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Introduction

In September 2005, the Cobb County Department of Transportation hosted a workshop on pedestrian safety and mobility along Six Flags Drive in southern Cobb County. The workshop was facilitated by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) via the Walkable Communities program. Workshop attendees included employees of various Cobb County departments and agencies, as well as community leaders and other interested parties. Emphasis was placed upon the lack of safe places for pedestrians to cross the right of way along Six Flags Drive, a thoroughfare consisting of five (5) lanes. Other notable findings from the workshop included the lack of adequate pedestrian and vehicular lighting at night; the need for additional sidewalks in areas lacking pedestrian infrastructure; and the desire to enhance the safety and comfort of pedestrians through the use of streetscaping techniques such as adding 'street trees' and 'street furniture'.

In January 2006 at the Cobb County Board of Commissioners' annual retreat, District IV Commissioner Annette Kesting cited results from the Walkable Communities workshop as reasoning for the County to take an in-depth look at the Six Flags Drive Corridor. Subsequently, the Community Development Agency's Planning Division was asked to prepare a study regarding the corridor. As a result, the Planning Division has developed a document that examines the relationships between land use patterns, transportation infrastructure and public safety along the corridor. The study considers the following general objectives:

- Promote transportation alternatives in the planning process such as transit, bicycle facilities pedestrian infrastructure, and other alternative modes of travel;

- Propose changes to the Cobb County Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan along the corridor in order to encourage revitalization or redevelopment of declining land uses;

- Encourage housing types and densities needed to support desired economic growth along the corridor.

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Six Flags Drive runs in an east/southeasterly direction from Blair Bridge Road to the Interstate 20 interchange at Riverside Parkway, then continues in a northeasterly direction until it becomes Lee Industrial Boulevard, just south of Mableton Parkway. The defined study area consists of a 1.1-mile stretch of Six Flags Drive beginning at Factory Shoals Road from the west and ending at the Interstate 20 interchange. The area has not received significant land use or infrastructure investment in recent years. Additionally, the area has consistently had one of the highest crime rates in Cobb County over the last several years.
The area serves as a backdrop to the *Six Flags Over Georgia* amusement park. The park, along with the area's close proximity to the Chattahoochee River, provides Cobb County with an extraordinary opportunity to increase interest and investment within the study area and surrounding communities.

The purpose of this study is to examine existing land uses, zoning, and future land use recommendations in order to determine whether or not policy changes would be appropriate. Recommended transportation infrastructure improvements are factored significantly into the overall final recommendations. The following is a breakdown of each individual section of the document:

- **Methodology:** Provides a basic overview of the tools and techniques used to carry out the study.

- **Community Profile:** Provides background information on the study area; Includes information on existing conditions within the study area such as population, demographics, housing, commercial/retail, etc.

- **Concept Plan/Recommendations:** Provides detailed strategies and action items to be considered for implementation within the study area. Information provided within this section is derived from feedback received from the public and the Steering Committee during the plan building process.

- **Implementation:** Provides information on ways to apply the tactics brought forth within the *Concept Plan* and *Recommendations* sections of this document.

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Methodology

The Six Flags Drive Corridor Study was carried out as an in-house planning project that utilized no external funding sources to assist in its development. Staff has prepared this document as a means of expanding dialogue between staff, community stakeholders, residents, and elected officials to concentrate on the unique issues occurring within the study area and to develop creative solutions to improve the quality of life within the area. Staff conceptualized this study so that it would be in concurrence with the ARC Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program criteria. The primary objectives of the LCI program are as follows:

- Encourage a diversity of mixed-income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the activity center, town center, and corridor level;

- Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to the various land uses and activities within the study area;

- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders

In order to carry out these criteria, Staff conducted a planning process that involved a Stakeholder Steering Committee and two (2) public meetings designed to obtain citizen input on corridor-related issues. All meetings (Steering Committee and Public) were held at the South Cobb Recreation Center, located on Six Flags Drive within the vicinity of the study area.

Steering Committee

To assist in the development of this Study, a Steering Committee was formed. Members of the committee were appointed by Commissioner Kesting per the recommendations of the Planning Division Staff. The role of this group was to provide guidance to Staff in the development of the plan recommendations resulting from the overall study process. Various organizations were represented on the committee, including:

- Austell Neighborhood Task Force
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta
- Cobb County Police Department
- Silver Creek Homeowners Association
- Southwest Austell Neighbors (SWAN)

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The Steering Committee held five (5) meetings in which various facets of the issues facing the study area were discussed, including but not limited to: land use planning, transportation infrastructure, public safety/social awareness issues, and greenspace and outdoor recreation. A *'Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats (SWOT)'* analysis was conducted as the primary plan-building exercise. These meetings were also used to summarize the outcomes of the two public meetings. A listing of Steering Committee members and detailed results of the SWOT Analysis, as well as accounts of each Steering Committee Meeting, can be found in Appendix C.

Public Meetings

Two (2) public meetings were held as part of the study process.

The first meeting was held on Saturday, June 24, 2006 at 10:00 AM. The meeting was advertised to the public as an 'open house' via road signs posted by the Cobb Department of Transportation. In addition, meeting notices were placed in the *Cobb Line* newsletter and on the official Cobb County Government website (www.cobbcounty.org). Approximately ten (10) days prior to the meeting, Commissioner Kesting and Planning Division Staff visited various businesses along Six Flags Drive, handing out letters that extended invitations to attend the meeting and expresses individual opinions and concerns.

The meeting opened with a ten-minute presentation followed by a question/answer session. Many of the questions asked were geared toward issues related to crime and public safety, due to the fact that such issues are prevalent within the community and are highly visible to both residents of the community and passers-through. Further discussion during the question/answer session brought other issues to the forefront, namely: lack of sidewalks, lack of grocery stores and other reputable, viable business, and lack of recreation facilities and activities for youth.

Following the question/answer session, meeting attendees were separated into groups for the purpose of a "charrette-style" activity. Workshop attendees were split into four groups and were asked to illustrate their ideas regarding land use along the corridor using maps provided by Staff. The prevailing theme amongst all four group renderings was commercialization, namely restaurant, retail and service-oriented businesses typically found in the major retail centers around the Atlanta Region. A bullet-list summary of public feedback from Public Meeting #1 is located in Appendix C.

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Following the positive turnout and feedback obtained from the June 24th meeting, the decision was made to host a second public meeting in hopes of garnering even more interest than the previous meeting. The meeting was held on Thursday, August 31, 2006 at 6:00 PM. As with the previous meeting, Cobb DOT placed signs on roadways in and around the Study Area to inform interested parties of the meeting. Several of the homeowner's associations (HOA'S) got involved in spreading the word regarding the meeting by distributing electronic flyers via email. Among the attendees were State Representative Alisha Thomas Morgan and State Senator Doug Stoner.

The meeting opened with a short slideshow presentation that provided a brief background of the corridor study and its overall purpose. Included within the slideshow were conceptual renderings of what the Six Flags Drive corridor could look like with a raised median and a revised streetscape design. A question/answer session followed, featuring questions regarding a variety of topics. As with the previous public meeting, many of the questions were regarding issues unrelated to the goals and objectives of the corridor study. However, the majority of questions were concurrent with issues focused upon within the study. Senator Stoner, Representative Morgan and Commissioner Annette Kesting actively participated in the dialogue, with County Staff moderating the discussion. Steering Committee member Major Robert Pittman of the Cobb Police Department took an active role in the dialogue as well by describing his precinct's efforts to work with area apartment complex managers to clean up the elements that foster criminal activity.

Following the question/answer session, the meeting switched over to an 'open house' format that allowed guests to mingle around the room and look at items displayed around the meeting room. Among those items were: listings of proposed recommendations for improving the corridor, as well as charts containing images that exemplified the types of land use/development patterns that could be implement in the study area, which would help promote walkability, public safety and economic vitality. These images were used to conduct an *Image Preference Survey* in which guests were asked to rate images according to what they would like to see more of in the Six Flags Drive corridor.

Image Preference Survey

This exercise consisted of 45 images displayed on three (3) posterboards. Participants were asked to rate each image on a scale of one-to-five (one being the lowest, five being the highest). The images were split into three (3) categories: *New Urbanism, Bus Stops, Crosswalks and Sidewalks, and Medians.*

- *New Urbanism:* This category included examples of medium-to-high density residential development styles, as well as mixed-use residential/retail commercial development styles. These are the types of development patterns commonly seen in areas that have evolved into activity centers. Survey respondents seemed to prefer the mixed-use scenarios that emphasized the types of retail services desired by area residents.

- *Bus Stops, Crosswalks and Sidewalks:* This category depicted examples of various streetscaping techniques that have the potential to positively impact the corridor in its current condition, as well as with any future redevelopment scenarios. *Street trees* and *street furniture*, bus stops with shelters, landscaping and trash receptacles, *pocket parks*, and various depictions of crosswalks (both at intersections and mid-block) were among the examples shown. Survey responses reflected a desire for greenspace being integrated into the overall streetscape design, as well as wider sidewalks, multi-use trails and pedestrian-scaled lighting.

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- *Medians:* This category depicts examples of raised medians. This goes hand-in-hand with previous category due to its impact on pedestrian safety. Staff chose to list this as a separate category due to the wide variety of median designs found throughout the metro area and the state. Survey responses reflected the desire for a full-length, landscaped raised median to be installed along the corridor.

Based on the results of this exercise, Staff and the steering committee confirmed that mixed used development that provides both a density-comparable alternative to the existing apartment complexes along the corridor, as well as viable commercial/retail services, are desires of citizens living in and around the study area. Additionally, the results reflected a desire to have more greenspace along the corridor and to create opportunities for such by incorporating it into pocket parks, bus stops and other streetscape improvements

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Community Profile

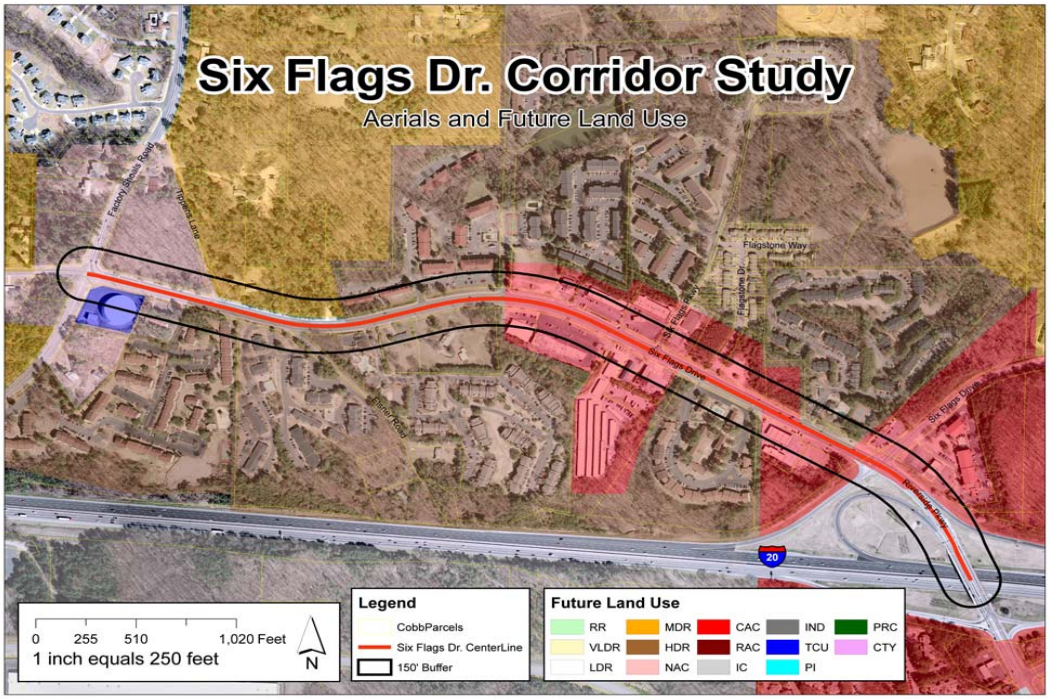
Study Area Context

The Six Flags Drive corridor is an area that is in a prime location for quality development opportunities due to its proximity to numerous regional assets, such as the Six Flags Over Georgia amusement park and the Chattahoochee River. Accessibility is an important factor to the growth and vitality of this area due to the presence of Interstate 20 with direct access to downtown Atlanta and its proximity to Interstate-285. The area, in general, does not have a strong commercial presence with the nearest major retail destinations being the Arbor Place mall in Douglas County and the Greenbriar Mall in Southwest Atlanta. The study area contains mainly marginal commercial/service uses and a large quantity of older multi-family renter-occupied residences. There has been a lack of public and private investment in this area of the corridor in recent years.

Study Area Extents

The study area runs in an east/southeasterly direction from Blair Bridge Road to the Interstate 20 interchange at Riverside Parkway and then continues in a northeasterly direction until it becomes Lee Industrial Boulevard, just south of Mableton Parkway. The defined study area consists of a 1.1-mile stretch of Six Flags Drive beginning at Factory Shoals Road from the west and ending at the Interstate 20 interchange. The study area also includes properties within one hundred and fifty (150) feet from the street right-of-way. The boundaries of the study area can be seen in detail in Map #1.

Map #1



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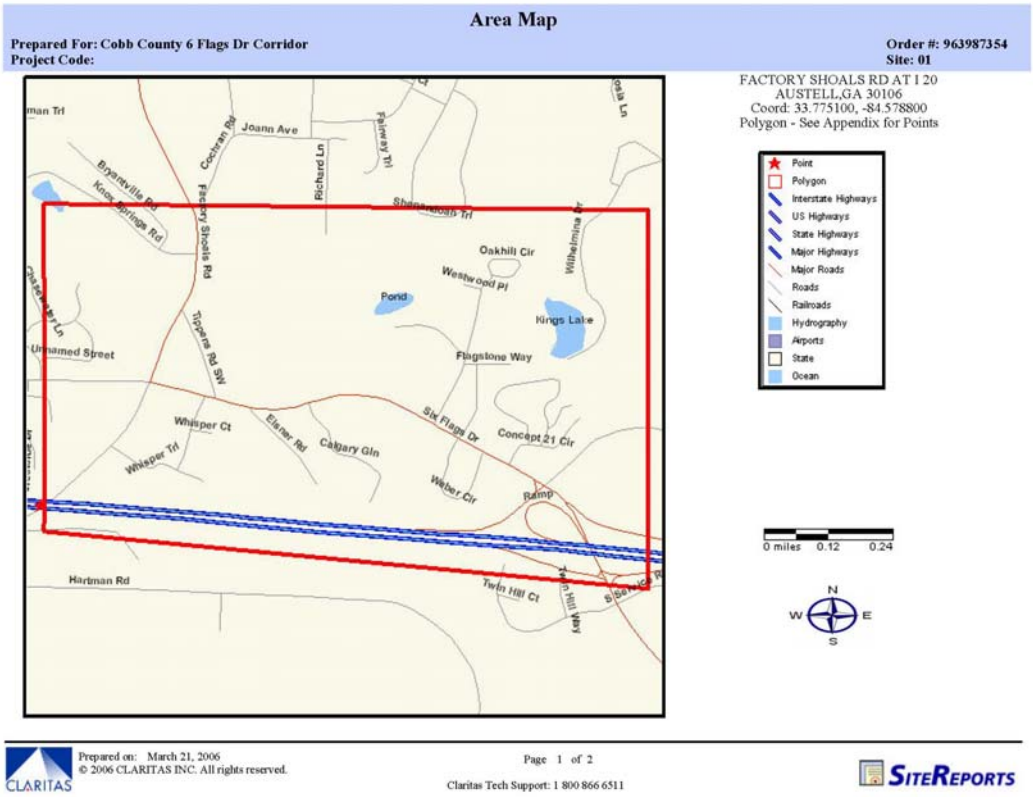
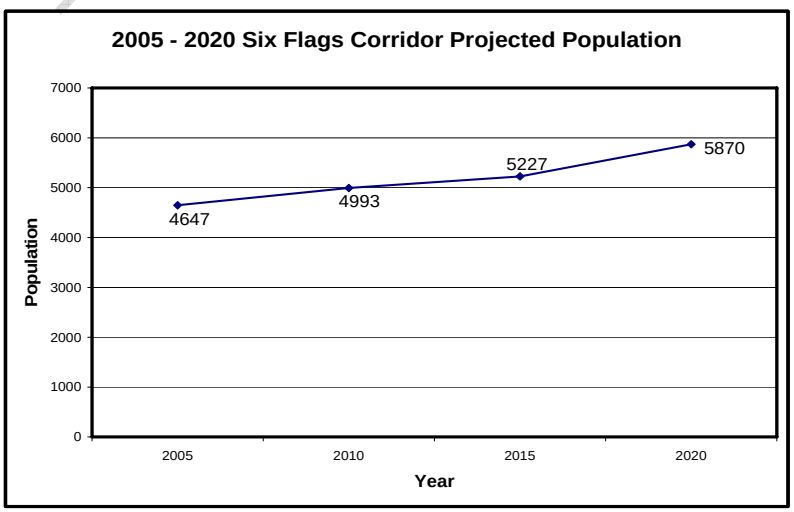
Population Demographics

The figures for the demographic analysis were estimated by Claritas, a private market research firm. There are some small discrepancies between the boundaries used to gather the market research and the study area boundaries, but the differences are inconsequential. A map of the market area boundaries is shown in Map #2.

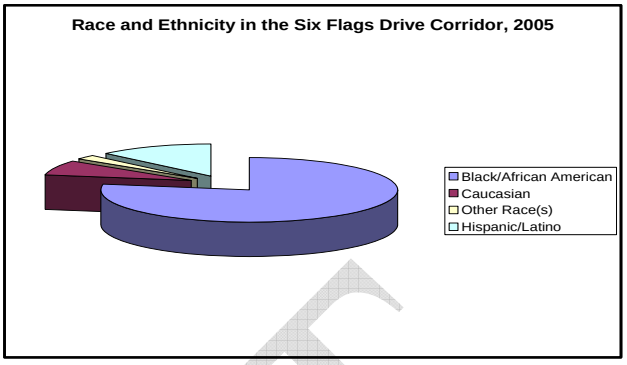
Map #2



The 2005 population of the study area is estimated at 4,647. This figure is projected to increase to 4,933 people by 2010. Staff projections estimate that, if current trends, by 2015 and 2025 there will be 5,227 and 5,870 people, respectively.

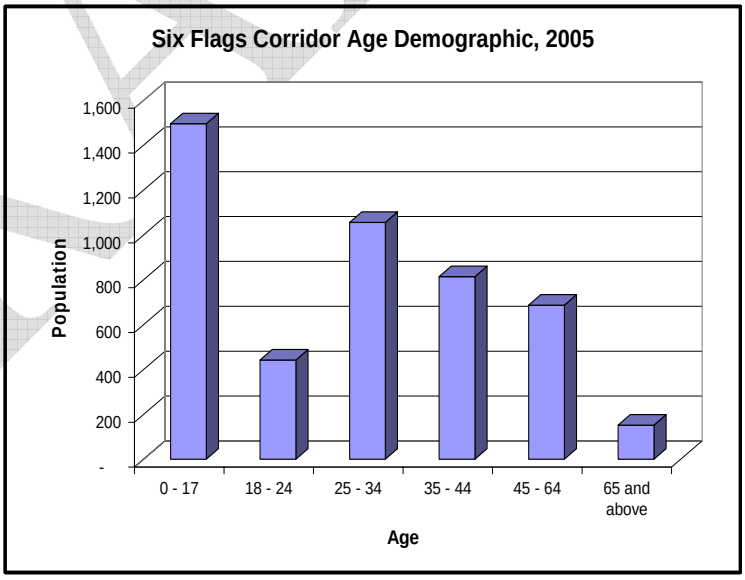


Of the 2005 population, 77.7% are Black/African American, 7.6% are Caucasian and 2.0% some other race or combination of races. 12.6% of the population identify themselves as having a Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. The ethnic makeup in this area is different from Cobb County as a whole, which has 72.4% Caucasian, 18.8% Black/African American, 8.8% some other race or combination of races, and 7.7% of the population identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino.



The median age of the population in 2005 was approximately 28.7 years, which is younger than the average of 33 years for the county as a whole. In the study area 32.2% of the population, in 2005, was under the age 18 while 7.5% was age 55 or older. The male to female ratio is similar to that of the County as a whole where there are slightly more women compared to men in the study area.

The median household income for the study area is $39,590. This figure is considerably less than the county median of $73,586. The size of households creates an additional challenge because there is a larger percentage of large households (households containing five or more individuals) as a percentage of total households within the study area compared to the county as a whole. The lower household income could be attributed to the low number of higher income households (households making more than $75,000/year) in the study area, 12.97%, compared to the county, 36.23% and the greater number of lower income households (households making under $35,000/year), 43.12% for the study area and 25.48% for the county as a whole.



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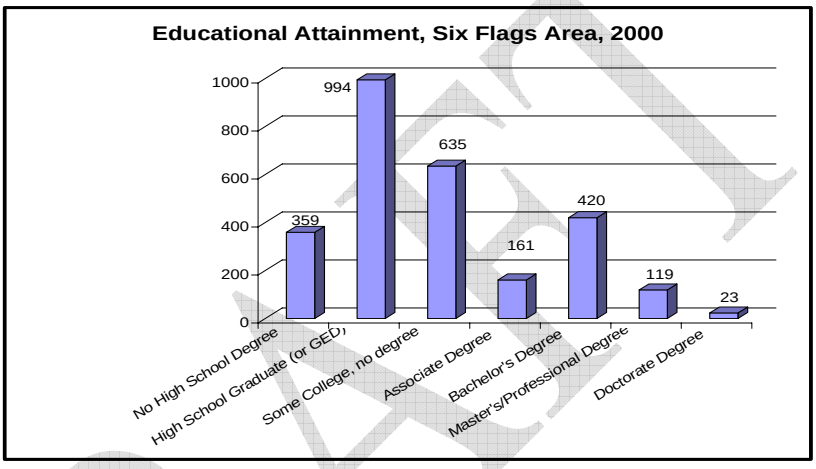
Another important population demographic indicator is educational attainment. Educational attainment is important because of it is an indicator used to explain income, economic activity, and the availability of jobs. In the study area 13.21% of the population has not completed high school, 36.7% have a high school diploma or equivalent, 5.9% have earned an associates degree, 15.5% have a Bachelor's degree, and 5.24% have a Graduate or Professional degree. These figures are low when compared to Cobb County: 11.1% has not completed high school, 20.80% have a high school diploma or equivalent, 5.8% have earned an associates degree, 28.10% have a Bachelor's degree, and 11.80% have a Graduate or Professional degree



Housing

The Six Flags Drive area has a variety of housing types. The corridor contains some single-family subdivisions featuring ranch-style homes built during the 1960's, in addition to several more-recently built single family subdivisions (circa 1990's and early 2000's). Within the study area itself, there are nine (9) multi-family developments, built primarily during the 1970's and 1980's. In 2005, there were 1,865 housing units within the study area. Of those, approximately 22.4% (418) were single-family detached homes while multi-family units accounted for the remaining 76.6% of housing units. This compares to 268,152 housing units county-wide, 68% (182,464) of which are single-family detached units.

In 2005, approximately 72.2% of occupied housing units within the study area were renter-occupied, while approximately 27.8% were owner-occupied. Compared to Cobb County as a whole, these totals are the complete inverse, whereas the 2005 American Communities Survey conducted by the Census Bureau indicated that the County had approximately 71.2% of its occupied housing units inhabited by owners, while 28.8% were inhabited by renters.

The value of housing within the study area is considerably less than that of the County as a whole. The estimated median value of owner-occupied housing within the study area in 2005 was $125, 955; which is 36% less than the median value county-wide ($195,700).

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The current housing stock seems to be affordable, relative to area incomes. This assertion is made considering that 30% of one's household income is generally considered the threshold for being *cost burdened* in terms of housing. As of the 2000 Census, approximately 58% of renters within the study area spent less than 30% of their household incomes on the cost of rent. As far as owner-occupied housing is concerned, approximately 75% of homeowners spent less than 30% of their household incomes on monthly housing expenses, which include mortgages, insurance, utilities, taxes, etc. Considering that the figures available for renters does not account for total housing costs, it does not give an accurate representation of the true burden of housing expenses for renters. Applying the additional expenses considered in the Census' computation of these statistics for homeowners, in turn to renters, we estimate that approximately 40% of renters would spend less than 30% of their household incomes on monthly housing expenses.

Based on current conditions, a need exists for additional housing units to meet market demand. Assuming these conditions remain as they are (employment, income, development types, etc.), there will be a need for 4,400 new housing units by the year 2020. It is important to note that part of the purpose of this study is to assist in reinvigorating the overall market conditions in this area. The level of success achieved during these efforts could potentially reveal a need for even more housing units within the area in the future. The Housing Market Analysis provides more details regarding housing demand and is available in Appendix A.

Commercial Activity

Commercial/retail outlets within the study area tend to be neighborhood-oriented. There are three gas station/convenience store combos within the study area. Each location appears to do reasonably good business based on the volume of customers witnessed during field observations. There are also (2) two strip-oriented shopping centers, both of which contain businesses such as check cashing outlets, dry cleaners and barber shops/beauty salons. Throughout the study process, we received comments from both the Steering Committee and the public-at-large advocating the need for new, more-viable businesses to the area. The most popular choices for new retail establishments were grocery stores, banks, and national chain restaurants (non-fast food).

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Transportation

As previously mentioned, the section of Six Flags Drive that passes through the study area consists of four (4) travel lanes and a two-way left turn lane in the center of the roadway. The only traffic signals located within the corridor are at either end of the corridor with no signalization in between. This scenario encourages motorists to travel in excess of the posted speed limit of 40 miles per hour, which is a key factor in the high number of accidents involving motor vehicles and pedestrians attempting to cross the roadway. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) accident statistics from 2004 recorded 263 motor vehicle accidents along Six Flags Drive. However, the data does not distinguish between accidents involving motor vehicles and pedestrians.

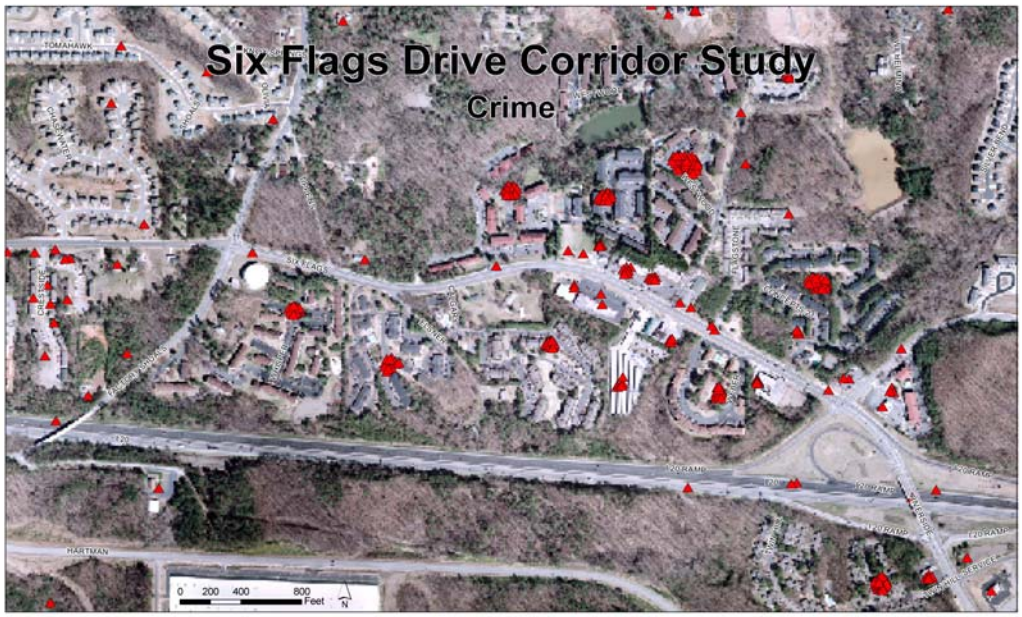
Cobb County Community Transit (CCT) operates the Route 30 bus line through the corridor. This bus route connects to MARTA's rail service via the H.E. Holmes Transit Station and Downtown Marietta. These termini serve as vital connections to employment centers, making it one of the most utilized routes within the entire CCT system. Within the study area, there are eight (8) transit stops; four (4) on either side of the roadway. Three (3) of the stop locations on the southern side of Six Flags Drive are not located on sidewalks, forcing transit riders to wait for the bus in shelters not situated on paved surfaces.

The southern side of the roadway is without sidewalk for the entire length of the study area. During our field observations, a worn path was visible, indicating a significant pedestrian presence in the area and the lack of adequate pedestrian infrastructure. In 2005, Cobb DOT was awarded a *Transportation Enhancement (TE)* grant to address the needs along the Six Flags Drive Corridor regarding pedestrian infrastructure and safety. This is an important "first step" in revitalizing the corridor. It is our goal to utilize this as a "springboard" to promote further improvements and enhancements within the study area.

Public Safety

Issues regarding public safety were amongst the chief concerns that were mentioned throughout the study process. Both members of the Steering Committee and citizens in attendance at the two public meetings expressed concerns regarding violent crime within the study area, particularly within the apartment complexes and at certain retail locations. According to the Cobb County Police Department, some of the most consistent incidences of crime in the entire County occur within the study area. The map shown below illustrates locations of crime incidents within the study area.

During our face-to-face efforts to garner public interest and to inform citizens of the first of the two public meetings, we noticed firsthand one of the most commonly-heard complaints from citizens during the public involvement process. There was a significant amount of loitering in the shopping centers where we distributed information pertaining to the study and the forthcoming public meeting. Although we did not feel threatened in any way, we recognize this as a legitimate concern of citizens as well as business owners along the corridor and have considered these and other public safety concerns in the development of the Concept Plan for this study.



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Concept Plan/Recommendations

Based on the community's vision for the study area, analysis of the area's current conditions, potential for new development and both current and potential market demand, Staff has devised a conceptual area plan and a list of recommendations that addresses the issues brought forth throughout the planning process. Although this plan is designed to reflect the desires of the citizens and stakeholders of the community, it should not be expected to provide immediate results, nor should the effort to execute the plan be placed on the shoulders of one entity. Execution of this plan should be a collaborative effort involving Cobb County Government, citizens of the Six Flags Drive corridor and surrounding areas, the development community and other area stakeholders, such as Six Flags over Georgia and The Boys & Girls Club.

The concept plan for the Six Flags Drive corridor focused on creating a *sense of place* for the area. Throughout our discussions with the Steering Committee and the public, an often-heard complaint was that the area had no true identity. The area is within a zip code (30168) that is associated with the City of Austell, though it is not physically located with the city's boundaries. There's also the proximity to the amusement park, which was somewhat unpopular amongst area residents in terms of their community being directly identified by such proximity. The overall theme of the concept plan is to transform the corridor into a destination/activity center, complete with parks and greenspace, new multi-family housing opportunities, and new mid-range retail outlets. Each of these elements is integrated with a refined transportation infrastructure that emphasizes pedestrians, bicyclists and riders of public transportation.

Community Identity

Throughout the planning process, there were several ideas that came forth regarding the improvement of community identity. One obvious solution was to come up with a name for the community. Although we did not have significant discussion as to what the name should be, we recommended that citizens work with their elected officials to adopt a name that reflects the community's new character more-so than its physical location. During our June 24th open house, we recommended that a gateway marking the entrance to the community be erected in the vicinity of the I-20 interchange with Six Flags Drive and Riverside Parkway. Such gateway could consist of wrought iron or some other metal-based material that would span the width of Six Flags Drive. Or, brick-based monument signage could be erected on either side of the roadway. It would be up to County Commissioners to determine what the most cost-effective measure would be, based on the preference of community citizens. Additionally, decorative streetlights with pennants/flags could be used to mark the community. Again, these types of choices will be made by the County Commissioners with community input.

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Transportation

Considering the fact that issues regarding transportation infrastructure were the primary factors leading to the initiation of this study, Staff spent significant time considering the implications of the transportation infrastructure and how it impacts the study area in its current state, as well as what impact it may have in the future in light of any potential redevelopment/revitalization scenario. The following is a listing of recommended projects and improvements that we believe will assist in bolstering the attractiveness of the study area.

Short-term Objectives (6-24 Months)

- Sidewalks (5' wide concrete), with six Pedestrian Refuge Islands

  This project would consist of implementing five-foot wide sidewalks along the south side of the corridor from the South Cobb Recreation Center (at Creekside Drive) to Riverside Parkway/Interstate 20, and approximately six pedestrian refuge islands with crosswalks along Six Flags Drive.

- Bus Stop Improvements

  The Transit Planning Study identified bus stops in need of improvement within the Cobb Community Transit system service area. There are eight bus stop in need of improvement along Six Flags Road, between Factory Shoals Road and Riverside Parkway.

- Intersection Improvements

  This project would consist of realignment and safety improvements to be completed for the intersection of Blairs Bridge Road at Six Flags Drive/Oak Ridge Drive.

Long-term Objectives (24 months and longer)

- Multi-Use Trail (12' wide asphalt)

  This project would consist of implementing a ten-foot wide multi-use trail along the north side of the roadway from Blairs Bridge Road to Six Flags Parkway tying into the Six Flags Amusement Park.

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- Connecting Trail (12' wide asphalt)

  This project would consist of implementing a ten-foot wide multi-use trail, between the Riverside Parkway/Six Flags Drive intersection and the Chattahoochee River. The alignment of the connecting trail would consist of the following:

  - North side of Six Flags Drive, between Riverside Parkway and Six Flags Pkwy.
  - West side of Six Flags Parkway, between Six Flags Drive and Lee Industrial Boulevard.
  - East side of Lee Industrial Boulevard, between Six Flags Parkway and Mableton Parkway.
  - North side of Mableton Parkway to the west side of the Chattahoochee River, connecting to the proposed Johnston's River Line Trail.

- Pocket Parks

  This project consists of enhancing the existing eight transit stops, with pocket parks, along Six Flags Drive, between Factory Shoals Road and Riverside Parkway/Interstate 20. The *pocket* parks would consist of green space surrounding each bus stop with environmental and community-based features such as stone benches, miniature gardens and/or shrubbery.

- Raised Median

  This project would consist of eliminating the two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) on Six Flags Drive and the installation of a raised, island-style, landscaped median with breaks to allow proper access management.

- Connecting Sidewalk/Sidewalk Improvement

  This project would consist of improving sidewalk along both sides of Six Flags Drive between the South Cobb Recreation Center and Blairs Bridge Road. Curb and gutter would be installed along both sides of the street, in order to retain accumulating stormwater.

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- In addition, a five-foot wide sidewalk, with curb and gutter, would be implemented along the north side of Six Flags Drive, between Blairs Bridge Road and Silverton Trail, and between Springchase Way and Factory Shoals Road.

- Street Grid Network

  This would be an on-going project that would integrate new side streets with the new land use pattern established within the study area (described later within this section of the document). The concept is focused on creating a network of streets that would provide easy vehicular and pedestrian access to all of the uses contained within new developments, including off-street parking. Limited on-street parking should also be considered within this new network of streets. These streets, whether publicly or privately maintained, would meet county standards in terms of right-of-way width and paving materials. The County and its appropriate staff should evaluate the area regularly to determine the need for signalization at newly-created intersections, the appropriateness of on-street parking, and for breaks in the previously-mentioned median.

- Intersection Improvements

  This project would consist of adding an optional right-turn lane at the Factory Shoals Road at Six Flags Drive intersection, going eastbound.

- Decorative Streetlights

  Decorative streetlights/crosswalks would be installed at each of the implemented pedestrian refuge islands, along Six Flags Drive, between the South Cobb Recreation Center and Riverside Parkway/Interstate 20.

- Aesthetic Features - Six Flags Drive main corridor, South Cobb Recreation Center to Riverside Parkway/Interstate 20

  - Planters along median and on sidewalks within furniture zones

  - Village style lampposts and banners

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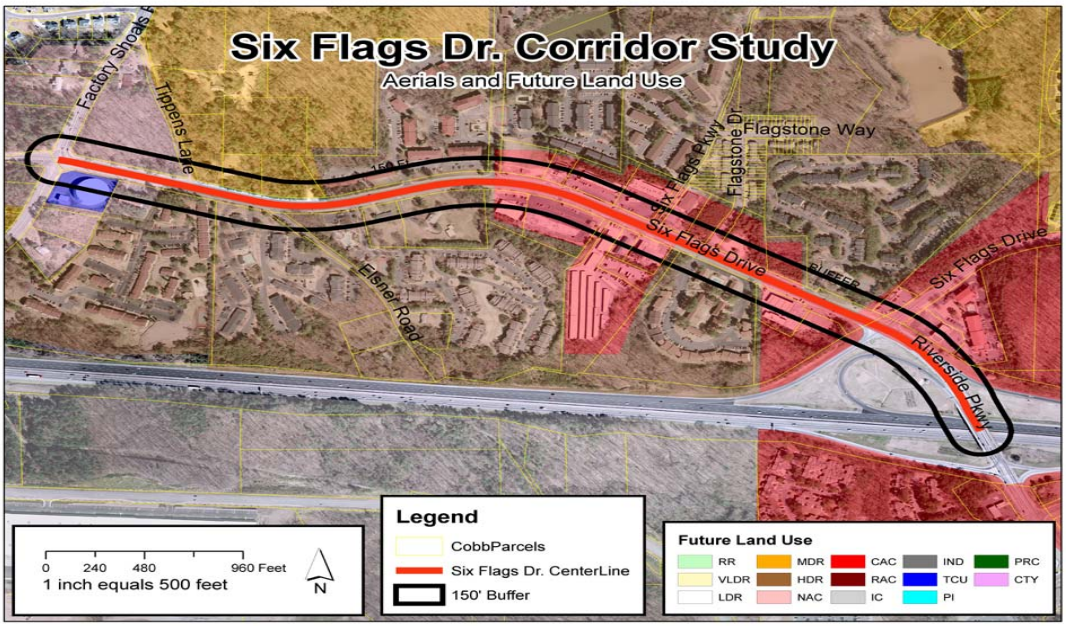
Land Use

Below is a map of the study area and the land use categories currently illustrated on the County's Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM is used by the Board of Commissioners as a policy guide for zoning and land development. In many cases, the FLUM reflects what is currently in place, as opposed to what will be located 'where' in the future.



Currently, approximately 85% of the area's acreage is located within the *High Density Residential (HDR)* FLUM classification. The remaining 15% is nearly equally split between the *Medium Density Residential (MDR)* and *Community Activity Center (CAC)* classifications. These classifications reflect the land uses currently in place within the study area. The following paragraphs will outline the community's vision for development within the study area. Many of the ideas expressed within this vision would suggest the need to amend the FLUM categories currently in place. This, in addition to other plan implementation strategies, will be discussed in the *Implementation* section.

Retail/Commercial

The retail outlets currently located in the area are housed in outdated structures and do not adequately fulfill the desires of community citizens. Public feedback throughout the planning process indicated a desire for retail outlets and services such as banks, grocery stores and casual dining restaurants. In contrast to the long-standing 'status quo' throughout the Atlanta Region of single-use, 'horizontal' development patterns, we propose a more 'vertical' pattern of development that would better-suit the integration of retail/commercial development with

housing and outdoor recreation activities. Note that this concept would continue to allow freestanding commercial uses, however there would be fewer of them as opposed to what is seen in traditional development patterns. Additionally, we encourage a 20,000 square-foot threshold be put in place for individual commercial/retail uses, so that we do not give the impression that we are looking to attract 'big box' retail to the area.

Housing

Considering the area's proximity to Interstate 20, higher-density residential development is appropriate for the area. The redevelopment of the older apartment complexes within the area would make way for such to occur. Presently, all of these complexes are designated as *High Density Residential (HDR)* on the FLUM, which currently allows a maximum density of twelve (12) units per acre. In order to foster a built environment that is conducive to the retail and outdoor recreation opportunities sought by the community, exceeding the existing density threshold would be necessary. A mixed-use development pattern and a density threshold of approximately twenty (20) per acre would help achieve this desire. This would be necessary to accommodate the projected housing demand for the area, which indicates that more than 2,400 new housing units will be needed within the study area by 2020. This is dependent upon the desire to transform the area into a thriving activity center with viable businesses and other commercial activities. This is discussed in more depth in the *Housing Market Analysis* appendix.

Mixed-Use Development

A mixed-use built environment fosters the types of amenities and conveniences sought by citizens of the community. Mixed-use development promotes alternatives to automobile transportation and helps to promote and active, healthy lifestyle. Additionally, it maximizes the property values, making it attractive to real estate investors and developers. Based on public feedback from the planning process, mixed-use development would be appropriate practically anywhere within the study area boundaries, with the exception of being located directly adjacent to new residential development that has already been approved for construction.

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The general principles of *New* Urbanism should be the focal point in design of the new development pattern. Building frontages and entrances should be brought within ten (10) feet of the adjacent right-of-way. In terms of building design, vertical orientation would be most conducive to achieving the village-style atmosphere along the corridor. Buildings would not exceed four (4) stories in height and would feature commercial retail, office and service uses on the ground level, with residential uses on the upper levels.

Education/Civic Facilities

Despite the close proximity of the Boys & Girls Club, the South Cobb Recreation and Aquatic Centers and two (2) elementary schools, area citizens desire more civic and community-oriented uses either within or in close proximity to the study area. The vacant parcel on the northwest intersection of Six Flags Drive and Factory Shoals Road was identified as a possible location for a library or community center. We feel that a library would better-suit the area because two of the previously-mentioned facilities currently located nearby serve community center-like purposes. Public feedback also indicated the desire for a charter school and a technical/vocational college. Given the parameters of the study area and the desire for a village-style environment, these uses may be difficult to integrate into a master plan for the area. Yet, nearly any type of use can be integrated into a mixed-use community. If desired, this idea can be explored on a continual basis by the Board of Commissioners and interested stakeholders.

Public Safety

The desire for increased police presence in the area was mentioned frequently amongst area citizens. Although the Cobb Police Department does not have the manpower to maintain 24-hour patrols in the area, area citizens felt that a police facility with minimal staffing may assist in deterring crime. The Board of Commissioners has responded to this need in advance of the inception of this study. They have approved the construction of a new fire station to be located on the west side of Factory Shoals Road, South of the Six Flags Drive intersection. This facility will be based on the design used for recently-built stations in other areas of the County and will included space for a mini police precinct, which will provide a location for a small group of officers to be regularly stationed. This addition to the area will prove to be beneficial in both the near and distant future.

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Implementation

This section outlines the goals, policies and action items that will facilitate the implementation of the concept plan and the desires of community citizens. The County Commission should continue to reach out to community citizens to ensure that these ideas (or any modifications made to them at a later date) are thoroughly considered and, hopefully, implemented in some fashion.

Short-Term Objectives (12 Months)

Goal: Increase and enhance the presence of public safety forces in the Six Flags Drive area in order to mitigate the negative elements currently in place

- Analyze service delivery issues, public safety trends, and response times for the purpose of overall service improvement in the Six Flags Drive area

- Increase public safety staffing levels proportionate to needs within the Six Flags Drive area

    - Evaluate the potential for police foot patrols in the area

- Seek out funding opportunities that will assist in implementing programs that will allow law enforcement to engage in intervention/outreach activities in an effort to deter crime; also, promote programs that encourage community policing. Such programs should allow citizen involvement in assisting police with identifying trouble spots, which in turn would help police perform their job at an optimum level of efficiency

    - Research and apply for other program funding opportunities to assist with community beautification, community policing, crime deterrence and prevention, etc.

        - Weed & Seed: Community Policing
        - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Beautification
        - Youth Rising (Office of Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention): Crime Deterrence/Prevention

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Goal: Transform the Six Flags Drive Corridor into an economically vibrant, aesthetically pleasing built- and natural- environment that appeals to a wide variety of people.

- Evaluate, refine and develop new economic incentives and policies aimed at determining and enhancing the feasibility of redevelopment in the Six Flags Drive corridor
    - Conduct a market feasibility study in the Six Flags Drive area that would evaluate the potential for new development and investment in the community
    - Increase purchasing power in the area by providing more housing opportunities for middle-to-high-income households, yet maintain a supply of lower-income housing in the area as well
- Consider amendments to the Cobb County Zoning Ordinance and Future Land Use Plan in order to encourage revitalization or redevelopment of declining land uses along the Six Flags Drive corridor
    - Establish a Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD) designation that encompasses the study area, in accordance with the County Zoning Ordinance
    - Amend the County's Future Land Use Map to a reflect the desire to promote newer housing, retail and services, in the form of mixed-use development
    - Update the Six Flags Corridor Study document every three-to-five years in order to reflect changes corresponding to the County Zoning Ordinance or any applicable regional programs or initiatives
- Consider impacts to adjoining residents when making land use and housing decisions in order to protect residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of new development.
    - Provide transitions in scale and/or land use between high and low intensity land uses
    - Increase buffer zones between low-density residential uses and higher-intensity uses (i.e. commercial or mixed use)
    - Utilize the Trust for Public Land's (TPL's) Greenprint model to identify viable locations for both active and passive open space

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Goal: Actively reach out to area citizens and area stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making and working cooperatively to determine the best overall course of action to address issues affecting the area

- Involve area churches and faith-based organizations in local government initiatives to garner public support for planning initiatives in the area, and to help lure investment to the area
    - Work with non-profit organizations (i.e. local churches, Boys & Girls Club, etc.) to develop more recreational/social programs for area youth
- Promote public-private partnerships where our corporate citizens help foster employment, training, and outreach activities in the local community
    - Capitalize on the opportunities presented by tourism drawn by Six Flags Amusement Park
        - Seek to establish a public/private investment agreement with the Six Flags Amusement Park in order to better-leverage resources for the benefit of the surrounding community
- Establish a local business association in order to set and uphold high standards for business practices and physical appearance of business locations

Goal: Create a community where people of various cultural, racial and economic backgrounds, can feel comfortable living and working in

- Proactively plan for the aging of the county's population by developing programs and ordinances to better integrate these individuals into the community.
- Create programs in conjunction with those in the real estate and financial lending industries that promote homeownership and offer education on the responsibilities associated with owning a home.
- Encourage an adequate balance of residential and commercial uses (in the form of mixed-use development or otherwise) needed to support desired economic growth in the Six Flags area, while providing housing opportunities for people with various levels of income.
    - Utilize initiatives created within the Countywide Comprehensive Planning Process that foster cooperation between the County Government and non-profit agencies (i.e.: Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Livable Communities Coalition, Cobb Works, etc.) in dealing with issues related to affordable housing/equal housing opportunity.

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Long-Term Objectives (13-to-30-Months)

Goal: Develop the Six Flags Drive area into a community that integrates a transportation system by providing multi-modal travel options in a safe, efficient manner. This system should be able to support a variety of land uses including parks/greenspace, transit-oriented development (TOD) and "live-work-play" mixed-use communities

- Utilize the land development process as a method of providing transportation improvements that may become necessary as a result of new development in the area
    - Develop an access management plan for the corridor that ties-in directly with any plans for a raised median
- Ensure a continuously adequate level of public funding for multimodal transportation improvements needed to meet increasing demands
    - Program new multi-modal transportation improvement projects into Federal and State programs for funding, such as the TIP/RTP, SAFETEA-LU and the FTA's 5309 "New Starts" program
    - Remain up-to-date on proposed TIP/RTP projects on I-20 so that any land use/transportation initiatives along the Six Flags Drive corridor can be coordinated with such projects

Goal: Create a viable community that has quality cultural activities, recreational opportunities, and state-of-the-art educational facilities

- Maximize the use of the South Cobb Recreation Center Complex for recreation and civic affairs
    - Locate and acquire land for the creation of new parks in the Six Flags area
    - Consider locating a library within or in close proximity to the study area
- Work toward the establishment of an educational institution that specializes in continuing education and workforce development
    - Work with existing institutions in Cobb County (i.e. Chattahoochee Technical College, Southern Polytechnic or Kennesaw State) in an attempt to establish a satellite campus in the surrounding area near Six Flags Drive
- Work toward the establishment of an alternative schooling option for the parents of school-aged children.
    - Maintain and open dialogue with the Cobb Board of Education regarding this and other matters pertinent to study area

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Appendix A

Housing Market Analysis

Cobb County...Expect the Best!

Introduction

The Six Flags Corridor, which serves a substantial trade area population base of more than 200,000 people (2000), has a diverse economic and social composition. The primary market area (1-mile from the study area limits) contains a population that is 17% Hispanic/Latino and 66% African –American. This is a factor that should be celebrated and used to the area's advantage from a market perspective. The market area has a median age of 26 and a median household income of $36,022 (in 1999), compared to the secondary market area (3-miles from the study limits), which has a median age of 27 and a median household income of $36,353 (in 1999).

Within the primary and secondary markets (see the Market Area Map on Page 3 of the Market Study) the housing unit vacancy rate is 9.5% and 6.9% respectively. The occupancy of the housing units in 2000 showed similarly troubling numbers indicating a 65% renter occupancy rate in the primary market area and a 41% renter occupancy rate in the secondary market area. The national average for rental occupancy is around 25% and Cobb County's renter occupancy is 32%.

There is substantial market for new housing opportunities in the area. There will be a demand for a total of 6,328 housing units by 2020 in the primary market area and 21,033 housing units in the secondary market area. In order for the supply of housing to meet this market demand there will be a need for 4,420 new and redeveloped housing units in the primary market area and 11,831 new and redeveloped housing units in the secondary market area. That would mean the creation of approximately 211 new housing units within the primary market area annually.

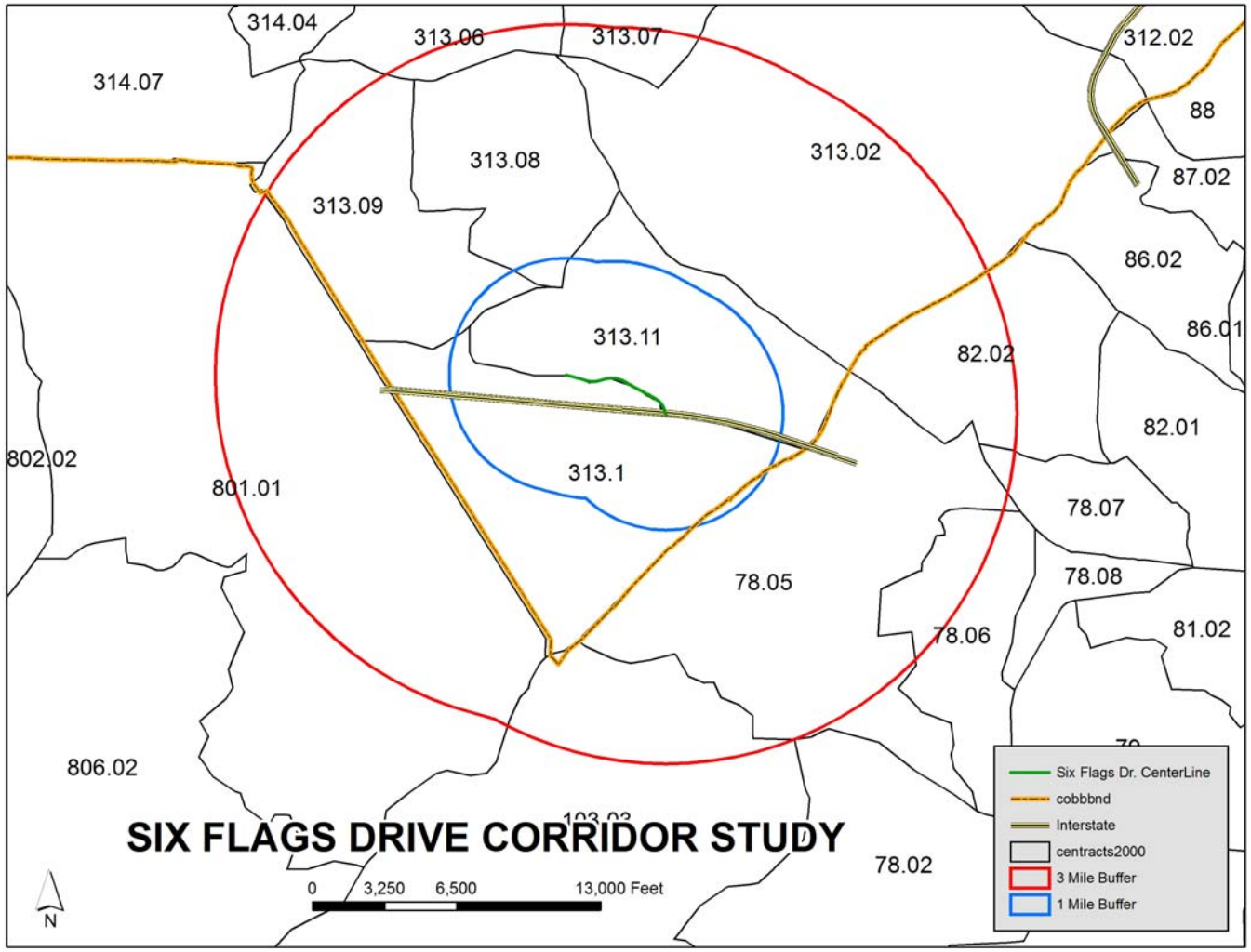
The homes being created in the primary market area should include a variety of types that includes townhomes, condominiums, and some single-family detached units. No less that 20% and no more than 40% of the new housing units should be affordable housing, which will need to be indistinguishable from the market rate housing that is needed in this area. In addition to the design, the affordable housing should be spread out among the various housing types. The emphasis of the area should be towards creating new

home-ownership opportunities, but some redevelopment of rental housing should be included to provide a quality and diverse housing stock.

Corridor Characteristics

The Six Flags Corridor study area is situated in Cobb County, Georgia extending from Factory Shoals Road to Interstate 20. The subject areas location close to Atlanta and intersecting with the Interstate highway system provides tremendous accessibility to points east and west, making it an ideal location for mixed-use and new urbanism styled developments. In addition, the corridor serves as the main point of access to a regional entertainment destination (Six Flags Over Georgia), which sees high traffic volumes annually in the spring and summer months.

The study area has a varying degree of visibility from Six Flags Drive, depending on the location, existing and planned streetscape improvements, and building setbacks from the roadway. Parking is assumed to be adequate for all development throughout the corridor, since it was developed mainly as a vehicular and industrial connector. Ingress and egress can be a problem in some areas as there may be too many curb cuts creating a dangerous situation with traffic entering and exiting onto a thoroughfare with a 40 mph speed limit.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3 Mile Buffer
1 Mile Buffer

Existing Conditions

The Six Flags Corridor is currently comprised of relatively weak and/or low end retail operations and a high level of rental housing. While there are some assets to the area, uses such as old deteriorating strip centers and automobile oriented developments are typical establishments that currently define the corridor. The roadway is designed in a way to move a high volume of traffic very quickly, creating an unsafe atmosphere for pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, the large number of curb cuts creates an additional impediment and hazard to those traveling the corridor without a motorized vehicle. Finally, the lack of attractive landscaping or streetscaping further detracts from the attractiveness of the corridor.

Commercial/retail development in the Six Flags Corridor will not be of a large scale like a regional mall or lifestyle center. The likely market for non-residential uses will be neighborhood and community serving retail and services that provide goods and services to people within the surrounding communities. In order to make the likelihood of new commercial development successful, there will be a need for new residential development and rehabilitation of some housing units. There are many examples of developments throughout Metro Atlanta and the overall United States that shows that alterations in the make-up and mix of housing, in a defined area, can lead to new commercial opportunities and markets. It is important to note that this can and should be accomplished without destroying the fabric of the existing community. New affordable housing needs to be created that is indistinguishable from the market rate housing and provides opportunities for a mixture of social groups within a neighborhood to create a strong sense-of-community and a healthier environment.

Residential Opportunities

A crucial component to altering the uses and retail environment of an area is the presence of people, both as area residents and shoppers. As our urban areas are evolving, people are beginning to understand the importance of placing a mixture of uses within a development or area in order to generate a sense of place and provide convenient access to goods and services.

The types of residential structures, the number of residential structures, and the mixture of residential types are all critical components to generating a functional mixture of uses within an area. Successful development of a mixed-use town center means creating an environment people frequent on a constant basis. This would include existing residents using the services as well as the people in the surrounding residential neighborhoods who now have a more convenient location for daily trips. The visibility of other people frequenting an area will create a vibrant, safe environment that will draw people from other trade areas.

As mentioned above, safety is another vital factor to enhancing commercial activity in an area. People will not visit a center, regardless of its offerings, if they feel it is not a safe place for them to be. This is especially true in the evening. The presence of other people, and the idea of being visible to area residents, having eyes on the street, creates a heightened feeling of security for shoppers. This enables the commercial center to become a focal point of the community, a gathering place, for the various segments of the local area population. The creation of various types of residential development in a mixed-use format will enhance the feeling of community in the area and provide an environment for better retail offerings, compared to what is currently in the area.

The residential market for this area will be a challenge. There is a need to create additional affordable, owner-occupied housing opportunities within the primary market area of Six Flags Drive. At the same time, the existing land use patterns contain numerous older apartment communities that are aging. The land values for these apartment communities are high due to the existing intensity of use. The high cost of overall development including: the assembly of land, demolition of declining structures, and the building new products at an affordable price, will mean that there will be few, if any, opportunities for single-family residential developments. Due to these costs, higher density residential development will need to be prevalent in the corridor in order to support affordability.

The Six Flags primary market area has a high level of rental housing. There is a need to reduce the overall percentage of leased homes in this area and create additional home-ownership opportunities. However, the overall Atlanta metropolitan area has been slow to catch onto condominium developments. We are starting to see an expansion of the condominium market out of the trendy markets in such as downtown Atlanta, Perimeter, and Cumberland. This is being aided by regional efforts to expand existing town centers and generate new town centers through programs like the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative.

Regardless of the location, housing developments within the study area should be created to incorporate a variety of housing types and income levels. Affordable housing must be designed and developed to be indistinguishable from other market rate housing developments and it should constitute between 20% - 40% of the total housing stock. This will enable the creation of replacement housing opportunities for people that could be displaced by redevelopment and it would also provide stability in the housing market to sustain increases in the values of the market rate structures.

The following table lists the type of housing units in the primary market area that could be developed, based upon market demand, if the goal of providing affordable housing is adhered to:

2020 New Housing Units for Primary Market Area			
Housing Type	**Max. Units per acre**	**Number of housing units**	**Comments**
Clustered single-family	8	504	Small lot clustered market rate homes used as a buffer against existing stable single family detached neighborhoods
Townhomes	20	1,315	Surface and garage parking Low to modest construction cost
Low – mid rise multi-family	25 - 40	2,602	Up to 4 floors Varied parking methods (surface and structured parking) Market rate to modest construction cost no lower than $120/square foot
Total		**4,420**	

The development in the primary market area should focus on the creation of a true village along the Six Flags corridor. The large quantity of aging multi-family residential structures provides plenty of opportunities to obtain larger tracts of land that could make a village concept achievable. The village concept would provide for a mixture of housing types in a mixed-use environment. Ideally, this could be created in an area within ½ mile of the I-20 intersection where we would be able to maximize transportation efficiencies, facilitate the expansion of transit, and allow people easier access to regional infrastructure.

In addition to the village, additional housing opportunities could be provided along Six Flags Drive. By fronting new developments to Six Flags Drive and creating an interaction between the public and the private realms, we will be improving the pedestrian environment by creating a sense of enclosure along the corridor, as well as improving safety by putting more eyes to the street. The higher density developments in these two locations would serve as the focal points of higher intensity developments and it would allow for a transition from these areas to the more stable single-family detached neighborhoods that are also in this area.

As mentioned earlier, the affordable housing component along this corridor should constitute between 20% – 40% of total housing units. This affordable housing could be generated by new development and it could also constitute the rehabilitation of some of the existing housing stock that is not too severely deteriorated. Depending upon the final costs of assemblage, it may be necessary to increase the density somewhat to offset this factor.

Once some of the new residential opportunities come to fruition along the corridor and some of the existing housing stock is either refurbished or converted to higher density housing, additional neighborhood services would become viable in the community. These include such uses as personal services (salon, nails, barber), laundry/dry cleaning, specialty foods (such as coffee, bagels, donuts) and potentially a small convenience store/supermarket. The retail centers being developed as part of the revitalization should

include a mixed-use village component that contains residential above retail/office. Due to the fact that the market can change drastically over a three (3) to five (5) year period, particularly if a positive plan for change is being implemented; it is highly recommended that the total number of housing units be reevaluated regularly.

While the figures quoted in this analysis appear high given the high vacancy rate of the primary service area, it is important to recognize that new quality developments will attract new residents and retain existing populations. The Six Flags area will start to lose pace with the overall development within Cobb County unless the areas image can be changed and it becomes a place people desire to move into. As home-ownership rates increase in the primary market area, the tax base will improve and assist in improving the area's overall quality-of-life.

For the secondary market, you would have a more varied mixture of uses and a higher prevalence of the suburban single-family detached development style given the more dispersed nature of the larger market area and the lack of additional thoroughfares/connectivity. The following table lists the type of housing units in the secondary market that could be developed based upon market demand:

2020 New Housing Units for Secondary Market Area			
Housing Type	**Max. Units per acre**	**Number of housing units**	**Comments**
Single-family residential	5	5,602	Market rate Single-family detached residential homes that are compatible with surrounding stable neighborhoods
Clustered single-family	8	1,025	Small lot clustered market rate homes used as a buffer against existing stable single family detached neighborhoods
Townhomes	20	1,402	Surface and garage parking Low to modest construction cost
Low – mid rise multi-family	25 - 40	3,802	Up to 4 floors Varied parking methods (surface and structured parking) Market rate to modest construction cost no lower than $120/square foot
Total		**11,831**	

HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS DATA APPENDIX

Total Population & Population Projections, 1990 - 2020												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990	2000	2010	2020
Total Population	9,128	12,433	13,004	13,979	36,444	41,042	48,417	52,044	447,745	607,751	650,224	698,933
Share of Cobb County Population	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	8.1%	6.8%	7.4%	7.4%				

Population Race and Ethnicity, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Caucasian	3,906	42.8%	2,737	22.0%	17,244	47.3%	13,929	33.9%	391,959	87.5%	439,991	72.4%
African-American	5,126	56.2%	8,235	66.2%	18,815	51.6%	23,855	58.1%	44,154	9.9%	114,233	18.8%
American Indian	0	0.0%	9	0.1%	0	0.0%	59	0.1%	957	0.2%	1,579	0.3%
Asian & Pacific Islander	59	0.6%	89	0.7%	110	0.3%	487	1.2%	7,918	1.8%	18,844	3.1%
Other	37	0.4%	1363	11.0%	275	0.8%	2,712	6.6%	2,757	0.6%	33,104	5.4%
Total Population	9,128	100.0%	12,433	100.0%	36,444	100.0%	41,042	100.0%	447,745	100.0%	607,751	100.0%
Hispanic Latino	189	2.1%	2,086	16.8%	541	1.5%	4,239	10.3%	8,995	2.0%	46,944	7.7%

Population Age Cohort & Median Age, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
less than 24	3,661	40.1%	5,487	44.1%	13,960	38.3%	15,999	39.0%	159,217	35.6%	109,782	24.4%
25 - 34	2,640	28.9%	3,053	24.6%	7,630	20.9%	7,888	19.2%	95,764	21.4%	55,140	12.2%
35- 54	1,964	21.5%	2,588	20.8%	9,056	24.8%	11,648	28.4%	135,537	30.3%	199,896	44.3%
55 - 69	569	6.2%	1,009	8.1%	5,428	14.9%	3,556	8.7%	39,723	8.9%	57,491	12.8%
70 and over	294	3.2%	296	2.4%	370	1.0%	1,951	4.8%	17,504	3.9%	28,512	6.3%
Total Population	9,128	100.0%	12,433	100.0%	36,444	100.0%	41,042	100.0%	447,745	100.0%	450,821	100.0%
Median Age	26		26		27		27		28		38	

Total Households & Household Projections, 1990 - 2020												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990	2000	2010	2020
Total Households	3841	4,443	5,229	5,782	13,420	14,654	17,792	19,675	171,409	227,590	249,398	275,790
Share of Cobb County Households	2.2%	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	7.8%	6.4%	7.1%	7.1%				

Persons per Household and Median Household Size, 1990 – 2000						
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area		Cobb County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Households	*3,841*	*4,443*	*13,420*	*14,654*	171,409	227,590
1 person	1,022	1,152	2,893	3,401	38,378	52,670
2 persons	1,311	1,208	4,210	4,263	55,678	73,751
3 persons	743	761	2,747	2,788	33,583	41,049
4 persons	510	648	2,126	2,131	29,242	36,569
5 persons	200	386	914	1,157	10,323	14,998
6 persons	46	189	330	524	2,907	5,554
7 or more persons	9	99	200	390	1,298	2,999
Median household size	*2.39*	*2.45*	*2.91*	*2.92*	*2.50*	*2.48*

Occupations of Residents, 2000						
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area		Cobb County	
	Total	% of total	Total	% of total	Total	% of total
White collar	*4,170*	66.4%	*8,902*	61.8%	273,081	83.0%
Management, professional, and related occupations	1,294	20.6%	5,132	35.6%	139,394	42.4%
Service occupations	836	13.3%	1,560	10.8%	34,860	10.6%
Sales and office occupations	2,040	32.5%	2,210	15.3%	98,827	30.0%
Blue collar	*2,112*	*33.6%*	*5,502*	38.2%	*56,055*	17.0%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0	0.0%	432	3.0%	474	0.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	748	11.9%	2,419	16.8%	28,769	8.7%
Transportation and material moving occupations	1,364	21.7%	2,651	18.4%	26,812	8.1%
Total occupations	*6,282*	*100.0%*	*14,404*	100.0%	*329,136*	100.0%

Household Income & Median Household Income, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Less than $10,000	370	9.6%	341	7.7%	1,677	12.5%	1,228	8.4%	11,292	6.6%	10,036	4.4%
$10,000 to $14,999	295	7.7%	271	6.1%	1,132	8.4%	954	6.5%	8,199	4.8%	6,652	2.9%
$15,000 to $24,999	907	23.6%	688	15.5%	2,697	20.1%	1,926	13.1%	22,634	13.2%	17,689	7.8%
$25,000 to $34,999	886	23.1%	719	16.2%	2,593	19.3%	2,080	14.2%	27,158	15.8%	23,608	10.4%
$35,000 to $49,999	786	20.5%	952	21.4%	2,683	20.0%	2,614	17.8%	35,417	20.7%	35,605	15.6%
$50,000 to $74,999	465	12.1%	942	21.2%	2,090	15.6%	3,175	21.7%	38,445	22.4%	51,539	22.6%
$75,000 to $99,999	101	2.6%	321	7.2%	443	3.3%	1,592	10.9%	15,682	9.1%	33,874	14.9%
$100,000 to $149,999	17	0.4%	129	2.9%	80	0.6%	775	5.3%	8,880	5.2%	31,103	13.7%
$150,000 or more	14	0.4%	80	1.8%	25	0.2%	310	2.1%	3,702	2.2%	17,484	7.7%
Total Households	3841	100.0%	4443	100.0%	13,420	100.0%	14,654	100.0%	171,409	100.0%	227,590	100.0%
Median Household Income	$26,418		$36,022		$26,487		$36,941		$37,353		$53,481	

Total Housing Units & Growth Rate, 1990 - 2000								
Primary Market Area			Secondary Market Area			Cobb County		
1990	2000	Growth Rate	1990	2000	Growth Rate	1990	2000	Growth Rate
4,692	4,931	5.1%	15,408	15,819	2.7%	189,872	237,522	25.1%

Housing Unit Occupancy, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Occupied	3,900	83.1%	4,465	90.5%	13,462	87.4%	14,727	93.1%	171,288	90.2%	227,487	95.8%
Vacant	792	16.9%	466	9.5%	1,946	12.6%	1,092	6.9%	18,584	9.8%	10,035	4.2%
Total	4,692	100.0%	4,931	100.0%	15,408	100.0%	15,819	100.0%	189,872	100.0%	237,522	100.0%

Housing Unit Tenure, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Owner Occupied	1,267	32.5%	1,572	35.2%	8,009	59.5%	8,708	59.1%	110,678	64.6%	155,075	68.2%
Renter Occupied	2,633	67.5%	2,893	64.8%	5,453	40.5%	6,019	40.9%	60,610	35.4%	72,412	31.8%
Total	3,900	100.0%	4,465	100.0%	13,462	100.0%	14,727	100.0%	171,288	100.0%	227,487	100.0%

Housing Unit Type, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Single Unit (detached)	842	17.9%	1,125	22.8%	8,107	52.6%	8,861	56.0%	115,895	61.0%	157,298	66.2%
Single Unit (attached)	194	4.1%	272	5.5%	364	2.4%	485	3.1%	10,337	5.4%	12,311	5.2%
Double Unit	40	0.9%	54	1.1%	197	1.3%	261	1.6%	2,419	1.3%	2,750	1.2%
3 to 9	1,156	24.6%	1,417	28.7%	2,563	16.6%	2,570	16.2%	22,870	12.0%	25,254	10.6%
10 to 19	1,160	24.7%	768	15.6%	2,156	14.0%	1,430	9.0%	21,033	11.1%	18,896	8.0%
20 to 49	708	15.1%	381	7.7%	811	5.3%	447	2.8%	8,849	4.7%	6,727	2.8%
50 or more	75	1.6%	336	6.8%	75	0.5%	637	4.0%	2,590	1.4%	9,109	3.8%
Other	517	11.0%	578	11.7%	1,135	7.4%	1,128	7.1%	5,879	3.1%	5,177	2.2%
Total Housing Units	4,692	100.0%	4,931	100.0%	15,408	100.0%	15,819	100.0%	189,872	100.0%	237,522	100.0%

Housing Unit Tenure by Unit Type, 2000				
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area	
	2000		2000	
Tenure by Unit Type	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Owner Occupied				
Single Family	1,067	23.9%	7,753	52.6%
Multi-family	505	11.3%	955	6.5%
Renter Occupied				
Single Family	260	5.8%	1,279	8.7%
Multi-family	2,633	59.0%	4,740	32.2%
Total Occupied Housing Units	4,465	100.0%	14,727	100.0%

Rental Occupied Housing Unit Gross Rent, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Less than $100	0	0.0%	30	1.1%	122	2.3%	117	2.0%	250	0.4%	308	0.4%
$100 to $199	4	0.2%	0	0.0%	136	2.6%	63	1.1%	1,087	1.8%	818	1.2%
$200 to $299	0	0.0%	20	0.7%	139	2.6%	207	3.6%	870	1.5%	662	0.9%
$300 to $399	362	14.0%	34	1.2%	759	14.3%	348	6.0%	3,025	5.1%	983	1.4%
$400 to $499	751	29.1%	282	10.0%	1645	31.1%	1182	20.4%	12,658	21.4%	1,885	2.7%
$500 to $599	888	34.4%	1039	37.0%	1385	26.2%	1798	31.0%	15,565	26.3%	4,755	6.7%
$600 to $699	507	19.6%	860	30.6%	849	16.0%	1226	21.2%	12,545	21.2%	10,457	14.8%
$700 to $999	72	2.8%	526	18.7%	234	4.4%	825	14.2%	10,746	18.1%	37,345	52.7%
$1,000 or more	0	0.0%	20	0.7%	22	0.4%	27	0.5%	2,490	4.2%	13,623	19.2%

Owner Occupied Housing Unit Value, 1990 - 2000												
	Primary Market Area				Secondary Market Area				Cobb County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Less than $49,999	69	9.3%	401	25.5%	860	14.4%	981	11.3%	4,159	4.2%	1,083	0.8%
$50,000 to $99,999	571	77.2%	529	33.7%	4,522	75.8%	4,113	47.2%	47,775	48.5%	25,911	18.1%
$100,000 to $149,999	69	9.3%	478	30.4%	424	7.1%	2,396	27.5%	26,530	27.0%	46,793	32.8%
$150,000 to $199,999	31	4.2%	110	7.0%	156	2.6%	596	6.8%	11,522	11.7%	31,332	21.9%
$200,000 to $249,999	0	0.0%	22	1.4%	5	0.1%	208	2.4%	4,082	4.1%	15,887	11.1%
$250,000 to $299,999	0	0.0%	15	1.0%	0	0.0%	105	1.2%	1,807	1.8%	8,313	5.8%
$300,000 to $399,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	145	1.7%	1,592	1.6%	7,740	5.4%
$400,000 to $499,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	139	1.6%	432	0.4%	3,142	2.2%
$500,000 or more	0	0.0%	17	1.1%	0	0.0%	25	0.3%	508	0.5%	2,589	1.8%
	740	100.0%	1,572	100.0%	5,967	100.0%	8,708	100.0%	98,407	100.0%	142,790	100.0%

Housing Unit Year Structure Built, 2000				
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area	
	2000		2000	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Built 1999 to March 2000	140	2.8%	398	2.5%
Built 1995 to 1998	472	9.6%	1,404	8.9%
Built 1990 to 1994	334	6.8%	1,227	7.8%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,670	33.9%	3,353	21.2%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,353	27.4%	3,264	20.6%
Built 1960 to 1969	685	13.9%	4,035	25.5%
Built 1950 to 1959	142	2.9%	1,417	9.0%
Built 1940 to 1949	73	1.5%	462	2.9%
Built 1939 or earlier	62	1.3%	259	1.6%
Total Housing Units	4,931	100.0%	15,819	100.0%

Projected Community Housing Demand				
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Projected Households	5,229	5,782	17,792	19,675
(*) 1+ Vacancy Rate	1.09	1.09	1.07	1.07
(=) Projected Number of Housing Units	5,723	6,328	19,020	21,033
Projected Community Housing Supply				
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Existing Number of housing units in 2000	4,931	4,931	15,819	15,819
(-) Projected Number of Existing beyond repair	1,353	3,023	3,264	6,617
(=) Projected Number of Housing Units Available	3,578	1,908	12,555	9,202
Demand for Additional Community Housing Units				
	Primary Market Area		Secondary Market Area	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
Projected number of Housing Units Needed	5,723	6,328	19,020	21,033
(-) Projected Number of Housing Units Available	3,578	1,908	12,555	9,202
(=) Projected Number of Housing Units Needed	**2,145**	**4,420**	**6,465**	**11,831**

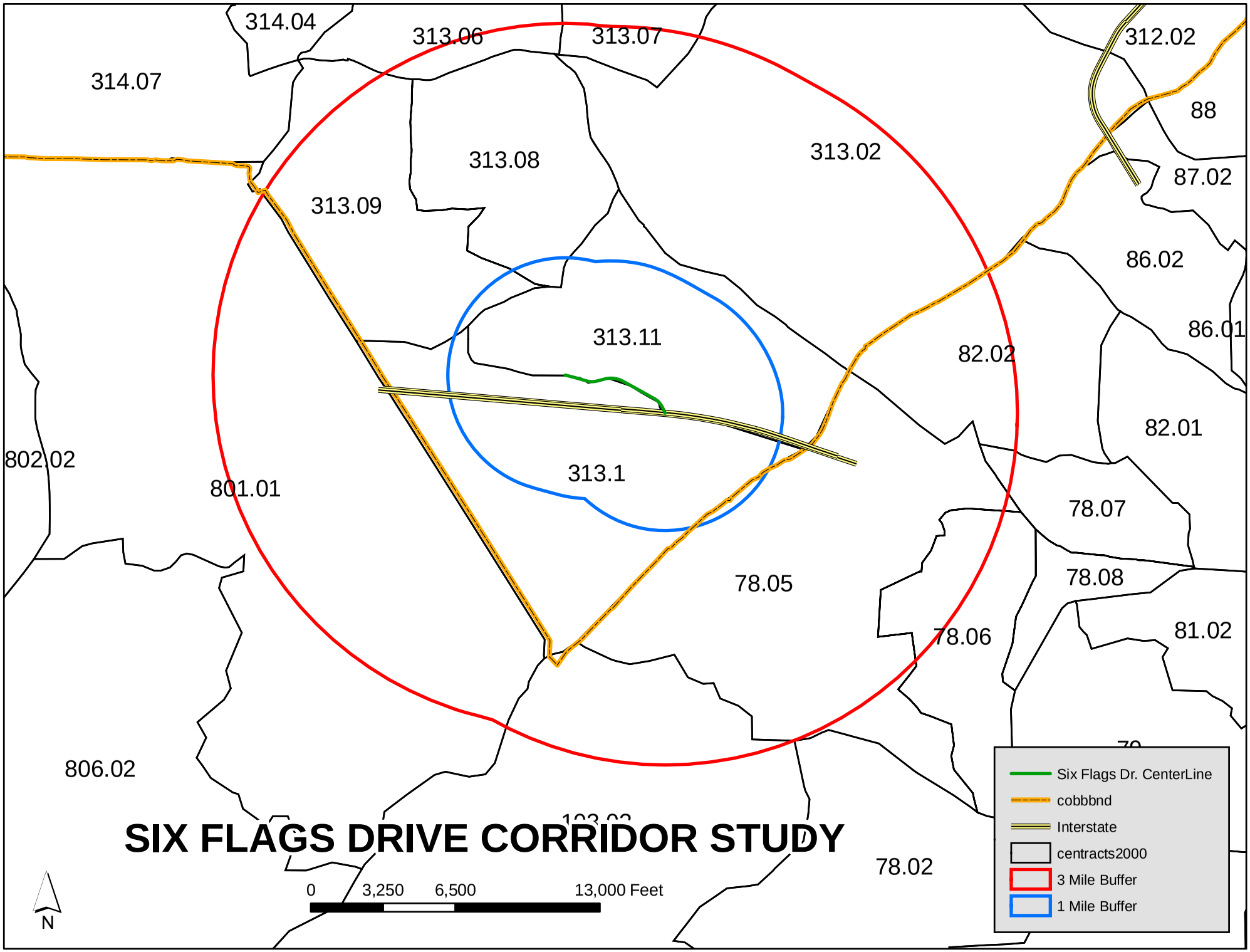
2020 New Housing Units for Primary Market Area			
Housing Type	Max. Units per acre	Number of housing units	Comments
Clustered single-family	8	504	Small lot clustered market rate homes used as a buffer against existing stable single family detached neighborhoods
Townhomes	20	1,315	Surface and garage parking Low to modest construction cost
Low – mid rise multi-family	25 - 40	2,602	Up to 4 floors Varied parking methods (surface and structured parking) Market rate to modest construction cost no lower than $120/square foot
Total		4,420	

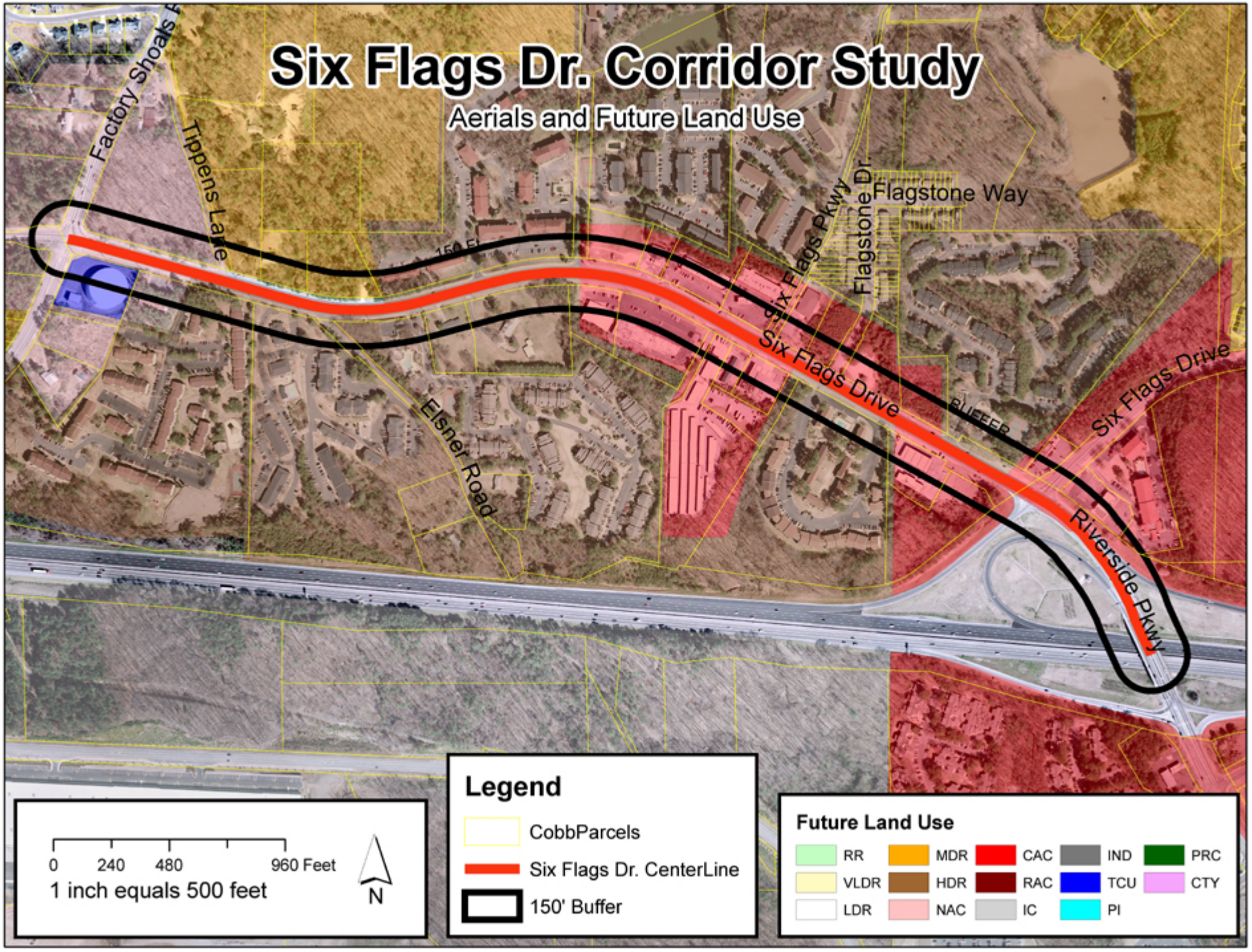
2020 New Housing Units for Secondary Market Area			
Housing Type	Max. Units per acre	Number of housing units	Comments
Single-family residential	5	5,602	Market rate Single-family detached residential homes that are compatible with surrounding stable neighborhoods
Clustered single-family	8	1,025	Small lot clustered market rate homes used as a buffer against existing stable single family detached neighborhoods
Townhomes	20	1,402	Surface and garage parking Low to modest construction cost
Low – mid rise multi-family	25 - 40	3,802	Up to 4 floors Varied parking methods (surface and structured parking) Market rate to modest construction cost no lower than $120/square foot
Total		11,831	

Appendix B

Maps

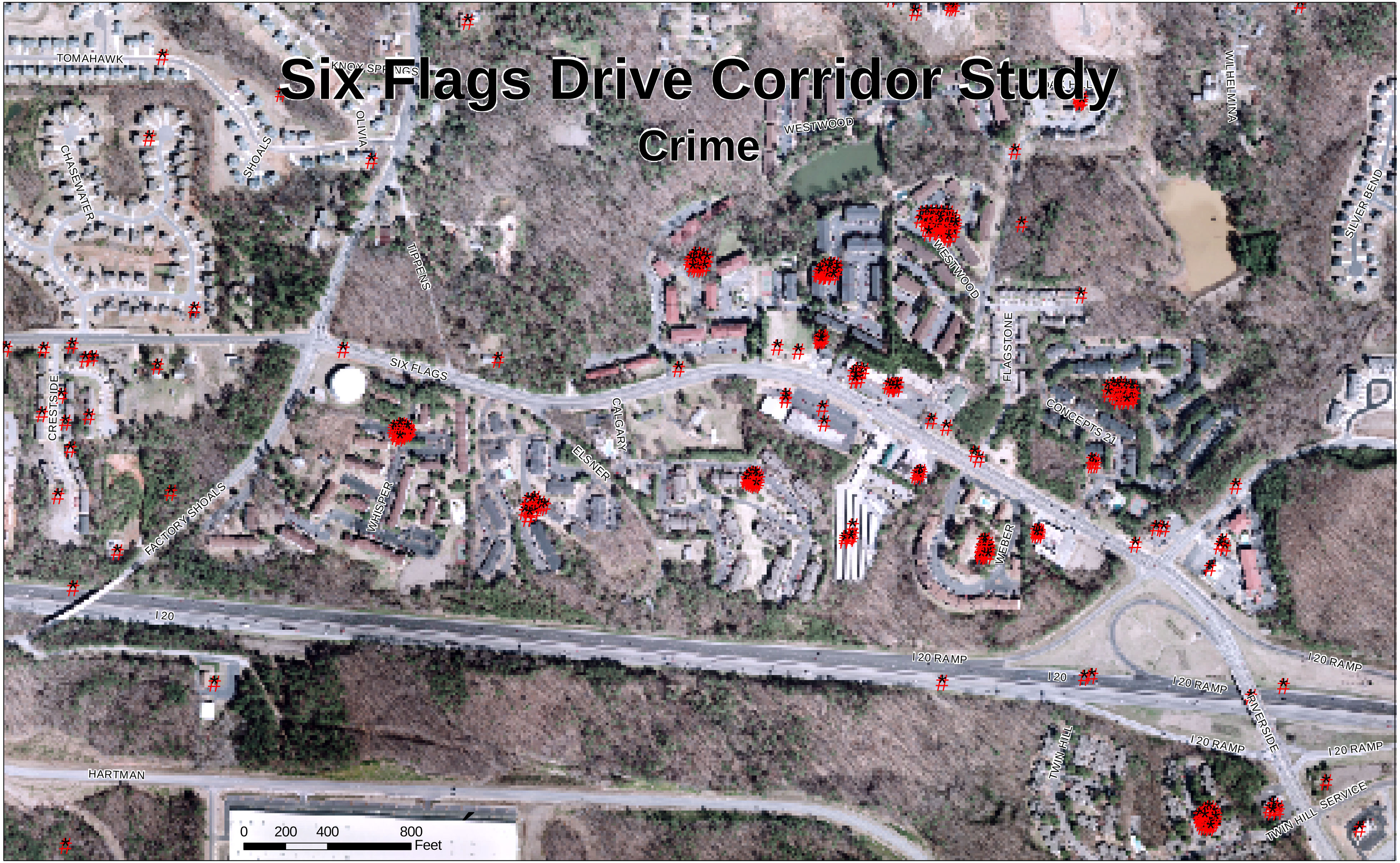
Cobb County...Expect the Best!


SIX FLAGS DRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY
314.04
313.06
313.07
312.02
314.07
88
313.08
313.02
87.02
313.09
86.02
313.11
86.01
82.02
82.01
802.02
313.1
801.01
78.07
78.05
78.08
78.06
81.02
806.02
78.02
0
3,250
6,500
13,000 Feet
N
Six Flags Dr. CenterLine
cobbbnd
Interstate
centracts2000
3 Mile Buffer
1 Mile Buffer

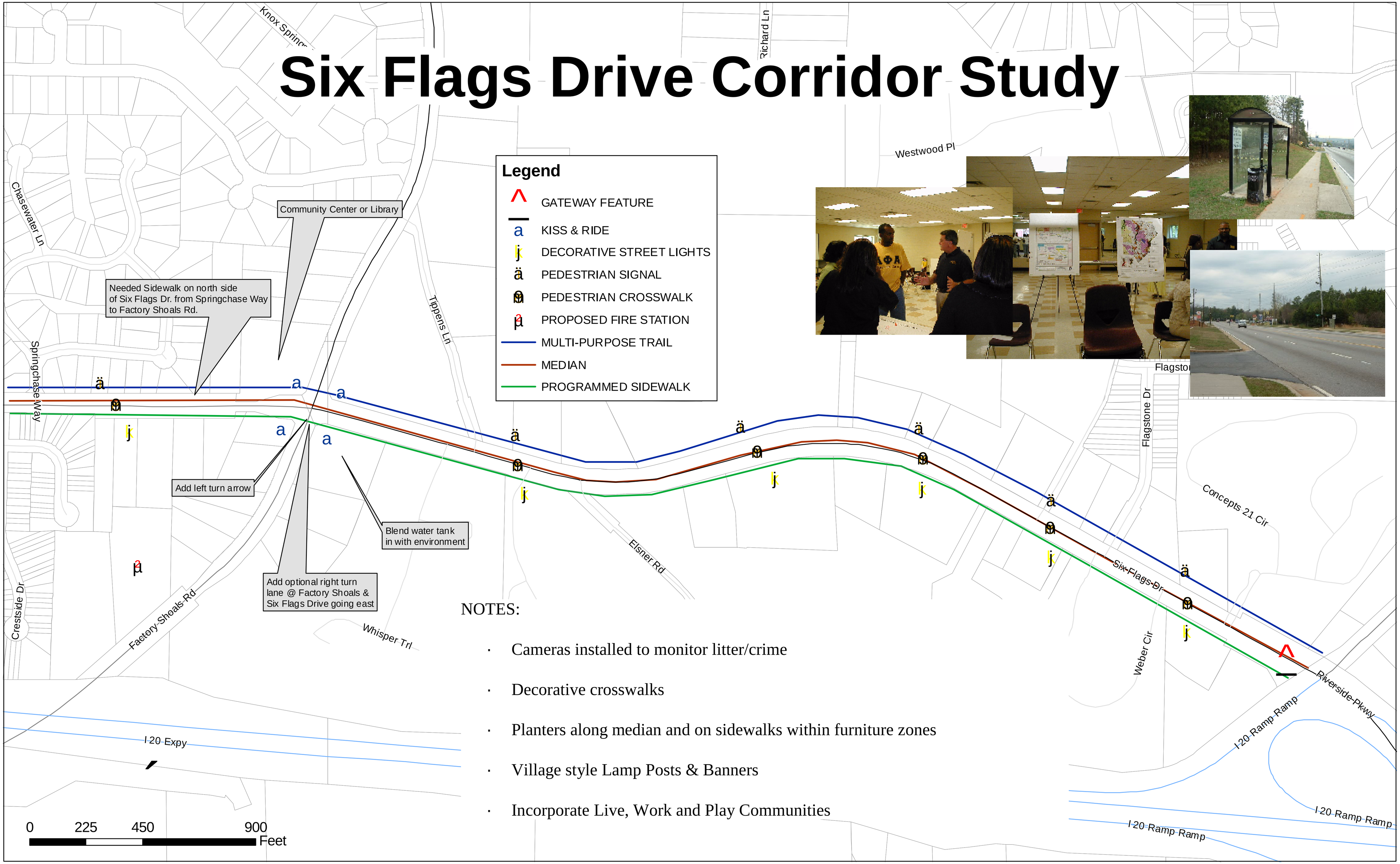

Six Flags Dr. Corridor Study
Aerials and Future Land Use
Factory Shoals
Tippens Lane
Elsner Road
Six Flags Pkwy
Flagstone Dr.
Flagstone Way
Six Flags Drive
Six Flags Drive
Riverside Pkwy
BUFFER
0 240 480 960 Feet
1 inch equals 500 feet
N
Legend
CobbParcels
Six Flags Dr. CenterLine
150' Buffer
Future Land Use
RR
VLDR
LDR
MDR
HDR
NAC
CAC
RAC
IC
IND
TCU
PI
PRC
CTY

Six Flags Drive Corridor Study

Crime



Six Flags Drive Corridor Study



NOTES:

- Cameras installed to monitor litter/crime
- Decorative crosswalks
- Planters along median and on sidewalks within furniture zones
- Village style Lamp Posts & Banners
- Incorporate Live, Work and Play Communities

Appendix C

Steering Committee Summary

Cobb County...Expect the Best!

The Steering Committee

To assist in the development of this Study, a Steering Committee representing a variety of community interests was formed. The following is a list of persons who participated on the Committee at any point during the study process:

- Clarice Barber-Page, Southwest Austell Neighbors (SWAN)
- Helen Burgess, area resident and real estate agent
- Lisa Cupid, area resident
- Denise Hardin, area resident
- Jarvis Haugabook, special assistant to Commissioner Kesting
- State Rep. Alisha Morgan
- Pam Nealey, Boys & Girls Club
- Tamisha Peterson, Austell Neighborhood Task Force
- Maj. Robert Pittman, Cobb County Police, Precinct 2 Commander
- Connie Taylor, area resident
- Community Development and Dept. of Transportation Staff

The Steering Committee held five (5) meetings in which various perspectives of the Corridor's deficiencies were discussed, including but not limited to: land use planning, transportation infrastructure (including public transportation infrastructure), greenspace and outdoor recreation, and public safety/social awareness issues. These meetings were also used to plan, facilitate, and summarize the outcome of two public meetings designed to obtain citizen input on corridor-related issues. Each of the meetings was held on a Monday night at the South Cobb Recreation Center. The following is a recap of the discussions that took place at each of the meetings:

April 24, 2006

During the first meeting, the committee inventoried the area's strengths, weaknesses, and threats in order to gain a better understanding of the issues most immediately hampering corridor residents' quality of life. Specifically, the committee noted the need for more viable businesses, better code enforcement, a cleaner landscape, a reduction in crime, increased numbers of long-term home owners, better walkability, and more local business involvement in the community.

Once listing these obstacles, specific actions to aid in solving these problems were noted. These initial suggestions included:

- Reducing cheap commercial signage and litter in road right-of-ways
- Cleaning up substandard apartment complexes
- Demolishing abandoned buildings
- Initiating neighborhood beautification incentives, awards, etc.
- Locating sponsors for an Adopt-a-Mile-type program
- Reallocating police manpower to increase law enforcement presence

- Seeking grant funds for neighborhood organizations
- Boosting community involvement from citizens
- Conducting truancy sweeps
- Educating new home buyers through programs and printed material
- Enticing reputable builders to do good, innovative projects in area
- Drafting a letter to businesses in the corridor to solicit community involvement

May 8, 2006

Since transportation improvements have the potential to positively impact many of the problems noted in the first meeting, the Cobb County Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Larry Stokes briefed the committee on pending, approved improvements as well as additional possible improvements to the corridor.

Mr. Stokes' presentation highlighted the following:

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

In addition to this presentation, the Steering Committee also noted the short-term progress (interior unit renovation, grounds improvements, and fencing installation a some apartment complexes) being made in the area and expressed the need for a grocery store for Six Flags Drive residents.

June 5, 2006

This meeting focused chiefly on land use needs and opportunities, possible project-funding avenues, and the public input/charette format. Specifically, the following was discussed:

- A Weed & Seed grant is a viable option but likely a project better explored at a later date since Marietta just received a grant of this nature.
- A new fire station will be built in the area.
- A lifestyle center is needed for area residents, but care must be taken to minimize displacement of long-time residents.

- SunTrust has designated parts of the corridor as a Community Reinvestment Area to help new home buyers.
- The upcoming charette to solicit public input will be highly publicized and will be called a workshop or open house to generate as large an audience as possible.
- The Planning Division staff will finalize meeting details and prepare presentation format and materials.

July 17, 2006

During the meeting, the Planning Division staff and steering committee re-capped the June 24, 2006 public meeting and discussed additional community needs.

The following are the major points and themes from the public meeting:

- Discussion of Feedback from Comment Sheets
  - Land Use
    - Retail sites should be improved.
    - More outdoor recreation opportunities such as pocket parks should be created.
    - Commercial and residential uses should be separated by providing transitional uses to buffer one from the other.
  - Transportation
    - Public feedback reflected a preference for a full-length, landscaped and raised median opposed to the pedestrian island concept currently programmed for construction.
    - Bicycle/Pedestrian trails were popular requests as well.
  - Public Safety
    - There is a strong desire for more police presence, as well as programs designed to deter crime amongst youth.

Following this re-cap, the committee members expressed the following ideas regarding various additional topics:

- Community Image/Persona
  - There is a serious need to increase income levels within the area.
  - The corridor would profit from an in-depth market analysis study.
  - Some apartments should be rehabilitated into condominiums.
  - Ideas for naming/branding of the area in order to create a greater sense of community identity should be explored.
  - There should be increased litter patrols to help keep road trash/debris to a minimum.
  - Exterior maintenance of nearby single-family residential areas should be improved.
  - Local churches should take a larger role in a variety of community initiatives.
- Education
  - There is a need for an alternative educational option within the area (i.e. charter school).

- Parks/Recreation
  - Allocation of existing greenfields or acquisition of new land viable for park space is needed.
- Transportation
  - Exploration of additional options for integrating pedestrian safety and intermodal mobility with any redevelopment scenarios utilized in the area should be pursued.
  - An access management plan designed to eliminate excessive curb cuts along roadway should be performed.

August 14, 2006

Since the committee now had a better understanding of the public's vision for the corridor, this meeting was dedicated to viewing a conceptual image survey in order to gain more specific design ideas. In addition, the financial future of Six Flags Over Georgia was discussed, as were details regarding the next and final public meeting.

The conceptual image presentation depicted Six Flags Drive with the following scenarios: a raised, landscaped median; median breaks; and crosswalks with user-actuated signals. The slides also depicted possible land use changes in the area. Retail structures imitating a 'New Urbanist style of building placement (i.e. close-up to Right of Way) were also shown.

Next, the committee discussed the financial troubles plaguing Six Flags Over Georgia. The corridor's future is necessarily tied to the park's success,and the committee noted its demise would have negative impacts on the area by eliminating jobs and further contributing to already-large redevelopment needs. In addition, the committee believes positive changes to the corridor itself could also, in addition to improving quality of life for area residents, improve the park's financial situation. Efforts made in Kissimmee, FL to support Disneyworld were cited as examples to possibly mimic in the Six Flags drive corridor.

Finally, the committee discussed the next and final public meeting, which was slated for Thursday August 31st at the South Cobb Recreation Center. This meeting will serve as an opportunity for the public (some who may have missed the first public meeting) to see depictions of median and other transportation enhancement scenarios. Additionally, it will serve is a forum to gain feedback on goals, objectives, and action items proposed by staff