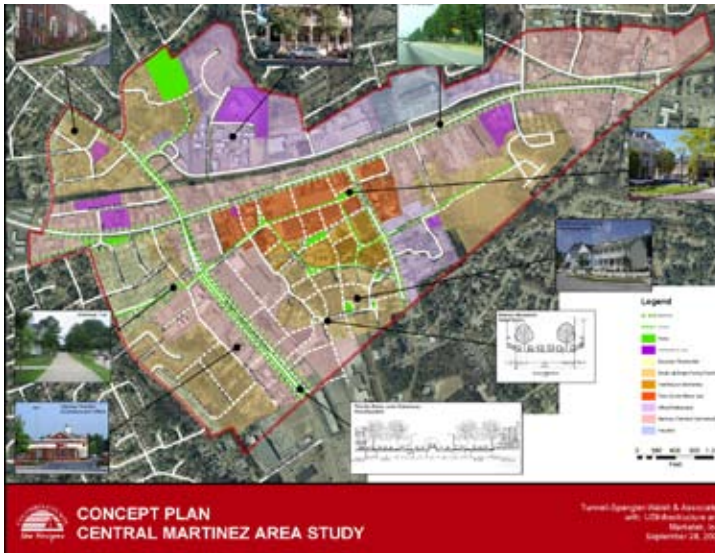


# CENTRAL MARTINEZ AREA STUDY

Central Martinez, Georgia



The Central Martinez area has many strengths such as proximity to central Augusta, ease of access to I-20, and strong residential neighborhoods, but these opportunities come with potential problems and special concerns. The proximity to I-20 offers development promise, but also includes the problem of dealing with the cut through traffic and pressure to maintain the area as auto-dependant. The potential decline of commercial development and its impact on the area's marketability is another challenge, as is the limited mix of land uses. An oversupply of surface parking helps to create a pedestrian-hostile environment making the creation of inviting and higher-end retail difficult. Washington Road as the gateway to Augusta National Golf Club is an important route through the area and merits special attention.

The challenge of creating a healthy mix-use area comes with additional concerns of providing neighborhood services, reducing oversized parking ratios, and ensuring a mix of housing types and price points. Connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods, nearby centers, and park and recreational opportunities is crucial. Future development within the area must occur at a scale and character that respects nearby single-family residential neighborhoods. Forested single-family neighborhoods are one of Martinez's greatest asset, and cannot be overlooked in the effort to revitalize commercial areas.

The TSW Team explored these issues to create a visionary, yet workable plan emphasizing the community input processes. TWS's past successes in corridor planning is directly attributable to the development of a close relationship between the professional, the client and citizens. Our experience has created a planning technique that brings parties together to resolve issues, define goals and objectives and develop a plan that is supported by all. By doing this, the client and stakeholders fully participate in consensus building and are able to resolve complex issues in a condensed time period. The entire project was grounded with extensive site visits, interviews and meetings, during which stakeholders voiced their opinions on a myriad of issues. By becoming a part of the community and establishing communication throughout the planning process TSW is better able to understand the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The Central Martinez Study Area focused on future development plans for the area of Washington Road from Davis Road to Bobby Jones Expressway. After a review phase, the plan will go before county commissioners, who will decide whether the plan should be implemented to preserve businesses in the Central Martinez Area and add new amenities. The central site the plan focuses on is the West Town Shopping Center with the Kmart shopping center serving as the catalyst project.

The first step of redeveloping the area of the West Town Shopping Center fronting Washington Road would include adding several new businesses there within the next five to 10 years. Parking decks also could be added where the shopping center parking lot is now. Twenty years out, if Kmart were to close, the Kmart site also could be developed into a main street/town square concept. Also, neighborhoods behind Kmart could be developed to become more upscale.

By recognizing existing challenges and building upon opportunities, the Study is intended to serve as a guide for positive change that both benefits the immediate area and the citizenry of Columbia County.