



CONCEPTS FOR GROWTH

THE FUTURE OF THE PARKWAY

Although previous plans agree that growth is coming to South Fulton County, there was no single vision for how the corridor should accommodate it. Thus, one of the goals of this planning effort is to answer the following questions:

- Where should growth go?
- What amount of growth do we want?
- What intensity of growth are we comfortable with?
- What type of growth do we envision?

To help answer these questions, the planning team developed three concepts for growth in the study area.

Concept 1: Stay the Course. If we continue along our current path, what does the Parkway look like in 30 years? The intent of showing this is to provide a baseline for comparison. In some cases, stakeholders do not want things to change; however, with the amount of developable land within the study area, change is inevitable. The goal with this concept is to show a likely scenario for growth if the market simply responds to the existing zoning codes and other regulations in place.

Concept 2 Green Corridor. The Green Corridor is similar to Stay the Course in terms of the total amount of development, but it organizes land use in a fundamentally different manner. Rather than spreading growth along the Parkway, this concept shows growth clustered in a series of villages and towns. These villages would be connected by a strong system of secondary roadways, greenways, and trails.

Concept 3: Mega-Node. The Mega-Node is a concept that would transform the study area. It represents the development of a new, dense urban place in South Fulton County with a variety of residence types, offices, and retail. The focal point of the development would be a large nature park of approximately 480 acres.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The initial concepts were based off of three sources: previous planning efforts, preliminary stakeholder input, and best practices in planning and design. For each concept, the planning team developed an illustrative concept, identified comparable imagery, and researched applicable case studies.

To help compare the three preliminary concepts in a more quantitative manner, the planning team calculated preliminary numbers for population, types of development, and the number of new trips that growth would generate. These numbers are high-level estimates based on national best practices and existing data on comparable development styles. To make these calculations, the planning team used the following guidelines and assumptions:

Streets, Open Space and Utilities: As a baseline, each concept dedicated 50 percent of its developable area towards open space, streets, storm water, and other utilities. This percentage increased to 70 percent in the Green Corridor Concept and the Preferred Concept.

Residential: Net acreage (developable acreage minus acreage devoted towards open space, streets, utilities) dedicated for residential land uses varied from 60 percent in the Mega-Node Concept to reflect a balanced live, work, play model, to 80 percent in the Stay the Course Concept to reflect the existing growth along the corridor. Acreage was then distributed as low, medium, and high. Dwelling units per acre (du/ac) was assigned based on comparable development types.

Office and Retail: Net acreage dedicated for office and retail ranged from 5 percent to 20 percent based on the location of the development area and the type of development. Acreage was then distributed as low, medium and high. Each category had a floor area ratio (FAR) based on comparable development types.

Industrial: Industrial uses were mainly clustered in Area D, and were based on the current FARs in the area.

Trips: Based on the above land use assumptions, trips were calculated using a simple synchro model to determine the total number of trips generated by the new growth.

Community members provided input on each of the preliminary concepts at public meetings and stakeholder workshop sessions through discussions with the planning team, quantitative rankings of the plans, and written feedback. From this input, the preliminary concepts were adjusted and a preferred scenario was eventually created.

DRIVERS OF GROWTH



LOCATION

The Parkway's location will attract development that needs to be close to a major international airport. It is also in close proximity to natural resources of regional significance, such as the Chattahoochee River and Cochran Mill Park. Within a short trip, residents, workers, and employers can catch a plane abroad or kayak down Atlanta's waterfront. However, because the Parkway was built with the primary goal of economic development, it does not currently have a significant "anchor" to the west that draws potential residents and businesses along its length.



ACCESS

The Parkway itself provides easy automobile access to South Fulton County and Douglas County, but for much of its length is not currently highly accessible in terms of freight or transit. For businesses that require fast access to the Interstate system, the Parkway is not an ideal location because of the relatively weak connections to I-85. For significant development to occur, there would need to be extensive investment in transportation infrastructure both near the Parkway and in the surrounding area.



LAND USE AND CONSERVATION

At first glance it can appear that the study area is a "blank slate" for development. However, many residential communities and industrial uses are already in place, and constrain development in some parts of the study area. There is also a significant amount of acreage under conservation easement, which further breaks up major swathes of land from large-scale development.



MARKET COMPETITION

Although economically healthy and growing, there is intense competition for investment in the Atlanta region—both public and private. In order to attract dollars, South Fulton Parkway and the study area must present a unique opportunity for investment that not only sets it apart from other greenfield development, but makes it competitive against redevelopment projects as well.

STAY THE COURSE

Based primarily on existing zoning and approved DRIs, Stay the Course represents a potential outcome if the study area continues along its current trajectory.

OVERVIEW

The starting point for considering the Parkway's future was to examine what is currently in place. If nothing changes, how is the Parkway likely to evolve?

Stay the Course is based primarily on existing zoning and the DRIs that have already been approved. To determine how land will likely be developed, the planning team assumed a "middle of the road" approach to density, in that land would be developed more densely than the minimum required by zoning, but would not reach the maximum allowable densities. Land that has already been platted for suburban residential uses would eventually be realized, and areas with many land owners on large lots (more than 2 acres) would remain rural residential. Small lots (less than approximately 5 acres) surrounded by a substantially different use were assumed to eventually rezone. Transportation improvements were based on those listed in the South Fulton County CTP.

Based on existing zoning and approved DRIs, the Parkway is likely to develop similarly to other corridors within the Atlanta metropolitan region. Land uses would be a disjointed mosaic of industrial areas, medium-density mixed use, dense single-family neighborhoods/planned unit development (PUD) communities and rural residential. Throughout the study area, there would also likely be some scattered areas of multi-family housing and commercial uses.

The Parkway would be expanded to six lanes with some intersections being rebuilt as "flyovers." Transportation improvements in the area around the Parkway would be limited, and growth is unlikely to be dense enough to support transit.

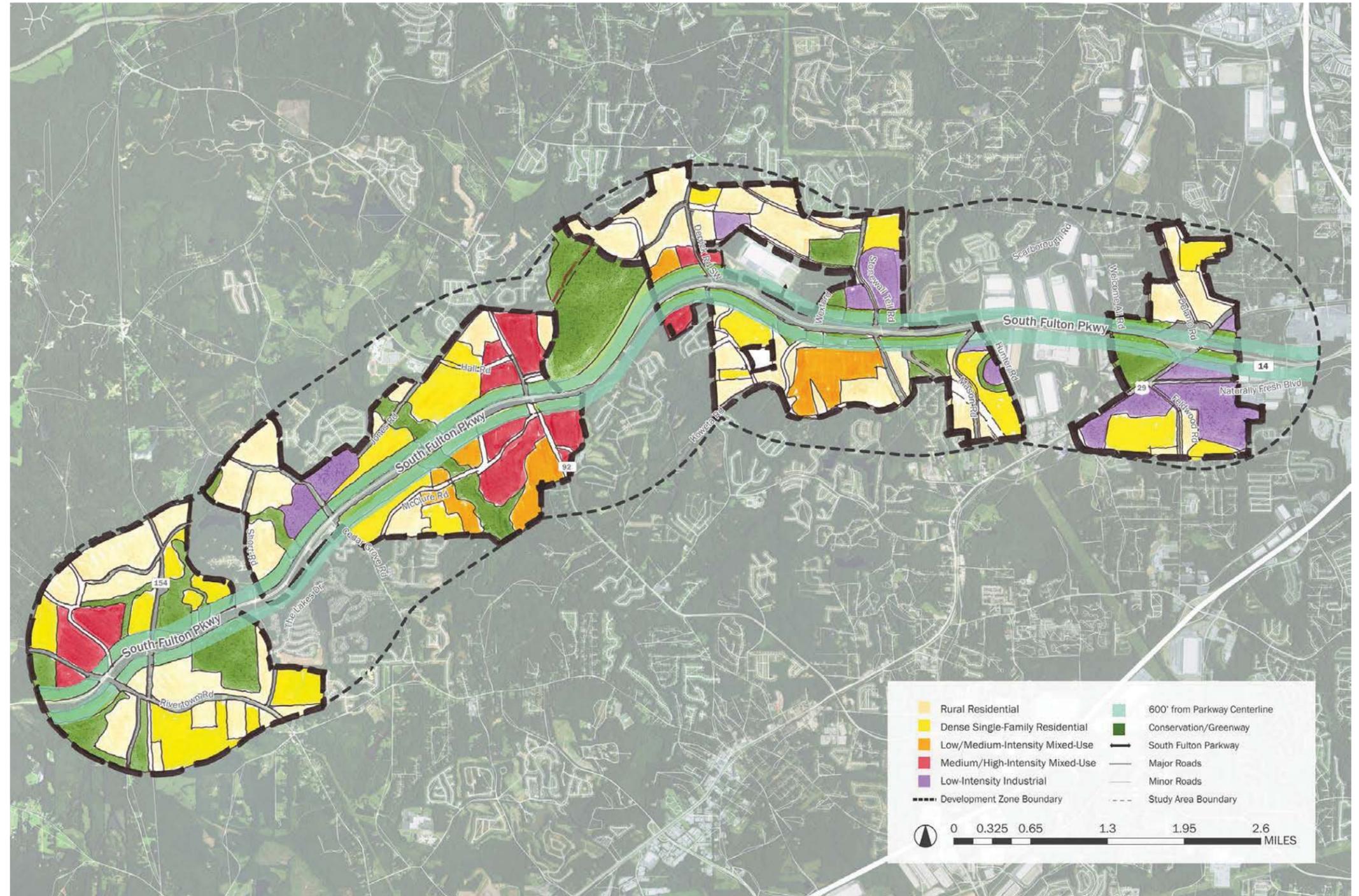


Figure 26: Stay the Course Concept

KEY FEATURES



Mosaic of many land uses.
By Staying the Course, the likely outcome is a mixture of many types of land uses. This is the result of the many uses currently allowed in the study area's zoning codes and the real estate market determining use on a parcel-by-parcel basis—rather than being guided by a corridor-wide vision.



Dispersed mixed-use areas
Mixed use areas will likely develop in some parts of the corridor, but connectivity between them will be limited, and each will develop according to individual developers' visions.



Six-lane Parkway with multi-use trail
To accommodate the expected growth under this scenario, the Parkway will likely need to be widened to six lanes throughout the study area. Per the South Fulton County CTP, a multi-use trail would be constructed within the existing ROW.

IN 30 YEARS, WE ESTIMATE:



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ACRES)

- 50% OPEN SPACE AND ROW
- 35% RESIDENTIAL
- <1% OFFICE
- 5% RETAIL
- 9% INDUSTRIAL



24,500

NEW RESIDENTS



10,600

NEW RESIDENTIAL UNITS



430,000

ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE



2,910,000

ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL



8,860,000

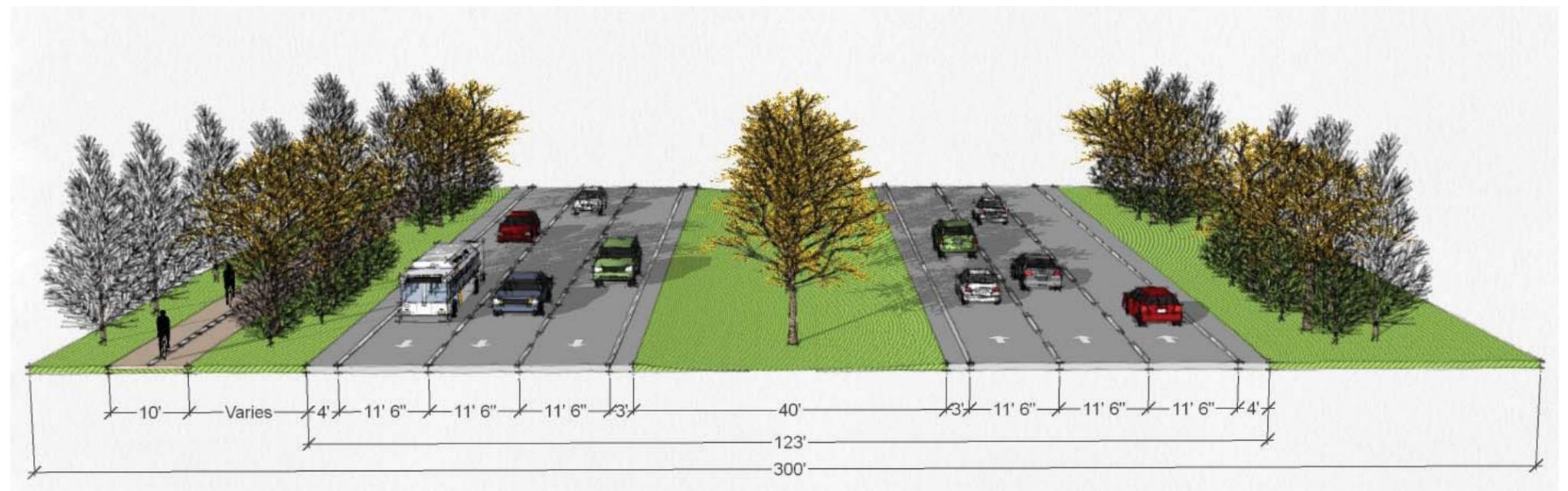
ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF INDUSTRIAL



162,000

NEW TRIPS GENERATED DAILY

ANTICIPATED PARKWAY CROSS-SECTION



STAYING THE COURSE LOOKS LIKE:



Old Milton Parkway



Old Milton Parkway



Fulton Industrial Boulevard



Johnson Ferry Road



Fulton Industrial Boulevard



Old Milton Parkway



Johnson Ferry Road



Homes near Old Milton Parkway



Fulton Industrial Boulevard

ADVANTAGES

No additional coordination required

If left up to existing zoning and market forces, there is no additional inter-jurisdictional coordination required.

No additional hurdles for landowners to develop

Many investors and developers purchased land with the intent to develop it under current zoning and land development regulations; by keeping these in place, landowners would face no new barriers to developing their holdings.

DISADVANTAGES

Likely result is sprawl

Most of the current zoning along the Parkway is very flexible in what can be developed; historically in the region, this flexibility has resulted in sprawl and uncoordinated, disconnected growth.

Difficult to refine/develop a sense of place

Without a cohesive vision for growth, the study area will lose its existing natural sense of place but is unlikely to gain unique, high-quality character from new development.

No additional transportation options

Growth will bring more trips to the Parkway, but is not projected to be dense enough to support transit. There is also no mechanism in place to develop a connected trail system, and there are very few secondary roadways in the study area currently programmed in the South Fulton County CTP.

Disjointed network of open space

Land under conservation easement will remain, but there is no mechanism for linking it into a connected system of open space and trails.

Risk of industrial uses spreading west

Although industrial land uses are good sources of jobs and tax revenue, many members of the community voiced concern over additional industrial growth and its impact on their neighborhoods.

Short-term value

Under current regulations, land in the study area is likely to develop in a way that maximizes investment returns in the short-run, rather than long-term returns on investment and benefits to the community.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Response to the Stay the Course concept was mostly negative, with many participants expressing great concern for the likely evolution of the Parkway. Of the three preliminary concepts, Stay the Course was ranked as the third choice by a significant majority of participants (75 percent) and no one ranked it as their first choice.

In describing their concerns with Stay the Course, many residents drew parallels to development in other parts of suburban Atlanta. In particular, participants mentioned areas that have experienced rapid growth and now suffer from the congestion that accompanies strip commercial development and disconnected low-density residential neighborhoods. They emphasized a desire to learn from mistakes elsewhere and avoid becoming another high-traffic area with no sense of place.

Fears of becoming another Fulton Industrial Boulevard were also common in response to the potential for scattered industrial development along the corridor. This opposition to dispersed industrial development near residential areas and the associated truck traffic was the most consistent comment received about the Stay the Course concept.

In addition to concerns over the negative externalities of extensive, disjointed commercial and industrial development, participants were discouraged by the lack of a compelling vision for the Stay the Course concept. Most felt it did not leverage the area's natural assets, or offer a land use vision that would attract high-quality development.

Some participants acknowledged the benefit of having the fewest barriers to implementation of any of the concepts and therefore offering the highest potential to generate short-term revenue for property owners and municipalities. But overall, few participants offered comments in favor of the concept.

CASE STUDIES

OLD MILTON PARKWAY/STATE BRIDGE ROAD

Alpharetta and Johns Creek, GA

Located in North Fulton County, State Bridge Road/Old Milton Parkway (SR 120) connects Alpharetta to Duluth via Johns Creek. The roadway is primarily four lanes with landscaped medians, but in higher population areas the roadway spans six lanes. Over its 8-mile course, the roadway crosses the Chattahoochee River, the Big Creek Greenway, and multiple major creek systems. Land abutting the roadway is a mixture of relatively dense office and retail uses, interrupted by open space and residential neighborhoods.

Congestion is a significant issue: Old Milton Parkway operates at an LOS F or E, which represent the longest amounts of traffic delay. State Bridge Road fares better, with an LOS C according to the North Fulton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Although the roadway has comparatively fewer curb cuts than other arterials in North Fulton, there is only a limited secondary roadway network. Transit is also limited to a MARTA bus route serving only one part of Old Milton Parkway. Safety is another serious issue: at the intersection with Medlock Bridge Road, there were 516 crashes between 2006 and 2008.

To help address these challenges, there is interest in creating a BRT line along the corridor, but conflicting plans also recommend widening the roadway. A potential TOD has also been identified where Old Milton Parkway meets GA 400. In the near-term, however, residents and workers are mired in traffic.

Old Milton Parkway and State Bridge Road provide a glimpse of how development typically occurs in the region without an overarching vision. Although this corridor is healthy in terms of its growth and upkeep, the congestion problems are significant and there is no definable sense of place.

FULTON INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD

Atlanta, GA

Fulton Industrial Boulevard is approximately 9.5 miles long, traversing the largest concentration of industrial use in the Atlanta region. It is located about 9 miles west of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and about 5 miles north of South Fulton Parkway. Within the corridor's Community Improvement District (CID), there is over 46.1 million square feet of industrial inventory.

The corridor first developed in the late 1950s, but most of what exists today was built during the 1970s. Growth along the corridor slowed down in subsequent decades, and the area is challenged to stay relevant in a changing economy. The emphasis on industrial uses limits the livability of the area, and there are very few residential or mixed uses nearby. Crime is also a significant concern.

Although successful from the perspective of a healthy tax base, Fulton Industrial Boulevard is an example of the challenges that come with an imbalance of land use types, and a lack of livable infrastructure.

ALTERNATIVE 1: GREEN CORRIDOR

The Green Corridor concentrates growth in a series of villages and towns connected by a system of greenways, trails, and secondary roadways.

OVERVIEW

The Green Corridor is an alternative concept for growth that prioritizes the natural character of the Parkway, and concentrates development into a series of towns and villages. These towns and villages would be linked by an interconnected system of greenways, trails, and secondary roadways. In total, this concept represents growth of approximately 24,100 residents, 3.4 million square feet of office space, and 6.1 million square feet of industrial—figures that are similar to the “Stay the Course” concept, but organized in a fundamentally different pattern.

The Green Corridor has its roots in the New Urbanism movement. New Urbanism is an approach to planning and designing communities based on time-tested principles of mixed uses, walkability, and human scale. Its intent is to provide an alternative to sprawling growth patterns that have been shown to have negative effects on community mobility, sociability, and livability.

From east to west, the concentration of growth in the Green Corridor concept gradually decreases. In the far east of the study area, there is an opportunity to concentrate higher intensity industrial uses where warehouses already exist. Moving west past Stonewall Tell Road, this concept shows two activity centers with some intensive growth, which represent potential corporate campuses or mixed-use communities. Density steps down again to the area around Derrick Road. Here the concept shows two new villages, one north of the Parkway and one to the south. This pattern of villages, connected by green space and conservation areas, continues to the western edge of the study area near Palmetto-Cascade Highway. In total, the Green Corridor shows seven new village/town centers, and two higher intensity towns/corporate campuses.

Like “Stay the Course,” the Green Corridor’s growth would likely not be robust enough to support transit. However, the concept does show a reserved ROW for future transit should that level of growth occur in the area or further west in Douglas County. The concept also shows areas reserved for future station areas, and an expansion of the Parkway to six lanes. In general, however, transportation improvements are focused off of the Parkway and on building an effective network of secondary roads that could keep short, local trips off of the Parkway. These trips could also be accommodated by a network of trails that would be incorporated into the concept’s signature greenways.

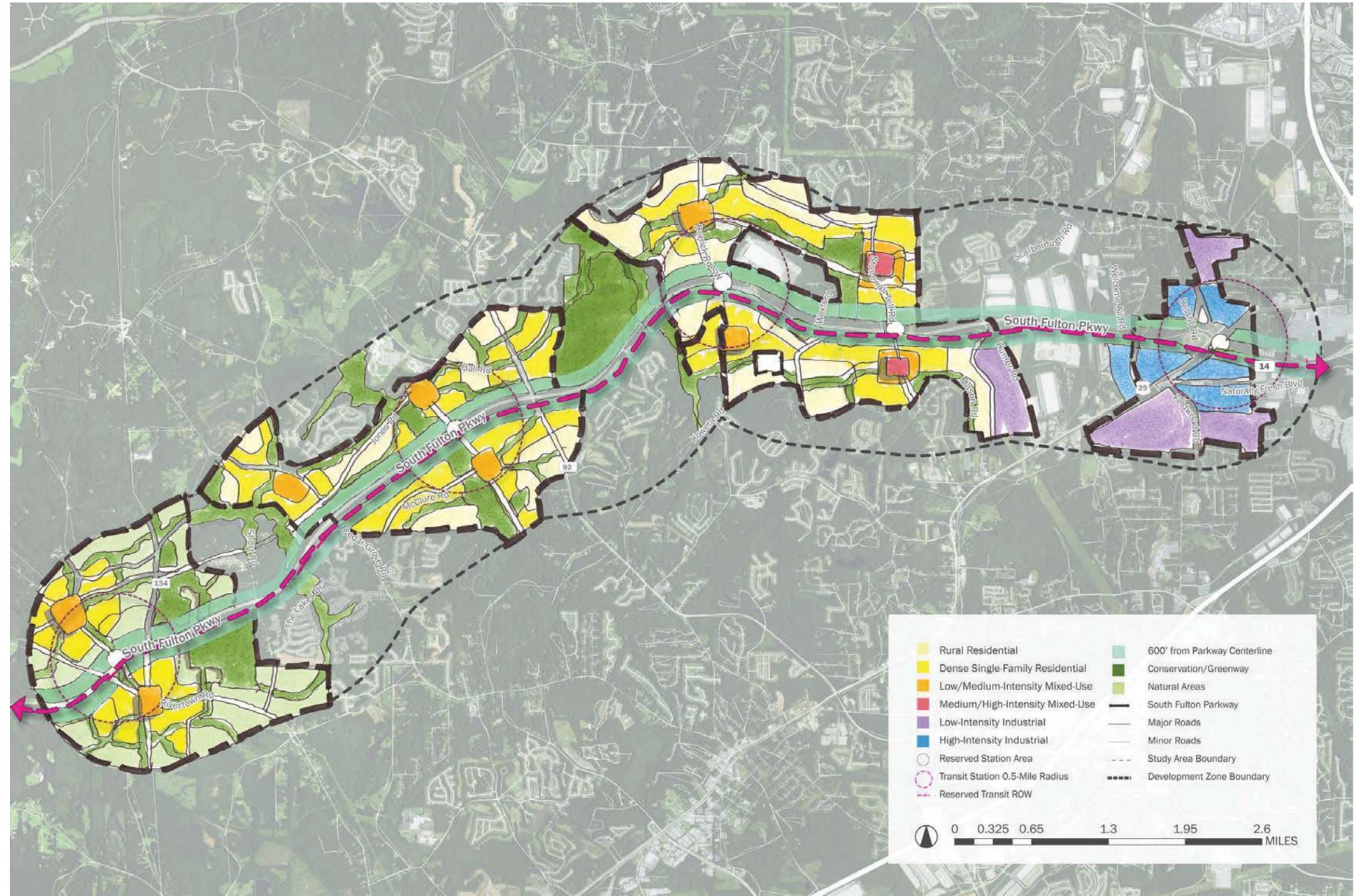


Figure 27: Green Corridor Concept

MAJOR FEATURES



Series of small towns and villages
Rather than sprawling growth, new homes, retail, and offices would be concentrated into comparatively dense towns and villages.



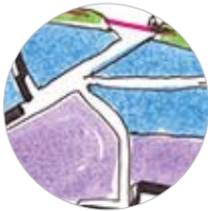
Reserved transit ROW and station areas on six-lane Parkway
ROW along the Parkway would be reserved for a future transit line and stations.



Robust, interconnected greenways and trails
Over 3,000 acres would be part of a linked system of greenways, trails, stormwater treatment, and parks.

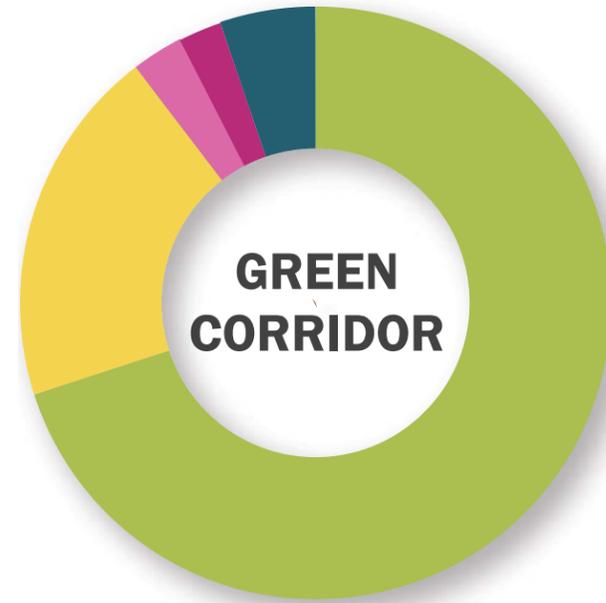


Office uses concentrated in the east
Two "towns" would be intended for large corporate campuses.



Industrial uses remain in the east
Industrial use would grow in areas that are already industrial in character and closest to I-85 and the airport.

IN 40 YEARS, WE ESTIMATE:



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (ACRES)

- 70% OPEN SPACE AND ROW
- 21% RESIDENTIAL
- 2% OFFICE
- 2% RETAIL
- 5% INDUSTRIAL



24,100

NEW RESIDENTS



10,500

NEW RESIDENTIAL UNITS



3,360,000

ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE



1,130,000

ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL



6,100,000

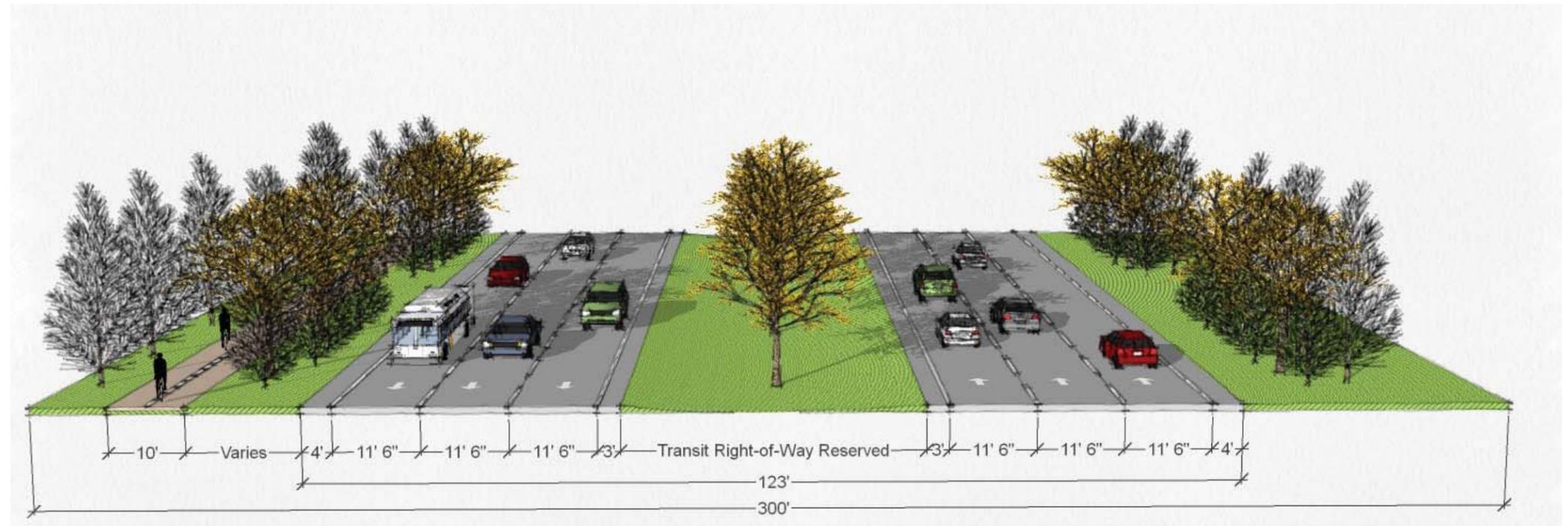
ADDITIONAL SQUARE FEET OF INDUSTRIAL



140,000

NEW TRIPS GENERATED DAILY

ANTICIPATED PARKWAY CROSS-SECTION



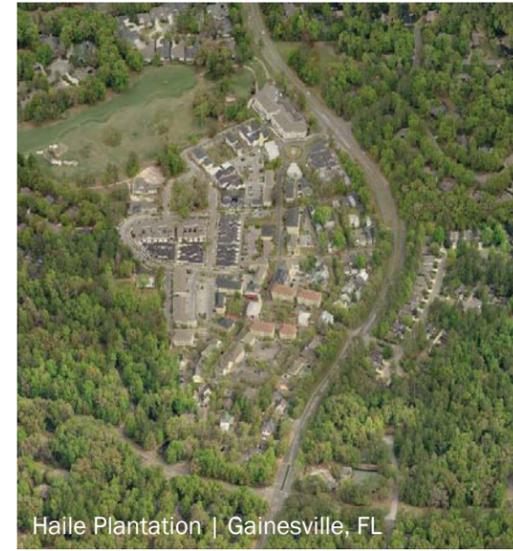
THE GREEN CORRIDOR LOOKS LIKE:



Haile Plantation | Gainesville, FL



Serenbe | Chattahoochee Hills, GA



Haile Plantation | Gainesville, FL



Big Creek Greenway | Alpharetta, GA



Harbor Town | Memphis, TN



Watercolor | Seaside, FL



Serenbe | Chattahoochee Hills, GA



Serenbe | Chattahoochee Hills, GA

ADVANTAGES

Preservation of natural character

Under the Green Corridor concept, the natural and rural character of the study area is preserved and incorporated into new development.

Encourages sense of place

Every town and village center is an opportunity to create a unique place.

Environmental and recreational benefits

The system of greenways and parks will help preserve ecological corridors and provide exemplary opportunities for nature-based recreation. Additionally, the large amount of green space will perform multiple environmental services such as helping to treat storm water and prevent flooding.

Strong network of secondary roads

The addition of arterials and collectors in the study area will help ease congestion on South Fulton Parkway.

Opportunity for regional and national recognition

Although common in Europe, this pattern of new, multiple distinct villages along a corridor does not occur in the United States. If the Green Corridor concept is implemented, it has the potential to become a national-level example for this type of growth.

Strong public support

Participants in the public process supported this concept, and were comfortable with the amount and distribution of growth.

DISADVANTAGES

Falls short of realizing full potential

The total amount of growth does not fully leverage the study area's location and economic development potential.

Lack of diversity

Most New Urbanist communities are expensive places to live, and lack socio-economic diversity.

Not supportive of transit

The total amount of new residents, jobs, and shopping will not be enough to justify the investment required by most types of transit.

Additional coordination and cooperation required

Extensive coordination will be required to develop a greenway system that seamlessly connects multiple jurisdictions.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The Green Corridor concept struck a chord with many participants, who welcomed its respect for the area's natural resources and the provision of new commercial centers and housing in small towns and villages. Of those who ranked the concept, 65 percent marked it as their first choice and 31 percent marked it as their second choice.

Broad familiarity with built examples of this kind of village development pattern at Serenbe and throughout Chattahoochee Hills created a level of comfort and appeal for many participants. They liked the idea of creating more walkable centers likely to attract the high-quality retailers and restaurants they desire, and preferred this configuration of development to strip commercial centers. The lack of industrial development east of Highway 92 bolstered people's confidence in the kind of development they could expect within the higher intensity villages. The high standards for design and strong character typical of New Urbanist communities was supported by many who want to create a distinct identity for the corridor. This concept received the highest rating for sense of place amongst the three alternatives.

The extensive network of trails and green space also elicited strong positive responses. Participants saw this as a way of differentiating their community, providing opportunities for recreation and non-motorized transportation, protecting the environment, preserving rural character, and enhancing their overall quality of life. A few participants felt the extensive greenway system resulted in a less urban character than they desired, or that the trail distances would be too long for people to use regularly.

Participants liked the proposed network of parallel access roads connecting the village centers, seeing it as an opportunity to prevent gridlock in the area and to avoid using the Parkway for local trips. The lack of transit in this concept was disappointing to some community members and of little concern to others; some found the lack of transit to be a favorable characteristic.

Despite general support for the Green Corridor, community members did have concerns. Some people liked the idea of high-quality, village-centered development, but wondered about the cost and feasibility of realizing a version that would be inclusive of residents with a range of income levels. Others felt the highest and best use of the land would be at a level of development intensity higher than envisioned in this concept.

CASE STUDIES

HAILE PLANTATION

Gainesville, FL

Located approximately 7.5 miles west of Gainesville, Florida, Haile Plantation is a thriving New Urbanist community and one of the most sought-after places to live in the area. The community, now numbering 7,500, is nestled in 1,100 acres of hardwood forest. It began as a master-planned developed in the early 1990s, and has its roots in the historic Haile Plantation from the 1850s. The developers preserved the historic plantation home, and wrote their own development standards separate from the County. The community focal point is Haile Village Center, which was sized to maximize a 5-minute walk for residents from their homes. A unique feature is the golf course, which was built as a public/private partnership. Recently, Haile Plantation became connected to the regional trail system through the completion of Phase 2 of the Archer Braid Trail.

Haile Plantation is an example of a compact town that successfully integrates nature, history, recreation, and a variety of housing types. It is representative of the type of the village development pattern envisioned in the Green Corridor.

SERENBE

Chattahoochee Hills, GA

Serenbe is a local example of successful New Urbanism. Inspired by the rural beauty in the Chattahoochee Hill Country, founders Steve and Marie Nygren envisioned a walkable, sustainable community that evoked a village lifestyle just miles from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Designed as a series of dense mixed-use hamlets, today Serenbe has a population of about 400 residents, a handful of high-end restaurants and shops, a nonprofit cultural institute, and a farm that produces over 300 varieties of organic produce.

Since the first house was built in 2004, the community has garnered multiple awards including the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Inaugural Sustainability Award and Earthcraft's "Development of the Year." Serenbe demonstrates that with a strong vision for development, a village center style of development can be successful in the Atlanta region.

ALTERNATIVE 2: MEGA-NODE

The Mega-Node would concentrate growth into a dense, mixed-use, city-like community with transit

OVERVIEW

The Mega-Node concept is the most transformative of the three—in essence, it is the creation of a completely new urban center in South Fulton County. This new population center would support dense residential, office, retail, and light industrial uses. Its “Central Park” would be the 480-acre natural area under conservation, which would be criss-crossed with trails and other low-impact, nature-based recreation opportunities. The concept represents 60,700 new residents, 6.2 million square feet of retail, 13.7 million square feet of office, and 6.4 million square feet of industrial space.

In the Mega-Node concept, there are two primary concentrations of people and jobs: one just west of Derrick Road, and one near the intersection of Highway-92 and the Parkway. These urban centers would flank the natural “Central Park.” From these centers, growth gradually steps down into less intense mixed use, medium/high intensity residential, single-family residential, and a more rural pattern of residential near Cedar Grove Road in the west and Hunter Road in the east.

West of Cedar Grove Road, growth is shown in villages and towns, echoing the Green Corridor concept. These towns would be the transitional area between the Parkway study area and the rural vision of growth in the City of Chattahoochee Hills. Also similar to the Green Corridor, the Mega-Node concentrates new industrial development in the east near Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

The Mega-Node’s intensity of growth and activity has the potential to support transit. In this concept, transit is pulled off of the Parkway into the newly developed areas to maximize potential for TOD and transit-supportive densities. A dense network of new arterials, collectors, and local roadways would be required to support the Mega-Node’s growth and provide flexibility, both in terms of accommodating the market and offering trip options. The Parkway would be expanded to eight lanes for the majority of the study area, and would likely transition to six lanes near Line Creek. There would also be a system of trails and greenways that provide relief to the urbanized area and connect to the small populations centers further west.

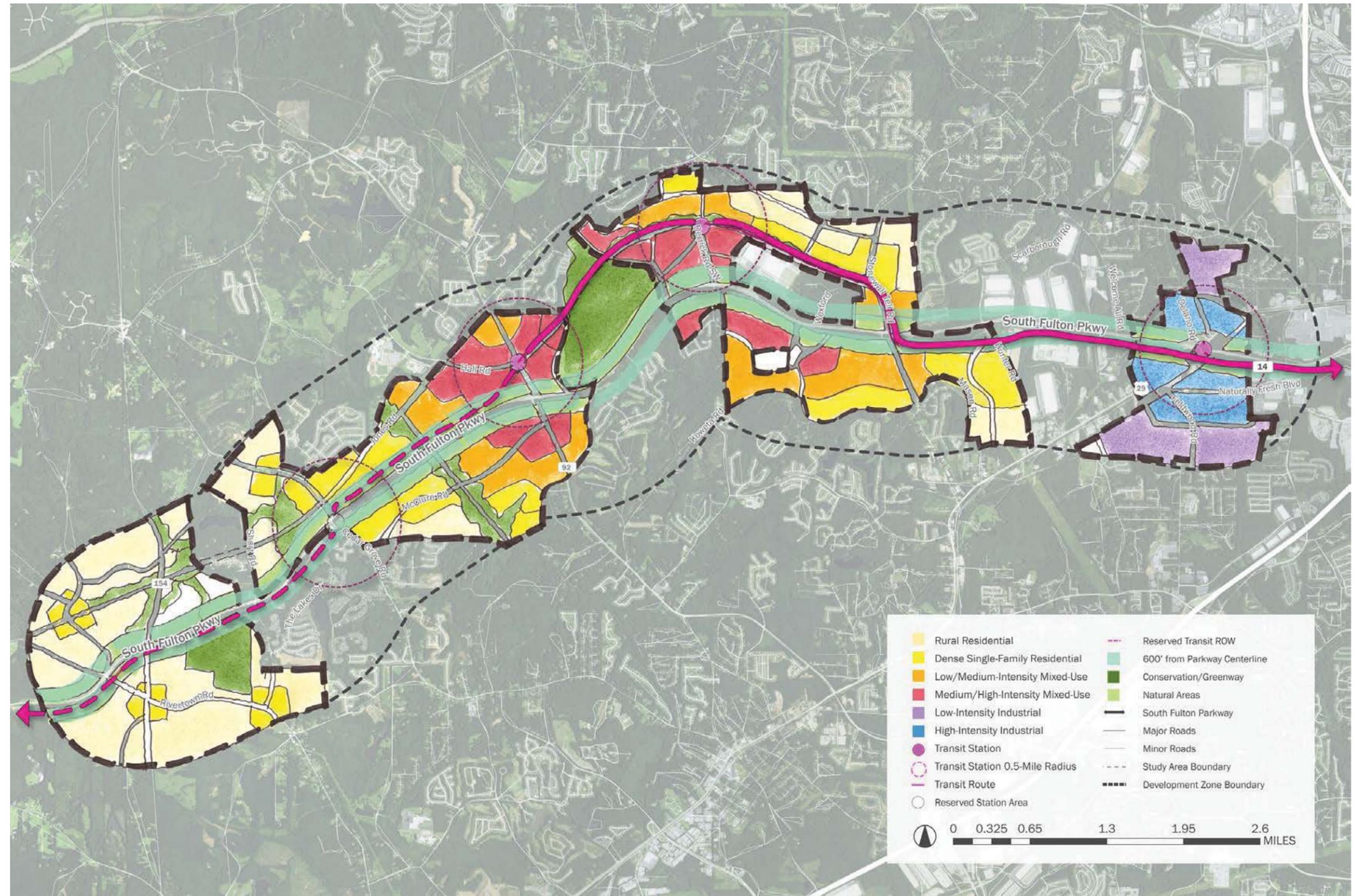


Figure 28. Mega-Node Concept

THE MEGA NODE LOOKS LIKE:



ADVANTAGES

Realizes full growth potential of area

The growth associated with the Mega-Node will effectively leverage the study area's location and access to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and the rest of the Atlanta region.

Can likely support transit

The density associated with the Mega-Nodes centers of growth will likely be able to support premium transit.

A regional destination

The intensity and quality of growth in the Mega-Node is envisioned to not only serve local residents, but be a regional draw much like Avalon in Alpharetta—but on a larger scale.

More job opportunities close to residents

With the significant amount of new office space, the number and types of jobs close to residents will increase.

More shopping, entertainment, and recreation opportunities

In an urban center of this size, residents will have far greater access to a diversity of shopping, entertainment, and recreation opportunities.

Intensity transitions from urban to rural

The Mega-Node is not a concept that promotes density through 100 percent of the study area. Instead, intensity gradually decreases to the west to form a seamless transition to the rural land use pattern of Chattahoochee Hills.

DISADVANTAGES

Loss of rural character

East of Highway 92, the character of the study area will likely be significantly more urban than it currently is.

Congestion

Despite the ability to support transit, South Fulton Parkway will experience more congestion.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The Mega-Node concept was the most polarizing of the three preliminary concepts, usually garnering an enthusiastic response or strong hesitation over the shift in community character. Of those who ranked the concept, 50 percent noted it as their first choice, and 36 percent marked it as their second choice.

For many participants, the Mega-Node tapped into a key desire for walkable, mixed-use areas within South Fulton County. Residents typically have to travel to nearby cities for jobs, shopping, dining, and entertainment and were excited by the potential to have these amenities nearby. Many were drawn to the idea of premium transit with stations located within the urban centers, seeing it as a good option to service the urban areas as well as for suburban park-and-ride users to connect to the MARTA system. The livability and accessibility of the urban areas were seen as particularly important to allow local seniors to age in place and to attract more corporations, young professionals, and families to the area.

Higher levels of development—as proposed in the urbanized portions of the Mega-Node—generally result in higher property values, greater job creation, and higher municipal tax revenues. Municipal representatives and property owners therefore tended to favor the intensity of this concept, seeing it as a fuller realization of the value of developable land so close to the world's busiest airport.

Those who questioned the Mega-Node concept tended to prefer a lower intensity environment and disliked features such as apartments, transit, and the estimated number of trips generated by this level of growth. A number of participants had a negative response to expanding the Parkway to eight lanes, but did like the intention of maintaining limited access to maximize flow.

Most participants agreed with the distribution of growth shown in this concept, with the bulk of urban development east of Highway 92 and all industrial development east of Hunter Road. The provision of a parallel roadway network and alternative modes of transportation was seen as beneficial, though almost everyone expressed some concerns over additional traffic.

CASE STUDIES

THE WOODLANDS

The Woodlands, TX

The Woodlands is a 28,000-acre community located approximately 30 miles north of Houston and a 25-minute trip from George Bush Intercontinental Airport. Master planned and built incrementally over multiple decades, today The Woodlands is home to approximately 105,000 residents, 200 restaurants, 21 million square feet of office space, and almost 8,000 acres of green space. Entertainment can be found at Restaurant Row at Hugh's Landing, and Cynthia Wood Mitchell Pavilion, an events venue that attracts national acts. Office space and entertainment are concentrated in the Town Center, which is then surrounded by nine "villages" of primarily residential uses that step down in density the further west one travels.

The Woodlands began in 1964, when a single developer purchased 2,800 acres of timber land. Over the course of the next 10 years, the developer acquired an additional 17,455 acres. The first "village," Grogan's Mill, officially opened in 1976. Gradually businesses moved into the development, and by 1983 total investment reached \$1 billion. The Woodlands grew steadily in the 1980s, and by 1990 had 30,000 people. Higher-density, "urban residential" projects arrived in 2003, and The Woodlands Township was created in 2008. Several corporations have their headquarters there, including Chevron Phillips and multiple pharmaceutical companies. The community has won multiple awards, including ULI's Special Award for Excellence.

The Woodlands is similar to areas envisioned in red on the Mega Node concept. It demonstrates that when done thoughtfully, urban, densely-developed communities can prosper in locations far beyond a region's traditional population centers. It also demonstrates the importance of a long-range vision that is flexible, and how a community of this size takes several decades to develop.

BALDWIN PARK

Winter Park, Florida

Located on the site of a former military installation, Baldwin Park is a community of about 6,200 in Winter Park, Florida. The master plan for the community was completed in 1998, and building began in 2001. A much smaller development than the Woodlands, Baldwin Park is expected to have 3,200 new housing units and 1.5 million square feet of office space when complete. The community was designed using the existing system of lakes and channels as a focal point. Today, Lake Baldwin is encircled by a popular multi-use trail, and is connected to the regional trail system through the Cady Way Trail. Baldwin Park residents live in a variety of home types ranging from single-family homes to apartments over shops and restaurants.

Located just 3 miles east of downtown Orlando, Baldwin Park is one of the most sought-after communities in the region. The development has won a number of awards, and has been honored by the Congress for the New Urbanism, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Association of Homebuilders.

Areas shown in orange in the Mega-Node concept are envisioned to have a similar mix of uses and intensity as Baldwin Park. As a case study, Baldwin Park represents a successful balance between urban and suburban, and growth and the natural environment.

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT COMPARISON

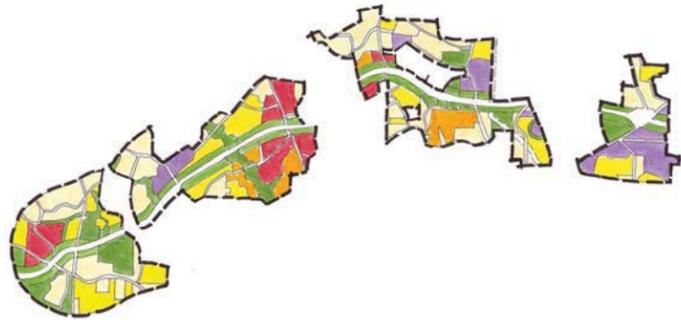
CONCEPT

KEY FIGURES

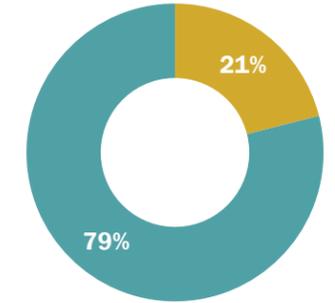
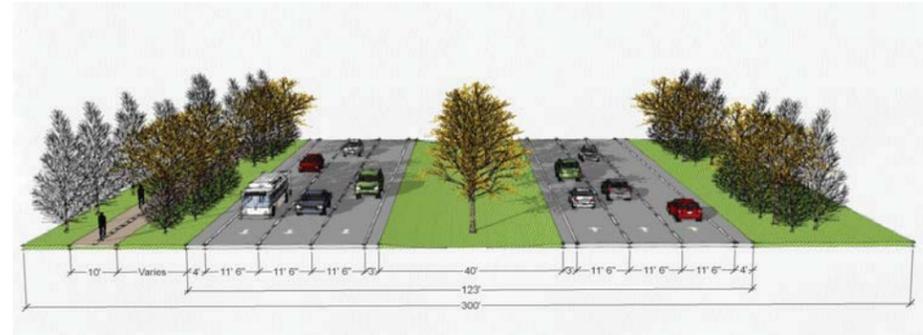
PARKWAY CROSS SECTION

RANKING BY PUBLIC*

STAY THE COURSE



New Residents: 24,500
New Residential Units: 10,600
Additional SF Retail: 430,000
Additional SF Office: 2,910,000
Additional SF Industrial: 8,860,000
New Trips Generated Daily: 162,000

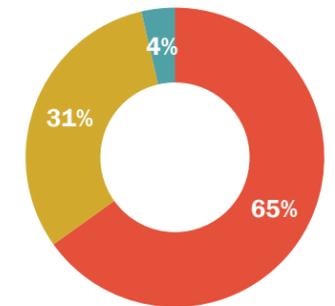
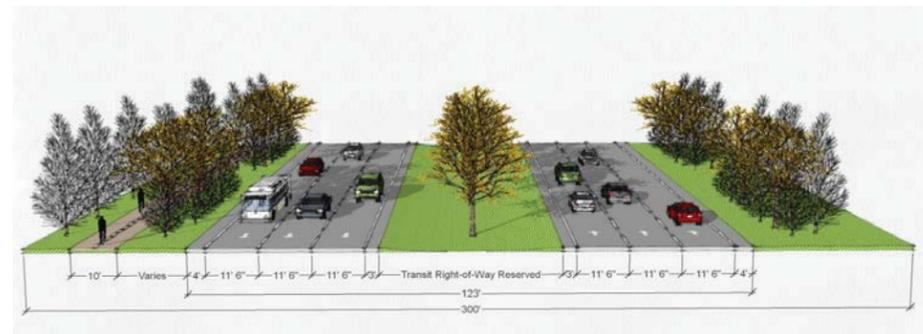


■ 1st ■ 2nd ■ 3rd

GREEN CORRIDOR



New Residents: 24,100
New Residential Units: 10,500
Additional SF Retail: 1,130,000
Additional SF Office: 3,360,000
Additional SF Industrial: 6,100,000
New Trips Generated Daily: 140,000

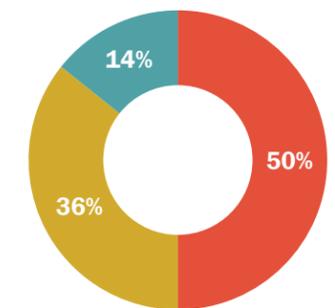


■ 1st ■ 2nd ■ 3rd

MEGA NODE



New Residents: 60,700
New Residential Units: 26,000
Additional SF Retail: 6,200,000
Additional SF Office: 13,700,000
Additional SF Industrial: 6,400,000
New Trips Generated Daily: 345,000



■ 1st ■ 2nd ■ 3rd

Figure 4. Comparison of Preliminary Concepts

*Not all participants voted for a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice