

Academy Boulevard Corridor Conditions Assessment  
Preliminary Analysis, July 11, 2007

**Academy Boulevard Corridor Conditions Assessment Preliminary Analysis**

**Prepared by the Comprehensive Planning Division of the City Planning and  
Community Development Department**

**July 10, 2007**

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## Introduction and Purpose

The City Comprehensive Plan defines a mature/redevelopment corridor as:

Corridors that line older arterial streets and state highways with retail uses and auto-oriented services developed in a typical strip commercial pattern, with multiple curb cuts, individual parking lots, cluttered signage, and small lots. These corridors also include significant infill and redevelopment opportunities.

Eight corridors are designated mature/redevelopment corridors in the City Comprehensive Plan, shown in Figure 1.

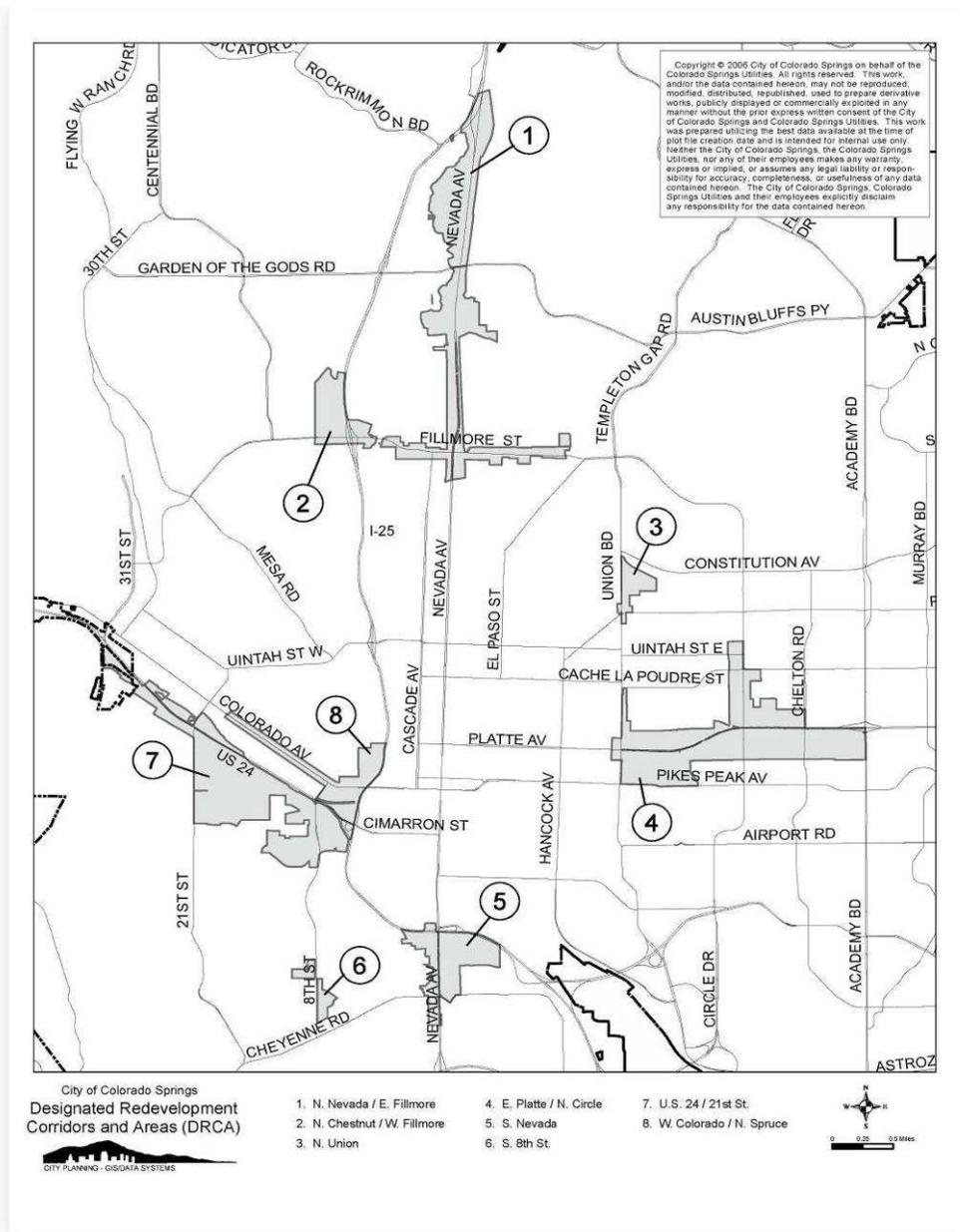


Figure 1: Designated Redevelopment Corridors and Areas

As part of the five-year assessment of the Comprehensive Plan in 2005, a recommendation was made to monitor the condition of existing commercial corridors for signs of deterioration and disinvestment resulting from the relocation of businesses to developing corridors and activity centers. A recommendation was also made to monitor the effect of commercial corridor disinvestment on adjacent and nearby neighborhoods.

Although the development pattern is different from the existing eight corridors, the Academy Boulevard corridor is exhibiting characteristics of a redevelopment corridor. Much of the area has experienced significant disinvestment as businesses close, the mix of tenants in centers changes dramatically, and large national retailers relocate to developing areas of the city, such as the Powers Boulevard corridor.

This study surveys the corridor from Austin Bluffs Parkway south to Drennan Road with the intent to redesignate the corridor as a "Mature/Redevelopment Corridor" as part of the annual updating of the Comprehensive Plan 2020 Land Use Map (LUM) by ordinance.

### ***Profile of the Academy Corridor***

#### **Demographic and Economic Statistics**

As census tracts are relatively stable statistical subdivisions used by the U.S. Census Bureau with an average population of 4,000 persons and are typically bounded by streets, railroads, and other visible features, they are an ideal geographic area to measure demographic and economic statistics along the Academy Boulevard corridor.

Fifteen census tracts (2000 census) are adjacent to Academy Boulevard between Austin Bluffs Parkway and Drennan Road and are largely bounded by Chelton Road, Circle Drive, and Templeton Gap Road on the west and Powers Boulevard and Murray Road on the east. Seven of the census tracts are located north of Platte Avenue and eight are south. A census tract map with an outline of the census tracts adjacent to the study area is illustrated in Figure 2. Note that Census Tracts 45.01 and 55.02 are only partially in the City of Colorado Springs.

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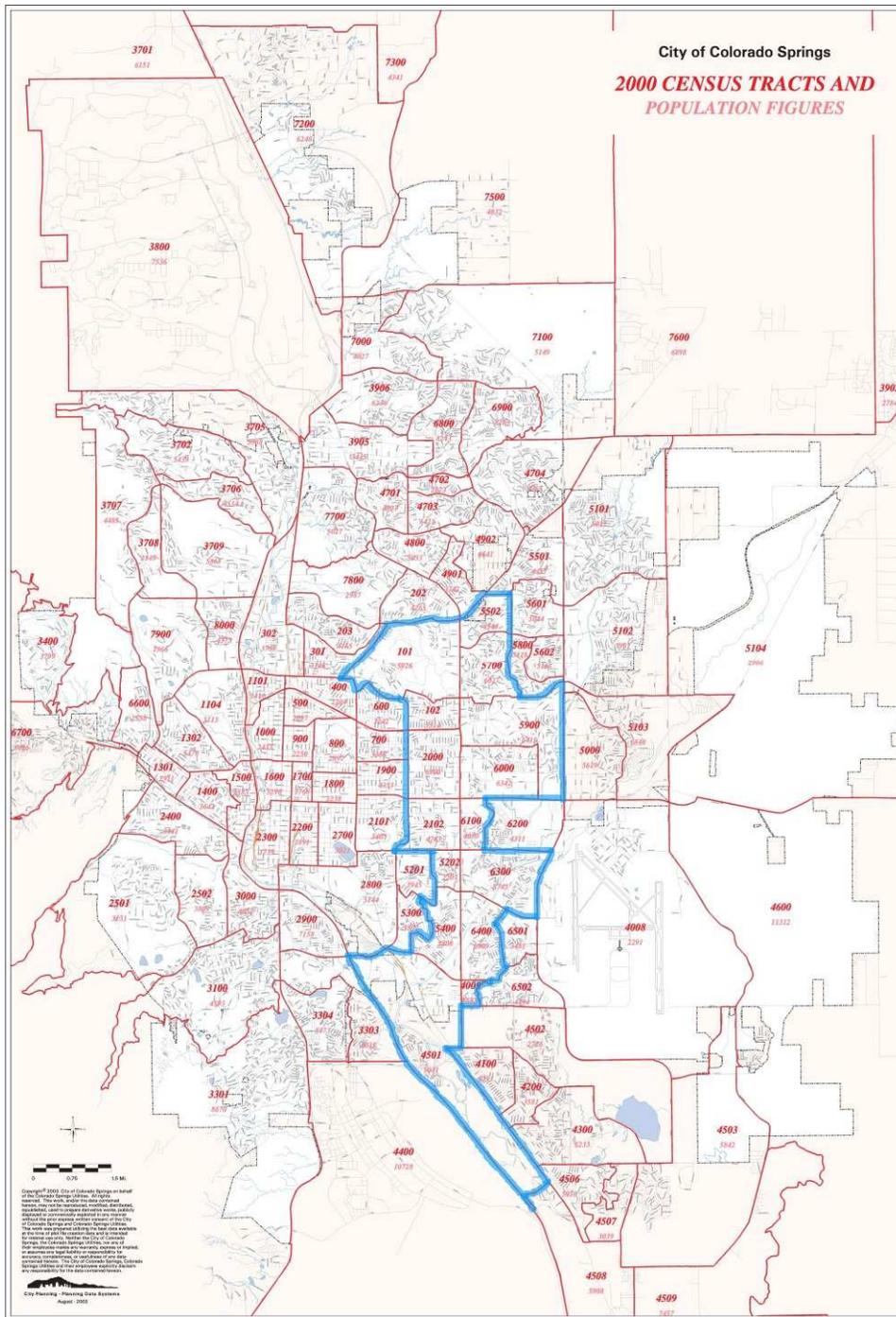
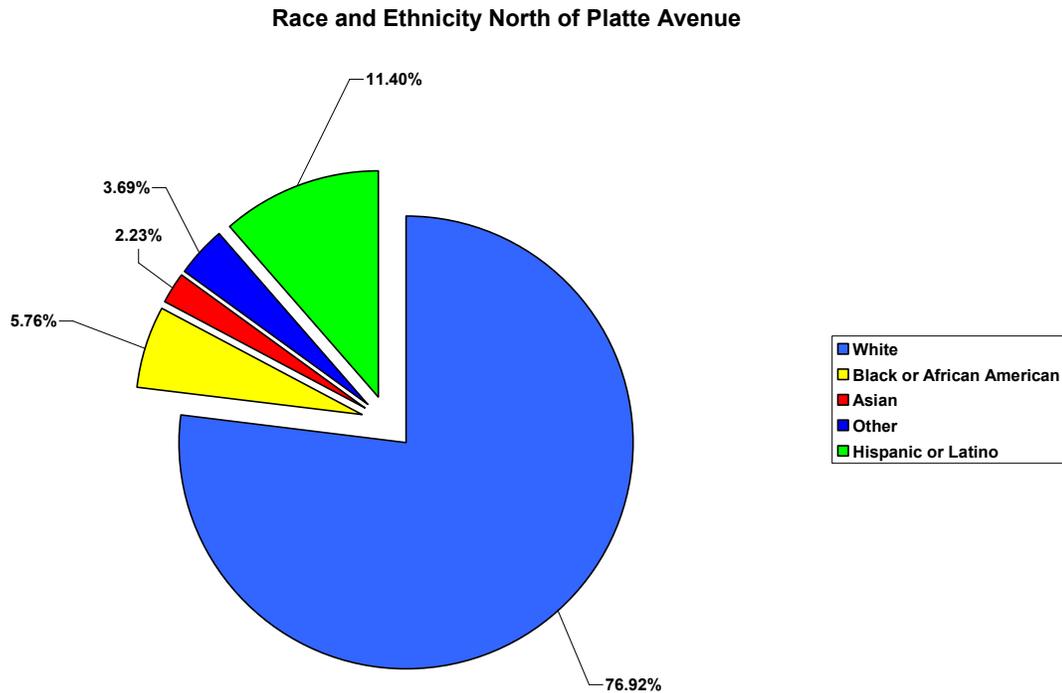


Figure 2: City of Colorado Springs Census 2000 Census Tract Map

As of the 2000 census, a population of 39,268 resided in the seven census tracts adjacent to Academy Boulevard north of Platte Avenue and 39,992 people resided in the eight census tracts south of Platte Avenue, a combined 22 percent of the City of Colorado Springs population. Of interest to this study is a sketch of the racial and ethnic background of the population living in proximity to Academy Boulevard and an assessment of incomes in the same area. The intent of this is to show the diversity of the

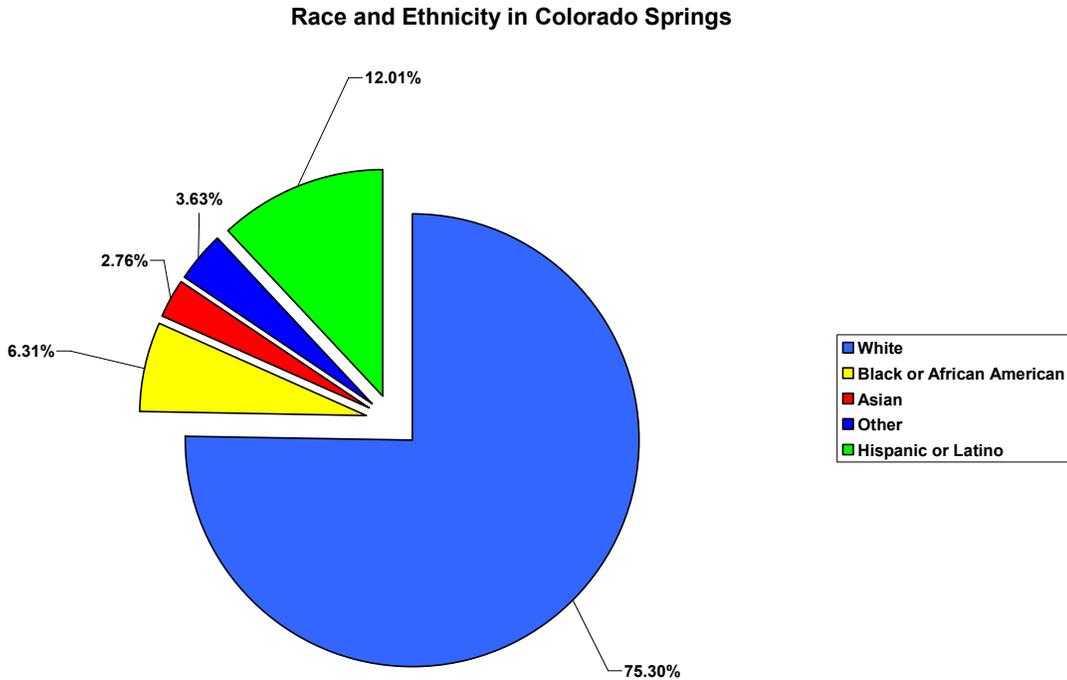
area and to characterize those who may be affected by a deterioration of the Academy Boulevard corridor.

Beginning with a racial and ethnic profile of the population in the seven census tracts adjacent to Academy Boulevard north of Platte Avenue, as is illustrated in Figure 3, the area is predominantly White Non-Hispanic or Latino and roughly approximates the racial and ethnic profile of the City of Colorado Springs shown in Figure 4.<sup>1</sup>



*Figure 3: Census 2000 Race and Ethnicity Profile for Seven Census Tracts Adjacent to Academy Boulevard North of Platte Avenue*

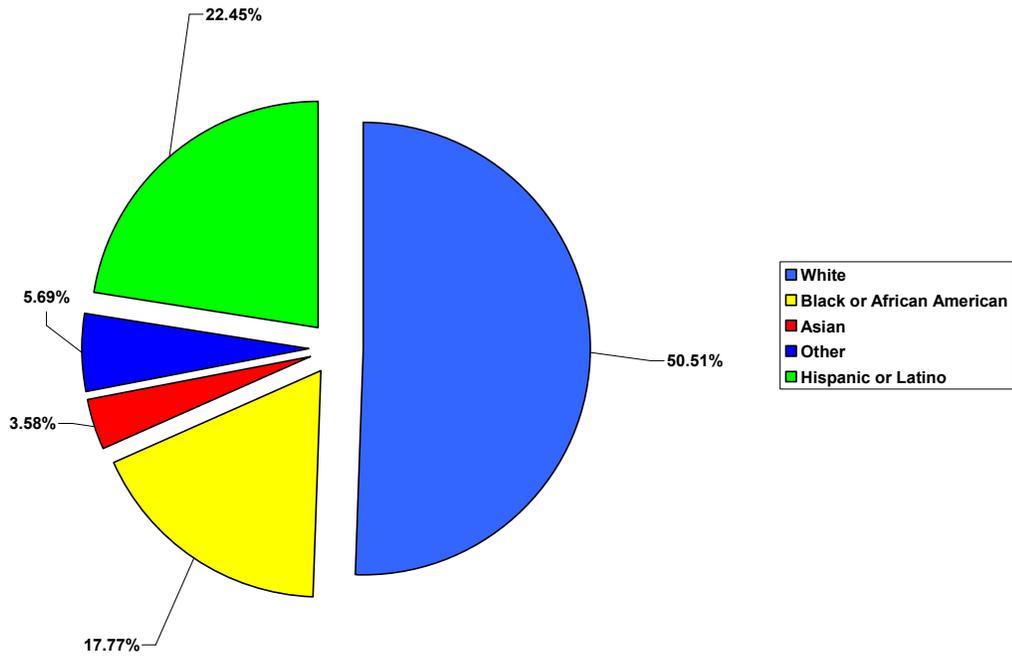
<sup>1</sup> This analysis uses Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data Table P8 Hispanic or Latino by Race. Per the census definition of the “Hispanic or Latino” ethnic category, it may include any race. This analysis is designed so that the “White”, “Black or African American”, and “Asian” race categories exclude the Hispanic or Latino ethnicity so that it may be analyzed independently. The “Other” category includes non-Hispanic or Latino individuals identified as “American Indian or Alaskan Native” or “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” in addition to individuals identified as belonging to some other race or two or more race categories.



*Figure 4: Census 2000 Race and Ethnicity Profile for City of Colorado Springs*

The eight census tracts adjacent to the Academy Boulevard corridor south of Platte Avenue exhibit different characteristics, notably that of a more diverse population than the city as a whole as shown in Figure 5. As of the date of the 2000 census, the percentage of White Non-Hispanic or Latino population was 50.51 percent of the area population, compared to 75.30 percent of the overall city population. This correlates to an increase in all of the other racial and ethnic categories. The percentage of Hispanic or Latinos in the area was 22.45 percent of the area population, compared to 12.01 percent of the overall city population. In addition to this, the percentage of Black or African Americans and Asians were a respective 17.77 and 3.58 percent of the area population, compared to 6.31 percent and 2.76 percent of the city population.

**Race and Ethnicity South of Platte Avenue**



*Figure 5: Census 2000 Race and Ethnicity Profile for Seven Census Tracts Adjacent to Academy Boulevard South of Platte Avenue*

This analysis is corroborated by a dissimilarity index, which analyzes two groups to determine the level of departure from area wide averages. Using the 97 census tracts that were in or partially in the City of Colorado Springs at the time of the 2000 census and the race and ethnicity categories adopted in the above analysis, it is possible to show the degree of dissimilarity between non-minority and minority groups from city averages at the census tract level. The index ranges from 0 to 1 and a low dissimilarity index equals a low level of departure from the area wide average. The results of this analysis are illustrated in Table 1, which show moderate levels of dissimilarity across the city.

Analysis	Total Population	Minority Population	Dissimilarity Index
White-Black or African American	331,347	26,499	0.42
White-Asian	331,347	11,258	0.24
White-Hispanic or Latino	331,347	50,257	0.31

*Table 1: Census 2000 Index of Dissimilarity at the Census Tract Level for City of Colorado Springs*

Working with the dissimilarity data, of the five census tracts with the largest proportion of Black or African Americans in the City of Colorado Springs, four are adjacent to the Academy Boulevard corridor south of Platte Avenue. Two of the five census tracts with the largest proportion of Asians in the City of Colorado Springs are adjacent to the Academy Boulevard south of Platte Avenue. Regarding Hispanics or Latinos, of the five census tracts with the largest proportion of the ethnicity in the City of Colorado Springs, three are adjacent to the Academy Boulevard corridor south of Platte and of the ten

census tracts with the largest proportion of the ethnicity, five are adjacent to the Academy Boulevard corridor south of Platte.

The construct of this analysis is not intended to create a division between racial and ethnic groups, but to recognize and identify the diverse population residing in proximity to the Academy Boulevard corridor, particularly south of Platte Avenue. This diversity is reflected in the land uses along the corridor, with more ethnic restaurants and markets found south of Platte Avenue.

Like the racial and ethnic background of the population residing in census tracts adjacent to Academy Boulevard, there is a division in median incomes between the seven census tracts north of Platte Avenue and the eight census tracts south of Platte Avenue. Across the City of Colorado Springs, median household income in 1999 was reported to be \$45,081. For the seven census tracts adjacent to Academy Boulevard north of Platte Avenue, it is estimated at \$42,460. Median household income in 1999 for the eight census tracts adjacent to Academy Boulevard south of Platte Avenue is estimated at \$39,441.

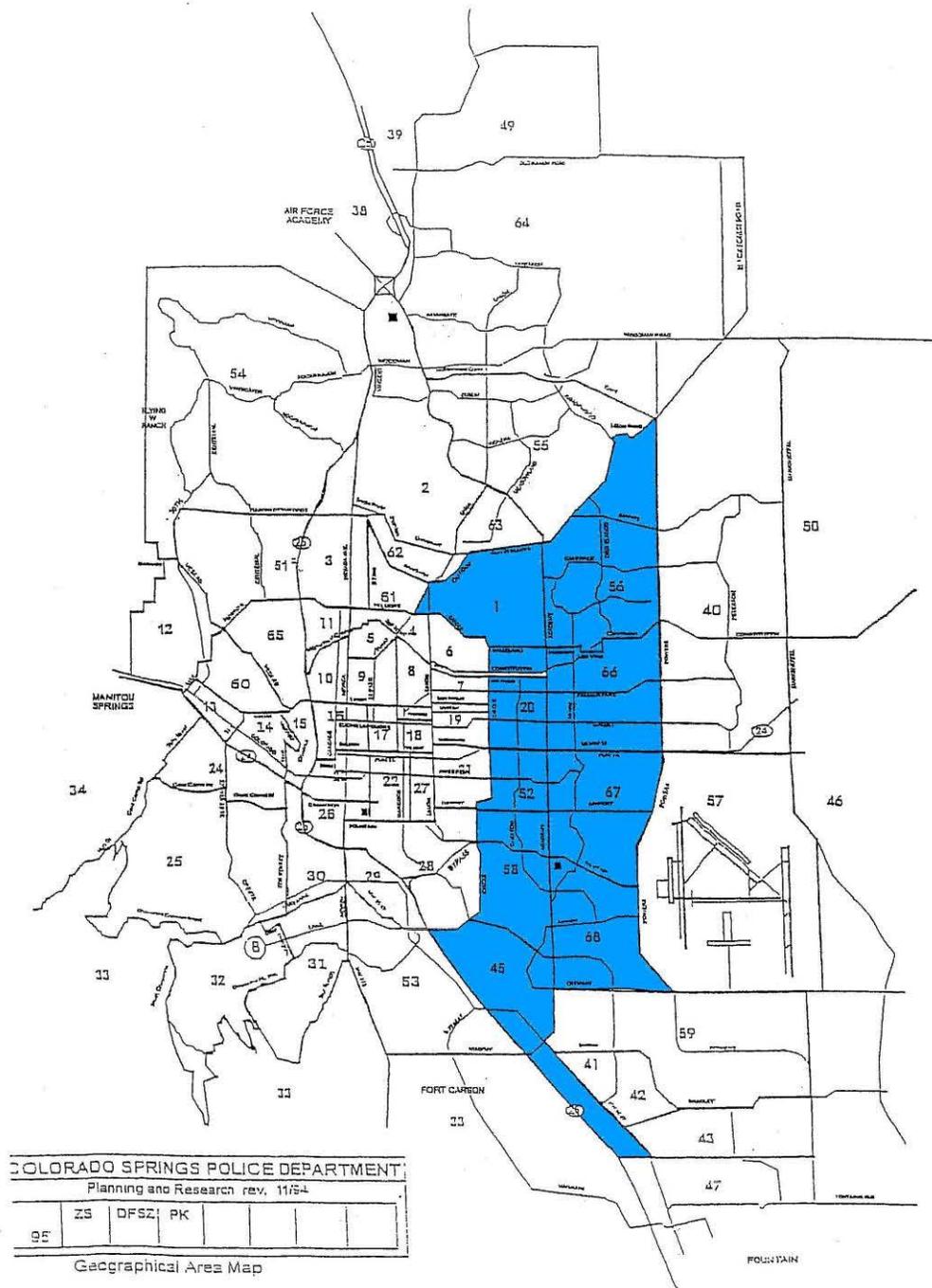
## **Transit**

{Transit information will be integrated into the report when it becomes available}

## **Crime Data**

In annual statistical reports, the Colorado Springs Police Department records crime data by geographical area using the National Incident Based Report System Standard (NIBRS). The geographical areas used by the Colorado Springs Police Department are roughly that of the census tract geographies used by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1980 and are incongruent to the census tracts used in the 2000 census. Even so, analysis of crime activity over a five year period from 2002 to 2006 in the geographical areas adjacent to the Academy Boulevard corridor between Austin Bluffs Parkway and Drennan Road provides additional insight into the area. Nine geographic areas are adjacent to the study area and are shaded in Figure 6. Note that geographic areas 45 and 56 are only partially in the City of Colorado Springs. Crime data recorded by the Colorado Springs Police Department in the annual statistical reports only includes city data.

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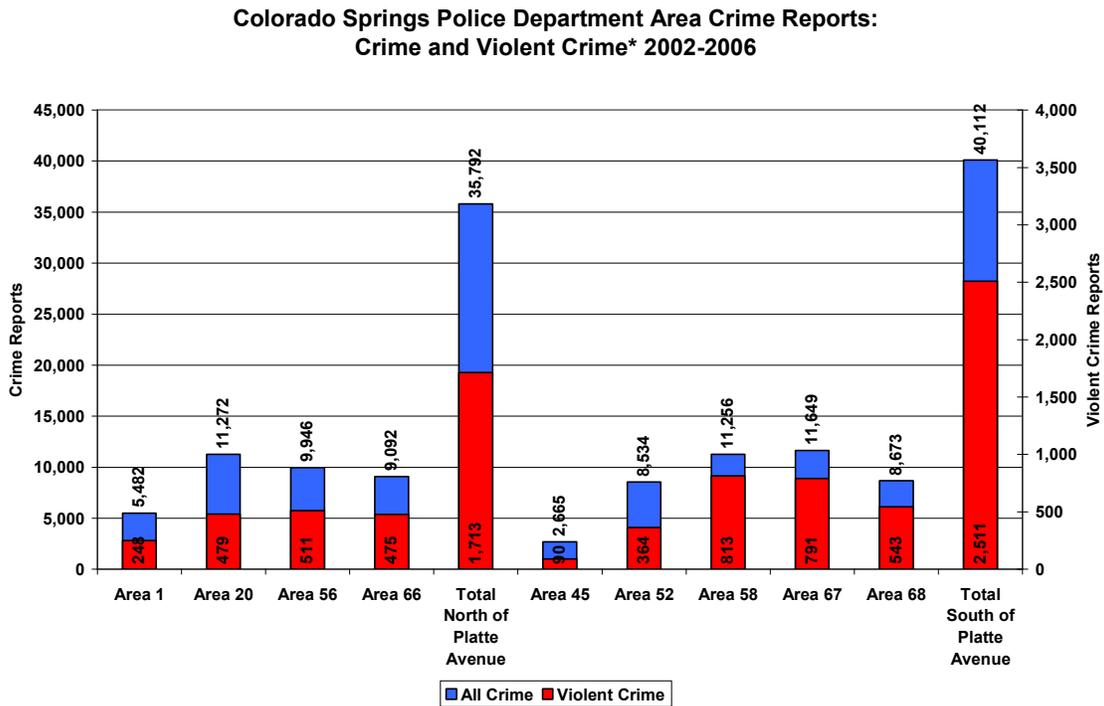
Figure 6: Colorado Springs Police Department Geographical Area Map

Over a five year period from 2002 to 2006, the nine geographical areas accounted for 34 percent of all crime reports across the City of Colorado Springs and 38 percent of all violent crime. Alone, the five geographical areas south of Platte Avenue accounted for

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18 percent of all crime reports and 23 percent of all violent crime across the City of Colorado Springs between 2002 and 2006.

Using the nine geographical areas defined by the Colorado Springs Police Department, Figure 7 shows the extent of crime and violent crime across the Academy Boulevard corridor. Between 2002 and 2006, over 35,000 crimes were reported (NIBRS counts all crimes that occur in an incident) in the four geographical areas north of Platte Avenue compared to over 40,000 in the five geographical areas south of Platte Avenue. Violent crime reports are depicted on the secondary y-axis and exceed 1,700 reports between 2002 and 2006 in the four geographical areas north of Platte Avenue. In the five geographical areas south of Platte Avenue, violent crime between 2002 and 2006 exceeds 2,500 reports.

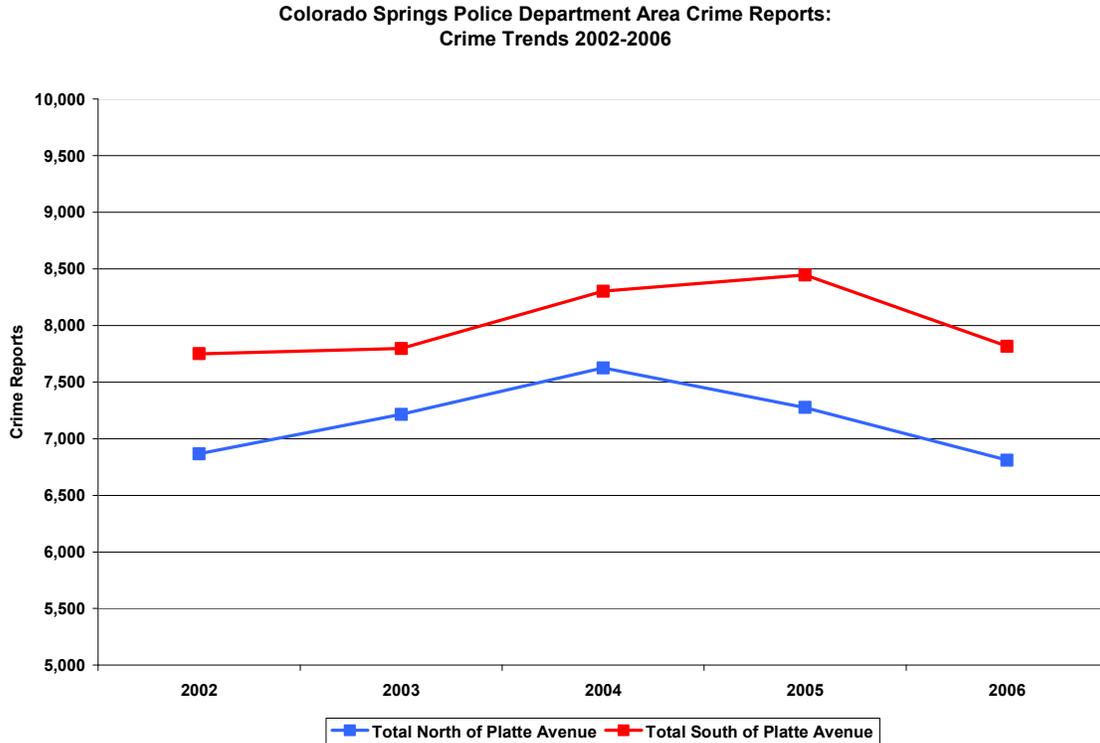


\*Violent crime includes homicide, forced sex offenses, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Figure 7: Colorado Springs Police Department Area Crime Reports: Crime and Violent Crime 2002-2006

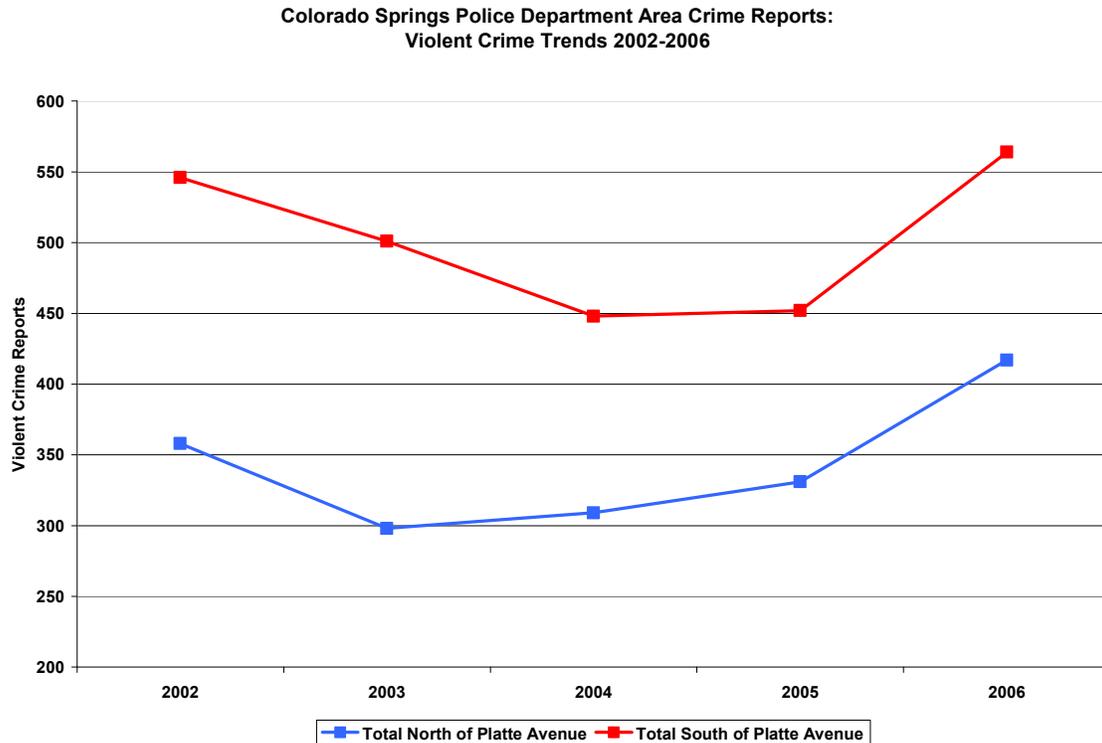
Illustrated in Figure 8, the overall trend between 2002 and 2006 shows that annual crime reports in the four geographical areas north of Platte Avenue have decreased every year since 2004. South of Platte Avenue, annual crime reports increased every year from 2002 to 2005, but decreased in 2006. Crime reports in 2007 for the five geographic areas south of Platte Avenue should be evaluated to determine if there is a downward trend in crime in these geographic areas.

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*Figure 8: Colorado Springs Police Department Area Crime Reports: Crime Trends 2002-2006*

While annual crime reports in the four geographical areas north of Platte Avenue have declined every year since 2004, violent crime reports have increased every year since 2003. This trend is illustrated in Figure 9. For the five geographic areas south of Platte Avenue, violent crime reports have increased every year since 2004. Violent crime reports in 2007 should be evaluated to determine if these trends continue.



*Figure 9: Colorado Springs Police Department Area Crime Reports: Violent Crime Trends 2002-2006*

Based on the Colorado Springs Police Department annual statistical reports, the perception that there is more crime in the areas around the Academy Boulevard corridor appears to be accurate. In 2006, only four geographical areas exceeded 2,000 crime reports, three of which were adjacent to the Academy Boulevard corridor (Areas 20, 58, and 67). The three geographic areas represent three of the four areas with the most crime reports between 2002 and 2006.

### **Summary of Corridor Analysis**

As a part of this study, the Academy Boulevard corridor is divided into seven sub-areas. Each sub-area is distinct in its mix of land uses development patterns. Although the recommendation of this study is to designate portions of Academy Boulevard between Austin Bluffs Parkway and Drennan Road a “Mature/Redevelopment Corridor” on the 2020 Land Use Map within the City Comprehensive Plan, this recommendation may only be made by assessing and evaluating each sub-area comprising the corridor.

This study looks at three descriptive indicators to characterize and assess the condition of each sub-area and Academy Boulevard as a whole: 1) occupancy rates for commercial, office, and industrial land uses; 2) quality and characteristics of the existing built environment; and 3) mix of land use types.

The sub-areas are defined by major streets and are:

1. Sub-Area No. 1: Academy Boulevard between Austin Bluffs Parkway and Maizeland Road

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2. Sub-Area No. 2: Academy Boulevard between Maizeland Road and Palmer Park Boulevard
3. Sub-Area No. 3: Academy Boulevard between Palmer Park Boulevard and Platte Avenue
4. Sub-Area No. 4: Academy Boulevard between Platte Avenue and Airport Road
5. Sub-Area No. 5: Academy Boulevard between Airport Road and Fountain Boulevard
6. Sub-Area No. 6: Academy Boulevard between Fountain Boulevard and Astrozon Boulevard
7. Sub-Area No. 7: Academy Boulevard between Astrozon Boulevard and Drennan Road

The east and west boundaries are drawn by the division of commercial, office, and industrial land uses related to the Academy corridor and the adjacent residential land uses. Whenever possible, a street is used as a boundary. When a street is not used as a boundary, parcel boundaries are used instead. Residential land uses are largely excluded from the study area except in instances where their inclusion is required for corridor contiguity. As an example, the Candlewood Apartments are included as a part of Sub-Area No. 1 because all adjacent properties to the north and south are included as a part of the sub-area while the Greentree Apartments are not included because the adjacent property to the north is not included as a part of the sub-area.

Refer to Figure 10 for a map of the corridor keyed to each sub-area.

*Figure 10: Academy Boulevard Corridor Map*

In summation of the findings of this study:

Sub-Area No. 1

- Includes Penrose Community Hospital, which may be impacted by the opening of St. Francis Medical Center in 2008
- Has over one million square feet of improved area in square feet
- Of the seven sub-areas, has one of the lowest percentage of net acreage of commercial land uses within the sub-area (52.42 percent) and the lowest percentage of improved area in square feet of commercial land uses within the sub-area (40.07 percent)
- A windshield survey of the sub-area in June 2007 concludes that approximately 10 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses are vacant, although this varies extensively by each commercial center.
- Large commercial center northeast of Village Seven Road and Academy Boulevard has recently been remodeled and has less than a 5 percent vacancy rate
- Of the seven sub-areas, has the second highest percentage of net acreage of office and industrial land uses within the sub-area (20.27 percent) and the second highest percentage of improved area in square feet of office and industrial land uses within the sub-area (26.42 percent)
- Isolated areas meet the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor, but not the entire sub-area

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Sub-Area No. 2

- Over 60 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area and improved area in square feet is commercial
- Approximately 35 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses within Sub-Area No. 2 are vacant, including an 80 percent vacancy rate for the Rustic Hills commercial center that has been adversely affected by the loss of two major anchors
- Of the seven sub-areas, has the highest percentage of net acreage of office land uses (18.34 percent) and improved area in square feet of office land uses (21.84 percent)
- Overall disinvestment and underutilization of land require attention for the area to be a focal point on the Academy Boulevard corridor
- Area exhibits redevelopment opportunities and meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor

Sub-Area No. 3

- Of the seven sub-areas, Sub-Area No. 3 has the highest percentage of net acreage of commercial land uses (68.96 percent) and has over one million square feet of improved area in square feet
- Approximately 35 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses in Sub-Area No. 3 are vacant
- Citadel Crossing is 50 percent vacant and Hobby Lobby's announcement to close its Palmer Park store together with the loss of TJ Maxx leaves about 40 percent of the center vacant
- Other smaller commercial centers are also exhibiting large vacancies
- Although residential land uses are atypical in a mature/redevelopment corridor, the development patterns of the older apartment complexes within Sub-Area No. 3 fit the characterization of a mature/redevelopment corridor and present a redevelopment opportunity
- Area meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor

Sub-Area No. 4

- Includes a large commercial center occupied by Target and Circuit City and many smaller commercial centers
- Over 60 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area is commercial
- A 12,000 square foot commercial center was developed on East Pikes Peak Avenue across from the existing Home Depot in 2005, but no other development or redevelopment activity has occurred since 2002
- Area is characterized by neighborhood oriented land uses such as ethnic grocery stores, retail, and restaurant uses
- Land uses are not indicative of a roadway with a 2005 average weekday traffic volume of 46,000 to 52,000 trips between Platte Avenue and Airport Road
- Office land uses are largely occupied and appear to be Class B or C
- Residential land uses around the sub-area are showing signs of deterioration and disinvestment
- Based on an assessment of the development patterns within Sub-Area No. 4 and the condition of the existing development, including occupancies, suggests that the area has redevelopment potential and meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor

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Sub-Area No. 5

- Area is largely built in a linear development pattern with 52,496 square feet of improved area of commercial land use
- Commercial land uses are largely occupied
- Remaining undeveloped land in Sub-Area No. 5 under development as Fire Station No. 8
- On its own, the area does not meet the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor

Sub-Area No. 6

- Over 90 acres of the sub-area remain undeveloped, more than all developed commercial, office, and industrial land in the sub-area
- Of the developed land, almost 70 percent is commercial
- Only an AutoZone has been developed in the sub-area since 2002
- When Bally Total Fitness relocated to Pace Plaza in 2001, it added an anchor to a center that had been in decline since the loss of Pace Membership Club in 1993
- Although Pace Plaza is largely occupied, it is less of a regional center than it was when it was occupied by Pace Membership Club
- Bally Total Fitness moved out of the Gateway Center within months of Home Furnishings Plus and Progressive leaving the center without an anchor
- Office land uses are about 35 percent vacant and appear to be Class A
- A majority of the uses are neighborhood oriented uses, suggesting an underutilization of land across the sub-area
- Based on the underutilization of properties within the sub-area and the infill development opportunities, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor

Sub-Area No. 7

- Approximately 60 acres of the sub-area remain undeveloped
- Of the developed land, about 55 percent is commercial
- Remodeling and expansion of Hancock Plaza resulted in the relocation of a grocery store from Mission Trace to Hancock Plaza
- Mission Trace is about 60 percent vacant based on a June 2007 windshield survey
- Commercial uses across the sub-area are about 35 percent vacant based on a June 2007 windshield survey
- Old HomeBase store was adapted to an industrial manufacturing use in 2003
- What once was a major commercial corridor and a regional activity center has been detrimentally impacted by the loss of retailers throughout the sub-area
- South Metropolitan Accessibility Study (SMAS) and the realignment of Drennan Road may introduce redevelopment opportunities in Sub-Area No. 7
- Based on the observed vacancy rates, the underutilization of properties within the sub-area, and the potential for redevelopment opportunities, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor

## **Description and Detailed Analysis of Corridor**

### **Sub-Area No. 1**

#### **Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded by Austin Bluffs Parkway on the north and Maizeland Road on the south. Within this sub-area, Morning Sun Drive, Van Teylingen Drive, and West Carefree Circle are all used as partial east and west boundaries. Refer to Figure 11 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 11: Sub-Area No. 1 Boundaries*

#### **Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 1 is comprised of 156.63 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 2 disaggregates the 156.63 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 1 are shown in Figure 12.

Sub-Area No. 1	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
High Density Residential	13.62	13.62	13.08	13.08	13.08	-0.55
Commercial	80.32	80.32	79.94	82.11	82.11	1.79
Office	15.49	16.21	17.12	17.76	17.30	1.81
Industrial	14.10	14.55	14.55	14.55	14.55	0.45
Institution	15.78	15.78	15.78	15.78	15.78	0.00
Vacant	17.77	16.61	16.61	13.81	13.81	-3.96

*Table 2: Sub-Area No. 1 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres*

*Figure 12: Sub-Area No. 1 Existing Land Use (June 2006)*

The sub-area is largely commercial, which in 2006 account for 52.42 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area. This is followed by office land uses at 11.04 percent and institution land uses at 10.08 percent. Although the sub-area is largely commercial, there are clusters of industrial uses within the underlying Intermediate Business (C-5) and General Business (C-6) zone districts, including areas to the west of Academy Boulevard. In 2006, the industrial land uses totaled 14.55 acres or 9.29 percent of the sub-area. Approximately 13.81 acres of the sub-area was categorized as undeveloped in 2006 or 8.82 percent of the sub-area.

Since 2002, the amount of undeveloped land within the sub-area has diminished, with a majority of it converting to commercial and office land uses. A small increase in industrial land uses occurred.

#### **Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

Although commercial land uses accounted for 52.42 percent of the net acreage of Sub-Area No. 1, the percentage of improved area in square feet of commercial land uses within the sub-area is substantially less. As is illustrated in Table 3, commercial land uses account for 707,819 square feet or 40.07 percent of the total improved area in

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square feet within Sub-Area No. 1 as of June 2006. The explanation for this is a lower floor-to-area ratio (FAR) than other land uses within the sub-area.

Sub-Area No. 1	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
High Density Residential	357,056	20.21%
Commercial	707,819	40.07%
Office	222,205	12.58%
Industrial	244,628	13.85%
Institution	234,959	13.30%
Total	1,766,667	

*Table 3: Sub-Area No. 1 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)*

A windshield survey of the sub-area in June 2007 concludes that approximately 10 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses is vacant. This varies extensively by each commercial center.

Shown in Figure 13, the large commercial center anchored by Safeway northeast of the intersection of Village Seven Road and Academy Boulevard has been recently revitalized with a renovation to the overall center in 2003. At 117,560 square feet in size, the center has a vacancy rate of less than 5 percent and a diverse mix of land uses, including many chain stores.



*Figure 13: Large Commercial Center Northeast of the Intersection of Village Seven Road and Academy Boulevard*

This is compared to the Academy Station commercial center on the west side of Academy Boulevard south of Austin Bluffs Parkway. Built in 1986, the center is 65,178 square feet in size (93,822 square feet if the Vanguard Church is included) and has a approximate vacancy rate of 30 percent excluding the Vanguard Church (20 percent including the church). In addition to an elevated vacancy rate, the mix of land uses within the Academy Station commercial center is distinctly different and less varied from the Safeway commercial center. A majority of its occupancy is from Creative Faith Ministries and the Vanguard Church. It also includes the Rocky Mountain Dance Academy, an adult daycare, a Planned Parenthood office, and two restaurants. The Academy Station commercial center generates limited traffic, with the exception of the peak weekend traffic related to the church uses, leaving it with the appearance of a dead commercial center.

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Although smaller in size, two neighborhood commercial centers are also noteworthy. Located northwest of the intersection of North Carefree Circle and Academy Boulevard is a 48,164 square foot commercial center built in 1978 and 1979. The inline center is largely occupied by Pirate's Liquor and the two pad sites are occupied by Bennigan's and a La Casita restaurant. The center has undergone many changes over the course of its lifetime. A nightclub was located in the commercial center for fifteen years until Pirate's Liquor opened in 2002. Before the La Casita restaurant opened in late 1997, medical offices occupied the pad site. Today, the commercial center is approximately 30 percent vacant.

Behind the Safeway commercial center is a 22,300 square foot Village Square neighborhood commercial center built in the 1970s. Notwithstanding the success of the Safeway commercial center, vacancy rates are around 50 percent in the neighborhood commercial center. Most of the existing uses may be classified as smaller independents and local retailers.

While Academy Station and the two neighborhood commercial centers are exhibiting some signs of physical deterioration, no commercial center in Sub-Area No. 1 approaches the deterioration of the former Black Angus Steakhouse located southwest of the intersection of Village Seven Road and Academy Boulevard. The restaurant has been boarded up since its closure and has been extensively vandalized. Even the parking lot is in disrepair, pitted with potholes and littered with debris. Pictures of the former Black Angus Steakhouse are illustrated in Figure 14.



*Figure 14: Former Black Angus Steakhouse Southwest of the Intersection of Village Seven Road and Academy Boulevard*

A quantitative assessment of unoccupied improved area in square feet of office land uses is more difficult to obtain from a windshield survey, but qualitatively speaking the land uses appear to be stable in Sub-Area No. 1. Three office buildings were built on Rebecca Lane between 2001 and 2005, adding 27,146 square feet of office space to the sub-area. Existing stock is largely occupied, although it should be noted that two of the recently developed office buildings on Rebecca Lane are only partially occupied. Based on this assessment, the absorption of office space in the area may be slow.

One area of concern is the Penrose Community Hospital located southeast of the intersection of Village Seven Road and Academy Boulevard. The viability of this land use may be in question once the St. Francis Medical Center off of Powers Boulevard opens in 2008. Any changes to Penrose Community Hospital will likely have an impact on adjacent medical land uses.

Most industrial developments in the area are as stable as office land uses within the area and are largely occupied.

#### **Assessment of Sub-Area No. 1 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

The overall condition of Sub-Area No. 1 is good as renovations to the large commercial center occupied by Safeway and the smaller Marketplace at the Bluffs have revitalized commercial activity within the sub-area. Based on the windshield survey of the sub-area, approximately 10 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses is vacant.

With that said, vacancies in the Austin Bluffs Plaza on the north side of Austin Bluffs Parkway east of Academy Boulevard are an area of concern. Albertson's closed its Austin Bluffs Plaza store in 2001 after it bought the former Cub Foods store to the east to accommodate a Grocery Warehouse (closed in 2007). Moreover, Longs Drugs closed its Austin Bluffs Plaza store in 2007. Although the centers are outside of this study area, the closures have added thousands of square feet of available commercial space to the market. Pictures of the developments are shown in Figure 15.

Considering that the former Albertson's store has remained vacant since 2001, it remains to be seen how the market will absorb all of this commercial space and whether commercial centers other than the Safeway commercial center will be able to improve their occupancies.





*Figure 15: Former Albertson's and Longs Drugs in Austin Bluffs Plaza*

The office and industrial land uses may be described as stable uses with low vacancy rates across the area. Absorption of office and industrial space may be slow. Medical uses should be monitored once St. Francis Medical Center opens.

In summation of Sub-Area No. 1, isolated areas meet the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor. Though not dominated by strip commercial centers, there are several in the area and other parts of the corridor represent redevelopment opportunities, including the former Black Angus Steakhouse.

## **Sub-Area No. 2**

### **Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded Maizeland Road on the north and Palmer Park Boulevard on the south. Within this sub-area, the zone district boundaries between the residential and non-residential zone districts adjacent to the Academy corridor are largely the east and west boundaries, with the exception of an undeveloped parcel of land southeast of the intersection of Maizeland Road and Academy Boulevard and a pocket of development northwest of the intersection of Constitution Avenue and Academy Boulevard. Refer to Figure 16 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 16: Sub-Area No. 2 Boundaries*

### **Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 2 is comprised of 85.85 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 4 disaggregates the 85.85 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 2 are shown in Figure 17.

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Sub-Area No. 2	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
Commercial	52.94	54.10	53.11	54.10	53.12	0.18
Office	14.84	14.84	15.82	14.84	16.04	1.20
Industrial	8.23	7.07	7.06	7.07	7.07	-1.16
Institution	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	0.00
Trails	0.00	4.49	4.49	4.50	4.50	4.50
Vacant	3.39	3.39	3.39	3.39	3.17	-0.21

Table 4: Sub-Area No. 2 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres

Figure 17: Sub-Area No. 2 Existing Land Use (June 2006)

Commercial land uses account for 61.88 percent of Sub-Area No. 2 in 2006. Office and industrial land uses comprised 18.68 and 8.23 percent of the sub-area in 2006 with 16.04 and 7.07 acres of each land use. Only 3.17 acres or 3.70 percent of the sub-area was classified as undeveloped in 2006.

Since 2002, the amount of undeveloped land in the sub-area decreased from 3.39 acres to 3.17 acres. A modest increase in commercial and office land uses absorbed the previously undeveloped land and offset a decrease in industrial land uses within the corridor.

**Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

As is illustrated in Table 5, the percentage of improved area in square feet of commercial, office, and industrial land uses within Sub-Area No. 2 in 2006 is roughly equivalent to percent of the net acreage of each land use in the sub-area. The percentages of commercial, office, and industrial land uses within the sub-area are slightly greater than the percent of the net acreage of each land use in the sub-area because the trails land use occupies roughly 4.5 net acres in the sub-area, but does not contribute to improved area.

Sub-Area No. 2	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
Commercial	542,279	63.39%
Office	186,871	21.84%
Industrial	99,235	11.60%
Institution	27,134	3.17%
Total	855,519	

Table 5: Sub-Area No. 2 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)

A windshield survey of the sub-area in June 2007 concludes that approximately 35 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses is vacant. Much of this is located in the 211,227 square foot Rustic Hills commercial center, largely developed in the 1970s and illustrated in Figure 18. Once anchored by an Albertson's (closed in 2006) and a Longs Drugs (closed in 2007), the center is approximately 80 percent vacant and may be best characterized as a decaying commercial center. The

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inline center is populated by two tenants, the Cowboys nightclub and H & R Block. Without a major anchor, the viability of the commercial center is questionable.



*Figure 18: Rustic Hills North Commercial Center*

Other commercial centers in Sub-Area No. 2 have better occupancy rates than the Rustic Hills commercial center. Most centers are adequately maintained. Throughout the sub-area, the mix of land uses include bars and nightclubs, churches, payday loan and check cashing services, and other retail, mostly smaller independents and local retailers.

Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, most office buildings appear to be occupied, including the medical offices on Academy Circle. Although the industrial land uses are difficult to access from Academy Boulevard, the uses appear to be occupied.

**Assessment of Sub-Area No. 2 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

A large percentage of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses within Sub-Area No. 2 are unoccupied or are underutilized, particularly the Rustic Hills commercial center which has been adversely affected by the loss of two major anchors and has an approximate vacancy rate of 80 percent. Based on the windshield survey in June 2007, approximately 35 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses are vacant across the entire sub-area. Although the commercial centers are different from commercial centers located in one of the existing eight mature/redevelopment corridors, it is evident the area needs attention to again be a focal point on the Academy Corridor. Because of this, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor.

**Sub-Area No. 3**

**Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded by Palmer Park Boulevard on the north and Platte Avenue on the south. Like Sub-Area No. 2, the east and west boundaries of the sub-area are largely defined by the zone district boundaries between the residential and non-residential zone districts adjacent to the Academy corridor. The only exception to this is a Multi-Family (R-5) zone district to the west of Academy Boulevard between San Miguel Street and Galley Road. Refer to Figure 19 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 19: Sub-Area No. 3 Boundaries*

**Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 3 is comprised of 129.84 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 6 disaggregates the 129.84 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 3 are shown in Figure 20.

Sub-Area No. 3	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
Medium Density Residential	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.43	-0.25
High Density Residential	17.36	17.36	17.35	17.36	17.61	0.25
Commercial	84.24	88.91	89.32	89.32	89.54	5.29
Office	10.01	10.01	9.60	9.60	8.97	-1.04
Industrial	7.65	2.98	2.98	2.98	3.39	-4.25
Institution	6.72	6.72	6.72	6.72	6.72	0.00
Open Space	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.00
Vacant	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	0.00

*Table 6: Sub-Area No. 3 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres*

*Figure 20: Sub-Area No. 3 Existing Land Use (June 2006)*

Commercial land uses account for 89.54 acres or 69.96 percent of the net acreage of Sub-Area No. 3 in 2006. Since 2002, commercial land uses within the sub-area increased by 5.29 acres as office and industrial land uses decreased by the same acreage. Second to commercial land uses, high density residential land uses accounted for 17.61 acres or 13.56 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area. Office land uses

comprised 8.97 acres or 6.91 percent of the sub-area. Only 2.95 acres of Sub-Area No. 3 was categorized as undeveloped in 2006, equaling 2.27 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area. No change in the amount of undeveloped land within the sub-area has occurred since 2002.

**Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

Although commercial land uses accounted for 69.96 percent of the net acreage of Sub-Area No. 1, the percentage of improved area in square feet of commercial land uses only accounts for 59.22 percent of the sub-area. The explanation for this is that commercial land uses have a lower FAR than other uses in the sub-area.

As this data is as of June 2006, it does not account for the loss of the Castle West apartment complex, which was 117,690 square feet in size and was on a 2.85 acre parcel of land. Accounting for this loss, the high density residential land use has a 0.55 FAR in Sub-Area No. 3.

Sub-Area No. 3	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
Medium Density Residential	3,246	0.19%
High Density Residential	474,463	27.97%
Commercial	1,004,522	59.22%
Office	123,614	7.29%
Industrial	46,811	2.76%
Institution	40,584	2.39%
Open Space	2,490	0.15%
Vacant	625	0.04%
Total	1,696,355	

*Table 7: Sub-Area No. 3 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)*

A windshield survey of the sub-area in June 2007 concludes that approximately 35 percent of the improved area in square feet of commercial land uses are vacant. Sub-Area No. 3 has been affected more by development along the Powers Boulevard corridor than any other sub-area in this study, having lost Hobby Lobby, TJ Maxx, Fashion Bug, Best Buy, and OfficeMax to competing centers on Powers Boulevard. This has directly affected two commercial centers, including the Rustic Hills commercial center south of Palmer Park Boulevard, about 40 percent vacant, and Citadel Crossing, about 50 percent vacant. Figure 21 is of the former Hobby Lobby and TJ Maxx stores and Figure 22 is of the Citadel Crossing.

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Figure 21: Former Hobby Lobby and TJ Maxx in Rustic Hills





*Figure 22: Citadel Crossing*

A development plan is under review to redevelop a portion of Citadel Crossing, which is representative of redevelopment constraints along the corridor. Although the lot is 42.23 acres in size, it is just over 750 feet deep at the widest point, resulting in a long and contracted lot with limited access. Above this, it also lies adjacent to low-density residential neighborhood. The transition between the commercial and residential land uses is a 100 foot wide building setback and a 40 foot wide landscape setback from the east property boundary. While the setbacks reduce the developable area and restrict the location of service areas and drive aisles, the setbacks also act as the only buffer between the commercial and residential land uses. Citadel Crossing may be an extreme case of development challenges along the corridor, but its characteristics are not unique. The second picture in Figure 22 is of the former K-Mart site which is proposed to be redeveloped into a Lowe's.

Other commercial centers in Sub-Area No. 3 are smaller in size than Rustic Hills and Citadel Crossing, but they are also afflicted with elevated vacancy rates. As an example, a 37,260 square foot commercial center shown in Figure 23 was developed in 1985 on the west side of Academy Boulevard south of Palmer Park Boulevard. Today, it is almost 50 percent vacant. Remaining land uses include a restaurant, pool hall, and a liquor store. Although the center is only 20 years old, it is in a state of disrepair as the asphalt parking lot is breaking up making it difficult to access most of the center.



*Figure 23: Small Commercial Center on the West Side of Academy Boulevard South of Palmer Park Boulevard*

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It is evident that as the corridor ages, the land use pattern evolves. Some uses are no longer viable on the corridor and are replaced with other land uses that are able to adapt to the conditions and are able to reuse the existing infrastructure. This may be good, like an adaptation of an obsolete movie theater or big box store into a use that brings vitality back to an area, but it may also be bad in instances where the use has a depressing influence on an area. An example of this is the adaptation of an auto sales use on the east side of Academy Boulevard north of Galley Road to a U-Haul storage lot shown in Figure 24.

While it is unquestioned that U-Haul is a legitimate land use that serves the overall community, the U-Haul storage on Academy Boulevard dominates the streetscape and adversely affects a passerby's visual perception of the corridor. U-Haul is not the type of land use that relies on pass by trips or is the storage a use that generates interaction and activity. In this regard, the U-Haul storage is more or less a dead zone. A development plan was approved in June 2007 to expand the U-Haul operation, including the area adjacent to the street. Streetscape improvements, including landscaping and more defined access to the public street, are proposed as part of the expansion and will improve the relationship of the use to the area.

Nevertheless, this is indicative of the more systemic issue of C-6 zone districts across older commercial corridors. The C-6 zone district is referred to as an "unplanned" zone district. Until a 1995 amendment to the City Code was adopted, City Planning review of development plans in the C-6 zone district was not required. Even with the code amendment, not all additions, expansions or changes in use require City Planning review and approval and those that require it are reviewed against a lesser set of review criteria than development plans in most other zone districts. The C-6 zone district is one of the oldest zone districts in the city and allows for most commercial and office uses and even some industrial uses. Like the U-Haul example, it is unquestioned that there is a need for these uses, but the prevalence of the C-6 zone district across the corridor coupled with the limited review of development activity, including additions, expansions and changes in use, and the wide array of uses allowed in the zone district make the establishment of a relationship to other land uses and the overall corridor a challenge.





*Figure 24: U-Haul on Academy Boulevard*

The remaining commercial land uses in Sub-Area No. 3 are typically smaller and developed in a strip commercial center pattern. Office uses are located throughout the sub-area and include medical and general office uses.

Although the sub-area abuts the Citadel Mall, it is not proposed for inclusion within the study area or as a “Mature/Redevelopment Corridor” on the 2020 Land Use Map within the City Comprehensive Plan. It is currently identified as a “Regional Center”, which fits the existing land use pattern. Continuing development along the Powers Boulevard corridor, including a JC Penny’s in the First & Main Town, may have an adverse impact on occupancy rates over time.

Although the Citadel Mall appears to be productive at present, it is recommended that the land use pattern and occupancy of the Citadel Mall be observed. If occupancies decline and there is an appreciable change in the existing land use pattern, it may be appropriate to reevaluate the 2020 Land Use Map classification of the Citadel Mall.

Office land uses in Sub-Area No. 3 appear to be more depressed than in other areas of the Academy Boulevard corridor. Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, it appears as if vacancy rates for office space are elevated. Most office space in the sub-area is off the corridor on Galley Road or San Miguel Street. Little of the space would be classified as Class A office space. Although industrial land uses only account for a small percentage of improved area in square feet in Sub-Area No. 3, the uses appear to be stable.

Unlike other sub-areas within the Academy Boulevard corridor study area, Sub-Area 3 boundaries were intentionally drawn to include a residential area. Within this area is the former Castle West apartment complex, destroyed in a fire in early 2007, along with other older apartment complexes in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The apartment complexes in this area are generally dense auto-oriented developments on smaller lots with little internal open space or integration between the uses. Several of the developments are in a deteriorating state. The example shown in Figure 25 shows a broken-up asphalt parking lot with an abandoned vehicle (left side of the picture). Although there is some landscaping adjacent to the sidewalk, the complex is devoid of any internal landscaping and open space.



*Figure 25: Apartment Complex in Sub-Area No. 3*

While the apartment complexes provide opportunities for affordable housing, the quality of the housing in the neighborhood suggests improvements are needed. The unfortunate loss of the Castle West apartment complex presents an opportunity to develop community in the area.

#### **Assessment of Sub-Area No. 3 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, Citadel Crossing is about 50 percent vacant and represents a redevelopment opportunity, although it comes with many challenges. The loss of Hobby Lobby and TJ Maxx in the Rustic Hills commercial center south of Palmer Park Boulevard leaves the center about 40 percent vacant. Other smaller commercial centers are also exhibiting large vacancies.

Also evident from the June 2007 windshield survey was a discernible change in the land use pattern. While it should be expected that land uses change over time, the mix of land uses in Sub-Area No. 3 is suggestive of an underutilization of property and an opportunity for redevelopment.

Like Sub-Area No. 2, the commercial centers are different from commercial centers located in one of the existing eight mature/redevelopment corridors. The prevalent vacancies and underutilization of property suggest that the area needs attention to again be a focal point on the Academy Boulevard corridor. Because of this, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor.

#### **Sub-Area No. 4**

##### **Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded by Platte Avenue on the north and Airport Road on the south. The East Platte/North Circle Designated Redevelopment Corridor and Area (DRCA) ends at the intersection of Platte Avenue and Academy Boulevard. It includes the area from Platte Avenue south to Bijou Street on the west side of Academy Boulevard and is a partial west boundary of Sub-Area No. 4.

The block south of this DRCA includes a Home Depot built in 1995, a mini warehouse built in 2000, an ethnic grocery store built in 2002, an auto body repair shop built in 2003, and a car was built in 2005. Because of this recent development activity, the existing “New/Developing Corridor” 2020 Land Use Map designation is appropriate. This block acts as a partial west boundary of Sub-Area No. 4.

An open space tract owned by the Aiken Audubon Society and the Audubon Springs residential development form the remainder of the Sub-Area No. 4 west boundary. The east boundary is partially comprised of an industrial office park to the east of the existing Target. As the park has no discernible relationship to the Academy Boulevard corridor, it is not proposed for inclusion as part of a mature/redevelopment corridor. The east boundary continues to the south along Ruskin Drive. Refer to Figure 26 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 26: Sub-Area No. 4 Boundaries*

**Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 4 is comprised of 83.68 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 8 disaggregates the 83.68 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 4 are shown in Figure 27.

Sub-Area No. 4	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
High Density Residential	5.65	5.65	5.65	5.65	5.65	0.00
Commercial	51.10	51.10	55.27	55.27	57.83	6.73
Office	4.14	4.14	4.14	4.14	4.14	0.00
Industrial	11.40	11.40	7.23	7.23	5.91	-5.49
Institution	9.95	9.95	9.95	10.15	10.15	0.19
Vacant	9.53	9.53	9.53	9.34	8.10	-1.43

*Table 8: Sub-Area No. 4 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres*

*Figure 27: Sub-Area No. 4 Existing Land Use (June 2006)*

In sum, commercial land uses account for 57.83 acres or 63.01 percent of the net acreage of Sub-Area No. 4 in 2006. Commercial land uses within the sub-area have increased by 6.73 acres since 2002 as a result of a corresponding decrease in industrial land uses and undeveloped land. Much of this decrease in undeveloped land was the result of the development of a 36,000 square foot commercial center in 2005.

**Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

As is illustrated in Table 9, commercial land uses summed to 495,551 of improved area in square feet as of June 2006. The large commercial center occupied by Target and Circuit City is the only large commercial center in the sub-area. Not including the pad sites adjacent to Academy Boulevard, the center is 202,992 square feet in size, just over 40 percent of all commercial land use improved area in square feet across the sub-area. The aggregation of all of the small commercial centers in the sub-area comprises the remaining 60 percent.

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Sub-Area No. 4	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
High Density Residential	162,369	19.24%
Commercial	495,551	58.71%
Office	66,581	7.89%
Industrial	88,156	10.44%
Institution	9,823	1.16%
Vacant	21,542	2.55%
Total	844,022	

*Table 9: Sub-Area No. 4 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)*

Based on a June 2007 windshield survey of the area, the vacancy rate across all commercial land uses in Sub-Area No. 4 is around 10 percent. As several large retailers have left the Academy Boulevard corridor for competing centers on Powers Boulevard, there is a possibility that other large retailers will likewise abandon the Academy Boulevard corridor. If this were to occur, it will significantly impact occupancy rates across the entire sub-area. As an illustration, holding occupied commercial space elsewhere in Sub-Area No. 4 constant, the loss of 30,000 square feet of occupied commercial space in the large commercial center would lead to a vacancy rate of 15 percent across the sub-area.

With the June 2007 approval of a development plan for the South Colorado Springs Nissan dealership southeast of the intersection of Fountain Boulevard and Academy Boulevard, their existing location southeast of the intersection of Bijou Street and Academy Boulevard will likely be closed. The auto sales use south of the existing South Colorado Springs Nissan was unoccupied at the time of the June 2007 windshield survey of the area.





*Figure 28: Auto Dealerships in Sub-Area No. 4*

Outside of the block that includes the Home Depot, one development has occurred since 2002 in Sub-Area No. 4. A 12,000 square foot commercial center was developed in 2005 on Pikes Peak Avenue west of Academy Boulevard adjacent to a furniture store that was remodeled in 2005. Aside from the Target and Circuit City, commercial land uses in Sub-Area No. 4 are mostly neighborhood oriented uses. Examples of this include three ethnic grocery stores on Pikes Peak Avenue in addition to the ethnic grocery store and indoor farmers market in the Academy Crossing center.



*Figure 29: Example of an Ethnic Grocery Store in Sub-Area No. 4*

While office and industrial land uses account for only 4.51 and 6.44 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area respectively, they comprise 7.89 and 10.44 percent of the total improved area in square feet. A majority of the space is occupied. Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, most office buildings in Sub-Area No. 4 appear to be Class B or C. An example of an office building in the sub-area is exhibited in Figure 30.



*Figure 30: Example of an Office Building in Sub-Area No. 4*

Three residential neighborhoods are immediately proximate or adjacent to Sub-Area No. 4, including Park Hill and the recently developed Audubon Springs on the west side of Academy Boulevard and Eastborough on the east side of Academy Boulevard. Audubon Springs is a linear north-south detached residential development that occupies a parcel of land between the area defined as Sub-Area No. 4 and the Park Hill neighborhood. As of June 2007, the planned 81-unit development was only partially constructed. Audubon Springs is shown in Figure 31.



*Figure 31: 81-Unit Audubon Springs Development Northwest of the Intersection of Airport Road and Academy Boulevard*

Park Hill was annexed into the city in 1959 and was largely built in the 1960s. A majority of Park Hill is detached single-family residential, although a row of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes is located on the east side of University Drive adjacent to Audubon Springs. The neighborhood shows signs of deterioration. Eastborough was annexed into the city in 1963 and 1964 and was largely built in the 1970s. It is separated from Sub-Area No. 4 by Ruskin Drive. Like Park Hill, it is also exhibiting signs of disinvestment and deterioration. Boarded up duplexes are illustrated in Figure 32.



*Figure 32: Example of Deterioration and Disinvestment in Neighborhoods Adjacent to Sub-Area No. 4*

#### **Assessment of Sub-Area No. 4 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

With the exception of the large commercial center occupied by Target and Circuit City, most of Sub-Area No. 4 is characterized by smaller commercial centers. The mix of uses within the small commercial centers includes neighborhood oriented uses such as ethnic grocery stores, retail, and restaurant uses. Despite occupancy rates that are greater than other areas adjacent to Academy Boulevard, much of Sub-Area No. 4 is underutilized. The mix of land uses is not indicative of a roadway with a 2005 average weekday traffic volume of 46,000 to 52,000 trips between Platte Avenue and Airport Road as reported by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments.

Based on the underutilization of properties within the sub-area, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor. Above this, the parking lots of many developments in this area abut the street and have minimal landscaping and other streetscape improvements. The overall condition of most development in the study area is fair, but adjacent neighborhoods are showing signs of deterioration.

#### **Sub-Area No. 5**

##### **Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded by Airport Road on the north and Fountain Boulevard on the south. The smallest of the sub-areas defined in the study, it is limited to a small area on the west side of Academy Boulevard south of Airport Road. Development to the south of the sub-area approaching Fountain Boulevard may be regarded as some of the more successful development on South Academy, which includes a Sam's Club, two auto dealerships, and several office buildings. In addition to the existing uses, a Nissan

dealership recently obtained approval of a development plan to build on a lot southeast of the intersection of Fountain Boulevard and Academy Boulevard. Refer to Figure 33 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 33: Sub-Area No. 5 Boundaries*

**Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 5 is comprised of 8.47 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 10 disaggregates the 8.47 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 5 are shown in Figure 34.

Sub-Area No. 5	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
Commercial	5.49	5.49	5.77	5.77	5.77	0.28
Office	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.28
Vacant	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	0.00

*Table 10: Sub-Area No. 5 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres*

*Figure 34: Sub-Area No. 5 Existing Land Use (June 2006)*

As of June 2006, all developed land in Sub-Area No. 5 may be identified as a commercial use. This includes an emergency veterinary clinic, an auto service use, and a commercial center south of Airport Road. In February 2007, a development plan was approved for Fire Station No. 8 on the remaining 2.7 acres of undeveloped land in the sub-area.

**Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

Sub-Area No. 5 has 52,496 square feet of improved area as of June 2006, all of which was identified as a commercial land use.

Sub-Area No. 5	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
Commercial	52,496	100%
Total	52,496	

*Table 11: Sub-Area No. 4 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)*

Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, vacancy rates in Sub-Area No. 5 are approximately 5 percent. Largely built in the 1990's, the commercial center shown in Figure 35 was developed in a linear development pattern and is occupied by several restaurants, a tattoo parlor, a lending office, a check cashing service, a pawn shop and other more neighborhood oriented uses.



*Figure 35: Commercial Center Southwest of Airport Road and Academy Boulevard*

As most of the commercial uses in Sub-Area No. 5 were built in the 1990s, the quality of the existing built environment in the sub-area is good, even exceeding other small commercial centers along the corridor.

#### **Assessment of Sub-Area No. 5 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

Where an argument may be made much of the 83.68 acre Sub-Area No. 4 is underutilized, it is difficult to make the same argument in Sub-Area No. 5. Although the commercial uses in Sub-Area No. 5 are largely neighborhood oriented land uses, it is all that can be expected out of the 8.47 acre sub-area. With most of its improved area occupied and a good quality built environment, the sub-area does not stand out as a mature/redevelopment corridor on its own.

### **Sub-Area No. 6**

#### **Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded by Fountain Boulevard on the north and Astrozon Boulevard on the south. Within this sub-area, Zebulon Drive, Delta Drive, Pulsar Drive, and Murray Boulevard are all used as partial east and west boundaries. Refer to Figure 36 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 36: Sub-Area No. 6 Boundaries*

#### **Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 6 is comprised of 178.54 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 12 disaggregates the 178.54 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 6 are shown in Figure 37.

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Sub-Area No. 6	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
Commercial	58.47	59.38	59.38	59.38	59.38	0.91
Office	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	0.00
Industrial	21.91	21.91	21.90	21.91	21.91	0.00
Institution	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.00
Vacant	92.77	91.86	91.85	91.86	91.86	-0.91

Table 12: Sub-Area No. 6 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres

Figure 37: Sub-Area No. 6 Existing Land Use (June 2006)

Commercial land uses account for 59.38 acres or 33.26 percent of the net acreage of Sub-Area No. 6 in 2006 (68.51 percent if undeveloped land is excluded). Only 0.91 acres of undeveloped land was developed between 2002 and 2006, the result of the development of an AutoZone in Pace Plaza in 2003.

Office land uses comprised 5.01 acres or 2.81 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area (5.78 percent if undeveloped land is excluded). Industrial land uses account for 21.91 acres or 12.27 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area (25.27 percent if undeveloped land is excluded).

Perhaps of greatest interest in Sub-Area No. 6 is the 91.86 acres of undeveloped land, almost equaling the existing commercial, office, and industrial land in the sub-area. Although the land is disbursed throughout the sub-area, it represents a significant opportunity for infill development.

**Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

As is shown in Table 13, commercial land uses account for 535,492 square feet of improved area in square feet as of June 2006 of which 227,491 square feet is Pace Plaza.

Sub-Area No. 6	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
Commercial	535,492	77.23%
Office	89,227	12.87%
Industrial	53,000	7.64%
Institution	14,400	2.08%
Vacant	1,250	0.18%
Total	693,369	

Table 13: Sub-Area No. 6 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)

Pace Plaza was largely built in the mid 1980s and was anchored by Pace Membership Club until it closed in 1993. The 100,000 square foot warehouse was unoccupied until 1998 when the rear 70,000 square feet was leased out as storage. In 2001, Bally Total Fitness leased the remainder of the Pace Membership Club space, shown in Figure 38. In addition to Bally Total Fitness, other uses in the center include a restaurant, a liquor

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store, retail and discount retail, auto service and auto repair. The Sand Creek Branch of the Pikes Peak Library District has been in Pace Plaza since 1988. Although the center is largely occupied, it is less of a regional center than when it was occupied by the Pace Membership Club.



*Figure 38: Bally Total Fitness in Pace Plaza*

Chelton Shopping Center is located southwest of the intersection of Chelton Road and Academy Boulevard and is 94,630 square feet in size. Built in the 1980s, the commercial center is entirely occupied. The mix of land uses in the commercial center includes discount retail, check cashing services, a pawn shop, liquor store, and several restaurants. The quality of the commercial center is poor as the asphalt parking lot is deteriorating making access difficult.

Also located in Sub-Area No. 6 is the 91,753 square foot Gateway Center. Built in 1984, the Gateway Center was the location of Bally Total Fitness before it relocated to Pace Plaza in 2001. About the same time, Home Furnishings Plus and a Progressive office also left the center, leaving it about 90 percent vacant. The Source filled in as an anchor after Bally Total Fitness, Home Furnishings Plus, and Progressive left the center, but it has also closed its store in the center. Illustrated in Figure 39 is the two-story center of the Gateway Center, once occupied by Bally Total Fitness and the Source.

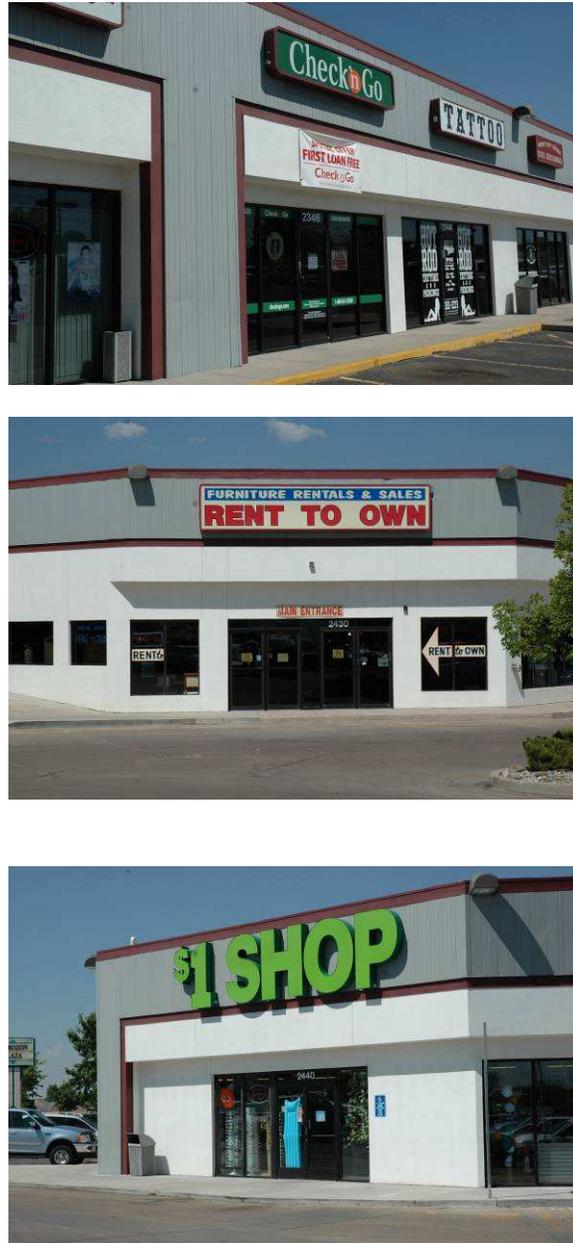


*Figure 39: Former Location of Bally Total Fitness and the Source in the Gateway Center*

While it was lauded in 2002 for adopting a strategy of leasing space at lower rents to increase occupancy, the resulting mix of land uses has created a commercial center without an identity. The center is no longer a regional center. As of a June 2007 windshield survey, the existing land uses include discount retail, rent-to-own furniture,

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check cashing services, a tattoo parlor, medical offices, an ethnic grocery store, restaurants, and other more neighborhood oriented uses. Examples of the existing uses are shown in Figure 40.



*Figure 40: Existing Uses in the Gateway Center*

Other commercial land uses in Sub-Area No. 6 include a 10 screen movie theater. Not reflected in the land use data is the redevelopment of an Amoco gas station into an Advance Auto Parts in 2006. A development plan for a Nissan auto dealership southeast of the intersection of Fountain Boulevard and Academy Boulevard was approved in June 2007. No other development or redevelopment activity has occurred in Sub-Area No. 6 since 2002.

Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, about the vacancy rate for commercial land uses in Sub-Area No. 6 is about 5 percent. A large percentage of the vacancies occur in the Gateway Center. In the Gateway Center, vacancy rates are approximately 20 percent based on a June 2007 windshield survey. The 36,668 square foot Astrozon Plaza was built in 1985 as a neighborhood commercial center and is also approximately 20 percent vacant.

A majority of the improved area in square feet of office space in Sub-Area No. 6 results from the 66,953 square foot General Dynamics office building southeast of the intersection of Fountain Boulevard and Academy Boulevard. Approximately 35 percent of this office building is vacant, although the complex appears to be well maintained.

Of note is a residential development on Academy Boulevard adjacent to Sub-Area No. 6. Sierra Springs is an 88 unit small lot PUD development on the east side of Academy Boulevard south of Sierra High School. This residential development will have direct access to Academy Boulevard and Jet Wing Drive.

**Assessment of Sub-Area No. 6 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

Like Sub-Area No. 4, many properties are underutilized in the sub-area. Occupancy rates in Sub-Area No. 6 are equivalent to those found in Sub-Area No. 4, but the mix of land uses is indicative of neighborhood commercial. While the area once was the location of a Pace Membership Club, Home Furnishings Plus, and a Progressive Insurance office, the existing land use pattern is made up of smaller independents and local retailers. Based on the underutilization of properties within the sub-area, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor.

**Sub-Area No. 7**

**Description of Sub-Area**

This sub-area is bounded by Astrozon Boulevard on the north and Drennan Road on the south. Within this sub-area, Jetwing Drive is used as a partial east boundary. Refer to Figure 41 for a depiction of the sub-area boundaries.

*Figure 41: Sub-Area No. 7 Boundaries*

**Land Use Data**

Sub-Area No. 7 is comprised of 188.81 net acres (less right-of-way and undetermined land uses). Table 14 disaggregates the 188.81 acre sub-area into land use categories. The 2006 land use patterns in Sub-Area No. 7 are shown in Figure 42.

Sub-Area No. 7	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002-2006 Change
High Density Residential	32.61	32.61	32.61	32.61	32.61	0.00
Commercial	79.93	70.37	71.11	71.12	71.12	-8.81
Office	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Industrial	0.31	9.87	15.99	15.99	15.99	15.68
Institution	7.56	7.56	7.55	7.56	7.56	0.00
Vacant	68.39	68.39	61.53	61.53	61.53	-6.86

*Table 14: Sub-Area No. 7 Land Use by Type 2002-2006 in Acres*

*Figure 42: Sub-Area No. 7 Existing Land Use (June 2006)*

Commercial land uses account for a majority of the developed land in Sub-Area No. 7. The 71.12 acres of commercial land uses equate to 37.67 percent of the net acreage of Sub-Area No. 7 in 2006 or 55.92 percent of the sub-area if undeveloped land is excluded. Since 2002, commercial land uses have decreased by 8.81 acres, largely resulting from an adaptation of the former HomeBase store northeast of the intersection of Hancock Expressway and Academy Boulevard to industrial use, partially offset by the development of a fast food restaurant southeast of the intersection of Astrozon Boulevard and Academy Boulevard in 2003.

Industrial land uses account for 15.99 acres or 8.47 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area (12.56 percent if undeveloped land is excluded). Industrial land use in Sub-Area No. 7 increased by 15.68 acres since 2002, largely because of the industrial manufacturing use in the old HomeBase but also because of a mini storage warehouse built in the sub-area in 2002.

As of June 2006, 61.53 acres of undeveloped land was in Sub-Area No. 7 or 32.59 percent of the net acreage of the sub-area.

**Assessment of Existing Square Footage and Approximate Vacancies**

Illustrated in Table 15, commercial land uses comprised 70.69 percent of the improved area in square feet in Sub-Area No. 7 as of June 2006.

Sub-Area No. 7	Improved Area (sq ft)	Percent of Sub-Area
High Density Residential	4,337	0.51%
Commercial	601,487	70.69%
Industrial	173,163	20.35%
Institution	71,860	8.45%
Total	850,847	

*Table 15: Sub-Area No. 7 Improved Area in Square Feet by Land Use by Type (June 2006)*

Two large commercial centers account for a majority of the improved area in square feet of commercial use. Including its pad sites, Hancock Plaza is 187,229 square feet in size. Built in the early to mid 1980s, the center was recently remodeled. A bank was built on a pad site in 2004 and another pad site was developed in 2006 to accommodate a Starbucks and a Panda Express. The center is anchored by a grocery store that relocated to the center from Mission Trace in 2002 in a space that was unoccupied for a period of six years. A picture of the Hancock Plaza grocery store is shown in Figure 43. Other uses include discount retail, a liquor store, restaurants, a bank, and a gas station. Based on a June 2007 windshield survey, the center is about 15 percent vacant.

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*Figure 43: King Soopers in Hancock Plaza*

Mission Trace is a 272,520 square foot commercial center largely built in the 1980s. Today, the commercial center is about 60 percent vacant. Its anchor grocery store left the center for Hancock Plaza in 2002. The remaining land uses include discount retail, a bank, restaurants, a church and other more neighborhood oriented uses. As of June 2007, part of the exterior had been remodeled, but not the center where two of the larger retailers once were located, shown in Figure 44.



*Figure 44: Existing Condition of Mission Trace*

Despite this investment in the center, the lack of an anchor and the abundance of commercial space in the area may exclude Mission Trace from attaining regional status again. Altogether, commercial uses across Sub-Area No. 7 are approximately 35 percent vacant based on a June 2007 windshield survey.

A HomeBase improvement store was located in the sub-area until it closed in 2001. Built in 1986, the building has since been adapted to an industrial manufacturing use illustrated in Figure 45. While the building is in use, it is only a shadow of the activity center it was for fifteen years as a HomeBase.



*Figure 45: Former HomeBase Northeast of the Intersection of Hancock Expressway and Academy Boulevard*

The old HomeBase store is not the only commercial use to be adapted into a non-commercial use as a grocery store southwest of the intersection of Hancock Expressway and Academy Boulevard became a church in the early 1990s.

#### **Assessment of Sub-Area No. 7 as a Mature/Redevelopment Area**

What once was a major commercial corridor and a regional activity center has been detrimentally impacted by the loss of retailers throughout the sub-area. While Hancock Plaza has recently been renovated, it remains 15 percent vacant and does not appear to be as competitive as the Safeway commercial center in Sub-Area No. 1 that was also recently remodeled. Other commercial centers in Sub-Area No. 7 have seen much more disinvestment, including Mission Trace. Even though the exterior of part of the center had been remodeled as of June 2007, the center is largely unoccupied and extremely underutilized. HomeBase is another casualty, losing out in a competition with other home improvement stores. Though the old HomeBase has been adapted to an industrial manufacturing use, it generates much less traffic than the HomeBase.

The outcome of the South Metropolitan Accessibility Study (SMAS) and the realignment of Drennan Road to access the airport from I-25 may introduce redevelopment opportunities in Sub-Area No. 7.

Based on the observed vacancy rates, the underutilization of properties within the sub-area, and the potential for redevelopment opportunities, it meets the definition of a mature/redevelopment corridor.

#### ***Possible Future Actions for Academy Boulevard Corridor***

There are a variety of tools that communities can use to address problems with declining commercial corridors. The level of approach is largely dependent on how actively local government wishes to be involved in developing and implementing a redevelopment process. In general, available tools fall into the regulatory and financial categories. The following list is not a recommended approach, but simply a general listing of tools that

have been used by other communities to address conditions similar to those found in the Academy Boulevard corridor.

### **Planning/Regulatory Tools**

- Zoning and land use approaches including but not limited to:
  - Selective rezonings
  - Corridor overlay zones with specialized development standards
  - Incremental application of site design and landscaping standards
  - Development and application of “big box” development standards
- Development of a Corridor Master Plan
- Performing a market study to objectively determine the corridor’s role in the economy and what can be supported from a demand basis
- Evaluating whether there is excess retail zoning in the community and/or in the corridor (ULI refers to this action as “Prune back retail-zoned land”)
- Conducting a blight assessment as a prelude to consideration of the corridor as an urban renewal area
- Roadway design modifications to address issues related to access, pedestrian activity, and accessibility of transit
- Long range planning for mass transit and land use implications/opportunities

### **Financial Tools**

- Incentives offered to developers
  - Varieties of tax relief
  - Subsidies or credits for various development exactions and utilities charges
- Strategic placement of infrastructure as a catalyst for redevelopment
- Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program available through CDBG, dependent on income criteria
- Limited possibility to use of CDBG funds as a result of designation of part of corridor as a Neighborhood Strategy Area
- Economic Development Assistance programs
- Any financial incentives that may be developed as a result of designation of an area as an Urban Renewal Area