



# **ULI Center for Leadership - 2017**

**Milford Church/Osborne mTap**



# ULI Team



**Kathy Logan**  
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# Overview

- **OBJECTIVES**
- **EXISTING CONDITIONS**
- **HISTORY**
- **DEMOGRAPHICS**
- **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**
- **CURRENT AND PROPOSED PROJECTS**
- **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**



# Objectives

The primary objective is to inform the revitalization of the midcentury Milford Church/Osborne neighborhoods. While many long-term residents remain in place, the population has diversified in recent years. Incomes have declined, resulting in declining commercial activity. The area is anchored by schools, a park and Olley Creek.

**A.** The mTAP team will develop a set of recommended action items intended to encourage redevelopment within the Milford Church/Osborne neighborhood of Cobb County, including the revitalization of the area's commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods by:

1. Reevaluating the current land use/zoning to identify strategic development nodes at key intersections that maximize existing infrastructure and encourage diversified non-residential uses along the corridor.
2. Co-locating services at strategic nodes to attract needed services
3. Improving access through future trail connections and street improvements





# Objectives

The recommendations will also consider affordable housing, residential and commercial blight, and nonconforming land uses by:

1. Identifying housing opportunities to further encourage homeownership in this established residential community.
2. Establishing Design Guidelines to create a sense of place in the target area (including gateways, public plazas, etc)

# Study Area



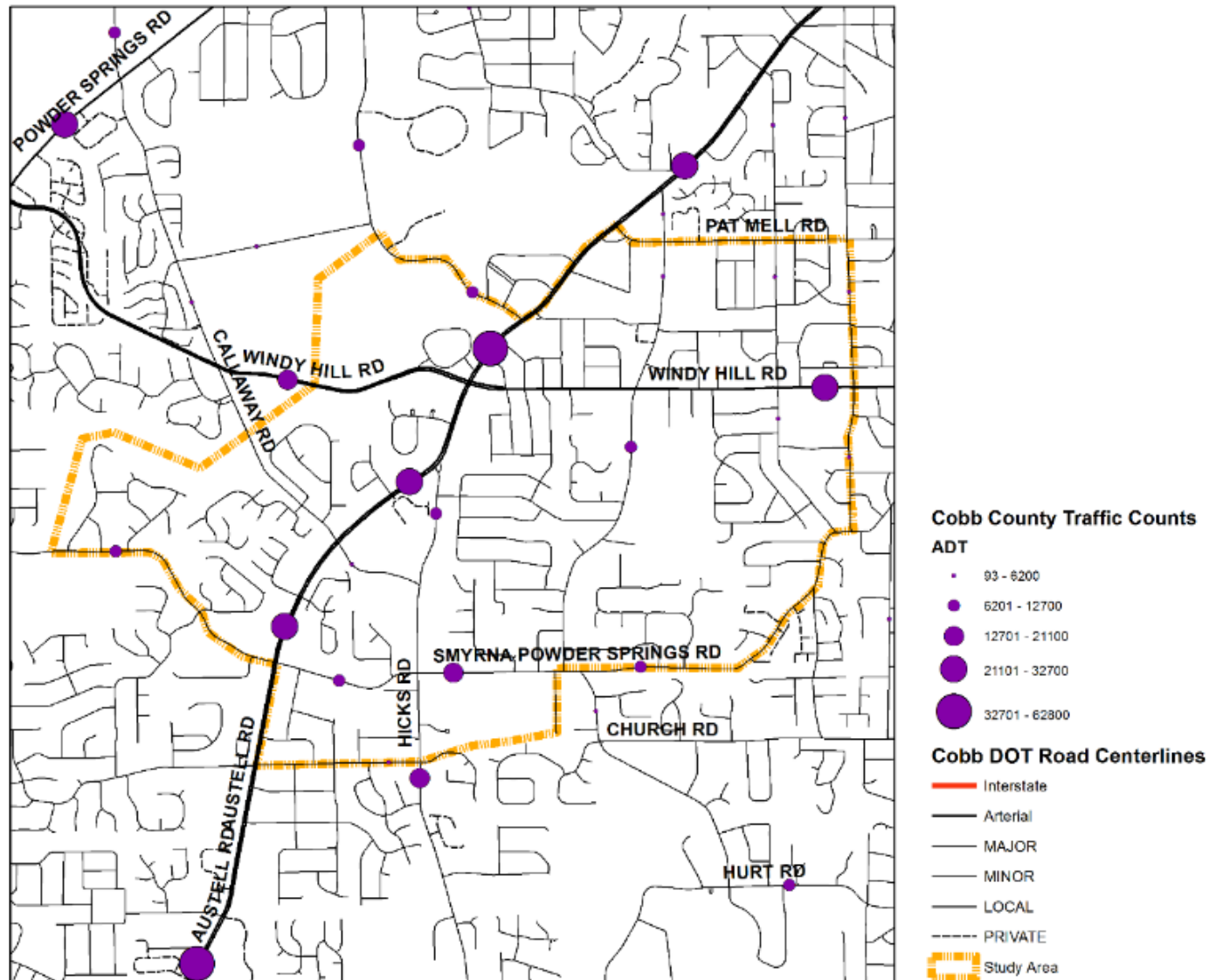




# Current Environment



# Traffic Flow



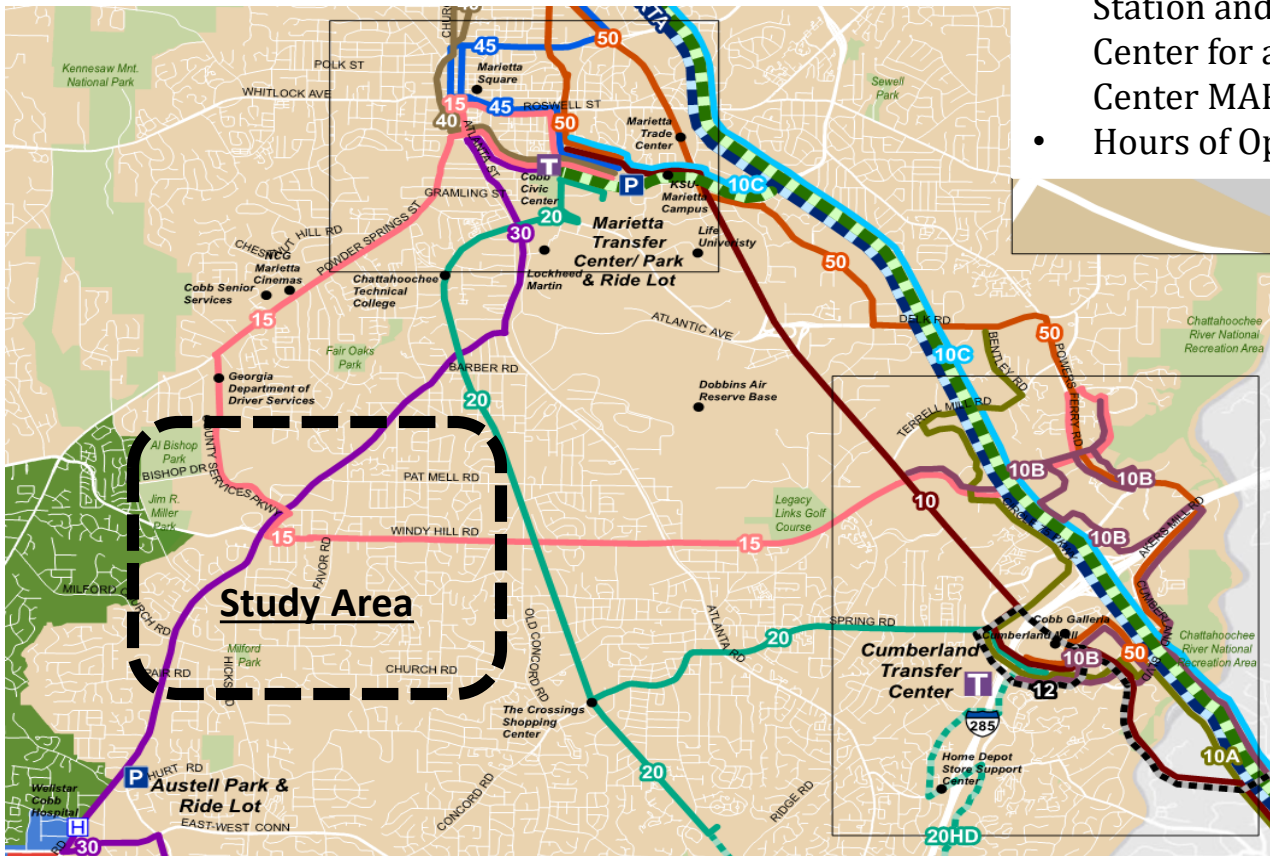




# LINC Transit System



- The 15 and 30 bus routes run through the mTap study area on Windy Hill Road and Austell Road.
- The 20 route is adjacent to the study area.
- Residents can access Holmes MARTA Station and the Cumberland Transfer Center for access to bus service to the Arts Center MARTA Station.
- Hours of Operation are 5:00AM to 1:00AM.



# Early history of site

Early indigenous residents (Woodland, Moundbuilders)

Cherokee and Creek Nations

European-descended settlers (land lottery, 1805-1832)

Civil War (Battle of Kolb's Farm)

Small farms and towns



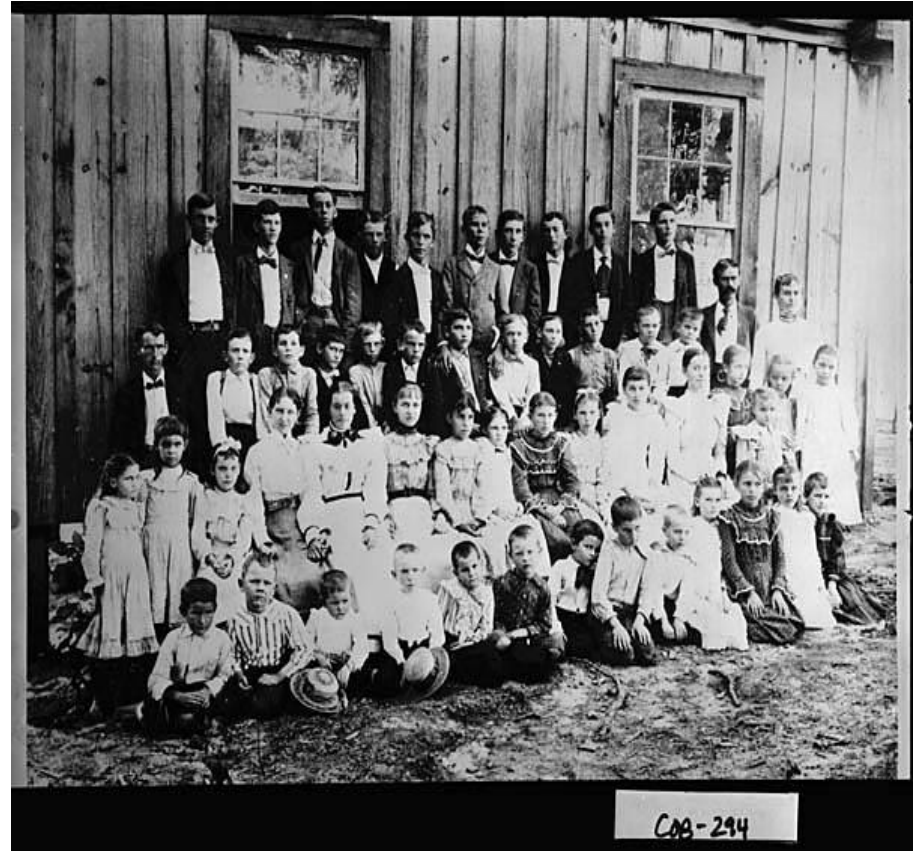
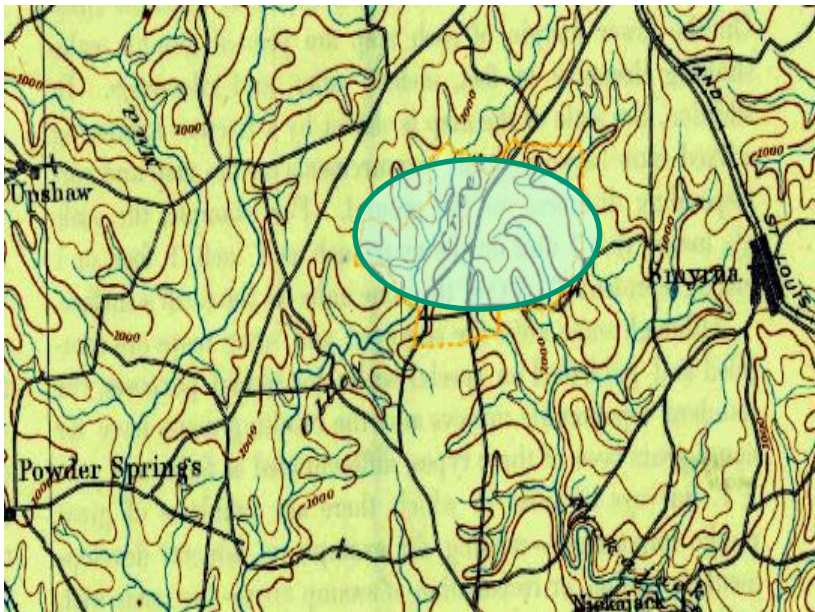
Clockwise from top left: carriages near Bell Bomber, Farmer Leslie B., Aunt Fanny's Cabin, 1890 Cobb farm



# Milford Community, 1900

Major roads established

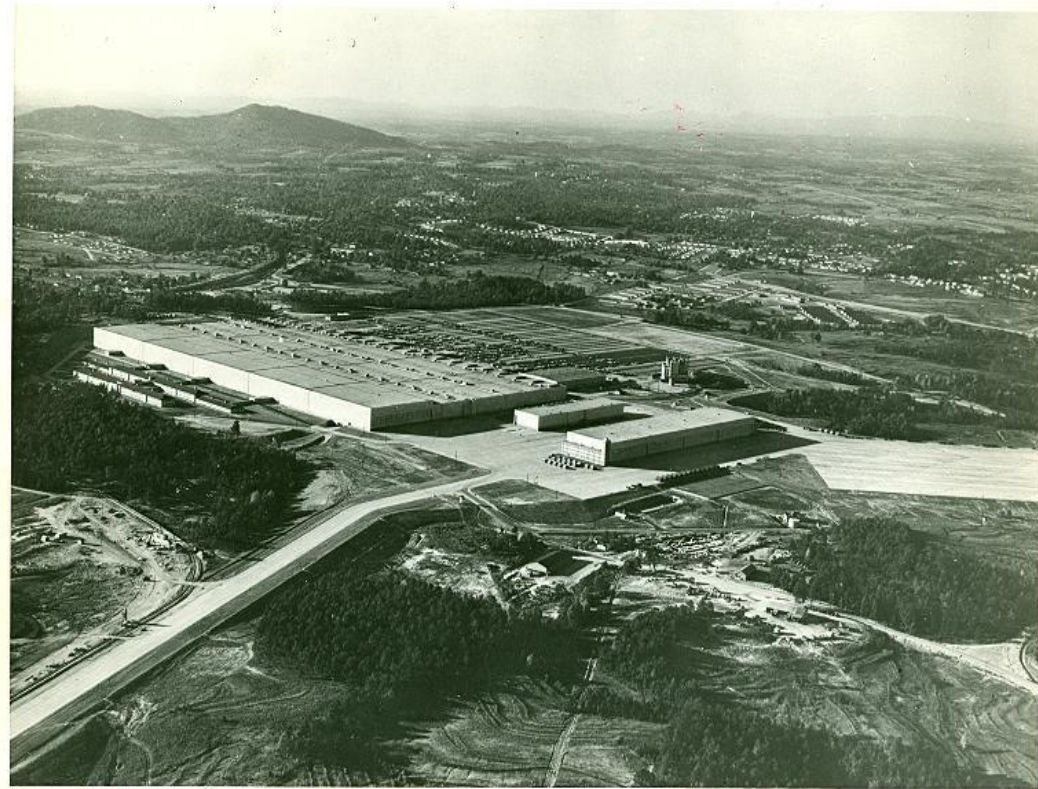
One room school house



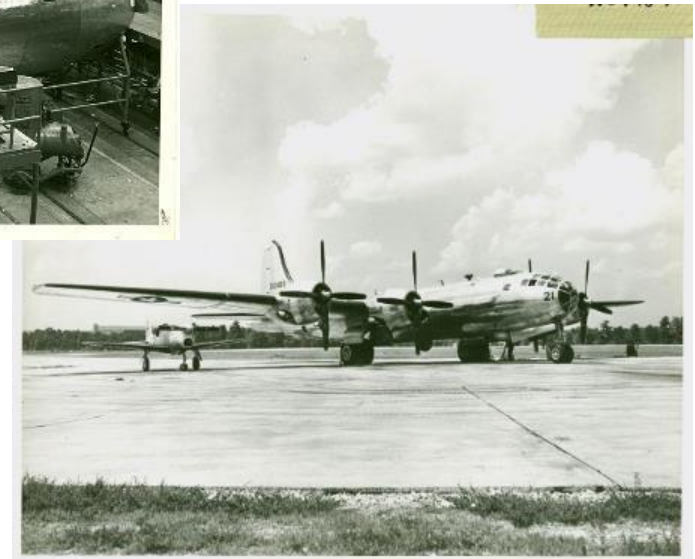
# Bell Aircraft (1943)

Provided jobs, ushered in new development

Led to rapid population growth









**1952**



**1960**



**1972**



**2015**





SGS  
Changing world

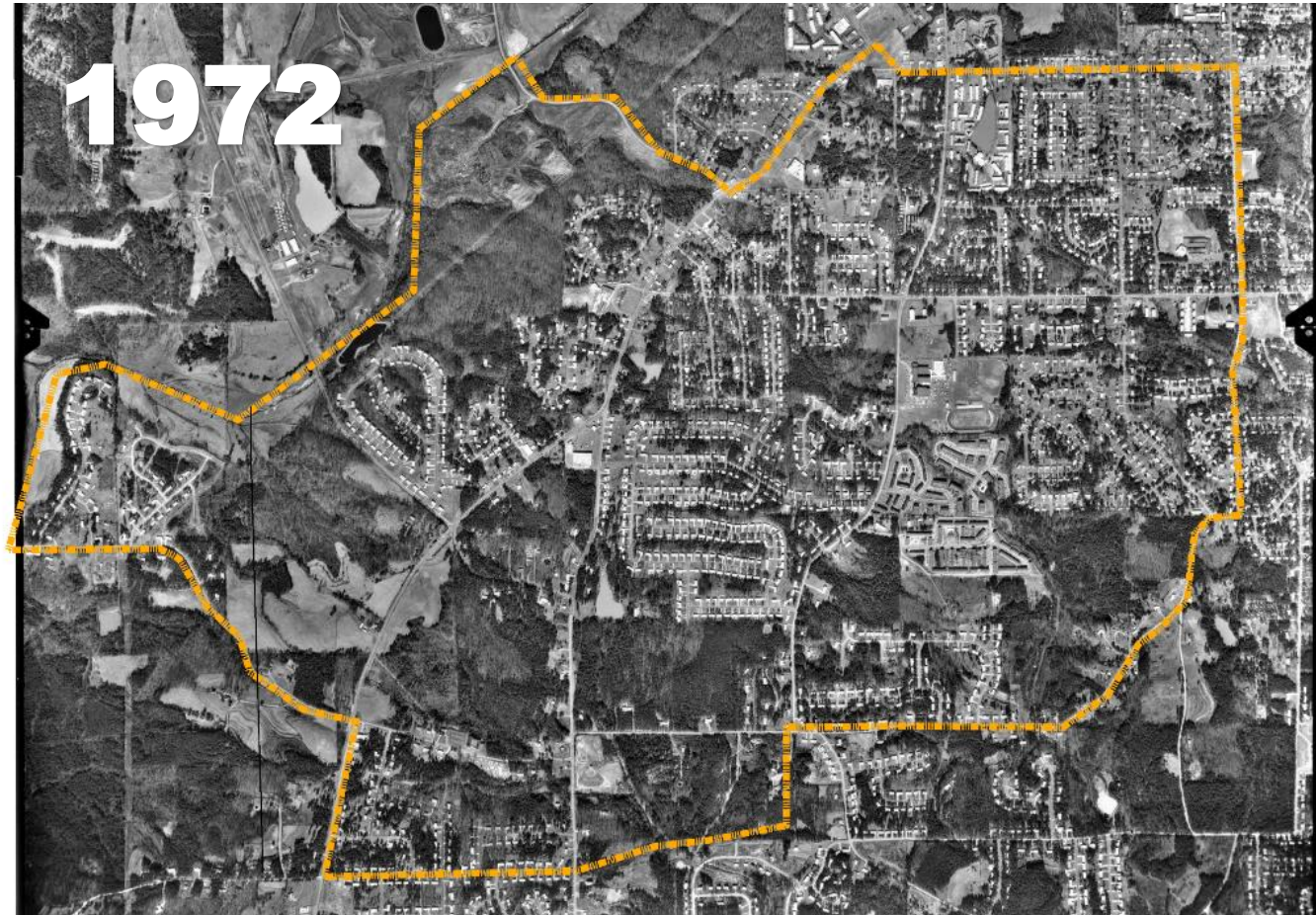
1952



1960

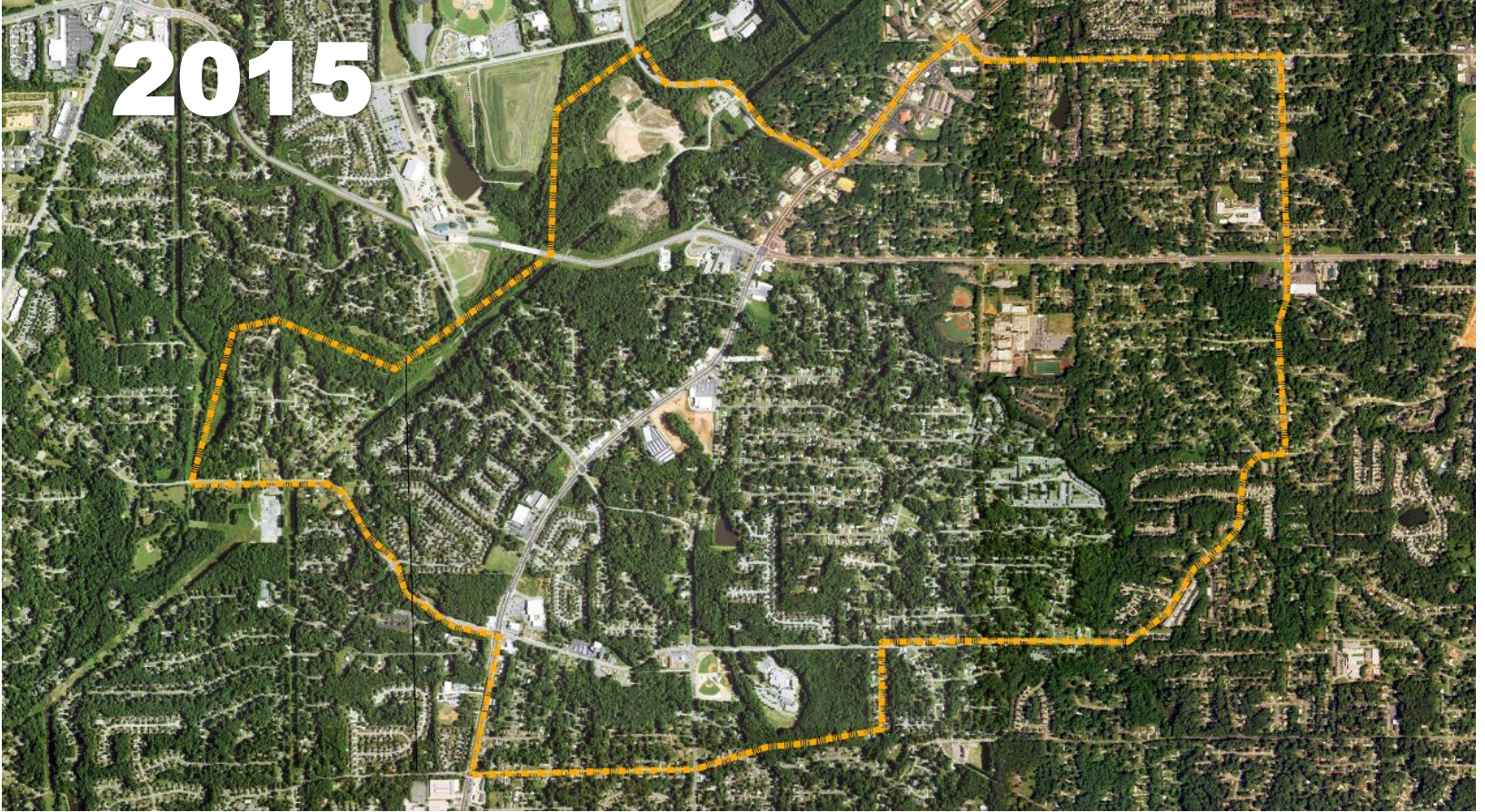








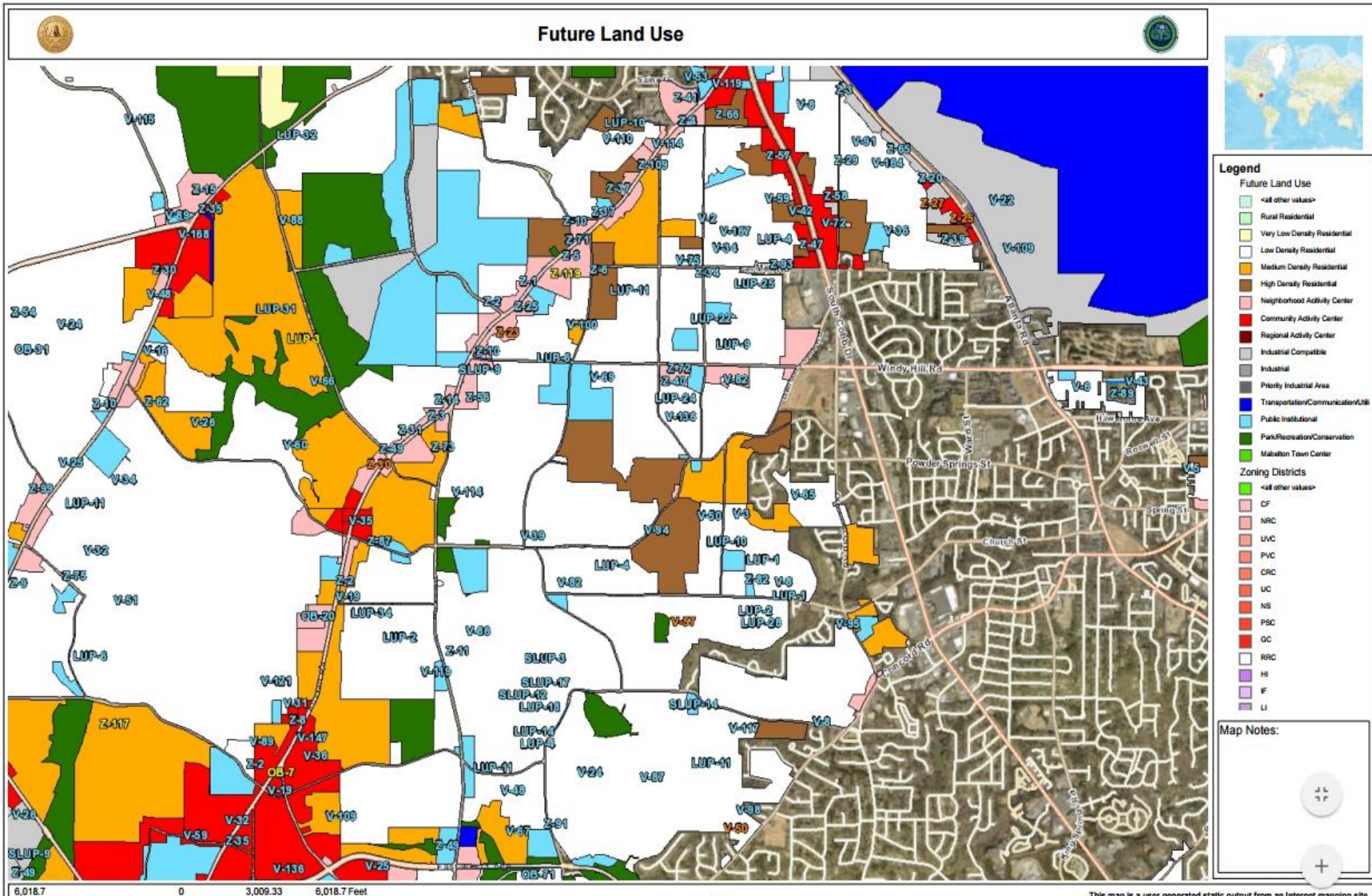
2015







# Existing Future Land Use

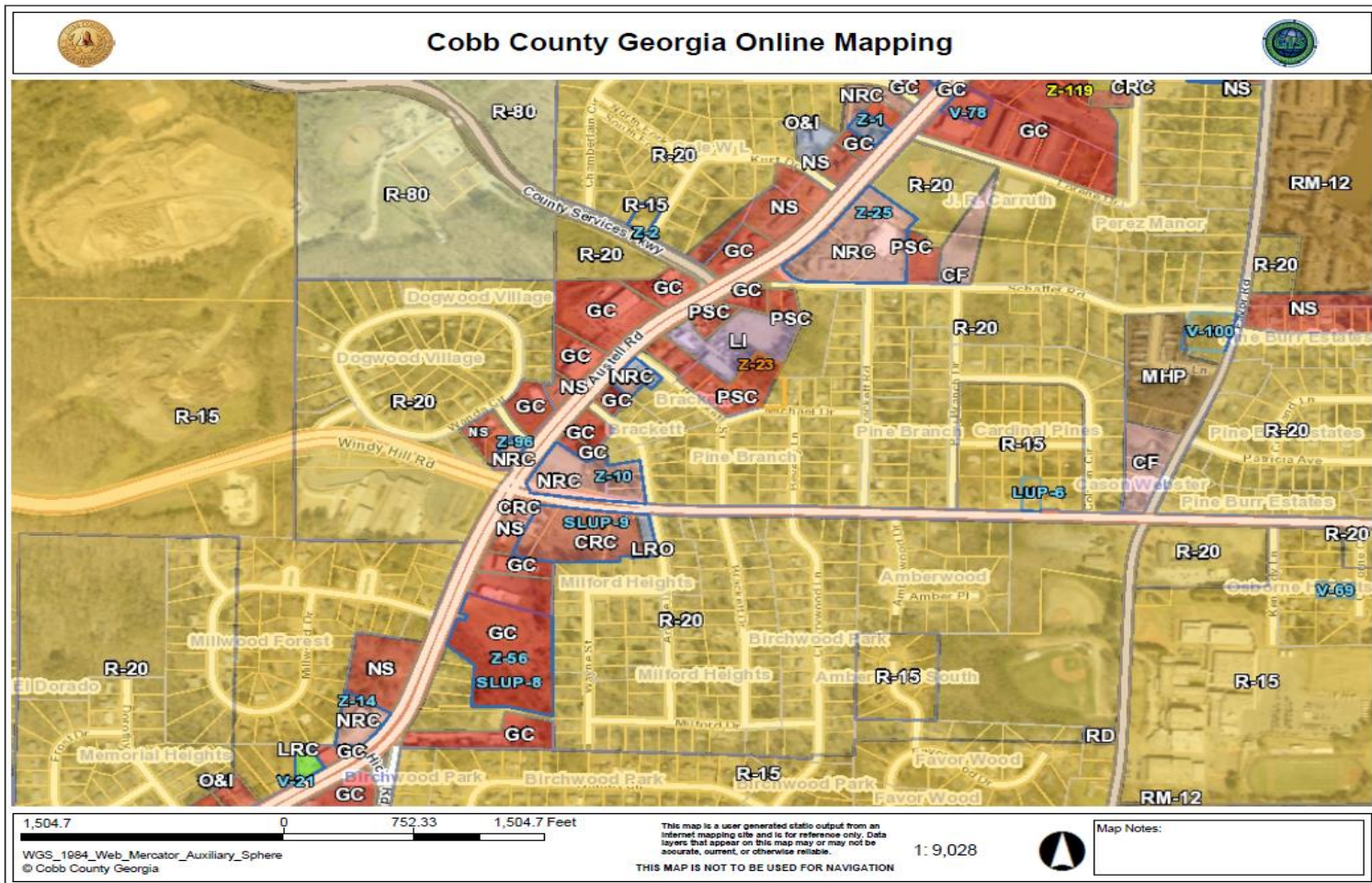






# Existing Zoning Conditions

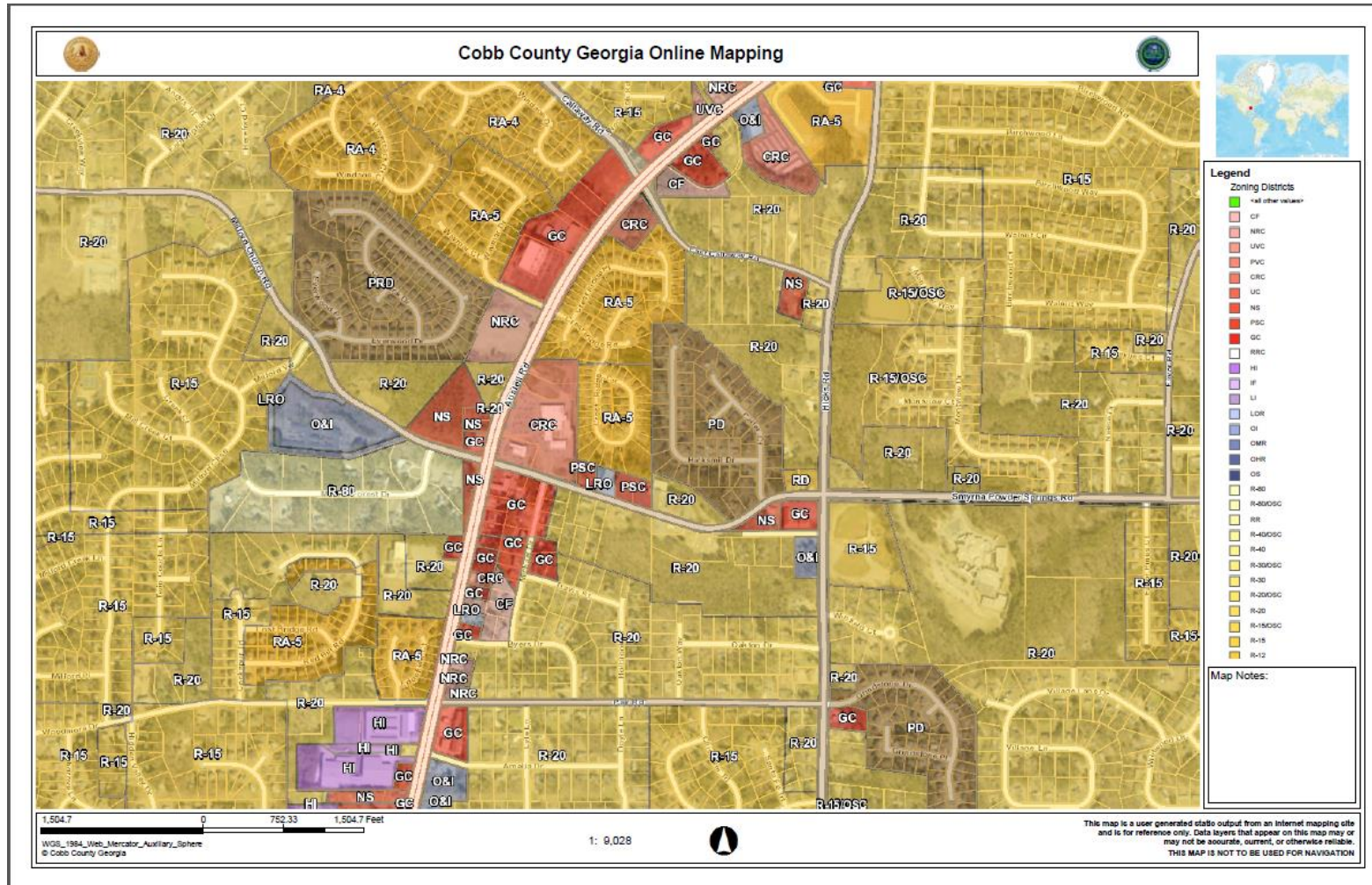
## Austell Road/Windy Hill Intersection







## Austell Road/Milford Church Intersection

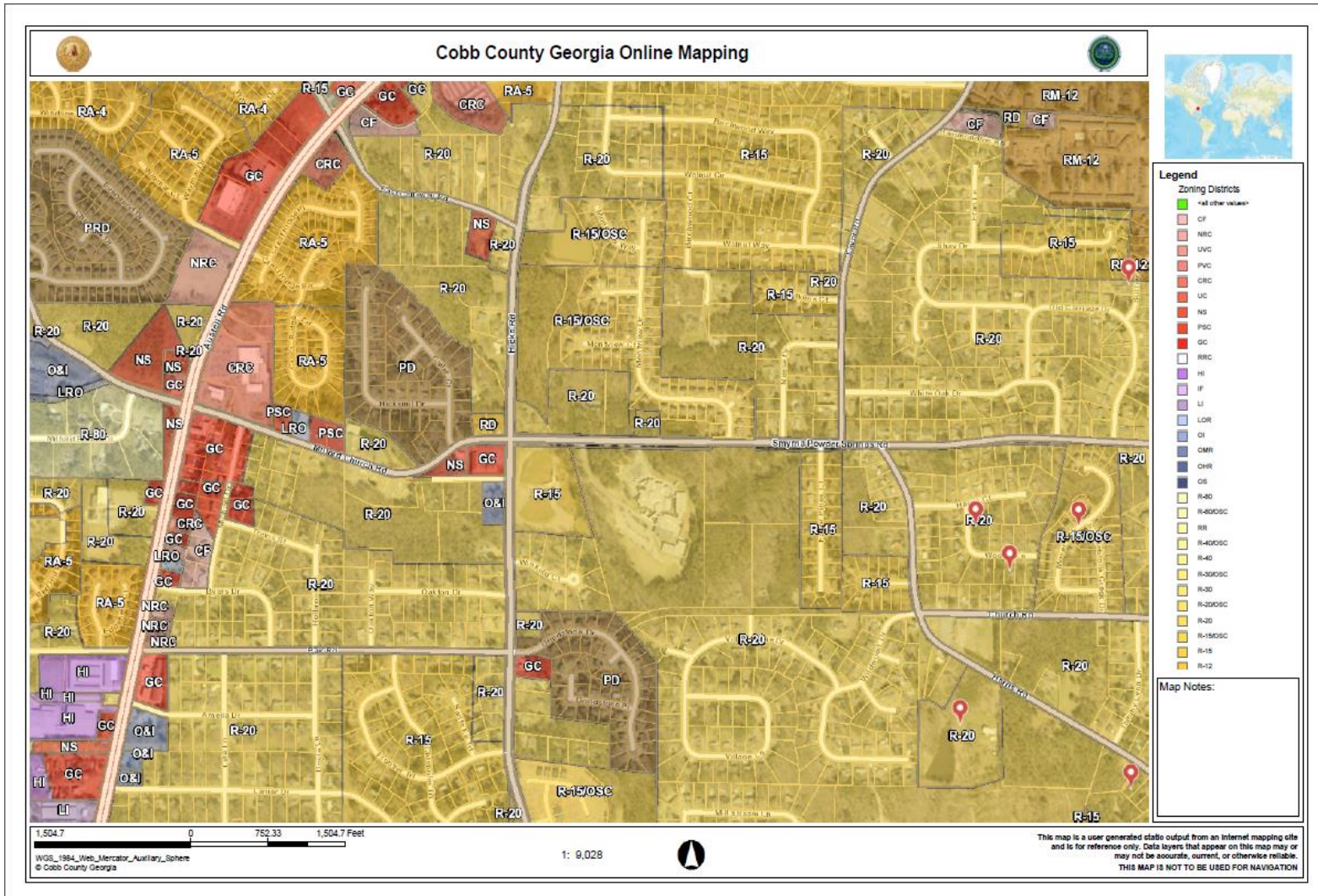






# Existing Zoning Conditions

## Milford Church/Hicks Road Intersection

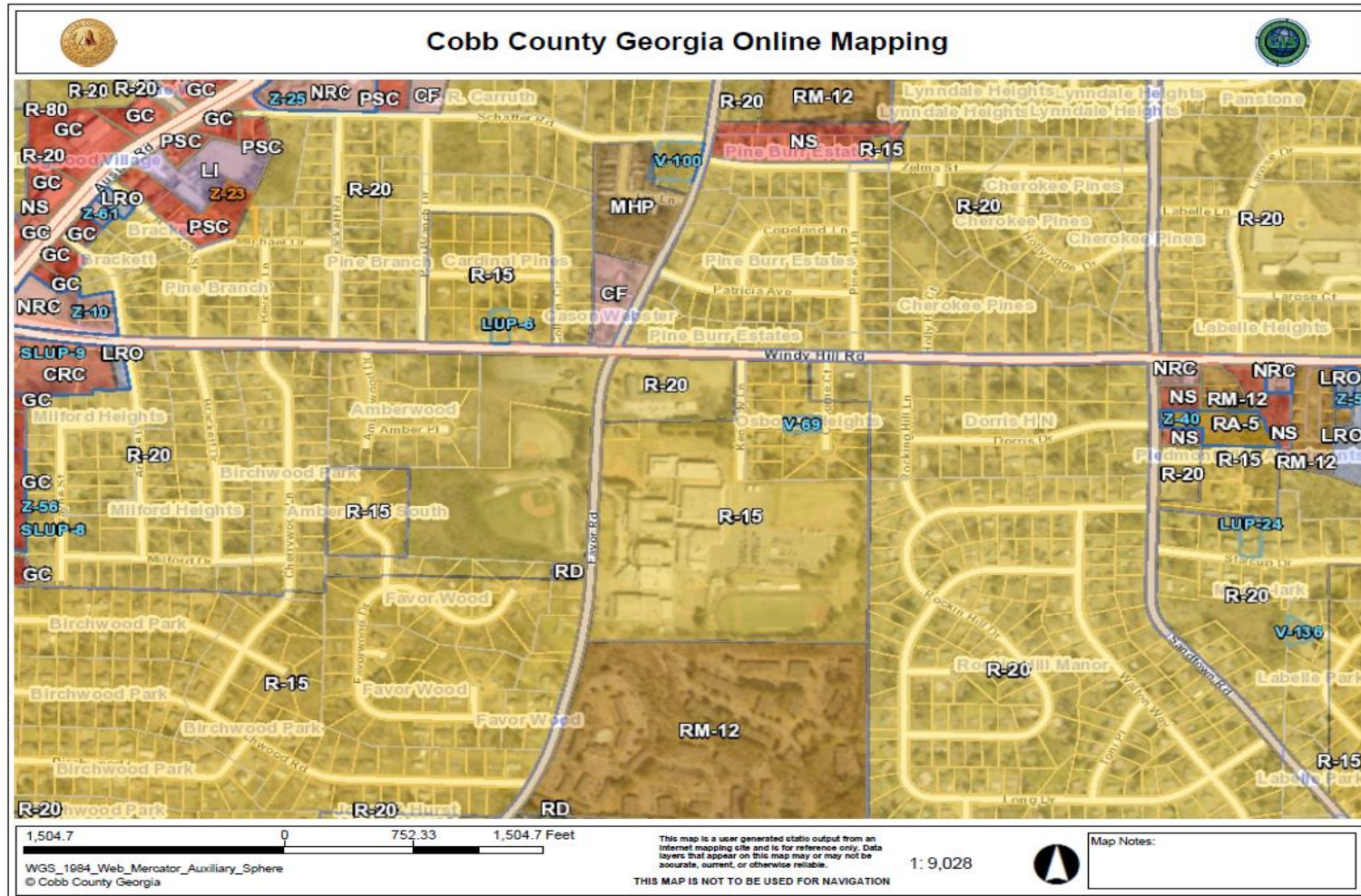




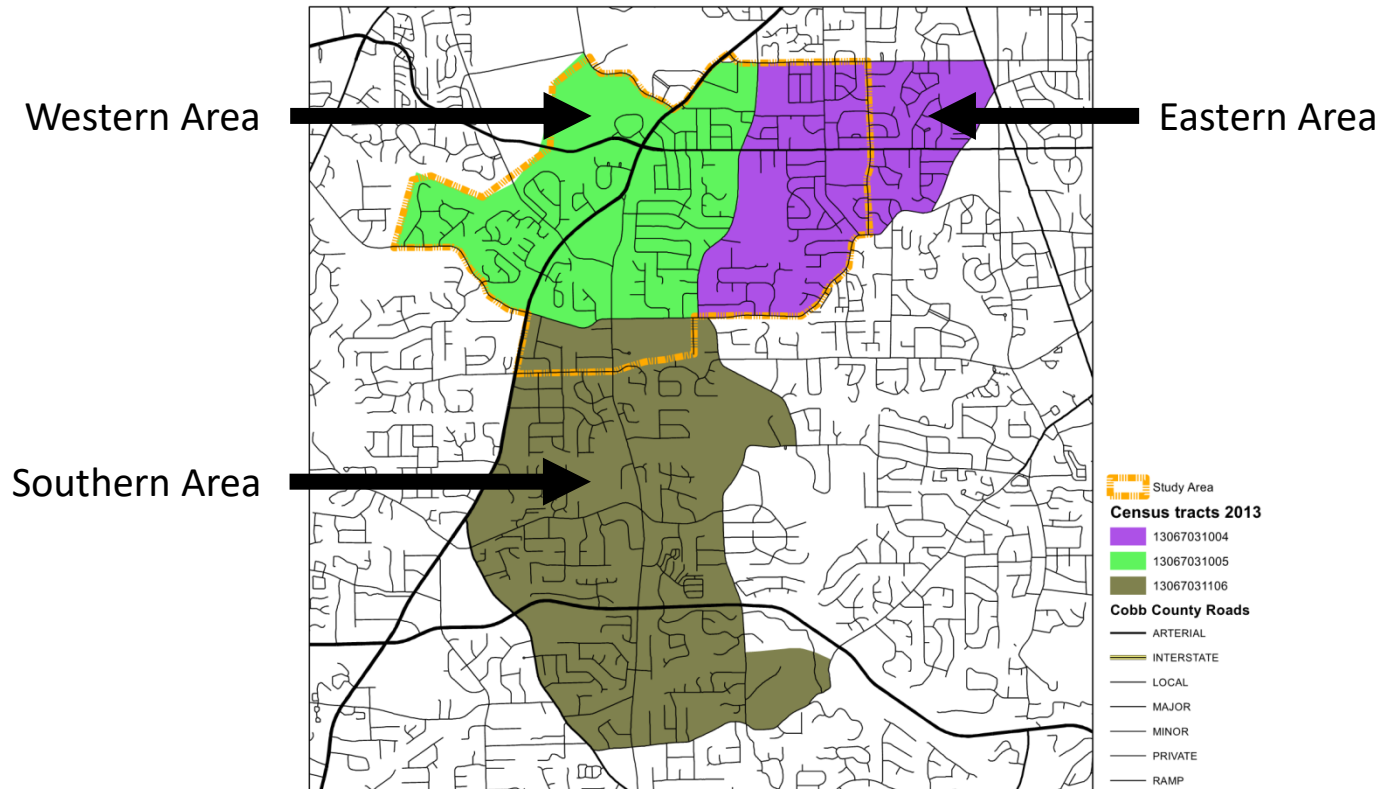


# Existing Zoning Conditions

## Windy Hill/Favor Road Intersection



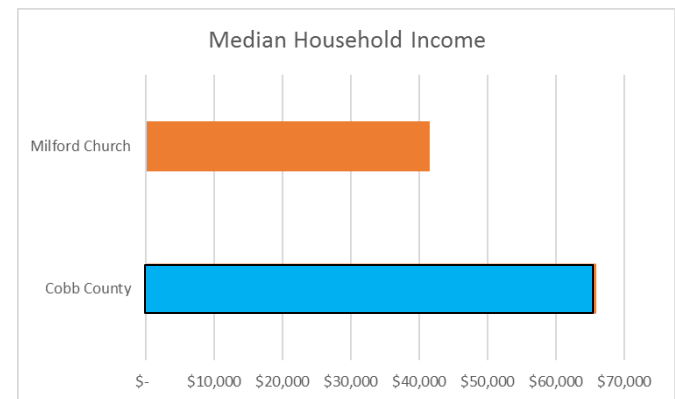
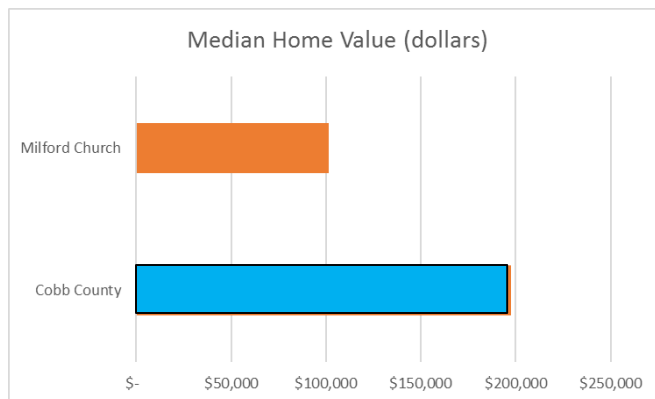
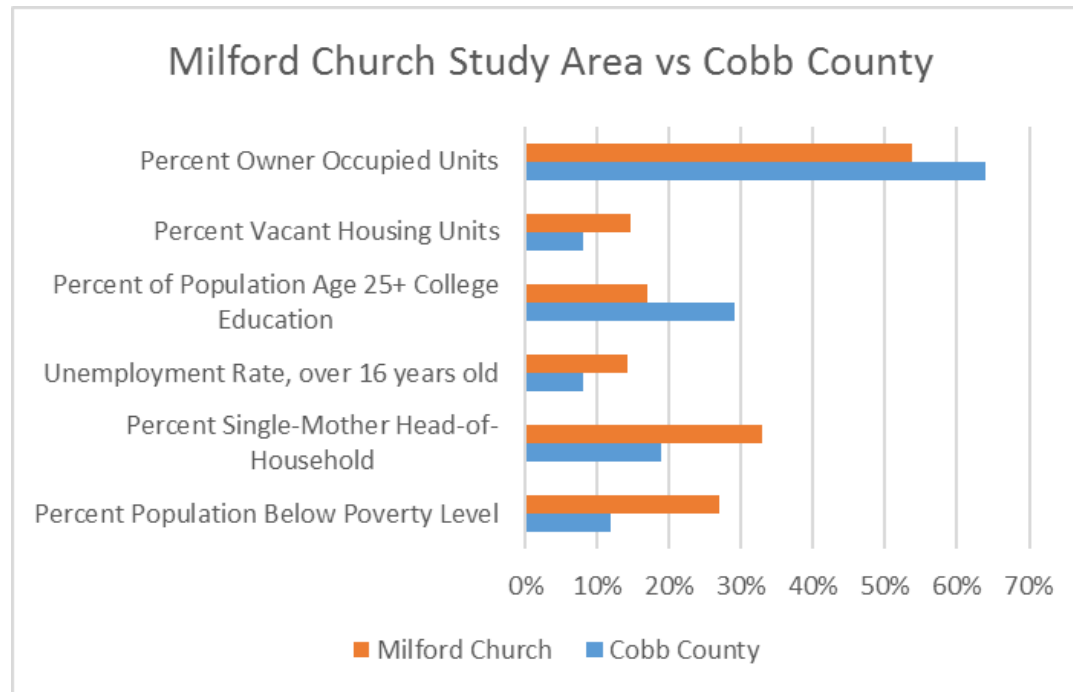
# Census Data of Study Area



- Census Data from 2015 United States Census American Community Service.
- The team did not rely on the census data for the Southern Area of the Milford Church Study Area due to the small portion of the area that falls within the mTap Boundary.
- The Eastern Area has similar demographics and neighborhood feel as the Western Area; the team did not attempt to qualify the data for the portion of the area that falls outside of the mTap Boundary.



# Census Data – Demographics of Study Area

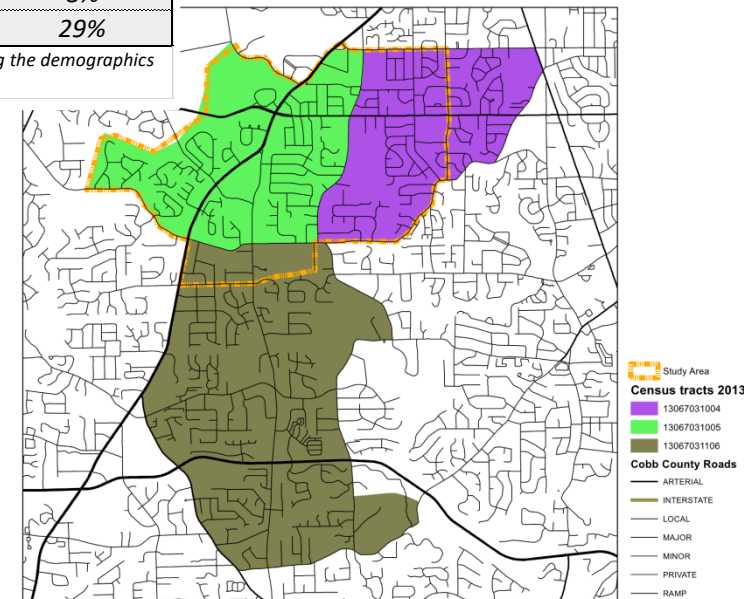


# Census Data – Demographics of Study Area

Census Tract	Western Area	Eastern Area	Total
Milford Church Area Population	5,546	7,541	13,087
Percent Living in Same House 1 Year Ago	83%	72%	77%
Percent Population Below Poverty Level	23%	30%	27%
<b>Cobb County Population</b>			
Percent Living in Same House 1 Year Ago			81%
Percent Population Below Poverty Level			12%
Percent Single-Mother Head-of-Household	29%	36%	33%
Median Household Income	\$ 52,576	\$ 33,420	\$ 41,538
Unemployment Rate, over 16 years old	13%	15%	14%
Percent of Population Age 25+ College Education	21%	14%	17%
<b>Cobb County Population</b>			
Percent Single-Mother Head-of-Household			19%
Median Household Income			\$ 65,873
Unemployment Rate, over 16 years old			8%
Percent of Population Age 25+ College Education			29%

\*Data was incomplete for the Southern Area of the study; the sample data is believed to be sufficient for understanding the demographics of the area.

- This part of Cobb County has a transient population relative to other parts of the county; roughly 1 in 5 homes have resident turnover compared to 1 in 4 homes for Cobb County as a whole.
- The area needs to increase the median income of the population to attract traditional retail; with roughly 1 in 4 people living below the poverty level compared to 1 in 10 people for Cobb County as a whole.
- Unemployment amongst the population is higher than other parts of the county; this area would be ideal for a work force training center. Consider a stronger connection to Chattahoochee Technical College located 3 miles north of the study area.
- Explore ways to attract more residents with College Education as a part of the strategy for boosting Median Household Income.



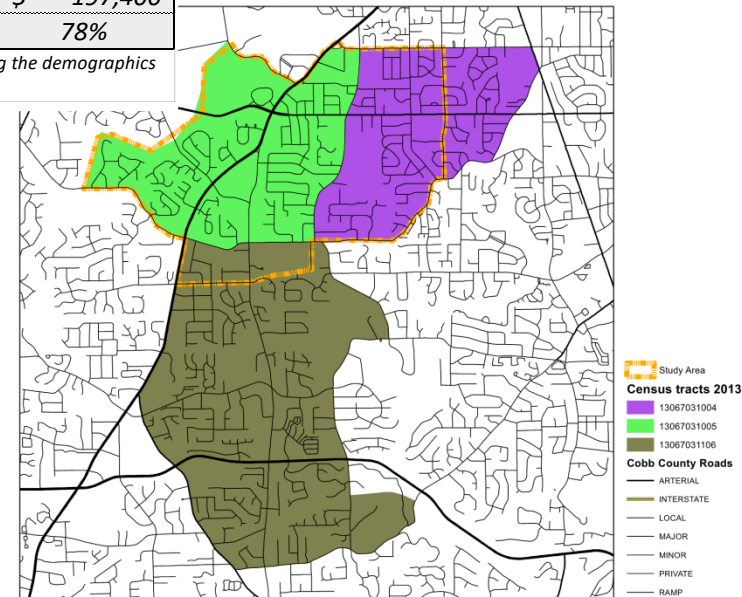


# Census Data – Demographics of Study Area

Census Tract	Western Area	Eastern Area	Total
Total Number of Housing Units	1,815	2,970	4,785
Percent Vacant Housing Units	9%	18%	15%
Percent Owner Occupied Units	78%	39%	54%
<b>Cobb County Population</b>			
Percent Vacant Housing Units			8%
Percent Owner Occupied Units			64%
Median Gross Rent	\$ 1,148	\$ 867	\$ 974
Median Year Structure Built	1980	1972	1975
Median Value (dollars)	\$ 120,200	\$ 89,700	\$ 101,269
Percent Housing Units with a Mortgage	79%	81%	80%
<b>Cobb County Population</b>			
Median Gross Rent			\$ 1,006
Median Year Structure Built			1987
Median Value (dollars)			\$ 197,400
Percent Housing Units with a Mortgage			78%

\*Data was incomplete for the Southern Area of the study; the sample data is believed to be sufficient for understanding the demographics of the area.

- Vacant housing is an opportunity for new investment in the area.
- To provide a less transient population, more home ownership should be incentivized; if the area was similar to Cobb County as a whole, there would be an additional 478 owner occupied homes in the study area.
- Median home value is extremely affordable given access to Cobb County Schools and relatively easy access to job centers, at roughly have the Median Value of Cobb County as a whole.
- Newer housing and/or fully renovated housing options are needed to attract higher income earners to the area.





# Strengths/Weaknesses

## STRENGTHS

- Established Affordable Housing Community
- Small-Mid size Business Commercial Opportunities
- Access to Job Centers
- Major Transportation Arterials
  - Windy Hill (East-West)
  - Austell Road (North South)
- Access to Public Institutions
  - Milford Elementary School
  - Birney Elementary School
  - Labelle Elementary School
  - Osborne High School
  - Chattahoochee Tech (nearby)
- Park/Recreation
  - Jim Miller Park
  - Milford Park
  - Olley Creek Trail\*

## WEAKNESSES

- Proliferation of uncoordinated strip commercial development uses
- No future land use/mixed use designation or nodes along the corridor to concentrate density and services
- Inundation of certain uses that do not stimulate or attract new business
- Number of curb cuts along Austell Road and pedestrian conflicts
- Absence of streetscape
- Lack of design and development standards to establish character or a sense of place.
- High percentage of people living below poverty

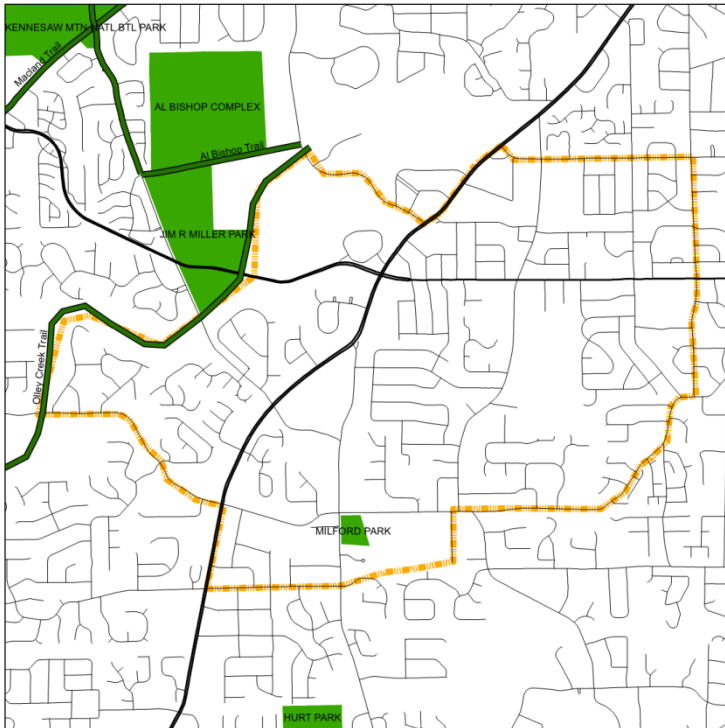




# Current and Proposed Projects

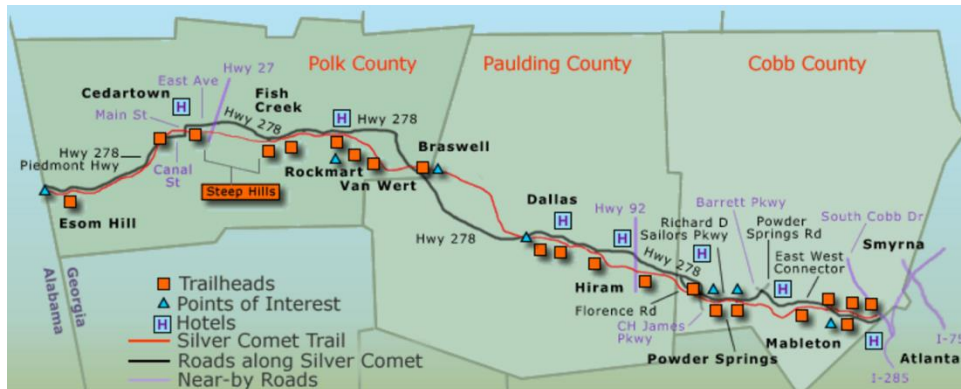
- Olley Creek Trail – Connection to The Silver Comet Trail
- Osborne High School Improvements / College and Career Academy
- Windy Hill Road Improvements
- Overton Place - New Townhomes on Austell Road

# Olley Creek Trail



Silver Comet Trail

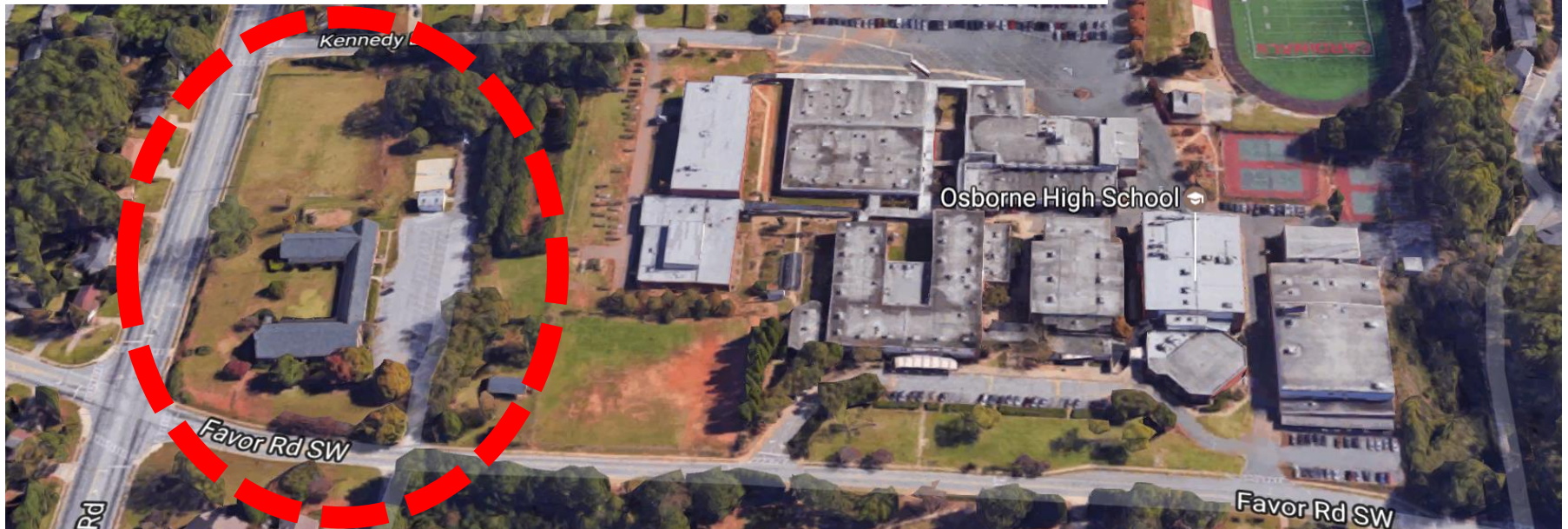
- Future trail that follows the Olley Creek basin on the western side of the study area.
- The trail will connect the area to the Silver Comet Trail; the Silver Comet runs from Cobb County westward to Alabama.
- The Olley Creek Trail connection will allow people to connect to the growing trail network in metro Atlanta and beyond.





# Osborne HS / College and Career Academy

- Cobb County Schools approved a full reconstruction of Osborne High School. The design of the new school has already begun and reconstruction of the building will be completed in mid-2018.
- The new school will be constructed on the same property as the existing school, similar to Walton High School, with the old building being demolished once the new building is completed.
- Cobb County is also completing a College and Career Academy (\$30MM project) that will be a part of the State of Georgia College and Career Academy system. This project will be constructed on the parcel in the red circle below.





# Windy Hill Road Improvements



- Reconfiguration of Windy Hill Road between South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road, just east of the study area.
- Four 'express' lanes with access roads on each side to enable thru-traffic to flow without stopping.
- The project will include new sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycles.



- Photo of existing Windy Hill Road in the study area on left; currently four lanes of traffic with Two-Way-Turn-Lane.
- Future Cobb County DOT plans could include removing the TWTL and replacing with a median; new landscaping and sidewalks would be included.

# Overton Place - New Townhomes



- New construction 3 Bedroom townhomes located in the mTap study area on Austell Road.
- Pricing of current inventory homes ranges from just over \$200k to \$230k.
- Total of 42 homes in Phase I.
- Affordable option for New Construction housing; estimated payments would range from \$1,250 to \$1,600 per month depending on down payment.
- The 11.17 acre parcel sold in late 2015 for \$391k, per county records.

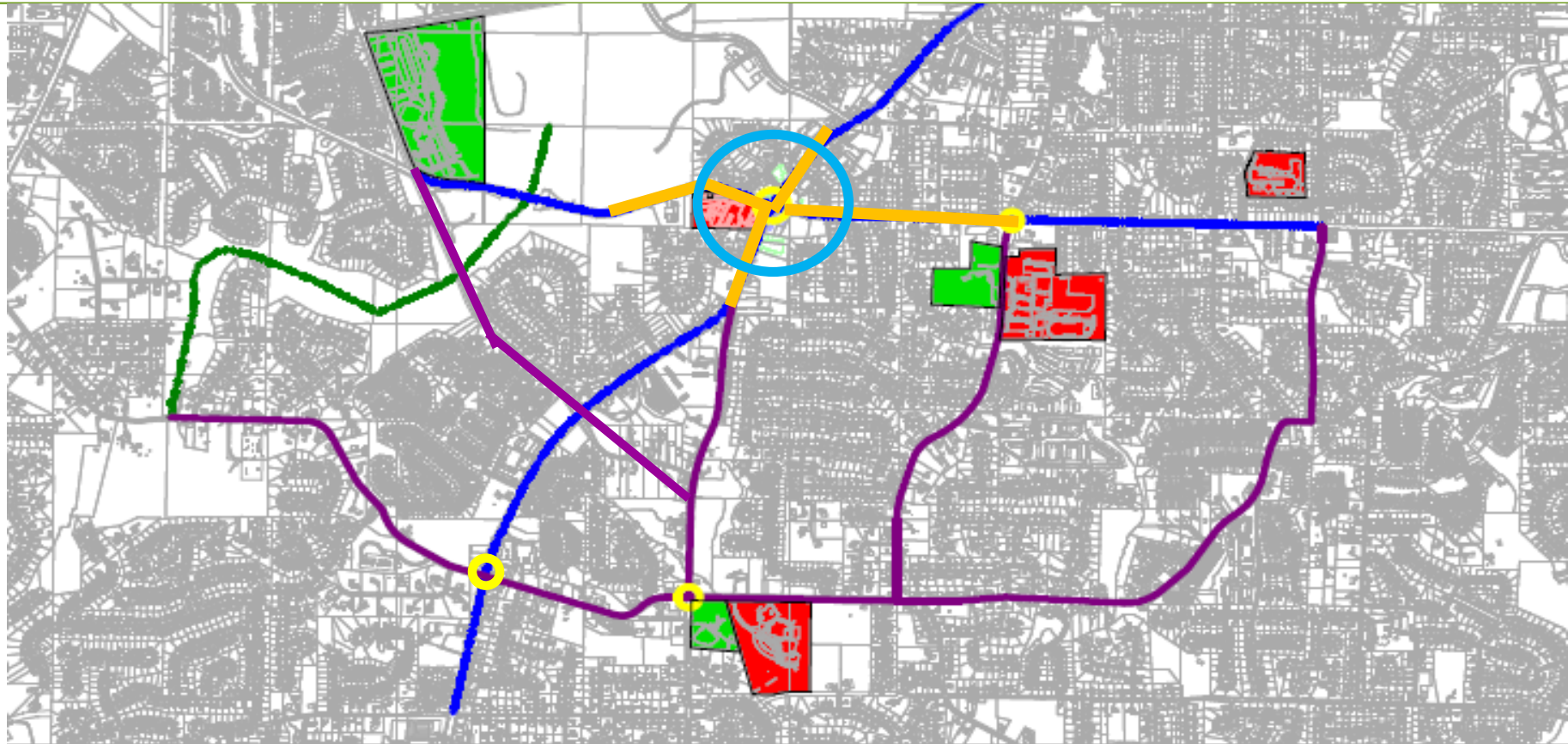




# Recommendations

- Public Infrastructure Improvements
- Policy Initiatives
- Design Guidelines
- Windy Hill Road and Austell Road Intersection Redevelopment





**Schools**



**Parks**



**Proposed City  
Center**



**Activity Nodes**



**Potential Trail Routes**



**Streetscape Improvements**



# Recommendations

## Policy Initiatives

### Land Use

- Commercial Activity Center Land Use Designation at (1) Windy Hill and Austell road, and (2) Milford Church Road/Austell Road
- Neighborhood Activity Center at Milford Church Road and Hicks Road Intersection
- Future land use change from GC to Neighborhood Activity Center from Austell and Windy Hill to Austell and Milford Church Road





# Housing Policies and Programs

## Homeownership and rehabilitation assistance:

- Credit and housing counseling for potential owners
- Lease-purchase and alternative financing for renters
- Access to state and federal programs (down payment assistance, lending, grants and loans for rehab)
- Property tax breaks for current residents
- Help for underwater homeowners
- Code enforcement compliance assistance





# Homeownership for Veterans

**Certain programs give priority to veterans (approximately 800 veterans live in this community).**

**Some provide funding specifically for ownership and rehabilitation programs directed towards veterans:**

- VA Home Purchase Loan Program (LTV as high as 100%) and Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan
- VA Housing Grants for Disabled Veteran
- FHLB of Atlanta Veterans and Returning Veterans Purchase & Rehabilitation (up to \$10K for purchase/rehab or \$15K for energy efficiency and accessibility improvements)

**Programs are often combined**





# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Create design guidelines for the Windy Hill & Austell Road Corridors
  - Planned, organized commercial development
  - Create a sense of harmony among buildings and structures
  - Promote future “organic” growth and development
  - Encourage commercial density along arterial corridors
  - **Foster a sense of community/identity**
- Minimum Design Criteria to be reviewed and enforced by Cobb County
  - Setbacks, Parking, and Loading Areas
  - Streetscape, Sidewalks, Landscape and Street Furniture
  - Signage
  - Architectural Guidelines





# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Setbacks, Parking, and Loading Areas
  - 15 foot minimum/25 foot maximum setback on Windy Hill and Austell Road
  - For existing parcels, institute planting berm requirements
  - Parking lots behind buildings and structures
  - Loading areas behind or to the side of buildings and structures
  - All trash areas and dumpsters are to be screened from view

# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

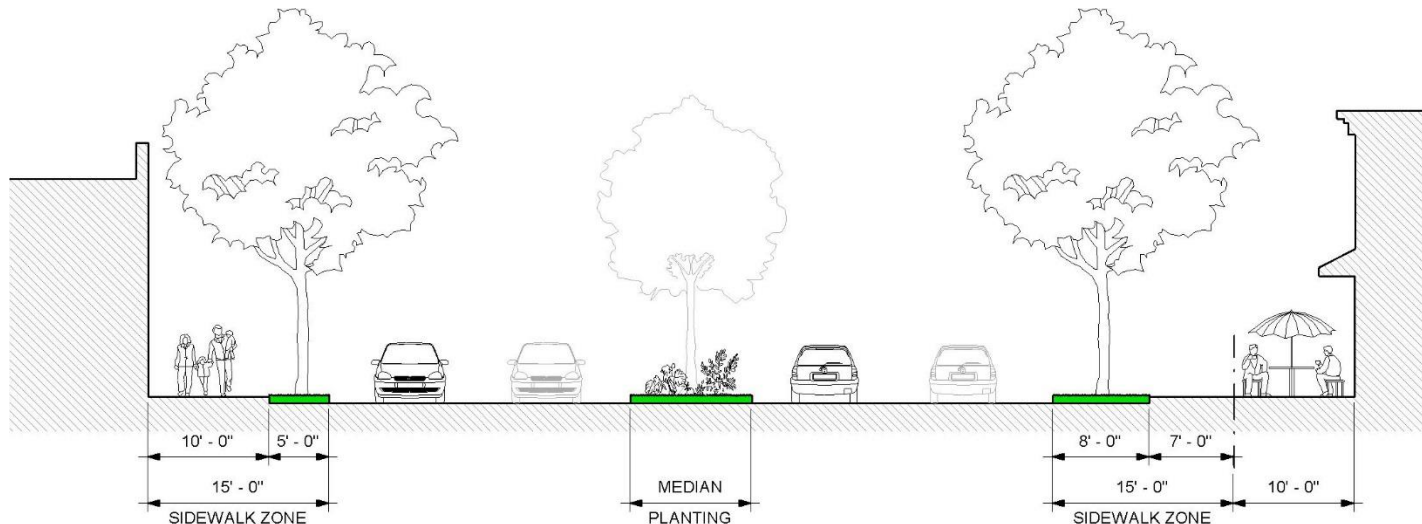
- Setbacks, Parking, and Loading Areas



# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Streetscape, Sidewalks, Landscape and Street Furniture
- Minimum 15' wide sidewalk “zone” along Windy Hill & Austell Road
- Minimum 3', maximum 8' planting strip immediately adjacent to Windy Hill & Austell Road, to provide a visual as well as safety buffer between busy vehicular traffic and pedestrians.
- Remaining 10' to be a landscape buffer or extension of “streetscape” (i.e. patios, wider sidewalks, awning/canopy)
- Existing buildings and sites can use the landscape buffer as a way to enhance streetscape without major impact to property (i.e. Advance Auto).







# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Streetscape, Sidewalks, Landscape and Street Furniture

**CURRENT**



**FUTURE**



# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Streetscape, Sidewalks, Landscape and Street Furniture





# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Signage
  - Eliminate future use of billboard signage
  - All new signage to be monument signs or attached to buildings
  - Building signage to have a maximum area requirement deemed appropriate by the county.
  - Restrictions on neon/light pollution from signage
  - Encourage shared parking and signage to decrease number of individual signs along roadways.





# Recommendations

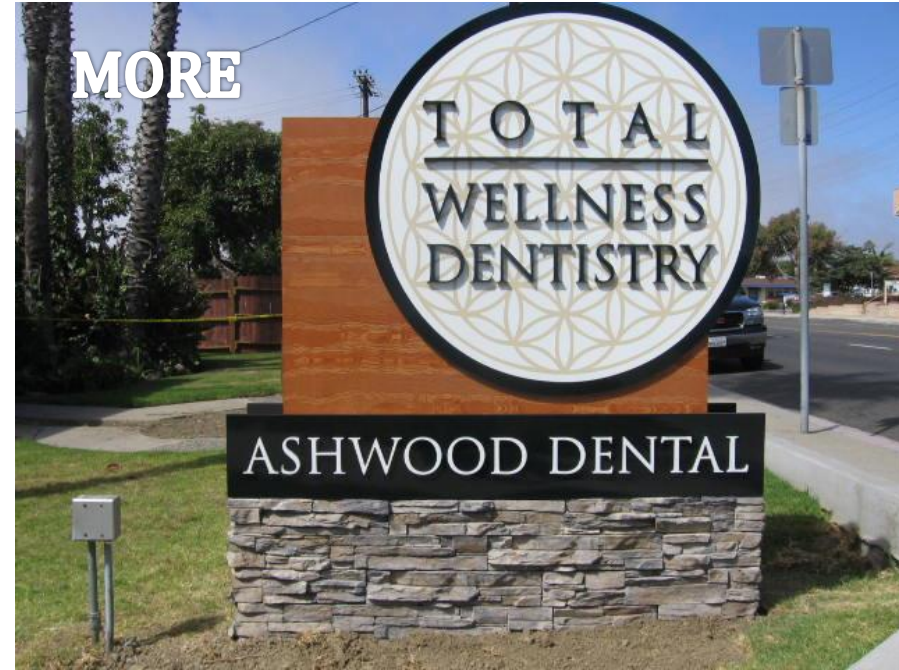
## Design Guidelines

- Signage

LESS...



MORE





# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Signage
  - Modify existing properties

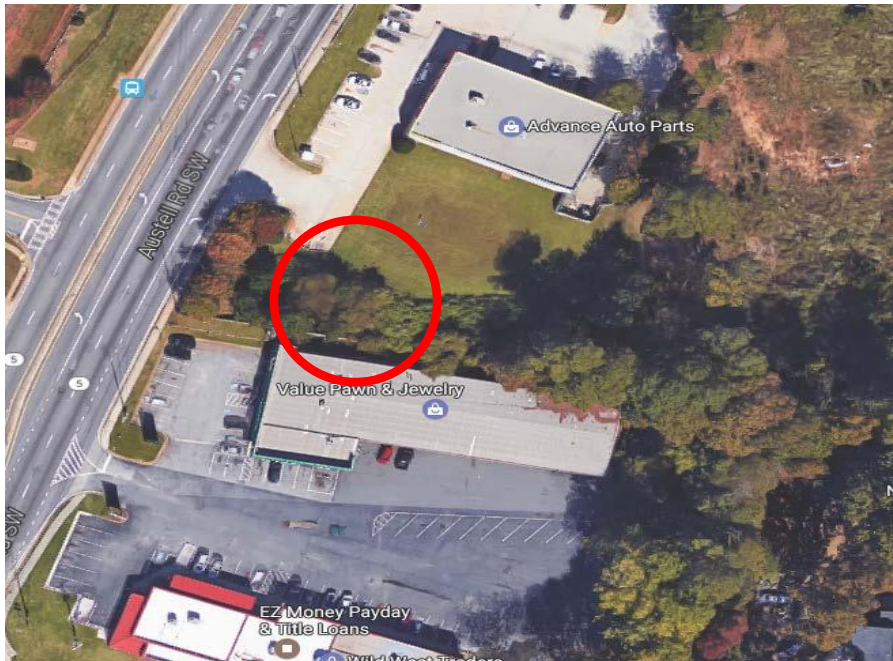




# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Signage
  - Encourage shared parking and signage to enhance streetscape



SBT02251





# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Architectural Guidelines
  - Materials include brick, glass, stone, stucco, and wood
  - Encourage use of brick to compliment existing residential, educational and community facilities
  - Maximize windows/storefronts on street frontage
  - Encourage use of awnings and canopies
  - Screen mechanical units and other utilities

# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

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# Recommendations

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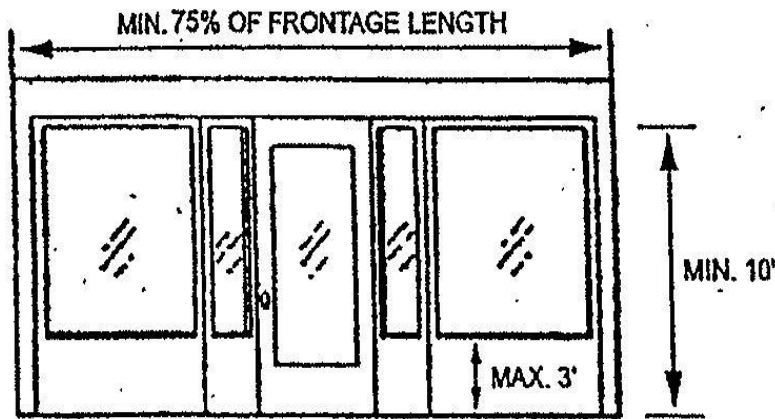




# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Architectural Guidelines
  - Maximize windows/storefronts on street frontage



Example from Atlanta Road Design Guidelines  
Cobb County Planning Division  
March, 2000



Main Street  
Downtown Woodstock, Georgia

# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Architectural Guidelines
  - Encourage use of awnings and canopies
  - Manage use of detached signage and fenestration signage
  - Pedestrian-friendly, welcoming environment



# Recommendations

## Design Guidelines

- Architectural Guidelines
  - Screen mechanical units and other utilities







# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- Redevelop intersection of Windy Hill & Austell Road “node”
  - Create a “city center” with strong anchor program
  - Promote future “organic” growth around the square
  - Connect “city center” to other significant nodes
  - **Foster a sense of community/identity**
- Suggested options for Milford Square
  - Relocate Milford Elementary School
  - YMCA or site of proposed county recreation center
  - Commercial hub
  - **Big Bold Idea!**



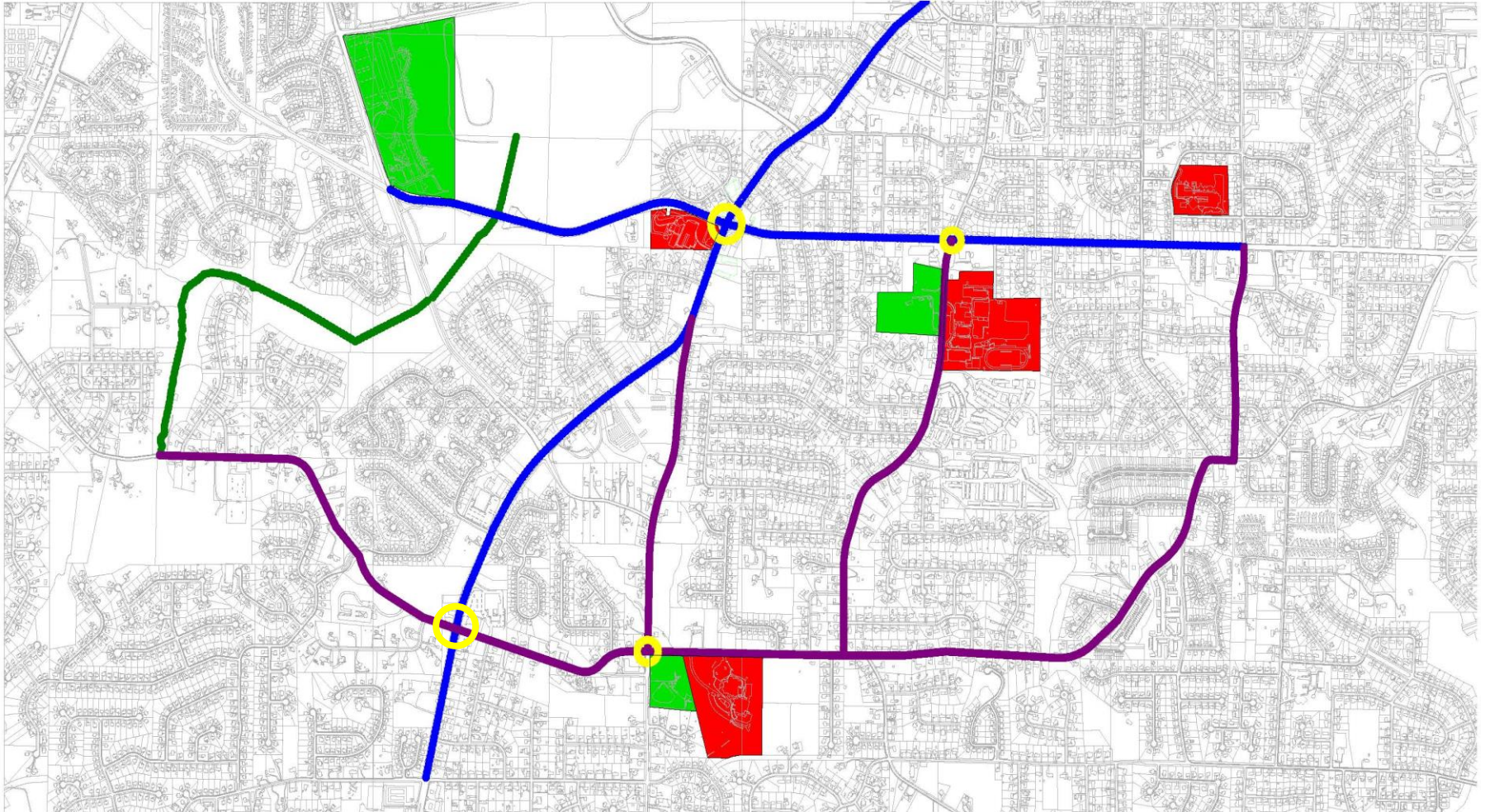
# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- Suggested options for Milford Square
  - Relocate Milford Elementary School – Strong encouragement from parents to close the school due to extension of Windy Hill Road
  - Potentially relocate adjacent to Osborne High School to create a centralized campus

# Recommendations

## Milford Square





# Recommendations

## Milford Square



# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- Milford YMCA or site of proposed county recreation center
  - Provide a strong community-oriented anchor to Windy Hill/Austell node
  - Caters to multiple income levels
  - A safe place for children/teens to go for after-school activities
  - Encourage a healthy lifestyle and wellness
  - Easily fits within existing site (parking, curb cuts, etc)
  - Architecture using materials of surrounding area (brick)

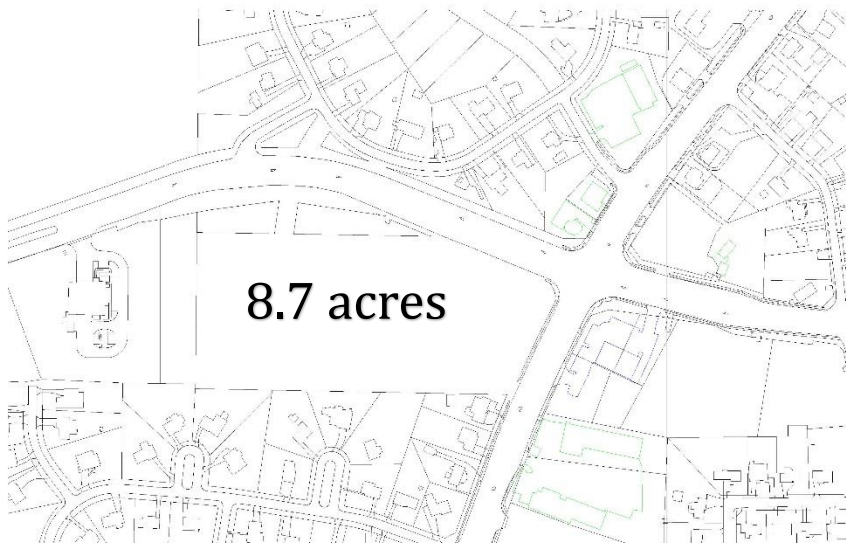




# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- Commercial Hub
  - New commercial development, starting with Milford Elementary Site
  - Mixed use with light retail, restaurants, medical offices (dentist, Wellstar)
  - Precedent of Smyrna Market Village for layout with strong emphasis on neighborhood-oriented retail.

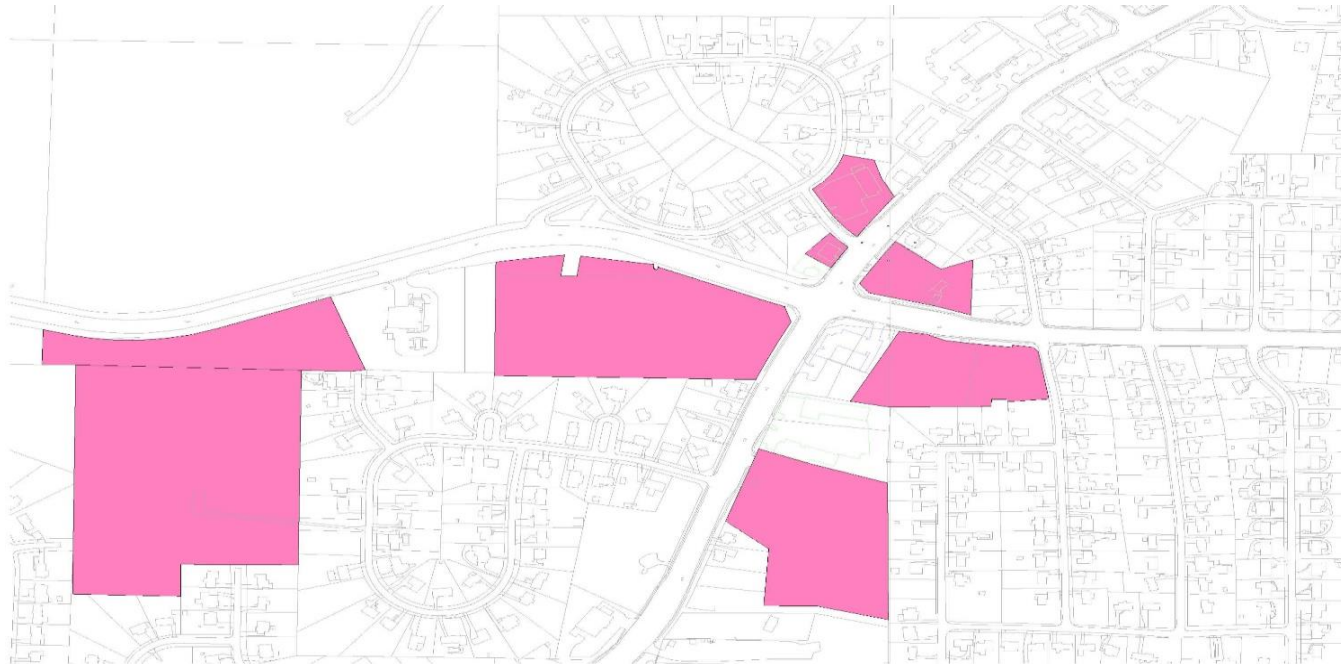




# Recommendations

## Milford Square

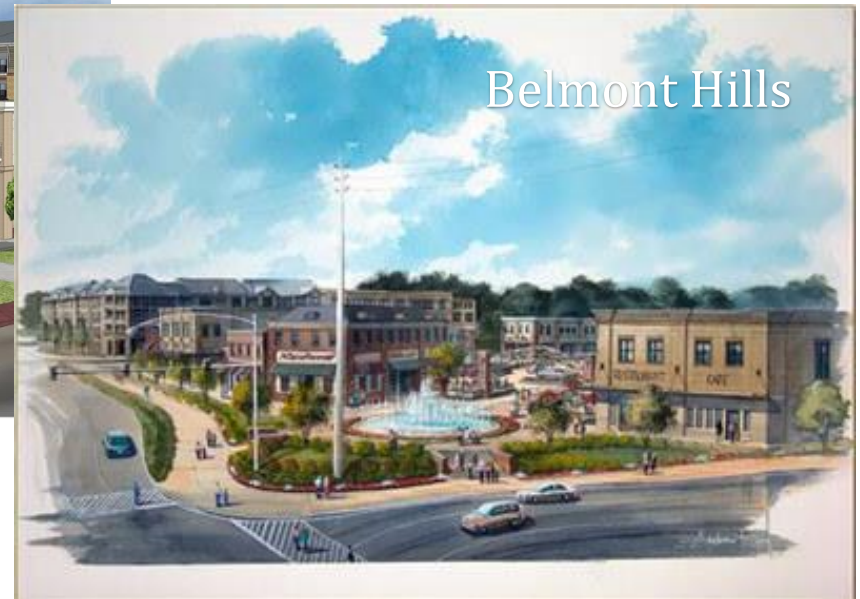
- Commercial Hub
  - Identify for sale or under-utilized lots nearby
  - Require similar commercial development to weave sites together, creating a larger hub/square



# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- Commercial Hub
- Result is similar to other developments in adjacent Cobb County cities





# Recommendations

## Milford Square

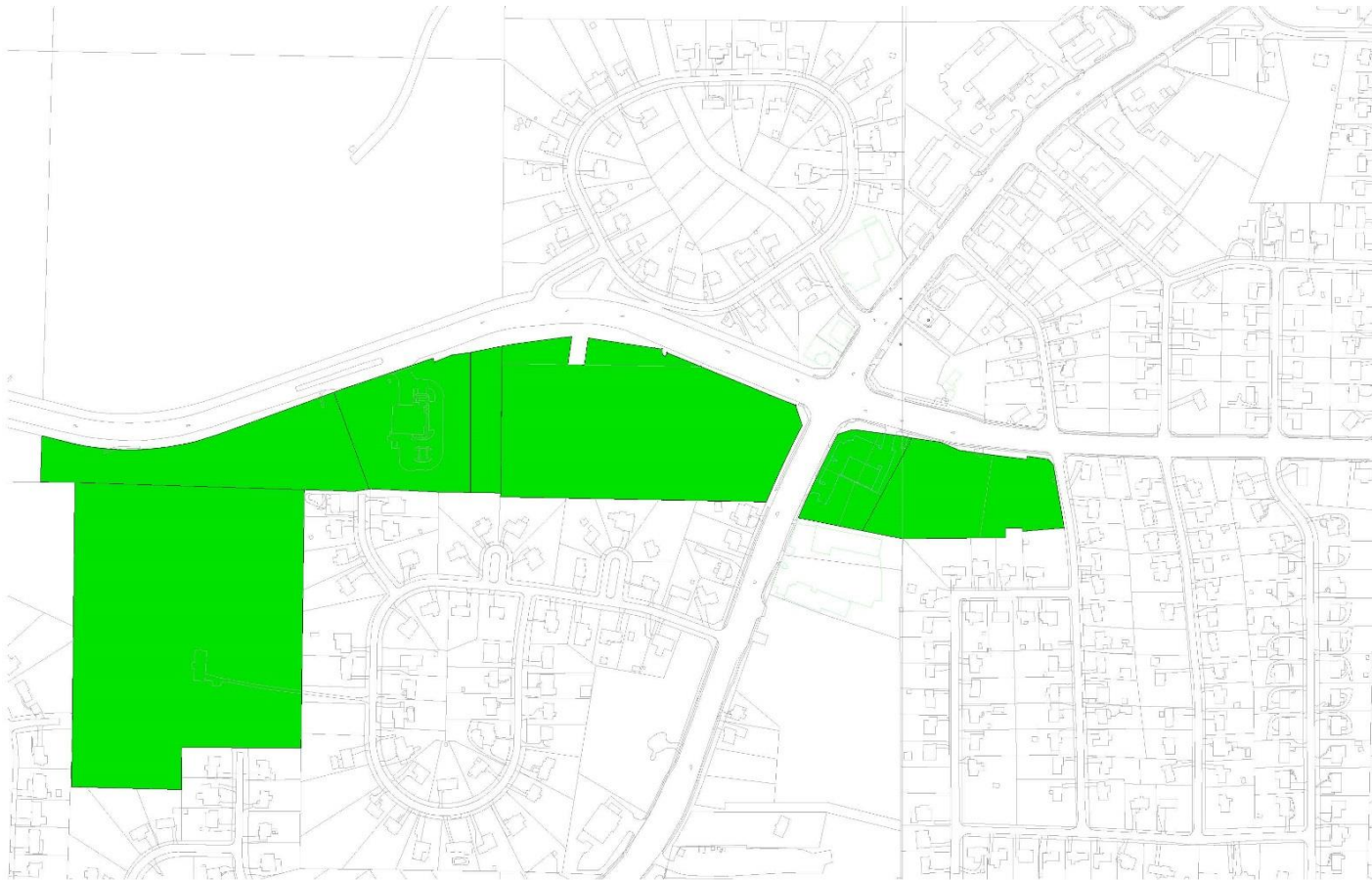
- **Big Bold Idea!**
  - Existing Milford Elementary site becomes catalyst of a true public park and square
  - Extend public square to adjacent lots needing redevelopment
  - Similar to Marietta Square or Downtown Woodstock



# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- **Big Bold Idea!**



# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- **Centralized park space with mixed use and retail surrounding**





# Recommendations

## Milford Square

- **Linear Configuration of the Site**

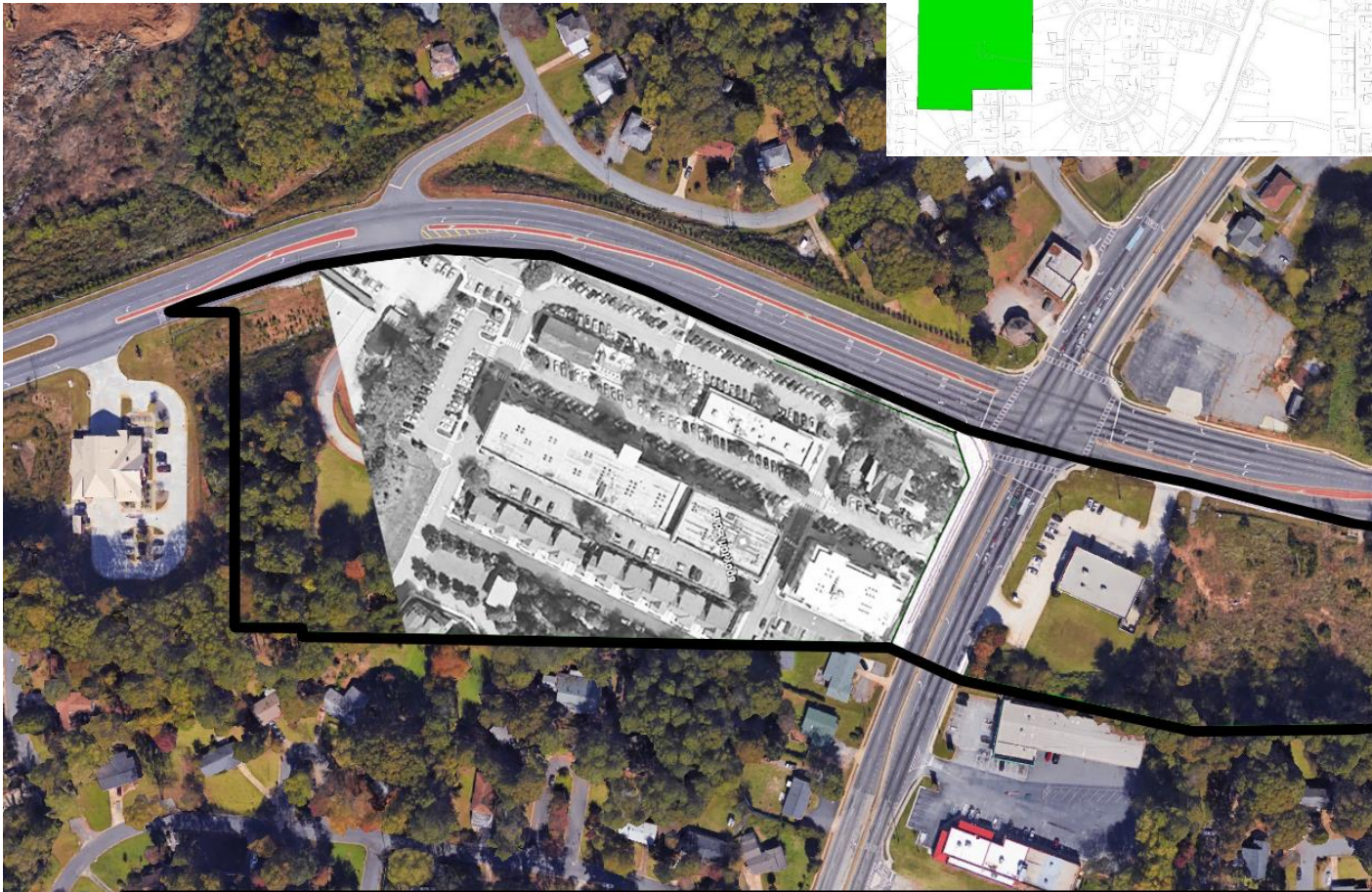




# Recommendations

## Milford Square

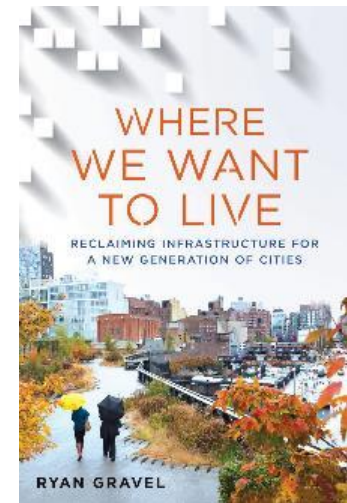
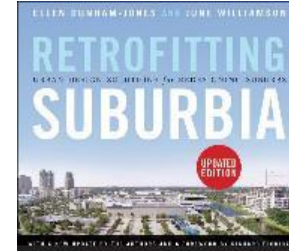
- **Linear Configuration of the Site**



# Commentary on Growth

Resources on understanding suburban growth patterns:

- Cobb developed in a classic sprawling pattern.
- Social, environmental, safety and health, and transportation issues result from this pattern.
  - *Environmental Health* by Howard Frumpkin
  - *Making Healthy Places* by Howard Frumpkin
  - *Pedestrian and Transit Oriented Design* by Reid Ewing
  - *Best Development Practices* by Reid Ewing
- Noted growth in Suburban Poverty.
  - *Study conducted by the Brookings Institute is available at Brookings.edu titled Suburban Poverty: A Year of Lessons.*
  - *Moving Beyond Sprawl, the Challenge for Metro Atlanta; also created by the Brookings Institute.*
- Retrofitting and Traditional Placemaking are potential responses:
  - *Retrofitting Suburbia* by Ellen Dunham-Jones.
  - *Where We Want to Live* by Ryan Gravel.



# Thank You