
CHAPTER 3

INVENTORY OF EXISTING STUDIES AFFECTING THE PARKWAY CORRIDOR STUDY

Several studies or plans have been prepared and adopted by the City of Florence which affect the currently adopted *Parkway Corridor Study*. The studies or plans include the *Dream Street Streetscape Improvement Study*, the *Florence Government Center Master Plan*, the Champion Window Field Complex, the *Boone County Transportation Plan*, the *Florence Bike/Pedestrian Plan*, the *I-75 Pedestrian Connection Feasibility Study* and the 2005 *Boone County Comprehensive Plan*.

Dream Street Streetscape Improvement Study

The *Dream Street Streetscape Improvement Study* was completed in 2001 for the City of Florence in order to evaluate street conditions and to recommend street, streetscape, signage and sidewalk improvements. Street and traffic conditions were examined closely. This included accident rates, street capacity, traffic controls, traffic counts and access management controls. Further, street design standards were formulated to aid pedestrians and vehicle traffic along with streetscape improvement such as trees, landscaping features, street furniture, retaining walls and street lights. Signage was included as part of the study. Recommendations were made that included developing a cohesive signage design for Dream Street and creating a directory of businesses near U.S. 42 and Ewing Boulevard. Other design standards were created such as limiting the type and number of signs and requiring internal illumination only and landscaping features near the bottom of each sign. Finally, implementation tools recommended in the study include code enforcement, property maintenance and rehabilitation assistance, improvement and overlay districts and public/private financing programs for the improvements. Many of the Study's recommendations that have been implemented in the past 5 years include property maintenance enforcement, reconstruction of Dream Street, sidewalk installation and community signage.

Florence Government Center Master Plan

In February 2002, the City of Florence by resolution adopted the *Florence Government Center Master Plan*. The *Florence Government Center Master Plan* serves as a guide to the future development of all city-owned property in the study area. As envisioned in 1986, the *Florence Government Center Master Plan* is the fulfillment of the city center concept as stated in the adopted *Parkway Corridor Study*. The *Florence Government Center Master Plan* includes the Government Center Building (58,500 square feet), the State Office Building (15,900 square feet), the 20,000 square foot Florence/Boone Skatepark, the newer Florence Aquatic Center and a future recreation center. The Government Center Building can be expanded with a second floor and the current Florence Public Services Building is located across Ewing Boulevard. Parking is provided with the eventual construction of 894 spaces.

Champion Window Field

At the interchange of I-75 and U.S. 42, is the 4,000 seat baseball stadium. Seating at Champion Window Field is 6,500 people, including lawn seating. This \$5 million stadium provides a new sporting and entertainment impact in Florence and the *Central Florence Strategic Plan* area. Other potential uses occur on the site include other recreational opportunities and festivals/concerts. Because of the type of development and its close proximity to the *Central Florence Strategic Plan* area, the businesses along Dream Street should benefit during the season causing local traffic movements on both sides of U.S. 42.

Boone County Transportation Plan

The *Boone County Transportation Plan* was adopted by the Boone County Fiscal Court in 2005. The plan evaluated the current conditions of streets in Florence in terms of capacity and projected population and employment growth. The plan prioritized a list of road and bridge improvements and recommended a series of street design standards. In addition, the plan suggested bicycle and pedestrian corridors along with mass transit route expansion. One of the most significant recommendations of the Plan was the expansion of Industrial Road from 2 to 5 lanes. Industrial Road serves a major employment center, the Northern Kentucky Industrial Park and is located in the southern portion of the *Central Florence Strategic Plan* area. The widening of Industrial Road to five lanes with sidewalks began in 2007 and will be completed to the intersection of U.S. 25 in 2009.

Florence Bike/Pedestrian Plan

The *Florence Bike/Pedestrian Plan* has been updated. The *Florence Bike/ Pedestrian Plan* recommended a series of bicycle/pedestrian networks through the City of Florence. The City Center Study area has developed over time with new bicycle and pedestrian routes as a result of the Florence Government Center complex. A bike path currently exists on the east side of Ewing Boulevard. Dream Street was reconstructed to include new sidewalks. The plan also recommends a new sidewalk along the north side of U.S. 42 to fill a gap in the sidewalk network. A state transportation grant has been given to the City of Florence for installing a sidewalk from Ewing Boulevard to Mall Road along the southside of KY 18.

Interstate 71/75 Pedestrian Connection Feasibility Study

The *Interstate 71/75 Pedestrian Connection Feasibility Study* was completed in 2001 at the request of the City of Florence. The purpose of the study was to examine potential pedestrian connections to both sides of I-75. The study reviewed four potential crossings - KY 18, Mall Road ramp, U.S. 42 and Tanners Gate Drive (fly-over). Costs for each optional crossing were made. The actual construction of a pedestrian crossing will help residents and workers from the City Center Study area visit the businesses on Mall Road. This could be significant if Mall Road is redesigned as part of the *Mall Road Crossroads Study*.

2005 Boone County Comprehensive Plan

The Land Use Element of the 2005 Boone County Comprehensive Plan states that the “area east of I-75, north of U.S. 42 and south of KY 18 shall continue to be developed in a cohesive manner to form a city center for Florence. The Parkway Corridor Study, which was originally developed for this area, has begun to be updated and should give a definitive direction for the area based on the fact that significant office, recreational and governmental development has occurred. A mixture of public, office, retail, commercial, recreation and residential development is the goal.”

The existing land use of the Study area is derived from the 2005 Boone County Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Element and the business inventory included in this document. The existing land use map from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan indicates commercial uses concentrated along KY 18, Commerce Drive, Dream Street and portions of U.S. 42. The Commercial (C) land use designation allows for not only retail uses but also office uses. In addition, there are Suburban Density Residential uses (up to 4 dwelling units per acre) located in well established residential neighborhoods along KY 18 and east of the government centers and along U.S. 42. There is a pocket of this type of land use located between I-75 and Ewing Boulevard and north of Dream Street. The Public/Institutional land use represents the existing Florence government complex, which includes satellite offices and recreational activities. Additional Commercial (C) land use designations exist in the south side of U.S. 42 and along Industrial Road. Urban Density Residential (UD) land uses are concentrated along Ewing Boulevard and off Industrial Road. The existing Recreation (R) land use represents the minor league baseball field located off Freedom Way. The future land use of the Study area is derived from the 2005 Boone County Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Element. The Future Land Use Map from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan recommends similar types of land uses described above on the existing land uses.

Analysis of Existing Studies

In 1986, the *Parkway Corridor Study* recommended that the City of Florence consider relocating its municipal building and create a campus of government buildings and uses. The *Florence Government Center Master Plan* set the direction for the construction of office and service buildings and recreational uses on the government campus. The *Dream Street Streetscape Improvement Study* outlined a series of construction improvements, that provide for better traffic movement in an area that is heavily traveled by interstate traffic. These improvements will provide a foundation for future development and redevelopment opportunities in this retail and office area. Some of the recommendations from this study will impact the visual character of the *Central Florence Strategic Plan* by including street trees, landscaping features, street furniture, lights and retaining walls into the overall street design. Further, an updated set of special sign requirements was recommended.

The *Florence Bike/Pedestrian Plan* encourages pedestrian and bicycle use in the *Central Florence Strategic Plan*. This is evidenced by the creation of a bike path along Ewing Boulevard and on the Florence Government Center campus. The bike path connects to existing sidewalks on KY 18 and U.S. 42. This will allow people to visit the government campus by walking or by bike. New sidewalks were built along Dream Street for pedestrian traffic from the office and hotel uses. The *Boone County Transportation Plan* identified the widening of Industrial Road as a critical project for the future of the Northern Kentucky Industrial Park. With this project, better traffic improvements will occur and will make U.S. 42 and Dream Street a more viable business center. The *Interstate 71/75 Pedestrian Connection Feasibility Study* recommended that proper pedestrian/bicycle access from both sides of I-75 be made. This will help the residents and businesses located in the new *Central Florence Strategic Plan* travel to and from the Mall Road area. The City of Florence recently received a grant to install sidewalks on the south side of KY 18 from Mall Road to Ewing Boulevard.

The Champion Window Field project and associated recreation and community uses and events will provide additional business opportunities to the commercial uses along U.S. 42 and Dream Street. The benefits from this project are driven by the seasonal business use.