

Chapter Five

Community Facilities and Utilities

Community facilities encompass a wide array of amenities and services in an area such as; educational facilities both public and private, parks and public spaces, police and fire protection, and religious institutions. Utilities refer to items such as sewer, storm sewer, water, electric, and natural gas infrastructure. This chapter contains information pertaining to these facilities and utilities that are wholly contained within the study area or those that are close enough to provide services into the area. Information contained within this chapter was obtained through key person interviews with representatives of the agencies or organizations or through information available from sources available to the public.

Schools

Schools play an important role within a community. They are not only centers for education and employment, but also serve as a venue for recreational activities and gatherings. These facilities bring community residents together, attract outside visitors, and create a sense of identity and place for an area. The schools currently located within the study area have been established for over 40 years and are a core component of the fabric of the community.

Covington Independent School System

The Covington Independent School System (CISS) operates two schools, Latonia Elementary (Figure 5.1) and Ninth District Elementary (Figure 5.2), whose districts encompass the entire study area. Both schools teach children from kindergarten through the fifth grade. Students from the area attend Holmes Middle School and High School located outside the study area.

Latonia Elementary is located in the middle of the study area at 3901 Huntington Avenue and had an enrollment of 403 students in the winter of 2010. The building was constructed in the mid-1960s and sits on an approximate six acre site featuring a playground and three greenspace areas that encompass approximately



Figure 5.1 – Latonia Elementary



Figure 5.2 – Ninth District Elementary

2 acres of land. Latonia Elementary currently offers all day kindergarten and early childhood education, both of which contribute to the educational wellbeing of the students and provide financial benefits to the parents. While these programs have been popular, their long term status depends on the budget of the school system.

Ninth District Elementary, constructed in the mid-1950s, is located in the northwest portion of the study area at 2800 Indiana Avenue. The school had an enrollment of 410 students in the winter of 2010. The school sits on an approximate seven acre site featuring a playground and a soccer field.

The Covington Independent School System has no plans to construct other schools within the study area and intends to continue operations at the existing schools into the foreseeable future. Repairs and improvements are planned for each school over the next five years. These plans include updating classroom facilities and safety systems to current state standards, removal of asbestos, new roofing, ongoing parking lot maintenance, lighting upgrades, and the construction of a greenhouse. While there are no plans for expansion, discussions with CISS did reveal the desire for a joint venture for a community center or swimming pool.

A large number of students enrolled in both schools are on free or assisted lunch programs. Seventy-three percent (73 percent) of the students enrolled in Latonia Elementary are on a free lunch program and thirteen percent (13 percent) are on an assisted lunch program. At Ninth District Elementary, eighty-one percent (81 percent) of the total student enrollment are on a free lunch program and seven percent are on an assisted lunch program. These percentages are consistent with other schools in the Covington Independent School System. The costs of both programs can have a significant impact the schools system budget.

Many of the students within the study area, and the CISS as a whole, will relocate their homes and move to another district in the system at least once, and in many cases, multiple times over the course of their education. Provisions are in place that allows students to maintain enrollment at a specific school despite moving to another district. There are also a significant amount of students which continue to attend school in the system despite moves to outside areas which creates multiple administrative and financial problems.

Other CISS Facilities in Latonia - In addition to the two elementary schools, the CISS operates a facility for Continuing Adult Education. The facility is located in the middle of the study area at 3618 Caroline Avenue, less than 500 feet from Ritte's Corner. The continuing education facility is open Monday through Friday between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening. Aspects such as flexible hours and central location have helped facilitate continued popularity and support from within

the community and surrounding areas for the services offered by the program. The Covington Independent School System also owns a lot along West Southern Avenue which houses the 19 school busses which run 23 routes throughout the entire school district. Approximately 30 percent of the children within the school system use busses. The remaining 70 percent either walk, bike, or are dropped off at school by their parents.

Considerations for Covington Schools

- Examine possibility of recreation center for school and community
- Investigate the potential for a shared community pool facility

Holy Cross Schools

The Holy Cross schools (Figure 5.3) are growing parochial schools located in the middle of the study area near Ritte's Corner. The schools span both sides of Church Street primarily between East 36th Street and Southern Avenue and the campus-like layout of the complex imparts a unique character to the area. While the church and high school share the name "Holy Cross" they are unique organizations and have been since the early 1980s.

Total enrollment at Holy Cross is approximately 640 students, 453 in the high school and approximately 180 in the grade school. About one quarter of the student population lives within the Latonia area. The remaining students, many of which are children of



Figure 5.3 – Holy Cross Schools

former alumni, commute from outside the Latonia area. Grade schools other than Holy Cross which feed in to the high school include St. Augustine and St. Benedict in Covington, St. Anthony in Taylor Mill, and St. Cecilia in Independence.

Continual growth in recent years has necessitated the expansion of Holy Cross. The growing campus currently consists of two larger institutional buildings, church, chapel, rectory, gymnasium, and five recently acquired single family buildings. The church operates and owns the grade school, gym rectory and church, while the high school is owned by the school. Two of the single family buildings have been professionally remodeled to accommodate administrative offices, counseling services, disabilities learning, and miscellaneous church activities. There are plans to raze the other three single family buildings and replace them with one larger building that will provide much needed space for classrooms, science labs, offices, and a book store. Some of these facilities are currently located in portions of commercial buildings that front Decoursey Avenue and are accessed through an abutting alley. The school also has athletic and storage facilities at the Eva Farris Complex, formerly Rosedale Park, which is located in the southeast portion of the study area near the Licking River and Banklick Creek.

Two of the primary concerns the school is currently faced with are traffic and safety. Several times throughout the day during class changes, students cross Church Street creating traffic congestion and potential safety hazards. Church Street is a main route with wider pavement than other streets through Latonia connecting the north and south areas. The route also avoids the 5-way intersection at Ritte's Corner. Parking has also been a continual concern as limited space force significant number of students to park on the local streets in the surrounding areas.

Considerations for Holy Cross Schools

- Examine options to address safety of pedestrians in the vicinity of Holy Cross
- Review potential for shared parking lots

Recreation

Recreation areas refer to parks, open space, and pay-to-play facilities that play a vital social and economic role in the viability and health of a community. They provide necessary space for gathering, interaction, and recreational activity, which helps shape the identity of a neighborhood. There are currently 11 recreation areas within the study area. Seven of these facilities are public, three operate under private control, and one is public / private partnership. Map 5.1 illustrates the location of recreational facilities in the Latonia area.

Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex.

The Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex (Figure 5.4) is located on approximately 63 acres along the south side of 43rd Street in the southern portion of the study area. The complex lies mostly in Covington, although some facilities are in Taylor Mill. The park sits atop a reclaimed landfill area and is located within the floodplain of Banklick Creek. As such, portions of the park occasionally have flooding problems following heavy rain events. The complex features a water park, playground, a substantial amount of green space and several athletic fields for soccer and baseball.



Figure 5.4 – Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex

The complex hosts over 1,000 sanctioned sports contests annually and is home to several sports leagues and tournaments which bring large numbers of visitors into the study area. The water park also has increased

in popularity with local residents. Due to this increased popularity its use now requires residency in the City of Covington. The next closest aquatic facilities in Covington are Randolph Pool and Goebel Park Pool, which are located approximately four miles to the north. The city partners with the Red's Community Fund to provide maintenance services which has been extremely helpful to the long term viability and health of the park.

Victory Avenue Covington Field

The Victory Avenue Covington Field is located on five acres in the southern portion of the study area along the southeast side of Victory Avenue, just south of the Bill Cappel Sports Complex. The park is an open area bounded by woods and the Banklick Creek. The facility is used by the Bengal Tiger Youth Football League during their season. Like the Cappel Sports Complex this facility is subject to periodic flooding due to Banklick Creek as displayed in Figure 5.5.



Figure 5.5 – Seasonal Flooding at Victory Avenue Covington Field

Eva Farris Sports Complex

Eva Farris Sports Complex is located on 22 acres in the southeastern corner of the study area at 4524 Virginia Avenue and represents a public / private recreation partnership. Formerly known as Rosedale Park, revitalization of the once aging and obsolete facility was made possible through funds raised by Holy Cross Schools. The city and the school have agreement in which the activities of the school have first priority for use of the facility. The complex features a track, football field, locker rooms, concessions, a playground and small pockets of green space. It should be noted

the park lies in an area that is susceptible to flooding, which can limit its availability for use.

Ninth District Athletic Field

The Ninth District Athletic Field is located on four acres adjacent to the 9th District Elementary School in the northern portion of the study area between Rogers Street and Clifford Avenue. The grounds feature a playground and soccer field. In addition to school activities this property is also used for a youth league play.

30th and Decoursey Tot Lot

The 30th and Decoursey Tot Lot is located on one acre in the northern portion of the study area. The facility features a running track, basketball hoop, and green space. The current lighting in the park is outdated and insufficient. There have been occasional problems with delinquent behavior occurring on the grounds.

35th and Carlisle Tot Lot

The 35th and Carlisle Tot Lot is a smaller pocket park woven into the fabric of the eastern portion of the study area. The park lies on less than an acre and features wooded areas, green spaces, and places for gathering.

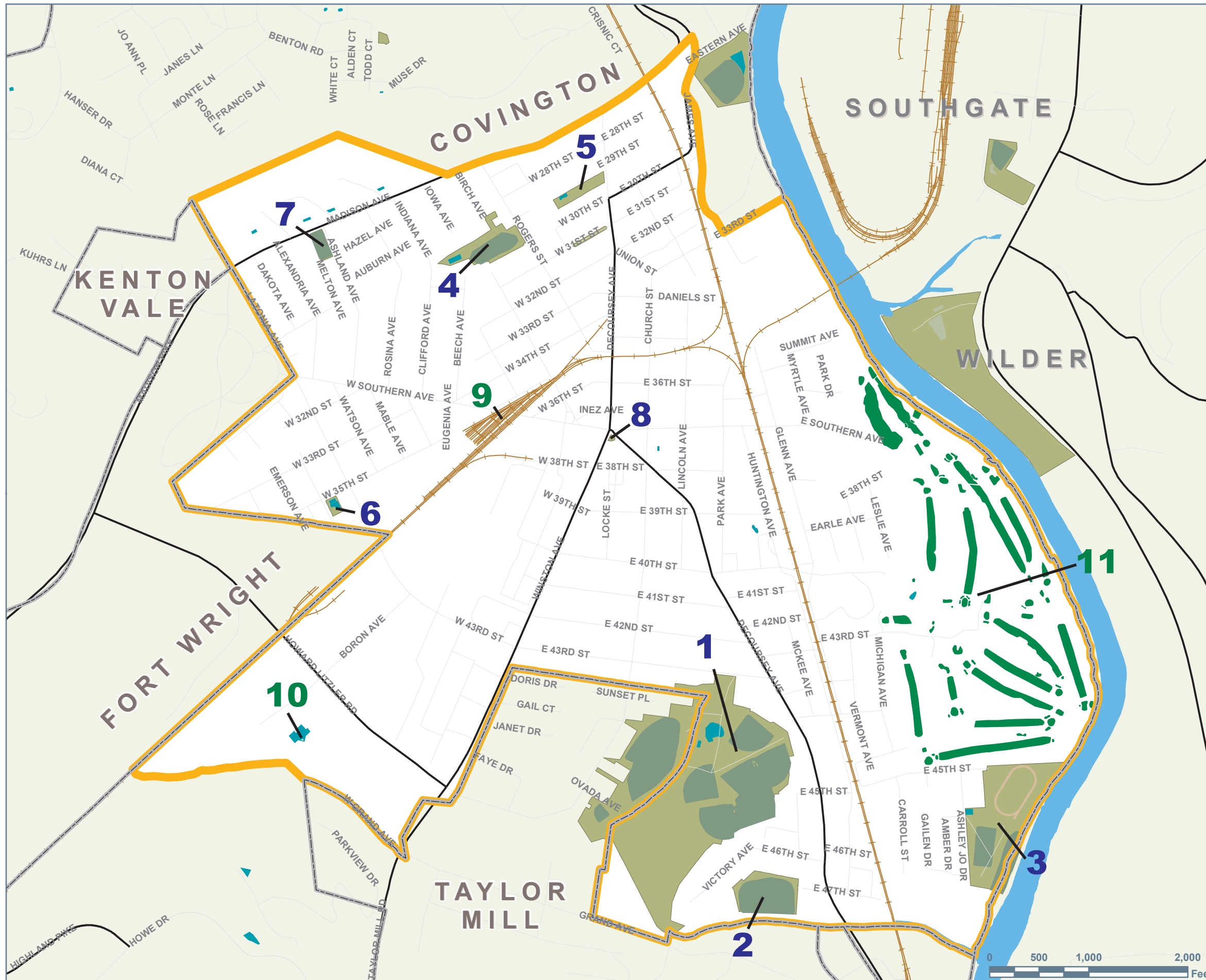
Madison and Ashland Playground

The Madison and Ashland Playground lies on approximately one acre and is a Tot Lot located in the eastern portion of the study area. The grounds feature open area, a playground, and basketball courts.

Korean War Memorial

The Korean War Memorial is located on a small portion of the southern block of the Winston Avenue and Decoursey Avenue section of Ritte's Corner. The memorial park opened in 2004 and was the result of a four-year collaborative effort between the VFW Post 6095 and the Ritte's East Neighborhood Group. The memorial features a bronze plaque listing the names of local soldiers who gave their lives fighting in Korea, a fountain, brick pavers, and benches. The intent of the memorial is to keep the sacrifices of the soldiers in the minds of those throughout the community and provide a local neighborhood center in which residents can take pride in Latonia.

Map 5.1 Recreational Activities and Areas








Legend

Public Recreation Facilities

- 1** Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex
- 2** Victory Avenue Covington Field
- 3** Eva Farris Sports Complex
- 4** Ninth District Athletic Field
- 5** 30th and Decoursey Tot Lot
- 6** 35th and Carlisle Tot Lot
- 7** Madison and Ashland Playground
- 8** Korean War Memorial

Private Recreation Facilities

- 9** Cincinnati Railway Museum
- 10** Totters Otterville
- 11** Twin Oaks Golf & Plantation Club

-  Study Area
-  City boundary
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways
-  Railroad

Source: LINK GIS Date: March, 2010

Private Recreation Facilities

Railway Museum of Greater Cincinnati

The Railway Museum of Greater Cincinnati (Figure 5.6) is located on approximately five acres in the central portion of the study area at 315 Southern Avenue, near Ritte's Corner. The facility is located on approximately four acres and contains over 80 artifacts and several trains cars. There are small pockets of green and wooded areas located on the grounds. The museum operates on a limited schedule and is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays.



Figure 5.6 – Railway Museum of Greater Cincinnati

Totters Otterville

Totter's Otterville is an educational entertainment center for children 10 and under located in the southern portion of the study area at 4314 Boron Drive, adjacent to Johnny's Toy Store. The facility lies on part of the 16 acre toy store parcel and features a water park, playgrounds, fishing pond, small amphitheater, a café, a maze and many other amenities geared towards children. Totter's Otterville is open seven days a week year round.

Twin Oaks Golf & Plantation Club

Twin Oaks Golf & Plantation Club (Figure 5.7) is an eighteen-hole privately owned public golf course located on approximately 160 acres in the southeastern corner of the study area at 450 East 43rd Street, next to the Licking River. Built in 1926, the club features a clubhouse which contains large indoor and outdoor dining areas, a pro shop, bar and grill, and two great



Figure 5.7 – Twin Oaks Golf & Plantation Club

rooms used for gathering and assembly. The club is open year round and has five full-time employees and 35 part-time employees.

Considerations for Recreation

- Address flooding issues where possible
- Create linkages to Licking River Greenway
- Pursue other bike and pedestrian linkages between parks outside of the Licking River Greenway Master Plan including a possible connection between Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex and Victory Avenue Covington Field
- Examine opportunities for better signage and wayfinding
- Consider potential of adding area and facilities to the Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex if the police impound lot becomes available
- Work with information found in Chapter 3 – Market Study to determine the feasibility of adding amenities to the area such as hotels and restaurants that could lead to more regional events at the Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex
- Identify potential to increase access and parking
- Explore opportunities for a Recreation Center
- Investigate the possibility of a community pool
- Look at potential for 32nd St. Park at the vacant gas station site
- Work towards creating more pocket parks or other small recreational facilities such as community gardens in neighborhood areas
- Look at chance for bigger events at sports complex

Safety and Emergency Services

Police

The mission of the Covington Police Department (CPD) is to interact with all citizens of Covington to improve the quality of life in the community. Each year a staff of approximately 145 sworn officers and civilians handle about 90,000 calls throughout the entire city. The main criminal problems in the study area include drug use and trafficking as well as theft.

There are two areas within the boundaries of the study that were identified as recently having higher than average levels of crime (Map 5.2). These areas fell victim to an outbreak of burglaries in November and December of 2009. The number of burglaries has since been reduced within the Latonia study area.

The Covington Police Department operates a substation in West Southern Avenue in Ritte's Corner. The substation is part of the Community Outreach Bike Patrol program and houses bicycle and locker facilities. The department also currently owns and operates an impound lot near the Bill Cappel Sports Complex. CPD is in the process of selling the lot due to continued shortfalls in the funds generated compared to the operating costs.

Neighborhood Watch

The study area benefits from an established Neighborhood Watch group in addition to police services. The watch started over 25 years ago and immediately proved effective in reducing crime. Today the watch continues to protect the citizens of Latonia by working cooperatively with the City and police department. Interviews with the Watch indicate that break-ins have increased recently, likely due to the downturn in the overall economy.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

The mission of the Covington Fire Department is to minimize the loss of life and property resulting from fire, medical emergencies and other disasters. The City of Covington's Fire Department was recently rated the best in Northern Kentucky from ISO with a Class II fire insurance rating. Covington shares this rating with only 12 other fire departments in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

The Department is made-up of 117 firefighters and five firehouses. One firehouse provides fire protection for the entire study area and is located near Ritte's Corner at 3315 Church Street, north of Holy Cross High School. Church Street is the main access route for emergency runs to the south and southeastern portion of the study area.







Discussions with fire personnel indicated poor access to the VFW Hall and trailer park, both located in the southeast corner of the study area. Ashland Oil, located adjacent to the northern boundary of the study area, also poses a fire and safety hazard.

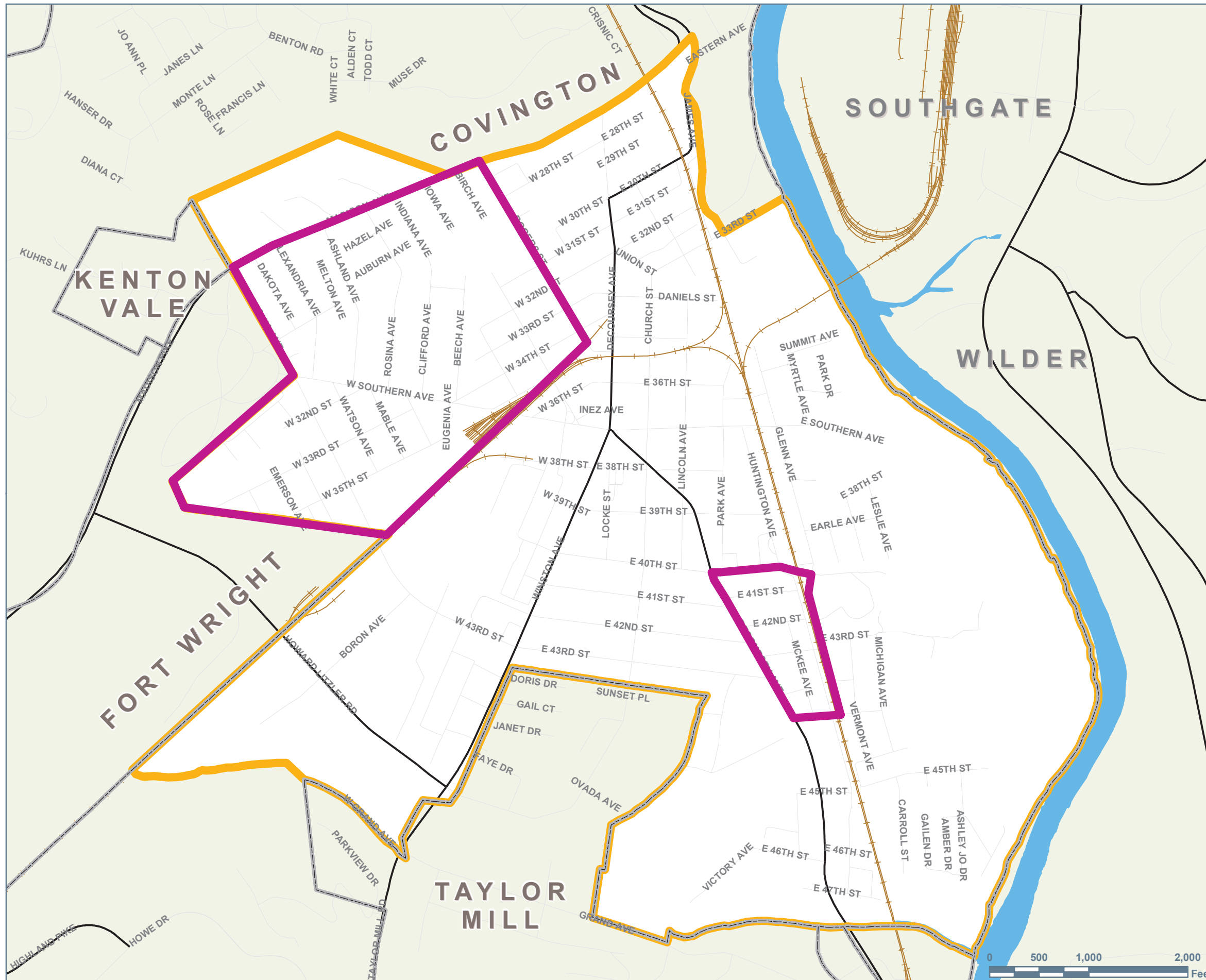
Considerations for Safety and Emergency Services

- Examine new potential uses for police impound lot
- Consider the need for additional police and fire protection in redevelopment alternatives within the study area
- Examine the Church Street route and its impact on fire and EMS operations in Latonia and the pedestrian activity at the Holy Cross schools and church

Map 5.2 Reported Higher Crime Areas

Legend

-  Reported Higher Crime Area
-  Study Area
-  City boundary
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways
-  Railroad



Source: LINK GIS Date: March, 2010

Business and Neighborhood Associations

The Latonia area is served by the Latonia Business Association, Ritte's East Neighborhood Group, and West Latonia Neighborhood Association, each of which are formally recognized by the City of Covington. These groups work towards general awareness of issues, promotion of businesses, general support of the neighborhood and neighborhood events, and contributions to efforts such as public safety and even the preparation of this plan.

Latonia Business Association

Historically Latonia had a business association whose roots started in the early 1900s. The association was in existence until the 1990s when it disbanded due to a reported lack of interest. The group was reorganized in 2004 and was officially restarted in 2005 under the same historical name. Today the association is very active and is represented by membership from many of the approximately 250 businesses in the area. Dues of \$75 per year per business helps to pay for events and programs like the Latonia Halloween Party, beautification efforts, and scholarship for local students.

Ritte's East Neighborhood Group

The Ritte's East Neighborhood Group has been active since 1995. While membership is open to anyone, their area of focus includes Ritte's Corner east to the river, north to 35th Street, and south to 40th Street (Map 5.3). The group meets monthly to discuss issues and plan events. Their largest project was the Korean War Memorial Fountain Plaza, created in partnership with VFW Post 6095 and the City of Covington. They hold annual Christmas parties, ice cream socials, and cleanup and beautification efforts. Yearly dues, to cover expenses, are \$5 for individuals, and \$10 for families.

West Latonia Neighborhood Association

The West Latonia Neighborhood Association is the newest neighborhood association in Latonia (Map 5.3). The group includes approximately 70 members comprised of residents and business owners that meet monthly. The association holds events such as ice cream

socials and participates in neighborhood beautification events like the Great American Cleanup. At this time yearly dues of \$5 per household give members voting privileges and helps pay for social events.

Considerations for Business and Neighborhood Associations

- Work to create a new group or groups to cover residents throughout Latonia by an association (Map 5.3)
- Rework boundaries of the existing associations with the new association(s) to most efficiently address the needs of local residents
- Examine creating a full-time position that would promote the needs of Latonia businesses and residents

Religious Institutions and Organizations

Numerous religious institutions and organizations exist within Latonia as illustrated on Map 5.4. The subsections below describe some of the larger institutions in greater detail.

Holy Cross Church

Holy Cross Church and Holy Cross School occupy the same campus area, just east of Ritte's Corner. As mentioned earlier in the school section, the church and school have been separate entities since the early 1980s. The church operates and owns the grade school, gym rectory and church, while the high school is owned by the school. Parking at the campus has been reported as an issue. This issue has grown as enrollment demographics at the school have changed from primarily Latonia students to scholars that travel from outlying areas by car.

The church itself has been located on the site since the early 1900s, although a fire damaged the interior of the building in 1988. Outreach such as working closely with other neighborhood churches, feeding people on a weekly basis, working with St. Vincent

DePaul, conducting pastoral ministries at Rosedale, and holding festivals in the community are just some of the numerous activities the church pursues. The church also provides assistance to homeowners who need help with property upkeep through a program known as Helping Hands.

Calvary Baptist Church

Calvary Baptist Church is located in the middle of the study area at 3711 Tibbatts Street, near the Latonia Plaza Shopping Center. They have approximately 1,500 members with a weekly attendance of eight to nine hundred people at their Sunday services. Many of the church's members come from areas outside of Latonia. Interviews with church leadership indicated there are only a few members from within the study area.

Overflow parking for church events is located in the adjacent shopping center and is provided free of charge. The church employs approximately 45 full and part time staff and operates a school approximately 5 miles south on Taylor Mill Road (KY 16) in South Covington. The church has become more involved in community outreach within the study area in recent years due to concerns with neighborhood decline. They are currently examining the full time employment of an individual to coordinate and carry-out their Latonia outreach efforts.

Latonia Baptist Church

Latonia Baptist Church is located in the middle of the study area at 3800 Church Street, immediately to the southeast of Ritte's Corner. The church, facing a declining membership, began providing outreach to the community which has continued to be a primary focus. They currently provide a number of programs and services which benefit all of the community. Approximately 20 percent of the church membership lives within the study area.

Latonia Christian Church

Latonia Christian Church is located in the middle of the study area at 3900 Decoursey Avenue. The church has approximately 750 members with an average weekly attendance of 250 people at their Sunday services. A

majority of the current membership (approximately 65 percent) live within the study area. Concerned with neighborhood decline, the church has become increasingly interested in offering community outreach and development services.

Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities has been involved in efforts within the Latonia study area for over 25 years and plays a vital role within the community. Their office is located at 3629 Church Street, near Holy Cross. The organization is a separately incorporated agency which operates as a part of the Diocese of Covington. The mission of the organization is to promote healing, restore hope and affirm human potential through services that empower, voices that speak for justice; and, partnerships that strengthen communities. They provide a wide variety of community services throughout Northern Kentucky, especially within the study area, featuring programs targeted towards community building and development, counseling, outreach, and assistance. Catholic Charities has a large presence in the community.

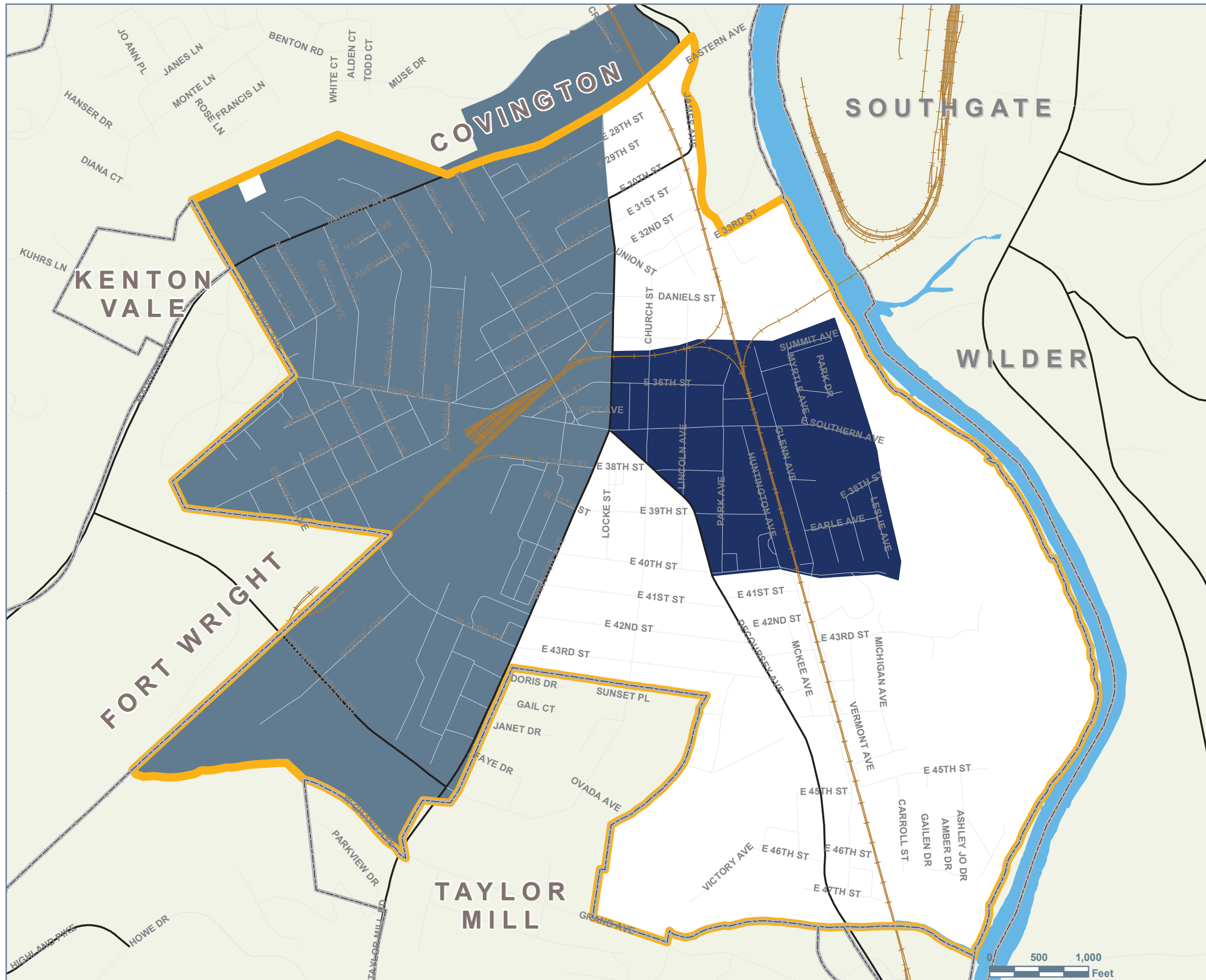
Action Ministries

Action Ministries is a volunteer based food pantry located at 4375 Boron Drive in Latonia. The organization is funded by churches, individual and corporate donations, and corporate grants. The food pantry serves over 600 local families monthly. Aside from food and grocery items for families in need the organization also provides referrals to GED classes and assists with furthering education and job placement assistance.








Considerations for Religious Institutions and Organizations

- Work towards retaining and strengthening existing institutions
- Investigate opportunities for increasing community outreach programs
- Partner with churches to increase greenspace in the community
- Explore the potential for shared parking opportunities between churches and business, particularly those closest to Ritte's Corner.

Map 5.3 Neighborhood Associations








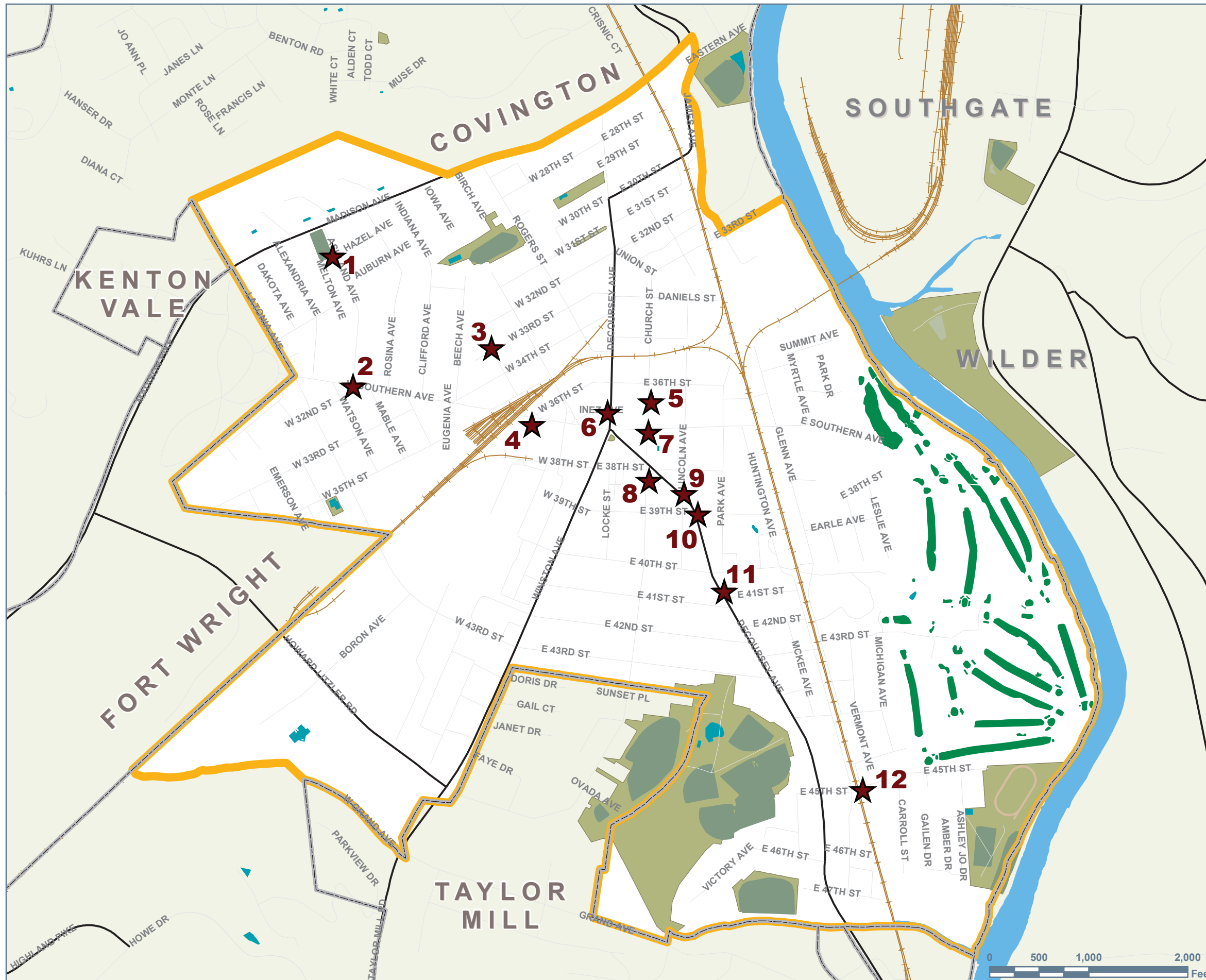
Legend

-  Ritte's East Neighborhood Group
-  West Latonia Neighborhood Association
-  City boundary
-  Study Area
-  Railroad
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways

Map 5.4 Religious Institutions

Legend

- 1** Ashland Avenue Baptist Church
- 2** First Church of God
- 3** Faith Baptist Church
- 4** Calvary Baptist Church
- 5** Holy Cross Church
- 6** Runyan Memorial Christian Church
- 7** Trinity United Methodist Church
- 8** Latonia Baptist Church
- 9** First Evangelical Methodist Church
- 10** Latonia Christian Church
- 11** Latonia Community Pentecostal Church
- 12** Rosedale Baptist Church
-  Study Area
-  City boundary
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways
-  Railroad



Other Community Facilities

The American Legion

The American Legion is located in the middle of the study area at 3801 Winston Avenue, near Latonia Plaza. The facility contains a bowling alley that is mainly used for league play, two bar areas, and two rooms for gathering and assembly. The primary draw to the Legion is B-I-N-G-O, which is held on Sunday and Tuesday nights. The organization currently has approximately 200 members, a decline from the roughly 700 members the organization reported at its height.



Figure 5.8 - Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall (VFW) is located in the southeastern corner of the study area at 343 East 47th Street. The 18.5 acre facility features a building for gathering and assembly. The property also has a lake. Each year the organization lends its facilities to the police and fire department to conduct bicycle safety classes. The VFW also hosts an annual fishing tournament on the site. The organization currently has 180 members and approximately 50 to 60 members in the Lady's Auxiliary, an organization for women similar to the VFW.

Considerations for Other Community Facilities

- Consider other community outreach programs the in which VFW could partake
- Consideration needs to be given to potential reuse of all land currently owned by these organizations

in case in the long-term future these groups sell the property for relocation or in the event they disband.

Utilities

Gas and Electric

Duke Energy provides gas and electric service to the entirety of the study area. The utility provider is currently in the process of updating a substation located along Decoursey Avenue, between 35th and 36th streets, near Ritte's Corner. Updates include tying in new higher voltage systems, and replacing an existing outdated conductor with a larger conductor. Together these improvements will allow for the removal of many unnecessary poles and wires located in and around Ritte's Corner.

Duke's future plans for the area include continual updates and the possible removal of their substation. The protocol for removal would include extraction of all equipment, testing the soil for contaminants, followed by the sale of the building.

Northern Kentucky Water District

The Northern Kentucky Water District provides water service to most of the study area, the exception being the trailer park, located in the southeast corner of the study area. This community runs and operates its own private water and sewer system. The existing water system in the study area has the ability to serve most residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Many of the water mains in the area are older concrete or cast iron construction which can create rust buildup, discolored water, seepage, and bad smelling water. Future plans for the area include replacing or cleaning water mains, many of which have been serviced since 1990.

Sanitation District Number One (SD1)

Sanitation District No. 1 (SD1) is responsible for the collection and treatment of wastewater as well as new storm water services and infrastructure. SD1 has 188

employees and treats 34 million gallons of wastewater daily. The District serves 33 communities in Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties of Northern Kentucky. SD1 also plays an advocacy role for the promotion of green infrastructure within communities such as the separation of storm and sewer water systems, utilizing bio-swales, water gardens, green roofs, and other eco-friendly technologies. More information on SD1 can be found in Chapter 4 - Green Infrastructure.

Considerations for Utilities

- Work with Duke Energy to reduce the amount of overhead utility lines in Ritte's Corner and throughout the study area
- Examine potential for new uses at the Duke substation site to prepare if they decide to close it.
- Consider green infrastructure practices in the area as redevelopment takes place