

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



Figure 1-1

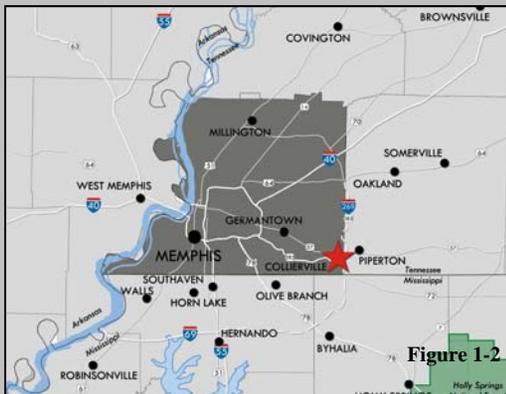


Figure 1-2

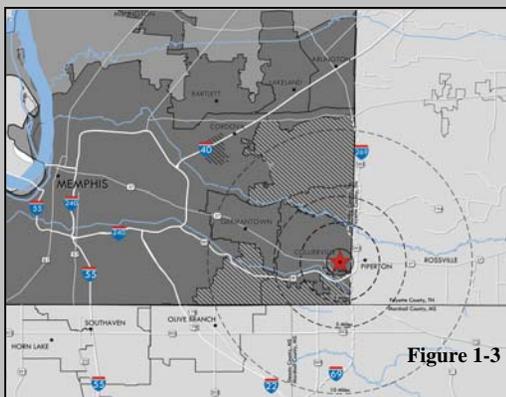


Figure 1-3

PLANNING AREA AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN DEFINED

At 746 acres, the Downtown Collierville planning area encompasses just over one square mile of the Town and includes the Historic Square as well as many of the Town's historic residential neighborhoods. Downtown Collierville is east of Memphis, at the easternmost limits of Shelby County, and slightly north of the shared state lines of Tennessee and Mississippi (see Figures 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3). The planning area is divided into three subcategories described in greater detail in Chapter 6, and each has a noticeably different role in helping the implementation of the Vision and Guiding Principles (see Figure 1-4):

- Heart of Downtown
- Surrounding Neighborhoods
- Gates

The purpose of the Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan is to serve as a vision for the physical future of the Heart of Downtown, its Surrounding Neighborhoods, and Gates (see Figure 1-4). It is also to be used by private, public, and quasi-governmental sectors as a guide for decision-making regarding proposed new development, redevelopment of real estate, capital improvement plan (CIP) expenditures, grant requests, rezonings, and planned developments (PDs). It is also important to note that this is a "build-out" plan, and does not have a horizon year. Although the policies of Chapters 5 and 6 are lofty, it is acknowledged that there will be several generations of development in Collierville's downtown, and that some undesirable uses and forms may be built in the interim and later removed and replaced with something that is more consistent with the long-term vision of this plan. Knowing that some decisions take decades to reverse, when something is proposed that is not consistent with this Plan, the question must be asked "how will this decision

adversely affect those around it?" This Plan is intentionally designed so that question will be asked repeatedly and incrementally with each application and significant community decision. Collierville took over 150 years to evolve from a small pre-Civil War railroad stop to a Town of almost 50,000 people when this Plan was drafted in 2010, and realistically, it will take decades, and possibly multiple generations, for the policies contained in this Plan to come to fruition. Planning should never stop for Downtown Collierville, and this Plan should be revisited often, such as once or twice a decade, to monitor trends and the effectiveness of policies.

The study area has been divided into seven distinct "Character Areas" which have been refined during the planning process to help consolidate and implement policies of previous planning efforts for Downtown Collierville undertaken over the last decade (see Chapter 5). The Character Areas were developed to allow for the development of a distinct community identity within each area, as well as to allow the application of specific policies and recommendations within each area to address unique issues and circumstances.

During the development of the Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan, the importance of the Historic Square area as the "heart" of the community was recognized, and it was determined that a more detailed study would need to be conducted to adequately address specific issues being faced there (see Chapter 6). The long-term stability and success of Downtown Collierville must be a major Town priority to ensure the vitality that permeates the entire Town. The need for a more strategic and cohesive implementation plan for the Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan was also reinforced by the Steering Committee and a large number of stakeholders and organizations already focusing

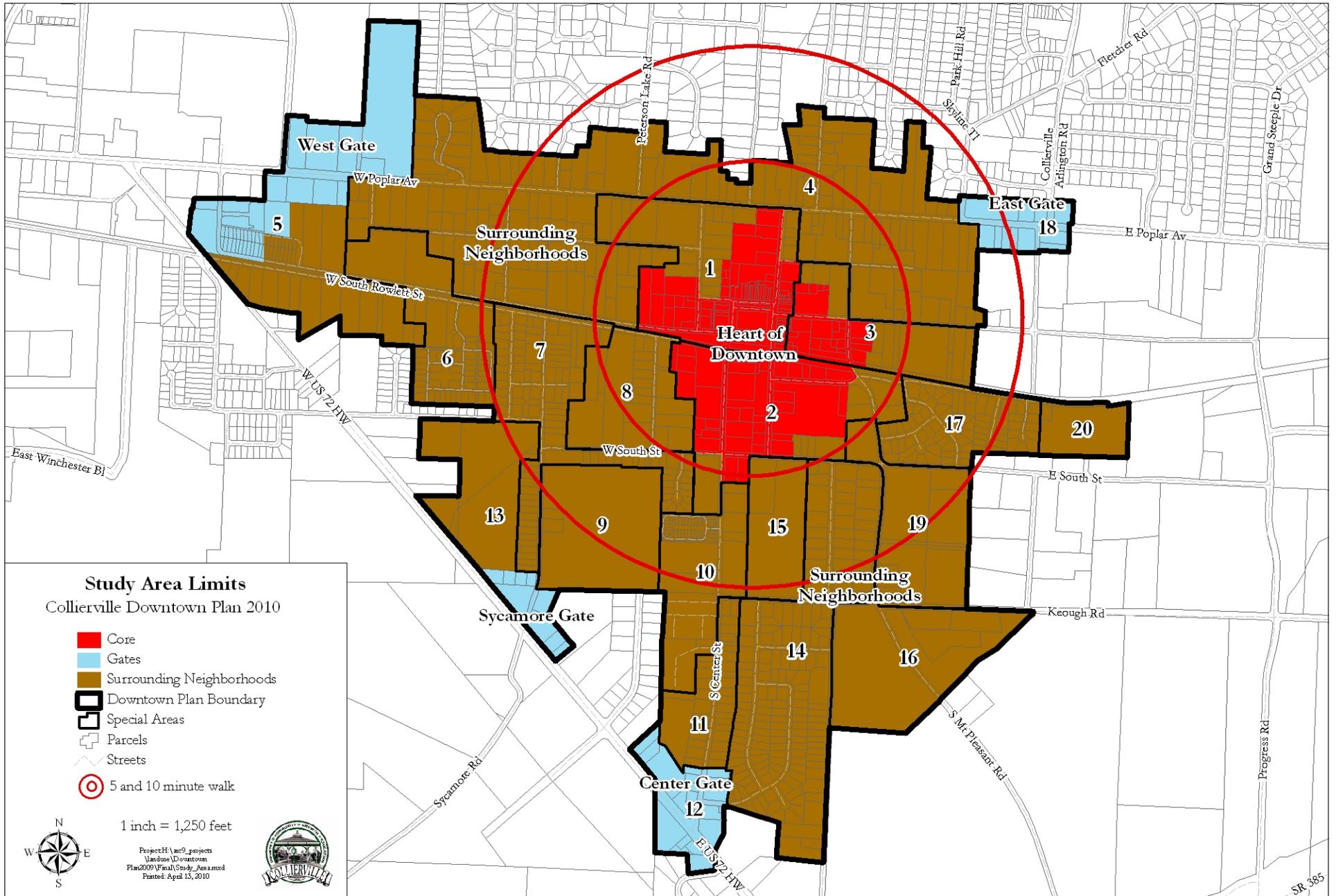


Figure 1-4

their efforts on various issues within the planning area. The Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan will function as an extension of the Town-wide plan, and, in fact, some of the overarching concepts developed for this Plan may be useful for future updates to other Town-wide planning efforts, such as the 2020 Land Use Plan, Major Road Plan, and Greenbelt Master Plan. Common concepts are described in more detail as appropriate throughout the chapters of this document, with a particular emphasis on Chapters 5 and 6, which will be looked to by both the public and private sector to implement the Vision.

The Downtown Small Area Plan is a conceptual planning document adopted by resolution by the BMA in July of 2010. It was the result of extensive work and visioning by numerous citizens and interested parties and the town. This is an attempt at recognizing both the potential and present worth of the extended downtown area and is meant to serve as a guide for the quality, nature and tone of this crucial area for the future to ensure its vitality. The plan should be interpreted as dynamic in nature and in no way vests specific development rights to specific parcels until they successfully complete the normal procedures and approval processes of the town.

PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Visioning Effort and Role of Previous Planning Efforts

Steering Committee meetings to develop this plan began in December 2009 following a series of stakeholder interviews and public visioning efforts that were held in the fall of 2009 (see Figures 1-5, 1-6, and 1-7). The results of this effort are fully contained in the Project Diagnosis and Outline dated February 2010. Many of those that became Steering Committee mem-

bers were involved in the visioning effort directly and/or interviewed by the Project Team as stakeholders in 2009. Many were also directly involved in previous planning efforts undertaken for Downtown Collierville over the last decade. All visioning efforts and steering committee meetings were open to the public and were attended by many citizens.

Steering Committee

A 14-member Steering Committee (Figure 1-8). was formed in November 2009 to provide oversight during the planning process and was comprised of residents, elected and appointed officials, property owners, and a mix of local business representatives chosen to help guide the future direction of Downtown Collierville. Steering Committee meetings were generally held once or twice a month, from December 2009 through June 2010, and the committee was charged with the following (see the Project Diagnosis and Outline for a detailed review of this critical phase of the Plan's development):

- use the "best of" the previous planning efforts for Downtown Collierville over the last 20 years;
- provide a plan that can be formally adopted by the Town;
- incorporate within the Plan the freshly-gathered public input from the Fall of 2009;
- utilize the talents of the Technical Advisory Group; and
- provide a professional-grade plan for Downtown in a timely fashion.

In preparation for their work on the Downtown Plan, the Steering Committee traveled to other downtowns to learn from on-the-ground examples and speak to local officials: Franklin, TN; Oxford, MS; Midtown Memphis; and Tupelo, MS (Figure 1-9).



Figure 1-5



Figure 1-6



Figure 1-7



Figure 1-8



Figure 1-9



Figure 1-10

Design Workshop Week and Public Forums

A “Design Workshop Week” was held in January 2010 in order to expedite the plan-making process, to best utilize creative technical support, and to improve the potential for quick consensus on policy drafts, maps and supporting images (Figures 1-10 and 1-11). This consensus-building technique was based on a process sometimes called a “charrette,” which takes place in many professional disciplines, including the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning and design. Such design workshops serve as a way of quickly generating a design solution while integrating the aptitudes and interests of a diverse group of people. Collierville’s Design Workshop Week was a collaborative session in which a group of designers and planners drafted a solution to the “design problem” at hand, which was to create maps and images out of the ideas from the visioning efforts and the “best of” previous plans. The week culminated in an open-house unveiling of the efforts, and the Steering Committee spent the months of February through June 2010 digesting the results of that week and providing direction to the Project Team, comprised completely of Town staff, for the development of this Plan. A widely-advertised open house was held on April 27, 2010 to unveil the final Draft of the Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan (Figure 1-12), and the Planning Commission held a public hearing at its May and July 2010 meetings.

Stakeholder Interviews

Project team members conducted numerous one-on-one interviews as well as several group interviews with key project stakeholders during the initial phase of the planning process to gather background information and to obtain a variety of perspectives on Downtown Collierville’s issues and the findings of the previous



Figure 1-11



Figure 1-12



Figure 1-13

efforts to study the area. The interviewees were identified by Town staff and officials, and included, among others, local business owners and representatives, residents, property owners and elected and appointed officials (Figure 1-13). Many of the interviewees were selected for their previous or ongoing involvement in related planning efforts or in organizations active within Collierville.

Market Reconnaissance

A targeted analysis of Downtown Collierville's market conditions was conducted in 2005 during the planning process for the Downtown Square Development Plan by Market Street Services, Inc and Sizemore Group. The result of this effort was not a full market study, but rather an analysis of general market trends in Downtown Collierville. The analysis provided insight into the potential impacts of market trends on future retail, office and residential opportunities if the policies contained in this Plan are realized. The findings of Market Street's previous efforts, and a related survey conducted during that effort, were relied upon heavily for the analysis in Chapter 2, and are the rational basis for many of the policies encouraging new development and redevelopment in Chapter 5 and the economy-growing initiatives of Chapter 6. Additional analysis for both the 2005 and the 2010 efforts was based largely on interviews with individuals and organizations with knowledge of local market conditions and activities. Further analysis, based on the residential density and commercial square footage assumptions in this Plan, is still needed, as well as a detailed parking demand and supply analysis (see also Chapters 4 and 6).

Project Diagnosis and Outline

In order to summarize the findings from the Fall 2009 visioning effort and the issue identification

process, a diagnosis report, which included a potential outline for the plan document, was presented to the Steering Committee at its December 2009 meeting. The diagnosis provided a summary of previous efforts, community feedback from the visioning process (which included findings from an image preference survey) and a proposed policy direction that could be incorporated into the completed Plan to address the issues and help to gather and reconcile the "best of" previous planning efforts. The conclusions and findings of the diagnosis provided a basis for the information reviewed at the Design Workshop Week held in January 2010. After completing that exercise, the Steering Committee adopted the Project Diagnosis and Outline at its February 2, 2010 meeting, and this Small Area Plan was drafted accordingly.

Issue Identification

At both of the project kickoff meetings held in December 2009 and the Design Workshop Week held in January 2010, an exercise was conducted by the project team to identify the range of issues to be addressed by the plan, and from it the Vision and Guiding Principles emerged. This exercise included a combination of evaluating completed surveys; undertaking a strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; and, consolidations of the findings of several previous planning efforts, listed below, into what would become the Vision and Guiding Principles for this Plan:

- Town Square Study Report by the Collierville Chamber of Commerce and DTD (2001)
- Comprehensive Preservation Plan by LRK (2001)
- Downtown Square Development Plan by Market Street Services, Inc. and Sizemore Group (2005)
- DNA Roadshow Findings included within the Project Diagnosis and Outline (October

2009)

- Discussions from Design Workshop Week and subsequent Steering Committee meetings (2010)

The early identification of these issues enabled the Project Team, Technical Advisory Group, and Steering Committee to focus work completed during the Plan's development in these key areas. Although a number of offshoot issues were identified during the course of the work effort that will need further study (e.g. funding, infrastructure, parking), most were linked closely to the initial list. They are addressed within this Plan to the extent that could be done during its development and adoption during 2009-2010 .

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As the downtown planning process progressed through the research and public input phases, and, later, the Design Workshop phase and the work of the Steering Committee, a clear picture began to emerge of a set of guiding principles underlying the Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan. These principles, which fall under six major themes to implement the Vision, directed the tenor of the maps, policies, and character examples that emerged from the planning process for the study area. Their influence can especially be noted in the policies of Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Vision: "The Square and Downtown area should be both a destination and the heart of a vibrant and living neighborhood."

Guiding Principles:

1. Encourage character-based new development in the study area for an improved tax base.

- Encourage appropriately-scaled, infill development or redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, or inappropriately developed properties that is contextual with its surroundings and in congress with the look, feel, and character of the Square and its Historic District.
- Encourage the expansion of the Town Square to the south of the tracks by improving views of the Square from the south.
- Increase the critical mass of mixed uses, including a retail component and supportive parking.
- Prevent the further encroachment of incompatible or inappropriate development forms identified through the planning process to ensure a sense of continuity and cohesiveness in the study area.
- Maintain and enhance the timeless appeal of buildings with attractive small-town architecture, front-porches, appropriate fencing, inviting streetscapes, with emphases on pedestrians.
- Enhance the character of existing stable non-historic neighborhoods.
- Promote public safety by placing more “eyes on the street” through orienting design towards the street and encouraging slower vehicle speeds.
- Encourage energy efficiency in the design of new structures and rehabilitation of old or existing structures.

2. Celebrate Collierville’s History and Increase Tourism.

- Preserve the Town’s history and respect the past by encouraging preservation, rehabilitation, and reuse of significant historic buildings.

- Promote heritage tourism within the study area so that others can experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. This includes historic, cultural and natural resources.

3. Plan for New Housing, Land Use, and Services.

- Provide a variety of residential options within walking distance to balance commercial and neighborhood services throughout the study area.
- Improve or stabilize areas within the study area in order to maintain and enhance the economic health and property values within the district.
- Assure adequate and properly located parking — convenient parking supports the increasing vitality of the Square and its immediate area.
- Accommodate all ages, allowing households to age in place.
- Provide opportunities for life-long learning and recreation.

4. Address Pedestrian and Vehicular Connectivity and Planning for Multimodal Transportation.

- Strengthen the critical gateways through signage.
- Increase and improve road access to Downtown.
- Provide options for public transportation and encourage physical activity such as walking and biking.
- Provide multiple, well-defined entry points (motorized and non-motorized) to the Downtown Square Area.

5. Plan for the Public Realm and Open Space.

- Encourage small, well-placed “village green” open spaces to function as gathering spaces and open areas within the study area.
- Tie together the existing and planned park resources through many different ways (sidewalks, greenbelts along environmental corridors, bike paths/lanes, etc) rather than just through a single mode of transportation, - the automobile.
- Incorporate and enhance significant natural features when possible.

6. Provide Clarity in Implementation Roles and Oversight.

- Define a structure for implementation that addresses a proper regulatory environment, oversight, and priorities for public improvements.
- Provide various incentives for preservation, adaptive re-use, and redevelopment of obsolete or underutilized uses that will support the Square.

ROLE OF THE CHARACTER STUDIES AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Abstract and complex issues and concepts, such as pedestrian or automobile circulation, scale, and community or historic character, are best explained visually. The project team and Technical Advisory Group prepared visual materials that are intended to be presented to the public in the form of color diagrams, sketch plans and sections (Figure 1-18), perspective renderings (Figure 1-16), photo collages and examples (Figure 1-17), and computer simulation models (Figures 1-14 and 1-15) for examples of typical character studies and visual communication used in this Plan. These materials are intended to help the public, property owners, developers, designers, and decision makers, visualize the

relationships between the different parts of a site or neighborhood and to capture the character of its environment. "Before and after" views have also been used, where appropriate, to convey the general intent of the Guiding Principles, Special Areas, and Character Area policies. Consensus was initially reached on the character studies formulated during the Design Workshop Week process and vetted with members of the Steering Committee and other local stakeholders as this Plan progressed. It is important to note that these character studies are not 'de facto' blueprints for any particular property shown, just as it is not correct to assume that particular schemes not shown to that level of detail are not addressed by the policies of this Plan. Rather, these schemes represent the collective design energy of the Steering Committee, local stakeholders, and members of the Technical Advisory Group and project team. As development of Collierville's Downtown area progresses, the actual design details and land uses of the developed or redeveloped parcels might look different than the schemes that are presented on the pages that follow, and rightfully so as market realities or multiple property ownership unique to largely-established built environments, may dictate alternative approaches. The purpose of these guidelines was not to stifle creativity, preclude innovation, or diminish valuable public input. Ultimately the incremental planning processes of the Town will cause this Plan to be implemented over time, (via site plans, subdivision plats, rezonings, planned developments, the capital improvements plan, and historic preservation efforts). That said, the character studies are an invaluable tool in helping to effectively communicate the Vision and to make this a more understandable and inspiring Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan is considered to be a subcomponent of the Land Use Plan originally adopted August 13, 2001 (as amended), and these documents are collectively known as the Collierville Land Use Plan. If there are any conflicting policies between the 2001 Land Use Plan (as may be revised and this plan as it applies to the study area), the policies contained within the Downtown Collierville Small Area Plan shall govern.



Figure 1-14



WASHINGTON STREET AFTER
View looking West towards the
Square from Washington/
Mt. Pleasant intersection

Figure 1-15



Figure 1-17



Figure 1-16



Figure 1-18