

Canton Road Corridor “Main Street” Design Principles Plan & Recommendations 2005

A Gateway to Change – A Commitment to Neighborhood Potential



Cobb County...Expect the Best!

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INTRODUCTION

In October 13, 2003, Commissioner Tim Lee held a Town Hall Meeting at Sandy Plains Baptist Church with the over 100 members of the Northeast Cobb Homeowners Group (NECHG) in attendance to discuss the potential of developing a corridor plan for Canton Road. Commissioner Lee was seeking guidance from the membership as to the best potential methodology to initiate a plan for the roadway. In the meeting, the primary concerns vocalized by the public related to Canton Road were specific to regional traffic during peak travel periods, unsightly buildings and signage along the corridor, continuing code enforcement issues to address, and increased community desire for more diverse and neighborhood-oriented businesses along the corridor.

The Town Hall session also brought out a historical perspective on the Canton Road corridor talking about the former SR 5 roadway evolving from a two-lane roadway in the 1960's to a five-lane urban arterial in the 1990's. The "Canton Highway" was removed from the GDOT State Route system in the 1990's in concert with a Cobb County roadway improvement project that would redesign the roadway into a four-lane section with a center two-way left-turn lane. The public stated the widening of the Canton Highway hurt many of the existing businesses along the corridor as a result of the road improvement project, which in part affected the marketability of the commercial land uses with small existing frontage lots.

Code enforcement and building architecture were other focal points in the evening's discussion. Canton Road has witnessed consistent situations where property owners (both commercial and residential) living along the corridor allowed their properties to decline aesthetically and they were placing visual pollution along the roadway to promote certain business enterprises. The majority of the buildings situated along the corridor are General Commercial (GC) zoned prefabricated "Butler" buildings with metal facades and roofs. The business owners have been persistent in placing promotional banners, illegal signage, neon paint colors, trampolines, hot tubs, etc. near the right-of-way of the roadway to promote their respective commercial establishment.

The other central theme in the evening input session was the statement, "No median on Canton Road!"

Several members of the business community spoke out in the Town Hall Meeting stating that they supported an effort to improve the Canton Road corridor, though they would not support any effort to retrofit a structured median down the center of the arterial. One real estate broker described a situation where the DOT was going to place a median on highway in the 1990's and the community came out in opposition to the roadway project and threatened regional media coverage if the median issue was pursued. He went on to say the widening project in 1996 had a negative impact on the existing property owners along Canton Road, if a median were placed on the roadway as part of the project, it would have been even more financially detrimental to those existing property owners.

Commissioner Lee stated to the group if the County were to develop a master plan for Canton Road that did not include a median in the roadway would they support the initiative. He went on to say the plan would be based on the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) planning process and it would incorporate input from various members of the community along the corridor to develop land use and transportation priorities.

There was unilateral support throughout the membership for the Canton Road plan going forward if a median was not part of the final recommendations for the corridor. Commissioner Lee concluded the meeting by saying he would meet with Community Development Agency Director, Rob Hosack on creating a plan for the corridor as part of his commissioner work program for 2004. He also stated that the County would be seeking potential LCI funds for the corridor as "grandfathered" study during the fall 2004 LCI application process.

In December 2003, Cobb County met with regional planners from Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) seeking guidance as to the best approach to develop a LCI plan for the Canton Road corridor where the County plan could be considered as "grandfathered" study and apply for LCI implementation funds in the fall 2004. The discussions with ARC staff land use planners focused on the plan having an activity center or town center theme in its orientation. Staff did indicate the ARC was planning on unveiling a corridor-based approach in 2004 though the details of the program were still being finalized.

Cobb County expressed interest in pursuing the opportunity of seeking implementation funds in 2004, where the County would develop a plan for the corridor for potential implementation program funding in 2006.

Methodology

In order to meet the constrained deadline to complete a Board of Commissioner approved LCI study for Canton Road with a strong public involvement component by the fall 2004 it was decided to entertain the process as an in-house initiative with the Planning Division managing the program.

The Planning Division researched the work done on the Canton Road Study (1997) to draw comparisons about past planning efforts with current corridor priorities. The 1997 Study was a detailed inventory of existing land use conditions along the corridor with staff-level recommendations for improvements related to emerging economic markets, code enforcement, and future land use.

In February 2004, the Planning Division began collecting data on the Canton Road corridor from the Sandy Plain Connector to SR 92 in Cherokee County and the Bells Ferry Road corridor towards Sandy Plains Road. The mapping process included overlay layers with respect to future land use, current zoning, transportation/right-of-way network, and aerial photography. (See GIS Map #1)

Field analysis included a tract-level survey of existing business enterprises and residential communities residing along the corridor from the Marietta City Limits just north of the Sandy Plains Connector to the Cherokee County border. The research included assessments of the properties current use condition and theoretical recommendations for redevelopment (if warranted) based on neighboring land uses, existing infrastructure, future trends, etc.

The Planning Division staff concurrently developed a Market Study of the Canton Road corridor that quantified socio-economic data, future land use, existing commercial industry mix information, and transportation system facilities, ultimately establishing staff-level assumptions on potential development use and future planning priorities. The “Canton Road Corridor Preliminary Market Study” is a 30 page document that utilizes Claritas software for quantifying the socio-economic data into the study area polygon for staff-level analysis and interpretation.

As a component of the Market Study, the Planning Division broke down the Canton Road corridor into three distinct segments due to the rather expansive acreage within the initial study area. The 4.5 mile section of Canton Road included a theoretical “Loft District” from the Sandy Plains Connector to Piedmont Road, the “Commerce District” from Piedmont Road to New Chastain Road, and the “Campus District” from Chastain Corners to Jamerson Road. The names for the districts were derived based on the land use successes for the areas in question. The Loft District has an existing grid street network which promotes residential-type uses in this portion of the corridor, similar to the Brumby Loft development theme in the City of Marietta. The Commerce District is based on the existing retail and commercial enterprises from Piedmont Road to New Chastain Road, and the Campus District draws from the success of existing office and educational land uses on the northern portion of the corridor study area.

The theoretical Districts were created in part to accelerate the pace in the planning process by developing a conceptual land use and transportation plan for the corridor from a staff-level perspective utilizing a combination of software technology (i.e. ArcView GIS and Claritas demographics) and regional planning policy guidelines (i.e. RDP & LCI) espoused at the Atlanta Regional Commission. The mapping simulation was used to evoke comments from the public and to possibly serve as conceptual land use “building blocks” that could move up and down the corridor or off the map completely. The District names also served as a form of reference for segments of the roadway corridor and helped simplify public discussions about potential land use and infrastructure developments. Staff indicated the names for the Districts will likely change as the planning process unfolds with planned public input sessions.

On May 5, 2004 the Planning Division hosted a Canton Road Corridor Kick-Off Meeting and PowerPoint presentation at Blackwell Elementary School to present a five month public involvement plan for the Canton Road corridor that would be designed as a potential proposal for Atlanta Regional Commission LCI funding. The session called upon the group to consider nominating potential steering committee members to assist with the public involvement component of the planning process.

Steering Committee Appointments/Nominations

The Kick-Off Meeting yielded a Steering Committee made up of a diverse group on concerned citizens involved with the Canton Road corridor, which included:

Commissioner Tim Lee
Alec Smith – Homeowners Association Officer
Stephen Moon, AIA – Resident and Business Owner
Bob Terrell – Property and Business Owner
Pamela Spencer – Blackwell ES Administration
Howard Callaway – Property and Business Owner
Ed Holland – Clergy Administration
David Poteet – Resident and Neighborhood Group
Autumn Rains – Property and Business Owner
Elizabeth Rubbo/Charles Koninsky – Neighborhood Group
Carol Brown – Neighborhood Group
Tom Boland, AICP – Cobb Chamber of Commerce
Christi Trombetti, AICP – Planning Commissioner
Laura Searcy – Cobb County School Board
Larry Roman – Property Owner
Darryl Neisses – Property Owner
Dr. Rick Wakefield – Property and Business Owner
Jimmy Glenn – Property and Business Owner
Cobb County Planning Division Staff

Timeline of Events

Revised Timeline (Revised 1/25/05)

- ◆ May 5th – Kick-Off Meeting Presentation – Blackwell Elementary School (6:00 - 8:00 PM)
- ◆ May 10th - Steering Committee Formation/Nominations Due
- ◆ May 27th – Steering Committee Meeting at Gritters Library (6:00 PM)
- ◆ June 16th - Steering Committee Meeting at Gritters Library (6:00 PM)
- ◆ July 10th (Saturday) - Canton Road Public Involvement Meeting Charrette/Design Session (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)
- ◆ August 25th - Gritters Library (6:00 PM) Joint Steering Committee/Business Association Meeting Alternatives and Recommendations Discussed Rescheduled from August 4, 2004

- ♦ **September 1st - First Public Hearing – Blackwell Elementary (6:00 PM)**
- ♦ October 7th – Steering Committee Meeting
Land Use Discussions New Life Baptist Church (6:00 PM)
- ♦ October 21st – Steering Committee Meeting
Land Use Discussions – New Life Baptist Church (6:00 PM)
- ♦ October 28th – Steering Committee Meeting
Transportation Discussions – New Life Baptist Church (6:00 PM)
- ♦ November 4th – Steering Committee Meeting
Transportation Discussions – New Life Baptist Church (6:00 PM)
- ♦ **November 17th – Second Public Hearing - Blackwell Elementary School**
Develop Draft Recommendations (6:00 – 8:00 PM) (Tentative Location)
- ♦ December 2nd Steering Committee Meeting
Public Hearing Review & Responses on Land Use & Transportation Recommendations
New Life Baptist Church (6:00 PM)
- ♦ February 2, 2005 – Steering Committee Meeting
Projects & Programs Discussion - Gritters Library (6:00 - 8:00 PM)
- ♦ February 16, 2005 – Steering Committee Meeting
Projects & Programs Discussion - Gritters Library (6:00 - 8:00 PM)
- ♦ March 2, 2005 – Steering Committee Meeting
Projects & Programs Final Recommendations – Gritters Library (6:00 - 8:00 PM)
- ♦ **March 15, 2005 - Third Public Hearing – Blackwell Elementary**
Final “Draft” Plan Recommendations (6:00 - 8:00 PM)
- ♦ June 2005 - Cobb County Board of Commissioners – Review
Cobb County Planning Commission Work Session – Review
- ♦ Fall 2005 - Final Plan Recommendations Submitted to the Atlanta Regional

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Steering Committee Meetings

The nominated Canton Road Steering Committee (Steering Committee) members met at Gritters Library on May 26, 2004 to begin the timeline of events to develop a corridor plan for the former State Route 5 roadway. As part of the evening agenda the Planning Division shared a Public Meeting Summary from the May 5th Kick-Off Meeting held at Blackwell Elementary School.

The meeting summary documented the strengths, weaknesses, and ideas the various break-out groups discussed during the May 5th session. The Planning Division broke-up the crowd of 50 individuals into four (4) categories of interested parties. The groups included Civic Leaders, Business Owners, Commercial Property Owners, and Residential Property Owners.

During the May 27, 2004 Steering Committee session, the Planning Division share PowerPoint presentation with the members of the committee that outlined a brief history of the Canton Road corridor, discussed the ARC Regional Development Plan policies and the Livable Centers Initiative program, and distributed a proposed timeline of events in the planning process. The meeting also provided a brief introduction to the various Steering Committee members about the diverse personalities that would be working together during the scheduled five (5) month planning process.

The group was informed on July 10th the Planning Division would be hosting a Saturday morning Charrette/Design Studio at Blackwell Elementary School to discuss potential land use and transportation plans for the four mile roadway corridor.

On June 16, 2004 the Canton Road Steering Committee (Steering Committee) met at Gritters Library in order to prepare for the July 10th Charrette at Blackwell Elementary School. The session included a PowerPoint presentation about the 1997 Canton Road Corridor Plan in addition to photo journal depictions of successful office, retail, and mixed-use developments around the Atlanta Region to act as a visual preference survey. The development guidelines and uses established along SR 92 in Roswell, Windward Parkway in Alpharetta, and the Forum retail development in Gwinnett County were the focal point in the Charrette presentation. The public was interested in the two-story retail concepts entertained in Roswell and Alpharetta and speculated about their viability along the Canton Road corridor. The “fence theme” on Windward Parkway and SR 92 was also considered for possible incorporation along the corridor, as it presented a neighborhood-oriented architectural design.

The key issues broached by the Steering Committee during the session were to consider an overlay and/or design guidelines for the corridor, to improve relationships with businesses on code enforcement issues, to promote family-friendly developments, and to develop a plan that would potentially receive LCI implementation funding in its proposed planning methodology (minutes enclosed).

In July the Canton Road Steering Committee members were asked to complete a questionnaire, and then be interviewed by a member of the Planning Division staff, regarding the improvement of the corridor. During interviews with the Canton Road Steering Committee members regarding improvement of the corridor, the following general themes and recommendations emerged.

July Steering Committee Interview/Questionnaire Summary

- *The overall appearance of buildings along the corridor should be enhanced. This should be achieved by creation and use of design guidelines requiring higher quality exterior materials (more use of brick), uniform signage, etc.*
- *The general streetscape along the corridor should be improved. This should include more landscaping, addition of street trees, placement of uniform lighting fixtures, and installation of street furniture.*
- *During times of peak travel, traffic congestion should be alleviated. Ideally, more interparcel connections should be created to avoid cars having to re-enter Canton Road to travel to nearby businesses.*
- *During times of low car volume, reduced speed along the route should be a goal. Visually, this should be accomplished by widened sidewalks, colorful brick-colored street treatments, and landscaping.*
- *Mixed-used developments built in order to achieve a live-work-play atmosphere would be welcomed. Such developments would give the corridor more of a village feel and offer residents the chance to reduce car use.*
- *Office complex construction should be sought along Canton Road. This could provide an opportunity for economic development as well as offer residents an increased chance to work closer to their homes.*
- *Public transportation in some form would be beneficial. Whether this should be accomplished by means of regular bus service, Bus Rapid Transit, commuter rail, or localized trolley service should be determined at a later time based on funding and other county, regional, and state plans.*
- *Increased greenspace is needed in the area. Greenspace in all forms (pocket parks, bike/running trails, passive parks, and preserved open land) should be a priority.*
- *At least one community center featuring activities for all ages is needed. This community center with recreation facilities should be easily accessible.*
- *In order to establish an identity for the corridor, a gateway/gateways should be established. Well-designed monument signage announcing arrival to the corridor should be placed at a strategic location(s).*

Charrette/Design Studio

On July 10, 2004 the Planning Division hosted a four-hour Charrette/Design Studio at Blackwell Elementary School to develop potential plans for various segments of the Canton Road corridor from the Sandy Plains Connector to Jamerson Road. Commissioner Tim Lee welcomed the group of over 30 interested citizens in taking time out of their weekend schedules to attend the design session at school.

Commissioner Lee discussed the on-going relationship with the City of Marietta in ensuring the plans developed for the Canton Road corridor are endorsed by the municipality if annexation activity were to take place on specific tracts land within the study area. He also stated his personal commitment to existing businesses and communities along the corridor in developing consensus-building plan recommendations.

The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation on the background of the study, existing socio-economic conditions along the corridor, regional planning policy guidelines, definition of New Urbanism, photography of successful office, retail, residential land uses, and an explanation on what a Charrette/ Design Studio is intended to establish in the overall planning process.

The Planning Division separated the participants into four tables with large-scale GIS maps and markers available for conceptual depictions of land use and transportation opportunities along the corridor. Each table had a professional planner acting as the group facilitator who would ask questions to generate comments and recommendations. (See GIS Maps #2 - #5)

As each group shared their vision for changing parts or all of Canton Road in its entirety, it was clear that there were many similarities from the various group members in the direction that Canton Road should develop and what particular land use characteristics would help make it successful, whether they represented neighborhood concerns or business development interests. (Show Four Concept Plans)

Commissioner Lee informed the participants that the four group design workshop activities would be brought back to the Planning Division, where staff would create a single corridor plan map incorporating the various group mapping recommendations into a unified conceptual design.

On August 25, 2004 (Rescheduled from August 4, 2004), the Planning Division hosted a joint meeting with the Canton Road Steering Committee members and the newly formed Canton Road Business Association at Gritters Library. In the meeting, the Planning Division shared the four conceptual plans created by the break-out groups at the July 10th Charrette. Commissioner Lee indicated to the group that the county would be combining the various four conceptual plans created in the Charrette together into a single GIS map plan in order to present the unified conceptual plan to the community at a subsequent public hearing.

The nature of the Joint Steering Committee Meeting was designed to bring the two groups together to discuss current-day issues faced by individuals living along the Canton Road,

both those living near the roadway and those doing business on the corridor. Many of the recommendations from the citizens in the Charrette break-out sessions were almost identical related to promoting specific community facilities on the corridor and making the roadway safer for vehicular and pedestrian mobility.

The Planning Division provided a brief background on the overall corridor planning process and discussed a proposed timeline of events to develop a planning document to submit that would be used in future rezoning hearings at the County level and would possibly be a candidate for LCI implementation funding in the near future.

Code enforcement and roadway safety were central themes during the evening discussions. The group mentioned Canton Road's history as a thriving commercial corridor in the 1970's and 1980's and the subsequent economic downturn when Town Center Mall developed in the 1990's and many of the businesses on Canton Road relocated towards the Mall location. Complaints about the paint color for business facades along Canton Road were vocalized. Neon paint tones and large banners tend to be common marketing techniques for certain businesses. Real estate signs litter the right-of-way along the corridor despite County efforts to remove the signs and contact the promotional companies to cease their practices.

One business owner described a situation where he attempted to orchestrate a mid-block pedestrian crossing along the five lane corridor, where he had to sprint into the center two-way left-turn lane to avoid oncoming traffic and then wait in the turn lane until a gap in the traffic to sprint over the remaining two travel lanes to the other side of the roadway. Some participants referenced that they only use a vehicle to cross Canton Road due to the dangerous conditions related to excessive speeding on the roadway. They indicated some vehicles are traveling over 60 MPH on the roadway during non-peak travel times.

Another business owner described a situation where vehicles use the center turn lane as a passing lane and drive for extended distances in the turn lane during peak travel periods. The free-flowing design of the existing two-way left-turn lane promotes dangerous vehicular accidents with left-turning movements from opposing directions fostering potential head-on conflicts.

The Planning Division mentioned their research efforts to evaluate potential median treatments for the existing center turn lane in order to help alleviate the dangerous vehicular movements taking place in this roadway facility design. The designs being considered were a heat transferred application for the existing center turn lane and possibly the turn lane islands along a portion of the corridor. Other analysis considers a stamped asphalt application using a color dye to change the appearance of the center turn lane. The stamped feature could also serve as a "rumble strip" to promote much slower vehicular speeds and reduce the severity of future turning movement conflicts. The proposed improvements to the center turn lane would be coordinated with a future roadway resurfacing proposal.

Staff indicated the cost to implement either turn lane treatment improvement methodology would be very expensive, where likely the area of the Canton Road corridor for the center turn lane to be redesigned would be from the Piedmont Road quadrant to the Chastain Corners Road area. The median treatment would also be designed to improve pedestrian

safety at existing intersections and promote slower vehicular speeds on the arterial corridor by letting the travel public know they are entering a “special Main Street area” through aesthetic enhancements and operational improvements. This particular section of Canton Road has numerous curb cut locations for the large-scale retail establishments, where turning movements create a much more significant accident history data and the importance related to safe pedestrian crossings is heightened.

The Planning Division discussed the potential of narrowing the existing vehicular through-lanes to 11’ wide, which will provide a less comfortable driving experience at higher rates of speed, thus causing the driver to slow their overall traveling speed. The technique of narrowing existing travel lanes as part of a resurfacing project provides a “traffic calming” benefit by narrowing the existing lane widths towards the center of the roadway, where the additional pavement along the edge of the roadway serves as a “bicycle-friendly shoulder” for Class-A bicyclist mobility. Staff indicated that most individuals using on-road bicycles only require 1’-2’ of pavement separation width from the existing travel lane in order to negotiate the roadway, where a striped and signed 4’-5’ wide bicycle lane facility is not always necessary design.

Creating a sense of identity was also common issue voiced by the group. The business community acknowledged a desire to have gateway markers placed on the roadway in key areas, similar to the existing brick monument signs located on major roadways entering Cobb County. The business owners acknowledged that a significant amount of the current land uses catered to the automobile market. They were also concerned that any efforts to develop a landscape plan along roadway may shield existing signage and promotional resources.

The groups representing neighborhood expressed concern about redevelopment along areas of the corridor, in particular the southern section of the roadway may force older residents to move out of their current homes. Many of the existing housing stock in the southern district are old “Bell Bomber Plant” employee housing that is slowing showing signs of gentrification. The older residents are primarily on fixed incomes and concerned that a redevelopment plan for the area might promote property condemnations and residential displacements.

In an effort to better educate the Steering Committee about Land Use and Transportation options for the corridor, the Planning Division added four (4) additional informational sessions to the overall process timeline to discuss current zoning/future land use trends and also address transportation alternatives for the corridor.

The Planning Division reminded the Steering Committee of the first Public Hearing scheduled for September 1, 2005 at Blackwell Elementary School.

Public Hearings

September 1, 2004 – First Public Hearing.

Over 30 members of the public and 9 County employees attended the first Public Hearing related to the Canton Road Corridor Plan scheduled at Blackwell Elementary School. The

evening's agenda included a welcome and briefing from Commissioner Tim Lee on the overall corridor planning process and the County's desire to develop a plan for the roadway that would potentially be a candidate for Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative funding in the future. Commissioner Lee described the effort to improve the Canton Road corridor as a multi-year process that would likely be done in phases as funding became available.

Commissioner Lee stated to the attendees that Cobb County had informal meetings with neighboring jurisdictions along the corridor supported the project and they would try to develop complementary land uses in their communities. The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners was informed of the corridor-planning proposal during a work session briefing on December 2, 2003. Cherokee County asked Cobb County to support their efforts to develop a LCI activity center plan for the Bells Ferry Road and RS 92 intersection.

Commissioner Tim Lee also mentioned his conversations with the City of Marietta Councilperson Jim King where they showed support for the corridor plan and the long-range vision for revising land use development patterns along the roadway. The City of Woodstock had also acknowledged their support of a corridor planning effort, where the city is also developing a LCI community plan for their historic downtown area. The cities in Marietta and Woodstock have municipal boundaries within a mile or less of the corridor Study Area.

The Community Development Agency presented a planning exercise to consider 4-5 "Home Run Sites" along the corridor study area where redevelopment should occur and to consider mixed-use development scenarios with multi-family residential use components in the overall design. Staff indicated the sites noted would be mapped along the corridor for review and comments by the Steering Committee and subsequently during the second Public Hearing November 17, 2004. The proposed density for the mixed-use residential scenarios would be 10 dwelling units an acre.

The Question & Answer portion of the meeting included questions from the public about the opportunity of lower the speed limit on the roadway, building wider sidewalks, short/long-range construction phasing, more involvement from the business community, proposed trail locations, existing stormwater concerns, code enforcement, SR 92 design guidelines in Roswell, and improved building facades.

The Community Development staff mentioned the ability to slow down cars by reducing the posted speed on a roadway can be difficult to enforce, when the traveling speeds of drivers tends to reflect the design of the road and not the speed limit signs. Staff recognized that wider sidewalks similar to the new GDOT standard of 6' wide would be more appropriate for pedestrian travel demands. The corridor plan for Canton Road is oriented as a multi-year plan that will likely take at least ten (10) years to implement many of the projects and programs endorsed by the public and the Steering Committee. The various funding sources being explored to develop the corridor plan will also be an integral component of the phasing plan.

Staff stated the plans for sidewalks and multi-use trails will be high priority projects for future funding, in particular the on-road locations on both sides of Canton Road. The idea to add a Silver Comet Trail on the existing GA Northeastern Rail Line right-of-way was mentioned by the public, though research from the Steering Committee indicated the limited right-of-way for the railroad corridor where a parallel trail would be a dangerous and uncomfortable undertaking. Staff stated the regional planners are still considering the GA Northeastern Rail Liner as a potential commuter rail alignment in the future, stretching from the City of Canton to the City of Marietta.

The Charrette break-out sessions in July established several potential locations for trails throughout the corridor, both on-road and off-road proposals. A common theme of connecting any missing sidewalk segments already existing and developing new sidewalks and trails that connect to schools, parks, community facilities, neighborhood shopping, etc. Improvements to the pedestrian environment will heighten the need to improve pedestrian crosswalks and signals at the busy intersections along the corridor.

The public mentioned existing stormwater concerns during heavy storm events as an on-going problem that has not been corrected. Staff indicated the Canton Road widen project in the mid-1990's created associated stormwater situations, where certain neighborhoods are receiving additional volumes of water during these strong storms. The plan to improve the corridor was looking at using open space and pocket parks as a stormwater management control feature, in addition to providing a possible passive recreation benefit in the final design.

Code enforcement has been an on-going concern for individuals, whether they are representing residential concerns or the business community. Many of the businesses along the corridor have opted for bright building color paint tones and retrofitting physical structures adjacent to the roadway right-of-way to attract the attention of the traveling public. Promotional tools of varying complexity and creativity have been employed to market businesses along Canton Road. Resources such as real estate signs, large banners, painted vehicles, hot tubs, mannequins, for sale automobiles, stacked tires, etc. have littered the roadway corridor promoting nearby commercial businesses. Proactive Code Enforcement by Cobb County has curtailed the situation substantially and the business community with the formation of a Canton Road Business Association has also contributed to getting the business community to do their part to assist in improving the aesthetic appearance of the roadway.

The Planning Division stated they were evaluating components of the Parkway Village Design Guidelines in the City of Roswell as a possible improvement plan for the Canton Road corridor. Staff indicated that the Steering Committee would also be evaluating the overlay plan for SR 92 as a planning methodology, which would include building designs and facades. The Planning Division indicated the second scheduled Public Hearing would be November 17, 2005.

On October 7, 2004 the Planning Division hosted a "Land Use Discussions" agenda that focused on briefing the members about the County's rezoning process and annual changes to the Future Land Use Map. The Planning Division described current zoning codes that might be appropriate candidates for future development like the County's existing mixed-use

ordinances for Planned Village Concept (PVC) and Urban Village Concept (UVC) communities. The Steering Committee also learned about the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program and their efforts to look at corridor-based projects in future funding years. In particular, Staff referenced the need to develop an access management plan for the corridor as a component of the new LCI program.

In the evening's discussion, Staff asked the Steering Committee to consider and list potential "Home Run Sites" where potential redevelopment and/or mixed-use development might be appropriate. The Planning Division described the "Home Run Sites" as being candidate areas where redevelopment is a reasonable option and potential residential densities may reach up to 10 dwelling units per acre in mixed-use scenarios. The Steering Committee was asked to develop their priorities for the October 21st meeting agenda. (See GIS Map #6)

On October 21, 2004 the second "Land Use Discussions" meeting was held at New Life Baptist Church. The Planning Division presented the GIS map showing "Home Run Sites" to the Steering Committee for their review. Ideas on the map included, a youth recreation center near Kell High School, redeveloping Blackwell Square, loft condominiums in the southern area, mixed-use developments south of Piedmont Road, out-parcels at Piedmont Village, and redevelopment of the K&G warehouse retail site.

The "Home Run Sites" also included a senior housing area near Shaw Park and a mixed-use "hub" at the Piedmont Walk retail site that would include sit-down restaurants, pedestrian-scale amenities, and outdoor entertainment uses.

On October 28, 2004 the Planning Division hosted the first "Transportation Discussions" session at New Life Baptist Church. As part of the planning process, the Planning Division created an access management plan for the corridor that encompassed parallel access roads on the eastern and western sides of Canton Road from Piedmont Road to Blackwell Road/New Chastain Road. The proposed access roads were aligned with existing shopping center tracts, existing roads/rights-of-way, and near a few areas in single-family communities. The Planning Division encouraged the Steering Committee members to drive the proposed access road locations to get a better idea of the potential location and the rationale behind the alignment. (See GIS Map #7)

The design of the access roads was to provide peak travel period mobility for the existing businesses along Canton Road. The confluence of traffic traveling to and from Cherokee County during the morning and afternoon peak periods discourages retail sales due to the difficulty of accessing the congested roadway. The access roads would be built as a condition of a rezoning approval for large tract proposals and likely establish a right-of-way easement location for smaller tracts seeking development use changes. New roadway connections from the proposed businesses on Canton Road towards the access road would be a consideration in the final design approval process.

One Steering Committee member thought the access road could serve as the transition area between the area to be redeveloped and the existing communities that are well-established behind many of the retail complexes along the corridor. The design provided the opportunity to develop multi-family residential (RM-8) at 8 units per acre and/or Low-Rise Office (LRO)

uses on the inner portion of the “loop access road” to shield the back walls of the existing/proposed retail uses and provide a neighborhood-scale residential design adjacent to established communities as an intensity use transition.

During the evening discussion, the Steering Committee voiced their concern about developing new roads around the Canton Road corridor. The Steering Committee participants indicated the cost of the roadways would be millions of dollars to construct, if the development community did not build the road(s) as a condition of rezoning. Staff indicated the intent of the plan was to shift the cost burden to the developers as part of the rezoning approval process and in small tract development situations the County would likely build portions of the access road at a later date with the set-aside access road easement in place.

Several of the participants inquired about the rationale behind the parallel access road proposal and inquired why it was being considered in the planning process. The Planning Division reminded the Steering Committee that in the October 2003 Town Hall Meeting with Commissioner Tim Lee, no median would be constructed as part of the plan for Canton Road. In light of developing an access management without including a raised island median structure under the LCI program guidelines, the Planning Division Staff research indicated that parallel access roads and inter-parcel connections were the best alternative methodology for consideration, based on existing conditions and public involvement.

The evening discussions included an opportunity to redesign the Canton Road Connector in the southern portion of the Study Area due to a dangerous merging situation in the current roadway design. The group also referenced developing off-road trails in the Noonday Creek watershed area, inter-parcel access for business-to-business connectivity, and bulb-out/ingress turn lane islands along the roadway for future bus/shuttle service integration. The participants stated the demand for intersection improvements at Piedmont Road and Liberty Hill Road in order to better address safety and operational demands at the intersections during peak travel periods.

The Steering Committee inquired about another public involvement process being done concurrently by Cobb County to develop a Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD) for specific areas of the County with a focal point in the ordinance creation to allow residential densities up to 24 dwelling units an acre, provided certain conditions are met by the developer in designing the site. The ROD ordinance methodology considers form based coding to serve as design templates with improved architectural design features considered. The primary concern with the ROD was the issue of allowing an expedited review in the ordinance language. One Steering Committee member expressed concern that the ROD plans should go through a formal Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners review as opposed to more of a “use by right” orientation. The Planning Division assured the Steering Committee that any plans to rezone property on Canton Road would go through a public review process with Board of Commissioners oversight.

Previous public meetings on the corridor plan gave witness to public sentiment concerning Cobb Community Transit (CCT) integration on the corridor, in particular during peak travel times. The public was receptive to an express bus service that would capture some of the

potential Cherokee County ridership currently traveling through the corridor in single occupancy vehicles to access I-75 and nearby employment centers.

Cobb DOT Staff mentioned that CCT was investigating opportunities to acquire rights to the property that would allow for a Park n' Ride Lot at Canton Plaza, south of the Study Area in the City of Marietta. The location could serve as a future transit stop for bus or shuttle service. The Steering Committee sessions previously mentioned the Piedmont Village site as another potential express bus service station, as part of a redevelopment plan for the large retail tract.

The Steering Committee requested that a future meeting schedule include a session from the land developer's perspective about their thoughts on land use and transportation issues. The Steering Committee view the approach would help them establish an overall orientation on the challenges faced by the development community in proposing land use changes at the local level. The Planning Division acknowledged the wonderful idea and indicated a hopeful agenda item with the development community in November.

The Steering Committee members also requested copies of overlay districts from neighboring jurisdictions as an educational tool for upcoming sessions. In particular, they requested information from the City of Roswell Parkway Village Design Guidelines, the City of Smyrna Market Village plan, and the City of Alpharetta's Windward Parkway corridor plan.

On November 4, 2004, the Steering Committee met for the second meeting about "Transportation Discussions." The Planning Division shared various overlay plans from neighboring jurisdictions for the Steering Committee to review and comment. The group liked the "fence theme" along SR 92 and Windward Parkway and thought the design had merit along Canton Road.

The Planning Division inquired about the Steering Committee's thoughts on the proposed access road alignments mapped in the previous meeting's discussions. The response for the access road alignment plan was mixed. The Steering Committee noted the topography along the western side of Canton Road was rather challenging due to the steep grades south of New Chastain Road, along Skyland Drive. They also expressed concern about existing property owner opposition related to the disruption of widening the narrow street into a proposed access road. The issue of condemning personal property for the access road was an underlying concern with Steering Committee.

The Planning Staff stated the location of the access road could change over time, as development interest evolves and specific parcels develop. Staff noted the steep topography would pose a development challenge, though the land location has excellent exposure and view shed potential for an office or townhouse type of design use. Staff recognized that a new road or improvement to an existing roadway would prove quite disruptive to property owners during the construction phase and increase vehicular trips. Staff reiterated that the access road plan for Canton Road is conceptual and does not call for property condemnations in its methodological framework, though it does allow property owners the right to develop their land voluntarily if financial and personal priorities dictate where improved vehicular

access may improve the marketability of their existing property in the future. Commissioner Tim Lee has stated on numerous public meeting occasions about the Canton Road planning process that he would not support property condemnations or the displacement of existing property owners as part of any plan for the corridor.

The Planning Division presented a GIS map to the Steering Committee that showed four (4) proposed “Redevelopment Areas” along the Canton Road corridor. The Redevelopment Areas included the Sandy Plains Connector area, Piedmont Road intersection, New Chastain/Chastain Corners intersection, and the Jamerson Road intersection. The redevelopment areas were developed by the Planning Division, based on the areas described in the “Home Run Site” map developed for the October 7th Steering Committee session.

The redevelopment areas were equal size “red circles” approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide designed to serve as a visual tool to evoke responses from the Steering Committee members. The $\frac{3}{4}$ mile width of the circles was an arbitrary figure established by the Planning Division, mapped as part of the planning input exercise. Staff described the mapping exercise as a possible component of the overall corridor plan and focus new development in the nodal intersection areas, factoring the availability of existing transportation infrastructure and strong vehicular travel movements at these arterial crossroads. The location of the redevelopment area circles was based on the comments and recommendations from the Steering Committee membership.

The Steering Committee voiced their concern about the size of the redevelopment areas mapped on the corridor and the connection the locations might having in becoming proposed ROD areas in the future. They stated the draft ROD ordinance was allowing residential densities for land in Community Activity Center (CAC) land use categories up to 24 dwelling units an acre (dua). The Steering Committee was also concerned the ROD was evaluating an expedited review process that would allow a project to be heard by the Board of Commissioners as an “Other Business” item at the end of the regular Zoning Hearing proceeding. They were concerned the expedited review process might not afford the public an acceptable amount of time to review a land use proposal in addition to having an opportunity to voice their concerns about a development project in a public forum.

The Planning Division stated the plan to map the redevelopment areas on a corridor plan was not to promote their inclusion into the draft ROD ordinance language. The redevelopment areas were theoretical community districts experiencing slow economic conditions in recent times, though the land uses were primarily occupied and productive contributors to the County tax base. The four areas were primarily within locations occupied by aging strip retail and commercial zoning districts. The redevelopment areas were centrally located at three significant intersections on the Canton Road corridor and the fourth location was offset from the Sandy Plains Connector to the west in an area encompassing established single-family detached residential, commercial, and industrial development uses.

The Planning Division asserted the point that any changes to property along the Canton Road corridor would have to go before the Board of Commissioners in a public forum, where the public would have an acceptable amount of time to prepare their comments on the plan. Staff indicated projects listed as “Other Business” items must have signs posted on the site at

least fifteen (15) days before the public hearing. The public has the opportunity to contact their District Commissioner's Office about the proposal to obtain more information and staff will provide plan review documentation for their research prior to the hearing.

The Planning Division mentioned many times "Other Business" items are held for a 30-day period, if the public is concerned about the project and has not been involved in the review discussions by the date of the sessions. "Other Business" items are designed to be projects that are minor land use changes proposed by a developer and do not have evident public opposition in place. Staff also reminded the group that the ROD ordinance was still in a draft format and though the ordinance does reference an expedited review process be considered, the final determination about the review methodology is a pending zoning policy.

The Steering Committee voiced their concern about high density residential projects being considered in the redevelopment areas, with a particular emphasis on the southern location adjacent to the Sandy Plains Connector. The group stated that high density residential or mixed-use development in the southern redevelopment area location would force existing elderly residents to be displaced from their homes and forced to making other living accommodations.

The Planning Division stated the rationale for adding the southern redevelopment area to the map was based on community input to consider a senior housing proposal or a mixed-use development to act as a catalyst for redevelopment in that particular portion of the corridor. Staff and the public considered the grid design of the southern redevelopment area roadways afforded a residential use proposal of a higher intensity in order to promote positive new neighborhood-oriented developments along the corridor while protecting those established nearby residential communities.

The design of the Brumby Loft development in the City of Marietta was an architectural style that would complement the corridor it would provide a transition in land use intensity, buffering the impact between the existing industrial properties and the established neighborhoods. The period design of the loft concept in the southern redevelopment area could serve as an active senior or young professional community, with associated neighborhood-scale retail uses that provide a mixed-use "village" concept.

A Steering Committee member brought an example of a median treatment the Cumberland Community Improvement District had constructed as a crosswalk feature at the CCT Bus Transfer Station on the western side of Cumberland Mall. The heat application treatment is designed to last the life of the roadway pavement. The crosswalk was redesigned to improve the visibility and safety of pedestrians accessing the CCT Transfer Station from the Mall site. The Steering Committee was quite receptive to the median treatment option for the Canton Road corridor both in the center turn lane and possible inclusion as a crosswalk feature at signalized intersections throughout the roadway.

The Planning Division stated the next Steering Committee meeting would take place at Gritters Library where two land developers would be speaking about their experiences in the development land in Cobb County and the steps necessary to undertaking in designing and building new communities. The meeting agenda was an acknowledgement of a Steering

Committee request to invite members of the development community to speak on the Canton Road corridor plan from their professional perspective.

On November 11, 2004 Gritters Library was kind enough to host the “Developer Input Session” where two prominent Cobb County developer representatives provided their perspective on the corridor plan for Canton Road and shared their individual experiences in developing land and going through the permitting process overseen by the County.

A representative from Pebblebrook Development LLC spoke of his work developing residential subdivisions in Cobb County and the process his company undertakes meeting with nearby property owners and neighborhood groups as he seeks to rezone property. The length and uncertainty of time necessary to gain acceptance (or denial) from public officials to rezone property can be very expensive and many times serves as a deterrent to the go through the overall rezoning process. The developer lived near the Canton Road corridor as a child and shared his local experiences watching the corridor evolved from the 1970’s to its current orientation today. He was encouraged by the effort to develop a comprehensive plan for the corridor and involving the public in developing new land use scenarios along the corridor.

A representative from the Pacific Group spoke of his company’s efforts to construct a mixed-use development on land adjacent to the Atlanta Road and Interstate 285 interchange. The developer described the undertaking of assembling 44 individual tracts of land in order to develop the project under the County plan review process, while also meeting with the public as the project developed. The mixed-use project is similar to a successful community design outside of Charlotte, NC named Birkdale Village. The design of the development includes residential over retail establishments, streetscape plan, hidden parking structures, open space for public congregating, and a “village theme” architectural concept. A high-end grocery store is also being contemplated for the site plan.

The developer spoke of the difficulties and time necessary to acquire the rights to property in order to assemble the necessary land to develop a mixed-use product of this magnitude. Meeting each of the 44 individual property owners was a time-consuming process and many times necessitated numerous meetings to finalize acquisition rights. The parcels established were primarily older single family houses and industrial use sites along Atlanta Road. The residential properties along this section of Atlanta Road were located on the site before the I-285 interchange land uses developed, in particular the intensive nearby industrial uses demanding interstate access.

From the presentations the Steering Committee expressed concern that a large assemblage project might be orchestrated along Canton Road and call for established residents to move from their existing homes to allow for a “live, work, and play” development to replace the older community. The proposed residential densities for the site along the I-285 were approaching 20 dwelling units an acre, where the Steering Committee was very concerned a similar density proposal might be considered.

The demographic profile of many of the residents in the southern portion of the Study Area is a strong mix of older, retired couples living on fixed incomes. The homes constructed in this

section of Canton Road were built during a similar time as the Atlanta Road properties, where the connection about assembling older homes on Canton Road for a large-scale mixed-use development in the future appeared evident.

County staff indicated that the intent to bring members of the land development community to the table to comment on the Canton Road was at the request of the Steering Committee as a means to gain another perspective on the corridor plan and to look at new trends in community living designs in the Atlanta region. Staff indicated the mixed-use proposal along Atlanta Road is adjacent to the Regional Activity Center area of the Cumberland-Galleria where high density residential uses are appropriate.

The developer noted to the Steering Committee that all the property acquired in the land assemblage effort was purchased voluntarily by the developer, where the property owners agreed upon the asking price of the land in question. No residential property was condemned in order to develop the land within the proposed site. Staff reiterated that condemnation activity of personal property would not be entertained by the County as part of the plans to improve the corridor in the future.

November 17, 2004 – Public Hearing #2.

Over 60 individuals signed-up as attendees for the second Public Hearing about the Canton Road Corridor Plan at Blackwell Elementary School. The meeting focused on the efforts to date related to the current six (6) month planning process and sought guidance from the community about potential projects and programs to consider as part of the corridor programming priorities for the future. The evening agenda included discussions about proposed “Home Run Site” locations, potential streetscape design opportunities, transportation system improvements, sidewalk/trail connections, and creating a sense of identity along the entire corridor.

The Planning Division displayed an array of maps outlining the planning process fostered from an in-house staff-level review exercise to a formalized public involvement program utilizing a Steering Committee format and scheduled public hearings in the final plan orientation. GIS maps showing the entire corridor with data layers showing aerial photography, future land use, current zoning, etc. were displayed to the public. The Planning Division also created maps showing existing and future trail projects, transportation network modifications, access road concepts, pedestrian safety locations, and potential candidate areas for future redevelopment. (See GIS Map #8 - #9)

The Public Hearing also distributed questionnaires created by the Planning Division that inquired about individual perceptions related to developing parallel access roads to help peak period traffic mobility, developing townhouses adjacent to the access road alignment, creating a Community Center near Shaw park, and establishing a new name(s) for key districts along Canton Road to serve as a new identity for the corridor and/or defined segments of the roadway. Staff also inquired what type of projects and programs would benefit Canton Road as part of the overall planning process. They also acknowledged the recent change requested by the Canton Road community to remove the “Redevelopment Areas” map from further research and public endorsement.

The proposal to add parallel access roads on both sides of Canton Road from Blackwell Road to Piedmont Road received criticism from existing property owners living near the proposed road alignment. In particular, the proposal to add Skyland Drive to the proposed access road alignment scenario received vocal objections from some existing property owners. Staff stated the road would be constructed as a condition of a rezoning process.

The “Home Run Sites” map was shared with the group was the result of a planning exercise developed at the Public Hearing in September that asked the public to list 4-5 “Home Run Sites” along Canton Road that would potential serve as opportunity locations for redevelopment and mixed-use development scenarios. The “Home Run Site” map placed circles around areas that may be reasonable for redevelopment or new development integration along the corridor. The majority of the areas were in the Piedmont Road quadrant and south towards the Sandy Plains Connector.

One of the “Home Run Site” recommendations included gateway entrance markers at the Cherokee County border on the north and City of Marietta jurisdictional boundary to the south. The markers would be similar to the Cobb County markers at the County border with an architecturally prominent brick column design, County Seal, and a landscaped area. The markers would let the traveling public know they are entering a “special place.” The Canton Road Business Association was also working on a plan to fund the addition of gateway markers in the “Business District” between Chastain Corners and Piedmont Road.

The “Home Run Sites” also considers ideas such as a youth recreation center near the Jamerson Road quadrant, senior living and facilities near Shaw Park, mixed-use developments near Liberty Hill Road, and redevelopment projects for the aging shopping centers at the Old Tyme Pottery Center, Piedmont Village, Blackwell Square, and Canton Plaza. The “Home Run Sites” also contemplated a commercial hub at Piedmont Road quadrant, which would include sit-down restaurants, pedestrian-scale streetscape amenities, outdoor entertainment, and neighborhood shopping.

Comments from the public about the corridor plan included keeping any proposed “Home Run Sites” out of existing neighborhoods and change all the Community Activity Center classifications on the corridor to Neighborhood Activity Center, no “Big Box” retail uses, higher density uses to be buffered from less intensive areas, Suburban Condominium (SC) and Low Rise Office (LRO) are the best uses for the southern and northern areas of the corridor, and the most appropriate sites for high density or mixed-use developments are in the existing commercial district and the industrial sites.

The public also acknowledged the need to build trails and connecting sidewalks the length of Canton Road and to consider setting aside greenspace or pocket parks in both the southern and northern portions of the corridor. The opportunity to design the building architecture in the future in a Historic Marietta theme was considered for the entire corridor area.

The Public Hearing also discussed the opportunity to re-create an identity along the corridor by possibly considering district names that could help promote commercial areas or

residential communities along the corridor. Staff noted historic names that have prevailed along the corridor's history have been the Blackwell Family and the Latimer Family.

The Planning Division reminded the group that the third Public Hearing would be in February or March 2005 to bring the final recommendations for projects and programs to the local community for review and comments with an ultimate goal of bringing the plan to the Board of Commissioners for their review and potential adoption. Staff noted the Steering Committee would be reviewing initial plans for the corridor prior to the final Public Hearing in 2005.

On February 2, 2005 the Steering Committee reconvened to discuss potential project improvements and programs that would potentially benefit the corridor, both from a short-term and long-term perspective. The Planning Division submitted a draft conceptual plan for the Steering Committee members to discuss and comment on the merits of the listed proposals. The list of projects included a multi-use trail along Canton Road, connecting sidewalk sections, intersection safety improvements, roadway treatment retrofit in the center turn lane of the roadway, open space areas, and an overall streetscape design theme.

The Planning Division asked the Steering Committee members to take a look at the listed projects to address potential phasing and prioritization for funding. Additional to the projects was a list of possible programs that could be considered for implementation with community-based support to pursue the program orientation. The programs considered included changes to the Future land Use Map, developing an overlay district in Business District, promoting senior housing on large land tracts, express bus service from Cherokee County through the corridor, curb cut buy-back program, State and Federal grant programs, ARC RTP/TIP project programming, and developing partnerships with the local community and the newly formed Business Association to work on programs that build community spirit and a sense of pride in ownership.

The Planning Division indicated the listed projects and programs are not prioritized currently, though the next meeting on February 16th the Steering Committee would be looking at possible project phasing methodologies to consider for short-term and long-term prioritization. Staff also mentioned they were researching the cost estimates from Cobb DOT for the various on-road projects listed on the conceptual plan to assist in assigning a ranking order for future programming.

The Planning Division listed nine (9) intersections along the corridor that should be considered for safety-related improvements. The proposals for each intersection varied in nature, though the primary need for pedestrian-related safety improvements at the crossings was evident. Staff described a situation where many of the signalized intersections along the corridor do not have the appropriate crosswalks striped at the intersections to allow for safe pedestrian mobility through the arterial corridor. The addition of raised turn lane islands at key intersections was considered and improved ADA curb ramps at the busy signalized crossroad locations. Staff also acknowledged that certain intersections would necessitate pedestrian-oriented traffic signal equipment be installed as a component of the intersection safety improvement plan.

The response from the Steering Committee was quite receptive about the listed projects and programs for their review and comments. They stated the need to see more detail related to the streetscape plan for the corridor, considering spacing street trees and period lighting closer to one another in the final design plans. The group also spoke favorably about the inclusion of pocket parks throughout the corridor and promoting developments that provide more open space in future design plans.

The issue that raised the most significant discussions related to potential changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation along defined tracts throughout the Study Area. The Planning Division stated a potential option of revising the FLUM designation for land designated as Community Activity Center (CAC) to Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) to assist in developing less intensive commercial uses in the existing CAC areas along the corridor. The CAC allows for “big box” retail to be developed in the County with allowable building footprints approaching 140,000 sq./ft. The NAC classification would allow a maximum building size of 70,000 sq./ft. to be developed. The current configuration of many of the CAC tracts does not promote such an intensive use proposal, where a neighborhood-scaled development scenario is more appropriate factoring existing conditions and the regional competition from the nearby Town Center Mall retail development.

The Steering Committee also voiced their concern about the program concept to establish specific redevelopment areas along the corridor in an overlay zoning methodology. The concern the redevelopment areas would not go through a formal review process, where the proposals may afford higher density residential allowances within these site plan locations than previously allowed by the County rezoning process. The Steering Committee thought the overlay concept was loosely based on the ROD ordinance being currently developed in a committee format and asked if the Community Development Agency could update the group on the pending ROD category.

The Planning Division recommended the group take a look at the various listed projects and programs in greater detail where the Steering Committee would reconvene on February 16th to establish additional form to the potential recommendations.

On February 16, 2005 the Steering Committee met at Gritters Library to discuss the projects and programs for the corridor and to obtain a briefing on the Redevelopment Overlay District Steering Committee process. The Planning Division began the evening by distributing a draft Conceptual Plan & Cost Estimate for the Steering Committee to review and comment. The document outlined a potential construction phasing program with associated cost estimates for the various line items programmed for funding.

The cost estimates were provided by the Cobb County Department of Transportation Planning Division outlined a multi-million dollar cost for the retrofit construction of a multi-use facility along the eastern side of Canton Road and connecting sidewalks segments throughout the corridor. Cost projections to improve the nine intersections with pedestrian crossing improvements were approximately \$30,000 per intersection. The DOT estimated the cost to create a gateway marker feature at four sections of the roadway was estimated at \$15,000 per marker site.

The Steering Committee mentioned the need to work closely with the local businesses and the business association in developing the streetscape improvements, median treatment, gateway marker design/ locations, etc. in light of the disruptive nature the roadway projects can create with local establishments during the construction phase.

The meeting transitioned to a briefing on the activity related to the ROD planning initiative and the draft recommendations being considered by the ROD Committee to date. The presentation included an exercise on “Obstacles & Solutions” considered in the ROD Committee methodology.

Obstacle: Conflicting zoning and code compliance issues.

Solution: Adoption of Form-Based Coding and/or Performance-Based Codes and Standards.

Obstacle: Lengthy public review process and time in approving project plans.

Solution: Accelerate the public hearing process from 60 days to 30 days.

Obstacle: Risk & Uncertainty.

Solution: Provide an incentive to developers and property owners where the underlying zoning could not be changed by Board of Commissioner action, if the applicant were seeking a rezoning.

Obstacle: Cost

Solution: An applicant would only be charged for advertisement and signage (i.e. posting the site) for the proposed land use change.

The presentation outlined the four essential components of the draft ROD ordinance.

1. Only Commercially-zoned properties in Community Activity Center and Regional Activity Center designated areas would qualify.
2. Neighborhood Activity Center designated properties would not qualify.
3. Specific corridors throughout the County would be identified as “priority areas.” Canton Road from Piedmont Road to Blackwell Road was included in the draft.
4. There would be a points-based system and density bonus available to applicants provided certain conditions were met in the overall plan design.

Commissioner Lee reminded the group that one of the primary motivations to look at an overlay plan or a sub-area study for the corridor was to develop a conceptual plan for the corridor that would assist in removing a majority of the General Commercial (GC) zoning categories that still prevail along the roadway corridor. The GC zoning categories allows for very diverse and sometimes very intensive commercial land uses to occupy certain tracts of land and tend to be “grandfathered” zoning categories that were zoned by the County, prior to 1972.

The Steering Committee expressed their strong reservations about the map showing the “Redevelopment Areas” in ¾ mile circles would possibly allow a developer to utilize the ROD zoning category in the future and redevelop high density residential communities for those tracts that fall within the red circles. They requested the map not be part of the overall corridor plan recommendations.

Community Development staff recognized the concern the “Redevelopment Areas” map created during the November 4, 2004 meeting with members of the Steering Committee and the general public and decided to remove the redevelopment areas map from further consideration in the overall planning process. The perception that high density residential could enter into low density areas was an overriding concern with the public, especially in the southern and northern sections of Study Area where more of the established residential communities prevailed.

On March 2, 2005, the Steering Committee met to discuss the final conceptual plans for consideration during the third Public Hearing on March 15. The Planning Division showed a new corridor plan for Canton Road that depicted two parallel roadway maps based on the County Future Land Use Map (FLUM) with current and proposed land use changes created in the mapping depiction. The primary change in the map was the reclassification of Community Activity Center (CAC) designations to Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) south of Piedmont Road and north of Blackwell Road.

The Planning Division stated the change to the FLUM map was based on strong public involvement and community-based input to develop residential properties at 5 dwelling units an acre or less and the desire to promote neighborhood-oriented commercial uses in the future.

The Steering Committee inquired about the proposed residential allowed for future development in the CAC area of the Business District between Piedmont Road and Blackwell Road. The Planning Division stated the residential density allowance has not yet been set for the Business District area, though a decision should be forthcoming.

Staff reminded the Steering Committee that the decision to change the CAC areas to a NAC classification will provide the community with ability to review land use proposals before development activity occurs. The change would necessitate that all property currently zoned General Commercial (GC) within a NAC area would have to go through a formal rezoning process in order to decide on the merits of the proposed use.

The methodology is very similar to the approach taken on the Atlanta Road corridor, where in part as a result of a road widening proposal in the 1990's any property that fell within the CAC areas of the corridor was amended to a NAC classification on the FLUM, where GC properties within a NAC area had to garner Board of Commissioner approval prior to development occurring. The time of the rezoning also provided the mechanism for the County to remove grandfathered GC zoning districts that were establishing intensive land use proposals in areas evolving in established communities and creating opposition in public hearing. Over the past 10 years, the success related to the Atlanta Road corridor in Cobb County has transformed the area into a high dollar value land acreage district with high-end land uses specific to attached and detached residential, wonderful new mixed-use developments, and a shift from disruptive auto-oriented retail uses to sustainable neighborhood oriented retail and office land uses.

The Steering Committee was receptive to the change in the FLUM classifications along the corridor. Staff indicated the FLUM change map would be part of the displays shown at the Public Hearing in two weeks, in addition to the Final Conceptual Plan map being a focal point of the planning session agenda.

The Planning Division also acknowledged the preliminary cost estimates provided by Cobb County DOT would be part of the evening discussion and a tentative schedule on how to program future transportation improvements over a 10-year period. Possible land use recommendations would also be considered, which potentially could serve as a catalyst for new mixed-use development, in particular within the Business District area of Canton Road.

A common theme voiced by the public and members of the Steering Committee over the 10-month process was that if the corridor plan could simply improve the quality of the existing strip retail shopping centers and provide new development opportunities within the large retail tracts in the area between Piedmont Road and Blackwell Road that the plan would have an associated positive impact on neighborhood-oriented development patterns evolving to the north and south of the Business District area, thus protecting the established residential communities concerns about higher density residential project may be situated adjacent to thriving neighborhoods.

March 15, 2005 – Public Hearing #3

The Community Development Agency hosted the final Public Hearing to consider the conceptual plan developed by the public and the Steering Committee over the past 10 months of the public involvement process and to obtain feedback on the course of action being entertained through a combination of transportation and land use recommendations.

The auditorium at Blackwell Elementary School accommodated over 100 interested citizens about the final plans for the Canton Road corridor. The local community represented a diverse assemblage of community members ranging from young families members to the senior community, the business/ development community, of various ethnic group distributions.

The evening agenda began with the Planning Division presenting a visual chronology of events through GIS mapping utilization, depicting the corridor planning process effort and various scenario development exercises entertained were displayed throughout the auditorium for public comments. The detailed maps include GIS layers with current zoning, future land use, aerial photography with parcel line delineations, DOT trail map, various Charrette/Design Studio conceptual plans, "Home Run Sites," transportation access management plan, roadway cross-sectional designs, and potential FLUM changes scheduled for January 2006.

Many of the individuals in attendance at the Public Hearing were older members of the Canton Road corridor community. The planning process over the previous year had raised speculation that the effort to redevelop Canton Road would promote residential condemnations and high-rise residential buildings to be placed near established neighborhoods throughout the corridor. Several property owners were at the meeting concerned the proposed access road plan would force them to move out of their homes due to the right-of-way requirements needed to improve some of the existing rural section residential streets as an the two/three lane urban section roadway alignment.

Commissioner Tim Lee reiterated his pledge to the group in attendance that the County would not endorse any condemnation activity associated with the development of land along the Canton Road corridor, in particular those areas with existing neighborhoods in place. He stated that a property owner has the right to sell their property voluntarily if they desire.

The Planning Division stated the plan to create parallel access roads on both sides of Canton Road from Blackwell Road to Piedmont Road part of an access management plan that would help address peak period traffic congestion for the Business District area and help interconnect existing land uses to promote safety, commerce, and pedestrian accessibility. The planned promoted inter-parcel access for retail and restaurants located along the corridor and recommendations for improving the future land uses in these commercial districts with mixed-use development opportunities.

Staff indicated the design and location of the access roads may change as development patterns become established in the Business District area, where the intent of the parallel access road plan is to shift the cost of constructing the roads on the developer as a condition of a rezoning approval process and not the place a cost burden on the existing taxpayers. The roadway plan could also serve to improve existing stormwater management issues that have been created from the expansive parking areas along the corridor that intrudes on residential areas during large storm events.

The public inquired about the proposed densities allowed in the CAC areas of the Business District area. Community Development staff did not provide a figure at the meeting, though they did indicate the density would likely be in the upper range of residential density threshold for the County.

The public was quite receptive to the vast majority of the land use changes proposed in the mapping exercise at the Public Hearing, though members from an existing residential community recently rezoned by the County for a medium density residential development

along Piedmont Road near Canton Road that was classified as CAC on the FLUM. They asked that a MDR classification be amended for the new subdivision community in January 2006 FLUM amendment process. Staff supported the change request noted by the community.

The public response to the streetscape concept along Canton Road was well-received. The design to incorporate a multi-use trail on the eastern side of the roadway, connect existing sidewalk segments, develop roadway amenities that would include ornamental trees, benches, garbage receptacles, period lighting, and a roadway frontage fence concept was regarded as a positive step in improving the corridor. The plan also shows both neighborhood and political support in developing sustainable land use patterns within the Business District, in order to help protect those established surrounding communities.

The Community Development staff stated the comments on the changes to the FLUM would be developed by staff for a final Steering Committee Meeting scheduled in late April/early May. Staff also indicated the cost estimates for the roadway project priorities would be improved and broken down into a phased program orientation. The timeline for the corridor planning process would bring the proposal to the Cobb County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners in May or June 2005 for review and potential plan adoption.

On May 2, 2005, the Planning Division hosted the final Steering Committee session to unveil the final conceptual plans for the corridor, which included a phased list of potential transportation improvement projects and program recommendations to help develop better land use proposals that benefit the local communities along the corridor.

Staff handed out a conceptual plan for text and FLUM changes that would assist in promoting the construction of mixed-use development scenarios in the Business District, while insulating existing residential communities in the south and northern areas of the corridor. The mapping changes also included recommendations from the Cobb County Zoning Division staff on land use amendments along the corridor that would complement future development integration and improve the FLUM classifications for existing residential properties along the corridor. The areas where change was contemplated included staff explanations for rationale behind the proposed land use amendment. (See GIS Map #10)

The focal point in the group discussions was the provision in the text recommendations for the FLUM that would allow residential densities up to 24 dwelling units per acre (dua) if specific conditions are met on the property in question. The Planning Division explained the reasoning behind the 24 dua threshold level was to address the significant cost of redeveloping existing shopping center locations, which tend to be incredibly expensive in terms of demolishing old structures, replacing/repairing/redesigning existing infrastructure, removing construction debris, etc. where the costs to perform these work requirements are sometimes uncertain where financial risks are clearly evident for developers to court redevelopment opportunities. Lending institutions have proven to be reluctant to fund these type of large-scale land use developments, in particular mixed-use scenarios.

The Steering Committee was rather vocal in their opposition to the 24 dua proposal in the Business District area. Staff reminded the group that over the past 10 months the community

has asked to preserve the existing neighborhood quality of life currently afforded in the southern and northern areas of the corridor and to focus on “shifting the density” along the corridor into the Business District, an area that is already developed, where the need to redevelop these aging retail tracts is a heightened local priority. Staff stated that the design of the project should be as important a consideration in the final plan approval process as the residential density allowed in the Business District, where Form-Based Codes would help complement the design of the new buildings being developed.

The Steering Committee expressed reservations that the proposed density threshold of 24 du would promote high density apartment complexes to be developed along the corridor, which would set a precedent for more multi-family residential uses to align along the corridor, where currently no apartments exist along the corridor. The Steering Committee attendees viewed apartments communities may lead to residential property value decline if they are integrated into the overall corridor plan recommendations.

The Planning Division stated the design for the mixed-use developments in the Business District is geared towards creating owner-occupied residential uses and not specifically rental economy apartment complexes. Staff indicated one of the greatest needs in Cobb County is affordable housing, where these mixed-use projects may provide for more affordable housing opportunities along the corridor and create new communities where the residential population can walk to retail uses and quite possibly future occupational opportunities along the arterial roadway.

Canton Road Business Association

In April 2004, a group of business owners decided to develop a Canton Road Business Association (CRBA) as part of the original recommendations for the roadway, based on the 1997 Canton Road Corridor Plan. In the past year, the CRBA has grown to over 150 active members working and networking to make the Canton Road corridor a destination area for commerce and for quality community living.

The CRBA holds monthly luncheons at the Canterbury Golf Country Club to promote the Business Association program and to invite influential leaders in the local community to speak to the group and offer advice in marketing the business community on Canton Road.

In January 2005 the CRBA Luncheon hosted a planning expert from Urban Collage, Rosa McHugh to speak on the efforts to develop a conceptual plan for Canton Road and provide a critique on what ingredients establish an effective corridor planning project. Ms. McHugh’s firm has done several Livable Centers Initiative project applications for several cities and counties in the State. Ms. McHugh was very complementary of the efforts generated to date and requested to receive a copy of the final plans and program recommendations for the corridor when they become available.

The CRBA has actively supported the corridor planning initiative along the Canton Road and a few members have been active participants in the Steering Committee sessions over the course of the process.

The Planning Division attends the sessions on a monthly basis to brief the membership on the corridor planning effort and to offer opportunities to be involved with the overall process methodology.

The CRBA is currently working on a program to place two gateway markers near the Business District area of the corridor. The CRBA has collected monies from luncheons, memberships, outreach activities, etc to earmark \$30,000 in funds for the two gateway markers. They have also been active in soliciting new members, developing partnerships between business concerns, and working as a group to address code enforcement issues on their own behalf. The success of the Canton Road corridor plan will be in part derived from the alliances developed and fostered between the business community, elected officials, and neighborhood groups in order to truly design sustainable developments patterns that will stand the test of time.

ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Recommendations

Cobb County has been working diligently for over ten (10) years trying to develop a corridor plan for the former State Route 5 roadway from the Sandy Plains Connector to the Cherokee County border. The existing conditions from both a land use and infrastructure development standpoint are such that the development community has seemed reluctant to pursue redevelopment opportunities based on land availability and associated construction costs. Many of the vital businesses that thrived along the corridor during the 1970's and 1980's chose to move towards the Town Center Mall location as a regional market developed along the Barrett Parkway corridor less than two miles from Canton Road.

The shift of major strip commercial retail enterprises to the regional activity center at Town Center Mall led to many existing land uses along Canton Road, primarily marketed for automobile-oriented businesses, franchise restaurants, gas stations, pawn shops, and less attractive retail uses to continue to prevail along the old State Route corridor landscape.

The year-long public involvement process highlighted a community vision for Canton Road that looked at the 4.5-mile corridor Study Area between the Sandy Plains Connector and Jamerson Road as a foundation to change land use patterns along the roadway, by enhancing the identity of the existing development patterns with infrastructure improvements and aesthetic amenities. Throughout the public involvement process the public spoke of protecting the existing single-family housing in the southern and northern portions of the corridor. The public stated the area to be redeveloped along Canton Road is where the existing commercial shopping centers are currently located between Piedmont Road and Blackwell Road, in an effort to create new mixed-use developments with residential/retail uses combined and to look at senior living communities in the area.

There was no evident opposition to the redevelopment of the older retail shopping centers along Canton Road if the proposal design considered neighborhood-oriented shopping and dining opportunities in the mixed-use scenarios at appropriate densities. The local community showed a desire to incorporate upscale restaurants and "fresh market" type grocery stores near the Business District, which may serve as a catalyst to create other higher end retail uses to align with these new shopping and dining establishments.

The three scheduled Public Hearings provided evidence of an aging demographic cross-section along the Canton Road corridor. Many of the residents living in the southern area of the corridor are retired persons on fixed incomes. These senior members of the community are concerned about their property taxes increasing, the gentrification of older communities into new families, developer buy-outs of existing homes, personal safety on the roadways, and an increasing demand for eldercare accommodations.

The senior community expressed interest in developing a community center in the Shaw Park/Gritters Library area of the Business District and potential senior living opportunities near this retail district of Canton Road. The proximity of Blackwell Elementary School and Daniell Middle School within walking distance of the area could serve as mentoring figures in the area by creating in-school/after-school programs in the local community. The importance of making the area safe and inviting for pedestrians of all ages was vocalized in the Public Hearings.

The existing design of Canton Road and the location of many retail businesses promote the need to utilize a vehicle for mobility to access these commercial developments in the Business District area. The five-lane configuration of Canton Road and problematic designs of the existing intersections provides a very difficult environment for creating walking opportunities to residential communities and retail enterprises.

The incorporation of the existing fiber optic technology network which currently in place along the Canton Road corridor could provide a means to improve the signal timing along the corridor in a manner that moves peak period traffic more effectively through the roadway, while also a safer opportunity for pedestrian accessibility through the intersections with striped crosswalks on all approaches, enhanced pedestrian signal timing technology, raised turn lane islands, ADA curb ramps, and streetscape amenities being integrated into the overall facility design.

Adaptive Signal Timing is a new concept in transportation where “smart roadway engineering technology” is being tested in areas like the Cumberland Community Improvement District as a potential benefit for peak period traffic and pedestrian mobility in this regional activity center area experiencing high-rise mixed-use development districts. The Canton Road corridor should consider programming a study to address the possible benefits of an Adaptive Signal Timing plan for the Business District area between Piedmont Road and the Blackwell Road.

The residential and business communities have agreed in the Public Hearings that a key component to the revisions to the existing streetscape design in the Business District would be the local preferred alternative to improve the Canton Road center turn-lane was with a median treatment from the Piedmont Road intersection to the Chastain Corners intersection. The median streetscape treatment would be a flush-mounted, stamped asphalt-type material, dyed a specific color located within the existing 16’ wide center turn-lane cross-section. The stamped material would serve to calm traffic as a rumble strip feature for left turning movements and help spotlight pedestrians in the roadway crossing areas at the signalized intersections.

The redesign of the center turn-lane would be performed concurrently with a future Local Area Resurfacing Program (LARP) project along the corridor, where the median treatment would be retrofitted into the center turn-lane and the four existing vehicular travel lanes re-striped to 11’ wide where the additional pavement in the roadway would be striped as a bicycle-friendly shoulder area for Class-A bicyclists along Canton Road. The bicycle-friendly shoulder plan would connect effectively with the existing bicycle facility along Sandy Plains Road in the southern portion of the corridor.

Another key component to the overall streetscape design in the Business District is the incorporation of roadway amenities such as decorative street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, brick column three-rail fences, and integrated open space/park areas. The streetscape plan proposes the retrofitting of a 12' wide multi-use trail on the eastern side of the Canton Road corridor with an interconnected on-street sidewalk network.

The parallel Georgia Northeastern Rail Line to the Canton Road corridor is a long-range planning project for a future commuter rail alignment from the City of Canton to the City of Marietta. Recent Atlanta Regional Commission projections indicate the project will not be programmed for funding due to relative cost estimates and ridership projections for the next 20 years. The alignment of the Georgia Northeastern Rail Line does present multi-modal transportation opportunities in the future where a potential commuter rail station(s) could be contemplated along Canton Road, where geographic proximity affords Jamerson Road, Piedmont Road, and the Sandy Plains Connector areas of the corridor.

Another multi-modal opportunity may exist south of the Canton Road corridor study area near the I-75 system. The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority is presently evaluating a potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station for the GDOT land at the northwestern quadrant of the Canton Road Connector cloverleaf interchange along Interstate 75. The proposed transit station location would be less than 2 miles from the Canton Road corridor study area and its proximity would greatly complement the corridor's land use planning initiative, if a transit station were to be integrated into this portion of the I-75 corridor.

The plan to improve the existing driveway curb cuts along the Business District will be an incremental process to remedy problematic access points due to current location, unacceptable ingress/egress design, site distance availability, and general operational safety demands. The associated benefit to address inter-parcel connections in existing parking lots would promote both improved vehicular mobility during peak period, while stimulating commerce through connectivity of complementary land uses. The County will actively pursue access management improvements related to curb cut redesigns and inter-parcel connections as an essential component to a future rezoning approval.

The business community has been involved in the public involvement plan since the inception of the planning process. Monthly Business Association luncheons have served to foster new relationships and help establish an identity in the Business District that would create a positive benefit to the residential districts to the south and north of the Canton Road corridor, through significant improvements to the central business district area. The owner of Piedmont Walk on the southwestern corner of the Canton Road at Piedmont Road intersection invested over \$1,000,000 in aesthetic improvements to the existing retail development has helped set the tone in the business community that it will be worthwhile to re-invest in the Business District commercial areas, in light of land availability costs, regional transportation accessibility, and close very proximity to the high-rise developments in the Town Center Mall area.

The creation of a “Main Street - Canton Road” corridor plan should be explored for the commercial properties abutting the roadway from Piedmont Road to Chastain Corners Road. The plan would consider the retrofitting of the streetscape amenities with the operational improvements at the intersections in an effort to stimulate land use development scenarios and a more pedestrian-friendly walking environment. The public involvement recommendations guided the plan of action towards a redevelopment overlay-zoning concept for the commercially zoned properties along the Canton Road corridor stretching for approximately one mile in linear distance. The Main Street plan for Canton Road would be based on the program criteria established by the Atlanta Regional Commission under the Livable Centers Initiative process guidelines.

Overlay zoning is a relatively new land planning practice in Cobb County based on past efforts to court overlay concepts for various areas of the County. Cobb County currently has an overlay-zoning program that promotes cluster home residential subdivisions under the Open Space Community and Conservation Subdivision ordinances. The County has yet to formally establish a zoning classification that would allow for the creation of an overlay district for mixed-use developments.

The Cobb County Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD) conceptual program will provide incentives for mixed-use developments to be integrated into older shopping center areas, which would include higher density residential unit allowances if certain developmental conditions were met as part of the overall design proposal.

The financing necessary to redevelop an aging shopping center is both substantial and many times rather speculative in nature factoring unforeseen situations in redeveloping commercial property. Economic development models are indicating that additional residential unit allowances need to be considered as necessary ingredients to motivate a developer to accept the risk of redeveloping a shopping center; where the costs to demolish buildings, remove the construction rubble, address existing environmental conditions, contemplate lengthy permitting/design review processes, and construct the final product are overwhelming and subject to market fluctuations.

The inclusion of open space along the Canton Road corridor is another opportunity the public spoke about during the Public Hearing sessions. The shopping centers in the Business District have virtually no landscaping along the roadway frontage or internal to the retail developments. The expansive striped parking lots create a high heat index in the summer months due to the lack of trees and landscaping material, which would promote a neighborhood design theme and more interaction opportunities with the business community. The Main Street plan for Canton Road would provide incentives to the development community if they were to assemble a “significant amount” of open space into the design of the mixed-use development that would complement the overall corridor planning methodology. The Board of Commissioners would have the final voice in the appropriate amount of open space to allocate to the conceptual plan based on existing conditions and associated engineering requirements.

The effort to invest in a streetscape plan for Canton Road will likely provide an associated benefit to the code enforcement issues that have prevailed along the corridor for years. The beautification of the roadway right-of-way area and better building designs that create a street presence enhancing civic pride by promoting a higher level of marketing professionalism and business owner policing of unattractive promotional initiatives.

The location of the Canton Road corridor is in the confluence of regional traffic pattern accessing occupational opportunities into the job centers near the City of Atlanta and the regional activity centers near the I-285 perimeter. The opportunity to incorporate the regional arterial traffic as a potential consumer market for existing/future business along Canton Road is still being conceptualized. Creating a Main Street area along Canton Road in the Business District with high-end mixed-use developments incorporating residential living opportunities with retail and office uses will help serve as an attraction to the corridor through sustainable land use patterns within the Business District area, in addition to protecting and enhancing those established residential communities with neighborhood-oriented shopping and dining enterprises.

FINAL CORRIDOR PLAN

Adopted on July 26, 2005

Future Land Use Map & Text Changes

The Steering Committee process and discussions with the public suggest changes to the Cobb County Future Land Use Map (FLUM) within the Canton Road Study Area and include specific text language for sub-areas along the corridor from the Sandy Plain Connector to Jamerson Road. The changes to the FLUM would be submitted in November 2005 and heard for by the Cobb County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners in January 2006 for formal review and approval.

The Planning Division and Zoning Division have created a revised FLUM for the Canton Road study area showing the current 2005 mapping designations and proposed 2006 FLUM recommendations in a geographic information systems format. Text Amendments for Consideration include:

Canton Road “Main Street” Design Principles (Design Principles) will serve as recommendations for the Canton Road corridor area between New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road intersection quadrant and the Piedmont Road intersection quadrant. The only areas where the Design Principles guidelines apply are within the established Community Activity Center (CAC) boundaries between New Chastain Road and Piedmont Road intersection quadrants. The intent of the Design Principles is to develop mixed-use developments in the CAC parcels that integrate residential living opportunities with commercial and/or office uses that promote “live, work, and play” communities.

The Cobb County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners will have final review of the Design Principles for mixed-use proposals to ensure the overall design complements the land in question. Buildings are encouraged to be designed specific to Form-Based Code models as an architectural theme in the engineered plans for the proposed development.

Highlights of the Canton Road “Main Street” Design Principles include:

- ✓ A minimum 25’ width open space area with an associated trail connecting to both the contiguous open space and the Canton Road corridor right-of-way would be required.
- ✓ Underground detention, inter-parcel access, and shared/reduced parking requirements are encouraged within the Design Principles area. The design must meet Cobb County Water System plan review engineering requirements.
- ✓ Design any new buildings with a maximum 25’ front set-back and shift parking behind the proposed buildings. The setback area is to be landscaped to County standards if pedestrian/customer-oriented amenities are not designed within this set-back area. Monument Signs must be designed as component of the set-back area plan.

- ✓ Any residential use in the Design Principles area fronting the proposed access road alignment as described in the Canton Road Corridor Plan should be limited to 8 dwellings units per acre (dua).

The 8 dua density threshold only applies to those areas designated as CAC within the proposed access road alignments, as residential use proposals, on the internal side of proposed access road alignment. Residential densities outside CAC boundaries and on the external side of the proposed access road should not be greater than 5 dua.

- ✓ Office (Low-Rise Office) uses are encouraged along the internal side of the proposed access road in addition to attached and/or detached residential dwellings.
- ✓ Land located along the proposed access road alignment may be considered by the County as public right-of-way for the future road access road project. Site plans greater than 5 acres shall build the proposed access road alignment to County standards as a condition of a rezoning. The proposed right-of-way width would be 40' in order to accommodate two 10' wide travel lanes, curbing and a sidewalk. The Cobb County Board of Commissioners will make the final determination of public right-of-way to be dedicated as a condition of the Design Principles approval process.
- ✓ The proposed streetscape design will necessitate additional public right-of-way be acquired as a condition of rezoning. The cross-section for the proposed streetscape requires an additional 10' of right-of-way on the western side of Canton Road and 15' on the eastern side of Canton Road be acquired from the existing boundaries. Any right-of-way acquired through the Design Principles review can be calculated into the total open space acreage for the site.
- ✓ Any new development tracts fronting Canton Road (Sandy Plains Connector to Jamerson Road) greater than two acres are required to build a three rail fence (painted white) with stacked red brick columns (2' x 2' x 5') minimum of 40' on-center along any property fronting Canton Road. The fence is to be located just outside the proposed right-of-way and is to be maintained by the property owner, where it should not create a sight distance problem with entrance driveways.
- ✓ Decorative street trees are to be planted a maximum of 40' on-center along Canton Road just outside the proposed right-of-way. Minimum of 3" caliper street trees to be approved by County Landscape Architect.
- ✓ The CAC areas from the Sandy Plains Connector to Jamerson Road, outside the Design Principles area shall be changed to a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) designation where any land use proposals must go before the Cobb County Board of Commissioners for review. The NAC designation areas shall allow a maximum building footprint of 35,000 sq. /ft. for retail uses.
- ✓ "Grandfathered" General Commercial zoning categories will be encouraged to be developed as neighborhood-scale uses such as mixed-use, office, retail, or residential.

- ✓ New retail and office uses to have complimentary building facades designed with stone and/or brick material. No metal, stucco, or split block material allowed on exterior surfaces unless approved by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners.
- ✓ Roofs to be asphalt shingled, pitched with gables, dormers and aesthetic treatments designed in a residential style. Standing seam metal roofs are discouraged.
- ✓ Limit mixed-use developments in NAC areas to two stories in height, with residential densities not to exceed 5 du/a.
- ✓ Retail and office uses should be restricted so that there are no twenty-four (24) hour establishments along the corridor.

ARC Regional Development Plan Land Use Policies and How They Apply to the Canton Road Corridor Plan

1. Provide development strategies and infrastructure investments to accommodate forecast population and employment growth more efficiently.
 - *Providing supporting infrastructure investments that promote additional residential growth in areas that can proactively address the change in the suburban landscape through coordinated planning and enhanced design options, will help achieve sustainability on the corridor.*
2. Guide an increased share of new development to the Central Business District, transportation corridors, activity centers, and town centers.
 - *New development in the Business District should strongly evaluate multi-family residential options in areas with existing/planned retail is being considered for redevelopment, which promotes pedestrian accessibility and aesthetic designs, which help establish “new villages.”*
3. Increase opportunities for mixed-use development, infill, and redevelopment.
 - *Mixed-use development is a common theme in regional planning today. Mixing uses tends to court residential communities being integrated within commercial and retail enterprises, which promote live, work, and play sustainability in the Business District with overlay zoning and land use amendments.*
4. Increase transportation choices and transit-oriented development (TOD).
 - *The ability to promote multi-modal transportation (bike, pedestrian, transit, etc) options in the Atlanta region is still an evolving process. Much of the reason that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is being proposed along the interstate system is the lack of acceptable residential densities (dwelling units per acre) along the interstate system based on Federal Highway*

Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding guidelines for light rail technology.

5. Provide a variety of housing choices throughout the region to ensure housing for individuals and families of diverse incomes and age groups.

- Providing housing choices that is affordable to a majority of the individuals living in the metropolitan area will be one of the greatest challenges in the next two decades of land use planning. The cost of land to develop typical single-family, detached residential uses is forcing new development into suburban and exurban locales where land is still reasonable in cost. The Canton Road corridor plan would promote new housing opportunities for both the young families desiring to live in the area and the growing senior population along the corridor.

6. Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.

- The ability to preserve our existing communities can be achieved by focusing development into areas that call for redevelopment of greyfield areas and consider in-fill, mixed-use designs in areas needing revitalization. The focus of redeveloping the older retail shopping centers with mixed-use development scenarios will assist in preserving these neighboring residential districts.

7. Advance sustainable development.

- Developing activity centers and designing quality buildings that will “stand the test of time” requires coordinated efforts from the local jurisdiction, neighboring communities, and the development community, in order to ensure success. The ability to achieve this goal may be derived from providing incentives to the developer that creates integrated land uses that complement one another and establish continuity and a higher standing. Utilization of the “carrot approach” to land planning has shown to be a more palatable methodology to establishing sustainable communities, with improved architectural designs, better exterior façade treatments, pedestrian-oriented landscaping themes, etc. The ability to initiate these improvements can be achieved through providing a “density bonus” to the developer, where there return on investment could increase with additional units being permitted as a condition, whereby the developer agrees to improve the aesthetic attributes of the development through this potential increase in earning potential. Sustainable building designs tend to maintain the original footprint and character of the building over time, where only the tenants and uses within the commercial space may change.

8. Protect environmentally sensitive areas.

- The ability to protect land areas that may be experiencing environmental impacts can in part be achieved through clustering development densities in areas that do not witness these same potential impacts, in an effort to delineate the areas from land development activities. The plan to incorporate non-structured detention in the Business District areas for new developments will assist in addressing existing stormwater concerns from surfacing parking areas that tends to pass through residential areas during heavy storm events.

10/11. Preserve existing rural character and historic resources.

- The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) or Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is another methodology for protecting pristine areas that have historic, cultural, and/or environmental resources present on a tract of land being contemplated for development. Shifting the “burden” of development into an area(s) not exhibiting these same important resources being impacted can establish new “sending areas,” where the development activity is more appropriate. The plan to look at the overall 4.5-mile corridor from the Sandy Plains Connector to the Cherokee County border essentially promoted the Business District as being the “sending area” for new development in order to protect the residential district character to the north and south of the corridor.

13. Coordinate local policies and regulations to support the RDP.

- The RDP is the “toolbox” that promotes the importance of balancing land use and transportation planning priorities into development patterns that are sustainable in nature and that tend to be transit-supportive and represent neo-traditional neighborhood designs. These “New Urbanism” enhanced designs may be mixed-use in concept, with inter-related adjoining land uses.

14. Support growth management at the state level.

- Managing growth is achieved through the incorporation of these 14 RDP policy principles, to varying levels of intensity, as the standard for future development approvals. The ability to adhere to the principles, factoring economic cycles and neighborhood-related concerns will place local jurisdictions in a precarious situation of balancing short-range priorities with long-range vision goals. The challenge of determining how land should be redeveloped as land redevelops, where to integrate transit-oriented opportunities, in-fill development challenges, and alternative housing design options will be a focal point in regional policy discussions and coordinated planning programs for the future.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Conceptual Plan & Program / Final Recommendations

Canton Road Corridor Projects & Programs – Steering Committee

Based on a comprehensive public involvement process the Planning Division has created a line item assessment of priority multi-modal transportation priorities for future programming. The projects listed are a combination of trail/sidewalk proposals, intersection safety improvements, center turn lane median treatment retrofit, signal timing studies, and potential streetscape facility priorities for future programming and funding.

Projects for Consideration

- ◇ Multi-Use Trail (12' wide asphalt) - Jamerson Road to Sandy Plains Road (Phased)
 - Phase I- Chastain Corners to Piedmont Road (Eastern Side)
 - Phase II - Jamerson Road (Kell High School to Noonday Park on Southern Side)
 - Phase II - Hawkins Store Road (Noonday Park to Canton Road on Northern Side)
 - Phase III - Kell High School (Lee Waters Road, Winfred Drive, Pine Mill Drive)

- ◇ Connecting Sidewalks
 - Jamerson Road to Sandy Plains Road (Western Side)
 - Shaw Park Road (Canton Road to Shaw Park on South Side)
 - Chance Road (Canton Road to Shaw Park Road on South Side)

- ◇ Intersection Improvements (Pedestrian Crossings – signals, turn lane islands, ADA ramps, striped crosswalks on all approaches, etc., where appropriate per MUTCD)
 - Liberty Hill Road, Piedmont Road, Chance Road, Worley Drive,
 - New Chastain Road – Blackwell Road, Chastain Corners Road
 - Hawkins Store Road, Ebenezer Road , Shallowford Road

- ◇ Local Area Road Program (LARP) Resurfacing –Travel Lane Narrowing (11' wide with Bicycle-Friendly Shoulders at existing curbs)

- ◇ Left-Turn Lane Median Treatment (Chastain Corners Road to south of Piedmont Road)
 - Flush mounted design with brick or stone features done concurrently with LARP Resurfacing.
 - Proposed material to be stamped asphalt and a potential dye color (red).

- ◇ Intersection Signal Timing Study – Piedmont and New Chastain /Blackwell Roads.
- ◇ Community Center near Shaw Park
- ◇ Streetscape Benches & Garbage Receptacles 100’ apart on both sides of the roadway in Business District
- ◇ Gateway Marker Features – Design TBD
(Sandy Plains Connector, Piedmont Road, Jamerson Road, Chastain Corners Road)
- ◇ Light Pole Banners in Business District on both sides of roadway
- ◇ Parallel Access Road (Two & Three lane Section landscaped with curb & gutter)
Piedmont Road to Blackwell Elementary School
(Two Lane-Urban Section with Landscaped Island 10’ wide)
New Chastain Road to Piedmont Road (Two Lane-Urban Section)
- ◇ Three-Rail Fence (White with Stone/Brick Columns) on both sides of roadway Jamerson Road to Sandy Plains Road
- ◇ Ornamental Street Trees (50’ apart in Business District & 200’ apart north of Chastain Corners & south of Piedmont on both sides of the roadway – variety TBD)
- ◇ Historic Period Street Lighting (Pedestrian Scale) every 50’ in Business District
- ◇ Pocket Parks (Cost Per Acre)
 - Powell Wright Road (just south of intersection)
 - Shaw Park Community Center
 - K & G Shopping Center
 - Chastain Corners – New Chastain Road
 - Jamerson Road

Short-Range & Long-Range Programs for Consideration

- ◇ Redevelopment Area in Business District area – Mandatory Rezoning & Public Review Methodology
- ◇ Neighborhood Activity Center Land Use Categories – Jamerson Road to Sandy Plains Road – 35,000 sq./ft. maximum building size
- ◇ Community Activity Center Land Use Categories – Redevelopment Areas Only
- ◇ Promoting Mixed Use Developments with Residential and Office/Commercial Scenarios
- ◇ Express Bus Service (Piedmont Village and Canton Road Plaza Park n’ Ride Lots)
- ◇ Senior Housing (Age Restricted) on large tract properties abutting Canton Road
- ◇ Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Regional Transportation Plan — Transportation Improvement Plan
- ◇ Transportation Enhancements Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)
- ◇ Curb Cut Buy-Back Program (Non-Rezoning)
- ◇ Canton Road Business Association Sponsorship
 - Flowering Planters (2 per lot)
 - Inter-Parcel Connection Program
 - Quarterly Clean-Up Saturday Program
 - Business District Improvement Fund Program
 - Media Campaign – Web Site & Promotional Video

Transportation Programs and Projects Matrix — next page

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS MATRIX

Description	Type of Improvement	Engineering Year	Engineering Cost	ROW Year	ROW Cost	Construction Cost	Total Project Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Amount	Cost Inflator	Inflated Cost
Chastain Corners to Piedmont Road - Multi-use Trail @ 6837'	Bicycle/Pedestrian	2008	\$563,287	2009	\$1,196,475	\$1,130,019	\$3,797,995	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$1,253,338	1.130	\$4,291,734
Chastain Corners to Jamerson Road - Multi-use Trail @ 12,332'	Bicycle/Pedestrian	2011	\$226,004	2012	\$2,158,100	\$2,038,233	\$3,999,881	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$1,319,961	1.267	\$5,067,849
Piedmont Road to Sandy Plains Road - Multi-use Trail @ 9776'	Bicycle/Pedestrian	2011	\$323,155	2012	\$1,710,800	\$1,615,777	\$3,649,733	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$1,204,412	1.267	\$4,624,211
Shallowford Road to Kell high School - Multi-use Trail @ 8201'	Bicycle/Pedestrian	2014	\$271,092	2015	\$1,291,658	\$1,355,461	\$2,918,211	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$963,010	1.384	\$4,038,804
Sidewalks - Canton Road @ 28945'	Pedestrian	2011	\$265,000	2012	\$5,427,188	\$1,325,000	\$7,017,188	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$2,315,672	1.267	\$8,890,777
Sidewalks - Shaw Park Road @ 2420'	Pedestrian	2014	\$11,000	2015	\$363,000	\$55,000	\$429,000	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$141,570	1.384	\$593,736
Sidewalks - Chance Road @ 2836'	Pedestrian	2014	\$9,000	2015	\$425,400	\$45,000	\$479,400	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$158,202	1.384	\$663,490
Liberty Hill Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2011	\$6,000	2012	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.267	\$150,140
Piedmont Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2008	\$6,000	2009	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.130	\$133,905
Chance Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2008	\$6,000	2009	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.130	\$133,905
Worley Drive - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2008	\$6,000	2009	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.130	\$133,905
New Chastain Road - Blackwell Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2008	\$6,000	2009	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.130	\$133,905
Chastain Corners Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2008	\$6,000	2009	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.130	\$133,905
Hawkins Store Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2011	\$6,000	2012	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.267	\$150,140
Ebenezer Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2011	\$6,000	2012	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.267	\$150,140
Shallowford Road - Intersection Improvements	Intersection Improvements	2011	\$6,000	2012	\$82,500	\$30,000	\$118,500	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$39,105	1.267	\$150,140
Gateway Marker - Sandy Plains Cntr.	Pedestrian	2008	\$3,000	2009	\$2,500	\$15,000	\$20,500	Cobb County	County	\$6,765	1.130	\$23,165
Gateway Marker - Piedmont Road	Pedestrian	2008	\$3,000	2009	\$2,500	\$15,000	\$20,500	Cobb County	County	\$6,765	1.130	\$23,165

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS MATRIX

Description	Type of Improvement	Engineering Year	Engineering Cost	ROW Year	ROW Cost	Construction Cost	Total Project Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Amount	Cost Inflator	Inflated Cost
Gateway Marker - Jamerson Road	Pedestrian	2008	\$3,000	2009	\$2,500	\$15,000	\$20,500	Cobb County	County	\$6,765	1.130	\$23,165
Gateway Marker - Chastain Corners	Pedestrian	2008	\$3,000	2009	\$2,500	\$15,000	\$20,500	Cobb County	County	\$6,765	1.130	\$23,165
Canton Road Resurfacing - Liberty Road to Shallowford Road	Roadway Operations	2011	\$211,640	2012	N/a	\$1,058,200	\$1,269,840	Cobb County	LARP, County	\$419,047	1.267	\$1,608,887
Canton Road Resurfacing - Chastain Corners to Piedmont Road	Roadway Operations	2008	\$77,600	2009	N/a	\$388,000	\$465,600	Cobb County	LARP, County	\$153,648	1.130	\$526,128
New Chastain Road to Piedmont East Road Access Road @ 6290'	Pedestrian/Roadway Operations	2014	\$358,445	2015	\$3,113,550	\$1,462,000	\$4,933,995	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$1,628,218	1.384	\$6,828,649
New Chastain Road to Piedmont Road Access Road Streetscaping	Pedestrian	2014	N/a	2015	N/a	\$330,225	\$330,225	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$108,974	1.384	\$457,031
New Chastain Road to Piedmont West Road Access Road @ 5321'	Pedestrian/Roadway Operations	2014	\$137,470	2015	\$2,633,895	\$408,000	\$3,179,365	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$1,049,191	1.384	\$4,400,242
Piedmont Road to Blackwell Elementary School Access Road Streetscaping	Pedestrian	2014	N/a	2015	N/a	\$279,352	\$279,352	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$92,186	1.384	\$386,623
Canton Road Street Trees (Business District) - 342 total	Pedestrian	2008	N/a	2009	N/a	\$205,200	\$205,200	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$67,716	1.130	\$231,876
Canton Road Street Trees (Other Areas) - 737 total	Pedestrian	2011	N/a	2012	N/a	\$442,200	\$442,200	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$145,926	1.267	\$560,267
Canton Road Ornamental Lighting - 171 total (Business District)	Pedestrian	2008	N/a	2009	N/a	\$513,000	\$513,000	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$169,290	1.130	\$579,690
Canton Road Pedestrian Amenities (Business District)	Pedestrian	2008	N/a	2009	N/a	\$60,000	\$60,000	Cobb County	TEA-05, County	\$19,800	1.130	\$67,800
Intersection signal timing study - Piedmont Road	Traffic Signals	2011	\$50,000	2012	N/a	N/a	\$50,000	Cobb County	County	\$16,500	1.267	\$63,350
Total			\$2,569,694		\$19,072,565	\$13,040,668	\$35,168,684			\$11,605,666		\$45,243,888

APPENDIX

Public Input Strengths and Opportunities

May 5th Kick-Off Meeting held at Blackwell Elementary School –

Civic Leaders

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Ideas</u>
Parks	No destinations in the area	Traffic calming
Business	Disconnect between people and greenspace	Area attraction/destination
Developable land (redevelopment)	Potential funding/financing	Small town redevelopment approach
		Outdoor theater/Entertainment
		Streetscape improvements (sidewalks, trees, lights, etc.)
		Different looks for each District
		Retirement villages
		Walking trail connections
		Trolley/LRT connection along corridor
		Minor League Baseball Stadium

Business Owners

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Ideas</u>
Current population	School Traffic	Traffic calming
Existing variety in types of business	Lack of variety of services	Area attraction/destination is not needed
	Lack of continuity in building façade	Small town redevelopment approach is not viable
	Billboards	Streetscape improvements (sidewalks, trees, lights, etc.) should not impede vehicular traffic
	Population	Increase population density
	Inter parcel access	Build/Improve upon existing “niche” businesses
	Tractor trailer traffic	LRT/Walkability connections along corridor is not necessary
	Proximity to Town Center	

Public Input Strengths and Opportunities

Business/Commercial Property Owners

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Ideas</u>
Traffic Counts	Visual clutter/signage	Overlay zoning
Current demographic and income levels	Random development patterns	Minimize zoning reviews
Vacant development opportunities	Lack of architectural standards	Involve neighborhood groups in review process
Access	Inconsistent development, setbacks	Inter parcel access
Proximity to Marietta	Parity with permitting requirements	Improve landscaping
	Uncoordinated traffic signals	
	Speed enforcement	
	Police enforcement	

Residential Property Owners

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Ideas</u>
Grouping of uses	Lack of emphasis on code enforcement	Synchronize traffic lights
Identifying issues	Restrictive land use effects	Shuttle transportation within the corridor
Uniformity in corridor	Social impacts of public transportation	Locate pedestrian in northern corridor
Unifying business owners	Billboard control – not addressed	Incorporate Noonday Baptist access into plan (median location)
Breaking up parking lots	Intersecting streets – not addressed	
Maximizing uses with access	Sewer not addressed	

Upon review, the top three answers for each category are as follows:

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Ideas</u>
<i>1. Traffic counts</i>	<i>1. Traffic congestion/flow</i>	<i>1. Landscape/Streetscape improvements</i>
<i>2. Redevelopment opportunities</i>	<i>2. Inter parcel access</i>	<i>2. Overlay/Architectural design standards</i>
<i>3. Variety of businesses</i>	<i>3. Zoning and Code Enforcement</i>	<i>3. Traffic calming/flow</i>

1997 Canton Road Corridor Study

Executive Summary

Canton Road Corridor Study

Report Contents

- A Comprehensive Survey and Analysis of Existing Conditions Along the Entire Corridor...including Land Use, Zoning Classifications, Structural Conditions, Demographic/Housing Characteristics, and Cultural Resources.
- A Survey of Parcels which are Undeveloped, Vacant, or For Sale, and Buildings which are either Abandoned, Dilapidated or Deteriorated.
- Identification of Commercial Areas which are Economically Depressed.
- Identification of Residential and Commercial Areas which are in Transition.
- Recommendation of Changes to be made to the Future Land Use Map to Encourage a More Desirable Development Pattern.
- Recommendation of Public Policies to improve aesthetics and encourage a balance of commercial and residential development and redevelopment in the Canton Road Corridor.

Overview: Report Contents

Background In March 1997, District 3 Commissioner Gordon Wysong observed that the Town Center area regional activity center was continuing to prosper while the Canton Road corridor appeared to be in a state of decline, in spite of the recent transportation improvement project completed by the Georgia and Cobb County Departments of Transportation in 1996. The Department of Community Development's Planning Division was directed to study the Canton Road Corridor for possible amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and to identify policies and programs which would encourage economic development throughout the corridor.

The Study Area The Canton Road Corridor, for the purpose of this study, was defined as the parcels directly served by Canton Road from Liberty Hill Road near the northeasterly city limits of Marietta, northward to Jamerson Road. The width of the study area varies but is approximately 4.2 miles long. (*See Figure 1 for a graphic description of the study area.*)

Geography Canton Road is a five-lane roadway with two travel lanes in each direction and one center line. As might be expected, the ground elevation along this stretch of roadway varies significantly starting with an elevation of approximately 1,000 feet on the northern limit, to a low

point of approximately 918 feet just north of Hawkins Store Road (intersection with Little Noonday Creek), and ending with an elevation of approximately 1,051 feet at Liberty Hill Road.

Natural resource features in the study area consist of the Little Noonday Creek which crosses Canton Road just north of its intersection with Hawkins Store Road. Additionally, in this same vicinity, the National Wetlands Inventory Map (NWI) indicates the possible presence of wetlands. According to the most recent Flood Insurance Rate Map (Map No. 13067C0015 F), Panel Number 15 of 95, this same area includes special flood areas which may be periodically inundated with a 100-year or 500-year flood. The cartecay and taccoa soils types which are common in flood prone areas generally pose a severe constraint on development. Assuming the appropriate precautions are taken when development proposals in this area of Canton Road Corridor are considered in the future, there should be limited impact on these natural resource features.

Canton Road Corridor Market Study - 2004

An Investment in Change and a Commitment to Neighborhood Potential

Executive Summary

Purpose

The transformation of suburban business districts and corridors demands a new form of community building that relies on the integration of office, retail, residential, and community uses. This integration creates opportunities for citizens to find places that are special and irresistible, in which they visit, invest, and quite possibly choose to reside. These new trends can act as a catalyst for new development and introduce smart growth initiatives to suburban locations. A key facet in a comprehensive land plan will be the establishment of pedestrian-friendly development patterns designed to link the needs of the neighboring communities, existing employers, and prospective business interests along Canton Road.

The purpose of this study is to perform a market evaluation for the Canton Road corridor in order to develop a conceptual plan for policy considerations and potential land development candidacy along respective areas of the corridor. The analysis will assist in determining potential improvement scenarios that could be entertained along key sections of the roadway, which will include streetscape and land use concepts in the overall review.

Through the assessment of socio-economic conditions, future land use, market data and transportation objectives, this study will provide recommendations for concerted policy initiatives embodying both economic development and the quality of life principles in the analysis. A successful implementation plan will necessitate effective cooperation between the citizens, the business community and local municipalities.

NOTE: The information provided in this documentation is proposed as a conceptual plan, designed to affect positive and sustainable change along the Canton Road corridor, while utilizing quantifiable demographic information, regional planning policies, current land use designations, geographic information systems (GIS), aerial photography, and successful corridor plans from other jurisdictions as components of this overall research. The recommendations and improvements referenced do not factor in the analysis any past County zoning decisions, neighborhood concerns, or individual property owner land development issues as part of this review. The primary source of this documentation was compiled by the Cobb County Community Development Agency - Planning Division based on a theoretical in-house staff planning exercise.

Background

In 1997, District 3 Commissioner Gordon Wysong observed that the Town Center area regional activity was continuing to prosper while the Canton Road corridor appeared to be in a state of decline. This was in spite of a transportation improvement project completed by the state of Georgia and Cobb County Departments of Transportation in 1996. The Department of Community Development Planning Division was directed to study the Canton Road corridor for possible amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan, while identifying policies and

programs, which would encourage economic development throughout the corridor. From this Commissioner direction, the 1997 Canton Road Study was created. Recent staff-level research as a component of this updated plan has identified many similar characteristics in the corridor appearance and development patterns that were evaluated in the 1997 Study.

The Canton Road corridor as its name indicates has been an important roadway for Cobb County residents desiring to commute to and from Cherokee County (Cities of Canton & Woodstock) for decades. As the metro area has grown in recent years, so has the importance of the roadway in providing regional mobility to the interstate system and key retail/business opportunities throughout the corridor. As this demand grew, so did the operational characteristics of the facility. The corridor transformed from a rural two-lane road into a 5-lane arterial with commercial and residential land uses throughout the corridor. The demand that Canton Road has created for regional through traffic has diminished its value as an activity center destination.

The Canton Road corridor from the Highway 5 Connector to the Cherokee County line was removed from the State Route system in the 1990's. From a planning and engineering perspective, this roadway reclassification will provide additional opportunities for design creativity within the right-of-way, though the improvements considered must adhere to AASHTO (civil engineering) design guidelines to ensure state programming and funding opportunities can be allocated in the future.

Current zoning along the Canton Road corridor from Sandy Plains Road to the Cherokee County border is an assortment of general commercial/retail, single-family residential, and industrial compatible land uses. The existing retail uses are a combination of gas stations, franchise restaurants, strip retail, and auto-dependent development patterns. The corridor shows evidence of retail establishments loosely categorized as Class-B & Class-C business uses. There are several vacant gas stations that have not redeveloped, though new, large-scale convenience store gas stations have been developed alongside these vacant sites. The strip retail shopping centers along the corridor exhibit varying levels of aesthetic improvements, where tenant turnover is apparent. The availability of office-related land uses appears deficient, in terms of achieving an effective balance of inter-related land uses that would benefit from the associated proximity.

The opportunities related to aesthetic improvements along Canton Road could provide an immediate enhancement along the roadway with specific attention to new building facades, ground-base monument signs, pedestrian-scale lighting, roadway landscaping, street trees, parking lot planted islands, and establishing pocket parks in key areas.

The intersection of Canton Road at Piedmont Road is listed as a site for potential redevelopment. The intersections proximity to the Town Center Community Improvement District (CID) provides a physical connection, which could provide complementary land uses for the Canton Road corridor. The Town Center CID's efforts to create a Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan as a part of their Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) could result in an associated economic benefit to the Canton Road corridor as the LCI area within the CID begins to fund roadway improvement and land use projects.

Citizen voiced concerns at recent Zoning Hearings and Commissioner Town Hall sessions specific to code enforcement, residential/commercial land use proposals, the visual appearance of the 5-lane corridor, storm water impacts from the existing commercial developments, and

regional traffic demands during peak travel periods. The residential communities surrounding the Canton Road corridor are well aligned and tend to voice their concerns during public review opportunities, with supporting representation from Northeast Cobb Civic Association and East Cobb Civic Association.

Study Area

For the purposes of this study, the Canton Road Corridor Boundary Area extends generally from Sandy Plains Road northward to the Highway 92 corridor in Cherokee County. The eastern boundary follows Sandy Plains Road extending northward to Ebenezer Road, continuing northwesterly along Ebenezer Road before turning due north to Highway 92 area in the City of Woodstock. The western boundary pushes northwesterly near Bells Ferry Road to Highway 92, while remaining east of the Town Center CID area. The total acreage in the Study Corridor is 12,440 acres. The area within Cobb County comprises 10,842 acres. (See GIS Map)

Study Data

Cobb County Community Development’s Planning Division produced this study. A special thanks to Tom Boland of the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce for providing the market statistics utilizing Claritas Software.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Population Growth

As shown in the Demographic Snapshot, the corridor population in 2003 is estimated at 36,787 and has realized an actual population count of 35,546 according to Census 2000. While the study area has shown a 12.38% increase in overall population between 1990-2000, a much smaller growth trend occurred between 2000-2002 at 3.49%. Likewise to that of the last three years, a marginal population increase is expected from 2003-2008 to be 5.87%.

Race/Gender

The data reviewed indicates in the estimated population in 2002 for the study area correlated to 82% of the citizens being White/Caucasian, with 8% of the population represented by Black/African American and Asian representing 4.2% of the survey area. As is generally reflected in Cobb County, the male to female ratio was equally distributed with males representing 49.7 % of the population and to the female 50.2%. Additionally, the average age of females in the study area was 37.75 years old and the male average age was 38.8. Cobb County has an average high of 18.4 percent of citizens between the ages of 35-44, where the corridor group average is comparable at 17.6%.

2003 Population Estimates by Single Race Classification

Race	Population	Percentage
White Alone	30,477	82.85%
Black or African American	3,078	8.37%

Alone		
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	145	0.39%
Asian Alone	1,552	4.22%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	27	0.07%
Some Other Races Alone	783	2.13%
Two or More Races	725	19.70%
Total	36,787	

2003 Hispanic or Latino Population Estimates by Origin

Race	Population	Percentage
Not Hispanic or Latino	34,722	94.39%
Hispanic or Latino	2,065	5.61%
Mexican	1,100	53.27%
Puerto Rican	193	9.35%
Cuban	82	3.97%
All Other Hispanic or Latino	691	33.46%
Total	36,787	

Education Level/Marital Status

Within the study area of population 15 years of age or older, a higher than normal County average relating to education levels is represented in the corridor with 24% having graduated from high school, 27% with some college experience and an impressive 25% having achieved a Bachelor's Degree. Currently married individuals account for 61% of the total population, leaving 23% as single and 13% accounting for divorce.

2003 Age 25+ Estimated Population by Educational Attainment

Education	Population	Percentage
Less than 9 th grade	638	2.62%
Some High School, no diploma	1,464	6.02%
High School Graduate (or GED)	5,927	24.37%
Some College, no degree	6,767	27.83%
Associate Degree	1,407	5.79%
Bachelor's Degree	6,154	25.31%
Master's Degree	1,343	5.52%
Professional School Degree	369	1.52%
Doctorate Degree	247	1.02%
Total	24,317	

Household Size

In the past few decades, household size declined nationally due to a decrease in fertility rates, increasing divorces and single person households and a rise in the elderly population. The average household size within the study area was 2.7 individuals, which exactly mirrored that of Cobb County.

Income/Work Habits

Corridor residents within the study area have a significantly higher household income level with an average of \$93,311 annually, as compared to the County average of \$58,289. Citizens, who were 16+ years old and worked, did so within the classification of Sales and Office (32.5%), Management/Business (18.90%) and Professional/Related Occupations finishing out the top three (21%). These same workers drove alone to work 82% of their time and only carpooled 9.9% of the time. It is interesting to note the travel time to work averaged 27% and 25% respectively for the time categories of 15-29 minutes and 30-44 minutes, with percentages remaining substantial for the less than 15 minutes category (19%) and 45-59 minutes (14%). Collectively, approximately 75% of the corridor has an annual income ranging from \$35,000 to \$150,000 per household.

2003 Est. Households by Household Income

Income	Population	Percentage
Less than \$15,000	501	3.82%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	598	4.56%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	805	6.14%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1,618	12.33%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	3,138	23.92%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	2,572	19.61%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	2,719	20.73%
\$150,000 - \$249,999	973	7.42%
\$250,000 - \$499,999	148	1.13%
\$500,000 and more	46	0.35%
Total	13,119	

Housing

Existing home values in the area were largely made up of properties \$100,000 to \$149,000 range accounting for 34% of the total housing stock, with an additional 34% of the households valued between \$150,000 to \$199,000. By reviewing the number of homes built each decade, the period between 1980-89 showed the largest percentage of homes built at 34% and during the 1970's decade saw another significant impact of 25%. The housing stock within the study area represents an average "year built" date of 1991, accounting for a very young development area.

2003 Est. All Owner-Occupied Housing Values

Value	Population	Percentage
Less than \$20,000	8	0.07%
\$20,000 - \$39,000	22	0.20%
\$40,000 - \$59,000	24	0.22%
\$60,000 - \$79,000	175	1.58%
\$80,000 - \$99,000	618	5.57%
\$100,000 - \$149,000	4,519	40.73%
\$150,000 - \$199,000	3,883	34.99%
\$200,000 - \$ 299,000	1,606	14.47%
\$300,000 - \$399,000	153	1.38%
\$400,000 - \$499,000	39	0.35%
\$500,000 - \$749,000	36	0.32%
\$750,000 - \$999,999	10	0.09%
\$1,000,000 or more	2	0.02%
Total	11,096	

Land Use Analysis

Introduction

The Canton Road Corridor is situated along Canton Road in northeast Cobb County, from the Marietta city limits to US Highway 92 in Cherokee County. Currently, this corridor serves as a thoroughfare to the city of Woodstock. Canton Road is lined with weak and/or low-end retailers. These shops are set back rather from the roadway with large parking lots fronting Canton Road and numerous access curb cuts.

Land uses within this section of Canton Road range from general commercial, heavy to light industrial, retail, civic, to single and multifamily residential zoning classifications. The southern end of the corridor, along Canton Road beginning at Boyd Road is comprised of commercial and industrial compatible development tracts, which could be best described as underutilized in their current economic state.

Along this portion of Canton Road there are no street trees or other aesthetic elements that might create more development appeal along this section of the corridor. The area has no bike paths nor and evidence of effective sidewalk connections. The corridor also contains high volumes of vehicular traffic, resulting in congestion during peak travel times creating an unpleasant and less safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists alike.

The heart of the corridor is a shopping area near the intersection of Canton Road and Piedmont Road. Land uses patterns adjacent to this commercial node include both commercial and multifamily residential developments. The area has 300+ different property owners, which will present challenges in assembling parcels for possible redevelopment opportunities. However, the preponderance of general commercial zoning provides flexibility for innovative development plans, which can be very appealing to speculative land planning interests.

The corridor has many assets that could promote redevelopment activity in key locations along Canton Road. These assets include Noonday and Shaw Parks, a substantial retail base, proximity to the interstate system, and a few successful retail ventures in place. Canton Road has the potential to be a gateway link between northeast Cobb County and the City of Marietta, but is currently serving a more utilitarian purpose as a thoroughfare for regional vehicular mobility. The purpose of the land use analysis is to potentially help interested citizens along the Canton Road corridor to become more involved in the redevelopment opportunities that may be afforded to the corridor and to work together in reinforcing importance of transforming key sections of the roadway, which will stimulate economic vitality and instill confidence in associated development proposals desiring to be a part of the new community landscape.

For mapping-related purposes, land use within the Canton Road Corridor was analyzed in two sections. The southern section begins near Boyd Road and runs northerly to New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road. The northern section begins at New Chastain Road /Blackwell Road and extends northerly to US Highway 92.

Northern Corridor

The northern section of Canton Road Corridor Study begins at New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road and runs northerly to US Highway 92. Of the two sections of the corridor, northern and southern, the northern section contains more vacant property and appears to have more opportunity for property assemblage and comprehensive development. Map #1 is an existing land use zoning map of the northern section of the study. Map #2 shows the adopted future land use designations for the parcels within the northern section of the study.

Existing Land Use Summary (Zoning)

A summary of the land use database that was developed is attached and listed as Table #1.

Among the findings, include:

87% of the land within the northern sub area is developed;

The northern sub area is dominated by Residential zoning designations. Single-family residential R-20 and R-15 zoning categories make up a combined 72.6% of current land use; Analysis reveals that 65% of the land is being used with a residential component. Of that, only 0.8% is used at a low density scale and 64.2% at a medium density scale; Correspondingly, the northern corridor zoning analysis shows 90.2% of zoning in the north being some sort of residential housing. R-20 makes up the largest zoning category at 42.5% with R-15 being 30.1%. After that the residential zoning drops off dramatically. Cluster residential contains 4.1%, while multi-family housing and fee simple townhouse consist of 0.4% each; Compared to the southern half of the Canton Road Corridor, this area carries a significantly higher industrial land use; Industrial/Compatible use within the northern corridor consists of 5.5% of the land, while commercial use makes up 5.5%;

A benefit to the northern corridor is the relatively large amounts of parklands and forest. Almost 17% of the land in this sub area currently has less intense land use; Park lands, which include Noonday Creek Park and Canterbury Soccer Park, make up 4.9% of the land while forest is the second largest land use in the northern corridor at 637 acres or 11.6%;

There are no parks designated along this portion of the corridor;

Only 1% of the current land use in the northern area of the corridor is designated for Office use.

Existing/Adopted Future Land Use

A summary of the future land use database that was developed is attached and listed as Table #2.

Among the findings, include:

The largest future land use designation is Low Density Residential (LDR) at 65%;
Corresponding to the existing land use, the second largest future land use category is

Public/Recreation & Conservation (PRC) at 10.6%;

Regional Activity Center (RAC) future land use designation is not found in any portion of the Canton Road Corridor;

The northern portion of the Canton Road Corridor has fewer parcels within the Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) and Community Activity Center (CAC) future land use designations. They make up a combined 7.4%;

Parks/Recreation/Conservation land use designation is very much inline with the existing land use. Cobb County set aside 10.6% or 567.37 acres of the northern portion of the Corridor for conservation or recreational activities. This includes existing parks and an existing golf course; 13% of the land in the northern corridor is undeveloped, which provides a great potential to passive recreational opportunities.

Proposed Future Land Use

The Planning Division has produced a conceptual outline of potential components of a corridor planning effort, which could be incorporated a development plan for the Canton Road Corridor. Corridor planning can focus on various aspects of roadway, streetscape, and land use improvements depending on the desires of the stakeholders involved and the intended results theorized in the planning process. Refer to Maps 5-7 for a geographic interpretation of these District concepts.

A Campus District concept is proposed for the northern Canton Road Corridor. The Campus District on Canton Road serves as a transition from the more intensive Commerce District (see Southern Corridor Proposed Future Land Use discussion) to the Campus District, which centers more on professional office uses from New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road to Shallowford Road and family entertainment land use categories from Shallowford Road to the Cherokee County border. Planned Village Concepts may be evaluated in larger tracts or assembled parcels, where appropriate. Consideration should be given to extending multi-use trails along the connecting roadways and stream corridors like Rubes Creek, Noonday Creek and Little Noonday Creek. The Canterbury Office Park design should serve as the central theme for the Professional Office use along both sides of Canton Road. The potential development will hinge on effective property assemblages and inter parcel connections to existing collector roadways.

The northernmost portion of the Canton Road corridor includes signalized intersection at Jamerson Road. This section of Canton Road encompasses numerous opportunities to develop Recreational land use proposals, which will complement the array of existing recreational facilities (both public and private) adjacent to the corridor. Current recreational uses include Noonday Creek Park (Soccer, Baseball), Kell High School, batting cage business, skateboard/roller blade business, skating rink, and a golf course.

The Jamerson Road area of the Canton Road corridor will present unique marketing opportunities for development and redevelopment efforts. The physical proximity of this portion of Canton Road will serve as northern gateway into Cobb County from the City of Woodstock and Cherokee County. Cobb County will need to work closely with the two governmental entities in developing a corridor plan that will transition land use patterns seamlessly across county lines, while providing complementary commercial and residential land uses. This particular portion of the corridor is predominated with Butler buildings lacking pedestrian accessibility and interconnected parcels.

The area could also support governmental service centers, a Senior Living Center, cultural center, or a similar type of public service use associated with recreation and/or education. The location of Kennesaw State University could also provide the Canton Road corridor with a satellite campus facility. Other Universities that may entertain satellite offices could be Clayton State College, Georgia State University, Chattahoochee Tech, etc.

The location of the Georgia Northeastern rail line will limit expansive development potential on the eastern side of the corridor. Possible opportunities for the area would be for a more intensive retail development with a “street presence” to Canton Road. The topography of the area could allow for a two or three story mixed use development, with the development pattern extending across the Georgia Northeastern rail line corridor. The area presents candidate opportunities as an extension of the professional office uses that could complement existing recreational uses.

A similar development pattern and architectural theme should be considered for all four quadrants of the Jamerson Road intersection. Improved pedestrian crossings and raised median islands should be a component of a comprehensive redevelopment plan.

Southern Corridor Existing Conditions

The southern section of Canton Road Corridor Study begins at or about Boyd Road and runs northerly to New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road. Of the two sections of the corridor, northern and southern, the southern section contains more developed land. Map #3 is an existing land use zoning map of the southern section of the study. Map #4 shows the adopted future land use designations for the parcels within the southern section of the study.

Existing Land Use Summary (Zoning)

A summary of the land use database that was developed is attached and listed as Table #1. Among the findings, include:

91% of the land within the southern sub area is developed;

Like the northern portion of the Corridor, the southern sub area is dominated by Residential zoning designations. Single-family residential R-20 and R-15 zoning categories make up a combined 80.5% of current land use designations;

High Residential is the second largest residential land use in the southern section at 1.2% and represents all of the High Residential in the entire Canton Road Corridor Study Area;

Compared to the northern half of the Canton Road Corridor, this area has significantly fewer industrial land uses but more commercial zoning land use designations. While the north has 2.7% commercial use, the southern section has dedicated 9.2% to commercial use, which works well for the proposed "Commerce District";

In contrast, the Northern Corridor contains 5.5% of Industrial/Compatible use, while the Southern Corridor consists of no Industrial/Compatible uses. This works well for more High Density Residential uses in the proposed "Loft District";

There are no parks designated along this portion of the corridor;

Inconsistent architectural appearance of structures; Over half of the sites observed were noted as having physical characteristics which could provide for enhanced and additional streetscape and landscape;

Contains established retail shopping centers with anchor tenets and available space;

Excessive curb cuts, signage, and outside storage;

Close proximity to the Interstate via Canton Road Connector and Piedmont Road/Barrett Parkway.

Existing/Adopted Future Land Use

A summary of the future land use database that was developed is attached and listed as Table #2.

Among the findings, include:

The largest future land use designation is Low Density Residential (LDR) at 68%;

The second largest future land use category is Medium Density Residential (MDR) at 13.8%;

Corresponding to existing land use, the properties fronting Canton Road have a Community Activity Center (CAC) future land use designation;

Regional Activity Center (RAC) future land use designation is not found in any portion of the Canton Road Corridor;

The southern portion of the Canton Road Corridor can accommodate a larger concentration of commercial uses based on its existing future land use -- Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) and Community Activity Center (CAC) future land use designations make up a combined 11%

Proposed Future Land Use

A Commerce District and Loft District concepts are proposed for the southern portion of the Canton Road Corridor. The Commerce District extends along Canton Road from just south of Piedmont Road and just north of New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road, along the Canton Road corridor. The plan calls for new development to provide buildings with 4-sides brick and architectural treatments referencing a historic period. The increased development intensity and foot traffic potential should warrant wide (10') multi-use trails on both sides of the corridor.

The Commerce District would serve as the primary location along the corridor for medium and large-scale commercial and retail land uses. The area should also evaluate Medium Density / High Density Residential opportunities along the corridor between the Piedmont Road and New Chastain Road/Blackwell Road intersections. The existing shopping centers in the Commerce District should develop at a minimum with infill out parcel lots, which front the Canton Road Corridor and provide street appeal and continuity with the existing uses within the development footprint. Consideration should be given to redeveloping the smaller declining shopping centers into potential townhomes or medium density residential communities.

Two and three-story retail shops are recommended on the southern portion of the Piedmont Road intersection. The redevelopment site would have a pedestrian bridge on the second story that would physically connect Piedmont Village with Piedmont Walk over Canton Road. The pedestrian bridge could also serve as a “gateway feature” for the corridor, while providing a safe pedestrian crossing during peak travel periods. Strong internal sidewalk network and pocket parks should be considered for both tracts as redevelopment occurs.

There should be an evaluation of the medium size anchor tenants and upscale eating establishments for the redevelopment plan. “Big box” development options for either tract are discouraged. The tenants could include businesses like Starbucks, Brewster’s Ice Cream, Kohl’s, Stony River, Buckhead Brewery, Applebee’s, F.I.R.E. businesses, etc.

Upscale restaurants should be considered for the area between Piedmont Road and Old Piedmont Road due to the sites visual location and roadway access potential.

The Olde Tyme Pottery/K&G Shopping Center should evaluate two-story retail along Canton Road or at a minimum, improved out parcel development opportunities, which extend into the expansive parking area. Inter parcel road connections should be designed for future retrofits. A Factory Outlet concept with high-end stores selling factory seconds (e.g. Polo, Jones New York, Bose, Calvin Klein, Mikasa, etc.) could be evaluated. Landscaped parking circulation islands (with trees and shrubs) should be a component of the redevelopment initiative.

Market Square development should add out parcel retail parcels along Canton Road, which complement the development, while providing continuity to the internal business already in place.

Shaw Park area and Chance Road should consider Medium Density Residential (two story design) condominiums/lofts, which could be marketed as senior living communities, where residents could live, shop and play with limited vehicular utilization.

Blackwell Square Shopping Center presents significant redevelopment possibilities as either a retail center or a Medium/High Density Residential development site. A retail component should be considered along the frontage of Canton Road. The topography of the site lends itself to separate out parcel lots to provide a visual connection to the existing strip development uses. Landscaped parking islands and improved pedestrian circulation should be entertained. A

similar concept could be evaluated for the northwest quadrant of the Blackwell Road intersection to New Chastain Road.

The area between the Canton Road Connector and Piedmont Road could present the greatest redevelopment challenges compared to other areas along the corridor, though the opportunity to transform the sub area from its current Industrial Compatible uses to mixed use development patterns, with live, work, and play communities would be quite beneficial. A Mixed-Use/Loft District is proposed for this most southern portion of the Corridor. The existing roadway network along the corridor will establish an effective grid system for access and mobility.

The established residential communities surrounding this section of the Canton Road corridor will need to be involved in the phasing and transitioning of land use patterns. The value of land for the existing commercial and industrial enterprises along the corridor will likely necessitate High Density Residential development patterns with mixed-use retail opportunities to support the financial outlook for a redevelopment retrofit proposal. The area on the western side of Canton Road between Kurtz Road and Westerly Way may present the greatest opportunities for a development pattern that includes Neighborhood Shopping and High Density Residential communities.

The concept of a Loft District is conceived to provide a transition from city of Marietta's Historic Area and establish modern-day land use development with historical architectural designs. The loft concept will be able to compete with the Industrial Compatible land uses in the short-term and eventually transition the development patterns to a more intensive residential, pedestrian-oriented focus. Retrofit designs should consider increased buffers from existing residential communities and possible linear/pocket parks, where appropriate.

A loft development proposal tends to attract a younger demographic profile when drawing comparisons with the current Atlanta real estate market. This area's connection to the Town Center CID and established East Cobb community may create an empty nest market share for older community members, if comprehensive mixed-use scenarios are entertained.

CURRENT MARKET ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Cobb County Chamber of Commerce assisted the Cobb County Planning Staff in acquiring detailed market condition data from Claritas Inc. for this study. The data included a retail market analysis and information on the various industries located within the study boundary. The Planning Staff also surveyed the corridor to analyze the existing business mix, business patterns and local competition. This portion of the study provides an area market overview and a more detailed market study of the existing conditions within the Canton Road Corridor study area.

Area Summary

The five-mile region surrounding the Canton Road Study Corridor consists of a mixture of uses including, commercial/retail, residential, office, industrial, public and conservation purposes. Given the mixture of uses, the area remains predominantly residential. Focusing on the commercial and retail competitive markets within this five-mile area, several Community Activity Centers (as defined in the Cobb County Comprehensive: A Policy Guide 1995-2015) exist.

Located west of the Canton Road Study Corridor is the Town Center Regional Activity Center. This is an area of intense commercial/retail development. There is also a concentrated mix of office and high density residential uses within the Activity Center. The Town Center District draws customers and clients on a sizeable scale, well outside of the boundaries of Cobb County. Directly adjacent to the Town Center Activity Center is a smaller Community Activity Center located along Bells Ferry Road. This area consists of nodal office and retail development designed to serve the immediate neighborhood and community. Northwest of the Town Center region and northwest of the Canton Road Study Corridor, office and retail development can be found at Wade Green Road and Interstate 75.

Other surrounding office and retail nodes within a five-mile radius of the Canton Road Study Corridor are located along the southern portions of Canton Road and Bells Ferry Road. Each of these districts, which are located southwest of the Study Corridor, are engrossed within the northern boundaries of the city of Marietta. The majority of the City of Marietta is located within a five-mile radius of the Study Corridor. Also located southwest of the Study Corridor are nodal developments along Cobb Parkway on the eastern boundary of the city of Kennesaw.

Office and retail nodal development can also be found southeast of the Canton Road Corridor at the intersection of Roswell Road and Robinson Road. Traveling northeast from the Study Corridor, office and retail nodes are found along Sandy Plains Road at Piedmont and Shallowford Road intersections. While remaining within a five-mile regional boundary extending outside of the Cobb County border, office and retail development is found along Highway 92 in Cherokee County. Cherokee County adopted an Overlay District to encourage redevelopment of this highway.

Canton Road Corridor Retail Market Analysis

The Canton Road Corridor Study Area consists of 306 total retail establishments and a total of 3,381 employees. The corridor generates \$429 million in total annual sales. Although the leading types of establishments are comprised of miscellaneous retail vendors (antique shops, jewelry stores, florists, newsstands, pet shops, etc.), these establishments only generate \$37.8 million in sales, behind Eating and Drinking, Equipment, Supply and Mobile Home, Food Stores and Service Stations Businesses. Service Station Establishments lead the way in sales generating \$105.6 million or 24.61% of the revenue in the Canton Road Study Area. Food Stores generate \$82.4 million in total sales or 19.2% of the Study Area. Supply and Mobile Home Businesses finish third in total sales generating \$65.4 million in sales or 15.24% of the Corridor.

SIC Code	Business Description	Total Establishments	% Of Corridor	Total Employees	% Of Corridor	Total Sales (millions)	% Of Corridor	Establishments 20+ Employees
52	Building Materials, Garden Supply and Mobile Homes	31	10.13%	464	13.72%	65.4	15.24%	5
53	General Merchandise Stores	3	0.98%	103	2.99%	11.4	2.66%	2
54	Food Stores	21	6.86%	511	15.11%	82.4	19.20%	5
55	Automobile Dealers and Gas Service Stations	41	13.40%	379	11.21%	105.6	24.61%	3
56	Apparel and Accessory Stores	18	5.88%	86	2.54%	7.0	1.63%	1
57	Home Furniture, Furnishings and Equipment	52	16.99%	336	9.94%	62.9	14.66%	2
58	Eating and Drinking Places	62	20.26%	1143	33.81%	56.6	13.19%	18
59	Miscellaneous Retail	78	25.49%	359	10.62%	37.8	8.81%	4
RET	All Retailing (Totals)	306	100%	3381	100%	429.1	100%	40

The lowest sales generating business type in the Corridor Study Area is Apparel and Accessory Stores. The Apparel and Accessory Stores generate \$7 million or only 1.63% of the total sales the Study Corridor. General Merchandise Stores (Department Stores) finish just ahead of the Apparel and Accessory Stores. The General Merchandise Stores earn only \$11.4 million in sales or 2.66% of the study area.

The Canton Road Corridor Market Study Area employs 3,381 employees. The top business type employer is Eating and Drinking Places. There are 1,143 workers employed by Eating and Drinking establishments, or 33.81% of the corridor. And of the 40 businesses in the entire study corridor with at least 20 employees or more, 18 of these are Eating and Drinking Places. The second top employer is Food Stores with 511 total employees or 15.11% of the Canton Road Study Area. Supply and Mobile Homes come in a close third employing 464 workers making up 13.72% of the study area. The fewest employees are found in the Apparel/Accessory Stores and the General Merchandise Stores. Between the two, these business types currently support 189 employees in the study area.

Canton Road Corridor Industry Overview

The Canton Road Corridor Study Area consists of 1549 total business establishments. These establishments are operated by almost 1300 employees generating approximately \$1500 million in annual sales. The leading business (number of establishments) in the study area is Business Services. This industry makes up 8.52% of the study area with over 600 employees. The Construction-Special Trade Contractor industry has 117 establishments or 7.55% of the study area, second to Business Services. Rounding out the top three of specifically classified businesses is the Wholesale Trade (Durable Goods) industry. This sector, supported by 828 employees, has 83 establishments or 5.36% of the Canton Road Study Area. A grouping of 87 Non-Classifiable Establishments make up 5.62% of the Canton Road Study Corridor.

SIC Code	Business Description	Total Establishments	% Of Corridor	Total Employees	% Of Corridor	Total Sales (millions)	% Of Corridor	Establishments 20+ Employees
TOT	All Industries	1549	100%	12819	100%	1517.1	100%	133
MAN	All Manufacturing (SIC 20-39)	67	4.33%	871	6.79%	76.1	5.02%	13
RET	All Retailing (SIC 52-59)	306	19.75%	3381	26.37%	429.1	28.28%	40

The top three businesses in sales generation in the Canton Road Study Corridor are Wholesale Trade-Durable Goods, Construction-Special Trade Contractors, and Building Construction and General Contractors, respectively. These three industries generate 25.72% of the total sales in the study area. In annual sales, Wholesale Trade-Durable Goods produce \$151.1 million. Building Construction and Construction-Special Trade generate \$122.4 million and \$115.6 million in annual sales respectively. Several industries hover between the 4% and 7% range each in total sales in the corridor. Those industries include Mobile Homes, Food Stores, Automobile Dealers and Gas Service Stations, Home Furniture/Furnishings, Business Services, and Educational Services.

SIC Code	Business Description	Total Establishments	% Of Corridor	Total Employees	% Of Corridor	Total Sales (millions)	% Of Corridor	Establishments 20+ Employees
15	Building Construction and General Contractors	74	4.78%	418	3.26%	115.6	7.62%	3
17	Construction-Special Trade Contractors	117	7.55%	893	6.97%	122.4	8.07%	8
50	Wholesale Trade-Durable Goods	83	5.36%	828	6.46%	152.1	10.03%	8

SIC Code	Business Description	Total Establishments	% Of Corridor	Total Employees	% Of Corridor	Total Sales (million \$)	% Of Corridor	Establishments 20+ Employees
52	Building Materials, Garden Supply and Mobile Homes	31	2.00%	464	3.62%	65.4	4.31%	5
54	Food Stores	21	1.36%	511	3.99%	82.4	5.43%	5
55	Automobile Dealers and Gas Service Stations	41	2.65%	379	2.96%	105.6	6.96%	3
57	Home Furniture, Furnishings and Equipment	52	3.36%	336	2.62%	62.9	4.15%	2
73	Business Services	132	8.52%	654	5.10%	94.4	6.22%	7
82	Educational Services	14	0.90%	711	5.55%	75.8	5.00%	7

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Canton Road corridor as its name indicates has been an important roadway for Cobb County residents desiring to commute to and from Cherokee County (Cities of Canton & Woodstock) for decades. As the metro area has grown in recent years, so has the importance of the roadway in providing regional mobility to the interstate system and key retail/business opportunities throughout the corridor. As this demand grew, so did the operational characteristics of the facility. The corridor transformed from a rural two-lane road into a five-lane arterial with commercial and residential land uses throughout the corridor as a result of a SPLOST project initiative in 1996.

This section will address potential roadway and transportation-related improvements that should be considered in a corridor improvement plan for Canton Road. The concepts are based on civil engineering designs standards and landscape architecture principles.

Streetscape Improvements are a generalized category for aesthetic improvements that tend to be located within the existing transportation right-of-way. Streetscape improvements will provide an immediate benefit to the initial appearance of the Canton Road corridor though careful thought should go into developing an effective phasing plan for associated construction activity during the conceptual planning phase. Streetscape concepts to be considered could include roadway median designs, landscaped curb islands and road shoulders, street trees, period lighting, multi-use trails and sidewalks, benches/garbage receptacles, and improved pedestrian crossings. These aesthetic enhancements tend to be very costly in implementing, where developing key areas for pilot improvement projects should be a focal point in a consensus building plan.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Community Choices Quality Growth Toolkit provides an interactive program specific to streetscape development planning choices that incorporates a strong citizen participation component in place for endorsing proposed roadway infrastructure improvements, which can be controversial in public review sessions.

Guiding principles to adhere to in the conceptual development of a streetscape improvement scenario should encompass to varying level of interest are the following:

It is important to facilitate the development of initiatives that foster positive economic development impacts, such as eliminating antiquated and unsightly signage to create visual appeal, establishing similar theme or architectural style in sign designs and building improvements, which stimulating investment and reinvestment by land assemblage.

Demonstrate the County's commitment to corridor redevelopment through incentives, cooperative funding opportunities, including façade grants.

Amend the Cobb County Sign Ordinance to create an incentive to replace older antiquated signs with more architecturally consistent ground based, monument type signs.

Continue aggressive, proactive code enforcement throughout the corridor with emphasis on potential code violations.

Begin inspections of structures noted as being in poor condition or unsafe.

Coordinate development of community or civic association.

Access Management seeks to reduce the overall number of curb cuts/commercial driveways, which evolve over time as new business development occurs. As subsequent zoning initiatives occurs, consideration should be extended to negotiating the closing problematic driveway locations and relocating these ingress/egress locations to safer areas of the roadway and/or providing shared internal circulation access with adjacent businesses. Access management with improved internal circulation provides inter-parcel connectivity, which reduces dependency on vehicular use while physically connecting complementary business enterprises.

An access management plan could be evaluated for the entire corridor, with particular emphasis placed on the corridor between Piedmont Road and Blackwell Road. The ability to remove or combine curb cuts will provide better vehicular through-movement and reduce the driver expectancy for dangerous egress maneuvers from the commercial establishments. The preponderance of curb cuts along Canton Road causes vehicular slowing/ stopping situations, which can increase the propensity for traffic accidents and incident management demands. Centralizing the egress movements of vehicles leaving business establishments at signalized intersections will enhance the operations of the roadway and reduce accidents/conflicts.

Context Sensitive Street Design is a concept introduced by the Federal Highway Administration which is geared towards designing roadway improvements in a manner that fits "within the context" of the built environment, in which it is being proposed for a retrofit widening proposal. Context Sensitive Design involves citizen input in assisting in the design of a roadway proposal, whereby the facility will not be "over-built" and seriously impact the adjacent residential and

commercial developments. This process ensures that the road proposal will not be detrimental to the existing communities and there is acceptance in the process moving forward towards programming federal funds for these transportation improvements. The concepts ascribed in Context Sensitive Design consider that the roadway profile (right-of-way cross-section) may change depending of the section of roadway being touted for the improvement and the existing built environment surrounding the proposal. Context Sensitive Design concepts are very similar in nature to those improvements related to streetscape enhancements, though a formalized process is involved for public involvement.

Visualization Techniques are becoming increasingly evident in conceptual planning exercises and corridor planning initiatives. A key facet to visualization is effective communications about a proposed development scenario, which seeks to involve and inform community members throughout the plan development process. Unlike other aspects of daily life and work, community planning and development requires an understanding of complex and sometimes counter-intuitive processes that unfold over long periods of time. Today's planning offices utilize visual mediums such as GIS/computer mapping software to assist in enhancing visualization techniques and many times better educating the public as to the importance and long-range planning benefits of the proposal being addressed.

Roadway Center Median Design Options for the Canton Road corridor will likely show dramatic changes to the physical appearance of the roadway and quite possibly the commercial enterprises located within the corridor if a raised median facility were to be entertained for the roadway. Transportation improvements ultimately cost millions of dollars to implement in a full-phase or multi-phased plan for a roadway corridor, if a raised median structure is to be evaluated in the future, a comprehensive planning process with effective citizen involvement will be a necessity.

The width of the Canton Road is such that a (narrow) 16' raised median facility could be considered for the limits of the corridor, which theoretically would replace the existing two-way left-turn lane section, in defined sections of the corridor. A raised median could also be landscaped with trees, shrubs, grassed, or a concrete structure facility. The City of Roswell is currently evaluating an alternative design option where the center left-turn lane for Alpharetta Street (SR 9/120) is treated with stamped red concrete surface to provide a brick texture that acts similar to a rumble strip, which greatly limits the lane being utilized for vehicular passing/through movements.

Pedestrian Accessibility could also be improved with a raised median section, which assists in providing a safer crossing for pedestrians along a corridor. A five-lane roadway like Canton Road tends to create dangerous mid-block pedestrian crossing situations, where pedestrians will stand in the center of two-way left-turn lane in order to make a full crossing, due to the heavy vehicular volumes in both directions of the roadway. Mid-Block crossings occur because the pedestrian feels safer when there are fewer areas for potential conflict to factor when making a roadway crossing. The conflict points are greater at intersections, though data supports that crossing at these signalized intersections is much safer than mid-block maneuvers where the vehicular operators do not expect pedestrians to be located.

One of the most important opportunities to make the Canton Road corridor more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly would be the extension of sidewalks along both sides of the roadway from Sandy Plains Road to the Cherokee County border. Consideration should be made to widening

the new sidewalk facilities to 10' wide in these retrofit locations. The area on the western portion of the roadway is impacted by the existing large utility monopoles that will make a retrofit opportunity a rather difficult and expensive undertaking.

Landscaping Improvements are a necessary ingredient in establishing an effective corridor improvement plan for Canton Road. The first impression a person witnesses traveling the roadway is the visual clutter of large above ground utilities, monopole business signs, huge paved parking lots, and virtually no established trees or shrubs through the vast expanse of the corridor. The inclusion of possible planted median islands, street trees along/or near the right-of-way, landscaped parking lot islands, and pocket parks would show a significant change to breaking up the line of visual infrastructure clutter, while creating a better sense of place and identity to defined areas along the corridor.

Being a former roadway on the State Route system, Canton Road has both the fortunate and unfortunate situation of having connectivity to the arterial and interstate roadway network. This proximity affords significant average daily traffic (ADT – approximately 30,000 vehicles daily) numbers and peak period congestion. Canton Road is designed for a 45 MPH posted speed, though the design of the roadway promotes traveling speeds closer to 55-60 MPH range during non-peak periods. The premise behind the traffic calming measure of lane re-striping could potentially narrow the existing travel lanes on Canton Road to 11' wide and the remaining pavement would be re-striped as a bicycle-friendly shoulder area along the existing curb line. The narrowing of the through-lanes serves to make the driver less comfortable at higher speeds, in order to maintain their lane when traveling, which acts to “slow” drivers down.

Transit-Oriented Design is a common theme being discussed throughout the region, in particular related to sustainable and progressive development patterns. The inclusion of regional bus service and expanded CCT service along Canton Road could be promoted with the incorporation of streetscape designs like period bus shelters, garbage receptacles, benches, and wide sidewalks/multi-use trails. This design options may also motivate businesses to move closer to the roadway corridor. The demand that Canton Road has created for regional through traffic has diminished its value as an activity center destination, though the inclusion of a Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) methodologies which could provide the aesthetic and operational improvements along the corridor. These design options may also help facilitate redevelopment opportunities where currently funds are available to consider transit oriented mobility options for corridors like Canton Road. The availability of Livable Centers Initiatives funds through the ARC could be further explored for the corridor if the option for regional bus service is endorsed.

Ground Base Monument Signs should be entertained in changing the existing monopole signage theme along Canton Road. The change will likely make a substantial difference in the overall corridor appearance. Lowering signs to a pedestrian scale may also slow vehicular speeds down an incremental level and provide a visual location that is not obstructed by established landscaping.

Pedestrian Scale Lighting along the roadway also acts as a traffic calming measure to a lesser extent and helps “invite” pedestrians into the roadway cross-section. This same lighting theme could be incorporated within adjoining parking lots through lighted access points and possible sidewalk extensions. Lighting at the pedestrian scale tends to “advertise” pedestrians and is less intrusive to existing ground-base monument signs.

Shared Parking could also be evaluated in some of the larger strip retail centers and the smaller strip retail areas that could be combined with inter-parcel access. The development of “out lots” along the roadway corridor could also assist in combining parking where the daily parking demands vary depending on the business use.

Conclusion – Land Use

The land use analysis and various future land use designations/districts proposed in this study are intended to guide Cobb County in its effort to redevelop the Canton Road Corridor. Establishing a more coordinated land use pattern, which is consistent with the objective listed in the Comprehensive Plan, is the key to the success of redeveloping the Canton Road Corridor. Some of the objectives are discouraging “strip” development patterns with multiple driveways, instead promoting nodal development, encouraging reuse and revitalization of obsolete commercial and industrial facilities, providing transitional land uses between high and low intensity land uses, protecting and preserving buildings, neighborhoods, or areas of historical, architectural, or cultural significance and providing sufficient opportunities for each land use type to serve the needs of the community while maintaining a tax base balance and sustaining the desired mix of residential properties.

Similarly, facilitating the development of economic initiatives is also important. For example, identifying the core commercial nodes to be upgraded and redeveloped along a similar theme or architectural style, strengthening institutional presences within the corridor to instill a greater sense of community and eliminating antiquated and unsightly signage to create visual appeal would support the proposed land use changes along the Corridor.

Building Façade Improvement Program could be evaluated as a component of a TAD option where the business owners develop a fund for businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their commercial building. Recent rezoning applications have called for, “three-sides brick” facades as a condition of the rezoning. This architectural theme is very expensive to retrofit for established business experiencing limited economic growth.

Conclusion -Transportation

The inter-relationship between the existing transportation facilities along the Canton Road corridor and potential changes to land use patterns should not be understated. Changing the appearance of the existing five-lane section roadway will be a controversial undertaking with the established residential and business concerns. Consideration for changing the appearance of the two-way left-turn lane with a stamped concrete treatment or red dye asphalt may be aesthetic options worthy of further investigation, which could potentially serve an associated operational benefit to the corridor. The red color treatment would provide as a visual differentiation along the corridor, which maintain maintaining its “full access design” for greater vehicular access while providing a “separation” from the existing two lane sections. The option would also be more palatable with existing commercial and residential interests along the corridor. This activity would need to be coordinated with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Local Area Resurfacing Program (LARP) to assist with the median treatment and re-striping demands.

The need to connect and extend existing sidewalks and pedestrian trails will help ensure a sustainable design theme that will physically link existing and future residential and commercial developments, while reducing the demand for vehicular mobility. Utilizing stream corridors and utility easements could also be considered for off-road pedestrian trail connectivity.

An access management plan should strongly endorse with inter-parcel connections and internal service streets being considered, where applicable. The County should pursue closing certain driveways and adding internal roadway/pedestrian connections as a condition of future rezoning approvals.

Improvements to the roadway cross-section within the existing right-of-way will show an immediate change to the physical identity of the Canton Road corridor. Inclusion of an enhanced median treatment, street trees, pocket parks, monument signs, pedestrian scale lighting, enhanced sidewalks, and transit-oriented design amenities transform the appearance of the corridor in a dramatic manner. An investment in roadway and streetscape improvements will likely invite a better assortment of potential development interests to court the Canton Road corridor as a component of their corporate portfolio.

Conclusion – Retail market

Trade Area Analysis

When a commercial and/or retail business is scouting an area for new market possibilities, the careful identification of the trade area is crucial. When identifying the trade area for potential future economic opportunities and the appropriate supply of consumer market needs/choices, the corridor study area was chosen due to data relevance. With the corridor area so large and the current services provided being so varied, the most beneficial market data related to new business potential. The application of the Unsatisfied Demand Method will quickly identify the basic services that are not meeting demand within the area based on national expenditure amounts versus what these retail markets are currently operating at.

The figure below shows the retail category and the comparison of current expenditures within the study area versus the national average expenditure amount in an average Trade Area

Business Market Category	\$ Current Sales/Expenditures within Canton Road Trade Area	\$ National Sales/Expenditures in average Trade Area	\$ Unsatisfied Economic Impact of potential Sales/Expenditures
Building Material Store	63	223	161
Grocery Store	82	943	861
Clothing Store	7	227	220
Home Furniture Store	63	212	149
Eating/Drinking	56	355	299

All numbers in millions

It is quickly determined that these basic retail service categories are not satisfying anywhere remotely close to the average expenditures with a trade area in Anywhere, USA. This market is lacking in these basic services. There is no immediate retail “capture” opportunity within the close proximity of Canton Road and so shoppers continue to travel to the outer limits of the trade area until the service/product is found. As the density of residential increases within the immediate Canton Road corridor, it will be crucial to provide the same basic retail services at a location that is closer to the patron’s major daily highway, but most probably closer to the residents of the potential purchaser. The impulse purchase and the revenue this behavior has on the retail market arena, single handedly are responsible for the most powerful consumer dollar.

Maps/Geographic Information Systems (#1–10)