

CURRENT AND PREVIOUS PLANS

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South Fulton County has been the subject of a number of planning studies. Some of these plans do not directly affect the study area, but inform the regional context. Others directly impact the study area with their visions and recommendations. All of them influence the vision for the study area, and provide a starting point for developing alternative concepts for the future.

REGION OF INFLUENCE

Following is an overview of the primary planning documents that affect the region directly outside of the study area.

City of Chattahoochee Hills Comprehensive Plan
Chattahoochee Hills became an incorporated city in 2007. In developing its first Comprehensive Plan, the City clearly stated its vision to be “deliberately rural,” emphasizing the importance of sustainable agriculture, preservation of rural vistas, and a green public realm. Development within the City is envisioned as a series of compact, walkable towns and villages. Although the City of Chattahoochee Hills is primarily outside of the study area corridor, the Parkway is the primary access corridor to the city.

Chattahoochee Hill Country: A Model Sustainable Village LCI (Livable Centers Initiative)
Developed prior to the City of Chattahoochee Hills’ incorporation, the Chattahoochee Hill Country LCI contained a concept plan for a community that integrates living, working, shopping, and playing in a walkable environment. The preferred concept ultimately combined three types of villages—the Small Town, the European Village, and the Neighborhood—to create a mixed use community that maximizes open space. The location of this “Model Sustainable Village” concept was identified just north of South Fulton Parkway, but beyond the study area corridor. It has not yet been realized.

City of Fairburn Comprehensive Plan
The City of Fairburn is one of the fastest growing areas in South Fulton County. Its Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2015, is primarily focused on strengthening its historic downtown and its gateways to and from I-85. Closer to South Fulton Parkway, the plan identifies a desire to maintain the city’s rural residential character and develop a greenway along Line Creek.

Fairburn Historic Downtown LCI Study
Completed in 2009, the Fairburn Historic Downtown LCI Study identified three primary nodes for development: a civic node at Senoia and Broad Street, an education node at Broad Street and SR 138, and downtown. The vision was for a walkable, vibrant downtown that preserves Fairburn’s historic character. The LCI study area is outside of the South Fulton Parkway study area corridor, and demonstrates the desire to reinvest and strengthen existing nearby community centers and nodes.

City of Palmetto Comprehensive Plan
The City of Palmetto completed their last Comprehensive Plan in 2010. It identified itself as “a city on the verge of significant growth, yet struggling to hold on to its small-town character.” The City’s primary areas of focus are its historic downtown, downtown north, Foxhall, and the Weldon Road gateway near I-85. Areas closest to South Fulton Parkway are predominantly agricultural and rural residential, which the plan identifies as areas to treasure and protect.

Palmetto LCI
Like the Comprehensive Plan, Palmetto’s LCI Study focuses on its downtown area. Specifically, it addresses the negative effects of unregulated development and the subsequent erosion of the city’s charm. The proposed plan aims to improve circulation, encourage growth of mixed-use areas, and direct investment into the heart of Palmetto. The LCI study area is outside of the South Fulton Parkway study area corridor; like the Fairburn Historic Downtown LCI, it also demonstrates the desire to reinvest and strengthen existing community centers and nodes.

Union City Town Center Redevelopment Plan and Tax Allocation District
In 2007, Union City developed a plan that targeted areas in the city for private investment: the former Shannon Mall site, “Union Square” as proposed by Goodson Investment LLC, and a new industrial/retail development in the Royal South Parkway corridor. All three of these sites are outside of the South Fulton Parkway corridor study area. Although the visions for each varied, the goal was to help these areas evolve into dynamic, multi-use communities over time.

Union Station Redevelopment Study (LCI)
As part of the LCI program, Union City studied alternatives for re-use of the Shannon Mall site, which closed in 2010. The vision articulated was for a mixed-use center of commercial, residential, and light industrial uses. Since the completion of the plan, the site has since redeveloped as a Wal-Mart distribution center.

Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail Master Plan
Produced by the PATH Foundation, this conceptual trail plan identified 98 miles of greenway trails throughout the area formerly known as Chattahoochee Hill Country. Trails near the study area are proposed to be multi-use and accommodate walkers/hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

Douglas County Comprehensive Plan
Douglas County’s 2013 Comprehensive Plan identified a vision to preserve the County’s small town character and wealth of natural and agricultural resources. Although outside of the study area corridor, South Fulton Parkway is a primary gateway to southern Douglas County from Fulton County and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. This area of Douglas County is envisioned to stay largely rural and natural, and only lightly developed.

Aerotropolis Atlanta Blueprint
Recently developed, the Aerotropolis Atlanta Blueprint is a regional strategy document that examines how to best leverage the economic engine of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Both Camp Creek Parkway and I-85 were identified as key distribution corridors, and South Fulton Parkway was identified as a general “strategic corridor” with opportunities for development in logistics, manufacturing, and skills training/technology/renewables.

Fulton County Comprehensive Plan
Between 2005 and 2010, unincorporated Fulton County shrank by over 124,000 acres from annexations and the incorporation of new cities. Because all of unincorporated Fulton County is now in the south, its Comprehensive Plan specifically targets the region around the study area. The plan identified a series of character areas that reflect an urban to rural “transect”: as one moves further from Atlanta, generally the less urbanized it becomes until Highway 154, when the character becomes rural. These gradated areas are punctuated by industrial areas and a series of mixed-use community nodes that are typically located at major crossroads.

Figure B summarizes these current and previous plans’ general recommendations and visions into a single, consolidated graphic. It illustrates the desire for many mixed-use nodes throughout South Fulton County; significant industrial areas along I-85; growth and investment around the airport; and the preservation of rural areas west of Highway 154/Cascade-Palmetto Highway.

STUDY AREA

The study area has also been subject to a number of plans that directly affect its future:

- Fulton County Comprehensive Plan
- Union City Comprehensive Plan
- Union City Urban Redevelopment Plan
- Parkway South: An Economic Development Master Plan
- South Fulton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)
- South Fulton Parkway Access Management Plan
- South Fulton Parkway Transit Feasibility Study
- South Fulton Parkway Corridor Plan

These plans and their primary recommendations are detailed on the following pages.

PLANNING CONTEXT



Figure B: Consolidated Vision of Plans in Region of Influence

FULTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

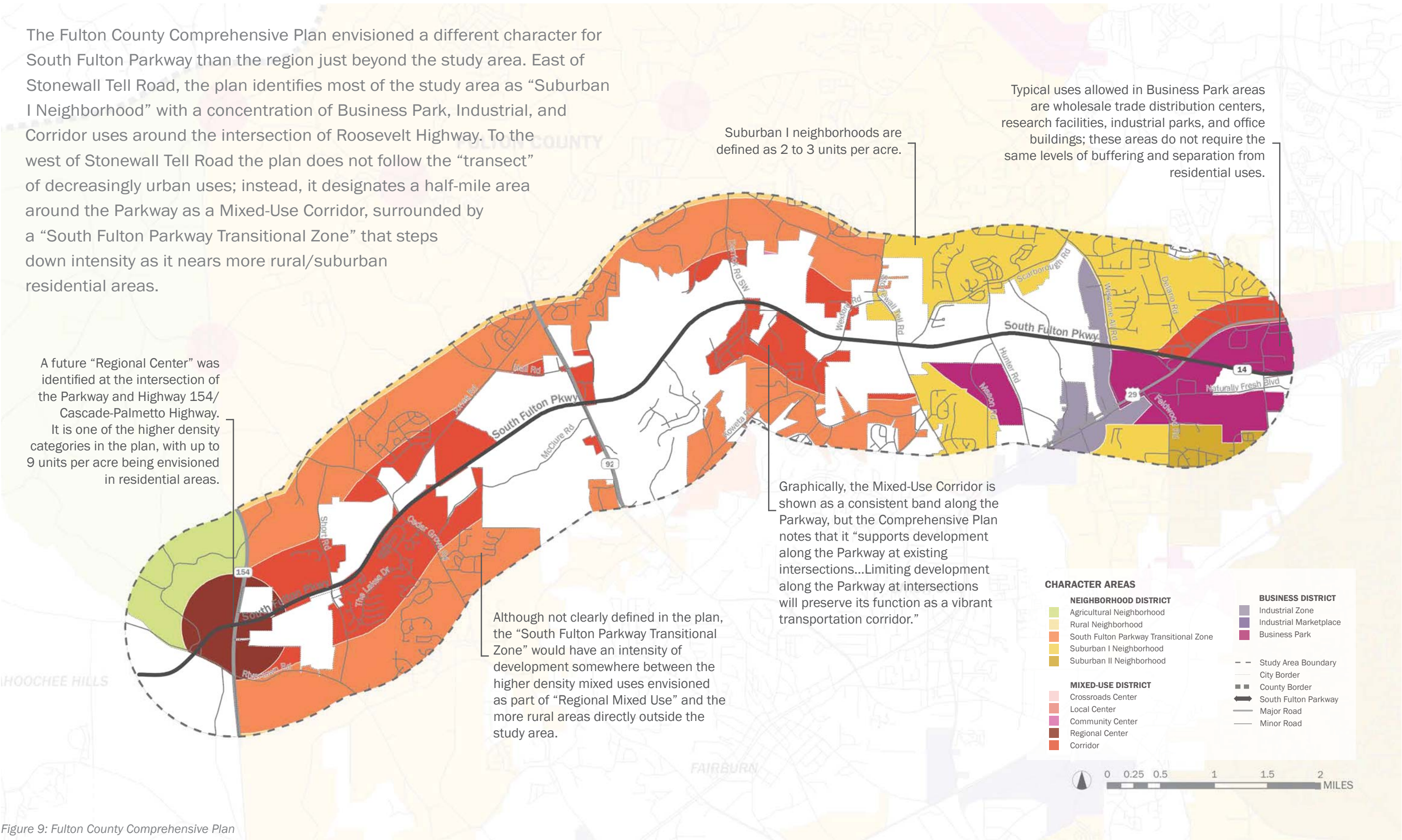


Figure 9: Fulton County Comprehensive Plan

UNION CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Union City Comprehensive Plan addresses four major themes: development patterns, resource conservation, social and economic development, and government relations. Its focus is revitalization of older areas, but also development along the Parkway and in areas east of I-85. The plan identifies the lack of connectivity along the Parkway as an important issue, particularly the scarcity of alternative east-west routes. It sees its proximity to MARTA transit service as a significant opportunity.

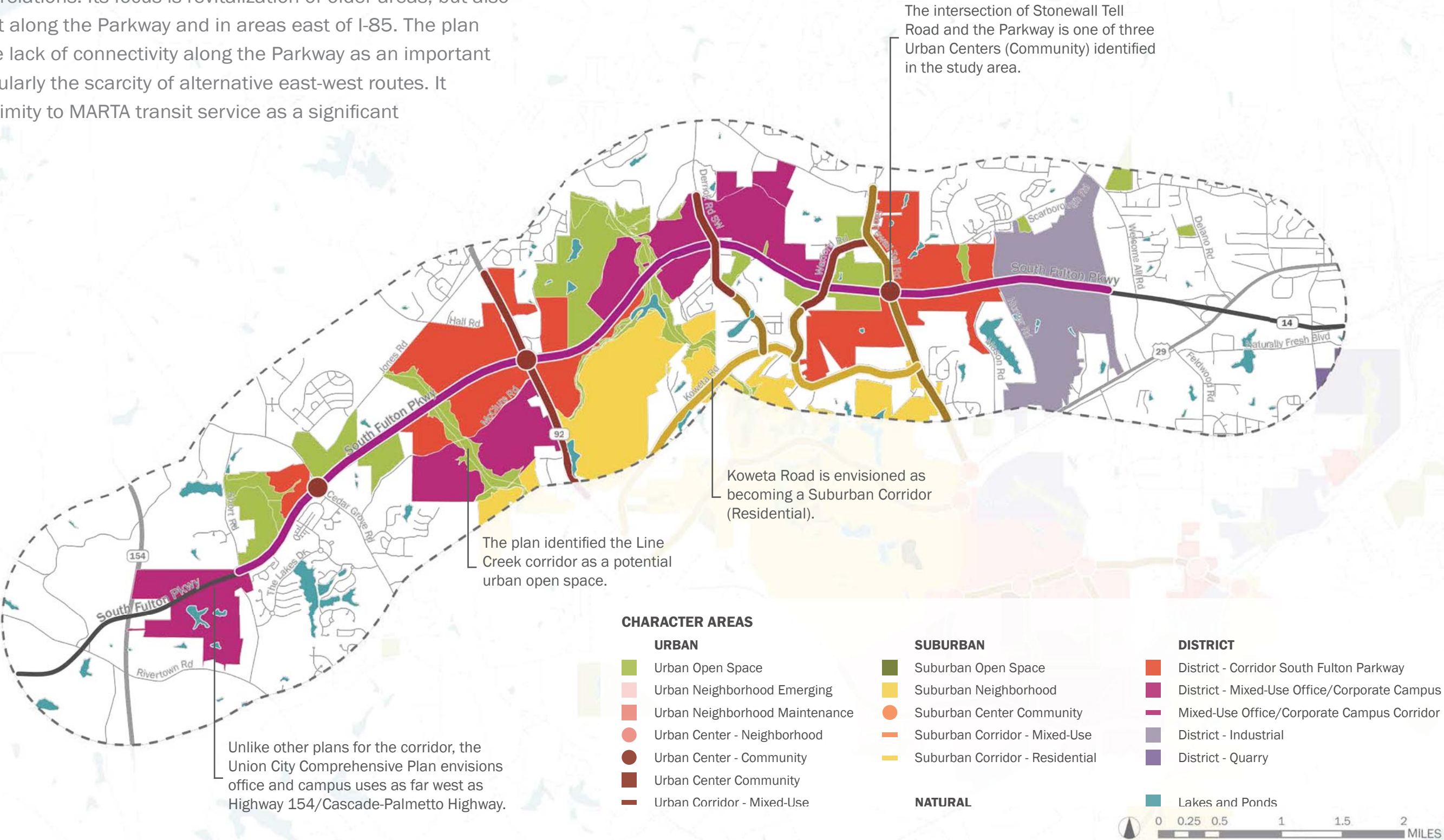


Figure 10: Union City Comprehensive Plan

UNION CITY URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

A broad policy document, the Union City Urban Redevelopment Plan sought to address the blight and disinvestment that has occurred within the City’s Target Area. Although much of the plan focused on reinvestment, it also envisioned the bulk of new development in the City happening along the Parkway. Development on the Parkway is envisioned as mixed use, and supported by a multi-modal transportation system rooted in an integrated busway and stronger north-south connections.

The plan emphasized the need to coordinate with MARTA for a future transit corridor on the Parkway, and mentioned the possibility of passenger rail.

The TCMU district is a very inclusive zone that encourages a higher density mix of uses and strong pedestrian infrastructure; bonuses are included for ground-floor retail and extra open space.

The General Commercial (GC) district is a departure from the predominantly mixed-used zones along the Parkway, and is intended for “certain lands and structures to provide and encourage proper grouping and development of roadside uses, which include a wide variety of sales and services that will best accommodate the needs of the City and the traveling public, reducing traffic congestion, hazard and blight.”

The northern edge of the Poverty Zone (defined as 15 percent or more of households within a Census Block Group are living in poverty) is within the study area.

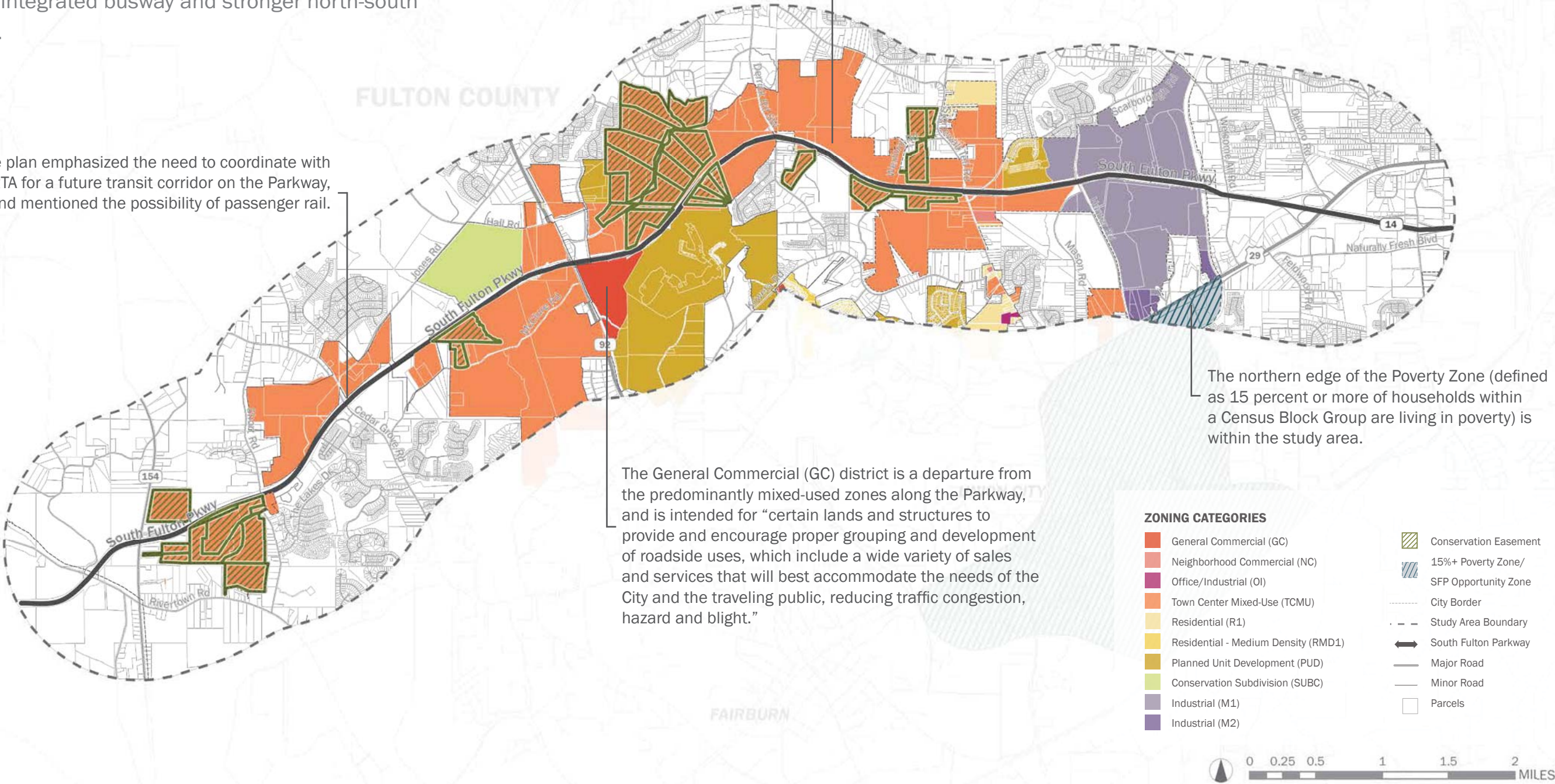


Figure 11: Union City Urban Development Plan

PARKWAY SOUTH: AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

Developed by the South Fulton Parkway Alliance in 2008, the Parkway South concept defined a vision for the Parkway as a “24-Hour People Place.” The concept was based on three areas of focus: the development of “true mixed-use communities,” enhanced infrastructure, and the expansion of transportation alternatives. As part of the Parkway South initiative, a number of potential concepts for individual properties were also developed to demonstrate the concept’s principles in action, with a particular emphasis on corporate campuses.

Shown as a conceptual “Village at Rivertown,” this area north of the Parkway was included as a low- to medium-density residential development modeled after a village pattern.

“Thompson Park” was shown as a large mixed use development with a robust local roadway network, and significant office development and green space; much of this area is now under conservation easement.

The Parkway South concept strings together a number of existing and proposed roadways to create a continuous parallel roadway north of the Parkway.

The land south of the Parkway between Cedar Grove Road and Highway 92 was envisioned as “Town Center at Parkway South,” with a broad band of mixed use along the Parkway, a large corporate campus to the south, and a residential neighborhood at the edge of the study area.

The western-most concept in the study area, this tract was shown as the “Rivertown Business Park,” a high-end corporate office park surrounding a system of lakes and greenways; this land is now under conservation easement.

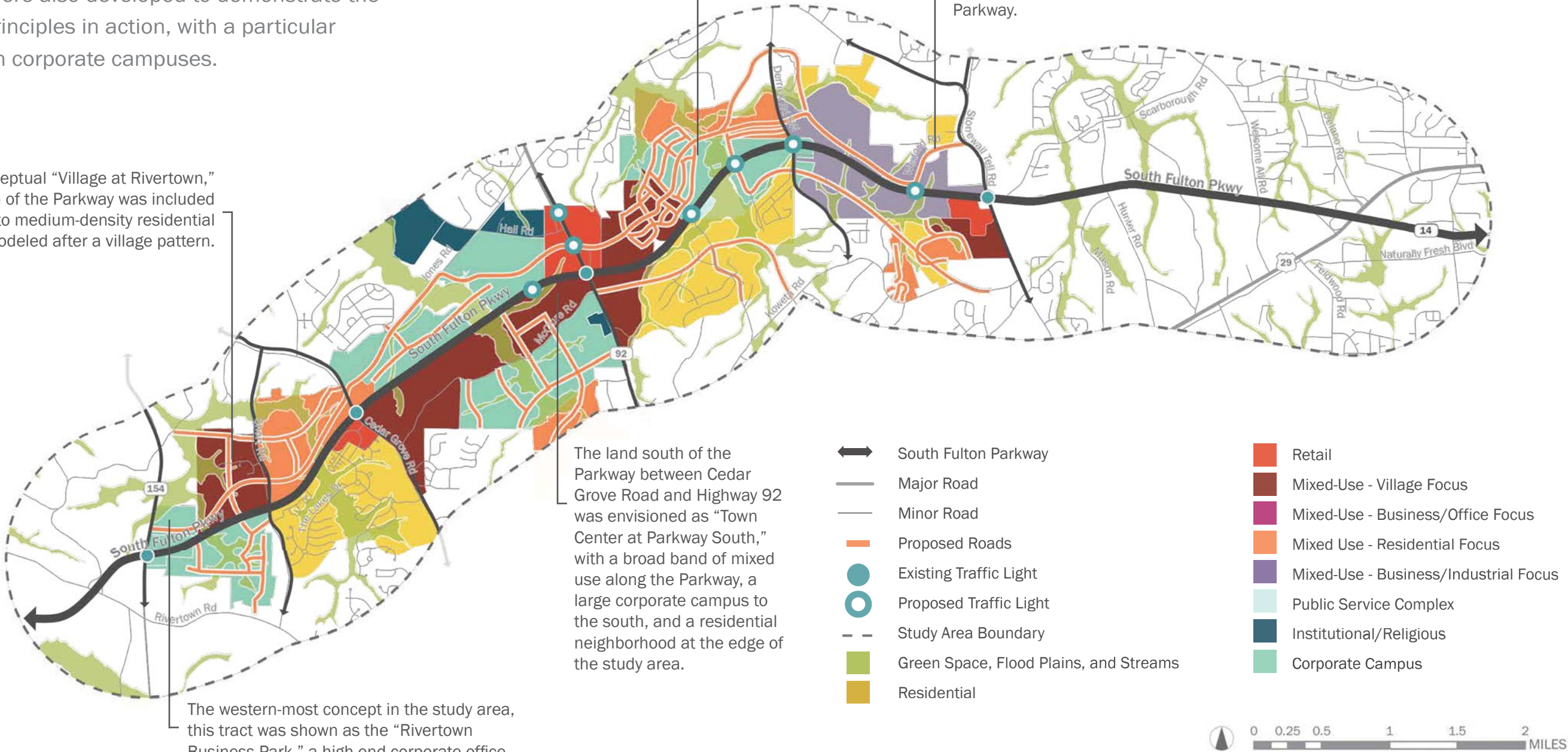


Figure 12: Parkway South Plan

SOUTH FULTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The South Fulton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was a holistic evaluation of transportation needs and priorities in unincorporated Fulton County and its neighboring municipalities. Its goal was “to improve mobility, increase capacity in growing urban and rural areas, mitigate traffic congestion, and encourage alternative modes of transportation” throughout the area. Through the planning process, the CTP compiled a list of hundreds of potential transportation projects culled from various plans, and identified the top priorities for South Fulton County.

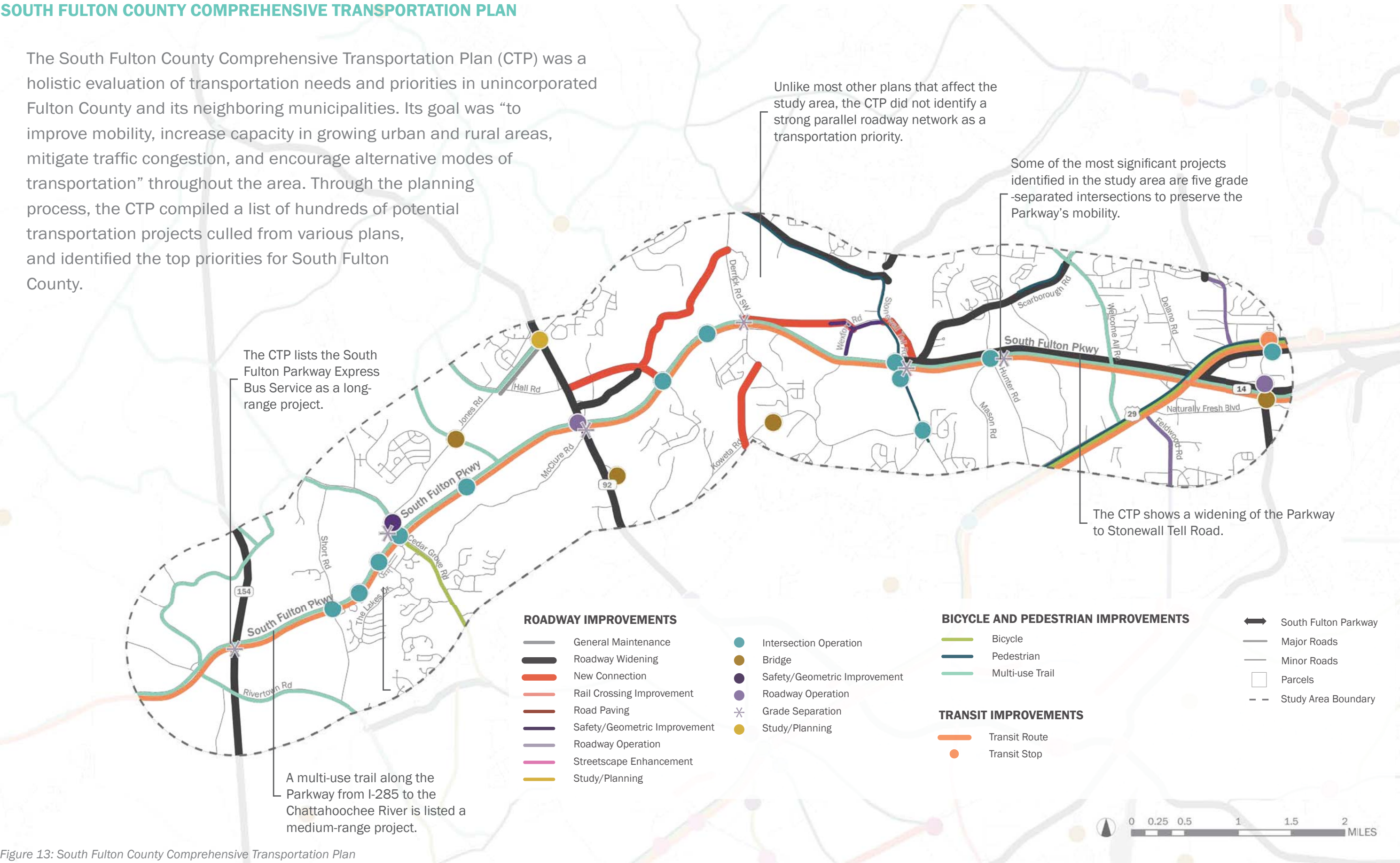


Figure 13: South Fulton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

SOUTH FULTON PARKWAY ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Conducted by GDOT, the South Fulton Parkway Access Management Plan looks 20 years ahead, and envisions the Parkway as a vibrant corridor that will “support local and regional economic vitality through future development, viable transportation connections, improvements to the safety and operations of transportation facilities, and preservation of the natural environment through integrated planning efforts and implementation of sustainable solutions.” It focuses primarily on the balance between access and mobility, and identified key secondary corridors that would form a strong parallel network to the Parkway.

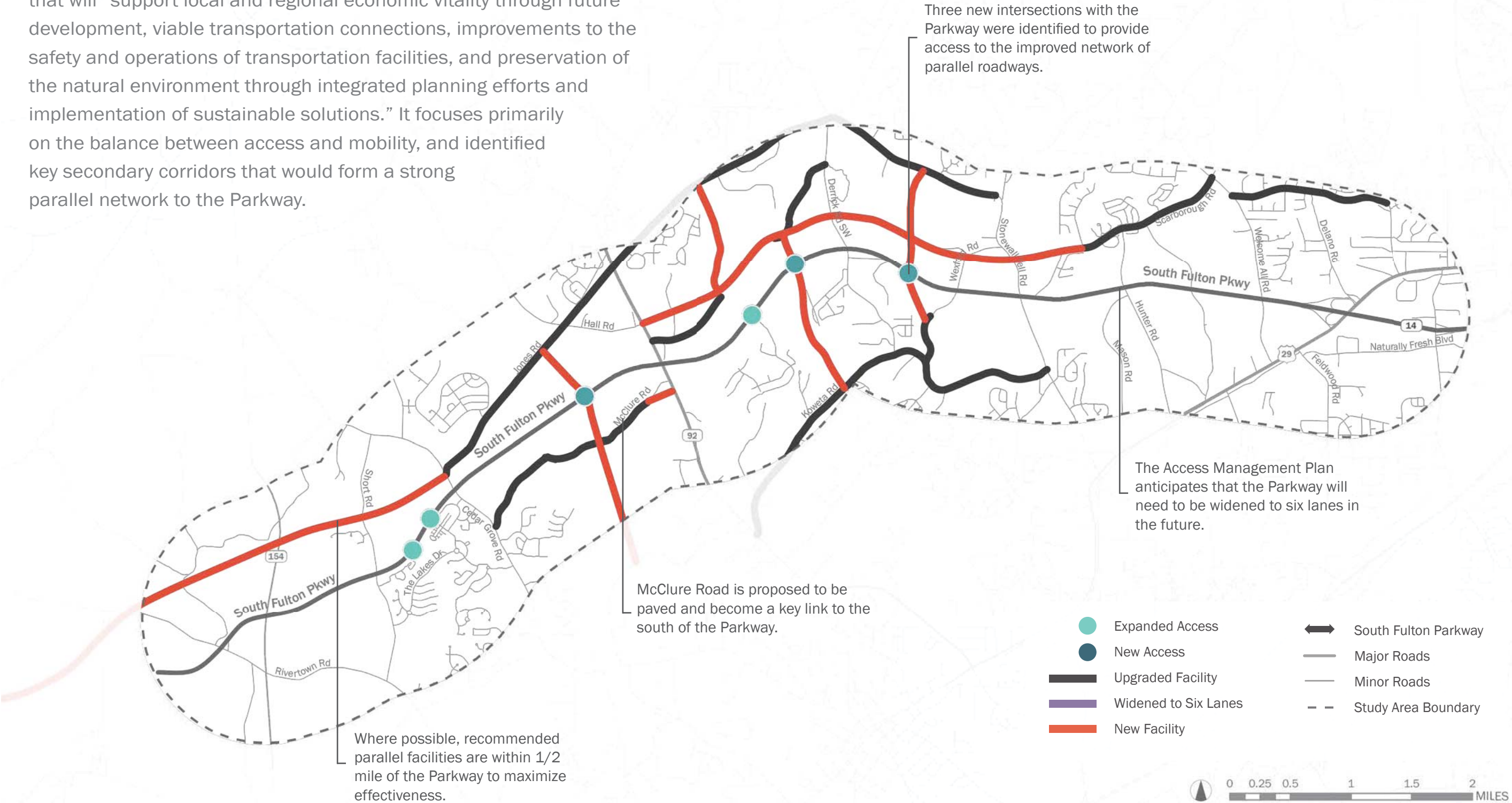


Figure 14: South Fulton Parkway Access Management Plan

SOUTH FULTON PARKWAY TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

MARTA’s South Fulton Parkway Transit Feasibility Study outlines the required actions in order for transit to be viable along the Parkway. The study determined that any type of transit along the Parkway will depend heavily on how land is developed and the policies that are in place to support it. To test transit viability, the study outlined three phases of potential transit service: express bus (30-minute headways, peak hours only); enhanced bus service (15-30 minute headways, all-day); and bus rapid transit (BRT) or other fixed-guideway service. Phase I would reach as far west as Stonewall Tell Road, and Phase II would include the rest of the study area.

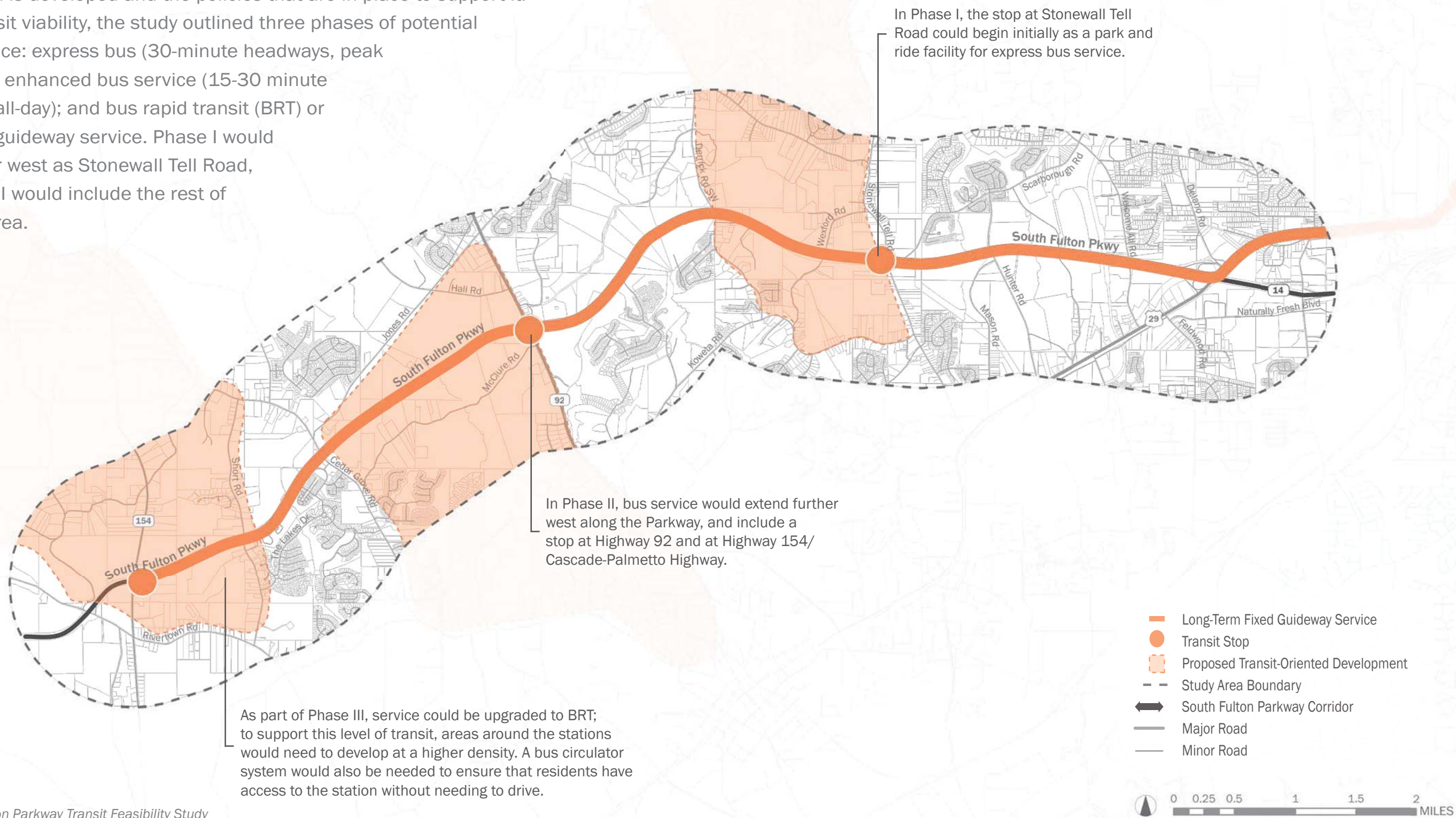
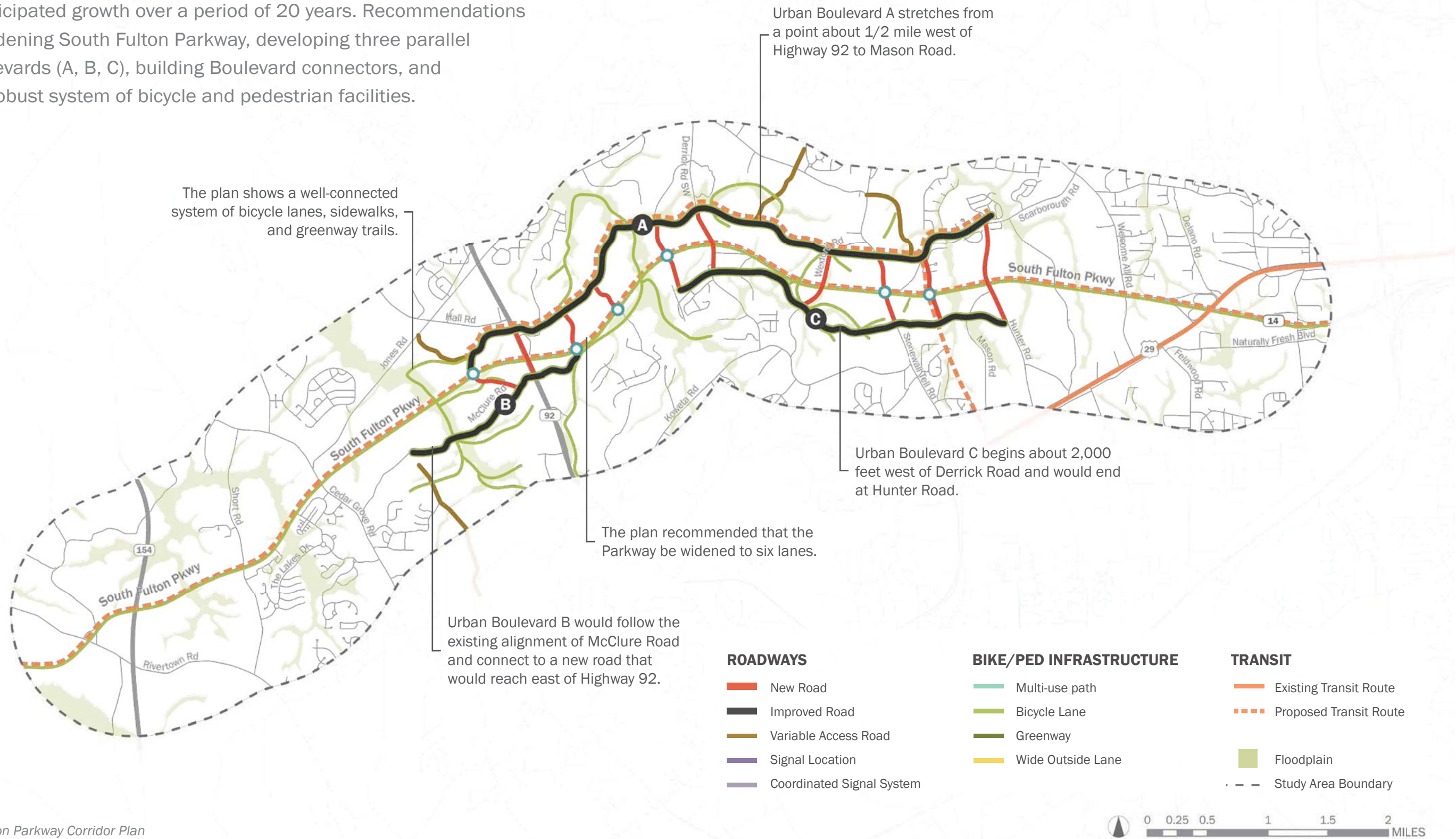


Figure 15: South Fulton Parkway Transit Feasibility Study

SOUTH FULTON PARKWAY CORRIDOR PLAN: A PLAN FOR UNION CITY’S NORTHERN CORRIDOR, TODAY - 2027

Union City’s annexation of 4,100 acres in 2006 near the Parkway prompted the development of a plan to address the corridor’s future. The plan focused on land use and transportation improvements that would be required to support anticipated growth over a period of 20 years. Recommendations included widening South Fulton Parkway, developing three parallel Urban Boulevards (A, B, C), building Boulevard connectors, and creating a robust system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.



PLAN COMMONALITIES

All of the existing plans agree on one thing: growth is coming to South Fulton County. Although the dates, agencies, and intents of the existing planning efforts all differ, most of the plans exhibit the following commonalities in their recommendations/visions for the study area:

- **Development of a parallel roadway network.** With the notable exception of the South Fulton County CTP, existing plans call for the development of a substantial parallel network to the Parkway. The preference for these roadways is to be within a 1/2 mile of the Parkway; opportunities to develop a continuous parallel road are greater north of the Parkway.
- **Limited addition of new access points the Parkway.** Most of the current plans acknowledge the need to preserve the Parkway’s current mobility by limiting the number of new intersections.
- **Focus on mixed-use communities.** In the plans that address land use, there is a heavy predisposition toward large, mixed-use developments.
- **Industrial uses remain east of Derrick Road.** In general, the plans align with the idea that the farther west one travels along the Parkway, the more rural and less developed it is. Most of the plans do not show industrial uses west of Derrick Road.
- **Future transit.** The current plans agree that future development will need to be served not just by a widened Parkway, but also by transit. The majority of the plans identified specialized bus service—ranging from express bus to BRT—as the most likely mode.
- **Creation of a bicycle and pedestrian system.** Most plans demonstrate a desire for a strong bicycle and pedestrian network in the study area.
- **Preservation of greenways.** In part because of the required stream buffers, most existing plans also show a system of greenways that follows the existing creeks in the study area.

PLAN DIFFERENCES

Despite broad agreement on most principles, the plans differ in some important details. Primarily:

- **The extent and exact location of the parallel roadway network.** A new local roadway network ranges from just the main parallels identified to the north and south of the Parkway, to more detailed conceptual networks that would provide access to a web of new residential and mixed-use developments.
- **The number of new intersections and their configurations.** Although the plans mostly agree that new intersections should be limited, they range from showing three new intersections in the South Fulton Access Management Plan to up to six in the South Fulton Parkway Corridor Plan. The South Fulton County CTP goes as far as to recommend the long-term grade separation of multiple intersections along the Parkway.
- **The number and locations of mixed-use communities and nodes.** Current plans show a variety of mixed-use nodes in the study area, ranging from one large regional node at the western edge of the study area (Fulton County Comprehensive Plan) to three smaller nodes placed at major intersections on the Parkway (multiple plans). Other plans do not specify nodes, but indicate large areas of mixed-use.
- **The location of office uses.** The Parkway South and both Union City plans show office uses occurring as far west as Highway 154/Cascade-Palmetto Highway. Although these particular parcels are now under conservation easement, these plans envision corporate campuses further west than the others.

This South Fulton Parkway Corridor Plan process builds off of the broad commonalities, while attempting to rectify the differences between the existing plans. Rooted in these planning efforts and stakeholder input, the following chapter explores alternative futures for South Fulton Parkway.