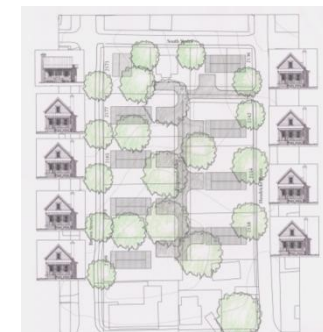


City of Covington, Georgia Urban Redevelopment Plan



Prepared on Behalf of the Covington City Council
By John W. Cheek, AIA, AICP
May, 2009

City of Covington, Georgia Urban Redevelopment Plan

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Kimberly Carter, Mayor of Covington

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Michelle Larson, Senior Planner

Lesley Hampton, Geographic Information System Professional

Kevin Klinker, Geographic Information System Professional

Members of the Covington Housing Task Force

Kay Lee and the staff of The Center in Covington

Cynthia Harrison, Community Initiatives Coordinator,
Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs

Martha Reimann, Community Development Specialist,
Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs

Malisa Thompson, Community Initiatives Coordinator,
Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs

As noted in the plan, the preponderance of data, goals and concepts brought together in this plan is drawn from a number of plans already prepared for the Covington Community by consultants, community volunteers and participants. These plans are described and summarized in this document. The complete texts are also available either through the City or The Center.

INTRODUCTION



Over the past two decades Covington has pursued a series of innovative planning initiatives in an effort to retain and build upon the community's rich historic urban fabric and proactively respond to growth in the community. Most recently, it has adopted a new zoning ordinance to assist in implementing the vision documented in these plans. These are a few of the reasons Covington was selected in 2006 to be a participant in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Signature Community Program.

Now it seeks to prepare an Urban Redevelopment Plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. 36-61 to expand its set of implementation tools, qualify for a range of state and federal financing programs and create additional financial incentives for redevelopment.

This Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to the requirements of the Urban Redevelopment Act, O.C.G.A. 36-61. It includes supporting documentation that will facilitate its implementation, such as maps and graphic illustrations, in order to guide the pattern of redevelopment in a fashion compatible with the community's vision for the city's core area.

This vision has been set out in several recent public documents, including a new zoning ordinance adopted in June 2008; a *Downtown Master Plan* prepared by Duany Plater-Zyberk for Downtown Covington and the Parker Pasture and Clark's Grove properties in 2001; the *Highway 278 LCI* Completed in 2005; the *Downtown Corridor Study*, the *Downtown Covington Government Corridor Study* completed in Spring 2009 by landscape architecture students at the University of Georgia and Newton County's *Economic Development Strategy* finished in February 2009.

This Urban Redevelopment Plan distills the goals and recommendations of these plans into a brief and direct summary plan which meets the requirements of the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Act and provides the implementation tools necessary to accomplish the goals in those plans which remain valid.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the introduction notes, a number of higher-level master plans have been developed by the Covington Community. This plan is not another high-level master plan; it is a plan for implementing the goals and projects of those plans which have already been done and are in place.

Those plans express many goals and list many projects. This plan seeks to identify the themes in those goals which express pervasive community needs and desires. The plan prioritizes the projects which respond broadly to those needs and desires and puts into place a mechanism that can fund, manage and build those projects.

To accomplish this program the City of Covington has chosen the Urban Redevelopment Plan format, an extremely flexible tool that the General Assembly of Georgia has created for local governments' use in combating, mitigating and correcting conditions of blight, decline and disinvestment.

A later section of this plan recapitulates the goals expressed in all these plans. The broad themes that come out of them are:

- The need to rehabilitate and replace substandard housing with safe, clean, comfortable, attractive and affordable housing
- The need to improve, extend and enhance the City's circulation system, especially its pedestrian elements
- The need to improve, expand and enhance public open space of all sorts

The City Council is implementing a program to accomplish these expressed goals by creating the Covington Redevelopment Authority, which will have the powers granted by the state's Urban Redevelopment Law to pursue a wide variety of activities which can fund and develop the public projects and which can encourage new private investment. This authority is charged with developing specific, implementation-oriented work plans to carry out those purposes by opening new funding sources and partnership opportunities to the City.

The Authority will be guided by an appointed board drawn from a cross section of the community to assure that its activities benefit affected stakeholders. It brings together the range of talents and skills necessary to provide sensitive and practical guidance to its activities.

BASIS OF FINDING THAT THE PLAN AREA QUALIFIES AS A REDEVELOPMENT AREA (O.C.G.A. 36-61-2(18))



Representative Housing Stock in the Redevelopment Area's Southern Sub-areas

Under the Urban Redevelopment Law (Georgia Code Title 36, Chapter 61), City of Covington is authorized to create a Redevelopment Area. Pursuant to that power, the City Council adopted a resolution finding that the Redevelopment Area defined herein meets the definition of a slum area in accordance with OCGA 36-61-2(18). Herein the Council creates the Covington Redevelopment Authority, acting with the support of appropriate City departments, as Redevelopment Agent.

According to the Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. 36-61-2(18)), by demonstrating one or any combination of the following characteristics, a designated area is defined as a slum and eligible to be designated Redevelopment Area under the law.

An area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential, which by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age, or obsolescence...; existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes;

These characteristics have been demonstrated in several of the existing plans, including the City of Covington *Comprehensive Plan* and the Highway 278 LCI Plan. They are also shown on several of the following maps, which illustrate extent of poverty conditions, vacant and deteriorating properties and crime statistics.

Any combination of ... factors ... conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, or crime and is detrimental to public health, safety, morals or welfare.

Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness

- The Parcel Analysis and Ownership maps following demonstrate both the fragmentation of ownership and the predominance of smaller parcels which make private redevelopment prohibitively complicated and costly. While this situation is not necessarily an issue in neighborhoods, it makes assembly and redevelopment in commercial and transitional residential areas very difficult for private sector developers. That we see ownership of multiple parcels in residential areas indicates that those areas have a lower owner-occupancy levels and higher levels of investor and absentee ownership.

The predominance of defective or inadequate street layout

- The *Comprehensive Plan*, LCI Plan, Downtown Covington Master Plan, Harristown Plan and others identify the lack of an interconnected, safe and comfortable pedestrian system. They also document hazardous vehicular situations and vehicular-pedestrian conflicts that result from the street layout's inadequacies.

CONCLUSION

The area defined as the Redevelopment Area on the following map demonstrates a variety of conditions which meet the definition of a "Slum Area" in O.C.G.A. 36-61-2(18).

City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan District Boundaries

Legend

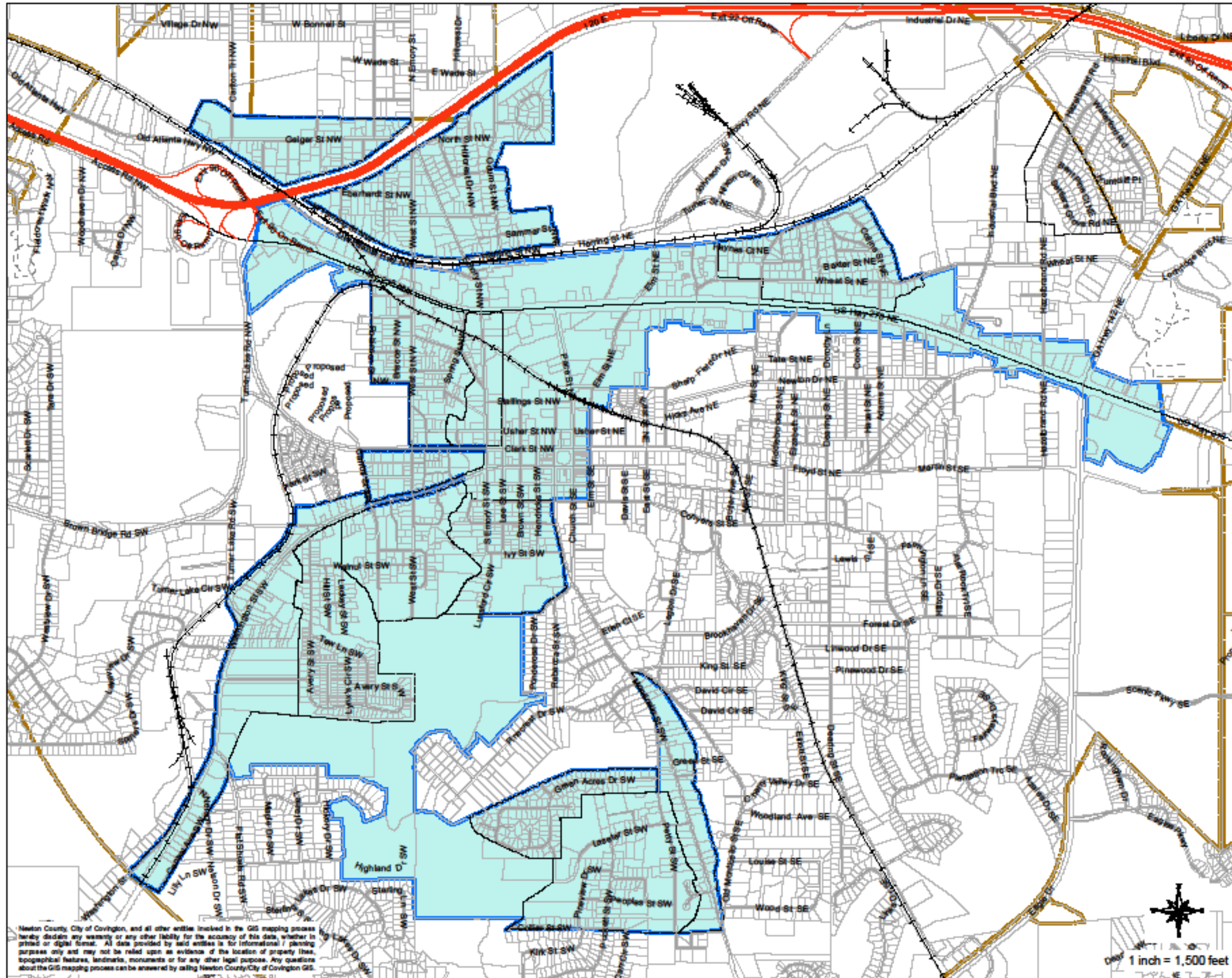
-  **Redevelopment Area**
-  **Redevelopment Subareas**
-  **City of Covington**
-  **Railroads**

This plan shows the boundaries of the Covington Urban Redevelopment Area. The district boundaries follow property boundaries, so parcels are either fully in or fully outside of the Redevelopment Area.

The Redevelopment Area includes thirteen Sub-areas:

- 38 Corridor
- Covington Mill
- Emory Street
- Fowler Street
- Gieger St
- Green Acres
- Harristown
- Nelson Heights
- North Covington
- Sand Hill

- Short Street
- Texas Alley
- Washington Street Corridor

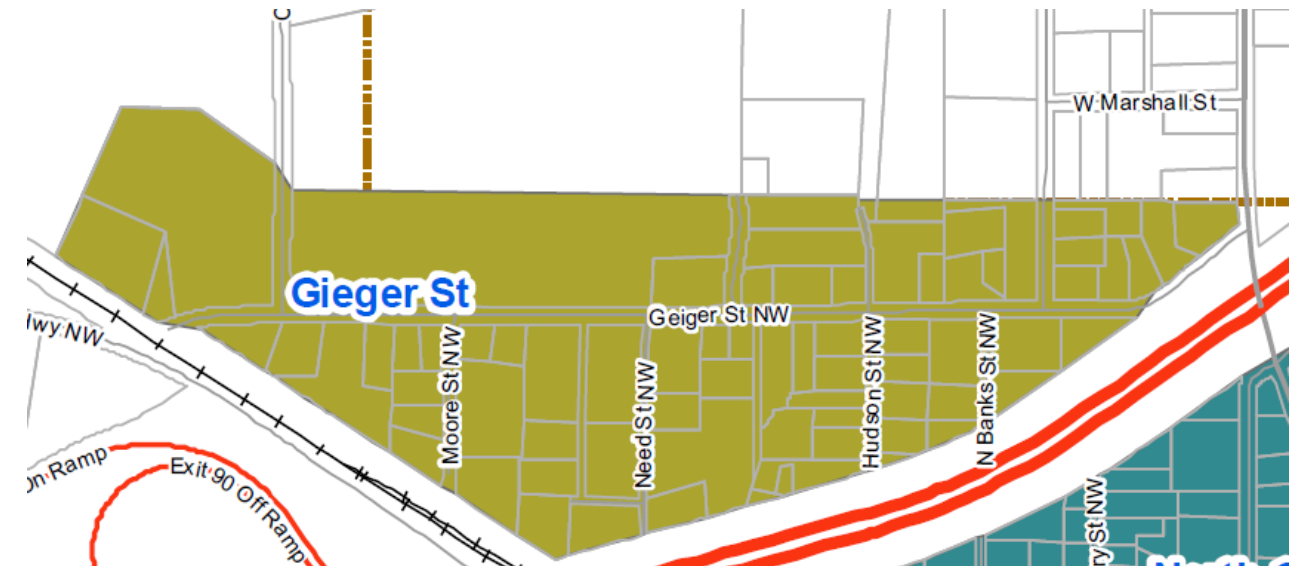


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REDEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-AREAS

As noted on the Redevelopment Area Map, The Redevelopment Area includes thirteen Sub-areas. The Sub-areas are described here.

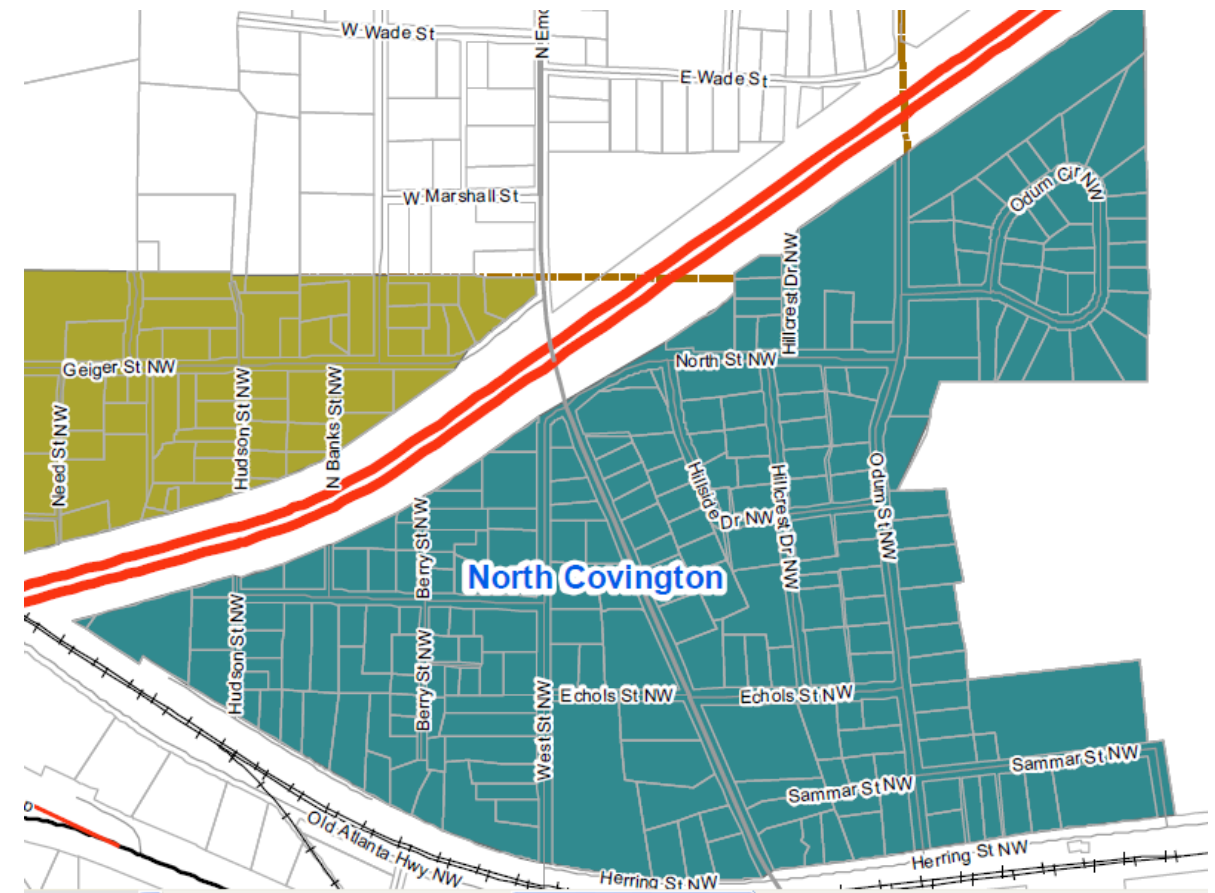


Geiger Street

Bounded by Interstate 20 to the southeast, Old Atlanta Highway to the southwest and the city of Oxford to the north, the Geiger Street area is dominated by medium density single-family ranch-style homes primarily built in the 1950s and 1970s. The area is anchored by public institutional uses such as Troy State University, Cousins Community Center, 911 Communications Center, and the Georgia Department of Driver Services.

The presence of public institutions and community service organizations within the community provide a good incentive for neighborhood improvements. The lack of pedestrian infrastructure in this neighborhood is particularly burdensome due to the presence of Cousins Middle School. Many children that walk to and from school in the morning and afternoons must walk in the street along the curbs because there are no sidewalks.

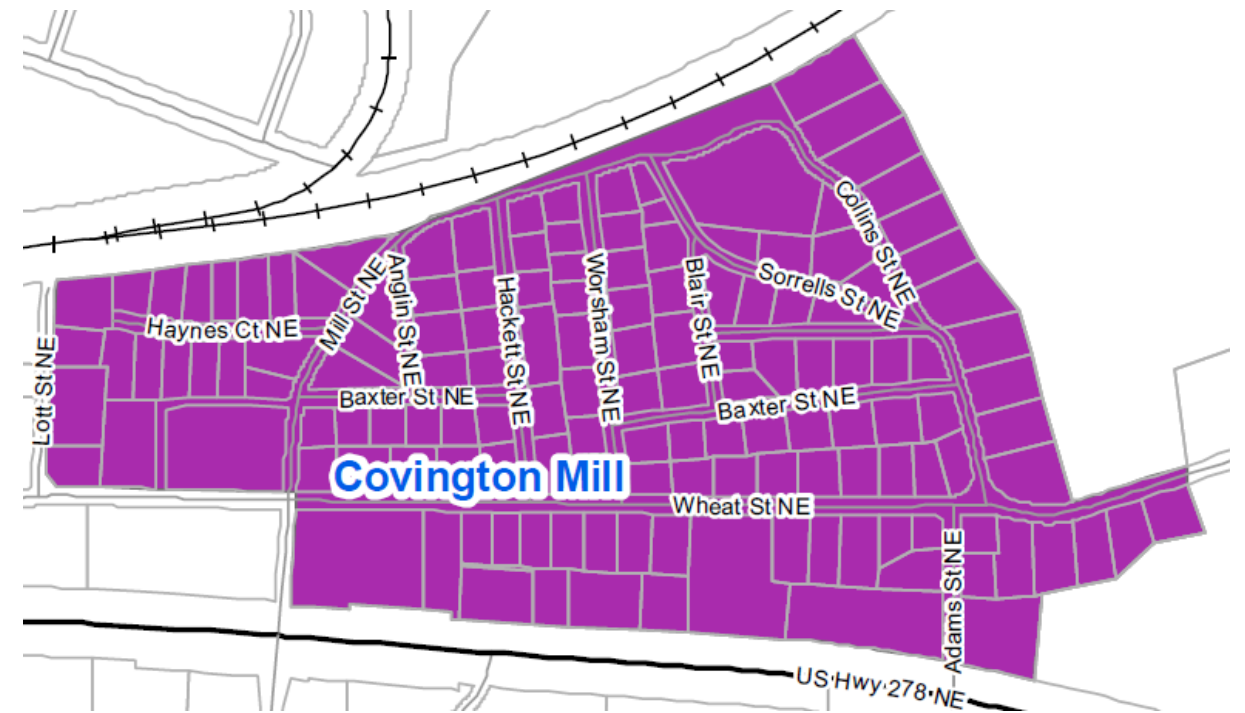
Covington's code enforcement has condemned a number of structures within the neighborhood. Many of these condemned structures have been brought up to code and three currently remain under condemnation. The streets closest to Interstate 20 show the highest levels of disrepair. In general, overgrown vegetation, peeling paint and peeling siding, show a history of continued decline.



North Covington

The North Covington area is one of the city's historic districts and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. Formerly called "Midway," due to its proximity midway between Oxford and downtown Covington, this district includes Greek Revival and Queen Anne architectural influences. Bounded by Interstate 20 to the north, the North Covington Industrial Area to the east, and the CSX railroad to the south and west, this is the northernmost historic area of the city.

The development of Interstate 20 in the mid 20th century created a schism in the North Covington area that has contributed to continued disinvestment and blight over the past several decades. Older, non-conforming uses and slowly deteriorating structures have deterred investment in one of the city's important gateway communities. While a good number of the historic homes within this district remain in satisfactory condition, targeted revitalization efforts are imperative in protecting these historic properties and ensuring that the character of the district remains intact.



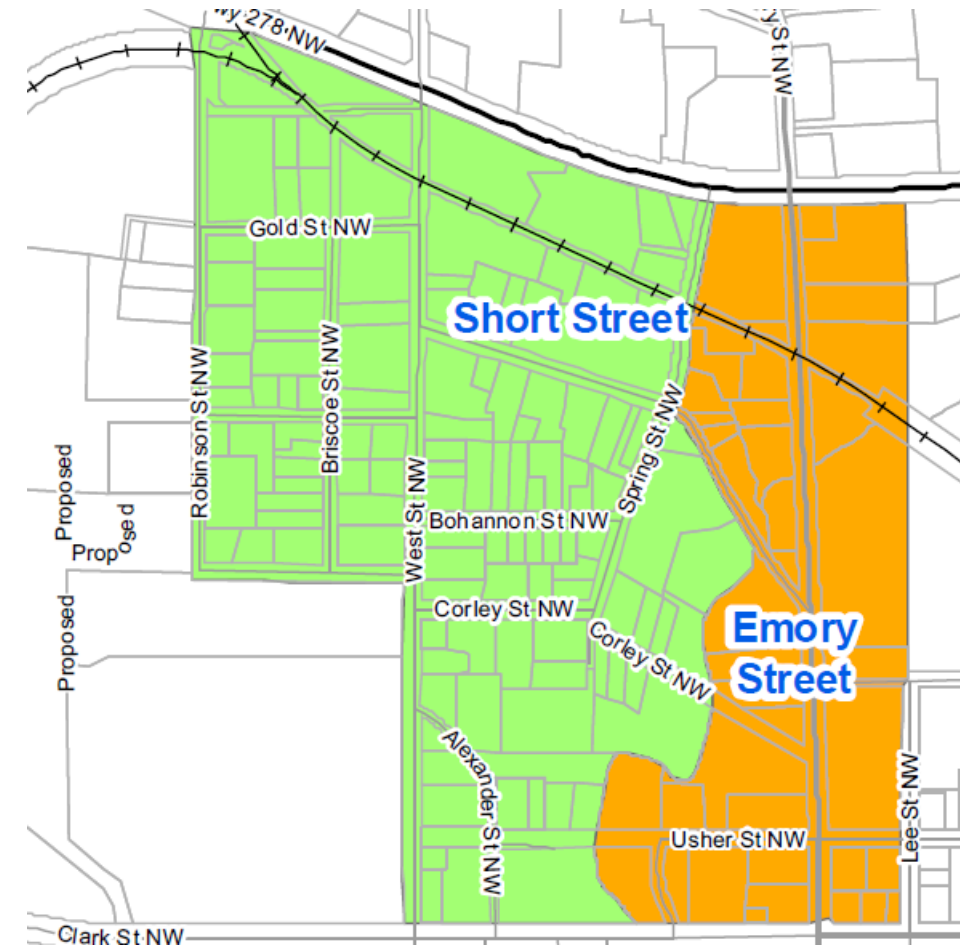
Covington Mill

The Covington Mill neighborhood is bounded by Highway 278 to the south, Lott Street to the west, Collins Street to the east and the CSX railroad to the north. An old mill village, this neighborhood was once home to the employees of Covington Mills, which closed in the 1960s. The Covington Mill Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000 due to its architectural and period significance.

Many of the mill homes that still exist within the neighborhood were built in the early 1900s out of pine and other combustible woods. There are three house types prevalent in this district: the saddlebag, Gabled-Ell cottage and the Pyramidal Cottage. Many of these homes were originally constructed as duplexes and were later converted to single-family homes when the homes were sold to mill workers in the late 1950s. It is estimated that the current renter to owner-occupied ratio of the area is 50/50.

There are presently three condemned structures within the neighborhood and one property currently under court order for abatement. Many of the code enforcement issues within this area involve overgrown vegetation, junk vehicles, and dilapidated porches and railing.

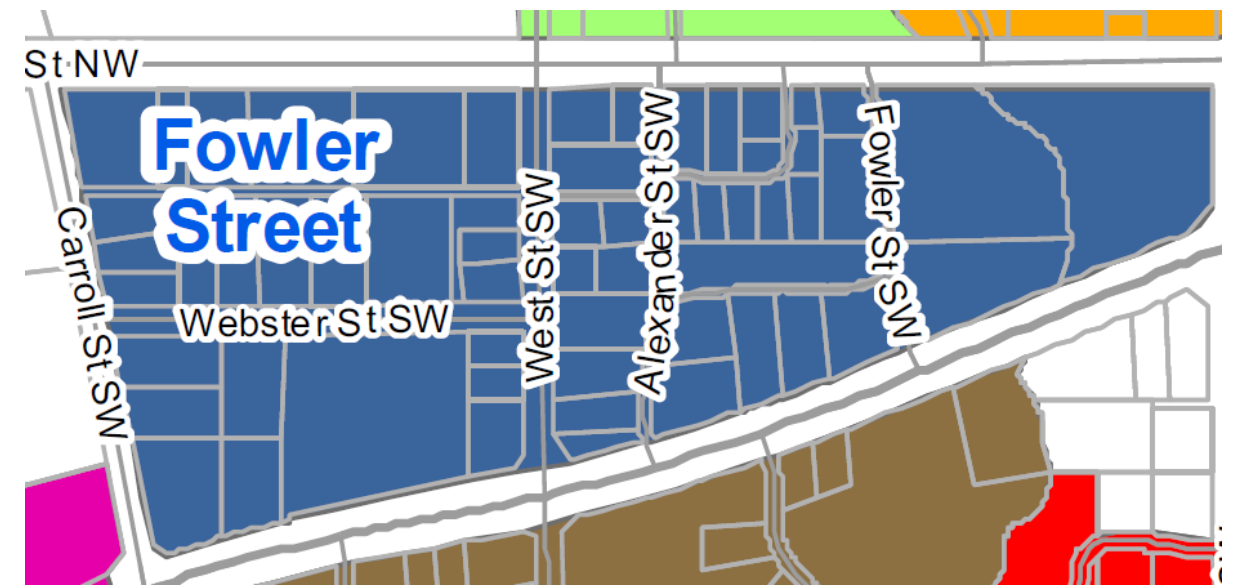
The presence of this neighborhood along the boundary of the Highway 278 Corridor Plan, make it an integral part of revitalizing the Highway 278 corridor.



Short Street and Emory Street

The Short Street-Emory Street area is bounded by Highway 278 to the north, Emory Street to the east, Clark Street to the south and Robinson Street to the west. These neighborhood areas are comprised of a mix of ranch homes, shotgun homes, duplexes and quadraplexes.

Several boarded and vacant homes line the Corley Street and Bohannon Street areas. There are two structures currently under condemnation in these neighborhoods and many others with overgrown vegetation and other minor code violations. High crime, illegal dumping and junk cars pose continuous problems for law enforcement and code enforcement. Much of these neighborhood areas are included within the Highway 278 LCI and their adjacency to Covington's downtown make revitalization of the area important to any development within the vicinity.

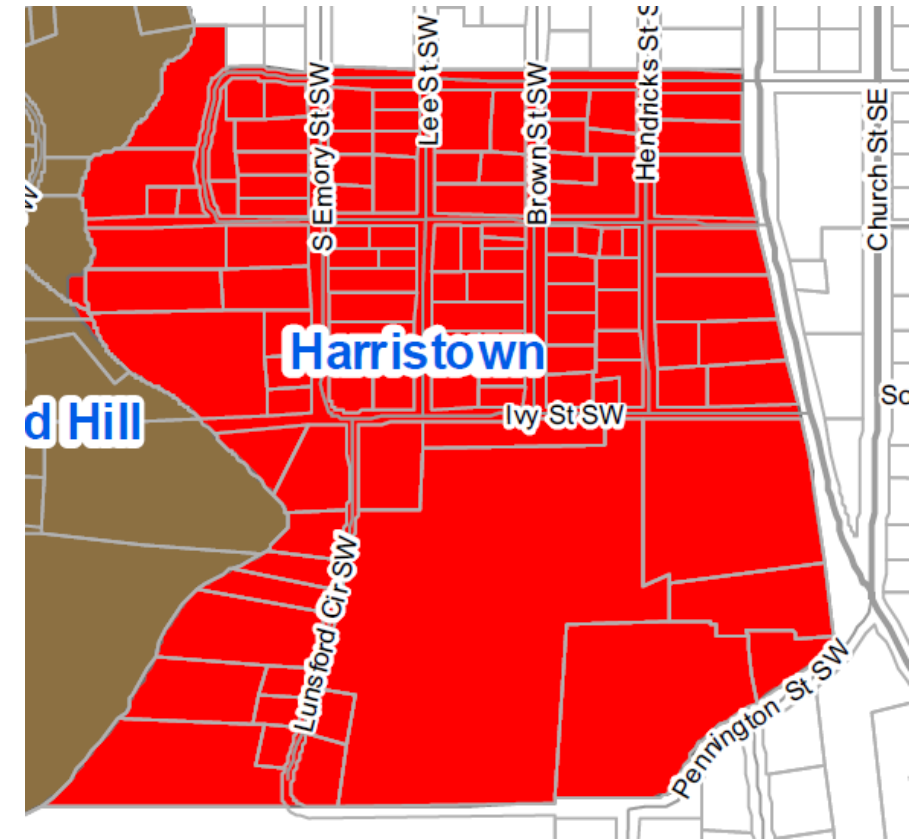


Fowler Street

Historically known as, “the Bottoms,” the Fowler Street neighborhood is bounded by Clark Street to the north, Emory Street to the east, Washington Street to the south, and Carroll Street to the west. Attempts at revitalizing this area have resulted in the rehabilitation of several properties on Fowler and Thelma Streets for affordable housing. Revitalization efforts were aimed at the rehabilitation of small cottages and shotgun style homes, development of sidewalk infrastructure, pedestrian-scale street lights and picket fences. A small park was originally planned for the intersection of Washington Street and Fowler Street, but has since been put on hold due to a lack of funding.

Many of the homes in this neighborhood, including the rehabilitated properties, have outdated floor plans, lack closet space and are energy inefficient. While it was hoped that the revitalization work on Thelma and Fowlers streets would serve to stabilize the area, the homes along Alexander, West, Webster and Carroll Streets remain in varying states of disrepair. Vacant structures within the neighborhood have been boarded and secured at the direction of the city’s code enforcement.

The Fowler Street neighborhood’s contiguousness to the downtown and historic district make it an essential part of downtown development. The non-profit Fowler Street Redevelopment Corporation and the Newton County Ministers Union would like to direct future revitalization of the area toward providing affordable housing opportunities for senior citizens living within the community.



Harristown

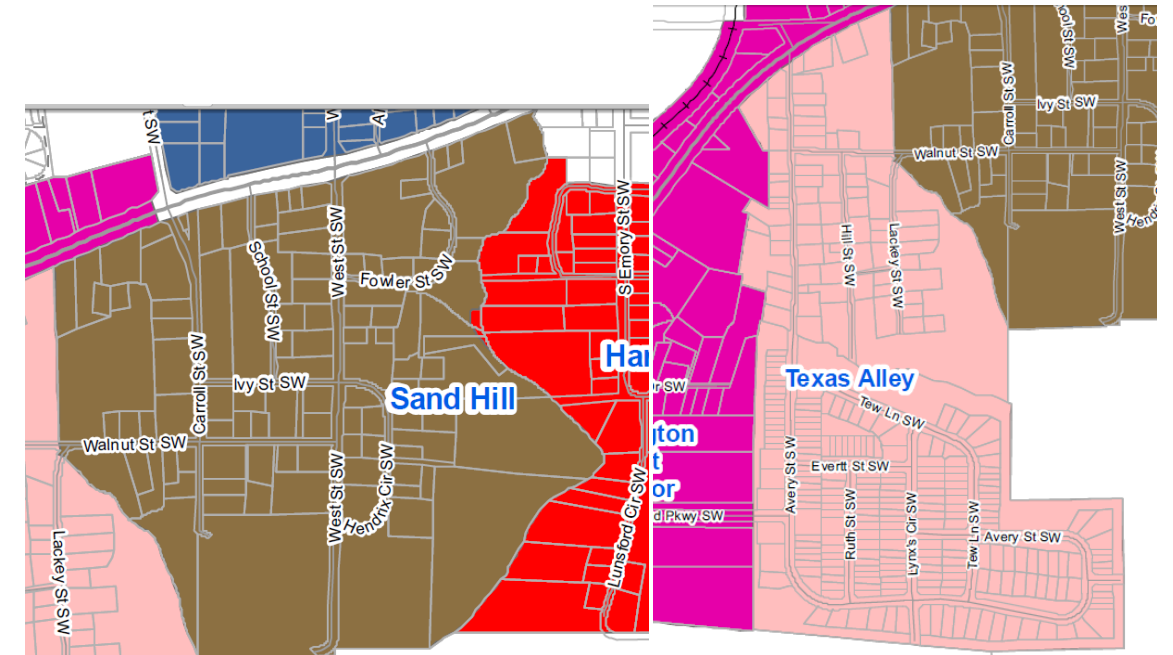
The Harristown neighborhood is located along the southern border of Covington’s downtown district. Bounded by Conyers Street to the north, Monticello Street to the east, Pennington Street to the South and the Sandhill neighborhood to the west, this historically African-American neighborhood began as a small community of workers for a plantation owned by Judge Harris.

The housing stock for the Harristown neighborhood is comprised of clapboard homes built in the 1890s, shotgun style single-family homes and duplexes and quadraplexes built between the 1930s and 1970s. Many of the structures have outdated floorplans and materials that make them energy inefficient.

Local organizations and Harristown residents have demonstrated a continued willingness to revitalize the neighborhood and to protect its historical significance. However, the availability of funding and the extreme deteriorating conditions of many of the structures have made revitalization a challenge.

It appears that more than half of the properties within Harristown are renter-occupied. The City’s code enforcement officers have ensured that the neighborhood’s vacant structures are boarded and secured so as to prevent vandalism, theft, and risk hazards to neighborhood children.

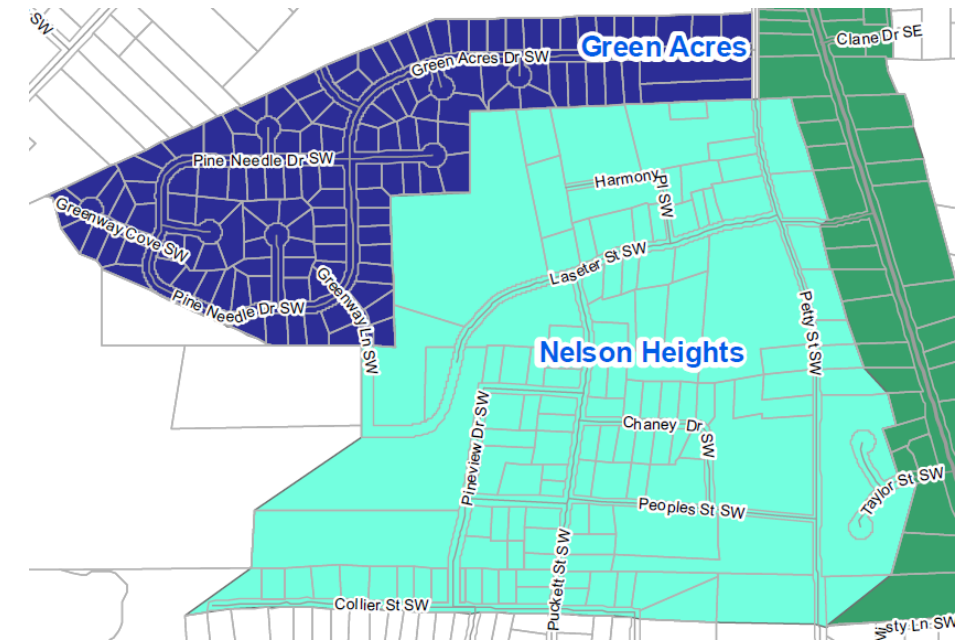
The Harristown neighborhood is vital to the growth of Covington’s downtown. It is located within one of the city’s historic districts and all material changes to structures within the neighborhood require an approved certificate of appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Board.



Sand Hill-Texas Alley

The Sandhill-Texas Alley area is located off of Highway 81 (Washington Street). These predominately African-American neighborhoods are comprised of single-family homes and duplexes. Many of the properties located within these neighborhoods are renter-occupied properties in various states of disrepair.

It appears this area has the largest number of boarded and vacant structures in the entire city. Asbestos siding, peeling paint, illegal dumping, and failing porch systems are primary health, safety and welfare concerns for the neighborhood. High crime rates associated with drug abuse and vagrancy contribute to further neighborhood disinvestment.

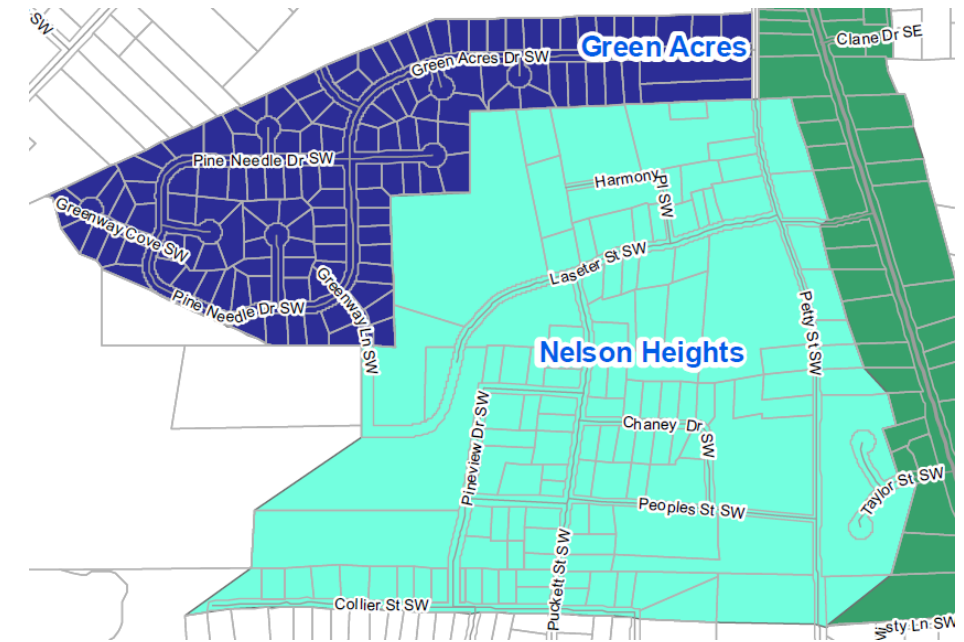


Green Acres / Nelson Heights

The Green Acres subdivision was built in the 1970s. This predominately African-American neighborhood is comprised of ranch-style homes, duplexes and triplexes. Many of the homes within this neighborhood are renter-occupied. Several properties are currently in foreclosure.

Newton County's Habitat for Humanity has made efforts toward spurring neighborhood revitalization by building three homes on Pine Needle Drive.

While many of the properties within the neighborhood appear to be structurally sound, the overall condition of the neighborhood is one of increasing blight and disrepair. While there have been no condemnations in Green Acres, there are several boarded and secured vacant properties within the area. Illegal dumping, junk cars, litter and overgrown vegetation present constant code enforcement issues for the City.

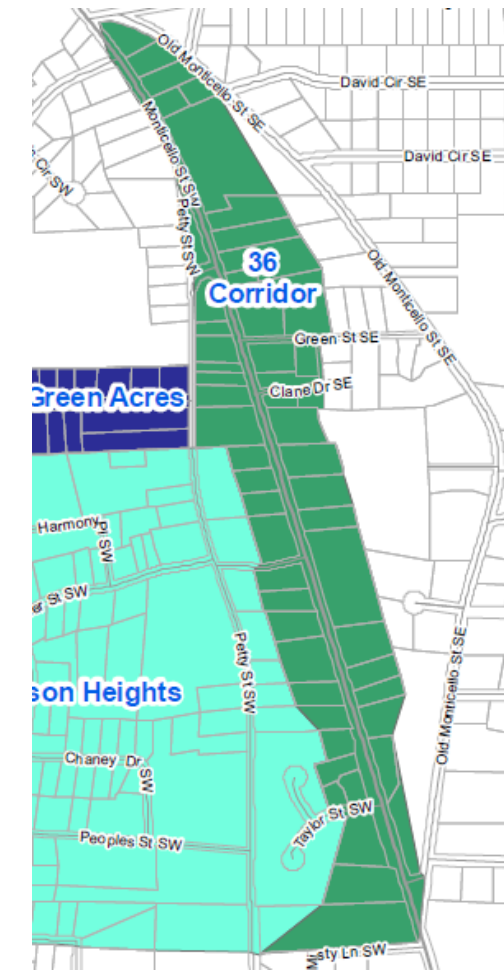


Nelson Heights

The Nelson Heights neighborhood is bounded by the Green Acres neighborhood to the north, Monticello Street to the East, Highway 142 to the south and Jefferson Avenue to the west. This neighborhood of ranch-style and modular homes that were built in the 1970s and 1980s, sprung up around shotgun and small cottage homes that were built in the 1930s and 1940s.

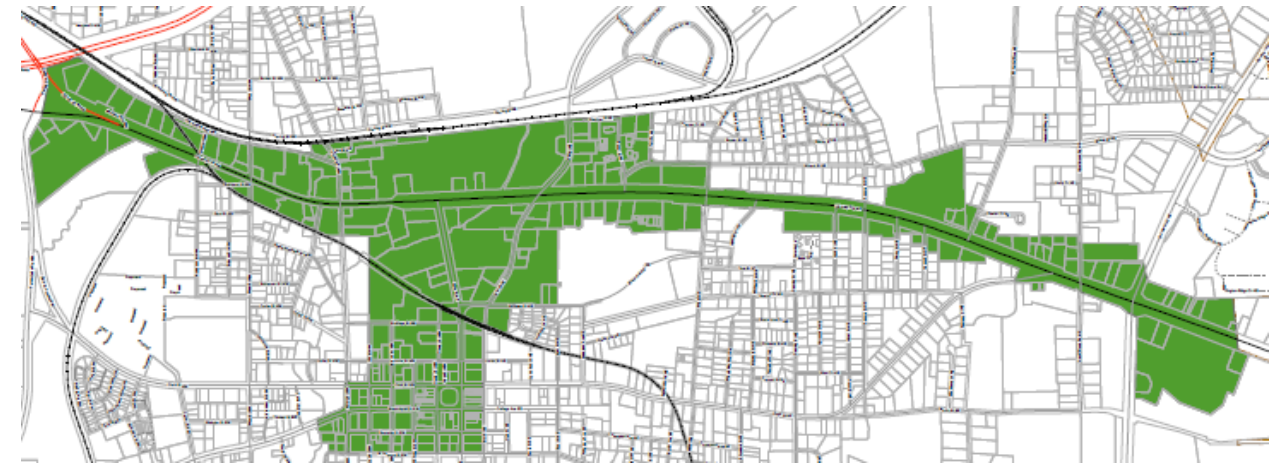
Three homes have been demolished in the Nelson Heights area within the past five years and one property is currently under condemnation. Asbestos siding, illegal dumping, and overgrown vegetation provide constant challenges to code enforcement.

A new subdivision, Jefferson Village, was developed within the southwestern portion of the neighborhood in 2004. Due to the foreclosure crisis, several of the homes within this subdivision have gone into foreclosure and are now REO properties. The City has selected this neighborhood as the target of its Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds and hopes that revitalization efforts within Jefferson Village will have an impact on the surrounding Nelson Heights neighborhood.



Highway 36 Corridor

The Highway 36 Corridor (Monticello Street) runs north-south parallel to Old Monticello Street and Petty Street. The corridor is comprised of a mix of older commercial and residential uses. The vision for this corridor is a stabilized residential area with small town character served by a neighborhood-level commercial center for those neighborhoods adjacent to the highway. The redevelopment of this corridor is central to supporting any revitalization or investment efforts within the contiguous Green Acres and Nelson Heights neighborhoods.



Highway 278 Corridor

The Highway 278 Corridor is the focus of the city's Livable Centers Initiative. This corridor is comprised of a mix of older and newer commercial uses. Aging retail centers, vacant big box stores, and automotive-related uses provide challenges to redevelopment efforts within this corridor.

The Highway 278 LCI is approximately 5 miles wide and 1 mile deep, encompassing the entire length of the highway within the Covington city limits. Downtown gateway plans along the Pace Street section of this corridor are under way to encourage the continued revitalization of the corridor and its connection to Covington's historic downtown.

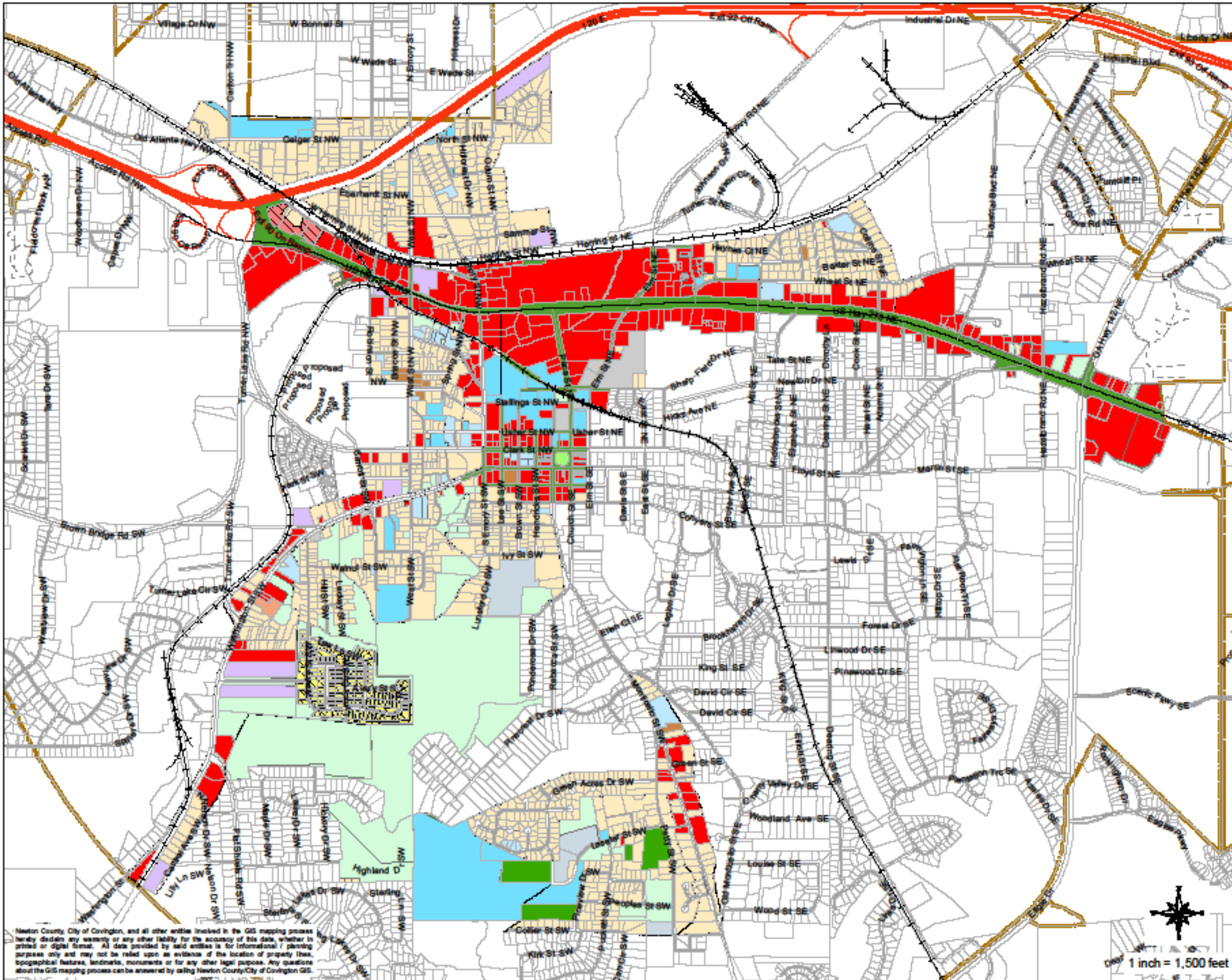
While improvements have been made to pedestrian infrastructure along the corridor (i.e., the installation of sidewalks and crosswalks), there is a continued need to improve the corridor's pedestrian facilities. Utility poles, curb cuts and street trees impede walkability on narrow sidewalks. Large building setbacks, massive asphalt parking lots, and older highway commercial uses discourage pedestrian activity and lend an appearance of an aging, aesthetically unappealing corridor. The redevelopment of this corridor is integral to development activities within the downtown. This corridor serves as a gateway into the city's center and historic neighborhoods. Connecting Highway 278 with its adjacent neighborhoods and reversing the blight along the corridor could serve to protect and stabilize these communities.

City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Existing Land Use in the Urban Redevelopment Area

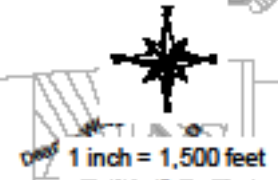
Legend

-  Railroads
-  Redevelopment Subareas
- Redevelopment Area ELU Description**
-  Rural Residential
-  Residential
-  Under Const Residential
-  Mobile Home Park
-  High Density Residential
-  Commercial
-  Under Const Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Public Institutional
-  Private Institutional
-  Agriculture Forestry
-  Parks/Recreation/ Conservation
-  Transportation/Communication/Utilities
-  Undeveloped/Vacant
-  City of Covington

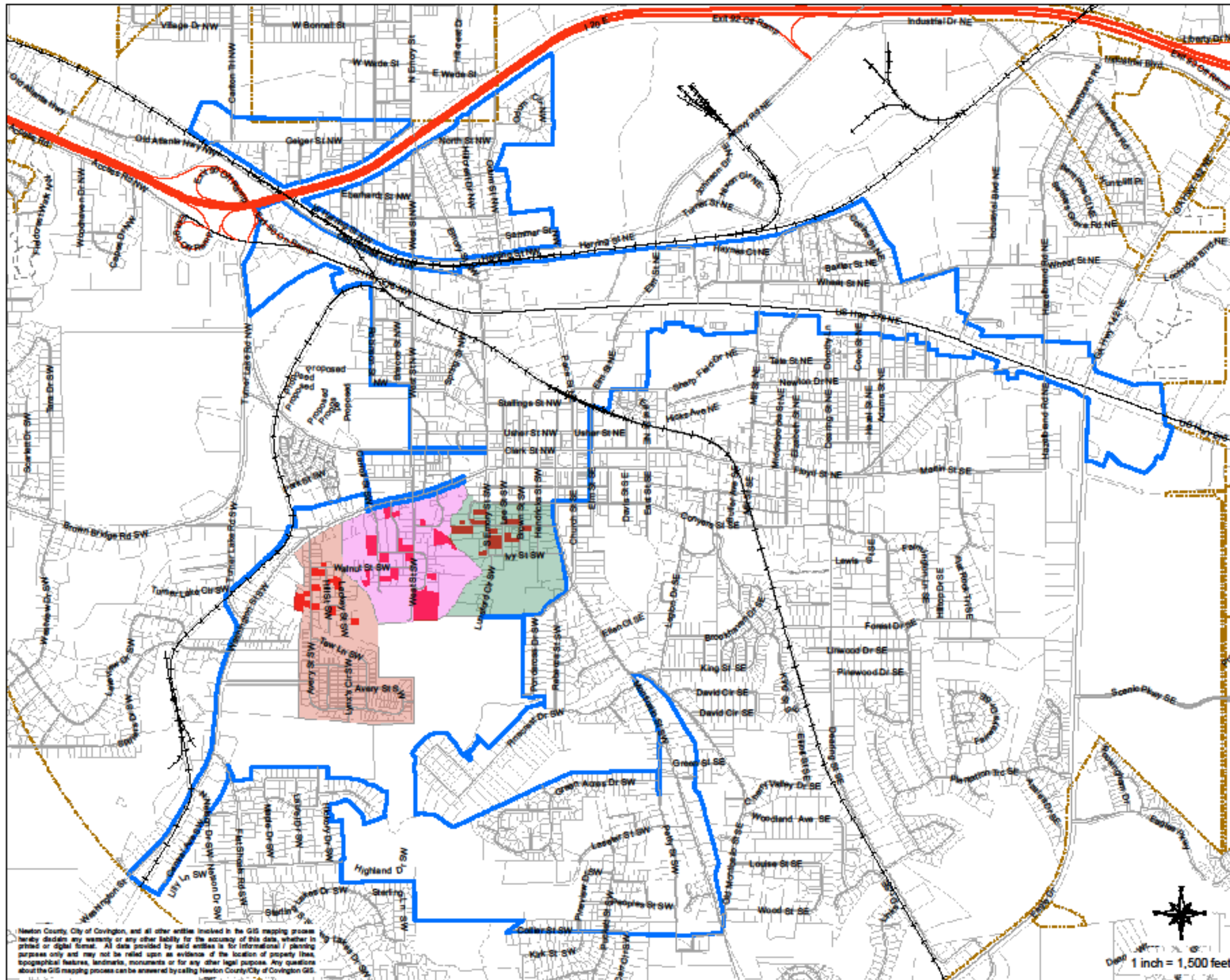
This plan shows the boundaries of the Covington Urban Redevelopment Area. The district boundaries follow property boundaries, so parcels are either fully in or fully outside of the Redevelopment Area.



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City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Vacant Buildings



Legend

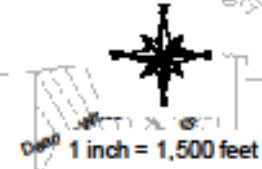
- Vacant Buildings
- Redevelopment Subareas**
- Harristown
- Sand Hill
- Texas Alley
- Redevelopment Area
- City of Covington
- +— Railroads

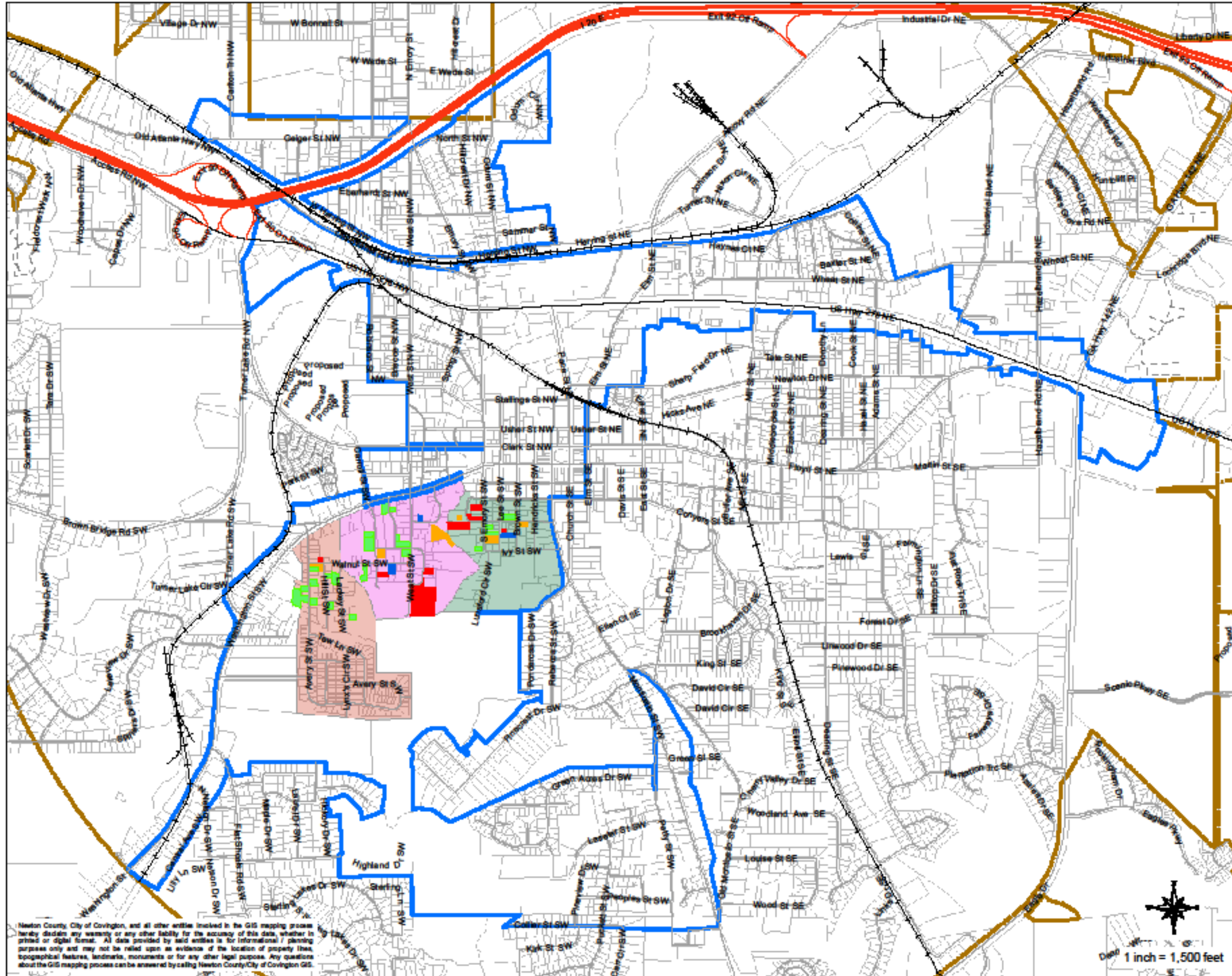
This plan shows vacant buildings for Harristown, Sandhill, and Texas Alley Redevelopment Subareas only

The Planning and Inspections Departments are in the process of updating and documenting vacancy and conditions assessments for all of the Sub-areas within the Urban Redevelopment Area. The Sub-areas shown have been completed as of the date of this plan.

The remaining neighborhoods have had initial assessments and those assessments are summarized in the Sub-area narratives that accompany the delineation of the Urban Redevelopment Area. As detailed inventories of other Sub-areas are completed, the information will be incorporated in this plan.

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City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Property Conditions

Legend

Condition of Structure

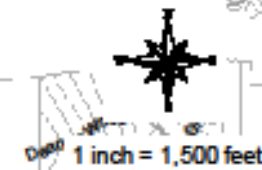
- DILAPIDATED
- DETERIORATED
- SUBSTANDARD
- STANDARD

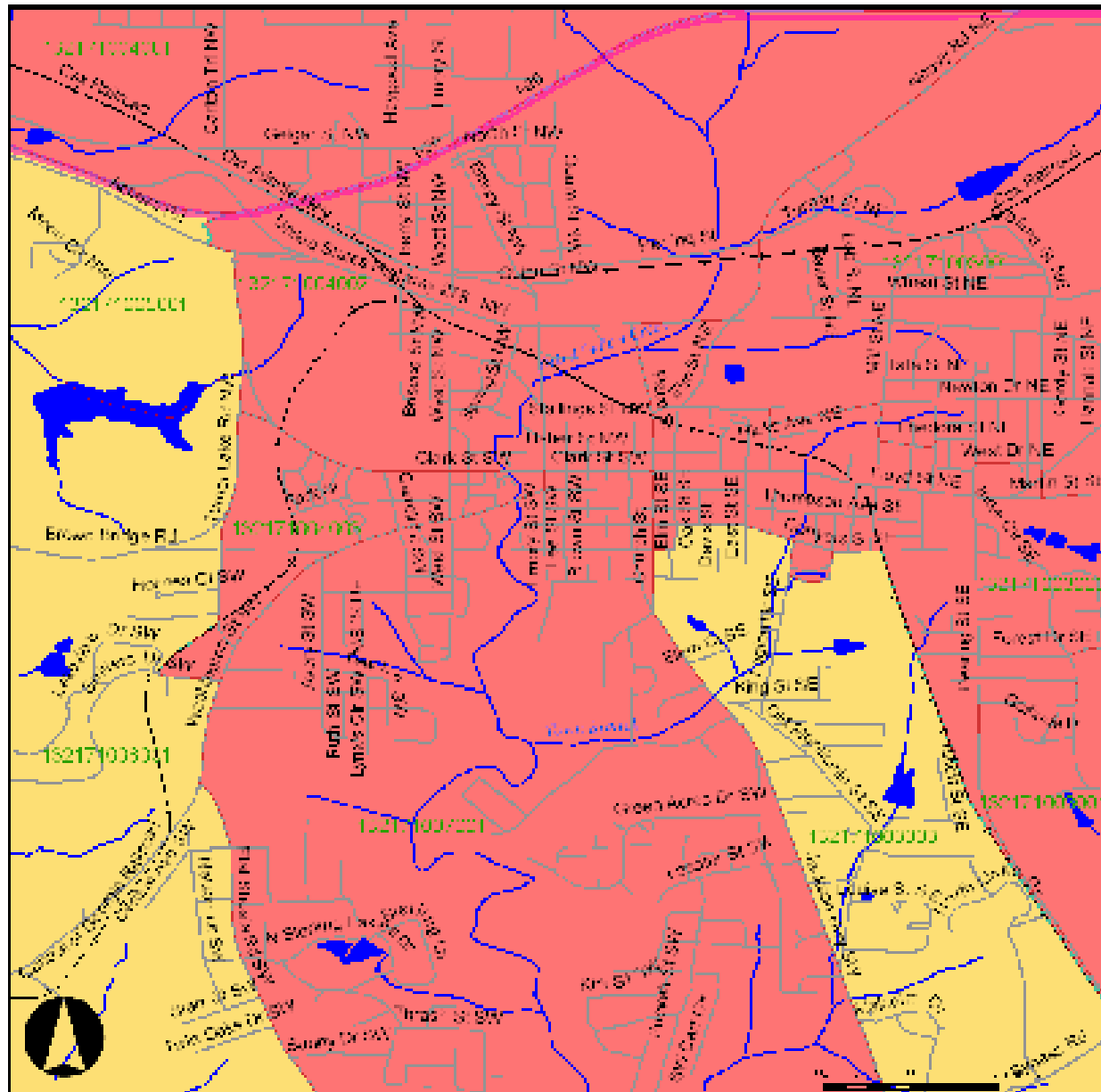
Redevelopment Subareas

- Harristown
- Sand Hill
- Texas Alley
- Redevelopment Area
- City of Covington
- + + Railroads

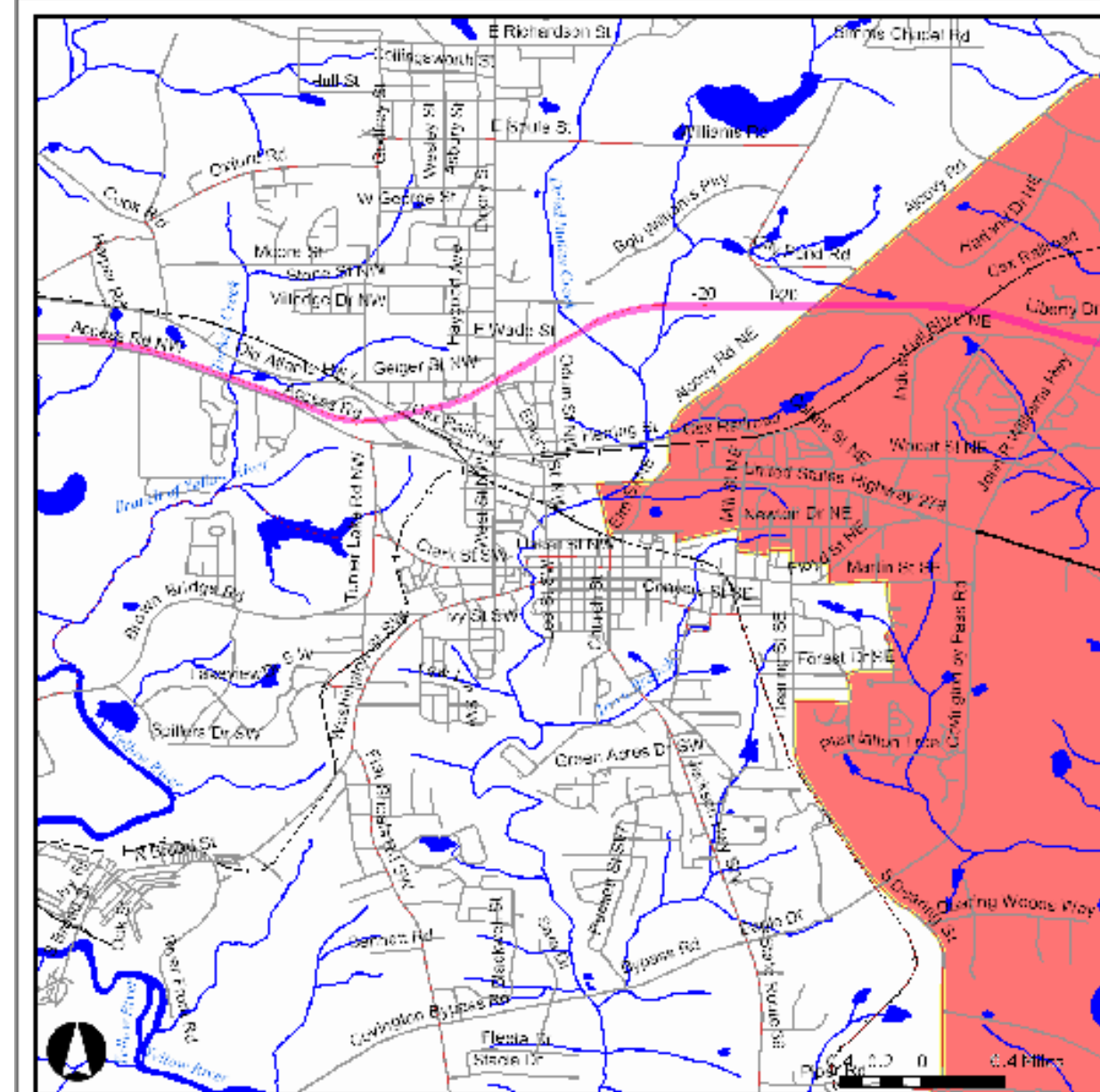
This plan shows general property conditions for Harristown, Sandhill, and Texas Alley Redevelopment Subareas only

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Areas of 15% Poverty & Adjacent Areas



Areas of 20% Poverty

City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Publicly Owned Property

Public Property Acreage	236.03
Public Property Institutional Acreage	20.91
Total Acreage	256.94

Legend

Public Owned Property

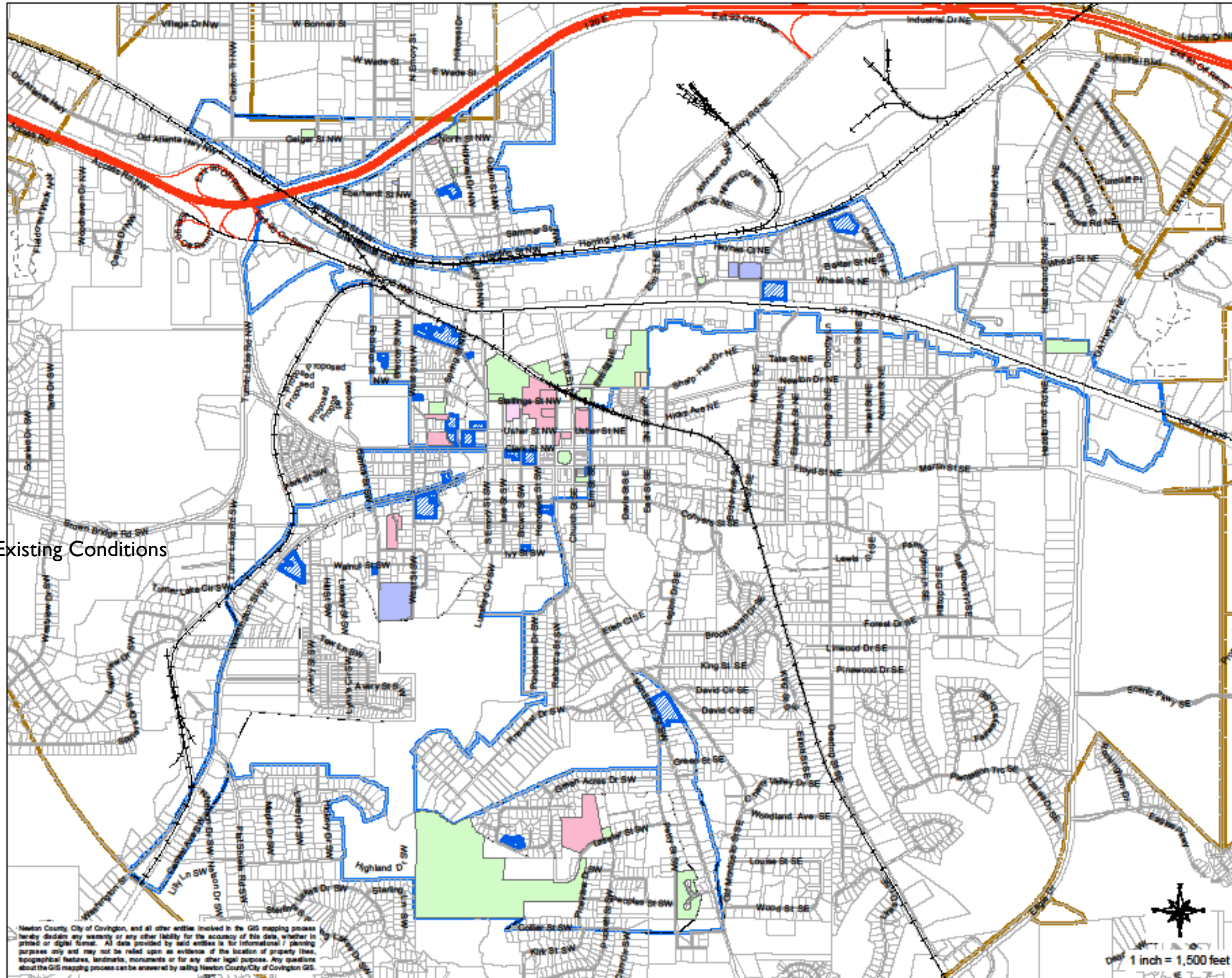
Owner

- City of Covington
- Newton County BOC
- Cemetery
- USPS
- Newton Co Education
- Newton Co Library
- Covington/Newton
- Public Property Institutional(Private)
- Railroads
- Redevelopment Area
- Redevelopment Subareas
- City of Covington

This plan shows the boundaries of the Covington Urban Redevelopment Area. The district boundaries follow property boundaries, so parcels are either fully in or fully outside of the Redevelopment Area.

In this map we see that a significant amount of the land area of the Covington Redevelopment Area is publicly-owned. It also indicated private institutional property which is tax-exempt.

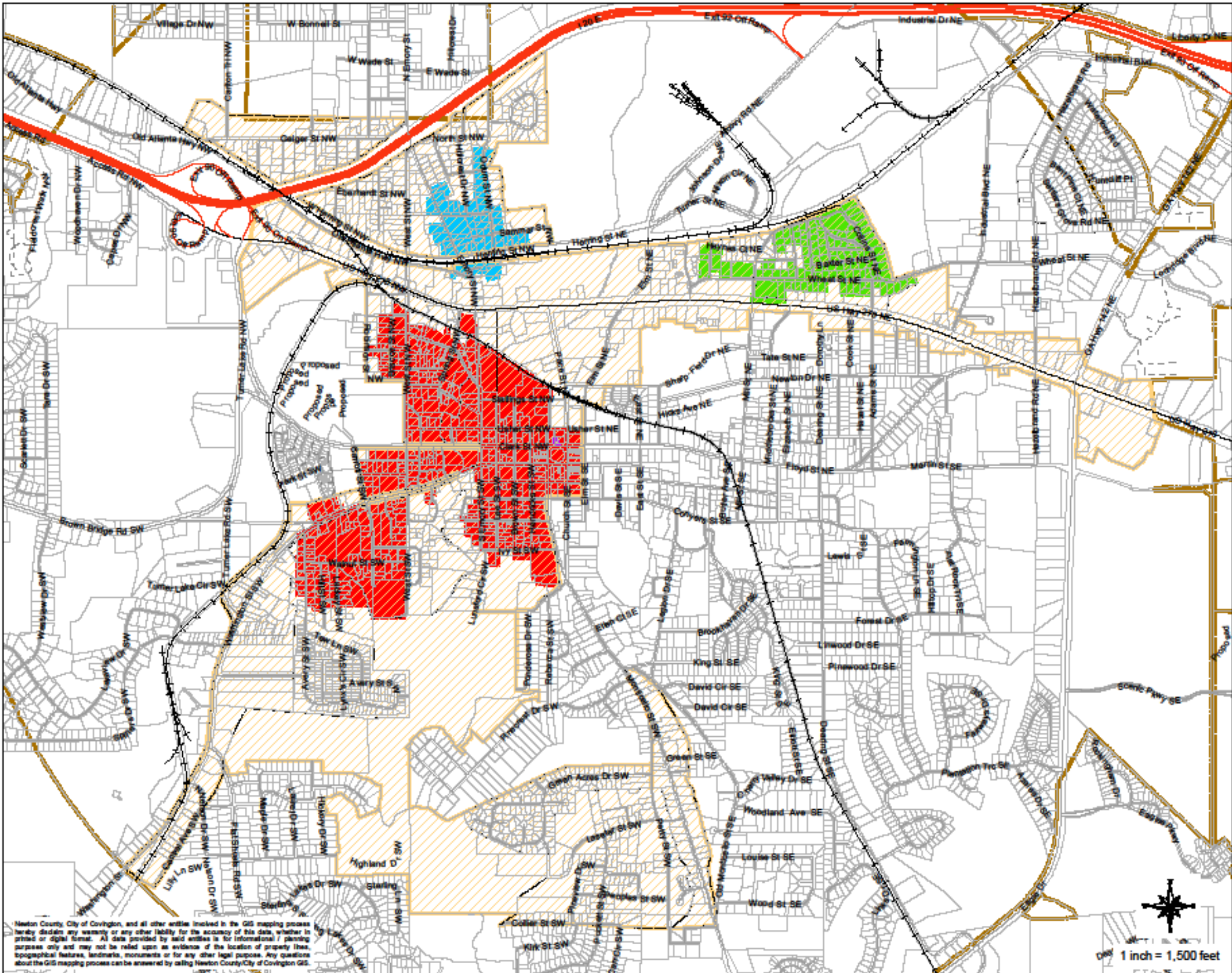
Not indicated because of lack of current data are the areas of street and road rights-of-way.



Existing Conditions

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City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Redevelopment Area Historic Districts



- Legend**
- Redevelopment Area Historic Districts**
- Newton County Courthouse
 - Covington Historic District
 - Covington Mills Historic District
 - North Covington Historic District
 - Redevelopment Area
 - Redevelopment Subareas
 - City of Covington
 - Railroads

If any altering of historic properties is required and involves use of public funds by this redevelopment effort, such modifications will take place according to relevant federal, state, and local guidelines and requirements.

This Plan incorporates the guarantee that projects considered for any form of public funding, including loan guarantees, sale-leaseback arrangements or others, have developed their plans using a proactive approach to rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties. The use of funding under this plan requires that historic properties, whether currently recognized or not, will have their potential for adaptive reuse carefully and imaginatively reviewed. Historic structures will not be demolished unless and until their reuse feasibility has been thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by the State Historic Preservation Office and no Feasible Reuse has been found. Rehabilitation of historic structures is anticipated.

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City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Parcel Analysis

Classification	No. of Parcels	Total Acres	Acres Percent
2 Acres and Less	1734	641.55	53.00%
More than 2 Acres	75	577.5	47.00%
Total	1809	1219.05	100.00%

Legend

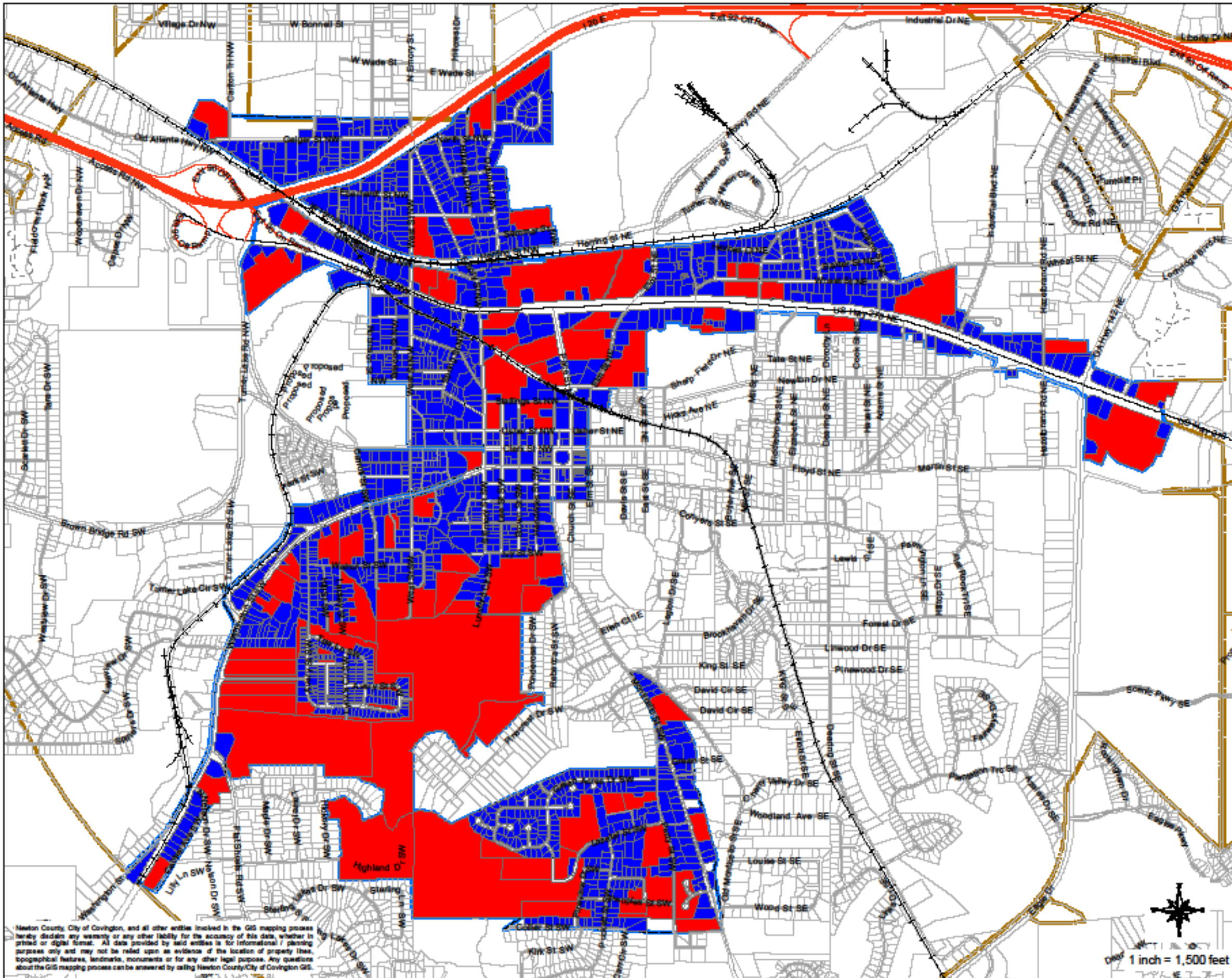
Parcel Analysis

- 2 Acres and Less
- More than 2 Acres
- Railroads
- Redevelopment Area
- Redevelopment Subareas
- City of Covington

This map illustrates the analysis of parcel size described in the Urban Redevelopment Plan. The majority of parcels in the district are less than two acres in area and that virtually all parcels in neighborhoods are less than two acres.

While this situation is not necessarily an issue in neighborhoods, it makes assembly and redevelopment in commercial and transitional residential areas very difficult.

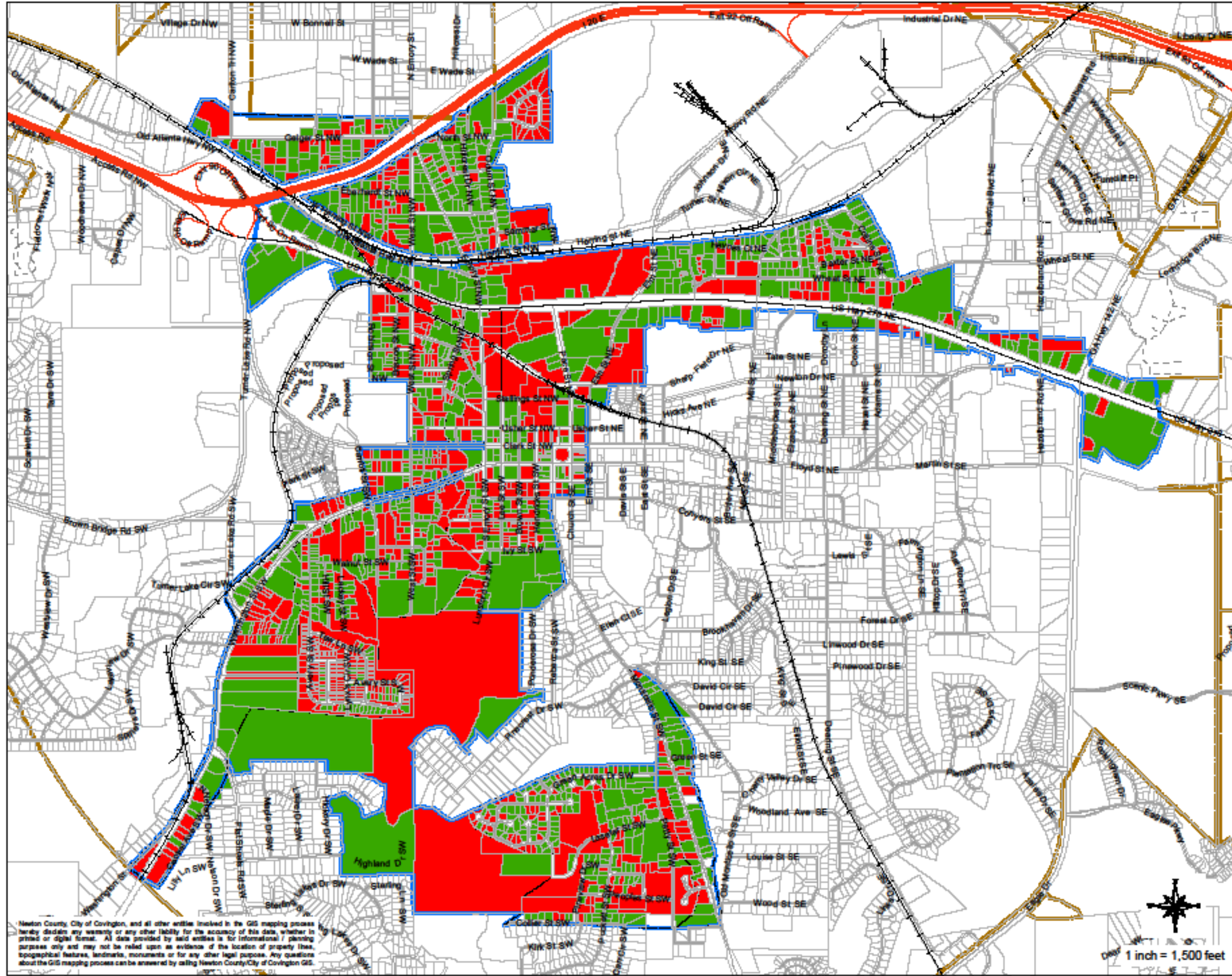
Coupled with the nature of the district's ownership patterns (seen on the following map), shown following, it is reasonable to expect that the type and quality of redevelopment necessary to accomplish the district's planning goals will never happen.



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1 inch = 1,500 feet

City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Ownership Patterns



- Legend**
- Ownership Patterns**
- Common Ownership
 - No Common Ownership
 - Railroads
 - Redevelopment Subareas
 - Redevelopment Area
 - City of Covington

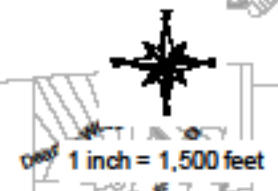
This map analyzes parcel ownership in the Redevelopment Area. The majority of parcels in the district is owned by an entity that has no other property in the Area.

While this situation is not necessarily an issue in neighborhoods from an assemblage and redevelopment point of view, the noticeable number of residential parcels under the same ownership in neighborhoods is a likely proxy for a high proportion of rental properties.

Conversely, in commercial areas the fragmentation of ownership indicates that assembly and redevelopment in commercial and transitional residential areas is likely very difficult.

Coupled with the nature of the district's parcel size patterns (seen on the previous map), it is reasonable to expect that the type and quality of redevelopment necessary to accomplish the district's planning goals will never happen if left to the private sector to assemble large enough tracts for many redevelopment projects.

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Conformity to Covington's Comprehensive Plan

The Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan includes several operational goals:

- Expand the City's implementation tools
- Qualify Covington for a range of state and federal financing programs
- Create additional financial incentives for private sector investment in redevelopment
- Assure that adequate urban design tools are in place which result in new development that embodies the quality and character goals expressed in a series of earlier planning initiatives.

The Covington Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2007, is one of several planning initiatives that the City and Newton County have completed over the past decade. These documents a consistent purpose and vision throughout that period:

- The need to rehabilitate and replace substandard housing with safe, clean, comfortable, attractive and affordable housing
- The need to improve, extend and enhance the City's circulation system, especially its pedestrian elements
- The need to improve, expand and enhance public open space of all sorts.

This plan's purpose is to provide additional tools to implement the *Covington Comprehensive Plan* and the other plans still functioning. It draws its purposes and projects from the *Covington Comprehensive Plan* and so is by definition in conformance with that plan.

This section summarizes the community development goals expressed in the half dozen plans which have been completed for the City of Covington and Newton County over the past decade. This URP is calibrated with both the Newton County and City of Covington *Comprehensive Plans*. Its intention is to:

- Recognize work that has already been done,
- Identify goals which are still valid and
- Build upon them so that the community can move to a more immediate level of implementing policies, programs and projects which advance these goals.

All of the following are direct extracts from the planning documents, slightly edited in some instances for consistency of form. Several themes carry through these documents which will form the bases of the action items in this URA Plan:

- Build to sustain the community's historic character and fabric
- Model new development on the community's human scale and walkability
- Build compact, mixed-use districts and neighborhoods with high connectivity
- Build public spaces
- Preserve and integrate the community's natural resources into its fabric
- Build a range of housing options affordable to a wide spectrum of the citizenry
- Use public investment to leverage private investment
- Establish a level of quality for new development, redevelopment and rehabilitation through public investment and regulations.

PLANNING GOALS

BLUEPRINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES (1997)

The Blueprints report does not lay out specific goals. It does explain that the purpose of the Blueprints initiative is to “address specific development issues in those communities which may be prototypical for the region in general. The workshops also serve to integrate the Successful Communities Principles which have been established as a result of this initiative.”

More specific goals for Covington may be drawn from a series of desirable outcomes for the community that the workshop identified:

- Create regional strategies for transportation, land use and economic growth
- Understand that sustainable community design is based on the effect of the built environment on the natural environment, aesthetics, scale, history and culture
- Promote efficient use of existing infrastructure, energy, water and land
- Incorporate compact integrated land uses which bring people closer to work, to school and shopping and safeguard undeveloped lands for agriculture, greenspace and recreation
- Provide transportation options so that each member of the community has access to goods, services and recreation
- Design [transportation options] to be safe, healthy, economically strong, environmentally sound and inclusive
- Strengthen the downtown with higher density housing and new retail shops
- Disperse economic groups
- Bring greater variety in shops, goods and services
- Retain the workforce within the boundaries of Covington and Newton County
- Reduce the large number of short trips, which consumes large amounts of street capacity
- Invest in lower-cost improvements in the area's streets and highways (improved traffic signs, access spacing)
- Invest in travel alternatives (bike paths and walkways)
- Establish more places for socializing and association (parks and trails, strengthening of the Town Square)
- Design developments with a mixture of ages, incomes and races
- Bringing the community closer together physically (open space linkages, better movement connections)
- Creating institutions and events which would draw people together, preferably in the central areas (museums, churches, festivals, art shows)
- Direct development into areas with existing physical and social infrastructure
- Stabilizes the historic courthouse square retail area and places new development within walking distance or a short drive of the square
- Place more new development near the proposed commuter rail station reducing vehicle miles traveled and encouraging more rail use
- Develop as a more pedestrian oriented city with fewer local vehicle trips made and fewer miles driven
- Increase city tax base to fund and maintain a high quality of life
- Provide more diverse residential neighborhoods which contribute to long term neighborhood and city sustainability
- New neighborhoods in Covington would resemble the existing historic city in residential scale, character and density.

THE DOWNTOWN COVINGTON PLAN (2001)

This Plan does not lay out any express goals but outlines its objectives as:

- Identify the most significant design issues and projects that Covington is facing and offer solutions to them
- Allow Downtown Covington to become a special retail destination, enhancing and celebrating its unique character
- Address the strong negative impact of fast-moving traffic in Downtown Covington, particularly around the square
- Address traffic patterns that adversely affect the quality of life in Downtown Covington
- Address existing and future on street and off-street parking needs
- Design two traditional neighborhoods on properties which are currently available for development: Clark's Grove and Parker Pasture
- Provide a Market Analysis for retail recruitment.

HARRISTOWN PLAN (2002)

Overall Goals

The neighborhood association seeks to formally organize itself to protect Harristown's future and to begin revitalizing and improving the neighborhood with sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and modifications to some streets and intersections where traffic is particularly dangerous.

Specific Goals

- Develop design recommendations for park, sidewalk and streetscape improvements for the Harristown neighborhood
- Locate a grocery store within walking distance that will make daily goods available at an affordable price
- Create a public place for children to enjoy supervised play is obviously an important goal; we believe that certain changes could make the playground a more well-used feature of the neighborhood
- Create public spaces for neighborhood gatherings
- Provide pedestrian safety on Emory Street.

RAILROAD MASTER PLAN (2005)

Purchase of the track miles in Newton County by the County.

THE COVINGTON US HIGHWAY 278 CORRIDOR STUDY (LCI Plan, 2006),

Overall Goal

The LCI's overarching mission is to better connect the community to its environment through better utilization of infrastructure and improved land-use decisions.

Specific Goals

- Improve traffic operations by supporting more efficient and alternate means of travel
- Encourage mixed-use development that works harmoniously with the surrounding neighborhoods
- Establish pedestrian-oriented mixed use nodes that build upon existing character.

CITY OF COVINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2007

The Overarching Goal

To develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community, and this plan is divided into seven major elements:

Land Use

Goal – Preserve and enhance the historic and small town character of the community while promoting sustainable economic growth.

Transportation

Goal – Maintain an efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation network to support efficient land use, minimize traffic congestion, and facilitate community-wide and regional circulation.

Economic Development

Goal – Promote a strong, diversified local economy and fiscal tax base.

Housing

Goal – Provide a variety of housing choices to suit the changing needs and lifestyles of City residents.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Goal – Protect, preserve and enhance the City's valuable natural and cultural resources.

Community Facilities and Services

Goal – Provide an efficiently managed system of public facilities and services that will accommodate the needs of the current and future population and businesses.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal – Support the individual and common goals of local, state and regional governments through cooperative efforts and open collaboration.

NEWTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2008

The Overarching Goal

To develop a plan that best manages the anticipated growth in the community, and this plan is divided into seven major elements:

Land Use

Goal– Preserve and enhance the rural and small town character of the community while promoting sustainable economic growth.

Transportation

Goal– Maintain an efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation network to support efficient land use, minimize traffic congestion, and facilitate community-wide and regional circulation.

Economic Development

Goal– Promote a strong, diversified local economy and fiscal tax base.

Housing

Goal– Provide a variety of housing choices to suit the changing needs and lifestyles of county residents.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Goal– Protect, preserve and enhance the county’s valuable natural and cultural resources.

Community Facilities and Services

Goal: Provide an efficiently managed system of public facilities and services that will accommodate the needs of the current and future population and businesses.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal– Support the individual and common goals of local, state and regional governments through cooperative efforts and open collaboration.

[Make] better [civic] decisions supported by the public

Use the Future Development Map and its character areas to:

- Supplement the role of the Future Land Use Map.
- Guide future rezonings, special use, and development applications.
- Serve as a design and physical development guidance tool.
- Encourage and promote quality development and redevelopment.
- Define common themes among regions of the county.
- Be used as a tool in securing funding for projects.

- Identify and incorporate available community resources in the implementation of the character area programs.
 - Provide a strong link between the community’s vision, goals, and land use policy.
 - Provide qualitative guidance to the development community.

- Lay the framework for urban design guidelines and changes to development regulations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (2009)

Based on the findings from demographic and economic trends, an assessment of Newton's competitive position and the input of over 50 local leaders and stakeholders, the following 12 Strategies are recommended.

1. Retain and Expand the Existing Business Sector
2. Increase Marketability and Success Of Stanton Springs
3. Enhance Covington Airport's Role as a Key Asset to the Community
4. Enhance Character and Economic Viability of Existing Airport-Area Industrial/Business District
5. Promote and Market Further Office Development
6. Expand Scope, Variety and Quality of Retail Sector County-Wide
7. Expand Scope, Variety and Quality of Retail in Downtown Covington
8. Preserve & Promote Small Town Environment
9. Protect Natural Resources and Promote Sustainability
10. Promote Local Agriculture and Other Economic Uses of Green Land
11. Expand Educational Opportunities
12. Promote Life Long Learning

IDENTIFIED AREAS OF FOCUS

2008 CONCEPTUAL STUDY FOR DOWNTOWN COVINGTON

The goal of this study was to encourage desired infrastructure development.

After the preliminary analysis, specific areas within the site were chosen for attention and further development. These sites include:

Existing government facilities:

- New government building
- Address parking
- Create cohesion amongst buildings Stallings Street Improvements
- Pedestrian accessibility/sidewalks
- Tree-lined streets
- Open lot near City Hall
- Address expansion of City Hall
- Open green space and adjacent green way to the proposed Historical Newton County History Center located in the rehabilitated historic jail facility.

By addressing these different sections, there will be concentrated areas of development. These concentrated areas begin to create individual hubs of activity within the larger district. The street improvements along Stallings Street will function as a connector between these areas that are being created. This plan promotes development through investment in infrastructure and a phased approach to development.

CITY OF COVINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2007

The Future Development Map... designates four corridors worthy of special attention:

1. Bypass Corridor
2. Atlanta Highway Corridor
3. Jackson Highway Corridor
4. Highway 81 Corridor

Separate policies are provided for each of these corridors that supplement the character area policies that they overlay. The corridors are listed above in terms of priority. In cases where one corridor overlaps another and the policies may contradict one another, the higher priority corridor's policies apply.

NEWTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2008

In addition the Future Development Map also designates two types of corridors worthy of special attention: Scenic Corridors and Quality Growth Corridors. Separate policies are provided for them as well.

Local Objectives

The planning goals recapitulated above summarize the Land Use, Transportation and other Community Objectives this plan seeks to advance:

- Build to sustain the community's historic character and fabric
- Model new development on the community's human scale and walkability
- Build compact, mixed-use districts and neighborhoods with high connectivity
- Build public spaces
- Preserve and integrate the community's natural resources into its built fabric
- Build a range of housing options affordable to a wide spectrum of the citizenry in all areas of the community
- establish a level of quality for new development, redevelopment and rehabilitation through public investment and regulations

The *Comprehensive Plans* lay out broad goals and objectives. This *Urban Redevelopment Plan* aims to identify critical issues, prioritize actions and act on projects which deliver demonstrable physical improvements within a five-year horizon. Therefore, this plan selectively reviews and pursues certain objectives set out in the *Comprehensive Plans* which relate to such physical improvements.

This is not to diminish the value or importance of those other goals and objectives; it simply means that the ones highlighted in this plan are highly interdependent and implementing this plan is highly dependent upon keeping attention on them. The ones we focus on in this plan are:

Land Use

- Integrate recreation areas and greenspace throughout our community; within neighborhoods, along streets, in parking lots, and within commercial and industrial developments
- Encourage the use of landscaping, lighting, signage, building design standards, and underground utilities to enhance the aesthetics of our community
- Guide appropriate residential and non-residential infill development and redevelopment in a way that complements surrounding areas
- Discourage development that may result in noise, odors, and light levels detrimental to the public health or quality of the human environment
- Support the redevelopment of abandoned industrial and commercial sites located within our community
- Protect future industrial, warehouse-distribution, and office areas from encroachment by residential development
- Encourage location of industrial uses where stormwater runoff and prevailing wind directions will not adversely affect residential areas.

Housing

- Accommodate our diverse population by supporting ... developments that provide a variety of housing types, styles, and price points toward the goal of creating “lifecycle” housing in the community
- Maintain and enhance the integrity and nature of existing residential neighborhoods
- Support the elimination of substandard or dilapidated housing in our community through restoration or nuisance abatement to help ensure that quality housing is available for all residents
- Encourage home ownership by increasing opportunities for low- to moderate-income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing
- Promote fair housing practices. Promote equal opportunity in housing regardless of race, religion, sex, age, or national origin and support existing agencies and groups that offer technical and legal aid to persons who have been discriminated against
- View each component of neighborhoods, such as schools, parks, residences, and businesses, as part of the greater community; and facilitate access among land uses through planned connections of walkways, bike paths, roads, and public transportation
- Encourage appropriate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods
- Encourage the design and construction of walkable, safe neighborhoods with pleasant, accessible public gathering places. Encourage the dedication of adequate space for recreational use in all neighborhoods.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Preserve, protect, and promote the city’s unique cultural and historic character and the resources that contribute to this character. Encourage the maintenance of all historic structures and, when appropriate, their adaptive reuse
- Support and encourage the development of historical sites as tourist attractions, where appropriate
- Support and cooperate with federal, state, and local historic preservation societies and agencies in their efforts to preserve and protect Covington’s resources, water pollution control laws and standards
- Promote and pursue the preservation of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas (streams, rock out-cropping, and steep slopes) for their ecological and aesthetic value, and for common enjoyment
- Encourage the preservation and planting of trees and other vegetation that enhance community livability and appearance. Preserve and restore trees and tree canopy in developed and developing areas
- Seek opportunities to partner with and support the work of local organizations in protecting and conserving physical resources and natural features
- Require that adequate and appropriate drainage systems be constructed and maintained as part of all development activities
- Encourage construction practices that minimize soil erosion and sedimentation

Transportation Objectives

- Connect streets, sidewalks, open space and paths in adjacent developments to each other and stub out to adjacent undeveloped land
- Plan and permit road networks of neighborhood-scaled streets (generally two or four lanes) with high levels of connectivity and short blocks
- Ensure that new development bears an equitable share of and responsibility for the cost of new roads, as well as the impact of additional use on existing roads
 - Ensure that new developments will be designed to be conducive to walking and biking
 - Require sidewalks on both sides of roadways in all new residential developments where the average lot size is less than 1 acre
 - Require sidewalks in new commercial and office developments, along fronting roadways, access roadways, and within parking lots providing pedestrian access to store fronts and businesses
 - Promote and support the provision of bicycle and pedestrian ways
 - If a new development is in the path of a proposed bicycle trail or multipurpose trail, as displayed on the Future Development Map or an adopted County's Trails Master Plan, require the connection to that trail either be maintained or constructed
- Require necessary traffic and pedestrian signals and paths to promote a safer environment for pedestrians
- Encourage and promote the design and engineering of roads and other facilities to fit topography and other site conditions
- Provide for the routing of truck traffic around congested areas
- Seek to reduce the number of curb cuts onto arterial streets and roadways to mitigate traffic congestion, through the requirement of inter-parcel access where appropriate
- Promote the provision of shared parking in commercial development
- Encourage traffic calming methods, such as splitter islands, roundabouts, and rumble strips be constructed in new developments to reduce traffic speed in neighborhoods.

Community Facilities Objectives

- Provide an adequate, efficient, and appropriate level of community services and public facilities that satisfy the needs of all citizens of Covington and that are within the City's fiscal capacity
- Support new development that is consistent with this plan in areas where necessary infrastructure, particularly roads, schools, public safety protection, and wastewater treatment systems are in place or planned for in the short-term
- Coordinate the timing, location, and capacity of community facilities with desirable patterns of land use and development
- Make efficient use of existing infrastructure before making new investments in capital projects that will increase operating and maintenance costs

- Encourage future development to take place through the logical expansion of existing developed areas with a utility extension policy that is sequential and phased
- Support high design standards for community facilities that will be a source of pride for the community and set the standard for high quality development in the private sector
- Promote and encourage the use of underground utilities, wherever possible
- Provide sufficient and safe water to all residents of the community
 - Seek federal and state funding to develop programs designed to improve water quality
 - Monitor sources of water pollution and institute remedial actions aimed toward a regional policy for combating sources of environmental pollution
 - Support rigorous enforcement of state health laws and adequate treatment measures to ensure safe drinking water
 - Provide an adequate water delivery system to meet both present and foreseeable water needs in accordance with safe drinking water standards
 - Develop an annual program for the cleaning and maintenance of water pipes
 - Develop and implement a comprehensive water conservation program throughout the community that includes implementing standards for plumbing fixtures, landscape design, metering, and pricing
- Provide removal and treatment of sewerage in the most environmentally-safe, economical, and efficient manner
- Provide for efficient, environmentally safe, and sanitary disposal of solid waste in a manner that minimizes cost and financial risk to the City
 - Increase efficiency of existing solid waste disposal systems
 - Continue to monitor innovations in solid waste technology to provide the County with educated alternatives for future solid waste disposal. Continue to provide collection services of home and business solid wastes
 - Encourage and support public education that focuses on the benefits of recycling practices and safe, environmentally sound methods of waste disposal
 - Support the rigorous enforcement of anti-litter and dumping laws county-wide
- Ensure protection from unsafe and overcrowded buildings and other structures
 - Enforce construction standards for new development
 - Continue systematic structural inspection of public buildings, bridges, and other structures
 - Enforce housing standards and building codes
 - Support enforcement of construction standards consistent with reasonable engineering design procedures
- Supply the City's residents with well-designed, functional, and versatile recreational opportunities
 - Support the maintenance and development of a parks and recreation system that serves the needs of citizens of all ages and abilities

- Encourage extended use of County school grounds for recreational purposes
- Make library services available to all residents of the community
 - Encourage the expansion of library services to areas experiencing population growth
 - Support and encourage the use of public school libraries and post-secondary educational libraries as an alternative to building additional library facilities
 - Support and maintain existing library services and facilities
- Promote and maintain professional law enforcement departments
 - Increase Police Department staffing to meet growth and the rising demand for public safety
 - Encourage professional comprehensive law enforcement training programs
 - Promote maintenance of law enforcement administration and support facilities
- Promote and maintain effective professional fire protection services
 - Increase fire fighting and EMS staffing, facilities, and equipment to accommodate rising service demands in areas where population density and property values are greatest
 - Encourage and support each fire department with sufficient personnel to efficiently carry out their duties
 - Encourage and support fire protection training programs
 - Maintain or improve the current fire insurance rating
 - Enforce fire safety standards for all structures in the City.

ACTION PLAN

The *Covington Comprehensive Plan* and related planning initiatives have laid out clear goals for the central core of Covington. The plans and studies also have identified many valuable projects aimed at implementing those goals. This plan takes the steps to organize those goals and projects into a **Workable Plan** to implement their primary objectives as elements of this Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Upon adoption of this plan by the City Council:

1. The Covington Redevelopment Authority (CRA) is hereby created as provided in OCGA 36-61 and is designated as the City of Covington's Redevelopment Agent for implementation of this Plan. The CRA shall
 - Have the powers granted to an Urban Redevelopment Agent under OCGA 36-61
 - Be guided by a board of directors consisting of nine to fifteen members
 - Establish a regular meeting schedule for the Agency
 - Confirm Board membership and appoint Executive Director
 - Establish an annual work plan with the primary focus of implementing this Plan
 - First year work plan shall include identification of non-profit organizations to partner with to serve as a Community Housing Development Organization or other purposes appropriate to executing its powers and authority. These entities include but are not limited to:
 - The Covington Downtown Development Authority
 - The Covington Housing Authority
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Fowler Street Redevelopment Co., Inc.
 - Newton Tomorrow, Inc.
 - Faith Works, Inc.
 - The Newton County Community Partnership
 - Cousins Community Center
 - The Center.
 - City agencies and departments may also partner with the authority and provide staff to the CRA in support of any of its activities.
 - The CRA shall not have the power of eminent domain, which shall remain vested in the City Council.
2. A CRA Organizing Committee is hereby convened. The CRA Organizing Committee shall be composed of nine members consisting of:
 - The Mayor of Covington who shall act as chairman
 - 1 appointment from each city council member – (6 total)
 - 1 appointment from the Downtown Development Authority
 - 1 appointment from the Covington Housing Authority.

Within ninety days of the adoption of this plan the CRA Organizing Committee shall recommend to the City Council the qualifications for and composition of the CRA board, taking into consideration such factors as geographic representation, stakeholder interest considerations, professional expertise required and such other factors as the Organizing Committee shall deem relevant.

Upon receipt of the Organizing Committee's recommendations for its structure and nominations for its membership the City Council shall appoint the Board's members. The CRA board shall then have an additional ninety days to establish its operating procedures, including by-laws, meeting times and preliminary staffing needs.

3. The City's Planning Department is directed to proceed with the following actions:

- Prepare an application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for designation of the Redevelopment Area as an Opportunity Zone.
- Establish the potential for using tax abatement mechanism provided by Enterprise Zones to encourage targeted rehabilitation of deteriorating housing stock in the URA
- Establish the potential for coupling the Georgia Dream NSP-2 Program with the NSP program now in place to acquire foreclosed properties in the URA and resell to low-income buyers through Georgia Dream NSP- assistance.
- Review requirements of the Redevelopment Area Strategy program through DCA and prepare an application.
- Prepare a Street Network Remedial Program. This shall be a multi-modal program that addresses identified issues of signalization, pedestrian system continuity and vehicular-pedestrian conflicts, emphasizing the security, comfort and ease of travel for pedestrians. The Harristown neighborhood and the LCI Plan have identified specific safety issues in its plan that shall be addressed in this plan.
- Provide staff support to the CRA Organizing Committee as needed.

PROPOSED LAND USES AFTER REDEVELOPMENT

The Redevelopment Area is composed of thirteen Sub-areas. Eleven of these Sub-areas face a similar range of housing and neighborhood stabilization issues. These neighborhoods will retain the primary land uses they currently have, although secondary uses such as recreational and neighborhood commercial may be introduced to these neighborhoods in order to strengthen them.

The other Sub-areas draw the following land use policies from the Highway 278 LCI Plan for those districts:

Land Use Policies

- Utilize a nodal framework for ... land use patterns.
- Centers proposed within the Redevelopment Area:
 - The Gateway Commercial District, located at US 278 and I-20
 - The Newton Plaza Mixed-Use Center, located around Newton Plaza.
 - The Downtown Covington Town Center
 - The Mill Street Neighborhood Center, located at the intersection of US 278 and Mill Street
 - The Cost Cutter Plaza Commercial/Office District, located around the Cost Cutter Plaza
 - The Floyd Street Neighborhood Center, located at Floyd Street and Adams Street
 - The SR 142/US 278 Mixed-Use Village, located around this important intersection
- Require all new development to be pedestrian-oriented.
- Preserve stable neighborhoods and protect them from commercial, multifamily and industrial encroachment.
- Gas stations are appropriate uses for US 278 but their current form is not acceptable in recommended walkable centers.
- Preserve civic, industrial, religious and most single-family residential land uses.
- Recognize that some auto-oriented uses are needed on US 278, but that their scale and relationship to Downtown must be appropriate and their form pedestrian-oriented.
- Use the redevelopment of under-utilized, auto-oriented land uses to create opportunities for new housing types and thus reduce pressure to increase density in the neighborhoods.
- Use the proximity of the Square and US 278 between Elm and Pace Streets to allow for a linkage between Downtown Covington and its main thoroughfare.
- Support new mixed-use developments with residential over retail in the Square, which could create a greater sense of “ownership” and revitalize the Central Business District.
- Promote quality, owner-occupied multifamily options, to increase the market appeal of Downtown and generate retail demand.

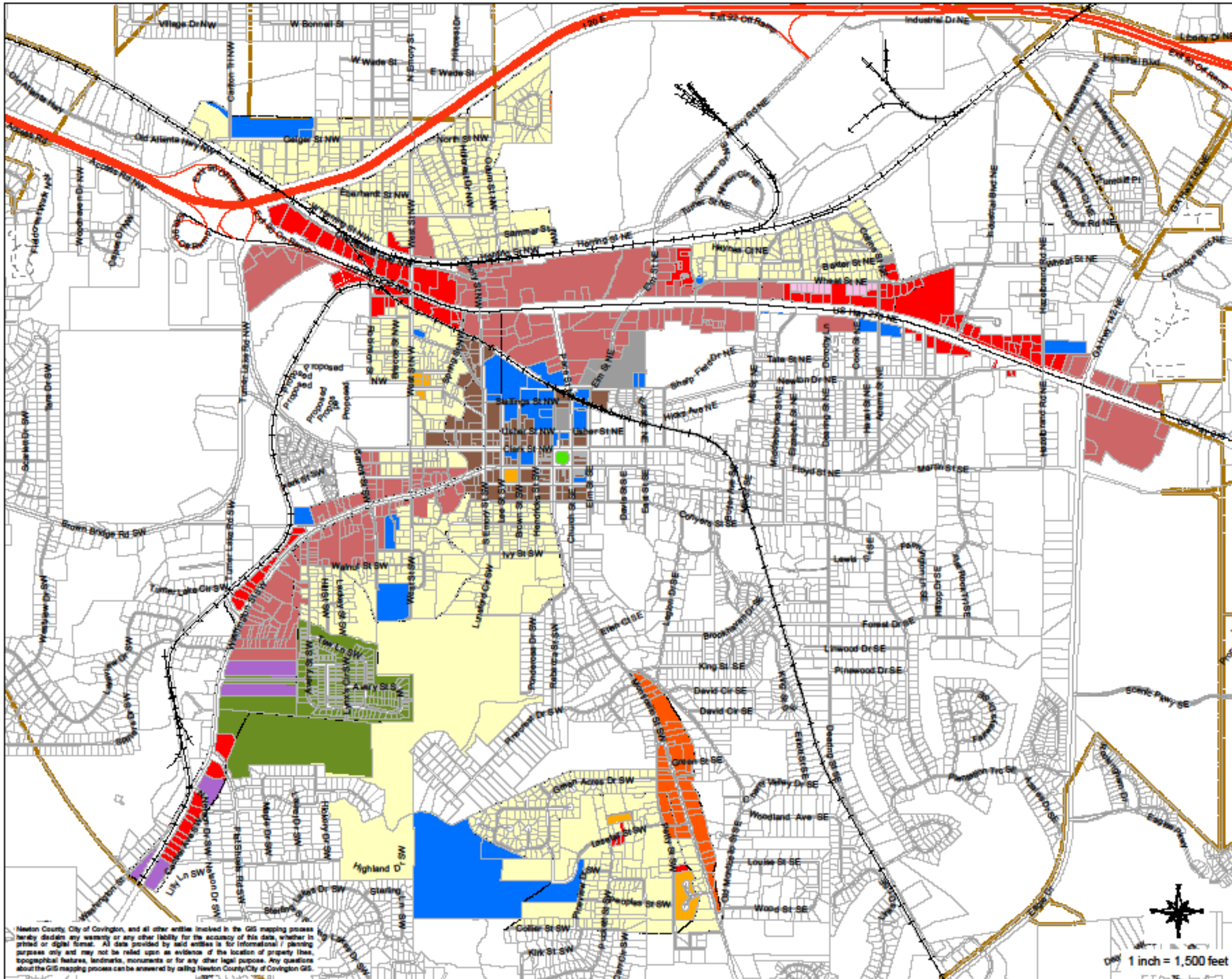
City of Covington Urban Redevelopment Plan Future Land Use in the Urban Redevelopment Area

Legend

Redevelopment Area FLU

Description

- Single Family Residential
- Multi Family Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Commercial
- Office Professional
- Mixed Use Neighborhood
- Mixed Use Corridor
- Mixed Use Downtown
- Industrial
- Public Institutional
- Parks/Recreation/Conservation
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Rural Residential
- Agriculture Forestry
- Redevelopment Subareas
- City of Covington
- Railroads



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CHANGES TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

This plan does not anticipate the need to modify the zoning ordinance in order to implement its provisions. In 2008, the City of Covington adopted a new and much more flexible form based zoning ordinance which will provide the tools necessary to implement the plan's land use and urban design goals.

MAXIMUM DENSITIES IN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA AFTER REDEVELOPMENT

Maximum densities based on land use standards are not anticipated to change. Actual population densities will in all likelihood increase since the plan addresses and seeks to alter two existing characteristics of the Redevelopment Area: abandonment of substandard dwellings and separation of land uses which excludes mixed use, and consequently residential use, in several areas of the Redevelopment Area. The City's recently-adopted zoning ordinance already is addressing the latter.

PROVISIONS FOR RELOCATION OF AFFECTED RESIDENTS



This plan does not envision the need for relocation of residents. Remediation of housing deficiencies which are contributing to blight and slum conditions will target substandard, derelict and vacant properties.

If, for any reason, the Covington Redevelopment Authority shall determine it to be necessary to take some redevelopment action relating to occupied structures, it shall follow a "No Displacement" policy under which it may only take such action after it has made suitable provisions for and relocated the affected residents.

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Redevelopment costs for the Covington Urban Redevelopment Area fall into several categories that respond to the deficiencies in public investment and seek to stimulate private investment:

- Circulation system improvements, including vehicular, pedestrian and transit
- Public spaces
- Public-private partnerships
- Affordable housing, housing rehabilitation and land assemblage.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT

This plan anticipates significant private investment in response to the public investments outlined above. Encouraging private investment is one of the goals of the Urban Redevelopment Law (36-61-4). One of the most immediate private development opportunities is in affordable housing for Seniors.

The *Covington Comprehensive Plan* notes factors which indicate a market for seniors and affordable housing. The Plan states that “The senior population, as a percentage of total population, is also on a downward trend; however, this trend is expected to reverse as the “Baby Boom” generation ages, creating needs for senior housing, healthcare, and other services.” It goes on to say that “...more than 37 percent of householders earn less than \$25,000. If this segment of the housing market grows at the same pace as the total market, then more affordable housing will be required.”

Therefore, alternative proposals which meet the redevelopment goals of this plan must be given thorough consideration and, if they are deemed to adequately meet the goals of this plan and maximize return on the public investment, be pursued in lieu of the particular mixes outlined above.

PROJECTS



Harristown Pedestrian Improvements

The Harristown Plan, the Highway 278 Plan and the City of Covington Comprehensive Plan have all identified circulation system projects which address safety and pedestrian connectivity in and adjacent to the Harristown neighborhood. The CRA, working with the City’s Planning and Public Works Departments, shall prioritize implementation of these projects.

City of Covington/Habitat for Humanity Scattered-site Rehabilitation Project

This project will provide nine new Habitat houses in the block bounded by Ivy, Brown, South and Hendricks Streets. The houses will be on properties controlled by Habitat and funded with NSP-2 funds. Because the houses are in a historic district the City is requiring house designs which conform to the district’s design standards.

Harristown Park Seniors Affordable Housing

This project was proposed and studied in the 2008 Conceptual Study for Downtown Covington. It is now ready for development by a private real estate developer. The concept for this development is to meet the demand for the target population, older persons with income limits up to \$35,400. A Market Study for the developer prepared by Novogradac and Company, LLC verifies the lack of affordable housing for older persons in the Newton community.

The property will be developed as **Housing for Older Persons** utilizing Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and conventional construction financing. As with the Habitat project, the City shall impose



design standards which follow the principles stated in the plans from which this program is drawn and the City of Covington's zoning ordinance.

The City of Covington and the CRA require that projects which receive public support such as this one shall demonstrate the same high level of design quality in their urban design, site design and architecture as is required of public projects. Therefore the project's developers shall be required to work with the City and the CRA in order to achieve such design quality in order to obtain a building permit and other public approvals necessary to carry out this project.

Dried Indian Creek Greenway and Open Space System

This project was proposed in the 2008 Conceptual Study for Downtown Covington. This Redevelopment Plan expands the concept farther south to the southern boundary of the Redevelopment Area. The plan for this project is to be developed as part of, and the first project to be developed under the Public Open Space Plan the CRA is directed to undertake elsewhere in this document.

Rails to Trails In-town Rail Segment Conversion

This project was identified in the 2005 Railroad Master Plan. It also is to be included in the Public Open Space Plan as a priority project. This project is being led by Newton County. The CRA shall work collaboratively with Newton County to facilitate the project as possible.

Downtown Civic and Conference Center

This project has been under study for some time and was at one point close to implementation as a public-private partnership. This project is a joint undertaking of City of Covington and Newton County and is being led by Newton County. The CRA shall work collaboratively with Newton County and other participating entities to facilitate the project as possible.