City of Fayetteville Staff Review Form

City Council Agenda Items and Contracts, Leases or Agreements

3/5/2013
City Council Meeting Date
Agenda Items Only

Leif Olson		Sustainability and Strategic Planning
Submitted By	**Division**	**Department**

Action Required:

Staff requests approval of a resolution to adopt the Wedington Corridor Plan Vision Document and Illustrative Plan.

N/A	N/A	N/A
Cost of this request	Category / Project Budget	Program Category / Project Name
N/A	N/A	N/A
Account Number	Funds Used to Date	Program / Project Category Name
N/A	N/A	N/A
Project Number	Remaining Balance	Fund Name

Budgeted Item ☐ **Budget Adjustment Attached** ☐

Department Director — 2/15/13 Date

City Attorney — 2-15-13 Date

Previous Ordinance or Resolution # _____

Original Contract Date: _____

Original Contract Number: _____

Paul A. Becker — 2-18-2013 Date
Finance and Internal Services Director

Received in City Clerk's Office
2013 FEB 15 PM 02:48 RCVD

Chief of Staff — 2-18-13 Date

Received in Mayor's Office
ENTERED 2/15/13

Mayor — 2/19/13 Date

Comments:

Tabled at the 3/5/13 CC mtg. to the 3/19/13 CC mtg.

Fayetteville ARKANSAS
www.accessfayetteville.org

THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Don Marr, Chief of Staff
Peter Nierengarten, Sustainability and Strategic Planning Director PN

From: Leif Olson, Associate Planner LO

Date: February 14, 2013

Subject: ADM 13-4318 Wedington Corridor Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests approval of a resolution to adopt the Wedington Corridor Plan vision document and illustrative plan with amendments provided by the Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council adopted City Plan 2030 on July 5, 2011. City Plan 2030 set a goal of using a charrette process to generate a complete neighborhood plan every other year for key areas of the City. These plans were intended to incorporate key principles of City Plan 2030, including appropriate infill and revitalization, traditional neighborhood development and attainable housing. The Wedington Drive Corridor was selected by the City Council on August 7, 2012 as the fourth complete neighborhood plan project.

The criteria used to select this area included: 1) Meets the City's goals as outlined in the City Council's Strategic Plan and City Plan 2030; 2) Is experiencing development pressure; 3) Has a high percentage of vacant or underutilized land; and 4) Has potential for significant public participation. The Wedington Drive Corridor met all of these criteria.

DISCUSSION:

During October and November 2012 City Staff led a community charrette where public input was solicited on the Wedington Corridor. This input was used to guide the development of the Illustrative Plan and the Vision Document which contains four plan fundamentals: 1) Refine Wedington Drive as Wedington Parkway, 2) Envision the "Heart" of the Neighborhood Along Rupple Road, 3) Support Active Transportation Options, 4) Designate a North-South Oriented "Greenway" Connecting the Hamestring and Owl Creek Watersheds.

The Planning Commission recommended forwarding of the Wedington Corridor Plan to City Council at it's February 11, 2013 meeting with an amendment to the implementation timeline for the realization of access management goals.

BUDGET IMPACT:

None

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE WEDINGTON CORRIDOR NEIGHBORHOOD MASTER PLAN VISION DOCUMENT AND ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, The City of Fayetteville developed City Plan 2030 through a collaborative planning process in 2011; and

WHEREAS, City Plan 2030 calls for a comprehensive neighborhood master plan to be prepared every other year; and

WHEREAS, the Wedington Corridor Neighborhood Plan was developed through an intensive and inclusive charrette process involving all stakeholders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS:

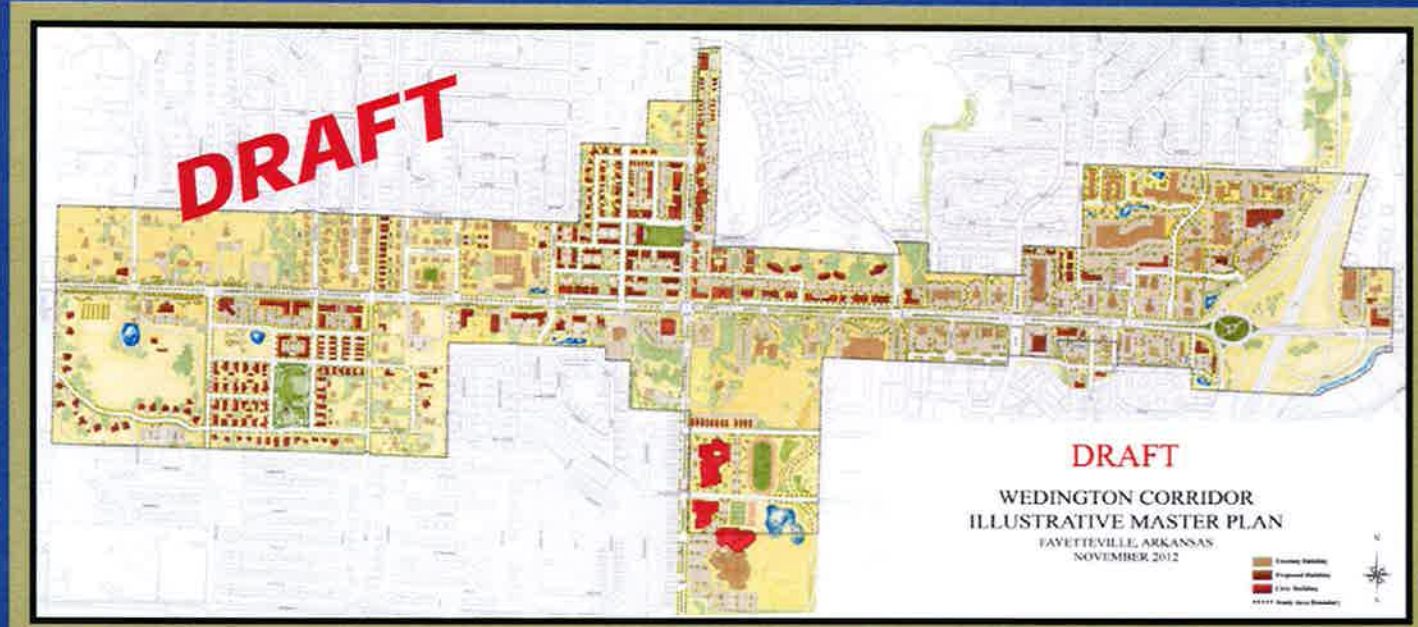
Section 1: That the City Council of the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas hereby approves a resolution to adopt the Wedington Corridor Neighborhood Master Plan vision document and illustrative master plan.

PASSED and **APPROVED** this the 5th day of March, 2013.

APPROVED: ATTEST:

By: _____ By: _____
LIONELD JORDAN, Mayor **SONDRA E. SMITH**, City Clerk/Treasurer

WEDINGTON CORRIDOR PLAN



ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION NO. XX-XX, MONTH XX, 2013

Fayetteville
ARKANSAS

DRAFT

WEDINGTON CORRIDOR PLAN

DESIGN TEAM

Jesse Fulcher
Andrew Garner
John Goddard
Kristina Jones
Alison Jumper
Matt Mihalevich
Peter Nierengarten
Leif Olson
Jeremy Pate
Quin Thompson
Nielsen Architects, LLC
(Nick Pierce, Designer)

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Lioneld Jordan
Rhonda Adams
Adella Gray
Mark Kinion
Alan Long
Sarah Marsh
Matthew Petty
Martin W. Schoppmeyer Jr.
Justin Tennant

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sarah Bunch
Matthew Cabe
William Chesser
Kyle Cook
Craig Honchell
Tracy Hoskins
Ryan Noble
Blake Pennington
Porter Winston

SPECIAL THANKS TO....

Fayetteville Boys and Girls Club
Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce
Fayetteville Ward 4
University of Arkansas Community Design Center
Tim Conklin
Rob Sharp
Jeff Huber
Paula Marinoni
Hal Poole
Tony Wappel
Denny Wood
And Design Team family members who tolerated a week of late nights and weekend work.

PARTICIPANTS

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Dave Bolen
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Daniel Carnahan
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Brina Teague
Ellen Thompson
Todd Walters
Micheal Ward
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Stephen Zisner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wedington Corridor Plan (the Plan) area is located north and south of Wedington Drive from the I-540 intersection west past 51st Ave. The Plan area has been transformed in the last 20 years from an outlying agricultural region with a very small population to a booming suburban residential and commercial corridor.

The Plan area was chosen by the City Council as the location for a City neighborhood plan in August 2012. After the Plan area was chosen, City staff conducted several months of background research and stakeholder meetings that culminated in a week-long public charrette in October 2012. The Plan is based upon the following four principles that emerged from the charrette process:

- Redefine Wedington Drive as Wedington Parkway
- Envision the heart of the neighborhood at Wedington Drive and Rupple Road
- Support active and public transportation options
- Designate a greenway connecting Hamestring and Owl Creek watersheds

Analysis in the Plan indicates that rapid growth without cohesive planning in the area has led to a number of challenges common in suburban sprawl areas where the prevailing development pattern is auto dependent in nature. The primary challenges include lack of street connectivity, poor pedestrian and bicycle access, congestion at the Wedington Drive/I-540 interchange, and lack of a neighborhood center. The Plan attempts to overcome these challenges by providing alternatives to suburban sprawl, improving traffic congestion, and placing a priority on active transportation options (pedestrians and cyclists).

To achieve these goals the Plan guides not only the location, but also the development pattern and form of future growth. The Plan prescribes increased density, mixed land uses, improved street connectivity, and active transportation options close to the I-540 corridor. As development patterns and land uses transition further west of I-540, these areas are envisioned to be left primarily rural with low density residential development in a conservation development pattern that preserves meaningful open space. Non-residential uses west of Broyles Avenue should be very limited and small in scale.

The goals of the Plan can be encouraged in part by utilizing form based zoning districts, requiring an interconnected network of streets and by creating a new conservation development code. The final authority to discourage sprawl and encourage infill in desired locations lies with appointed and elected officials who approve or deny annexation and zoning requests. These decisions should be made with the understanding that growth allowed to occur on the far western fringe of the City diminishes the capacity to create a complete, compact, and connected neighborhood closer to the I-540 corridor.

Each of the Plan fundamentals is instrumental in creating a livable neighborhood for this area of the City. The Plan identifies a set of implementation steps in order to achieve the four principles and establishes a timeline for their completion.

The principal goals of City Plan 2030 (CP 2030) are the overarching framework that staff and appointed and elected officials use to guide future neighborhood development and redevelopment. They are used to set metrics for the measurement of future success, and the neighborhood planning process is always viewed through the lens of these six goals:

We will make appropriate infill and revitalization our highest priority
We will discourage suburban sprawl
We will make traditional town form the standard
We will grow a livable transportation network
We will assemble an enduring green network
We will create opportunities for attainable housing

I. HOW THE PLAN WAS CREATED

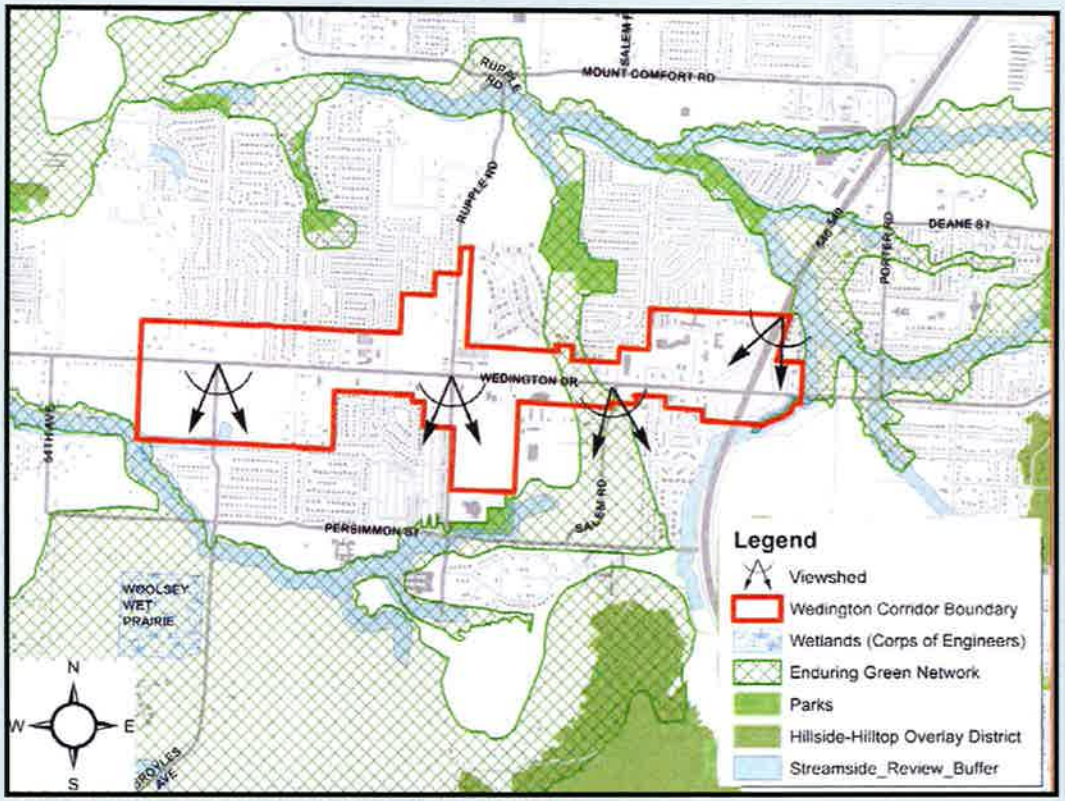
City Plan 2030 was adopted unanimously by the Fayetteville City Council in July 2011 and serves as Fayetteville's comprehensive land use plan, which establishes a vision for what Fayetteville can achieve. One of the stated objectives in City Plan 2030 is to produce a complete neighborhood or corridor plan every other year utilizing a charrette process. A design charrette process maximizes public participation and ownership of the plan. The Wedington Drive area was chosen and approved by the City Council for this corridor plan on August 7, 2012. A City-led design team consisting of staff from the City's Planning Division and the Sustainability and Strategic Planning Department facilitated the October 27th design charrette at the Boys and Girls Club on Rupple Road. The City also hired Nick Pierce from Nielsen Architecture to create conceptual illustrations of the plan using a computer generated sketch-up model. Over the course of the design process approximately 100 community residents, business owners, civic and community organization members, transportation and design experts and elected and appointed officials offered input for the corridor vision.

CHARRETTE PREPARATION

In the months leading up to the charrette, staff gathered and analyzed information and began visiting with groups and individual stakeholders in the Wedington Drive area. The charrette team compiled a series of maps that examined the existing street, sidewalk and trails network, land use, property ownership, environmental constraints, zoning and future planned infrastructure improvements. The charrette team held a meeting with City staff from the Transportation, Engineering, Water and Sewer, Solid Waste, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire and Geographic Information Systems Divisions to talk about opportunities and constraints that their individual divisions manage in the Wedington Corridor Plan area.

In order to maximize public participation the charrette team utilized a variety of advertising mediums including: print ads in the NWA Times and the Arkansas Traveler, save-the-date postcards to all property owners within the corridor and personally delivering flyers to local businesses and churches. The Fayetteville Flyer featured an online story prior to the charrette week and the NWA Times published an article the day before the community charrette. Staff publicized the charrette through presentations at a Ward 4 meeting, an Environmental Action Committee meeting, a joint City Council and Planning Commission tour and a business owner meeting at City Hall. Multiple television news crews interviewed participants throughout the progress of the event, as well.

ANALYSIS MAPS: ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & ENDURING GREEN NETWORK

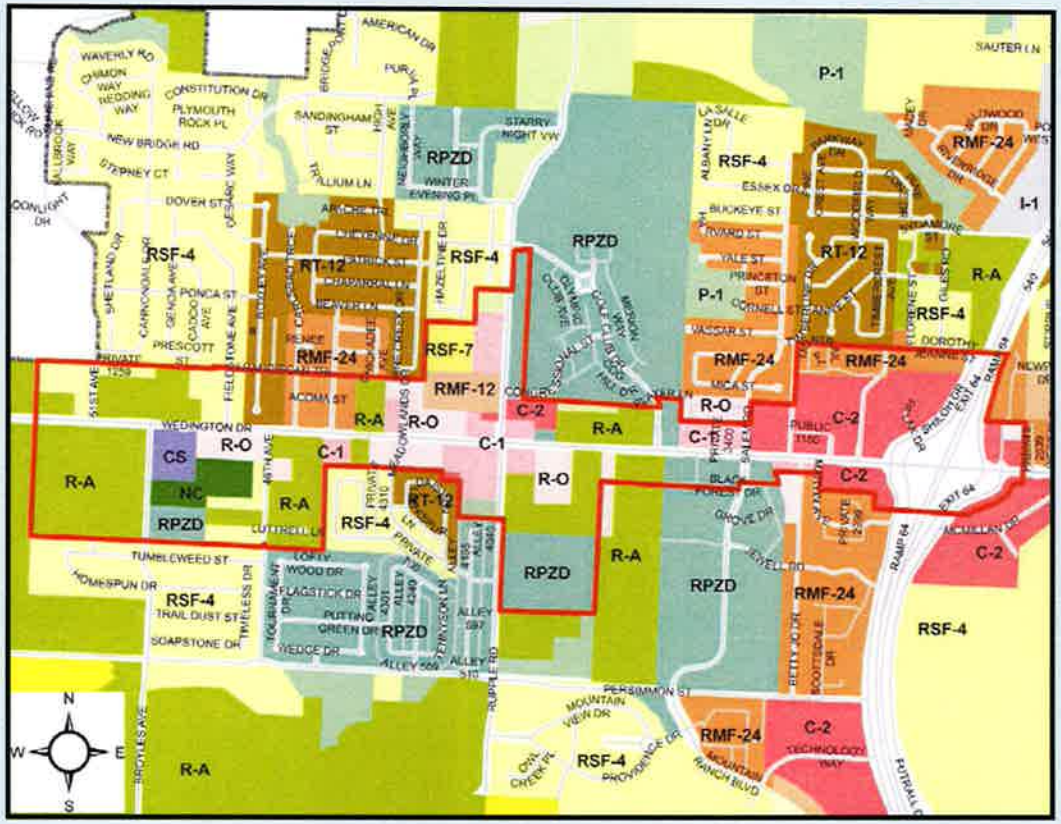


There are no known sensitive or endangered species, impaired watersheds or significant creeks or waterways in the Wedington Corridor Boundary. However, the overall visual environment offers scenic views of the rolling topography, undeveloped fields, and tree-covered hills immediately south of the study area. These scenic views were noted by staff and members of the public before and during the charrette process, and were incorporated into elements of the plan. These views are considered significant natural resources indicative of the visual character of Fayetteville.

The land within the Wedington Corridor boundary is primarily uplands consisting of the Captina-Nixa-Pickwick Association soils. These soils are commonly found in Washington County in areas that have broad plateaus with a gentle gradient of 1 to 8 percent. This soil association is well suited to farming and has few limitations for non-farm development. The lands adjacent to the corridor on the north and south are bisected by significant streams, Hamestring and Owl Creek respectively. The Enduring Green Network (see page 28 for explanation) encompasses both the Hamestring and Owl Creek riparian corridors, though accessibility to these resources is limited. Additionally, variously sized wetlands exist in close proximity to the Wedington corridor, most notably the Woolsey Wetland Prairie at the Fayetteville Westside Wastewater Treatment Plant.

"The Enduring Green Network connects people and nature through a mapped system of trails and green infrastructure. This network recognizes and assembles the ecological assets in Fayetteville that need to be preserved while providing a lasting connected corridor for wildlife. The strength, function and appreciation of the Enduring Green Network will develop over time as our community experiences these natural areas and distinct ecosystems." From City Plan 2030, Fayetteville Arkansas

ANALYSIS MAPS: CURRENT ZONING

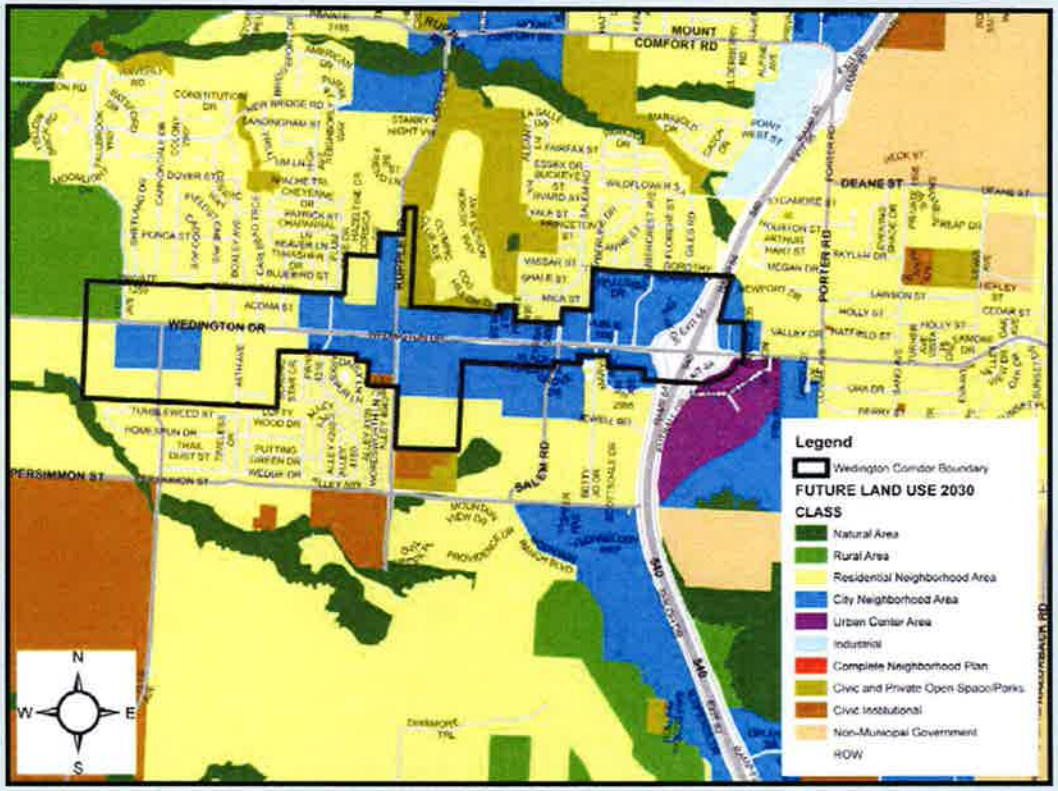


Historically this area was primarily agricultural with a very low residential density. With the completion of the State Highway 71 by-pass in 1975, now I-540, annexations brought much of this area into the City in the 1970s and 1980s. As land was annexed it was rezoned for the many different land uses that we see in the Wedington corridor area today. Areas north and south of Wedington Drive are predominately residentially zoned with a wide variety of density. The land directly adjacent to Wedington Drive has primarily been zoned for commercial and office use with a large area of Thoroughfare Commercial (C-2) zoning located at the I-540 interchange. In recent years developers have utilized the City's Planned Zoning District (PZD) process to create more urban development patterns that allow for varied residential densities mixed with commercial uses. Staff anticipates that the remaining agriculturally zoned lands in direct proximity to Wedington Drive will likely have rezoning requests in the near future as this area continues to develop.

Wedington Infrastructure

The City of Fayetteville provides water and sewer service to the entire Wedington Corridor and the influence area east of Double Springs Road. Much of the existing Water & Sewer Infrastructure on the West side of Interstate 540 is relatively new with adequate storage and capacity for continued infill development. During the recent construction of the West Side Wastewater Treatment Facility, pump stations and sewer collection mains were upgraded in this area. Water infrastructure has a good one mile grid of minimum 12 inch waterlines in developed areas; this grid should continue as build out happens. Infrastructure connections south of Persimmon are currently limited but are projected to improve with the construction of Rupple Road south to Hwy 62.

ANALYSIS MAPS: CITY PLAN 2030 - FUTURE LAND USE



The Wedington corridor is primarily envisioned as a City Neighborhood Area in the future that will accommodate a large variety of residential and commercial uses. City Neighborhood Areas encourage complete, compact and connected neighborhoods. Lands further west along Wedington Drive are identified as Residential Neighborhood areas characterized by predominantly residential uses with strong street connectivity. Overall, the large areas of vacant and underutilized land in the Wedington corridor provide opportunities for growth and for the preservation of existing rural residential uses.

City Neighborhood Areas are characterized as a dense and primarily residential urban fabric. Mixed-use and low-intensity commercial uses are usually confined to corner locations. These areas have a wide range of residential building types: single-family, multi-plexes, sideyard and rowhouses. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets typically define medium sized blocks with a high level of connectivity between neighborhoods. City Neighborhood Areas recognize conventional strip commercial developments but encourage complete, compact and connected neighborhoods.

Residential Neighborhood Areas are almost exclusively residential in nature with naturalistic planting and varied setbacks. This designation recognizes conventional single use residential subdivision development but encourages traditional neighborhood development that incorporates low-intensity commercial uses. All new development should create a strong sense of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connectivity.

Rural Areas consist of lands in an open or cultivated state or sparsely settled. These may include woodlands, agricultural lands or grasslands. These areas have only the infrastructure and public services to support low-density zoning.

Natural Areas consist of lands approximating or reverting to a wilderness condition, including lands with limited development potential due to topography, hydrology, vegetation or its value as an environmental resource.

WEST WEDINGTON AREA OF INFLUENCE CENSUS DATA ANALYSIS

For this project the design team created an area of influence in order to understand the population that utilized the Wedington corridor for transportation and commerce. The area of influence boundary is roughly lands located south of Mount Comfort Road, west of I-540, north of Highway 62 and east of the western city limits near Double Springs Road. The following lists some of the pertinent demographic information for this area:

- The total population of the area of influence is 14,781 people or about 19.7% of the total Fayetteville population. Of this, 29% of males and 28% of females are over 25 years of age, and 43% are less than 25 years old. The median male age is 22-24 and the median female age is 25-29. The average number of people per household is 2.43.

- There are a total of 7,713 households in the area of influence. Of these 72% are family households, 28% are non-family and 5% are single person households.

- The median income of the area is $44,000 to $49,999. This is the same as the City as a whole.

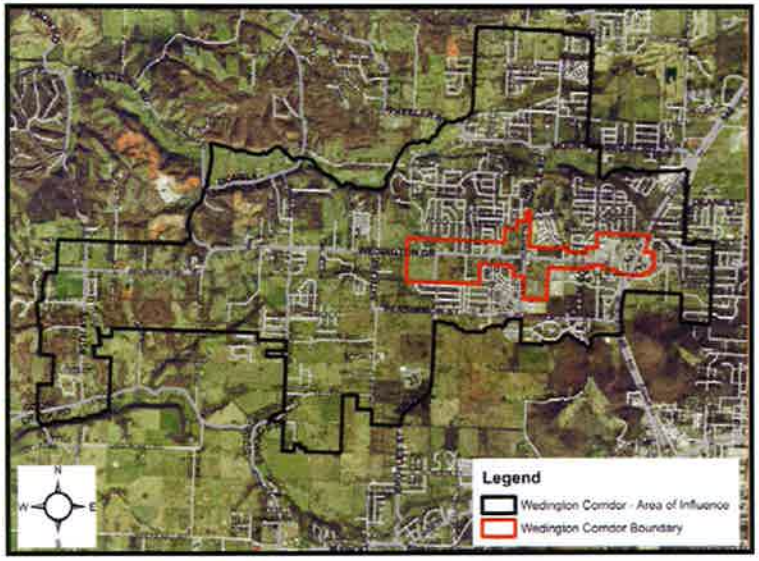
The census data informs us that the population in the area of influence is relatively young with a high number of families with small children. There is also a significant population of young adults, probably college students, which live in this area.

The City's GIS department also tracks housing data and the following numbers reinforce the census data that this area is made up of predominantly young families and college students.

- A total of 7,532 occupiable housing units exist in the area of influence. Of these 59% are single family, 30% are multi-family and 11% are duplexes or mobile homes.

The City also keeps track of land use City wide. According to the latest analysis the land use for the Wedington area of influence is the following: 42% undeveloped or agriculture, 39% residential, 10% street right-of-way, 3 % entertainment and recreation, 2% general sales or services, 2% communication and utilities and 2% for education and health care.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission develops population projections for the municipalities in the region. Their most recent population projection estimates that in 2035 Fayetteville will have a population of 116,445 people. This is an increase of 41,343 people in the next 20 years or so. Due to the fact that there are large areas of easily developable land in the Wedington area of influence a substantial amount of that population growth will likely occur here.



Wedington area of influence

WEDINGTON AREA HISTORY

Wedington Drive takes its name from William Lewis Weddington, a prominent land owner who settled west of Fayetteville near the present day Lake Wedington in the early 1800s. Recorded history of the area dates back to the use of the Wedington Drive corridor as a passage for Native Americans before the area was settled by pioneers. This transportation corridor later became know as 'Wedington Gap.' The area was first settled by Anglos in the late 1820s, Washington County being established soon thereafter. One of the first families to settle in this part of Washington County was the Woolsey family, Samuel D. and his wife, Matilda. The Woolseys moved from Illinois in 1830, settling a farm of 80 acres acquired through public land grants at $1.25/acre, which is today located on City property off of Broyles Road near the City Westside Wastewater Treatment Plant, about one mile southwest of the Wedington Corridor Plan area. Much of the Woolsey homestead and burial ground has been preserved in its original location. As part of the construction of the City's new wastewater treatment plant adjacent to this homestead, a wetland mitigation site called the Woolsey Wet Prairie has been installed and is being maintained to restore the tall grass wet prairie that was once common to the area.

Like the Woolsey property, much of the area west of Fayetteville was settled with small homesteads in the mid- to late 1800s and had much less hardwood forest than exists today, with large areas of tall grass prairie. Bison, elk, deer, beaver and other game were plentiful and hunting and trapping was a common occupation.

The eastern part of the Wedington Neighborhood Plan Area was annexed into the City of Fayetteville in 1967 with annexations gradually extending west over the decades with the westernmost portion of the study area annexed in 2006. Until the 1980s this area of Fayetteville/Washington County was primarily rural, with a number of family farms and rural residences. More recent agricultural activities primarily consist of livestock and hay farming and still exist today on several large parcels of land adjacent to Wedington Drive. There were not many non-residential services or uses in the study area until the past 30 years. However, one hub at a crossroads in the area was a small grocery store called the Earl Williams Grocery that was located at the northeast corner of what is now Wedington Drive and Rupple Road.

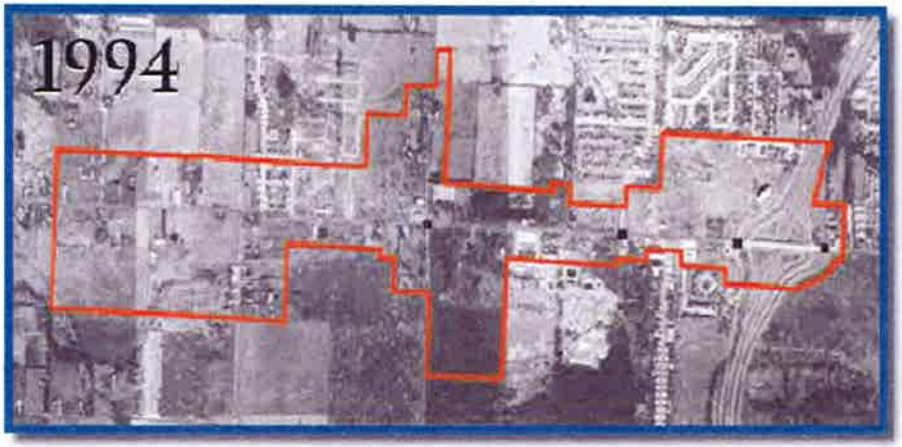
Some of the well established non-residential uses still in existence along this corridor are Airways Freight offices, Westwood Gardens plant nursery, the First United Pentecostal Church, Catfish Hole restaurant, and Ozarks Electric office and equipment yard. The construction of the State Highway 71 bypass in the

Lake Wedington History

Lake Wedington, 12 miles west of Fayetteville, was built through the Rural Resettlement Administration, a New Deal program under the Roosevelt administration and was established in order to take low quality agricultural lands out of production, creating a "natural and scenic area for recreational and educational purposes" and resettling farmers on better agricultural lands. The project displaced 163 families but yielded work for 500 people building cabins and other structures, a dam, planting 350,000 trees and reworking 6000 acres of pasture planted for grazing. Lake Wedington officially opened in April 1938. Source: http://www.historicwashingtoncounty.org/lakewedington.html

early 1970s (the current I-540 corridor) introduced major changes to this rural landscape. The 71 bypass connected the Fayetteville Airport north to the regional mall and opened up this area for development including a gas station, strip malls, hotels, the Betty Jo Apartments, and eventually single family neighborhoods and the Harps grocery store into the 1990s and early 2000s. The construction of I-540 provided connection through the entire northwest Arkansas area and was completed and officially opened in January 1999.

Most of the commercial and residential development in this study area has been developed within the past 15 – 20 years. Comparisons between 1994 and 2012 aerial photography of the area show significant change in the amount of development in the area. See Appendix B for references.



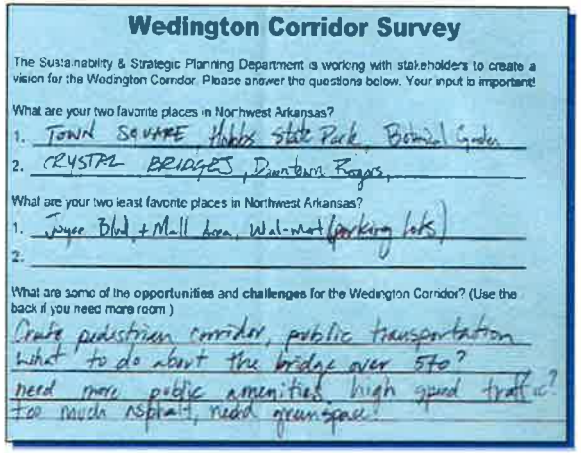
NEIGHBORHOOD TOURS

The charrette hosted multiple walking tours of the Wedington Corridor in the weeks leading up to the design charrette. Additionally, a driving and walking tour with members of the Planning Commission and City Council allowed the charrette team to gather early feedback. Multiple tours of the area allowed the charrette team to assess existing conditions within and around the Wedington Corridor Plan Area, familiarize themselves with the neighborhoods, and identify traffic and congestion issues, street and block patterns, alternative transportation opportunities and constraints, existing land uses and possible infill and open space sites, in advance of the charrette week events.

THE CHARRETTE KICK-OFF

The design charrette began with a kick-off event at the Boys and Girls Club on Thursday, October 25th. Peter Nierengarten, Sustainability and Strategic Planning Director and City Council member Rhonda Adams started by welcoming everyone to the kick-off event and encouraging them to participate during the charrette week. City Planner Jesse Fulcher gave an overview of the history of the Wedington area and its past agricultural significance to provide historical context to the area.

Attendees completed a survey at the kick-off event that asked about the challenges and opportunities in the Wedington corridor area. The challenges most frequently identified were traffic volumes, high rates of speed and congested access, especially at the I-540 interchange. The top opportunities included making the area walkable, bikeable and transit friendly.



Wedington Corridor Survey

The Sustainability & Strategic Planning Department is working with stakeholders to create a vision for the Wedington Corridor. Please answer the questions below. Your input is important!

What are your two favorite places in Northwest Arkansas?

1. Town Square, Hobbs State Park, Botanical Garden
2. Crystal Bridges, Downtown Rogers,

What are your two least favorite places in Northwest Arkansas?

1. Joyce Blvd. + Mall Area, Wal-mart (parking lots)
2.

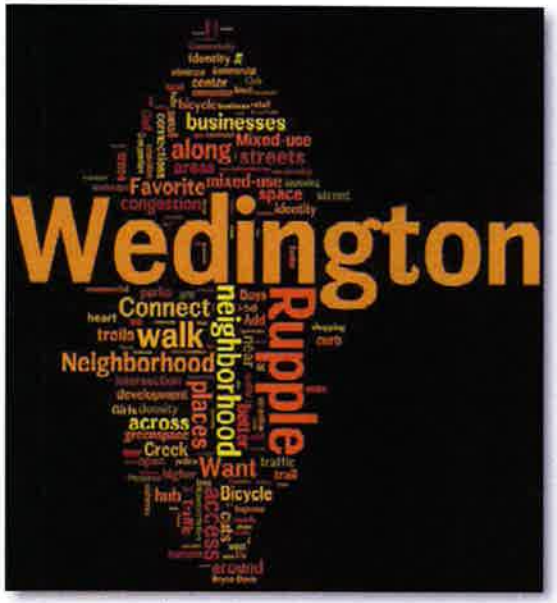
What are some of the opportunities and challenges for the Wedington Corridor? (Use the back if you need more room.)

Create pedestrian corridor, public transportation
what to do about the bridge over 540?
need more public amenities, high speed traffic?
too much asphalt, need greenspace!

THE HANDS-ON DESIGN WORKSHOP

The hands-on design workshop was held on Saturday, October 27th. About 40 community members and stakeholders gathered for the three hour brainstorming and design session. Mayor Jordan kicked off the event with opening remarks, followed by Planner Jesse Fulcher, who presented a visual preference survey, a tool used to obtain public feedback on physical design alternatives. Peter Nierengarten gave a "food for thought" presentation that highlighted the existing conditions in the Wedington Drive area. Participants then worked in small groups of 6 to 8 people through a series of design questions provided by the facilitator. The groups worked on brainstorming ideas and drawing on maps to illustrate concepts and design thoughts. Participants were challenged to develop a vision of what the Wedington area could become; they identified traffic and alternative transportation limitations and solutions, and they recognized the missing pieces needed to complete the neighborhood.

At the conclusion of the design session each of the six groups selected a representative to present their table's ideas to the larger group. A number of common elements emerged that included:



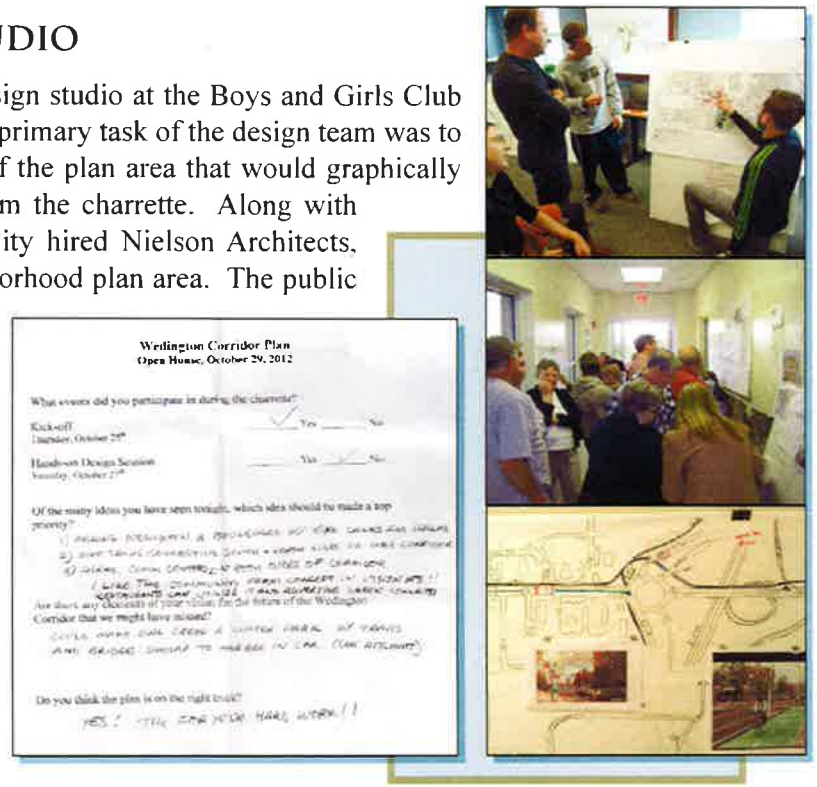
Wordcloud software source: wordle.com

- Wedington Drive as a boulevard or parkway.
- Improve the Wedington I-540 interchange and improve multi-modal transportation options.
- Develop a node or "heart" of the neighborhood at Wedington Drive and Rupple Road
- Create a north-south oriented greenway with trails bisecting Wedington Drive

A "word cloud" of the table representatives' presentations was created immediately following their presentations and shared with the participants. The word cloud correlates word-size with frequency used, offering insight into the top ideas that were discussed based on how often they were mentioned. Ultimately, the hands-on design workshop generated maps and ideas for the design team to utilize as they began to create an illustrative map based upon this citizen input.

THE OPEN DESIGN STUDIO

The design team held an open design studio at the Boys and Girls Club from Sunday until Thursday. The primary task of the design team was to draw an illustrative master plan of the plan area that would graphically depict the ideas and concepts from the charrette. Along with the illustrative master plan the City hired Nielson Architects, LLC to produce 3D renderings and character sketches of key places in the neighborhood plan area. The public was encouraged to check in on the status of the plan and look over the designers' shoulders to make sure that their ideas were represented in the developing illustrative plan. The citizens' maps and idea boards displayed in the hallway outside of the design studio showed the development of the plan from the first rough sketches and idea boards. Dozens of people dropped by during the design week to check in on the plan as it progressed.



The design team requested that Tim Conklin, a transportation planning professional in the region and Jeff Huber, project designer at the University of Arkansas Community Design Center, to review the public input and offer constructive criticism of the proposed design solutions. Both Tim Conklin and Jeff Huber offered an insightful critique of the progressing plan especially in respect to traffic and congestion issues and the boulevard design. Additionally, the design team

hosted an open house on October 29th where initial design alternatives were displayed for various areas in the Wedington corridor. This event was well attended, and public feedback was positive and re-enforced that the design team was heading in the right direction with the plan.

CHARRETTE CONCLUSION WITH WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATION

A work-in-progress presentation at the Boys and Girls Club on November 1st, 2012 concluded the charrette. Approximately 40 people came out to see the draft illustrative plan and to hear the design team's proposals. Peter Nierengarten reviewed the week's events and shared the four main goals that were developed based upon citizen input. This presentation gave the public an understanding of the future vision for the Wedington corridor and some practical solutions for achieving it.




II. PLAN FUNDAMENTALS

The following four guiding principles were developed through the design charrette process based upon citizen and staff input. They serve as the fundamental framework of the plan and will be utilized as the basis for developing implementation action steps to achieve the vision of the plan. This chapter explains and illustrates in detail the significance of each fundamental principle. The four principles are:

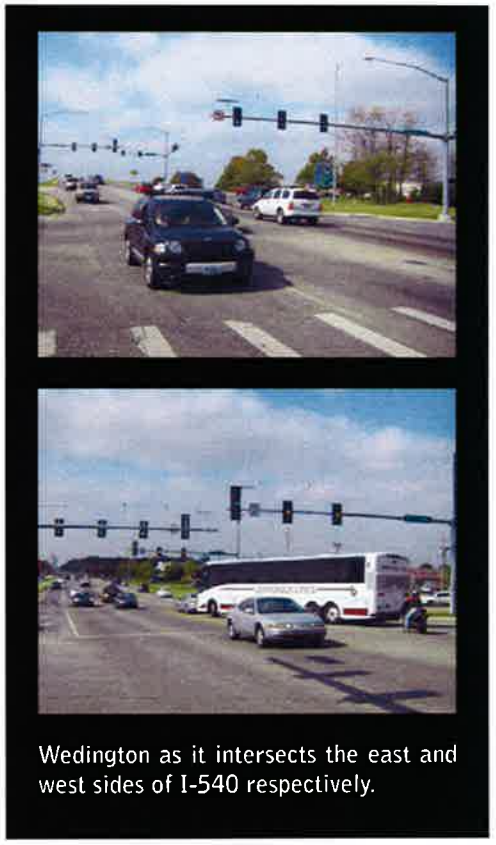
1. Redefine Wedington Drive as Wedington Parkway
2. Envision the "Heart" of the Neighborhood Along Rupple Road
3. Support Active and Public Transportation Options
4. Designate a North-South Oriented "Greenway" Connecting the Hamestring and Owl Creek Watersheds.

1) REDEFINE WEDINGTON DRIVE AS WEDINGTON PARKWAY

Wedington Drive is both a state highway and a principal arterial city street that serves as the primary commercial corridor for this area. Wedington Drive is maintained by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department and provides access to, from and across Interstate 540. The Wedington corridor has approximately 30,000 vehicle trips per day and the existing four and five lane cross-section is primarily designed for high speed (40 – 45 mph) automobile travel.

This area has experienced rapid growth in the last 10 years. Coupled with older policies related to access management, this has produced an incremental development pattern characterized by numerous curb cuts and poorly aligned street intersections. The haphazard alignment of curb cuts and the continuous center turn lane leads to a dangerous driving condition, especially when coupled with high traffic speeds and large volumes. The fact that the Wedington Drive and I-540 intersection is the only point of crossing, serving thousands of residents in the immediate area creates considerable congestion at peak driving times. The morning traffic moving eastward is backed up by the required left turn movement to access I-540 north. Similarly in the evening, traffic is backed up moving west along Wedington Drive and at the interchange's southbound exit ramp. During the charrette week participants repeatedly mentioned that the lack of street connectivity, access to, and across, I-540 were the primary generators of traffic congestion in the area.

An array of design solutions were discussed and proposed. Ultimately, residents expressed a strong desire to remake Wedington Drive into a street that reduces congestion near I-540, provides pedestrians and cyclists with safe and efficient means of travel, is designed to limit vehicular traffic to appropriate speeds and is consequently more attractive.

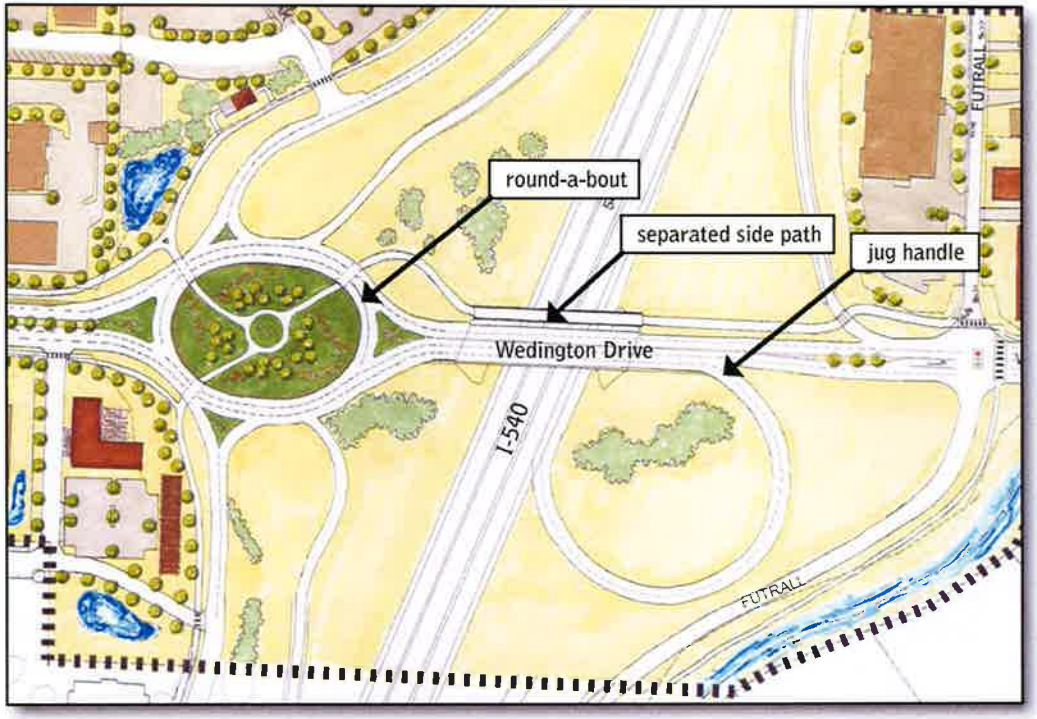


Wedington as it intersects the east and west sides of I-540 respectively.

PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO/ACROSS I-540

In order for an interchange to accommodate high volumes of vehicular traffic and function effectively it should be designed to minimize disruptions to traffic flow and reduce conflict points. Alternative intersection designs such as round-a-bouts, diverging diamonds or continuous flow intersections can improve traffic flow by reducing the number of traffic signals. Safely separating pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic and reducing left turn vehicle movements can help reduce conflicts and improve the flow of vehicular traffic.

The proposed interchange design for I-540 and Wedington Drive, shown at the left, replaces the existing left turn for east bound Wedington Drive vehicles onto I-540 North with a free right "jug handle" and also eliminates one traffic signal on the east side of I-540. A round-a-bout on the west end of the existing bridge replaces two traffic signals (one at Wedington & Shiloh and one at Wedington & I-540 on/off ramps). The round-a-bout provides more continuous traffic flow while improving the safety of the intersection due to the reduced severity of potential vehicle accidents. A separated side path will reduce conflicts with pedestrian and bicyclists and connect to multi-use paths on the west side of I-540.



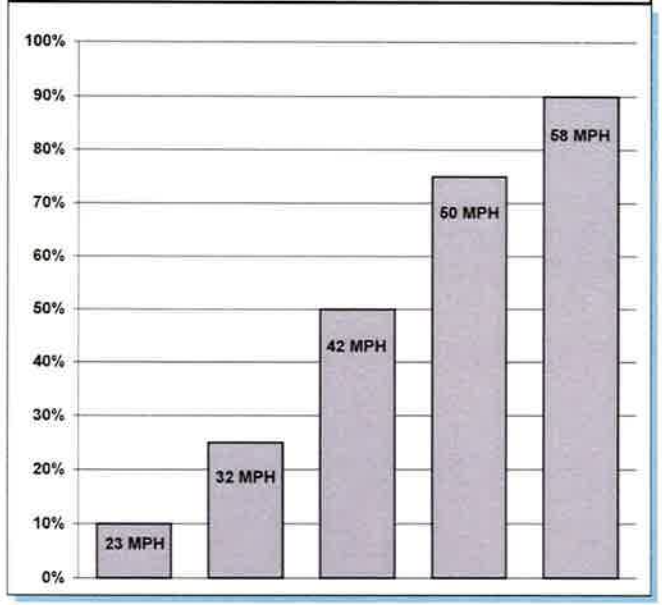
Typical round-a-bout configuration. Image courtesy of EMH&T.

Alternative intersection designs such as round-a-bouts (pictured above), diverging diamonds or continuous flow intersections can improve traffic flow by reducing the number of traffic signals. Safely separating pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic and reducing left turn vehicle movements can help reduce conflicts and improve the flow of vehicular traffic.

MANAGE SPEED, ACCESS & CONGESTION

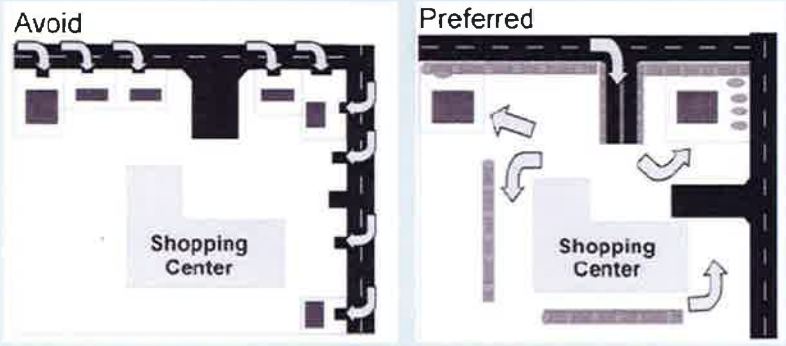
Reduced vehicle speed on streets improves safety for all road users; motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. Vehicular accidents are less likely at lower speeds and when they do occur they are less injurious. Lower speed collisions between vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists are also much less likely to result in a fatality. The graph to the right illustrates a pedestrian's chance of death if hit by a motor vehicle at varying speeds.

FATALITIES BASED ON SPEED OF VEHICLE
A pedestrian's chance of death if hit by a motor vehicle



Data Source: 2011 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Access management is a term used by planners and traffic engineers that refers to the regulation of intersections, driveways and median openings to a roadway. The objective of an access management plan is to allow access to adjacent land uses while maintaining safety by controlling access locations, spacing and design. This is especially important for major throughways that have large traffic volumes and high traffic speeds.



Source: Guide for Analysis of Corridor Management Policies and Practices, Florida Department of Transportation, 2007.

An access management plan is a key tool in managing both safety and congestion along major thoroughfares. Access management can be accomplished by combining multiple entrances/exits into one combined driveway. The use of a boulevard cross-section can help reduce congestion and accidents by controlling left turns from thoroughfares into developments.

TREE LINED BOULEVARD OR PARKWAY

A boulevard is usually a wide multi-lane thoroughfare with a center median that may be tree lined. The center median is broken in key locations to provide controlled left turn movements and cross access at intersections. The principal advantage that boulevards offer over a street with a continuous turn lane is the reduction in conflicts due to control of cross access and left turn movements. If properly landscaped and maintained they can provide beautification and reduced heat-island effect due to shading of paved surfaces. In addition, the center median can provide a refuge space for pedestrians at crossing locations. This is especially helpful for mid-block crossings where there isn't a signalized intersection.

The lack of median at Wedington near Shiloh Drive makes safe crossing difficult.

The center median along Garland Ave. creates a safe, beautiful and environmentally friendly street.

Multi-Way Boulevards were imported to the United States from Europe as part of the park movement in the late nineteenth century. A multi-way boulevard allows the arterial street to serve its primary function of enabling high volume through traffic to move efficiently through the area. The use of parallel, low-speed slip lanes allows continuous access and parking for adjoining properties. The slip lane also functions as a shared travel lane for bicycles. Generally, multi-way boulevards have tree lined medians or green space between the opposing travel lanes and also between the travel lanes and the slip lane. Sidewalks adjacent to the slip lane parking spaces provide an enhanced pedestrian experience and access to the adjoining buildings. Proper use of a multi-way boulevard can beautify a corridor, reduce congestion, manage access and provide safe spaces for all road users.

Proposed Multi-way Boulevard for Franklin Boulevard in Eugene, OR.

Crosswalk on Canyon Blvd. in Boulder, CO.

Rendering of eastern end of Wedington Drive

BETTER PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

A pedestrian crossing is a chosen point along a roadway that is designed to safely keep pedestrians together as they cross vehicular traffic. Pedestrian crossings are often located at intersections but may also be located at any point where higher numbers of pedestrians are likely to cross arterial streets or where crossing a busy road is unsafe. Safe pedestrian crossings are an important component of a complete streets network and are necessary to support a walkable development pattern. The Wedington Corridor Plan proposes pedestrian crossings at new signalized intersections at Marvin/Tahoe, Golf Club Dr., Meadowlands and Fieldstone.

PEDESTRIAN FATALITY FACTS

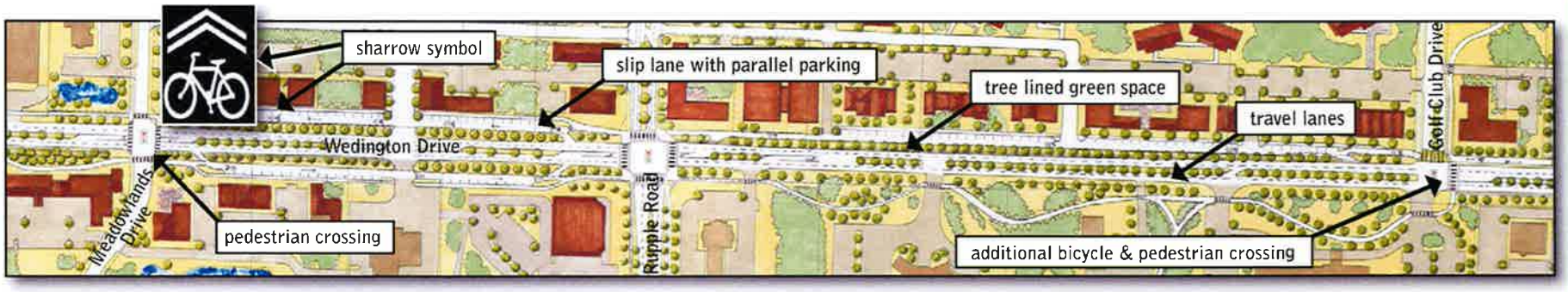
A 2003 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study titled "Pedestrian Roadway Fatalities" concludes that between 1975 and 2001 nationwide:

- Pedestrians accounted for about 12% of all highway fatalities involving motor vehicles
- Almost two-thirds of pedestrian fatalities occurred on urban roadways
- Most pedestrian fatalities occur at non-intersections (over 75%) and roadways without crosswalks (over 40%)
- Most pedestrian fatalities occurred at night between 6 PM and 6 AM (64%)

WEDINGTON DRIVE STREET DESIGN: THREE DISTINCT STREET CROSS-SECTIONS

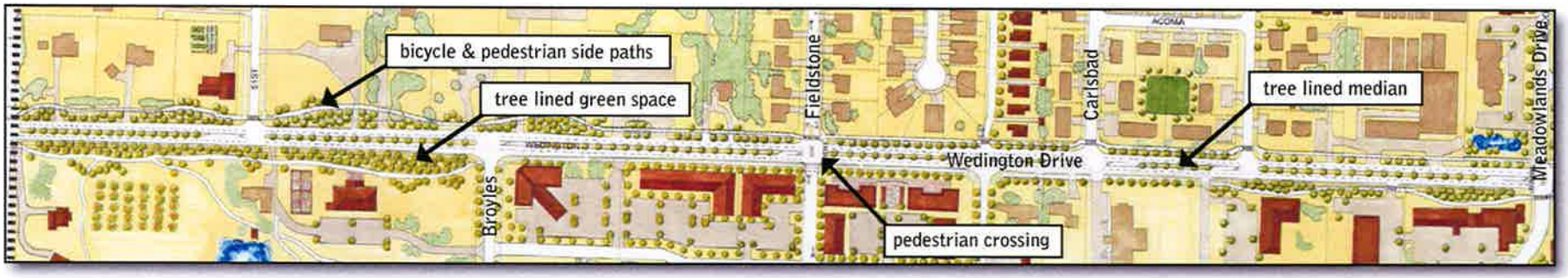
GOLF CLUB DRIVE TO MEADOWLANDS DRIVE:

This section of Wedington Drive is predominately undeveloped with a continuous double yellow line dividing two travel lanes in each direction. A multi-way boulevard with a tree lined median and tree lined green space between the travel lanes and slip lane is proposed in this area. Parallel parking for future businesses and residences is provided along the slip lane. Bicylces transition into the slip lane and sharrows in the slip lane indicate the shared use between low speed vehicles and cyclists. This section of roadway is envisioned to have additional pedestrian and bicycle crossing locations, most notably at Wedington and Golf Club Drive and at Wedington Drive and Meadowlands Drive.



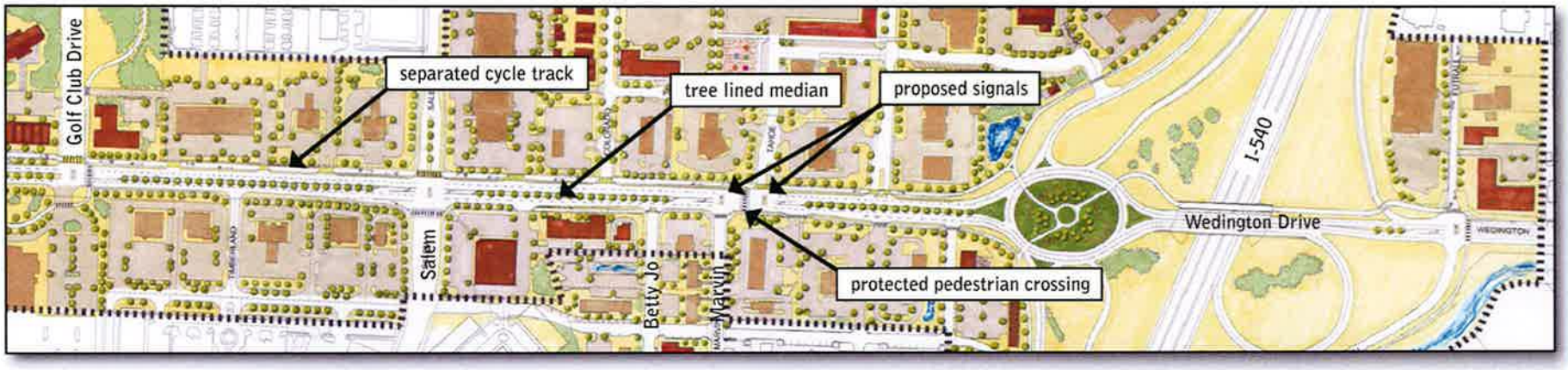
MEADOWLANDS DRIVE TO 51ST AVE:

This five lane section of Wedington Drive is relatively undeveloped with a continuous middle turn lane and two travel lanes in each direction. The proposed design for this section of Wedington Drive includes a tree lined median to replace the center turn lane allowing for controlled access points at intersections and a tree lined green space with bicycle and pedestrian sidepaths adjacent to both sides of the street. The proposed parkway design provides an appropriate urban to rural transition for this outlying area of the City of Fayetteville.



I-540 TO GOLF CLUB DRIVE:

This five lane section of Wedington Drive is highly developed on both sides of the street with a continuous middle turn lane. A traditional boulevard with a tree lined median and a separated cycle track along the north side of the street is proposed for this section. Proposed traffic signals at the offset intersection of Wedington & Tahoe Pl. and Marvin Ave. would allow left turn access for vehicles and also provide a protected pedestrian crossing of Wedington Drive.



2) ENVISION THE "HEART" OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ALONG RUPPLE ROAD

Wedington Drive serves as the principal and most convenient commercial corridor for residents living west of Interstate 540 roughly between Mount Comfort Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (Hwy 62). As mentioned previously, approximately 20% of Fayetteville's population lives in the Wedington influence area. During the Wedington Corridor Charrette residents were asked to envision where the "heart" or central hub of activity of this area of Fayetteville should be developed over time. The overwhelming preference by citizens was for it to be located near the intersection of Wedington Drive and Rupple Road.

Three of the four corners of the intersection of Wedington Drive and Rupple Road are currently developed, but much of the immediate area beyond the intersection is undeveloped or underdeveloped.

Charrette participants expressed a desire to make the "heart" of the neighborhood walkable with an urban form much like a traditional "Main Street." This form of development sustains small businesses, supports mixed-use buildings and often contains a central community space. In addition, they envisioned that missing neighborhood services, resources and housing options should be located within walkable proximity to the "heart" of the neighborhood at Wedington and Rupple, thereby creating west Fayetteville's first truly urban district .

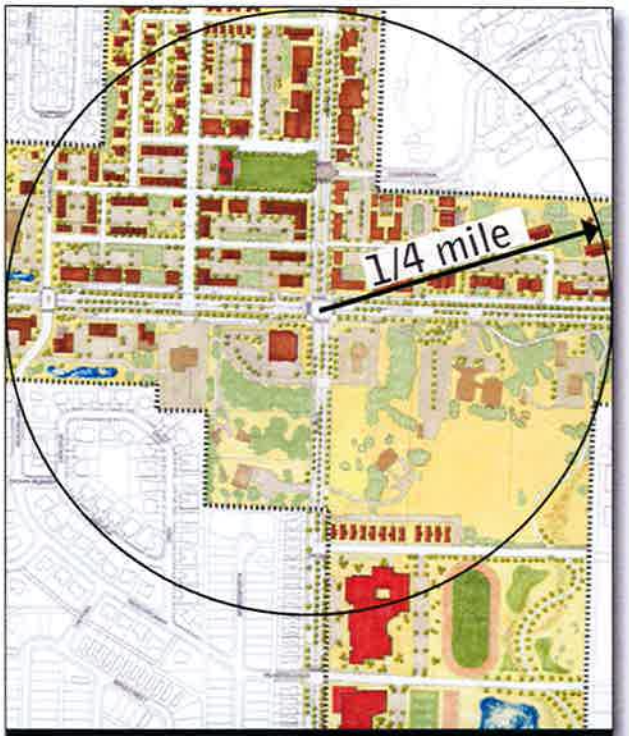
The intersection of Rupple and Wedington was picked by charrette participants as a future "heart" of the neighborhood. The area currently boasts several eateries and commercial businesses and has development potential with a 21 acre tract for sale and prime street frontage along Rupple to the west of the Links.

ENHANCE WALKABILITY AND A "MAIN STREET" FEEL

Traditional "Main Streets" and town centers, developed prior to World War II and the advent of auto dominant development patterns, were designed at a human scale with buildings placed close to the street in contiguous and uninterrupted rows. Streets were generally designed with a slow traffic speed and wide, accommodating sidewalks with appropriate parking adjacent to the street or in the interior of the block. These traditional "Main Streets" were variable in scale from a small town square to elaborate shopping districts in larger cities. In the post war period this pattern of development was largely replaced by the auto centric, high speed arterial roadways that currently dominate the suburban retail districts across the country. The Wedington Corridor Plan envisions the area along Rupple Rd. to be designed in the traditional town form with smaller retail and mixed use development. This "Main Street" development pattern coupled with the close proximity of residential areas will promote a highly walkable heart for the neighborhood.

Typical midwest "main street"

If streets are designed to be walkable, studies have shown that most people will walk a distance of approximately ¼ mile (1,320 feet) before turning back or opting to drive a car or ride a bike. Most neighborhoods built before World War II are ¼ mile from center to edge. This dimension is a constant in the way people have settled for centuries. This distance relates to the manner in which people define the edges of their own neighborhoods. Of course, neighborhoods are not necessarily circular in design, nor is that desirable. The ¼ mile radius is a benchmark for creating a neighborhood unit that is manageable in size and feel and is inherently walkable.



The ability for a resident to satisfy most of their daily needs by having a wide variety of goods, services and daily destinations within a quarter mile lends itself to creating a walkable, sustainable neighborhood.

INFILL OF NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES/RESOURCES

The residential subdivisions that were developed in this area from the 1990s until today have created the demand for the more recent civic, institutional and commercial land uses that provide goods and services to the newly developing neighborhood. Eventually, the infill of additional or missing services will reduce residents' need to drive longer distances out of the neighborhood to meet or find those goods or services. Developing these neighborhood businesses in a walkable urban form within close proximity to nearby residential areas may ultimately eliminate the need for many automobile trips thereby reducing congestion in the Wedington Area. The following lists provide insight into the places that residents value and goods or services that need to be provided to create a more sustainable neighborhood, as identified by charrette participants:

FAVORITE PLACES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Yogurt Shop
- Goodwill Store
- Gusano's Pizza
- Cat Fish Hole
- Golf Course
- West Wood Gardens
- Boys & Girls Club
- Harps
- Dog Park
- Wal-Mart
- Hunan Restaurant
- Green Space
- Cross Church

NEEDED GOODS/ SERVICES OR AMENITY

- Branch Library
- Owner Occupied Town Houses
- Cottage Courts
- Upscale Grocery Store
- Police Sub-Station
- Post Office
- Senior Center
- Theater
- Bakery
- Brewery
- More Restaurants
- Neighborhood Center
- Drug Store
- Farmer's Market
- Community Building
- Auto Shop
- Meeting Rooms
- Bike/Ped Trails
- Museum
- More Schools
- Transit
- Hardware Store

INFILL OF "MISSING MIDDLE" NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING

The term "Missing Middle" housing refers to medium density housing types such as duplexes, fourplexes, bungalow courts, and live-work units that support walkable urban living. They are classified as missing because of the relatively small number of these housing types have been constructed during the post-World War II era. These types of housing can provide effective transitions or buffers between lower density single family detached housing and commercial corridors or other more urbanized areas. Quality Missing Middle housing is characterized by the following: they are constructed in mixed densities that often seem lower than they actually are, they are compact, well designed and simply constructed units on sites that are not designed around off-street parking (this is not so say that off-street parking cannot exist), and most importantly missing middle neighborhoods are supremely walkable thereby creating community through the creative use of shared space. For the Wedington Corridor Plan missing middle housing is envisioned in the heart of the neighborhood as a mix of small single family homes, duplexes, triplexes, town homes and live/work units. These housing units help create a mixing of uses along Rupple Rd. and Wedington Dr. and provide transition between existing single family housing and more intensely developed retail areas.

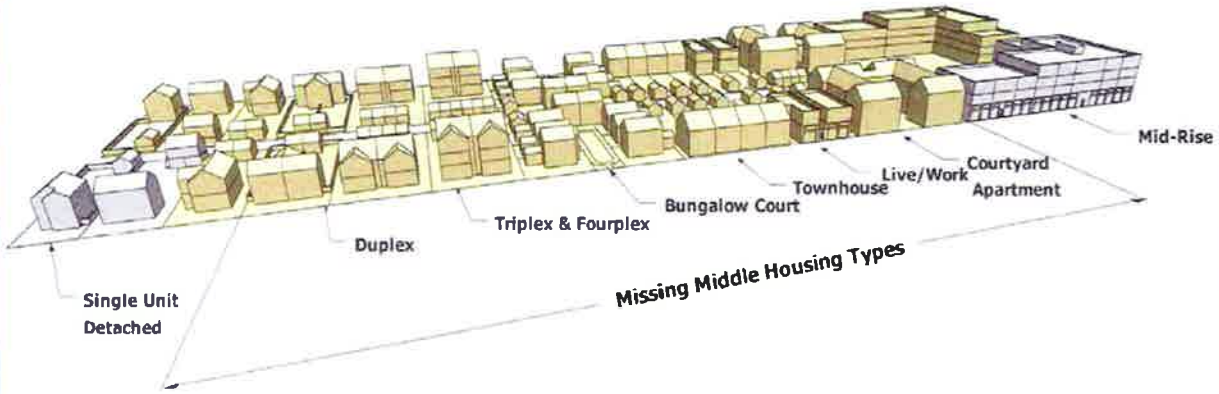


Illustration of the "Missing Middle." Source: Blog Post by Dan Parolek, Better! Cities & Towns, April 13, 2012

EXAMPLES OF "MISSING MIDDLE" HOUSING

Duplex bungalow | Modern duplex

Rowhouse | Townhome

Fourplex | Bungalow court

Courtyard apartment | Live work unit

ENABLE A CENTRAL COMMUNITY/SOCIAL SPACE

Many participants in the Wedington Charrette expressed a need for a central community space in the Wedington area. Outdoor community spaces can provide opportunities for a variety of activities such as farmers markets, outdoor festivals, or other community gatherings. If designed and programmed correctly these spaces will regularly attract people thereby supporting surrounding retail and providing the anchor for the "heart" of the neighborhood.

Rendering of central community square along Rupple Road, (NW of Rupple & Wedington) by Neilson Architects, LLC.

Rendering of Community Center and Junior High School along Rupple Road (South of Rupple & Wedington) by Neilson Architects, LLC.

3) SUPPORT ACTIVE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

SUPPORT INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIVITY

As previously discussed, the relationship between congestion and the lack of street, bicycle, pedestrian and transit connectivity across I-540 was a major concern of many charrette participants. The public overwhelmingly pointed out that the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the Wedington Corridor was fragmented and inferior to that of other neighborhoods within the City. For instance, the sidewalk location along Wedington Drive has a narrow 3-4 foot greenspace separating it from the high speed driving lanes. This creates an uncomfortable situation for a pedestrian along the street. Pedestrian crossings are located at the intersection of Wedington Drive and Shiloh, Salem and Rupple Road. However, these crossings are not necessarily in the most convenient locations for pedestrians wanting to cross. This leads to people running across the street and dodging traffic. Bicycle infrastructure has been installed in some locations along the corridor with the Salem Road and Rupple Road intersecting Wedington Drive having well marked sharrows or bike lanes. However, Wedington Drive itself lacks a dedicated bike lane and the I-540 overpass is especially dangerous for bicyclists.

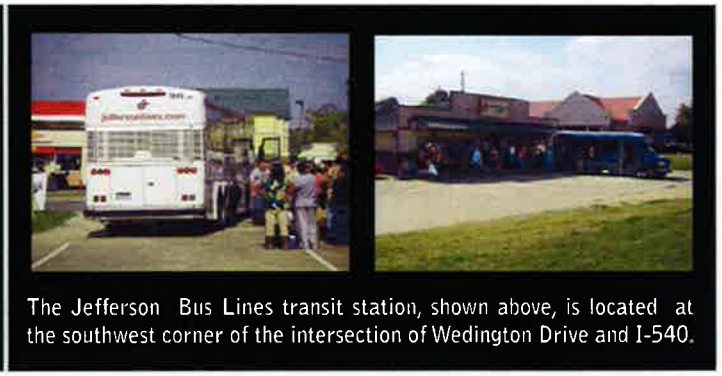
And finally, the public acknowledged the need for improved transit access for residents in the area. The linking of a number of local, regional and inter-regional bus services at the existing Jefferson Bus Lines transit station is a strategically positioned resource that this area should draw upon.

CITY STREETS: DYNAMIC PUBLIC PLACES

"Streets require vast amounts of land. In the United States, from 25 to 35 percent of a city's developed land is likely to be in public rights-of-way, mostly in streets. Streets are almost always public: owned by the public, and when we speak of the public realm we are speaking in large measure of streets. What is more, streets change. They are tinkered with constantly: curbs are changed to make sidewalks narrower or (in fewer cases) wider, they are repaved, lights are changed, the streets are torn up to replace water and sewer lines or cables and again repaved. The buildings along them change and in doing so change the streets. Every change brings with it the opportunity for improvement. If we can develop and design streets so that they are wonderful, fulfilling places to be, community building places, attractive public places for all people of cities and neighborhoods, then we well have successfully designed about one third of the city directly and will have had an immense impact on the rest."

Excerpt from "Great Streets" by Allan B. Jaobs, 1993

Narrow green space along Wedington and on Wedington Bridge creates an uncomfortable experience for pedestrians and cyclists.



The Jefferson Bus Lines transit station, shown above, is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Wedington Drive and I-540.

CONNECT MISSING LINKS – STREETS, SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS

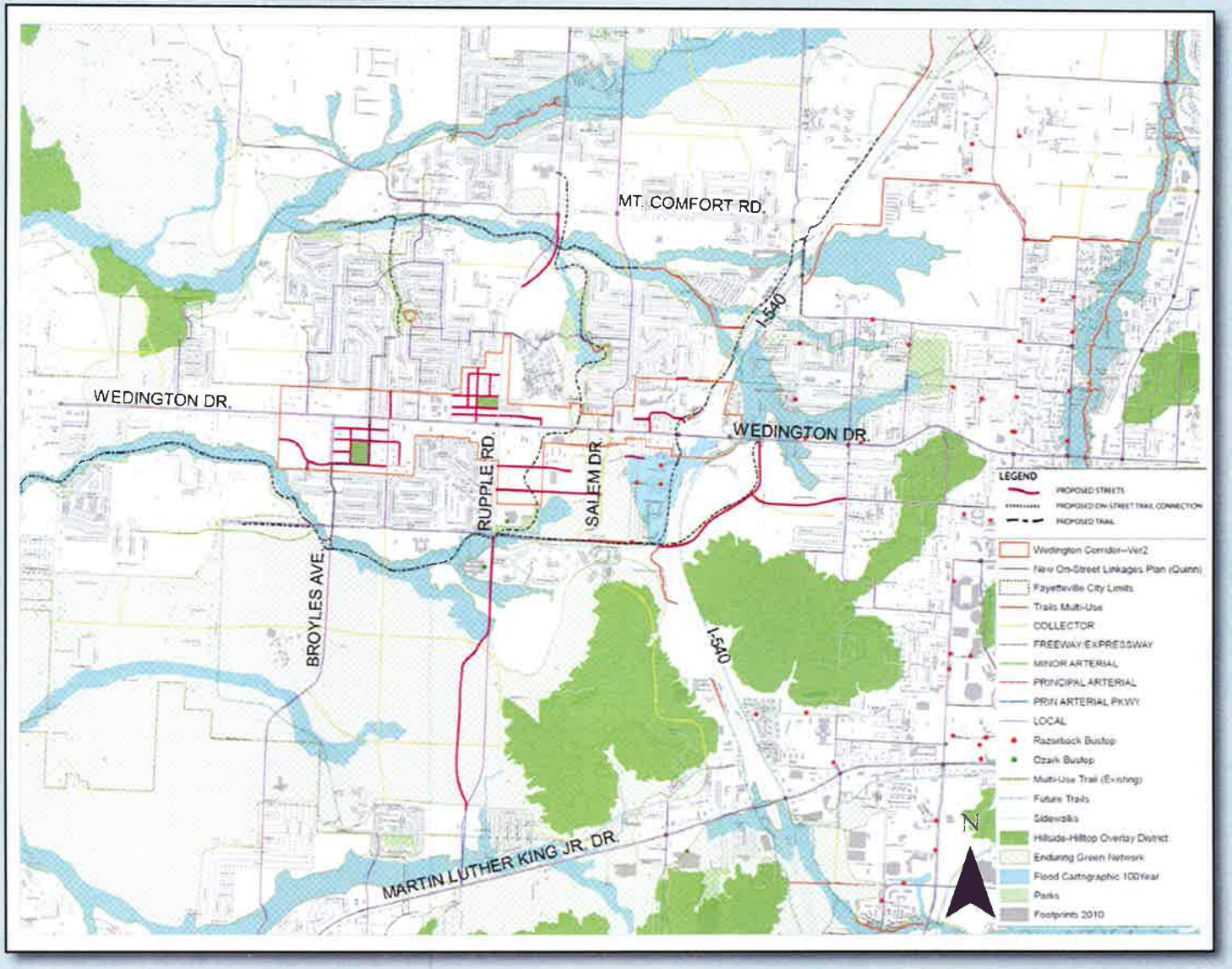
The street network of a neighborhood determines the way those streets are utilized. In traditional development patterns an interconnected street network provided opportunities for all modes of transportation due to the short blocks laid out in a grid. Traditional residential blocks were welcoming to vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians by their slow speed design. The disconnected nature of the post war suburban development pattern interrupted the grid with cul-de-sac subdivisions that had limited access thereby funneling traffic onto the higher classification streets. This leads to the need to provide expansive collector and arterial streets to handle large volumes of traffic that otherwise could have been dispersed through a well connected street network.

MasterTransportation Connections Map

Therefore, a consciously designed, well-connected network of streets, sidewalks and trails is essential for the dispersal of traffic into, out-of and through the corridor. For the most part, the current street network that intersects Wedington Drive is fragmented. This is principally due to the incremental nature of development that has happened in the last two decades. A number of opportunities for increased street connectivity were missed in the past, for instance the dead-end of Steamboat Drive. Fortuitously this area is only partially built out, thereby providing the City with the opportunity to plan for completing a street network that addresses these missing connections. In 2008 the City adopted an Access Management and Street Connectivity ordinance that mandates curb-cut separation distance requirements and requires an interconnected public street network prohibiting cul-de-sac streets. In the proposed Wedington Illustrative Plan the larger un-developed parcels located in the plan area represent a model for creating an interconnected local street network.

The proposed interchange design and the conversion of Wedington Drive into a boulevard cross-section will change traffic patterns and access along the corridor. The removal of the center turning lane will restrict left turn movements to street intersections and major access points to the adjacent properties. This makes the need for cross access and a connected street grid very important. Pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks are required for any proposed street design.

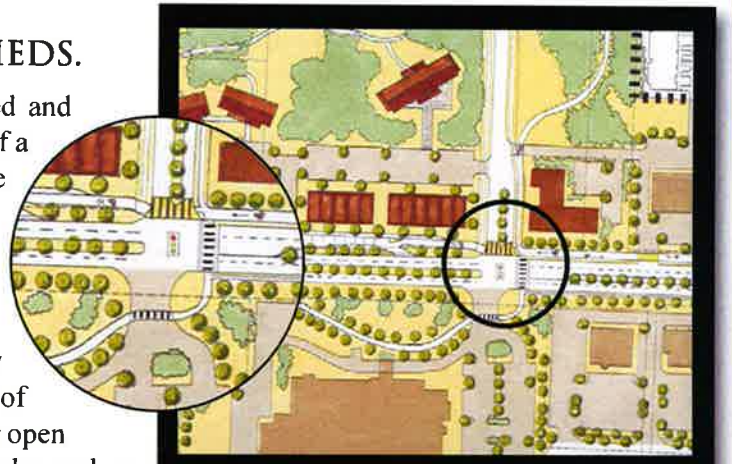
The trail infrastructure that is proposed to cross Wedington Drive at Salem Road will create the opportunity to penetrate the Wedington corridor with off-street active transportation facilities. Trail infrastructure serves multiple purposes including transportation options, health benefits and preserving natural or open spaces through the use of greenways. Trail and street transportation connections both within and into/out of the Wedington Area are shown on the Master Transportation Connections Map.



MasterTransportation Connections Map

4) DESIGNATE A NORTH-SOUTH ORIENTED "GREENWAY" CONNECTING THE HAMESTRING AND OWL CREEK WATERSHEDS.

With the adoption of City Plan 2030 an Enduring Green Network (EGN) was identified and mapped (See map page 6). The EGN is a tool for guiding land use decisions and is a part of a larger development framework. It was developed as a means to connect people and nature through a mapped system of trails and green infrastructure. This network recognizes and assembles the natural resources of Fayetteville that should be preserved to provide lasting connected corridors for wildlife, trails, waterways, and passive open space. The EGN map was created by identifying and inventorying the existing natural resources and linking them together with parks and linear trail networks. The EGN was mapped as a broad boundary for use in locating possible properties that could eventually become a contiguous network of greenspace and trails. The EGN as realized will likely be narrow corridors connecting larger open spaces. Over time, the function and appreciation of the Enduring Green Network will be enhanced as its pieces are fitted together and it becomes inter-connected and easily accessible.



The trail crossing at Wedington and Golf Club Road provides a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists and connects the Enduring Green Network across Wedington Drive.

The view of Milsap's Mountain southeast of the Boys and Girls Club provides a visual reminder of the ecological resources once abundant and still existing in the Wedington area today.

In urban contexts, these narrow ribbons of greenspace are typically termed "Greenways" from the combination of green belt and parkway. Greenways are characterized as vegetated and linear, often containing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in narrow corridors.

At this time, a portion of the EGN bisects the Wedington corridor at the intersection of Salem Road. Commercial development currently occurring here limits the viability of the EGN in this location. Staff proposes amending the EGN map and moving its location west to the intersection of Golf Club Road. This location is favorable for connecting the existing and planned green spaces to the north and south of Wedington Drive. This connection will favorably impact a multitude of residential, civic, open space and commercial uses in the Wedington area, most notably the Hamestring and Owl Creek trail corridors, public elementary and middle schools, the Boys and Girls Club, the Links Golf Course and Bryce Davis Park.

This greenway connection is further strengthened by the view of Millsap's Mountain and Mount Kessler to the south, an asset of the area identified by citizens during the hands-on design workshop. A greenway in this location will ensure that a perpetual viewshed is established and maintained.

Meadow Valley trail at the U of A Farm

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS/LAND ACQUISITION

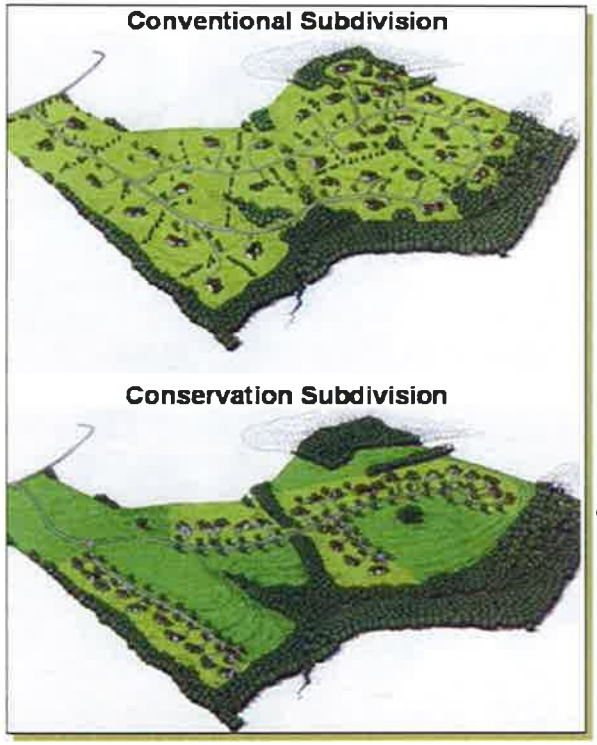
There are a number of policies and regulations currently existing that may be utilized to acquire identified greenspace, the foremost being the Parkland Dedication Ordinance and the Fayetteville Alternative Transportation and Trails Master Plan. As the remainder of the Wedington Corridor develops, this north and south greenway should be incorporated into development plans on the now vacant lands adjacent or contiguous with the planned route.

The Fayetteville Alternative Transportation Plan should be amended to recognize this very important north-south greenway connection and to ensure that space for this corridor is prioritized in any future development plans for these properties.

In addition, the City should create a "Conservation" development ordinance that would allow for sustainable land use development for lands in the EGN that protect environmental features such as viewsheds, natural wildlife habitats, environmentally sensitive areas or farmlands in perpetuity. A conservation design for neighborhood development may be appropriate in areas where there are important natural resources to protect or where the development form of the surrounding area is primarily rural or agricultural. This form of development typically sets aside half or more of the land area to be designated as undivided, permanent open space. This result is achieved in a density neutral manner whereby the overall number of dwellings is the same as what would be allowed in a conventional layout. This results in residential neighborhoods that are more compact and with smaller lots. The central goal is the preservation of lands to create a contiguous community wide open space network. This may be accomplished through partnerships of private and public land owners, land trusts and/or local governments. This pattern of land development is particularly appropriate for the urban fringe or edge of the city where urban services are not available and where low density residential development is a given.

Advantages of a conservation subdivision are:

- less infrastructure for developer to install
- less infrastructure for City to maintain
- smaller lots for owners to maintain
- common/shared space for neighborhood to utilize



Source: Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

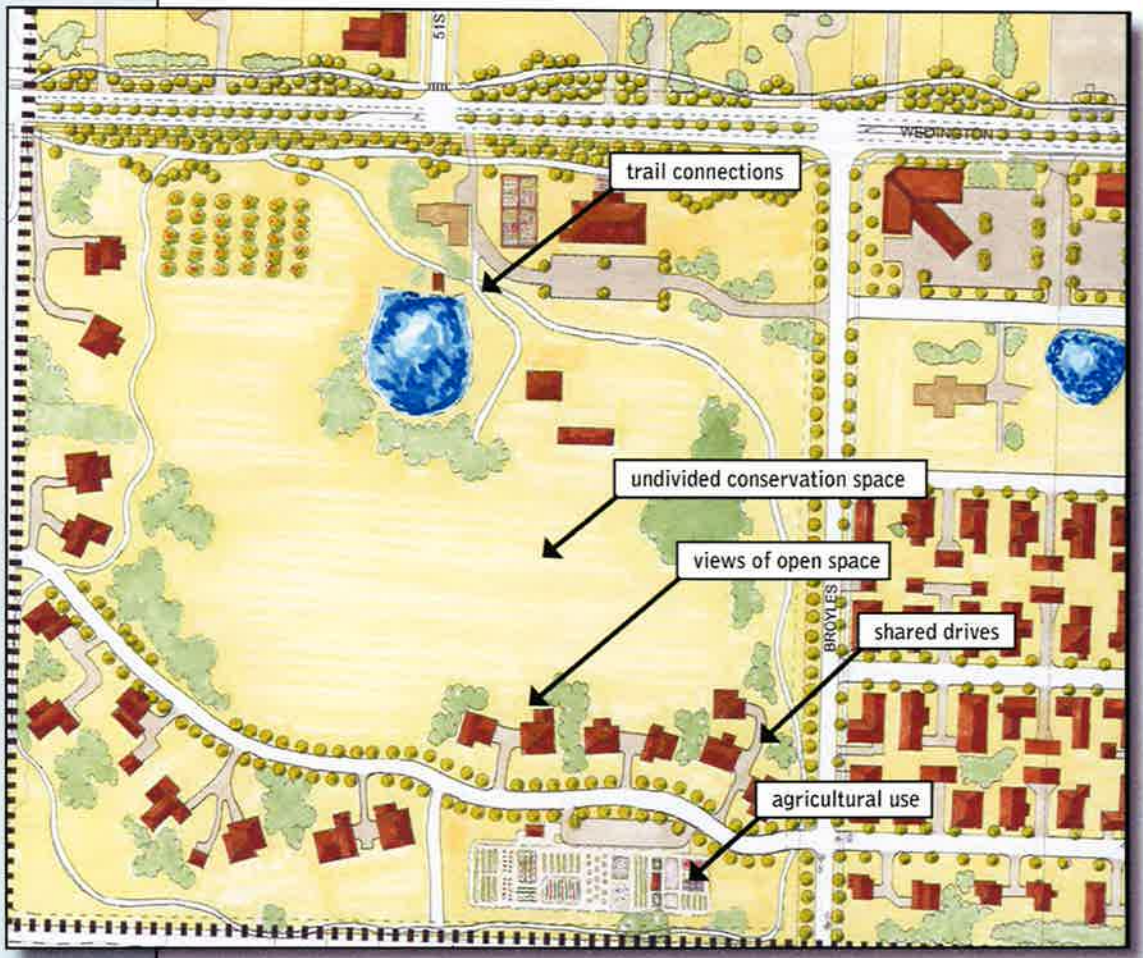
FOUR STEPS FOR CREATING A CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION:

1. Identify potential conservation areas on the property: This includes wetlands, forested slopes, streams and valuable agricultural lands.

2. Identify home sites on the property: Home sites should be identified that will take advantage of the open space viewsheds and by providing pedestrian access.

3. Design the street alignment and trails: Provide adequate access to each home and share driveway curb cuts when possible. Design street alignments to maximize views into the open space. Minimize dead end streets and connect to adjoining properties. Provide trail connections through the conservation spaces allowing the neighborhood to access and appreciate the greenspace.

4. Create small lots that do not divide the conservation open space. Achieve a density neutral design that is flexible in terms of lot width, area, setbacks and frontage requirements. Open space lots should be left as large contiguous parcels. A land management plan with maintenance responsibilities must be established to ensure the long term viability of the conservation space.



Conceptual conservation subdivision

III. CHARRETTE OUTCOMES: ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

The Wedington Corridor Illustrative Master Plan shows only one of many alternatives or scenarios for development within the corridor in the next 15 – 20 years. Many of the features in the illustrative plan reflect ideas and opportunities that were identified by charrette participants. The implementation of some of the more significant components within the plan will be controlled by entities or organizations outside of city government. These include a Branch Library, a Junior High School, a Community Center, a Farmers Market, future street connections and a round-a-bout interchange at I-540.

PLACES AND SPACES

BRANCH LIBRARY

The Fayetteville Public Library currently houses their entire circulation and operations within one building located in Downtown Fayetteville. Since this building was completed in 2004 the number of active library card holders has skyrocketed to over 65,000 people. Use by these cardholders has exceeded the capacity for the current building, which has prompted the library to update their 20 year master plan.

One option within this master planning process may be to open a branch library. Several considerations will influence the location choice for a branch library including; community desire, distance from the existing library, existing and future population growth and available funding. A branch library envisioned by charrette participants near the intersection of Rupple Rd. and Wedington Dr. would seem to satisfy several of these criteria as it would be located approximately 5 miles from the existing downtown library, in a neighborhood with high growth potential and in relatively close proximity to nearly 15,000 current Fayetteville residents.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The Fayetteville Public School District is the oldest school district in the State of Arkansas. The district provides K–12 education with a current enrollment of over 9,000 students. In recent years, the district has seen a steady increase in enrollment that corresponded with the growth of Fayetteville's population. In an effort to accommodate this growth, three new middle schools have been constructed in the past 12 years and Fayetteville High School is currently undergoing a major expansion and renovation. Conversely Woodland Junior High School and Ramey Junior High School, both serving 8th and 9th grades, were built in 1960 and 1966 respectively, and new plans for junior high facilities have not surfaced in recent years.

The current school district forecasts for student growth do not point toward the need for any new buildings within the next 9 years. However, a continuation of Fayetteville's population growth to over 110,000 people in the next 20 years according to the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, would indicate the need for a new Junior High School before 2030. With much of this growth projected for the west side of Fayetteville, locating a future Junior High School within the Wedington Corridor seems reasonable.

COMMUNITY CENTER

During the Wedington Corridor charrette, one of the stronger messages that citizens articulated was the desire for a community space for an expanded set of users. This space was envisioned to be flexible for a wide variety of uses such as a community meeting space, a senior center, community programs, branch library and athletic activities. While citizens acknowledged some overlap of these potential uses with the adjacent Boys and Girls Club, which is a membership organization, they envisioned a building that was open without charge to the public. Capital and operations funding would need to be developed to make a community space viable.

FARMERS' MARKET

Multiple groups during the hands-on design workshop expressed strong support for a space that could be utilized as a farmers market and for other similar outdoor events. Existing farmers' markets located on the Downtown Square and at the Botanical Gardens are very popular with Fayetteville residents. Strong community support for these markets helped the Fayetteville Farmers Market win the 2012 American Farmland Trust's – Favorite Large Farmers' Market Award.

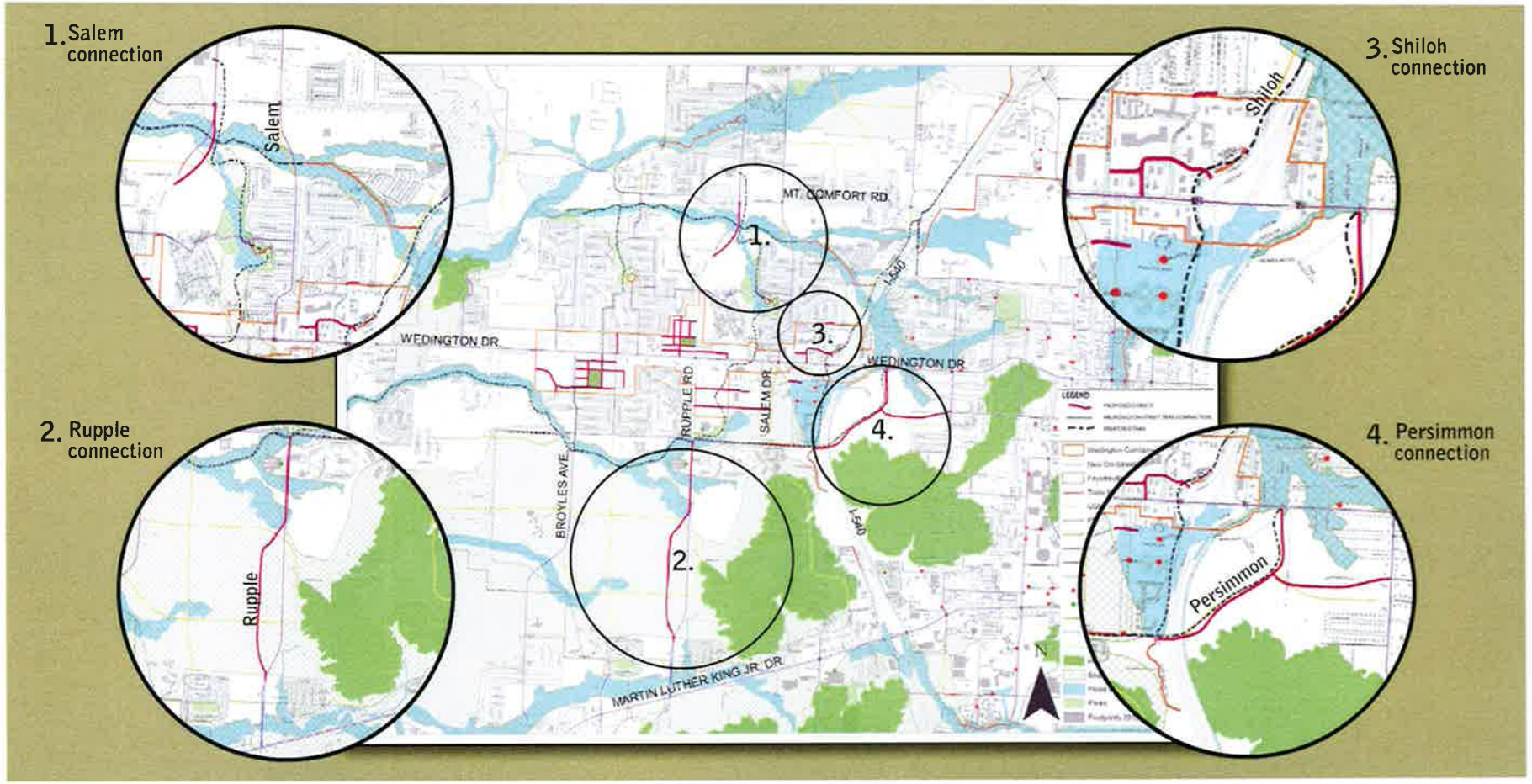
Some communities with vibrant farmers' markets are now supporting the concept of having smaller neighborhood scale farmers' markets that compliment the larger markets by adding convenience. These markets tend to have reduced number of vendors and are scheduled on days that do not conflict with larger centrally located markets, often on weekday afternoon/ evenings. Centrally locating this market near a walkable retail district could help anchor the heart of the Wedington neighborhood.

FUTURE STREET NETWORK COMPONENTS

City Plan 2030 goal six states that "We will grow a livable transportation network." One of the tools that the City utilizes to implement this goal is the adoption of a Master Transportation Plan. One component of this is the Master Street Plan map, on which the City identifies future collector and arterial street connections. These streets are the larger functional classification roadways that have higher traffic volumes. The alignments shown on the map are approximate and may change slightly due to physical constraints in the field. Typically, these streets are constructed through a combination of public and private means such as City bond issues and construction cost share agreements with the approval of development projects. The network of local and residential streets is regulated through the City's street connectivity ordinance that guides alignment and intersection spacing of these smaller streets.

In the Wedington Corridor analysis the design team focused on four important street extensions shown on the Master Street Plan in the Wedington corridor area: Salem Road, Shiloh Drive, Persimmon St. and Rupple Road. All of these connections are vital for future growth to occur in this area because the carrying capacity of Wedington Drive across I-540 is inherently limited even with future interchange improvements.

It is important to note that the connection between land use and streets is inseparable and complementary, with land use typically instructing the street function and design. A useful efficiency or sustainability metric for a street network, or individual street segment, is density or intensity of land use per linear foot of street. A lower ratio of linear street frontage per dwelling unit or square feet of commercial use is more efficient. Therefore, the efficient use of land is important for sustainable city services and future maintenance needs. Development projects that are proposed far out on the western fringe of the City will actually diminish the possibility of creating a complete neighborhood in the Wedington Corridor Plan area by siphoning off this future growth and reducing the overall development capacity of the area nearest to the City center.



TRAFFIC MODEL FROM NWARPC

As a part of this project the design team examined the future collector and arterial streets shown on the City's Master Street Plan for their impacts on traffic congestion at the Wedington Drive and I-540 interchange. This included the extension of Persimmon St. over I-540, the extension of Rupple Road south to Highway 62/MLK, the extension of Salem Drive north to Mt. Comfort Road and the extension of Shiloh Drive north to Porter Road.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC) maintains a Travel Demand Model for macro-level analysis of automobile traffic in Benton and Washington Counties. Streets that are proposed on the Wedington Corridor Transportation Connection Map can be inserted into this model to determine their impact on existing and projected traffic patterns. The design team requested that NWARPC model results for the future streets classified as Collector and Arterial. The model predicted the following:

- Connecting Rupple Road South to Hwy 62 would accommodate 5200 vehicles per day
- A new bridge across I-540 along Persimmon would accommodate 7900 vehicles per day and divert 2000 vehicles per day from the Wedington Bridge over I-540

All models are predictive by nature and the results are determined, in part, by the baseline assumptions that form the model's framework. The design team holds the opinion that the NWARPC's traffic model is very instructive for modeling the traffic pattern changes for street extensions in relation to the current built environment and for answering questions such as how many cars would travel this newly extended street if it was completed and opened tomorrow.

These types of transportation models are less accurate for modeling multiple future street connections if assumptions on future growth are based upon extrapolating past development and density patterns. The vast amount of data needed to run such a model can skew the final result significantly. For example, if the population growth projections are off significantly or other data inputs are inadequate the model may produce an incomplete or inaccurate projection. These challenges must be kept in mind when analyzing model results that combine street connectivity and future growth scenarios.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

This planning document serves as a vision statement of what the Wedington Corridor could eventually become. The achievement of this vision is dependent on developing a comprehensive strategy and timeline for implementing changes or improvements that the City can initiate. However, many of the concepts developed in the plan and shown on the illustrative build out plan are not directly controlled or directed by the City. For instance, highway improvements are ultimately determined by the AHTD and school locations and expansions are decided by the Fayetteville School District. However, the ability of the City to regulate and control development patterns creates numerous opportunities to direct growth and development towards achieving the four guiding principles of this plan. This is achieved by developing specific implementation action steps and timelines. These steps are separated into near term (0-5 years) and long term (5-20 years). The near term steps are primarily regulatory changes and planned or funded infrastructure improvements. The long term implementation steps will require capital investment and are largely focused on transforming the existing Wedington Drive from a five lane arterial roadway into a grand boulevard. Ultimately, the success of this plan is dependent upon the implementation of the following initiatives:

SHORT TERM STEPS:

1. WEDINGTON SPEED STUDY

The posted speed limit along Wedington Drive west of I-540 is predominately 45 mph. During the Wedington Corridor charrette many participants suggested that the posted speed limit within the corridor was too high for this area and intuitively deduced that high speed limits lead to accidents that are more severe. Also noted was that the high speed of traffic is detrimental to the safety and welfare of pedestrians and cyclists.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) requires that a speed study be conducted in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in order to adjust the posted speed limits on State highways. Guidance in the MUTCD suggests that the posted speed be set to within 5 mph of the speed at which 85% of the free flowing traffic in the study area is traveling. The manual further suggests that other subjective factors such as road characteristics, roadside development, pedestrian activity and the number of accidents may be considered when determining the posted speed. The City should conduct a speed study of this area to see if a speed reduction is possible. Then the City may elect to request that AHTD conduct a speed study along Wedington Drive in order to make a change in posted speed limit signage. If the speed study supports the existing posted speed limits, 45 mph, then the City should pursue physical design changes to the roadway, in conjunction with ATHD to encourage lower traffic speeds.

2. NEW I-540 INTERCHANGE

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) is planning to start construction on a new interchange at Wedington and I-540 by late 2014. This work will likely involve construction of a new bridge over I-540 along with changes to the existing freeway on and off ramps.

Preliminary AHTD conceptual plans for this interchange include additional lanes along Wedington Drive, elimination of one traffic signal on the east side of I-540, increased spacing of the traffic signals on the west side of I-540, and the addition of a two-lane free right turn "jug handle" on-ramp for west-bound Wedington traffic to enter north-bound I-540. AHTD is conducting traffic models for this preliminary intersection concept and have agreed to also model the proposed round-a-bout shown in the Wedington Corridor Illustrative Master Plan. Ultimately, the modeling results will determine the viability of the round-a-about envisioned for the west side of the I-540 and Wedington interchange. Regardless of the infrastructure improvements that are ultimately selected, it is imperative that the City work with AHTD to make sure that these improvements are in line with the City Plan 2030 goal of "growing a livable transportation network" that accommodates all users.

AHTD's recognition of the mapped on-street bicycle linkage shown on the Fayetteville Alternative Trails and Transportation (FATT) Plan along Wedington Drive over I-540 would normally facilitate the inclusion of bicycle lanes in addition to automatic pedestrian sidewalks on the new bridge. However the likely free right turn associated with the new two-lane "jug handle" I-540 on-ramp on the south side of the bridge makes safe sidewalks and bicycle lanes on the south side of the bridge very impractical. Instead a combined bicycle/pedestrian sidepath on the north side of the bridge (as shown on the illustrative master plan) would provide safe connections across I-540 for non-motorized users. City staff will continue to work with AHTD to incorporate safe and effective pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the new bridge.

3. PROPOSE ZONING CHANGES FOR THE CORE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AT THE INTERSECTION OF WEDINGTON DRIVE AND RUPPLE ROAD

City Plan 2030 goal number three calls for "making traditional town form the standard." Traditional town form is identified by an urban development pattern that prioritizes an interconnected street network with buildings that are placed near the street and parking located to the side or preferably the rear of the site. Currently, the Wedington Corridor is primarily zoned utilizing suburban commercial, office and multi-family zoning districts. These zoning districts prescribe the existing suburban development pattern seen today along the corridor and it has created unintended consequences that should not be repeated going forward if the goal is to create a walkable urban core in this area.

At the charrette the public overwhelmingly expressed a desire to see a walkable urban center develop at the intersection of Wedington Drive and Rupple Road. At this time, a number of sizable parcels of land are undeveloped northwest of this intersection. The illustrative plan envisions this area as a complete, compact and connected neighborhood with civic, residential and commercial uses. The utilization of the City's form based zoning districts will be essential to ensure that the development pattern prescribed here is walkable and urban. Form based zoning districts are also much more flexible in allowing for a variety of residential and commercial densities and intensities. This encourages a diverse mixture of building types, scales and uses that are not separated from each other but instead are co-mingled to create a unified, sustainable and cohesive whole.

4. AMEND THE FAYETTEVILLE ALTERNATIVE TRAILS AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND THE ENDURING GREEN NETWORK TO RECOGNIZE THE ILLUSTRATED TRAIL CROSSING OF WEDINGTON DRIVE

City Plan 2030 goal number five states that the City will "assemble an enduring green network." The Fayetteville Alternative Transportation and Trails Master Plan (FATT Plan) plays an integral role in achieving this goal because it is the most prevalent and useful tool for preserving linkages between nodes such as parks in the overall Enduring Green Network (EGN).

The FATT Plan, which consists of a guiding document and a map showing the existing and future trail and on-street bicycle alignments, is updated on a five year basis and is utilized by staff and elected officials to prioritize short, medium and long term trail expansion projects and on-street bicycle linkages. The FATT plan, by design, mirrors in many ways the EGN, both uniting green infrastructure with active transportation routes.

The EGN currently is shown intersecting Wedington Drive between Timberland Ln. and Salem Road. Unfortunately, this area has approved development plans that include the existing Walmart Neighborhood Market and a number of commercially developable out-lots making a trail connection within a greenway unlikely. The design team recommends moving the EGN to the west at the intersection of Wedington Drive and Golf Club Drive This is a natural location for a trail to cross Wedington Drive and link the Hamestring and Owl Creek watersheds.

The FATT plan is due for an update in 2015. Staff proposes an update of the FATT plan document that was first adopted in 2001 and amending the FATT plan and EGN maps to include the trail and open spaces illustrated in the Wedington Corridor Plan.

5. PRIORITIZE PARKLAND DEDICATION ACREAGES AND FUNDS THAT ARE COLLECTED IN THESE QUADRANTS TO ACQUIRE THE PARKLANDS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WEDINGTON CORRIDOR PLAN

When residential development occurs in the City, a portion of land or money in lieu is collected for the acquisition and/or development of parklands. Currently, the formula is 0.23 acres for each single family residential unit and .014 acres per multi-family residential unit. At the time of development, Parks staff makes a recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on whether a land dedication or money in-lieu is more appropriate given the existing facilities in the area and other criteria as adopted by the Parks and Recreation Board. The money in-lieu option allows developers to pay a one time fee of $920 for a single family home or $560 for a multi-family unit. This is based upon a land value estimate in 2012 of $40,000 per acre. The money collected is saved in escrow for subsequent acquisition and/or development of parkland within the quadrant that the development occurred. These funds are utilized to create larger neighborhood oriented parks that benefit a broader area than a single residential subdivision.

In the Wedington Illustrative Plan the design team identified potential locations for two new parks. The first is a central square space that is envisioned for a new development that would occur directly northwest of the intersection of Rupple Road and Wedington Drive. This small park could serve as a central green for a complete, compact and connected development node in this location. The park illustrated here is approximately 2 acres and would require a land match equal to 83 single family homes or 224 multi-family units or the approximate equivalent of $80,000. The second park is shown between 46th St. and Broyles Ave. and is approximately 3.8 acres and would require a land match of 158 single family homes or 224 multi-family units or the approximate equivalent of $152,000.

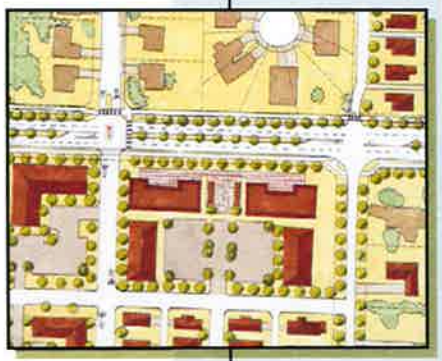
As the Wedington corridor continues to develop the City's Parks and Recreation staff should identify suitable locations that would serve the identified needs and goals of the plan for future strategic or financial planning processes. A combination of funding or land dedication from multiple public and private sources will likely be needed in order to realize the parkland illustrated in the Wedington Corridor Plan.

6. DEVELOP A CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT DESIGN PROCESS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE OR RURAL AREAS

The Wedington corridor area of influence contains a lot of undeveloped and rural lands held in large parcels. These lands will be increasingly pressured to be developed into low density residential uses. Unfortunately, this type of residential subdivision development typically happens in a leap frog fashion that is determined by market forces. The resulting haphazard development pattern is not well thought out and is unsustainable given the vast amount of resources required to construct and maintain it. The outcome is development that does not pay for itself given the City's investment in services, maintenance and infrastructure such as streets, water and sewer lines, fire and police services, etc. in perpetuity. Therefore, it is incumbent upon appointed and elected officials to adhere to the City Plan goals of discouraging suburban sprawl and prioritizing appropriate infill and revitalization.

A conservation design for neighborhood development is an appropriate tool to utilize for areas of the City that are designated as Enduring Green Network and possibly for tracts of rural lands on the City's fringe. City staff should research the possibility of a conservation development ordinance, which would include a process for identifying appropriate lands and the creation of efficient and equitable conservation development guidelines.

7. DEVELOP AN ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WEDINGTON DRIVE



City Plan 2030 calls for growing a "livable transportation network" that is safe and efficient for all users. An integral component of a livable transportation network is the ability to control the access onto arterial and collector roadways in order to maintain their through traffic capacity while making it safe and accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. This can be accomplished through the development of an access management plan for major roadways.

An access management plan is used to regulate intersections, driveways and median openings to a roadway. The objective is to allow access to land uses while maintaining roadway safety and mobility. In order to implement the boulevard cross-sections shown in the illustrative plan, an access management plan will be necessary and must be agreed upon by the City of Fayetteville and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD). This should occur prior to the design phase of any proposed roadway improvements.

The general design framework provided in the access management plan will address the efficient spacing of local, collector and arterial street intersections. Driveway locations and access to parcels fronting Wedington Drive should be minimized with access to intersecting side and parallel streets required. The implementation of a landscaped median will require a thorough analysis of the existing and future intersections, left turn lanes and parallel slip lanes. Special consideration should be paid to pedestrian and bicycle comfort and safety especially at intersections and mid-block crossings.

The timing of creating an access management plan will depend on the AHTD and the City's priorities for this project. At a minimum a near-term partial analysis will be needed for the reconfiguration of the Wedington Drive / I-540 interchange. Due to the large amount of undeveloped land that exists along the corridor, the sooner an access management plan happens the better. Ultimately, the access restrictions to Wedington Drive imposed upon these undeveloped lands will positively influence the site designs and street networks needed to serve these developments while preserving the throughway capacity of the roadway.

LONG TERM STEPS:

1. REDEVELOP AND RENAME WEDINGTON DRIVE AS WEDINGTON PARKWAY

Public input during the charrette repeatedly recommended that the five lane cross section of Wedington Drive should be redesigned as a boulevard cross section. The design team followed through with this suggestion when developing the illustrative plan and developed a design that is flexible enough to endure changes as existing or future conditions warrant. The Wedington Parkway design envisioned in the illustrative plan is in line with City Plan 2030 goal number three of "growing a livable transportation network."

The most important aspect of completing the vision of a redesigned Wedington Parkway is to secure Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) approval and to find the necessary funding. Previously, the AHTD has partnered with Fayetteville and other cities to transform portions of State Highways into more attractive, safe and efficient roadways through the development of access management plans. Local examples include Garland Avenue (Highway 112) and Crossover Road (Highway 265) in Fayetteville. A similar approach is needed to correct some of the issues noted along Wedington Drive that have been mentioned previously in this plan.

To this end, it is imperative that the City work with AHTD to develop an I-540 interchange design that is safe and efficient for all users. This will most likely be accomplished in the next 5 years, but the relatively recent widening improvements to Wedington Drive will likely push additional roadway improvements to the corridor west of I-540 to a second phase.

The City could potentially fund improvements and the reconstruction of this roadway through a street bond issue, the City's Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funds, AHTD or Federal monies or a combination of any of the above. Due to the accelerated growth in this area, preparations and access management planning should start in the near term with the final completion of this project happening in a 5-20 year timeline. At the completion of this project the roadway should be renamed Wedington Boulevard or Parkway.

V. CONCLUSION

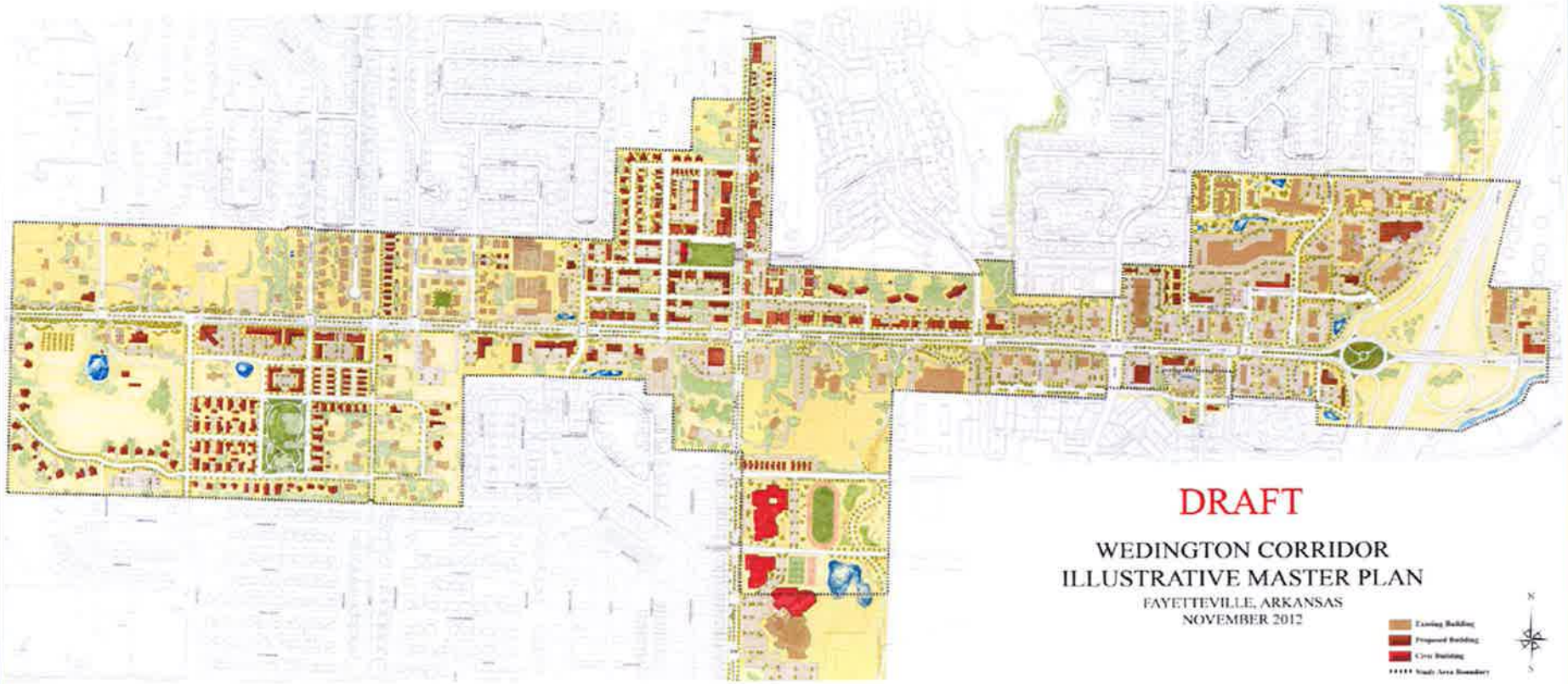
The Wedington Corridor plan document and illustrative map provide a vision and a framework for transforming and taming an arterial roadway and interstate interchange while creating a more livable neighborhood that is complete and connected. This vision is based on input expressed by the community that resulted in the creation of four main guiding principles: redefining Wedington Drive as Wedington Parkway; creating the heart of the neighborhood at Wedington Drive and Rupple Road; supporting an active transportation network; and designating a greenway to connect the Hamestring and Owl Creek watersheds.

The vision document provides a timeline for developing policies and programs. Wedington Drive has the potential to be transformed from a five lane arterial roadway, with all of its attendant problems such as high speed, congestion and dangerous curb cuts, into a beautiful slow speed multi-modal boulevard. The changes proposed for this street cross-section are envisioned to transform the pattern of development from a suburban development model with large front setbacks and conspicuous parking to an urban development pattern with buildings set at the street edge with side or rear parking. This urban pattern is crucial to creating the "heart" of the neighborhood at Wedington Dr. and Rupple Rd. as shown in the illustrative plan. The inclusion and promotion of active and public transportation is evident throughout the plan and is vital to fulfill the functionality of the urban design. Planned greenway connections provide for the preservation of important riparian areas, green spaces and viewsheds that are critical for creating an enduring green network that links people and commerce through the natural environment.

The implementation of the plan will require adherence to the four guiding principles and the cooperation of multiple sectors, public and private, over a period of years. The opportunities for this corridor to become a safe, inviting and well designed neighborhood are limitless and the incremental nature of the development process should not overshadow the long term success of realizing the vision of the Wedington Corridor Plan.

VI. APPENDICES

A: WEDINGTON CORRIDOR ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN



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C: WORK-IN-PROGRESS AND OPEN HOUSE SURVEYS

Do you think the plan is on the right track
YES – 89%
NO - 11%

Are there any elements of your vision for the future of the Wedington Corridor that we may have missed?

- Public transit and alternative transportation connection potential needs to be embraced by the "drivers". Perhaps build it and they will come will cause a cultural change.
- Trolley system along Wedington Drive.
- Area needs an additional Fire Station
- A nice park and green space on Wedington that can be easily accessed by kids from both the north and the south side and maybe an elevated pedestrian crossing over Wedington that provides access. Since 20% of Fayetteville's population lives here it seems like a large city pool/ park/playground/skate ramps would be well used.
- Some elements of the illustrative plan may cause more flooding.
- Owl Creek area near the School could be made into a water park.
- Pedestrian bridges over Wedington instead of crosswalks.