SMYRNA GATEWAY | SMYRNA, GA

A VISION FOR THE SPRING ROAD CORRIDOR

GEORGIA TECH CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING | DECEMBER, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Smyrna is a thriving community in Cobb County characterized by its Market Village, tight-knit neighborhoods, diverse population, and close proximity to the City of Atlanta. In November 2013, the Atlanta Braves announced plans to relocate outside of the City of Atlanta, constructing a new stadium (Sun Trust Park) and mixed use development (The Battery) at the I-75/I-285 interchange in Cobb County. This sudden relocation of a Major League Baseball team ushered in the potential for substantial development opportunities in the Cumberland Area, a traditionally suburban job center. Smyrna officials – anticipating extensive population and job growth in the main arterial of Spring Road that provides east-west connection from Smyrna Market Village towards the new stadium — sought the assistance of Georgia Tech Masters of City and Regional Planning students, Noell Consulting, and Sizemore Group, to develop a visioning plan for the future of the corridor.

Through an intensive four-month studio process, the Georgia Tech team, with feedback from many stakeholders, developed a number of recommendations intended to transform the Spring Road corridor into a thriving live, work, and play destination for Cobb County and the Atlanta region. This document consists of four chapters that present findings on study background and existing conditions, and correlatin city wide recommendations as well as core area recommendations summarized below:

- ***Citywide recommendations (Chapter 3)*** proposes a number of improvements, such as connecting bicycle and pedestrian facilities, creating local circulator and regional Bus Rapid Transit Routes, adding parks, and tightening design and land-use regulations that will benefit the Spring Road corridor and City as a whole.
- ***Core area recommendations (Chapter 4)*** proposes transforming the area surrounding the intersection of Cobb Parkway and Spring Road into a mixed-use urban center filled with jobs, multi-family residences, inspiring parks, and vibrant streets. The study divides this area into four distinct districts and proposes new roadway connections

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INSTRUCTOR'S PREFACE

The Smyrna Gateway studio spanned the fall semester of 2016 and included 11 Master's Degree students with diverse areas of interest, three of whom are pursuing dual degrees in planning and transportation engineering. The City of Smyrna asked us to explore development impacts and opportunities along the east portions of the Spring Road corridor and its intersection with Cobb Parkway. The city's driving purpose was to explore and assess the implications for Smyrna of the one billion dollar investment in the new SunTrust Stadium and associated The Battery development across the street. The goal became to suggest measures that could maximize opportunities for transforming low density, strip style development over time into the emergence of a major new urban center. The studio work incorporated a detailed Market Analysis of its emerging vision and its long term implications, performed by the Noell Consulting Group, and a Fiscal Impact Analysis, performed by Alfie Meek of Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute, to provide the framework for understanding what obligations and benefits the city might expect over the coming years. In addition, the studio's work dovetailed with Smyrna's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study, conducted by the Sizemore Group, whose technical expertise and citizen engagement processes picked up to further guide the students' work.

To address those central issues the students first undertook a context-framing study to inform themselves on the larger demographic, transportation, housing, economic development, urban design, and parks and environment factors and trends bearing on the core area. Some of the key outcomes of this effort included:

The People:

- Steadily growing population over the last 25 years from 32,000 to about 55,000
- Slowly diversifying ethnicities
- A seeming clustering of demographic profiles that reflects the city's growth in different types of subdivisions from '80s to the present

Connectivity:

- Generally well located and connected to the larger region, Sandy Springs, the Perimeter, the City of Atlanta and the airport by roads and railroads (freight), thus to jobs, services, and amenities
- Transit connectivity, served by Cobb Community Transit with a MARTA link at Cumberland Mall, however, is not as effective as it will need to be to support anticipated and generally desired growth
- A growing consensus with the Cumberland CID, the Braves, and Smyrna (if not Cobb County) that this deficiency is an obstacle to attracting and sustaining the changing markets experienced in the region

Identity:

- Over the last 25 years, after getting national press as the "Redneck Capitol of the South," city leaders have consistently prioritized building the kinds of public infrastructure that has led the region in priming emerging markets for high quality public places, beginning with Village Green, then Market Square, and major corridor streetscape and greenway trails improvements
- Smyrna's 70 percent population

growth since then partly reflects this commitment to quality

- Taking this growing commitment as their cue, students sought to translate this spirit and achievement as guides for reimagining the strip identity that characterize the study's core area

Economic Development:

- Students found that the diversity in the economy and job types is strong and well enough balanced to sustain continued population growth and market attractions
- Ironically, they discovered that, in round numbers, about 20,000 Smyrna residents work outside the city, while about 20,000 of Smyrna jobs are filled by people living outside the city
- With major input from the market analysis performed by The Noell Consulting Group, students found that the most promising market locations for attracting new investment reinforces the notion that the city's and the studio's core area has the best potential for growth, densification, and diversification
- In short, mirroring and extending the kinds of up-to-date markets being tapped by The Battery (if not by the county as a whole) presents a broad positive development strategy for the city

Transportation:

- The city has generally good north-south connectivity but is challenged in its east-west corridors, especially in the studio's Spring Road core area
- As mentioned above, significant improvements in transit access, both local and regional, will need to be staged to accommodate the kinds of incremental redevelopment envisaged by the Smyrna Gateway project
- Congestion is exacerbated by the limited options for exiting off of Cobb Parkway and Spring Road, suggesting the need for developing and accessing a network of streets to deconcentrate the congestion points
- Parking is an essential consideration for any incremental redevelopment strategy – its location (out of sight), its convenience, its synergies of daytime-nighttime use (including, for example, Braves games), suggesting the need for a mix of decks and maximizing on-street parking
- Perhaps most fundamental and impactful for knitting Smyrna together with Cumberland would be measures for pedestrians to cross Cobb Parkway safely, conveniently, and even pleasantly, using new buildings to accommodate the grade change, landscape, and lighting designs that favor pedestrian use over auto use in key crossing locations

Development Demographics:

- The market analysis highlighted a strong and growing demand for all residential types and densities, accelerating from modest west of Jonquil Park to intense approaching Cobb Parkway and I-285
- Noting that the residential population in the core area is not large, yet does provide housing at costs manageable for modest wage workers, students sought to explore housing strategies where the range of incomes of present and anticipated workers could be matched as closely as possible to the housing costs anticipated in mixed use redevelopment plans

Parks, pedestrian, bicycle and environmental findings:

- Smyrna and Cobb County are well underway with rational and effective bike and pedestrian networks
- In that vein, students noted opportunities and needs for enhancing, connecting, extending, and densifying these networks as they lace into the core area redevelopment strategies

Accordingly, students took the findings summarized above to help them frame their action analyses and proposals. In addition, students and I participated in planning activities linked with the city's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study, including the initial visual preference and related surveys launched at the Jonquil Festival and the follow up community engagement processes. Citizen feedback was vital for the students to understand the culture, the problems, the hopes, the aspirations, and the priorities of a cross-section of Smyrna's citizenry. With this evolving analysis and input, beginning with proposals city or region-wide in nature, the studio identified frameworks that could be considered as provisions in considering emerging development proposals or as modifications for the Comprehensive Plan, an update of which is now underway.

CITY OR REGION-WIDE MOVES

Bicycle/pedestrian network:

- Students went into considerable detail in identifying and suggesting metrics and in prioritizing segments for implementation, emphasizing access to and within the core area, all with the objectives of strengthening bike/ped access as an alternative travel mode, increasing connectivity, and linking Smyrna's program to a region-wide network

Park system:

- Noting that Smyrna's park system well serves a range of traditional park and recreation activities, students suggest that there may be a value in two new kinds of parks: a new large, signature park extending Jonquil Park across Spring Road to the south, and a series of small pocket parks as nodes or hubs that provide intersections of other park and trail activities as well as other modes of travel

Local Circulator:

- Picking up on the importance of enhancing transit connectivity to now and future destination concentrations, in this case at the local level, students provided considerable detail on how local circulator transit might be developed, including ballpark costs and providing and assessing alternative routing possibilities

Bus Rapid Transit:

- At the larger scale, taking into account the considerable study that the county has given to establishing a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that would connect to Atlanta, students made the case for BRT as the technology that best combines cost, ridership achievement, and time of delivery
- In so doing, they identified route alternatives, travel times, capital and operating costs, and partnership alternatives for serving Smyrna, noting the commonsense of developing the program incrementally, perhaps with Smyrna in conjunction with the Cumberland CID representing a first stage in the overall framework of the county's readiness to improve its transit service

Shared Mobility:

- Reflecting on multimodal transportation network planning emerging around the country, students described how "shared use mobility centers" can facilitate travel transfers between walking, biking, various transit modes, and ride sharing, located strategically at network intersections, possibly in conjunction with pocket parks as referenced above, and designed to promote transfer convenience as well as safety and sociability

CORE AREA ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS

In focusing in on the core area, students' analysis recognized the essential interactive relationships between land use/urban design proposals and the multimodal transportation networks necessary to support the emerging vision. On the land use side, the students grouped the core into four "Character Areas," that is, sub areas that by virtue of their existing conditions, identification of amenities and needs, and promise for attracting development levels compatible with their surroundings made sense to define in more detail. Thus the students identified the Character Areas as follows, west to east, from the least changes from existing policies, regulatory framework, and land use character to the most, or:

Jonquil Park Character Area,

where a logical break from more strip commercial parcels to more low density residential parcels is marked by the park itself

- students explored the possibilities of extending the park across Spring Road to the south, to front on Campbell Road, consolidating a much larger land holding dedicated to park and civic purposes, acquisition of which could be at least partly funded by reserving portions of the park fronting property for sale for residential use
- noting the market study's emphasis on the importance of good schools as vital for the area to realize its full community-building potential part of this idea was to relocate Argyle Elementary School away from its present Spring Road access to a safer site location, better to accommodate drop-off and parking as well as school recreation areas (consideration of such an idea, obviously, would require assessing the school for its present condition in meeting current school criteria and partnering with the school board to explore the idea further)
- in any event, the proposal would require a much clearer and safer Spring Road crossing, possibly using the existing bridge and/or designating an extended and signalized pedestrian crossing zone, possibly reinforced by dropping the posted speed limit (dropping by 10 miles per hour would add about 2 minutes to the trip from Cobb Parkway to Atlanta Road, big deal)
- in addition, students noted the problem/opportunity associated with the Spring Road/Spring Street split farther west, where presently a few strip-style one story buildings occupy about five acres of land in a random pattern:
  - given the city's commitment to create a bike priority treatment for Spring Street, leading directly into Market Square, enthusiastically

supported by the students' analysis, the studio recommends establishing these lands as a community-serving hub

- exploring shared equity partnerships with current owners, new zoning approaches as recommended in the other character areas, these parcels offer the opportunity of transforming from forlorn to vibrant, possibly anchored with a shared use mobility center

East Spring Road Neighborhoods Character Area,

with their primary access off of Spring Road, where a mix of housing types, neighborhoods, and demographics exist, some likely to see reinvestment and/or redevelopment over time

- Students noted that, while these neighborhoods appear generally stable and kept up, the age of structures and changing markets should alert policy makers to consider now this redevelopment eventuality; the market study in particular identified the Galleria Courtyards Apartments as a site where new market-serving development might occur
- Students noted that there are differences in price points among the neighborhoods, some still generally affordable for working people, it would be good to seek ways to maintain income diversity in considering private sector redevelopment proposals
- Similarly, they noted that these neighborhoods together could accommodate a range of housing types, including single family detached, perhaps duplexes or provision for accessory dwelling units, town homes, and low density multifamily, with regulatory provisions to encourage mixes both in housing type and cost
- Modest neighborhood-serving retail and office activities might make sense in a few places, perhaps in conjunction with shared use mobility hubs or others at the more accessible locations at edges of neighborhoods
- Urban design guidelines that emphasize walkability, lighting, landscaping, yards compatible with adjacent development, with building heights capped at 35 feet for single family development and 45 feet for multifamily

The Gateway District Character Area,

as the transition from the high intensity vision for the areas within the Cumberland Boulevard perimeter, students envision as a medium density mix of multifamily, commercial, and office development, where the mix of housing types would be the predominant use

- Here, the students strongly recommend that new or rehab development activity take its planning and urban design cues from the character of the Village Green/Market Square town center at the other end of Spring Road, not the same density, but the same attention to place-making principles, thus setting the tone for a corridor of quality consistent with the rapidly growing demand for walkable, landscaped, well lit, and safe public environments
- o As with the east Spring Road neighborhoods, but with perhaps more opportunities, students again recommend seeking provisions that encourage or require housing cost mixes pegged generally to range of incomes projected for the job mixes of the oncoming development

The Bridge District Character Area,

the name the students give to the most intensive focal area, basically bounded by Cobb Parkway, Cumberland Boulevard, and I-285, where the opportunity exists to create a compact new city center, positioning Smyrna as the hip, new development center for the county, much as Village Green/ Market Square pioneered the place making character of suburban places 25 years earlier

- Students named the district to underscore how vital it is to cross Cobb Parkway in a way that prioritizes all mode connectivity to The Battery, SunTrust Stadium and the whole Cumberland hub, transcending the gash that is Cobb Parkway today
- For the larger area within the Cumberland Boulevard perimeter students propose to become high intensity development, with office, hotel, some retail and multifamily housing
- Here again, the emphasis on design becomes paramount, with a dense grid of streets and sidewalks, on street parking, low speed limits, and landscaping defining the public realm, along with strategically located pocket parks and plazas
- Bridging Cobb Parkway along an axis that links multistory development on both sides provides the opportunity to establish, for example, a green promenade that proceeds pretty much at the grade of the second or third story of the new mixed use buildings that extends all the way from the stadium west into The Bridge District and indeed on to Jonquil Park.
- As a way to signal the coming of such a piece of connective infrastructure, it might be worth taking the baby step of establishing a dedicated pedestrian clear zone, with pavement treatments, pedestrian crossing refuges, signalization, reduced speed limit, landscaping and lighting that tame the Cobb Parkway traffic, at least, say, for the width of the street crossing at The Battery and perhaps as far south as Spring road itself.
- Finally, the linchpin site whose future could determine the course and pace of future development in the district is presently occupied by a Lexus dealership; while the other proposals advanced by the students can and

some probably will stand alone, the Lexus site has the best opportunity for bridging Cobb Parkway to The Battery, extending a proposed new "Jonquil Street" through the site to the bridge, and redeveloping the site at very high and mixed use density, taking advantage of its topography to build structured parking serving the immediate and nearby development as well as Braves parking for its evening games

Core Area Transportation Framework,

as noted above, students analyzed the multimodal travel needs over time to realize the visions for the Character Areas. The network recommendations radiate from the Bridge District outward, including a phased, incremental approach for breaking up the Cumberland Boulevard "superblock" and greatly increasing connectivity and developability in the district. As we will see in the implementation section, it is important, one, to have a comprehensive multimodal street and path network to aim for, and, two, to recognize that getting it done will involve a number of private-public joint actions and creative financing arrangements, the timing of which is unpredictable, yet using the ultimate network as the goal will benefit both property owners and the broader community.

The connected radial street grid is the foundation for scalable growth and development in Smyrna's urban core

- Students proposed three main roadway types – vehicular thoroughfares, multimodal connectors, and neighborhood greenways – a hierarchy designed to accommodate the densities and character of development and the traffic volumes they generate
- The network would provide for much more street fronting development opportunities than the current patterns
- The network, with greater connectivity to both Cobb Parkway and Spring Road, will alleviate to some extent the congestion choke points that so muddle the area presently; examples include the extension of Herodian Way into and through the district and Union Avenue providing the multimodal connector spine to reorganize the superblock into more developable smaller blocks
- The students propose a rational ordering of moves to establish the network, noting that market conditions and access to public funding could result in a more hopscotch implementation, but still aiming to achieve the new network over time
- The students detail the optimum street design characteristics of the three street typologies
- The students propose a network of neighborhood greenways that extend the pedestrian-oriented streets included in the Bridge District network into the neighborhoods, anticipating that these travel ways become amenities that induce more pedestrian and bike travel into the higher density parts of the core
- And the students call for a major commitment to designated and well-designed pedestrian crossings throughout the District as essential for establishing pedestrian friendliness

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The studio began to develop a framework for implementing the vision that it is proposing for the core. The elements of necessary strategies include zoning and other regulatory tools, capital budget prioritization, financial tools, and private public partnerships, among others. The students well recognized that the "big move" of establishing the Bridge District as a future new city center is a bold vision that could challenge the will to pursue. They noted, however, that Smyrna has undertaken ground-breaking moves in the past to create places of quality that have proven to be successful. And a key part of their proposed development programming is based on a staged and incremental approach that can interact with market forces, individual property interests, public and private funding sources, all aimed at building the proposed street grid, streetscapes, and private street-frontage environments over time – whether a block at a time or in larger chunks. They noted too that, given Smyrna's growth projections that affirm its desirability as a unique town in the region, concentrating growth and density in the core should take the pressure off stable, settled neighborhoods that otherwise might tempt developers to encroach upon. The instructor's synthesis of these actions and strategies is in Chapter 5, below.

CHAPTER 1: STUDY BACKGROUND

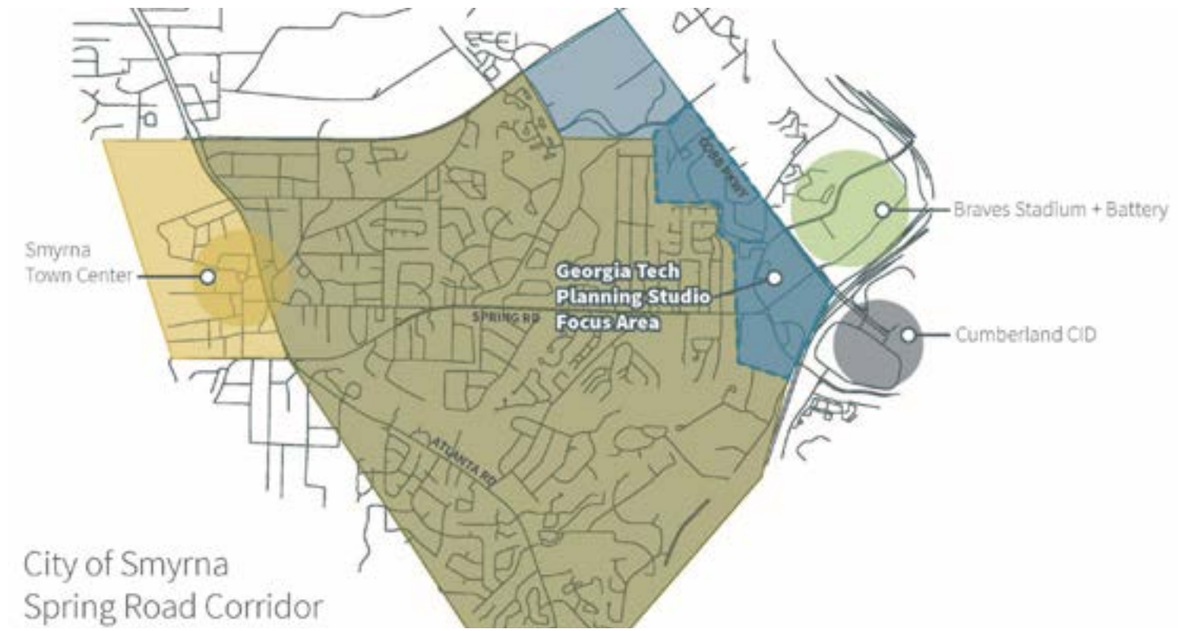
INTRODUCTION

The City of Smyrna commissioned this study to analyze the impact that current market trends and upcoming developments will have on Spring Road, and to design a plan that accommodates development demand in a manner that will allow Spring Road to serve as an attractive gateway into the City of Smyrna. This document is organized into the following chapters:

1. **Study Background** information on the project process and the goals that the team set out to accomplish with this study.
2. **Existing Conditions** an analysis of current conditions in Smyrna with a focus on Spring Road. The team used the findings from this chapter to inform the study recommendations.
3. **Citywide Recommendations** recommendations on land-use, community design, and area-wide transportation improvements.
4. **Smyrna Gateway Recommendations** a plan for transforming the area surrounding the intersection of Cobb Parkway and Spring Road into a mixed-use urban center filled with jobs, multi-family residences, inspiring parks, and vibrant streets.

Figure 1 Smyrna is a vibrant community that has benefited greatly from community visioning and planning efforts such as the Village Green, pictured left. The vision for this study is to plan for a future Spring Road that supports the same kind of vibrancy and acts as a gateway to the rest of the community from the Cumberland and Battery areas.

Figure 2 - Reference Map of the Study Area



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

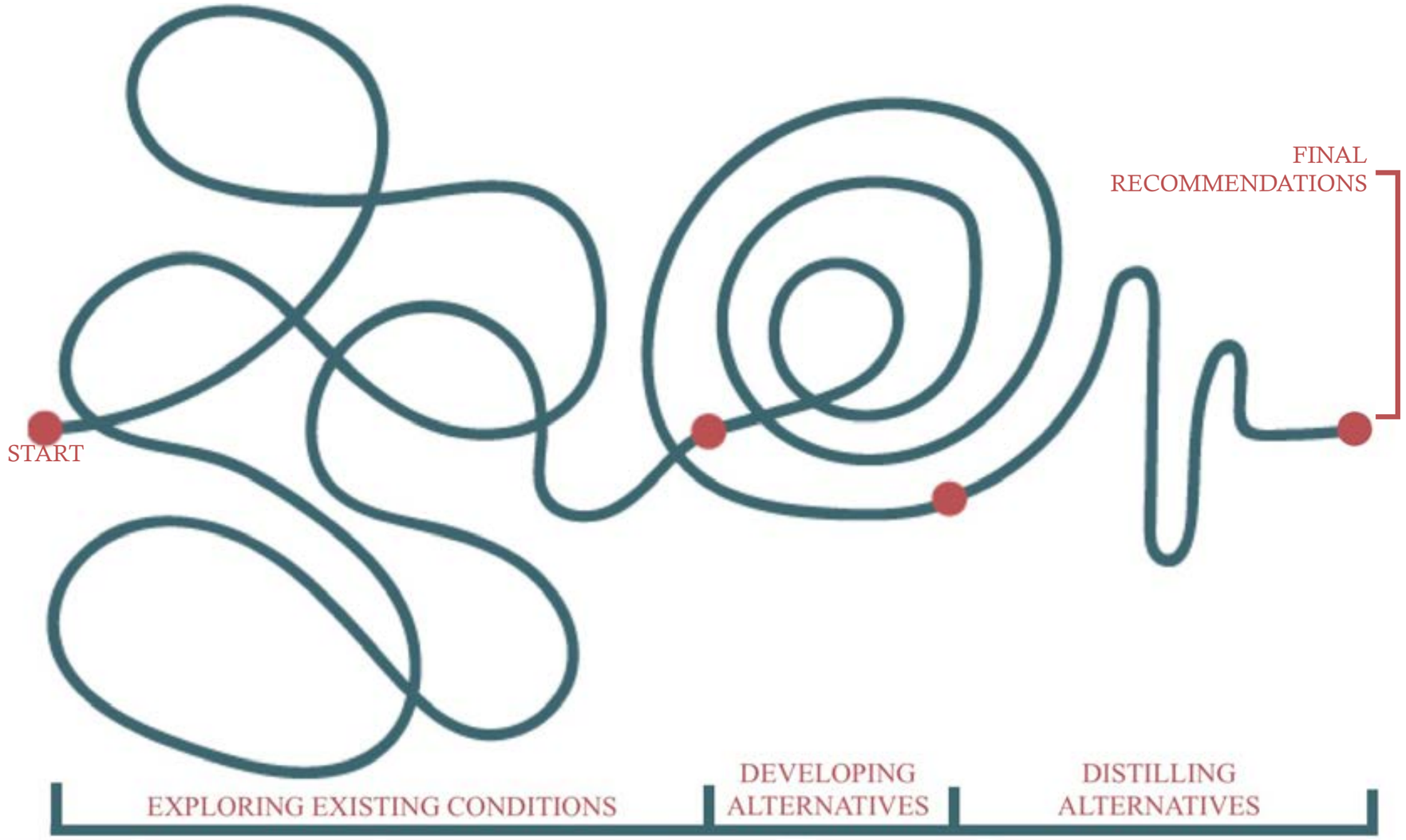
Community engagement was an important facet of the studio. The project team participated in a variety of public outreach activities throughout the study process. Members from the Studio team attended a Cobb County transit talk hosted by Advance Atlanta, where relevant stakeholders presented their vision for the future of transit in the Cumberland area following the opening of Sun Trust Park in 2017. Studio team members also assisted Sizemore group in facilitating outreach events at both Smyrna's Jonquil Festival (10/22/16) and a City of Smyrna Public Meeting on November 1, 2016. The latter two events commenced Sizemore Group's Livable Centers Initiative Study for the Spring Road area.

PROJECT PROCESS/ OUTLINE

The project team kicked off the study by meeting with officials from both the City of Smyrna Planning Department and consultants with Sizemore Group to discuss the preliminary goals and objectives from all stakeholders for the study. The team began by conducting an existing conditions analysis to gather information from previous studies, such as the 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan. The team additionally gathered new information from community stakeholders and current regional planning efforts.

Following an exhaustive existing conditions analysis, the team developed several alternative development scenarios for the Spring Road corridor that ranged from small improvements and modest density increases to significant transformations in the character of the Smyrna Gateway area through substantial changes in community form and density increases. These scenarios presented a range of different density levels for commercial and residential development, future transportation options, and enhanced connectivity to other Cities throughout the region. In response to feedback on these scenarios, the Studio aimed to think holistically about the corridor and envision a future that invites higher density development in a responsible fashion. The final recommendations offer a bold vision for the future of the Spring Road Corridor, one that envisions the corridor being an important gateway for the community and a cultural, business, and entertainment center for the region.

Figure 3 - Project Process of the Smyrna Spring Road Corridor Study



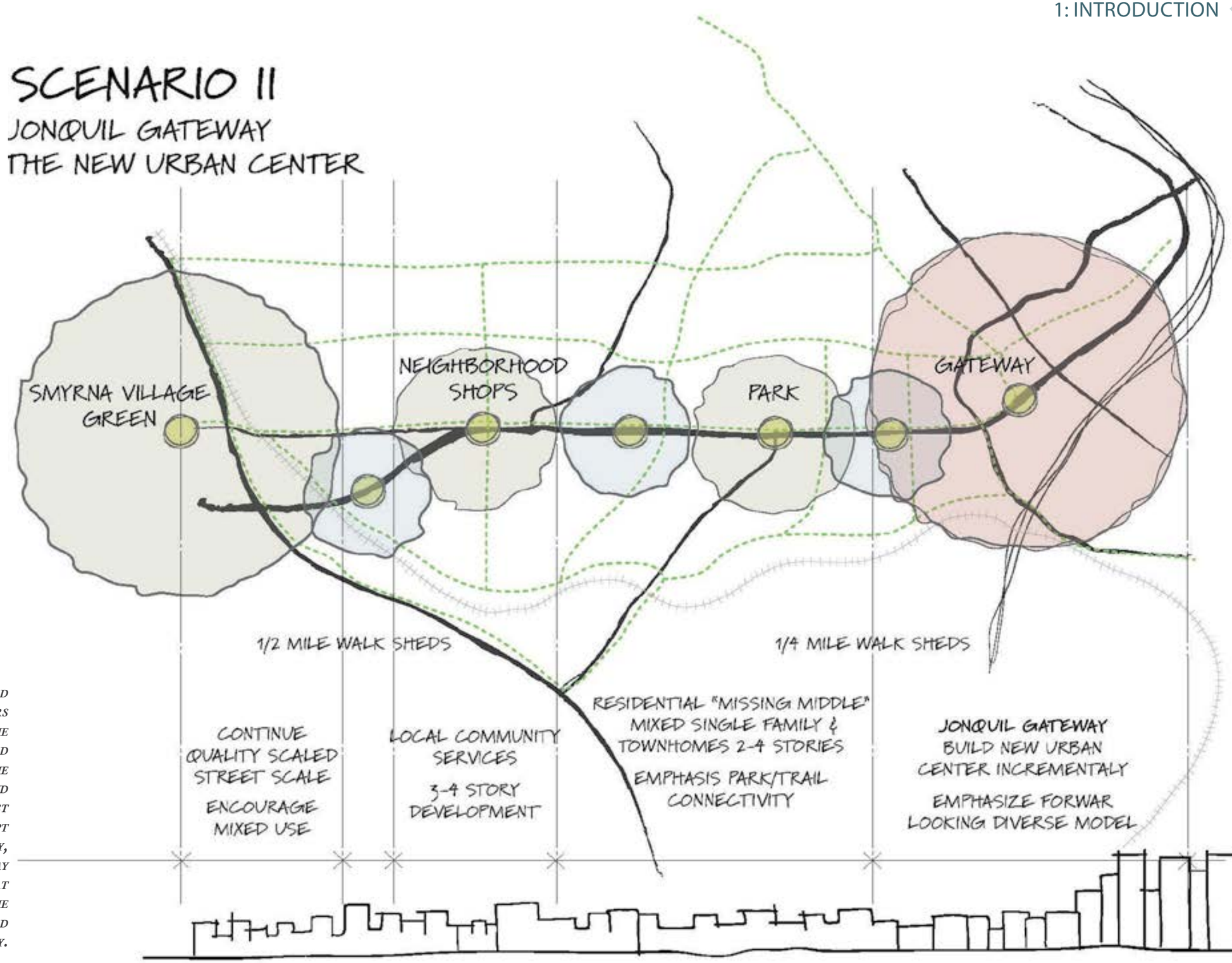


Figure 4 - The team presented Scenario II to project stakeholders early in the development of the study recommendations and called for a denser core near at the intersection of Cobb Parkway and Spring Road. As one moves west along spring road, the concept proposes preserving the low-density, residential feel of present-day Smyrna. This is the concept that the team further developed into the detailed recommendations presented in this study.

VISION & GOALS

The Smyrna Gateway Studio framed the various themes of the project within ***three*** distinct goals:

1. **Enhancement of connectivity** along the Spring Road area
2. **Preservation of Smyrna's character** and identity
3. **Improvement of the quality of life** for Smyrna residents

PRIMARY, UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS

In addition to the overall vision and the three aformentioned goals of the Studio, several more specific concepts were agreed upon to better define and advance the vision for the Spring Road corridor. These concepts are:

1. Increase bicycle/pedestrian connectivity along the corridor
2. Create a circulator route that offers an alternative mode of transportation
3. Provide a mix of housing options within the middle of the Spring Road corridor. Incrementally increasing density as you move west along Spring Rd.
4. Prioritize the creation of new greenspace along the corridor
5. Ensure that municipal services along the corridor meet community needs

Figure 5 - Goals for the Future of the Spring Road Gateway

Figure 6 - Guiding Concepts Along the Spring Road Gateway

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES: POSITIVE PROGRAMMING

The team developed the following secondary objectives that, if followed, will support the universal concepts, goals, and vision for Spring Road by building an inviting culture and a sense of pride throughout the Spring Road corridor, and surrounding community.

Keep it Local

The development of the Smyrna Gateway will take multiple construction phases and many years to complete. One way to ensure that local residents are able to equitably participate in bids for services is to provide primary preference to qualified businesses in Smyrna.

Keep it Green

Varying subsidies/grants should be provided to mindful real estate developers who utilize sustainable materials and who are committed to creating spaces that are eco-friendly. Also, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies for new developments should be implemented to encourage new employers and residents alike to utilize transportation options that minimize impact on traffic congestion.

Keep it Clean

As public and green spaces are developed, maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the area becomes increasingly important. Working with local schools and clergy, coordinating clean-up efforts and encouraging social interaction among Smyrna residents encourages a sense of community. The City of Smyrna already carries out such concerted efforts. It's important to continue and perhaps expand these existing efforts as the number of green spaces increases.

Figure 7 - Positive Programming Objectives

CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 8

INTRODUCTION

In order to develop a comprehensive proposal for development along the Spring Road Corridor, the team sought to understand the demographic characteristics of Smyrna as a whole. This chapter focuses on the existing conditions that not only have made Smyrna the city that it is today, but have also provided opportunities for redevelopment along Spring Road. The existing conditions discussed address: **demographics** (age, race, employment, income), **economic development** (industry, job centers, programs etc.), **transportation**, **land use** (existing zoning), and **urban design**. Additionally, this chapter illustrates the current real estate market in Smyrna and the surrounding area—highlighting the essential need for developing a vibrant and connected Spring Road.

Figure 9 The Poplar Creek Trail, pictured left, is one of several recreational amenities connecting to the Spring Road corridor. Building off of such features will draw people to the corridor and improve the quality of life for surrounding residents.

Figure 10 Looking West on Spring Road. Improvements underway include roadway widening near the Cumberland Blvd. and Cobb Parkway intersections, as well as the addition of multi-use trails on both the north and south side of the corridor.

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

According to the 2014 American Community Survey, the City's population is estimated at 56,146. Within the past 25 years, Smyrna has witnessed a growth rate of 14.11 percent. The population is expected to grow at a similar rate from 2016-2020.

Figure 11 Smyrna Population Characteristics

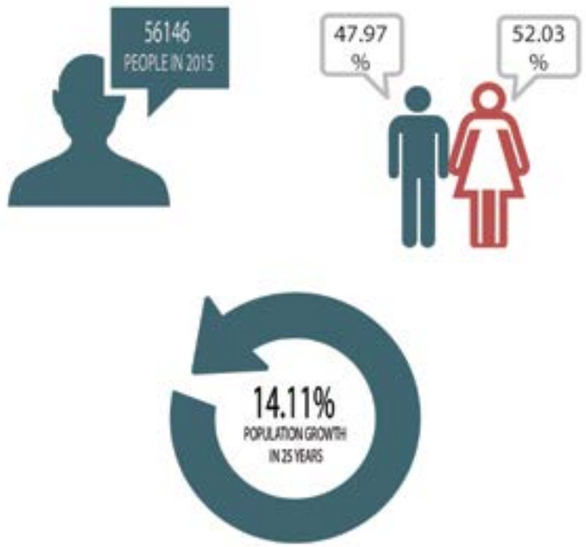


Figure 12 Population Characteristics Along Spring Road

AGE

On the whole, Smyrna's population is somewhat older when compared to that of metro Atlanta. While 60.5 percent of the population of Smyrna is between the age 18 to 65, the median age of individuals in the city is 34.4 years old, according to the 2000 Census. Additionally, 22.6 percent of the city's population is between 0 and 17 years old. 3984 individuals in the city are 65 years and older, or 7.77 percent of the population. The city has a 48 to 52 percent male to female ratio, with a respective percentage growth of 11.23 and 16.57 from 2000.

Figure 13 Smyrna Age Distribution

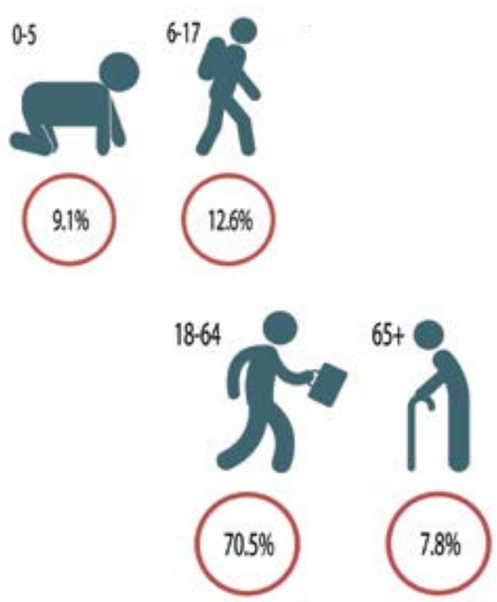
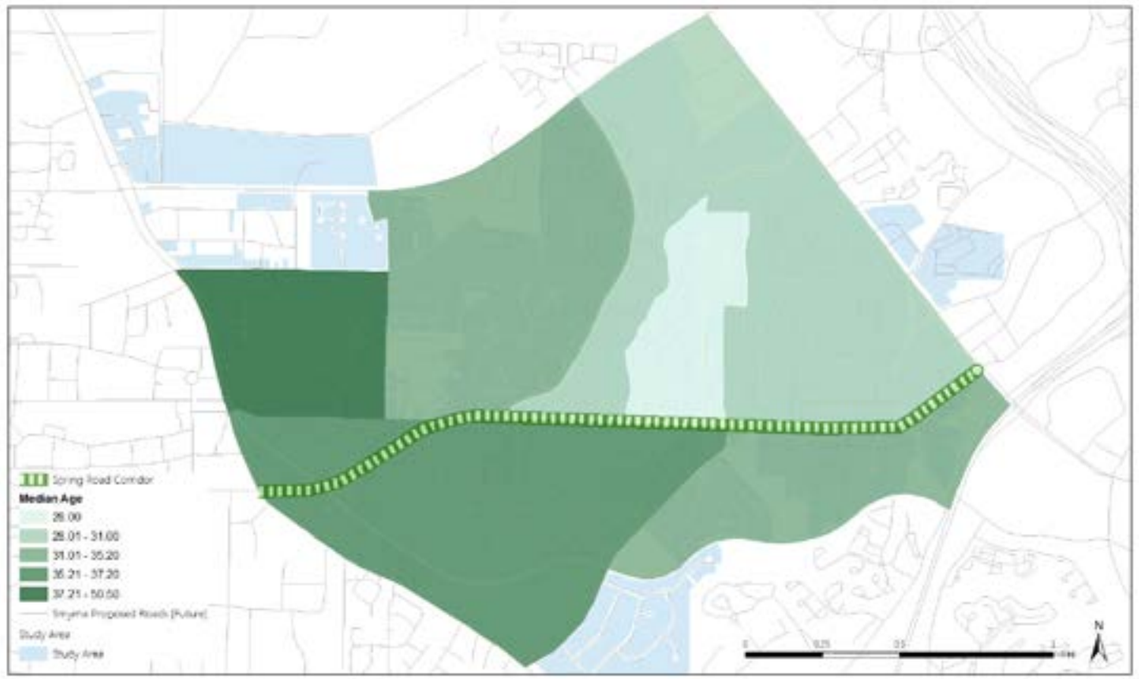


Figure 14 Age Distribution Along Spring Road



EDUCATION

When compared to the rest of Metro Atlanta, Smyrna has a more educated populace, with 52.2% of residents having a bachelors degree or higher (2010 Census).

Figure 15 Smyrna Education Characteristics

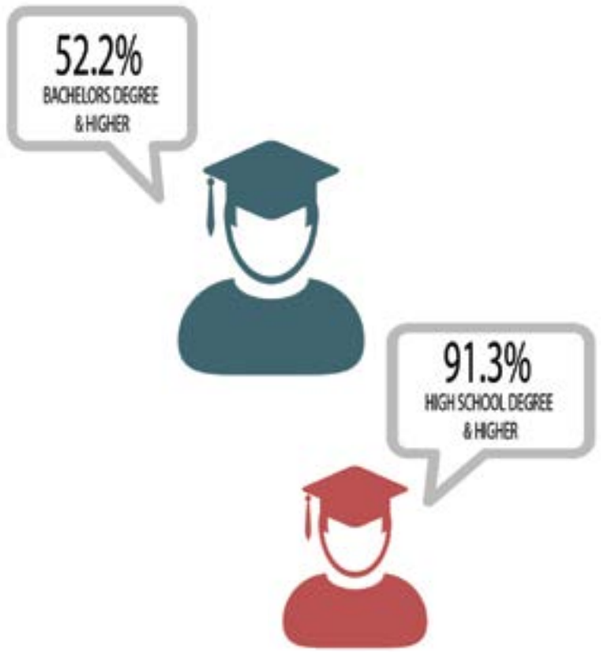


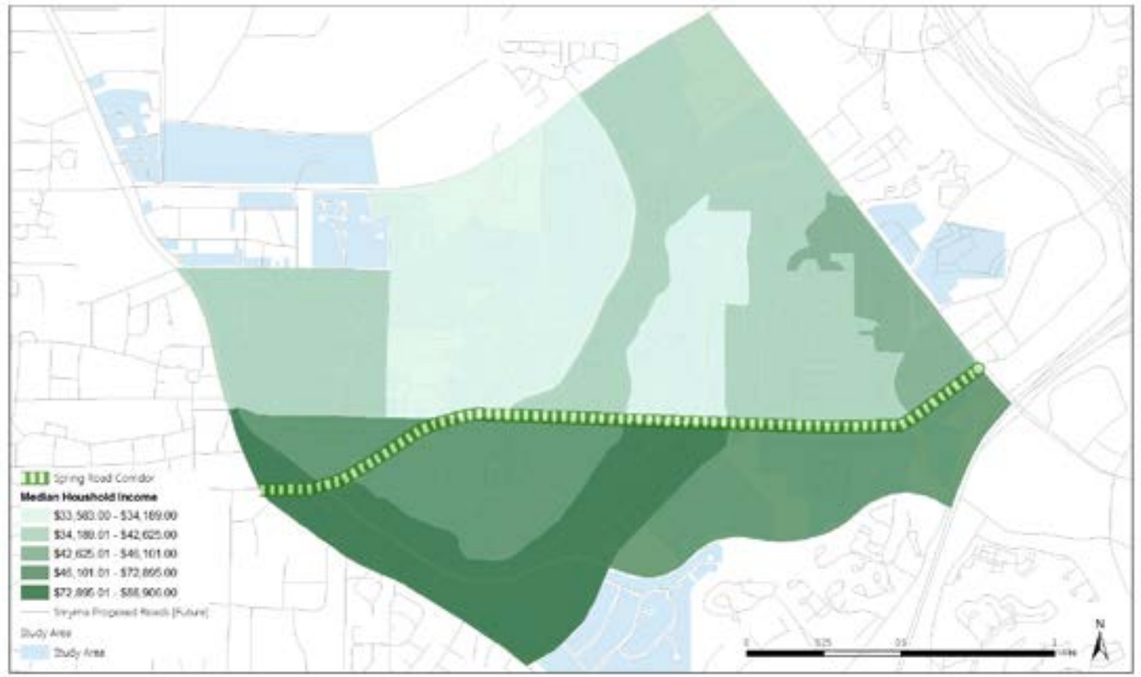
Figure 16 Education Attainment Along Spring Road

INCOME

With respect to income, the household rates for the City of Smyrna are slightly higher when compared to metro Atlanta. The median household income in 2014 was $61,333 - a 5.23 percent increase from 2000. The per capita income for the city for the years 2010 to 2014 was $37,844. Interestingly, about 13.5% of the population in Smyrna was below the poverty line living in the City of Smyrna in 2015.

Figure 17 Smyrna Income Characteristics

Figure 18 Income Characteristics Along Spring Road



HOUSING

According to The American Community Survey, the City of Smyrna has 25,745 housing units with a 50.2 percent owner occupied housing unit rate for the years 2010-2014. The median value of owner-occupied housing units for the years 2010-2014 is $208,500, with a median gross rent of $936. Renters make up 45.43 percent of the populace of Smyrna. Smyrna has a residential vacancy rate of about 9%.

Figure 19 Smyrna Housing Characteristics

Figure 20 Spring Road Corridor Percent Owner-Occupied Units

RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

Smyrna has a range of racial and ethnic diversity. According to the 2010 Census, 53.4 percent of the population identifies as "non-white", compared to the 46.1 percent identifying as "White/Caucasian".

Figure 21 Smyrna Racial Distribution (Source: Census Reporter)

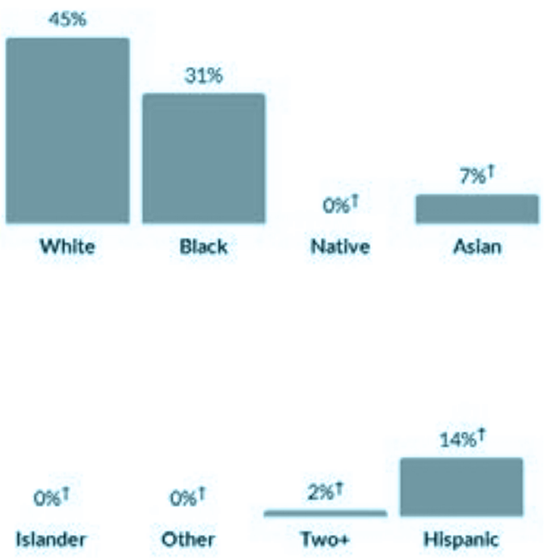


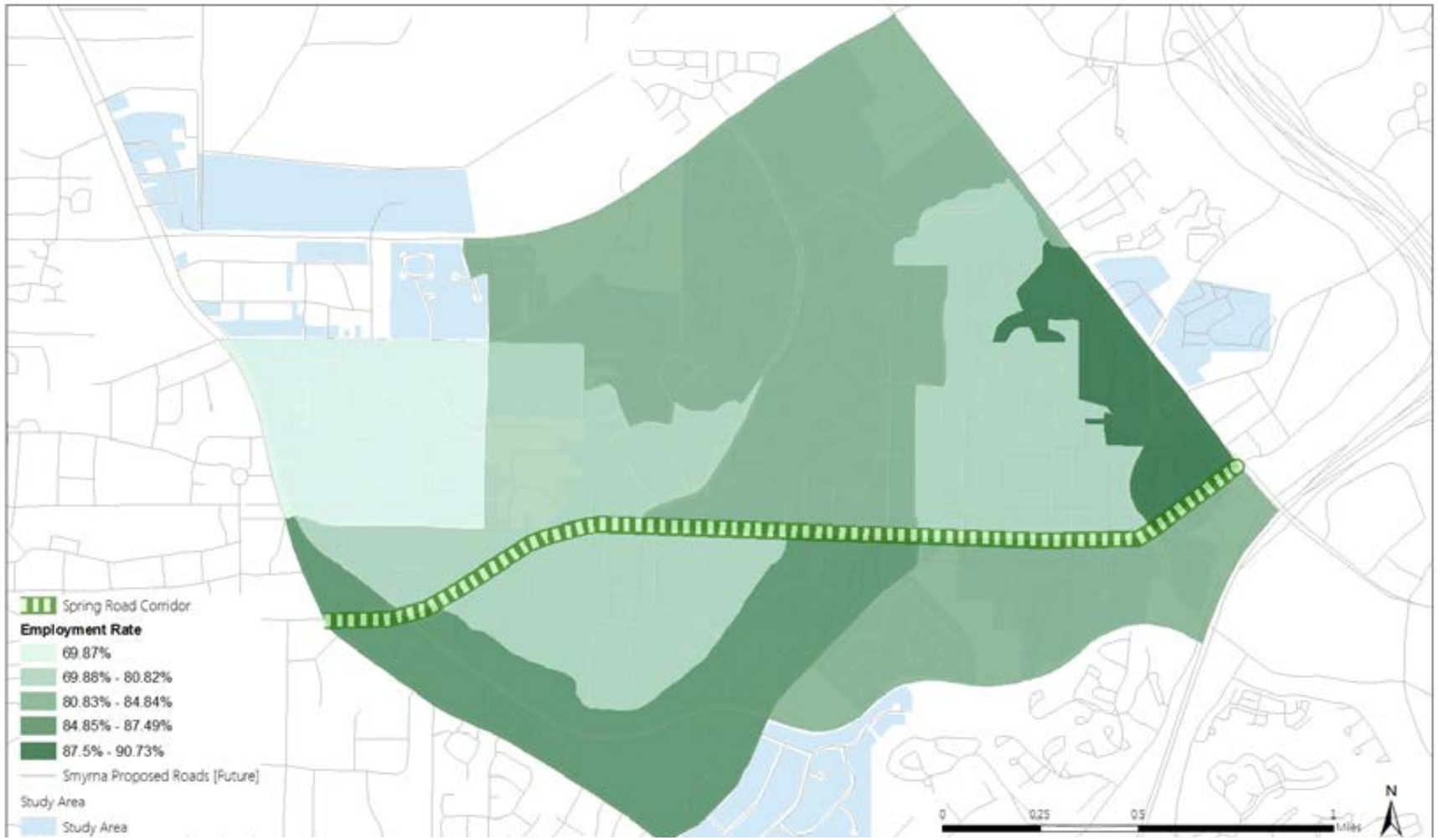
Figure 22 Spring Road Corridor Percent White Population

EMPLOYMENT

In 2013, Smyrna accounted for 9.2 percent of total Cobb County employment. Of the workers who live in Smyrna, 48.6 percent work in Cobb County, with only 17 percent working in Smyrna. Between 2003 and 2013, the City of Smyrna added around 1000 jobs, accounting for 3.1 percent growth.

Figure 23 Workforce Flows in Smyrna (Source: US Census On The Map)

Figure 24 Spring Road Corridor Employment Trends



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This subsection presents information on the current market trends and analysis, employment centers, retail trends and analysis, surplus leakage.

According to the Census, the economic focus of the city is presently on wholesale trade (13 percent), construction (11.4 percent), health care and social assistance (11.2 percent), professional, scientific, and technical services (10.7 percent), retail trade (10.7 percent), and accommodation and food service (10.4 percent). Collectively, these sectors account for 67.3 percent of Smyrna's total employment.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET ANALYSIS

The Atlanta Metropolitan area accounts for 92% of apartments currently established and those in the pipeline. South East Cobb absorbs 8%, with the Smyrna area capturing only a small portion of that.

Renter Profile

- 42% make less than $35,000/year
- 36% make more than $50,000/year
- >75% of renters are under 45
- Approx. 40% live alone
- 56.7% apartment demand in the income range of $50K - $75K and the rent range of $1,250 -$1,500

Owner Profile

- 73% earn over $50,000/year
- 47% earn more than $100,000/year
- 62% of owners are over 45
- Approx. 36% live alone

Apartment Comparables

- Average Unit—950 square feet
- Average price--$1.60/square foot

	Complex	Units	psf
1	Overton Rise	294	$1.60
2	Walton Riverwood	315	$1.65
3	Alexan Vinings	232	$1.75
4	Reserve at the Park	321	$1.74
5	Alta Belmont	274	$1.62
6	Avonlea Square	318	$1.21

FIGURE 26 EXISTING APARTMENT COMPARABLES (SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS, GOOGLE EARTH, NOELL CONSULTING)

Townhome Comparables

- Average Sale Price--$367,963
- Average price per square foot --$1.59

	Complex	Price	psf
1	Village at Belmont	$336,890	$1.75
2	Park on Church	$262,650	$1.29
3	Benton Ridge	$423,411	$1.46
4	Lylebrooke	$448,900	$1.87

FIGURE 25 EXISTING TOWNHOME COMPARABLES (SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS, GOOGLE EARTH, NOELL CONSULTING)

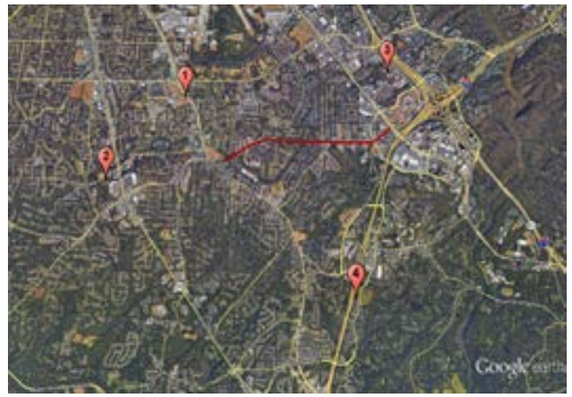


FIGURE 28 SMYRNA RENTAL ASSESSMENT (SOURCE: NCG, NIELSEN, US CENSUS DATA, NOELL CONSULTING)

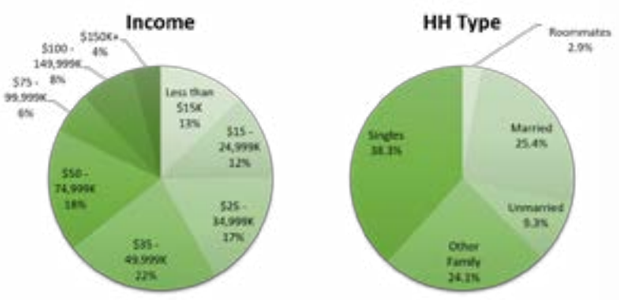


FIGURE 29 SMYRNA OWNER ASSESSMENT (SOURCE: NCG, NIELSEN, US CENSUS DATA, NOELL CONSULTING)

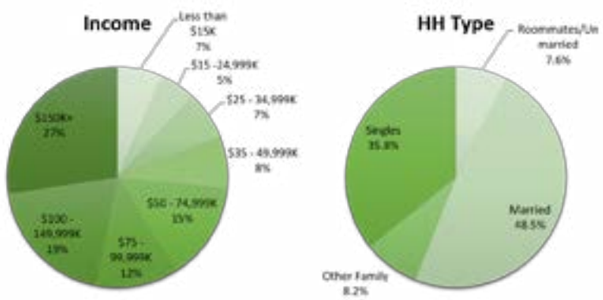


FIGURE 27 ANNUAL APARTMENT DEMAND DISTRIBUTION BY RENT RANGE (SOURCE: NOELL CONSULTING)

Income Range:	Under $50,000	$50,000 $75,000	$75,000 $100,000	$100,000 $150,000	$150,000 $200,000	$200,000 Above		
Rent Range (Avg. 18-26% of Gross Income)[4]:	Under $1,250	$1,250 $1,500	$1,500 $1,833	$1,833 $2,500	$2,500 $3,000	$3,000 Above		
Annual Demand Dist. By Rent Range[5]:	0%	56.7%	19.8%	17.6%	4.7%	1.2%	Total:	Total w/in Rent Range
2016 Demand By Rent Range	0	402	140	125	33	8	709	709
2017 Demand By Rent Range	0	328	115	102	27	7	579	579
2018 Demand By Rent Range	0	468	164	146	39	10	827	827
2019 Demand By Rent Range	0	261	91	81	22	5	460	460
2020 Demand By Rent Range	0	150	52	47	12	3	265	265
% Available for New Product Delivery	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	→	

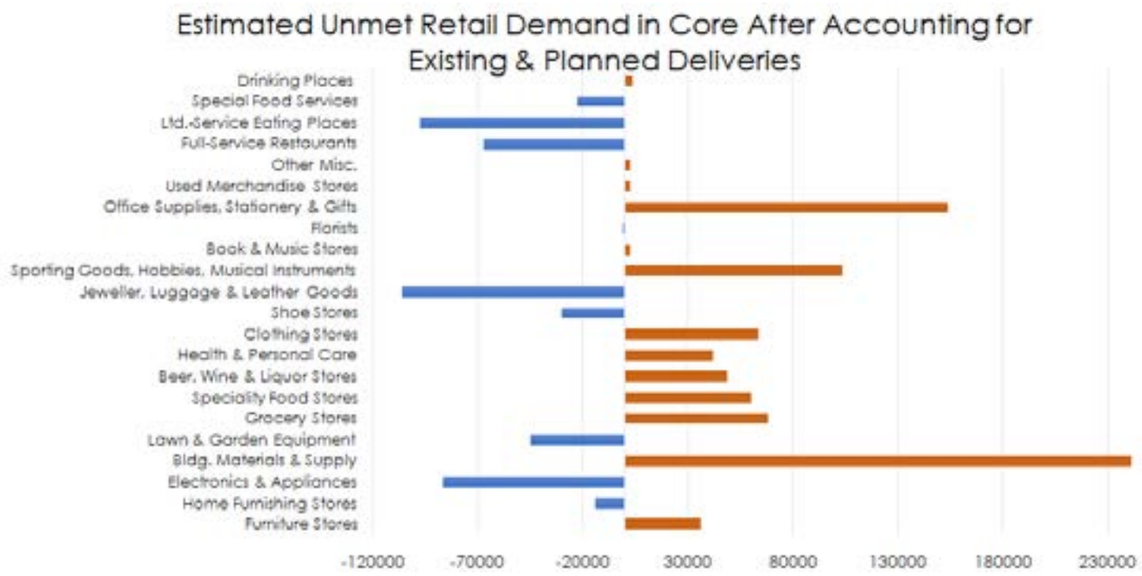
RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

In order to analyze retail opportunities in the community the retail surplus and leakage were evaluated to indicate how well the retail needs of the community are met. A retail surplus indicates that the trade area in the community captures the local market plus attracts non local shoppers in the area, however this analysis does not represent the community's capacity to support additional businesses. On the other hand, a retail leakage implies the unmet demand in communities, representing the need for citizens to engage in commercial activities outside the trade area. A positive index indicates that the community is attracting retail from outside the trade area. A negative index indicates that out-shopping is taking place and the community is not successfully drawing its own residents.

The City of Smyrna has an unmet demand for grocery, however market studies predict that the new Publix at Jonquil will be sufficient for the market demand. While the new Publix should meet much of this demand, there is opportunity for new entry stores to tap the small traditional grocery market. The local area market has an under supply of specialty food stores such as bakeries, fish and meat markets. The local trade area is oversupplied with dining options, however there is a need for drinking places and bars in the area.

- Total unmet demand = 827,000
- Net unmet demand = 56,000
- Current vacant space = 174,000 SF

Figure 32 Estimated Unmet Retail Demand Accounting for Existing and Planned Deliveries (SOURCE: Noell Consulting)



Retail Comparables

- Average unit – 164,100 square feet
- Average price—$23.54/square foot

	Complex	Sqf	$/Sqf
1	Market Village	88,550	$17.50
2	Cobb Galleria Centre	132,726	$20
3	Parkway Pointe	181,099	$11
4	Station @ Vinings	13,266	$27.50
5	Ivy Walk	60,000	$29
6	Piedmont Commons	91,491	$19
7	Powers Ferry Village	26,917	$24
8	Vinings Village	61,573	$27
9	Highland Station	95,257	$23.50
10	Crossing @ 4 Corners	152,578	$27
A	Akers Mill Square	290,000	$26.50
B	Vinings Jubilee	116,200	$30
C	Cumberland Mall	903,400	$30
D	Cumberland Sq. N	84,339	$17.50

Figure 30 Select Retail Comparables (SOURCE: Google Maps, Google Earth, Noell Consulting)

OFFICE MARKET ANALYSIS

- Average Class A Property—331,039 square feet, Average price--$26.75/ square foot
- Average Class B Property—23,276 square feet, Average price--$19.30/ square foot
- Overall Average—171,146 square feet, Average price--$23.36/square foot

	Complex	Sqf	$/Sqf
1	600 Cobb Galleria Pkwy	425,312	$29
2	3330 Cumberland Blvd	250,000	$26
3	400 Galleria Pkwy	470,484	$29
4	3625 Cumberland Blvd	387,267	$27
5	2018 Powers Ferry Rd	219,668	$24
6	3225 Cumberland Blvd	233,500	$25.50
7	1161 Concord Rd	10,000	$15.50
8	1290 W Spring St	15,439	$17
9	2251 Corporate Plaza Pkwy	20,000	$17
10	2802 Powers Ferry Rd	15,940	$22.50
A	3250 Riverwood Pkwy	55,000	$24.50

Figure 31 Select Office Comparables (SOURCE: Google Maps, Google Earth, Noell Consulting)

CONDITIONS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

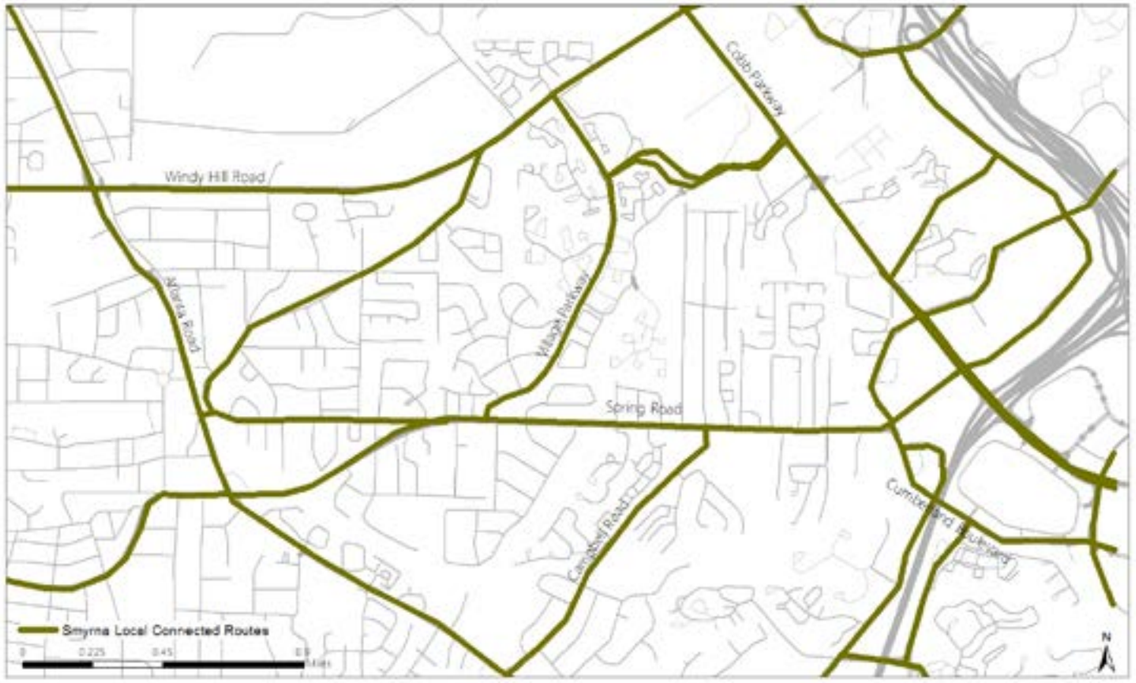
MOBILITY

This section explores the transportation features along Spring Road and potential areas for enhancement.

Road Network Analysis

Road networks lack the kind of connectivity that promotes walkability and community-centric development. Walkable and area-wide connectivity is confined to certain major routes: Spring Road, Cumberland Boulevard, and Cobb Parkway within the Smyrna Gateway area. There are few alternative routes for people to use to reach destinations.

Figure 33 Roadway Connections Along the Spring Road Corridor



Bus Analysis

Currently, bus service is provided through Cobb Community Transit. The existing bus routes for getting around are limited to two routes in the area provided by Cobb County Transit: bus routes 10 and 25. Route 10 is not available along the Spring Road corridor. Transit users must first arrive at Cumberland Boulevard, the southeast portion of our study area. Route 25 serves Spring Road on an hourly basis. Transit conditions do not provide a reasonable alternative to driving for most people along the corridor. Currently the transit system caters only to those who have no other transportation options. Over the long-term, a viable transit option is necessary, one that Smyrna residents feel is reliable and convenient. Part of our suggestions in Chapter Three includes a comprehensive strategy to bring a world-class transportation system that serves Smyrna and the Cumberland area as an epicenter for new development and growth. The team incorporates multiple transportation options, building on the latest technologies with companies like Uber, Lyft, and Zipcar to provide a range of new options for residents, workers, and visitors to use.

Figure 34 Existing Transit Near the Smyrna Gateway

Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Analysis

For bicycle and pedestrian travel, conditions are arguably better than any other city in Cobb County. Spring Road has a side path that provides a safe, direct bicycle connection to Market Village. However, the public has noted that even this high quality facility can be enhanced with safer street crossings and more lighting to improve perceptions of safety, particularly during the night. Smyrna has an existing bike sharing system, but the stops are limited and there is large opportunity to expand usage.

Chapter Three proposes expanding on this great bicycle network through creating an even more comprehensive citywide network that provides bicycle connections to all neighborhoods in the Spring Road Corridor and extends to people living within the vicinity of the corridor.

Building on Current Transportation Strengths

Our recommendations will incorporate existing transportation options, with greatly expanded, integrated, and new travel options. Introducing new travel options into the Smyrna Gateway will give residents, workers, and visitors a way out of congestion in a way that is cost-effective and apmlifies Smyrna's quality of life.

LAND USE + ACCESS

Spring Road corridor largely consists of low density, detached single family homes. The area has a suburban character with large lots, deep setbacks, and ample parking directly in front of commercial developments. Multi-family housing is available in the middle of the corridor but is relatively isolated from other non residential land uses along Spring Road. There are a few nodes of commercial activity centered at Atlanta Road and Spring Road, the Spring Road and Spring Street split, and Spring Road and Cobb Parkway. There are a number of restaurants within these corridors. Retail options exist as the corridor moves east towards Cobb Parkway, seen in Figure 35. While there is existing retail, the corridor lacks entertainment options.

DESTINATIONS

Other than Jonquil Park, the study area had no notable destinations. Beyond the study area, we found that the central Smyrna area, the under construction Braves' Sun Trust Park, and the Cumberland business district are local, regional, and national destinations. The study area currently connects many of these destinations, and performs mainly as a bridge to destinations found elsewhere.

Figure 35 Access to Services – Restaurant Locations

Figure 36 Access to Services – Retail Locations

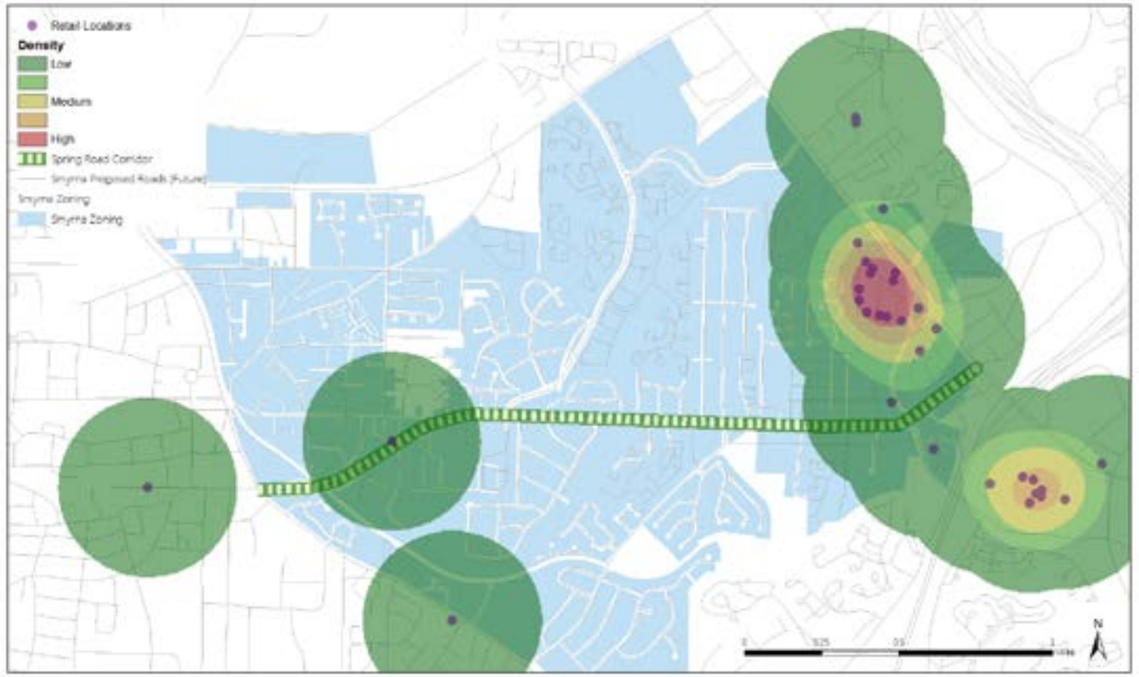
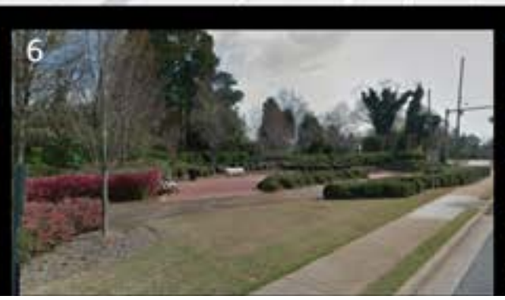


Figure 37 Access to Services – Entertainment Locations

SMYRNA VISUAL CHARACTER

SPRING ROAD VISUAL



CHAPTER 3: CITYWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the existing conditions section, Spring Road has many opportunities for land-use redevelopment, transportation enhancements, and improvements to the visual character of the corridor. This chapter recommends a number of land-use, transportation, and design improvements along Spring Road throughout the focus area – from Atlanta Road to Cobb Parkway. If implemented in a cohesive manner, these improvements will have a dramatic, positive impact on Spring Road and the surrounding community.

- The chapter begins by recommending **bicycle and pedestrian network improvements** that would connect neighborhoods by foot and by bike to destinations along, and surrounding Spring Road. The network recommendations emphasize **low-stress connections**, which will encourage more walking and bicycling for short trips throughout the area.
- Next, the chapter discusses a proposed **local circulator route** connecting from the Smyrna Market Village to the Spring Road Gateway/Urban Core area. The circulator would provide an attractive alternative to car transportation between these two popular areas, as well as increase connectivity to neighborhoods and destination centers along Spring Road.
- Regional transit recommendations include **Bus-Rapid Transit (BRT) connections** between Midtown Atlanta and Smyrna (among other destinations), which would fill a gap in the region's high-frequency transit service options.
- To complement other transportation recommendations, we recommend the addition of **transportation hubs** to expand the breadth of transportation options in Smyrna.
- Finally, this chapter recommends **land use and community design improvements** along the corridor, both of which are intended to enhance the character and the transportation accessibility of Spring Road over time. The goals of these recommendations are to allow responsible growth in appropriate areas, preserve the character of other areas, and promote connectivity throughout the Spring Road corridor focus area.

Figure 38 Atlanta Road, pictured left, has seen many improvements in recent years, especially between the Market Village and Spring Road. The team proposes applying similar and complimentary improvements to the Spring Road corridor.

BICYCLE/ PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

This subsection discusses the proposed walking and bicycling networks along the Spring Road Corridor– which will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Provide an alternative travel mode for residents
2. Increase connectivity among neighborhoods
3. Link to existing bike paths to establish a comprehensive network.

Additionally, this subsection will discuss the benefits that a greenway along Poplar Creek would provide for pedestrians.

WALK AND BIKE-FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE BENEFITS

Provides infrastructure for an active, healthy mode of travel for residents: Currently, driving is the most common commuting mode in Smyrna. However, congestion has made driving stressful and time consuming. Therefore, this study recommends providing multi-modal choices for citizens in Smyrna. Walking and bicycling are viable alternatives for short distance trips, with the added benefit of improving the health and well-being of residents and visitors.

Increases connectivity among neighborhoods: Walking and biking has the potential to facilitate connectivity and increase vibrancy among neighborhoods. In addition, west-east connections adjacent to Spring Road support the development of commercially focused areas in the Smyrna Gateway area.

Connect existing walking and bicycling infrastructure to establish a connected network: The existing bike paths along Spring Road will benefit from new connections. The proposed bike paths will connect to the existing bike paths in order to create a comprehensive bike path network.

BICYCLE FACILITY TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The study considers many characteristics such as current traffic volumes, speed, and available street rights-of-way in recommending bike facilities that provide a safe and low-stress bicycling environment. The various facility types that this study recommends are described in the following sections.

Side Paths

Side paths are shared-use paths for pedestrians and bicyclists. These paths encourage walking and biking, by providing accommodation to bicycle and pedestrian travelers separate from vehicles. Side paths are safer and more desired than bike lanes along roads with high traffic volumes and speeds, although special care must be taken in designing safe driveways and intersections.

This plan recommends side paths along the following roads:

- **Spring Road SE**
- **Windy Hill Road SE**
- **Village Parkway**
- **Lake Park Drive**
- **Campbell Road SE**

According to shared-use path design requirements from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), sidepaths can range from 10 feet to 14 feet (8 feet is the minimum allowable for use in constrained areas). Figure 38 shows the current sidewalk width of the five roads. In many areas, the existing sidewalks are in good condition and could be retrofitted as side paths.

Figure 39 Side Path Widths (FHWA, 2014)

Roads	Width
Spring Road	8 to 10 ft. sidewalk
Windy Hill Rd.	8 feet sidewalk on both side
Village Pkwy	6 ft. sidewalk on west side; no sidewalk on east side, but ROW available
Lake Park Dr	Sidewalk, one side. More than 12 ft. ROW available on both sides of roadway
Campbell Rd	Off-bridge: 6 -10 ft sidewalk on one side. On bridge: 7.5 ft. sidewallk on both sides

Shared Travel Lanes

Shared travel lanes are where bicycles and automobiles share the available roadway space. It is suitable for roads with low traffic volumes and speeds, such as neighborhood streets. In these situations, the road must

Figure 40 Shared lane markings (Source: NACTO's Urban Bikeways Design Guide)

Figure 41 Bikeway Sinage (Source: NACTO)

be designed to have slow enough vehicle speeds that interactions among bicyclists and vehicles are minimally stressful. As shown in Figure 41, shared travel lanes are recommended between major east-west bicycle connections along Spring Road.

It is recommended that designated shared travel lanes include shared lane pavement markings and consistent wayfinding signage.

Figure 42 Proposed Bicycle Connections and Parks

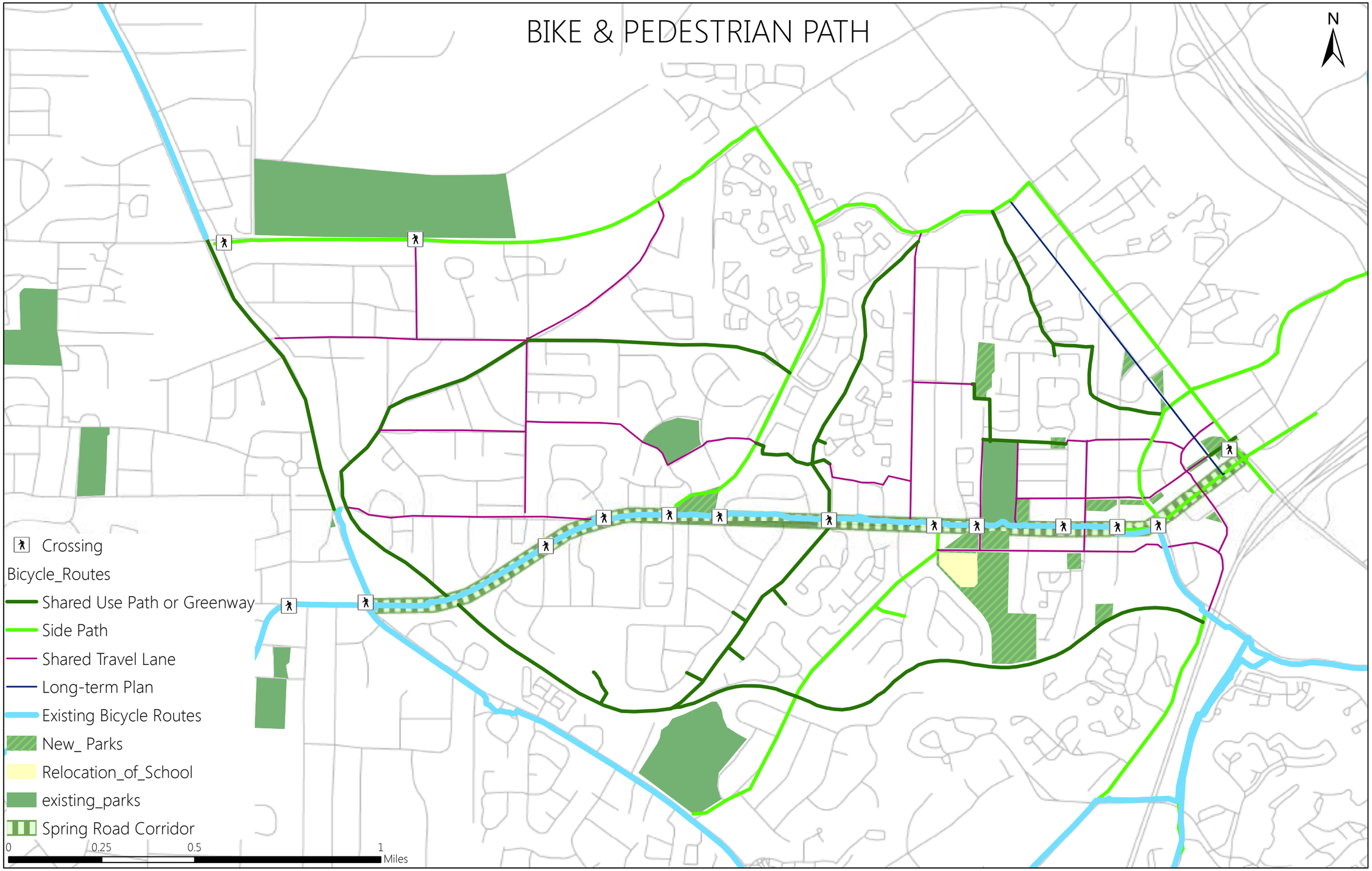


Figure 43 Shared use path examples. The image below shows a rail-with-trail example (source: annontonia.gov, East Side of Austin, Texas)

Among other benefits, shared lane markings reinforce the legitimacy of bicycle traffic on the street, recommend proper bicyclist positioning, and may be configured to offer directional and wayfinding guidance (MUTDC, 2009). Traffic calming is also recommended where there are large discrepancies between vehicle and bicyclist speeds.

Another important solution is bikeway signing, which should indicate the presence of bicycle facility or distinguish that facility for bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians. Bicycle signage includes wayfinding and route signage, regulatory signage, and warning signage (NACTO, 2014).

Greenways and Shared-use Paths

The presence of forest areas south of Spring Road and Poplar Creek provide ample opportunities for developing greenways throughout Smyrna. This study proposes **two greenways** that follow natural desire lines such as ridges, valleys, and streams and connect to existing infrastructure.

- One follows the existing trail along Poplar Creek south of Spring Road
- Another follows a proposed trail development along Roswell Street to Village Parkway.

The topography along Poplar Creek gets steeper at the connection with the railroad, and could potentially connect to mountain biking trails. In order to make it friendly to walkers, bicyclists, and other recreational users, the Poplar Creek trail should be paved (a minimum width of 10 feet).

One shared use path will follow the railway to the south of Smyrna. This east-west path will connect an existing bike path on both sides. Since the immediate region around railroad is wooded, there's a chance to locate a shared use path here, utilizing existing trees as barriers from the railway. Though the team heard concerns about safety of locating a path along railroad, several design guidelines for rail-with-trail projects exist and there are many successful examples throughout the US (AASHTO, 2013).

Some general guidelines from the AASHTO Urban Bikeway Design Guidelines are provided here:

- First, shared use paths in utility corridors should meet or exceed general design standards. If additional width allows, wider paths, and landscaping are desirable.
- Setback is based on space constraints, train frequency, train speed and physical separation, with 10-25 feet minimum from centerline of tracks.
- If required, fencing should be a minimum of five feet in height with higher fencing than usual next to sensitive areas such as switching yards.

PARK SYSTEM

Existing parks in Smyrna are primarily active sports parks such as Jonquil Park and Brinkley Park. This plan proposes **two additional park types** that would provide new recreational options. These include a *large community park* that expands upon the existing Jonquil Park footprint, and *small pocket parks* primarily for passive uses in the gateway district adjacent to Cobb Parkway. New and existing parks will be connected throughout Smyrna by bike paths and greenways. The following sections provide an overview of the proposed park types for Smyrna.

COMMUNITY PARK

This study proposes a new park that ties into Jonquil Park along Spring Rd. The Jonquil Park extension will connect across Spring Rd through the existing at-grade road crossing at Park Rd. and a grade-separated crossing that either utilizes the existing pedestrian bridge or creates an underpass. The extension proposes to add uses consistent with those of a large, community park such as Piedmont Park in Atlanta. Proposed uses include public gardening spaces, an arboretum, large unprogrammed open spaces, a lagoon, a large community playground, and wooded single-track trails that for walking or mountain biking.

There are two major challenges with the development of this park. First, the expansion property would need to be purchased by the City and annexed into Smyrna. Second, Argyle Elementary School is located in the space where the new park is proposed, opposite to Jonquil Park. The school takes up 220,740 square feet of land with a main building of 73,241 square feet and a playground of 24,800 square feet. In the plan, the elementary school will be moved west, directly adjacent to Campbell Road. The new location for the school will include a main building (same size as the

Figure 44 Piedmont Park is an example of a Community park (Source: Wikepedia.com)

old one), parking spaces and a playground (shared with the park). Transportation circulation will also be improved for the school, taking access to the school off of Spring Road and put it instead on Campbell Road and the new road south of Spring Rd.

POCKET PARKS

Pocket parks are small-scale recreational greenspaces, typically used for passive recreaonal uses such as meeting friends, reading, or walking a pet. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements would connect to these parks and, therefore, encourage people to take non-driving modes of transportation. Pocket parks are closely-spaced to provide a linear park-type feel in some parts of the study area. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities would connect these parks to the larger Jonquil Park.

Figure 45 Pocket park. (Cobblestone Park, Te Aro, Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. Source: http://www.waal.co.nz/)

LOCAL CIRCULATOR

This subsection will outline the specifics behind several proposed circulator routes that will improve connectivity between Smyrna Market Village and the new Braves stadium. The circulator provides a low-cost way of traveling between these two centers of activity in the City of Smyrna without the need for a car. Both capital and operating cost estimates are presented in this section.

SMYRNA CIRCULATOR BENEFITS

Benefits of a Smyrna Circulator Shuttle service are summarized in the following paragraphs:

Congestion Reduction: The area around the Spring Road corridor experiences substantial levels of traffic as a result of Spring Road being a vital regional connection that connects residential, employment, shopping, and entertainment uses. A circulator would reduce dependence on single-occupancy automobile trips within the area and therefore relieve traffic congestion.

Enhancement of Existing Transit Services: The proposed circulator connects with the MARTA/Cobb Transit station at Cumberland Mall providing a direct connection to MARTA and other Cobb County transit routes. A circulator will attract new transit riders who will be able to connect to regional transit options more easily.

Increased Mobility: The circulator will provide residents, workers and shoppers with a frequent, reliable, and low-cost transportation alternative increasing travel options along the Spring Rd corridor.

Increased Economic Activity: The circulator will provide more Smyrna residents, workers and visitors with the opportunity to fully-utilize the retail and commercial services available around Sun Trust Park, The Battery, Cumberland Mall, and throughout the Spring Road corridor.

Increased Transit Flexibility: The circulator routes and service levels can be easily modified based on changing demands for transit connectivity in the area. Charging competitive fares can ensure long-term sustainability of the service.

COST BREAK-DOWN FOR A CIRCULATOR SYSTEM

The circulator costs are divided into two categories, capital costs and operating costs. Capital costs consist of installing bus stop infrastructure, the scheduling and information system, and the transit vehicles. The following table breaks down the estimated operating costs for a circulator system:

Cost breakdown - Circulator System.

Circulator Captial and Operational Costs	Price Estimate
Transit Vehicles	$61,000-$550,000
Shelters with Pads	$25,000
Bus Stops	$250
Passenger information System	$50,000
Operation Cost (per Hour of service)	$50 ~ $60

The city of Smyrna has several options for the shuttle vehicles, ranging from $61,000 for a small bus to $550,000 for a normal transit vehicle, with the range of upfront purchasing cost depending on the make and seating capacity of a vehicle.

Figure 46 Potential Circulator Vehicle Types

SMYRNA CIRCULATOR ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

This study proposes three alternatives for the circulator route that are responsive to local socioeconomic conditions such as population density, employment ratio, and jobs. The routes aim to connect the Sun Trust Park, Smyrna Market Village, and Cumberland Mall.

- **Alternative One (5.9 miles)** provides service along Spring Road connecting two destinations: Sun Trust Park and Market Village. This route provides service to areas along Spring Road, between Sun Trust Park and Smyrna Market Village.
- **Alternative Two (7.2 miles)** extends the Alternative One service south of Cumberland Mall and connects to the Cumberland transit hub.
- **Alternative Three (8.5 miles)** extends the service to the north areas, passing through Windy Hill Road and Village Road.

This study suggests ten-minute headways during peak hours and fifteen minutes during off-peak hours. The study also suggests hours of operation from 5am until 11pm during the weekday and 7am until 10pm during the weekend. The service frequency can be adjusted accordingly to achieve the maximum level of ridership.

FIGURE 47 CIRCULATOR SHUTTLE SYSTEM: ALTERNATIVE ONE

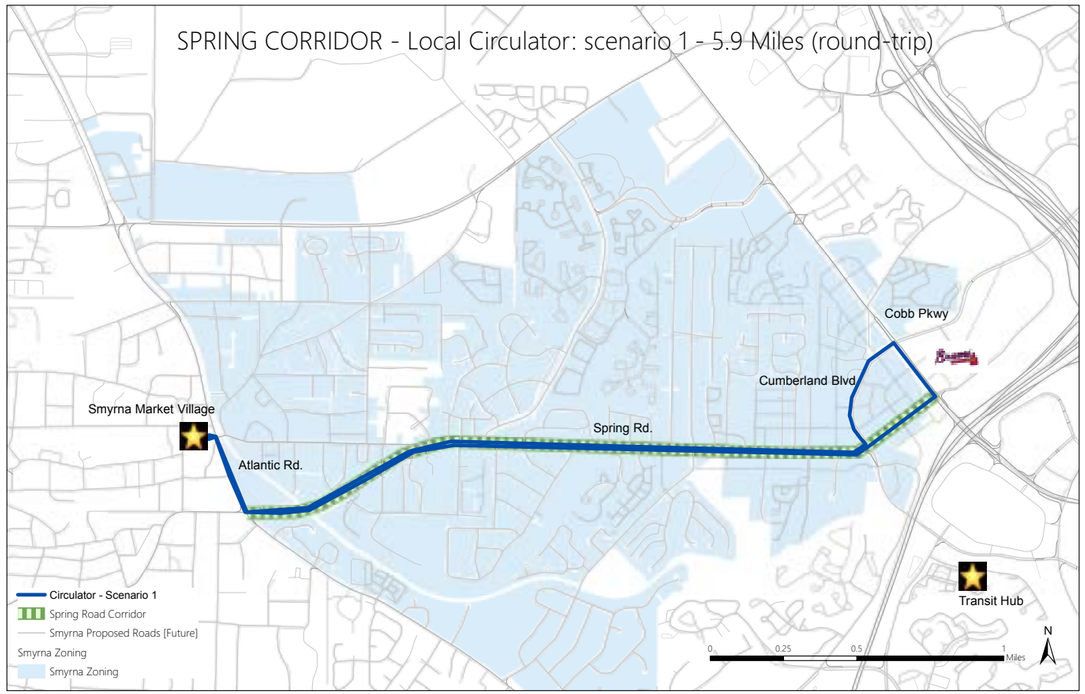


FIGURE 48 CIRCULATOR SHUTTLE SYSTEM: ALTERNATIVE TWO

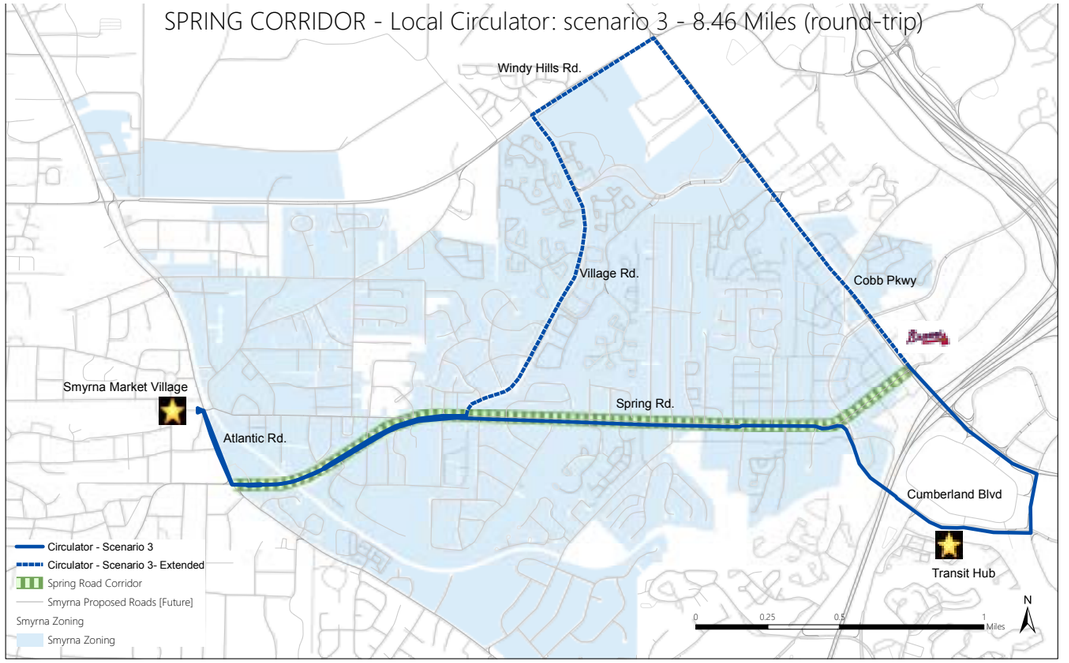


FIGURE 49 CIRCULATOR SHUTTLE SYSTEM: ALTERNATIVE THREE

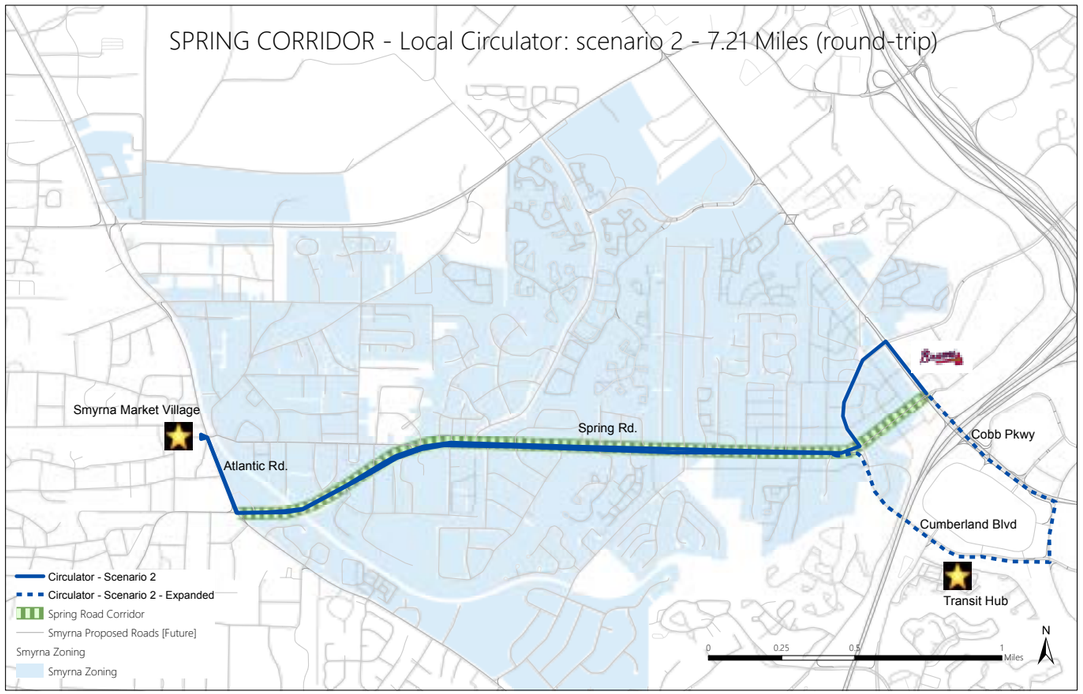
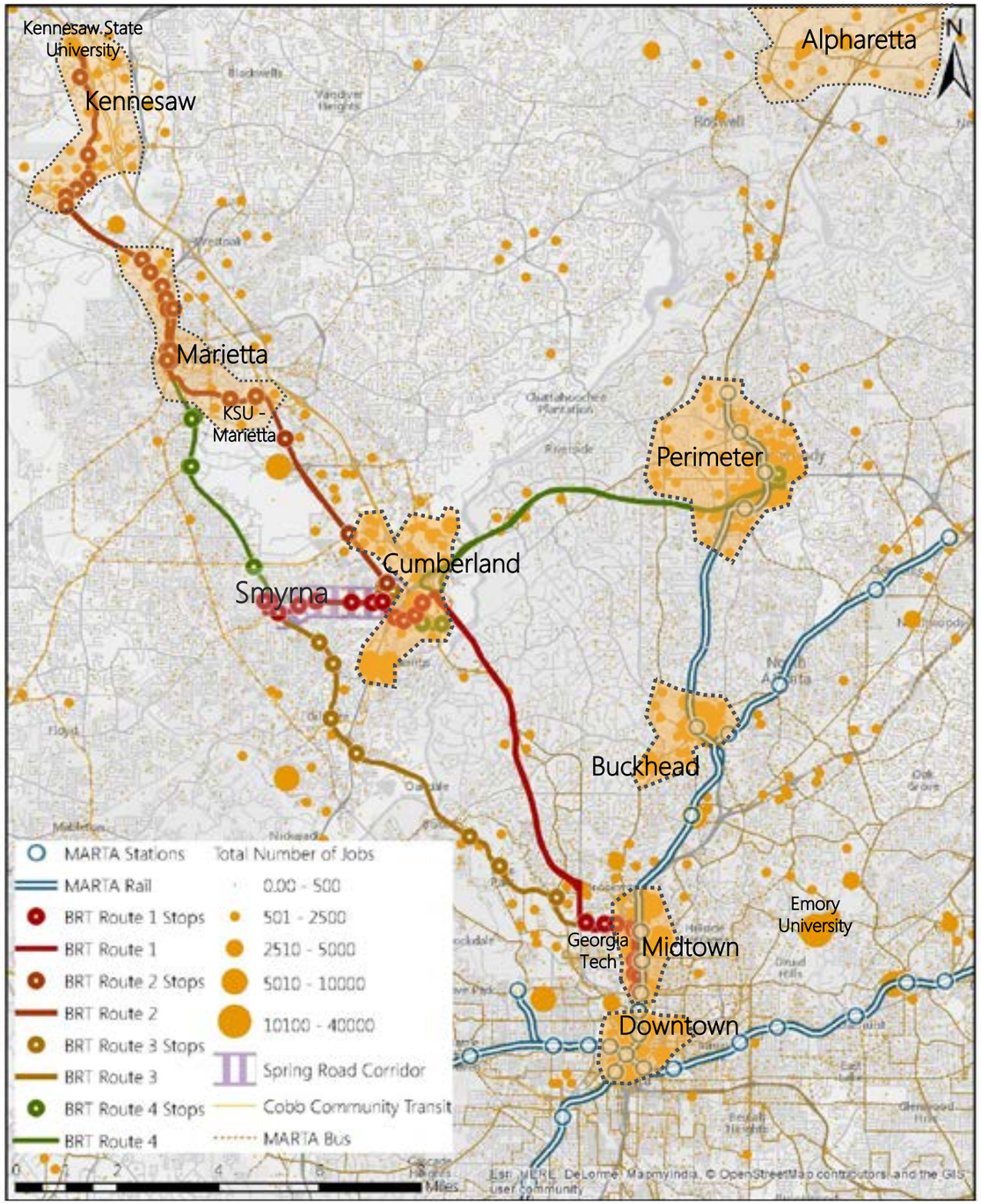


FIGURE 50 POTENTIAL TO CONNECT ATLANTA REGION EMPLOYMENT AREAS BY BRT



BUS RAPID TRANSIT

The need for better transportation options will increase substantially with the amount of growth expected in this study, and existing transit infrastructure is incapable of accommodating this growth. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which offers the speed and capacity benefits of rail-transit but with lower capital costs and ROW requirements, will help alleviate congestion and provide connectivity to regional job centers, a necessity as the region grows with new residents, jobs, and services.

BRT routes are proposed to cover three major employment centers: Cumberland, Midtown Atlanta, and Sandy Springs/ Perimeter. Additionally, routes would service other employment centers and universities in Atlanta, Marietta and Kennesaw. Within the Atlanta region, Cumberland is the only one of these major employment centers without any access to dedicated, high-frequency transit service. BRT operating between Midtown and Cumberland would finally provide a direct, dedicated, reliable transit connection where one does not currently exist.

The proposed routes provide Smyrna residents and employees with a viable alternative to driving to important regional destinations. Rough cost estimates for capital expenses are provided in Figure 56. Operating costs for running a BRT line will need to be formally examined in a separate study, given that operating costs vary between different BRT systems.

PROPOSED BRT ROUTE SCENARIOS

Route One proposes a direct connection between Smyrna and Midtown Atlanta. The suggested route begins at Smyrna Market Village and ends at the North Avenue MARTA Station. This route would use existing and planned High Occupancy Vehicle/ High Occupancy Toll Lanes along I-75 and then follow Northside Drive where a new dedicated transit vehicle lane can be constructed. Using existing separated bus lane infrastructure, the bus can pass through Atlantic Station to Midtown, where new bus-only lanes can be considered on Spring Street and West Peachtree Street. Close to 50,000 jobs could be accessed within a quarter-mile of the BRT stops along this route. This specific route passes through Smyrna along Spring Road, stopping at Cumberland Boulevard and Spring Road and making several intermediate stops before reaching Smyrna Market Village.

- Total transit time between Smyrna Gateway and Midtown Atlanta would be 20-minutes during peak rush hour.

Route Two is largely based on a previous BRT study conducted by Cobb County to extend BRT service from Kennesaw State University to Midtown Atlanta. The suggested route in this study follows this plan closely, except for routing BRT through Downtown Marietta. The route serves Cumberland Boulevard and Cobb Parkway instead of Spring Road. These improvements benefit the denser development areas along Spring Road proposed in this Plan.

Figure 51 BRT Proposed Route One

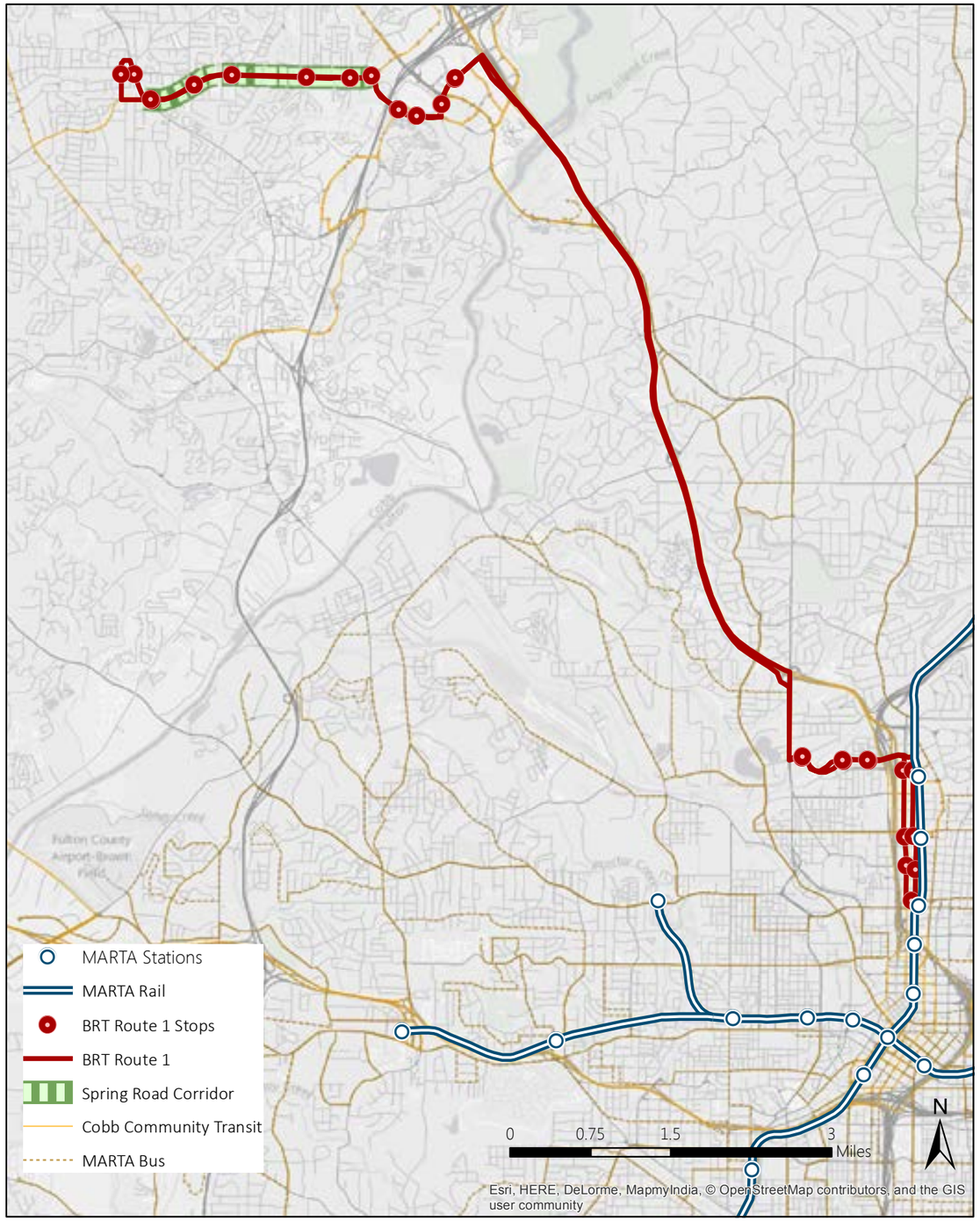


Figure 52 BRT Proposd Route Two

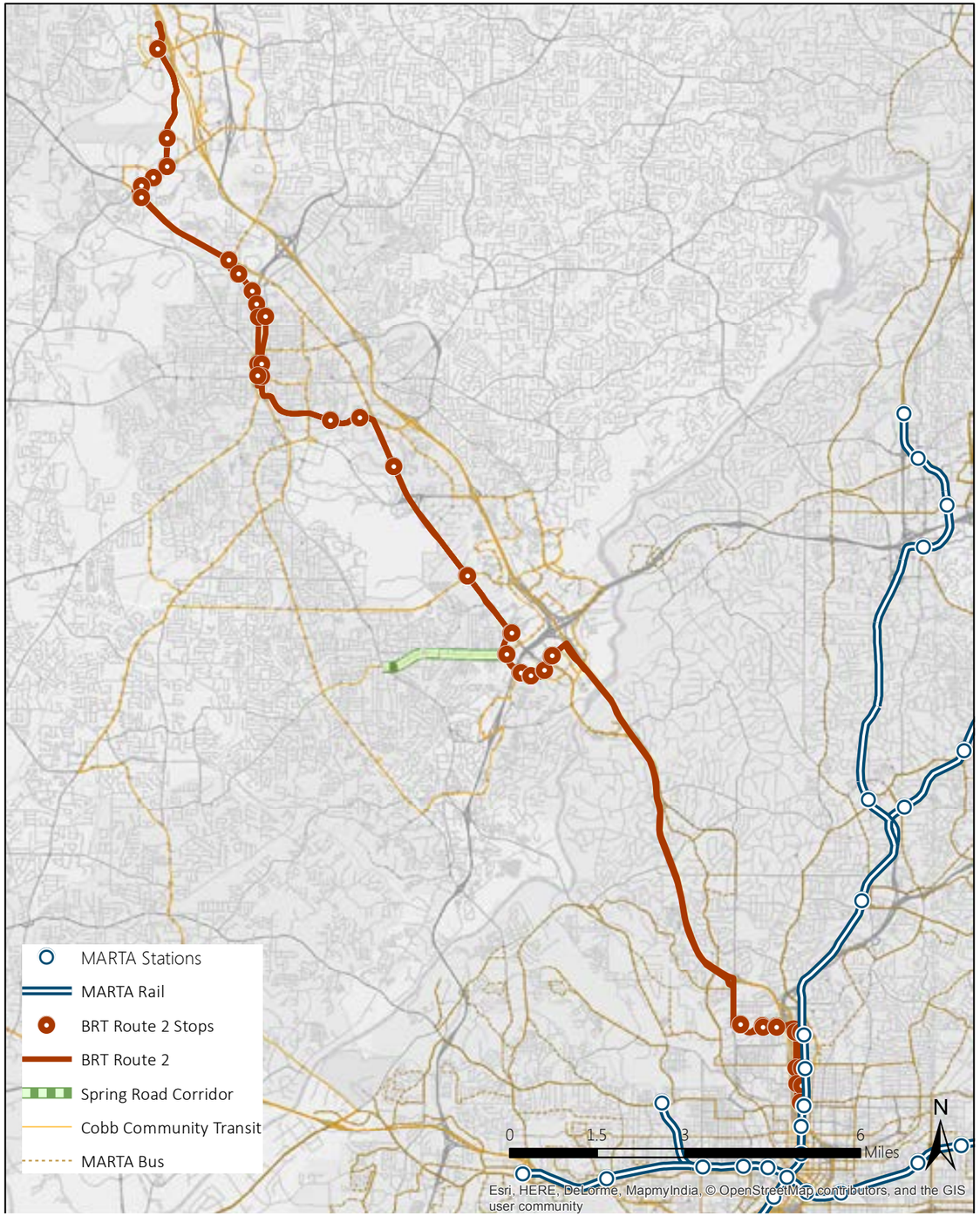
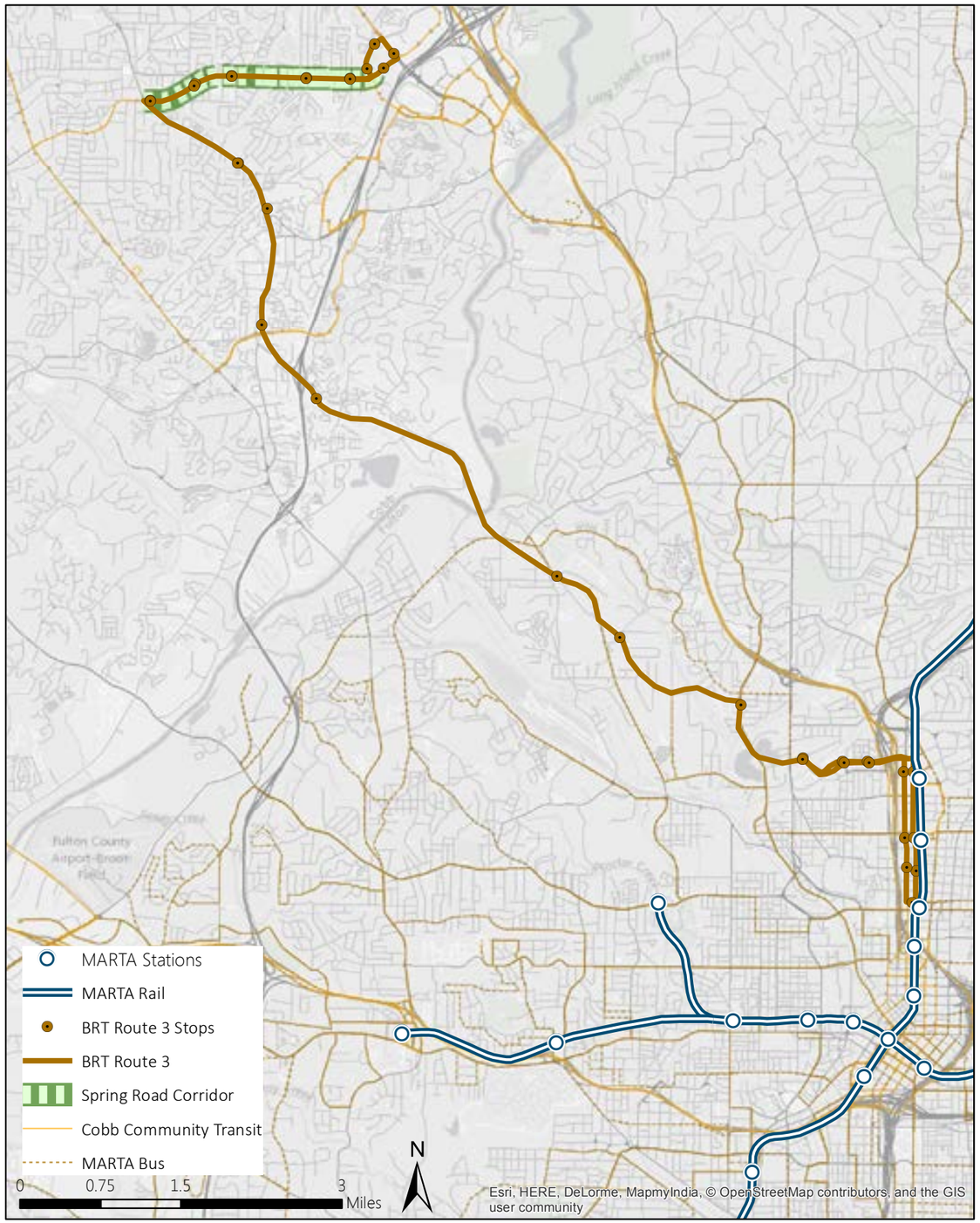


Figure 53 BRT Proposd Route Three



- Total transit times between Smyrna Gateway and Midtown Atlanta would be approximately 20-minutes during peak rush hour.

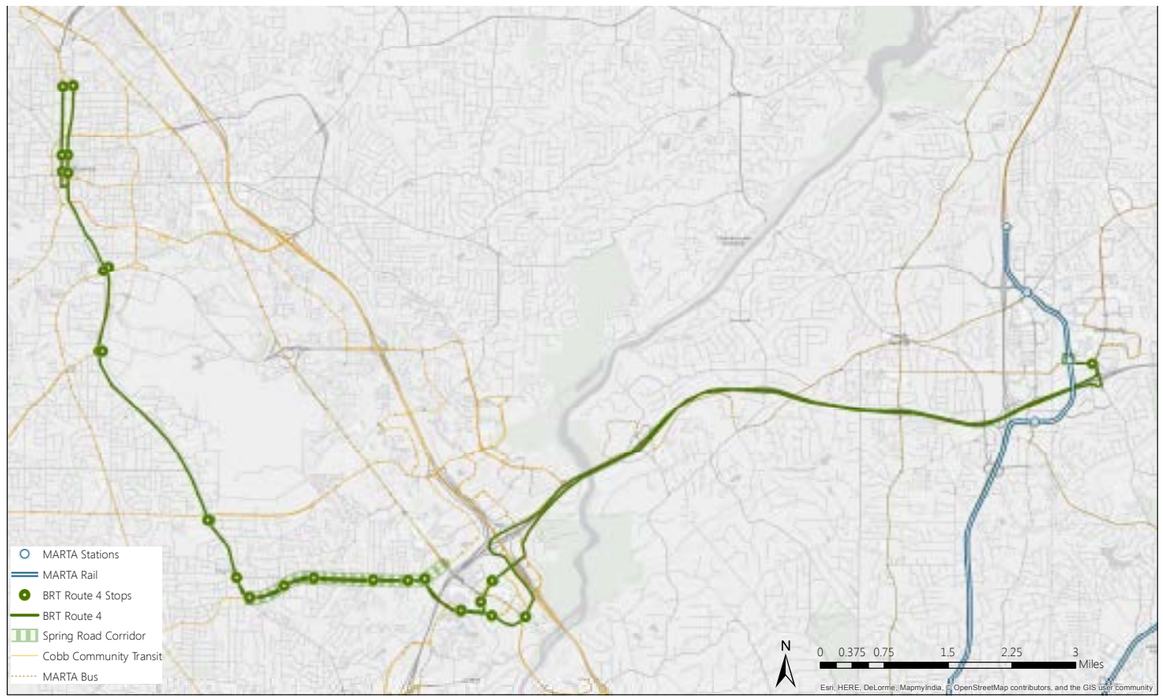
Route Three connects Smyrna to Midtown Atlanta along Atlanta Road. Dedicated ROW for BRT will be a challenge, and the route may have to be compromised as an Arterial Rapid Transit route without dedicated lanes. The route is similar to Route 1, but would end at the Braves Stadium area, first passing through Smyrna Market Village from Midtown Atlanta.

- Total transit times between Smyrna Gateway and Midtown Atlanta are estimated to be approximately 30-minutes during peak rush hour (25 minutes from Market Village).

Route Four provides a connection between Smyrna and the large employment area of Perimeter and Sandy Springs. This route proposes using the I-285 High Occupancy Toll lane to connect people in Smyrna from the Market Village, along Spring Road, to the Cumberland area before providing direct connection to the Perimeter MARTA station

- Transit times between Smyrna Gateway and Perimeter MARTA are estimated to be approximately 20-minutes during peak rush hour.

Figure 54 BRT Proposd Route Four



BRT CAPITAL COSTS

BRT systems come at a fraction of the capital costs required for commuter rail, heavy rail, and light rail transit systems. Between February 2005 and February 2012, 30 bus rapid transit systems were funded through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) with capital costs ranging from $3.5 million (a partial system) to $567 million. The capital costs are largely based on the length of the proposed route and the required right-of-way acquisition. While they are significantly less costly, there is evidence of BRT systems developing similar economic development benefits as light rail. Of the 30 federally-funded BRT systems, a majority of them were funded under the Small Starts Program in FTA, a competitive source of funds for transit agencies to rely on for capital funds to build these systems.

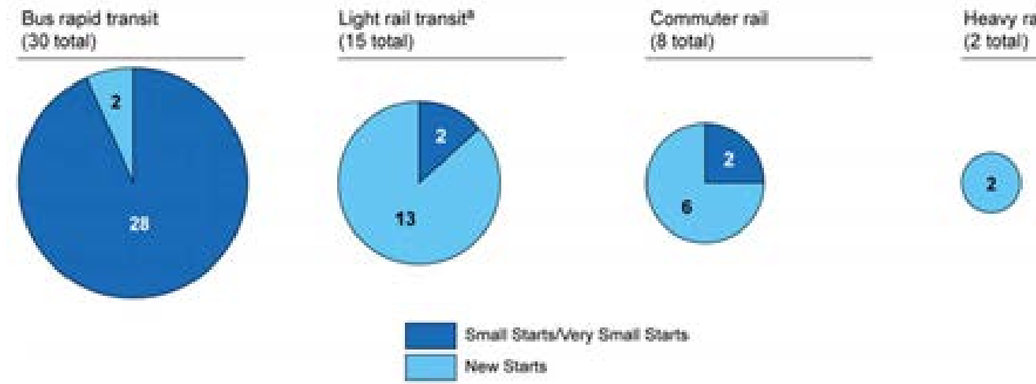


Figure 56 Federal Funding Sources for Transit Capital Projects: New Starts and Small Starts (Source: http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/592973.pdf)

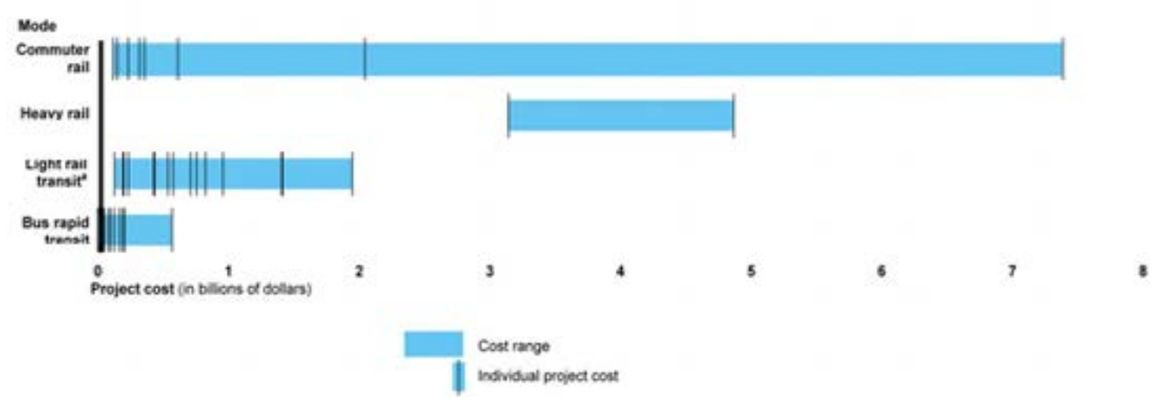


Figure 57 Range of Individual Capital Costs for BRT and Rail Transit Projects (Source: http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/592973.pdf)

BRT OPERATING COSTS

Total operating costs for BRT varies based on several project factors, including the length of the route, headways, and vehicle type. Given the many factors involved, differences in operating costs are difficult to generalize. In some cases BRT projects have lower operating costs than the bus service they replace. For example, the Eugene EmX BRT system decreased overall operating costs per rider. Officials had attributed the savings to improved schedule reliability and travel-time savings from the dedicated right-of-way, which also reduced labor costs due to fewer busses needed to maintain schedules. Cleveland RTA's Healthline BRT both reduced their overall operating budget and the average costs per rider. For RTA, the 18 vehicles that operate during peak hours replaced 28 regular buses. Hourly labor costs are about the same for BRT as standard bus service, and heavy rail. Compared to standard buses, the cost per rider is lower due to higher capacities and ridership on a BRT route. Operating costs for BRT and rail transit depend on the surrounding destination density and transportation system characteristics.

PARTNERSHIPS NECESSARY FOR BRT TO SERVE SMYRNA

Community Improvement Districts, such as Cumberland CID, Midtown Alliance, Atlantic Station, LLC, Gateway Marietta CID, and Perimeter CID can contribute to both the funding and operations of BRT connecting to Smyrna. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Cobb County DOT, MARTA, and GRTA are transportation agency partners that can help to plan, build, and operate BRT and supplemental transit lines. Finally, USDOT often supports BRT projects through two competitive federal capital transit funding programs, New Starts and Small Starts.

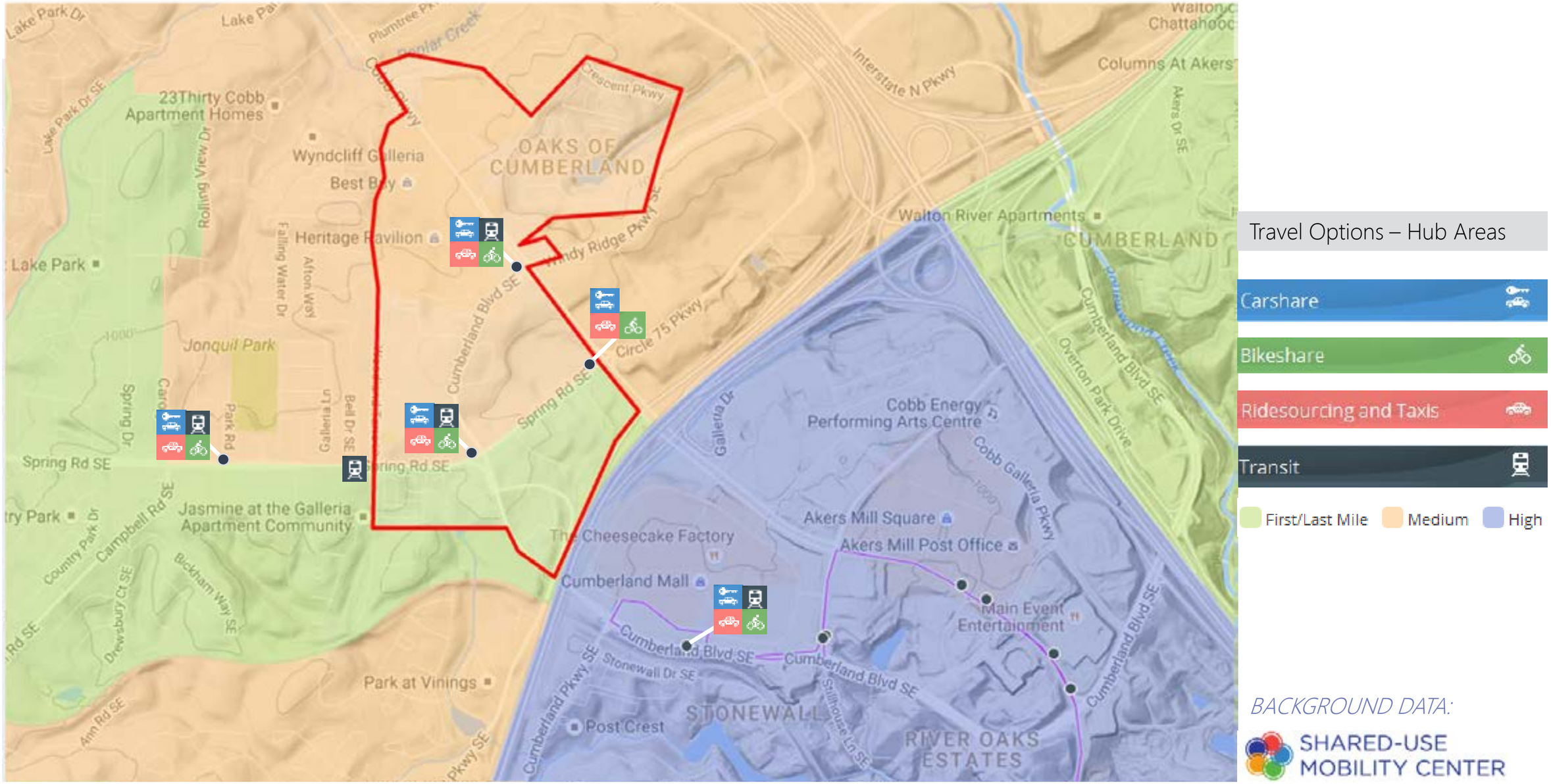
SHARED MOBILITY

This subsection illuminates strategies to give people viable transportation options other than driving and transit.

These suggested strategies complement existing efforts by the City of Smyrna to provide several transportation options. Smyrna Bike Share can be expanded to incorporate more integrated transportation options. As part of a shared mobility strategy, this study proposes that the City create five transportation hubs throughout the community for people to use, whether they live in, work in, or are visiting Smyrna. They will connect bikeshare, carsharing, ride-sourcing, ridesharing, and bus transit stations. These transportation hubs will support carless households and fewer vehicle commuter trips to Symrna jobs.

Figure 55 Example of What a Shared-use Mobility Hub Could Look Like in Smyrna

FIGURE 58 POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR SHARED USE MOBILITY CENTERS



LAND-USE/ COMMUNITY DESIGN

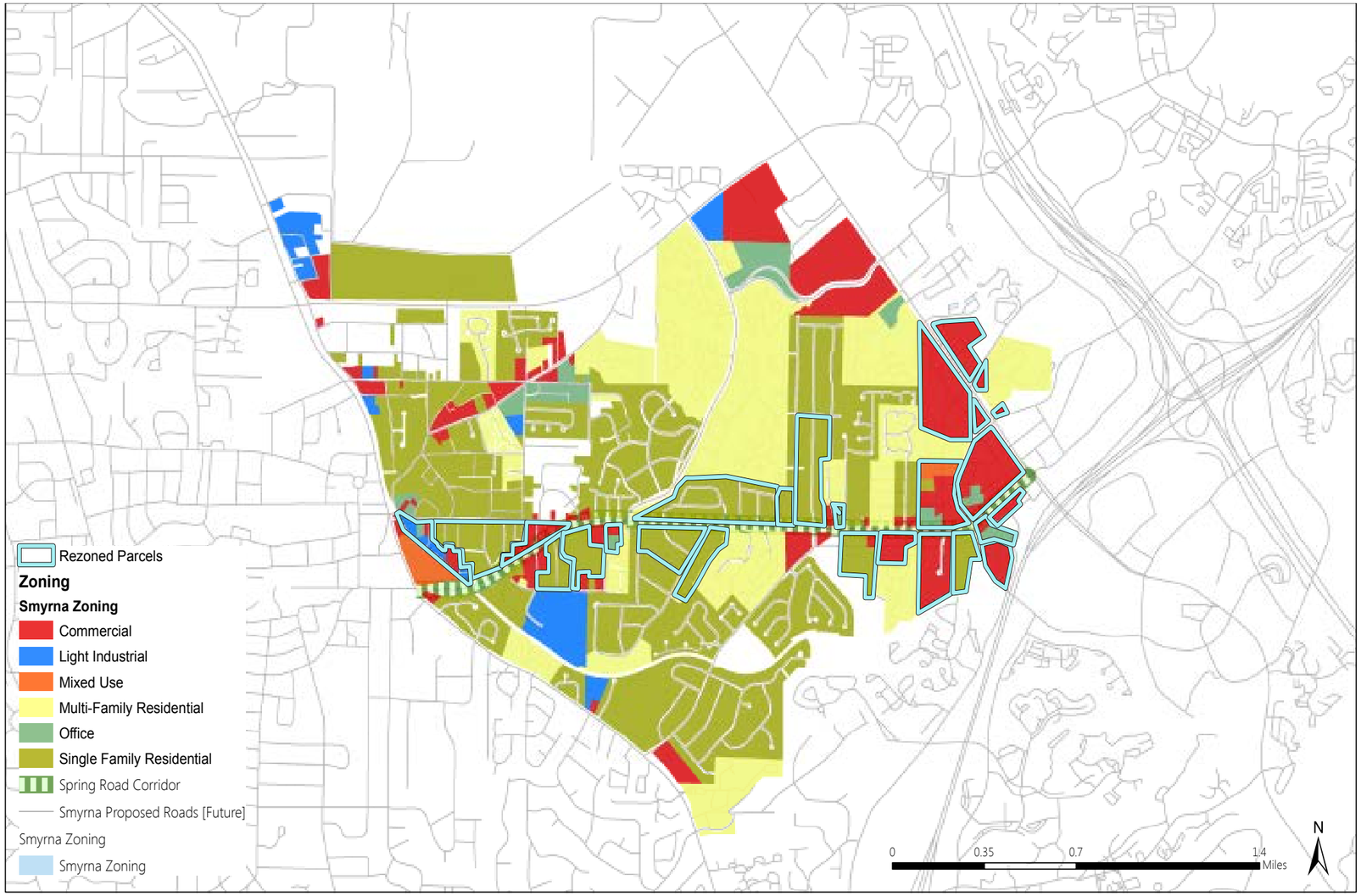
This section describes the current zoning around the Spring Road corridor and makes recommendations to increase density and commercial development along Spring Road and Cobb Parkway. The recommendations will correlate with the core area districts described elsewhere in the report. In addition, the team provided the City with proposed changes to the Spring Road Urban Design Guidelines Overlay District.

CURRENT LAND USE

Currently, the City of Smyrna and the neighborhoods along the Spring Road corridor are characterized by low density, suburban character. Significant flexibility in current zoning codes encourage this character. The majority of the corridor is characterized by low-density, single-family residential homes with pockets of multi-family complexes and commercial development interspersed. Commercial areas are found on the west end of the study area near Atlanta Road and towards the Spring Road and Spring Street split. These are primarily auto-focused commercial developments, characterized by large building setbacks, parking lots in front, and single-tenant buildings. The current land use character throughout the area reflects the city's suburban, low density character.

Figure 59 to the right illustrates existing zoning classifications:

Figure 59 Existing Zoning Classifications in Smyrna Along the Spring Road Corridor



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CHAPTER 4: CORE AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The City of Smyrna has the opportunity to create safer and more attractive public spaces by investing in an integrated transportation system that builds off of the existing street network. A well connected grid can improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians, while facilitating steadier traffic flow.

This section discusses the study's vision for the urban core area between Cumberland Boulevard and Cobb Parkway. This area is seen as having the greatest potential for high density commercial and retail development along the Spring Road area. This chapter recommends changes to the street network, the establishment of districts, as well as opportunities for real estate and economic development.

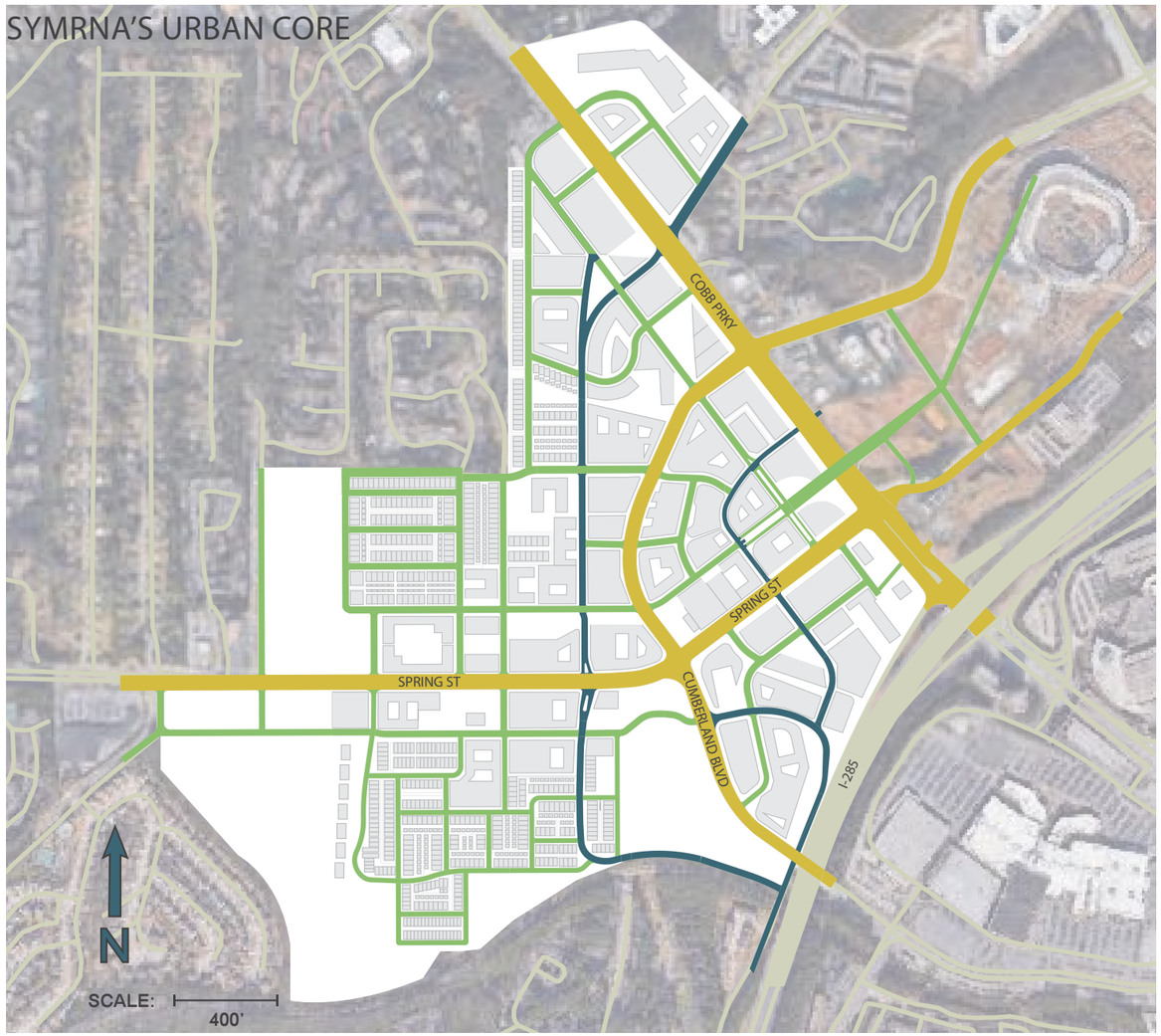
- The chapter begins by discussing Street network changes the studio has proposed. As seen in the existing conditions section, the Cumberland Boulevard area is currently a "super block" more conducive to moving single occupancy vehicles through it ratherthan creating a pleasant pedestrian experience. The network recommendations include a phased incremental approach which breaks up the super block and creates more connectivity in the area. Special emphasis is placed on increased greenspace, connections to Jonquil Park, and a pedestrian connection to The Battery at Sun Trust Park.
- Next, the chapter discusses the formation of districts along the Spring Road corridor. The districts begin along Cobb Parkway in the existing super block which will be the highest density area in the corridor, the subsequent district's density decreases into a more residential based form.
- Finally, the chapter discusses the real estate sub market in the Cumberland and Smyrna area and opportunities for increased economic development.

Figure 60 to the left features a view of the Market Village Streetscape in Smyrna. The recommendations proposed in this study, if implemented, will create a walkable, inviting environment much like the one shown here.

STREET NETWORK

THE CONNECTED RADIAL STREET GRID IS THE FOUNDATION FOR SCALABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN

Figure 61: Symrna's Built-out Street Network



THE FULLY BUILT OUT STREET NETWORK IS COMPRISED OF THREE MAIN ROADWAY TYPES:

VEHICULAR THOROUGHFARES

MULTIMODAL CONNECTORS

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

While the proposed street network is based on the traditional hierarchy of streets (arterial, collector, and local), our classification system relies on a multimodal frame of reference. The goal was to create conditions for a vibrant, walkable community, while simultaneously recognizing that the legacy road network of the study area is important for vehicular travel for the city of Smyrna and other Cobb County residents.

This report assumes two main advantages of a new comprehensive, connected street network for the study area:

- The first is that it can provide new alternative routes for vehicles, which this report considers necessary to support any substantial increase in the study area's residential and commercial density.
- The second reason is that a comprehensive, diverse set of streets can help establish quality pedestrian experiences and land uses. Creating new pedestrian focused roads within the interior of the superblocks is more feasible than trying to convert the auto-dominated roads into something that works for the pedestrian.

In order to build safe, enjoyable, walkable spaces for residents, visitors, and businesses, it is vital that design encourages a safe coexistence between cars and pedestrians. An increase in transportation demand is inevitable, but street connections can provide vital alternatives for local traffic while simultaneously creating a vibrant street life.

A PHASED APPROACH TO BUILDING OUT A STREET NETWORK

The fragmented nature of the parcels in the study area suggests that an incremental buildout of the road network is the most likely scenario to build a connected network of streets. The study's street connectivity proposal was designed to incorporate existing parcel boundaries. Additionally, while all the proposed roads work best when joined into a single network, the design guarantees that all suggested street buildouts work independently from one another.

Some amount of parcel consolidation is necessary and expected, but the hypothetical scenario assumes that no more than a few commercial properties are consolidated to form viable, single development proposals. The road network is built out piece by piece, development by development. Some level of adaptability and flexibility in the street connectivity proposal is necessary to ensure that no single piece of the buildout can render the whole network ineffective. As the network continues to be built out, the market will incentivize future development cooperation by benefiting those developers that provide for new street access.

FIGURE 62: A POTENTIAL PHASING FOR BUILDING OUT THE STREET NETWORK

Existing Roads
New Roads
Roads Built in Previous Phase

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

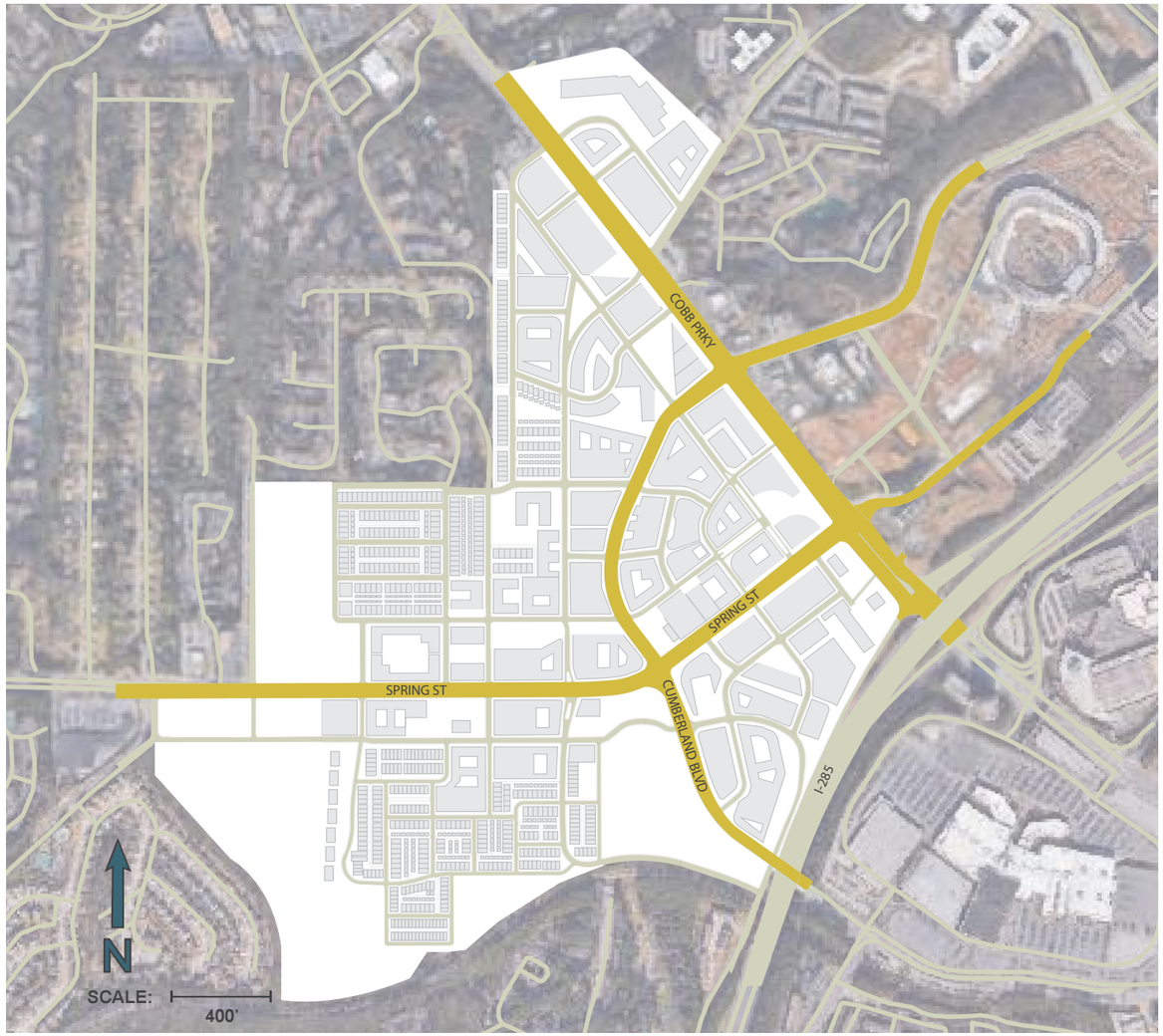
PHASE 3

PHASE 4

STREET TYPE 1

VEHICULAR THOROUGHFARES

Figure 63: Major Thoroughfares and Potential Development Build-out



DESIGNATED ROUTES FOR VEHICULAR TRAVEL

Vehicular Thoroughfares are associated with arterials and serve main corridors for vehicular traffic. These roads often provide the quickest travel route for vehicles moving through the urban core. They are the widest of all the road categories and usually provide the least pedestrian friendly experience.

Spring Road, in particular, provides one of the few east-west connection routes in this area and is heavily trafficked due to its collector connection to both Cobb Parkway, I-285, and I-75. Creating a new east-west connection across Smyrna is not possible, nor advisable due to existing residential neighborhoods.

All road network design was predicated on the idea that Spring Road would largely continue to serve as primarily a mover of traffic. Any increase in density in the study area would also increase pressure on Spring Road and rely on this road to form the central spine for all network improvements and additions. All suggested improvements provide new alternative routes and relief for the existing road network, especially at major intersections.

Example Corridors

Cobb Parkway

- Primarily a N/S automobile thoroughfare. Pedestrian and Bicycle access is limited. However, a pedestrian and bicycle sidepath is proposed to facilitate local access.
- Principally high-density commercial development along the corridor.

Spring Street

- Primarily a N/S automobile thoroughfare. Comfortable pedestrian and bicycle paths exist along the roadway (with planned extensions) facilitating non-motorized access.
- Both lower-density residential and commercial development front the corridor.

Cumberland Boulevard

- Multimodal connection between Spring Rd and Cobb Parkway. Balance demands of local circulator route, pedestrian and bicycle access (sidepaths proposed), and vehicular access.

STREET SECTION EXAMPLES

LANDSCAPED BUFFERS

- Cobb Parkway: 30 ft
- Spring Street: 20 ft
- Cumberland Boulevard: 10 ft

SECTION 1: 7-LANE STREETSCAPE PROPOSED DESIGN

The widest vehicular thoroughfares should only be located where traffic levels and vehicular connectivity needs are greatest in the study area.

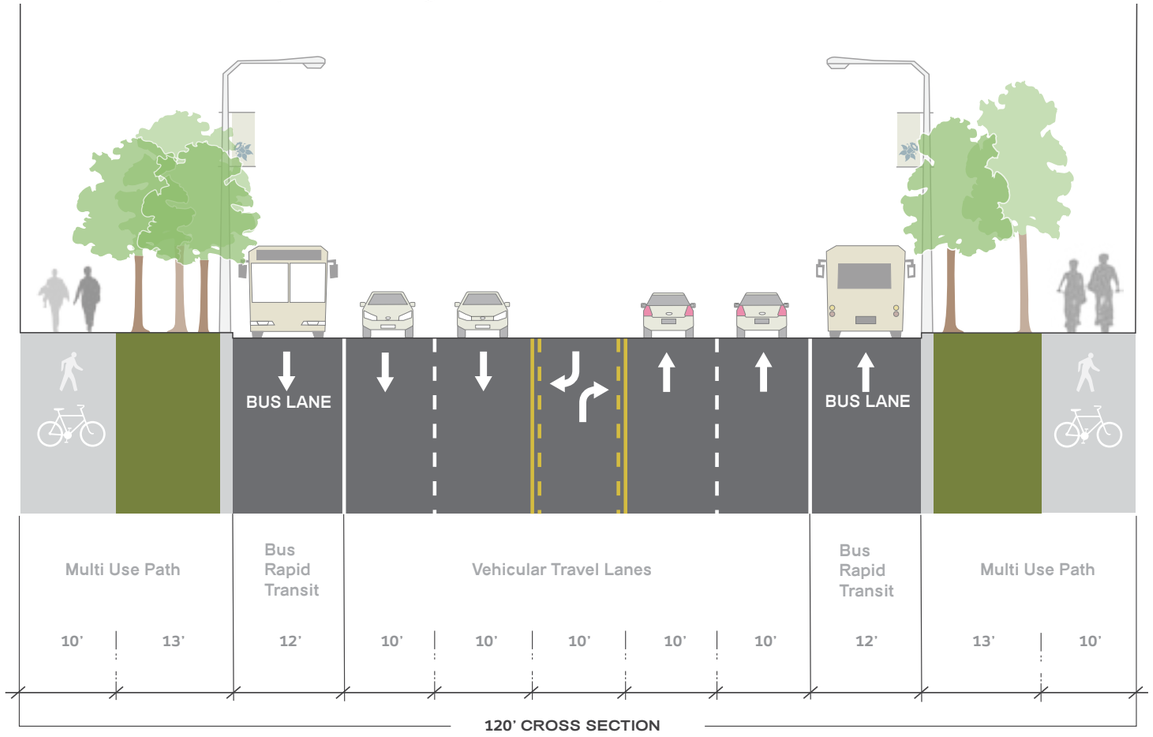


FIGURE 64: 7-LANE STREETSCAPE WITH BUFFERED MULTI USE PATH

SECTION 2: 5-LANE STREETSCAPE PROPOSED DESIGN

The standard roadway design for vehicular thoroughfares should closely resemble the 5-lane streetscape detailed in Figure 65 below

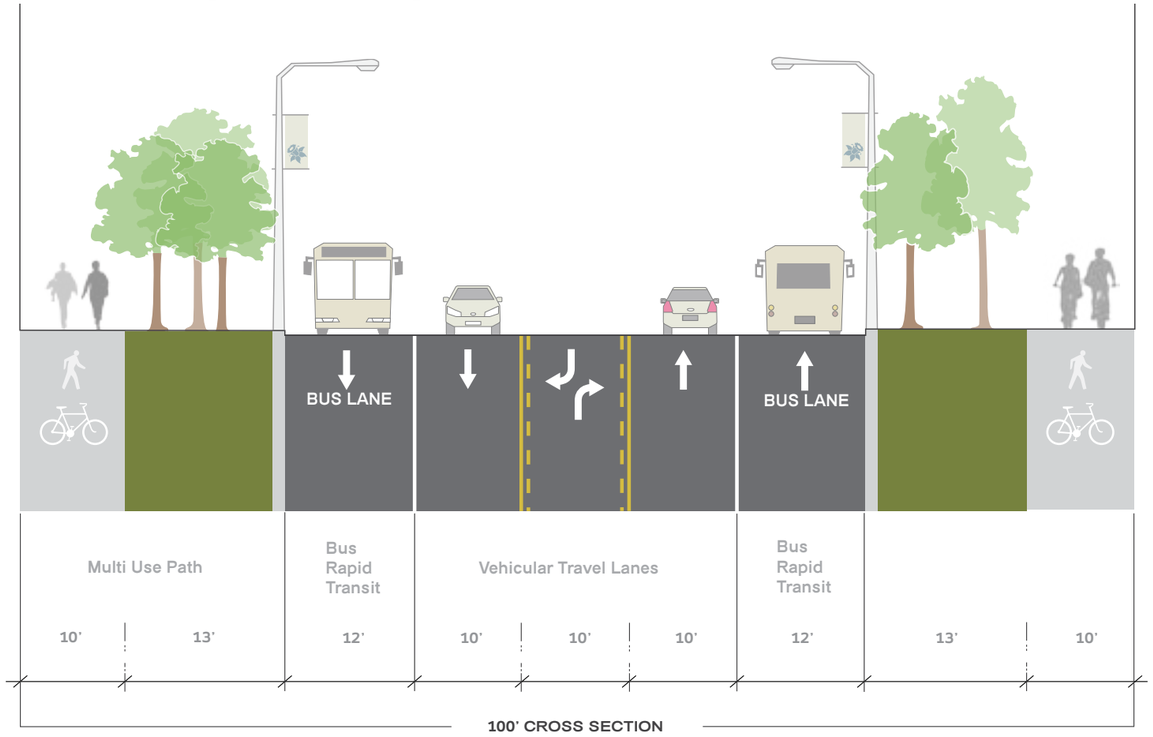
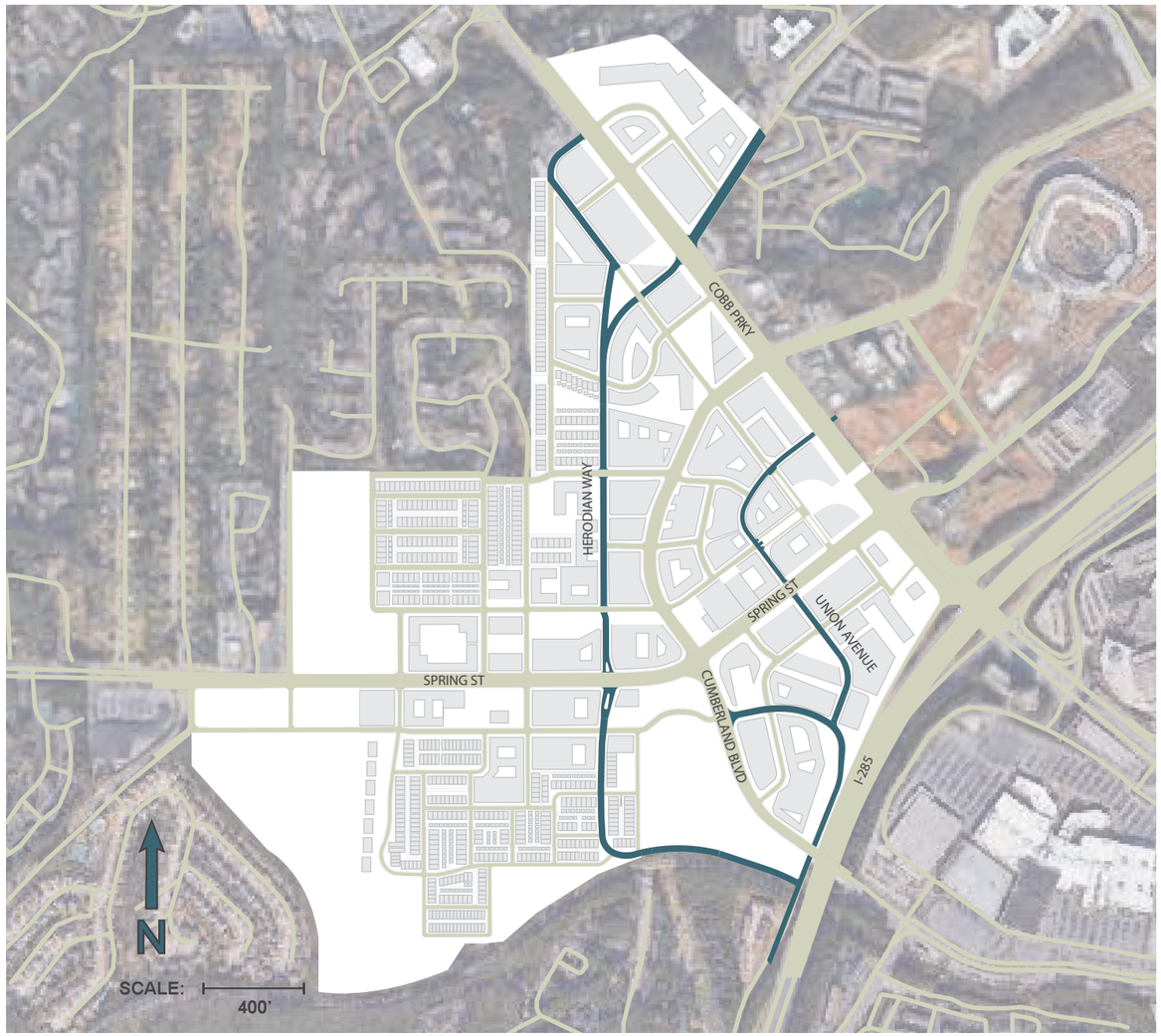


FIGURE 65: 5-LANE STREETSCAPE WITH BUFFERED MULTI USE PATH

STREET TYPE 2

MULTIMODAL CONNECTORS

Figure 66: Multimodal Connectors and Potential Development Build-out



ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FOR ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Multimodal Connectors are associated with collector streets and serve to connect vehicular thoroughfares. These roads allow a greater concentration of uses and have a commercial component. Both proposed connectors radiate away from the intersection at Cobb Parkway and Spring Road providing a bypass system for both cars and pedestrians. Pedestrians wishing to avoid vehicular thoroughfares and congested their intersections. Combined with vehicular thoroughfares the streets will drastically improve vehicle circulation in the study area.

Example Corridors

Herodian Way Extension (NEW proposal)

- Envisioned as the main inter-neighborhood connector for the Gateway and East Spring districts.
- Connects from Herodian Way to Spring Street and Spring Hill Parkway and provides local access to businesses and multi-family housing
- On-street separated bikeways and wide sidewalks facilitate comfortable local pedestrian and bicycle access.

Union Avenue (NEW proposal)

- Requires 80 feet of ROW
- This street would serve to connect Cobb Boulevard, Spring Street, and Cumberland Boulevard within the most densely populated district. Union Avenue would provide valuable travel alternatives for maneuvering within the proposed Bridge District core area and serve to concentrate the tallest, most significant buildings.

STREET SECTION

SECTION 1: 3-LANE STREETSCAPE PROPOSED DESIGN

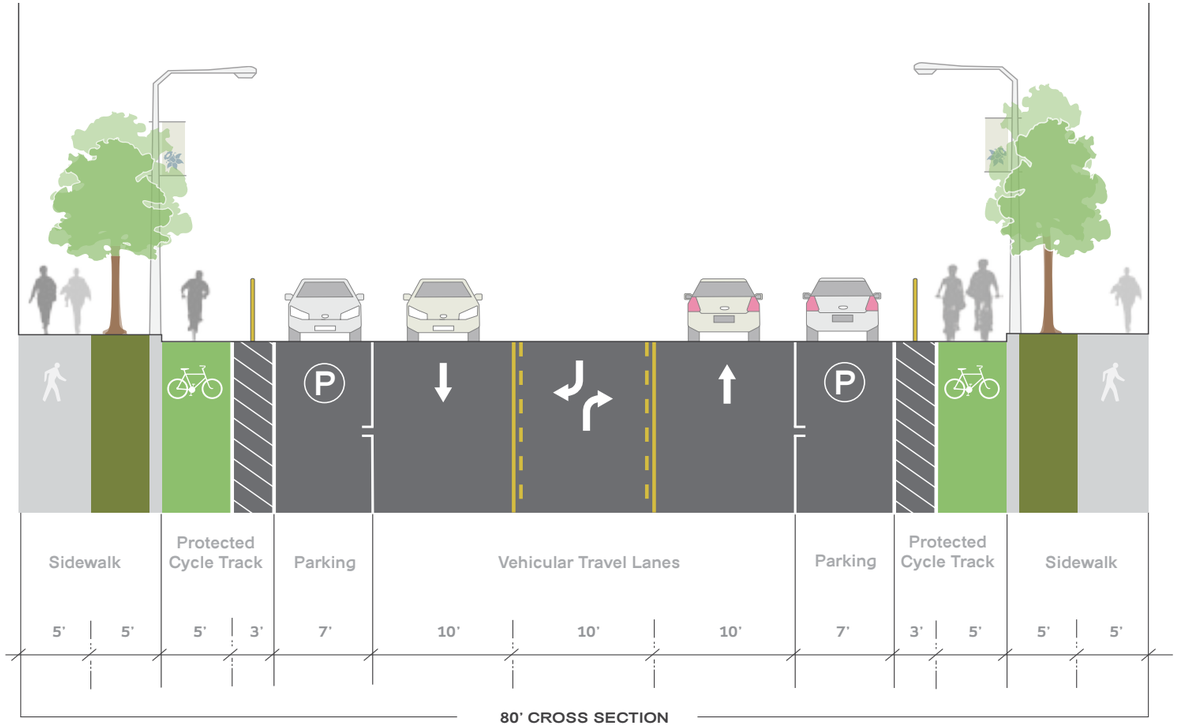


Figure 67: 3-lane streetscape with protected bike lane and buffered pedestrian access

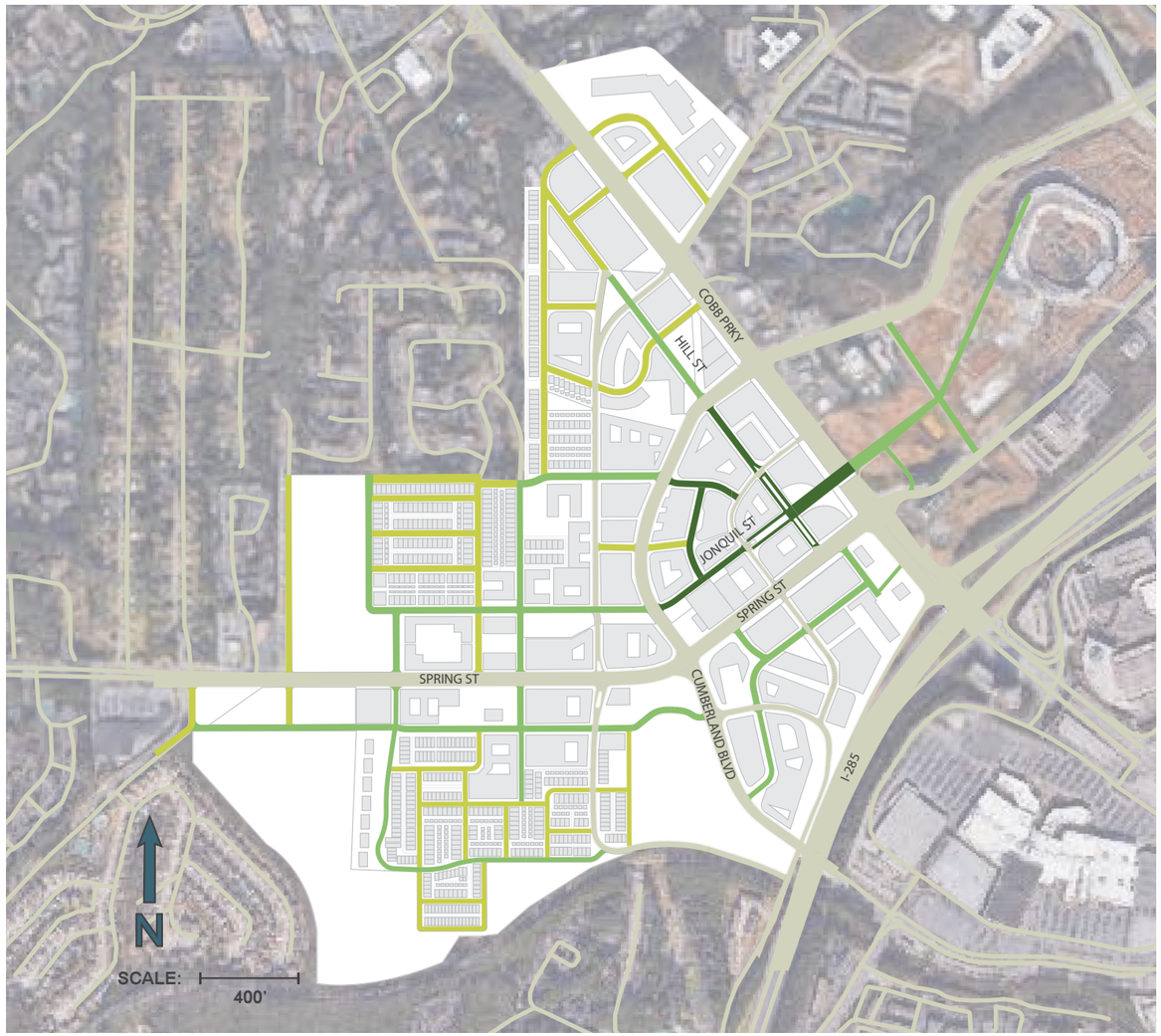
ELEMENTS OF MULTIMODAL STREETS

Figure 68: Bike Share and Designated Bike Lane on Wyncoop Street in Denver

STREET TYPE 3

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

Figure 69: Neighborhood Greenways and Potential Development Build-out



A NETWORK OF LOW-STRESS PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ROUTES

The system of neighborhood greenways is comprised of three distinct roadway designs. Each design prioritized bicycle and pedestrian travel, while provides various levels of protection. We propose a new road that would provide key connectivity:

PEDESTRIAN PROMENADES

LOCAL BIKE | PED CORRIDORS

SHARED STREETS

Jonquil Street, that would run southwest to northeast, as pictured in Figure 69

Example Corridors

Pedestrian Promenade and Local Bike/Ped Corridors, such as *Jonquil Street* and *Hill Street* (NEW proposed streets):

- Connects Jonquil Park with Jonquil Square and continues as a pedestrian bridge over Cobb Parkway, connecting Smyrna to the Battery Development.
- Dotted with pocket parks for a linear park feel.
- Strictly low-speed and local vehicular access, making it a comfortable environment for pedestrians and bikes to share the road.
- Designed as a 'festival street' with frequent pedestrian-oriented programming. Could serve as the parade site for the next Braves' World Series win.

Shared Streets

- Function primarily as residential streets, providing local access
- Car traffic and speeds are limited on these roads (20mph max)

PEDESTRIAN PROMENADES

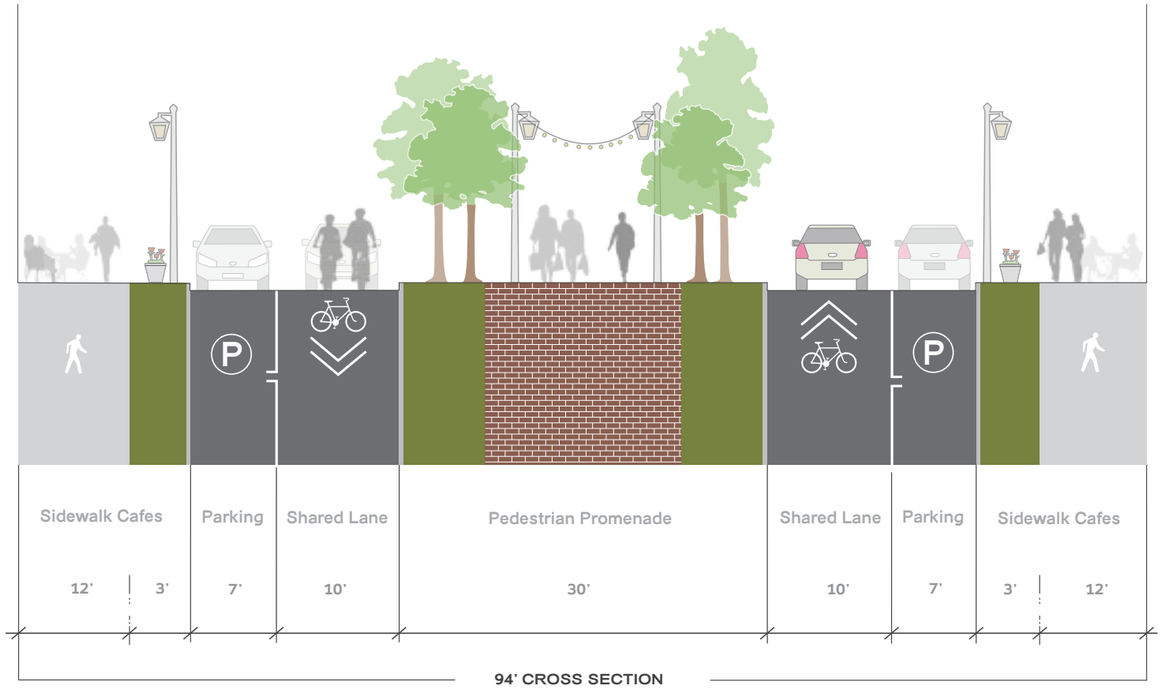


Figure 72: Neighborhood greenway that prioritizes pedestrian traffic

LOCAL BIKE | PED CORRIDORS

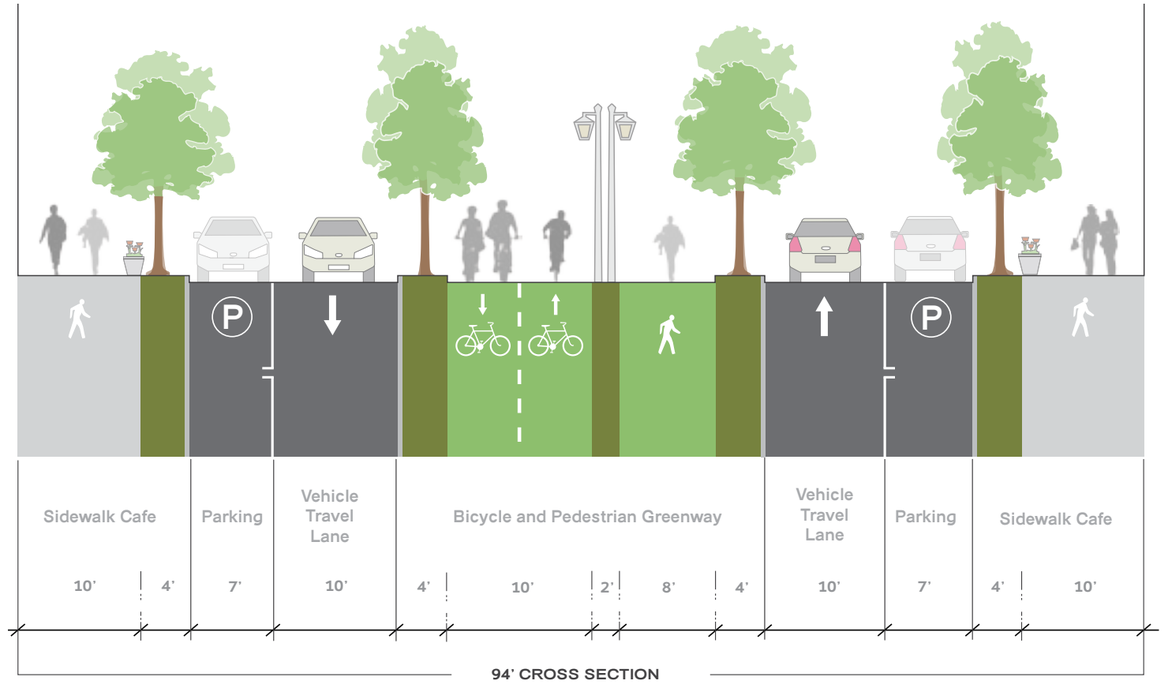


Figure 74: Neighborhood greenway that prioritizes active transportation

Figure 70: Source:-INDYSTAR.com

Figure 71: Source-Georgiastreettindy.com

SHARED STREETS

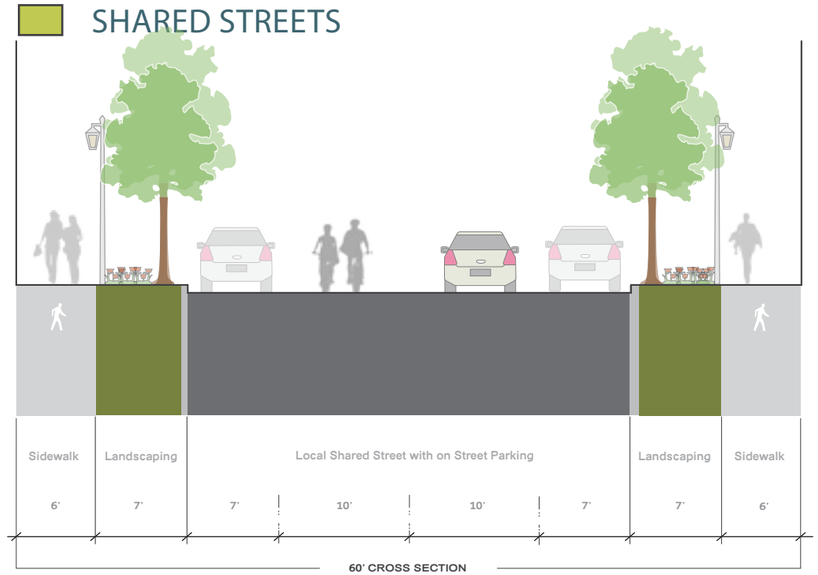


Figure 73: Local Street Neighborhood Greenway

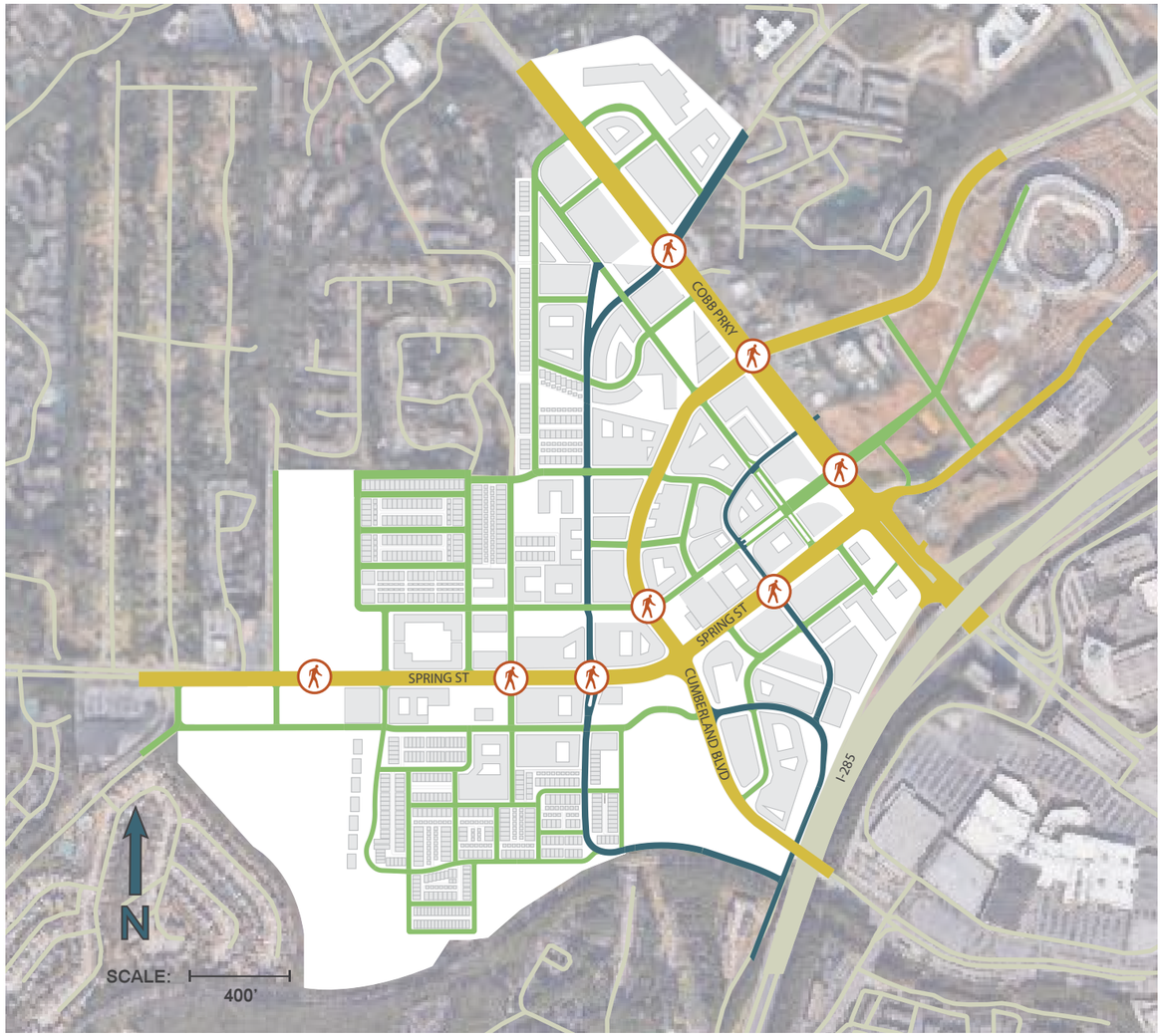
HIGH PRIORITY PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

BRIDGING DESTINATIONS

While one of the benefits of the proposed road network design is the creation of pedestrian friendly spaces separated from the major roadways, this also creates major divisions in the urban fabric. One of the proposal's main goals was to avoid creating "islands of walkability" surrounded by auto dominated uses and infrastructure. To achieve this, a viable urban district requires easy and unrestricted pedestrian movement across the major vehicular thoroughfares of the study area.

The report suggests multiple strategic pedestrian crossings and at-grade routes that could serve to bridge the gaps created by the vehicular thoroughfares. This section provides more detail on the most important strategic crossings, but a successful pedestrian crossing strategy will need to be comprehensive in its approach. A focus on both the big projects, and the small intersection improvements will go a long way towards stitching the study area together.

Figure 75: Intersections Identified as Major Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossings



Intersections Identified as Major Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossings

A safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle crossings are essential components of a complete multimodal street network

VEHICULAR THOROUGHFARES

MULTIMODAL CONNECTORS

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

Jonquil St., the Lexus Site, and the Pedestrian Bridge

Our report considers the Lexus site as the central nexus point for a public investment opportunity.This investment would include:

- A shared, structured parking podium with dense development located on the surface.
- A new street, *Jonquil Street* (as referenced previously in the report) would cut through the interior of the block, beginning at Cumberland Boulevard, meeting the grade of the parking podium and continuing over Cobb Parkway as an above-grade pedestrian bridge.

Jonquil Street is key to these proposals. As just described, this street creates connectivity through Jonquil Square and transforms into a pedestrian bridge across Cobb Parkway (see Figure 76 below). It was a high priority that pedestrians moving along this main route would not have to climb stairs or walk across 120 feet of asphalt to cross Cobb Parkway. The Lexus site, with its sunken elevation and central location, is a crucial potential project site for providing uninterrupted pedestrian access from the study area to the Battery and Sun Trust Park. The route was designed for minimal grade changes to create the sense of a seamless crossing over the major vehicular thoroughfare.

Figure 76: Elevation Gain From Brave Stadium to Symrna Gateway

This concept is demonstrated in Figure 76, which shows the elevations for both Spring Street and the proposed Jonquil Street, along with the pedestrian bridge that connects Jonquil Street with the Braves site. The section of Spring Street, moving from Cumberland Boulevard to Cobb Parkway, loses about 50 feet of elevation, and the section of Spring Road that includes the Lexus site loses about 33 feet of elevation. Therefore, it is possible to raise the Lexus site, through a structured parking podium, to allow for enough height to cross Cobb Parkway without a significant grade change.

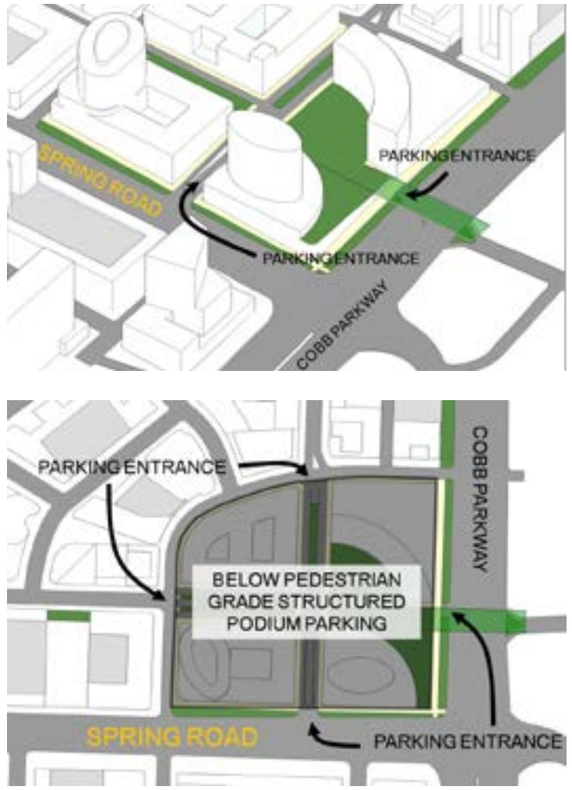


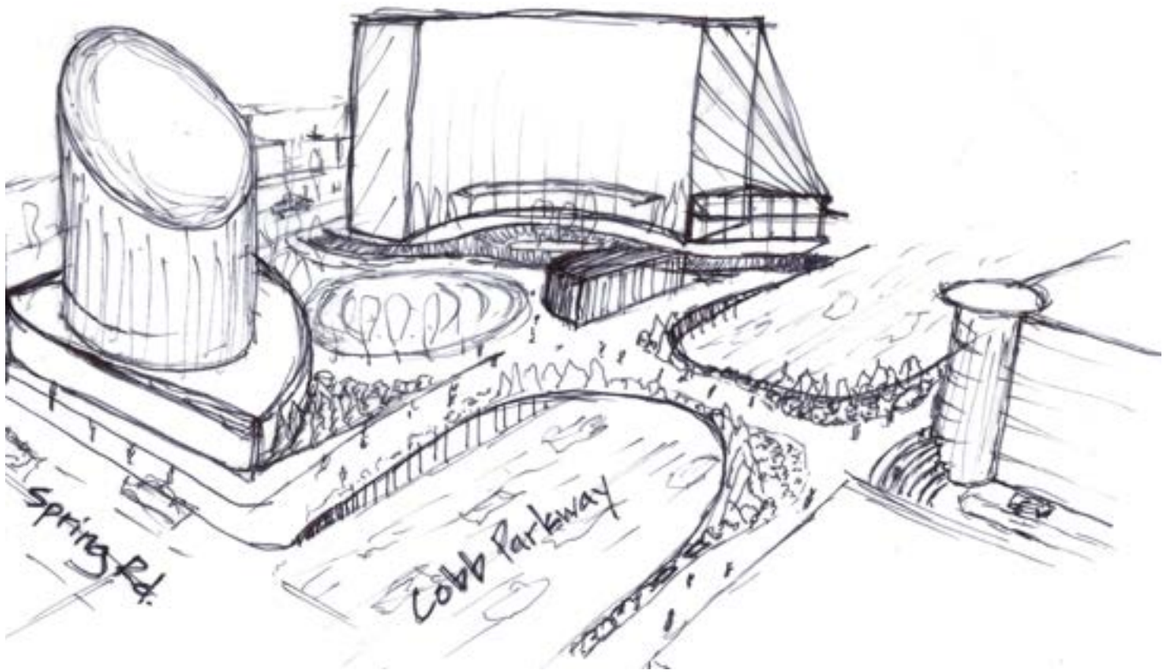
Figure 77: Underground Parking

Atlantic Station, the large brownfield redevelopment in Midtown, Atlanta, uses their structured podium parking in a similar way but on a much larger scale. The use of a parking podium allows for a continuous above grade connection over the interstate barrier, while also providing a pedestrian space that is both at-grade and elevated. Another advantage of the Atlantic Station parking podium is that it moves all parking below the pedestrian space, freeing the surface level for more creative buildings and plazas.

Figure 77 demonstrates how the below-grade parking structure will allow for cars to directly access parking from Cobb Parkway and Spring Roads, which lessens traffic pressure on the more pedestrian friendly streets constructed within the interior of the site. This parking area could also be completely hidden from Spring Road and Cobb Parkway using wrapped buildings.

Additionally, the roughly nine acre Lexus site and the adjacent Steak and Shake site, when combined with 30-40 feet elevated parking structure, could provide an enormous amount of parking. This report estimates as many as 5,000 parking spaces could be created through this elevated parking podium, which could be used by the development on site as well a used for shared parking for the rest of the Bridge District, the Battery, and Sun Trust Stadium.

Figure 78:Conceptual pedestrian bridge designs for the intersection of Spring road and cobb parkway



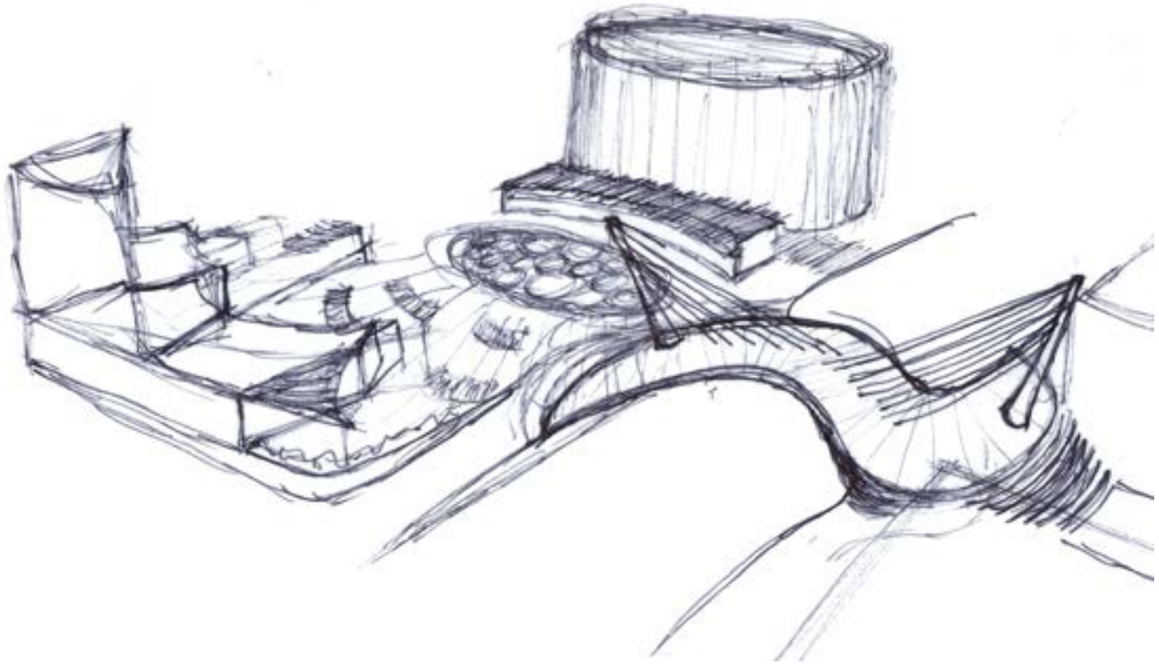
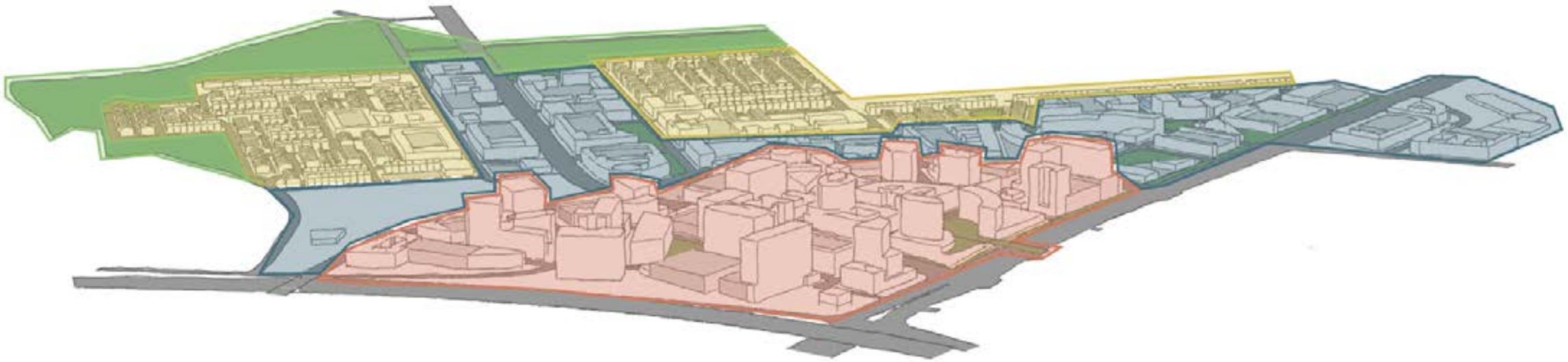
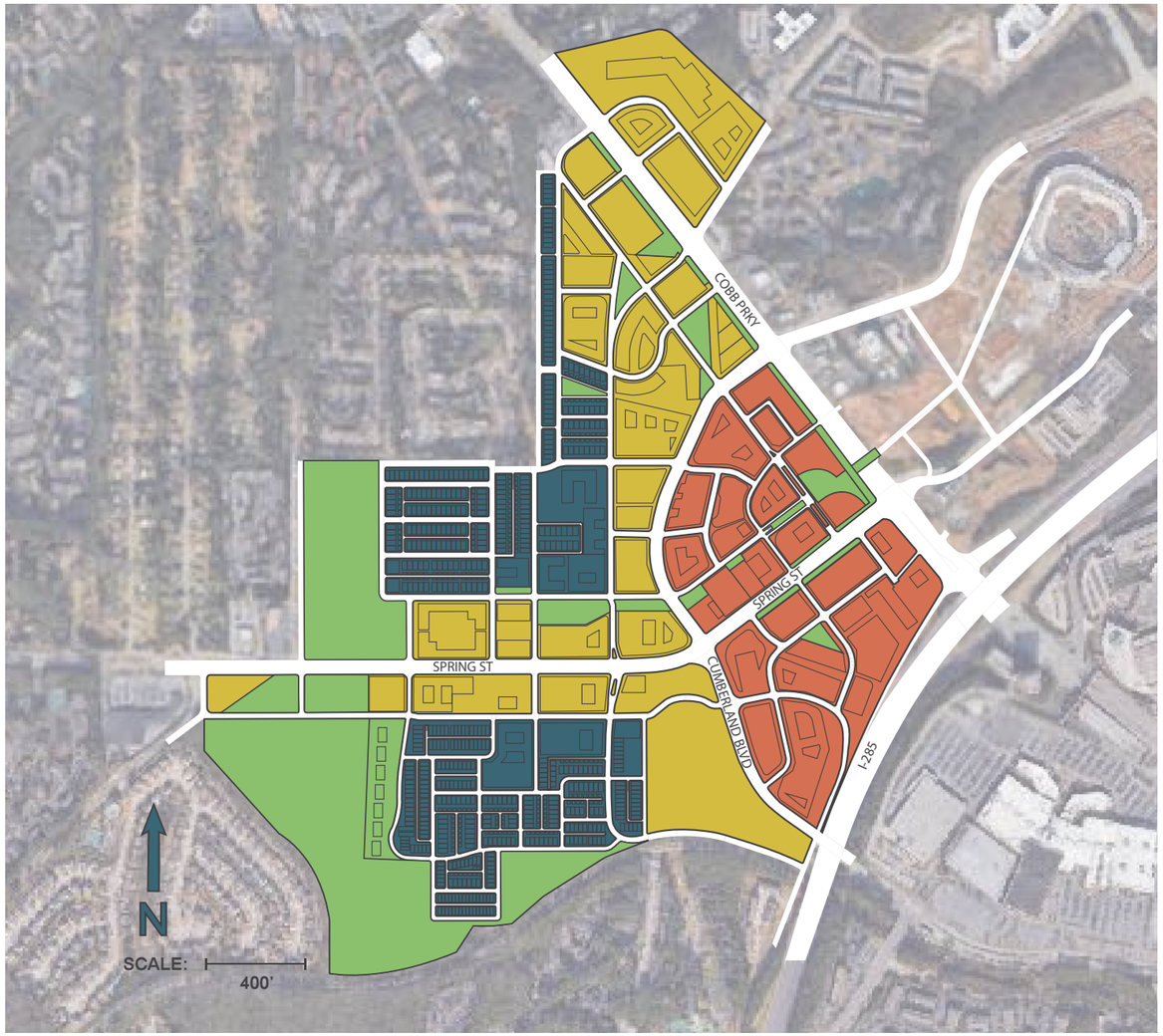


Figure 79: City of Symrna Urban Core with Color Coded Character Core Areas



URBAN CORE CHARACTER DISTRICTS

Figure 80 : Urban Core Districts



FOUR CORE AREA CHARACTER DISTRICTS ARE DEFINED BY DENSITY, DESIGN, AND LAND USES

THE BRIDGE DISTRICT
Land Area: 59.6 acres
FAR: 2.5

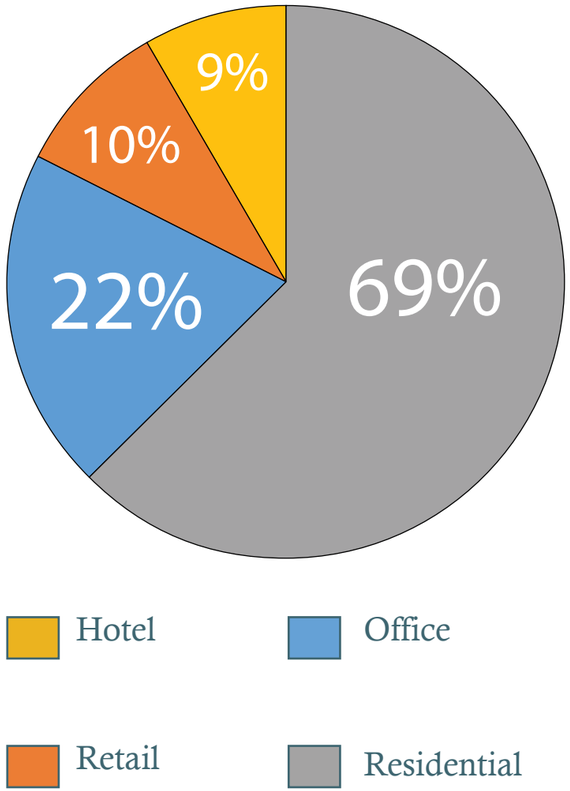
THE GATEWAY
Land Area: 87.2 acres
FAR: 1.5

EAST SPRING NEIGHBORHOOD
Land Area: 60 acres
FAR: 0.75

JONQUIL PARK
Land Area: 51.7 acres

The four proposed core area districts correspond with the density, design, and land uses appropriate for their locations. Each core area was defined by a maximum gross floor area ratio and the mix of land uses, as discussed in Chapter 3 Zoning and land use section. These attributes were determined by examining market conditions and considering the impact on surrounding neighborhoods. These suggestions do not include strict proscriptive elements. Instead, they let height and density guide market trends toward a transformative end.

PROPOSED MAXIMUM PERMITTED SQUARE FOOTAGE BY USE



Square Footage by Use	Existing Ft²	Proposed Ft²	% Increase	Absolute Increase Ft²
Office	69,400	3,275,363	4720%	+3,205,963
Retail	1,044,000	1,530,363	147%	+486,363
Residential	631,500	8,708,775	1379%	+8,077,275
Single-family	*33,000*	*1,830,150*	*5546%*	*+1,797,150*
Multi-family	*598,500*	*6,878,625*	*1149%*	*+6,280,125*
Hotel	270,400	1,300,000	481%	+1,029,600
Total	**2,763,400**	**23,523,276**	**851%**	**+20,876,476**

The proposed square footage below corresponds with the suggested FARs for each core area. As suggseted by FAR, total buildout represents total possible build out under these recommendations. Proposed quantities of office, retail, residential, and hotel development were calculated by examing each core area relative strengths and benefits and the total amount development that could be realistically supported by the market. Assuming strong market conditions, these recommendations would ensure that development in study area could meet, but not exceed, the proposed maxmimum permitted square footage. Land use make up was determined through physical development limitations, like ground floor retail requirements, and market conditions. Each core area has land use restrictions, but the mix within the core area will largely be determined through long-term market conditions. Overall, a considerable expansion of development would be supported under these new FAR, land use, and height proposals.

THE BRIDGE DISTRICT

SITE CHARACTER

The Bridge District incorporates our highest density suggestions. This district overlooks the Braves Stadium and its related development. Combining multifamily, office, and hotel uses, this area can attract both residents, visitors, and an active workforce. This mixed use approach will feature a maximum residential density of approximately 80 dwelling units per acre with a variety of buildings with varying heights—maxing out at 200 feet. A key feature of this district is the Pedestrian Bridge which will activate feet on the street while also providing a safe alternative to crossing Cobb Parkway. By utilizing Cumberland Boulevard to the South, Cobb Parkway to the North, and I-285 to the east, a distinctive buffer is created as a transition from a high density district into the medium-density land use in the Gateway District. We would expect to see the more premium commercial retail options in the Bridge District like Aveda, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Brooks Brothers, GAP, Polo and other stores of this type.

Figure 81 : District 1 - The Bridge District

BUILDING USE

Building Use	% Area Makeup	Proposed Square Ft
Multi-family	30%	1,950,00
Office	45%	2,925,00
Retail	5%	325,000
Hotel	20%	1,300,000
Total	**100%**	**6,500,000**

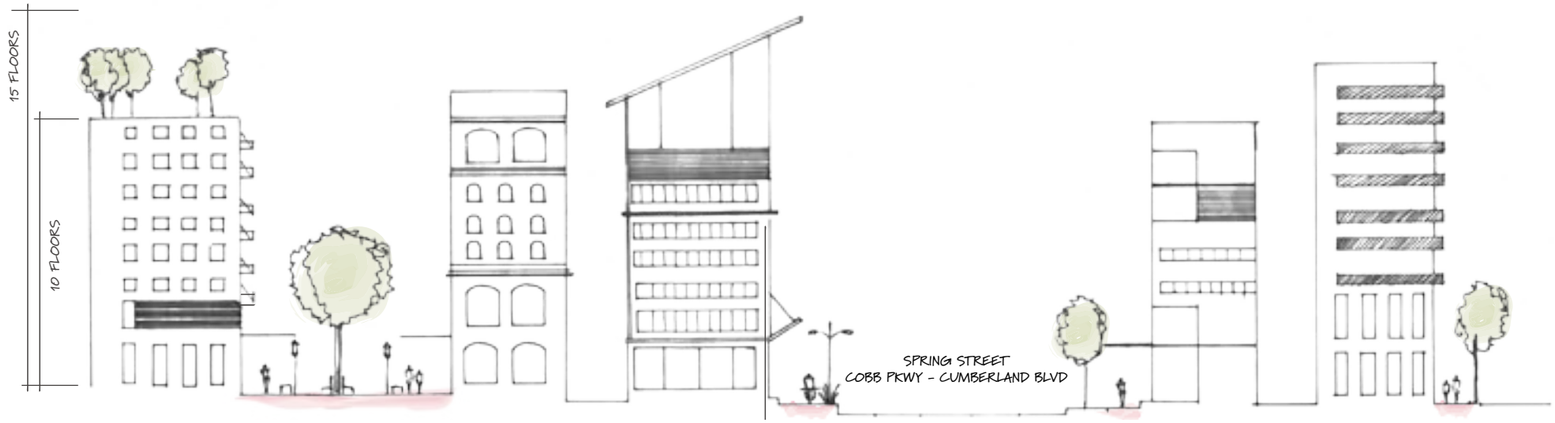
DENSITY: FAR 2.5

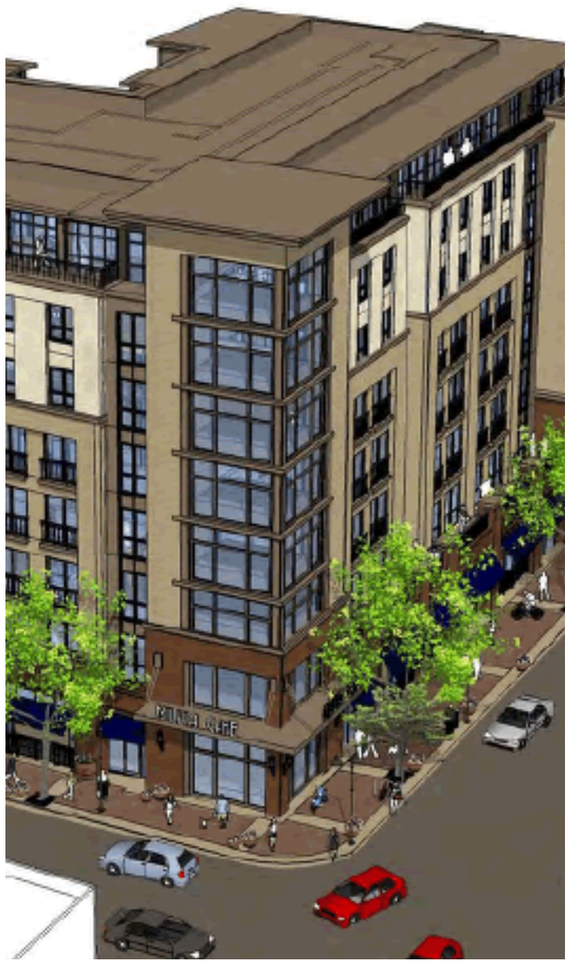
BUILDING HEIGHT MAXIMUMS:

200 ft

110 ft

BUILDING TYPES



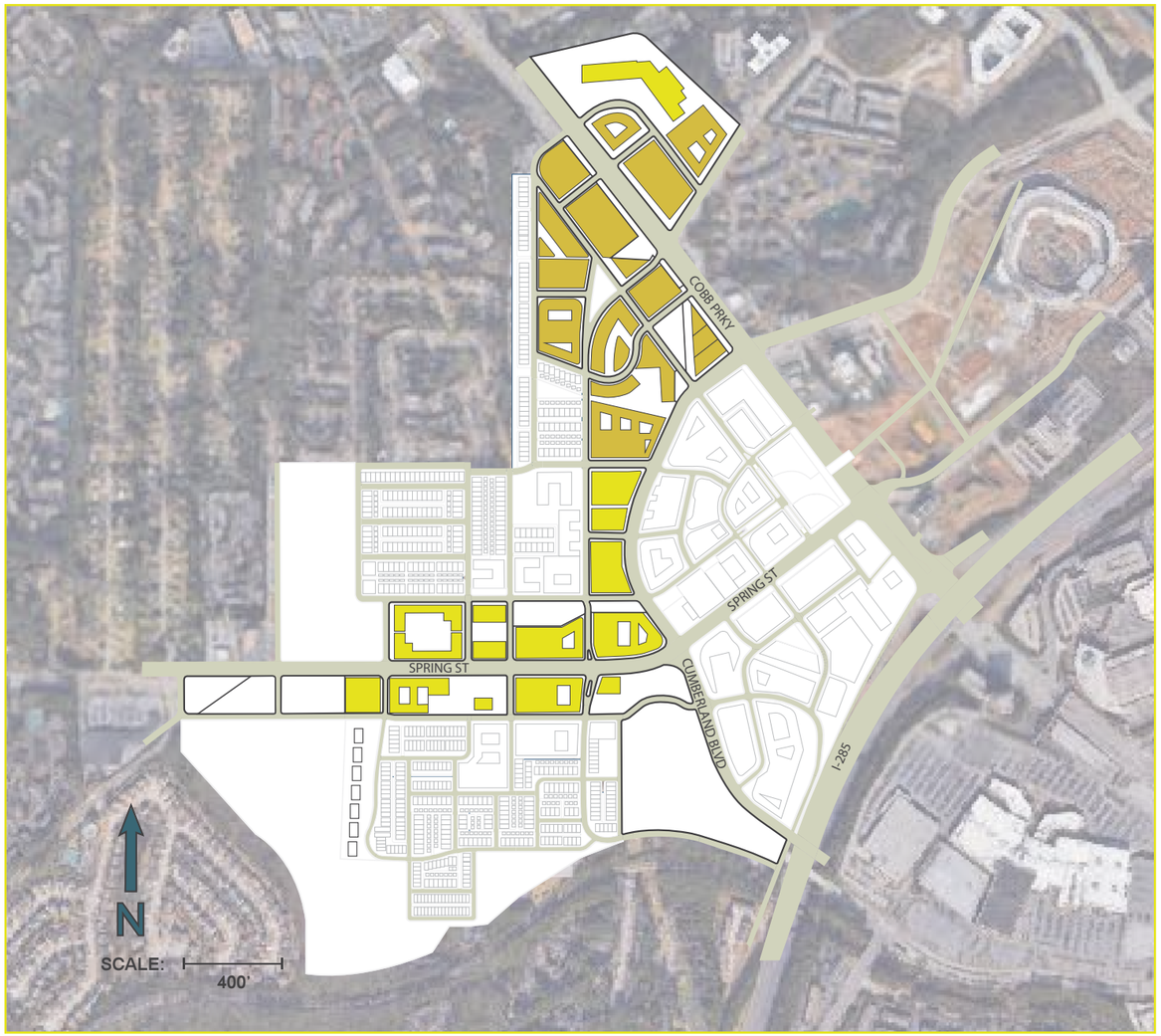


THE GATEWAY DISTRICT

SITE CHARACTER

The Gateway incorporates a medium density design, providing a large amount of multifamily housing and commercial mixed-use development. This area will likely attract the young professional who work in the area, or the young entrepreneur dreaming up the next big idea. A local presence in retail and service options will exist along the Spring Street strip, although less high end than that of the Bridge District. One may find a boutique pet shop or a corner bar owned by a local resident. This mixed use approach will feature a maximum density of approximately 50 dwelling units per acre with a variety of buildings with varying heights—maxing out at 70 feet. The main feature of this district is the Northwestern corner where the offices and other mixed use developments will be located. From shared kitchens and co-working space, to the possibility of cooperative housing, this district will provide residence for a mix of incomes and interests.

Figure 82 : District 2 - The Gateway District



BUILDING USE

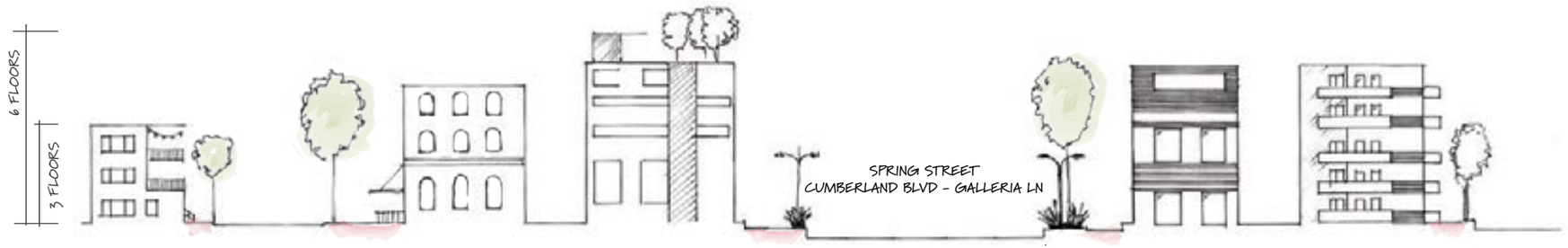
Building Use	% Area Makeup	Proposed Square Ft
Multi-family	75%	4,275,000
Retail	20%	1,140,000
Office	5%	285,000
Total	**100%**	**570,000**

DENSITY: FAR 1.5

BUILDING HEIGHT MAXIMUMS:

- 70 ft
- 55 ft

BUILDING TYPES

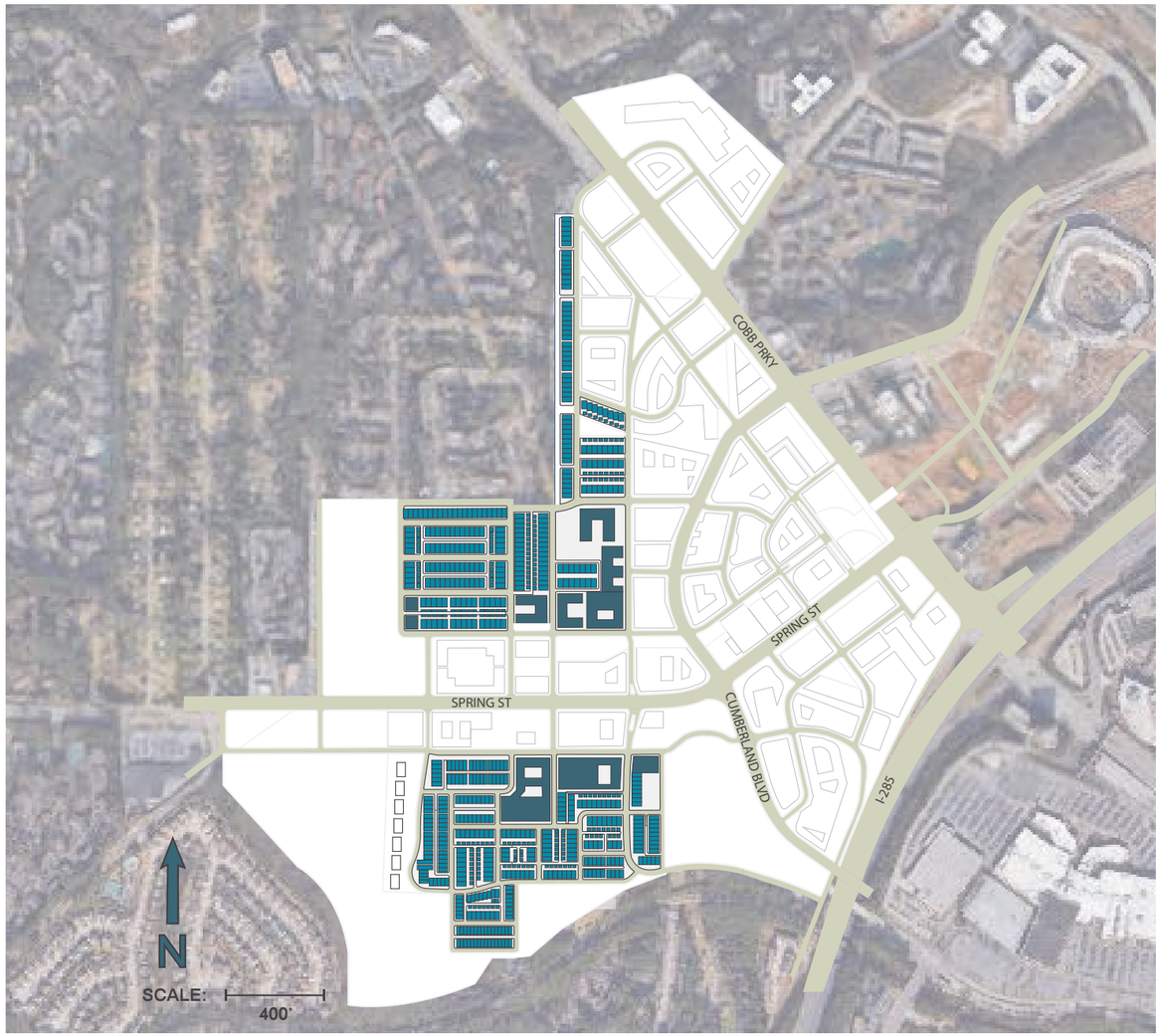


EAST SPRING ST. NEIGHBORHOOD

SITE CHARACTER

The East Spring Street Neighborhood has a traditional residential environment. At around 30 dweling units per acre, it provides less density than the other districts, while embracing the surrounding new development. Here, there exist more mixed-use multifamily units, in addition to attached townhomes. It transitions well to the single family residential parcels that are found in the middle of this corridor. The main feature of this district is the design, incorporating mixed use development with townhomes in the same area. It also features different options for types of townhomes, maxing out at 45-foot building heights. Premium commercial retail options like, Chipotle, local bakeries, Starbucks, Smoothie King, and other similar retail types are located here. Additionally, the office space may address some of the area service needs.

Figure 83 : District 3 - East Spring St. Neighborhood



BUILDING USE

Building Use	% Area Makeup	Proposed Square Ft
Single-family	70%	1,830,150
Multi-family	25%	653,625
Retail	3%	65,363
Office	3%	65,363
Total	**100%**	**2,614,500**

DENSITY: FAR .75

BUILDING HEIGHT MAXIMUMS:

45 ft

45-25 ft

BUILDING TYPES

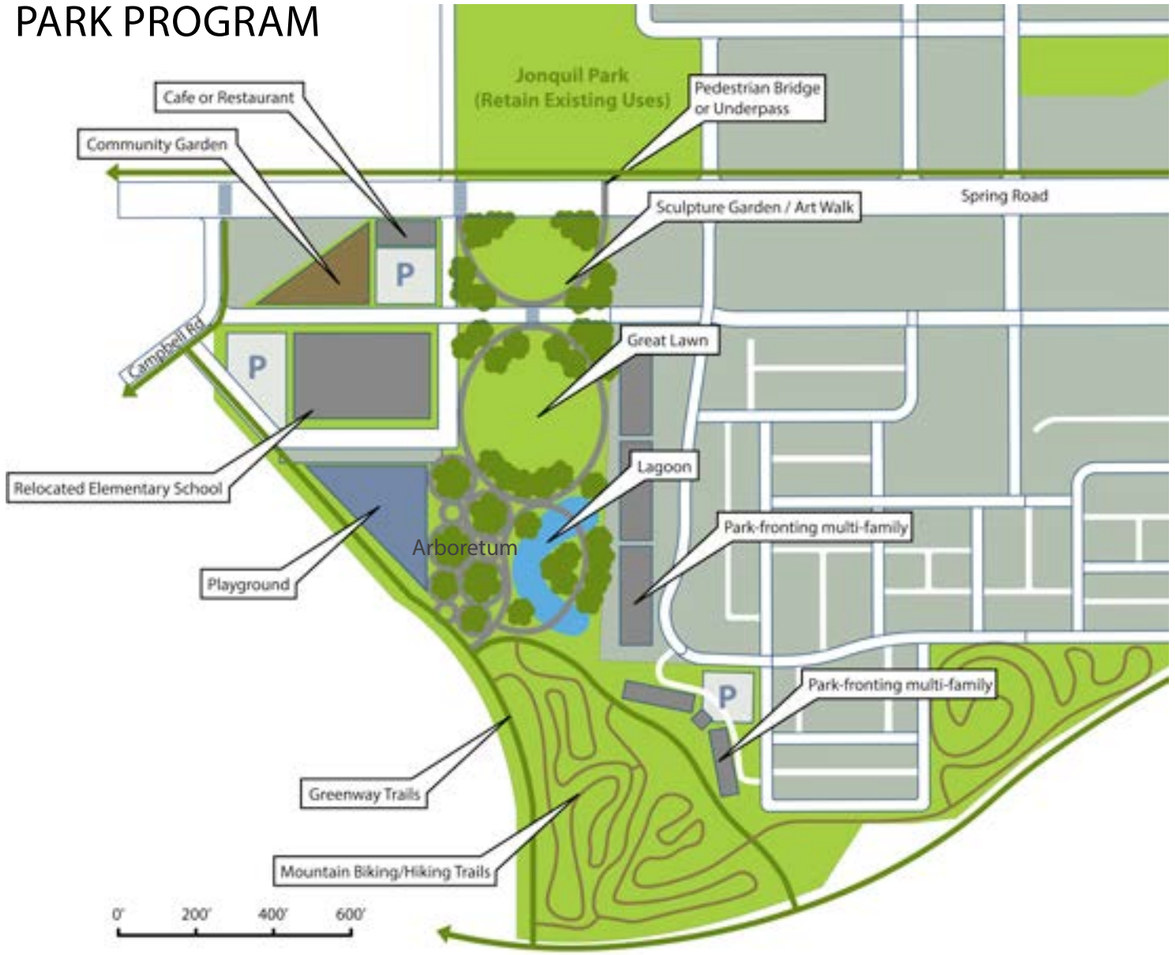
JONQUIL PARK

Located on the eastern edge of the urban core, Jonquil Park serves as a transition zone between Symrna's low density town center and the high intensity urban development surrounding the Braves Stadium.

We propose expanding Jonquil Park, adding a south expansion of the park that makes Smyrna a regional destination for recreation as well as entertainment. To create a connection between the existing and proposed south-facing side of the park, we propose constructing a seamless bicycle and pedestrian connection bridging Spring Road, presently a barrier. New features that can make this park into a regional destination include public gardening spaces, an arboretum, large unprogrammed open spaces, a lagoon, a sculpture garden, a large community playground, and wooded single-track trails that for walking or mountain biking. New park-facing development can fund many of these local improvements through a Tax Allocation District (TAD) for new multi-family development added on the southwest side of Spring Road.

SYMRNA'S PARK SYSTEM

SOUTH EXPANSION PARK PROGRAM



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INSTRUCTOR'S IMPLEMENTATION SYNTHESIS

The Studio outlined the kinds of moves it might take to carry forward its vision for the Core Area. While constrained by its four month timeframe, students got an overview sense of moves that Smyrna might consider should it decide to move forward. In these efforts, students used the market analysis to assess which market segments Smyrna was best positioned to attract and then produced the proposals for each Character Area which considered full buildout projections over ten years and beyond. The Fiscal Impact Analysis provides the framework for assessing the potential benefits and costs to be expected going forward.

ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND PROCESS

Students analyzed Smyrna's zoning and other codes with a view toward synchronizing the Character Area proposals and their optimal street framework patterns. Overall, they proposed changes to reinforce the character of these areas, from minimal to modest tweaks in the Jonquil Park area (with a more robust treatment suggested for the localized Spring Road/Spring Street), to more directive suggestions in the East Spring Road Neighborhoods area, to fairly extensive modifications for the Gateway area, including significant moves for developing a more connective street network, and then major shifts for the Bridge District. The roadway changes are described and diagrammed in the body of the report, while more details on the zoning strategy and prospective zoning and zoning overlay changes are sketched out below.

Common to all of the Character Areas the zoning proposals outline permissible uses, property access locations, street frontage treatments for the appropriate range of uses, signage, yard dimensions, height limitations, parking access and screening, landscaping treatment, provisions for streets and sidewalks according to the street typologies across the areas, parking and loading, and permissible bulk, including FAR limitations.

The students suggest a more robust use of the zoning tool to join with the street layout proposal as a way to effectuate the new street and block network over time. While seeking to minimize impacts on existing parcel ownership in their proposed street network, students recognized that some lots would need to be rearranged in order to accomplish the goal. The rationale is that creating the new block pattern will facilitate development patterns that allow much greater densities than can the current "superblock" type street network and low density strip development realities. Accordingly, the proposal, taking a cue from the White Flint model in Montgomery County, Maryland, which also deals with transforming a strip development, suggests establishing a base floor area ratio (FAR) metric of 0.5 for the core area that provides for ranges of incentives that can carry permissible FAR upward in each Character Area (except in the Jonquil Park area).

The bases of these incentives are twofold:

- Parcels that would need to be split in order to accommodate new streets or wider sidewalks would be able to count the original parcel size for calculating permissible FAR
- Development proposals that incorporate public policy priorities, like provision of street ROWs, sidewalks, green space connectivity, and mixed income housing provisions, could combine to raise the permissible FARs to maximums of 2.5 in the Bridge District, 1.5 in the Gateway District, and 0.75 in the East Spring Road District.

Students sought ways to modify the existing ordinance to incorporate provisions that would transform the Core Area, and particularly the Bridge District and the Gateway District. While they believed this could be done (rough draft in Appendix C), they believed that another approach would be worth exploring with city officials, property owners, and citizens. Again using the White Flint model, they felt that a rezoning strategy that was fully integrated with the proposed new street network would be more effective for setting up the vision for implementation. This approach would not affect existing development, only coming into play as development partnerships emerged to undertake the initiatives to move toward realization of the vision.

Recognizing the city's initiative to update its CDP, now underway, the studio recommends that its vision be considered for incorporation into the CDP, taking that consideration through the full citizen input, work session and public hearing process that the CDP initiative will require. Thus, should the process support the students' work, either in its broad visions or elements therein, the CDP would provide the policy basis for moving forward for the zoning initiatives, transportation plan modifications, any required subdivision modifications, as well as set priorities for the capital improvement plan.

While engaged in the visual preference survey, phone surveys, and early LCI input sessions, students' input into this work reflected that the LCI process, which dovetailed toward the end of the semester, was the primary framework for citizen guidance into the city's three part planning process (Tech studio, LCI, and CDP). Even so, students noted the generally positive, forward-looking and knowledgeable feedback that those processes elicited. Students realize that their proposals may be on the bold side, yet even the recognition of proposals embodied in their four Character Areas could help to ramp up the accommodation of growth and densities from not much change to the west to significant transformation approaching Cobb Parkway. A key component of the

students' assessment of its proposals, which they thought to be particularly compatible with their sense of community values and priorities, was that the Bridge and Gateway districts could by themselves accommodate Smyrna's growth markets for many years forward. The proposals are better in line with what have clearly been identified region-wide as responding to emerging markets, where the current low density strip patterns are failing, and their implementation would take pressure off the kinds of proposals that might otherwise seek to change the character of existing stable, settled neighborhoods. The students fully support and encourage citizen engagement as a major test of the viability of what they are proposing.

CAPITAL BUDGET PRIORITIZATION

While the studio did not analyze the city's capital budget, either currently or in terms of trends through the last several years and going forward, they suggested that the capital budgeting process be interwoven with the CDP update, projecting over the next several years how the city's emerging planning, design, and development aspirations might guide now and future capital deliberations

FINANCING TOOLS

Again, the students did not go into any depth in identifying and assessing all the various tools available or potentially available to reinforce the CDP and Capital Budget priorities. They noted, however, that the city has a long and well-developed history of leveraging its resources to focus on the considerable place improvement activities that have been and are underway. The establishment of the development authority for the whole city, for example, provides for considerable strategic flexibility for supporting public planning and development policy objectives. The studio left as an open question whether to pursue a Tax Allocation District (TAD) designation, noting that in the framework of their vision much of the property in the Bridge District and the Gateway District is greatly undervalued. If the city were to pursue such a strategy, then sooner would be better than later to capture the greatest increment.

PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

Again, the city has a long and generally successful record in forming partnerships, both with the private sector and other public agencies, to pursue its visions. The studio felt that to be successful most of the visions it recommends, particularly for the Gateway and Bridge districts, will depend on these kinds of private and multi-agency partnerships, now and for the long term. The studio is aware, for example, that some preliminary explorations have been launched to consider the linkages between The Battery, particularly as it conceptualizes continuation of its densification patterns up to and along Cobb Parkway and the shared recognition of pedestrian crossing priorities across to Smyrna. Accordingly, strategies to continue to engage both developers and property owners should be pursued. For example, the Livable Communities Council of the Atlanta chapter of the Urban Land Institute puts together study teams to consider development pros and cons in areas where transformational development is contemplated. In the last couple of years they have looked at development conditions on Atlanta's Westside, around the BeltLine, and they have held meetings and heard from mayors and state legislators from Sandy Springs, Alpharetta, Midtown, and other areas of interest. With The Battery and the Braves, ways to make common cause with the Cumberland CID, for example, could implement better transit infrastructure and service to Atlanta or to Perimeter or both as a first phase of whatever Cobb County ultimately decides to do.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The market analysis developed interactively with the students throughout the studio provided the major information base and rationale for the students' work (full report in Appendix A). The strengths, the challenges, the opportunities, and the possibilities fueled the students' enthusiasm and ultimately led to their bold vision. Their proposals for the four Character Areas track closely with the analysis, in which three of the four opportunity sites identified figure prominently, along with a number of other inferred development possibilities. (The fourth, the site at the split of Spring Road and Spring Street briefly noted earlier, while not part of the studio's core area focus, is nonetheless a very important opportunity and ripe for developing and redefining the character node of this node as a community-serving mixed use center, the midpoint between Smyrna Gateway and Market Square). The street network proposals, the transit improvement proposals, the use of parking demand and the possibilities for shared use and shared funding thereof, all flowed from absorbing and understanding the analysis. The market study further identified funding and absorption possibilities beyond what the students posited for carrying out the fiscal impact study. Even here, though, where the market study suggests the use of site specific or "pay as you go" Tax Allocation Districts as a possible funding strategy, the studio wondered why this device should not be considered more widely for the Bridge and Gateway Character Areas, where it seems certain that there will be a significant tax base increase and where the broader designation could be put in place for constructing streets, sidewalks, green space, and parking more flexibly.

One area that students explored in more depth than dealt with in the market analysis is transit options. Cobb County (and to some extent the market analysis) has been tiptoeing around the very word for years, and at this moment citizens county-wide continue to resist and push back against the very good study work that has been placed before them now for many years. Students wondered why Smyrna, as a

home rule city, could not press on with a transit agenda, a key factor in how fully the city might go forward with an aggressive development agenda, not to mention the biggest complaint that came up through the citizen engagement process, congestion. It would seem too that the Cumberland CID could join in a serious exploration of bringing transit to the Smyrna/CID area, as a stand-alone or as a first phase in longer term program.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

In order to provide a framework for assessing the fiscal implications of the proposal for Smyrna, students used the full buildout market assumptions and rule of thumb measures for guesstimating costs associated with one model of public participation for the necessary infrastructure. (see Appendix B for full report by the Enterprise Innovation Institute). Using the funding devices of issuing a 20 year general obligation bond secured by property taxes coupled with imposition of development impact fees, property taxes would increase by about 13 percent to cover the projected $52 million cost. Staging the work to focus on a projected first phase would reduce the property tax increase to about 2 percent. The City would begin to cover its expense outflow in about the sixth year, and would be breaking even by the tenth.

In this model ranges of potential other funding sources and public-private partnerships as suggested above were not considered. In addition, the model is aggressive in that it projects development of the bridge crossing Cobb Parkway, the redevelopment of the Lexus site, and building some of the key streets right up front. While this model would certainly provide a dramatic entry into the new Smyrna, other, more incremental, strategies could be more realistic. That is, creating the vision through the Comprehensive Plan, adopting the aspirational street network, amending the zoning ordinance, and aligning the capital improvement program would enable building toward the vision on a development-by-development basis. This approach would stretch out the cost but also the revenue side. With the proper partnerships and well-programmed, designed and located, as these developments might occur, momentum could build to provide the impetus to step up the pace. For example, even as other retail sites might begin to redevelop to higher density residential or office complexes, coordination with The Battery, the CID, GDOT, the county, and maybe even a transit provider could surely amass the capital necessary to share the load of upfront infrastructure cost contemplated in the fiscal impact report. In short, the fiscal impact analysis provides a framework mechanism for assessing the level and pace of development. Although this framework should be used as guidance for the development process, the information should be periodically updated and amended as events unfold.