DOWNTOWN TIFTON

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE CONNECTIVITY PLAN

ADOPTED BY THE TIFTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MAY 15, 2018

Historic Downtown TIFTON

Southern Georgia Regional Commission

I. Introduction & Background

This plan presents a range of recommendations for improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, optimizing the use of parking, and encouraging pedestrian and bicycle traffic, with its associated economic benefits, in Downtown Tifton, Georgia. This plan was prepared for the Tifton Downtown Development Authority by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, and was paid for using Federal Highway Administration funds provided through the Georgia Department of Transportation's annual contract with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission for pedestrian and bicycle planning activities.

Most of the recommendations in the plan consist of improvements to infrastructure, but there are also policy and programmatic recommendations. In 2017, the opportunity arose for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) to prepare a Downtown Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Plan for the City of Tifton at no cost to the community.

A broad range of stakeholders were involved in the planning process, including the following:

- The Downtown Development Authority
- The City of Tifton Mayor and City Council
- Downtown business owners and employees
- The Tiftarea Greenways Association
- Tift Regional Medical Center
- Local cyclists and advocates
- Law enforcement
- The general public

The plan was developed through a series of meetings hosted by the Downtown Development Authority during their regularly scheduled meeting times. Separate meetings were also held with the City of Tifton's Mayor and City Council, Tift Regional Medical Center, and the Tiftarea Greenways Association. In addition, SGRC staff held informal interviews with the owners and employees of 10 Downtown businesses, two law enforcement officers, and 10 patrons of local businesses. During these meetings and interviews, SGRC staff gathered input from all the stakeholders in order to incorporate it into the plan.

Plan Goals

The ultimate goal of this plan is to provide a range of realistic, achievable, structural and policy-oriented actions that can be taken by the community to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in Downtown Tifton, in order to maximize pedestrian and bicycle access to Downtown businesses, while also making efficient use of available parking resources and street infrastructure.

The recommendations of this plan focus on accommodating all travel modes, calming traffic, and managing parking demand as opposed to greatly increasing parking supply. The Downtown economy is also considered, with the goal of preserving and improving Downtown Tifton's status as a thriving business district. A "Complete Streets" approach is used, meaning that Downtown

streets should safely and comfortably accommodate all users of all ages, abilities, and travel modes. Studies have shown that a walkable environment that is friendly to cyclists and pedestrians, along with lower traffic speeds, results in an increase in business sales.[1] Studies have also shown that higher traffic volumes, and even some degree of traffic congestion, are beneficial to the economy of a central business district.[2] Consequently, this plan does not focus on reducing traffic volumes.

Study area

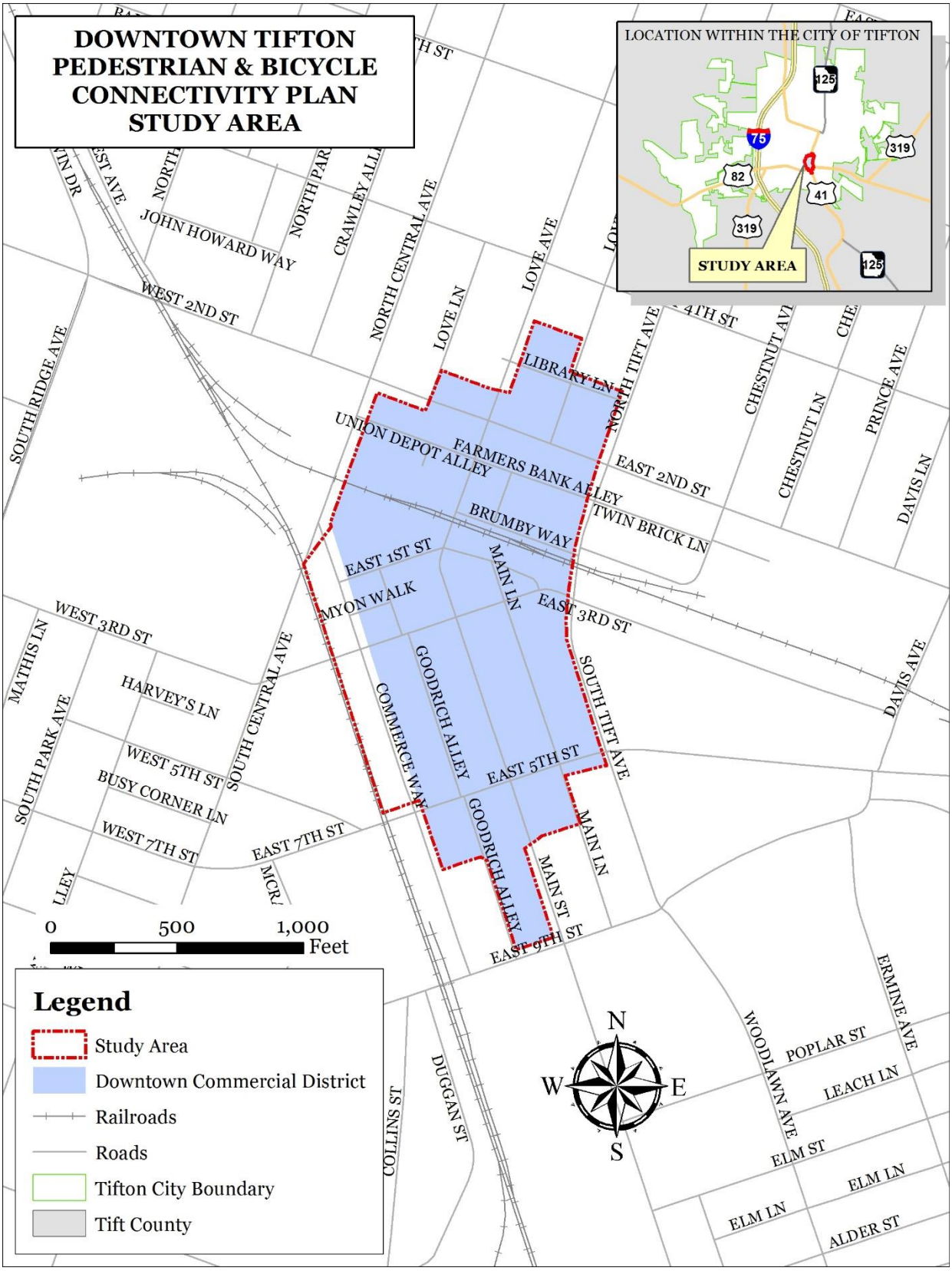
The study area for this plan consists of the Downtown Commercial District boundary, plus the area between Commerce Way and the railroad tracks bounded by Fifth Street to the south and Central Avenue to the north. This additional area was included due to its importance in providing parking and offering easy connectivity to many Downtown businesses. Map 1 shows the study area location and boundary.

Downtown Tifton is a highly walkable central business district with many good connectivity features. (Existing pedestrian infrastructure is shown in Map 2.) Wayfinding signs are provided at several strategic locations throughout the area, to orient visitors (see Figure 1). Higher-traffic streets run along the perimeter of the Downtown area, with only moderate traffic on Main Street. With limited enhancements, it could be a truly excellent walking environment that provides convenient access from parking to downtown area businesses. Sidewalks are adequate throughout most of Downtown, and visually appealing landscaping and street furnishings are present throughout most of the area. Several wayfinding signs have been installed to provide orientation for visitors.

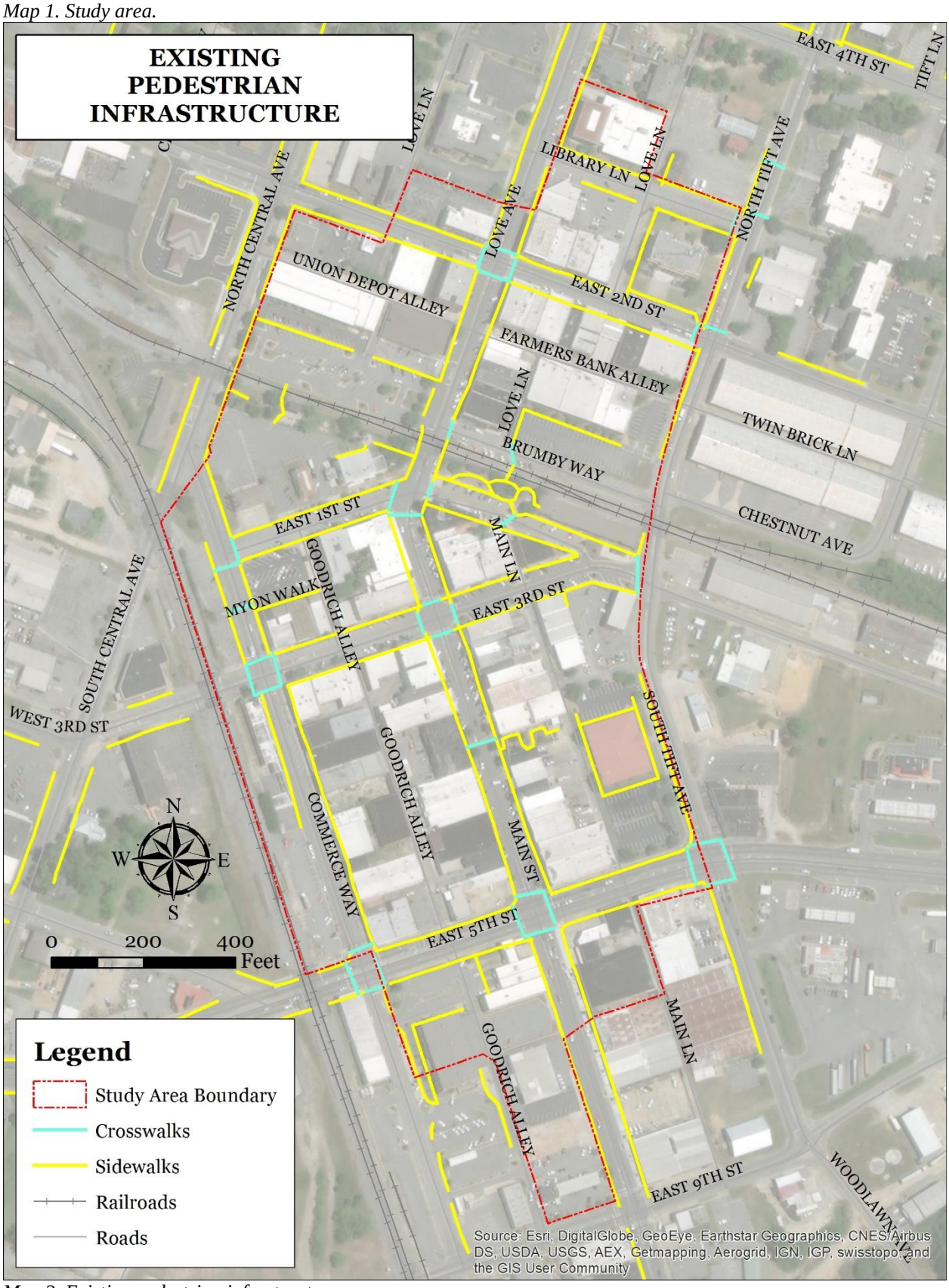
Figure 1. Wayfinding sign in Downtown Tifton.

[1] For example: World Resources Institute. "The Need for (Safe) Speed." http://www.wri.org/blog/2017/05/need-safe-speed-4-surprising-ways-slower-driving-creates-better-cities

[2] Sweet, Matthias N. 2014. "Do firms flee traffic congestion?" *Journal of Transport Geography* vol. 35: 40-49.


DOWNTOWN TIFTON
PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE
CONNECTIVITY PLAN
STUDY AREA
LOCATION WITHIN THE CITY OF TIFTON
125
75
319
82
41
319
STUDY AREA
125
JOHN HOWARD WAY
WEST 2ND ST
NORTH CENTRAL AVE
CRAWLEY AVE
LOVE LN
LOVE AVE
LIBRARY LN
NORTH TIFT AVE
CHESTNUT AVE
CHESTNUT LN
PRINCE AVE
DAVIS LN
SOUTH RIDGE AVE
UNION DEPOT ALLEY
FARMERS BANK ALLEY
EAST 2ND ST
BRUMBY WAY
TWIN BRICK LN
EAST 1ST ST
MYON WALK
MAIN LN
EAST 3RD ST
WEST 3RD ST
MATHIS LN
HARVEY'S LN
SOUTH PARK AVE
SOUTH CENTRAL AVE
GOODRICH ALLEY
COMMERCE WAY
SOUTH TIFT AVE
DAVIS AVE
WEST 5TH ST
BUSY CORNER LN
EAST 5TH ST
WEST 7TH ST
EAST 7TH ST
MAIN ST
EAST 9TH ST
0
500
1,000
Feet
Legend
Study Area
Downtown Commercial District
Railroads
Roads
Tifton City Boundary
Tift County
N
W
E
S
COLLINS ST
DUGGAN ST
WOODLAWN AVE
POPLAR ST
ERMINE AVE
LEACH LN
ELM ST
ELM LN
ALDER ST

Map 1. Study area.



Map 2. Existing pedestrian infrastructure

Other Relevant Plans and Documents Consulted

Several other existing adopted plans, ordinances, and other relevant documents are applicable to Downtown Tifton and are relevant to this plan. The following is a list of other plans and documents that were consulted in the development of this plan. In all cases, efforts were made to ensure that this plan is thoroughly consistent and compatible with these other documents.

- **Downtown parking ordinance.** Section 78-87 of the City of Tifton Code of Ordinances regulates vehicle parking within the Downtown area.
- **The Comprehensive Plan for Tift County and the Cities of Tifton, Omega, and Ty Ty.** An update to the Comprehensive Plan was being produced at the same time that this plan was being developed. The efforts were coordinated, with many stakeholders attending meetings for both plans and comparing notes to ensure consistency.
- **Urban redevelopment plan.** Adopted in 2000, the Tifton Urban Redevelopment Plan remains applicable. It calls for a pedestrian-friendly Downtown area, among other things.
- **Downtown Master Plan.** Prepared by Genesis Group and Strategic Planning Group in 2007, the City of Tifton Development Visioning Process and Downtown Master Plan contains many recommendations for Downtown. Many items from this plan have already been implemented; others are no longer optimal. This plan was used as a reference for the current planning effort, and recommendations were coordinated.
- **City of Tifton Land Development Code.** Adopted in 2012, the City of Tifton Unified Development Code regulates the use and development of land within the City.
- **Southern Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**. The regional plan contains several overall goals that are consistent with this local plan, and which this local plan contributes to implementing.
- **Tifton Area Greenways Master Plan and Best Practices Report.** Both of these documents contain recommendations that are relevant especially for bicycle traffic in Downtown Tifton. This is discussed further in Section IV.
- **Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.** Originally adopted in 2006 and currently in the process of a section update, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan outlines strategies and actions at the state level to reduce the number of bicyclist and pedestrian injuries and deaths.

II. Pedestrian Opportunities and Recommendations

Downtown Tifton is a highly walkable central business district with many good connectivity features. However, some gaps in connectivity still exist, and in some locations pedestrian infrastructure improvements are needed. The City has indicated a need for improved pedestrian connectivity within the Downtown area, especially as it relates to Downtown business access. Following a field analysis of existing conditions by SGRC staff, the following improvements to pedestrian infrastructure are recommended.

1. **Provide ADA ramps and marked crosswalks at all curb cuts, including alleys and parking lot entrances/exits.**

This need is especially evident in the area around where Main Street intersects with the railroad tracks. Ample parking exists in public parking lots next to the railroad tracks, less than 500 feet from many Main Street businesses. However, these parking lots are not utilized to their fullest potential due to a perception that they are too far away from Main Street businesses, and patrons prefer to search for parking on Main Street, which is in short supply. Pedestrian infrastructure has been improved in some locations in this area, but not in others (compare Figure 2 and Figure 3). Completion of these pedestrian infrastructure improvements would help to emphasize sidewalk continuity and encourage more walking.

Figure 2. Parking lot entrance without crosswalk, and blocked sidewalk on Main St.

Figure 3. Parking lot exit with crosswalk and ADA ramps on Main St.

2. Provide marked crosswalks and stop signs where alleys cross sidewalks.

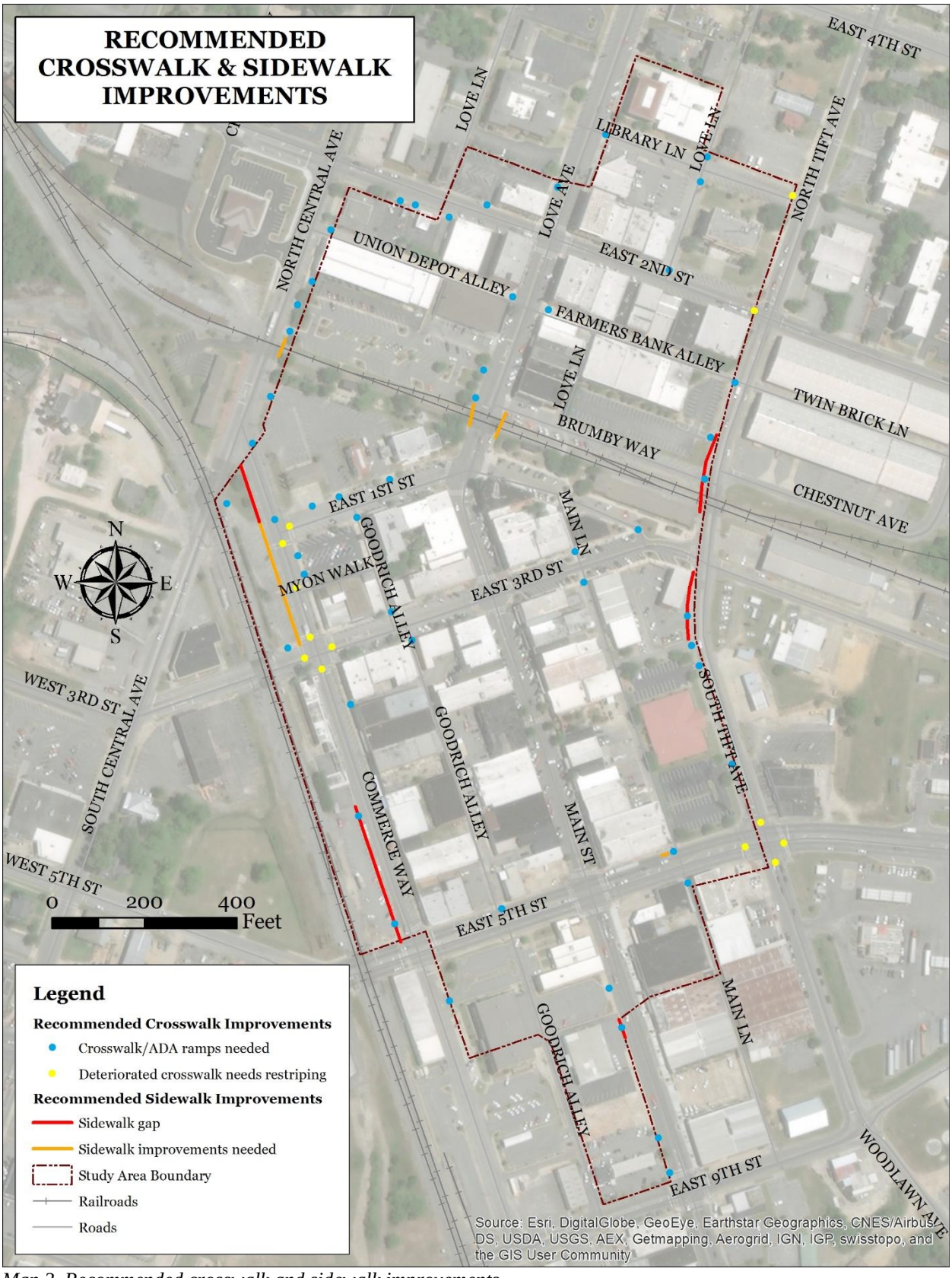
There are a few locations in Downtown Tifton where alleys cross sidewalks without any traffic controls (such as Stop or Yield signs) and without adequate visibility (due to the presence of buildings). In these locations, delivery trucks or other vehicles coming out of the alley have the potential to collide with pedestrians walking along the sidewalk. Such conditions exist at the intersection of Main Lane and Third Street (see Figure 4 and Figure 5), and at the intersection of Goodrich Alley and Third Street, among other places.

Figure 4. Third Street/Main Lane intersection.

Figure 5. Potential pedestrian/vehicle conflict point at Third Street and Main Lane.

3. Repair all deteriorated, cracked, and uneven sidewalks.

Some sidewalks in the study area were observed to be in poor condition, especially along Commerce Way, where sign posts and tree stumps obstruct the sidewalk (see Figure 13). Map 3 shows all the sidewalks and crosswalks for which repairs and/or improvements are recommended.



Map 3. Recommended crosswalk and sidewalk improvements.

4. Fill all sidewalk gaps.

Only a small number of sidewalk gaps (i.e., segments of street without any sidewalk) exist in Downtown Tifton (see Map 3). The main gaps are on Tift Avenue and Commerce Way. On Tift Avenue, the sidewalk south of Third Street ends abruptly with a drop-off (see Figure 6). However, sufficient space exists to connect it to the existing sidewalk directly to the south (see Figure 7).

Figure 6. North view of sidewalk gap, Tift Avenue south of Third Street.

Figure 7. South view of sidewalk gap, Tift Avenue south of Third Street.

5. Restripe all deteriorated/substandard crosswalks according to the latest and best design standards.

A few crosswalks in Downtown Tifton are faded and otherwise deteriorated, mainly on Commerce Way (see Figure 8 and Figure 9). Perpendicular bars will increase crosswalk visibility (as shown in Figure 17).

Figure 8. Deteriorated mid-block crosswalk lacking perpendicular bars, Commerce Way.

Figure 9. Deteriorated intersection crosswalk lacking perpendicular bars, Commerce Way.

6. Provide smooth concrete pedestrian crossings over railroad tracks.

A smooth concrete pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks currently exists connecting the Brumby Crossing parking lot to First Street. Bumpy asphalt crossings in other locations, such as Main Street, are less visually appealing and harder for wheelchair and stroller users to navigate (compare Figure 10 and Figure 11). Improving these crossings would give the appearance of a more continuous sidewalk and help to combat the perception that this is not a highly walkable area.

Figure 10. Asphalt sidewalk railroad crossings are less inviting to pedestrians, and can be difficult for wheelchair and stroller users to negotiate.

Figure 11. The smooth concrete pedestrian railroad crossing between Brumby Way and First Street is more inviting to pedestrians, and includes an advisory sign for safety.

7. **Move street furnishings, such as trash receptacles and utility poles, that currently block the clear width of the sidewalk.**

During a field survey, a trash receptacles was found occupying the middle of the sidewalk on Main Street (see Figure 2 on the previous page), as well as a large utility pole obstructing the sidewalk on the north side of East Fifth Street between Main Street and Tift Avenue, making this sidewalk inconvenient for all users and impassable for wheelchair, stroller, and other mobility aid users (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Utility pole blocking sidewalk on Fifth Street.

Figure 13. Obstructed and deteriorated sidewalk on Commerce Way.

8. Provide directional arrows and signs to indicate entrance/exit points of parking lots and directions of traffic flow within parking lots.

Directional arrows make it clear which way motorists should go in parking lots and which curb cuts they should use to enter and exit. This reduces confusion not only for motorists, but also for pedestrians. These improvements have been made to some parking lots but not to others (compare Figure 14 and Figure 15).

Figure 14. A parking lot on the east side of Main St. with the intended direction of traffic flow clearly indicated.

Figure 15. A parking lot on the west side of Main St. lacks indicators to direct traffic.

9. Consider adding a crosswalk across Main St. to connect Veteran's Park to Kanebo Park.

Because of the existing walkways through these two small parks, an opportunity exists for direct connectivity (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. An additional crosswalk could connect Veteran's Park to Kanebo Park, directly across Main Street.

10. Investigate redesigning the crosswalk on the south side of the intersection of Main Street and First Street, where visibility problems exist.

Visibility problems exist at the crosswalk across Main Street on the south side of the intersection with 1st St (see Figure 17 and Figure 18). Because Main Street curves at this point, pedestrians wanting to cross from the east side of Main St. and motorists coming around the curve (northbound) cannot see each other. However, the southbound lane of Main St. at this point is excessively wide (28 feet). Interviews with local business owners have indicated that high traffic speed is also a problem at this location. A realignment of the intersection is recommended, in which the centerline would be moved a few feet to the west, and the sidewalk bump-out on the east side of Main St. extended, so that the total width of the roadway and length of the crosswalk would be reduced. If engineered optimally, this would improve visibility at the intersection, slow the design speed, and improve safety. A conceptual design for this solution is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 17. Main Street/First Street crosswalk, view from the west.

Figure 18. Main Street/First Street crosswalk, view from the south.

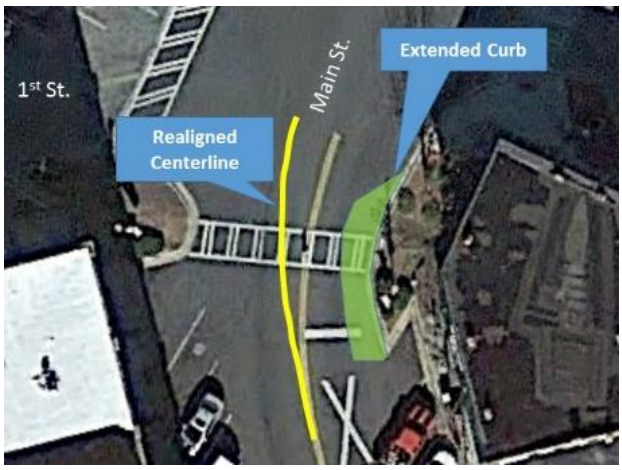


Figure 19. Conceptual design for realignment of Main Street / First Street crosswalk.

11. **Implement a regular maintenance program including the replacement of missing or broken crosswalk "sentinel" signs, repair of sidewalks, and the regular restriping of deteriorated crosswalks.**

Crosswalk "sentinel" signs should be maintained and replaced when broken or missing (see Figure 20). Crosswalks tend to wear away quickly, and should be repainted regularly to ensure clear visibility.

Figure 20. Damaged and removed crosswalk "sentinel" sign on Main Street.

12. **Work with law enforcement to encourage motorists to stop at crosswalks and comply with other relevant laws.**

During the planning process, interviews with local business owners indicated that motorists in Downtown Tifton often fail to stop for pedestrians within crosswalks. Motorists are required to stop, per the following statute:

> **O.C.G.A. § 40-6-91. Right of way in crosswalks**
> (a) The driver of a vehicle shall stop and remain stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross the roadway within a crosswalk when the pedestrian is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling, or when the pedestrian is approaching and is within one lane of the half of the roadway on which the vehicle is traveling or onto which it is turning. For the purposes of this subsection, "half of the roadway" means all traffic lanes carrying traffic in one direction of travel.

Engineering and design, education of the public, and enforcement of laws are all factors in the operation of a safe and effective transportation system. Jaywalking was not identified as a problem during interviews with stakeholders in this planning process, and it is not recommended that law enforcement focus on violations of traffic laws by pedestrians, since this might further discourage people from walking in Downtown Tifton.

13. Consider innovative aesthetic treatments for crosswalks and intersections.

A variety of innovate aesthetic treatments for crosswalks and intersections have been used successfully in other communities. Such treatments could add to the unique character of Downtown Tifton, and could have a traffic calming effect at a relatively low cost. This section includes some illustrative examples. Crosswalks on state and federal highways (which include Main Street and Fifth Street) must comply with all applicable state and federal regulations.

Figure 21. Decorative crosswalk in Decatur, GA. (Source: John Bolen)

Figure 22. Innovative crosswalk creating a 3-D optical illusion in Ísafjörður, Iceland. (Source: Mother Nature Network)

Figure 23. Crosswalk in Rome, GA decorated with colorful painted footprints.

Figure 24. Piano keyboard crosswalk in Denison, TX. (Source: Michael Barera, Wikimedia Commons)

14. Install "Walk Your City" signs.

Downtown Tifton is a small and compact central business district, measuring slightly less than half a mile by a quarter mile. As such, distances within Downtown are eminently walkable (a leisurely half-mile walk takes about 10 minutes). However, as in many other places, the perception exists that distances are less quick and convenient to walk than they actually are, and that parking very close to one's destination is essential.

In recent years, many communities have worked to overcome this perception by installing "Walk Your City" signs, showing the walking time and/or distance to nearby popular destinations. Some examples are shown in Figure 25 and Figure 26 below. Such signs are often temporary in nature and can be installed at very low cost.

Figure 25. "Walk Your City" signs in San Jose, CA. (Source: Richard Masoner / Cyclelicious on Flickr)

Figure 26. "Walk Your City" signs in Valdosta, Georgia, installed as a class project by students at Valdosta State University.

III. Parking Opportunities and Recommendations

This plan's study area has a total of 1,259 parking spaces: 326 in public parking lots, 452 on the street, and 481 in private lots. 40 of these are handicap parking spaces (22 on-street, 6 in public lots, and 12 in private lots. The parking inventory for Downtown Tifton is shown in Map 4.

During interviews, local business owners and other stakeholders indicated a pervasive problem for Downtown Tifton businesses: Potential business patrons are reluctant to walk even relatively short distances from parking spaces to their destinations. Therefore, motorists will often search for on-street parking at their destination even when ample parking in public lots is available a short distance away. As a result, there is a perception among local business owners that they lose some business from the lack of immediately available parking.

Downtown Tifton is compact, highly walkable, and almost completely built out, with limited opportunities for creating any additional parking spaces. Excessive quantities of surface parking can detract from a cityscape and make a community less appealing to visitors (compare Figure 27 and Figure 28). Consequently, it is recommended that efforts to solve Downtown Tifton's parking problems should focus primarily on encouraging visitors to accept slightly longer walking distances from parking areas. In order to preserve the vitality and historic character that makes Tifton appealing to visitors and tourists, future goals for Downtown should focus on revitalizing rather than demolishing vacant buildings. Only very limited amounts of new surface parking should be created.

A small number of projects to create additional parking have been proposed or are currently underway:

- On Commerce Way south of Third Street, two buildings are set to be demolished and a new $377,000 parking lot in that location will add approximately 40 new parking spaces close to Main Street businesses.
- Restriping of parking spaces on Goodwhich Alley between Fifth Street and Third Street has been proposed. If implemented, the design, prepared by the Department of Community Affairs, would add 57 parking spaces along the alley, in close proximity to Main Street businesses.
- A design has been produced for the creation of 32 on-street parking spaces on Chestnut Avenue, directly east of Tift Avenue. Visitors parking in this area would need to cross Tift Avenue and the railroad tracks in order to access the most active part of Main Street. The walking distance from this area to the Main Street Gateway is approximately 1,100 feet, comparable to the distance from the currently underutilized Cato Knight Memorial Parking Complex. At a minimum, for this parking area to be well used, the sidewalk gap on Tift Avenue should be completed (see Recommendation #10) and an effective crosswalk for crossing Tift Avenue (average daily traffic: 7,230 vehicles per Georgia Department of Transportation, 2016) should be provided.

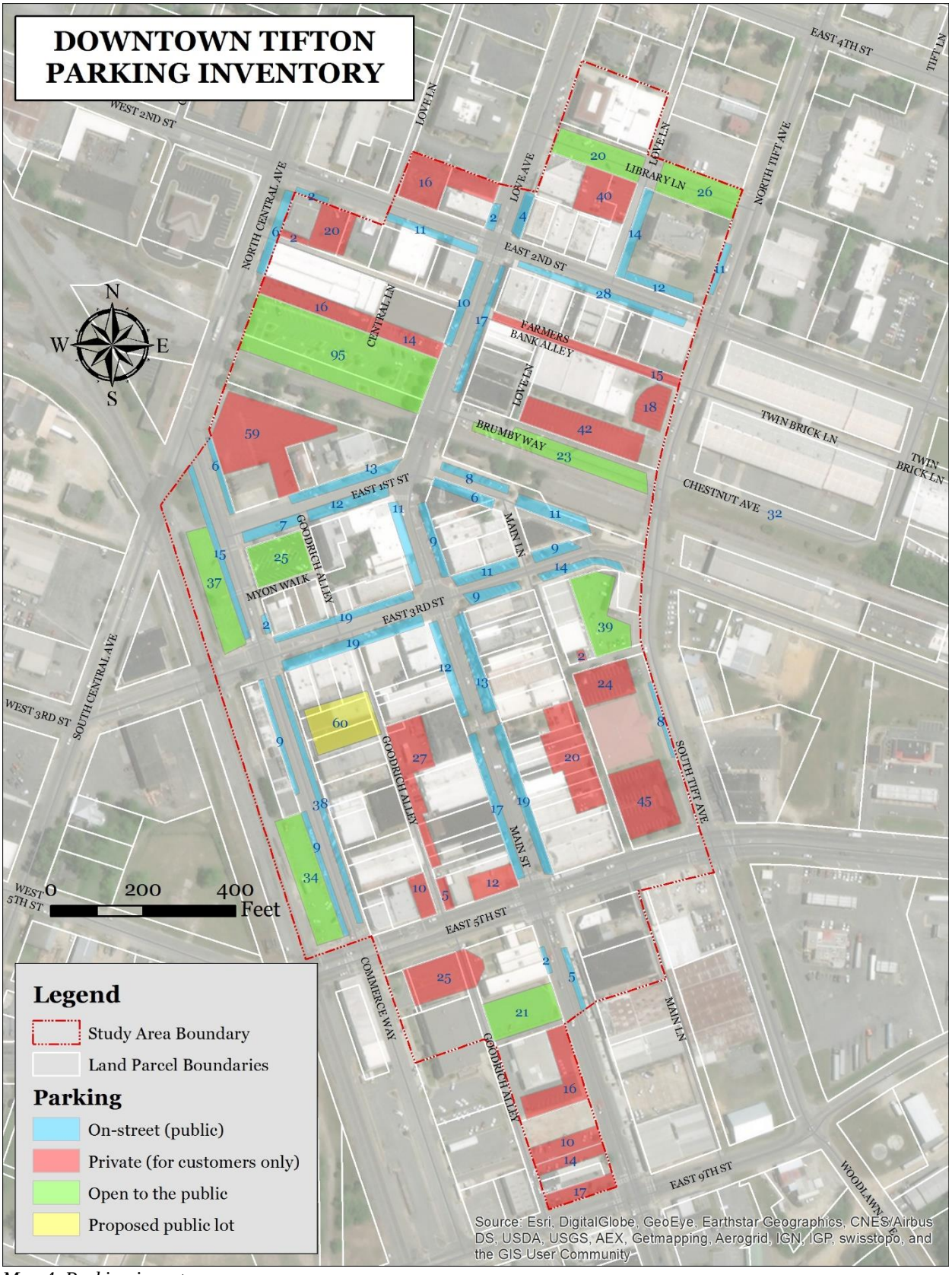
Figure 27. Aerial view of Downtown Tifton, with comparatively little space devoted to surface parking. (Image source: Google Maps)

Figure 28. Aerial view of a community of comparable size (Ashtabula, Ohio) with a greater proportion of surface parking in the Downtown area, creating a less inviting environment.

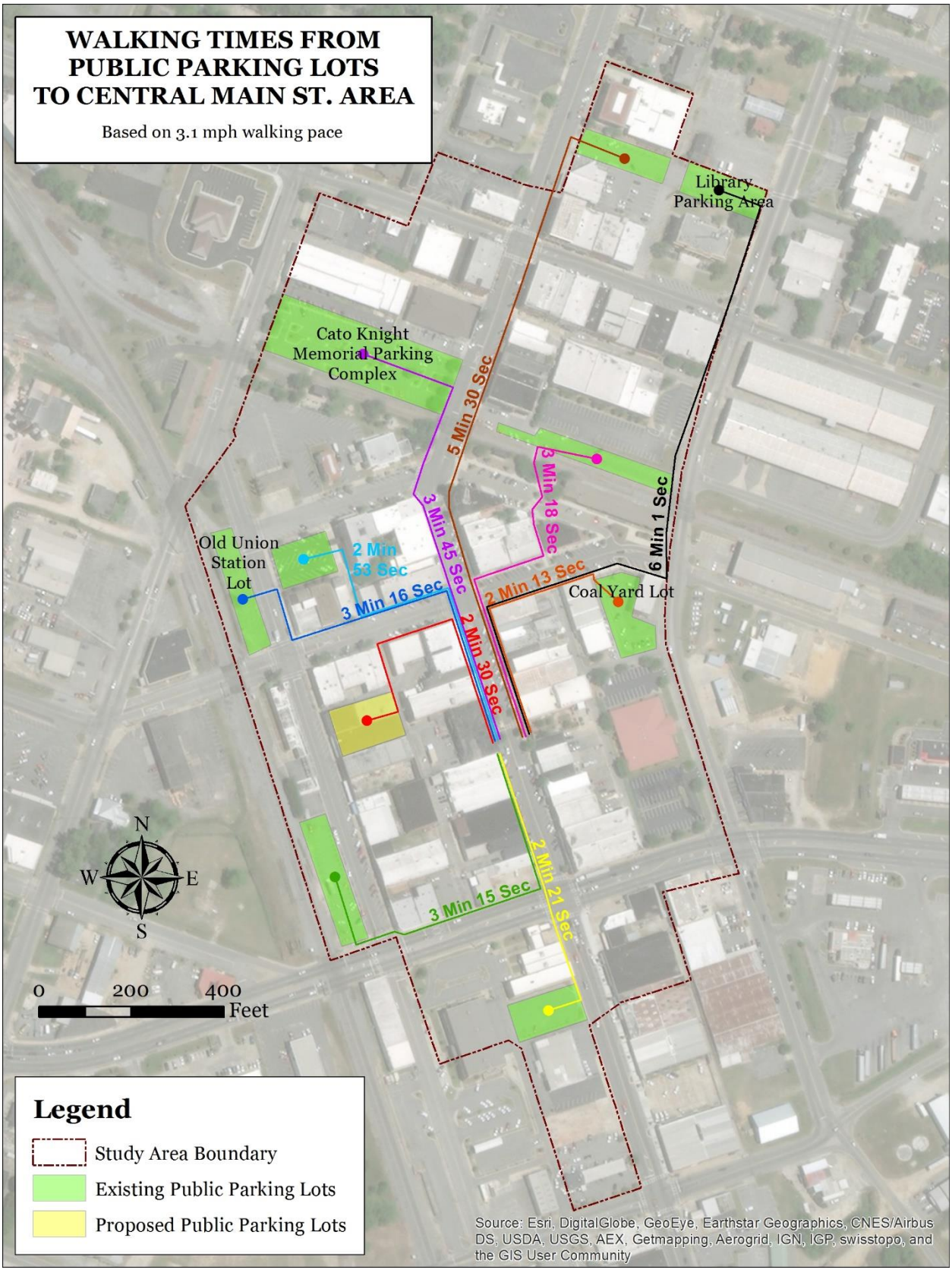
Map 5 shows the walking times from public parking lots to the midpoint of the block of Main Street between Fifth Street and Third Avenue, based on the typical preferred walking speed of 3.1 miles per hour.[3] The rates of utilization of public parking lots are influenced not only by distance, but also by convenience (such as whether or not major roads must be crossed) and by the quality of the surroundings along the route from the parking lot to the destination (i.e., by sidewalk quality, shade trees, and other factors that influence the pleasantness of the walk).

A visitor to Tifton is likely to walk further at the local Wal-Mart than in Downtown. To illustrate this, Map 6 shows the outline of Downtown Tifton and its streets, parking, and selected destinations, superimposed at the same scale over an aerial view of the Tifton Wal-Mart Supercenter and parking lot. From this map, it can be seen that the walking distance from underutilized public parking lots (such as the Cato Knight Memorial Parking Complex) to popular downtown destinations is comparable to the distance from the middle of the Wal-Mart parking lot to the middle of the store.

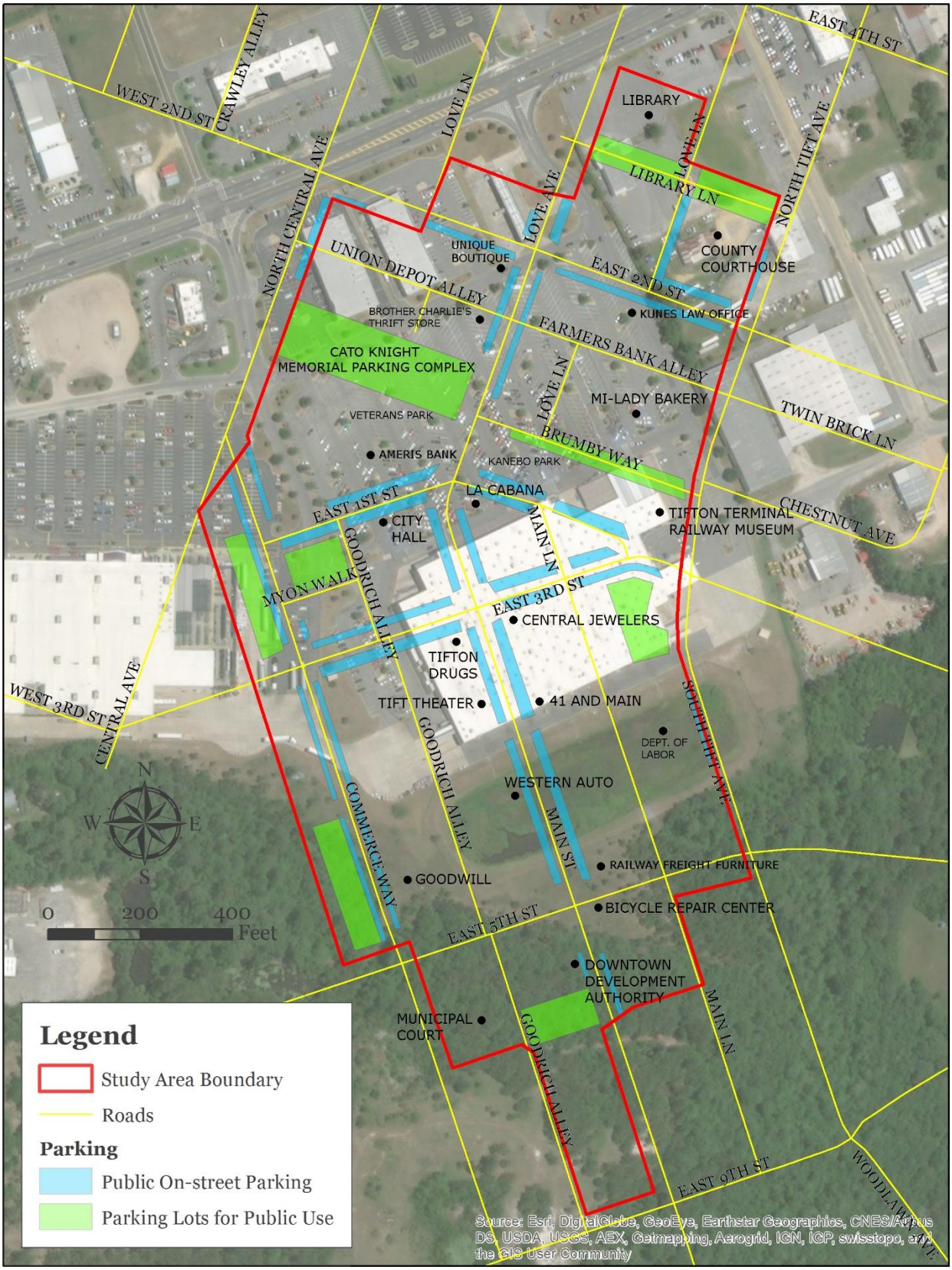
[3] Browning, R. C., Baker, E. A., Herron, J. A. and Kram, R. (2006). "Effects of obesity and sex on the energetic cost and preferred speed of walking". Journal of Applied Physiology. 100 (2): 390–398.



Map 4. Parking inventory



Map 5. Walking times from public parking lots to the central Main Street business area.



Map 6. Downtown area boundary superimposed on Tifton Wal-Mart parking lot.

Although limited opportunities for expanding parking capacity exist in Downtown Tifton, there are some areas where additional parking spaces could be created at relatively low cost. This section describes the opportunities that were identified during field visits by SGRC staff, as well as some opportunities for optimizing parking use by other methods.

Walkshed Analysis

This section shows the areas within 1-, 3-, and 5-minute walking distances of the Cato Knight Memorial Parking Complex, chosen because it is both the largest and the most underutilized public parking facility in Downtown Tifton. As can be seen, most of the Downtown study area is within a 5-minute walk of the central point of the Cato Knight Memorial Parking Complex. Many popular destinations, such as La Cabana Mexican Restaurant, The Bistro at 219, City Hall, and all the businesses along Love Avenue and Second Street in Downtown, are within the 3-minute walkshed.

Short-Term Parking Opportunities

1. Enforce the Parking Ordinance.

The City of Tifton's Downtown Parking Ordinance (Code of Ordinances, Section 78-87, "Downtown parking") is intended to reserve Downtown on-street parking for customers of businesses. During this planning process, discussion with the Downtown Development Authority and other stakeholders indicated that this ordinance is not consistently enforced in all parts of Downtown at all times. Enforcing this ordinance consistently and thoroughly would likely free up a substantial number of parking spaces in Downtown during the day. Increased enforcement could be accompanied by informational outreach to Downtown employees and business owners to raise awareness of the existence and proximity of the underutilized public parking lots that are available for them to use.

The Downtown parking ordinance is reproduced in full below.

Sec. 78-87. - Downtown parking.

Due to the commercial emphasis of the downtown business area and the need for consumers to obtain on-street parking reasonably close to businesses, the following on-street parking restrictions shall apply to the downtown business area:

(a) For purposes of this section, the term *weekday downtown area* shall be defined as:

(1) Love Avenue/Main Street south of Fourth Street and north of Fifth Street (U.S. 82);
(2) Second Street east of Central Avenue and west of Tift Avenue;
(3) First Street and First Street Extension;
(4) 3rd Street east of Central Avenue and west of Tift Avenue;
(5) Commerce Way north of 5th Street and south of Central Avenue;
(6) Brumby Way.

On-street parking shall not be allowed for owners and employees of businesses in the weekday downtown area nor for residents or their guests in residential units (apartments, condominiums, etc.) located in the weekday downtown area between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. For the purposes of this section, owners shall include any person or entity that leases a building or any portion thereof in the weekday downtown area.

(b) For purposes of this section, the term *Saturday downtown area* shall be defined as Main Street south of Third Street and north of Fifth Street (U.S. 82).

On-street parking shall not be allowed for owners and employees of businesses in the Saturday downtown area nor for residents or their guests in residential units (apartments, condominiums, etc.) located in the Saturday downtown area between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. For the purposes of this section, owners shall include any person or entity that leases a building or any portion thereof in the Saturday downtown area.

(c) Free public parking is hereby made available to such persons during the above-described prohibited times for on-street parking at the Cato Knight Parking Lot and the public parking lots adjacent to Commerce Way.

(d) Notwithstanding the foregoing, these parking regulations and restrictions shall not apply to the following holidays:

(1) New Year's Day.
(2) Independence Day.
(3) Thanksgiving.
(4) Christmas Day.

(Ord. No. 2011-03, § I, 3-7-2011; Ord. No. 2011-04, § I, 4-4-2011; Ord. No. 2014-19, § I , 8-4-2014)

2. Create more on-street parking by reducing gaps between parking spaces.

In several locations in Downtown Tifton, especially along Commerce Way and also on Central Avenue and Second Street, there are gaps approximately 8-foot-long gaps between on-street parallel parking spaces that are striped diagonally to indicate that motorists should not park there (see Figure 29). Although these gaps make parallel parking easier, they reduce the total number of on-street parking spaces available. There are approximately 20 such gaps, with an estimated total length of 160 feet. By eliminating these gaps and restriping parking spaces to be directly adjacent to each other, the City could gain an estimated 10 additional on-street parking spaces.

Figure 29. Striped gap between parking spaces on Commerce Way.

3. Consider removing bulb-out on First Street near La Cabana

On First Street between Main Street and Main Lane, near to La Cabaña Restaurant, there is a "bulb-out" that is purely concrete, with no landscaping or other improvements (see Figure 30). This bulb-out appears to serve no purpose and has no aesthetic value. Several other well-designed traffic-calming features exist along this block of First Street. Therefore, it is expected that this bulb-out could be removed with no adverse effects. An estimated two parking spaces would be gained.

Figure 30. Unimproved bulb-out on First Street.

4. **Add striping to more clearly delineate parking spaces on First Street between Main Lane and Third Street in order to ensure efficient use of space.**

On this block, visually appealing streetscaping has been implemented, including brick street paving, but the diagonal parking spaces have not been delineated (see Figure 31). There are approximately 11 spaces plus one accessible parking space. Clear delineation of parking spaces could help to ensure that motorists use the available space optimally.

Figure 31. Diagonal parking on First Street with spaces not marked.

5. **Redesign parking areas along alleys to optimize use of space.**

The City currently has a proposed plan to restripe and optimize parking along Goodwhich Alley. Main Lane could benefit from a similar approach. Haphazard parking currently takes place along Main Lane behind Main Street businesses, and trash receptacles and other furnishings are not optimally placed (see Figure 32). Farmers Bank Alley may also benefit from this approach.

Figure 32. Haphazard parking along Main Lane.

6. Redesign the Coal Yard parking lot.

The Coal Yard parking lot (see Figure 33) is estimated to be the most heavily utilized public parking lot in Downtown. The lot is an unusual shape, which leads to an odd configuration of parking. A plan currently exists for restriping parking spaces in the lot to improve the parking experience (see Appendix), but this plan does not increase the total number of parking spaces. It is possible that a different design could slightly increase the number of spaces.

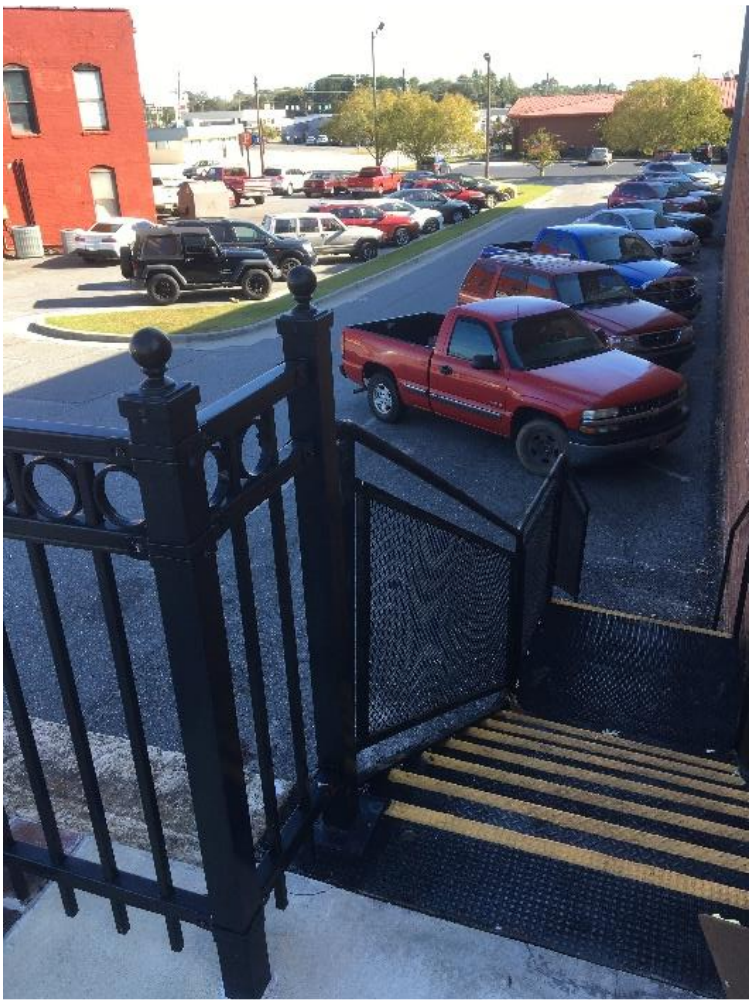


Figure 33. Coal Yard parking lot.

7. Consider on-street parking on the alley directly south of the Coal Yard parking lot.

The small alley that runs between the Coal Yard parking lot and Department of Labor parking lot is wide enough that, if converted to one-way traffic, there would be room for approximately 6 or 7 parallel parking spaces (see Figure 34).

Figure 34. Alley between Coal Yard and Department of Labor parking lots, with possible space for on-street parking.

8. Create motorbike/scooter parking spaces.

Several locations exist in Downtown Tifton where extra space allows for the creation of smaller parking spaces for motorcycles and scooters. This is a potential way to increase overall parking capacity using existing areas of paved surface that are currently not utilized (see, for example, Figure 35). An example of motorcycle parking is shown in Figure 36.

Figure 35. Empty space on West Third Street, too small for standard parking but possibly feasible for motorcycle parking.

Figure 36. Example of motorcycle parking spaces (source: University of British Columbia).

9. Encourage use of underutilized public parking lots.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity for Downtown Tifton's parking situation involves encouraging the public to embrace the idea of walking slightly longer distances from parking space to final destination. The following are some approaches that might help to address this problem.

More prominent signs at key locations: During interviews with Downtown business owners, it was mentioned that some patrons can be seen searching at length for parking on Main Street, even when easy parking is available a short distance away. One possibility for addressing this problem would be some prominent signs that indicate the distance to nearby public parking lots, as shown in the rendering in Figure 37. Further examples are shown in Figure 38 and Figure 39. Almost all downtown businesses are within a five-minute walk of underutilized public parking lots (see the Walk-Shed Analysis at the beginning of this section).

Figure 37. Example of a sign that would inform visitors of how close they are to free parking. This sign is placed at Main Street and First Street, and directs motorists to the Cato Knight Memorial Parking Complex, 300 feet ahead.

Figure 38. Example of a sign that could be placed near Downtown businesses, advertising the proximity of public parking lots.

Figure 39. Example of a sign that could be placed at a public parking lot to emphasize the proximity to Downtown businesses.

Associated with this idea, "Walk Your City" signs are also recommended (see Pedestrian Recommendation #15).

Pedestrian infrastructure improvements: The improvements mentioned in Section II, such as improving sidewalks, improving pedestrian crossings over the railroad, removing sidewalk obstructions, and restriping crosswalks, could go a long way toward encouraging Downtown visitors to use public parking lots and walk from there. Other amenities that encourage walking include, but are not limited to, shade trees, drinking fountains, increased numbers of benches, planters and other landscaping, and pervasive street lighting at night.

Long-Term Parking Opportunities

10. Continue to pursue shared parking agreements.

Significantly underutilized private parking lots exist in Downtown Tifton, notably the Department of Labor parking lot and Ameris Bank lot. Although success in obtaining shared parking agreements has been limited thus far, the City should continue to pursue such agreements wherever possible. Figure 40 illustrates the extent to which some private parking is underutilized while other parking areas are overcrowded.

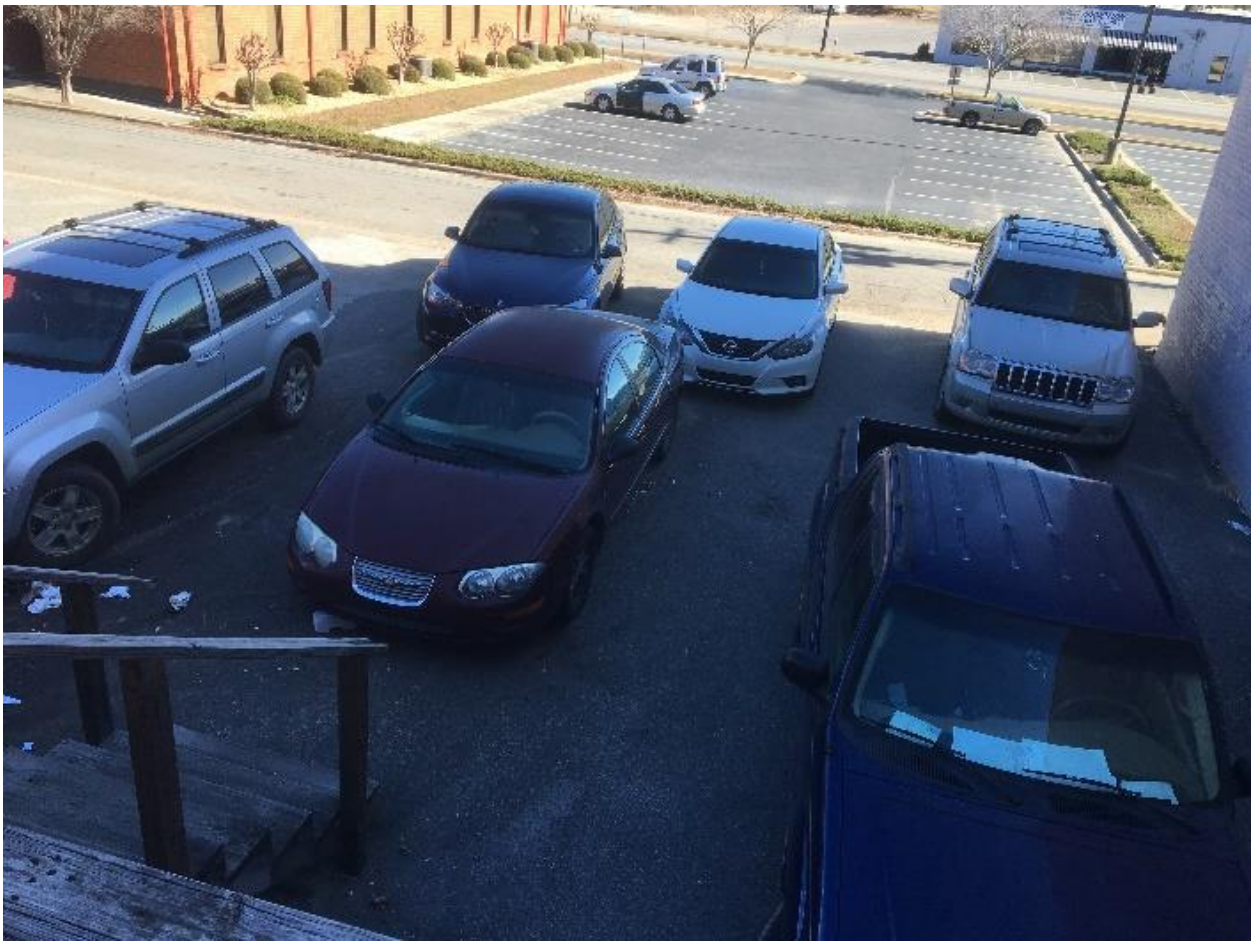


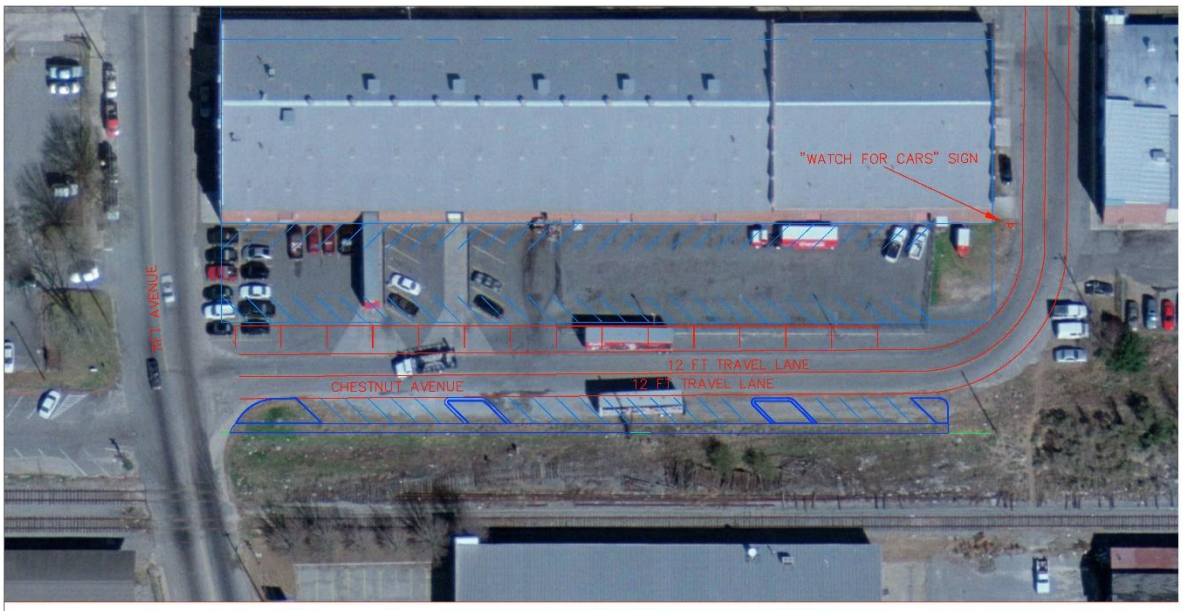
Figure 40. "Stacked" parking on Main Lane behind a Main Street business, with a nearby underutilized private parking area in the background.

11. Continue to investigate the feasibility of a parking deck and paid parking.

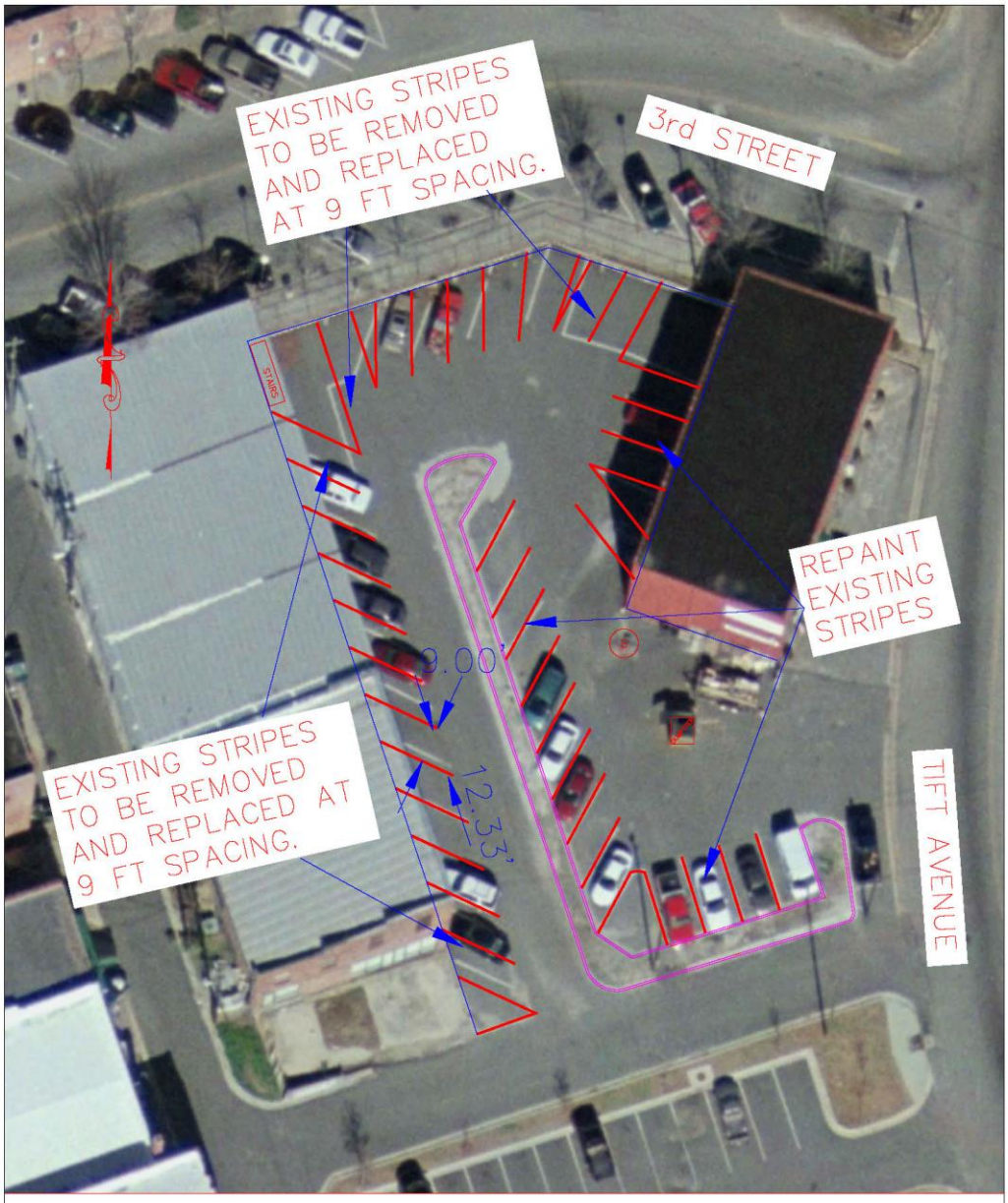
The Downtown Master Plan (2007) called for a parking deck or parking garage, and this possibility should continue to be investigated for the long term. Parking meters, kiosk parking, and app-based paid parking are also possibilities to investigate in the long term. Efforts to plan for the future of parking in Downtown Tifton should take into account the latest technological changes and innovations. For example, it is generally predicted that self-driving cars and car-sharing will become more prevalent in the coming decades. App-based paid parking will likely continue to replace older forms of paid parking such as parking meters.

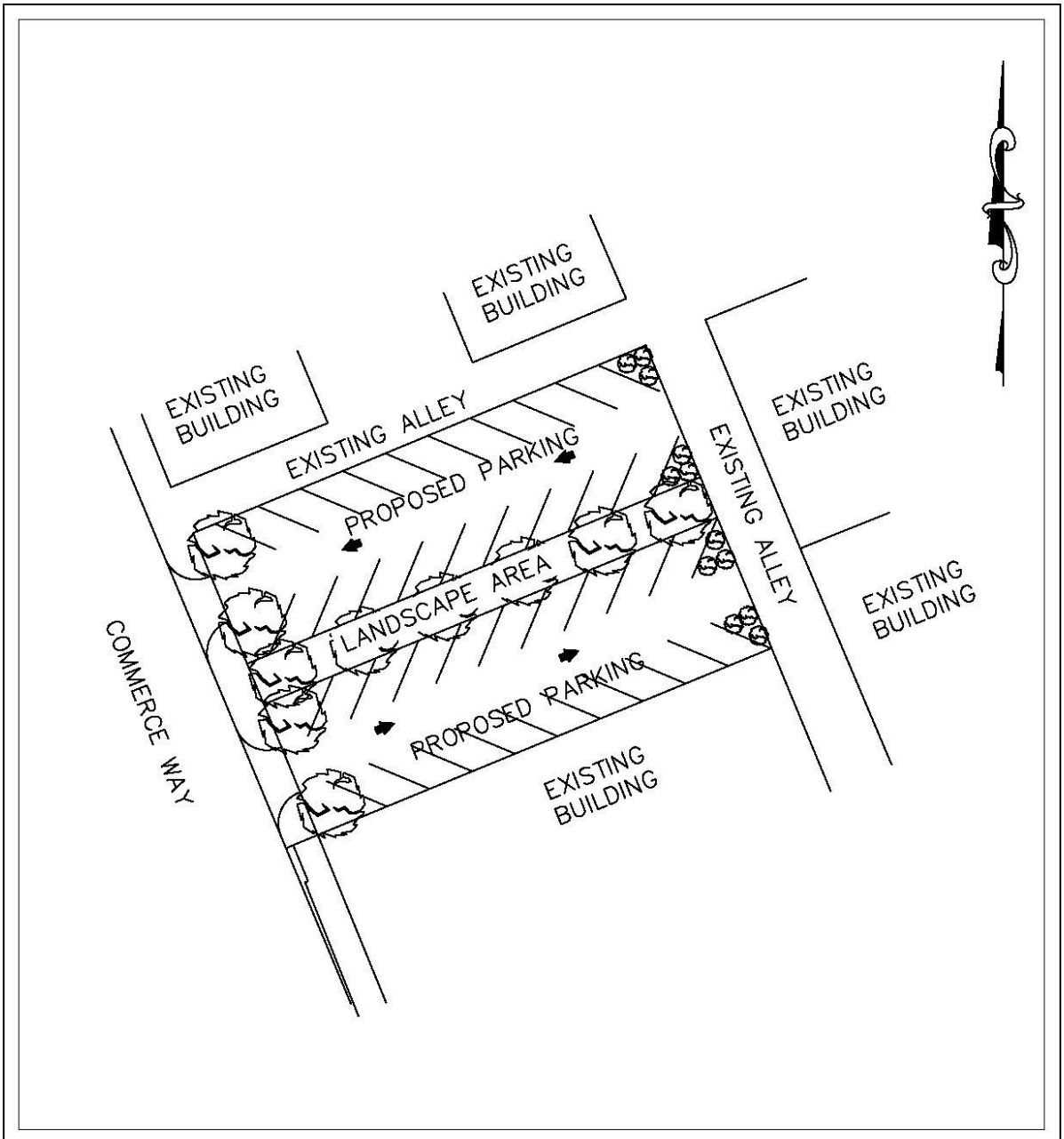
Conceptual Parking Plans

This section includes some conceptual parking plans that are currently under consideration for the Downtown Tifton area.



SCALE 1" =40'±	14 & 22 PARKING SPACES	STREET PARKING ON CHESTNUT AT TIFT AVENUE TIFTON, GEORGIA


EXISTING STRIPES TO BE REMOVED AND REPLACED AT 9 FT SPACING.
3rd STREET
REPAINT EXISTING STRIPES
9.00'
12.33'
EXISTING STRIPES TO BE REMOVED AND REPLACED AT 9 FT SPACING.
TIFT AVENUE
SCALE 1" =25'±
RESTRIPING COAL YARD PARKING LOT
3RD STREET AT TIFT AVENUE
TIFTON, GEORGIA



REVISIONS		
NO	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

PROPOSED PARKING AND LANDSCAPE AREA
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
REDEVELOPMENT FUND

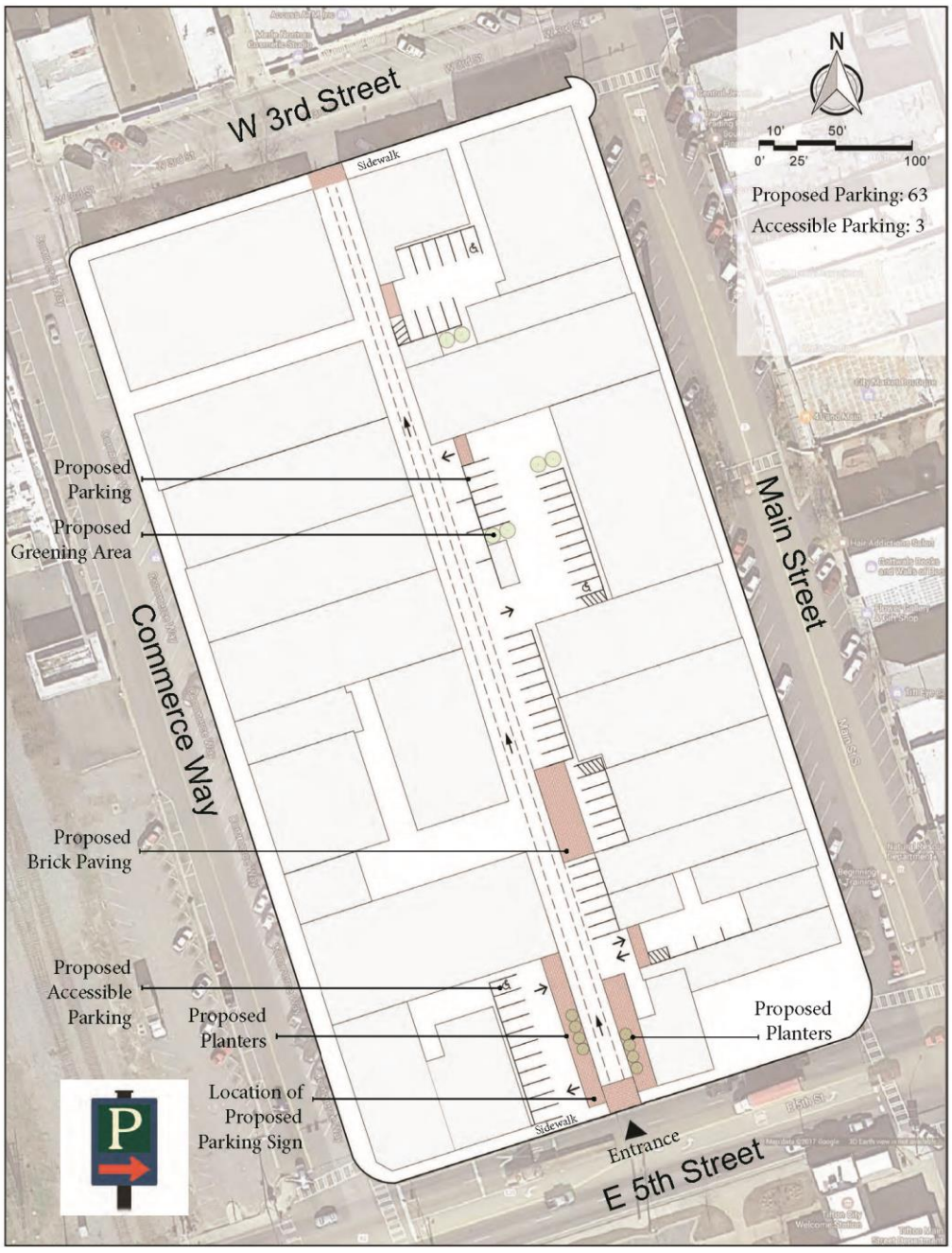
CITY OF TIFTON,
TIFT COUNTY GEORGIA
PROJECT NO. COT-00715

ESG Operations, Inc.

SCALE: 1"=40'	1
DATE: 08/20/2015	
DWN. JWS	
CKD. JWS	
DWG. NO. COMMERCE WAY	

Goodwhich Alley Improvements

Goodwhich Alley, Tifton, GA



1 of 2	Drawn by: SL Checked by: CF Date: 02/28/17	Project ID: 3600181S7	Drawing prepared by: Georgia Department of Community Affairs	City: Tifton Project: Goodwhich Alley Owner: City of Tifton	GEORGIA MAIN STREET	NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION Conceptual use only This drawing was prepared as a conceptual design solution. Neither the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design, nor the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation will be responsible for any problems which arise from the use of this drawing as a working drawing for construction purposes.

Goodwhich Alley Parking Space

Goodwhich Alley, Tifton, GA

Design Recommendations

Alley Planter Solutions

Landscape improvements such as trees, planters and brick pavers will separate pedestrian and vehicular use areas and define the Goodwhich Alley entrance. Additionally, signs and lighting will help the public view the alley as a safe and accessible space.

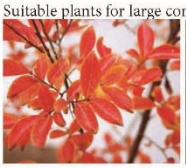
Heavy duty resin-based planters are lightweight, durable and UV-protected and may be moved within the alley according to changing use patterns. These containers may be relocated using a dolly. The beige color will blend with existing concrete and masonry products in the streetscape area. Drought resistant plants are recommended for the alley.

Green Alley Entrance

Large planter: 42" tall 60" wide

Vendor: TerraCast Products
Source: terracastproducts.com
ITEM: TCN-60 Color: Beige

Suitable plants for large container growing



Crapemyrtle
Lagerstroemia indica sp.

Crapemyrtle

Trident Maple
Acer buergerianum

Trident Maple

Small planter: 18" tall 46" wide

Vendor: TerraCast Products
Source: terracastproducts.com
ITEM: TCN-49 Color: Beige

Suitable plants for small container growing

Pink Muhly Grass,
Muhlenbergia capillaris

Adam's Needle Yucca,
Yucca filamentosa

Stonecrop,
Sedum spectabile 'Autumn Joy'

Creeping phlox,
Phlox subulata

Lighting

Goodwhich Alley should have lights both for security and to enhance business entrances. Appropriate fixtures for higher locations are exterior straight-arm, wall mounted warehouse fixtures that are full-cutoff to reduce light wast and pollution. Wall sconces are appropriate for locations which have limited installment space.

Light fixtures should face downward and direct light onto the facade.

Pedestrian scaled, full cut-off light standards are offered in a variety of styles and colors. Signs may also be mounted on the poles.

Paving

The use of brick pavers will provide visibility for the pedestrian sidewalk and help define the alley entrance.

2 of 2

Drawn by: SL
Checked by: CF
Date: 02/28/17

Project ID: 3001815.7

Drawing prepared by
Georgia Department of Community Affairs

City: Tifton
Project: Goodwhich Alley
Owner: City of Tifton

GEORGIA MAIN STREET

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
Conceptual use only

This drawing was prepared as a conceptual design solution. Neither the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design, nor the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation will be responsible for any problems which arise from the use of this drawing as a working drawing for construction purposes.

IV. Bicycling Opportunities and Recommendation

The encouragement of bicycling goes hand in hand with the encouragement of walking in Downtown Tifton. There are five bicycle racks in Downtown (see Figure 41), and ease of parking is one of many factors that can make bicycling convenient.

Figure 41. Bicycle parking in Downtown Tifton

However, the City of Tifton and Tift County as a whole are lacking in bicycle infrastructure. Few bicycle lanes exist in the community, and some previously existing lanes have recently been removed as part of resurfacing projects. No multi-use paths or trails exist in the community, although plans are in place to create a "rail trail" in a disused rail bed. Due to limited right-of-way width, options are limited for creating on-street bicycle lanes in the Downtown area.

The following are some recommendations for improving the bicycle-friendliness of Downtown Tifton and increasing bicycle traffic in the area.

1. Add "sharrows" on Downtown streets.

Shared lane markings, also known as "sharrows" ("share" + "arrow"), function as a reminder to motorists that bicycles are allowed and should be expected on the roadway. They also function as encouragement to bicyclists to use the roadway (especially in areas where riding on the sidewalk may be unsafe and/or illegal), and encourage bicyclists to ride in the direction of traffic, which is safer than riding against traffic. Some roads in the area of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College have already been painted with sharrows. Sharrows would be appropriate for all streets in Downtown Tifton except for Fifth Street, where they are not recommended due to traffic volumes, including truck traffic.

Proper sharrow placement for Main, First, Third, and Second Streets would be in the middle of the lane (see Figure 42). Alongside parallel parking spaces, care should be taken not to place sharrows in the "door zone" where bicyclists might be injured by people opening car doors in front of them.

Figure 42. Properly placed "sharrow" or shared lane marking in Fitzgerald, GA. Note that the sharrow is placed in the middle of the lane and not in the "door zone."

2. Implement a public bike repair station.

A public bike repair station is typically a small fixture that includes one or more bicycle pumps and various bicycle tools (such as hexagonal wrenches and screwdrivers), secured on cables and made available for bicyclists to conduct minor repairs such as fixing a flat tire or adjust bike seat height. An example is shown in Figure 43.

Public bike repair stations fulfill minor repair functions that are complementary with, and not competitive with, local bicycle shops, such as adjusting seat height and adding air to tires. Public bike repair stations can be particularly beneficial to cyclists who are stranded due to minor repair needs during the hours when local bike shops are closed. This recommendation may be implemented in partnership with existing bicycle repair businesses and other merchants.

Figure 43. Trailside bike repair station in Rome, GA.

3. Add more bicycle parking if needed.

There are 5 bicycle racks in Downtown Tifton, providing a total of approximately 25 bike parking spaces. All of these bicycle racks are in prominent and convenient locations. To further encourage bicycling, the City could add more bike racks to Downtown depending on need. Locations where bike parking may be needed include the Tift County Courthouse and administration building, and the businesses along Commerce Way.

4. Continue to investigate bike-share programs.

Two types of bike-share programs have been discussed for the City of Tifton. One is a low-cost bike-share program implemented by a private company, which provides the bicycle and other necessary equipment and operates the program. Another option is the utilization of impounded abandoned bicycles (of which the City currently has a large inventory), which could be spray-painted a unique color to identify them. Such bicycles could be provided to the community free of charge with minimal start-up costs.

Possible options include a docked bike-share system, in which users return bicycles to any of a number of docking stations after use (see Figure 44); or a dockless bike share system, in which bikes can be picked up and left anywhere within a defined district (for example, see Figure 45).

Figure 44. Docked bike share station in Savannah, GA.

Figure 45. Bicycles that are part of a dockless bike-share system, Seattle, WA. Photo: Ser_Amantio_di_Nicolao, Wikimedia Commons.

5. Install "Bike Your City" signs.

In many communities, bicycling has been encouraged by signs that provide a reminder of the short distance and/or time required to reach a destination by bicycle (see Figure 46 and Figure 47). Just as with walking, this helps to overcome the perception that travel modes other than driving are too tiring or time-consuming to be feasible.

Figure 46. Temporary "Bike Your City" sign in Valdosta, Georgia.

Figure 47. "Bike Your City" sign in Ottawa, Canada (source: Lana Stewart, modalmom.com)

6. Continue to investigate adding bike lanes where feasible.

Most streets in Downtown do not have sufficient extra width available for the addition of bike lanes without a complete redesign of the roadway. However, there are sections of Tift Avenue where extra width is available. An engineering study should be conducted in order to ascertain whether, and to what extent, bike lanes would be feasible on Tift Avenue. If implemented, bike lanes on Tift Avenue could provide a direct bicycle connection between Downtown and Fulwood Park.

7. Continue to pursue implementation of the Tift Area Greenways Master Plan, including bike lanes and multi-use paths, and promote bicycle connectivity to and from Downtown.

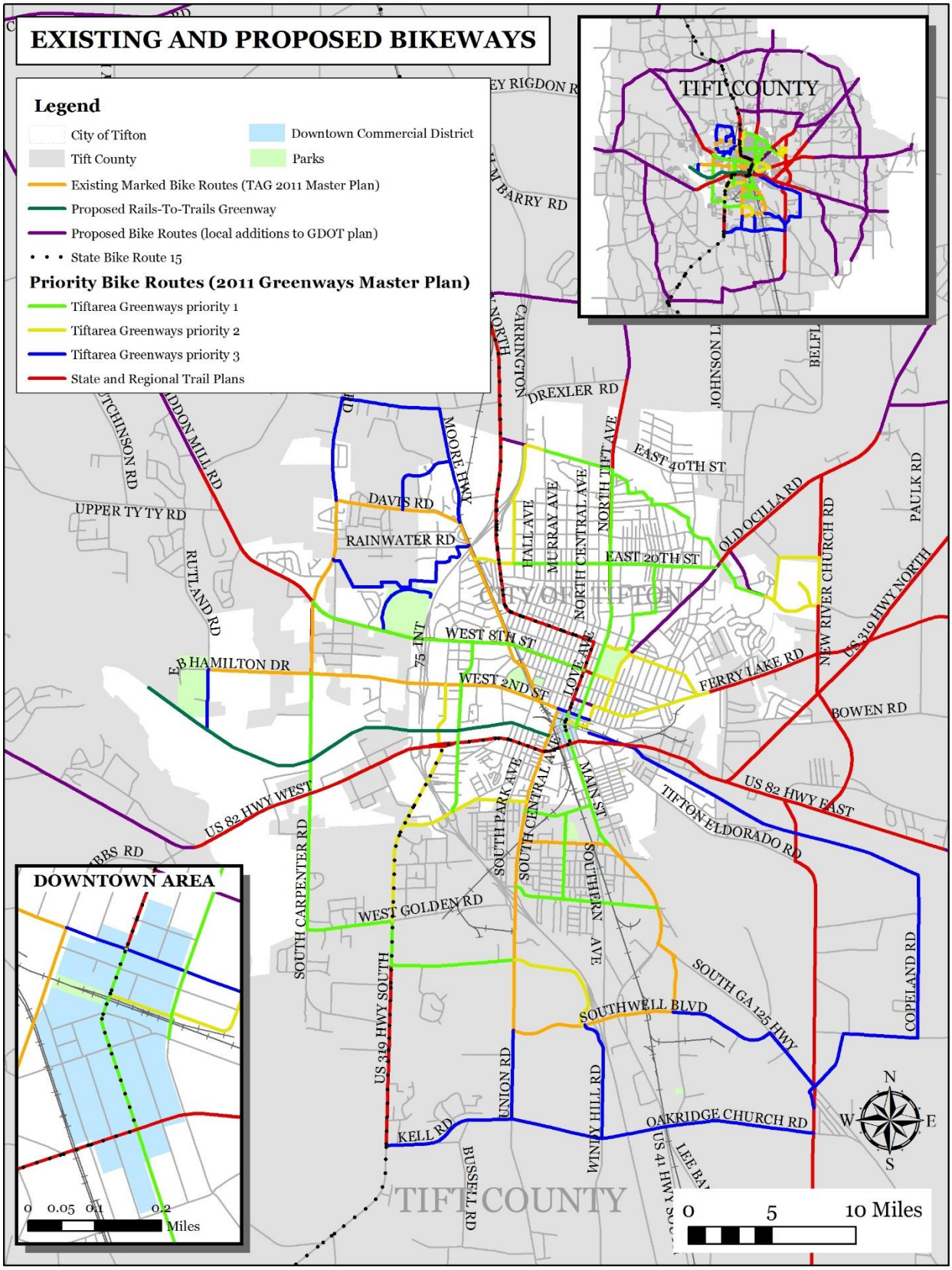
Pedestrian traffic and bicycle traffic in Downtown Tifton are influenced by different sets of issues. Most pedestrians in Downtown Tifton are people who have parked Downtown and then walk to destinations within Downtown. However, bicyclists seen in Downtown Tifton are more likely to be people who ride from residential areas into Downtown. Consequently, in order to increase bicycle traffic, a priority should be the provision of bicycle connections into and out of Downtown.

The Tift Area Greenways Master Plan proposes several bicycle routes leading from other parts of the community into Downtown. In addition, a new rails-to-trails greenway is proposed (see Map 7). Continued implementation of these projects will contribute to the encouragement of bicycle traffic, with all its associated benefits, in Downtown.

With regard to destinations outside the Downtown area, during the development of this plan, stakeholders identified the following priority destinations for improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to Downtown, listed in Table 1. The Tift Area Greenways Master Plan already calls for improved connectivity to (or very near) all these destinations.

Table 1. Priority Destinations for Improved Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity to Downtown.

Destination	Approximate distance from Downtown
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	3 miles
University of Georgia Tifton Campus	3 miles
Tiftarea YMCA	< 3 miles
Fulwood Park	< 1 mile
Friendly City Park / E. B. Hamilton Complex	4 miles
Tift Regional Medical Center	2 miles
Henry Tift Myers Airport	2 miles
Tift County High School	3.5 miles



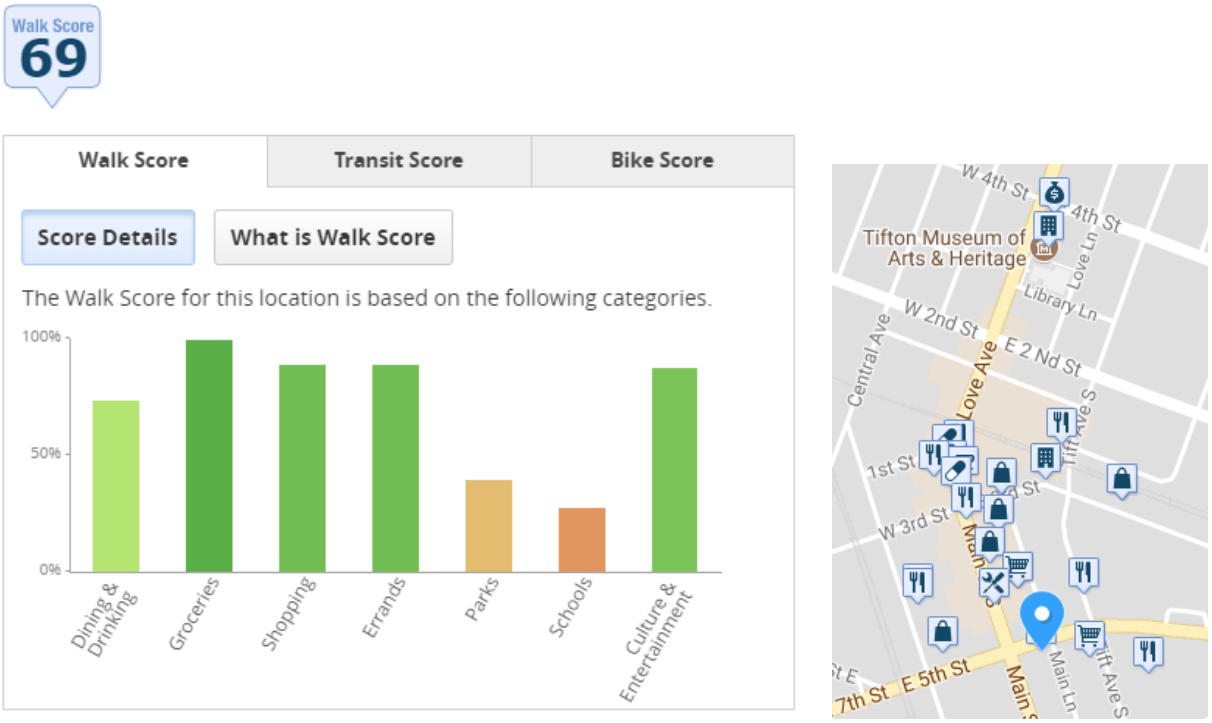
Map 7. Existing and proposed bikeways.

V. Walk Score

Walk Score is a well-known private company that provides assessments of the walkability of cities, neighborhoods, and other places. It is important to note that the Walk Score methodology does not take into account the availability or quality of infrastructure such as sidewalks or crosswalks. Therefore the value of Walk Score ratings for assessing Downtown Tifton is limited. Walk Score measures walkability based on the following criteria:

- Proximity to amenities such as shops, restaurants, etc.
- Population density
- Road metrics such as block length and intersection density

Based on these criteria, Downtown Tifton has a Walk Score of 69 ("Somewhat Walkable"). Downtown Tifton has high scores in the categories of Dining & Drinking, Groceries, Shopping, Errands, and Culture & Entertainment, and only scores low in the categories of Parks and Schools. However, as of late 2017, Walk Score's GIS data do not include the three parks that are in Downtown Tifton. The SGRC has provided updated data to the sources Walk Score utilizes, however no changes to the Walk Score were noted at this time.



Amenity scores (left) and map of amenities used to calculate Walk Score (right). Source: WalkScore.com

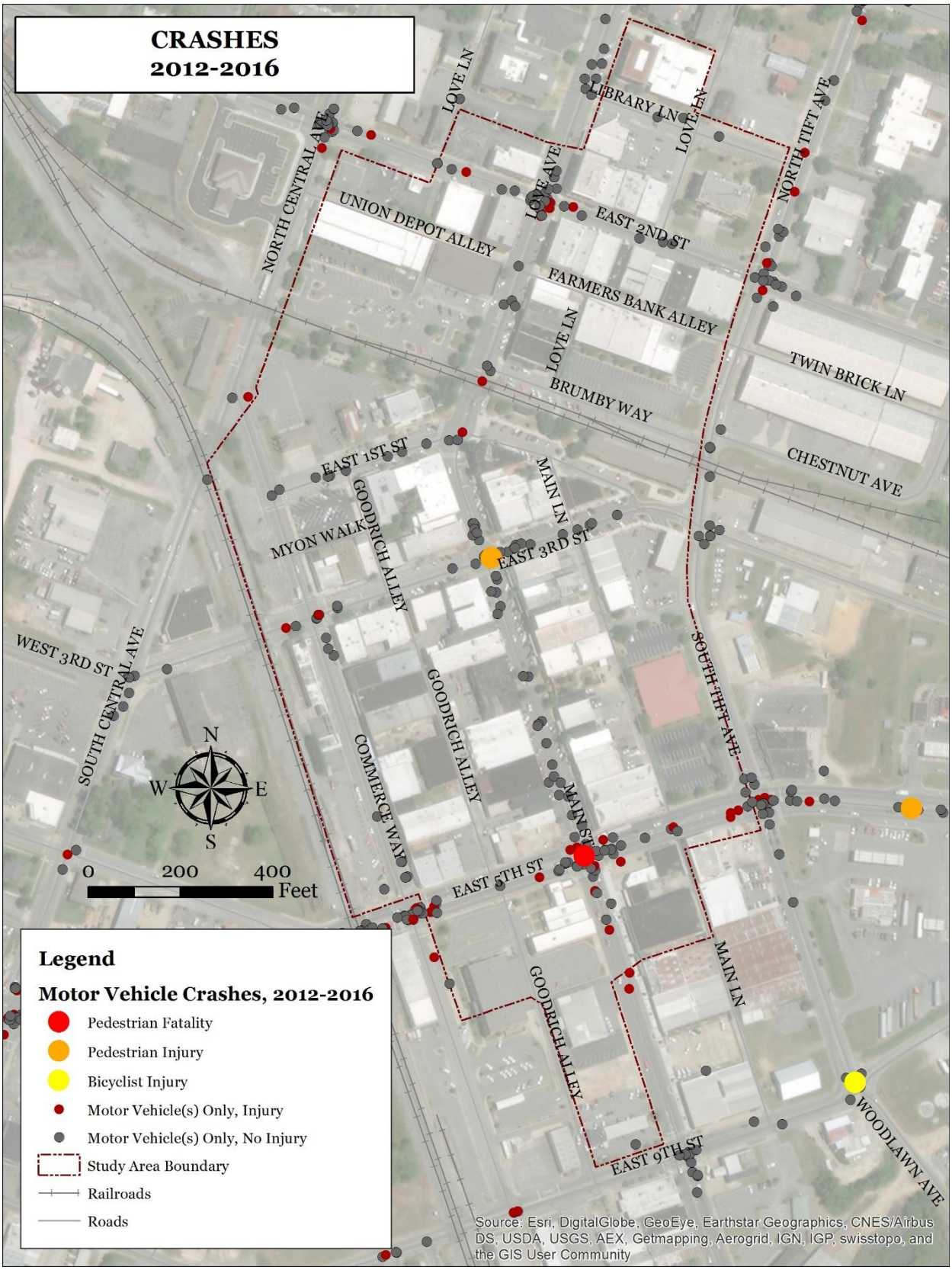
References: "About Walk Score" https://www.walkscore.com/about.shtml
"Walk Score Methodology" https://www.walkscore.com/methodology.shtml
Tifton, GA Walk Score https://www.walkscore.com/score/tifton-ga

VI. Motor Vehicle Crashes

As in most locations, traffic safety presents some problems in Downtown Tifton. During the five year period 2012 – 2016 (the most recent time period for which data are available), there were 248 motor vehicle crashes within our study area, causing 54 injuries and 1 fatality (the victim was a pedestrian, at the intersection of Main Street and Fifth Street, on April 11, 2014).

Only two crashes involving pedestrians are recorded in our study area during this time period: The aforementioned fatality, and an injury crash that took place in 2016 at the intersection of Main Street and Third Street. No crashes involving bicyclists are recorded within our study area during this timeframe. Map 8 shows the locations of these crashes.

While motor vehicle crashes have occurred throughout all of Downtown, the most noticeable clusters of crashes are at the intersections of Second Avenue and Love Avenue; Main Street and Fifth Street; and Tift Avenue and Fifth Street.



Map 8. Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2012 – 2016.

VII. References

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The aerial imagery in this document was sourced from Google Maps (http://maps.google.com), Google Earth software, and ESRI ArcGIS Online basemaps.

Where not otherwise indicated, photographs and graphics in this document were created by Southern Georgia Regional Commission staff.