COVINGTON
TRAFFIC CALMING & CONNECTIVITY PLAN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The City of Covington's historic downtown district is a charming hub for commerce, arts, and community events for residents and visitors alike. While the area is already a destination and gathering place, a lack of comfort and connectivity for people walking, people riding bicycles and other non-motorized users prevents people from experiencing its full potential. Boston Street is Covington's "Main Street," yet the state highway is, at times, a barrier that splits the town in half. Several initiatives are underway to improve transportation and recreation options downtown, including bikeways, road markings, street furnishings, and park planning.

This Traffic Calming and Connectivity Plan was created with the input of residents, business owners, community groups, and the city, and the recommendations are based on their vision. This plan is intended to be used as a guide by the city officials to link current and past efforts together, clarify what other efforts are needed, and strengthen the case for obtaining funding for these efforts. While this plan is not a comprehensive approach to managing traffic and connectivity across all of Covington and the surrounding areas, it does provide the city with ways to ensure that pedestrians and bicyclists are safe and comfortable in the core of town and that those in vehicles drive safely and with care.

Acknowledgments

The Covington Traffic Calming and Connectivity Plan is an initiative of the City of Covington, with support from the Northshore Area Board of REALTORS®.

Report prepared by:

CENTER *for* PLANNING EXCELLENCE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

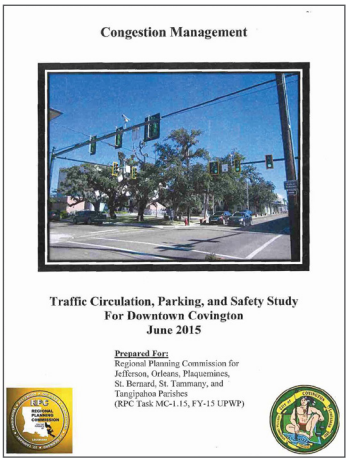
Downtown Covington is bisected by Hwy 21/US Hwy 190, also known as Boston Street. This state highway brings with it a lot of traffic and congestion from surrounding areas, which in turn causes problems for the city, such as gridlock at peak hours, a dangerous pedestrian environment, and unwanted truck traffic. Covington is situated at the confluence of three rivers that provide wonderful natural assets, as well as connectivity challenges. Namely, there are only a few bridge crossings, which funnel traffic down Boston Street. This project will address these issues, while bolstering the charm and culture that already exists.

Columbia Street Block Party (nola.com)

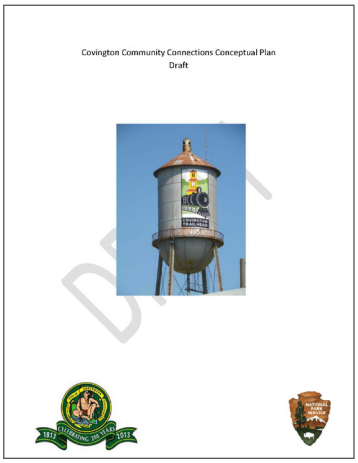
Historic Ox Lots in downtown (abitamuseum.com)

WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO DATE

Covington has done a great deal of planning work over the last few years. Some of this work includes a park master plan, traffic analysis, and various trail projects. The work presented in this document builds on the existing work.

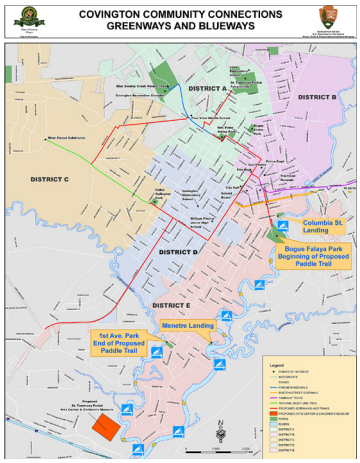


"Traffic Circulation, Parking, and Safety Study for Downtown Covington" 2015



"Covington Community Connections Conceptual Plan" 2013

"Bogue Falaya Park Master Plan" 2016



"Covington Community Connections Greenways and Blueways" 2013

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

A broad range of community stakeholders were engaged throughout the project, including residents, city staff, business owners, community groups, area schools, and others. Their ideas and feedback were collected in a number of ways, including surveys and comment cards, one-on-one meetings, engagement activities at the Columbia Street Block Party, and an open house.

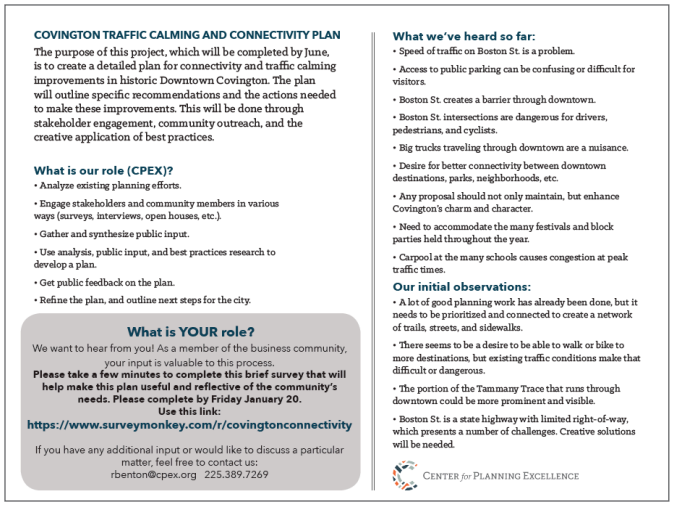
Stakeholder Meetings

Over the course of the project, we met with the following stakeholders:

- Covington Mayor's Office
- Covington Planning Department
- Covington Engineering Department
- Covington Public Works
- Covington Parks and Recreation
- Tammany Trace
- Keep Covington Beautiful
- Kiwanis
- Covington School Board
- St. Peter School
- Kehoe France School
- St. Paul's School
- St. Scholastica Academy
- Local business owners
- Covington Business Association
- Local real estate professionals
- LA Department of Transportation and Development

Covington Business Association Outreach

We presented an overview of the project at the Covington Business Association's January 2017 meeting. Surveys were distributed to local business owners to better understand their particular issues with traffic and connectivity and their priorities for downtown Covington.



COVINGTON TRAFFIC CALMING AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN

The purpose of this project, which will be completed by June, is to create a detailed plan for connectivity and traffic calming improvements in historic Downtown Covington. The plan will outline specific recommendations and the actions needed to make these improvements. This will be done through stakeholder engagement, community outreach, and the creative application of best practices.

What is our role (CPEX)?

- Analyze existing planning efforts.
- Engage stakeholders and community members in various ways (surveys, interviews, open houses, etc.).
- Gather and synthesize public input.
- Use analysis, public input, and best practices research to develop a plan.
- Get public feedback on the plan.
- Refine the plan, and outline next steps for the city.

What is YOUR role?

We want to hear from you! As a member of the business community, your input is valuable to this process.
Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey that will help make this plan useful and reflective of the community's needs. Please complete by Friday January 20.
Use this link:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/covingtonconnectivity

If you have any additional input or would like to discuss a particular matter, feel free to contact us:
rbenton@cpex.org 225.389.7269

What we've heard so far:

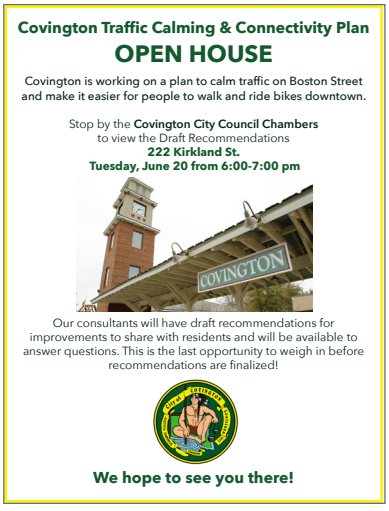
- Speed of traffic on Boston St. is a problem.
- Access to public parking can be confusing or difficult for visitors.
- Boston St. creates a barrier through downtown.
- Boston St. intersections are dangerous for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Big trucks traveling through downtown are a nuisance.
- Desire for better connectivity between downtown destinations, parks, neighborhoods, etc.
- Any proposal should not only maintain, but enhance Covington's charm and character.
- Need to accommodate the many festivals and block parties held throughout the year.
- Carpool at the many schools causes congestion at peak traffic times.

Our initial observations:

- A lot of good planning work has already been done, but it needs to be prioritized and connected to create a network of trails, streets, and sidewalks.
- There seems to be a desire to be able to walk or bike to more destinations, but existing traffic conditions make that difficult or dangerous.
- The portion of the Tammany Trace that runs through downtown could be more prominent and visible.
- Boston St. is a state highway with limited right-of-way, which presents a number of challenges. Creative solutions will be needed.

CENTER for PLANNING EXCELLENCE

Project information sheet distributed to businesses



Covington Traffic Calming & Connectivity Plan

OPEN HOUSE

Covington is working on a plan to calm traffic on Boston Street and make it easier for people to walk and ride bikes downtown.

Stop by the **Covington City Council Chambers** to view the Draft Recommendations
222 Kirkland St.
Tuesday, June 20 from 6:00-7:00 pm

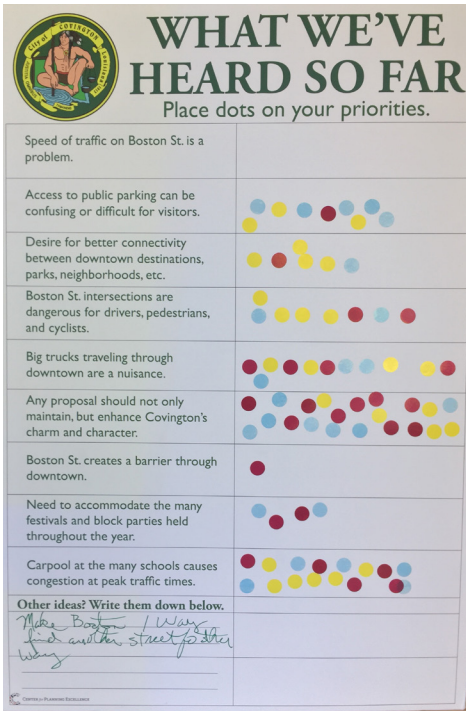
Our consultants will have draft recommendations for improvements to share with residents and will be available to answer questions. This is the last opportunity to weigh in before recommendations are finalized!

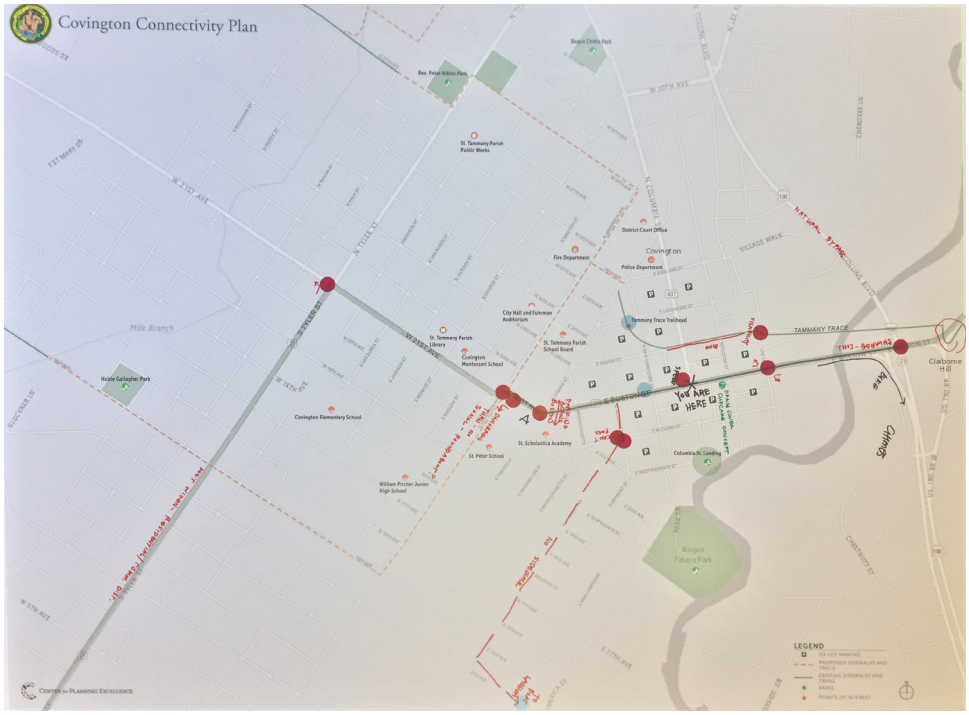
We hope to see you there!

Flyers were distributed through the CBA and other stakeholders to notify residents about outreach events.

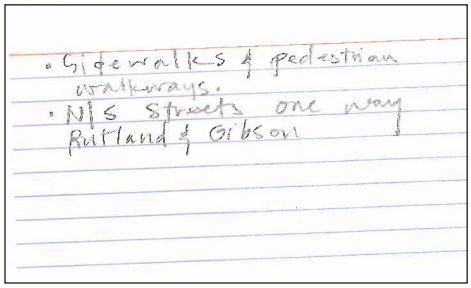
Columbia Street Block Party

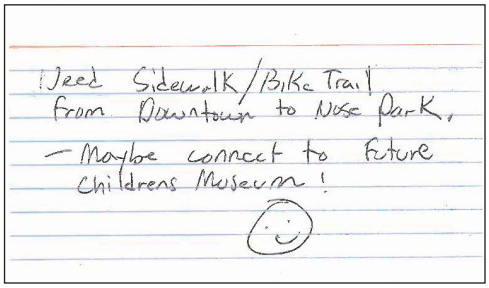
At the Columbia Street Block Party on March 31, 2017, input was gathered through mapping exercises, surveys, issue prioritization, and conversations with residents. This information was compiled and analyzed, then used to guide recommendation development.





Surveys and Comment Cards

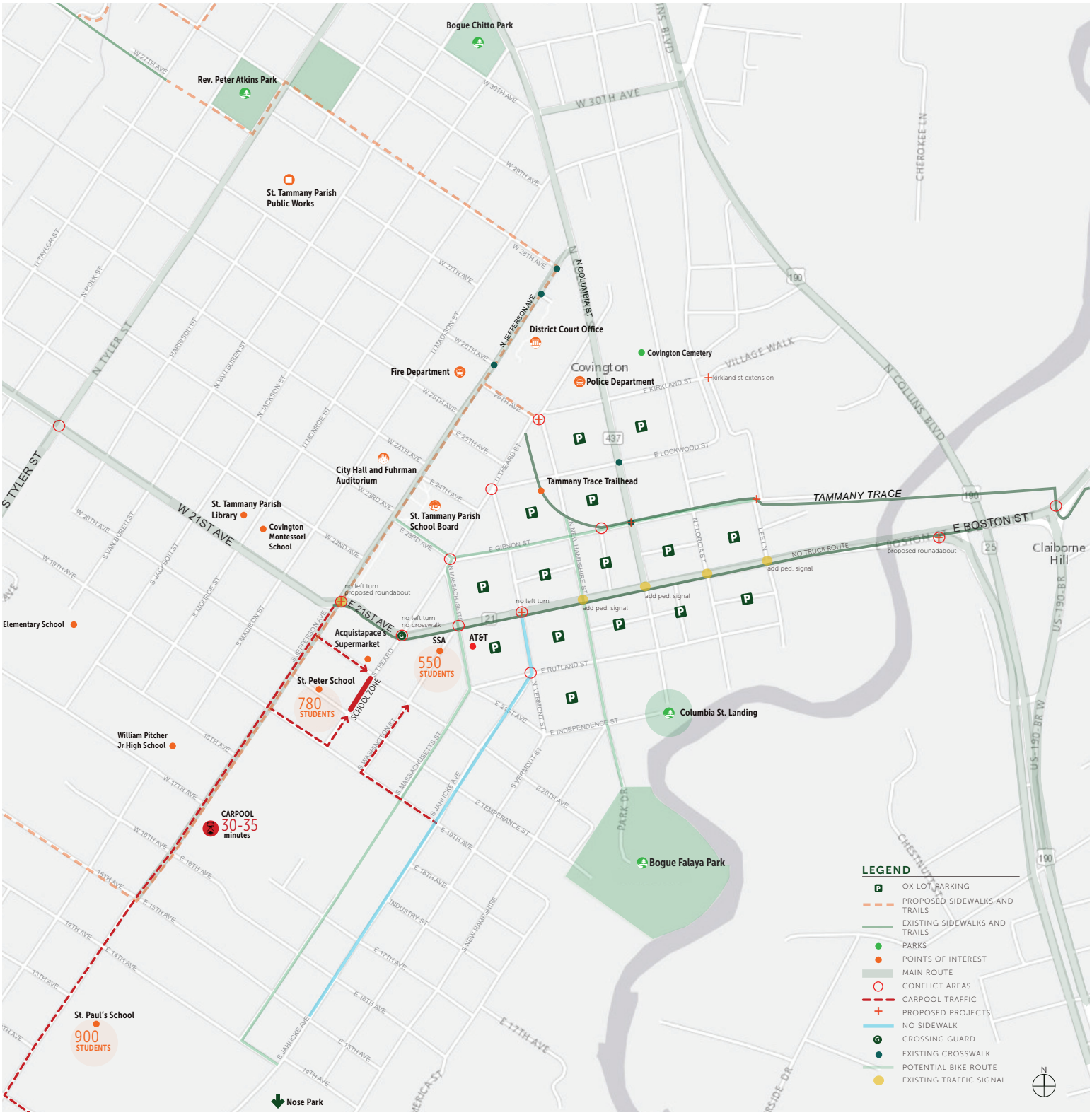




Comments collected during the Columbia Street Block Party

PUBLIC INPUT SYNTHESIS

The public input gathered throughout the project was mapped, along with existing conditions, proposed projects, and other relevant information to give a holistic view of the issues. This mapping exercise helped guide the development of recommendations.



ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Through analysis and stakeholder engagement, the following issues were identified as the most important to address. The recommendations in this plan seek to address these issues through a combination of programmatic and design-focused changes.

1. Any proposal should not only maintain, but enhance Covington's charm and character.
2. Carpool at the many schools causes congestion at peak traffic times.
3. Big trucks traveling through downtown are a nuisance.
4. Access to public parking can be confusing or difficult for visitors.
5. Boston Street intersections are dangerous for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
6. People want better connectivity between downtown destinations, parks, neighborhoods, etc.
7. Downtown Covington needs to accommodate the many festivals and block parties held throughout the year.
8. Boston Street creates a barrier through downtown.

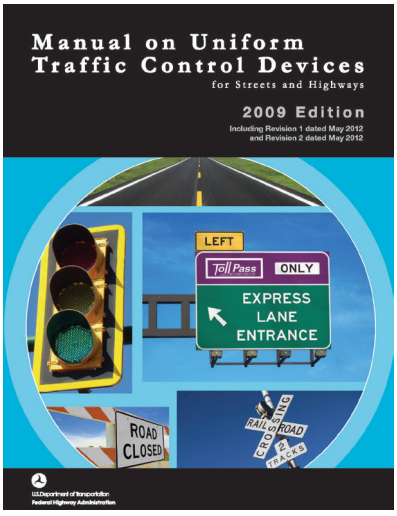
PROJECT METHODOLOGY

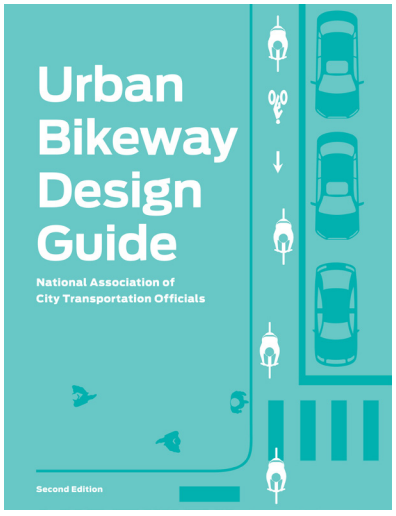
From the beginning of this project, there was no pre-conceived idea of what shape the final product would take. However, it was important that the recommendations identified be practical, economical, and realistic to implement, given the City of Covington's staff capacity, funding, and constraints typical of a small city. It was also important that the recommendations be broken up into manageable phases and incorporated into existing plans for improvements across the city. Informed by the conditions on the ground, information from stakeholders, and best practices, a combination of focused design solutions and coordinated programmatic initiatives are proposed here.

Guiding Principles

- Consider that many of the issues on Boston Street emanate from surrounding area, including cut-through traffic, congestion, regional connectivity problems, etc.
- Build on, and prioritize, existing work.
- Develop strategic design recommendations for Boston Street, as well as complementary low or no-cost programmatic and coordination recommendations.
- Apply best practices creatively and economically to produce a plan that is feasible to implement.

Best Practice Resources





Best practices and uniform standards were used when developing the recommendations to ensure that the final product would comply with DOTD's standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONNECTIVITY AND TRAFFIC CALMING

The recommendations outlined here are explained in depth in the following sections. Each recommendation includes information that will help guide implementation, including action items, benefits, partners, order of magnitude cost, and a step-by-step process, where applicable.

Programmatic Recommendations

1. Walking School Bus
2. Bike to School Days
3. Crossing guards and traffic management
4. Satellite pick-up and drop-off locations for schools
5. Expanded coordination meetings
6. Truck routing around downtown

Design Recommendations

1. Bicycle facilities and improvements
2. Pedestrian facilities and improvements
3. Wayfinding and parking
4. Traffic calming
    A. Street trees
    B. Planting upgrades
    C. Planter upgrades
    D. Access management
    E. On-street parallel parking

LEGEND

- OX LOT PARKING
- PARKS
- POINTS OF INTEREST
- ACCESS MANAGEMENT
- REPLACE EVERY THIRD PLANTER
- REPLACE EXISTING PLANTS
- STREET TREES
- ON STREET PARKING
- BIKE ROUTE
- HIGH VISIBILITY CROSSWALK
- PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL
- SATELLITE PICK UP AND DROP OFF LOCATIONS
- 5 MINUTE WALK
- 10 MINUTE WALK

N

This map shows the proposed locations of the various recommendations. The design and traffic calming solutions are concentrated along Boston Street, while the programmatic solutions that are able to be mapped are spread out in the surrounding area.


22nd Judicial District Court Office
Covington Cemetery
Fire Department
Covington
Covington Police Department
Covington's Farmer's Market
Covington Brewhouse
City Hall
TRAILHEAD LOT
Montessori
St. Tammany Parish School Board
E BOSTON ST
E 21ST AVE
Acquistapace's Supermarket
St. Scholastica Academy
St. Peter School
Columbia St. Landing
Bogue Falaya Park
Bogue Falaya Park
N COLUMBIA ST
VILLAGE WALK
E KIRKLAND ST
E LOCKWOOD ST
N NEW HAMPSHIRE ST
N VERMONT ST
N FLORIDA ST
LEE LN
E GIBSON ST
N MASSACHUSETTS
N THEARD ST
E RUTLAND ST
E INDEPENDENCE ST
PARK DR
S WASHINGTON ST
S MASSACHUSETTS ST
S JAHNCKE AVE
S VERMONT ST
S NEW HAMPSHIRE
E 19TH AVE
E 18TH AVE
INDUSTRY ST
W 28TH AVE
W 27TH AVE
W 26TH AVE
W 25TH AVE
W 24TH AVE
W 23RD AVE
W 22ND AVE
E 25TH AVE
E 24TH AVE
E 23RD AVE
E 20TH AVE
N JEFFERSON AVE
190
437

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Programmatic recommendations are projects or initiatives that are low-cost and easy to implement. They can be rolled out as a first phase of more costly infrastructure changes like intersection improvements and bike lanes. These proposed programmatic recommendations are intended to work in conjunction with design recommendations to create a robust network of traffic calming and connectivity improvements. Additionally, these recommendations may help to build public support for more permanent infrastructure changes.

1. Walking School Bus
2. Bike to School Days
3. Crossing guards and traffic management
4. Satellite pick-up and drop-off locations for schools
5. Expanded coordination meetings
6. Truck routing around downtown

1. Walking School Bus

A walking school bus is a group of children that regularly walks to school with one or more adults. Children meet at a designated location and time off campus and are escorted to school. It can be two families taking turns walking their children to school or a route with meeting points, specific meeting times, and a team of volunteers. The walking school bus should be coordinated with satellite pick-up and drop-off locations, which is described on page 18.

BENEFITS:

- Reduces congestion by taking cars out of carpool.
- Builds physical activity into children's daily routine (one mile of walking equals two-thirds of the recommended daily physical activity).
- Improves academic achievement, learning, memory, and focus.
- Reduces fidgeting in class.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

1. Contact potential participants and partners, including parents, children, principal, law enforcement officers and other community leaders to determine interest in a walking school bus program.
2. Identify the route(s) and walk it without children first.
3. Identify a sufficient number of adults to supervise walkers.
4. It is recommend to have an adult for every 6 children ages 6 to 10. For children 4 to 6, an adult per 3 children is recommended. Fewer adults are needed if children are over 10.
5. Finalize logistics, such as who will participate, how often it will operate (daily or weekly), identify meeting locations and meeting times, training for volunteers, and safety training for children.
6. Kick off the program and have fun!

PARTNERS:

- Participating schools
- City
- Law enforcement

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$$

See page 37 for additional resources

2. Bike to School Days

On a single day every May, thousands of students, families, elected officials and community partners organize walk and bike to school events across the country. Children and chaperones meet at a designated location off campus and ride to school. These events are meant to celebrate the benefits of walking and biking to school and encourage others to try it. Ideally, events such as this encourage schools to establish a regular bike to school program that continues beyond the single event in May.

BENEFITS:

- Ways to try out different routes, modes of transportation, and meeting places for more permanent walking and biking to school program.
- Identifies and document safety concerns for people walking and biking.
- Helps create public awareness about the benefits of daily walking and biking to the individual's health and to Covington's traffic woes.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

1. Outline the event, theme, potential activities, and incentives.
2. Get buy-in from the school(s) and outline the physical and educational benefits of walking and biking. Have a basic outline of the event to share with the principal.
3. Register your event at http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/registration/.
4. Approach partners and recruit volunteers, including teachers, parents, law enforcement, PTO members, crossing guards, businesses, public officials, bicycle shop owners or groups.
5. Finalize event details, such as road closures, safety guidelines, adult chaperones, etc.
6. Promote the event, starting two weeks prior to the event with flyers, press releases, and email blasts to school families and area businesses.
7. Host Bike to School event, making sure to document with photos and numbers of participants.
8. Determine what is needed to make it safe for children to bike and walk to school permanently.

PARTNERS:

- Participating schools
- City
- Law enforcement
- Bike clubs

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$$

See page 37 for additional resources

3. Crossing Guards and Traffic Management

Many of Covington's schools are located in downtown, with a number of them in close proximity to Boston Street. While this location is convenient, central, and walkable, it is not without challenges. The heavy traffic on Boston Street makes it difficult for children to cross safely.

BENEFITS:

- Improves safety for students walking to and from school.
- Encourages students to walk and bike to school by providing a safe environment.
- Keeps carpool and event traffic moving without installing more permanent and expensive features, such as a traffic signal, that are not needed the rest of the day.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

1. Identify and meet with partners, such as law enforcement, school representatives, DOTD, etc.
2. Identify locations and times where crossing guards are needed. (See resources for location identification guidelines).
3. Identify locations and times when traffic direction is needed, such as during carpool and events.
4. Train crossing guards and distribute uniforms and equipment. (See resources for training guidelines and crossing procedures.)
5. Request law enforcement to direct traffic, as needed.

PARTNERS:

- Participating schools
- City
- Law enforcement
- DOTD

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$

See page 37 for additional resources

4. Satellite Pick-up and Drop-off Locations

Locations within a 10-minute walk from the schools have been identified as places where children can be dropped off then walk to school. These locations are determined by walking distance and safety, and are near streets that will allow cars to pick up or drop off children without coming into the most congested area of downtown. Satellite locations can be paired with bike groups or a Walking School Bus to ensure that kids get to school safely.

BENEFITS:

- Reducing the concentration of students being picked up and dropped off in a small area can reduce traffic congestion in downtown.
- Increases physical activity in school children.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

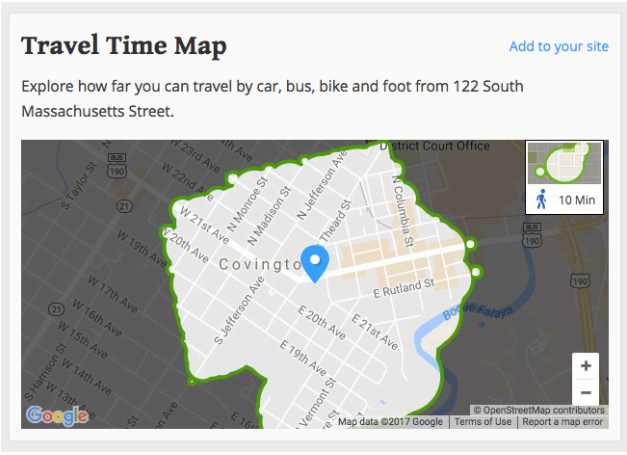
1. Use walk radius map provided to determine pick-up/drop-off locations where children from multiple schools can walk to and be picked up. Three are suggested.
2. Work with the school administrations, law enforcement, library, city and area business to make them aware of the program and address any concerns they may have.
3. Determine routes between satellite locations and schools, and do a trial walk to identify any safety concerns.
4. Recruit parent or teacher volunteers to lead a walking school bus between satellite locations and schools.
5. Work with schools to promote satellite drop-off and pick-up to parents.
6. Organize a walk and bike to school day to try out locations and promote their permanent use.
7. Add signage with times, pick-up locations, and basic safety guidelines at each satellite location.
8. Work with schools, law enforcement, city and volunteers to address any safety concerns with programmatic or design changes.
9. Once more children are walking and biking, the city can request additional safety measures on Boston Street.

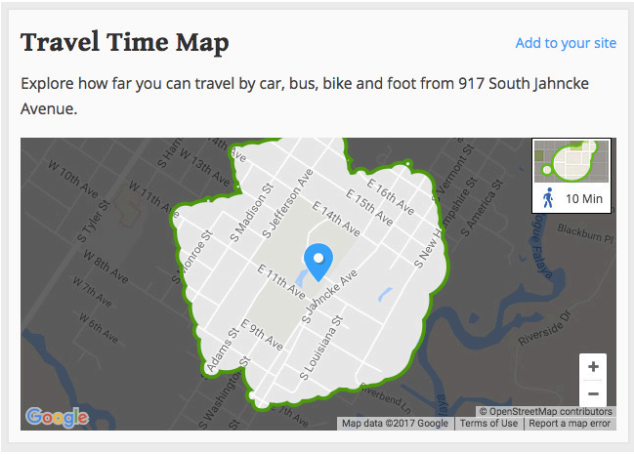
PARTNERS:

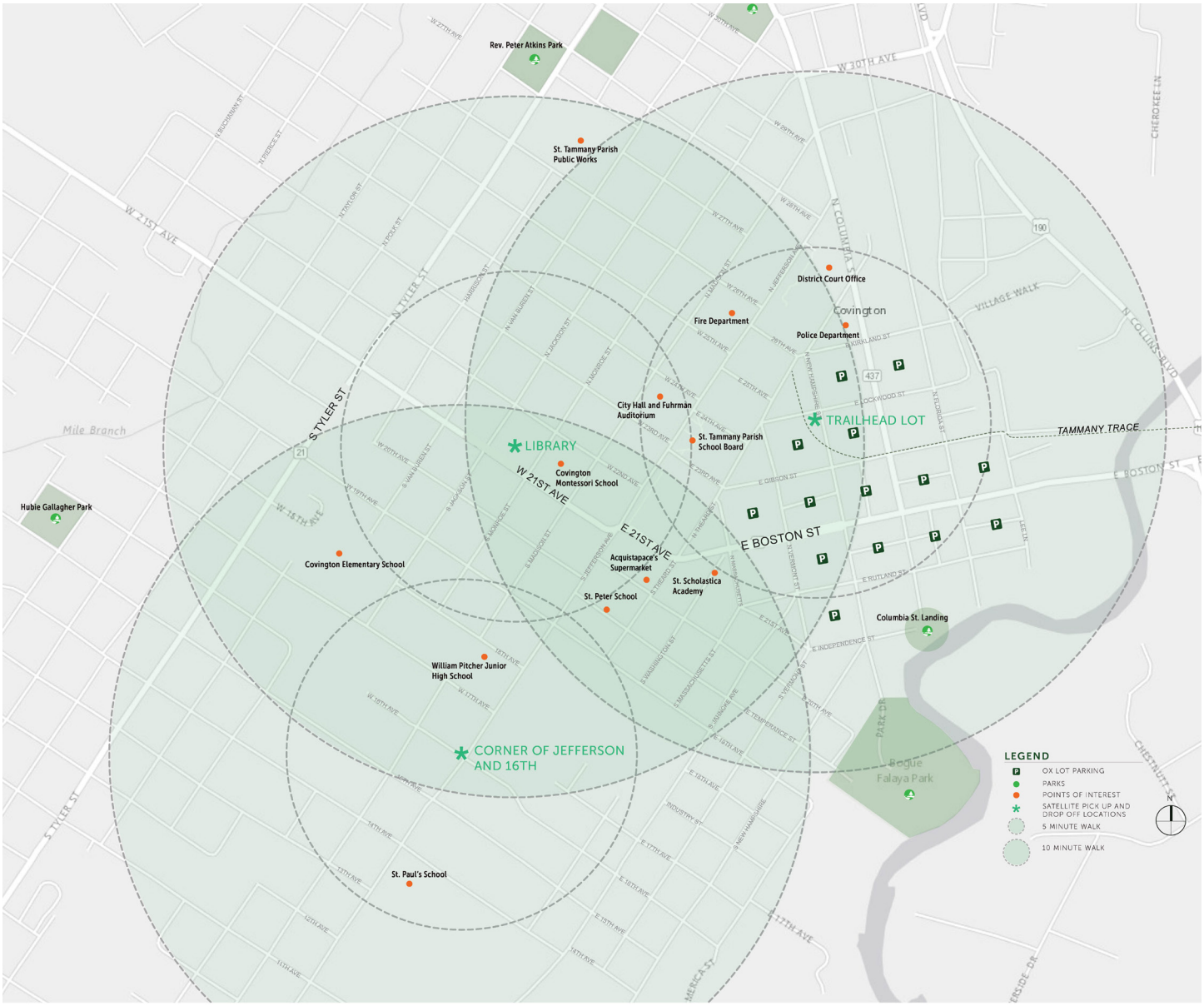
- Participating schools
- Pick-up/drop-off location property owners

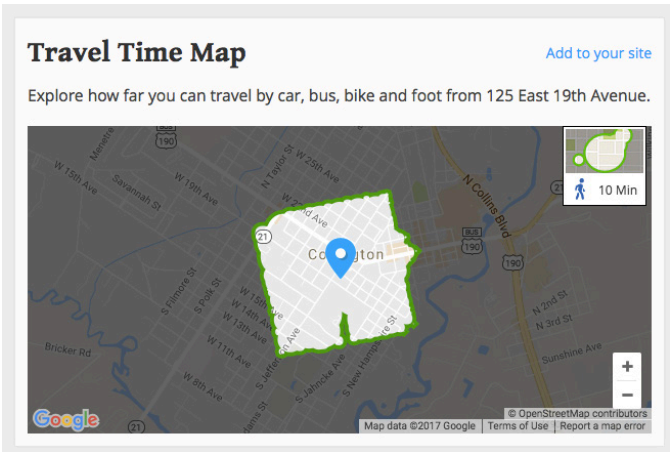
COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$$

See page 37 for additional resources









(Left) Walk Score analyses were used to identify preliminary pick-up and drop-off locations.

(Above) This map identifies 5-minute and 10-minute walk distances from the identified pick-up and drop-off locations.

5. Expanded Coordination Meetings

The schools, fire chief and police chief already meet monthly to coordinate on safety topics on their campuses. This group can be expanded to address safety off campus, such as walking and biking to school and traffic concerns. In addition, quarterly coordination meetings with the city, civic groups, DOTD, Regional Planning Commission (RPC), St. Tammany Parish, etc. will help identify any issues and keep implementation on track.

BENEFITS:

- Coordination ensures that all parties stay informed.
- Resources and knowledge can be shared between schools, the city, and other groups.

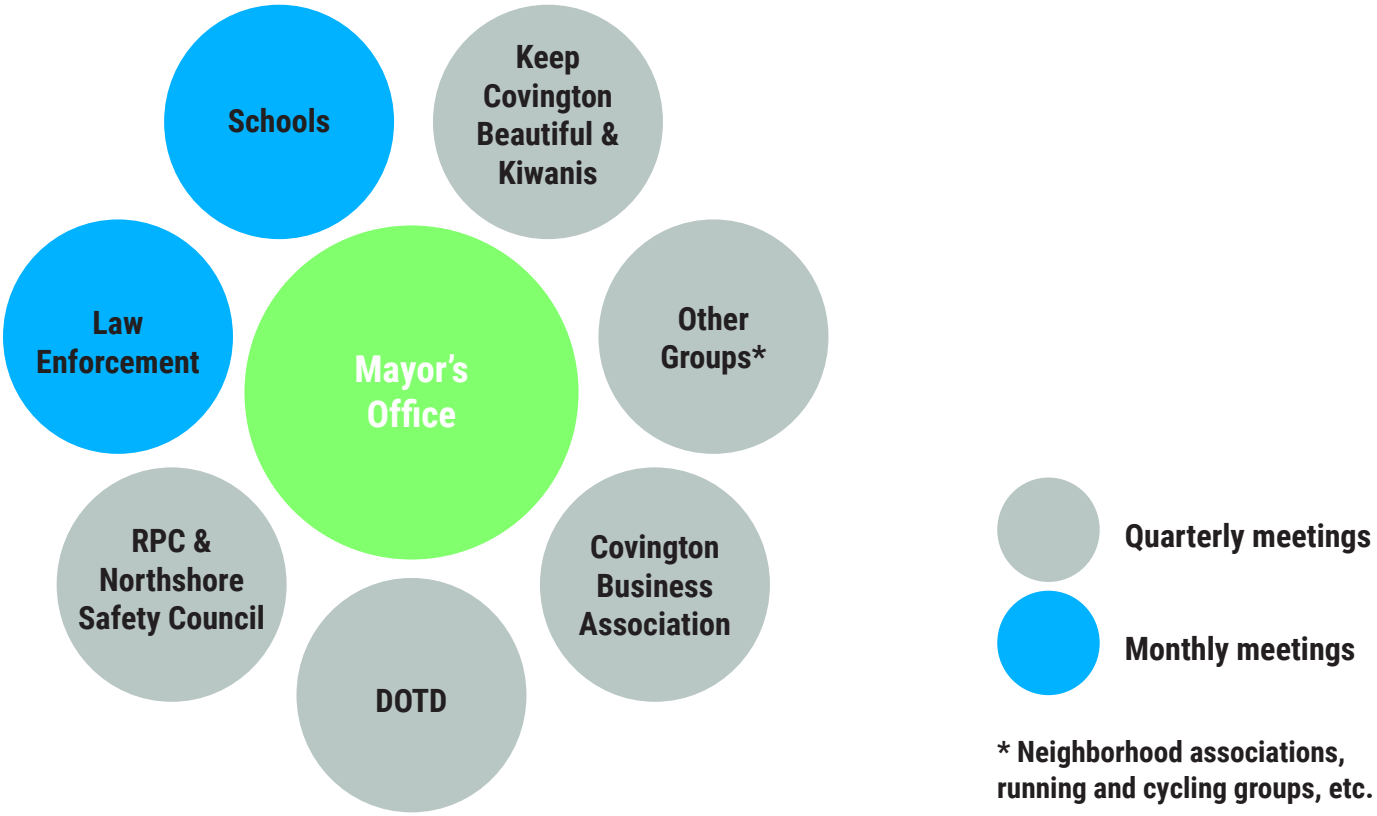
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

1. Expand the monthly school safety meetings to include a representative from the mayor's office.
2. Outline safety concerns for walking and biking to school.
3. Discuss potential partnerships between schools, law enforcement and city.
4. Determine partners' interests in the programmatic recommendations from this plan, such as walking school bus, bike to school days, shared crossing guards or traffic direction.
5. Host a quarterly coordination meeting with community partners, such as DOTD, RPC, Covington Business Association, Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis, St. Tammany Parish, Tammany Trace, etc.
6. Outline a work plan to accomplish agreed upon recommendations.

PARTNERS:

- All listed in graphic below

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$



6. Truck Routing Around Downtown

The presence of large trucks on Boston Street was identified as a major concern for local businesses and residents. While some are in the area for deliveries, it appears as though many trucks are using Boston Street to bypass US HWY 190 or I-12, even though Boston Street is not a designated truck route. Consistent truck route signage and enforcement should help to change the behavior of truck drivers who habitually use the Boston Street route by giving truck drivers clear signage and adequate time to select the correct route.

BENEFITS:

- Routing large trucks around downtown reduces congestion, noise, and wear and tear on city streets.
- Big trucks pose a safety risk to pedestrians in downtown.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

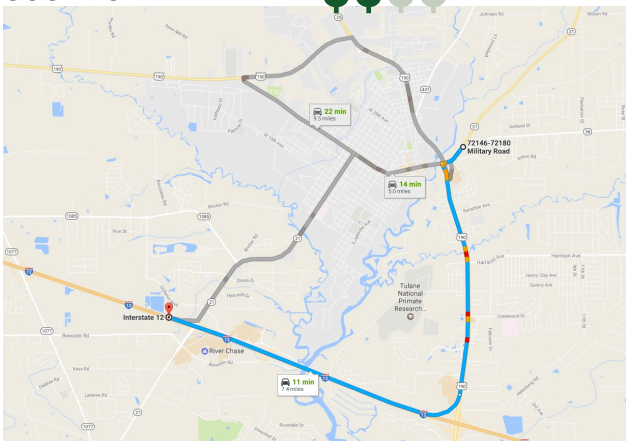
1. Update Google Maps and Waze to route trucks around, not through, downtown.
2. Install state and city signage marking “truck route” and “no trucks” at either end of the no truck route and periodically in between.
3. Ensure that state and local police enforce truck routes.

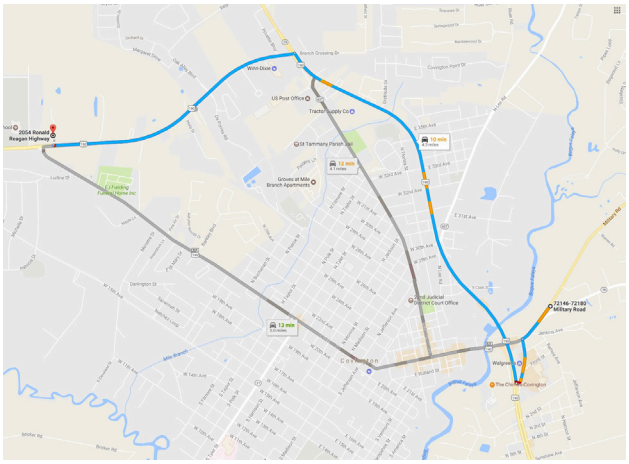
PARTNERS:

- DOTD
- City
- Law enforcement

See page 37 for additional resources

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$





(left) These Google Maps routes show that it is faster to bypass Boston Street.
(below) An 18-wheeler on Boston Street.

TRUCK ROUTE SIGNAGE PROCESS:

1. Determine if the conditions of placement of 'NO TRUCK' signage apply. Conditions are as follows:
    - The route is not designated as a truck route and one of the following conditions are met:
        - The route has a specific weight limitation.
        - The route has a specific geometric limitation.
        - The local jurisdiction can make a request by resolution or other official document.
2. Have a Traffic Engineering report as a reference addressing the traffic issues.
3. The Traffic Engineering Administrator approves signage prior to installation.
4. Forward approved request to the Office of Multi-modal Planning for documentation and the District Traffic Operation Engineer for installation.
5. Signs should be placed at the beginning of the designed route and repeated as necessary.
6. Document the locations of the NO TRUCK ROUTE signs.

R14-1

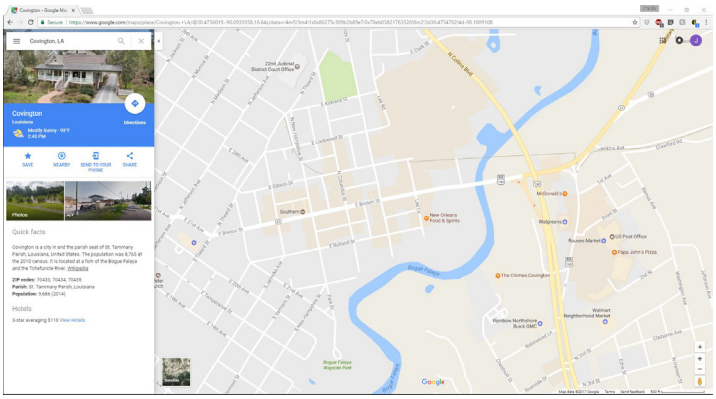
R5-2a

GOOGLE MAPS* UPDATE PROCESS:

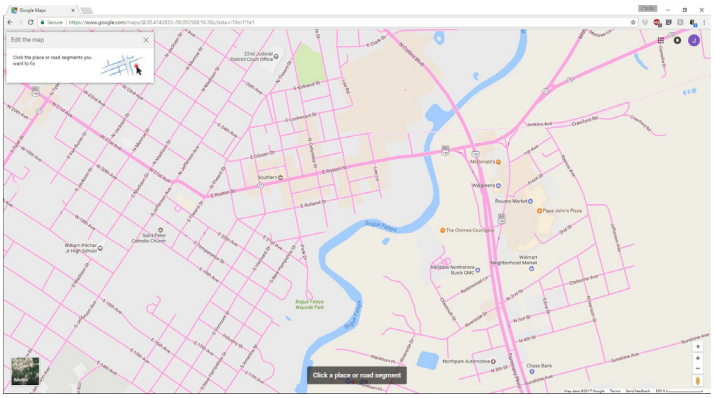
1. In your internet browser type https://www.google.com/maps.
2. Search Covington, LA and zoom into Boston Street.
3. On the lower right of the screen select the option “Send feedback”
4. A new tab appears on the left of the screen with a few options. Select the “Other feedback” option. Submit description.
5. Additionally, under the “Send feedback” tab also select “Edit the map”.
6. Under the option select the entire road and add a description to submit.

*The process for updating Waze is similar.

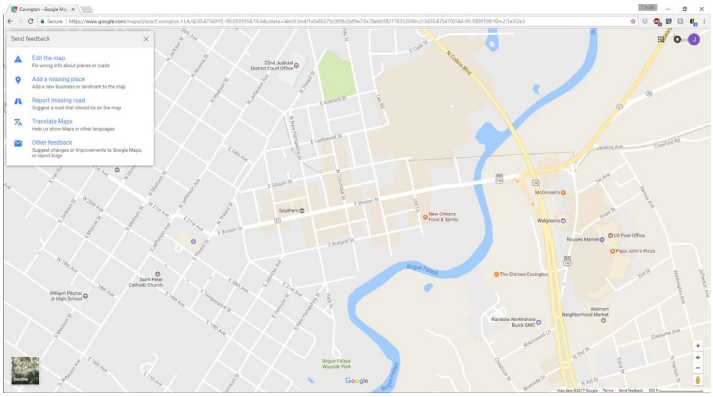
1.



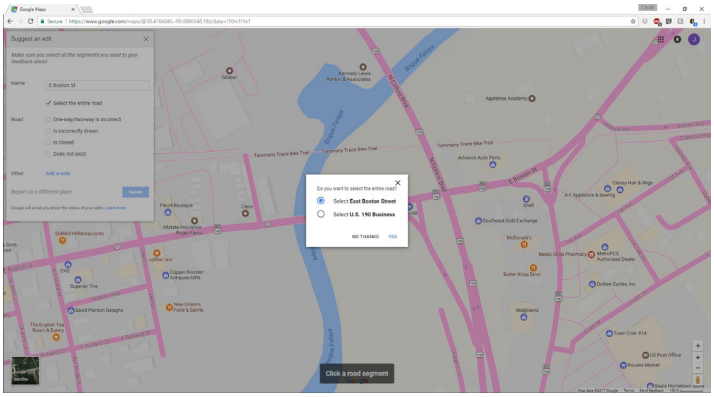
4.



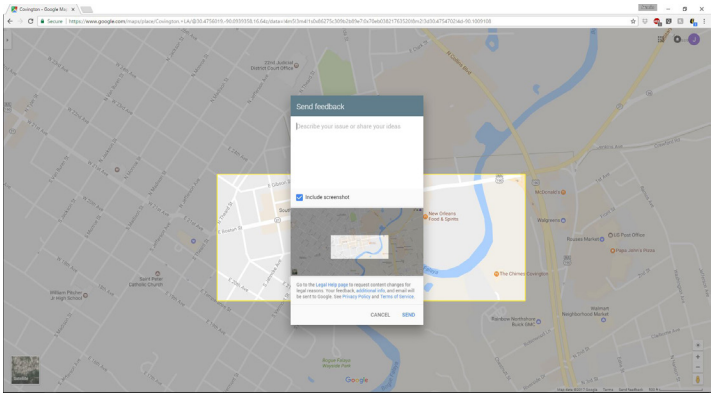
2.



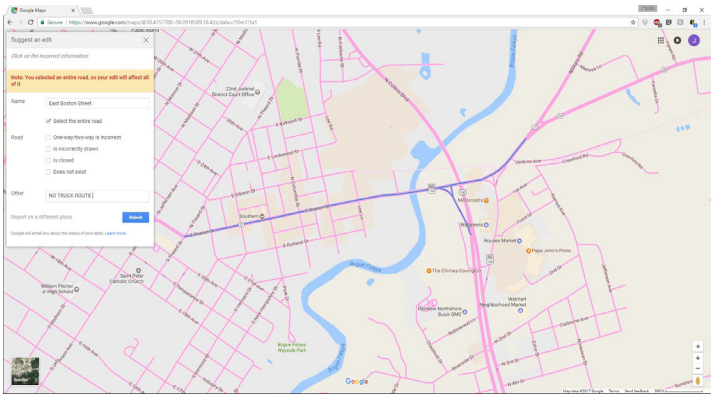
5.



3.



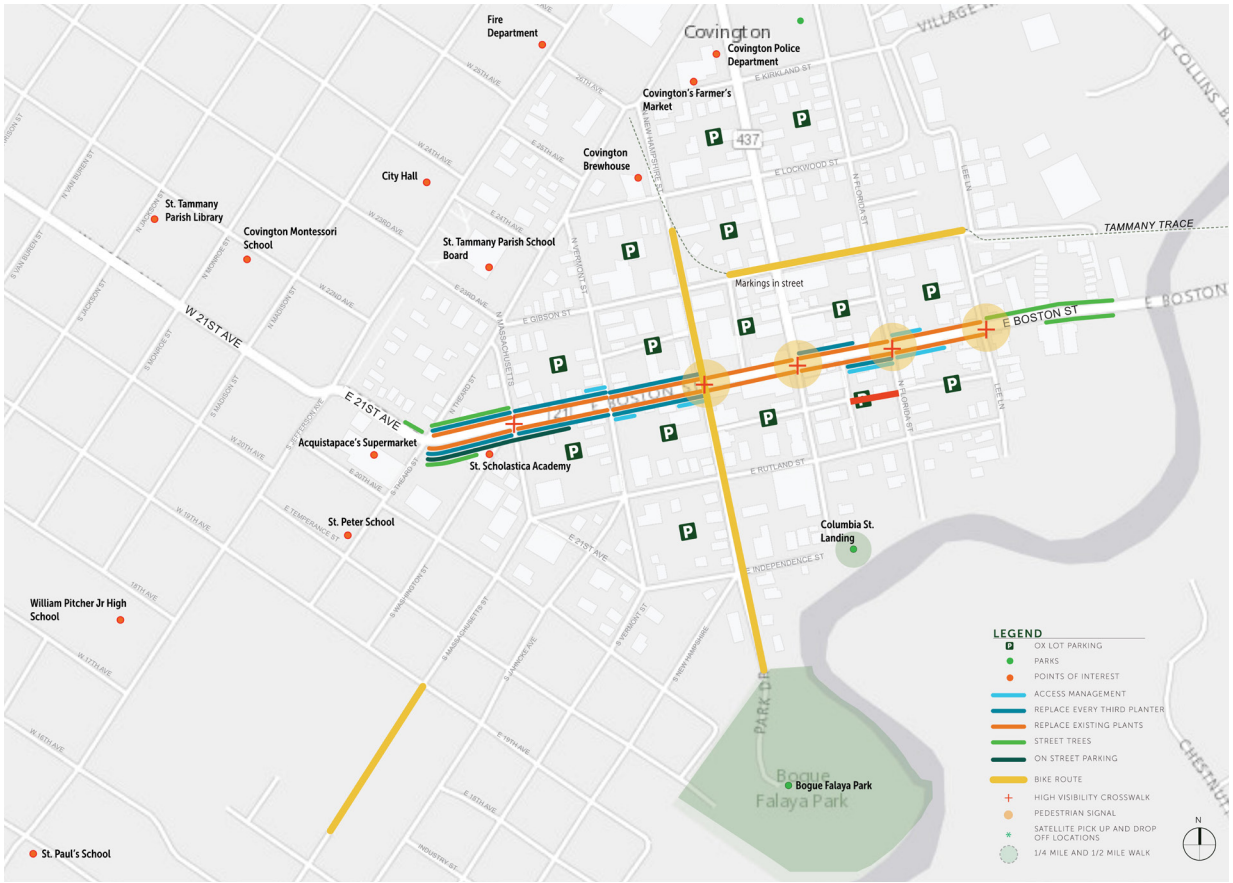
6.



DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

These design-focused recommendations are physical changes and enhancements to the street network in downtown Covington, especially Boston Street. The proposed improvements are design measures intended to create an environment where cars travel slowly through downtown and pedestrians and bicyclists can move about confidently and safely, all while enhancing the existing character of Covington.

1. Bicycle facilities and improvements
2. Pedestrian facilities and improvements
3. Wayfinding and parking
4. Traffic calming
    - A. Street trees
    - B. Planting upgrades
    - C. Planter upgrades
    - D. Access management
    - E. On-street parallel parking



1. Bicycle Facilities and Improvements

Covington is already a bike-friendly community, with the nearby Tammany Trace, an active bike community, and a number of trail projects in the works. A few key connections will help connect visitors and locals alike to the Tammany Trace, parks, schools, and other amenities in downtown Covington.

BENEFITS:

- Reduced roadway and parking congestion
- Increased transportation options
- Economic benefits from improved public health, increased retail and tourism spending, and lower infrastructure costs over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

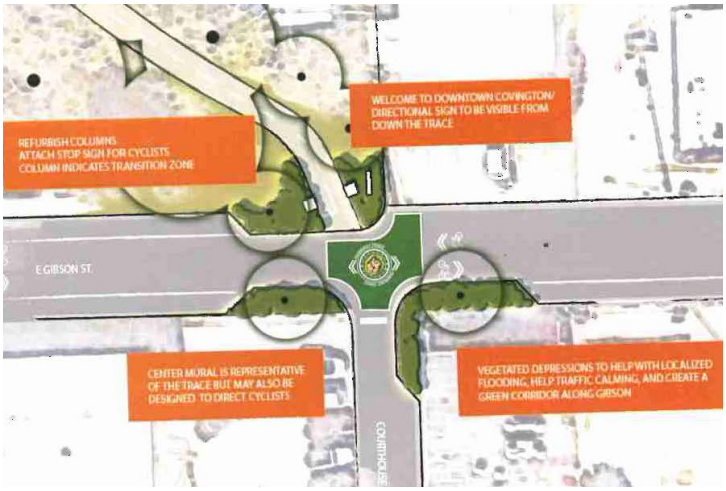
1. Connect trailhead and Tammany Trace with signage and pavement markings on Gibson Street (per the Covington Congestion Management report).
2. Add bike route signage and sharrows on New Hampshire Street between the trailhead and Bogue Falaya Park.
3. Utilize abandoned Massachusetts Street right of way for a multi-use trail.
4. Connect to existing and proposed trail network (Tammany Trace, 27th Ave., proposed Jefferson Ave. trail, etc.)

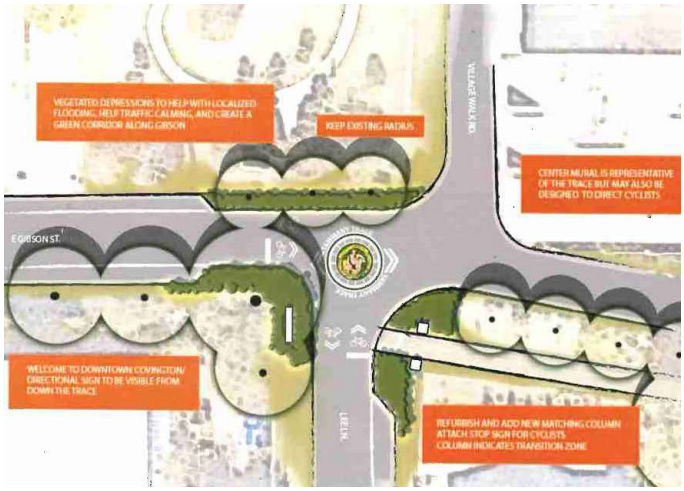
PARTNERS:

- Tammany Trace
- Bike groups
- Covington Business Association (CBA)
- St. Tammany Parish
- City

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$

1.



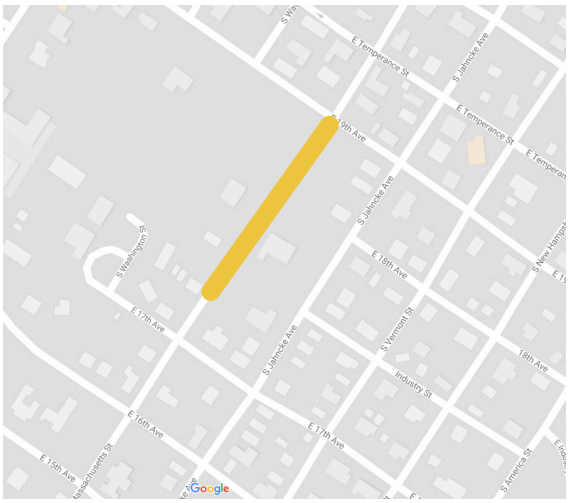


Trailhead to Tammany Trace connection (per Congestion Management Report)

2.

Examples of bike route signage for New Hampshire Street

3.



(above) The unused Massachusetts Street right of way
(left) Possible design for unused right of way

2. Pedestrian Facilities and Improvements

Boston Street creates a barrier for pedestrians in an otherwise walkable downtown. The proper crosswalks, signage, and signals can help make Boston Street safer and easier to cross, which will connect the two sides of downtown.

BENEFITS:

- High visibility "continental" crosswalks are a low cost solution that creates defined space for pedestrians and an opportunity to create something unique to Covington.
- Pedestrian signals and signage notify drivers that pedestrians may be present, and create a predictable environment for drivers and pedestrians.

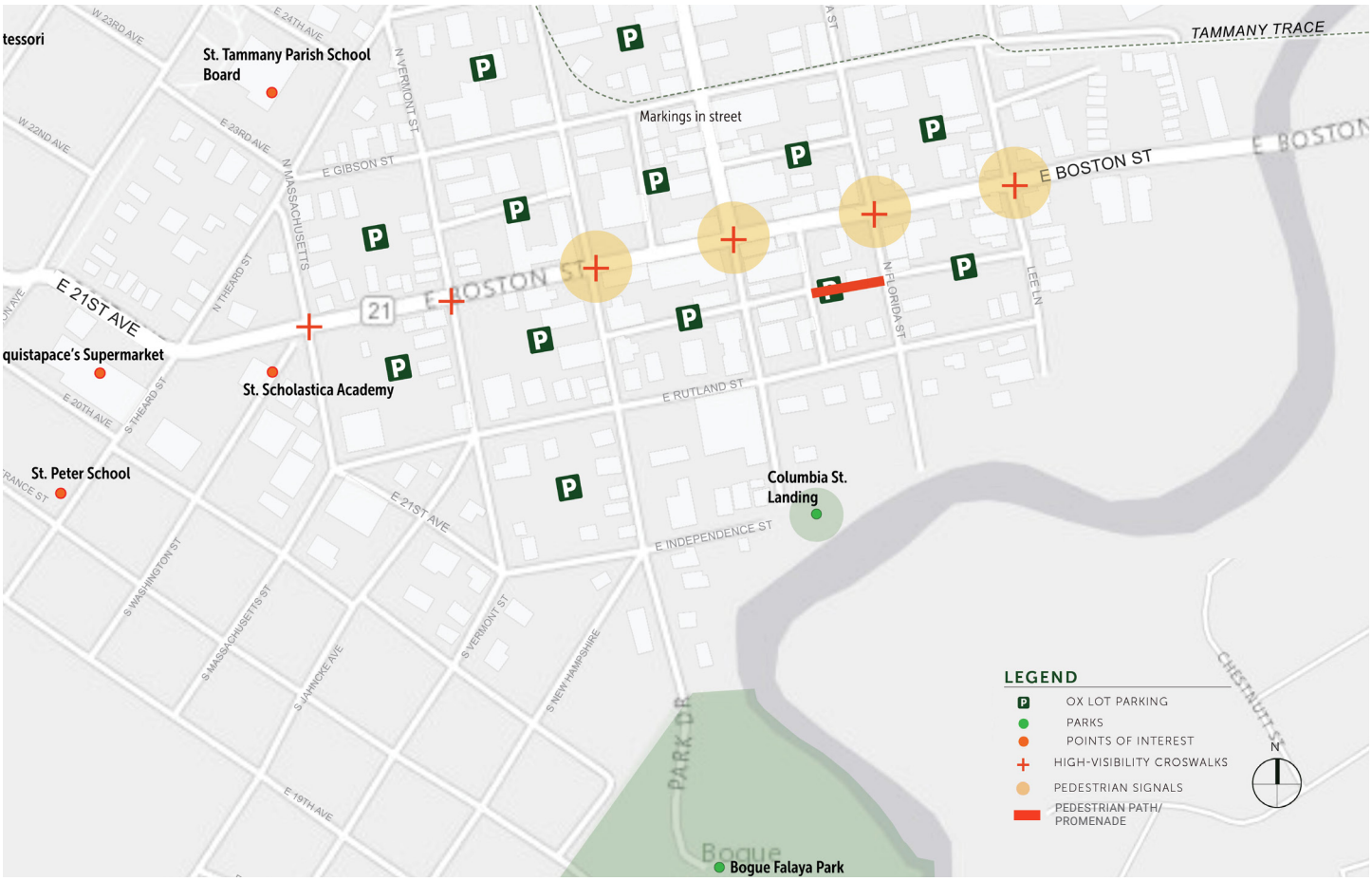
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Add high visibility "continental" crosswalks at intersections on Boston Street.
2. Add pedestrian signals and signage at signalized intersections.
3. Create a pedestrian path or promenade in the apparent Ox Lot right-of-way between St. John Lane and N. Florida Street.

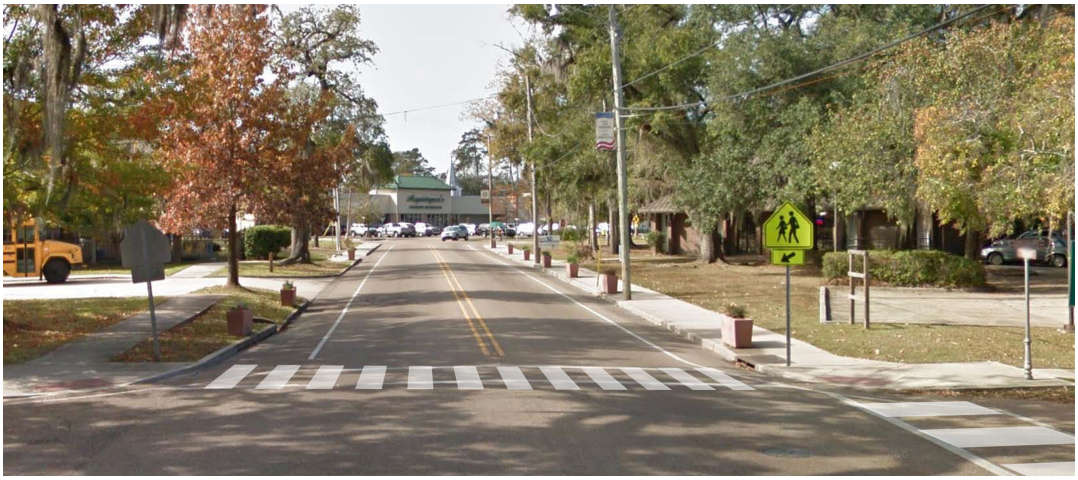
PARTNERS:

- DOTD
- City

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$



1.

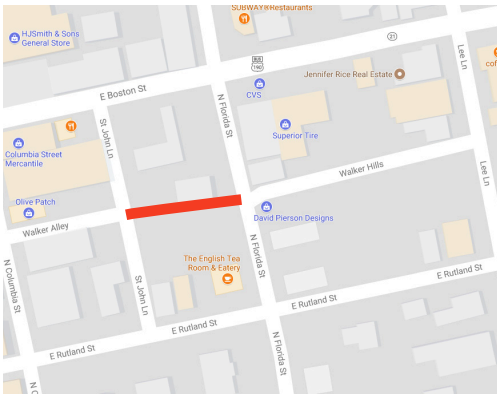


Visualization of traditional high visibility crosswalk (left) and a number of more creative options (below)

2.

Examples of pedestrian coundown signal and MUTCD standard pedestrian signage

3.



Apparent ox lot right of way that is suitable for a pedestrian-only path or promenade

3. WAYFINDING AND PARKING

Difficulty or confusion finding public parking and other downtown points of interest was one of the issues identified early on in this process. Some signage exists and new signage has been added, particularly in the ox lots, but a more comprehensive approach may be needed.

BENEFITS:

- Moderate cost to implement, but potentially large impact.
- Much of this has already been laid out in Congestion Management Plan.

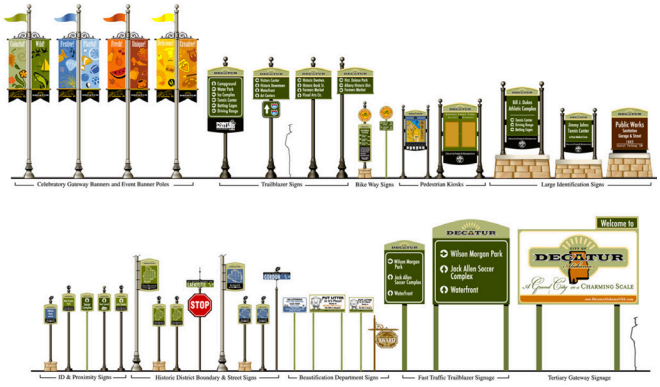
RECOMMENDATION:

1. Develop a coordinated wayfinding plan with appropriately scaled and spaced signage for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
2. Install Covington-specific signage to encourage drivers to slow down.
3. Utilize recommendations in Covington Congestion Management Plan, particularly those related to ox lot parking.

PARTNERS:

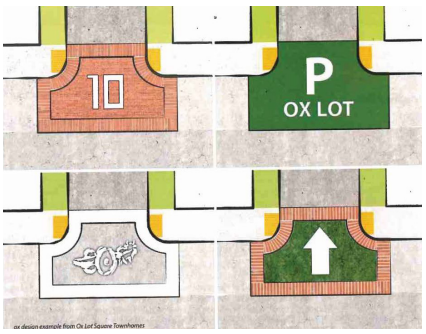
- City
- Covington Business Association (CBA)
- DOTD
- Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$



Examples of coordinated wayfinding from Burlington, VT (above) and Decatur, AL (right)

Existing ox lot signage



Ox lot wayfinding proposed in the Congestion Management Plan

Signage to encourage drivers to slow down and drive carefully. These can be customized for Covington.

4. TRAFFIC CALMING ON BOSTON STREET

The recommendations in this subsection focus on the issue of traffic calming. The solutions outlined here will help create an environment along Boston Street where drivers will feel less comfortable traveling at higher speeds. As a result, they will slow down, and pay more attention to the surrounding environment, which creates a safer environment for people of all ages, abilities, and modes of transportation.

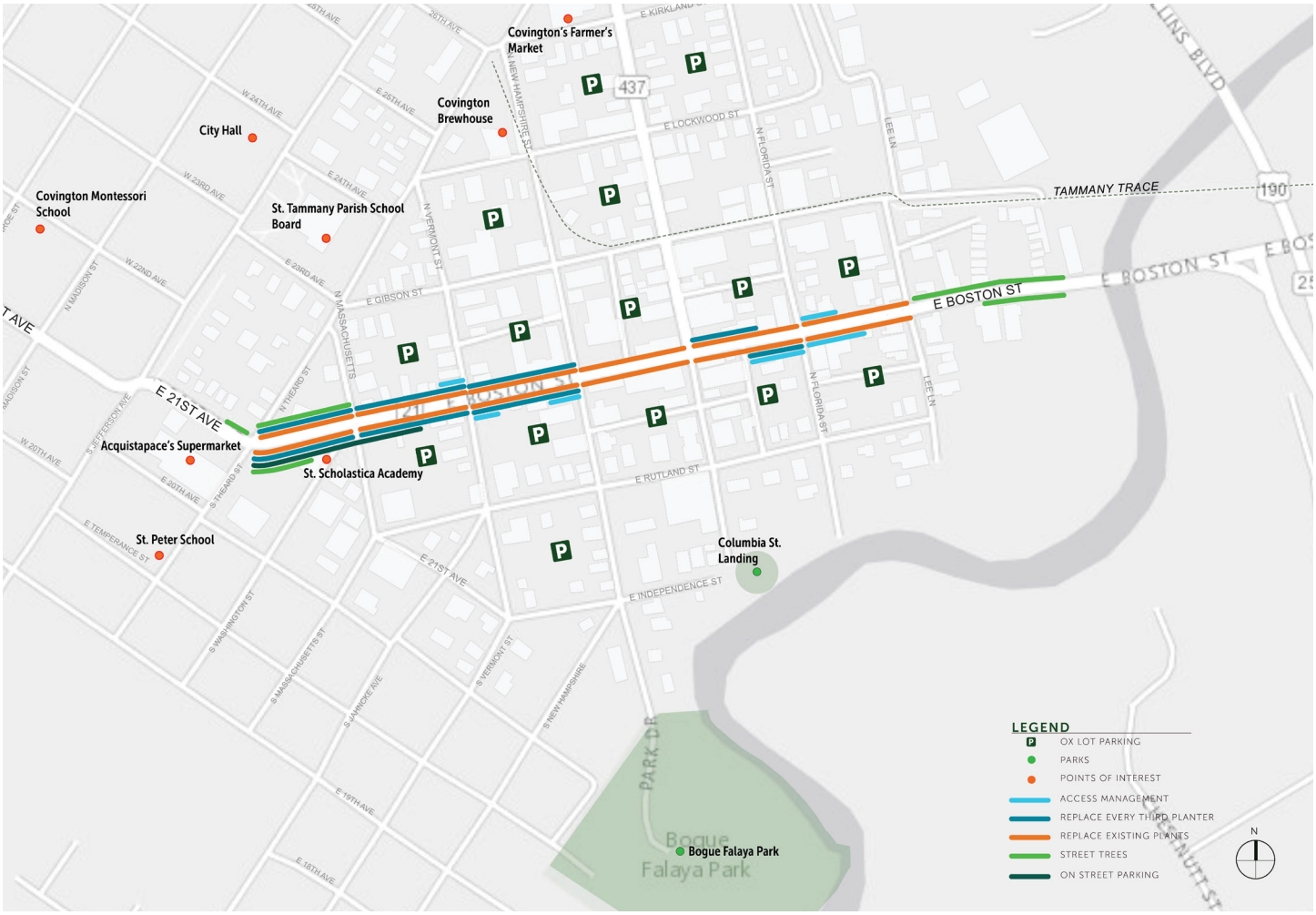
A. Street trees

B. Planting upgrades

C. Planter upgrades

D. Access management

E. On-street parallel parking



4A. STREET TREES

Street trees offer a number of benefits, including shade, reduced energy costs, improved aesthetics, and in this situation, they help to calm traffic. Different trees can be used to mark gateways and create a sense of arrival. Suitable locations along Boston Street have been identified for street trees. These areas have adequate right-of-way free of building awnings, while maintaining generous sidewalk width.

BENEFITS:

- Create "Green Gateways" into downtown
- Provide buffer from street
- Provide shade
- Cause drivers to slow down

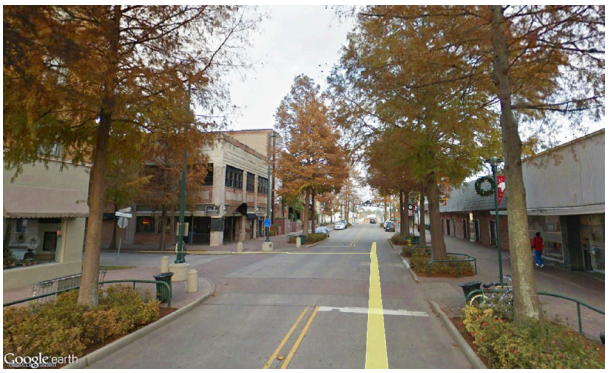
RECOMMENDATION:

1. Plant street trees where identified (Bald Cypress recommended).

PARTNERS:

- DOTD, Covington Tree Board
- Covington Business Association (CBA)

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$



Bald Cypress street tree plantings in Lafayette and Baton Rouge

Locations identified for street trees

4B. PLANTING UPGRADES

The existing planters along Boston Street are a great way to provide a buffer between the cars on the road and pedestrians on the sidewalk. With a few adjustments, this strategy can be even more effective.

BENEFITS:

- Provides buffer from street
- Low cost, intermediate solution
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Opportunity to engage businesses as sponsors

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Replace plantings in existing planters in identified areas along Boston Street with taller, more robust plants that will create a better buffer between cars and pedestrians. Plant selections should adhere to DOTD's sight triangle guidelines, particularly at intersections.

PARTNERS:

- City, Covington Tree Board
- Covington Business Association (CBA)
- Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$

Visualization of larger plantings in the existing planters along Boston Street

Locations identified for planting upgrades

4C. PLANTER UPGRADES

Replacing some of the existing planters is a strategy to further enhance the existing strategy of using planters along the street. A number of new, larger planters in suitable areas will allow for larger plants and small trees. This is way to get the affect of street trees in areas that are not well suited to planting traditional street trees.

BENEFITS:

- Provides buffer from street
- Causes drivers to slow down
- Less costly than street trees
- Good solution for areas where street trees are not feasible
- Opportunity to engage businesses as sponsors

RECOMMENDATIONS:

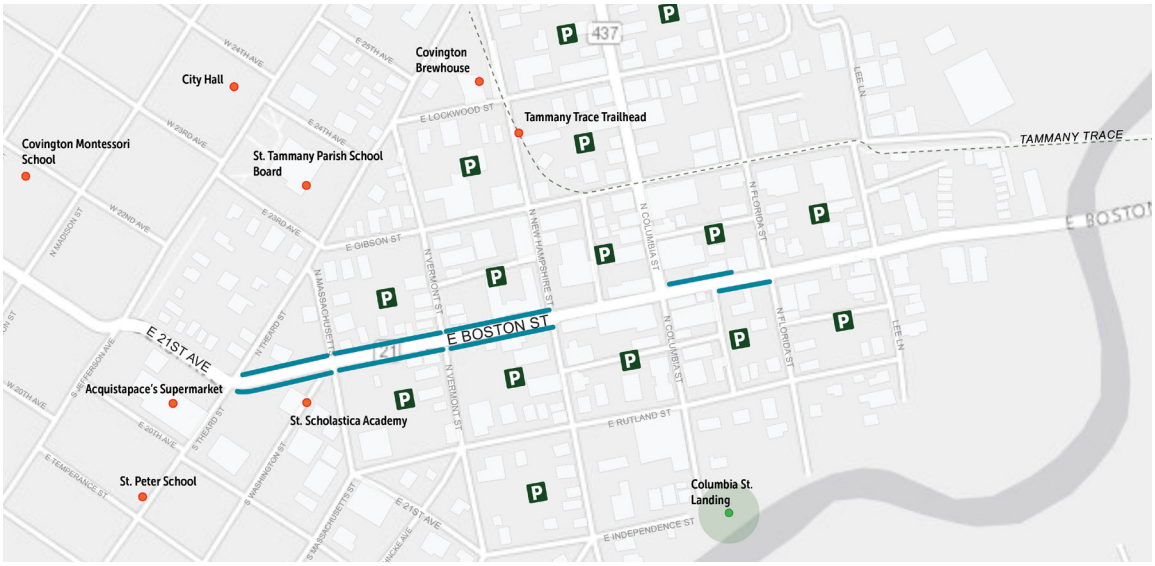
1. Replace every third planter in identified areas with a larger one that provides space for larger plants and small trees.

COORDINATION NEEDED:

- City
- Covington Business Association (CBA)
- Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$

Larger planters can accommodate small trees. Stock tanks similar to ones on Columbia Street could be used as well.



Locations identified for planter upgrades

4D. ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Good access management is an effective way of improving safety for all users of a road. On Boston Street, areas have been identified as good candidates for improved access. These are places where there is little or no differentiation between road, driveway, sidewalk, and parking. Clearly defining these spaces will make Boston Street safer and more enjoyable for everyone who uses it.

BENEFITS:

- Creates defined driveways for businesses.
- Creates a safer, more predictable environment for all users.
- Creates space for additional street trees and landscaping.
- Encourages pedestrian activity, which in turn reduces traffic.

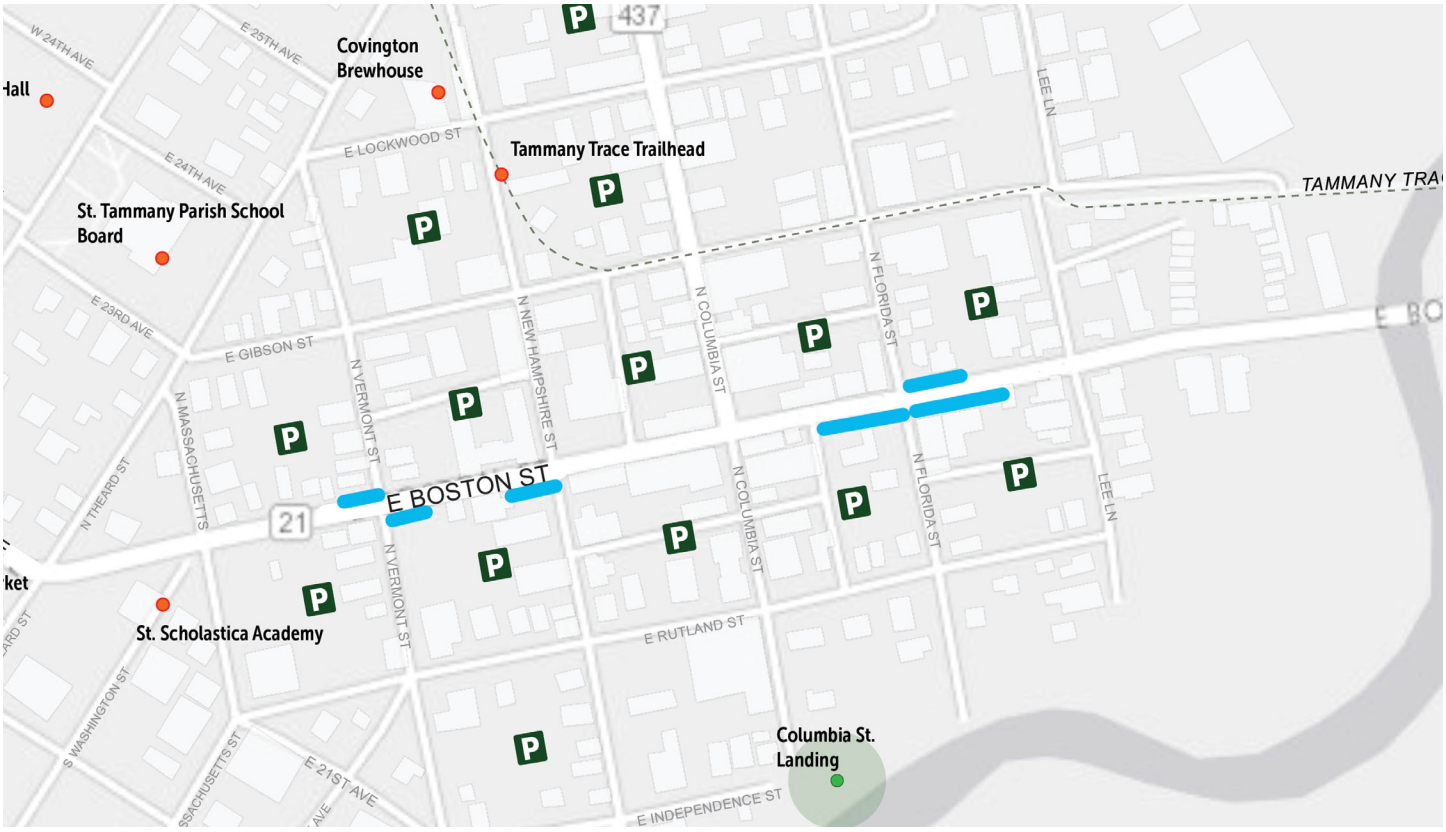
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Manage access from properties that have side street access by reducing or removing driveways on Boston Street.
2. Use surplus planters from Recommendation 4C as a first phase "trial" before making any permanent investment. The planters and marking paint can be used to delineate driveways and pedestrian areas in front of the identified businesses.

PARTNERS:

- City
- Covington Business Association (CBA)
- DOTD

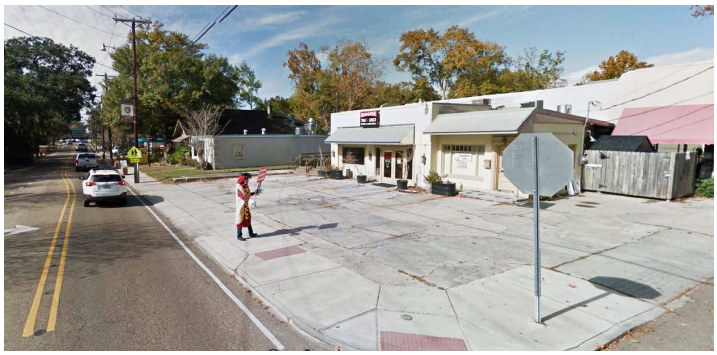
COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$

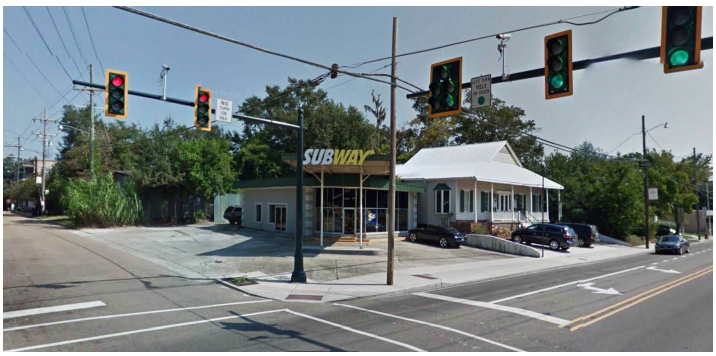


Locations identified for access management

A roadway similar to Boston Street with poorly managed access

Visualization of the same roadway with access management practices applied





Areas identified as needing access management. These properties all have multiple driveways on Boston Street or access from a side street.

4E. ON-STREET PARALLEL PARKING

Sections of Boston Street have a considerable amount of excess paving that could be utilized for traffic calming. On-street parking is a traffic calming strategy that can utilize the extra space, while providing a small amount of additional parking in downtown near St. Scholastica Academy and St. Peter School.

BENEFITS:

- Narrow lanes and parked cars help to slow down traffic.
- On-street parking provides another option for parking in downtown.
- Parked cars create a buffer between the street and sidewalk.

RECOMMENDATION:

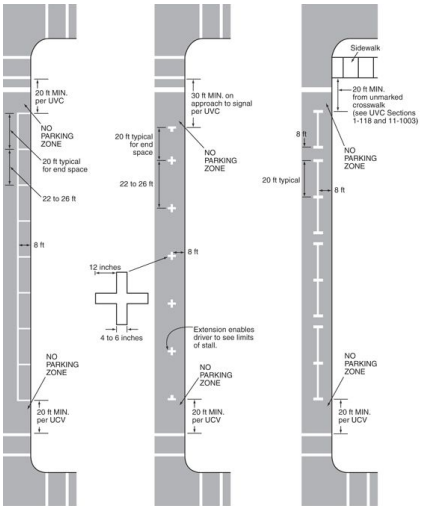
1. Create on-street parallel parking on the south side of Boston Street where identified.

PARTNERS:

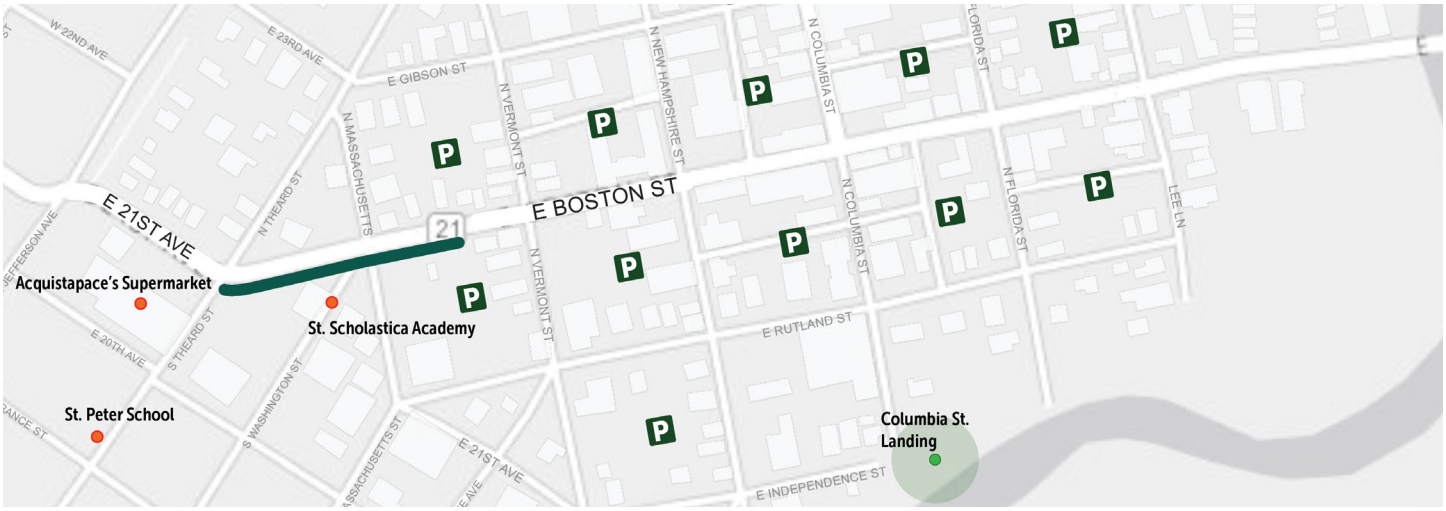
- DOTD
- City

COST TO IMPLEMENT: $$$$

Location identified for on-street parallel parking



Parallel parking guidelines from MUTCD



Location identified for on-street parallel parking

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WALKING SCHOOL BUS & BIKE TO SCHOOL DAYS

- walkbiketoschool.org/plan/how-to-plan/getting-started-guide/
- walkbiketoschool.org/plan/how-to-plan/
- walkbiketoschool.org/plan/event-ideas/
- walkbiketoschool.org/plan/downloadable-materials/

CROSSING GUARDS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

- http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/crossing_guard/
- http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/crossing_guard/identifying_the_locations_where_adult_school_crossing_guards_are_needed.cfm
- http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/crossing_guard/crossing_procedures_for_a_variety_of_situations.cfm

SATELLITE PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

- https://www.walkscore.com/

TRUCK ROUTING AROUND DOWNTOWN

- https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2003r1/Ch2B.pdf
- https://www.google.com/maps
- https://www.waze.com/editor/

BEST PRACTICE RESOURCES

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
- NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide
- NACTO Urban Street Design Guide
- Small Town and Rural Design Guide, http://ruraldesignguide.com/

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Programmatic Recommendations

Programmatic recommendations are projects or initiatives that are low-cost and easy to implement. They can be rolled out as a first phase of more costly infrastructure changes like intersection improvements and bike lanes. These proposed programmatic recommendations are intended to work in conjunction with design recommendations to create a robust network of traffic calming and connectivity improvements.

RECOMMENDATION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	PARTNERS	COST	FUNDING SOURCES
1) Establish a bike to school day in May and promote to school families and residents.	Immediate	City	Downtown schools, law enforcement, bike clubs	$	Local grants, local operational & capital, Regional Planning Commission
2) Host activities on campus for bike to school day.	Immediate	Downtown schools	Law enforcement, bike clubs	$	Local grant
3) Utilize off-duty law enforcement officers to manage traffic during school and during off-hours events to keep traffic flowing.	Immediate	City	Downtown schools, law enforcement, Covington Business Association	$$	Local operational & capital, downtown schools, NHTSA 402, TA
4) Hold periodic meetings with schools, NGOs, and law enforcement to coordinate traffic and safety issues.	Immediate	City	Downtown schools, law enforcement, bike clubs, NGOs, others	$	N/A
5) Update Google Maps and Waze to route trucks around, not through, downtown.	Immediate	City	Google Maps, Waze	$	N/A
6) Ensure that state and local police enforce truck routes.	Immediate	Law Enforce-ment	City	$	N/A
7) Establish regular walking school buses and routes to downtown schools.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Downtown schools	City, law enforcement	$	N/A
8) Establish bike to school routes that build on proposed bike and pedestrian improvements.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Downtown schools, law enforcement, civic associations	$	N/A
9) Strategically locate crossing guards or traffic officers to help children walk to and from school safely.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Downtown schools, law enforcement, DOTD	$$	NHTSA 402, TA, Regional Planning Commission
10) Establish satellite locations where children can be dropped off/picked up then walk to/from school by themselves or as a walking school bus.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Downtown schools, parents, library, law enforcement	$	N/A
11) Promote satellite locations and walking school bus with school and school families.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Downtown schools	Parents, City	$	Regional Planning Commission, local operational & capital
12) Install state and city signage marking “truck route” and “no trucks.”	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	DOTD	$$	DOTD, local operational & capital
13) Add drop-off/pick-up location signage with walking school bus schedule.	Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	Downtown schools, parents	$$	Regional Planning Commission, local operational & capital, TA, STP

Design Recommendations

These design-focused recommendations are physical changes and enhancements to the street network in downtown Covington, especially Boston Street. The proposed improvements are design measures intended to create an environment where cars travel slowly through downtown and pedestrians and bicyclists can move about confidently and safely, all while enhancing the existing character of Covington.

RECOMMENDATION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	PARTNERS	COST	FUNDING SOURCES
1) Connect trailhead and Tammany Trace with signage and pavement markings on Gibson Street	Immediate (in process)	City	St. Tammany Parish, Tammany Trace	$$	RTP, HSIP, CMAQ, LRSP, STP, TA, SRTPPP
2) Use clear and legible signage to direct drivers to public parking.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Covington Business Association	$$	Local operational & capital
3) Add signage to encourage people to slow down downtown.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Covington Business Association, Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis	$$	Local operational & capital, private grants
4) Replace plantings in existing planters along Boston Street with taller, more robust plants.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Covington Business Association, Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis	$$	Local operational & capital, private grants
5) Use surplus planters as a first phase "trial" before making any permanent investment.	Short-term (1-2 years)	City	Covington Business Association, Businesses, Keep Covington Beautiful, DOTD	$	N/A
6) Add bike route signage and sharrows on New Hampshire Street between the trailhead and Bogue Falaya Park.	Short-term (1-2 years)/ Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	St. Tammany Parish	$$	RTP, parks, TA, HSIP, LRSP, STP
7) Connect Boston Street to existing proposed trail network.	Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	Covington Business Association, DOTD	$$$	TA, SRTPPP, CMAQ, RTP, HSIP, LRSP, STP
8) Add high visibility crosswalks at intersections on Boston Street	Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	DOTD	$$	TA, CMAQ, RTP, HSIP, LRSP, STP
9) Add pedestrian signals and signage at intersections.	Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	DOTD	$$$	TA, SRTPPP, CMAQ, RTP, HSIP, LRSP, STP
10) Highlight bike routes and nearby destinations with signage and road markings.	Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	St. Tammany Parish, Covington Business Association	$$	Local operational & capital, TA, CMAQ, RTP, HSIP, LRSP, STP
11) Replace every third planter with a larger one that provides space for larger plants and small trees.	Mid-term (3-5 years)	City	Covington Business Association, Keep Covington Beautiful, Kiwanis	$$	Local operational & capital, private grants
12) Plant street trees where identified.	Mid-term (3-5 years)/ Long-term (5+ years)	City	Covington Business Association, DOTD	$$$	Local operational & capital, private grants
13) Create on-street parallel parking on Boston Street where identified.	Mid-term (3-5 years)/ Long-term (5+ years)	City	DOTD	$$$	Local operational & capital, DOTD
14) Utilize abandoned Massachusetts Street right of way for a multi-use trail.	Long-term (5+ years)	City	Downtown schools, property owners	$$$$	TA, SRTPPP, CMAQ, RTP, HSIP, LRSP, STP, RTP
15) Manage access from properties that have side street access.	Long-term (5+ years)	City	Covington Business Association, DOTD, Businesses	$$$$	LRSP, DOTD

Funding Key

HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
LRSP: Local Road Safety Program
NHTSA 402: State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program
RTP: Recreational Trails Program
SRTPPP: Safe Routes to Public Places Program
STP: Surface Transportation Program
TA: Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside

Prepared By:  CENTER *for* PLANNING EXCELLENCE

August 2017