

The background image shows a concrete bridge spanning a river. The water is calm, reflecting the bridge and the sky. On the right side, there is a rocky bank with some sparse vegetation. The overall scene is somewhat overcast.

Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study

Report on Existing Conditions and
Plan for Future Development

City of Conway, Arkansas
Planning and Development Department

July 2008

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Prepared by the Conway Planning and Development Department
for the Conway City Council and
Conway Planning Commission

City of Conway, Arkansas

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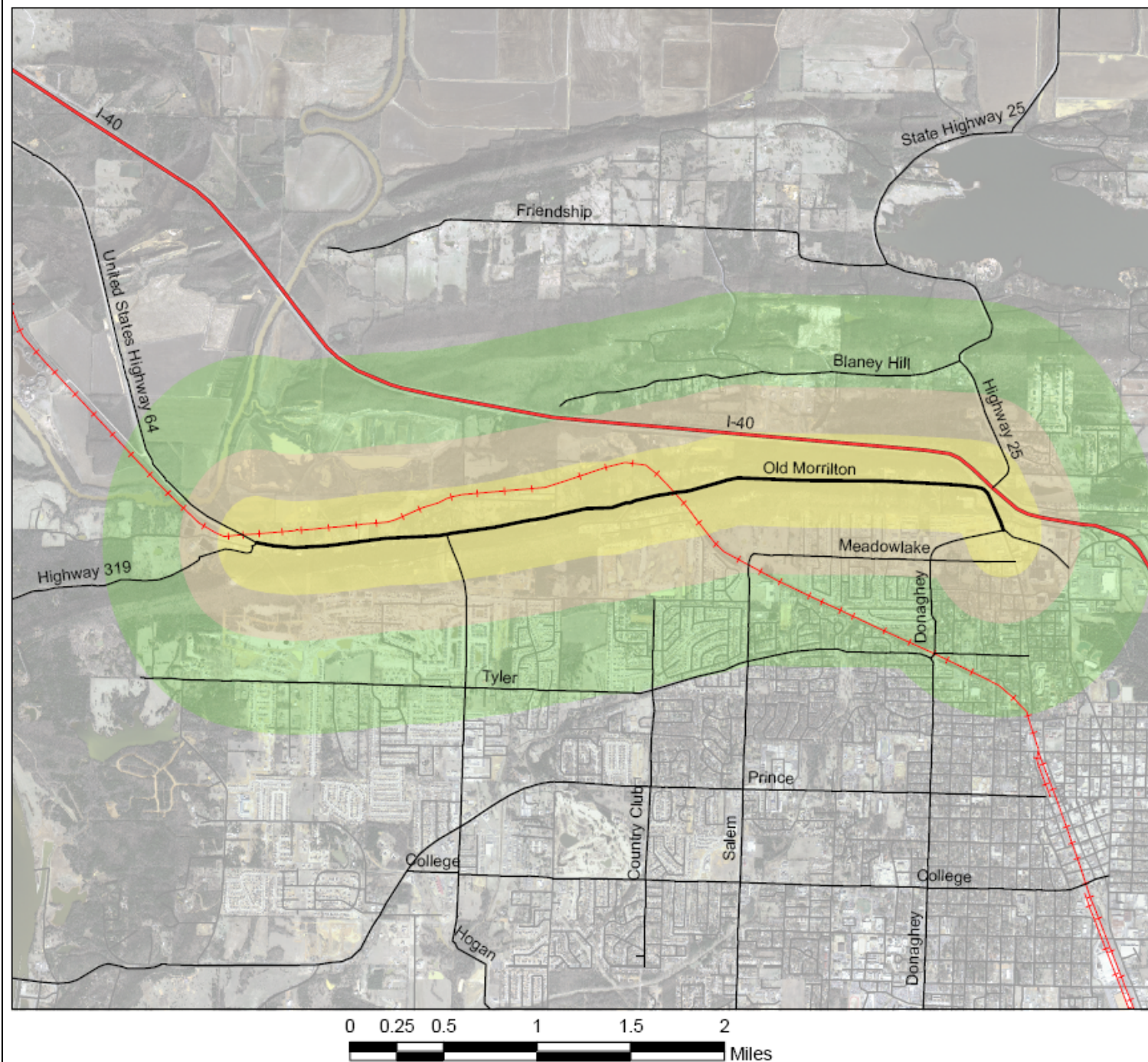
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Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study

Conway, Arkansas



- Old Morrilton Highway
- Quarter-mile buffer
- Half-mile buffer
- One-mile buffer
- Interstate 40
- Major street
- Railroad

February 12, 2008

Source: ESRI

City of Conway
Planning and Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study is the result of an extensive research and planning effort undertaken by the Conway Planning and Development Department. The study began in earnest in February 2008. The Planning and Development Department went to great measures to include the voices of a diverse group of stakeholders in the planning process. Land owners, residents, elected officials, and recreationists were consulted as the plan moved from the conceptual stage to draft to its present, final form. The study represents a collaborative approach to land use planning, relying heavily on scenario testing and public participation in the planning process.

Existing Conditions

The study identifies the strengths and weaknesses that contribute to the corridor's present condition. The corridor's dominant feature—the natural environment—serves a dual role: it constrains future development while offering opportunities for the corridor to become a regional recreational attraction. The lack of infrastructure throughout the corridor is a weakness that must be addressed if the corridor is to see any large-scale development. The need for sewer service is a recurring theme in the study as

is the area's population growth and the resulting demand for an enhanced transportation network.

Public Input

The Conway Planning and Development Department conducted a series of events at which the public was encouraged to participate in the planning process. While a public presentation and a public comment session offered opportunities for stakeholder input, the Department's Open House gave stakeholders the opportunity to engage in a more in-depth conversation with city planners. Input gathered at all of the public events and through an online visual preference questionnaire was considered by the Planning and Development Department in the formulation of this plan.

Guiding Principles and Development Standards

The study relied on standard set of guiding principles to guide the planning process. The principles are vehicular and pedestrian safety, accessibility and connectivity, aesthetics and contextual design, and sustainable development. An examination of each principle led to the identification of policies, each of which included a series of action items. The long-range plan is based on the action items.

Long-Range Plan

Though the study was prompted by short-term development concerns, the goal of the study was to produce a long-range plan that enables responsible and sustainable development. The potential for immediate development is severely limited by the lack of infrastructure. To accommodate current demand, the plan encourages neighboring property owners to work cooperatively with developers to create planned unit developments. The long-range aspect of the plan encourages mixing land uses to create a sense of community in the corridor and to provide proper buffers to protect single family housing from commercial infringement.

Implementation Strategies

The Conway City Council is encouraged to carefully consider the study's findings and recommendations and adopt the long-range plan. In order to implement an Access Management Plan, the City will have to work alongside the state transportation agency and the metropolitan planning organization. Cooperation between the City and Faulkner County is also encouraged and is, in fact, a necessary component of a successful plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor.

Vision Statement

Old Morrilton Highway will become a safe and easily-accessible transportation corridor for residents, commuters, passers-by, and recreationists in the Conway area, providing residents and visitors a contextually-sensitive and unique place to live, work, drive, and play.

I: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to identify existing conditions within the Old Morrilton Highway corridor and articulate the City of Conway's vision for the corridor. The resulting plan is intended to replace the corresponding portion of the City of Conway's Comprehensive Plan and serve as a long-range guide to development along the corridor.

Old Morrilton Highway is the local name for the portion of U.S. Highway 64 between Conway, Arkansas, and Morrilton, Arkansas. For the purpose of this corridor study, the delineated portion of Old Morrilton Highway is a four-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 64 that extends from Donaghey Avenue on the east to the split between U.S. Highway 64 and State Highway 319 on the west. This portion of Old Morrilton Highway is wholly contained within Faulkner County.

The need for a corridor study for the Old Morrilton Highway has arisen due to the construction and opening of a new exit connecting the highway to U.S. Interstate 40 by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department. Previously, Old Morrilton Highway connected to Interstate 40 via an off-ramp on the eastern end of the highway; there was no on-ramp connecting the highway to the interstate. The new exit includes both on-ramps and off-ramps. As the westernmost interstate exit serving Conway, the new exit

promises to increase traffic along Old Morrilton Highway as it provides quicker access to growing west Conway.

In preparing this document, the Conway Planning and Development Department gathered input from local citizens through a series of public meetings. Additionally, the Department sought expertise from elected officials, Directors and designated employees of other City divisions, and other stakeholders.

Organization of Document

This document includes: a report on existing conditions in the Old Morrilton Highway corridor (chapter two); a report on the public input portion of the study (chapter three); identification of guiding principles, policies, and action items (chapter four); the long-range plan (chapter five); and implementation strategies (chapter six).

Basis for Document

The principles that guided the Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study were:

- Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety
- Accessibility and Connectivity
- Aesthetics and Contextual Design
- Sustainable Development

The guiding principles provide an appropriate framework for the long-range land use plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety. Safety is the primary aspect of the Old Morrilton Highway corridor plan. Drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians face numerous safety challenges—including unlimited access and narrow, winding roads—throughout the corridor. The plan includes limitations on the number of curb cuts along Old Morrilton Highway through an Access Management Plan similar to the one in place on Dave Ward Drive. The widening and straightening of dangerous roads in the corridor is included in the plan. Additionally, the plan encourages safe bicycling and pedestrian activity and includes adequate facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

Accessibility and Connectivity. Linkages between Old Morrilton Highway and other parts of Conway are limited. Presently, only three roads provide direct access from Old Morrilton Highway to growing west Conway. Access from Old Morrilton Highway to the area north of Interstate 40 is even more limited; Highway 25 is the only route connecting those areas. The plan includes a new road network built upon existing stubs. A network of easily accessible and well-connected parks and

a mountain biking trail are identified in the plan. Cross-sections of road types are also included.

until proper infrastructure is in place to handle such development.

Aesthetics and Contextual Design. Uncontrolled development in the study area will detract from the corridor's natural characteristics. Hillside excavations and large-scale tree removal have already damaged the aesthetic quality of the area. To protect the corridor's natural appearance from the effects of typical interstate corridor development, the plan designates areas of the corridor that are inappropriate for large-scale development. In locations identified as appropriate for development, planned unit developments are encouraged as a means to overcome immediate challenges posed by the lack of existing infrastructure. The plan also identifies nodes appropriate for mixed use developments.

Sustainable Development. Because of the unique terrain of the area surrounding Old Morrilton Highway, the plan is especially attentive to areas where development potential is physically and environmentally suitable. Special consideration is given to environmentally-sensitive areas. The plan includes strict controls on hillside development and a tree preservation plan. The plan recognizes the limitations of existing infrastructure—especially sanitary sewer service—and calls for an prohibition on large-scale development throughout the corridor

II: EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter examines the area's existing natural environment, land uses, transportation network, zoning, and demographics.

Environment

Old Morrilton Highway is a relatively flat, straight road that provides drivers with scenic views and few intersections. Views of the natural foliage along the highway are interrupted only by overhead wires and occasional hillside excavations.

Hillside Excavations. Portions of the natural hillsides on the south side of the highway have been excavated for various purposes, including building speculation and satisfying the need for fill

materials. These excavations have left sizeable and visually unpleasant craters in the hillside. The City of Conway currently prohibits cutting deeper than ten feet into a hillside without a City-approved excavation plan. However, Faulkner County has no such prohibition. Further, the Conway hillside excavation ordinance did not take effect until 2006. Thus, protection of hillsides is a relatively new practice that affects only those hillsides that are within the City's corporate limits.

Water Bodies. Old Morrilton Highway is proximate to two major water bodies: Cadron Creek and the Arkansas River. Cadron Creek runs throughout northern and central Faulkner County. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has

deemed Cadron Creek impaired due to excessive turbidity, resulting in the placement of the creek on the EPA's 303(d) list. Cadron Creek serves as Conway's secondary water supply; a pumping station is located near the split of Old Morrilton Highway and Highway 319.

Hazardous Materials. Conway's solid waste facility is located at the western end of Old Morrilton Highway. The facility does not accept medical or other hazardous waste, thus minimizing the facility's effects on local water bodies. The solid waste facility should reach capacity within 17 to 25 years.



Hillside excavation on the eastern end of Old Morrilton Highway; a new ordinance limits future excavations in the City of Conway.



Natural hillside with autumn foliage along the southern edge of Old Morrilton Highway.



View of Cadron Creek at the Faulkner / Conway county line. The creek is currently listed as an impaired water body by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Land Uses

Single-family housing is the dominant land use throughout the study area. Duplex housing, multi-family housing, and commercial, institutional, and recreational uses are scattered along the corridor.



Above: Typical single-family residence on Old Morrilton Highway.

Below: Duplex housing near new interstate exit.



Housing

Housing along Old Morrilton Highway ranges from traditional single-family ranch-style homes to mobile homes and small multi-family buildings. Most residences are on large lots and are typically separated by several hundred feet at least. Few homes along the road appear to be newly constructed. Most homes appear to be in good condition, though several noticeably deteriorated houses are present, especially along the western half of the study area. Long, winding driveways scattered along Old Morrilton Highway connect ridge-top residences to the road.

Besides the housing units located directly on the highway and those on Boone Loop, few housing units are located north of Old Morrilton Highway between the highway and Interstate 40. Some multi-family housing is present along the north side of Old Morrilton Highway; two multi-family buildings, including that pictured in contain four to eight units each. The northernmost portion of the study area is primarily agricultural with a scattering of residences.

Several newer housing developments are situated south of the highway and the ridge. A large apartment complex and a rental townhome development are located on Hogan Lane within a half-mile of the highway. Additional multi-family housing can be found south of the highway along Meadowlake Road, a short distance from the



Above: Abandoned single-family house on Old Morrilton Highway near newly widened portion.

Below: A multi-family building located near Cadron Ridge Baptist Church on Old Morrilton Highway; two other similar buildings are located nearby.



highway. The Links at Cadron Valley, a 550-unit multi-family development built around a golf course, sits on Irby Drive, approximately one-half mile south of the highway. Subdivisions with single-family homes make up the majority of the housing south of Old Morrilton Highway.

Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and Civic Uses

Businesses are prominent along the eastern end of Old Morrilton Highway. A strip shopping center can be found on Old Morrilton Highway near the Old Morrilton / Donaghey intersection. Strip shopping centers, big box stores, banks, a convenience store, and several fast food restaurants line Donaghey. An additional convenience store sits on the south side of Old Morrilton Highway near the previous Interstate 40 exit ramp.

Other non-residential uses along Old Morrilton Highway are limited. The Cadron Ridge Baptist Church is located on the north side of the road, approximately 1,000 feet from the railroad crossing. The church has continuous access along the highway, as do most businesses and institutions located on the highway. Institutional uses on Old Morrilton Highway's western end include the Conway Landfill, the local animal shelter, an Entergy electric substation, and a water treatment facility. Few private businesses are located along the western end of the study area.



Though non-residential land uses are limited on Old Morrilton Highway, the corridor is diverse in the types of facilities located there. Clockwise from right: Entergy power station at the Old Morrilton / Hwy 319 split; Water treatment facility along Cadron Creek; Conway solid waste facility and animal shelter; strip shopping center at the Old Morrilton / Donaghey intersection; and Cadron Ridge Baptist Church.



Recreation

Recreational opportunities exist at Beaverfork Lake on the far northeastern end of the study area and Cadron Settlement Park on the far southwestern end of the study area.

Beaverfork Lake. Located on Highway 25, Beaverfork Lake is a 1,200-acre lake that is frequently used for boating, fishing, and swimming. A park that adjoins the lake includes covered pavilions, sanded volleyball courts, and a softball field. The lake and park are owned by the City of Conway.

Cadron Settlement Park. Cadron Settlement Park is a small day use park located on Highway 319. The park includes a 1.3-mile trail, boat ramp, and two picnic shelters. The most prominent feature of the park is the Cadron Blockhouse, a replica of an eighteenth-century structure. In July 2008 the City



The Cadron Blockhouse at Cadron Settlement Park is a replica of an eighteenth century gathering place.

of Conway took control of the park through a lease agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In recent years, the Faulkner County Sheriff's Department has routinely conducted surveillance of the park and arrested individuals for criminal offenses including drug-related activity and loitering.

Other Recreational Uses. The Old Morrilton Highway corridor is popular among local bicyclists, many of whom utilize a portion of the highway on a scenic route that leads from Mayflower to Beaverfork Lake. Other bicyclists use Old Morrilton Highway on their route between Conway and Morrilton. Several local mountain bikers use an informal trail system that begins near Cadron Settlement Park and makes it way east along the ridge.

Transportation

Traffic Counts. Old Morrilton Highway has seen a steady increase in vehicular traffic over the last several years. In 2004 the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) reported an average daily traffic count of 5,800 along Old Morrilton Highway near Cadron Ridge Baptist Church. By 2005, the traffic count had increased to 6,300. By 2006, average daily traffic had increased to 7,300, representing a 26 percent increase over a two-year period. Continued growth in west Conway along with the opening of the new interstate exit could increase average daily traffic to more than 10,000 vehicles in 2008.

Factors affecting the traffic count along Old Morrilton Highway include the following:

- Residences along Old Morrilton Highway
- Residences in growing west Conway
- Interstate exit



Looking north from the new Interstate 40 exit bridge.

- Businesses near Donaghey
- Vehicles traveling between Conway and Morrilton
- City solid waste facility
- Recreational uses

Average daily traffic along the portion of Highway 25 near Beaverfork Lake reached 6,000 in 2007. Traffic counts have not been routinely conducted in other portions of the study area.

Traffic Calming. The speed limit along Old Morrilton Highway is generally 55 miles per hour, though it is lower in the commercialized area near Donaghey. Vehicles often speed on the road, and aside from the decreased speed limit near the commercial zone, there are no traffic calming measures present. Old Morrilton Highway is partially within the City of Conway and partially within unincorporated Faulkner County; the Conway Police Department and the Faulkner County Sheriff's Department are responsible for traffic control on the portions of roadway within their respective jurisdictions. Further, as a U.S. highway, Old Morrilton Highway is occasionally patrolled by the Highway Patrol Division of the Arkansas State Police. Records from the Arkansas State Police indicate no fatal crashes along Old Morrilton Highway during the period 2005 to 2007. Highway 25, on the other hand, is noted as a particularly dangerous road, especially the portion between Beaverfork Lake and



Installation of curbs along newly widened portion of Old Morrilton Highway.

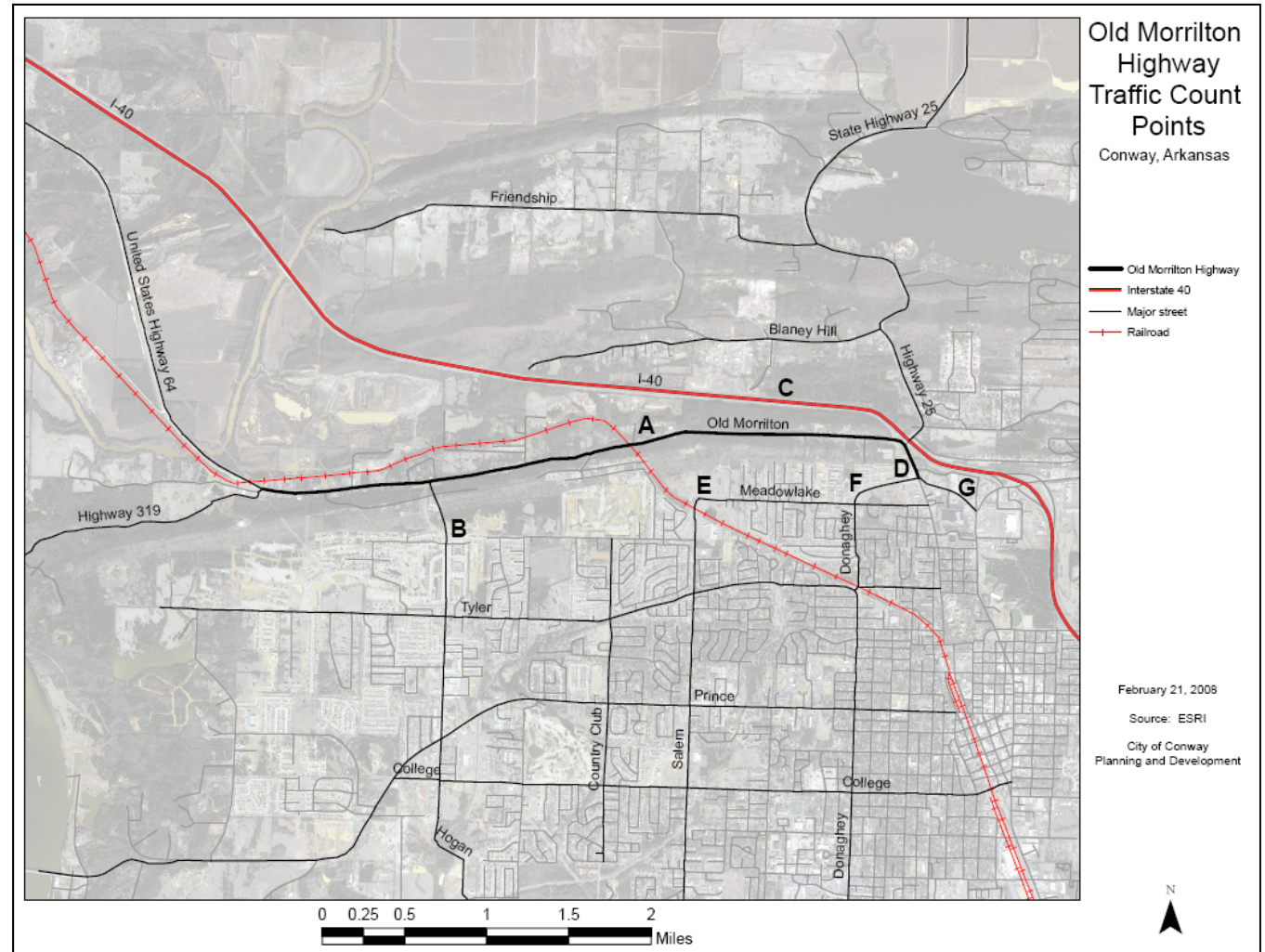
Interstate 40. Trucks and speeding traffic make that narrow, curvy stretch of Highway 25 hazardous for ingress/egress traffic, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Old Morrilton Highway west of the commercialized area near Donaghey presently lacks curbs and striping. Access to residences, businesses, and institutional facilities is generally unlimited, particularly west of the new interstate exit. None of the roads in the study area north of Interstate 40 have curbs.

Major Roads. Roads that intersect with Old Morrilton Highway include: an interstate access road on the north; Clearwell Road on the south, which leads to Miller's View subdivision and provides access to west Conway; Doy B Road on the north, which dead-ends into land used for

agricultural purposes; Boone Loop on the north, which is a residential area; and Hogan Lane on the south, which leads to west Conway and serves as a major arterial. The western end of the study area terminates at the intersection of Old Morrilton Highway and Highway 319, the latter of which leads to Cadron Settlement Park.

Pedestrian Activities. Pedestrian access along Old Morrilton Highway and throughout the study area is limited due to the lack of sidewalks. Further, the narrow shoulders, which are approximately four feet wide on most portions of the highway, provide little space for bicyclists.



Location	Average Daily Traffic Count			Change	% Change
	2004	2005	2006	2004-2006	2004-2006
A Old Morrilton Highway (Cadron Ridge Baptist Church)	5,800	6,300	7,300	1,500	25.86%
B Hogan Lane between Tyler and Old Morrilton	7,100	6,600	7,500	400	5.63%
C Interstate 40 @ Cimmaron Park	27,000	28,200	28,900	1,900	7.04%
D Old Morrilton Highway @ Donaghey	13,600	13,400	14,500	900	6.62%
E Meadowlake @ Railroad	7,900	8,100	8,500	600	7.59%
F Donaghey @ Meadowlake	13,800	14,400	15,200	1,400	10.14%
G Old Morrilton Highway @ Skyline	24,800	23,600	24,400	-400	-1.61%

Source: Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department

Zoning

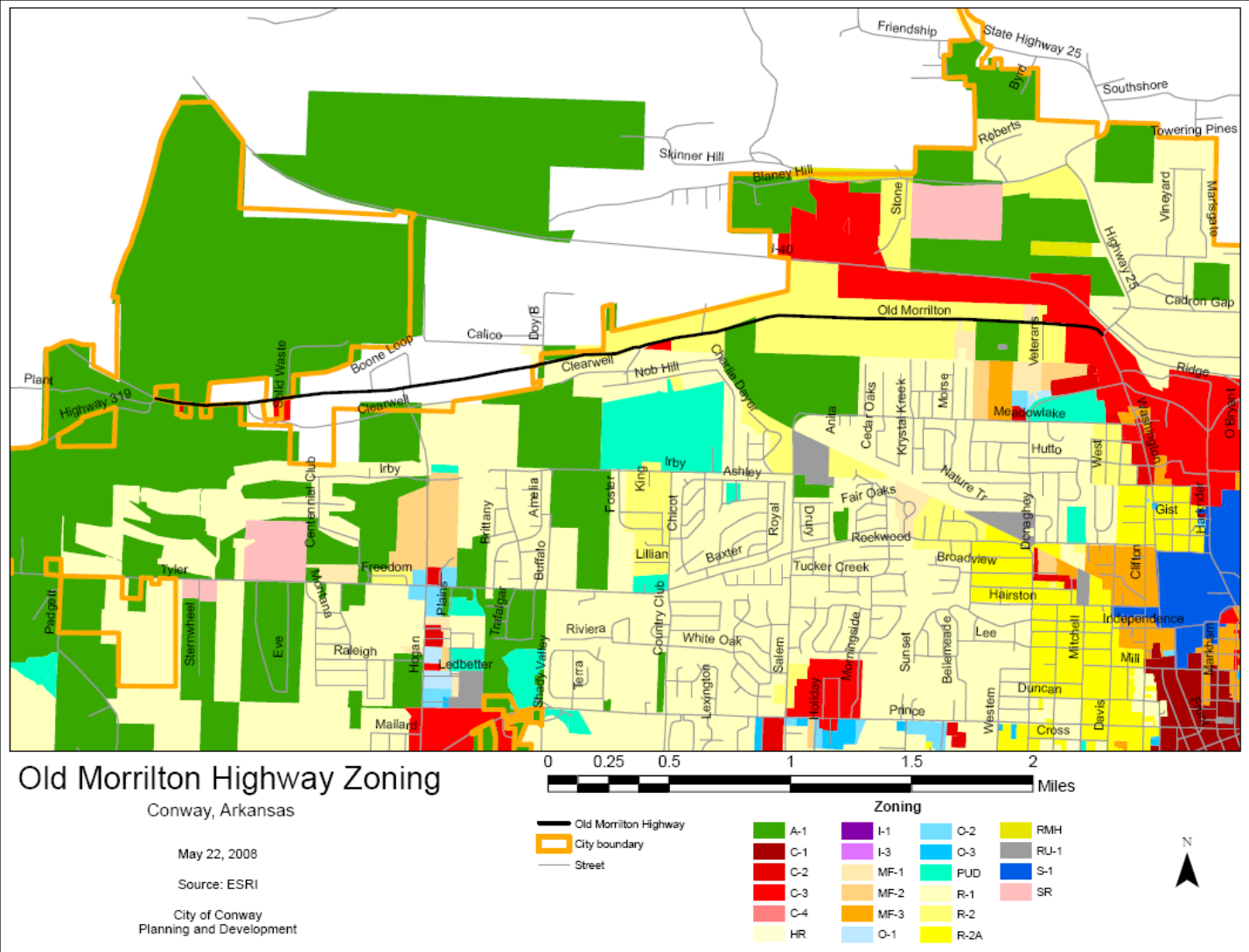
Zoning along Old Morrilton Highway ranges from C-3 commercial around the Donaghey intersection to R-2 residential along most of the highway. Commercial zoning is also prominent along the portion of the study area north of Interstate 40, particularly in the Cimarron Park area. The western end of Old Morrilton Highway is currently zoned A-1 agricultural, which limits the type and intensity of uses allowable.

C-3 (Commercial) zoning designates an area as a highway service and open display district. This zoning is typical along heavily traveled roads and is typically not compatible with pedestrian movement.

R-2 (Residential) zoning designates an area as a low-density residential zone. The R-2 zone requires a minimum lot area of 3,500 square feet per family. The R-2 zone protects higher density housing from commercial and industrial activity.

The unincorporated portion of Faulkner County within the study area is subject to the City of Conway's extra-territorial jurisdiction. Thus, the City may designate zoning categories for property within the unincorporated

portion of the study area. The City has claimed zoning along much of the unincorporated portion of Old Morrilton Highway, although the zoning classification has not yet been determined.



Demographics

An examination of demographic trends is a necessary component of the planning process because these trends clarify the need for government services, such as schools and infrastructure. Demographic information is also helpful in determining the number and types of housing units and commercial activities that an area needs and can support. Further, by examining trends, citizens and government agencies can be proactive in steering growth in desired areas and protecting neighborhoods and the natural environment from the unintended consequences of uncontrolled growth.

The Old Morrilton Highway study area is wholly contained within Census Tract 305, Block Group 1 as delineated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Though the block group extends outside the study area, most of the population included in the block group resides within a one-mile radius of Old Morrilton Highway. Demographic information cited in this study includes all of Census Tract 305, Block Group 1.

Population. Population in the study area increased from 1,371 in 1990 to 5,860 in 2000, representing a 327 percent increase. The 2007 population estimate was 7,634, representing an additional 30 percent increase. The number of households also sharply increased from 485 in

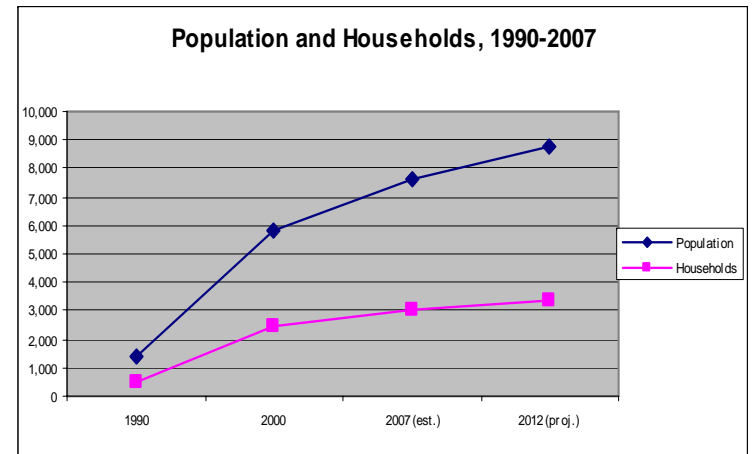
1990 to 2,436 in 2000; by 2007, the number of households had increased to 3,007.

Most of the population and household growth between 1990 and 2007 occurred south of Old Morrilton Highway between Hogan and Donaghey. One consequence of the increase in population in the area has been an increase in traffic along arterials such as Hogan, Prince, and Donaghey, as well as collectors such as Tyler and Meadowlake. Undoubtedly, Old Morrilton Highway's increased traffic counts are also related, in part, to growth in the area south of the highway.

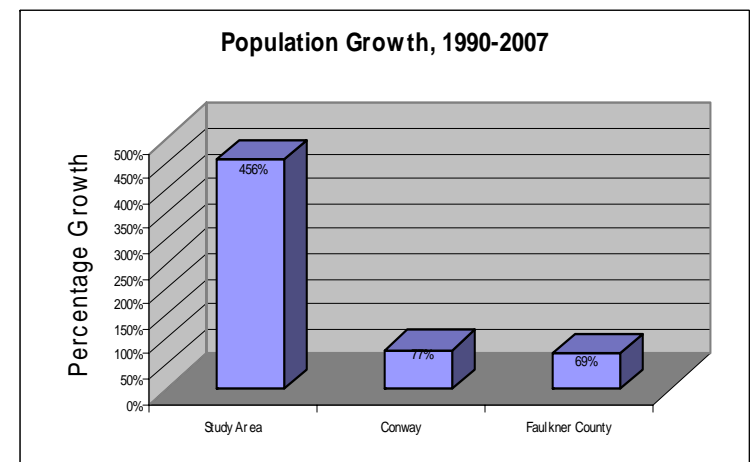
Young adults aged 25 to 34 make up the fastest growing age group, as well as the largest age group, in the study area. Between 1990 and 2007, the number of 25 to 34-year olds increased from 244 to 1,583. The number of children under age 14 increased from 324 to 1,611 during that same period. Elementary school students who reside along Old Morrilton Highway were recently rezoned from Ida Burns Elementary School to Woodrow Cummins Elementary School on Padgett Road; Cummins Elementary was built in 2008 to accommodate the growing population of west Conway.

The racial composition of the study area is predominantly white. African-

Americans are the largest minority, making up approximately seven percent of the population. Between 1990 and 2007, the racial makeup did not change significantly. People of Hispanic ethnicity make up 1.7 percent of the study area's population, compared to 3.3 percent of Conway's population.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and DemographicsNow



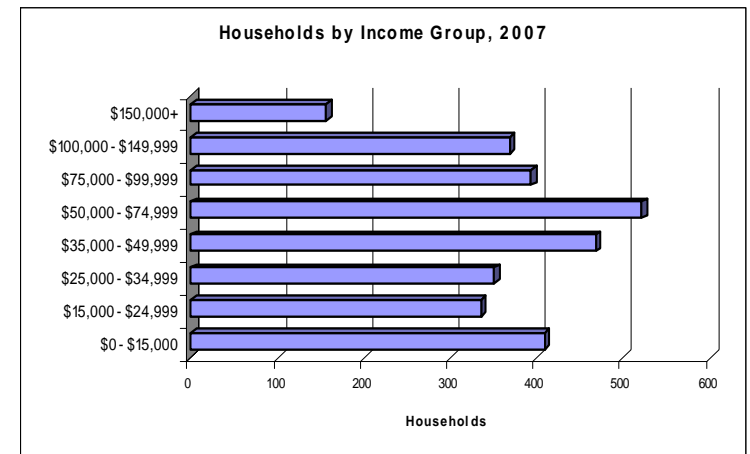
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and DemographicsNow

Income. Income levels in the study area vary greatly; there is no dominant single income group. Slightly more than 17 percent of households have annual incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999. Nearly 29 percent of households in the study earn less than \$25,000 annually, while 17 percent earn more than \$100,000.

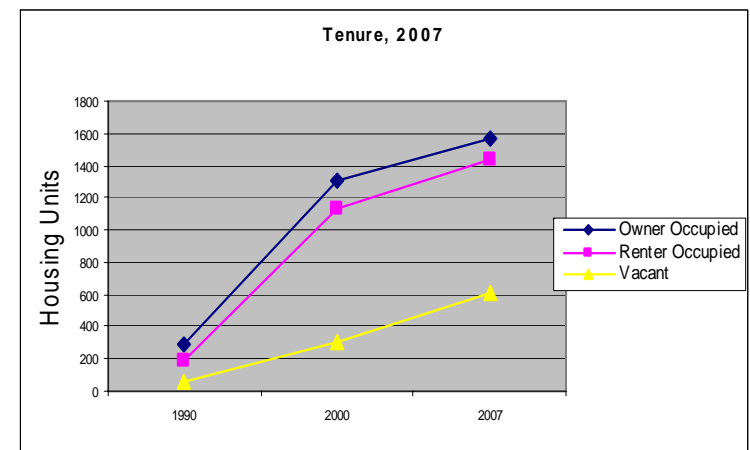
Housing. Within the study area, there are 3,615 housing units of which 1,571 are owner-occupied and 1,436 are renter-occupied. Since 1990, the percentage of owner-occupied units has decreased from 53.8 percent to 43.5 percent. During that same period, the number of vacant units increased from 65 to 608; currently, vacant units represent an alarming 16.8 percent of all housing units within the study area. The large number of rental apartments and speculative construction in the subdivisions south of Old Morrilton Highway most likely accounts for the majority of vacant housing units.

Review. In summary, demographic data reveals the following trends within the Old Morrilton Highway corridor study area: population and number of households have increased dramatically over the last two decades and continue to increase; the number of young adults and children has increased exponentially; the area is diverse in income levels; and the growth rate of renter-occupancy is currently increasing, while the

growth rate of owner-occupancy is decreasing. The effects that these trends have had on the corridor—including increased traffic, increased demand for services and infrastructure, and changes in the types and number of facilities and services available—will intensify with further growth and should be considered in the planning process. As the next chapter demonstrates, a diverse population leads to a diversity of ideas about the corridor’s future.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and DemographicsNow



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and DemographicsNow

III: PUBLIC INPUT

As part of the Old Morrilton Highway planning process, the Conway Planning and Development Department organized several opportunities for stakeholder input. This chapter provides an overview of the methods used to collect input and summary of comments and suggestions offered by stakeholders.

Methods of Gathering Input

The Conway Planning and Development Department hosted two public events in June 2008: a Public Kick-Off Event and a Public Workshop. The Kick-Off Event was an informational session, while the Public Workshop gave participants the opportunity to ask questions, make comments, and offer suggestions about the planning process and the plan itself. The public events were publicized in several articles in the *Conway Log Cabin Democrat*, as well as through promotional fliers, roadside signs, and a rolling advertisement on local public access television. Stakeholders were invited to answer a visual preference questionnaire, which was accessible through the City's website for one week following the public events. During that same time period, the Planning and Development Department held an Open House at which stakeholders were welcome to ask questions and discuss

development opportunities with city planners. The Planning and Development Department used stakeholder input from the workshop, the visual preference questionnaire, and the Open House as tools for planning future land uses and desired forms.

A flyer titled "Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study Public Participation Events". It features a yellow banner with black dots at the top. The text describes the Conway Planning and Development Department's invitation to join the planning process for the Old Morrilton Highway. It lists two events: a Kick-Off Event on Thursday, April 24th, at the McGee Center, and a Public Workshop on Saturday, April 26th, at Ruth Doyle Intermediate School. It also mentions a visual preference survey available online and in paper form. Contact information for the City of Conway Planning & Development Department is provided at the bottom, along with a logo for the City of Conway, Arkansas.

**Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study
Public Participation Events**

The Conway Planning and Development Department invites you to join us in the planning process for Old Morrilton Highway. Two upcoming events and an open public comment period will give you the opportunity to participate in the planning process.

The Public Kick-Off Event (April 24) will include a presentation of existing conditions and alternative scenarios for future development. At the Public Workshop (April 26), you will have the opportunity to share your own long-range vision of Old Morrilton Highway.

Public comments will also be accepted Monday, April 28th through Friday, May 2nd, at Conway City Hall during business hours (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM). A visual preference survey will be available online and in paper form during that period as well.

Schedule of Events

Kick-Off Event
Thursday, April 24th
6:30 PM
McGee Center
3800 College Avenue

Public Workshop
Saturday, April 26th
9:00 AM
Ruth Doyle
Intermediate School
800 Padgett Road

Take the
Visual Preference Survey
Available April 24-May 2
Online at
www.conwayplanning.org

For more information,
contact:

City of Conway Planning &
Development Department
1201 Oak Street
Conway, Arkansas 72032

Phone: 501-480-6108
Fax: 501-480-6144
www.conwayplanning.org

The logo of the City of Conway, Arkansas, featuring a circular seal with the text "CITY OF CONWAY ARKANSAS" and "PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT" around the perimeter.

Public Kick-Off Event. The first event in the Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study series was the Public Kick-Off, which included a presentation on existing conditions and a draft vision for the area.

The Public Kick-Off was held on Thursday, April 24, 2008, at the McGee Center, a city-owned recreation facility located in west Conway. Twenty-five stakeholders attended the Kick-Off event. Representatives of the Streets Department, Sanitation Department, and Parks and Recreation Department were present. Two City Councilpersons also attended the event. Due to time constraints, attendees were asked to hold their questions and comments until the Public Workshop the following Saturday. However, City officials in attendance fielded questions informally.

Public Workshop. The second event in the Corridor Study series was a Public Workshop, which gave stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions about the study and the planning process and offer comments and alternative scenarios for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. The Public Workshop was held on Saturday, April 26, 2008, at Ruth Doyle Intermediate School. Approximately 15 stakeholders participated in the event. A representative of the Sanitation Department was present, as were two City Councilpersons. The event was covered by the *Conway Log Cabin Democrat* in a story that appeared in its Sunday, April 27, 2008 edition.

Visual Preference Questionnaire. Stakeholders were asked to complete a visual preference questionnaire that was available online at the Conway Planning and Development Department's website. Paper surveys were available upon request. The visual preference questionnaire included 28 images representing streets, bicycle paths and trails, intersections, commercial developments, multi-family residential developments, and environmental characteristics. The primary purpose of the visual preference questionnaire was to gauge interest in innovative solutions to existing problems within the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. The questionnaire included an open comments portion, which allowed stakeholders to offer comments while retaining anonymity if desired. Eighty-nine stakeholders completed the visual preference questionnaire. Full results of the visual preference questionnaire are available in Appendix B.

Open House. The Planning and Development Department hosted a weeklong Open House at Conway City Hall the week of April 28, 2008, from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM each day. Due to a scheduling conflict, the Open House ended on Friday, May 2, at 10:00 AM. At the Open House, stakeholders were invited to visit the Planning and Development Department to discuss future development options with city planners. Seventeen stakeholders visited the Open House.

Public Comments. Written public comments were accepted at the Public Workshop and the Open House, as well as on the visual preference questionnaire. Comments from 52 stakeholders were submitted to the Conway Planning and Development Department. These comments are included in this document as Appendix A.

Role of Public Input

The Conway Planning and Development Department utilized stakeholder input as one of the factors—along with best planning practices and technical expertise—in crafting the long-range plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. A significant number of Old Morrilton Highway residents and/or landowners participated in at least one of the public events, while a larger number of stakeholders submitted written comments or participated in the online visual preference questionnaire.

As Appendix A illustrates, stakeholder comments were greatly varied. Eight stakeholders submitted written comments encouraging the expansion of opportunities for commercial development. Bike trails, pedestrian paths, and/or green space were encouraged by 16 stakeholders. Other written comments submitted included: landowner's concern that a bike path or sidewalk would block his access to his property; a proposal that a restaurant and museum focused on

Conway's rail history be located near the railroad underpass; two reminders that Old Morrilton Highway is a major thoroughfare, not a local street; and a suggestion to leave the highway undeveloped.

The visual preference questionnaire revealed near-consensus (greater than 75 percent) among stakeholders on eight of the 28 images. The images considered "appropriate" by at least 75 percent of participants are: image 9, a wide bike path in a natural setting; image 11, a striped bike path beside a lake; image 19, a "deli and market" with an adjoining brick clock tower; image 20, a brick fuel station with monument sign and prominent landscaping; image 22, a unique Wendy's restaurant with landscaping and sidewalk; and image 28, a hillside with natural foliage. The images considered inappropriate by at least 75 percent of participants include image 5, a typical commercial strip, and image 27, a hillside excavation.

While each individual concern cannot be addressed by the long-range plan, the plan does attempt to strike compromises among the various viewpoints where possible. Each written comment and analysis of the visual preference questionnaire can be found in the appendices following the plan.

IV: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Recognizing that current and proposed land uses have long-term consequences, the Conway Planning and Development Department urges stakeholders and decision-makers to look beyond calls for immediate commercialization of Old Morrilton Highway and to look toward a plan that promotes a pattern of development that will remain viable for future generations of Conway residents. The plan should be based on a set of guiding principles. The purpose of this chapter is to identify those guiding principles and offer a corresponding set of policies and action items that will direct the Old Morrilton Highway corridor plan. The guiding principles for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor plan are:

- Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety
- Accessibility and Connectivity
- Aesthetics and Contextual Design
- Sustainable Development

Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety

The safety of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians is the primary concern of the long-range plan. Vehicular safety is the primary catalyst for policies and action items related to roads north of Interstate 40, while pedestrian and bicycle safety are the focus of suggested road improvements south of Interstate 40.

Ingress and Egress. Policy: In order to maintain safety and traffic fluidity along the highway and encourage joint and cross access among contiguous developments, curb cuts should be limited.

Many property owners along the portion of Old Morrilton Highway that is within close proximity of the new Interstate 40 interchange have expressed their desire to market their property for commercial or other non-residential uses. However, State and local restrictions on curb cuts in this area severely limit the possibility for land uses that demand frequent ingress from and egress to the highway. The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department has constructed fences along Old Morrilton Highway directly south, east, and west of the new interchange, indicating that no curb cuts will be allowed along the highway in those areas. Additionally, no curb cuts will be allowed along the planned Salem Road extension. Because frequent curb cuts create potentially hazardous conditions for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, the frequency of curb cuts should be limited; this is particularly true on busy highways, the main function of which is to move traffic safely and efficiently.

Action Item 1a: Require 300 feet between non-residential driveways along Old Morrilton Highway.

Presently, an Access Management Plan regulates frequency of curb cuts allowed along Dave Ward Drive, which is an east-west route through the southern portion of Conway. The Access Management Plan requires that the City, State, and Metropolitan Planning Organization approve requests for new curb cuts along Dave Ward Drive. A similar arrangement for Old Morrilton Highway would create a checks-and-balances system that ensures that curb cut requests are evaluated on the basis of development desirability, effects on the transportation network, and environmental impacts.

Action Item 1b: Create an Access Management Plan for Old Morrilton Highway. The Access Management Plan should include a requirement that the Conway Planning and Development Department, the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, and MetroPlan concur with any planned curb cut not serving a single family residence.

Dangerous Roads. Policy: For the safety of drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, roads should be of adequate width and should not be excessively curvy.

Many of the existing roads north of Interstate 40 are narrow and excessively curvy, making them unsafe for both drivers and pedestrians. Blaney Hill Road and Highway 25 are of immediate concern. Blaney Hill Road is a narrow road that links Highway 25 to the Cimarron Park commercial area; the road is regularly used by trucks, creating an unsafe and noisy atmosphere for residents along the road and other drivers.

Action Item 1c: Widen Blaney Hill Road to adequately serve the needs of residents and existing businesses.

Highway 25 accommodates nearly 8,000 vehicles daily; however, sharp curves make the road dangerous for drivers and bicyclists. The



Example of a paved, multi-use path. On the visual preference questionnaire, 73 percent of stakeholders rated this image as somewhat to highly appropriate for Old Morrilton Highway. The average rating for this image was 5.16 on a scale of one to seven.

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department has indicated its intention to connect Highway 25 to the new interstate exit.

Action Item 1d: Straighten Highway 25 south of Beaverfork Lake and provide a connection to the new Interstate 40 exit.

Bike Paths and Sidewalks. Policy: Bike paths and sidewalks are desirable along scenic corridors and should safely accommodate recreational bicyclists and pedestrians.

Despite frequent use by bicyclists, Old Morrilton Highway has neither a designated bicycle lane nor adequate shoulder width to accommodate bicyclists. While long-distance bicyclists often prefer to use standard traffic lanes, recreational bicyclists would be better served by a distinct, paved facility separated from the roadway by a landscaped buffer. Such a facility should be of adequate width to accommodate pedestrians as well, similar to the Tucker Creek Trail in west Conway. Residents along Old Morrilton Highway would retain access to their properties via existing driveways that would cross the proposed bike and pedestrian path.

Action Item 1e Plan a paved multi-use path ten feet in width and parallel to Old Morrilton Highway to serve bicyclists and pedestrians. The path should be buffered from the highway by a landscaped strip.

Accessibility and Connectivity

A well-planned road network can ease traffic congestion, make neighborhoods more walkable, and decrease reliance on the automobile. Largely because of a lack of road connections, many stakeholders in the Old Morrilton Highway corridor must use indirect routes to reach businesses and services that should be easily-accessible.

Road Network. Policy: The city should be connected by a sensible road network that allows for efficient access to areas where people live and work.

The Old Morrilton Highway corridor is presently inadequately served by an underdeveloped network of adjoining roads. Hogan Lane, which is identified as a major arterial by the Comprehensive Plan, serves as the primary north-south connection between Old Morrilton Highway and growing west Conway. Hogan Lane intersects Old Morrilton Highway approximately two and one-half miles from the new Interstate 40 exit, ensuring that traffic volume will increase between the two points. Nob Hill Road is also utilized as a connection between Old Morrilton Highway and west Conway, though the strictly residential character of Nob Hill makes it an inappropriate road for heavy vehicular traffic. Extending Salem Road to Old Morrilton Highway

should provide relief to commuters utilizing the new Interstate 40 exit.

An extension of Hogan Lane to connect with Interstate 40 is included in the City's Comprehensive Plan. In order for development to occur around a future Hogan Lane exit, a road network should be planned to accommodate such development. Existing rural roads such as Doy B and Calico Lane could be improved and serve commercial and/or mixed use developments without creating the need for additional curb cuts.

Action Item 2a: Plan a road network utilizing existing ingress and egress points and connecting Old Morrilton Highway to any future development near the planned Hogan Lane interchange.

Additional roads are needed to ensure that traffic moves safely and efficiently through northwest Conway. The portion of the corridor north of Interstate 40 is of particular interest because of its long-term potential for redevelopment. Presently, this area is largely undeveloped and lacks adequate linkages between major thoroughfares. Future development in this area is contingent upon sewer service and an adequate road network.

Action Item 2b: Utilize existing road segments to plan a road network to serve the area between Friendship Road and Interstate 40.

Park Network. Policy: Parks and open spaces are integral components of a city's quality of life and should be easily accessible to residents and visitors.

Beaverfork Lake and Cadron Settlement Park offer local residents and visitors multiple recreational settings. Additional opportunities for new parks exist between Beaverfork Lake and Cadron Settlement Park. Among the sites that could be considered for new parks are the property north of Blaney Hill Road that formerly served as the City's sanitation facility and the City's current sanitation facility, which will reach capacity in 17 to 25 years. These facilities—along with the existing parks—would be connected by the proposed multi-use path and could transform the study area into a unique recreational corridor.

Action Item 2c: Plan a network of parks connecting Beaverfork Lake with the Arkansas River. Convert the former sanitation facility into a public park.

Because of Old Morrilton Highway's unique terrain and its position between two prominent parks, it could be enhanced as a scenic parkway. Scenic parkways often include wide medians with prominent landscaping and utilize existing trees and roadside landscaping to enhance the visual appeal of the area. Scenic parkways can have a calming effect on traffic,



Example of a mountain biking trail. Nearly one-half of respondents to the visual preference questionnaire rated his image as somewhat to highly appropriate for the Old Morrilton Highway—Cadron Ridge corridor.

particularly where they follow the natural contours of the land.

Action Item 2d: Plan a cross-section of both a four-lane scenic parkway and a two-lane scenic parkway for consideration by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department for future road-widening projects.

Recreational Uses. Policy: Recreational opportunities are an integral component of a city's quality of life and should be available to residents and visitors.

Conway Corporation owns a utility easement that runs alongside a portion of the hillside south of Old Morrilton Highway. A mountain bike trail along the easement would

provide local mountain bikers with a new recreational opportunity. Such a trail could be created at little cost to the City. The elevation of the easement changes periodically, and the easement appears to dead-end into private property at various points. The bike trail would work in conjunction with the proposed multi-use path along Old Morrilton Highway, which would provide temporary relief to mountain bikers as the easement ends. Local mountain bikers presently utilize public and private property along the hillside east of Cadron Settlement Park. A well-marked trail along the easement and other existing public property would designate areas where it is permissible for mountain bikers to ride.

Action Item 2e: Plan a mountain bike trail utilizing the existing Conway Corporation easement that is integrable with the proposed multi-use path.

Aesthetics and Contextual Design

Context-sensitive development that blends well with the surrounding natural and built environment can enhance the city's visual appeal and protect property values. The natural hillside and extensive foliage present throughout the Old Morrilton Highway corridor make the study area both vulnerable to the negative effects of development and ideal for aesthetically-pleasing, contextually-sensitive development. The City of Conway has enacted measures—including

development review standards, planned unit development zoning, and a traditional neighborhood overlay—to, in part, improve the city's aesthetics.

Design Standards. Policy: Design standards should improve the quality of life of residents by protecting and enhancing the City's appearance, identity, and economic vitality.

In September 2007, the Conway City Council adopted new development review standards for the City of Conway. The standards apply to all new developments that are not single family or duplex residences. Among the highlights of the new standards were the following: 1) Impervious cover may not exceed 80 percent of any site; 2) Masonry must occupy at least 51 percent of each façade of new buildings; 3) Prominent landscaping must line the perimeter of the site and be incorporated into parking lot design; 4) Joint and cross access is required for adjoining properties; and 5) Each land use has both a minimum and maximum number of parking spaces allowed. Any new development within the incorporated portion of the study area must adhere to the development review guidelines. No action items are necessary.

Planned Unit Developments. Policy: Planned unit developments should be employed where



Buildings with unique architecture fared better in the visual preference questionnaire than standard undistinguished commercial buildings.

Above: The clock-tower image was deemed somewhat to highly appropriate for Old Morrilton Highway by 82 percent of questionnaire respondents.

Below: The branded, metal building was deemed somewhat to highly inappropriate by nearly 55 percent of respondents.



necessary to promote coordinated development, mixed land uses, and open space.

Property adjacent to the new Interstate 40 interchange faces three barriers that challenge

new commercial development in the area: 1) the lack of a sanitary sewer system, which limits land use type and land use intensity; 2) the aforementioned curb cut limitations, which significantly lessen development potential along the highway; and 3) the limitation on hillside excavations.

A planned unit development (PUD) is a creative approach to zoning that ensures that a development suits the surrounding environment and accommodates any unique circumstances that would make development under a standard zoning category either impractical or impossible. Planned unit developments are most often invoked when setback requirements severely limit or prohibit desirable development. At least 20 percent of the land included in the planned unit development must be dedicated as open space. Though planned unit development zoning does not in itself require that landowners coordinate their efforts,

landowners near the new interchange should be encouraged to work together alongside a developer to create a low-impact development plan for the area. A coordinated effort to develop a planned unit development would allow for joint access points, reducing the need for additional curb cuts. Additionally, a coordinated effort would allow for greater lateral flexibility, thus reducing the need for a new hillside excavation. Finally, planned unit developments allow for multiple uses that traditional zoning would disallow.

Action Item 3a: Use planned unit developments as alternatives to traditional commercial zoning along Old Morrilton Highway near the new interchange.

Mixed Uses. Policy: Mixed use developments should be utilized to discourage automobile usage while easing strict segregation of land uses.

Presently, Conway does not have a specific zoning category for mixed land uses. In order to mix residential, office, and/or commercial uses, landowners and developers must propose planned unit developments. The purpose of a mixed use development can vary by location; along the Old Morrilton Highway corridor, the primary benefit of a mixed use development would be to buffer strictly residential areas from interstate commercial areas. A well-planned mixed use development could include some combination of residential, commercial, office, and public uses. As a long-term solution, the City should create a mixed use zoning category, which would outline the purpose, permitted uses, and setback requirements of such a zone.

Action Item: 3b Identify areas in the Old Morrilton Highway corridor that would be suitable for mixed use developments.



Left: The hillside excavation image prompted the lowest average rating of any image included in the visual preference questionnaire. The average rating for the image was 2.03 on a scale of one to seven; 82 percent of respondents deemed the image somewhat to highly inappropriate for Old Morrilton Highway.

Right: The natural hillside image was one of the highest rated images in the visual preference questionnaire. The average rating for the image was 5.48 on a scale of one to seven; more than three-quarters of respondents deemed the image somewhat to highly appropriate for Old Morrilton Highway.



Sustainable Development

The Old Morrilton Highway corridor is an environmentally-sensitive area due to two major factors: the Cadron Ridge hillside on the highway's south side and the two water bodies that run in close proximity to the highway on the west. Future development should occur within the context of the natural environment and not infringe upon sensitive areas. Additionally, tree preservation is necessary in order to maintain the natural character of the corridor.

Hillside. Policy: Hillsides are natural assets that should remain undisturbed by development.

Through the enactment of Ordinances O-06-67 and O-07-43, the Conway City Council has placed controls on future hillside excavations. Ordinance O-07-43 (which amended the earlier O-06-67) requires that “any person engaging in excavation into a hillside or sloped area (ground slope is steeper than three feet horizontal to one foot vertical) where the maximum vertical height of the excavation exceeds ten feet for single family construction or non single family construction” must submit an excavation plan to the City Engineer for approval. While it may be possible to develop a single-family home on a large hillside lot without destabilizing the hillside or causing significant runoff, commercial developments—which require more lot coverage—would threaten

both hilltop residences and properties south of the hillside.

Action Item 4a: Disallow commercial development on hillside where slope exceeds three feet horizontal to one foot vertical.

Water Bodies. Policy: All development should be conducted in such a way that the integrity of local water bodies is not jeopardized.

Though water quality issues in Cadron Creek and the Arkansas River are not solely Conway's responsibility, the city's actions can have long-term effects on those water bodies. Developers should be especially mindful of the negative impacts large-scale developments can have on nearby rivers and lakes. State and federal regulations govern the amount and types of waste that developments may contribute to local water bodies.

Action Item 4b: Require developers of non-single family residential property to provide evidence of compliance with all State and Federal environmental regulations in the Development Review process.

Tree Protection. Policy: Trees provide shade and visual relief for residents, drivers, and recreational users, serve as natural buffers between the road and pedestrian-related areas, and act as natural erosion barriers on the hillside. Therefore, mature,

viable trees should be protected from development where possible.

Presently, Conway lacks an ordinance to protect trees in areas other than those that fall under the auspices of the Old Conway Design Review Board. Uncontrolled, intensive development within the Old Morrilton Highway corridor could result in the unnecessary loss of trees throughout the corridor; tree protection is especially important along the hillside on Old Morrilton Highway's south side because of the natural erosion-controlling qualities of trees.

Action Item 4c: Encourage a tree preservation plan for all future non-single family developments. Incentivize the preservation of significant existing trees (12" in diameter measured at breast height from base) through the development review process.

Infrastructure. Policy: Septic systems are not adequately suited for large-scale developments; such developments should be discouraged until public sanitary sewer service becomes available.

The lack of a public sewer service makes large-scale development impractical throughout most of the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. Presently, sewer service is not available along Old Morrilton Highway west of Highway 25. No sewer service is available in the portion of the study area north of Interstate 40. The cities of Conway,

Wooster, and Greenbrier are currently engaged in a study to determine the feasibility of a public sewer system.

Action Item 4d: Disallow any large-scale development within the Old Morrilton Highway study area until sanitary sewer service becomes available.

The action items identified in this chapter provide the basis for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor long-range plan. As detailed in the following chapter, the long-range plan considers both present realities presented in chapter 2 and the ideals represented by the action items included in this chapter.

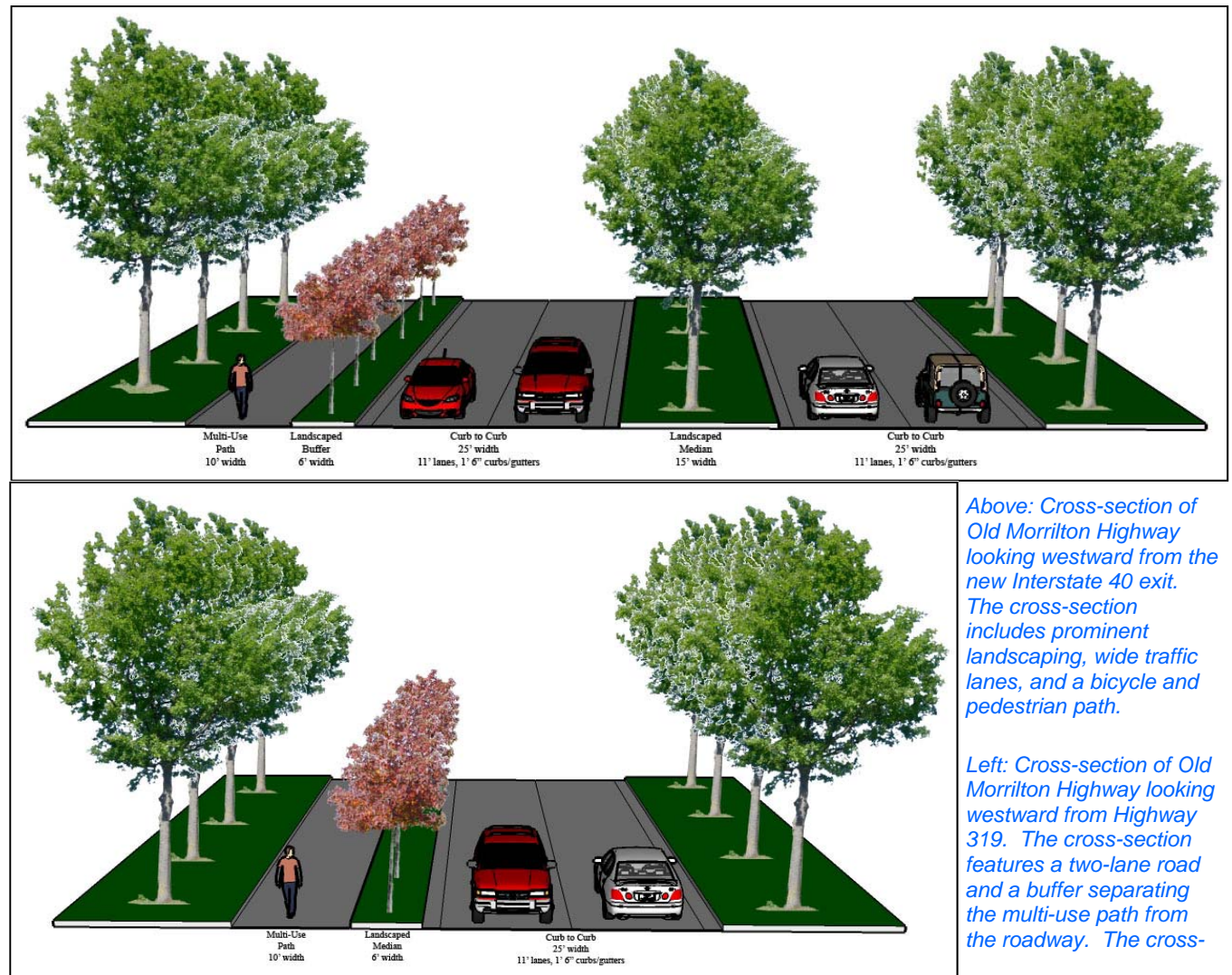
V: LONG-RANGE PLAN

The long-range plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor anticipates increased demand and controlled growth over a 30-year period. The plan represents the corridor's anticipated long-term appearance and functionality based upon responsible, sustainable development opportunities. The plan addresses the action items listed in the previous chapter.

Cross-Sections

Presently, most of the roads in the study area lack curbs and gutters; the State has installed curbs along the portion of Old Morrilton Highway between Highway 25 and the new Interstate 40 interchange. All street cross-sections contained within the plan include both curbs and gutters.

Donaghey to Hogan. The long-range plan for Old Morrilton Highway anticipates the eventual widening of a portion of the highway to accommodate local commuters and travelers. To preserve and enhance the natural character of Old Morrilton Highway, future road widening should be conducted in a manner consistent with the surroundings. A four-lane parkway with a wide, landscaped median would be more in



Above: Cross-section of Old Morrilton Highway looking westward from the new Interstate 40 exit. The cross-section includes prominent landscaping, wide traffic lanes, and a bicycle and pedestrian path.

Left: Cross-section of Old Morrilton Highway looking westward from Highway 319. The cross-section features a two-lane road and a buffer separating the multi-use path from the roadway. The cross-

keeping with Old Morrilton Highway's natural characteristics than a typical five-lane highway. Additionally, a paved multi-use path separated from the parkway by a landscaped buffer would provide bicyclists and pedestrians a safe

transportation and recreation facility. The cross-section spans 79 feet in width.

Hogan to Highway 319. When the Hogan Lane interchange is built, the area west of Hogan Lane

should not see a traffic increase of enough significance to warrant a four-lane highway. There is not a sizeable population between this area and Plumerville, which is already served by an interstate exit. Old Morrilton Highway should retain its current two-lane character west of Hogan Lane; an extension of the multi-use path is also included in the cross-section. The cross-section spans 39 feet.

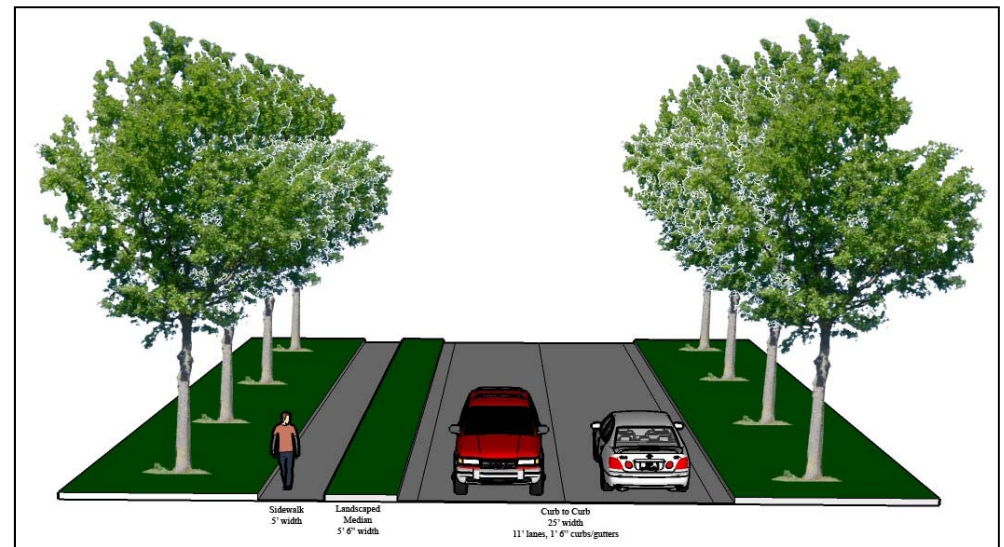
Roads North of Interstate 40. Many of the roads serving the area north of Interstate 40 within the study area are narrow and winding. The plan utilizes one cross-section for all existing and proposed roads in this area. The cross-section consists of a two-lane roadway with adequate lane width and a pedestrian sidewalk and spans 36 feet.

New Roads

The plan includes two new roads, one road realignment, and several new road segments connecting existing roads. Existing roads—particularly in the portion of the study area north of Interstate 40—are not adequately suited to accommodate any additional traffic burden brought about by new development. The area provides many opportunities for additional road connections, resulting in a ruralized type of street grid.

South of Interstate 40. Along Old Morrilton Highway, the previously-announced Salem Road extension will connect the existing Salem Road to Old Morrilton Highway at the new Interstate 40 interchange. The plan also anticipates a future Interstate 40 interchange at Hogan Lane and includes an expanded network of roads to serve new developments at that interchange; the new road network builds on existing stubs and driveways.

North of Interstate 40. There is not presently a sensible road network serving the portion of the study area north of Interstate 40. Blaney Hill Road and Friendship Road are the major east-west roads; however, both end abruptly and share few connections. The sole complete north-south connector is Highway 25, which is excessively winding. A future realignment project will connect Highway 25 to the new Interstate 40 exit. The plan includes a realigned Highway 25 and a new network of roads to serve the study area north of Interstate 40.

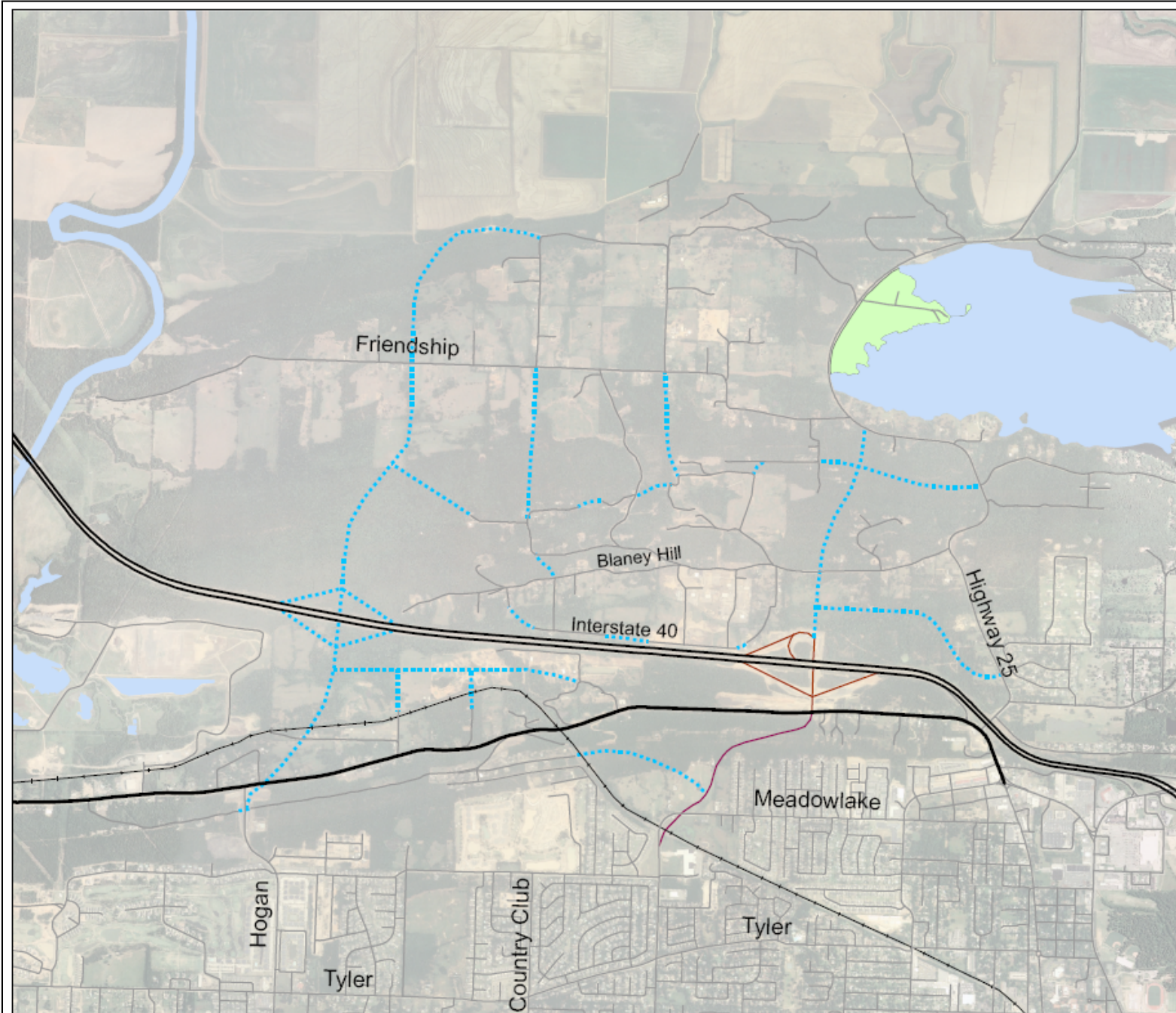


Cross-section for roadways north of Interstate 40 and new collectors south of Interstate 40. The cross-section includes two wide lanes, a landscaped buffer, and a sidewalk.

Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study

Existing and
Proposed Roads

- Old Morrilton Highway
- Interstate 40
- Street
- Railroad
- Water body
- Proposed road
- I-40 Exit and Salem extension



May 8, 2008

Sources: GeoStor, ESRI

City of Conway, Arkansas
Planning & Development

N



Multi-Use Path and Bicycle Trail

An extensive sidewalk system and separate bicycle path are highly desirable on new roads. However, installing such facilities on existing roads with limited right-of-way is often impractical or impossible. Old Morrilton Highway lacks sufficient right-of-way to install the ideal pedestrian system. In order to provide an adequate transportation and recreation facility for bicyclists and pedestrians, the plan includes a paved, multi-use path ten feet in width that is buffered from the highway by a landscaped strip. The path would function in a manner similar to that of the existing Tucker Creek Trail in west Conway.

Multi-Use Path. The multi-use path connects Beaverfork Lake park with Cadron Settlement Park and passes through the former and current sanitation facilities, both of which could become parks. By creating a network of parks and connecting them via a bicycle and pedestrian path, the Old Morrilton Highway corridor will become a unique destination for recreationists. The multi-use path parallels existing streets, including Highway 25, Blaney Hill Road, and Old Morrilton Highway. Crosswalks with in-pavement lights should be installed at points along the path's route where the route crosses the roadway.

Bicycle Trail. The existing Conway Corporation easement along the hillside south of Old Morrilton Highway provides an opportunity for recreational uses. The plan includes a mountain biking path along the easement. Where the easement ends into private property, trail users would be redirected to the paved multi-use path until the easement reenters the hillside.

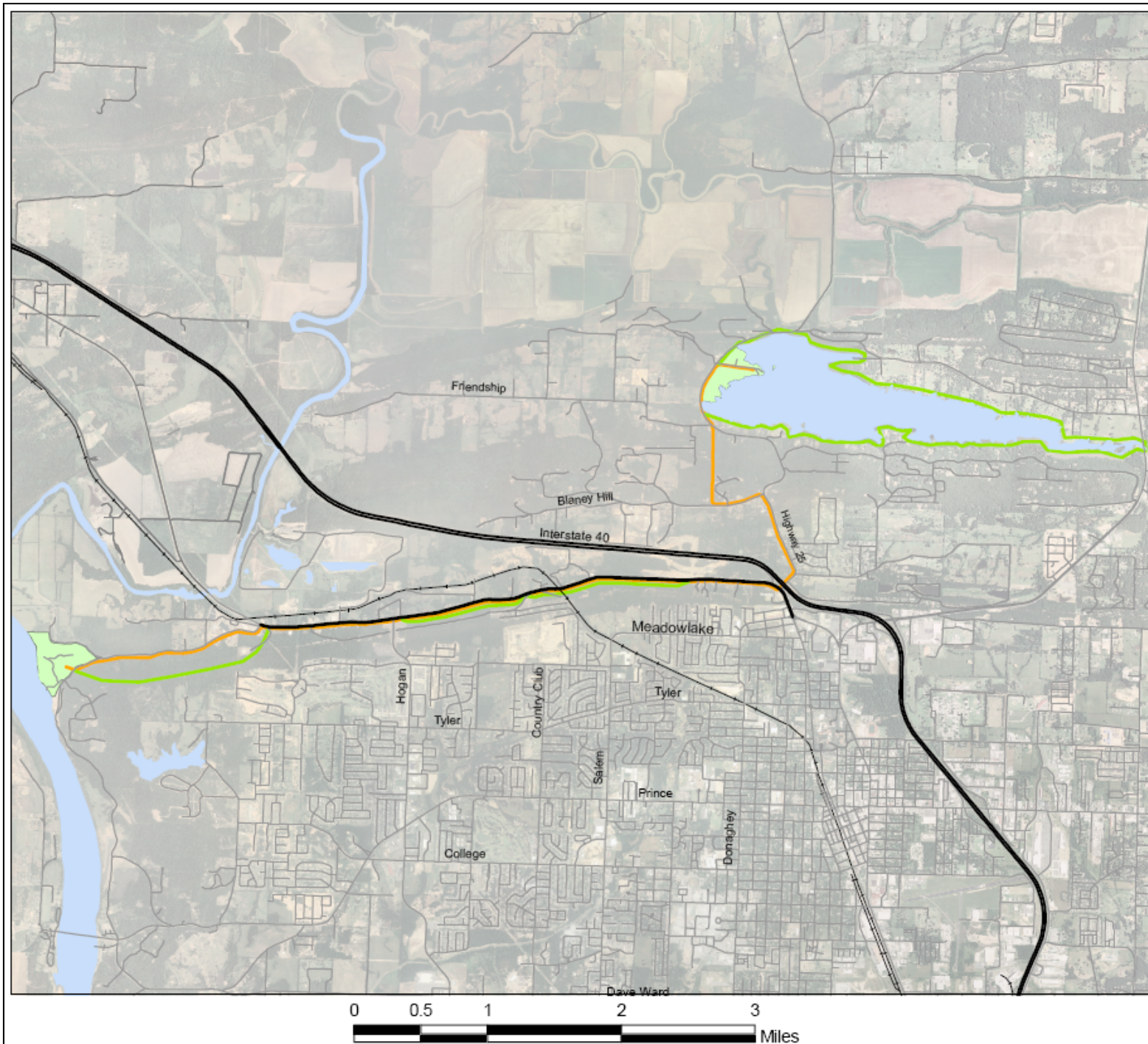
Old Morrilton Highway Corridor Study

Proposed
Recreational
Uses

- Old Morrilton Highway
- Interstate 40
- Street
- Railroad
- Water body

Proposed recreational uses

- Path (Paved)
- Trail (Unpaved)



May 8, 2008

Sources: GeoStor, ESRI

City of Conway, Arkansas
Planning & Development

Land Uses

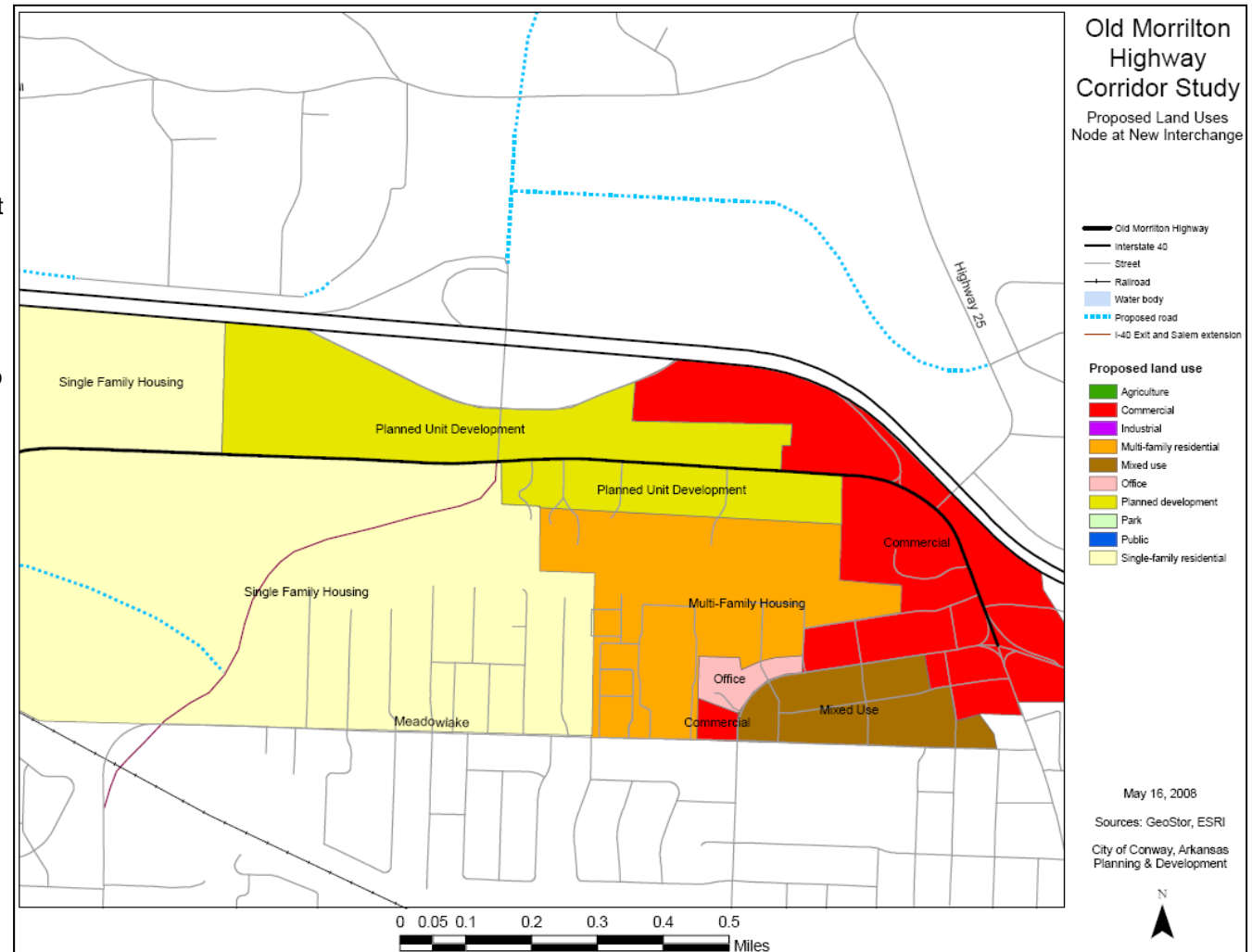
The plan includes an array of land uses, leading to the creation of a genuine mixed-use corridor. The natural characteristics of the corridor are protected by the land use plan, which retains single-family residential as the primary use along the south side of Old Morrilton Highway. The plan promotes practical and sustainable non-residential uses at strategic locations. As previously noted, the lack of public sewer service limits the short-term potential for high-impact uses. Because of its long-range intent, the plan includes several high volume uses that would be possible only with public sewer service.

Node at New Interstate 40 Interchange. Due to the lack of sewer service and the previously mentioned difficulties with creating curb cuts near the new interchange, the plan allows for planned unit developments to the northeast, northwest, and southeast corners of the new interchange's intersection with Old Morrilton Highway. Planned unit developments offer a creative approach to property owners and developers; a mix of land uses is permissible. Further, designating the area as suitable for planned unit developments encourages a collaborative approach to development. Aggregating properties to form a singular

planned unit development will encourage complimentary uses, rather than competitive ones; thus, the area can develop in a more sustainable manner and foster an environment distinct from the typical interstate strip. Rather than cutting into the hillside, adjoining properties can be used to provide more space for developments to occur laterally, rather than vertically. With limited space,

a wide array of services can be offered through planned unit developments.

The existing mix of commercial, office, multi-family and single-family residential uses on the eastern end of the study area is retained in the plan. The area immediately surrounding the Salem Road extension is not appropriate for non-residential uses; thus, the plan encourages single-

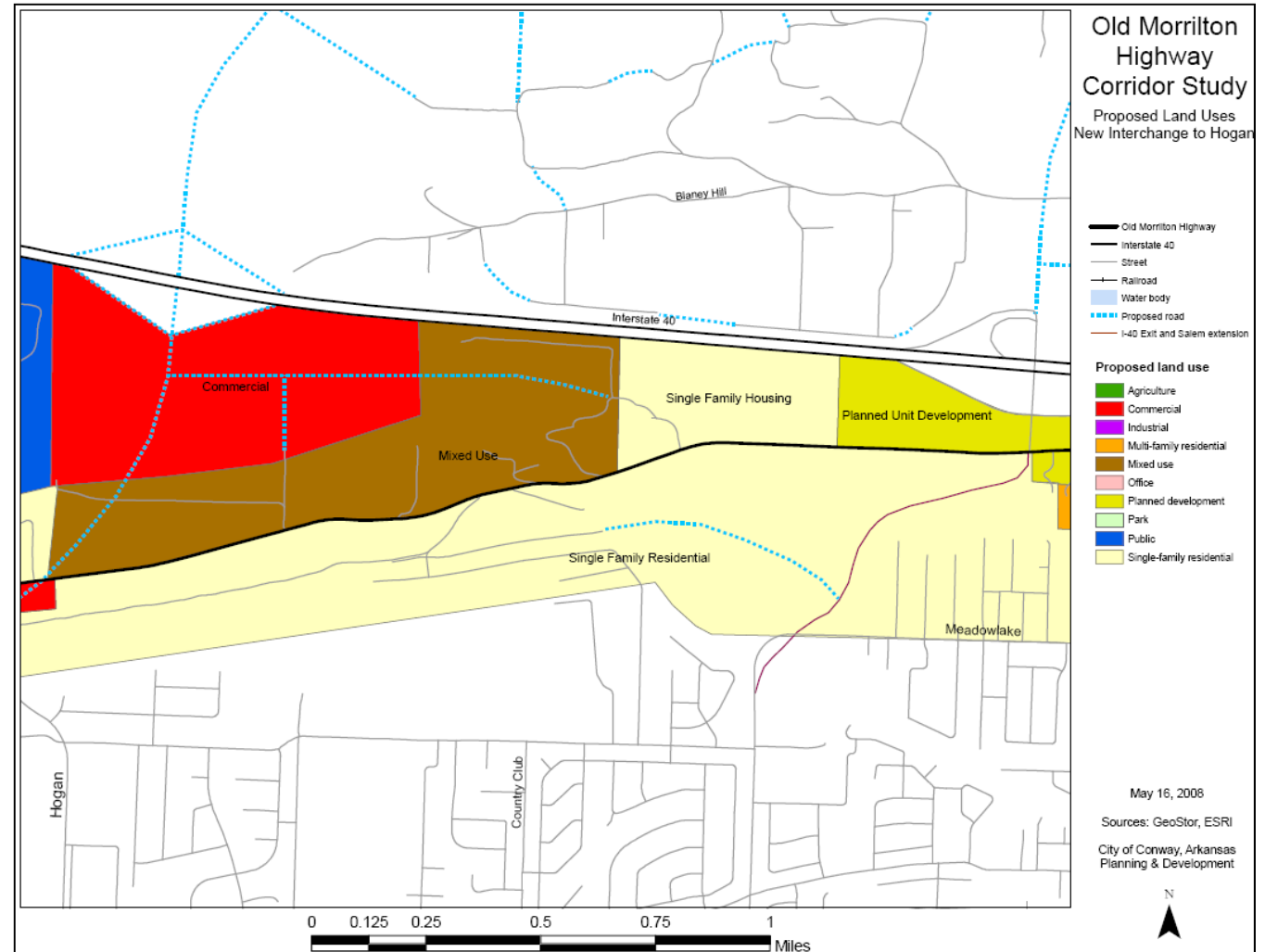


family residential uses there. Additionally, the plan indicates single-family residential on the southwestern side of the new interchange's intersection with Old Morrilton Highway.

New Interstate 40 Interchange to Hogan.

The plan includes a mixed use area and a commercial node near the future Hogan Lane interchange. An expanded road network would serve a mixed use and commercial node near the interchange. The existing railroad track complicates the potential for development in the area; notably, however, expanding existing roads would allow for the creation of a new road network to serve the area without causing additional curb cuts along Old Morrilton Highway. Single-family residential use is not encouraged along the existing railroad track.

The proposed mixed use area could include a mix of commercial and office use. The easternmost portion of the area could be suitable for multi-family housing if a proper buffer around the railroad track could be established. Because of its distance from Old Morrilton Highway's natural characteristics, the commercial node near the Interstate 40 exit would be suited for interstate commercial development. The plan also identifies a small commercial node that includes both the southeast and southwest corners of the



intersection of Hogan Lane and Old Morrilton Highway. This node makes use of existing hillside excavations. While commercial development in excavations is not typically desirable, the strategic location of these particular excavations makes them subject to possible small-scale commercial development.

Hogan Lane Westward. The plan anticipates little demand for non-residential land use on Old Morrilton Highway west of Hogan Lane. As previously noted, the existing sanitation facility will reach capacity in 17 to 25 years and become parkland. Entergy and Conway Corporation currently own parcels to the south and southeast of the Old Morrilton Highway - Highway 319 split.

Few residences exist in the area, and the terrain indicates residential as the highest and best use for the area.

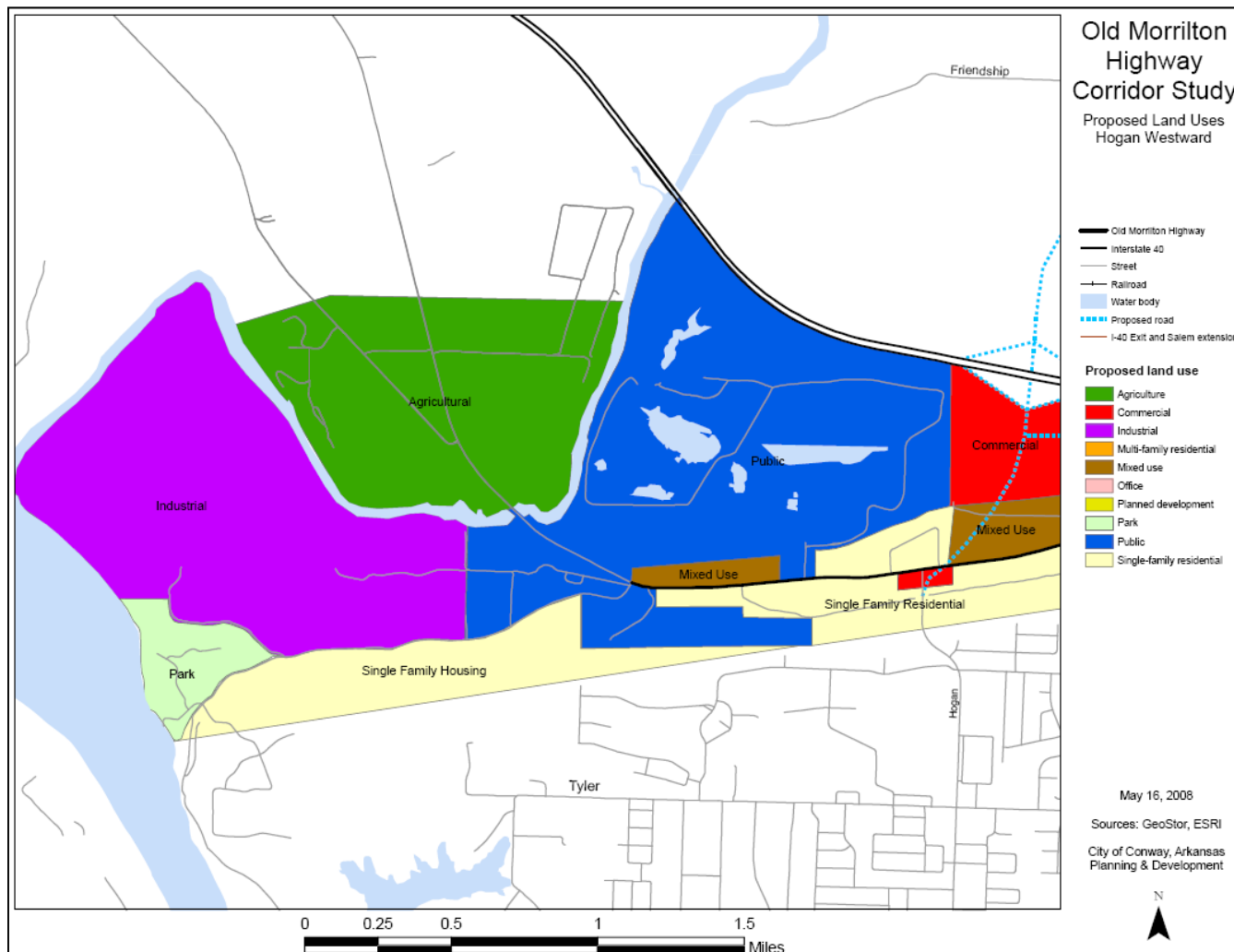
The property between Cadron Creek and the Arkansas River (north of Cadron Settlement Park) appears well-suited for a future industrial use. This property has direct access to the Arkansas River and nearby access to both the

existing railroad track and the future Hogan Lane interchange. The plan identifies the area of Conway County northeast of the potential industrial site as suitable for continued agricultural use. The City of Conway has not yet exercised its extra-territorial jurisdiction over either the proposed industrial or agricultural areas.

North of Interstate 40. Cimarron Park—a light industrial and commercial park—is the sole large-scale development within the portion of the study area north of Interstate 40. Presently, Blaney Hill Road is the only route into and out of Cimarron Park. Because of its prominent location, Cimarron Park serves as a gateway to Conway for eastbound travelers on Interstate 40. The

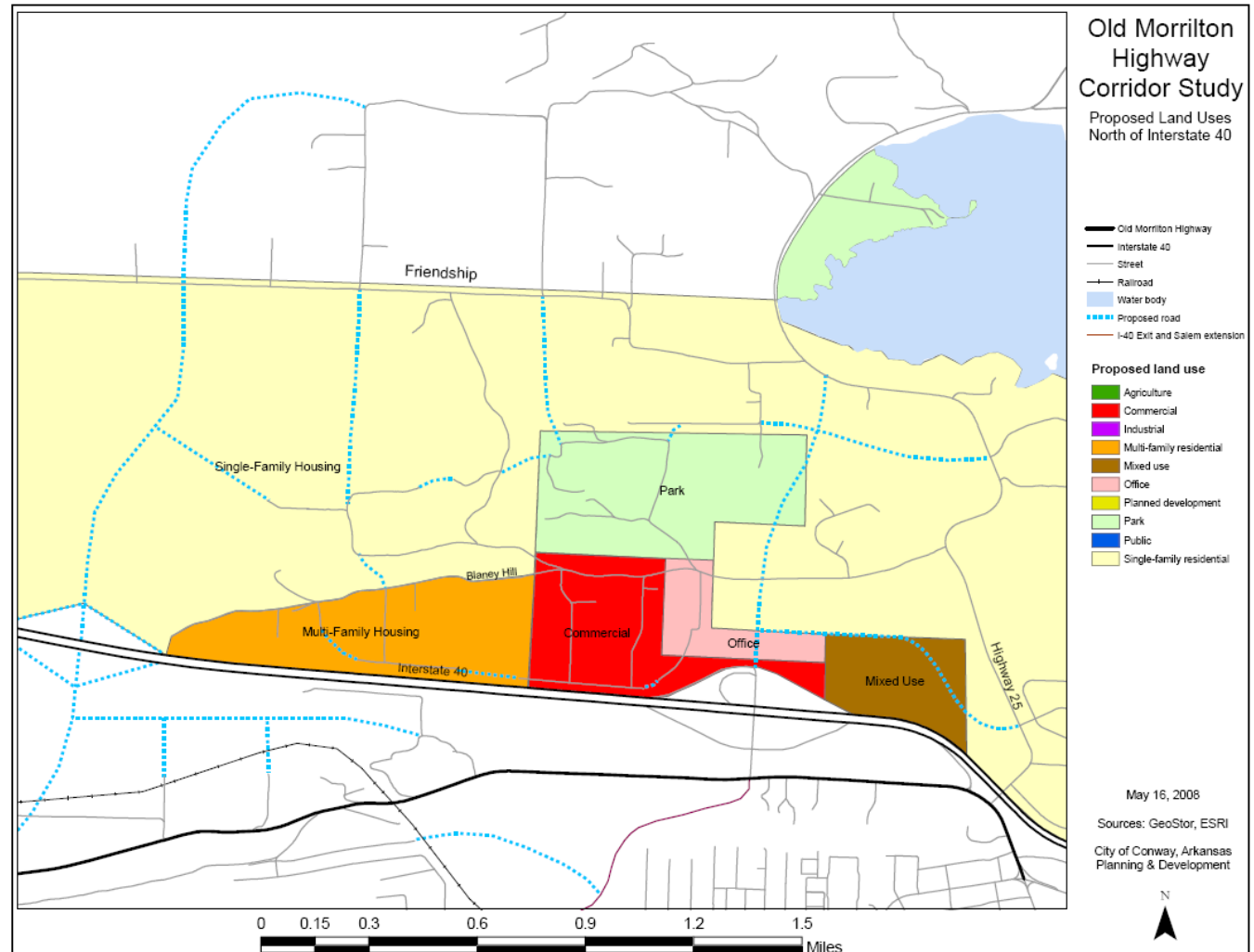
Cimarron Park area is ideally situated for a large-scale commercial development that could attract residents of Morrilton, Russellville, and other towns in Central Arkansas and the Arkansas River Valley. One potential use for the area would be a lifestyle center. Surrounded by a mix of multi-family housing, single-family housing, parkland, and office use, a local lifestyle center would serve as a regional shopping destination. Many suburban communities have had great success in attracting the spending power of residents of nearby larger cities and smaller communities to well-planned lifestyle centers. As noted previously, an extensive network of roads and public sewer service are essential for large-scale development in this area.

The plan includes a mix of land uses in the study area north of Interstate 40. The existing Cimarron Park area would retain its commercial character. The commercial area would be buffered from single-family residential areas via multi-family housing,



office uses, parkland, and a mixed use area. The former sanitation facility north of Blaney Hill Road has potential to be developed into a useable park that would be part of the planned recreational character of the corridor.

In summary, the long-range plan for Old Morrilton Highway indicates: expansion of the local transportation network; revisioning of the highway as a recreational corridor; and designation of specific areas as appropriate for increased development. In order for the long-range plan to serve as an effective guide for future development, clear implementation strategies must be outlined and followed. The following chapter suggests methods of implementation for each aspect of the plan.



VI: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This chapter outlines strategies for implementing the long-range plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. Implementation of specific aspects of the Old Morrilton Highway corridor plan begins with adoption of the plan itself by the Conway City Council. A resolution passed by the City Council would be necessary in order for the plan to replace the corresponding portion of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Upon adoption into the Comprehensive Plan, the Old Morrilton Highway corridor plan will become the guiding long-range plan for growth and development in the Old Morrilton Highway corridor.

Cross-Sections

Future road projects undertaken by the City of Conway and/or the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department should adhere to the road cross-sections included in the plan. When constructing new roads, the City should ensure that roads are of the appropriate width, include a sidewalk five feet in width, and have a landscaped buffer six feet in width between the road and sidewalk. Additionally, the continued enforcement of design standards through the Planning and Development Department's development review process ensures that all new developments will include sidewalks; property

owners must construct sidewalks on all street frontage abutting the developed property. If necessary, the development review guidelines should be adjusted by the City Council to indicate that sidewalks must be built in accordance with the appropriate cross-section.

After adopting the corridor plan, the City Council should indicate to the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department that the City desires that any future road widening project along the highway follow the appropriate cross-section. The City should work closely with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to ensure that the future Old Morrilton Highway includes a parkway setting with proper landscaping and a buffered multi-use path.

New Roads

New roads should be constructed in conjunction with the extension of other infrastructure including public sanitary sewer service. Roads should be built in a sensible, grid-like pattern where possible. The City of Conway will be responsible for constructing roads within the City's corporate limits. Faulkner County will be responsible for constructing roads in the unincorporated portions of the study area. Besides the previously planned extension of

Salem Road and the connection of Highway 25 to the new Interstate 40 exit, no new roads are recommended for immediate construction. The new roads outlined in the plan should be built only as new development demands and only when adequate infrastructure comes available. The City should use funds collected from impact fees to build the necessary new roads.

The creation of an Access Management Plan for Old Morrilton Highway requires the cooperation of the City of Conway, the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, and MetroPlan. The Access Management Plan should require that designated representatives of each of the three bodies acquiesce to requests for new curb cuts along the highway. The three bodies should sign a memorandum of understanding accepting the terms of the Access Management Plan.

Multi-Use Path and Bicycle Trail

Implementation of the proposed multi-use path requires adoption of the cross-sections as outlined previously. Multi-use paths should be ten feet in width in order to adequately serve pedestrians and bicyclists. All new developments in Conway (excluding only single-family residential on non-subdivided lots) require sidewalk

construction. In order to create the desired cross-section and not put an unfair burden on property owners on the side of the road where the proposed path is to be constructed, sidewalk funds collected from new developments along Old Morrilton Highway should be pooled and held by the City until such time that the proposed path is feasible. Where bicycle paths are not immediately executable, the City of Conway should place roadside signs alerting drivers of the presence of bicyclists. On-street striping is also desirable where possible.

The proposed bicycle trail utilizes an existing Conway Corporation easement. Presently, the terms of the easement do not allow for the placement of a bicycle trail. The City of Conway and Conway Corporation would need to secure the consent of property owners in order to expand the scope of the easement. Maintenance of the trail would be the joint responsibility of Conway Corporation and the Conway Parks and Recreation Department.

Land Uses

The long-range plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor provides a guide for future land development and should be adopted as a replacement for the corresponding portion of the City's Comprehensive Plan. After initial review by the Conway Planning Commission, the City

Council should adopt the long-range land use plan for the corridor in lieu of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan would act as a guide for the Planning Commission and City Council in considering future rezoning requests, though neither body would be bound by the plan.

The section of the current Zoning Ordinance pertaining to planned unit developments should undergo an extensive review by the Conway Planning and Development Department to ensure that the ordinance adequately addresses the needs of areas such as the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. If the Planning and Development Department deems any changes necessary, it should recommend them to the City Council for adoption. Further, the Planning and Development Department should study best practices related to mixed use zoning and offer a recommendation to the City Council to create a mixed use zoning category for the City of Conway.

Implementing Other Action Items

A few of the action items listed in chapter four are not included in the long-range plan; these action items identify controls rather than planning tools. Action items that are identified as controls include: 1) requiring 300 feet between non-residential driveways along Old Morrilton Highway; 2) disallowing commercial development on hillside

where slope exceeds three feet horizontal to one foot vertical; 3) requiring developers of non-single family residential property to provide evidence of compliance with all State and Federal environmental regulations in the Development Review process; and 4) requiring a tree preservation plan for all future non-single family developments. Though these controls cannot be shown on land use maps, they are integral to a successful long-range plan for the Old Morrilton Highway corridor. Within the area deemed appropriate for planned use developments, each of these controls should be conditions for Planning Commission and/or City Council approval.

The disallowance of commercial activity on the hillside (action item 4a) can be achieved by the passage of a City Council ordinance amending ordinance O-06-67 to specifically forbid commercial development on the hillside where the slope exceeds three feet vertical to one foot horizontal. This restriction would not apply to the existing hillside excavations.

Action item 4b, which would require developers to submit evidence of compliance with all Federal and State environmental regulations, can be implemented by amending Article 1101 (Site Plan Review) of the Conway Zoning Ordinance. Section 1101.6 should include action item 4b as subitem "C".

Implementation of a tree preservation program (action item 4c) would require either a

new ordinance or an amendment to the Conway Zoning Ordinance. Because the tree preservation program would include incentives for landowners and/or developers (such as allowing a modest increase in the number of parking spaces), a specific matrix outlining the exchange arrangement should be created.

Action item 4d, which would disallow large-scale development where public sanitary sewer service is not available, can be implemented by strict enforcement of Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) sanitary sewer requirements. Presently, the Permits Office in the Conway Planning and Development Department requires an approval letter from ADH prior to issuing building permits. Because ADH does not typically allow large-scale developments where sewer service is unavailable, no new ordinance or amendment should be necessary.

Conclusion

Conway's rapid westward expansion and the construction of a new interstate exit have changed Old Morrilton Highway from a sleepy U.S. Highway to a major thoroughfare. While the highway was built to move traffic—as many stakeholders have noted—Interstate 40 has largely relieved the highway of the burden of accommodating heavy long-distance traffic. Old Morrilton Highway's primary use now is as a local

road, serving the residents along the highway and throughout other parts of west Conway and commuters from Conway County and other nearby locales.

The City and stakeholders can choose one of two options in response to the demands being placed on Old Morrilton Highway: do nothing, or do something. If the City and stakeholders choose to do nothing, the area will remain residential in character and will not accommodate Interstate 40 traffic. Traffic volume will continue to increase. Bicyclists and pedestrians will continue to be endangered by the lack of bike paths and sidewalks. The parks in the area will continue to function as individual units, not connected to each other. In short, by doing nothing, the City and stakeholders ensure that Old Morrilton Highway continues its “business as usual.”

Doing something seems to be a more logical choice. The long-range plan set forth in this document is the “something” proposed by the Conway Planning and Development Department. The long-range plan is intended to guide future development in the Old Morrilton Highway corridor and ensure that such development leads to a safer, more accessible, better connected, aesthetically-pleasing, context-sensitive, and sustainable corridor. The plan discourages judging each proposed development individually; rather, developments should be assessed based on how they relate to one another and how they fit

into the community vision outlined in the plan. The plan should be revisited regularly—and revised as necessary—to ensure that it accommodates responsible, sustainable, and creative approaches to land use.