

## Section Four - Community Facilities and Utilities

Community facilities are services and facilities necessary to support the population such as; schools, recreation and open space, fire and emergency medical service, police protection, library service, and health care. Availability and accessibility to these facilities and services is related to how residents perceive the quality of the community in which they live. Most community facilities are publicly funded and rely on tax based income collected and budgeted by legislative bodies and/or special districts. In the case of Park Hills and this study, however, two important facilities within the study area are private schools that function and provide services similar to public community facilities.

Utilities include sanitary sewer, water, electric, and natural gas service. Storm water is discussed in the Section 5 of this Chapter and encompasses another type of utility. A review of the utilities within and surrounding the immediate study area is intended to ensure that adequate and consistent services are provided to manage anticipated growth and minimize pollution within the planning period. The challenge for community facilities and utilities is to maintain existing facilities and provide a high level of service at a reasonable cost that will support existing and future needs of the community. This Chapter contains information regarding the existing educational, religious, recreation, library, police, and fire community facilities and utilities that are wholly contained within the study area or are close enough to provide services into the area.

Research throughout the planning process indicates Park Hills, and thus the study area, are adequately supplied with community facilities and utilities. No new facilities are recommended; however, while the study area is adequately served by

the utilities and community facilities, this plan makes a few key recommendations for the improvement of community facilities and utilities with the future development/redevelopment plans.

### Schools

The students of Covington Catholic High School (*Figure 6.16*) and Notre Dame Academy, as well as their parents, are potential customers of the redeveloped commercial areas and should be viewed as an important asset to the City. Both schools have expressed desires to expand their campuses. Notre Dame Academy has ample property to expand upon and has already done so with little to no impact on the study area. Covington Catholic High School will need to acquire land to allow for expansion space. One potential site for this expansion is on the north side of their campus. With this in mind the City should work with the school in their expansion efforts to develop a plan of action that benefits both parties. One possible solution may be to incorporate adequate parking space in new development adjacent to the school so that it can be shared with the school. Typically school uses and other land uses do not overlap in regards to peak usage times and this would make such sharing of parking potentially feasible. If this can work it may be possible for Covington Catholic High School to reuse some of



*FIGURE 6.16*  
*COVINGTON CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL*

their existing parking for other school facilities. With the students and their parents in mind, the City should try and locate uses suited to their needs close to the schools. This could include youth related destinations such as clothing stores, video game stores, ice cream and snack shops. A coffee shop such as Reality Tuesday's Café could fill market needs of both students and their parents. Another synergy concept with the students as a primary constituent is a sports medicine/rehab facility. This would provide services for the population at large and benefit from a location close to a large number of students, as well as the aging population of Park Hills.

The study area also includes a portion of the main campus of Gateway Community and Technical College. Gateway Community and Technical College is currently in the process of relocating their facilities into downtown Covington and will become vacant in the near future. The divided parcels in Covington and Park Hills are currently being assembled for sale to a private entity. The assumption at this time gathered from key person interviews is the site will be developed as higher density and/or high end residential.

The potential change of the Gateway Community and Technical College site to residential has sparked concern about an increase in the amount of traffic on Old State Road and along Amsterdam Road, which has already experienced land slippage issues. This study recommends the City further explore the potential of constructing a road to provide direct access to Dixie Highway immediately behind Fort Mitchell Garage. Currently, there is an unused portion of an old road that had historically been use as a service road connection between Old State Road and Dixie Highway. The potential may exist that this road may be able to be reconstructed to support vehicular traffic. While there may be some structural issues with this unused access point, it could prove to be a convenient connection to Dixie Highway for a new development and provide for less traffic through the already established residential area. For further information on this issue, please see **Section 2** of this **Chapter 6**.

## Emergency Services

The City is currently adequately provided with emergency services. However, the substantial increase

in commercial activity recommended in this plan may require an increase in police and fire protection along the corridor. With an increase in public gathering spaces within the core area, there is an increased opportunity for both formal and informal gatherings which may demand a need for increased police presence. Additional structures and infrastructure may also warrant increased fire protection and the need for supplementary firefighting personnel and apparatuses.

## Utilities

Currently, the area is adequately supplied with utilities. As redevelopment of the area occurs the City should look for opportunities to work with Duke Energy to bury electrical utilities. Existing infrastructure along neighboring streets has the capacity to carry the utility load that currently runs along Dixie Highway. If the opportunity presents itself during any major roadway improvements along Dixie Highway, the City should seek opportunities to shift the backbone load carried along Dixie Highway to neighboring streets and then place the remaining load along Dixie Highway underground.

If major roadway improvements occur along Dixie Highway, the utility companies may be required to move the existing infrastructure at their cost. At that time, Park Hills could seek supplemental funding to offset the additional cost of placing the remaining facilities underground. Burying utility lines during roadway improvements would significantly reduce the City's cost of going underground because the City would only be required to cover the additional cost, not the entire cost of the move. The Northern Kentucky Water District and Sanitation District No. 1 will also need to be kept informed so they can inspect and replace failing water lines while the area is undergoing redevelopment. Additionally, if the City of Fort Wright is considering going underground with their utilities, Park Hills may want to consider working together to reduce the cost of burying lines along Dixie Highway.

The reduction in impervious surface desired by Sanitation District No. 1 is a means to reduce the amount of storm water entering the combined sewer system. This may be very difficult to achieve since the plan calls for an increase in square footage of commercial use. It may be possible to reduce the amount of storm

water entering the sewer system by a combination of using rain gardens, bio-retention areas, and green roofs where possible and utilizing green infrastructure techniques. For more information on this issue see **Section 5** of this Chapter.

## Community Center

Public meeting comments and Task Force discussion indicated there is interest in having a community center for the City. These facilities are usually multi purpose in nature and provide a large space for the community to gather. This function fits well with the neighborhood Village Center proposed in the core of the study area. The core area depicts a gathering spot that can provide a symbiotic relationship with the commercial activity. Such a facility should be located on the edge of the core area thus placing the facility in close proximity to the commercial activity limiting interference with energy of the commercial area.

## Public Space

Public open space provides a venue for festivals and events that bring enjoyment to area residents and build community identity. The neighborhood commercial center in the core area is the ideal location for these activities. The commercial uses both attract people into the area for events and help provide for attendee's needs during festivals.

Phase Two of the preferred alternative recommends implementing large permanent pedestrian areas (indicated by the tan and brown areas in *Figure 6.17* for public space. While a majority of the outdoor space in these areas is permanently dedicated for public space the areas can be temporarily increased in size with the use of barricades. Figure 6.17 also illustrates how installing temporary barricades (red lines) on the road parallel to Dixie Highway will allow for a larger pedestrian only area (blue line). This larger area could be used for festivals or special events with minimal impact to traffic and parking.

The public space could be a paved plaza that preferably utilizes pervious pavement, unpaved areas, or a combination of both. Ideally public space will surround and compliment commercial buildings in the Core Area and be in close proximity to the community

center. If the City intends to encourage a large number of festivals and events in the area it should consider having separate public restroom facilities located close to the public space. Locating these events in this area will enhance the sense that this area is the center of town, the City's heart. More detailed information about the preferred alternatives can be found in **Section 1** of this Chapter.

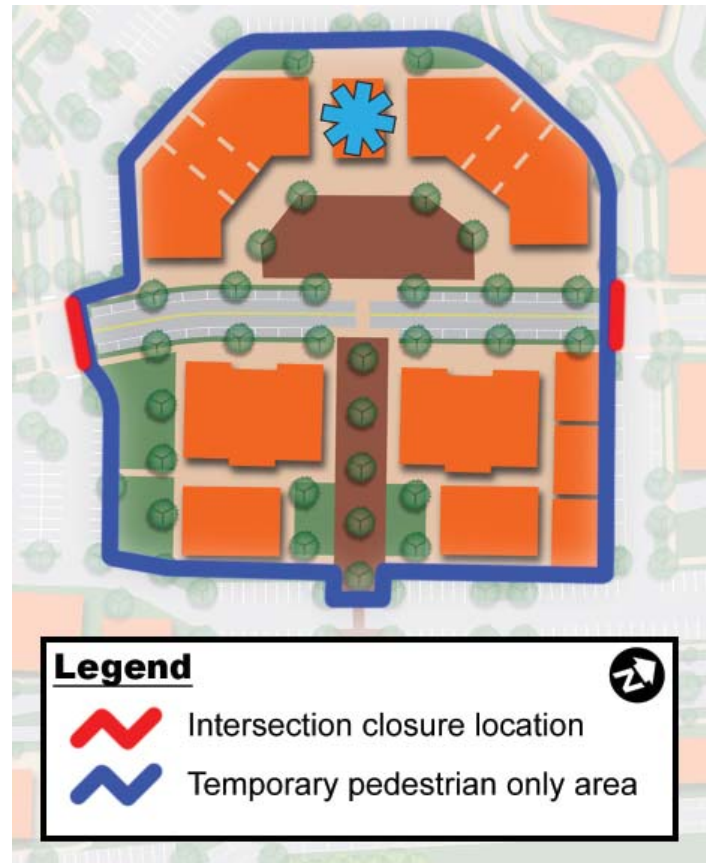


FIGURE 6.17  
TEMPORARY PEDESTRIAN ONLY AREAS

## Religious Institutions

The Generations Church, formerly the Covington First Church of the Nazarene, is located in a strategic position between Covington Catholic High School and the neighborhood commercial center. This building is in a good location for a community building and/or parking for both the school and the commercial center. This transition area between the school and the commercial center provides a variety of opportunities some of which are mentioned above. Phase Two of the preferred alternative recommends removal of this particular structure and two new smaller structures are shown in its place. This is one case

where it is important to remember that the preferred redevelopment alternative is the basic idea of how the corridor should redevelop. If, over time it is found that the existing church structure remains a quality and functional space, it could remain. If however, over time this structure becomes obsolete, this study recommends that this piece of the corridor be used as a transitions area between the high school and the main mixed use area.

Saint Josephs Convent (*Figure 6.18*) likely will not change in any substantial way for the foreseeable future; however, the longevity of convents throughout the county is an issue that will possibly need to be addressed in Park Hills. The facility itself may eventually become vacant and the City should consider what they want to happen with the land and the structure. The grounds and historic structures are quite impressive and could facilitate new tenants in the future through some form of adaptive reuse. Conversion into a hotel with accommodations for retreats, seminars, small conventions and workshops might be one



*FIGURE 6.18*  
*SAINT JOSEPHS CONVENT*

potential reuse for the structure. The close proximity to the City’s primary commercial center gives the city another potential synergistic relationship that could bring activity to the City.