Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

Summer 2014

Cobb County
Planning Division

Cobb County...Expect the Best!

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Timothy D. Lee, Chairman
Helen Goreham, District 1
Bob Ott, District 2
JoAnn Birrell, District 3
Lisa Cupid, District 4

PLANNING COMMISSION
Mike Terry, Chairman
Bob Hovey
Christi Trombetti
Judy Williams
Galt Porter

COUNTY MANAGER
David Hankerson

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Rob Hosack, AICP, Director
Dana Johnson, AICP, Manager
Phillip Westbrook, Planner/Project Manager
Xiaoang Qin, AICP, Urban Designer

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Faye DiMassimo, AICP, Director
Eric Meyer, Manager
Marty Sewell, AICP, Planner

WATER SYSTEM
Steve McCullers, P.E. Director
Eric Olson, P.E, Engineering Manager
David Breaden, P.E, CFM, Engineer
Tim Davidson, Engineer

Northwest Land Vulnerability Study

Introduction

The Northwest Land Vulnerability Study is a collaborative effort involving various departments within Cobb County as well as the community. The goal of this report is to examine, identify, and modify incompatible land uses with respect to existing and changing conditions that could influence this area over the next 10 to 20 years. These influencing forces include incompatible land uses, commuter traffic, new and improved transportation facilities, commercial and residential developments, and environmental factors related to stormwater runoff and Lake Allatoona. This study is intended to create a community driven goal that will guide growth in an environmentally sensitive manner.

The Community Development Planning Division is the lead in the effort with other departments providing technical assistance including the Department of Transportation and Water System as it relates to transportation, stormwater and sewer. To ensure the study is successful and reflects the community's character and ideas, residents and business owners in and around the study area were a valuable and informative asset to this plan.

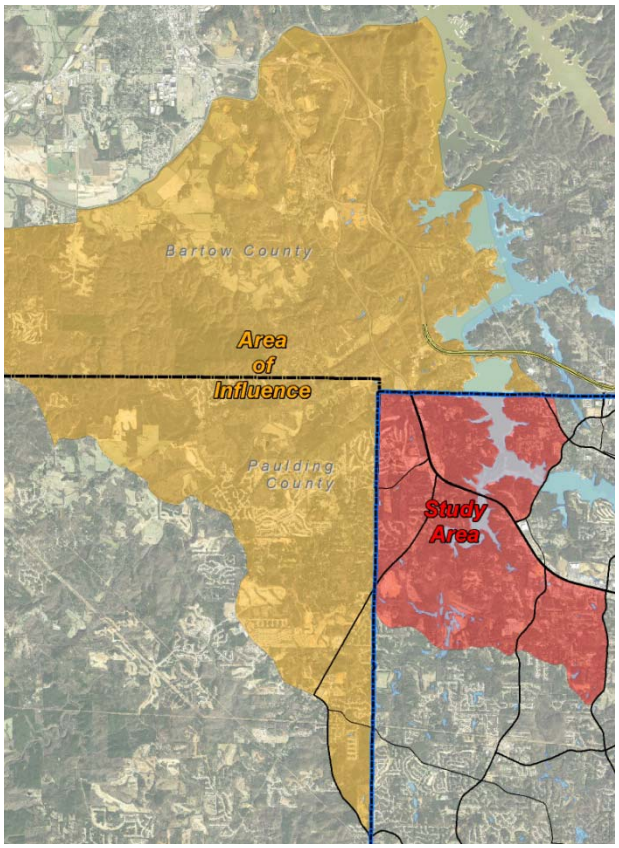
The primary tasks for the vulnerability study included an existing conditions report, community involvement, and a concept plan to be approved by the Board of Commissioners and included in the Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Existing Conditions

Study Area

The focus area for the Northwest Land Vulnerability Study is shown in **Map 1** located in the Appendix. The boundary replicates census tract 301.01 from the 2010 census. The west and north border of the boundary is the Cobb County line with Paulding and Bartow counties respectively. The eastern boundary line traverses along Old Highway 41, Lake Acworth Drive, Cobb Parkway and Acworth Due West Road and does include portions of City of Acworth. The southern boundary line moves along Old Stilesboro Road from Acworth Due West Road to the Paulding County line.

Areas of influences were set up to analyze a variety of impacts on the northwest Cobb study area. The two influence areas include Paulding County 2010 census tract 1201.01 and Bartow County 2010 Census Tract 9608.03. The influence areas were analyzed from a demographic, land use and transportation perspective to get a better understanding of how these areas impact the study area now, as well as in the future.



Demographic

Population figures from 2000 and 2010 were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau for the study area and the areas of influence. The study area and the area of influence for Bartow County saw a percentage increase consistent with the state of Georgia. However, the Paulding influence area saw a significant boost in population over the 10 year

period. Not only was this area one of the fastest growing in the state but there continues to be reasonably priced undeveloped land for further growth opportunities.

Population projections from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) show the study area is expected to add almost 40% more people over the next 30 years. However in comparison, Bartow and Paulding are projected to add 80% each.

Population	2000	2010	% Change
State of Georgia	8,186,453	9,687,653	18.3
Study Area	5,864	7,062	20.4
Area of Influence Paulding	4,400	12,406	181.9
Area of Influence Bartow	4,423	5,149	16.4

Population Projections	% Change from 2010 to 2040
Study Area	39.5
Area of Influence Paulding	80.7
Area of Influence Bartow	81.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & Atlanta Regional Commission

Jobs

Employee projections reflect the estimated number of total employees that are expected to be working within the specified area. The influence area of Bartow, which does include the cities of Cartersville and Emerson, is expected to see almost a 200% increase in jobs from 2016 to 2040. Such a large increase is likely due to the LakePoint Sporting Community & Town Center within the City of Emerson. Northern Paulding County is projecting to add approximately 31% more jobs, while the study area is expected to add approximately 850 jobs through the same time period, which is a 32% increase.

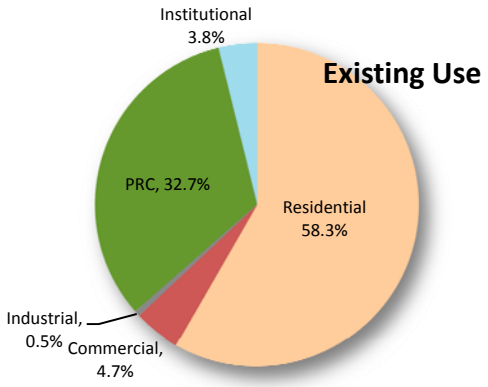
Employee Projections	2016	2040	% Change
Study Area	2,657	3,519	32.4%
Area of Influence Paulding	2,258	2,959	31%
Area of Influence Bartow	1,959	5,864	199.3%

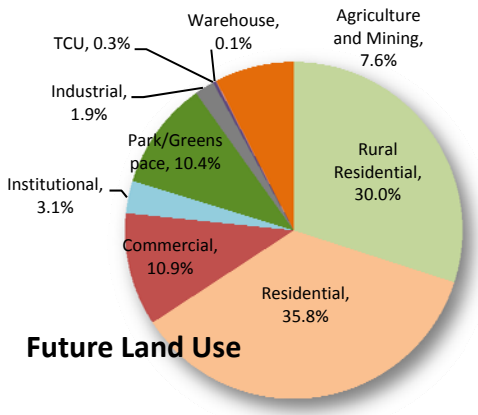
Source: Atlanta Regional Commission

Land Use

Existing Use:

The primary existing use throughout the study area is residential. Park, Recreation and Conservation (PRC) comprise over 2,000 acres devoted to the preservation of land surrounding Lake Allatoona and recreation on Lake Allatoona. Commercial and Industrial uses make up 5% of the existing land uses and are located along Cobb Parkway. Churches and Schools make up almost 4% of the study areas existing uses. **Map 2** located in the Appendix details the existing land use of the study area.





Future Land Use:

The future land use, which is a land use guide for future development, was analyzed across the study area and the influence areas. The percentages reflect the total areas across the entire analyzed spectrum including the study area and area of influences. The data shows that the region is expecting to remain primarily residential (65.8% with Residential and Rural Residential combined), especially within the

influence areas of Paulding and Bartow. Almost 11% of the area is being guided toward commercial use. Most of that 11% is within Bartow County, which appears to be focusing commercial growth between Highway 41 and I-75, similar to the non-residential growth that has occurred between Cobb Parkway and I-75 in Cobb County over the past 30 years. **Map 3** located in the Appendix depicts the Future Land Use for the Study Area.

It is important to note that 84% of the future use for the Paulding influence area is designated for residential use and 64% of the future use for Bartow is designated for residential use. This correlates well with the projected population growth for both areas. With residential planned and projected population growth for both Paulding and Bartow counties there will continue to be an increase in commuting traffic streaming through the study area and Cobb County.

Zoning:

There are a variety of zoning categories throughout the study area as shown in **Map 4** in the Appendix. The predominant zone is Rural Residential (RR) which covers mostly Lake Allatoona and the surrounding Federal Government property. Residential single-family lots (R-30 and R-20) make up the majority of the regulated land uses for the area. The Planned Development (PD) zone is a zoning category no longer used by Cobb County and covers 360 acres at Governors Towne Club. Most of the commercial zones, which are located along Cobb Parkway, include Low Rise Office (LRO), Office and Institution (OI), Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC), Neighborhood Shopping (NS), General Commercial (GC), Tourist Services (TS), Light Industrial (LI) and Heavy Industrial (HI). The GC property makes up most of the commercial acreage and is scattered along Highway 41.

New Projects

There are several new developments currently under construction that will have an impact on the study area. Four of the projects are non-residential developments with one being developed in the City of Emerson in Bartow County. There are also new residential developments that are not necessarily new developments but are vacant developed lots that have ceased construction and have not been completely built out, likely the result of the housing bust in the late 2000's. The following information provides details on each of the larger projects that will have an impact in the community:

LakePoint Sporting Community & Town Center:

Located in the City of Emerson, the sporting community is a 1,300 plus acre mixed use development and sporting complex with a completed build out year of 2020. The initial phase of the project, which has been approved by the state through the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process, includes the development of 1,883,000 SF of retail, 551,000 SF of office and 600,000 SF of mixed use on 248 acres. The overall project is expected to generate up to 20,000 new jobs for the City of Emerson and Bartow County, as well as six million visitors annually. There are expected to be transportation improvements surrounding the development as well as within the development.

The scale of the LakePoint project and the trips that will be generated to and from this development is expected to impact the Study Area's transportation network. The sporting complex is marketed toward a regional and national clientele, which is expected to be accessing the complex via Interstate 75. There are currently two full access interchanges within the community that will likely be the entryway and exit to and from the center. Land use from this development will have a high likelihood of impacting the study area as complementary uses may choose to locate in Cobb County, specifically along Cobb Parkway within the Study Area, due to its proximity to restaurants, retail, and entertainment.

Cedarcrest Church and Wellstar Acworth Health Park:

Located north of Awtrey Church Road, on the east side of Highway 41 is a new horizontal mixed use development. The project was approved by Cobb County consisting of a 400,000 SF church, 380,000 SF of medical and professional offices and 140,000 SF of retail and restaurants. Through the approval process, additional transportation improvements for

this area were mandated via the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority. Infrastructure improvements have been made on site and the medical facility and church are complete and currently in operation. The site is expected to generate 2,431 Sunday peak trips.

Governors Towne Club is a residential project that is yet to be built-out. The private golf club and gated community is located within Cobb and Paulding Counties and consists of 506 lots and 7 golf villas on 690 acres, 360 of which are located in Cobb County. The overall density of the project, excluding the golf course, is 1.33 units per acre. There are still 142 vacant developed lots (VDL) available for construction.

There are other smaller scale developments throughout the study area. Most of these developments are small subdivisions that began developing years ago but ceased with the drop in the housing market. However, since then construction of new homes has picked up and according to Metrostudy, VDL's within the entire study area have dwindled from 235 in the first quarter of 2012 to 181 in the first quarter of 2014.

There have been several non-residential rezoning cases along the Cobb Parkway corridor. Most recently is Z-45 from 2008, which is located on the west side of Cobb Parkway north of Cedarcrest Road, and Z-5 and Z-37 from 2010, located on the corner of Cedarcrest Road and Cobb Parkway. The 2008 case was approved from General Commercial (GC) to Neighborhood Retail Commercial (NRC) for the purpose of office and retail center. The 2010 cases were zoned from GC to NRC for the purpose of office, small retail and restaurant uses along with an open air park that will be architecturally consistent with the office and retail center.

Build Out Scenarios

As part of the study area analysis, a build-out examination was conducted to get a better understanding of local market forces that will likely influence future land demand. The resulting estimate includes population projection based solely on land use and future new dwellings and non-residential square footage, as well as employment. Undeveloped and underutilized properties that are capable of being developed were analyzed to retrieve land use estimates.

Residential:

The residential build-out scenarios were conducted utilizing the maximum and mid-point recommended density figures per the future land use from Cobb County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The commercial build-out scenarios were conducted utilizing the Floor Area Ratios (FAR) for both office and retail uses recommended from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

The following charts detail the number of dwellings and projected populations based on the mid and max density residential future land uses.

Residential Land Use (Mid-Density)	Study Area Acres	Dwellings Yield	Population Projection
RR (0.5 upa)	720.08	360	1022
VLDR (1 upa)	118.17	118	335
LDR (1.25 upa)	104.28	182	517
MDR (2.5 upa)	7.13	27	77
Total	949.66	687	1951

Assumptions: Development at Mid-point density level per residential future land use category; Average Household Size of 2.84 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 SF1 100% Data)

Residential Land Use (Max Density)	Study Area Acres	Dwellings Yield	Population Projection
RR (1 upa)	720.08	720	2,045
VLDR (1 upa)	118.17	236	670
LDR (1.25 upa)	104.28	261	741
MDR (2.5 upa)	7.13	36	102
Total	949.66	1,253	3,558

Assumptions: Development at Max density level per residential future land use category; Average Houshold Size of 2.84 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 SF1 100% Data)

According to the analysis, the study area could potentially add 687 dwelling units and 1,951 people if residential developments were built at the density mid-point. If developments were built out at the maximum density, there would be an increase of 1,253 dwelling units and 3,558 people. In both scenarios most units and populations would be

located within the Rural Residential land use category.

Non-Residential:

The non-residential build-out scenarios focus primarily on the office and retail uses of the Community Activity Centers, Neighborhood Activity Centers and Industrial Compatible areas of the study area. The central component to the build-out scenarios revolves around the recommended FAR for the future land use categories as defined within the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Using the FAR at the mid and max values and the total developable square footage, a potential square footage yield was determined as well as a number of jobs that each use could potential accommodate.

Non-Residential Land Use (Mid-FAR)	Total SQFT.	SQFT. Yield	Jobs Projection
Office (Mid-FAR)			
NAC (.25 FAR)	2,976,890.40	744,223	2,977
CAC (.375 FAR)	11,761.21	4,410	18
IC (.375 FAR)	1,728,896.40	648,336	2,593
Total	4,717,548.01	1,396,969	5,588
Retail (Mid-FAR)			
NAC (.125 FAR)	2,976,890.40	372,112	394
CAC (.125 FAR)	11,761.21	1,481	2
IC (N/A)	1,728,896.40	N/A	N/A
Total	4,717,548.01	373,593	396

Assumptions: 945 Sqft. per worker for Retail Services (Source: U.S. Department of Energy) and 250 Sqft. per worker for suburban, private sector office (U.S. General Services Administration)

Non-Residential Land Use (Max-FAR)	Total SQFT.	SQFT. Yield	Jobs Projection
Office (Max-FAR)			
NAC (.5 FAR)	2,976,890.40	1,488,445	5,954
CAC (.75 FAR)	11,761.21	8,821	35
IC (.75 FAR)	1,728,896.40	1,296,672	5,187
Total	4,717,548.01	2,793,938	11,176
Retail (Max-FAR)			
NAC (.25 FAR)	2,976,890.40	744,223	788
CAC (.25 FAR)	11,761.21	2,940	3
IC (N/A)	1,728,896.40	N/A	N/A
Total	4,717,548.01	747,163	791

Assumptions: 945 sqft. Per worker for Retail Services (Source: U.S. Department of Energy) and 250 sqft. per worker for suburban, private sector office (U.S. General Services Administration)

Transportation Network

Northwest Cobb is well linked to the rest of the region with a transportation network that includes Interstate 75, Highway 41/Cobb Parkway and State Route 92. Interstate 75, which is just outside of the study area, is the primary north/south route connecting this area to the rest of the southeast and nation. Cobb Parkway transects the study area providing an alternate north/south route that connects Marietta and Cartersville locally and provides regional connection between Atlanta and Chattanooga and beyond. State Route 92 traverses the study area providing east/west connectivity to Hiram or Acworth and further. The Interstate and state highways fall under the authority of the Federal Government and Georgia Department of Transportation. Other roadways such as Cedarcrest Road, Awtrey Church Road, Third Army Road, Black Acre Trail and others all provide local access connecting residents to the state highway system.

Classification:

The Cobb County Major Thoroughfare Plan, which was last amended by the Board of Commissioners on April 29, 2009, assigns each roadway a functional classification that indicates a facility's relative importance within the roadway network. These classifications contain design parameters that dictate ideal facility operations. **Map 5** within the Appendix

shows the transportation network and classifications for each of the roadways throughout the study area.

Level of Service:

As a way to measure and understand where there may be deficiencies in the transportation network, Level of Service (LOS) data was mapped. The level of service is a graduated scale from A to F, with A being the best and F the worst, that measures the level of congestion on a segment of a roadway. Levels of Service A through C are generally accepted as high levels of service with little or no congestion. Level of service D is associated with moderate congestion and Level of Service E designates heavy congestion. Level of Service F denotes severe congestion. **Map 6** details the LOS for the Study Area.

Circulation:

Using the current traffic volumes from Cobb County Department of Transportation and the Georgia State Traffic and Report Statistics (STARS) module, an analysis of traffic patterns through the study area reveals that Highway 41 is the "spine" of the network with other connector roadways feeding into and out of Highway 41. **Map 7** shows the Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT) for different sections of the network. Highlighting these sectors based AADT volumes shows that most of the trips are along Highway 41 between Dallas Acworth Highway and Lake Acworth Drive. These large volumes can be attributed to Paulding and Bartow County commuters converging during the AM peak hours onto Highway 41 and then dispersing slightly at Lake Acworth Drive and Highway 41 to reach job centers further south along I-75. The opposite is true during the PM peak hours.

New Transportation Projects

The transportation network for the study area is expected to grow over the next 10 to 20 years. Several projects are slated to provide better connectivity to the overall region and reduce congestion. **Map 8** provides a visual of where these projects are located.

The following projects, which are identified on the 2005 SPLOST lists, are currently in the design phase:

Cedarcrest Road Widening: The proposed undertaking would widen and improve Cedarcrest Road to 4 lanes with a 20' median from Harmony Grove Church Road in Paulding County to Governors Towne Drive in Cobb. The Harmony Grove to Cobb County (PA-036B) segment is considered "long range" within the Atlanta Regional Commission's PLAN 2040. The segment from the Paulding County line to Governors Towne Drive (in the PLAN 2040 TIP:CO-344A) is slated to begin construction in 2015.

State Route 92/Lake Acworth Drive Widening: The overall plan is to widen State Route 92 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes from the Paulding County line to Cobb Parkway (Highway 41) and then from Cobb Parkway to Cowan Road, which is also known as Lake Acworth Drive.

I-75 at Third Army Road Interchange: The purpose of this project is to provide safety and operational improvements and to reduce traffic congestion on those roads that feed traffic from northern Paulding County, southern Bartow County and northwest Cobb County to and from I-75. The project looks to create an access controlled roadway between Highway 41 and a new interchange on I-75 that parallels Third Army Road. This will provide direct access to the area from I-75 and may include a grade separated interchange with Highway 41 to further alleviate potential congestion on Highway 41.

Along with the three projects from the 2005 SPLOST there are two additional projects within the study area that are included in the more recent 2011 SPLOST. The following projects will provide Safety and Operational improvements, Congestion Relief and Infrastructure Preservation:

Cobb Parkway at Mars Hill Road: This intersection improvement project, for which construction is scheduled for completion in September of 2014, will improve traffic flow by adding left turn lanes on Mars Hill Road and Cobb Parkway, and lengthen westbound Cobb Parkway's left turn lane. The

project includes enhanced traffic and pedestrian signals and widening on Mars Hill Road to receive two left turn lanes from Cobb Parkway.

Old Stilesboro Road over Little Allatoona Creek: This infrastructure preservation project will replace the deficient bridge on Old Stilesboro Road over Little Allatoona Creek.

Other transportation projects include state managed resurfacing of Cobb Parkway from Bells Ferry Road to Bartow County Line and intersection improvements at Cobb Parkway and State Route 92.

Water Capacity

Potable Water Supply:

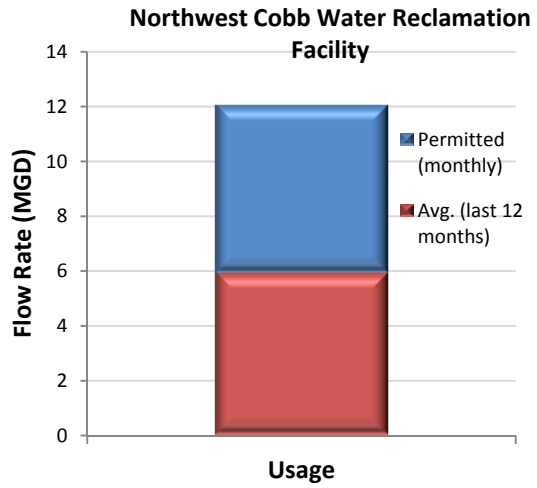
Drinking water for this area of the county is withdrawn from Lake Allatoona and treated at the Hugh A. Wyckoff Treatment Facility that is owned and operated by the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA). Drinking water is sold by CCMWA to Cobb and Paulding counties who in turn distribute the water to individual households, businesses and other consumers. CCMWA has recently upgraded the Wyckoff Treatment Facility, and it will have adequate capacity and be able to meet drinking water standards for the foreseeable future. In general the water distribution system has adequate capacity to meet current and forecasted growth. The County has identified a need for additional redundancy to meet demand in the event of a major water transmission main break. This is not related to future development pressures.

Water Reclamation:

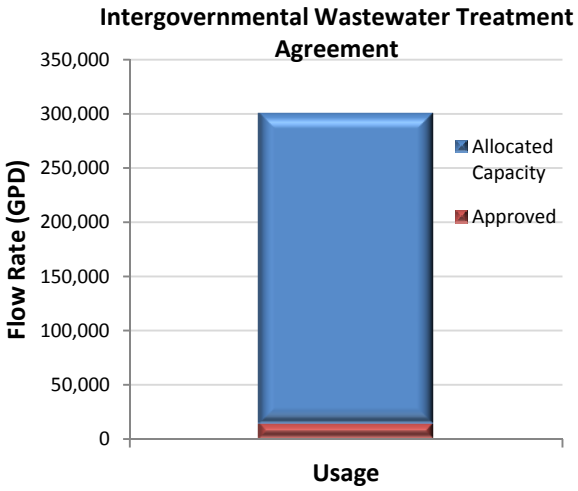
Once water has been used, it needs to be purified before returning to the environment. In the study area there are both private and public systems for this. Private systems include a septic tank and drain field for each home or business using this method. No public sewer is required in areas that make use of private septic systems. Septic systems will continue to be one means of wastewater disposal in the study area.

Septic systems can become an environmental nuisance if not properly installed and maintained. Considering the adjacency of Lake Allatoona, maintenance and upkeep of the septic systems in this area is vital to the water quality of the lake and the ecosystem surrounding and within the lake. As a way to measure any potential problems from the onsite systems, Cobb County Public Health has provided onsite sewage management permit data for most residential properties surrounding Lake Allatoona. According to the information, 80% of the septic systems have not required repair permits, while 20% showed records of repair work. This was a sampling of the overall lots that utilize on-site septic systems and based on the provided information and considering the age of the homes, the number of repair permits appear to be reasonable and considered isolated. The homes that were sampled for this study were built between 1954 and 2012 with the majority of homes being built in the 1980's and 90's.

In areas served by public sewers, wastewater is conveyed to a publically owned water reclamation facility (WRF) or a water reuse facility. In Cobb County the Northwest Cobb WRF serves areas in the southern part of the study area as well as the eastern portion of the study area near the City of Acworth. Most of the service area for the Northwest Cobb WRF is outside of the study area. The plant is permitted for a monthly average flow of 12 million gallons per day (MGD). Over the last 12 months flow has ranged from 5.3 MGD in October to 6.8 MGD in February, with an annual average of 5.9 MGD. It has capacity to serve the anticipated growth in the study area that can be routed to it through gravity sewers. **Map 9** shows the area covered by the Northwest plant.



Source: Cobb County Water System



Source: Cobb County Water System

Another treatment plant that serves a portion of the study area is the Pumpkinvine Creek Water Reuse Facility in Paulding County. Cobb and Paulding counties entered into a long-term agreement in 2008 for Paulding County to provide wastewater service for selected portions of Cobb County in the study area that can be served by gravity sewers. In exchange, the Northwest Cobb WRF provides capacity for an equal amount of flow from a portion of Paulding County. The allocated capacity in the Agreement is 300,000 gallons per day (GPD). To date approximately 5% of this amount has been allocated.

The water reclamation capacity using private septic systems, the Northwest Cobb WRF and the Pumpkinvine Creek Reuse Facility can meet the needs of lower density scenarios. The needs for specific parcels of property are governed by local soil conditions, or the ability to provide gravity sewers that can be routed to a treatment plant.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community participation is vital to the creation and management of the Northwest Land Vulnerability Study. The public participation strategy was created to ensure the process includes important public key discussion making points during the study effort. The public process builds upon the strengths of community participation which is based on the principle that the built and natural environments work better if the community is active and involved in its creation and management. Implementing the public participation strategy ensures that the plan reflects the people it serves by encouraging citizen input.

The primary goal and objective for the public participation phase was to determine the future land use direction of the community as well as any policy changes that need to be made based on existing condition factors and transportation improvements that will be occurring over the next 10 to 20 years.

The focus for the first public meeting on April 2, 2013 was to provide information on existing conditions within the study area and to present five (5) scenarios **(see Appendix Map 10 - 14)** for the public to view and offer comments and feedback. The 5 scenarios that were presented to the public are described below. Public comments and a summary of comments and ideas generated from the public can be found in **Appendix 17 & 18** along with public meeting images.

No Change Scenario

The purpose of the No Change scenario was to get feedback on whether the community wanted to continue forward with the future land use and comprehensive plan policies that exist today for this area. This scenario provided no substantial change to the future land use or the Comprehensive Plan. The only changes that were proposed with the No Change alternative were future land use corrections that would need to be made, such as tracts that

contain institutional uses like schools, churches, and Cemeteries. An advantage of this scenario would be the familiarity that the community has with the existing land use and the fact that there would be no encroachment into the Rural Residential land uses that make up most of the future uses in the area. Some disadvantages include small industrial areas that would not be conducive for "Tech" jobs, and existing uses that exceed the current future land use designations and are not compatible with new surrounding developments and transportation improvements.

Commuter Focus Scenario

The Commuter Focus scenario was an alternative that was created centered on more commercial and job producing uses. This scenario takes advantage of the increasing number of commuters that will be traversing through the study area. This option provides jobs and retail shopping opportunities for commuters passing through as well as jobs and services closer to the residential populous of the study area, potentially reducing commuter times. The advantages to this scenario from a land use perspective would be a new employment center, small businesses to serve surrounding neighborhoods and a better transition of uses from Highway 41 to the residential uses. Disadvantages of this scenario are a possible increase in local traffic due to increased turning movements, loss of industrial land, and, because of the addition of commercial space, the potential for increased vacant space on surrounding, commercial districts.

Health and Technology Scenario

The Health and Technology alternative was created as way to complement the Wellstar Acworth Health Park and provide jobs. The Biomedical and Technology uses would be oriented toward the intersection of the proposed Third Army Road Connector with retail and small area businesses centered around the Highway 41 intersections of Cedarcrest Road and Dallas/Acworth Highway. This option would promote a cleaner, more technically advanced industrial center focused more on medical types of industries and small businesses serving surrounding neighborhoods. This scenario would likely generate more local and community traffic, more impervious surface within the industrial area, and would require adequate buffers especially between industrial uses and existing residential uses. This scenario would also require more innovative measures to handle potential stormwater runoff and non-point source pollutants.

Suburban Housing Scenario

An option that focuses on residential in the area is the Suburban Housing Scenario. This alternative concentrates on providing more housing options and better land use transitions within the study area. The suburban housing scenario focuses on 55 and over senior living communities between the commercial and retail fronting Highway 41 and the existing single family homes. This option would be ideal for senior living considering the close proximity to the commercial uses and the Wellstar Acworth Health Park. Another consideration is amending the rural residential land use west of Highway 41 between Cedarcrest Road and Dallas/Acworth Road to Very Low Density Residential. This proposal would remain within the Water System's capacity limitations and would be more consistent with existing residential neighborhoods in the area. Since the topography on the west side of Highway 41 slopes away from Lake Allatoona this could offer more housing opportunities without affecting Lake Allatoona and decreasing residential development pressures between Highway 41 and Lake Allatoona.

Blended Use Scenario

The Blended Use option was developed with the goal of creating a scenario that combines the four other alternatives. The blended option provides for senior housing combined with commercial and a healthcare facility, and offers a great transition from Highway 41 to Governors Towne Club. This option provides for an increase in commercial retail and office space, accommodates more residential uses that could include flexible design in residential open space communities and concentrates development where there is existing water, sewer, and topographical features that reduce impacts on Lake Allatoona. Challenges for this scenario, which will inhibit intensity of land use include limited sewer

capacity, limited access to possible retail and offices near the proposed Third Army Road connector, linear commercial development pattern, and additional commercial that could create vacant space in surrounding commercial districts.

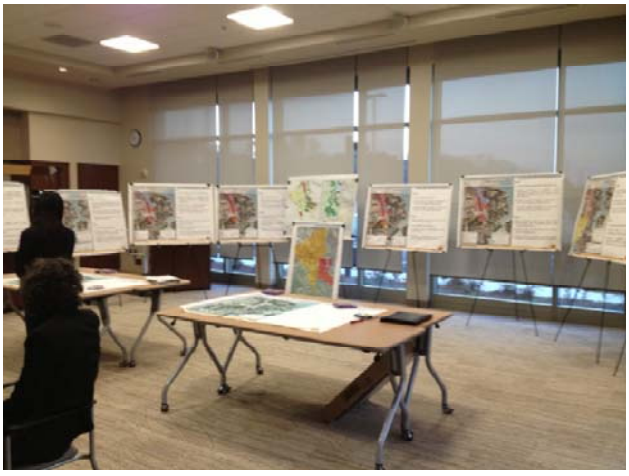
VISION

The Northwest Land Vulnerability Study (NWLVA) is intended to create a land use "framework" that guides the future of the northwest corner of Cobb County. The five planning scenarios that were drawn up factor in population, land use, new and proposed transportation infrastructure, water capacity, and the environmental sensitivity of the area with regards to Lake Allatoona.

After careful considerations by the community and the county staff, the 5 scenarios were reduced to one Framework Plan **(Map 15)** and a set of Specific Area Policy Guidelines (SAPG). **(Appendix 16)**

The framework plan's strategy is outlined by the three major elements that make up the recommended vision for the study area and is summarized within the Northwest Cobb Land Vulnerability Study Implementation Plan found on page 12.

1. Land Use
2. Environment
3. Transportation



Land Use

The land use element to the framework plan includes recommended future land use changes and additional specific area policy guidelines to guide appropriate uses for the area. The proposed land use changes focus on more continued commercial and retail along Highway 41 with low rise office type uses as a step down to the residential neighborhoods off the main corridor. Residential uses are concentrated between Cedarcrest Road and Dallas Acworth Highway and a smaller area north of Cedarcrest Road where the plan recommends amending the future land use from Rural Residential to Low Density Residential (LDR). The LDR would provide a transitional use from the commercial along Highway 41 to the acre lots within Governors Towne Club. A specific area policy guideline **(Appendix 16, SAPG #3)** for the LDR area would encourage senior living development to provide housing opportunities to the largest growing population sector in the county.

Between Cedarcrest Road and State Route 92 the change from Rural Residential to Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) would accommodate projected residential growth for the area and at same time help to maintain sewer capacity limits. Expected job growth within the City of Emerson and Bartow County may fuel additional housing in northwest Cobb County. By allowing additional residential growth west of Highway 41, which drains away from Lake Allatoona, there could be less interest and development pressure east of Highway 41 within the Rural Residential areas thus potentially preserving this area to control water quality and non-point source pollutants adjacent to Lake Allatoona.

Most of the parcels with direct access to Highway 41 are recommended to be amended to the Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC). Currently these sites are considered Industrial Compatible and zoned for Industrial uses and general commercial uses. Most of the lots are small and typically don't meet the intention of the existing industrial compatible future land use designation. The NAC would also provide better transitional uses to assist in mitigating impacts to the surrounding residential uses. Where the NAC is adjacent to residential uses, the plan has recommended specific policy guidelines **(Appendix 16, SAPG #4)** to direct future development toward compatible residential style low

rise office uses. These policies are defined in the Framework Plan.

A land use conversion from Industrial Compatible to NAC is also being recommended near the Bartow County line. The transition to the NAC would be more appropriate based on the adjacency of the proposed Third Army Road/I-75 intersection and connector that potentially could be traversing across the northern boundary of the study area. Significant changing conditions north of the study area within the City of Emerson and Bartow County, known as the Lakepoint Sporting Community, also lends this part of Cobb County and the study area to a NAC future land use category. With the scale that the sporting complex is being built and the number of visitors that is anticipated annually it would be important to Cobb County to market this NAC toward auxiliary uses in the form of restaurants, retail and office uses. If the I-75 interchange is created and direct access to this particular NAC is made then the county should consider hospitality type uses. The NAC would provide jobs and services closer to the populous, which could potentially shorten commuter times. **(Appendix 16, SAPG #1**)

Other recommended land use changes include park, recreation and conservation uses on the east and west sides of Cobb Parkway near Lake Allatoona. These recommended changes would further provide water quality and non-point source pollutant control for Lake Allatoona and could potentially allow for passive recreation, such as pervious walking trails and/or mountain bike trails. **(Appendix 16, SAPG #5)**

Through this study effort there were several institutional types of uses, such as schools, churches and a cemetery, discovered to be incompatible with the future land use map. It would be recommended that these properties be amended to the Public Institutional land use category as it would be expected that these properties would remain institutional.

Environment

Given the areas proximity to Lake Allatoona and the fact that the lake provides drinking water for Cobb, Bartow and Cherokee Counties, stormwater runoff and water quality is the primary concern for the area. Currently surrounding the lake is 25,000 acres of public land that is owned by the Army Corp. for the purpose of recreation and water quality.

To assist in continuing to be responsible stewards of the lake but also to allow for appropriate development, it is recommended that new policy guidelines be implemented that would encourage environmentally low impact development (LID) on the east side of Highway 41 to assist in protecting the environmentally sensitive lands surrounding Lake Allatoona as well as Lake Allatoona itself.

LID is a technique that utilizes green infrastructure to assists stormwater runoff and erosion control. It involves using alternative development principles to minimize the stormwater impact of development and can help lakeside communities better protect water quality, habitat, and biological resources. It can be used at the site level by integrating management practices such as wet ponds, biofiltration ponds, vegetative swales, xeroscaping, bioswales, rain gardens, re-irrigation ponds, and possible rain water harvesting. Utilizing LID practices usually reduces overall cost of development while increasing environmental performance. The LID strategies would be in addition to the standard stormwater management facilities.

The recommended LID policy guidelines that would be implemented through the 2030 Comprehensive Plan can be found within **Appendix 16, SAPG #2**.

Transportation

The transportation element of the framework plan includes recommended inter-parcel access streets, as well as 2005 and 2011 SPLOST projects.

Transportation improvement recommendations from this study focus on local traffic and minimizing the impact of through traffic volumes by expanding the network of inter-parcel access streets. On the east side of Highway 41 from Old Acworth/Dallas Highway to north of the Acworth Health Park, these inter-parcel streets are a combination of private and public rights of way. The expansion would be implemented through private redevelopment

initiatives and could potentially be a recommendation through the rezoning process. The conceptual layout of the access streets is shown in the Framework Plan.

Other transportation improvements highlighted on the Framework Plan include projects from the last two SPLOST initiatives. The Cedarcrest Road widening project from Paulding County to Governor's Towne Club was part of the 2005 SPLOST and State Route 92 from the Paulding County to Highway 41 and from Highway 41 to Cowan Road was part of the 2011 SPLOST. The I-75/Third Army Road Interchange and Connector is also part of the 2011 SPLOST. Both the State Route 92 road widening project and I-75/Third Army Road project are considered Tier 1 projects but only if sufficient Federal, State, or other grants assistance becomes available.

SUMMARY

The Northwest Land Vulnerability study area is in a challenging area of Cobb County. There are environmentally sensitive lands. There are incompatible land uses along with three highly traveled arterial roadways and proposed new transportation projects. There are emerging new developments that will impact the study area and there is an intergovernmental water agreement with capacity limits. With the new and growing infrastructure, the attraction of Lake Allatoona, and the new commercial developments there is expected growth for northwest Cobb County.

Planning Division Staff along with Staff from Water System and Department of Transportation has ensured that this plan reflects the community's desires and is appropriate from a technical standpoint as well as from a policy perspective.

This plan addresses concerns regarding the environmental sensitivity of Lake Allatoona. It mitigates incompatible land uses. It attempts to guide residential growth away from Lake Allatoona and it also better aligns this area of the county for the market realities that is expected along Highway 41.

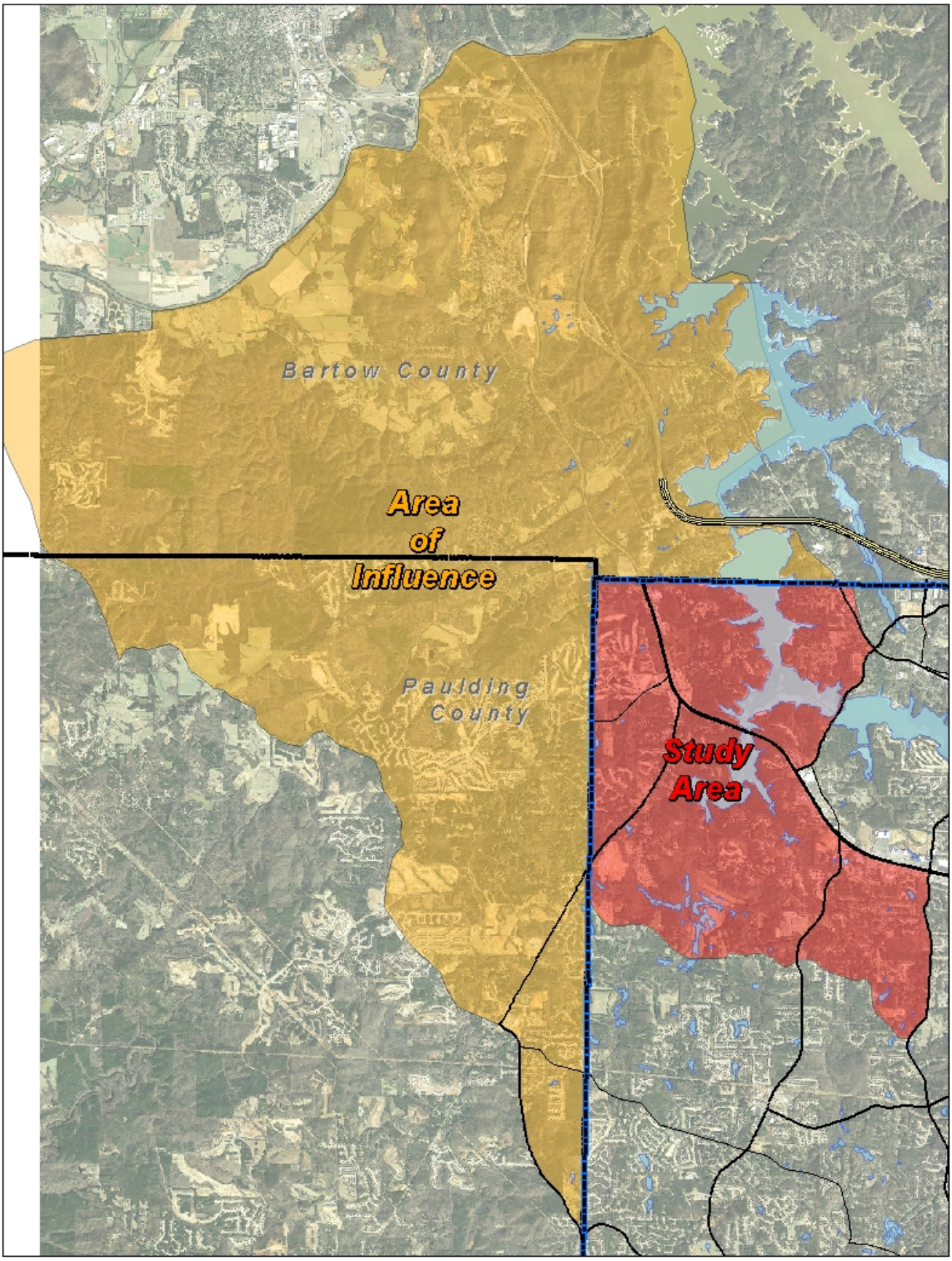
By implementing the Northwest Land Vulnerability plan the goal of modifying incompatible land uses and adding new policy direction within the 2030 Plan will be achieved and guidance on future development will be recognized and to an extent predictable for the county, property owners and more importantly the community. This plan provides a proactive approach to guiding and controlling future growth for northwest Cobb County.

Northwest Cobb Land Vulnerability Implementation Plan					
Recommendation Item	***Timeframe***	***Type of Deliverable***	***Responsible Party***	***Cost Estimate***	***Possible Funding Source***
Pursue Future Land Use map changes within Comprehensive Plan per adopted Framework Plan	Short-Term	Policy	County (CD)	$0	Staff time
Pursue amending 2030 Comprehensive Plan to include Specific Area Policy Guideline #1 per Framework Plan	Short-Term	Policy	County (CD)	$0	Staff time
Pursue amending 2030 Comprehensive Plan to include Specific Area Policy Guideline related to #2 per Framework Plan	Short-Term	Policy	County (CD)	$0	Staff time
Pursue amending 2030 Comprehensive Plan to include Specific Area Policy Guideline related to #3 per Framework Plan	Short-Term	Policy	County (CD)	$0	Staff time
Pursue amending 2030 Comprehensive Plan to include Specific Area Policy Guideline related to #4 per Framework Plan	Short-Term	Policy	County (CD)	$0	Staff time
Pursue amending 2030 Comprehensive Plan to include Specific Area Policy Guideline related to #5 per Framework Plan	Short-Term	Policy	County (CD)	$0	Staff time
Investigate the acquisition of parcels associated with #5 per Framework Plan for water quality improvements and the protection of Lake Allatoona	Short-Term	Land Purchase / Water Quality	Cobb County Water System	Dependent upon Property Appraisals	Cobb County Water System
Encourage inter-parcel access streets through redevelopment scenarios per Framework Plan	On-going	Coordination	County (CD), Cobb DOT, Development Community	N/A	Private Development

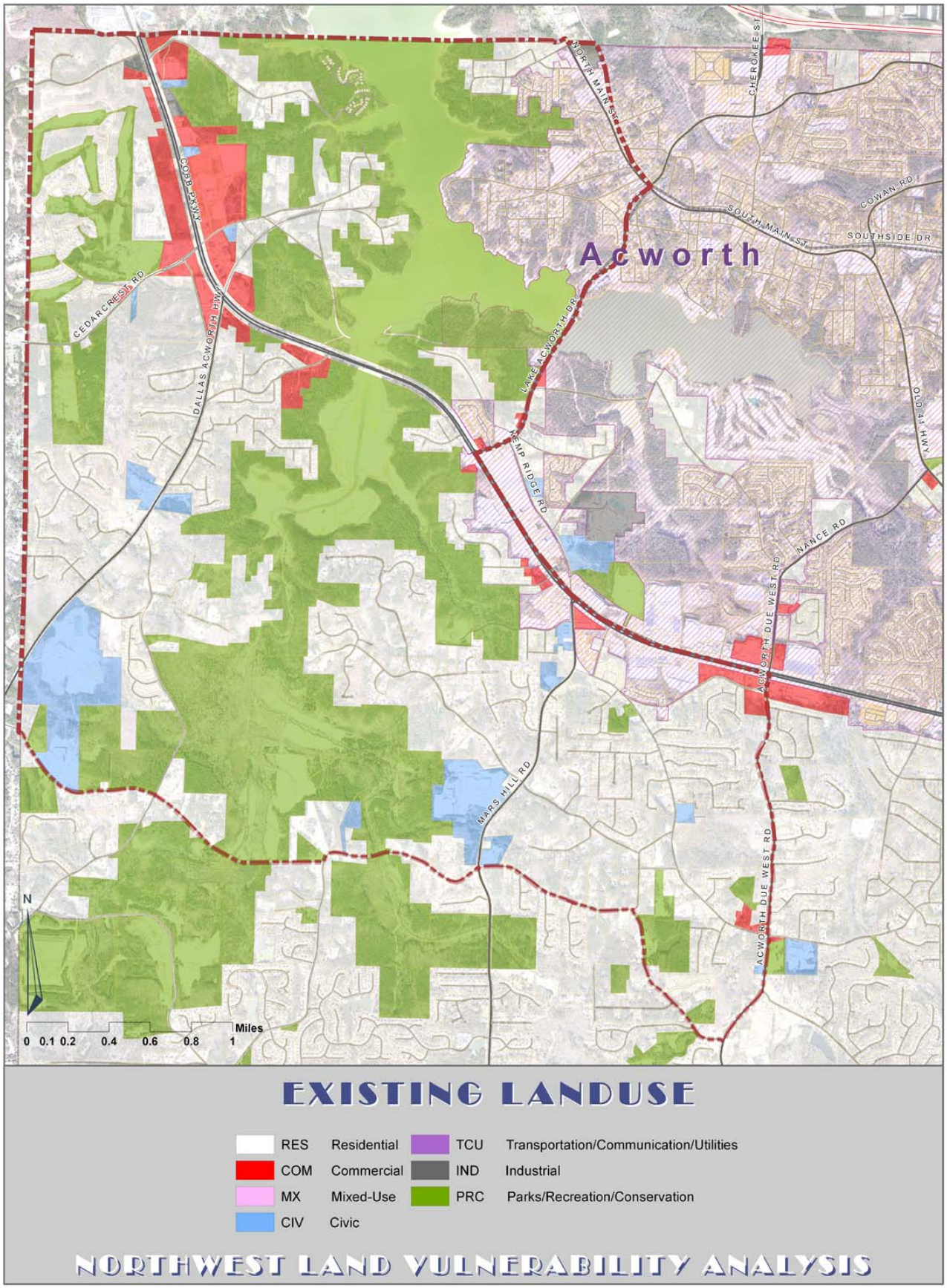
Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

Appendix

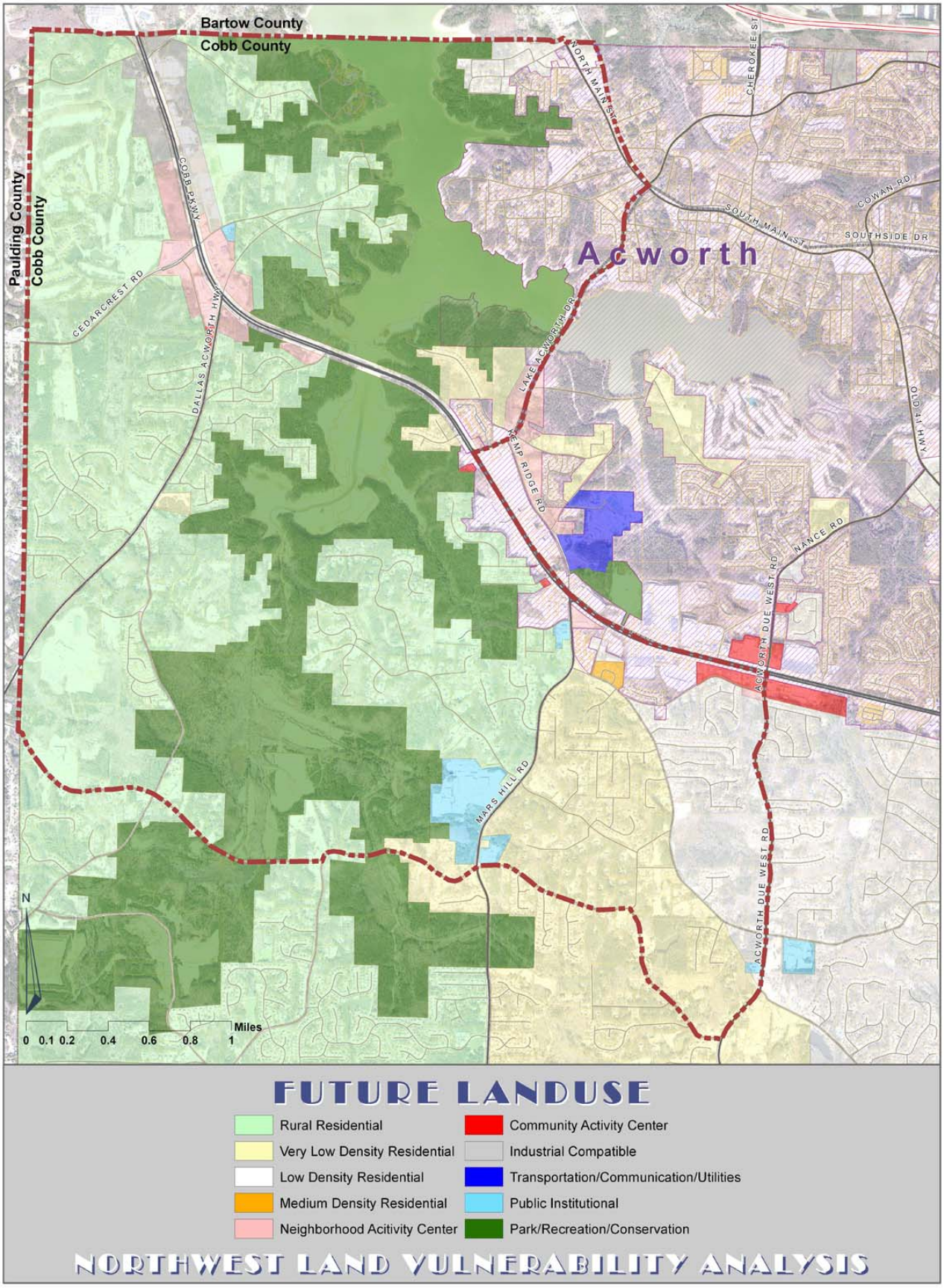
MAP 1 - Study Area Boundary



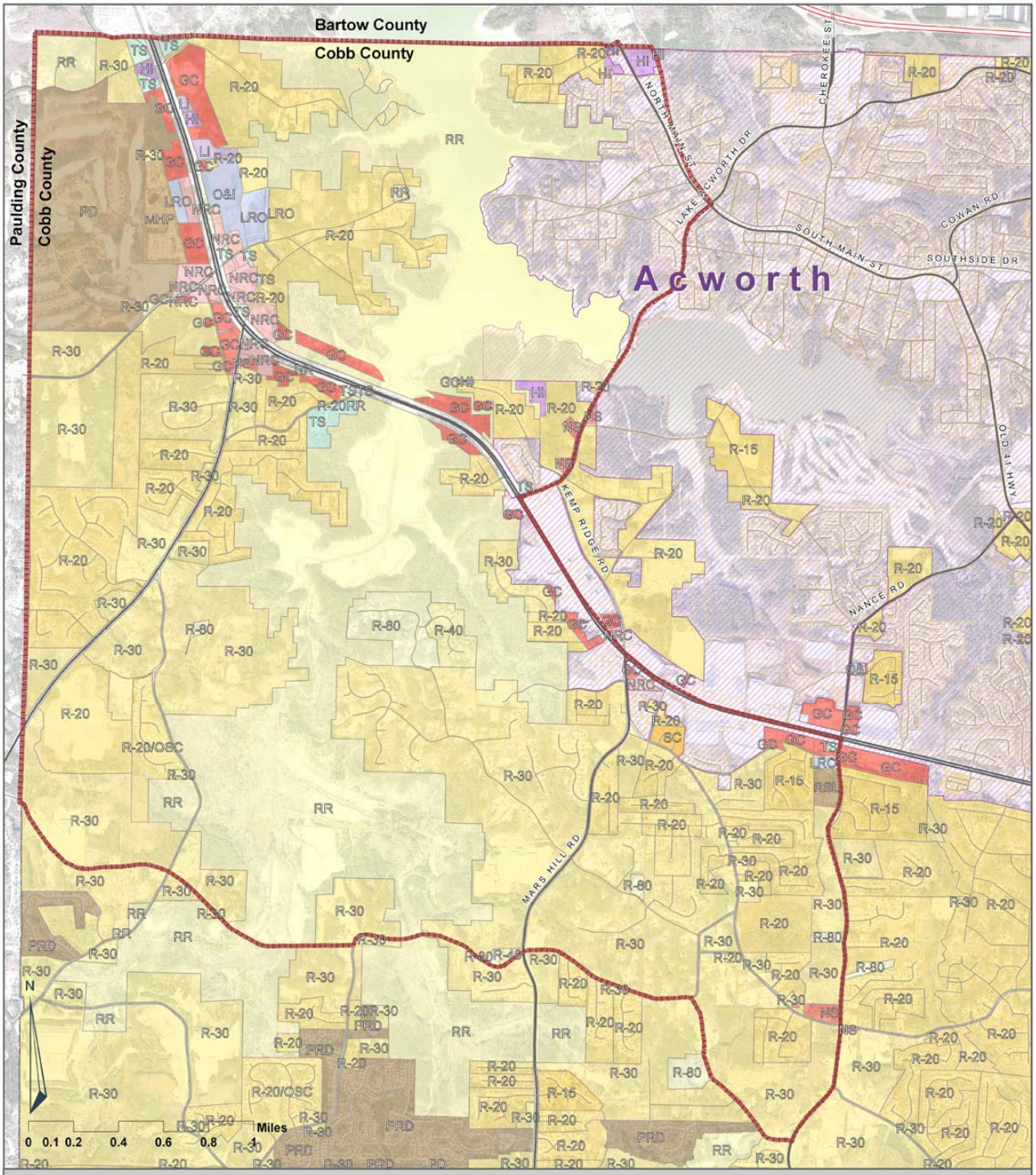
MAP 2 - Existing Land Use



MAP 3 - Future Land Use



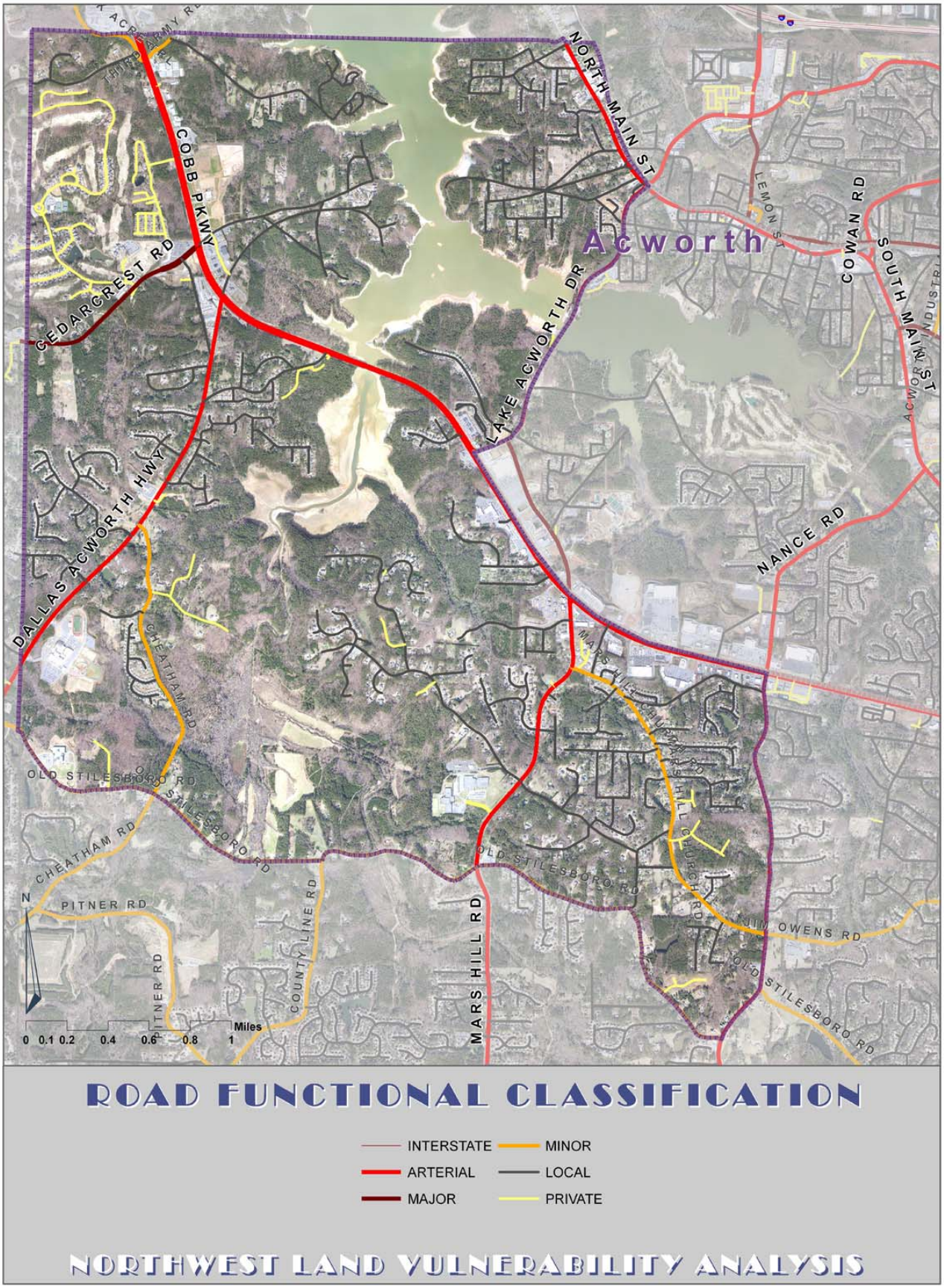
MAP 4 - Zoning



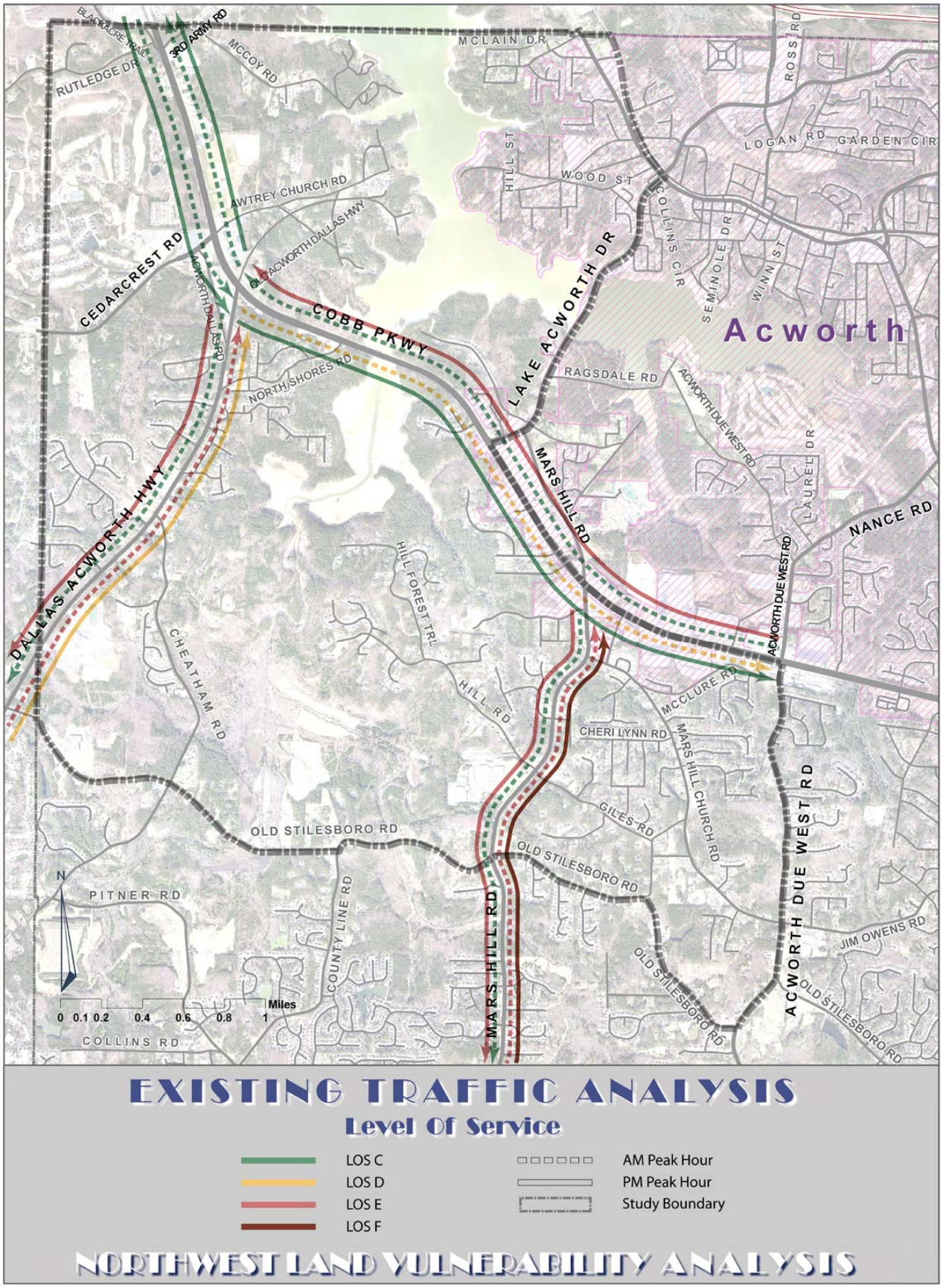
ZONING

NORTHWEST LAND VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS

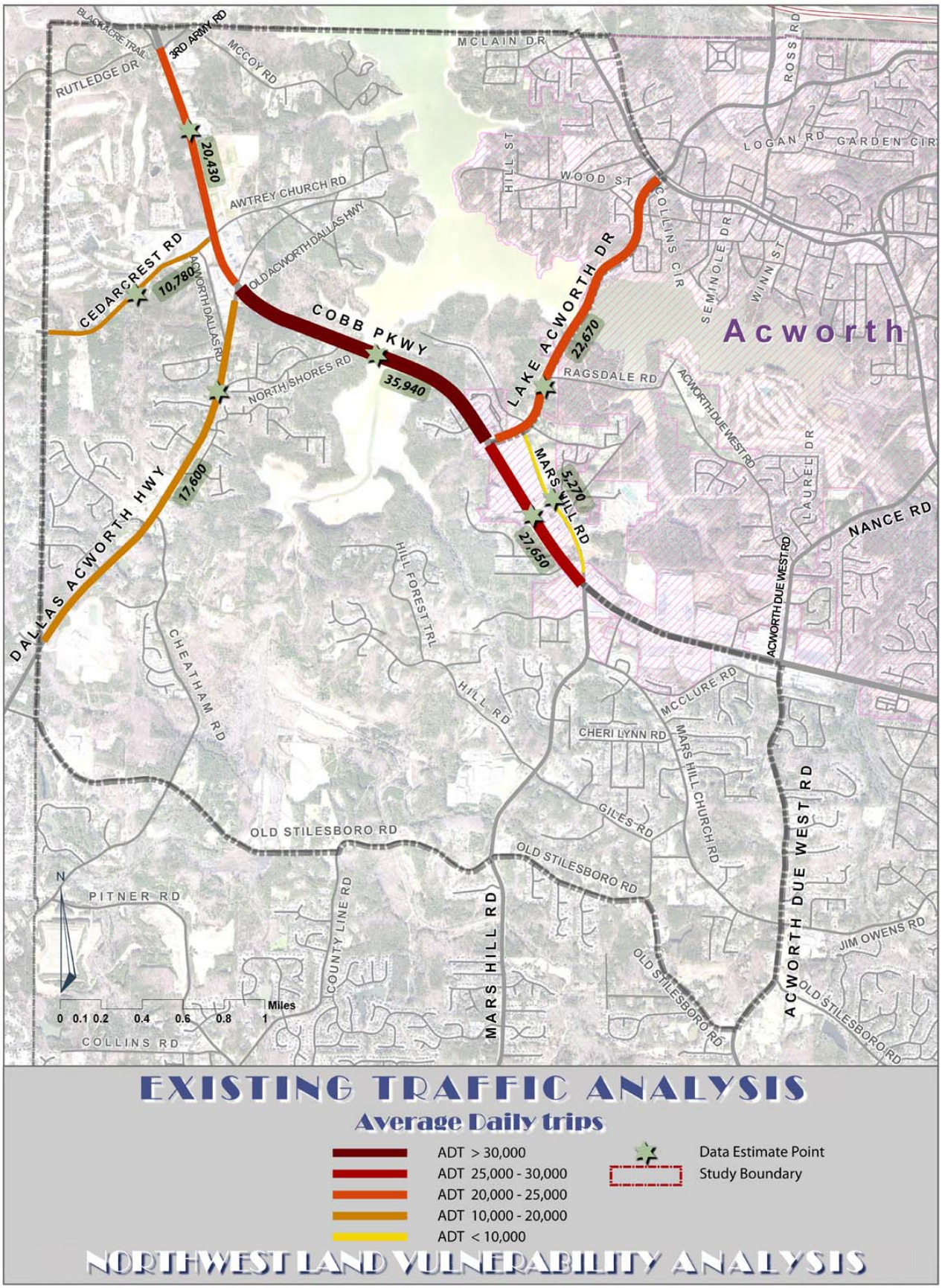
MAP 5 - Transportation Network & Functional Classification



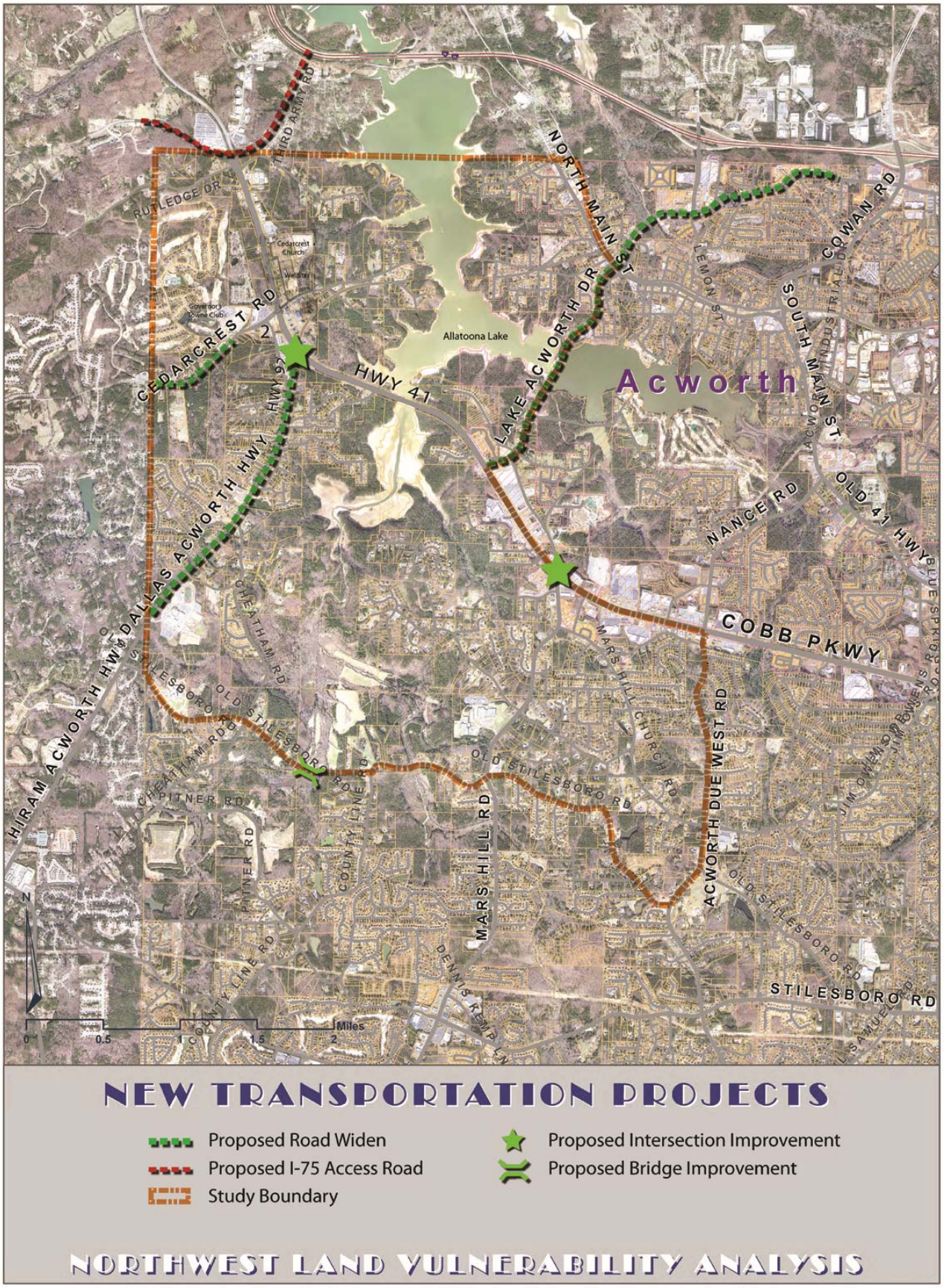
MAP 6 - Transportation Level of Service (LOS)



MAP 7 - Transportation Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)



MAP 8 - New Transportation Projects

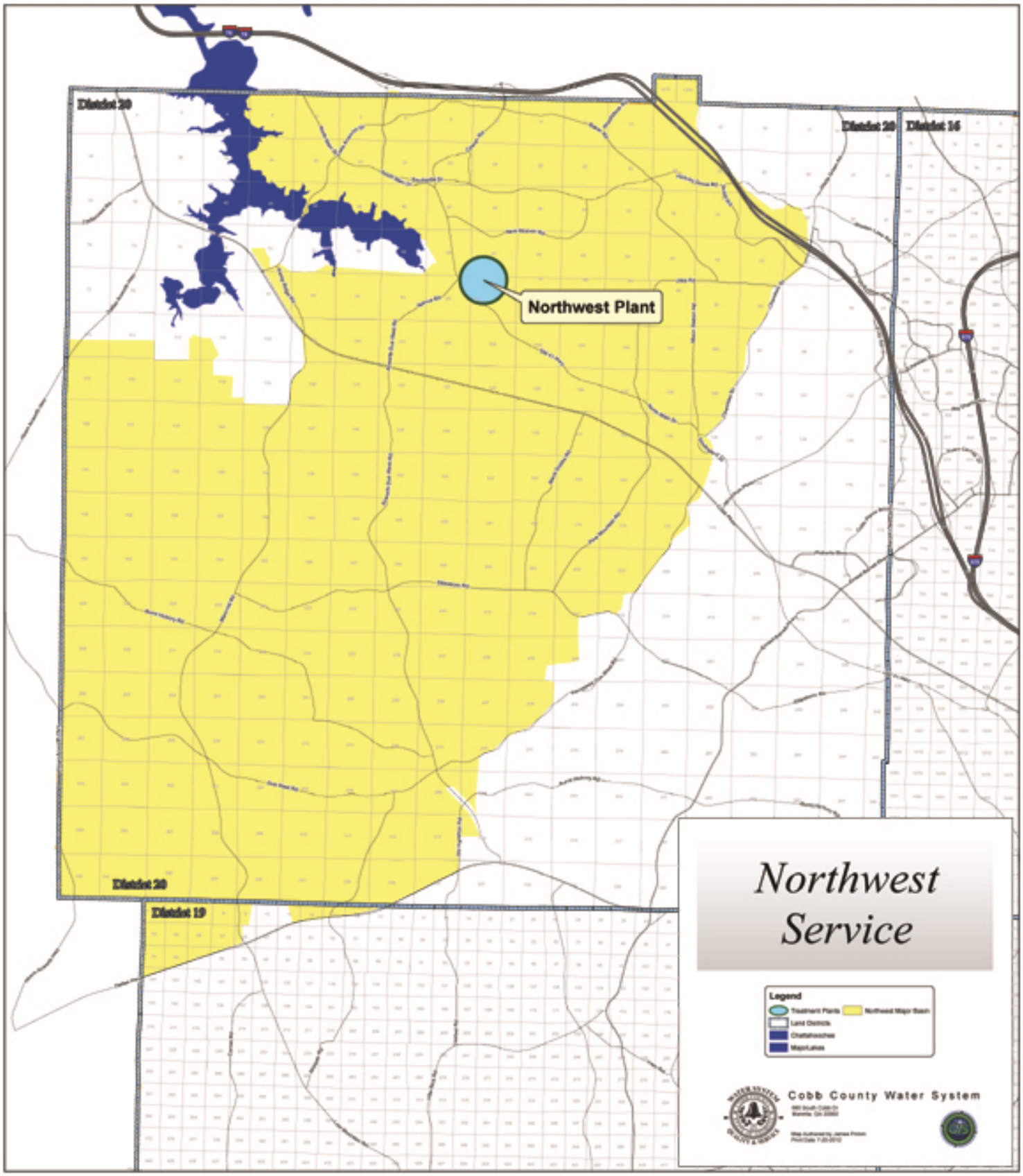


NEW TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

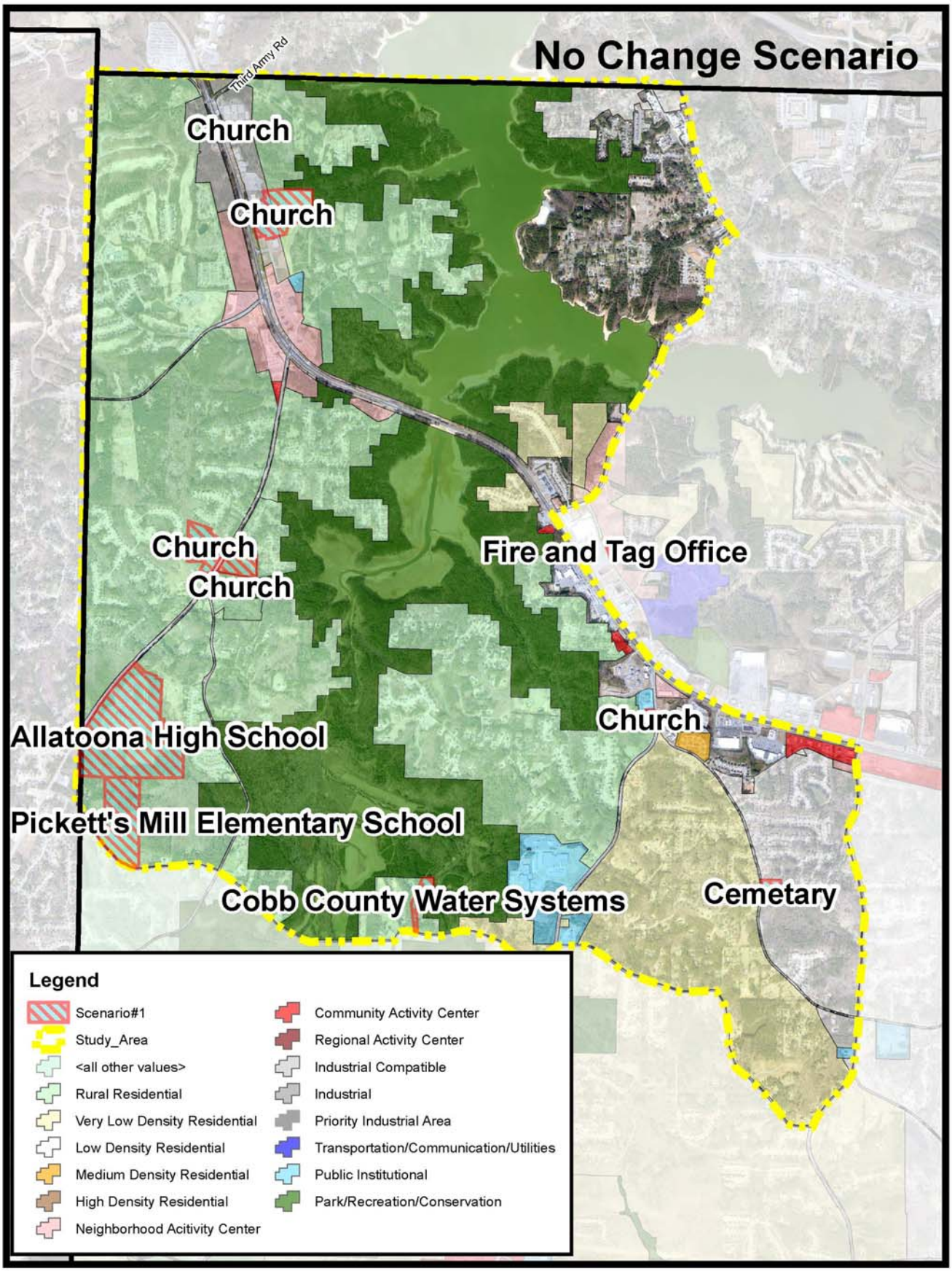
- Proposed Road Widen
- Proposed I-75 Access Road
- Study Boundary
- Proposed Intersection Improvement
- Proposed Bridge Improvement

NORTHWEST LAND VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS

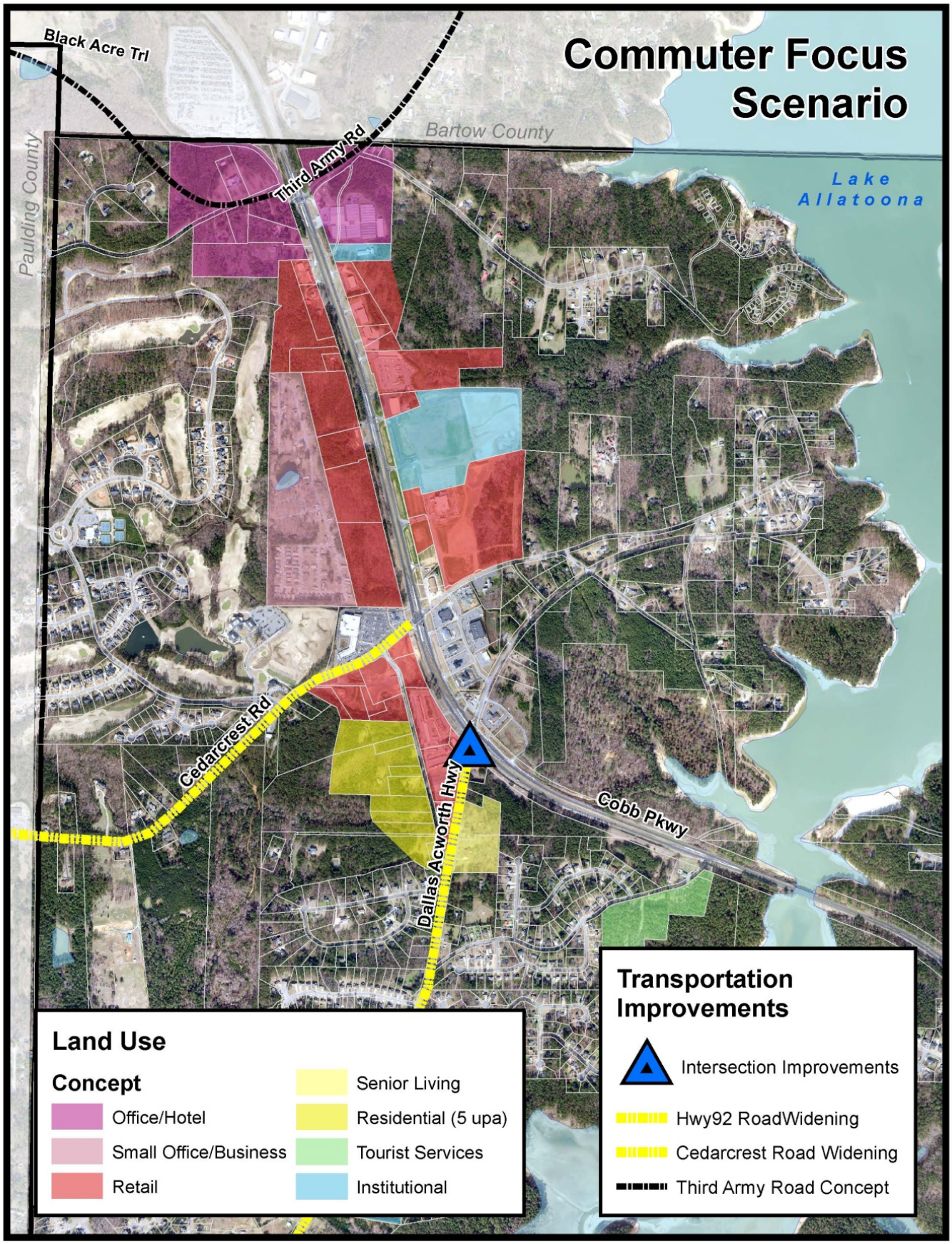
MAP 9 - Northwest Water Reclamation Facility



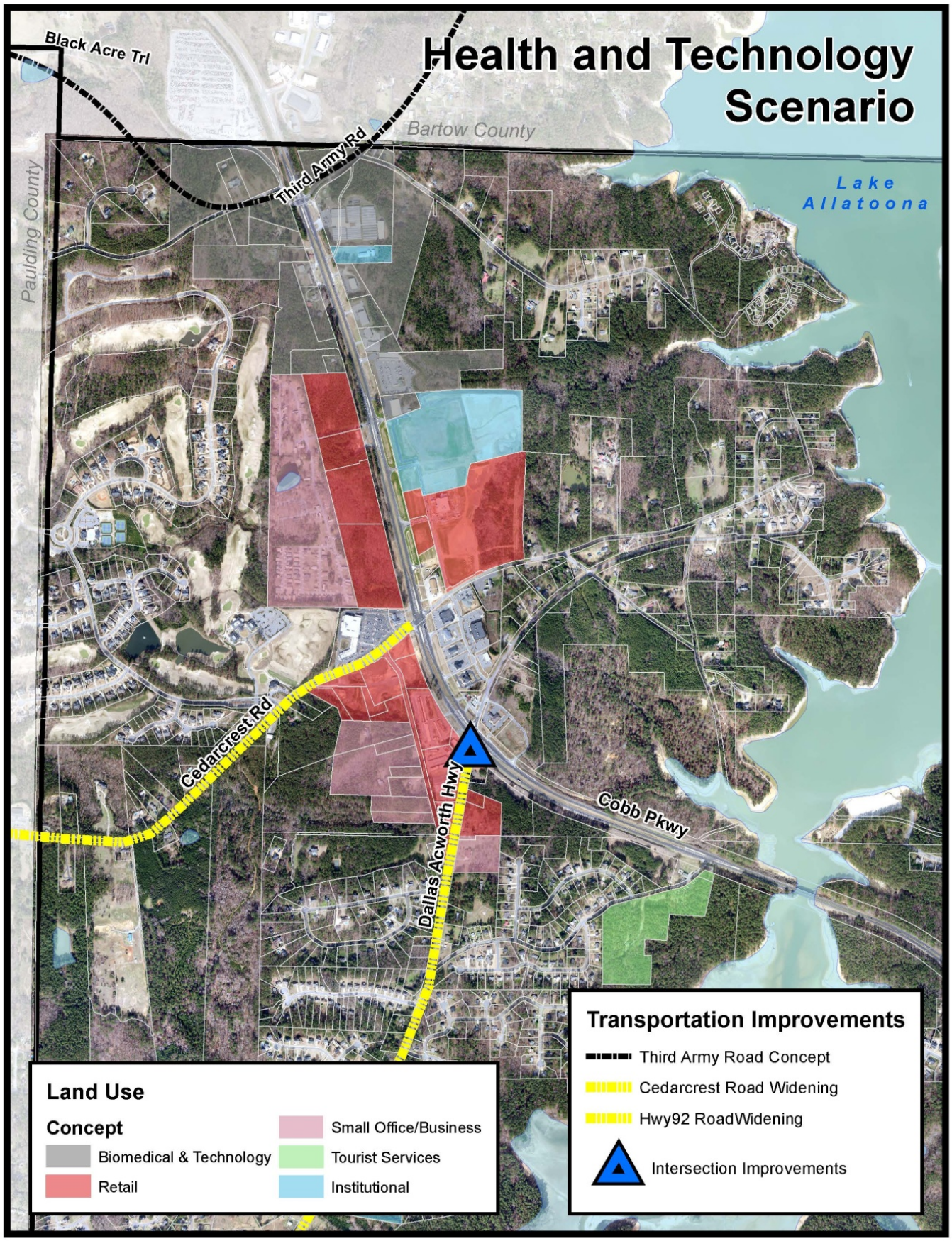
MAP 10 - No Change Scenario



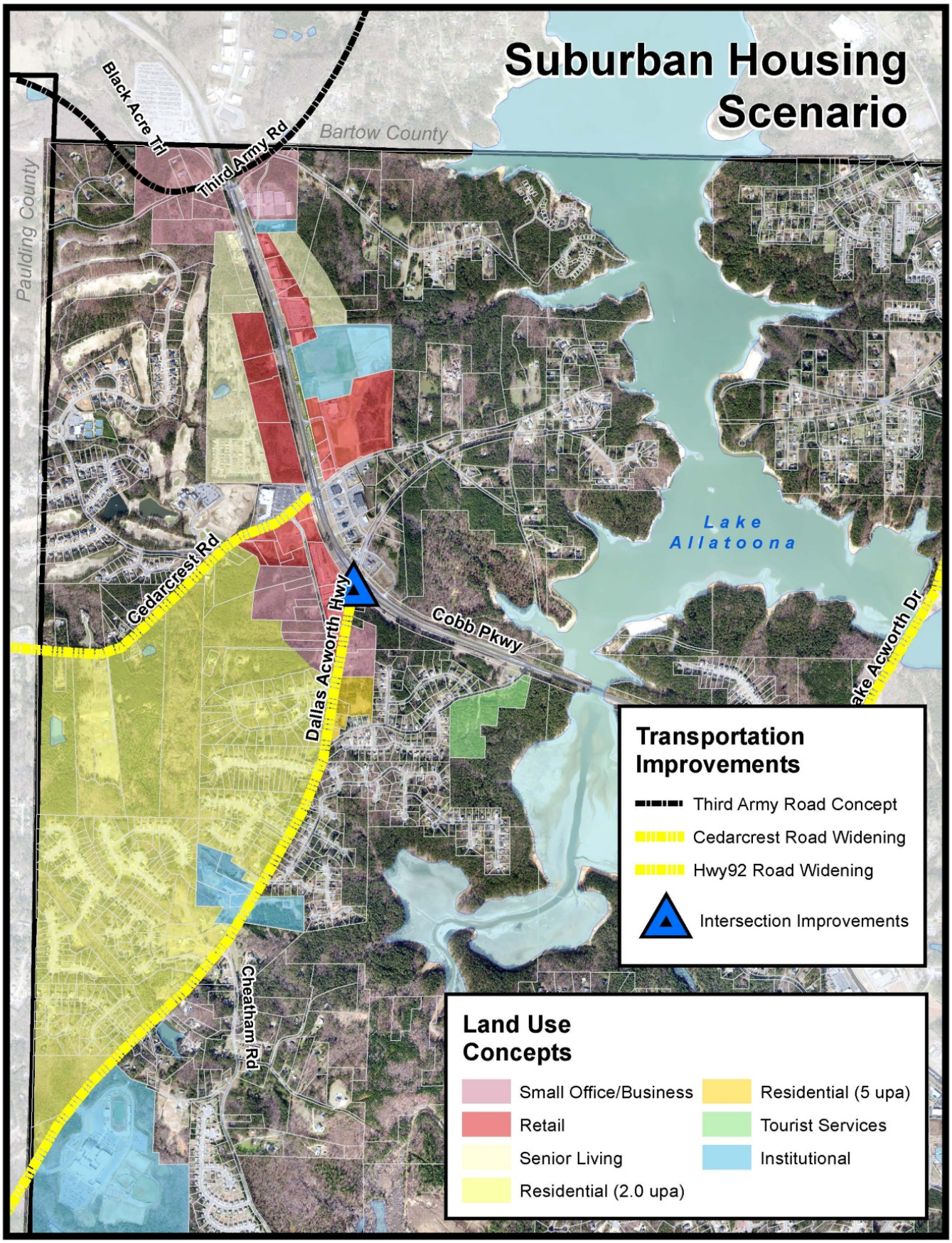
MAP 11 - Commuter Focus Scenario



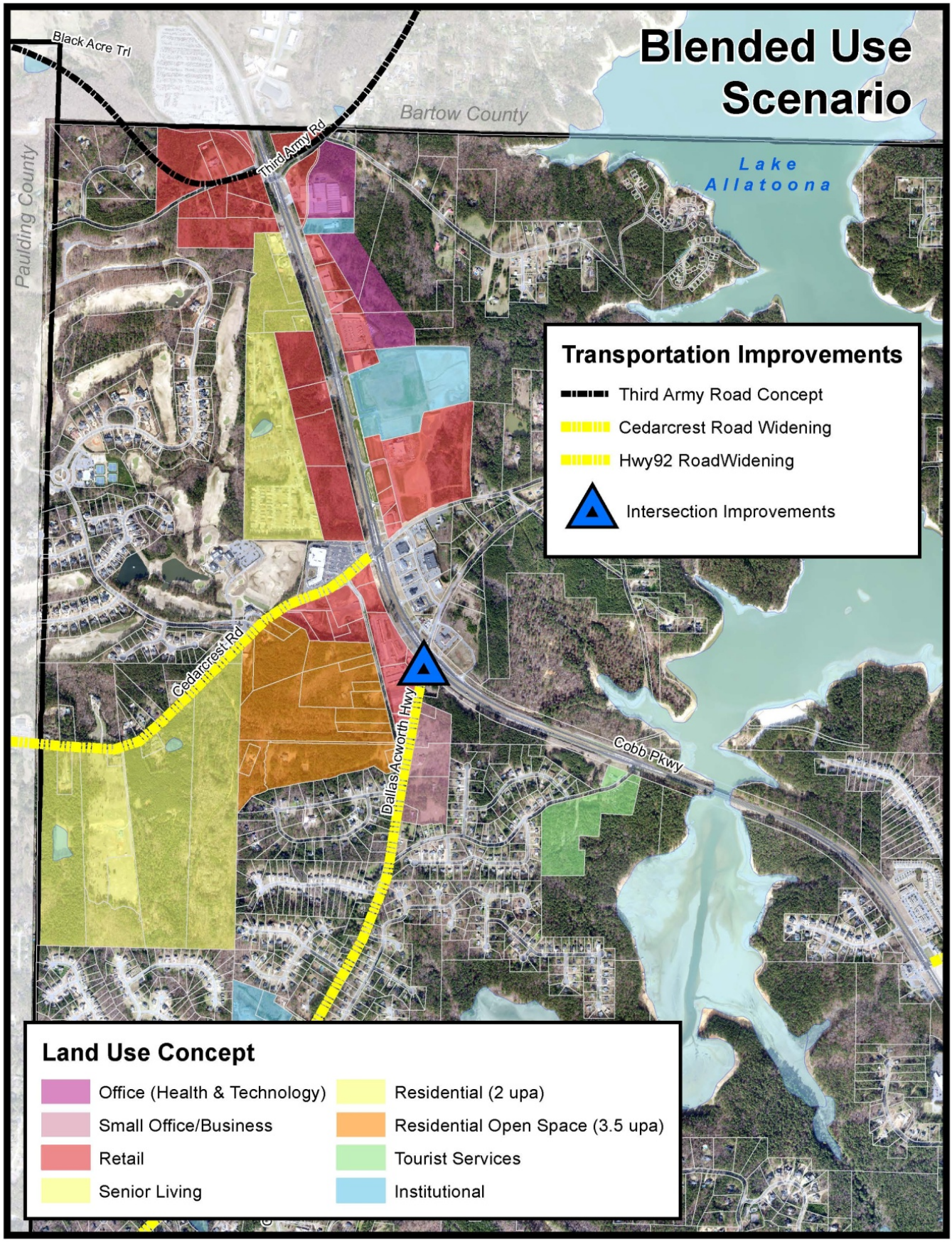
MAP 12 - Health and Technology Scenario



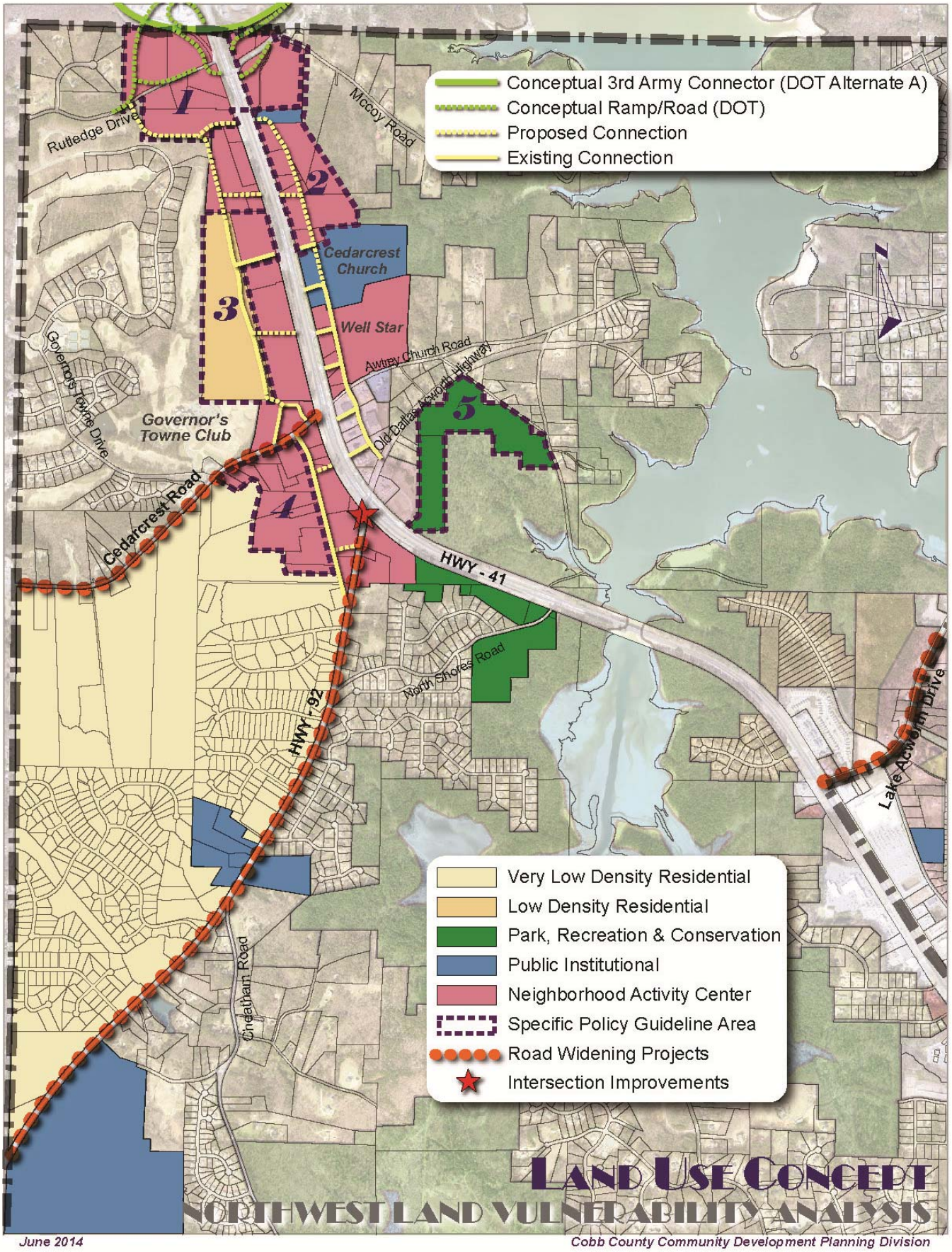
MAP 13 - Suburban Housing Scenario



MAP 14 - Blended Use Scenario

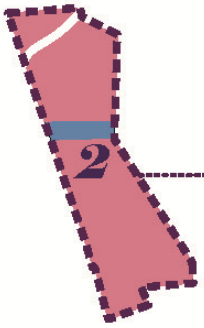


MAP 15 - Framework Plan



Specific Area One: ((*NAC - Third Army Rd and HWY 41 intersection*))

- Establish a Neighborhood Activity Center node
- Encourage retail and office uses. In addition, if the proposed I-75 and Third Army Road Interchange is built, this NAC area would be considered for hospitality type uses
- Limited sewer capacities
- Utilize environmentally sensitive, low impact development standards on east side of HWY 41
- Recommend shared stormwater detention when possible



Specific Area Two: (*NAC - East of HWY 41*)

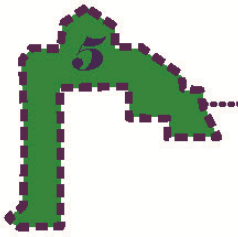
- Environmentally sensitive area, adjacent to Lake Allatoona
- Encourage utilization of environmental low impact development techniques to manage stormwater
- Require standard stormwater management facilities
- Encourage shared stormwater detention when possible

Specific Area Three: *(LDR/NAC - East of Governor's Towne Club)*

- To be considered for Low Density Residential
- Provide an adequate transition and buffering from the commercial uses
- Recommend senior living type of development
- Direct access to Cobb Parkway
- Inter-parcel access to adjacent retail and office uses

Specific Area Four: *(NAC - Between Cedarcrest Rd & HWY 92)*

- Expanded existing Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) on the west side of Acworth Dallas Road
- Recommend low rise professional office type uses with residential architectural style
- Recommend residential uses at the mid range of the Low Density Residential category
- Provide a transition in building scale and land use type
- Establish appropriate buffering when office uses are adjacent to established residential neighborhoods
- Architectural compatibility, shared access, and land use transition to be paramount important
- Assemblage of properties to be preferred and evaluated for appropriateness



Specific Area Five: *(PRC - South of Old Dallas Acworth HWY)*

- Environmentally sensitive area and proximate to Lake Allatoona
- Remain within a Park, Recreation and Conservation land use category to naturally provide water quality control for Lake Allatoona
- Consideration may be giving to allow for passive recreation in the form of walking or biking trails given that such trails consist of pervious material

SPECIFIC AREA POLICY GUIDELINES

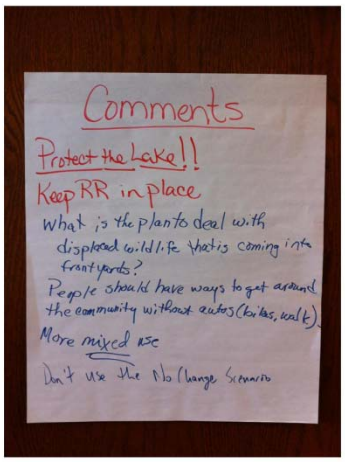
NORTHWEST LAND VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX 17 - Public Comments from April 2, 2013

Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

Public Comments from April 2 meeting

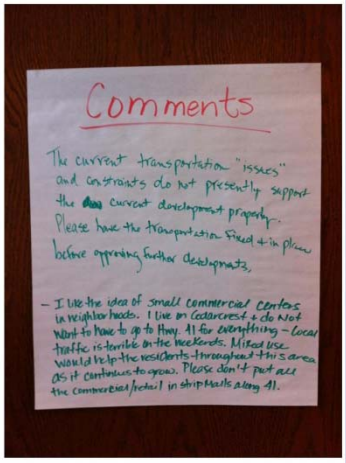
- Protect the Lake!!
- Keep RR in place
- What is the plan to deal with displaced wild-life that is coming into front yards?
- People should have ways to get around the community without autos (bikes, walk)
- More mixed use
- Don't use the No Change Scenario



Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

Public Comments from April 2 meeting

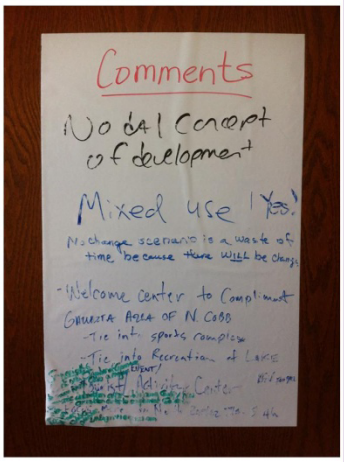
- The current Transportation "issues" and constraints do presently support the current development properly. Please have transportation fixed and in place before approving further developments.
- I like the idea of small commercial centers in neighborhoods. I live on Cedarcrest and do not want to have to go to Hwy. 41 for everything – Local traffic is terrible on the weekends. Mixed use would help the residents throughout this area as it continues to grow. Please don't put all the commercial/ retail in strip malls along 41.



Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

Public Comments from April 2 meeting

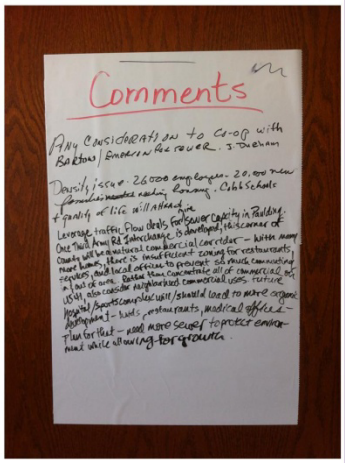
- Nodal concept of development
- Mixed Use ! Yes!
- No change scenario is a waste of time because there will be change
- Welcome center to compliment ????? area to north Cobb
  - Tie into sports complex
  - Tie into Recreation of Lake
  - Tourist event/activity center
- Focus more on north rather than south
- Scenario #6
  - Work with Chamber of Commerce to make North Cobb a major economic destination center – Welcome center/new convention center to complement Galleria.



Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

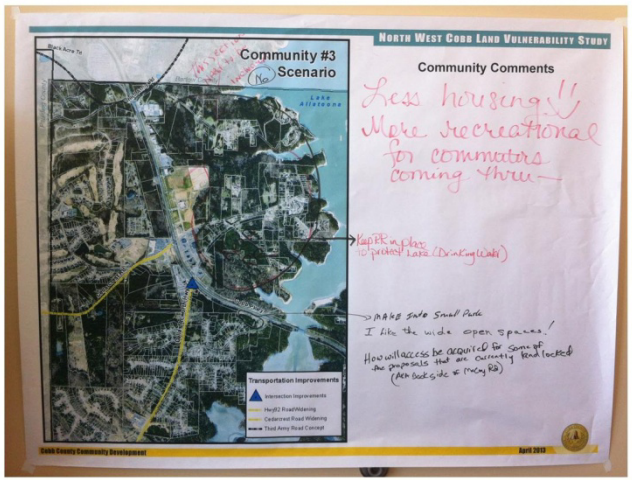
Public Comments from April 2 meeting

- Any consideration to co-op with Bartow/Emerson for sewer
- Density issue – 26,000 employees, 20,000 new families needing housing. Cobb Schools + quality of life will attract.
- Leverage traffic flow deals for more sewer capacity in Paulding. Once Third Army Rd Interchange is developed, this corner of county will be a natural commercial corridor – With many homes, there is insufficient zoning for restaurants, services, and local offices to prevent so much commuting in & out of area. Rather than concentrate all of commercial on US 41, also consider neighborhood commercial uses. Future hospital/ sports complex will/should lead to more organic development - hotel, restaurants, medical offices – Plan for that – need more sewer to protect environment while allowing for growth.



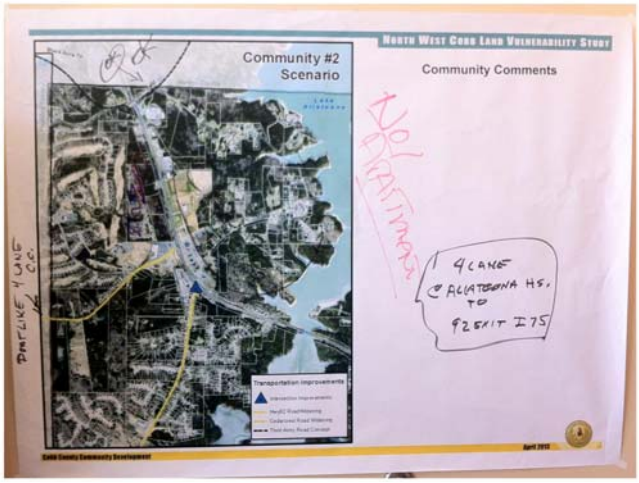
Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

Public Comments from April 2 meeting

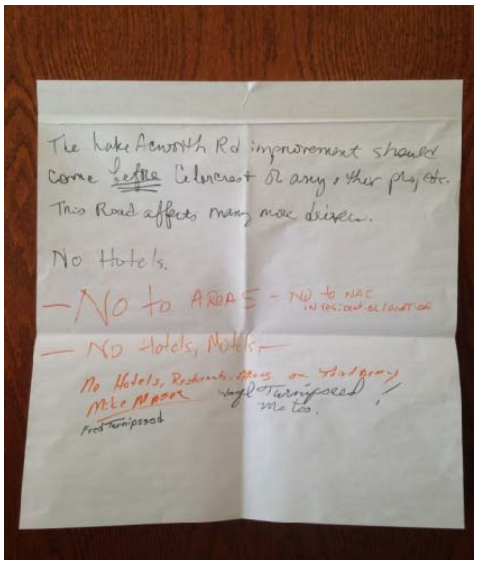


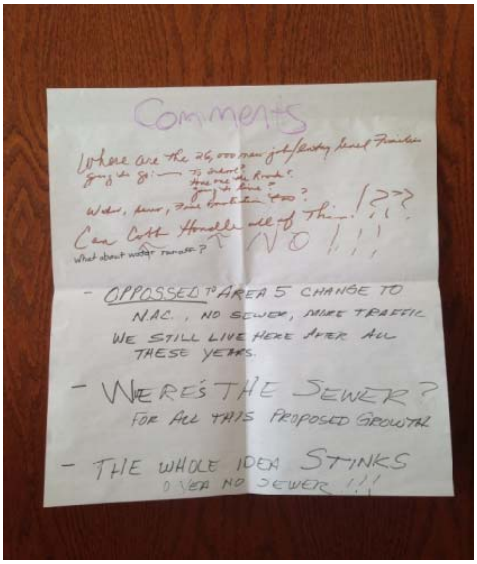
Northwest Land Vulnerability Analysis

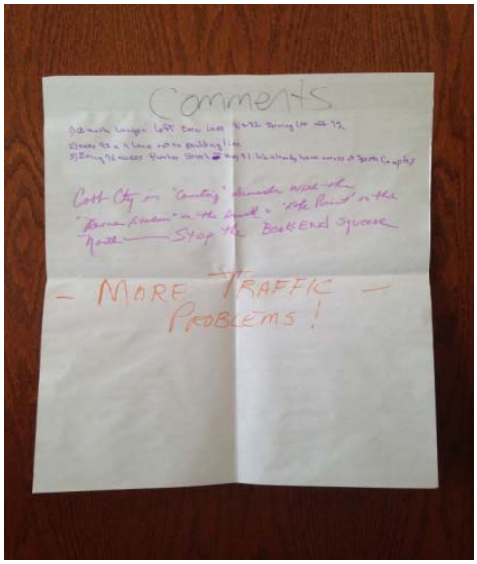
Public Comments from April 2 meeting

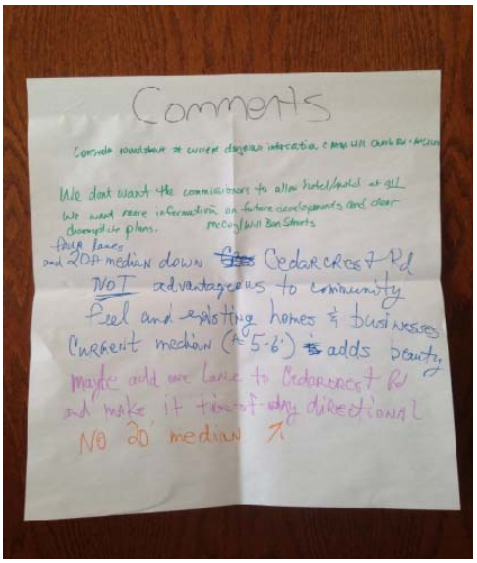


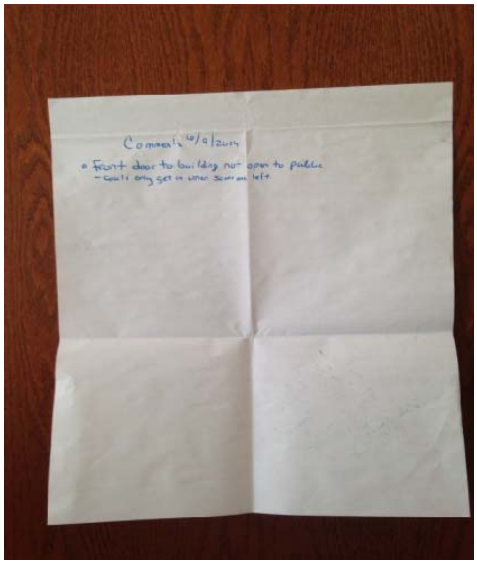
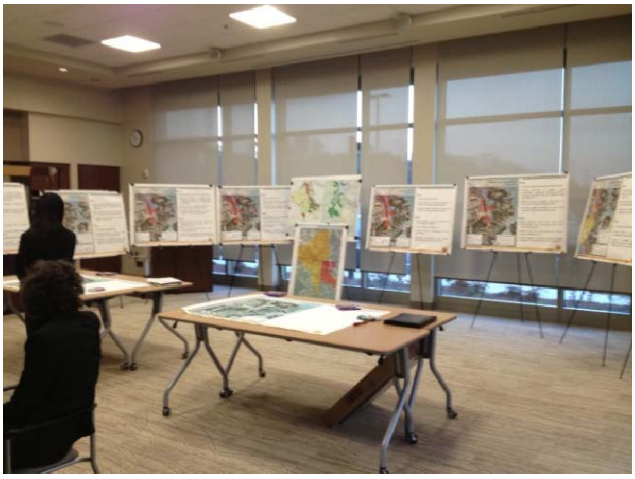
APPENDIX 18 - Public Comments from June 9, 2014











APPENDIX 19 - Public Meeting Images