Chapter Six
Redevelopment Concept

Section One – Preferred Redevelopment Alternative

At the second public meeting, four redevelopment alternatives were presented to gather input and preferences for the redevelopment of the corridor. These alternatives can be reviewed in **Appendix A**. With public input, the Task Force prepared a preferred redevelopment alternative comprised of components from the four original alternatives to express an ideal development style for the City of Park Hills. This ideal development style is meant to guide Park Hills toward achieving their vision for the future. The preferred alternative was then presented at the final public meeting on September 10, 2009, and modifications were made as necessary for the final version presented here as part of this plan.

To help the community visualize how the corridor may redevelop over time, the preferred redevelopment alternative has been divided into two phases. The first phase, as seen in *Map 6.1*, helps to prioritize some of the first steps of implementation and prioritize where the City should focus its attention during the first several years of implementation. The second phase, as seen in *Map 6.2*, depicts how the entire corridor may appear after completion of all recommended development.

The Phase One and Phase Two drawings which follow are not intended to be site plans. Rather, these images are intended to help the community visualize they type of development they seek for the future. As development actually occurs, the finished development will take shape only after more detailed site and engineering design.

The first portion of **Section 1** discusses the overarching themes that are seen throughout the entire corridor. The second portion of **Section 1** describes the details of the preferred redevelopment alternative in terms of the South Area, the Core Area, and the North Area.

The preferred redevelopment alternative prepared by the Park Hills Dixie Study Task Force focuses includes recommendations for the physical redevelopment of the landscape, improvements to mobility, changes in land use, improvements to community facilities, and awareness and improvements in green infrastructure practices.

Overarching Themes

Median

In 2006 the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) in partnership with NKAPC prepared and adopted *The Dixie Fix* study, an overarching plan for the Dixie Highway corridor throughout Kenton County. The plan proposed several recommendations for the thoroughfare, including suggestions for implementation of access management controls where appropriate. Access management is defined as a formal, structured program to coordinate and maintain the safe and efficient use of the arterial street system, while providing necessary vehicular access to adjacent lands. In other words, creating a safer roadway by managing where and how adjoining property is accessed.

Figure 6.1
Absence of curbs and sidewalks along Dixie Highway

Non-traversable medians constitute a primary cornerstone of effective access management plans. These medians limit the location of left turns to strategic locations along the roadway, thus eliminating traffic conflict points. Specific steps are necessary to create the landscaped median and dedicated turn bays along the Park Hills section of Dixie Highway. The current roadway consists of four travel lanes, two northbound and two southbound, that are ten feet in width. Right-of-way widths along the corridor range from 64 to 70 feet, with an average of 66 feet. *The Dixie Fix* study recommends expanding the right of way to 70 feet throughout the corridor to accommodate the proposed roadway changes and added facilities. The study also recommends reducing the number of travel lanes from four to two and creating a landscaped center median that will be approximately 12 feet in width. This median will limit the currently unrestricted left turn movement to identified points along the route.

Currently access is unlimited on the northern side of the roadway due to the absence of a defined curb

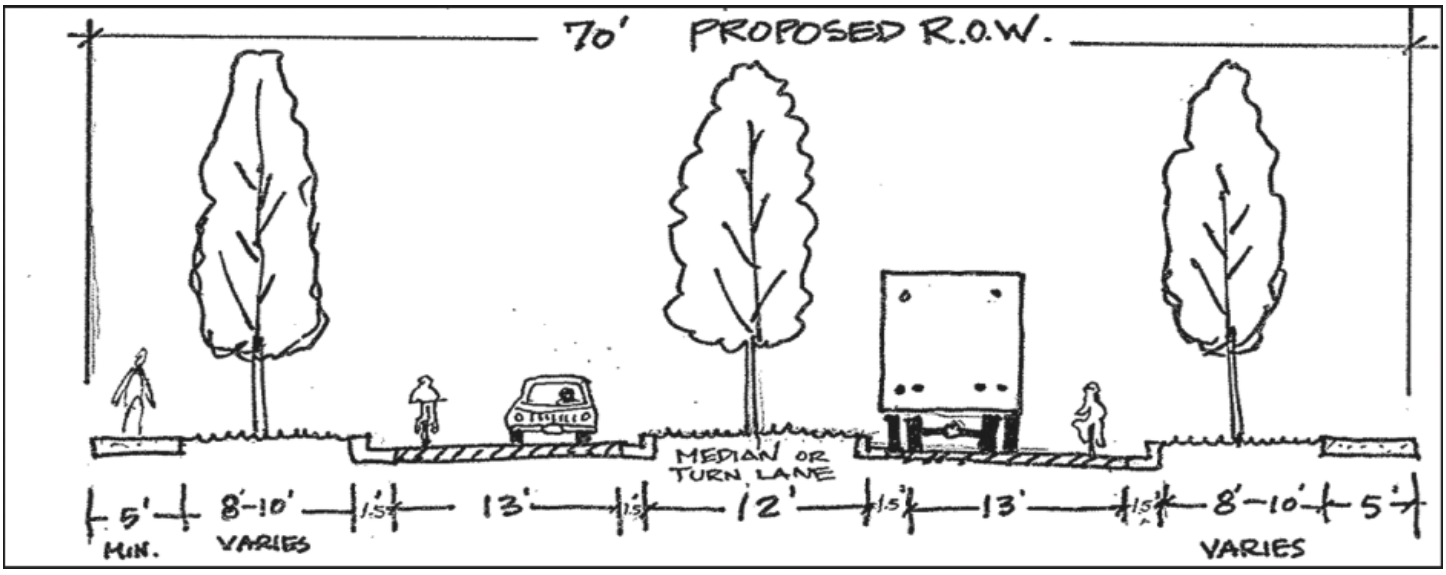

Figure 6.2
Recommended Dixie Highway cross-section in Park Hills

NKAPC
Northern Kentucky
Area Planning Commission

Source: LINKGIS Date: September 2009

Legend

- Existing Structure
- New Structure
- Plaza Area
- Pedestrian Path / Sidewalk
- Signature Building / Feature
- City Gateway Feature
- Transit Stop / Shelter
- Intersection Gateway Feature
- Added tree or vegetation buffer
- Study Area Boundary
- Park Hills City Boundary

PARK HILLS
Dixie Study

Preferred Alternative - Phase 1

Map 6.1

NKAPC
Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission

Source: LINKGIS Date: September 2009

Legend

- Existing Structure
- New Structure
- Plaza Area
- Pedestrian Path / Sidewalk
- Signature Building / Feature
- City Gateway Feature
- Transit Stop / Shelter
- Intersection Gateway Feature
- Added tree or vegetation buffer
- Study Area Boundary
- Park Hills City Boundary

PARK HILLS
Dixie Study

Preferred Alternative - Phase 2

Map 6.2

to separate parking and travel lanes. The lack of a defined curb allows vehicles to enter and exit the primary roadway in a random manner and may create several potential conflict points for drivers travelling on the thoroughfare. Unlimited access also negates many of the positive aspects of median construction because some properties may not have left turn access. Driveway and median construction is recommended for properties between the Zachary Lauren Custom Design jeweler and the Fort Mitchell Garage (*Figure 6.1*).

In addition to increasing safety along the roadway, the landscaped median will also serve to beautify the corridor and provide added protection to pedestrians. *Figure 6.2* shows the proposed cross-section of Dixie Highway in Park Hills from *The Dixie Fix* study. The proposed 12 foot median will provide space for tree and landscaping. The space will also serve as a pedestrian sanctuary by allowing a space to wait between the travel lanes for vehicular traffic to pass when crossing Dixie Highway.

Specific recommendations for Phase One of the Preferred Redevelopment Alternative include construction of a raised non-traversable vegetated landscaped median throughout the study area. The median should be 12 feet in width and include street trees that provide adequate visibility for motorists. A cross section view of the median from The Dixie Fix study is provided in *Figure 6.2*. The potential exists that instead of a raised median that this could be depressed as part of the storm water management efforts for the area. (See Section 2 of this Chapter for further details)

The non-traversable landscaped median will change to an auxiliary left turn lane at full access points where left turns are permitted into properties. Phases One and Two of the preferred alternative show auxiliary left turn lanes as a darker grey lane bordered by yellow striping (*Maps 6.1* and *6.2*). Turn lanes should be engineered to provide adequate stacking space for left turning vehicles and they should also offer sufficient space for vehicles that are turning left from properties to wait before joining the flow of traffic. Recommendations concerning the median should be started in Phase One and carried forward into Phase Two of the preferred alternative.

Parking

Parking has historically been an issue discussed by commercial property owners along Dixie Highway. A parking study (Interim Report – Chapter 6: Dixie Highway Corridor Parking Survey) was conducted in conjunction with this small area study to address the issue and determine plans for future parking needs. The study found that while some specific lots operated at or very close to capacity, a vast majority of parking areas along the corridor were more than adequate for parking demand. Additionally, where some areas experienced high parking volumes, immediately adjacent parking lots were either completely or nearly empty. Differences in parking volumes suggest that congregating parking through the elimination of boundaries between lots could allow for more efficient parking scenarios. Both Phase One and Two of the preferred alternative recommend implementing congregated parking areas to allow for greater land utilization for buildings and other uses and to support parking on the smallest area possible.

In conjunction with eliminating boundaries between existing parking lots, the study also recommends mixing land uses and attempting to find a mix wherein parking needs vary during the time of day. Mixing uses in this way could allow for more efficient use of congregated parking areas by alternating business hours between businesses when parking demands are high. An example of this scenario could be a doctor's office that typically needs more parking during daytime hours, which would use the same lot as a restaurant that requires more parking in the evenings and on weekends.

Along with better serving a mix of uses, congregated parking has other advantages as well. More compact and strategically placed parking areas and buildings tend to make an area friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists because these users do not have to cross vast parking lots to get to a destination. Congregating parking areas can also encourage transit ridership. By limiting the amount of parking and making an area more walkable more users could choose to take public transportation to the redeveloped area.

This study specifically recommends reducing the amount of required parking to 3.2 spaces per

1,000 square feet of commercial space. While this recommendation is a reduction of the number of parking spaces currently required by the *Park Hills Zoning Ordinance – Article XIII Off-Street Parking Regulations*, it maintains the parking ratios currently found within the corridor. It should also be noted that the preferred alternative does retain limited amounts of extra land area immediately adjacent to identified parking areas, which could be used for parking expansion if deemed necessary in the future.

On-street parking is another parking option and can be used to make an area more pedestrian friendly by calming traffic on a roadway. The presence of parallel parking spots requires a driver on the thoroughfare to be more mindful of vehicles entering and exiting the roadway. No on-street parking is recommended on Dixie Highway because of potential high vehicle volumes and the need to maintain traffic flow on the thoroughfare. On-street parking is, however, recommended along the roadway within the redeveloped area in both Phase One and Two. These areas will encounter lower traffic volumes than the primary highway and should be designed to include on-street parking. Other traffic calming devices such as raised crosswalks, textured pavement, center islands, and mid-block curb extensions are recommended, where feasible, to increase pedestrian safety.

Walkability and Bikeability

Accommodations for cyclists and pedestrians are growing in importance in today's redevelopment strategies. Complete streets, or streets that have capacity for motorists as well as transit riders, cyclists, and pedestrians, work toward solving several problems through a more comprehensive design. Issues such as congestion relief, safety and accessibility can be addressed through inclusionary facilities.

Not only does the inclusion of bike and pedestrian facilities on a street work toward reducing the reliance on the personal motor vehicle, they also promote a healthier lifestyle. Sidewalks provide pedestrians safe havens to walk and exercise, and bike lanes offer cyclists options other than riding in vehicular travel lanes or on the sidewalk. The provision of these facilities gives people the ability to choose more active alternatives rather than riding in a vehicle. These facilities also provide individuals who cannot drive the opportunity to utilize the redeveloped area, through multimodal transportation options.

Pedestrian facilities in the study area today are solely limited to Dixie Highway. While sidewalks are provided on both sides of Dixie Highway almost entirely between St. James Avenue and St. Joseph Lane they are only present on the south side of the roadway from St. Joseph Lane to the Northern Kentucky University Covington Campus driveway. Additionally, the sidewalks in the northern section of the study area directly abut the roadway, i.e. there is no treelawn (*Figure 6.3*). Treelawns are important safety elements and when designed properly provide a natural barrier between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. *Figure 6.2* shows *The Dixie Fix* study cross section recommendation of separating sidewalks and travel lanes with a tree-lined treelawn that ranges from 8 to 10 feet in width.

The Dixie Fix study also recommends implementing bicycle lanes on Dixie Highway at the time of roadway reconfiguration. The cross section defines a wider vehicular travel lane with the opportunity to stripe the roadway with dedicated bike lanes that would provide a safe travel lane for cyclists and alert motorists that bicycles are likely in the vicinity. While the provision of bike lanes is needed in both directions, it is especially important for southbound traffic, as cyclists will

Figure 6.3
Lack of treelawn along Dixie Highway

experience significantly slower speeds while climbing the Dixie Highway hill.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be included in the redeveloped area in addition to the Dixie Highway corridor recommendations. Phase One and Two of the Preferred Redevelopment Alternative display numerous sidewalks crossing the design area, which could accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists in the form of shared-use paths. It should also be noted that shared-use paths are recommended to extend from Dixie Highway to Old State Road along the new vehicular connection and points near CCHS and connecting to Alhambra Court. These paths will provide higher levels of connectivity from Dixie Highway, across the redeveloped area and into the existing neighborhood. Bike parking facilities near new businesses and residential areas are also recommended to be included in any redevelopment scenario.

With an increase in bicycle facilities throughout the corridor and a desire to make Park Hills a bike/pedestrian friendly community, the introduction of a bicycling center may be desired for this area. A center of this type would be served by more secure bicycle parking, shower facilities, a clothes-changing area, and storage. This type of center could also be combined with a transit stop, making the area a prime location for multimodal connectivity throughout the Greater Cincinnati region. Park Hills' close proximity to Devou Park would then be better positioned to serve as a key entryway for bike and pedestrian traffic into the park.

Finally, sidewalks should be added to the following neighborhood streets: Arlington Road, South Arlington Road, and St. Joseph Lane. New facilities along these thoroughfares would provide neighborhood access to the core area in the form of safe walkways for pedestrians. These types of streets, which are residential local streets, do not warrant dedicated bicycle lanes.

Lighting

Lighting throughout the corridor today is predominantly provided by standard cobra head lights attached to utility poles (*Figure 6.4*). *Figure 6.5* demonstrates more decorative lighting on top of the Park Hills monuments at the Arlington Road and Dixie Highway intersection.

New lighting in the corridor should be compatible with the historical character of the area. While *Figure 6.5* is historical in nature, some of its features are problematic. The historical fixture emits omnidirectional light that can glare onto nearby buildings. Care should be taken to choose fixtures that limit the amount of light that spills onto adjacent buildings, especially in areas where buildings are in close proximity to roadways. The chosen fixtures should adequately light the roadway and sidewalk areas while limiting glare onto adjoining buildings. Additionally, it is recommended that full cut-off lighting fixtures be installed to limit the amount of light that emits above the fixture.

Figure 6.4
Cobra head illumination

Figure 6.5
Decorative lighting

Character

Park Hills is one of Northern Kentucky's most unique residential neighborhoods in terms of architectural style and character. Homes in the area were predominantly built in the first half of the 20th Century and are characterized by Tudor and Craftsman styles as demonstrated in *Figure 6.6*. These neighborhoods, which most characteristically define the architecture and essence of Park Hills, are located on residential streets far from the primary thoroughfare of Dixie Highway. Unfortunately, the location of the these identifying neighborhoods away from Dixie Highway mean a majority of the City's visitors likely do not experience the historic character of Park Hills. The Task Force expressed an interest in bringing this character to the Dixie Highway corridor as stated in the goals and objectives for this study.

The identifying characteristics of structures found in Park Hills neighborhoods do not currently extend to the Dixie Highway corridor. The corridor itself is characterized by random styles that do not promote a uniform look or feel as demonstrated in *Figure 6.7*. Historically the corridor was developed with little regard for the architectural style of neighboring structures, which provides for the diverse range of building types in the 0.6 mile length of the study area.

This study recommends implementing corridor-wide design standards for new structures as redevelopment takes place. These standards will work toward creating overarching design elements that tie the corridor together, effectively creating a sense of place along the

Figure 6.7
Various residential architectural styles found within Park Hills

FIGURE 6.7
VARIOUS COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES ALONG DIXIE HIGHWAY

Dixie Highway corridor in Park Hills. Furthermore, these standards should incorporate architectural characteristics from structures in the Park Hills neighborhoods. Transferring identifying attributes from neighborhoods to redeveloped areas will move the entire City toward having an overall architectural style and a greater sense of place. More specific details about design standards can be found in **Chapter 7**.

Details of Preferred Redevelopment Alternative

The descriptions on the following pages present information on each of the three sections (North, Core and South areas) in order to aid in the understanding of how each piece of the Dixie Highway corridor may redevelop in the future. Like the overall plan presented previously, information on each of these sections is described in two phases of development.

South Area

Phase One

- Access and parking will be improved via installation of a landscaped median along the majority of the Dixie Highway corridor through the City of Park Hills.
- There is a gateway opportunity at the vacant lot located on the corner of St. James Avenue and Dixie Highway. This gateway could take the form of a bus stop/pull off (replica of the trolley stations Park Hills is recognized for), landscaping or signage.
- A land swap between a portion of the parking in front of Covington Catholic High School and a piece of vacant land currently located behind the existing commercial development would provide open, developable land directly on Dixie Highway. There is however, a potential issue with stromwater management on the currently vacant site.
- The current right in right out access for Covington Catholic High School will be closed and access rerouted to the existing traffic signal at St. Joseph's Lane.
- New development will begin to occur at the intersection of St. Joseph's Lane. This area is intended to become a "gateway" to the Core Area.

Phase Two

- Development will continue at the intersection of St. Joseph Lane and Dixie Highway further promoting this area as a gateway to the Core Area.
- The new open space in front of Covington Catholic High School created by the potential land swap provides the opportunity for new development to begin occurring in this area. However, it is important to note that this development should not become the focus of development activities along the corridor; rather, it should only be promoted after the Core Area has been developed.

South Area Phase One

South Area Phase Two

Core Area

Phase One

- A full non-signalized access point is added mid-block to help with the consolidation of access points along the corridor.
- Parking and access is consolidated through the implementation of many *Dixie Fix* study recommendations.
- Many existing structures will remain with façade improvements.
- New development will be located at the intersection of St. Joseph Lane to help promote this area as a gateway to the primary Core Area.
- A new access road to the first phase of development will connect St. Joseph Lane to Arlington Road.
- The bulk of new development in Phase One will occur behind existing structures and adjacent to the new road which connects St. Joseph Lane to Arlington Road. This new development will include a public space which could be closed off to vehicular access for special events.
- The new development area will also include a pocket of multi family residential structures which will act to buffer the existing single family residential from the new mixed use development.
- Vehicular access will be created from the back of the new development to Old State Road. This access will help to better connect the existing neighborhood and residents to the center of their community.
- The intersections at Arlington Road and South Arlington Road will be realigned to alleviate traffic incidents in this area.
- The southeastern side of Dixie Highway will begin to see some cohesive development This development could take the form of townhomes or small office type development with parking behind and access from St. Joseph Lane and South Arlington Road.
- A pedestrian connection across Dixie Highway will be constructed mid-block to help promote a more pedestrian friendly environment
- A new public space will be constructed at the intersection of St. Joseph Lane and Dixie Highway.

Phase Two

- Redevelopment of existing buildings into new, more cohesive development will take place in Phase Two. This redevelopment will include a pedestrian mall which will help connect Dixie Highway (and those one the southeastern side of Dixie Highway) to the public gathering space located within the Phase One portion of the preferred redevelopment alternative.

Core Area Phase One

Core Area Phase Two

North Area

Phase One

- Consolidation of parking and access is the first priority in this portion of the corridor.
- Most existing structures are to remain within this phase of redevelopment.
- *The Dixie Fix* study calls for the realignment of the curve into Covington, and phase one of this study follows that recommendation.
- With the realignment of the curve, a street-wall or landscaping should be included at a gateway into the north end of Park Hills.
- The potential exists to utilize a section of abandoned roadway that runs directly behind the Fort Mitchell Garage up the hill toward Old State Road as either a road and/or pedestrian access.

Phase Two

- Over time, new structures set closer to Dixie Highway will help to promote general cohesiveness and walkability throughout this portion of the corridor.
- Realignment and shifting of the curve of Dixie Highway, per recommendation from *The Dixie Fix* study will provide improved safety.

North Area Phase One

North Area Phase Two