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CITY HALL

# Vision + Framework **2**

Community Engagement

Opportunity Map

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Transportation Framework



# Community Engagement

A community vision for the Locust Grove Town Center area was developed through a series of interviews and public workshops in the fall of 2015. Community engagement for the Locust Grove Town Center LCI encouraged aspirational planning but also promoted an understanding of short-term limitations. In doing so, three basic questions were asked:

- What makes Locust Grove Town Center today?
- What does Locust Grove Town Center want to be in the future?
- What steps will be required for Locust Grove Town Center to be successful?

As part of the initial outreach efforts, the planning team asked Core Team Members and the community to describe the strengths and weaknesses of Locust Grove. The images on the next page are composed of words that were most used to describe the community today.

## Key interest groups targeted and invited to participate in outreach activities include:

*Elected officials*  
*City staff*  
*Area residents*  
*Local business owners*  
*Major employers*  
*Neighborhood advocates*  
*Main Street representatives*  
*Community Development representatives*  
*Public Safety Representatives*  
*Public Works Representatives*  
*Atlanta Regional Commission*  
*Downtown Development Authority*  
*Representatives*



# Process

Through the interviews and a series of input exercises, city staff, community leaders, local business owners, property owners, and residents helped identify the area's major strengths and weaknesses, which helped clarify the community's vision to:

- **Enhance east-west connectivity between Tanger Outlet Center and Historic Downtown**
- **Develop multimodal access through the Study Area**
- **Encourage economic development**
- **Create a stronger sense of place**
- **Brand the area through the development of wayfinding and signage**

## Strengths

- Strong community
- Quaint Historic Downtown
- Safe Downtown
- Regional accessibility
- Recent Community Development efforts
- The Locust Grove Main Street Program
- Train Watching Platform
- Increased tourism
- Attraction of young families
- Warren Holder Park
- Great location
- Good visibility from I-75
- Future development opportunities

## Weaknesses

- Traffic congestion
- Bill Gardner aesthetics and safety
- Increase in rail traffic
- Railroad tracks dissect the city
- Peeksville Intersection
- Bowden Intersection
- Frances Ward @ Bill Gardner intersection
- Ingles and Walmart access points off Bill Gardner
- Downtown retail
- Local and regional awareness of Downtown
- Wayfinding and identity
- Housing opportunities, specifically near Downtown
- Parking in Downtown
- Pedestrian accessibility of Downtown
- Zoning restrictions
- Public recreation, parks, and open space
- Local connections to Downtown

As part of the planning process, 18 Core Team members—including the Mayor, City staff, DDA Board Members, Main Street Program and Locust Grove Heritage Society representatives—utilized the list of identified strengths and weaknesses to develop a priority list to categorize potential investment opportunities for the City of Locust Grove. These priorities are outlined to the right.

This list was later used during a prioritization exercise at a public workshop to distinguish the five investment opportunities that the community considered to be the highest priority for enhancing the City of Locust Grove. These priorities are listed on page 47.

## Investment Opportunities

### **HOUSING**

*Add a wider range of housing options*

### **RETAIL/DINING**

*Bolster downtown with additional retail and dining options*

### **TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS**

*Improve traffic movement at the Interchange, along Bill Gardner and Main Street*

### **EAST-WEST CONNECTIVITY**

*Add new east-west streets to increase connectivity within the Study Area*

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

*Enhance historic preservation efforts in and around downtown*

### **PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

*Provide more parks, trails, and open space*

### **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE AMENITIES**

*Enhance the ability to walk and bike in and around the Study Area*

### **BILL GARDNER PARKWAY IMPROVEMENTS**

*Improve safety and aesthetics*

### **PARKING**

*Provide additional parking downtown*

### **WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE**

*Develop wayfinding signage of Locust Grove and the downtown area*

# Priorities

In conversations and prioritization exercises with community leaders and stakeholders, five themes were consistently ranked highest: Retail/Dining, Traffic Improvements, Public Parks and Open Space, East-West Connectivity, and Wayfinding and Signage.

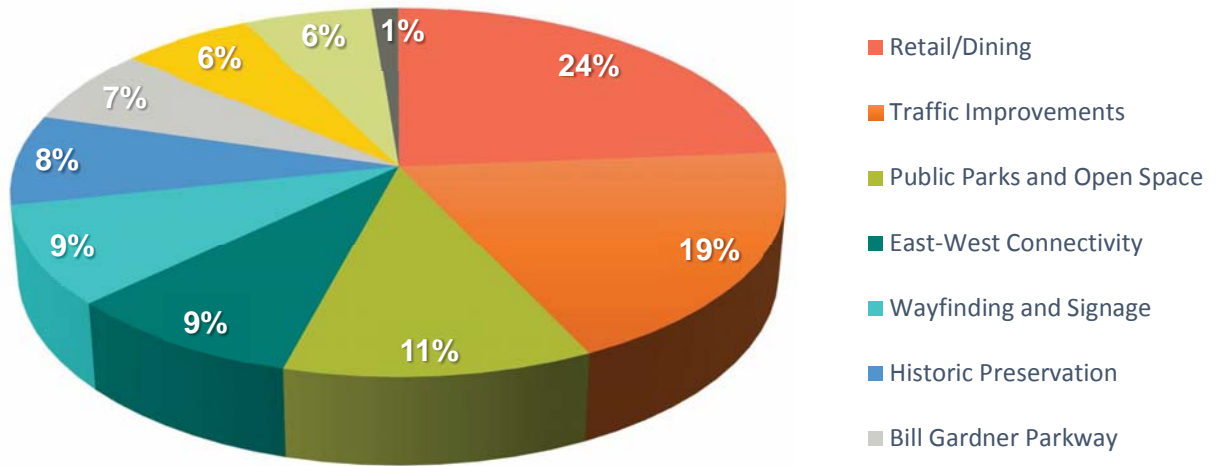
The “funding allocation” referred to in the chart to the right and on page 48 represents a prioritization exercise conducted with area stakeholders in September 2015.

## Top Priorities

- 1 *Retail/Dining*
- 2 *Traffic Improvements*
- 3 *Public Parks and Open Space*
- 4 *East-West Connectivity*
- 5 *Wayfinding and Signage*

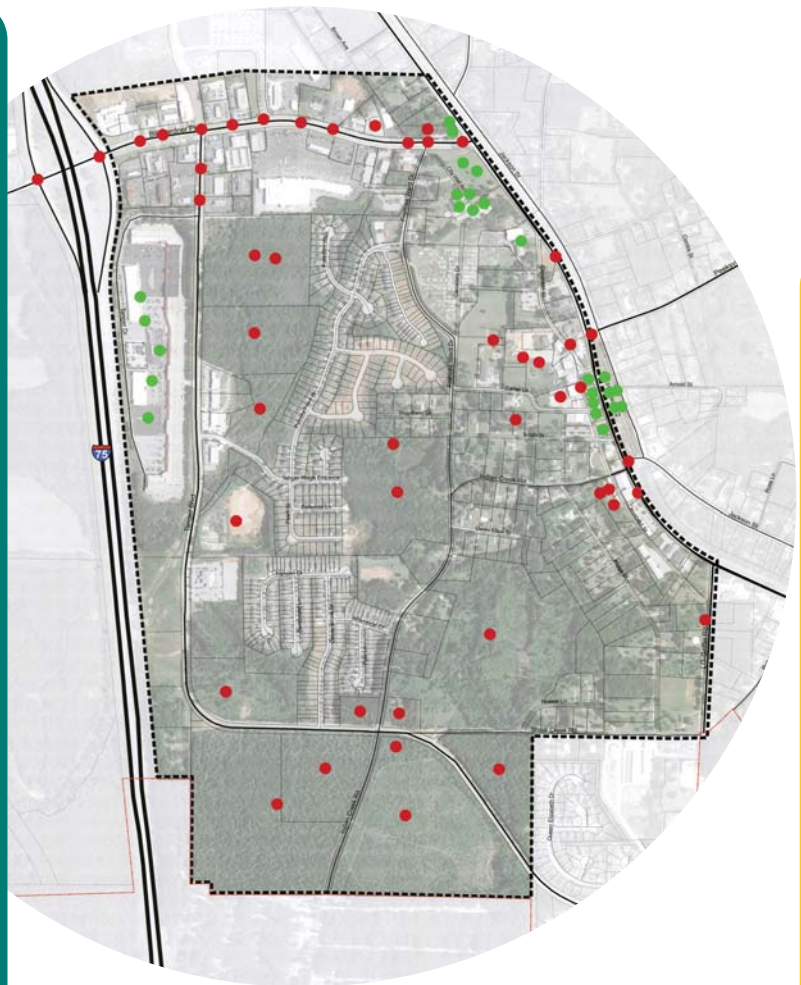
Out of the top five priorities, Traffic Improvements was listed as a priority for 75% of the participants, however, it represented 5% less “funding allocation” than Retail/Dining.

Overall, these two priorities, along with Public Parks and Open Space, East-West Connectivity, and Wayfinding and Signage, represent 72% of the total “funding” available for this exercise.



## Dot Mapping Exercise

As part of the public engagement effort, area leaders, residents, business owners, and property owners were also asked to identify major opportunity areas for new development/redevelopment and priority preservation areas. In the map to the right, green dots note areas the community wished to preserve while red dots identified areas they wanted to see change. Priority areas to preserve included Tanger Outlet Center, Locust Grove Municipal Complex, and the core of Downtown. Priority areas to change included Bill Gardner Parkway and various vacant parcels throughout the Study Area.





# Opportunity Map

Based on public input and the planning team's assessment of the Study Area, the opportunity map to the right was developed.

The opportunity map defines those areas (in red) that are prioritized for preservation and/or unlikely to change. The areas not shaded in red are preferred and/or available for development, redevelopment, or other forms of investment in accordance with the concepts and plans presented throughout this document.

Priority areas to preserve include Tanger Outlet Center, the Locust Grove Municipal Complex, and the core of the Downtown Historic Business District between Highway 42 and Cleveland Street from Smith Street to Main Street.

Priority development and redevelopment areas include Bill Gardner Parkway; various industrial and vacant sites in the Downtown Historic District, particularly along Cleveland Street; the old Oxidation pond along Tanger Boulevard; the vacant parcel across from the Tanger Outlet Center; and several significant undeveloped tracts of land in the south portion of the Study Area along Tanger Boulevard and Frances Ward Drive.

## Key properties that were identified as primary development/redevelopment opportunities:

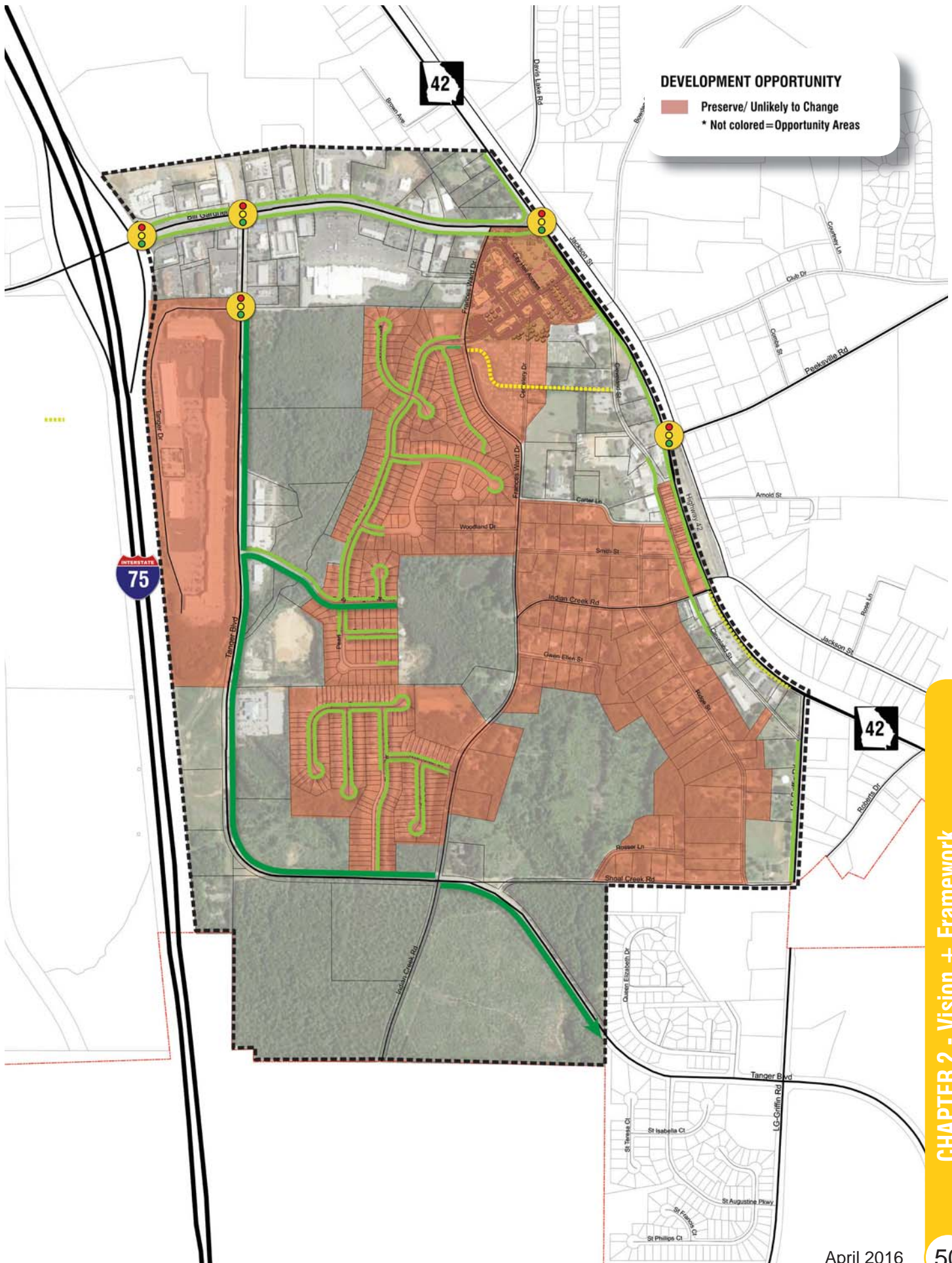
*Oxidation pond*

*Out-parcels along Bill Gardner Parkway*

*Warren Holder industrial sites*

*Vacant parcels*

*Undeveloped parcels adjacent to Tanger Outlet Center*



# Land Use Framework

The Land Use Framework Plan provides an overall vision for future development and investment within the Locust Grove Town Center.

In September 2015, public input was gathered through a series of interactive planning exercises. The public was asked to select and place their preferred development types using a collection of development characteristic images. An example exercise is shown at the bottom of this page.

Area residents recognized that the types of preferred investment in and around the Historic Downtown is different from what is preferred and appropriate along Bill Gardner Parkway and across from Tanger Outlet Center. Opinions for the types of uses desired in the southern portion of the Study Area were varied. However, due to surrounding residential development, there was a clearly defined preference for residentially acceptable land use. Based on community input, a market study, and the experience of the planning team and city leaders, an overall land use framework was defined to divide the Study Area into three distinct character areas.

The Gateway District includes Tanger Outlet Center, the commercial corridor along Bill Gardner Parkway, and development along Tanger Boulevard to the Locust Grove Georgia DDS and DMV Office. The Gateway District is envisioned to grow and develop as a regional destination with a mix of uses

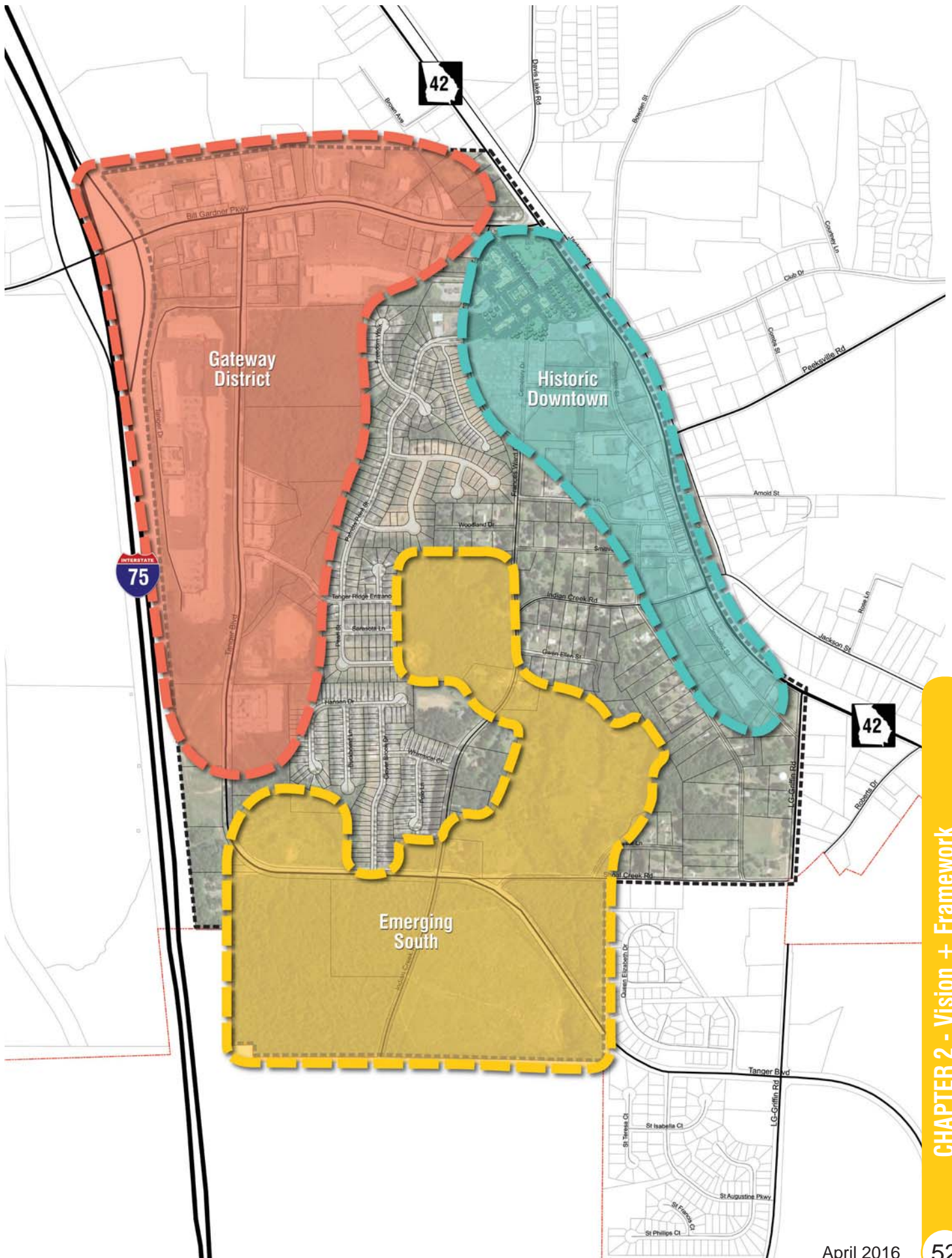
where area residents and visitors can shop, dine, work, and live.

The Historic Downtown District follows Highway 42 from Bill Gardner Parkway to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. It is intended to preserve and grow the Downtown area's historic, walkable character with additional residences, retail, restaurants, and small-scale local offices. Maintaining downtown's vibrancy and architectural character are of the utmost importance.

The Emerging South District contains a number of large, future development parcels and should be targeted for additional residential development that provides a greater range of housing options, including senior-oriented housing and quality single-family and multi-family development.

While the Land Use Framework Plan provides the overall structure for future development and investment, each district and its respective recommendations are provided in greater detail in Chapter 3.





# Transportation Framework

The main goals and vision of the Transportation Framework Plan are to:

- Improve East-West connectivity
- Reduce congestion at key intersections and improve the experience of Bill Gardner Parkway
- Provide new connections to enhance safety and facilitate local connectivity
- Enhance pedestrian/bicycle access and connectivity among Tanger, neighborhood areas, and the Historic Downtown

The various project types necessary to foster and implement the vision for the Locust Grove Town Center are outlined here. Additional details for each transportation improvement project can be found in further detail in Chapter 3.

## Corridor Enhancements

Corridor Enhancements include a variety of improvements and additions to existing infrastructure. Many of the projects identified as a Corridor Enhancement focus primarily on improving the roadway serviceability and adding or enhancing pedestrian access and facilities to an otherwise lacking corridor.

## New Roadway Connections

New Roadway Connection projects identify key/major gaps in the roadway network and look to realign, link, or extend the existing grid to a more fully formed system.

## Intersection Improvements

Intersection Improvement projects pinpoint existing intersections throughout the Study Area that are functioning below standard and proposes to upgrade them with a variety of improvements that help ease traffic flow and stabilize the efficiency of traffic movement.

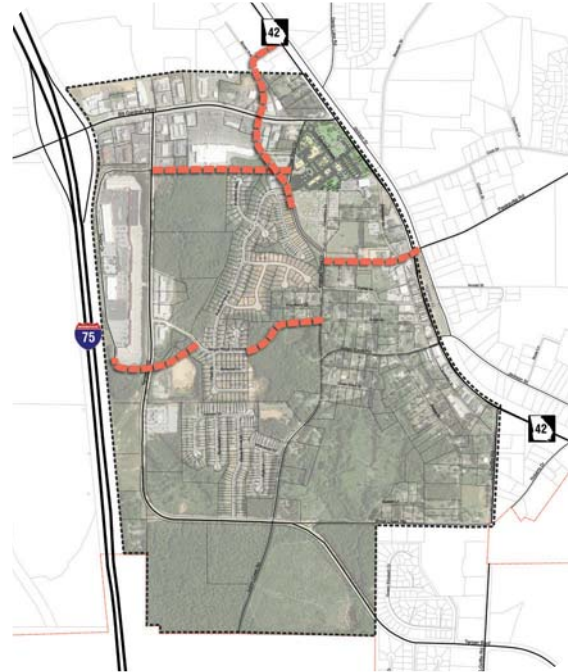
## Pedestrian and Multi-Use Paths

Pedestrian and Multi-Use Path projects create new off-road passages for pedestrians and cyclists to move through the Study Area. The project identified in the image to the right creates a pathway through an otherwise undevelopable area and creates an off-road linear park, linking pedestrians to existing and future development areas.

## Corridor Enhancements



## New Roadway Connections



## Intersection Improvements



## Pedestrian and Multi-Use Paths

