



# Appendix C

# ERLANGER KENTUCKY



**2012 Community Visioning Initiative**  
Community Based Projects  
Ball State University  
Muncie, Indiana



# ERLANGER

KENTUCKY



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Figure 1: Rendering of proposed restaurant in new town center

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# INTRODUCTION



## History of CBP

Community Based Projects (CBP) was informally established in 1966 with the admission of the first class at the College of Architecture and Planning (CAP). From the beginning, students were involved at Ball State University with projects in Muncie, Indiana, and other communities as part of their academic studios.

In 1969, with its participation in the first Indianapolis Inner City Study, the college established the Urban Design Studio, the forerunner of CBP. The program was formally renamed in 1979 to better reflect its wide variety of activities, which have ranged from environmental-impact and growth-management studies to neighborhood revitalization and planning strategies for downtown development.

Since 1969, we have been involved in more than 100 Indiana communities, ranging from one-day charrette workshops to a 22-month study. We have participated in national R/UDAT—Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams—studies in Lafayette and Anderson and state-sponsored White River Park P/DAT—Public/Design Assistance Teams—and Indiana Commission for Higher Education public education programs. But we primarily have been involved with hundreds of local governmental, civic, and service organizations.

In each project, the desires and needs of the community are interfaced with the educational philosophy and goals of the program. Since 1969, we have been directly or indirectly responsible for approximately \$120 million in public capital improvements throughout Indiana and countless dollars of related private investments.

The primary goal of the CBP Program is to provide the CAP students with a series of viable learning experiences in problem recognition, planning and design, citizen participation methods, etc. This goal is based on the philosophy/assumption that a more realistic and pragmatic understanding of these activities can best be gained by students through their participation in a community-based, problem focused, hands-on format.



Figure 2: Community stakeholders discussing project

The second goal of the program is to provide public education in environmental planning and design to both the public and private sectors so that they may more effectively participate in the decision-making process, which is an integral component of creative problem-solving. This goal is based on the philosophy/assumption that an informed and educated public is the key to an effective participatory format for all community design, planning, and development efforts. The development of communication techniques geared to increasing public awareness and facilitating a "take part" process is an important foundation of the program.



Figure 3: Ball State teaming touring site



Figure 4: Site orientation meeting

The third goal of the program is to provide public service in the form of technical assistance to the public sector in community planning and design matters. This goal is based on the assumption that responsible decisions concerning the future of the community's physical environment must be based on accurate, unbiased information and objective comparisons of alternative strategies and proposals.



Figure 5: BSU team developing ideas

The fourth goal of the program is to promote research activities that focus on the widest range of Indiana's communities. This research concerns itself with the methodologies employed in the analysis, programming, planning, and design (synthesis) of urban and rural communities and the teaching of professionals who will be involved with them.

# UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Erlanger is the “Friendship City” of Kentucky. It is located in the tri-state area that includes Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. This Northern Kentucky city is about ten miles outside of Cincinnati and is known for the connections to neighboring areas in the metropolitan region.

Transportation systems have a major influence on life in Erlanger. The interstate highways, nearby international airport, and freight rail line going through the city all make it easy to leave Erlanger. Surrounding communities serve as employment centers and contain many commercial, entertainment and recreational amenities resulting in Erlanger being a bedroom community.

The diagram below illustrates the major transportation systems and the impact of the interstate highway system and the large amount of land consumed for this network, especially for the 275 / 75 intersection.



Figure 6: Erlanger's regional context

As seen by the diagram, the outline of the city jurisdiction makes a very unique shape. There would seem to be very different districts within the city-based transportation systems.



Figure 7: Project site context

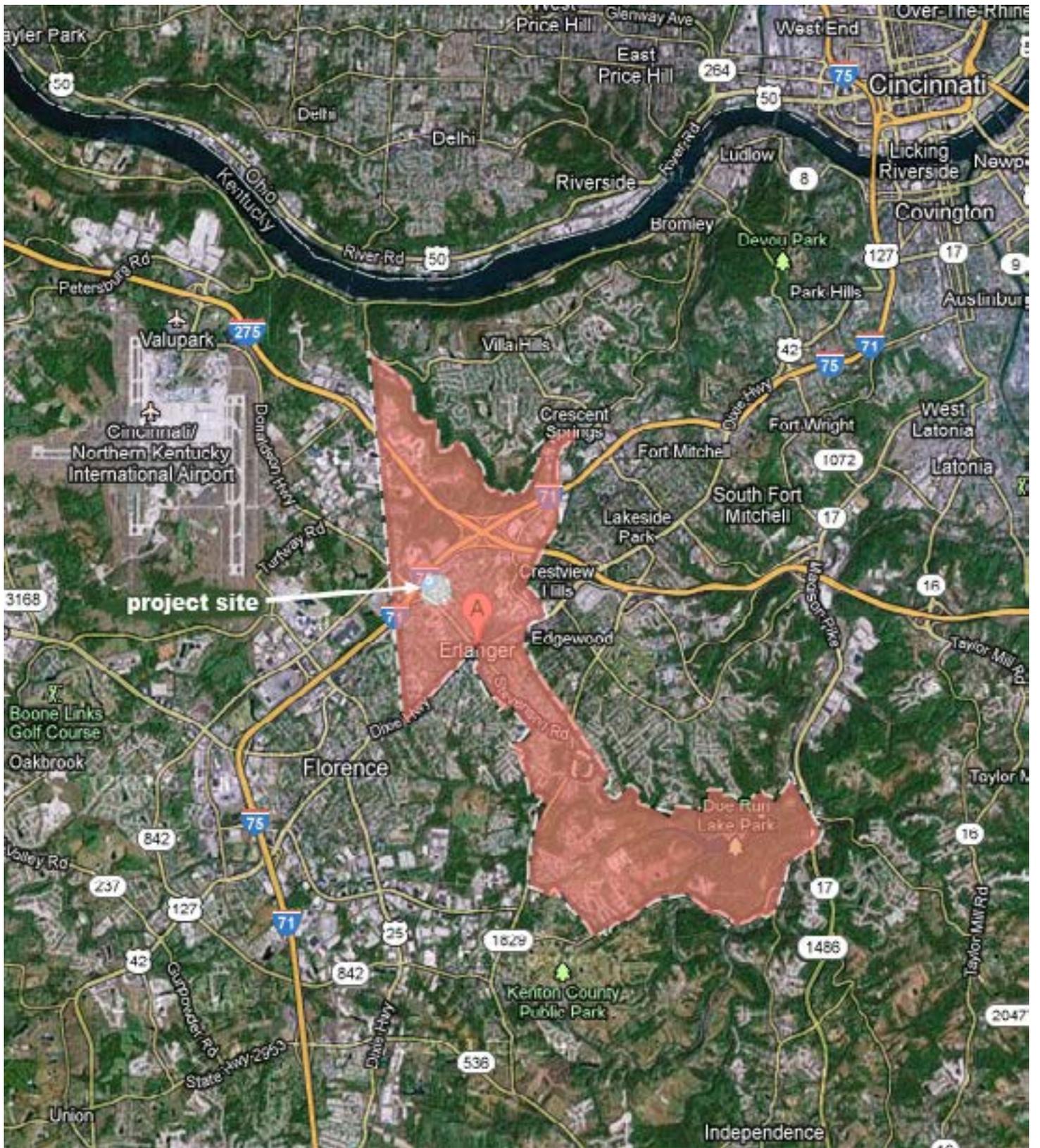


Figure 8: Erlanger and surroundings

# PROJECT AREA

The diagram below illustrates some of the critical influence of the project area. The team began the process of conceptualizing the redevelopment based on these strong contextual influences.

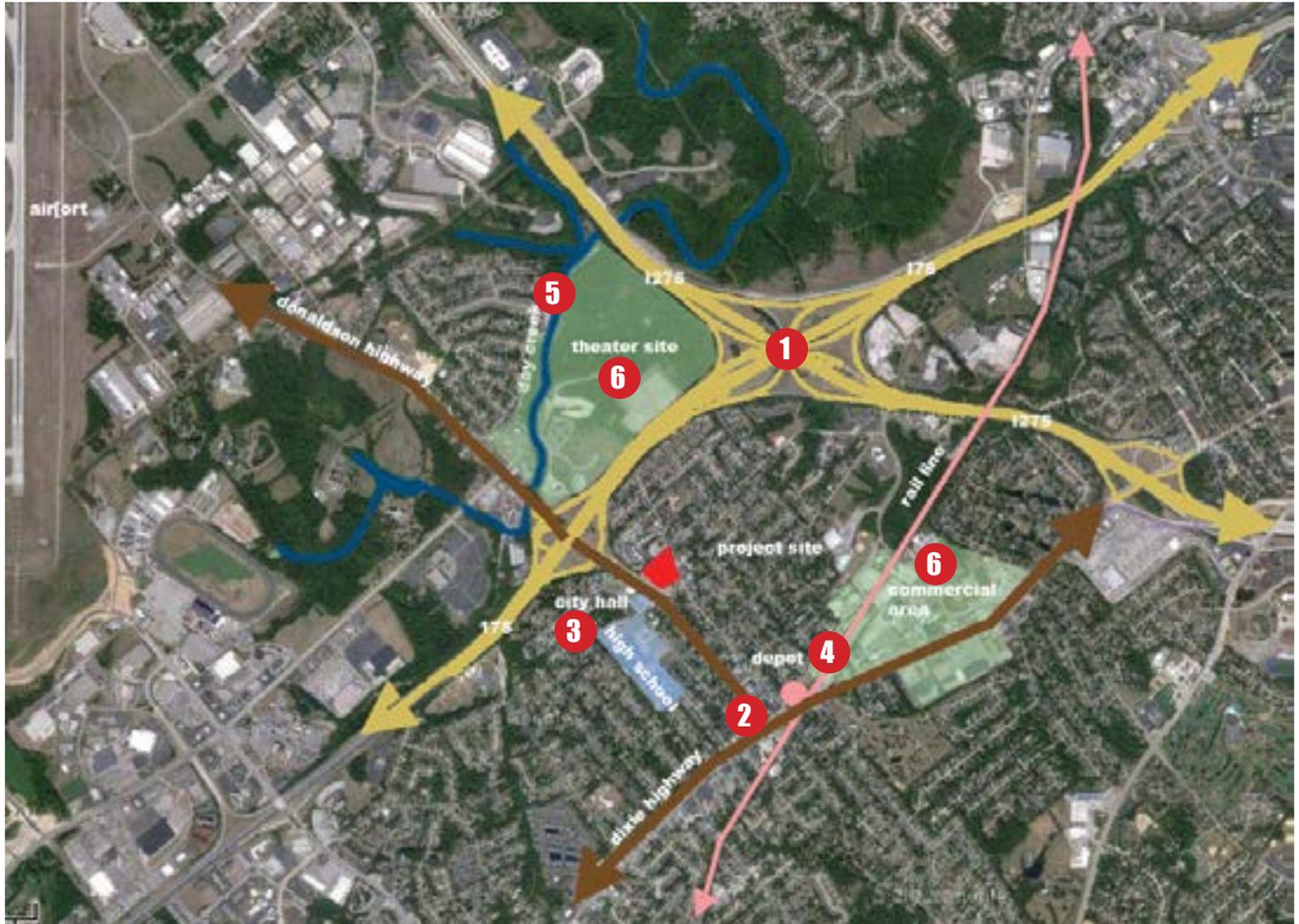


Figure 9: Project site and context

## 1 Interstate 275 / Interstate 75

The interstate system provides two primary intersections for Erlanger. The Dixie Highway exchange with Interstate 275 on the east side and the Donaldson exchange on the west side provide easy access to this network. Because they are both the first exits after the interchange of Interstate 275 and Interstate 75, it is somewhat of a challenge to negotiate the exit if you are not familiar with the appropriate lane designations. This is a real challenge for cars on southbound Interstate 75 negotiating the Erlanger/ Donaldson exit, especially during rush hour traffic.

## 2 Dixie Highway and Commonwealth Ave.

The two primary roads through Erlanger are Commonwealth Ave / Donaldson Highway and Dixie Highway. Dixie Highway is historically significant to Erlanger and is the primary commercial corridor for the community. It is an automobile corridor lined with strip development patterns and big box stores that lack any continuity in site development, parking, or signage. Dixie's role as a main highway to Cincinnati has been lost with the development of the interstate system. It connects to Interstate 275 and is one of the two main entries to Erlanger.

### 3 Lloyd High School and City Hall

Two significant landmarks are adjacent to the project site. A high school plays a very important role in any community but especially in Erlanger. The school functions as a community center, bringing the residents together for a variety of activities. The bowling alley on the project site provides the home “lanes” for the high school bowling team and draws teams from around Northern Kentucky.

City Hall is a new building strategically located as part of the gateway to Erlanger. Located above Commonwealth Avenue, it oversees this main entry into the community. The municipal building also provides community meeting rooms.



Figure 10: Southside development

### 4 Rail Line

Erlanger's was historically a railroad town – one of the last stops of the Southern Railway Company before Cincinnati. This line, which ran from Cincinnati to Chattanooga brought visitors into Union Station. This line is still active with freight trains and has a bright future, as the high-speed rail hub in Cincinnati will bring new life to these old passenger lines once again.

### 5 Day Creek

One of the biggest surprises during the BSU team site visit was the discovery of Day Creek. This apparently forgotten stream going under Donaldson Highway turns into an amazing natural creek that could be part of an significant trail and hiking area as part of Erlanger's park system. It is a true asset to the Theater development area.



Figure 11: Scattered parking

### 6 Key Commercial Areas

The project site is positioned between two important commercial areas in Erlanger. The first is a commercial area that has a high concentration of retail ranging from single offices to big box retail. This area along Dixie Highway is lacking any sense of place – totally auto oriented and unfriendly to pedestrians. It is the classic suburban commercial sprawl ready for retrofitting into a viable town center.

The second key commercial area is the property on the West side of Interstate 75 – identified as the vacant theater site. The area fronts Donaldson and is still has large wooded areas. The site is currently visually isolated and difficult to access from the interstate. It must become a destination, developing based on the number of amenities that are in the area. Certainly the airport is one of these as well as its potential to be connected to a transit stop. Currently that could begin with bus rapid transit and eventually be light rail.

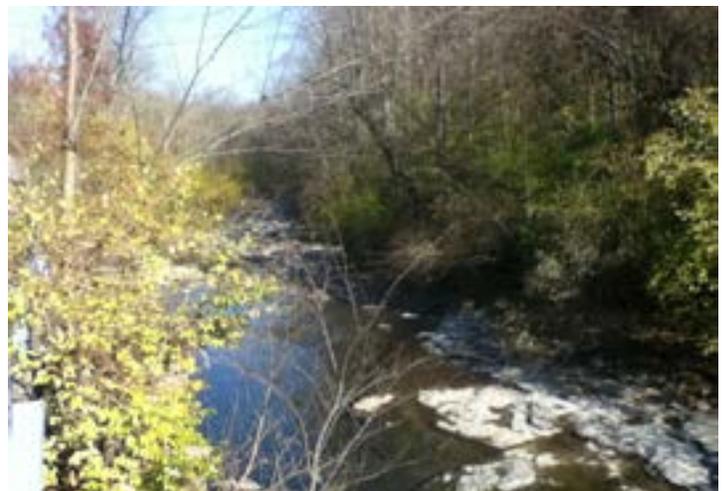


Figure 12: Day Creek is a community asset.

# STUDY AREA

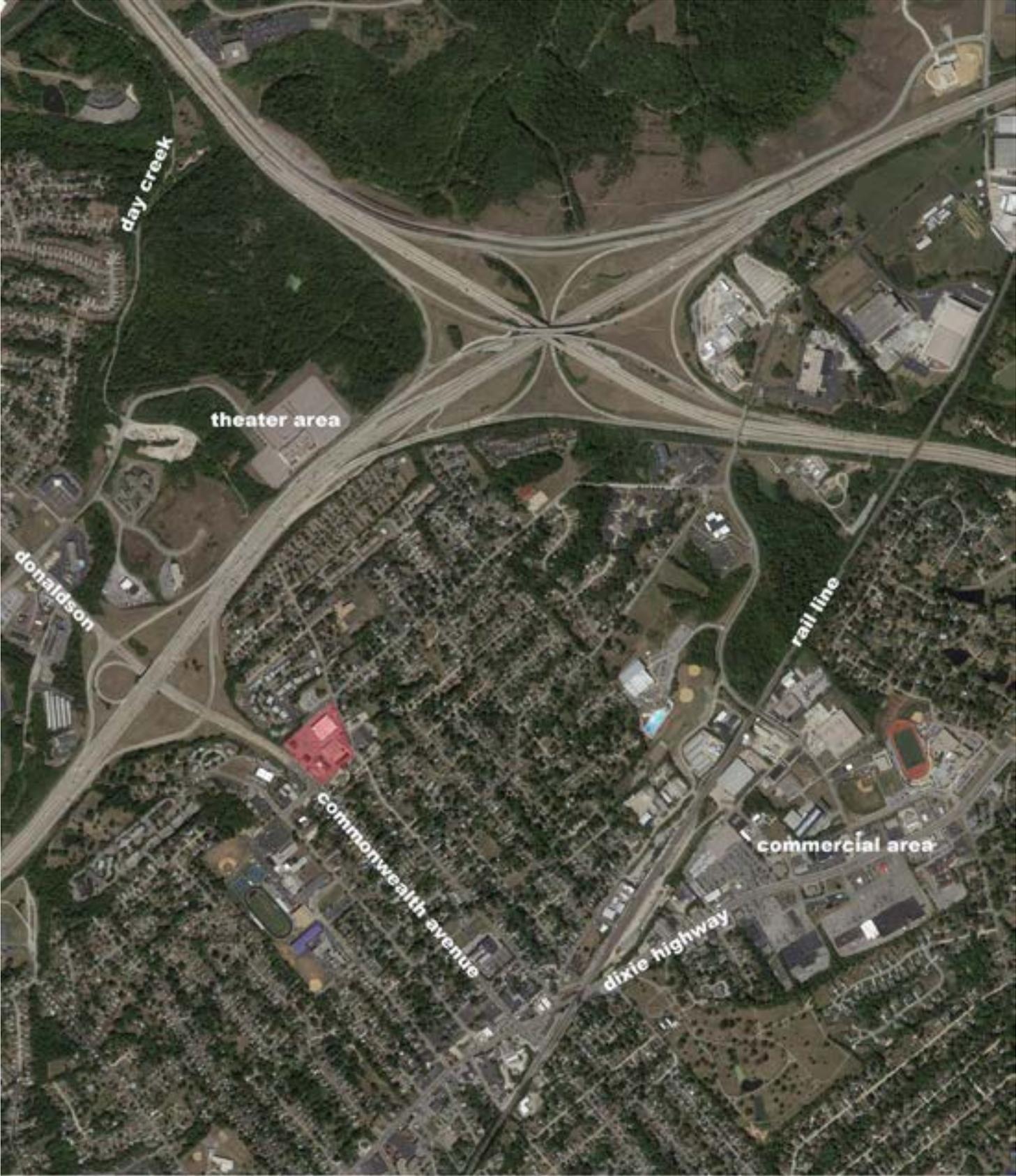


Figure 13: The project site is marked in red. The location is by the interstate entrance and exit, the rail line, Dixie Highway, a commercial/ shopping district, and the theater area.



Figure 14: Looking west on Commonwealth toward interstate



Figure 17: Looking east on Commonwealth along site.



Figure 15: The Super Bowl, a popular place on the site.



Figure 18: One of the gas stations off of Commonwealth.



Figure 16: Looking west along Erlanger Avenue



Figure 19: Looking south toward Commonwealth along the site's west edge with the apartments.

# TANK

## TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF NORTHERN KENTUCKY

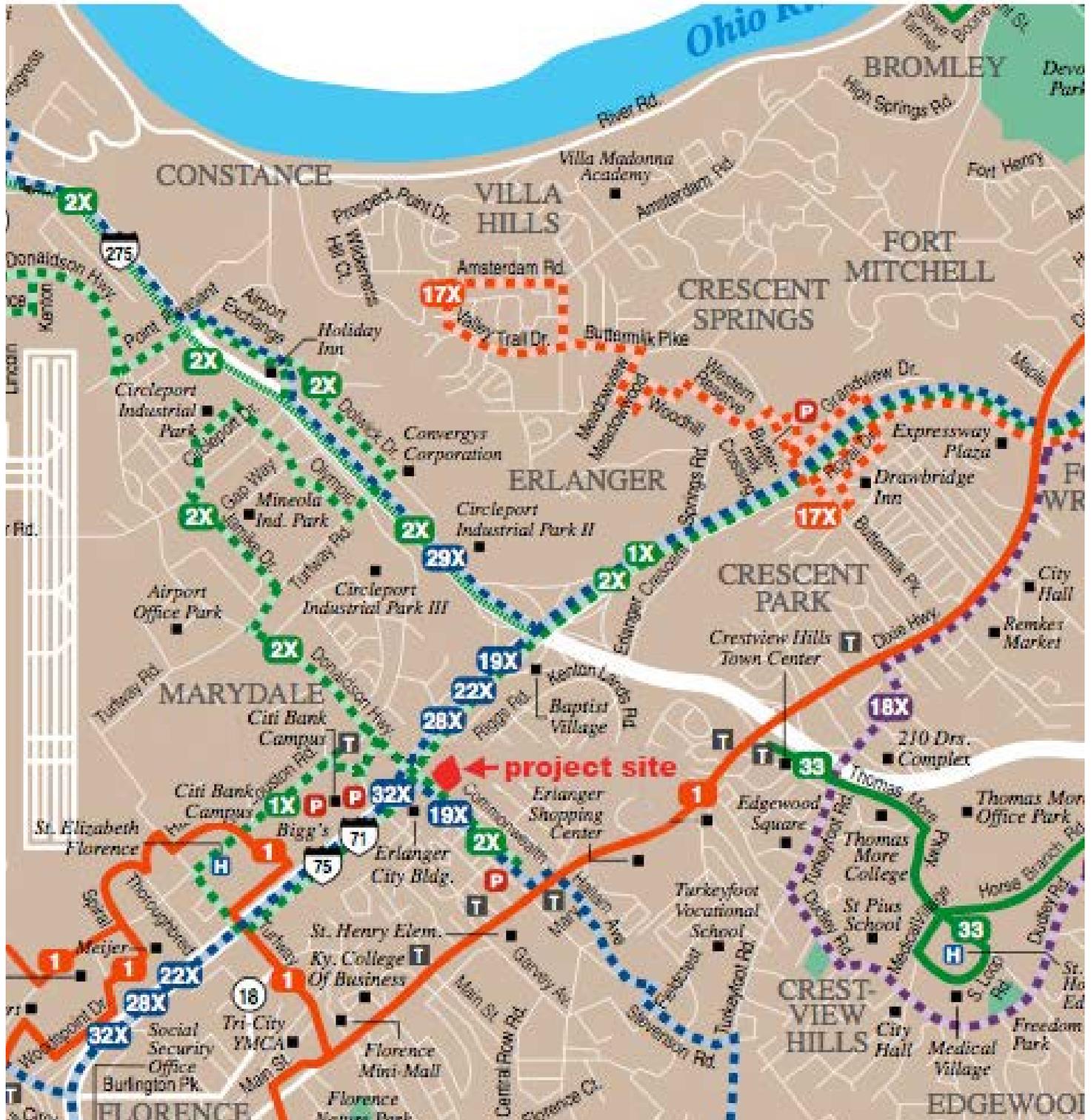


Figure 20: The project site is on TANK routes

# TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES

The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) covers Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties, and Downtown Cincinnati. The service allows people to commute to the many cities in the region, which includes a park and ride program, park and ride location site close to the study area, on Houston Road.

The TANK system and the interstate network create a comprehensive transportation network to connect Cincinnati and Covington to the entire Northern Kentucky region. TANK leaders and other leaders in transportation and government have recently been discussing new ideas for regional transportation, such as bus rapid transit.



## Possible Bus Rapid Transit Corridors in Greater Cincinnati



Figures 21 & 22: TANK BRT banner and proposed route map

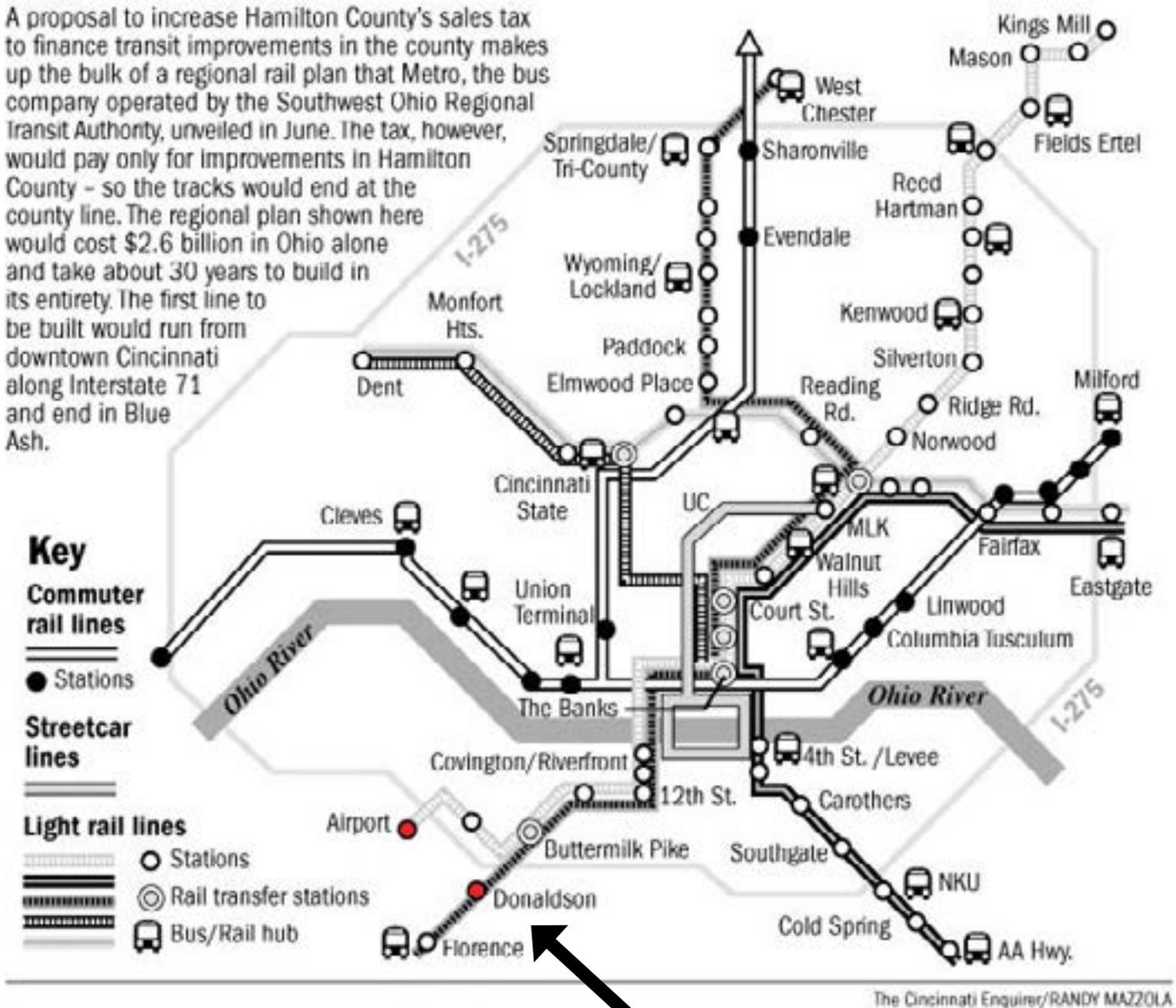
# METRO RAIL PLAN

## Cincinnati Metro Area

## Commuter & Light Rail Planning

### Metro's rail plan

A proposal to increase Hamilton County's sales tax to finance transit improvements in the county makes up the bulk of a regional rail plan that Metro, the bus company operated by the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority, unveiled in June. The tax, however, would pay only for improvements in Hamilton County - so the tracks would end at the county line. The regional plan shown here would cost \$2.6 billion in Ohio alone and take about 30 years to build in its entirety. The first line to be built would run from downtown Cincinnati along Interstate 71 and end in Blue Ash.

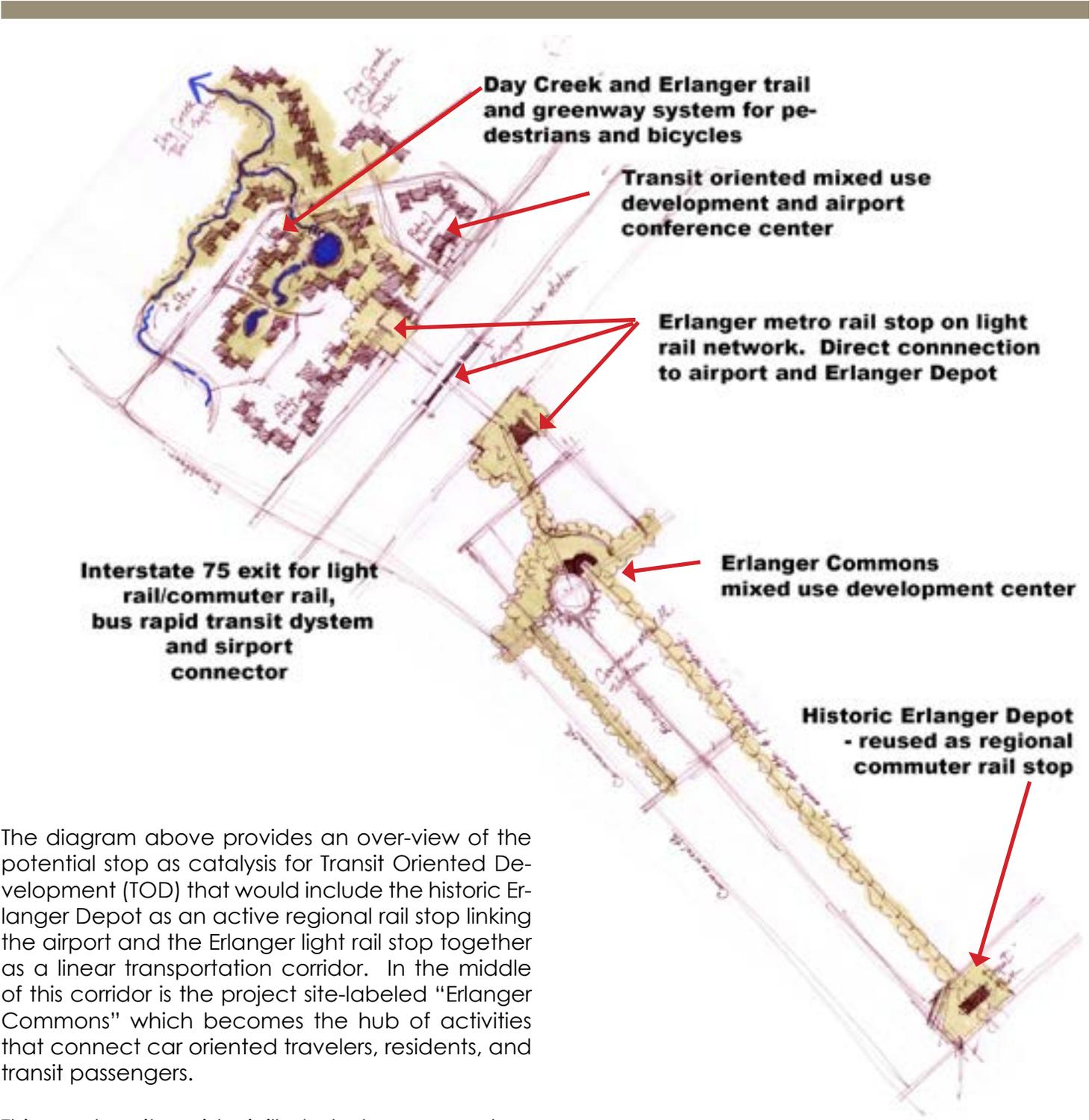


The Cincinnati Enquirer/RANDY MAZZOLA

Erlanger will benefit from light rail stops that are proposed on the Metro Rail Plan. The line from downtown Cincinnati to Florence has a stop labeled "Davidson." Conceptually this stop appears to be south of the interstate exit for Erlanger. Moving this stop north would provide an opportunity for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) to occur on the properties on either side of Interstate 75. This stop would generate tremendous economic development potential for Erlanger. This stop could also be an additional airport stop with a shuttle service directly to the airport.



Figure 24: Regional transit diagram



The diagram above provides an over-view of the potential stop as catalysis for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) that would include the historic Erlanger Depot as an active regional rail stop linking the airport and the Erlanger light rail stop together as a linear transportation corridor. In the middle of this corridor is the project site-labeled "Erlanger Commons" which becomes the hub of activities that connect car oriented travelers, residents, and transit passengers.

This new transit corridor is illustrated as a green tree lined system. The intention would be to have an integrated transportation spine that includes pedestrian and bicycle usage for residents and transit users to enjoy. It also serves a way to link Erlanger residents to Day Creek and the proposed trail and park system that is part of the new transit development.

Figure 25: Erlanger Linear Green System

# ANALYSIS



Figure 26: Day Creek

The team discovered Day Creek when touring the abandon theater site. The creek area is underdeveloped but could be a major community amenity. A nature hiking / biking trail along the creek would improve the quality of live of those living in Erlanger.

The illustration to the right conceptualizes the creek as part of a new linear park and trail network that links the two sides of the Interstate 75 corridor leveraging the transit stop as part of this pedestrian and bicyclist corridor along Erlanger Road. The branches of this system will also connect the new transit development sites, city hall, high school, and new park areas.

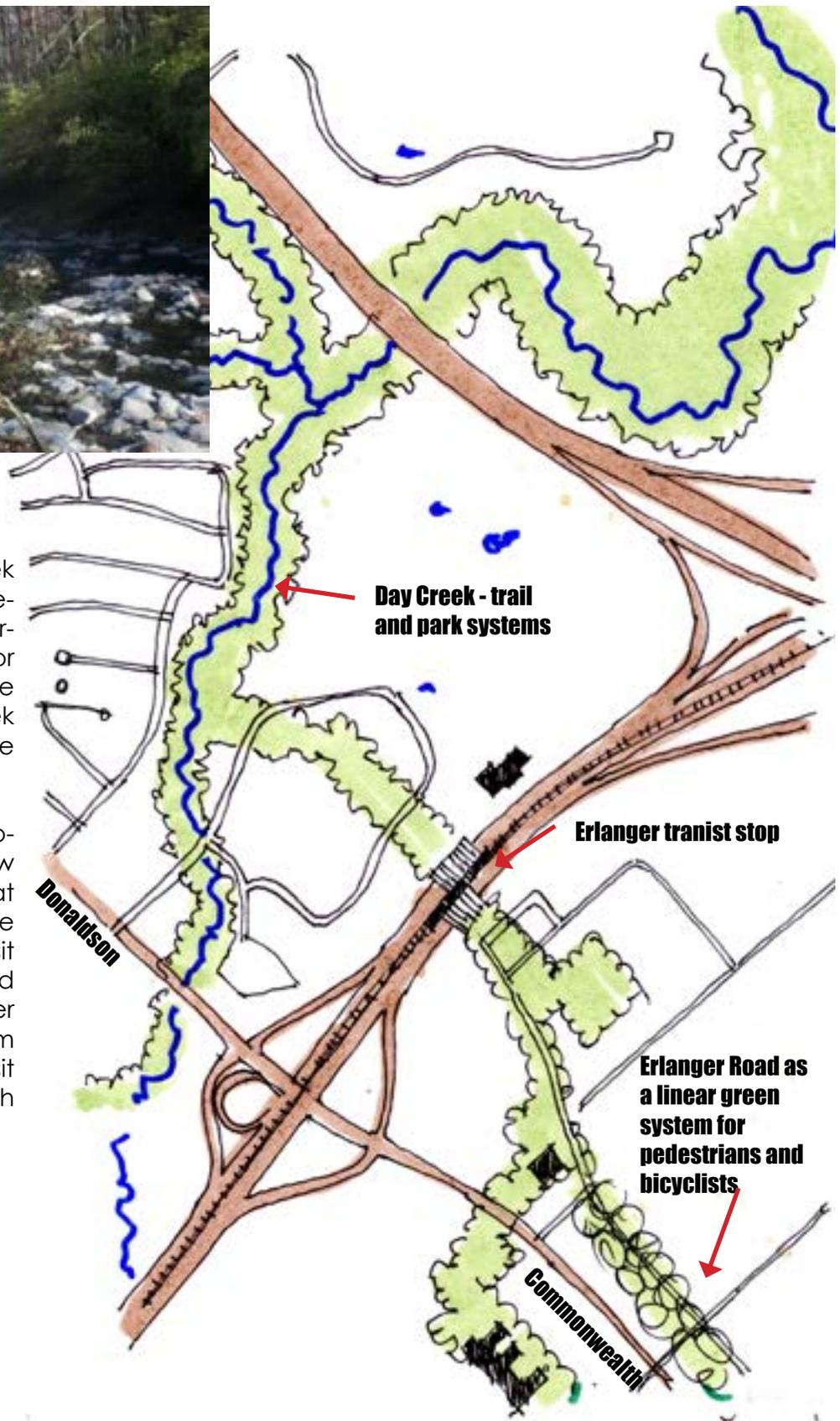


Figure 27: Proposed trail and park system

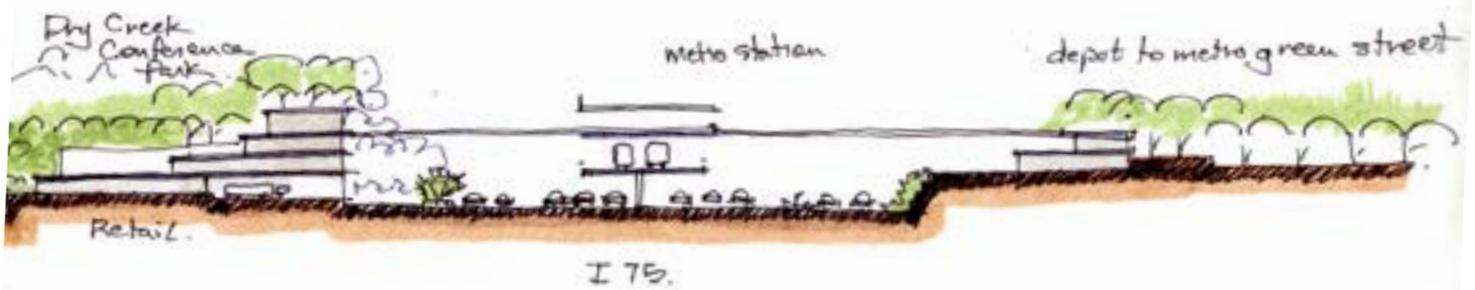
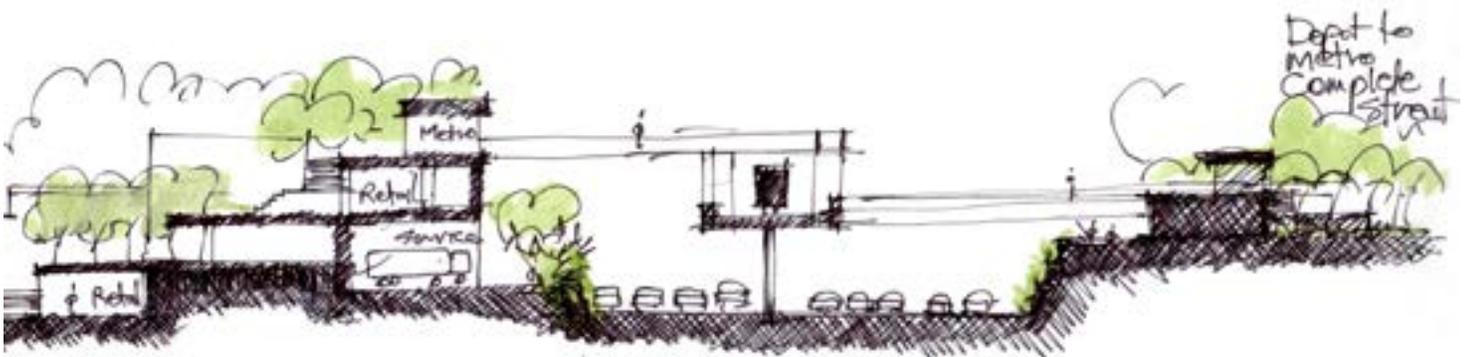


Figure 28: Section through interstate 75 corridor

The proposed multi-modal elevated transit station and the extended Erlanger Road provide excellent access to the proposed Day Creek TOD. A conference center and park would be part of a new mixed-use center that could include a major hotel, conference center, retail shopping, restaurants and amphitheater, along with the ambiance of the Day Creek Greenway and its trail system.

This would be an ideal residential location for young adults, seniors and others that could use the transit network to access entertainment and employment. The new trails and park system would enable recreational activities to develop and add to the quality of life.



Figures 29: Section through Interstate 75 corridor

### What is TOD:

Transit oriented development is, according to the Center for Transit-Oriented Development:

A mix of housing, retail and/or commercial development and amenities- typically referred to as mixed-use development- integrated into walkable neighborhoods within a half-mile of quality public transportation.

The organization of a TOD improves access to jobs and amenities in the region while providing a sense of community and reducing reliance on automobiles.

The existing transportation connections from Erlanger to other cities through the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky and the interstate system have been key in development in the county. There is an opportunity to accommodate for other modes of transportation by developing bicycle lanes and a light rail network.

# COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets are designed for safe transportation networks. They are designed for multiple users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobile drivers.

Depending on the needs of the community and the specific street, multi-modal elements can include:

- Sidewalks
- Bicycle lanes
- Bus lanes
- Visible crosswalks
- Medians
- Narrow car lanes
- Traffic calming methods
- Wayfinding and signage

Streets handle more than just cars. Complete streets account for drainage, appearance, and safety measures.

These may include:

- Street trees
- Bioswales
- Permeable pavement

The images on these pages illustrate how these elements can be added to existing roads in Erlanger. The city is a part of a thorough transportation system, and adding bicycle lanes, bus lanes, traffic calming methods, and more to particular streets will make all



Figure 30: A complete street accommodates pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and vehicular traffic. Source: [www.tooledesign.com](http://www.tooledesign.com)

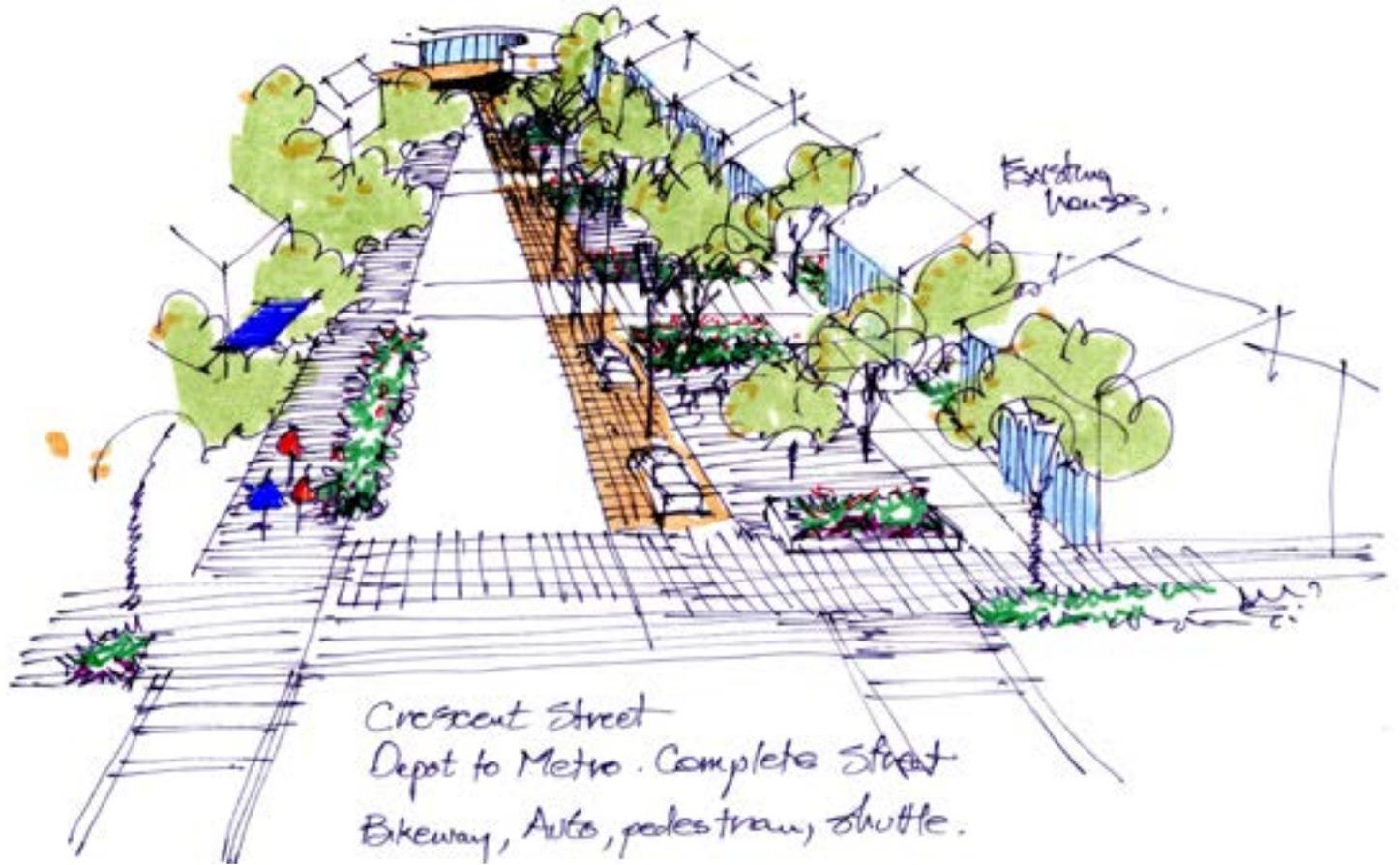


Figure 31: A complete street accommodates different types of traffic along with water runoff and air quality.

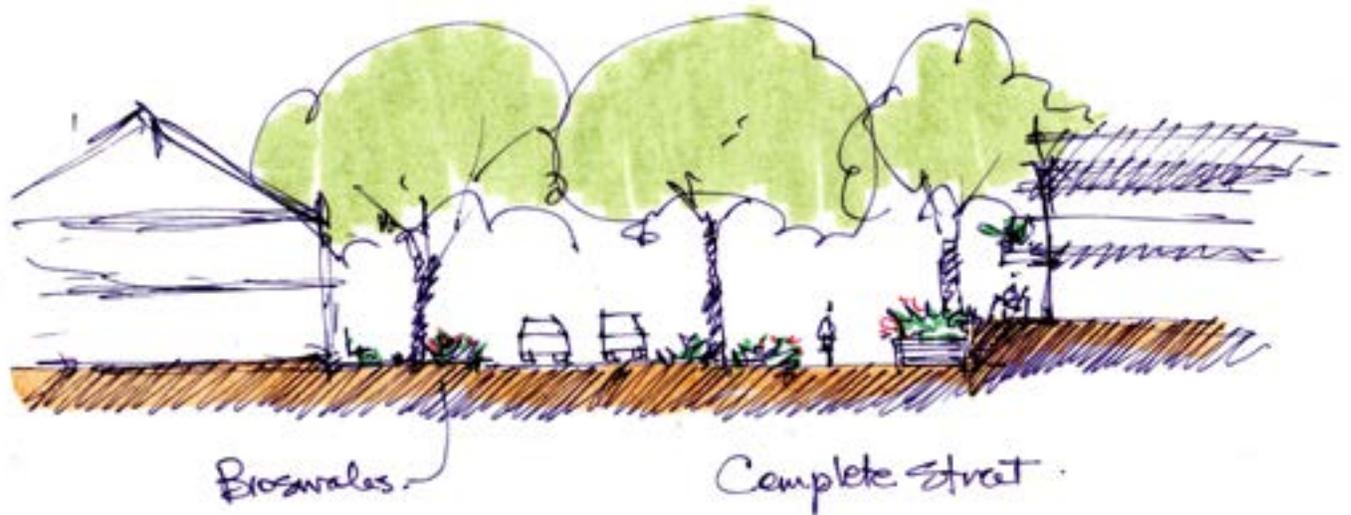


Figure 32: Bicycle lanes and bioswales are added to the streets.

# SCENARIO ONE: ERLANGER COMMONS



Figure 33: Conceptual redesign for Erlanger Commons

The plan view above and the aerial view on the next page represent one idea for the redevelopment of the project site – which we have called “Erlanger Commons.” This redevelopment plan integrates existing business into a redevelopment plan that expands uses, services, and amenities for all of the residents of Erlanger. The design is “transit ready” – meaning that it has been developed with the understanding that the future of the area will change to accommodate the opportunities of a Erlanger light rail stop.

**1** This area of the plan focuses on the development of two or three story mixed-use buildings. These buildings would have retail and office uses on the first floor with office or residential units on the upper floors. Priority would be given to existing businesses in the area with new businesses filling in the complex.

**2** The redevelopment strategy introduces townhouses as a housing prototype for Erlanger. These units with detached garages appealing to young adults or young married couples who are looking for a walkable - town center lifestyle. The design creates a strong sense of place.



Figure 34: Aerial drawing design for Erlanger Commons

- 3** The redevelopment strategy includes the expansion of existing business, providing a new community center building that could accommodate a daycare and fitness center for gymnastics, dance, or other recreational activities.
- 4** The plan maintains the “Super Bowl” wrapping the blank walls of the facility with retail that provides additional services. Recreational opportunities similar to the bowling alley would give the facility stronger pedestrian presence.
- 5** A clock tower will serve as a strong visual icon for Erlanger Commons.
- 6** Additional mixed use development is proposed for the corner of Baker Street and Commonwealth. These stores would have entrances from Baker Street, providing a strong edge to the development with materials and roof lines that blend into residential areas.
- 7** Mixed-use development is proposed for the corner of Baker and Erlanger road and could incorporate existing buildings.
- 8** Erlanger Road development would best be two-story development that transitions in to the residential neighborhoods. Mixed use development with apartments above the stores or offices would add to the diversity of housing options.
- 9** A new neighborhood-based park would provide recreation space for young families and the new residents of Erlanger Commons.
- 10** Riggs Road Circle will calm traffic and create a distinctive intersection for Erlanger Road.

# SCENARIO ONE: ERLANGER COMMONS



Figure 35: Phases one and two conceptual design ideas for the Erlanger transit stop and Erlanger Commons

The site drawing above illustrates conceptual ideas for the area based on the implementation of the Erlanger transit stop. The transit stop would not only be a huge catalyst for the west side (old theater site) but also the east side of the Interstate 75 corridor. The drawing envisions the redevelopment potential as a Transit Oriented Development.

- 1** The first phase of the airport conference center or Day Creek Lifestyle Center could be a parking deck for commuters and some retail to serve the west side stop.
- 2** Transit stops often play the role that railroad terminals did historically. Serving as the gateway to a city, in this case the opportunity exists to integrate the development around this important portal. This area has the potential to be the transfer point to the airport and regional rail. This terminal would connect to shuttle buses, local buses, and the BRT network.
- 3** The drawing illustrates a light rail stop in the center of I75 with pedestrian bridges that would connect both sides of the stop. There are several options for the stop and future investigation would be important to provide the proper infrastructure to be transit ready.
- 4** The east side terminal would be an important link to the existing and proposed neighborhoods. Erlanger Road would serve as the green pedestrian and bike corridor that connects the regional rail depot with the light rail stop
- 5** The east side terminal would also have some retail associated with the stop. Coffee, bakery, and dry cleaners are typical businesses at commuter transit stops.
- 6** Parking for the Erlanger stop will be an important amenity as commuters will transfer from their bikes or cars to the light rail to reach employment centers in Cincinnati / Northern Kentucky region.
- 7** Additional phases of the townhouse development would provide significant opportunities for new residents to locate in Erlanger. Proximity to schools and the proposed town center will be very appealing to young families looking for a small town with quality of life amenities.
- 8** The Interstate 75 intersection with Commonwealth Avenue and Donaldson Road is a very important gateway to Erlanger. The drawing illustrates the development of this area with park space and landscaping that would line the entry.

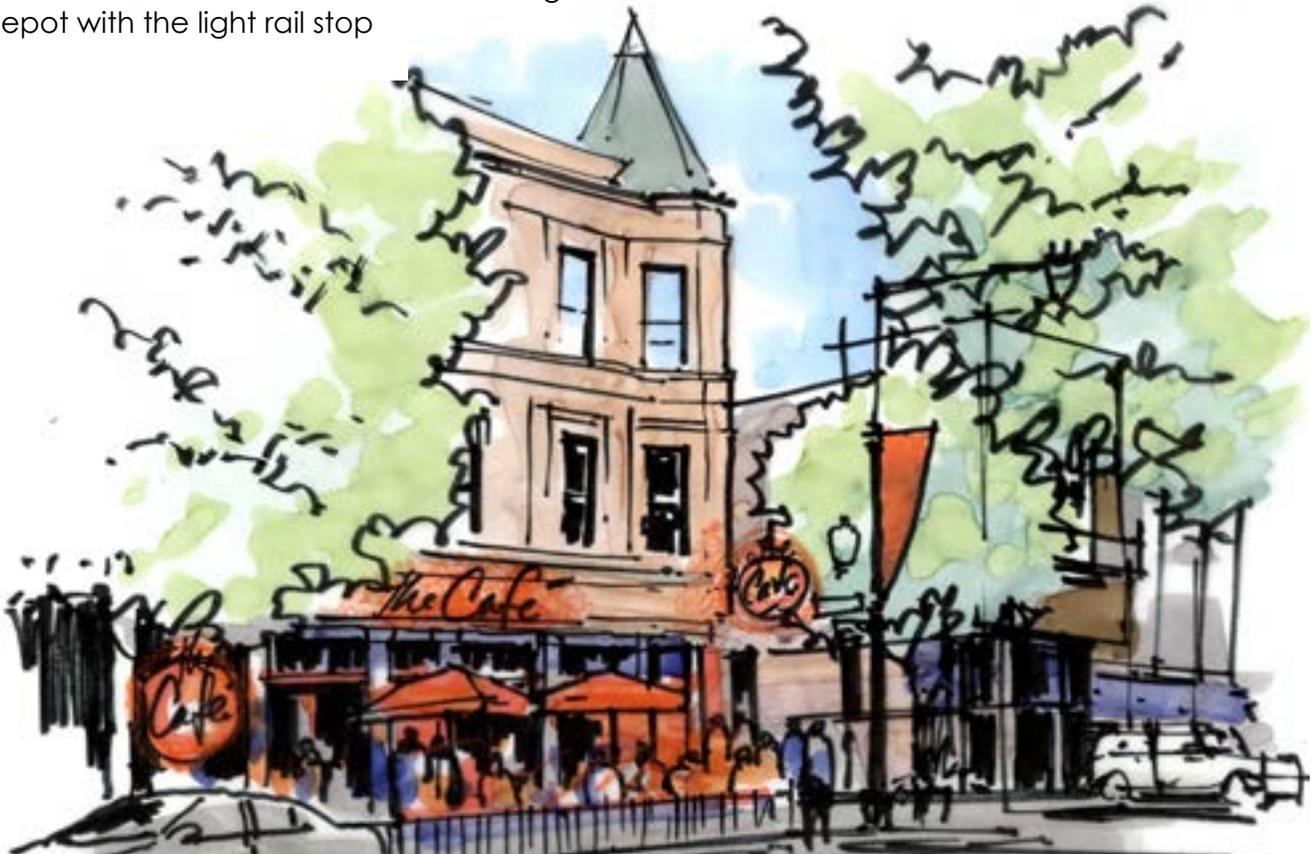


Figure 36 : The illustration shows the potential for cafes and pedestrian focused businesses at transit stop

# SCENARIO TWO: GATEWAY COMMONS



Figure 37: Looking northeast, the infill on the site creates a wall for Commonwealth Avenue.

Scenario Two focuses on a gateway and a connection between the two sides of Commonwealth Avenue. A park borders Commonwealth Avenue and the entrance ramp to the interstate, similar to the first scenario. A pedestrian crossing bridge over Commonwealth connects the two sides of the street while adding a gateway landmark.

**1** The Super Bowl bowling alley will remain on the site, but the housing and substation will change. More housing units will be added and a parking garage will consolidate the scattered parking currently on the site.

**2** Proposed infill on the site, with new retail along Commonwealth Avenue. A new hotel will also be added on the south side of Commonwealth by the office building and City Hall. Open space exists where the pedestrian crossing ends.

**3** Pedestrian bridge and walkway connecting the two sides of Commonwealth.

**4** Riggs Road will be extended along the northwest side of the Super Bowl intersect with Commonwealth Avenue and terminate at Graves Avenue. The intersection of Erlanger and Riggs will become a roundabout.

**5** New infill mixed-use development mixed with existing buildings to create a pedestrian friendly commercial center.

**6** New housing development that provides options for new residents to Erlanger and contributes to a new town center concept.

**7** Community park space and a new gateway that creates a strong sense of community.

**8** Parking garage will consolidate the scattered parking.



Figure 38: View looking north across Commonwealth Avenue as a pedestrian bridge links the two side of this new Gateway Commons scenario. This crossing would go over the road.

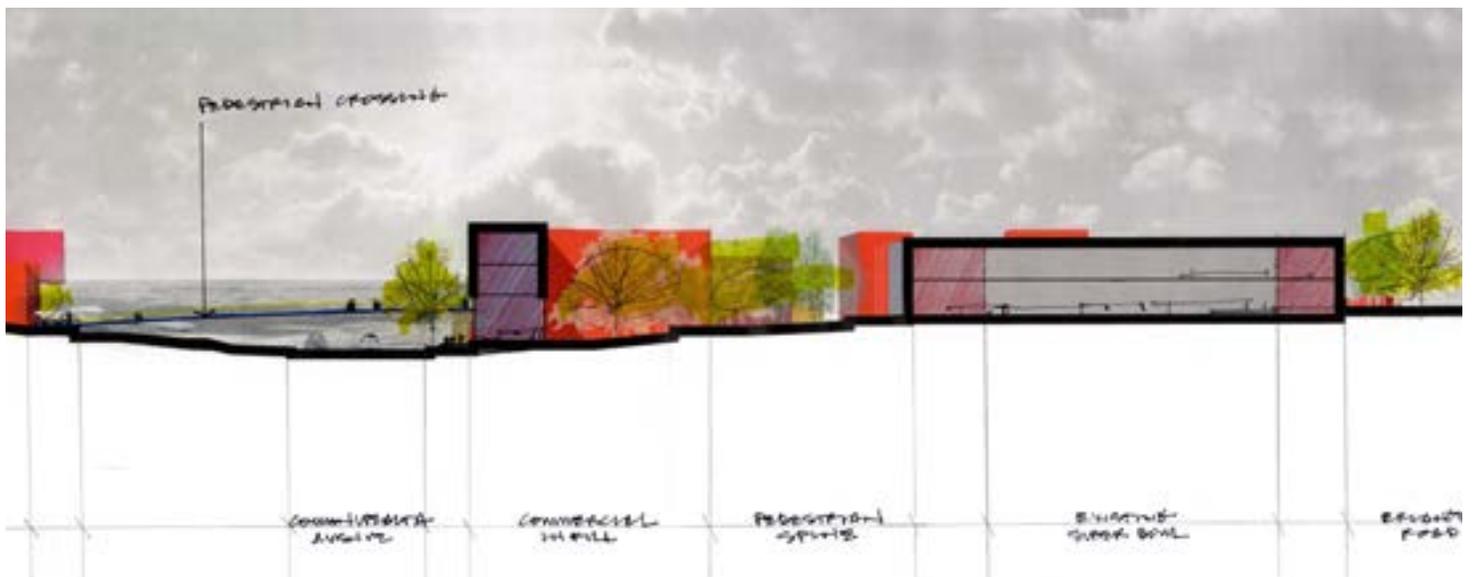


Figure 39: Looking west at the commercial infill includes the addition of businesses around the Super Bowl building. The pedestrian bridge spans Commonwealth Avenue, creating a prominent gateway to Erlanger.

# SCENARIO TWO: GATEWAY COMMONS



Figure 40: Aerial view of gateway pedestrian bridge and overall building massing



Figure 41: The Super Bowl entrance with new businesses



Figures 42 & 43: show two views of buildings in the new town center. showing new buildings in town center

## Conclusion:

The project site is has tremendous potential and should be carefully planned. The site is currently a mix of auto and interstate related businesses and some community based stores. Building conditions and aesthetics vary significantly on the site. The site has many property owners, and it is unclear how many are interested in the development potential of the site.

The Ball State Team concentrated on the long term potential with this site and ideas on developing a cohesive "town center" focused on serving the residents of Erlanger as well as leveraging the Interstate access. However the greatest influence on the concepts was the discovery of the Metro Rail Plan that indicated a Donaldson stop on the Florence/Airport leg of the system. For the team this was critical information in looking at the long term potential for the area.

Nationally, transit and the development of alternative transportation systems are leading the growth in cities like Denver, Portland, and others. Cincinnati is a significant economic force in the region and will continue to grow as the high speed rail network is developed. This will expedite the role of regional transportation projects including the bus rapid transit network, regional commuter rail and local multi-modal systems. For Erlanger, this is an opportunity to take advantage of its proximity to Cincinnati and the airport and leverage the sites that can be economic drivers of this new development.

This is an opportunity to bring together areas of the city that are fragmented and disconnected into a holistic strategy for economic growth and placemaking at the same time. However it will require additional planning and visioning and an aggressive effort on the behalf of Erlanger or the opportunity will be lost to another location.

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