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The South Gilbert Street Commercial Corridor

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A Report for the Central District Plan to the
City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department
May 10, 2005
Nathan Borst, Brad Johnson, Dylan Mullenix, Judd Vande Voort, Li Zhang
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose
The purpose of our project is to complete a thorough land use inventory of the South Gilbert Street Commercial Corridor, document real and perceived problems, and to recommend actions to address such problems. The study was confined to the area enclosed by the Iowa Interstate Railroad to the north, the Iowa River to the west, the division of commercial-zoned land to the east, and Highway 6 to the south. The study did not include City Carton or the Iowa City North Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Methodology
The team performed a land use survey, collected land values and ran a comparison with similar areas in the Iowa City area, performed business surveys, interviewed realtors and residents, collected demographic data, and researched relevant literature. This data was used to analyze concerns with the Study Area and discuss remedies.

The land use inventory was completed by collecting data online as well as visually in the field. Variables such as operating use (such as laundromat or office) and vacancy were obtained by a visual survey of the area. Other variable such as address, square footage, and land value were collected on the Johnson County Assessor website. Zoning for the area was collected from Iowa City’s zoning map. This data was assembled by property and entered into one spreadsheet. We compared land values for two areas with similar commercial intensity suggested by the Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department and by business owners and a realtor. Parcel size and value for properties in both of these areas was entered into the same spreadsheet. This allowed a valid comparison of land values between the Study Area and these two alternative locations.

Business surveys were completed after businesses were categorized. Each business in the Study Area was classified as Intensive Commercial, Office, and Community Commercial. The Study Area was also divided into three functional areas based principally on geography. Sixteen businesses were selected by a rough, hand selected sample with an attempt to stratify by geographic area and use category. Business owners or operators were approached on-site, and asked a short series of questions to determine site suitability as well as negative and positive elements of the Area. The survey results were aggregated by business type. Residents living adjacent to the Study Area were interviewed using similar questions.

Two realtors with a history of service in the Study Area were also interviewed. These were relatively lengthy interviews intended to gather more data from these experts. Information was collected about the demand for commercial property and impediments to a healthy real estate market in the Study Area.
Demographic data was collected for a background analysis on area residents. Data for the block group containing the Study Area as well as the four surrounding block groups was obtained from the United States Census Bureau website.

Literature research included background information on form based zoning, methods of organizing neighborhood associations, pedestrian accessibility, and methods of encouraging infill development. Information was gathered from several sources listed in the annotated bibliography of this report.

Findings
The Project Team found a multitude of general information which is discussed in the body of the report. Some of the more notable findings include:

**Zoning and Land Use**
- Intensive Commercial zoning dominates the area, covering about 70% of the properties.
- Consumer Service, Intensive Commercial, and Office land uses make up about 80% of the total area, followed by Public use, Residential, and Vacant properties.
- Based on geography, land use, and zoning, the South Gilbert Street Commercial Corridor should be considered three sub-districts; the Gilbert Street Sub-district, the Northwest Sub-district, and the Southeast Sub-district.

**Demographics and Land Value**
- The student population in the Study Area is increasing, represented by a decreasing age and more rental housing.
- The average land value in the Study Area is $6.15/\text{ft}^2$.
- Land Values in the Study Area are significantly higher than one business location alternative (Intersection of Highways 218 & 1) and somewhat less expensive than one other business location alternative (Intensive commercial area of the Coralville Strip).

**Perceptions of Businesses, Residents, and Realtors**
- Businesses see proximity to other commercial businesses, access to arterial streets, a centralized location, the affordability of real estate, and a good traffic flow as the positive elements of the Study Area.
- Businesses see inadequate local streets, homelessness, crime, limited expansion possibilities, and the increasing student/residential population as negative elements of the Study Area.
- Residents viewed the affordability of the area, sense of community, and short distance to downtown and the University as positive elements of the Study Area.
- Residents overwhelmingly viewed the rail traffic as the major negative element of the Study Area, followed by the increasing student population and the lack of more neighborhood-friendly businesses.
• Realtors believe that the Study Area provides a central location with good traffic flow, but that the commercial market in the Study Area is “soft” due to a mixed assortment of businesses and lack of aesthetic quality.

Recommendations
The Study Area is divided into three Sub-districts for analysis and future plans. The Gilbert Street Sub-district spans the Study Area from north to south and is characterized by auto-oriented consumer services. This Sub-district should be thought of as a major gateway for Iowa City and local policies and land use decisions should reflect this. The Northwest Sub-district is located west of Ralston Creek and is characterized by office and multi-family residential uses. This area also has significant pedestrian potential due to its land use make-up and its proximity to the University and downtown. The Southeast Sub-district is located to the east of the CRANDIC Railroad Line and is characterized by more intensive commercial uses. We found that recommendations were most appropriate for the Sub-district level. Our recommendations are as follows:

Gilbert Street Sub-district

• Gilbert Street should be considered a major gateway for Iowa City.
• Landscaping in southern portion of the corridor should be improved
• Strategies should be created to fill vacant lots along the Corridor.
• Pedestrian and bicycle access in the Corridor should be improved.
• Design guidelines should be formulated to ensure consistent and attractive development and redevelopment along the Corridor.

Northwest Sub-district

• The Northwest Sub-district should be an area of denser future development (including residential) and pedestrian improvements.
• The City should encourage the further development of a mixed-use employment and residential node.
• The City should work closely with Johnson County officials and nearby stakeholders to ensure any future expansion of the current county facilities takes place in an orderly fashion.

Southeast Sub-district

• The Southeast Sub-district should be considered an intensive commercial area providing vital services for the citizens of Iowa City. Dramatic changes are not recommended.
• The City should encourage better enforcement of buffer requirements between businesses and residents.
• The City should encourage the business owners in this Sub-district to work together to improve the area. This could be a formal business organization or an effort by the City to bring stakeholders in this area together to discuss any future planning endeavors.
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to assist the Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department in the creation of Iowa City’s Central District Plan. Our study addresses the commercial area in the southwest portion of the Central District. We analyzed the commercial viability of the area- the affordability of land and rent, the adequacy of land uses, and market trends. We also developed a land use inventory cataloguing the properties within the Study Area, and assessed the current zoning to see how well it fits with the current land uses.

To accomplish this, our group did the following:

- Conducted a land use inventory of all properties in the area to determine their actual uses and better understand the character of the area.

- Surveyed businesses in person to determine their views of the area.

- Conducted phone interviews with area residents to collect their views of the area.

- Collected demographic and housing data from the 1990 and 2000 census to determine any trends the area has seen in the previous decade.

- Spoke with real estate agents familiar with the area to better understand development trends.

- Compared land values of the Study Area with similar areas throughout the metropolitan area to determine the relative affordability of the area.

Goals of the Study

- Provide a detailed land use inventory and map of the Study Area to the Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department

- Determine the best future mix of land use(s) for the area

- Make recommendations for how Iowa City could achieve the desired land uses in the area. These recommendations may be incorporated in the Central District Plan
The body of this study is laid out as followed:

1. **Background** - boundaries of the Study Area, geography, and zoning

2. **The Study Area** – detailed background of the area, focused on the actual land uses, demographic and housing data, land values and the relative affordability of the area

3. **Perceptions** – perceptions of the area from interested parties including local businesses, residents, and real estate agents familiar with the area

4. **Recommendations** – recommendations formulated by our group to be considered by the Iowa City Planning Department for inclusion in the Central District Plan

**BACKGROUND**

**Geography**

The Study Area is comprised of all properties south of the Iowa Interstate Railroad, north of Highway 6, east of the Iowa River (with the exception of the current City Carton facilities and the Iowa City’s North Wastewater Treatment Plant), and west of Boyrum Street and Gilbert Ct. (See Maps 1 and 2 on pages 3 and 4). Gilbert Street and Kirkwood Avenue are the two major roads in the Study Area and have the greatest amount of traffic in the area. The Study Area is also traversed by a number of railroad tracks, with the heaviest and most frequent rail traffic along the Iowa Interstate Railroad. Ralston Creek is another prominent natural feature that splits the Study Area in half from northeast to southwest.

This Study Area has been completely developed over the last 30 years and primarily serves as a business district. Some major land uses in the area include the Johnson County Administration Building and the National Guard Armory on the west side, an assortment of offices and retail businesses along Gilbert Street including Kennedy Plaza, and many intensive commercial operations and some single family residential on the east side. A more in depth analysis of the land uses is presented in the *Land Use Inventory* section.
Map 1: Location of the Study Area
Iowa City, Iowa

Legend
- major roads
- study area
- Iowa City
- Iowa Interstate Railroad

Source: United States Census 2004 Tiger/Shape Files
Map 2: Parcels in the Study Area

Parcels in the Study Area
- Water Bodies
- Outside of Study Area
- Parcels in the Study Area

Source: Johnson County Parcel Information, 2003
Zoning
The Study Area consists of 167 properties totaling roughly 75 acres. The Iowa City Zoning Code identifies 6 different uses in this area: Community Commercial (CC-2), Intensive Commercial (CI-1), Commercial Office (CO-1), General Industrial (I-1), Public (P), and Medium Density Single-Family Residential (RS-8). Map 3 on the following page illustrates the zoning in the area. Table 1 (below) summarizes the number of properties and the area these zones represent.

Table 1: Zoning in the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th># of Properties</th>
<th>% of Total Properties</th>
<th># of Acres</th>
<th>% of Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.37%</td>
<td>11.43</td>
<td>15.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI1</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>71.26%</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>70.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.99%</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>8.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>74.68</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Iowa City Zoning Map, March 2004, and Johnson County Assessor Information

The majority of the area is zoned for commercial activity. CI-1 is intended for businesses involving sales and service, and is characterized mainly by outdoor display, storage and/or sale of merchandise, or motor vehicle repair. The CI-1 zone in the Study Area contains many auto repair businesses and construction/building oriented businesses.

The CC-2 zone is characterized by businesses that service the needs of a large community population. These businesses are mainly retail services that are often large traffic generators. With respect to the higher traffic volumes these businesses attract, the zoning is adequate as all the properties zoned CC-2 are located along Gilbert Street or Kirkwood Ave. The businesses in the Study Area that fall within this zone include real estate offices, insurance companies, restaurants, and laundry services.

The other zones found in the area consist of only a few properties each. Lensing Funeral Home is the only business in the area zoned CO-1. The lots zoned I-1 are found in the far western boundary of the Study Area and serve only as parking lots. There are a few public uses in the area, including the Johnson County Administration Building, the National Guard Armory, and the Johnson County Public Health facility. The remaining 10 lots of the area are zoned single family residential (RS-8).
Map 3: Zoning in the Study Area

Zones in the Study Area
- Water Bodies
- Outside Study Area
- CC2
- C1
- CO1
- I1
- P
- RS8

Source: Johnson County Parcel Information, 2003, and the Iowa City Zoning Map, March 2004
THE STUDY AREA

Land Use Inventory
One task of the project was to look beyond zoning to determine the different types of uses found in the Study Area. Our group conducted a land use inventory of the area, including each businesses name, address, primary use, land value, square footage, the presence of any residential units, and the opportunity for infill development. These items were collected by visiting the area, as well as using assessor information from the Johnson County Assessor’s website. A detailed land use inventory can be found in Appendix F.

Using definitions established by the Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department, each property was classified based upon its use. Our group took these many classifications and condensed them into 6 classes: Consumer Services, Intensive Commercial, Office, Public, Residential, and Vacant properties. The following definitions explain each classification:

- Consumer Services - businesses characterized by frequent, mainly unscheduled visits by customers. Examples include restaurants and bars, retail stores, laundry services, and convenience stores/gas stations.

- Intensive Commercial - businesses characterized by more land intensive, storage, or repair oriented businesses, much like those intended in CI-1 zoning. Examples include automobile repair services, contractor storage, maintenance shops, heavy equipment sales or repair, and lumber yards.

- Office - businesses characterized by either non-customer oriented operations, or those with scheduled visits by customers or clients. Examples include medical or veterinary offices, insurances and real estate offices, and offices of building contractors.

- Residential - properties that are entirely used for residence, such as single family homes, duplexes, or multifamily apartment buildings.

- Vacant - properties that have either no structure present (such as lots with surplus parking,) or have vacant buildings.

Table 2 on the following page summarizes the breakdown of the properties and the area they occupy.
Table 2: Land Uses in the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th># of Properties</th>
<th>% of Total Properties</th>
<th># of Acres</th>
<th>% of Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>28.14%</td>
<td>22.57</td>
<td>29.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Commercial</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23.95%</td>
<td>21.50</td>
<td>28.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Oriented</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26.95%</td>
<td>18.68</td>
<td>25.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.59%</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>9.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.58%</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.78%</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>3.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>74.68</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Use Inventory, 2005, and Johnson County Assessor Information

It should be noted that a number of properties contain mixed use buildings with both businesses and apartment units present. The buildings that contain more than one use were categorized by their primary use. For example, a building with offices on the bottom floor and apartments on the top floor was classified as Office because the primary use of the building is an office. The Johnson County Assessors webpage was used to determine the number of apartment units in the mixed use and multifamily properties. A total of 135 dwelling units are located in the area. This figure includes apartment units in the mixed use buildings, single family homes, and duplex and multifamily units. Table 3 (below) summarizes the distribution of residential units, and Map 4 on page 9 shows the land use location in the area, including those with mixed use residential.

Table 3: Presence of Dwelling Units in the Study Area by Land Use Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th># of Properties</th>
<th># of Properties with Dwelling Units</th>
<th>% of Category Total</th>
<th># of Dwelling Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.77%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Commercial</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Oriented</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20.96%</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Use Inventory, 2005, and Johnson County Assessor Information

Tables 2 and 3 and Map 4 show that the largest land uses are Consumer Service, Intensive Commercial, and Offices, with the three use categories combining for around 80% of the area. These three use categories are scattered throughout the area, with a concentration of Consumer Service businesses along the Gilbert Street corridor, especially in Kennedy Plaza, and also along Gilbert Ct. Offices are scattered throughout the area, with the heaviest concentrations along Ralston Creek to the north of Kirkwood Ave. The largest concentration of vacant land is a block just to the southeast of the Gilbert Street-Kirkwood Ave. intersection. Figure 1 on page 10 shows an example of a vacant lot in the Study Area.
Map 4: Land Use Categories of the Study Area

Land Use Categories
- Water Bodies
- Mix Use Residential Properties
- Consumer Service
- Intensive Commercial
- Office
- Public
- Residential
- Vacant

Source: Johnson County Parcel Information, 2003, and Field Problems Land Use Inventory, 2005
Figure 1: Picture of a Vacant Lot in the Study Area

Source: Field Problems Project Group, 2005

Intensive Commercial businesses have two major areas of concentration: Hawkeye Lumber’s properties between Lafayette, Clinton, Dubuque, and Benton streets, and the businesses located to the south of Kirkwood Ave, especially in the properties along Highland Ct. and Gilbert Ct. in the southeastern corner of the Study Area. Many of these Intensive Commercial properties in the southeastern corner are adjacent to single family homes just outside the Study Area, with a fence serving as the buffer between the two as Figure 2 below shows.

Figure 2: Picture of the Fence Buffer Between Intensive Commercial Uses and Residential Uses

Source: Field Problems Project Group, 2005
Five of the six Public properties are located west of Gilbert Street. The amount of Public land in the area surrounding the Johnson County Administration Building may increase in the coming years with the possible creation of a Johnson County Campus. The Johnson County website provided some insight as to the plans for the Campus, although a final design is yet to be determined. Map 5 on the next page was obtained from the Johnson County website and illustrates the County’s preliminary plans for the area. This shows that blocks directly north and northeast of the current administration building to the Iowa Interstate Railroad will be used to house new County buildings and surface parking (Johnson County, 2002). The development of a Johnson County Campus will significantly affect land use in the area due to its size and the number of businesses it will displace.

Offices and Consumer Service buildings contain the most mixed use residential uses, with a majority of them in the area north of Kirkwood Ave. Kennedy Plaza itself makes up about 60% of the mixed use dwelling units in the Consumer Service land use with 28 units, while buildings containing Office uses have an average of around 6 dwelling units per building.

**Three Sub-districts**

*An Inventory of Current Character*

The Land Use Inventory suggests that the Study Area is best defined as three Sub-districts (shown in Map 6 on page 13). Distinctions are based on natural features, infrastructure, and policy. The land uses and general character of each area also suggest that they should be thought of as sub-districts. The three districts are best designated the Gilbert Street Sub-district, the Northwest Sub-district, and the Southeast Sub-district.

The Gilbert Street Sub-district is distinct from the other Sub-districts. Gilbert Street is a major arterial in the Iowa City area. Many of the businesses located here are auto-oriented consumer services such as restaurants, retail stores, and some offices. This area is also characterized by significant traffic flow due to its status as a principle connector of Highway 6 to downtown.

Kirkwood Avenue physically divides the sub-district with respect to aesthetics. Aesthetic features north of Kirkwood include shrubbery lining parking lots, and the presence of street trees and sidewalk buffers. Business signs are low to the ground and brick building facades are prevalent. The character of the southern portion of this sub-district is much less consistent. There is minimal landscaping, business signs are more elevated, and building materials are quite varied. Vacant lots are much more prevalent south of Kirkwood, suggesting the Gilbert Street Sub-district has a need for infill development. See Figures 3 and 4 on page 14. The lack of uniformity along such a prominent road in the City is a concern that we identify, and we will make recommendations to alleviate this problem in a later section.
Map 5: Johnson County Campus Plan

Source: Johnson County Five Year Capital Improvements Plan, 2002.
Map 6: Study Area Sub-districts

Source: Johnson County Parcel Information, 2003, and Field Problems Land Use Inventory, 2005
Figures 3 and 4: Illustration of Gilbert Street Sub-district Character
Northern Portion

Landscaping is prevalent

Southern Portion

Landscaping is sporadic or non-existent

Figures 5 and 6: Illustration of Northwest Sub-district Character

Businesses have a community commercial nature

Walkable landscape

Figures 7 and 8: Illustration of Southeast Sub-district Character

Parking lots with little greenery and on and off-street parking

Varied building facades (many with metal siding)
Table 4: Land Use Breakdown of the Gilbert Street Corridor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th># of Properties</th>
<th>% of Total Properties</th>
<th># of Acres</th>
<th>% of Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.88%</td>
<td>12.37</td>
<td>39.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Commercial</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.07%</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>30.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Oriented</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.77%</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>20.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.33%</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>4.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.96%</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>4.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.99</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Gilbert Street Sub-district contains 67 dwelling units making it the district with the second highest residential density. Much of this is a result of Kennedy Plaza, located at the northern edge of the district and bordering the southeast portion of downtown. This mixed-use complex contains 28 of the 67 dwelling units.

The Northwest Sub-district is office-oriented and contains the highest residential density of the three districts. It is similar to the area to the north of the railroad tracks and just outside the boundary of the Study Area in terms of building sizes, landscaping, and uses. A significant amount of mixed use buildings with offices and student housing already exists in the northern portion of the Sub-district suggesting that the area is a good location to continue with this type of development. The Johnson County Administration building and the other county offices form a major employment hub for the Sub-district in the south. Table 5 below shows that office uses make up 27 percent of the total properties in the area and that public land uses make up another 11 percent of the properties. The Johnson County buildings dominate the public use category, but their activity is office-oriented. Office uses, therefore, actually make up nearly 40 percent of the Sub-district. The Northwest Sub-district’s land use make-up and especially its proximity to downtown make it the portion of the Study Area with the most pedestrian and multi-family residential potential. See figures 5 and 6 on page 14.

Table 5: Land Use Breakdown of Northwest Sub-district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th># of Properties</th>
<th>% of Total Properties</th>
<th># of Acres</th>
<th>% of Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.15%</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Commercial</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.40%</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>16.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Oriented</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27.66%</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>27.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.64%</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>34.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.51%</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>3.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.64%</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>7.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Southeast Sub-district consists mostly of intensive commercial uses and is bordered on the east by a single-family residential neighborhood. The Southeast Sub-district is also adjacent to Highway 6. Businesses include auto repair shops and other heavy businesses. Many of the lighter office-oriented uses in the area deal with construction, painting, and industrial sales. Consumer services are also an important component. The presence of social service agencies, thrift/resale shops, and more standard retail services add to the vitality of this area. This mix of businesses creates an aesthetic character that would be expected. Metal buildings with large
garage doors are prevalent and parking on and off the street is usually present. Landscaping such as trees and shrubs are not very prevalent, however given the intensive use of the sub-district this is not a major concern.

Table 6: Land Use Breakdown of Southeast Sub-district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
<th># Properties</th>
<th>% Properties</th>
<th># Acres</th>
<th>% Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Commercial</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>34.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Oriented</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.91%</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>29.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>3.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 6 above indicates, this area contains very little residential development within its boundaries. There are a few smaller mixed-use buildings with residential on the upper floors. The largest of these contains 10 apartments. Vacant lots are also not a problem in this area as they are in the other Sub-districts. Both of these factors bolster the Sub-district’s identity as an intensive commercial district. See figures 7 and 8 on page 14.

Demographic Profile

Description of areas for comparison

We compared the 1990 and 2000 Census data for the block group containing the Study Area (referred to as Gilbert GRP) to the adjacent block groups (referred to as Surrounding GRPs), and Iowa City as a whole. Map 7 on the next page shows the three areas that we compared. We examined household income, race distribution, age distribution, education level, and population for different types of households.

It should be noted that our study area only takes up half of the area of Gilbert GRP. The Gilbert GRP also includes the adjacent single family neighborhood on the east side which is zoned as RS-5. Since the smallest scale of data available for variables such as income and education is the block group data, this level of analysis is used in the study.

The surrounding block groups include the Iowa City downtown area. The area has a healthy rental housing market which supports UI students and other non-family renters. People in the area are 5 years younger than the city as a whole. They are also less wealthy. An increasing number of people live in non-family households, which indicates that as the rental housing market reaches saturation it will expand to adjacent areas.
Map 7: Areas Used for Demographic Study

Source: United States Census 2004 Tiger/Shape Files
Age, Wealth, and Education

The income of residents of Gilbert GRP increased faster, on average, than residents of surrounding areas and residents of Iowa City as a whole, although the median household income of residents of Gilbert GRP is close to that of residents of Iowa City as a whole. Racial composition became more mixed during the past decade, but still remains less mixed than the surrounding areas and Iowa City as a whole. While the median age of Iowa City residents as a whole increased by two years from 1990 to 2000, median age in the Study Area decreased by 4.5 years. Within the Gilbert GRP the trend is not surprising since 20% fewer people lived in family households and 20% more people lived in non-family households in 2000 than in 1990. During the decade rental housing for students and other non-family residents expanded from the downtown area south to the Study Area. Gilbert GRP has been changing from a primarily owner-occupied neighborhood into one with residents about equally distributed between rental and owner occupants. Residents’ education levels are also consistent with this trend. People 25 years old and older who attained a Bachelor’s degree or Master’s degree have been increasing faster in the block group than the surrounding areas. This said, the population with a bachelor’s degree is still a smaller share of this area than that of the surrounding area and Iowa City. However, the population of the Gilbert GRP with a Graduate degree exceeded the Surrounding GRPs and the City as a whole in both 1990 and 2000. See Appendix A for more information.

Housing

This section summarizes the housing situation in the Gilbert GRP, the surrounding area, and Iowa City, using the 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

Occupancy

From 1990 to 2000 renter-occupied housing units increased faster than in both surrounding areas and Iowa City. The percentage of renter-occupied units exceeded the city average in both years. The housing market was extremely tight in 2000 with a vacancy rate of zero for both rental housing and owner-occupied homes. Figure 9 on the next page shows that rental housing has expanded from downtown as the rental housing market has become saturated. The data also shows that from 1990 to 2000 renters shifted largely from single-family units to multi-family units in Gilbert GRP, although single-family units and clustered units (less than five units in structure) still account for about 705 rental units.
Affordability

Similar to surrounding GRPs, the median gross rent of Gilbert GRP is higher than the city average, while the median home value is lower. Both gross rents and home values increased faster than the surrounding area.

Given that households in the area have higher median incomes than the surrounding areas, and the median rent is the same, rental housing is more affordable in the Gilbert GRP. As rental housing in the city (especially in the surrounding GRPs) became less affordable between 1990 and 2000, it actually became more affordable in the Gilbert GRP area. Owner-occupied housing in the Gilbert GRP is less affordable than rental housing. Although median values for owner-occupied homes are lower than the city as a whole, owners also have lower incomes, so a higher proportion of owners pay more than 30% of their incomes for housing (a standard measure of affordability). See Appendix A for more information.

The demographic and housing data implies that mixed land uses should be encouraged to meet housing needs. This is most appropriate in the Northwest Sub-district because of the proximity to downtown and because the other two Sub-districts are more densely commercial.

Transportation

The average travel time to work for workers in the Gilbert GRP is 14.97 minutes, which is about one minute longer than the city as a whole, and one half minute shorter than the surrounding GRPs. About 77% of people go to work by car. Virtually no workers go to work by public transportation or motorcycle. About 7.5% of workers go to work by bicycle, which is the highest share compared to the two other areas. Although the fewest workers travel by foot this mode has been increasing the fastest. The transportation data demonstrates an increasing need for pedestrian and bicycle access. See Appendix A for more information.
Land Value Comparison
A basic land value comparison was developed by measuring the mean and median land price in the Study Area and two other alternatives. We chose two alternative intensive commercial areas for comparison: the intersection of Highways 218 and 6, and the intensive commercial area of the Coralville Strip. Several businesses and realtors mentioned this as an alternate location for the types of businesses in the Study Area. Map 8 on the next page shows the location of these two comparison areas.

Property area and assessed value data was available for 158 properties in the Study Area. Twenty eight properties in the Highway 218 area and 16 properties in the Coralville Strip area had the same data available. After removing outlier data, these three areas had values of $6.15 / \text{ft}^2$, $2.31 / \text{ft}^2$, and $9.31 / \text{ft}^2$, respectively. In other words, land in the South Gilbert Street area is one third cheaper than similar land on the Coralville Strip and about more than twice as expensive as similar land around the intersection of Highways 218 and 6. While the Study Area is significantly more expensive than the commercial area at the intersection of Highways 218 and 6, it serves as a lower priced alternative for businesses that wish to locate in an area with high visibility such as the Coralville Strip. Appendix G contains more information on the land value comparison.
Map 8: Areas Used for Land Value Comparison

Legend
- major roads
- comparison areas
- study area
- Iowa City

Source: United States Census 2004 Tiger/Shape Files, and Johnson County Assessor, 2005
PERCEPTIONS OF BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS, AND REALTORS

The South Gilbert Street Commercial Corridor is dominated by commercial activity. The businesses located within the area vary from large construction contractors to dance studios. The land use inventory was used to select businesses for further study. Considering factors such as location within the Study Area, nature of the business, and zoning, we selected a mix of “intensive commercial” businesses, “office” businesses, and “consumer commercial” businesses. Interviews with each selected business were conducted to learn more about the way the business perceive the commercial study area. We interviewed representatives from the following businesses (the location of these businesses can be found in Map 9 on the following page):

Office Businesses:
1. McComas-Lacina Construction
2. McDonald Chiropractic
3. Heartland Investments
4. Animal Clinic, Inc.

Intensive Commercial Businesses
1. Hawkeye Lumber
2. Aero Rental
3. Merit Electric
4. Dave Seydell, Complete Auto & Truck Repair
5. Bobcat of Iowa City

Consumer Commercial Businesses
1. Varsity Cleaners
2. Grizzlies Pub and Grill
3. Adult Marketplace
4. Iowa Paint
5. Crowded Closet
6. Deli-Mart
Map 9: Business Survey Locations

Surveyed Businesses
- Water Bodies
- Consumer Service
- Intensive Commercial
- Office
- Public
- Residential
- Vacant
- Businesses Surveyed

Source: Johnson County Parcel Information, 2003, and Field Problems Land Use Inventory, 2005
Goals for the Business surveys (see actual surveys in the Appendix B):

- Determine the business’ satisfaction with access to customers, clients, and deliveries, as well as satisfaction with the affordability of real estate and the adequacy of their current facilities.

- Determine the business’ perception of the importance of proximity to downtown Iowa City, residential neighborhoods, other commercial and intensive commercial businesses, and arterial streets.

- Discover the reasons why businesses chose to locate within the Study Area.

- Determine what elements of the area are advantages and disadvantages.

Business Issues

Intensive Commercial Businesses

The group of intensive commercial type businesses interviewed overwhelmingly indicated that the four most important elements of the Study Area are proximity to other commercial businesses, access to arterial streets, a centralized location, and affordability of real estate. Being close to other businesses is especially important to these intensive commercial businesses because many of their suppliers, repair service providers, and subcontractors are visited on a daily basis. For example, Merit Electric, Inc. provides McComas-Lacina with much of its electrical subcontracts, and in the planning stage of a construction project much communication is needed. The business’ offices are located directly across the street from each other, which makes meeting about plan revisions easier than if they had to travel across town. A second reason why locating among other commercial businesses is desirable is for the convenience of their customers. Builders can combine trips to lumber yards, electrical contractors, machinery dealers, and machinery rental businesses. The close proximity of these businesses makes it more convenient for their customers to patronize businesses in the area.

Access to arterial streets is an important attribute of the Study Area, and all of the intensive commercial businesses interviewed said that their access is very valuable. Several large contractors in the area have tractor-trailer trucks making deliveries on a daily basis. Although South Gilbert Court and Highland Court are both narrow streets that make maneuvering large trucks difficult, this is mitigated by the favorable access to those streets from Interstate 380 and U.S. Highway 6. These contractors are involved in projects all over Johnson and Linn counties, therefore their trucks need access to these highways from their shops located within the Study Area. Shorter travel times to job sites are a reason why a centralized location with access to good roads is an important advantage to the Study Area. However, access is not seen as an advantage to all area businesses. An industrial implement dealer within the area serves equipment owners located all over southeastern Iowa, and the dealership expressed plans to move the business to a new location near the interchange of Interstate 380 and U.S. Highway 6. Access to major roads is important; however the primary reason for the dealership’s move is the limited size of the
parcel on which their store and shop are currently located. Another factor considered by the dealership is the narrow streets that are not conducive to the loading and unloading of industrial equipment. This problem of getting truck access to the intensive commercial businesses is mitigated to a certain extent because the side streets on which the businesses are located are not usually busy with through traffic. The side streets, including Maiden Lae, South Gilbert Court, and Highland court, primarily serve traffic flowing to and from parcels located within the Study Area. It is our conclusion that these streets do not serve a significant amount of through traffic, making the streets more conducive to the truck traffic generated by intensive commercial businesses.

*Office Businesses*

There are a variety of offices located within the Study Area, including financial advisors, veterinarian clinics, chiropractors, law offices, real estate offices, and insurance sales offices. We met with several of these businesses to learn about the aspects of the area they value as well as their concerns with the state of the area. The positive aspects identified by the businesses are, again, centralized location and access to major streets, for many of the same reasons mentioned above. In addition to these important attributes, the area’s relatively high traffic flow and adequate parking are seen as advantages. Parking is a critical factor for these businesses because their clients come from all parts of town and demand easy and inexpensive parking. Heartland Investments had recently moved their financial services office from downtown Iowa City to a new location on Kirkwood Avenue for this reason. The owner indicated that many of his clients are elderly residents who find traveling downtown difficult, and prefer driving to the Kirkwood office and parking right in front of the building. One of the area chiropractors expressed similar sentiments with respect to parking. The office businesses were less concerned with their proximity to other commercial businesses than the intensive commercial businesses. They do not believe that being close to resident’s homes is important.

The negative aspects of the commercial area expressed by the office businesses include crime, homeless people, and aesthetically unappealing buildings. Crime was repeatedly mentioned by these businesses. Breaking and entry was cited as a primary concern, however, the businesses indicated that there have been fewer break-ins in recent years. Late night pedestrian traffic was cited as a source of vandalism. One reason seen as a source of this late night activity is the 24-hour adult novelty stores located on Kirkwood Avenue. Apparently, these businesses are heavily patronized late at night. Whether there is any actual connection between adult businesses and unsavory people roaming the streets at night is unclear. However, it seems that such a perception exists.

Another disadvantage mentioned by the office businesses is the prevalent homeless population. The homeless population seems to be somewhat concentrated in the Study Area. One business person cited the railroad tracks as a factor contributing to the presence of homeless people in the area. However, the actual effect of the homeless people’s presence is minor. Nearly everyone we interviewed mentioned the presence of homeless people and in the next sentence said that they create no significant negative impacts on the area. This too seems to be a perception issue, simply seeing homeless people in a particular area is presumed to indicate a depressed area.

25
The third negative factor mentioned by the office businesses was the deterioration of buildings and residential units in the area, which in their minds contributes to a generally uninviting sense of place. One person described it as an "aesthetically depressed area" another said that the area is not "very inviting."

**Consumer Service Businesses**

The positive factors cited by consumer service business owners and managers are similar to those mentioned by the office businesses. However, the emphasis placed on high levels of traffic flow was much greater than for either of the other two types of businesses. The importance of high traffic volume is no surprise. The parcels adjacent to Gilbert Street are more attractive for consumer service businesses then for intensive commercial businesses that benefit from low traffic volumes.

The high level of traffic volume and the centralized location work together. The manager of the Deli-Mart saw the flow of traffic through the area as a critical factor in the success of the business. However, he did have some concerns with traffic congestion in the area at certain times during the day. He explained that the complex intersection of South Dubuque Street and East Benton Street inhibits the flow of traffic past Deli-Mart at busy times of the day.

Consumer commercial business owners and managers also place a high value on their centralized location. The manager of Iowa Paint felt that visibility is a critical factor the South Gilbert Street location offers. He also expressed the importance being close to two lumber yards, which he believes has a positive impact on Iowa Paint's sales. This point is similar to that made by the intensive commercial businesses regarding the synergies that exist among businesses located in the same vicinity. These relationships between businesses are valuable and indicate that policies permitting the concentration of commercial businesses are important to business owners.

Of the consumer services businesses we interviewed, Varsity Cleaners seemed to place the most importance on their centralized location and were less concerned with the volume of traffic flowing past their business. Being close to customers is extremely important to their business because the ease of access is a primary factor considered by customers. A second reason why a centralized location is critical to Varsity Cleaners is that a fair amount of the laundry handled by the business is actually picked up at remote locations and hauled to the South Gilbert Street location where it is laundered and then returned.

The Crowded Closet is another consumer commercial business that places a high value on their centralized location. However, this business is centralized for a different reason. The managers with whom we spoke emphasized the importance of the business' close proximity to bus stops, the Crisis Center, the Salvation Army, and Johnson County Public Health. Being accessible to lower income customers is an advantage. The management also appreciates the location because of the strong sense of community that exists in the neighborhood and the wide variety of people that frequent the area and patronize their store. The business recently expanded their building to accommodate an increased volume of merchandise.
The Crowded Closet does have some concerns with crime in the area. The business is a recent victim of arson. Part of the store’s building was damaged by fire and much of their merchandise was damaged by smoke. There have also been several instances of vandalism and muggings in recent years. The store’s management thinks that vandals use the rail road tracks as escape routes and as ways to hide from public view while moving about the area.

On the other end of the consumer commercial business spectrum, the Adult Marketplace stated that a centralized location is not an important factor to its business. In fact, the manager indicated that it might be better to be located away from downtown Iowa City and closer to an interstate where they could capture business from more travelers. The primary reason why the business is located within the Study Area is that the City’s zoning code has restricted their business to the area.

Grizzlies Pub and Grill is another example of a business that does not place much value on high traffic volume, or proximity to downtown. The owner of Grizzlies likes their location on Highland Court because it is out of the way, which contributes to the laid back atmosphere of their establishment. Like the Crowded Closet’s management, she mentioned the strong sense of community among business owners in the area, and really seemed to appreciate how people try to help one another whenever possible. Unlike the Adult Marketplace, which wants to be distant from all residential uses, the Crowded Closet, Varsity Cleaners, and Grizzlies all seem to appreciate having some residents living near their businesses. This indicates that a policy favoring a mix of residential and consumer commercial may benefit these types of businesses.

In summary, businesses see proximity to other commercial businesses, access to arterial streets, a centralized location, the affordability of real estate, and a good traffic flow as the positive elements of the Study Area. Businesses see inadequate local streets, homelessness, crime, limited expansion possibilities, and the increasing student/residential population as negative elements of the Study Area.

**Resident Issues**

While the Study Area is primarily a commercial area, there are a number of homes within and bordering this area. We wanted to investigate how these residents view the area and the concerns they have living in close proximity to a largely commercial area. It was more difficult to contact area residents than businesses, however, so a small number of neighborhood residents were interviewed. The residents who were interviewed were referred to our group as having expressed an interest in planning and development in their neighborhood, as well as having a vast knowledge of the area. A total of four key residents were interviewed, although we recommend that more be interviews to get a better idea of the issues that are present when the Central District Plan is created.
Goals for the Resident interviews (see actual surveys in the Appendix C):

- Determine the residents’ satisfaction with accessibility to their places of work, schools, grocery stores, etc., the affordability of the area, and the quality of life in the area.

- Determine any major concerns residents have with living close to a commercial area.

- Discover the reasons why the residents chose to locate within or near the Study Area.

- Determine which elements of the neighborhood the residents saw as advantages and disadvantages.

Three of the four residents interviewed live just outside the northeastern boundary of the Study Area between Gilbert Ct. and Webster Street, and the other is a former resident of an apartment building just outside the northwest boundary of the area along Clinton Street. They ranged in age, from 25 to 65 years. The three residents living in the northeastern side of the area have all lived there a considerable amount of time, ranging from 15 to 30 years. The other resident lived adjacent to the area for 4 years before recently moving.

All the residents viewed their location as accessible to their place of work because of its centralized location in the city. A few selected the location specifically because the university is within walking distance. They all also agreed that the area is relatively affordable, although a few mentioned that this may be because of the proximity to the commercial area and railroad. All but one of the residents felt that there is good social interaction in the area, especially in the northeastern area, where there is the desire to create a formal neighborhood association.

The primary disadvantage of the area that all residents commented is the proximity to the Iowa Interstate Railroad. The noise and pollution from the trains is bad and worsening. The trains were not much of a problem in the past, but in the last few years a new railroad maintenance facility was located nearby that is used to repair the train engines. A few residents mentioned that when the engines are being fixed, they will run for days at a very high idle, which is very noisy and releases a large amount of pollution into the air. One interviewee said that at times the air pollution in his neighborhood rivals that of his former home of Los Angeles.

The presence of low income oriented businesses, such as thrift stores, the Salvation Army, the Crisis Center, and Johnson County Public Health, was brought up by a few of the residents with differing opinions. Some believed that these businesses, while important to have in a community, were a negative element of the area because they attract more of a homeless population and some crime. Others think that the presence of these businesses is very important and gives the area character; the homeless population is not a threat and is not responsible for much crime in the area. Regardless of their opinions of these businesses, the residents did agree that they had a strong presence in the area.
All residents agreed that smaller neighborhood businesses would be an advantageous vision for the area. Some examples mentioned included a daycare, restaurants, small retail stores, and otherwise quiet, clean businesses that do not take away from the neighborhood. Others simply stated that the larger intensive commercial uses should be discouraged near the residential areas. The more intensive uses create more heavy traffic, such as large delivery trucks, and are also noisier than other neighborhood businesses.

The residents in the northeastern portion of the Study Area agreed that the student population in the area is increasing, and the conversion of the residential area from primarily single family homes to multifamily or rental housing was a concern. They stated that more students lead to more noise and a lack of parking, and that these problems have led some of their neighbors to move from the area. All residents did note, however, that the increasing student population was only a small problem when compared to the railroad problems. The resident near the northwestern boundary believed that more multifamily housing units in the area west of Gilbert Street would be ideal due to its proximity to downtown and also because there is already a large student population there.

In summary, interviewed residents dislike the increase in student and rental housing in the residential areas adjacent to the district, and would like to see such housing trends move to the Northwest Sub-district. There is also a desire for more neighborhood friendly businesses, especially in the Gilbert Street Sub-district. Businesses in the Southeast Sub-district seem to be tolerated as long as there is some distance between the more intensive uses and residents’ homes, and the presence of low income oriented businesses are thought to provide a special character to the area. One unresolved issue is the rail traffic, a complicated matter not easily fixed through a district plan.

**Commercial Realtors**

**Goals for Realtor Interviews (see actual surveys in the Appendix D):**

- Assess demand for commercial space within the Study Area and compare to demand for commercial space in other parts of the Iowa City area.

- Assess the turnover of commercial property in the Study Area relative to other commercial areas in the Iowa City area.

- Determine how real estate professionals with experience in the Study Area view the affordability of real estate in the area, the importance of the area’s proximity to downtown, and the importance of access to major streets.

- Understand what the realtors see as viable methods of increasing the vitality of the commercial area.
The demand for commercial space within the Study Area is an important factor with far reaching implications for the vitality of this commercial district. To learn about the nature of the commercial real estate market we interviewed two commercial realtors that buy, sell, and lease property all over Johnson and Linn Counties. Both of the realtors we interviewed have handled properties within the Study Area and are very familiar with the market forces at work in Iowa City. The realtors were first asked to comment on the positive attributes the Study Area has to offer. Affordability and a centralized location were the top two positive factors. Next, the realtors were asked to comment on the negative attributes of the area and both pointed to the appearance of the muddled assortment of buildings, explaining that clients see the aesthetic quality of the area as a disadvantage. The realtors stated that the commercial market in this area is generally “soft” and that dramatic redevelopment of the Gilbert Street corridor would ensure vitality, but short of such redevelopment, moderate demand will persist.

The positive attributes of affordability and a centralized location, including quick and easy access to major roadways, are the main elements this commercial district offers. The affordability factor is especially important to startup businesses seeking small quantities of commercial space at low prices because much of the newer construction in Coralville and Iowa City is expensive and is often large in size. The realtors felt that the Study Area provides commercial space that is both affordable and provides a good fit for new businesses, especially if the business does not depend on pedestrian traffic for its customers. A centralized location in this instance means that the area is close to downtown and has access to major roads, which allows deliveries, clients, and employees to get to the business with ease. Both realtors indicated that, in their opinions, the high volume of traffic on Gilbert Street is the sustaining element of the Study Area’s commercial vitality. One of the Realtors felt that a “redevelopment” of Gilbert Street, from U.S. Highway 6 to downtown, could create a gateway to downtown from the south, much like Dubuque Street from the north. He believed that such a redevelopment of this commercial corridor would capitalize on the area’s main attributes, its centralized location and access to major roads.

The negative factor stressed by both realtors is the perception that the area is less vibrant than other areas of town. Businesses depending on visibility and a generally positive image are likely to shy away from locating within the Study Area. Most of the properties in the area are well maintained, however, an inviting store front is less important to an electrical contractor or an automobile repair shop than it is to a nice restaurant, for example. The commercial activities, especially the ones we have classified as intensive commercial, are simply less concerned with aesthetics than other commercial businesses which is cited as one reason why the area is less appealing. A second possible reason why the area is viewed this way is the lack of uniformity in buildings and uses.

In a commercial area with zoning that permits a wide variety of businesses, it should be expected that structures will not be uniform. The realtors we met with have differing opinions on how the market perceives older buildings. One said that businesses seeking commercial space do not have an aversion to older buildings and the primary reason why we see so much new construction is the fact that there are few older buildings that meet the space requirements of new or growing businesses. He claims that the high cost of leasing newly constructed space usually
encourages some businesses to find existing space that fits their needs, but adequate space in older buildings is often unavailable, or would cost too much to convert. The other realtor insists that the older buildings located in the Study Area are a primary cause of the soft demand for such space, claiming that the building in the area are generally “dumpy” and that it is not an appealing place to locate a business.

The rate of property turnover in the Study Area is less than in other areas of town. The realtors went on to cite this as a reason why redevelopment might be difficult for a private developer. One realtor thought it would be really difficult for a developer to assemble a group of adjacent parcels into a property large enough for substantial redevelopment project. He indicated that there are very deeply rooted businesses dispersed throughout the area and it would be too expensive and time consuming to assemble six or seven parcels adjacent to Gilbert, for example. The other realtor suggested that the area should be classified as a blight area, which would encourage people to sell their property at lower prices and the area would be more likely to qualify for redevelopment funding. Our group questions the soundness of such a strategy, yet it is interesting to note the various opinions and ideas of real estate professionals who work in the area. The common point in both realtors’ comments is that a lack of turnover in the area may be impeding redevelopment, which could be favorable for the intensive commercial businesses.

In summary, realtors believe that the Study Area provides a central location with good traffic flow. This said, the commercial market is considered “soft” due to a mixed assortment of businesses and lack of aesthetic quality, and redevelopment is thought to be the key solution to this problem.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The most appropriate way to offer recommendations for this area is by sub-district. The uniqueness of the sub-districts and the individual problems faced by each make it useful to do so. Our first recommendation is that the city staff consider these same divisions when creating the Central District Plan.

Gilbert Street Sub-district

Gilbert Street connects Highway 6 to downtown and should be considered a major gateway to the city. Redevelopment in this area should be encouraged to better reflect this. We recommend city staff encourage landscaping and design improvements, incentives for new infill development and redevelopment, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements in the sub-district.

Recommendation: Landscape and Design Guidelines on Gilbert Street

The first recommendation for this sub-district concerns its physical appearance. Its role as a major gateway in Iowa City and a direct path to downtown makes aesthetic quality a priority. The inconsistencies in landscaping and design along Gilbert Street also make it a less attractive location for new businesses. We recommend that city staff encourage the adoption of a design overlay district that covers all of the properties located in this sub-district. New construction and redevelopment occurring within the boundaries of the overlay district would be held to minimum landscape and design standards. Street trees, sidewalk buffers, and landscaped parking lots should be required to be consistent throughout the sub-district. Building facades and signage could also be more unified. A standard setback for businesses located on Gilbert Street should also be established. The adoption of a design overlay district would make the vacant properties along Gilbert Street more attractive to businesses apprehensive about locating there for aesthetic reasons. This policy would ensure that the future development of this portion of Gilbert Street be held to standards more appropriate for a gateway. This strategy will also ensure that new development along Gilbert Street will pay some portion of the cost of redeveloping the entire gateway.

Recommendation: Encourage Infill

Vacant lots are both an economic and aesthetic hindrance to the sub-district. Eight small vacant lots exist in this district. Many of these vacant lots are located directly on Gilbert Street and create an eyesore for anyone traveling on the arterial. An infill strategy is needed for these lots. Another option would be to encourage the owners of these lots to landscape them regardless of whether a business decides to locate there. Landscaping is needed to screen vacant parking lots
from view. We recommend that the City encourage the adoption of a tax increment-financing (TIF) district that would cover the same area proposed for the design overlay district. Demand for lots in this area is currently weak. A TIF would provide added economic incentive for developers by ensuring that property values would increase. A TIF would also partially mitigate any negative implications developers associate with a design overlay district. The funds received from the TIF would allow the City of Iowa City to make streetscape improvements in the right-of-way. TIF revenues could also be used by the City in an incentive program designed to encourage current businesses to comply with the minimum standards set for new businesses by the design overlay district. The City could pay for some percentage of the cost incurred by businesses choosing to do so. This would encourage further aesthetic improvement of the corridor and make it more financially feasible for current businesses to follow along with the trend of redevelopment. The improvement of this gateway would positively affect all of Iowa City by making it more economically viable and aesthetically consistent.

Recommendation: Pedestrian & Bicycle Access

Pedestrian access should also be improved within this sub-district. Sidewalks vary in quality. There are no other pedestrian enhancements present. The high volume of traffic limits bicycle access. It is our recommendation that pedestrian and bicycle amenity be improved. As explained earlier, the percentage of residents in the Study Area commuting to work by bicycle is increasing. A direct route for bicycles on Gilbert Street is recommended with any expansion of the road. Bike lanes should be included on Gilbert Street at a time when the width of the road safely permits it. Access points are numerous in this area. Limiting the number of direct access points from Gilbert Street to the businesses in this sub-district is also recommended. Unnecessary access points only make traffic a more intimidating to pedestrians and bicyclists. The landscaping and design improvements mentioned above would also help make this area a more desirable place for pedestrians.

Northwest Sub-district

The future acquisition of land by Johnson County to expand is likely to occur in the future. The US Armory located adjacent to the Johnson County Administration Building is already marked for acquisition. Just north of the railroad tracks on Dubuque and Clinton a small commercial and residential district has formed. These southern and northern anchors create an attractive environment for the redevelopment in this area. Recommendations for this area will reflect the sub-district’s unique position as a place appropriate for greater density, increased walkability, and further multi-family residential and mixed-use development.

Recommendation: Encouragement of a Live/Work Neighborhood
Our initial recommendation for the Northwest Sub-district is that higher density development should be encouraged by the City. With the presence of the Johnson County offices to the south, a fairly dense concentration of apartment living to the north, a small commercial node to the north of the railroad tracks, and several office uses on the eastern boundary, this sub area has the potential to capitalize on its unique character. A node of office, commercial, and residential uses forms here. We feel that a CC-2 zoning classification would be most appropriate for the parcels in this sub-district. This would help to encourage a live/work neighborhood. An informal neighborhood of this type already exists. Small retail shops, bars, hair salons, apartments, and offices are present. This is in addition to the large Johnson County presence. Rezoning this area CC-2 would be an incentive for more businesses like these to choose this area and more office uses to consider this location. This might also make developers of multi-family properties to reconsider this area. Rezoning this area would help to ensure that it develops into a walkable and cohesive neighborhood.

**Recommendation: Work with Johnson County Officials**

The success of a live/work neighborhood in this sub-district partially hinges on decisions made by Johnson County. The Johnson County offices currently located in this sub-district have a profound effect on its character. Any change or expansion that Johnson County plans to undertake will increase this effect. Some of the nearby businesses discussed the impact of a Johnson County expansion. It was clear that they saw this as a closed matter that they would have no control over. Their businesses would be displaced by a new expansion. As stated before, expansion plans are in no way finalized, but the rumors are already taken to be true by stakeholders. We recommend that the City of Iowa City work closely with Johnson County in any development endeavor they pursue, and involve stakeholders and business owners in shaping any future plans. A map shown earlier in this report showed a possible expansion plan for a Johnson County Campus. Individual buildings and surface parking lots dominated this potential layout. Several property owners would be displaced if this plan were pursued. We feel that surface parking lots should not dominate this area and that Iowa City should work with Johnson County to come up with a solution that reflects the idea of a live/work neighborhood. The map shown depicts a campus that is auto-oriented and promotes little connection between its offices and the retail and residential uses already there. We feel a walkable campus that promotes interaction between Johnson County offices and with other businesses and residential uses in the sub-district is the best solution. A plan like this would also be helpful in attracting redevelopment. We also recommend that city staff work to limit the number of businesses that will be displaced by an expansion.

**Southeast Sub-district**

This sub-district is a fairly autonomous unit. There are very few striking issues that plague this area. The types of businesses dominating the Southeast Sub-district are less appropriate for residential or mixed-use neighborhoods, but they are viable and provide important services for
the Iowa City community. This area functions effectively. Our recommendations focus on improving separation between this sub-district and the residential neighborhood to the east and strengthening the communication between the businesses in the sub-district and the City of Iowa City.

Recommendation: Separation of Commercial & Residential

The land use patterns and businesses in this area are consistent. Many of the businesses in the Southeast Sub-district are intensive and generate negative externalities. This makes the immediate area undesirable for residential land uses. Attention should be focused on improving the buffer between these businesses and the single-family neighborhood to the east. The zoning ordinance already requires a separation. Our recommendation is that the enforcement of this separation be strengthened to ensure that the single-family character of the nearby neighborhood is not compromised. The back set-backs of businesses abutting the single-family neighborhood are inconsistent. We recommend that a uniform back set-back requirement be established to deter negative interaction between intensive commercial businesses and homes.

Recommendation: Open a Dialogue With Businesses

The Southeast Sub-district is an example of an agglomeration economy. Informal relationships exist between businesses, and many are interdependent. Given this our recommendation would be to encourage greater dialogue among these businesses and between businesses and the City. In the best case scenario a formal business organization would be formed and provide a voice for this area and symbolize the autonomous nature of this sub-district. Interviews suggest that a desire to improve this area on some levels does exist. Businesses should work together to improve this area. They would be most efficient in improvement efforts if they collaborated with one another. In the absence of a formal group the City should create a dialogue with these businesses prior to the formulation of any plans. Interviews with individual business owners provided a wealth of information, but this cohesive group of businesses would address problems and propose solutions much better as a unit.
APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The following tables summarize demographic and housing information for the Study Area. This was done by comparing block group data for the area (name Gilbert GRP) with the block groups that surround the Study Area (named Surrounding GRP), as well as the information for Iowa City as a whole. These areas are shown in Map 7 on page 17. The Study Area only takes up half of the area of Gilbert GRP. The Gilbert GRP also includes the adjacent single family neighborhood on the east side which is zoned as RS-5. Block group data was used because it is the smallest scale of data available in the U.S. Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table-1: Demographic information, 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median family income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Asian &amp; Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Other Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age (year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/professional degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population by Household type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In family households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In nonfamily households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In group quarters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
Figure 1 -- Income

% change in income, 1990-2000

Median household  Median family income

- Gilbert GRP
- Surrounding GRPs
- Low a City

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

Figure 2 -- Race

% change in race: 1990-2000

- White
- Black
- American Indian
- Asian & Pacific
- Other Race

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
Figure 3 – Median Age

Change in Median age: 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

Figure 4 – Age Distribution

% change in age: 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
Figure 5 – Education Level

% change in education level (for people older than 25): 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

Figure 6 – Household Type

% change in household type: 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
### Table-2: Housing information, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gilbert GRP</th>
<th>Surrounding GRPs</th>
<th>Iowa City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied Units</td>
<td>45.12%</td>
<td>22.36%</td>
<td>46.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter Occupied Units</td>
<td>54.88%</td>
<td>77.64%</td>
<td>53.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacancy Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-Occupied Units</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.39%</td>
<td>2.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-Occupied Units</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rents/Home Value</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median gross rent</td>
<td>$578</td>
<td>$578</td>
<td>$572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home value</td>
<td>$99,300</td>
<td>$99,300</td>
<td>$128,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affordability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median gross rent as a percentage of Household Income</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median selected monthly cost as a percentage of Household Income</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Renter-occupied units by Structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single family units</td>
<td>18.79%</td>
<td>9.03%</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clustered units</td>
<td>50.34%</td>
<td>19.15%</td>
<td>22.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multi-family units</td>
<td>28.86%</td>
<td>71.44%</td>
<td>66.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mobile homes</td>
<td>2.01%</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>0.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure built during 1990 to 2000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied Units</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
<td>2.80%</td>
<td>23.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-occupied Units</td>
<td>24.16%</td>
<td>13.40%</td>
<td>14.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

### Figure 7 -- Tenure

**% change in occupied housing units: 1990-2000**

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
Figure 8 – Vacancy Rate

Change in Vacancy Rate by Tenure: 1990-2000

![Graph showing change in vacancy rate by tenure: 1990-2000.](chart)

- Renters: Gilbert grp, Surrounding grps, Iowa city
- Owners: Gilbert grp, Surrounding grps, Iowa city

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

% Change in rents/Home values: 1990-2000

![Graph showing percentage change in rents and home values: 1990-2000.](chart)

- Median gross rent: Gilbert GRP, Surrounding Grps, Iowa City
- Median Home value: Gilbert GRP, Surrounding Grps, Iowa City

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
Figure 9 – Affordability

Change in median rents/costs as a percentage of household income: 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

Figure 10 – Rental Unit Structure

% Change in Structure Type for Renters: 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
### Table 3: Transportation information (for workers 16 years and over), 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gilbert GRP</th>
<th>Surrounding GRPs</th>
<th>Iowa City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Travel Time (in Minutes)</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>14.46</td>
<td>15.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Travel by Car; truck; or van</td>
<td>77.02%</td>
<td>55.93%</td>
<td>73.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Travel by Public transportation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.06%</td>
<td>7.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Travel by Motorcycle</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Travel by Bicycle</td>
<td>7.74%</td>
<td>4.24%</td>
<td>2.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Travel by Foot</td>
<td>13.51%</td>
<td>31.32%</td>
<td>15.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Travel by Other means</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A

### Figure 11 – Means of Transportation

% change of workers 16 year and over by means of transportation: 1990-2000

Source: 1990 & 2000 United States Census Bureau of Population and Housing, STF-3A
APPENDIX B: BUSINESS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions for Business:

1. Rate how satisfied you are with your business’s current location based on the following characteristics.
   *(RATE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5: 1 = very satisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied)*
   a. ___ Accessibility for customers/clients.
   b. ___ Accessibility for your deliveries
   c. ___ Affordability of current facilities
   d. ___ Adequacy of current facilities.

2. Rate the importance of your business’s proximity to:
   *(RATE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5: 1 = very satisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied)*
   a. ___ Downtown Iowa City.
   b. ___ Residential neighborhoods.
   c. ___ Commercial and industrial businesses.
   d. ___ Arterial streets and highways.
   e. ___ Customers.

3. What are the top three things that you:
   a. Like about your current location.
      i. __________________________
      ii. __________________________
      iii. __________________________
   b. Dislike about your current location.
      i. __________________________
      ii. __________________________
      iii. __________________________

Specific questions about the interviewee to be asked at time of interview

4. How long has the business been at its current location?

5. Why is the business located in this area of town?

6. Have you considered moving to another location, and if so, why?

7. Do you have specific plans to expand or change the business within the next two years?
APPENDIX C: RESIDENTIAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions for Residents:

1. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your home’s location?  
   (RATE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5: 1 = very satisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied)
   a. ___ Accessibility to your place of work
   b. ___ Accessibility to retail and other services
   c. ___ Affordability
   d. ___ Quality of life—neighborhood characteristics
   e. ___ Quality of life—social interaction with neighbors
   f. ___ Other ________________________________

2. What are the top three things that you:
   a. Like about your current location.
      i. ________________________________
      ii. ________________________________
      iii. ________________________________
   b. Dislike about your current location.
      i. ________________________________
      ii. ________________________________
      iii. ________________________________

Specific questions about the interviewee to be asked at time of interview

3. How long have you lived in your current location?

4. Why did you decide to locate yourself in this area of town?

5. Do you have any problems or concerns about living close to the commercial area around Gilbert and Kirkwood?

6. What is your vision for the area in the next 20 years?
APPENDIX D: REAL ESTATE AGENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions for Realtors

1. How much demand is there for commercial space in the area compared to other commercial areas?

2. How much turnover is there compared to other commercial areas?

3. How important are the following factors in attracting buyers to this area?  
   (RATE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5: 1 = very satisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied)  
   a. ___ Price  
   b. ___ Proximity to Downtown  
   c. ___ Access to major streets and highways  
   d. ___  
   e. ___ Other ________________________________

4. What areas of town are good alternatives in terms of the type of facilities available to commercial buyers and lessees?

5. In your opinion, what should be done to increase the desirability of this area of town for commercial enterprises?
APPENDIX E: BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

Positive Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Businesses Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Flow</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Access</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Location</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the Way</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Businesses Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad noise/traffic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited expansion possibilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of maintenance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students/residence proximity</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion/access</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics/nature of other businesses</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of City cooperation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F: LAND USE INVENTORY

Due to the size of the Land Use Inventory spreadsheet, it is provided in an excel document on a CD.

APPENDIX G: LAND VALUE COMPARISON

Due to the size of the Land Value Comparison spreadsheet, it is provided in an excel document on a CD.
LIST OF REFERENCES

Iowa City Department of Planning and Community Development. 2003. Iowa City Zoning Ordinance. Iowa City, IA. Updated May 2003.

Iowa City Department of Planning and Community Development. 2004. Iowa City Zoning Map. Iowa City, IA. Updated March 2004.


ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Infill Development of Vacant Land
Document from the City of Wilmington, NC about land use, specifically infill. Pages 20-22 are of particular importance as they lay out Wilmington’s policy for infill on small vacant properties in areas with varied uses.
http://www.ci.wilmington.nc.us/development/flu%5Fplan%5Fad.htm

Strategies for Successful Infill Development

The Barriers to Using Urban Growth Infill Development to Achieve Smart Growth
By J. Terrence Farriss
Study that identifies infill developments roll in promoting smart growth with a particular emphasis the creation of housing units in infill locations.
http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hpd/v1211-farris.shtml

High Density Development and Infill Can Boost Urban Economies
Article from the National Association of Realtors discussing the benefits and desire for cities to increase density near downtown areas, especially in cities with a more educated population. In these places infill and high density developments, especially when close to downtowns, have been successful.

Form First
Article by Peter Katz. Found on pages 17-21 in the November 2004 issue of Planning magazine. The article discussed the use of form-based coding as an alternative to conventional use-based zoning. Form based zoning emphasizes guidelines for the physical form and look of the building, while the land use of the property is a secondary consideration. This would fit well in our area where there is an abundance of land uses; with form based coding, these uses could interact together yet give the area a distinct look.

A Toolbox for Alleviating Traffic Congestion and Enhancing Mobility
Institute of Transportation Engineers;
Very large article discussing all aspects of transportation engineering/planning. Of particular importance to our study are the sections on Arterials and Local Street design, Intersection Improvements, Arterial Access Management, and One Way Streets. Adobe page 67 to start.