



PREPARED FOR: Cobb County, Georgia
PREPARED BY: EDAW AECOM

RIVER LINE MASTER PLAN



Acknowledgements

Cobb County would like to thank the following for their contributions to the development of the River Line Master Plan:

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RIVER LINE
MASTER PLAN





Executive Summary

1.0 Overview

The Cobb County Community Development Agency (ComDev) requested land use, preservation, recreation, and non-vehicular transportation planning services for the development of a master plan in southern Cobb County.

Cobb County was the procuring agency and client for the project, and ComDev was responsible for the overall administration and management of the project.

2.0 Public Participation Process

A key tenet of the plan was to get insight from a wide range of stakeholders who knew the River Line area well and who could report on its strengths as well as its challenges.

The planning process therefore sought from the beginning to engage the following groups:

- A Project Management Team, comprised of local government leaders, who understand the area's political and legislative context;
- A Stakeholder Committee, comprised of key representatives from special interest groups as well as from the resident and business communities, to serve as a link between the Project Management Team and the wider public;
- The Public, to hear from people who live, work, and spend time in the River Line area on a regular basis; and
- County Commissioners, to get approval of the final master plan and support for implementation.

2.1 Project Management Team

The County's project manager for the Cobb County River Line Master Plan, in consultation with EDAW, identified members of a Project Management Team to help guide the development of the study. Comprised of individuals from County and City agencies, the Project Management Team established goals and objectives for the plan early on at a kick-off meeting.

2.2 Stakeholder Committee

The Steering Committee included members of special interest groups (such as the Chattahoochee River Keeper and the Georgia Battlefields Association) and members of the public active in local community development. Before each

public meeting, the Steering Committee was given an opportunity to review and comment on material to be presented. Industrial property owners were not on the original Stakeholder Committee, but their interests, concerns, and input was valued in the process. As a result, industrial property owners had substantial input in the process of generating the master plan.

2.3 Public Meetings

Public involvement is paramount in generating enthusiasm and building the broad community support for innovative parks, recreation, and open space planning in the years ahead. It was established that three (3) public meetings would take place at 25%, 50%, and 75% project completion milestones. During the course of the project, an additional four meetings were conducted to ensure there was sufficient public involvement.

2.4 County Commissioner Briefings and Presentation

The Project Management Team gave a presentation of the final report to the Cobb County Commissioners. The purpose of this presentation was to ensure the Commissioners had a thorough understand of the process and the recommendations in the report.

3.0 Understanding the Context

3.1 Review of Existing Studies and Data

A baseline analysis was undertaken to understand the context of the River Line study area. Plans addressing policy, transportation, open space, the Chattahoochee River, and historic resources were reviewed to ensure the consistency of the River Line Master Plan with their contents and to recommend potential amendments to these plans (where appropriate). Mapping exercises, which focused on examining existing conditions, are described in the following section.

The plans and studies described in this section include the following:

Overarching Policy

- Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning
- Smyrna 2030 Comprehensive Plan (Community Agenda) and Zoning

Transportation

- Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan (in progress)
- Future Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study (DL Hollowell – Veterans Memorial Highway Corridor)

Open Space

- Nickajack Creek Feasibility Study
- Cobb County Municipal Ordinances (pertaining to Nickajack Creek)
- Cobb County Parks Bond
- Cobb County Conservation Easements

Chattahoochee River

- Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) and the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan
- Chattahoochee River Greenway Planning and Implementation Handbook

Historic Resources

- Johnston’s Chattahoochee River Defense Line
- National Register of Historic Places (Johnston’s River Line)
- Historic Property Description: Presley / Hall – Parlor House

3.2 Inventory and Analysis

The purpose behind an Inventory and Analysis is to gain insight into what makes an area unique. As part of the process we documented existing conditions, analyzed the implications of what is there, and then started the synthesis process to determine the most appropriate design and planning decisions. Specific issues assessed include: the study area’s current land use patterns, recreational opportunities, non-vehicular transportation options, preservation efforts, and urban design elements.

3.2.1 OVERVIEW

The River Line is an area in transition. The area has a rich and diverse history dating back to when it was occupied by Native Americans. During the Civil War, General Joseph Johnston constructed trenches and other earthen defenses to repel the Union forces that were marching toward Atlanta. The Johnston’s River Line is particularly significant due to the presence of very unique fortifications called shoupades that do not exist any other place in the country.

3.2.2 NICKAJACK CREEK

Nickajack Creek is one of the primary water ways in south Cobb County leading to the Chattahoochee River. The area around the creek is mostly undeveloped because much of it is in floodplain. There are also selected wetlands along the creek.

3.2.3 RIVERVIEW ROAD

The study area starts at the intersection of Riverview Road and a railroad bridge overpass. Riverview Road is the easternmost road in the study area and is closest to the Chattahoochee River. It runs parallel to the river, which runs diagonally in a northeast/southwest direction. Riverview Road is a two lane road with no sidewalks, bike lanes, or curb and gutter in most places. There are industrial uses along most of Riverview Road. There is a lot of truck traffic on Riverview Road because of the industrial uses, and the road has become a de facto truck route.

3.2.4 DISCOVERY BOULEVARD

Discovery Boulevard is a two-lane road with sidewalks and curb and gutter along both sides of the road in many locations. There are selected locations along the road where sidewalks do not exist on one side of the road, or both. Discovery Boulevard is much more manicured and well-maintained than other roads in the study area, and although this road is flanked by industrial uses it overall has a nice visual character.

3.2.5 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

Veterans Memorial is a four-lane divided highway that serves as one of the major roads in the area. Traffic moves at a brisk pace on Veterans Memorial, and like so many roads in the Atlanta area, pedestrians are taking their lives in their hands when attempting to cross from one side of the road to the other. There are no sidewalks or bike lanes along Veterans.

3.2.6 MABLETON PARKWAY

Mableton Parkway is the end of study area. It is a busy, four-lane arterial highway that transitions into Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to the east.

3.2.7 OAKDALE ROAD

Oakdale Road, which runs through the center of the study area, is a two-lane road with curb and gutter and sidewalks on both sides of the road. Oakdale

Road follows a ridge, so there are outstanding views in both directions. From a couple of locations that are really nice views of downtown Atlanta. In some sections along Oakdale Road there are fairly large stands of mature trees.

3.2.8 BUCKNER ROAD

Buckner Road serves as the western boundary of the study area. It is a two-lane road with no curb and gutter or bike lanes and has little sidewalk connectivity. It appears to be a small country road that has been improved over the years. Buckner Road is very curvilinear and is lined with fairly dense vegetation on both sides. It has a very different look and feel to it as compared to many of the newer roads. There are several older homes setback from the road on both sides.

4.0 Comprehensive Mapping

Effective strategic planning always begins with a sound base of information. EDAW used geospatial data, satellite photos, CAD data, and site visits to identify key existing conditions and opportunities. A number of maps were generated to help illustrate the baseline context for the master planning process. These included:

- Cobb County Existing Land Use
- Cobb County Future Land Use
- Transportation/Connectivity Map
- Trails Map
- Facilities Map
- Vacant Land Map
- Environmental Resources
- Cultural and Historic Resources

5.0 Master Plan Development

5.1 Purpose of the Master Plan

The master plan is intended to create a “framework” that guides the future of River Line. Although conceptual in nature, the planning concepts were drawn from a thorough and careful understanding of the land, the community, and the history that has shaped both.

This master plan explores a range of options and then identifies future, discrete improvement projects and lays out an achievable and cost effective strategy for their implementation.

5.2 Primary Planning Principles

5.2.1 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Background research (including the review of policy and strategy documents, site analysis, and comprehensive mapping exercises, as described in Sections 3 and 4) helped the consultant team piece together initial issues and opportunities for the River Line area. At the first public meeting (November 18, 2008), results from this analysis were presented for comment.

Members of the public highlighted several main issues which were of concern:

- **Connectivity**
- **Conflicts between different Uses**
- **Chattahoochee River**
- **Recreation**
- **Historic and Community Resources**
- **Public Realm**
- **Identity**

5.2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Six primary planning principles were developed to guide development of a master plan. They are:

- Enhance Connectivity
- Reconnect to the River
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities
- Emphasize Cultural & Historic Resources
- Create Community-friendly Character
- Develop Strong Sense of Identity
- Enhance Businesses in the Area

5.3 Major Issues

There are four major issues that influenced the development of the alternative concepts. They are:

- **Floodplain & Wetlands** – The floodplains along the Chattahoochee River and Nickajack Creek will influence developable areas within the study area.
- **Topography** – Parts of the study area are very steep, and this will influence which areas are buildable and how both pedestrian and vehicular connectivity may occur.

- *Transportation & Connectivity* – The basic transportation infrastructure is in place, and it directly influences potential development in the River Line area.
- *Environmental Concerns* – Some sections of the River Line area near the Chattahoochee River may have environmental issues that need to be addressed. Upstream activities have had a significant impact on the water quality of the river.

5.4 Alternative Planning Concepts

Based upon input from Cobb County staff, the Project Management Team, and local stakeholders, EDAW developed three Alternative Planning Concepts. Each concept incorporated the six Primary Planning Principles, but the application of the principles varies considerably.

The three Alternative Planning Concepts are:

- 1) Green/Community;
- 2) Historic/Cultural with improvements to existing businesses; and
- 3) Village Center.

5.4.1 GREEN/COMMUNITY CONCEPT

This concept places an emphasis on natural resources, pedestrian connections, new parks, and community facilities. The idea is to focus on creating a strong sense of identity for the River Line area that is based in large part on parks, trails, and natural resources. The concept recommends the following:

- Addition of pocket parks and linear parks;
- Development of a community park near the river;
- Restoration of wetlands;
- Focus on protecting/enhancing natural resources;
- Addition of trails, walks, and trailheads;
- Emphasis on pedestrian modes while minimizing motorized vehicles; and
- Enhanced connection of schools to river.

5.4.2 HISTORIC/CULTURAL CONCEPT

This concept emphasizes the rich, diverse history of the River Line area. It seeks to build upon this history and use it as the basis for creating a sense of identity for the area. This concept recommends the following:

- Protect and interpret historic features;
- Conduct a complete cultural inventory;

- Consider historic district designation in selected areas;
- Construct museum/history center;
- Improved industrial uses maintained along river;
- Research historic trails/embankments – recreate, restore, or interpret; and
- Emphasize tourism.

5.4.3 VILLAGE CENTER CONCEPT

This concept focuses on developing an urban center that serves as the heart of the River Line neighborhood, and making the transition from a bedroom subdivision to a true Village Center. This approach is dependent upon one or more private developers taking the lead on constructing the urban center, but the County can offer incentives to encourage this type of development. This concept recommends the following:

- Develop mixed use hub along the river that will include a Village Center, public space, residential, commercial, and community use;
- Industrial uses maintained along river would be enhanced;
- Connect Oakdale and northern residential areas to the river via “pedestrian promenades”;
- Take advantage of good access from I-285 and I-20 that will allow customers to easily access the urban center;
- Include commercial development at an appropriate scale to expand the concept of live/work/play;
- Develop public gathering areas in and around the urban center in order to encourage pedestrian activity; and
- Include facilities and activities that will attract people, such as a restaurant, a pub, a museum, or community spaces.

5.4.4 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PLANNING ALTERNATIVES

On January 20, 2009, a second public meeting was held to review the three Planning Alternative Concepts. At this meeting, called the 50% Public Meeting, each of the three concepts were presented and the potential merits and liabilities associated with each were discussed. The basic comments from the meeting are as follows:

- Liked ideas to improve connectivity
- Strong support for the Village concept
- Concern over the scale of the Village
- Support for more greenspace and park development
- Provide opportunities for tourism

- Provide history center/museum
- Recreation & dining are major needs
- Combination of all options

5.5 Preliminary Preferred Master Plan

Based upon reviews of the alternative concepts, EDAW incorporated feedback from the County Project Manager, Project Management Team, Stakeholder Committee, general public, and other stakeholders to create a Preliminary Preferred Master Plan. This plan incorporates the strongest features of the three alternative concepts and blends them into one plan. In particular, the Preferred Master Plan is developed around the idea of a Village Center, a strong green infrastructure, and embracing the historical significance of the River Line area.

5.6 Final Master Plan

This Preliminary Preferred Master Plan was reviewed by the County Project Manager, Project Management Team, and Stakeholder Committee, and appropriate modifications were made and incorporated into the Final Master Plan.

The primary focal point of the Final Master Plan is a mixed use Village Center similar in character to projects such as Birkdale Village Center (Huntersville, NC), Smyrna Market Village (Smyrna, GA), Glenwood Park (Atlanta, GA), and Jubilee (the Vinings neighborhood of Atlanta, GA).

The Village Center would include commercial, residential, public gathering spaces, walkways and trails, and strong visual and physical links to the river. Industrial uses could be located around the Center if such uses were improved. A mixture of uses can coexist within the River Line area. Buffering would help minimize potential conflicts.

5.6.1 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Roadway improvements need to occur along Oakdale, Buckner and Riverview roads. These roadways should be kept as two-lane roads, with bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides where feasible. These roads should be improved to better accommodate traffic, but should have a pedestrian scale, with street trees and bioswales. Turn-lanes, scenic overlooks, planting medians, and enhanced landscaping as should be added as appropriate to allow for shared uses by business owners and residents.

5.6.2 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements will most likely need to be made to Oakdale, Buckner, and Riverview roads in order to accommodate the expected level of traffic in

the area. The basic idea is that all three roads would remain two-lane, but would include turn-lanes, planted medians in selected areas, street trees, and sidewalks. Improving the roads would minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Crosswalks need to be added to making it easier for pedestrians to cross the road.

5.6.3 NICKAJACK CREEK IMPROVEMENTS

Nickajack Creek is one of the greatest assets in the River Line area. It is one of the primary water ways that leads to the Chattahoochee River. There are opportunities to protect and enhance the environmental sustainability of the creek and its surrounding watershed. Water quality needs to be improved, and this can be accomplished by implementing best management practices that address stormwater runoff.

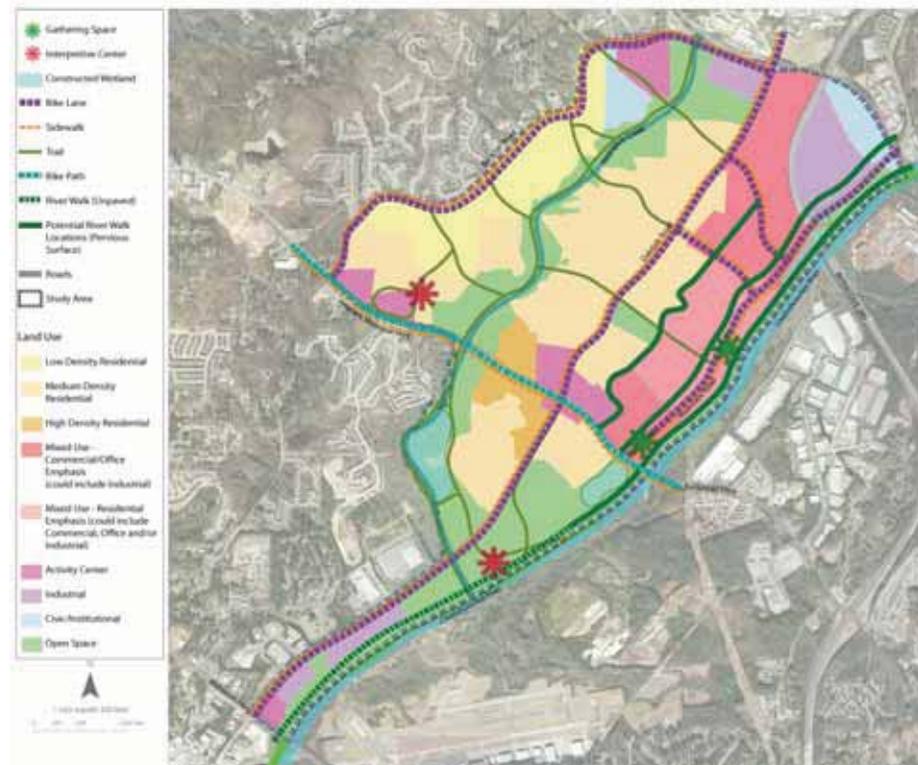


FIGURE 0-1: Final Master Plan

5.6.4 RIVER WALK – RECONNECTING TO THE RIVER

We have an inherent attraction to water, and the Chattahoochee River is the most dominant natural resource in the study area. Developing a River Walk will provide opportunities for pedestrians to get closer to the water. Currently there are very few opportunities to see the river, and even fewer to actually get close to the river. The River Walk does not have to be located right along the river. In places it can be located on the uphill side of Riverview and Oakdale. A walk in these areas would be able to provide nice views to the river and would be out of the floodplain.

5.6.5 INTERPRETIVE CENTER

One problem with trying to tell the story of the history of the River Line area is that most of the historic and archeological features are not apparent. Many have been lost or destroyed over the years, and some are on private property. The development of an interpretive center within the River Line would provide a place to tell about the history and culture of the place.

6.0 Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy is intended to provide direction for how to make the recommendations in this plan a reality. This Strategy builds off an Implementation Schedule of actions needed to implement the goals, programs, and projects formulated as part of the Final Master Plan.

The Strategy and Schedule are organized around the four guiding elements of the master plan, namely land use, preservation, recreation, and transportation. Additionally, actions specifically associated with organization are addressed.

While it is assumed the majority of these actions will take place over a 10-year time period, the Schedule emphasizes priority projects to undertake rather than dictating a strict time line as market conditions, developer interest, and funding cycles may vary. Development priorities for the River Line area are dependent upon a number of factors.

Environmental issues are a priority because the Chattahoochee River is possibly contaminated and there are concerns that development of all types have contributed to this. It is difficult to determine the type and amount of pollution that has occurred, and what remediation is required, until initial studies are completed. Environmental cleanup can be extremely expensive and time-consuming, so understanding the problem is a priority so we can determine which solutions are most viable.

6.1 Organizational

6.1.1 MAINTAIN ACTIVE OVERSIGHT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIVER LINE AREA

A strong Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from Cobb County and local special interest groups and active members of the community, was established to provide a first level of stakeholder input to help guide the master planning process. As part of the Implementation Strategy, it is proposed that such active involvement on behalf of the River Line area be maintained.

6.2 Land Use

6.2.1 CHANGE LAND USES TO BETTER REFLECT THE DESIRED COMMUNITY-FRIENDLY CHARACTER OF THE AREA

In order for the Final Master Plan to be implemented, the County may need to modify its Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, and zoning to allow the development of additional greenspace, a Village Center, and mixed uses along Riverview Road. These mixed uses could include residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Land use changes are also recommended along Veterans Memorial Highway in selected areas. Currently all of these areas where changes are recommended are zoned Industrial.

6.2.2 DEVELOP A NEW “VILLAGE CENTER” NEAR THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

While this master plan can recommend a Village Center be developed near the Chattahoochee River in the River Line area, the realization of the vision will of course depend on market interest. Cobb County can help lay the foundation to entice private developers to the area. Tools which the County could employ include offering economic incentives and strategies as well as negotiating public-private partnerships to help build infrastructure and amenities in the area. Any changes in ownership within the River Line area will occur only because of willing owners. It is anticipated that many of the existing land owners, including both residential and industrial, will choose to stay in the area.

6.2.3 ENSURE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENTLY EMBODIES THE DESIRED CHARACTER FOR THE AREA

To help ensure the character of development in the River Line area is in keeping with stakeholders' and the public's vision, it is recommended several projects be undertaken. A top priority should be developing a “pattern book” (or design

guidelines) for the River Line area. A pattern book would identify the shapes, materials, and patterns that build upon the historic and cultural character of the area. Of major issue with the River Line area is lack of identity. A pattern book will help ensure there is a consistent approach to signage, lighting, architectural colors and styles, benches, landscaping, and other site elements, and this consistency will help create a visual identity for the River Line area.

6.3 Preservation

6.3.1 DEVELOP PROGRAMS AND POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE THE PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SHOUPADES AND OTHER HISTORIC RESOURCES FOUND ALONG THE RIVER LINE

Lifted from Cobb County's Comprehensive Plan Policy 6.21, the above goal speaks to the importance of safeguarding some of the most unique features not only of the River Line area, but of the county and even country. While the Shoupades in particular are in need of protection, other archaeological and historic remnants in the area exist, such as Native American remains and properties such as the Hooper-Turner House on Oakdale Road (as described in Section 3.1.5). Building awareness around these resources not only sheds light on the rich history of the River Line area but helps cement its identity. Protection measures should be put in place before public access is granted to these resources to ensure they are preserved for future generations in the best possible state.

6.3.2 PROMOTE HISTORIC-BASED TOURISM

Cobb County's Comprehensive Plan recognizes the potential economic value of promoting historic-based tourism in an area (described further in Section 3.1.1). The River Line area is uniquely placed to capitalize on its historic resources not only for cultural and educational purposes, but also to help attract visitors and therefore encourage economic development.

One major limitation, however, is that not many people know much about the River Line area. As a stronger sense of identity begins to be developed through physical changes in the area, it is also important to convey messages about River Line, its people, and its history. This can be done via brochures, handouts, and other media. Conducting oral presentations to schools, community organizations, and other interested parties will help people think of "The River Line" as a specific place.

6.3.3 ENCOURAGE LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

Preservation can mean not only protecting an area's historic resources but also its natural ones. In response to the community's desire to incorporate "green" elements into the new master plan, it is recommended that means to ensure low impact development (LID) are adopted. LID involves using alternative development principles to minimize the potential impact from development on natural systems. LIDs are a set of techniques that incorporates small-scale natural landscape features into designs for new development sites.

6.4 Recreation

6.4.1 IMPROVE EXISTING PARKS AND DEVELOP NEW ACCESSIBLE PARKLAND IN THE RIVER LINE AREA

There are several additional studies that will need to be done in the River Line area to improve recreation opportunities. In addition to an overarching open space master plan to pinpoint precise areas for active and passive recreation, detailed site plans need to be developed for the greenspace around Nickajack Creek, for the 100-acre site along the Chattahoochee River, the 17-acre site along Veterans Memorial Highway, and an updated master plan needs to be prepared for Nickajack Park.

The County needs to continue to acquire land in the River Line area for new greenspace as well. The River Line area is growing rapidly, and if the County waits too long, land along the river and along Nickajack Creek will become more expensive and may be developed for other uses. Some properties in the area have been nominated for the County's Park Acquisition Program, so this may result in more public greenspace.

6.4.2 DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF TRAILS TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND NON-VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

A detailed trails and connectivity plan needs to be developed to determine the exact location and layout not only of new trails but of new sidewalks, river walks, crossings, underpasses, signage, trailheads, and gathering areas. Strategic connections to other trail systems should be included as part of the plan, including identifying linkages to the Silver Comet Trail and other amenities such as Activity Centers, major parks, and the Chattahoochee River. The special environmental concerns and regulations related to Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River need to be recognized in the plan as well.

6.5 Transportation

6.5.1 ENSURE LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS REFLECT THE DESIRED COMMUNITY-FRIENDLY CHARACTER OF THE AREA

Although this study's scope included examining only non-vehicular transportation, suggested alterations to wider transportation plans are made when conflicts with master plan recommendations were identified. One such conflict is the proposed designation of Oakdale Road as a future truck route in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This designation conflicts with the vision defined in the Final Master Plan, which calls for Oakdale Road to be redesigned as a residential-scale roadway that is limited to two lanes, has sidewalks and street trees on both sides of the road, and seeks to make it easier to get from one side to the other. The designation should therefore be omitted from the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and alternate truck routes identified, as necessary. If Riverview is designed an alternative truck route, the road could still be improved to improve aesthetics and better accommodate cyclist and pedestrians.

6.5.2 DEVELOP A HIGH QUALITY, CONTINUOUS SIDEWALK NETWORK TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

While some sidewalks exist in the River Line area, they are often incomplete. With gaps in the system, pedestrian movement is discouraged as it is difficult (and often dangerous) to access amenities on foot. Connectivity in the area could be greatly improved if these networks were to be completed. The Final Master Plan recommends sidewalks be built along all major roads in the River Line area, i.e. Veterans Memorial Highway, Oakdale Road, Riverview Road, Buckner Road, and Discovery Boulevard. Additionally, connections from Oakdale Road leading to the Chattahoochee River need to be developed to help provide public access.

6.5.3 DEVELOP A NETWORK OF BICYCLE PATHS TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

According to comments made at the public meetings, there are many bicyclists in the area who routinely use Veterans Memorial Highway and Oakdale Road/Discovery Boulevard for recreation purposes. It appears the construction of bike lanes and paths on these thoroughfares, therefore, should be prioritized. Efforts

should be made to tie these bicycle lanes into proposed trails and greenway networks when appropriate as well. Building bike paths along Veterans Memorial Highway will be another element considered as part of the upcoming LCI.



RIVER LINE
MASTER PLAN



1.0 Overview

The Cobb County Community Development Agency (ComDev) requested land use, preservation, recreation, and non-vehicular transportation planning services for the development of a master plan in southern Cobb County.

There were several desired products of the master plan including:

- Alternate land use scenarios to effectively manage the growth in the area;
- Identifying non-vehicular transportation enhancements;
- Suggesting multi-use path and recreational trail connections to expand the county's trail network;
- Potential new park facilities;
- Preservation of existing historic features and structures; and
- Development of recommendations to improve the quality-of-life for the area.

Cobb County is the procuring agency and client for the project, and ComDev was responsible for the overall administration and management of the project.

1.1 Need for Plan

The County pointed out that this is not a “typical” master plan because the area is not in an economic slump. The area has excellent access to surrounding cities and developments, and there has been considerable growth in the area in recent years. A master plan is needed to help guide this development.

The defined boundary for this project includes areas that are growing rapidly, and others that are not. As a result, it is important that the study addresses the needs and the impacts of commercial, residential, and industrial growth in the community.

1.2 Schedule

The project was anticipated to last up to twelve (12) months.

1.3 Specific Tasks

The County defined three major tasks for the project. They include:

Task 1 - Public Involvement. The goal of this task is to develop a local planning

outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders in the study area. The public involvement process was to address: the project management team; stakeholder meetings; general public meetings; interviews; and other activities.

Task 2 - Develop a Study. The goal of this task is to assess the study area's land use patterns, recreational opportunities, non-vehicular transportation options, preservation efforts, and urban design elements. It was specified that this analysis was to be coordinated with other completed and ongoing studies and programs in the County and surrounding community that involve the study area.

Among other things, the study was to develop three different concepts that will support future sustainable growth, and to then refine the preferred direction.

Task 3 - Prepare Project Deliverables. The goal of this task is to compile the results of the overall work effort, the study process, relevant findings, and recommendations into a summary document.

2.0 Public Participation Process



2.0 Public Participation Process

The Cobb County River Line Master Plan study was guided from inception to final recommendations by input and feedback from local government representatives and residents alike. A key tenet of the plan was to get insight from a wide range of stakeholders who really knew the River Line area and who could report on its strengths as well as its challenges.

The planning process therefore sought from the beginning to engage the following groups:

- A Project Management Team, comprised of local government leaders, who understand the area's political and legislative context;
- A Stakeholder Committee, comprised of key representatives from special interest groups as well as from the resident and business communities, to serve as a link between the Project Management Team and the wider public;
- The Public, to hear from people who live, work, and spend time in the River Line area on a regular basis; and
- County Commissioners, to get approval of the final master plan and support for implementation.

2.1 Project Management Team

The County's project manager for the Cobb County River Line Master Plan, in consultation with EDAW, identified members of a Project Management Team to help guide the development of the study. Comprised of individuals from County and City agencies, the Project Management Team established goals and objectives for the plan early on at a kick-off meeting. Through regular meetings (taking place approximately every two months, and before each of the public meetings), the Project Management Team provided feedback on and insight into preliminary and more advanced master plan proposals at key stages of the process. Major decisions about the planning process and schedule were reviewed with the Project Management Team to ensure that project goals were being met. Notes from each meeting were recorded by EDAW and distributed to team members as a record of the proceedings. The Project Management Team was comprised of representatives from Cobb County as well as one representative from the City of Smyrna (see Table 2-1).

TABLE 2-1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Organization	Representative Role
Cobb County Community Development Agency	Project Manager
	Historic Preservationist
	Planner
Cobb County Department of Transportation	Transportation Planner
Cobb County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs	Recreation Manager
Cobb County Economic Development Department	Economic Development Coordinator
City of Smyrna Community Development Department	Planner

2.2 Stakeholder Committee

EDAW worked with the Project Management Team to identify key stakeholders who could serve as the first level of public input, providing a link between County and City representatives and the wider public outreach effort. The resulting Steering Committee included members of special interest groups (such as the Chattahoochee River Keeper and the Georgia Battlefields Association) and members of the public active in local community development. Industrial property owners were not on the original Stakeholder Committee, but their interests, concerns, and input was valued in the process. As a result, industrial property owners had substantial input in the process of generating the master plan.

Before each public meeting, the Steering Committee was given an opportunity to review and comment on material to be presented. Three (3) Steering Committee meetings were held in advance of the public meetings. Notes from each of these meetings were prepared by EDAW and circulated to the group as a record of the proceedings. Please see Table 2-2 for a complete list of the members of the Steering Committee.

2.3 Public Meetings

While accurate facts are essential, it is the public's vision, trust and support that truly drive the planning effort. Public involvement is paramount in generating enthusiasm and building the broad community support for innovative parks, recreation, and open space planning in the years ahead.

To guide the public participation process, EDAW developed a Public Involvement and Communications Plan, which outlined when and how stakeholders could

TABLE 2-2: STEERING COMMITTEE**Organizations Represented**

Georgia Power
Whitefield Academy
Mableton Improvement Coalition
River Line Historic Area
Vinings Estates Home Owners Association
Georgia Battlefields Association
Marthasville Development
Council for Quality Growth
Smyrna Historic Society
South Cobb Business Association
Trust for Public Land
Chattahoochee River Keepers

get involved in the plan development process. The Communications Plan served as a blueprint for how EDAW shared and received information with stakeholders throughout the 10-month study. It was established that three (3) public meetings would take place at 25%, 50%, and 75% project completion milestones. (Copies of all presentations can be found on Cobb County's website.) Cobb County advertised these public meetings through signage, public notices in local newspapers, newsletters and the County's website.

During the meetings, EDAW staff recorded comments from the public, and this input was used to help develop the subsequent concepts and final master plan option. The public meetings were very well attended, with approximately 100 people participating in each. The public meetings took place as follows.

2.3.1 PUBLIC MEETING 1 (NOVEMBER 18, 2008 AT SOUTH COBB LIBRARY)

For the first public meeting (at 25% completion), EDAW presented a baseline analysis of the River Line area, including an initial inventory of potential opportunities

(such as revitalizing the Chattahoochee River frontage) and constraints (such as busy roadways and properties that form barriers to the river). A review of the project's goals and objectives, the planning process, and opportunities for public involvement was also presented.

2.3.2 PUBLIC MEETING 2 (JANUARY 20, 2009 AT WHITEFIELD ACADEMY)

For the second public meeting (at 50% completion), EDAW presented a constraints and opportunities analysis and three master plan concepts for consideration. The three concepts focused on developing 1) a "greener" community, dotted with parks and connected by a system of trails; 2) a historic assets-based community, where such remnants as the Civil War earthworks were protected and promoted as centerpieces for tourism; and 3) a community with a "Village Center," located near the Chattahoochee River, containing residential, commercial, retail, and recreational uses, to serve as the heart of the River Line area. These concepts, as well as the public's feedback, are explained in greater detail in Section 3.2

2.3.3 PUBLIC MEETING 3 (MARCH 19, 2009 AT WHITEFIELD ACADEMY)

For the third public meeting (at 75% completion), the Preliminary Preferred Master Plan was presented. The preferred master plan combined elements from all three conceptual master plan options, as described above. While the concept presented at the public meeting is described more fully in Section 3.3, key elements include a "Village Center" near the Chattahoochee River, new



FIGURE 2-1: Public Meeting 1, Issues and Opportunities

parkland incorporating the 100-acre property owned by Cobb County off of Discovery Boulevard, a new trail system linking neighborhoods and open space, continuous sidewalks and bike lanes, an enhanced public realm, and protected historic features.

2.3.4 PUBLIC MEETING 4 (JULY 22, 2009 IN MARIETTA)

A public meeting was added by Cobb County to give industrial business owners in the River Line area an opportunity to participate in the public planning process. As a result of this discussion, the County delayed a decision by the County Commissioners and added additional public meetings.

2.3.5 PUBLIC MEETING 5 (AUGUST 26, 2009 AT SOUTH COBB COMMUNITY CENTER)

A public meeting was added by Cobb County because of concerns that additional public input was needed. This meeting focused on discussions about how residential and industrial uses would coexist in the River Line area.

2.3.6 PUBLIC MEETING 6 & 7 (JUNE 20 & SEPTEMBER 14, 2009)

Two public information sessions were held to share the status of the project with the public. The first information session, held at the South Cobb Library,

was held to share the preliminary plan. The second public information session was held after the plan was revised to include input from local business owners.

2.4 County Commissioner Briefings and Presentation

The Project Management Team gave a presentation of the final report to the Cobb County Board of Commissioners. The purpose of this presentation was to ensure the Commissioners had a thorough understanding of the process and the recommendations in the report, and how these recommendations could be implemented.



FIGURE 2-2: Public Meeting 3, Preliminary Preferred Master Plan

3.0 Understanding the Context



3.0 Understanding the Context

3.1 Review of Existing Studies and Data

A baseline analysis was undertaken to understand the context of the River Line study area. Plans addressing policy, transportation, open space, the Chattahoochee River, and historic resources were reviewed to ensure the consistency of the River Line Master Plan with their contents and to recommend potential amendments to these plans (where appropriate). Mapping exercises, which focused on examining existing conditions, are described in the following section.

The plans and studies described in this section include the following:

Overarching Policy

- Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning
- Smyrna 2030 Comprehensive Plan (Community Agenda) and Zoning

Transportation

- Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan (in progress)
- Future Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study (DL Hollowell – Veterans Memorial Parkway Corridor)

Open Space

- Nickajack Creek Feasibility Study
- Cobb County Code of Ordinances (pertaining to Nickajack Creek)
- Cobb County Parks Bond
- Cobb County Conservation Easements

Chattahoochee River

- Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) and the Chattahoochee Corridor Plan
- Chattahoochee River Greenway Planning and Implementation Handbook

Historic Resources

- Johnston's Chattahoochee River Defense Line
- National Register of Historic Places (Johnston's River Line)
- Historic Property Description: Presley / Hall – Parlor House (also known as the Hooper-Turner House)

3.1.1 OVERARCHING POLICY

MAPPING OUR FUTURE: COBB COUNTY 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (JANUARY 2008) AND ZONING

Growth has occurred at a rapid pace in the Atlanta region and in Cobb County, making it important to safeguard and improve upon a neighborhoods' sense of place. The Community Agenda portion of the Comprehensive Plan provides direction for managing change that is taking place; it is a policy document to help guide future decision-making on how the county should develop. The following summarizes the policy contained within the Comprehensive Plan which relates to and affects future development in the River Line study area.

Land Use

Existing land use information indicates that the River Line study area is primarily residential in nature. There are, however, significant swaths of industrial land which exist, particularly along Riverview Road and the Chattahoochee River. A relatively large amount of land is designated as parks, recreation, and conservation, notably at Nickajack Park and along Nickajack Creek (running through the middle of residential development) as well as in the 100-acre parcel owned by Cobb County along the Chattahoochee River, south of Discovery Boulevard. Three (3) Neighborhood Activity Centers, which indicate neighborhood focal points containing concentrations of commercial/retail activities and potentially higher residential densities compared to the surrounding community, exist at the following intersections: Discovery Boulevard and Mableton Parkway; Oakdale Road and Veterans Memorial Highway (including the John Wieland Legacy development); and Buckner Road and Veterans Memorial Highway (including the Publix shopping center). A fourth Activity Center exists at Whitefield Academy.

The Future Land Use Map, which is the official land use document of the County's Comprehensive Plan with respect to growth policy, shows that much of this land use is expected to remain unchanged up to 2030. Some modifications, however, exist: Industrial uses along Nickajack Creek (to the north of Discovery Boulevard) are designated as open space in the future; high density residential is shown along Veterans Memorial Highway north of Oakdale Road where industrial development exists; and a public / institutional use is shown on the northern side of I-285 in place of industrial uses.

In the plan, industrial uses along the Chattahoochee River are shown to remain in place. The Comprehensive Plan states that "there needs to be a concentrated effort by Cobb County to protect these remaining undeveloped / underdeveloped industrial areas from residential and commercial incursion"

(page 87) as no other places in the county exist which are suitable for such development to occur. The desire to maintain industrial land in this location, however, must be balanced with the need to create a high quality of life for people in what is essentially a residential area. Because the nature of industrial development in this area is of a poor quality and it sits on the banks of the environmentally-sensitive Chattahoochee River, the appropriateness of retaining all of this land use should be evaluated.

The four Activity Centers are likewise shown to remain in place. While some development which is suitable for Activity Centers has been built in these locations (such as higher density residential at the John Wieland Legacy development), these centers do not currently function as the true “focal points” for the community which they are intended to be. Future development at these locations should build upon progress made thus far, incorporating more mixed-use and spaces for public gathering and social interaction. According to the Comprehensive Plan, “pedestrian activity is another important factor in the viability of activity centers because it allows people that live in the neighboring residential areas the ability to accomplish daily trips without using the automobile” (10). In developing the River Line Master Plan, allowances must therefore be made to ensure pedestrian facilities are planned throughout the area, linking existing neighborhoods to these activity nodes. Additionally, “village-style development” (93) is encouraged near Activity Centers. Incorporating such a feature into the River Line Master Plan will therefore serve to strengthen the future land use plan for the area.

Zoning

Although not part of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, zoning designations (found in the County’s municipal code) form the underlying legal framework which guides development in the area. While in theory zoning should align with future land use, this is not always the case. Future land use policy representing the vision for potential development and zoning representing what is currently permitted.

The most significant inconsistencies are apparent with land zoned heavy industrial. In particular, all park / recreation / conservation land designated in future land use located along the Chattahoochee River (including the Johnston’s River Line Park area) as well as land north of Discovery Boulevard along Nickajack Creek is currently zoned heavy industrial, which does not permit the development of parks. Additionally, the public / institutional use shown in the future land use map located east of the Oakdale Road / Buckner Road intersection is zoned heavy industrial.

Even if these zoning inconsistencies are addressed to reflect the future land use map designations, however, the preponderance of permitted heavy industrial development must be called into question if the River Line area is to reconnect to some of its most unique assets (such as the Chattahoochee River and Nickajack Creek). As is currently zoned, the permitted heavy industrial uses, if allowed to remain in place, arguably serve as a barrier to these assets.

Community Character

In Cobb County, a variety of neighborhood types exist, including traditional hamlets such as Mableton and Vinings with defined centers and walkability, and more suburban enclaves of detached single family housing developed around cul-de-sacs, as well as rural neighborhoods with greater space between houses. Aspects from all these neighborhood types can be found in or just adjacent to the study area: the traditional neighborhood character of Mableton is close by and remnants of a rural landscape of undeveloped land still exist.

The predominant land use in the River Line area is now suburban, where new developments are being constructed with few connections to the rest of the study area. Through public outreach as part of the current study, it has been reported that this type of suburban development in the River Line area engenders a lack of sense of place. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that there is a need to create a sense of place in some areas of the county. The



FIGURE 3 -1: Suburban residential development off Oakdale Road

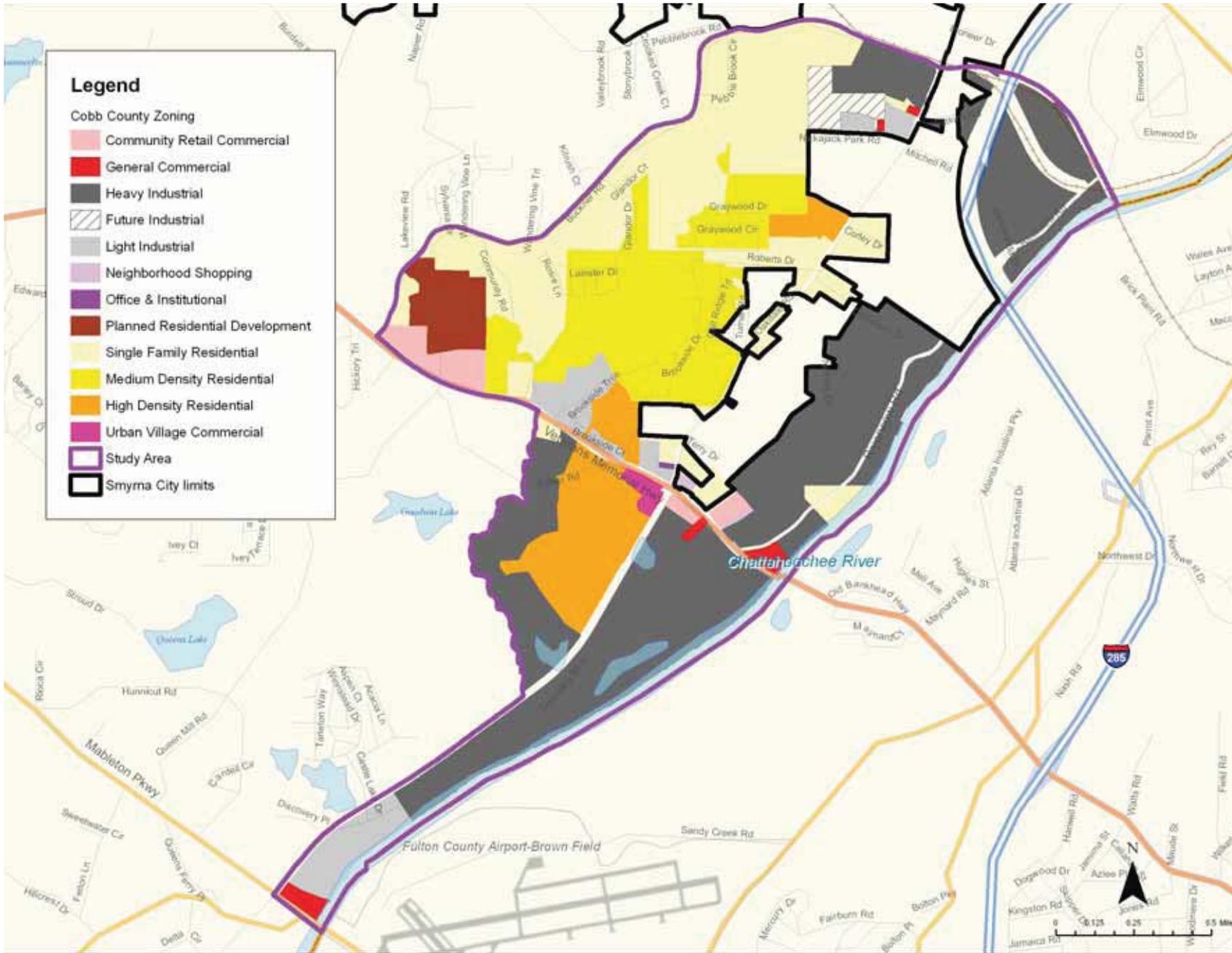


FIGURE 3-2: Cobb County Zoning

Department of Community Affairs (DCA), through their Quality Community Objectives, describes the need for the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points to help create sense of place. According to DCA, these community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertaining. The River Line Master Plan, therefore, should endeavor to enhance the best aspects of each of these neighborhood types: respecting natural areas and green space as in rural communities, instilling walkability and sense of community and identity as in traditional hamlets, and focusing on quality residential development around activity centers that engender a sense of place, which should be a hallmark of suburbia.

Economic Development

Cobb County is focusing its economic development efforts through several endeavors, including targeting industries to create economic clusters, business retention and expansion through supporting employers, and working towards a jobs-housing balance. The County is also focused on building a knowledge-based economy in the area and attracting an educated workforce. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that communities with quality amenities, high quality of life, and recreational opportunities attract such populations, as well as employers. To support this aim, the River Line Master Plan should endeavor to provide amenities such as green space, sidewalks, parks, and shopping, where appropriate.

Another economic development goal is to promote historic-based tourism. In the River Line area, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the potential value in connecting the 100-acre parcel owned by the County which borders the Chattahoochee (known as Johnston's River Line Park – although it is not yet a formal park) via the floodplain of Nickajack Creek to other areas of open space, such as Heritage Park. In doing so, the plan wishes to promote and make more accessible the historic Civil War remnants located in the Johnston's River Line Park parcel to the wider Cobb County community, and potentially a broader audience as well. The River Line Master Plan must therefore strike a balance between attracting residents and visitors into the area by promoting the area's unique historic remnants while protecting artifacts which are oftentimes fragile and can be easily disturbed.

Transportation

The Cobb County Comprehensive Plan is being amended to reflect findings published in the countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). Because the CTP has recently been published, the River Line Master Plan has not

studied transportation issues in depth as part of the scope of work. Both the transportation policies in the Comprehensive Plan and CTP have been examined to determine ways in which a master plan for the River Line area can best be developed to respond to the area's context.

In the Comprehensive Plan, traffic congestion is listed as a prominent issue, increasing in step with population growth. The plan suggests that urban design can help alleviate the problem to some extent, such as designing environments that have interconnected streets. While the River Line Master Plan does not include a transportation study and therefore does not make any major recommendations regarding street reconfiguration or the re-routing of traffic, this is clearly a problem which needs to be considered when formulating plans for the area and will require further work to pinpoint practical solutions. The plan does highlight the need for context sensitive design of transportation facilities, including incorporating landscaped medians, street trees, larger sidewalks, street lights, and better pedestrian crossings, which factored into thinking about how different roadways in the River Line area could possibly be reworked in the future.

The River Line Master Plan study is tasked with examining non-vehicular transportation concerns. Improving amenities such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes are emphasized in the Comprehensive Plan to serve as transportation alternatives. The plan also recognizes that operational improvements to these facilities need to take place to enhance mobility and performance. Incorporating new and improved sidewalks and bicycle lanes, therefore, figured prominently into the creation of the master plan.

Natural and Historic Resources

Goal 6 in the County's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the need to promote and preserve the county's parks, trails, greenspace, tree canopy, and sensitive habitat and the desire to educate the public on the importance of historic preservation. Policy 6.6 specifically encourages "the development of multi-use greenways in floodplains and easements to allow for the maintenance of natural open space while accommodating citizens needs for passive recreation opportunities, bicycle networks, and public access to lakes and streams for low intensity recreation" (108). This speaks to the need for more parks and recreation throughout the county, which are noted as some of the more "pressing needs as far as new facilities are concerned" (95). To this end, the County has purchased several parcels through the bond acquisition program and has requested nominations for other properties to acquire to safeguard more green space in the county. The River Line Master Plan was developed with the need for greater recreation opportunities and the potential for

acquisition of parks and open space in mind. These recreation areas should offer opportunities for passive recreation as well as accommodate opportunities for social interaction.

Cobb County's historic remnants are also recognized as vital community resources. The study area draws its name from one of these historic resources – Johnston's River Line. The River Line is a long line of Civil War trenches and other earthen defenses, and is specifically recognized in the Comprehensive Plan as a unique historic resource. Remnants of the old defense line, built to repel Union forces as they marched towards Atlanta in 1864, are located throughout the study area. Johnston's River Line includes fortifications called Shoupades, which do not exist anywhere else in the country. Thirty-six (36) Shoupades were originally constructed, but only eight (8) remain. (See below, in the Historic Resources portion of this section, for more information on the defense line.) Policy 6.21 in the Cobb County Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the need to "develop programs and policies to encourage the preservation and maintenance of the Shoupades found along Johnston's River Line and other archaeological features located in the county" (109). To this end, the County recognizes the need to commission a study of Johnston's River Line to identify existing Civil War artifacts and recommend opportunities for preservation and interpretation.

COMMUNITY AGENDA: CITY OF SMYRNA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2005-2030 (AUGUST 2007) AND ZONING

Though the River Line study area is located primarily in Cobb County, a significant portion is under the jurisdiction of the City of Smyrna (skirting Oakdale Road approximately from Veterans Memorial Highway to I-285; SEE FIGURE 4-1 FOR BOUNDARIES). Several challenges face the City of Smyrna, which is expected to experience rapid population growth over the next 20 years. The Smyrna Comprehensive Plan recognizes that little connectivity exists between pedestrian, bike, transit, and road facilities and that people are spending increasing amounts of time driving to school, shopping, and work. The plan states that the community's historic and cultural resources have not been identified or mapped. The plan also states that the community lacks professional office space but has an overabundance of commercial and retail space, and that vacant "big box" stores represent particular challenges. A need exists for more neighborhood-serving retail, restaurants, arts, and entertainment establishments.

Future development in upcoming years can help remedy some of these problems. The Future Development Map illustrates the City's desire for this growth. The map shows future residential, industrial, and mixed use areas in the current River Line study area. Specifically, a large swath of land from I-285



FIGURE 3-3: Unprotected remnants of a Shoupade

to the river up Dickerson Drive to Oakdale Road is designated as mixed use. Land on both sides of Oakdale Road beyond the mixed use parcel is designated as moderate density and suburban residential. To the north of Nickajack Park Road on the east side of Oakdale Road, land is designated industrial.

In suburban residential areas, which are low density and typically contain cul-de-sacs, the plan recommends the development of linkages to the City's network of bicycle and pedestrian trails. Moderate density residential differs in that it is slightly denser than suburban development and is more pedestrian-oriented. The plan states, therefore, that it is supportive of Neighborhood Activity Centers and retail opportunities such as those within Smyrna Market Village. Unlike the suburban designation, moderate density development may contain duplexes and quadraplexes as well as single family detached houses.

Mixed use areas are recommended around the existing Smyrna Market Village, along South Cobb Drive and Cobb Parkway, and inside the River Line study area. Uses which are appropriate in these areas, according to the plan, include "Main Street" retail, office and professional, townhomes and condominiums, civic, and parks and plazas. Mixed use areas should be connected to neighborhoods and parks by pedestrian linkages. Gateway signage should mark these areas.

As with Cobb County, inconsistencies exist between Smyrna's future land use and zoning designations, most significantly south of Oakdale Road. Whereas

the Future Land Use map shows a large amount of land here as mixed use, it is currently zoned for light industrial. When examined in conjunction with Cobb County's zoning designations, therefore, the entire stretch along the Chattahoochee River south of Oakdale Road in the River Line study area is overwhelmingly zoned for industrial use.

Because industrial development "contributes to a diverse economic base, employment opportunities, and a health jobs/housing balance" (18), the Comprehensive Plan states that clean light industrial uses that are compatible with the residential character of the City should be encouraged. Uses in these designated areas can include light industrial, office / distribution centers, warehousing, and commercial. Office uses are allowed to be integrated with light industrial, distribution, and warehousing developments. The freight traffic which accompanies some of these uses must be considered when planning in residential areas. Buffering and screening between industrial, commercial, and/or office uses must be provided if they are to be built next to residential areas.

3.1.2 TRANSPORTATION

COBB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (FEBRUARY 2008)

The County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan is a study of the county's existing transportation needs and challenges over the next 25 years. Combining public input with analyses of existing conditions and future demands, the plan recommends infrastructure improvement projects and potential changes to the County's transportation policies. As the scope of the River Line Master Plan includes examining only non-vehicular transportation, the summary below focuses on elements such as trails, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes rather than roadway improvements. However, major infrastructure projects which will fundamentally impact the area have been documented.

According to the plan, Cobb County has a fairly robust system of multi-use trails. The plan and other sources list several existing trails located near the study area:

- The Silver Comet Trail, located just north of the study area. This 12.8-mile multi-use trail (which can be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, and other non-motorized vehicles) is paved and utilizes the railroad track bed that connected Atlanta to Birmingham, extending from south Cobb to Paulding County;
- The Heritage Park Trail, also located north of the River Line area. The two-mile trail begins at Heritage Park and crosses Nickajack Creek (outside the study area) and parallels it for about a mile and a half and connects to the Silver Comet Trail; and

- Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Trails, five sections of which are located within Cobb County, totaling 20 miles of trails. West Palisades / Paces Mill is the closest of these sections to the River Line area.

The existing trails, however, provide limited connectivity to employment, schools, and retail opportunities. Identifying opportunities to link existing trails with new greenways through the master planning process will help make this network more functional as well as enjoyable.

Another concern is that connectivity is limited by the lack of sidewalks. Only 18% of roadways in the county have sidewalks, and significant gaps in sidewalk connectivity exist. In the study area, sidewalks currently exist on Oakdale Road and parts of Buckner Road. Small sections of sidewalk also exist on Veterans Memorial Highway and Discovery Boulevard. A pedestrian facilities map shows the need for connections to Lindley Middle School and Whitefield Academy as well as Neighborhood Activity Centers. No trails exist within the study area; however, the Silver Comet Trail and a State Bicycle Trail (called "March to the Sea") are located to the north. A bicycle suitability map shows all the major roads in the River Line community (Oakdale Road, Buckner Road, Riverview Road, Veterans Memorial Highway) have "medium" conditions for bicycling.

The Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan recommends making improvements to these systems through the construction of the elements listed in Table 3-1 in or adjacent to the River Line community.



FIGURE 3-4: Veterans Memorial Highway

While no specific roadway improvements are expected in the study area (except for the widening of the shoulder on Buckner Road), Oakdale Road has been identified as a potential future truck route (see page 6-4 in the report), presumably in part due to its proximity to the industrial development

TABLE 3-1: PROPOSED TRAIL AND SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Project Name	Description	Length	Estimated Project Cost
Johnston's River Line Trail	Near the Chattahoochee Riverbank from Sunrise Boulevard to Six Flags Road	1.5 miles	\$1.5 million
Nickajack Creek Trail	Connecting from the Silver Comet Trail to the proposed Johnston's River Line Trail, paralleling Norfolk Southern Rail Line	6 miles	\$6 million
Silver Comet Trail – Atlanta Connector	Connecting Nickajack Creek Trail to Silver Comet Trail	1 mile	\$1 million
Laurel Creek Connector Trail	Connecting Nickajack Creek Trail to Silver Comet Trail	1 mile	\$1 million
Floyd Road Trail	From Veterans Memorial Highway to the Silver Comet Trail	1 mile	\$1 million
Mableton Trail	Following Mableton Parkway from Veterans Memorial Highway to the Chattahoochee River	4 miles	\$4 million
Extension of Johnston's River Line Trail	From Mableton Parkway to Douglas County Line	3.5 miles	\$3.5 million
Pedestrian improvements along Veterans Memorial Highway	From Pebblebrook Road to the Chattahoochee River	-	-

which currently exists along the Chattahoochee River and I-285. This would significantly impact the character of the River Line community. According to the plan, predicted growth in freight movement requires that more roads are designated to accommodate large trucks. Given the impact this would have on the character of the area, the necessity for transitioning Oakdale Road to a truck route should be called into question. Any alterations to recommendations in the plan would need to be pursuant to industrial land use changes, however, to ensure existing business needs are accommodated.

COBB COUNTY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT PLAN (IN PROGRESS)

The emerging Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan builds on recommendations set out in the County's 2030 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (February 2008), providing greater specificity regarding facility needs and implementation. The Cobb County Department of Transportation began developing the plan in August 2008 and is expected to complete it by October 2009. Serving as an update to Cobb County's last Bicycle Transportation Plan from 1993, the plan identifies opportunities for improvements to physical infrastructure, such as paths, sidewalks, and on-street bike lanes, and will be accompanied by an implementation strategy.

The plan also builds upon the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan (2007). This ARC plan identifies Veterans Memorial Highway and Mableton Parkway (both within the current study area) as part of the "Regionally Strategic Transportation System." The inclusion of these roadways signifies their status as important principal arterials that provide continuous, cross-regional mobility, connect major activity centers, and serve as freight corridors.

A portion of the study will also be dedicated to developing a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program for the county, which will include a toolkit for schools to enable more students and parents to safely walk or bike to school from nearby areas. Some of the aims of the SRTS Program are to increase accessibility to schools for walkers and bikers, reduce traffic congestion around schools, and reduce the speed of traffic in school zones. Additionally, the plan will include options for an extension to the Silver Comet Trail toward the Chattahoochee River and connection to Fulton County's trail system.

When the Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan is finalized, projects recommended as part of this master plan may be prioritized based on findings from the study (such as where greatest demand for sidewalk and bicycle improvements exists and where quality of facilities is lacking). Greater coordination will be possible during the upcoming DL Hollowell - Veterans Memorial Highway LCI process when the Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan will be complete.

3.1.3 OPEN SPACE

NICKAJACK CREEK GREENWAY FEASIBILITY STUDY (COBB COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION, FEBRUARY 1999)

The Nickajack Creek Greenway Feasibility Study states that there is need for greater passive recreation opportunities and watershed protection along the Nickajack Creek corridor. The study examines opportunities and constraints related to the potential development of a trail system around the creek which could address these issues. In particular, the study recommends connecting Heritage Park (in the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District, northwest of the River Line study area) and the 100-acre parcel owned by Cobb County bounded by the Chattahoochee River and Discovery Boulevard, via Nickajack Creek. From Heritage Park, the creek flows south past subdivisions, parks, schools, business complexes, vacant lands and industrial areas before entering the 100-acre County parcel (which the plan reports can only be developed as a park) and emptying into the Chattahoochee River. The study reiterates the potential significance of the Policy Statement for Promoting Alternative Transportation which was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 1998, which “endorsed a program to provide non-vehicular connectivity of subdivisions and activity centers and to create a network of off-street travel routes, i.e. paths and trails, to reduce the need for and volume of vehicular traffic in Cobb” (6).

Although the plan states it would be beneficial to construct a trail network around Nickajack Creek, the plan also recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing the water quality of the stream. Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has classified the creek as an “impaired water” as samples taken from the creek since 1980 have shown a decline in the health and habitat of the water, due to increased non-point source pollution run-off. To this end, the area along Nickajack Creek from the Chattahoochee River and north of Discovery Boulevard has been included in the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) setback and buffer restrictions.

The plan highlights the many opportunities that exist for developing a trail system along Nickajack Creek. Of particular import is the amount of undeveloped land available around the creek which would allow for the development of a continuous greenway and the availability of funding which could be tapped through transportation and recreation sources (e.g. Section 319 (h) Non-point Source Implementation Grants, EPA Five-Star Restoration Challenge Grants; River Network Watershed Assistance Mini-Grants). The report notes that land acquisition for the trail may be made easier as development opportunities around the creek are limited due to floodplain restrictions, and that the likelihood of owners selling or donating this land for tax relief



FIGURE 3-5: Nickajack Creek

purposes is good. The plan also speculates that a trail along Nickajack Creek would be welcomed by the community, given the enthusiastic reception of other recreation facilities such as the Silver Comet Trail and Heritage Park. The plan warns, however, that the area’s rapid development in recent years could threaten the feasibility of such a trail if action is not taken in due time.

Finally, the plan lists some of the possible benefits of implementing the greenway plan. Among these are:

- Improved water quality;
- Floodplain management;
- Increased aesthetic values;
- Provision of alternate transportation;
- Provision of opportunities for recreation, health and fitness;
- Stewardship and habitat development; and
- Improved air quality.

COBB COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES (PERTAINING TO NICKAJACK CREEK)

Supplementing the policies presented in the Comprehensive Plan are Cobb County’s Ordinances, which will help define development guidelines in the study area. Regulations pertaining to Nickajack Creek directly relate to the River Line community. While Article II Chattahoochee River Corridor Tributary Protection Area (Chapter 50, Environment) establishes only certain development (such as

transportation route crossings) can take place within 25 feet on either side of tributaries of the Chattahoochee River, Article III Land Disturbing Activities in the same chapter addresses Nickajack Creek in particular. This regulation mandates that no “land disturbing activities” may take place within 200 feet of the banks of Nickajack Creek, from Buckner Road downstream to the Chattahoochee River. The Cobb County Community Development Director may give administrative variances to the County buffer requirement (and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division approves the 25 foot State stream buffer). Development of a trail system, therefore, would have to abide by these regulations unless variances are granted.

COBB COUNTY PARK BONDS

New parkland was recently purchased by Cobb County following the issuance of a \$40 million bond approved by voters in 2006. An article on Cobb County’s Parks and Recreation website (“Parks Bond allows county to preserve precious greenspace,” <http://prca.cobbcountyga.gov/parks-bond-info.htm>) highlights the need for parkland since 90% of the county is already developed. The Henderson Road property, comprised of 16 acres land off Veterans Memorial Highway, was purchased as part of this bond but has yet to be developed into a park.

Another bond passed in 2008 allocates an additional \$40 million County-wide for open space acquisition for future park lands and passive greenspace. Over 300 properties were nominated, including several parcels in the River Line study area. The Mableton Improvement Coalition (MIC) nominated approximately 42 acres of land in the study area, including key pieces along the Chattahoochee River which would connect with the 100-acre property owned by the County which contains segments of Johnston’s River Line. The acquisition of these properties would help establish the framework for the development of a trail system in the area. However, due to the large number of nominations, there is significant competition for the bond acquisition money. All nominations are expected to be reviewed in 2009 by the Parks citizen committee, with the expectation of purchasing to begin in 2010.

COBB COUNTY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

A conservation easement is an agreement between a land owner and a government body or land trust. Such an easement permanently protects open space on the owner’s land by limiting the amount and type of development that can take place there. Of the information supplied to the consultant by the County, it appears only one conservation easement exists within the study area: the Veterans Memorial Highway Right-of-Way dedication at Publix Providence Pavilion (located at the Buckner Road intersection), land lots 165 and 166 of the

18th District, 2nd Section Cobb County, comprising 0.17 acres. This easement may prove helpful in the implementation phases of the River Line Master Plan when the location of trail heads or other community facilities will be explored more fully.

3.1.4 CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

METROPOLITAN RIVER PROTECTION ACT (MRPA) AND THE CHATTAHOOCHEE CORRIDOR PLAN (ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION, SEPTEMBER 1998)

The Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) became state law in 1973 to protect the Chattahoochee River as a source for drinking water. As part of the MRPA, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) was required to develop and adopt a plan to protect the river and a corridor on both sides from negative effects of development.

The Chattahoochee Corridor Plan represents the most current set of standards for development of the corridor – essentially defined as “all land within 2,000 feet of the banks of the Chattahoochee River” (3) – as adopted by ARC. Under the MRPA, all land-disturbing activity in the corridor must be reviewed by ARC under the Corridor Plan. Policy in the Corridor Plan states that development occurring in the corridor should be fitted to the natural features of the site and should be sited to minimize any negative effects on water quality.

Certain standards must be met for development to be considered consistent with the policy as set forth in the Corridor Plan. These standards, divided into three categories, must be considered when developing plans for areas along the Chattahoochee River as part of the River Line Master Plan. The standards are summarized as follows on ARC’s website (<http://www.atlantaregional.com/html/304.aspx>):

- Vulnerability Standards
 - All corridor land is in one of six vulnerability categories based on land characteristics.
 - Each category has maximum amounts of land disturbance and impervious surface stated as a percentage of category area.
 - Land disturbance is any activity disturbing the land or existing vegetation.
 - Impervious surface is any paved, hardened or structural surface such as buildings, driveways, decks, patios, pools, etc.
- Buffer Zone Standards
 - 50-foot undisturbed vegetative buffer along the river and its impoundments.
 - 35-foot undisturbed vegetative buffer along flowing streams in the corridor.

- 150-foot impervious surface setback along the river and its impoundments.
- Floodplain Standards
 - Balancing fill with an equal volume of cut in the river's 100-year floodplain.
 - No blocking of flood flows.
 - 35-foot height limit above existing grade on all structures except bridges in the river's 500-year floodplain.

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER GREENWAY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION HANDBOOK (JORDAN, JONES & GOULD, FALL 2000)

The Chattahoochee River Greenway Planning and Implementation Handbook describes environmental principles and best management practices for to guide government agencies considering trail construction, ecological restoration, and other activities near the river. Information and recommendations pertaining to a greenway that incorporates elements of preservation, restoration, water quality, recreation, and education are presented. For each of these topics, the following recommendations are made:

- Preservation
 - Protect sensitive habitats
 - Create wildlife corridors
 - Protect cultural resources
 - Creation a management plan
- Restoration
 - Develop a restoration plan
 - Revegetate impacted areas as needed
 - Create wildlife habitat
 - Eradicate exotic species
 - Imitate natural disturbance regimes
 - Restore wetlands
- Water Quality
 - Develop a watershed protection plan
 - Protect riparian buffers
 - Protect floodplains
 - Restore streams
 - Manage stormwater effectively
 - Limit impervious surfaces
 - Control erosion and sediment

- Recreation
 - Conduct a recreational needs assessment
 - Conduct a regional park system assessment
 - Identify the suitable location of amenities
 - Determine the site carrying capacity
 - Develop trails according to certain principles (described below), such as multi-use trails, soft-surface footpaths, trails in culturally and naturally sensitive areas, and trails in wooded areas
- Education
 - Provide access to cultural and natural resources
 - Include interpretive signage
 - Create a unique site / architectural design
 - Incorporate demonstration projects
 - Identify research opportunities
 - Organize special events / festivals
 - Display public art

All of these elements should play some role in the development of a trail system near the Chattahoochee River. In particular, the report states the importance of identifying sensitive natural and cultural resources within the Chattahoochee Corridor. The plan recommends having an ecologist or biologist examine land within the corridor to identify special habitats and to protect



FIGURE 3-6: Industrial development along Chattahoochee River (Riverview Road)

sensitive areas from human use if discovered. For cultural resources, the plan recommends creating local ordinances to protect the structures (in the case of the River Line area, this could be appropriate for such remnants as the Civil War embankments, or Shoupades). Education should be a key component to protection, and decisions must be made whether the site is sensitive to damage or looting and therefore be avoided by trails or recreational areas, or if limited trail access or full access is desired. Depending on the sensitivity of the structures, parks could be developed around them or trails could pass nearby to help educate the public about their significance.

The plan also highlights the importance of returning ecosystems which have been damaged by invasive species or development. This will be especially important along Riverview Road, where industrial material has been stored along the riverbank, at times inside the MRPA buffer. While the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper continues to help clean up this area, the plan notes that restoration can also be taken on by a government agency, university, nonprofit organization, or by private industry. Conducting a study of species that occur on site is also recommended to identify exotic species which can be eliminated. Restoring wetlands to their natural state can also be investigated. Revitalizing these ecosystems can be beneficial for a number of reasons, including for groundwater recharge and discharge, floodflow alteration and storage, sediment stabilization, and wildlife diversity.

Due to an increasing amount of impervious surfaces in Atlanta, the potential for nonpoint source pollution feeding into the Chattahoochee River is also rising. The report focuses on water quality and the need to protect watersheds. Preserving and restoring riparian buffers (naturally vegetated areas adjacent to the river) filter storm water runoff and helps stabilize the riverbanks, making them less prone to erosion. Impervious surfaces should not be built into these buffers, with the exception of such structures as bridge crossings, boat launches, and soft-surface trail access to these locations. Additionally, to help protect the floodplain (such as around Nickajack Creek), the number of impervious surfaces built within it should be minimized. Incorporating best management practices for storm water management, such as by designing trails to conform to the natural contours of the river so as not to disrupt natural flow patterns and developing treatment wetlands, can also help improve water quality. These issues will be essential to consider when developing the more detailed site plan for projects in the River Line area.

The report also discusses the need for additional recreation opportunities to allow people to experience the Chattahoochee River in a safe and responsible

way, with minimal impact on natural and cultural resources within the river corridor. The plan recommends locating recreational activities near existing roads or access points to leave undisturbed areas for preservation. A section on design guidelines for trails is helpful as it describes appropriate surfaces and uses for different types of trails. Of particular interest for the River Line Master Plan are the following:

- Multi-use trails, which are used for a variety of activities, such as walking, jogging, biking, and in-line skating; generally paved; recommended width of 8-12 feet; and
- Soft-surface footpaths, which are used for walking or hiking only, appropriate for a variety of locations (such as woodland or steep terrain); can be bare soil, mulch, gravel, or soil stabilizer; should be marked with signage; can be as narrow as 20 inches or as wide as 4 feet.

It will be important to link trails developed in the River Line area to existing parks and trail networks. In particular, opportunities exist to connect the River Line area to the system of parks which form the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA). Comprised of 19 separate land units located along a 48-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River, the CRNRA begins south of Lake Lanier and follows the river through Fulton and Cobb counties, ending less than a half mile southeast of the I-75 / I-285 Interchange, making the closest parks Cochran Shoals and Palisades. Outreach to the National Park Service, which oversees the CRNRA, should be made in an effort to incorporate the River Line amenities into this park system.

Guidelines for low-impact river access, canoe/kayak trails, and swimming and wading options are described. Having water quality of a high enough standard to attempt these activities, however, is important. Due to the both point and non-point pollution which has been a problem along the Chattahoochee River for decades, the water quality in this area needs to be further explored before strides are made to incorporate these types of recreational facilities.

Education is another important element of the greenway plan. Through recreation opportunities, people are able to learn about the river as well as any natural and cultural resources in its proximity. The plan recommends incorporating interpretive signage to provide visitors information about their surroundings; developing classes, possibly in outdoor classrooms, which teach people about the river as a resource; creating events which celebrate the river / greenway; and incorporating public art.

3.1.5 HISTORIC RESOURCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ENTRY (JOHNSTON'S RIVER LINE)

While the National Register of Historic Places entry for Johnston's River Line describes the historic remnants of the Civil War trenches in broad terms, it is of particular interest due to the other artifacts which it specifies are located in and around the County's 100 acre parcel located on the Chattahoochee River. In particular, the entry notes the existence of the remains of Indian sites, dating from the Archaic Period to Late Mississippian, which can be found in addition to Civil War remnants around the River Line. Native American history in this area of Cobb County is described below:

Moundbuilders had settlements along the Chattahoochee River and Nickajack Creek before 1000 AD. They were followed by the Creek, who had a large settlement along Sweetwater Creek and possibly other locations in Cobb County. The land west of the Chattahoochee River was originally a trading area for the Cherokee and Creek tribes following the battle of Taliwa in 1755. Southern Cobb County was marked the boundary in an agreement between the Cherokee and Creek tribes from 1826 on.

While the Shoupades are remarkable historic artifacts, it is important to consider other people and events that helped shape the River Line area, such as Native Americans. Two of the River Line's most historic features are described below; however, when formulating more site-specific plans, the sensitive and educational aspects of these elements should be considered to help define development around them.

JOHNSTON'S CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER DEFENSE LINE (COBB COUNTY, MARCH 1995)

The River Line area derives its name from the fortified defense line constructed by General Joseph Johnston in 1864 on the Chattahoochee River, built to block the advance of Sherman's troops during the Civil War. The defense line, originally running along a ridge in an arc eight miles long, began on the southeast side of the river across from the mouth of Nickajack Creek and ended on the river about a half mile north of the Atlanta Road bridge. (In the study area, the Confederate defense line begins near the Chattahoochee River in the 100 acre tract of land owned by Cobb County to the southeast of Discovery Boulevard and thereafter generally follows Oakdale Road.) The field fortifications were said to be some of the strongest created in the Civil War.

Built quickly by African-American fieldhands from nearby farms, the defense line was comprised of a series of fortifications, most notably the innovative shoupades – diamond-shaped infantry forts made of log walls 10 to 12

feet thick and high designed by Brigadier General Francis M. Shoup – not found anywhere else in the world. These fortifications were designed to accommodate around 80 soldiers each, who would have the ability to fire on attackers from all sides. Shoupades were built at the most prominent apexes of the defense line. Additionally, structures called redans (open "V" shaped earthwork artillery forts, often armed with cannons) and lunettes (multi-sided artillery forts, open to the back) punctuated the defense line. Between the shoupades and redans, the defense line was fortified by thick dam-shaped walls and sharpened timbers planted at 45 degree angles which would have impaled any horse or man attacking the stockades. Trenches were dug behind these walls and angled timbers to accommodate more Confederate soldiers along the line.

On July 5, 1864, 60,000 men occupied and the Chattahoochee River Defense Line, in place to protect the river crossing at what was once Turner's Ferry (now Bankhead Highway). Sherman intended to take offensive action against the western flank of the defense line (located in what is today the 100 acre tract of land owned by Cobb County, to the east of Discovery Boulevard), placing numerous artillery pieces and digging trenches in the direction of the defense line directly north of Nickajack Creek. Men protecting this piece of the line – many of whom had seen battle at the infamous Port Hudson, Louisiana and Vicksburg, Mississippi sieges – were shelled intensively beginning July 6. Elsewhere along the line, minimal skirmishing took place.

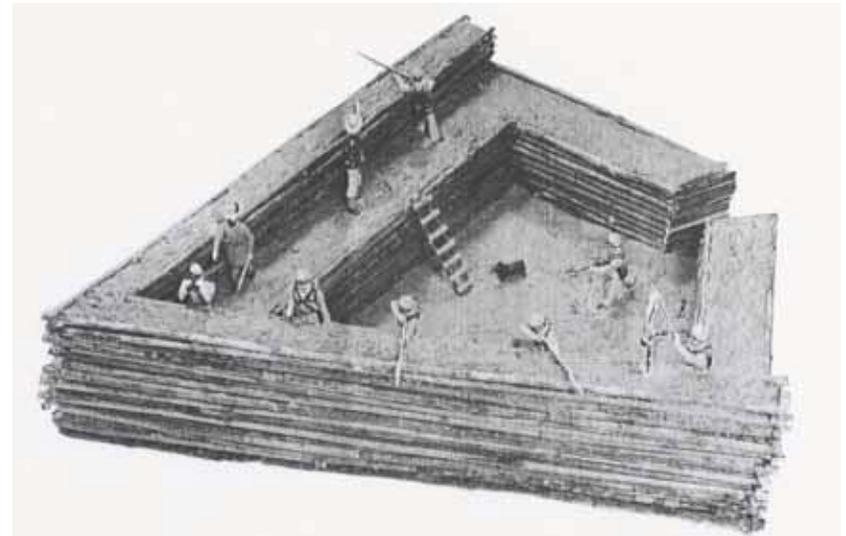


FIGURE 3-7: Model of a Shoupade

The shelling never escalated into a full-blown fight, however, as Sherman's troops were able to outflank Johnston's. Because Johnston failed to protect key river crossings near Atlanta, lightly armed Union soldiers were permitted to pass, and forces crossed at Sope Creek (about 10 miles north of the defense line) on July 8. By essentially going around the defense line, Union troops outwitted the Confederates and avoided really testing Johnston's design. On July 9, Johnston's troops were therefore forced to retreat and slip back across the Chattahoochee River, and as General Shoup later commented, "the Confederacy was finished when they abandoned the defenses and crossed the river."

Although only occupied for four days, the Chattahoochee River Defense Line offers valuable glimpses into the area's – and the country's – history. Only remnants of the defense line still exist, however, as most traces have been destroyed by development. Still, segments of the line can be found throughout the study area. In the 100 acre tract of land owned by Cobb County, remains of a large redan exist. Evidence suggests the redan accommodated at least six artillery pieces and was protected a ditch over eight feet deep and by walls which were probably 10 to 12 feet high. Additional underground "bomb-proofs" might also exist in this area, but archaeological work on the site has not been extended beyond the main trench line. A full archaeological survey needs to be undertaken to fully document the artifacts that the 100 acre tract contains.

The portion of Johnston's River Line in the County's 100 acre tract was given National Historic Landmark status in 1973. The National Register entry notes its significance as "among [the] few remaining traces of both armies on [the] northern perimeter of Atlanta."

HISTORIC PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: PRESLEY / HALL – PARLOR HOUSE (NEW SOUTH ASSOCIATES) (I.E. HOOPER-TURNER HOUSE)

The Presley home (today called the Hooper-Turner house after its original owners), located at 5811 Oakdale Road, is a one-story brick-sided house which was built around the mid-1800s. Known as a "Hall-Parlor" house, it was originally comprised of only two rooms and featured wood siding. Additions and alterations have taken place over the years, however. The rear of the house was expanded in 1909 to include two bedrooms and a bathroom, and a flat-roof addition and fieldstone chimneys appear to date from the 1940s.

According to oral history, the house was in use during the Civil War. Although the structure is architecturally distinct, further work needs to be undertaken to determine the house's true provenance.



FIGURE 3-8: Frances Presley / Hooper-Turner House

3.2 Inventory and Analysis

The purpose behind an Inventory and Analysis is to gain insight into what makes an area unique. As part of the process we documented existing conditions, analyzed the implications of what is there, and then started the synthesis process to determine the most appropriate design and planning decisions. Specific issues assessed include: the study area's current land use patterns, recreational opportunities, non-vehicular transportation options, preservation efforts, and urban design elements.

3.2.1 OVERVIEW

The River Line is an area in transition. The area has a rich and diverse history dating back to when it was occupied by Native Americans. During the Civil War, General Joseph Johnston constructed trenches and other earthen defenses to repel the Union forces that were marching toward Atlanta. The Johnston's River Line is particularly significant due to the presence of very unique fortifications called shoupades that do not exist any other place in the country. Only nine of the original 36 Shoupades still exist.

Like many parts of the Atlanta area, industrial uses were established along the Chattahoochee River. Previous comprehensive plans designated the land use for the area along the river as industrial, due largely to its flat and flood-

prone nature. These characteristics made this area less desirable for the development of other land uses.

In the last two decades or so, the area to the north of the river has become a prime area for development as people began recognizing the area's many assets. Located in Cobb County, taxes are lower and access to I-285 (and subsequently to I-20 and I-75) is convenient, making it easy to get to other parts of the Atlanta region from the River Line area. Among the residential developments in the River Line area are Providence, Legacy, Registry Oaks, Inverness Ridge, Park Avenue Views, Vinings Estates, Westbury Vinings, and Vinings Vintage. The area is quickly becoming a bedroom community for Atlanta. Efforts such as those undertaken by the nearby Cumberland Community Improvement District (CID) are helping to ensure that the quality of life in these developing areas is maintained and elevated.

3.2.2 NICKAJACK CREEK

Nickajack Creek is one of the primary water ways in south Cobb County leading to the Chattahoochee River. The area around the creek is mostly undeveloped because much of it is in floodplain. There are also selected wetlands along the creek.

Nickajack Creek has been listed as an "impaired water" by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as a result of pollution from urban runoff, and there are some concerns about water quality.

Since the floodplain restricts development along the creek, there are opportunities to protect and enhance natural resources, and to provide trails and other recreation opportunities.

Nickajack Creek runs diagonally through the study area and could potentially serve as the "spine" that connects all of the neighborhoods in the River Line area.

3.2.3 RIVERVIEW ROAD

The study area starts at the intersection of Riverview Road and a railroad bridge overpass. Riverview Road is the easternmost road in the study area and is closest to the Chattahoochee River. It runs parallel to the river, which is situated diagonally in a northeast/southwest direction. Riverview Road is a two lane road with no sidewalks, bike lanes, or curb and gutter in most places. There are industrial uses along most of Riverview Road. There is significant truck traffic on Riverview Road because of the industrial uses. Although

Riverview Road is not currently designated as a truck route in Cobb County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, it has essentially become a de facto truck route. As currently constructed, Riverview does not meet the needs of industrial or residential uses in the area.

Along this part of Riverview Road are sports fields for Pace Academy. This is one of the few places along Riverview Road that has a sidewalk. Along the east side of Riverview Road is undeveloped land consisting primarily of densely vegetated areas. There are a few glimpses of the river through the vegetation, but these are infrequent.

In some places, the adjacent industrial development is set considerably higher than the road. The topography to the west of Riverview Road is very steep in places, and the grade continues up until it abuts Oakdale Road. Much of the area along Riverview Road is unkempt, and the vegetation is scrubby. Just past Dickerson Drive there is an abandoned house completely covered with kudzu.

Along the east side of Riverview Road, between the road and the rivers, are a number of storage yards. These include a concrete mixing site, a palette company, junk yards, and other industrial uses. These continue all the way down to the intersection at Veterans Memorial Highway. These uses prevent any views of the river, and such uses often have an impact on water quality in the river.



FIGURE 3-9: Riverview Road



FIGURE 3-10: Heavy industrial uses on Riverview Road

3.2.4 DISCOVERY BOULEVARD

Discovery Boulevard is a two-lane road with sidewalks and curb and gutter along both sides of the road in many locations. There are selected locations along the road where sidewalks do not exist on one side of the road, or both. Discovery Boulevard is much more manicured and well-maintained than other roads in the study area, and although this road is flanked by industrial uses, the contrast with Riverview Road is striking.

At the northwest corner of the Veterans Memorial and Discovery intersection is the Walk at Legacy. Legacy is a John Wieland Homes development. It is a master-planned neighborhood with sidewalk-lined streets and pocket parks surrounded by upscale homes. It features historically inspired homes and townhomes with classic early 1900s-style architecture that includes front porches and garages set back from the street. The commercial part of the village is still under development and features shops on the bottom and townhomes on the top.

Along much of Discovery are light industrial uses and large box industrial manufacturing facilities, including Nelson Westerburg, Recall, MSC and Crystal Springs.

There are also areas along Discovery Boulevard that are more natural in character and include a mixture of pines and hardwoods. The area along

Discovery where Nickajack Creek runs into the Chattahoochee River has standing water in places and is not developable. The bridge across Nickajack Creek has no bike lanes, but there is a raised, paved walk on both sides of the bridge, so access for pedestrians is good.

Although Discovery Boulevard runs parallel to the river and is actually quite close, a motorist would not even know the river is there. There is no access to the river, and there are not even any views of the river.

3.2.5 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

Veterans Memorial is a four-lane divided highway that serves as one of the major roads in the area. Traffic moves at a brisk pace on Veterans Memorial, and like so many roads in the Atlanta area, pedestrians are taking their lives in their hands when attempting to cross from one side of the road to the other. There are no sidewalks or bike lanes along Veterans.

Land uses along Veterans Memorial are primarily commercial and industrial, and all uses are oriented toward motorists.

3.2.6 MABLETON PARKWAY

Mableton Parkway is the end of study area. It is a busy, four-lane arterial highway that transitions into Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to the east.



FIGURE 3-11: Light industrial uses on Discovery Boulevard



FIGURE 3-12: John Wieland Legacy development on Discovery Boulevard

3.2.7 OAKDALE ROAD

Oakdale Road, which runs through the center of the study area, is a two-lane road with curb and gutter and sidewalks on both sides of the road. Oakdale Road follows a ridge, so there are outstanding views in both directions. From a couple of locations, nice views of downtown Atlanta exist. In some sections along Oakdale Road there are fairly large stands of mature trees.

Along Oakdale Road is a mixture of older, traditional homes located along the road and a number of new residential developments scattered among the older homes. These residential developments include both single family homes as well as townhomes. Several of the residential developments along Oakdale Road have clubhouses, pools, and exercise facilities for their residents. These are typically very small, though, and most likely are not available to non-residents. There does not appear to be much public space, and connectivity between developments is minimal.

Roberts Road, which is off of Oakdale, is a two-lane road with no sidewalks, no curb and gutter, and no bike lanes. The subdivisions in this area consist of older, affordable homes. Some of the homes are in need of repair but others are well maintained. There are several different developments in this area, but they all have the same basic characteristics. This feels like a very traditional subdivision, with houses fronting the road, and each having a driveway and a garage.

Located just off Oakdale Road, the City of Smyrna's new park was just completed, and the soccer fields are currently in use. Nickajack Park is also located off Oakdale Road; however, it is not visible from the road. Very much a specialty park geared toward active recreation, it consists primarily of three ball fields, several paved parking lots, a small playground, and supporting facilities. There is a community garden located on the northern part of the park. The park is fairly functional, but it is somewhat dated and needs to be redesigned and renovated. There are tennis courts and a basketball court tucked away in the southeast corner of the park. These are not very visible from the main part of the park.

Despite its close proximity to so many residential developments, Nickajack Park does not appear to have many trails that connect to these areas. Lindley 6th Grade Academy is located just to the west of the park on the other side of Nickajack Creek. There is a utility easement that cuts across the northern portion of the park, and it could potentially be used for trails that help connect to other parts of the study area.

3.2.8 BUCKNER ROAD

Buckner Road serves as the western boundary of the study area. It is a two-lane road with no curb and gutter or bike lanes and has little sidewalk connectivity. It appears to be a small country road that has been improved over the years.



FIGURE 3-13: Oakdale Road



FIGURE 3-14: Views to the city from Oakdale Road

Buckner Road is very curvilinear and is lined with fairly dense vegetation on both sides. It has a very different look and feel to it as compared to many of the newer roads. There are several older homes setback from the road on both sides.

There are a number of residential developments north of Buckner Road. There are also several developments on the south side of the road, but there are still undeveloped areas here. There is a sidewalk on the northern side of Buckner Road in this area.

The area is a mixture of older homes and newer subdivisions. There are some very large homes located along the road in selected areas. In some places, large oaks hang over the road, creating a more relaxed, shady drive than along other roads in the study area.

Additionally, Lindley 6th Grade Academy is located off of Buckner Road. To the north is Whitefield Academy, a private Christian school that was constructed in 1996. It is intended for students from PK-4 through 12. Whitefield Academy includes a football stadium, baseball facility, softball facility, practice fields, and other facilities.



FIGURE 3-15: Buckner Road

4.0 Comprehensive Mapping



4.0 Comprehensive Mapping

Effective strategic planning always begins with a sound base of information. EDAW used geospatial data, satellite photos, CAD data, and site visits to identify key existing conditions and opportunities. The following maps help illustrate the baseline context for the master planning process.

The River Line Mater Plan study area is bounded to the south by the Chattahoochee River (which forms the boundary between Fulton and Cobb counties) and to the north by Buckner Road. Major routes through the area include Veterans Memorial Highway and Oakdale Road / Discovery Boulevard, and Interstate 285 crosses over the easternmost corner of the area via an elevated bridge. While the majority of the study area is in unincorporated Cobb County, some land is under the jurisdiction of the City of Smyrna. The Fulton County Airport is located just outside the study area (south of Discovery Boulevard, across the Chattahoochee River); however, activities there do not impact the River Line area as the planes' flight paths are directed away from the River Line area. Interstate 20 is also nearby (located just south of the study area), providing good interstate access to residents and businesses within the area.

The study area is typified by suburban residential development and contains some amenities such as a shopping center (Providence Pavilion), two public parks (Nickajack Creek and the new Smyrna ball fields), and two schools (Lindley Middle School and Whitefield Academy). Industrial development also represents a significant land use in the study area, particularly fronting the Chattahoochee River along Riverview

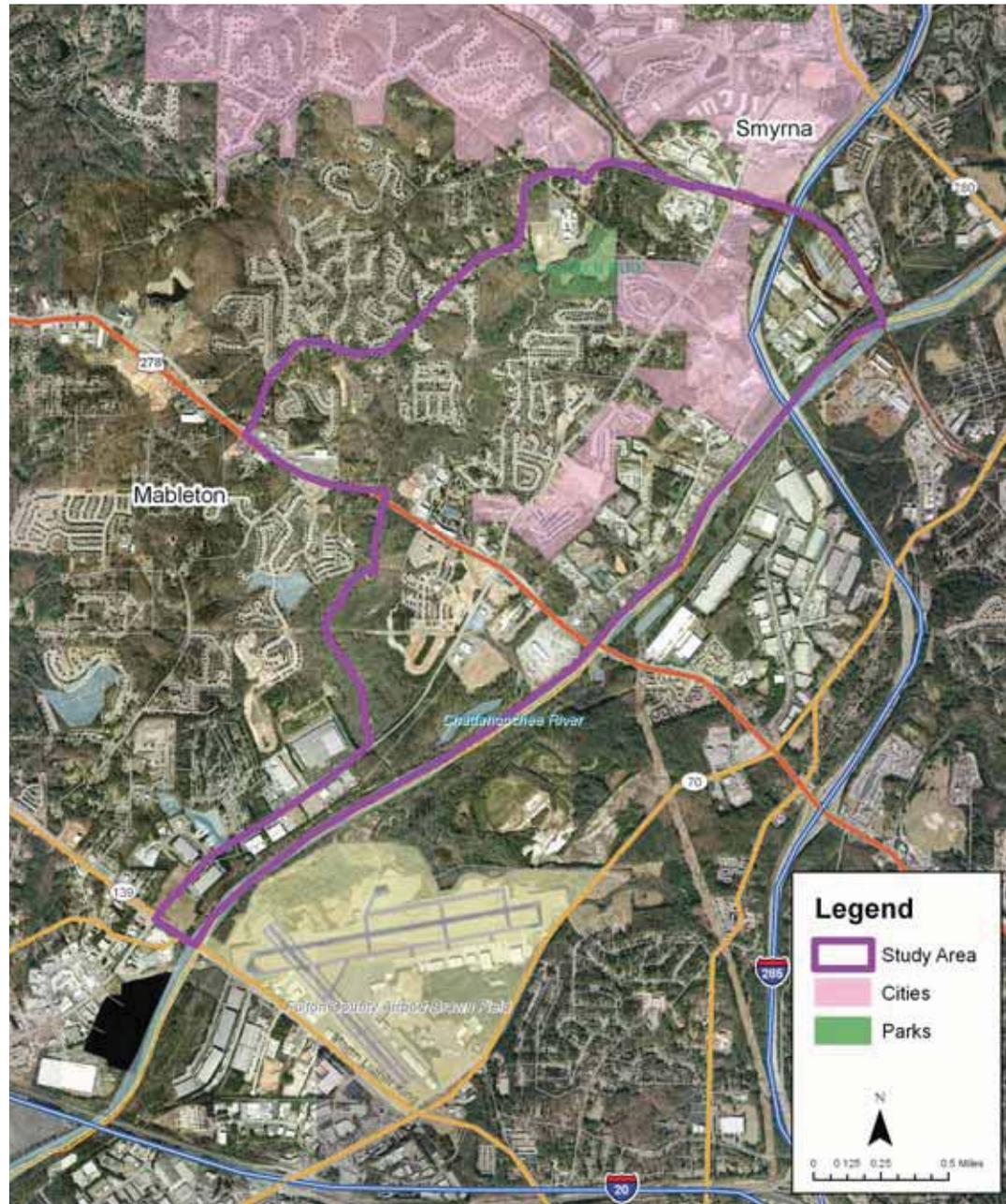


Figure 4-1: River Line Master Plan Study Area

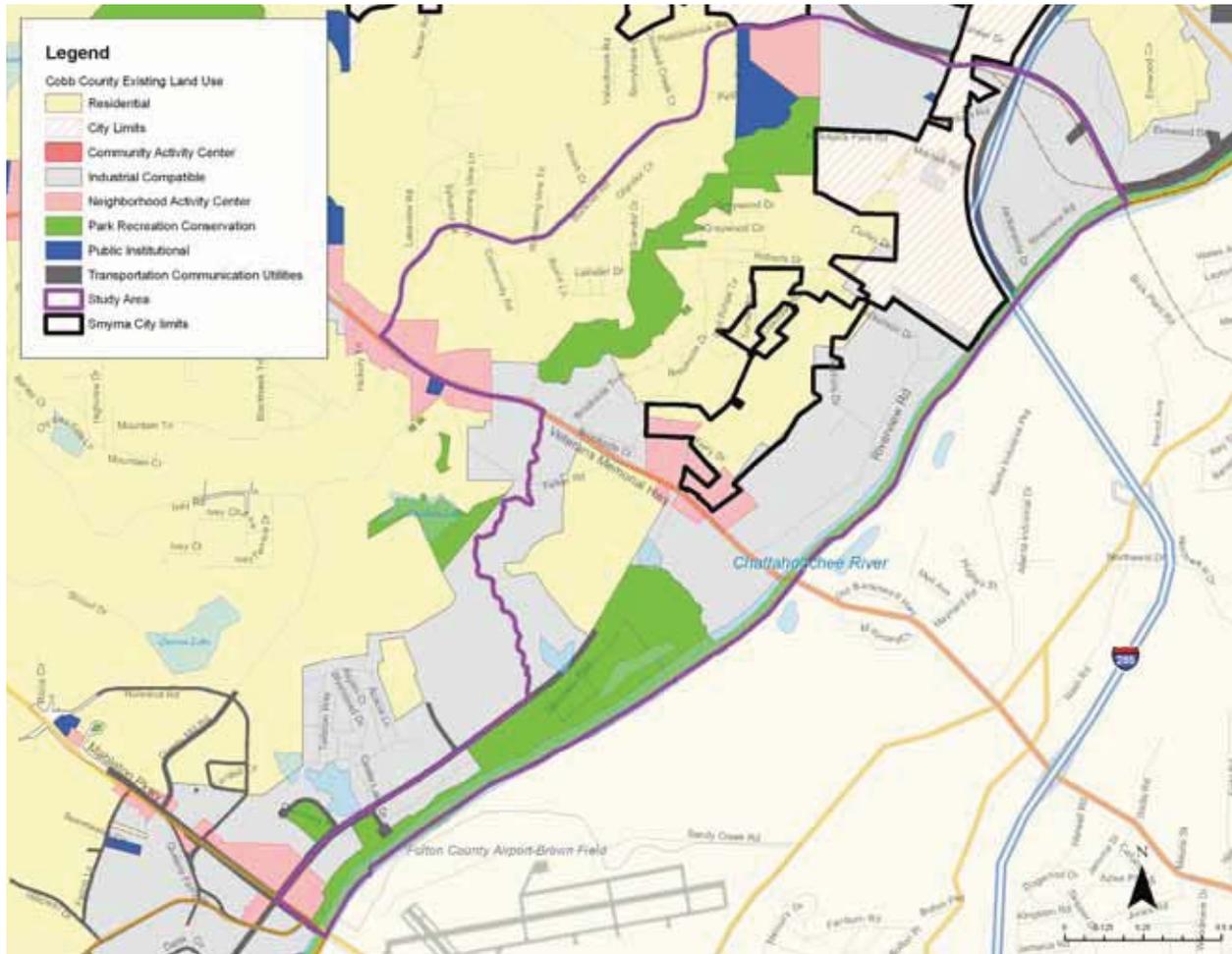


FIGURE 4-2: Cobb County Existing Land Use

Road. The character of this industrial development varies, from well-maintained light industrial uses along Discovery Boulevard to heavy industrial uses along Riverview Road (described further in Section 3.2). A significant amount of land is also classified as park / recreation / conservation use, notably in the 100 acre parcel between Discovery Boulevard and the Chattahoochee River and along Nickajack Creek. While this land has not been developed as formal parkland, it has the potential to become so in the future. Another development potential is around the area identified as a Neighborhood Activity Center at the intersection of Oakdale Road and Veterans Memorial Highway. Unlike Providence Pavilion, this area has yet to fully develop as a community amenity, as two corners are currently vacant land.

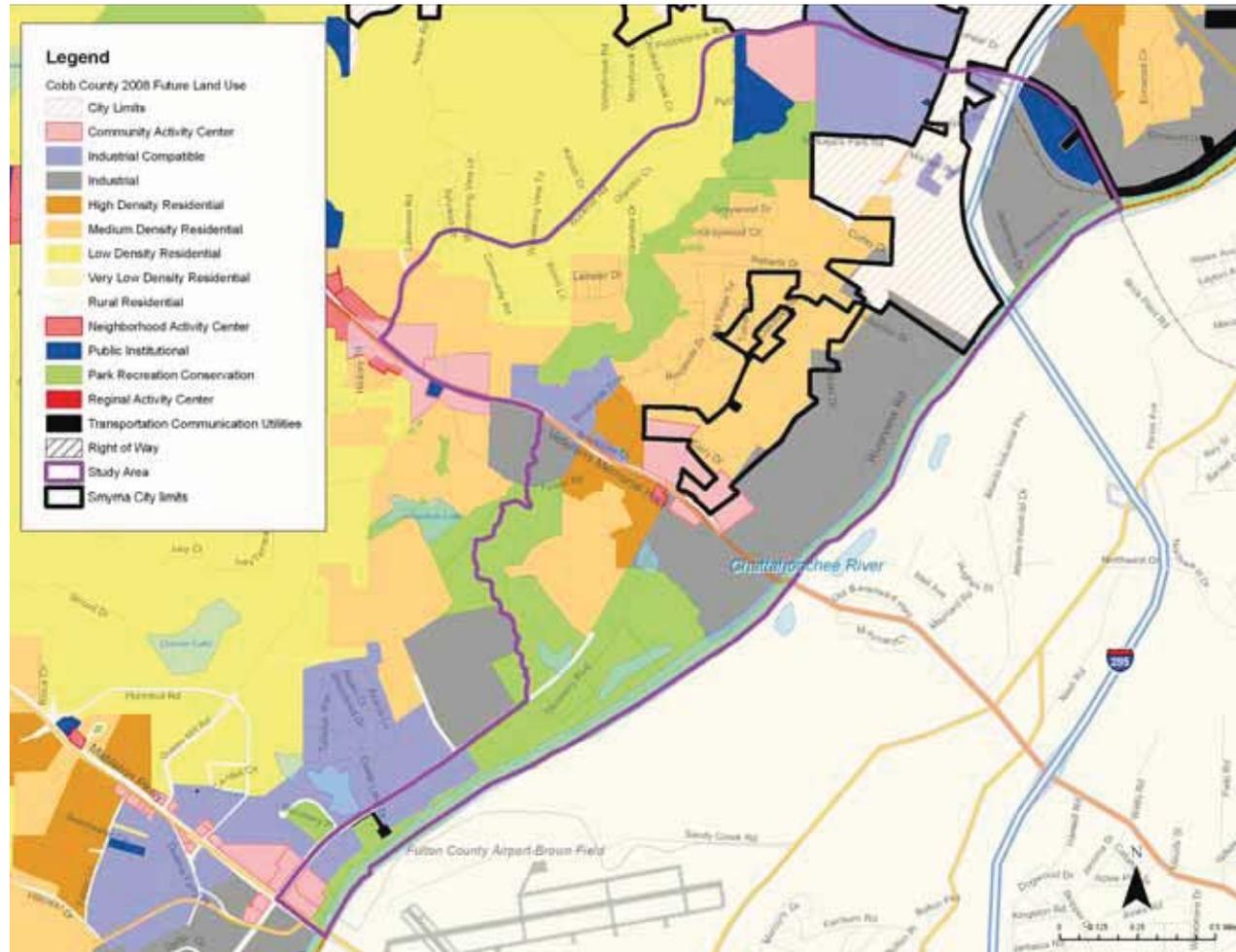


FIGURE 4-3: Cobb County Future Land Use

According to Cobb County's future land use designations (as outlined in their Comprehensive Plan), the River Line area will be maintained as a primarily suburban residential area. Although additional green space is proposed along Nickajack Creek, however, much industrial development is slotted to remain in the Riverview Road area. Additionally, transitioning what is now inaccessible green space into usable parkland is considered and addressed further in the Implementation section of this plan. (For a more detailed description of future land use, see Section 2.1.1.)



FIGURE 4-4: Transportation / Connectivity

Section 2.1.2 reviews transportation policies and plans for the River Line area. The map above, however, illustrates some of the existing connectivity issues. Evidently, while sidewalks exist in various places in the study area, significant gaps exist, most notably along Veterans Memorial Highway, Discovery Boulevard, Buckner Road, and Riverview Road (where very few sidewalk facilities exist). No bus routes pass through the study area either, severely limiting the possibility for people to utilize alternative modes of transportation in and around the River Line area. Car and truck traffic, therefore, predominate along the major roadways here.

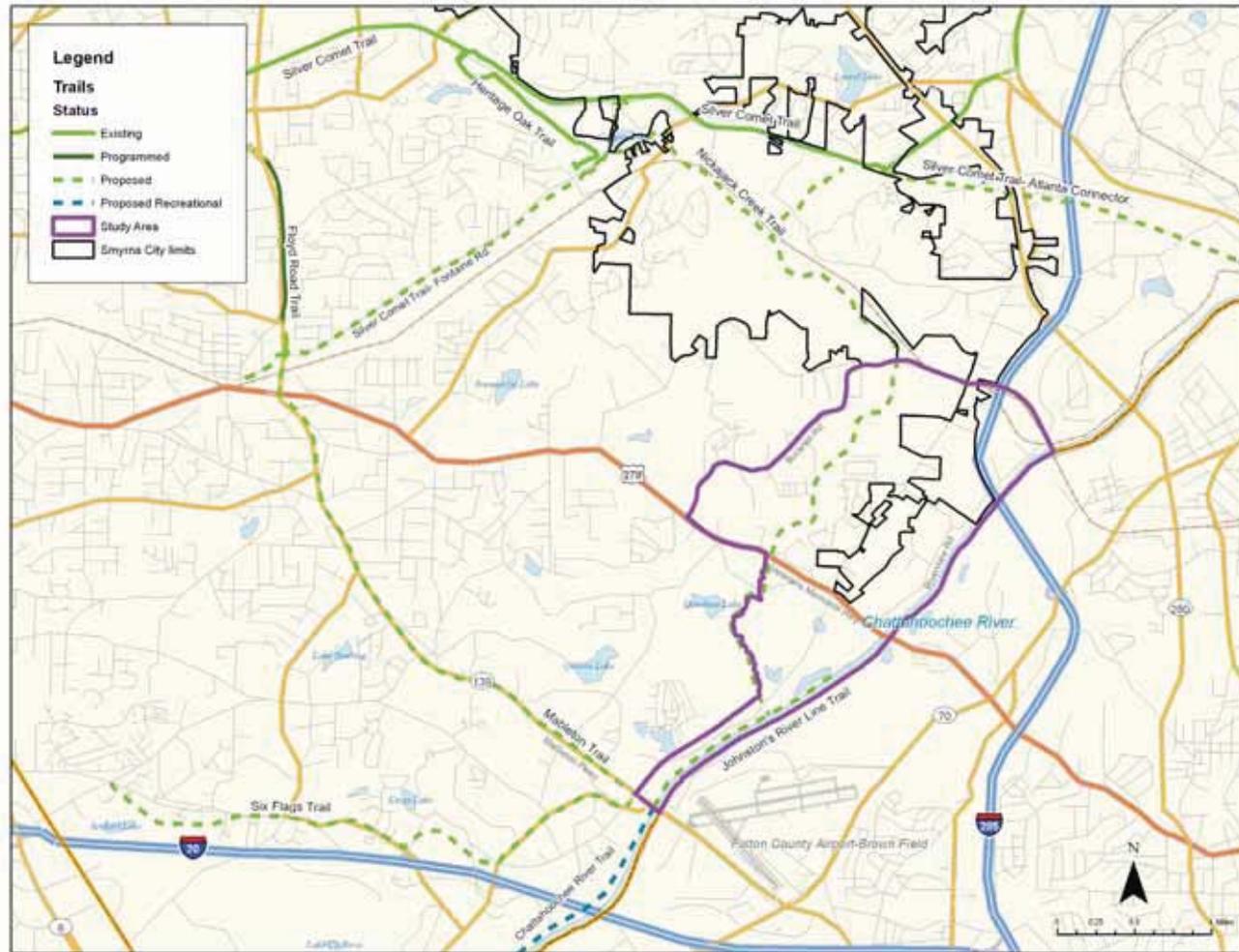


Figure 4-5: Trails

Figure 4-5 illustrates trail networks – both existing and proposed – in and around the River Line area (see also Section 2.1.2). The nearby Silver Comet trail is a tremendous asset for the community; however, no direct connections currently exist for residents and visitors to easily access it from the River Line area. As shown in the map, two trails (the Nickajack Creek Trail and Johnston's River Line Trail) are proposed in the study area according to information contained within Cobb County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, which would help connect amenities such as existing and future trails and parks. Not only would these new trails provide River Line residents with transportation choices to move around their community but also help attract visitors to some of the area's most unique features, such as the Chattahoochee River and potential parkland around Johnston's River Line. By developing these (and potentially other) trails to traverse the River Line area, this community could boast recreation and transportation amenities unique to the county.

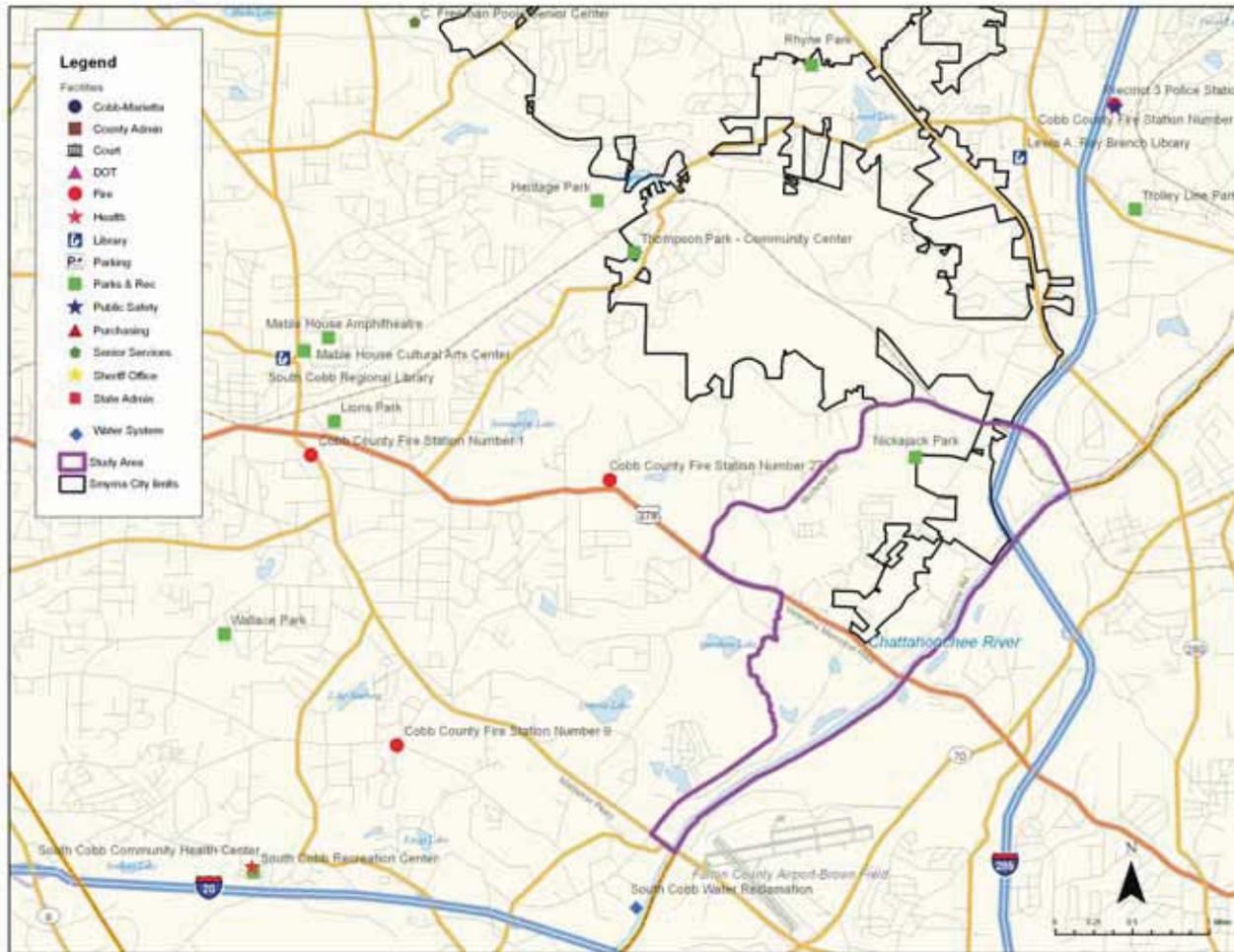


FIGURE 4-6: Facilities

Within approximately five miles of the study area, numerous community facilities exist, notably a large number of parks of varying size. Three libraries exist within the immediate area and two health centers. Within the study area, however, only two public parks exist – at Nickajack Creek and the new Smyrna ball fields. Accessibility to these facilities, however, is key, as most are not within reach by foot or public transportation. While nearby libraries could accommodate community meetings or events, they are not close enough to be accessed other than by car. Likewise, parks are not connected via paths or trails to the River Line area. There appears, therefore, to be a need for accessible community meeting facilities and parkland to be located within or closer to the River Line study area, connected via trails, sidewalks, and/or bicycle lanes. Additionally, Figure 4-6 does not address the quality of existing facilities: Nickajack Park, for example, is in need of improvements.

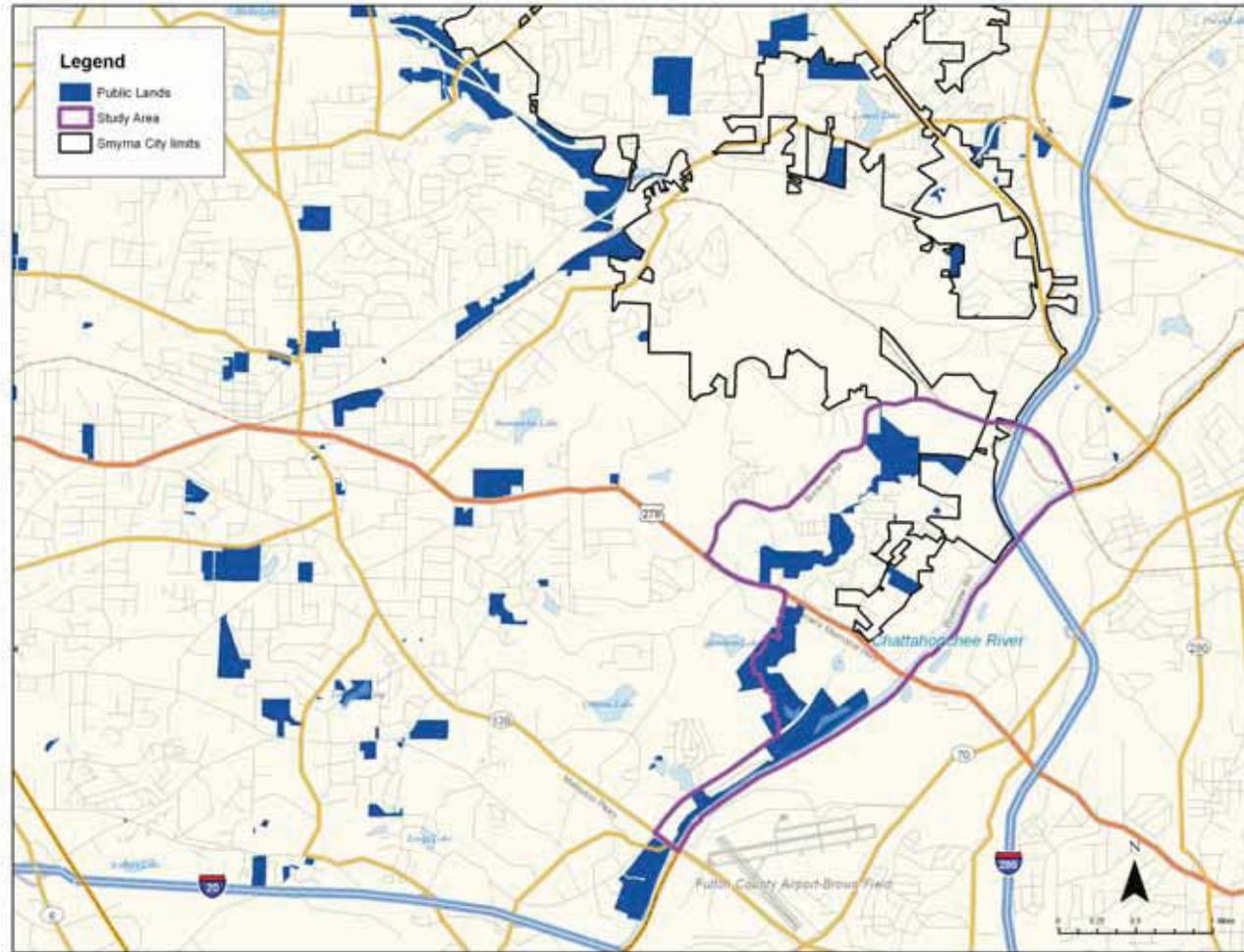


FIGURE 4-7: Public Lands

Figure 4-7 shows land owned by local governments and Figure 4-8 (on the following page) shows land which is currently unoccupied within and around the study area. The information contained within these maps is useful as it represents opportunity areas for development. When land is both vacant and publicly owned, the opportunity to deliver community-oriented development is great as there are no ownership issues nor existing land uses with which to contend. Instances where vacant land is publicly owned occur around Nickajack Creek, indicating developing uses in these areas, such as a trail system, could be relatively straight-forward, with funding and environmental concerns notwithstanding.

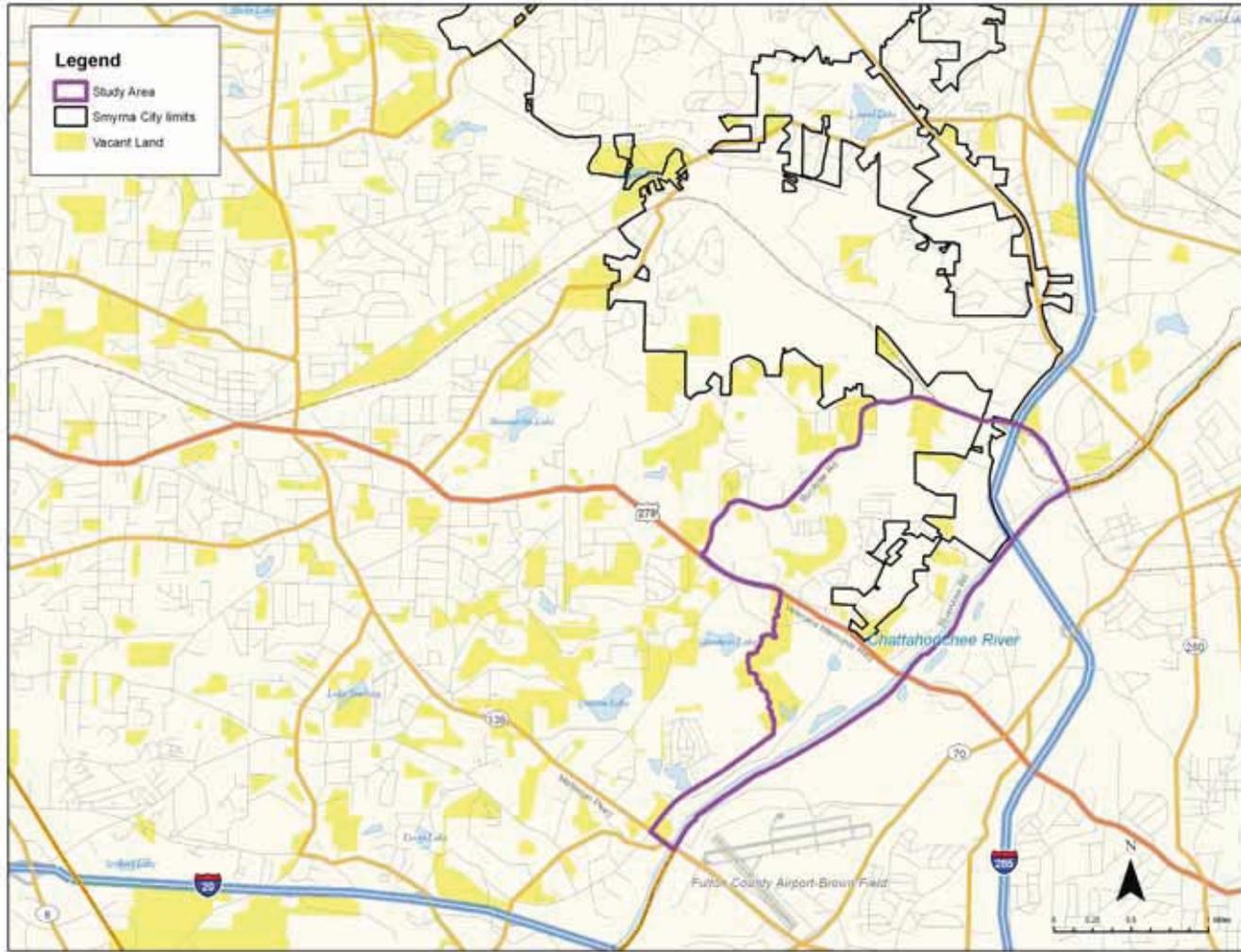


FIGURE 4-8: Vacant Land



FIGURE 4-9: Environmental Resources

Figure 4-9 shows floodplains and wetlands within the River Line study area. Naturally, these areas exist around the two main watercourses in the area, i.e. Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River. Typically, it is advisable to avoid development in these areas due to their sensitive ecological nature. However, development can be permitted if it complies with the federal, state, and Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) standards (see Section 2.1.4 above). Cobb County's Municipal Code additionally details the special permitting process required to build within these areas. Opportunities exist to re-introduce wetland elements in the River Line area and are explored further in Sections 3 and 5.

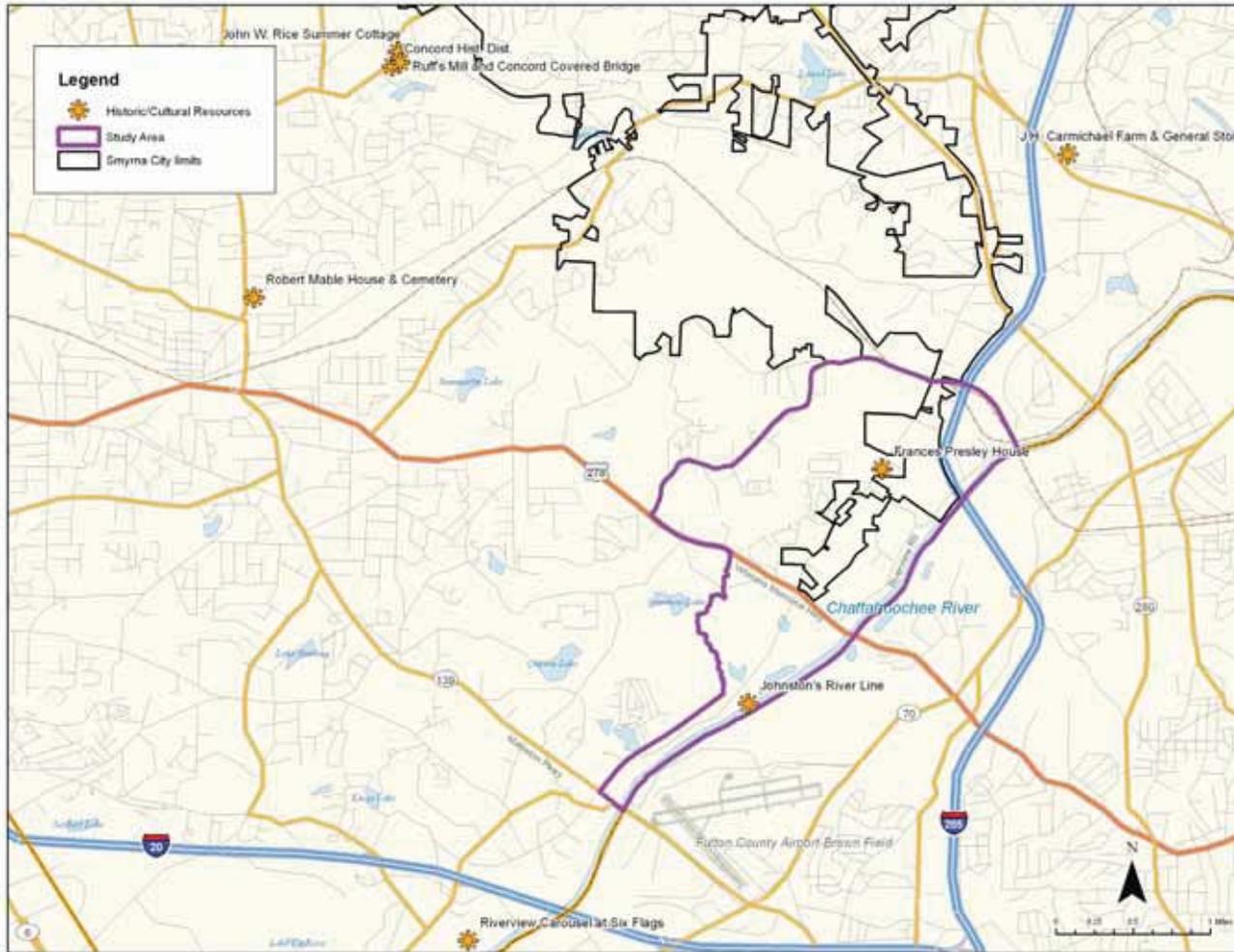


FIGURE 4-10: Cultural and Historic Resources

As described in Section 2.1.5 above, the local area has a rich history, dating back to Native American settlements near the Chatahochee River. The two most notable resources within the River Line study area, however, date to around the Civil War era, namely Johnston's River Line and the Presley House (also known as the Hooper-Turner House). As part of the master plan, opportunities to connect these and other landmarks outside the study area were assessed to devise a strategy to best promote yet protect these unique features.

5.0 Master Plan Development



5.0 Master Plan Development

5.1 Purpose of the Master Plan

The Master Plan is intended to create a “framework” that guides the future of River Line. Although conceptual in nature, the planning concepts were drawn from a thorough and careful understanding of the land, the community, and the history that has shaped both.

This Master Plan explores a range of options and then identifies future, discrete improvement projects and lays out an achievable and cost effective strategy for their implementation.

5.2 Primary Planning Principles

5.2.1 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Background research (including the review of policy and strategy documents, site analysis, and comprehensive mapping exercises, as described in Sections 3 and 4) helped the consultant team piece together initial issues and opportunities for the River Line area. At the first public meeting (November 18, 2008), results from this analysis were presented for comment.

Members of the public highlighted several main issues which were of concern:

- **Connectivity:** linking important places in the area such as the Chattahoochee River and Nickajack Park and getting there safely via a continuous network of sidewalks and/or trails. Busy streets (such as Veterans Memorial Highway) were seen to hinder this connectivity. Vehicular and truck traffic, particularly on Oakdale Road, was noted as a problem.
- **Industrial Uses:** described as a nuisance (e.g. noise, odors). It was suggested that these uses be moved away from the Chattahoochee River to protect it as a natural resource as well as recreational opportunity. It should be noted that at the fourth public meeting, industrial land owners took offense to this comment and suggested they planned on staying in the River Line. There were discussions at the fourth meeting about opportunities to enhance industrial uses in the area in order to enhance aesthetics and minimize environmental concerns.
- **Chattahoochee River:** seen as a missed opportunity in its current condition. People said there is a desire to create green space, pathways, and amenities such as riverfront restaurants along its banks. Riverview Road was described as a “blight” which needed to be fixed to allow public to access to

the river. There were discussions at the fourth public meeting about ways to improve the visual quality of Riverview Road.

- **Recreation:** a strong desire to build upon existing assets such as Nickajack Park (which needs to be improved), the new Smyrna ball fields, and nearby Silver Comet Trail. People talked about the need to preserve the green space which does exist (such as wooded areas) and the desire for multi-use trails, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian paths.
- **Historic and Community Resources:** Civil War earthworks (Shoupades) as well as the Hooper-Turner House, the old mill on the Henderson Road property, and historic cemeteries were identified as important resources worthy of protection. A visitor center or museum was suggested. People said there are few community facilities, however, especially places to gather. A lack of sense of community was noted and attributed to the absence of such places to meet.
- **Public Realm:** elements such as street lighting, landscaping, and signage were said to be incorporated consistently throughout the River Line area to make it more pedestrian friendly and help engender a sense of place.
- **Identity:** incorporating features as unique as the Chattahoochee River, historic remnants, and the nearby Silver Comet Trail, the River Line area was seen to have many desirable elements, yet people thought the area was not a cohesive whole with a distinct identity. Like Vinings, people wanted River Line to have its own recognizable character.

5.2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Based on baseline research but also in large part on community input regarding the most important features which should be incorporated into the River Line area in the future, six primary planning principles were then developed to guide development of a master plan. They are:

- Enhance Connectivity
- Reconnect to the River
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities
- Emphasize Cultural & Historic Resources
- Create Community-friendly Character
- Develop Strong Sense of Identity

5.2.3 ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY

One major limitation of the current River Line Area is that both pedestrian and vehicular circulation is difficult at times. A common comment from residents

is that Oakdale Road is a “parking lot” during rush hour, and that the lack of sidewalks and trails makes it impossible to walk from one neighborhood to another, or to destination points such as schools, parks, and commercial areas.

There are number of ways to improve pedestrian connectivity, including trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes. Pedestrian bridges need to be included in selected locations to cross Nickajack Creek. The addition of trailheads, sitting areas, scenic overlooks, and other public gathering areas will help encourage the use of trails and walkways that help link to activity nodes and public spaces.

The trails, walks, and bike lanes will help improve connectivity within the River Line area, and they can also be used to link with outside neighborhoods and gathering spaces. In particular, there are opportunities to connect to Fulton County and other parts of Cobb County via bike lanes.

Within residential areas, developing interior roads that link one neighborhood to another would help improve connectivity by providing drivers with an opportunity to avoid major streets such as Oakdale Road.

Crossings need to be developed to make it safer to get across major thoroughfares. At Veterans Memorial Highway, an underpass may be the best way to handle potential conflicts between pedestrians and motorists.

5.2.4 RECONNECT TO THE RIVER

The Chattahoochee River is the major physical feature that defines the River Line area. Surprisingly, though, the river is not visible from most parts of the area. The river should be the focal point of the River Line area, and it should be viewed as a major asset. Views to the river need to be enhanced, and a river walk or trail developed to provide access to the water’s edge. Any trail near the river must meet the appropriate regulations to protect water quality and the shoreline. There are opportunities to develop public spaces,

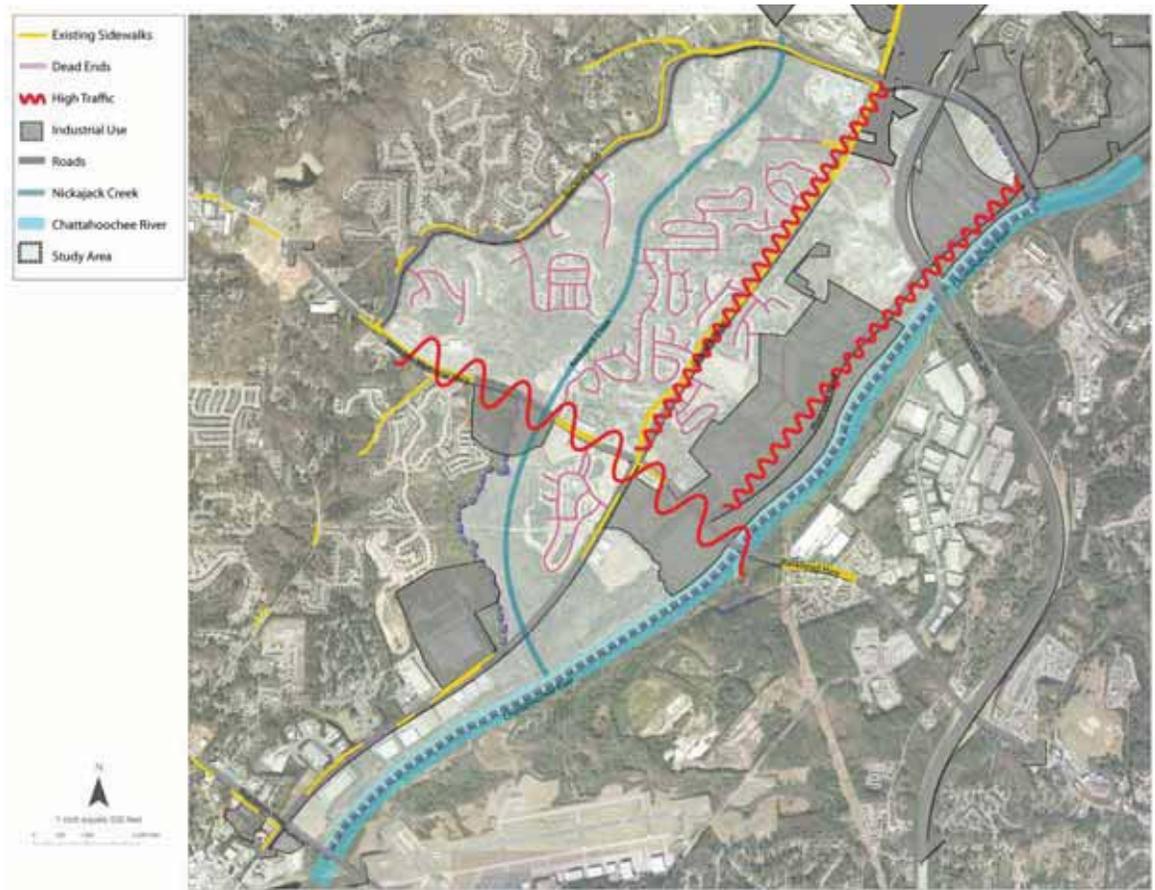


FIGURE 5-1: Connectivity Constraints

trailheads, scenic overlooks, and recreational opportunities along the river. One to improve access to the river is to change existing land use and provide more greenspace along the river. Another is to work with existing landowners to provide potential locations for access to the river. Developing new trails further away from the river will still be able to offer views of the river if located appropriately.

5.2.5 ENHANCE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of existing active and passive recreation opportunities within the River Line, and these should be expanded. Major renovations are

need at Nickajack Park, and there needs to be better pedestrian links to this park from neighboring residential areas.

Emphasis should be on providing passive recreation opportunities, improving walkability and connectivity; and developing multi-use trails that link parks with where people live. Developing new greenspace near the river, along Nickajack Creek, and in the residential areas would help protect existing natural resources and create a “greener” feel for the area.

5.2.6 EMPHASIZE CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The River Line area has a broad, rich history that includes the Civil War, Indian settlement, historic cemeteries, railroads, trolley, old mill, and other historic resources. Much of this history has been lost due to the extensive development in the area, so it is important to protect existing historic features and to find new opportunities to interpret the history of the place. One option is to develop appropriate interpretive opportunities, including signage, interpretive tours, and reenactments.

5.2.7 CREATE COMMUNITY-FRIENDLY CHARACTER

The River Line area currently is an area in transition. Much of the area has traditionally been industrial, but in recent years a number of small residential developments have been constructed.

It is important that the roads in the area be more pedestrian in scale and include sidewalks, street trees, and landscaping along the road. This will help create a more “walkable” feel to the community and will improve aesthetics.

If industrial use is maintained in the River Line area, it needs to be more compatible with the residential development. The use of buffers will help minimize conflicts. Incentives should also be offered to business owners to improve the overall aesthetic appeal of their property. This could include the addition of ornamental plantings, native plantings, and other landscape elements.

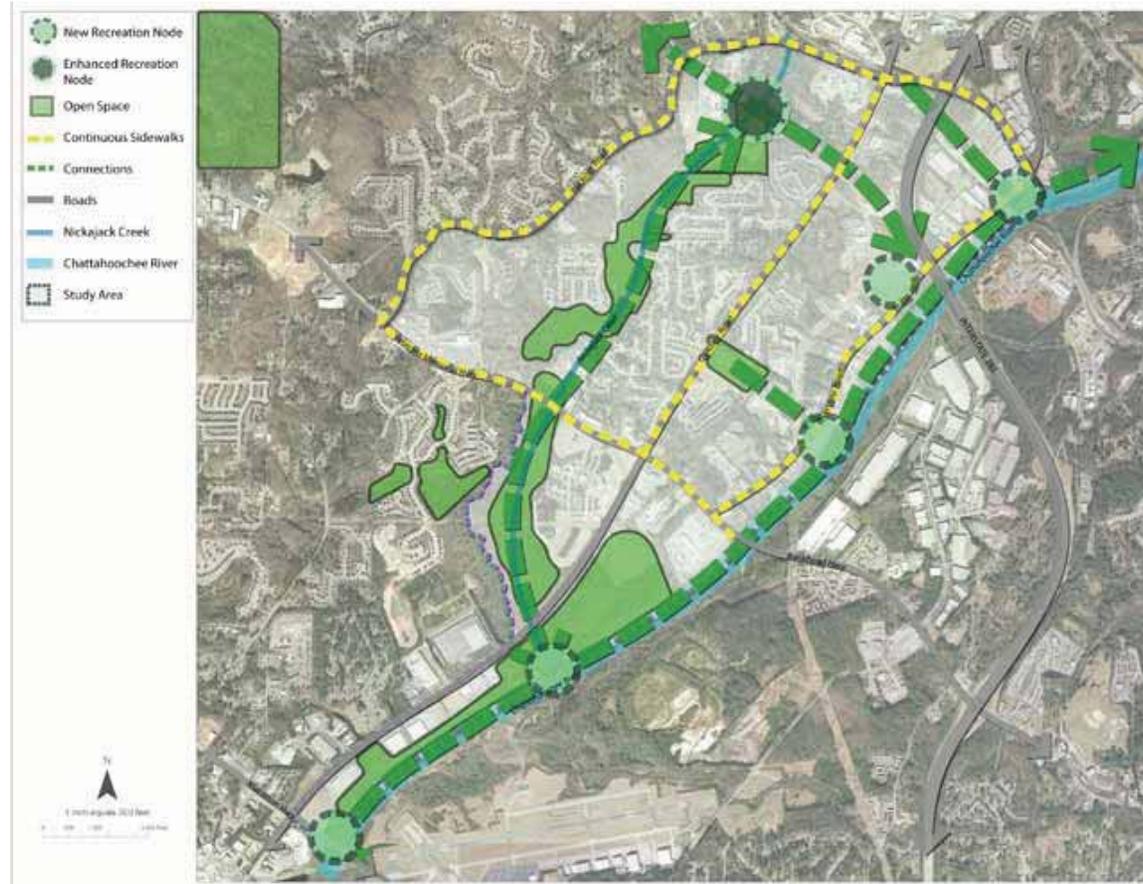


FIGURE 5-2: Recreation Opportunities

It is important to provide views of and access to the river, but this can be done without completely removing existing land uses along the river.

5.2.8 DEVELOP STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

The River Line area feels more like a combination of individual buildings and developments than it does a neighborhood. The developments are disconnected and do not contribute to the feeling that this is a cohesive community. It is important to create a sense of identity that helps give residents a sense of belonging, and visitors a clear sense that they are in a well-defined community.

Future development in the River Line area needs to be more consistent with the existing trend toward residential, and should follow a more consistent architectural style. A Pattern Book (i.e. design guidelines) should be developed that identifies the shapes, materials, and patterns that build upon the historic and cultural character of the area, and these should be used to help guide new development.

To help develop a stronger sense of community, more green space and recreation, community facilities, activity zones, and mixed uses should be added. Stronger entrances into the River Line area need to be defined. People should know they are entering Cobb County, and that they are entering the River Line area.

5.3 Major Issues

There are four major issues that influenced the development of the alternative concepts. They are:

- *Floodplain & Wetlands* – The floodplains along the Chattahoochee River and Nickajack Creek will influence developable areas within the study area. The area around Nickajack Creek should be protected and preserved as greenspace. The floodplain mapping along the Chattahoochee River is an approximation based on GIS data, and it is intended to provide general guidance on areas of concern. The actual buildable areas may vary. There are apparently existing flooding problems along Nickajack Creek that need to be addressed.
- *Topography* – Parts of the study area are very steep, and this will influence which areas are buildable and how both pedestrian and vehicular connectivity may occur. The steep slopes offer some potentially incredible views of the river and of downtown Atlanta. Storm water runoff is an issue because of the existing topography.
- *Transportation & Connectivity* – The basic transportation infrastructure is in place, and it directly influences potential development in the River Line area. Most likely Riverview Road will need to be improved, and other roads

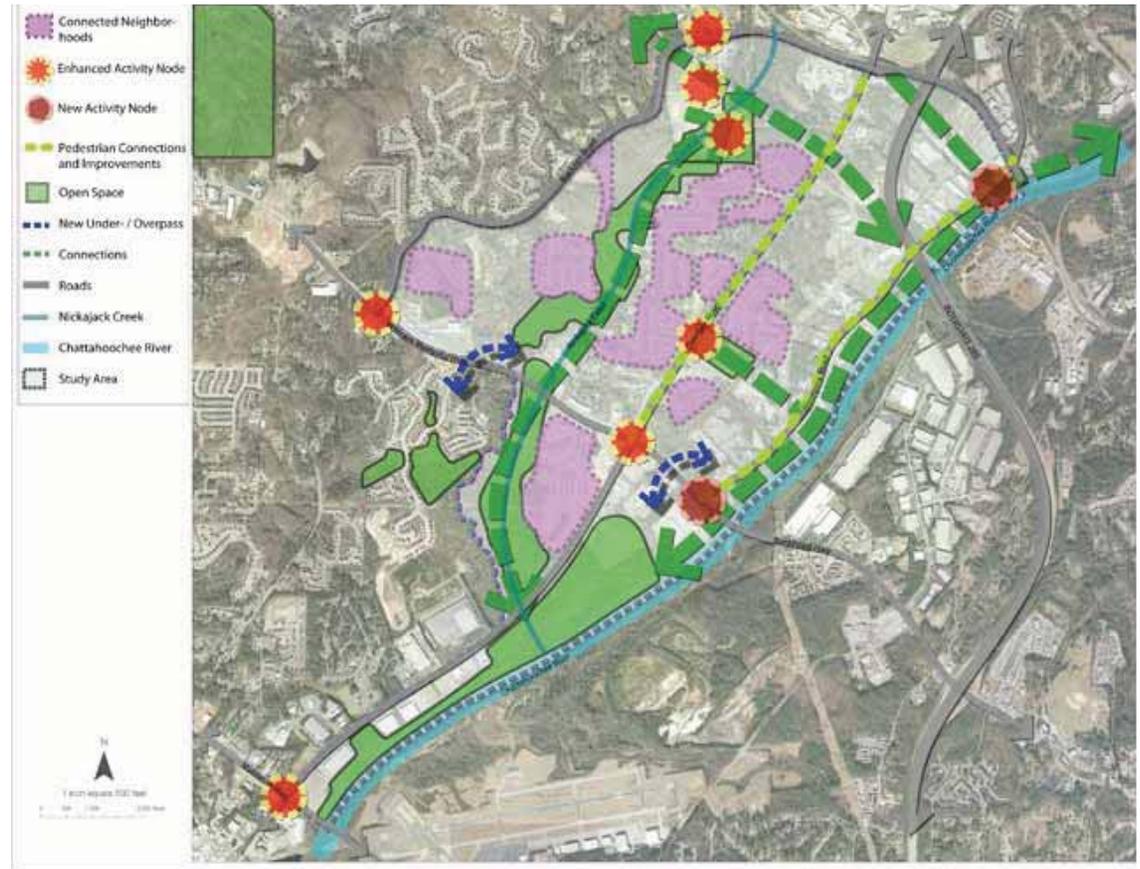


FIGURE 5-3: Community-friendly Character Opportunities

such as Buckner and Oakdale also need to be considered for improvements. In addition, connectivity between neighborhoods should be explored. Far too many neighborhoods have dead-end cul-de-sacs that result in limited internal circulation and only one egress/ingress point.

- *Environmental Concerns* – Most likely much of the natural resources in the River Line area has been impacted because of point and non-point pollution, much of which comes from up river. The Chattahoochee River is known to be contaminated. There have been reports that raw sewage is being pumped into the Chattahoochee upstream of the River Line area, and that is a major concern. The exact level of contamination will have to be determined via additional studies.

5.4 Alternative Planning Concepts

Based upon input from Cobb County staff, the Project Management Team, and local stakeholders, EDAW developed three Alternative Planning Concepts. Each concept incorporated the six Primary Planning Principles, but the application of the principles varies considerably.

The basic idea behind planning concepts is to generate clearly defined approaches, with each having a definitive theme and focus. One way to think about concepts is to ask the question, “If I have a specific budget, how do I want to spend my money?” With each concept, the primary focus of the budget is different.

The three Alternative Planning Concepts are:

- 1) Green/Community;
- 2) Historic/Cultural; and
- 3) Village Center.

5.4.1 GREEN/COMMUNITY CONCEPT

This concept places an emphasis on natural resources, pedestrian connections, new parks, and community facilities. The idea is to focus on creating a strong sense of identity for the River Line area that is based in large part on parks, trails, and natural resources. The concept recommends the following:

- Addition of pocket parks and linear parks;
- Development of a community park near the river;
- Restoration of wetlands;
- Focus on protecting/enhancing natural resources;
- Addition of trails, walks, and trailheads;
- Emphasis on pedestrian modes while minimizing motorized vehicles; and
- Enhanced connection of schools to river.

One of the biggest advantages of this concept is that there is already considerably greenspace in the area, with the area around Nickajack Creek running through the middle of the study area, and extending all of the way to the Chattahoochee River. This greenspace could serve as the primary spine that connects the rest of the study area.

5.4.2 HISTORIC/CULTURAL CONCEPT

This concept emphasizes the rich, diverse history of the River Line area. It seeks to build upon this history and use it as the basis for creating a sense of identity for the area. This concept recommends the following:

- Protect and interpret historic features;
- Conduct a complete cultural inventory;
- Consider historic district designation in selected areas;
- Construct museum/history center;
- Improve industrial uses maintained along the river;
- Research historic trails/embankments – recreate, restore, or interpret; and
- Emphasize tourism.

One potential benefit of this concept is that it can expand the economic base by attracting tourists who want to know more the history of the area. There are enough existing historic resources, such as the 100-acre site and existing shoupades, to use as the start of interpreting the area. However, many of the historic resources in the area are long gone, so reconstructing or interpreting historic elements may be required. An archaeological study of the area may reveal other elements.

5.4.3 VILLAGE CENTER CONCEPT

This concept focuses on developing an urban center that serves as the heart of the River Line neighborhood, and making the transition from a bedroom subdivision to a true Village Center. This approach is dependent upon one or more private developers taking the lead on constructing the urban center, but the County can offer incentives to encourage this type of development. This concept recommends the following:

- Develop mixed use hub along the river that will include a Village Center, public space, residential, commercial, and community use;
- Industrial uses maintained along the river would be enhanced;
- Connect Oakdale and northern residential areas to the river via “pedestrian promenades”;
- Take advantage of good access from I-285 and I-20 that will allow customers to easily access the urban center;
- Include commercial development at an appropriate scale to expand the concept of live/work/play;
- Develop public gathering areas in and around the urban center in order to encourage pedestrian activity; and
- Include facilities and activities that will attract people, such as a restaurant, a pub, a museum, or community spaces.

Fortunately there is sufficient available land in the River Line area to make this a viable option. Too often these types of areas are developed to a point

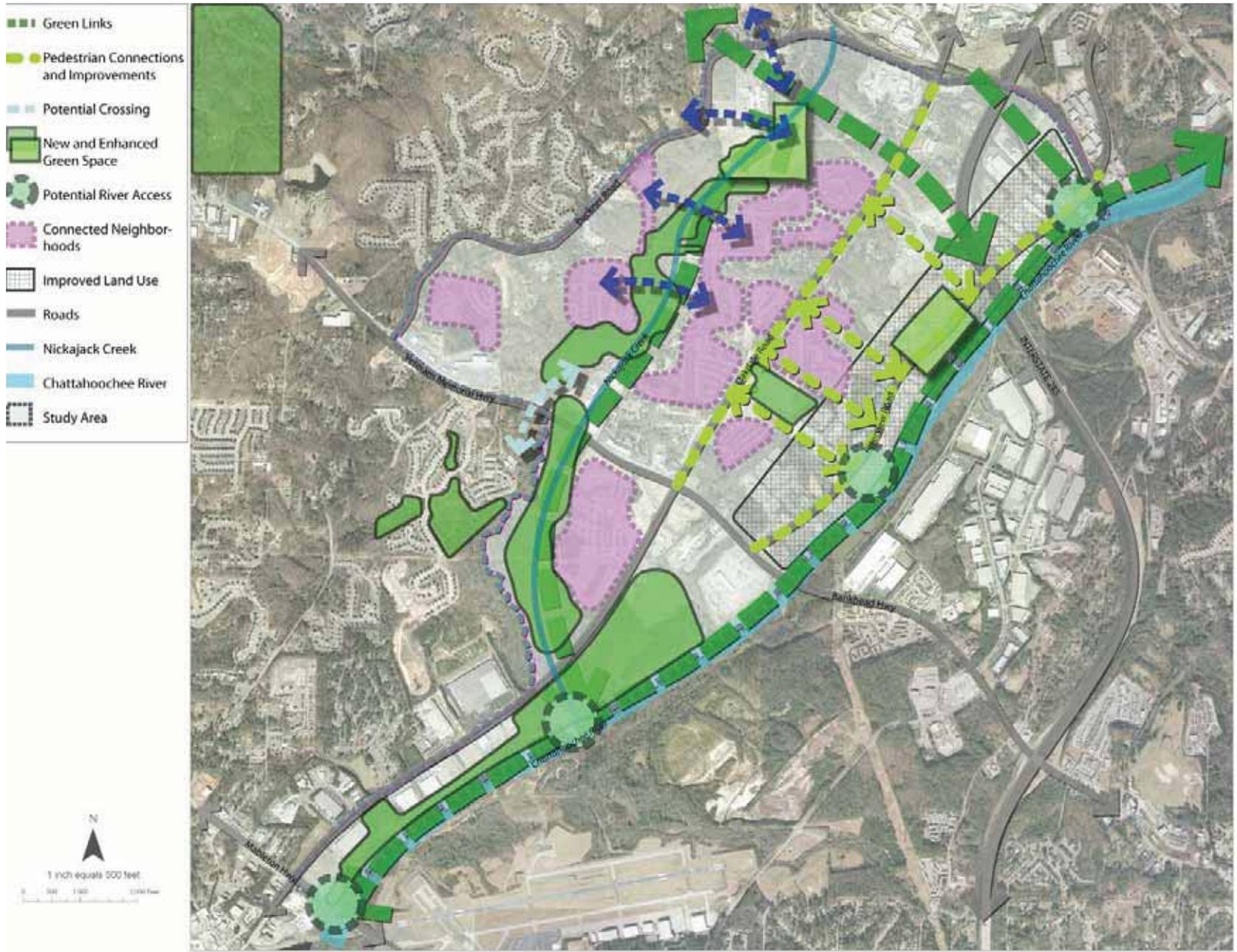


FIGURE 5-4: Green / Community Concept

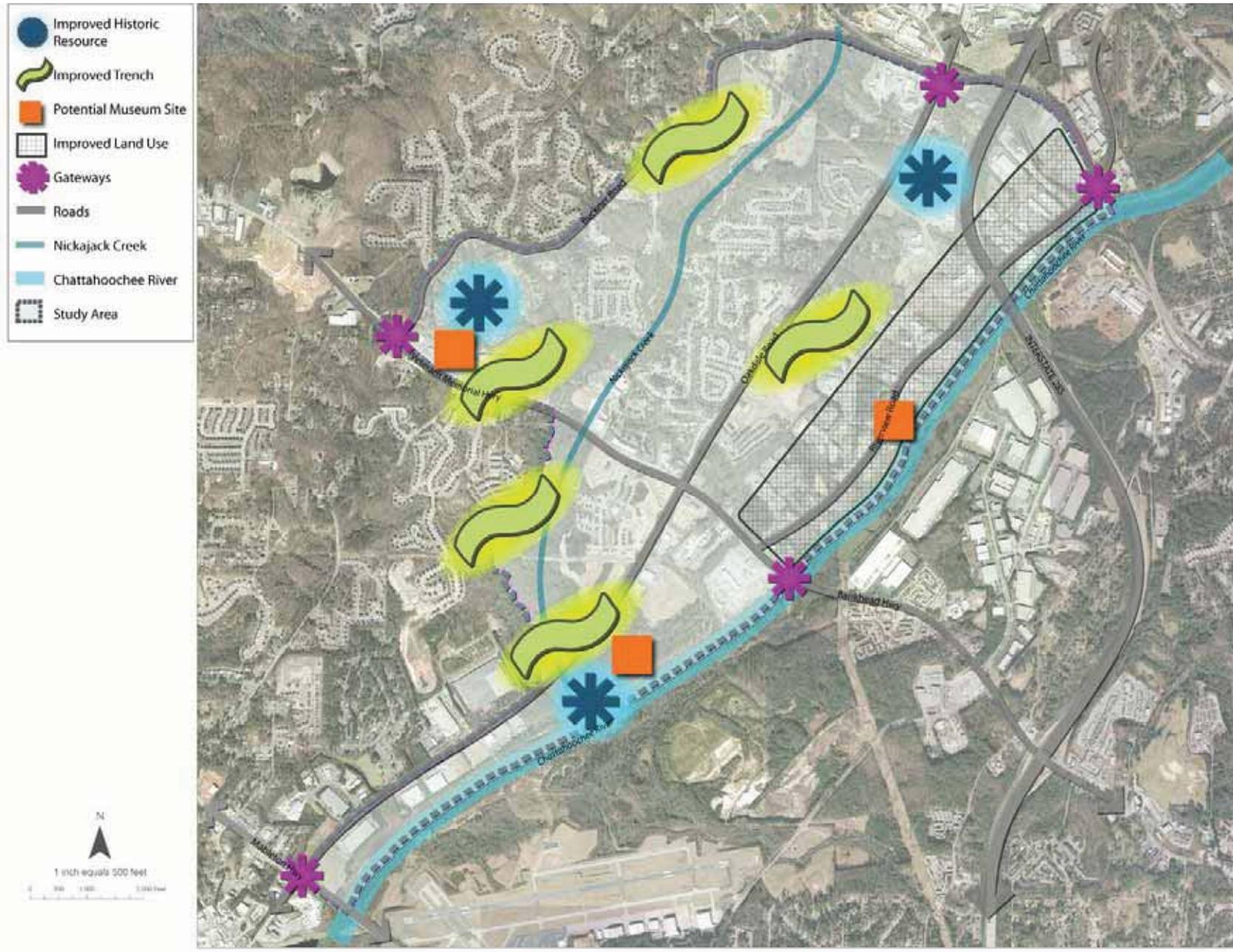


FIGURE 5-5: Historic / Cultural Concept

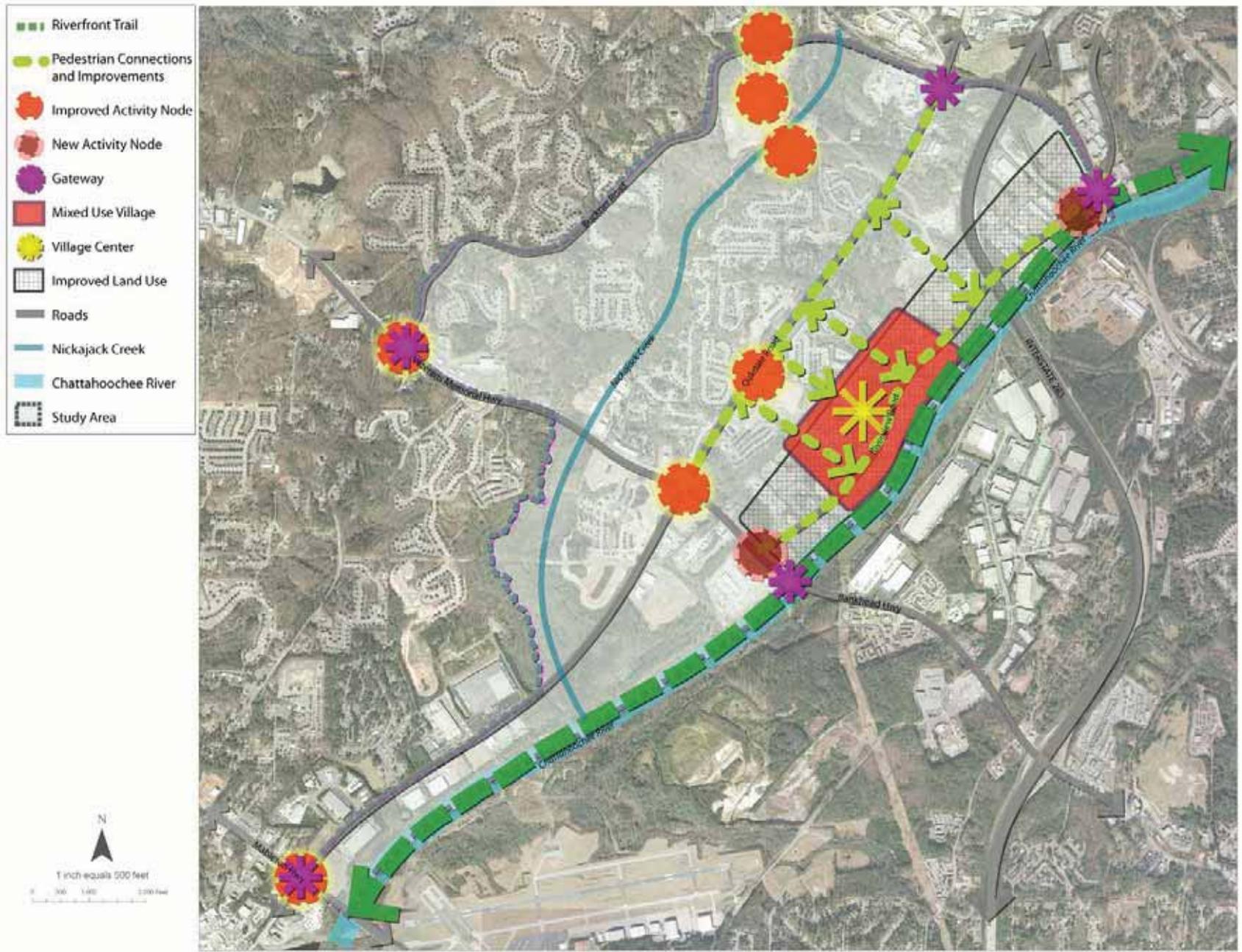


FIGURE 5-6: Village Center Concept

where it is cost prohibitive to pursue constructing an urban center. The basic utility infrastructure is in place, although existing roads would have to be expanded to handle the additional traffic. The County would have to modify its existing Transportation Plan and Land Use Plan to enable this concept to be implemented.

5.4.4 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PLANNING ALTERNATIVES

On January 20, 2009, a second public meeting was held to review the three Planning Alternative Concepts. At this meeting, called the 50% Public Meeting, each of the three concepts were presented and the potential merits and liabilities associated with each were discussed. The basic comments from the meeting are as follows:

- Liked ideas to improve connectivity
- Strong support for the Village concept
- Concern over the scale of the Village
- Support for more greenspace and park development
- Provide opportunities for tourism
- Provide history center/museum
- Recreation & dining are major needs
- Combination of all options

The general consensus at the meeting was that a combination of the three alternatives was preferred. The meeting participants strongly supported the idea of a Village Center, but they also liked the idea of enhancing recreation opportunities, protecting and expanding greenspace, and creating a more walkable community. It was also noted that the history of the area was important, and that it should be incorporated into the preferred plan for the River Line area. At the fourth public meeting, there was strong support for pursuing options that would allow industrial uses to coexist with other uses in the River Line area.

5.5 Preliminary Preferred Master Plan

Based upon reviews of the alternative concepts, EDAW incorporated feedback from the County Project Manager, Project Management Team, Stakeholder Committee, general public, and other stakeholders to create a Preliminary Preferred Master Plan. This plan incorporates the strongest features of the three alternative concepts and blends them into one plan. In particular, the Preferred Master Plan is developed around the idea of a Village Center, a strong green infrastructure, and embracing the historical significance of the River Line area.

5.5.1 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PRELIMINARY PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

This preliminary concept was presented at the third public meeting (March 19, 2009). Members of the public generally liked the master plan, some saying they were excited about the potential for the area after having seen the plans. People were reminded of other towns which had incorporated similar development schemes, such as the River Walk in Columbus, Georgia, which proved popular. Some members of the public commented that they were also encouraged by the inclusion of mixed use and the Village Center concept, which is influencing their decisions to stay in Cobb County rather than move to Atlanta.

The discussion, however, focused largely on implementation, as people seemed eager to have elements of the plan developed. Cobb County representatives explained that once the plan is adopted, policies will be written to encourage development which will be in line with the master plan. As money becomes available, the County will also begin developing the public assets, such as parks, trails, and public infrastructure. However, much of the building will depend on private developers staking an interest in the area, as well as community support for the plans.

The issue of environmental protection was raised at one point, with some concerned about the proximity of a river walk to the Chattahoochee River. The consultants explained that there are regulations in place which developers and/or the County must abide by (e.g. the Metropolitan River Protection Act) which stipulate buffer and run-off requirements, for example. In the site design phase of implementation, special consideration for such sensitive areas (including around Nickajack Creek) to use the most appropriate materials for the setting, such as pervious surfaces for trails located near streams or rivers.

There was also particular concern about accommodating traffic on Oakdale Road if improvements such as adding a planted median were to be introduced. It was stressed that while this study's scope did not include addressing traffic problems, such issues will be examined as part of the forthcoming DL Hollowell-Veterans Memorial Highway Corridor Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). Section 6 describes the LCI and other implementation projects and processes in greater detail.

At the fourth meeting, a point of emphasis was that the preferred plan should not assume industrial uses would have to move. Instead, the plan should be flexible enough to accommodate residential, commercial, and industrial uses, and encourage efforts to make them more compatible.



Preliminary Preferred Concept was revised to create the Final Master Plan, shown on the next page.

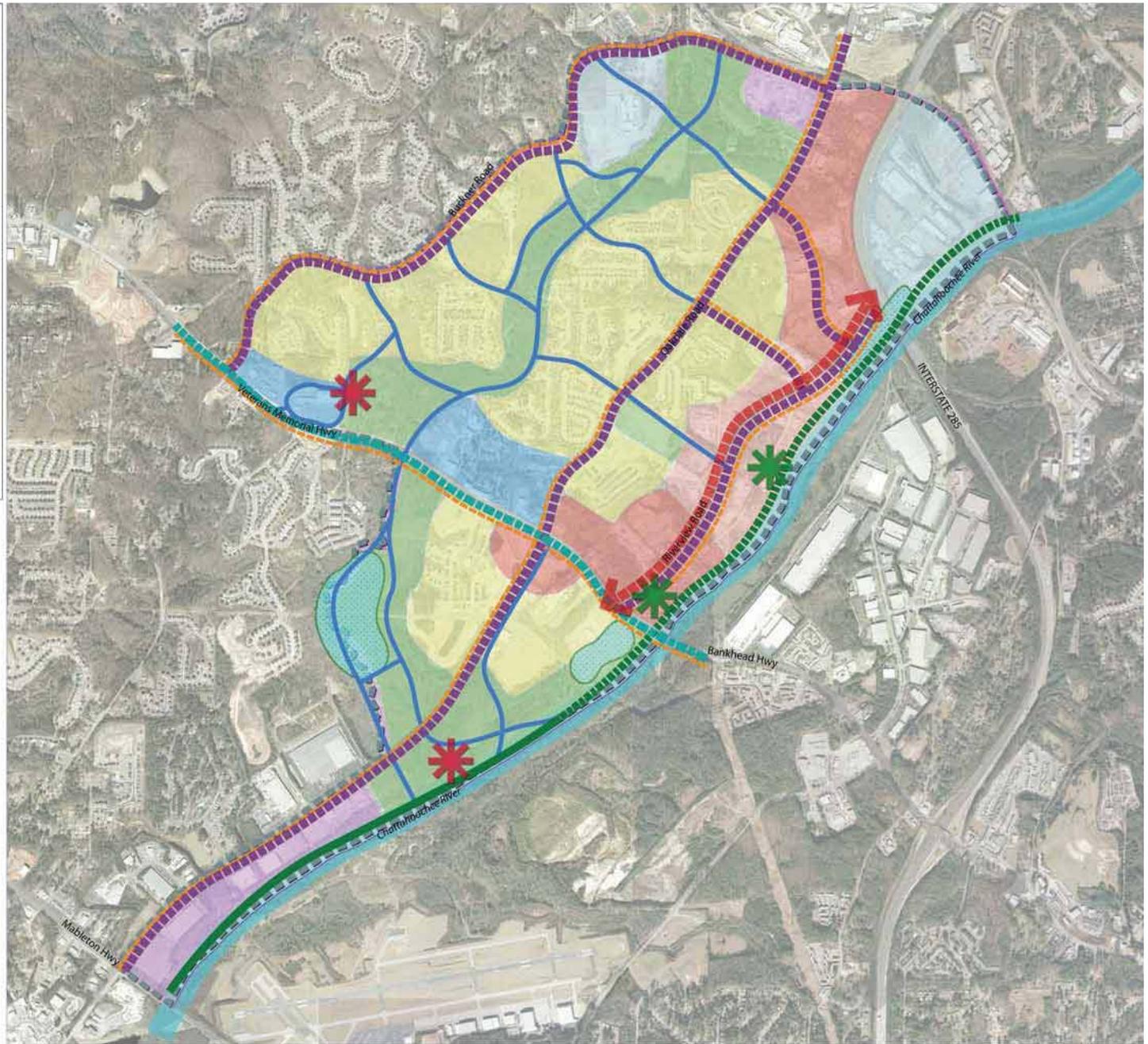


FIGURE 5-7: Preliminary Preferred Concept

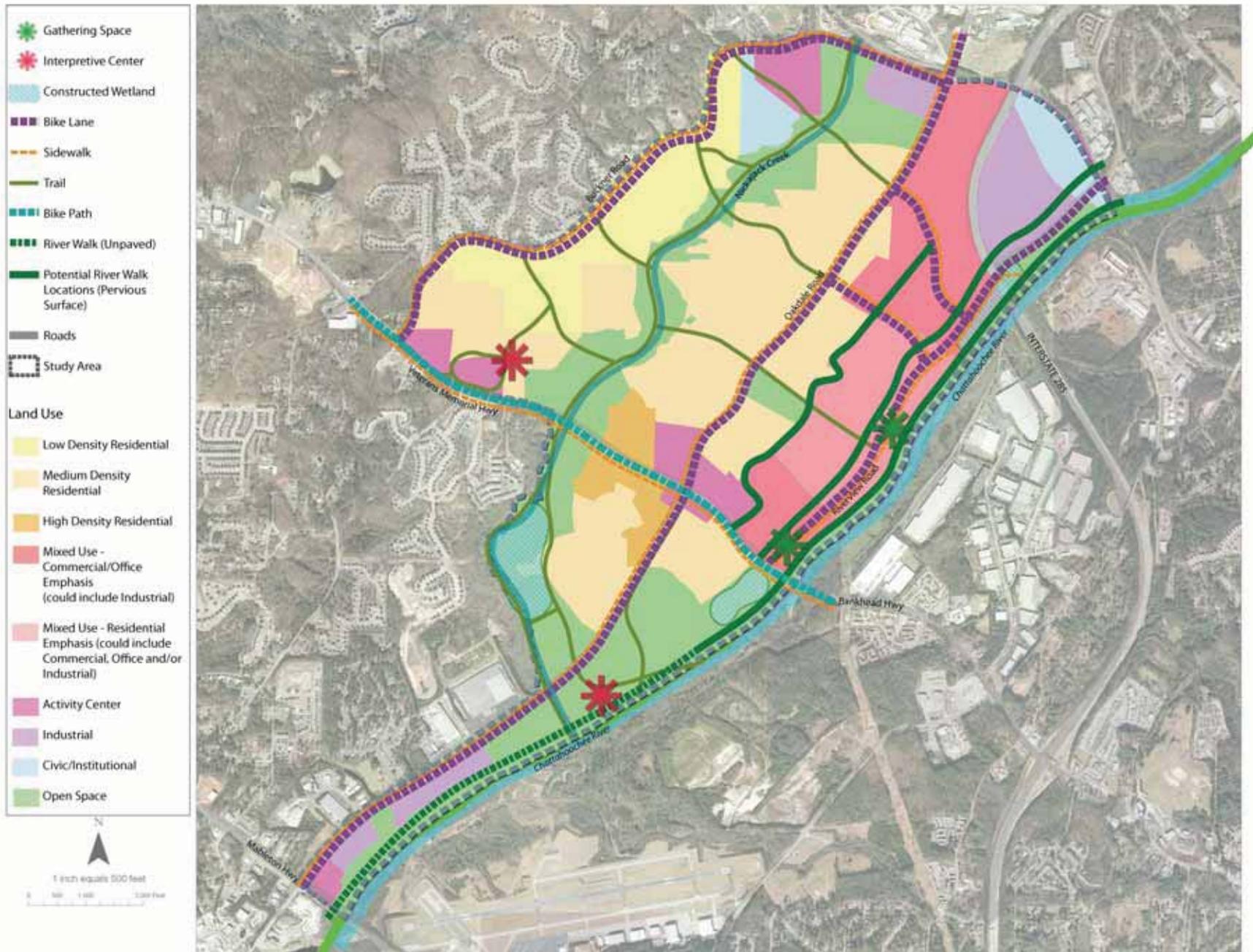


FIGURE 5-8: Final Master Plan



FIGURE 5-9: Smyrna Market Village



FIGURE 5-10: Glenwood Park

5.6 Final Master Plan

This preliminary preferred master plan was reviewed by the County Project Manager, Project Management Team, and Stakeholder Committee, and appropriate modifications were made and incorporated into the Final

Master Plan (shown in Figure 5-8). The conceptual preliminary plan was refined to more closely mirror the County's and City of Smyrna's future land use designations.

Additionally, the proposed change to civic / institutional uses to the northeast of I-285 in the preliminary master plan was reverted back to the original future land use designation of industrial for the final master plan. Industrial uses are to be maintained here in an effort to protect remaining industrial areas, a stated goal in the County's Comprehensive Plan (see Section 3.1.1 above). However, to adhere to the vision for the future of the River Line area, these industrial uses should be adequately maintained and buffered to become more community-friendly. Along the Chattahoochee River, it is recommended that the industrial uses also be improved to enhance aesthetics and minimize potential environmental concerns. If there are willing sellers, these properties could be converted into open space to help develop provide access to the river. The green space would also serve as a buffer to help protect the environmental quality of the Chattahoochee River.

The primary focal point of the Final Master Plan is a mixed use Village Center similar in character to projects such as Birkdale Village Center (Huntersville, NC), Smyrna Market Village (Smyrna, GA), Glenwood Park (Atlanta, GA), and Jubilee (the Vinings neighborhood of Atlanta, GA).

The Village Center would include commercial, residential, and public uses, and would include public gathering spaces, walkways and trails, and strong visual and physical links to the river. Industrial uses could be located around the Center if such uses were improved. The intention is to allow different uses to coexist. Buffering would help minimize potential conflicts.

One initial recommendation was to explore realigning Riverview Road in order to gain more usable area along the Chattahoochee River. However, one potential obstacle in change the road's alignment is an existing 36" water line that runs parallel to Riverview Road. This may not be a viable alternative.

5.6.1 PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Roadway improvements need to occur along Oakdale, Buckner and Riverview roads. These roadways should be kept as two-lane roads, with bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides where feasible. These roads should be improved to better accommodate traffic, but should also be kept residential in character, with street trees and bioswales. Turn-lanes, scenic overlooks, planting medians, and enhanced landscaping as should be added as appropriate.

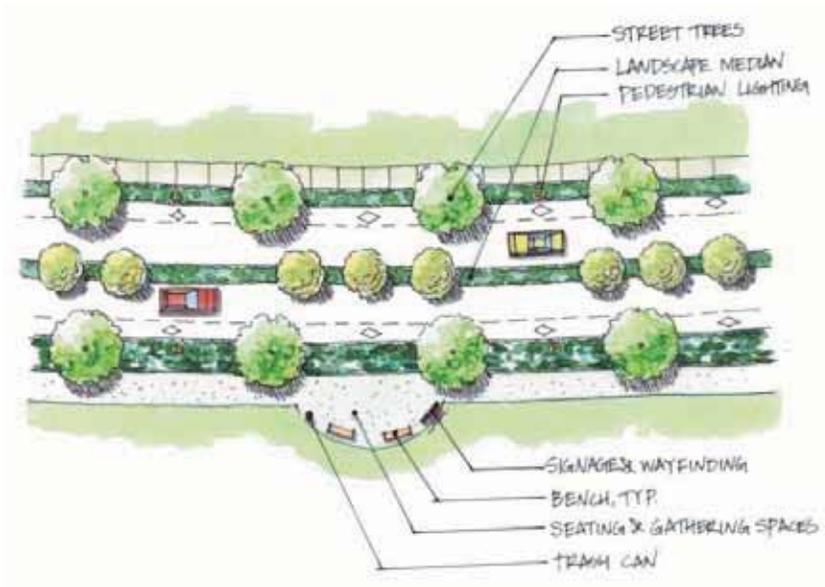


FIGURE 5-11: Plan view of example road improvements



FIGURE 5-12: Offset trail / sidewalk

5.6.2 ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements will most likely need to be made to Oakdale, Buckner, and Riverview roads in order to accommodate the expected level of traffic in the area. The basic idea is that all three roads would remain two-lane, but would include turn-lanes, planted medians in selected areas, street trees, and sidewalks. Crosswalks need to be added to making it easier for pedestrians to cross the road. An underpass also needs to be added at Veterans Memorial Highway. If Riverview is maintained as a truck route, then special care should be given to how pedestrians cross the road. The underpass would allow the continuation of a trail along Nickajack Creek and would eliminate potential conflicts between motorists and pedestrians.

Figures 5-11 through 5-14 show examples of road improvements which may be appropriate in some River Line areas. To make roads more pedestrian-friendly, planted medians should be explored for Oakdale Road in particular as this constitutes the central spine of the area. Depending on a potential re-design of Riverview Road, medians could be accommodated here as well. Street trees could be planted to buffer pedestrians from traffic on all major roads in the study area, increasing safety. Additional greenery and landscaping would also provide aesthetic enhancements. Turn-lanes should also be added

where appropriate to make access to neighborhoods easier. Roads intended to allow truck traffic should be designed accordingly. Additional analysis will be conducted through the Hollowell LCI to determine the type of facilities needed.

Figure 5-11 shows an alignment which comprises two lanes for cars, bike lanes, and an adjacent path. Amenities in this example include signage (potentially for wayfinding or historic interpretation purposes), gathering spaces, and street furniture (e.g. benches) accommodated along a path. Along Oakdale Road, views to Atlanta could be capitalized on if such amenities were placed in strategic locations. Incorporating these elements with a planted median and street trees would help create a “boulevard” effect.

Figure 5-13 (on the next page) shows a cross-section of the same example. To accomplish such a boulevard feel, the right-of-way in the example measures 80 feet. Although the right-of-way is 70 feet on Oakdale Road, the same elements could be built. This could include travel lanes for traffic measuring around 15 feet wide each (including room for bike lanes), a median measuring a minimum of 6 to 8 feet wide, planted strips with street trees measuring around 6 to 8 feet wide, and sidewalks measuring around from 4 to 6 feet wide. The same treatment could be implemented on Riverview Road, depending on its re-design.



FIGURE 5-13: Example road alignment with planted median



FIGURE 5-14: Example road enhancements with constrained right-of-way

Figure 5-14 shows other options for road improvements which do not include a planted median or street furniture. For narrower streets, such as Buckner Road which has a right-of-way of only 50 to 60 feet, incorporating medians may not be possible. Even with more limited possibilities, simply adding trees to shelter sidewalks or paths can greatly improve a pedestrian's experience. If trees are planted in continuous rows, the feeling of a "pedestrian promenade" could be created, increasing safety as well as visual appeal. Even with a constrained right-of-way, space exists for such landscaped buffer strips (measuring around 6 to 8 feet wide), sidewalks (around 4 to 6 feet wide), and bike lanes (around 5 feet wide). By making people's experience of these roadways more pleasant, they will be more likely to choose alternative modes of transportation to move around the River Line area.

Figure 5-12 above shows an alternative pedestrian alignment, where a path or sidewalk is offset from the road. For safety concerns, this approach is recommended for pedestrian access along Veterans Memorial Highway. Because more people may be using the path or sidewalk, it should be wider than others in the area, measuring 6 to 8 feet wide. Additionally, a paved, multi-purpose off-road bike path is recommended along Veterans Memorial Highway measuring approximately 10 to 12 feet wide.

Possibilities for greater landscaping opportunities also exist between the path and road. "Green-ing" the area in such a manner would help develop the community-friendly character which the public desires. This treatment could also work well when the proposed trail network meets other roadways.

In summary, the following general parameters are recommended for roadway improvements in the River Line area; however, exceptions may need to be made depending on site-specific issues and constraints:

- **Sidewalks:** For Oakdale Road, Discovery Boulevard, Riverview Road, and Buckner Road, sidewalks should measure 4 to 6 feet wide as a general rule. Where I-285 crosses Riverview Road, however, the sidewalk should be redirected to join the River Walk to continue to provide pedestrian connectivity but pull pedestrians away from this portion of road for safety reasons, as it will still accommodate truck traffic into the future. For Veterans Memorial Highway, sidewalks should measure 6 to 8 feet wide and should be pulled away from the road for safety purposes.
- **Bicycle lanes / paths:** For Oakdale Road, Discovery Boulevard, Riverview Road, and Buckner Road, on-street bicycle lanes should measure 5 feet wide. For Veterans Memorial Highway, off-street bicycle paths should measure 10 to 12 feet wide. These paths should be paved and multi-purpose and be pulled away from the road for safety purposes.
- **Medians:** Recommended only for Oakdale Road as appropriate. Planted medians should measure 6 to 8 feet wide at a minimum. There would not be sufficient room for a median on Riverview if it is to accommodate truck traffic.
- **Landscape / buffer strips with street trees (along the sides of roads):** These should measure 6 to 8 feet minimum and be wider along Veterans Memorial Highway.

Incorporating medians, turn-lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, and street trees must be further explored, however, to understand the impacts such additions may have on traffic in the area.

5.6.3 NICKAJACK CREEK IMPROVEMENTS

Nickajack Creek is one of the greatest assets in the River Line area. It is one of the primary water ways that leads to the Chattahoochee River. There are opportunities to protect and enhance the environmental sustainability of the creek and its surrounding watershed. Water quality needs to be improved, and this can be accomplished by implementing best management practices that address stormwater runoff. The existing vegetation can be enhanced by removing invasive species and reintroducing native plants that are appropriate for specific ecosystems.

A trail along Nickajack Creek would help define this as a major pedestrian corridor that links surrounding neighborhoods and developments together. In places it may be appropriate to build trails on both sides of the creek. This trail should be unpaved and should offer the feeling of “fitting” with nature. In selected areas the trail could be paved, and be part of a more park-like setting

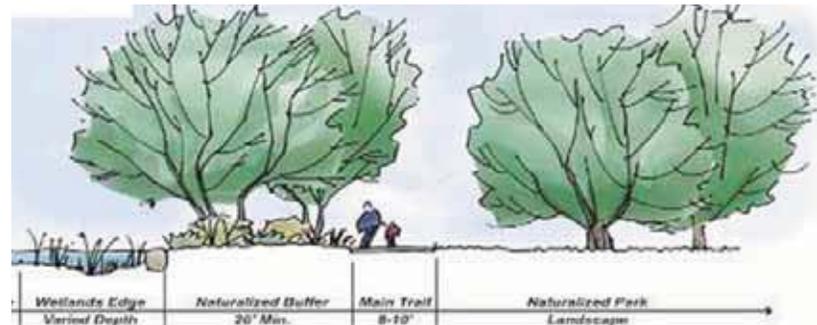


FIGURE 5-15: Example cross-section of a River Walk

that includes open meadows, large shade trees, and seating areas. Security will be a major issue for all trails.

5.6.4 RIVER WALK – RECONNECTING TO THE RIVER

We have an inherent attraction to water, and the Chattahoochee River is the most dominant natural resource in the study area. Developing a River Walk will provide opportunities for pedestrians to get closer to the water. Currently there are very few opportunities to see the river, and even fewer to actually get close to the river. The idea behind the River Walk is to access the river when possible, but it is just as important to create a trail from which we can see the river. The River Walk could be in one of three basic locations: (1) along the Chattahoochee River; (2) on the other side of Riverview Road away from the river; or (3) between Riverview and Oakdale near the edge of the existing residential area. The River Walk would need to work around existing uses in the River Line area. No land acquisition is recommended unless there are willing sellers. The County may also want to consider working with existing landowners to establish easements for the River Walk. It will be important that any walkway associated with the river be designed in a manner that addresses safety concerns.

Parts of the River Walk located close to the Village Center should be paved to better fit the concept of developing a community gathering area. Other parts of the River Walk should be more informal and be constructed of a surface such as gravel or mulch. These parts of the walk would be located along Discovery Boulevard, and along some parts of Riverview Road. Any development along the river needs to meet the environmental standards established for the Chattahoochee River (such as regulations as set out in the Metropolitan River Protection Act [MRPA], as described in Section 2.1.4). Paving used should be pervious to allow water to percolate into the soil, and best management practices should be implemented to minimize stormwater runoff and ensure

water quality. Figure 5-15 shows an example cross-section of a River Walk where a naturalized buffer is incorporated. As shown in the image, the River Walk would be set back to allow for this vegetated edge.

5.6.5 INTERPRETIVE CENTER

One problem with trying to tell the story of the history of the River Line area is that most of the historic and archeological features are not apparent. Many have been lost or destroyed over the years, and some are on private property. The development of an interpretive center within the River Line would provide a place to tell about the history and culture of the place. The center could include meeting rooms, interpretive displays, an archival library, a multi-media room, and historic features.

Before public access is granted to these resources and the property on which they are located, it will be important to ensure they are adequately protected. Protection, such as fencing, staffing, or interpretive signs, should be in place prior to the Shoupades and other sensitive archaeological features being open to the general public to enjoy. This will help guarantee these resources are preserved for future generations in the best possible state.

6.0 Implementation Strategy



6.0 Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy is intended to provide direction for how to make the recommendations in this plan a reality. This Strategy builds off an Implementation Schedule (see Table 6-1) of actions needed to implement the goals, programs, and projects formulated as part of the Final Master Plan.

The Strategy and Schedule are organized around the four guiding elements of the Master Plan, namely land use, preservation, recreation, and transportation. Additionally, actions specifically associated with organization are addressed. In the Schedule, goals and actions are related back to the primary planning principles developed in part from public input, as outlined in Section 5.2, to help ensure projects align with the community's vision for River Line.

While it is assumed the majority of these actions will take place over a 10-year time period, the Schedule emphasizes priority projects to undertake rather than dictating a strict time line as market conditions, developer interest, and funding cycles may vary. Development priorities for the River Line area are dependent upon a number of factors. If a private developer steps up and is interested in developing the urban center, then that will have a significant impact upon how priorities are established. If plans are initiated for an urban center, than transportation, infrastructure, environmental issues, and potential incentives will need to be addressed immediately.

Environmental issues are a priority because there is a high probability that industrial sites along the river are contaminated. It is difficult to determine the type and amount of pollution that has occurred, and what remediation is required, until initial studies are completed. Environmental cleanup can be extremely expensive and time-consuming, so understanding the problem is a priority so we can determine which solutions are most viable. Once environmental issues are addressed, the County should focus on establishing the green infrastructure that is an essential part of the Final Master Plan.

The following further describes the goals, actions, and projects listed in the Implementation Schedule.

6.1 Organizational

6.1.1 MAINTAIN ACTIVE OVERSIGHT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIVER LINE AREA

A strong Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from Cobb County, local special interest groups and active members of the community, was established to provide a first level of stakeholder input to help guide the master planning process. As part of the Implementation Strategy, it is proposed that such active involvement on behalf of the River Line area be maintained. To this end, establishing a River Line Oversight Committee is recommended to ensure projects developed through the master planning process are carried forward. Additionally, this group should act as the liaison to government agencies and help ensure community buy-in for appropriate developments proposed for the area.

Rather than being headed by the County, however, it is envisioned this Oversight Committee would be community-led. Potential members of the group could include representatives from homeowners' associations, historic societies, environmental groups, local property and business owners, local interest organizations such as the Mableton Improvement Coalition, and developers with a vested interest in the area.

As interest in moving forward with projects in the area grows as well, the need for such a committee becomes evident. Because the foundations for this group have been laid as part of this master planning process, it is believed the committee could be established rather quickly. As such an Oversight Committee's input will be needed in the near future, and it is believed the committee could be formed rather easily, its creation is ranked as a high priority.

6.2 Land Use

6.2.1 CHANGE LAND USES TO BETTER REFLECT THE DESIRED COMMUNITY-FRIENDLY CHARACTER OF THE AREA

In order for the Final Master Plan to be implemented, the County will need to modify its Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map, and zoning to allow the development of additional greenspace, a Village Center, and mixed residential, commercial uses, and industrial uses along Riverview Road. Land use changes are also recommended along Veterans Memorial Highway to accommodate a more community-friendly character. Changing land use is intended to allow more flexibility, and allow a mix of uses to be developed in the area. This can be done while still allowing existing businesses to stay in the area. The idea is to allow different uses to coexist as long as they work together to address

aesthetics and environmental issues, and build on the vision established for River Line in this plan. Please refer to Figure 6-1 for land use change recommendations.

Before any major development can occur in the River Line area, particularly along Riverview Road, an environmental assessment needs to be conducted to determine what remediation measures are required to meet national standards. There are ongoing water quality issues associated with the Chattahoochee River, and these should be part of the broader discussion of environmental issues. The County may be able to offer incentives for developers to accomplish this task or may pursue some type of public/private partnership to address the issues.

Another environmental concern which needs to be further investigated is floodplain protection. Floodplains, last assessed in 1972 for Cobb County, need to be re-evaluated to understand how best to handle stormwater and incorporate best management practices.

The infrastructure in the area will also have to be updated to accommodate future development, and this will require additional engineering studies. Additional transportation studies and stormwater management studies will also need to be addressed.

As changes to the Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Plan, and zoning are all fundamental to set the proper regulatory and policy framework under which the master plan needs to develop, these are considered top priorities for action. Additionally, to help understand the degree of remediation required before land can be developed (for instance, if it has been used for heavy industrial purposes), it is recommended that an evaluation of the level of environmental clean-up necessary be conducted as a priority. Studies examining infrastructure updates needed should also be commenced in advance of development to understand vital work required to facilitate future building in the area.

6.2.2 DEVELOP A NEW “VILLAGE CENTER” NEAR THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

While this master plan can recommend a Village Center be developed near the Chattahoochee River in the River Line area, the realization of the vision will of course depend on market interest. There is a lot of flexibility for where this center should be located. The key is to work with existing landowners and find a location that works for developers as well as the people who live and work in the area. Cobb County can help lay the foundation to entice private developers to River Line. Tools which the County could employ include offering economic incentives and strategies as well as negotiating public-private partnerships to help build infrastructure and amenities in the area.

Tax Allocation District (TAD)

Although Cobb County has typically been fairly conservative when it comes to providing incentives for developers, one potential economic incentive that may be applicable for the River Line area is a Tax Allocation District (TAD). Cobb County has not implemented a TAD as of yet, but the County does seem to be open to the possibility.

To create a TAD, the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Law, Chapter 44, Title 36 requires preparation of a Redevelopment Plan for any such proposed financing district. The purpose of the Redevelopment Plan is to:

1. Specify the boundaries of the area proposed for redevelopment.
2. Provide evidence that the area meets the statutory requirements for the creation of a Tax Allocation District.
3. Explain the proposed vision for the area and potential for redevelopment.
4. Establish the area’s current tax base and project the increase in the tax base after redevelopment.
5. Define the types of costs that will be covered by TAD funding.
6. Fulfill all technical requirements as outlined by the Redevelopment Powers Law.

When a jurisdiction experiences economic development, new projects add to the overall tax base, and taxing entities such as the County collect higher tax revenues from these newly developed properties. Under a TAD, these government entities continue to collect property tax revenue at a base level in the designated area determined by the tax base at the time the TAD is created. The property taxes from new projects (known as “the tax increment”), however, can be used to fund specifically designated redevelopment activities in that district. In the case of a River Line TAD, such redevelopment activities could include new parks, trails, transit, environmental clean-up, and other such projects.

Funding for these redevelopment projects can be generated over time as incremental taxes are collected or alternatively can be advanced through the sale of bonds. When bonds are sold, the local government can dedicate future tax revenue from the new properties to retire the debt. As redevelopment projects are realized, the stream of future property tax revenue generated is available to support such bonds and the debt is issued.

The TAD is a very powerful financing tool that can stimulate growth and thus contribute to job creation, housing opportunities, parks, and other broad economic development goals. In the River Line area, the general emphasis on public investments may be supplemented by targeted development subsidies to private developers.

Because interest has already been expressed in developing areas suitable for a Village Center within River Line, it is recommended the County begin to explore development incentives such as a TAD and start to identify developers. Once relationships have been established, talks can commence regarding potential public-private partnership opportunities.

Recovery Zone Bonds

Other potential financing mechanisms to explore are Recovery Zone Bonds. Intended to stimulate economic development in areas affected by job loss, the bonds are intended to help local governments obtain financing for projects such as public infrastructure development. Recently created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, \$25 billion has been allocated nationwide for two new types of bonds – \$10 billion for Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds (for economic development projects) and \$15 billion for Recovery Zone Facility Bonds (for private businesses in designated recovery zones to finance capital projects). For Cobb County, approximately \$37 million has been allocated for the economic development bonds and approximately \$56 million for the facility bonds. Although precise rules attached to the funding have not been announced at the time of writing, this financing tool merits further investigation to potentially assist with redevelopment opportunities in the River Line area.

6.2.3 ENSURE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENTLY EMBODIES THE DESIRED CHARACTER FOR THE AREA

To help ensure the character of development in the River Line area is in keeping with stakeholders' and the public's vision, it is recommended several projects be undertaken. A top priority should be developing a "pattern book" (or design guidelines) for the River Line area. A pattern book would identify the shapes, materials, and patterns that build upon the historic and cultural character of the area. Of major issue with the River Line area is lack of identity. A pattern book will help ensure there is a consistent approach to signage, lighting, architectural colors and styles, benches, landscaping, and other site elements, and this consistency will help create a visual identity for the River Line area.

The pattern book will serve as a guide to help developers, home owners, County departments, and other stakeholders in the area select appropriate physical features.

The County needs to develop a comprehensive streetscape plan for all of the roads within the River Line study area. For most people moving through the area, the view from the road provides their most vivid perception of the area. It is important that the River Line area have a consistent "look", and one way to do that is to develop a streetscape that has the same sidewalk layout, planting approach, stormwater management approach, signage, lighting, and other site furnishings.

6.3 Preservation

6.3.1 DEVELOP PROGRAMS AND POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE THE PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SHOUPADES AND OTHER HISTORIC RESOURCES FOUND ALONG THE RIVER LINE

Lifted from Cobb County's Comprehensive Plan Policy 6.21, the above goal speaks to the importance of safeguarding some of the most unique features not only of the River Line area, but of the county and even country. While the Shoupades in particular are in need of protection, other archaeological and historic remnants in the area exist, such as Native American remains and properties such as the Hooper-Turner House on Oakdale Road (as described in Section 3.1.5). Building awareness around these resources not only sheds light on the rich history of the River Line area but helps cement its identity.

A complete record, however, has not been compiled to fully understand which artifacts exist and in what state; further, ways to preserve and interpret these features have not been researched. As a first step to help accomplish the above goal, therefore, a study of historic resources in the River Line area should take place.

Once a complete record of historic artifacts has been compiled and recommendations regarding their future treatment and interpretation opportunities have been made, policies should be developed and reflected in the County's Comprehensive Plan to help ensure protection. Developing zoning overlays which describe special measures which need to be taken when developing around these resources should also be considered.

Before allowing public access to historic resources, their protection must be ensured. Fencing, staffing, or interpretive signage could be put in place to safeguard Shoupades and other archaeological features.

6.3.2 PROMOTE HISTORIC-BASED TOURISM

Cobb County's Comprehensive Plan recognizes the potential economic value of promoting historic-based tourism in an area (described further in Section 3.1.1).

The River Line area is uniquely placed to capitalize on its historic resources not only for cultural and educational purposes, but also to help attract visitors and therefore encourage economic development.

One major limitation, however, is that not many people know much about the River Line area. As a stronger sense of identity begins to be developed through physical changes in the area, it is also important to convey messages about River Line, its people, and its history. This can be done via brochures, handouts, and other media. Conducting oral presentations to schools, community organizations, and other interested parties will help people think of “The River Line” as a specific place.

To help promote the area’s historic assets and spread the “River Line story,” it is recommended that a subcommittee of the Oversight Committee (see Section 6.1.1) be established to organize events, help develop educational programs, etc. Identifying existing organizations with which to partner that promote education and events relevant to the history of the River Line area, such as the Civil War, could be a good starting point for such a group.

6.3.3 ENCOURAGE LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

Preservation can mean not only protecting an area’s historic resources but also its natural ones. In response to the community’s desire to incorporate “green” elements into the new master plan, it is recommended that means to ensure low impact development (LID) are adopted. LID involves using alternative development principles to minimize the potential impact from development on natural systems. LIDs are a set of techniques that incorporates small-scale natural landscape features into designs for new development sites. They encourage the integration of treatment and management measures at the site level. Utilizing LID practices usually reduces the overall cost of a development project while increasing environmental performance.

One problem is that many cities and counties do not allow the implementation of LIDs in their current codes. As a result, many designers, contractors, and clients avoid using LIDs because of the time it will take to get these features approved. Cobb County needs to ensure that appropriate LIDs are approved for the River Line area. The County needs to update their ordinances and policies periodically to promote LID practices. We recommend that the County also provide guidance to developers, homeowners, and stakeholders on the acceptable design and installation of LID management practices

LID projects can reduce the life-cycle costs associated with storm water infrastructure and long-term maintenance. Some of recommended LID stormwater management practices include:

- *Preserving-clustering-dispersing.* Protecting or replanting a significant portion of a development site’s vegetation; locating development on a smaller part of the site; and directing runoff to vegetated areas. In many cases, the most efficient and cost-effective way to manage stormwater.
- *Bioretention (rain gardens).* Shallow, landscaped areas composed of soil and a variety of plants. Bioretention cells are stand-alone features while bioretention swales are part of a conveyance system.
- *Soil amendments.* Compost added to soils disturbed during the construction process. Restores soil’s health and its ability to infiltrate water.
- *Pervious pavement.* Allows water to infiltrate and removes pollutants. Includes concrete, asphalt, pavers and grid systems filled with grass or gravel.
- *Vegetated roofs.* Roofs composed of a waterproof layer, root barrier, drainage layer, growth media and plants. Provides slower release of runoff, improves energy efficiency, extends roof life and provides wildlife habitat and recreational amenities.
- *Rooftop rainwater collection.* Catchment systems or cisterns that collect rooftop runoff for irrigation, drinking water, grey water or other purposes. Reduces runoff and demand on groundwater supplies.
- *Minimal excavation foundations.* Alternative building foundations composed of driven piles and a connector at or above grade. Eliminates the need for extensive excavation and reduces soil compaction.

6.4 Recreation

6.4.1 IMPROVE EXISTING PARKS AND DEVELOP NEW ACCESSIBLE PARKLAND IN THE RIVER LINE AREA

There are several additional studies that will need to be done in the River Line area to improve recreation opportunities. In addition to an overarching open space master plan to pinpoint precise areas for active and passive recreation, detailed site plans need to be developed for the greenspace around Nickajack Creek, for the 100-acre site along the Chattahoochee River, the 17-acre site along Veterans Memorial Highway, and an updated master plan needs to be prepared for Nickajack Park.

The County needs to continue to acquire land in the River Line area for new greenspace as well. The River Line area is growing rapidly, and if the County waits too long, land along the river and along Nickajack Creek will become more expensive and may be developed for other uses. Some properties in the area have been nominated for the County’s Park Acquisition Program, so this may result in more public greenspace.

Developing a way-finding system to help direct residents and visitors to amenities such as new open space, trails, appropriate historic resources, and the Village Center should follow the plan-making and park acquisition described above. Way-finding designs should be developed for installations at trail-heads and other key gathering spots (such as intersections or plazas). Information pertaining to local history and the natural environment could be incorporated. Once developed, demonstration projects which utilize the way-finding system should be installed as early evidence of master plan implementation progress in the area.

While open space plans should consider the strategic location of the River Line area and potential connections to recreation amenities outside its boundaries, future endeavors could reach further and include discussions with the National Park Service (NPS) to lobby for inclusion of the River Line segment and trails in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA). As part of the larger network, the River Line area would have more exposure and potentially be eligible for greater funding opportunities. The appropriateness of pursuing such talks will, however, have to be measured after environmental studies and firmer development plans have been formulated.

6.4.2 DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF TRAILS TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND NON-VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

A detailed trails and connectivity plan needs to be developed to determine the exact location and layout not only of new trails but of new sidewalks, river walks, crossings, underpasses, signage, trailheads, and gathering areas. Strategic connections to other trail systems should be included as part of the plan, including identifying linkages to the Silver Comet Trail and other amenities such as Activity Centers, major parks, and the Chattahoochee River. The special environmental concerns and regulations related to Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River need to be recognized in the plan as well.

While the trails and connectivity plan has yet to be started, construction of trails which are already programmed in the County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan should be top priorities (see Table 3-1). In particular, trails along Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River show the highest latent demand and therefore should be considered first for development.

6.5 Transportation

6.5.1 ENSURE LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS REFLECT THE DESIRED COMMUNITY-FRIENDLY CHARACTER OF THE AREA

Although this study's scope included examining only non-vehicular transportation, suggested alterations to wider transportation plans are made when conflicts with master plan recommendations were identified. One such conflict is the proposed designation of Oakdale Road as a future truck route in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This designation conflicts with the vision defined in the Final Master Plan, which calls for Oakdale Road to be redesigned as a residential-scale roadway that is limited to two lanes, has sidewalks and street trees on both sides of the road, and seeks to make it easier to get from one side to the other. The designation should therefore be omitted from the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and alternate truck routes identified, as necessary. Any alterations to recommendations in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan would need to be pursuant to industrial land use changes, however, to ensure existing business needs are accommodated.

In addition, Riverview Road is not defined in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, but it is being used as a truck route because of the existing industrial uses along the road. Assuming that industrial uses are maintained along Riverview, it makes sense that the road officially be designed as a truck route. If the industrial uses ever move out of the area (this is not expected to happen anytime soon), there will no longer be a need for trucks to use Riverview Road. The existing road needs to be significantly improved to address stormwater runoff and improve aesthetics.

Efforts should also be made to ensure recommendations set forth in this plan are incorporated into the forthcoming DL Hollowell-Veterans Memorial Highway Corridor Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). The emerging LCI plan, which will help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by better connecting homes, shops and offices, enhancing streetscapes and pedestrian amenities and improving access to transit options, should use the Final Master Plan as a guide to help determine projects which will fulfill the vision for the River Line area.

6.5.2 DEVELOP A HIGH QUALITY, CONTINUOUS SIDEWALK NETWORK TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

While some sidewalks exist in the River Line area, they are often incomplete. With gaps in the system, pedestrian movement is discouraged as it is difficult (and often dangerous) to access amenities on foot. Connectivity in the area could be greatly improved if these networks were to be completed. The Final Master Plan recommends sidewalks be built along all major roads in the River Line area, i.e. Veterans Memorial Highway, Oakdale Road, Riverview Road, Buckner Road, and Discovery Boulevard. However, because industrial uses will be maintained to the northeast of I-285, sidewalks will be re-directed from Riverview Road where the interstate crosses to join the River Walk for this section of the road.

Prioritization of their construction should be based on opportunities to capitalize on developments occurring in the area by building sidewalks simultaneously with new construction.

6.5.3 DEVELOP A NETWORK OF BICYCLE PATHS TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

According to comments made at the public meetings, there are many bicyclists in the area who routinely use Veterans Memorial Highway and Oakdale Road/Discovery Boulevard for recreation purposes. It appears the construction of bike lanes and paths on these thoroughfares, therefore, should be prioritized. Efforts should be made to tie these bicycle lanes into proposed trails and greenway networks when appropriate as well. Building bike paths along Veterans Memorial Highway will be another element considered as part of the upcoming LCI.

TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY SCHEDULE

ID	Goals	Actions	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Responsible Entity	Relevant Planning Principles
Organizational							
1	Maintain active oversight of the development of the River Line area	<p>Establish a River Line Oversight Committee as a stakeholder group specifically concerned with development in the River Line study area to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry forward measures and recommendations developed through the master planning process; Act as the community liaison to government agencies; and Help ensure community buy-in for future projects 	X			Public at large; residents; business owners; interested stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create community-friendly character Emphasize cultural and historic resources Develop a strong sense of identity Enhance connectivity Enhance recreation opportunities Reconnect to the River
Land Use							
2	Change land uses to help improve the River Line area	<p>Update Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map as follows (refer to the Final Master Plan map for precise locations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate new Activity Center / mixed uses along the Chattahoochee River to encourage the development of a "Village Center," and expanded open space Change land uses along Veterans Memorial Highway to those more aligned with community-friendly character, as appropriate 	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create community-friendly character Reconnect to the River Develop strong sense of identity
3		Update zoning to reflect change in land use, encouraging planned development	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna	
4		Evaluate the level of environmental clean-up necessary to redevelop selected areas and protect the Chattahoochee River from negative impacts of development	X			Developers	
5		Conduct engineering, transportation, and stormwater management studies to evaluate future infrastructure needs	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna	

TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY SCHEDULE

ID	Goals	Actions	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Responsible Entity	Relevant Planning Principles
6	Develop new "Village Center" near Chattahoochee River	Begin to identify developers with interests in developing the "Village Center" area within the mixed use area designated on the Final Master Plan map	X			Cobb County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create community-friendly character Develop strong sense of identity
7		Explore development incentives and strategies to be offered	X			Cobb County	
8		Explore public-private partnerships for development of the site		X		Cobb County; Developers	
9	Ensure future development consistently embodies the desired character for the area	Develop a River Line pattern book / design guidelines		X		Cobb County; City of Smyrna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance connectivity Create community-friendly character Develop strong sense of identity
10		Develop and implement a streetscape plan		X		Cobb County; City of Smyrna	
Preservation							
11	Develop programs and policies to encourage the preservation and maintenance of the Shoupades and other historic resources found along the River Line	Conduct a study of the River Line area to identify artifacts in need of preservation as well as ways to preserve and interpret these features; include priority projects as part of plan	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna; Local Property Owners; input from Oversight Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize cultural and historic resources Develop a strong sense of identity
12		Develop appropriate policies to protect these historic features; ensure the Comprehensive Plan reflects new policies; create zoning overlays as appropriate to help protect resources		X		Cobb County	
13		Ensure proper protection of Shoupades and other archaeological and historic resources (e.g. through fencing, staffing, interpretive signage) before public access is granted to any property with resources present		X		Cobb County	
14	Promote historic-based tourism	Establish a sub-committee of the Oversight Committee to help spread the River Line story and promote the area, organize events, etc.			X	Oversight Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize cultural and historic resources Develop a strong sense of identity
15	Encourage low impact development (LID)	Ensure that appropriate LIDs are approved for the River Line area by updating ordinances and policies periodically to promote LID practices	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create community-friendly character
16		Provide guidance to developers, homeowners, business owners, and stakeholders on the acceptable design and installation of LID management practices		X		Cobb County; City of Smyrna	

TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY SCHEDULE

ID	Goals	Actions	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Responsible Entity	Relevant Planning Principles
Recreation							
17	Improve existing parks and develop new accessible parkland in the River Line area	Prepare a master plan to improve and revitalize Nickajack Park	X			Cobb County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance recreation opportunities Create community-friendly character Emphasize cultural and historic resources Develop a strong sense of identity
18		Prepare a master plan to develop Johnston's River Line Park on the 100-acre County-owned parcel located between Discovery Boulevard and the Chattahoochee River	X			Cobb County	
19		Prepare an open space master plan for the River Line area, which should include identification of areas for active and passive recreation and prioritization of publicly-owned conservation land which should be developed into parks	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna	
20		Continue park acquisition process to secure land for future park sites		X		Cobb County	
21		Develop a way-finding system which helps direct residents and visitors to parks and other amenities (including the new "Village Center" and the Chattahoochee River); include designs for installations at trailheads which include educational information about local history and the natural environment			X	Cobb County; City of Smyrna; Developers	
22		Develop demonstration projects which incorporate way-finding and educational opportunities to serve as benchmarks for further development			X	Cobb County; City of Smyrna; Developers	
23		Work with the NPS to lobby for inclusion of the River Line segment of the Chattahoochee River to be included in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) (i.e. the proposed River Walk trail and the proposed Johnston's River Line Park)				X Cobb County; Oversight Committee	

TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY SCHEDULE

ID	Goals	Actions	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Responsible Entity	Relevant Planning Principles
24	Develop a system of trails to provide greater opportunities for recreation and non-vehicular transportation	Develop a detailed trails plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of parcel ownership information and design and alignment of trails Opportunities to connect into the Silver Comet Trail and other major amenities such as the Chattahoochee River, schools, activity centers, and parks Investigation of connecting Lindley 6th Grade Academy to Nickajack Park via an utility existing easement Recognition of environmental concerns related to development around Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River 	X			Cobb County; City of Smyrna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance connectivity Enhance recreation opportunities Create community-friendly character Emphasize cultural and historic resources Develop a strong sense of identity Reconnect to the River
25		Construct trails which are already programmed in the CTP and/or are located on County-owned land; first priority is along Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River		X		Cobb County; Developers	
26		Construct other trails as recommended by the new detailed trails plan, including links to the Chattahoochee River			X	Cobb County; City of Smyrna; Developers	
Transportation							
27	Ensure local and regional transportation plans reflect the desired community-friendly character of the area	Omit the proposal to designate Oakdale Road as a future truck route from the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), pursuant to land use changes from Industrial to more community-friendly uses	X			Cobb County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance connectivity Create community-friendly character
28		Enhance Riverview Road to improve aesthetics, manage stormwater, and protect water quality	X			Cobb County	
29		Conduct a study to devise alternative truck route options which do not include Oakdale Road; update the CTP and Comprehensive Plan as appropriate		X		Cobb County	
30		Incorporate recommendations set forth in the River Line Master Plan into the forthcoming Veterans Memorial Highway LCI	X			Cobb County; ARC	

TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY SCHEDULE

ID	Goals	Actions	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Responsible Entity	Relevant Planning Principles	
31	Develop a high quality, continuous sidewalk network to improve connectivity and provide greater opportunities for non-vehicular transportation	Veterans Memorial Highway: Build sidewalks where gaps currently exist and improve existing facilities. Sidewalks should measure 6 to 8 feet wide as a general rule and be pulled away from the road for safety purposes.		X		Cobb County; Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance connectivity • Enhance recreation opportunities • Create community-friendly character • Reconnect to the River 	
32		Oakdale Road: Improve existing sidewalk facilities where needed, particularly between the area's residential development and major amenities. Sidewalk widths should be 4 to 6 feet as a general rule.		X		Cobb County; City of Smyrna; Developers		
33		Riverview Road: Build sidewalks where gaps currently exist, including for access to the Chattahoochee River where appropriate. Sidewalk widths should be 4 to 6 feet as a general rule, to be built simultaneous with development. As the road will still accommodate truck traffic into the future, the sidewalk should pull pedestrians away from the road and/or appropriate buffers and crosswalks should be provided for safety reasons.		X		Cobb County; Developers		
34		Buckner Road: Build sidewalks where gaps currently exist and improve existing facilities. Sidewalk widths should be 4 to 6 feet as a general rule.				X		Cobb County; Developers
35		Discovery Boulevard: Build sidewalks where gaps currently exist and improve existing facilities. Sidewalk widths should be 4 to 6 feet as a general rule.				X		Cobb County; Developers
36		Build new sidewalks to connect Oakdale Road to Riverview Road. The sidewalks should connect to the "Village Center" and lead to the River Walk and public access points to the Chattahoochee River. Sidewalk widths should be 4 to 6 feet as a general rule.				X		Cobb County; Developers

TABLE 6-1: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY SCHEDULE

ID	Goals	Actions	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Responsible Entity	Relevant Planning Principles
37	Develop a network of bicycle lanes and paths to improve connectivity and provide greater opportunities for non-vehicular transportation	Veterans Memorial Highway: Off-street bicycle paths should be built and measure approximately 10 to 12 feet wide. These paths should be paved and multi-purpose and be pulled away from the road for safety purposes.		X		Cobb County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance connectivity Enhance recreation opportunities Create community-friendly character Reconnect to the River
38		Oakdale Road, Discovery Boulevard, Riverview Road, and Buckner Road: on-street bicycle lanes should measure approximately 5 feet wide. On Riverview Road, lanes should be built simultaneous with development and particularly be designed with cyclist safety in mind.			X	Cobb County; City of Smyrna	
39		Investigate opportunities to tie bicycle lanes into the proposed trails / greenway network in the study area			X	Cobb County	
40	Develop other roadway improvements to help create a more community-friendly character	Medians: Recommended only for Oakdale Road and potentially Riverview Road, as appropriate, to accommodate both industrial and pedestrian improvements. Planted medians should measure 6 to 8 feet wide at a minimum.		X		Cobb County; City of Smyrna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance connectivity Enhance recreation opportunities Create community-friendly character Reconnect to the River
41		Landscape / buffer strips with street trees (along the sides of roads): These should measure 6 to 8 feet minimum and be wider along Veterans Memorial Highway.		X		Cobb County; City of Smyrna	
42		Consider new road connections between Oakdale, Buckner, and Riverview roads as part of the forthcoming LCI		X		Cobb County; ARC	

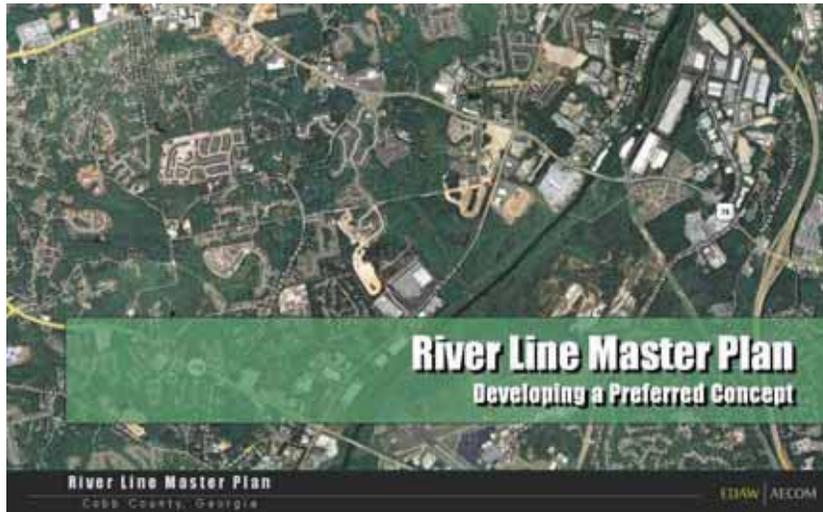
ACRONYMS	
ARC	Atlanta Regional Commission
CRNRA	Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
CTP	Comprehensive Transportation Plan (Cobb County)
LCI	Livable Centers Initiative
NPS	National Park Service
PRIMARY PLANNING PRINCIPLES	
Enhance connectivity	
Reconnect to the River	
Enhance recreation opportunities	
Emphasize cultural and historic resources	
Create community-friendly character	
Develop strong sense of identity	



7.0 Appendix

RIVER LINE
MASTER PLAN





Primary Planning Principles

- Enhance Connectivity
- Reconnect to the River
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities
- Emphasize Cultural & Historic Resources
- Create Community-friendly Character
- Develop Strong Sense of Identity



River Line Master Plan
Cobb County, Georgia

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Planning Concepts

- **Green / Community** ... emphasis on natural resources, pedestrian connections, new parks, and community facilities
- **Historic / Cultural** ... emphasis on the rich, diverse history of the River Line area
- **Village Center** ... developing an urban center that serves as the heart of the River Line neighborhood

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Concepts – Green / Community

- Addition of pocket parks and linear parks
- Development of a community park near the river (replace industrial use)
- Restoration of wetlands
- Focus on protecting/enhancing natural resources
- Addition of trails, walks, and trailheads
- Emphasis on pedestrian modes while minimizing motorized vehicles
- Enhanced connection of schools to river

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Concepts – Historical/Cultural

- Protect & interpret historic features
- Conduct a complete cultural inventory
- Consider historic district designation in selected areas (archaeological?)
- Construct museum / history center
- Improved industrial maintained along river
- Research historic trails / embankments – recreate, restore, or interpret
- Emphasize tourism

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Concepts – Village Center Development

- Make the transition from a bedroom subdivision to a Village Center
- Develop mixed use hub along the river – include a village center, public space, residential, commercial, and community use
- Remove industrial use along river
- Connect Oakdale and northern residential areas to river by 'pedestrian promenades'
- Take advantage of good access (265, 20)

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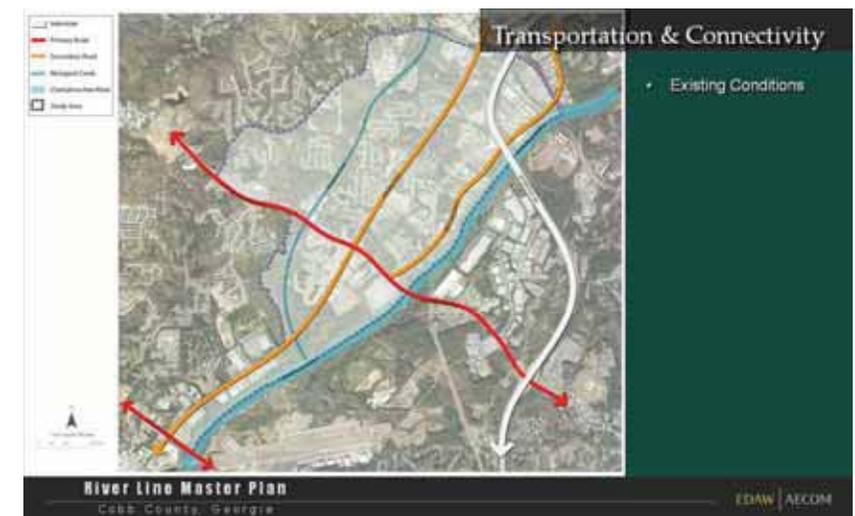
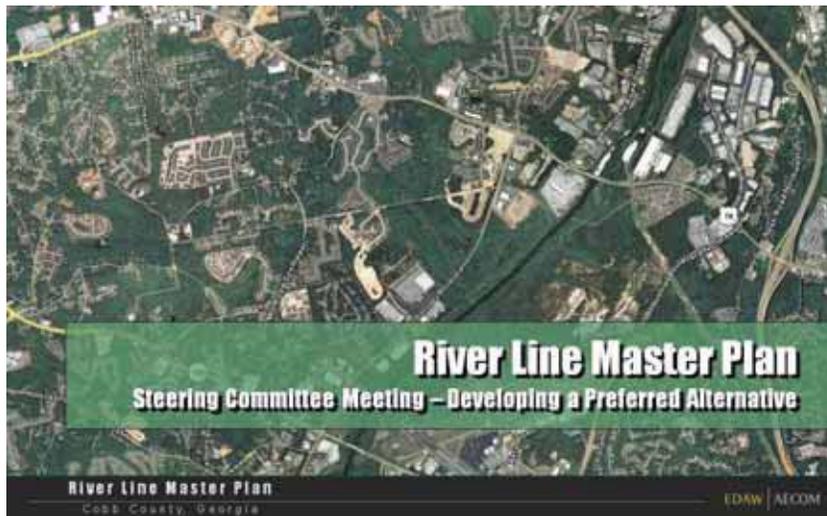
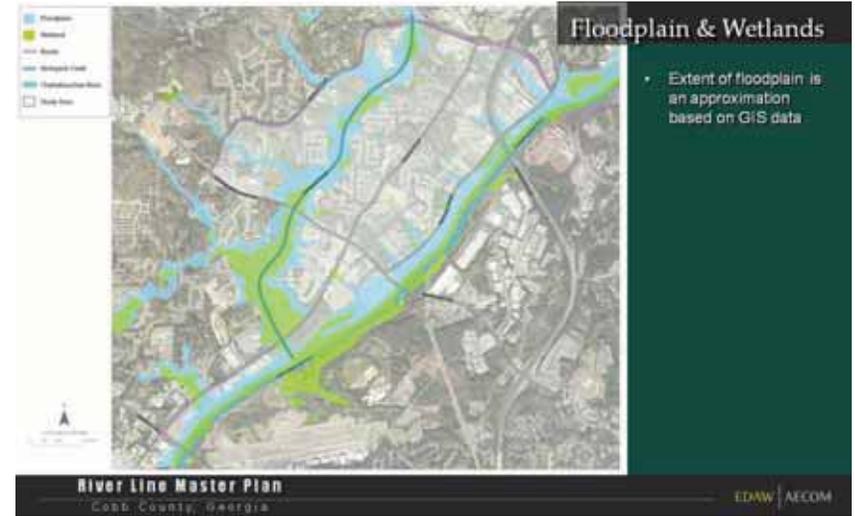
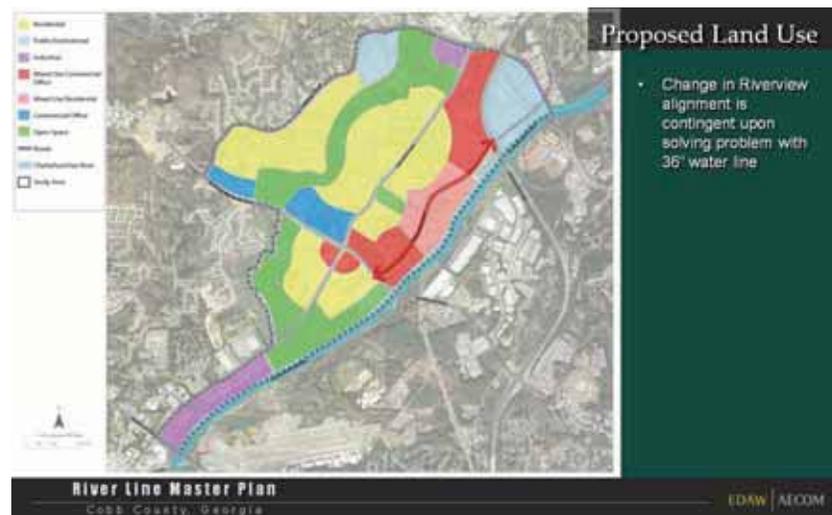
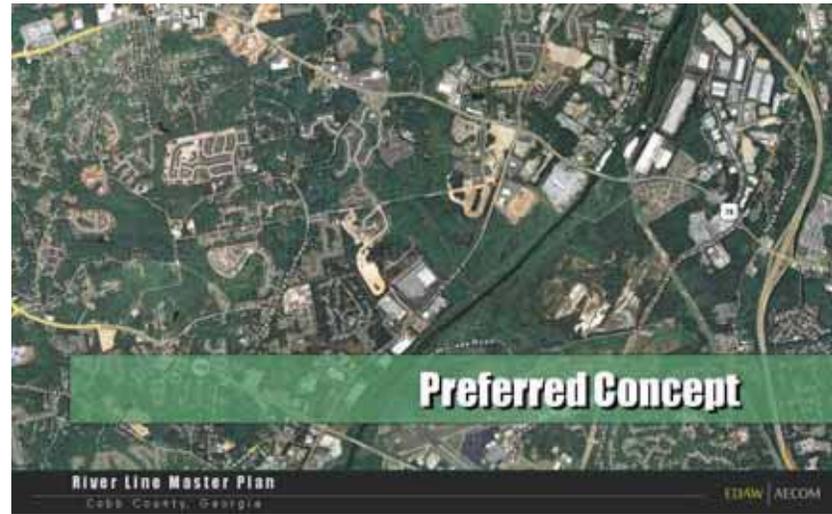
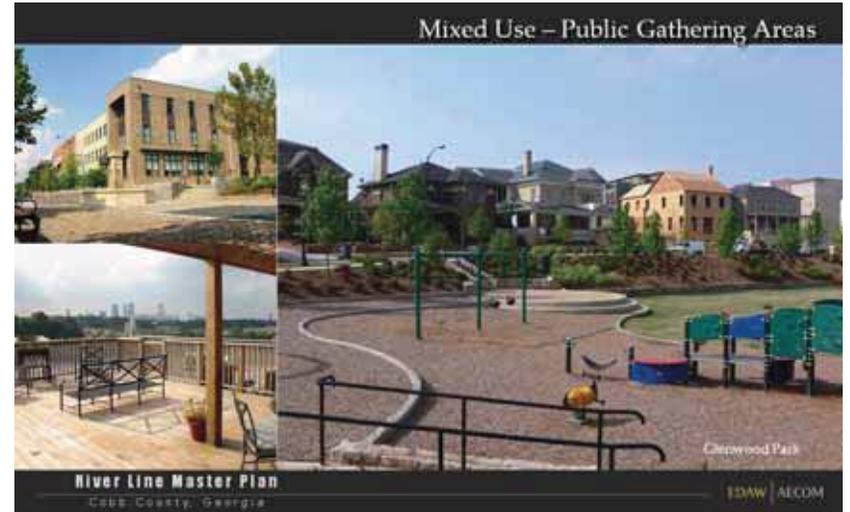
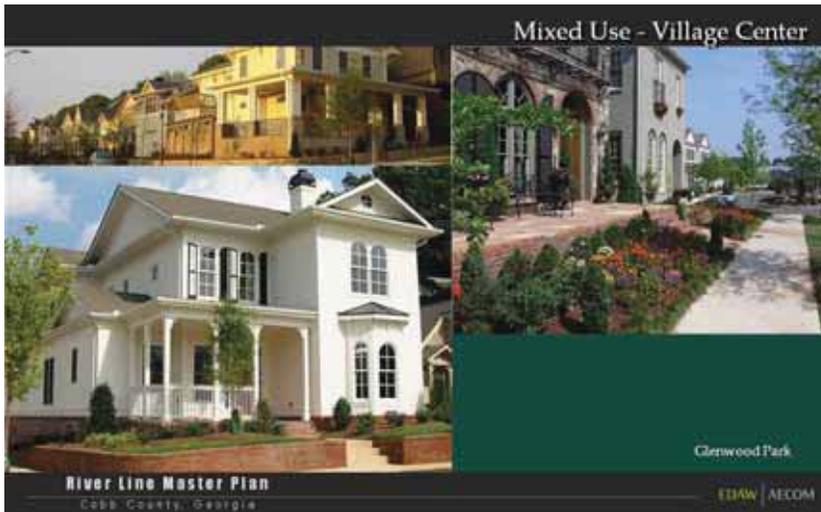
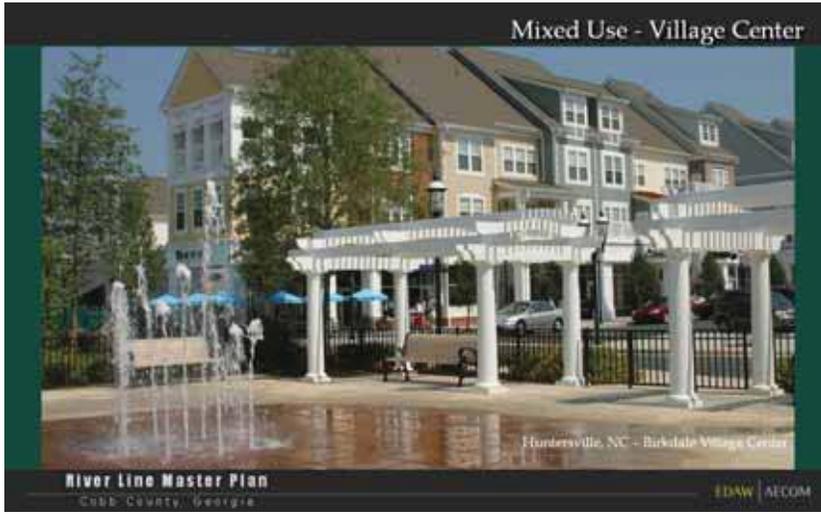


FIGURE 1-2: Title of Map





Agenda

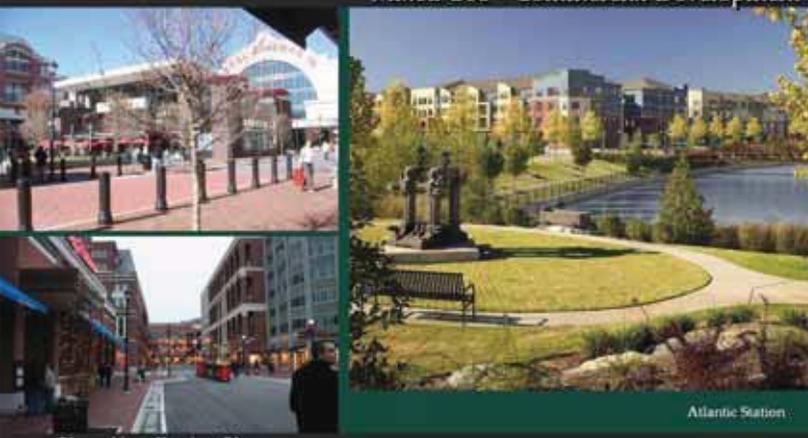
- What We Have Heard
- Primary Planning Principles
- Planning Concepts
- Public Input
- Developing a Preferred Alternative



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Mixed Use – Commercial Development



Atlantic Station

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Mixed Use – Link to the River

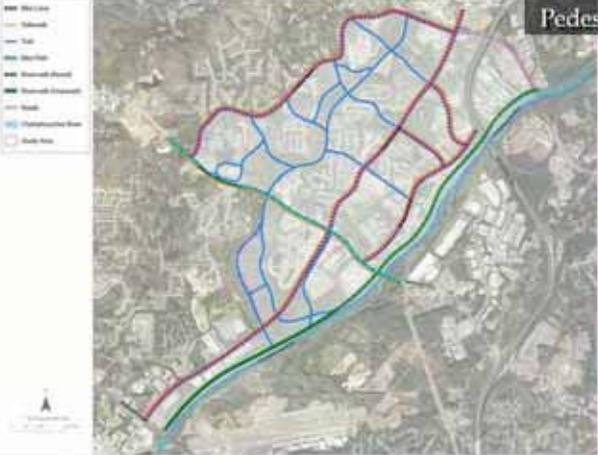


Clemwood Park

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Cobb County, Georgia

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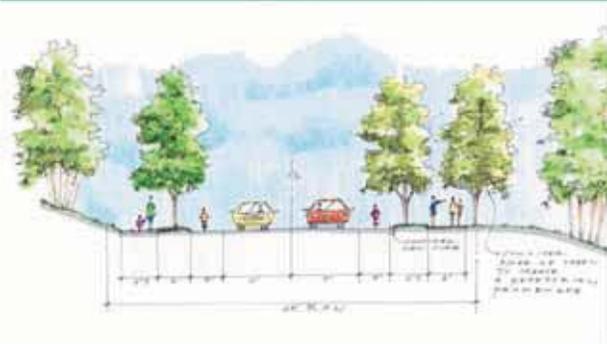
Pedestrian Connectivity



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Cobb County, Georgia

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Roadway Improvements – Oakdale, Buckner & Riverview



- Provide consistent sidewalks on both sides of road
- Add bike lanes on both sides of road
- Keep as a two lane road
- Keep the road residential in character – not a truck lane
- Enhance landscaping via street trees, groundcover
- Add gathering nodes
- Provide views to the river

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Roadway Improvements - Oakdale



- Provide consistent sidewalks on both sides of road
- Add bike lanes on both sides of road
- Keep as a two lane road
- Keep the road residential in character – not a truck lane
- Enhance landscaping via street trees, groundcover
- Add gathering nodes
- Provide views to the river
- Add turn-lanes and planting medians as appropriate

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Roadway Improvements – Oakdale & Buckner



- Provide consistent sidewalks on both sides of road
- Add bike lanes on both sides of road
- Keep as a two lane road
- Keep the road residential in character – not a truck lane
- Enhance landscaping via street trees, groundcover
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Roadway Improvements

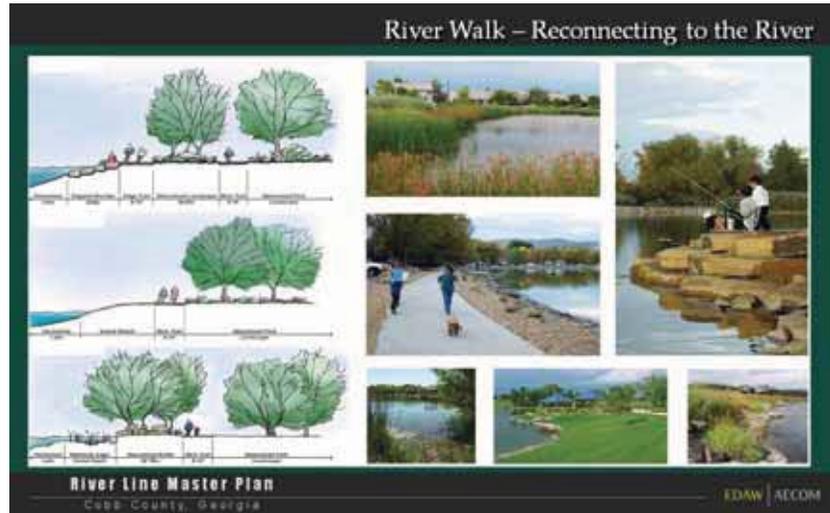
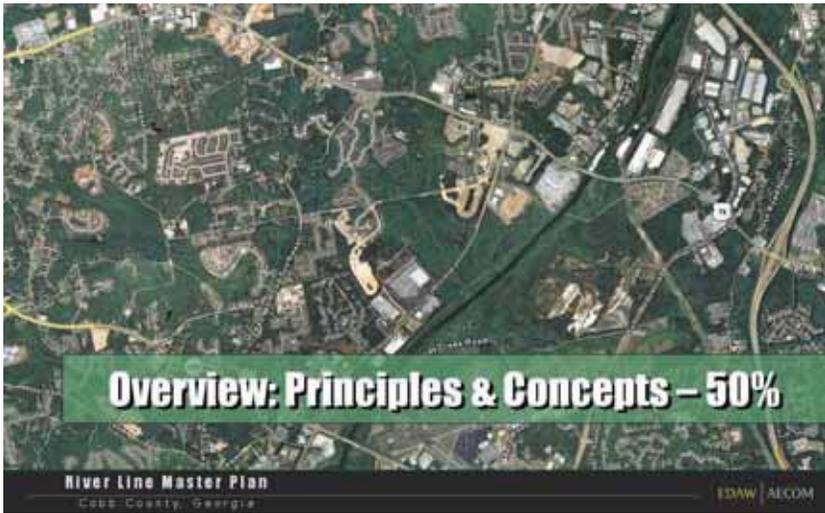
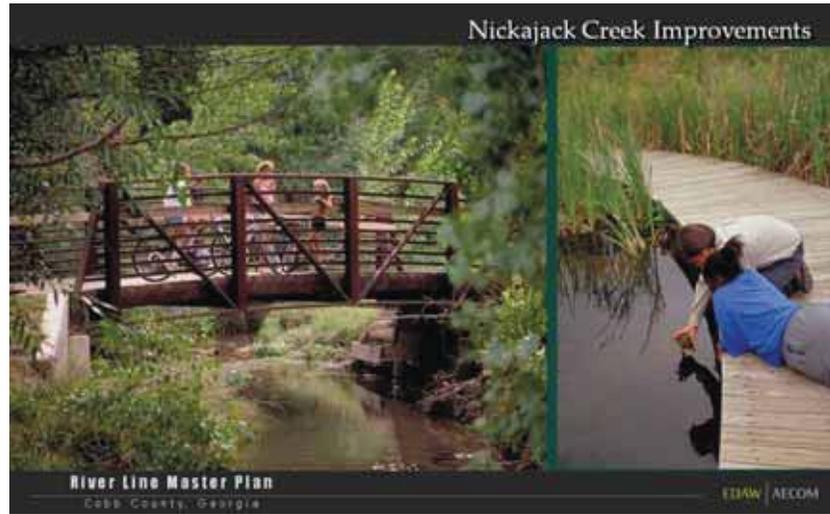
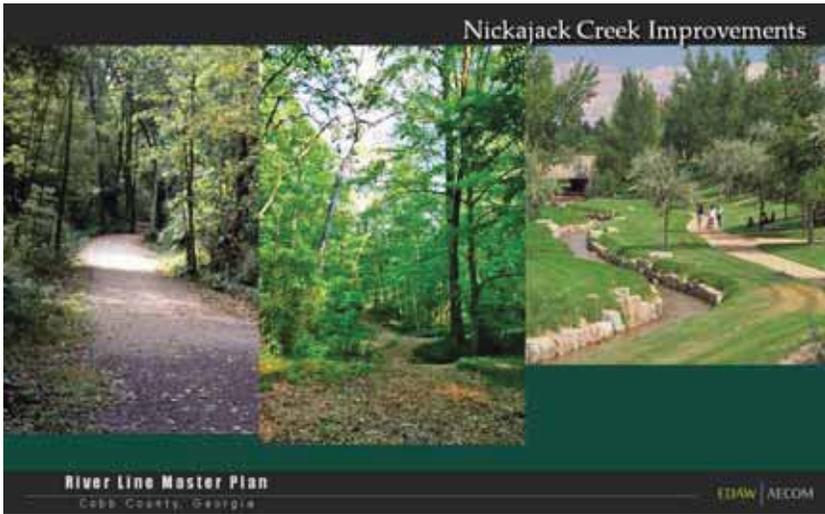


Crosswalks

Underpass at Veterans Memorial

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Implementation Strategies



- 10-year Schedule of Actions
- Change land use
- Change transportation master plan
- Continue park acquisition process
- Development priorities & timeline for improvements
- Develop strategy for environmental clean-up
- Develop a River Line pattern book
- Spread the River Line story
- Explore economic incentives and strategies
- Explore additional studies

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Develop a River Line Pattern Book



- Develop a pattern book that identifies the shapes, materials, and patterns that build upon the historic and cultural character of the area

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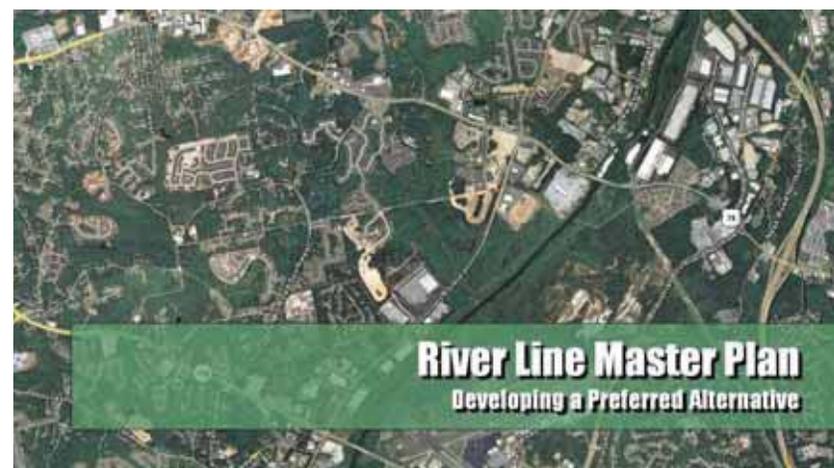
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Next Steps

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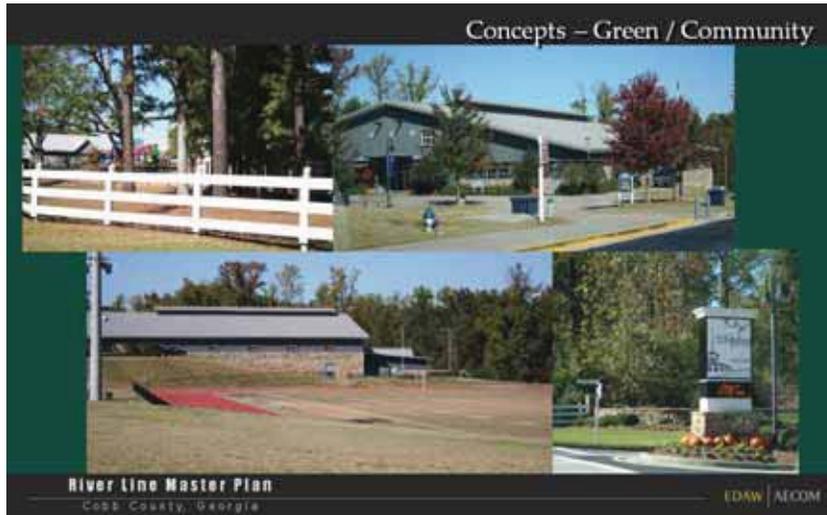
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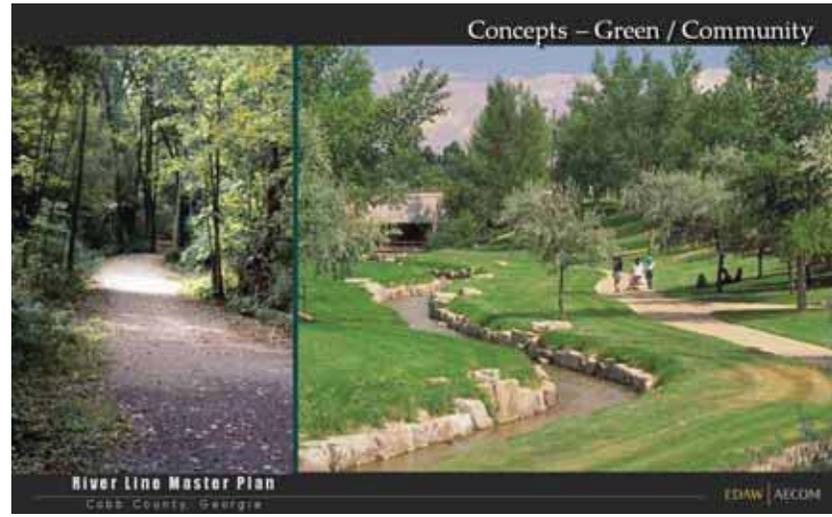
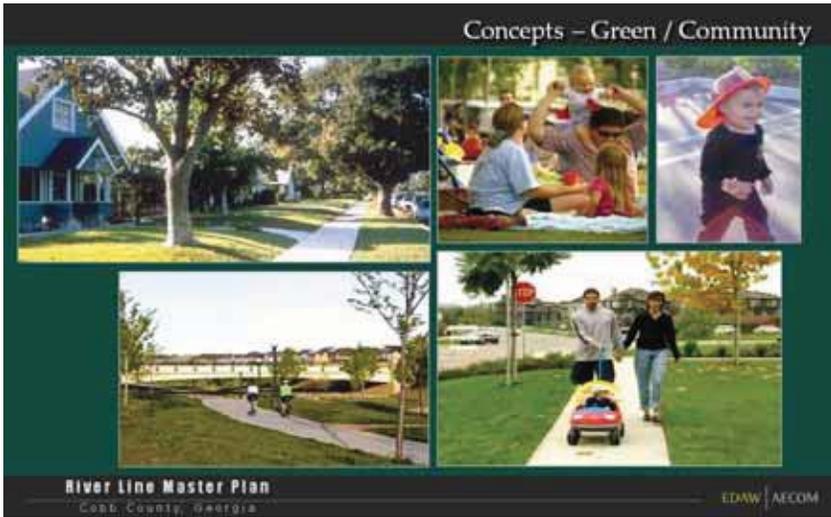


River Line Master Plan Developing a Preferred Alternative

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Planning Concepts

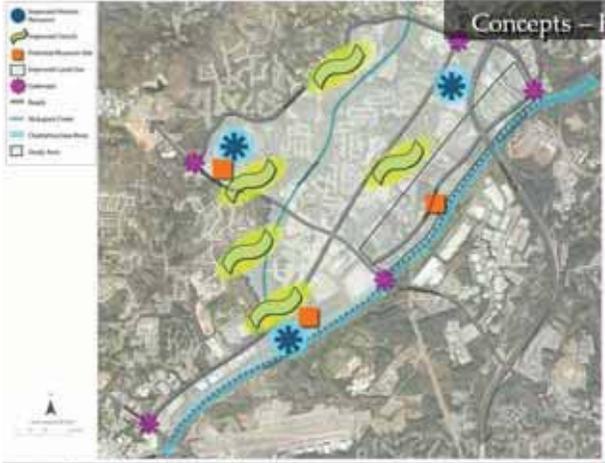


- **Green / Community** ... emphasis on natural resources, pedestrian connections, new parks, and community facilities
- **Historic / Cultural** ... emphasis on the rich, diverse history of the River Line area
- **Village Center** ... developing an urban center that serves as the heart of the River Line neighborhood

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Concepts – Historical/Cultural



- Protect & interpret historic features
- Conduct a complete cultural inventory
- Consider historic district designation in selected areas (archaeological?)
- Construct museum / history center
- Improved industrial maintained along river
- Research historic trails / embankments – recreate, restore, or interpret
- Emphasize tourism

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Public Meeting # 1 – 11-18-08



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Cobb County, Georgia

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Concepts – Historical/Cultural



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Planning Concepts

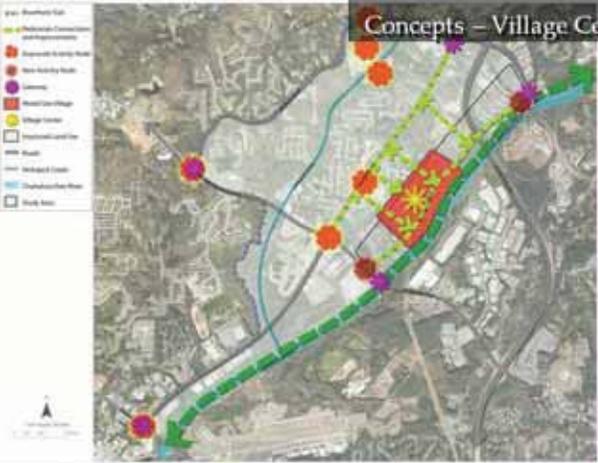
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Concepts – Village Center Development



- Make the transition from a bedroom subdivision to a Village Center
- Develop mixed use hub along the river ... include a village center, public space, residential, commercial, and community use
- Remove industrial use along river
- Connect Oakdale and northern residential areas to river by 'pedestrian promenades'
- Take advantage of good access (285, 20)

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Concepts – Village Center Development



Vivings - Jubilee

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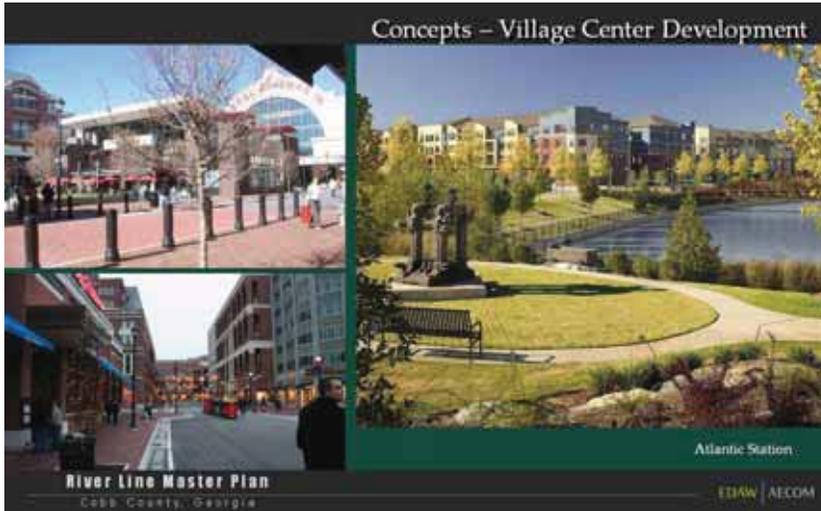
Concepts – Village Center Development



Seneca Market Village

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Cobb County, Georgia

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What We Heard

- Who uses the River Line area
- Connectivity
- Industrial Uses
- Chattahoochee River
- Recreation
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Public Realm
- Identity



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Steering Committee Input
Developing a Preferred Alternative

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Residential Development



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Cobb County, Georgia

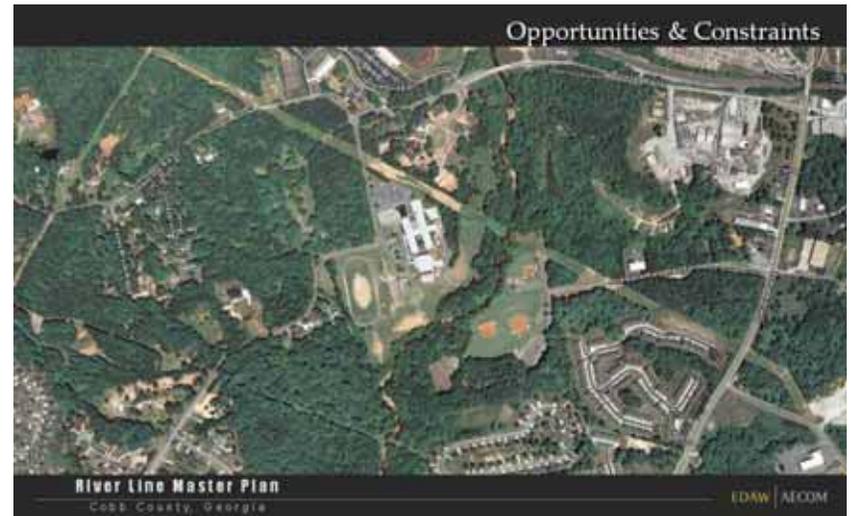
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Residential Development



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Cobb County, Georgia

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Scope of Work



- Project Initiation & Establishment of the Master Plan Direction
- Public Involvement/ Communications Plan
- Review existing Cobb County data sources
- Comprehensive Mapping
- Inventory and Analysis
- **Master Plan Development**
- Implementation Strategy
- Project Schedule

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Scope of Work



- Project Initiation & Establishment of the Master Plan Direction
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Six Primary Planning Principles

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Six Primary Planning Principles

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	18-Oct-08	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Schedule									
Planning Process									
MILESTONES									
Kick Off Meeting with Client									
Public Meeting - 25%									
Public Meeting - 50%									
Public Meeting - 75%									
Workshop on County Public Manager, County Management Team, and Stakeholder Committee									
Final meeting to present the River Line Master Plan									
TASKS									
Develop Communications plan									
Review existing Cobb County data sources									
Inventory and Analysis									
Interviews with individual stakeholders									
Comprehensive Mapping									
Master Plan Development - generate River Line plan concepts									
Master Plan Development - review alternative concepts									
Master Plan Development - develop Preliminary Preferred Water Plan & Elements									
Master Plan Development - develop Final Master Plan & Recommendations									
Implementation Strategy - develop preliminary strategy									
Implementation Strategy - develop final strategy									



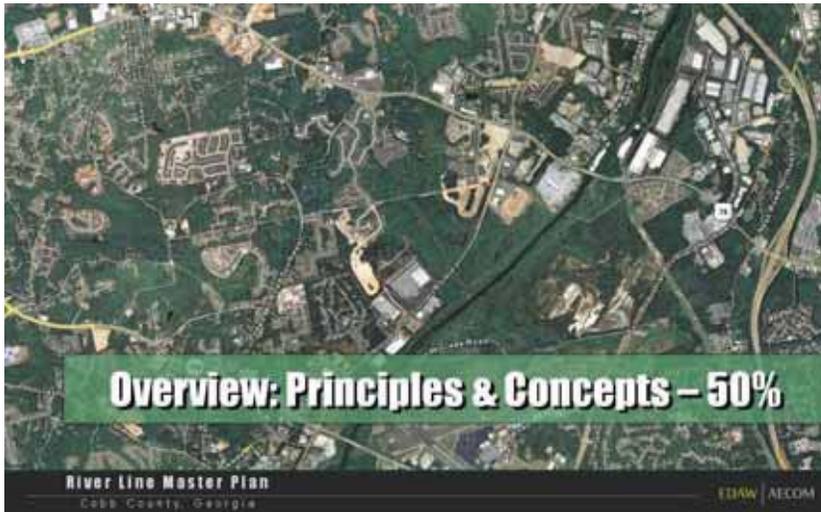
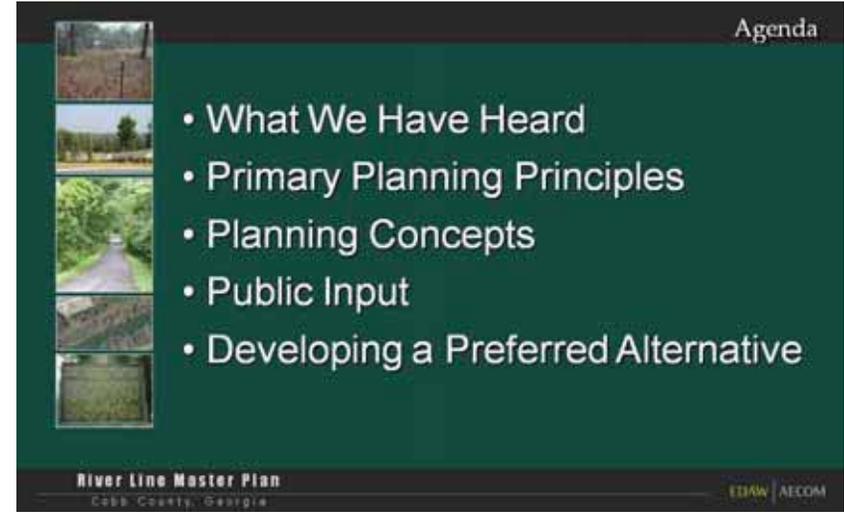
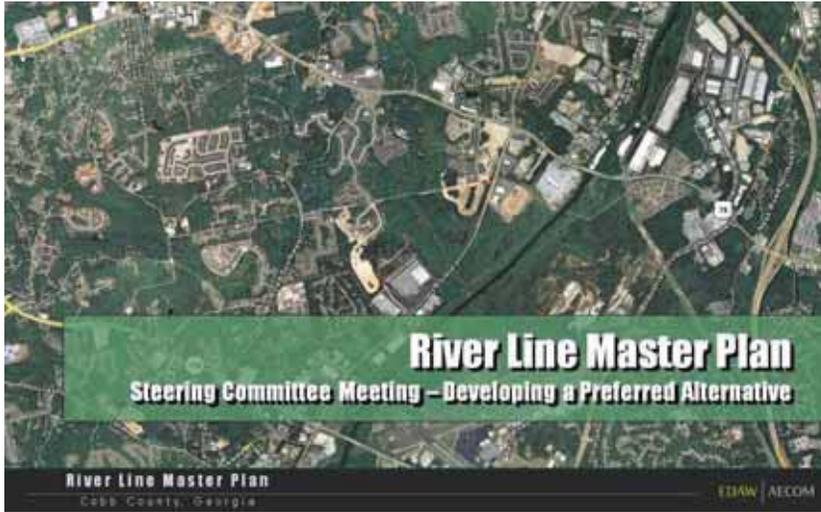
Fundamental Questions

- Issues / Concerns?
- Opportunities / Recommendations?

Site Web Address

- <http://comdev.cobbcountyga.gov/river-line/>







What We Heard

- Who uses the River Line area
- Connectivity
- Industrial Uses
- Chattahoochee River
- Recreation
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Public Realm
- Identity

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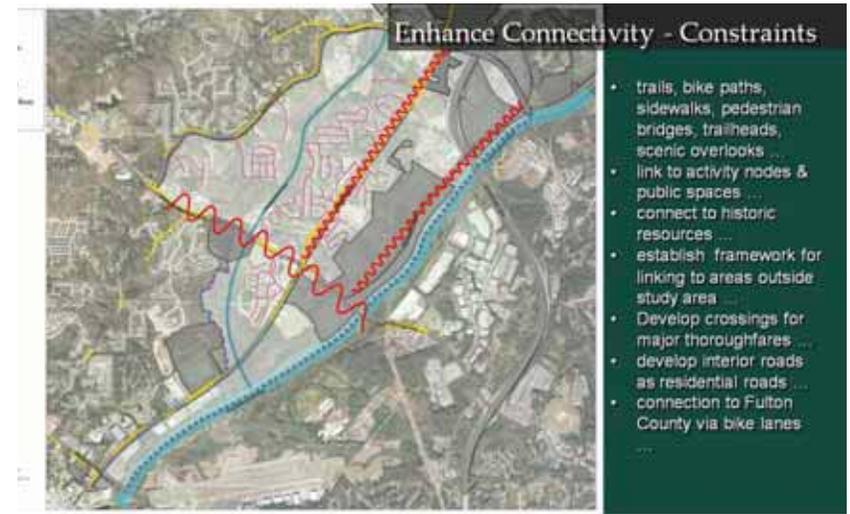
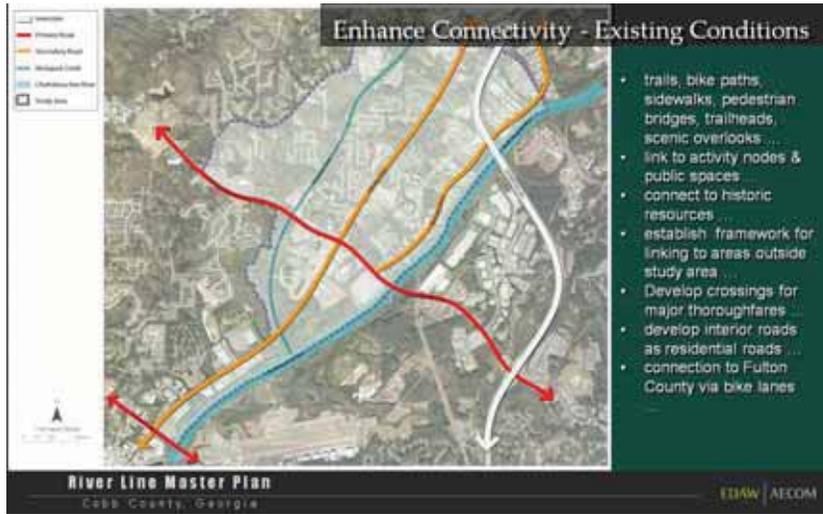


Primary Planning Principles

- Enhance Connectivity
- Reconnect to the River
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities
- Emphasize Cultural & Historic Resources
- Create Community-friendly Character
- Develop Strong Sense of Identity

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Enhance Connectivity - Opportunities



- trails, bike paths, sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, trailheads, scenic overlooks ...
- link to activity nodes & public spaces ...
- connect to historic resources ...
- establish framework for linking to areas outside study area ...
- Develop crossings for major thoroughfares ...
- develop interior roads as residential roads ...
- connection to Fulton County via bike lanes ...

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Enhance Connectivity - Opportunities



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Enhance Connectivity - Opportunities

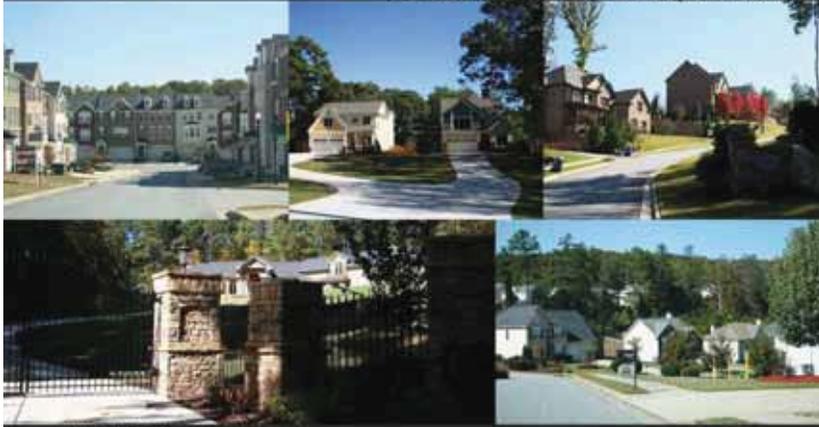


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- establish framework for linking to areas outside study area ...
- Develop crossings for major thoroughfares ...
- develop interior roads as residential roads ...
- connection to Fulton County via bike lanes ...

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Create Community-friendly Character



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Create Community-friendly Character - Constraints

- Shift land use away from Industrial ...
- Add more green space and recreation, community facilities, activity zones, and mixed uses.
- Keep roads more residential in scale
- If industrial use is maintained, it is a less noxious use that is more compatible with other uses, and provides views of the river, access to the river, and connectivity along the river ...

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Create Community-friendly Character - Constraints

- Shift land use away from Industrial ...
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Create Community-friendly Character - Opportunities

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Create Community-friendly Character - Opportunities



- Shift land use away from industrial ...
- Add more green space and recreation, community facilities, activity zones, and mixed uses
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Cobb County, Georgia

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Create Community-friendly Character - Opportunities



- Shift land use away from industrial ...
- Add more green space and recreation, community facilities, activity zones, and mixed uses
- Keep roads more residential in scale
- If industrial use is maintained, it is a less noxious use that is more compatible with other uses, and provides views of the river, access to the river, and connectivity along the river ...

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Cobb County, Georgia

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Create Community-friendly Character - Opportunities



- Shift land use away from industrial ...
- Add more green space and recreation, community facilities, activity zones, and mixed uses
- Keep roads more residential in scale
- If industrial use is maintained, it is a less noxious use that is more compatible with other uses, and provides views of the river, access to the river, and connectivity along the river ...

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Reconnect to the River - Constraints



- Enhance views to the river ...
- Create more public space and provide better access to the river ...
- Develop a river walk or trail along river ...
- Utilize the river as an asset ...
- Potential recreation access ...
- Concepts – Trails, Parks, scenic overlooks, potential land use changes, restore native character as needed ...

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Reconnect to the River - Constraints

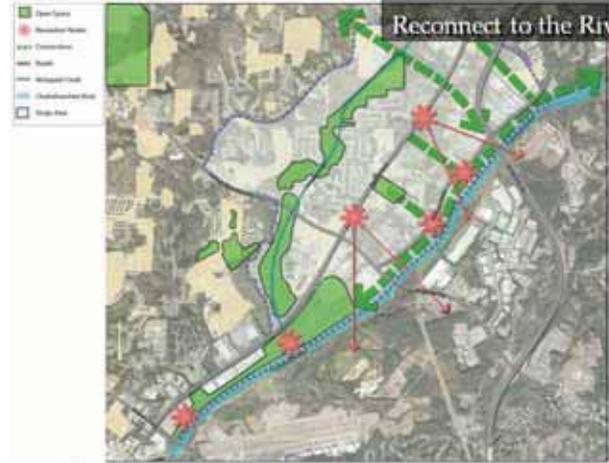



- Enhance views to the river ...
- Create more public space and provide better access to the river ...
- Develop a river walk or trail along river ...
- Utilize the river as an asset ...
- Potential recreation access ...
- Concepts – Trails, Parks, scenic overlooks, potential land use changes, restore native character as needed ...

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Reconnect to the River - Opportunities



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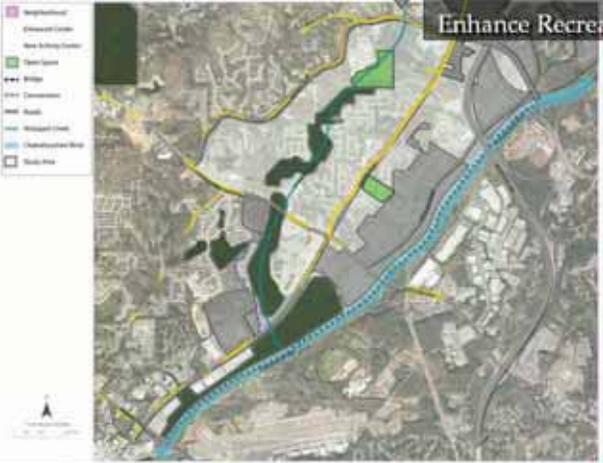


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Enhance Recreation - Constraints



- Emphasize walkability and connectivity; passive recreation activities; pedestrian walks; multi-use trails; better links and access to parks; stronger links to schools; establish natural parks to protect existing resources ...
- Major renovation for Nickajack Park ...
- Add neighborhood park facilities ...
- Address safety concerns ...
- Add environmental education ...
- Ensure accessibility ...

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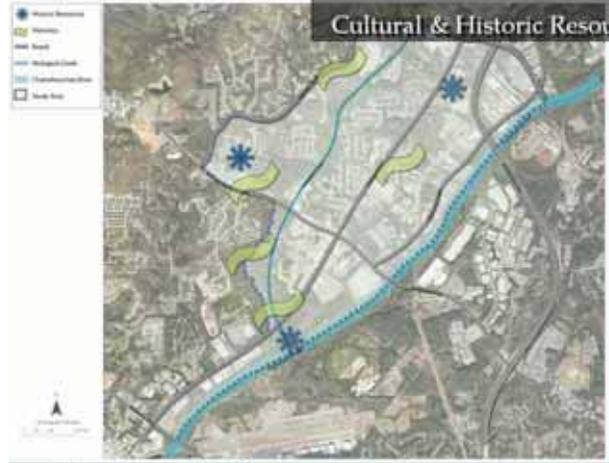


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Cultural & Historic Resources – Constraints



- Recognize the broad, rich history of the area – civil war, Indian, historic cemeteries, railroads, trolley, old mill, and other historic resources ...
- Identify opportunities for historic features in area ...
- Use this information to determine how best to protect the features ...
- Where feasible, consider appropriate interpretive opportunities, including signage, interpretive tours, etc. ...

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Develop Strong Sense of Identity – Constraints



- Create a stronger entry – first into the county, and secondly into the neighborhood ...
- Continuity of materials ...
- Develop a pattern book that identifies the shapes, materials, and patterns that build upon the historic and cultural character of the area ...

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Planning Concepts

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Planning Concepts

- **Green / Community** ... emphasis on natural resources, pedestrian connections, new parks, and community facilities
- **Historic / Cultural** ... emphasis on the rich, diverse history of the River Line area
- **Village Center** ... developing an urban center that serves as the heart of the River Line neighborhood

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Concepts – Green / Community

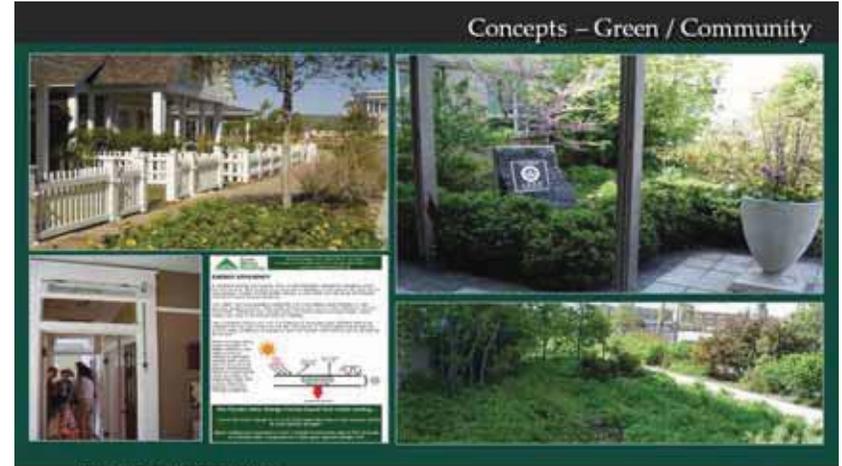


- Addition of pocket parks and linear parks
- Development of a community park near the river (replace industrial use)
- Restoration of wetlands
- Focus on protecting /enhancing natural resources
- Addition of trails, walks, and trailheads
- Emphasis on pedestrian modes while minimizing motorized vehicles
- Enhanced connection of schools to river

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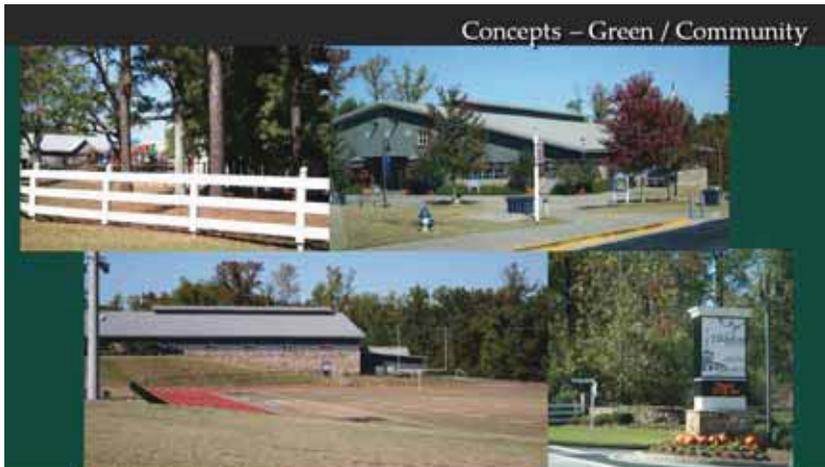
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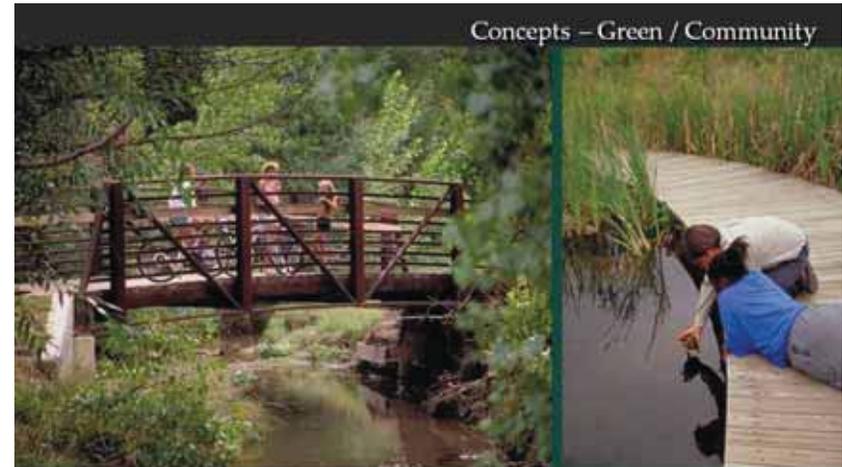
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Concepts – Green / Community



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Concepts – Green / Community



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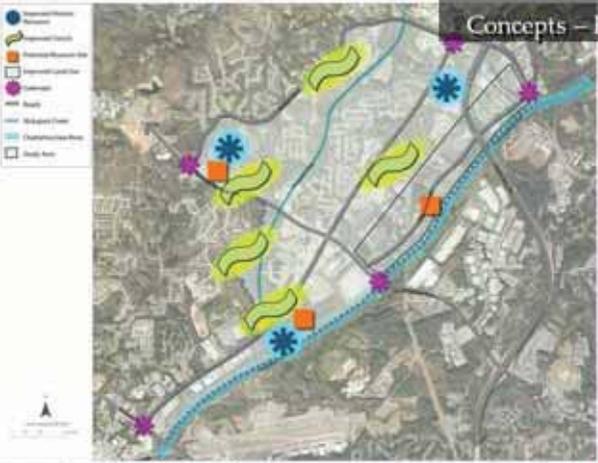


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Concepts – Historical/Cultural



- Protect & interpret historic features
- Conduct a complete cultural inventory
- Consider historic district designation in selected areas (archaeological?)
- Construct museum / history center
- Improved industrial maintained along river
- Research historic trails / embankments – recreate, restore, or interpret
- Emphasize tourism

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Concepts – Historical/Cultural



Johnston River Line trench segments

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Concepts – Historical/Cultural



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Planning Concepts

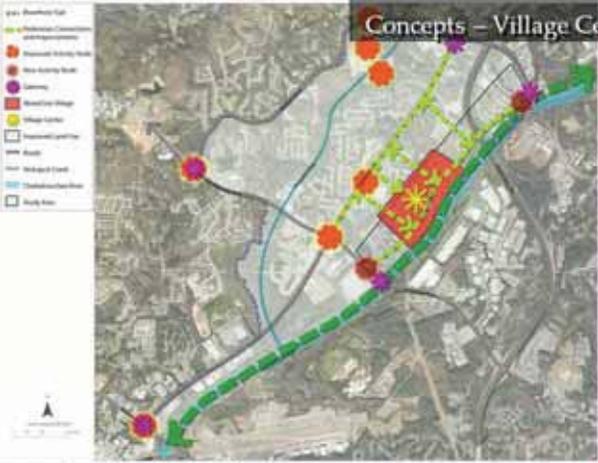
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Concepts – Village Center Development



- Make the transition from a bedroom subdivision to a Village Center
- Develop mixed use hub along the river ... include a village center, public space, residential, commercial, and community use
- Remove industrial use along river
- Connect Oakdale and northern residential areas to river by 'pedestrian promenades'
- Take advantage of good access (265, 20)

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Concepts – Village Center Development



Vining's - Jubilee

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Concepts – Village Center Development



Seneca Market Village

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Comments



- Liked ideas to improve connectivity
- Strong support for the Village concept
- Concern over the scale of the Village
- Support for more greenspace and park development
- Provide opportunities for tourism
- Provide history center/museum
- Recreation & dining are major needs
- Combination of all options

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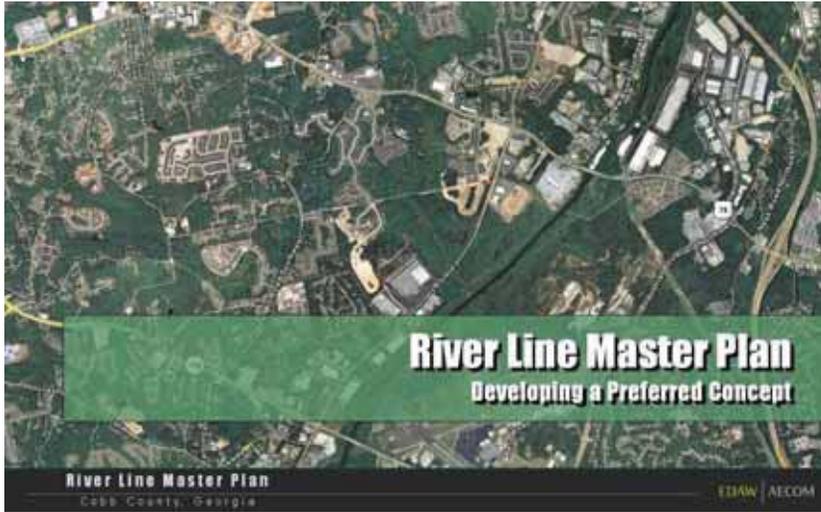
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Steering Committee Input
Developing a Preferred Alternative

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Primary Planning Principles

- Enhance Connectivity
- Reconnect to the River
- Enhance Recreation Opportunities
- Emphasize Cultural & Historic Resources
- Create Community-friendly Character
- Develop Strong Sense of Identity

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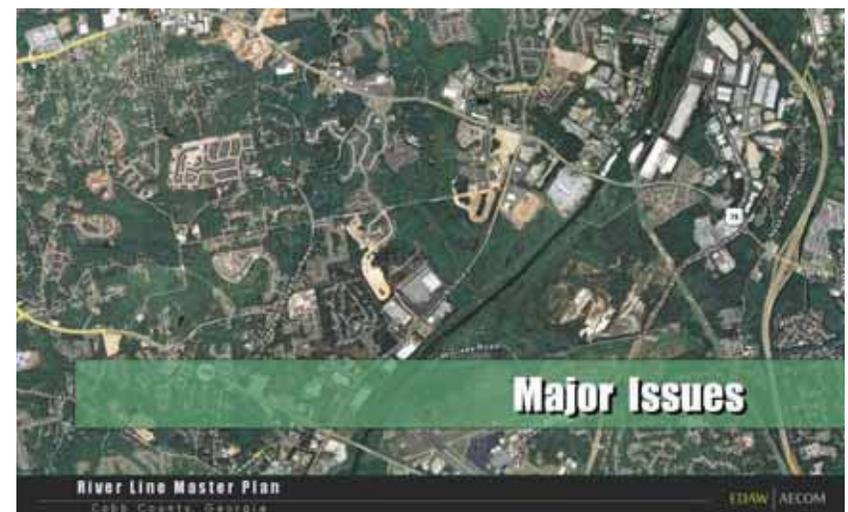
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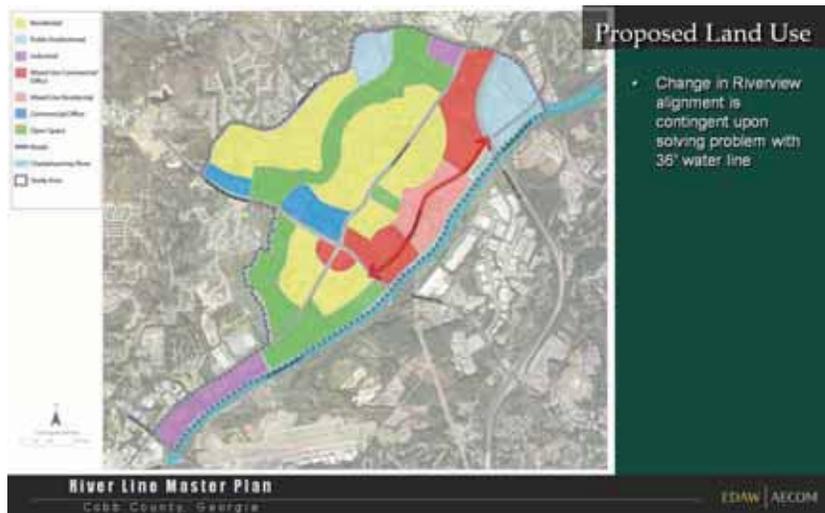
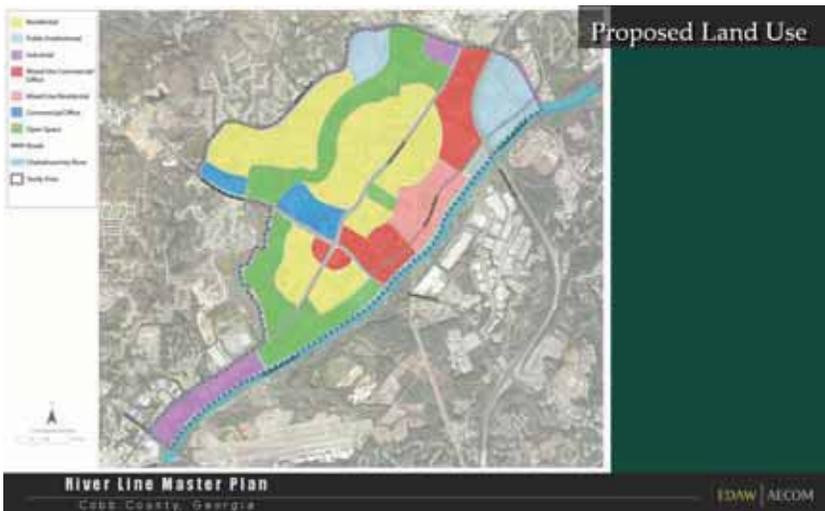
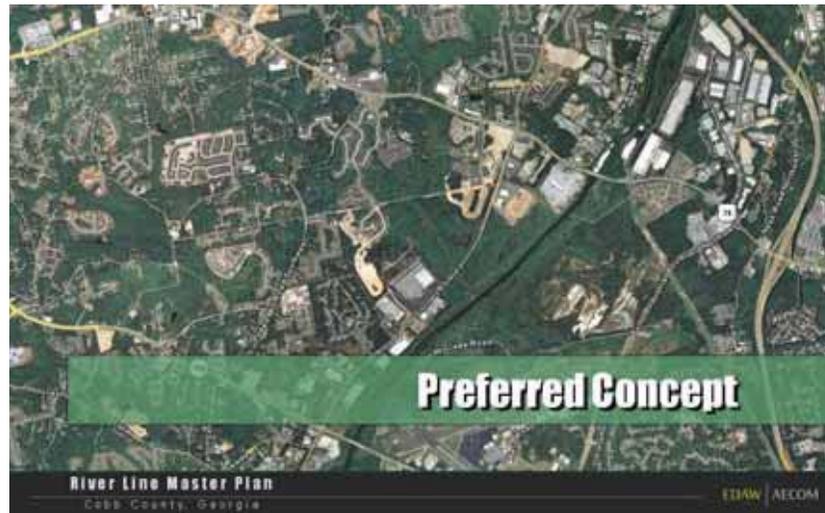
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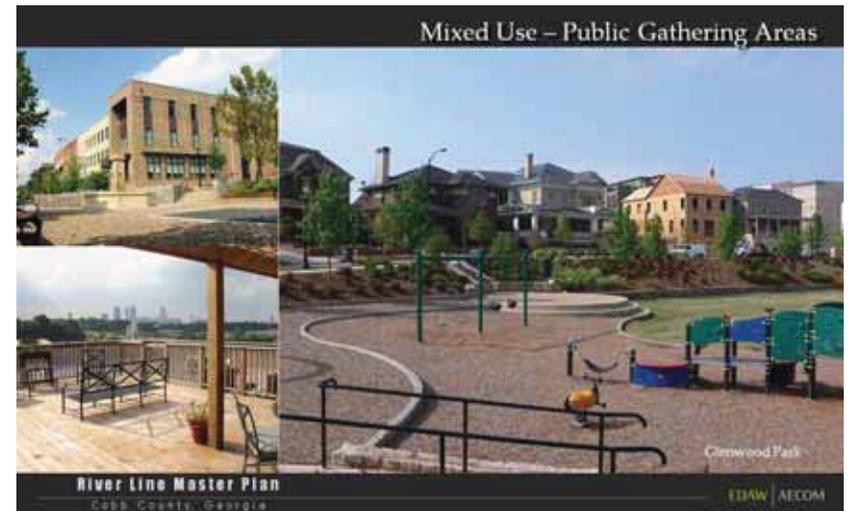
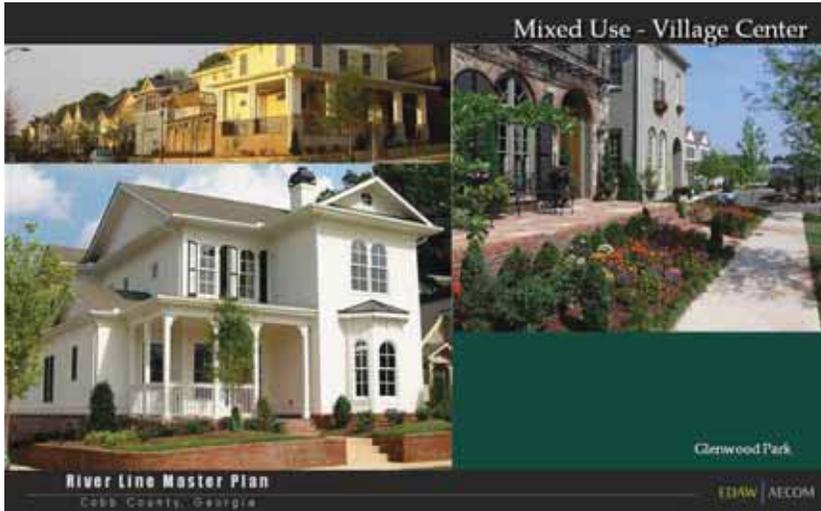
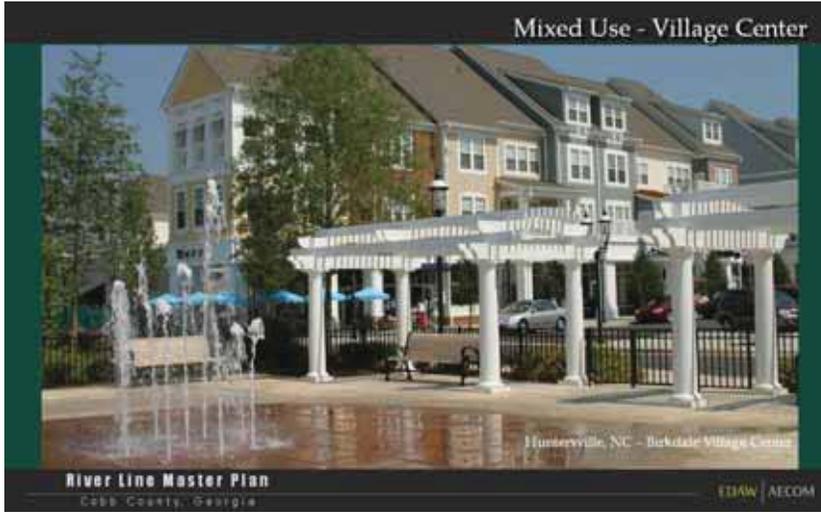
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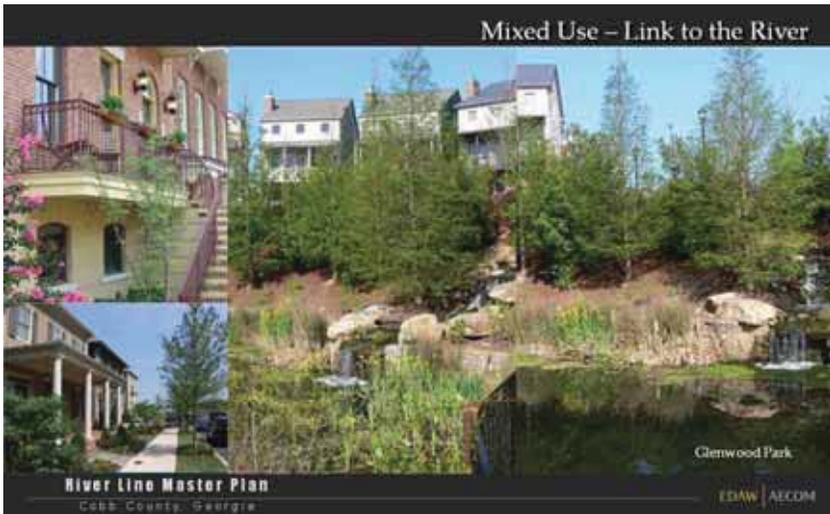
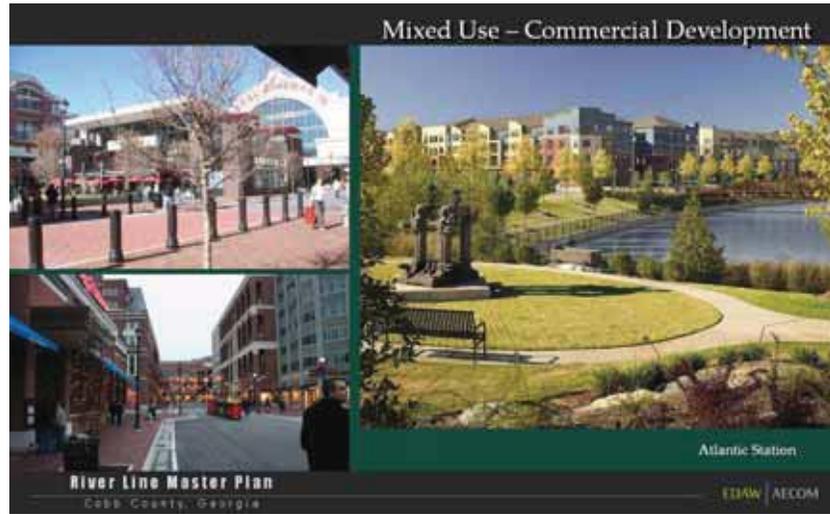
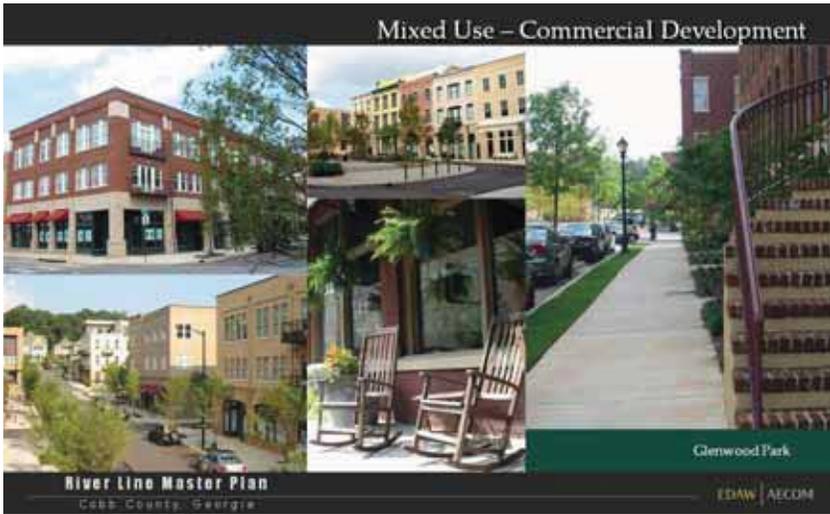
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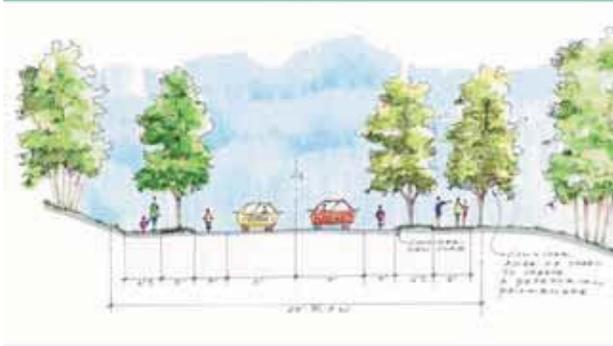








Roadway Improvements – Oakdale, Buckner & Riverview



- Provide consistent sidewalks on both sides of road
- Add bike lanes on both sides of road
- Keep as a two lane road
- Keep the road residential in character – not a truck lane
- Enhance landscaping via street trees, groundcover
- Add gathering nodes
- Provide views to the river

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Roadway Improvements - Oakdale

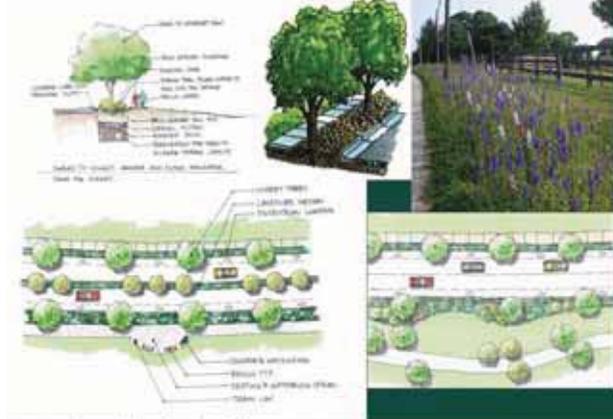


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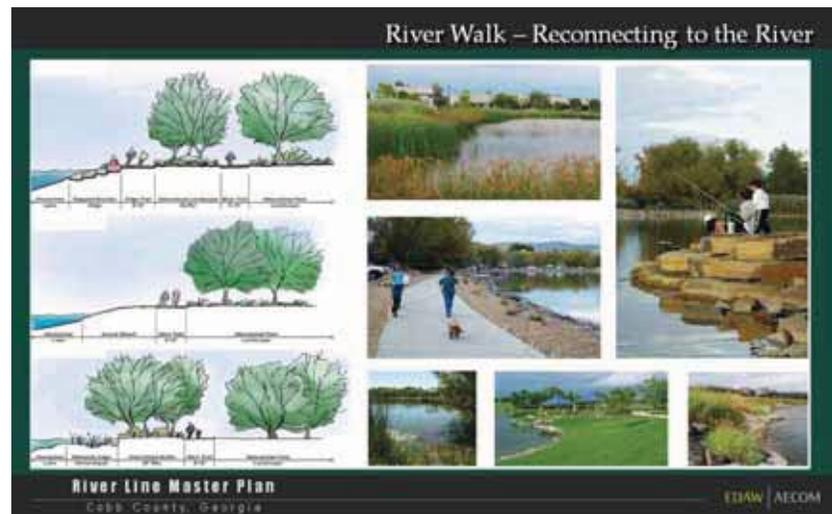
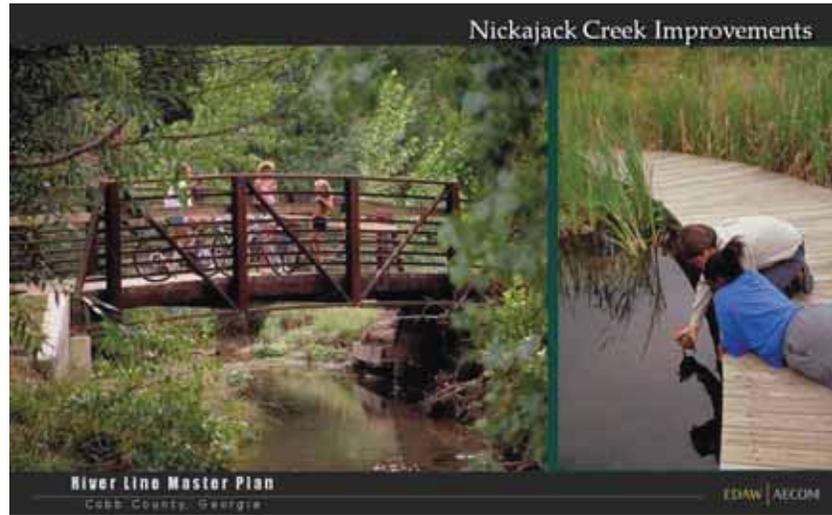
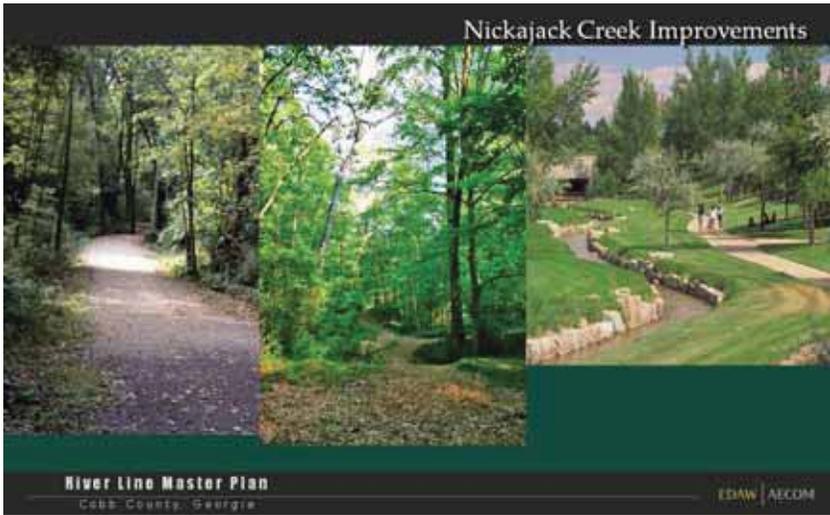
Crosswalks

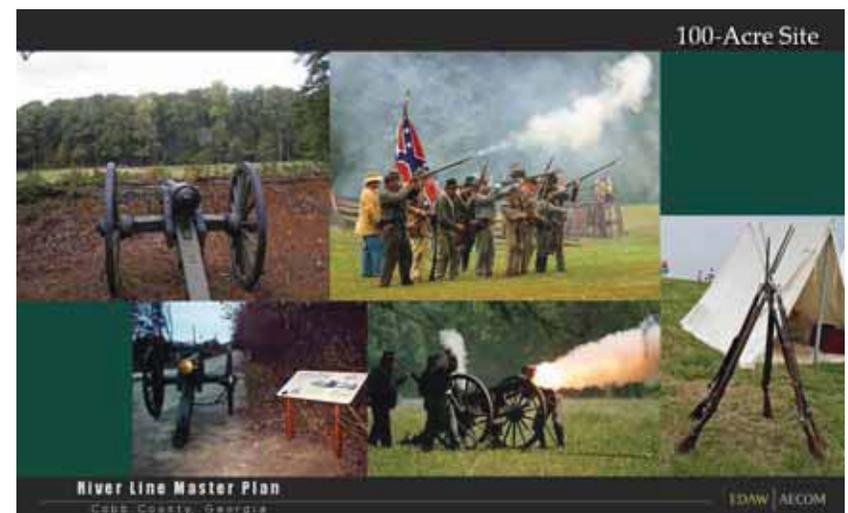
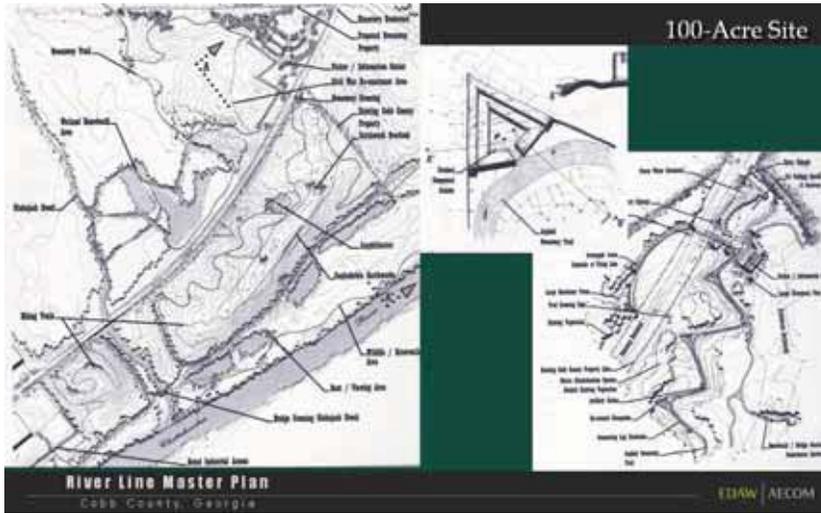
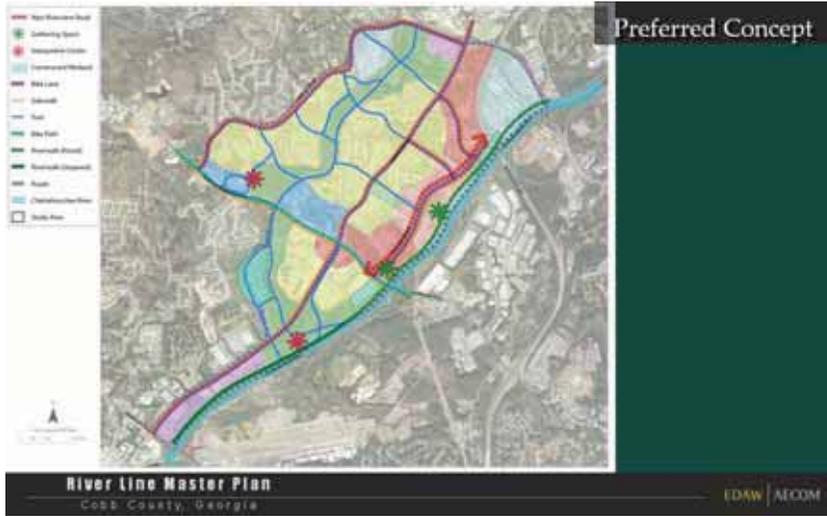


Underpass at Veterans Memorial

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Implementation Strategies



- 10-year Schedule of Actions
- Change land use
- Change transportation master plan
- Continue park acquisition process
- Development priorities & timeline for improvements
- Develop strategy for environmental clean-up
- Develop a River Line pattern book
- Spread the River Line story
- Explore economic incentives and strategies
- Explore additional studies

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Develop a River Line Pattern Book



- Develop a pattern book that identifies the shapes, materials, and patterns that build upon the historic and cultural character of the area

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PREPARED BY:
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