

# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



OCTOBER 2017



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**JACOBS**



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan document is the product of a collaborative effort on the part of Smyrna community, including: community members, City of Smyrna elected officials, the *2040 Comprehensive Plan* Steering Committee, City of Smyrna staff, and the consultant team.

A special thank you is given to community members that shared input, ideas, and feedback throughout the planning process to help define the vision and priorities for the City of Smyrna.

The following individuals played a lead role in the plan's development. Members of the City Council and Planning & Zoning Board who were also a part of the Steering Committee are denoted by an asterisk (\*):

## CITY OF SMYRNA MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

- A. Max Bacon, Mayor
- Derek Norton, Ward 1
- Andrea Blustein, Ward 2
- Teri Anulewicz, Ward 3 & Mayor Pro Tem \*
- Charles Welch, Ward 4
- Susan Wilkinson, Ward 5
- Doug Stoner, Ward 6 \*
- Ron Fennel, Ward 7

## CITY OF SMYRNA PLANNING & ZONING (P&Z) BOARD

- Joel Powell, Chairman \*
- Ron Roberts, Ward 1 \*
- Leslie Lightfoot, Ward 2 \*
- Emily Hein Warren, Ward 3 \*
- Earl Rice, Ward 4 \*
- Cheri Harrington, Ward 5 \*
- Denny Campo, Ward 6 \*
- David Monroe, Ward 7 \*

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Teri Anulewicz, City of Smyrna, Mayor Pro-Tem
- Joel Powell, City of Smyrna Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Board, Chairman
- Ron Roberts, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 1
- Leslie Lightfoot, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 2
- Emily Hein-Warren, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 3
- Earl Rice, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 4
- Cheri Harrington, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 5
- Denny Campo, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 6
- David Monroe, City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 7
- Troy Sather, Smyrna 2014 Vision Plan Representative & Smyrna Arts and Culture Council
- Amanda Coffelt | Smyrna 2014 Vision Plan Representative
- Corbin Adams, Magnolia Homes of Georgia
- Bennett Sands, Wood Partners
- Doug Stoner, City of Smyrna City Council Member, Ward 6
- Slade Gullede, Cobb Chamber, Vice President Advocacy and Government Relations
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- Tanya DiClemente
- Christine Harris

### Market Street

- Ranada Robinson
- Kathy Young
- Katie Thomas

## Resolution No. 2017 - 18

### A Resolution of the City of Smyrna to adopt the Smyrna 2040 Comprehensive Plan

**Whereas:** The Comprehensive Plan for Smyrna, Georgia is mandated by the Georgia Planning Act 634 (Georgia Law 1989, pp. 1317-1391);

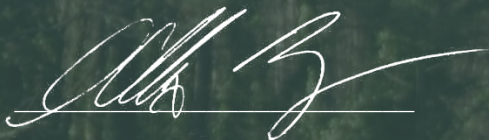
**And whereas:** This act requires that each jurisdiction in the state prepare and implement a Comprehensive Plan, which is reviewed by the regional development commission;

**And whereas:** The Smyrna 2040 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in August of 2017. Smyrna Community Development has received the comments from both ARC and DCA regarding the document and has made the necessary changes suggested for its completion;


**Now therefore be it resolved:**

That the Mayor and Council of the City of Smyrna do hereby adopt the Smyrna 2040 Comprehensive Plan;

**Resolved:** By the Mayor and Council of the City of Smyrna this 16th day of October 2017.



**A. Max Bacon, Mayor**

ATTEST: 

Terri Graham, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



City Attorney Scott Cochran

# GUIDE SMYRNA

## 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

More for our city's future growth and development? Visit [www.guidesmyrna.com](http://www.guidesmyrna.com) to learn more!

What additional development should be encouraged around Market Village in the future?

Place dots in the boxes below to indicate additional development at Market Village. Do not place more than one dot in any one box.

What types of development does the City encourage around the new Windy Hill Road improvements?

Directions: Place dots in the boxes next to the types of places you think would best fit with the infrastructure improvements along Windy Hill Road. You may choose multiple.



airmats



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# SMYRNA 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW

The City of Smyrna's *2040 Comprehensive Plan* serves as a guide for making rezoning and capital investment decisions by City officials and staff. It also provides the greater Smyrna community a snapshot of where the community is today and what it wants to be tomorrow through the year 2040. It builds upon the efforts of the previous *2030 Comprehensive Plan*, prepared in 2007, and incorporates the findings and recommendations of several subsequent planning studies, including the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan*, the *Cobb County Consolidated Plan*, the *Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2040 Update*, the *South Cobb Drive Corridor Development Study*, the *Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative Study*, and the *Georgia Tech Studio Smyrna Crossroads Study*.

The plan's preparation was guided by the state's planning requirements, adopted by Georgia Department of Community Affairs in 2014. As a result, its organization and content are primarily focused on the community's future vision and how to achieve it. This update is the result of an extensive public outreach effort that included an online survey, public workshops, an open house, Steering Committee meetings, and interviews with local leaders. The planning effort included a detailed analysis of housing, economic development, transportation and land use data. The details and finding of this analysis are documented in the accompanying Technical Addendum, along with a summary of the record of accomplishments from the previous plan, detailed documentation of public involvement, and definitions.

## THE VISION

Before starting this comprehensive plan update process, the City had already undertaken a major visioning effort that resulted in the adoption of the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan*. That plan focused primarily on quality of life issues and economic development, and the community continues to actively refine its recommendations through vision committee efforts. Where appropriate, the recommendations of the strategic vision plan and its committees were incorporated directly into policies and action items of this comprehensive plan update. To best serve as a guide in making land use decisions, the intent of this comprehensive planning effort was to translate the strategic visioning efforts into the language of place. This can be seen in the vision statement: "Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods."

This place-based vision for the future is embodied in two maps: the 2040 Future Land Use Map, and the Comprehensive Plan Policy Map. The 2040 Future Land Use Map offers parcel-based guidance for rezoning decisions by designating each parcel of with a character area that depicts how the community would like it to develop in the future. In similar fashion, the Comprehensive Plan Policy Map provides general guidance on where the community



sees the need for preservation and protections as well as opportunities for change and growth. Features of both maps tie directly to policies that help guide day-to-day decisionmaking for city officials.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Among the many recommendations of this plan, the following items stand out as key in achieving the community’s vision for the future by helping the city achieve multiple goals and its long-term vision:

1. Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance to improve readability and ease of use, and to allow the development of new residential, industrial, and commercial products in line with the community’s vision.
2. Conduct a study of infill development guidelines, and adopt recommended infill development guidelines.
3. Study the potential application of architectural design standards to key activity centers and corridors of the city.
4. Consider establishing a land bank that can be used as redevelopment tool to purchase foreclosed and delinquent properties for future sale or development.
5. Implement the recommendations of the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study.
6. Undertake a transit feasibility study.
7. Implement and regularly update the City’s *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*.
8. Consider expanding the City’s Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.

## VISION

““ Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods. ””

9. Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
10. Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making improvements to commercial properties to increase the likelihood of occupancy as a special program, i.e. the Commercial Revitalization Program.
11. Conduct an annexation study in order to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts.

# 1

## SMYRNA TODAY: *NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES*

This chapter provides a broad snapshot of Smyrna as a city today. It answers basic questions that the community asked early in the planning process, such as:

- *How would you describe Smyrna today?*
- *What are the key needs and opportunities influencing growth in our community?*
- *What plans are already in place influencing future development?*



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# 1. SMYRNA TODAY: NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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*A viable plan for the future is grounded in a thoughtful understanding of the past. The existing conditions highlighted in this chapter reflect data and information collected in the early stages of the planning process and vetted with the Steering Committee and the public. It includes a technical review of existing conditions, a summary of the community engagement process, and the priority needs and opportunities identified for the City to address in planning for the future. A more detailed review of existing conditions is provided in Appendix B: Baseline Conditions Report and Appendix C: Community Engagement.*

## SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

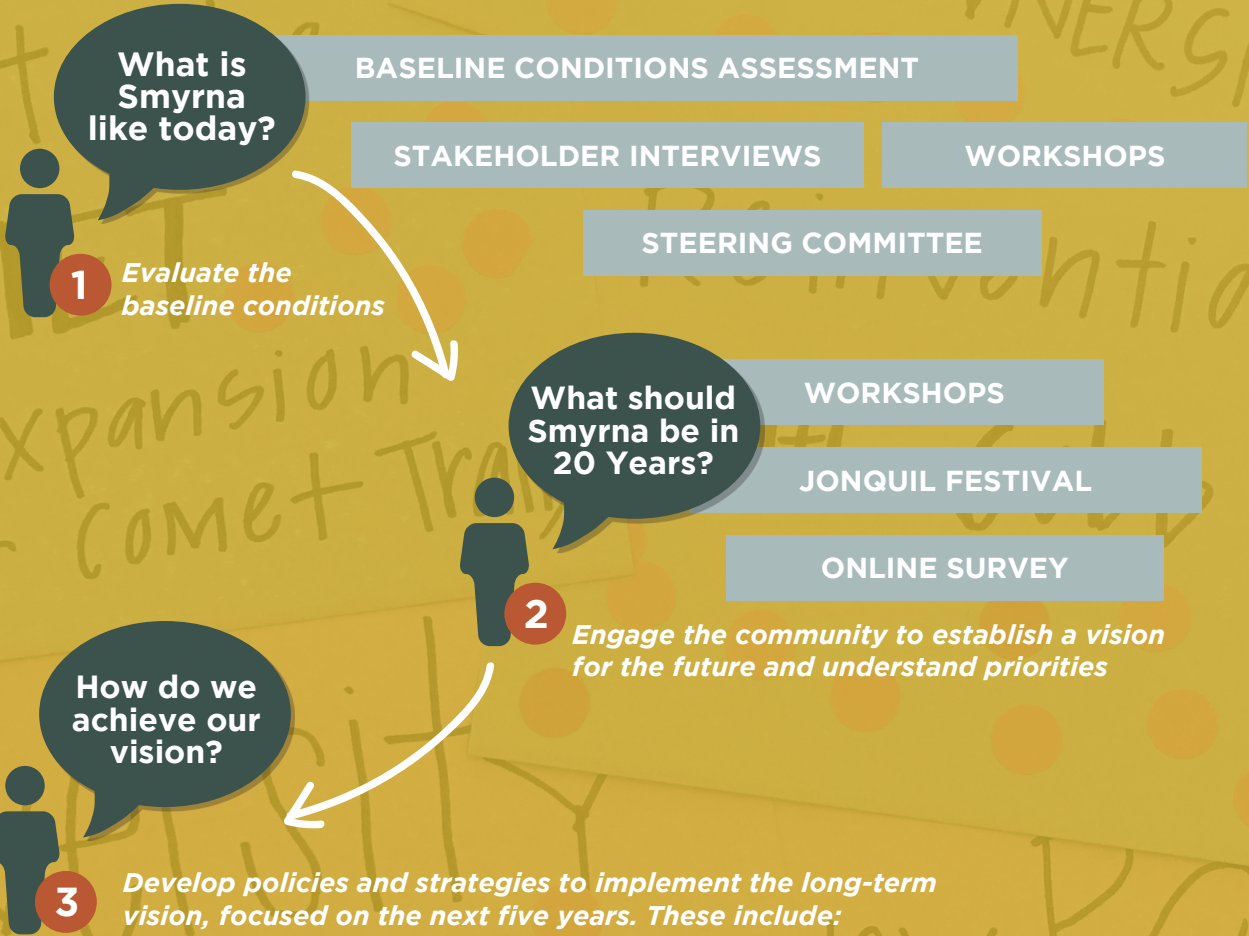
This comprehensive plan represents a continuation of an ongoing planning process, including the findings and recommendations of the current *2030 Comprehensive Plan*, recent visioning efforts undertaken as part of the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan*, and the planning and analysis provided in a number of other related studies. The *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan*, however, stands out from the pack. Recently adopted by the City Council, it includes a clear vision for the future of the city as it relates to involvement and leadership,

quality of place, and the city's image and identity. In addition, findings and recommendations of the plan are continually being refined through ongoing committee efforts.

The insight gathered and collective vision established through that process served as a launching point for the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Where the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* focused mainly on overall quality of life and



# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA PROCESS



## 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

The FLUM identifies the desired future character of different areas of the city. Each piece of land is assigned a category, and each category has a description with the vision for the area, character images, appropriate land uses, appropriate zoning districts, and strategies to advance the vision.

### POLICIES

General policy statements define how Smyrna will approach various issues and guide future decisions by staff and officials. Policies address issues of land use, transportation, housing, and economic development.

### COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Action items are organized into a 5-year work program with a timeline, responsible party, estimated cost, and potential funding sources for each. This becomes the game plan for Smyrna's planning staff and officials.

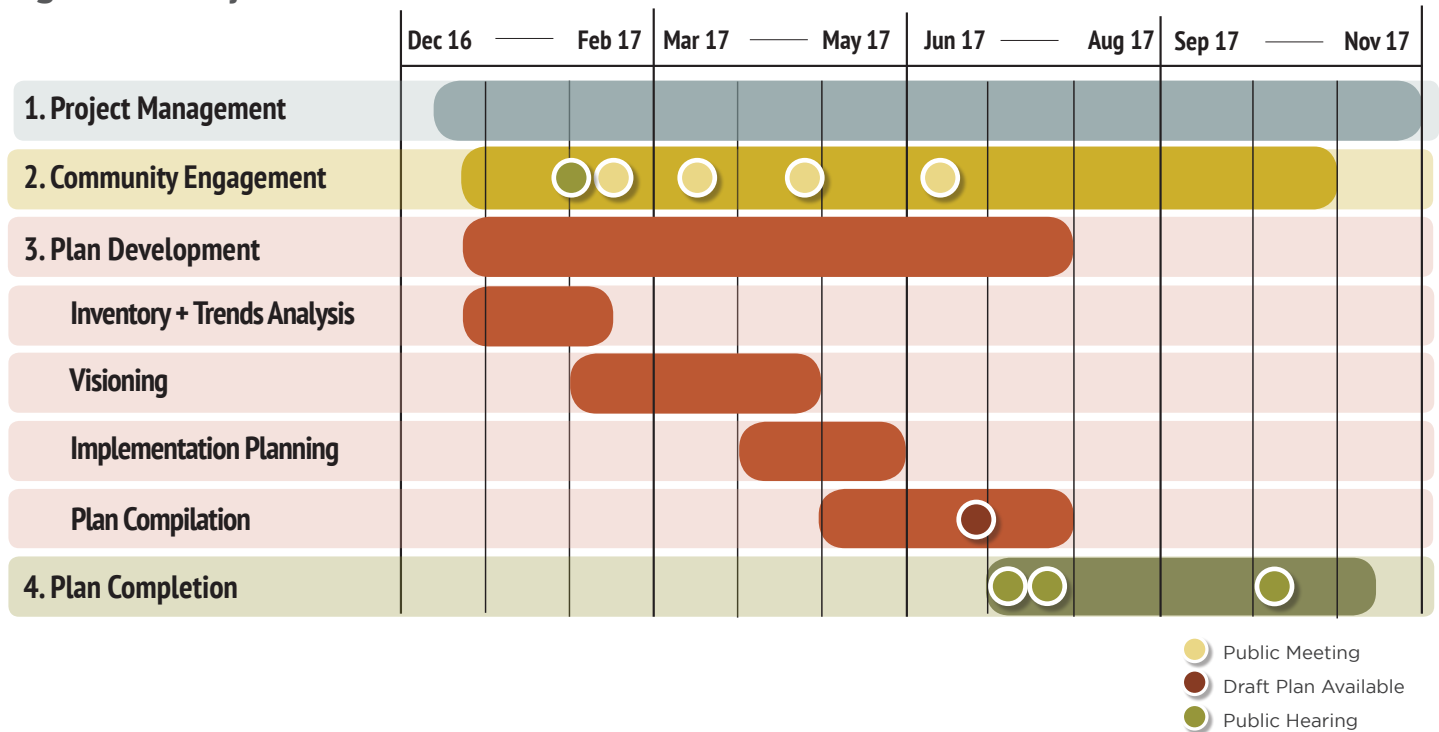
economic development issues, this plan focuses mainly on the built environment. Dialogues with the Steering Committee and public helped translate the broader vision into the language of place and determine how that vision and related policies should be reflected in maps, images, and city policies.

## METHODOLOGY

The *Smyrna 2040 Comprehensive Plan* was developed as part of a four-stage planning process as summarized in Figure 1.1. Project Schedule was directed by the city Community Development Department staff and supported by the efforts of a consultant team led by Jacobs. The consultant team also included Market Street, the same consultants that prepared the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan*. The community was actively engaged throughout the process. Plan development took place in four stages: 1) inventory and trends analysis, 2) visioning, 3) implementation planning, and 4) plan compilation. The inventory and trends analysis resulted in the

preparation of the *Baseline Conditions Report*, which was used as a resource for the Steering Committee and public as they identified the priority needs and opportunities that will influence the future growth of the city. The visioning stage resulted in the development of a vision statement, a policy map, and a future land use map that will help guide city officials in making zoning and capital investment decisions, described in Chapter 2. Implementation planning was primarily the result of close coordination with the Steering Committee and city staff to develop a community work program with key action items and policies to help the city achieve its vision, outlined in Chapter 3. Finally, the plan compilation phase resulted in this plan document and the Technical Addendum, which documents the findings and recommendations of the planning effort for ongoing and future reference. These final documents are the result of an iterative review process between the consultant team, city staff, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and the City Council.

**Figure 1.1. Project Schedule**



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Insight from Smyrna community members drove the development of the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Key community engagement activities and outcomes are summarized below and complete summaries of all community engagement activities can be found in Appendix C.

### STAKEHOLDERS

To ensure the diverse voices of Smyrna’s population were represented in the plan, a variety of engagement opportunities targeted different groups throughout the process. Key project stakeholders included community members, the Steering Committee, the Mayor and City Council, the Planning and Zoning Board, and local developers and business owners.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee was made of representative members of the Smyrna community who provided guidance to the planning team, served as champions of the plan, and helped engage the community in the planning process. The committee met four times throughout the planning process and included members of the Planning and Zoning Board, elected officials, local developers and business owners, nonprofit representatives, and vision committee members.







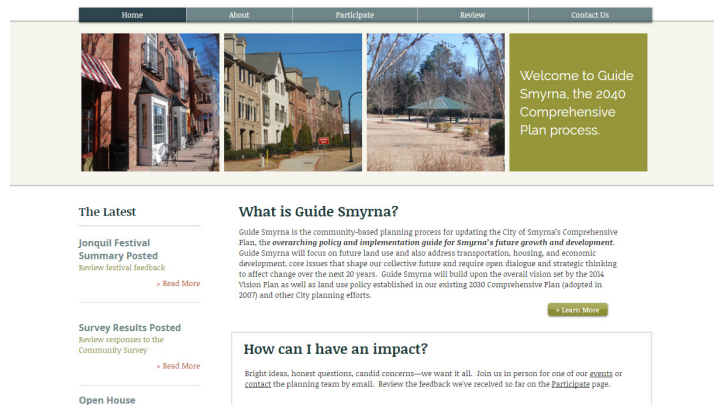
## WEBSITE

The project website, [www.guidesmyrna.com](http://www.guidesmyrna.com), was the landing page for all project content and the primary point of online community engagement. The site included information about the planning process, the project calendar, access to the online survey, meeting minutes, draft plan materials, and contacts for the planning team.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The planning team conducted a series of 24 stakeholder interviews at the onset of the planning process to help identify key topics and top opportunities and concerns that should be further considered in the community engagement process. Interviewees included elected officials, neighborhood representatives, nonprofit leaders, city and county staff, developers, business owners, and vision committee members. They noted the city’s strong recent progress, Smyrna’s unique character, local mixed-use development, impacts of the Windy Hill Road construction and SunTrust Park, traffic concerns, the need for improved transit, and housing affordability as key trends to examine in the planning process.

## 8 GUIDE SMYRNA



**1,725+** People engaged with the project online

**267** People participated at an in person event

Key phrases used to describe Smyrna's sense of place:



Key phrases used to describe catalysts for Smyrna's future:



## PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

Public Workshop #1 focused on building consensus around the community's vision, challenges, and opportunities, as well as educating participants about the role of the Comprehensive Plan and the planning process. Discussion groups addressed three major topics: neighborhoods, activity centers, and corridors.

Key themes included the need to accommodate quality infill housing; need for starter homes; desire to preserve the character of established neighborhoods; potential for expanding housing typologies in certain neighborhoods; an appetite for medium-intensity activity centers; locations appropriate for future mixed use development; support for active transportation options; need to reduce traffic congestion; and desire for improved transit services along major corridors.



Participants vet the priority needs and opportunities identified by stakeholder interviewees and the Steering Committee.



Left to right:  
 1) Workshop participant comments about activity centers and gateways;  
 2) Project team explaining the Comprehensive Plan process

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

At Public Workshop #2, participants rotated through a series of four small group discussions centered on 1) residential areas, 2) activity centers, 3) public spaces and transportation facilities, and 4) places of work and commerce. Participants provided feedback on the Draft Policy Map, priority needs and opportunities, and potential action items related to each topic.

Key discussion points included:

- Openness to a greater variety of housing types;
- Need to maintain housing affordability;
- Desire to maintain neighborhood quality; need for infill development guidelines;
- Preference for locating denser housing near SunTrust Park or Riverview Landing;
- Vision for the SunTrust Park area as transit-oriented development;
- Need to improve usability of zoning ordinance;
- Support for investment in Spring Road and Atlanta Road as signature corridors;

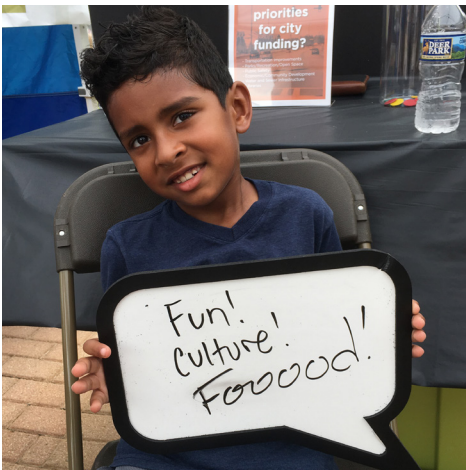
- Desire for enhanced transit service, especially in the northern part of the city;
- Need for safer pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- Desire for a large, signature park;
- Opportunity for an industrial mixed use area off Jonquil Drive;
- Placemaking as an economic development strategy;
- Desire for additional retail; and
- An opportunity to leverage SunTrust Park.

## ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

More than 500 community members participated in the online survey, responding to questions about land use, housing, transportation, economic development, satisfaction with the city, public investment, and overall priorities. Overall, respondents value Smyrna's convenient location, small town feel, and affordability; worry about transportation choices, school quality, and the rapid pace of development; think new development needs corresponding transportation improvements; desire coordinated signal timing, sidewalk improvements, local shuttles, connection to MARTA, and more efficient roadway designs; would like to walk or bike

## WHAT WILL SMYRNA BE KNOWN FOR IN THE FUTURE?

Jonquil Festival attendees shared their visions for the city's future, sharing their ideas about the community amenities and access they thought would make Smyrna a fun and welcoming home for all.



to activity centers and recreation facilities; want to leverage development interest around SunTrust Park; and would like additional park space.

## JONQUIL FESTIVAL BOOTH

The planning team hosted an interactive booth at the Spring Jonquil Festival to connect with stakeholders that may not typically attend public meetings. The booth provided information about the planning process and solicited input about the vision for the city's future, public investment priorities, future transit services, annexation, and targeted future development questions about three key areas: the SunTrust Park area, Windy Hill Road, and the Market Village area. Most participants wanted a signature park, walkable residential, and mixed use with a retail focus near SunTrust Park; additional development around Market Village, especially restaurants, retail, and arts and culture organizations; and a linear park, small mixed-use development, and small businesses in converted homes along Windy Hill Road. The majority supported both expanded transit services and annexation. Parks, recreation, and open space and transportation were considered priorities for city funding.

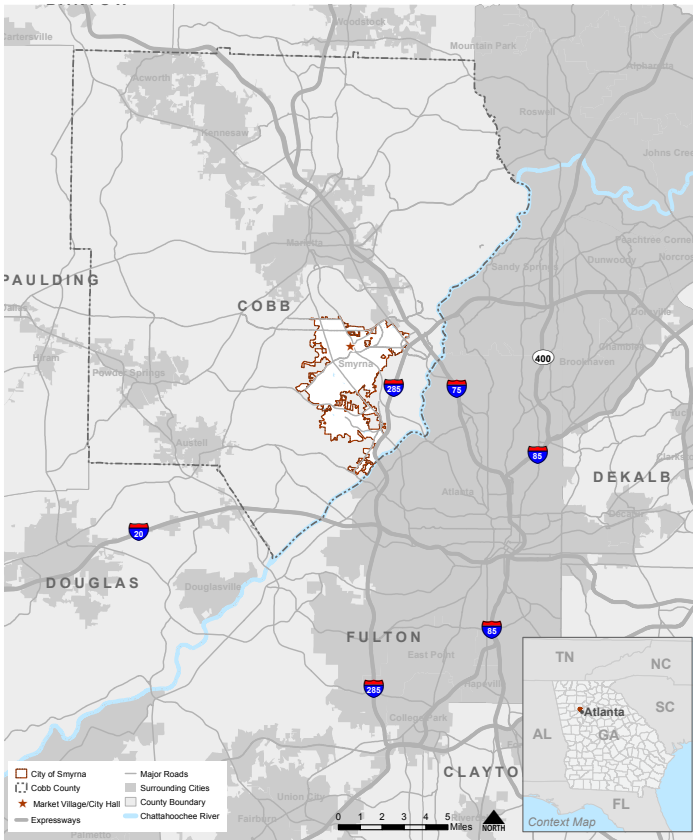
## OPEN HOUSE

Draft plan materials were presented to the community at the Open House to collect feedback and refine the plan. Participants reviewed the priority needs and opportunities, vision, goals, 2040 Future Land Use Map, and proposed action items for the Community Work Program.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings were held before City Council to announce the project, transmit the plan for state and regional review, and adopt the plan, providing additional opportunities for citizens to voice their opinions about its process and content.



**Figure 1.2. Location Map**

Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

## BASELINE CONDITIONS SUMMARY

The *Baseline Conditions Report* provides a high level review of existing conditions and trends in the City of Smyrna in an effort to support and inform the update to the city's Comprehensive Plan. To better understand how Smyrna compares to other communities, its characteristics and performance have been benchmarked against five peer cities-- Cedar Park, TX; Duluth, GA; Marietta, GA; Matthews, NC, and Woodstock, GA-- along with Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States\*. This summary focuses on Smyrna itself, with comparative assessments and more detailed information available in the full *Baseline Conditions Report* in Appendix B.

## OVERVIEW

Located within Cobb County, Georgia, the City of Smyrna is 15.46 square miles and centrally positioned in the Atlanta region, with the City's southern boundary abutting the Chattahoochee River and the City of Atlanta (see Figure 1 on page C-2). The City's northern boundary abuts the southern tip of the City of Marietta and Dobbins Air Reserve Base (ARB), with the bulk of the city adjacent to unincorporated areas of the Cobb County, including the prominent Cumberland Community Improvement District on the northeast, home to one of Atlanta's important employment centers and Atlanta's Major League Baseball team, the Atlanta Braves, at SunTrust Park.

## RECENT PLANS & STUDIES

The City of Smyrna has grown and developed with the guidance of a long history of planning. The recent and ongoing plans summarized in Table 1.1 are particularly relevant to the update of Smyrna's Comprehensive Plan.

\*For basic population data, the U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates program was used. For 2000 to 2009 data, the 2010 Intercensal Dataset from the Census was utilized. For 2010 to 2015 data, the Vintage 2015 Population Estimates was utilized. For detailed data, the American Community Survey (ACS) was the primary source. Due to the size of the city, ACS estimates are five-year averages. For the most recent data available, the 2011-2015 American Community Survey was used, and for historical estimates, the 2006-2010 American Community Survey data was used.

**Table 1.1. Summary of Recent Plans and Studies**

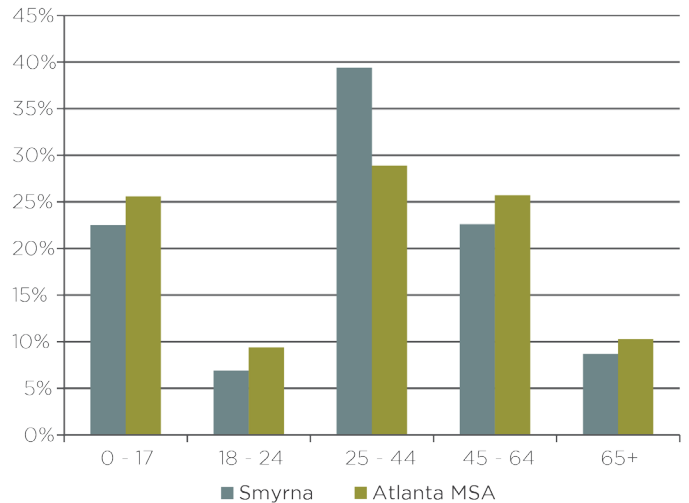
CONTRIBUTING PLANS & STUDIES	<p><b>SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN (2014)</b> Sets a strategic overarching vision, goals, and actions for the City’s next 10 years.</p>
	<p><b>SMYRNA’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030 (2007)</b> The City’s current Council approved plan for citywide growth and development, including the City’s Future Development Plan.</p>
	<p><b>COBB COUNTY CONSOLIDATED PLAN (2016)</b> Addresses special housing and community development needs in Cobb County and its municipalities.</p>
	<p><b>COBB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2040 UPDATE (2015)</b> Countywide plan for improvements to transportation with Cobb County and its municipalities.</p>
	<p><b>SOUTH COBB DRIVE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT STUDY (2017)</b> Covering South Cobb Drive corridor from Concord Road to Windy Hill Road. This collaborative effort between the City and the Georgia Department of Transportation, Cobb County and CobbLinc will formulate various concepts for corridor improvements.</p>
	<p><b>SPRING ROAD LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE (LCI) STUDY (2017)</b> Focusing on guiding redevelopment along Spring Road corridor from Cobb Parkway to Atlanta Road and identifying appropriate investment projects to improve the aesthetics and functionality of this corridor.</p>
	<p><b>GEORGIA TECH STUDIO SMYRNA CROSSROADS STUDY (2016)</b> In coordination with the Spring Road LCI, Georgia Tech developed a vision for the gateway area around SunTrust Park, including land use, transportation, and economic development.</p>

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### POPULATION

Smyrna, like many similar areas in metro Atlanta, has experienced significant population growth over the past decade, with a population of more than 56,000 in 2015, an increase of 18 percent over a 10-year period. Of this rapidly expanding population, Smyrna enjoys more racial diversity than many peer communities. Smyrna’s population is nearly half non-white. Additionally, 14 percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino and roughly half of this Hispanic or Latino population is non-White. This indicates that while the United States is not projected to be a majority-minority nation until 2044, Smyrna is ahead of the trend with only 45 percent of its population being White, non-Hispanic. Smyrna residents are not only diverse, but also relatively young with nearly 70 percent of residents under the age of 45. Many of these community members are between 25 and 44, representing young professionals, typically beginning their careers and starting families. (See Figure 1.3.) Smyrna also has a relatively small average household size of 2.27 persons per household.

Figure 1.3. Population Age Distribution



FAST FACTS

**56,146** RESIDENTS  
in 2015

**70%** UNDER 45  
years old

**21.8%** of youth  
living in **POVERTY**

Median **INCOME** of  
**\$62,363**

**55%** **MINORITY**  
population

**52%** of community has a  
**COLLEGE DEGREE**

**81.4%** of residents  
**DRIVE ALONE** to work



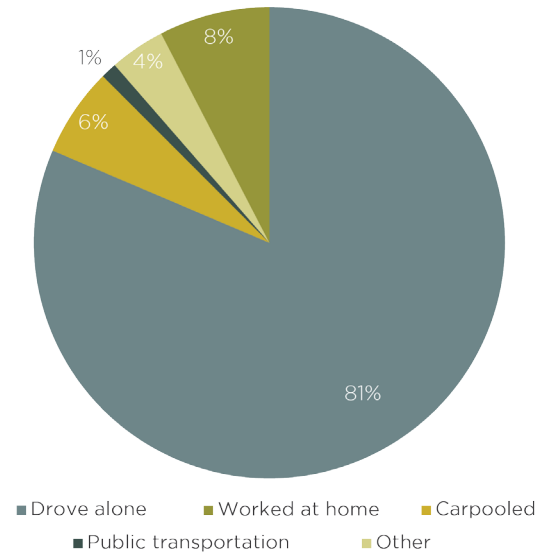
## TRANSPORTATION BEHAVIOR

While much of metro Atlanta is notorious for long commute times and distances, more than half of Smyrna residents live within ten miles of their place of employment and a quarter of residents commute into the city of Atlanta for their primary job; however, the average travel time to work for Smyrna residents is on the rise. While the average travel time to work for residents was 28.7 minutes in 2015, this commute time has increased by 3.3 minutes in recent years. Analysis indicates that this increase was most likely influenced by the increase in residents who commute more than 60 minutes to work each day. Although commute distances are generally less than those of comparable baseline communities, Smyrna residents, like most in the metro Atlanta region, travel primarily by personal vehicle. More than 80 percent of residents drive alone to work, and only 5 percent ride bikes, walk, or take public transportation.

## EDUCATION & INCOME

Smyrna boasts an extremely well-educated population, with more than half of residents aged 25 and older having a bachelor’s degree or higher. However, when race and ethnicity are taken into account, disparities among Smyrna’s black and Hispanic residents are clear. Educational attainment for black and Hispanic community members is competitive among baseline comparison communities. Given the high levels of educational attainment, it is not surprising that Smyrna residents have relatively high household incomes. In 2015, the median household income was more than \$62,000, a 14.2 percent increase over the past decade. Although household income levels in Smyrna are generally high, they are accompanied by an increasing rate of poverty. In 2015, 13.4 percent of Smyrna’s total population and 21.8 percent of Smyrna’s youth population were living in poverty with an annual household income of less than \$24,339. Therefore, there is a growing disparity in income between those with a higher household income and those who live in poverty.

**Figure 1.4. Mode of Transportation to Work**

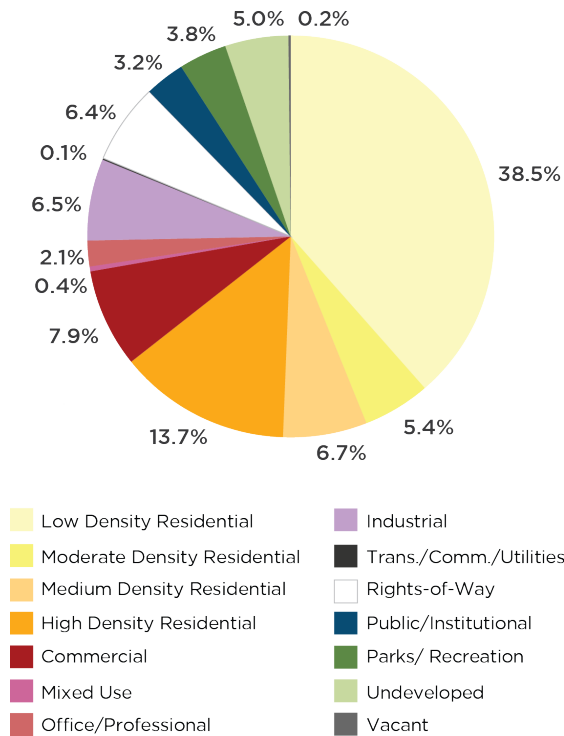


## LAND USE

### EXISTING LAND USES

The more than 15.5 square miles of land in Smyrna are separated into residential, commercial, office, industrial, support, and vacant land uses. The most prominent of these land uses is residential, accounting for approximately 64 percent of the land in Smyrna, nearly two-thirds of which is single-family residential. Slightly less than 17 percent

**Figure 1.5. Existing Land Uses**



of the city can be classified as employment-based or commercial and industrial. Roughly 13 percent is support-based, used for Transportation/Communications/Utilities, Public/Institutional, and Parks/Recreation/Conservation. Only about 5 percent of the city is still vacant or undeveloped, indicating that most of the new construction in the city will be in the form of redevelopment.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Smyrna is part of the North Georgia Water Planning District, which oversees the area’s Water Supply and Conservation Management Plan, Watershed Management Plan, and Wastewater Management Plan. The city is in compliance with its stormwater protection requirements, and regulations for stormwater management, floodplain management and flood damage prevention, stream buffer protection, illicit discharges and illegal connections, and litter control have been adopted as part of the Code of Ordinances.

The city is part of two watersheds: the Upper Chattahoochee Watershed and the Middle Chattahoochee Lake Harding Watershed. Few wetland areas are present within the city, comprising 22 acres along stream banks and ponds. There are no groundwater recharge areas located within Smyrna. The city is in compliance with the

FAST FACTS

**15.5**  
SQUARE  
MILES

**360+**  
NEIGHBORHOODS  
and subdivisions

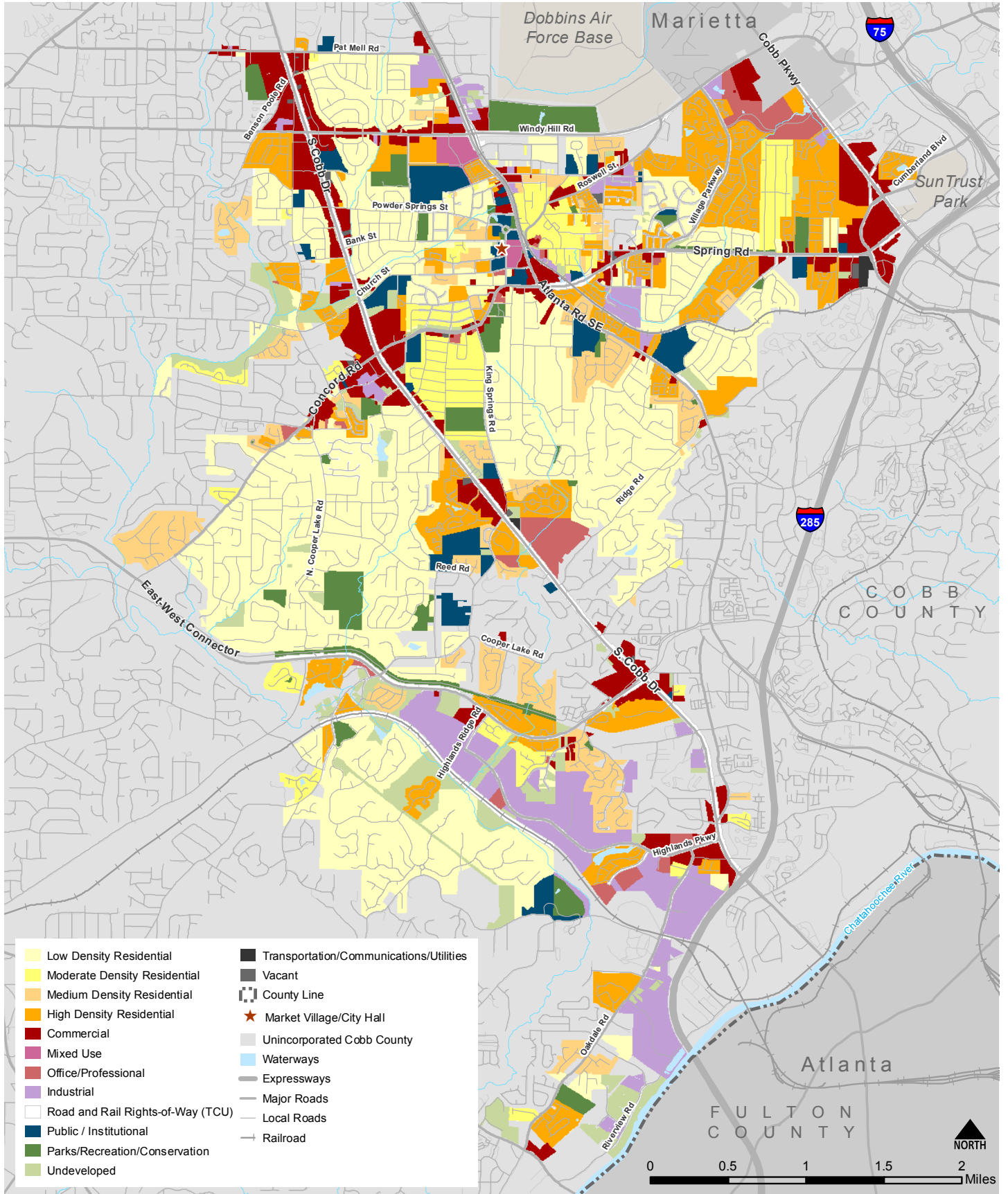
**64%** of land use is  
**RESIDENTIAL**

**19,200** PARCELS  
of land

Only **5%** VACANT  
or undeveloped land

**SPRING ROAD** corridor  
is booming after opening of  
**SUNTRUST PARK**

Figure 1.6. Existing Land Use Map



Metropolitan River Protection Act's Chattahoochee River Tributary Protection Ordinance and requires 50-foot stream buffers on all state waters, a stricter requirement than mandated by the state.

## ZONING & OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Zoning plays a critical role in implementing land use decisions, and current zoning closely mirrors existing land uses. Much like the proportion of residential land uses in Smyrna, two residential zoning categories (R-15 and RAD) cover almost 50 percent of the city. Six overlay districts-- including the Downtown Design District, South Atlanta Road, Spring Road, Windy Hill Road, South Cobb Drive, and Concord Road-- provide a guide for land use, design, and development in strategic areas of the city. (See Figure 1.7.) These overlay districts are currently planned along major commercial corridors of the city and the downtown area. Properties can also opt into the Redevelopment Overlay District

(ROD), which is not applied to a specific geography and is meant to encourage pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use developments. Complete tables of zoning codes, maps, and other information can be found in Appendix B.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Several ongoing and proposed developments indicate high development interest in the Smyrna area, many of which are either large mixed use developments or infill housing projects. The opening of SunTrust Park has also created increased development interest in the area, spurring the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study, which will have a direct impact on the land uses surrounding the Spring Road corridor. Additionally, there is an opportunity to increase environmental protection constraints to ensure the future of the community's mature tree canopy and stream network.

## DEVELOPMENT TREND: MIXED USE

### WHAT IS MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT?

Mixed-use development combines multiple land uses within close proximity to each other. It includes both horizontal mixed use, with different uses in separate buildings next to each other, and vertical mixed use, with different uses occupying parts of the same building.

### WHY MIXED USE?

Mixed-use neighborhoods typically offer a convenient, walkable lifestyle, giving people a place to live, work, and play without relying on a car for every trip. Because they bring users to the area at different times of day for a variety of purposes, they tend to be more vibrant and interesting places than areas that serve a single purpose.

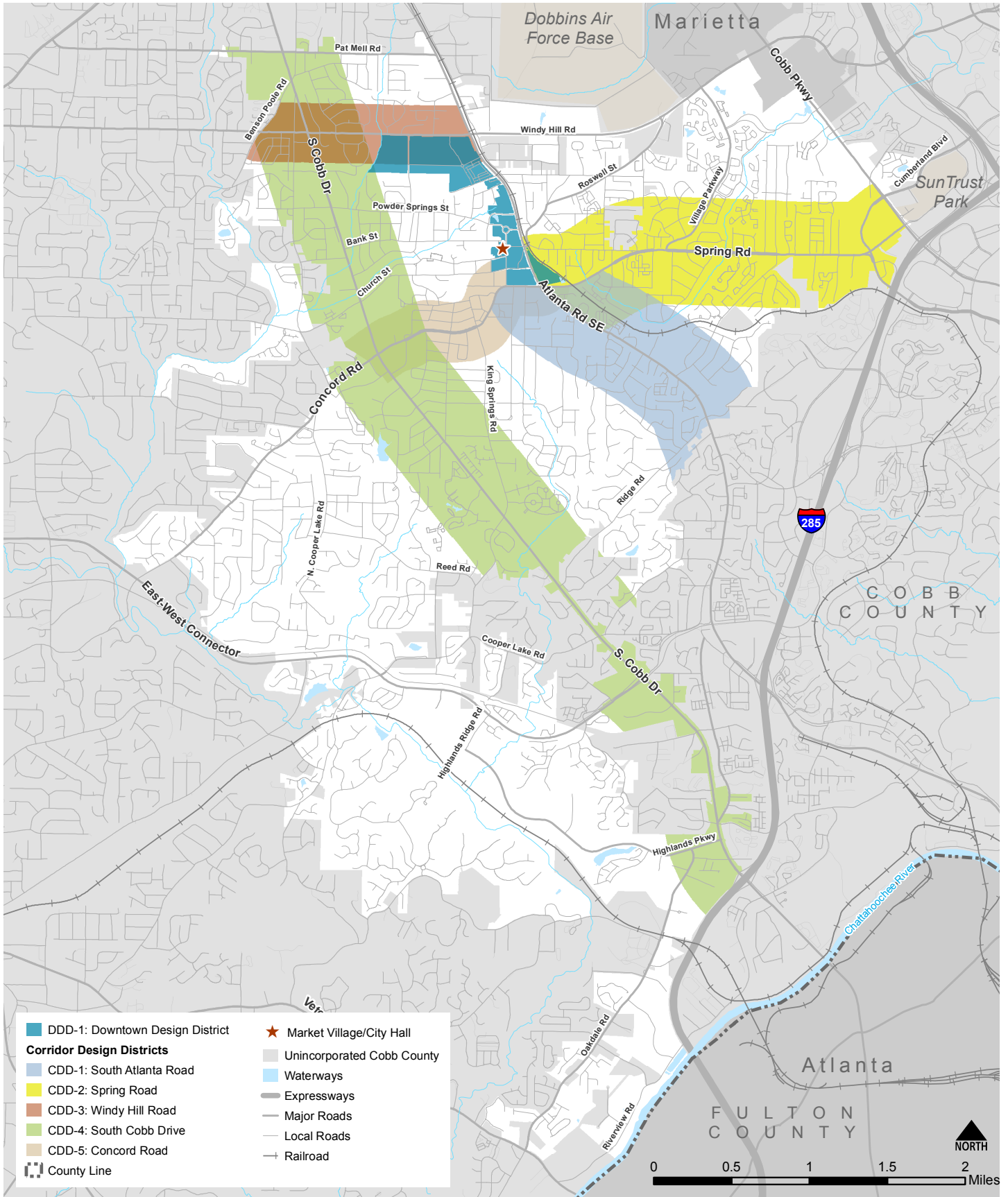
### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SMYRNA?

Recent development in Smyrna and throughout metro Atlanta have trended toward mixed use, including Market Village, Belmont, and Jonquil.



▲ Market Village is a signature mixed-use development in Smyrna, combining restaurants, shops, small offices, residences, civic facilities, and park space within a walkable area connected to the adjacent neighborhood. It was most frequently selected as participants' favorite place in Smyrna during the community engagement process.

Figure 1.7. Zoning Overlay Map

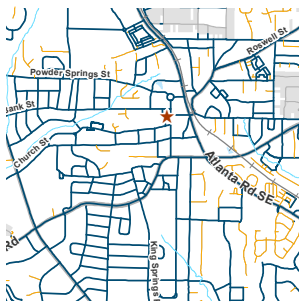


Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

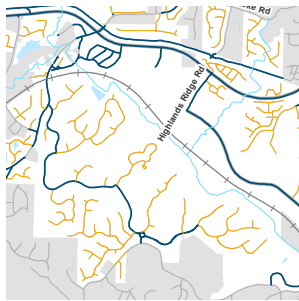


## IMPACT OF NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

Within a road network, some roads connect to more than one other road (multiple-outlet roads) and others, such as culs-de-sac, only connect to one other road (single-outlet roads). The prevalence of single-outlet roads in Smyrna limits alternative routes, increases the distance traveled between destinations, and contributes to congestion.



◀ Most of the roads in the northern part of the city have **multiple outlets**, allowing for a variety of potential routes, helping to alleviate congestion, and accommodating a range of potential development types.



◀ In the southern part of the city, most roads are **single outlet**, which can put strain on major roads and largely limits potential development to residential uses.

■ Multiple-outlet roads    ■ Single-outlet roads

## TRANSPORTATION

### ROAD NETWORK

Smyrna enjoys direct connection to high-capacity interstate highways and principal arterials including I-75, I-285, SR 41 (Cobb Parkway), and the East-West Connector. This wealth of connectivity to major arterials, however, is fed through an abundance of small, residential road networks which lack cohesive connection. Of the 225.7 total linear miles of roadway in Smyrna, 91.5 miles (41 percent) are single outlet roads, which do not contribute to effective and efficient network connectivity. These residential street systems are a result of low density, suburban areas, creating inefficient and disconnected roadways .

A variety of projects and plans-- a complete list of which can be found in Appendix B-- impact the road network in Smyrna. There are currently \$63 million in local transportation projects scheduled to be completed before 2023 through the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) alone. This network of roads is supported by a variety of parking options, with various public and private garages, surface lots, and on-street parking locations throughout Smyrna.

### FAST FACTS

41% of roads are **SINGLE OUTLET**  
**225.7** linear **MILES** of roadway

**\$63** MILLION in **TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS** before 2023

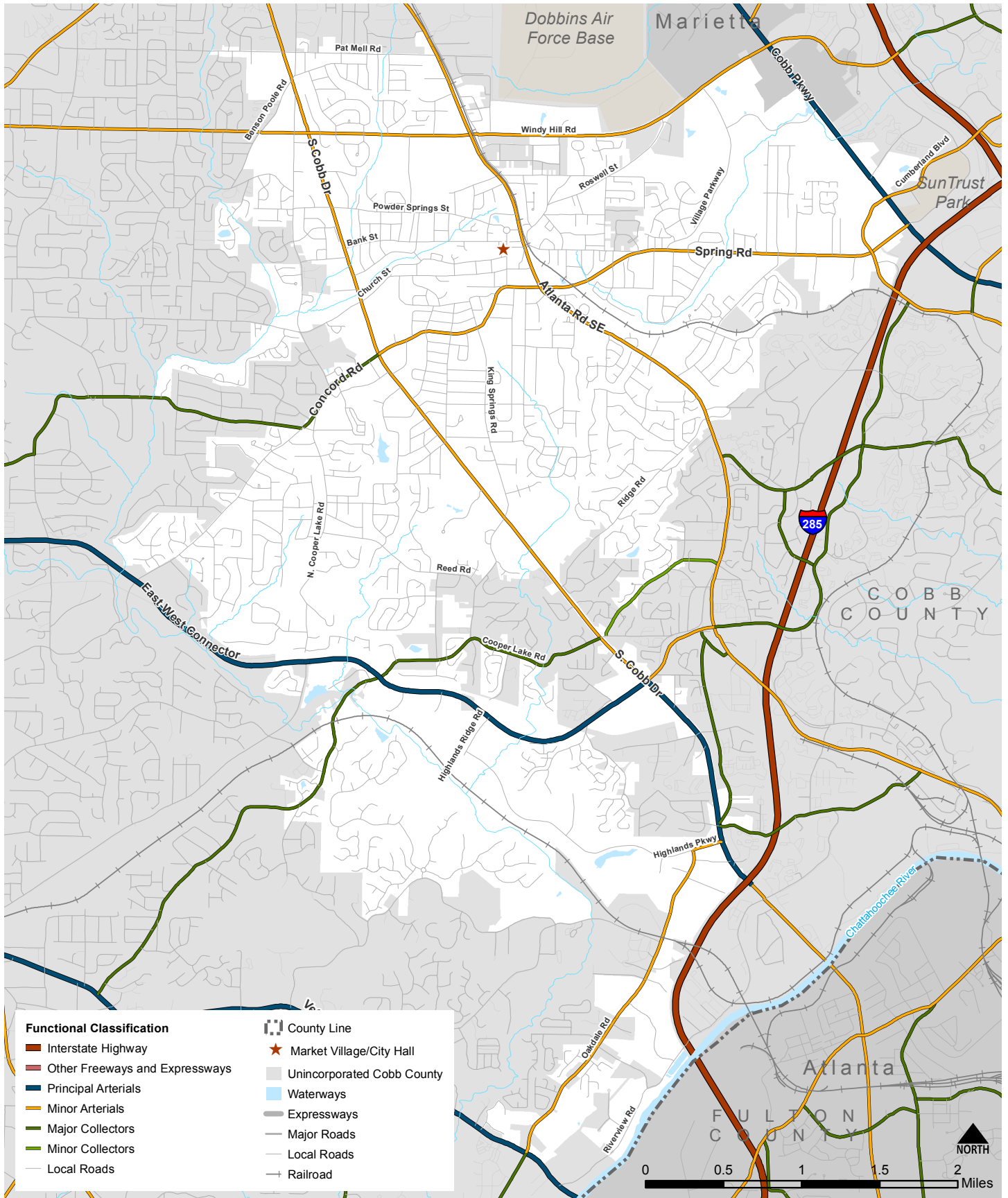
**CONNECTION** to I-75, I-285, SR41, & the East-West Connector

CobbLinc **BUS ROUTES** 10, 15, 20, & 25

**4** primary **BICYCLE ROUTES**



**Figure 1.8. Road Network Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Local networks have contributed to challenges in Smyrna's active transportation infrastructure. Active transportation is any form of transportation that is human powered, the most significant form of which in Smyrna is sidewalks. Sidewalks are present along most major roads, but their presence, quality, and connectivity is less consistent within residential neighborhoods. In addition to sidewalks, Smyrna has four major cycle routes: Atlanta Road Shared Path, Spring Road/Concord Road Shared Path, Village Parkway Shared Path, Silver Comet Trail. (See Figure 1.9.) These paths are primarily used for recreational purposes due to the connectivity barrier of a disconnected street grid.



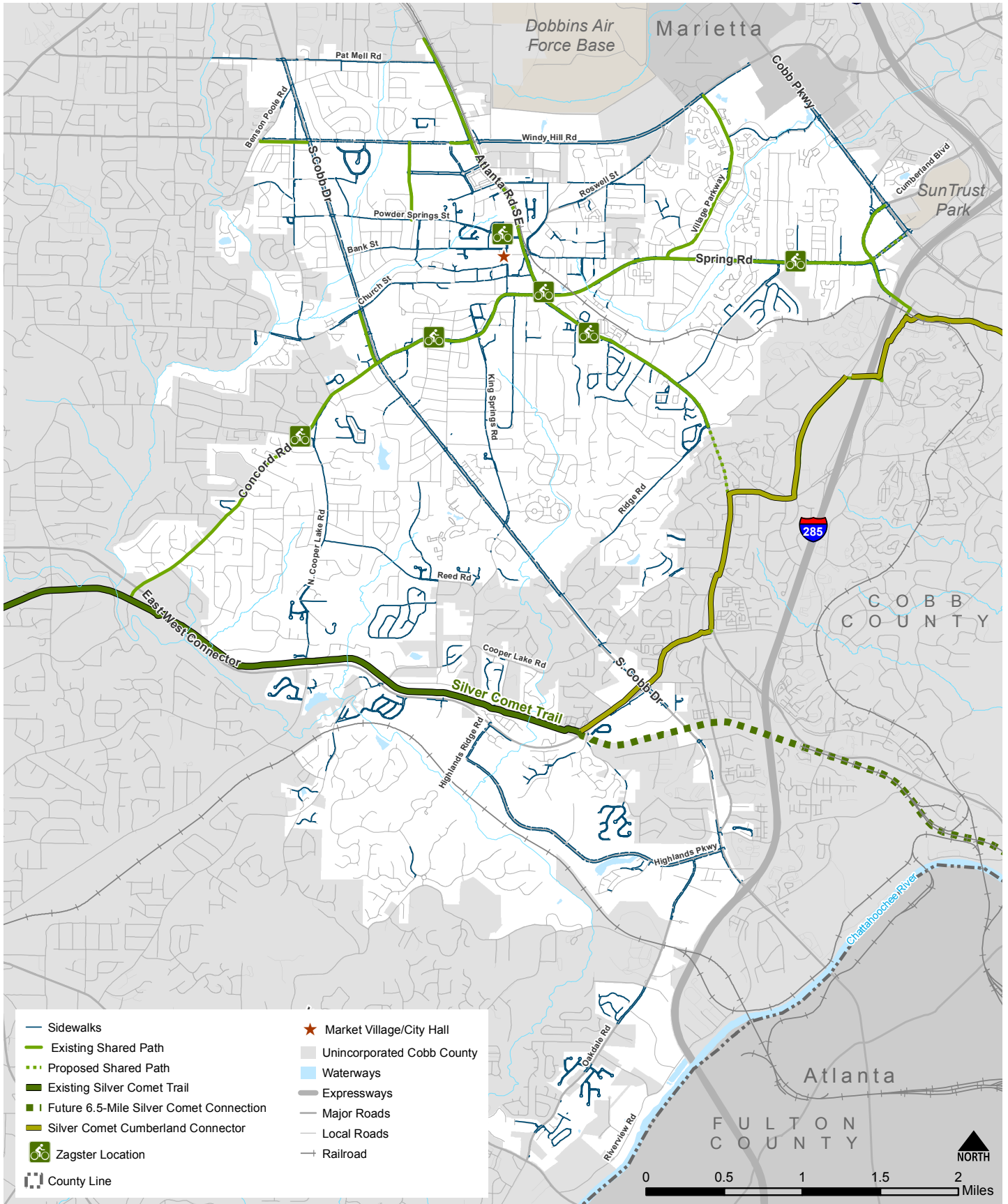
## TRANSIT

Additional transportation options include public transportation provided by CobbLinc, which operates between Cobb County and Downtown Atlanta. Four services operate within the City of Smyrna, including bus routes 10, 15, 20, and 25. While CobbLinc operates 100 buses on 18 routes, transit in Smyrna connects to limited destinations with infrequent service.





Figure 1.9. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Map



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

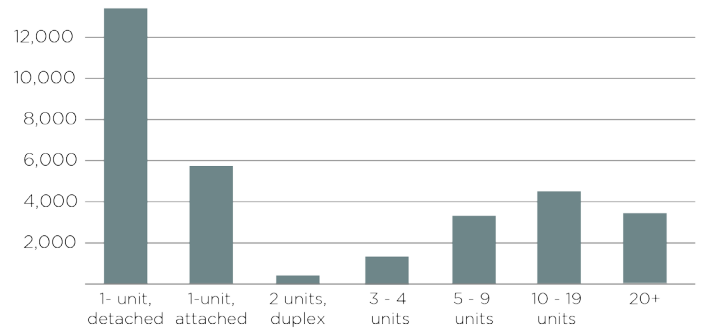


## HOUSING

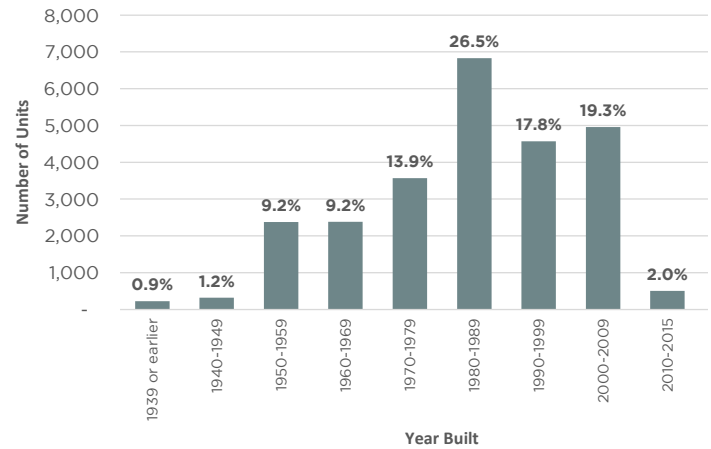
### HOUSING STOCK

Smyrna’s housing stock consists of a variety of different types of both single-family and multi-family homes. Roughly 59 percent are single-family homes-- including both detached and attached units-- and 41 percent are multi-family homes. (See Figure 1.10.) Nearly 80 percent of the housing stock was built in 1970 or later, with most of the older housing units located in the northern half of the city. (See Figure 1.11.) Newer single-family homes have been built both as subdivisions in the southern part of the city and as infill housing within older neighborhoods. While much of the housing stock in Smyrna is located in single-family neighborhoods, high density residential is located along major corridors, contributing to a more urban layout promoting live, work, play environments. A recorded homeowner vacancy of 2 percent and renter vacancy of 4.8 percent indicate a desirable location and additional opportunity for residential development. Due to limited available land, much of this development will likely take place in the form of redevelopment or infill residential projects.

**Figure 1.10. Smyrna Housing Stock, 2016**



**Figure 1.11. Age of Housing**



FAST FACTS

59% of housing is **SINGLE FAMILY**

**\$951** Median monthly **RENT**

45% renters are **COST BURDENED**

Median unit **VALUE** of **\$216,000**

8% housing **VACANCY**

80% of housing built **AFTER 1970**

## COST OF HOUSING

The median value of homeowner occupied units in Smyrna is \$216,000. An estimated 23 percent of Smyrna homeowners with a mortgage and an estimated 8 percent without a mortgage are cost burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. This is fewer than most comparable baseline communities. With a median monthly rent cost of \$951, an estimated 45 percent of Smyrna’s renters are cost burdened. While high, this number of cost burdened renters is not unique to Smyrna and is, in fact, less than the proportion of cost burdened renters of all other areas reviewed. Additionally, overcrowding does not appear to be a pervasive problem in Smyrna, with only two percent of occupied housing units having more than one person per room. Special needs housing, serviced by Cobb County, and affordability will continue to be relevant concerns for the City of Smyrna as property values continue to rise.



## DEVELOPMENT TREND: INFILL

### WHAT IS INFILL DEVELOPMENT?

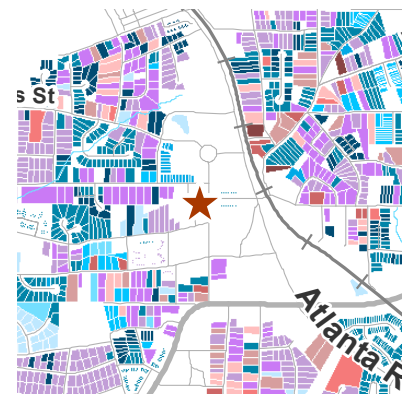
Infill development refers to building within an already established area, rather than on an undeveloped greenfield site.

### WHY INFILL?

Infill development typically occurs in built out urban areas where there is limited undeveloped land available, or to conserve remaining natural land. Because it utilizes existing infrastructure and helps preserve natural land, it is a more sustainable and economical alternative to greenfield development.

### WHAT’S HAPPENING IN SMYRNA?

Smyrna has limited remaining undeveloped land, making infill a preferred and necessary approach to development. The primary form of infill development in Smyrna is in the context of residential development; typically replacing an older home with one or more new homes. It can also take the form of commercial or mixed-use development, such as the recent conversion of an aging strip mall in the center of the city into the Belmont development.



▲ A map of the age of homes in Smyrna shows a historic trend of infill development in the northern part of the city. Around Market Village, in Williams Park, and in other nearby neighborhoods, new construction has already come alongside older homes in

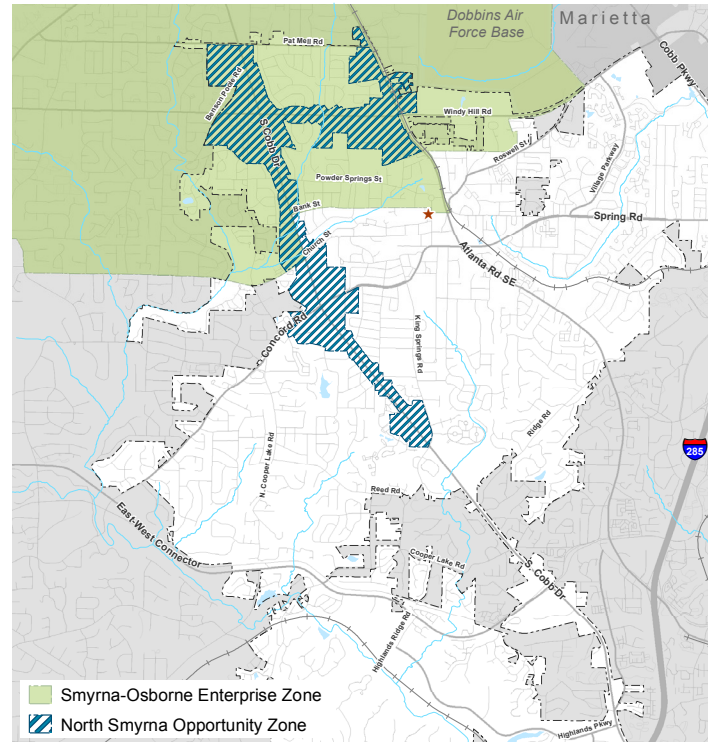
Year Built	
Pre-1900	1950-1959
1900-1909	1960-1969
1910-1919	1970-1979
1920-1929	1980-1989
1930-1939	1990-1999
1940-1949	2000-2009
	2010-2016

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### EMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW

Smyrna’s economy, as measured by total job growth, has out-performed the region, county, state, nation, and majority of the benchmarked peer communities since 2006. In 2016, there were an estimated 34,877 jobs in Smyrna. Furthermore, the average annual wage for jobs in Smyrna falls in the middle range among peer communities, and has increased by nearly 15 percent between 2010 and 2015. Over the same five-year period, the labor force grew by more than 5 percent and the number of residents with employment increased by 10.7 percent. More than 14 percent of the net gain in jobs was classified as food preparation and serving related occupations. Annual unemployment in Smyrna in 2015 was 4.9 percent, lower than metro Atlanta’s unemployment rate of 5.9 percent for the same year. More than 94 percent of Smyrna residents are employed outside of Smyrna for their primary job, and roughly half of residents work in one of five sectors: professional, scientific, and technical services; healthcare and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; and accommodation and food services.

**Figure 1.12. Opportunity Zones and Enterprise Zones**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Georgia Department of Community Affairs

<b>FAST FACTS</b>	<b>34,877</b> JOBS in 2016	<b>15%</b> annual <b>WAGE INCREASE</b> 2010-2015	<b>94%</b> residents <b>EMPLOYED OUTSIDE</b> of Smyrna
	<b>4.9%</b> annual <b>UNEMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>11%</b> <b>INCREASE</b> in employed residents since 2010	Architecture & engineering are the <b>FASTEST GROWING</b> jobs

## LOCAL & REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLANS

Economic development is a “team sport,” as seen by the proportion of Smyrna residents who are employed outside of the city. Therefore, economic planning requires partnerships, collaborations, and ongoing communication with other municipalities and regional organizations. Smyrna last embarked on an economic strategic visioning process in 2014; however, various economic plans impact the economic development of Smyrna, such as Cobb’s Competitive EDGE and the Atlanta

Regional Commission’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. These economic planning efforts have been reviewed as they relate to the future of Smyrna’s economic development, and further detail about each of these influencing plans can be found in Appendix B. The City of Smyrna offers several incentive programs for businesses, including an opportunity zone, an enterprise zone, and various fee waivers. (See Figure 1.12.)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND RESOURCES



### LOCAL

- *City of Smyrna, Community Development & Community Relations*
- *Public schools and private schools*
- *Smyrna Education Foundation*
- *Wave of Excellence*
- *Smyrna Downtown Development Authority*
- *Smyrna Business Association*
- *Smyrna Economic Advisory Incentive Committee*



### COUNTY-LEVEL

- *Cobb County Chamber of Commerce*
- *Cobb’s Competitive EDGE*
- *Cobb Travel & Tourism*
- *CobbWorks*
- *Development Authority of Cobb County*
- *Cobb County Commission*
- *Cumberland CID*
- *South Cobb Redevelopment Authority*
- *CobbLinc*



### REGION- AND STATE-LEVEL

- *Georgia Power*
- *Atlanta Regional Commission*
- *Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)*
- *Georgia Department of Economic Development*
- *Technology Association of Georgia*
- *Georgia Economic Development Association*
- *Southern Economic Development Council*
- *Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Department of Labor*
- *Georgia Chamber of Commerce*



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES & RESOURCES

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Smyrna community has earned a reputation as a community of excellence in both services and treasured public amenities. With 28 park facilities in Smyrna, residents enjoy 304 acres of parklands, trails, and greenspace. Five new parks were added to the city as a part of the 2005 Parks Bond. Additionally, senior services are run through the Wolfe Center, hosting programs for 930 members as of 2014.

### PUBLIC SAFETY & FACILITIES

Key public services and facilities in the city include the police department, fire department, sanitation services, and water and sewer services.

- **Police Department:** The Smyrna Police Department has 98 sworn officers, 20 jail employees, and 10 administrative staff members. The city is serviced by a 24/7 E-911 center with an operating budget of more than \$1.5 million in 2017. A recent increase in arrest and citation percentages and a decrease in serious crime are attributed to shifts in community policing.
- **Fire Department:** The City of Smyrna Fire Department operates and maintains eight

pieces of emergency response equipment and has 80 career employees.

- **Sanitation Services:** More than 10,000 tons of municipal solid waste are collected by Smyrna's residential Sanitation and Recycling Division, a division of the Public Works Department, through a contract with Advanced Disposal Services Atlanta. Recycling bins are provided to all city residents, and recyclable materials are processed at the City's Recycling Center.
- **Water and Sewer Services:** 240 miles of water lines and 130 miles of sewer lines are serviced by the City of Smyrna Public Works Department. Part of the city falls under the Cobb County Water System service area.

### FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Key facility and resource updates in Smyrna include improvements to the City's Recycling Center, replacement of the roof at Wolfe Pool, renovation of the Tolleson Park Pool Building, completion of the Concord Road Linear Park project, installation of the Atlanta Road and Spring Street shared paths, and the recently constructed Smyrna Elementary School. There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school serving the Smyrna area, all of which are managed and operated by Cobb County School District. Historic resources in Smyrna include Brawner Hall, Aunt Fanny's Cabin, and the Chattahoochee River Line.

## FAST FACTS

**304**  
ACRES OF  
parklands,  
trails, & **GREEN**  
SPACE

**28**  
PARK  
facilities

**98** sworn  
POLICE OFFICERS

**80** career  
FIREFIGHTERS

**1** HIGH school  
**2** MIDDLE schools  
**8** ELEMENTARY schools

**370** MILES of serviced  
WATER & SEWER lines



## PRIORITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Smyrna's priority needs and opportunities were identified based on the assessment of existing conditions, dialogue with the community, and refinement with the Steering Committee. These priorities set the direction for the land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and other issues addressed in the plan. The goals, policies, future land use recommendations, and community work program that follow were crafted in response to the particular needs and opportunities community members identified as most critical to realizing their vision for their future. The priority needs and opportunities are:



### LAND USE

- LU1.** Target public investment in key nodes and corridors.
- LU2.** Increase adaptability of development regulations.
- LU3.** Ensure infill development is compatible with the surrounding area.
- LU4.** Maintain high design standards.

### TRANSPORTATION

- T1.** Enhance and expand transit service.
- T2.** Reduce congestion on major roads.
- T3.** Expand the bike/pedestrian network.

### HOUSING

- H1.** Continue to encourage the creation of diverse housing choices.
- H2.** Encourage home ownership and neighborhood stability.
- H3.** Continue to enhance quality of life in neighborhoods.
- H4.** Facilitate context-appropriate housing densities.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ED1.** Reduce commercial vacancies.
- ED2.** Expand retail in activity centers and priority redevelopment areas.
- ED3.** Leverage Braves stadium for restaurant and hospitality industries, as well as professional services.
- ED4.** Support and/or accelerate entrepreneurship.
- ED5.** Retain existing businesses.

### OTHER

- O1.** Support school quality excellence.
- O2.** Provide additional parks and greenspace.
- O3.** Cultivate public art and culture.
- O4.** Develop a strategic approach to annexation.

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# 2

## SMYRNA TOMORROW: COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

This chapter provides an aspirational vision of how Smyrna will develop in the future. It offers tools in the form of goals, policies, maps that will aid city officials in guiding public and private investment to achieve that vision. It addresses the questions:

- *What kind of place should Smyrna be in 2040?*
- *What policy framework will help us reach that vision?*



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## 2. SMYRNA TOMORROW: COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

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*The community vision and goals identify the City of Smyrna's direction for the future and are intended to serve as a guide for city officials in day-to-day decision making. They are the product of an extensive public involvement effort and are comprised of several components:*

- *Vision statement (p. 45)*
- *Overarching community goals (p. 48)*
- *General policies (p. 48)*
- *Policy Map (p. 47)*
- *Future Land Use Map and defining narrative (p. 56)*

With the exception of the Policy Map, each of these components was already established as part of the City's *2030 Comprehensive Plan*. However, through the *Guide Smyrna* plan update process, community members were given the opportunity to revisit and update each component through a series of input activities. The results of these activities are presented here, and reflect the changing conditions and evolving vision for the community. In particular, the 2040 Future Land Use Map has been revised to provide guidance in making rezoning decisions at

the parcel level. The map illustrates the appropriate future land use patterns that would be in keeping with the overall vision and goals for the community. It works in concert with the Policy Map. While the Future Land Use Map provides guidance on specific future land uses that would be in keeping with the community vision, the Policy Map provides guidance on where to apply area-wide policies related to development trends, transportation corridors, and broad geographic locations.

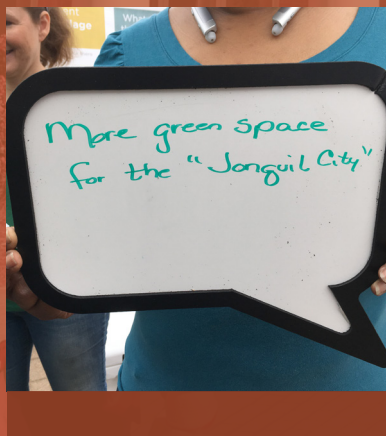


### 2014 SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN STATEMENT

“Smyrna will achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment by providing academic excellence for our children, fully involving our citizens in all aspects of the community, creating leadership opportunities for all residents, establishing high expectations for our quality of life and place, and creating strong identity and image.”

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION

“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods.”



## VISION

The community vision paints a picture of what the City of Smyrna desires to become in the long term, extending out to the year 2040. To arrive at this vision, the project team began with the community vision statement that was established as a part of *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* and refined it through the public input process. It was determined that the existing vision statement was reflective of the community’s vision, but did little to offer specific guidance in making land use, transportation, or housing decisions. To address this, the vision was translated into the language of place. The resultant vision statement was crafted by the project team, and refined through discussion with the Steering Committee and participants at the community workshops.

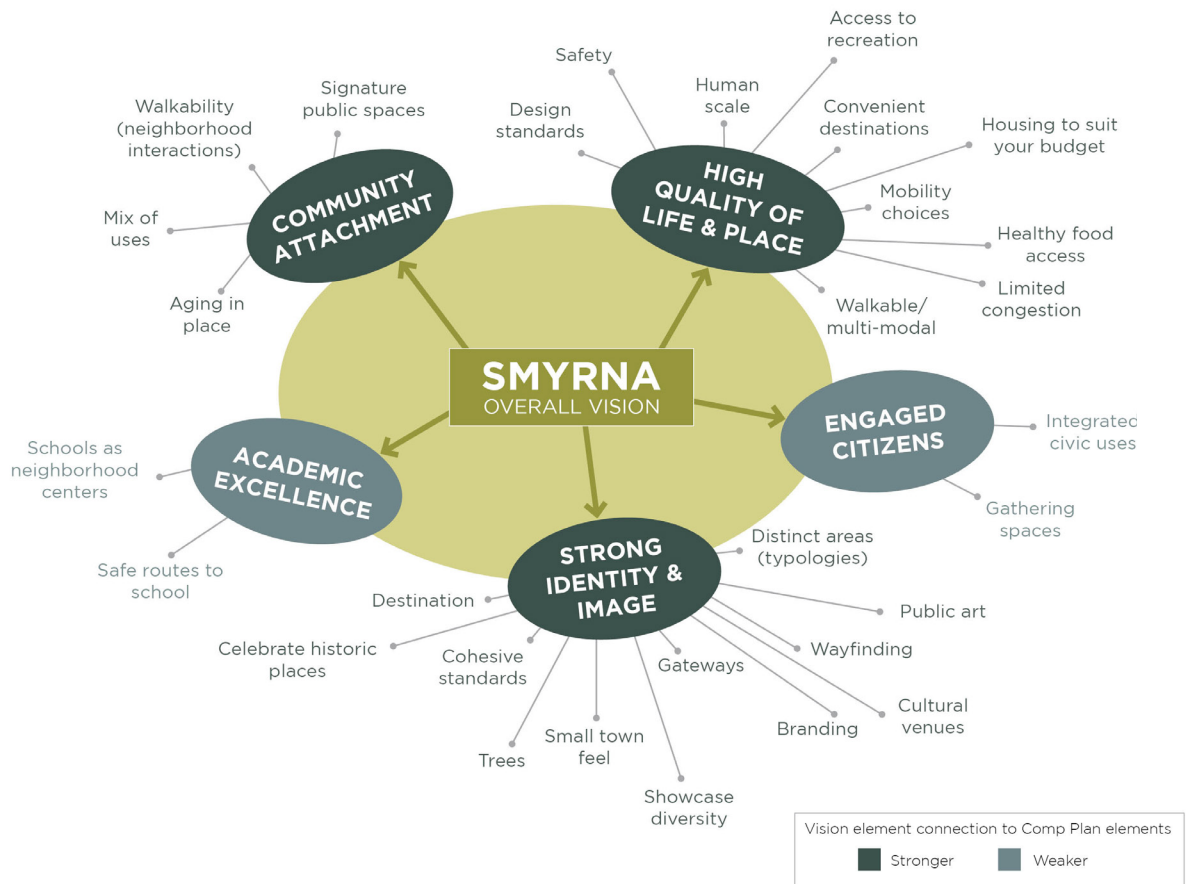
## TRANSLATING THE VISION INTO THE LANGUAGE OF PLACE

The vision statement at the core of *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* includes several key images or ideals that relate to different policies and actions that community can undertake to achieve that vision. That vision statement reads:

### 2014 SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN STATEMENT

*“Smyrna will achieve the highest levels of community attachment and commitment by providing academic excellence for our children, fully involving our citizens in all aspects of the community, creating leadership opportunities for all residents, establishing high expectations for our quality of life and place, and creating strong identity and image.”*

As part of the visioning effort, key ideas were pulled from the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Plan*. Potential action items related to the four major *Comprehensive Plan* elements— land use, transportation, housing, and economic development— were identified to brainstorm how the city’s overall vision could be translated into the language of place. ▶



These key ideals include community attachment, high quality of life and place, engaged citizens, strong identity and image, and academic excellence. The diagram below shows how those ideals could be translated into action items and land use based policies that are exemplary of a comprehensive plan. These ideals and action items were presented to the Steering Committee, who in turn came up with a complementary vision statement in land use terms. That statement was vetted by the public and revised as:

#### **2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT**

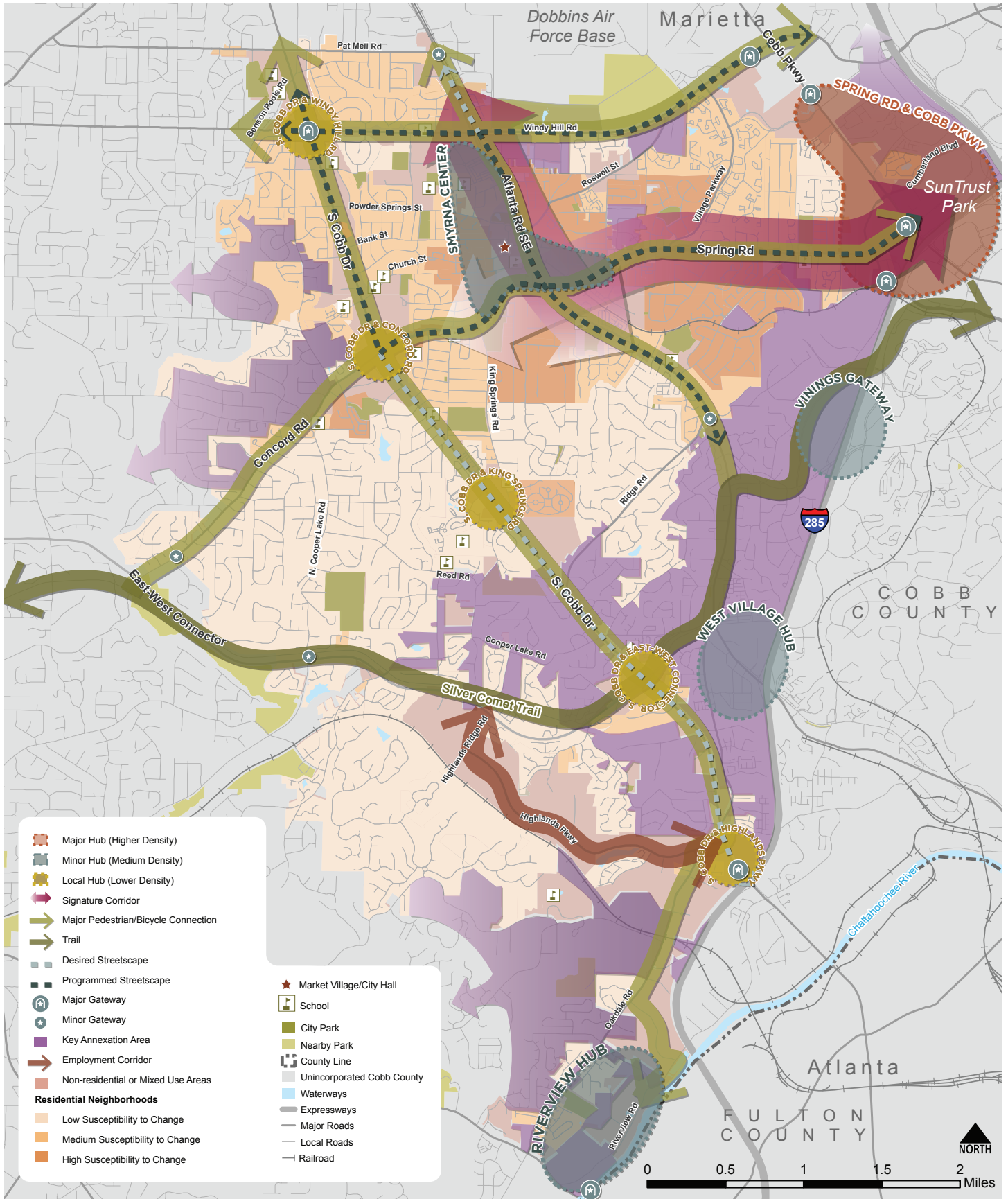
*“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods.”*

This vision statement was in turn then used as a sounding board in refining the goals and policies from the *Smyrna 2030 Comprehensive Plan*, as well as a guide in crafting a Policy Map to support their application.

## UNDERSTANDING THE POLICY MAP

*The Policy Map serves two purposes: (1) it provides a portrait of the overall development trends impacting the Smyrna community, and (2) it provides guidance on where to apply area-wide policies related to development characteristics, transportation corridors, and broad geographic locations. Like the goals and policies, the Policy Map was crafted from a reiterative process involving the project team, city staff, the Steering Committee, and participants in the public engagement process. The features of the map describe the character and function of activity hubs, major transportation routes, and residential neighborhoods. It also identifies potential annexation areas as well as desired features such as gateways, trails, and public facilities. For map feature definitions, see Appendix D: Definitions.*

Figure 2.1. Policy Map



## GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals represent the recurring, dominant themes expressed by participants in the *Guide Smyrna* planning effort, themes that the city needs to achieve in order to make this citywide vision a continuing reality. The majority of the goals were carried forward from the *Smyrna 2030 Comprehensive Plan*, but each underwent a reiterative vetting process involving the project team, city staff, the Steering Committee, and participants in the public engagement process. Under each goal are listed supportive policies that were also reviewed by participants in the *Guide Smyrna* planning effort, intended to offer ongoing guidance and direction to local government officials in making decisions consistent with achieving the community goals. These policies are organized by goal, though being comprehensive in nature, many individual policies likely will help to achieve multiple goals.

### HOUSING

#### **GOAL 1 Protect and preserve established residential neighborhoods.**

**Policy 1.1** Ensure adequate buffering and screening in order to protect residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of adjacent incompatible development.

**Policy 1.2** Ensure that infill housing development is compatible with surrounding established neighborhoods.

**Policy 1.3** Maintain a strict code inspection and compliance program to promote the maintenance and preservation of existing housing.

#### **GOAL 2 Encourage redevelopment of older declining neighborhoods and apartment communities.**

**Policy 2.1** Identify declining neighborhoods within planning studies and target these areas for revitalization efforts.

**Policy 2.2** Strictly enforce building code and property maintenance regulations in order to eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing.

**Policy 2.3** Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complexes into townhomes and condominiums in order to increase home ownership rates.

**Policy 2.4** Maintain an inventory of vacant properties, properties owned by the City or other government agencies, and tax delinquent properties suitable for infill development.

**Policy 2.5** Encourage adequate amounts, types, and densities of housing needed to support desired mixed use redevelopment.

#### **GOAL 3 Encourage the development of a range of housing choices in order to meet market demand and allow residents to remain in Smyrna across different life-cycle stages.**

**Policy 3.1** Encourage the construction of affordable and accessible housing in order to accommodate the growing senior population.

**Policy 3.2** Encourage housing opportunities for young families as well as “empty nester” households.

**Policy 3.3** Encourage housing opportunities to ensure that those who work within Smyrna have the option of living within the City.



**Policy 3.4** Support housing opportunities for special needs populations such as the disabled.

**Policy 3.5** Encourage opportunities for mixed-use, live/work housing.

**Policy 3.6** Assist nonprofit housing agencies to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing.

**Policy 3.7** Support equal housing opportunities for all persons.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL 4 Attract and retain a diverse variety of businesses in order to provide quality employment opportunities for residents and maintain a healthy tax base.**

**Policy 4.1** Promote opportunities for additional office professional development around the Cumberland/Galleria employment center.

**Policy 4.2** Encourage opportunities for light industrial employment that is compatible with the residential nature of the City.

**Policy 4.3** Pursue growth industries such as education, health care, and transportation to locate within the City.

**Policy 4.4** Continue to work with the Cobb Chamber of Commerce to conduct business recruitment, retention and expansion programs.

**Policy 4.5** Focus some economic development activities on retention, expansion and support of existing businesses (entrepreneur and small business assistance, business retention programs, etc.).

**Policy 4.6** Develop a mechanism to market the City and its assets. Network and coordinate with agencies which compile data and carry out promotional and marketing efforts, to assist in stimulating business location and development that serves the region.

**GOAL 5 Promote revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas.**

**Policy 5.1** Promote adaptive reuse and mixed-use redevelopment of declining strip commercial centers.

**Policy 5.2** Continue to utilize innovative economic development tools to revitalize declining commercial areas.

**Policy 5.3** Compile and maintain a database of key parcels with development and redevelopment potential.

**GOAL 6 Promote continued economic development within downtown Smyrna and other activity centers as vibrant mixed-use centers for residential, government, office, retail and entertainment activities.**

**Policy 6.1** Support higher-intensity housing within and adjacent to activity centers in conformity with the Future Land Use Map.

**Policy 6.2** Pursue cultural institutions, entertainment, and recreational businesses to locate in and around activity centers in order to draw people to the district after business hours.

**Policy 6.3** Maintain a strategy to promote special events in Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 6.4** Encourage new businesses to locate within Activity Centers, such as specialty retail, office, and services.

**Policy 6.5** Maintain architectural design standards in the Smyrna downtown area and along key gateway corridors.

**GOAL 7 Improve the job skills and educational attainment of residents in order to attract professional employment opportunities.**

**Policy 7.1** Encourage continued excellence in the public educational system, making sure we are providing training in the work skills needed by local businesses and industry.

**Policy 7.2** Explore possible job training programs and tax credits for company training.

**Policy 7.3** Collaborate with Cobb County through its Cobb Works job training program to enhance workforce skills and education.

## LAND USE

**GOAL 8 Protect natural resources and sensitive environmental features from encroachment by development.**

**Policy 8.1** Develop a greenspace plan as part of a comprehensive natural resources strategy.

**Policy 8.2** Target environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands for greenspace acquisition.

**Policy 8.3** Encourage use of conservation subdivision designation for the protection of sensitive natural resources and provision of community open space.

**Policy 8.4** Consider environmental sensitivity of steep slopes and ridgelines when making land use and site plan decisions.

**Policy 8.5** Develop and manage land use and transportation networks in order to promote air and water quality.

**Policy 8.6** Encourage opportunities for compact development supportive of open space preservation.

**Policy 8.7** Maintain development regulations that protect and preserve environmentally sensitive features.

**GOAL 9 Provide for community open space, parks, and recreational opportunities.**

**Policy 9.1** Continue development of bicycle/pedestrian trail network throughout Smyrna with linkages to parks, schools, and residential areas.

**Policy 9.2** Preserve scenic views and natural environment along the Silver Comet Trail and other multi-use paths in the City.

**Policy 9.3** Maintain the City's parks master plan in coordination with greenspace preservation efforts.

**Policy 9.4** Incorporate the connection, maintenance, and enhancement of greenspace in all new development.

**GOAL 10 Protect the unique historic and cultural assets of the City of Smyrna.**

**Policy 10.1** Identify historic resources and apply for designation of the National Register of Historic Places.

**Policy 10.2** Enlist the resources of a civic or community organization to perform an inventory of all historic structures in the City.

**Policy 10.3** Maintain certificate of approval process for historic structures in designated urban design districts.

## **GOAL 11 Maintain compliance with state environmental planning regulations.**

**Policy 11.1** Implement and enforce the City's stormwater management ordinance.

**Policy 11.2** Maintain a stormwater management plan.

**Policy 11.3** Implement and enforce the City's erosion and sedimentation control ordinance.

**Policy 11.4** Maintain a solid waste management plan.

**Policy 11.5** Support solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

**Policy 11.6** Work with state and federal agencies to identify and clean up brownfields and hazardous waste sites.

**Policy 11.7** Implement and enforce the City's Stream Buffer Ordinance.

## **GOAL 12 Expand on the success of Smyrna's Downtown Market Village**

**Policy 12.1** Promote mixed-use redevelopment of older strip commercial shopping centers and apartments at key intersections around Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 12.2** Encourage infill residential development and redevelopment surrounding the downtown area that is supportive of "Main Street" retail.

**Policy 12.3** Promote walkable, pedestrian-oriented development in and around Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 12.4** Encourage commercial buildings to be oriented toward the street with parking in the rear in order to enhance pedestrian appeal and mitigate the impact of automobiles.

## **GOAL 13 Encourage an efficient, equitable, and compatible distribution of land uses.**

**Policy 13.1** Support a broad range of land uses within the City.

**Policy 13.2** Encourage an appropriate transition of type and scale between established neighborhoods and activity centers.

**Policy 13.3** Designate areas for industrial, warehousing, distribution, and transportation uses with direct access to major transportation systems.

**Policy 13.4** Protect established single-family residential neighborhoods from the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

**Policy 13.5** Encourage the use of density bonuses to encourage greenspace creation or preservation.

**Policy 13.6** Coordinate land use planning with transportation improvement programs.

## **GOAL 14 Establish a visually attractive environment.**

**Policy 14.1** Update, implement and enforce the City's tree ordinance to preserve and re-establish the City's tree canopy.

**Policy 14.2** Update, implement and enforce the City's sign ordinance.

**Policy 14.3** Update, implement and enforce the City's design guidelines for development along major corridors.

**Policy 14.4** Screening of service yards and other places that tend to be unsightly should be encouraged by the use of walls, fencing, planting, or combinations of these. Screening should be equally effective year round.

**Policy 14.5** Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations should be placed under ground, where economically feasible.

**Policy 14.6** Monotony of design in single or multiple building projects should be avoided. Variations in detail, form, and siting should be used to promote visual interest. Harmony in texture, lines, and mass is encouraged.

**Policy 14.7** Reduce the visual impact of the automobile in both commercial and residential areas of Smyrna.

**Policy 14.8** Maintain and utilize gateway signage and landscaping in order to foster a sense of place within the community.

### **GOAL 15 Encourage infill development and redevelopment that has a positive impact on existing neighborhoods and activity centers.**

**Policy 15.1** Prioritize redevelopment and revitalization of existing underutilized commercial and industrial areas over development of new land for commercial purposes.

**Policy 15.2** Ensure that infill development is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers.

**Policy 15.3** Where appropriate, the City should assist in site assemblage for redevelopment initiatives, without the use of eminent domain.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **GOAL 16 Provide a safe, efficient, financially supportable transportation system**

**Policy 16.1** Concentrate development in areas with existing infrastructure to reduce congestion, encourage transit, and foster redevelopment.

**Policy 16.2** Protect the identity and unique character of Smyrna through context-sensitive design in all transportation projects.

**Policy 16.3** Refine and use the subdivision and development process in order to provide transportation improvements needed such as pedestrian facilities, safety improvements, interparcel access, and transit supportive street design within a specific timeframe as a condition of development approval.

**Policy 16.4** Require a Traffic Analysis as a condition of development to review the potential traffic impacts related to proposed developments, assign appropriate mitigation requirements as a condition of development approval, and discuss opportunities for multi-modal travel.

**Policy 16.5** Any development that generates more than 500 PM peak hour trips should prepare a traffic impact study and define how they plan to mitigate their impacts.

**Policy 16.6** Developments that generate more than 100 PM peak hour trips and have direct access to a roadway that currently operate at Level of Service (LOS) E or F, which reflects conditions where a roadway is operating at or above its design capacity, should prepare a traffic impact study and define actions to mitigate their impacts.

**Policy 16.7** Strive to achieve a minimum LOS D, which reflects conditions where roadways are functioning within their design capacity, for all roadway classifications.

**GOAL 17 Connect to the county and regional transport networks in a seamless manner, and coordinate with regional and local plans to support multiple goals wherever possible.**

**Policy 17.1** Continue the participation in and development of the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan to address congestion, pollution, transit, land use and redevelopment issues.

**Policy 17.2** Coordinate with Cobb County and GDOT to maximize the effectiveness of all transportation investments.

**Policy 17.3** Coordinate transit planning and services with CobbLinc and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to ensure existing bus routes and stops are appropriately planned for and incorporated into the transportation network and land use plan.

**Policy 17.4** Consider policies and recommendations from the Regional Freight Mobility Plan and Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

**GOAL 18 Promote the further development of a multi-modal transportation network to maximize access and connectivity for all residents.**

**Policy 18.1** Work to provide more transit service where cost effective in order to allow more residential areas direct access to transit.

**Policy 18.2** Design better pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, traffic calming measures, and crossings in high traffic areas, as recommended in the LCI study.

**Policy 18.3** Promote transportation alternatives such as transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian infrastructure, carpooling, and other forms of alternative modes of travel by mixing land uses and making more areas pedestrian accessible.

**Policy 18.4** Encourage a safe and efficient transportation network for all modes of travel.

**Policy 18.5** Work with the PATH Foundation, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, and PEDS to assist with the provision of safe and convenient bike and pedestrian facilities to and throughout the City.

**Policy 18.6** Consider opportunities for a Safe Routes to School Program.

**Policy 18.7** Encourage street connectivity and/or pedestrian connectivity between subdivisions for low density residential and moderate density residential.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

### **GOAL 19 Provide for efficient, high-quality, cost-effective public services.**

**Policy 19.1** Maximize the use of existing community facilities and services.

**Policy 19.2** Encourage infill development in areas with existing infrastructure capacity.

**Policy 19.3** Ensure that service levels are maintained whether to existing residents or new development.

**Policy 19.4** Use planned infrastructure investments and capital improvements to support desired development patterns.

**Policy 19.5** Coordinate public facilities and services with land use planning.

**Policy 19.6** Promote the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City in order to streamline and simplify the provision of public services.

**Policy 19.7** Consider impact fees in order to balance the need for new development and public services.

**Policy 19.8** Consider fiscal impacts of proposed new developments and annexations.

**Policy 19.9** Provide for vital public safety and emergency services within Smyrna.

**Policy 19.10** Encourage quality schools and diverse educational opportunities, such as charter schools.

### **GOAL 20 Provide lifestyle amenities that improve the “quality of life” in Smyrna.**

**Policy 20.1** Continue support for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development in and around Smyrna Market Village.

**Policy 20.2** Provide pedestrian linkages from existing neighborhoods to the City’s multi-use trail system.

**Policy 20.3** Encourage outdoor gathering areas, such as plazas, public squares, and amphitheaters.

**Policy 20.4** Provide a variety of recreational opportunities including both active, organized recreation (e.g. sports fields), as well as areas for passive recreation (e.g. nature preserves, walking trails).

### **GOAL 21 Ensure that community facilities and services are adapted to meet the changing needs of Smyrna’s diverse population.**

**Policy 21.1** Provide facilities and services for the growing population of senior citizens.

**Policy 21.2** Adapt public services and facilities to meet the needs of growing minority communities in Smyrna.

**Policy 21.3** Adapt public services and facilities to serve special client groups such as the handicapped, homebound, and institutionalized.

**GOAL 22 Support mechanisms for the coordination of public services between different governmental entities.**

**Policy 22.1** Continue to work with Cobb County in providing vital emergency services such as fire protection and emergency medical service.

**Policy 22.2** Maintain the required Service Delivery Strategy document that formalizes intergovernmental service provision agreements.

**Policy 22.3** Work collaboratively with Cobb County and the Cobb County School Board in order to improve local schools.

**Policy 22.4** Support communication mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between adjacent local governments and Cobb County.

**GOAL 23 Coordinate planning efforts of the City with surrounding jurisdictions.**

**Policy 23.1** Continue to ensure that land use plans are consistent with surrounding jurisdictions and regional goals. Coordinate planning with bordering cities, Cobb County, and Cumberland CID.

**Policy 23.2** Continue to foster strong relationships with the surrounding county and regional agencies to ensure that infrastructure improvements within the City's surrounding area are supportive of local needs and compatible with the City's future development plans.

**Policy 23.3** Pursue joint processes for collaborative planning and decision making.

**Policy 23.4** Provide City representation on ARC task forces or committees and maintain close staff relationships with ARC in efforts to address regional issues.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Plan narrative provides a vision for development and land use patterns throughout the City’s distinct character areas. The narrative provides a detailed description of each future development category found on the 2040 Future Land Use Map (See Figure 2.2). The Future Land Use Map replaces the existing 2030 Future Development Map as a guide for future growth and development in the City of Smyrna. The primary features of the Future Land Use Map are its character areas. Character areas represent a future land use pattern of distinct residential areas, activity centers, employment centers, and infrastructure and public spaces that support the community’s future vision. Each character area description includes:

- An overview of the vision and intent,
- Design and transportation features,
- Appropriate land uses,
- Corresponding zoning categories,
- Implementation strategies, and
- Character images (examples of preferred land use patterns).

The recommended land uses listed for each character area represent the range of possible activities that are compatible with the intent of each area. While providing for a flexible list of potential uses, the Smyrna Community Development Department will review specific development proposals against the allowable appropriate range of uses. Elected officials have the authority to permit the least intensive uses listed within each area as deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis. As with the recommended land uses, implementation policies listed for each future character area represent a toolbox of possible strategies to achieve the desired vision.

The character areas are:

### Residential Character Areas

- Low Density Residential (3 dwelling units per acre and under) (LDR)
- Moderate Density Residential (4.5 dwelling units per acre and under) (MODR)
- Medium Density Residential (6 dwelling units per acre and under)(MEDR)
- Medium-High Density Residential (10 dwelling units per acre and under) (MHDR)
- High Density Residential (more than 10 dwelling units per acre) (HDR)

### Activity Center Character Areas

- Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC)
- Community Activity Center (CAC)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Regional Activity Center (RAC)

### Employment Center Character Areas

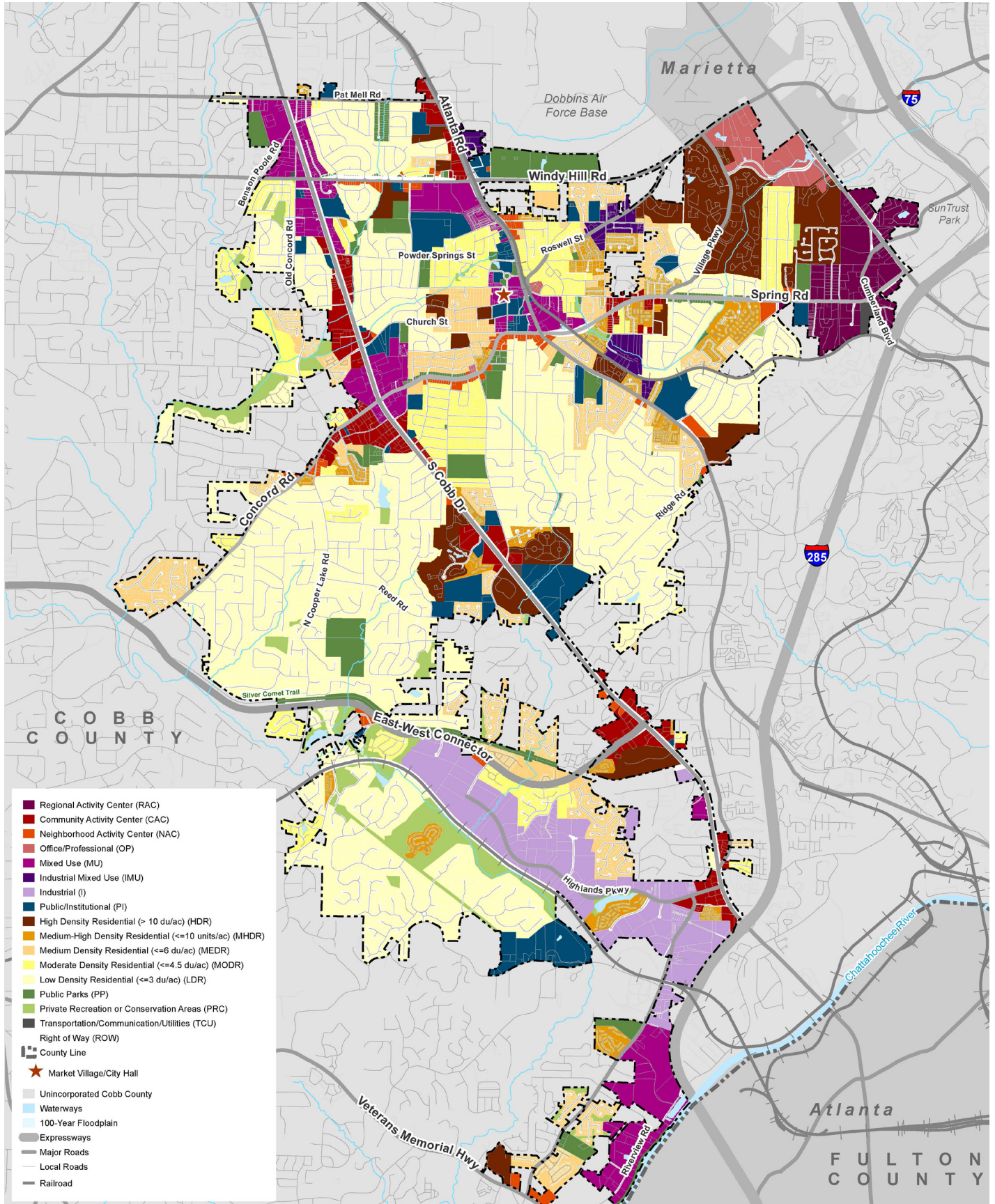
- Office/Professional (OP)
- Industrial (I)
- Industrial Mixed Use (IMU)

### Public Services and Quality of Life Character Areas

- Public/Institutional (PI)
- Public Parks (PP)
- Private Recreation and Conservation (PRC)
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities (TCU)
- Rights-of-way (ROW)



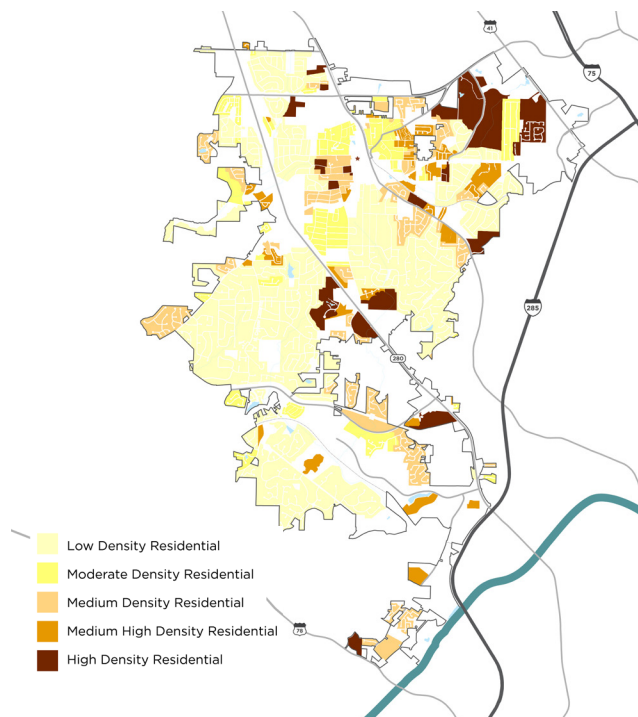
Figure 2.2. 2040 Future Land Use Map





Everyone’s housing needs are different. Depending on where they work, their lifestyle preference, and their household budget, they may prefer the retreat of a large lot, single-family home along the Silver Comet Trail or the low-maintenance lifestyle of a condo in Market Village. As these examples show, Smyrna already offers a wide diversity of housing products, but today’s housing supply may not meet future housing demands.

**Figure 2.3. Residential Character Areas**



## CHARACTER AREAS

The residential character areas represented on the 2040 Future Land Use Map encompass a wide range of future housing products, and they are characterized primarily by housing density represented by dwelling unit densities per acre (du/ac) of land. There are five residential character areas on the Future Land Use Map:

- **Low Density Residential (LDR)** - 3 du/ac or less
- **Moderate Density Residential (MODR)** - 4.5 du/ac or less,
- **Medium Density Residential (MEDR)** - 6 du/ac or less,
- **Medium-High Density Residential (MHDR)** - 10 du/ac or less, and
- **High Density Residential (HDR)** - more than 10 du/ac.

## SUPPORTING CITY GOALS

Together, the visions for these character areas support the city’s primary housing goals:

- **Goal 1:** Protect and preserve established residential neighborhoods



- **Goal 2:** Encourage the redevelopment of older, declining neighborhoods and apartment communities.
- **Goal 3:** Encourage the development of a range of housing choices in order to meet market demand and allow residents to remain in Smyrna across different life-cycle stages.
- Coordinated transportation improvements,
- A focus on walkable communities,
- Access to Activity Centers,
- Protection of natural resources, and
- Connecting residents to home ownership and maintenance programs.

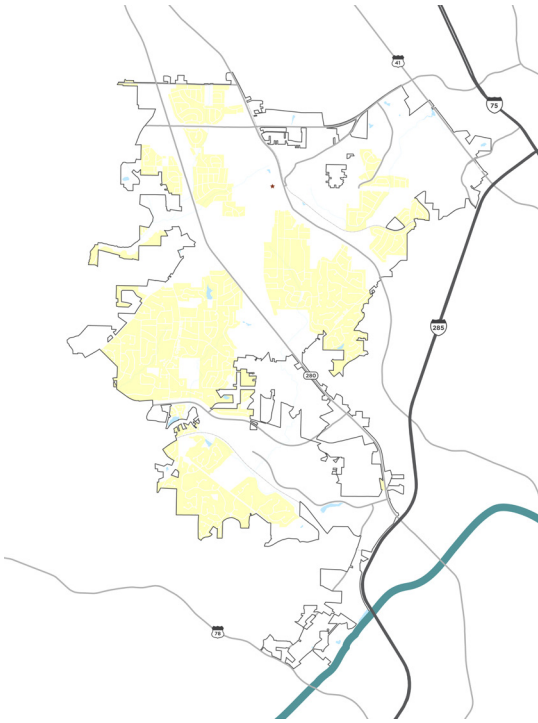
Housing is one component of a complete community. To support goals related to transportation, economic development, and sustainability, the following general policies should be encouraged across all residential character areas:

In addition, some supportive non-residential uses should be allowed within residential character areas to encourage active lifestyles and reduced vehicular dependency by locating everyday activities within walking distance of residences.

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

*The overall design of a neighborhood plays a major role in establishing its character and protecting the property values. Some communities establish design guidelines that dictate a particular architectural style, minimum building sizes, or maximum building heights to maintain or enhance neighborhood character. There was some limited interest expressed during the public participation process of this plan in establishing such neighborhood design guidelines in Smyrna. It was also recognized, however, that such guidelines maybe overly restrictive and difficult to administer. As a compromise, this plan recommends that the creation of voluntary neighborhood design guidelines be considered as part of a revision to the City Zoning Ordinance. The guidelines are described as voluntary in that individual subdivisions or neighborhoods could, by petition among their residents, self-impose such guidelines rather than have the City impose the guidelines on them.*

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)



### OVERVIEW

Most of the land in Smyrna today and in the future is occupied by low density residential neighborhoods. Density in these neighborhoods is limited to 3 dwelling units per acre. This land also includes some small, neighborhood-serving civic and recreational uses. Open space here is often privately held in the form of individual yards or community recreation facilities, collectively owned and managed by a homeowners association.

### DESIGN

Low Density Residential neighborhoods are characterized by single-family homes on large lots, with a high degree of building separation and deep setbacks. A generous tree canopy is typical of these neighborhoods and should be maintained. As infill development occurs, care should be taken to reflect the dimensions and character of the existing neighborhood.

### TRANSPORTATION

Low Density Residential neighborhoods are designed to provide a quiet, peaceful retreat for residents. Traffic calming devices-- such as speed humps, bulb-out curbs, and crosswalks-- may be implemented to reduce vehicle speeds and encourage careful driving. Road networks should be designed to provide connectivity to the surrounding area. Pedestrian facilities-- such as sidewalks, trails, and street lighting-- are encouraged to promote physical activity and decrease vehicular dependence.



Cooper Lake Park neighborhood

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District (*if built on lots greater than 1/3 of an acre*)

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Continuous sidewalks and pedestrian linkages to trail systems
- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- Historic preservation may be considered on a voluntary basis for homes and even neighborhoods built over 50 years ago that still maintain a strong historic character and context
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Discourage clear cutting
- Conservation subdivisions
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Strict code enforcement
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Buyer education and counseling

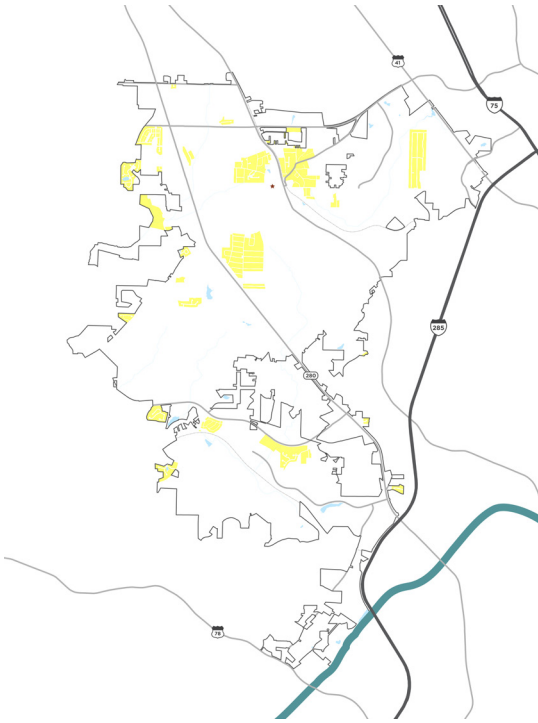


Vinings Glen neighborhood



Creatwood Trail neighborhood

## MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MODR)



### OVERVIEW

Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods are primarily single-family detached residential neighborhoods designed at a slightly higher density than Low Density Residential neighborhoods. Density is limited to 4.5 dwelling units per acre or less. They may include a wider variety of housing types—such as accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, duplexes, or quadraplexes—and small civic or recreational uses.

### DESIGN

Homes in Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods are characterized by smaller lots, some degree of building separation, and moderate setbacks. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) principles should be applied throughout to encourage walkability by orienting buildings toward the street, designing alleys, locating residences near other uses, integrating parks and public spaces, opting for compact designs, and providing safe and inviting alternative modes of transportation.

### TRANSPORTATION

Road networks in Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods are connected to the surrounding area. As in other residential areas, traffic calming devices-- such as speed humps, bulb-out curbs, and crosswalks-- may be implemented to reduce vehicle speeds and encourage careful driving. The proximity of many of these areas to mixed-use and commercial nodes makes walking and biking feasible modes for many trips, and excellent pedestrian facilities-- such as sidewalks, trails, street trees and lighting— should be provided to connect residents to nearby commercial and recreational amenities.



Single-family detached homes near Belmont

## MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached housing
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes
- Cottage courts
- Accessory dwelling units
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District (*if built on less than 1/3 of an acre*)
- R-12, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Residential Attached and/or Detached
- O-I, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- Continuous sidewalks and pedestrian linkages to trail systems
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Review the impact of stormwater regulations on potential lot configurations for infill development
- Discourage clear cutting
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Create additional zoning categories as alternatives to RAD
- Buyer education and counseling
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Strict code enforcement

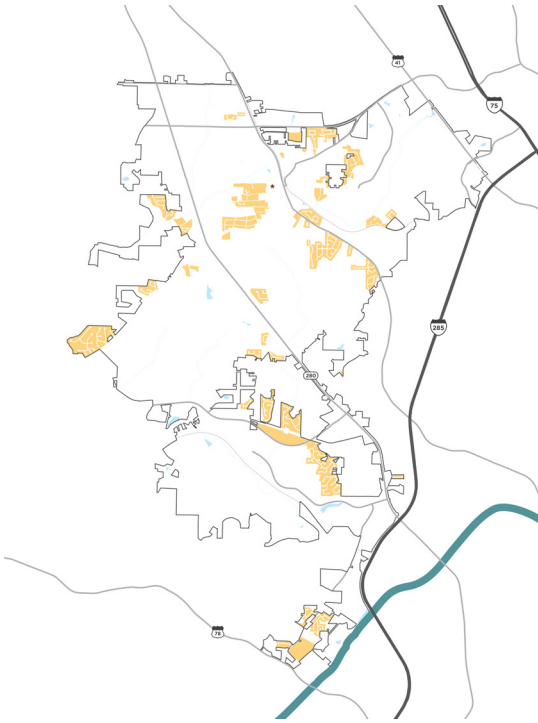


Williams Park neighborhood



Homes in the Stapleton neighborhood in Denver, CO

## MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MEDR)



### OVERVIEW

Medium Density Residential neighborhoods include a mix of detached and attached housing in a primarily residential context. Density is limited to 6 dwelling units per acre or less. Small civic and recreational uses may be incorporated into the neighborhood. These neighborhoods are often located near activity centers or mixed use areas.

### DESIGN

Medium Density Residential areas are relatively compact, walkable places. Homes are oriented to the street, sited on smaller lots with shallower setbacks, and have little or no building separation. Open space is a mix of small, private lawns and shared spaces, such as neighborhood parks or trails. Traditional Neighborhood Development principles are encouraged in Medium Density Residential areas.

In some cases, Medium Density Residential neighborhoods may take the form of master-planned communities, such as Planned-Unit Developments (PUDs). These planned communities are meant to allow for innovative designs that may not fit within the confines of established zoning districts, and approvals are tied to project site plans, allowing for both greater flexibility and administrative discretion. PUDs often integrate a mixture of housing types and sizes along with limited commercial uses, open space, and recreation facilities.

### TRANSPORTATION

The connected transportation network in Medium Density Residential neighborhoods offers residents direct access to nearby amenities by a variety of modes. Pedestrian amenities—such as continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and street trees—should be standard elements of neighborhood streets to encourage non-automotive trips to nearby destinations.



Single-family detached homes in Smyrna Heights



Townhomes in Smyrna Heights



## MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes
- Townhomes
- Cottage courts
- Accessory dwelling units
- Senior housing
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens
- Limited neighborhood commercial within a PUD

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District
- R-12, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Single-family Residential Attached and/or Detached District

- RD, Residential Duplex
- RD-4, Residential Triplexes or Quadraplexes
- PUD, Planned Unit Developments
- OI, Office-Institutional District

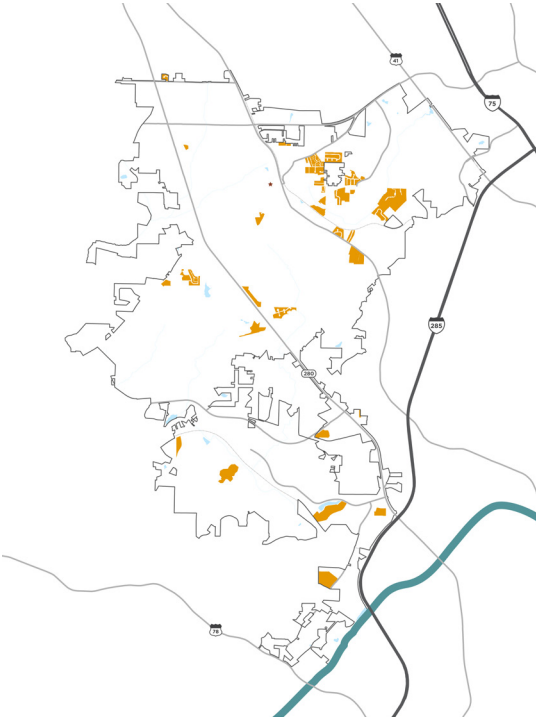
### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, and lighting
- Cluster development
- Planned-Unit Development
- Conservation subdivisions
- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- On-street parking
- Strict code enforcement
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Review the impact of stormwater regulations on potential lot configurations for infill development
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Create a new zoning district as an alternative to RAD
- Buyer education and counseling



Mix of single-family detached homes, townhomes, and small multi-family residential in the Ansley Park neighborhood in Atlanta

## MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MHDR)



### OVERVIEW

Medium-High Density Residential areas consist primarily of compact, low-maintenance housing, such as townhomes and small-scale, multi-family housing. Density is limited to 10 dwelling units per acre or less. They may include auxiliary uses, such as small civic buildings or recreational amenities. These neighborhoods are typically located along high-volume corridors near activity centers and mixed use nodes.

### DESIGN

Medium-High Density Residential neighborhoods have a pedestrian-oriented design. Buildings are oriented toward the street on small lots with shallow setbacks, in keeping with the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design. More often than not, buildings are attached. Roads are lined with street trees and open space and amenities are typically shared facilities, such as a neighborhood park or trail.

### TRANSPORTATION

The road network in Medium-High Density Residential neighborhoods should have a high degree of connectivity and provide facilities to easily access nearby commercial destinations by foot or bike. In many cases, they are located next to shared paths on major roads. Continuous sidewalks, lighting, and traffic calming measures should be implemented to create a safe and enjoyable walking environment.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes
- Townhomes



Detached townhomes at Belmont

## MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

- Cottage courts
- Accessory dwelling units
- Senior housing
- Multi-family residential
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Community gardens

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

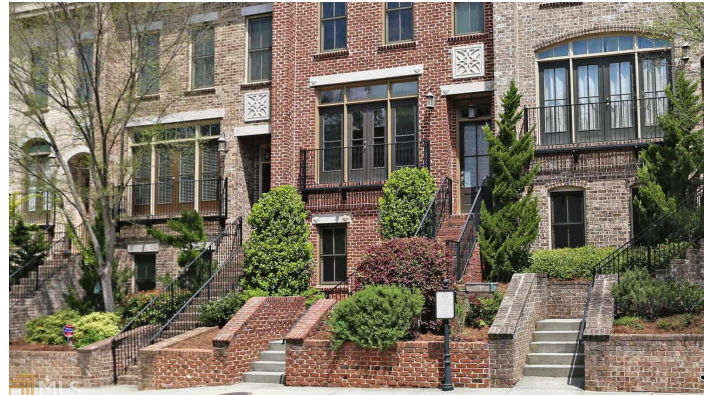
- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Residential Attached and/or Detached
- RD, Multi-family Residential District
- RD-4, Multi-family Residential District
- RMC-8, Multi-family Residential District
- RM-10, Multi-family Residential District
- TD, Multi-family Residential District
- OI, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, street trees, and lighting
- Cluster development
- Roadway safety improvements
- Traffic calming
- On-street parking
- Strict code enforcement
- Home ownership and maintenance programs
- Voluntary neighborhood overlays with design guidelines
- Conduct Infill Housing Study and develop guidelines to regulate compatibility of new development in established neighborhoods (e.g. DCA Model Code 3-10)
- Review the impact of stormwater regulations on potential lot configurations for infill development
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Buyer education and counseling

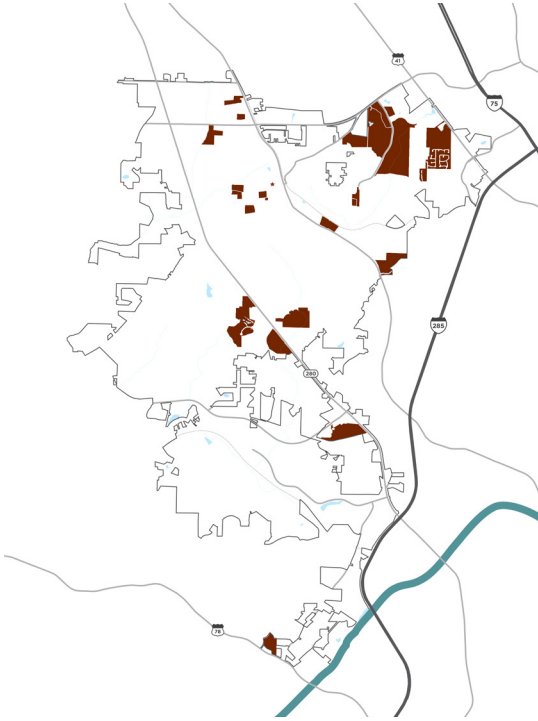


Multi-family residential in Old Fourth Ward in Atlanta



Townhomes in Decatur, GA

## HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (HDR)



### OVERVIEW

High Density Residential areas include multi-family housing ranging from small-scale condominiums to high-rise residential buildings. Residential developments with a density of more than 10 dwelling units per acre are included in this category. These areas are often located along high-volume corridors in close proximity to Activity Centers or Mixed Use nodes as part of a broader, mixed-use neighborhood.

### DESIGN

This category encompasses both multi-family buildings in integrated, neighborhood settings, as well as apartment or condominium complexes. The renovation of older multi-family complexes is encouraged. Open space in High Density Residential areas typically takes the form of a neighborhood park or plaza, as well as privately owned recreational amenities.

### TRANSPORTATION

High Density Residential areas should be part of a well-connected, multi-modal street network. New multi-family complexes and major renovations should be designed with multiple points of entry to avoid creating stressors on major roads; gated complexes are discouraged. Locations in close proximity to transit routes are preferred, and transit stops should be coordinated with multi-family residential locations. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities within developments and connecting to the surrounding area should include lighting, street trees, and other features to encourage non-automotive trips.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes
- Quadraplexes



Condominiums in Asheville, NC



Multi-family residential at Belmont

## HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (CONTINUED)

- Townhomes
- Multi-family residential
- Senior housing
- Small-scale civic/public/places of worship
- Parks/recreation/greenspace
- Supportive limited commercial
- Traffic calming
- Access management and interparcel connectivity
- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks, shared paths, crosswalks, street trees, lighting, and bicycle parking
- Access to convenient and efficient transit routes with high quality, nearby shelters and pedestrian connections

## CORRESPONDING ZONING

- R-30, Single-family Residential District
- R-20, Single-family Residential District
- R-15, Single-family Residential District
- R-12, Single-family Residential District
- RAD, Residential Attached and/or Detached
- RD, Residential Duplex
- RD-4, Residential Triplexes or Quadraplexes
- TD, Multi-family Residential District
- RMC-8, Multi-family Residential Condominium Ownership
- RM-10, Multi-family Residential District
- RM-12, Multi-family Residential District
- RM-15, Multi-family Residential District
- RHR, Residential High-rise District
- OI, Office-Institutional District
- On-street, hidden surface parking, and structured parking encouraged
- Shared private or public amenities
- Redevelopment incentives for older multi-family complexes
- Strict code enforcement
- Incentives for the provision of affordable units and workforce housing
- Buyer education and counseling
- Screening and buffering requirements between neighborhoods and surrounding commercial/industrial uses
- Locate highest density buildings furthest from adjacent single-family neighborhoods

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Urban design standards when located within an overlay zoning district
- Roadway safety improvements

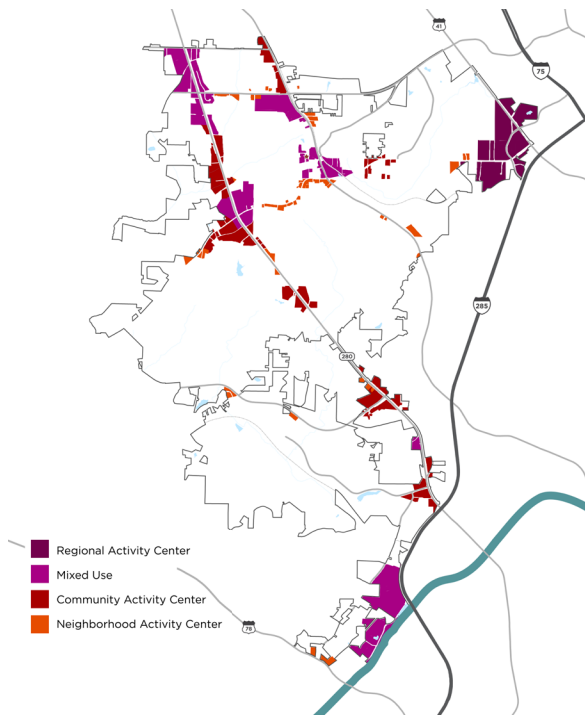


Senior living facility in Colorado



Located along the major transportation corridors of the city, activity centers contribute greatly to setting the overall character and image of the city. They include the commercial centers, which based on overall economic trends and the city's small supply of vacant and undeveloped land, represent the best opportunity for redevelopment and growth. With the rise of online shopping and the “gig” economy, the demand for retail space is declining, so the overall development trend is for aging strip commercial centers to be transformed into vibrant

**Figure 2.4. Activity Center Character Areas**



mixed use centers. A prime example of this trend within Smyrna is the Belmont development, which replaced one of the largest strip shopping centers in region with a mix of over 485 residential units, 28,000 sf of retail, and a 30,000 sf office.

## CHARACTER AREAS

This transition of commercial to mixed use is at the heart of the community's future vision, and its promotion will be the key to successful implementation of this plan. As a general category activity centers include 4 character areas:

- **Neighborhood Activity Centers (NAC)**
- **Community Activity Centers (CAC)**
- **Mixed Use (MU), and**
- **Regional Activity Centers (RAC)**

These areas share a history of commercial use, and a generally high real estate market demand for redevelopment due to their visibility and access. Because they often present opportunities for the adaptive reuse of aging and possibly historic structures, general policies applicable to each of these categories must consider the design challenges that such reuse or redevelopment presents, as well as the possibility of starting with a completely cleared and graded site. Since most of these sites are aging commercial centers, the



redesign of surface parking lots to allow for outdoor dining areas, multi-use paths, passive storm water detention, landscaped parking islands, or even small public parks should be encouraged where appropriate.

In addition to real estate trends pushing for the redevelopment of aging commercial sites, trends in transportation are also playing a major role in design of activity centers. Throughout the public engagement process for this plan, participants supported a future lifestyle that is less dependent on the traditional automobile and more supportive of the use of a wide variety of transportation modes, including walking, bicycling, on-demand ride sharing, and transit. Participants even realized that through

technological advances the form and function of automobiles themselves are changing. Though no one can yet accurately predict when self-driving or autonomous vehicles will dominate the auto market and subsequently our public streets, the reality that it is coming and very likely within the time frame of this plan, or by the year 2040, is generally accepted. As a result, activity centers must be designed to accommodate a wide range of transportation options, and include such features as drop off and queue lanes, pedestrian and bicycle access to front doorways, wayfinding, and a general orientation of the building toward the street, rather than toward parking areas.

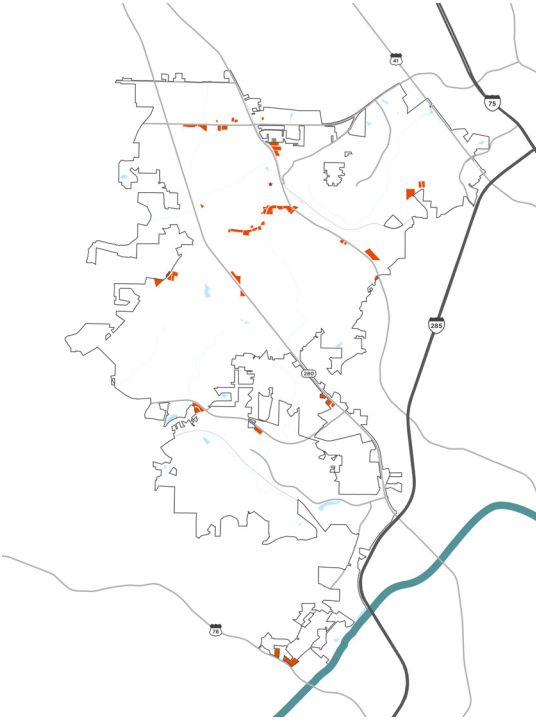
## TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

*Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a “pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use community near a transit station that provides relief from automobile-dependent lifestyles for residents and workers, enabling them to drive less and ride transit more,” typically encompassing the area within a 10-minute walk (half mile) of a transit station. Activity Centers are natural transit service locations and should be designed to encourage the use of buses, shuttles, and potential future rail, integrating transit facilities seamlessly into the community. Effective TODs feature a connected grid network with small block sizes; a compact, vertical land use pattern with a mix of uses; buildings oriented toward the street; continuous sidewalks and bicycle facilities; lighting, street trees, furniture, public art, and other pedestrian amenities; clear wayfinding signage; and alleys and other design features to reduce the curb cuts in sidewalks.*

<sup>1</sup>Atlanta Regional Commission - Transit Oriented Development



## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER (NAC)



### OVERVIEW

Neighborhood Activity Centers are neighborhood focal points with a concentration of small commercial, civic, and public activities. Retail and services within Neighborhood Activity Centers are intended to be local-serving. Development within these areas is encouraged to be pedestrian and bicycle-oriented and compatible with surrounding single-family residential areas.

Neighborhood Activity Centers are of limited scale in order to control adverse impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood Activity Centers typically feature small-scale commercial establishments each less than 5,000 square feet in size. Office and retail uses within Neighborhood Activity Centers should be limited to a maximum of two stories. Auto-oriented land uses, such as gas stations, car washes, and drive-through windows should be discouraged within Neighborhood Activity Centers.

### DESIGN

Commercial buildings within Neighborhood Activity Centers should be oriented to streets that are easily accessible from adjacent neighborhoods. To accomplish this, the following design consideration should be implemented were deemed appropriate:

- Buildings should have minimal front setbacks for easy pedestrian access.
- Building entrances should be oriented toward streets; corner buildings should have corner entrances whenever possible.
- When it is not practical or reasonable to orient building entrances toward existing streets, a new “shopping street” with sidewalks and pedestrian amenities can be created within the retail center.



Home converted to business in Nashville, TN



Virginia Highlands neighborhood in Atlanta



## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)

- Developments should include sidewalks with a street furniture zone.
- Parking and vehicle drives should be located away from building entrances, and not be allowed between a building entrance and the street.
- Surface parking should be oriented behind or to the side of buildings for new construction. In redevelopment situations, where an excess of parking is provided under the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, pedestrian walkways, landscaping, or outdoor serving areas should be required.
- If the site is large enough, landscaping should be provided within parking lots, adjacent to sidewalks, and adjacent residential land uses.

Small offices will also play an important role in the city's future development. Residential houses located along busy corridors may benefit from adaptive reuse as small offices or neighborhood commercial.

### TRANSPORTATION

Neighborhood Activity Centers are normally found at the intersection of collector streets that serve residential areas. Limiting such uses to collectors minimizes traffic on local streets. Pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods are encouraged to facilitate trips by foot or bike.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Neighborhood commercial (not automobile-oriented)
- Small mixed-use development

- Live-work units
- Low-rise office/professional
- Civic / public / places of worship
- Parks / plazas

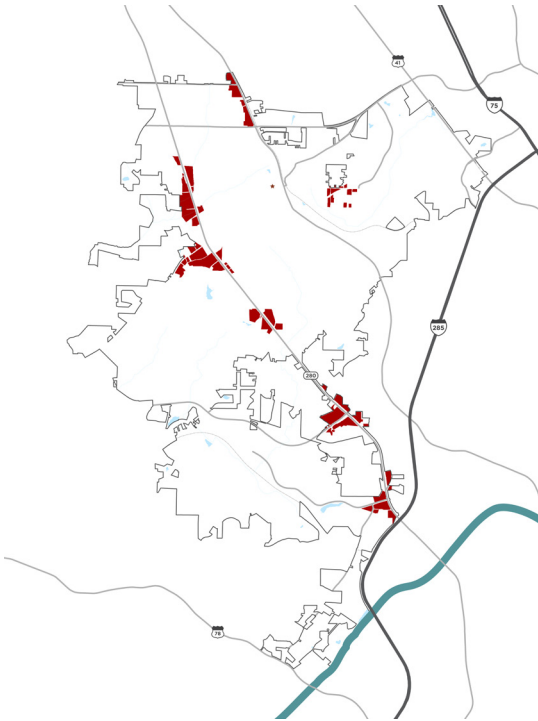
### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- LC, Limited Commercial District
- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District
- FC, Future Commercial District
- OI, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Implementation of Corridor Design Guidelines, (See recommended changes to the zoning ordinance in the Implementation Plan.)
- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Require pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented wayfinding
- Encourage streetscaping, street furniture, and lighting
- Redesign off-street parking facilities for inter-parcel connectivity
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Orient new buildings toward primary streets
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Market available commercial space and work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify potential tenants

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)



### OVERVIEW

Community Activity Centers contain a mix of commercial, professional, civic, and public uses, and are intended to accommodate commercial uses serving several adjacent neighborhoods. Compared to the other character areas, CAC is more commercial and auto-oriented. Most of the locations within this designation are currently traditional commercial uses within strip commercial centers or standalone buildings supported by large surface parking lots. Though there is still a market demand for such development, current real estate market trends indicate that that demand is waning and the future vision for these areas is not strictly commercial in character, but rather centers of local activity that support a mix of uses that support the surrounding community with variety of activities and services.

### DESIGN

A transition in building scale and land use type should be provided between higher intensity uses and adjacent residential areas. Within a site, more intense uses should be located further from existing residential development. Community Activity Centers should also reflect the character and aesthetic of the surrounding neighborhoods. The installation of public art and good wayfinding should also be encouraged.

### TRANSPORTATION

Community Activity Centers have been established along major arterials and at key intersections where development nodes can be supported by the regional transportation network. While Community Activity Centers are more automobile-oriented than Neighborhood Activity Centers, basic access and safety should be provided for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.



Street-oriented retail at Edgewood Shopping Center in Atlanta



Redeveloped retail center in Orlando with added street-facing buildings and a trail connection

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Mixed use development
- General commercial
- Office / professional
- Civic / public / places of worship
- Plaza / park / gathering space

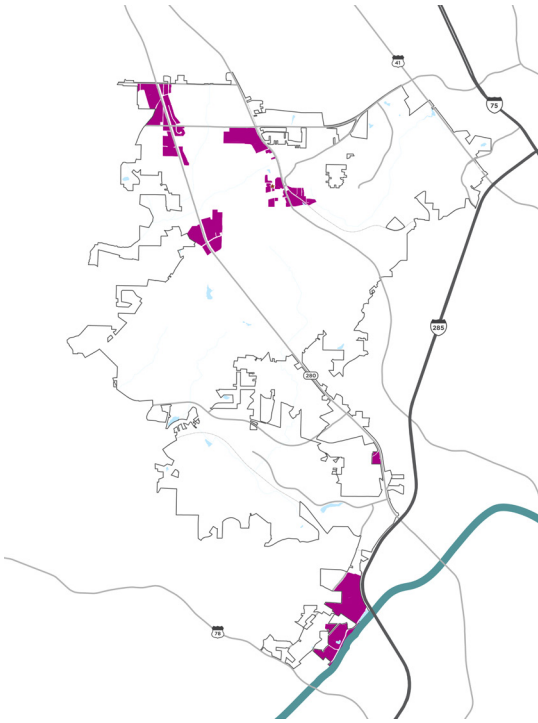
### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- GC, General Commercial District
- MU, Mixed Use District
- LC, Limited Commercial
- NS, Neighborhood Shopping District
- TS, Tourist Services District
- OI, Office-Institutional District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Encourage alternatives to or reuse of big box retail development
- Implement corridor design guidelines where applicable
- Buffering between commercial uses and surrounding neighborhoods where appropriate
- Improve parking design standards to better support other modes of transportation, such as on-demand ride sharing, transit, pedestrian, and bicycling. (See recommended changes to the City Zoning Ordinance in the Implementation Plan.)
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Redesign off-street parking facilities for inter-parcel connectivity, where applicable
- Require pedestrian safety improvements and connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- Bicycle safety improvements, connections, parking, and bike share stations
- Provide high quality transit infrastructure, shelters, and connections

## MIXED USE (MU)



Market Village

### OVERVIEW

Mixed Use areas provide a unique sense of place and identity, and include several landmark developments that many identify with the city, such as the Market Village, Belmont, and Jonquil. They provide a vibrant combination of residential and commercial uses, and a venue for gatherings, events, and civic activities within a “village center.” The redevelopment of existing automobile-oriented commercial centers to Mixed Use nodes is encouraged, particularly at key intersections, such as South Cobb Drive at its intersections with Windy Hill Road and Concord Road.

### DESIGN

Each mixed use development should also be supportive of pedestrian and bicycle access through use of a compact site plan that includes a mix of uses within close proximity to one another. Buildings should be oriented to the street and feature human-scale design elements, using best practices in Traditional Neighborhood Development. Open space—such as parks, pocket parks, plazas, and trails—provide everyday gathering spaces and a place to hold community events. These areas should be designed to integrate seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhoods through a transition in building scale and a connected road network.

### TRANSPORTATION

Mixed Use areas should be designed as pedestrian oriented nodes, rather than auto-oriented strip corridors. The road network should consist of connected streets with small, walkable blocks. Streets should feature generous sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and traffic calming elements to create an enjoyable walking experience. To encourage locals to bike to these areas, bike lanes, bike share stations, and trail connections should be provided. Coordination with transit stops and the creation of a potential shuttle system should be considered. Parallel road networks, access management, and coordinated signal timing will help reduce vehicle congestion in the surrounding area.

## MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- “Main Street” retail
- Office/Professional
- Detached single-family residential
- Townhomes
- Multi-family residential
- Live-Work units
- Civic / government / places of worship
- Parks / plazas / gathering spaces

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- CBD, Central Business District
- MU, Mixed Use District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Pedestrian-oriented design
- Redevelopment Overlay Districts

- Design guidelines
- Internal pedestrian connectivity and linkages to parks, neighborhoods, Silver Comet Trail, and activity centers
- Bicycle lanes and bike share stations
- Provide high quality transit infrastructure, shelters, and connections
- Wayfinding and gateway signage
- Streetscaping features including lighting, street trees, furniture, and public art
- Integrate public open space
- Maximize use of existing parking
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Locate parking in the rear or to the side of new buildings
- Marketing publication promoting existing businesses
- Downtown Business Improvement District
- Zoning incentives for mixed-use development.
- Provision of housing at a range of price points
- Festival events

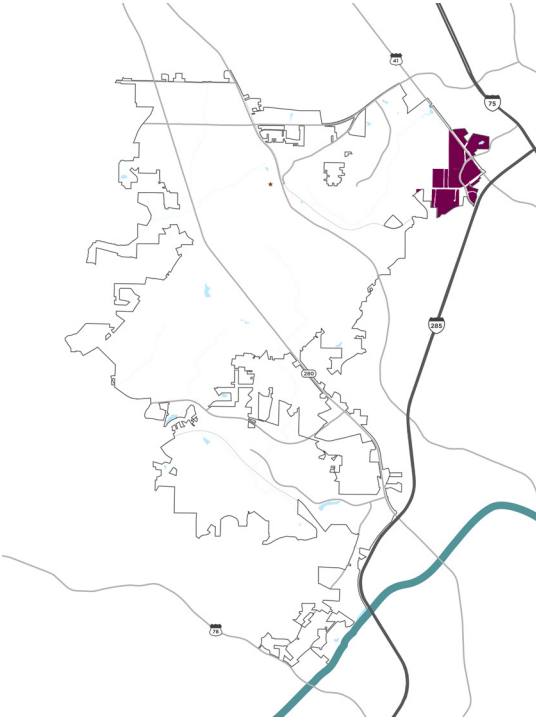


Harbor Town in Memphis, TN



Pearl Brewery Redevelopment in San Antonio, TX

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (RAC)



### OVERVIEW

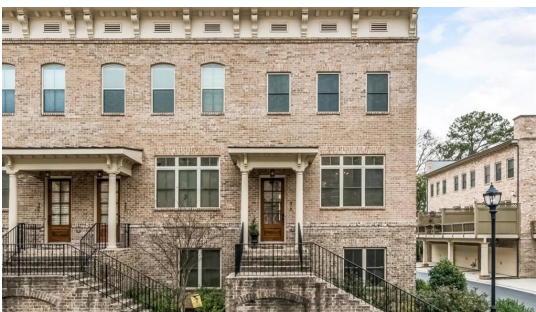
The recent construction of SunTrust Park and the Battery has served as a catalyst for development interest around the intersection of the Spring Road and Cobb Parkway. Throughout the public involvement process of the plan, participants recognized the Spring Road area is becoming urbanized and more regionally focused, drawing in visitors from all over the Metro Atlanta area, and saw it as an appropriate location for future growth. To plan for this, the City recently undertook and adopted the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study, and the purpose of this character area is to support the implementation of that study. The boundaries of the RAC do not directly match the boundaries of the study, but do focus on the core area of the study where a more urbanized land form was recommended than is currently supported by the Zoning Ordinance. The vision for the area is one that contains a mix of mid- to high-rise commercial, professional, residential and public uses.

### DESIGN

The Regional Activity Center is positioned to become the gateway to Smyrna for much of the Metro Atlanta community. Its design should represent the community's vision for a walkable, mixed-use area with good access and integrated park space. New plazas, pocket parks, and stronger connections to Jonquil Park will provide community gathering spaces and opportunities for recreation. Development patterns should reflect best practices in transit-oriented development (TOD), with many uses within convenient walking distance and buildings oriented to the street. As in Community Activity Centers, a transition in building scale and land use type should be provided between higher intensity uses and adjacent residential areas. As called for in the LCI plan, the building scale will be highest around SunTrust Park and Cobb Parkway and scale down in intensity the further away from the park.



RiverPlace in Greenville, SC



Townhomes in the Ansley Park neighborhood of Atlanta

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)

### TRANSPORTATION

The Regional Activity Center will be the multi-modal hub of Smyrna. Premium transit service should be a core component of the future development of this area in order to effectively and efficiently connect users from throughout the region to the site. Within the area, most trips will be by foot or by bike. The road network will be a walkable, connected network with smaller blocks to create a pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly environment. Excellent pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities—including generous sidewalks, signalized crosswalks, bike lanes, bike share stations, lighting, street trees, landscaping, wayfinding, public art, and a pedestrian bridge over Cobb Parkway—will be essential to creating a high quality of life and reducing the impact of local trips on roadway congestion. When possible, alleys should be provided and utility poles should be located in the rear of buildings or underground to minimize curb cuts and sidewalk interruptions. The creation of parallel roads, access management, signal optimization, and innovative roadway design solutions should be implemented to reduce the traffic impact of the stadium and future development on the surrounding area.

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Mixed use
- Office/professional
- Townhomes
- Multi-family residential
- Hotels
- Civic / government / places of worship
- Parks / plazas / gathering spaces

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- MU, Mixed Use District
- GC, General Commercial District
- OI, Office Institutional District
- New zoning categories will need to be created to support the higher densities of development recommended by the Spring Road LCI Study

## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Create an efficient, walkable road network by extending existing roads to form a more connected grid pattern.
- Build on existing and under-construction bridge projects to create a seamless pedestrian/bicycle connection, and potentially a transit loop, grade separated from vehicular traffic.
- Build a multi-modal boulevard, referred to as Baseball Boulevard in the Spring Road LCI study, between Jonquil Park and the Battery that provides ample sidewalks for pedestrians, a bike boulevard for cyclists, and greenspace/pocket parks along the way
- Amend the Corridor Design District Overlay and Mixed Use Zoning District, as described in Section 4.4 of the Spring Road LCI Study
- Create a Special Use District in the area to allow the city to invest in significant infrastructure for sites and adjacent roads in exchange for higher development intensities and greater development flexibility.
- Consider the creation of a Community Improvement District.
- Pursue grants to help offset up-front infrastructure development costs, focusing on underground utilities, streetscape improvements and parking for key redevelopment sites in the area.
- Consider the development of a parking structure near the proposed location of the transit transfer hub that could accommodate commuter transit parking as well as apartment and retail parking.
- Pursue green SPLOST to improve and expand Jonquil Park.
- Consider inclusionary zoning, housing that requires a given share of new construction to be workforce housing.
- Consider allowance of smaller lot sizes, smaller minimum building footprints, and accessory dwelling units in making revisions to the current Zoning Ordinance.
- Consider the acquisition and conversion of existing single-family homes south of the existing linear parkway along Spring Road into greenspace.



## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (CONTINUED)



The Green in Uptown, Charlotte, NC



Bicycle boulevard, as recommended in the Spring Road LCI Study



Fifth Street bridge at Georgia Tech, designed to enhance connectivity and minimize highway impact on the pedestrian experience



Activated, transit-integrated community plaza in Decatur, GA



Bethesda Row in Bethesda, MD

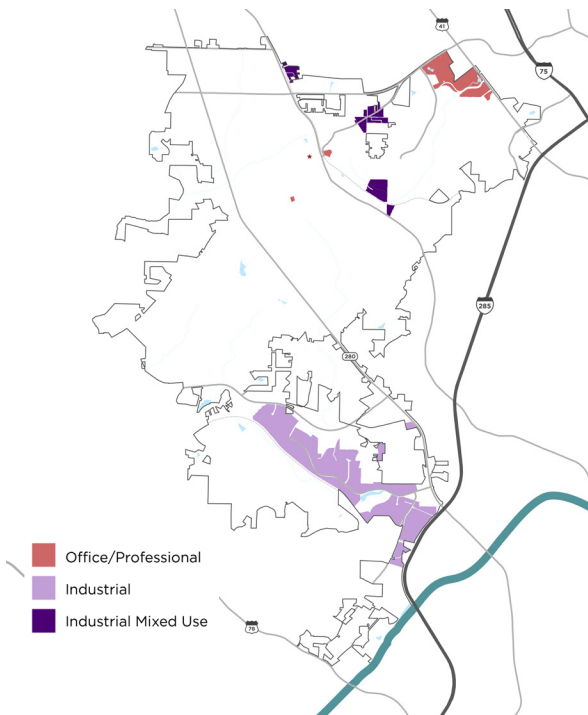


The Gulch in Nashville, TN

# EMPLOYMENT CENTER CHARACTER AREAS

A well balanced community not only offers a diverse supply of housing choices, but also a diverse supply of employment opportunities. Smyrna is fortunate to have easy access to all that the metropolitan Atlanta area has to offer, but to maintain and foster a strong tax base, reduce traffic congestion, and minimize the strain on local transportation systems, it must also provide good locations for employment centers.

**Figure 2.5. Employment Center Character Areas**



## CHARACTER AREAS

The 2040 Future Land Use Map includes three character areas that support employment based land uses:

- **Office Professional (O/P)**
- **Industrial (I), and**
- **Industrial Mixed-Use (IMU)**

Though other areas of the map also support home-based businesses, government services, and commercial service sector employment, these three categories provide the primary locations for employment within the city, and are often comprised of aging office parks and industrial areas. As in the case of the activity centers, employment centers also offer redevelopment opportunities to accommodate the anticipated growth of the community.



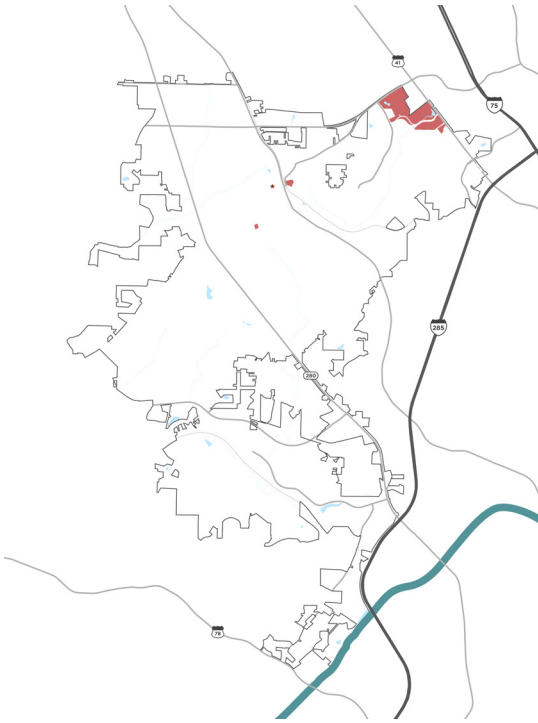
## SUPPORTING CITY GOALS

Together, the visions for these character areas support the city’s primary economic development goals:

- **Goal 4:** Attract and retain a diverse variety of businesses in order to provide quality employment opportunities for residents and maintain a healthy tax base.
- **Goal 5:** Promote revitalization of declining commercial and industrial areas.
- **Goal 6:** Promote continued economic development within downtown Smyrna and other activity centers as vibrant mixed-use centers for residential, government, office, retail and entertainment activities.

Like housing, employment centers are just one component of a complete community, and as the economic development goals suggest, the activity centers play as much of a role in the future employment growth of the city as do the employment centers themselves. One way in which the employment centers are different from other land uses in the city, however, is their reliance on and accommodation of both rail- and highway-oriented freight traffic. Such uses tend to be less compatible with residential uses, so adequate buffering, proper orientation and screening of loading areas, and adequate turning radii for large vehicles are essential to mitigate negative impacts of freight traffic.

## OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL (O/P)



### OVERVIEW

Office/Professional areas, along with Activity Centers and Mixed Use areas, are centers of professional employment within the city. Office uses are the primary focus of these areas, though they may include some limited supportive retail or service uses, such as restaurants or daycares.

### DESIGN

Office/Professional areas may take the form of freestanding office buildings or professional campuses. Along primary streets, new building frontages and entrances should be oriented toward the road to contribute to the walkability and sense of place in the surrounding area.

### TRANSPORTATION

Historically, these areas have typically taken the form of office parks with limited connectivity to the surrounding area and ample parking. New construction and renovations should seek to increase connectivity and ensure the availability of alternative modes of transportation, such as by improving connections to nearby bus shelters or providing sidewalks for employees to walk within the campus.



Office building on Atlanta Road



Office park campus on S. Cobb Parkway

## OFFICE/PROFESSIONAL (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

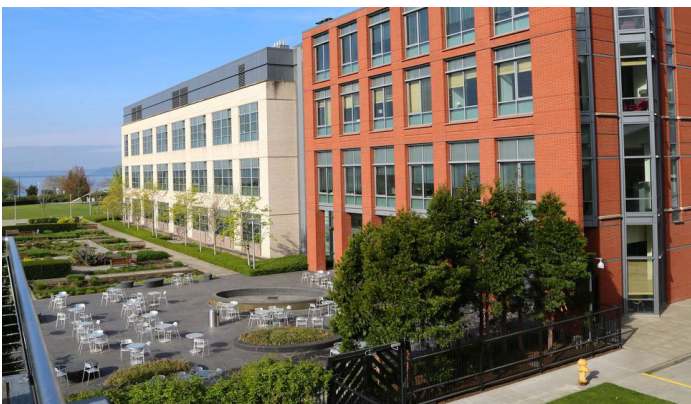
- Office
- Research and development
- Limited supportive commercial
- Civic/government

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- OI, Office-Institutional District
- OD, Office-Distribution District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Market available office space and work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify potential tenants
- Expand the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Urban design standards when located within an overlay zoning district
- Encourage shared parking agreements
- Pedestrian and bicycle facility connectivity within the parcel and to the surrounding area
- Provide high quality transit routes, shelters, and connections
- Orient new buildings toward primary streets
- Screening and buffering between office uses and adjacent neighborhoods

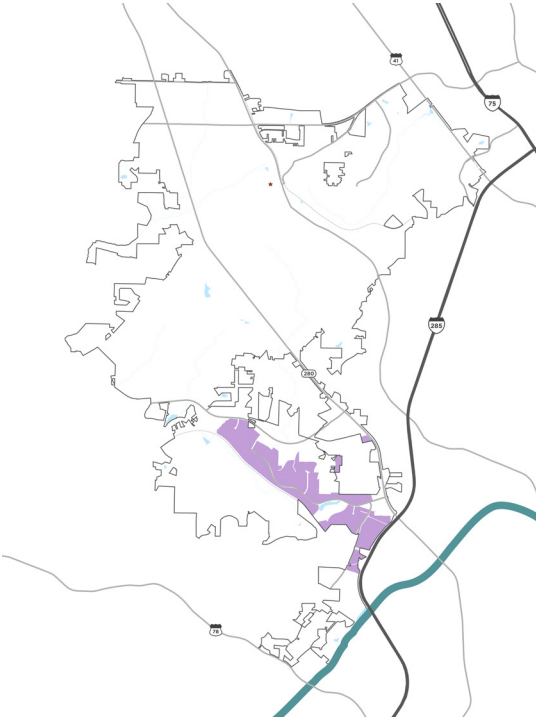


Office park with outdoor amenities



Office building on Concord Road

## INDUSTRIAL (I)



### OVERVIEW

Clean, light industrial uses compatible with the residential nature of Smyrna support the city's economic base and are encouraged. These may include light and artisanal manufacturing, distribution, construction, and warehousing facilities, as well as offices or flex space. Heavy industrial uses, which generate significant external impacts, are not permitted.

### DESIGN

Sufficient screening and buffers—such as appropriate setbacks, fences, walls, and landscaping—should be provided to minimize disturbances from industrial uses and designed to avoid creating a harsh environment. Along primary streets, building frontages and entrances should be oriented toward the road.

### TRANSPORTATION

By nature of their function, these areas are primarily auto-oriented. Industrial, warehousing, and distribution facilities can produce major freight traffic and must be carefully planned to avoid freight traffic impacts on residential areas. These uses should be located with direct access to designated oversize vehicle routes or rail lines. Clearly defined, safe pedestrian paths should be provided, using markings and features like pedestrian crossing signals to increase pedestrian visibility and minimize conflicts. Transit stops should be coordinated with major employment centers.



Warehouse on Martin Court

## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Light industrial
- Office
- Research and development
- Distribution centers
- Transportation and warehousing
- Utilities
- Commercial

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- LI, Light Industrial District
- OD, Office-Distribution District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Market available industrial space and work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify potential tenants
- Expand the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Provide sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and street trees along major corridors
- Screening outdoor storage and loading areas
- Screening and buffering between industrial and commercial uses and nearby neighborhoods

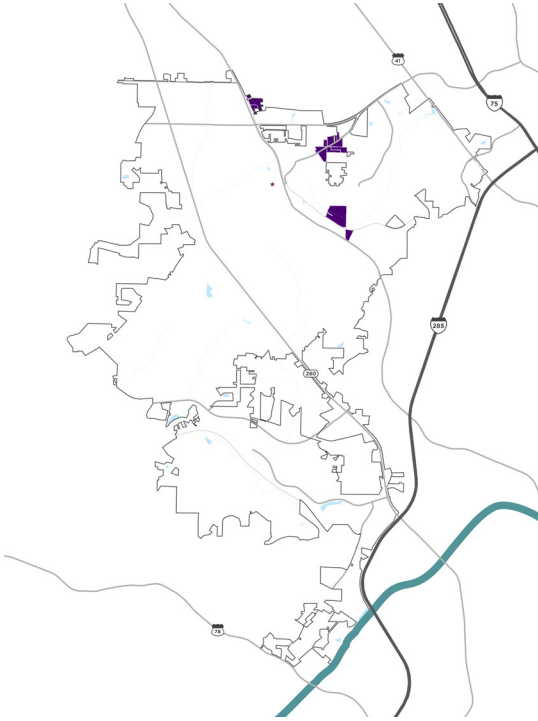


Sustainably designed light manufacturing facility



Renovated warehouse

## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE (IMU)



### OVERVIEW

Industrial Mixed Use areas are legacy light industrial areas located near Activity Centers and residential neighborhoods. The continuation of light industrial uses in these areas is encouraged. To expand opportunities for relatively affordable commercial space and encourage innovative design, a broader range of uses is also allowed, including small commercial, makers' spaces, offices, event spaces, breweries, and multi-family residential.

### DESIGN

Many existing industrial sites are inwardly oriented and separated from their surroundings by physical barriers. These screening and buffering techniques should be used as necessary to mitigate negative impacts of some industrial uses, but should be designed to avoid creating a harsh environment. As these areas evolve and begin to incorporate more non-industrial uses, industrial properties will become one element of an eclectic area character, along with infill development and adaptive reuse projects. Open space, such as pocket parks or trails, may be incorporated into these areas.

### TRANSPORTATION

The existing transportation system in Industrial Mixed Use areas is auto-oriented and impacted by freight traffic. Sidewalks are generally inadequate in size or condition, discontinuous, or nonexistent. As property renovations and road improvements are made, provisions for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be made with particular consideration for opportunities to mitigate conflict with truck traffic. Increased interparcel connectivity for non-industrial uses and road network connectivity throughout will improve the functionality of the area for a broader set of uses.



Industrial adaptive reuse project



Combined studio and warehouse facility



## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE (CONTINUED)

### APPROPRIATE LAND USES

- Light industrial
- Office
- Limited commercial
- Research and development
- Event space
- Breweries
- Flex space
- Multi-family residential
- Live-work units
- Townhomes
- Post-secondary education

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- LI, Light Industrial District
- OI, Office-Institutional District
- OD, Office Distribution District
- LC, Limited Commercial District
- MU, Mixed Use District

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Respect and encourage the continued use of light industrial facilities
- Market brownfield sites and vacant industrial buildings for redevelopment opportunities
- Identify funding sources for brownfield remediation

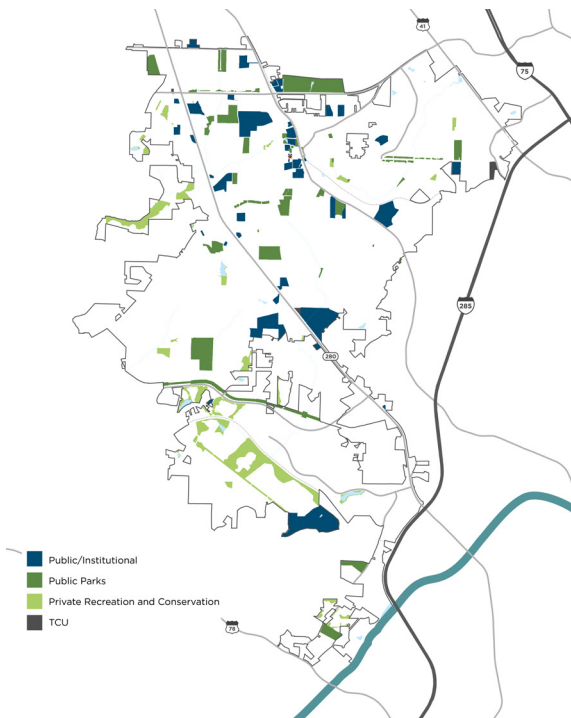
- Encourage the renovation and adaptive reuse of vacant, underutilized, or obsolete industrial facilities
- Promote the Commercial Revitalization Program
- Create a small-scale business incubator and mentorship program through public-private partnership
- Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure plans with freight routes and loading logistics to minimize conflicts
- Monitor roads for wear from freight traffic and identify road resurfacing projects
- New buildings should locate parking and loading facilities in the rear or to the side
- Screening outdoor storage and loading areas
- Screening and buffering between industrial and commercial uses and nearby neighborhoods
- Discourage fencing and encourage interparcel connectivity for non-industrial uses
- Create a new zoning category or revision to allow makers spaces, breweries, small retailers and services, and other uses appropriate to this area
- Conduct small area studies for priority redevelopment areas, such as the Jonquil Drive Industrial Area
- Promote the installation of temporary and permanent public art
- Code enforcement



# PUBLIC SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE CHARACTER AREAS

Several character areas shown on the Future Land Use Map represent the locations of essential public services as well as lands reserved and dedicated to recreation and conservation uses. These areas more than any other influence the overall quality of life offered by the city. In some respects, they are so ubiquitous that they are often taken for granted, and so to some extent, some would view these as features of the map rather than distinct character areas; however, most of these areas are directly owned and controlled by the city or other

**Figure 2.6. Public Services and Quality of Life Character Areas**



government or institutional bodies, and so the city has a strong influence on their function and aesthetics.

## CHARACTER AREAS

As a general category public services and quality of life include five character areas:

- **Public/Institutional** (PI)
- **Public Parks** (PP)
- **Private Recreation and Conservation** (PRC)
- **Transportation/Communication/Utilities** (TCU), and
- **Rights-of-way** (ROW)

## SUPPORTING CITY GOALS

Core to the proper functioning of the city, the Public Services and Quality of Life character areas support the vast majority of the goals outlined in this plan, but in particular the, land use and public services and quality of life goals themselves. Following are a sampling of the goals most directly related to these areas:

- **Goal 8:** Protect natural resources and sensitive environmental features from encroachment by development.
- **Goal 9:** Provide for community open space, parks, and recreational opportunities.

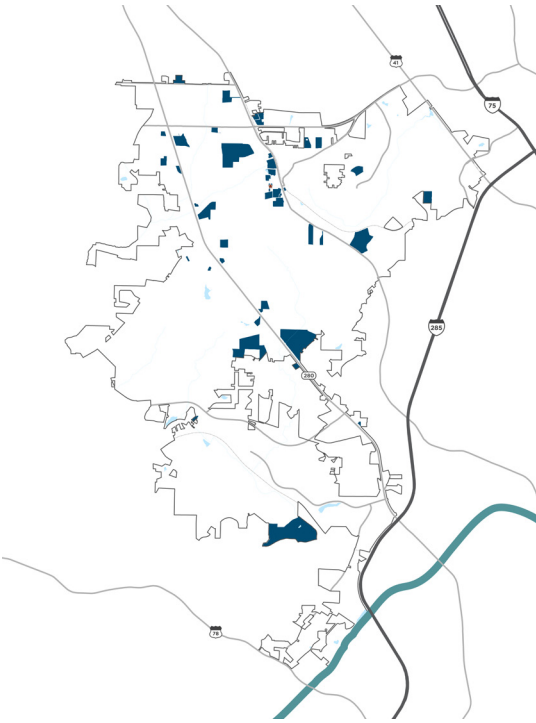


- **Goal 10:** Protect the unique historic and cultural assets of the City of Smyrna.
- **Goal 14:** Establish a visually attractive environment.
- **Goal 19:** Provide for efficient, high-quality, cost-effective public services.
- **Goal 20:** Provide for lifestyle amenities that improve the “quality of life” in Smyrna.
- **Goal 21:** Ensure that community facilities and services are adapted to meet the changing needs of Smyrna’s diverse population.
- Newly installed utility services and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations should be placed underground, where economically feasible.
- Maintain and utilize gateway signage and landscaping in order to foster a sense of place within the community.
- Maximize the use of existing community facilities and services.
- Provide pedestrian linkages from existing neighborhoods to the city’s multi-use trail system.

To support these goals, the following general policies should be encouraged:

- Target environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands for greenspace acquisition.
- Maintain development regulations that protect and preserve environmentally sensitive features.
- Continue development of bicycle/pedestrian trail network throughout Smyrna with linkages to parks, schools, and residential areas.
- Preserve scenic views and natural environment along the Silver Comet Trail and other multi-use paths in the city.
- Incorporate the connection, maintenance, and enhancement of greenspace in all new development.
- Provide for outdoor gathering areas, such as plazas, public squares, and amphitheaters.
- Provide a variety of recreational opportunities including both active, organized recreation (e.g. sports fields), as well as areas for passive recreation (e.g. nature preserves, walking trails).
- Provide facilities and services for the growing population of senior citizens.
- Adapt public services and facilities to meet the needs of growing immigrant and Hispanic communities in Smyrna.
- Adapt public services and facilities to serve special client groups such as the handicapped, homebound, and institutionalized.

## PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL (PI)



### OVERVIEW

Public/Institutional areas consist of government and civic nodes that provide services to surrounding neighborhoods. Providing the basic supportive infrastructure and government services, these areas are compatible with all land uses. Public/Institutional areas should encourage shared use of recreation facilities and gathering spaces with the surrounding community in order to maximize the utility of vibrant community spaces. While Public/Institutional areas provide spaces for necessary educational and civic services, those Public/Institutional uses which will likely generate higher volumes of traffic should be alternately located within Activity Centers and Mixed Use districts.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Medical facilities
- Educational facilities
- Civic/Government buildings
- Places of worship
- Public safety facilities
- Other institutional uses

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- All zoning categories

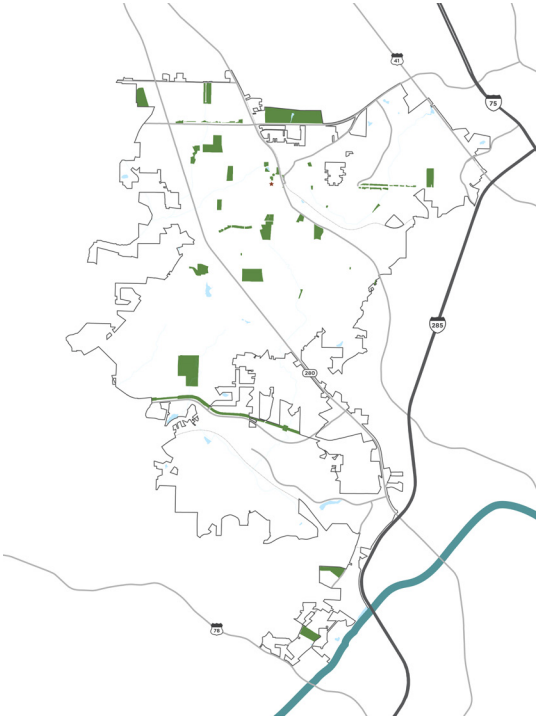


Smyrna City Hall



Smyrna Elementary School

## PUBLIC PARKS (PP)



### OVERVIEW

Public Parks include a variety of open space facilities including neighborhood parks, trails, regional parks, preserves, playgrounds, and conservation areas. These spaces are essential to preserving natural resources-- such as streams and floodplains-- from development, and when possible these spaces should be designed to incorporate light imprint storm water management and other green infrastructure. The City will continue to explore possible greenspace acquisition opportunities along these corridors to jointly address environmental preservation and recreational needs.

Public parks should be designed with excellent pedestrian and bicycle access to increase connectivity and minimize the need for parking. Lighting, wayfinding, and outdoor furniture should support user experience and safety.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Parks
- Recreational facilities
- Bicycle/pedestrian pathways
- Conservation areas

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- All zoning categories

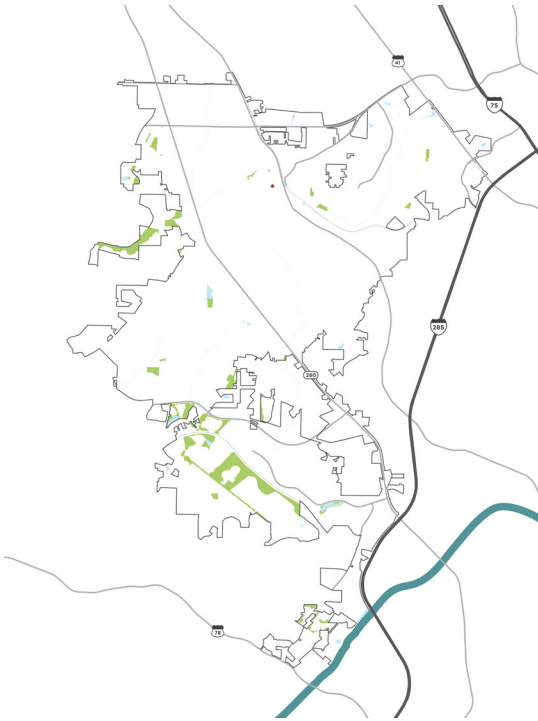


Village Green



Silver Comet Trail

## PRIVATE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION (PRC)



### OVERVIEW

Private Recreation and Conservation areas are spaces held in common ownership. These spaces are typically a part of subdivisions, providing legally-protected spaces for neighborhood residents. Private Recreation and Conservation areas may be parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, clubhouses, or other amenities.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Parks
- Recreational facilities
- Conservation areas
- Clubhouses and other gathering spaces
- Other subdivision amenities

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

- All residential zoning categories

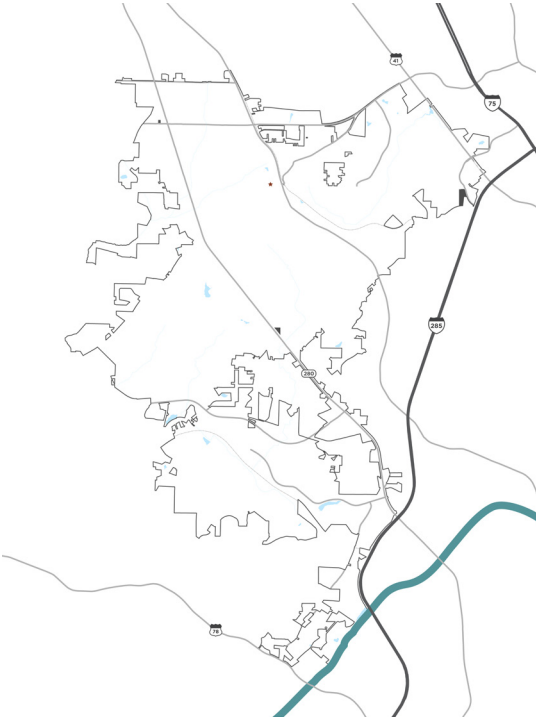


The Cove at Vinings Estate Clubhouse



Nickajack Creek

## TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATIONS/UTILITIES (TCU)



### OVERVIEW

TCU areas include roads, railroads, transit infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure, and water and sewer facilities. TCU areas can be owned either privately or publicly, and they account for a considerable amount of land. These areas generally cover substantial impervious surfaces, and so consideration must be made for mitigating storm water runoff.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Power stations
- Airports
- Public utility facilities
- Communication towers
- Private roads

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

All zoning categories

## RIGHTS-OF-WAY (ROW)

### OVERVIEW

Rights-of-way areas consist of land reserved for public transportation purposes, and should be considered a subcategory of TCU. The use of Rights-of-way areas can include a variety of transportation purposes such as railroads, highways, sidewalks, or bike trails, as well as power, gas, and cable transmission lines.

### APPROPRIATE USES

- Rail lines
- Bike trails
- Roads/highways
- Utilities pipelines
- Other public transportation uses

### CORRESPONDING ZONING

All zoning categories

**Table 2.1. Future Land Use Categories and Zoning Districts Matrix**

		Future Land Use Categories																
		Low Density Residential	Moderate Density Residential	Medium Density Residential	Medium-High Density Residential	High Density Residential	Neighborhood Activity Center	Community Activity Center	Mixed Use	Regional Activity Center	Office/Professional	Industrial	Industrial Mixed Use	Public/Institutional	Public Parks	Private Recreation & Conservation	Transportation/Communication/Utilities	Rights-of-way
Corresponding Zoning Districts	R-30	●	●										●	●	●	●	●	
	R-20	●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	R-15	●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	R-12		●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RAD		●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RMC-8				●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RM-10				●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RM-12					●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RD			●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RD-4			●	●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	TD				●	●							●	●	●	●	●	
	RM-15					●							●	●	●	●	●	
	FC						●						●	●		●	●	
	RHR					●							●	●	●	●	●	
	LC						●	●					●	●	●		●	
	OI		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●		●	
	NS						●	●					●	●			●	
	CBD								●				●	●			●	
	GC							●		●			●	●			●	
	OD										●	●	●	●	●		●	
	LI											●	●	●	●		●	
	PUD			●									●	●			●	
	MU							●	●	●			●	●	●		●	
TS							●					●	●			●		

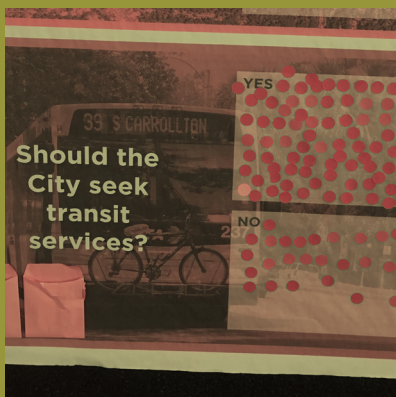


# 3

## ACHIEVING THE VISION: COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

This chapter outlines the overall strategy and action items for achieving the community vision. It addresses the questions:

- *How can we best address the priority needs and opportunities our community will face in the future?*
- *What action items and capital projects will help us now to achieve our vision?*





## 3. ACHIEVING THE VISION: COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

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*Smyrna is community of action with a long planning history of effective implementation. The community work program is where the rubber meets the road in terms of allocation of funds, definition of required actions, and plans for future studies that will take the city closer to achieving its vision. It is grounded in the recommendations of previous planning studies and charts a new course in line with the community's overall vision and goals.*

### OVERVIEW

#### COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

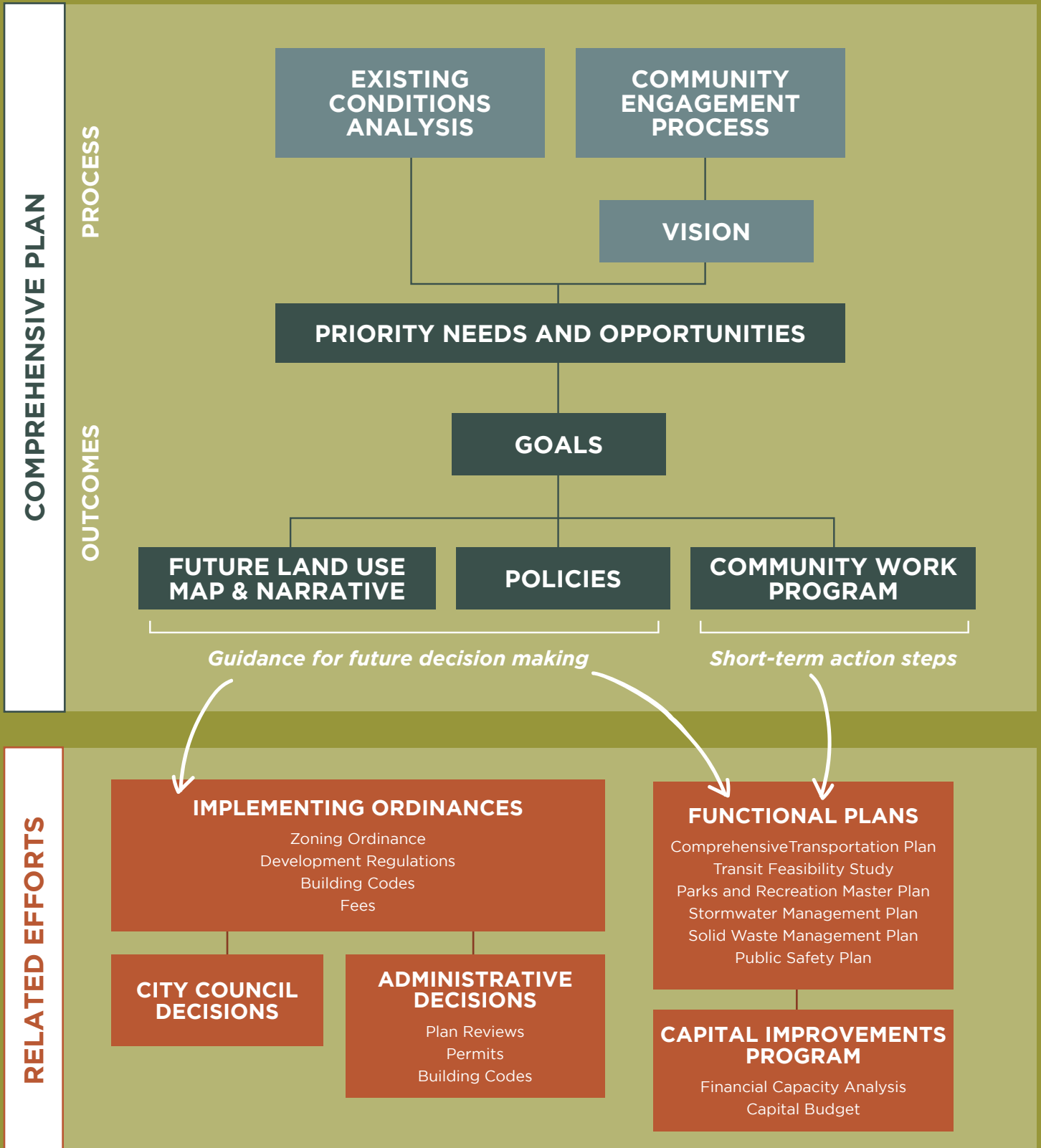
Following is a community work program designed to help Smyrna achieve its vision for the future and in particular address the priority needs and opportunities identified through this planning effort. This work program is divided into three parts: Policies and Actions, a 100-day Action Plan, and a 5-year short term work program. The Policies and Actions borrow heavily from the ongoing strategic vision planning effort and adopted policies from the 2030 comprehensive planning effort, but have been

modified where needed to address the stated goals of this comprehensive plan. The 100-day Action Plan highlights ongoing efforts to address the priority needs and opportunities and new efforts that the Steering Committee identified as high priority or strong first steps to implementing this plan. And finally the 5-year Short Term Work Program lays specific action items that City plans to undertake, and identifies projected costs, implementation partners, and funding sources.



# HOW DOES THE VISION GET IMPLEMENTED?

*As the city's umbrella policy document, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan will both provide guidance for future decision making and establish tangible action items to work toward realizing the community's vision.*



## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Policies and action items that are a part of the *2040 Smyrna Comprehensive Plan* are organized under the priority needs and opportunities. These action items have been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the public workshops. Action items and policies identified in the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* or carried forward from the *2030 Comprehensive Plan* are identified as such with their respective reference number. Policies are goals that the city government will take into consideration when making administrative and capital investment decisions, and action items are specific tasks, such as the construction of particular facilities or the undertaking of designated studies or planning initiatives.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The implementation program outlines a variety of action items that need to be undertaken to address the priority needs and opportunities. These action items include policies, ongoing efforts, and short term efforts. Short term efforts are those that can be accomplished in the next five years and are later included in the Short- Term Work Program.

As the ongoing committee efforts of the Strategic Vision Plan demonstrates, implementing the city's vision for the future requires a targeted effort. Like in any community, resources are limited and implementation often relies upon the hard work of city staff and community volunteers, coordination with other jurisdictions, and local champions to see that the tasks are carried through to completion. The implementation program is intended to be a living document that is regularly updated and referenced as existing conditions change and new needs and opportunities are identified.

## LAND USE

### LU1. TARGET PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN KEY NODES AND CORRIDORS

For this item, a Priority Redevelopment Area Map has been created that identifies key areas where there is a need for more public and private investment. See Task ED 2.2 and Figure 3.1 for a partial list of these redevelopment areas.

**LU1.1 Prioritize redevelopment and revitalization of existing underutilized commercial and industrial areas over development of new land for commercial purposes.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 18.1).

**LU1.2 Implement various corridor improvement projects identified in the current Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), such as Windy Hill road and Concord Road.** (See the 2011 and 2016 SPLOST project lists in the 2017-2022 Short Term Work Program, same as Action Item T2.3)

**LU1.3 Implement various public works improvements to meet the needs of new development, including water, sewer and storm sewer facilities.**

The City already does an excellent job of meeting and anticipating the public facility needs of new development. Through its annual budget process the City allocates millions of dollars to maintain and upgrade water distribution, sewer and storm sewer infrastructure.

### LU2. INCREASE ADAPTABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

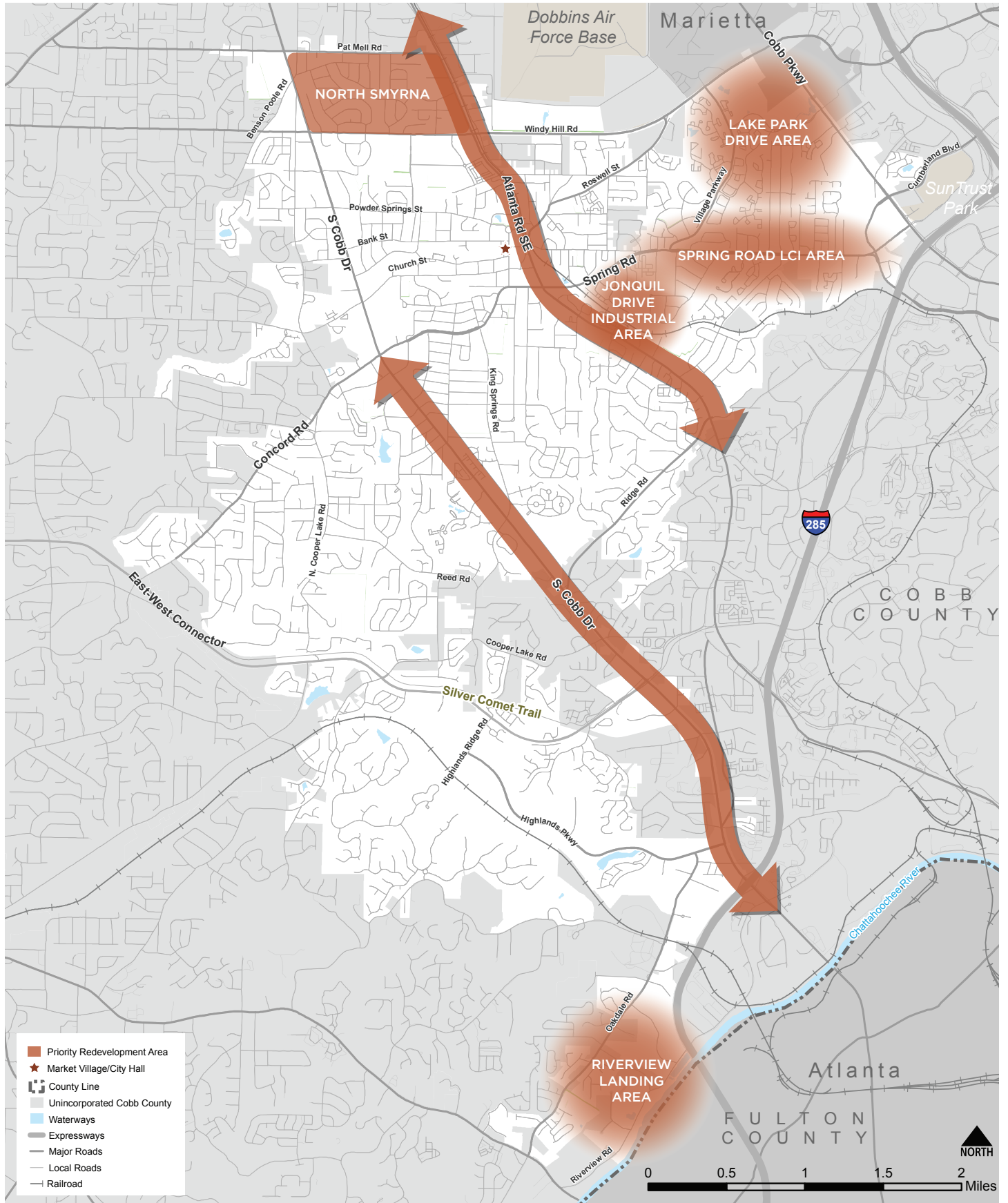
**LU2.1 Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance to improve readability and ease of use, and to allow the development of new residential, industrial, and commercial products in line with the community's vision** (See action item H4.2).

**LU2.2 Offer a local Citizen Planning Academy program that regularly meets with local developers, homeowners, and business leaders to improve communication about recent development news, rezonings, and regulatory changes.** (SVP, Task 1.2.2)

**LU 2.3 Provide for a reasonable accommodation of a broad range of land uses within the City.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 16.1).

**LU 2.4 Provide the use of density bonuses to encourage greenspace creation or preservation.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 16.5).

**Figure 3.1. Priority Redevelopment Areas**



### LU3. ENSURE INFILL DEVELOPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH ITS CONTEXT.

**LU3.1 Encourage infill residential development and redevelopment surrounding the downtown area that is supportive of “Main Street” retail.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 15.2).

**LU3.2 Conduct an Infill Housing Study that will address the following goals:**

- Establish Infill Development Guidelines for consideration at the time of rezoning and permitting
- Evaluate the impact of the City Stormwater regulations, Chapter 46, Article V of the City of Smyrna Official Code of Ordinance, on the configuration of lots and development costs for infill development.

### LU4. MAINTAIN HIGH DESIGN STANDARDS.

**LU4.1 Study the application of architectural design standards to key activity centers and corridors of the city.**

Some of the existing Urban Design Overlay districts include architectural design standards--such as regulations for building materials, roof types, or facade articulation—to varying degrees, while others only provide site planning criteria. Conduct an assessment of the current architectural design standards, their impact on development, the appropriate level of design regulation, and other locations where architectural design standards may be applicable.

**LU4.2 Update, implement and enforce the City’s design guidelines for development along major corridors.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 17.3).

Revise the Urban Design Overlay guidelines with the goal of making them more readable, easier to administer, and more consistent. This task will be done in conjunction with the revision to the City Zoning Ordinance (Task LU2.1).

## HOUSING

### H1. CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF DIVERSE HOUSING CHOICES.

Over the past ten years, Smyrna has done much to encourage greater housing choices, particularly through the development of mixed use centers such as Market Village, Belmont and Jonquil Village. The success of these developments has further fueled the demand of such housing product. As a result the demand is outpacing the supply, which in turn leads to higher housing prices. This need can be addressed by providing an even greater variety of housing choices such as accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, duplexes, and townhomes.

The key issue in providing such choices is one of location, which will be addressed through land use policy as presented in the guidance of the Future Land Use Map. Most likely, locations for this greater variety of housing types would be within moderate and medium density single-family areas that have been identified on the Policy Map as exhibiting a high susceptibility to change. Below are some additional supportive policies and action items than help promote the creation of diverse housing choices.

**H1.1 Consider ways to offer a reduced price point in new quality apartments, such as through incentives for moderately priced units.** An example of this can be seen in Atlanta BeltLine overlay housing requirements in the City of Atlanta. Like the Atlanta BeltLine, Smyrna will need to leverage a desirable amenity in order for this incentive to be effective. This task could be undertaken as part of the Revisions to the City Zoning Ordinance (Task LU2.1)

**H1.2 Consider establishing a land bank that can be used as a redevelopment tool to purchase foreclosed and delinquent properties, for future sale or development.** (See Action Item ED1.3)

**H1.3 Encourage the construction of affordable senior housing in order to accommodate the growing senior population** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 3.1).

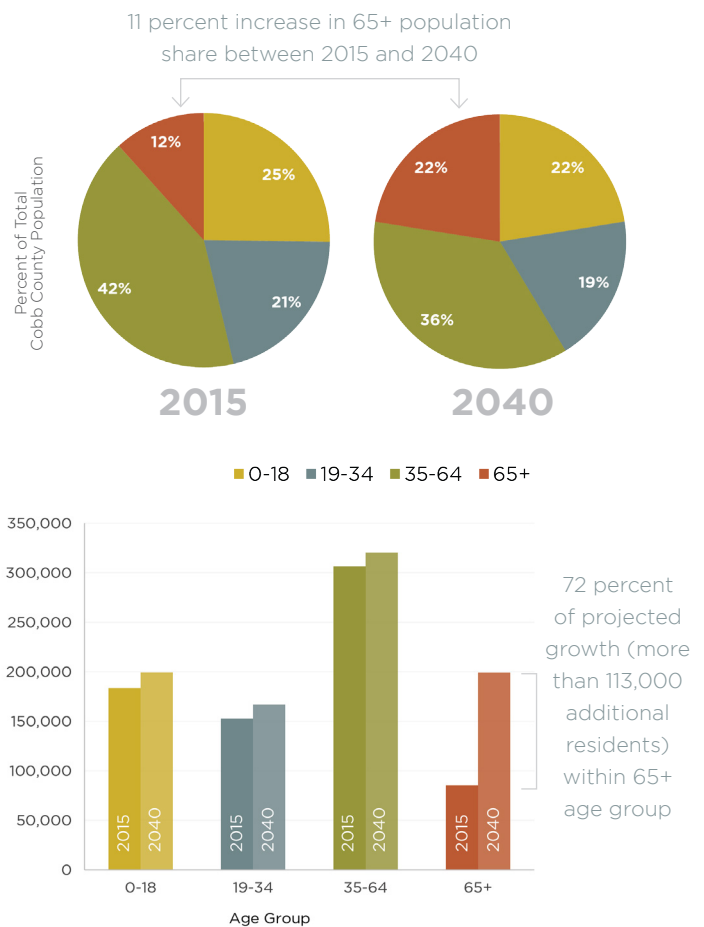
## GROWING DEMAND FOR SENIOR HOUSING

### SIGNIFICANT LOCAL DEMAND

As the baby boomer generation ages, the number of residents in need of senior housing will increase,<sup>1</sup> and the impact in Smyrna will be higher than average. Residents **over the age of 65** are projected to be the **fastest growing population** segment in Cobb County between 2015 and 2040, **more than doubling** from 85,449 residents in 2015 to 199,016 residents in 2040, an 11 percent increase in countywide population share.<sup>2</sup>

### SENIOR HOUSING NEEDS

Quality of life for older adults is particularly impacted by **affordable, accessible, and well-located** housing, as many live on fixed incomes and may experience limited mobility. Integrating units that fit these criteria within a community allows residents to **age in place**, helping them to maintain valuable social connections. Walkable, mixed-use communities with access to healthcare and other resources can help extend independence and an active lifestyle, and assisted living facilities are needed for older adults requiring additional support.



<sup>1</sup>Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Housing America's Older Adults: Meeting the Needs of an Aging Population (2014).

<sup>2</sup>Atlanta Regional Commission (2015).



Smyrna like many communities around the country is seeing an increased demand for senior housing; particularly active senior housing that is designed for ease of accessibility and mobility. Design features such as zero step entries and master bedrooms on the main floor, as well as condominium, apartment, or assisted living options in walkable, mixed-use settings are the types of housing products that help meet this senior housing demand. Provisions for or incentives to build accessibility and mobility friendly housing can be included as goal of to the Revisions of the City Zoning Ordinance (Task LU2.1) and the creation of Master Housing Plan (Task H1.5)

**H1.4 Encourage housing opportunities to ensure that those who work within Smyrna have the option of living within the City** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 3.3).

Throughout the planning process many expressed a concern over the impact of rising housing prices on the ability of the City's low income workers to live close to work. This situation creates a number of problems, including greater traffic congestion. This issue should be a focus of the local Housing Master Plan as described in Task H1.5.

**H1.5 Develop a Housing Master Plan.** (The Strategic Vision Plan (SVP), Task 2.4.1). Unlike the Consolidated Plan for Cobb County, prepared under the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, this housing study would analyze ways to encourage the construction of housing suitable for active seniors (Task H1.3), the housing needs of those that work within the city (Task H1.4), as well as ways to encourage the redevelopment of aging apartments (Task H2.3).

## **H2. ENCOURAGE HOME OWNERSHIP AND STABILITY.**

In order to make home ownership realistic for more people, it needs to be more affordable, yet safe, well built, and free from the negative impact of adjacent development. Many of these action items and policies are integral part of the day-to-day operation of the Community Development Department in their efforts to administer and enforce the City's land use regulations. Many of these will also need to be taken into consideration in revising the City Zoning Ordinance (Task LU2.1).

**H2.1 Ensure adequate buffering and screening in order to protect residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of adjacent development.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 1.1).

**H2.2 Strictly enforce building code regulations in order to eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 2.2).

**H2.3 Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complexes into townhomes and condominiums in order to increase homeownership rates.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 2.3).

**H2.4 Require that new apartment developments to be built with individual unit utility metering to ease conversion from renter to owner occupied. To be addressed in the Revision to the City Zoning Ordinance** (Task LU2.1)

**H2.5 Create a preferred multi-family vendor designation to reward good management practices and as a first step in increasing maintenance standards for rental homes.** (SVP Task, 2.4.3)

**H2.6 Educate interested homeowners in available financial assistance and other support for lower income homeowners who want to renovate their properties.** (See example of programs offered through Residents and Communities of Georgia, a non-profit known for its work in the Reynoldstown neighborhood of Atlanta.)

### **H3. CONTINUE TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEIGHBORHOODS.**

Well established single-family neighborhoods are the foundation of much of the charm and character of Smyrna. Preservation of these neighborhoods is a high priority, and to bolster their overall quality of life, access to recreational opportunities is essential, as well as strict code enforcement, which is already identified as an action item under H2.2 above.

**H3.1 Incorporate a park into every neighborhood or provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access from every neighborhood to larger community parks.**

To address as part of the update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Task O2.1).

**H3.2 Improve coordination between the City Public Works Department, private waste management services, and the Community Development Department to monitor code violations.**

**H3.3 Identify declining neighborhoods through planning studies and target these areas for revitalization efforts.**

See the Priority Redevelopment Area Map (Figure 3.1 on page 102) discussed under LU1.

**H3.4 Implement various park improvement projects identified in the current Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).** (See SPLOST project list in Short Term Work Program)

**H3.5 Continue to invest in the maintenance and improvement of City public safety facilities.** (See SPLOST project list in Short Term Work Program)

### **H4. FACILITATE CONTEXT-APPROPRIATE HOUSING DENSITIES.**

**H4.1 Consider design guidelines for residential neighborhoods to ensure new construction is high quality, respect the scale and character of the neighborhood, and contribute to a pleasant public realm.**

As part of the revision to the Infill Housing Study, review efforts by other jurisdictions such as DeKalb County that allow local residential neighborhoods to impose voluntary overlay districts that impose design guidelines to regulate the quality, scale and character of new infill construction, and renovation of existing housing. (See Action item LU3.2)

**H4.2 Revise the City Zoning Ordinance to offer a wider range of residential zoning designations to avoid reliance on single-family residential attached and/or detached zoning district, currently known as RAD.** (See action item LU2.1)

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders who are familiar with and regularly use the Zoning Ordinance pointed to the need to revise and update the provisions for the RAD district. It has been recommended that the district be split into more than one category to more closely align to the residential densities depicted on the 2040 Future Land Use Map, and be renamed to avoid confusion.

**H4.3 Examine the impact of existing stormwater regulations and detention facility requirements on potential lot configurations and development costs for infill development.**

Current stormwater regulations make it more cost effective to replace a single home with multiple homes in many cases. These regulations are covered under Chapter 46, Article V of the City of Smyrna Official Code of Ordinances and would have to be reviewed as part of the Infill Housing Study (Action Item LU3.2).

**H4.4 Ensure that infill housing development is compatible with surrounding established neighborhoods.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 1.2).

This is a current policy that is taken into consideration at the time of permitting and rezoning, but guidelines on how to apply this policy should again be included in the Infill Housing Study. (Action Item LU3.2)

**H4.5 Encourage adequate amounts, types, and densities of housing needed to support desired mixed use redevelopment.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 2.5).

**TRANSPORTATION**

**T1. ENHANCE AND EXPAND TRANSIT SERVICE.**

Throughout the planning process, participants expressed a desire to:

- Improve efficiency of existing system.

- Enhance existing bus stops.
- Explore direct connection from Market Village to the Airport or an end-of-the-line MARTA station (Sandy Springs or Hamilton E. Holmes).
- Study the potential for a Smyrna Circulator.
- Coordinate bus timing with city events.

This will require close intergovernmental coordination with those entities providing transit service within the Smyrna community.

**T1.1 Coordinate transit planning and services with CobbLinc and GRTA to ensure existing bus route and stops are appropriately planned for and incorporated into the transportation network and land use plan.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 19.14).

**T1.2 Undertake a Transit Feasibility Study that will include:**

- A review of available existing transit services and the current and future demand for such services
- An evaluation of shuttle service between commercial districts in Smyrna and the Atlanta Braves Stadium using the circulator system being envisioned for the Cumberland Galleria area.

(SVP Action Item 2.2.6, and the Georgia Tech Spring Road Study).

At the time of this plan’s preparation, the Smyrna City Council has applied for a grant through the Atlanta Regional Commission for a Transit Feasibility Study.

**T1.3 Advocate for alternative transportation options that can alleviate congestion for Smyrna residents.** (SVP Task 2.2.1)



## T2. REDUCE CONGESTION ON MAJOR ROADS.

**T2.1 Continue participation in the regular updates of the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan to address congestion, pollution, transit, land use and redevelopment issues.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 19.1).

Many participants in the planning process expressed the need for better coordination of traffic lights along key corridors and pinch-points, and wells as the need for parallel road networks as redevelopment occurs.

**T2.2 Actively be involved in regional and state-level decision making that impact Smyrna's transportation system** (SVP, Task 1.5.3)

Partner organizations that the City of Smyrna is and should continue to be involved with include, but are not limited to: the Cobb County Commission, Cobb County Department of Transportation, the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Cumberland Community Improvement District, the Cobb Chamber of Commerce, Cobb Travel and Tourism, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

**T2.3 Implement various transportation projects identified in the current Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).** (See the 2011 and 2016 SPLOST project lists in the 2017-2022 Short Term Work Program, same as Action Item LU1.2)

## T3. EXPAND THE BIKE/PEDESTRIAN NETWORK.

**T3.1 Work with the PATH Foundation, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, and PEDS to assist with the provision of safe and convenient bike and pedestrian facilities to and throughout the City, with the following goals in mind:**

- Create continuous bicycle connections to designated activity centers and residential nodes.
- Improve safety along bicycle corridors through signage, providing adequate bicycle facilities, and outreach.
- Provide bicycle facilities along designated routes and/or activity centers.
- Examine existing pedestrian “cow paths” and opportunities to provide formal connections.
- Become the first community “outside the Perimeter” to connect to the Atlanta Beltline. (SVP, Task 2.2.3)
- Implement recommendations related to trail and path connectivity as contained in the Parks & Recreation Ten Year Master Plan. (SVP, Task 2.2.4)

At the time of this plan's preparation, the Smyrna City Council has approved funding through the SPLOST Program for a Parks & Recreation Ten Year Master Plan.

**T3.2 Implement and regularly update the City's Parks & Recreation Master Plan.** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 19.15, Same as Action Item Q2.1)

The Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes plans for trail and greenway connections between City Parks, and so plays a critical role in the planning of the city's multi-modal transportation network.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### ED1. REDUCE COMMERCIAL VACANCIES.

**ED 1.1 Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making improvements to commercial properties to increase the likelihood of occupancy as a special program, i.e. the Commercial Revitalization Program.**

The City already provides incentives to companies who apply for them and can show impact by various tiers. To laser focus on this goal, the incentives can be repackaged as a special program for the express purpose of updating and improving properties that have had longstanding barriers to occupancy. Because the City has existing relationships with many of its property owners, it can use the tools it already has in place to encourage improvements in specific corridors and increase the opportunity for interest in those properties.

**ED 1.2 Continue to promote available commercial properties.**

Currently, the City's website features available commercial properties, and City staff serve as a liaison between interested tenants or buyers and existing property owners. The City should continue working with brokers and owners to update this website feature regularly and to introduce potential tenants to property owners when appropriate. As referenced in the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan (2.5.3)*, an additional tactical action is to "seek opportunities for adaptive re-use of non-traditional spaces to make a wide variety of properties available to small business owners and potential entrepreneurs."

**ED 1.3 Work with the Downtown Smyrna Development Authority to create a city land bank.**

A strategy that has proven effective in catalyzing redevelopment and revitalization in communities across the country is government authorization to obtain and "bank" (hold) land and then redistribute this land for desirable public and/or private-sector projects. In many cases, land banking is performed specifically to reduce blight, with a focus on the acquisition of tax-delinquent properties. One of the greatest challenges with land banking for municipal governments and authorities is that banked properties are often those in the greatest need of rehabilitation and are thus less attractive to developers. As a result, banked land is often offered at below market cost to investors as a development incentive. The City should evaluate the need to establish a formal mechanism to acquire distressed properties, as well as the legal parameters surrounding land banking in the State of Georgia.

### ED2. EXPAND RETAIL IN ACTIVITY CENTERS AND PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS.

**ED 2.1 Implement the recommendations of the Spring Road LCI Master Plan.**

The Spring Road LCI delves deeply into Smyrna's Spring Road corridor, a priority redevelopment area. Recommendations to encourage economic development within this corridor include pursuing a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to improve and potentially expand Jonquil Park, employing beautification strategies along the corridor, pursuing the Sports Avenue redevelopment, and supporting the development of the Arts District.

### **ED 2.2 Pursue future studies for priority redevelopment areas.**

Smyrna is an active planning community and has a long history of undertaking planning studies targeted to improve priority redevelopment areas. (See Figure 3.1.) Through this planning effort several such areas have been identified for further study, including the following:

- The southern portion of South Cobb Drive Corridor – this would be a companion study to the current South Cobb Drive Corridor Study and will focus on the area south of Concord Road.
- Atlanta Road Corridor
- North Smyrna area – north of Windy Hill Road to Pat Mell Road and between Atlanta Road and South Cobb Drive
- Jonquil Drive Industrial Area
- Lake Park Drive – could include greater surrounding area of aging apartments and office parks
- Riverview Landing – the greater area around the proposed development
- Updates to existing LCIs: Smyrna LCI 10 year update in 2018, Spring Road LCI 5 year update in 2022

### **ED 2.3 Continue to serve in a “curator” role to help attract new retail to the city.**

**2.3.1 Leverage findings of a retail leakage and surplus study to strengthen retail recruitment and expansion effort** (SVP, action item 2.6.1).

Understanding that retail is a largely market-driven development process, the City can continue to serve in a “curator” role to help attract new retail that can not only be patronized by residents, but bring in shoppers from other jurisdictions. Pursuing a retail leakage and surplus study can arm the City with the information needed to strategically attract preferred retail options.

### **ED3. LEVERAGE BRAVES STADIUM FOR RESTAURANT AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRIES, AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.**

#### **ED 3.1 Follow recommendations of the Spring Road LCI Master Plan regarding the connection between SunTrust Park and Market Village.**

Recommendations of the LCI Study include the “Braves Boulevard” that would connect Smyrna neighborhoods to the “Battery Smyrna Plaza” and to the “Battery Atlanta” and provide opportunities for redevelopment, and creating Special Use Districts and performance Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) around the “Battery Smyrna Plaza” and “Battery South Spring.”

### **ED4. SUPPORT AND/OR ACCELERATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP.**

#### **ED 4.1 Continue to explore the City’s role in working with Cobb EDGE, surrounding higher education partners, and existing businesses to establish a small-scale incubator and mentoring programs.**

Much interest has been expressed in the idea of rallying resources to encourage entrepreneurship within the city limits through an incubator and/or maker space and related mentorship. The City enjoys a strong relationship with its partners, which can be leveraged to bring the Chamber and private players together to formalize a conversation around the feasibility of a small-scale incubator in Smyrna.

**ED 4.2 Examine the feasibility of instituting gradual license fee increases.**

Although small business owners are very positive regarding the City's one-stop-shop and its responsiveness to small business concerns, one concern that lingers is stark increases in license fees. While business owners understand the necessity in these increases, they expressed the preference for gradual increases over large percentage increases every few years. Currently, gradual increases are only offered as an incentive to new businesses.

**ED 4.3 Continue to promote education about City processes among small business owners.**

Work with the Smyrna Business Association to provide a workshop within its workshop series that focuses on navigating city services and the process by which the City adopts changes to its fee structures and other policies.

**ED 4.4 Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.** (SVP, Action item 3.4.1).

Although the City of Smyrna is limited in its ability as a public entity to spur innovation and entrepreneurship in the city, it can continue to bolster its reputation as a business-friendly community by following the 7-step process to obtain this designation. By achieving this designation, the City not only puts in place several of the state's best practices in strengthening its business-enabling environment, but it also signals to prospective entrepreneurs and small businesses that Smyrna will welcome and support their entrepreneurial endeavors.

**ED5. RETAIN EXISTING BUSINESSES.**

**ED 5.1 Consider expanding the City's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.**

**5.1.1. Consider including an annual business survey to broaden its outreach efforts.**

The City has a strong BRE program that consists of approximately 50 site visits per year. The focus is primarily on smaller businesses who may need more city assistance with identified challenges or with preparing for future growth. The City's rapport with its area business community is favorable and an asset to its BRE program, and a customized survey questionnaire to the existing business community would increase the city's reach beyond site visits. This questionnaire should be targeted at those businesses who are not in the City's queue for site visits in the given year. The questionnaire can also help in maintain minimal contact with mid-sized to larger businesses who do not desire frequent site visits. Finally, the survey can assist with gathering broad information on the business climate and general business and economic trends, while broadening the reach of the City's existing Business Retention and Expansion outreach efforts.

**5.1.2 Consider acquiring a customer relationship management (CRM) system customized for BRE, such as ExecutivePulse or Synchronist.**

These systems are critical for ensuring that information is effectively recorded and tracked over time, businesses receive timely and relevant follow-up from various forms of outreach and communication, and analysis can be conducted on individual businesses, sectors, and the existing business community at large to help identify trends, obstacles, and opportunities.

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

### Q1. SUPPORT SCHOOL QUALITY EXCELLENCE.

School quality was consistently raised as a top concern of participants in the public involvement efforts for the comprehensive plan, and was also a top concern raised in the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* planning efforts. The City of Smyrna government does not have direct control over local public schools. Direct control over the schools is the jurisdiction of the Cobb County School Board. Nonetheless, the City does have a degree of influence on school board decisions and is an active partner. Toward this end, there are a few actions and policies that city as a local government can undertake, and the Strategic Vision Plan (SVP) does include a number of stated outcomes and actions that address this:

- Parents and businesses will be expected to be active partners with local schools (SVP desired outcome 1.4)
- Smyrna's public schools will be high-performing and sought out by parents and families (SVP desired outcome 2.1)
- Smyrna will be known for its high quality schools (SVP desired outcome 3.1)

**Q1.1 *Work collaboratively with Cobb County School Board, local school administrators and volunteer leadership in order to improve local schools.*** (Policy 20.3, 2030 Comprehensive Plan)

### Q2. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PARKS AND GREENSPACE.

**Q2.1 *Develop and routinely update a parks master plan*** (ongoing, should be underway as the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan), to undertake the following:

- Identify if there is a need for additional parks and the type of parks needed (active, passive, signature)
- Identify what programs and activities should occur at the parks. Basketball was one activity noted as missing.
- Identify ways to improve safety and security at all parks, including along the Silver Comet and other multi-use paths.
- Create a signature park, similar to Piedmont Park, either the enhancement of an existing park or the creation of a new one.

### Q3. CULTIVATE PUBLIC ART AND CULTURE

**Q3.1 *Pursue cultural institutions, entertainment, and recreational businesses to locate in and around Smyrna Market Village in order to draw people to the district after business hours.*** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 6.3).

### Q4. DEVELOP A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ANNEXATION.

**Q4.1 *Promote the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City in order to streamline and simplify the provision of public services.*** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 12.8).

**Q4.2 *Ensure that land use plans are consistent with surrounding jurisdictions and regional goals.*** (2030 Comprehensive Plan, Policy 21.1).

**Q4.3 *Conduct an Annexation Study in order to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts and community facilities.*** (Community Work Program Item from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan).



# 100-DAY ACTION PLAN

The 100-Day Action Plan consists of the action items from the overall Community Work Program identified as **critical first steps** to realizing the community's vision. While these items should be prioritized and initiated within the first 100 days of the plan's adoption, most will take longer than that period to be accomplished.



## LAND USE AND DESIGN

- Revise and **update the City Zoning Ordinance**.
- Conduct a **study of Infill Development Guidelines**, and in it recommend and adopt Infill Development Guidelines.
- Undertake a **study** of the application of **Architectural Design Standards** to key activity centers and corridors of the city.



## TRANSPORTATION

- Undertake a **Transit Feasibility Study**.
- Apply for **supplemental LCI funding** for projects recommended in the Spring Road LCI
- Attract **implementation project LCI funding** for select Spring Road LCI initiatives
- Implement and regularly update the city's **Parks and Recreation Master Plan**.



## HOUSING

- Revise the city Zoning Ordinance to offer a **wider range of residential zoning** designations.
- Identify **declining neighborhoods** through planning studies and target these areas for revitalization.
- Consider establishing a **land bank** that can be used as a redevelopment tool.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Consider expanding the city's **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program** by including an annual business survey and acquiring a customer relationship management system
- Seek **Entrepreneur Friendly Community status** through the Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making **improvements to commercial properties**
- Develop a **marketing and rendering** package for the **Spring Road** area in partnership with the Cumberland CID



## PUBLIC SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

- Conduct an **Annexation Study** to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impact
- Develop and routinely update a **parks master plan**

## ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to align the Zoning Ordinance with the vision established in the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*, several high level changes are recommended. Additional, detailed review of the alignment of the Zoning Ordinance with this plan is recommended as part of the revision and update of the city’s Zoning Ordinance, a priority action item for the community work program. Those changes originally recommended in the Spring Road LCI Study are denoted with an asterisk (\*), and more detailed information about recommended zoning changes is available in that report.

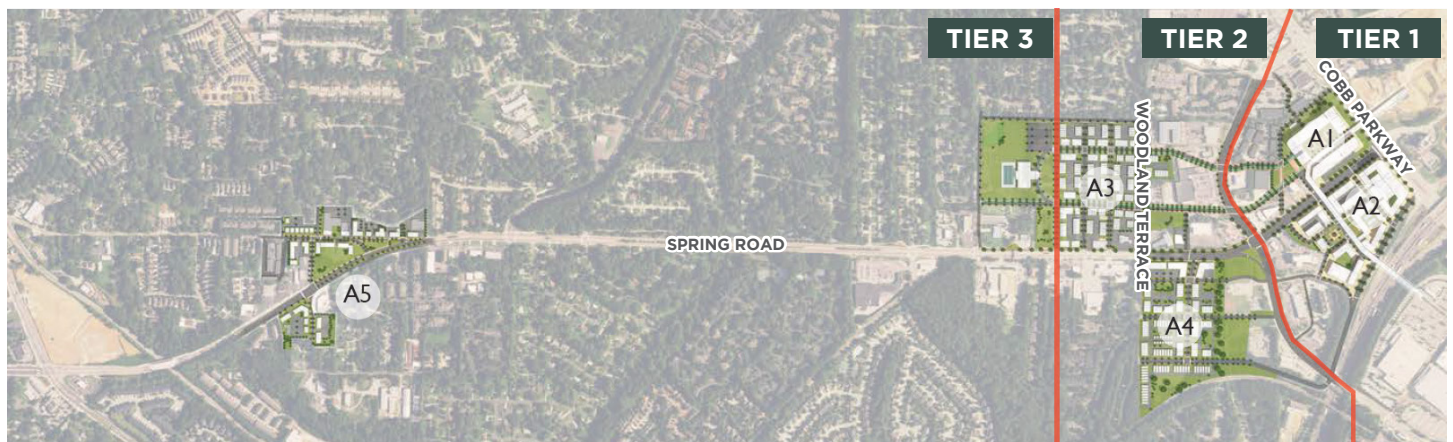
## REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

- Update the boundary of the Spring Road Corridor Design District Overlay to match the Spring Road LCI Study boundary.\*
- Create design standards to regulate block size and street connectivity for the Spring Road Corridor, in addition to the overlay\*:
  - Require large parcels be divided according to maximum block lengths of a recommended 300-400 feet and a maximum of 600 feet.\*
  - Recommend new connections per the Spring Road LCI Study proposed street connections map.\*

**Table 3.1. Regional Activity Center Tiered Building Scale**

	← Near Cobb Parkway Highest Intensity	→ Near Residential Neighborhoods Lowest Intensity	
	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
Max. Building Height	15 stories	10 stories	6 stories
Density	40 to 50 du/ac	20 to 30 du/ac	10 to 12 du/ac
Min. Distance Between Buildings	0 feet	5 feet	5 feet

**Figure 3.2. Proposed Development Tier Map for Spring Road LCI Study Area**



Source: Spring Road LCI Study (2017)

- Avoid or prohibit dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs.\*
- Design standards for street sections, street lights, street furniture, plantings, and signage.\*
- Develop a tiered plan for building heights, densities, and building-to-building distances with the greatest intensities near Cobb Parkway. (See Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1.)\*
- Allow smaller lot sizes, smaller minimum building footprints, and accessory dwelling units for the residential portion of the Spring Road LCI Study area.\*
- Recommend a ratio of 10 acres of greenspace per 1,000 residents within the Spring Road Corridor Design District Overlay.\*
- Require trail connections where feasible.\*
- Consider incentives for workforce housing or inclusionary zoning within the Spring Road Corridor Design District Overlay.\*
- Establish a recommended mix of unit sizes in multi-family developments.\*

## MIXED USE

- Consider updates to the Mixed Use zoning category, as described in the Spring Road LCI Study.\*
  - Reduce the minimum unit size for single-family detached dwellings to 500 square feet to accommodate cottage courts and accessory dwelling units.\*
  - Reduce the minimum setback for single-family detached dwellings to 0 feet from back of sidewalk.\*
  - Reduce minimum lot sizes for multi-family and single-family attached homes to 3,000 square feet.\*

- Develop design standards or guidelines for the Spring Road corridor-- including streetscape standards, block sizes, setbacks, and other urban design features-- in alignment with the recommendations of the Spring Road LCI Study.\*
  - Increase the minimum sidewalk width to 6-feet wide or more.\*
  - Decrease front yard requirements on Spring Road and secondary roads to a minimum of 30 feet and a maximum of 50 feet.\*

## INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE

- Create a new Industrial Mixed Use zoning district to accommodate a mix of light industrial uses, office, limited commercial, research and development, event space, breweries, flex space, multi-family residential, live-work units, townhomes, and post-secondary education.

## RESIDENTIAL

- Review the R-15 (Single-family residential, 15,000 square feet, 2.7 du/ac) district and consider creating an alternative low-density residential category.
- Review the RAD (Residential attached and/or detached, 6 du/ac) district and consider creating an alternative medium-density residential category.
- Review residential zoning requirements to better align with the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development.
- Permit residential accessory uses and structures to be rented or occupied for gain.

- Expand the allowable uses for select residential categories to permit cottage courts, accessory dwelling units, and community gardens.
- Assess the impact of residential zoning regulations for stormwater management on potential lot configurations for infill development and revise to increase flexibility.
- Establish a process for allowing neighborhoods and subdivisions to adopt voluntary neighborhood design guidelines.
- Permit the creation of alleys within single-family residential neighborhoods.
- Reduce the recommended residential block lengths, currently between 600 and 1,800 feet, to encourage walkability.
- Require the provision of sidewalks for newly developed residential parcels or major redevelopments.
- Create incentives for the provision of moderately priced residential units.
- Consider relaxing home-based business occupation certificate requirements to encourage entrepreneurship.

## PARKING

- Revise regulations of the joint use of parking facilities to permit and incentivize shared parking agreements.\*
- Reduce parking requirements for multi-family and mixed-use development within a transit-oriented development.\*
- Revise off-street parking and loading design standards for appropriate districts to require parking and loading for new buildings (other than single-family homes) be located in the rear or to the side.

## GENERAL

- Revise the Zoning Ordinance to improve readability, adaptability, and ease of use.
- Consider creating an interactive, digital mapping interface to make it easier for property owners to identify the regulations associated with their parcels.
- Review zoning requirements to ensure they are applicable to both new development and redevelopment scenarios.
- Update urban design overlay districts to more clearly delineate overlay boundaries and align with the design recommendations of the Spring Road LCI Study, South Cobb Drive Corridor Improvement Study, and best practices in Traditional Neighborhood Development and transit-oriented design.
- Identify additional locations and zoning designations suitable for childcare and eldercare to accommodate growing demand.

## 2017-2022 SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM

The Short-Term Work Program identifies key action items to be accomplished over the short term to make meaningful progress toward the city’s long-term vision. The work program addresses issues related to land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life. The responsible party, estimated cost, and anticipated funding source for each project are provided when

available. Per state planning requirements, an annual Record of Accomplishments will be provided beginning in 2018, detailing the action items accomplished to date and providing an opportunity to reflect on tangible progress made. The Record of Accomplishments for the previous Short-Term Work Program is provided in Appendix A.

**Table 3.2. Short-Term Work Program: Land Use**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
1	1-620	LU1.3	Stormwater Drainage Rehabilitation	●	●	●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$300,000	2016 SPLOST
2	517	LU1.3	Water Distribution Infrastructure Improvements Replace 1, Water Meters and Back Flow	●	●	●	●	●	●	Water Distribution	\$11,400,000	Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund
3	523	LU1.3	Install Water Distribution Preventers	●	●	●	●	●	●	Water Distribution	\$2,240,000	Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund
4	524	LU1.3	Drainage Improvements	●	●	●	●	●	●	Water Distribution	\$1,040,000	Water/Sewer Capital Project Fund
5	519	LU1.3	Storm Water Projects	●	●	●	●	●	●	Storm Water	\$4,650,000	Storm Water Capital Project Fund
6		LU2.1	Evaluate RAD zoning and change to RDA			●				Community Development	Staff Time	General Fund
7	-	LU2.1	Revise and Update the City Zoning Ordinance			●				Community Development	Staff Time	General Fund
8	-	LU2.2	Offer a Citizen Planning Academy Program			●	●	●	●	Community Development	Staff Time	General Fund
9	-	LU3.2	Prepare Infill Housing Study				●			Community Development	TBD	General Fund



**Table 3.2. Short-Term Work Program: Land Use (Continued)**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
10	-	LU4.1	Conduct Architectural Design Study for activity centers and key corridors			●				Community Development	TBD	General Fund
11	-	LU3, H2.2	Truck Replacement for Building Inspector*						●	Community Development	TBD	TBD
12	-	LU3, H2.2	Truck Replacement for Lead Marshal*						●	Community Development	TBD	TBD

\*Item carried over from previous STWP; may not be realized during the current five-year cycle, depending on budget constraints

**Table 3.3. Short-Term Work Program: Housing**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
11	-	H1.5	Conduct Housing Master Plan				●			Community Development	TBD	General Fund
12	-	H2.5	Create a preferred multifamily vendor designation					●		Community Development	TBD	General Fund
13	1-015, 1-622	H3.4	Park Improvement Projects	●	●	●	●	●	●	Parks & Recreation	\$3,951,298	2011 SPLOST, 2016 SPLOST
14	1-016, 1-623	H3.5	Public Safety Facility Improvements	●	●	●				Public Safety	\$3,399,716	2012 SPLOST, 2016 SPLOST
15	1-624	H3.5	Public Safety Equipment	●	●	●	●	●	●	Public Safety	\$2,360,057	2016 SPLOST

**Table 3.4. Short-Term Work Program: Transportation**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
16	-	T1.1	Transit Feasibility Study	●	●	●	●			Community Development	\$500,000	General Fund (20% match), Surface Transportation Block Grant (80%)
17	1-005	T2.3	Village Pkwy Improvements	●	●					Public Works	\$10,506	2011 SPLOST
18	1-007	T2.3	Intersection Improvements	●	●	●				Public Works	\$1,167,326	2011 SPLOST
19	1-002, 1-601	T2.3	Windy Hill Rd Improvements	●	●	●	●	●	●	Public Works, Cobb DOT	\$44,045,177	2011 SPLOST, 2016 SPLOST
20	1-602	T2.3	Church St Improvements	●	●	●	●			Public Works	\$900,000	2016 SPLOST
21	1-603	T2.3	Pat Mell Rd Improvements	●	●	●	●			Public Works	\$900,000	2016 SPLOST
22	1-604	T2.3	Spring Rd and Cumberland Blvd Improvements	●	●					Public Works	\$6,050,000	2016 SPLOST
23	1-605	T2.3	Intersection Improvements at Five Points	●	●	●	●			Public Works	\$1,000,000	2016 SPLOST
24	1-001, 1-606	T2.3	Concord Rd at S Cobb Dr Intersection Improvements	●	●	●	●			Public Works	\$3,242,007	2011 SPLOST, 2016 SPLOST
25	1-607	T2.3	Riverview Rd at S Cobb Dr Intersection Improvements			●				Public Works	\$150,000	2016 SPLOST
26	1-608	T2.3	Oakdale Rd Improvements	●	●		●	●		Public Works	\$1,500,000	2016 SPLOST
27	1-609	T2.3	Dickerson Dr Improvements	●	●	●				Public Works	\$1,000,000	2016 SPLOST
28	1-610	T2.3	Pedestrian Access Improvements		●	●	●	●		Public Works	\$2,020,000	2016 SPLOST
29	1-611	T2.3	Gann Rd Culvert Replacement				●	●		Public Works	\$600,000	2016 SPLOST



**Table 3.4. Short-Term Work Program: Transportation (Continued)**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
30	1-612	T.2.3	Congestion Relief Improvements	●	●					Public Works	\$1,528,000	2016 SPLOST
31	1-613	T.2.3	Traffic Calming		●	●				Public Works	\$200,000	2016 SPLOST
32	1-614	T.2.3	Traffic and Pedestrian Crossing Signal Upgrades	●	●	●				Public Works	\$150,000	2016 SPLOST
33	1-615	T.2.3	Street Signage and Signal Pole Upgrades	●	●	●				Public Works	\$300,000	2016 SPLOST
34	1-009, 1-616	T.2.3	Paths / Sidewalks	●	●	●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$1,003,967	2011 SPLOST, 2016 SPLOST
35	1-010, 1-617	T.2.3	Street Resurfacing	●	●	●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$6,432,363	2011 SPLOST, 2016 SPLOST
36	1-618	T.2.3	Pavement Marking		●	●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$250,000	2016 SPLOST
37	1-619	T.2.3	Curb and Gutter		●	●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$500,000	2016 SPLOST
38	1-621	T.2.3	Undertake Operational Transportation Studies	●	●	●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$250,000	2016 SPLOST
39	-	T.2.3	South Cobb Drive Study	●	●					Community Development	\$150,000	General Fund (20% match), Surface Transportation Block Grant (80%)
40	-	T.2.3	South Cobb Dr Improvements				●	●	●	Public Works, Cobb DOT	TBD	TBD



**Table 3.5. Short-Term Work Program: Economic Development**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
41	-	ED1.3	Undertake Smyrna Land Bank Feasibility Study						●	Downtown Smyrna Development Authority	TBD	TBD
42	-	ED2.1	Implement the Economic Development recommendations of the Spring Road LCI Master Plan, including pursuing the creation of a Special Use District/Community Services District, and a Smyrna Community Improvement District		●	●	●	●		Community Development,	\$20,000	General Fund, ARC
43	-	ED2.2	Pursue studies of priority redevelopment areas	●	●	●	●	●	●	Community Development	TBD	General Fund for matching funds
44	-	ED3.1	Jonquil Commercial District Sidewalks *			●	●	●		Public works	\$320,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds
45	-	ED3.1	Poplar Creek Bridge Pedestrian Enhancements *			●	●	●		Public Works	\$275,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds
46	-	ED3.1	Argyle Elementary Sidewalk Enhancement *					●	●	Public Works	\$275,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds
47	-	ED3.1	Cobb Parkway West Sidewalk Enhancement *					●	●	Public Works	\$330,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds
48	-	ED3.1	Jonquil Commercial District Trail Enhancements *				●	●	●	Public Works	\$200,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds
49	-	ED3.1	Jonquil Park-Gateway East-West Street Connection *				●	●	●	Public Works	\$4,525,000	General Fund, TBD
50	-	ED3.1	Argyle Elementary East-West Connection *					●	●	Public Works	\$5,800,000	General Fund, TBD
51	-	ED3.1	Spring Road Baseline Crossing *						●	Public Works	\$1,350,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds



**Table 3.5. Short-Term Work Program: Economic Development (Continued)**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
52	-	ED3.1	Spring Road I-285 Connector Path *						●	Public Works	\$9,800,000	TIP or LCI, General Fund for 20% matching funds
53	-	ED3.1	Cumberland Mall Pedestrian Path Enhancements *						●	Public Works, Cumberland CID, Cobb County	\$110,000	CID Funds, LCI Implementation Funds
54	-	ED3.1	Galleria Connection *					●	●	Public Works, Cumberland CID, Cobb County	\$380,000	CID Funds, LCI Implementation Funds
55	-	ED3.1	Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Bridge: Battery to Smyrna Gateway *						●	Public Works	\$5,500,000	TIP and CID funds, public-private partnership
56	-	ED3.1	Signage and Wayfinding Program *			●	●	●	●	Public Works	\$75,000/year	General Fund, Private development contributions
57	-	ED3.1	Transit Amenity Program for Stop Enhancement		●	●	●	●	●	Public Works, Cobb Linc	\$50,000/year	FTA funds
58	-	ED3.1	Station Area Access Enhancements				●	●	●	Public Works, Cobb Linc	\$2,300,000	FTA funds

**Table 3.6. Short-Term Work Program: Quality of Life**

Ref. No.	2018 Budget Project No.	Policy and Actions Ref. No.	Project or Activity	Ongoing	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
59	-	Q2.1	Prepare Parks and Recreation Master Plan	●	●	●				Parks & Recreation	\$86,500	2016 SPLOST
60	-	Q4.3	Conduct an Annexation Study			●	●			Community Development	TBD	General Fund

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**8** GUIDE  
SMYRNA

*CITY OF SMYRNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT*

*JACOBS | MARKET STREET SERVICES*

OCTOBER 2017



CITY OF SMYRNA

# 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## TECHNICAL ADDENDUM

OCTOBER 2017

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# TECHNICAL ADDENDUM **OVERVIEW**

This Technical Addendum provides supporting material for the City of Smyrna's *2040 Comprehensive Plan*. It includes material created and utilized throughout the *Guide Smyrna* planning process, which informed the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The four supplemental appendices are:

## **APPENDIX A: RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Record of Accomplishments documents the City of Smyrna's progress to date toward completing the action items set forth by the Community Work Program of the previous *2030 Comprehensive Plan*.

## **APPENDIX B: BASELINE CONDITIONS REPORT**

The *Baseline Conditions Report* is an analysis of the existing conditions for the City of Smyrna as of 2017 and addresses demographics, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and community facilities and resources. It was completed at the beginning of the planning process and used to provide a foundational understanding for community dialogue and decisionmaking throughout. The report was originally published as a standalone document.

## **APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The community engagement appendix is a compilation of summary materials from the *Guide Smyrna* public involvement process, including the Community Engagement Plan, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee meetings, public workshops, the Jonquil Festival booth, the open house, and the online community survey.

## **APPENDIX D: DEFINITIONS**

The definitions provided in this appendix offer more detailed guidance for interpreting the content of the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*.

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# A

## **APPENDIX A: *RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS***

The Record of Accomplishments documents the City of Smyrna's progress toward the action items set forth by the Community Work Program of the previous *2030 Comprehensive Plan* as of June 2017.

# APPENDIX A: RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Table A.1. Record of Accomplishments**

Ref No.	Project/Activity	Department	Status		
			Date Complete	Currently Underway	Postponed
CF-1	Truck Replacement for Building Inspector	72100 Community Development			X*
CF-2	Truck Replacement for Lead Marshal	72100 Community Development			X*
CF-3	Marshal Car	25000 Court Services	2013		
CF-4	Vehicle Replacement	15350 Information systems	2016		
CF-5	First Response Vehicle	35100 Fire Administration	2012		
CF-6	First Response Vehicle	35100 Fire Administration	2013		
CF-7	Vehicle Replacement	35100 Fire Administration	2014		
CF-8	Vehicle Replacement	35100 Fire Administration	2014		
CF-9	Vehicle Replacement	35100 Fire Administration	2015		
CF-10	Replacement Rescue Vehicle	35100 Fire Administration	2016		
CF-11	Police Cruisers	32100 Police Administration	2016		
CF-12	Police Detectives & Administration Vehicles	32100 Police Administration	2015		
CF-13	Motorcycle Replacement	32100 Police Administration	2015		
CF-14	Vehicle Replacement	61100 Parks Administration	2014		
CF-15	Vehicle Replacement	61100 Parks Administration	2015		
CF-16	Replace Pick-up Truck #59	61100 Parks Administration	2016		
CF-17	Replacement Forklift	42100 Highway & Streets	2016		
CF-18	Replacement Boom Mower Tractor	42100 Highway & Streets	2016		
CF-19	Replace Dumptrucks #85 & #95	42100 Highway & Streets	2015		
CF-20	Replace 2003 JD 410 Backhoe #93	42100 Highway & Streets	2013		
CF-21	Replace 2003 JD 710G Backhoe #54	42100 Highway & Streets	2014		
CF-22	Purchase Asphalt Patching Unit	42100 Highway & Streets	2015		
CF-23	Replace 2005 JD 644 Front End Loader	42100 Highway & Streets	2016		
CF-24	Purchase Mini Sheeps Foot Compactor	42100 Highway & Streets	2013		
CF-25	Replace 2003 GMC Knucle Boom Truck	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-26	Replace Garbage Truck #3	43100 Sanitation	2015		
CF-27	Replace Garbage Trucks #14 & #52	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-28	Replace Garbage Trucks #69 & #70	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-29	Replace Knuckle Boom Truck #71	43100 Sanitation	2014		
CF-30	Replace Garbage Trucks #68 & #73	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-31	Replace Recycling Trucks #74, #75 & #76	45400 Recycling	2016		
CF-32	Replace Community Service Truck	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-33	Replace Can Truck #22	43100 Sanitation	2014		
CF-34	Replace Pick-up Truck #8	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-35	Replace Can Truck #51	43100 Sanitation	2016		
CF-36	Replace Dumptruck #16	42100 Highway & Streets	2016		

\* Budgetary constraints, moved to 2021

**Table A.1. Record of Accomplishments (Continued)**

Ref No.	Project/Activity	Department	Status		
			Date Complete	Currently Underway	Postponed
CF-37	Replace Dumptruck #5	42100 Highway & Streets	2014		
CF-38	Purchase Streetsweeper	42100 Highway & Streets	2015		
CF-39	Purchase Tandem Dump Truck	42100 Highway & Streets	2014		
CF-40	Replace Bucket Truck F550	42700 Traffic	2016		
CF-41	Replace Service Truck	49000 Maintenance Shop	2016		
CF-42	Replace Truck #43	42100 Highway & Streets	2014		
CF-43	Replace Truck #46	42100 Highway & Streets	2016		
CF-44	Replace Pick-up Truck #24	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2016		
CF-45	Replace 1998 Van	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2016		
CF-46	Replace Pick-up Truck #2	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2016		
CF-47	Replace 2 2005 Pick-ups & 2 2005 Explores	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2015		
CF-48	Replace Pick-up Truck #57	42100 Highway & Streets	2016		
CF-49	Replace 4x4 Pick-up Truck #39	42700 Traffic	2014		
CF-50	Council Chamber Audiovisual Equipment	13200 Administration	2014		
CF-51	Desktop Computer Upgrades	15350 Information systems	2015		
CF-52	Network Infrastructure Upgrades	15350 Information systems	2014		
CF-53	Upgrade Microsoft Exchange	15350 Information systems	2012		
CF-54	Upgrade Microsoft Office	15350 Information systems	2012		
CF-55	Refresh of Servers	15350 Information systems	2016		
CF-56	SAN Expansion	15350 Information systems	2013		
CF-57	Upgrade Firehouse Software	35100 Fire Administration	2014		
CF-58	Replace VoIP Servers	15350 Information systems	2013		
CF-59	Financial Software	15100 Finance	2016		
CF-60	Computer Replacement	32100 Police Administration	2016		
CF-61	Police Department Roof Replacement	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2012		
CF-62	PWC Roof - Seal & Coat	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2012		
CF-63	Paint Public Works Building	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2012		
CF-64	Miscellaneous Carpet Replacement	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2016		
CF-65	Purchase HVAC Equipment @ CC Kitch.	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2012		
CF-66	Resurface Library Parking Lot	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2015		
CF-67	Sod Replacement for Riverline & Jonquil Park	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2012		
CF-68	Resurface City Hall Parking Lot	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2015		
CF-69	Repave Lot at Rose Garden	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2015		
CF-70	Resurface Parking Lot Adjacent to Community Center	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2015		

**Table A.1. Record of Accomplishments (Continued)**

Ref No.	Project/Activity	Department	Status		
			Date Complete	Currently Underway	Postponed
<b>CF-73</b>	Extension to Equipment Shed	42100 Highway & Streets	2014		
<b>CF-74</b>	Purchase 20,000 lb Drive-on Rack	49000 Maintenance Shop	2015		
<b>CF-75</b>	Purchase Crane & Track	49000 Maintenance Shop	2014		
<b>CF-76</b>	Purchase 30,000 lb Truck lift	49000 Maintenance Shop	2015		
<b>CF-77</b>	Replace Pool Shell & Tile	61220 Athletics/Aquatics	2014		
<b>CF-78</b>	Light Pole Replacement	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2015		
<b>CF-79</b>	Purchase Durham Park Playground	15650 Buildings & Grounds	2016		
<b>CF-80</b>	Public Furniture Replacement	65100 Library	2014		
<b>T-1</b>	Concord Road Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2017		
<b>T-2</b>	Windy Hill Road (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works		X	
<b>T-3</b>	Belmont Hills Connector Road (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2013		
<b>T-4</b>	Ward Street Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2014		
<b>T-5</b>	Village Parkway Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2017		
<b>T-6</b>	Reed Road Drainage Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2013		
<b>T-7</b>	Intersection Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works		X	
<b>T-8</b>	Congestion Relief Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works		X	
<b>T-9</b>	Bridge Rehabilitation (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works		X	
<b>T-10</b>	Street Resurfacing (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works		X	
<b>CF-1</b>	Parks Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2016		
<b>CF-2</b>	Public Safety Facilities - New Jail Locking System (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2017		
<b>CF-3</b>	Recycling Facility Improvements (2011 SPLOST)	Public Works	2016		

# B

## APPENDIX B:

### ***BASELINE CONDITIONS REPORT***

The *Baseline Conditions Report* was conducted at the beginning of the planning process to provide a review of where the city stands as a community in 2017 on issues such as land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and community facilities. It informed the priority needs and opportunities and served as a basis for discussion at community engagement activities. The report was originally published as a standalone document.

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**8** **GUIDE**  
**SMYRNA**  
BASELINE CONDITIONS REPORT

JUNE 2017



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# INTRODUCTION

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## PURPOSE AND CONTENT

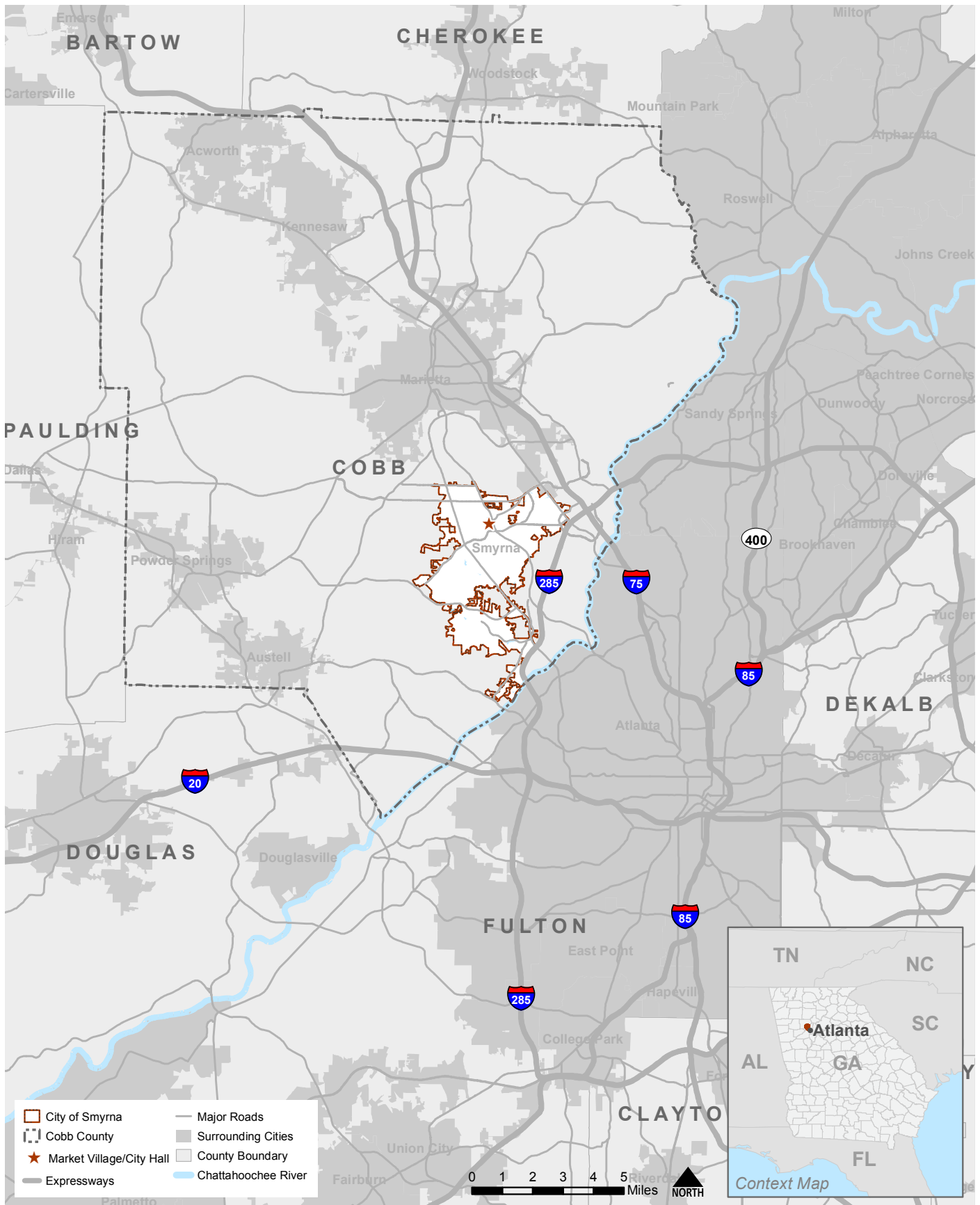
This Baseline Conditions Report provides a high level review of existing conditions and trends in the City of Smyrna. Its primary purpose is to support and inform the update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. By providing a baseline review of where the city stands today as a community, it allows the Smyrna community to think strategically about the opportunities and challenges it can best plan for and influence in the years ahead. Areas of focus include land use, housing, economic development, and transportation. The review also includes a look at population trends and community resources and services. The latter two areas, while not a focus of the plan update, have a defining influence on the city’s makeup and help tell the story of what sets Smyrna apart from other communities today.

## ABOUT SMYRNA

Located within Cobb County, Georgia, the City of Smyrna, totaling 15.46 square miles, is centrally positioned in the Atlanta region, with the City’s southern boundary abutting the Chattahoochee River and the City of Atlanta (see Figure B-1 on page B2). The City’s northern boundary abuts the southern tip of the City of Marietta and Dobbins Air Reserve Base (ARB), with the bulk of the city adjacent to unincorporated areas of the Cobb County, including the prominent Cumberland Community Improvement District on the northeast, home to one of Atlanta’s important employment centers and Atlanta’s Major League Baseball Team, the Atlanta Braves at SunTrust Park.



Figure B-1. Location Map



Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission



## RECENT PLANS AND STUDIES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

An important dialogue covered in this Baseline Conditions Report is that the City of Smyrna and its partners have a long history of planning. By no means is the update to Smyrna's Comprehensive Plan happening in isolation. To a large degree, it will pull together recent plans and studies completed by the City and its partners into a coherent strategy for future growth of the city by building upon planning work already completed while calibrating those plans with new input from the City's stakeholders and community as a whole. Among the most important plans that the update directly incorporates are *Smyrna's Comprehensive Plan 2030*, *Smyrna's 2014 Strategic Vision Plan*, the *Cobb County Consolidated Plan*, the *Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan*, and small area studies specific to the Smyrna, including the *South Cobb Drive Corridor Development Study* and the *Spring Road Corridor Livable Centers Initiative Study*.

## BASELINE CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

The City of Smyrna has served as leader in municipal development over the last several years. As one of the first Atlanta area suburbs to prioritize and rebuild its city core in the Market Village area, it has shown that the location and context of community investments do matter. The City has served as a model in this regard, and the result has been continued focus by the City on fostering public and private development and investments that meet needs while also creating a sense of community and enhancing day-to-day life of its residents. The City has multiple community resources including over 25 parks and recreational facilities or resources, its own fire and police departments, and a City library – combined, these resources provide an impressive portfolio for any community.



Top to Bottom: 1) Mixed-use core at Market Village; 2) Single-family home; 3) Scenic shared use path along Village Parkway.

# CONTRIBUTING PLANS & STUDIES

## **SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN**

Sets a strategic overarching vision, goals, and actions for the City's next 10 years.

## **SMYRNA'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030**

The City's current plan for citywide growth and development, includes the City's Future Land Use Plan.

## **COBB COUNTY CONSOLIDATED PLAN (2016)**

Provides a plan for addressing special housing and community development needs in Cobb County and its municipalities.

## **COBB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2040 UPDATE (2015)**

Countywide plan for improvements to transportation with Cobb County and its municipalities.

## **SOUTH COBB DRIVE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT STUDY (2017)**

Covering South Cobb Drive corridor from Concord Road to Windy Hill Road, a collaborative effort between the City and the Georgia Department of Transportation, Cobb County and Cobb LINC, study will formulate various concepts for corridor improvements.

## **SPRING ROAD LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE (LCI) STUDY (2017)**

Focusing on guiding redevelopment along Spring Road corridor from Cobb Parkway to Atlanta Road and identifying appropriate investment projects to improve the aesthetics and functionality of this corridor.

## **GEORGIA TECH STUDIO: SMYRNA CROSSROADS STUDY (2016)**

In coordination with the Spring Road LCI, Georgia Tech developed a vision for the gateway area around SunTrust Park, including land use, transportation, and economic development.



Residential neighborhood in south Smyrna

Located just outside the I-285 perimeter, Smyrna is a community within the Atlanta region with many opportunities at its doorstep due to its quality of life and proximity to major regional job centers and the airport. The creation of mixed-use developments continues to advance Smyrna from a purely suburban development style to a hybrid community that offers the quiet, calm of suburban-style residential areas coupled with a new in-town vibe. Mixed-use centers such as Market Village, Jonquil Village, and Belmont accommodate the various ages and lifestyle preferences of people living and desiring to live here and offer places where one can live, work, and play without leaving the city limits. These characteristics of Smyrna set a strong foundation for continuing to grow the City's economic base and attract jobs. With an estimated 35,000 jobs and a labor force of roughly 33,000 people, there indeed is an opportunity for Smyrna to continue to look for opportunities to attract new jobs that align with the skillsets of residents while providing the right mix of housing options that meet workers' needs. The City's centralized location and continued development interest, however, has been driving up prices of land. Although Smyrna can still be considered affordable, largely due to its diversity of products both in terms of age and structure types, the cost of homes is on the rise. This trend raises the question of whether or not many of the city residents and workers will be able to afford to stay in Smyrna over time.

The City's transportation network is feeling the impact of a changing context as well. Although the City enjoys easy access to the important interstates of 285 and 75, getting to and from these locations from within Smyrna is getting more and more time-consuming, largely due to the suburban development style within the city, which affords minimum alternate routes to local residents, but also due to the increasing development intensity both within Smyrna and in adjacent and nearby communities. Thru-traffic generated by residents of communities to the north and west traveling through Smyrna to interstates, regional employment centers, Downtown Atlanta, and the airport has a significant impact on congestion. The City has been working to enhance mobility through targeted transportation studies and incorporation of sidewalks and expansion of multi-use paths, but there are still few time-competitive options to driving. New transit opportunities may very well be an important key to Smyrna's future success.

As the Comprehensive Plan charts out desired growth and development for the next 20 years, there are a variety of potential opportunities and challenges. Those presented above are just the tip of the iceberg. Building on recent successes and mitigating potential roadblocks will be essential to the City's future success. Thoughtful planning along with an eye on implementable actions and achievable results will help Smyrna continue to build on its history as a model city within the Atlanta region.

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# DEMOGRAPHICS

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## GEOGRAPHIES

Smyrna’s demographic characteristics and performance have been benchmarked against five “peer” and “aspiration” cities – Cedar Park, TX; Duluth, GA; Marietta, GA; Matthews, NC; and Woodstock, GA – along with Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States. Three of the cities – Cedar Park, TX; Marietta, GA; and Matthews, NC – were included as an update to the 2014 Strategic Vision Plan and were selected based on their similarities to Smyrna in population size, location within a large metro area, demographics, and other indicators that put into perspective Smyrna’s performance as a city over the past decade. Duluth, GA and Woodstock, GA were added to the analysis in order to provide greater context for the dynamics observed in Smyrna, particularly with respect to its position in the Atlanta MSA.

The Atlanta MSA refers to the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, Georgia Metropolitan Statistical Area, as defined by the February 2013 Office of Management and Budget Bulletin, which consists of 29 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton.

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\*For basic population data, the U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates program was used. For 2000 to 2009 data, the 2010 Intercensal Dataset from the Census was utilized. For 2010 to 2015 data, the Vintage 2015 Population Estimates was utilized. For detailed data, the American Community Survey (ACS) was the primary source. Due to the size of the city, ACS estimates are five-year averages. For the most recent data available, the 2011-2015 American Community Survey was used, and for historical estimates, the 2006-2010 American Community Survey data was used.



## POPULATION GROWTH

Over the past decade, Smyrna has experienced steady population growth, and as of 2015, the most recent year for which data is available, the city's population reached 56,146. Between 2005 and 2015, the population increased by 18 percent, while over the past five years, it increased by 9.3 percent. Smyrna's population growth closely mirrored that of the Atlanta MSA's total population growth; however, Smyrna's population grew at a faster rate than Georgia, Cobb County, and the neighboring city of Marietta.

Elsewhere in metro Atlanta, the City of Duluth grew at relatively the same pace as the Atlanta MSA over the past five years (9.4 percent compared to 9.3 percent), while Woodstock has grown exponentially over the past decade. Woodstock, Georgia and Cedar Park, Texas have grown at unusually fast rates and are among the country's fastest-growing suburbs, which has partially been attributed to their proximity to fast growing metros, of Atlanta and Austin, respectively, and their positions as upcoming suburbs with new, desirable developments.

**Table B-1. Total Population**

	2005	2010	2015	5-yr Chg.		10-yr Chg.		CAGR	
				#	%	#	%	5-yr	10-yr
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	47,590	51,382	56,146	4,764	9.3%	8,556	18.0%	1.8%	1.7%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	36,998	52,397	65,945	13,548	25.9%	28,947	78.2%	4.7%	5.9%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	25,128	26,696	29,193	2,497	9.4%	4,065	16.2%	1.8%	1.5%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	57,116	56,892	59,067	2,175	3.8%	1,951	3.4%	0.8%	0.3%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	24,708	27,307	30,678	3,371	12.3%	5,970	24.2%	2.4%	2.2%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	17,793	24,024	29,898	5,874	24.5%	12,105	68.0%	4.5%	5.3%
<b>Cobb County, GA</b>	646,754	689,676	741,334	51,658	7.5%	94,580	14.6%	1.5%	1.4%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	4,770,870	5,303,758	5,710,795	407,037	7.7%	939,925	19.7%	1.5%	1.8%
<b>Georgia</b>	8,925,922	9,713,454	10,214,860	501,406	5.2%	1,288,938	14.4%	1.0%	1.4%
<b>United States</b>	295,516,599	309,346,863	321,418,820	12,071,957	3.9%	25,902,221	8.8%	0.8%	0.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates

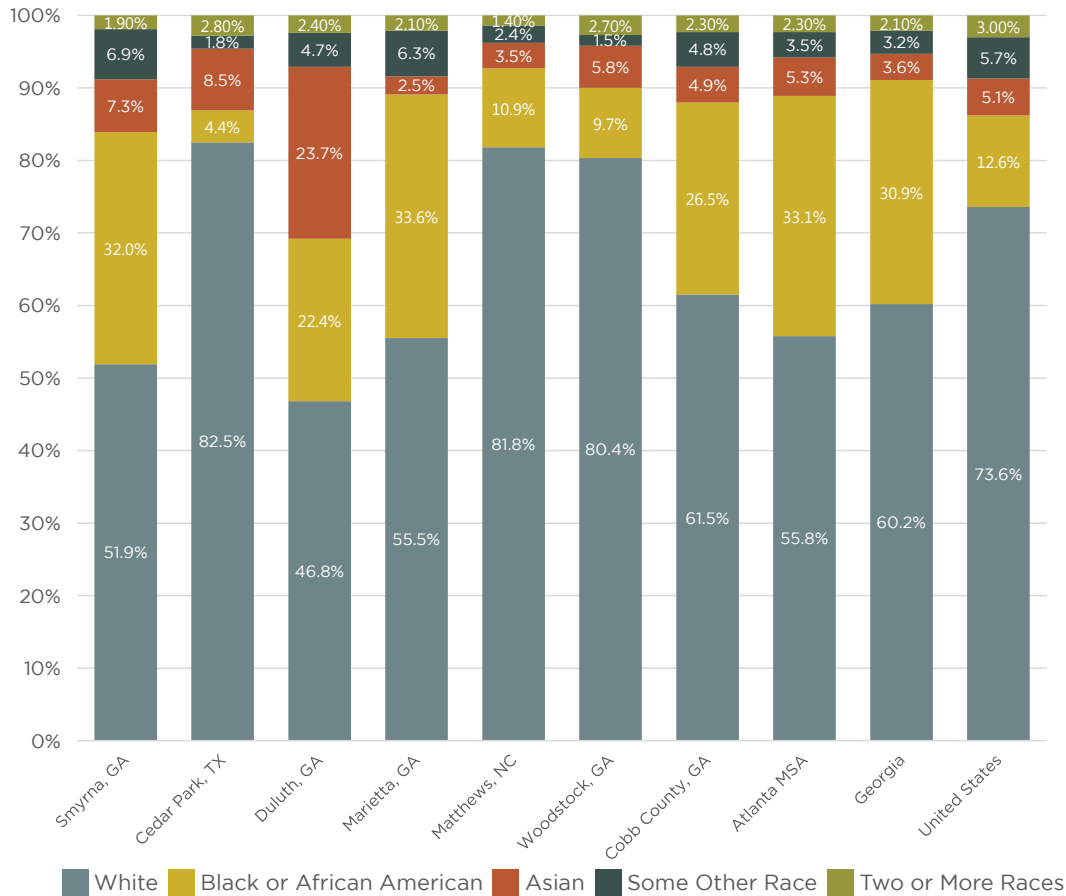
# RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Diversity plays an important role in defining the character of a community, and typical of many metropolitan Atlanta communities, Smyrna is much more diverse than the majority of communities across the country. This diversity is measured in two ways, race and ethnicity. Racial diversity refers to biological or genetic traits and differences among the population, such as White, Black or Asian; whereas ethnic diversity refers to cultural differences among the population such as Hispanic, Chinese, or Irish. The U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS) reports both measurements separate and together to get a composite picture of diversity in a community. In terms of ethnic diversity the ACS simplifies the categories into two major categories Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino.

## RACE

The ACS 2015 Estimates show Smyrna’s population at 52 percent White, 32 percent Black or African American, 8 percent Asian, and 8 percent some other race. This is a slight change from 2010 when the city population was 56 percent White, 30 percent Black or African American, 6 percent Asian, and 8 percent some other race, indicating a slight proportionally increase in the number of Blacks and Asians in the City compared whites and other racial groups. Compared to the other benchmark communities, Smyrna has the highest percentage of non-white population, other than Duluth, which is estimated to be only 53 percent non-white.

**Figure B-2. Racial Diversity**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates



## ETHNICITY

In terms of ethnicity, regardless of race, 14 percent of the city's population is Hispanic or Latino. This too is a slight change from 2010, when the city population was 13 percent Hispanic or Latino, and is fairly comparable to the other benchmark communities, though marginally above the average. Among the Smyrna Hispanic community, 66 percent are Mexican, 12 percent are Puerto Rican, 2 percent are Cuban, and 22 percent are some other Hispanic or Latino culture.

## DIVERSITY

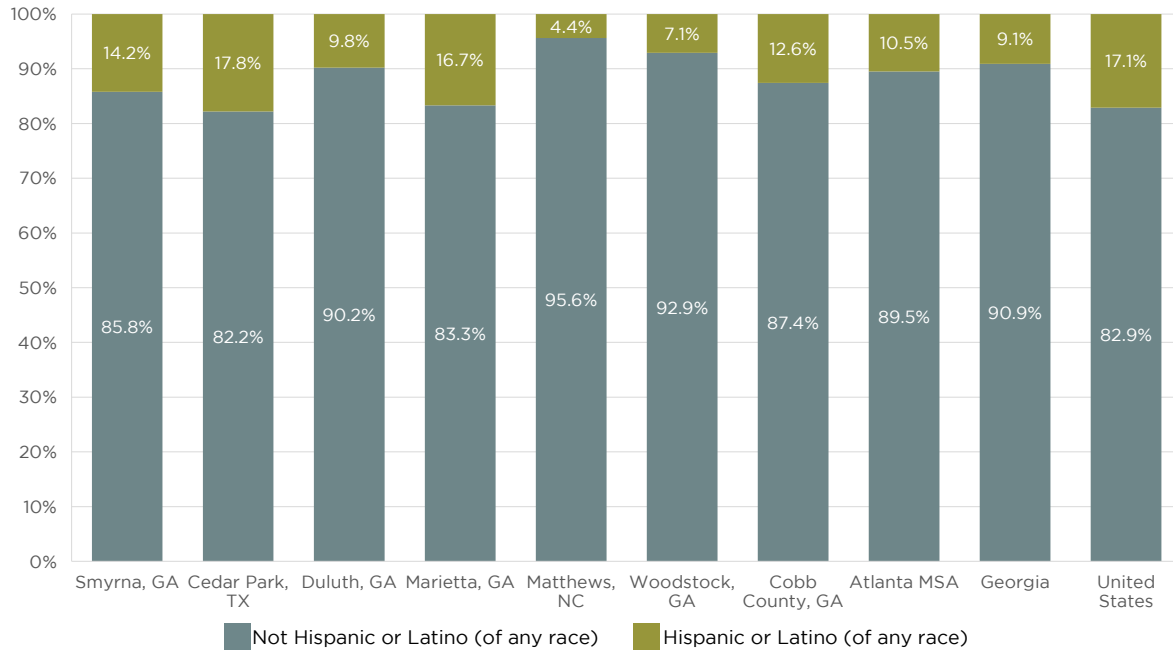
Figure B-2 and Figure B-3 show population diversity in the comparison communities when considered as a function of race and ethnicity. These figures combine Non-Hispanic or Latino populations with the Hispanic or Latino population to give a composite picture of diversity. Note that in 2015, 47% of Smyrna's Hispanic or Latino population is White, an estimated population of 3,625. Although the United States is not projected to be a majority-minority nation until 2044, Smyrna is ahead of the trend with only 45.1 percent of its population with no minority designation (White, non-Hispanic).

Smyrna's demographic composition is similar to the 29-county Atlanta MSA, including Duluth and Marietta; however, the city is more diverse than Cobb County as a whole and much more diverse than what is seen in the other comparison communities, including Woodstock in the Atlanta MSA.

Smyrna has continued to diversify over the past five years and has done so at a faster pace than many of the comparison communities. The increasing diversity within city limits illustrates the community's attractiveness as a place to live for residents of many races and ethnicities. The share of the population that is Black, non-Hispanic increased by 1.8 percentage points, while Asian, non-Hispanic increased by 1.6 percentage points and the Hispanic population increased by one percentage point. Meanwhile, the share of the population that is White, non-Hispanic fell from 49.9 percent to 45.1 percent over the five-year period. The shift in the distribution was due to both growth in the minority population and a small decline (-3.2 percent) in the White, non-Hispanic population over the time period.



**Figure B-3. Ethnic Diversity**



## HOUSEHOLD SIZE

There are approximately 23,700 households in Smyrna with an average of 2.27 persons per household, a slightly smaller average household size than the county, metro, state, and nation. The number of households in Smyrna increased by 3.3 percent over the five-year period with an additional 752 households in the city. Consistent with the relatively smaller average household size, the share of households with children living in them is also smaller than what is observed at the regional level. Roughly 28 percent of households have one or more people under the age of 18. Although the average household size and share of households with children trails all the benchmark and comparison communities, it has been increasing in recent years.

**Table B-2. Household Dynamics and 5-Year Change Educational Attainment Distribution**

	Avg. HH size	5-yr Chg.	% of HHs w/children	5-yr Chg.
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	2.27	0.08	28.4%	0.7%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	3.05	0.27	46.1%	-2.9%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	2.61	0.10	36.2%	-2.1%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	2.42	0.03	30.1%	-1.4%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	2.61	0.02	31.5%	-4.3%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	2.69	0.26	43.9%	5.8%
<b>Cobb County, GA</b>	2.64	0.02	36.0%	-1.1%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	2.77	N/A	36.6%	-1.1%
<b>Georgia</b>	2.73	0.07	35.2%	-1.7%
<b>United States</b>	2.64	0.05	32.3%	-1.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

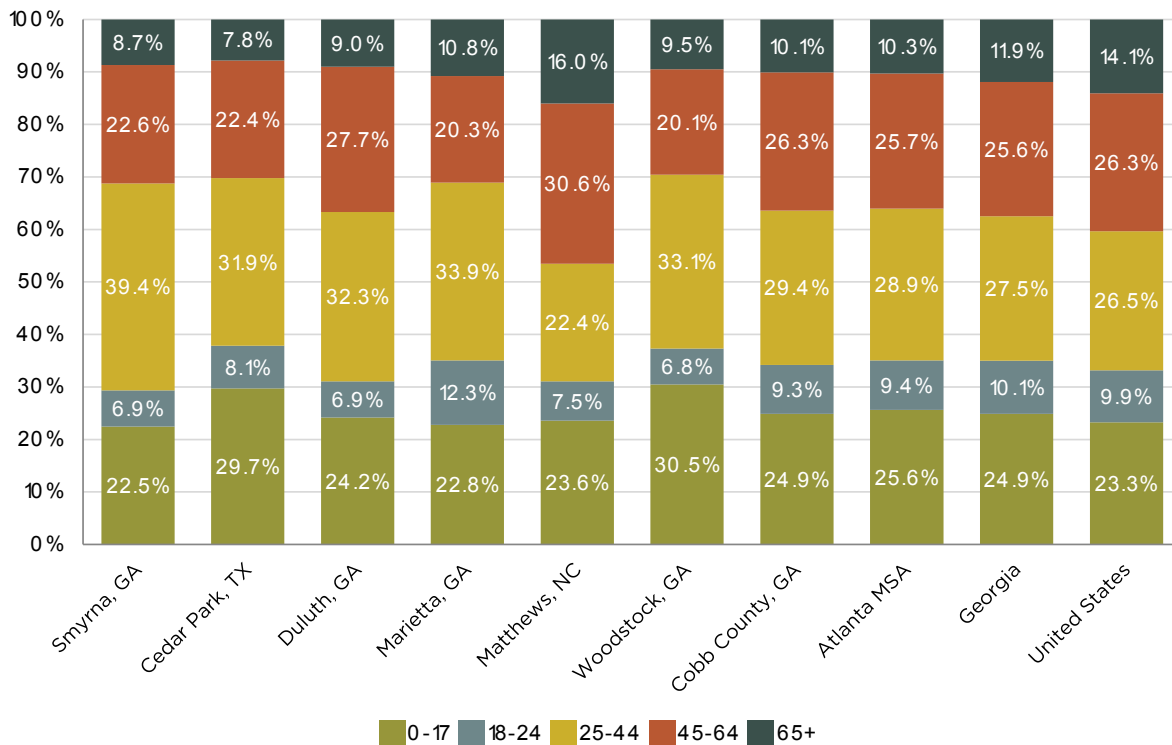
Smyrna has a relatively young population with nearly 70 percent of residents under the age of 45 and has one of the highest shares of residents between the ages of 25 and 44 relative to the comparison communities. Nearly 40 percent of residents fall within this age group. Residents between the ages of 25 and 44 represent individuals that are prime working age, as well as the coveted group of young professionals. Young professionals include individuals that are typically at the beginning of their careers, starting their families, and setting down roots in communities.

Approximately 22.5 percent of residents are under the age of 18, the smallest percentage of all of the comparison and regional communities; however, in recent years, the percentage of children living in Smyrna has been growing. Between 2010 and 2015,

the share of residents under the age of 18 grew by 1.5 percentage points. These population trends, coupled with the household dynamics, indicate that the increase in household formations includes many households that have children residing in their homes and/or existing residents adding children in their households.

At the other end of the age spectrum, the share of the population over the age of 65 living in Smyrna increased by 1.4 percentage points between 2010 and 2015. The aging population and growth in the share of the population over the age of 65 mirrors trends seen across the country. As of 2015, 8.7 percent of Smyrna residents were aged 65 and older; with the exception of Cedar Park, Smyrna had the lowest share of residents within this age group with comparable communities.

**Figure B-4. Age Distribution**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Smyrna boasts an extremely well-educated population, and out of the comparison communities, Smyrna had the highest share of college-educated residents. Over half of residents aged 25 and older has a bachelor’s degree or higher. In comparison, 44.1 percent of Cobb County residents and 35.8 of Atlanta MSA residents have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher. Across the state and nation, less than 30 percent of adults have attained that level of education.

Smyrna continues to attract and retain educated residents, as is evident by the increase in the share of the population that is college educated. Between 2010 and 2015, the share of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher increased by 2.6 percentage points. This increase stemmed from a growth in the share of residents with a graduate or professional degree.

Smyrna has a smaller percentage of adults without a high school diploma than Marietta, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States. However, when compared to the other highly educated communities such as Cedar Park, Matthews, and Cobb County, Smyrna’s share of adults without a high school diploma (9.5 percent) stands elevated in comparison. The share of Smyrna residents without a high school diploma has remained relatively unchanged.

When race and ethnicity are taken into account, disparities among Smyrna’s black and Hispanic residents are clear. While 60.7 percent of white, not Hispanic residents aged 25 or older hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher, only 42.7 percent of black residents and 20.8 percent of Hispanic residents have at least a four-year degree. However, 69.4 percent of Asian residents have at least an undergraduate degree. These disparities are common nationwide—33.2 percent of white, not Hispanic U.S. adults aged 25 or older hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 19.5 percent of black adults, 14.3 percent of Hispanic adults, and 51.4 percent of Asian adults. Smyrna is still comparatively competitive, with its proportion of white, not Hispanic and Asian residents holding a four-year degree or higher surpassing that of all nine comparison geographies. Smyrna’s proportion of black residents with a four-year degree or higher surpasses that of all geographies except Woodstock (49.3 percent) and Matthews (48.7 percent). Smyrna’s proportion of Hispanic residents with a four-year degree surpasses that of all comparison geographies except Woodstock (32.9 percent), Matthews (34.8 percent), and Cedar Park (30.2 percent).

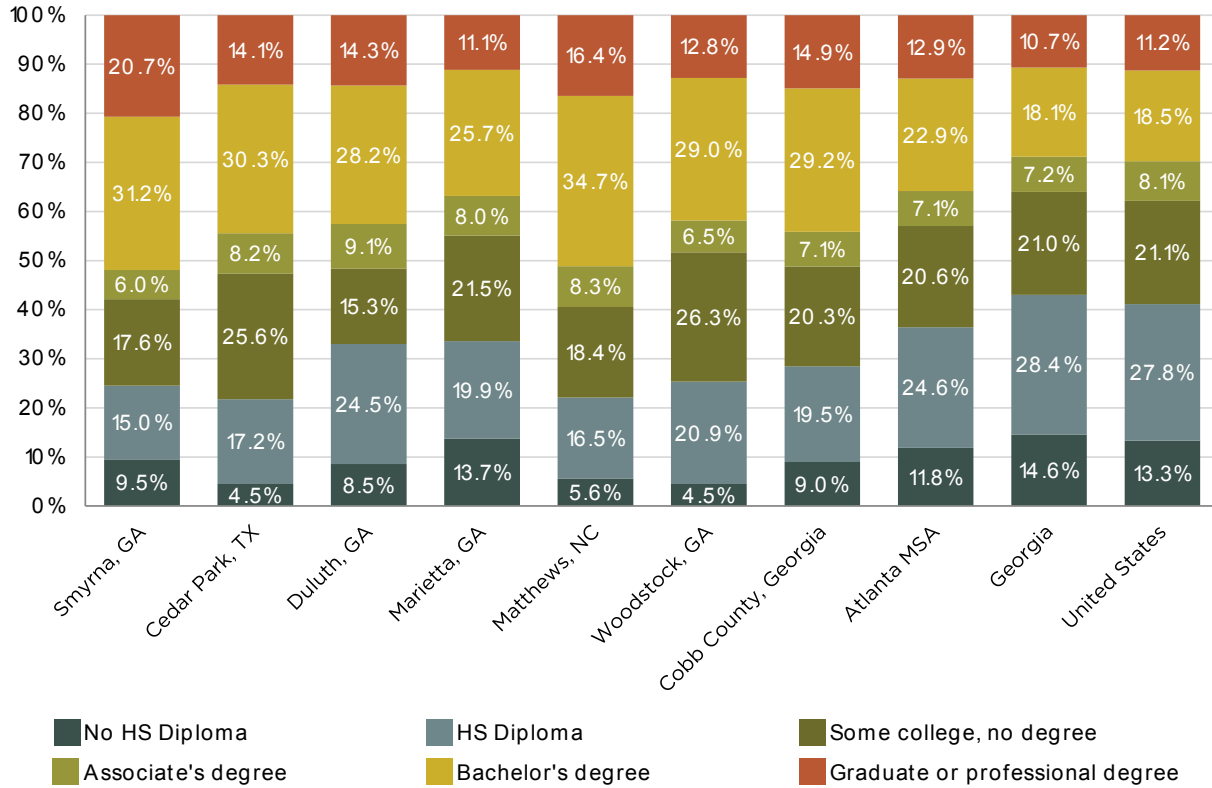
**Table B-3. Educational Attainment Distribution, 5-Year Pct. Pt. Change**

	No HS Diploma	High School Diploma	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	0.3%	-2.4%	0.0%	-0.5%	-0.1%	2.70%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	-1.2%	-1.1%	-2.0%	0.7%	0.4%	3.13%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	0.0%	6.4%	-3.5%	1.9%	-6.5%	1.55%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	-3.3%	-2.9%	2.4%	3.2%	1.1%	-0.66%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	0.3%	0.9%	-4.3%	-1.1%	0.8%	3.35%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	-0.6%	2.9%	1.9%	-4.3%	-2.2%	2.29%
<b>Cobb County, GA</b>	-0.9%	-0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	-0.1%	0.33%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	-1.2%	-1.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	1.13%
<b>Georgia</b>	-1.9%	-1.2%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	1.00%
<b>United States</b>	-1.6%	-1.2%	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	0.95%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

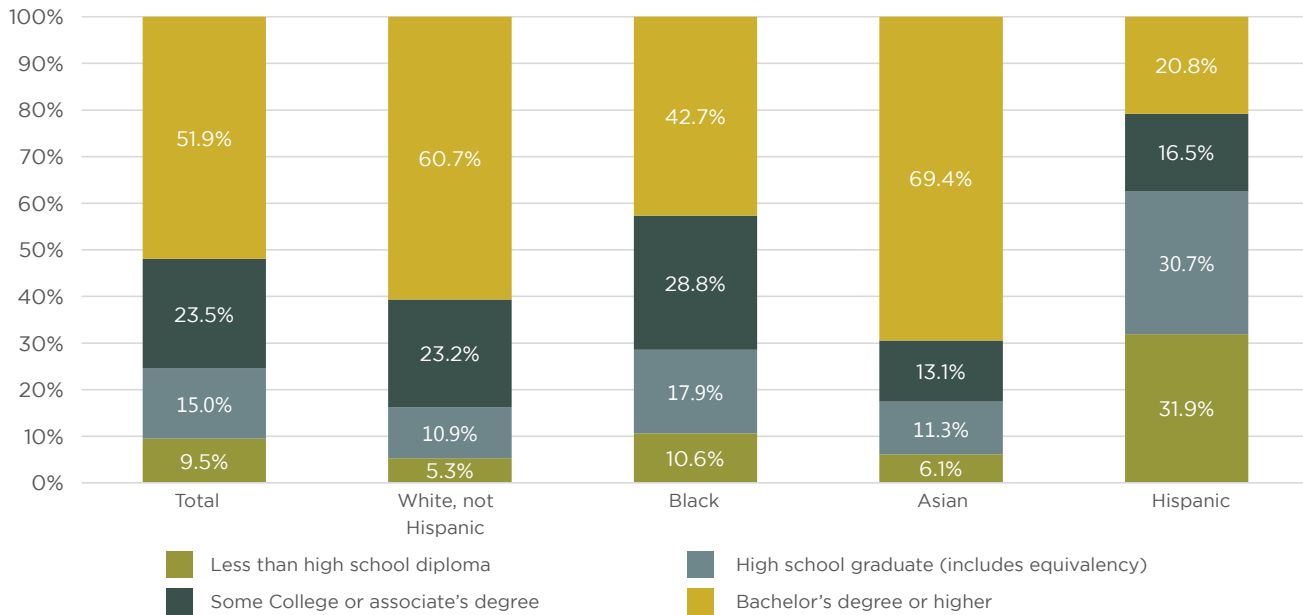


**Figure B-5. Educational Attainment**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

**Figure B-6. Educational Attainment by Race and Ethnicity, Smyrna Only**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

Note: Black and Asian include both Hispanic and non-Hispanic. Data is not available by ethnicity for these race groups.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

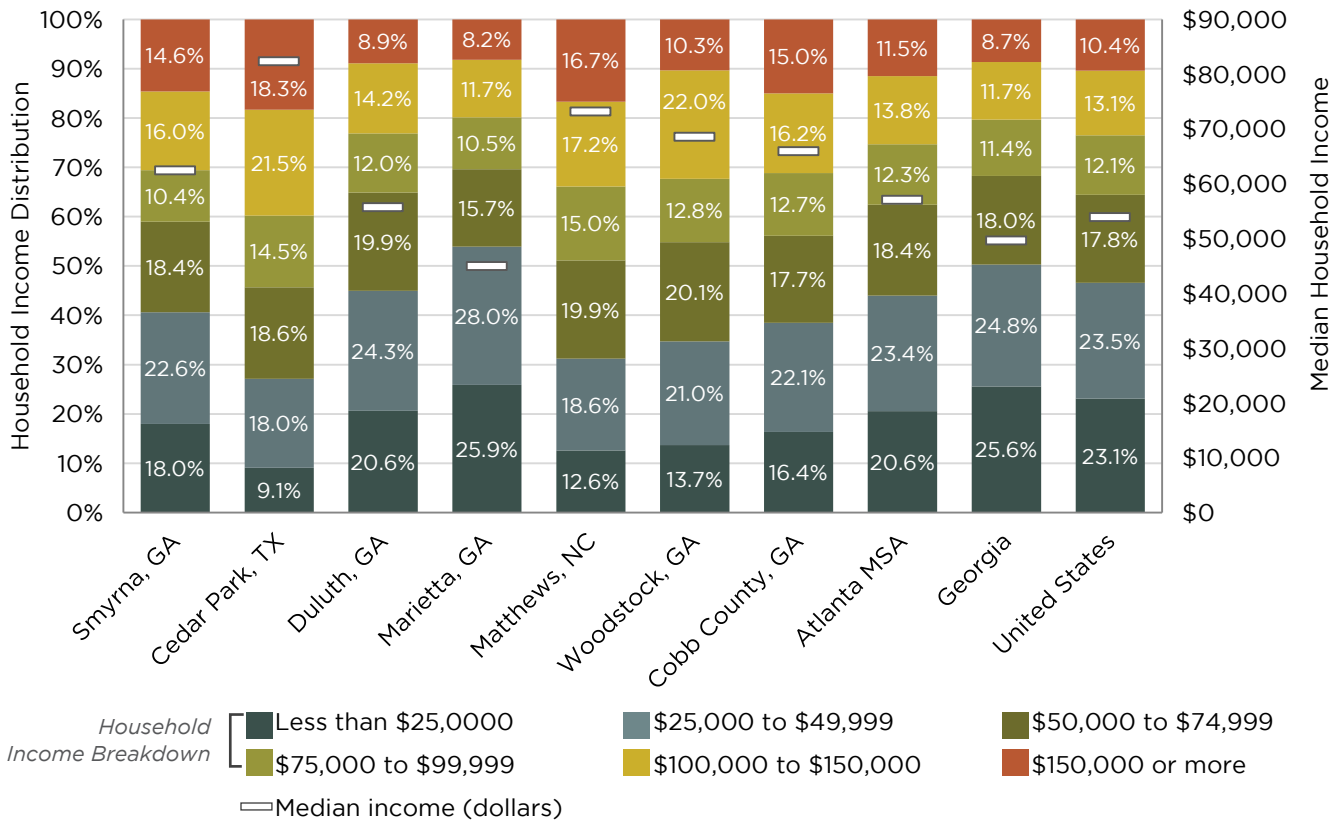
Given the high levels of educational attainment and share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, it's not surprising to see that Smyrna also has a population with relatively high household incomes. In 2015, the median household income was \$62,363, which was higher than Duluth, Marietta, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States. However, despite comparatively higher educational levels than the other benchmark communities, Smyrna's median household income trailed Cobb County, Woodstock, Matthews, and Cedar Park.

Overall, the median household income in Smyrna increased by 14.2 percent, which was greater than all the comparable community household income growth, with the exception of Cedar Park. An analysis of the household income distribution and growth within the higher income brackets illustrates that wealth within the community has been growing in recent years. The most recent data show that the share of households earning more than \$100,000 a year accounted for roughly 30.6 percent of all households in Smyrna, while nationally, 23.5 percent of households fall within that income bracket. In 2015, the share of households with incomes greater

than \$100,000 had increased by 4.7 percentage points in Smyrna over the five-year time frame; nationally, it increased by 2.6 percentage points. Additionally, contrary to regional trends, the share of households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 did not increase in Smyrna. Duluth, Marietta, Woodstock, Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, and Georgia all experienced an increase to some degree in the share of their population at the lowest end of the income spectrum.

It is interesting to note the range of median household income across majority and minority racial and ethnic groups. In Smyrna, the median income of white, not Hispanic households is \$73,640, compared to \$85,051 for Asian households, \$50,893 for black households, and \$37,176 for Hispanic households. Smyrna's Asian households have a higher median income than all geographies except Cedar Park (\$118,947). Cedar Park and Matthews surpass Smyrna's median income across all selected racial and ethnic groups. While white, not Hispanic and black households in Smyrna have higher median incomes than the metro, state, and nation, this is not the case for Hispanic households, for whom incomes lag behind these geographies.

**Figure B-7. Household Income Distribution**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

**Table B-4. Household Income Distribution, 5-Year Percentage Point Change**

	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$150,000	\$150,000 or more
Smyrna, GA	-0.1%	-4.3%	0.1%	-0.5%	1.7%	3.0%
Cedar Park, TX	-1.7%	-1.6%	-4.1%	-2.9%	1.9%	8.3%
Duluth, GA	6.6%	-2.4%	-1.5%	-2.7%	-0.2%	0.0%
Marietta, GA	0.5%	-1.3%	-2.0%	-0.3%	2.7%	0.4%
Matthews, NC	-1.3%	-0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	-1.4%	1.9%
Woodstock, GA	1.0%	-1.5%	-4.0%	-4.2%	6.3%	2.2%
Cobb County, GA	0.5%	0.2%	-0.9%	-1.0%	-0.4%	1.7%
Atlanta MSA	1.1%	-0.5%	-0.8%	-0.9%	-0.1%	1.2%
Georgia	0.5%	-0.7%	-0.6%	-0.5%	0.4%	1.2%
United States	-0.4%	-1.1%	-0.8%	-0.2%	0.8%	1.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

## POVERTY RATE

Examining poverty rates helps to gauge a community or region's socioeconomic conditions. Poverty rates are estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau using income measures from annual population surveys. Information including family size, pre-tax income, and the number of children help the Bureau determine poverty thresholds. If a family's income is less than the poverty threshold, that family would be considered living in poverty.

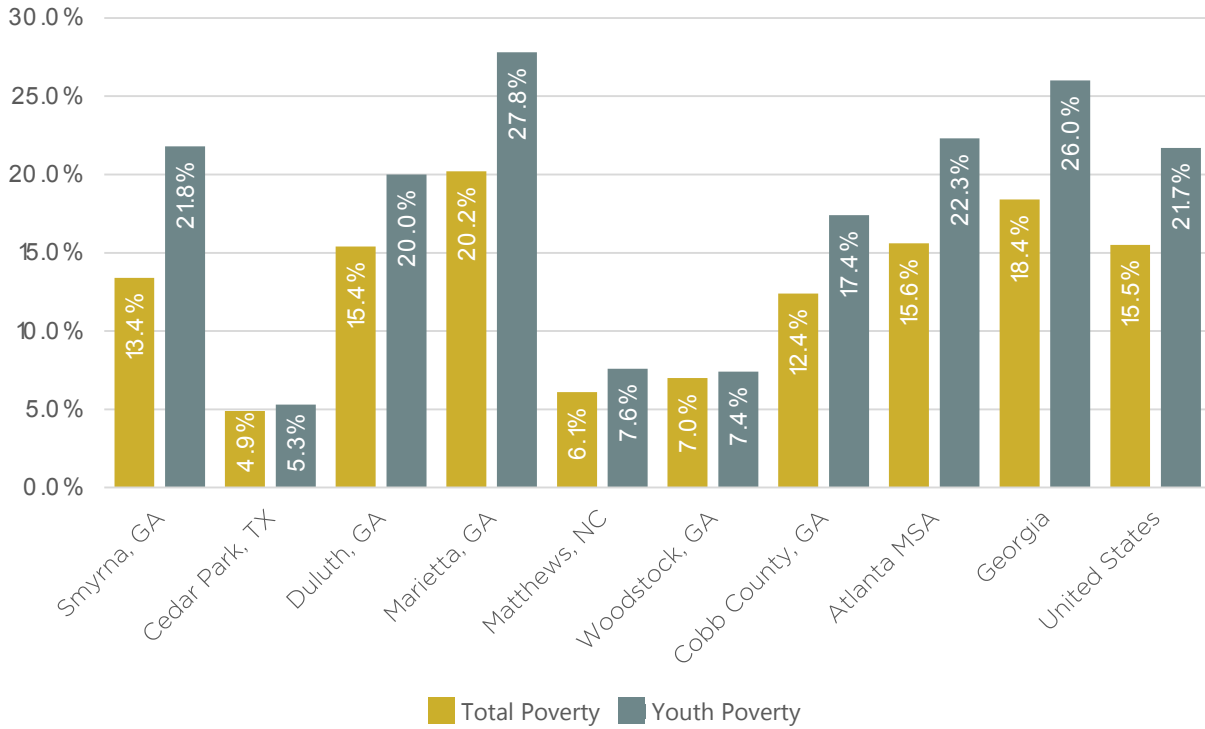
The federal poverty threshold in 2016, the most recent year for which poverty data thresholds have been set at the time of this report, for a family of four with two children was \$24,339. Considering that the national median annual income for high school dropouts is \$25,636, it is clear that a high school dropout is unfortunately a likely path to poverty in the United States. In this section, the total poverty rate (the percentage of all residents who are living below the poverty line) and the youth poverty rate (the percentage of residents aged 17 and below who are living below the poverty line) are examined.

In 2015, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$24,036. Smyrna's most recent total poverty rate was 13.4 percent, while the youth's poverty rate

was 21.8 percent. Smyrna's poverty rate is slightly higher than Cobb County (12.4%, 17.4%), but is less than the Atlanta MSA (15.6%, 22.3%), Georgia (18.4%, 26.0%), and the United States (15.5%, 21.7%). Smyrna's poverty rate illustrates that although there is a smaller share of households in the lowest income bracket, there are still many residents living in poverty, including roughly one in five children. Youth poverty rates are historically higher than total poverty rates for several reasons, including that households with children require more income to stay out of poverty. Another contributing factor is that on average, households with children have fewer workers than childless households, i.e. two-parent households with a parent who stays at home to care for children or an elderly family member and single parent households.

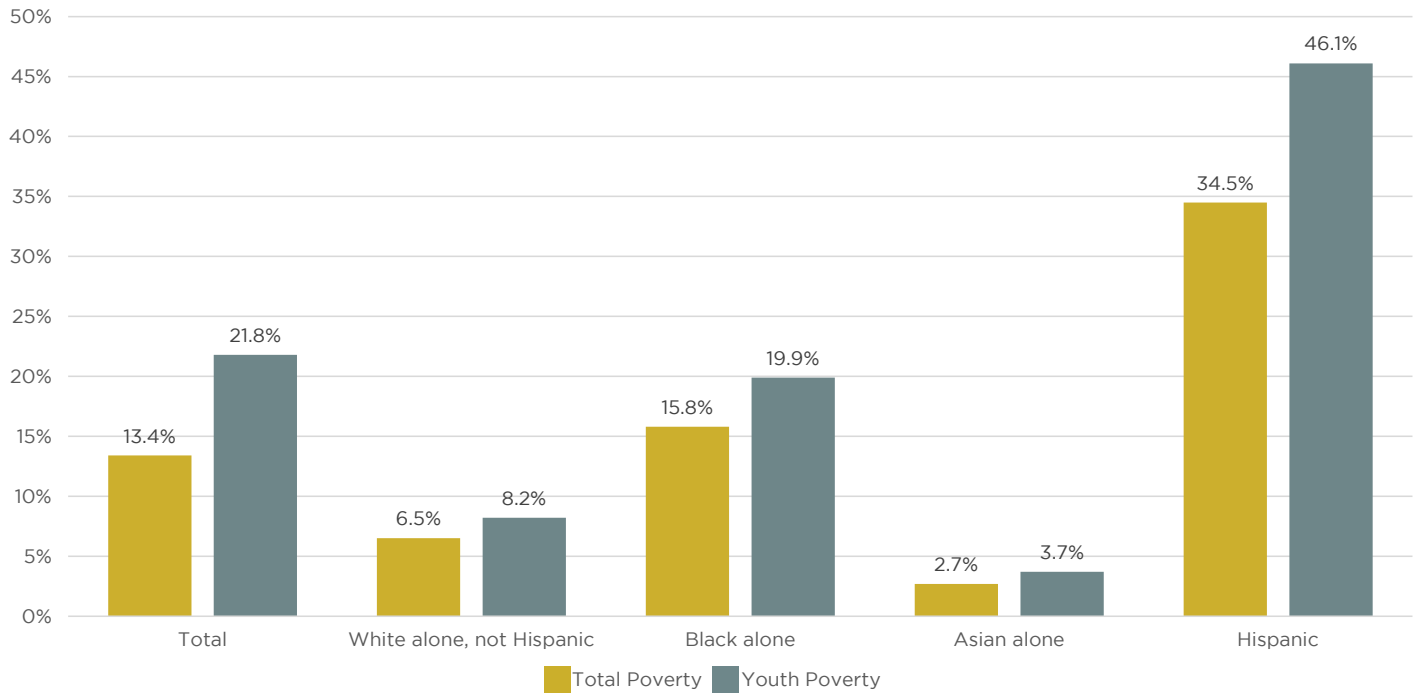
Over the past decade, poverty rates across the country increased as the negative impact of the recession hit households. And although Smyrna's poverty rates increased by less than national trends, the city was not fully immune to such negative recessionary effects. In 2015, Smyrna's poverty rate was 0.6 percentage points higher than in 2010, and its youth poverty rate was 2.3 percentage points higher.

**Figure B-8. Poverty Rates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

**Figure B-9. Poverty Rates by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates

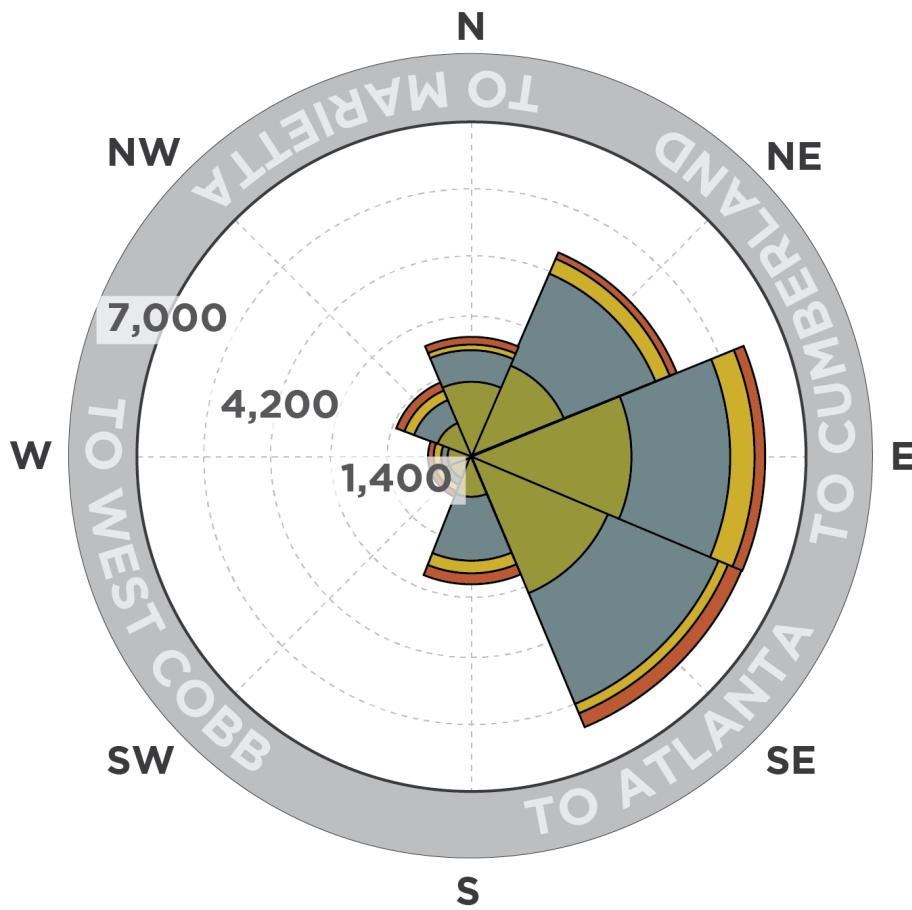


## COMMUTE PROFILE

Although the Metro Atlanta area is notorious for its challenges associated with traffic and rush hour congestion on the interstate, Smyrna is one of the few cities outside the perimeter that enjoys relatively shorter commute times due to its proximity to downtown Atlanta, the airport, and major employment centers. Data show that 94.3 percent of residents are employed outside of

Smyrna for their primary job, suggesting that many residents are in fact taking advantage of Smyrna’s location to major nearby employment centers. In 2014, roughly half of residents were within 10 miles of their place of employment. Overall, approximately 25 percent of residents commute to the city of Atlanta for their primary job.

**Figure B-10. Jobs by Distance and Direction of Travel**

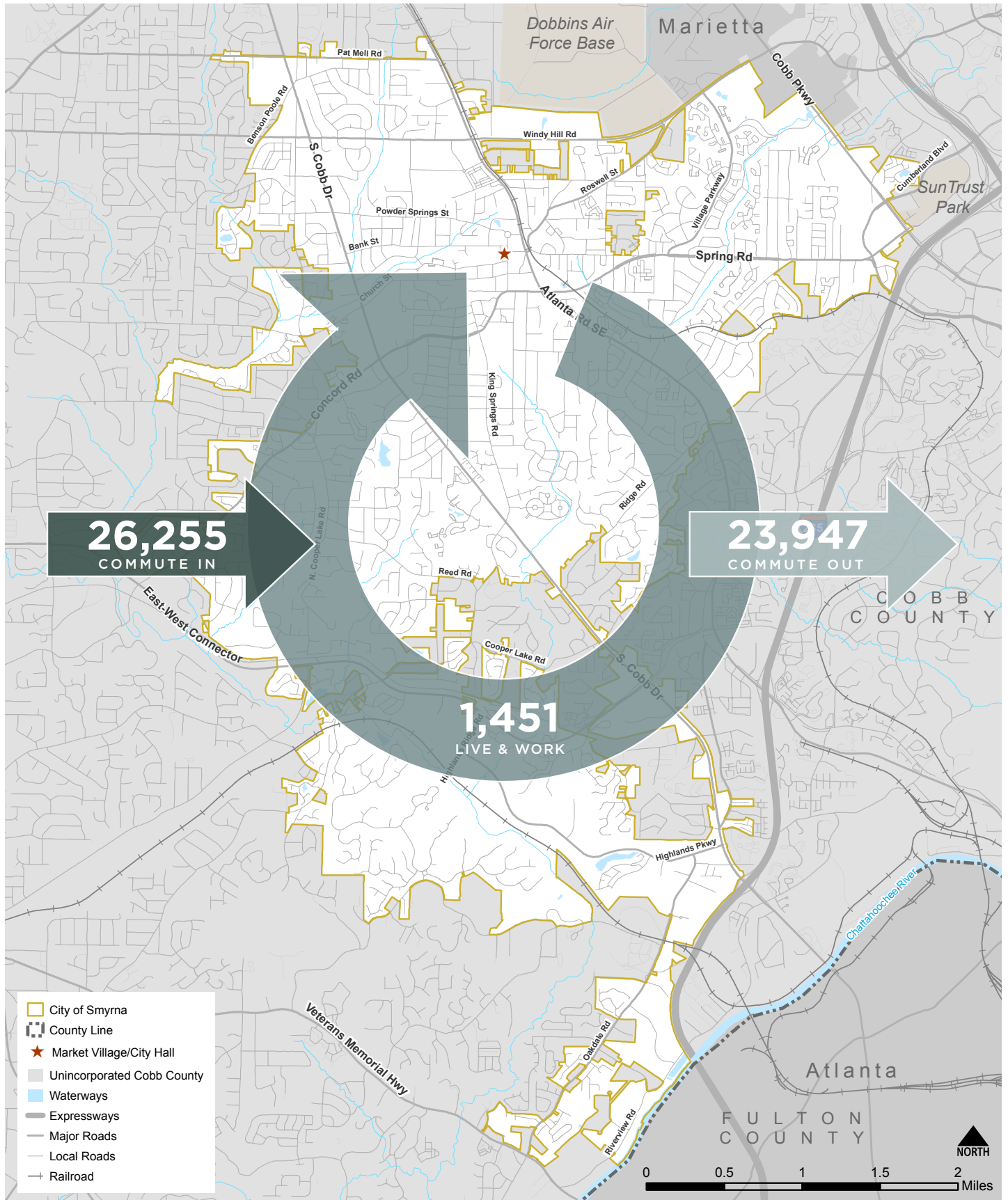


Home Census Block to Work Census Block Distance	2014 Jobs	
	Count	Share
Less than 10 miles	12,664	49.9%
10 to 24 miles	9,893	39.0%
25 to 50 miles	1,525	6.0%
Greater than 50 miles	1,316	5.2%
<b>Total Primary Jobs</b>	<b>25,398</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OntheMap



**Figure B-11. Inflow and Outflow of Workers, 2014**



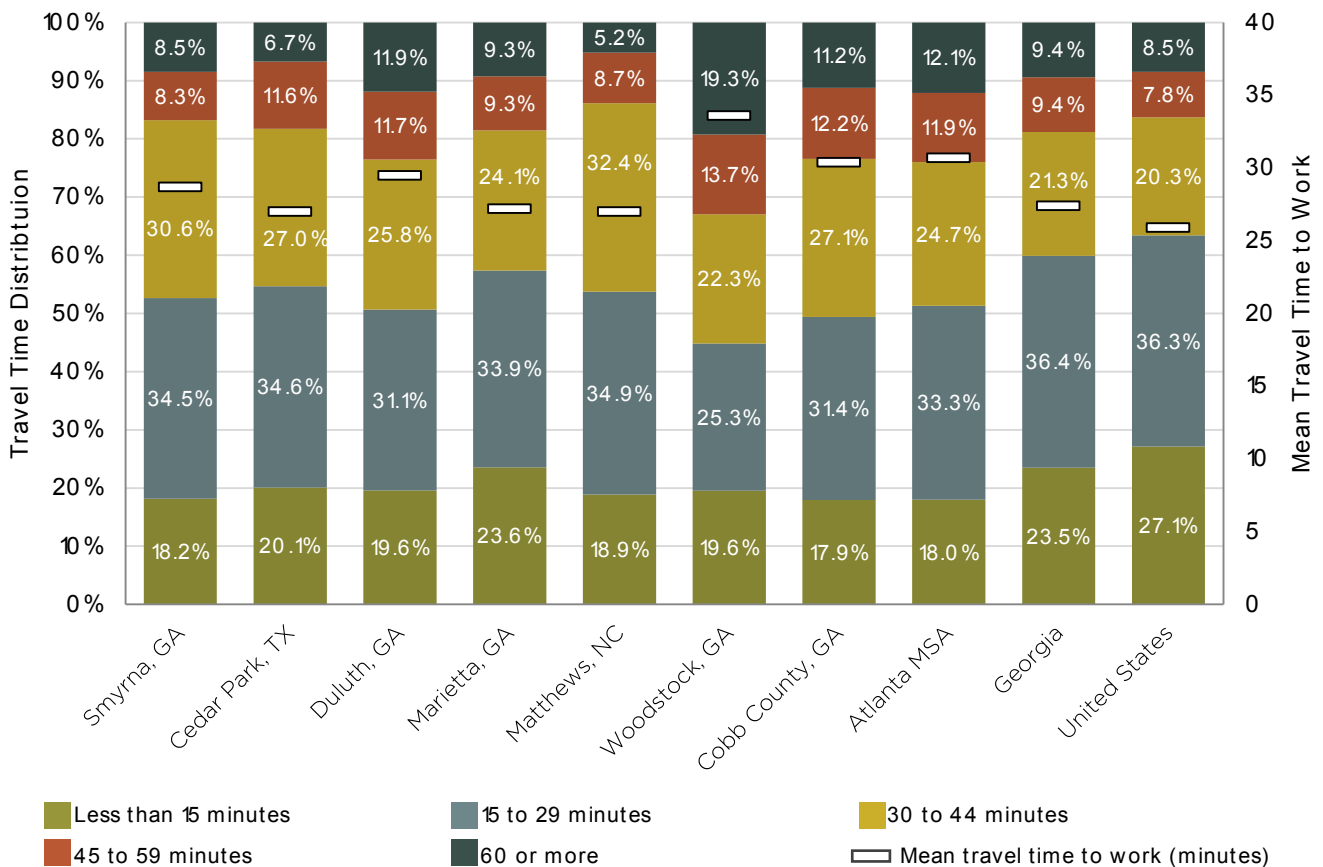
Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Census OntheMap

## TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

The average travel time to work for Smyrna residents was 28.7 minutes in 2015. Smyrna's short mean travel time to work illustrates that the average Smyrna resident is spending less time commuting than the average Atlanta resident. In comparison, Duluth (29.5), Woodstock (33.6), Cobb County (30.4), and the Atlanta MSA (30.7) all reported longer average commute times. In recent years, the average commute time for Smyrna residents increased by 3.3 minutes, a greater increase than any of the comparison communities.

An analysis of the travel time distribution of residents shows that this was most likely influenced by the increase in the share of residents with a commute time of more than 60 minutes. Between 2010 and 2015, there was a 4.3 percent increase in residents with a travel time of 60 minutes or more. Only Woodstock, Georgia experienced a greater increase in the share of residents that had a travel time of greater than one hour to work; its share of workers increased by 6.1 percent.

**Figure B-12. Travel Time to Work, 2011-2015**



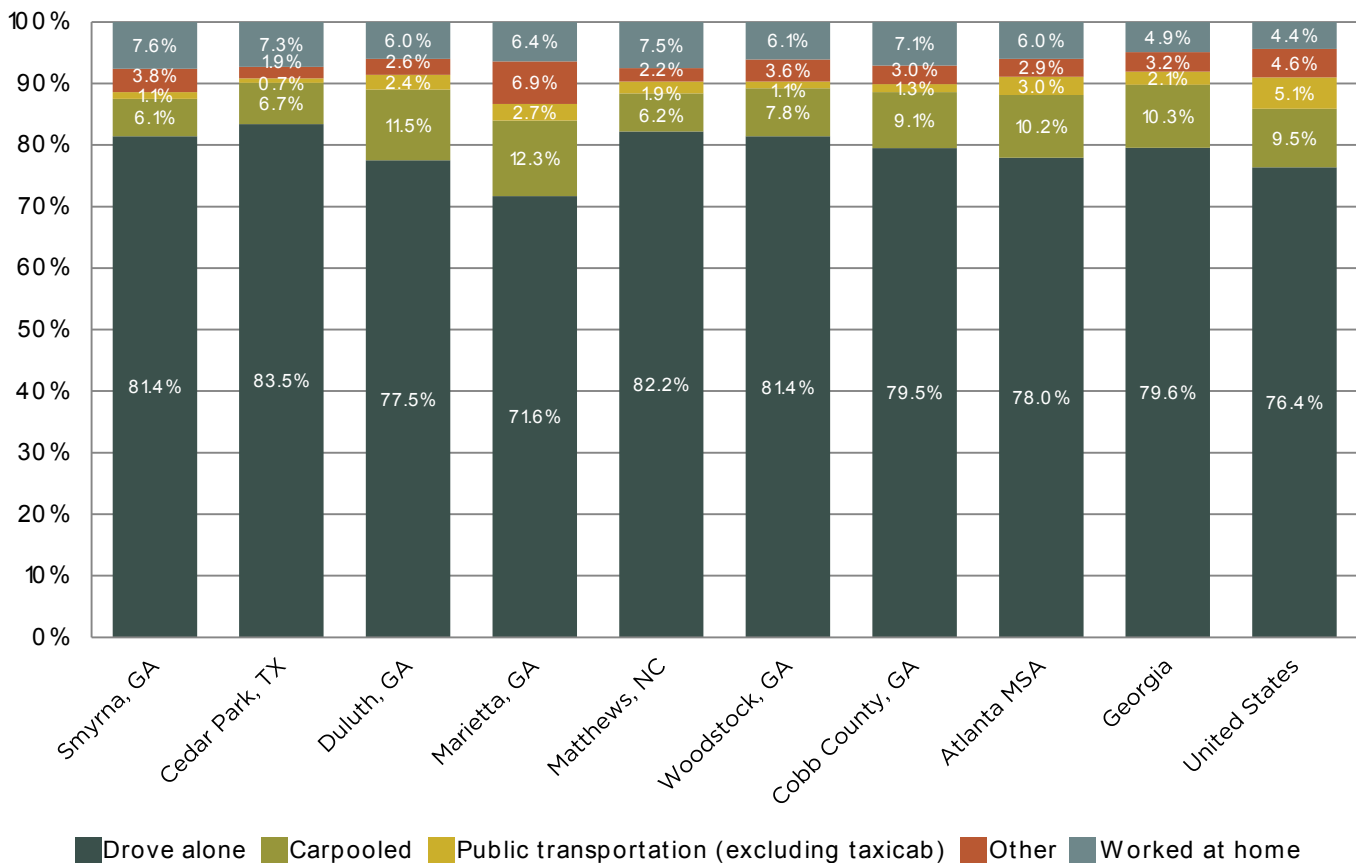
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## TRANSPORTATION MODES

Similar to most communities, the average Smyrna resident's primary means of transportation to work is in a vehicle and driving alone. In 2015, an estimated 81.4 percent of Smyrna residents drove alone, while 76.4 percent of workers in the United States also drove alone. Only 1.1 percent of Smyrna resident use public transportation as their primary mode of travel to work. In the Atlanta MSA, roughly 3 percent of residents use public transportation to travel to work.

Interestingly, Smyrna has the highest share of residents that work at home out of all the comparison communities. The most recent data show that 7.6 percent of workers over the age of 16 worked at home in Smyrna. Nationally, 4.4 percent of individuals work from home. Nearly every comparison community saw an increase in their share of residents that worked from home, as more companies embrace flexible hours and working arrangements for employees. The share of workers that work from home increased by 2.1 percent in Smyrna between 2010 and 2015.

**Figure B-13. Mode of Commute, 2011-2015**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



# LAND USE

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## INTRODUCTION

Much of the character, success, and productivity of a community are tied to how it uses its land. This portion of the baseline assessment systematically reviews existing land use within the City of Smyrna, by analyzing how land is used today, reporting on what plans are underway, and what regulations and policies are in place to change how the land can be used in the future.

In many ways, land use drives the other topic areas addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. The reason for this is that land use management is a primary responsibility of local government. Unlike other topic areas, such as economic development, transportation, and housing (which are primarily influenced and driven by the decisions of businesses, developers, and other government agencies), local land use decisions are the responsibility of the City of Smyrna. The Comprehensive Plan lays out the framework for making land use decisions, and this assessment identifies potential opportunities and issues that will need to be addressed in order to meet the future needs of the community. This provides a foundation upon which the community can identify potential adjustments to its Future Land Use Map, land use policy, and related priorities and initiatives that the City may choose to pursue.

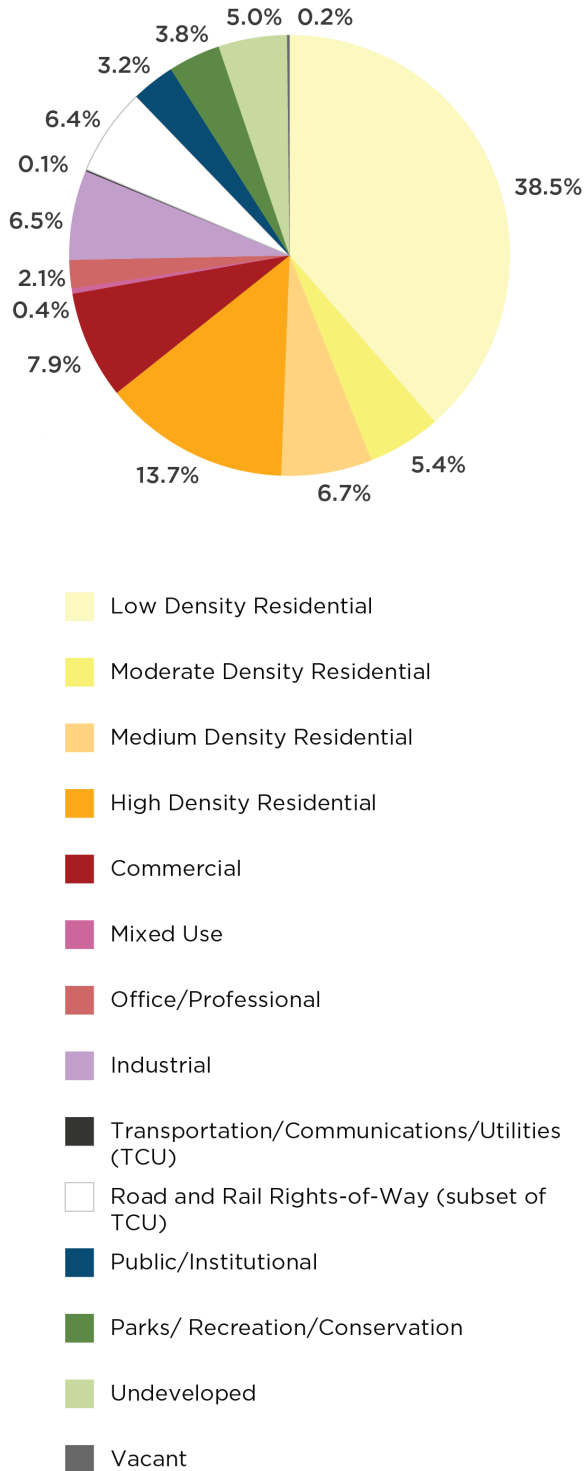
## ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Smyrna currently encompasses approximately 15.5 square miles, and over 19,200 parcels of land. In order to gain a clear understanding of current land use patterns, each of these parcels was classified by how it is being used in January 2017. This existing land use survey was based on data from Comprehensive Plan 2030, development permit records, recent tax records, aerial photography, and a windshield survey. The land use classifications are the same as those in Comprehensive Plan 2030 as described in Table B-5 on page B25.

Based on this survey, a majority of the land (approximately 64 percent) can be classified as residential, nearly two-thirds of which is single-family residential. Slightly less than 17 percent of the city can be classified as employment based or commercial and industrial. Approximately 13 percent is support based, used for Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities, Public/ Institutional, and Parks/ Recreation/ Conservation. Only about 5 percent of the city is still vacant or undeveloped, indicating that most or the new construction in the city will be in the form of redevelopment. Most of this undeveloped land is located close to streams and waterways, and likely has environmental constraints for development.



**Figure B-14. Existing Land Uses**







The parcels classified as vacant are based on a commercial database the City’s economic development team has used over the last several years to track available commercial and industrial space within the City. Only those commercial and industrial buildings that are 100 percent vacant are classified on the Existing Land Use Map as vacant, totaling approximately 17 acres. According to the database, only 5 percent of the City’s total office and industrial space is vacant, which equates to 523,549 sq.ft. of the total supply of 3,684,567 sq. ft. This indicates a strong real estate market, and a high demand for employment based land uses in Smyrna.<sup>1</sup>





Residential uses occupy a majority of the land area within the city. These residential areas are comprised of a large variety of neighborhoods/subdivisions, each with their own character and unified by strong neighborhood or community organizations. According to the City records, there are over 360 neighborhoods/subdivisions in the City. One of Smyrna’s greatest assets is its location within Cobb County and proximity and access to the interstate highway system and the airport. Surrounding Smyrna are several key developments that influence or will influence land use within the city including Dobbins Air Force Base, the Cumberland Mall area, and the new Atlanta Braves Major League Baseball Stadium at SunTrust Field. As a result, opportunities for greenfield development through annexation are few, and surrounding uses are likely to be future catalysts for redevelopment.

<sup>1</sup> City of Smyrna Commercial and Industrial Space Database

**Table B-5. Land Use Classifications**





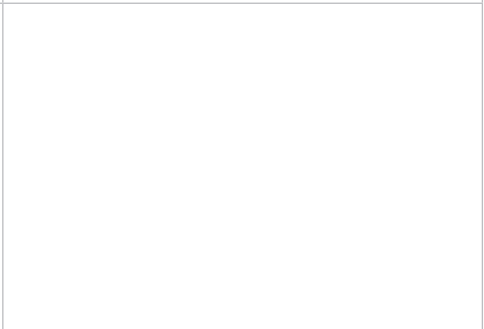
Land Use Classification	Photo
<p><b>Low Density Residential:</b> Single-family detached housing with a density under 3 units per acre.</p>	
<p><b>Moderate Density Residential:</b> Single-family detached housing with a density range between 3 and 4.5 units per acre.</p>	
<p><b>Medium Density Residential:</b> Single-family detached and attached housing with a density range between 4.5 and 6 units per acre.</p>	
<p><b>High Density Residential:</b> Single-family detached, single-family attached, and multifamily attached housing units with a density of 6 units per acre and higher.</p>	

**Table B-5. Land Use Classifications (Continued)**

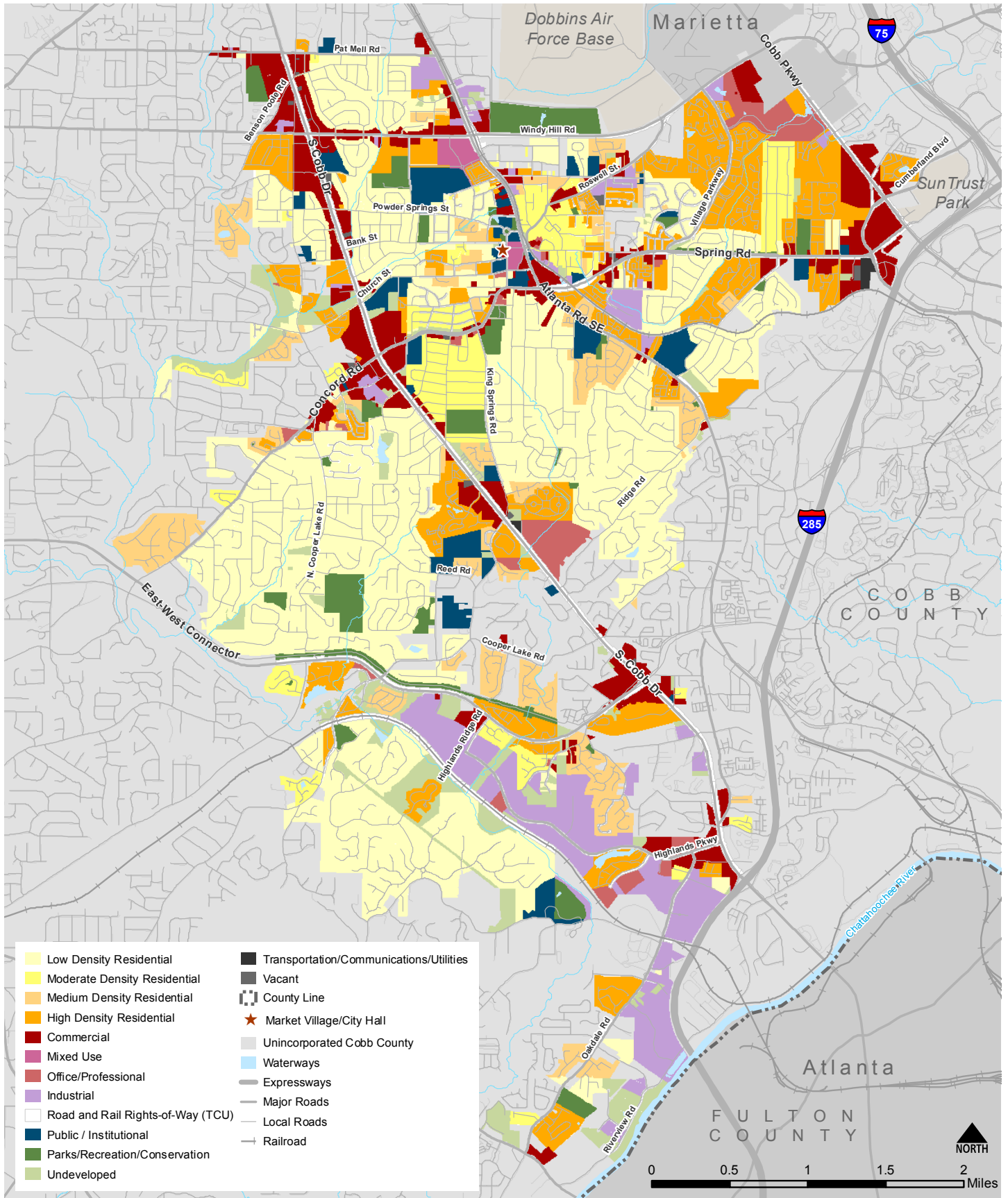
Land Use Classification	Photo
<p><b>Commercial:</b> Land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, services and entertainment facilities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building</p>	
<p><b>Mixed Use:</b> Land developed with an integrated combination of residential, commercial, and office uses. Frequently, mixed-use developments include ground-floor retail, services, and office uses with residential uses on upper floors (vertical mixed use). They can also include a combination of uses on separate, adjacent parcels (horizontal mixed use).</p>	
<p><b>Office / Professional:</b> Office buildings and professional employment centers.</p>	
<p><b>Industrial:</b> Land dedicated to light manufacturing facilities, processing plants, factories, warehousing and wholesale trade facilities, assembly facilities, or other similar uses.</p>	



**Table B-5. Land Use Classifications (Continued)**

Land Use Classification	Photo
<p><b>Transportation/Communication/Utilities:</b>                      Land dedicated to such uses as power generation plants, railroad facilities, radio towers, public transit stations, telephone switching stations, or other similar uses. Road and railroad rights of way are also included in this category. For the purposes of this analysis, road and rail right-of-way has been broken out as a separate listing from the remaining T/C/U uses.</p>	
<p><b>Public/Institutional:</b>                      Land used by state, federal or local government, or institutions. Government uses include city hall and government building complexes, police and fire stations, libraries, prisons, post offices, schools, military installations, etc. Examples of institutional land uses include colleges, churches, cemeteries, hospitals, etc</p>	
<p><b>Parks/Recreation/Conservation:</b> Land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, open space, sensitive habitat, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers and other similar uses.</p>	
<p><b>Undeveloped:</b>                      This category is for lots or tracts of land that have not been developed for a specific use (left in their natural state), though they may be served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.).</p>	
<p><b>Vacant:</b>                      This category is for lots or tracts of land that are served by typical urban public services (water, sewer, etc.), were developed for a specific use, but have since been vacated.</p>	

**Figure B-15. Existing Land Use Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

## KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- The City is mostly built out with only 5 percent of the land being undeveloped. Opportunities for new development will likely take the form of redevelopment of older commercial areas, and infill housing within residential areas. This topic is discussed further under the Analysis of Recent Development Trends.
- Over half the city is used for residential, offering a wide mix of housing types, though single family subdivisions are the dominant residential form.
- Most of the land surrounding the city is also built out, so opportunities for annexation and corresponding greenfield development are few. However, several key activity centers such as Dobbins Airforce Base, SunTrust Park, and Cumberland Mall serve as a strong catalyst for development interest in Smyrna.

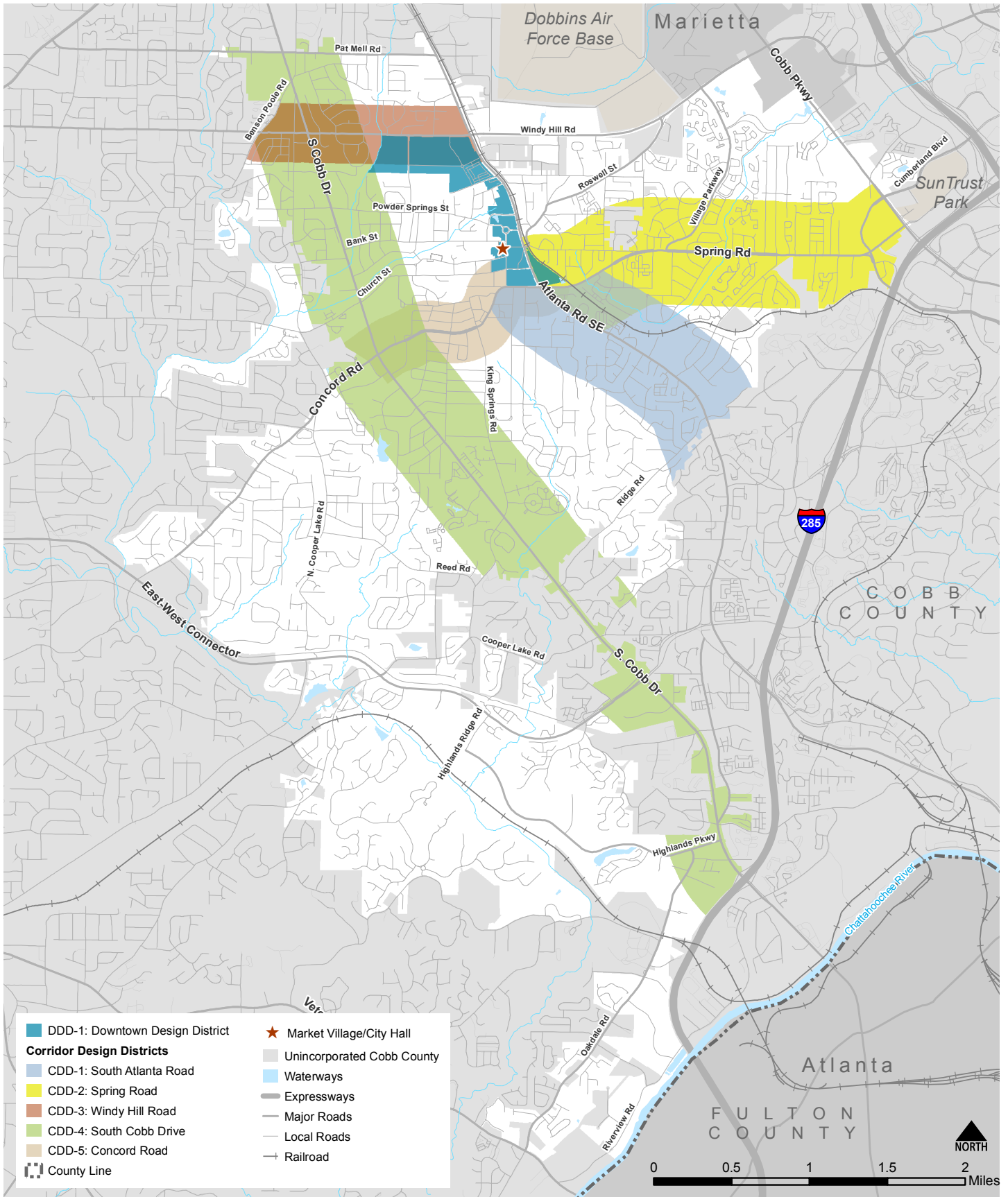
## ANALYSIS OF EXISTING ZONING, INCLUDING FOCUS ON OVERLAY DISTRICTS

The City's zoning regulations, design guidelines, and development requirements play a dominant role in shaping the city's natural and built environment as defined by the city's formal land use policy. The City has a conventional zoning ordinance that for the most part separates traditionally incompatible land uses, such as industrial and residential use. In addition, the City does have a Planned Unit Development District (PUD) and a Residential Attached/detached District (RAD) that allows for a mixture of housing types within the control of an approved master plan. It also has a mixed use district that promotes a mix of compatible uses in a more urban setting.

The city has seven overlay districts including six urban design districts that follow along the major commercial corridors of the city and the downtown area, as reflected in Figure B-17 on page B31 and one Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD).

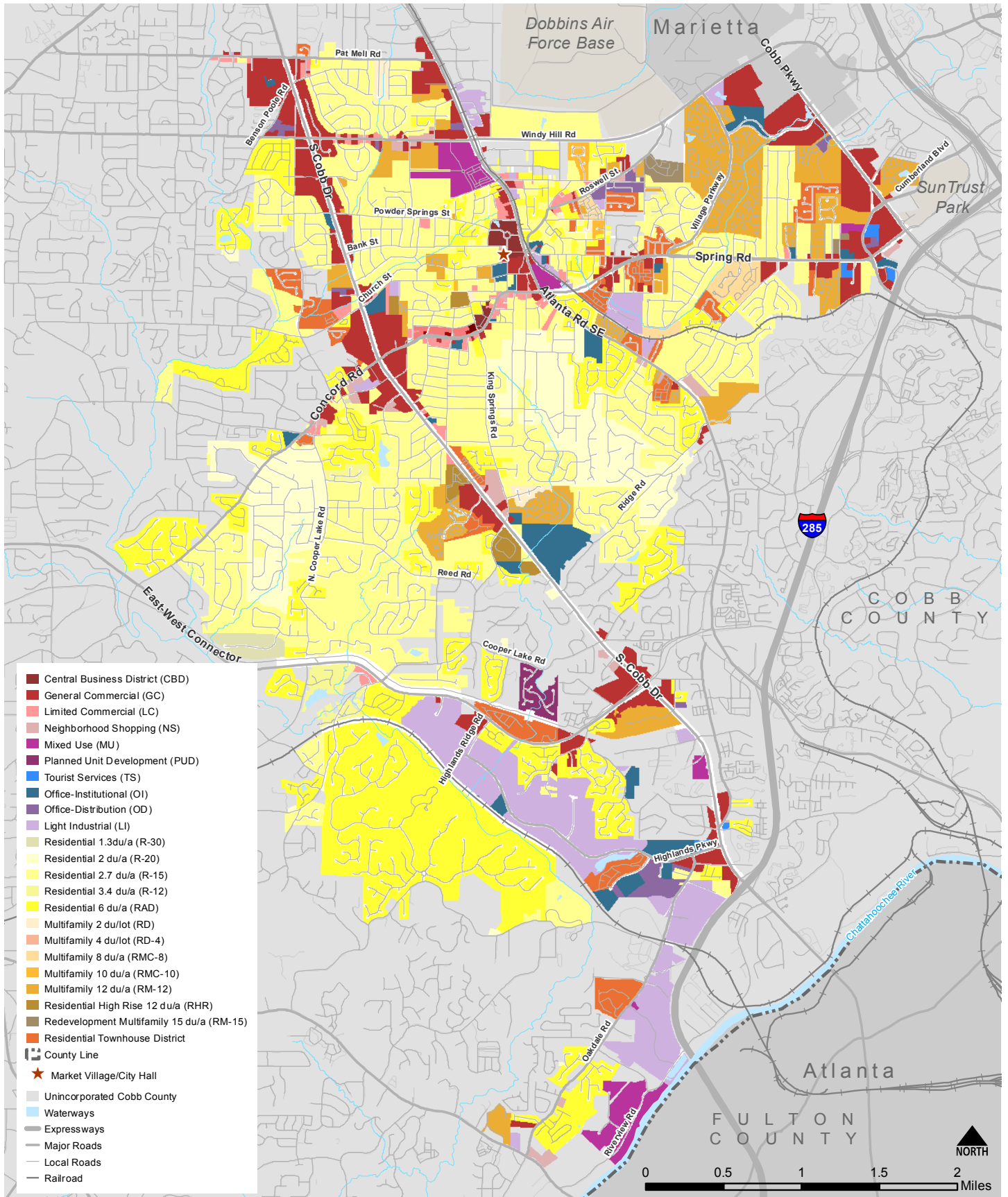
The ROD is a targeted overlay district that maybe overlaid upon the RM-12, RHR, CBD and GC zoning districts and either community activity center, high density residential or mixed-use land use categories as designated on the Future Development Map at the applicant request, and City Council approval. It is intended to provide locations for mixed use development and redevelopment of commercial, office and residential uses which are pedestrian oriented and developed at a community or regional activity center scale and intensity. Table B-6 on page B32 summarizes the prominence of each of these districts within the city.

**Figure B-16. Zoning Overlay Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

**Figure B-17. Zoning Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

**Table B-6. Zoning Area Analysis**

	Zoning Category	Total Square Miles*	Percent Total Area*
Highest Percent Land Area	R-15	4.34	32.8%
	RAD	2.80	21.2%
	GC	1.18	8.9%
	RM-12	1.05	8.0%
	LI	0.94	7.1%
	R-20	0.92	7.0%
	RTD	0.47	3.5%
	OI	0.32	2.4%
	MU	0.25	1.9%
	LC	0.14	1.1%
Lowest Percent Land Area	R-12	0.11	0.9%
	OD	0.11	0.8%
	NS	0.10	0.8%
	RMC-8	0.09	0.7%
	RHR	0.08	0.6%
	R-30	0.06	0.5%
	PUD	0.05	0.4%
	RD	0.05	0.4%
	CBD	0.05	0.3%
	RM-15	0.04	0.3%
RM-10	0.03	0.2%	
TS	0.03	0.2%	
TBD	0.01	0.1%	
RD-4	0.00	0.0%	
Total	13.21	100.0%	

Source: City of Smyrna

\* The total land area of the City of Smyrna is 15.46 square miles. The City's zoning data does not assign zoning to rights-of-way and easements. Percentages shown represent the proportion of zoned land.

**Table B-7. Zoning Descriptions - Design Overlays**

Urban Design District	Description
DDD-1	Downtown Design District
CDD-1	South Atlanta Road
CDD-2	Spring Road
CDD-3	Windy Hill Road
CDD-4	South Cobb Drive
CDD-5	Concord Road

**Table B-8. Zoning Descriptions**

Zoning Code	Description
R-30	Single-family residential, 30,000 square feet, maximum 1.3 dwelling units per acre.
R-20	Single-family residential, 20,000 square feet, maximum 2 dwelling units per acre.
R-15	Single-family residential, 15,000 square feet, maximum 2.7 dwelling units per acre.
R-12	Single-family residential, 12,000 square feet, maximum 3.4 dwelling units per acre.
RAD	Residential attached and/or detached, maximum 6 dwelling units per acre.
RMC-8	Multi-family residential condominium ownership, maximum 8 dwelling units per acre.
RM-10	Multi-family residential, maximum 10 dwelling units per acre.
RM-12	Multi-family residential, maximum 12 dwelling units per acre.
RD	Multi-family residential, maximum 2 units per 12,500-square-foot lot.
RD-4	Multi-family residential, maximum 4 units per 17,000-square-foot lot.
TD	Multi-family residential, maximum 10 units per acre.
RM-15	Redevelopment district - Multi-family residential, maximum 15 dwelling units per acre.
RHR	Residential high-rise, maximum 12 dwelling units per acre, or as provided in article X.
FC	Future Commercial
LC	Limited Commercial
OI	Office-Institutional
NS	Neighborhood Shopping
CBD	Central Business District
MU	Mixed Use
GC	General Commercial
OD	Office-Distribution
LI	Light Industrial
TS	Tourist Services
PUD	Planned Unit Development
ROD	Redevelopment Overlay District

## KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- The existing land use and zoning maps are very similar, indicating that there are few deviations from the policies established in the previous Comprehensive Plan for the city.
- The urban design districts could be simplified and reorganized to be more uniform to ease use of the code for both city staff and the community, such as improved district boundary descriptions to remove overlaps.
- Two residential zoning categories (R-15 and RAD), combined, cover almost 50 percent of the city:
- The R-15 zoning district allows for single-family detached homes on lots with a minimum lot size of 15,000 sq. ft. at a density of 2.7 units per acre. The R-15 zoning comprises 28 percent of the City's total land area (32.8 percent of zoned land area). The RAD zoning district allows for single-family detached or attached homes at a density of 6 units per acre. The RAD zoning comprises 18 percent of the City's total land area (21.2 percent of zoned land area).
- R-15 is comprised mainly of well-established single-family neighborhoods, whereas RAD is a zoning designation of choice for many new residential infill developments, allowing for a range of attached and detached housing products.
- Because the two zoning classifications are so prevalent, they often abut one another, and there has been some concern voiced from staff and stakeholders in previous planning efforts regarding the need for appropriate buffers and setbacks to preserve the low density character of the traditional single-family neighborhoods.



## ANALYSIS OF RECENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Images on the following page highlight recent and ongoing developments in and around Smyrna, as well as those areas that have development or redevelopment potential. Noted developments in recent years include:

- **Smyrna Grove** – A 194 single-family home subdivision at the intersection of Windy Hill Road and Old Concord Road.
- **Jonquil** – A mixed-use development at the intersection of Atlanta Road and Spring Road, that includes 266 multi-family units, a 46,000 sq. ft. grocery store, and 21,400 sq. ft. of retail space in three multi-tenant buildings.
- **Belmont** – A mixed-use development at the intersection of Atlanta Road and Windy Hill Road, that includes 274 multi-family units, 154 single-family homes, 164 independent senior housing units (proposed), 28,000 sq. ft. of retail space, and a 30,000 sq. ft. medical office building.
- **Concord Road Linear Park** – A new 6-acre city park along the north side of Concord Road at the intersection with Hollis Street, and an additional 1.5 acres of retail-office and restaurant parcels.
- **Riverview Landing** – An 83-acre mixed-use development proposed along the Chattahoochee River on an old industrial site along Riverview Road, which will include 65 single-family detached homes, 233 townhomes, 310 multi-family units and 3,000 sq. ft. of retail space.
- **The Battery Atlanta** – A mixed-use development located just outside the City at the intersection of I-285 and I-75 that will be anchored by the new Atlanta Braves Baseball Stadium, SunTrust Park. The Battery Atlanta will include 630,000 sq. ft. of office, 500,000 sq. ft. of retail space, 450,000 sq. ft. of hotel space, 750,000 sq. ft. of multi-family space, and 100,000 sq. ft. of multi-use space.



Clockwise from Top Left: 1) Single family homes at Smyrna Grove; 2) Commercial buildings under construction at the mixed-use Jonquil Village development; 3) Concord Road Linear Park; 4) Rendering of The Battery Atlanta, anchored by the new Atlanta Braves Stadium, SunTrust Park; 5) Rendering of waterfront property at the proposed Riverview Landing development; 6) Smyrna Elementary School and multi-family housing at the mixed-use Belmont development.

Source: City of Smyrna Community Development Department, 2016

The Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan identifies that the City has been fortunate to experience relatively even growth over the past ten years, while overall growth in Metro Atlanta has slowed down in many areas. This clearly points to the desirability of Smyrna as a unique destination and preferred location for investment. As stated under the “Analysis of Existing Conditions,” most of this investment will be in the form of redevelopment, and the Development Trends/Opportunity Map points out the location of vacant commercial and industrial tracts where this is likely to occur.

In addition, the City has also witnessed a great deal of infill residential development, where houses in older neighborhoods are being significantly renovated or torn down and replaced. In some incidences, the original residential lot is being subdivided as well, thus increasing the existing housing density in the neighborhoods. Based on field observations, infill residential is particularly prevalent in the northern portions of the city near the Market Village.

### KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- Development interest in Smyrna is relatively high as witnessed by several ongoing and proposed developments.
- Most of the market interest is in large mixed-used development and infill housing.

## REVIEW OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

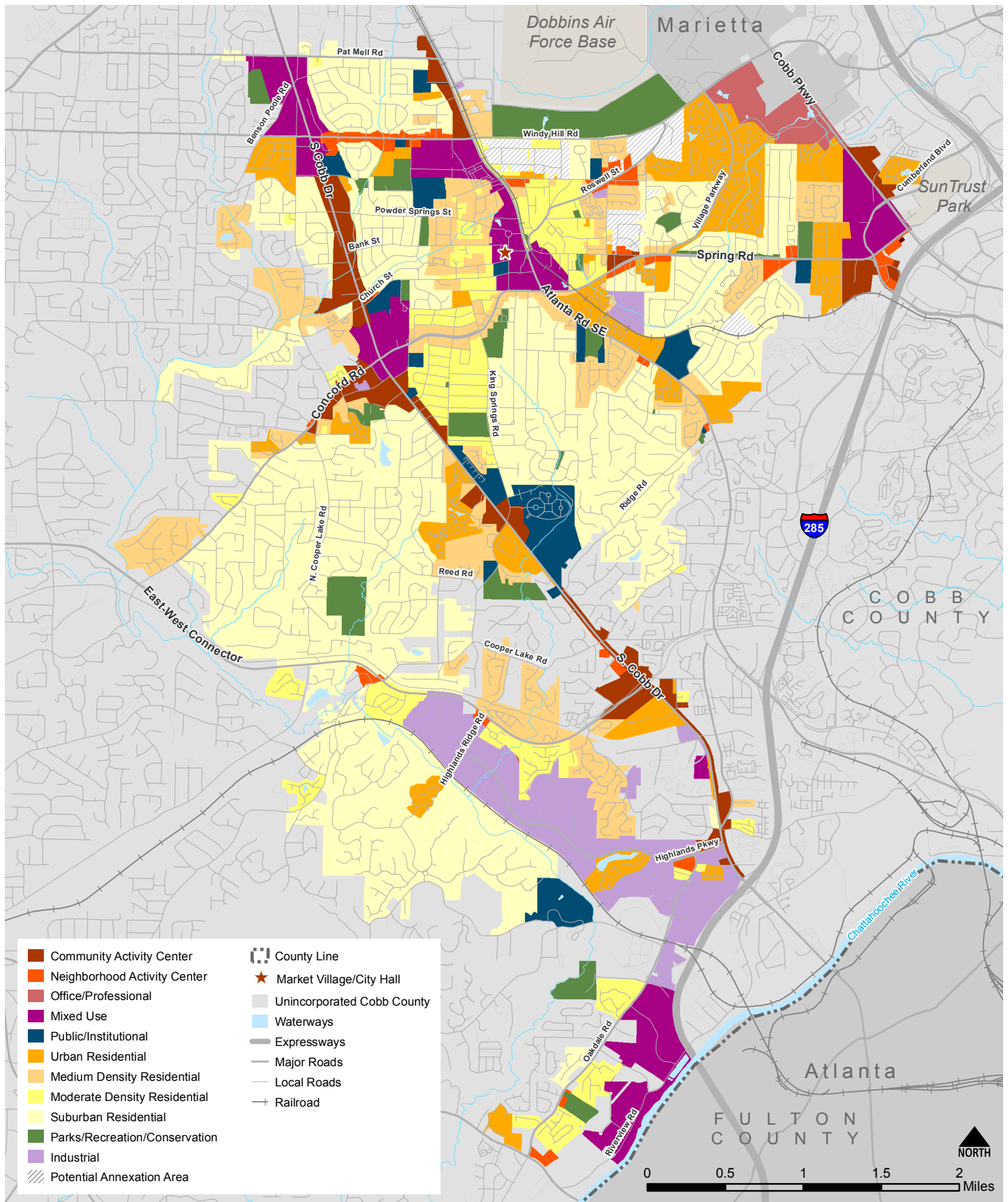
Adopted in 2007 as part of the City of Smyrna Comprehensive Plan 2030, Smyrna’s current Future Land Use Map (FLUM), referred to as the Future Development Map, and supportive narrative provides a vision for development patterns and land use throughout the City’s in terms of distinct development areas. Each development area lists recommended land uses that would be compatible with the area’s vision and intent, as well as a review of the state’s Quality Community Objectives and recommended implementation measures which can be applied to achieve the desired vision for each area. This map is used primarily for guidance in making rezoning decisions.

Compared to other future development or future land use maps, around the State, the Smyrna Future Development Map is very prescriptive and describes the development areas in terms of primary land use at the parcel level, very similar to a zoning map.

The vision and intent of each of the existing 13 development areas is summarized on the following pages. The Future Development Map also denotes potential annexation areas, but it did not offer any guidance as to the future character or vision of those areas. Since the plan’s adoption, several of those areas have been annexed and were subsequently reclassified using the adopted palette of 13 development areas as prescribed under the land use guidelines in the City’s Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) with Cobb County. The SDS spells out what City land use designations would be acceptable to the County if the parcels were to be annexed. A corresponding City future development category is assigned for each County category. Figure B-19 on page B39 shows the recommended designations for nearby unincorporated parcels.

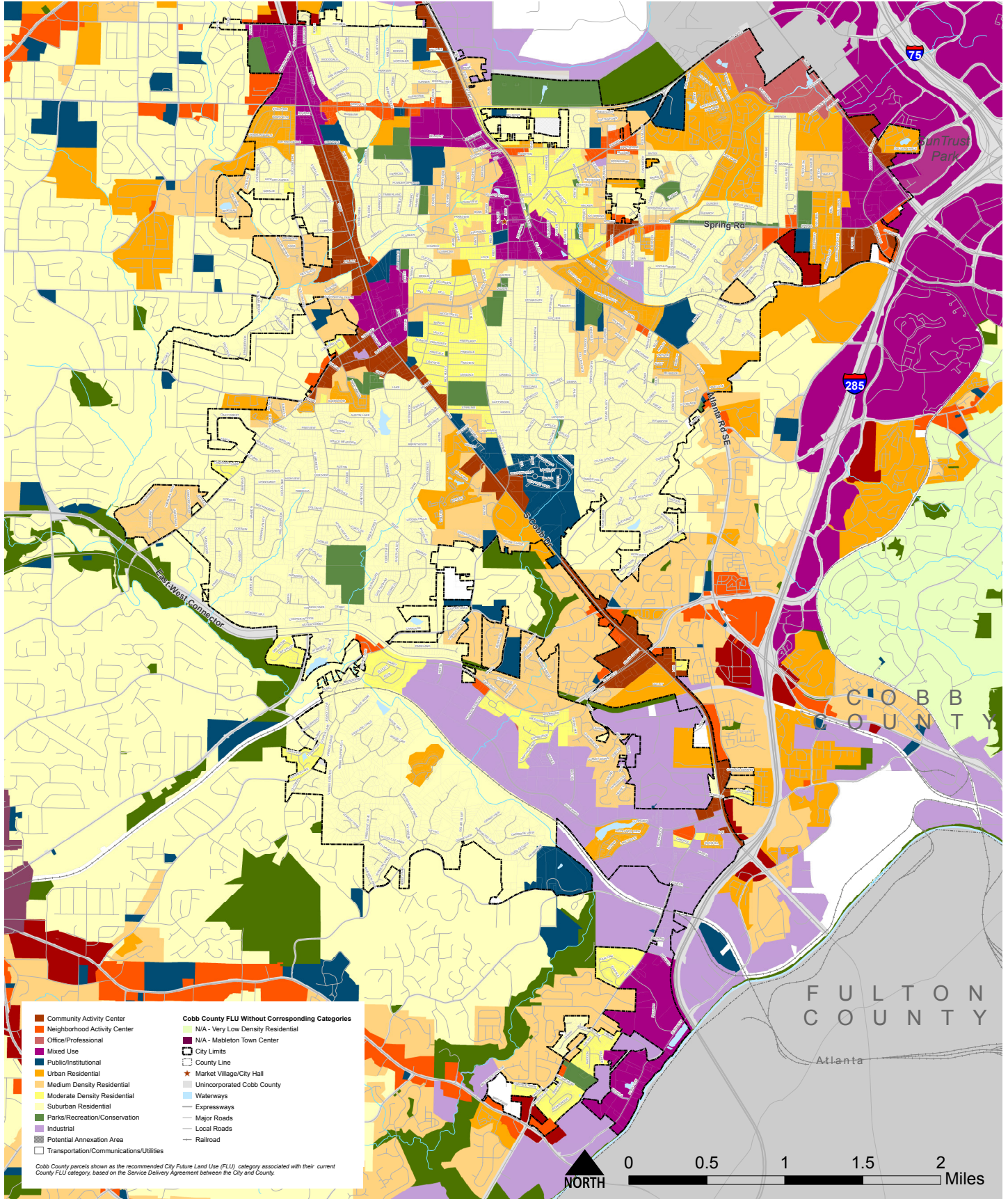
The appropriate land uses, implementation measures, and boundaries of the areas on the Future Development Map will be reviewed, validated, and possibly revised as part of this comprehensive planning effort.

**Figure B-18. Future Development Map (Comprehensive Plan 2030)**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

**Figure B-19. Combined City of Smyrna Future Development Map and Recommended Future Development Categories for Potential Cobb County Annexations**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; City of Smyrna and Cobb County Service Delivery Strategy Agreement  
 Note: Cobb County parcels are shown as the recommended City Future Development category associated with their current County FLU category, based on the Service Delivery Strategy Agreement.



## **SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL (LESS THAN 3 UNITS/ACRE)**

Comprised almost exclusively of single-family residential neighborhoods, Suburban Residential is the largest development area on the Future Development Map, representing over 44 percent of the total land area. The vision is one of preservation and enhancement: preservation from commercial encroachment, incompatible uses and traffic, and enhancement through support of public services, recreational and small scale institutional uses.

Suburban Residential neighborhoods are often characterized by cul-de-sacs and curvilinear street patterns designed to discourage cut-through traffic.

## **MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (UNDER 4.5 UNITS/ACRE)**

Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods primarily consist of single-family detached housing at a slightly higher density than Suburban Residential neighborhoods. The development area is characterized by a high level of pedestrian orientation and traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles. TND principles include a gridded street network, houses oriented towards the street with relatively small setbacks. Because of its pedestrian oriented design, Moderate Density Residential development is supportive of “Main Street” retail opportunities and Neighborhood Activity Centers. It is encouraged within one half mile of the Smyrna Market Village, and also serves as a transition area between established Suburban Residential neighborhoods and Neighborhood Activity Centers.

## **MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (UNDER 6 UNITS/ACRE)**

Medium Density Residential areas provide for both small attached and detached housing at a greater density than both Suburban and Moderate Density Residential neighborhoods. Medium Density Residential neighborhoods may include a mixture of owner and renter occupied housing, and also provides opportunities for innovative master planned communities such as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Conservation Subdivisions.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are master planned communities that may include a mixture of housing types and sizes all within one development or subdivision. PUDs may also include a Neighborhood Activity Center component of convenience shopping, recreational facilities, or open space. Buildings are often clustered within PUDs in order to provide for collectively owned parks, trails, and open space. PUDs allow for greater development flexibility while increasing administrative discretion and negotiating power.

Conservation Subdivisions are an approach to laying out residential subdivisions so that a significant percentage of buildable uplands are permanently protected in such a manner as to create interconnected networks of conservation lands. This style of development keeps the same gross density as a traditional subdivision, but more closely clusters houses together on a portion of the total lot in order to preserve conservation land for communal enjoyment. In theory, this concept may be applied to other residential density categories, but it is restricted to the Medium Density Residential development area in Smyrna.

## URBAN RESIDENTIAL (6 UNITS/ACRE AND OVER)

Urban Residential areas provide opportunities for high density attached housing of both owner-occupied and rental tenure. This development area includes townhomes, condominiums, as well as apartment developments. Urban Residential communities often provide a transitional area between Neighborhood Activity and Community Activity Centers and surrounding lower density residential neighborhoods. Urban Residential areas are also compatible with adjacent mixed-use development. This development area encourages pedestrian accessibility to nearby Activity Centers, Mixed Use districts, and redevelopment of older multi-family housing into condominiums and townhomes.

Many of the City’s existing Urban Residential communities are located along high-volume corridors such as Cobb Parkway and South Cobb Drive. Both of these corridors have been identified as areas for targeted redevelopment and improvement. In many ways, the fate of these Urban Residential communities is intertwined with their adjacent commercial corridors. Redevelopment proposals in this area are encouraged to allow for mixed-use redevelopment of older shopping centers along with surrounding apartments with both pedestrian and automobile connectivity with adjacent activity centers.



## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER

Neighborhood Activity Centers are neighborhood focal points with a concentration of small commercial, civic, and public activities. Uses within Neighborhood Activity Centers are intended to be local-serving. Development within these areas is encouraged to be pedestrian-oriented and compatible with surrounding single-family residential areas, and at a smaller scale of intensity than Community Activity Centers. Neighborhood Activity Centers are typically less than 10 acres in total area, with small-scale commercial establishments each less than 5,000 square feet in size, and two stories or less. Neighborhood Activity Centers are normally found at the intersection of collector streets which serve residential areas.

Commercial buildings within Neighborhood Activity Centers are intended to be oriented to streets that are easily accessible from adjacent neighborhoods. Buildings should have minimal front setbacks for easy accessibility by pedestrians (such as zero lot line). Building entrances should be oriented toward streets; corner buildings should have corner entrances whenever possible. When it is not practical or reasonable to orient building entrances toward existing streets, a new “shopping street” with sidewalks and pedestrian amenities can be created within the commercial center. Developments should include sidewalks with a street furniture zone.



Apartments (left), townhomes (right), and other housing types with densities over 6 du/a are permitted within the Urban Residential category. Single-family detached homes on smaller lots also fall into this category.

Parking and vehicle drives should be located away from building entrances, and not allowed between a building entrance and the street. Surface parking should be shared and oriented behind or to the side of buildings. Landscaped buffering should be provided between parking lots, adjacent sidewalks, and adjacent residential land uses.

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER

Community Activity Centers are regional focal points containing a mix of commercial, professional, civic, and public uses. Community Activity Centers are designed to accommodate commercial uses serving several adjacent neighborhoods. Community Activity Centers have been established along major arterials and at key intersections where development nodes can be supported by the regional transportation network. While Community Activity Centers are more automobile-oriented than Neighborhood Activity Centers, basic access and safety should be provided for pedestrians.

A transition in building scale and land use type should be provided between higher intensity uses and adjacent residential areas. Urban Residential areas may serve as a transition between Community Activity Centers and lower density Suburban Residential areas. This transition in uses removes such high intensity centers from single-family neighborhoods and serves to buffer nearby neighborhoods. In addition, more intense uses

should be focused on those properties in the center of the Community Activity Center and away from existing residential development.

## MIXED USE

A prime example of the mixed use development area is the Smyrna Market Village. The Market Village serves as the symbolic heart of the City as a mixed use live/work/play district that provides a venue for gatherings, events, and civic activities. It also provides a unique sense of place and identity for Smyrna, along with a vibrant mix of uses within easy walking distance. Like the Market Village, other mixed use redevelopment of key Community Activity Centers will help revitalize aging commercial areas and serve as a positive amenity for surrounding residential areas. Two key examples are the Belmont and Jonquil developments, both of which are integrated with the City's existing downtown area.

The Future Development Map also encourages additional Mixed Use redevelopment areas at key intersections along major corridors such as South Cobb Drive and Cobb Parkway. South Cobb Drive has been identified as a redevelopment corridor in both the Cobb County Comprehensive Plan and the City of Smyrna Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study. Mixed Use redevelopment will be encouraged along South Cobb Drive at its intersections with Windy Hill Road and Concord Road.



Commercial uses are located in multiple future development areas, such as the Community Activity Center area along the Silver Comet and East-West Connector (left) and amongst other uses in the Mixed Use area at Market Village (right).



## OFFICE / PROFESSIONAL

The Office / Professional development area seeks to encourage office park development in appropriate locations such as around the around the Cumberland CID/Galleria regional activity center in an effort to diversify and strengthen the City's economic base. Supportive commercial retail and services are also considered appropriate within these areas.

## INDUSTRIAL AREA

Industrial development areas provide suitable locations for industrial employment which do not conflict with residential areas. Clean, light industrial uses that have minimal impact on nearby residential use are encouraged, as well as transportation/ warehousing/ distribution uses carefully planned to avoid freight traffic impacts on residential areas. In addition to industrial uses, some supportive commercial development is also appropriate within industrial areas. Office uses may also be integrated into some light industrial, distribution, and warehousing developments. For example, the Highlands Parkway corridor includes office parks along with some light industrial and distribution uses.

## PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL

Public/Institutional areas consist of government and civic nodes that provide services to surrounding neighborhoods. Public / Institutional buildings often serve as the anchor for Neighborhood Activity Centers. Public / Institutional areas are compatible with both residential neighborhoods and activity centers. Schools and churches are often located within neighborhoods in order to isolate children from high-traffic areas. However, intensive public uses, such as 'mega-churches' and city halls should be located within Community Activity Centers and Mixed Use districts. Because public/institutional uses are so integral to the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the value of keeping this category as a separate development area should be evaluated.

## PARKS / RECREATION / CONSERVATION

Parks and recreational facilities form an important neighborhood asset and contribute to the overall health and quality of life of the community. This development area includes all public parks and multi-use paths and greenways such as the Silver Comet Trail. The City of Smyrna is committed to the expansion and enhancement of its system of greenways, parks, and the development of new linear park facilities. New greenways will be created connecting parks, public facilities, and activity centers. Linkages and trailside amenities will also be created between the city's trail system, pedestrian network, and residential neighborhoods.

It should be noted that this development area for most part reflects existing parks and conserved areas at the time of the last plans adoption, not proposed or potential areas. Also as noted earlier, parks often are integral to the overall character of the surrounding neighborhood are may best be described as part of a larger development area. A close look at future park expansions and plans should be made to determine if additional areas should be included in this development area as part of this planning effort, or indeed whether the development area should be deleted and the area designated as PRC integrated into other surrounding development areas.



**Table B-9. Future Development Area and Zoning Comparison**

Future Development Area	Corresponding Zoning District
Suburban Residential	R-30, R-20, R-15, OI
Moderate Density Residential	R-15, OI
Medium Density Residential	R-12, RAD, PUD, OI
Urban Residential	RAD, RMC-8, RM-10, RM-12, RM-15, RD, RD-4, RTD, OI
Neighborhood Activity Center	LC, NS, FC
Community Activity Center	GC, MU, NS, TS
Mixed Use	CBD, MU
Office / Professional	OI, OD
Industrial Area	LI, OD
Public / Institutional	OI
Parks / Recreation / Conservation	R-15

Source: Robert and Company, 2007

## KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- Compared to other future development or future land use maps around the state, the Smyrna Future Development Map is very prescriptive and describes the development areas in terms of primary land use at the parcel level, very similar to a zoning map. The advantage of this is that it is easy to apply and interpret, as well as transparent, because it is so specific. On the other hand, it does not offer much in the way of land use flexibility and does not necessarily enhance or reflect the distinct character of a particular area, for example, where design overlays may be applied. Through this planning process, the City may want to consider revising the current palette of development areas it uses.
- The adopted plan had identified as an issue that “Our community’s land use/development regulations and Future Land Use map do not match.” This point needs to be further explored through the public involvement process to see if this perspective is still shared today.

**Table B-10. Future Development Area Acreage Totals**

Future Development Areas	Acres	Percent Total Land Area
Suburban Residential	4,285.2	44.4%
Moderate Density Residential	798.7	8.3%
Medium Density Residential	1,056.5	10.9%
Urban Residential	879.9	9.1%
Neighborhood Activity Center	146.0	1.5%
Community Activity Center	442.6	4.6%
Mixed Use	631.4	6.5%
Office / Professional	133.5	1.4%
Industrial Area	620.5	6.4%
Public / Institutional	348.8	3.6%
Parks / Recreation / Conservation	316.3	3.3%
Potential Annexation Areas	189.5	N/A
<b>Total (Excluding Annexation Areas)</b>	<b>9,659.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Robert and Company, 2007

## REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

The City of Smyrna's natural features are typical of similar Atlanta communities close to the Chattahoochee River. It is primarily characterized by a mature tree canopy, a protected stream network, and sloping topography. As the following evaluation of environmental planning criteria indicates, there are few natural constraints to development in the City, but those that do exist are primarily associated with the protection of the City's water resources and associated sloping topography near the city's watercourse network. In particular, natural constraints are most prominent along the Chattahoochee River, Nickajack Creek, Laurel Creek, and Poplar Creek. In addition, as the Topology Map indicates steep slopes are also found along both sides of the appropriately named Ridge Road.

## EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Protecting the city's natural environment plays an important role in furthering the quality of life for Smyrna residents and contributes to a healthy regional ecosystem that is sustainable for generations to come. The City of Smyrna's ordinances and development regulations help achieve these important needs by including a series of provisions that maintain consistency with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District plans and the Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria of the Georgia Planning act that are administered by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Consistency with these plans and criteria are described in the following section.

## REGIONAL WATER PLANS

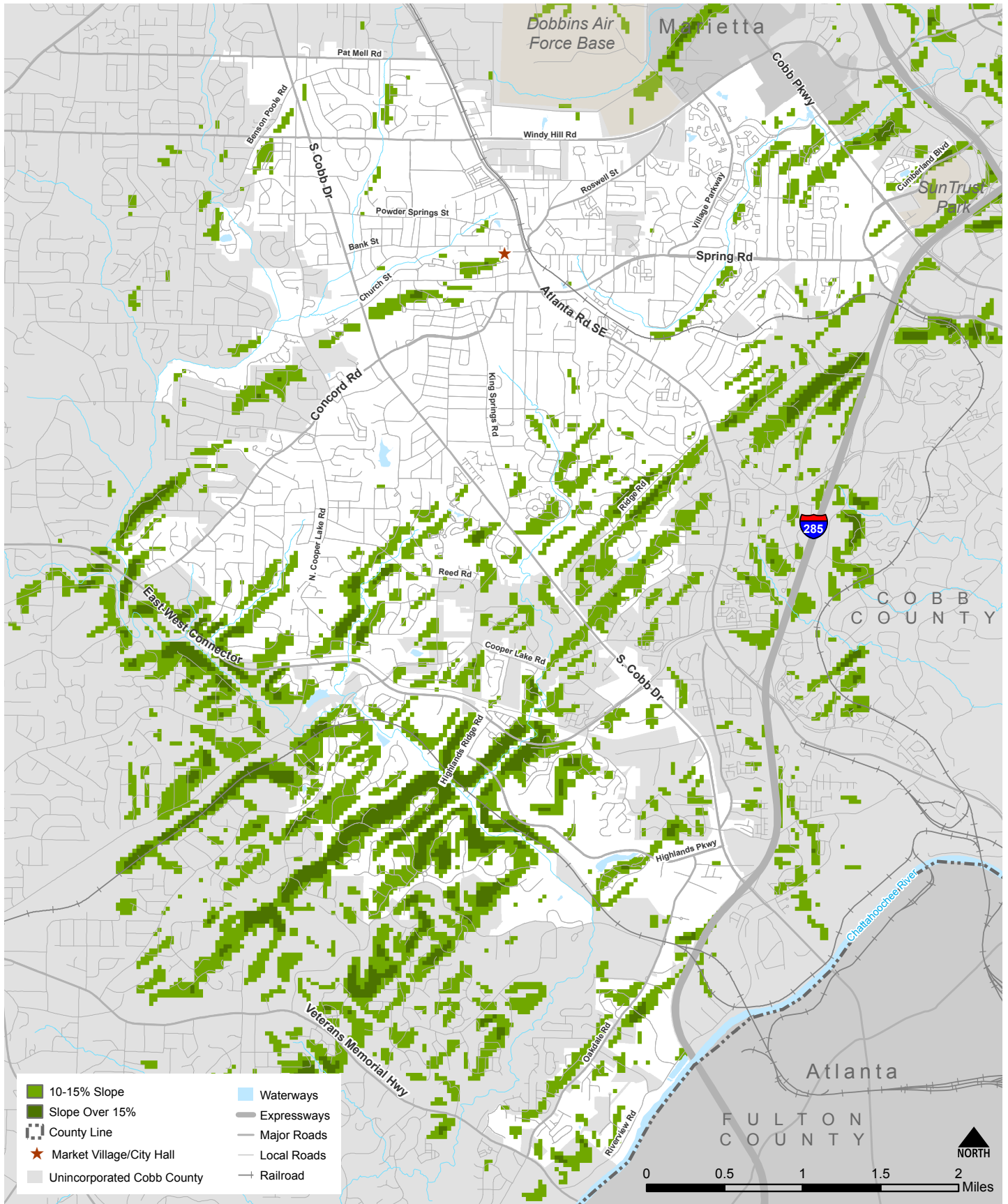
The City of Smyrna is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD), which was created in 2001 to oversee regional water management for over 100 jurisdictions within metropolitan Atlanta, including Cobb County and the City of Smyrna. The MNGWPD oversees implementation of the Water Resource Management Plan, which addresses the region's water resources and its water, wastewater, and watershed management infrastructure. The water supply and wastewater plans are implemented through water and wastewater service providers. For the City of Smyrna, the Public Works Department in conjunction with the Cobb County Watershed Stewardship Program oversees implementation of these items.

The Watershed Management Plan includes local management measures that are to be undertaken by all MNGWPD jurisdictions. These measures include five model ordinances to be adopted by all local jurisdictions within the MNGWPD. The ordinances are for Post-development Stormwater Management, Floodplain Management and Flood Damage Prevention, Stream Buffer Protection, Illicit Discharges and Illegal Connections, and Litter Control. The City of Smyrna has adopted all of these regulations as a part of its Code of Ordinances, Chapter 46 - Environment:

- Article V. Stormwater Quality Management
- Article VI. Stream Buffer Protection
- Article VII Stream Buffer Protection
- Article VIII. Illicit Discharges and Illegal Connections

Flood hazard reduction measures are addressed in Code of Ordinances, Chapter 54 - Floods. Litter control measures are addressed in Code of Ordinances, Chapter 89, Article IV - Litter.

**Figure B-20. Topography Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

## DNR ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Cobb County and its member municipalities have adopted Part V of the Georgia Planning Act, the environmental planning criteria developed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These standards include requirements governing development in water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and river corridors (DNR Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria).

## WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

Water supply watersheds are areas of land upstream of a governmentally-owned public drinking water intake. The larger a watershed is, the less susceptible it is to pollution by land development. Small watersheds are categorized as less than 100 square miles in size, and have stricter protection criteria than large watersheds. Criteria are established to allow development of a water supply watershed without contaminating the water source to a point where it cannot be treated to meet drinking water standards.

The City of Smyrna is situated within two large watersheds, the Rottenwood Creek and the Nickajack Creek Basin. Both of these areas are sub-watersheds of the Chattahoochee River Basin. Approximately 22 percent of Smyrna's land area lies within the Rottenwood Creek Basin located above the City of Atlanta's water intake. The only water supply watershed criteria that must be adhered to is the regulation of new facilities located within seven miles of the water supply intake that handle hazardous materials of the types and amounts as determined by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This seven mile radius shown on the Water Supply Watershed map, and as can be seen nearly all of the city lands lie within it.

## WETLANDS

Wetlands within Smyrna are classified as Palustrine Systems. Palustrine systems include all non-tidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, emergents, mosses, or lichens. Palustrine subsystem classifications found in Smyrna include aquatic bed, emergent, forested, scrub-shrub, and unconsolidated bottom. DNR's criteria list five categories of wetlands that require identification and mapping: open water, non-forested emergent, scrub-shrub, forested, and altered wetlands. Thirteen forested wetlands and one scrub-shrub wetland are identified within Smyrna along stream banks and ponds, as shown in Figure B-21; however, given the small, combined wetland area of approximately 22 acres, no further city-level protection measures are considered necessary. Other existing federal and state laws are applicable to wetlands and their protection.

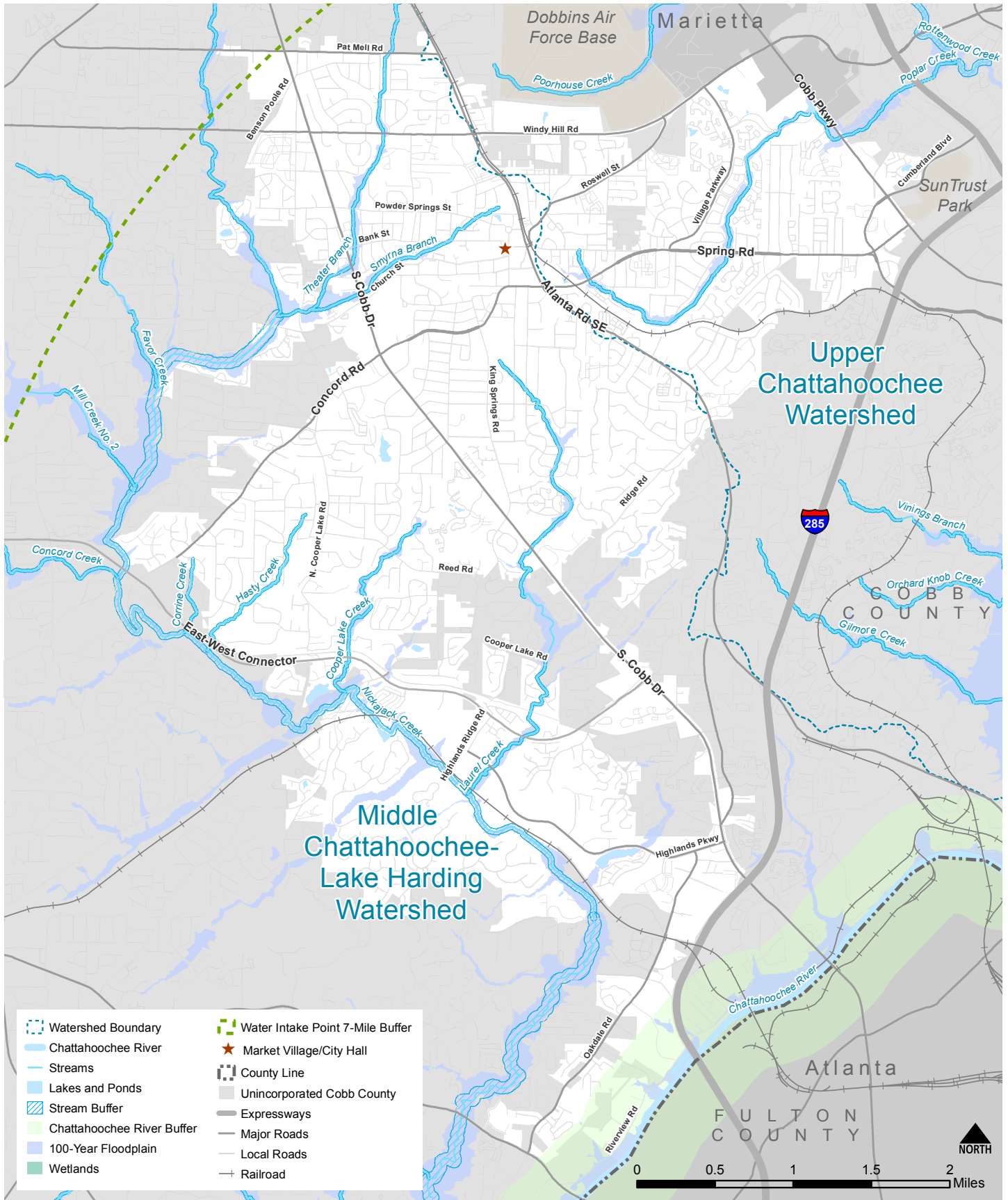
## GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

Groundwater recharge areas are areas where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. According to the U.S. Geological Survey and the Georgia Department of Resources, there are no groundwater recharge areas located within the city limits of Smyrna.

## PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDORS

The City of Smyrna lies within the Upper Chattahoochee and the Middle Chattahoochee-Lake Harding Basins, which are tributaries to the Chattahoochee River. The City is in compliance with the Metropolitan River Protection Act's Chattahoochee River Tributary Protection Ordinance. The City forwards development and land-disturbing applications within 2,000 feet of the Chattahoochee's banks to ARC for consistency review, the location of the buffer can be seen on the Water Features Map. Proposals that are consistent with the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan are then permitted and monitored by the City.

**Figure B-21. Water Features Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

Furthermore, the City has adopted other water protection ordinances. Smyrna requires a more stringent stream buffer of 50 feet on all state waters, instead of the state mandated 25 feet. The City is in compliance with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's stormwater protection requirements. The City has a Litter Control ordinance, and has adopted the following Planning District's model ordinances.

- Post Development Stormwater Management for New Development and Redevelopment
- Floodplain Management/Flood Damage Prevention
- Conservation Subdivision/Open Space Development
- Illicit Discharge & Illegal Connection
- Stream Buffer Protection

## PROTECTED MOUNTAINS

There are no protected mountains located within the city limits of Smyrna according to Georgia's Department of Community Affairs' map of protected mountain areas.

## KEY OBSERVATION:

- The City is compliant with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District plans and the Part 5 Environmental Planning Criteria of the Georgia Planning act that are administered by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

## LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELATED STUDIES

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

The existing City of Smyrna Comprehensive Plan 2030 serves as the foundation for this update, and as such serves as a reference point for this assessment. Indeed, many of the findings from Comprehensive Plan 2030 prepared have either not changed or changed little. This is particularly true of the assessment of natural resources. Changes to the plan are being driven by development projects both within and near the city boundaries, minor changes in the city boundaries due to annexations, and recent planning studies. Through this comprehensive planning process, the land use recommendations and policies, particularly as expressed through the Future Development Map and its supportive narrative will be evaluated and revised if appropriate.

### SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

The Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan not only defines an overall city vision that will be evaluated and integrated into this plan, but also lays out a detailed implementation plan that includes a few land use related recommendations. In particular, the plan in short term (2015-2016) spelled out two action items: (1) "Evaluate the competitiveness of City incentives for new mixed-use development," and (2) "Create gateways into Smyrna that are recognizable and distinct." Incentives for mixed use development could take the form of zoning code modifications, so the follow-up efforts to implement this task should be reviewed. The other action item of creating gateways can be as simple as installing new monument signs or as complex as creating architectural design guidelines that facilitate an inviting character that is reflective of the city at its main entry points. The Future Development Map could play an important supportive role in this effort.



## SPRING ROAD LCI STUDY

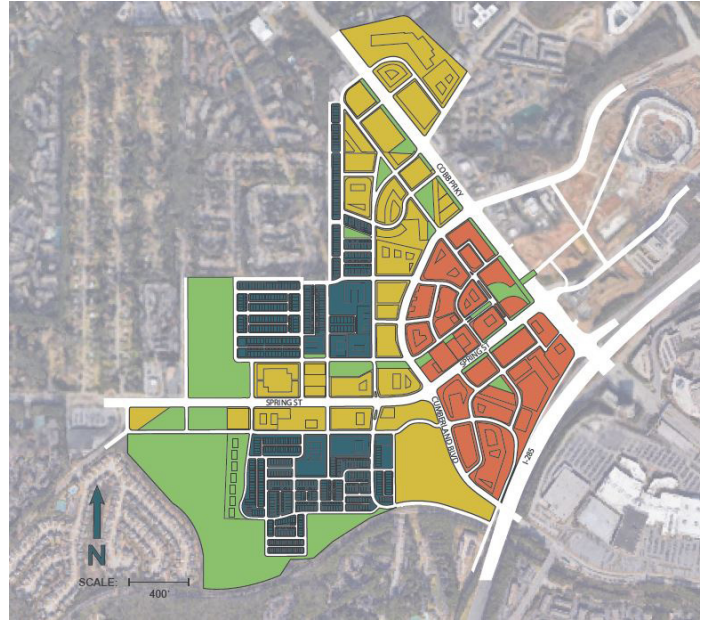
Another key planning effort is the Spring Road LCI Study. Final recommendations from that study will be evaluated in the implementation planning phase of the project. A companion effort was undertaken by Georgia Tech, who was working on a Studio Report related to the Spring Road Gateway to Smyrna. Final recommendations of the report will be evaluated in the implementation planning phase of the project.

## GEORGIA TECH STUDIO SMYRNA CROSSROADS STUDY

In coordination with the Spring Road LCI Study, graduate students in the Georgia Tech School of City and Regional Planning completed a vision plan for the Spring Road gateway area near SunTrust Park in December 2016. Land use recommendations for the gateway area include: 1) higher density, mixed-use development near the intersection of Spring Road and Cobb Parkway; 2) medium density, mixed-use development transitioning west into residential neighborhoods; 3) an infill traditional residential neighborhood; and 4) the creation of Jonquil Park, funded by a potential Tax Allocation District (TAD).

## SOUTH COBB DRIVE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STUDY

The South Cobb Drive Corridor Improvement Study addressed the segment of South Cobb Drive between Concord Road and Windy Hill Road. The study developed alternative concepts for the road as a multi-modal corridor, including strategies to improve safety, connectivity, and capacity on the roadway. It also examines appropriate land uses, redevelopment opportunities, and aesthetic improvements to the corridor. A preferred alternative will be selected and adopted in late Spring 2017.



■ The Bridge District      ■ The Gateway  
■ East Spring Neighborhood      ■ Jonquil Park



Top to bottom: 1) Four core areas envisioned in the Georgia Tech Smyrna Crossroads Study; 2) Redevelopment opportunities identified as part of the South Cobb Drive Corridor Improvement Study.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS:

- From a land use perspective, there are a few recommendations from the Vision Plan that can be further explored as part of updating the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, an evaluation of the City's incentives for mixed use developments and creation of distinct gateways.
- The Spring Road LCI Study efforts need to be monitored to see what land use recommendations need to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

## KEY FINDINGS

1. The City is built out, new development will take the form of redevelopment along the major commercial corridors, particularly along Spring Road and South Cobb Drive.
2. With the city being primarily residential, the quality of schools has a significant impact on future growth. It must be recognized, however, that decisions of school expansion, location and curriculum are not under the jurisdiction of the City Government, but rather the Cobb County School District.
3. Spin off effects from SunTrust Park (Spring Road Corridor) will have a direct impact on redevelopment efforts along Spring Road, and the City has undertaken a planning effort to address and study what those impacts and preferred vision for the Spring Road corridor should be. The final recommendations of the Spring Road LCI Study will be incorporated into the recommendations of this update based on direction from City staff.
4. Overlay Districts are inconsistent in application, process and procedure and should be standardized in the code to improve their utility, this update will offer high level recommendations as to how to revise the code.
5. The current Future Development Map, also known as the Future Land Use Map, is very land use specific, could be improved by reflecting character of different neighborhoods and incorporating overlay design districts, but this is a decision that will be explored through the public engagement process and will be to the City Council to determine if changes are needed.
6. There are few natural constraints for further development in the City, and there are policies and regulations in place to protect natural resources that would be threatened by future development. This too will be a topic to explore with public through this planning process, to determine if further protections are needed or desired and should be revised



# TRANSPORTATION

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## INTRODUCTION

High performing, multi-modal transportation infrastructure is crucial to maintaining quality-of-life for Smyrna residents, supporting local businesses, and ensuring the future success of the City. This section provides an assessment of mobility in Smyrna, addressing the existing and planned multi-modal transportation system. The key strategies guiding future transportation projects in Smyrna include the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2040 – Cobb in Motion (completed in 2015), and The Atlanta Regional Commission’s (ARC) ‘Atlanta Region’s Plan’ (updated in March 2016). Other plans that will provide targeted improvements to the City’s transportation network include the Smyrna Spring Road Corridor Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study and the South Cobb Drive Corridor Improvement Study, and the Georgia Department of Transportation’s (GDOT) Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP).

## TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS

### ATLANTA REGION’S PLAN

The ARC’s ‘Atlanta Region’s Plan’ is a long-range transportation strategy for infrastructure investment to improve mobility in the region. The plan aims to provide Atlanta with world-class infrastructure to build a competitive economy and develop healthy, livable communities. The plan allocates funding for the following project with significant impact for Smyrna.

The ARC Transportation Improvement Program 2016-2021 that is part of the plan allocates \$42.05 million to the **Windy Hill Boulevard Widening and Complete Streets Project in north Smyrna**. This project is a jointly funded project between Cobb County and City of Smyrna and will reconstruct the existing 5-lane roadway between South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road with a multi-modal boulevard. The proposed roadway will accommodate all forms of travel including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit and reduce congestion by providing four limited access express through lanes. The project will incorporate complete streets design guidelines, promoting pedestrian and cyclist use and safety through landscaping, lighting, and street furniture.



## MAJOR MOBILITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (MMIP)

Through the MMIP, the Georgia DOT has focused on 11 major mobility investment projects to strategically reduce congestion along key freight and passenger corridors by improving road and bridge infrastructure. Several of these highway projects will impact traffic flow in and around Smyrna, including two new express lanes in each direction on I-285 from I-75 to I-85 and one new express lane in each direction on I-285 from I-20 to I-75.

## SPRING ROAD LCI STUDY

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program offered by the Atlanta Regional Commission that encourages local governments to implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities. The Spring Road Corridor LCI aims to improve the aesthetics and functionality of Spring Road, a key corridor in Smyrna. The study focuses on guiding redevelopment along Spring Road, identifying appropriate investment projects and enabling Spring Road to benefit from its strategic location near Cumberland CID and SunTrust Park.

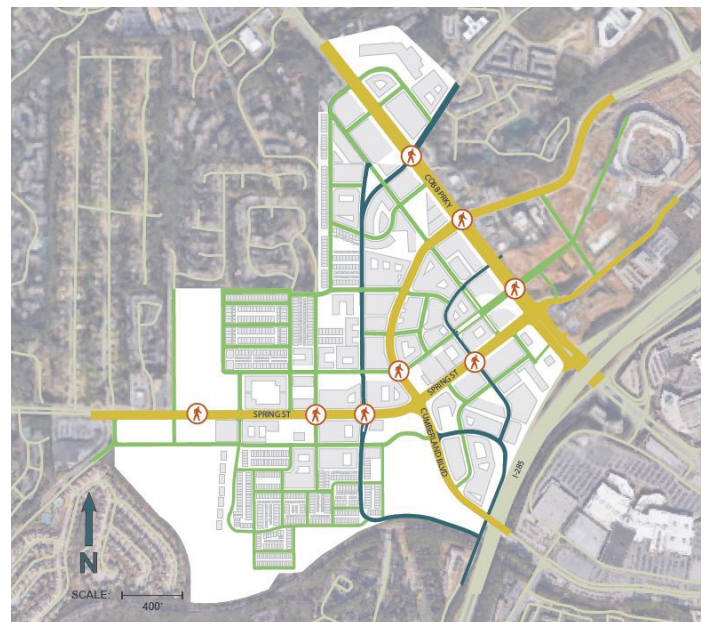
## GEORGIA TECH STUDIO SMYRNA CROSSROADS STUDY

In coordination with land use recommendations (see page B51), the Georgia Tech Smyrna Crossroads Study proposes improvements to the transportation system in and around the Spring Road gateway area near SunTrust Park. The study proposes citywide recommendations, such as pedestrian/bicycle connections and transit service to better connect the study area with surrounding neighborhoods. Within the study area, recommendations include: 1) incrementally building out a connected street network; 2) improved pedestrian crossings; and 3) a street hierarchy comprised of vehicular thoroughfares, multi-modal connectors, and neighborhood greenway typologies.

## SOUTH COBB DRIVE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STUDY

Similarly, the City of Smyrna, in association with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), is conducting a Corridor Improvement Study (CIS) for South Cobb Drive (SR 280) between Concord Road and Windy Hill Road. South Cobb Drive is an important north-south corridor, providing access to I-75 and I-285 and commercial, retail, and office centers in Smyrna. The City of Smyrna's vision for South Cobb Drive is to transform the transportation arterial into a dynamic retail, residential, and mixed-use commercial corridor.

The Spring Road, Windy Hill Road, and South Cobb Drive projects will complement Market Village and Atlanta Road to enhance and connect Smyrna's network of walkable and vibrant centers. These projects will improve mobility options in Smyrna, encouraging active transportation and supporting future economic and population in the city. The recommendations from these studies should be incorporated and reflected in the recommendations of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.



-  Major bike/ped crossing
-  Vehicular Thoroughfares
-  Multi-modal connectors
-  Neighborhood Connectors

Proposed street network for the Georgia Tech Smyrna Crossroads Study

## CONCORD ROAD LINEAR PARK

The City completed a development concept study for the Concord Road corridor in March 2015 to determine the best use of city-owned parcels adjacent to the roadway. The recommended concept is a linear park, with some parcels sold off for commercial development to assist in funding the park. The park will include a walking path, wellness area, pond, public restrooms, parking, and a bike share station.

## SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (SPLOST) PROJECTS

In 2014, Cobb County voters approved a one cent SPLOST that is projected to provide \$750 million between FY 2016 and FY 2023. Of this, \$52.7 million will be allocated to City of Smyrna projects alone based on population. Most of this money is allocated for transportation, and when combined with countywide projects located within the city, the approved 2017 City of Smyrna budget identifies \$62.7 million in transportation related projects being funded by the SPLOST. These projects include the following roadway improvements:

- Windy Hill Road Improvements (joint project with the County)
- Church Street Improvements
- Pat Mell Road Improvements
- Spring Road and Cumberland Blvd Intersection Improvements
- Intersection Improvements at Five Points
- Concord Road at South Cobb Drive Intersection Improvements
- Riverview Road at South Cobb Drive Intersection Improvements
- Oakdale Road Improvements
- Dickerson Drive Improvements

In addition, the SPLOST will fund maintenance, upgrades, and general improvements to culverts, sidewalks, traffic calming, curb and gutters, trails, paving markings, as well help fund transportation related studies. The three largest of these general maintenance and improvement projects are \$575,000 a year for road resurfacing, \$300,000 a year for Congestion Relief Improvements, and \$150,000 a year for sidewalks.



Concord Road Linear Park development concept, featuring an extensive walking path.

**Table B-11. SPLOST Funding - Projected Expenditures FY 2016 to FY 2023**

Project	Total Cost
Windy Hill Road (joint project with Cobb County)	\$38,000,000
Church Street Improvements	\$900,000
Pat Mell Road Improvements	\$900,000
Spring Road and Cumberland Boulevard Improvements	\$4,000,000
Intersection Improvement at Five Points	\$1,000,000
Concord Road at S Cobb Drive Intersection Improvement	\$3,000,000
Riverview Road at S Cobb Drive Intersection Improvement	\$150,000
Oakdale Road Improvements	\$1,500,000
Dickerson Drive Improvements	\$1,000,000
Pedestrian Access Improvements	\$2,500,000
Gann Road Culvert Replacement	\$600,000
Congestion Relief Improvements	\$2,273,000
Traffic Calming	\$200,000
Traffic and Pedestrian Xing Signal Upgrades	\$150,000
Street Signage and Signal Pole Upgrades	\$300,000
Paths / Sidewalks	\$1,000,000
Resurfacing	\$4,000,203
Pavement Marking	\$250,000
Curb and Gutter	\$500,000
Stormwater Drainage Rehabilitation	\$300,000
Studies	\$250,000
<b>Total Transportation Projects</b>	<b>\$62,773,203</b>

Source: City of Smyrna 2017 Budget

## ROAD NETWORK

The City of Smyrna's local road network is strategically connected to high capacity interstate highways and principal arterials located within Smyrna, including I-75, I-285, State Route (SR) 41 Cobb Parkway, and the East West Connector). Both I-75 and I-285 carry high traffic volumes and provide access to employment and activity centers across Metro Atlanta and beyond. The city's principal arterials include SR 41 Cobb Parkway, which is a key north-south link on the western edge of the city, and the East-West Connector, located in the south of Smyrna. Minor arterial roads as classified by GDOT include Atlanta Road, Windy Hill Road, Spring Road, SR 280 South Cobb Drive, and Concord Road east of South Cobb Drive. Cooper Lake Road SE and Concord Road west of South Cobb Drive are designated major collectors by GDOT.

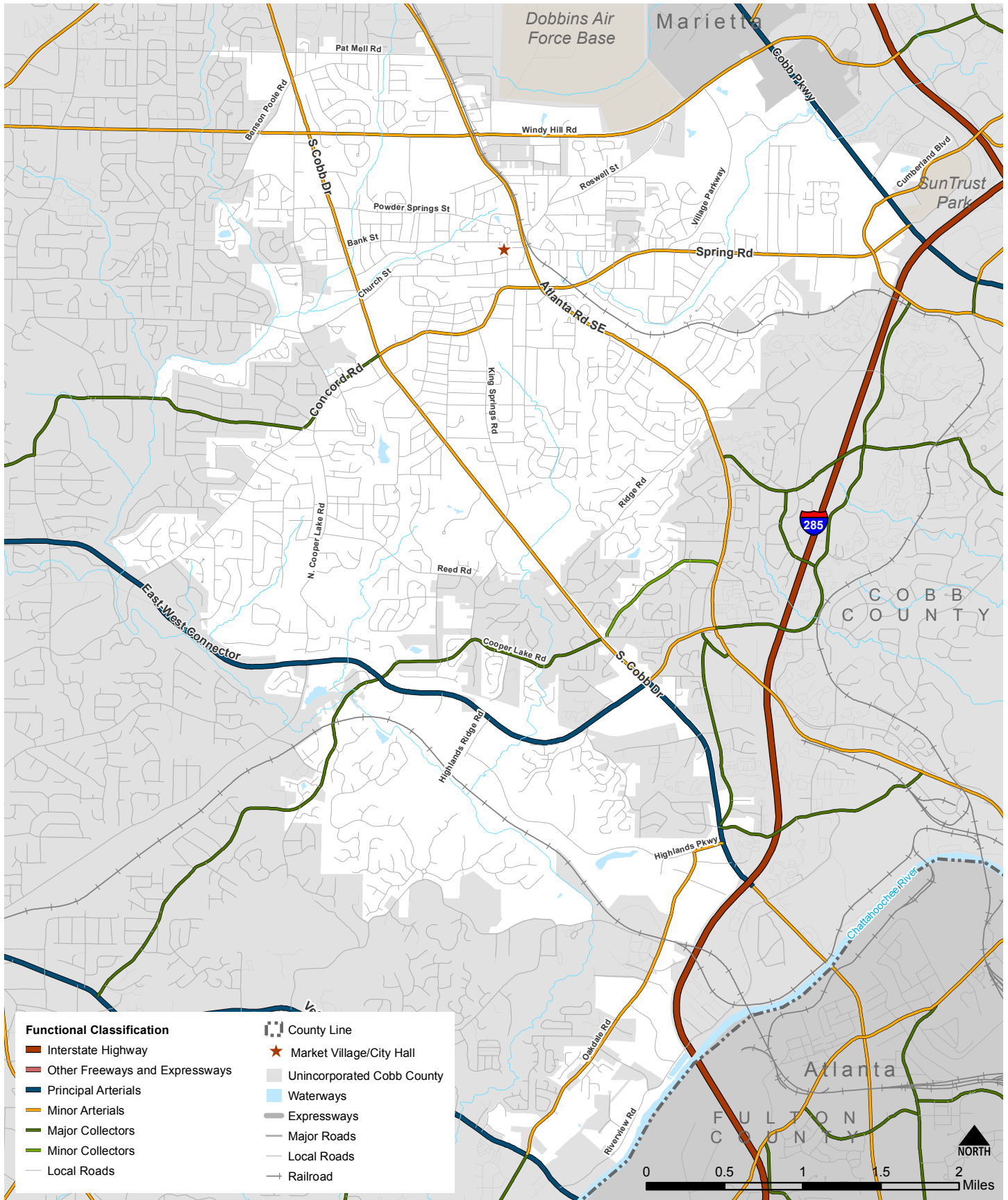
The built form of Smyrna is typical of low-density, suburban areas in Atlanta. This form of development has resulted in residential streets and neighborhoods that are inefficiently disconnected from the street grid, often with only one or two outlets to the city road network. Figure B-23 shows the effective road network for the city, highlighting the streets that are connected to the broader network by multiple outlets and those that are connected only by a single outlet, such as a cul-de-sac or subdivisions with a single entrance. Of the 225.7 total linear miles of roadway within City limits, 134.1 miles (59 percent) have multiple outlets and form a connected network, and 91.5 miles (41 percent) are single outlet roads that do not contribute to network connectivity.

This network design puts tremendous strain on key arterial and collector roads in Smyrna as local traffic cannot bypass these major roads on lower volume local roads. Subsequently, the resulting congestion on key arterials like Atlanta Road, Spring Road, and South Cobb Drive may affect the travel times of residents in Smyrna due to lack of sufficient connectivity.

Community feedback collected in the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan indicates residents are concerned about the impact on local roads from fans accessing the 41,000 seat SunTrust Park at nearby Cumberland CID. In 2017, the Atlanta Braves games are scheduled to begin at 7.30 p.m., with travel to games overlapping with evening peak traffic times.

Future projects including the widening of Windy Hill Road, known as the Windy Hill Boulevard Widening and Complete Streets Project, and Spring Road Complete Streets will increase the capacity, operation, and travel times on these key corridors. Guiding future development in Smyrna along a more regular and permeable street network would help spread traffic evenly across the local road network.

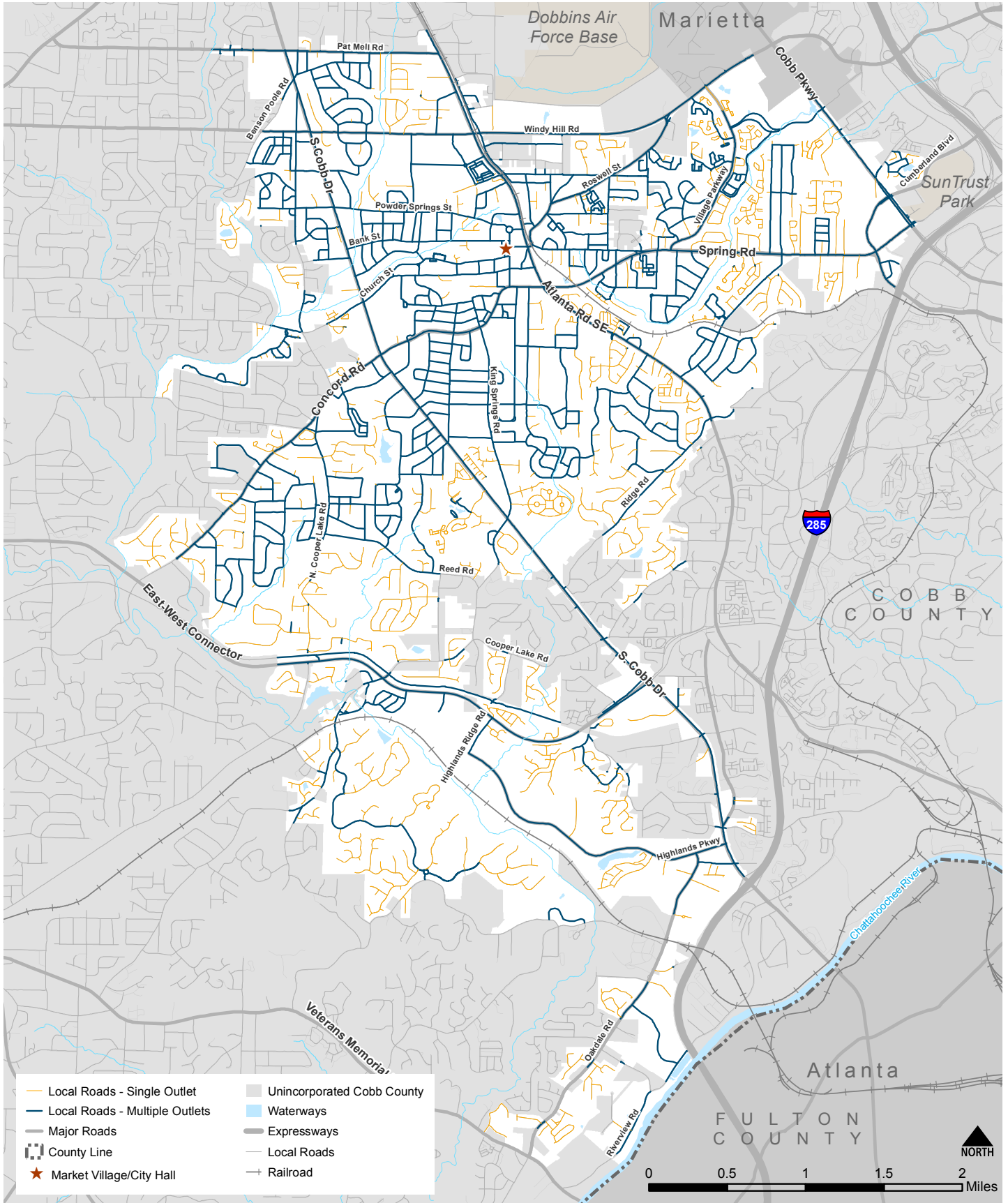
**Figure B-22. Road Network Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission



**Figure B-23. Effective Road Network Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Jacobs

## FREIGHT

The movement of road freight in the City of Smyrna is served by two major Interstates (I-75 and I-285) and a GDOT-designated oversize vehicle route (South Cobb Drive), which together handle freight through traffic in and around the city. South Cobb Drive connects with industrial areas in Smyrna near Oakdale Road and Highlands Parkway. Both the ARC and American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) pinpoint the intersection of I-285 west and I-75 north as the worst truck bottleneck in the region. This congestion is caused by freight traffic traveling from Chattanooga to Macon, avoiding Metro Atlanta. State Traffic and Report Statistics (STARS) database compiled by the GDOT show the maximum daily volumes for I-75 North is 25,000 trucks per day and 20,000 for I-285 west, making it the heaviest traveled truck corridor in Georgia. Road Freight traffic has the potential to impact travel times in Smyrna, especially during the peak times.

CSX operates a freight railroad connection through Smyrna, connecting to Inman Yard in West Atlanta and Cartersville in northwest Georgia. This line carries significant amounts of rail freight bound for Chattanooga and serves businesses located near the mainline.

Strategies and projects to improve the movement of freight around Smyrna include Atlanta Region's Plan, the GDOT Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan 2010-2050, and the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update 2040 (CTP). A proposal to reconstruct the interchange of I-75 and I-285 is outlined in Atlanta Region's Plan along with the "Northwest Corridor" project currently under construction, which will add corridor capacity along I-75 to I-285 and improve the flow of traffic, assisting the movement of freight. The CTP has a goal to increase capacity and operations along major truck freight routes through Cobb County through roadway widening or signal timings. The strategy outlines innovative strategies for moving road freight, including potential truck friendly lanes on key corridors.

## TRANSIT

Transit in Smyrna is provided by CobbLinc which operates services between Cobb County and Downtown Atlanta. Four services operate within the City of Smyrna, including routes:

- **10** - Marietta Transfer Center to MARTA Arts Center Station, via Cobb Parkway.
- **15** - Marietta, south to County Services Parkway, then Windy Hill Road west to Wildwood office park.
- **20** - Marietta to Cumberland Mall, via South Cobb Drive.
- **25** - Cumberland Transfer Center, to MARTA's Hamilton E. Holmes station, via Concord Road and Mableton Parkway.

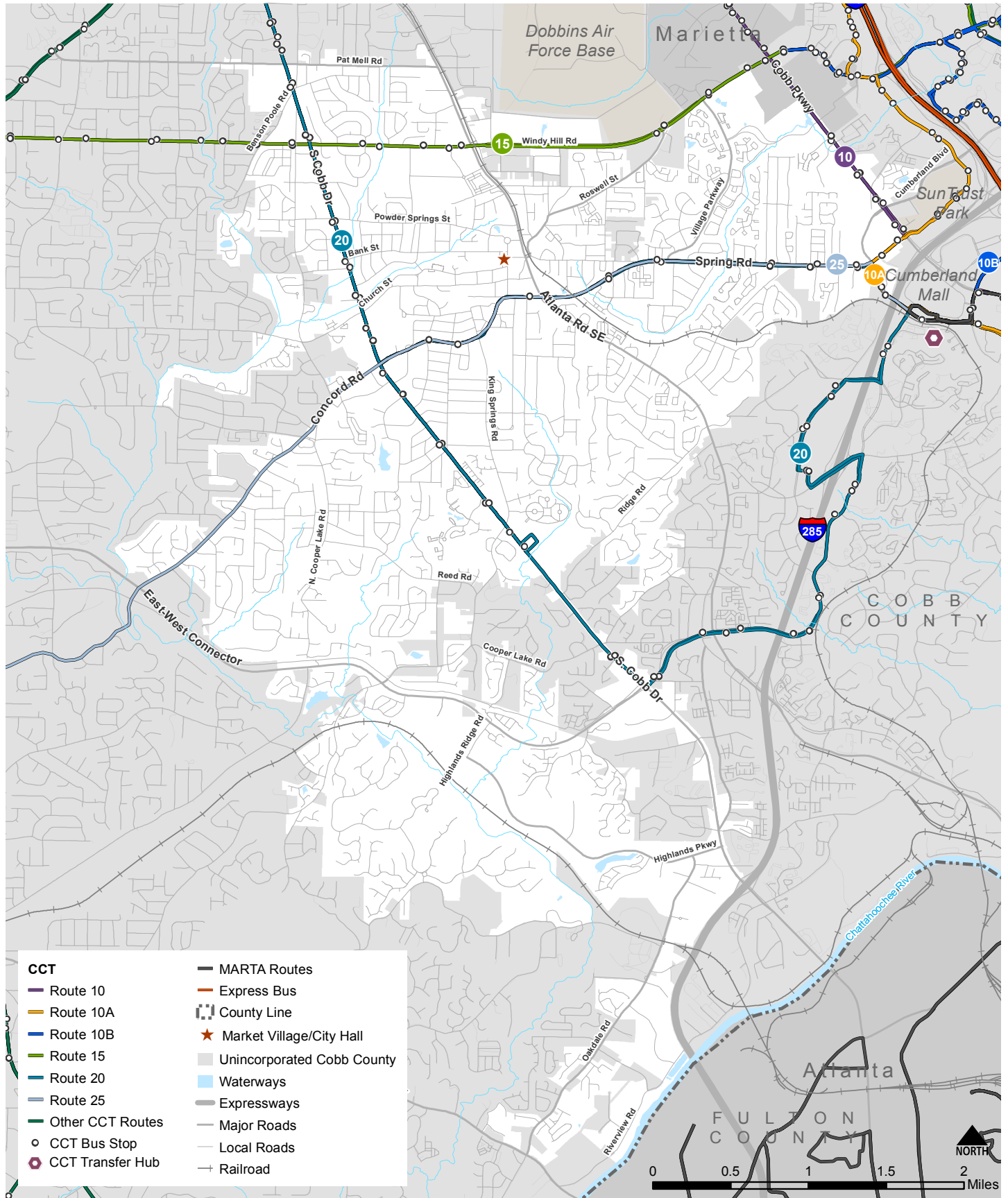
Routes 15, 20, and 25 are the chief routes serving major transportation corridors in Smyrna and connect with Cobb Express buses to Metro Atlanta along Interstate 75. Routes 15 and 20 operate a bus every 30 minutes from Marietta during peak times. Outside peak times and on Saturdays, Route 20 provides a bus every 60 minutes. Route 25 operates a bus every 60 minutes Monday through Saturday. CobbLinc services do not operate on Sunday. Route 10 operates Monday through Saturday with a bus every 30 minutes during peak times. There are no

park-and-ride facilities within the City of Smyrna, with the Marietta park-and-ride facility located to the north of Dobbins Air Force Base being the closest services for Smyrna residents.

CobbLinc operates 100 buses on 18 routes and makes more than four million trips per year. In 2016, CobbLinc revised its schedule and added 35 new buses and a new Route 25 to its service. Despite these improvements, transit options in Smyrna are limited. Community feedback in the 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan identified transit services operated by CobbLinc as being insufficient for the community's transit needs. More reliable, frequent and fast services to Cumberland CID and Metro Atlanta are desired, including a potential rail connection to MARTA. A dedicated city shuttle service connecting Smyrna with Cumberland CID was also proposed by residents.

Increasing the frequency, scheduling and speed of Routes 15, 20, and 25 through Smyrna would have an immediate and greater benefit for the majority of Smyrna residents. Increasing the time advantage of bus services through the installation of dedicated priority lanes on Windy Hill Road, Spring Road and South Cobb Drive during peak times would also make transit a more attractive transportation option.

**Figure B-24. Transit Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Jacobs; Cobb Community Transit

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation includes any form of transportation powered by human activity, typically walking and bicycling. Active transportation is proven to improve health, quality of life, and economic development in communities and is supported by a network of safe and connected sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways and trails. Active transportation projects in Smyrna are guided by the Cobb CTP Active Transportation Policy and Program improvement and the City of Smyrna's Master Plan LCI Study. Figure B-25 on page B64 shows the existing active transportation facilities in the city. Sidewalks are the most common form of active transportation infrastructure in Smyrna, bolstered by 10-foot-wide shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists along select corridors and the Silver Comet Trail (see page B65 for more information). There are no on-street bicycle facilities in the city.

### URBAN CORE

The pedestrian network is strongest around Market Village and along key roads, including Concord Road, Spring Road, South Cobb Drive, Windy Hill Road, and Atlanta Road. These areas provide access to retail, civic, and recreational areas in Smyrna and CobbLinc bus connections to Marietta and Cumberland Mall.

## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

More recently built residential neighborhoods generally have a sidewalk on one side of the road. Streets in older residential neighborhoods are often without sidewalks, and pedestrians are faced with a variable environment, including obstruction from public infrastructure; parked cars; trees and landscaping; walking on private property along roads; and uneven terrain. These obstacles increase the danger for vulnerable pedestrians-- including the elderly, disabled and children-- to be exposed to passing vehicle traffic.

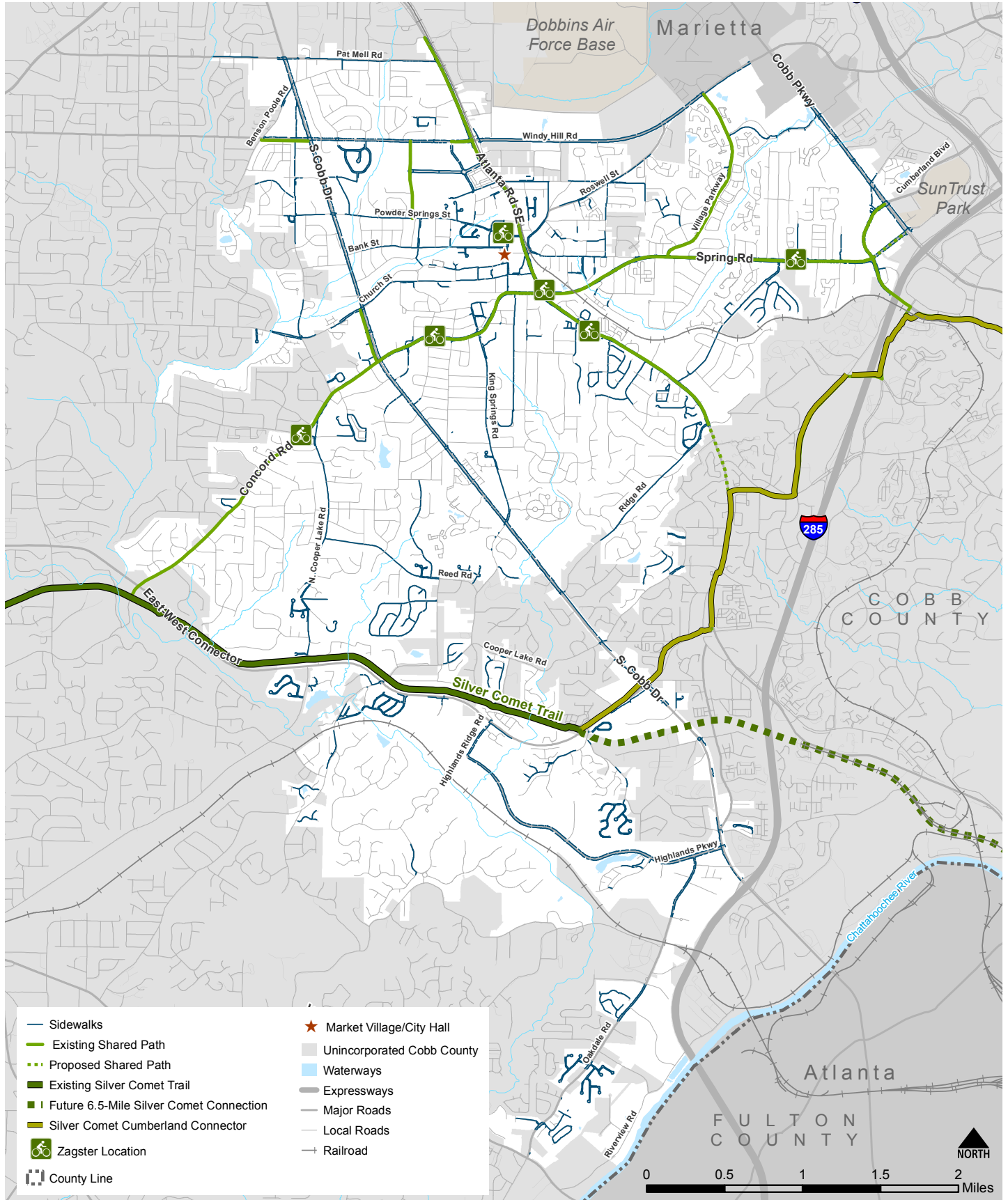
### RECREATION

The Silver Comet Trail does not connect to as many uses as do other paths, and it is used primarily for recreation. Cyclists and hikers from across the region come to Smyrna to use the trail. Most city parks are located within residential neighborhoods and are connected to a sidewalk or shared path on at least one side.

### IMPACT OF CITY FORM

The City's low-density urban form and disconnected street grid create another barrier to active transportation. Compared to a connected street network, this type of neighborhood design can often significantly increase the walking distance and time to destinations by requiring a circuitous route rather than a direct one.

**Figure B-25. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission



Left to Right: 1) Atlanta Road Shared Path; 2) Covered pedestrian and bicycle bridge at the Spring Street Shared Path

## MAJOR CYCLE ROUTES

There are four recommended cycle routes in Smyrna, including the Atlanta Road Shared Path, Spring Road Shared Path, Village Parkway Shared Path, and Silver Comet Trail.

1. The **Atlanta Road Shared Path** is a 10-foot-wide path that runs along Atlanta Road beginning at Pat Mell Road in the north and ending at Ridge Road in the south. The path is shared between cyclists and pedestrians and crosses many residential and commercial entrances, creating potential conflicts with motorists. At Windy Hill Road, users must cross Atlanta Road to continue along the path.
2. The **Spring Road/Concord Road Shared Path** is the primary cycle route between the Cumberland CID and the Silver Comet Trail, hitting several destinations within the City along the way. This connection to the Cumberland Transfer Center within the CID provides Metro Atlanta transit riders with access to the local trail network. However, like Atlanta Road, the path crosses many parking lot entrances, roads, and private driveways, potentially posing safety risks for cyclists.

3. The **Village Parkway Shared Path** is a scenic, 10-foot-wide path along the west side of Village Parkway, connecting Spring Road to Windy Hill Road.
4. The **Silver Comet Trail** is a 61 mile long, off-road, paved trail that starts at the Mavell Road Trailhead in Smyrna and ends at the Georgia/Alabama state line, near Cedartown. Smyrna residents account for 434,000 uses of the Silver Comet Trail per year – or around 1/4 of the total usage statewide. A plan to acquire 7 miles of Silver Comet railroad track and convert it to trail would connect the Silver Comet and the Atlanta BeltLine Trails. This connection would provide a significant boost to cycling in Smyrna and the wider Atlanta region as it would provide a safer commuting option for Smyrna residents to employment, education, transit, and cultural locations in Metro Atlanta than current on-road routes.

Since 2015, the City of Smyrna has provided a Bike Share program operated Zagster Bikes. The City has installed five sharing stations at Smyrna Public Library, Taylor-Brawner Park, Jonquil Park, and two on Concord Road, allowing easy access to the Spring, Concord and Atlanta Road shared paths. Rides are free for the first four hours, and then five dollars per hour after that up to forty dollars.



Left to Right: 1) Neighborhood road without sidewalks; 2) Zagster bike share station at Market Village

Smyrna’s bike share program provides access to residential and commercial areas, transit services and trails within Smyrna and beyond.

Community feedback in the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan indicated a desire for safer and more pedestrian and biking friendly environment in Smyrna. The City of Smyrna is improving the experience of pedestrians and cyclists through the Windy Hill Boulevard Project and Spring Road Complete Streets Programs. The Cobb County CTP Update 2040 has allocated funding for improved sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure in Smyrna, including \$2.5 million for pedestrian crossing and access improvements at Spring Street, Hawthorne Avenue, and South Cobb Drive. The plan also allocates \$200,000 to install traffic calming devices, \$150,000 for traffic and pedestrian crossing signal upgrades, and \$1 million for new sidewalks and upgrades to existing sidewalks. These projects will improve the pedestrian environment in Smyrna and increase the attractiveness of walking as a transport option. Most of these projects are being funded wholly or in part through the 2016 SPLOST.

To increase the attractiveness of active transportation in Smyrna, the City should look to install sidewalks on all residential streets and roads within a walkable catchment of key retail and activity nodes, generally about 0.5 mile or ten

minutes’ walk. Increased connections between neighborhoods, including laneways and trails, could also decrease the distance between residents and centers.

The City’s new existing shared path systems should be installed with large signs, wayfinding, distinctive pavement marking and network maps. To increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the city’s shared paths, a right-of-way priority for pedestrians and cyclists over motorists at junctions and entryways that cross share paths could be instituted. Road safety infrastructure, including speed bumps, flashing lights and colored pavement, would reinforce this priority and decrease vehicle speeds at shared path junctions and entryways. Lastly, increased marketing of the City’s bike network and bike share program, the creation of a network map and the development of cycle themed programs like free bike valet, would encourage residents to view active transportation as a viable, safe and attractive mobility option in Smyrna.



## TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

Land use has a significant impact on the transportation system and affects the mobility options available to residents. Low-density single-family residential development dominates land use in Smyrna, with small pockets of medium density apartments clustered on key roads, including Atlanta Road, and around Market Village. Many neighborhoods are disconnected from the street grid and have only one outlet to the road network. This puts tremendous strain on key arterial and collector roads in Smyrna as local traffic cannot bypass these major roads on lower volume local roads. Subsequently, congestion on principal and minor arterials like Atlanta Road, Spring Road, and South Cobb Drive affects the travel times of residents in Smyrna.

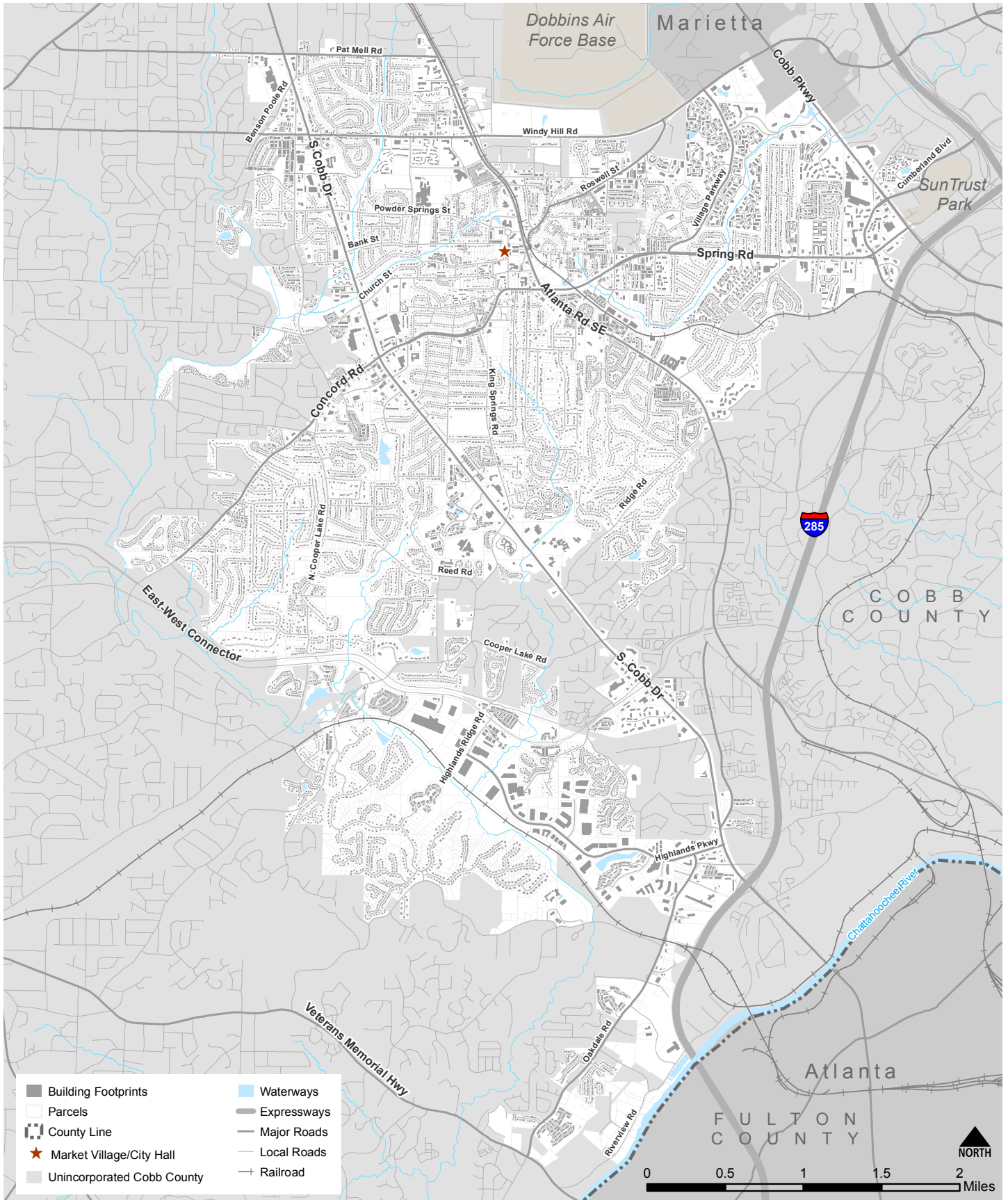
Smyrna's disconnected street network also reduces walkability in Smyrna by decreasing route options and increasing the distance to local shops and centers. Community feedback in the 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan indicated the urban form and street network in Smyrna made travel by private vehicle the only viable option for mobility throughout Smyrna. Active transportation was considered to be possible in limited areas of Smyrna.

Future residential and commercial growth should be focused on Market Village and along mixed use corridors, including Spring Road and Atlanta Road, to increase the viability and attractiveness of transit and active transportation. This would provide the population density required for increased transit services through Smyrna.

## PARKING

A general inventory of parking facilities in the City can be found in the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2040 Update (Cobb CTP). It noted that parking is available in various public and private parking garages, surface lots, and on-street locations. Public parking facilities in Smyrna are generally off-street surface lots located off major roads, including South Cobb Drive and Windy Hill Road, as well as on street parking around Market Village. The Cobb CTP does not provide any detailed parking assessment of need; however in 2016, the City of Smyrna did approve \$288,152 for a new parking lot to be built at the intersection of Concord Road and Hollis Street, 0.7 miles south of Market Village to serve the new linear park on Concord Road.

**Figure B-26. Road Network and Physical Form Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

## KEY FINDINGS

- Within the city core and along key transportation routes Smyrna is experiencing a greater density of development than what has historically occurred in the city. While this may increase future traffic congestion in Smyrna, it also presents an opportunity to increase mobility options in the city.
- The operation of SunTrust Park, the new home of the Atlanta Braves, has potential to severely impact the operation of local roads in Smyrna at least 81 days of the year. Close collaboration with Cobb County and other key stakeholders will be required to minimize the impact on the transportation system during Atlanta Braves games.
- Transit services in Smyrna are limited, infrequent, and slow. Collaboration with Cobb Transit to increase the frequency and scheduling of Routes 20 and 15 through Smyrna would make transit a more attractive option. The City could investigate the use of City resource as Park-and Ride facilities and dedicated bus priority lanes for Windy Hill Road, Spring Road, and South Cobb Drive during peak times to decrease transit travel times.
- The quality of active transportation infrastructure in Smyrna is varied and includes a well connected network of sidewalks in an around Market Village and along key roads, including Concord Road, Spring Road, and Atlanta Road, as well as four primary bicycle routes: the Atlanta Road Shared Path, the Spring Road/Concord Road Shared Path, the Village Parkway Shared Path, and the Silver Comet Trail . Nonetheless, there is need for improved infrastructure and information that can help increase the safety and attractiveness of walking and biking as a transport option for Smyrna residents.
- Smyrna is characterized by a low density urban form and disconnected street network. Increasing street connections in existing and new developments would improve route and mobility options for residents, increasing walkability and the operation of local roads in Smyrna.
- Higher density development should be focused at Market Village and along mixed use corridors, including Spring Road near Cobb Parkway and Atlanta Road, to increase the viability and attractiveness of transit and active transportation.



# HOUSING

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## INTRODUCTION

Housing plays an important role in the story of Smyrna's history growth and future development. The housing available in the community and the form it takes impacts who lives and stays in the community over time. The mix of housing types shapes how people interact with each other and the built environment as well as the services and jobs that the community attracts. Availability of housing at different price points can also have an impact on business decisions to remain, expand, or locate in a community. This section takes a close look at how Smyrna's housing stock and housing policy interact with and impact the city's form and population by considering the following factors:

- Adequacy and suitability of existing housing stock
- Condition and occupancy
- Cost of housing (rental and ownership)
- Availability of housing options across the life cycle
- Housing needs of special populations
- Jobs housing balance
- Key findings and potential opportunities and issues based on the analysis

# HOUSING STOCK

## OVERALL MIX

Smyrna’s housing stock consists of a variety of different types of both single-family and multi-family homes, with roughly 59 percent single-family homes, including both detached and attached units (e.g. townhomes), and 41 percent multi-family homes (duplex, fourplex, and multiple unit buildings). Single-family detached units make up the biggest segment of housing types, and multi-

family products with five or more units comprising another important segment of housing at roughly 35 percent. The city’s housing stock is more diverse than that of Cobb County and the State of Georgia. The City of Marietta has a relatively similar mix of units with fewer single-family attached products and more multi-family units with 5 units or more.

**Table B-12. Housing Structures**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Total housing units</b>	25,735	100.0%	26,277	100.0%	10,556	100.0%	290,963	100.0%	4,133,065	100.0%
<b>1-unit, detached</b>	10,716	41.6%	10,592	40.3%	6,997	66.3%	191,582	65.8%	2,742,156	66.3%
<b>1-unit, attached</b>	4,565	17.7%	3,039	11.6%	1,423	13.5%	23,475	8.1%	153,418	3.7%
<b>2 units (Duplex)</b>	349	1.4%	755	2.9%	19	0.2%	2,701	0.9%	91,607	2.2%
<b>3 or 4 units (Triplex &amp; Quadraplex)</b>	1,090	4.2%	1,149	4.4%	162	1.5%	7,070	2.4%	124,540	3.0%
<b>5 to 9 units</b>	2,629	10.2%	2,903	11.0%	241	2.3%	16,747	5.8%	210,166	5.1%
<b>10 to 19 units</b>	3,573	13.9%	3,444	13.1%	710	6.7%	23,330	8.0%	194,905	4.7%
<b>20 or more units</b>	2,721	10.6%	4,130	15.7%	996	9.4%	21,680	7.5%	230,534	5.6%
<b>Mobile home</b>	92	0.4%	265	1.0%	8	0.1%	4,307	1.5%	382,992	9.3%
<b>Boat, RV, van, etc.</b>	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	71	0.0%	2,747	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04





Smyrna features an assorted housing stock, including detached single-family homes on lots of various sizes, attached single-family homes, and multi-family buildings.

## AGE

An up-tick in housing built in the 1950s corresponds with the opening of Lockheed Martin in Marietta in 1951, which led to a surge in nearby job opportunities and demand for new housing – almost ten fold over the previous decades. Nearly 80 percent of the City’s housing stock was built in 1970 or later. This is similar to Marietta at 76 percent and Cobb County at 85 percent. Located in the southern portion of Cobb County, it is not surprising that Smyrna has a higher percentage of housing built in the mid to early 20th century, compared to the county as a whole. The greatest percentage of the

city’s housing stock growth occurred during the 1980s when 27 percent of the city’s housing stock was built. This concentration of 1980s built housing is similar to the makeup of nearby Marietta and Cobb as whole, reflecting the boom of growth of Atlanta’s suburbs at the time.

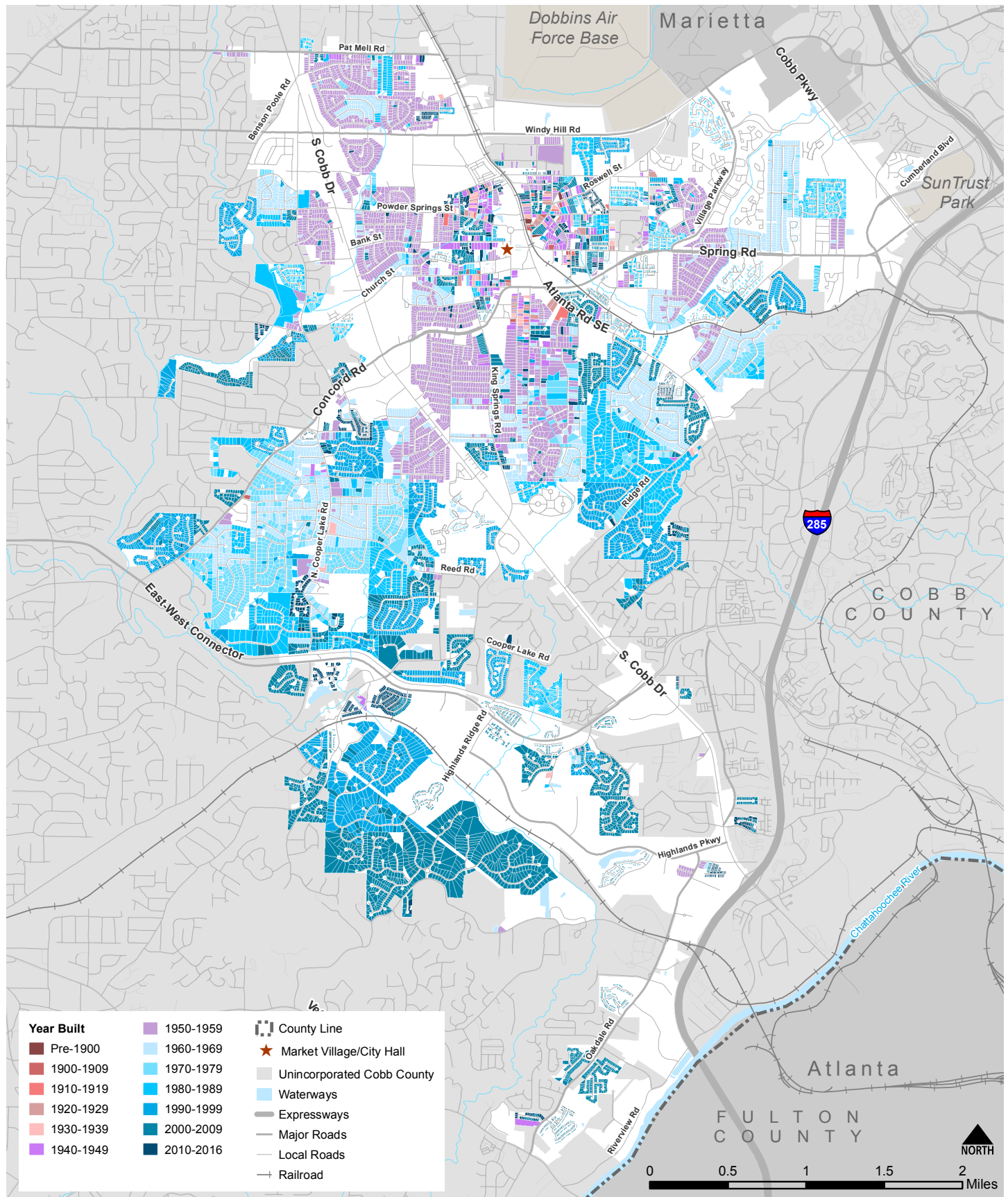
As demonstrated by Figure 24, the grand majority of Smyrna’s pre-1960s housing is located in the northern half of the city, with the newest units (those built between 2010 and 2016), interspersed throughout the city either as newer neighborhoods or infill units in preexisting neighborhoods.

**Table B-13. Age of Housing**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Total housing units</b>	25,735	100.0%	26,277	100.0%	10,556	100.0%	290,963	100.0%	4,133,065	100.0%
<b>Built 2010 to 2015</b>	505	1.9%	456	1.8%	490	4.7%	4329	1.5%	67432	1.6%
<b>Built 2000 to 2009</b>	4,958	19.3%	3,368	12.8%	5,784	54.8%	55,394	19.0%	951,412	23.0%
<b>Built 1990 to 1999</b>	4,573	17.8%	4,783	18.2%	2,511	23.8%	64,408	22.1%	878,551	21.3%
<b>Built 1980 to 1989</b>	6,828	26.5%	6,343	24.1%	922	8.7%	76,482	26.3%	717,212	17.4%
<b>Built 1970 to 1979</b>	3,566	13.9%	5,038	19.2%	585	5.5%	47,108	16.2%	580,003	14.0%
<b>Built 1960 to 1969</b>	2,380	9.2%	2,319	8.8%	103	1.0%	23,954	8.2%	374,216	9.1%
<b>Built 1950 to 1959</b>	2,378	9.2%	1,707	6.5%	103	1.0%	12,414	4.3%	258,270	6.2%
<b>Built 1940 to 1949</b>	320	1.2%	901	3.4%	46	0.4%	3,183	1.1%	121,047	2.9%
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	227	0.9%	1,362	5.2%	12	0.1%	3,691	1.3%	184,922	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

**Figure B-27. Age of Residential Buildings\***



\*Apartments excluded from data source

Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Cobb County Tax Assessor





## DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING TYPES

The existing land use map (see Figure B-14 on page B24) reflects the pervasiveness of low density single family residential (defined as three units per acre or less) on the City's landscape, particularly south of Spring Road and Concord Road, north of the East-West Connector. High density residential is concentrated in the northeast segment of the City, along the Village Parkway, Spring Road, and Atlanta Road corridors. High density residential is also an element of mixed-use projects of Belmont and Jonquil. Where these higher densities of people are located, there will be a high traffic impact on local roads (the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) estimates an average number of 10 daily trips per single family dwelling and 6 daily trips per multifamily unit). This provides an opportunity to better incorporate other modes of transportation such as transit, walking, and biking, with focus on connecting people to common destinations such as parks, commercial areas, local job centers, and other community destinations.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

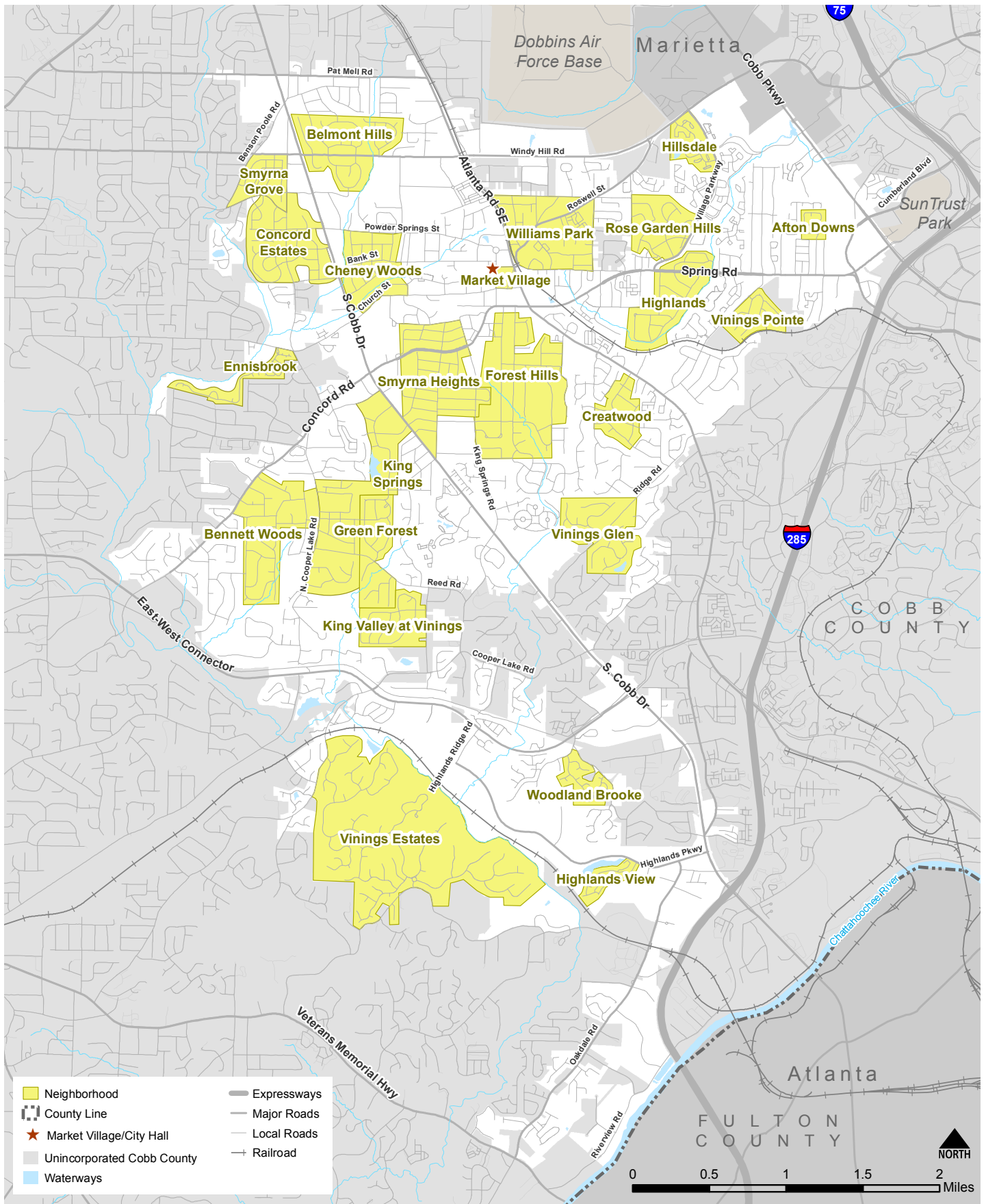
As discussed in the land use analysis, there are more than 360 formally identified neighborhoods/subdivisions within the city. (Figure B-28 shows some of the largest and most recognized neighborhoods in the city, but does not include all neighborhoods.) The neighborhoods and their suburban design have an important impact on the way the city functions. While offering privacy to residents, their insular design over time has contributed to arterial congestion at peak travel time and limited connectivity between different neighborhoods through the use of cul-de-sac and curvilinear street design. Although most of the neighborhoods are pedestrian friendly with sidewalks, some lack pedestrian connectivity between each other and to and from commercial and business areas. This can partially be attributed to topography and environmental constraints, such as streams.

## HOUSING TRENDS

Recent investment around the Village Green and Market Village has introduced a new traditional development style within Smyrna that emphasizes connectivity and a positive relationship between residential units and street life. This has led to new housing products that are more reflective of an urban live, work, play environment, providing greater diversity in the City's housing stock and living environments. The diversification of housing makes Smyrna more accommodating as a life-long community by offering different housing products and living environments to accommodate the young and old alike.

Smyrna has been experiencing a continued evolution of its housing stock as a result of carrying out its vision for the community. Belmont and Jonquil are expected to add nearly 692 residential units to Smyrna between 2016 and 2017. Belmont includes senior units, which will help provide for aging in place alternatives within the city. Redevelopment of property along Smyrna's southern boundary and the Chattahoochee River is expected to continue to diversify the housing stock by adding approximately 608 units.

**Figure B-28. Neighborhoods**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; City of Smyrna Economic Development Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

## OCCUPANCY

The American Community Survey estimates Smyrna housing vacancy rate at 8 percent, the same as Cobb County. This is notably lower than the state and slightly lower than that of Marietta. Some degree of vacancy is considered healthy to allow for movement of households within the housing market. Smyrna's homeowner vacancy rate is similar to that of Cobb County, estimated at 2 percent, while its rental vacancy rate is estimated at 4.8 percent, the lowest of all comparison geographies. This low rental vacancy rate may be a reflection of Smyrna's desirable location within Cobb County and the broader Atlanta region and implies there is likely additional opportunity for rental housing within Smyrna. During Census years, Smyrna's vacancy rate has fluctuated from 11.8 percent in 1990, to 6.7 percent in 2000, and 10.7 percent in 2010.

Housing tenure measures the makeup of occupied housing units within a community by owners and renters. It is estimated that Smyrna's occupied housing is evenly occupied by owners and renters, with 50 percent owner-occupied units and 50 percent renter occupied units. By comparison, Marietta has an estimated 42 percent owner occupancy rate, and Woodstock has a 68 percent owner occupancy rate.

The American Community Survey (2011-2015 5-Year Estimates) also show that the average household size of owner-occupied units within Smyrna is 2.36 people, which is lower than Cobb at 2.69, Georgia at 2.76, and Woodstock at 2.76. Smyrna also reflects a lower average household size for rental units at 2.17, which is lower than Cobb at 2.55, Georgia at 2.67, and Woodstock at 2.52. These smaller household sizes may be a symptom of both the community's attractiveness as a residence for young adults and empty-nesters as well as school-related concerns that may deter some families from staying in the community when at certain times in their children's education, as pointed out by the findings of the 2014 Strategic Vision Plan.

**Table B-14. Housing Occupancy**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Total housing units</b>	25,735	100%	26,277	100%	10,556	100%	290,963	100%	4,133,065	100%
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	23,666	92%	23,371	89%	9,933	94%	268,616	92%	3,574,362	86%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	2,069	8%	2,906	11%	623	6%	22,347	8%	558,703	14%
<b>Homeowner vacancy rate</b>	2.0%		3.3%		1.2%		2.1%		2.7%	
<b>Rental vacancy rate</b>	4.8%		8.3%		7.1%		7.0%		8.7%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

**Table B-15. Housing Tenure**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	23,666	100.0%	23,371	100.0%	9,933	100.0%	268,616	100.0%	3,574,362	100.0%
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	11,927	50.4%	9,837	42.1%	6,705	67.5%	172,334	64.2%	2,263,697	63.3%
<b>Renter-occupied</b>	11,739	49.6%	13,534	57.9%	3,228	32.5%	96,282	35.8%	1,310,665	36.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

# HOUSING POLICY

## RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

The City of Smyrna’s Zoning Ordinance includes 13 residential zoning districts out of 20 total base zoning districts. The districts generally allow for a variety of different housing types, ranging from single-family detached residential, attached single-family residential (townhomes), and multifamily, both owner and renter occupied. Residential zoning districts are shown in Table B-16.

## HOUSING AS A COMPONENT OF MIXED USE

The City’s also offers a Planned Development option that permits residential development as a part of a comprehensive development plan when certain conditions are met, such as appropriate underlying zoning and minimum development tract size. The planned development option allows from deviations from conventional development standards of the city, and thereby, affording flexibility of design and product to developers while creating desired community amenities such as open space.

## APARTMENT MORATORIUM

Beginning in the 1990s, the City had a long-term moratorium on zoning for rental housing, which was allowed to expire in 2008, making way for the first apartment complex in 20 years, Avonlea Square, which was a complete redevelopment of the Regency Square apartment complex. The long-term policy addressed concerns about the large quantity of rental units within the city and their impact on quality of life aspects, most notably their negative impact on maintaining a stable school environment within classrooms. The expiration of on the moratorium was intentional to allow for higher end apartments that would have a limited impact on quality of life factors while offering housing that meets the demand to live in Smyrna with its accessible location in close proximity to both perimeter area employment centers as well as those within the City of Atlanta.

**Table B-16. Residential Zoning Districts**

Zoning District	Characteristics
<b>R-30</b>	Single-family residential, 30,000 square feet, 1.3 dwelling units per acre.
<b>R-20</b>	Single-family residential, 20,000 square feet, 2 dwelling units per acre.
<b>R-15</b>	Single-family residential, 15,000 square feet, 2.7 dwelling units per acre.
<b>R-12</b>	Single-family residential, 12,000 square feet, 3.4 dwelling units per acre.
<b>RAD</b>	Residential attached and/or detached, 6 dwelling units per acre.
<b>RMC-8</b>	Multi-family residential condominium ownership, 8 dwelling units per acre.
<b>RM-10</b>	Multi-family residential, 10 dwelling units per acre.
<b>RM-12</b>	Multi-family residential, 12 dwelling units per acre.
<b>RD</b>	Multi-family residential, maximum 2 units per 12,500-square-foot lot.
<b>RD-4</b>	Multi-family residential, maximum 4 units per 17,000-square-foot lot.
<b>TD</b>	Multi-family residential, maximum 10 units per acre.
<b>RM-15</b>	Redevelopment district - Multi-family residential, 15 dwelling units per acre.
<b>RHR</b>	Residential high-rise, 12 dwelling units per acre, or as provided in article X.



## COST OF HOUSING

Housing costs are an important metric for a locality's housing stock. They determine over time what level of diversity or homogeneity a place accommodates and whether current residents can afford to move or change residences within the same community or would be priced out, should a move be necessary. Housing costs also impact travel patterns to jobs. If people that work in the Smyrna area are unable to live here, then there will be increased pressure on the roadways and increased congestion. Finally, housing costs and underlying land values impact people's decisions to invest in a given location versus another. While rising costs are often good for those seeking to make a long-term investment, they can also inhibit current residents from remaining in the community should housing costs exceed an affordable house point. **Cost burdened households are widely defined as those spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs**, which factor in costs such as mortgage, rent, utilities, property taxes, etc. The conventional use of the 30 percent metric dates back to the U.S. National Housing Act of 1937, which has maintained acceptance over time as the amount of income that a family could spend on housing and still have enough left over for other non-discretionary spending. Households within Smyrna that are cost burdened are highlighted under owner-occupants and renters. It should be noted that homeowners can be cost burdened without a mortgage. Some people, such as the elderly, may own their homes outright, but are cost burdened due to taxes, utilities, and other housing expenses.

## OWNER-OCCUPANTS

The estimated median value of owner-occupied units within Smyrna is \$216,000. This is comparable to that of the City of Marietta (\$211,500), while notably higher than that of Cobb County (\$197,400). Just above 50 percent of Smyrna's housing stock falls within the \$200,000 to \$499,999 range. An estimated 23 percent of Smyrna home owners with a mortgage and an estimated 8 percent without a mortgage are cost burdened. In comparison to other communities (see Table B-19 on page B82), fewer Smyrna home owners are estimated to be cost burdened.

## RENTERS

Median monthly rent in Smyrna is estimated at \$951, which is slightly higher than Marietta (\$900) but lower than Cobb (\$1,006) and notably lower than Woodstock (\$1,129). Interestingly, an estimated 45 percent of Smyrna's renters are cost burdened, according to the 30 percent of income standard. While this number seems very high, it is not unique to Smyrna. In fact, when comparing to other geographies (see Table B-18 on page B81), Smyrna is estimated to have the fewest cost-burdened renter households of all other areas reviewed. This likely is related to Smyrna's high number of older apartment units within the city that make renting costs slightly lower.

Sometimes high housing costs can lead to overcrowded housing situations. Overcrowding is general defined as more than one person per room. Overcrowding does not appear to be a pervasive problem in Smyrna, with the American Community Survey estimating only two percent of occupied housing units at having more than one person per room.

**Table B-17. Housing Value of Owner-Occupied Units**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Owner-occupied units</b>	11,927	100.0%	9,837	100.0%	6,705	100.0%	172,334	100.0%	2,263,697	100.0%
<b>Less than \$50,000</b>	367	3.1%	716	7.3%	169	2.5%	8,011	4.6%	247,350	10.9%
<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	1,426	12.0%	1,258	12.8%	403	6.0%	17,600	10.2%	456,049	20.1%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	1,654	13.9%	1,021	10.4%	1,599	23.8%	27,999	16.2%	443,760	19.6%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	1,927	16.2%	1,548	15.7%	1,882	28.1%	34,161	19.8%	374,496	16.5%
<b>\$200,000 to \$299,999</b>	3,071	25.7%	3,003	30.5%	2,075	30.9%	40,835	23.7%	367,121	16.2%
<b>\$300,000 to \$499,999</b>	2,910	24.4%	1,579	16.1%	446	6.7%	30,728	17.8%	255,611	11.3%
<b>\$500,000 to \$999,999</b>	572	4.8%	630	6.4%	119	1.8%	11,362	6.6%	97,719	4.3%
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	-	0.0%	82	0.8%	12	0.2%	1,638	1.0%	21,591	1.0%
<b>Median (dollars)</b>	\$216,000		\$211,500		\$180,700		\$197,400		\$148,100	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

**Table B-18. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Occupied units paying rent*</b>	11,184		13,021		3,140		91,345		1,190,334	
Less than 15.0 percent	1,576	14%	1,092	8%	226	7%	10,610	12%	134,809	11%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	1,715	15%	1,747	13%	426	14%	13,653	15%	147,816	12%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	1,814	16%	1,441	11%	636	20%	11,835	13%	147,963	12%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	1,021	9%	1,414	11%	243	8%	10,352	11%	136,458	11%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	1,133	10%	1,243	10%	368	12%	8,308	9%	107,069	9%
35.0 percent or more	3,925	35%	6,084	47%	1,241	40%	36,587	40%	516,219	43%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

\*Excludes units where GRAPI cannot be computed



**Table B-19. Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Housing units with a mortgage*</b>	9,632	100%	7,483	100%	5,713	100%	133,032	100%	1,526,935	100%
Less than 20.0 percent	5,089	53%	3,405	46%	2,881	50%	62,980	47%	640,471	42%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	1,587	16%	982	13%	880	15%	21,471	16%	237,404	16%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	760	8%	971	13%	416	7%	13,403	10%	165,759	11%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	463	5%	535	7%	416	7%	8,315	6%	112,359	7%
35.0 percent or more	1,733	18%	1,590	21%	1,120	20%	26,863	20%	370,942	24%
<b>Housing unit without a mortgage*</b>	2,205	100%	2,258	100%	971	100%	38,033	100%	711,202	100%
Less than 10.0 percent	1,236	56%	1,171	52%	460	47%	21,644	57%	319,918	45%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	364	17%	481	21%	224	23%	5,969	16%	136,213	19%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	135	6%	206	9%	124	13%	3,363	9%	80,562	11%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	187	8%	132	6%	115	12%	2,060	5%	50,252	7%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	111	5%	92	4%	21	2%	1,476	4%	31,250	4%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	41	2%	-	0%	9	1%	679	2%	21,204	3%
35.0 percent or more	131	6%	176	8%	18	2%	2,842	7%	71,803	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

\*Excludes units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed



## SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Although the City of Smyrna does not provide direct services to meet special housing needs in the city, through administration of Cobb County’s Consolidated Plan, the County provides related services and access to resources through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Act Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), which are open to city residents. Services include community development, funding of building, buying, and rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership, and providing direct rental assistance to low-income people. Key goals in administering the County’s Consolidated Plan are affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization and reinvestment, increased housing options for homeless, increased capacity of public services, and increased funding for economic development. Additionally, Habitat for Humanity actively helps build affordable housing within Smyrna and consistently helps place families here.

Other special housing needs beyond affordable units include housing for seniors and those needing assisted living or continuing care facilities. Seniorhousingnet.com identifies over 20 housing developments either in Smyrna or in adjacent Mableton, Marietta, or unincorporated Cobb County, that offer assisted living, independent living, personal care, an age restricted 55+ environment, or some combination of these housing plus care opportunities. Examples of these facilities include: Delmar Gardens, Smyrna Towers, and Providence at Creekside Village.

## PREVIOUS PLANS & HOUSING

Important planning documents that address housing policy in Smyrna include the City of Smyrna Comprehensive Plan 2030, the City of Smyrna 2014 Strategic Vision Plan, and the Cobb County Consolidated Plan.

### SMYRNA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

Comprehensive Plan 2030 documents the City of Smyrna’s housing stock largely based on 2000 Census data and highlights the housing environment in relation to the broader context, considering factors such as jobs/housing balance, affordability, and special housing needs. The policy aspect of the plan identifies a series of needs and opportunities for housing.

### SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

The 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan provides a unique perspective on how housing contributes to sense of place and local perceptions, priorities, and concerns. The Quality of Place Goal area strives to strengthen community attachment. Among desired outcomes for this goal is that “Housing diversity in Smyrna will enhance community attachment, cater to a diverse population, and be a model for other growing cities.” The goal includes the following three action items:

- 2.4.1:** Conduct a housing master plan to promote the densities and types of housing that will be favorable to Smyrna’s continued development.
- 2.4.2:** Evaluate the competitiveness of City incentives for new mixed-use development.
- 2.4.3** Improve the quality of multi-family housing and the living experience of residents.

## HOUSING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES, 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1

### HOUSING MIX & FUTURE DEMAND

- The city should continue to provide a variety of housing options to meet resident's needs at all stages of life.
- There is a lack of special needs housing (elderly, handicapped, etc.) in our community.
- There is no inventory of public and private land available for the development of future housing.
- Continued townhome and condominium development will cause some areas of Smyrna to transition from a suburban to urban character.
- Conversion of apartments to townhomes may allow the city to upgrade older multi-family structures and increase the rate of ownership.

2

### WORKFORCE/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- The increase in high-end housing in the City of Smyrna may create affordability issues for low income residents and seniors.
- Our community does not have a Workforce Housing Master Plan.
- The incentives and barriers to maintenance and/or development of affordable/workforce housing in the community have not been inventoried.

3

### HOUSING & LAND USE INTERACTION

- Our community does not have an inventory of vacant properties, properties owned by the city or other government agencies, and tax delinquent properties suitable for infill development.

## COBB COUNTY CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Cobb County oversees administration of federally funded housing grants to support special housing and community development needs throughout unincorporated Cobb County and within its municipalities. These grants include CDBG, HOME, and ESG. The PY2016-2020 Consolidated Plan and PY2016 Annual Action Plan is the most recent documentation of the County’s priorities for these programs. Among other items, the document outlines a comprehensive strategy for addressing affordable housing and related community development and economic development needs. The plan’s needs assessment identifies a high concentration (20 percent more than the countywide designation) of African

American residents as well as Hispanic/Latino residents within Smyrna. The plan identifies that, in these minority neighborhoods where residents are concentrated, there is often a prevalence of older housing stock, old infrastructure, and lack of funds for rehabilitation in housing. These areas are often served by CDBG funding. As an entitlement community, the City of Smyrna receives a direct allocation of CDBG funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), although funds are administered by Cobb County through a cooperation agreement.

**Table B-20. 2016 Smyrna CDBG Allocation from HUD**

PY2016 Funding	Description	Annual Goals	Target Areas	Priority Needs Addressed
\$292,002.00	Public Facility projects and Administration	Acquire/Construct/Rehabilitate Public Facilities; Provide Administrative Structure	City of Smyrna	Neighborhood Revitalization and Reinvestment

## KEY FINDINGS

Smyrna's housing stock offers a wide variety of unit and structure types to accommodate different residential preferences over one's lifetime. Historically, the city's landscape has been dominated by low-density, suburban style subdivisions, resulting in a large stock of detached single-family homes. Recently, there has been movement towards creating a live, work, play environment in strategic areas of the city. This approach uses a traditional style of development, allowing for smaller blocks and setbacks, as well as a greater diversity of housing products. Smyrna is adapting to being more and more centralized in region as the I-285 perimeter area continues to see major investments in infrastructure, jobs, and recreational facilities, such as the home of the Atlanta Braves Major League Baseball team in adjacent SunTrust Park. The City has a broad range of residential zoning districts that contribute to this flexible environment. This policy foundation, with the recent expiration of the apartment moratorium, open up a new era of opportunity in Smyrna for how it is perceived and experienced as a place to live for people in different stages of their life. With this dynamic and what could be labeled "hot" environment comes with a set of likely opportunities and challenges:

- As residential density in the city continues to increase, how will the City ensure mobility of existing and new residents? Opportunities include increased access and options for public transit, cycling, and walking.
- Smyrna's property values are on the rise. To maintain some level of affordability, Smyrna may need to consider new policies to maintain affordability across the lifecycle. Land values alone could price some households out of the community completely without some other intervening policy to set aside dedicated housing that is affordable to lower-waged residents and those on a limited income.
- Continued partnership with Cobb County and area non-profits will help accommodate needs of special needs housing populations desiring to live within Smyrna.
- Housing as a component of a mixed-use development has generally been the result of site plan specific rezonings. There may be some opportunity to allow for smaller scale mixed-use residential/commercial in certain locations by considering addition of a new, small scale mixed-use zoning category. Mixed use categories can often be effective at providing amenities that are beneficial to broader community members, such as open space, pedestrian facilities, and neighborhood serving commercial.
- Like many communities situated in proximity to I-285, infill housing and major renovations and "flipping" of houses within the City's single-family neighborhoods is a reality. The level of priority that the community desires to put on community character should be further explored to understand if the City's current ordinances sufficiently address community preferences for these infill housing situations over time.
- There is limited land for future development within the city. To accommodate a larger population, housing will largely need to result from either redevelopment of existing property or annexation of new land into the city.

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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Holistic economic development is about more than a single event or an individual prospect. It is about more than having good retail options and requires more than just developing a strategy to recruit new companies. Economic development is about the **people** and the **places** that make the community special and building long-term **prosperity** for all residents. It is about ensuring fiscal stability for a community. Successful economic development requires measuring progress across all these areas and not just tracking jobs and investment numbers. Economic Development is about protecting investments with predictable and sustainable development goals.

## REVIEW OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLANS

Smyrna is part of a large region, and the City works with multiple economic development partners to plan for future growth and prosperity. Locally, Smyrna embarked on a strategic visioning process in 2014 with the goal of increasing community attachment and commitment of its residents and ensuring that all the fundamental components are in place to continue to be a thriving community. Smyrna's Vision and its initiatives are currently being implemented by five citizen-led work groups:

Quality of Place, Image and Identity, Involvement and Leadership, Community and Economic Development, and Smyrna's Schools.

At the county level, Smyrna is a part of Cobb's Competitive EDGE, an initiative of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce and other community partners. The holistic and transformational community and economic development strategy is designed to strengthen the quality of life, education, and infrastructure throughout the county and to market Cobb County to the world. The plan is designed to increase job growth, incomes, and educational levels for residents, while reducing unemployment and poverty rates.

Regionally, Smyrna is located in metro Atlanta, an area that has seen tremendous growth and development in recent years. In 2012, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) embarked on a process to create a five-year Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy for metro Atlanta which satisfies Economic Development Administration's guidelines for the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The plan satisfies federal guidelines that enable the region to receive federal funding for economic development, and is meant to serve as the region's roadmap for



improving its competitiveness. Together, local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and other community partners are working collaboratively to leverage the region’s existing assets, improve upon its weaknesses, and address the issues affecting

regional competitiveness. Implementation of the strategy is being carried out by four committees, each of which focuses on one of the four goal areas included in the Strategy: Educated, Prosperous, Innovative, and Livable.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Economic development is a “team sport” and requires partnerships, collaborations, and ongoing communication. Below is a list of existing and potential partners for economic development initiatives.

### LOCAL

- City of Smyrna, Community Development & Community Relations
- Public schools and private schools
- Smyrna Education Foundation
- Wave of Excellence
- Smyrna Downtown Development Authority
- Smyrna Business Association
- Smyrna Economic Advisory Incentive Committee

### COUNTY-LEVEL

- Cobb County Chamber of Commerce
- Cobb’s Competitive EDGE
- Cobb Travel & Tourism
- CobbWorks
- Development Authority of Cobb County
- Cobb County Commission
- Cumberland CID
- South Cobb Redevelopment Authority
- CobbLinc

### REGION- AND STATE-LEVEL

- Georgia Power
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Technology Association of Georgia
- Georgia Economic Development Association
- Southern Economic Development Council
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Department of Labor
- Georgia Chamber of Commerce

## SMYRNA ECONOMY OVERVIEW

Smyrna's location in metro Atlanta is a competitive advantage due to its strategic position between multiple employment centers and an asset base that includes a large labor pool, a major international airport and interstate connectivity, and a significant consumer base. Although the majority of residents commute outside of Smyrna for their primary job, Smyrna is much more than a bedroom community. Smyrna is home to a large and healthy supply of employment opportunities. In 2016, there were an estimated 34,877 jobs located in Smyrna, which accounted for roughly 9.2 percent of total jobs in Cobb County.

During the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan process, residents were optimistic with regards to Smyrna's future economic opportunities related to recent and upcoming development projects. These include the Atlanta Braves Major League Baseball stadium and the Jonquil and Belmont mixed-use projects. Smyrna's economy has exhibited healthy growth, despite a slight downturn during the recessionary years. Overall, Smyrna's economy, as measured by

total job growth, has out-performed the region, county, state, nation, and majority of the comparison communities since 2006.

The average annual wage of jobs in Smyrna falls in the middle range among comparison communities, but trails those in Cobb County and the Atlanta MSA; however, wages in Smyrna have been increasing at a relatively fast pace in recent years. Between 2010 and 2015, wages increased by 14.9 percent; a faster rate than Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States. Over the ten-year period, wages in Smyrna grew by 29.1 percent; Smyrna's overall wage growth outpaced that of all of the comparison communities. Such wage growth could be attributed to a shift in the composition of the jobs in the local economy and an increase in higher-paying, higher-quality jobs within city limits.

Many of Smyrna's most concentrated sectors provide wages higher than the Smyrna average of \$51,283, including jobs in construction; wholesale trade; professional, scientific, & technical services;

**Table B-21. Total Jobs, 2006-16**

	2006	2011	2016	2011-16, % Chg.	2006-16, % Chg.
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	31,437	29,353	34,877	18.8%	10.9%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	17,402	21,083	25,291	20.0%	45.3%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	79,377	75,613	84,540	11.8%	6.5%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	151,782	147,401	165,231	12.1%	8.9%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	28,670	28,629	34,114	19.2%	19.0%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	21,880	20,707	26,166	26.4%	19.6%
<b>Cobb County</b>	346,258	324,964	380,059	17.0%	9.8%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	2,573,105	2,441,353	2,764,100	13.2%	7.4%
<b>Georgia</b>	4,566,904	4,312,659	4,790,795	11.1%	4.9%
<b>United States</b>	150,944,871	145,672,482	158,524,651	8.8%	5.0%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)



**Table B-22. Average Annual Wages, 2005-15**

	2005	2010	2015	2011-16, % Chg.	2006-16, % Chg.
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	\$39,722	\$44,623	\$51,283	14.9%	29.1%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	\$38,899	\$40,372	\$47,334	17.2%	21.7%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	\$49,097	\$55,321	\$62,290	12.6%	26.9%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	\$42,065	\$45,486	\$50,897	11.9%	21.0%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	\$40,776	\$44,025	\$51,332	16.6%	25.9%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	\$30,616	\$31,388	\$36,081	15.0%	17.9%
<b>Cobb County</b>	\$42,663	\$46,229	\$52,952	14.5%	24.1%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	\$42,657	\$46,778	\$52,839	13.0%	23.9%
<b>Georgia</b>	\$37,670	\$42,058	\$47,449	12.8%	26.0%
<b>United States</b>	\$39,135	\$44,646	\$50,445	13.0%	28.9%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)

## LOCATION QUOTIENTS

Location quotients are used throughout this report to measure the relative concentration of local employment in a given business sector or occupation. When applied to business sector employment, they measure the ratio of a business sector’s share of total regional employment to that business sector’s share of total national employment.

$$LQ = \frac{\text{(Local Employment in Sector/Total Local Employment)}}{\text{(National Employment in Sector/Total National Employment)}}$$

A business sector with an LQ equal to 1.0 possesses exactly the same share of total county employment as that business sector’s share of national employment. When a local business sector possesses a location quotient greater than 1.0, this signals that the business sector is more concentrated in the city than it is nationwide. Conversely, a location quotient less than 1.0 indicates that the business sector is less concentrated in the city than it is nationwide. The higher the location quotient, the more concentrated the level of local employment as compared to its national equivalent. For example, a location quotient of 1.25 would indicate that a local business sector’s share of total employment is 25 percent higher than the same business sector’s share of national employment. An LQ of 2.0 would indicate that a business sector’s share of local employment is twice as large as the national share, while an LQ of 0.5 would indicate that the business sector’s share of local employment is half the national equivalent.



management of companies and enterprises; and real estate. As demonstrated by their LQ, employment within these sectors is more concentrated in Smyrna than the average community and has been growing over the past five- and ten-year periods. Combined, these five sectors account for an estimated 11,765 jobs, or roughly 33.7 percent of all jobs in Smyrna. Nationally, the same five sectors account for 18.8 percent of jobs. Smyrna's most concentrated jobs are reflective of some of the large private sector employers that are located in the city, including IBM, United Distributors, and S.P. Richards.

Top employing sectors such as health care and social assistance, information technology, professional services, and wholesale trade align with Cobb County's collaborative economic development program, Cobb EDGE. Overall, local job growth in many of the top employing sectors outpaced national growth. Employment in construction – an industry hit hard during the 2007-09 Great Recession – has rebounded over the past five years in the Smyrna area. Jobs within the sector grew at twice the national growth rate and, overall, contributed nearly 900 net jobs to the local economy.

**Table B-23. Smyrna Area Economy Overview, 2011-16**

Description	2016		Change 2011-2016			Smyrna Wages, 2015	
	Total Jobs	LQ	Smyrna # Chg.	Smyrna % Chg.	US % Chg.	Avg. Annual Wage	% of Nat'l Avg. Wages
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>34,877</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,524</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>\$51,283</b>	<b>101.7%</b>
Retail Trade	4,156	▲ 1.14	479	13.0%	8.2%	\$34,939	118.2%
Accommodation & Food Services	3,960	▲ 1.33	892	29.1%	16.3%	\$17,776	91.4%
Construction	3,913	▲ 2.08	859	28.1%	14.5%	\$56,838	112.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3,787	▼ 0.86	417	12.4%	14.5%	\$50,237	107.4%
Wholesale Trade	3,532	▲ 2.65	300	9.3%	6.2%	\$89,306	123.1%
Admin & Support & Waste Mgmt./Remediation Svcs	3,154	▲ 1.45	373	13.4%	14.9%	\$36,366	102.5%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Svcs	2,843	▲ 1.27	277	10.8%	15.0%	\$75,385	90.3%
Manufacturing	1,683	▼ 0.61	534	46.4%	4.7%	\$53,081	83.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,637	▬ 0.98	74	4.8%	1.3%	\$25,624	92.1%
Government	1,167	▼ 0.22	91	8.5%	0.2%	\$46,383	90.4%
Finance & Insurance	785	▼ 0.58	117	17.5%	5.3%	\$82,728	84.5%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	768	▲ 1.55	404	111.0%	17.3%	\$106,800	91.5%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	709	▲ 1.24	110	18.4%	9.4%	\$52,440	104.6%
Information	665	▬ 1.03	133	24.9%	4.0%	\$77,950	84.8%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	558	▬ 0.94	125	29.0%	14.7%	\$18,944	57.2%
Educational Services	554	▼ 0.62	55	10.9%	9.9%	\$29,743	77.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	548	▼ 0.47	112	25.6%	13.6%	\$47,362	94.4%
Utilities	318	▲ 2.57	114	55.5%	2.5%	\$90,133	89.2%
Unclassified Industry	120	▲ 2.05	51	73.9%	52.8%	\$67,394	133.5%
Crop & Animal Production	12	▼ 0.03	N/A	N/A	3.8%	\$42,042	140.2%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	<10	▼ 0.05	N/A	N/A	-14.4%	Insf. Data	N/A

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)

Note: Geographic area for Smyrna is made up of zip codes 30080, 30081, and 30082. LQ is the abbreviation for 'location quotient,' which is an indicator of employment concentration. It is the ratio of a sector's share of total local employment to that same sector's share of total national employment. If a business sector has a location quotient greater than one, it is said to be more concentrated in a given area than the United States as a whole. If the location quotient is less than 1.0, it is under-concentrated. Color coded symbols are as follows: LQ>1.1 is green; LQ<.09 is red; LQ between .09 and 1.1 is yellow.

## SMYRNA OCCUPATIONAL OVERVIEW

While the business sector data provided in the previous section is useful in understanding jobs from an industry perspective, occupation data provides insight from a workforce perspective. The following section examines the presence of various occupations of workers at Smyrna area firms. Understanding business sector composition is vital—however, it is important to also understand that the jobs within those sectors can range from managers to janitors. Occupational data analysis allows for honing in on the type of talent and the range of skills present in Smyrna companies.

As with Smyrna’s business sectors, the top occupations have outperformed national trends over the past five years, some significantly so. Additionally, the most concentrated occupations, as measured by the location quotient, are reflective of the community’s top business sectors. Sales and related occupations and construction and extraction are both among the top employment and most concentrated occupations at Smyrna businesses.

The occupational overview also offers further insight into the wage growth observed in Smyrna’s average annual wages. Management and business and financial operations occupations are two occupational groups that have growth rapidly over

the past five years. Combined, the two groups have added over 700 new jobs in Smyrna, and over the five-year period, employment in each group grew by more than twice the national growth rate. In 2015, average hourly wages for the two occupational groups were \$53.63 and \$33.22, respectively, which is significantly higher than the average hourly wage for all jobs in Smyrna (\$22.30). These occupations typically have a minimum education requirement of a bachelor’s degree or higher and often times also require years of experience. Growth in high paying jobs helps to raise the overall average annual wage for Smyrna.

The fastest growing jobs between 2011 and 2016 were in architecture and engineering occupations, followed by protective service and production occupations. Nationally, food preparation and serving related occupations were the fastest growing occupations. These occupations are lower paying and often require very little education or skills in order to perform the job duties associated with the occupation. Although food preparation and serving related occupations were not the fastest growing occupational group in Smyrna over this period, jobs within this group grew by 27.4 percent in Smyrna, compared to the 15.7 percent growth that was seen at the national level, and contributed the largest number of new jobs in Smyrna. Overall, 14.5 percent of the net gain in jobs were classified as food preparation and serving related occupations.



**Table B-24. Smyrna Area Occupational Overview, 2011-16**

Occupational Group	2016		Change 2011-2016			Smyrna Wages, 2015	
	Jobs	LQ	Smyrna # Chg.	Smyrna % Chg.	US % Chg.	Avg. Hourly Wage	% of Nat'l Avg. Wage
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>34,877</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,524</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>\$22.30</b>	<b>98.1%</b>
Office & Administrative Support	4,805	0.92	593	14.1%	6.9%	\$17.04	97.1%
Sales & Related	4,455	1.26	465	11.7%	7.4%	\$21.30	111.8%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	3,738	1.29	804	27.4%	15.7%	\$9.81	86.6%
Construction & Extraction	2,505	1.61	490	24.3%	10.9%	\$20.22	95.5%
Management	2,332	1.23	418	21.8%	8.4%	\$53.63	108.7%
Transportation & Material Moving	2,290	1.01	331	16.9%	11.5%	\$15.62	92.1%
Business & Financial Operations	1,931	1.11	325	20.3%	10.0%	\$33.22	94.7%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	1,734	1.31	310	21.8%	9.1%	\$21.67	100.4%
Production	1,623	0.79	384	31.0%	6.6%	\$16.18	92.7%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	1,507	0.79	186	14.0%	9.2%	\$38.90	103.0%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	1,279	0.97	131	11.4%	7.4%	\$13.06	102.7%
Protective Service	1,067	1.37	261	32.3%	5.1%	\$15.86	73.2%
Computer & Mathematical	947	0.98	159	20.1%	15.3%	\$38.70	94.8%
Personal Care & Service	938	0.66	101	12.1%	12.0%	\$11.74	99.0%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	915	1.48	199	27.8%	8.4%	\$22.74	93.1%
Healthcare Support	756	0.78	102	15.7%	12.1%	\$14.73	103.5%
Education, Training, & Library	656	0.33	73	12.5%	3.9%	\$18.98	75.7%
Community & Social Service	500	0.89	43	9.3%	11.3%	\$20.64	93.0%
Architecture & Engineering	429	0.75	122	39.8%	6.7%	\$36.74	92.9%
Military	232	0.52	(13)	-5.4%	-2.0%	\$18.10	98.5%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	125	0.45	22	21.5%	6.2%	\$30.49	89.3%
Legal	92	0.32	15	19.6%	3.0%	\$46.11	96.3%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	24	0.09	3	12.8%	8.1%	\$13.23	103.3%
Unclassified	-	0	-	N/A	N/A	\$0.00	N/A

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)

Note: Geographic area for Smyrna is made up of zip codes 30080, 30081, and 30082. LQ is the abbreviation for 'location quotient,' which is an indicator of employment concentration. It is the ratio of a sector's share of total local employment to that same sector's share of total national employment. If a business sector has a location quotient greater than one, it is said to be more concentrated in a given area than the United States as a whole. If the location quotient is less than 1.0, it is under-concentrated. Color coded circles are as follows: LQ>1.1 is green; LQ<.09 is red; LQ between .09 and 1.1 is yellow.

## SMYRNA LABOR FORCE

Smyrna’s well-educated population and high household incomes are reflected in the quality of its local labor force. As previously mentioned, over half of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Smyrna’s well-educated workforce indicates that its residents are highly skilled and qualified for jobs that are typically higher paying, white-collared occupations. National trends show that higher levels of education are tied to lower unemployment rates and higher earnings. In 2015, the national unemployment rate for adults over the age of 25 was 2.8 percent, while the unemployment rate for adults without a high school diploma was 8.0 percent. Likewise, median usual weekly earnings for adults with a bachelor’s degree was \$1,137 in 2015 compared to \$493 for workers without a high school diploma. In Smyrna, the 2015 annual unemployment rate was 4.9 percent, while metro Atlanta’s unemployment rate was 5.9 percent. Smyrna’s unemployment rate has historically remained below the unemployment rates in Cobb County, metro Atlanta, and the state.

Smyrna’s labor force grew by 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2015, while the number of residents with employment increased by 10.7 percent over the

five-year period. Both rates outpaced the regional growth rates and indicate that Smyrna is attracting a labor force that is skilled and able to find employment. Further support is seen in the number of unemployed residents actively seeking work, which fell by nearly half (46.8 percent) between 2010 and 2015.

## RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY BUSINESS SECTOR

While the previous section analyzed the businesses operating within Smyrna city limits and the occupations found within them, this section and the following one focuses on the types of jobs and business sectors that Smyrna residents are employed in. As previously mentioned, 94.3 percent of residents are employed outside of Smyrna for their primary job. Although Smyrna’s location in metro Atlanta and access to a large labor pool make it competitive for all types of jobs, knowing which sectors Smyrna residents are employed in is useful information for analyzing the compatibility of the local workforce with local jobs.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2011-15 American Community Survey, roughly half of Smyrna residents work in one of five sectors –

**Table B-25. Smyrna Labor Force**

	2005	2010	2015	2010-15, 5-yr Chg.
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	28,311	31,474	33,082	5.1%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	26,202	27,522	34,254	24.5%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	15,450	14,456	15,311	5.9%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	34,620	32,786	34,180	4.3%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	13,444	14,248	16,294	14.4%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	N/A	13,006	14,613	12.4%
<b>Cobb County</b>	369,291	380,297	398,123	4.7%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	2,584,601	2,720,044	2,836,322	4.3%
<b>Georgia</b>	4,586,420	4,696,676	4,770,873	1.6%
<b>United States</b>	149,320,000	153,889,000	157,130,000	2.1%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) and Current Population Survey (CPS)



professional, scientific, and technical services; health care and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; and accommodation and food services. An estimated 13 percent of Smyrna residents work in professional, scientific, and technical services, and 10.8 percent of residents work in health care and social assistance alone. These two business sectors typically provide quality jobs that pay above-average wages and require an educated and skilled workforce.

Table 26 shows the distribution of sectors in which residents of Smyrna are employed in and the share of jobs by business sector located in Smyrna. The right column shows the difference in percentage point between the two and is sorted in descending order based on the difference in the share of residents employed in a field and the share of jobs

in Smyrna. Given the community's high educational attainment rates, it's not surprising to find that Smyrna is home to many residents that work in traditionally white-collar, knowledge-based sectors.

The percentage point difference between resident employment and area job distribution reveals that the city may have more opportunities to capitalize on its skilled, local workforce. For example, there is additional local capacity for expansion in professional, scientific, and technical services and finance and insurance. Both sectors typically require a highly educated workforce and provide higher paying employment opportunities. Given the shift in preferences towards more live-work-play environments, Smyrna has the opportunity to better communicate its local talent and competitive advantage for new business growth and expansion.

**Table B-26. Resident Employment and Local Job Distribution by Business Sector**

Business Sector	Resident Employment by Sector	Smyrna Area Job Distribution	Difference
Educational Services	8.6%	1.7%	7.0%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Svcs	13.0%	8.3%	4.7%
Finance & Insurance	6.6%	2.2%	4.4%
Information	4.5%	1.8%	2.7%
Transportation & Warehousing	4.2%	1.6%	2.6%
Manufacturing	6.3%	4.9%	1.4%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	3.1%	2.2%	0.9%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2.0%	1.5%	0.5%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Crop & Animal Production	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Utilities	0.6%	0.9%	-0.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	10.8%	11.2%	-0.4%
Retail Trade	10.7%	11.8%	-1.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3.3%	4.9%	-1.6%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.3%	2.3%	-2.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	7.8%	11.3%	-3.5%
Admin & Support & Waste Mgmt/Remediation Svcs	4.7%	8.7%	-4.0%
Construction	6.7%	10.7%	-4.0%
Wholesale Trade	3.7%	10.3%	-6.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-15 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate and Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI)

Note: Cell shading is based on range of percentages with red corresponding to lower numbers and green corresponding to higher numbers. Data for resident employment is based off of 2011-15 five-year average estimate, while data for Smyrna area jobs is for 2015. Government and unclassified employment were not included.

# RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

The top occupations of Smyrna residents are reflective of the business sectors in which residents are employed in. The top five occupations comprise over 50 percent of the occupations of the city’s residents: management occupations (17.8 percent), sales and related occupations (12.5 percent), office and administrative support occupations (11.2 percent), business and financial operations occupations (7.5 percent) and computer and mathematical occupations (6.1 percent).

Similar to the distribution of resident and area employment by business sector, there is a higher share of residents working in high quality and high paying occupations such as management, computer and mathematical and business and financial support operations. Smyrna could capitalize on economic opportunities that require a skilled workforce in such key business sectors by effectively communicating its valuable and talent local workforce.

**Table B-27. Resident Employment and Local Job Distribution by Occupational Group**

Occupational Group	Resident Employment by Group	Smyrna Area Job Distribution	Difference
Management	17.8%	6.8%	11.0%
Education, Training, & Library	5.9%	1.9%	4.0%
Computer & Mathematical	6.1%	2.7%	3.4%
Business & Financial Operations	7.5%	5.6%	2.0%
Legal	1.5%	0.3%	1.2%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%
Architecture & Engineering	1.7%	1.2%	0.5%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	3.0%	2.5%	0.4%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	4.8%	4.4%	0.3%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.0%	0.1%	-0.1%
Personal Care & Service	2.6%	2.7%	-0.1%
Sales & Related	12.5%	12.8%	-0.3%
Community & Social Service	1.0%	1.5%	-0.4%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	2.9%	3.6%	-0.7%
Healthcare Support	1.3%	2.2%	-0.9%
Protective Service	1.3%	3.0%	-1.7%
Construction & Extraction	4.6%	6.9%	-2.3%
Production	2.2%	4.7%	-2.5%
Office & Administrative Support	11.2%	13.9%	-2.7%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	2.2%	4.9%	-2.8%
Transportation & Material Moving	3.6%	6.6%	-3.0%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	5.1%	10.6%	-5.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-15 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate and Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI)  
 Note: Cell shading is based on range of percentages with red corresponding to lower numbers and green corresponding to higher numbers. Data for resident employment is based off of 2011-15 five-year average estimate, while data for Smyrna area jobs is for 2015. Government and unclassified employment were not included.



## CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The City of Smyrna offers several incentive programs for businesses, including an opportunity zone, an enterprise zone, and various fee waivers. Additional incentive programs are available from Cobb County and the State of Georgia.

### NORTH SMYRNA OPPORTUNITY ZONE

If a new or existing business locates in an “opportunity zone” and creates two or more jobs, the business is eligible for a Job Tax Credit of \$3,500 per job that can be applied against its state income tax liability and payroll withholding tax. In 2011, the City of Smyrna achieved its first Opportunity Zone designation, which consists of roughly 695 acres that include commercial and retail areas located along South Cobb Drive, Windy Hill Road, and Atlanta Road.

### SMYRNA-OSBORNE ENTERPRISE ZONE

This enterprise zone was created in 2014 by joint resolution of the Smyrna City Council and the Cobb County Board of Commissioners to encourage employment growth and new investment in underperforming areas. The Smyrna-Osborne Enterprise Zone covers an area between Powder Springs and Austell roads, parts of South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road, and even some portions of unincorporated Cobb County. Incentives are granted to businesses within the zone on a case-by-case basis. If a business spurs new development or redevelopment of an existing property or is in an eligible business sector (retail, manufacturing, warehousing & distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, research and development, finance, insurance, real estate, or daycare ) and creates at least five new qualifying jobs, potential incentives include tax exemption or reduction (including local ad valorem taxes, occupation taxes, property taxes, license fees, etc.).

## OTHER CITY INCENTIVES

If a business is not located in the opportunity zone or enterprise zone, other incentives are available if a project meets one of the criteria in Table B-28.

Depending on the impact of the project, the following fees may be waived upon approval of the City Council:

- Occupational Tax Certificate Fees
- Plan Review Fees
- Building Permit Fees

For new development, additional waivers may include:

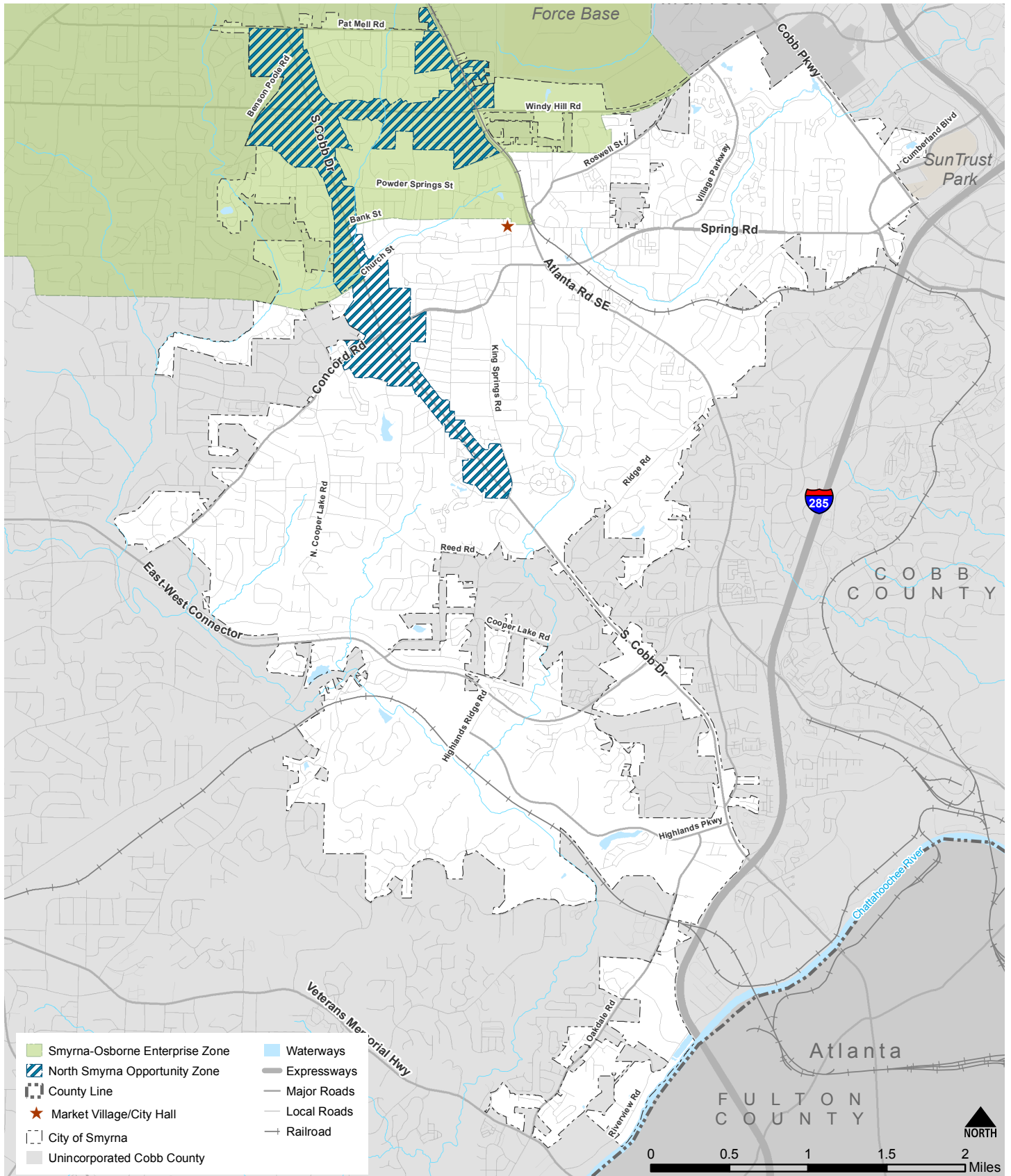
- Water System Development Fees
- Sewer Impact Fees
- Financing of Sewer System Development Fees
- Water/Sewer User Charges

**Table B-28. Economic Development Incentive Criteria**

Tier	Minimum New Jobs	Economic Impact
1	25-71	\$500,000
2	75-99	\$350,000
3	100-124	\$250,000
4	125+	\$125,000
Small Business	10-25	\$250,000
Target Property	N/A	N/A



**Figure B-29. Opportunity Zones and Enterprise Zones**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Georgia Department of Community Affairs



## METHODOLOGY

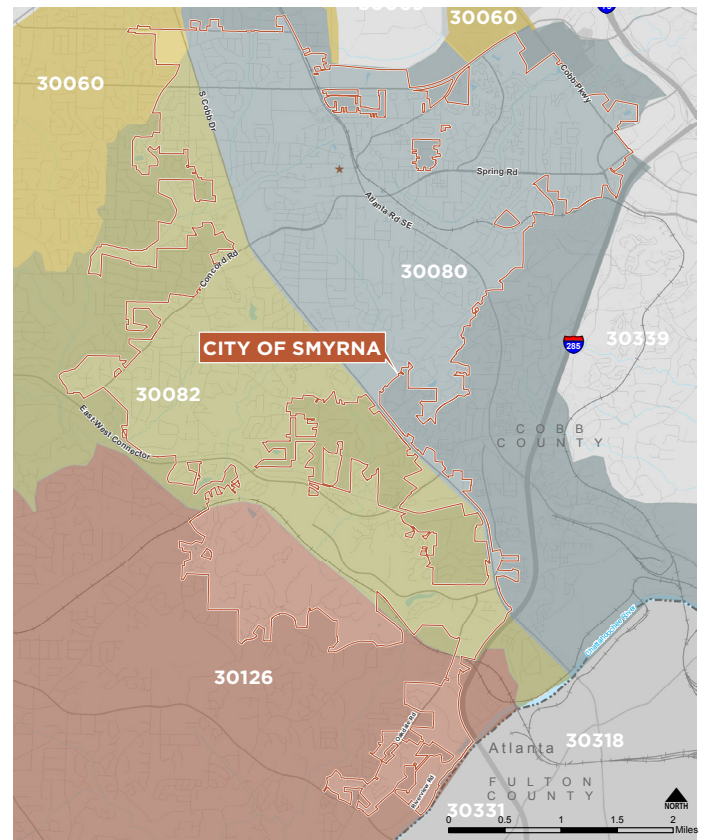
Because economic data is not available at the city level, this analysis focuses on a geography that is slightly different from city boundaries, but includes the vast majority of economic activity in the city. Smyrna, for the purposes of this analysis, consists of the primary three ZIP codes the city lies in: 30080, 30081, and 30082. For city comparisons, the following ZIP codes were used:

- **Cedar Park, TX:** 78613 and 78630
- **Duluth, GA:** 30095, 30096, 30097, 30098, and 30099
- **Marietta, GA:** 30006, 30007, 30008, 30060, 30061, 30062, 30063, 30064, 30065, 30066, 30067, 30068, 30069, and 30090
- **Matthews, NC:** 28104, 28105, and 28106
- **Woodstock, GA:** 30188 and 30189

The data was obtained from Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), an industry-leading provider of proprietary data. EMSI's datasets are comprised of aggregated data from over 90 public sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the National Center for Education Statistics, CareerBuilder, and many others. In order to develop employment by business sector tables contained with this analysis, Market Street utilized EMSI's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Non-QCEW, and Self-Employed data sets.

Residential employment data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015). It is important to note that while the Smyrna area business sector and

**Figure B-30. Local ZIP Codes**



Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

occupational data refer to the three aforementioned ZIP codes and to jobs in Smyrna without regard to where those workers live, residential business sector and occupational data refer to the City of Smyrna's census boundaries and to jobs held by residents without regard to where those jobs are located. It is also important to point out that time periods are inconsistent between these data sources. EMSI estimates for the 3-ZIP Smyrna area are one-year estimates, with the most recent year in 2016, while American Community Survey estimates for city residents are five-year estimates, with the most recent year in 2015. Therefore, direct comparisons cannot be made between these data sets.

## KEY FINDINGS

- In 2016, there were an estimated 34,877 jobs located in Smyrna, which accounted for roughly 9.2 percent of total jobs in Cobb County.
- Smyrna's strategic location in metro Atlanta, place-based assets, and skilled workforce have helped to support a healthy and prosperous economy.
- Between 2011 and 2016, employment in Smyrna increased by 18.8 percent. Local job growth outpaced that of Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States.
- Jobs in construction; wholesale trade; professional, scientific, & technical services; management of companies and enterprises; and real estate pay above the local average annual wage and are more concentrated in the local economy than the average community nationwide. Combined, these five sectors account for 33.7 percent of all jobs in Smyrna.
- Smyrna's labor force grew by 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2015, while the number of residents with employment increased by 10.7 percent over the five-year period. Both rates outpaced the regional growth rates and indicate that Smyrna is attracting a labor force that is skilled and able to find employment.
- An analysis of resident employment versus area employment indicates that there is local capacity to support additional economic activity in business sectors that provide high quality and high-paying employment opportunities.



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Smyrna's community resources contribute greatly to livability, community cohesion and quality of life in Smyrna. Smyrna has earned a reputation as a community of excellence in the Atlanta Region, with quality residential neighborhoods, great services, a strong sense of community, and treasured public amenities. This chapter provides an overview of the City's community resources including public facilities, parks, public safety, utilities, and historically significant items. Since, 2013, the City has improved existing assets and added new facilities including:

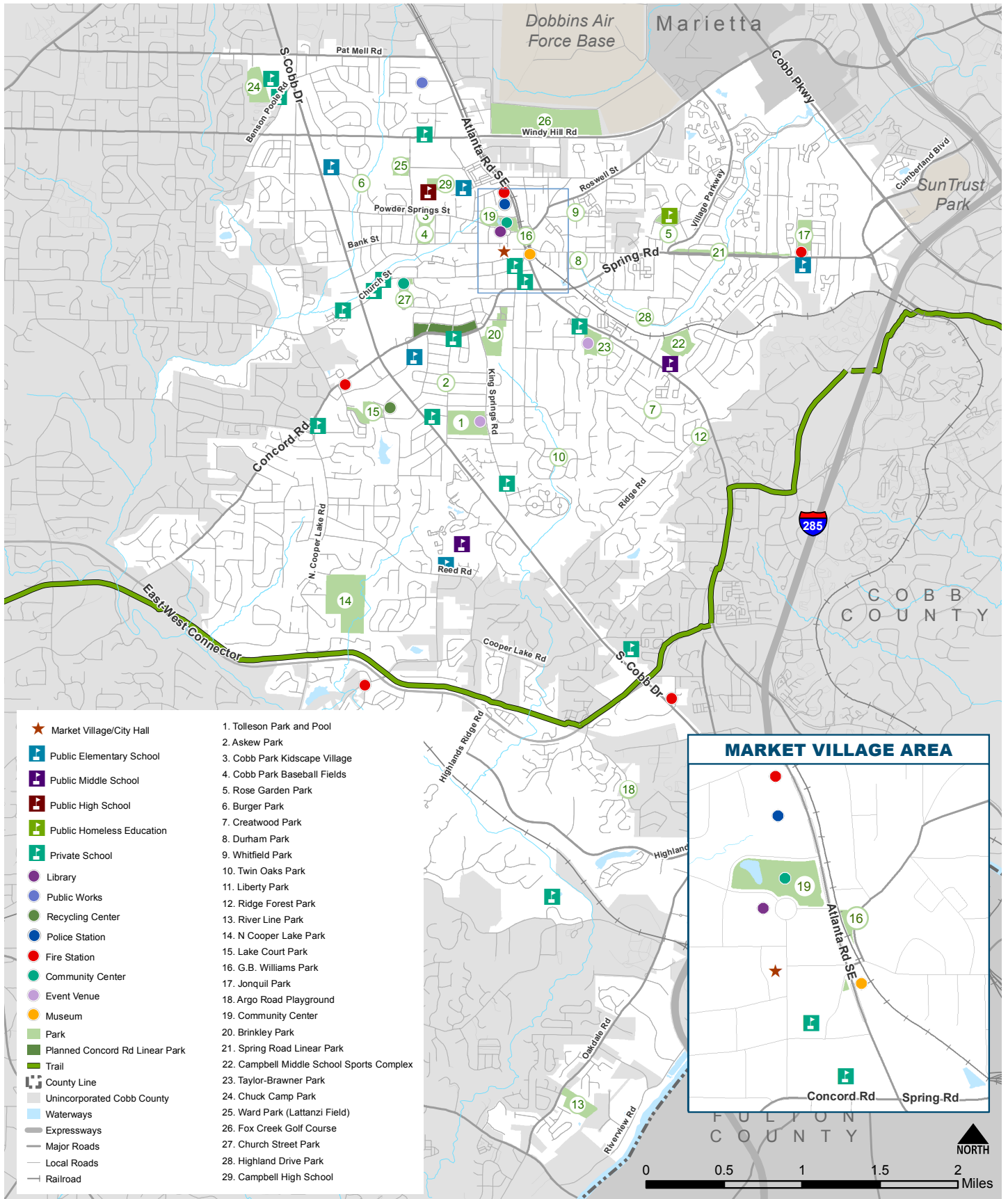
- The City's Recycling Center was greatly improved after a \$2.12 million upgrade in May 2015. This modernization program greatly expanded the city's recycling scheme and improved access to the facility for Smyrna businesses and residents.
- Replacement of the roof at Wolfe Pool in April 2014. This involved the installation of an insulated roof and a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system to provide dehumidification and greater temperature control for the heated pool.

- Renovation of the Tolleson Park Pool Building. This included improvements to bathrooms, the lobby area, concession stand, and the electrical system. The total project cost was \$120,000.00 and was completed in May 2013.
- The completion of the Concord Road project in June 2015. The upgrade of Concord Road involved the installation of a landscaped median, multi-use trail, a linear park, and decorative lighting to the corridor between South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road.
- Installation of the Atlanta Road and Spring Street Shared Paths to accommodate safe active transport between residential areas, Market Village and the city's trail network.

Additionally, the Cobb County School District opened Smyrna Elementary School in 2013, which now accommodates over 900 students.



Figure B-31. Community Facilities Map



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

The City of Smyrna is experiencing strong residential and commercial investment as highlighted by the development of new mixed-use communities at Belmont and Jonquil. The 2017 opening of SunTrust Park, the home of the Atlanta Braves, in the adjacent Cumberland area of unincorporated Cobb County will create fresh opportunities for businesses and enhance the entertainment options available to residents. In addition to its high quality of community facilities, the City of Smyrna enjoys a fantastic natural environment, with 304 acres of parklands, trails, and green space within the City's 15 square miles.

Despite a rich history, Smyrna has relatively few officially recognized historic and cultural resources. Currently, there are two sites on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), but many additional sites are potentially eligible following the 2007 Cobb County Historic Resources Survey. Many of the city's historic sites are privately owned and remain largely unprotected.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Market Village is the civic and commercial heart of the City of Smyrna. Located off Atlanta Road, this area is centrally located for all city residents and houses City Hall, the library and community center, and restaurants and shops, as shown in Figure 1. The Village Green is a beautifully landscaped area that enhances the village atmosphere and hosts the City's annual concert series and diverse festivals held throughout the year. Market Village also includes:
- The Smyrna Community Center - a multi-use facility with a variety of indoor spaces for meetings, athletics, and activities. It is located at the Village Green and hosts a variety of community sports including youth and adult league basketball in two gymnasiums, three racquetball courts, a walking track, fitness area, and game room. Other activities include gymnastics, ballet, dance, martial arts and fitness classes. The Center was host to 1,130 rentals in 2014.



Left to Right: 1) Brawner Hall and 2) Taylor-Brawner House, both properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Smyrna’s City Hall, a 22,000-square-foot facility, houses the departments of Finance, Human Resources, Court Services, Community Relations and the Administrative Offices, including those of Mayor and Council. The Utilities Services Division, which includes the Water Department and the application office for garbage collection, is also located in City Hall.
- The City of Smyrna Library is the oldest city-operated library in the state of Georgia and works with the community to present high-quality events, improve services, and expand collections. In 2014, the library had a total circulation of 257,144 items, a 14 percent increase on 2013. Smyrna Library’s public computers continue to be an extremely popular resource. Half of the library’s computer users are non-residents. Innovative children’s programs including “Smyrna Reads” and “Write a Letter to Santa” led to a 49 percent increase in children and youth attendance.
- The Smyrna Museum was opened in 1999 and is located in a replica of the 1910 Smyrna Train Depot on Atlanta Road. Its collection includes thousands of photographs, publications, artifacts, oral histories as well as historical and genealogical research materials. The materials are from both Smyrna and Cobb County and date to 1832. The Museum is permanently staffed by volunteers from the Smyrna Historical Society, the Smyrna Golden K Kiwanis Club and individuals who have an interest in preserving this history of this city.
- The Twentieth Century Veterans Memorial is located in downtown Smyrna and is the designated site of the annual Smyrna Memorial Day and Veterans Day Ceremonies. The Twentieth Century Veterans Memorial is dedicated to the memory of those who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces – Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard – during the twentieth century. The Memorial honors the living, the dead, the wounded, the missing, and the families who supported those who gave part or all of their lives to our country, in war and in peace.



Left to Right: 1) Market Street; 2) City Hall

## SENIOR SERVICES

The Programs Division of the Parks and Recreation Department manages the City's senior services program. The Programs Division is located at the Aline Wolfe Adult Recreation Center, which is located at Church Street Park and is designed for fitness and social interaction for those 55 years of age and older. The Wolfe Center is a social hub for the City's community programs for senior citizens and is open 56 hours a week. The center features a wide range of facilities including a therapy pool, fitness center, dance room, and large meeting rooms. The center hosted nearly 38,000 visits to the center by 930 members, offering 2,629 programs in 2014. Community programs include crafts, art classes, bus trips, and special social events.

Major goals for the Programs Division in 2017 as outlined in the budget include:

- Modifying and improving adult fitness classes at the Community Center and expansion of community programming.
- Expanding Wolfe Therapy Pool class offerings for senior adults and implementation of a special population aquatic program.
- Planning the expansion of senior adult programs at the Aline Wolfe Adult Recreation Center.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### E-911

The City of Smyrna offers a 24/7 E-911 center dedicated to taking emergency calls from Smyrna businesses and residents. The City's E-911 Fund pays for the maintenance of the City's 911 Center, which has an operating budget of \$1,505,612 in 2017. While many cities do not operate their own E-911 centers and allow county governments to manage emergency calls, the City of Smyrna believes a dedicated E-911 Center increases the safety of Smyrna residents and heightens coordination of emergency services in Smyrna.

On November 4th, 2014 the voters of Cobb County approved a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to fund capital improvement projects throughout Cobb County and within each of the County's six cities. Approximately \$52 million in sales tax funding is anticipated to be allocated to the City of Smyrna between January 2016 and December 2021. In 2016, the SPLOST will fund the upgrade of fire station alarms and emergency radios to maintain compatibility with the Cobb County radio system.

### POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Smyrna Police Department serves the community through the operation of seven divisions, employing 98 sworn officers, 20 full and part-time jail employees, 20 full and part-time communications officers, and 10 administrative staff members. In 2014, the Police Department arrested 3,943 suspects and issued a total of 23,909 citations. This represents an increase of 7 percent and 18 percent on 2013 numbers respectively. Overall, the City of Smyrna experienced a 10.3 percent decrease in Part 1 crimes. Part 1 crimes include crimes most likely to be reported to police including homicide, aggravated assault, auto theft and burglary.



The increase in arrest and citation percentages and a decrease in serious crime are attributed to a shift to community policing. The Police Department has continues its citizen engagement program, including “Coffee with a Cop” and the Citizens Police Academy, to ensure the continuation of social order and facilitate the maximum use of Police resources in Smyrna.

The City of Smyrna Jail, a full-service technologically progressive facility, processed 6,171 inmates in 2014. Of that, 2,415 inmates were housed for other jurisdictions, a cooperative service that realized revenue of \$440,885.61 in 2014.

The City’s 2017 Budget allocates \$6.7 million to Police Department Administration and \$1.1 million for Jail Operations. This budget includes a range of upgrades and improvements for the department including:

- Seven new or replacement vehicles,
- Additional storage capacity for body camera data,
- New Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Alternate Light Sourcing used for forensic investigations,
- An upgrade to the departments Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) for fingerprint identification, and
- Replacement of approximately 90 Tasers for officers.

The City’s Police Department is well placed to serve Smyrna into the future. A combination of community policing initiatives, excess jail capacity and infrastructure upgrades will ensure the maintenance of social order and a safe environment for residents in Smyrna.



Top to Bottom: 1) Smyrna Police patrol vehicle; 2) City of Smyrna Fire Department Station #1

## **FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The City of Smyrna Fire Department employs 80 career firefighters to provide fire protection and emergency management for the 56,146 residents in Smyrna. It has an operating budget of \$5.06 million (2016) and currently operates 8 pieces of emergency response equipment at five stations around the city. This equipment consists of three engines, two Advanced Life Support (ALS) trucks, two Advanced Life Support (ALS) Rescue Units, and one Command vehicle. In addition to the frontline apparatus, Smyrna Fire has one reserve Engine, and an Air and Light Trailer. In 2015, the Department responded to 5,626 emergencies .

The City of Smyrna Fire Department is an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rated Class 2 “all hazards” response agency that responds to all types of emergency medical calls and fire incidents. ISO is an insurance industry risk advisory body that helps insurance carriers set appropriate premiums. Fire departments are rated on a varied set of items including manpower, station distribution, water supply, and communications. The Class 2 rating is the second highest available ISO rating Smyrna joins 27 other Class 2 agencies within the State of Georgia.

The City of Smyrna Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2021 earmarks \$80,000 for the re-modelling of Fire Station 4, a two year project to replace HVAC mechanical equipment, roof replacement and installation of an emergency power generator. Smyrna is well placed to respond to emergencies and maintain its Class 2 ISO rating into the future.

## **UTILITIES**

### **WATER AND SEWER**

The Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA) is a regional public utility that provides potable water on a wholesale basis to the City of Smyrna. The Water and Sewer Division of the City of Smyrna is primarily responsible for ensuring the supply of potable water and wastewater service to residents. 21 employees are responsible for maintaining 240 miles of water lines and 130 miles of sewer lines and carry out maintenance, replacement and emergency repairs to lines, installation of water and sewer taps, and the operation of lift stations

In 2014, the City of Smyrna Water and Sewer Division of Public Works detected and serviced approximately 11 miles of water and sewer mains, 4 percent of the overall system. Repairs and maintenance of the water/sewer system, including

rehab for 2014, included six water mains and three sewer mains. Activities included servicing/installation of 3597.5 linear feet, repairs and maintenance 105 linear feet of sanitary sewer mains and the continued Belmont Hills sanitary sewer rehab project.

Smyrna is served by the South Cobb and R.L. Sutton Wastewater Treatment Plants, part of the Cobb County Wastewater Treatment System.

- The R.L. Sutton Wastewater Treatment Plant has a capacity of 50 million gallons per day (MGD) and is Cobb County's largest treatment plant. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Long-Term Wastewater Management Plan proposes an expansion of the R.L. Sutton Plant to 60 MGD between 2011 and 2020 – an increase of capacity by 20 percent.
- The South Cobb Wastewater Treatment Plant has a capacity of 40 MGD, with a planned expansion to 50 MGD by 2030 – a capacity increase of 25 percent.

## RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE

The removal of solid waste and recycling are the tasks of Smyrna's Residential Sanitation and Recycling Division. During the 2014 reporting period, the sanitation division collected up to 10,180 tons of municipal solid waste and 2,589 tons of yard waste. The City of Smyrna Recycling Center averages approximately 7,096 participants with an average of 40 tons of recyclable materials collected and transported each week which saves approximately \$55,151 in annual tipping fees.

Waste reduction is a key part of the 'Keep Smyrna Beautiful', an initiative to raise awareness of environmental and solid waste issues in the community. 'Keep Smyrna Beautiful' is a non-profit organization funded by the City of Smyrna and private contributions. Keep Smyrna Beautiful works with local schools to educate and promote sustainability to improve quality of life in the community.

The City of Smyrna Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2021 allocates \$28,000 for 'New Sanitation Roll-Out Carts' to provide new customers with improved refuse and recycling equipment.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Smyrna manages 28 park facilities including athletic fields for organized sports like baseball, softball, and soccer and passive recreation areas for walking, picnicking, and community gardening. Thanks in part to the 2005 Parks Bond, Smyrna's park system has expanded significantly over the past decade with the development of five new parks including: Taylor-Brawner, Brinkley, Riverline, North Cooper Lake Road, and Burger Park. Projects at existing parks including Jonquil and Rose Garden have expanded the opportunities for recreation in the City of Smyrna.

Taylor-Brawner Park is one of the more visited recreation sites in Smyrna and considered by many as the City's flagship park property. The park has walking trails, open lawns, pavilions, an amphitheater and a playground with access from surrounding areas via a multi-use trail. The popular and successful Smyrna Food Truck Tuesday series is hosted here.

The Silver Comet Trail is a 61 mile long non-motorized, paved trail that starts at the Mavell Road Trailhead in Smyrna and ends at the Georgia/Alabama state line, near Cedartown. It is free of charge and allows for walkers and bicyclists to travel through the natural beauty of the north Georgia countryside, crossing a 500-foot-long trestle bridge and gliding through tall stately pines and rock cliffs. Smyrna residents account for 434,000 uses of the Silver Comet Trail per year – or around 1/4 of the total usage statewide.

The 2017 Capital Improvement Plan allocates \$767,119 or 17 percent of the total budget for upgrading, maintaining and replacing Smyrna’s Parks and Recreation assets. Some of these projects include:

- Complete FY17 planned functional and aesthetic upgrades at the Community Center.
- Implement a Connectivity and Trails Plan. Plan improved access to parks with better connections.
- Implement a youth fencing program at the Community Center.

The Table B-28 outlines parks and recreation facilities in Smyrna.



Smyrna Community Center

**Table B-29. Park Facilities**

Park/ Facility	Classification	Acres
Arboretum and Pond	Gazebo, Walking Trail	3
Askew Park	Playground	0.5
Brinkley Park	Sport fields, Pavilion, Walking trail	16
Burger Park	Dog Park	3.7
Campbell Middle School Sports Complex	Baseball Field, Multi-Use field, Running Track, Tennis Courts	16.2
Chuck Camp Park	Baseball Field, Concession Stand, Gazebo, Multi-Use field, Playground, Walking Trail	16

**Table B-29. Park Facilities (Continued)**

Park/ Facility	Classification	Size
Cobb Park and Kidscape Village I & II	Baseball Field, Playground, Gazebo	5.8 acres
Community Center	Basketball Court, Game Room, Gazebo, Gymnasium, Kitchen, Meeting Room(s)	Capacity 100+
Creatwood Park	Playground	0.5 acres
Durham Park	Open Space, Walking Trail	3 acres
Fox Creek Golf Course	Golf Course / Driving Range	77 acres
GB Williams Park	Open Space	0.6 acres
Jonquil Park	Gazebo/Pavilion, Multi-Use field	-
Playground, Restrooms, Walking Trail	14.1	-
Lake Court Park	Bocce Court, Dog Park, Gazebo,	-
Playground, Volleyball Court	12.6	-
Liberty Park	Historic Site	0.5 acres
North Cooper Lake	Community Garden, Mountain Bike Trail, Restrooms, Walking Trail	51 acres
Ridge Forest Park	Fitness Room / Exercise Stations	1.1 acres
River Line Park	Concession Stand, Gazebo, Historic Site, Multi-Use field, Playground, Walking Trail	14.2 acres
Rose Garden Park	Basketball Court, Gazebo, Playground, Restrooms, Tennis Courts, Volleyball Court (Sand), Walking Trail	9 acres
Silver Comet Trail	Walking, Bicyclist Trail, Wheelchair accessible	61.5 linear miles
Spring Road/Concord Road Linear Park	Walking Trail	0.7 acres
Taylor-Brawner Park	Historic Buildings, Gazebo, Open Space, Playground, Restrooms, Walking Trail	10 acres
Tolleson Park and Pool	Baseball Field, Gazebo, Multi-Use field, Playground, Pool, Volleyball Court (Sand), Walking Trail	26 acres
Twentieth Century Veterans Memorial	Historic Site, Open Space	-
Twin Oaks Park	Passive Open Space	1.3 acres
Ward Park (Lattanzi Field)	Baseball Field, Concession Stand, Restrooms	6 acres
Whitfield Park	Gazebo, Open Space, Playground	2 acres



Clockwise from Top Left: 1) Rose Garden Park; 2) Village Green; 3) Pavilion at Brinkley Park ; 4) Silver Comet Connector

## SCHOOLS

Smyrna is served by the Cobb County School District. There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school serving the Smyrna area. Smyrna Elementary School opened in 2013 and has over 900 students. In addition, there are seven private institutions located within the city limits of Smyrna.

In 2016, 93 percent of fifth grade students in Smyrna were “On-track for Graduation,” defined as the percentage of 5th grade students passing at least four courses in the core content areas: English language arts (ELA), math, science, social studies, or world languages. This score is 1 percent higher than results for Cobb County as a whole. Students in Smyrna, however, scored lower than the rest of Cobb County in tests for Advanced Academics, Iowa Reading 3rd Grade Score, and the CCRPI Score – Georgia’s accountability rating system for schools, districts and the state.

Community responses to City’s Vision Plan outlined schools as the greatest challenge for the City of Smyrna. Concerns over underperformance (especially in middle and high school), both real and perceived; school safety; physical appearance; and leadership quality were apparent and are supported by input and data. Many parents and stakeholders believe that now is the time to demand higher performance, increase parental involvement, and support the local schools to be points of pride in the community.



Top to Bottom: 1) Smyrna Elementary School; 2) Campbell High School recreation facilities

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic resources are cultural resources that remind us of our past and help define a community's character. Residential and commercial growth in the Smyrna region since the mid twentieth century has steadily eroded the rural character of Smyrna and many important historic resources have been lost to property and infrastructure development. The City of Smyrna retains several significant historic resources, which are currently being preserved by the City and volunteer associations. These resources include historically significant public and private buildings, archeological items, and historic museum items, including Brawner Hall, Aunt Fanny's Cabin, and The Chattahoochee River Line.

Brawner Hall opened as a private mental health hospital in 1910 and, when constructed, was the only alternative to state mental health care in Georgia. It is listed on the NRHP. The City of Smyrna rehabilitated the two-story Greek revival era property after it lay vacant since the 1990s. Brawner Hall is located within the 11-acre Taylor- Brawner Park, along with the Taylor-Brawner House, a Victorian home built in 1890 and listed on the NRHP.

Aunt Fanny's Cabin opened in 1941 and was a landmark in Cobb County, known as one of the best restaurants in the Atlanta area. It is located on Atlanta Road near Market Village and is currently used as an event venue.

The River Line Historic Area derives its name from The Chattahoochee River Line: a six to seven mile line of Civil War trenches and forts along the Chattahoochee River. The River Line is particularly significant due to its unique fortifications called Shoupades, exclusive to Cobb County and designed by Confederate Brigadier General Francis A. Shoup. Currently, only 9 of the original 36 Shoupades are identifiable as most have been damaged from housing development. Many are threatened as eight Shoupades are located on private property.

The Cobb County Historic Resources Survey, completed in August 2007, evaluated historically significant properties located within Cobb County.

The locations of each property can be found at the Georgia Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) on-line database, operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Division. A total of 875 properties in Cobb County met the criteria of the Georgia Historic Resources Survey, 273 of which were located in Smyrna. Information and photographs of each property can be found on the Cobb County Government website.

As detailed in the Smyrna Vision Plan, Smyrna's residents have called upon the City to provide better protection and promotion of the city's historic assets. These include:

- **Creating a tour map** of historic and cultural sites in Smyrna.
- Working with volunteer partners to **promote and distribute information on historic sites** including the Smyrna Historical and Genealogical Society, the Smyrna Museum, River Line Historical Association, Mableton Improvement Coalition, and the Vinings Historic Preservation.
- **Promote the City's Civil War Artifacts Collection** and consider securing a long-term location for the collection and other historical artifacts.
- **Collaborate with the National Park Service** to more closely connect Smyrna's historical and cultural sites to Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park programming and visitors.

The City of Smyrna has made significant efforts to rehabilitate historic properties and make them accessible to the community. Aunt Fanny's Cabin is rented to the public for dinner parties and small receptions while weddings are commonplace at Brawner Hall. As part of the Parks and Recreation budget in The City of Smyrna Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2021, the City will renovate the historic Reed House and begin managing it as a public rental



facility by Fall 2017. Opening historic properties for public use is a useful way to help cover the costs for the preservation of historic sites in Smyrna.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The City of Smyrna has a robust network of community facilities, civic spaces and recreational resources, enhancing quality of life in the city.
- With solid budgets, the City of Smyrna is on track to meet the future needs of the residents and businesses in Smyrna.
- A key challenge will be ensuring that the income coming into the city can be sustained and increased to meet the continuing community facility needs and demands. This can be done through maintaining a balanced and strong commercial/industrial tax base and/or higher taxes.
- To maximize usage of the city's extensive park and trail network, the City could look to raise the profile of the City's bike share program and create a network map to showcase active transport connections to the Silver Comet Trail and commercial and recreational areas in the city.
- Increased marketing of the City's historical assets will open these sites to a larger audience, and raise custodianship of the city's heritage. Increasing planning controls over historic items located on private properties would ensure the city's heritage is safeguarded for future generations.
- The City's wide ranging programs and facilities at The Wolfe Center is well equipped to meet demands for senior services from an aging population in the future.

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## **APPENDIX C: *COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT***

This appendix contains the Community Engagement Plan and summaries of public involvement activities held throughout the planning process. These materials were originally published on the project website, [www.guidesmyrna.com](http://www.guidesmyrna.com), to provide citizens with access to ongoing information about the project.

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# APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN



**GUIDE**  
**SMYRNA**  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 1, 2017





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The City of Smyrna has earned a reputation as a community of excellence in the Atlanta Region, with quality residential neighborhoods, great services, a strong sense of community, and treasured public amenities, such as the Village Green, the Silver Comet Trail, and quality community parks. Smyrna is experiencing increasing development and investment interest with the construction of the new Braves stadium and exemplified by such developments as Belmont and Jonquil Village. Now is the optimal time for the City to update its comprehensive plan. Much of this is attributed to a long history of strategic, community-based planning.



Smyrna's Jonquil Festival

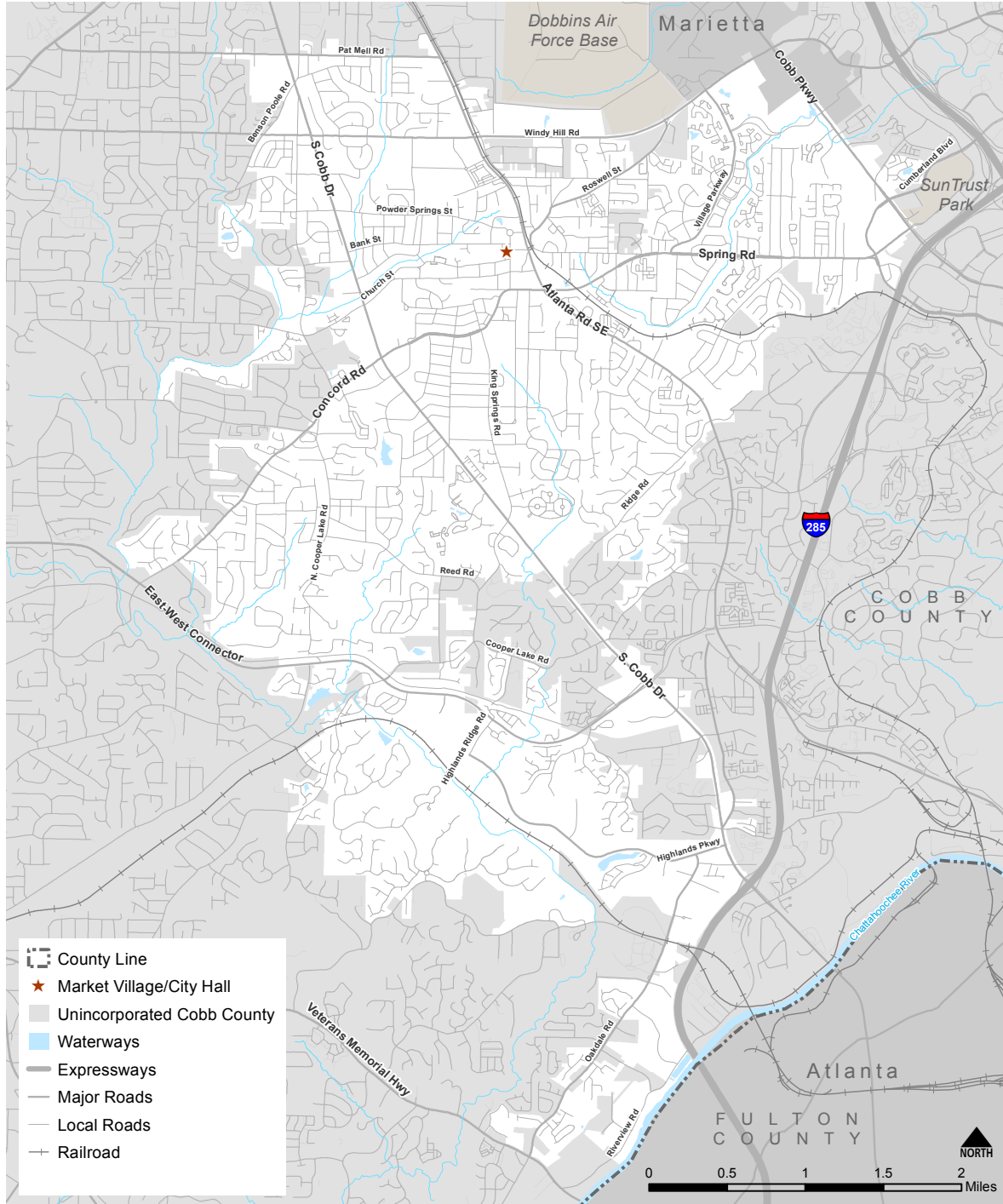
Photo credit: Atlanta Journal Constitution

*The City of Smyrna is looking to the community once again to help guide Smyrna's growth and development and ensure we have the right policies, framework, and action plan in place to facilitate our vision for the future as a part of Guide Smyrna, the process of developing Smyrna's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Guide Smyrna process will build on recent planning processes such as Smyrna's 10-Year Vision Plan, Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative Study, and South Cobb Drive Corridor Development Study while focusing on areas requiring more detailed attention for the plan to effectively advance the community's goals for future growth and development.*



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Figure 1.1. City of Smyrna



Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department, Atlanta Regional Commission





## OVERVIEW

**The backbone of the Guide Smyrna is an inclusive and informative public engagement.** This Community Engagement Program (CEP) details the ways the City of Smyrna will guide those with an interest in the future of Smyrna to be involved in and contribute input to the planning process. Key goals of the CEP are to ensure all voices in the community have a clear understanding of how and when they can get involved and have a meaningful way to help shape the plan. This program rests on consistent communication with the public in person and online. As the CEP is a living document, the meetings and events dates may be subject to change. Current dates will be communicated on the Participate page of [www.guidesmyrna.com](http://www.guidesmyrna.com).

**The CEP consists of two key components: 1) engagement opportunities and 2) communications strategy.** The engagement strategies indicate how the members of the Smyrna community can provide input to and be involved in the planning process, and the communications strategy depicts how information will be shared throughout the planning process. Community engagement will span a large portion of the project, as illustrated in the Figure 1.2 below. The CEP will be carried out by the planning team, consisting of the City of Smyrna staff and its consultant team led by Jacobs and supported by Market Street Services.

Figure 1.3. Guide Smyrna Stakeholders



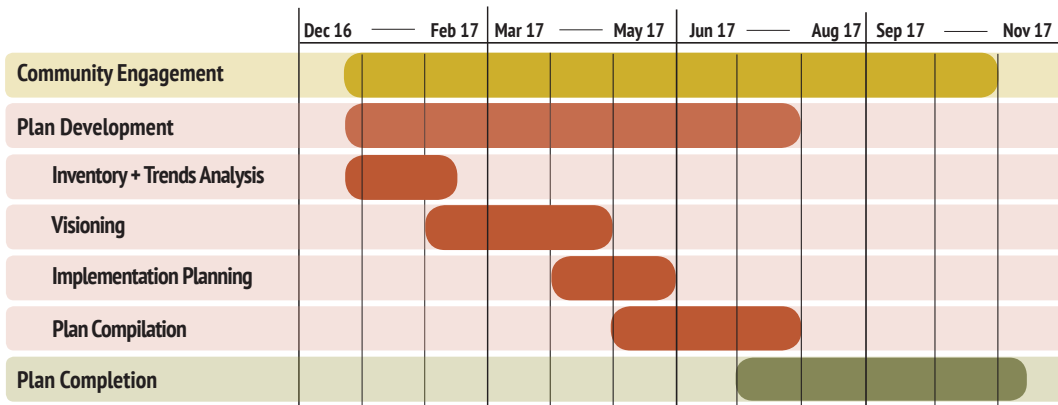
### PLANNING TEAM

City of Smyrna Community Development Department, Jacobs, Market Street Services

### COMMUNITY

Residents, Property Owners, Community Associations, Business Owners

Figure 1.2. Guide Smyrna Planning Schedule



## ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWS

The City of Smyrna will conduct interviews with several key stakeholders who play a role in shaping growth and development in Smyrna. These stakeholders include elected and appointed officials, business leaders and developers, neighborhood groups, City staff, and others. These interviews will inform the planning team's understanding of the issues and opportunities in Smyrna and complement the team's data analysis of conditions in the city. These interviews will take place on Friday, January 20, 2017 at Brawner Hall from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is a group of 17 community members who will play an ongoing strategic role in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Steering Committee is made up of City Planners, Economic Development leaders, Community Affairs members and Work Groups and will steer the Guide Smyrna process, serve as champions of the plan, and help encourage fellow community members to participate.

The Steering Committee will meet four times through the planning process at the following times:

- Steering Committee Meeting #1 - Thursday, February 2, 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting #2 - Tuesday, March 7, 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting #3 - Tuesday, April 11, 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting #4 - Tuesday, May 16, 2017

Table 1.1. Steering Committee Members

STEERING COMMITTEE	
City of Smyrna Mayor	Max Bacon
City of Smyrna Mayor Pro-Tem	Teri Anulewicz
City of Smyrna Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Board, Chairman	Joel Powell
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 1	Ron Roberts
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 2	Leslie Lightfoot
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 3	Emily Hein-Warren
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 4	Earl Rice
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 5	Cheri Harrington
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 6	Denny Campo
City of Smyrna P&Z Board Member, Ward 7	David Monroe
Representative from 2014 Vision Plan Work Groups	Troy Sather (Smyrna Arts & Culture Council)
Representative from 2014 Vision Plan Work Groups	Amanda Coffelt
Developer	Corbin Adams (Magnolia Homes of Georgia)
Developer	Bennett Sands (Wood Partners)
City of Smyrna, Elected Official	Doug Stoner (Ward 6)
Economic Development Representative	Slade Gullede (Cobb Chamber)
Education Representative	Chad Koenig (Smyrna Education Foundation)

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The City of Smyrna will develop and carryout a web-based survey, open to the general public, to gain input on the Guide Smyrna vision, priorities, development goals, and key actions for the future. The web-based survey will extend the reach of the Guide Smyrna engagement program and allow us to reach a large cross section of the Smyrna community, including residents who may be unable to attend public meetings (such as families). By providing opportunities for people to comment in their own time, a web-based survey helps ensure the planning process is meaningful, equitable, and inclusive of all voices in the community. The survey is expected to take place over four weeks, with its debut corresponding with the February 16 Public Workshop.

## PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The City will hold two public workshops to facilitate Guide Smyrna visioning and plan development in collaboration with the public. The aim of public workshops is to uncover and discuss issues and opportunities facing Smyrna today and into the future, with a focus on building upon previous planning efforts and updating the City's overall future land use plan. The workshops will be interactive in nature and will include a group presentation followed by small group discussions. The public workshops will be advertised through a mix of communications channels, including signs along major City roads, social media, and flyers, and take place between at the following times and locations:

- Public Workshop #1 – Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at Brawner Hall (3180 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Public Workshop #2 – Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at Brawner Hall (3180 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

## JONQUIL FESTIVAL BOOTH

To create more informal opportunities to interact with and gain input from local residents, the City of Smyrna will host a booth at the Jonquil Festival on April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon (exact hours to be determined). This booth will feature information and activities and provide further opportunity for residents to learn more about the Guide Smyrna and provide feedback in an informal setting.

## OPEN HOUSE

An open house will be held to provide community members and opportunity to review key recommendations and highlights from the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Open House will be informal in nature and allow people to come and choose as they please and ask one-on-one questions to members of the project team about the draft plan. A full draft of the plan will be available on the City's website.

- Public Open House – Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at Brawner Hall (3180 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Guide Smyrna will be presented at four public hearings to facilitate plan kick-off, review, and adoption. These hearings and associated dates include:

- Kick-off Hearing with Mayor and City Council – Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall
- Pre-transmittal Hearing with Planning and Zoning Board – Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall
- Pre-transmittal Hearing with Mayor and City Council – Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall
- Adoption Hearing with Mayor and City Council – Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall



## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

*The City of Smyrna will use a variety of communication tools to announce public meetings, exhibit draft documents, and enable the community to provide feedback on Guide Smyrna. Regular information updates will help ensure relevant and fluid communications with the public and generate interest in the Guide Smyrna. The following communications tools will be utilized.*

### PROJECT BRANDING



*The process of updating the City's comprehensive plan document is being branded as Guide Smyrna. The appearance of this project logo and tagline will signal to community members that they are looking at an official document or participating in an official activity of the process.*

### WEBSITE



*GuideSmyrna.com will be a one-stop-shop portal that provides the community with educational information about the Comprehensive Plan and its role in the City's day-to-day activities as well as information on planning events and links to the Guide Smyrna documents. It will be an easy to use portal to allow the public to submit comments on the Guide Smyrna. This standalone website will serve as the official information portal for the Guide Smyrna process and be linked to the City of Smyrna's website.*

### SOCIAL MEDIA



*The City of Smyrna operates a dedicated Facebook page and Twitter feed. Social media will be utilized to inform the public of upcoming events and ensure the community is aware of the opportunities to be involved in the Guide Smyrna.*

### EMAIL BLASTS



*Information regarding events and posting of major draft documents will be emailed to residents who participate in and sign-up for the Guide Smyrna outreach list during the planning process.*

### ROAD SIGNS



*The City of Smyrna owns and operates five digital Variable Message Signs and a number of static signs located on roadways around the City. These signs will be used to provide short tailored messages to inform the community of upcoming public meetings for the Guide Smyrna in line with the City's social media posts.*

### FLYERS



*Flyers will be distributed to help promote public events and to help disseminate information and encourage community participation. The City, Steering Committee, and email blasts will play an important role in distributing flyers.*



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**CONTACT US**

[WWW.GUIDESMYRNA.COM](http://WWW.GUIDESMYRNA.COM)

[GUIDESMYRNA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:GUIDESMYRNA@GMAIL.COM)



# PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1



## PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1 SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

The goals of the workshop were to: 1) gather input on vision, challenges, and opportunities; 2) familiarize community members with the Comprehensive Plan and update process; and 3) gain direction on future growth and development to help inform the update of the Future Land Use Plan.

### LOGISTICS

The workshop was held on Thursday, February 16, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Brawner Hall. There were 48 participants that signed in at the workshop, along with four staff members of the City of Smyrna Community Development and four members of the consultant team.

### AGENDA

- 6:30 P.M.** Sign-in and Arrival Activities
- 6:45 P.M.** Welcome Presentation
- 7:00 P.M.** Smyrna’s Future Development Discussion Groups
- 8:25 P.M.** Parting Remarks

### SUMMARY OF ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

Upon arrival, participants reviewed background material and participated in input activities. Displays with key maps, data, and observations from the draft Baseline Conditions Report were posted for review. Participants placed stickers on a map to show where they lived, where they worked, and their favorite place in Smyrna. Most indicated they live in the northern part of Smyrna, and their places of work were dispersed across the city and elsewhere in the region. Market Village and the Silver Comet Trail were selected as participants’ favorite places in town.

A set of statements on the opportunities and challenges currently facing the City, which had been collected during stakeholder interviews and the first Steering Committee meeting, was posted for participants to review. In response to the statements, they could place stickers to show if they agreed or disagreed and were able to add their own statement if they felt something had been left out of the discussion thus far. The opportunities and challenges with the most votes are shown in Figures 3 and 4 on the following pages. Congestion on Atlanta Road; school quality impacts on housing; affordable housing; the need for high end retail; and the need to attract and retain young families were affirmed as top challenges. MARTA expansion to Smyrna; education; the reinvention of South Cobb Drive; bicycle and pedestrian access to the new Braves stadium; and improvement of major corridors were seen as top opportunities.



Left to right:  
 1) Participant sharing where she lives, works, and enjoys; 2) Cluster of participants’ favorite places around Market Village; 3) Challenge and opportunity cards, with green stickers to agree and red stickers to disagree.

stadium; and improvement of major corridors were seen as top opportunities.



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Participants received Vision Questionnaires upon arrival and returned them before leaving, providing feedback on how to refine the strategic vision from the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan to focus on future growth and development. Given a selection of phrases to add to the vision and the option to write in their own, the most popular choices were connectivity, greenspace, diversity of people, sustainable, and entrepreneurial. Participants were also asked three open-ended questions about future development. The parts of Smyrna that define its sense of place were most often cited as parks, Market Village, and South Cobb Drive. The most frequently recommended catalysts for Smyrna’s future were more parks and public amenities, direct integration with MARTA, better bicycle infrastructure, and limits on high density development. In the year 2040, most people envision Smyrna as a livable community with good transportation.

**Figure 1. Key phrases for Smyrna’s sense of place**



**Figure 2. Key phrases for catalysts for Smyrna’s future**





Figure 3. Arrival Activity - Top Challenges

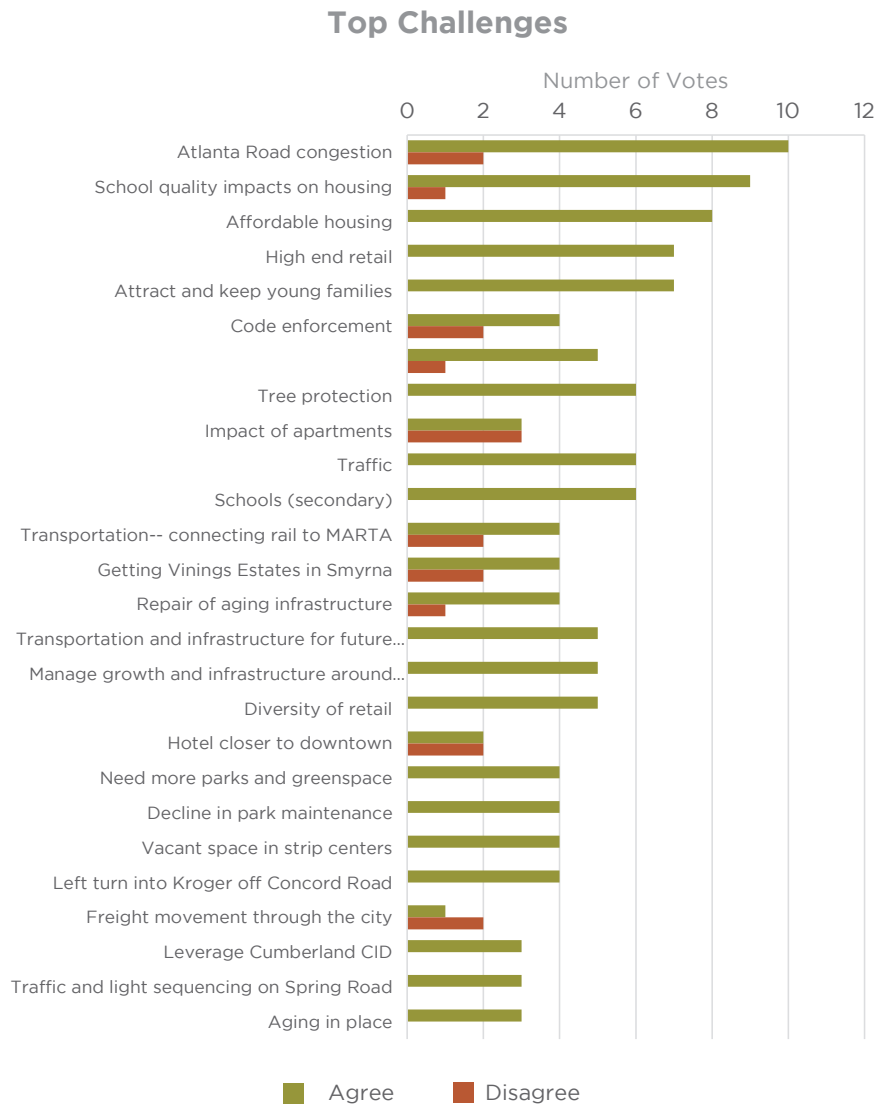
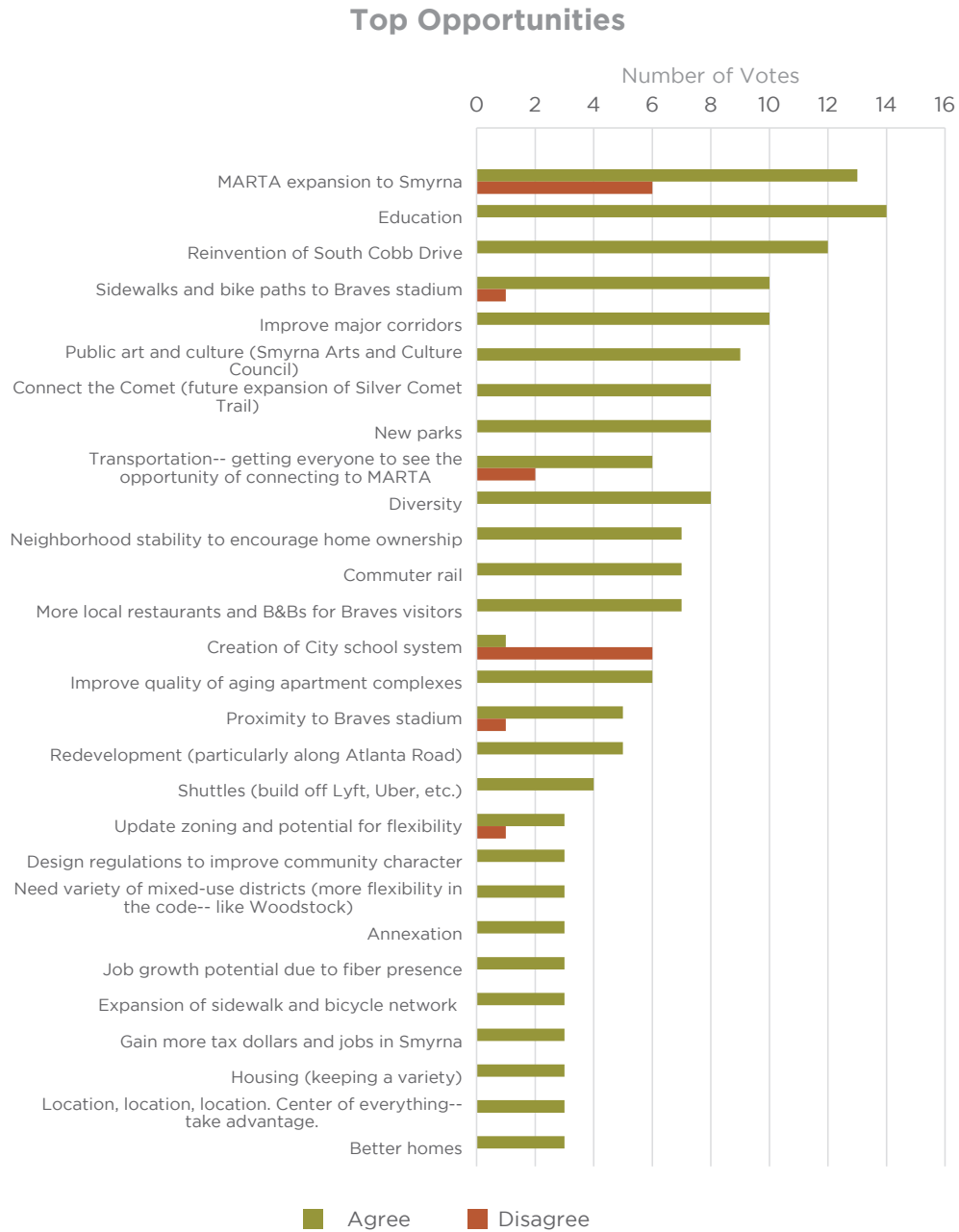






Figure 4. Arrival Activity - Top Opportunities



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## SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

After welcoming the participants, Rusty Martin, senior planner with the City of Smyrna Community Development Department, introduced the project and Amanda Hatton, the consulting team project manager. Amanda then gave a 15-minute presentation, which provided an overview of the planning process, the plan framework and elements, scheduled public meetings and events, the project website, contact information, and directions for the Future Development Discussion Groups.

## SUMMARY OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION GROUPS

Participants were divided into three discussion groups with topics focusing on: 1) Neighborhoods, 2) Activity Centers, and 3) Corridors. Within each group, they envisioned which areas should stay the same or change and discussed key opportunities and initiatives the City should pursue. Groups discussed each topic for 30 minutes and then rotated to the next station.

### STATION 1: NEIGHBORHOODS

**Discussion Topics:** Infill housing, types of housing, affordability

**Facilitated by:** Meghan McMullen (Jacobs) and Joey Staubes (City of Smyrna)

#### Overview

The Residential Neighborhoods group discussed the status of and vision for Smyrna's primarily single-family neighborhoods. Each group began with several members sharing descriptions of the physical characteristics and sense of community in their own neighborhoods. The group then discussed housing trends, as well as areas they felt should stay the same in 20 years and those they felt should change, either because they wanted to improve an area's current conditions or because they saw it as a location best suited to receive anticipated growth. They shared ideas on preservation and development opportunities and the types of housing they felt would be appropriate in various neighborhoods. A map highlighting the residential neighborhoods in Smyrna was provided as a discussion aid, and participants placed stickers on the map to note the areas they recommended should stay the same or change. Participants represented several Smyrna neighborhoods, including Cheney Woods, Belmont Hills, Forest Hills, Heritage at Vinings, Smyrna Heights, and Williams Park.

#### Key Discussion Themes

The major trends in Smyrna's residential neighborhoods are infill housing—where an old home is torn down and replaced by one or more homes—and remodeling of older houses. Participants generally welcomed the renovations. Their concerns centered on infill development, if it is happening too rapidly or when a single home is replaced by multiple homes, because of the potential for associated traffic impacts, tree canopy reduction, and inflated home prices. When infill housing does happen, they want to make sure it is at an appropriate scale for the neighborhood. Home remodels were seen in a more positive light, giving young families a way to buy into the neighborhood at a more affordable price.

Housing needs and preferences varied amongst participants. Some had sought out Smyrna to get a home on a large lot and a tree-lined street close to Atlanta, while others were after the low-maintenance, convenient lifestyle of townhomes or multifamily units. In terms of pricing, some would-be first-time homebuyers expressed difficulty finding starter homes, and renters said they could find affordable options, but that they were typically older, basic units. There was a consensus that walkable neighborhoods are preferred. Because of the range of housing preferences amongst them, most participants valued the variety of housing types currently available within the City and want to continue to see a variety of types available in the future, though some participants said they would rather limit apartment development citywide. Garage apartments (carriage houses) were considered acceptable within single-family neighborhoods. Most participants thought duplexes, townhomes, and quadraplexes would be acceptable in that context, given the appropriate scale and quality and the provision of off-street parking. Apartments were generally



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considered more appropriate as transitions between commercial areas and single-family homes than within residential neighborhoods.

## Additional Discussion Highlights

### Infill Housing

- To maintain the neighborhood character, it may be appropriate to regulate the scale and quality of new homes through mechanisms such as floor area ratio (FAR) requirements or design guidelines.
- Worried that rapid infill development will eliminate affordable older homes; may need to consider ways of preserving affordability
- Concerns about speculative investors
- Younger families are moving into neighborhoods, especially Forest Hills, and often remodeling their homes. Beginning to see many more strollers on the sidewalks and school buses stopping where they didn't before.

### Affordability

- Remodeling small, older homes as a primary source of affordable housing for new homeowners.
- Some participants were weary of housing at a lower price point and of apartments in general and expressed a preference to stick to only detached single-family homes.
- Others felt it was important to provide housing that fits the budget of retail employees and public servants, who may be seeking rental housing or homes at a lower price point, in order to have an inclusive community.

### Apartments

- Older apartment buildings in town need renovations.
- To attract tenants and create long-term value, better to build apartments near an amenity like a park, school, or commercial area.

### Areas to Stay the Same

- Market Village
- Williams Park (keep the variety of housing stock and inclusion of some neighborhood commercial)
- Belmont Hills (keep the availability of rental homes, affordability, and diverse neighbors)
- Cheney Woods (keep ranch homes on large lots)
- Smyrna Heights
- Bennett Woods

### Areas to Change

- Riverview Road area (if this develops, make sure the public still has access to the riverfront)
- Neighborhoods adjacent to Spring Road near SunTrust Park
- Would like to annex neighborhoods adjacent to the City





## STATION 2: ACTIVITY CENTERS

**Discussion Topics:** Jobs/housing balance, building heights, transportation and gateway investments

**Facilitated by:** Amanda Hatton (Jacobs), Ranada Robinson (Market Street), and Bob Summerville (City of Smyrna)

### Overview

The Activity Centers group discussed where major or minor activity centers are located in the Smyrna now or in the future and how those areas would ideally evolve over time. Each group discussion began with a general explanation of what an activity center is: a place where you could park your car and complete a few different tasks or activities without having to get back into your car. Activity centers can be characterized in different ways. As a starting point for discussion, the planning team introduced a map to the group that showed activity centers in five locations of the city, each with a half mile radius. The map also showed an initial effort by the planning team to document major and minor gateways into the city.

### Key Discussion Themes

Groups generally felt that Smyrna was appropriate for lower scale and lower intensity activity centers. The only area viewed as appropriate for higher intensity uses is SunTrust Park area. People liked the idea of neighborhood centers and activity nodes that fostered entrepreneurship, such as small start-ups, boutique shops, and local restaurants. There was not much appetite for activity centers that brought forth major employers, office buildings, or higher density multi-family structures. Some of the opposition to multi-family was tied to concern about traffic. Many attendees liked the idea of connectivity between activity centers that does not require a car and could be accommodated by bike, walking, or possibly transit. To that end, people would like to see more passive parks throughout the city to create little community nodes. Potential locations for passive recreation include Spring Road and in residential areas south of the Silver Comet Trail.

### Activity Center Highlights

#### SunTrust Park Activity Node

- There was general consensus that this is the one appropriate area for higher density.
- Office makes sense here as well as higher intensity apartments or condos.

#### Market Village Activity Center

- Groups agreed that this is the one “true” activity center currently in the city that features “live, work, play”.
- Many people placed blue stars on the area to indicate that it should stay the same.
- There is an opportunity to create a linear art walk along Spring Road on the southern end
- Some people voiced concern over the turnover of businesses in Market Village. Daytime businesses have located in some spaces instead of restaurants or shops that could contribute to a more vibrant and appealing destination for residents and visitors.
- The Community Center needs to be expanded, or there is possibly a need for another.

#### South Cobb Drive and Concord Road

- Community members see this as a commercial area for restaurants and retail. There is an opportunity for small boutique or restaurant entrepreneurship here.
- People would generally like to see this node stay the same, as a neighborhood serving retail area.



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- It is not seen as appropriate for higher density multi-family dwellings or office in the future.

### South Cobb Drive and Windy Hill Road

- This is an area seen as likely to change, having future potential as an eclectic neighborhood center. That opportunity will need to be balanced with the intersection's role as a major gateway into the city for commuters going east or west through Smyrna.
- There is an opportunity for a community amenity like a splash pad.
- The node can leverage the area's cultural diversity. It is believed the area is home to several Hispanic businesses. This could be leveraged to make the area unique.

### Riverview Road

- Several people liked the idea of this becoming an activity center in the future.
- The river and its history can and should be leveraged.
- Development here should be high quality and picky as it is a unique opportunity.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate public amenities, such as greenspace.
- This could be a great place for musical or other events or possibly something like a brewery. The example of Winter Garden, Florida's Plant Street Market was given.
- Some community members pointed out the challenge of limited incorporated city land in the area. To truly have an impact in this area, the City should annex more surrounding land. Adjacent industrial uses could also pose challenges to redevelopment.

### Belmont Hills

- Belmont Hills was not mapped as an activity center, but community members pointed out that it is one.
- People would like it to become more like Market Village over time and incorporate passive parks.

### Potential Neighborhood Centers

- Area around Rev Coffee on Spring Road
- Area around Creatwood Circle at Atlanta Road. This is a small commercial node with a park nearby.

### Other Discussion Points

- How does this plan consider the impact of development on schools and transportation? These are the two major concerns of community members.
- There is a need for a transit center in the city that also serves as a live, work, play location.
- The City needs to piece together assets: civil war ruins to river.
- Connecting our activity centers via non-vehicular modes is of high importance. For example, how can Smyrna residents walk or bike to the Braves game?
- Annexation needs to be a priority. The City should fill in the "holes" in the city.
- Smyrna needs nightlife options such as the Shops of Buckhead, Downtown Decatur, Highland Avenue in Inman Park, or West Midtown.
- There is an opportunity for office space along Windy Hill Road, east of South Cobb Drive.
- East West Connector at South Cobb Drive is not necessarily an activity center, but there is opportunity for greater coordination. There is heavy traffic, and better planning is needed.



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## STATION 3: CORRIDORS

**Discussion Topics:** Uses appropriate along corridor, function, design preferences

**Facilitator:** Jim Summerbell (Jacobs)

### Overview

The Corridors group discussed the typologies of the City's major transportation corridors and the desired land uses along them. Each group discussion began with a general explanation of what the different types of corridors are, including: 1) transit corridors, 2) green community corridors, and 3) technology/employment corridors. Transit corridors primarily handle commuter and cut through traffic and are typically designed to handle transit along with vehicular traffic. Green community corridors are designed to accommodate non-vehicular traffic along with local vehicular traffic. They often have linear parks, trails, or public art along them. The third type of corridor, technology/employment corridors, serves primarily to handle freight and work-based traffic to and from the City's major employment centers. The planning team introduced a map to the group that highlighted the corridors and an initial effort to identify the typology of each.

### Key Discussion Themes

Groups generally felt that traffic was a major concern, and there is strong need for operational improvements, such as signal timing, roundabouts, and additional turn lanes to improve intersection traffic flow. Though many approve of recent transportation related projects, there was a lot of concern and questions about the full scope of such projects as the Windy Hill Road improvements and the work related to the Battery and SunTrust Park. From a land use perspective, there was concern for small business owners being displaced by these efforts, and the types of development and amenities planned along the corridors. All groups also expressed support for transit (both CCT and MARTA), and designing the corridors with all modes of transportation in mind. There was also interest in the potential impacts of driverless vehicles and intelligent transportation systems that help alert travelers to traffic and road conditions. Trail connectivity and improvements to the Silver Comet were also of general interest.

### Corridor Highlights

#### Windy Hill Road

- Plans for linear park design of road will limit the location redevelopment opportunities along it. Need to study plans closely to determine future uses.
- Many small businesses are being displaced due to the road construction. Is the City losing them or are they being relocated?

#### Atlanta Road

- Prime area for greater density and redevelopment.
- Issues currently exist with left turning movements on the road at rush hour, particularly turning north toward Marietta from the Market Village area.
- Operational improvements are really needed around Brawner Hall.
- Signal timing needs to be improved



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## South Cobb Drive

- Good location for retail and office around Concord Road Intersection
- People generally would like to see the roadway stay as low density in character, but see the corridor as ripe for redevelopment.
- The southern part of the corridor below Concord Road should be studied like the northern portion is currently being studied now.
- Particular intersections in need of improvement include I-285, the East/West Connector, King Springs, and Concord Road (Note along East/West Connector close to S. Cobb Drive, the intersection with Gaylor Street is an issue too.)

## Spring Road

- Arts Line - City should promote through the Arts Council, major public arts displays along the corridor. This would add interest to the multiuse path along it, help promote the arts, and serve as a gateway to the City and SunTrust Park.
- Few alternative routes, everything funnels onto Spring Road.

## Riverview Road

- Concern over any new development limiting access to the river. The river should be open to all the public, no gated communities.
- Some community members pointed out the challenge of limited incorporated city land in the area. To truly have an impact in this area, the City should annex more surrounding land.

## Oakdale Road

- The western half of the roadway should be designed as a Green Community Corridor, to help preserve residential uses along it.

## Local collectors

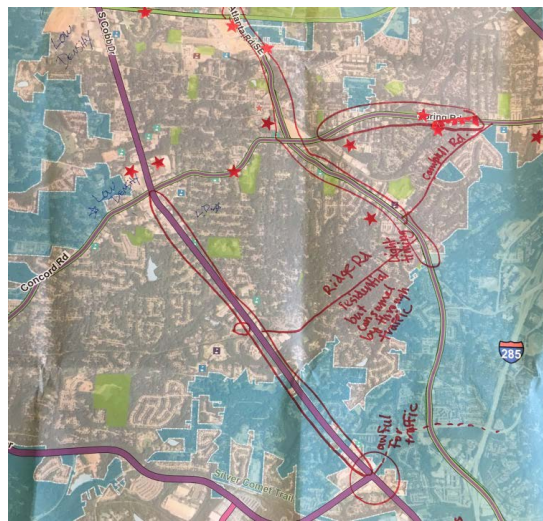
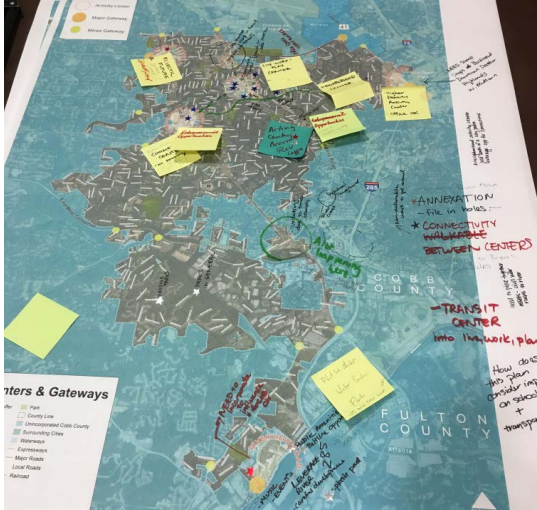
- Both Ridge Road and Campbell Roads are local residential neighborhood oriented streets, but they handle large volumes of traffic at rush hour. They are seen as cut throughs, and are worthy of improvements or special design consideration.

## Other Discussion Points

- How does this plan consider the impact of development on schools and transportation? These are the two major concerns of community members.
- There is a need for a transit center in the city that also serves as a live, work, play location.
- Commuter Rail is needed and should be promoted
- Local shuttle needed from Market Village to SunTrust Park
- Close coordination with the County DOT is a necessity



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*Clockwise from top left: 1) Participant comments on the Activity Centers map; 2) Neighborhoods discussion group; 3) Welcome presentation; 4) Comments on the Corridors map*





## PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2



### PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 SUMMARY

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#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the meeting was to 1) inform participants about the project; 2) review and refine the vision elements of the draft plan; and 3) discuss how well the current plan reflects the vision and what needs to be changed.

#### **LOGISTICS**

The workshop was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Brawner Hall. There were 24 participants signed in, along with five staff members of the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development and four members of the consultant team.

#### **AGENDA**

**6:30 P.M.** Sign-in and Arrival Activities

**6:45 P.M.** Welcome Presentation

**7:00 P.M.** Smyrna's Future Land Use Map Discussion Groups

**8:30 P.M.** Adjourn

#### **SUMMARY OF ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES**

Informational boards and input activities were set up for participants to review upon arrival. Participants were asked to place stickers on a map showing where they live and work; all those who responded live in the northern part of Smyrna and worked outside of the city. A map of the current City of Smyrna Future Development Map was displayed, combined with the recommended future land uses for nearby unincorporated Cobb County parcels, per the Service Delivery Agreement for the City and County. The draft Policy Map was also shown, along with an explanation of the process for updating the Future Development Map and the role the Policy Map plays in that.

The list of 21 goals from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan was provided on a board, and participants were asked to place stickers next to the three they feel are most relevant today. The most popular choice was Goal 19, which addresses the need for a well-connected, multimodal transportation system. Participants also selected Goal 1 (protect established residential neighborhoods), Goal 3 (provide a range of housing choices), Goal 8 (protect natural resources), Goal 9 (provide parks and recreation), Goal 10 (protect historic and cultural assets), and Goal 15 (expand on the success of Market Village).



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The draft vision statement was presented and participants were asked to vote for phrases they supported or opposed. The most frequently supported phrase was “ease of access and connectivity,” followed by “Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination,” “signature public spaces,” “embodied in unique local businesses,” and “its diversity of distinct and welcoming businesses” (tied). No phrases were opposed.

## SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Ken Suddreth, Director of the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development, welcomed the participants and introduced Jim Summerbell, the acting consulting team project manager. Jim gave a 10-minute presentation that included an overview of the planning process and an outline of the evening’s activities. He explained the small group format and the four stations: 1) Residential Areas; 2) Activity Centers; 3) Public Spaces and Transportation Facilities; and 4) Places of Work and Commerce. Participants were asked to keep the vision in mind throughout the discussion and consider how policies could be adjusted to better align with that vision.

### DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

*“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods.”*



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## RESIDENTIAL AREAS STATION SUMMARY

The Residential Areas station addressed the single-family residential neighborhoods in Smyrna, as well as activity centers where housing is currently located or may be appropriate. A brief overview of density levels and housing types was provided to acquaint participants with relevant housing policy terminology and concepts.

### Policy Map and Future Land Use Discussion

The group reviewed the residential categories on the current Future Development Map and their allowable uses and densities, as well as the draft Policy Map showing the residential areas designated as low, medium, and high susceptibility to change. (See Figure 1.) This categorization considers which residential areas are most likely to change in the near future due to market forces. Change may take the form of renovation, infill, or potentially a change of use depending on approval of a required rezoning. The designations were determined based on factors such as the age or quality of the development; proximity to activity centers; and ownership characteristics. See Table 1 below for a summary of factors contributing to the neighborhood susceptibility ratings.

**Table 1. Residential Neighborhood Susceptibility to Change**

Susceptibility to Change			
	Low	Medium	High
<b>Age of Structures</b>	New development or established neighborhood with very little infill to date	Some degree of variability in age of homes	High degree of variability in age of homes (infill already occurring)
<b>Location</b>	Away from activity centers and redevelopment	Close to activity centers	Very close to activity centers
<b>Ownership</b>	Majority single-family, owner-occupied homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority single-family, owner-occupied homes</li> <li>• May have some rental properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority single-family, owner-occupied homes</li> <li>• May have some rental properties</li> <li>• Apartment complexes</li> </ul>

In reviewing the Policy Map and neighborhood susceptibility to change, most participants felt the map reflected realistic locations for future change. The areas surrounding SunTrust Park and along Spring Road were perceived as the most likely areas to change due to market interest in the location and were seen as more appropriate locations for infill development and higher density housing. They also felt it would be appropriate for the Riverview Hub area to shift from industrial to residential to help meet housing demand. Most participants expressed a preference for maintaining the existing character of the single-family neighborhoods to the south (shown as low susceptibility to change), in terms of both character and density and were willing to accept more development in the



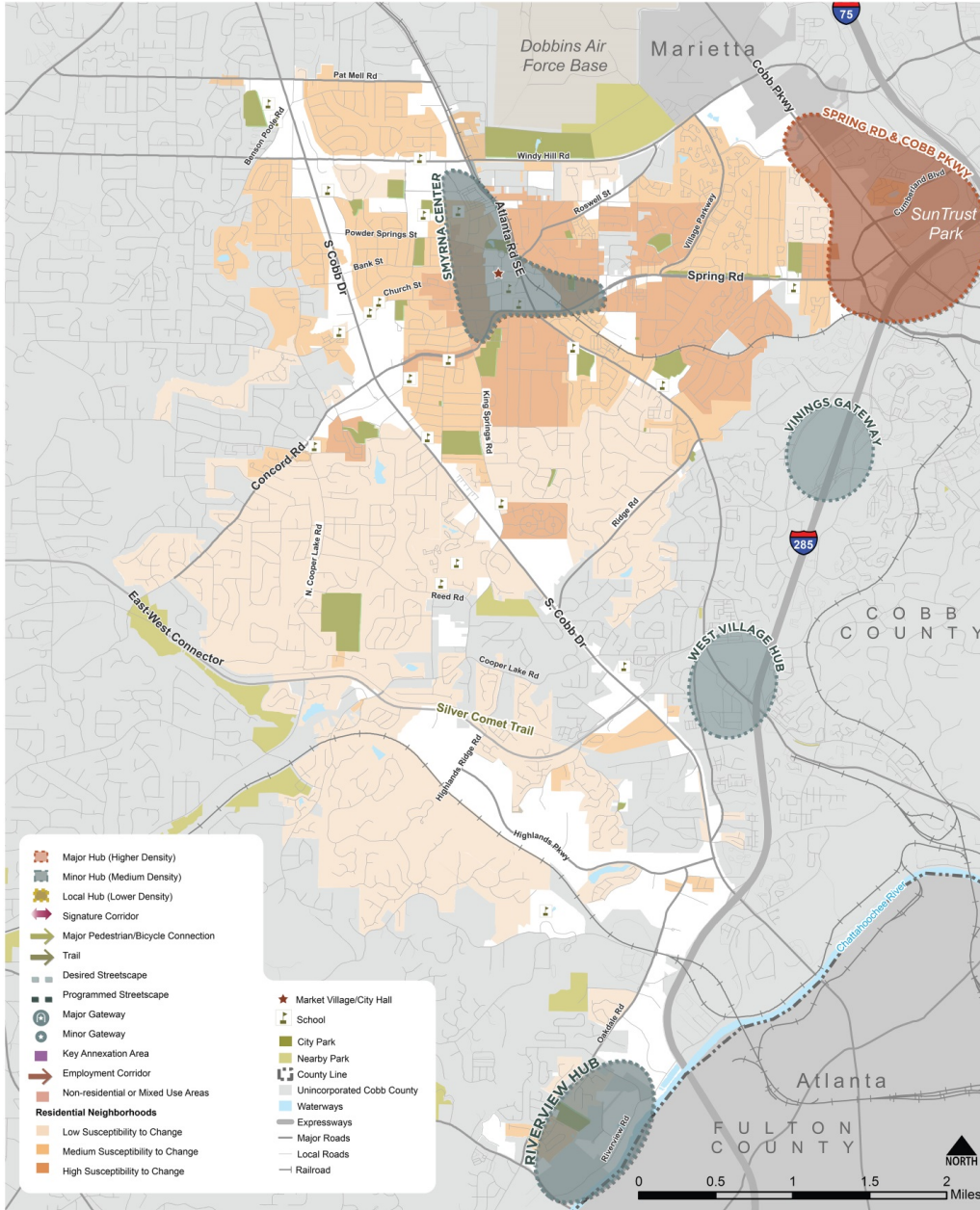
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northern part of the city in order to accept future growth, as long as the appropriate infrastructure investments are coordinated.



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Figure 1. Draft Policy Map - Residential Areas



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## Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion

Four priority housing needs and opportunities had been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

### H1. Continue to encourage the creation of diverse housing choices.

- Some areas—such as the area around SunTrust Park and the Riverview Hub-- may be appropriate for higher densities in order to provide low-maintenance and lower priced housing.
- A greater variety of housing types would be acceptable in some single-family neighborhoods, especially moderate and medium density areas. Accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, duplexes, and townhomes may be appropriate in these settings.
- Condominiums and apartments should be reserved for urban residential areas with supportive infrastructure and amenities like parks and retail nearby.
- Providing a variety of senior housing is a priority. Residents want both single-family homes with accessible designs (such as zero step entries and master bedrooms on the main floor), as well as condominium, apartment, or assisted living options in walkable, mixed-use settings.
- New apartments are still expensive; may need to consider ways to offer a reduced price point, such as through incentives for moderately priced units. Atlanta BeltLine overlay housing requirements and initiatives were discussed. Need a desirable amenity to leverage.
- The City needs to consider creative ways to provide affordable housing in the long term, such as through a land bank.

### H2. Encourage home ownership and stability.

- In order to make home ownership realistic for more people, it needs to be more affordable.
- Need to maintain a stock of older homes available for first time homebuyers to purchase and renovate.
- Want to increase maintenance standards for rental homes, but do not currently have a registry of rental properties and owners.
- Interested in providing financial assistance and other support for lower income homeowners who want to renovate their properties. Resources for Residents and Communities of Georgia mentioned as an example for their work in the Reynoldstown neighborhood.

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### **H3. Continue to enhance quality of life in neighborhoods.**

- Preserve established neighborhoods.
- Incorporate a park into every neighborhood or provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access from every neighborhood to larger community parks.
- Maintain stricter code enforcement. May require increased City staff capacity.
- Improve coordination between the City, the public works department, and private waste management services to monitor code violations.
- Maintain existing lot sizes in certain areas.

### **H4. Facilitate context-appropriate housing densities.**

- Consider design guidelines for residential neighborhoods to ensure new builds are high quality, respect the scale and character of the neighborhood, and contribute to a pleasant public realm.
- Provide a wider range of zoning designations to avoid reliance on RAD rezonings.
- Encourage the Board of Commissioners to stick to the development regulations and reduce the number of variances approved.
- Look into appropriate locations for tiny homes.
- Locate higher density housing in areas with sufficient infrastructure to handle higher volumes of users.
- Examine the impact of existing stormwater regulations and detention facility requirements on potential lot configurations and development costs for infill development. Current regulations make it more cost effective to replace a single home with multiple homes in many cases.

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## ACTIVITY CENTERS SUMMARY

The Activity Centers station addressed those areas in Smyrna where mixed-use land use and major commercial crossroads are located. Before discussion began, a brief overview of three different types of activity centers recognized on the Future Development Map was provided to acquaint participants with relevant land use policy terminology and concepts. The three different types of activity centers were described as follows in a handout given out to participants as they signed in.

Activity Centers - Current Future Development Areas		
Name	Description & Vision	Corresponding Zoning
<b>Neighborhood Activity Center</b>	Neighborhood Activity Centers are neighborhood focal points with a concentration of small commercial, civic, and public activities. Uses within Neighborhood Activity Centers are intended to be local-serving.	LC, NS, FC
<b>Community Activity Center</b>	Community Activity Centers are regional focal points containing a mix of commercial, professional, civic, and public uses. Community Activity Centers are designed to accommodate commercial uses serving several adjacent neighborhoods.	GC, MU, NS, TS
<b>Mixed-Use</b>	A mixed-use, live/work/play district that provides a venue for gatherings, events, and civic activities. A prime example of the mixed use Future Development Area is the Smyrna Market Village.	CBD, MU

Participants were also presented an excerpt from the draft Policy Map that highlighted three different levels of activity hubs (major, minor and local) that were identified by the participants at the first workshop, see Figure 2.

### Policy Map and Future Land Use Discussion

The group compared the activity centers located on Future Development Map and their allowable uses and densities, with the draft Policy Map. Staff asked each group what they considered to be appropriate densities and heights for the major hub shown around the SunTrust Park. All the groups agreed that their vision for the areas was denser than what is currently allowed on the Future Development Map, which is similar to what is currently allowed in the Market Village. Groups saw the area as a walkable transit oriented regional development more urban in scale than other current mixed uses developments in the city. Appropriate uses to include in the mix of land uses in the area were seen as high density residential, office, retail, entertainment with high architectural standards. Groups differed in their views of appropriate building height, one groups said as high as 10 to 15 stories, another group 8 to 10 stories, and one said 4 to 5 stories. All agreed, however, that the issue will be discussed in greater detail in Spring Road LCI study, and that the height should be stepped down closer to surrounding low density residential areas. The groups

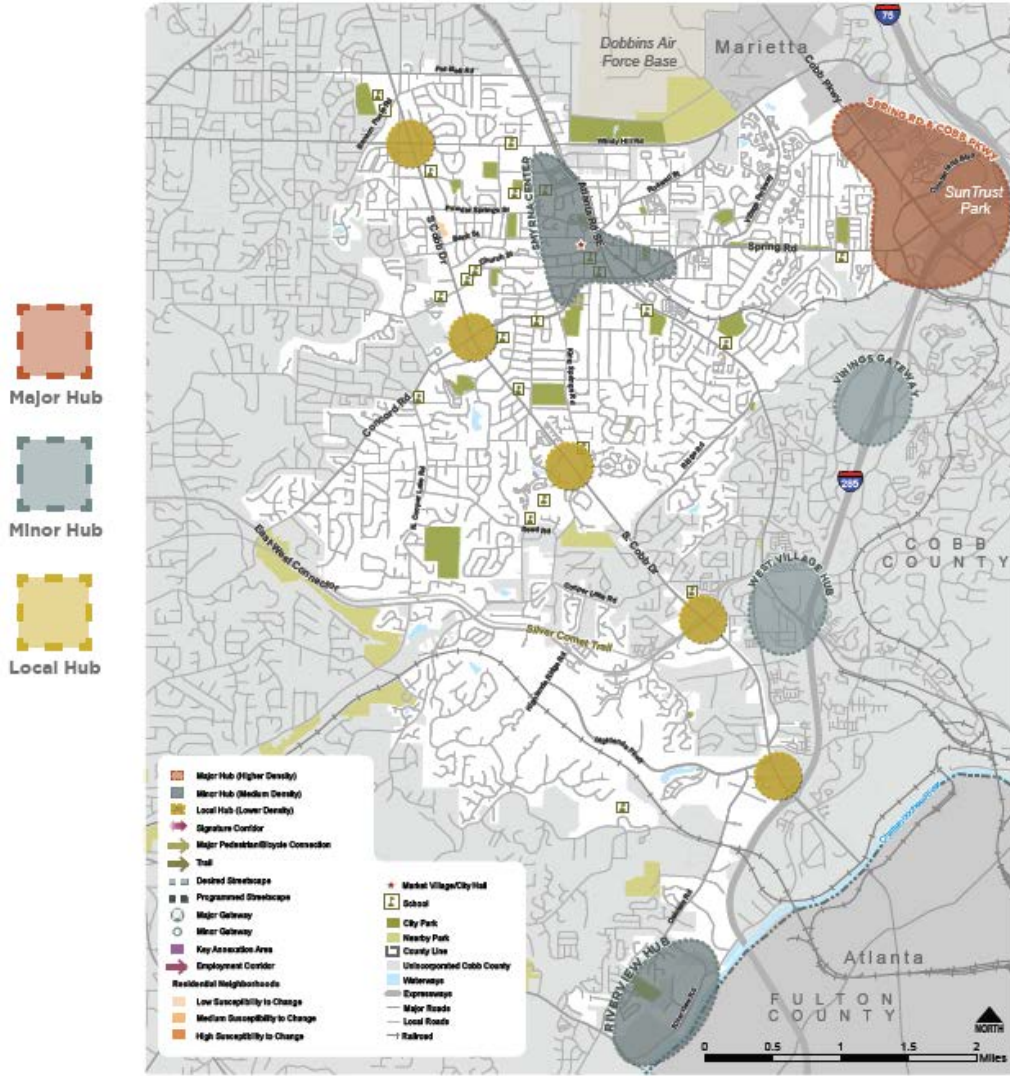




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also agreed that a new land use designation will need to be created on the new 2040 Future Land Use Map, to capture the vision for this area.

Figure 2. Draft Policy Map - Activity Centers



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Most agreed that the density and scale of development currently seen around the Market Village was desirable, and they see the opportunity for expansion to 4 to 5 stories similar to West Village. As a rule, most participants saw the need for more residential and local businesses around Market Village to support more activity in the area.

The smaller hubs on South Cobb were generally viewed as neighborhood serving in scale and in need of reinvestment and redevelopment. Greater code enforcement was desired by some, and many were willing to explore the possibility of architectural standards to help promote high quality development. Many felt that each hub should have its own character and different form from the others to help promote neighborhood and city identity. The provision of multiple housing options was seen as generally desirable, and one group brought up the possibility of tailoring these options as well as local services to active seniors.

The only other activity centers that the participants commented on were Riverside Landing along the Chattahoochee River and those along I-285 just outside the city but within the potential annexation area. Riverview Landing was viewed by many as a blank slate, and felt that even though the council recently approved a revised site plan for the area that was more residential in focus than mixed use, that the potential for infill with non-residential uses was still open and so a more mixed use center was still possible. All agreed that public access and the enjoyment of the river by all Smyrna residents was desirable. Both of the I-285 nodes were seen as desirable for the City to annex but somewhat of a long shot. Both areas would retain a similar scale and density as seen today, but reinvestment into the areas will be needed.

## Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion

Four priority land use needs and opportunities had been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

### LU1. Target public investment in key nodes and corridors

For this item, participants identified key areas where they saw the need for more public and private investment. Most agreed that parks should be one of the forms of that this investment should take. These areas included:

- South Cobb Drive from I-285 to the East West Connector
- The area of northern Smyrna between Pat Mell, Windy Hill Road, Atlanta Road and S Cobb Drive
- Market Village
- Jonquil Drive and Spring Road



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## **LU2. Increase adaptability of development regulations**

- Most agreed that a zoning update is needed, but little was offered in the way of details other than to stress improving readability and ease of use
- Toward this end, greater communication about the overall process was also identified as a need

## **LU3. Ensure infill development is compatible with its context.**

- The existing policies and action items under this topic were still viewed as relevant, which include the undertaking of Study of Infill Development Guidelines.
- One participant pointed out that Brookhaven had a good example of such policies that they were applying to the Deering Area.

## **LU4. Maintain high design standards.**

- Most participants felt that the idea of implementing architectural design standards, not just site design standards, was worth exploring by the city
- Many pointed out the need for greater code enforcement.

## **PUBLIC SPACES AND TRANSPORTATION STATION SUMMARY**

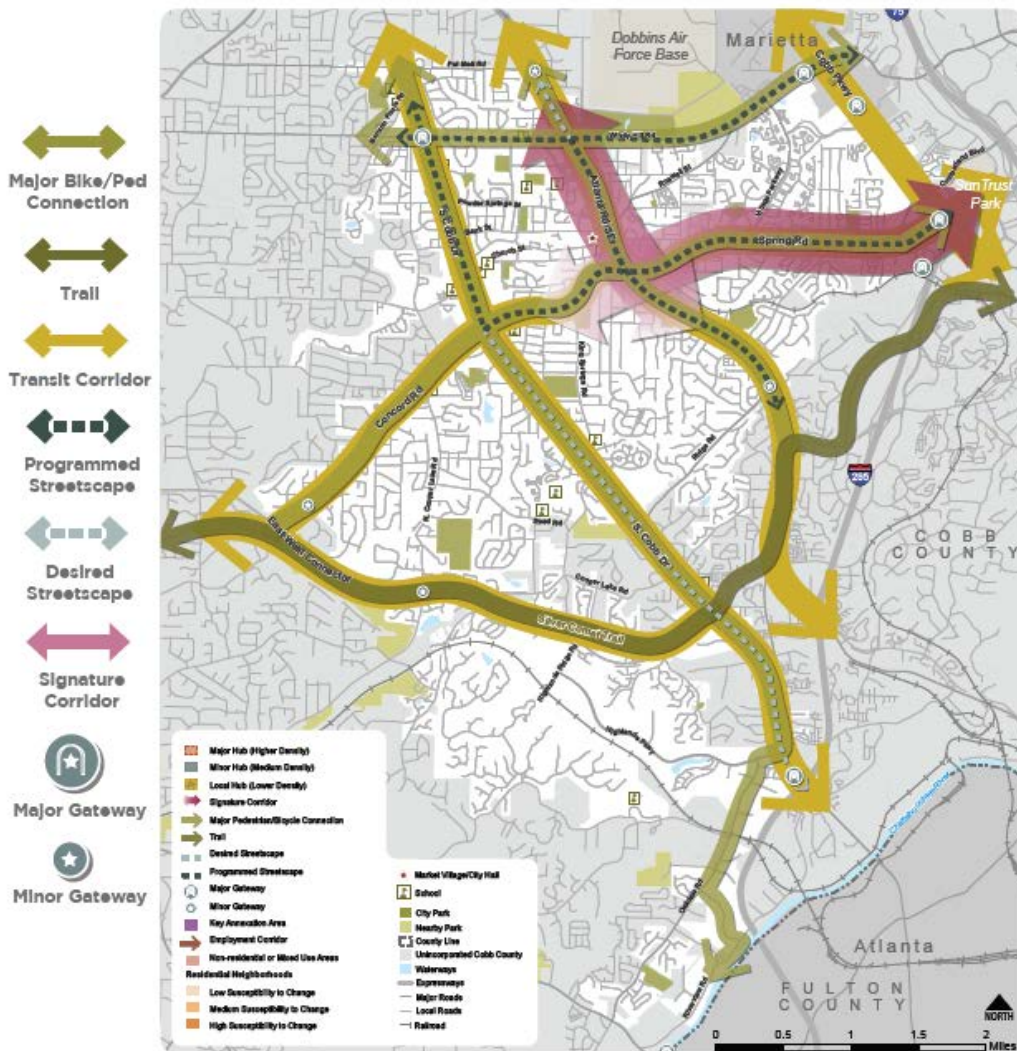
The Public Spaces and Transportation Facilities station focused on confirming a draft policy map and identifying specific policies and action items to implement that policy. Each group was presented a brief overview of what we have heard to date from the community, followed by a discussion of the draft policy map and action items, and concluded by a discussion on next steps.

### **Policy Map Discussion**

Each group reviewed the draft Public Spaces and Transportation Policy Map, and were in consensus on the direction of that map. The overwhelming majority supported the designation of Spring Road (between Atlanta Road and Cobb Parkway) and Atlanta Road (between Windy Hill Road and Spring Road) as signature corridors. Those corridors should be a top priority for the community and strive to become complete streets. A second tier priority would extend the signature corridor designation along Atlanta Road and Concord Road. Several community members discussed the need for a second east-west corridor – either with trails or linking streets as redevelopment occurs. Finally, transit options along Concord Road/Spring Road should be explored.

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Figure 3. Draft Policy Map - Public Spaces and Transportation Facilities



## Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion

Seven priority needs and opportunities had been identified related to the public spaces and transportation discussion based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work

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program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

## **T1. Enhance and expand transit service.**

- Improve efficiency of existing system.
- Enhance existing bus stops.
- Explore direct connection from Market Village to the Airport or an end-of-the-line MARTA station (Sandy Springs or Hamilton E. Holmes).
- Study the potential for a Smyrna Circulator.
- Coordinate bus timing with city events.

## **T2. Reduce congestion on major roads.**

- Coordinate traffic lights along key corridors and pinch-points
- Continue to encourage parallel networks as redevelopment occurs.

## **T3. Expand the bike/pedestrian network.**

- Create continuous bicycle connections to designated activity centers and residential nodes.
- Improve safety along bicycle corridors through signage, providing adequate bicycle facilities, and outreach.
- Provide bicycle facilities along designated routes and/or activity centers.
- Examine existing pedestrian “cow paths” and opportunities to provide formal connections.

## **O1. Support school quality excellence.**

- No comments were offered, other than support for the existing policy in the 2030 Comprehensive plan (Policy 20.3) of work collaboratively with Cobb County and the Cobb County School Board in order to improve local schools.

## **O2. Provide additional parks and greenspace.**

- Create a signature park, similar to Piedmont Park.
- Improve safety and security at all parks, including along the Silver Comet and other multi-use paths.
- Develop a parks master plan to:
  - Identify if there is a need for additional parks and the type of parks needed (active, passive, signature)
  - Identify what programs and activities should occur at the parks. Basketball was one activity noted as missing.

## **O3. Cultivate public art and culture**

- No comments were offered, other than support for the existing policy in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan (Policy 6.3) - Pursue cultural institutions, entertainment, and recreational businesses to locate in and around Smyrna Market Village in order to draw people to the district after business hours.



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- As well as support for the Strategic Vision Plan Action Item 2.3.1 - Establish an Advisory Arts and Culture Council to increase opportunities for high quality programming.

#### **O4. Develop a strategic approach to annexation**

- No comments were offered, other than support for the existing policies and items from the 2030 Comprehensive plan
  - Policy 12.8 - Promote the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City in order to streamline and simplify the provision of public services.
  - Policy 21.1 Ensure that land use plans are consistent with surrounding jurisdictions and regional goals, and
  - Community Work Program item - Conduct an Annexation Study in order to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts and community facilities.

#### **PLACES OF WORK AND COMMERCE STATION SUMMARY**

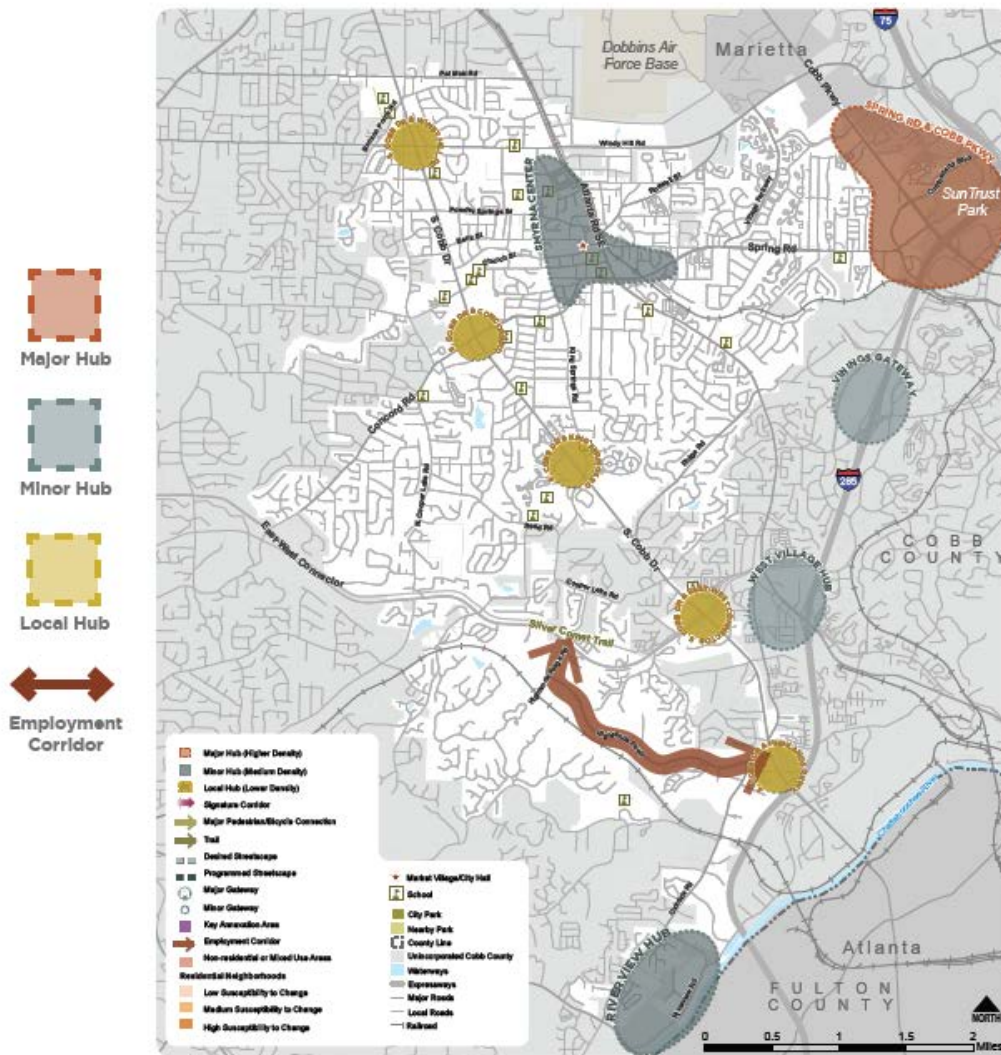
The Places of Work and Commerce station focused on confirming a draft policy map, See Figure 4, and identifying specific policies and action items to support economic development. Each group was presented a brief overview of what we have heard to date from the community, followed by a discussion of the draft policy map and action items, and concluded by a discussion on next steps.

#### **Policy Map Discussion**

Each group reviewed the draft Places of Work and Commerce Policy Map, and were in general consensus on the direction of that map, though one group felt that with the recent City Council action concerning Riverview Landing that that activity center will likely be more residential than retail or employment based.

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Figure 4. Draft Policy Map - Places of Work and Commerce



Each group also compared the policy map to the 2030 Future Development Map, and made the following comments:

- Northern portion of the city: Ensure spaces for millennial/professional services – connectivity and live, work, play opportunities.
- Comments on Jonquil Industrial area off of Jonquil Drive:

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- This could be good area for rezoning and redevelopment for a local activity center or mixed use. The businesses are not rail-served so it's not required that they are located there. The area may have outlived the zoning.
- Warehouses there need to be near I-285 or other major corridors that are more suited to truck traffic.
- Could be mixed use but no entertainment and retail. Not enough room in that area.
- We might be getting carried away with mixed use. Takes away from culture of the city (single family homes)
- Too tight for retail (parking)
- Redevelopment opportunity for residential? Could be a smaller version of King Plow or space for a brewery.
- Comments on Office Space: There could be some on the east end of Spring Road as long as it's well done.

## Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion

Five priority Economic Development needs and opportunities had been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

### ED1. Reduce commercial vacancies.

- Lure high-tech graduates by leveraging Smyrna's location in center of colleges and universities, and marketing Smyrna's access to high-skilled labor. The challenge we face in doing this is the close proximity to the Cumberland CID.
- Promote in the media outside of Cobb County (print advertising and other media).
- Improve public aesthetic along key corridors to influence or incentivize private property owners to provide strip retail center facelifts
- Clean up garbage behind the vacancies along S. Cobb in particular the SW quadrant of S Cobb and Concord, behind Dunkin Donuts, school of dance, and where recycling center used to be.
- City should invest money in a study to see what would fit best in vacant spaces and promote their use
- Research best practices from other parts of the region
- Create another TAD/Enterprise Zone

### ED2. Expand retail in activity centers and priority redevelopment areas.

- Upgrade the quality of stores. General comments included:
  - Too many nail salons, discount dollar stores, selling blood, Ultimate Fighting
  - Planet Fitness came out of nowhere and anchored a space
  - Orange Theory – similar to Planet Fitness, but can we handle saturation in fitness centers?
- Try to attract business based on traffic through Smyrna
  - Example - Campaign for Trader Joe's before the new Publix located in that space
- Keep the north part of the city affordable





# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

### **ED3. Leverage Braves stadium for restaurant and hospitality industries, as well as professional services.**

- Incentivize “white tablecloth” restaurants
  - If you want something different (not a chain), have to go outside of Smyrna
- Attract more hotels – not enough space in summer because of competitive sports
  - Would also create more meeting space
- Redirect game-goers to Belmont and other nodes: LCI Study will address connectivity from stadium
- Promote boutique hotel or bed and breakfast downtown – potential site unused by the city near the community center

### **ED4. Support and/or accelerate entrepreneurship.**

- Support of an business incubator could be a tactic, but it has challenges, such as donation of property/administrative services; corporation or municipal sponsorship.
- Support Minority Business Development efforts – helping to celebrate diversity
- Encourage Studio art space (also ED1). Ex. King Plow on the S. Cobb corridor (north area would be more affordable)
- Promote more office/business space near Rev Coffee area – having spaces that attract specific types of office

### **ED5. Retain existing businesses.**

- Improve traffic.
- Improve/expand transit, for example offer transit connection to the Perimeter area to reduce traffic.



# JONQUIL FESTIVAL BOOTH



## JONQUIL FESTIVAL BOOTH SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the festival booth was to solicit input about key issues to inform the draft 2040 *Comprehensive Plan* and to share information about the planning process to date. The location was selected to engage with residents attending the festival who may not have otherwise attended a public workshop and reach a broader segment of the Smyrna population.

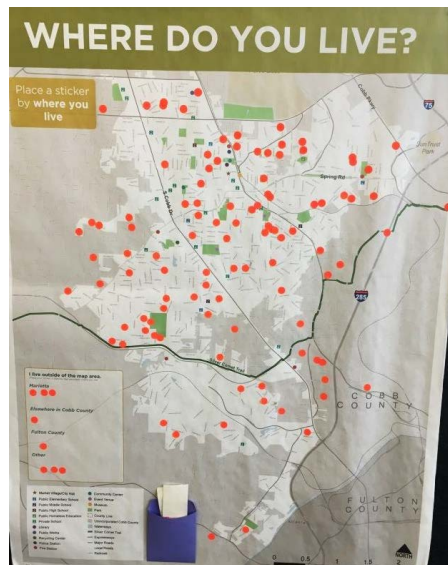
### LOGISTICS

The Spring Jonquil Festival took place on Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 30, 2017 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. There were more than 140 participants. Two members of the consultant team and three staff members from the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development staffed the booth over the course of the weekend.

### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

#### Resident Map

Participants placed dots on a map to show where they live. The group included residents from all parts of Smyrna, with the majority being from the northern part of the city. Only 23 participants lived outside of the city.



# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## Project Background

Background information was provided for participants who may not have previously engaged with the planning process. This included an overview of the planning process and schedule, considerations and action items for the areas of impact (land use, transportation, housing, and economic development), and highlights from previous public engagement activities. Information cards were also distributed, directing people to the project website and promoting the upcoming Open House.

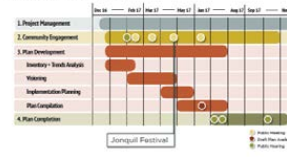
## What is Guide Smyrna?

Guide Smyrna is the community-based planning process for updating the City of Smyrna's Comprehensive Plan, the overarching policy and implementation guide for Smyrna's future growth and development. Guide Smyrna will focus on future land use and also address transportation, housing, and economic development, core issues that shape our collective future and require open dialogue and strategic thinking to affect change over the next 20 years. Guide Smyrna will build upon the overall vision set by the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan as well as land use policy established in our existing 2030 Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2007) and other City planning efforts.

### THE PROCESS



### PROJECT SCHEDULE



### Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

The FLUM identifies the desired future character of different areas of the City. Each area of land is assigned a category and each category has a description with the vision for the area, character images, appropriate land uses, appropriate zoning districts, and strategies to achieve the vision.

**Policies:** General public statements define how the City will approach various issues and guide future decisions for staff and officials.

**Community Work Program:** Action items are organized into a year-long program with a thematic, responsible party, estimated cost, and potential funding sources for each. This becomes the same plan for Smyrna's planning staff and officials.

## What does it impact?

	LAND USE	TRANSPORTATION	HOUSING	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>What is the best mix of uses for our community?</p> <p>Where do these uses belong?</p> <p>How do we create standards for quality development?</p> <p>What kind of place should Smyrna feel like?</p>	<p>How can we provide safe and convenient mobility options?</p> <p>How should transportation infrastructure be coordinated with new development?</p> <p>How do transportation choices impact our health and environment?</p>	<p>What kinds of homes and price points are available in our community?</p> <p>How can we ensure good property maintenance?</p>	<p>What kind of business environment do we want to create?</p> <p>Are there opportunities for entrepreneurship?</p> <p>Is economic growth occurring equitably?</p>
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<p>Future Land Use Map and regulations</p> <p>Recommended changes to current zoning and design guidelines</p> <p>Small area strategies or study recommendations</p>	<p>Prioritization of locations, modes, and budgets for transportation improvements and studies</p> <p>Identification of funding sources and partners for transportation improvements</p>	<p>Evaluate and modify allowable housing types to meet current and future needs</p> <p>Identify opportunities to provide affordable housing and associated funding sources</p>	<p>Identification of barriers to economic growth</p> <p>Prioritization of economic development initiatives</p> <p>Identification of funding sources and partners</p>

## What have we heard?

We have been listening to community members throughout the planning process and using their input to guide the vision for Smyrna's future.

The results for select survey questions are shown below. Summaries from workshops and the full online community survey results are posted on the project website, [www.guidesmyrna.com](http://www.guidesmyrna.com).

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION**

"Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity; signature public spaces and art, entrepreneurial spirit embodied in unique local businesses, and its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods."

**CHARGE FOR ACTION**

Input has consistently said to focus efforts on:

- Attracting competition by increasing efficiency of existing resources
- Encouraging entrepreneurship
- "Changes to mixed-use centers and projects"
- "Encouraging public-private partnerships"
- "Encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives"
- "Encouraging affordable housing"
- "Encouraging small business and sense of community"
- "Encouraging transportation improvements around downtown Park"
- "Encouraging public spaces"
- "Encouraging outdoor resources"

Visit [www.guidesmyrna.com](http://www.guidesmyrna.com) to review the full survey results!

## 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

### Future of Smyrna Pictures

Participants were asked to consider their vision for the city's future by finishing the sentence, ***"In the future, Smyrna will be known for..."*** and writing their answers on a white board. They then posed for photos with the boards, and instant pictures were posted for other participants to see. Responses included:

- Walkable, non-congested city with a small town feel
- Maintain "small town" feel and charm
- Vibrant, medium-sized city
- Welcoming to all
- Fun! Culture! Fooooood!
- YMCA
- Better schools
- Green space
- Good, safe area to raise kids
- Sports and entertainment
- Development for young people
- Renovated dog parks
- Happy kids
- Parks and coffee shops
- Family and community
- Braves and more family fun
- Small community feel

### Input Boards

Input boards solicited feedback from participants to better understand the community perspective on targeted issues. Though the responses provided are based on a select sample of residents not fully representative of the city, they will be used as one of several forms of input to inform decisions in drafting the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*.

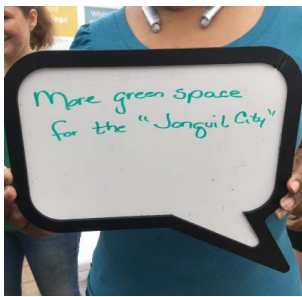
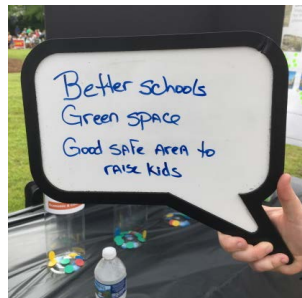
Three locations were identified as needing additional input to inform the draft plan: the SunTrust Park area, the Market Village area, and Windy Hill Road.

The input board questions were also made available as a mobile survey on the project website and received three digital responses.



# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## In the future, Smyrna will be known for...



# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## SunTrust Park Area

Participants reviewed a series of labeled images depicting a range of development types and intensities. They placed stickers next to the type of development that best represent what they imagine belongs in the area next to SunTrust Park, which was mapped as the study area for the Georgia Tech Smyrna Crossroads Studio. They could select as many images as they felt would be appropriate and were told that a combination of development types would be possible.

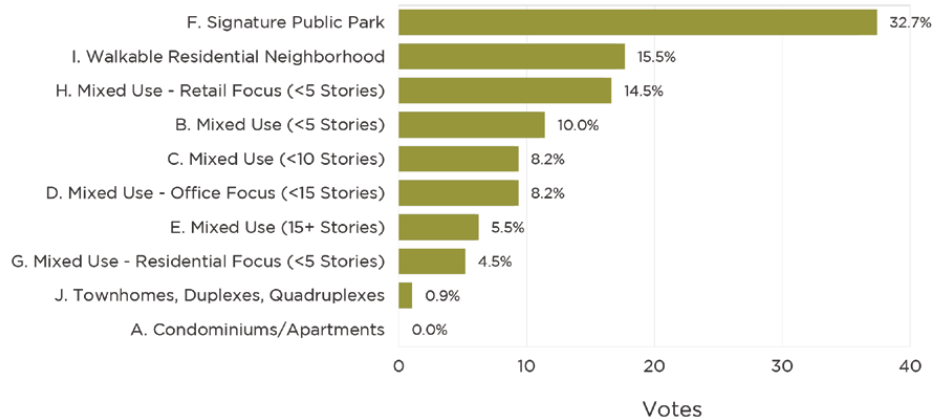
The most frequently selected images were a signature public park (32.7%), walkable residential neighborhood (15.5%), and mixed use - retail focus (<5 stories) (14.5%). The least frequently selected choices were those focused on multi-family development, followed by the highest intensity uses.

Some participants provided additional comments suggesting unique restaurants with good parking (1), light rail (10), and schools (1).

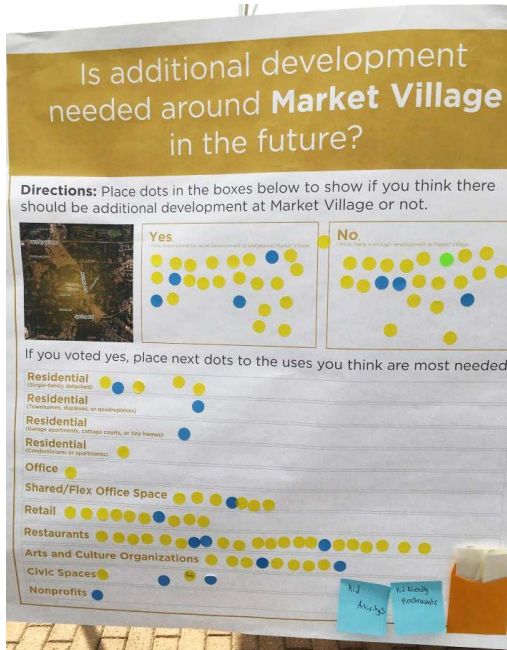


Participant feedback on input boards

### What scale should new development be near the Braves Stadium at SunTrust Park? (You may choose multiple.)



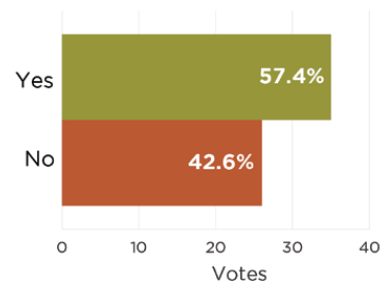
# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA



### Market Village Area

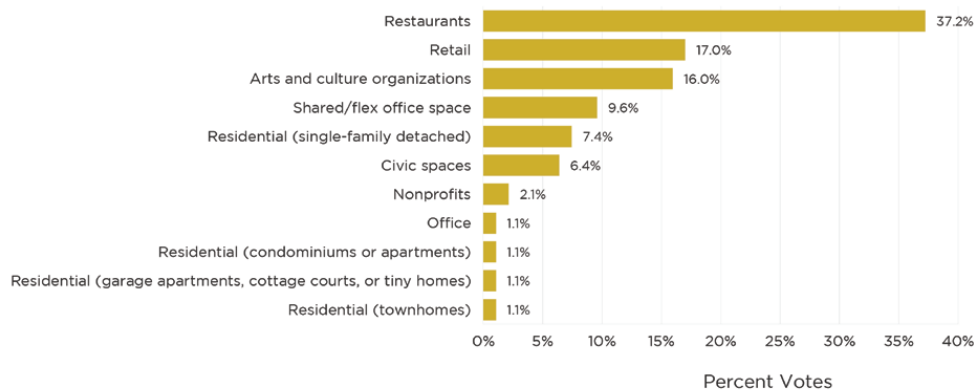
Participants were asked to consider whether there should be additional development concentrated in the Market Village area or not. If they did think there should be additional development, they were asked which uses they felt were missing from the area. The majority of respondents (57.4 percent) thought additional development was needed.

### Is additional development needed around Market Village in the future?



Of those who felt additional development is needed, most desired additional restaurants (37.2 percent), retail (17.0 percent), and arts and culture organizations (16.0 percent). There were two additional comments recommending kid-friendly activities.

### If you do think there should be additional development around Market Village, what do you think is missing? (You may choose multiple.)



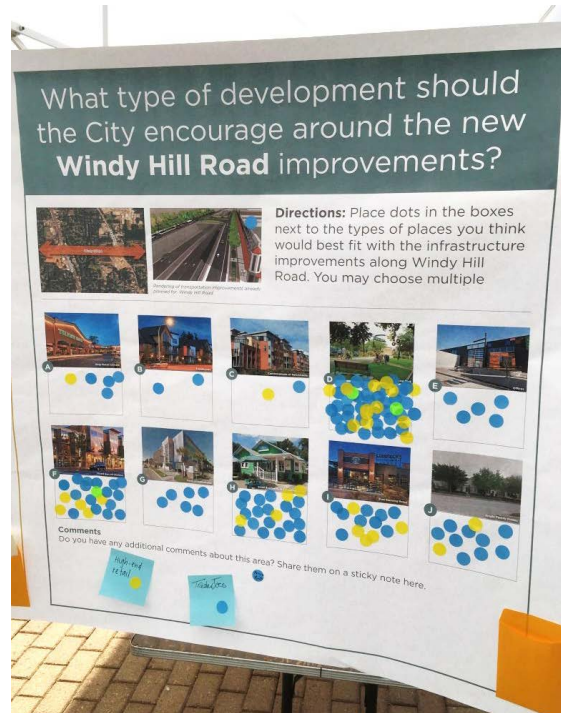
# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## Windy Hill Road

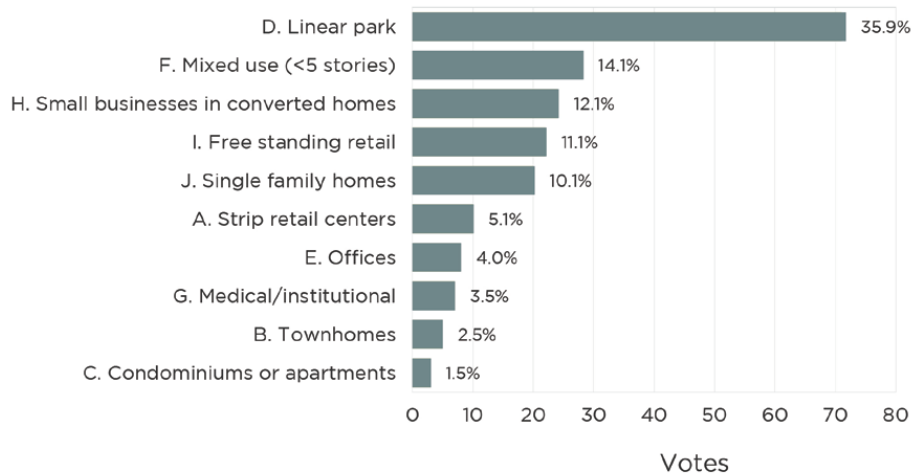
A rendering of the proposed transportation improvements to Windy Hill Road was provided and participants were asked to consider which land uses would be best suited along the corridor in the future, given the change. They chose from ten potential uses based on labeled images. Additional comments suggested a Trader Joes (3), high-end retail (3), a movie theater, and the conversion of Fox Creek Golf Course into a public park.



Rendering of proposed transportation improvements along Windy Hill Road.



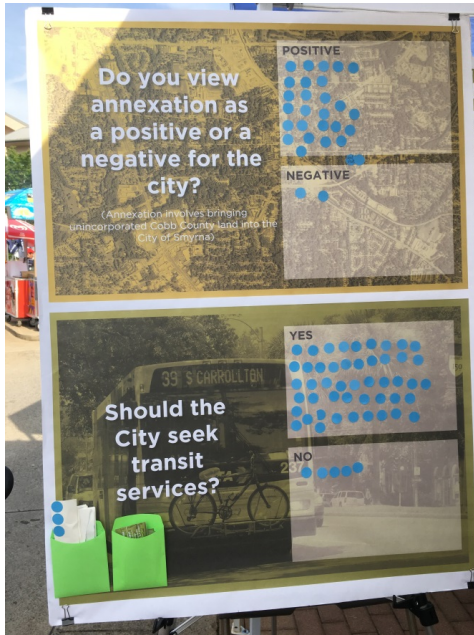
### What type of development should the city encourage around the new Windy Hill Road improvements? (You may choose multiple.)





# 8 GUIDE

## SMYRNA



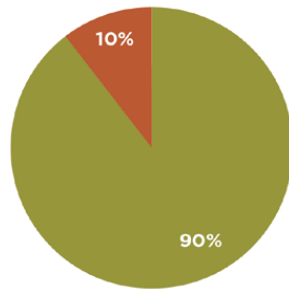
### Annexation

Participants were asked whether they viewed annexation as a positive or a negative for the city. The majority of respondents (90 percent) viewed it as a positive.

### Transit

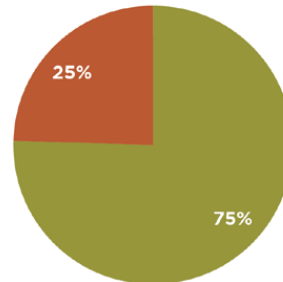
When asked if the City should seek transit services, the majority of respondents (75 percent) said it should.

**Do you view annexation as a positive or a negative for the city?**



■ Positive ■ Negative

**Should the City seek transit services?**



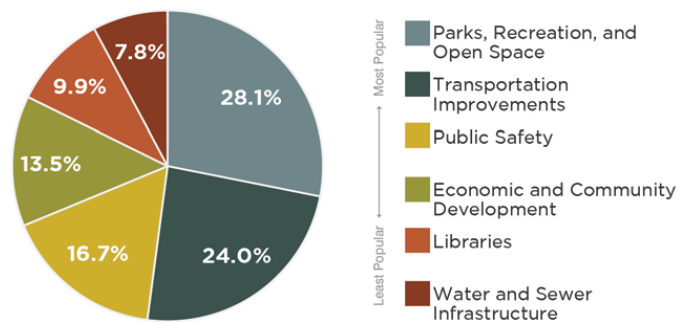
■ Yes ■ No

# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## Priority Spending Voting

Participants were asked what the priorities for City funding should be and were given three tokens to allocate amongst six spending categories: transportation improvements; parks, recreation and open space; public safety; economic and community development; libraries; and water and sewer infrastructure. The most frequently selected categories were parks, recreation, and open space (28.1 percent) and transportation improvements (24.0 percent).

What should be the priorities for City funding?



# OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY



## OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

The Open House provided community members with an opportunity to review plan content prior to the finalization of the draft plan. Participants were asked to provide feedback to help refine content and ensure it reflected the community vision established through previous engagement activities.

### LOGISTICS

The Open House was held on Thursday, June 8, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Brawner Hall. There were 31 participants, 5 staff members of the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development, and three members of the consultant team.

### AGENDA

The event was held in an open house format. Rather than a formal presentation, draft materials from the *2040 Comprehensive Plan* were displayed and participants reviewed them at their own pace. The planning team was available to discuss the content with participants.

### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Upon arrival, participants picked up informational sheets and a feedback form to use as they made their way through the Open House. These included the draft goals, needs and opportunities, 2040 character area descriptions, and a layout of the event setup. Informational boards were displayed around the room with content addressing the planning process, priority needs and opportunities, vision and goals, 2040 Future Land Use Map, and highlights from the action plan.

#### Process

The process boards explained the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, the overall planning process, the project schedule, the impact of the plan on the community’s future, and highlights from community feedback received to date.



*Participants review the project process (top) and key findings from the Baseline Conditions Report (bottom).*



# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## Priority Needs and Opportunities

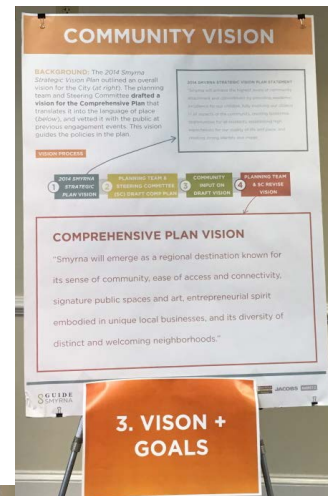
Key findings from the assessment of existing conditions and community feedback from engagement activities were organized according to the four primary sections of the plan: land use, transportation, housing, and economic development. These findings were the basis for the recommended changes to the Future Land Use Map, policies, and action items for the Community Work Program and were provided to give participants context for the recommendations. Printed copies of the *Baseline Conditions Report*, which contains a more detailed assessment, were available for participants interested in additional information. The report is also available online at [www.guidesmyrna.com/review](http://www.guidesmyrna.com/review).

## Vision and Goals

The established vision and the Policy Map that was used as a discussion tool throughout the planning process were provided to orient participants to the direction the Future Land Use Map, policy, and action items recommendations were meant to drive the community.

## 2040 Future Land Use Map

The draft 2040 Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was presented, along with the current 2030 Future Development Map it will replace and the current recommended future land use categories for nearby Cobb County parcels. Key changes to the 2040 FLUM were highlighted. These included:



*Community members discussed changes to the proposed 2040 Future Land Use Map.*

# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## Consistency Changes

Some changes to the map did not reflect a change in vision, but rather brought the map into better alignment with the current physical and regulatory characteristics of the city, such as:

- Shift to a parcel-based, which more accurately reflects new developments and more closely aligns with existing zoning.
- Alignment with existing, allowable residential densities.
- Alignment with the boundaries of existing industrial and commercially zoned properties.
- Update to public and institutional uses, including schools, city hall, and some large private institutions, which were not reflected on the previous map.

## New Definitions and Features

Additional map features were added citywide:

- New categories:
  - Medium High Residential (6-10 dwelling units/acre)
  - Regional Activity Center
  - Industrial Mixed Use
  - Private Recreation and Conservation
  - Transportation/Communications/Utilities (substations)
- 100-year floodplain shown as a map feature
- The Policy Map, a separate but related map, will be used in conjunction with the FLUM to identify potential annexation areas.

## Location-Specific Changes

Substantive, location-specific changes to the 2040 FLUM include:

1. Spring Road and SunTrust Park area
  - New Regional Activity Center designation aligned with Spring Road LCI Study
2. Jonquil Drive industrial area redevelopment
  - New Industrial Mixed Use area
  - Linear park shown on the map
3. Roswell Street area
  - New Industrial Mixed Use area
  - Higher residential densities
  - Expansion of Mixed Use area east of railroad and south of Spring Street
4. Market Village area
  - Public/Institutional consistency changes
  - Higher single-family residential densities in the surrounding single-family neighborhoods

# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

- Reflection of existing parks, including the planned linear park along Concord Road
- 5. Windy Hill Road
  - New right-of-way reflected as shown in the Windy Hill Road Improvements plan
  - Linear park along the northern side of the road, consisting of the remaining portions of parcels acquired for roadway construction
  - New Mixed-Use areas on the southern side of the road between Burbank Circle
  - Industrial Mixed Use area east of Atlanta Road and north of Windy Hill Road
  - Park along Valley Oaks Drive south of Pat Mell Road
- 6. North end of South Cobb Drive
  - Smyrna Grove development reflected
  - Extension of Mixed Use area south of Glendale Place and west of South Cobb Drive
- 7. Established residential areas
  - Private recreation areas reflected
- 8. Central section of South Cobb Drive
  - Consistency changes to reflect the presence of higher density residential areas
- 9. South end of South Cobb Drive
  - Consistency changes to reflect the presence of commercial areas
  - Changed Oakdale Court area to industrial
- 10. Riverview Landing area
  - Residential densities increased to reflect existing zoning
  - Added private recreation areas

## Action Items

The 100-Day Action Plan consists of the action items from the overall Community Work Program identified as critical first steps to realizing the community's vision. The action items for land use, transportation, housing, economic development, public services, and quality of life were outlined for participants to review. While these items should be prioritized and initiated within the first 100



*Participants review draft items for the 100-Day Action Plan.*

# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

days of the plan's adoption, most will take longer than that period to be accomplished. They include:

## Land Use

- Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance.
- Conduct a study of infill development guidelines and adopt recommended guidelines.
- Undertake a study of the application of architectural design standards to key activity centers and corridors of the city.

## Transportation

- Undertake a transit feasibility study.

## Housing

- Revise the City Zoning Ordinance to offer a wider range of residential zoning designations.
- Identify declining neighborhoods through planning studies and target these areas for revitalization.
- Consider establishing a land bank that can be used as a redevelopment tool.

## Economic Development

- Consider expanding the city's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.
- Consider implementing an annual economic development survey of local businesses.
- Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
- Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making improvements to commercial properties.

## Public Services and Quality of Life

- Conduct an annexation study to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts.
- Implement and regularly update the city's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Additional action items will be included in the comprehensive Community Work Program.

## FEEDBACK

Participants were given feedback forms to document their responses to the draft materials provided. Comments received included:

# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## Process

*What worked well? How could the planning process be improved in the future?*

- “Current process worked well.”
- “Good report of impact.”
- “Study and input from disability perspective was lacking.”
- “Inclusion of so many community groups was great, except inclusion of the disabilities community was lacking.”

## Priority Needs and Opportunities

*Are any needs or opportunities missing? Would you prioritize them differently?*

- “All good.”
- “None.”
- “Awareness of the needs of the disabled to include transportation, safe pedestrian walkways and crossings, and accessibility beyond ADA.”
- “It is surprising to see the order of importance of annexation. I live in Ward 5 and most people to attend were residents in the other communities. There was not much vocal or attendance from Ward 5 to express their concerns for opportunity.”
- “With buildout and increased housing density, how will utility development be upgraded to match increased use, population density (water, sewer, road construction)?”
- “Smyrna needs high quality senior housing—perhaps at Belmont. We do not need 60 condos next to the Reed House—big mistake!”
- “Regardless of funding, ADA compliance should be incorporated on all priorities and projects.”

## Vision and Goals

*Do the established vision and goals make sense for Smyrna?*

- “Yes.”
- “I think so.”
- “Yes, but the growth sounds very aggressive, so I’m concerned about services for the community and roads keeping up at the same pace.”
- “Yes—please try to keep some of our “old” character intact.”
- “Mixed-use and residential construction has outrun transportation. Trees and islands don’t help traffic move. Major emphasis on transportation is key to quality of life in Smyrna.”
- “I believe the vision from a government development standpoint is there. However, the initiative to educate and push communities that do not participate and getting them to understand the future long-term benefits of the vision and goals can increase interest where it will make sense with proactive ward representation.”



# 8 GUIDE SMYRNA

## 2040 Future Land Use Map

*How do the proposed character areas align with your vision for the city's future?*

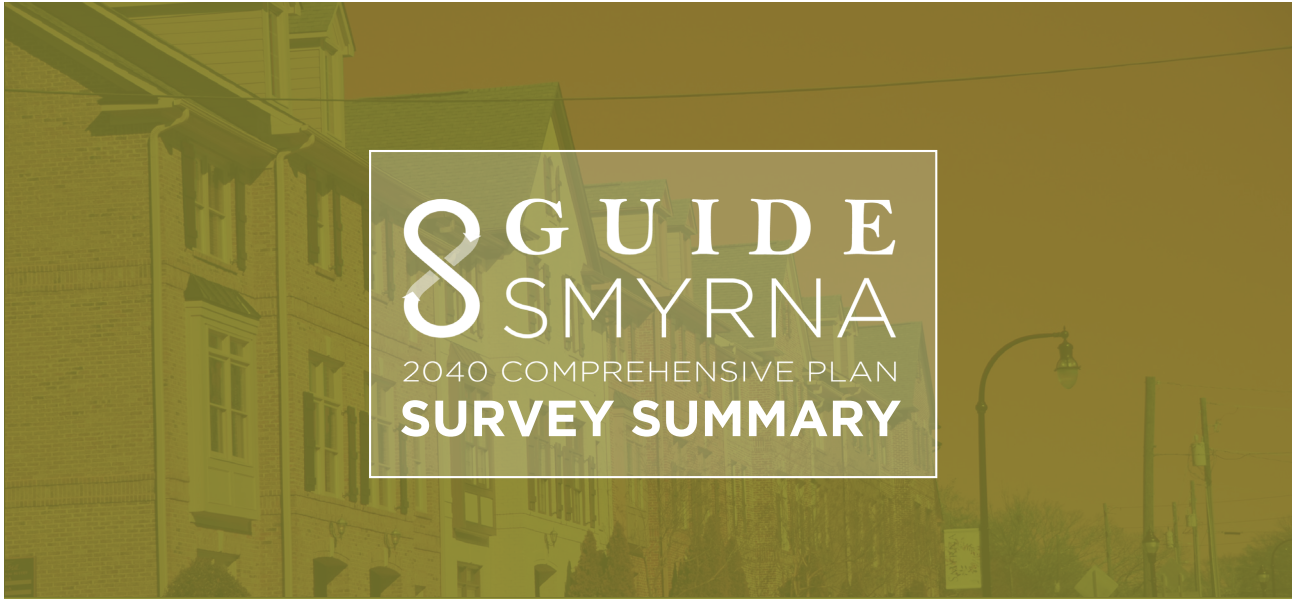
- “Very well.”
- “Meets future vision.”
- “Feels very dense/crowded.”
- “I am grateful for the thoughtful planning and communications in preparation for change.”
- “I see the initiative to encourage change where I reside. I am interested in seeing more concentration along South Cobb Drive/Windy Hill Road, where there are opportunities for retail shopping at reasonable price points. I don't see high dollar retail yet, but as the economic change occurs, it will or can have the potential to attract more sustainable residential and business growth that can result in a more sought after attraction.”
- “Don't current ordinances address the many “eyesore” neighborhoods? Future planning/zoning should address this concern.”
- “Smyrna has had a “small town feel.” Much of the plan shows increased population. This leads to congestion, increased crime, and loss of environment. It is good to have a plan in place; hopefully it won't be too aggressive.”
- “6-10 homes per acre seems to create overcrowding and lack of green space and personal space.”

## Action Plan

*Do the proposed actions drive the vision forward? Are there other key actions to consider?*

- “Yes, especially zoning and economic development.”
- “Key actions need to include disabled accessibility for sensory-based through all levels of impairment and accommodation for living, working, participating, and contributing to the community.”
- “Smyrna spends \$2-3M on the Reed Property and then considers high-density condos from a questionable builder in an area where condos are not needed—please no!”
- “How does this plan interface with Cobb County and Marietta plans?”
- “Key actions to consider in my opinion are getting South Cobb Drive from Concord Road down to Pat Mell Road in a position to attract opportunities more than just aesthetics along roads but bring cohesiveness as it connects to other communities that are currently seeing change.”
- “No condemnation of private property for purposes of private enterprise!!”
- “Inclusion of input from the sensory and physical disabilities community. Their needs are very different.”

## COMMUNITY SURVEY



### OVERVIEW

An online community survey was conducted as part of the public engagement process for Guide Smyrna, the planning process for the City of Smyrna's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The survey focused on issues related to land use, housing, transportation, economic development, satisfaction with the city, public investment, and overall priorities. There were 37 questions in all.

The survey was open from February 17 to March 24, 2017 and was promoted through posts on the City's Facebook and Twitter pages, email blasts, the project website, flyers, and announcements at project workshops.

### SNAPSHOT OF PARTICIPANTS

A total of 501 respondents participated in the survey. Their responses are a representative snapshot of the opinions of Smyrna community members, but do not reflect all of the voices within the City. Table 1 on page 2 compares demographic characteristics of survey respondents to the Smyrna population as a whole. Relative to the city population, respondents tended to have higher household incomes, higher levels of educational attainment, and were typically more middle aged and less racially or ethnically diverse than city residents overall.

### CONTINUITY WITH THE 2014 SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

To establish continuity with the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan and better understand if opinions have changed significantly in the past three years, several questions from the 2014 survey were repeated. Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 20, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 came from that survey.

Most responses to repeated questions were consistent with the results of the 2014 survey, which had 1,763 respondents. Key differences are noted in the question summaries that follow. Some open-ended questions from the 2014 survey were formatted as close-ended responses for this survey; answer choices were based on the most popular responses from the previous version.



2 | SURVEY SUMMARY

Table 1. Survey Respondent Profile Compared to City of Smyrna Demographics

	Survey Respondents	City of Smyrna Population <sup>1</sup>
<b>Household Income (Q35)</b>		
Less than \$25,000	0.8%	18.0%
\$25,000-49,999	3.4%	22.6%
\$50,000-\$99,999	15.5%	18.4%
\$100,000-\$149,999	28.5%	16.0%
\$150,000 or more	41.7%	14.6%
Prefer not to answer	10.1%	N/A
<b>Highest Degree of Education (Q34)</b>		
Less than a high school diploma	0.0%	9.5%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	0.8%	15.0%
Some college (1-4 years, no degree)	7.6%	17.6%
Associate's degree	1.4%	6.0%
Bachelor's degree	47.3%	31.2%
Master's degree	31.9%	
Professional school degree	3.1%	20.7%
Doctorate degree	4.5%	
Professional certifications	1.7%	N/A
Prefer not to answer	1.7%	N/A
<b>Age (Q30)</b>		
Younger than 18	0.0%	22.5%
18 to 24	0.0%	6.9%
25 to 44	61.0%	39.4%
45 to 64	31.7%	22.6%
65 and over	6.7%	8.7%
Prefer not to answer	0.6%	N/A
<b>Race (Q31)</b>		
African-American (Black)	7.3%	32.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.3%	7.3%
Caucasian (White)	83.7%	51.9%
Other	2.0%	6.9%
Two or more races	N/A	1.9%
Prefer not to answer	7.9%	N/A
<b>Ethnicity (Q32)</b>		
Hispanic or Latino	3.3%	14.2%
Not Hispanic or Latino	86.1%	85.8%
Prefer not to answer	10.6%	N/A

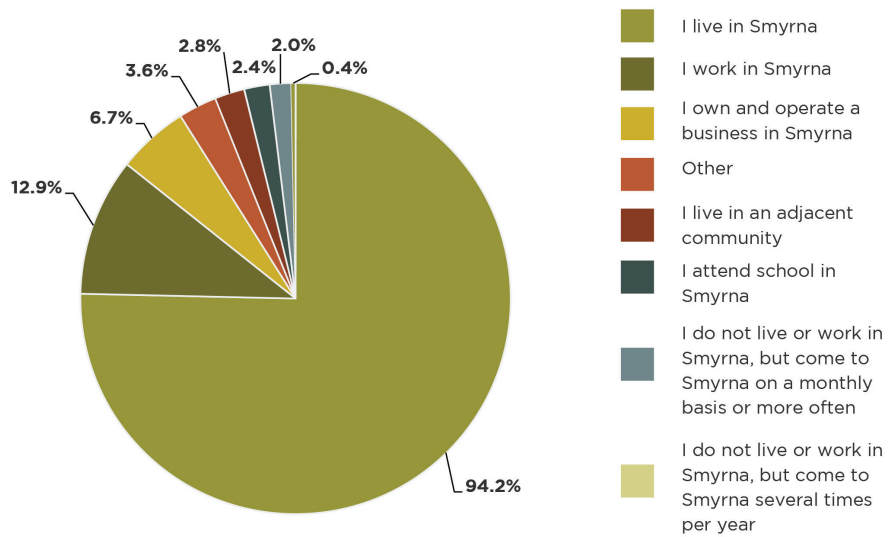
<sup>1</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates



## INTRODUCTION

### Q1. Which of the following best describes your relationship to Smyrna? Select all that apply to you.

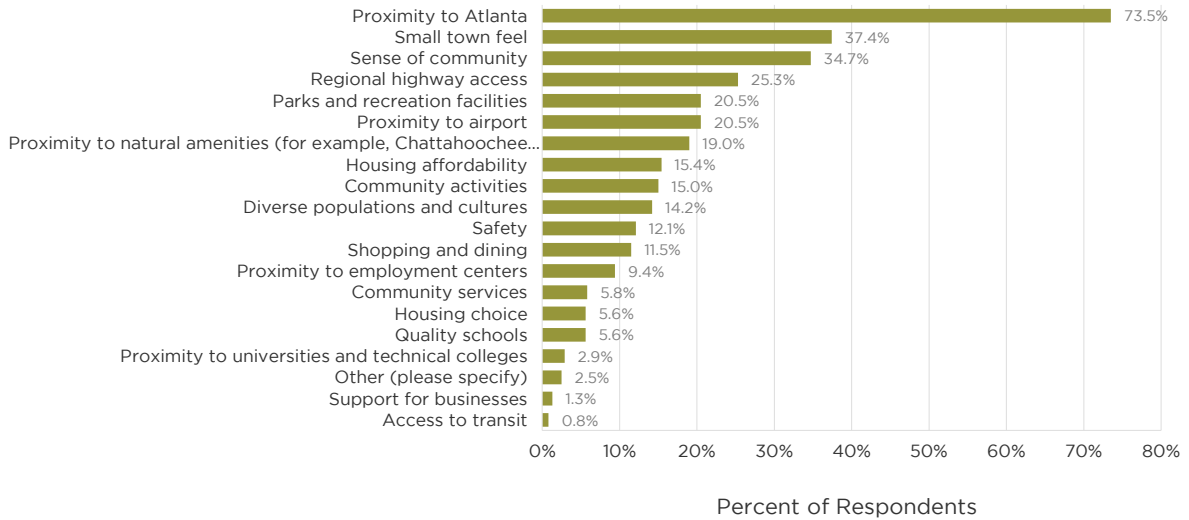
Almost all respondents live in Smyrna (94.2 percent), and their other relationships to the City varied. Working in Smyrna (12.9 percent) or owning and operating a business in Smyrna (6.7 percent) were the next most frequent connections.



## VISION AND GOALS

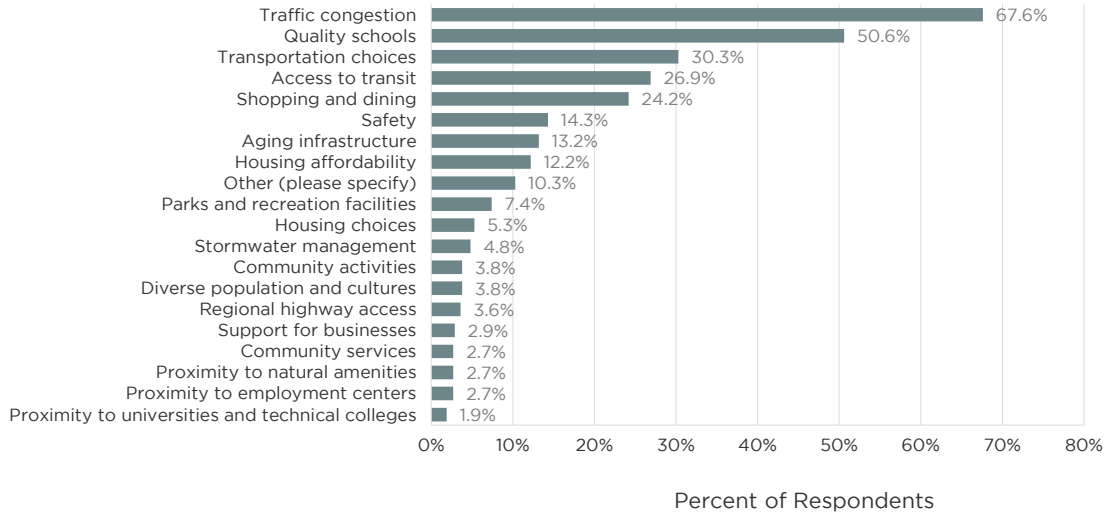
### Q2. In your opinion, what is Smyrna’s greatest strength (or strengths)? Select up to three.

Proximity to Atlanta (73.5 percent), the City’s small town feel (37.4 percent), and the overall sense of community (34.7 percent) were seen as Smyrna’s greatest strengths.



**Q3. In your opinion, what is Smyrna's greatest challenge (or challenges) to overcome? Select up to three.**

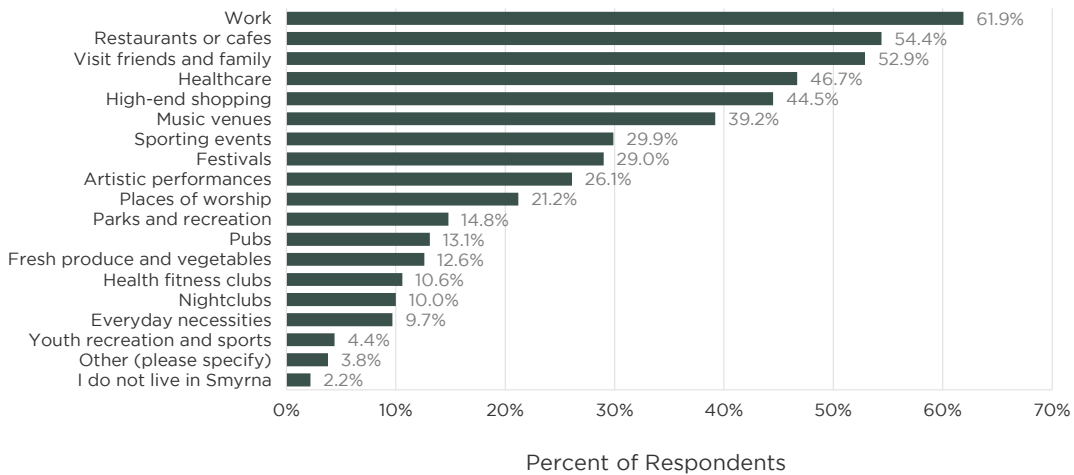
The greatest challenges for the City were perceived as traffic congestion (67.6 percent), quality schools (50.6 percent), and transportation choices (30.3 percent).



**COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Q4. Please identify the reasons and/or destinations that you frequently leave Smyrna for. Select all that apply.**

The most frequent reasons respondents leave the City are to go to work (61.9 percent), restaurants and cafes (54.4 percent), or to visit friends and family (52.9 percent). The 2014 survey yielded similar responses with the same top seven results in a slightly varied order.

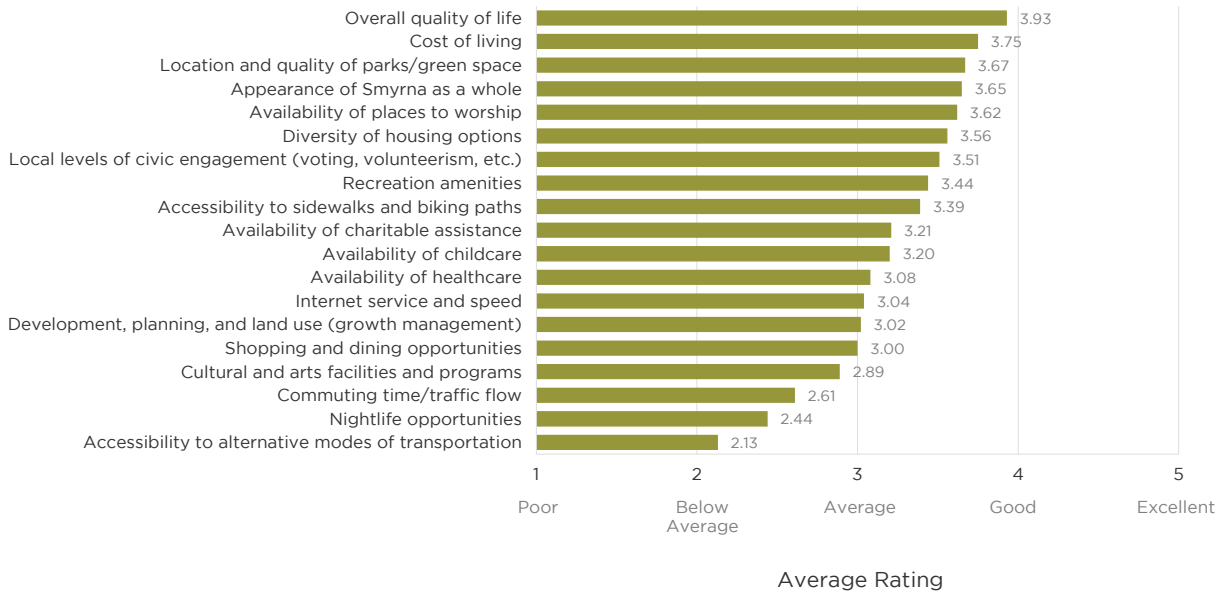


6 | SURVEY SUMMARY

**Q5. Please rate the following aspects of quality of life in Smyrna, based on your experience.**

Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction with various categories related to quality of life in Smyrna using a Likert scale, ranking their experience with each as Poor (1), Below Average (2), Average (3), Good (4), or Excellent (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of satisfaction.

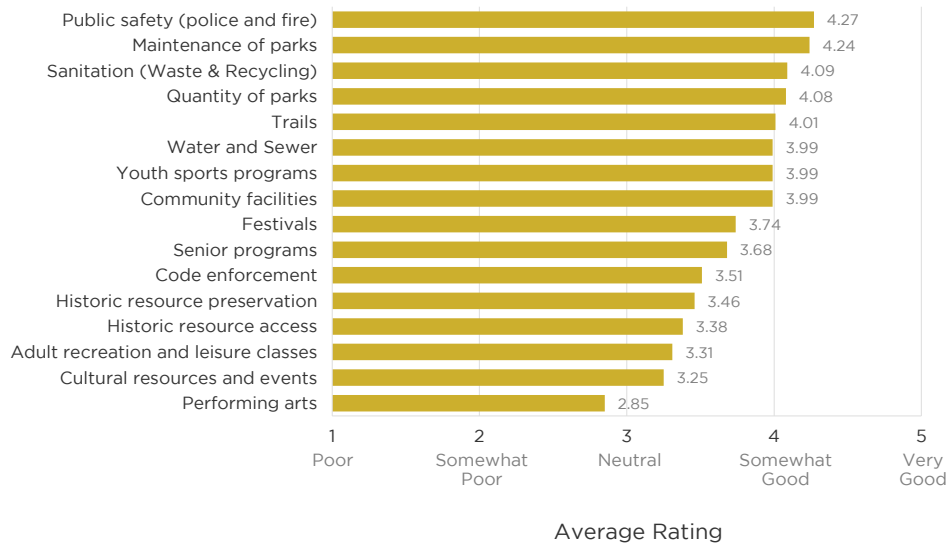
They were most satisfied with the overall quality of life (3.93 - Good), cost of living (3.75 - Good), location and quality of parks/green space (3.67 - Good), which were also the top results from the 2014 survey. Almost every category had a mean rating above Average (3). Respondents were least satisfied with the access to alternative modes of transportation (2.13 - Below Average), nightlife opportunities (2.44 - Below Average), and commuting time/traffic flow (2.61 - Average).



**Q6. How would you describe the quality of the following community services and resources in Smyrna?**

Respondents indicated the quality of community services using a Likert scale, ranking their experience with each as Poor (1), Somewhat Poor (2), Neutral (3), Somewhat Good (4), or Very Good (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of satisfaction.

All of the services listed received average scores of Neutral or better. Essential services and facilities generally received higher rankings than programmed activities or cultural resources. The community services with the highest average ratings were public safety (police and fire) (4.27 - Somewhat Good), maintenance of parks (4.24 - Somewhat Good), and sanitation (waste and recycling) (4.09 - Somewhat Good). Performing arts (2.85 - Neutral), cultural resources and events (3.25 - Neutral), and adult recreation and leisure classes (3.31 - Neutral).

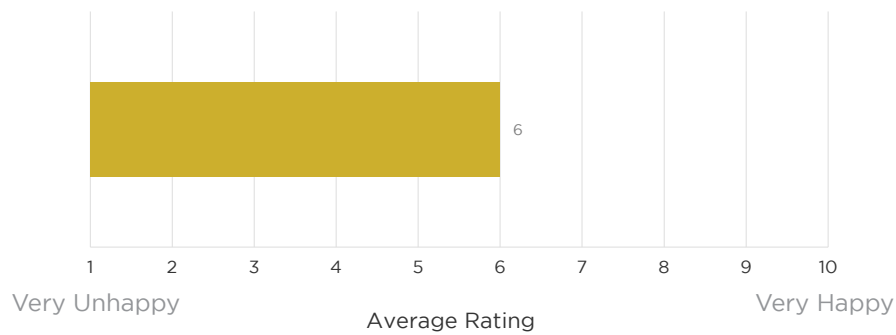




## DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

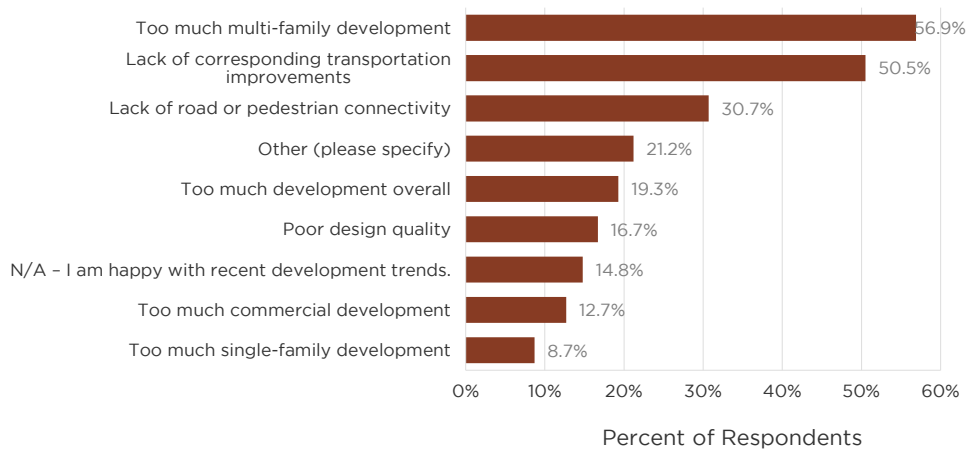
### Q7. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the happiest), how happy are you with developments that have occurred in the City of Smyrna?

Most respondents felt neutral to positive about recent development trends, with an average rating of 6 out of 10.



### Q8. If you are unhappy with recent development trends, what aspects do you dislike? Select all that apply.

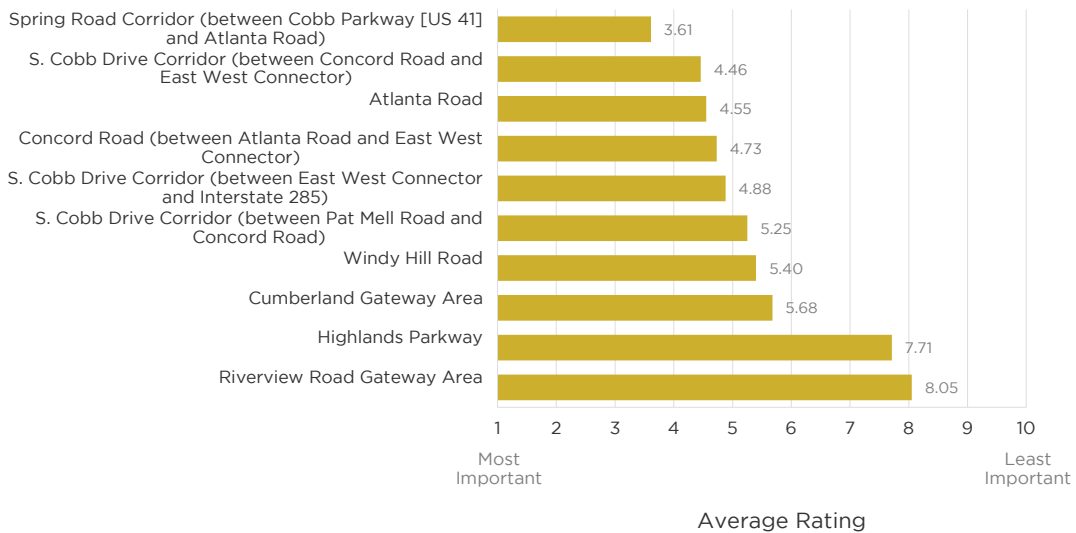
Of the respondents that were unhappy with recent development trends, most cited too much multi-family development (56.9 percent), a lack of corresponding transportation improvements (50.5 percent), or lack of road or pedestrian connectivity (30.7 percent) as the reason for their dissatisfaction.



**Q9. Rank the following areas in order of importance for targeting future public improvement investments, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.**

The graph below shows the mean rating of importance for each location. Lower scores represent higher prioritization.

The areas ranked as the most important locations to target future public improvement investments are major roads in the northern part of the city: Spring Road (between Cobb Parkway [US 41] and Atlanta Road) (3.61), South Cobb Drive (between Concord Road and the East-West Connector) (4.46), and Atlanta Road (4.55). Locations in the southern part of the city were ranked as lower priorities.

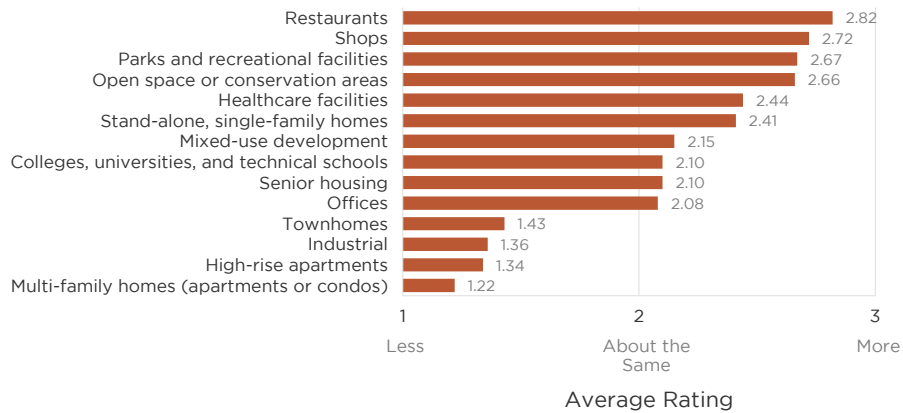


## MIX OF USES

### Q10. How balanced is our city? Please indicate if you'd like to see less, about the same, or more of each of the following types of development or uses.

Respondents selected whether they wanted to see less (1), about the same (2) or more (3) of each development type or use. The chart below shows the mean rating for each category. Higher ratings indicate people want more of a given category.

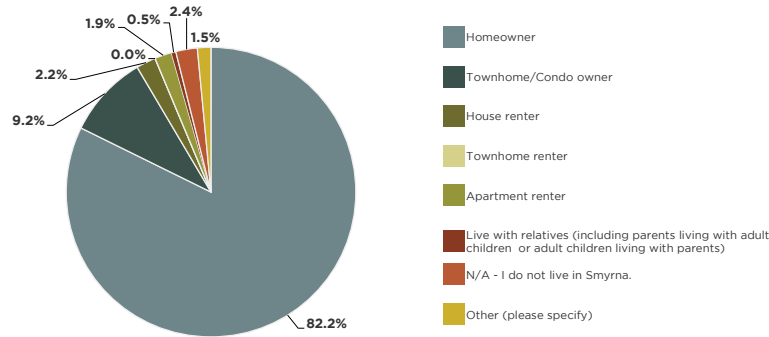
People typically indicated they wanted about the same or more of each category. Restaurants (2.82), shops (2.72), and parks and recreation facilities (2.67) were most frequently identified as categories people want more of. They would prefer fewer multi-family homes (apartments or condos) (1.22), high-rise apartments (1.34), industrial development (1.36), and townhomes (1.43).



## HOUSING

### Q11. If you are a Smyrna resident, which of the following best describes your living situation?

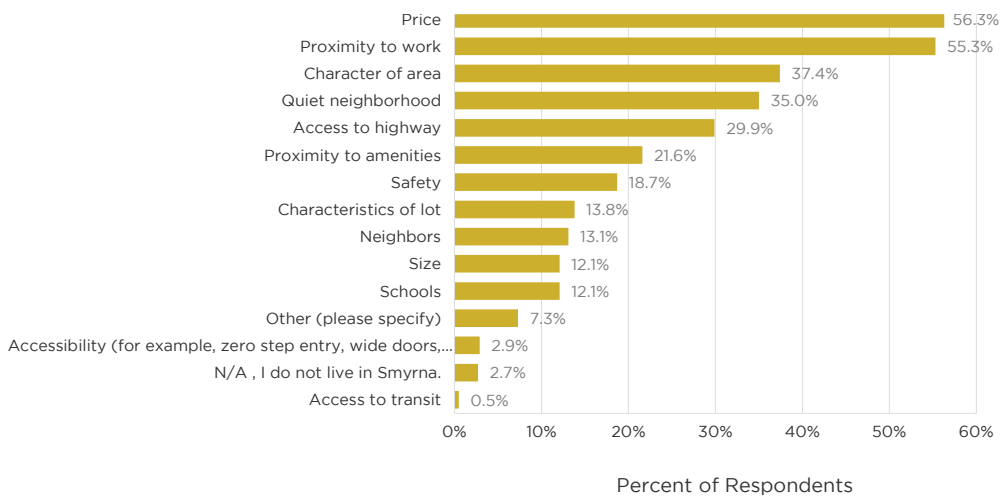
The vast majority of respondents (91.4 percent) own homes in Smyrna, including both owners of detached single-family homes (82.2 percent) and owners of townhomes or condos (9.2 percent). Renters accounted for a total of 4.1 percent of respondents,



### Q12. What drove your decision to live in your current home in Smyrna? Select up to three.

The most frequently selected reasons driving respondents' decision to live in their current homes were price (56.3 percent), proximity to work (55.3 percent), and the character of the area (37.4 percent). Common responses for the "other" category were:

- Proximity to family or friends
- Near childhood home
- Inherited the home
- Proximity to Atlanta and/or the airport
- Access to sidewalks and running/biking trails
- Believe it is likely to appreciate in value due to changes in the neighborhood
- Yard and landscaping

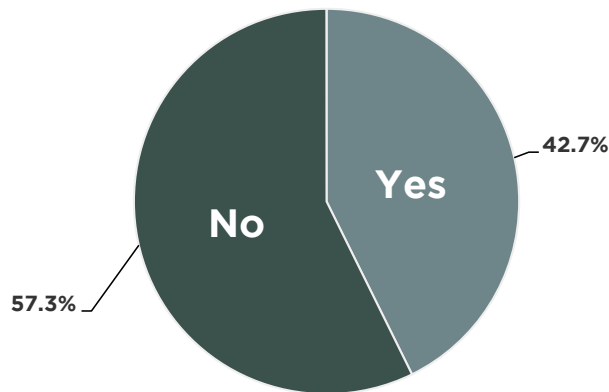


**Q13. Are you concerned about continued affordability of living in the City of Smyrna?**

Most respondents (57.3 percent) were not concerned about the continued affordability of living in Smyrna; however, the typical income range for survey respondents was significantly higher than the average household income for the City overall.

There were 88 comments provided for this question, centered on topics such as:

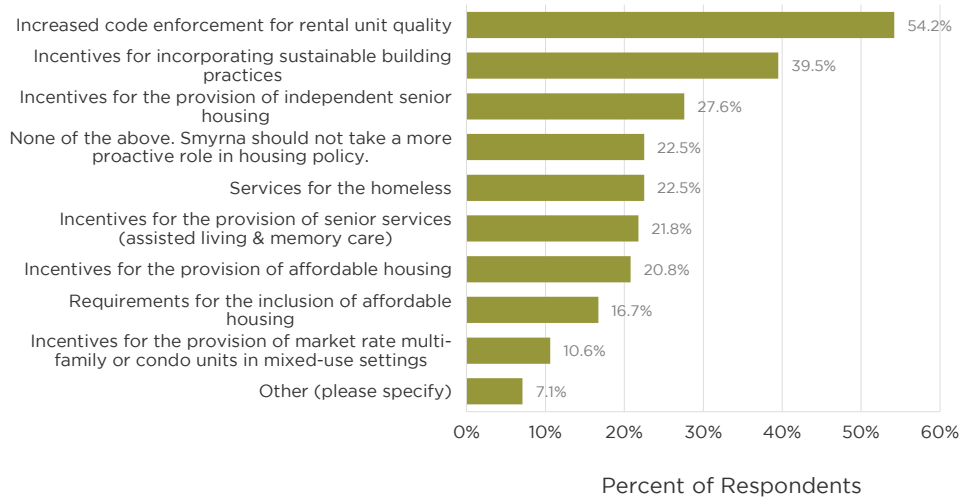
- Cost of living is increasing quickly
- The demolition of small, older homes and replacement with expensive, new builds is eliminating much of the housing stock for first-time homebuyers
- New homes are not affordable for most single people or families with median incomes
- Affordability is more of a concern for renters; homeowners are benefitting from rising home values
- SunTrust Park likely to further increase home prices
- Don't think it will be possible to stay in Smyrna when the family outgrows the current home
- Not enough housing choices under \$300,000
- Concerned property taxes will increase



**Q14. Which of the following housing policies do you feel are appropriate for the City to pursue? Select all that apply.**

The housing policies considered appropriate by the greatest number of respondents were increased code enforcement for rental unit quality (54.2 percent), incentives for incorporating sustainable building practices (39.5 percent), and incentives for the provision of independent senior housing (27.6 percent). Just over a fifth of respondents (22.5 percent) do not believe Smyrna should take a more proactive role in any type of housing policy. For those who selected “other,” common responses included:

- Hold homebuilders to high standards
- Opposition to public housing
- Need education and resources for low-income residents

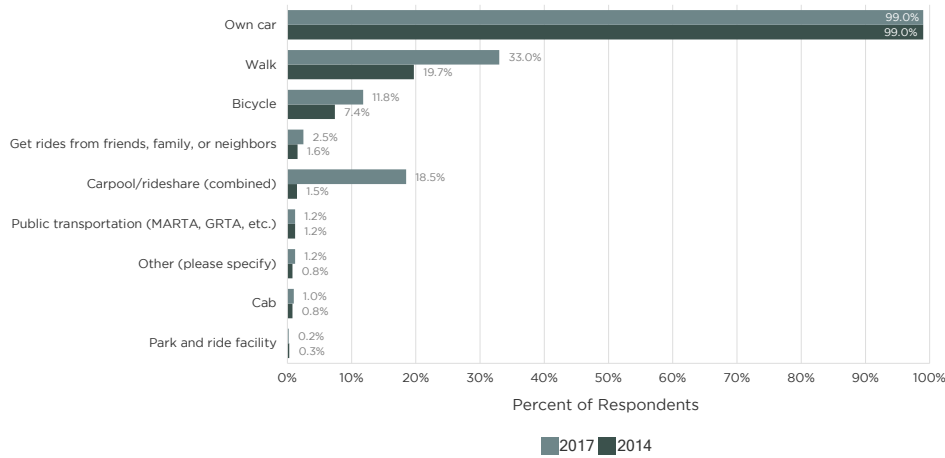
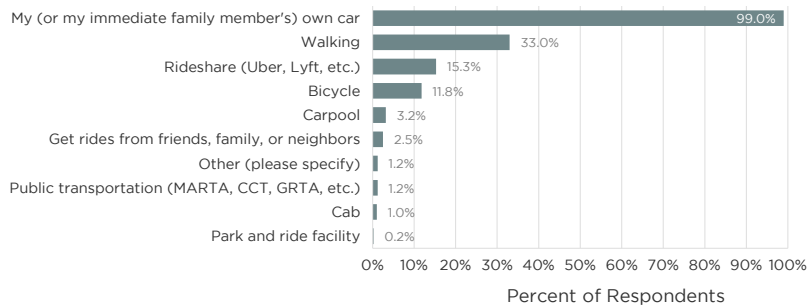


## TRANSPORTATION

### Q15. Which transportation modes do you rely on to get around on a daily basis? Select all that apply.

Almost all respondents drive on a daily basis (99.0 percent), but many also walk (33.0 percent), use rideshare services (15.3 percent), or bike (11.8 percent) on a regular basis. Though they do not account for the entire population, these figures paint a more diverse picture of transportation mode choice than is captured in the U.S. Census transportation mode data, which only measures the mode of transportation people take to work, suggesting people may use a greater variety of modes for non-work trips or have changed their travel behavior recently. The 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates indicates the following mode shares for the commute to work: drove alone (81.4 percent), carooled (6.1 percent), public transportation (1.1 percent), other (3.8 percent), and worked at home (7.6 percent).

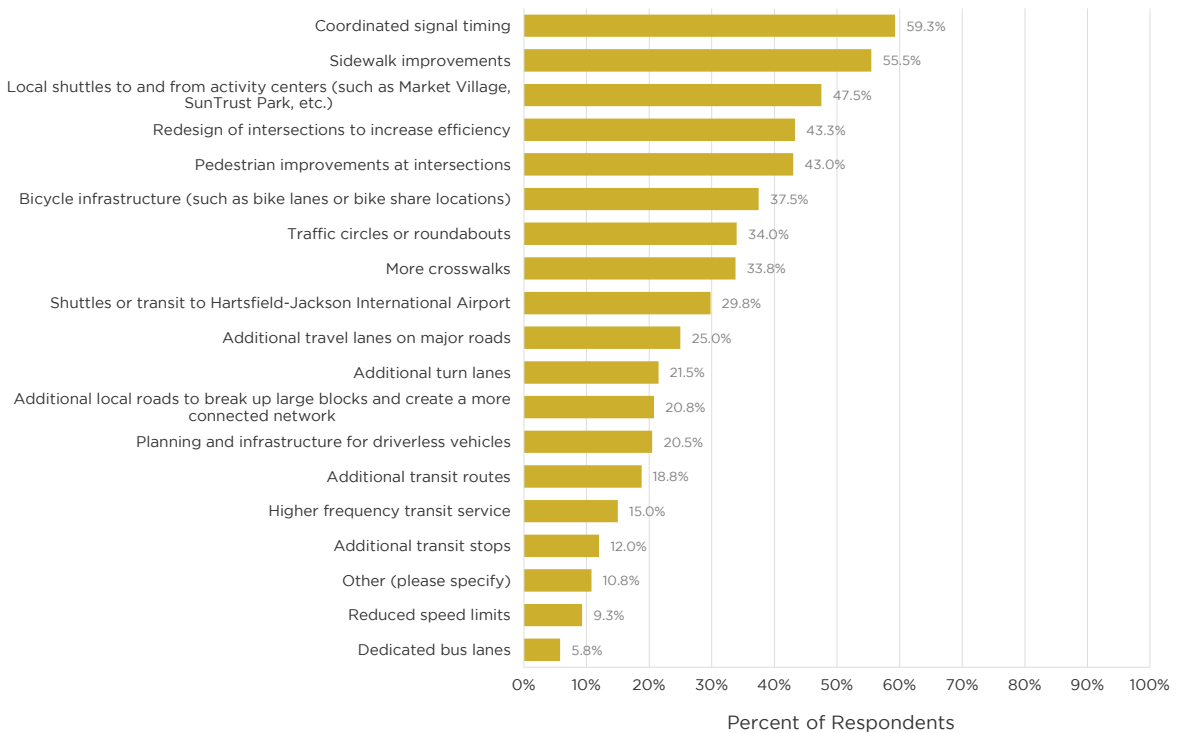
Compared to the same question asked in the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan* survey, the rate of all alternative transportation modes increased or stayed the same over the three-year period. The use of carpool or rideshare increased most significantly, moving from a combined of 1.5 percent in 2014 to an 18.5 percent use rate in 2017. There was also a major increase in the share of respondents who walk, which increased from 19.7 percent in 2014 to 33.0 percent in 2017.



**Q16. What transportation improvements would you like to see that would help you get around inside of Smyrna? Select all that apply.**

To improve mobility within Smyrna, respondents would most like to see coordinated signal timing (59.3 percent), sidewalk improvements (55.5 percent), and local shuttles to and from activity centers (such as Market Village and SunTrust Park) (47.5 percent). Of those who chose “other” common responses included:

- MARTA rail station near the Cumberland area
- Reduced speeds on neighborhood roads
- Minimize cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods
- Electrical vehicle charging stations
- More flashing yellow turn signals
- Fewer flashing yellow turn signals
- Airport shuttle

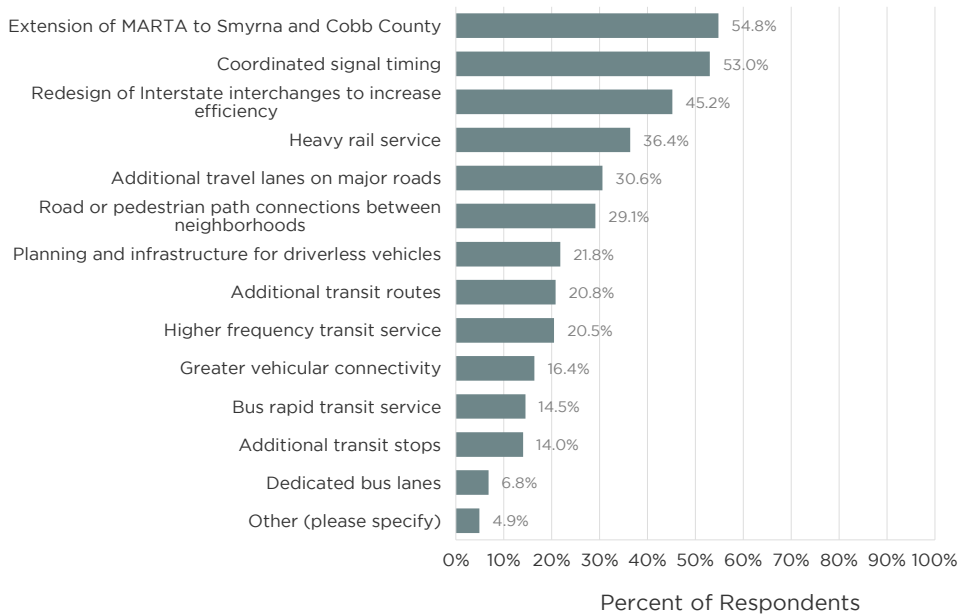




**Q17. What transportation improvements would you like to see that would help you get around outside of Smyrna? Select all that apply.**

To improve access to areas outside of the City, respondents would most like to see an extension of MARTA to Smyrna and Cobb County (54.8 percent), coordinated signal timing (53.0 percent), and the redesign of Interstate interchanges to increase efficiency (45.2 percent). For respondents who selected “other,” common comments included:

- Connection to the Atlanta BeltLine
- Light rail
- Completing existing road projects
- Express bus route directly to Midtown or Downtown Atlanta
- Airport shuttle

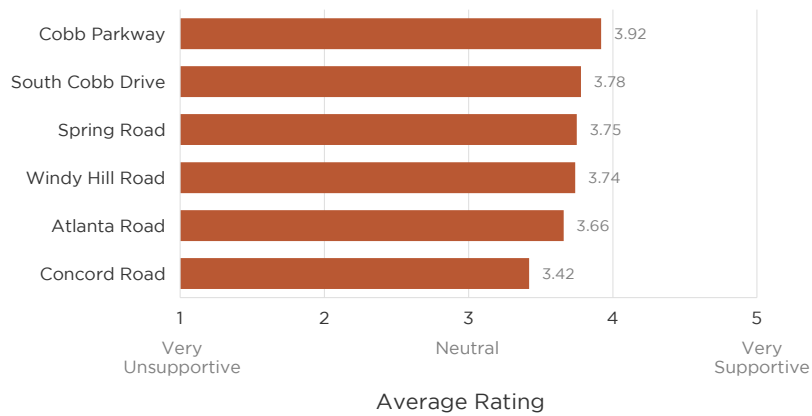


### Q18. How supportive are you of increased transit opportunities along the following roads?

Respondents indicated the the degree to which they support increased transit along several corridors using a Likert scale, rating their position as Very Unsupportive (1), Somewhat Unsupportive (2), Neutral (3), Somewhat Supportive (4), or Very Supportive (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of support.

Respondents generally supported increased transit opportunities along all five of the corridors presented, with average ratings for all falling between Neutral and Somewhat Supportive. Additional comments provided on this topic included:

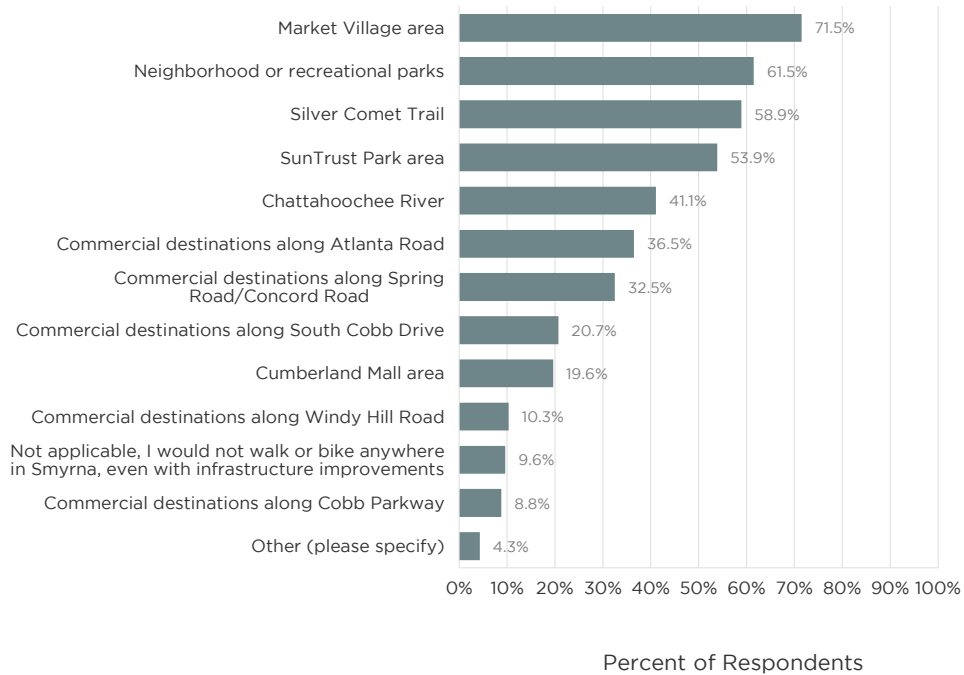
- Support would depend on the type of transit
- Would not oppose if it would not contribute to congestion
- Preference for expanding shared paths over transit
- Need to coordinate transit service across all of Metro Atlanta to be useful
- Want fewer buses
- Work outside of Cobb County, so CCT is not helpful



**Q19. To which of the following destinations would you be likely to walk or bike if facility improvements were made? Select all that apply.**

Respondents were most likely to walk or bike to mixed-use activity centers like Market Village (71.5 percent) or the SunTrust Park area (53.9 percent) or to recreation destinations like parks (61.5 percent), the Silver Comet Trail (58.9 percent), or the Chattahoochee River (41.1 percent). They were less likely to be interested in walking or biking to strip commercial corridors. Common responses from those who selected “other” include:

- Already walk/bike and don't need facility improvements
- Already walk/bike and wish it were safer
- Currently have to drive to walkable destinations, then get out and walk or bike around
- Thompson Park in Cobb County
- Would walk to restaurants along the East-West Connector between Highlands Parkway and Cooper Lake Road

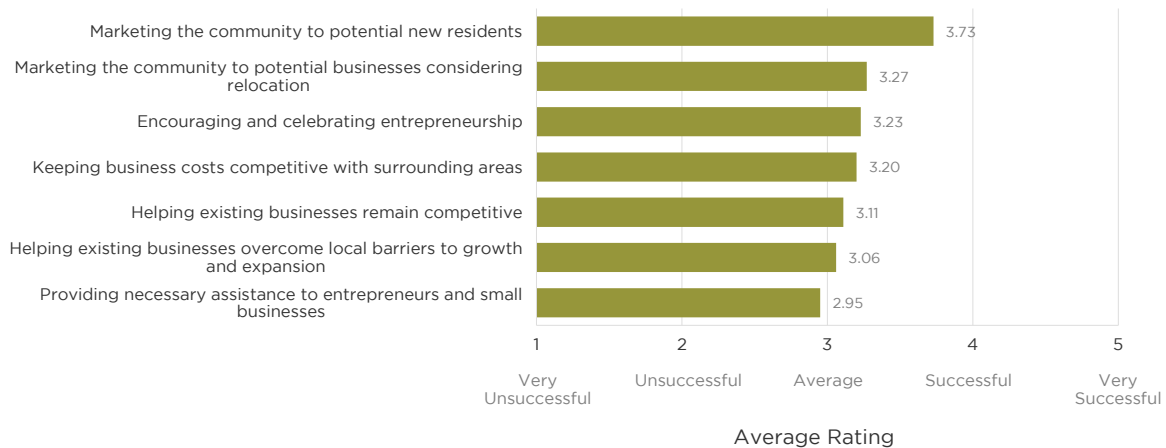


## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Q20. Please indicate the degree to which you believe the community has been successful in the following areas.

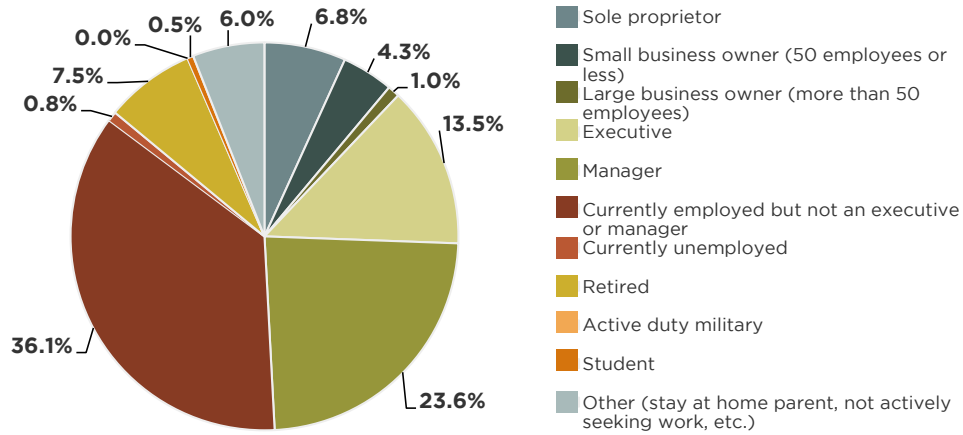
Respondents indicated the the degree to which they feel the community has been successful at several items using a Likert scale, rating their opinion as Very Unsuccessful (1), Unsuccessful (2), Average (3), Successful (4), or Very Successful (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived success.

They believe the community has had an average level of success or better for each of the items listed. The highest perceived success was in marketing the community to potential new residents (3.73), marketing the community to potential businesses considering relocation (3.27), and encouraging and celebrating entrepreneurship (3.23). Ratings were generally consistent with the 2014 survey results for the same question; however, the perceived success of marketing the community to potential businesses has increased. It was ranked lowest in the previous survey with a score of 2.99.



**Q21. Which of the following best describes your current work situation?**

The highest share of respondents described themselves as employed, but not an executive or manager (36.1 percent), a manager (23.6 percent), or an executive (13.5 percent).

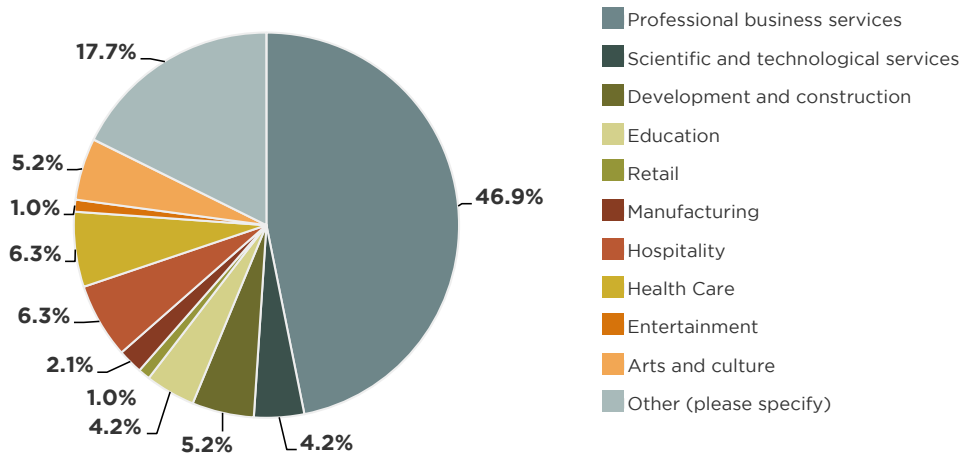


**BUSINESS LEADER INSIGHTS**

**Q22. Which of the following best describes your type of business?\***

The majority of respondents were in the professional business services field (46.9 percent). Of those who indicated "other" (17.7 percent), responses included real estate, development, government, transportation, architecture, media, distribution, law, and nonprofits.

\*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 96 people responded.

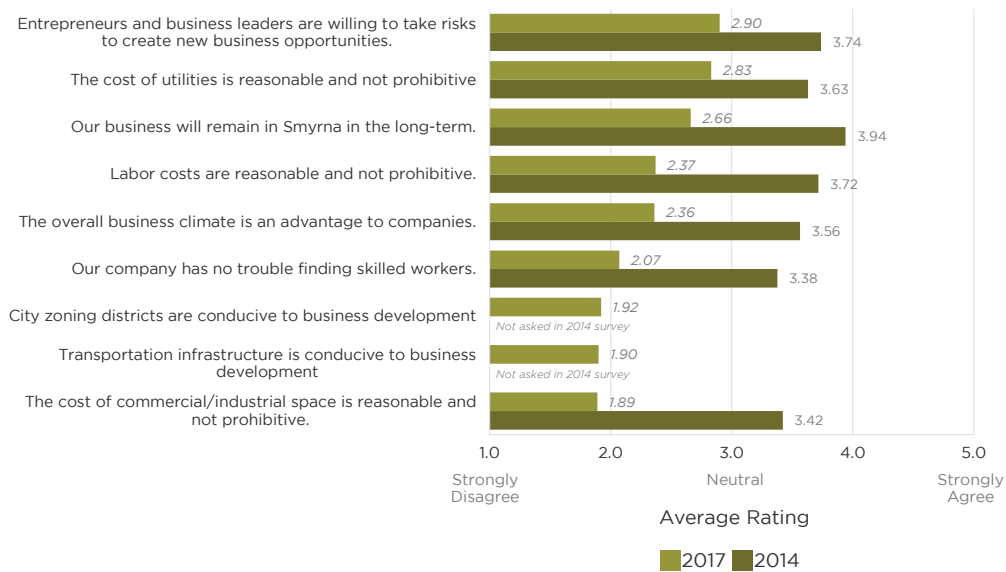


**Q23. Please evaluate the following statements according to the degree to which you agree.\***

Respondents indicated the the degree to which they agreed with a set of statements using a Likert scale, rating their opinion as Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), or Strongly Disagree (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate a better perception of the business climate.

All of the statements received average ratings between Neutral and Strongly Disagree, indicating respondents have a somewhat negative perception of the business climate in Smyrna. They most strongly disagreed that the zoning districts, transportation infrastructure, and cost of commercial/industrial space were conducive to business development. Compared to the results of the 2014 survey, in which all dimensions received average ratings between Neutral and Strongly Agree, the perception of the business climate in Smyrna has weakened. The cost of commercial/industrial space (down 1.53 points) and difficulty finding skilled workers (down 1.31 points) saw the greatest negative changes in perception between the 2014 and 2017 surveys.

\*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 89 people responded.



**Q24. From an economic standpoint, what do you believe is Smyrna’s greatest strength or asset? Please respond in one sentence or less.\***

Participants provided open-ended responses, highlighting what they believe to be Smyrna’s greatest strength. Common responses included:

- Central location with proximity to:
  - Atlanta
  - Buckhead
  - Perimeter
  - Airport
- Small town feel
- Lower cost of living
- Highway access
- Diversity
- Relatively high-income residents
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Skilled workforce
- Infrastructure upgrades
- Safety
- Cleanliness
- Resident support for local businesses
- Strong government leadership

\*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 67 people responded.

**Q25. From an economic standpoint, what do you believe is Smyrna’s biggest challenge?**

Participants provided open-ended responses, highlighting what they believe to be Smyrna’s greatest challenge. Traffic, school quality, and insufficient transit were the most common refrains. Typical responses included:

- Lack of quality public transportation
- Ineffective transportation connections to the metro area
- Negative perception of school quality
- Traffic
- Congestion from SunTrust Park
- Blighted strip commercial centers
- Lack of local restaurants and shops
- Tendency to overbuild
- Too much growth
- Increasing home prices and commercial rents
- Increasing amount of multifamily housing
- Maintaining diversity

\*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 74 people responded.



**Q26. What do you think is the greatest economic opportunity for the City of Smyrna?**

Participants provided open-ended responses about what they believe to be the greatest economic opportunity for the City. The most frequent responses were to capitalize on redevelopment around SunTrust Park, improve transportation facilities, and increasing school quality. Common responses included:

- Redevelopment opportunities around SunTrust Park
- Alleviation of traffic
- Provision of transportation alternatives
- Renovation of older buildings
- Build and maintain infrastructure in coordination with new development
- Continue to create a distinct sense of place
- Improve school quality
- Redevelopment of South Cobb Drive
- Attracting higher end retail and restaurants
- More cultural resources and entertainment
- Attracting young professionals and young families

\*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 71 people responded.



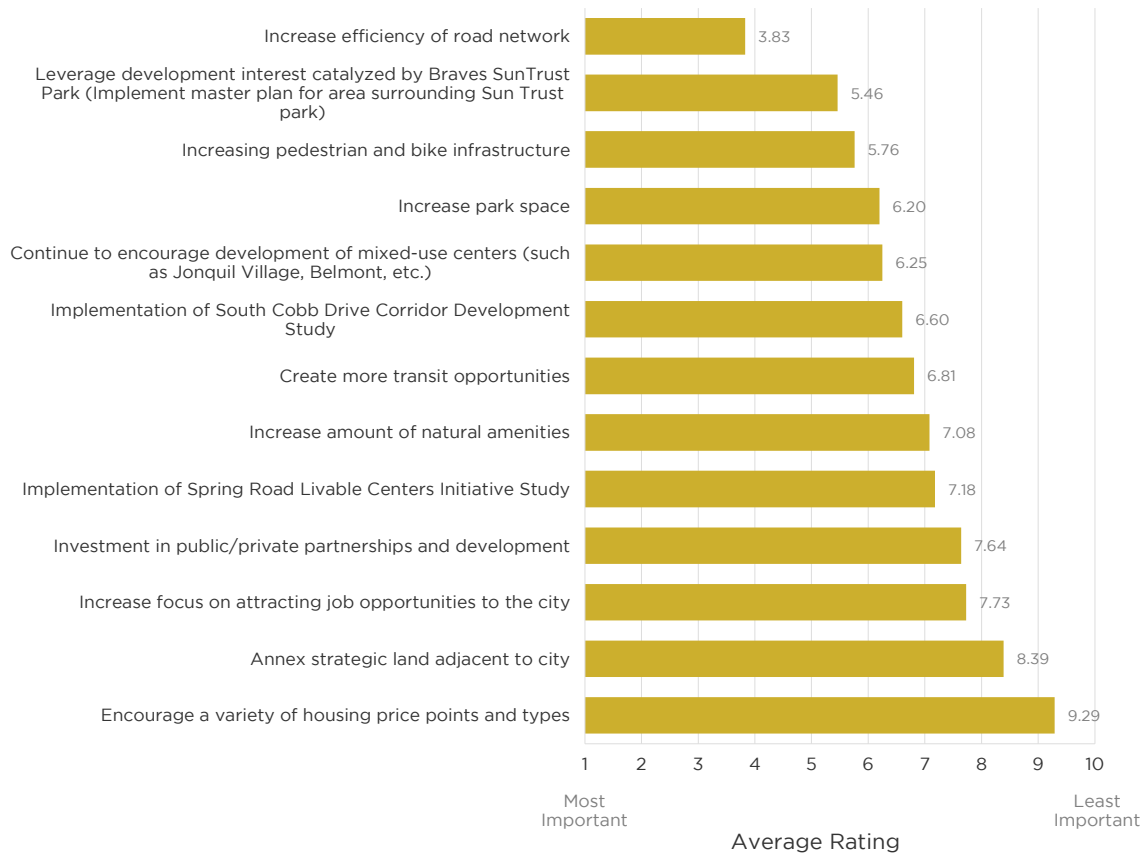


## PRIORITIES

### Q27. In order of importance (with 1 being the most important), please rank how you believe the City should prioritize the below activities.

The graph below shows the mean rating of importance for each priority. Lower scores represent higher prioritization.

Respondents gave the greatest priority to increasing the efficiency of the road network (3.83), leveraging the development interest catalyzed by SunTrust Park (5.46), and increasing pedestrian and bike infrastructure (5.76).

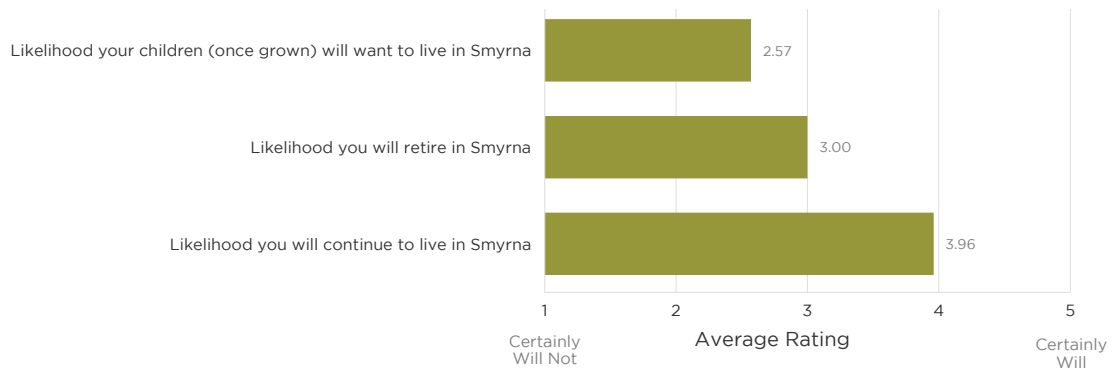


## TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

### Q28. Are you and/or your family likely to stay in Smyrna? Please rate the following statements.

Respondents indicated how likely they or their children were to stay in Smyrna using a Likert scale, rating their opinion as Certainly Will Not (1), Not Likely (2), Possible (3), Highly Likely (4), or Certainly Will (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate a higher likelihood to stay.

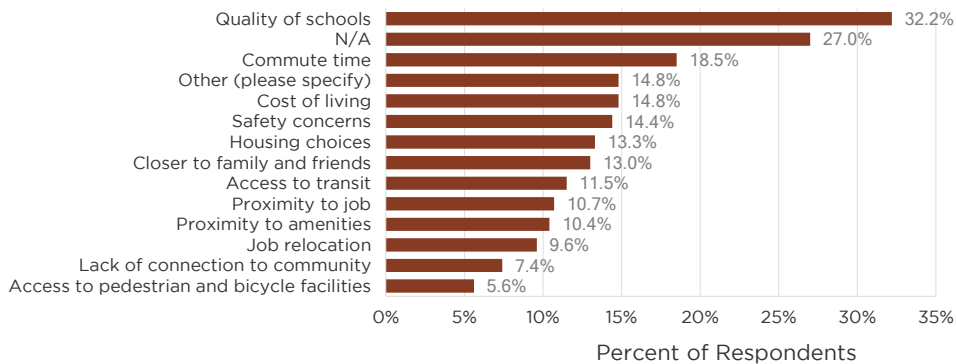
Most respondents said they were highly likely to continue to live in Smyrna and that it is possible they would retire there. They were less certain that their children would want to live in Smyrna as adults, typically rating that between Not Likely and Possible. Scores were similar to the 2014 survey results for the same question.



### Q29. If you will not continue to live in the community, why do you feel this way? Select all that apply.

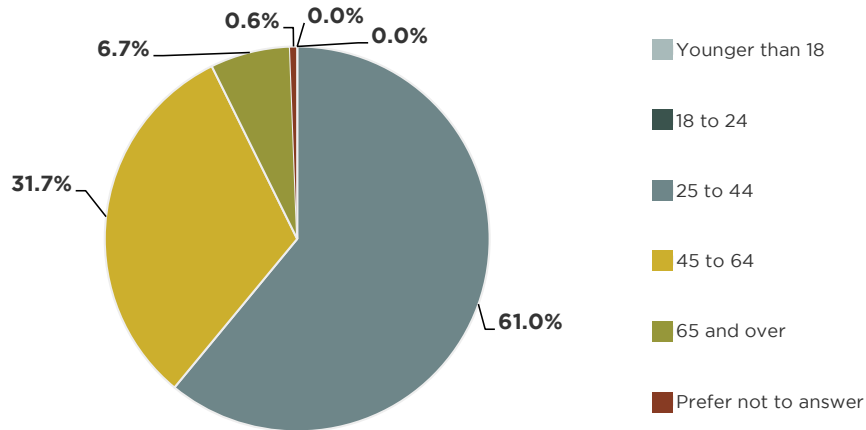
If they were to leave the community, respondents said it would most likely be due to the quality of schools or the commute time. For those who specified “other,” common responses included:

- Traffic
- Want to downsize and relocate somewhere more active once kids move out
- Lack of shopping and dining
- Lack of senior services
- Overcrowding
- Increasing property taxes
- Dislike multifamily homes and townhomes



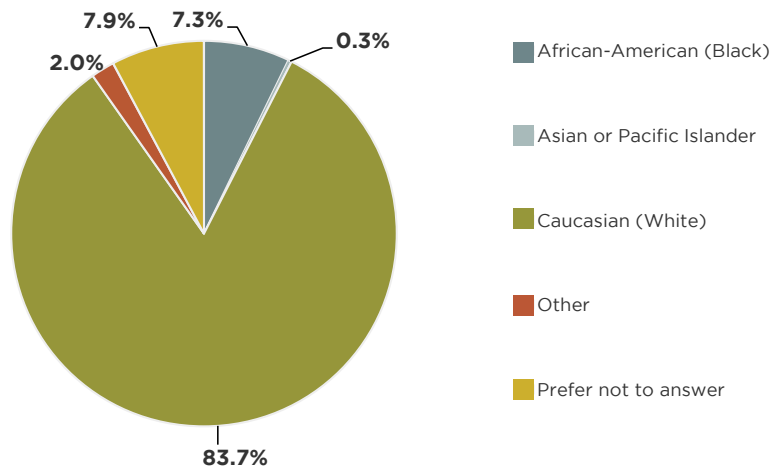
**Q30. What is your age?**

The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 (61.0 percent), followed by 45 to 64 (31.7 percent) and 65 and over (6.7 percent). There were no respondents under the age of 25.



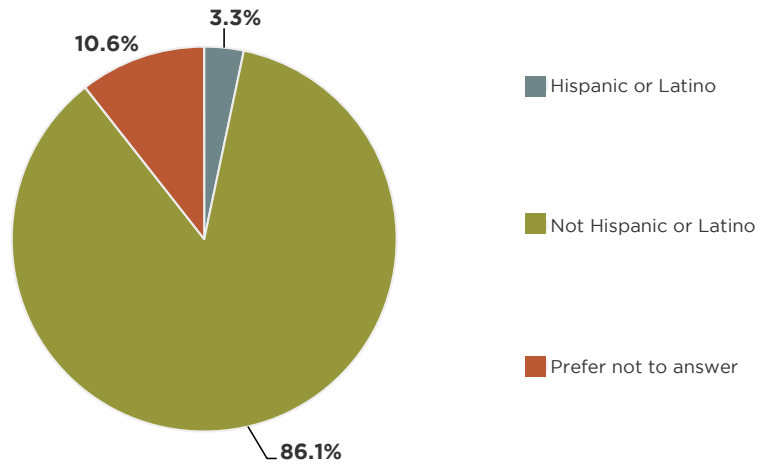
**Q31. What is your race? Check all that apply.**

Most respondents (83.7 percent) were caucasian (white), followed by African-American (black) (7.3 percent), other (2.0 percent), and Asian or Pacific Islander (0.3 percent). This group is less racially diverse than Smyrna as a whole, which is 51.9 percent white, 32.0 percent black, 7.3 percent Asian, 6.9 percent other, and 1.9 percent two or more races, according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.



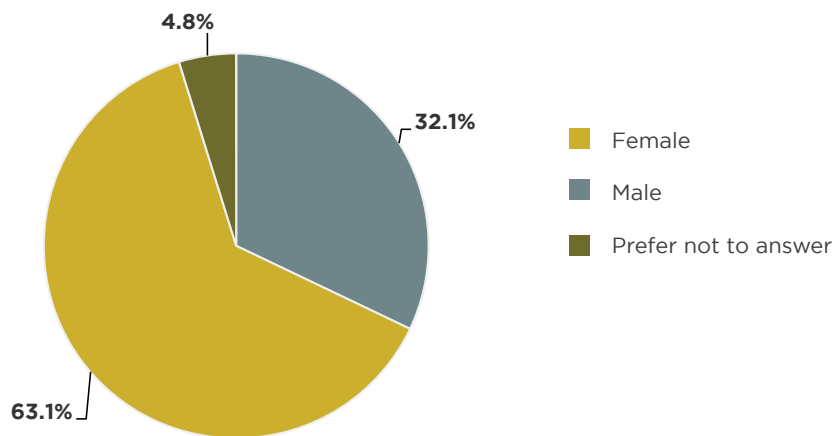
### Q32. What is your ethnicity?

Most respondents were not Hispanic or Latino (86.1 percent) or preferred not to answer (10.6 percent); 3.3 percent of respondents identify as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 14.2 percent of the Smyrna population according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.



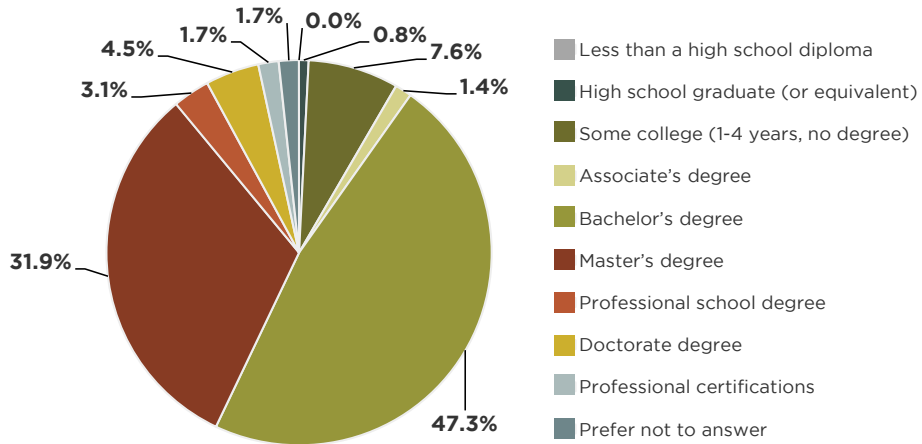
### Q33. Please indicate your gender.

The majority of respondents were identify as female (63.1 percent); 32.1 percent identify as male, and 4.8 percent prefer not to answer.



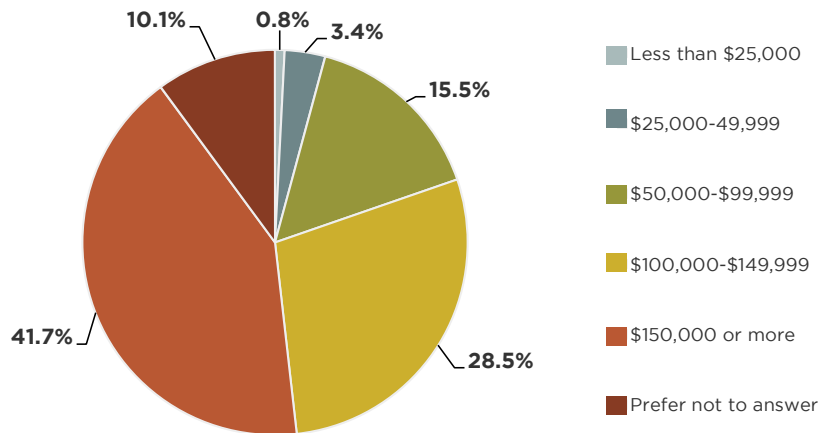
**Q34. What is your highest degree of education?**

The majority of respondents have a bachelor’s degree or higher levels of education (86.8 percent). No respondents indicated they had not graduated high school. This group has a higher level of education than the Smyrna population, which includes 9.5 percent of people without a high school diploma and only 51.9 percent of people with a bachelor’s degree or a higher level of education, according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.



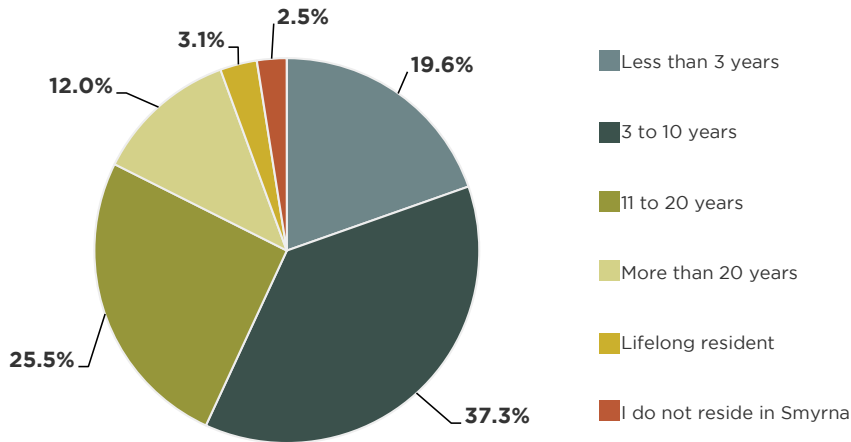
**Q35. What is your total household income (for all people living in your housing unit)?**

Respondents were skewed toward the higher end of the income spectrum relative to the City’s demographics. The majority of respondents live in households earning incomes of \$100,000 or more (70.2 percent), a much higher share than the 30.6 percent of Smyrna households earning \$100,000 or more, according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. Households earning less than \$50,000 make up 40.6 percent of the City population, but made up only 4.2 percent of survey respondents.



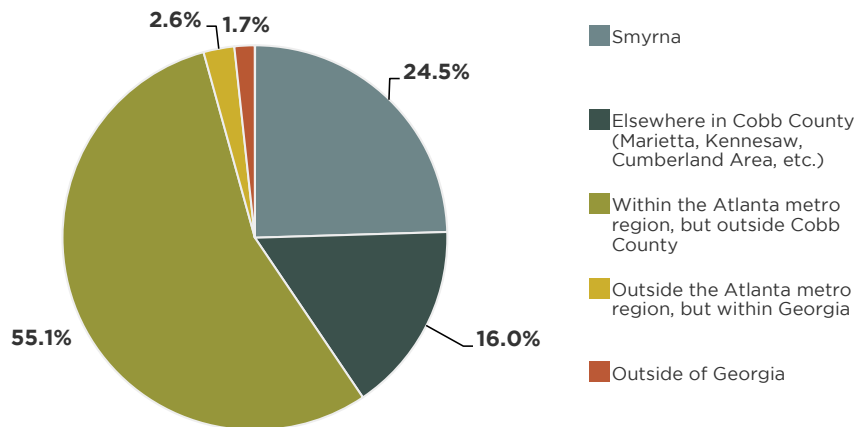
**Q36. How long have you been a resident of Smyrna?**

Respondents had a variety of tenures as Smyrna residents, including less than three years (19.6 percent), 3 to 10 years (37.3 percent), 11 to 20 years (25.5 percent), more than 20 years (12.0 percent), and lifelong (3.1 percent). Few participants (2.5 percent) did not reside in Smyrna.



**Q37. What is your primary location for work?**

Approximately a quarter of respondents work in Smyrna (24.5 percent), some work elsewhere in Cobb County (16.0 percent), and most work within the Atlanta metro but outside of Cobb County (55.1 percent).



# STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 1 SUMMARY MINUTES

### MEETING DETAILS

Date & Time: February 2, 2017, 7:30am-9:30am  
 Location: Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

### MEETING ATTENDEES

#### Committee Members Present

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corbin Adams</li> <li>• Teri Anulewicz</li> <li>• Denny Campo</li> <li>• Amanda Coffelt</li> <li>• Slade Gullede</li> <li>• Cheri Harrington</li> <li>• Emily Hein-Warren</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chad Koenig</li> <li>• David Monroe</li> <li>• Earl Rice</li> <li>• Ron Roberts</li> <li>• Troy Sather</li> <li>• Doug Stoner</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

#### Planning Team and City Staff

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna</li> <li>• Amanda Hatton, Jacobs</li> <li>• Ranada Robinson, Market Street</li> <li>• Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna</li> <li>• Kathe Roper, City of Smyrna</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kelsey Scott, City of Smyrna</li> <li>• Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna</li> <li>• Ken Suddreth, City of Smyrna</li> <li>• Jim Summerbell, Jacobs</li> <li>• Bob Summerbell, City of Smyrna</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

#### Others

Susan Wilkinson, City Council Member

### MEETING OVERVIEW & SUMMARY DISCUSSION POINTS

#### Welcome & Introductions – All, Welcome by City Leadership

- Doug Stoner, City of Smyrna Council Member Ward 6 and Chair of Community Development Committee, started meeting by welcoming attendees.
- Ken Suddreth, Smyrna Community Development Director, followed initial remarks with a quick overview of the plan, emphasizing the importance of focus on land use planning and tie-in with the 2014 Vision Plan and other planning efforts. The City hired the Jacobs and Market Street consultant team to help carryout the plan's update
- Introductions were given by all in attendance. Each committee member identified his or her perspective on the number one opportunity and challenge for the City's future growth and development. A listed of topics raised is highlighted on the following page.

*Handout: List of Steering Committee Members and Planning Team Contacts*





### #1 Opportunity

- *Model community in the state for schools, shopping, and parks with a concentration on public schools*
- *Get a bigger tax base and more jobs in Smyrna, new parks, better homes*
- *Smart growth around major arteries*
- *Development of depressed areas, such as Belmont, Jonquil Plaza, brings life back into the area and attracts young people*
- *Focus on education system*
- *Diversity of opportunities in the city, housing, etc.*
- *Diversity and healthiness of the city as it grows*
- *Smyrna Grove and other deals that help with redevelopment*
- *Location, location, location – how to take advantage of our prime location – new motto: “At the center of everything”*
- *Old “Brain Train” concept connecting Athens, Atlanta, and Macon*
- *Staying on the right track*

### #1 Challenge

- *Attracting and keeping young families in Smyrna – we’re fine grades 1-5, but families move out as they move into 6th grade*
- *Traffic*
- *Lack of trust in middle schools*
- *Zero going on in Ward 5 and other wards not seeing much change/revitalization*
- *Transportation and infrastructure*
- *Transportation and transit options*
- *Commute options – we need to be cognizant of what’s coming down the pipe, like autonomous vehicles*
- *Aging population in Smyrna and how we will provide services and affordable housing to those citizens and keep them here*
- *Affordable land for schools/to build schools*
- *Housing mix – “complete community”*
- *Transportation – we have done a great job with road network – how do we come up with premium transit service to help move folks around in and outside of Smyrna?*
- *Connectivity between Atlanta and Smyrna – connecting rail to MARTA – changing mindsets about public transportation*

### **Comprehensive Plan 101 – Amanda Hatton**

- Amanda Hatton, Project Manager with Jacobs, provided a brief overview of the planning process, highlighting the planning schedule and tasks, topics to be addressed by the plan (land use, housing, economic development, and transportation), public outreach activities, State of Georgia and Atlanta Regional Commission oversight, and





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coordination with other planning efforts, including the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative Study and the South Cobb Drive Corridor Redevelopment Study.

- The role of the Steering Committee to help guide and promote the plan and keep the plan update consistent with community vision and priorities as well as upcoming meetings were also discussed.

*Handout: Guide Smyrna Project Overview Sheet*

### **8:00 Highlights from Baseline Conditions Analysis – Jim Summerbell & Ranada Robinson**

- Jim Summerbell with Jacobs and Ranada Robinson with Market Street Services gave a brief overview of findings from the planning team’s inventory and trends analysis.
- The presentation covered demographics, economic development, land use, housing, transportation, and community facilities.
- Committee members asked the following questions (Q) and provided related (C), responses (R) were given by the Planning Team:
  - *(Q) Why these comparison communities for demographics? (R) The comparison geographies are either carry-overs from the 2014 Vision Plan or otherwise considered similar communities agreed upon by the planning team. All comparison cities are located in similar metropolitan areas with similar recent growth patterns.*
  - *(Q) Can the presentation be sent out to the group following the meeting? (R) Yes.*
  - *(C) It would be helpful to see historical information for some of the demographics and housing statistics.*
  - *(C) It would be helpful to think about how some of the different data points may be related to each other. For example if you look at race and poverty makeup, how does that factor into our school outcomes?*

The team concluded by sharing that a full Baseline Conditions Report giving a deeper dive on the statistics would be available for the Steering Committee and general public within the next couple weeks.

### **Discussion: The 2040 Development Vision – All**

#### Vision & Goals

Ms. Hatton led the group through an explanation of the “Community Goals” requirement of the Comprehensive Plan update process. The group then reviewed the City’s 2014 Vision Plan vision statement and discussed whether it should be carried over to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan or modified to more directly address future growth and development.





*Handout: Vision and Goals Overview*

*Discussion Comments*

- The vision statement is a good base/starting point, but this plan is focused more on economic development and growth so we need to add something about those elements.
- Would like to see our vision statement include something about sustainability or sustainable growth and development.
- Some of these are not applicable to a land use-focused plan, like leadership opportunities for residents.
- Separation of vision from goals is good.
- Share the specific goals of the Vision Plan subcommittees; Inform public of goals work already completed by the committees.
- Some of this leaves me hanging – clarify this – what is community attachment? And commitment to whom?
  - When it's all together, it makes sense. The goals explain the vision.
- Development is the built environment, but also green space, focusing on entrepreneurship (one good way to tackle poverty #), “mobility” not just transportation.
- Incorporate earlier opportunities and challenges raised by the Steering Committee during introductions, including such items as smart growth, entrepreneurship, and mobility.
- Poverty is largely generational poverty, which is more difficult to overcome than poverty
- Important to note that growth is good but not at the expense of Smyrna's diversity

*The side topic of how the public will be informed and involved in the planning process came up and, in particular, how to reach the Hispanic community.*

Future Land Use Map

Mr. Summerbell led the group through a brief review and discussion of the City's Future Land Use map (also referred to as the Future Development Map). The discussion focused on two key questions: 1) Which aspects of the current Future Land Use map need to be refined? 2) What areas of the community do you expect to experience change?

*Handout: Future Development Areas*

*Which aspects of the current Future Land Use (FLU) map need to be refined?*

- *Look into changing the color scheme on the map, need a greater diversity of color.*
- *Consider adding resources in adjacent jurisdictions (such as parks), showing just the city does not show the full picture of accessible resources.*
- *Need more greenspace/parks in city, specifically:*
  - *North of Windy Hill Road*
  - *West side, between Concord and S. Cobb Drive*



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- *Annexation areas – development that is occurring adjacent to city has impact on Smyrna.*
  - *Some developments adjacent to city, such as those off Cumberland Pkwy, have a significant impact on Smyrna.*
  - *County's future land use plan is an important part of plan*
  - *Mayor and City Council may be engaging in annexation study to do it in a logical way*
- *Conservation areas*
- *Consider how transportation projects will impact land use*
  - *What's funded – transportation projects*
  - *Overlay transportation projects on FLU map*

*What areas of the community do you expect to experience change?*

- *Near Bolton Rd (just outside city), Atlanta Rd corridor*
- *Windy Hill*
- *Spring Rd*
- *Between I-285 and Atlanta Rd*
- *Density is changing in yellow residential areas*
  - *Different people are moving in (life cycle back to families)*
- *Transportation change (in how we move around within and outside of city)*
  - *Importance of considering ongoing coordination with state/regional transportation partners to advance our mobility goals*
  - *Smyrna was identified as an original rail stop for MARTA a long time ago. If that came back, where would it be? S. Cobb Drive?*

### **Up Next – Amanda Hatton**

The meeting adjourned with a brief highlight of next steps: City Council Kick-off Hearing on February 6 at City Hall and Public Workshop #1 on February 16 at Brawner Hall. The online community survey will be available beginning February 16. The Committee was asked to help get the word out about upcoming events and encourage fellow community members to get involved. Committee members were handed a copy of the Community Engagement Program. The next committee meeting is Tuesday, March 7 (7:30-9:30am) at City Hall

The meeting adjourned at 9:35am.

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #2



### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 2 SUMMARY MINUTES

#### MEETING DETAILS

Date & Time: March 7, 2017, 7:30am-9:30am  
Location: Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

#### MEETING ATTENDEES

##### Committee Members Present

- Denny Campo
- Slade Gullede
- Cheri Harrington
- Chad Koenig
- David Monroe
- Earl Rice

##### Planning Team and City Staff

- Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
- Amanda Hatton, Jacobs
- Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
- Kathe Roper, City of Smyrna
- Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
- Ken Suddreth, City of Smyrna
- Jim Summerbell, Jacobs
- Bob Summerville, City of Smyrna

##### Others

Susan Wilkinson, City Council Member

#### MEETING OVERVIEW & SUMMARY DISCUSSION POINTS

##### Welcome & Introductions – All

- Amanda Hatton, Project Manager with Jacobs, welcomed committee members and reviewed the meeting agenda and goals. Primary goals were to update the group on project status and gain direction on key vision elements.
- Introductions were given by all in attendance.

*Handout: Agenda*

##### Project Update – Amanda Hatton

- Amanda Hatton, Project Manager, provided a brief review of the comprehensive plan content and update process, highlighting the plan framework, topics to be addressed by the plan (land use, housing, economic development, and transportation), and an update on the project timeline.
- March and April will be essential for setting a solid foundation for the plan with May and June focused on pulling the plan together into a focused document.

*Reference Material: PowerPoint Presentation*





### **Recap of Public Participation Efforts – Amanda Hatton**

Ms. Hatton briefly reviewed community engagement activities to date: stakeholder interviews, public kick-off hearing, first Steering Committee meeting, and Public Workshop #1; community survey debuted on February 17.

- **Public Workshop #1 was held on February 16.**
  - There were 48 registered attendees, in addition to the planning team.
  - Upon arrival, attendees gave input to help inform the vision statement development and prioritization of opportunities and challenges. After a welcome presentation, attendees spent the remaining 1.5 hours of the meeting in discussion groups, providing input to help shape the update to the future land use plan. Discussion groups focused on corridors, activity centers, and neighborhoods. Attendees rotated through all three groups.
  - Feedback from the meeting was positive. People liked the interactive nature of the workshop. Feedback received at the workshop would be covered later in the meeting as a part of The 2040 Development Vision Elements discussion.
  - Ken Suddreth, Community Development Director, added that the meeting attracted several “new” faces or people that had not been involved in other recent planning efforts. This was a positive. It was also well received by City Council members in attendance
- **The Community Survey debuted on February 17.**
  - To date, 264 people have taken the survey. We would like to see the number of participants double, at minimum before the survey closes on March 17.
  - Stats on participants to date were shared:
    - 95 percent live in Smyrna; 14 percent work in Smyrna
    - 59 percent are between ages 25-44; another 35 percent are between ages 45-64
    - 85 percent White; 6 percent African American
    - 4 percent Hispanic
    - 66 percent female; 29 percent male
    - 46 percent hold a Bachelor’s degree
  - Committee members were asked to help promote the survey to their network. If each person on the committee could reach 15-20 people, we would double participation rates.
  - One comment was made regarding having the survey available in printed hard copy format in addition to the online version. In response, Amanda stated that Jacobs will coordinate with City Staff regarding this, and seek direction on where to place them.
- **Public Workshop #2 will be held March 21.**
  - The workshop will follow a similar format to the first public workshop although the meeting will focus on building upon and refining draft elements of the





plan, including the vision statement, action items, and future land use plan details.

**Discussion: The 2040 Development Vision Elements**

Jim Summerbell led the discussion of key vision aspects of the plan, including a review and discussion of priority needs and opportunities by element of the plan, the land use policy map, and the vision statement.

In the notes below, Committee members questions are denoted with (Q), comments by (C), and planning team responses by (R) .

Needs and Opportunities

The planning team took an initial effort at identifying top priorities to be addressed by element of the plan (as shown in boxes). The lists were based on community input collected to date from stakeholder interviews, the first Steering Committee meeting, and Public Workshop #1.

*Reference Material: PowerPoint Presentation*

<b>LAND USE</b>	<p><b>LU1.</b> Redevelop key nodes and corridors  <b>LU2.</b> Increase flexibility in regulations  <b>LU3.</b> Ensure infill development is compatible with its context  <b>LU4.</b> Maintain high design standards</p>
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*Comments:*

- (Q) *How do you define "redevelop"?*
- (C) *What we do with schools and retail, etc. influences our land use.*
- (C) *"Flexibility" in regulations? How do we define? For example, regulations do not allow people to walk around with a beer at Avalon.*
  - (R) *Maybe "adaptability" is better word. And the example provided is really not a land use regulation but a city ordinance. They do relate to one another though, and certainly can have an impact on a business's decision to locate in the city.*
  - (C) *Addressing "Flexibility" has to include some better sense of predictability (what development will look like).*

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<p><b>T1.</b> Enhance and expand transit service  <b>T2.</b> Reduce congestion on major roads  <b>T3.</b> Expand the bike/pedestrian network</p>
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Comments:

- T2 – (Q) *Is this realistic? How can we accomplish this?*
  - (R) *Technology is changing how we get around, particularly younger generation (e.g. Waze app and the emergence of driverless cars)*
  - (R) *Communication is also part of the solution – new signal timing implemented last year. For example, a new website is coming out to provide or already available that will provide real-time info on traffic particularly around stadium and other commute issues. (Cobb and SS Chamber effort)*
  - (C) *Smyrna is both young and old, each solution does have universal appeal to all age groups.*
  - (Q) *How do we define transit?(R) We can discuss this with the public at the next workshop.*
  - (C) *State Senate bill (SR 228) is currently being considered and if passed would restrict the use of CSX rail line for to just CSX freight traffic. This would be a barrier to the line being used for commuter rail. We need to lobby against the bill.*

<b>HOUSING</b>	<p><b>H1.</b> Continue to encourage the creation of diverse housing choices</p> <p><b>H2.</b> Encourage home ownership and neighborhood stability</p> <p><b>H3.</b> Continue to enhance quality of life in neighborhoods</p>
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Comments:

- (Q) *We are pricing out first time homebuyers. How do we address this?*
  - (C) *Empty-nesters/seniors also impacted by this – as desire for smaller footprint/lot at affordable price.*
  - (R) *Consider reducing square footage requirements?*
  - (C) *Preserve older housing styles (ranch homes on larger lots, for example) should be a part of this, as well as help preserve natural environment? (Trees, etc.)*
  - (C) *Bungalow style housing (shared greenspace) and meeting buffer/infrastructure requirements also play a part in this. Need for code to allow for this?*
- (Q) *How are we addressing higher density with these priorities?*
  - (R) *Will be addressed in the Future Land Use map.*
  - (R) *This topics and a discussion of high amenity areas could be a topic at the next workshop.*
  - (C) *The plan should consider different housing types, such as Granny pods (one type of accessory dwelling units).*
- (Q) **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT** - *How can stormwater management be more flexible to allow for different housing options?*



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- (R) Identify areas in the plan where regional detention is possible (example of Corn and Jonquil)
- (C) Historic fourth ward park (Atlanta) is a good example of this
- Ties to land use and housing

<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<p><b>ED1.</b> Reduce commercial vacancies</p> <p><b>ED2.</b> Expand retail in activity centers and priority redevelopment areas</p> <p><b>ED3.</b> Leverage Braves stadium for restaurant and hospitality industries, as well as professional services.</p> <p><b>ED4.</b> Support and/or accelerate entrepreneurship</p>
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**Comments:**

- (C) ED3 – GA Tech study and Spring Road LCI implementation (have already focused on this topic from a City perspective)
  - (R) Largely private market driven, but the plan should closely reference the recommendations of the other studies.
- (C) Add retain/maintain existing businesses as ED5.
- (C) ED2 and ED4 – Smyrna has more of a home town, home spun feel (Marietta as an example)
  - Vision Plan Cultural Art Committee
  - Comp Plan should support other initiatives underway (no need to re-invent wheel)
- (C) ED4 – Kennesaw State co-working space – Smyrna could have some space too.
  - Rev Coffee is informal place for this, need formal
  - Also could address ED2
  - There are good examples of Maker Space in Marietta
  - (Q) Should high tech a part of this?
- (C) Opportunity for greater intensity of office on south side of city

<b>OTHER</b>	<p><b>O1.</b> Support school quality excellence</p> <p><b>O2.</b> Provide additional parks and greenspace</p> <p><b>O3.</b> Cultivate public art and culture</p>
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**Comments:**

- (C) School Quality
  - Much work done to date – best approach may be to reference other initiatives/efforts rather than reinvent wheel in Comp Plan
- (C) Add new priority (an O4) related to annexation strategy





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### Policy Map

The policy map reflects different areas of the city that may call for tailored actions, initiatives, or policy treatments. The draft policy map is largely a reflection of input received from the community members to date, with notable influence from Public Workshop #1 input.

### *Discussion Comments*

- *(C) What land is Cobb considering buying to use for additional park space in unincorporated county? This information, as well as current County parks, would be helpful to have on the map to better show the actual context.*
- *(Q) Ken Suddreth asked the Steering Committee to pay particular attention to the southern portion of the map and make sure that the area was appropriately addressed by the map.*
  - *(C) People consider the north and south of Smyrna to be different.*
  - *(C) The City has always prioritized making sure there are options in Smyrna and the north and south offer different living environments.*
  - *(C) The policy map shows a lot more going on in northern portion of city. Is that accurate?*
    - *People like the diversity of options in the city.*
  - *(C) Intent of RAD should remain - is to be able to address needs of different environments of city*
- *(C) The City needs to have flexibility, so the Policy map does help address that.*
- *(C) Would like to see focus at I-285 and S. Cobb Drive, possibly another activity center. The intensity of the activity center needs to be further looked into at the workshop.*
- *(Q) There is limited opportunity at S. Cobb Drive and East/West Connector. Should this be shown as an activity center.*
  - *Much land in this area has already redeveloped.*
- *(C) We need to make sure that we have the tools in place to achieve our vision.*
- *(Q) Susceptibility to change – why is area by Windy Hill shown this way?*
  - *(R) Much infill is already going on here. That factor in addition to the age of housing contributes to how areas susceptible to change were identified.*
  - *(R) It does not necessarily imply that the City will do anything special here to limit or facilitate change. This should be a topic further discussed at the next workshop.*
- *(C) Area along N. Cooper Hill has a higher susceptibility to change and should be shown as such on the map.*
- *(C) There is an opportunity for more trail connections on the south side of City. Perhaps that is something that should be shown on the map.*

### Vision and Goals

A couple handouts were provided to explain how the planning team arrived at a first, preliminary draft of a supplemental “land use based vision” for the Comprehensive Plan that would tack



onto the vision statement in the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan. The group briefly discussed the initial draft of the vision statement and provided the following comments.

**Draft Place-Based Vision Statement**

“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods, signature public spaces and art, and as an incubator for successful entrepreneurial efforts.”

*Handout: Vision Bubble, Comment Form, and Public Workshop #1 Vision Input*

**Comments**

- (C) *“Entrepreneurial efforts” is too restrictive, look at adjusting this portion of the statement.*
  - *Consider replacing the last phrase with something like “Cultivate the homegrown spirit”*
  - *Encourage, incubate, and cultivate – one of these terms could be used, but we need to be sure the loaded term reflects the meaning we want*
  - *End on a stronger phrase that is more focused on land use.*
  - *Remove incubate*
  - *Ending on neighborhoods may be better.*

**Up Next – Jim Summerbell**

The meeting adjourned with a brief highlight of next steps: Community Survey (open until March 17), Public Workshop #2 on March 21 at Brawner Hall, and the next Steering Committee meeting at City Hall on April 11. Committee members were encouraged to help distribute flyers promoting Public Workshop #2 and the Community Survey.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.



# STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 3

*Summary Minutes*

### Meeting Details

**Date:** Tuesday, April 11, 2017

**Time:** 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

**Location:** Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

### Meeting Attendees

#### Committee Members Present

- Corbin Adams
- Teri Anulewicz
- Denny Campo
- Slade Gullede
- Cheri Harrington
- Chad Koenig
- Leslie Lightfoot
- David Monroe
- Ron Roberts
- Bennett Sands
- Troy Sather
- Doug Stoner

#### Planning Team and City Staff

- Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
- Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
- Meghan McMullen, Jacobs
- Ranada Robinson, Market Street
- Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
- Ken Suddreth, City of Smyrna
- Jim Summerbell, Jacobs

#### Others

- Susan Wilkerson, City Council Member

### Meeting Overview and Summary Discussion Points

#### Welcome and Introductions

Jim Summerbell, Project Manager with Jacobs, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the meeting agenda and goals. The primary goals for the meeting were to inform the committee of the project efforts to date and get direction on plan recommendations. Participants were given a meeting agenda and handout with information about the current Future Development Map categories.

#### Community Engagement Discussion

Meghan McMullen, a planner with Jacobs, reviewed outcomes from recent community engagement activities (Public Workshop #2 and the Community Survey) and solicited input for the format of the upcoming booth at the Jonquil Festival.

##### *Public Workshop #2*

The second public workshop was held on March 21<sup>st</sup> at Brawner Hall and had 24 attendees. Participants reviewed materials and provided feedback on the draft vision statement and goals from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan upon arrival.

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Following a short welcome presentation, participants were broken into four groups and rotated through stations to discuss potential revisions to the Future Land Use Map, review draft priorities, and brainstorm related action items. The station topics were: 1) Residential Areas; 2) Activity Centers; 3) Public Spaces and Transportation; and 4) Places of Work and Commerce. Highlights from the discussions included:

## Residential Areas

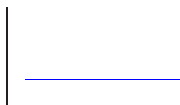
- Some participants were reassured by the low susceptibility to change areas
- Areas around SunTrust Park, along Spring Road, and around Riverview Landing were seen as most likely to change
- Higher density is okay in certain areas if transportation improvements are made
- Affirmed all four priorities
- Greater variety of housing types okay in Moderate, Medium, and Urban Residential (e.g. accessory dwelling units, cottage courts)
- Interested in design guidelines for residential areas

## Activity Centers

- Envision SunTrust Park area denser than Market Village- more of a regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Need new FLU designation for Regional Activity Center
- Transition densities/heights approaching residential neighborhoods
- Need more residences and local businesses at Market Village
- More code enforcement and architectural standards at smaller hubs on S. Cobb Drive
- Need more commercial in Riverview Landing area and maintain river access

## Public Spaces & Transportation

- Spring Road and Atlanta Road as signature corridors with complete streets
- May need second east-west corridor with trails
- Improve bus frequency and enhance stops
- Consider end-of-the-line MARTA connection
- Study potential for Smyrna Circulator
- Coordinate signal timing
- Encourage parallel road networks
- Continuous bike connections to nodes
- Create signature park (like Piedmont Park)
- Develop a parks master plan
- Support public art and culture



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## Places of Work & Commerce

- Industrial area off Jonquil Drive could be good for redevelopment (like King Plow Arts Center, brewery, or residential)
- Could have some office on the east end of Spring Road
- Improve aesthetics along key corridors and incentivize owners to renovate
- Clean up garbage around vacant properties
- Create another TAD/Enterprise Zone
- Attract higher quality retail
- Improve connectivity from SunTrust Park to Market Village/Belmont
- Encourage hotels/restaurants near SunTrust Park
- Consider business incubator
- Support minority business development
- Reduce congestion and expand transit to attract businesses

### ***Community Survey Results***

The Community Survey closed on March 24th, and highlights from the results were shared with the committee. 501 people responded to the 37-question survey. The feedback was largely consistent with the input received at previous workshops and included:

- Smyrna's greatest strengths are perceived as its proximity to Atlanta, small town feel, and sense of community.
- Smyrna's greatest challenges are perceived as congestion, quality schools, and transportation choices.
- Respondents stated they were likely to continue to live in Smyrna, but those who may leave would do so primarily because of the quality of schools and the commute time.
- Most respondents chose their current home based on price, proximity to work, and the character of the area.
- Most people are concerned about the continued affordability of housing in Smyrna.
- Regarding recent development trends, people were most frustrated by the amount of multifamily, lack of corresponding transportation improvements, and lack of road or pedestrian connectivity.
- The future uses people want to see most are restaurants, shops, and parks, and they want to see less multifamily, high-rise apartments, and industrial.
- The housing policies believed to be most appropriate for the City to pursue are increased code enforcement for rental unit quality, incentives for incorporating sustainable building practices, and incentives for the provision of independent senior housing.
- Almost all respondents drive on a daily basis, but also frequently walk, use rideshare, or bike.
- To improve mobility within Smyrna, respondents would most like to see increased efficiency of the existing road network, an improved pedestrian network, and local shuttles connecting activity centers.

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- To improve mobility between Smyrna and the surrounding region, respondents would most like to see the extension of MARTA to Smyrna and Cobb County, coordinated signal timing, and the redesign of interstate interchanges to increase efficiency.
- Respondents support increased transit opportunities along Cobb Parkway, South Cobb Drive, Spring Road, Windy Hill Road, Atlanta Road, and Concord Road.
- If improvements were made to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, respondents would be likely to walk to mixed-use centers, parks, and trails.
- The biggest priorities for the City were considered to be increasing the efficiency of the road network, leveraging development interest around SunTrust Park, and increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- The locations seen as the most important targets for future public improvement investments were Spring Road, South Cobb Drive, and Atlanta Road.

### *Jonquil Festival*

The next public engagement event will be a booth at the Jonquil Festival on April 29 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and April 30 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Several potential approaches to soliciting feedback and sharing draft materials were discussed. Committee members recommended a combination of activities including one quick response format (such as dot voting), one extended response format (such as having individuals write their aspirations for the City on a wall), maps explaining concepts from the draft plan, and an option to text in a response or tweet with the #GuideSmyrna hashtag. The committee recommended asking specifically about people's interest in a potential MARTA extension to better understand the level of support around that issue.

### **2040 Future Land Use Map Discussion**

Jim Summerbell facilitated a discussion of potential changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) based on public input received to date. Committee members were asked to provide feedback on each potential change. These included:

#### **1. *Create a Regional Activity Center designation to align with the higher proposed densities in the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study.***

The Spring Road LCI Study recommends higher levels of density in the area surrounding SunTrust Park than are currently allowable under any of the City's future land use categories. To accommodate this character, a new Regional Activity Center category will likely be created, and it is possible that multiple categories will be created to align with the three character areas of the LCI plan. The study is currently being finalized and reviewed by City Council, and the *Guide Smyrna* planning team will follow up with that process and make a recommendation on how to address this area once it has been approved.

Members of the Steering Committee also recommended revisiting the height and residential density metrics proposed in the LCI plan to ensure they are aligned and reflect a realistic, buildable product. For example, it was mentioned that the Bridge District allows buildings as tall as 200 feet, but residential densities of 80 dwelling units per acre (du/a), a low level for the corresponding height allowance.

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**2. *Create an industrial/mixed-use designation for the Jonquil Drive Industrial Area.***

Through the community engagement process, the industrial area around Jonquil Drive in north Smyrna was identified as an area that may be likely to redevelop and take on a more mixed-use character, in addition to the existing light industrial uses. Small office, maker spaces, microbreweries, event spaces, and residences were mentioned as potentially appropriate uses. There is currently no future land use category suitable for this combination of uses, so a new category will be created to accommodate this character and may be applied to other parts of the City. Steering Committee members suggested the Riverview and Five Points as other locations where this category may be appropriate.

**3. *Show open space and floodplain as features on the map for the Riverview Landing Activity Center.***

The Future Development Map does not currently show open space along the Chattahoochee River as Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC) in the Riverview Landing. The team has recommended showing the designated open space area there as PRC and showing the 100-year floodplain as a graphic feature to make it easier for staff in reviewing rezoning applications. The committee discussed the conflict between the mixed-use parcels within city limits in this area and the adjacent County parcels, which are designated as industrial. City staff indicated the County has studied these parcels. It is also possible these parcels would become annexed into the City when they redevelop.

**4. *Fix inconsistencies between the 2030 Future Development Map and recent developments.***

Some recent developments are not accurately reflected in the 2030 Future Development Map, including the Smyrna Elementary School site, Concord Linear Park, portions of the Silver Comet Trail, part of Belmont, and Smyrna Grove. The new map will be updated to reflect these changes. The team will consult the Planning Commission to identify other potential inconsistencies.

**5. *Align with programmed transportation improvements, such as the Windy Hill Road improvements.***

Roadway and public realm improvements to corridors like Windy Hill Road and South Cobb Drive may impact the likely future development of adjacent parcels. Especially along Windy Hill Road, the adjacent parcels are shallow and would likely require aggregation to redevelop. Committee members recommended extending the Neighborhood Activity Center designation slightly deeper to allow for this possibility.

**6. *Increase the allowable residential densities in areas located near activity centers and with supportive infrastructure, and require a high quality of design.***

The low density threshold of the current designation Urban Residential category encompasses forms including detached single-family homes on smaller lots and does not always reflect a true urban character. The team recommended splitting the current Urban Residential designation, used for all residential areas over 6 du/a, into two categories: 1) 6-10 du/a; and 2) >10 du/a. The Steering Committee supported this distinction and recommended renaming the categories.

The potential for establishing design guidelines for residential neighborhoods, which came up at both public workshops, was also discussed. The committee generally

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supported standards governing lot size, building size, and the relationship between a building and its surroundings, but felt architectural guidelines regulating detailed issues (such as paint colors) would be too prescriptive and potentially infringe on property rights. They recommended leaving this up to Homeowner Associations (HOAs) and individual neighborhoods to adopt, if there is strong support from residents. To facilitate the creation of design guidelines in neighborhoods without HOAs, they recommended establishing a process through which neighborhoods can apply to the City to get support in creating them and proactively reaching out to neighborhoods to let them know about the option.

Committee members suggested reviewing the proposed path connecting the Silver Comet to the Atlanta BeltLine, showing that path as PRC and assessing where adjacent land may be designated as mixed-use or another appropriate category in anticipation of demand driven by the new connection.

During the discussion, the potential for creating a land bank overseen by the Development Authority was mentioned as a tool to help aggregate small parcels in targeted redevelopment areas and to help retain affordability.

## Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion

The priority needs and opportunities were drafted at the previous Steering Committee meeting and reviewed at Public Workshop #2. Jim Summerbell and Ranada Robinson briefly reviewed the list with the committee. Ms. Robinson also explained the process currently underway to review the *2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan*, *2030 Comprehensive Plan*, and current Community Work Program to identify action items that should be incorporated into the *2040 Comprehensive Plan*, based on the established set of priority needs and opportunities. Priorities and action items that most needed additional input were also reviewed:

### *Economic Development*

The team asked for feedback on the following action items:

- Continue to explore the City's role in working with Cobb EDGE, surrounding higher education partners, and existing businesses to establish small-scale incubator and mentoring programs.
- Consider expanding the City's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program
  - Consider including an annual survey
  - Consider acquiring a customer relationship management (CRM) system customized for BRE, such as ExecutivePulse or Synchronist

Committee members showed support for both concepts, especially the creation or facilitation of a small-scale incubator and mentoring programs. A former car wash site in the Five Points area and the former Imagine International Academy of Smyrna site on South Cobb Drive were mentioned as potential locations, and locations with the new industrial/mixed-use category were generally considered appropriate. They suggested incorporating a co-working space and focusing on how to transition these small entrepreneurs into their own brick and mortar locations, such as by connecting them with available properties and offering legal counsel. IgniteHQ, a partnership



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between Kennesaw State University and the Cobb Chamber of Commerce in Marietta, was mentioned as a potential model, and Chattahoochee Technical College was suggested as a partner.

## **Land Use**

The committee was asked for their feedback on the recommended action to:

- Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance to improve readability, ease of use and to allow the development of new residential, industrial, and commercial products in line with the community's vision

They were specifically asked to consider whether a complete rewrite of the ordinance would be necessary, or if it would make more sense to target certain zoning categories for revisions. Most people felt a complete rewrite was not necessary, but some major revisions are needed and efforts did need to be made to improve clarity and readability. They recommended incorporating a citizen education component, making the code reader-friendly, adding visuals, and improving the digital interface to make it easy for property owners to identify all of the regulations associated with their parcels, possibly through an interactive map. The need to ensure the standalone text would still provide sufficient clarity was also emphasized, as many users access the code through the Municode website, which does not include visuals.

In addition to enhancing legibility, the committee identified some areas where the current regulations are lacking. Additional residential zoning categories should be evaluated to fill gaps in the current set, especially to provide an alternative to the Residential Attached/Detached (RAD) district. There is a growing need for childcare and eldercare, and the code should be revisited to identify locations that should be more permissive of that use. There is no current zoning category that would correspond to the new Regional Activity Center around SunTrust Park, and one will need to be created. An overall review for alignment with the new Future Land Use Map will also be necessary.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 9:30 AM, and participants were reminded that the next Steering Committee Meeting will be on May 16, at the same location and time, Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room at 7:30 AM.

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #4



### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 4

*Summary Minutes*

#### Meeting Details

**Date:** Tuesday, May 16, 2017

**Time:** 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

**Location:** Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

#### Meeting Attendees

##### Committee Members Present

- Teri Anulewicz
- Denny Campo
- Slade Gullledge
- Cheri Harrington
- David Monroe
- Ron Roberts
- Bennett Sands
- Troy Sather
- Doug Stoner

##### Planning Team and City Staff

- Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
- Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
- Ranada Robinson, Market Street
- Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
- Jim Summerbell, Jacobs
- Addie Weber

##### Others

- Susan Wilkerson, City Council Member

#### Meeting Overview and Summary Discussion Points

##### Welcome and Introductions

Jim Summerbell, Project Manager with Jacobs, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the meeting agenda and goals. The primary goals for the meeting were to inform the committee of the project efforts to date, discuss the first draft of the 2040 Future Land Use Map and discuss the draft action items of the Community Work Program. Participants were given a meeting agenda and handout with information about the proposed 2040 Future Land Use Designations.

##### Community Engagement Discussion

Jim continued the conversation giving an overview of public meetings and events scheduled for the remainder of the project. He then spent about 10 minutes reviewing the Jonquil Festival results. A formal summary of the festival results can be found in the attachment.

In preparation for the next public meeting, scheduled on Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup> between 6:30pm to 8:30 pm, members of the steering committee asked if we could advertise this even during Food Truck Tuesday. City staff discussed having a “teaser” sign at the event to inform the public of the upcoming public meeting.

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## 2040 Future Land Use Map Discussion

The majority of the meeting was focused on recommended changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Jim Summerbell began the facilitated discussion with a review of new definitions and features of the map, and consistency recommendations with existing zoning, and established policies. Committee members were in agreement of these changes that included the following:

- Creating a new residential designation, and renaming the current designations for consistency. The new residential designations are Low Density ( $\leq 3$  units/ac), Moderate Density ( $\leq 4.5$  units/ac), Medium Density ( $\leq 6$  units/ac), Medium-High Density ( $\leq 10$  units/ac), and High Density ( $> 10$  units/ac).
- Creating a new Regional Activity Center Designation
- Creating a new Industrial Mixed Use Designation
- Adding Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Splitting Parks/Recreation/Conservation into two categories, one for public parks and the other for private recreation and conservation areas.
- Adding the 100-year flood plain as a feature of the map.

Steering Committee members were then asked to provide feedback on each FLUM subarea. The areas and their changes include:

### 1. *Spring Road and SunTrust Park Area*

The recommended changes to the FLUM in this area bring together the zoning and Spring Road LCI Study recommendations. It also utilizes a new Regional Activity Center designation. Members of the Steering Committee agreed with the changes to the FLUM and also discussed the desire for a signature park along Spring Road.

### 2. *Jonquil Drive Industrial Area Redevelopment*

A new industrial mixed use designation is proposed for this area. This use would allow for a variety of residential, limited commercial, and office uses. The proposed changes also take into account the linear park along Spring Road. Steering Committee members liked the notion of having an industrial mixed use designation. They suggested the Planning Team review Cobb County's zoning to ensure they are inline with proposed FLUM recommendations. Residential densities in the surrounding area were also updated to be consistent with approved zoning.

### 3. *Roswell Street Area*

The proposed FLUM for the Roswell Street Area incorporates the new industrial mixed use designation and higher residential densities, as well. Steering Committee members stated that this area has a unique feel and character. A proposed extension of the Mixed Use designation behind Jonquil Village was also approved though slightly modified from that shown in the draft map

### 4. *Market Village Area*

Around and within the Market Village, the map was updated to reflect the presence of several key city buildings and public park areas and some well-established churches. Overall residential densities in the area were increased to reflect the ongoing trend in rezoning approvals, and the linear park along Concord Road was added.

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## **5. *Windy Hill Road Area***

The widening of Windy Hill Road will be asymmetric, with new rights of way be acquired currently on the north side of the road. The planned remnant pieces of ROW are proposed for a linear park, while the south side of the road is shown as appropriate for mixed use. The committee was in general agreement about these recommendations on the roadway but had some recommended changes for two other subareas near the roadway. For one an existing industrial area on the northeast side of Atlanta Road and Windy Hill had been designated residential on the 2030 map, and the recommendation was to change to industrial to reflect the zoning. The Committee recommended changing this to Industrial Mixed Use. The second recommended change was for the medium density residential neighborhood off of Pat Mell Road should be designated as a future site of a public park, since most of the area is in floodplain and the area is in need of redevelopment.

## **6. *Northside of South Cobb Drive***

Several changes were recommended for this area including some consistency changes in the NW corner of the city limits along Pat Mell Road which are currently zoned for commercial uses but are primarily being used for residential. The committee recommended not changing these areas and leaving them residential as shown on the current 2030 plan. The primary reason for this is the current market trend away from retail shops, and the fact that the area never developed fully as commercial as zoning indicating a lack of local market for such a use. Another major change on the map was the reflection of the new Smyrna Grove development and the southerly extension of the mixed use area boarding Smyrna Grove, which the committee approved. There was some discussion about how the uses along Birch Street should be designated the current 2030 map and the draft 2040 map show the houses on the west side of the road as Community Activity Center. The Committee decided to pull back the CAC designation to only reflect the existing commercial zoning. Again because the market for further retail expansion in the city is low and projected to decrease.

## **7. *Concord Road and South Cobb Drive***

Only minor changes were proposed for this area, including a possible addition of a new Industrial Mixed Use district, but the Committee rejected the idea. The committee did advise updating this portion of the map to reflect existing city facilities, such as the fire station.

## **8. *Middle section of South Cobb Drive***

This area had several changes to reflect consistency with existing zoning and development around the hospital site. The Committee recommended increasing the housing density in the area, and changing some of the area designated as Public Institutional on the 2030 plan for residential.

## **9. *South section of South Cobb Drive***

This area also had several changes to reflect consistency with existing zoning particularly industrial and commercial properties. The focus of committee discussion in this area revolved around the Oakdale Court residential neighborhood, which is surrounded by industrial uses. The committee recommended showing the neighborhood as industrial.

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## 10. Riverview Landing Area

This area also had several changes to reflect consistency with parks/recreation/conservation areas and existing zoning particularly residential properties which on the 2030 plan were under shown as lower density than that allowed by the zoning. The focus of committee discussion was on the reflection of private recreation and conservation areas in area as well as the whole city, which the committee was supportive of.

### Action Items

The remaining 10 minutes of the meeting were focus on the identifying the 2018-2022 Community Work Program which includes the 100 Day Action Plan. Jim Summerbell began this discussion by presenting an overview of the how the comprehensive plan is framed. He then presented an overview of the 5 topic areas: Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development and Other. The Other category captured priorities that related to parks, culture, schools and annexation.

Addie Weber of Jacobs continued the discussion with an exercise to determine the top action plan priorities. Steering Committee members were given a hand-out that listed all the action items in their representative topic areas. Members were then asked to review and rank their top 3 action items, identify if it is a 100-day action item and a potential partner for that action item. The top priorities are listed below under their topic headings.

- **Land Use**

Steering Committee members were in general agreement about the overall need to increase adaptability and readability of the City's zoning and development regulations.

1. LU2.1 - Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance to improve readability and ease of use, and to allow the development of new residential, industrial, and commercial products in line with the community's vision.
2. LU3.2 - Conduct a Study of Infill Development Guidelines, and in recommended adopt Infill Development Guidelines
3. LU4.1 - Undertake a study of applying Architectural Design Standards to key activity centers and corridors of the city.

- **Transportation**

There were only two action items identified for transportation. Discussion amongst the Steering Committee centered on whether or not an evaluation of shuttle service between commercial districts in Smyrna and the Atlanta Braves Stadium should be its own action item. The resulting discussion kept the evaluation as part of the Transit Feasibility Study but acknowledged that this item has more potential as a market solution than one developed by the City. The ranking of the action items included two studies that the City Council has already authorized and strongly support:

1. T1.2 - Undertake a Transit Feasibility Study.

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2. T3.2 – Implement and regularly update the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

- **Housing**

Addie presented each housing action item and asked the Steering Committee to rank their top 3. The members spent some time discussing *H1. Continue to Encourage the Creation of Diverse Housing Choices* and the need for a Housing Master Plan, and questioned whether they should be included. General consensus was to that both efforts should be further refined through the Strategic Visioning committee efforts. The top 3 action items were:

3. H4.2 – Revise the City Zoning Ordinance to offer a wider range of residential zoning designations to avoid reliance on RAD, single-family residential attached and/or detached zoning district.
4. H3.3 – Identify declining neighborhoods through planning studies and target these areas for revitalization effort.
5. H1.2 – Consider establishing a land bank that can be used as redevelopment tool purchase foreclosed and delinquent properties, for future sale or development.

- **Economic Development**

Ranada Robinson of Market Street presented the economic development action items. Steering Committee members asked for clarification on what it meant to be an Entrepreneur Friendly Community (ED4.4). The top 3 action items were:

1. ED5.1.1 – Consider expanding the City’s Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. Consider including an annual survey.
2. ED4.4 – Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
3. ED1.1 – Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making improvements to commercial properties to increase the likelihood of occupancy as a special program, i.e. the Commercial Revitalization Program.

- **Other**

Addie Weber concluded this section of the presentation by reviewing the two action items that were placed in the “Other” topic area. They were ranked as follows:

1. O4.3 – Conduct an Annexation Study in order to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts.
2. O2.1 – Develop and routinely update a parks master plan.

### Adjournment

The meeting ended at 9:30 AM.

### Attachments:

1. Jonquil Festival Summary Report
2. Smyrna 2040 Future Land Use Designation Definitions
3. Steering Committee #4 PowerPoint

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS



## GUIDE SMYRNA STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS KEY THEMES & TOPICS REPORT

### OVERVIEW

The planning team carried out a series of stakeholder interviews with community leaders over the course of two weeks to help identify key topics as well as top opportunities and concerns that should be further considered during the community engagement process. All City Council members and the mayor were invited to participate as well as representative business leaders, small business owners, resident representatives, and citizen leaders from the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan committees. A full list of those interviewed in alphabetical order is provided below:

Interviewee	Representing
Teri Anulewicz	Mayor Pro-Tem, City Council (Ward 3)
Max Bacon	Mayor
Keith Bentley	Williams Park
Andrea Blustein	City Council (Ward 2)
Brent Buckner	Bennett Woods
Edward Chen	Atkins Park
Kevin Drawe	Atkins Park
Ron Fennel	City Council (Ward 7)
Chris Fields	Must Ministries
David Gernatt	David Weekly Homes
Mike Jones	Smyrna City Administrator
David McGinnis	Habitat for Humanity
Virgil Moon	Cobb Board of Health
David Moore	Covenant United Methodist Church
Derek Norton	City Council (Ward 1)
Holly Quinlan	Cobb Travel & Tourism
Eric Randall	Smyrna Department of Public Works
Doug Stoner	City Council (Ward 6)
Brad Thompson	Single Family Home Builder
Tony Waybright	Community and Econ Development Strategic Vision Plan Work Group
Steve West	Halpern Properties
Susan Wilkinson	City Council (Ward 5)
David Woodberry	The Woodberry Group
Chuck Young	Community and Econ Development Strategic Vision Plan Work Group





## PRIMARY OBSERVATIONS

Overall the interviewees were happy with the city's direction and the progress made in recent years. Many cited as examples the recent development trends favoring mixed-use development, the visionary approach and support of the Strategic Vision Plan, and the overall character and strength of the community. Many see Smyrna as great place to live with a very bright future.

Interviewees were asked about the opportunities and challenges facing the city in the coming years. Most pointed to new developments such as the improvements to Windy Hill Road and all the construction and improvements around the Battery and the new Braves Stadium. For the most part, they saw these as opportunities, but also pointed to the fact that no really knows the full impact and many in the community have expressed some concerns along with their optimism. Traffic, the need for improved transit, and increasing concerns over housing affordability were also high on this list.

Another major goal of the interviews was to gauge the expectations of the Comprehensive Plan Update project itself and what they wanted to see come out of this planning process. Most expressed an interest in incorporating and carrying forward the good work on the Strategic Vision Plan, and the desire for a practical, implementable plan that is grounded in best practices. No one wanted a plan that simply met the minimum state requirements, but rather a plan that exceeds them.

## WHAT MAKES SMYRNA STANDOUT IN THE REGION

Interviewees all responded with positive statements about Smyrna's image and place in the region. A few even mentioned that this was not always the case, and huge improvements thanks to progressive leadership have made a big impact. Common descriptors used by respondents included quality, diversity, balanced, and innovative.

- Smyrna is a very well balanced place with different people, different incomes, backgrounds, types of housing, etc.
- Diversity – ethnic, socioeconomic, housing, opportunity, engagement.
- Smyrna is a down to earth place.
- Although growing, Smyrna still has a small town feel.
- Quality growth and out of the box thinking, such as Market Village.
- Smyrna is like an in-town community outside the perimeter. It has the potential to be the Decatur of Cobb County.
- Convenience (location) and proximity to Atlanta. Easy accessibility and transportation to get to city via I-285/I-75. Smyrna needs a new motto (“At the Center of Everything”).
- Good quality of life, including parks and community events.
- Live-work-play that accommodates a diversity of housing types.
- Good pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. The community is very walkable, having some 10-foot sidewalks with amenities and access to the Silver Comet Trail.
- Sense of community. Vibrant and very active with both its initiatives and fun events.
- A caring City Council, concerned about community welfare and standard of living.
- Dedicated to new technology and innovation with good fiber access.
- Visionary dreams to move Smyrna ahead from yesterday. It's all in the Strategic Vision Plan.





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- Stability of leadership.
- Transit that connects.
- Old neighborhoods and quality of life is good for services.
- Arts and culture (provide as an amenity).
- Smyrna is well-positioned for tourism.
- People want to be in Smyrna.
- Smyrna is great at planning.
- The uniqueness of people and character.
- City taxes are lower than Cobb County taxes.

### RECENT CITY TRENDS FAVORED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders generally expressed a sentiment that they choose to live or work in the community because they like the direction Smyrna is moving in, and they appreciate that the changes have continued to foster a strong sense of community.

- Tying in sidewalks and bike lanes going toward the ball park.
- The number of restaurants more than doubled. There was not much to choose from before, even around Cumberland. Smyrna now has a local food culture.
- Businesses like Rev Coffee create a spirit of entrepreneurship in the city.
- The Braves stadium has been positive for attracting development.
- Improvements to the downtown area, location, access to Atlanta, library (community feel), trails, concerts downtown, leaf vacuuming truck (as example), and animal control officer has been helpful.

### AREAS WITH HIGHEST CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

The areas north of Concord Road/Spring Road, and along major corridors leading into the city were universally seen as the areas with highest capacity for change.

- Area between South Cobb Parkway/Pat Mell Road/South Cobb Drive/and Atlanta Road has the greatest potential for change.
- Annex to west of South Cobb Drive, north of Concord.
- Windy Hill Road redevelopment.
- South Cobb Drive -uses along road.
- In the vicinity of the Battery and the new Braves Stadium - uses should be more intense.
- Areas around transit corridors.
- Spring Road and Atlanta Road.

### WHAT DO YOUR CLIENTS LOVE ABOUT SMYRNA?

The small town character and the components that support it, along with strong leadership were the most common responses to this question.

- Live-work-play atmosphere, including Market Village, Belmont, and Jonquil Village.
- Educational system is great.
- Hospital availability – South Cobb Drive (WellStar), Emory at Smyrna,



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- Churches.
- Live-work-play that accommodates housing.
- Innovation.
- Administration does a great job working with the community. The City works with us and vice versa.

### **WHAT DO YOUR CLIENTS HAVE CHALLENGES WITH IN SMYRNA?**

Issues related to transportation and housing were the most common challenges that the interviewees heard from others.

- South Cobb Drive - is dangerous for walking, has too much commercial, traffic bad, state has much more right of way than it needs.
- Balanced tax base.
- Keeping balance of housing for everyone.
- Access to Transportation – accessing service center itself, located on a bus stop or close to one; some clients walk or ride a bike or ride a bus.
- Public transportation is a need. Bus service is not timely nor necessarily get where they need.
- Affordable housing – rapid increase in prices, members struggling with finding affordable housing. Retail/commercial employees have lower class earnings – can the housing mix accommodate that employment mix so they can live in the area.

### **HOW COULD YOUR AGENCY'S GOALS BE BETTER SUPPORTED BY THE CITY?**

Interviewees that represented non-profits and local community groups were asked how the city could better support their goals. For most part, responses indicated that city was very supportive, and open to dialogue. Interest in continued support was universally expressed.

- Council is supportive of affordable housing, allowing flexibility in single family housing, specifically related to lot size.
- Flexibility is essential to balance and having healthy community.
- Improved access and dialogue between city officials and non-profits to foster public-private partnerships to move forward.
- Support tourism around historic resources. Need to leverage our history.

### **ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF RESIDENTS**

Elected officials were asked what issues and concerns they most heard from residents, and the most common response was traffic, schools, and public safety. Though schools are not under the jurisdiction of the city, the need for closer coordination and dialogue between city officials and the School Board was strongly stressed.

- Traffic congestion.
- Public safety and apprehension about how the Braves Stadium will impact this.
- Traffic (Atlanta Road – what options are available to mitigate traffic here?) and Braves impending traffic.
- Manage quality development – standards are currently followed.
- Quality of schools.
- Need more schools, but land is too expensive.
- High Turnover in the schools



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- Business displacement. The City is acquiring north side of Windy Hill Road to widen it. 80 businesses on 40 properties are impacted, many of which are automotive businesses, doctors, etc. Many of the businesses are minority owned or run, especially by Hispanic operators.
- Need more code enforcement
- Traffic and the light sequencing on Spring Road. Need for pedestrian bridge over Highway 41.

## **BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES**

Interviewees were asked about the biggest opportunities facing the community. For the sake of organization, these responses were organized by major topic area, including land use, economic development, transportation, housing, and other. As previously stated, most pointed to new developments such as the improvements to Windy Hill Road and the construction and improvements around the Battery and the new Braves stadium. For the most part they saw these as opportunities, but also pointed to the fact that no one really knows the full impact and many in the community have expressed some concerns along with their optimism.

### **Land Use**

- Redevelopment, particularly along Atlanta Road.
- Additional design regulations to improve community character.
- Location.
- Density transitions. Need step downs in density between lower and higher density housing along transit routes.
- Strategic annexation that to increase housing opportunities. (I-285 should be the city border on the east.).
- The area by SunTrust Park as a major gateway to the City with greater density.
- Reinvention of South Cobb Drive.
- Increase density by Cobb Parkway.
- Need variety of mixed use districts, more flexibility in the code (like Woodstock).
- Improve our heavily traveled corridors.
- There is a need to revisit the design districts, update them, and make them easier to follow.
- Revisit tree ordinance to ensure it is aligned with community, not just developer, goals.

### **Housing**

- Neighborhood stability to encourage greater home ownership.
- More medium and high density housing in activity centers.
- Improve the quality of aging apartment complexes or redevelop.

### **Transportation**

- Transit in general is a big opportunity for Smyrna's future.
  - MARTA expansion to Smyrna.
  - Commuter rail.
  - Premium transit service.
- Sidewalks and bike paths to the Braves Stadium.
- Shuttles; build off Lyft, Uber, etc.
- Connect the Comet, the future expansion of the Silver Comet Trail.



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## Economic Development

- More local restaurants and small Bed and Breakfast style hotels for visitors to the Braves.
- Job growth potential due to fiber presence
- Proximity to Braves stadium. Smyrna should complement, rather than mimic, what is going on by the stadium. Offer more local restaurants, shops, and festivals that can appeal to visitors to SunTrust Park while not trying to compete with it.
- Proximity to WellStar Vinings Health Park.
- Leverage quality of life to attract jobs.
- Attract high tech jobs, building off of community's fiber optics, existing businesses, and skillsets of residents.
- The City could also be known for its restaurants. (Porchlight and South City Kitchen were specifically mentioned.)
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is the most underutilized tool in Smyrna's tool belt. They can actually levy up to 5 mills. Owner-occupied residential is exempted, and everything else is fair game, including rentals.
- Land bank – DDA could own and hold the land. It doesn't require a referendum, just requires the council to vote on it.

## Other

- Expansion of sidewalk and bicycle network, particularly going to the Battery.
- Creation of City school system.
- Public art and culture (Smyrna Arts and Cultural Council).

## BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Interviewees were also asked about the biggest challenges facing the community, and for the sake of organization, these responses were again organized by major topic area, including land use, economic development, transportation, housing, and other. Traffic, the need for improved transit, and increasing concerns over housing affordability were high on this list of challenges. School quality was also a common theme, but as stated earlier, is outside the specific scope of this planning effort or the jurisdiction of the City. Only through close collaboration and coordination with the school board can any progress be made toward addressing school related concerns.

## Land Use

- Would like to see hotel closer to downtown.
- Keep developing the way we've been developing so close to Atlanta. Be a vibrant live-work-play community.
- Properly regulate infill housing and its impact on services.
- Code enforcement.
- Need more parks and greenspace.
- Buffers between single family residential and commercial uses, particularly along South Cobb Drive.
- Leverage Cumberland Community Improvement District as an opportunity for quality growth.
- Design overlay districts need to be more consistent.
- The City's code is outdated for what the City wants to see happen. The RAD zoning district is one example. Another example is limited flexibility for neighborhood level commercial.
- Need better permit and rezoning application forms.



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## Housing

- Housing affordability - how can we create and preserve affordable housing in the city?
- Keeping balance of housing for everyone.
- School quality impacts housing market.
- Impact of apartments.
- Infill housing is raising housing costs.
- Infill housing impact on community character and density.
- Nowhere for millennials and new college graduates to live.
- Apartments are not kept up to code. Code enforcement needs to be stronger, and State's property rights law could be improved.

## Transportation

- General traffic congestion, with increased concern surrounding following traffic issues:
  - Braves stadium area
  - Traffic and light sequencing on Spring Road.
  - Atlanta Road congestion.
  - Through traffic from West Cobb and Paulding County adding to congestion.
- Freight movement through the city.
- Need more city transportation staff to keep up with growth.
- Pedestrian bridge over US Highway 41.
- Access to public transportation.

## Economic Development

- Right Mix of retail to support population.
- Need more commercial to support tax base.
- Windy Hill Road in bad shape. There are too many vacancies and 40 businesses are being displaced by new road construction.

## Other

- Maintenance of parks has declined.
- Trees are being planted under powerlines; code should prevent this.
- Planning for community facilities based on future needs.
- Sewer availability in some parts of the city.
- Tree protection.
- Inadequate city staffing.
- Fire Department accommodating new types of development (ladder trucks for taller buildings) to maintain good ISO rating.
- Repairing aging infrastructure.
- Aging population and addressing their needs; need more senior centers.
- Stormwater management - there is a lack of underground detention.
- City's nonprofits that help those in need are stretched to the max.
- Smyrna desperately needs a Boys and Girls Club.Helps to get youth off the street, but need a city leader to advocate for this.





### HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS OR CITY INITIATIVES

Interviewees were asked what were the highest priority projects or city initiatives currently underway. Transportation projects were the most common response, along with initiatives to improve transit and community facilities. Several also mentioned the coordination efforts with the school board and the ongoing Strategic Vision Committee work.

- Windy Hill Road corridor expansion and improvements (under SPLOST).
- Sidewalk projects (under SPLOST).
- Spring Road gateway (under SPLOST).
- Signage needs at gateways.
- Need to physically connect Smyrna to Battery (signage and bridge).
- Fulfilling vacant staffing needs in the City, including Public Works.
- Maintaining appropriate safety equipment (such as fire truck ladders) and safety resources (such as police patrolling) to accommodate needs of new types of development and high intensity uses, such as the Braves stadium.
- Updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (slated for 2017).
- Passage of a parks bond to facilitate priority improvements and investments.
- Connect the Comet initiative. (Top initiative of Quality of Place Committee.)
- Identifying locations for future community facilities such as schools, parks, etc.
- Aquatics center.
- Performing arts facility.
- Museum in old railway one complex, in bad shape and needs to be reworked.
- Land use.
- Premium transit (with or without County).
- Affordable housing – do we need a policy? Provide affordable options in certain areas, what type? What's the context and how do you make that work? Does our zoning allow for a range of affordability options?
- Schools
  - Impacted by old apartments. How do we diffuse the problem?
  - Council is forming a permanent standing committee on schools in 2017. Work with school district and enhance business role.
- South Cobb Drive Study – implementation funding.
- Schools – improving them and taking into account how development impacts them. What can we do in this area?
- Traffic – continue to implement plans and improve traffic signal synchronization.
- Trail connections – continue to build and provide better signage/maps.
- Add greenspace. (See Parks and Recreation Plan.)
- Strategic Vision Plan was a good start for more community involvement and direction in city matters, need to keep up the momentum.



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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Interviewees were asked specifically to comment on the city's current economic development needs. Everyone was supportive of the work currently underway and saw the need for more resources and support to be dedicated to economic development effort; however, most also realized that with limited resources the city needs to be very strategic and proactive in their approach

- No major, huge employers here – the City needs balance.
  - Needs dense residential portion to attract companies.
- Better communications about anticipated licensing and permitting fees so that businesses can prepare well in advance.
- Parking should be planned out now, as it could become an issue area later for businesses.
- Help educate the public about and demystify what economic development is all about.
- Harness the increasing entrepreneurial spirit and opportunities to foster homegrown, local business.
- Help bright minds stay in Smyrna.
- Targeted approach to attracting industries; want to explore targeting high-tech industries, etc.
- Need to invest money in our Economic Development Department – only have limited resources now.
- Need a serious look at exactly what our economic development plan is. Currently, efforts are more reactive than proactive.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

Most interviewees expressed an interest in incorporating and carrying forward the good work on the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan and the desire for a practical, implementable plan that is grounded in best practices. No one wanted a plan that simply met the minimum state requirements, but rather a plan that exceed them.

- The Comprehensive Plan can help educate community members on the benefit of concentrating development as well as the lifestyle preferences of millennials and how that impacts new development or redevelopment.
- Very useable and workable plan that the community is in agreement with and supportive of in terms of how the Smyrna community wants to move forward.
- Reflective of the needs of citizens, institutions, and users.
- A plan that results in a better planned and more inclusive community.
- Keeping up to speed with best practices.
- What are other communities doing and other concepts of development?
- Keep an open mind. What's the goal? Provide flexibility to get there.
- Education. There is no understanding within the community of what we mean by low, medium, or high density. Need to pair this with a conversation about walkable and transit oriented developments.
- The current plan is good; continue that tradition.
- The Comprehensive Plan needs to focus more on Ward 5, where much of the area was built to house Lockheed Martin employees.
- A practical tool, not just a check off the box type of plan.
- The Vision is central to the document and the plan.



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- Housing data needs to be updated. In the last comp plan, Table 15 on page 55 of the Assessment – Demand and Supply of Housing, there is a very important chart, which needs to be updated to help guide housing policy. Even looking at Cobb County’s comprehensive plan, there’s a complete lack of financial data.
- Fiscal planning tool. Even if not now, it needs to be agreed that there should be a follow-up task to develop a practical fiscal impact tool when making rezoning decisions. The fiscal policy is missing to actually determine what’s possible and needed to make smart fiscal decisions.
- Support for more open communication between the citizen groups, city staff, and council committees. Need to further along the goals of the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan.



# D

## **APPENDIX D: *DEFINITIONS***

Terms used throughout the *2040 Comprehensive Plan* should be interpreted using the definitions provided in this appendix. For interpretation of any term not defined, defer to the City of Smyrna Community Development Department staff.

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## APPENDIX D: DEFINITIONS

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### A

**ACCESS MANAGEMENT:** The regulation of interchanges, intersections, driveways, and median openings to a roadway in order to enable access to land uses while maintaining roadway safety and mobility through controlling access location, design, spacing, and operation.

**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT:** Additional living quarters on single-family lots that are independent of the primary dwelling unit. These units can be either attached or detached from the main residence and are commonly referred to as accessory apartments, second units, or granny flats.

**ACTIVITY CENTER:** A place with a sufficient hub of activity to allow users to park their cars (or arrive by another mode) and engage in multiple activities without having to drive from one destination to the next.

**ADAPTIVE REUSE:** The renovation or reuse of pre-existing structures for new purposes

**AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES:** A vehicle that can drive itself from a starting point to a predetermined destination in “autopilot” mode.

### B

**BLOCK:** Land or a group of lots, surrounded by streets or other rights -of -way, other than an alley.

**BROWNFIELD SITE:** A property on which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

**BUFFERING:** That portion of a lot set aside for open space and visual and/or sound screening purposes; such space to be developed or improved with appropriate plantings and/or a fence or wall as may be required in certain locations to reduce the conflicting or adverse effects of different uses abutting each other.

### C

**CLEAR CUTTING:** Cutting down and removing all trees from a site or area.

**CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT:** The grouping of properties on a site in order to use the extra land as open space, recreation, or conservation areas.



**CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION:** Typically a development that dedicates a minimum of 50 percent of the total development parcel as open space.

**CONTEXT:** The characteristics of the buildings, streetscape, and landscape that support or surround a given building, site, or area such as predominance of period architecture, or consistent forms or finish materials, or consistent street trees.

**COTTAGE COURT:** A building type designed to accommodate 5 to 9 detached dwelling units organized around a shared internal courtyard.

## D

**DESIGN GUIDELINES:** A set of design parameters for development created to evaluate the acceptability of a project's design. Design guidelines are adopted to advance the policies, goals, and objectives of community plans and help translate these directions into desired outcomes for the design of streets, parks, open spaces, and buildings.

**DISTRIBUTION CENTERS:** A warehouse or other specialized building used for the storage of goods to be redistributed. These buildings can be anywhere from less than 50,000 to 3 million square feet.

**DUPLEX:** A building designed for and containing two dwelling units

## E

## F

**FLEX SPACE:** Lightly zoned buildings which are typically used for a combination of industrial uses and office space.

## G

## H

**HEAVY INDUSTRIAL:** Industrial uses with large-scale facilities—such as those involving the processing of chemicals and plastics, refineries, and industrial machinery-- that generate significant external impacts, such as freight traffic, vibrations, pollution, or noise.

**HIGH RISE RESIDENTIAL:** A multi-family residential building with at least six stories.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION:** The practice of protecting and preserving sites, structures or districts which reflect elements of local or national history in an effort to advance the education and welfare of communities while providing economic and aesthetic benefit.

**HISTORIC STRUCTURE:** A building or other structure that is significant because of its link to an important period in the past.

## I

**INCENTIVES:** Strategies to encourage a desired behavior-- such as the provision of moderately priced housing-- by providing a benefit in return.

**INFILL:** Building within an already established area, rather than on an undeveloped greenfield site.

**INTERPARCEL CONNECTIVITY:** Transportation connections between abutting private properties, often created through interparcel access easements.

**J**

**JOINT USE AGREEMENTS:** A formal agreement between two separate government entities—often a school and a city or county-- setting forth the terms and conditions for shared use of public property or facilities.

**K****L**

**LIGHT INDUSTRIAL:** Manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution with limited impacts on adjacent properties, other than truck traffic.

**LIMITED COMMERCIAL:** Comprised primarily of existing single-family residential areas whose character, because of major street widening or similar factors, is changing from residential to nonresidential, the intent of the LC district is to provide for commercial establishments whose operations would have a minimal adverse effect on adjacent residential areas.

**LIVE-WORK UNITS:** A single unit consisting of both a commercial/office and residential component that is occupied by the same resident.

**M**

**MAIN STREET RETAIL:** Small-scale retail, typically with a pedestrian-friendly design, oriented to the street as part of a commercial node or corridor.

**MAKER SPACE:** A place in which people with shared interests, especially in computing or technology, can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.

**MIXED USE:** A type of development that blends residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses, integrating a variety of functions to provide pedestrian connections.

**MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL:** A type of housing where multiple separate housing units are contained within one building or several buildings within one complex.

**N****O**

**OFFICE:** Place of work for professional employment.

**OVERLAY ZONING:** A regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone(s), which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone.

**P**

**PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED DESIGN:** Design which encourages pedestrian activity through connected development, such as commercial or mixed-use districts, and amenities, such as street trees, benches and bicycle amenities.

**PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT:** A commercial, institutional or residential development that has a total area of ten acres or greater, and whose plan has been reviewed by the city planning commission and approved by the mayor and city council.

**PRIMARY STREETS:** Streets which link traffic from interstates or highways to residential streets or other small, local roads. These streets include both arterial through routes as well as multi-function streets providing access to properties as well as other amenities.

**PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS:** Areas within Smyrna that have been identified as priorities for redevelopment, which should be focus areas for public investment and private development incentives. These include Atlanta Road; South Cobb Drive between Concord Road and I-285; the Spring Road LCI Study Area; Jonquil Drive Industrial Area; Lake Park Drive Area; Riverview Landing Area; and North Smyrna.

**PUBLIC ART:** Any art created with the intention of being staged in the public realm.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP:** An arrangement between a private-sector company and a government agency for the purpose of completing a project that will serve the public.

## Q

**QUADRAPLEX:** An apartment building with four units.

## R

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:** Activities that lead to the development of a new product or a new manufacturing and assembly process.

**RIGHT-OF-WAY:** A type of easement granted or reserved over the land for transportation purposes, this can be for a highway, public footpath, rail transport, canal, as well as electrical transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines.

**ON-DEMAND RIDESHARE:** an arrangement in which a passenger travels in a private vehicle driven by its owner, for free or for a fee, especially as arranged by means of a website or app. – such as Uber, Lyft, etc.

## S

**SCREENING:** A natural or human-made buffer which separates land uses. Screening, buffering, and landscaping requirements address visual, light, and sound impacts.

**SENIOR HOUSING:** housing that is suitable for the needs of an aging population. This ranges from independent living to 24-hour care. In senior housing there is an emphasis on safety, accessibility, adaptability, and longevity that many conventional housing options may lack.

**SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS:** A tool through which adjacent property owners share their parking lots and reduce the number of parking spaces that each would provide on their individual properties

**SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED:** A dwelling unit which is located on an individual lot of record and which is attached to another dwelling unit or an adjoining lot by a common party wall.

**SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED:** A building designed for and containing one dwelling unit.

**SMALL-SCALE CIVIC, PUBLIC, OR PLACES OF WORSHIP:** Civic, public, or religious facilities that generate limited traffic and are well suited to the context of a primarily residential neighborhood.

**STREETSCAPE:** The visual character of a street as determined by elements such as structures, access, greenery, open space, view, etc.

**T**

**TOWNHOME:** A single-family dwelling constructed as part of a series of three or more dwellings separated by property lines, all of which are either attached to the adjacent dwelling or dwellings by common walls or are located immediately adjacent thereto with no visible separation between the walls or roofs. These dwellings shall be at least two stories, not including a basement and be separated from adjoining houses in the same row or group by architectural style, changing of facade, or offsets.

**TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT:** Village-style development with a variety of housing types, a mixture of land uses, an active center, a walkable design, and often a transit option within a compact, neighborhood scale area.

**TRAFFIC CALMING:** the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.

**U****V**

**VOLUNTARY NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAYS:** Optional design overlays for individual neighborhoods, which may be created at the request of a majority of neighborhood residents as part of a zoning ordinance update process.

**W**

**WAREHOUSING:** The storage and handling of goods in a planned space.

**WAYFINDING:** The ways in which people orient themselves in a physical space and navigate from place to place. This may include the use of landmarks, signage, symbols, colors, maps, and other means to make navigation easier and more intuitive.

**X****Y****Z**

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SMYRNA

CITY OF SMYRNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

JACOBS | MARKET STREET SERVICES

OCTOBER 2017



RESOLUTION 2017-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SMYRNA TO ADOPT  
THE SMYRNA 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS: The Comprehensive Plan for Smyrna, Georgia is mandated by the Georgia Planning Act 634 (Georgia Law 1989, pp. 1317-1391);

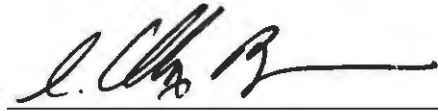
AND WHEREAS: This act requires that each jurisdiction in the state prepare and implement a Comprehensive Plan, which is reviewed by the regional development commission;

AND WHEREAS: The Smyrna 2040 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in August of 2017. Smyrna Community Development has received the comments from both ARC and DCA regarding the document and has made the necessary changes suggested for its completion;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Mayor and Council of the City of Smyrna do hereby adopt the Smyrna 2040 Comprehensive Plan;

RESOLVED: by the Mayor and Council of the City of Smyrna this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2017.

Mayor:



A. Max Bacon

ATTEST:

By:

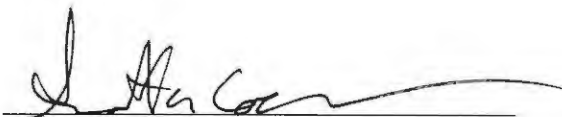


Terri Graham, City Clerk



Approved as to Form

City Attorney



Scott A. Cochran