

Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study

Final Report – June 2012

Prepared for:

Cobb County, Georgia
In association with Atlanta Regional Commission

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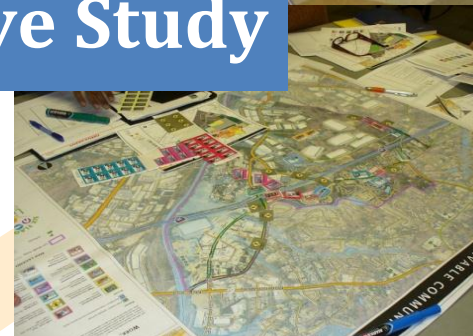
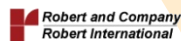


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Executive Summary

The Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study offers and analyzes public and stakeholder input and recommendations on transportation, land use, economic development with an eye towards sustainability for the study area in Southeast Cobb County. Cobb County was awarded this LCI grant by the Atlanta Regional Commission to further the efforts made through various other studies in the area and to present the community with implementable projects and policies to enhance the area. This study was done to identify new opportunities within the study area. The county hired the Stantec team, which also includes Contente Consulting, Robert and Company and Economic Development Research Group, Inc., to assist with the development of the plan.

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program in which the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) awards competitive grants to local Metro Atlanta governments to develop plans and implementation strategies for centers with potential regional land use and transportation impacts. The ARC Board has awarded \$1 million annually for study funds (from 2000 – 2017), with a total commitment of \$500 million to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The Six Flags study area is categorized as an Activity Center Study as it includes a mixture of office, retail, and service, residential or civic uses. The placement within this category is supported by the inclusion of the single and multi-family homes, the industrial and institutional land uses as well as the local and regional attractors with the South Cobb Recreation Center and Six Flags Over Georgia. Additionally, Interstate 20 runs through the

northern section of the study area and provides direct regional access to the City of Atlanta.

The LCI program has three main concepts:

1. Encourage a diversity of residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the activity center and town center level; housing should be given strong focus to create mixed-income neighborhoods and support the concept of “aging in place”;
2. Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area; and,
3. Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders (including those not often involved in such planning efforts).

The Six Flags area is ideally suited for as an LCI and an enhanced regional center due to its proximity to significant regional assets. These include: I-20, Fulton County airport, major industrial developments, Six Flags Over Georgia and the Chattahoochee River. It also contains a mixed base of land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and entertainment.

The overall purpose of this study is to develop a master plan for multi-modal transportation options, a mix of compatible but varied land uses that are supported an economic analysis and an implementable five year program.



The goals of the Six Flags LCI study were presented in the three main categories. The top goals within each category, as ranked by the team with input from the Core Team and stakeholders, are highlighted below:

- Land Use –
 - **Create a safer community for residents and visitors.**
 - **Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.**
 - **Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complex properties along Six Flags Drive.**
 - **Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.**
 - **Promote pedestrian-oriented development along Six Flags Drive.**
 - Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth.
 - Identify opportunities for town center mixed use development within the Study Area.
 - Establish a unique community identity and sense of place.
 - Identify opportunities for community and regional entertainment uses in order to take advantage of the proximity to the Six Flags amusement park.
 - Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.
- Transportation –
 - **Develop and prioritize a network of paths for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians by interconnecting existing sidewalks and introducing new paths/sidewalks/trails for major routes & corridors.**
 - Identify partnerships and other methods for providing transportation options for seniors, children and students within the study area.
 - Clearly define truck travel paths and routes (both officially designated & heavily traveled routes) develop a project to safely accommodate trucks and residential traffic (e.g. Riverside Pkwy, Access to I-20, Six Flags Parkway).
 - During the redevelopment process, some guiding principles include consideration of access management standards for new developments such as shared driveways, inter-parcel access, and where appropriate right-in/right-out islands.
- Economic Development –
 - **Attract office jobs in regionally competitive industries such as professional and technical services, health care, and educational services.**
 - **Create a safer community for businesses, employees and customers.**
 - **Retain and expand industrial employment in existing firms and encourage new industrial business by ensuring a continued competitive environment (transportation access, access to workforce, low cost of doing business).**
 - Provide workforce opportunities by developing partnerships between education/workforce development entities and businesses.
 - Attract retail jobs, which provide entry-level jobs for those without work experience, part time employment for students, seniors and others not



desiring full time work, and some career-track opportunities through management training programs.

Based on the community input the top goals, regardless of category are:

- Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.
- Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complex properties along Six Flags Drive.
- Create a safer community for residents and visitors.

The Six Flags LCI Study planning process included meetings that involved various Cobb County Officials, Businesses and other organizational Representatives, residents from within and near the Six Flags LCI Study area, nearby business and property owners including apartment managers/representatives and Home Association (HOA) representatives.

In addition to working sessions with the Core Team and the Public, interviews were conducted with many business owners/managers and residents as well as organizations working in the community. Coordination and outreach also included the local faith community, elected officials, philanthropic organizations, as well as service providers.

Social media was employed to share information and gather input as well. Local press attended all meetings, reported on the progress of the study and invited comments and participation as well.

There are two overarching recommendations that have emerged from assessing all of the input to this process. The community has members who are very engaged and searching for a way to help the area succeed. It is recommended that this group initiate the formation of a Six Flags Community Task Force.

The second recommendation is that the requirements for additional police resources be evaluated and that funding opportunities to support this growth in police presence be identified and sought.

A summary of the recommended action items and policies for the Six Flags LCI included below. Figure E.1 shows the draft future land use concept map. Table E.1 Shows the Five Year Implementation Plan for transportation projects.

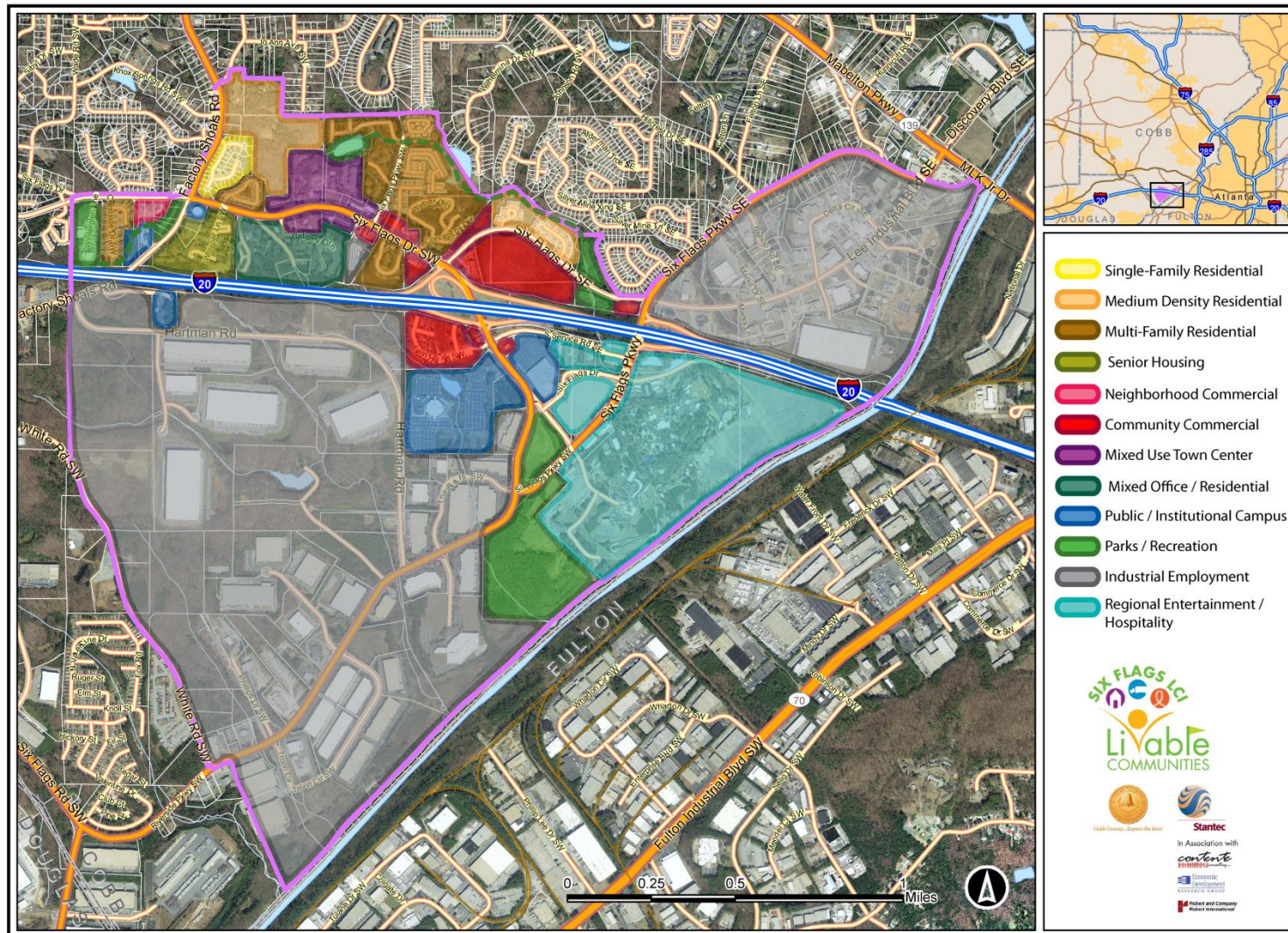
- Land Use: **Commercial –**
 - Designate commercial activity centers according to intensity of desired development and commercial service area. (e.g. Neighborhood Commercial and Community Commercial)
 - Perform grocery store market study within LCI economic development analysis.
 - Recruit mid-sized retail/grocery store.
 - Improve aesthetics of existing commercial areas.
 - Improve pedestrian accessibility to commercial centers.
- Land Use: **Mixed Use Town Center –**
 - Potential Tax Allocation District could fund public improvements to Town Center



- Land Use: **Mixed Use Office/Residential** –
 - Employment incentives (Opportunity Zone / Enterprise Zone)
 - Locate office/professional uses as a transition between activity centers and less intensive development.
- Land Use: **Public/Institutional Campus** –
 - Pursue faith-based redevelopment initiatives through public/private partnerships.
 - Encourage development of educational facilities and job training centers.
 - Provide pedestrian accessibility between campus facilities and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Land Use: **Regional Hospitality/Entertainment** –
 - Develop hospitality / entertainment district adjacent to Six Flags entrances.
 - Encourage private development of a golf resort hotel on vacant land south and west of Six Flags Over Georgia.
- Land Use: **Industrial Employment Centers** –
 - Prevent incursion of residential land uses into industrial districts.
 - Mitigate conflicts between industrial truck traffic and surrounding land uses.
 - Form Industrial Business Improvement District.
 - Designate routes for trucks in order to manage industrial traffic.
- Land Use: **Parks/Recreation/Conservation** –
 - Develop new neighborhood parks at key community focal points and gateways.
 - Develop a network of trails in order to link recreational amenities.
 - Provide public safety and Crime Prevention through design in new parks.
- Land Use: **Residential** –
 - Develop mixed use town center as a catalyst for residential redevelopment of older apartment complexes.
 - Encourage mixed income redevelopment that includes provisions for affordable housing.
 - Consider Lifelong Communities principles in order to allow residents to remain in the community as they age.



Figure E1. Future Land Use Concept – Six Flags LCI Study Area



Note: These recommendations are a concept only and do not alter or impact land use policy. Therefore, they cannot be used to justify land use and zoning decision making.

Table E1. Land Use Five Year Implementation Plan – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Recommendation	Action	Cost	Year	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources	Match Amount
Encourage mixed use redevelopment along Six Flags Drive.	Promote Redevelopment Overlay District for Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals and I-20	\$5,000	2013	SCRA	SCRA	\$1,000
Facilitate the development of religious, civic, and educational institutions that provide social services for the community.	Amend Cobb County Comprehensive Plan to include Word of Faith Campus as a public-institutional district	Staff time	2012	CCP	CCP	
Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.	Acquire land at intersection of Factory Shoals and Six Flags Drive for gateway park	\$250,000	2015	Cobb County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs	Cobb County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs	\$50,000

CCP: Cobb County Planning

SCRA: South Cobb Redevelopment Authority



- Transportation: **Pedestrian** –

- Complete the existing network of sidewalks with priority based on location of worn paths and high pedestrian traffic routes.
- Develop multiuse trail to connect future potential green spaces to proposed Cobb trail and bicycle plan.
- Identify potential perpetual maintenance efforts of sidewalks, trails, and paths. Develop collaboration with local community for sidewalk beautification maintenance.
- Installation of sufficient lighting for safe pedestrian travel as well as to better allow drivers to identify pedestrians at night. Adequate lighting should be installed in the study area with heavy concentration at highly utilized areas.

- Transportation: **Transit** –

- Develop local community trolley service
 - A shuttle or a closed loop trolley service would be limited to strictly service the study area.
- Short Term-
 - Complete the existing network of sidewalks with priority based on location of worn paths and high pedestrian traffic routes
 - Evaluate the existing bus route and stops to compensate for stops and destinations that are now excluded due to the previously terminated routes.

- Long Term – Reinstatement of public transportation services in the study area
- Increase awareness and setup local hub for Cobb Freedom Voucher Program

- Transportation: **Roadway Operations & Capacity** –

- Installation of gateway nodes - The identified intersections should be analyzed to determine the appropriate configuration which may be upgrading lanes and signals or roundabout installations.
- Installation and/or upgrade of crosswalks at gateway nodes.
- Improve visibility for drivers and pedestrians with the use of specialized crosswalks such as textured or raised pavements increased lighting.
- Develop a wayfinding signage plan, specifically for community identification
- Considerations for access management standards where appropriate for new developments such as shared driveways, inter-parcel access, and right-in/right-out islands.
- Plan for the installation of a 10-foot wide median on Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals Road and Riverside Parkway with openings at key locations



- **Transportation: Trucks –**
 - Installation of signage prohibiting through truck traffic on primarily residential corridors segments (these areas are outside of the current study boundaries)
 - Installation of truck route signage consistent with the proposed wayfinding signage plan
 - Include geometric improvements and signal optimization at local intersections.
 - Work with local schools and employment centers to develop a program to educate the general public on passenger car/truck/pedestrian safety.
 - Enhance county standards/guidelines for freight specific building and site requirements for use by local jurisdictions when conducting permitting and site review.
 - Resurfacing Riverside Parkway from six Flags Drive to Bob White Road.



Table E2. Transportation Five Year Implementation Plan – Six Flags LCI Study Area

ID	Description	Type of Improvement	Length	Engineering or Planning ¹		Right of Way		Construction		Total Project Cost	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources	Match Amount
				Year	Costs	Year	Costs	Year	Costs				
S1	Six Flags Drive from Concept 21 Cir to S. Service Road (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.4 Mile	2014	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2015	\$350,000	\$375,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$75,000
S2	Six Flags Drive from Riverside Parkway to Lee Industrial Blvd	Sidewalks	0.8 Mile	2014	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2015	\$350,000	\$375,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$75,000
S3	Six Flags Parkway from Hillcrest Drive to Silver Mine Trail (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.2 Mile	2013	\$15,000	TBD	N/A	2014	\$150,000	\$165,000	CCDOT	LCI Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$33,000
S4	Six Flags Parkway from Silver Arrow Cir to S. Service Rd (eastern side of road)	Sidewalks	0.3 Mile	2013	\$12,500	TBD	N/A	2014	\$100,000	\$112,500	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$22,500
S5	Factory Shoals Road from Tomahawk Pl to Six Flags Dr (western side of road)	Sidewalks	0.2 Mile	2014	\$10,000	TBD	N/A	2015	\$100,000	\$110,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$22,000
S6	Factory Shoals Road from Six Flags Dr to Hartman Rd (both sides of road, long term)	Sidewalks	0.5 Mile	2016	\$40,000	TBD	N/A	2017	\$375,000	\$415,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$83,000
S7	Riverside Pkwy from Six Flags Way to Lake Careco Rd (on eastern side of road)	Sidewalks	0.8 Mile	2016	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2017	\$350,000	\$375,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$75,000
S8	Six Flags Pkwy SW from Riverside Pkwy to S. Service Rd (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.5 Mile	2016	\$40,000	TBD	N/A	2017	\$375,000	\$415,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$83,000
S9	Six Flags Way from Six Flags Pkwy to Riverside Pkwy (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.2 Mile	2017	\$15,000	TBD	N/A	2018	\$150,000	\$165,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$33,000
S10	Six Flags Dr (south of S. Service Rd) from Six Flags Pkwy to Six Flags Way (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.3 Mile	2017	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2018	\$200,000	\$225,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$45,000
G1	Southwest Gateway: Hartman Rd at Factory Shoals Rd	Intersection Improvements	N/A	2017	\$30,000		N/A	2018	\$75,000	\$105,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$21,000
G2	West Gateway: Factory Shoals Rd at Six Flags Dr	Crosswalks & Signal Upgrade	N/A	2013	\$50,000		N/A	2014	\$150,000	\$200,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$40,000
G3	Southeast Gateway: Six Flags	Intersection	N/A	2015	\$50,000		N/A	2016	\$200,000	\$250,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$50,000

¹ Planning includes traffic studies that are necessary to finalize the design of improvements



SIX FLAGS LCI STUDY

JUNE 2012 – FINAL

ID	Description	Type of Improvement	Length	Engineering or Planning ¹		Right of Way		Construction		Total Project Cost	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources	Match Amount
				Year	Costs	Year	Costs	Year	Costs				
G4	Pkwy at Riverside Pkwy East Gateway: Six Flags Pkwy at Lee Industrial Blvd.	Improvements Intersection Improvements or Roundabout	N/A	2014	\$150,000	TBD	N/A	2016	\$500,000	\$650,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$130,000
G5	Regional Gateway: I-20 WB Ramps at Riverside Pkwy	Crosswalks & Signal Upgrade	N/A	2015	\$50,000		N/A	2016	\$150,000	\$220,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$44,000
G6	Regional Gateway: I-20 EB Ramps at Riverside Pkwy	Crosswalks & Signal Upgrade	N/A	2015	\$50,000		N/A	2016	\$150,000	\$270,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$54,000
G7	Regional Gateway: I-20 WB Exit & EB Entrance Ramp at Six Flags Pkwy	Crosswalks & Signal Improvements or Roundabout	N/A	2015	\$150,000		N/A	2016	\$500,000	\$650,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$130,000
T1	Study Existing transit service and identify ways to restore additional service	Transit Study	N/A	2013	\$25,000		N/A			\$25,000	CCT/CCDOT	LCI	\$5,000
T2	Implement local trolley service (privately sponsored)	Local Trolley Service*	N/A	2016			N/A	2016		\$100,000/yr	CCT	TMA	\$20,000/yr
T3	Replace and maintain bus shelters and street furniture		N/A	2013 - 2015	\$45,000					\$45,000	CCT	LCI	\$9,000/yr
R1	Installation of wayfinding signage plan		N/A	2014	\$45,000		N/A	2015	\$150,000	\$195,000	CCDOT	LCI	\$39,000
S1	Conduct study to develop trolley service for local area			2014	\$10,000		N/A			\$10,000	CID	CID or FTA	\$2,000
RS1	Resurfacing Riverside parkway from Six Flags Drive to Bob White Road	Pavement Resurfacing	2 Miles	2015	27,000		N/A	2016	534,400	\$561,400	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$112,280

Dollars are expressed in 2012 \$

Assumes that vehicle will be provided by other and TMA will only pay operating costs.

CCDOT: Cobb County Department of Transportation

CCT: Cobb Community Transit

LCI: Livable Centers Initiative Transportation Improvement Funding

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

ECODEV: Cobb County Economic Development Department

FTA: Federal Transit Administration



- Economic Development : **General** -
 - Collaboration with the Police Department for strategic deployment of resources to improve safety in area.
 - Development of additional resources, as funds are available to increase the police presence in the area.
- Economic Development: **Housing** –
 - Identify and purchase apartment buildings with a significant proportion of blighted and substandard housing to be replaced;
 - Encourage apartment complex managers to meet with residents of housing stock to be reduced. Provide information and applications for potential relocation.
 - Identify and work with private sector developer experienced in affordable and mixed-income
- Economic Development: **Office** –
 - Identify existing buildings within the Study Area suitable for office use
 - Identify possible sites along Six Flags Drive suitable for a major user-driven office project
 - Raise awareness among state-level economic development officials regarding the desirability of a Six Flags site for office location/expansion
- Economic Development: **Retail** –
 - Work with civic partners to raise awareness of healthy eating and fresh foods among Study Area residents
 - Identify sites within the Study Area that satisfy zoning regulations with regard to distance from schools and churches
 - Design a package of incentives that reduce the risk for the real estate developer and grocery store anchor tenant
 - Assign a grocery store champion to approach possible operators, introduce them to the sites and incentives available in the study area and see the process through to completion.
- Economic Development: **Industrial** –
 - Identify workforce skill gaps needed to meet Six Flags company needs
 - Provide workforce training to close skill gaps
 - Provide job training in job search skills, resume and interview skills
 - Work with employers to get job postings
 - Provide job matching services, employee pre-screening and other services to employers



Table E3. Economic Development Five Year Implementation Plan – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Category	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources
Housing	Identify and purchase apartment buildings with a significant proportion of blighted and substandard housing to be replaced;	TBD	2012-2014	ECODEV	Neighborhood Stabilization Program Funds, New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant
	Identify and work with private sector developer experienced in affordable and mixed-income housing to provide new housing products in the Study Area as part of the larger Town Center development.	Staff time	2013-2014	ECODEV, Cobb County, multiple agencies (Planning, Zoning, Community Dev, etc)	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant
Retail	Identify possible sites that meet regulatory requirements;		2012	ECODEV	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant, Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credit
	Design a package of incentives that reduce the risk for the real estate developer and grocery store anchor tenant; and	Outside services	2012-2013	ECODEV	
	Assign a “grocery store champion” to approach possible operators, introduce them to the sites and incentives available in the study area, open a dialog with the operators to determine what needs to be done, and see the process through to completion.	\$20,000	2013-2014	ECODEV	
Office	Identify desirable locations for major office development within the Six Flags Study Area		2012-2013	ECODEV	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant, Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credit
	Identify a corporate user looking for an expansion site	Outside services	2012-2017	ECODEV	
	Assemble an incentives package to ensure that a Six Flags site is financially advantageous to the proposed user	\$20,000	2012-2013	ECODEV	
	Raise awareness among state-level economic development officials regarding the desirability of a Six Flags site for office location/expansion		ongoing	ECODEV	
Industrial	Continue existing economic development policies that have led to the development of high quality industrial parks with excellent transportation access and competitive business costs	n/a	ongoing	ECODEV	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant
	Preserve undeveloped industrial sites for future employment uses		ongoing	CCP	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible)
	Provide workforce training and job placement services within the Six Flags community		2012, ongoing	Cobb Works	Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credits, State workforce training grants

CCCD: Cobb County Community Development

CCP: Cobb County Planning, Economic Development

TAD: Tax Allocation District

ECODEV: Cobb County Economic Development Department

SCRA: South Cobb Redevelopment Authority



1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a planning effort led by the Cobb County Department of Transportation that was awarded one of the two LCI study grants from the Atlanta Regional Commission for 2011. This study takes an in depth look at the land use, transportation, and economic development characteristics of the Six Flags study area and develops and prioritizes pre-existing recommendations and implementation strategies.

The overall purpose of the Six Flags LCI study is to develop a master plan with existing and new land uses as well as transportation improvements and options with a strong focus on economic development and sustainability. This study will provide scenarios for new development that provides for economic growth.

1.2 THE LCI PROGRAM

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program in which the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) awards competitive grants to local Metro Atlanta governments to develop plans and implementation strategies for centers with potential regional land use and transportation impacts. The ARC Board has awarded \$1 million annually for study funds (from 2000 – 2017), with a total commitment of \$500 million to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

LCI study areas fall into one of four categories:

- Activity Center
- Emerging” Regional Center or Corridor
- Town Center
- Corridor

The Six Flags study area is categorized as an Activity Center Study as it includes a mixture of office, retail, and service, residential or civic uses. The placement within this category is supported by the inclusion of the single and multi-family homes, the industrial and institutional land uses as well as the local and regional attractors with the South Cobb Recreation Center and Six Flags Over Georgia. Additionally, Interstate 20 runs through the northern section of the study area and provides direct regional access to the City of Atlanta.

The LCI program has three main concepts:

4. Encourage a diversity of residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the activity center and town center level; housing should be given strong focus to create mixed-income neighborhoods and support the concept of “aging in place”;
5. Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area; and,



6. Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders (including those not often involved in such planning efforts).

In support of the three LCI concepts, there are 10 goals that each LCI study should meet:

1. Encourage a diversity of medium to high-density, mixed income neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the transit station, corridor, activity and town center level.
2. Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area.
3. Encourage integration of uses and land use policy/regulation with transportation investments to maximize the use of alternate modes.
4. Through transportation investments increase the desirability for redevelopment of land served by existing infrastructure at transit stations, corridors, activity and town centers.
5. Preserve the historical characteristics of transit stations, corridors, activity and town centers, and create a community identity.
6. Develop a community-based transportation investment program at the transit station, corridor, activity and town center level that will identify capital projects, which can be funded in the annual TIP.
7. Provide transportation infrastructure incentives for jurisdictions to take local actions to implement the resulting transit station, corridor, activity or town center study goals.
8. Provide for the implementation of PLAN 2040 objectives, quality growth initiatives and Best Development Practices in the study area and at the regional level.
9. Develop a local planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders particularly low income, minority and traditionally underserved populations
10. Provide planning funds for development of transit station, corridor, activity and town centers that showcase the integration of land use policies/regulations and transportation investments with urban design tools.

1.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES & PLANS

The Six Flags LCI Study is preceded by several other studies and plans for the area that were reviewed for information to help with identifying the recommendations in this study:

- South Cobb Implementation Strategy 2012, prepared by Cobb County Government, January 2012
- Western Gateway Vision Plan, prepared by Macauley + Schmit, November 2010
- Six Flags Drive Corridor Study prepared by Cobb Community Development Agency, 2006
- Walkable Community Workshop, Six Flags Drive: From Factory Shoals Road to Riverside Parkway, prepared by the Cobb County Department of Transportation, September 2005

A detailed summary of the key findings of these studies is provided in the Appendix. These have been considered throughout this study process and incorporated where

appropriate. In some cases, the goals have been brought forward from previous studies but new specific recommendations have been developed.

1.4 LIFELONG COMMUNITIES

The Atlanta Regional Commission's Lifelong Communities (LLC) program is an initiative designed to assist with ensuring that individuals can live within their communities throughout their lifetime. This initiative identifies various goals and strategies that communities meet with specific options with respect to Transportation and Housing. These goals are:

- Promoting Housing and Transportation Options
- Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles
- Expanding Information and Access to Services

Additionally, there are seven principles that can be incorporated to help meet the LLC goals:

- Connectivity – Providing the most options for getting from one place to another, reduces traffic and creates a viable street network for multiple modes of transportation
- Pedestrian Access and Transit – Creating a vibrant streetscape, destinations worth walking to, connected and safe sidewalks and transit, both within the community and to regional hubs

- Neighborhood Retail and Services – Permitted within walking distances of housing to reduce auto travel, increase walkability and provide for sustainable community hubs
- Social Interaction – Resulting from the provision of adequate green space, community centers, neighborhood gardens and more
- Diversity of Dwelling Types – Allowing individuals to remain within the community as their needs and preferences change
- Healthy Living – Growing out of an environment that promotes physical activity (trails and bike paths), neighborhood-scale groceries offering fresh fruits and vegetables and health clinics and medical offices within walking distance
- Consideration for Existing Residents – Providing options for existing residents to remain in the community as redevelopment occurs

The Lifelong Community principles have been used as guiding principles in the development of the recommendations for future land use and transportation options.



1.5 COUNCIL ON OPPORTUNITY ZONE

The Six Flags Council on Opportunity Zone (COZ) is an effort led by local leadership and key community members that focuses on coordinating local services that will work together towards six shared goals:

- Education
- Health
- Income
- Quality of Life
- Homeless Prevention

This effort is aligned with the target areas for United Way and has received some limited funding to advance some of the programs to concepts identified by their outreach efforts.

The COZ held several Community Cafes with discussion that cover several issues within and beyond the study area. While many of the issues are social, some originate from lack of resources within the Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development categories. Within transportation, some of the issues identified by the COZ include:

- Lack of Cobb Community Transit (CCT) bus routes, connections and stops
- Lack of frequency of CCT routes
- Lack of sidewalks and bike trails
- More visible stop signs
- Inadequate lighting on roads
- The community needs better connectivity to Atlanta via Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- More adequate bus shelters

The COZ also identified various Quality of Life constraints within the study area:

- There are not enough adequate resources within the study area, especially on Six Flags Drive
 - Grocery Stores
 - Pharmacy
 - Doctor office or clinic
 - Library
 - Banks
 - Gym
 - Activities for seniors
- Not enough quality apartments and affordable housing
- Lack of educational opportunities specifically with respect to soft skills as well as
- There is not an overall sense of adequate safety within the study area.

The consistency of the findings of this effort with those of the LCI study indicate that coordination and collaboration can create opportunities to multiply effectiveness. This is reflected in the Implementation Guidebook.

2.0 Community Profile

2.1 STUDY AREA LOCATION

The LCI Study Area is located in the southeast corner of unincorporated Cobb County, Georgia. While the Six Flags Over Georgia amusement park is its most recognizable feature, the Study Area also includes a large industrial employment center and many apartment communities.

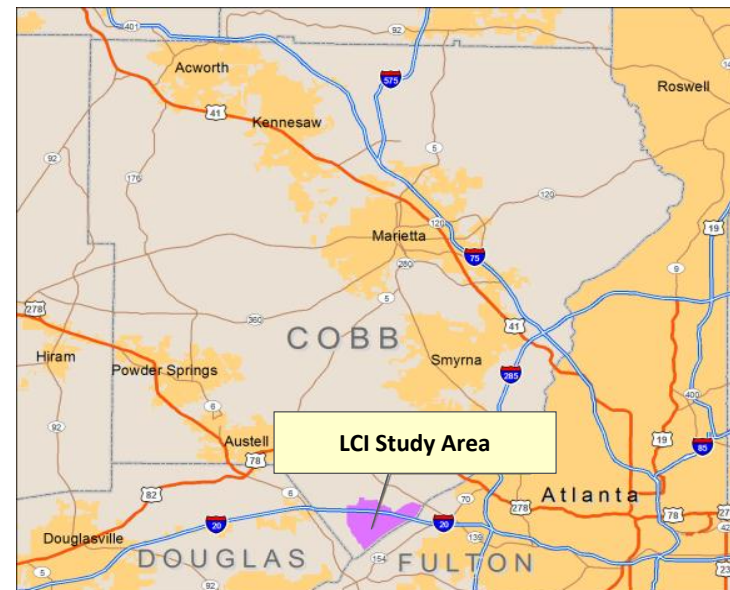
The Study Area is roughly bounded by the Chattahoochee River / Cobb County boundary on the east, White Road and Factory Shoals Road on the west, and the apartment communities along Six Flags Drive on the north. The Study Area is bisected by US Interstate Highway 20 (I-20), with a large industrial employment center on the south, apartment communities and a smaller industrial area on the north. The nearest municipalities are the City of Atlanta to the east, Douglasville to the west, Austell to the northwest, and Smyrna to the north.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS, HOUSING & LAND USE

2.2.1 Demographics

The following demographic analysis is based on data from the 2010 US Census and the LCI Study Area. Wherever possible the smallest Census geography was used for analysis. When the Study Area deviated from Census geography, Census figures were adjusted based on area-weighted recalculation and block-level population data.

The population of the Six Flags LCI Study Area was just under five thousand (4,945) as of the 2010 Census. Between 2000 and 2010, the population of the LCI Study Area increased at a rate (15.1%) comparable to the growth of Cobb County (13.2%). The Study Area represents an enclave of minorities, with 73.2% African Americans and 21.1% Hispanics. In contrast, Cobb County as a whole had a majority white population and only 25% African Americans and 12.3% Hispanics. (See Table 1)



The Study Area has a proportion of family households (65.3%) that is comparable to Cobb County (67.4%). (See Table 2) However, the Study Area has a high proportion of households with children (47.4%), and unmarried households with children (24.8%).

The age distribution within the Study Area is relatively young, with 33% of the population under 18. (See Table 3) The median age of the Study Area is 27.9 as compared to 35.4 in Cobb County as a whole. Only 2.3% of the Study Area was over 65 years old, as compared to 8.7% in Cobb County. While there are relatively few seniors within the Study Area, there are a greater number of older residents in the single-family residential neighborhoods just north of Six Flags Drive.

The residents of the Study Area have a relatively low median household income (\$58,200) as compared to Cobb County (\$76,904). (See Table 4) According to Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data, 46.5% of the Study Area residents are classified as low income, and 67.5% are classified as low to moderate income.

2.2.2 Housing

Housing within the Six Flags LCI Study Area is primarily multi-family attached units, with 58% of the occupied units for rent and 42% owner-occupied. Likewise, many of the owner-occupied units are relatively dense townhome developments. As of the 2010 census, 25.4% of the housing units in the Study Area were vacant, with a majority of these vacant units for rent. (See Table 5) Thus, many of the apartments within the community suffer from extremely high vacancy rates. In contrast, the overall vacancy rate of Cobb County was 9.7% for the same year.

Table 1 Population by Race, 2010 – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Population by Race	Number	%
Total	4,945	100.0
Population Reporting One Race	4,798	97.0
White	616	12.5
Black	3,622	73.2
American Indian	27	0.5
Asian	18	0.4
Pacific Islander	4	0.1
Some Other Race	511	10.3
Population Reporting Two or More Races	147	3.0
Hispanic Population	1,042	21.1

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Table 2 Households by Type, 2010 – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Households by Type	Number	%
TOTAL	1,795	100.0
Households with 1 Person	478	26.6
Households with 2+ People	1,317	73.4
Family Households	1,172	65.3
Husband-wife Families	498	27.7
With Own Children	318	17.7
Other Family (No Spouse Present)	674	37.5
With Own Children	446	24.8
Nonfamily Households	145	8.1
All Households with Children	851	47.4
Multigenerational Households	101	5.6
Unmarried Partner Households	167	9.3
Male-female	151	8.4
Same-sex	16	0.9
Average Household Size	2.76	

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census



Housing values within the LCI Study Area are significantly lower than Cobb County as a whole. (See Table 6) According to the 2010 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Home Sales Report, the zip code that includes the LCI Study Area has experienced a drastic decline (-61%) in home resale values between 2007 and 2010. Much of this steep decline in housing values can be attributed to high foreclosure rates.

Table 3 Population by Age, 2010 – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Age	Number	%
Age 0 - 9	1,015	21%
Age 10 - 19	772	16%
Age 20 - 29	880	18%
Age 30 - 39	1,000	20%
Age 40 - 49	705	14%
Age 50 - 59	365	7%
Age 60 - 69	148	3%
Age 70 - 79	43	1%
Age 80 +	19	0%
Total	4,948	100%
Under 18	1,644	33.2
Over 65	112	2.3

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Figure 1 Existing Land Use, Six Flags LCI Study Area

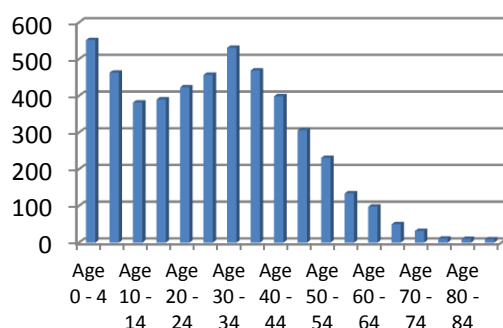


Table 4 Income, 2010 – Six Flags LCI Study Area, Cobb County

Variable	LCI Study Area	Cobb County
Median HH Income	\$58,200	\$76,904
Average HH Income	\$63,586	\$96,722
Per Capita Income	\$22,229	\$35,879

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online

Table 5 Housing Occupancy Status, 2010 – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Total Housing Units by Occupancy	Number	%
Total	2,405	100.0
Occupied Housing Units	1,795	74.6
Vacant Housing Units	610	25.4
For Rent	483	20.1
Rented, not Occupied	8	0.3
For Sale Only	86	3.6
Sold, not Occupied	2	0.1
For Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional Use	5	0.2
Other Vacant	26	1.1

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

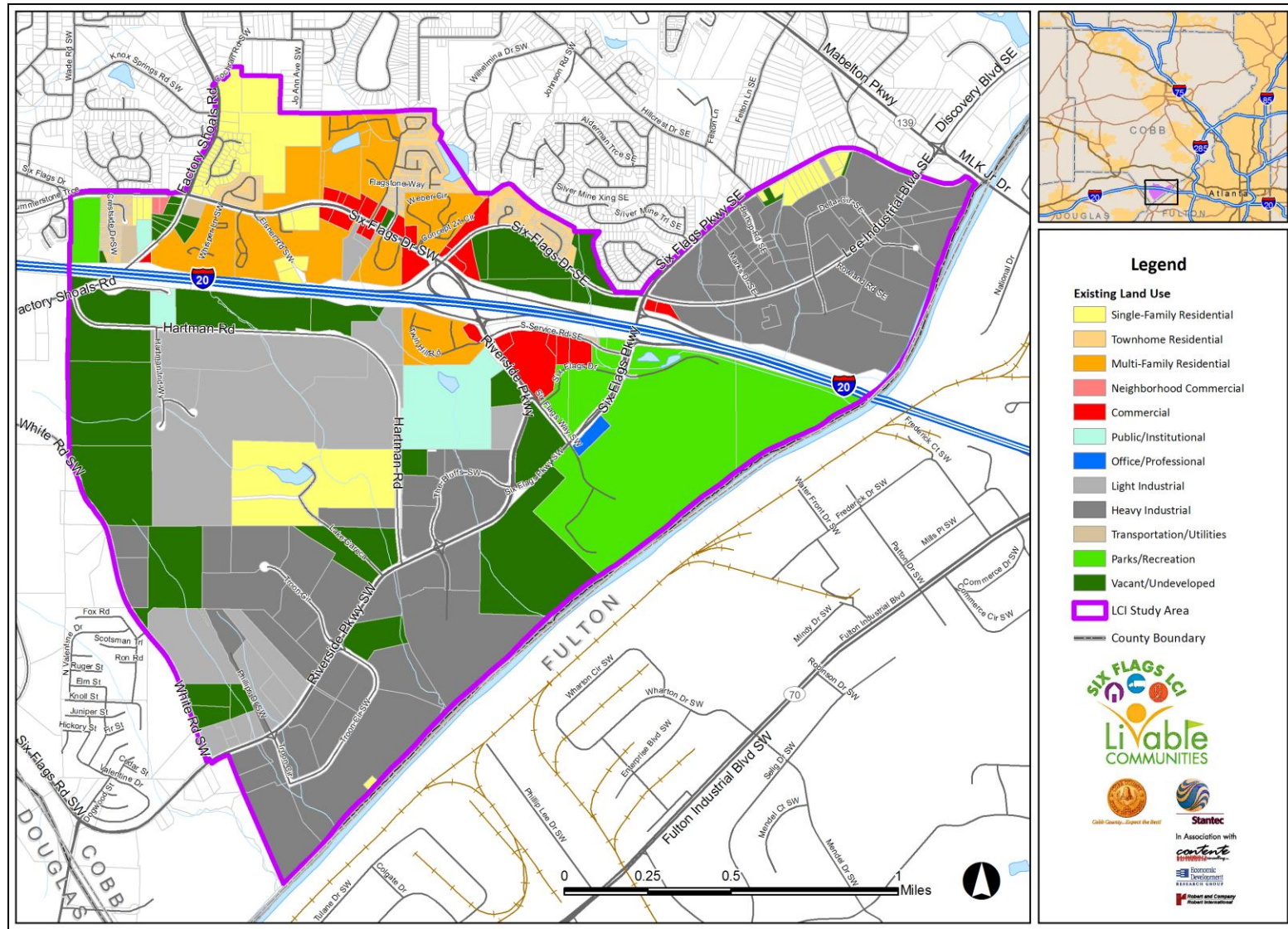
Table 6 Median Home Value

Variable	LCI Study Area	Cobb County
Median Housing Value	\$75,000	\$157,850
Average Housing Value	\$92,991	\$191,660

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online



SIX FLAGS LCI STUDY
JUNE 2012 – FINAL



2.2.3 Land Use

The land use planning process for the Six Flags LCI Study began with an inventory of existing land uses using desktop GIS software and a windshield survey. Next, the existing and future land use regulations governing the area were examined. The existing zoning of the Study Area was compared to future land use plans. Since there have been several different plans that have addressed land use within the Study Area, future development scenarios were also compared. Public outreach was gathered utilizing several land use charette exercises and consultation with local stakeholders and Cobb County staff.

Existing Conditions

Figure 1 provides a map of existing land uses within the Six Flags LCI Study Area as of 2012 and Table 7 provides a corresponding breakdown of each land use by acreage. The Six Flags Over Georgia amusement park at the eastern edge of the study area constitutes the defining feature of the community and makes up the vast majority of the parks/recreation land. The South Cobb Recreation Center and Aquatic Center on the western edge of the Study Area are examples of publicly available recreation facilities that serve the surrounding community. While there is no public outdoor recreation in the LCI Study Area, there are parks and outdoor recreational facilities associated with schools located to the north.

Industrial land uses make up the largest proportion of the total acreage of the Study Area. Heavy industrial uses are generally located on the eastern edge of the Study Area along the Chattahoochee River, Riverside Parkway, and Lee Industrial Boulevard. Likewise, there is a significant concentration of industrial activity across the river within Fulton County. There is

also a large concentration of light industrial warehousing/distribution activity along Hartman Road in the southern half of the Study Area.

There are hospitality commercial land uses associated with Six Flags located at expressway interchanges and along S. Service Road leading into the amusement park. There are some small strip commercial shopping centers located along Six Flags Drive that serve the community. There are also some small neighborhood commercial establishments near the intersection of Factory Shoals Road and Six Flags Drive. The only regional commercial in the Study Area was a former Sam's Club, which has recently been purchased for public/institutional use by the Word of Faith Family Worship Cathedral.

Table 7. Existing Land Use, 2012 – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Existing Land Use	Acres	%
Single-Family Residential	139.9	7.3%
Townhome Residential	59.9	3.1%
Multi-Family Residential	152.8	8.0%
Commercial	51.3	2.7%
Public/Institutional	52.9	2.8%
Office/Professional	3.4	0.2%
Light Industrial	261.6	13.7%
Heavy Industrial	605.0	31.7%
Transportation/Utilities	5.2	0.3%
Parks/Recreation	230.8	12.1%
Vacant/Undeveloped	344.5	18.1%
TOTAL	1,907.5	100.0%

Robert and Company



The Word of Faith church, located along Riverside Parkway, represents the largest public/institutional land use within the Study Area. As a “mega-church,” Word of Faith operates a large capacity cathedral for church services with future plans for extensive community services, including fitness, recreation, job search, and conference facilities. The only other public/institutional land uses within the Study Area are a small church and a fire station. The only office/professional land use within the Study Area is administrative offices associated with Six Flags Over Georgia.

Residential land uses within the Study Area are located primarily north of I-20 along the Six Flags Drive corridor. There is only one single-family residential subdivision within the Study Area, however, there are numerous subdivisions immediately to the north. The vast majority of housing within the LCI area is medium to higher density townhomes and apartments.

Land Use Regulations

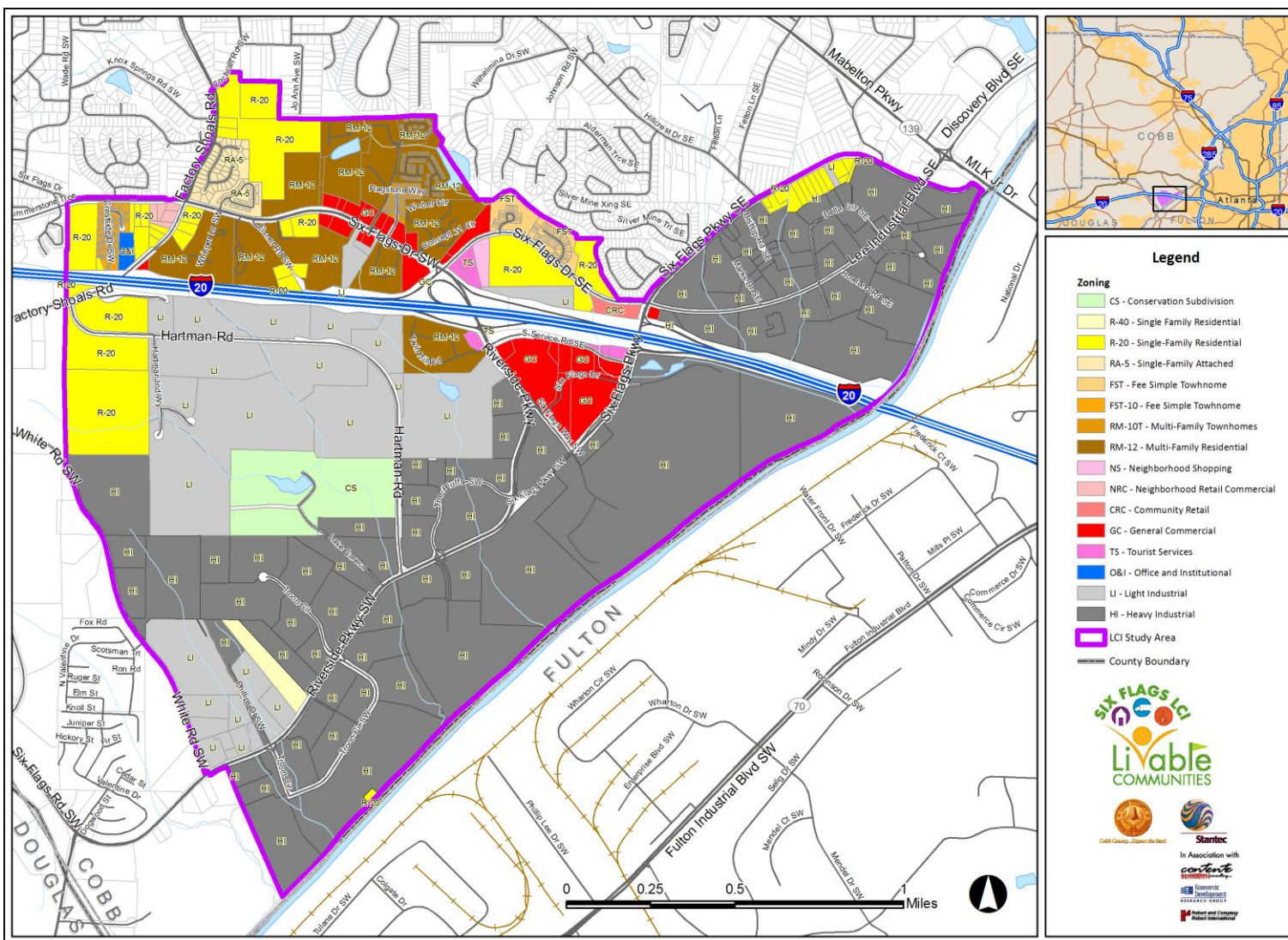
Land use within the Study Area is governed by existing zoning and future land use plans. Zoning codes regulate the land uses currently allowable, as well as the intensity of development, required setbacks, etc. Future land use plans are consulted whenever rezoning applications are filed. Figure 2 shows the current zoning of land within the Six Flags LCI Study Area, and Table 8 provides the corresponding acreage of each zoning designation.

Table 8 Existing Zoning – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Zoning	Acres	%
CRC - Community Retail Commercial	3.6	0.2%
CS - Conservation Subdivision	65.4	3.4%
FST - Fee Simple Townhome	16.9	0.9%
FST-10 - Fee Simple Townhome	8.0	0.4%
GC - General Commercial	65.5	3.4%
HI - Heavy Industrial	979.7	51.4%
LI - Light Industrial	357.8	18.8%
NRC - Neighborhood Retail Commercial	3.4	0.2%
NS - Neighborhood Shopping	3.4	0.2%
O&I - Office and Institutional	3.0	0.2%
R-20 - Single-Family Residential	180.8	9.5%
R-40 - Single-Family Residential	11.0	0.6%
RA-5 - Residential Attached/Detached (Duplex)	21.4	1.1%
RM-10T - Multi-Family Residential (Townhome)	4.1	0.2%
RM-12 - Multi-Family Residential	176.3	9.2%
TS - Tourist Services	7.3	0.4%
TOTAL	1,907.5	100.0%

Source: Cobb County GIS

Figure 2. Zoning, Six Flags LCI Study Area



Land Use Change Opportunities

When planning for future land use, it is important to identify areas where land use change is likely and/or desirable. It can also be useful to identify areas of likely land use change and compare them to current zoning designations.

First, vacant/undeveloped land is an obvious area that should be examined for potential future development. While many of the undeveloped parcels within the Study Area are encumbered by steep topography and floodplains, these areas provide a starting point for examining land use change. Table 9 provides a summary of the current zoning for all of the undeveloped parcels in the Study Area. For the purpose of this analysis, some very large parcels that are currently classified as residential were included within the summary. For example, the 65 acre tract zoned for CS (Conservation Subdivision) was included, since the parcel currently contains only three homes.

One of the potential land use changes is within the distressed apartment communities located along Six Flags Drive. Interviews with property management companies have indicated extremely high vacancy rates at many of the apartments in the Study Area, sometimes approaching 50%.

Among older single-family residential properties that are located along major corridors there are some opportunities for change. As the value of these properties for residential use is impacted by traffic, there is often pressure for conversion to commercial land uses. There are several older ranch homes located directly off Six Flags Drive that are prime for redevelopment or adaptive reuse. Likewise, there are several single-family residential properties

directly off Six Flags Parkway that have been identified as Industrial Compatible within the county's future land use plans.

Table 9 Undeveloped or underutilized Land by Zoning – Six Flags LCI Study Area

Zoning	Acres	%
CRC - Community Retail Commercial	3.6	0.8%
CS - Conservation Subdivision	65.4	14.9%
GC - General Commercial	0.8	0.2%
HI - Heavy Industrial	166.2	37.8%
LI - Light Industrial	56.7	12.9%
NRC - Neighborhood Retail Commercial	2.1	0.5%
NS - Neighborhood Shopping	3.4	0.8%
R-20 - Single-Family Residential	141.3	32.2%
TOTAL	439.4	100.0%

Source: Cobb county GIS zoning Data, Robert and Company Land Use Survey

2.3 TRANSPORTATION

A key component of the Six Flags LCI is to identify and prioritize the transportation challenges and opportunities within the study area that will assist in promoting development consistent with current and future needs of its residents and businesses. This section will focus on the existing conditions and set the stage for the various transportation challenges and potential improvements within the study area including its most heavily traveled corridors and intersections.

2.3.1 Roadway Systems

To determine existing traffic conditions of the study area, an inventory was made of the three main and most heavily traveled corridors in the area as well as four main study intersections in the study area was conducted. Figure 3 shows the base map of the study area highlighting the main corridors and intersections.

The main study intersections include the following:

- Three signalized intersections:
 - Factory Shoals Road at Six Flags Drive;
 - Six Flags Drive at Riverside Parkway; and
 - Riverside Parkway at the I-20 Eastbound Ramps.
- Four unsignalized Intersections:
 - Factory Shoals Road at Hartman Road;
 - Six Flags Parkway at South Service Road;
 - Six Flags Parkway at the I-20 Westbound Ramp;
 - Six Flags Parkway at Six Flags Drive/Lee Industrial Boulevard;

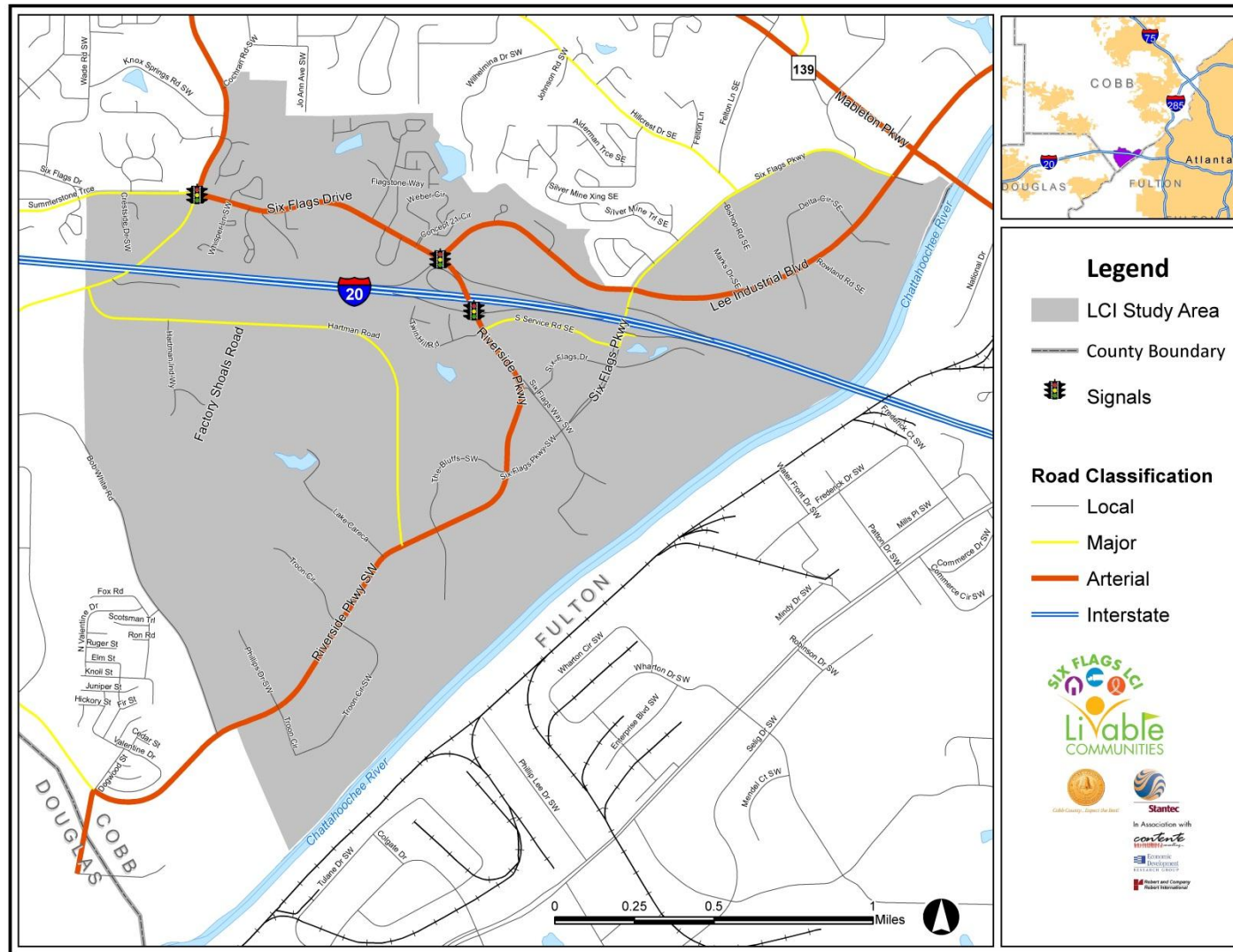
The five main corridors within the Six Flags LCI area are listed below:

- Factory Shoals Road from Hartman Road to Cochran Road;
 - Two-lane roadway south of Six Flags Drive
 - Four-lane roadway north of Six Slags Drive.
- Lee Industrial Boulevard from Six Flags Drive to Six Flags Parkway (Near Mableton Pkwy);
 - Two-lane roadway west of Marks Lane.
 - Two-lane roadway with two-way left turn median east of Marks Lane.
- Riverside Parkway from Bob White Road to Six Flags Drive;
 - Four-lane roadway with two-way left turn median north of Phillips Drive.
 - Two-lane roadway south of Phillips Drive.
- Six Flags Drive from Factory Shoals Road to Six Flags Parkway; and
 - Primarily a four-lane roadway with two-way left turn median.
- Six Flags Parkway from Riverside Parkway to Lee Industrial Boulevard (Mableton Pkwy).

Two-lane roadway except between Interstate 20 Eastbound ramps and Six Flags Drive where it is four lane median divided.



Figure 3 Roadway Functional Classification



2.3.2 Roadway Functional Classification

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), an Urban Minor Arterial will serve trips that are moderate (10-20 mile trips) and serve local communities but should not access actual neighborhoods. Riverside Parkway, Lee Industrial Boulevard and segments of Factory Shoals Road, Six Flags Drive and Six Flags Parkway are all classified as Urban Minor Arterials based on the GDOT Highway System Status Map, last updated July 2010.

The functional classification of roadways within the study area are provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Cobb County Department of Transportation are shown in Table 10. In Figure 3, and for the remainder of this study, all roadway classifications used are that of the Cobb County DOT.

A 2.4 mile stretch of Interstate 20 runs east-west through the study area from the Chattahoochee River and Fulton County line to just west of Factory Shoals Road. The study area has two Interstate 20 interchanges with a roadway network that has moderate connectivity with the potential to provide congestion relief and driver alternatives to the interstate, if necessary. Although Interstate 20 provides the major east-west travel movement, Hartman Road, Six Flags Drive, and Lee Industrial Boulevard corridors also provide this movement running parallel to Interstate 20. Additionally, Riverside Parkway and portions of Factory Shoals Road provide the major north-south movement within the study area.

It is important to note however that the use of these main corridors is not exclusively by local drivers. While the main study area corridors are not considered principal arterials to/from major destination outside of the study area, they do provide direct access to such routes. More specifically, for example, Lee Industrial Boulevard provides close access to Atlanta via its close proximity to SR 139/Mableton Parkway, and both Riverside Parkway and Factory Shoals Road are in close proximity to SR 6/Thornton Road, providing access to Douglas and Fulton counties respectively.

Table 10 Main Corridors Existing Roadway Functional Classifications

Roadway	Functional Classification	
	GDOT	Cobb County
Factory Shoals Road	Urban Minor Arterial *	Arterial**
Hartman Road	Local Road	Major
Lee Industrial Boulevard	Urban Minor Arterial	Arterial
Riverside Parkway	Urban Minor Arterial	Arterial
Six Flags Drive	Urban Minor Arterial	Arterial
South Service Road	Local Road	Major

*North of Six Flags Drive, and Local Road south of Six Flags Drive

**North of Six Flags Drive, and Major south of Six Flags Drive

Source: Georgia DOT, 2011 Functional Classification maps & Cobb County, 2011 Functional classification



2.3.3 Vehicle Traffic

The 2008, 2009 and 2010 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) data was taken from the State Traffic and Report Statistics section of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) website. There were three traffic count locations identified within the study area. A summary is included in Table 11.

The counts taken from GDOT along the corridors showed a range of daily vehicles volumes from about 6,900 to about 15,000 in different sections of the study area. The volumes provided indicate that over the over the 2008 – 2010 years, Factory Shoals Road and Six Flags Parkway had increases in trips while Lee Industrial Boulevard and Riverside Parkway had decreases.

The study area is home to a significant amount of industrial activity and future land use; furthermore many of the corridors are heavily traveled by trucks. As shown in Table 11 above, on Lee Industrial Boulevard, Six Flags Parkway and Riverside Parkway trucks account for 19%, 12% and 15% of the total traffic respectively. Figure 4 Shows the frequently used truck routes in the study area.

Table 11 Six Flags LCI Study Area AADT Data

Road Segment	2008	2009	2010	Trucks	Average % change per year
Factory Shoals Road, North of Six Flags Drive	9,390	9,130	12,650	3% (*2010)	+16.1%
Lee Industrial Boulevard, East of Marks Lane	7,110	6,930	6,940	19% (*2008)	-1.2%
Six Flags Parkway, at the I-20 WB Ramp	5,690	6,220	6,230	12% (*2009)	+4.6%
Riverside Parkway, North of Hartman Road	15,010	14,590	9,550	15% (*2010)	-20.2%



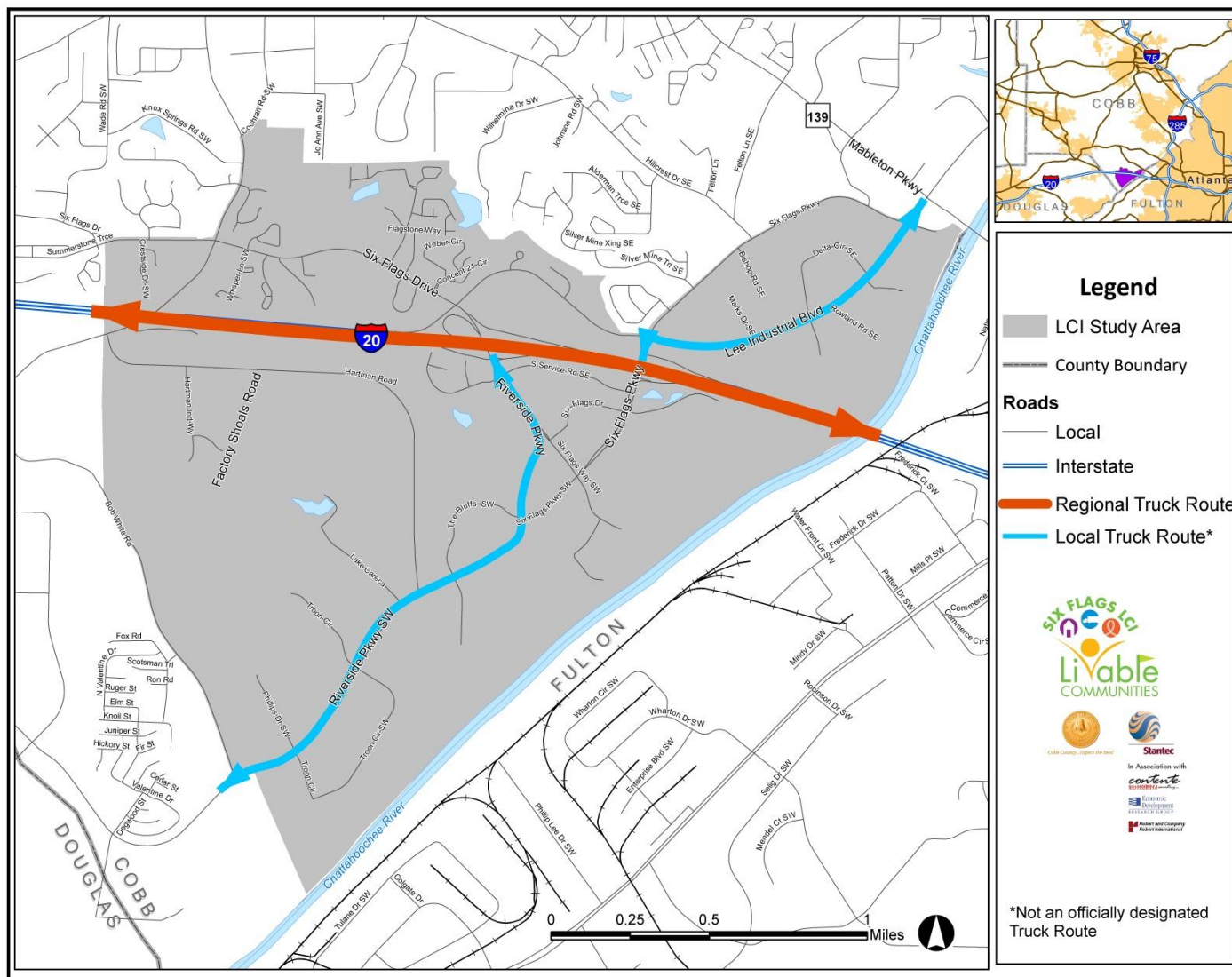
Lee Industrial Boulevard –
Sidewalks damaged by truck turning



Factory Shoals – Narrow, patching, & worn edge of pavement.



Figure 4. Major Truck Corridors



2.3.4 Alternative Transportation

Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

The inventory of sidewalks and trails in the study area shows that while there are some existing facilities, there are numerous areas where sidewalks are disconnected as shown in the Figure 5 and Table 12. Sidewalks exist along a number of the segments within the Six Flags LCI study area, but often only on one side of the road or with considerable gaps.

Sections of the existing sidewalk are covered by overgrown weeds. Such maintenance issues create an impediment to pedestrian activity and is especially a hindrance to those with mobility challenges. Many of the roads have parallel pedestrian created paths that come from walking in desired areas with a lack of actual sidewalks.

There are no existing designated bicycle paths within the study area.

Table 12 Main Corridors' Sidewalk Inventory

Roadway	Location of Sidewalks
Factory Shoals Rd	Mostly none and disconnected especially south of Six Flags Dr.
Hartman Rd	None near the intersections with Riverside Pkwy and Factory Shoals Rd.
Lee Industrial Blvd	Mostly none.
Riverside Pkwy	Heavily disconnected and on one side from White Rd to Six Flags Dr.
Six Flags Dr	Mostly disconnected from Lee industrial Blvd to Factory Shoals Rd.
South Service Rd	Exists on both sides.



Six Flags Drive – Pedestrian path installed, but is flush with the curb, creating unsafe conditions.

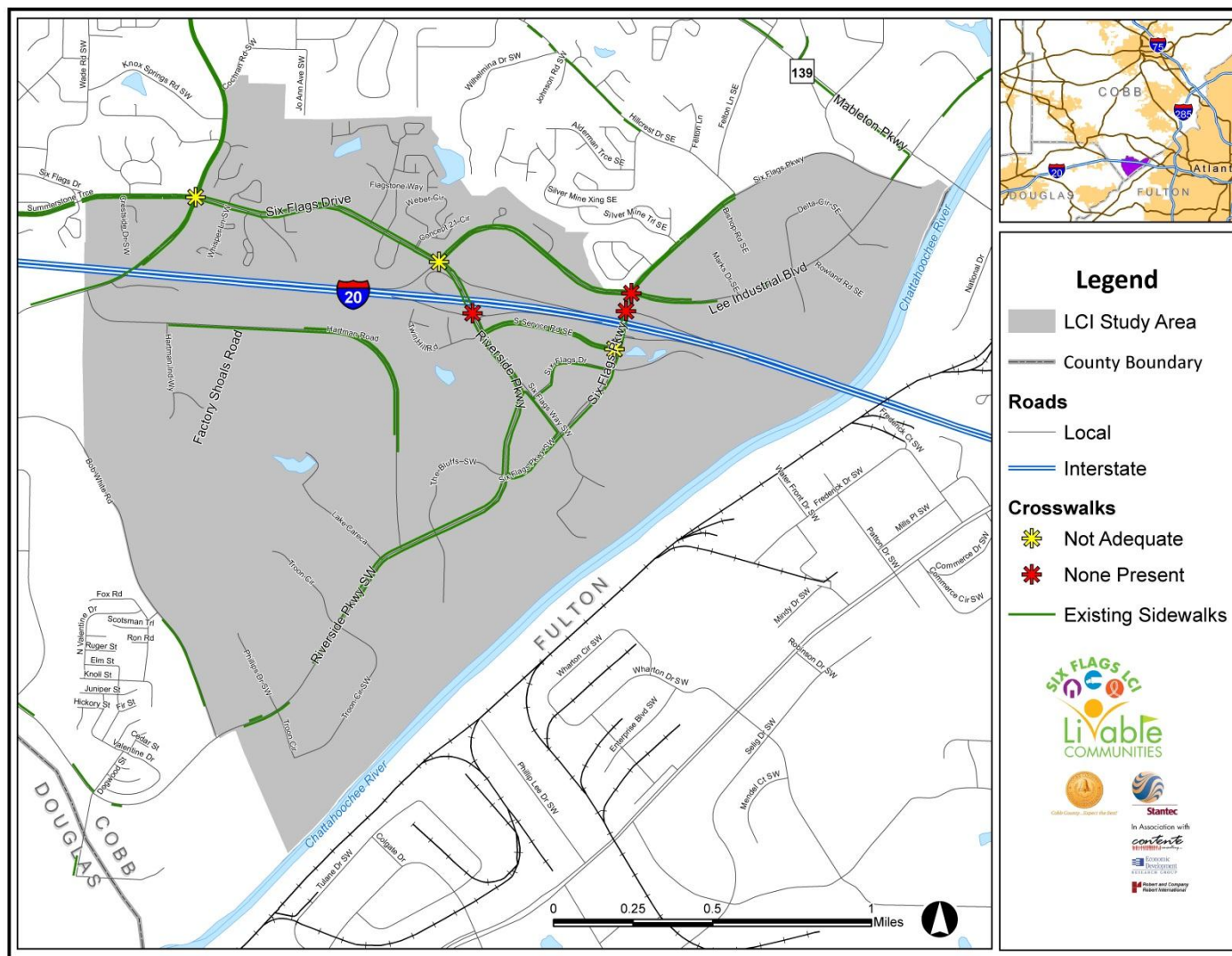


Hartman Road - Sidewalks that lead to no specific destination.



Six Flags Drive – Sidewalks ending but leading to pedestrian created path.

Figure 5 Crosswalks & Sidewalk Locations



Transit

The one existing transit route identified in the study area is Cobb County Transit Route 30. Information for this route including schedule and planned stops was obtained from the Cobb Community Transit website and field verified for accuracy.

Route 30 operates Monday through Friday from 4:30AM to 1:11 AM and on Saturday from 7:00AM to 11:30PM (See Figure 6). Buses run at approximately 15-30 minutes apart depending on the time of day. Within the study area, the route travels south on Factory Shoals from its intersection with South Gordon Road then turns east on Six Flags Drive to its intersection with the South Service Road where it continues east to the intersection with Six Flags Parkway, finally heading east onto Interstate 20. Route 30 has 14 stops within the Six Flags LCI study area. There are numerous damaged bus shelters along this route. Many of the designated transit stops have inadequate bus shelters with deteriorated roofing or sides; there are also several stops with no shelters present.

The ARC has published a study looking into the existing transportation services for Older Adults. This study involved a survey, conducted by the UGA Carl Vinson Institute, of adults over 55 years of age living in the ten county Metro Atlanta Region. From this survey it is noted that within Cobb County approximately 19.1% of seniors over 65 have limited access to public mobility options. Cobb County operates Senior Transportation Services through its Demand Response Service as well as through vouchers to the CCT paratransit service for seniors over 60 living outside the paratransit service area. After discussion from the Stakeholder and Public meetings, one of the

issues regarding transit, specifically for seniors, is the accessibility of the location to sign up for special transit services. Currently the only place to sign up is in Marietta, GA, approximately 14 miles away. For seniors with limited transportation options, getting to Marietta to sign up for transit alternatives becomes a challenge.

Currently the county has a supplemental voucher program for seniors called the Cobb Freedom Voucher Program. Additionally, similar services for citizens with disabilities will be available starting in the summer of 2012.

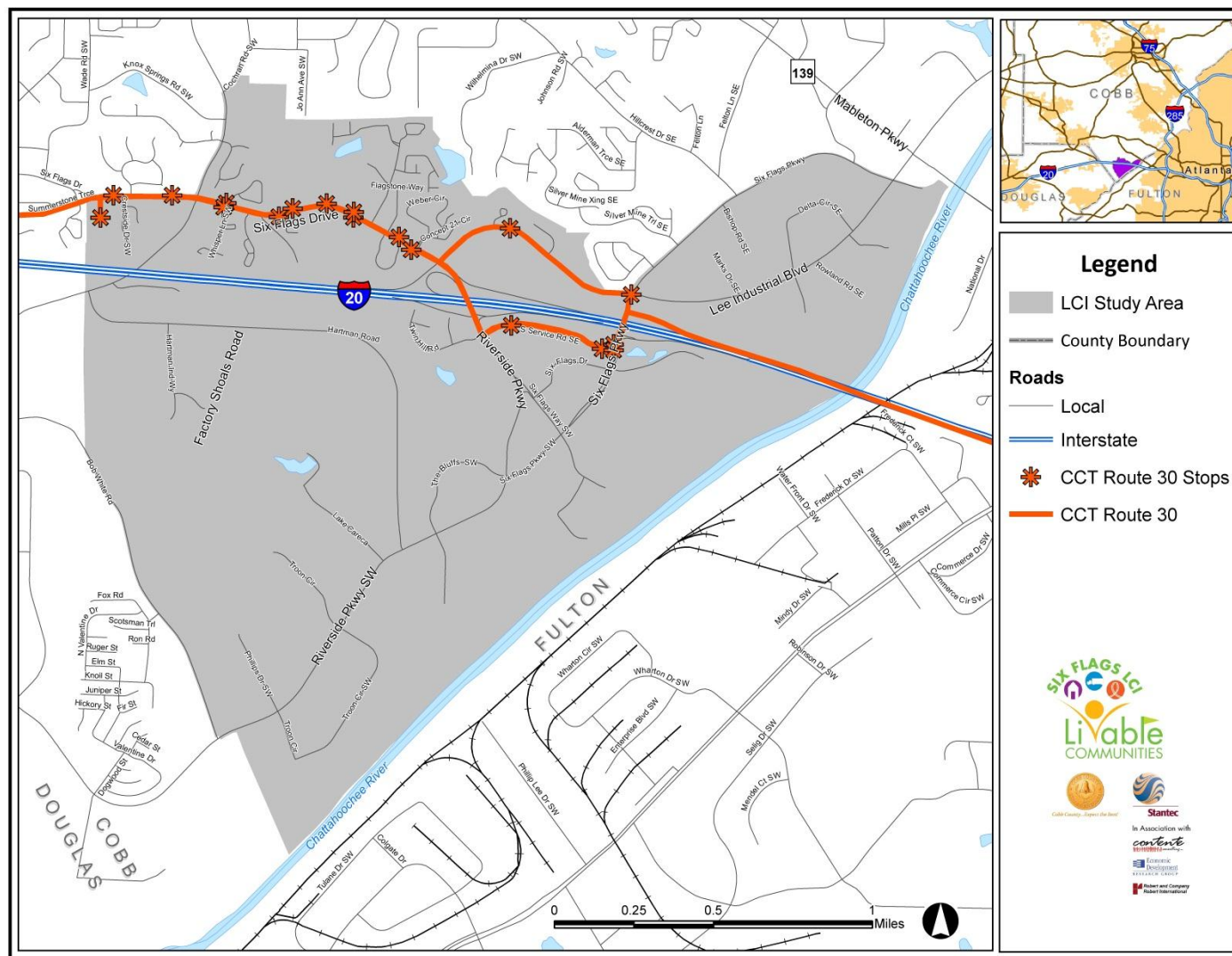


S. Service Road - Bus shelter with missing fiberglass siding.



Six Flags Drive - Bus shelter with missing fiberglass siding and no sidewalks for approaching pedestrians.

Figure 6 Cobb Community Transit Route 30



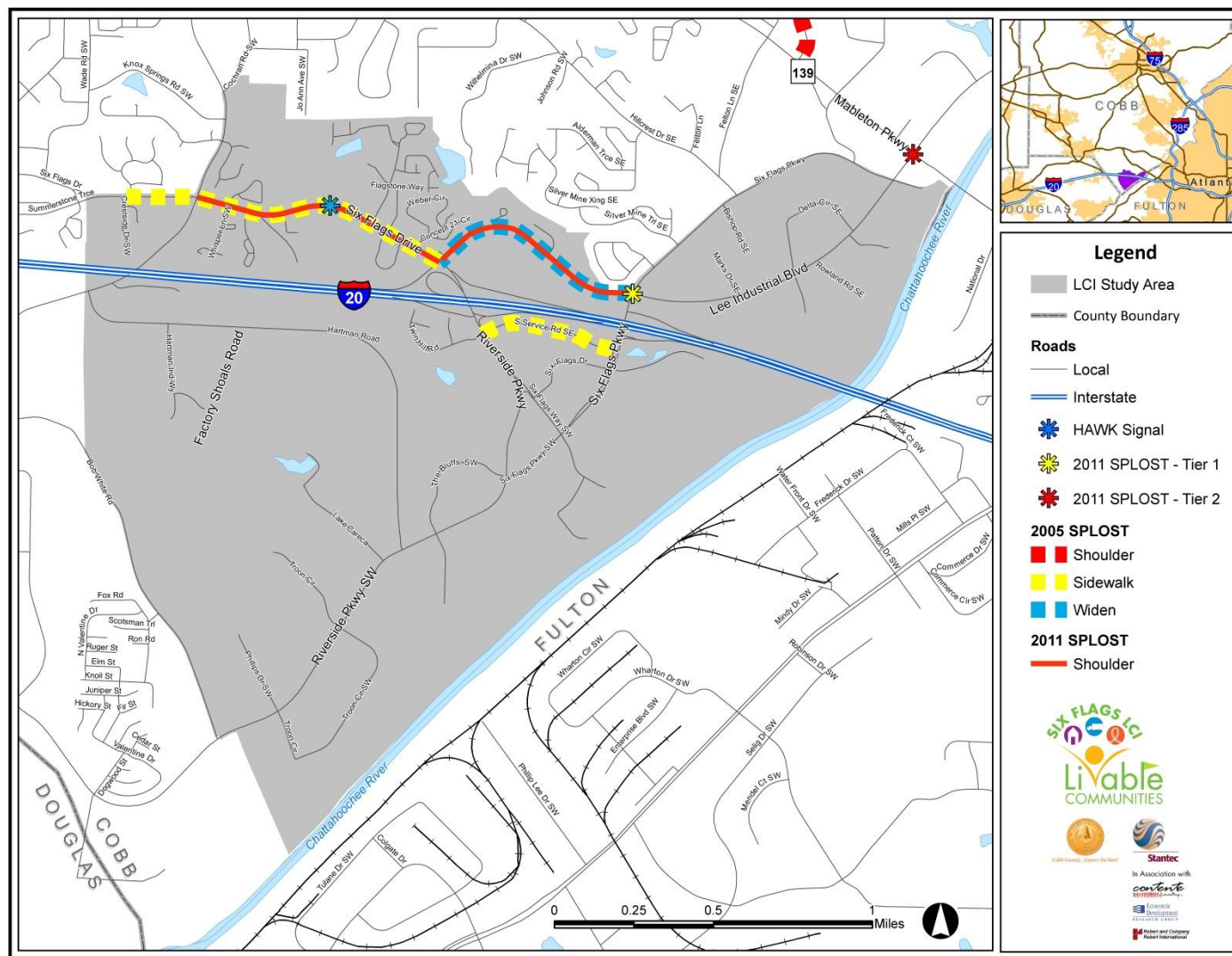
2.3.5 Current and Planned Projects

An inventory of identified and planned projects was completed and included on Figure 7. According to the Cobb County Department of Transportation as well as its 2011 SPOLST, planned projects within the Six Flags LCI Study Area include:

- Six Flags Road sidewalks – from Crestside Drive to Riverside Parkway;
- A High Intensity Activated crosswalk (HAWK) Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon on Six Flags Drive, just west of its intersection with Six Flags Parkway;
- Capacity improvements at the intersection of Six Flags Drive and Lee Industrial Boulevard; and
- Locations of proposed multi-use trails are identified throughout the study and were provided by the Cobb County Department of Transportation.

One of the planned projects that is currently in the implementation process is the installation of High Intensity Activated crosswalk (HAWK) Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon on Six Flags Drive, just west of its intersection with Six Flags Parkway. This special signal is designed to stop traffic to allow pedestrians to safely cross the roadway.

Figure 7 Current and Planned Projects



2.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKET ANALYSIS

Economic development is about jobs. It is about fostering a business climate that allows a community to retain existing jobs, encourage existing firms to add jobs, support entrepreneurship among small businesses, and even attract businesses from other areas. This means diversifying the employment base to ensure that the economy is not too reliant on a single industry or just a few major employers. It also means developing an employment base with a range of occupational needs that match the occupational skills in the local workforce, providing workers with opportunities to increase their earning power and allowing businesses to grow. Successful economic development builds on an area's strengths and seeks to improve an area's weaknesses.

This study outlines the existing conditions in the Study Area as they relate to economic development, focusing on supply and demand for housing and employment space. In determining demand for employment space, it also identifies the Study Area's strengths for job growth as well as weaknesses and factors that could be improved.

2.4.1 Population, Housing & Workforce

Table 13 presents population, households and some basic housing characteristics of the Study Area for 2000, 2010 (estimates), and 2015 (projections). These figures show an increase in population of more than 28 percent between 2000 and 2010. During the same period, the number of housing units increased by 29 percent – a greater increase than population – yet the number of households increased by only 23 percent. The result was an increase in household size to 3.08, well above the average of 2.68 for the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta MSA (and 2.58 for

the nation as a whole) accompanied by an increased number of vacant units.

Table 13 Population and Housing Characteristics

	Population	Households	Av. Household Size	Total Housing Units	Housing Vacancy %	Owner Occupie d %
2000	2,636	886	2.96	1,038	12.7%	29.5%
2010	3,370	1,089	3.08	1,344	19.0%	26.1%
2015	3,605	1,158	3.10	1,462	20.8%	25.3%

Source: ESRI, Inc.

Demand for housing is driven by population levels and household size. Projections for 2015 show the need to accommodate 69 additional households. However, the high average household size, currently 3.08 and projected to increase to 3.10 by 2015 indicates some level of overcrowding in existing households, particularly considering that more than 70 percent of the Study Area's housing units are multi-family which tend to be smaller than single family housing units. If overcrowding could be alleviated, average housing size would decrease, creating a need for additional housing units. For example, if household size declined to the regional average of 2.68 persons per household, that would create demand for more than 180 additional housing units beyond those required for 69 additional households projected due to population growth alone. Regionally, household size has been declining and the Atlanta Regional Commission expects this trend to continue through 2040. The regional average is probably lower than what could be attained in the Study Area, due to other factors such as income and family relationships. Nonetheless, if housing size declined more modestly, to an average of 3.0 persons per unit, an additional 80 units would be needed.



This demand may be met by construction of new housing units or utilization of units that are currently vacant. The latter may require rehabilitation or renovation.

Figure 8 presents median household income and per capita income in the Six Flags Study Area compared with Cobb County and the Atlanta Region as a whole. Though Cobb County enjoys higher income levels than the region as a whole, the Six Flags community lags both the county and the region as a whole. Figure 9 presents trends in median income between 2000 and 2010 and projections for 2015 for the Study Area, Cobb County and the Atlanta Region. The Study Area showed encouraging growth between 2000 and 2010, increasing at an average rate of 3.7 per year, compared with 2.8 percent annual growth in the county and region. Projections for 2015 show this growth slowing, however, averaging only 1.8 percent per year versus 2.7 percent annual growth in the county and 2.8 percent in the region.

Income levels play a role in determining housing availability as well as retail offerings. The implications of lower income levels for the Study Area's economic development objectives and opportunities will be discussed in a subsequent phase of this study.

Figure 8 Median Household and Per Capita Income, 2010

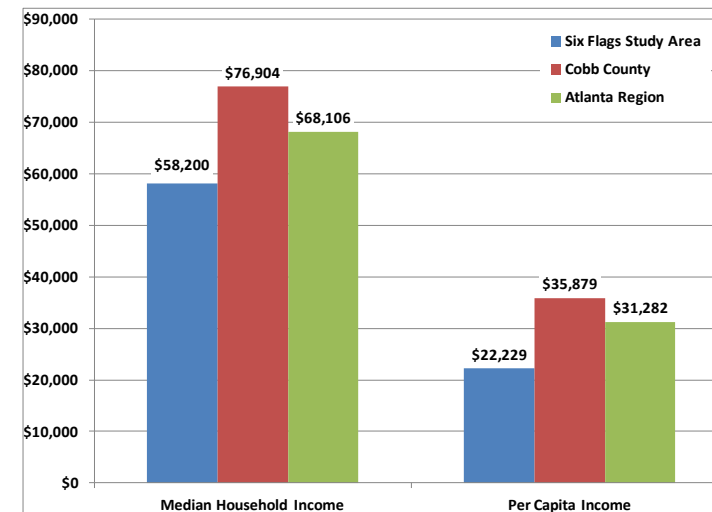
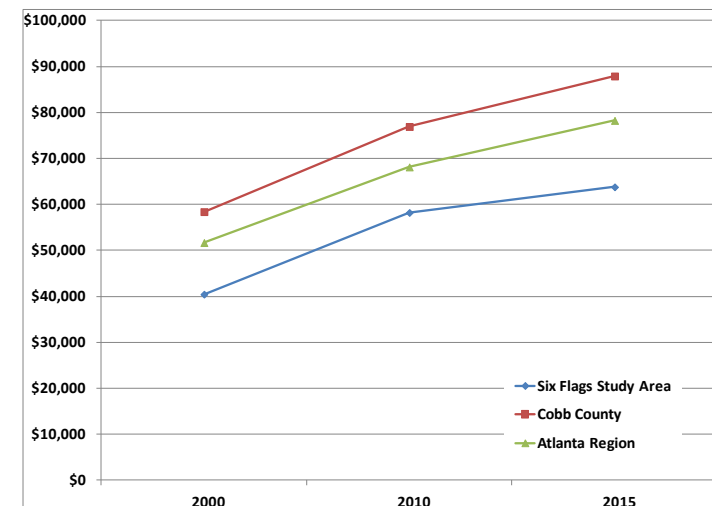


Figure 9 Median Household Income Trends and Projections, 2000-2015



Source: ESRI, Inc.



Table 14 presents characteristics of the Study Area's working age population compared with Cobb County and the region as a whole. This table reflects all employment locations, including those outside the Study Area. According to estimates for 2010, nearly 1,770 Study Area residents are currently participating in the labor force, with more than 85 percent employed. The unemployment rate of nearly 15 percent is higher than Cobb County and the region as a whole. However, it does imply labor availability of more than 262 individuals, which, depending on skills and capabilities, can be attractive to potential employers wishing to draw upon the local workforce.

Table 14 also presents employment by industry and employment by occupation, which give some indication of the experience and skill sets present in the Six Flags labor force (though unfortunately, it only reflects information about the population presently employed and does not reflect the skills of the unemployed population). The Study Area working population has higher percentages working in the manufacturing, services, and transportation industries compared with the county and region. Across all industries, Study Area residents are highly concentrated in administrative support occupations, followed by services, with notably small shares of the labor force employed in management/business/financial and professional occupations compared with the county and region.

Table 14 Workforce Characteristics of Six Flags Study Area Resident Population Ages 16 and Over, 2010

	Six Flags Study Area	Cobb County	Atlanta Region
Population In Labor Force	1,768	--	--
Civilian Employed	1,506	--	--
Civilian Employed %	85.2%	90.0%	88.9%
Civilian Unemployed	262		
Civilian Unemployed %	14.8%	10.0%	11.1%
Employed Population by Industry (%)			
Agriculture/Mining	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%
Construction	5.1%	6.7%	7.5%
Manufacturing	10.2%	6.0%	7.0%
Wholesale Trade	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%
Retail Trade	8.6%	12.4%	11.5%
Transportation/Utilities	8.0%	5.4%	6.6%
Information	4.2%	3.8%	3.6%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	5.0%	9.3%	8.1%
Services	49.5%	48.8%	47.1%
Public Administration	5.0%	3.4%	4.4%
Employed Population by Occupation (%)			
Management/Business/Financial	12.6%	21.7%	18.5%
Professional	14.3%	24.4%	22.3%
Sales	10.6%	14.1%	12.5%
Administrative Support	23.0%	13.5%	14.0%
Services	16.3%	12.6%	14.5%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Construction/Extraction	5.0%	4.9%	5.8%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	3.5%	2.6%	3.3%
Production	6.0%	2.3%	3.6%
Transportation/Material Moving	8.7%	3.7%	5.4%

Source: ESRI, Inc.



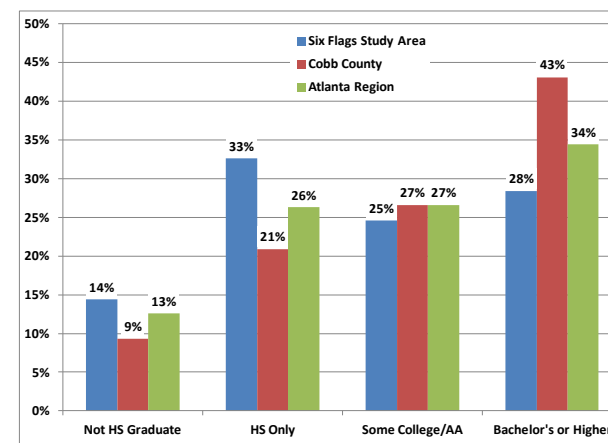
Figure 10 presents educational attainment for population ages 25 and over for the Study Area, Cobb County and Atlanta Region. Along with employment by industry and occupation, educational attainment is another indicator of a work force skill. It is an incomplete measure, as some trades require extensive apprenticeships without granting a formal degree, and some employees may have advanced degrees in subjects that do not match employer needs. Nonetheless, it is an important metric from an economic development opportunities stand point. As the figure shows, the Study Area has an unfortunately high proportion of population with a high school education (33 percent) or less (14 percent), and a low proportion of workers with a Bachelor's degree or higher. The Study Area does have a comparable share of population with some college or an Associate's degree. Workers with this level of education are typically recruited for so-called "middle skill" occupations. A subsequent phase of this study will further explore the match between Study Area workforce skills and the needs of Study Area businesses with the goal of increasing Study Area resident employment in local businesses.

2.4.2 Existing Conditions – Businesses

Current data from Claritas indicates that there are approximately 180 firms, employing more than 3,100 workers in the Six Flags community. In contrast to the employment discussed in the previous section which represented jobs (located anywhere) held by Study Area residents, these jobs are located within the Study Area regardless of where the employees reside. To be sure, with more than twice the number of jobs as resident labor force, the Study Area is a significant importer of workers. Table 15 presents the top 10 largest employers in terms of employment within the

Study Area, which includes well known national firms such as Coca-Cola, Phillips-Van Heusen, and Subaru.

Figure 10 Educational Attainment, 2010



Source: ESRI, Inc.

Table 15 Top 10 Employers in the Six Flags Study Area

Company	Industry Description	Employment
Coca-Cola Bottling Co	Soft Drink Manufacturing	288
High Grove Partners	Landscape Architectural Services	240
Plateau Excavation Inc	Site Preparation Contractors	200
Phillips-Van Heusen Dist Ctr	Clothing Wholesaler	150
Valassis	Other Services Related to Advertising	150
Subaru Of America Inc	Wholesale Trade Agents & Brokers	100
Six Flags Over Georgia	Amusement and Theme Parks	80
Georgia Hydraulic Cylinders	Machine Shops	75
Inmark Inc	Surgical and Medical Instrument Manufacturing	75
All Crane Rental of Atlanta	Industrial Machinery/Equipment Wholesale	70

Source: Claritas.



Table 16 presents current employment by industry in the Study Area. The largest sectors in most economies are the population-dependent sectors of retail, construction and government, but this is not the case in the Six Flags Study Area. Instead, Wholesale Trade makes up the largest share of employment, at 22 percent, followed by manufacturing (17.6 percent) and professional scientific and technical services (15.9 percent). These industries, known as “primary industries” or “economic base industries”, play a key role in economic development because they bring economic activity into the Study Area by selling value-added products and services to customers outside the Study Area. Retail trade, a “secondary industry”, is supported by the local population base.

Retail employment accounts for about 11 percent of national employment, and a similar share of employment in most communities across the country. However, it accounts for less than 4 percent of employment in the Study Area, indicating a shortage of local retail and personal services. Retail is a “secondary” industry. Rather than bringing in dollars from beyond the community, it is largely supported by expenditures of local residents. As such, it is not a traditional target of economic development which seeks to increase “export oriented” job growth. Nonetheless, availability of local retail and services is an important quality of life issue, and very low level of retail available has significant implications for the livability of the Six Flags Study Area.

Table 16 Employment by Industry, 2011

Industry	Employment	% of Total
Construction	342	10.7%
Manufacturing	560	17.6%
Wholesale Trade	713	22.4%
Retail Trade	115	3.6%
Transportation	110	3.5%
Telecommunications	8	0.3%
Monetary, Financial, & Credit Activity	20	0.6%
Real Estate	136	4.3%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Services	502	15.8%
Administrative & Support Services	127	4.0%
Health Care & Social Services	48	1.5%
Amusement & Recreation	126	4.0%
Accommodations, Eating & Drinking	220	6.9%
Repair, Maintenance, & Personal Services	104	3.3%
Government and Non-Profits	56	1.7%
Total	3,187	100.0%

Source: Claritas.



2.4.3 Existing Conditions for Employment Growth

There are two main sources of job growth opportunities for the Six Flags study area. The first is the Study Area's "fair share" of regional growth. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has developed detailed employment projections for the region as a whole, for counties and sub-county areas, all the way down to the census tract level. To be sure, these projections were made during a time of continuing economic uncertainty. In its PLAN 2040 Regional Transportation Plan document (2010), ARC notes:

"Despite a strong economy and an overall good quality of life that has developed over the last few decades, the region is currently dealing with a significantly distressed regional economy as the result of economic struggles at the national level. It is unclear when a sustained economic recovery will occur, but it is likely that the conditions that were present during the past 40-plus years that enabled continuous and rapid growth will return in the early years of PLAN 2040."

Such job growth is by no means guaranteed, but under current and expected future regional economic conditions, these projections represent the Study Area's likely "baseline" job growth. The second source of job growth can be catalyzed if the Study Area successfully identifies its "niche", industries that build off of existing strengths, and successfully identifies and mitigates its weaknesses, those factors that currently limit job growth.

Existing conditions for both sources of job growth are discussed in greater detail below.

Study Area Job Growth Projections

Table 17 presents ARC employment projections for the Study Area.² Projections for the region as a whole, Cobb County and South Cobb County are shown as a point of reference. Note that the figures are not mutually exclusive - the region contains Cobb County, Cobb County contains South Cobb County, and South Cobb County contains the Study Area.

These projections indicate that job growth in the Study Area is expected to outpace the rate of job growth in the rest of Cobb County and the region as a whole through 2040. By 2020, the Study Area is expected to add more than 1,600 jobs.

Estimates from ESRI Business Analyst indicate that the Study Area currently contains nearly 3,150 jobs. If the Study Area is able to capture its share of South Cobb County's job growth by growing at the same rate as South Cobb as a whole, it will add nearly 1,800 new jobs through 2040, the equivalent of about 60 new jobs per year.

Growth Industries in the Six Flags Study Area and the Region

The second source of job growth for the Six Flags Study Area, as discussed above, is based on capitalizing on local niche opportunities. These opportunities are found in industries that build on local strengths and can be maximized by mitigating local weaknesses, where possible. This analysis uses ARC employment by industry projections for 2010 to 2020 for the Atlanta Region as a whole as well as the Six Flags Study Area, and national job

² Comprised of 56% of the employment in Census Tract 031310 and 27% of employment in Tract 031311, based on the land area that falls within Study Area boundaries.



projections for a similar time period from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to identify niche industry growth opportunities within the Study Area.

Table 19 shows industries in the Six Flags Study Area by concentration and by growth trend. Concentration refers to the share of the Study Area's total employment each industry represents relative to that industry's share in the Atlanta Regional economy. For example, an industry with a ratio of 1.2 compared to the region is 20% more prevalent in the Study Area than in the region as a whole, while an industry with a ratio of 0.8 has only 80% of employment concentrated in that industry relative to the region as a whole. This allows us to identify industries that are over-represented and under-represented in the local economy.

Growth trend refers to each industry's average annual percent growth for the 2010-2020 period, based on ARC projections. This is compared to the industry's average annual growth rate in the nation as a whole for a similar time period (2008-2018 are the most recent series available from BLS).

For this diagnostic, industries are classified according to seven categories (from left to right in Table 19):

- Industry growing "faster" locally than nationally
- Industry declining locally while growing nationally
- Industry growing locally while declining nationally
- Industry growing locally "slower" than nationally
- Industry declining locally "slower" than nationally
- Industry declining locally "faster" than nationally
- Industry growing or declining locally at a rate "similar" to national trend

Table 17 Atlanta Regional Commission Job Growth Projections – 2010-2040

Employment	2010	2020	2030	2040
Six Flags Study	3,117	4,780	5,587	6,490
South Cobb	29,067	37,689	43,596	50,911
Cobb	304,696	364,538	407,283	458,382
Atlanta Region	2,173,573	2,740,322	3,153,244	3,651,353

New Jobs by 10-Year Period	2010-2020	2020-2030	2030-2040
Six Flags Study	1,663	807	902
South Cobb	8,622	5,907	7,315
Cobb	59,842	42,745	51,099
Atlanta Region	566,749	412,922	498,109

Av. Annual Job Growth	2010-2020	2020-2030	2030-2040
Six Flags Study	4.4%	1.6%	1.5%
South Cobb	2.6%	1.5%	1.6%
Cobb	1.8%	1.1%	1.2%
Atlanta Region	2.3%	1.4%	1.5%

*Includes 56% of the employment in Census Tract 031310 and 27% of employment in Tract 031311.

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission 2040 Projections.



Table 18 Interpreting Concentration/Trend Analysis Results

Industry Trend Category									
		Industry growing “faster” locally than nationally* (1)	Industry declining locally while growing nationally (2)	Industry growing locally “slower” than nationally * (3)	growing at a rate “similar” to national trend* (4)	Industry growing locally while declining nationally (5)	Industry declining locally “slower” than nationally* (6)	Industry declining locally “faster” than nationally* (7)	Industry declining locally at a rate “similar” to national trend (8)
Concentration	Greater than 1.2	Strong, stable local industry	Strong but needs attention	Strong but needs attention	Strong, stable local industry	Industry in national decline, seek diversification	Industry in national decline, seek diversification	Industry in national decline, seek diversification	Industry in national decline, seek diversification
	0.8-1.2	Strong, consider supporting	Medium strength, growth potential	Medium strength, growth potential	Strong, consider supporting	Unstable, consider diversification	Unstable, consider diversification	Unstable, consider diversification	Unstable, consider diversification
	Less than 0.8	Emerging local industry, consider supporting	Weak local industry, potential opportunity	Weak local industry, potential opportunity	Emerging local industry, consider supporting	Possible consolidation, monitor	Weak local industry	Weak local industry	Weak local industry
Strengths/Opportunities						Weaknesses/Threatened			

Table 19 Mix and Trend Analysis for the Six Flags Study Area

Industry Trend Category								
Concentration	Industry growing "faster" locally than nationally* (1)	Industry declining locally while growing nationally (2)	Industry growing locally "slower" than nationally * (3)	growing at a rate "similar" to national trend* (4)	Industry growing locally while declining nationally (5)	Industry declining locally "slower" than nationally* (6)	Industry declining locally "faster" than nationally* (7)	Industry declining locally at a rate "similar" to national trend (8)
	Greater than 1.2	Construction Wholesale Trade Arts/ Entertainment/ Food/ Accommodations						
	0.8-1.2	Transportation/ Warehousing Professional/ Technical/ Management/ Administration						
	Less than 0.8	Retail Trade	Education	Health Care/ Social Assistance				
Strengths/Opportunities					Weaknesses/Threatened			



A sector expanding nationally and growing even faster in the Six Flags community indicates a regional strength. The local market share is increasing within a strong national market. Industries in this category for Six Flags are construction, wholesale trade, and arts/entertainment/food/accommodation. As these industries are already strong and over-represented in the Study Area, it is not necessary or advisable to seek additional employment directly in these industries. Instead, the prudent economic development approach is to identify supply chain relationships that can be leveraged for job growth in *related* industries. For example, businesses that sell products to the arts/entertainment/food/accommodation industry may be interested in locating in an area where that industry is growing. Likewise, an industry that buys from the construction industry may wish to expand its presence in an area where its suppliers are thriving.

Two industries are growing more rapidly than the nation, but are currently only average in terms of concentration: transportation/warehousing and professional/technical/management/ administration. As with the highly concentrated industries, these industries may present opportunities to attract related businesses in the supply chain.

Retail trade makes up a very small share of the Study Area's employment, just over 7 percent relative to 12 percent in the Atlanta Region as a whole – just 60 percent of regional levels. Though retail employment in the Study Area it is expected to grow at an average of 1.1 percent per year, that will mean adding just 26 new jobs to the sector, reflecting a further exacerbation of the Study Area's shortage of neighborhood-serving retail and personal services.

Retail trade is not generally considered an “economic base industry” because it is largely supported by local residents. With the exception of regional-serving malls and “destination retail”, the sector does not bring dollars into the community from beyond. For the Six Flags Community, however, growth in retail trade employment is vitally important to economic development for three key reasons. First, the very low proportion of employment in retail in the Six Flags Community, corroborated by the very low percentage of land used for retail, indicate that Six Flags residents must do a significant amount of their day-to-day retail spending outside their community. In effect, instead of investing their retail expenditures in their own community, they must spend it in surrounding communities.

Second, though retail jobs are not typically high-paying, they are an important source of entry level jobs as well as part time work. These jobs allow new and unskilled workers to participate in the economy and gain work experience. They also allow people with school and/or child/elder care responsibilities and those seeking to supplement their income with a second job to work part time. Furthermore, some retailers offer career-track management training programs that provide workforce training to people who may not have access to other formal workforce training options.

Third, availability of local retail is to some extent, a business attraction factor. Workers need access to dry cleaners, florists, banks, pharmacies and food stores, among other retail needs. Though people do most of their shopping where they live, they also use lunch breaks and before/after work to run errands. Large companies can provide cafeterias and general stores to meet some of these needs, but most firms count on the local community to provide these types of stores. Lack of retail and personal services can make recruiting workers more difficult.

Businesses themselves also rely on certain retail stores and services, such as banking, printing, and last-minute office supply needs. Lack of these retail stores may send prospective smaller businesses to other communities where such stores are located.

As noted above, retail employment is supported by local expenditures which is driven by population and income levels. The market analysis portion of this analysis more directly addresses the Study Area's capacity to capture its fair share of retail employment.

Employment in education is underrepresented in the Study Area and also projected to grow more slowly in the Study Area than in the nation. Similarly, health care/social services is underrepresented in the community and only expected to grow at the national rate. This suggests that Study Area lacks one or more factors necessary for these industries to thrive in the Study Area, that some barrier is holding them back. To the extent that these factors/barriers can be identified and remedied, such efforts may open up new opportunities for job growth. To be sure, job growth in education and health care have important quality of life implications for the community, similar to those presented by retail.

2.4.4 Economic Development Potential

The purpose of this section is to identify opportunities for housing, retail, office and industrial development in the Six Flags Study Area. The first part quantifies market support for each use based on demographic data, economic and real estate market data and trends and interviews with employers in study area industrial parks. It also identifies barriers to development and

recommends appropriate strategies to overcome those barriers to achieve Study Area economic development goals. The second part of this section introduces the importance of economic development tools in overcoming barriers to new development in the Six Flags Study Area, and illustrates the impact of the Opportunity Zone Jobs Tax Credit on project economics for the development of a grocery store and office building. The Preliminary Feasibility of Establishing a Tax Allocation District includes further discussion with additional economic development tools page including a possible Business Improvement District, workforce training resources, and the possible development of a Tax Allocation District.

This market analysis quantifies market support for housing, retail, office and industrial development/redevelopment based on demographic data, economic and real estate market data and trends and interviews with employers in study area industrial parks. It also identifies barriers to development and recommends appropriate strategies to overcome those barriers to achieve Study Area economic development goals.

2.4.4.1 Housing

Demand for housing is primarily driven by population levels and household size. Population projections, presented in Table 20, show the need to accommodate 69 additional households through 2015. The high average household size indicates some level of overcrowding in existing households, particularly considering that more than 70 percent of the Study Area's housing units are multi-family which tend to be smaller than

single family housing units. If overcrowding could be alleviated, average housing size would decrease, creating a need for additional housing units. For example, if household size declined from the current 3.08 persons per household to the regional average of 2.68 persons per household, that would create demand for more than 180 additional housing units beyond those required for 69 additional households needed to meet population growth alone. The regional average is probably lower than what could be attained in the Study Area, due to other factors such as income and family relationships. Nonetheless, if housing size declined more modestly, to an average of 3.0 persons per unit, an additional 80 units would be needed.

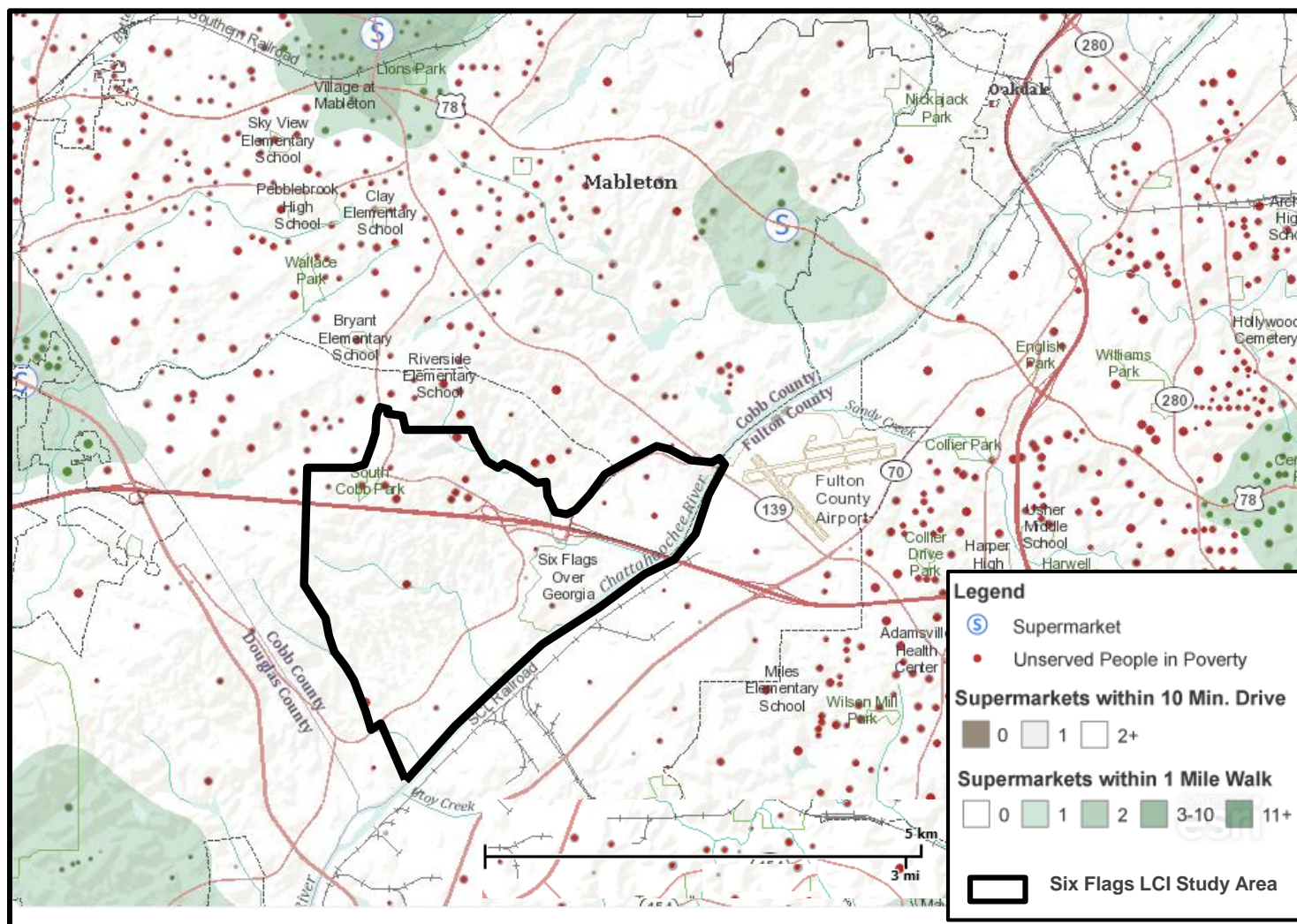
The community has expressed interest in housing types that serve a wider range of incomes. Many residents have observed that without sufficient housing for middle and upper middle income households, residents with higher incomes end up leaving the community in search of better housing options. The Study Area currently offers a limited range of housing products, consisting of a number of large apartment complexes, multi-family condominiums, and subdivisions with single family homes. The apartments largely serve a very low income population, with the condominiums and single family homes serving moderate/middle income households.

The main challenge in developing new units to meet population growth and to provide housing that serves a wider range of incomes is that the Six Flags Study Area is currently overbuilt for residential. Rents and ownership housing values are depressed, and the apartment complexes are experiencing very high

vacancy, in some cases above 50 percent. Some of these units are in disrepair, with blighted exteriors and un-livable interior conditions.

Another challenge is that households with higher incomes expect a greater range of neighborhood amenities than currently available in the study area. The study area is fortunate to have an excellent school system and the South Cobb Recreation Center. However, it lacks other critical amenities such as a grocery store, sit-down restaurants, banking and other retail and personal services. Figure 11 is a map displaying the lack of grocery stores in the study area.

Figure 11 Location of Food Deserts



Source: ESRI

Table 20 Population and Housing Characteristics

	Population	Households	Av. Household Size	Total Housing Units	Housing Vacancy %	Owner Occupied %
2000	2,636	886	2.96	1,038	12.7%	29.5%
2010	3,370	1,089	3.08	1,344	19.0%	26.1%
2015	3,605	1,158	3.10	1,462	20.8%	25.3%

Source: ESRI, Inc.

2.4.4.2 Retail

As the existing conditions memorandum discussed, neighborhood-serving retail is in short supply within the Study Area. This leaves residents to buy their day-to-day necessities, such a fresh foods and sundries, in other communities. From an economic development perspective, this means foregone economic activity that could be contributing to the vibrancy of the Six Flags economy. From a livability perspective, it leaves residents to spend additional time and money on transportation. This is a significant burden for low income households, particularly for those without access to a vehicle and individuals with restricted mobility, such as senior citizens.

The Study Area's ability to attract retail development depends on the strength of the consumer base within effective drive-time market areas. This retail opportunity/gap analysis assesses consumer spending potential against actual store sales within the relevant drive-time (rather than radii) market areas. A 5-minute travel time represents the effective market area from which grocery, convenience and neighborhood type stores will capture

resident spending potential, while a 10-minute drive time represents the effective market area for a community center strip mall or other configuration of stores (up to about 150,000 square feet of retail space).³ These two market areas are the focus of our analysis, as they most directly serve the Six Flags resident population. In particular, neighborhood-serving retail such as a grocery store, pharmacy or bank has potential to make the greatest impact on the livability of the Study Area. In the future, as the economy begins to revitalize, there may be opportunities to leverage freeway-visible sites in the Study Area for regional-serving retail which would draw from the 15-minute drive time market area.

³ Drive-times reflect "average network congestion"; market areas during peak hours may be smaller, particularly the green and purple areas accessible by regional highways.



Table 21 presents some basic characteristics of the 5-, 10- and 15-minute drive time markets including population, households, median household income as well as retail demand and supply levels (including food and beverage). Population and household characteristics for the Six Flags Study Area, nested at the very center of these market areas, are presented as a point of reference. (Note that the Six Flags Study Area is within the 5-minute drive time market, the 5-minute market is within the 10-minute market and so forth). As the table illustrates, the Study Area itself is relatively small, but it is at the center of a much larger pool of buying power even just within the first 5-minute drive time market. For example, population within the 5-minute drive time market is more than five times greater than the Study Area alone while the 10-minute drive time market expands population by nearly ten-fold.

Total Retail Supply estimates sales to consumers by establishments, excluding business-to-business sales. Total Retail Demand estimates the expected amount spent by consumers at retail establishments and Retail Gap represents demand minus supply. A positive Retail Gap represents ‘leakage’ of retail opportunity outside the trade area, i.e. residents shopping outside of their market area. A negative value represents a surplus of retail sales, a market where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area. The 5-minute drive time market area shows a retail gap of more than \$42.9 million. The 10- and 15-minute drive time markets show a retail surplus. However, just because there is an apparent surplus at the aggregate level doesn’t mean there aren’t important retail opportunities in key types of retail stores.

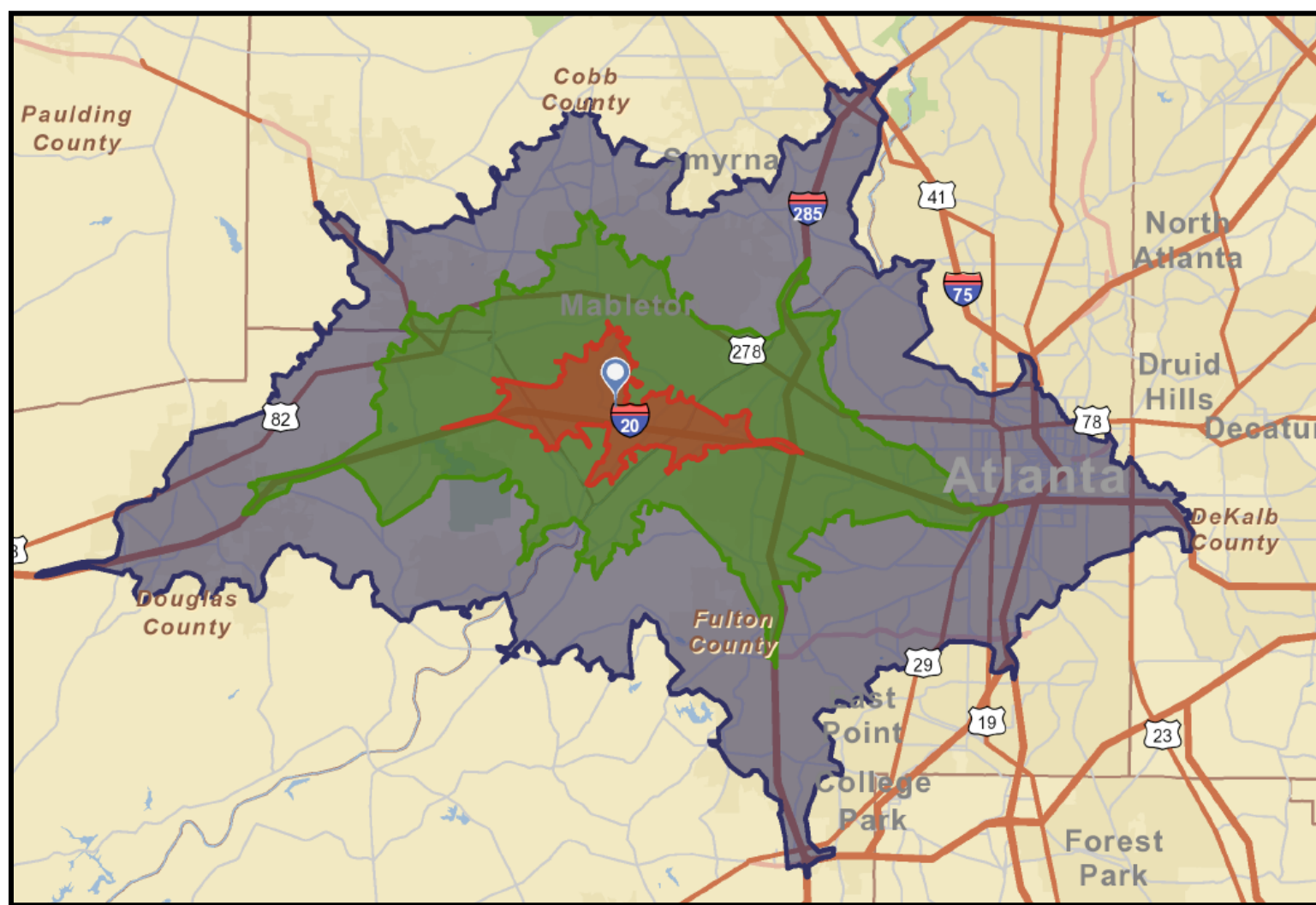
Table 21 Retail Market Area Characteristics, 2010 (dollar amounts are in 2010 \$)

	Six Flags Study Area	5-Min.	10-Min.	15-Min.
Population	3,370	17,909	132,240	516,377
Households	1,089	6,282	48,321	192,202
Average Household Size	3.08	2.84	2.71	2.55
Median Household Income	\$58,200	\$55,493	\$48,422	\$47,051
Total Retail Demand	n/a	\$222,521,200	\$1,410,103,600	\$6,423,924,000
Total Retail Supply	n/a	\$179,570,700	\$1,778,889,000	\$8,116,150,400
Retail Gap (Leakage)	n/a	\$42,950,500	(\$368,785,400)	(\$1,692,226,400)

Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Claritas Market Reports; EDR Group.



Figure 12 5-, 10-, and 15-Minute Unconstrained Drive Time Market Areas



Source: ESRI Business Analyst.

The focus of this study is livability, so this analysis concentrates on identifying retail gaps in types of stores that most directly serve the Six Flags resident population, i.e., those in the 5- and 10-minute drive time market areas.

Table 22 summarizes retail demand, supply and gap by store type for these two trade areas. Only categories with gaps are shown, store categories with surpluses are omitted. The most notable gap in the 5-minute drive time market is in the supermarket category, which corroborates residents' comments at numerous focus groups and public meetings throughout this and previous studies. Other notable gaps at the neighborhood level are present in the pharmacies, other general merchandise and limited-service eating places. Table 23 translates these into supportable square feet based on industry average sales per square foot figures, and number of new stores based on industry average store sizes. As the table shows, the 5-minute drive time market could support at least one grocery store, a specialty food store (such as a bakery, deli or fruit stand), and a number of pharmacies and general merchandise stores. The 10-minute drive time market shows wider support for additional square footage for key retail categories such as appliances, clothing and accessories, and health and personal products.

Not all of this demand will be met within the Six Flags Study Area. New stores may be built at other locations in the broader community, and other existing stores may expand to absorb demand. Nonetheless, there is clear support for at least some additional retail. For example, even if the Study Area managed to

capture just 10% of the \$137 million retail gap shown in Table 23, the resulting \$13.7 million in sales would be enough to support about 40-50,000 square feet – enough for a full sized grocery store and a few smaller stores, or a small footprint grocery store, a pharmacy and a few smaller stores, or similar.

Historically, developing retail in lower income communities is challenging. High crime (real or perceived), lack of disposable income, lack of transportation, and more frequent, smaller purchases that are more costly for retailers are just some of the difficulties even in a favorable lending environment. Unfortunately, in these economic times demonstrating unmet demand for retail is not enough to entice the market to filling that gap. Commercial real estate brokers interviewed for this project indicated that even in the fastest growing, highest income neighborhoods in the region, banks are unwilling to lend for retail projects, and as a result, retail development is at a stand-still. No significant activity is expected for at least the next year in wealthier areas, while projects in lower income neighborhoods face a longer wait estimated at 2-5 years. Financing is currently the key barrier for projects serving neighborhoods of all income levels.

An additional challenge for the Six Flags community lies in identifying an appropriate site. Most grocery stores sell alcohol, and zoning regulations prohibit the sale of alcohol near schools and churches. This makes it necessary to either 1) identify an operator that offers a store format that does not include alcohol sales, or 2) identify a site that meets the regulatory requirements with regard to distance from area schools and churches.

Table 22 Retail Store Categories with Gaps/Opportunities

	Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
5-Minute Drive Time Market Area			
Supermarkets, Grocery (Excl. convenience) Stores-44511	\$27,249,700	\$2,186,900	\$25,062,800
Convenience Stores-44512	\$1,358,400	\$238,100	\$1,120,300
Specialty Food Stores-4452	\$988,200	\$446,200	\$542,000
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	\$11,606,100	\$900,200	\$10,705,900
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	\$860,000	\$164,400	\$695,500
Gasoline Stations w/o Convenience Stores-44719	\$5,542,700	\$2,730,100	\$2,812,600
Other General Merchandise Stores-4529	\$16,390,700	\$7,126,400	\$9,264,300
Special Foodservices-7223	\$2,008,100	\$461,900	\$1,546,200
10-Minute Drive Time Market Area			
Household Appliances Stores-443111	\$5,436,600	\$1,914,800	\$3,521,800
Computer and Software Stores-44312	\$6,634,100	\$1,796,000	\$4,838,200
Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313	\$1,380,800	\$0	\$1,380,800
Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	\$2,560,100	\$1,792,300	\$767,800
Hardware Stores-44413	\$11,674,200	\$6,703,400	\$4,970,800
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	\$10,534,100	\$3,865,000	\$6,669,100
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	\$80,427,400	\$67,431,000	\$12,996,400
Optical Goods Stores-44613	\$2,968,000	\$211,900	\$2,756,100
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	\$5,956,700	\$1,236,700	\$4,720,000
Gasoline Stations w/o Convenience Stores-44719	\$33,649,200	\$32,472,500	\$1,176,800
Clothing Stores-4481	\$54,315,600	\$37,515,000	\$16,800,500
Shoe Stores-4482	\$11,319,500	\$9,323,800	\$1,995,700
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483	\$9,187,500	\$2,530,800	\$6,656,700
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	\$8,920,500	\$1,439,300	\$7,481,100
Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112	\$6,482,900	\$336,600	\$6,146,200
Book Stores and News Dealers-45121	\$5,534,600	\$2,984,300	\$2,550,300
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322	\$6,128,200	\$3,022,100	\$3,106,100
Special Foodservices-7223	\$12,392,900	\$7,083,400	\$5,309,500

Source: Claritas and EDR Group.



Table 23 Supportable Sq.Ft. of Retail and Number of Stores by Store Type

	Opportunity Gap/Surplus	Median Sales per Sq.ft.	Supportable Sq.ft. of New Retail Space	Median Store Size	Potential Number of New Stores
5-Minute Drive Time Market Area					
Supermarkets, Grocery (Excl. Convenience) Stores-44511	\$25,062,800	\$368	68,078	24,800	2
Convenience Stores-44512	\$1,120,300	\$204	5,505	2,080	2
Specialty Food Stores-4452	\$542,000	\$187	2,897	2,066	1
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	\$10,705,900	\$429	24,928	12,544	1
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	\$695,500	\$163	4,280	1,400	3
Other General Merchandise Stores-4529	\$9,264,300	\$155	59,585	20,020	2
Special Foodservices-7223	\$1,546,200	\$267	5,799	1,799	3
10-Minute Drive Time Market Area					
Household Appliances Stores-443111	\$3,521,800	\$302	11,654	2,648	4
Computer and Software Stores-44312	\$4,838,200	\$302	16,010	2,648	6
Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313	\$1,380,800	\$220	6,281	3,190	1
Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	\$767,800	\$389	1,976	8,095	0
Hardware Stores-44413	\$4,970,800	\$389	12,790	8,095	1
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	\$6,669,100	\$389	17,160	8,095	2
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	\$12,996,400	\$430	30,240	10,990	2
Optical Goods Stores-44613	\$2,756,100	\$248	11,134	2,000	5
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	\$4,720,000	\$248	19,068	2,000	9
Clothing Stores-4481	\$16,800,500	\$233	72,204	4,598	15
Shoe Stores-4482	\$1,995,700	\$193	10,355	3,306	3
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483	\$6,656,700	\$303	21,943	1,610	13
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	\$7,481,100	\$220	34,028	3,190	10
Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112	\$6,146,200	\$220	27,956	3,190	8
Book Stores and News Dealers-45121	\$2,550,300	\$220	11,600	3,190	3
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322	\$3,106,100	\$170	18,226	4,468	4
Special Foodservices-7223	\$5,309,500	\$314	16,903	2,400	7

Source: Claritas; Dollars & Cents of Shopping Centers/The SCORE 2008 (ULI/ICSC); and EDR Group.



2.4.4.3 Office

Demand for office space is driven by job growth in industries such as information, finance, professional/technical, and administration which utilize office space. Table 24 presents Atlanta Regional Commission's job growth projections for relevant industries in the Six Flags Study Area, indicating an average rate of growth of approximately 9.2 percent between 2010 and 2020. Our interest for this study is more near-term, so Table 25 applies average growth rates to obtain projected growth for the 2011-2016 period. This five-year window is appropriate because commercial office projects need enough critical mass of demand to support what a relatively large investment, and they also take a while to finance, design and construct. As the table shows, the projected job growth of some 404 jobs by 2011 could support more than 101,000 sq.ft. of new office space in the Study Area.

This job growth can easily be accommodated by existing vacant space in the industrial parks, which can easily be configured into attractive, functional, inexpensive office space. Examples include the corporate office of Georgia Hydraulic Cylinder on The Bluffs Drive, and the corporate office of United Forming on Riverside Parkway.

Table 24 Projected Job Growth in Industries Utilizing Office Space

	Employment by Industry		Av. Annual Growth Rate
	2010	2020	
Information	0	3	0.0%
Finance	0	38	0.0%
Real Estate	27	150	18.6%
Professional/Technical	170	342	7.2%
Management	0	2	0.0%
Administrative/Waste	392	999	9.8%
Educational	75	84	1.1%
Health/Social Assistance	32	39	2.1%
Other Services	33	104	12.1%
Public Administration	0	1	0.0%
Total Jobs in Office Space	729	1,762	9.2%

*Includes 56% of Census Tract 031310 and 27% of Tract 031311.
Source: ARC 2040 Projections.

Table 25 Demand for Office Space to Accommodate Job Growth, 2011-2016

Total New Jobs 2011-2016	404
Average Employees per	250
Total Sq.Ft. Needed	101,100

Source: ARC 2040 Projections, US Energy Administration, and EDR Group calculations.



It is unlikely that new Class A office space would be developed speculatively within the Study Area. New office developments tend to cluster near existing office areas, such as those in the Central Perimeter and Northwest Atlanta submarkets. The Six Flags Study Area is not currently recognized in the region as a center for office users. The entire I-20 West/Douglasville market area, which encompasses the Six Flags Area, represents just 530,000 of the region's more than 144 million sq.ft. of office space. Though Six Flags is not likely to become a Central Perimeter (22.7 million sq.ft.) or Cumberland/Galleria (20.6 million sq.ft.), brokers familiar with the area note that its proximity to Atlanta, interstate access/visibility, and large labor market area make it is suitable for a user-driven project. That is to say, that while the market is not ripe for speculative development ("if you build it, they will come"), a joint public-private sector effort, such as the one that landed the 700-job Home Depot call center for Cobb County, could be successful in bringing a similar project to the Six Flags neighborhood.

2.4.4.4 Industrial

Demand for industrial space is driven by job growth in manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation/warehousing and construction industries. Table 26 presents Atlanta Regional Commission's job growth projections for relevant industries in the Six Flags Study Area, indicating an average rate of growth of approximately 2.2 percent between 2010 and 2020. Our interest for this study is near-term growth potential, so Table 27 applies average growth rates to obtain projected growth for the 2011-2016 period. As with office projects, this five-year window is appropriate because industrial projects take a while to finance,

design and construct. As the table shows, the projected job growth of some 160 jobs by 2011 would only support about 64,000 sq.ft. of industrial space in the Study Area. Given current vacancies the near-term job growth can be accommodated in existing available industrial space.

Table 26 Projected Job Growth in Industries Utilizing Industrial Space

	Employment by Industry		Av. Annual Growth Rate
	2010	2020	
Construction	409	547	2.9%
Manufacturing	148	150	0.1%
Wholesale Trade	710	857	1.9%
Transportation/Warehousing	145	196	3.1%
Total Jobs in Industrial	1,412	1,750	2.2%

*Includes 56% of Census Tract 031310 and 27% of Tract 031311.
Source: ARC 2040 Projections.

Table 27 Demand for Industrial Space to Accommodate Job Growth, 2011-2016

Total New Jobs 2011-2016	160
Average Employees per Sq.Ft.	400
Total Sq.Ft. Needed	64,000

Source: ARC 2040 Projections, US Energy Administration, and EDR Group calculations.



Interviews with employers in the Six Flags Study Area industrial parks indicate that for the most part, they enjoy favorable access to employees with the right occupational skill sets, very few of these employees are drawn from the immediate workforce available in Six Flags Study Area residential neighborhoods. Conversely, residents have expressed interest in expanding opportunities to work for firms in Study Area industrial parks.

Based on interviews with Study Area employers and workforce specialists, there appears to be a mismatch between the skill set among available workers in the Study Area and the needs of local employers. Increasing access to workforce training programs and job placement resources is key to reducing the skill mismatch and leveraging the wealth of jobs in the industrial areas to reduce unemployment and underemployment in the Study Area.

A second barrier is transportation access. The industrial areas are beyond walking distance and not currently served by public transportation. The size of the area and the fact that many of the firms operate on shifts (including swing and night work), present significant challenges to providing public transit. As a result, most employers require their employees to have access to a car and the low rate of car ownership in the Study Area puts those jobs out of reach.

2.4.5 The Role of Economic Development Incentives and Public-Private Partnerships

Competitiveness for business attraction is both absolute and relative. Businesses require certain baseline (absolute) conditions in order to start in a new location or to expand. These absolute

conditions may include availability of utilities, proximity to customers and suppliers, access to an airport or freight intermodal rail terminal, and available labor with relevant occupational skills, among other factors. These factors are used to develop a “short list” of candidate locations which are then considered in greater detail. At this point in the site selection process, all other factors being equal, businesses tend to locate and/or expand where they can minimize costs.

A guiding principal of economic development finance is that capital markets do not reflect perfect competition. Instead, market imperfections result in gaps in the availability of capital. These gaps are exacerbated in low income areas, where information on the viability of a proposed project can be difficult to obtain. In a vibrant area, a developer can point to a number of successful ventures that demonstrate the viability of his or her development concept, and must only demonstrate that additional market support exists over and above what is being served by existing businesses. Where little retail, office or market rate housing exists, it may be impossible for a developer to convince a traditional lender that market support is sufficient to justify a proposed project.

Economic development tools made available by the federal, state, and Cobb County governments, regional organizations such as the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and civic stakeholders such as the United Way, help close this financing gap. Some tools are available directly to private businesses while others, such as New Market Tax Credits, involve the formation of public-private partnerships. Tools range from tax credits to grants, loans, loan guarantees, and bonds. Tools available to businesses locating or

expanding in the Six Flags Study Area include the following (by source):

- Available through Federal Agencies:
 - New Market Tax Credits
 - Low Income Housing Tax Credits
 - Historical Restoration Tax Credits
 - Empowerment Zone (includes tax credits)
- Available through State Agencies:
 - Opportunity/Enterprise Zone designation
 - Georgia BEST (tax credits for job retraining, on-site child care facilities, mega projects creating 1,800 jobs or more, jobs that pay greater than average wages, etc)
 - Bond Allocation Program (for Industrial Development Bonds, Mortgage Revenue Bonds, exempt facility bonds, etc)
- Available through ARC, Cobb County and other Local Organizations:
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG, originating from HUD but made available through the local government).
 - Potential Tax Allocation District
 - Business Improvement District
 - ARC Revolving Loan Fund
 - ARC Economic Development Grant program

Successful projects typically combine a number of tools and bring together a variety of partners — non-profit and for-profit, corporate and civic, local and national — to coordinate the package of loans, grants, and tax incentives necessary to fully finance a project. For example, financing the ground-breaking Market Creek Plaza project that revitalized San Diego's low income Encanto community, involved the following tools:

- A New Markets Tax Credit loan, which involved a partnership between Clearinghouse CDFI, Wells Fargo Bank, and the Jacobs Family Foundation;
- Program-Related Investments from the Rockefeller Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, F.B. Heron Foundation and Legler Benbough Foundation;
- Innovative small business financing offered through the California Southern Small Business Development Corporation;
- Grants from the Legler Benbough Foundation, Semptra Energy, San Diego Neighborhood Funders' Family of Funds, the Ackermann Foundation, the Irvine Foundation and the Wells Fargo Foundation; and
- Property tax reimbursements to the Jacobs Foundation for approximately 60 percent of their investments in pedestrian walkways, bridges and other infrastructure pro, provided by the local Economic Development Corporation.

The Study Area is eligible for a number of tax credits that are not available in many competitor locations, such as the Opportunity

Zone Jobs tax credit. These tax credits give the study area a distinct advantage in attracting retail, office, and in the future, industrial development and redevelopment. Table 28 presents an example of the impact of the Opportunity Zone jobs tax credit on the economics of a new grocery store. The job tax credit of \$3,500 per job for up to 5 years, essentially works out to a \$5.00 per square foot reduction in rent. On average grocery store rent of \$9.80 per square foot, that represents a savings of more than 50 percent. As the calculation of rent as a percent of sales per square foot demonstrates, this allows the operation to be half as profitable as would normally be required for a viable grocery store, a critical advantage for a business in its early years while it establishes market presence and operational costs and revenues stabilize.

A similar exercise can be done for the proposed user-driven office project, as shown in Table 29. For a 175,000 sq.ft. office building, designed to accommodate 700 employees at 250 sq.ft. per employee (common for call center-style operations), the tax credit would be worth approximately \$14.00 per sq.ft. Compared to the average triple-net office rent in the west Atlanta submarket of \$16.62, this represents a discount of more than 80 percent.

The market analysis indicates a number of exciting opportunities for the Study Area, which have the potential to significantly improve the livability for local residents, workers and business owners. Economic development tools available in the Six Flags Study Area provide a unique advantage for business attraction and development of retail, housing and employment space and will be critical in making these exciting opportunities a reality.

Table 28 Example: The Economics of the \$3,500 Jobs Tax Credit for a Study Area Grocery Store

Project Characteristics	
Store Size (GLA)	40,000
Sq.Ft. per Employee (FTE)	700
Total Employees (FTE)	57
Tax Credit per Employee	\$3,500
Total Tax Credits	\$200,000
Tax Credit per Sq.Ft.	\$5.00
Median Rent per Sq.Ft.	\$9.80
Median Sales per Sq.Ft.	\$430.05
Rent as a % of Sales	2.28%

Sources: ULI Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers; "Planning & Design Criteria" (Joseph De Chiara); EDR Group calculations.

Table 29 Example: The Economics of the \$3,500 Jobs Tax Credit for a Study Area Grocery Store

Office Building Size (Sq.Ft.)	175,000
Sq.Ft. per Employee (FTE)	250
Total Employees (FTE)	700
Tax Credit per Employee	\$3,500
Total Tax Credits	\$2,450,000
Tax Credit per Sq.Ft.	\$14.00
Average Rent per Sq.Ft. (NNN)	\$16.62

Notes: FTE = Full-time equivalent; NNN = triple net rent.

Sources: Colliers International Market Report Office Atlanta Q2 2011; Knoll Office Systems; EDR Group calculations.



3.0 Visioning

3.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Project Management Team

Serving as the executive decision making group for the plan, this group is comprised of County representatives, ARC staff and the consulting team. They met monthly to guide the process and ensure that the project was on schedule and deliverables/outcomes are developed as outlined in the scope of work.

Input From Participants

In addition to gleaning relevant information from previous studies, it was critical to gather input during this process. The Project Team, the Core Team and a wide variety of stakeholders were invited to provide input. Some of this was done through the use of forms that many participants completed which were summarized and used by the team. Copies of the input forms are included in the Appendix.

Core Team

The Core Team is comprised of Cobb County DOT and Economic Development staff, representatives from local and state agencies, and community stakeholders including active community leaders and residents, education and faith-based institutions, businesses and business associations, service providers and multi-family residential communities. This group met one week prior to the public meetings to allow for open and interactive discussion of key issues around the planning team's assessment of the study area and plan recommendations. While serving as a sounding board to guide the development of the presentation materials

one-week prior to public viewing, the core team also served as advocates and recruited constituents to participate throughout the planning process. All the Core Team meetings were convened at the South Cobb Recreation Center on the dates listed below:

Core Team Meeting #1 - October 6, 2011

The initial Core Team meeting served as an introduction to the planning process and provided a brief overview of the goals and objectives of the ARC LCI program. In addition, the planning team led a discussion with the Core Team on transportation and development issues facing the Six Flags LCI study area and potential solutions that should be explored during the planning process. Many of these issues were identified in previous planning studies conducted in the area and were used as a framework to facilitate discussions at the public meeting that followed.



Core Team Meeting #1

Core Team Meeting #2 - November 10, 2011

The Core Team meeting began with a presentation of the summary of research, field observations as well as the feedback from the first Core Team and community meetings held on October 6 and October 13 respectively. This presentation highlighted the issues within the study area with respect to Transportation, Land Use, Housing Demographics, and Economic Development. Following the presentation, the Core Team split into two groups to participate in a charette activity. The Team used maps, markers, and stickers with various land use and transportation themes to identify potential ideas and projects to enhance the area.



Core Team Meeting #2

Core Team Meeting #3 – January 26, 2012

During this final Core Team Meeting, the team presented the Draft land use, transportation and economic development recommendations for study area. The proposed future land use pattern identifies a town center concept in the heart of the corridor serving as both a local and regional attractor. Additional opportunities include preserving the industrial uses; new recreational/ open space opportunities; Six Flags Over Georgia hospitality supportive services; mix use development including office; and preserving and stabilizing single family communities while rehabilitating multi-family developments experiencing deferred maintenance.

A combination of vehicular and pedestrian oriented transportation recommendations were also presented for feedback. To address pedestrian safety issues and concerns, the plan proposes the installation of sidewalks, streetscape improvements and access management options. Due to resident's reliability on public transportation, a closed loop trolley or shuttle and limited CCT service increases the accessibility to jobs and services. Improvements to the highway interchanges include beatification, wayfinding/ signage and gateway installations to create an identity for the area.

The market analysis conducted early in the planning process resulted in several short term recommendations and those pending the rebound of the market. The market realities suggest the area can support a small-scale grocery and demand for supportive services for Six Flags Over Georgia and mixed income housing. There is not a near term demand for additional industrial as the existing stock

is viable, but civic uses including job training, medical services are in immediate demand and warrant implementation. The team also identified several economic tools for consideration to implement development, transportation and economic development projects including SPLOST, the Transportation Investment Act, Tax Credits/ incentives, and a potential Tax Allocation District. The feasibility of these funding tools will require additional study by the County.

Community Forums

To generate meaningful dialogue about transportation and land use issues, the study included a series of community forums or public meetings, typically held in a presentation or open-house format, to present project information, gain insights to study area conditions, and receive public input. These meetings were convened at the South Cobb Recreation Center and are described below:

Public Meeting #1 – October 13, 2011

The kick off meeting began with an introduction of the planning process followed by a general description of the key plan elements (land use, transportation and economic development). After a question and answer session, the approximately 40 participants visited conversation areas led by the planning team and engaged in an open dialog around transportation, safety, housing, employment, retail and other issues facing the study area. Participants were also asked to complete a brief questionnaire regarding these various topics which the team would compile and identify consensus.



Public Meeting #1

SIX FLAGS LCI STUDY

JUNE 2012 – FINAL

Public Meeting #2- November 17, 2011

Approximately 43 community stakeholders attended the second public meeting designed to facilitate a discussion on a comprehensive vision for the Six Flags Drive area. The meeting began with a brief video of a cross walk signalization system (the Hawk) that is currently being installed by Cobb County on Six Flags Parkway that addresses the pedestrian safety concerns along this corridor. The planning team followed with a formal presentation that highlighted key Transportation, Land Use, Housing Demographics, and Economic Development findings in the study area. The meeting participants split into (5) groups to participate in a charette activity.

Using maps, markers, and stickers with various land use and transportation themes the participants were asked to identify potential ideas and projects to enhance the area. Some ideas included pedestrian improvements that enhance connectivity such as sidewalks and trails and developing a mixed-use village center and year round entertainment district. Each group presented their ideas during the wrap-up session. In addition, the participants were provided a questionnaire and asked to prioritize goals identified in previous planning efforts.



Public Meeting #2

Public Meeting #3 February 2, 2012

The public meeting opened with the introduction of the team members and Cobb County staff.

The approximate 25 participants were informed and engaged in the discussion of the future land use plan, transportation recommendations and economic development opportunities. Like the Core Team meeting convened on January 26th, the team presented options for future growth and revitalization based on market realities. An engaging Q&A session followed the presentation, and the team provided more detailed descriptions of the plan recommendations at large scale-transportation and land use maps. The PowerPoint presentation is available on the project Facebook page for viewing.

Individual Meetings and interviews

The planning team conducted phone interviews and individual meetings with property and business owners and other community organizations throughout the process to obtain information on their perceptions of the area, future plans, needs and issues impacting their organizations.



Public Meeting #3

3.2 MESSAGING STRATEGY

The Six Flags LCI messaging strategy included elements to keep the general public and stakeholders apprised of all activities and to maximize the potential participation. The messaging methods/tools for this study included:

Meeting Notifications

Meeting notices/ fliers were used to provide straightforward information to the public and stakeholders about the process and upcoming public meetings. The notices were distributed via email to the project contact list and placed at strategic locations along the corridor including:

- Churches
- Schools
- South Cobb Community Center
- Community organizational meetings
- Apartment complexes
- Places of interest
- Government offices and businesses

Project Fact Sheet

A fact sheet was generated and distributed at meetings educating the general public about the process, the goals and anticipated outcomes of the plan, method of stakeholder involvement throughout the process, and general contact information. A sample of the project fact sheet is included in the Appendix.

Signage

Utilizing the Cobb DOT sign printing capabilities, large scale signs were posted in strategic locations along the corridor with meeting dates and location information.



Corridor Signage

Social Media, Online Calendars, and TV23

Facebook

A project Facebook page was created to increase project visibility and provide updated project information including photographs from public meetings, clippings from the media and brief narratives when appropriate.

Community Calendars and Newspapers

Online community calendars were available on various online newspapers. Meeting notices, pertinent project information and articles were posted regularly for public information.

These resources include:

- Cobb Online
- The Bright Side
- South Cobb Patch
- www.cobbcounty.org

TV23 and On Demand

Cobb County Government used TV23 as a resource to inform the Cobb community about upcoming project events.



Facebook Page

4.0 Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

In preparing to define the specific recommendations, it is important to acknowledge the work has been done through other efforts. Further, through the visioning process, additional goals have been developed which will result in specific recommendations. A summary of the findings from the most significant previous studies, the goals, previous and new, as well as the detailed recommendations are included in the Appendix.

There are two overarching recommendations that have emerged from assessing all of the input to this process. The community has members who are very engaged and searching for a way to help the area succeed. It is recommended that this group initiate the formation of a Six Flags Community Task Force.

The second recommendation is that the requirements for additional police resources be evaluated and that funding opportunities to support this growth in police presence be identified and sought. Based on the type of crime in the area, an increased police presence, combined with land use changes, is expected to be required to make sustainable improvements. Reducing the overstock of apartments and therefore increasing the occupancy rates will help. Sidewalk improvements and additional development along the Six Flags Dr. corridor that generate more pedestrian activities will also be part of the solution. It is also anticipated that additional police presence is also necessary. The preferred staffing levels are being developed by the area commander.

4.1 FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use recommendations for the Six Flags LCI Study Area have been developed based on a number of factors. First, previous land use studies were reviewed in order to identify future development initiatives that have already been identified for the area. This review of previous plans is especially important given the number of recent studies that have been conducted. Whenever possible, this study seeks to build on the future land use plans that have already achieved consensus.

Next, an analysis of demographic and economic trends in the surrounding areas was conducted in order to assess the regional demand for various land uses. The recent decline of the Atlanta Metropolitan economy is the most pressing factor that affects the viability of redevelopment plans. The existing land use survey included an assessment of the condition of current uses and their potential for the future. Finally public outreach and consultation with local stakeholders and county staff was carried out in order to evaluate the support for various redevelopment proposals. A series of land use charettes and interactive exercises were also included within this outreach program.

Based on this planning process, there have been several major themes that have emerged. First, public outreach and research have identified needs that relate land use to community livability and public health. This nexus between livability and

development is among the founding principles of the Livable Centers Initiative program. Residents have repeatedly stressed the need for a grocery store that provides options for healthy food. Indeed, a recent national study of supermarket accessibility by ESRI found that the Six Flags area community is effectively a “food desert,” where low income residents have little access to groceries.

Another community livability factor identified in the LCI study has been the need for outdoor recreation. While the South Cobb Recreation Center serves as an invaluable recreational asset, there are few parks with outdoor ballfields and passive recreational amenities. In order for low income residents to make use of community facilities, they must be accessible to those who lack automobiles. Thus, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accessibility are key factors in community livability and public health.

Another community livability factor in the Six Flags Study Area related to public health is the need for public safety. Pedestrian oriented development should improve the safety of residents who are currently forced to navigate dangerous intersections to access basic needs. Redevelopment areas and community facilities must also be designed to minimize crime.

Previous planning studies have identified redevelopment priorities in the Study Area. In order to change the existing dynamic of the Six Flags Drive corridor, it is necessary to target distressed apartment communities for redevelopment. A mixed use town center along Six Flags Drive is proposed as a catalyst development and community focal point. The other major redevelopment proposal identified throughout previous studies

has been the opportunity to create a mixed use hospitality and entertainment district adjacent to Six Flags Over Georgia. The mixed use character of these redevelopment areas is intended to create live-work-play activity centers.

In order to further improve the livability of the Study Area, redevelopment should enhance community identity and sense of place. Identity nodes, such as public plazas and fountains, have been identified as community focal points within both of the proposed mixed use activity centers. Gateway features at key intersections, such as signage and public art, can also enhance the sense of place and community. A public art project at Factory Shoals Road and Six Flags Drive is proposed to install a mural on the water tower.

4.1.1 Future Land Use Goals

A series of basic future development goals were developed to guide the land use planning process. Many of these goals have been adopted directly from recent planning studies and confirmed through public outreach.

- Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.
- Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complexes along Six Flags Drive.
- Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth.
- Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.
- Identify opportunities for town center mixed use development within the Study Area.

- Identify opportunities for professional employment within the Study Area.
- Prevent conflicts between industrial and residential land uses.
- Establish a unique community identity and sense of place.
- Promote pedestrian-oriented development along Six Flags Drive.
- Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.
- Identify opportunities for community and regional entertainment uses in order to take advantage of the proximity to the Six Flags amusement park.
- Facilitate the development of religious, civic, and educational institutions that provide training and social services for the community.
- Create a safer community for residents and visitors.

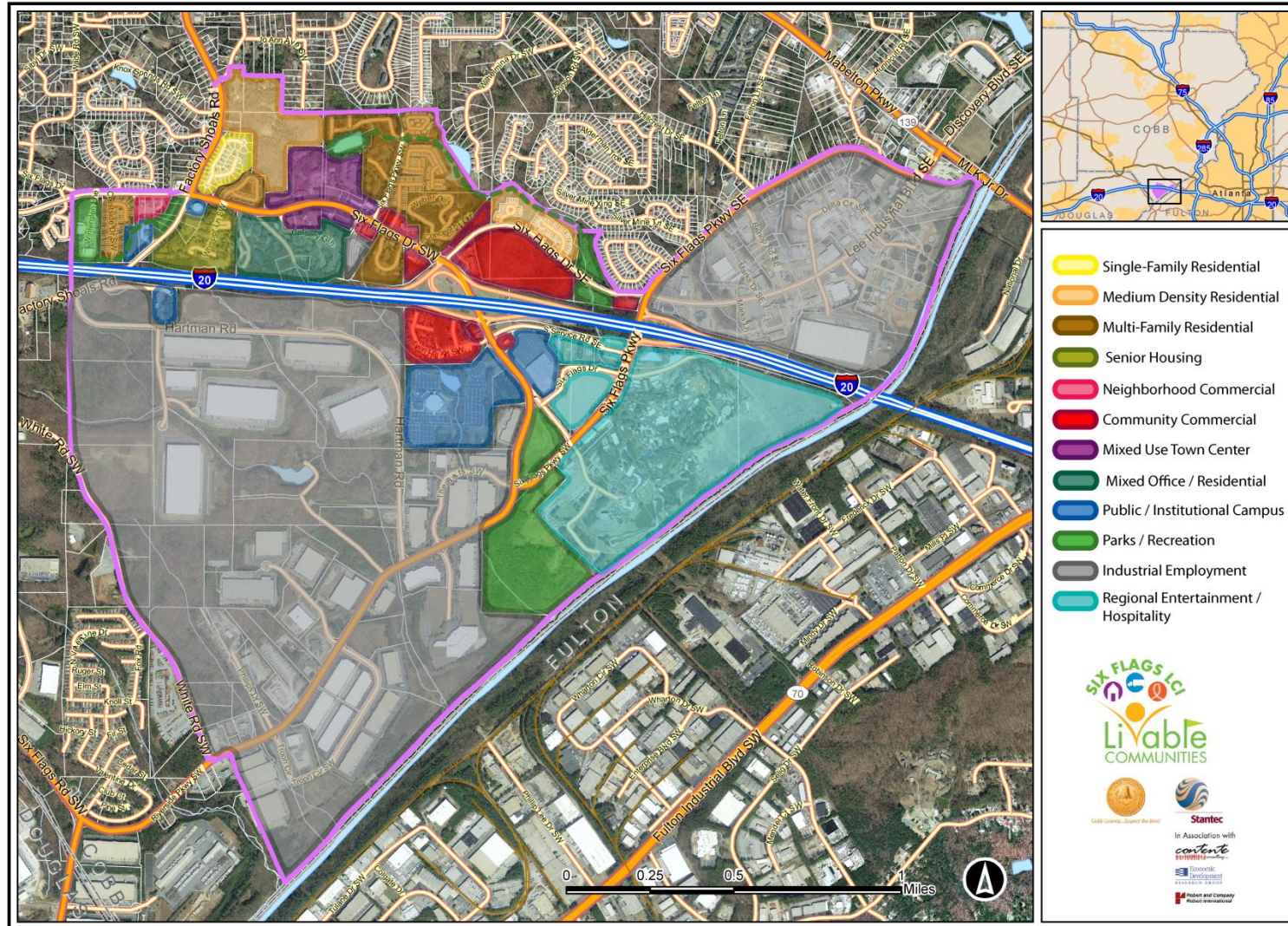
illustrate the desired character of new development, rather than actual site plans.

The Land Use categories used here are a little more specific than those used on the Future Land Use map in the Comprehensive plan to provide a bit more description of what is envisioned. Where this is the case, the recommendation in this study is consistent with what is encompassed in the land use category in that guiding document.

4.1.2 Future Land Use Narrative

The Future Land Use Narrative provides a vision for the future of the Six Flags area community and a rationale for redevelopment initiatives. The discussion is organized by each major land use category in the corresponding Future Land Use Concept depicted in Figure 13. Pictures included in this section are intended to

Figure 13 Future Land Use Concept – Six Flags LCI Study Area



Note: These recommendations are a concept only and do not alter or impact land use policy. Therefore, they cannot be used to justify land use and zoning decision making.

Commercial

Readily-accessible retail shopping and services are a key feature that enhances the livability of a community center and allows residents to shop near their homes without commuting long distances. The accessibility of fresh food and groceries is particularly important for communities that lack transportation options. The Six Flags Drive Corridor has been identified as a “food desert” within a national study of supermarket accessibility conducted by ESRI. (See Figure 11 in the previous Economic Development section.) Likewise, the need for a supermarket was repeatedly stated within community input.

Future commercial development within the Study Area should be divided in scale between two levels of intensity, including Neighborhood Commercial and Community Commercial. These categories correspond to the Neighborhood Activity Center and Community Activity Center designations included in the Cobb County Comprehensive Plan.

At the smallest scale, Neighborhood Commercial nodes should be designed to serve the immediate surrounding neighborhood with shops and offices under 10,000 square feet in size. In these areas, adaptive reuse techniques should be applied in order to allow older homes to be converted to small-scale commercial activities that do not generate substantial traffic, such as day care centers and small offices. The intersection of Six Flags Drive and Factory Shoals Road has been identified as a Neighborhood Commercial node.

At the next level of intensity, Community Commercial centers should be designed to serve several surrounding neighborhoods. Community Commercial areas include the existing shopping centers east of the proposed town center along Six Flags Drive. Likewise, parcels adjacent to expressway interchanges represent an opportunity for Community Commercial development. For

example, the land between Six Flags Drive SE and Interstate 20 has been identified as a potential Community Commercial center due to its proximity to the expressway, visibility, and accessibility to the surrounding communities. While all new commercial development within the Study Area should be accessible to pedestrians, auto-oriented shopping centers are appropriate at expressway interchanges.



Neighborhood Commercial



Community Commercial

Mixed Use

One of the major themes in previous studies as well as in public comments has been the desire to establish a pedestrian-oriented mixed use redevelopment area to serve as a center for community activity. The linear nature of the Six Flags Drive corridor and the lack of a commercial core has left the area without a clear identity aside from its proximity to the Six Flags amusement park. The distressed condition of some of the apartment communities along Six Flags drive provides an opportunity to develop such a mixed use town center to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and revitalization. Ground floor commercial should be allowed along Six Flags Drive and along the perpendicular and approved “Main Street” area with residential or office on the upper floors. Behind this commercial core medium to high density housing should be encouraged, with an emphasis on owner-occupied properties. Connections should be established between the proposed town center and surrounding redevelopment areas in order to create a pedestrian oriented grid with minimal block lengths. Public plazas, greenspace, trails, and streetscapes should be integrated into the design in order to provide a compelling pedestrian experience.



Town Center Mixed Use with Plaza



Commercial / Residential Mixed Use



Mixed Use Office / Residential

The Mixed Use Office/Residential district is intended to allow for redevelopment of older apartment communities into office, educational, institutional, and residential land uses. Land between Six Flags Drive SW and Interstate 20 has been identified for conversion to more intensive land use. This policy reflects the status of I-20 as a major growth corridor and employment center. While the majority of the multi-family housing in this area is not currently blighted, long range plans should allow for conversion to a mix of office and residential development. Redevelopment within this district could include stacked office/residential mixed use or single-use development.

Mixed Use Office/Residential development adjacent to the proposed Town Center serves several purposes. Office development provides a transitional land use that is compatible with both the adjacent Town Center and interstate corridor. In order to support the proposed Town Center, the Mixed Use Office / Residential district should encourage pedestrian oriented development that allows workers to easily access community facilities and amenities. Next, office development provides opportunities for professional employment within the Study Area. Office/institutional uses such as educational facilities could also help develop workforce skills for residents. The Mixed Use Office/Residential or Town Center districts would provide an ideal location for a job training career center facility. Medical office uses provide another opportunity for professional employment that also benefits community health needs.



Low Rise Office



Office with Pedestrian Enhancements



Office and Residential Mixed Use

Hospitality / Entertainment

The presence of the Six Flags Over Georgia amusement park within the Study Area provides an excellent opportunity for complimentary hospitality and entertainment development. There are already several small hotels and motels near the entrance to Six Flags and at expressway interchanges. While the deterioration of the local economy has had an impact on these businesses, there is also the potential for revitalization with improvements to the corridors leading into Six Flags. There should be coordination between Six Flags, local businesses, and Word of Faith to ensure that revitalization of the surrounding area benefits all local stakeholders.

Several planning studies have explored the possibility of a regional hospitality / entertainment district adjacent to Six Flags. There are some large tracts of vacant or underutilized land immediately adjacent to Six Flags that could be used for a major new development. In addition, some of the surface parking lots serving Six Flags could be consolidated to make room for a regional entertainment destination. A resort hotel with golf and recreational amenities would encourage visitors to stay for multiple days when visiting Six Flags. This type of development would be a private venture and would not involve any public funds or public participation. The entertainment district should include restaurant and retail opportunities that provide an alternative to fast food.

Industrial

Industrial Employment Centers are the primary economic engine of the area, with a major agglomeration of both heavy and light industrial along Riverside Parkway and Hartman Road. Maintenance and continued development of these assets is an important goal for future land use planning, given the importance

of industrial uses to the local economy. Conflicts between industrial activities and surrounding land uses should be minimized, particularly by separating them from residential development. Likewise, freight traffic routes should be designated in order to avoid conflicts between truck traffic, neighborhoods, and business districts.

*Hospitality**Regional Recreation**Light Industrial Warehousing / Logistics*

Public / Institutional Campus

Public / Institutional Campus districts include government, religious, educational, and civic land uses. Small community facilities, such as neighborhood churches, are often compatible with neighborhoods and activity centers. For example, government facilities are included within the neighborhood activity center at Factory Shoals Road and Six Flags Drive. Public facilities can also enhance mixed use activity centers such as the proposed Town Center and Office/Residential districts. Public safety facilities, such as a mini police precinct, can enhance the quality of walkable development by improving the perception and the reality of security.

However, large-scale institutional campuses should be restricted to regional activity centers. Large religious venues must manage traffic and parking for events and adjunct facilities. The Word of Faith Cathedral includes a large capacity auditorium and training center. The church has extensive plans for expansion, including a campus of amenities and social services.

Institutional Campus expansion should be coordinated with local redevelopment plans and community initiatives. Partnerships between religious institutions and hospitality/commercial businesses in the area should be encouraged. Joint redevelopment efforts have the potential for shared recreational amenities and public facilities. In addition to adequate parking and automobile access, large institutions should provide pedestrian linkages between campus facilities and surrounding neighborhoods. As with Word of Faith's shuttle bus program, large institutions should consider transit and transportation management approaches to provide access and minimize traffic impacts.



Small Community Church



Word of Faith Chapel



Word of Faith Life Training Center

Parks / Recreation / Conservation

The priority for new public parks and recreation within the LCI Study Area should focus on amenities that serve the existing communities on the north side of I-20. In the short term, neighborhood parks can be created in areas with good visibility in order to deter crime and maximize the benefit for spurring redevelopment. Oakdale Park in Smyrna is an example of a neighborhood park with both good visibility and fencing for security. The vacant parcels at the intersection of Six Flags Drive and Factory Shoals Road provide such an opportunity for a secure neighborhood park.

Many of the water features in the Study Area and tributaries leading into the Chattahoochee River provide opportunities for conservation land, passive greenspace, and trails. While floodplain areas should not be developed, these areas can serve as important recreation amenities. The riparian corridor and ponds north of the proposed town center could be used as a trail network linking redevelopment areas into surrounding neighborhoods. A riparian trail along this water feature could also form a loop, if connected to the proposed trail along Six Flags Drive. However, the low-lying nature of river corridors would require public safety patrols and lighting in order to ensure safety.

At a larger scale, the vacant land west and southwest of Six Flags Over Georgia could serve as possible locations for regional recreational amenities. A park has been proposed in the area between Six Flags Parkway and Six Flags Way in order to complement the proposed entertainment district. Recreational development in this area should be coordinated with the expansion plans of the Word of Faith church. Past proposals for the undeveloped land southwest of Six Flags include a nature

center or botanical garden. It would also be possible to develop a regional sports facility such as a 9-hole or par-3 golf course on the land southwest of Six Flags. This type of development would be a private venture and would not involve any public funds or public participation.



South Cobb Aquatic Center



Oakdale Park, Smyrna



Residential

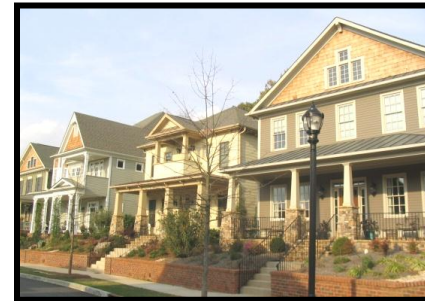
Future residential development within the Study Area is generally divided between detached single-family residential, medium density residential, and multi-family residential. Medium density residential can range from detached traditional neighborhood development and cluster homes to single family attached townhomes. Senior housing has also been included as an additional category of medium to high density housing. The vast majority of the current residential in the Study Area is attached housing, in the form of townhomes and apartments. Previous plans and public comments have expressed the need for a diverse housing stock that includes options for more types of housing.

The top priority for residential development within the Six Flags LCI Study Area is to encourage redevelopment of distressed apartment communities. The proposed Mixed Use Town Center includes some older apartments that have undergone foreclosure. Redevelopment of the existing housing stock should seek to create mixed income communities that introduce quality new housing while preserving some affordable units.

New housing should also provide opportunities for residents to remain within the community as they transition between different life cycle stages. Lifelong Communities strategies outlined within ARC best practices should be encouraged as a means of allowing residents to “age in place” and remain within the community. In order to allow seniors to maintain active lifestyles, senior housing should be near public services and community amenities.



Senior Housing



Village Center Residential

Some new housing within the Study Area is recommended for medium density clustered single family residential. These neighborhoods should seek to incorporate traditional neighborhood development (TND) techniques as a means of encouraging pedestrian activity and community interaction. Underutilized land northwest of the proposed town center is recommended as medium density residential to serve as a transition between the town center and surrounding single family residential areas to the north.

Currently there is very little single family residential within the Six Flags LCI Study Area. However, there are several single family residential subdivisions immediately north and west of the Study Area. While there is little undeveloped land available on the north side of the Study Area, there are some several large tracts of vacant land that are currently zoned for residential. In order to prevent conflicts between residential and industrial development, the south side of the Study Area should primarily be reserved for industrial employment.



Townhomes



Apartments

Table 30 Land Use Five Year Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Action	Cost	Year	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources	Match Amount
Encourage mixed use redevelopment along Six Flags Drive.	Promote Redevelopment Overlay District for Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals and I-20	\$5,000	2013	SCRA	SCRA	\$1,000
Facilitate the development of religious, civic, and educational institutions that provide social services for the community.	Amend Cobb County Comprehensive Plan to include Word of Faith Campus as a public-institutional district	Staff time	2012	CCP	CCP	
Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.	Acquire land at intersection of Factory Shoals and Six Flags Drive for gateway park	\$250,000	2015	Cobb County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs	Cobb County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs	\$50,000

CCP: Cobb County Planning

SCRA: South Cobb Redevelopment Authority



4.2 TRANSPORTATION

Implementing projects within the study area is a very important and imperative aspect of the LCI program. These projects must promote livability and sustainability as well as support Lifelong Communities Principles. Throughout the course of this study, the team and the citizens of the Six Flags Community have developed and prioritized a list of transportation projects that achieve this objective, with significant focus being placed upon the Six Flags Drive corridor.

The Six Flags Drive corridor will remain the neighborhood oriented street as it is today with specific improvements to the intersections with Factory Shoals Road and Riverside Parkway to promote pedestrian mobility and traffic calming via wide sidewalks, street trees or appropriate greenery and landscaping and reinvested commercial nodes adjacent to the sidewalks. Better connectivity of sidewalks in existing areas of high pedestrian activity is recommended.

Overall it is recommended that initial transportation implementation should be focused on pedestrian activity and the general walkability within the study area. All of these transportation improvements together form the framework to ensure that all future development is neighborhood-oriented and accessible.

4.2.1 Sidewalks

Proposed sidewalk recommendations include increasing connectivity specifically closing the gaps in sidewalk locations

throughout the study area. The sidewalks segments are placed into two major implementation categories:

1. **Priority segments:** These are segments that are projected to provide the greatest and most immediate benefits. Sidewalk segments within this category currently have worn paths showing an existing need. These segments would be planned, designed and constructed as short-term projects.
2. **Developmental segments:** These are segments that will occur as a part of future land use development. As the future land use develops, a shift in pedestrian activity and travel patterns is expected. These segments would be meet the needs of future land use and are considered long-term projects.

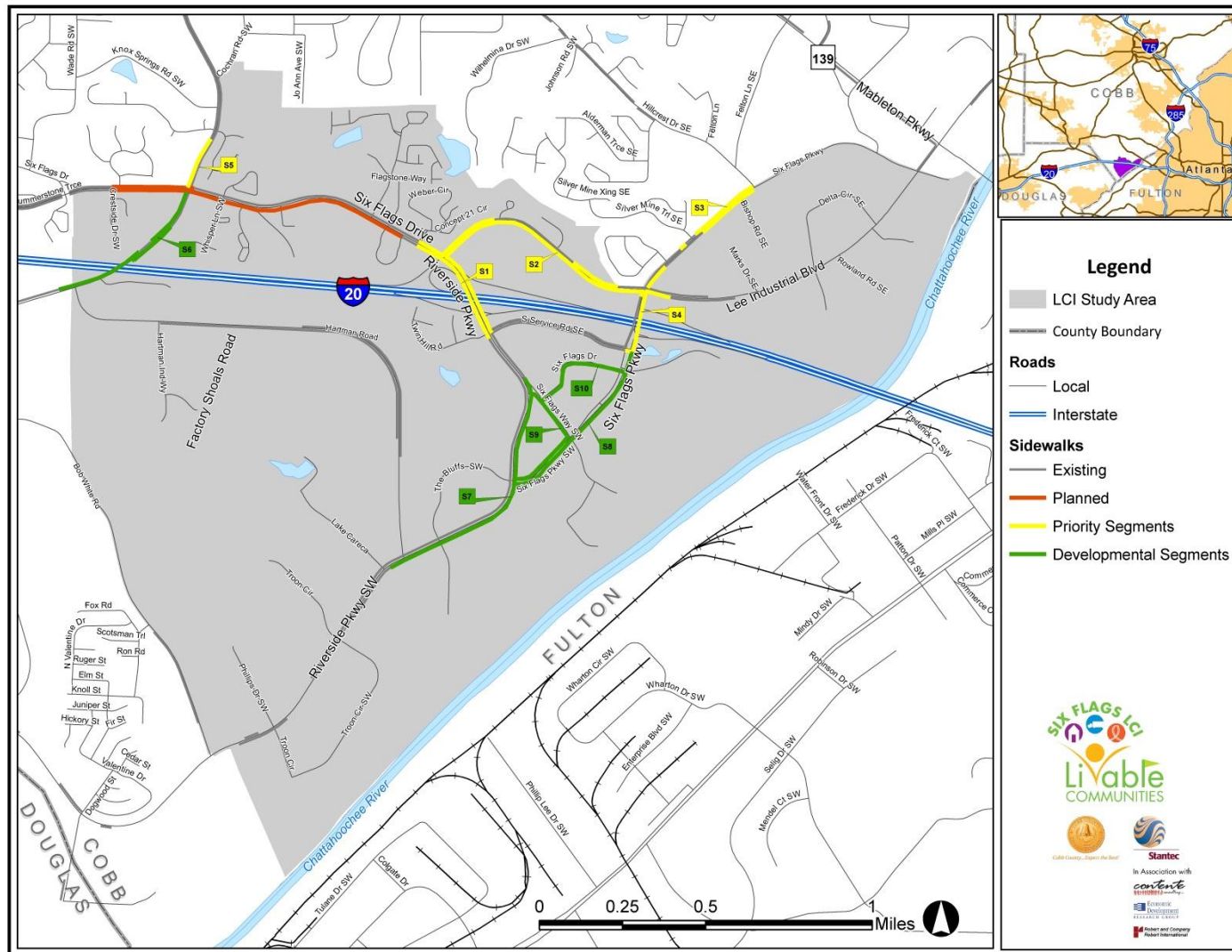
While the exact location of planned long-term sidewalks will be determined by future land use, Figure 14 shows the anticipated priority and developmental sidewalk segments.

Installation of sufficient lighting for safe pedestrian travel as well as to better allow drivers to identify pedestrians at night is needed along corridors with sidewalks or trails. Adequate lighting should be installed in the study area and maintained to ensure adequacy.

Currently Cobb County Department of Transportation (DOT) has a relationship with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Initiation of specific projects under this program begin with efforts of an individual school, rather than the DOT. While there are no schools within the study area, the schools just beyond the study area limits are encouraged to begin efforts to participate in the SRTS program. Schools just beyond the study area limits include Bryant Intermediate School and Riverside Primary & Intermediate Schools.



Figure 14 Recommended Sidewalk Upgrades



4.2.2 Crosswalks & Gateway Nodes

Installation of gateway nodes, similar to those identified in the Western Gateway Vision Plan, is recommended. However, it is recommended to analyze the proposed nodes lane requirements, signal upgrade and tested for roundabouts as an alternate solution. Solutions considered should improve visibility for drivers and pedestrians such as textured or raised crosswalks and increased lighting. As shown in Figure 15, gateway nodes should be included at the following intersections:

- Six Flags Drive at Factory Shoals – West Gateway
- Factory Shoals at Hartman Road – Southwest Gateway
- Six Flags Drive at Riverside Parkway (southern end, just south of where the existing Garden Ridge Building is located) – Southeast Gateway
- Riverside Parkway at the I-20 EB & WB Ramps – Regional Gateway
- Six Flags Drive at the I-20 WB Ramps – Regional Gateway
- Lee Industrial Blvd at Six flags Pkwy – East Gateway

4.2.3 Access Management & Streetscape

During the redevelopment process, some guiding principles include consideration of access management standards where appropriate for new developments such as shared driveways, inter-parcel access, and right-in/right-out islands. In addition, it is desirable to plan for the installation of a 10-foot wide median on

Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals Road and Riverside Parkway with openings at the key locations:

- Six Flags Parkway, adjacent the QuikTrip Gas Station
- The main driveway for the proposed Mixed use land use (approximately at the existing Family Dollar main access Driveway)
- Others to be determined in a future study.

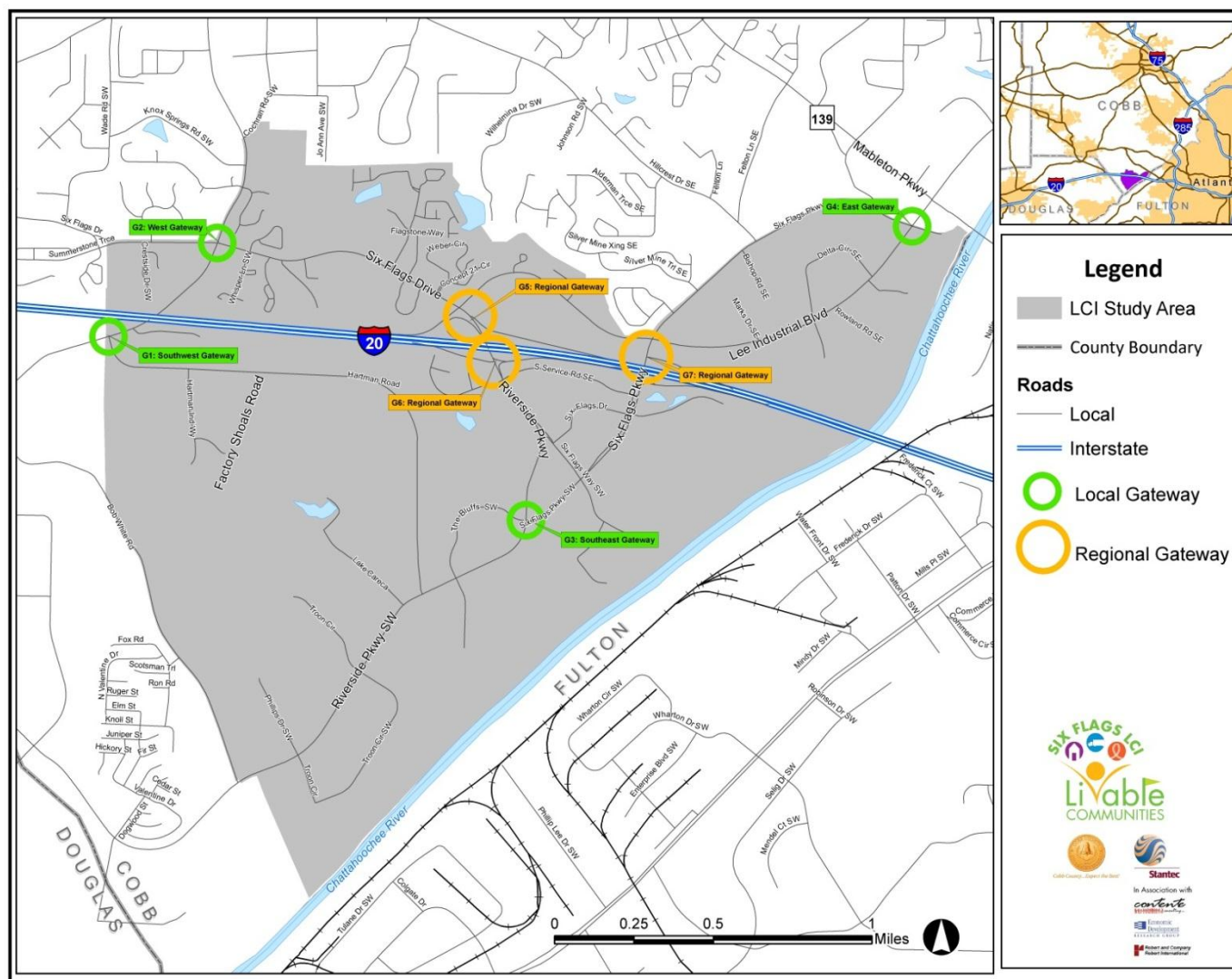
The focus is on mobility and accessibility; however, this is also an opportunity to improve the aesthetics in the area.

In addition to the improvements with the currently planned HAWK signal, Cobb DOT and the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) need a plan for the installation of streetscape and furniture along Six Flags Drive as well as at additional CCT route stops currently located in the study area. Efforts should be made to install furniture that can withstand the high transit ridership as well as potential bus shelter vandalism.



Streetscape & Furniture

Figure 15 Recommended Gateway Nodes



4.2.4 Wayfinding Signage

Include wayfinding signage, with an example shown below, to provide community identification throughout the study area. This should include major commercial and entertainment destinations as well as community centers and parks. An actual design study to determine appropriate style, placement and content should be conducted.



Sample Wayfinding Signage

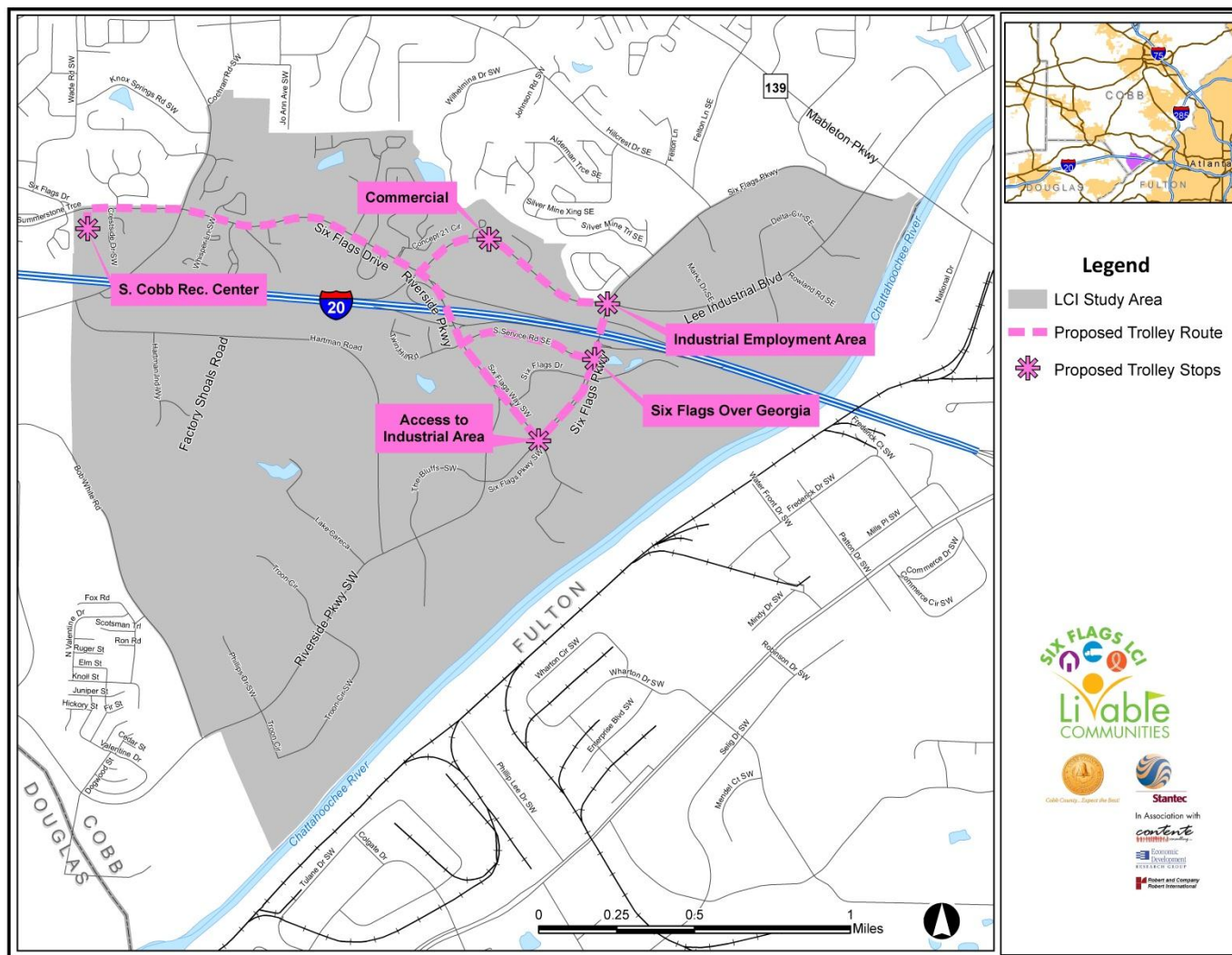
4.2.5 Transit

The existing Cobb Community Transit (CCT) bus route #30 and stops should be evaluated to compensate for stops and destinations that are now excluded due to the previously terminated routes. Long term recommendations should include reinstating additional service within the study area.

In addition to the CCT recommendations, as redevelopment occurs, or if a Community Improvement or Business Improvement District is formed, a shuttle or a closed loop trolley, as shown in Figure 16 can be created. This trolley service would be limited to strictly service the study area. An additional feasibility study would need to be completed to identify the route that would best suit the needs of the users in the area connecting students and residents with jobs and other essential services.

It is noted that the county has the Cobb Freedom Voucher Program currently available to seniors. In the summer of 2012 it will become available for persons with disabilities. It is recommended that steps be taken to increase awareness of the program and to make it more accessible to study area citizens.

Figure 16 Recommended Local Trolley Service



4.2.6 Trucks

One of the great strengths of this area is the strong job base created by the industrial and other businesses located primarily on the eastern end and southern parts of the study area. In interviewing many of those businesses, it was clearly stated that the excellent access to the interstate is one of the attractive features of this geographic area. Transportation improvements in the area should take into account the requirements of the trucks and the routes that are most significant.

Previous studies have identified Riverside Parkway as the designated Truck Route. This route should be clearly identified with proper signage and be incorporated in the future wayfinding signage for the study area. In addition, the access to Lee Industrial Blvd and the road itself need to be truck friendly as well.

Sample truck route signage is shown to the right. Recommendations to address the mixture of truck and non-industrial vehicle sin the area include:

- Installation of truck route signage consistent and incorporation into the proposed wayfinding signage plan
- Include geometric improvements and signal optimization on local intersections ensuring adequacy for truck movements
- Develop No Through Trucks on Local Roads where route is predominantly residential (outside of current study area)
- Work with local schools and employment centers to develop a program to educate the general public on passenger car/truck/pedestrian safety.

- Ensure county standards are met for industrial sites so access is reasonable and does not impede the flow of other traffic.
- Resurface Riverside Parkway from six Flags Drive to Bob White Road.



Truck Routing Signage

Table 31 Transportation Five Year Implementation Plan

ID	Description	Type of Improvement	Length	Engineering or Planning ⁴		Right of Way		Construction		Total Project Cost	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources	Match Amount
				Year	Costs	Year	Costs	Year	Costs				
S1	Six Flags Drive from Concept 21 Cir to S. Service Road (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.4 Mile	2014	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2015	\$350,000	\$375,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$75,000
S2	Six Flags Drive from Riverside Parkway to Lee Industrial Blvd	Sidewalks	0.8 Mile	2014	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2015	\$350,000	\$375,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$75,000
S3	Six Flags Parkway from Hillcrest Drive to Silver Mine Trail (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.2 Mile	2013	\$15,000	TBD	N/A	2014	\$150,000	\$165,000	CCDOT	LCI Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$33,000
S4	Six Flags Parkway from Silver Arrow Cir to S. Service Rd (eastern side of road)	Sidewalks	0.3 Mile	2013	\$12,500	TBD	N/A	2014	\$100,000	\$112,500	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$22,500
S5	Factory Shoals Road from Tomahawk Pl to Six Flags Dr (western side of road)	Sidewalks	0.2 Mile	2014	\$10,000	TBD	N/A	2015	\$100,000	\$110,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$22,000
S6	Factory Shoals Road from Six Flags Dr to Hartman Rd (both sides of road, long term)	Sidewalks	0.5 Mile	2016	\$40,000	TBD	N/A	2017	\$375,000	\$415,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$83,000
S7	Riverside Pkwy from Six Flags Way to Lake Careco Rd (on eastern side of road)	Sidewalks	0.8 Mile	2016	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2017	\$350,000	\$375,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$75,000
S8	Six Flags Pkwy SW from Riverside Pkwy to S. Service Rd (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.5 Mile	2016	\$40,000	TBD	N/A	2017	\$375,000	\$415,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$83,000
S9	Six Flags Way from Six Flags Pkwy to Riverside Pkwy (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.2 Mile	2017	\$15,000	TBD	N/A	2018	\$150,000	\$165,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$33,000
S10	Six Flags Dr (south of S. Service Rd) from Six Flags Pkwy to Six Flags Way (both sides)	Sidewalks	0.3 Mile	2017	\$25,000	TBD	N/A	2018	\$200,000	\$225,000	CCDOT	LCI, Safety CMAQ, SPLOST	\$45,000
G1	Southwest Gateway: Hartman Rd at Factory Shoals Rd	Intersection Improvements	N/A	2017	\$30,000		N/A	2018	\$75,000	\$105,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$21,000
G2	West Gateway: Factory Shoals Rd at Six Flags Dr	Crosswalks & Signal Upgrade	N/A	2013	\$50,000		N/A	2014	\$150,000	\$200,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$40,000

⁴ Planning includes traffic studies that are necessary to finalize the design of improvements



Table 31 Continued - Transportation Five Year Implementation Plan

ID	Description	Type of Improvement	Length	Engineering or Planning ⁴		Right of Way		Construction		Total Project Cost	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources	Match Amount
				Year	Costs	Year	Costs	Year	Costs				
G3	Southeast Gateway: Six Flags Pkwy at Riverside Pkwy	Intersection Improvements	N/A	2015	\$50,000		N/A	2016	\$200,000	\$250,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$50,000
G4	East Gateway: Six Flags Pkwy at Lee Industrial Blvd.	Intersection Improvements or Roundabout	N/A	2014	\$150,000	TBD	N/A	2016	\$500,000	\$650,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$130,000
G5	Regional Gateway: I-20 WB Ramps at Riverside Pkwy	Crosswalks & Signal Upgrade	N/A	2015	\$50,000		N/A	2016	\$150,000	\$220,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$44,000
G6	Regional Gateway: I-20 EB Ramps at Riverside Pkwy	Crosswalks & Signal Upgrade	N/A	2015	\$50,000		N/A	2016	\$150,000	\$270,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$54,000
G7	Regional Gateway: I-20 WB Exit & EB Entrance Ramp at Six Flags Pkwy	Crosswalks & Signal Improvements or Roundabout	N/A	2015	\$150,000		N/A	2016	\$500,000	\$650,000	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$130,000
T1	Study Existing transit service and identify ways to restore additional service	Transit Study	N/A	2013	\$25,000		N/A			\$25,000	CCT/CCDOT	LCI	\$5,000
T2	Implement local trolley service (privately sponsored)	Local Trolley Service*	N/A	2016			N/A	2016		\$100,000/yr	CCT	TMA	\$20,000/yr
T3	Replace and maintain bus shelters and street furniture		N/A	2013 - 2015	\$45,000					\$45,000	CCT	LCI	\$9,000/yr
R1	Installation of wayfinding signage plan		N/A	2014	\$45,000		N/A	2015	\$150,000	\$195,000	CCDOT	LCI	\$39,000
S1	Conduct study to develop trolley service for local area			2014	\$10,000		N/A			\$10,000	CID	CID or FTA	\$2,000
RS1	Resurfacing Riverside parkway from Six Flags Drive to Bob White Road	Pavement Resurfacing	2 Miles	2015	27,000		N/A	2016	534,400	\$561,400	CCDOT	LCI/GDOT	\$112,280

Dollars are expressed in 2012 \$

Assumes that vehicle will be provided by other and TMA will only pay operating costs.

CCDOT: Cobb County Department of Transportation

CCT: Cobb Community Transit

LCI: Livable Centers Initiative Transportation Improvement Funding

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

ECODEV: Cobb County Economic Development Department

FTA: Federal Transit Administration



4.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Land Use section above provided recommendations for residential, retail, office and industrial development from a land use perspective. This section provides related recommendations that address development from an economic development perspective.

4.3.1 Residential

Residential development goals are threefold:

- Reduce residential vacancy rates
- Replace obsolete/blighted/substandard housing units
- Provide housing for a wider range of incomes
- Foster residential communities that support vibrant retail areas

Low income levels, low rent levels; high vacancy rates and a lack of basic retail such as grocery and banking present barriers that must be overcome in order to achieve the goals above.

To alleviate blighted units, reduce vacancy, improve the range of housing products available in the study area, and create a suitable location for a mixed-use Town Center, it is recommended that 150 housing units be removed from the market through demolition. 120 of these units would be replaced by new housing units in a mixed-income development integrated into the mixed-use Town Center which would also contain retail and civic uses (discussed in greater detail below in the Retail section).

The market context described above indicates that redevelopment of blighted housing units will not occur without public and civic-sector intervention. The following actions would help overcome barriers to achievement of residential development goals:

- 1) Identify and purchase apartment buildings with a significant proportion of blighted and substandard housing to be replaced;
- 2) Encourage apartment complex managers to meet with residents of housing stock to be reduced. Provide information and applications for potential relocation; and
- 3) Identify and work with private sector developer experienced in affordable and mixed-income housing to provide new housing products in the Study Area as part of the larger Town Center development.

4.3.2 Retail

The most critical retail goal is the attraction of a grocery store and complementary neighborhood-serving retail to the Study Area. To overcome the challenges inherent in attracting retail to underserved neighborhoods, as well as regulatory issues related to identifying a grocery store site, strong public-private partnerships and strategic deployment of economic development tools is critical. Specific recommendations to achieve this are:

- 1) Identify possible sites that meet regulatory requirements;



2) Design a package of incentives that reduce the risk for the real estate developer and grocery store anchor tenant; and

3) Assign a “grocery store champion” to approach possible operators, introduce them to the sites and incentives available in the study area, open a dialog with the operators to determine what needs to be done, and see the process through to completion.

4.3.3 Office

Goals for office employment and development in the Study Area include the following:

- To forge a link between existing office jobs in the industrial areas and available workforce in the Six Flags Study Area
- Attract a modest user-driven office development to the study area, providing office jobs for residents and support for Six Flags area retail from workers from outside the neighborhood.

Six Flags is not currently an office real estate market in the region, and other established office markets in the county and region have attractive and functional office space available. Furthermore, Six Flags lacks the retail/dining amenities necessary to support office workers. Though these reasons make it unlikely that new Class A office space would be developed speculatively within the Study Area, a joint public-private sector effort could be

successful in bringing a user-driven office development to the Six Flags neighborhood. To achieve this, stakeholders should identify a corporate user seeking a site and put together a package of incentives that allow the company to make the case to their shareholders that a site in the Six Flags area is the most cost effective option.

4.3.4 Industrial

Recommendations for industrial development center on:

- Reducing vacancy in the Study Area’s existing, high quality industrial space
- Providing a link between the local labor force and jobs in the Study Area’s industrial parks.

To address the first goal, local and regional policymakers should continue existing economic development policies that have lead to the development of high quality industrial parks with excellent transportation access and competitive business costs (including real estate prices).

To address the second goal, stakeholders should seek to establish a workforce training element in the civic space proposed for the Town Center development. This could come in the form of a periodic service, such as Cobb Works’ Mobile Career Center, or as a more permanent satellite office of Cobb Works or similar agency. With Chattahoochee Tech located approximately four miles from the study area, a partnership should be explored.

Table 32 Economic Development Five Year Implementation Plan

Category	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible	Potential Funding Sources
Housing	Identify and purchase apartment buildings with a significant proportion of blighted and substandard housing to be replaced;	TBD	2012-2014	ECODEV	Neighborhood Stabilization Program Funds, New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant
	Identify and work with private sector developer experienced in affordable and mixed-income housing to provide new housing products in the Study Area as part of the larger Town Center development.	Staff time	2013-2014	ECODEV, Cobb County, multiple agencies (Planning, Zoning, Community Dev, etc)	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant
Retail	Identify possible sites that meet regulatory requirements;		2012	ECODEV	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant, Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credit
	Design a package of incentives that reduce the risk for the real estate developer and grocery store anchor tenant; and	Outside services	2012-2013	ECODEV	
	Assign a “grocery store champion” to approach possible operators, introduce them to the sites and incentives available in the study area, open a dialog with the operators to determine what needs to be done, and see the process through to completion.	\$20,000	2013-2014	ECODEV	
Office	Identify desirable locations for major office development within the Six Flags Study Area		2012-2013	ECODEV	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant, Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credit
	Identify a corporate user looking for an expansion site	Outside services	2012-2017	ECODEV	
	Assemble an incentives package to ensure that a Six Flags site is financially advantageous to the proposed user	\$20,000	2012-2013	ECODEV	
	Raise awareness among state-level economic development officials regarding the desirability of a Six Flags site for office location/expansion		ongoing	ECODEV	
Industrial	Continue existing economic development policies that have led to the development of high quality industrial parks with excellent transportation access and competitive business costs	n/a	ongoing	ECODEV	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible), Community Development Block Grant
	Preserve undeveloped industrial sites for future employment uses		ongoing	CCP	New Market Tax Credits, TAD (possible)
	Provide workforce training and job placement services within the Six Flags community		2012, ongoing	Cobb Works	Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credits, State workforce training grants

CCCD: Cobb County Community Development

CCP: Cobb County Planning, Economic Development

TAD: Tax Allocation District

ECODEV: Cobb County Economic Development Department

SCRA: South Cobb Redevelopment Authority



5.0 Measurement of Progress

The following is a framework that summarizes the community goals and recommendations for the Six Flags LCI study. It also identifies potential measures for tracking progress towards meeting the community's goals. This framework outlines how the community's goals will be met as well as how the outcomes of the implementation of these recommendations can be monitored. Reporting on these measures will provide Cobb County and the community with measurable information on the changes occurring in the area and the degree to which these

changes are aligned with the community's goals. It also highlights how to track progress on the long-term prosperity and sustainability of the community.

It is recommended that a monitoring program be established to report on the measures identified. A monitoring program defines the data collection process as well as the frequency of and structure of reporting.

Table 33 Six Flags Progress Framework: A path to achieving community goals and monitoring progress

	Goals	Recommendations	Measures
Land Use	1. Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate commercial activity centers according to intensity of desired development and commercial service area. (e.g. Neighborhood Commercial and Community Commercial) • Perform grocery store market study within LCI economic development analysis. • Recruit mid-sized retail/grocery store. • Improve aesthetics of existing commercial areas. • Improve pedestrian accessibility to commercial centers. • Work with civic partners to raise awareness of healthy eating and fresh foods among Study Area residents • Design a package of incentives that reduce the risk for the real estate developer and grocery store anchor tenant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage increase in retail space (sq ft) from baseline year, by type • Percent increase in number of sit-down restaurants

Table 33 Continued - Six Flags Progress Framework: A path to achieving community goals and monitoring progress

	Goals	Recommendations	Measures
Land Use	1. Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a grocery store champion to approach possible operators, introduce them to the sites and incentives available in the study area and see the process through to completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage increase in retail space (sq ft) from baseline year, by type Percent increase in number of sit-down restaurants
	2. Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complex properties along Six Flags Drive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and purchase apartment buildings with a significant proportion of blighted and substandard housing to be replaced Develop mixed use town center as a catalyst for residential redevelopment of older apartment complexes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of housing stock built after 1980 (or other appropriate year, where data are available)
	3. Identify opportunities for professional employment within the Study Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain incentives for employment of area residents (Opportunity Zone / Enterprise Zone) Workforce Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage increase in office space (sq. ft.) Percentage increase in professional employment
	4. Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage mixed income redevelopment that includes provisions for affordable housing. Identify and work with private sector developer experienced in affordable and mixed-income housing to provide new housing products in the Study Area as part of the larger Town Center development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Mix (percentage of units by housing type) Household Density (units per acre)
	5. Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage mixed income redevelopment that includes provisions for affordable housing. Consider Lifelong Communities principles in order to allow residents to remain in the community as they age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Distribution (percentage of dwellings, by household income groupings)

Table 33 Continued - Six Flags Progress Framework: A path to achieving community goals and monitoring progress

	Goals	Recommendations	Measures
Land Use	5. Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage apartment complex managers to meet with residents of housing stock to be reduced. Provide information and applications for potential relocation. Design a community involvement plan to help existing residents relocate within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Distribution (percentage of dwellings, by household income groupings)
	6. Identify opportunities for town center mixed use development within the Study Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Tax Allocation District could fund public improvements to Town Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See measures related to Goal 1 and 3 as well as transportation measures
	7. Establish a unique community identity and sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a branding study that can also be used for the wayfinding program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a (requires local survey)
	8. Facilitate the development of religious, civic, and educational institutions that provide social services for the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue faith-based redevelopment initiatives through public/private partnerships. Encourage development of educational facilities and job training centers. Provide pedestrian accessibility between campus facilities and surrounding neighborhoods. Identify sites within the Study Area that satisfy zoning regulations with regard to distance from schools and churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Training Clients Social Services Provided Unemployment Rate Level of satisfaction with social services provided (requires local survey)
	9. Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new neighborhood parks at key community focal points and gateways. Develop a network of trails in order to link recreational amenities. Provide public safety and Crime Prevention Through Design in new parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parkland and protected areas (acres or percentage of total land area)

Table 33 Continued - Six Flags Progress Framework: A path to achieving community goals and monitoring progress

	Goals	Recommendations	Measures
Land Use	10. Identify opportunities for community and regional entertainment uses in order to take advantage of the proximity to the Six Flags amusement park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop hospitality / entertainment district adjacent to Six Flags entrances. Encourage private development of a golf resort hotel on vacant land south and west of Six Flags park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of hotel rooms and visitors
	11. Increase the number of options for restaurants and community commercial.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the specific areas to be marketed and create marketing packets including available incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Goal 1
	12. Create a safer community for residents and visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop resource requirements for additional police presence and seek funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime Rate (criminal code offences per capita)
	13. Prevent conflicts between industrial and residential land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent incursion of residential land uses into industrial districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of truck traffic complaints reported.
	14. Maintain and expand Industrial Employment Centers as a major economic asset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate conflicts between industrial truck traffic and surrounding land uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial employment Industrial space (Sq. Ft.)
Transportation	15. Clearly define truck travel paths and routes (both officially designated & heavily traveled routes) develop a project to safely accommodate trucks and residential traffic (e.g. Riverside Pkwy, Access to I-20, Six Flags Parkway).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement truck route signage and include in future wayfinding program. Improve intersections adequate for truck movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of non-residential streets designed for a target speed of 25 mph Vehicle Accident Rate (number vehicle related injuries/fatalities per capita)
	16. Encourage new developments to comply with access management standards to the extent possible for Six Flags Drive from Riverside Parkway to Factory Shoals Rd and Six Flags Parkway from Riverside Parkway to Lee Industrial Blvd. Should take into consideration the multi-modal travel plan/options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the existing network of sidewalks with priority based on location of worn paths and high pedestrian traffic routes. Develop multiuse trail to connect future potential green spaces to proposed Cobb trail and bicycle plan. Identify potential perpetual maintenance efforts of sidewalks, trains, and paths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of sidewalks (percentage of streets with sidewalks on both sides – length of streets with sidewalks on both side/total length) OR number of intersections per square mile See Mode Share (Goal 9) – but by age – if data are available

Table 33 Continued - Six Flags Progress Framework: A path to achieving community goals and monitoring progress

	Goals	Recommendations	Measures
Transportation	17. Encourage involvement of local schools with the Safe Routes to School program and define related areas and paths within the study area. (Need coordination with areas outside of the study area.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of sufficient lighting for safe pedestrian travel as well as to better allow drivers to identify pedestrians at night. Adequate lighting should be installed in the study area with heavy concentration at highly utilizes areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of non-residential streets designed for a target speed of 25 mph • Vehicle Accident Rate (number vehicle related injuries/fatalities per capita) • Availability of sidewalks (percentage of streets with sidewalks on both sides – length of streets with sidewalks on both side/total length) OR number of intersections per square mile • See Mode Share (Goal 9) – but by age – if data are available
	18. Develop and prioritize a network of paths for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians by interconnecting existing sidewalks and introducing new paths/sidewalks/trails for major routes & corridors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of gateway nodes - The identified intersections should be analyzed to determine the appropriate configuration which may be upgrading lanes and signals or roundabout installations. • Installation of wayfinding signage for truck routes as well as community identification 	
	19. Identify partnerships and other methods for providing transportation options for seniors, children and students within the study area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community trolley service • Complete the existing network of sidewalks with priority based on location of worn paths and high pedestrian traffic routes 	
	20. Identify opportunities to connect residents to job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the existing bus route and stops to compensate for stops and destinations that are now excluded due to the previously terminated routes • Reinstate public transportation services in the study area 	

Table 33 Continued - Six Flags Progress Framework: A path to achieving community goals and monitoring progress

	Goals	Recommendations	Measures
Economic Development	21. Attract office jobs in regionally competitive industries such as professional and technical services, health care, and educational services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify existing buildings within the Study Area suitable for office use• Identify possible sites along Six Flags Drive suitable for a major user-driven office project• Raise awareness among state-level economic development officials regarding the desirability of a Six Flags site for office location/expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of jobs within 3 miles of the study area center(s)• Dwelling to Job Ratio within ½ mile of the study area center(s)• See Crime Rate (Goal 10)
	22. Retain and expand industrial employment in existing firms and encourage new industrial businesses by ensuring a continued competitive environment (transportation access, access to workforce, low cost of doing business).		
	23. Provide workforce opportunities by developing partnerships between education/workforce development entities and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify workforce skill gaps needed to meet Six Flags company needs• Provide workforce training to close skill gaps• Provide job training in job search skills, resume and interview skills• Work with employers to get job postings• Provide job matching services, employee pre-screening and other services to employers	
	24. Attract retail jobs, which provide entry-level jobs for those without work experience, part time employment for students, seniors and others not desiring full time work, and some career-track opportunities through management training programs.		
	25. Create a safer community for businesses, employees and customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify sites within the Study Area that satisfy zoning regulations with regard to distance from schools and churches	

5.1 LIFELONG COMMUNITIES REVISITED

Currently, this study area has some of the characteristics of a community where residents can choose to age in place. Many of the recommendations, when implemented, will enhance this opportunity.

The improvements that are anticipated to be seen most visibly during the next five year period will include addressing the following Lifelong Community Principles:

Streets that are welcoming and unintimidating, Traffic calming strategies that make the environment feel safe, walkable sidewalks, crossable streets, covered bus stops with seating, diversity of housing, reinforcement of gathering places, improved access to community rooms, opportunities for meaningful volunteer activities, walkable destinations, neighborhood access to healthy food and wayfinding signage.



APPENDIX



APPENDIX A: Summary of Key Findings from Previous Studies

LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

The following studies were reviewed for information about project recommendations in the Six Flags LCI study area.

Walkable Community Workshop, Six Flags Drive: From Factory Shoals Road to Riverside Parkway, prepared by Cobb County Department of Transportation, September 2005

There were three projects identified on Six Flags Drive from this study:

- Sidewalks and 6 Pedestrian Refuge Islands – Short term objective
- Multi-Use Trail – Long tem objective
- Pocket Parks tied into transit stops – Long term objective

Six Flags Drive Corridor Study prepared by Cobb Community Development Agency, 2006

The citizen recommendations included the following (page 7):

- “...mixed used development that provides both a density-comparable alternative to the existing apartment complexes along the corridor...”
- “...viable commercial/retail services...”
- “...more green space along the corridor and to create opportunities for such by incorporating it into pocket parks, bus stops and other streetscape improvements.”

The staff identified several short- and long-term goals needed to implement the concept plan based on the citizen surveys (pages 22-25):

- Short Term:
 - “Increase and enhance the presence of public safety forces...”
 - “Transform the Six Flags Drive Corridor into an economically vibrant, aesthetically pleasing built- and natural-environment...”
 - “Actively reach out to area citizens and area stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making...”
 - “Create a community where people of various cultural, racial and economic backgrounds, can feel comfortable living and working in”
- Long Term:
 - “Develop the Six Flags Drive area into a community that integrates a transportation system by providing multi-modal travel options in a safe, efficient manner...” This includes the following:



- “Develop an access management plan for the corridor that ties-in directly with any plans for a raised median”

A steering committee was formed to assist with this study and they had five meetings beginning in April 2006. In the May 2006 meeting the committee was briefed by Mr. Larry Stokes (Cobb County DOT) on some of the pending and approved transportation improvements to the corridor (Appendix C):

- “Because the corridor demonstrated the 2nd-heaviest ridership within the Cobb County Transit (CCT) system, the organization is considering increasing service frequency to many routes within the corridor.
- \$1 million in sidewalk improvements has been awarded for sidewalk installation on the north side of Six Flags Drive through a Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant.
- Lane widening in the area will be completed by 2010.
- The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) is considering constructing an Xpress Bus park-and-ride near Riverside Parkway at the old Sam’s Club location and/or near Blairs Bridge Road.
- The community could petition the CDOT for SPLOST funds to pay for other projects such as multi-use trails on area roadways.
- I-20 is a candidate for construction of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes.”

Most of the transportation recommendations from this plan have not been implemented; although a majority of the land use recommendations have been implemented. Widening of I-20 within this study area is included under GDOT’s plans but there currently are no short term plans for HOV designation.

Western Gateway Vision Plan, prepared by Macauley + Schmit, November 2010

This study examined made recommendations within the study area mainly based on zoning and land use challenges. The study divided the study area into two Districts – The “Town Center” area along Six Flags Drive and the “Entertainment District” south of Interstate 20 between Six Flags Over Georgia and Word of Faith Family Church. (Page 10)

- It was recommended that a series of actions (called the “big bang”) be put in place concurrently to use public infrastructure investments to leverage mixed use redevelopment at key activity centers (Page 10)
 - Create a Town Center along Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals Road on the west and Six Flags Parkway on the east.
 - Create a mixed use entertainment and recreation district along Six Flags Parkway south of Interstate 20.
- “Georgia DOT has long term plans for providing HOV lanes through these two interchanges.” (Referencing the two exits where the Six Flags Corridor can be accessed from Interstate 20) (Page 15)
- Recommended Actions include the following:
 - “Action 12 – Develop Six Flags Drive into a beautiful tree lined boulevard that encourages pedestrian activity on the street.” (Page 30)
 - “Action 15 – Improve the traffic flow at the intersection of Lee Industrial and Six Flags Parkway that will provide a southern gateway into Six flags Drive” (Page 31)



- “Action 19 – The County should consider the use of a form-based code to govern land use and building designs in the Town Center.
- “Action 20 – Incorporate a trolley system to move between the Town Center and the Entertainment District.” (Page 32)
- “Action 22 – Support the extension of the SPLOST with funds targeted toward transportation improvements” (Page 32)
- *“Action 30 – Apply for Livable Centers Initiative funding for transportation improvements. Funds can be used to develop boulevard along Six Flags Drive from Riverside Parkway to Flat Shoals Road.” (Page 33)*
- Next Steps identified on (Page 35)
 - “1. Begin discussions with Six Flags Over Georgia (SFOG) and Word of Faith Family Worship Cathedral (WOF) to find common ground and ways to work together to create an implementable market-oriented plan for the proposed Entertainment and Recreation node and the WOF campus, and to address the surface parking issues and transportation issues for the area south of I-20. We believe there are huge wins in this for SFOG, WOF, the community and the County as well as other area stakeholders.*
 - 2. Plan the Western Gateway Town Center, midway between I-20 and Factory Shoals Road on Six Flags Drive, to create a mixed-use/mixed-income village including a heavy focus on job creation by planning a higher education/health/ technology campus around the proposed Town Center. Although this is referred to as the Town Center area it should also include all the land parcels on both sides of Six Flags Drive from I-20 to Factory Shoals Road...”*

From this study, there have been a couple of projects/recommendations implemented and/or currently being planned. There are current plans to improve the intersection of Six Flags Drives at Lee Industrial Boulevard. This project is included in the Cobb county 2011 SPLOST but an estimated construction completion date has yet to be determined. Additionally, the county has followed through with the LCI process and discussions with the Six Flags Over Georgia and Word of Faith Family Worship Cathedral have begun.

South Cobb Implementation Strategy 2012, prepared by Cobb County Government, January 2012

- Concentrating in two areas:
 - Mixed use redevelopment along Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals Road and the I-20 Interchange referred to as the Six Flags Drive Node (Page 15)
 - Establish Identity node on Six Flags Drive with catalyst redevelopment project.
 1. Acquire foreclosed or distressed properties for redevelopment.
 2. Use land banking to assemble and hold property for redevelopment.
 - Three main area functions were identified as basic requirements for the transportation infrastructure to meet the community needs:
 - “1. Ensure continued vehicular transportation mobility;



- 2. Improve multimodal accessibility; and
- 3. Implement context sensitive design solutions.” (Page 18)
- “... current and projected congestion on Six Flags Drive is minimal, it is important to develop a transportation design that provides better access for the other uses in the corridor (pedestrian, bicycle, and transit). This should include sidewalks on both sides of the road and bicycle lanes.” (Page 20)
- In reference to the intersection of Six Flags Drive & Lee Industrial Pkwy – “Improvements will need to be made to ensure that this intersection functions better for freight traffic, including the addition of left turn lanes with longer cuing lengths, larger turning radii, and an investigation to study the need for full signalization.” (Page 20)
- Mixed Use entertainment district south of I-20 adjacent to the Six Flags Over Georgia Amusement Park (Page 21)
 - “...starts with consolidating parking into a series of parking decks that will provide...sufficient parking and additional developable land to create a focal point in the center of the Entertainment District.” (Page 21)
 - Two main area functions were identified as basic requirements for the transportation infrastructure to meet the community needs:
 - “Improve truck traffic and travel to I-20 and ensure pedestrian safety Ensure continued vehicular transportation mobility and aesthetic improvements to make the Entertainment District successful.” (Page 23)
 - Riverside Parkway is suggested to become the designated truck route for access to Interstate 20. “This will mean...additional lane width, a paved shoulder, curb, gutter, sidewalks, and improving sight distance.” (Page 23)
 - Within the “entertainments District” of the study area, transportation improvements should include “multi-modal and context sensitive accommodations including the following:
 - 1. “...improvements to the street grid should be made to reduce block lengths, which will improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation.” (page 23)
 - 2. “ten foot lane widths; curb, gutter, and sidewalks on both sides of the road; bicycle lanes; improved pedestrian street crossings; improvements to the landscape median; street trees; and decorative pedestrian scale lighting” (Page 23)
- Park and Nature Center adjacent to the proposed Six Flags Entertainment district (Page 23)
 - Establish urban park adjacent to Entertainment District to serve as signature greenspace identity node.
 - Establish nature center south of Six Flags Over Georgia in order to provide recreational activities supportive of tourism and hospitality.
- Some of the projects identified include but are not limited to the following:
 - 2015 - Implement improved gateway markers and ensure maintenance through community partnerships (Page 49)
 - 2016 - Retrofit Six Flags Drive into a tree lined Boulevard from Blairs Bridge Road to Six Flags Parkway (Page 49)
 - 2015 - Redesign the Lee Industrial and Six Flags Parkway Intersection to improve truck traffic flow and serve as a southern gateway into the corridor (Page 49)



- 2021 - Improve Six Flags Parkway between Riverside Parkway and Lee Industrial Boulevard to incorporate streetscapes and improved pedestrian mobility (Page 49)
- 2012 - Six Flags Drive intersection Improvements (Page 54)
- 2012 - Six Flags Drive safety and operational improvements (Page 54)

Overall there were a few projects from previous studies that were highlighted in the South Cobb Implementation Strategy Study as “Area Accomplishments” (Transportation, Page 25):

- Six Flags Drive sidewalks (north side) Blair Bridge Rd to Silverton Trail
 - Completed 2/2009
- Sidewalks & Pedestrian Crossings (Six Flags Dr. Factory Shoals Rd to I-20/Riverside Pkwy)
 - Currently underway, Final Construction Plans pending GDOT approval
- Implement HAWK signal to improve pedestrian mobility near high volume transit stops
 - Currently underway, Grant has been obtained secured and concept plan is pending approval with GDOT.
- Factory Shoals Road sidewalks.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The following studies were reviewed for information about project recommendations in the Six Flags LCI study area.

Six Flags Drive Corridor Study prepared by Cobb Community Development Agency, 2006

This study focused on transportation and land use issues, but also included analysis and recommendations related to economic development. The study also included a market study for residential development. Due to significant changes in the residential housing market since 2006, the amount of support for has changed significantly. Nonetheless, the study reflects the goals of diversifying housing types and price ranges, a theme which has been carried forward in this LCI analysis.

The Six Flags Drive Corridor Study identifies the goal, “Transform the Six Flags Corridor into an economically vibrant, aesthetically pleasing built- and natural-environment that appeals to a wide variety of people.” Two of the recommendations set forth for achieving this goal are relevant to economic development. The first is to conduct a market study to evaluate the potential for new development and investment in the community. That has been done as part of this LCI study. The second is to “increase purchasing power in the area by providing more housing opportunities for middle-to-high income households, yet maintain a supply of lower-income housing in the area as well”. This principle was incorporated into the LCI recommendations.



Western Gateway Vision Plan, prepared by Macauley + Schmit, November 2010

This study, described in the transportation section, included information, themes and concepts that influenced (and were ultimately incorporated into) the economic development research and recommendations for this LCI study.

- The study identifies financing mechanisms for economic development (“CAPITAL – The Economics of Community) including Tax Allocation Districts, Community Improvement Districts, Enterprise Zones, Tax Credits (New Market Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Opportunity Zone tax credits), and sources of grant funds including the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities, Communities and Promise Neighborhood Grants, US Department of Justice “Weed and Seed” program, Community Development Block Grants (HUD), State of Georgia Regional Economic Business Assistance Grants, and Atlanta Regional Commission Planning Grants.
- Recommended Actions related to economic development that most influenced the recommendations of the LCI study include the following:
 - Create a Town Center along Six Flags Drive between Factory Shoals Drive on the west and Six Flags Parkway on the east (page 25).
 - Develop a comprehensive “Cradle to College” education model (Action 3, page 29).
 - Establish a police and human services center along Six Flags Drive to address safety and resident support (Action 7, page 29).
 - Establish a Tax Allocation District in the Six Flags Corridor (Action 21, page 32).
 - Incorporate New Market Tax Credits into financing availability based on expected low income designation for census tract (Action 31, page 33).
- A number of economic development-oriented recommended actions have already been implemented, including the following:
 - Apply to the State of Georgia for an Opportunity Zone designation (Action 28, page 33)
 - Apply for Livable Centers Initiative funding for transportation improvements (Action 30)

South Cobb Implementation Strategy 2012, prepared by Cobb County Government, January 2012

This policy and implementation document contains a number of themes and concepts that influenced the economic development research and recommendations of this LCI Study, as follows:

- Envisions a Mixed-use Town Center that would integrate mixed-income housing and supporting retail, surrounded by office, educational and civic uses.
- Recommends using NSP3 funds, the South Cobb Redevelopment Authority and the Six Flags Community Task Force, Cobb County, and Cobb CDBG program, in concert with local charitable organizations, to “change the existing dynamics” and “activate the redevelopment of this area”.
- Recommends removing substandard housing units, reducing the overall number of units, particularly rental units.



New and Previously Identified Project Goals

New or Previously Identified		Goals
Land Use	Previously Identified	26. Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.
	Previously Identified	27. Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complex properties along Six Flags Drive.
	New	28. Identify opportunities for professional employment within the Study Area.
	New	29. Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth.
	Previously Identified	30. Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.
	Previously Identified	31. Identify opportunities for town center mixed use development within the Study Area.
	Previously Identified	32. Establish a unique community identity and sense of place.
	New	33. Facilitate the development of religious, civic, and educational institutions that provide social services for the community.
	New	34. Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.
	Previously Identified	35. Identify opportunities for community and regional entertainment uses in order to take advantage of the proximity to the Six Flags amusement park.
	New	36. Increase the number of options for restaurants and community commercial.
	Previously Identified	37. Create a safer community for residents and visitors.
	New	38. Prevent conflicts between industrial and residential land uses.
	New	39. Maintain and expand Industrial Employment Centers as a major economic asset.
Transportation	New	40. Clearly define truck travel paths and routes (both officially designated & heavily traveled routes) develop a project to safely accommodate trucks and residential traffic (e.g. Riverside Pkwy, Access to I-20, Six Flags Parkway).
	New	41. Encourage new developments to comply with access management standards to the extent possible for Six Flags Drive from Riverside Parkway to Factory Shoals Rd and Six Flags Parkway from Riverside Parkway to Lee Industrial Blvd. Should take into consideration the multi-modal travel plan/options.
	Previously Identified	42. Encourage involvement of local schools with the Safe Routes to School program and define related areas and paths within the study area. (Need coordination with areas outside of the study area.)
	Previously Identified	43. Develop and prioritize a network of paths for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians by interconnecting existing sidewalks and introducing new paths/sidewalks/trails for major routes & corridors.



New or Previously Identified		Goals
Economic Development	Previously Identified	44. Identify partnerships and other methods for providing transportation options for seniors, children and students within the study area.
	New	45. Identify opportunities to connect residents to job opportunities
	New	46. Attract office jobs in regionally competitive industries such as professional and technical services, health care, and educational services.
	New	47. Retain and expand industrial employment in existing firms and encourage new industrial businesses by ensuring a continued competitive environment (transportation access, access to workforce, low cost of doing business).
	New	48. Provide workforce opportunities by developing partnerships between education/workforce development entities and businesses.
	New	49. Attract retail jobs, which provide entry-level jobs for those without work experience, part time employment for students, seniors and others not desiring full time work, and some career-track opportunities through management training programs.
	Previously Identified	50. Create a safer community for businesses, employees and customers.



APPENDIX B: Projections

PROJECTIONS FOR POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT AND DEMAND FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL SPACE

Population Projections for Six Flags Study Area

	Total Population	Change in Population	Av. Annual Growth Rate
2010	5,309	--	--
2015	5,440	131	0.5%
2020	5,574	134	0.5%
2025	5,627	54	0.2%
2030	5,682	54	0.2%
2035	5,737	55	0.2%
2040	5,793	56	0.2%

Note: Six Flags Study Area includes 56% of Census Tract 031310 and 27% of Tract 031311 based on distribution of land area.

Source: ARC 2040 Projections with EDR Group calculations.

Employment Projections for Six Flags Study Area

	Total Employment	Change in Total Jobs	Av. Annual Growth Rate
2010	3,117	--	--
2015	3,786	669	4.0%
2020	4,780	993	4.8%
2025	5,155	376	1.5%
2030	5,587	432	1.6%
2035	6,012	424	1.5%
2040	6,490	478	1.5%

Note: Six Flags Study Area includes 56% of Census Tract 031310 and 27% of Tract 031311 based on distribution of land area.

Source: ARC 2040 Projections with EDR Group calculations.



Non-Residential Space Projections for Six Flags Study Area

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF SPACE							
Retail (1)	1,010	1,171	1,372	1,485	1,608	1,769	1,948
Office (2)	696	1,045	1,658	1,903	2,187	2,414	2,669
Industrial (3)	1,412	1,570	1,750	1,768	1,792	1,828	1,873

SPACE NEEDS BY TYPE OF SPACE (SQ.FT.) (4)

	<u>Sq.Ft./ Employee (5)</u>							
Retail	450	454,400	526,800	617,500	668,300	723,800	796,200	876,400
Office	300	208,700	313,600	497,400	570,800	656,100	724,200	800,700
Industrial	1,500	2,117,700	2,355,500	2,624,600	2,651,700	2,687,700	2,742,100	2,809,700

NEW DEMAND FOR SPACE BY TYPE (SQ.FT.) (4)

Retail	72,400	90,700	50,800	55,500	72,400	80,200
Office	104,900	183,800	73,400	85,300	68,100	76,500
Industrial	237,900	269,100	27,100	36,000	54,400	67,600

Note: Six Flags Study Area includes 56% of Census Tract 031310 and 27% of Tract 031311 based on distribution of land area.

(1) Retail space users include employment in retail trade, arts/entertainment, food/accommodation, and other services.

(2) Office space users include employment in utilities, information, finance, real estate, professional/technical, management, administrative/waste, educational, health/social assistance, and public administration.

(3) Industrial includes employment in construction, wholesale trade, and transportation/warehousing.

(4) Values rounded to the thousands to avoid false precision.

(5) Assumption of employees per square foot by type of space based on published sources such as Planning and Design Criteria (DeChiara), revised by observed employment densities in similar communities.

Source: ARC 2040 Projections with EDR Group calculations.



Population and Housing 2010-2040, LCI Study Area

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	4,946	5,270	5,593	5,917	6,240	6,564	6,887
Households	1,795	1,890	1,985	2,080	2,175	2,270	2,365
Housing Units	2,517	2,829	3,140	3,452	3,763	4,075	4,386

Source: Robert and Company Projections, US Census 2000-2010, ESRI Business Analyst

Housing by Type 2010, LCI Study Area

Total housing units	1-unit, detached	1-unit, attached	2 units	3 or 4 units	5 to 9 units	10 to 19 units	20 or more units	Mobile home
2,517	720	245	33	96	254	591	364	214

Source: Estimate by Robert and Company based on 2010 Census, American Communities Survey 2006-2010



APPENDIX C: Public Meeting Handouts and Comment Forms



Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study



WHAT IS THE SIX FLAGS LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDY?

The Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study will focus on finding ways to improve transportation infrastructure including walking/ bicycling, pedestrian, transit and freight movement in the area surrounding Six Flags Drive. In addition to improving mobility in the Six Flags area, the LCI will build off previous planning efforts ensuring consistency. The LCI study will work to encourage viable land use planning and transportation infrastructure, as well as energize economic development for the benefit of those who live, work and engage in other activities within the study area.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Everyone can get involved—the study will provide opportunities to inform, educate and engage all interested parties from the beginning to the end of the project. The community is encouraged to work together, to look for ways to revitalize the study area while protecting existing neighborhoods, and attracting new housing, jobs, and services. Who should participate?

- Local elected officials
- Residents (including youth and seniors)
- Property Owners
- Business Owners
- Institutions (Cobb County Schools, Churches, Educational Institutions)
- Service Providers

FACT SHEET

WHO IS THE STUDY'S SPONSOR?

This study is funded by an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Grant and managed by Cobb County Department of Transportation, with support from the Cobb County Community Development Agency and the Cobb County Office of Economic Development.

PROJECT SCHEDULE SUMMARY

Kick-Off Meeting

October 13, 2011 6pm—8pm
South Cobb Recreation Center
875 Six Flags Drive
Austell, GA 30168

Visioning Public Meeting


November

Draft Recommendations

January

Open House

February—March



For more information about the project, you can access the following:

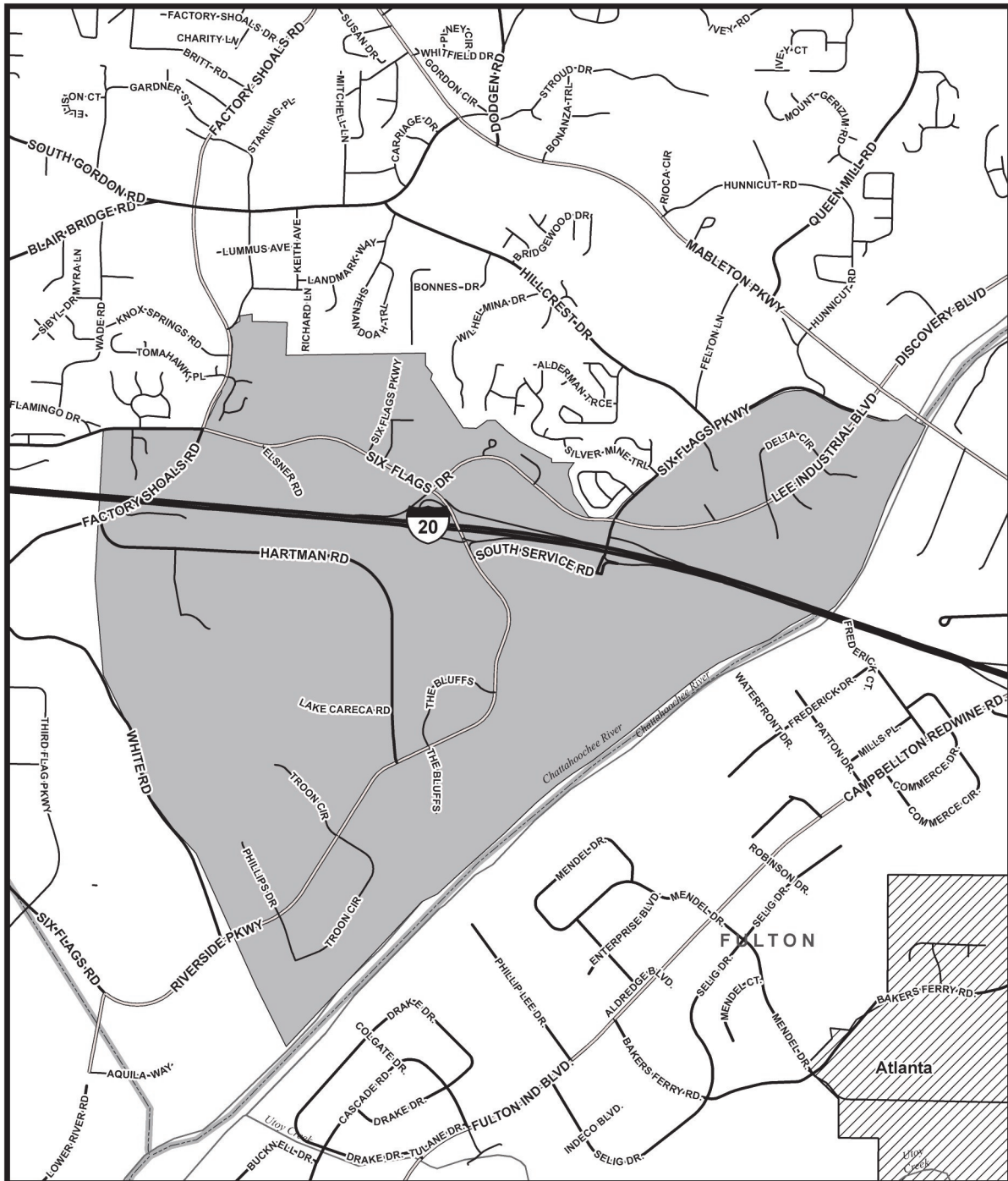
Laraine A. Vance,
Planning Division Manager
Cobb County Department of
Transportation

Phone: (770) 528-1679

Email: planning@cobbcounty.org

www.dot.cobbcountyga.gov

Six Flags LCI Project Study Area



SEPTEMBER 27, 2011



The “HAWK” Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at Six Flags Drive

PROJECT BENEFITS

- HAWK beacons are intended to aid pedestrians crossing streets with heavy traffic volumes.
- Studies have shown a high compliance rate by motorists with HAWK beacons at pedestrian crossings.
- HAWK beacons are designed for use in locations that do not meet traffic engineering standards for a conventional signal on streets with heavy, high-speed traffic volumes.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

- Construction of Cobb County’s first HAWK beacon will begin Winter 2012 with completion in Spring 2012.

Cobb County places a high priority on pedestrian safety. For this reason the County is installing its first pedestrian hybrid beacon or “HAWK” beacon at Six Flags Drive near Cobb Community Transit’s (CCT) Route 30 bus stop. “HAWK” is an acronym for High intensity Activated crossWalk.

For the pedestrian, the HAWK works similar to any button-activated traffic signal. Its stops traffic to allow pedestrians to safely cross the road. The biggest difference, however, is for the driver; **the HAWK beacon remains dark** for traffic unless a pedestrian activates the push-button; no lights remain on or are flashing.

When the pedestrian presses the button, approaching drivers will see a FLASHING YELLOW for a few seconds, indicating to reduce speed and prepare to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

The FLASHING YELLOW is followed by a STEADY YELLOW then by a STEADY RED, requiring motorists to STOP at the crosswalk stop line. At this time, pedestrians receives a WALK indication on the countdown timer.



Cobb County...Expect the Best!

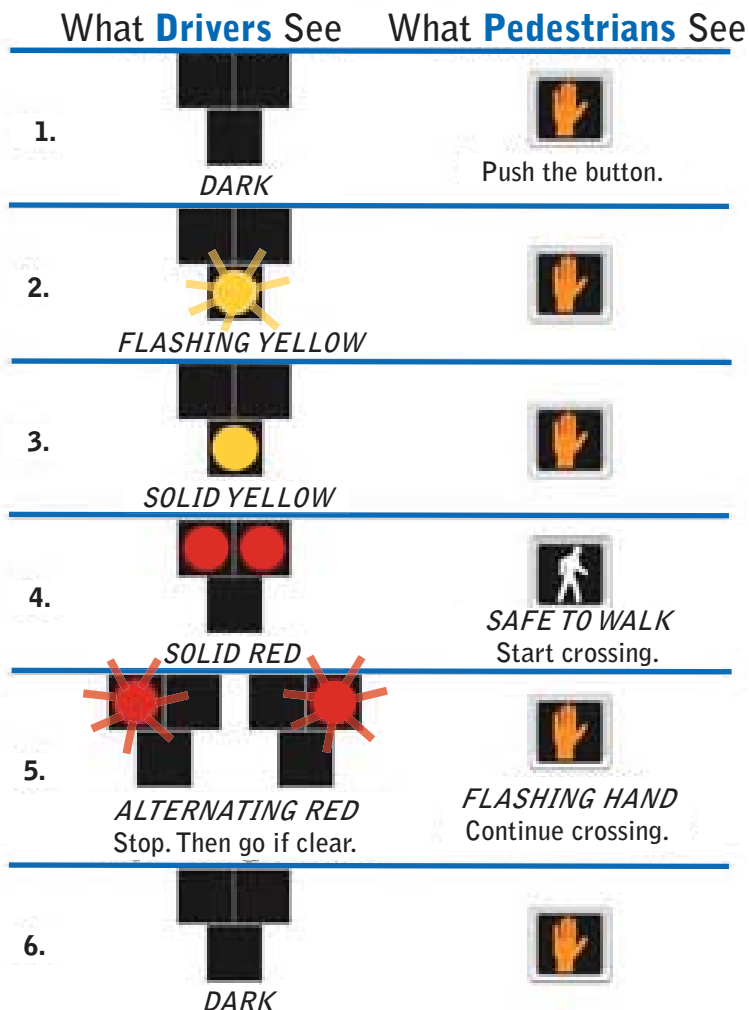
Location map of Cobb County’s HAWK beacon and illustration of the HAWK signal sequence on reverse

The “HAWK” Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon



How does a *HAWK* operate?

While slightly different in appearance, a **HAWK Beacon** operates much like a conventional signal in that it stops traffic flow.



The HAWK remains DARK for traffic until activated. While the HAWK is DARK, traffic can continue through without stopping.

When a pedestrian presses the cross-button, approaching drivers see a FLASHING YELLOW signal, indicating the beacon has been activated.

The flashing yellow then changes to a SOLID YELLOW signal, indicating that motorists should reduce speed and be prepared to stop.

The solid yellow is followed by double SOLID RED signals, requiring drivers to stop and allowing pedestrians to cross the road safely.

The double solid red signals are followed by alternating FLASHING RED signals. During this time, vehicles may continue through the HAWK beacon after coming to a complete stop once pedestrians have finished crossing.

The HAWK will then go dark until activated again.

Pedestrian compliance is important: the HAWK beacon will work only when the pedestrians press the button. Drivers need to remember that a “dark” HAWK beacon is not a guarantee there are no pedestrians attempting to cross. Drivers can be certain, however, a red or yellow lights flashing means a pedestrian is wanting to cross.

Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHO IS THE STUDY'S SPONSOR?

This study is funded by an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Grant and managed by Cobb County Department of Transportation, with support from the Cobb County Community Development Agency and the Cobb County Office of Economic Development.

WHEN CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDY?

Study Kick-Off Meeting—October 13, 2011 6pm—8pm

WHERE IS THE MEETING?

South Cobb Recreation Center
875 Six Flags Drive
Austell, GA 30168

WHAT IS THE SIX FLAGS LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDY?

The Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study will focus on finding ways to improve transportation infrastructure including walking/ bicycling, pedestrian, transit and freight movement in the area surrounding Six Flags Drive. In addition to improving mobility in the Six Flags area, the LCI will build off previous planning efforts ensuring consistency.

The LCI study will work to encourage viable land use planning and transportation infrastructure, as well as energize economic development for the benefit of those who live, work and engage in other activities within the study area.



Laraine A. Vance, Planning Division Manager, Cobb County Department of Transportation

Tel 770.528.1679 Email planning@cobbcounty.org www.dot.cobbcountyga.gov



Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study

NEXT MEETING

**Six Flags LCI Study
Visioning Public Meeting
November 17th, 2011
6:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.**

**(Special presentation begins
at 6:15pm)**

**South Cobb Recreation Center
875 Six Flags Drive
Austell, GA 30168**

For more information contact
Laraine A. Vance,
Planning Division Manager
Cobb County Department of
Transportation
Phone: (770) 528-1679

Visit us on Facebook:
Six Flags Livable Centers
Initiative

Help shape the vision for transportation infrastructure improvements and land use along Six Flags Drive! Provide your input to the Cobb County Department of Transportation on November 17 between 6 PM and 8 PM at the South Cobb Recreation Center, 875 Six Flags Drive, Austell, GA 30168

Special Presentation at 6:15 PM will provide the project overview, study area analysis, summary of public comments followed by a series of interactive exercises to discuss how the area should develop over time.

The Six Flags LCI Study is funded by an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Grant and Managed by the Cobb County Department of Transportation with support from the Cobb County Community Development Agency and the Cobb County Office of Economic Development.



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Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHO IS THE STUDY'S SPONSOR?

This study is funded by an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Grant and managed by Cobb County Department of Transportation, with support from the Cobb County Community Development Agency and the Cobb County Office of Economic Development.

WHEN CAN YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDY?

Local Community Meeting—
January 12, 2012 6pm—8pm

WHERE IS THE MEETING?

Kingsley Village Apartments
595 Six Flags Drive
Austell, GA 30168

WHAT IS THE SIX FLAGS LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDY?

The Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study will focus on finding ways to improve transportation infrastructure including walking/bicycling, pedestrian, transit and freight movement in the area surrounding Six Flags Drive. In addition to improving mobility in the Six Flags area, the LCI will build off previous planning efforts ensuring consistency.

The LCI study will work to encourage viable land use planning and transportation infrastructure, as well as energize economic development for the benefit of those who live, work and engage in other activities within the study area.



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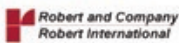


Cobb County...Expect the Best!



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Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study

NEXT MEETING

Six Flags LCI Study Recommendations Public Meeting

Thursday, February 2, 2012
6:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.
(Formal presentation begins at
6:15pm)

**South Cobb Recreation
Center**
875 Six Flags Drive
Austell, GA 30168

Light snacks provided
Children are welcomed to attend

RSVP by January 23, 2012 at
planning@cobbcounty.org or
770.528.1679

Over the last four months, Cobb County Department of Transportation has heard the concerns of community residents, property owners, businesses and institutions with a vested interest in the revitalization of Six Flags Drive. The Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative planning team has taken the development, infrastructure, employment and economic development issues, incorporated the community's vision along with the market realities and developed a comprehensive revitalization for the area.

On February 2, 2012 at 6:00p.m. – 8:00p.m. at the Cobb County Recreation Center, the recommendations will be presented to the general public for comment.

Your input is vital!

The Six Flags LCI Study is funded by an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Grant and Managed by the Cobb County Department of Transportation with support from the Cobb County Community Development Agency and the Cobb County Office of Economic Development.

For more information contact Laraine A. Vance, Planning Division Manager, Cobb County Department of Transportation

Tel 770.528.1679 Email planning@cobbcounty.org www.dot.cobbcountyga.gov Facebook: Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative

Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study

Where are the worst traffic conditions and when do they occur?

Where would you like to travel without an automobile?

What are the vehicular safety issues?

Where are there pedestrian safety issues?

Where are there bicycling safety issues?

Do you currently use transit? Where do you start and end?

Do you have any issues using transit?

Are there any streets you typically avoid using? Why?

***Your Ideas and
Opinions Matter***



Six Flags Livable Centers Initiative Study, Page 2

Which streets do you consider high priority? Why?

Which intersections need the most improvement?

Are there places where signage needs to be improved?
Where? Why?

Is there a difference in traffic safety between the daytime
and the nighttime?

What are the differences during Six Flags season?

Are there places in the study area where truck traffic is an issue? Where? When?

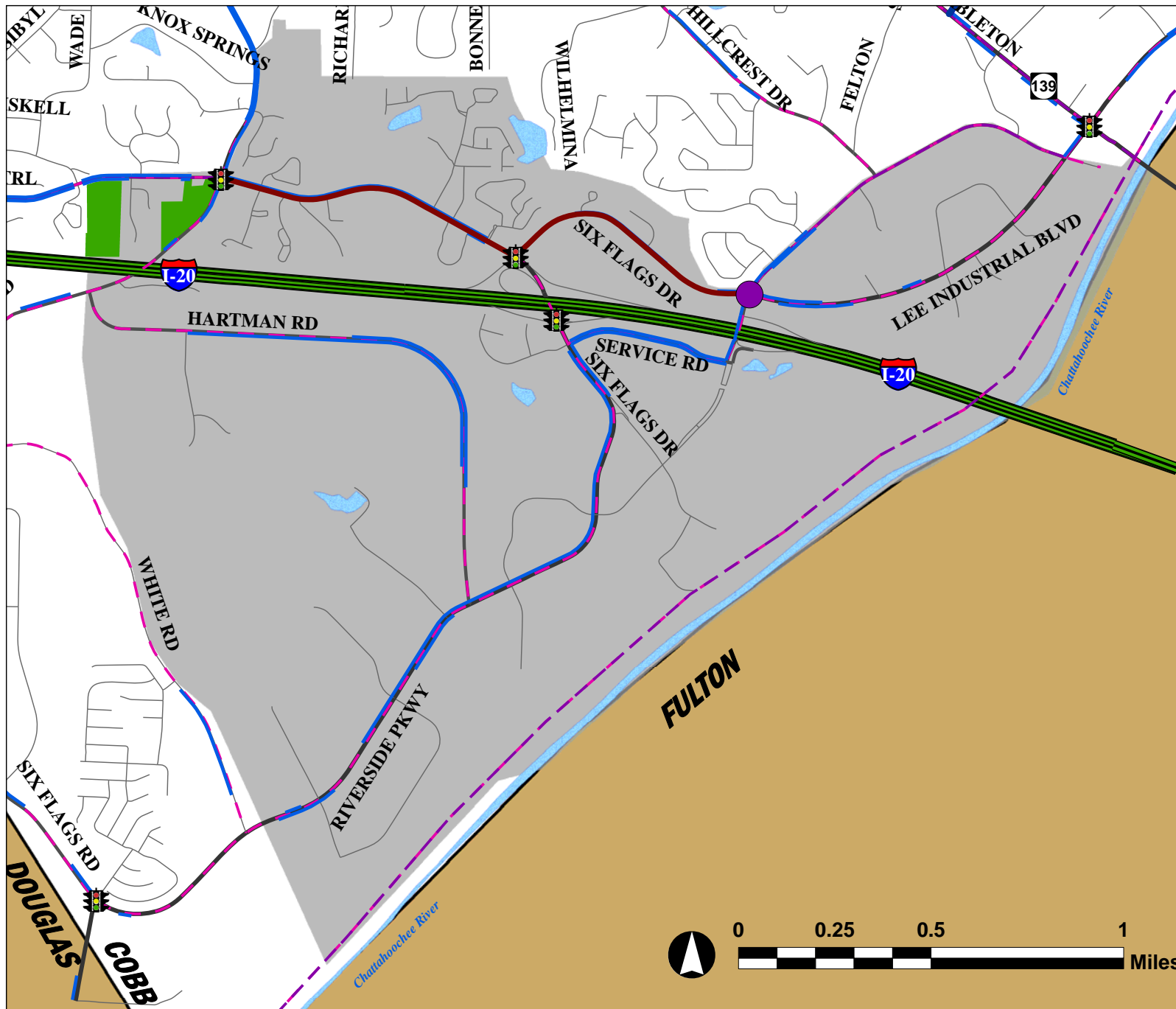
Are there any other traffic related issues?

What is the single most important transportation improvement
for this area? Why?

What else do you want us to know?

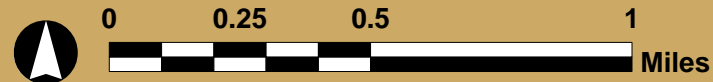
Six Flags LCI - Transportation Basemap

Please help us to identify any roadway related issues with respect to traffic conditions, safety, trucks, pedestrians or bicycles concerns.




Legend


- Cobb Signals
- 2011 SPLOST Projects
- 2011 SPLOST Tier 1 Lines
- Existing Sidewalks
- Cobb Trail Plan
- Bicycle & Ped. Imp. Plan
- Lakes & Ponds
- Parks
- Six Flags LCI Study Area
- Roads**
 - Local Roads
 - Interstate
 - Arterial
 - Major




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	<p>Previous studies have established goals for the area and the County has many initiatives underway to begin addressing those. The LCI study area is more comprehensive and the Atlanta Regional Commission process encourages validation of all goals. This activity is to get your input on both the previously stated goals and some new ones to ensure that the plan responds to the community vision.</p>		
Goal previously identified or New Goal		Rank the goals within each topic. 1 is most important goal.	Comments or Ideas
	Land Use		
Previously identified	Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complex properties along Six Flags Drive.		
Previously identified	Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.		
Previously identified	Identify opportunities for town center mixed use development within the Study Area.		
Previously identified	Establish a unique community identity and sense of place.		
Previously identified	Identify opportunities for community and regional entertainment uses in order to take advantage of the proximity to the Six Flags amusement park.		
Previously identified	Create a safer community for residents and visitors		
New	Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.		
New	Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth.		
New	Promote pedestrian-oriented development along Six Flags Drive.		
New	Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.		
New	If you have one or more, you can add your own goal(s):		

Goal previously identified or New Goal		Rank the goals within each topic. 1 is most important goal.	Comments or Ideas
	Economic Development		
Previously identified	Retain industrial employment in existing firms by ensuring a continued competitive environment (transportation access, access to workforce, low cost of doing business).		
Previously identified	Develop or improve tools to attract new businesses		
New	Attract office jobs in regionally competitive industries such as professional and technical services, health care, and educational services		
New	Provide workforce opportunities by developing partnerships between schools and businesses.		
New	Attract retail jobs, which provide entry-level jobs for those without work experience, part time employment for students, seniors and others not desiring full time work and some career-track		
New	Create a safer community for businesses, employees and customers		
New	If you have one or more, you can add your own goal(s):		

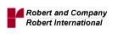
Goal previously identified or New Goal		Rank the goals within each topic. 1 is most important goal.	Comments or Ideas
	Transportation		
Previously identified	Build upon Cobb County's relationship with Safe Routes to School program and define related areas and paths within the study area. (Need coordination with areas outside of the study area.)		
Previously identified	Develop and prioritize a network of paths for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians by interconnecting existing sidewalks and introducing new paths/sidewalks/trails for major routes & corridors. This includes an assessment of safety issue		
Previously identified	Identify partnerships and other methods for providing transportation options for seniors, children and students within the study area.		
New	Safely accommodate trucks and residential traffic while ensuring mobility for all modes of transportation.		
New	Develop an access management guidelines for major corridors while taking into consideration the multi-modal travel plans/options.		
New	If you have one or more, you can add your own goal(s):		

	<p>Previous studies have established goals for the area and the County has many initiatives underway to begin addressing those . The LCI study area is more comprehensive and the Atlanta Regional Commission process encourages validation of all goals. This activity is to get your input on both the previously stated goals and some new ones to ensure that the plan responds to the community vision.</p>		
Goal previously identified or New Goal		Pick your top three goals for the whole project (ignore the categories)	Comments or Ideas
	Land Use		
Previously identified	Encourage the redevelopment of older apartment complex properties along Six Flags Drive.		
Previously identified	Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods.		
Previously identified	Identify opportunities for town center mixed use development within the Study Area.		
Previously identified	Establish a unique community identity and sense of place.		
Previously identified	Identify opportunities for community and regional entertainment uses in order to take advantage of the proximity to the Six Flags amusement park.		
Previously identified	Create a safer community for residents and visitors		
New	Attract community serving retail uses, such as grocery stores, banks, and sit-down restaurants.		
New	Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth.		
New	Promote pedestrian-oriented development along Six Flags Drive.		
New	Create parks, trails, greenspace, and landscaping in order to provide recreational opportunities and improve aesthetics.		
	Economic Development		
Previously identified	Retain industrial employment in existing firms by ensuring a continued competitive environment (transportation access, access to workforce, low cost of doing business).		
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New	Attract retail jobs, which provide entry-level jobs for those without work experience, part time employment for students, seniors and others not desiring full time work, and some career-track opportunities through management training programs.		
New	Create a safer community for businesses, employees and customers		
	Transportation		
Previously identified	Build upon Cobb County's relationship with Safe Routes to School program and define related areas and paths within the study area. (Need coordination with areas outside of the study area.)		
Previously identified	Develop and prioritize a network of paths for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians by interconnecting existing sidewalks and introducing new paths/sidewalks/trails for major routes & corridors. This includes an assessment of safety issue		
Previously identified	Identify partnerships and other methods for providing transportation options for seniors, children and students within the study area.		
New	Safely accommodate trucks and residential traffic while ensuring mobility for all modes of transportation.		
New	Develop an access management guidelines for major corridors while taking into consideration the multi-modal travel plans/options.		

Six Flags LCI Study Recommendations Comment Sheet



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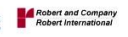


Recommendations	Agree/ Disagree (1=Strongly Agree 5=Strongly Disagree)	Identify Potential Funding Sources/ Potential Partners	Comments
Redevelop distressed apartment complexes into a mixed use town center with residential above shops, civic, and office uses.			
Encourage regional hospitality and entertainment development adjacent to Six Flags over Georgia.			
Create design guidelines or overlay zoning in order to encourage pedestrian-oriented redevelopment of the proposed town center and entertainment district.			
Allow regional commercial development near expressway interchanges in order to provide shopping opportunities while minimizing traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.			
Connect existing sidewalks, add in new locations, with sufficient lighting			
Upgrade crosswalks, specialized at gateway nodes			
Installation of gateway nodes – Analyze intersections for lane requirements, signal upgrades, and test for roundabout solution			
Access Management - 10-foot wide landscaped median on Six Flags Drive with openings at key locations, shared driveways, right-in/right-out			
Include way finding signage with community identification and truck route			
Upgrade Six Flags Drive Streetscape – Replace bus shelters and install benches.			

Six Flags LCI Study Recommendations Comment Sheet



In Association with

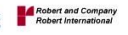


Recommendations	Agree/ Disagree (1=Strongly Agree 5=Strongly Disagree)	Identify Potential Funding Sources/ Potential Partners	Comments
Evaluate the existing CCT Route - Compensate for stops and destinations that are no longer served.			
Shuttle or a closed loop trolley - Limited to strictly service the study area.			
Housing - Identify and purchase apartment buildings with a significant proportion of blighted and substandard housing to be replaced			
Housing - Design a community involvement plan to help existing residents relocate within the community			
Housing - Identify and work with private sector developer experienced in affordable and mixed-income housing to provide new housing products in the Study Area as part of the larger Town Center development			
Retail - Work with civic partners to raise awareness of healthy eating and fresh foods among Study Area residents			
Retail - Identify sites within the Study Area that satisfy zoning regulations with regard to distance from schools and churches			
Retail - Design a package of incentives that reduce the risk for the real estate developer and grocery store anchor tenant			
Retail - Assign a grocery store champion to approach possible operators, introduce them to the sites and incentives available in the study area and see the process through to completion.			
Office - Identify existing buildings within the Study Area suitable for office use			

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Office - Identify possible sites along Six Flags Drive suitable for a major user-driven office project			
Office - Raise awareness among state-level economic development officials regarding the desirability of a Six Flags site for office location/expansion			
Industrial - Identify workforce skill gaps needed to meet Six Flags Study Area employer needs			
Industrial - Strengthen the link between Six Flags workforce and employers by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing job training in job search skills, resume and interview skills 2. Posting job listings at a central, visible location in the community 3. Providing job matching services, employee pre-screening and other services to employers 4. Encouraging employers to participate in job shadowing programs for middle school and high school students 			