus
- **LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN**
 - Victory Drive Frontage
- **INCENTIVE PROGRAM**
- **REQUIREMENTS OPTIONAL OR MANDATORY?**
 - Variance Process (if Requirements Mandatory)

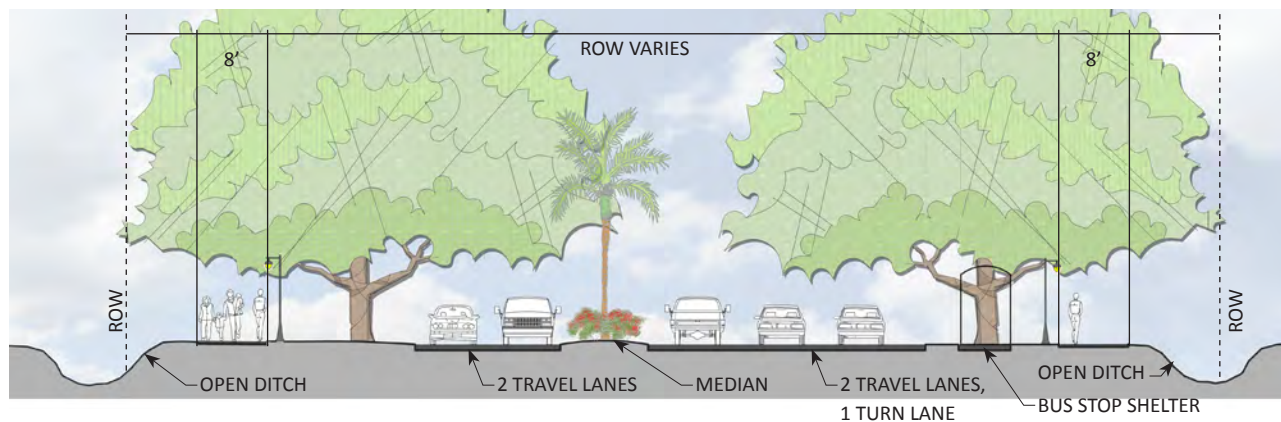
PROPOSED CONDITIONS DIAGRAM



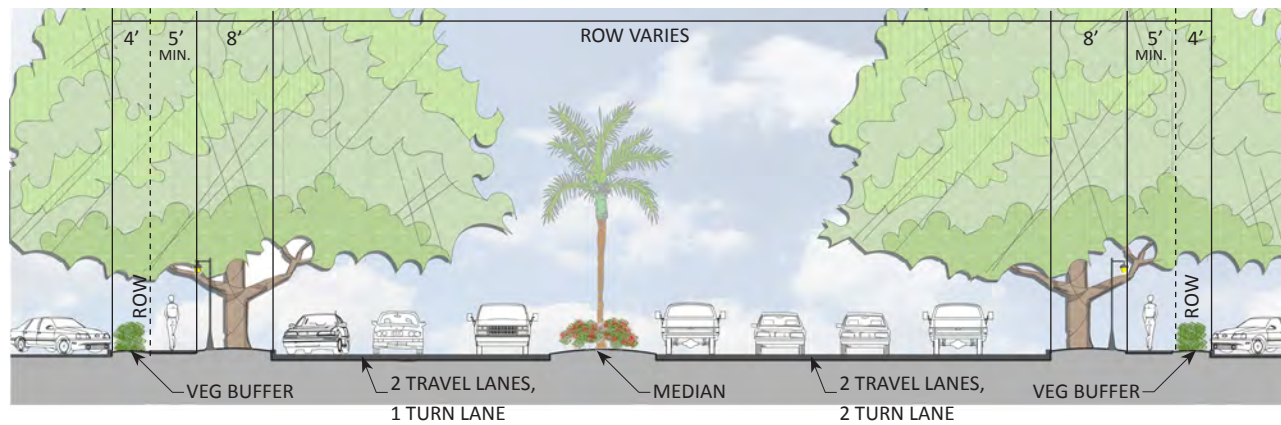
LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK- PROPOSED SECTIONS



PROTOTYPE



WIDE



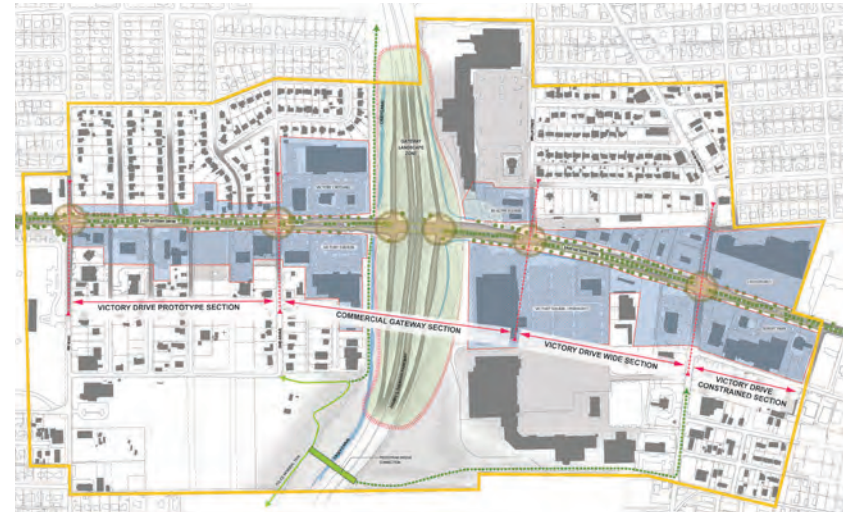
CONSTRAINED

V. Conclusion

FINAL THOUGHTS

This focus area is unique within the 20-mile-long Victory Drive/US-80 corridor and as such it possesses both unique challenges and unique opportunities. This area is, and will remain, an important commercial/retail node. It is however currently congested and lacks the visual cohesiveness of the landscape that is present in other areas of Victory Drive. The opportunity exists to improve both the safety and mobility and the landscape framework of this area and thereby improve all users' experience and access to and through the area.

The vision of reestablishing Victory Drive as a "Great Street" along its entire length is achievable as is the goal of enhancing the Bee to Skidaway Focus Area as an important and desirable commercial destination. That vision, however, can only be achieved through a series of collaborative partnerships. The partners will need to include the City, the County, GDOT, commercial property owners and, potentially, a Victory Drive Conservancy organization.





Appendices:

(Available Under Separate Cover)

- A1. Stakeholder Feedback – Sign-in Sheets
- A2. Stakeholder Feedback – August Community Meeting
- A3. Stakeholder Feedback – November Community Meeting
- A4. Transportation Memorandum

Acknowledgments

COASTAL REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

James Aberson, CORE MPO Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Phillip Claxton, City Manager, City of Port Wentworth

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Harold Fowler, Mayor, City of Richmond Hill

Ron Feldner, City Manager, City of Garden City

Caroline Hankins, Town Administrator, Town of Thunderbolt

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James Hungerpillar, Mayor, Town of Vernonburg

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Mike Lamb, Mayor, City of Pooler

Pete Liakakis, Chatham Area Transit Board of Directors

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Jannine Miller, CORE MPO Economic Development and Freight Advisory Committee

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