



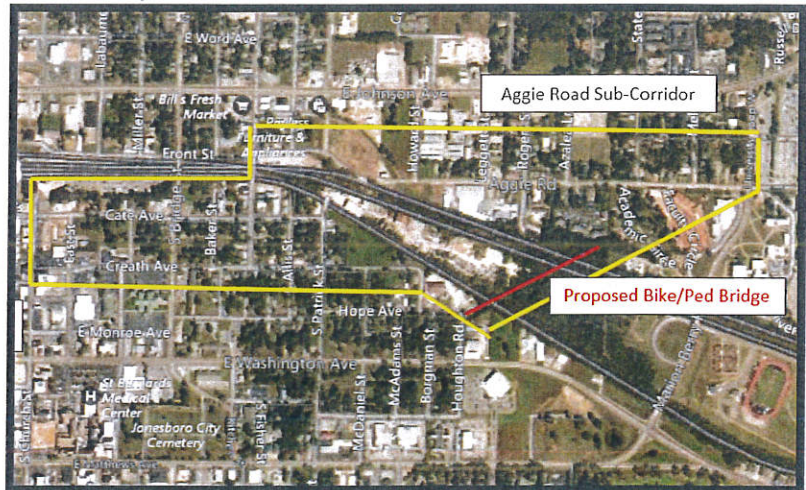
To: Mayor Harold Perrin  
 From: Mike Downing, Chair, A-State/Downtown Corridor Committee  
 RE: Recommendations  
 Date: September 11, 2018

The Corridor Committee has concluded its work per your instructions. On behalf of the Committee members, our recommendations are below.

**Committee Members:**

- Mike Downing, Committee Chair – Vice President, Jonesboro Unlimited
- Andrea Allen – Delta Center for Economic Development
- Jamar Andrews – Pastor, Word Baptist Church
- Chris Barber – Chair, Jonesboro Unlimited; President and CEO, St. Bernard’s Healthcare
- Kelly Damphousse – Chancellor, Arkansas State University - Jonesboro
- Ted Herget – President, Gearhead Outfitters
- Jerry Morgan – Chair, Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission; First National Bank
- Chris Moore – Jonesboro City Council; Owner, Moore Plumbing
- Kevan Inboden – Special Projects Administrator, City Water and Light
- Lindsey Ford Wingo – Executive Director, Downtown Jonesboro Association
- Derrel Smith – Planning Director, City of Jonesboro

**Purpose of the Committee:** In July, you established this committee with its purpose to determine the feasibility for the redevelopment of the Corridor from ASU to Downtown in order to (a) remove blighted conditions, (b) spur economic growth, and (c) facilitate the attraction and retention of ASU students and young talent in Jonesboro. Another task was to determine the potential of the Wolverine property on Aggie Road, which the city now owns.



**Goals:** The goals of the committee were to:

- Determine a process to facilitate quality private investment and encourage the redevelopment of aging / obsolete properties / infrastructure and new infill development within the Corridor;
- Create a Corridor that is desirable, connected, safe, and accessible and places where people want to gather, connect, and create a distinctive and marketable community image and identity;
- Create economic opportunity for area residents, and new tax revenue to the city and other public entities;
- Explore potential funding sources, including incentives, public/private partnerships, grants, sponsorships and others to help facilitate the goals; and,
- Conduct the committee's work recognizing the conclusions of recent plans and studies applicable to the area.

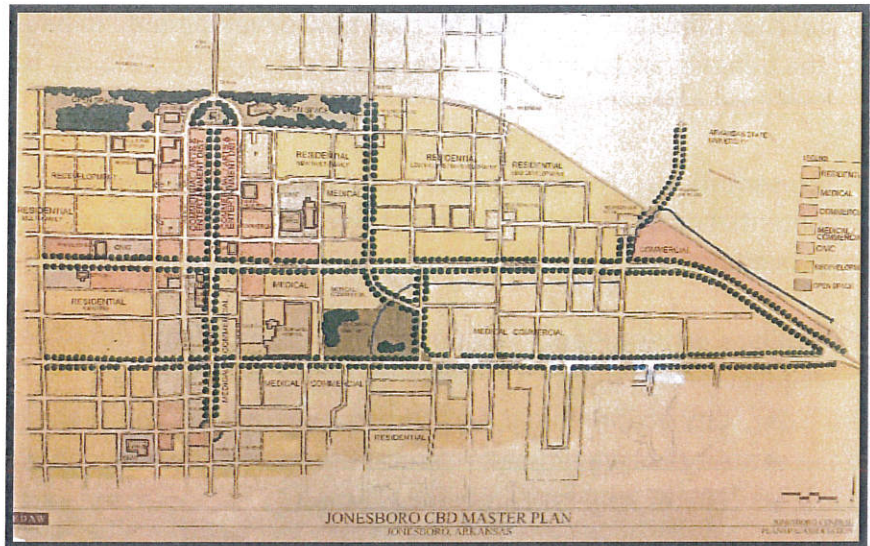


**Other Plans and Studies:** The committee examined several plans and studies that were applicable to the Corridor, including:

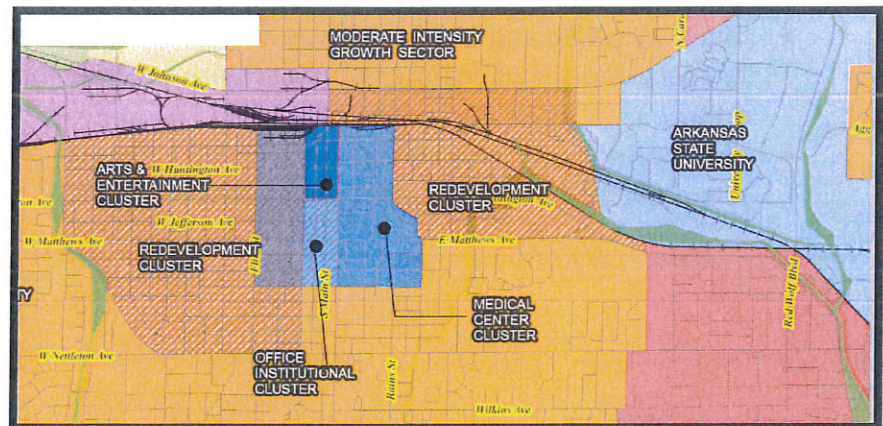
- Jonesboro Bike + Ped Plan, authorized by the City of Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Department, updated August 2018.
- Regional Active Transportation Plan, November 2017, authorized by the NEA Regional Transportation Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Land Use Plan by the Jonesboro Land Use Advisory Committee, October 2017.
- Aggie Road – Technical Memorandum for Healthy Community, prepared by U of A Research and Extension, April 2017.
- Momentum Jonesboro Plan, 2016, authorized by Jonesboro Unlimited.



- Jonesboro Downtown Railroad Corridor Initiative, 2016, prepared for applying for a Brownfield Planning Grant (not awarded).
- 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, June 2016, authorized by the Jonesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Johnson Avenue Bicycle/Pedestrian Study, and Downtown Pedestrian/Bike Study, January 2015, authorized by the Jonesboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, and written by Lose and Associates.
- Wallace Bajjalli Response to a City RFP, 2014.
- Vision 2030 Plan, December 2013, developed by the Jonesboro Comprehensive Planning Advisory Commission.
- Arkansas State University Campus Master Plan, 2013.
- Jonesboro Downtown Action Agenda Update, July 2013, authorized by the City of Jonesboro and the Downtown Jonesboro Association, and written by Hyett Palma.
- City Adopted Greenway and Bike Route Map, 2009.
- Vision 2020, Authorized by the City of Jonesboro, 1996, written by the RM Plan Group.
- Jonesboro CBD Master Plan, authorized by the Jonesboro Central Planning Association (now the Downtown Jonesboro Association), 1999, prepared by EDAH Planners.



**Area Designations by Other City Organizations:** The 2017 Land Use Study indicates that the area east of Church and west of Rains St., and north of Cherry and south of the railroad is a “Medical Cluster Area”. That study also indicates that the area east of Rains to west of Marion Berry, and south of Johnson to north of Matthews is a “Redevelopment Cluster”. The



Land Bank Commission has recently indicated that a portion of the Corridor is within one of the three areas they will concentrate on.

**Corridor Research:** The Committee conducted research on the current condition within the Corridor:

- Number and type of properties; ownership; zoning; and infrastructure issues;
- Challenges of redevelopment;
- Past redevelopment efforts; and,
- Potential redevelopment uses.

The Committee discussed (a) how the prior plans and reports related to current economic conditions of the Corridor; (b) the lack of state and local incentives available for redevelopment; (c) that eminent domain has not been used for redevelopment; (d) the significant amount of low-cost available developable land in the outer portions of the city; and (e) that there are no impact fees for new development. In addition, there was discussion about the benefits and process of redevelopment, and that the city lacked a pro-active process to facilitate redevelopment.

**Presentations:** The Committee heard presentations regarding the Land Bank; street layout and potential options for improvements within the Corridor and Downtown; and city development procedures and related issues.

**Similar Corridor Plans:** The Committee reviewed and discussed two similar corridor redevelopment plans:

- City of Springfield, MO – Kearney Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan
- City of Lafayette LA - Central Corridor Redevelopment Plan.
- City of Rogers “Experience District”

The key features about these (and most other significant redevelopment projects) are:

- The cities had an established pro-active process to facilitate redevelopment projects, including a permanent committee or authority.
  - They have state and local incentives available to facilitate redevelopment, and could use eminent domain when necessary to acquire needed property within the redevelopment area.
  - They had professional planning firms develop the plan and lead the process and used comprehensive market studies to determine best uses.
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## Committee Recommendations

1. **Bike + Ped Plan:** The Committee recommends that the City should endorse the proposed Bike + Ped plan, with the first priority project as the A-State/Downtown connection. This will provide a key feature to attract and retain A-State students/faculty and young professionals in medical, professional services, and other fields that are critical to Jonesboro's future economic growth. The Bike + Ped Plan will also have a catalytic effect on redevelopment within the area.
2. **Pro-Active Redevelopment Process:** The redevelopment of blighted areas will attract new private investment, increase the local tax base, reduce crime, and improve the appearance of neighborhoods. The Committee recommends that the City should create a process to pro-actively facilitate redevelopment projects.
  - a. Create a long-term/standing redevelopment committee or authority; or broaden the scope of the Land Bank to become the redevelopment committee/authority.
  - b. Assess the best practices of other communities and attempt to adopt those for Jonesboro.
  - c. Identify the top 3-5 high priority redevelopment areas to concentrate resources among all city agencies. A "redevelopment area" should be between 2-8 blocks such that upon completion the blighting conditions have been removed, the residents and customers feel safe, and the property values will increase. For the highest priority redevelopment areas, the city should develop a redevelopment plan, including a professional market research study, property assemblage, infrastructure improvements, and pro-active marketing of the property.
  - d. Develop a website with resources and redevelopment opportunities.
  - e. Create/modify/streamline procedures by city agencies to facilitate redevelopment projects.
3. **Identify Catalyst Projects:** "Catalytic" or "Anchor" facilities are a key feature to facilitate the redevelopment of an area. The Committee recommends that the City, Jonesboro Unlimited, the Jonesboro Chamber, the Land Bank, A-State, and other partners should identify and facilitate "catalytic" projects for high priority redevelopment areas.
  - a. The catalytic projects may be public buildings (state, federal or local), institutional facilities (medical, educational, other), or private sector facilities.
  - b. The surrounding area of the Wolverine property should be one of the designated "redevelopment areas", and pro-actively marketed as a potential catalytic project.
4. **Downtown Redevelopment Plan:** Downtowns make a community unique and provide an entertainment venue important in the attraction and retention of young talent. The Committee recommends that the City, the Downtown Jonesboro Association, and other economic development partners jointly develop a professional downtown redevelopment plan which provides a **comprehensive market research report**, identifies priority projects and improvements, and establishes a realistic and feasible implementation and financing plan. The plan should be modeled after similar successful plans in other communities.

5. **Opportunity Zone Seminar:** The Committee recommends that a seminar should be held to promote the Opportunity Zone incentive to facilitate redevelopment within the Corridor, Downtown, and other priority redevelopment areas.
  - a. Seminar Audience: Developers, accountants, attorneys, others that have an influence on persons that have a significant amount of capital gains that could be invested in eligible projects within Jonesboro's three zones.
  - b. The sponsors of the seminar would be local economic development partners – City, Chamber, Jonesboro Unlimited, A-State Delta Center, and others, working with tax attorneys and CPAs.
  - c. The seminar should not only describe the benefits and process of the Opportunity Zone program, but also promote the priority redevelopment areas (from #2 above).

### Opportunity Zone Areas Within the Corridor

