



bankhead highway corridor plan

executive summary

carrollton corridor development and beautification committee

In September 2016, the Mayor and City Council created the Carrollton Corridor Development and Beautification Committee (CCDBC). The purpose of this committee is to create a plan to encourage and promote development and beautification of the major corridors leading into the City of Carrollton, including making recommendations for streetscape improvements, pedestrian scale building and site design standards, and economic development incentives. The following community members were appointed to serve as founding members of the CCDBC:

MIKE PATTERSON, Committee Chairperson, a commercial and industrial real estate broker serving the community for 17 years.

MET LANE, Ward 4 City Councilmember, Attorney and Partner at Shadrix Lance, P.C. and co-sponsor of the resolution creating the CCDBC.

RORY WOJCIK, Ward 2 City Councilmember, Assistant Director of Event Production at the University of West Georgia and co-sponsor of the resolution creating the CCDBC.

DAVID GODWIN, City School Board Member and Senior Vice President of BankSouth Mortgage.

MICHELLE MORGAN, Carroll County Commissioner representing the Bankhead Highway Corridor, works with Morgan Oil Company, a family owned business that operates in three commercial corridors, including the Bankhead Highway study area.

SANDRA HOUSTON, City of Carrollton Planning Commissioner, Associate Broker at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Georgia Properties and a member of the Board of Assessors for Carroll County.

JOHN SAMMON, Broker/Owner of Georgia West Realty and managing partner of Lake Carroll Mall, both located on Bankhead Highway.

ANDY CAMP, Vice President of Business Development for NextSite, a retail and commercial development consulting firm that assists communities with economic development; former Vice President of Economic Development at Carroll Tomorrow.

CHUCK CONERLY, City Attorney, Attorney and Partner at Smith Conerly, LLP.

CHRISTINA DAVIS, Senior Project Manager at Columbia Residential, a regional mixed use and multifamily development company. She has more than 11 years of experience in the development and construction industry.

ERICA STUDDARD, City of Carrollton, Community Development Director for the City of Carrollton and the former Executive Director of Friends of Carrollton GreenBelt.

LUKE WOJCIK, a civil engineer with Georgia and West, Inc., over five years of experience in land planning and engineering, provides the committee with insight on the practicality and feasibility of the conceptual infrastructure improvements developed by the group.

THE 11-MONTH PLANNING PROCESS INVOLVED FIVE MAIN TASKS:



TASK 1



SWOT ANALYSIS

Identify areas of weakness in the corridor and develop a vision for the area (neighborhood and pedestrian oriented redevelopment) and needed streetscape improvements to accommodate vision.



TASK 2

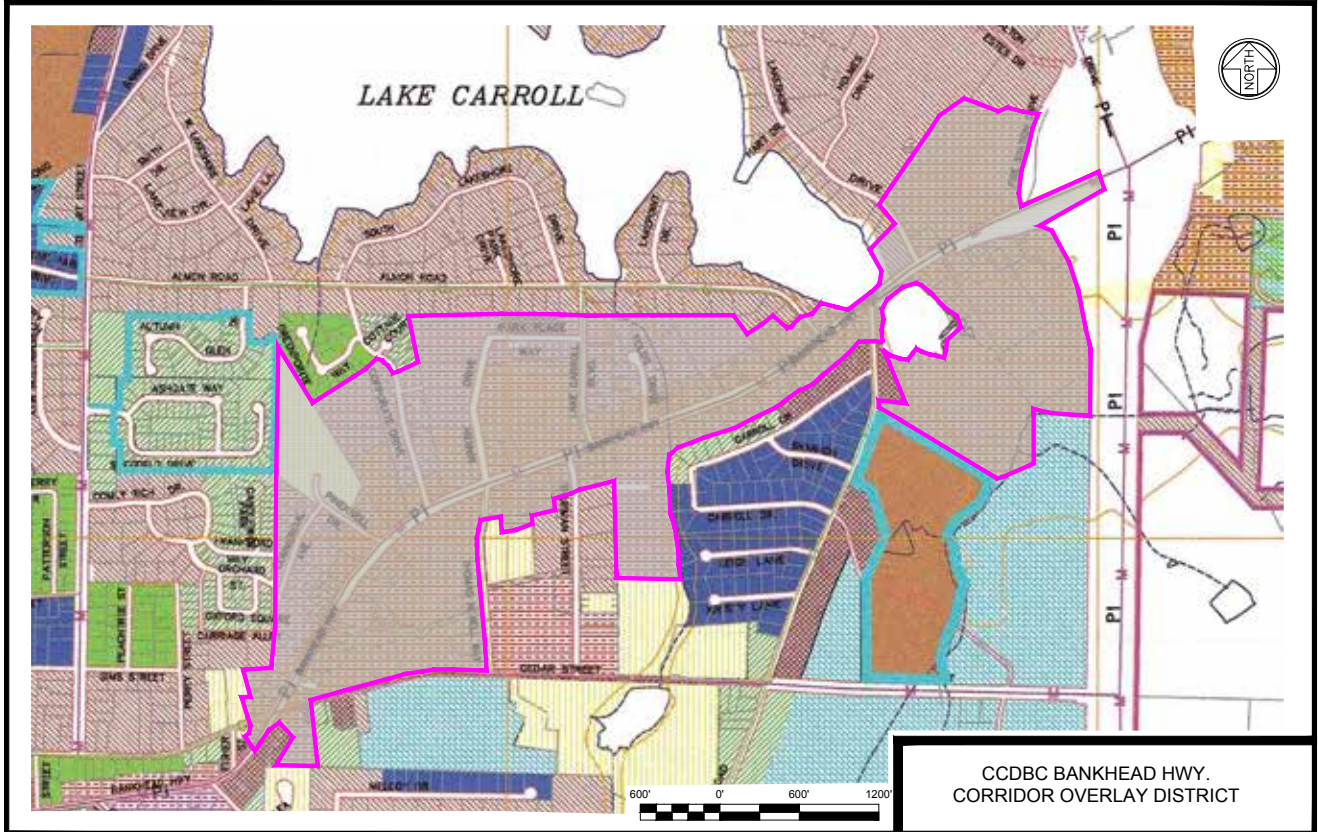


TRAFFIC STUDY

Analyze traffic patterns and complete a traffic study to consider options with regard to lane reduction and the installation of bike lanes and sidewalks.

project area

The general boundaries for the area of focus on the Bankhead Highway Corridor begin at the Cedar Street intersection to the west and end at the intersection with Highway 166 (Carrollton Bypass). The project area is zoned exclusively C-2 (General Commercial) and includes several large, defunct shopping centers and smaller commercial lots. Many dilapidated and abandoned signs dot the landscape of the corridor. Most of the area does not have sidewalk or bike lanes. The Carrollton GreenBelt crosses the corridor at Lake Carroll on the western side of the corridor.



TASK 3

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommend economic development and grant incentives that may entice redevelopment along the corridor and improved beautification of existing properties, including signage and landscaping.

TASK 4

SIGNS

Create proposed signage standards that encourage creative and unique designs while preventing cluttered and unattractive streetscapes.

TASK 5

DESIGN STANDARDS

Draft proposed site design and architectural standards that encourage the growth of both residential and commercial neighborhood development along the corridor.



TASK 1

Task 1 was a “group think” effort by the CCDBC at identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) that currently exist along the Bankhead Highway Corridor. **Factors that were discussed include:**

- Vacant buildings/businesses
- Cluttered, dilapidated, and abandoned signage
- Transition from car-oriented design to neighborhood commercial design
- Changing traffic patterns and the desire for commercial businesses to be located on Highway 27 instead of Bankhead Highway
- Lack of adequate sidewalk
- Lack of pedestrian oriented building design
- Lack of bike lanes
- Location of commercial corridor to the surrounding neighborhoods and lack of connection between the two
- The need for more residential development to support new and existing commercial development
- Cluttered overhead utilities
- “Mall” concept is dated
- Utilization of Lake Carroll and the Carrollton GreenBelt as an asset
- The creation of a village to bring life back into the corridor



A traffic study was conducted on the corridor by a traffic engineering firm in the spring of 2017. In addition to this study, the committee engaged a local engineering firm to survey the portions of the corridor that include Phase 1 of the proposed streetscape improvements. These studies confirmed the ability for a lane reduction to accommodate the installation of bike lanes and sidewalks.



TASK 3



The committee recommends two options to foster and promote economic development in the corridor:

- 1. Beautification Grants:** This grant fund can be established by the City of Carrollton as a local tool to foster beautification of existing businesses along the corridor.
 - City will establish a grant fund capped at \$50,000 per year for three years.
 - Grant will be a re-imbursement grant up to 75-percent of project cost with no more than \$10,000 distributed to a single property owner.
 - Grant can be used towards signage, landscaping or exterior building rehabilitation.
 - All sign permit fees will be waived for participants who replace signage using this funding.
- 2. Tax Incentive Program:** The success of a tax freeze program will be greater with a partnership with Carroll County. Unlike an abatement program, this would freeze property values at a specific rate for a defined period once a property is redeveloped. However, it would not reduce existing tax revenue for the corridor. Committee members have approached Carroll County leadership to begin discussions of a freeze program. At this time, the committee is researching how the city may implement this tax incentive for redevelopment. Once a suitable structure is developed, the committee recommends formalizing the partnership with Carroll County. **Proposed elements of the program may include:**
 - Eligibility limited to redevelopment where at least 75-percent of present day assessed value of the property will be expended.
 - Property tax freeze for 8 years (similar timeframe to Historic Tax Credits).
 - Both new construction and redevelopment of existing structures are eligible.
 - Site design standards must adhere to the overlay design standards.
 - Both commercial and mixed use projects are eligible.

TASK 4



Signage is vital to the Bankhead Highway corridor. While functioning primarily as a communication tool, signs can also contribute to the unique character of an area. The Bankhead Highway corridor has a diverse mix of pole, monument, wall, temporary, and dilapidated signage. **The intent of the sign design standards in the Bankhead Highway Corridor is:**

- To encourage excellence in signage, both as a communication tool and as an art form.
- To allow and encourage creative and unique sign designs while preventing cluttered and unattractive streetscapes.
- To provide basic parameters for creative signs that may be varied and unique like the businesses they represent.

Effectively designed signage should respond to the site, landscape, and architectural design context within which they are located. Signs should be compatible in scale, proportion, and design with the building's façade and its surroundings. These standards do not dictate design. Photographs of sign examples are used to illustrate design concepts, but should not be viewed as an exclusive list of acceptable signs.

The sign standards for the Bankhead Highway Overlay District address the following:

- Appropriate locations
- Number of signs allowed on a property
- Maximum area for individual signs
- Height limitation
- Color and materials
- Lighting
- Temporary signage (both on-site and off-site)
- Off-site signs
- Dilapidated or abandoned signage

TASK 5

Site design standards and architectural standards are critical for the redevelopment of the Bankhead Highway Corridor. The existing corridor is designed completely around automobile usage. Over the years, traffic counts along this corridor have dropped, making it less desirable for auto-oriented businesses to locate along Bankhead Highway. Commercial neighborhood oriented design, where both the pedestrian and cyclist users are critical, requires a different design structure to be successful.

Emphasis is given to the architectural elements of the buildings by placing parking lots to the side or rear of buildings. Sidewalks with direct connections to the buildings and trees lining the street create a space that invites the pedestrian. Bike lanes provide another transportation opportunity for the neighborhood. Providing a mixture of housing opportunities along the corridor creates the population to sustain new commercial development. These elements combined will contribute to the creation of a neighborhood village, rather than a commercial shopping center, automobile-focused corridor.



