

**Stonecrest**  
**LCI Plan**  
**DeKalb County**  
in association with  
Atlanta Regional Commission

**SIZEMORE GROUP**

in association with

KIMLEY HORN and ASSOCIATES INC., GIBBS PLANNING GROUP,  
and SYCAMORE CONSULTING, INC.





# Stonecrest LCI Plan

## DeKalb County

in association with Atlanta Regional Commission

### Final Report - August 2013

**SIZEMORE GROUP**

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KIMLEY HORN and ASSOCIATES INC., GIBBS PLANNING GROUP,  
and SYCAMORE CONSULTING, INC.



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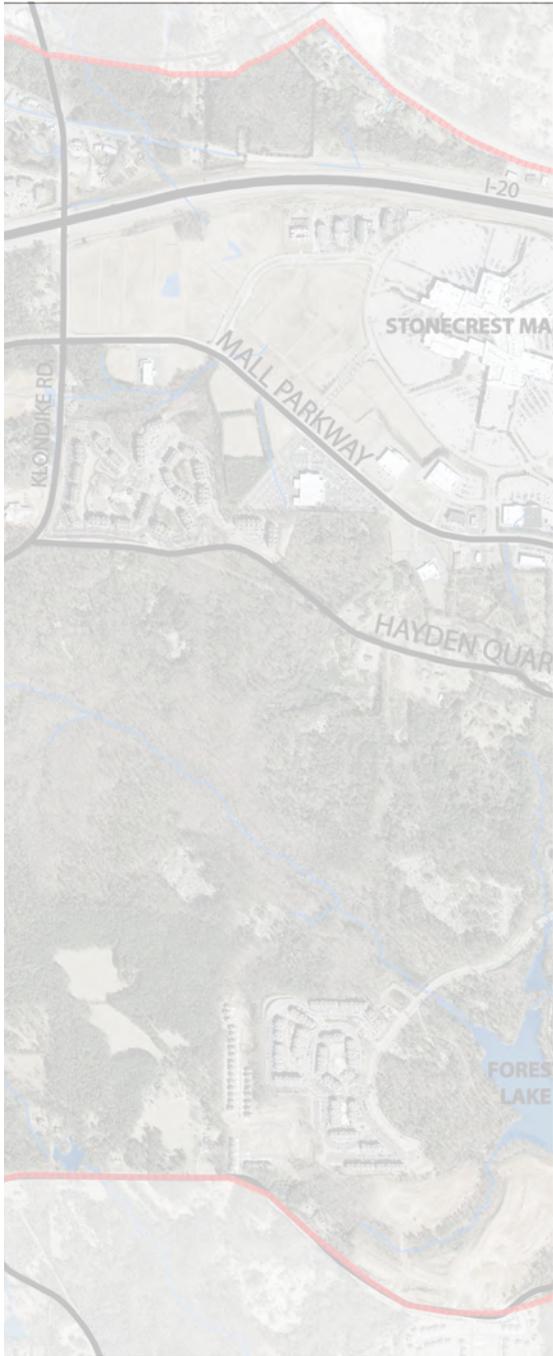
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# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

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# STONECREST

Introduction

## 1.0 Introduction

The Stonecrest Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Plan is a planning study led by DeKalb County and sponsored by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). DeKalb County was the recipient of a 2012 ARC Livable Centers Initiative Study Grant to complete this process.

### 1.1 Location and Context

The study area is located in unincorporated southeastern DeKalb County. It is approximately 20 miles from downtown Atlanta, 10 miles east of the I-20 and I-285 interchange, and is approximately three miles from the Rockdale County line farther east. The land area for the Stonecrest LCI is 2,485 acres and is defined by Old Covington Highway to the north, the DeKalb-Rockdale County line to the east, Rockland Road to the south, and Woodrow Drive to the west. The Mall at Stonecrest, the Arabia Mountain Trail, the Stonecrest Public Library, and Strayer University are all popular destinations located within the study area. Refer to Figures 1a to 1d.

At the core of the study area is the Mall at Stonecrest - a regional mall built in 2001. The Mall and its surrounding outparcels consist of retail, medical, office, hotel and residential uses which are regulated by the County's Stonecrest Compatible Use Overlay District and the Stonecrest Design Controls Guidelines to encourage a pedestrian friendly environment and set forth design standards for the preservation of the value and integrity of the Mall at Stonecrest. Additionally, the study area is located within the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, which celebrates and works to preserve the area's

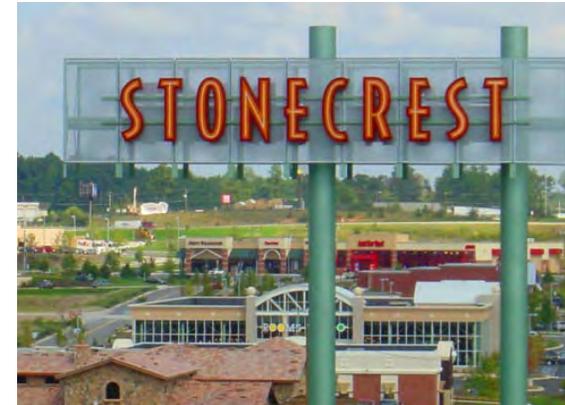
unique history, environment and culture.

The Stonecrest study area is a designated Regional Activity Center, by DeKalb County, due to the existing and planned high density mixed land use, including retail, office, and high density residential. Continued growth and proposed development of the Stonecrest area along with the effects on the housing and retail market due to the current economic recession has created the need for a proactive approach in guiding future land use decisions and creative economic development strategies. This study will seek to enhance the long term economic viability, create a healthy and safe place for pedestrians and cyclists, improve local congestion and promote easy access to jobs and services.

### 1.2 The LCI Program

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program of the Atlanta Regional Commission that awards planning grants on a competitive basis to local governments and nonprofit organizations to prepare plans for the enhancement of existing centers and corridors that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities consistent with regional development policies. Planning grants are awarded to local governments and nonprofits to:

- 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 allow access to all uses within the study



FIGURES 1a: STONECREST SIGNAGE



FIGURES 1b: STONECREST AERIAL



FIGURES 1c: STUDY AREA CONTEXT MAP

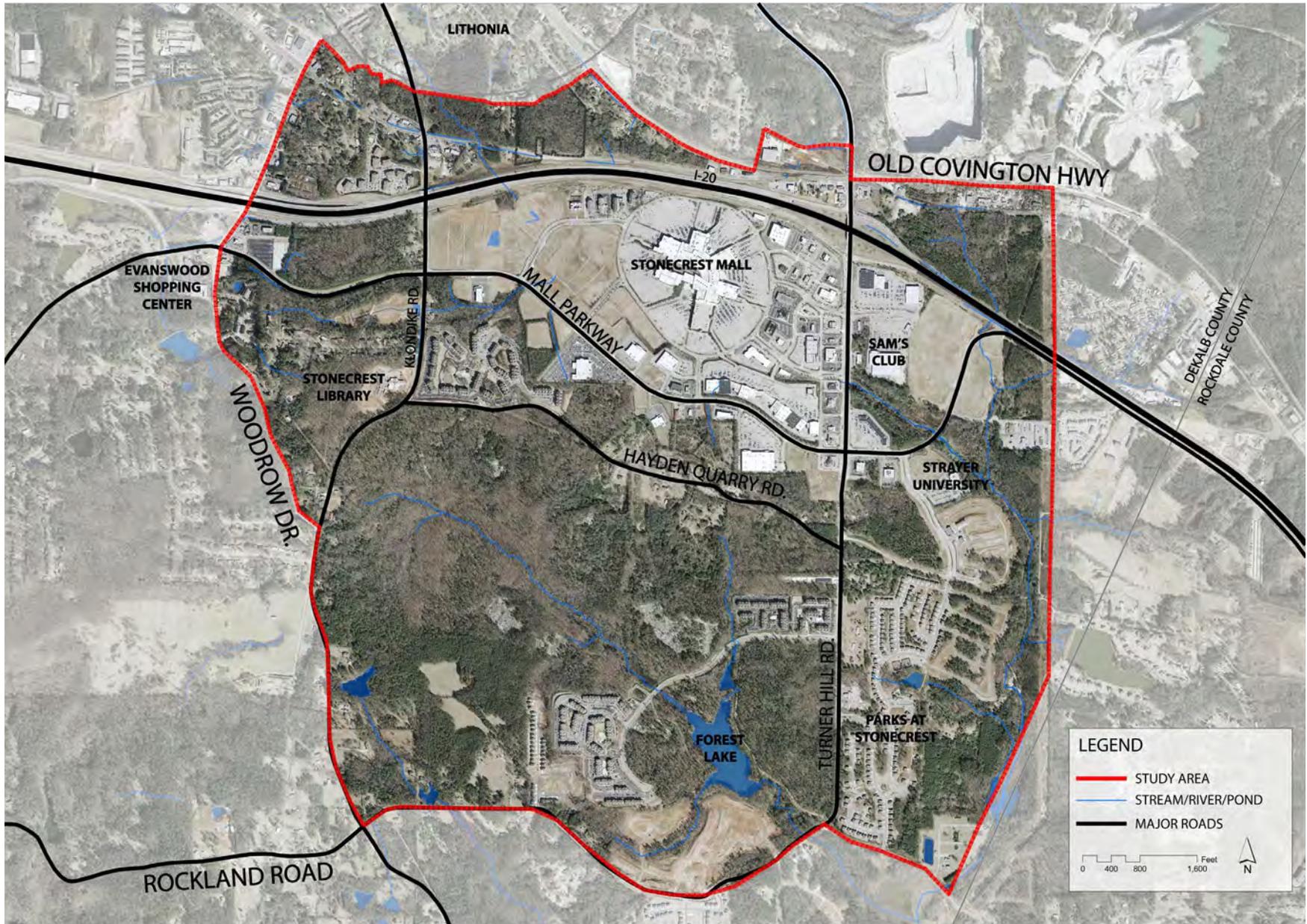


FIGURE 1d: STUDY AREA MAP

area.

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

The LCI program has been an extremely popular endeavor. LCI communities have made significant commitments and investments to create and implement innovative plans for the improvement of their town centers, activity nodes and corridors. This project will result in a master plan that brought various stakeholders together to form a unified vision for the ultimate enhancement of the Stonecrest area.

### 1.3 Previous Studies and Plans

Over the last decade, several plans have been prepared for areas inside and in vicinity of LCI area. These studies, their focus and the recommendations are outlined here. This LCI study will build on these plans by reviewing recommendations and incorporating them in the final plan.

#### DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan

The 2005-2025 DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan provides a shared vision and development plan for the entire County to help manage growth and guide redevelopment efforts. The Community Agenda section of the plan provides a community vision, a list of issues and opportunities to be addressed, and an implementation plan for achieving the vision.

The Community Agenda identifies the northern portion of the Stonecrest study area as a Regional Center. DeKalb County defines a regional center as:

- A concentration of regionally-marked commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, higher-education facilities, recreational complexes and higher density housing.

The Community Agenda also identifies character areas within the study area, including the regional center near I-20, suburban and rural residential areas south of the regional center, and conservation/greenspace throughout the study area.

Additionally, the Community Agenda identifies the Stonecrest Overlay District, an Urban Design Overlay District that is designed for existing low density, single use areas to encourage new mixed-use or higher density development.

#### DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

DeKalb County is currently undergoing a process to update its Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which will identify goals, needs, and investment priorities for the County's transportation system. The Plan is anticipated to be complete in March, 2014. The CTP goals and priorities for the LCI study area should be aligned with the transportation recommendations found within this study.

#### Cadillac Fairview Master Plan

Cadillac Fairview, a previous partial owner of Stonecrest Mall who still owns property in the vicinity, developed a Master Plan for the Mall and surrounding land. This plan has been taken into consideration in the development of this study.

The plan identifies a mix of uses surrounding the Mall, including office, residential, entertainment and additional retail. Higher density housing is shown in closer vicinity to the Mall, while less dense, single

family homes, are located further south.

#### Arabia Mountain Plan

In 2006, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, per National Park Service requirements, completed a Management Plan. The community supported plan, defines significant historic, natural, and cultural sites and addresses how they can be better shared with the public.

The Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area is a major asset to the study area. This plan and stakeholder input from the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance helped direct the recommendations found within this document.

The plan identifies a Heritage Area Visitor Center and Culture and Community Gateway Facility to be located adjacent to the study area, near the intersection of Klondike Road and Plunkett Road. A themed walking and driving route, showcasing the "Early Settlers", mainly Native American culture, historic communities, sites and architecture; is also proposed in the plan that would extend into the study area. This route begins in the City of Lithonia and ends at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit.

### 1.4 The Process

The study process began by clearly defining the goals of the LCI study and aligning these goals with the overall LCI program goals, as listed in section 1.2, with the Project Management Team, the Core Team and the public. At the same time, existing demographics, land use and market conditions were collected through a variety of means to promote a greater understanding of the Stonecrest area. These facts were verified through key stakeholder interviews and information gathered from the public during the kick-off workshop and were

helpful in confirming study area needs and opportunities. Master planning sessions were held with the public at the second Core Team meeting and during a public design charrette held at Stonecrest Mall (refer to Figures 1e and 1g). The feedback gathered during these meetings was used to draft a Master Plan for the study area. The consultant team also developed strategies for implementation of the Master Plan. The draft Master Plan was revealed to the Core Team at their third meeting and to the public at the final open house, which was also held at Stonecrest Mall (refer to Figures 1f and 1h). The final LCI study was presented to the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners for adoption.



FIGURE 1e: DESIGN CHARRETTE, AT THE MALL AT STONECREST



FIGURE 1f: BEFORE AND AFTER VIEW OF MAIN STREET



FIGURE 1g: DESIGN CHARRETTE

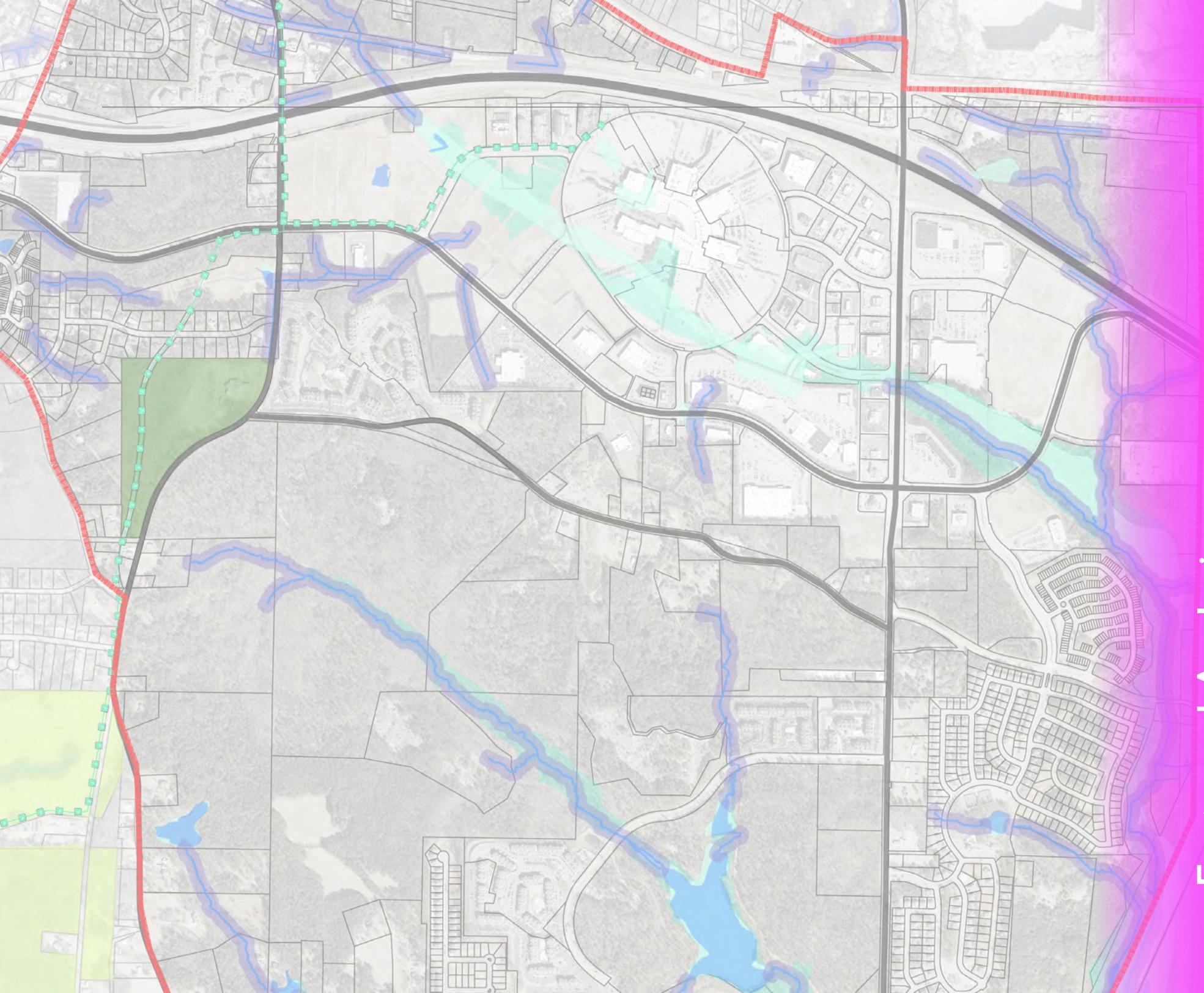


FIGURE 1h: FINAL PUBLIC MEETING, OPEN HOUSE

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

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# Facts and Analysis

## 2.0 Facts and Analysis

### 2.1 Land Use and Zoning

#### Land Use

The current land uses within the study area remain largely segregated, with commercial and retail uses near Interstate 20 and the majority of residential uses residing further to the south.

Retail and commercial uses are largely clustered near the I-20/Turner Hill interchange, which provides easy access and visibility. The Mall at Stonecrest is a major retail draw and takes up a majority of the land between Mall Parkway and I-20. Retail and restaurant out parcels have been developed mainly to the east of the mall, adjacent to Turner Hill Road, due to the freeway accessibility. Parcels to the west of the Mall, adjacent to I-20, are largely undeveloped. These parcels have been graded and are prime for redevelopment. A Walmart is under construction to the east of the Mall, accessible from Turner Hill Road. Other major retailers and commercial tenants in this portion of the study area include Sam’s Club, Target, Best Buy, Strayer University and Stonecrest Toyota.

Five hotel buildings, including one unfinished and abandoned building, sit along I-20 just west of the Mall at Stonecrest.

The majority of residential uses sit to the south of Hayden Quarry Rd, with the exception of a few residential parcels in the north-western portion of the study area, accessible to Klondike Road and Evans Mill Road.

A majority of the land in the south-west portion of the study area is undeveloped. A super block has been formed in this area, bounded roughly by Klondike Road and Pluckett Road to the west, Rockdale Road to the South, Turner Hill Road to the east, and Hayden Quarry to the north. There is little connectivity within this block. Other potential reasons for the lack of development in this portion of the study area are rivers/streams and lakes, including the required 50’ buffer on both sides of the waterway; challenging topography; and potential subsurface rock and outcroppings. Further study on subsurface rock outcroppings will be necessary to determine the economic feasibility of developing on much of this land.

The DeKalb County Future Development Map identifies the study area as a Regional Center for the parcels adjacent to I-20, including the Mall at Stonecrest. The land south of approximately Hayden Quarry Rd. is identified as suburban residential and low density rural residential. Land surrounding existing rivers/streams and the PATH Trail are identified as Conservation or Greenspace areas. Refer to Figure 2a.

#### Strengths

- The study area is anchored by a strong regional retail/commercial node with great access and visibility from I-20.
- Natural waterways and undeveloped forested land provide a natural, rural character for the south-western portion of the study area
- The study area is located within the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, recognized for its unique history, culture, and natural landscape. Located just to the south sits the Arabia

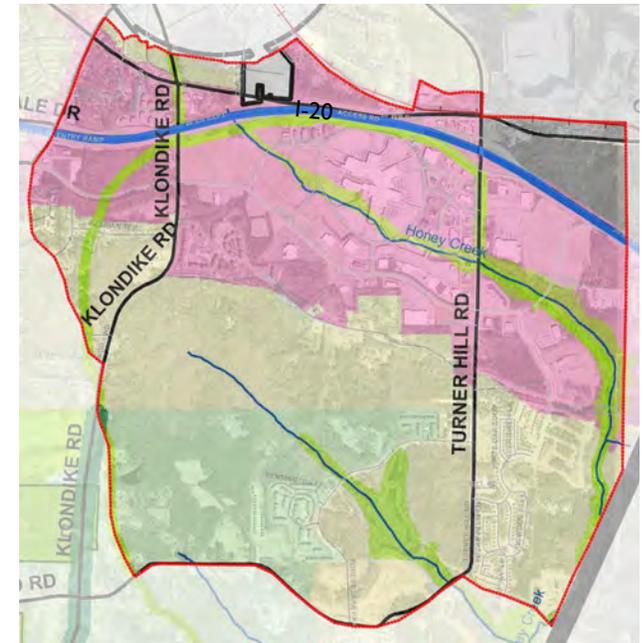


FIGURE 2a: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

#### Character Areas

- Conservation/Greenspace
- Rural Residential
- Suburban
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Center
- Town Center
- Regional Center

Mountain Preserve and Panola State Park.

#### Opportunities

- There exist great opportunity for mixed use development to the west of the Mall on undeveloped land parcels.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate neighborhood retail and a variety of housing options at existing residential nodes. New development can create pedestrian friendly environ-

- ments and improve connectivity through out the study area.
- Connectivity to destinations and housing throughout the study area can be improved through expanding the PATH trail system as well as improving pedestrian and bicycle amenities along existing roadways. Refer to the Appendix for a map of the existing Arabia Mountain trail.

### Property Ownership

The majority of the retail/commercial parcels are individually owned by the tenants. The Mall at Stonecrest is owned by Forest City, with the exception of the anchor stores, who individually own their parcel and designated parking. Refer to Figure 2b for parcel ownership information.

The majority of the undeveloped land to the west of the Mall, is owned by Cadillac Fairview. This land is currently handled by a broker company, Wheeler/Brand Management Company.

The Mall was built in 2001 by Cadillac Fairview and Forest City. Forest City is currently the owner of the Mall property, with anchor stores, such as Kohl's, Macy's, and AMC Theater owning their retail space and adjacent parking lots. The Development Authority of DeKalb provided bond financing for the Mall development and therefore have a financial interest in the property. The Mall layout is based on a 30 year old development model of an enclosed mall surrounded by parking lots and a ring road with auto dependent out parcels.

The majority of the undeveloped and forested land in the southwestern portion of the study area, is owned by two individual property owners.

DeKalb County owns three parcels within the study area - the parcel which hosts the Stonecrest Library, an old water treatment center, and a small undeveloped parcel.

### Zoning

The majority of the study area is within the Stonecrest Overlay District. The Stonecrest area is one of three Urban Design Overlay Districts designated by DeKalb County through its Comprehensive Plan. Such areas are low density, single use areas where mixed-use development is encouraged. The purpose of this overlay is to:

Preserve, protect and enhance existing and proposed open space networks that are adjacent to or within the Stonecrest Area;

Enhance the long term economic viability of this portion of DeKalb County by encouraging new commercial and residential developments that increase the tax base and provide jobs to the citizens of DeKalb County;

To implement the policies and objectives of the 2025 DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and the policies and objectives of the design guidelines for the Stonecrest Overlay District;

To establish and maintain a balanced relationship between industrial, commercial, and residential growth to ensure a stable and healthy tax base in DeKalb County;

To provide a balanced distribution of regional and community commercial and mixed use office centers;

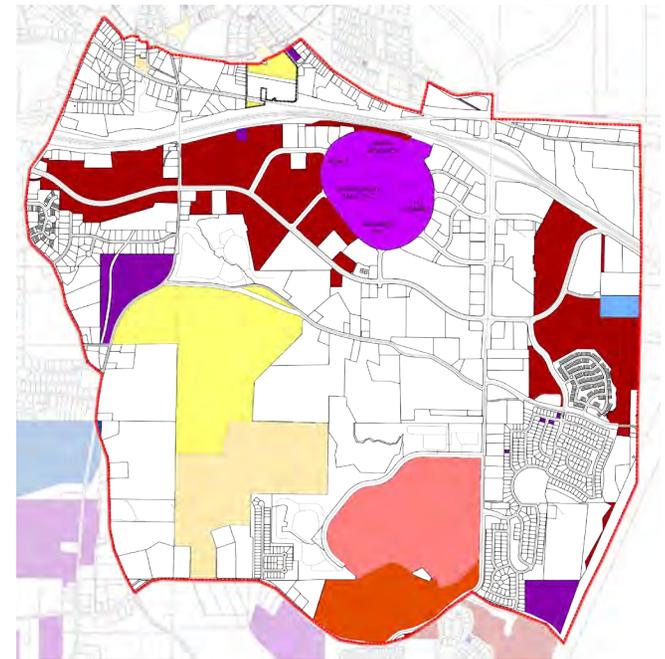


FIGURE 2b: PARCEL OWNERSHIP

#### Parcel Ownership

- DEKALB COUNTY
- DEVELOPMENT AUTH OF DEKALB/FOREST CITY
- STATE OF GEORGIA
- GA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
- CFN I-20 INC
- FOREST LAKE VENTURES LLC
- STONECREST LAND LLC
- PROPERTY OWNER 1
- PROPERTY OWNER 2
- INDIVIDUAL OWNER PARCEL

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

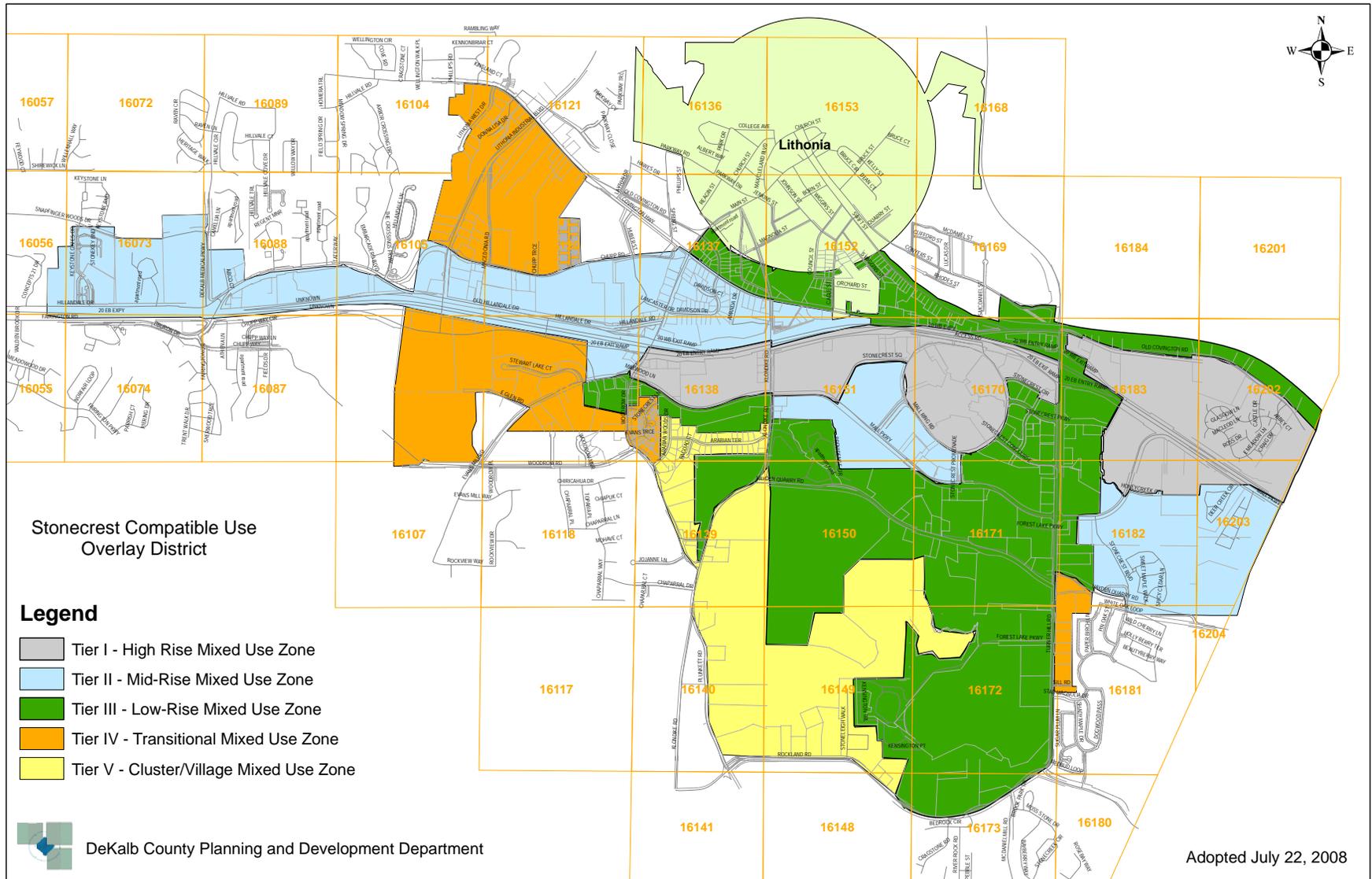


FIGURE 2c: STONECREST COMPATIBLE USE OVERLAY DISTRICT MAP

To support high density housing in office and mixed-use centers which have the appropriate location, access, and infrastructure to accommodate it;

To encourage mixed-use developments that meet the goals and objectives of the Atlanta regional commission's smart growth and livable centers initiatives;

To allow flexibility in development standards in order to encourage the design of innovative development projects that set high standards for landscaping, greenspace, urban design, and public amenities;

To encourage an efficient land use and development plan by forming a live-work-play environment that offers employees and residents the opportunity to fulfill their daily activities with minimal use of single-occupant automobiles;

To allow and encourage development densities and land use intensities that are capable of making productive use of alternative transportation modes such as bus transit, rail transit, ridesharing, bicycling and walking;

To focus and encourage formation of a well designed, pedestrian-friendly activity center with high-density commercial and residential development that increases vitality and choices in living environments for the citizens of DeKalb County;

To protect established residential areas from encroachment of uses which are either incompatible or unduly cause adverse impacts on such

communities, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of DeKalb County;

To promote uniform and visually aesthetic architectural features which serve to unify the distinctive visual quality of the Stonecrest Area.

The overlay is a tier system that allows for high density near the I-20 Corridor with less density as you move further south of the expressway. Refer to Figure 2c for more information on the tiered system of the Overlay and locations.

### Water and Topography

The topography of the study area, logically, follows the rivers and streams, with most undeveloped areas dropping towards these waterways. Refer to Figure 2e.

Topography near the mall drops towards the ring road and rises again towards I-20.

There are several major rivers and lakes throughout the study area, including Honey Creek and Forest Lake, along with adjacent rivers/streams that connect to these waterways. A portion of Honey Creek has been piped north of Mall Parkway, near the Mall at Stonecrest and surrounding parcels. The piped waterway will need a 500 year floodplain right-of-way/retention area. A street and/or path system may be able to be built on it. Refer to Figure 2d.

County and Federal regulations require a 50' stream buffer on both sides of a waterway, preventing development within this buffer. Stream buffers, wetlands and floodplains are identified in Figure 2d and 2e.

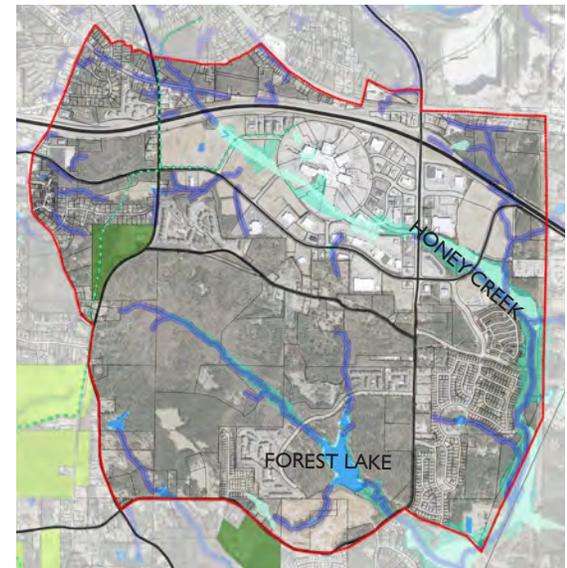
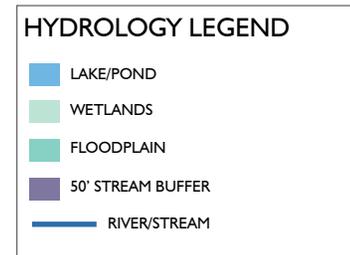


FIGURE 2d: HYDROLOGY MAP



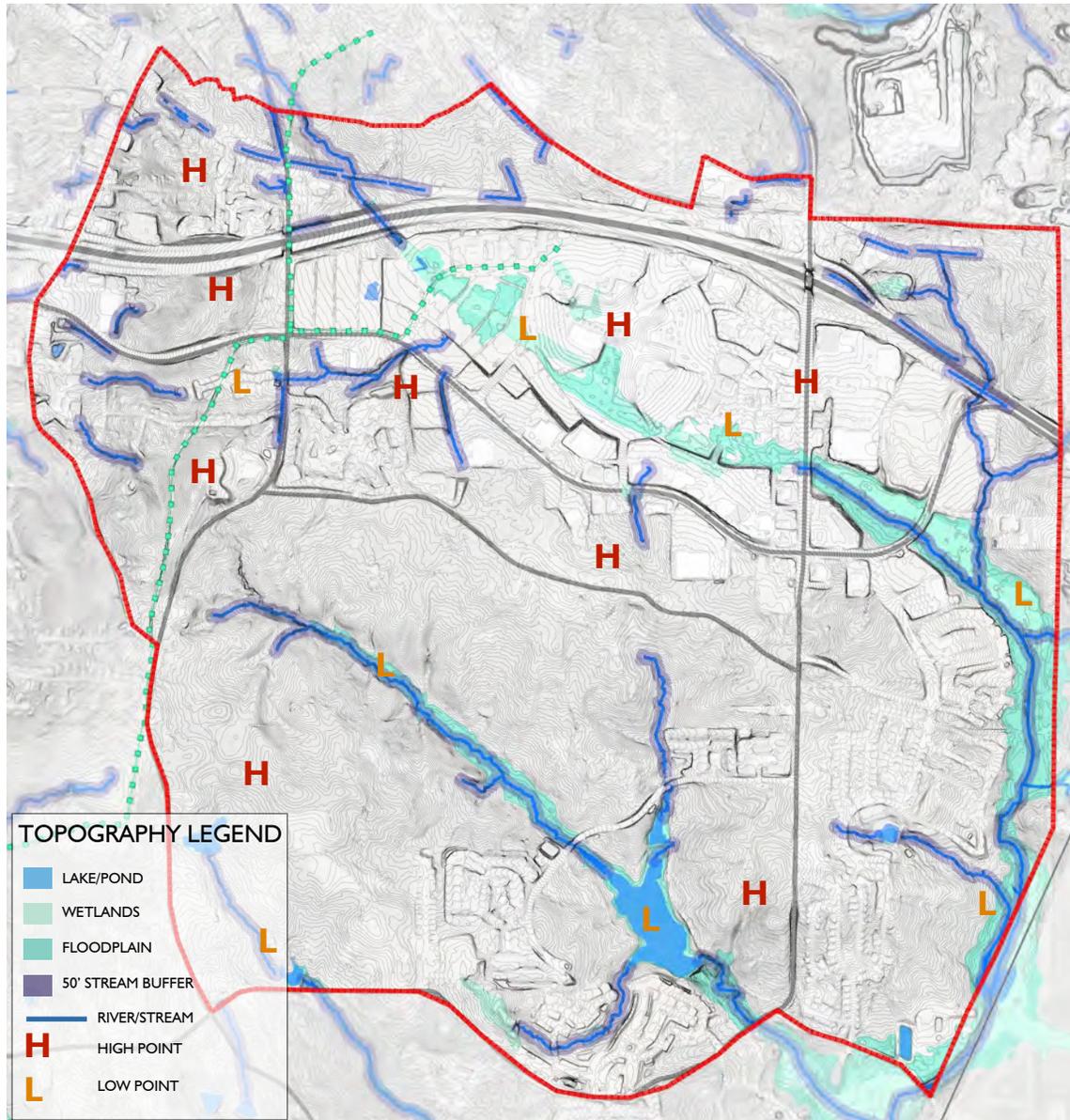


FIGURE 2e: TOPOGRAPHY MAP

## 2.2 Greenspace, Parks and Trails

### Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area

The study area is located within the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area (AMNHA). The Heritage Area is recognized by Congress for its unique contribution to the nation's history based on historical, cultural, and natural significance.

The AMNHA is one of only 49 Heritage Areas in the Nation. This Heritage Area is significant for its strong historic and cultural significance, including Native American culture, African American History, and its part in the history of the quarry industry in the south-east. Additionally, the Heritage Area is home to numerous indigenous plants and species that thrive in this region and landscape. Refer to Figure 2f.

Of natural significance to the AMNHA are the preservation of the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve and Panola Mountain State Park, a County and State Park respectively, located adjacent to the study area boundaries. The natural



FIGURE 2f: AMNHA LANDSCAPE



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ing residential nodes, the Mall at Stonecrest, and other retail nodes. Currently, the primary use of the trail is for recreation.

## DeKalb County Parks

The Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, located adjacent to the study area, is a DeKalb County Park. Within the study area, the site of the Stonecrest Library is considered a County park site, although the undeveloped portion of this parcel is forested land.

While there are rich natural amenities, that are accessible through the PATH trail, surrounding the study area, there is a lack of park space that would allow for community gatherings and festivals; recreation - such as soccer, football, etc.

## 2.3 Transportation

### Transit

Three MARTA bus routes currently serve Stonecrest Mall: Routes 86, 111, and 116. Routes 86 and 111 arrive from the west and connect to East Lake Station and Indian Creek Station respectively. Route 116 arrives in the project study area from the North along Turner Hill Road and connects back to Indian Creek MARTA Station.

The planned MARTA I-20 East Transit Initiative is an effort by MARTA to expand transit further East along the I-20 corridor. The Locally Preferred Alternative includes an extension of heavy rail from the Indian Creek Station to the Stonecrest area. An Environmental Impact Statement is currently underway to determine the best location for this

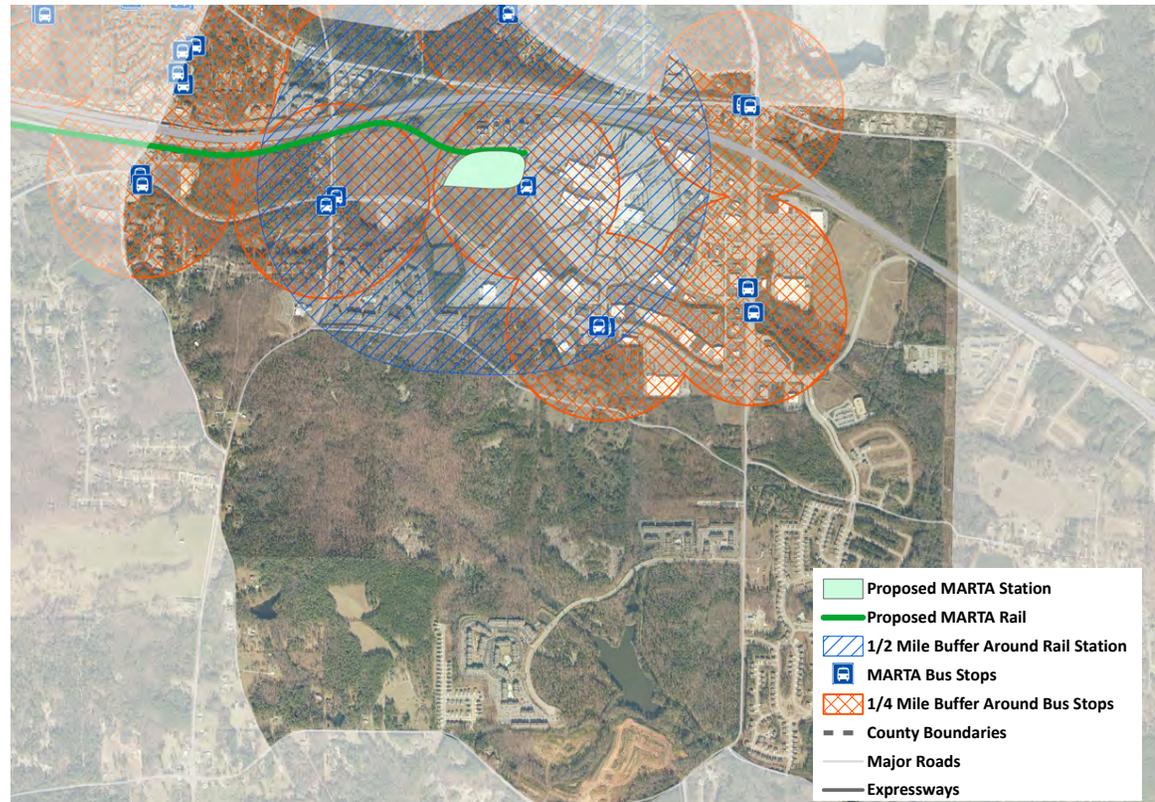


FIGURE 2h: EXISTING PROPOSED STATION LOCATION FROM MARTA

### TIMELINE:



**Total Timeframe: 10–14 years if funding is identified**

FIGURE 2j: MARTA IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

rail line and station, although the LPA location, as identified on the MARTA map, is near Mall Ring Road, west of the Mall. The implementation of this rail line is dependant on funding being achieved and allocated to this project. Refer to Figure 2h and 2j for more information. According to the Atlanta Regional Commission's 2040 Plan, this transit line is programmed for long range funding during the later years of the Regional Transportation Plan.

MARTA does own a parcel of land south of Mall Parkway. While this location is not ideal for a future transit station, due to additional cost to extend the rail line, it could be utilized in a land swap to acquire the appropriate land for the station, closer to the expressway, where the transit line will stem from.

MARTA has expressed that this line extension will most likely be an above ground line due to topography and cost. The cost to build above versus below ground is significant. In Washington D.C., a current WMATA rail station is anticipated to cost \$300 million more to construct below ground. Below ground transit costs may also increase in the Stonecrest area due to presence of excessive rock in the soil.

Much of the study area is low in density which makes the area more difficult to serve by transit. Over time, if the densities and land uses are adjusted to better support pedestrian and bicycle mobility, this will better support the development of the MARTA I-20 East line.

### Roadways

The major roadways in the study area include I-20,

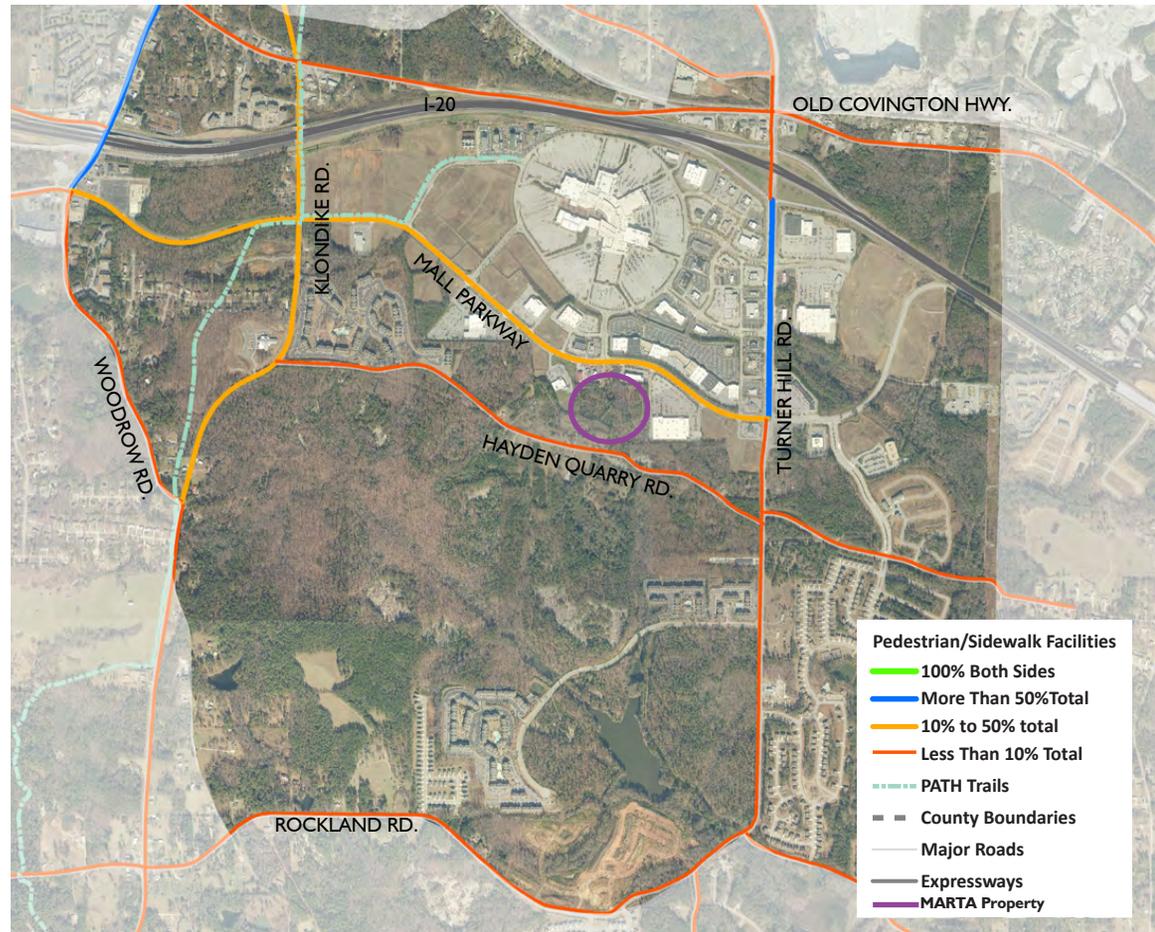


FIGURE 2k: EXISTING PEDESTRIAN/SIDEWALK FACILITIES

Turner Hill Road, Mall Parkway, Klondike Road, Hayden Quarry Road, and Rockland Road. I-20 is accessible from Turner Hill Road. Development patterns have followed this accessibility, with the majority of retail and commercial development along Turner Hill Road near the I-20 intersection. Refer to Figure 2k.

Sidewalks currently exist within the study area along portions of Evans Mill Road, Turner Hill Road, Klondike Road, and Mall Parkway. There is a lack of sidewalks/pedestrian amenities along other roadways in the study area. Refer to Figure 2k.

The highest roadway traffic volumes within the

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

study area are along Turner Hill Road (20,000 vehicles per day) and along Mall Parkway (14,130 vehicles per day)

All traffic signals within the study area occur along three main roadways: Turner Hill Road, Mall Parkway, and Klondike Road. Refer to Figure 2m.

Much of the study area is currently undeveloped, especially south of Hayden Quarry Road. This will mean that much of the desired transportation enhancements will need to be implemented in partnership with private developers as parcels develop over time.

The highest concentrations of crashes appear to occur around the interchanges for I-20. This is not surprising since these are areas where several major intersections have many conflicting high volume turning movements.

Two roadways within the study area are included on the transportation project list for improvements. The Hayden Quarry Road project extends/ connects this roadway to Sigman Road. The Turner Hill Road project widens the roadway to 4 lanes with a median. Currently there is no funding allocated for either of these projects.

## Trails

Segments of PATH trails exist along Klondike Road, Stonecrest Square, and a small part of Mall Parkway. These trails connect Stonecrest Mall with the City of Lithonia and the Arabia Mountain Natural Heritage Area. Aside from the PATH trails, minimal bicycle facilities exist in the study area.



FIGURE 2m: EXISTING SIGNALLED INTERSECTIONS

## 2.4 Market Demographic, and Socio-Economic Profile

### Retail

This study finds that the Stonecrest retail study area can support an additional 217,000 square feet (sf) of retail development at this time, and can sustain a total of 282,000 sf by 2017. The new development would capture up to an additional \$62.3 million in sales. By 2017 the new retail development is estimated to have \$90.0 million in annual revenue. The growth could partially be absorbed by existing businesses plus the development of a new grocery-anchored neighborhood center with 25 to 30 new businesses, including local and national restaurants and retailers.

If opened, these new businesses could fill a void for many of the goods and services that are desired and needed by the surrounding consumers, and take advantage of cross-shopping opportunities with the patrons of the Stonecrest Regional Mall. Refer to Figure 2n.

Business Type	Supportable Size	Number of Stores
Apparel, Shoes & Accessories	8,300 sf	5 - 8 stores
Electronics, Appliances & Computers	9,200 sf	3 - 5 stores
Food & Beverage	64,300 sf	1 - 2 markets
General Merchandise	14,900 sf	3 - 5 stores
Hardware, Lawn & Garden	27,200 sf	2 - 6 stores
Health Care & Personal Services	54,500 sf	12 - 15 stores
Home Furnishings	9,200 sf	2 - 4 stores
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods	600 sf	1 stores
Miscellaneous Retailers	4,300 sf	3 - 4 stores
Restaurants	10,100 sf	3 - 5 stores
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books & Music	15,200 sf	5 - 7 stores
<b>Totals</b>	<b>217,800 sf</b>	<b>40 - 62 stores</b>

Retail Category	2012	2017	2012		2017	
	Supportable Retail (SF)	Supportable Retail (SF)	Captured Annual Sales	Sales Per S/F	Captured Annual Sales	Sales Per S/F
Women's Apparel	1,700	1,800	\$413,000	\$243	\$500,000	\$278
Men's Apparel	1,600	1,700	\$353,000	\$221	\$431,000	\$254
Children's Apparel	2,100	2,200	\$464,000	\$221	\$550,000	\$250
Unisex Apparel	1,300	1,400	\$240,000	\$185	\$289,000	\$206
Shoe Store	1,600	1,700	\$283,000	\$177	\$338,000	\$199
<b>Total Apparel, Shoes &amp; Accessories</b>	<b>8,300 sf</b>	<b>8,800 sf</b>	<b>\$1,753,000</b>	<b>\$209</b>	<b>\$2,108,000</b>	<b>\$237</b>
Computers and Software	1,000	2,200	\$560,000	\$560	\$1,310,000	\$595
General Electronics	3,000	6,300	\$924,000	\$308	\$2,166,000	\$344
Appliances	5,200	9,800	\$742,000	\$143	\$1,587,000	\$162
<b>Total Electronics, Appliances, Computers</b>	<b>9,200 sf</b>	<b>18,300 sf</b>	<b>\$2,226,000</b>	<b>\$337</b>	<b>\$5,063,000</b>	<b>\$367</b>
Full Service Restaurant	1,200	2,000	\$422,000	\$352	\$827,000	\$414
Limited Service Restaurant	8,900	14,900	\$2,518,000	\$283	\$4,737,000	\$318
Drinking Places						
<b>Total Food &amp; Restaurant</b>	<b>10,100 sf</b>	<b>16,900 sf</b>	<b>\$2,940,000</b>	<b>\$318</b>	<b>\$5,564,000</b>	<b>\$366</b>
Grocery Store	60,600	77,200	\$18,786,000	\$310	\$26,093,000	\$338
Specialty Food Store	1,200	1,600	\$432,000	\$360	\$651,000	\$407
Beer, Wine & Liquor Store	2,500	3,100	\$859,000	\$344	\$1,227,000	\$396
<b>Total Food &amp; Beverage Stores</b>	<b>64,300 sf</b>	<b>81,900 sf</b>	<b>\$20,077,000</b>	<b>\$338</b>	<b>\$27,971,000</b>	<b>\$380</b>
Department Store	800	3,400	\$182,000	\$228	\$846,000	\$249
Discount Department Store	1,200	4,700	\$248,000	\$207	\$1,062,000	\$226
Warehouse Club	3,600	3,200	\$1,004,000	\$279	\$972,000	\$304
Used Merchandise	9,300	8,300	\$1,339,000	\$144	\$1,269,000	\$153
<b>Total General Merchandise</b>	<b>14,900 sf</b>	<b>19,600 sf</b>	<b>\$2,773,000</b>	<b>\$215</b>	<b>\$4,149,000</b>	<b>\$233</b>
Building Materials & Supplies	20,400	25,800	\$4,752,000	\$233	\$6,862,000	\$266
Lawn, Garden Equipment and Supplies	6,800	7,600	\$1,501,000	\$221	\$1,914,000	\$252
<b>Total Hardware, Lawn &amp; Garden</b>	<b>27,200 sf</b>	<b>33,400 sf</b>	<b>\$6,253,000</b>	<b>\$227</b>	<b>\$8,776,000</b>	<b>\$259</b>
Drug Store/Pharmaceutical	25,800	30,200	\$12,589,000	\$488	\$16,881,000	\$559
Health & Beauty Store	6,600	8,100	\$1,629,000	\$247	\$2,178,000	\$269
Optical/Vision Care	8,500	10,000	\$2,345,000	\$276	\$3,279,000	\$328
Personal Services	13,600	15,900	\$3,821,000	\$281	\$4,992,000	\$314
<b>Total Health Care &amp; Personal Services</b>	<b>54,500 sf</b>	<b>64,200 sf</b>	<b>\$20,384,000</b>	<b>\$323</b>	<b>\$27,330,000</b>	<b>\$368</b>
Furniture Store	5,300	6,900	\$1,515,000	\$286	\$2,152,000	\$312
Home Furnishings	3,900	4,200	\$741,000	\$190	\$890,000	\$212
<b>Total Home Furnishings Store</b>	<b>9,200 sf</b>	<b>11,100 sf</b>	<b>\$2,256,000</b>	<b>\$238</b>	<b>\$3,042,000</b>	<b>\$262</b>
Jewelry Store	600	1,700	\$213,000	\$355	\$674,000	\$396
Luggage & Leather Store						
<b>Total Jewelry, Luggage, &amp; Leather Goods</b>	<b>600 sf</b>	<b>1,700 sf</b>	<b>\$213,000</b>	<b>\$355</b>	<b>\$674,000</b>	<b>\$396</b>
Art, Craft & Sewing Stores	1,000	1,100	\$200,000	\$200	\$239,000	\$217
Musical Instrument	700	1,500	\$154,000	\$220	\$369,000	\$246
Book & Music	10,500	13,100	\$1,522,000	\$145	\$2,121,000	\$162
Sporting Goods	2,300	4,700	\$508,000	\$221	\$1,160,000	\$247
Toy & Hobby	700	1,400	\$117,000	\$167	\$264,000	\$189
<b>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books, &amp; Music</b>	<b>15,200 sf</b>	<b>21,800 sf</b>	<b>\$2,501,000</b>	<b>\$191</b>	<b>\$4,153,000</b>	<b>\$212</b>
Card/Gift Shop						
Florists						
Office Supplies, Stationary	2,200	1,900	\$486,000	\$221	\$475,000	\$250
Pet Supply Store	1,300	1,300	\$247,000	\$190	\$279,000	\$215
Tobacco Shop	800	900	\$260,000	\$325	\$339,000	\$377
Video/Entertainment	0	600			\$90,000	\$150
<b>Total Miscellaneous Retailers</b>	<b>4,300 sf</b>	<b>4,700 sf</b>	<b>\$993,000</b>	<b>\$245</b>	<b>\$1,183,000</b>	<b>\$248</b>
<b>Total Identified Retail Expenditure</b>	<b>217,800 sf</b>	<b>282,400 sf</b>	<b>\$62,369,000</b>	<b>\$272</b>	<b>\$90,013,000</b>	<b>\$303</b>

FIGURE 2n: RETAIL MARKET STUDY - DEMAND

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

## Trade Area

Based on our field evaluation, the existing retail hubs, population clusters, highway access, and the retail gravitation in the market, as well as our experience defining trade areas for similar communities throughout the United States, Gibbs Planning Group (GPG) determined that consumers in the Stonecrest primary and secondary trade areas generate demand to support a wide variety of additional neighborhood and community scale retailers. This potential will continue to grow over the next five years, sustained by a modest annual population growth rate of 0.44 percent and average household income growth of 2.9 percent.

The primary trade area is the consumer market where the Stonecrest study area has a significant competitive advantage because of access, design, lack of competition, and traffic and commute patterns. This competitive advantage equates to a potential domination of the capture of consumer expenditure by the retailers in the study area. The secondary trade area is the consumer market, which provides some capture of consumer expenditure, but the study area does not hold the position of supremacy in this market as it does in the primary trade area. The Stonecrest Mall has regional retail gravity, increasing the capture of the secondary trade area to approximately 40 percent of total sales.

GPG defined a primary trade area by topography, vehicular access, strength of retail competition, and residential growth patterns. In this study area, consumers inside of the primary trade area will account for almost 60 percent of the total sales. Due to the strong retail gravitational pull of

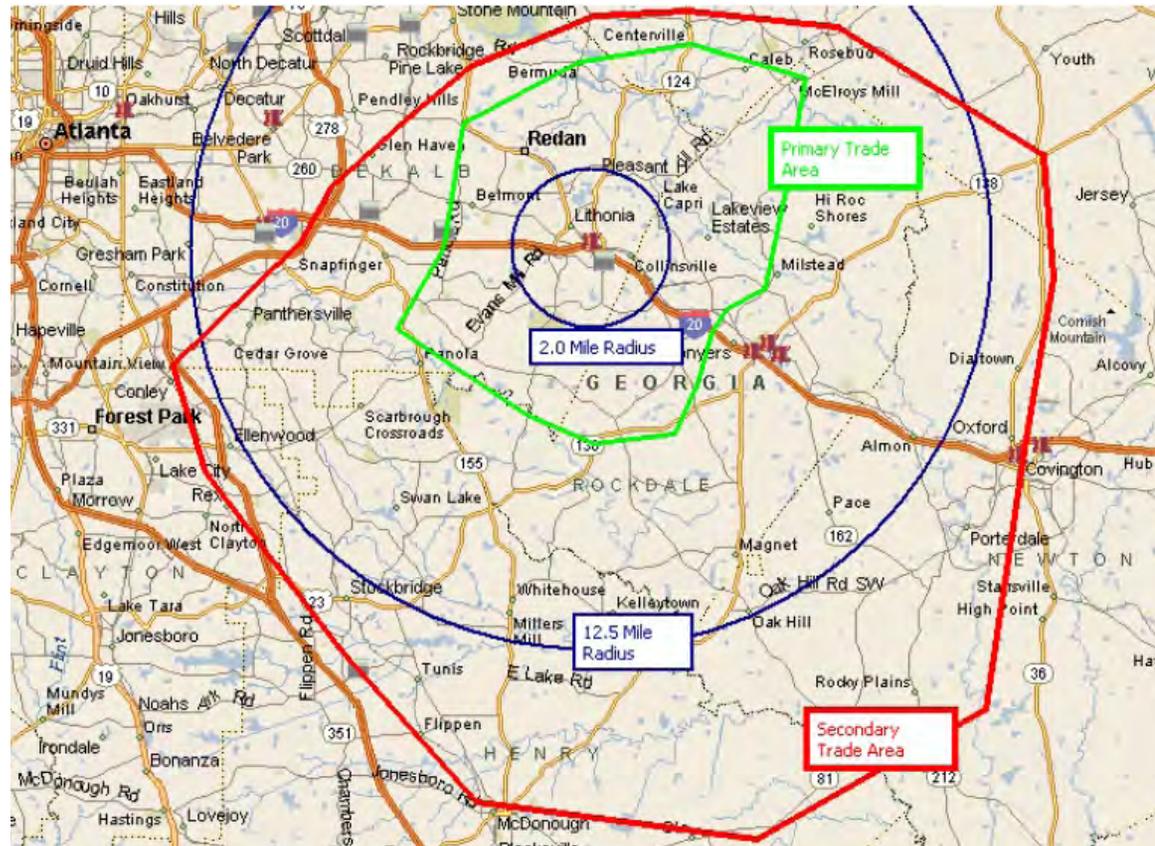


FIGURE 2p: RETAIL TRADE AREA

Memorial Drive/US 78 corridor to the north, limited population density to the immediate south and east, and a lack of strong competition to the south, GPG finds that primary trade area is centered on the Stonecrest mall, while being elongated slightly to the northeast and south. Refer to Figure 2p.

The following borders approximately delineate the primary trade area:

- Parallel and south of the US 78 corridor to the north
- Along Loganville Highway to the east
- Stockbridge Highway to the south
- Snapfinger Road to the west

## Housing

This study finds that the Stonecrest residential site will have a limited demand for 60 to 80 additional housing units by 2017, because of the existing inventory of 2nd generation builder lots that were purchased at below development cost. The long-term projection through 2040 also has total residential expansion of up to 575 to 600 new dwellings, based on a projected housing unit growth rate of 0.33 percent annually in the nearby sector.

Housing product for this site should be active adult targeted in-line 4-6 plex condos or small lot village homes, which will appeal to DeKalb County's empty nester population and mitigate the impact of the local DeKalb County Public Schools, which are rated below the state averages by [GreatSchools.org](http://GreatSchools.org). Units in the 4-6 home buildings should be a Stonecrest style ranch or Cape Cod style with an attached 1-2 car garage, ranging in size from 1,100 to 1,600 square feet (sf). Refer to Figures 2s.



SMALL LOT VILLAGE HOMES

The study area can support small lot village homes. These homes appeal to empty nesters, young families and singles.

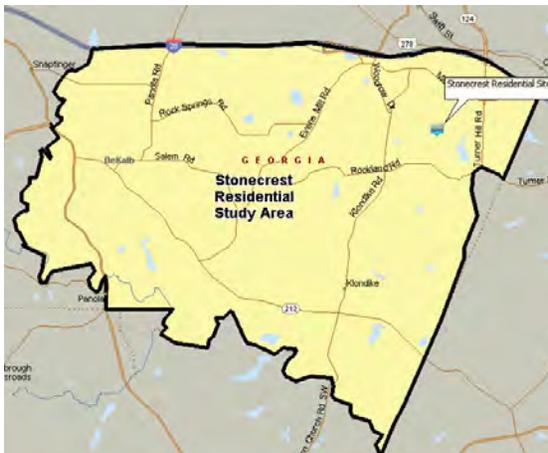


FIGURE 2r: RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA



FIGURE 2s: RANCH-STYLE CONDOS

Ranch-style condos are attractive options for the growing households in the 55+ consumer age group

The Stonecrest residential project needs to have easy pedestrian and vehicular access to the Regional Mall amenities, as well as its own node in the public transportation grid. Pricing for this product is recommended to start at the \$80 per sf level to overcome the lingering effects of the 2008-2009 national housing recession, during which time average home values in the local 30038 zip code fell from \$133,000 to a 2013 level of \$61,000.

Gibbs Planning Group, Inc. (GPG) finds that based on: (1) recent residential development patterns which favor the northwest DeKalb County areas of North Decatur and the Druid Hills, (2) school district boundaries (Lithonia High School, Lithonia Middle School and Murphy Candler Elementary), and (3) the projected 27-year limited population growth in the Stonecrest housing market area, as well as our experience defining trade areas for similar residential developments throughout the United States, this 30038 zip code study area has limited potential for future residential demand until the existing inventory is absorbed.

### *Background*

GPG has been retained by DeKalb County to conduct a residential study for the Stonecrest-Lithonia Study Area. The boundaries of the study area are Turner Hill Road to the east, Rockland Road to the south, Klondike Road to the west and the Stonecrest Regional Mall to the north. The location is situated in southeast DeKalb County on the Interstate 20 corridor, which continues east through Conyers to Covington, at the edge of Metropolitan Atlanta. There are multiple apartment projects on site, and developed vacant single family and multiple family home sites to the imme-

diately east across Turner Hill Road.

### *Residual Impact of 2008-2009 Financial Crisis*

The residential market for new home construction in the Stonecrest trade area has multiple issues. The most serious is the impact of depressed absorption rates on formerly active new home communities from 2009 to 2013. To generate the sale of approximately 5,000 new dwelling units in 2007, there would have to be an existing inventory of nearly 15,000 lots and condo pads in the DeKalb marketplace, plus an entitlement pipeline of 5,000 to 8,000 lots of additional projects seeking approvals. The low levels of absorption beginning in 2009 significantly increased costs attributed to the debt service on the then current inventory of development lots and condo sites. Combined with the effective decrease in sales prices of new homes, caused by considerable increases in builder incentives (or actual reductions in sales prices) to spark absorption, the interest carry expense had a catastrophic impact on the traditional home building economic model of 50 percent of the sales price for direct cost, 20-25 percent for land/pad cost, 25-30 percent for gross profit.

The impact of driving down the sales price with builder incentives, or evolving the product type towards smaller homes with lower gross sales prices (with the price per square foot remaining approximately the same), while potentially adding five years of extra interest carry to the cost of the improved lots, drove the cost for the land component up to 40-45 percent of the sales price, which causes the builders' gross profit to approach 0 percent. The economics of this downward spiral is the primary cause of bank foreclosure for build-

ers/developers on the developed and undeveloped lots, models and spec homes in residential projects.

The secondary consequence of the foreclosure on a builder/developer is the creation of a market for foreclosed residential projects. These projects were typically sold for 25 to 40 percent (which is related to the original loan to cost ratios required by the bank at the approval of the acquisition and development loan) of the actual land development costs. This is a very favorable circumstance for the next generation of well-capitalized builder who, without legacy costs, gets the developed lots or condo pad sites at a below cost rate, making home building for second generation builders possible and reducing new home purchase prices.

However, the sale of developed lots and condo pad sites for a fraction of actual development costs inhibits new vacant land development by creating a substantial competitive disadvantage for builders/developers of vacant land properties, who have a lot cost basis of actual costs - not the fraction of cost paid by the second generation builder at the foreclosed site. This market outcome may have the effect of extending the economic suspension of new residential land development at the Stonecrest site through 2015 (or until a significant amount of the foreclosed and resold projects are built out and sold to new home consumers), even though new home construction permits should begin to make significant gains in 2013 and 2014.

Over the last four years since the nation's financial crisis, DeKalb County has issued only about 4,000 new dwelling unit permits, about 20-25 percent of the 2008 excess lot inventory. The "A" quality sites in the Druid Hills and North Decatur areas

have had the best absorptions of the legacy inventory. As the second generation builders deplete the foreclosed sites in the northwestern portion of DeKalb County, the demand for the Stonecrest residential area homes will pick up.

#### Stonecrest Residential Study Area Statistics

The overall Stonecrest residential study area (refer to Figure 2r), in the 30038 zip code, is located in the southeast portion of DeKalb County. This area has a 2012 population of 37,800, approximately 5.3 percent of the county population and 14,400 households. Average household size is 2.58 persons, with an annualized population growth rate at 0.85 percent. In 2012, there were an estimated 16,300 housing units with a vacancy rate of 11.7 percent. Home ownership is at 53.5 percent, while renters occupied 34.8 percent of the housing stock. Home ownership and renter levels are projected to rise by 2017 to 54.4 and 35.4 percent, respectively. Gains in both categories will come from limited population and household growth, and a decrease in the vacancy rate which is expected to fall to 10.2 percent.

Housing units for 2017 in the 30038 zip code are estimated to rise to 16,700, an increase of just over 400 dwelling units. This increase in demand is primarily for single family homes, which is 65 percent of new residences. New rental unit demand accounts for 35 percent. Long-term demand for residential units is best estimated by the Atlanta Regional Commission, which projects minor population gains for this residential study area at a growth of only 3,000 persons by 2040, to the level of 40,300 persons. This population growth equates to a total residential housing units number

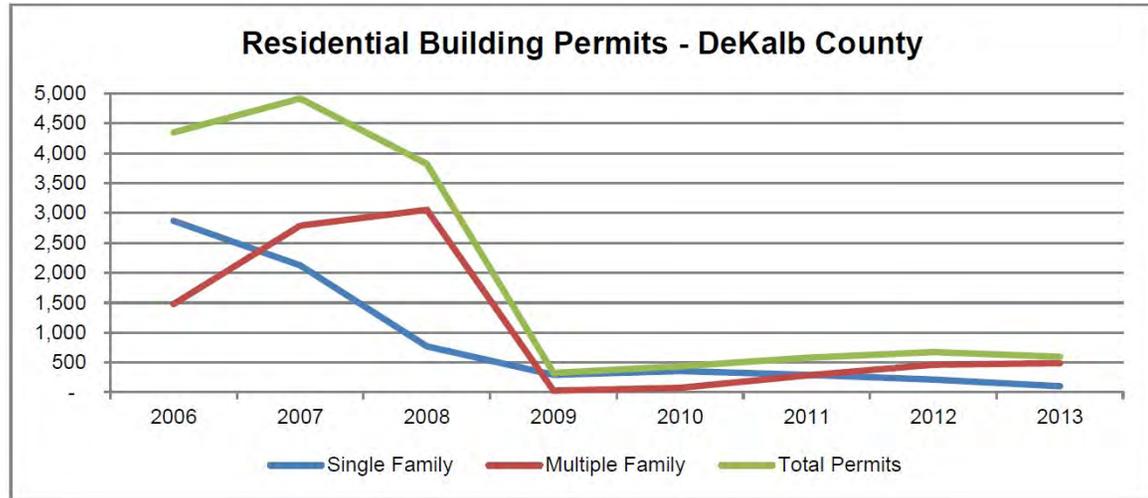


FIGURE 2r: RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS, DEKALB COUNTY

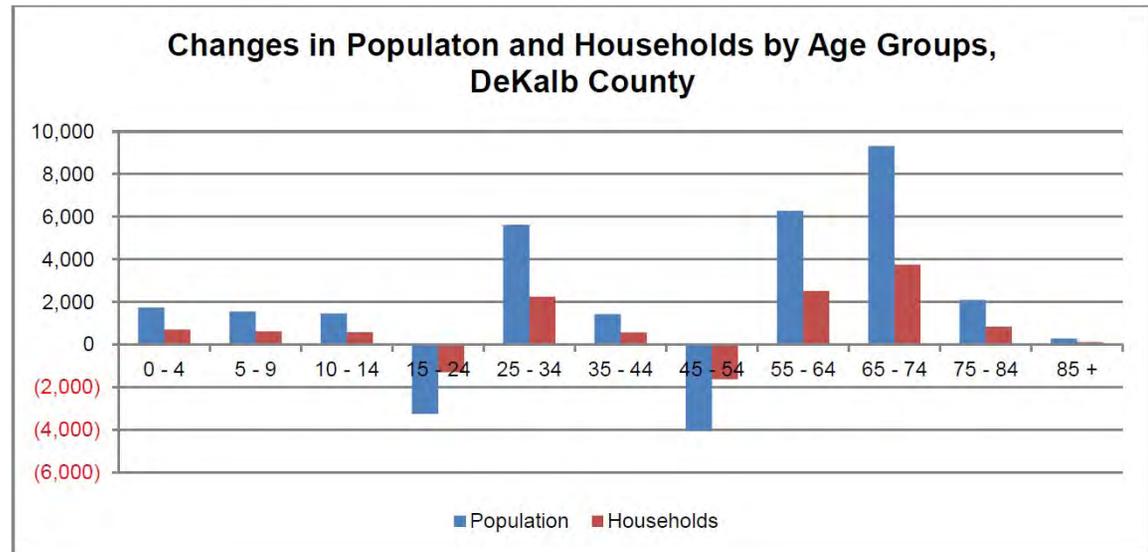


FIGURE 2u: CHANGES IN POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS BY AGE GROUP, DEKALB COUNTY

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

of 17,900, which is an annualized growth rate of 0.33 percent for the next 27 years, yielding a gain of 1,600 homes or 60 per year on average. Median household income is predicted to rise from the current level of \$53,000 to \$61,000, while per capita income should show similar gains from \$25,400 to \$29,800. Dwelling unit values are anticipated to jump from a near 10-year low of \$61,000 to a 2017 level of \$70,100. Of this long range demand, GPG estimates the Stonecrest study area could potentially absorb 575-600 new ranch condominiums or small lot village homes geared towards empty nester home buyers.

Public schools in the area are a part of the DeKalb County Public School District. This residential study area is served by Lithonia High School, Lithonia Middle School and Murphy Candler Elementary School. These local schools have consistently scored below state averages. Schools in this area are outperformed by schools in the northwest portion of the county in general, and the Decatur Public Schools specifically. Single family residential growth will mostly follow the quality schools in the region, and will be concentrated in the northwest portion of DeKalb County.

### Rationale

The Atlanta residential market has plummeted from 2007 highs in terms of new residential permits issued, home occupancy levels and home values (refer to Figure 2t). Although there are almost 11,700 new residential units anticipated for DeKalb County over the next five years, the residential study area is projected to gain only 400 new dwelling units. A combination of factors including poor local public schools, distance to regional employ-

	2018	2023	2038
Gross Office Space Demand (Northlake Submarket)	30,000,000 sf	33,200,000 sf	35,100,000 sf
Gap (Demand less Supply) (Northlake Submarket)	4,200,000 sf	6,460,000 sf	10,700,000 sf
Captured Demand (Stonecrest Submarket)	48,000 sf	69,500 sf	568,000 sf
Aggregated Captured Demand (Stonecrest Submarket)	48,000 sf	117,500 sf	568,000 sf

FIGURE 2v: OFFICE SPACE DEMAND FOR NORTHLAKE SUBMARKET AND STONECREST STUDY AREA

ment centers, high lingering foreclosure levels, declining home values and low population growth limit the new home construction capture at the Stonecrest site in the 30038 zip code.

Two positive factors contribute to potential residential development at this site: the unequalled access to the regional mall, and a graying population looking to shed the responsibilities of single family residences for active adult-targeted condominium product.

A competitive advantage that the Stonecrest site has over other project locations in the residential study area is its close proximity and access to the Mall and associated retail development. This unparalleled linkage provides access to all levels of retail goods and services found in the Stonecrest regional shopping concentration.

The other encouraging factor for potential residential demand at the Stonecrest study site is the expansive growth of households in the 55+ age groups, which account for a staggering 79.9 percent of population growth in DeKalb County over

the next five years. Refer to Figure 2u. This active adult demographic consists of consumers that are looking to downsize their living space and the associated home maintenance responsibilities, as well as not being sensitive to the quality of the local schools.

### Office

This office market study finds that the Stonecrest site, located within the Northlake Submarket, supports 48,000 square feet (sf) of new office development by 2018. This report also finds that 69,500 sf of additional space will be supportable by 2023, 117,500 total over the next ten years. Gibbs Planning Group, Inc. (GPG) predicates these projections on a stabilized vacancy factor of 13.5 percent, a market average of 260 sf per general office employee, and an annualized employment growth range of 1.8 percent to 2.1 percent. This new class B type office space will primarily serve the needs of local medical, legal, sales, and financial services providers.

Long range (25-year) demand forecasting is based

on more conservative parameters - for this study a stabilized vacancy factor of 14.0 percent, 260 sf per general office employee, and an annualized employment growth rate of 1.0 percent. The 2038 estimate of new supportable new office space is 568,000 sf, with 500,000 sf being Class B space, and 68,000 sf of Class A buildings. Refer to Figure 2v.

Current Class A office space needs for regional or national companies will primarily be met at alternative sites in the marketplace, with superior access to the industrial and commercial centers in both the Central Perimeter and Midtown Atlanta submarkets, and by the 290,000 sf of class A office space at 4770 Buford Highway in the western portion of the Northlake office submarket, of which Stonecrest is a part of, preleased to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### Employment

Demand for additional office space in this Northlake submarket is driven primarily by employment growth. This area currently has an estimated 338,000 employees, of which approximately 105,500 are office workers. Employment by 2018 in this region is projected to climb to 373,000 total, with 116,500 office workers. By 2023, the region is expected to support 412,500 jobs, including 128,500 requiring offices. The twenty-five year projection, based on a cautious employment growth rate of one percent, has total Northlake employment at 433,000 jobs, of which 135,000 are predicted to be office employment Stonecrest Mall/Northlake Office Sub Market. The Northlake office submarket contains a total of over 31 million sf of space in 2,300 buildings. Refer to Figure 2w.

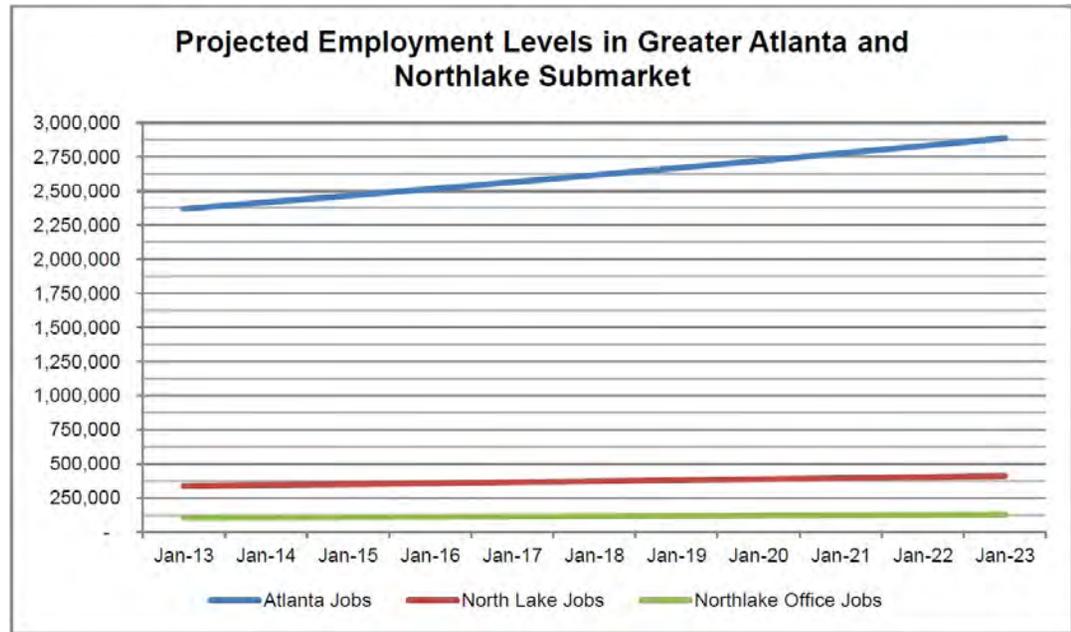


FIGURE 2w: PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT LEVELS IN THE GREATER ATLANTA AND NORTHLAKE SUBMARKET  
Employment is projected to grow by just less than 2.0 percent annually over the next 10 years. Recent gains have been at the rate of 2.5 percent per year.

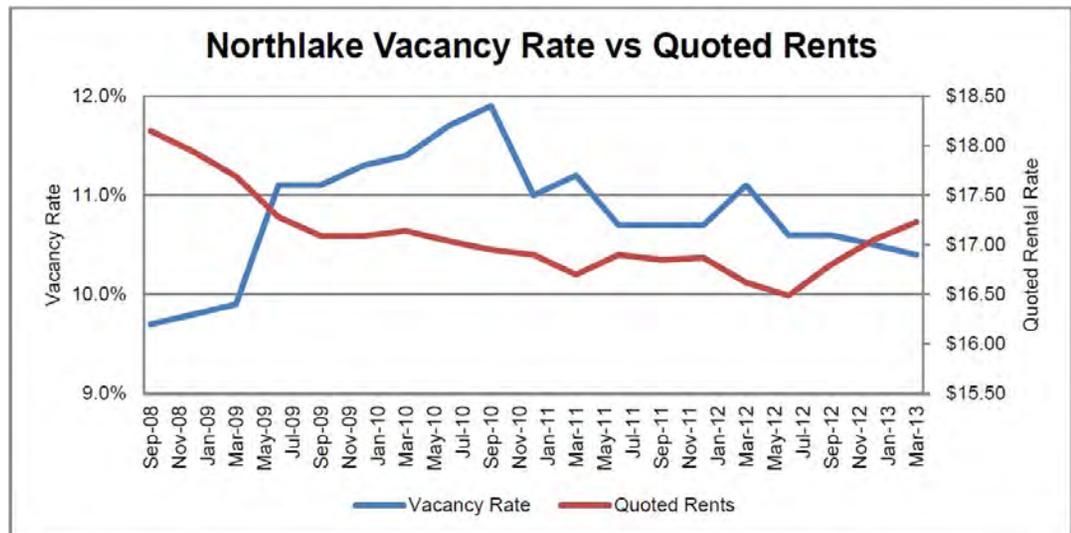


FIGURE 2x: NORTHLAKE VACANCY RATE VS. QUOTED RENTS  
Rental rates have continued to decline while Northlake's vacancy rate has recently begun to improve.

This market has 3,370,000 sf of Class A space, 18,640,000 sf of Class B, and just over 9,000,000 sf of Class C. The I-20 East/Conyers secondary grouping has 4,000,000 sf, comprised of 102,000 sf of Class A space, 2,100,000 sf of Class B and 1,800,000 sf of Class C office.

The combined classes of office vacancy rate in the Northlake area at the end of the first quarter of 2013 was 10.4 percent, with a positive year-to-date absorption of 22,000 sf. There is currently one project under construction, which is 100 percent preleased to the CDC. An eight-story, 290,000 sf class A building at 4770 Buford Highway is scheduled to come on line this year.

The rental rate has seen a slight recovery over the last three quarters, rising to a level of \$17.23 from a low of \$16.49 per sf in June of 2012. Refer to Figure 2x.

An additional factor in the demand for new office space is functional obsolescence and depletion of the 1603 class C buildings, which currently contain over nine million sf of office space in the Northlake region.

### *Stonecrest Study Area Office Space Demand*

Demand for office space has two main components: need for office space for local services such as dental, medical, legal and financial services; and the need for office space for non-local services, such as management for regional and national companies. Office space demand driven by public sector employment is statistically limited because of the tendency of governmental entities to meet their workplace needs on civic campuses, mixing the different government services at one central

location. Satellite government offices, like those required by the Department of Motor Vehicles, typically locate in convenient retail locations.

Estimating office space gap (need or over supply) is based on inventorying the existing office square footage in a submarket, less the current vacancy rate, quantifying and disaggregating the base employment by category, determining the number of employees who require office space by employment category, and then estimating the market specific existing office space per square foot per employee. This statistic is multiplied by the estimated job growth, which is a derivative of the additional need for local services and businesses, generated by population or income increases. Therefore, the demand for office space has an indirect link to the population growth. The new demand created indirectly by population growth is then added to the existing demand, adjusted by a market-specific Stabilized Vacancy Factor and compared to the office space supply. Former office space inventory plus the amount of new space delivered into the market, less that which is functional obsolete or demolished, is the new office space supply.

For purposes of this study, the existing inventory in the Northlake office submarket is 31.08 million sf. GPG estimates that through 2017, 580,000 sf (6.4 percent) of the Class C office space will become functionally obsolete. The Stabilized Vacancy Factor for the office submarket is 13.50 percent. Based on the "WorkPlace & Employment Summary: Northlake Submarket" found in the appendix of this report, the total number of employees in this office submarket is 338,000, of which 105,000 are dedicated office employees. The 2012 office space required per dedicated

office worker is 260 sf per worker. The 2018 Total Office Space Market Demand for this office submarket is 30,000,000 sf, based on an annualized employment growth rate of 2.00 percent (source: Georgia Department of Labor). Adjusting for the stabilized vacancy factor generates a total demand of 34,700,000 sf. GPG finds that by 2018, an additional 48,000 sf of local services office space is supportable in the Stonecrest Study Area.

The projection for office space demand is a primary derivative of job creation. Using the statistics produced by Georgia's Department of Labor, GPG forecasts a 2023 annualized employment growth rate of 2.0 percent and a 2038 rate of 1.00 percent. Both forecasts are more conservative than the State's short-term job (two-year) prediction of a 2.50 percent annual job gain.

Based on projected job growth and a stabilized vacancy factor of 12.5 (2023) & 14.0 (2038) percent, GPG finds that by 2023 a cumulative 117,500 sf of primarily Class B space will be supportable in the study area. Job creation through 2038 will support an additional (more than 2012) 568,000 sf of office space.

## Demographics and Socio-Economics

Using data from ESRI, Experian and Claritas, GPG obtained the population and demographic characteristics, present and projected for 2012 & 2017 for the defined trade areas, as well as national and statewide statistics.

As shown in the Demographics Chart, Figure 2y, the median household income of \$50,700 in the primary trade area is higher than the Georgia level, but lower than the national level. Per capita income, at \$22,600, is lower than both state and national amounts.

The median age, 33.5 years, is younger than both the state's average of 35.5, and national level of 37.3. This median age statistic has remained basically stable since the 2000 Census level of 33.4 years. This statistic is projected continue to rise slowly to 33.7 by 2017.

Characteristics	Primary Trade Area	Georgia	U.S.
2012 Population	131,300	9,858,000	313,129,000
2017 Population	134,300	10,311,000	323,986,000
2012-2017 Projected Annual Growth Rate	0.44%	0.90%	0.68%
Persons Per Household 2012	2.78	2.64	2.58
2012 Median Household Income	\$50,700	\$46,700	\$54,100
2012 Per Capita Income	\$22,600	\$24,000	\$26,400
% Households w. incomes \$75,000 or higher	28.1%	28.9%	31.5%
% White	14.4%	59.3%	71.9%
% Hispanic	6.4%	9.2%	16.3%
% Black	79.7%	30.6%	12.6%
Median Age	33.5	35.5	37.3

FIGURE 2y: DEMOGRAPHICS CHART

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

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Plan Development

## 3.0 Plan Development

### 3.1 Public Process

Public involvement is a key component of the LCI program and is critical for truly understanding the vision, goals, and needs in the Stonecrest area. As such, all LCI studies must involve the public in a meaningful way and at key study milestones. Establishing many ways for people to engage in the planning process helps to ensure that local knowledge is accessed and used in developing master plan recommendations. It also maximizes the opportunities for the public to become involved in the overall process. The Stonecrest LCI public participation process engaged stakeholders at three levels throughout the planning process: The Project Management Team, the Core Team, and the General Public.

A Project Management Team consisting of consultants, DeKalb County Government staff from the Department of Planning and Sustainability, the Office of Neighborhood Empowerment, and the Atlanta Regional Commission was convened. The purpose of the team was to discuss the progress of the plan, to brainstorm solutions and strategies to address challenges and needs, and to plan community engagement opportunities at a very high level. This team met on a bi-monthly basis either in person or by conference call.

The Core Team consisted of stakeholders within the Stonecrest LCI study area with knowledge and expertise that could lend to the study process. Core Team members included community residents, the Stonecrest Business Alliance, the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area Alliance, Mall at

Stonecrest Management, the Georgia Conservancy and members of the medical community among others. This group was instrumental in guiding the course of the study through the identification of issues and opportunities, development of plan goals and objectives, and review of the feasibility and effectiveness of recommendations. Three sessions were held with the Core Team at key milestones throughout the process.

The general public which includes the study area community, at large was engaged at three opportunities: a kick-off meeting, a design charrette, and an open house celebration event. All outreach opportunities were designed to inform, invite and communicate with stakeholders about the LCI study.

The public involvement process included a variety of outreach tools including key stakeholder interviews; an online project website; meetings, workshops, and open house events; and an online community survey. This focus on multiple means of collection and distribution of information, along with careful timing of activities to tie them directly to the anticipated completion of technical tasks and key milestones of the project allowed for public input to be incorporated into the technical process in a meaningful way.

### Stakeholder Interviews

During the months of April, May and June the consultant team conducted stakeholder interviews with representatives from DeKalb County, various organizations and businesses. Interviews were consistent in format utilizing a prepared questionnaire that included a range of discussion points.

The Consultant Team Project Manager began each interview with an introduction to the study followed by background information prior to beginning the interview. The interviews were scheduled for an hour and were conducted in person or via telephone based on the stakeholder's request and availability. From the interviews, stakeholders provided insight into their overall vision for the study area. Main transportation and land use needs and concerns were also discussed. Suggestions for how best to involve and inform the public concluded the interviews. A total of eight stakeholder interviews were conducted as well as one briefing of the DeKalb County Department Directors' Executive Leadership Meeting. A full summary of key stakeholder interviews can be found in the Appendix.

### Core Team Meetings

The Core Team met at three points during the planning process. The following are brief summaries of these meetings. A full summary of each meeting can be found in the Appendix.

- Core Team Meeting #1 was held on May 2, 2013: The purpose of the first Core Team Meeting was to introduce the project, lay out a plan for the citizen engagement, specifically how the general public kick-off meeting would be organized, and conduct an interactive work session to identify goals and visions for the study area. During the workshop, attendees discussed ideal uses for the area, their vision, economic development goals, the timeframe, and ways to engage the public to attend upcoming general public meetings.

- Core Team Meeting #2 was held on May 21, 2013: The purpose of the second Core Team Meeting was to present the results of the online survey, review the first public workshop, prepare for the upcoming charrette, and receive feedback on plan goals and visions identified to date. In preparation for the Charrette, the group discussed the major issues that needed to be addressed at the charrette, general needs for the area, and logistics. Topics to be addressed at the Charrette included:

- Creating the “Place to Be”
- Live-Work-Play-Shop
- Transportation Alternatives
- Green Strategies
- Economic Development

- Core Team Meeting #3 was held on June 25, 2013: The purpose of the third and final Core Team Meeting was to review the Master Plan development, make sure the goals of the project align with those set at the beginning of the process, and develop priorities for implementation of the Master Plan. The results of the charrette were presented, followed by plans for both short-term and long-term implementation. Finally, plans for the Tactical Urbanism/Celebration Event were discussed.

### Public Workshops & Open House Events

The general public was engaged at three points throughout the planning process. A summary of each outreach event is included below and a full summary of each can be found in the Appendix.

- Kick-Off Meeting was conducted on May 9, 2013: The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project to the public and to educate them on the LCI study process. At this meeting, the public was engaged in an interactive process to gather feedback based on four topics: what they wanted to preserve, change, create, and connect within the study area. Refer to Figure 3a.

- A Design Charrette was held on June 8, 2013: The design charrette, which was held at the Mall at Stonecrest, was an opportunity for stakeholders to provide their vision for the Stonecrest LCI study in a workshop setting. Five different topics were provided at separate tables for stakeholders to provide feedback on: Transportation, Live-Work-Play-Shop, Creating the “Place to Be”, Green Strategies, and Economic Development. Experts sat at tables geared towards these topics, held discussions with stakeholders, answered questions, and recorded their input. At the end of the charrette, the group collectively visited each discussion table and heard a brief presentation of the ideas collected. Stakeholders were free to visit as many tables as they wished. The outcomes of this charrette, along with goals and visions gathered prior, were the basis for the Master Plan. A Design Charrette held at a mall location is the first of its kind in DeKalb County. Refer to Figures 3b and 3c.

- The Open House Celebration was held on August 17, 2013: The final community event combined an open house with a tactical urbanism event at the Mall at Stonecrest.



FIGURE 3a: KICK OFF MEETING



FIGURE 3b: DESIGN CHARRETTE, AT THE MALL AT STONECREST



FIGURE 3c: DESIGN CHARRETTE, AT THE MALL AT STONECREST



source of retail, employment, civic, and recreational opportunities. Survey respondents were asked what the primary purpose of the study area should be and were given three options:

- To provide shopping/retail opportunities
- To provide jobs and employment
- To provide opportunities for outdoor recreation

Half of survey respondents believe the primary purpose of the study area should be to provide shopping/retail opportunities followed by providing jobs and employment (27%). A smaller percentage (11%) believes the primary purpose of the study area should be to provide recreation opportunities.

The next question talked about the rich natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities and asked the types of outdoor activities in which survey respondents like to participate. Walking is the most popular response followed by biking, hiking, and running. Refer to Figure 3f. All of these activities are supported by resources currently found in the study area.

The next three questions asked about needed improvements:

- What single improvement should be made to attract people to the area?
- What single improvement is important from a local perspective?
- What resource is missing in the area?

Regarding the single improvement that should be made to attract people to this area, respondents would prefer more stores and restaurants of a higher quality. Refer to Figure 3g. Improved transporta-

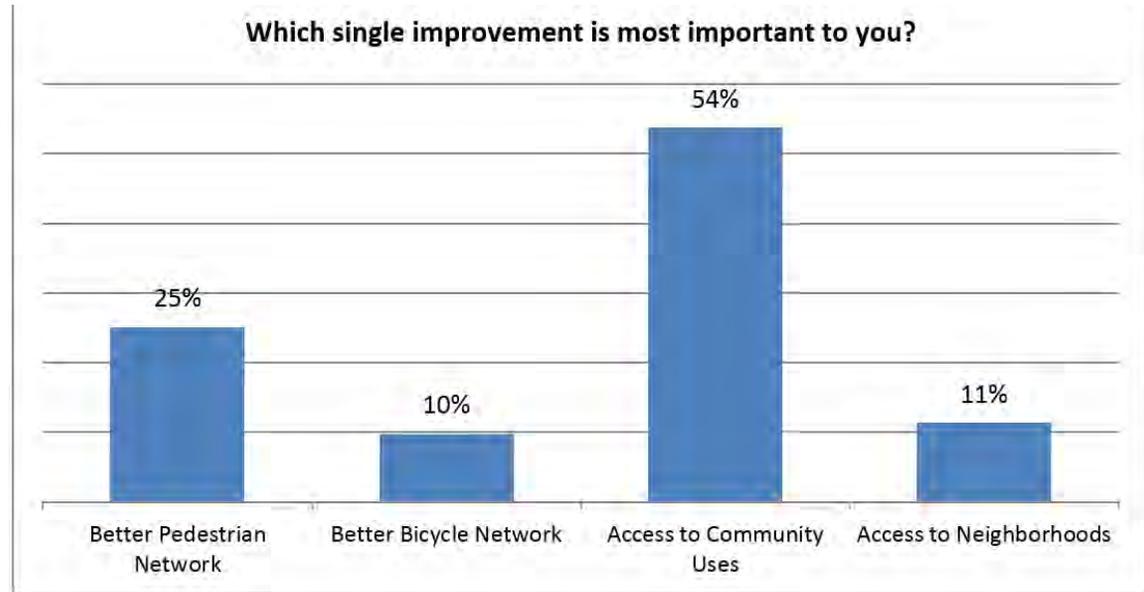


FIGURE 3h: SURVEY CHART  
WHAT SINGLE IMPROVEMENT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

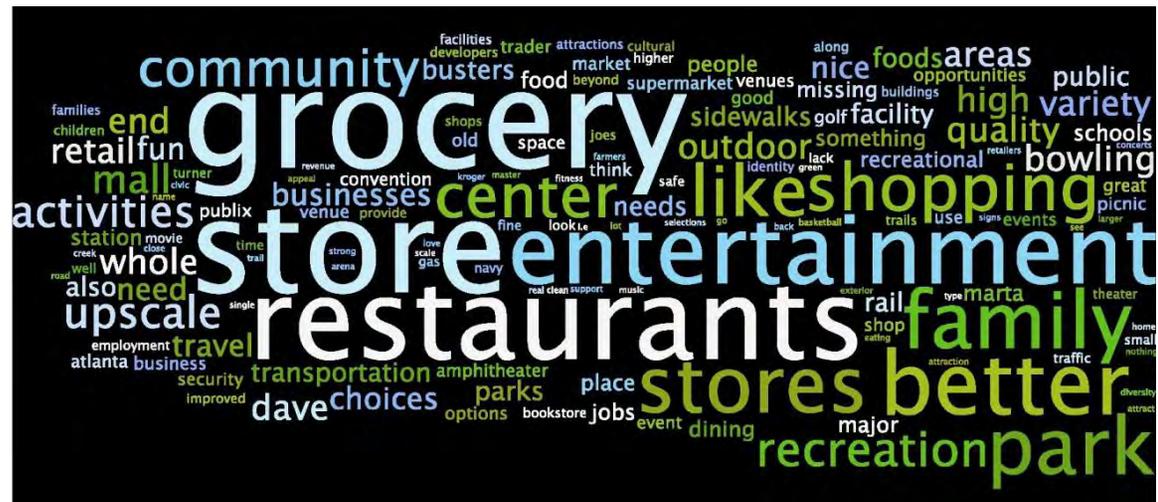


FIGURE 3j: WORD CLOUD  
WHAT IS MISSING IN THE STUDY AREA?

tion options, family entertainment, and community events were also cited as single improvements that could create a regional draw to Stonecrest.

Next, we asked respondents to think from a local perspective and to offer their opinion regarding the single improvement most important to respondents given the following options:

- Provide a better network for pedestrian travel
- Provide a better network for bicycle travel
- Provide access to community uses such as parks, schools, churches, and libraries
- Provide access to neighborhoods

Over half of respondents (54%) believe that the single most important improvement that should be made is to provide access to community uses such as parks, schools, churches, and libraries. A quarter of those responding to this question felt that the single most important improvement should be to provide a better network for pedestrian travel throughout the study area. An almost equal number of respondents believed that providing access to neighborhoods (11%) or providing a better bicycle network (10%) were the single, most important improvements. Refer to Figure 3h.

Lastly, we asked respondents to think of all of the resources available in the area today and to tell us what they think this area is missing.

The most popular response is a grocery store, followed by family entertainment (such as bowling, a Dave & Busters franchise, or a music venue), quality restaurants, and an active park. Refer to Figure 3j.

## Project Website

A project website was established as the hub of information for the LCI study. The site provided basic information about the purpose of the study, a description of the study area, a “Frequently Asked Questions” document, summaries of Core Team meetings, and information on how the public could remain involved. Contact information for the DeKalb County Project Manager was also available on the website.

## 3.2 Vision and Goals

Stakeholder input was vital in formulating visions and goals to lead the development of this plan. Visions and Goals, as listed below, are a result of discussions, interviews, and surveys conducted throughout the process and as discussed in section 3.1.

To identify Visions and Goals, stakeholders were asked to present their views on the following four questions:

- What would you like to preserve?
- What would you like to change?
- What would you like to create?
- What would you like to connect?

The following section provides a summary of the responses from the stakeholders as well as the larger community.

### Preserve

- Greenspace
- Businesses that are good community partners
- Historic architecture and use of local granite

- Stonecrest Toyota
- Medical offices
- Target (store)

### Change

- Improve gateways into the area, including Turner Hill Road, Klondike Rd., and Mall Parkway.
- Improve the visual appearance of the landscaping and bridge at the Turner Hill/I-20 interchange - a major gateway into the community.
- Turner Hill Rd. Improvements: Fix potholes, improve sidewalks and incorporate lighting.
- Rockland Rd.- needs better sidewalks and lighting
- Traffic lights leaving Stonecrest to I-20 west need to have better signal timing.
- Negative perception of the area (including safety, trash, roadways)
- No more apartment complexes
- Education - Test scores for area schools are low.
- Change drainage problems.
- Tear down the unfinished building near the mall/hotels.
- Limit the number of discount stores.
- Allow for signage that helps create growth - update the Overlay District signage regulations to make installing signage easier for businesses.
- Open air shopping instead of enclosed mall

### Create

- Community park
- Entertainment for families: such as a water

park, bowling alley, Dave and Busters, teen center.

- More jobs - including office jobs
- Commerce that draws revenue and creates jobs
- Convention Center for High School graduations.
- Amphitheater
- Regional Sports Complex
- Recreational/Urban Park
- Water features
- Anything we create should compliment what is currently in place.
- Better service stations
- Better bus stops
- Better signage for area amenities, including the PATH trail.
- Add a police station in the area
- Make the exits on I-20 look more attractive.
- Adult entertainment such as rock climbing facilities, night clubs, etc.
- Add MARTA in the area.
- Have DeKalb County incentivize businesses to come to the area
- Gateways into the area - work with the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance to establish these gateways and connect them to the PATH trail.
- A Stonecrest Business Alliance CID
- Water Park

**Connect**

- Upgrade communication network/broadband/internet in the area
- Have a better connection between downtown Lithonia and Stonecrest
- Connect the Arabia Mountain PATH trail to residents within the study area.



FIGURE 3k: "CREATING THE PLACE TO BE" CHARETTE TABLE DRAWING

- Stonecrest Business Alliance- connect them with the residents so that they can address issues that aren't happening fast enough
- Don't allow the concrete to take over- connect with the greenspace in the area.

**3.3 Design Workshop**

Stakeholder input was vital in formulating visions and goals to lead the development of this plan. Visions and Goals were created during the stakeholder meetings, as described in section 2.1.

**Creating the "Place to Be":**

- The heart/core of the study area is Stonecrest Mall and its surrounding land. This is the place to build from in order to create a destination with a regional draw. Refer to Figure 3k.
- Potential Uses at the core of the study area that could attract people to Stonecrest: family entertainment; conference center; offices; high-density housing; athletic fields; multi-use park/amphitheater; grocery store; retail.

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- Consider creating a mixed-use development with an entertainment and/or recreational draw that enhances and extends from the existing Stonecrest Mall footprint.

## Live-Work-Shop-Play:

- Desired Land Uses within the study area: family entertainment (bowling alley, Dave and Busters, etc.); higher-end restaurants and bars; recreation facilities; playground; amphitheater; grocery store; business/office center; satellite college campus; medical offices; high-rise condos surrounding Stonecrest Mall with less dense single family housing on the land south of the Mall. Refer to Figure 3m.
- Focus Mixed-Use and higher density development near Stonecrest Mall. Less dense nodal development could occur near existing residential areas and provide neighborhood services and retail.



FIGURE 3m: "LIVE-WORK-PLAY" CHARETTE TABLE DRAWING



FIGURE 3n: "GREEN STRATEGIES" CHARETTE TABLE DRAWING



FIGURE 3p: MARTA LOCATION PREFERENCE MAP

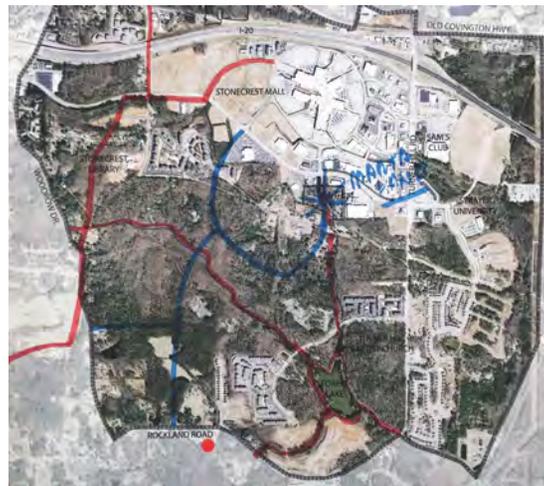


FIGURE 3q: "TRANSPORTATION" CHARETTE TABLE DRAWING



FIGURE 3r: "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT" CHARETTE TABLE DRAWING

- 
- Connect the residential neighborhoods to area amenities, such as Stonecrest Mall, the PATH trail, and the Nature Preserve, with trail extensions and better pedestrian and bicycle amenities – including sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian lighting, trees, shade, etc.

### Transportation Alternatives:

- Utilize the existing rivers and streams to extend the PATH Trail system. Refer to Figure 3q.
- Consider extending the PATH trail to the surrounding neighborhoods
- MARTA connectivity to the area is desired (heavy rail and BRT). Station locations are preferred near the Mall. Three station locations were discussed during the Charrette - one near Klondike Rd and Mall Parkway, a second alternative near the hotels, west of the Mall, and a third location where MARTA currently owns land, south of Mall Parkway. A voting exercise was conducted to gather public input and all three sites were equally preferred (refer to Figure 3p).
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions, including improved lighting, sidewalks, trees, shading, etc., on Turner Hill Rd., Hayden Quarry Rd., Woodrow Dr., Rockland Rd.
- Improve gateways into community with improved landscaping, signage, lighting and beautification.

### Green Strategies:

- The Arabia Mountain Preserve is a local amenity and draw for the area – Build from this asset and extend green space into the study area. Bring greenspace into higher density areas, including the Stonecrest Mall area.

Refer to Figure 3n.

- Consider incorporating community gardens, local farms, farmer’s markets, and native plants into the study area.
- Highlight historic sites with signage and connected trails.
- Undeveloped land to the south of the Mall could incorporate low-density housing with natural areas, such as: Deconstructed botanical gardens, walking trails, farms, local agriculture, vineyards, etc.
- Consider Green Power solutions, including solar panels on large buildings, such as the Mall at Stonecrest.
- Create Green Jobs through green power solutions, sustainable farms, vineyards, etc.

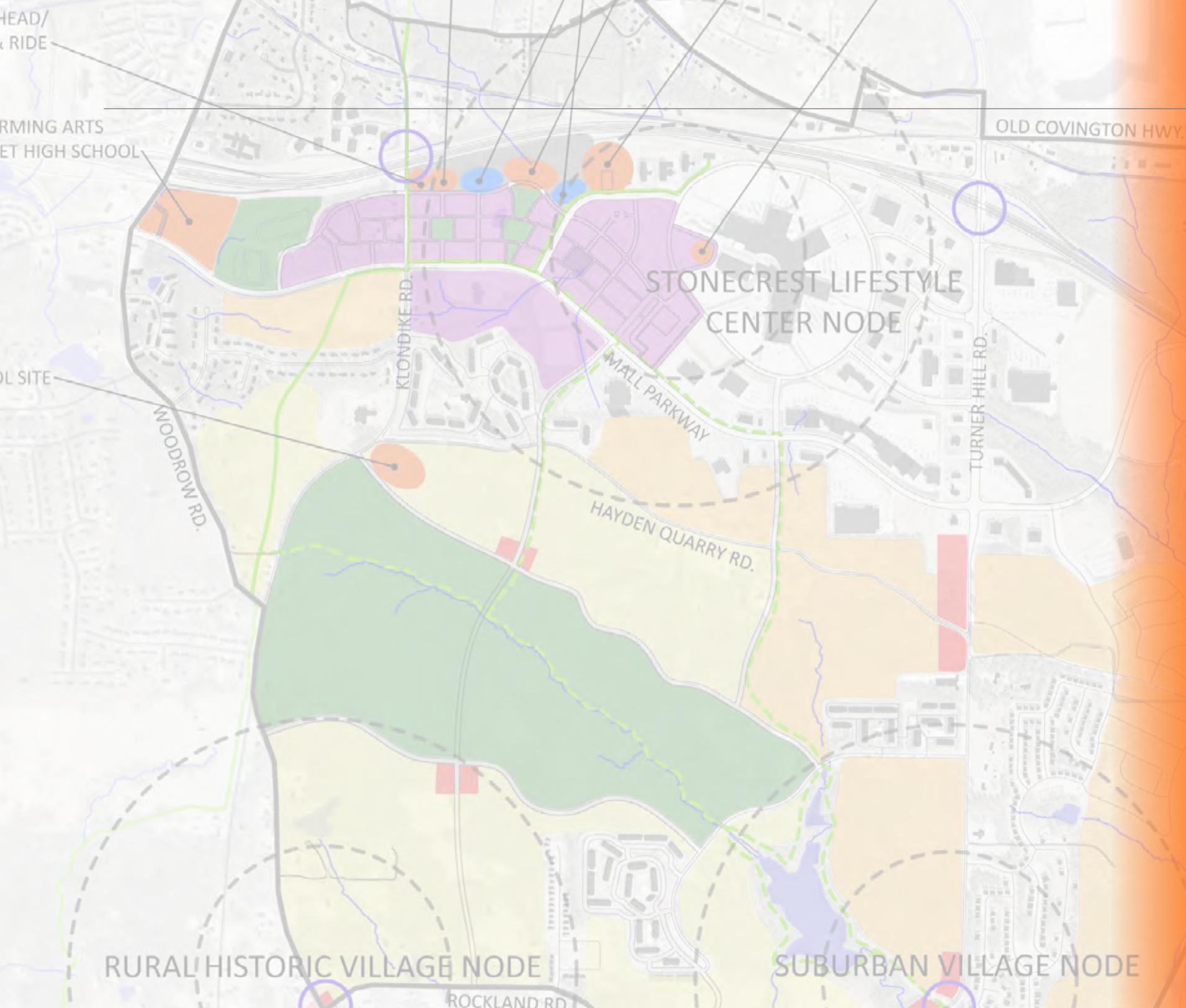
### Economic Development:

- More Jobs are needed in the area to provide a day time population, who will utilize local retail and restaurants. More office space may help provide this opportunity. Refer to Figure 3r.
- Consider creating an Opportunity Zone as a tool to attract businesses.
- Consider creating a Customer Service Training program for the area retail, with the help of the Stonecrest Business Alliance.

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Recommendations

# 4.0 Recommendations

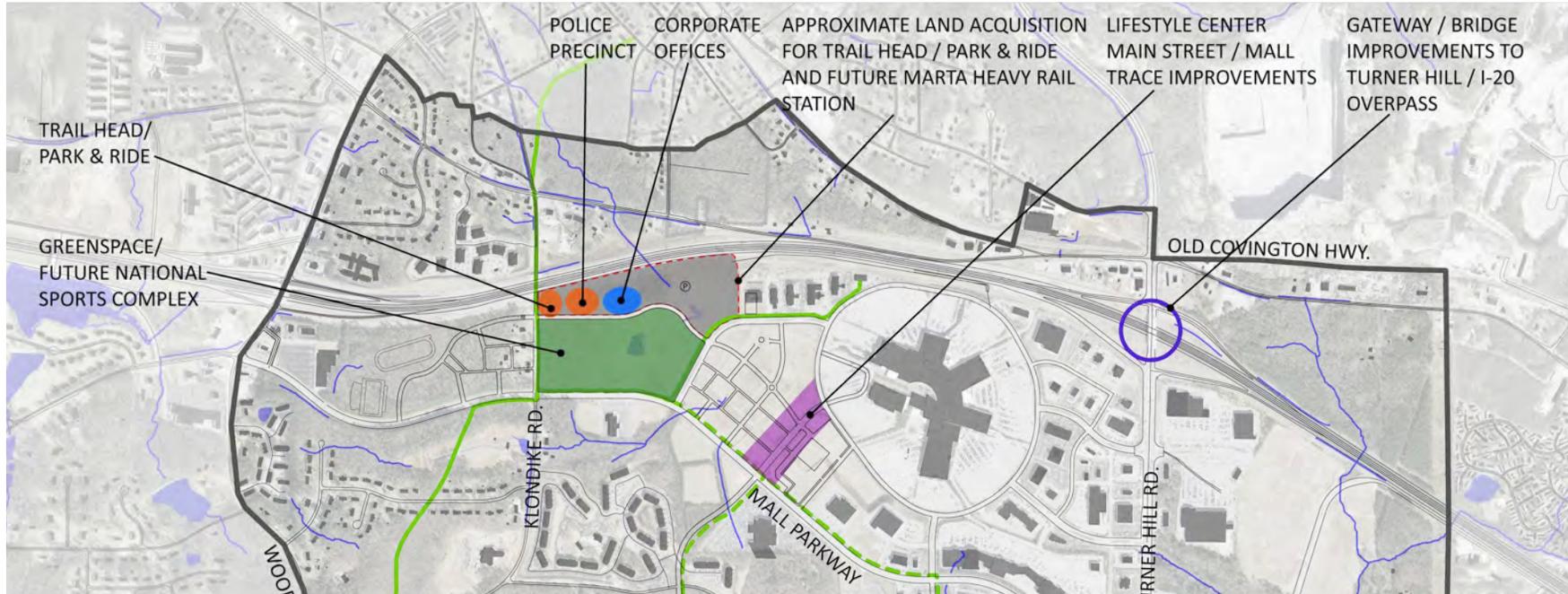


FIGURE 4a: FIVE YEAR MASTER PLAN

## 4.1 Master Plan

The Master Plan is presented here in two phases, a 5-year Plan and a Visionary Plan. Refer to Figures 4a and 4b.

The 5-year Plan addresses the two LCI priority projects that are recommended in this report for DeKalb County and the ARC to pursue necessary funding and implementation strategies:

- Streetscape Improvements to Mall Trace to invest in the concept of a mixed-use Lifestyle Center Main Street on this roadway and capture the retail market demand for additional retail

space.

- A PATH Trail Head/Park and Ride/Community Center. The Trail Head/Park and Ride may be the first step in acquiring land and providing transportation alternatives growing to include: MARTA Bus Rapid Transit and eventually for MARTA heavy rail at this site.

In addition to the priority projects, it is recommended, in the first five years, to further study the market feasibility of a national sports complex and pursue the sports complex implementation based on

market study results; pursue the development of market supported office space; begin appropriate land acquisition for the future MARTA rail station; and pursue gateway improvements at the Turner Hill / I-20 overpass.

The Visionary Plan addresses future, 25-year projections for housing, office, and retail, as well as, other economic development strategies, including a regional conference center. This long-term plan also proposes a location for the future MARTA rail station. At the time of this report, funding is not anticipated for a MARTA extension to the

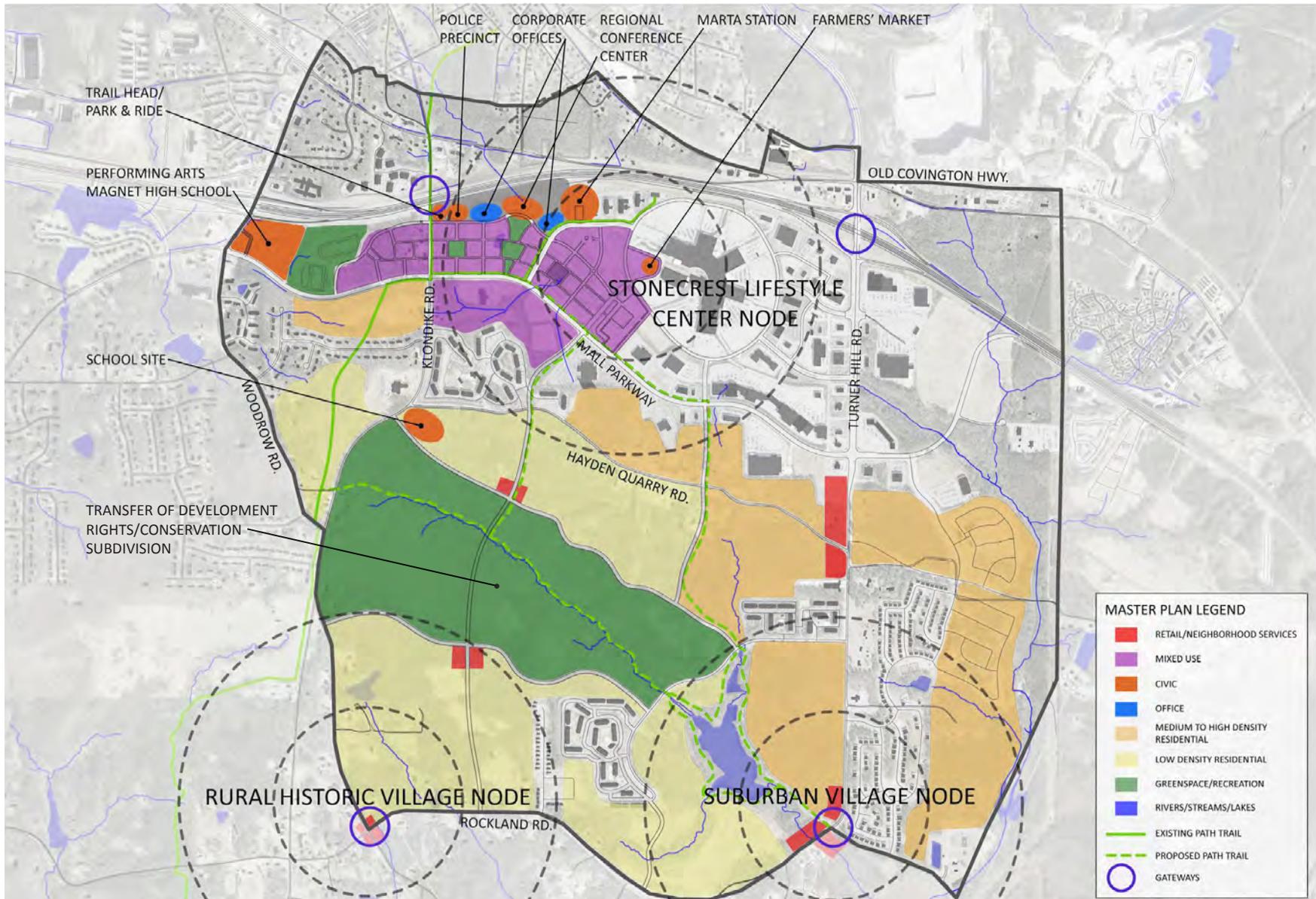


FIGURE 4b: VISIONARY MASTER PLAN

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FIGURE 4c: LIFESTYLE CENTER / ENTERTAINMENT MAIN STREET RENDERING AT STONECREST TRACE LEADING INTO MALL



FIGURE 4d: TRAIL HEAD/PARK & RIDE RENDERING AT KLONDIKE RD. AND I-20



FIGURE 4e: Lifestyle CENTER ENTERTAINMENT NODE

Stonecrest area. However, as funding becomes available priority will be given to have a plan to help deliver a regional live-work-play-shop, green transit oriented development.

The Visionary Plan allows for iconic regional uses along the I-20 Corridor:

- Trail Head/Park & Ride
- Police Precinct
- Corporate Office
- Conference Center

These uses can take full advantage of the highway visibility to attract visitors and growth to the area and leverage corporate investments through increased exposure. This layout also allows for the living areas and outdoor spaces to be buffered from the negative impacts of the highway (poor air

quality, noise, etc.) by these iconic uses.

The Visionary Plan also identifies land uses for the entire study area including 3 development nodes/character areas where neighborhood retail, services, restaurants, and a variety of housing options can develop in a manner specific to each node's existing character.

## 4.2 Land Use and Zoning

The following Land Use and Zoning considerations are put forth to encourage and promote the successful implementation of the Stonecrest LCI Plan. The Lifestyle Center Node and Trail Head renderings found within this document are conceptual, with the intention of guiding well-connected, market driven development.

## Land Use Recommendations

The following land use recommendations are based on development of the main concepts presented in the master plan. The main land use concepts in the master plan include:

Develop 3 Character Areas/Nodes (refer to Figure 4b and 4e):

1. Stonecrest Lifestyle Center Entertainment Node: This node builds from the existing regional retail hub of the Mall at Stonecrest, utilizing vacant parcels, adjacent to the Mall.

The Lifestyle Center Entertainment Node provides market based and community supported high quality retail, restaurants, entertainment, office, civic and housing to the core of the study area, the place to be - as identified by stakeholders throughout the process. The proposed development attempts to increase the economic value of the area and attract new residents, businesses, and visitors by providing functions and opportunities that would make this place unique within metro Atlanta and the south-eastern region of the U.S.

As supported by the market study the first catalytic move, is recommended to be the development of a lifestyle center situated on a Main Street, an improved Stonecrest Trace. Uses along this main street should include market supported and high quality retail, restaurants, entertainment (bars, night clubs, and family venues), office, residential on floors 2 and above - as the market allows, and a grocery store. Refer to Figure 4c.

The walkable main street is envisioned to also include a green plaza, surrounded by

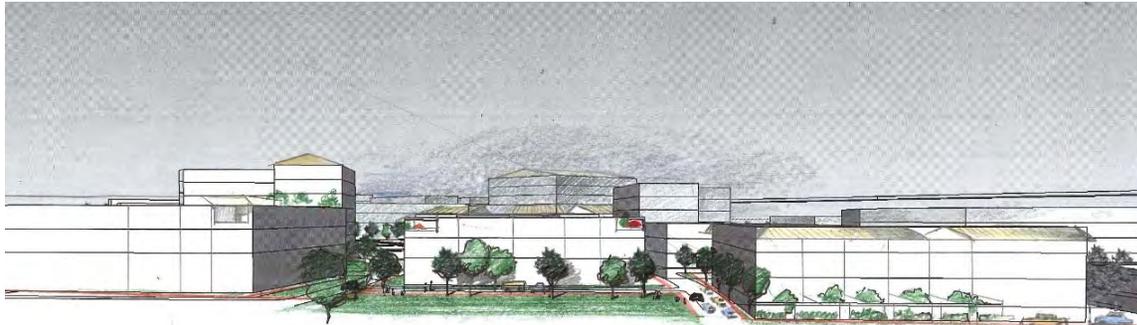


FIGURE 4f: MALL BLOCK SECTION

terraces, entertainment venues, and a boutique hotel - an entertainment destination space.

The open air Farmers' Market at the end of the Main Street near the existing Mall Plaza can provide space for festivals, community events, a teen center, performances, outdoor roller skating, and pop-up retail, in addition to a farmers' market venue.

This lifestyle center should be well connected, through roadways and pedestrian/bicycle paths, to the Mall and to new development to the west.

This connectivity is proposed through the design of the Mall Block (refer to figures 4f-4j). The Mall Block is fashioned after the walkable style of the Savannah block. One way streets make up the interior, surrounding the central green, providing a pedestrian-friendly, well connected street grid. The Mall Block is approximately 13 acres with a central green and 6 interior blocks. As shown in Figure 4h, the Block provides 500,000 square feet of residential and retail space, with an average of three stories.

The amount of residential over retail, as proposed in the Mall Block, three stories, is not supported by the current market study, in the near term. The block size allows for a variety of uses, such as retail, office, and commercial, to develop, as the market demand allows. The block can provide surface parking in initial phases, and convert to structured parking once densities increase.

This model of walkable development focused around a greenspace is unique to the metro Atlanta area and should positively impact the residential, retail, and office market demands by attracting new residents to the area.

Along with a mixed use lifestyle center main street, other proposed recommended uses in the first five years include:

- A. DeKalb County Police Precinct. The Police Precinct is interested in moving into the study area. The vacant, partially constructed hotel west of the Mall has been identified as one of the potential sites for this relocation, however, the cost of renovations may be high. A location near the proposed Trail Head is identified in the Master Plan.



FIGURE 4g: SAVANNAH BLOCK



FIGURE 4h: MALL BLOCK



FIGURE 4j: SAVANNAH BLOCK

B. A Trail Head/Park and Ride Facility. The proposed trail head/park and ride would provide a dedicated facility for cyclist using the Arabia Mountain Trail along Klondike Road. The facility would include restrooms, changing rooms, bike storage, food vendors, and community meeting space. A teen center could also be incorporated into this facility. It is recommended that a MARTA bus stop be incorporated into this development, to allow for bike commuters to access alternative transportation options. Refer to Figure 4d.

This facility is anticipated to be a catalyst to attract MARTA Bus Rapid Transit and eventual Heavy Rail to the area. As much of the land for all three developments would overlap, it is recommended that land acquisition for this project should be in partnership with MARTA. Refer to the Silver Comet Trail Economic Impact report for more information on the economic benefits of multi-use trails and bicycle commerce.

C. A National Sports Complex. The sports complex is proposed on the block between Klondike Road and Stonecrest Square, surrounded by residential, office, and public uses. When the sports complex

is not in use for national tournaments, the land can be a greenspace amenity for the community. Over time, as the market calls for more housing, office, retail, etc., in the study area with access to I-20 and area amenities, the sports complex fields can relocate so more mall block development can occur on the land. Refer to Figure 4k.

The Visionary Plan includes the follow uses with regional heavy rail transit access:

A. A Performing Arts High School. As the area grows and transit options expand, it is recommended to work with DeKalb Schools to site a high school near Evans Mill Road. This site allows for easy access to Lithonia and surrounding communities, the interstate, the PATH trail and the future transit station.

B. A Regional Conference Center. The conference center is recommended to be located near the hotels, as its development may be in partnership with hotel ownership. The ideal conference center would support high school graduation seating of 6,000 and be developed in partnership with the school system. This location also provides views and access to the proposed greenspace/sports complex, the future transit, the main street/



FIGURE 4p: SMALL LOT VILLAGE HOMES



FIGURE 4q: RANCH-STYLE CONDOS



FIGURE 4k: NATIONAL YOUTH SOCCER TOURNAMENTS COULD BE HOSTED AT THE STONECREST SPORTS COMPLEX



FIGURE 4m: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS GRADUATIONS COULD BE HOSTED IN THE STONECREST CONFERENCE CENTER



FIGURE 4n: FARMERS' MARKET

lifestyle center, and the Mall. Refer to Figure 4m.

2. Suburban Village Node at Turner Hill Road and Rockland Road This node builds from the existing residential to include retail, neighborhood services and diverse housing types - such as live/work, town homes, senior living, condos and single family. This node is recommended to provide neighborhood services and entertainment to the existing and future residential uses in the area. More dense housing options are recommended near major routes and the center of the node, mixed with the retail and neighborhood services. Housing surrounding this node is recommended to be medium density. Housing types, as supported by the market study, including 4-6 plex condos and small lot village homes, should be considered for development in this node, in close proximity to the Lifestyle Center Node. Refer to Figures 4p and 4q.

3. Rural Historic Village Node at Pluckett Road and Rockland Road: This node builds from the rural and historic character of this portion of the study area. Refer to Figure 4r. Low density neighborhood retail and services will accompany low density housing that respects the architectural character of the area. This node is also recommended to bring neighborhood services, retail, and entertainment options to the community living in walking distance to this node. Housing surrounding this node is recommended to be low density, similar to the existing character. Architectural styles should respect and utilize the rural and unique stone aesthetic of the area. Historic design guidelines should be developed for this area.

Develop a Conservation Area, using Conservation Subdivision or Transfer of Development Rights that buffers the river south of Hayden Quarry. Building from the green amenities surrounding the study area, such as the Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve and the PATH Trail, it is recommended to conserve the land on either side of the river for green uses. Uses may include a vineyard, walking and biking trails through natural areas, community agriculture, and a botanical garden showcasing the regions native species.

Develop small “village” nodes at the intersections of new roadways proposed south of Hayden Quarry Road, which respect the proposed conservation area surrounding the river and the rural and historic character of the area. These nodes will provide a mix of uses, including neighborhood services and housing options. Housing should be developed in a cluster or village style, to conserve the surrounding natural greenspace. These nodes will provide even more walkable destinations for future housing.

### 5 YEARS

As the 5 Year Plan depicts, based on market findings, community goals, and available ARC funding opportunities the following projects are recommended as priorities for the first five years:

- A Trail Head/Park and Ride Facility and land acquisition for the future MARTA station and Police Precinct.
- Market based Lifestyle Center Main Street Development.

These first projects are expected to work as catalyst for continued development of the Visionary Plan. The progression of development is further detailed in the following pages.



Rural venacular



Stone building, Lithonia, GA



Arabia Mountain landscape

FIGURE 4r: RURAL HISTORIC CHARACTER

5 YEARS: 2017 Lifestyle Center and Park & Ride Trail Head

The first 5 years show the development of the Trail Head/Park & Ride, the Lifestyle Center main street, the Police Precinct, Corporate Office space, and the development of a National Sports Complex - if further market study finds it feasible.



10 YEARS: 2022 Mixed-use adjacent to Lifestyle Center and Amphitheater

The 10 year phase further develops the land adjacent to the Lifestyle Center, providing more mixed use development, including residential and retail uses. During this phase, it is also recommended to develop an Amphitheater for community use - as further market study recommends.



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## 15 YEARS: 2027 Conference Center, Corporate Office, Multi-cultural Community Center, Theater, and Marketplace

At the 15 year phase, the development of a Conference Center, in accordance with market feasibility, is recommended. More Corporate Office space and a Farmers' Market is also proposed during this phase (refer to Figure 4n).



## 20 YEARS: 2032 Relocate Sports Fields, expand Mixed-use, and add Corporate Office

The 20 year phase explores the idea that over time the National Sports Complex/fields may not be the most optimum use of this land and proposes a relocation of the sports complex to allow for this land to accommodate more mixed use development, including residential, retail, and office.



25 YEARS: 2037 Corporate Office, MARTA Plaza with Mixed-use and Shared Parking Deck

At 25 years, this plan makes room for a MARTA heavy rail station, creating greater connectivity and access to the study area. This phase will be dependant on appropriate funding, land acquisition, and community and political support to implement.



30 YEARS: 2042 Magnet Performing Arts High School and Residential Development

The 30 year phase, recommends continued growth west of Klondike Rd to include more mixed use development and a Magnet Performing Arts High School.



All of the recommended phases will need to respond to market forces and may be dependant on funding, land acquisition, and partnerships with the development community, the County, the school district, among other government and business-invested stakeholders. To assist in the long-term development of the LCI Plan and associated market analysis, vision and grant goals shall be re-evaluated with master plan revisions as recommended and funded by the ARC.

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP UPDATE

The existing DeKalb County Future Development Map creates a regional town center with high density mixed uses, north of Hayden Quarry, and suburban and rural residential development identified to the south. Conservation/Greenspace in this existing plan follow existing rivers/streams, lakes, and the PATH trail.

In order to fulfill the vision of the LCI, it is recommended that updates be made to the Future Development Map to support the development of (refer to Figure 4t):

- Pedestrian friendly nodes at Turner Hill Rd./Rockland Rd. and Woodrow Rd./Rockland Rd.
- Compact cluster village development south of Hayden Quarry
- Conservation of greenspace around the river

In order to support the mixed-use nodes at Woodland Road/Rockland Road and at Turner Hill Road/Rockland Road, the development map needs to support a mix of uses in these pedestrian sheds, including retail, commercial, entertainment, office,

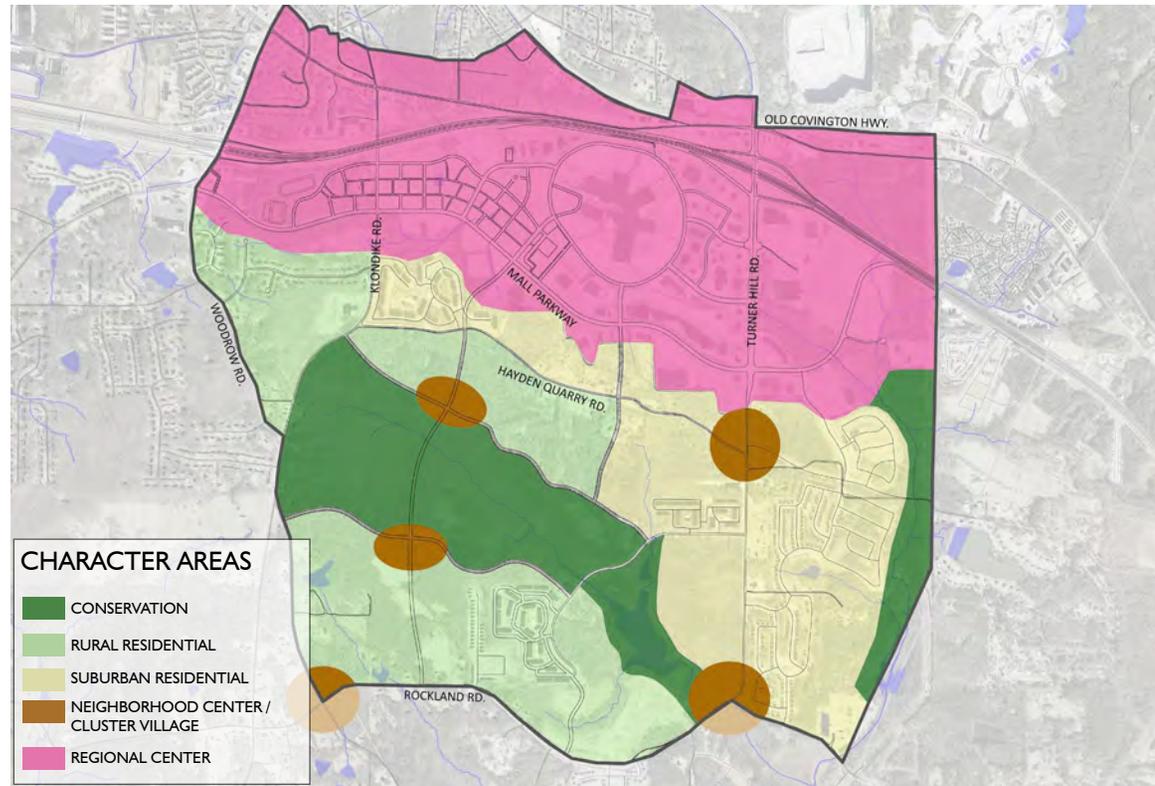


FIGURE 4t: PROPOSED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MAP

neighborhood services, and a range of housing types - creating a vibrant mixed use and mixed income community. It is recommended to incorporate neighborhood centers/cluster village character areas at these nodes.

Similarly, a mix of land uses needs to be incorporated into the land south of Hayden Quarry Road where new cluster development is to occur with the help of new road infrastructure. In order to create walkable, mixed-use and mixed income developments, these land uses must also include retail, commercial,

entertainment, office, neighborhood services, and a range of housing types. It is also recommended to incorporate neighborhood center/cluster village character areas at these nodes

In order to preserve the land surrounding the river, south of Hayden Quarry Road, enhancing the green branding of the area, land uses must allow for agricultural, recreation, and passive uses. It is recommended to create a conservation area surrounding the river.

To preserve the rural character of much of the land south of Hayden Quarry Rd. and near Klondike, it is recommended to expand the rural residential character area to the north as depicted in the Proposed Future Development Map (refer to Figure 4t).

## **Zoning Recommendations**

### **OVERLAY DISTRICT**

The Stonecrest study area currently sits within the Stonecrest Overlay District, which provides a tiered density and building height program, ranging from Tier I, high density and allowable building heights greater than 5 stories with no maximum, to Tier III, lower density and building heights of three stories maximum. Also included in the Tiers are Tier IV, serving as a transitional mixed use zone between existing single family development and future high density mixed use zones, and Tier V, a cluster/village mixed use zone that allows for lower density residential with commercial and offices uses that serve the community's needs.

### *LAND COST*

While the mix of uses in all tiers is conducive to allowing for the mixed use developments proposed in this plan, the high density, particularly in Tier I, may be a deterrent to development. The high density allowance has the potential to inflate property values above the demand supported by the market. Consider working with the land owners to align density with the market to accelerate development.

### *GREENSPACE PRESERVATION AND TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDRS)*

In order to provide greenspace preservation, especially around the river south of Hayden Quarry

Road, the zoning should allow for Transfer of Development Rights or Conservation Subdivisions to maintain value and lower development cost. Additionally to allow for uses to preservation areas, as discussed in the master plan, Tiers III and V should allow for agricultural and recreational uses.

### *LOT SIZES TO SUPPORT CLUSTER/VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT*

Tier V lot size requirements are too large to encourage a true cluster/village development. Update the minimum of 15,000sf lot size within neighborhood centers/cluster village nodes to an a maximum average lot size with a variety of sizes preferred.

### *REVIEW ALLOWED USES*

Currently Tier I and II do not allow for Outdoor Amusement and Recreation Services. In order to allow outdoor entertainment/recreation and to encourage green branding of the area, Outdoor Amusement and Recreation Services should be allowed in the Tier I and II zoning categories. Additionally, to support the growing automobile sales industry in the study area, the County should consider including more automobile uses, such as used motor vehicles dealers, gasoline service stations, automotive rental and leasing, etc.

### *ALLOW SINGLE FAMILY USES*

Tier III does not allow for single family uses within existing zoning. In order to encourage a mix of housing types and mix of incomes in the study area, single family detached residential uses should be allowed in Tier III.

### *CONNECTIVITY*

In order to create walkable, pedestrian friendly

environments, street connectivity requirements should be included in the Overlay District. One approach is to work with area stakeholders to create a Master Street Plan. An alternative is to create maximum block sizes or lengths for each Tier. Tier I should require the smallest block size, while areas outside of neighborhood centers in Tier III and V could have larger block sizes. For additional connectivity, new streets should be required to have a minimum number connections to existing streets. Creating maximum block sizes and connectivity requirements would allow for land owners to have flexibility in their development, while still creating a walkable, pedestrian friendly network.

Additionally, connectivity to the PATH network should be required for all new large parcel development, further supporting a connected, pedestrian friendly system and helping to brand the area as a bike friendly, sustainable community. Similar to Peachtree City's cart pathway development ordinance. Refer to the Silver Comet Trail Economic Impact report for more information on the economic benefits of multi-use trails and bicycle commerce.

### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Supplementary to the Overlay District is the Design Guidelines for the Stonecrest Overlay District. The Design Guidelines provide design standards, focused on public space and exterior building appearance for the entire study area.

### *DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR CHARACTER AREAS/NODES*

Currently the design guidelines provide design solutions for the entire study area. To distinguish and preserve the character of the three different Character Areas/Nodes, the County should

incorporate design standards specific to each node, including street types, signage types, and lighting and street furniture types.

### SIGNAGE ISSUES

Stakeholders expressed concern regarding the difficulty in acquiring signage that meets the guideline requirements and allows for the business to adequately advertise, in particular due to lettering height and signage height restrictions. The County should consider allowing for taller lettering and signage, viewable from the I-20 corridor. Letter and signage height should be in relation to the distance and speed of the roadway it is advertising to - the longer the view and faster the road, the larger the signage, the shorter the view distance and slower the road, the smaller the signage. The quality of the sign is of most importance and should be a key component of the design guidelines. Billboard signage should not be allowed. Coordinated efforts between area businesses, led by the Stonecrest Business Alliance, to create signage standards for area businesses, further building on the branding of the area. Refer to Figure 4u for an example of a collaborative mall effort to install non-billboard signage along the expressway.

### BUILDING FINISHES

Stakeholders expressed concern that the building finish restrictions increase the cost of the building construction. The County should consider allowing for a maximum percentage of alternative materials, beyond the recommended building materials and/or require recommended building materials only on facades visible from the street. The County should also encourage the use of sustainable building finishes in character with the history of the area through design guidelines. For example,

white siding, light gray roofs, and local gray stone are all indigenous to the area while simultaneously lowering operation costs through improved thermal dynamics of exterior envelopes with high reflectivity and/or low diurnal cycles.

### LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS

According to stakeholders, the landscaping requirements block viewsheds from the roadway into area businesses. The existing guidelines require parking lot landscaping to be 18" in height and cover at least 50% of the parking lot facing the street. This type of buffer may visually impair the view into some business types, such as a car dealership. The County should consider allowing for alternative landscape plans, including lower ground cover and/or less than 50% landscape along the street. This requirement could be allowed in exchange for additional greenspace preservation on-site and/or Low Impact Development practices.

## 4.3 Transportation

### FUTURE TRANSIT

A future MARTA heavy-rail transit station is proposed in the Visionary Master Plan near the hotels, along I-20. While this station is at least 25 years away from construction and does not currently have a funding source, the right-of-way acquisition should begin in the next five years. The land in the right-of-way acquired can, in the near term, be utilized for the proposed Trail Head/Park and Ride. This land can then be converted into a Bus Rapid Transit station, with the parking shared between the Trail Head and the BRT system. This shared parking concept could expand to the National Sports Complex and Regional Conference Center, maximizing the development opportunity while minimizing the asphalt dedicated



FIGURE 4u: GREAT LAKES CROSSING, AUBURN HILLS, MI  
Tall Pillar Signage along the Expressway provides advertising



FIGURE 4v: HACKESCHER MARKT STATION, BERLIN  
The future transit station should incorporate public space and connectivity

for parking. Finally, when the Heavy-Rail line and station are ready to be built, a parking deck can be constructed and a new rail station and line will be built within this right-of-way.

It is recommended that MARTA consider a land swap of their current land, just south of Mall Parkway, to help offset some of the cost in acquiring land for

this development.

The MARTA Heavy-Rail line is anticipated to be above ground instead of a below ground system. This is mainly due to the cost of construction. For example, in Washington DC a new WMATA rail station is underway to Dulles Airport. Building an above ground station is saving WMATA over \$300 million. Additionally, cost of building an underground MARTA connection at Stonecrest may be even higher due to the presence of granite throughout this region.

Above grade heavy rail tracks often have adjacent property values and impede access. To mitigate the impact, MARTA right-of-way should hold close to the I-20 right-of-way, then bend out to the Mall station location.

The proposed location, just west of the Mall, was chosen due to its access to the new Main Street, the Trail Head, and the Mall/retail hub. The site is also close to I-20, lessening the cost of rail line expansion, which would be more costly the further the line branches off of I-20.

Station design should incorporate public space and well designed multi-modal connectivity to area assets, including the Trail Head, the Main Street and the Mall. The station could conceal the above ground rail line and make a great public space fronted by an urban building with market driven uses. Refer to Figure 4v for a station example in Berlin, Germany that incorporates public space and a mix of uses into the station design. In this example the above ground rail line is hidden within a building, whose ground floor contains a mix of uses, including cafes, retail, and entrances into the rail station. The

plaza functions as an entrance to the station, cafe seating, a weekly market, and a space for festivals.

A new street network is also proposed near the future MARTA station in the Master Plan to create a well-connected system for all modes of transportation, providing access to the transit station.

#### *BREAK UP SUPERBLOCK SOUTH OF HAYDEN QUARRY RD.*

The superblock south of Hayden Quarry Road creates a lack of connectivity on the south side of the study area. The County should develop collector type roads through the superblock to begin and encourage development. Additional roadways in new developments should be the responsibility of the private developer. These new roadways should safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians through sidewalks and bike lanes, or the installation of a side path.

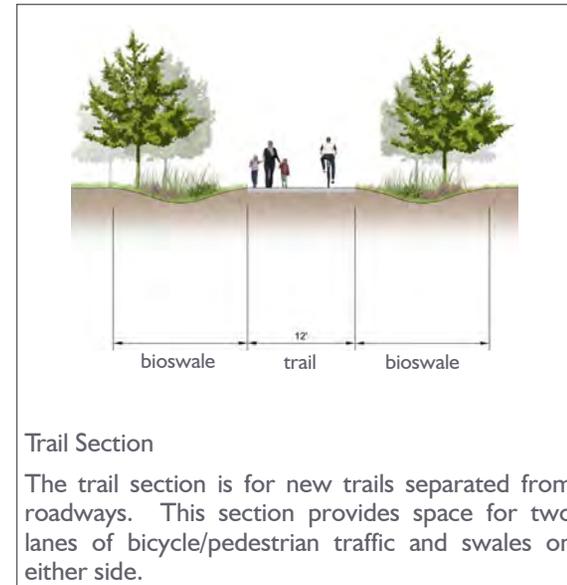
#### *EXPAND TRAIL SYSTEM*

Trail network expansion is proposed within the Visionary Plan to better connect residents to the area amenities. The PATH expansion follows waterways and new roadways creating connections to the existing trail system, residential areas, and the three development nodes. Refer to Figure 4w for the proposed Trail design.

#### *STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS AND CHARACTER*

New streets and street improvements are proposed to create better connectivity throughout the study area, including connectivity to the Mall at Stonecrest and surrounding communities, including Lithonia.

New streets types are proposed for the three different character areas. Refer to the Roadway



Trail Section

The trail section is for new trails separated from roadways. This section provides space for two lanes of bicycle/pedestrian traffic and swales on either side.

FIGURES 4w: PROPOSED TRAIL SECTION

Network Map and corresponding Street Sections, Figures 4x and 4y, for more information.

Projects involving development of new streets that are not classified as collectors and above will need to be led by private developers. Additionally, new right-of-way for collector streets will need to be paid for in partnership with developers.

Currently, both Hayden Quarry Road and Turner Hill Road are on the project list for improvements. The Hayden Quarry Rd. project extends this roadway to connect with Sigman Rd. The Turner Hill Rd project widens the street to four lanes with a median. Both these projects will help connect the retail hub to more communities, potentially helping to spur develop growth.

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

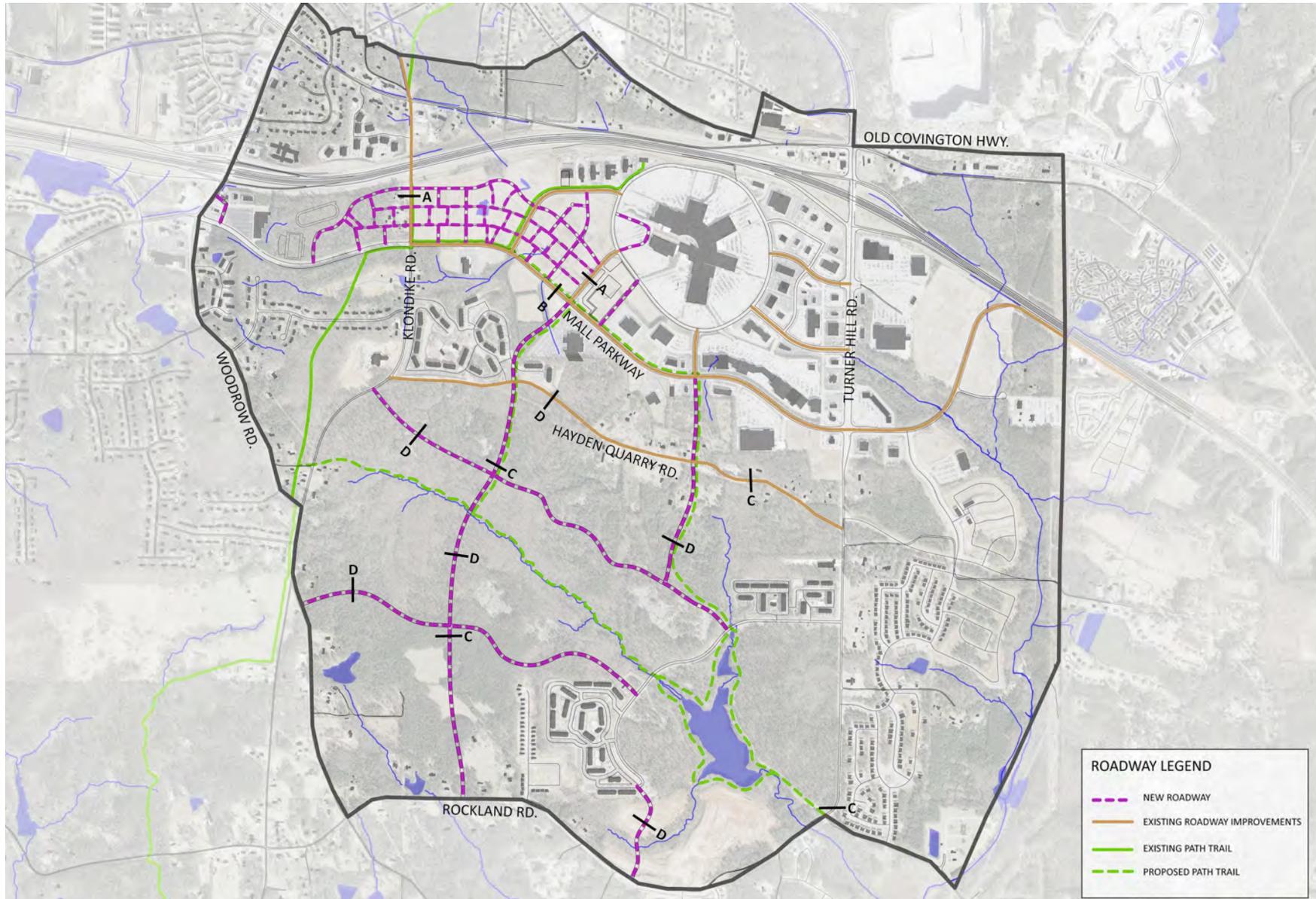
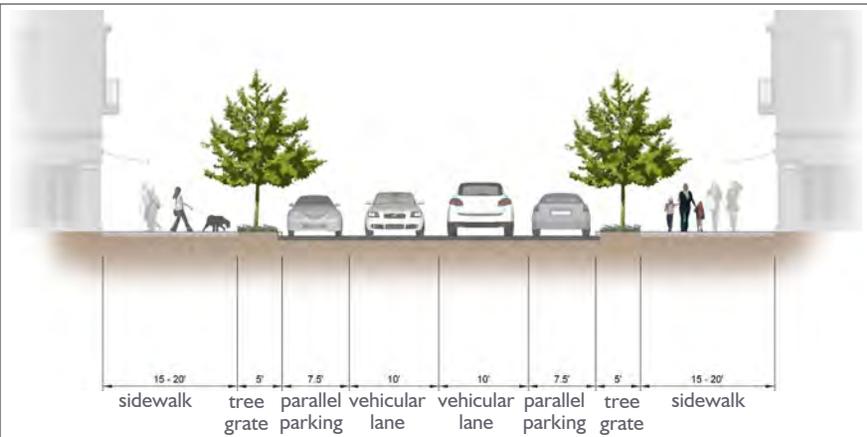
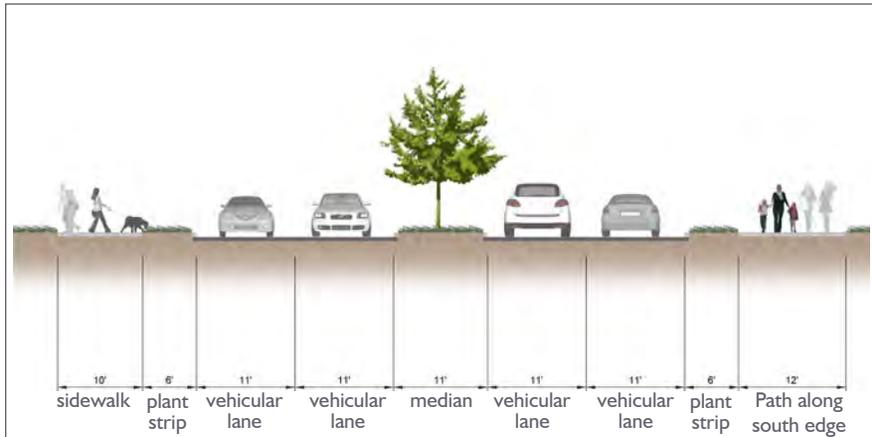


FIGURE 4x: ROADWAY MASTER PLAN



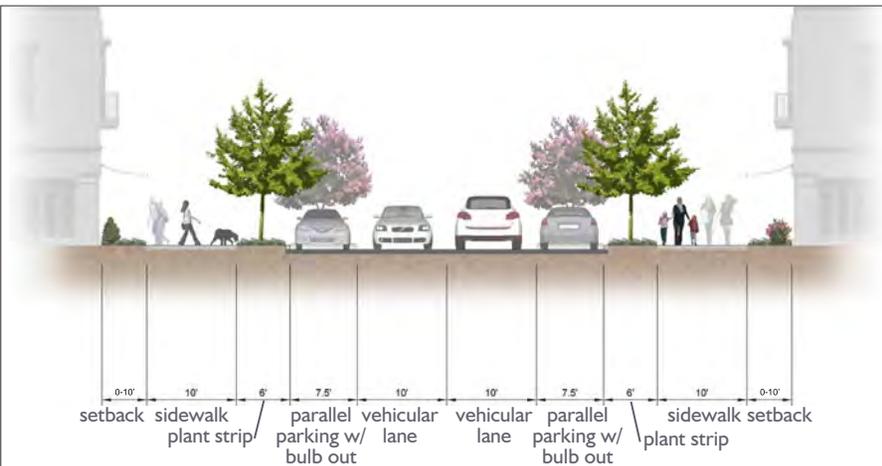
Street A: Urban Retail Node Street:

The Urban Retail Node Street is recommended for the redevelopment of Mall Trace into a main street for the lifestyle center. The street type includes on-street parking near retail storefronts, shared bicycle and vehicular road, and ample sidewalk space for pedestrians and outdoor cafe seating. Klondike Road and other main connection streets in the Urban Retail Node will also take on the character of this street section.



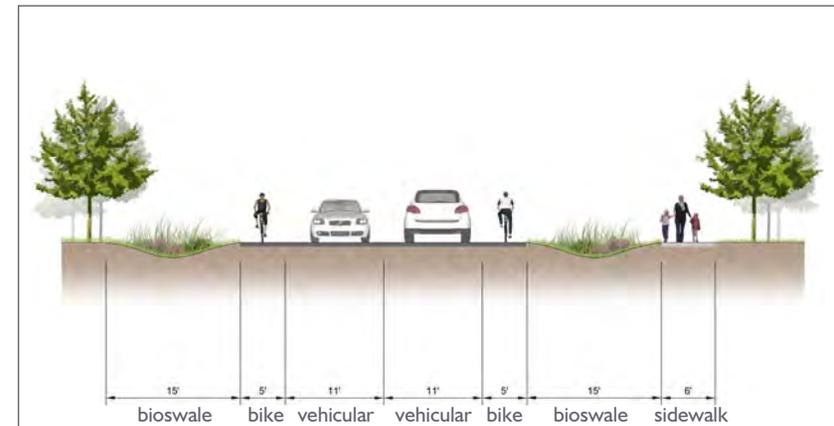
Street B: Urban Retail Node Collector Street

This street type is a variation of the Urban Retail Node Street, developed for improvements to Mall Parkway. This street type includes a median to break up the scale of this large existing collector street.



Street C: Village Node Main Street

This street type is intended for mixed use nodes in the Suburban Village and in Village/Cluster developments in the south portion of the study area. This street type provides convenience street parking in front of retail/commercial/office uses.



Street D: Rural Historic Road Collector Street

This street type is recommended for collector streets in the rural historic node and surrounding area. The character of this street fits into the existing rural context of the area. This street type utilizes swales instead of curb and gutter to capture water run-off, provides bike paths in the road, and a sidewalk on one side of the street.

FIGURES 4y: PROPOSED STREET SECTIONS

## TURNER HILL BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

Improve the visual appearance and incorporate signage onto the Turner Hill bridge overpass to create a sense of identity and arrival into the Stonecrest Area. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements should be considered to be incorporated into Turner Hill Road at the bridge, as this may help in acquiring ARC funding for a portion of the project cost. Refer to Figure 4z for a concept sketch of bridge signage improvements. This concept proposes LED lighted clear vertical tapered columns that could change color and through out the year, creating different shapes and patterns.

## 4.4 Green Strategies

### CONSERVATION AREA

Create a conservation area buffering the river south of Hayden Quarry (refer to Figure 4aa). Initial study shows that much of this area may be difficult to develop due to steep topography, rock outcroppings visible from aerial photos, and buffers and wetlands associated with the river. Preserving this area would build on the natural amenities in the study area. Potential uses for this conservation area could include: community gardens, local agriculture, community supported agriculture (CSA), wineries, botanical gardens, passive trails, etc.

### GREEN BRAND

Promote and develop a plan for Green Branding of the study area. This includes incorporating greenspace and trails into all areas, including higher density zones; implementing green strategies, such as solar panels on the Mall at Stonecrest; and connecting to the existing PATH trail system and Arabia Mountain Preserve.

A recommended National Sports Complex that can be utilized as park space when competitions are not in play, will help identify this area as a green



FIGURE 4z: CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR STONECREST TURNER HILL / I-20 OVERPASS

destination.

Additionally, the recommended conservation area south of Hayden Quarry Road will further this identity and create a green destination.

### TRAIL ACCESS

It is recommended that trail expansions take advantage of the existing waterways and natural areas to highlight these amenities. Restoration of rivers and streams in conjunction with trail development will further the green brand for the community.

### COMPACT VILLAGE NODAL DEVELOPMENT

It is recommended that new development south of Hayden Quarry Road be developed in a way that preserves natural areas. Compact and clustered developments will provide a strategy to preserve

existing greenspace, woodlands, and habitats. Transfer of Development Rights can further this strategy by allowing more dense development in cluster nodes and in the Urban Retail Node, while preserving conservation areas, as identified.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

It is recommended to further study the feasibility of green retrofits and installation of solar panels on large retail rooftops in the study area. In particular, the Mall of Stonecrest has a large, underutilized roof area that could take advantage of alternative energy opportunities.

### LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Promotion of Low Impact Development (LID) in all new developments, both public and private, are recommended. Education of these methodologies

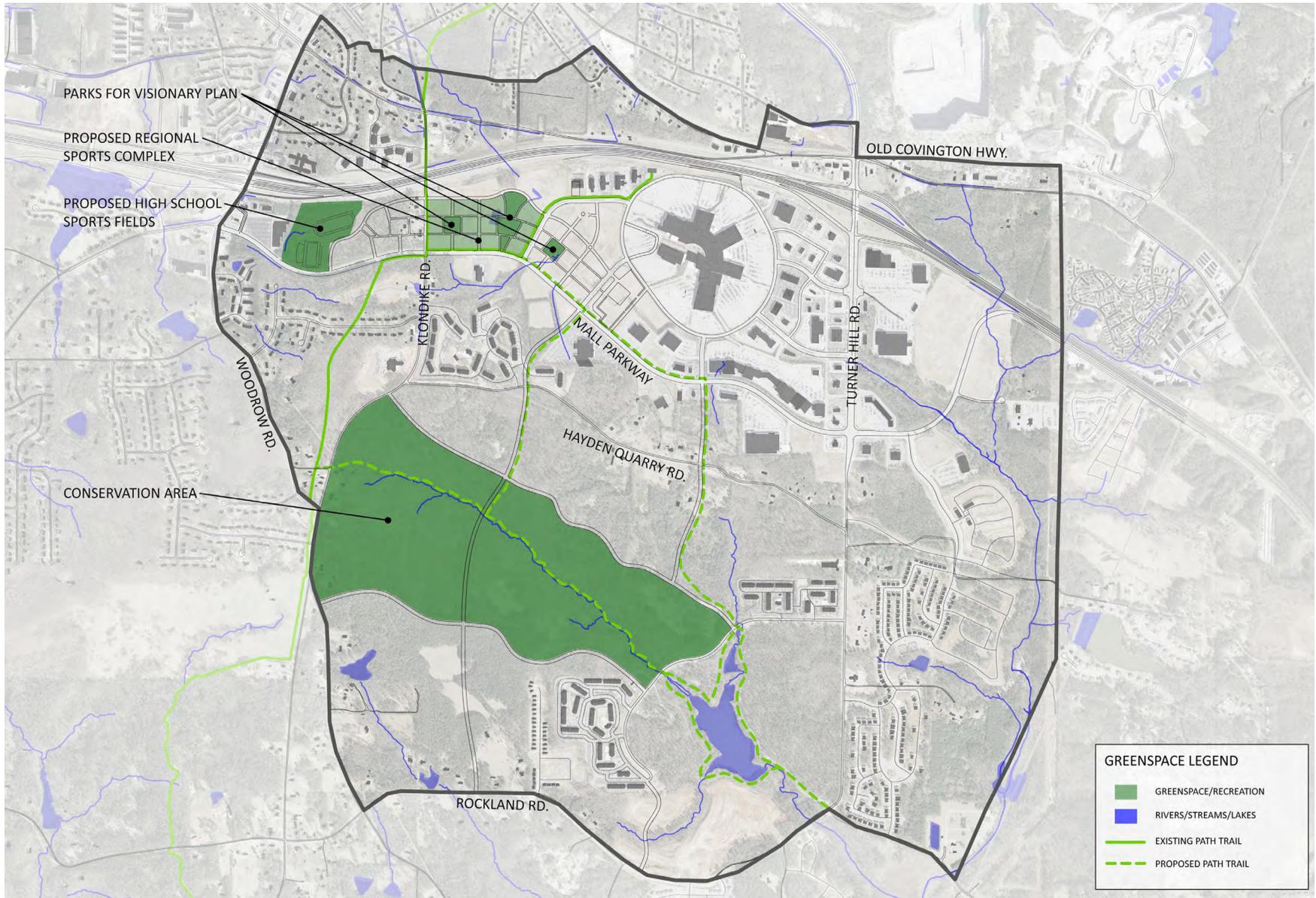


FIGURE 4aa: GREENSPACE AND TRAILS PLAN

to area stakeholders and developers can have a positive impact. Additionally, it is recommended to include text that encourages low impact development in the Overlay District zoning code.

#### *PROMOTE GREEN PROGRAMS*

It is also recommended that area stakeholders and developers be educated about the positive outcomes of following green building programs, such as LEED and LEED ND, to improve energy efficiency and water conservation. Include incentives into the Overlay District for developers to follow green program guidelines.

#### *BUILDING ORIENTATION*

Encourage developers/buildings to orient and design buildings for energy efficiency, including use of day light/ventilation. Include this recommendation in the Overlay District design guidelines.

## 4.5 Economic Development

#### *LIFESTYLE CENTER*

Redevelop the vacant and underutilized properties near the Mall at Stonecrest into a mixed use community, focused on a Lifestyle Center. Market results identified a lifestyle center with retail, housing and office as a viable land use for this area. The lifestyle center can build from the success of the existing retail hub, The Mall at Stonecrest, and draw more people to the area.

#### *TRAIL HEAD/PARK AND RIDE*

Develop a Trail Head/Park and Ride along Klondike Road in partnership with MARTA and their efforts for right-of-way acquisition for the future Bus Rapid Transit Station and Heavy Rail line. Park and Ride Parking can be shared between the trail head and MARTA facilities. Create strong pedestrian and bicycle connections between the MARTA facilities and the Trail Head.

#### *NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX*

It is recommended to further explore the feasibility of a national sports center in the Stonecrest Area that is accessible to and visible from I-20. National sports centers have proven to spur economic growth in communities as they draw visitors from out of the area looking for hotels, restaurants, and retail opportunities. Additionally, a sports complex would provide local residents and area schools, with recreation facilities. A market analysis is needed to understand what type of sports venues are lacking in the south eastern United States and to confirm that the available land and configuration would support this type of venue.

Once the market study is complete and identifies the appropriate complex, the County should begin to attract the appropriate national sports complex, along with complementary health and wellness facilities, to create a health center at Stonecrest.

Refer to Figures 4bb and 4cc for examples of shopping centers where sports complexes have been incorporated into adjacent land. The Abacoa Town Center in Jupiter, Florida has 14 baseball fields across the street, including a Major League spring training facility. Legends Outlets in Kansas City, Kansas is situated next to the Kansas Speedway, a major league soccer stadium, and a minor league baseball stadium. These shopping centers have developed into entertainment centers drawing regional visitors to the area.

#### *REGIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER AND AMPHITHEATER*

Most Conference Centers and Amphitheatres have not shown, historically, to have a major economic impact on the local businesses and communities. However, as complimentary uses to other facilities, they could help to grow a diverse economy for the

study area. It is recommended that further market studies be developed to explore the feasibility of a conference center and amphitheater in the study area.

#### *CID*

It is recommended that the Stonecrest Business Alliance continue to develop a Community Improvement District (CID) designation. Through a CID, the community would have an organization, tools and funding source to help implement plan ideas and improvements to the community.

#### *TAD*

Implement a Tax Allocation District in the study area to help fund future transit and other development initiatives.

#### *ECONOMIC, MARKETING, AND BRANDING CAMPAIGN*

Create an 'Economic, Marketing and Branding' campaign to promote this regional center and recruit businesses; industries/offices/retail/restaurants/entertainment and the development community.

Promote tourism that focuses on the natural and historic resources found in the study area, such as the Arabia Mountain National Heritage area.

As part of this campaign, an incentive plan/structure should be developed to retain and attract businesses/corporations to the study area

The campaign should also target private investors interested in public/private partnerships to facilitate development projects near Stonecrest Mall and to assist in funding the MARTA Heavy Rail Line

#### *MANUFACTURING AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USES*

Allow for manufacturing and light industrial uses along the I-20 corridor. These uses would provide jobs and a mixed economy to support the area.



FIGURE 4bb: ABACOA TOWN CENTER, JUPITER, FLORIDA

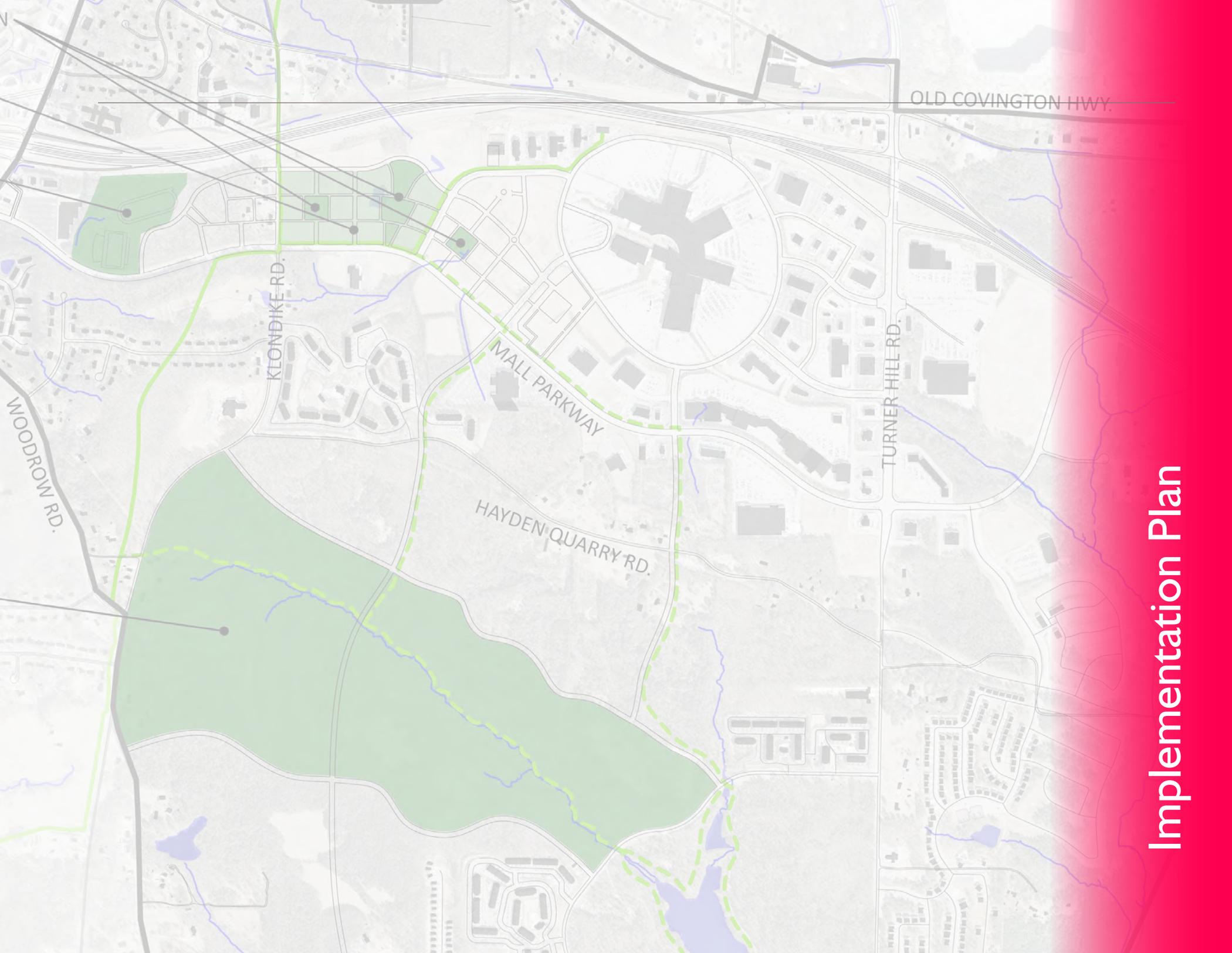


FIGURE 4cc: LEGENDS, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

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OLD COVINGTON HWY.

KLONDIKE RD.

WOODROW RD.

MALL PARKWAY

TURNER HILL RD.

HAYDEN QUARRY RD.

# Implementation Plan

## 5.0 Implementation Plan

### 5.1 Implementation Strategies

The implementation strategies provide direction on how to make the recommendations a reality. An action plan with specific projects and programs are laid out to implement the vision and goals of the Master Plan.

While the implementation of the visionary plan may take longer, 25 or more years, a schedule of projects and programs are laid out that focus on the first five years and priorities. While the projects within the private sector may rely on market conditions, developer interest and funding, there are projects that may and can be undertaken by the public sector that can provide catalyst for the public/private development; infrastructure and civic facilities, regulatory framework and organizational structure.

The following are the implementation strategies for implementing the Master Plan. They include organizational, along with the recommendation categories: land use/zoning, transportation, economic development, and green strategies. These strategies focus on creating a vibrant livable and walkable, destination oriented regional center with housing options, employment, access to natural resources, future transit, mobility and connectivity between nodes.

#### Organizational

This study brought together a strong and engaging stakeholder team who are interested in seeing this vision become a reality. In order to implement this plan it is strongly recommended that The Core Team, which represented a diverse group of stakeholders from business leaders to residents

to area non-profits, form an oversight committee. This committee would be a voluntary groups who work to prioritize and lead plan initiatives, working closely with DeKalb County. Additional members should be included as necessary. While the committee will work closely with DeKalb County, it will be the stakeholders who have the vested interest and ability to push plan recommendations forward and truly brand their community.

It is recommended that the committee form Leadership Sub-Teams for: promoting the green brand, trail extension implementation, Stonecrest CID formation, national sports complex exploration, mixed use lifestyle center development and economic development strategies - such as TADs.

#### Land Use and Zoning

In order for the Master Plan to be implemented, land use and zoning changes as proposed should be adopted by DeKalb County.

#### Comprehensive Plan Updates

The County should adopt this LCI study as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Future Development Map, within the Comp Plan should be updated to reflect the edits as recommended within this report, in particular including Neighborhood Centers at nodal intersections and creating a conservation zone surrounding the stream south of Hayden Quarry.

#### Zoning

Zoning changes should keep the current entitlements and allow flexibility to create the land use and activities envisioned in the LCI Plan. DeKalb County

with the help of the stakeholders need to lead this effort. The development community should be an active part of this dialogue as the regulatory framework is developed. The zoning framework should include the best practices that promote sustainable communities and environment. The County should consider incentives to help develop sustainable communities and conserve and enhance the existing greenspace, especially in the southern portion of the study area, including the addition of Transfer of Development Rights in the Overlay and incentives for Low Impact Development principles. Programs such as LEED and LEED ND (Leadership in Environment and Energy Design for Neighborhood Development), Earth Craft, ARC Green Communities or other recognized programs should be encouraged in the Overlay District zoning to promote smart growth. The zoning changes should include supporting aging in place, senior living and affordable housing. Specific recommendations include:

#### OVERLAY DISTRICT

The County should work with area land owners to align density requirements with the actual market demand. The existing high density allowance has the potential to raise perceived property values above the demand supported by the market and deter actual development.

The County should amend the Overlay District to:

- Include Transfer of Development Rights and Conservation Subdivisions in Tiers III and V. In particular to provide greenspace preservation around the river south of Hayden Quarry Road and encourage higher density development in

Tier I, II, IV and within the cluster/village nodes in Tier III and V.

- Include Agricultural and Recreational uses in Tiers III and V to support a variety of low impact uses in the Conservation area south of Hayden Quarry.
- Create a maximum lot size within Tier V to support cluster/village development at key Neighborhood Center nodes. The current minimum lot size of 15,000sf will not support this type of cluster development.
- Review the excluded uses in Tier I and II and consider including Outdoor Amusement and Recreation Services to support proposed entertainment land uses. Also consider inclusion of Automobile categories, such as used motor vehicles dealers, gasoline service stations, automotive rental leasing, etc. to support the growing automobile dealership industry.
- Include Single Family detached residential in Tier III to support plan recommendations and a mix of housing types.
- Revise each Tier to include street connectivity requirements. This can be done in one of two ways: 1. Work with area stakeholders, including land owners, residents, and businesses to create a Master Street Plan. 2. Include maximum block sizes specific to each tier and require minimum street connectivity. Language could include: Length of residential or commercial blocks in Tier I, II, IV, V and within Neighborhood Centers should not exceed 660'. Closer to the commercial core the recommended maximum block length in commercial areas is 400 feet. Commercial blocks longer than 400 feet should have a mid-block pedestrian crossing. Blocks in Tier III, not within a Neighborhood Center could have a larger length requirement - as

this area is more rural in character. In regards to connectivity, language could be included such as: New streets must connect two other streets unless natural site conditions make such connection impossible. Cul-de-sac streets are not permitted, as they contribute to traffic congestion rather than help disperse traffic.

- Include requirements to connect all new large parcel development back to the existing PATH Trail network and across properties, so adjacent parcels can connect overtime, similar to the Peachtree City cart path model.

#### DESIGN GUIDELINES

The County should amend the Overlay District Design Guidelines to:

- Include distinct design standards specific to each Node/Character Area - including specific street types, signage types, and lighting and street furniture types.
- Revise the signage requirements so that signage height is in relation to the viewshed and speed of the street it is facing. To continue the branding of the Stonecrest area, the County should work with the Stonecrest Business Alliance to create signage standards.
- Consider allowing for a maximum percentage of alternative materials on a building facade beyond the recommended building materials, to help lower building construction/material costs. An alternative approach is to require the recommended building materials only on facades visible from the street. Encourage indigenous and sustainable colors and materials to improve the thermal dynamics of the exterior building envelope.
- Provide alternatives for parking lot landscaping requirements. Lower ground cover or less than the required 50% landscaping along the

street could be exchanged for the inclusion of Low Impact Development practices and/or additional greenspace preservation on-site.

#### Transportation

To implement the transportation recommendations, as discussed, strong partnerships will need to be undertaken between the County, stakeholders, MARTA, and private developers and investors. Following is a list of implementation strategies for the recommendations.

DeKalb County, the Stonecrest Business Alliance, MARTA and Cadillac Fairview should work together to submit a supplemental transportation implementation LCI pre-qualification application to ARC for the two priority projects per the LCI Plan, which include roadway improvements to Stonecrest Trace to incentivize development of the Lifestyle Center main street and development of the Trail Head/Park and Ride.

DeKalb County to make necessary multi-modal road improvements to Mall Parkway, Klondike Road, and Hayden Quarry.

Build a partnership amongst DeKalb County, MARTA, and the Police Department to begin acquiring the land necessary for the new police precinct, Trail Head/Park and Ride, the BRT station, and the future Heavy Rail Station.

DeKalb County, Cadillac Fairview and the development community should work together to develop incentives for the street network north of Mall Parkway - either through a Master Street Plan and/or connectivity requirements within the Overlay District.

DeKalb County and land owners shall work together to develop incentives for the street network south of Mall Parkway and Hayden Quarry Road - either through a Master Street Plan and/or connectivity requirements within the Overlay District.

DeKalb County to work with land owners, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, and the PATH Foundation to acquire easements and develop trail expansions.

DeKalb County should work with GDOT District Engineer and District Board Member and the ARC to create signage and aesthetic improvements to the Turner Hill Bridge overpass. DeKalb County and Stonecrest Business Alliance should work together to create a plan for maintenance of the overpass signage/improvements.

DeKalb County should work with County leadership to establish SPLOST funding for the roadway improvements discussed within this report.

DeKalb County to work with the Stonecrest Business Alliance and the ARC to implement the recommended projects per the work program.

## Economic Development

Economic development is crucial for a successful and sustainable community. Having access to good employment, jobs to housing balance, increased tax base and revenue for the County will provide more services and amenities to the community that in turn raises quality of life and the sustainability of the community. Following are some of the strategies to implement the recommendations envisioned:

DeKalb County, Stonecrest Business Alliance,

Cadillac Fairview, and the development community should work together to incentivize development of the lifestyle center, as supported by the market study.

DeKalb County and the Stonecrest Business Alliance should work together to:

- Create a marketing and branding campaign to attract new businesses and new development; retail, entertainment, regional sports facilities, corporations and offices to locate in the community, focusing on redevelopment of the land west of the Mall into a lifestyle center.
- Create a Stonecrest CID to help implement and fund plan recommendations.
- Work with the development and investment community to launch a public/private partnership initiative program aimed at developing and funding plan recommendations.
- Conduct a market study on the feasibility of a regional sports complex in the study area.
- Market the area to developers for a national sports complex, according to market findings.
- Conduct a market study for the feasibility of an Amphitheater and a Conference Center in the study area. Based on market findings, work with the development community, local hotels, and the school district to develop these amenities.

DeKalb County to:

- Utilize incentives to attract businesses and new development, such as County investment in roadways and public space, market studies resulting from this plan, zoning incentives, and initiation of a TAD. Further explore Enterprise Zone and Opportunity Zone programs for the study area.

- Partner with DeKalb Schools to encourage development of a Conference Center for graduation and educational facilities in future educational SPLOST funds.
- Condemn the incomplete/vacant hotel structure that is visible from I-20. This is one of the first views into Stonecrest from I-20 East. Once condemned, work with the Stonecrest Business Alliance and development community to demolish the structure.

## Jobs to Housing

There is a need to ensure that appropriate housing options are available for people who work in the community. Lack of housing options will result in longer commutes, more congestion, and more parking that negatively impacts the environmental quality of the area.

As development and redevelopment occurs, more retail, commercial, entertainment, and office uses will become available that bring opportunities for a greater diversity of housing options. The jobs-to-housing match will ensure that a community continues to adhere to the principles of smart growth and promotes a positive quality of life. The provision of workforce housing requires communities to include a range of affordable housing types and pricing. It is important to maintain a high quality of design and planning in all developments.

Following are some options that may be considered to promote housing options:

**Inclusionary Zoning:** Inclusionary zoning ordinances prescribe that a certain minimum percentage of units in a specific residential development need to be made available to households at a partic-

ular income level, generally defined as a percentage of the area median income. The required set asides are usually targeted towards larger developments in the area. Ideal locations for inclusionary zoning should focus on the higher density Tiers, I and II, in the northern portion of the study area.

Many of the communities which have such ordinances also offer some form of incentive to the developer in return for the provision of affordable housing. These incentives can include waivers of certain zoning requirements; relaxation of existing requirements for density, area, height, open space and use. Other incentives include waiver of permit fees, local tax abatements, fewer required amenities, “fast track” permitting. The other incentive that is often provided by the jurisdiction for the developer is the provision or subsidization of infrastructure for the site.

The current Stonecrest Overlay provides density bonuses. Including a certain percentage of workforce housing/low-income housing in a development should be considered for inclusion as a density bonus incentive.

**Seeking Federal funds to targeted sites in the area:** There is a need to target financial resources to allow developers to include housing for low income, workforce and senior living. HOME and CDBG funds are federal programs that provide financial resources that may be used to create the necessary affordability of housing in the area. Development of low income multi-family and senior housing in the Tier I and II zones could benefit from these funding sources.

**Expanding opportunities for Employer assisted**

**housing:** This incentive should be encouraged among the potential employers in the area. As employers move into the area, discussions about the provision of Employer assisted housing programs should be encouraged. Employer Assisted Housing is a powerful incentive that can effectively promote employee retention.

**Seek Federal Funding for Senior Housing:** According to the market study senior housing is in demand in the study area. Federal funds are available to assist developers with low-moderate income senior housing. Many federal programs prefer to fund senior housing located in walking distance to transit and area amenities. It is recommended to site senior housing near the Mall and the lifestyle center. Federal programs include: CDBG funds.

**Green Strategies**

In order to promote a sustainable community and create a green brand for the Stonecrest area, the strategies mentioned below should be considered which can ensure the preservation and enhancement of natural resources, the environment and quality of life.

Work with DeKalb County, the Stonecrest Business Alliance, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, and other stakeholders to develop a green branding strategy and marketing campaign for the area.

Provide guidance to developers, property owners, business owners and stakeholders on the Low Impact Development (LID) management practices and its benefits. Incentivize LID in the Stonecrest Area Overlay District. Incentives may include; density bonuses, rapid approval process, administrative variances, tax incentives, lowered landscape

requirements, among others.

Include incentives for compliance with national and/or other recognized programs that promote sustainable developments. LEED ND, Earth Craft, ARC Green Communities in the Stonecrest Area Overlay District.

Create a Transfer of Development Rights program in the Stonecrest Overlay Area to incentivize conservation of areas, as recommended in the master plan.

Promote and provide incentives for LEED certification of buildings.

Work with existing property owners, the County, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, and the PATH Foundation to acquire the land, fund, and develop trail expansions.

Work with the County, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, the PATH Foundation, and the Stonecrest Business Alliance to develop the Trail Head/Park and Ride along Klondike Road.

Work with MARTA, DOT, and ARC to implement the BRT and heavy rail transit services.

Work with Employers to promote sustainable business practices and incentives to their employees. Programs such as recycling, water conservation, car pooling, telecommuting and transit/bike commuting incentives.

Include health impact assessment for new development and projects, especially for those that include the use of public funds.

**5.2 Work Program and Five Year Schedule**

**Implementation Goals for the First Five Years**

1. Attract Lifestyle Center with multi-modal access and a mix of uses
2. Develop Trail Head facility with shared parking in collaboration with Georgia Department of Transportation, Atlanta Regional Commission, DeKalb County and MARTA.
3. Create CID and begin to build a marketing campaign, develop a regional green brand and identify infrastructure improvements.
4. Attract LCI Supplemental Funds to assist in the implementation of goals 1 and 2, above.
5. Revise the Stonecrest Overlay District
6. Develop a detailed market study on economic development strategies, including regional entertainment, a national sports complex, a conference center, and an amphitheater.

**Planning and Zoning**

<i>Description / Action</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>
Develop Trail Head Facility: Design and Develop a Trail Head Facility with shared parking to spur multi-modal connectivity to the study area.	\$5,000,000	2014-2018	DeKalb County/ GDOT / ARC / MARTA	DeKalb County / ARC / MARTA
Attract Supplemental LCI Funds: Complete ARC requirements to apply for LCI funds to plan priority projects. Focus should include: 1. roadway improvements to Stonecrest Trace to spur development of the lifestyle center and, 2. development of the Trail Head/ Park and Ride facility.	\$50,000	2014-2018	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / ARC
Amend the Stonecrest Overlay District Guidelines and Design Guidelines: Revise the Guidelines to reflect recommendations and the vision as described in section 5.1.	\$150,000	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / ARC
Turner Hill Overpass Bridge Improvements: Design and develop improvements to the Turner Hill Road I-20 bridge overpass. Improvements should focus on creating an identity for the Stonecrest area with signage and aesthetic improvements. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be considered on Turner Hill.	\$3,000,000	2013-2018	DeKalb County / SBA / GDOT	DeKalb County / GDOT / ARC / SBA
Turner Hill Overpass Bridge Improvements: An initial phase to develop a concept design, engage stakeholders, and create a funding strategies	\$50,000	2013-2014	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / GDOT / ARC / SBA

Amend the Comprehensive Plan: Adopt this LCI study as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Update Future Development Map as described in sections 4.2 and 5.1.	TBD	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / ARC
Land Acquisition: Acquire land for the Trail Head, shared parking, future BRT station, future MARTA station, trail connections between these facilities, and police precinct. MARTA should consider a land swap to obtain a portion of this land.	TBD	2013-2015	DeKalb County / ARC / MARTA / GDOT / DeKalb Police	DeKalb County / ARC / MARTA / GDOT / DeKalb Police
Host a Charrette with the development community, commercial tenants, and land owners to educate them about the plan and receive input on how the plan can meet their needs.	TBD	2013-2014	DeKalb County / SBA	DeKalb County / ARC / SBA
<b>Economic Development</b>				
CID Formation: Test the feasibility, and if feasible create a Community Improvement District to begin to build a regional green brand and assist in the development of infrastructure improvements	TBD	2014	SBA / DeKalb County / ARC	SBA / DeKalb County
Create an Economic, Marketing, and Green Branding Strategy/Campaign: This strategy/campaign should focus on how to promote and grow the areas green brand as well as how to attract new development with a priority focus on the market based lifestyle center.	TBD	2013-2014	DeKalb County / SBA / Private Land owner	DeKalb County / SBA
Conduct detailed Market Studies: Complete detailed market studies on economic development strategies including regional entertainment, a national sports complex, a conference center, and an amphitheater and update 5 year plan to reflect findings.	\$95,000	2014	DeKalb County / SBA	DeKalb County / SBA / ARC
Create an Economic Development Incentive Plan/Structure: Create a plan and develop implementation tools to attract businesses and new development. Incentives include: TADs and Public/Private Partnerships	TBD	2013-2018	DeKalb County / Private Investors	DeKalb County / ARC

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

## Housing

Conduct a detailed residential market study on Transit Oriented Development / Traditional Neighborhood Development to thoroughly understand the market impact of the Mall Block development	\$30,000	2014	DeKalb County / SBA	DeKalb County / SBA / ARC
Update Overlay District Guidelines to allow for Single Family Detached Residential in Tier III to support recommendations and a mix of housing types.	TBD (included in Amend Overlay District Guidelines)	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / ARC
Amend Tier I and II of the Overlay Design Guidelines to include incentives for Inclusionary Zoning	TBD (included in Amend Overlay District Guidelines)	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / ARC
Include incentives for employer assisted housing in Tier I and II of the Overlay Design Guidelines	TBD (included in Amend Overlay District Guidelines)	2013	DeKalb County	DeKalb County / ARC

## Transportation Priority Projects

Project Name	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs	ROW Year	ROW Costs*	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
Stonecrest Trace Improvements	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Stonecrest Trace; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe for on-street parking (reduce to two travel lanes); add pedestrian lighting and landscaping		\$20,000	TBD	TBD		\$200,000	\$220,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$44,000
Grid Network	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Pedestrian Facility	Grid network streets with two 11' travel lanes, 8' on street parking, 6' furniture zone for landscaping, 10' sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and bus stops to create a complete street		\$200,000 per 1000 linear feet	TBD	TBD		\$2,000,000 per 1000 linear feet	\$2,200,000 per 1000 linear feet	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$440,000 per 1000 linear feet
Stonecrest Promenade Extension to Hayden Quarry Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Mall Parkway and Hayden Quarry Road; extension of Stonecrest Promenade; two 11' lanes, 12' multi-use path on the east side; complete with pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$140,000	TBD	TBD		\$1,400,000	\$1,540,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$308,000
Stonecrest Trace Extension to Hayden Quarry Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Mall Parkway and Hayden Quarry Road; extension of Stonecrest Trace; two 11' lanes, 12' multi-use path on the east side; complete with pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$190,000	TBD	TBD		\$1,900,000	\$2,090,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$418,000
Stonecrest Trace Extension from Hayden Quarry Road to Proposed Trail Connection	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Hayden Quarry Road and the proposed trail connection (connection Forest Lake trail to existing PATH trail); extension of Stonecrest Trace; two 11' lanes, 12' multi-use path on the east side; complete with pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$270,000	TBD	TBD		\$2,700,000	\$2,970,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$594,000
Stonecrest Promenade Extension from Hayden Quarry to new northern east/west roadway	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Hayden Quarry Road and the new northern east/west roadway; extension of Stonecrest Promenade; two 11' lanes, 12' multi-use path on the east side; complete with pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$210,000	TBD	TBD		\$2,100,000	\$2,310,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$462,000
New Northern East-West Connection from Stonecrest Trace Extension to Klondike Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Stonecrest Trace Extension and Klondike Road; north of the new multi-use path project; two 11' lanes and two 5' bike lanes, 6' sidewalk on one side; pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$270,000	TBD	TBD		\$2,700,000	\$2,970,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$594,000
Stonecrest Trace Extension from new multi-use path project to New Southern East-West Connection	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between new multi-use path project and New Southern East-West Connection; extension of Stonecrest Trace; two 11' lanes and two 5' bike lanes, 6' sidewalk on one side; pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$210,000	TBD	TBD		\$2,100,000	\$2,310,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$462,000
Stonecrest Trace Extension from New Southern East-West Connection to Rockland Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between New Southern East-West Connection and Rockland Road; extension of Stonecrest Trace; two 11' lanes and two 5' bike lanes, 6' sidewalk on one side; complete with pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding		\$290,000	TBD	TBD		\$2,900,000	\$3,190,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$638,000

	New Southern East-West Connection from Stonecrest Trace Extension to Klondike Road	Roadway / Multimodal Roadway / Operations & Safety Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Stonecrest Trace Extension and Klondike Road; two 11' lanes and two 5' bike lanes, 6' sidewalk on one side; complete with pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding	\$290,000	TBD	TBD	\$2,900,000	\$3,190,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$638,000
	New Southern East-West Connection from Stonecrest Promenade Extension to Stonecrest Trace Extension	Roadway / Multimodal Roadway / Operations & Safety Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Stonecrest Promenade Extension and Stonecrest Trace Extension; two 11' lanes and two 5' bike lanes, 6' sidewalk on one side; pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding	\$330,000	TBD	TBD	\$3,300,000	\$3,630,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$726,000
	New Connection between Forest Lake Parkway and Rockland Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New complete street roadway between Forest Lake Parkway and Rockland Road; two 11' lanes and two 5' bike lanes, 6' sidewalk on one side; pedestrian lighting and signage/wayfinding	\$190,000	TBD	TBD	\$1,900,000	\$2,090,000	DeKalb County, Private Developer	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	Private Developer, DeKalb County	\$418,000
	Klondike Road Improvements	Roadway / Multimodal Roadway / Operations & Safety Transit / Facilities Capital Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Klondike Road between Main Street and Mall Parkway; pedestrian lighting; add two 5' bike lanes; 6' sidewalks on both sides; landscaping.	\$270,000	TBD	TBD	\$2,700,000	\$2,970,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$594,000
	Mall Parkway Improvements from Klondike Road to Stonecrest Square	Roadway / Multimodal Roadway / Operations & Safety Transit / Facilities Capital Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Mall Pkwy between Klondike Road and Stonecrest Square; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe to have two 5' bike lanes, convert two-way left turn lane into a planted median; improve pedestrian lighting; 6' planted furniture zone on each side and 8' sidewalks; (if pavement width will not allow for bike lanes, add side-path along south edge of roadway)	\$140,000	TBD	TBD	\$1,400,000	\$1,540,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$308,000
	Mall Parkway Improvements from Stonecrest Square to Stonecrest Trace	Roadway / Multimodal Roadway / Operations & Safety Transit / Facilities Capital Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Mall Pkwy between Stonecrest Square and Stonecrest Trace; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe to have two 5' bike lanes, convert two-way left turn lane into a planted median; improve pedestrian lighting; 6' planted furniture zone on each side and 8' sidewalks; (if pavement width will not allow for bike lanes, add side-path along south edge of roadway)	\$110,000	TBD	TBD	\$1,100,000	\$1,210,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$242,000
	Mall Parkway Improvements from Stonecrest Trace to Stonecrest Promenade	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Mall Pkwy between Stonecrest Trace and Stonecrest Promenade; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe to have two 5' bike lanes, convert two-way left turn lane into a planted median; improve pedestrian lighting; 6' planted furniture zone on each side and 8' sidewalks; (if pavement width will not allow for bike lanes, add side-path along south edge of roadway)	\$220,000	TBD	TBD	\$2,200,000	\$2,420,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$484,000
	Mall Parkway Improvements from Stonecrest Promenade to Turner Hill Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Mall Pkwy between Stonecrest Promenade and Turner Hill Road; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe to have two 5' bike lanes, convert two-way left turn lane into a planted median; improve pedestrian lighting; 6' planted furniture zone on each side and 8' sidewalks; (if pavement width will not allow for bike lanes, add side-path along south edge of roadway)	\$220,000	TBD	TBD	\$2,200,000	\$2,420,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$484,000
	Mall Parkway Improvements east of Turner Hill Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Mall Pkwy from Turner Hill Road until it becomes parallel with I-85; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe to have two 5' bike lanes, convert two-way left turn lane into a planted median; improve pedestrian lighting; 6' planted furniture zone on each side and 8' sidewalks	\$340,000	TBD	TBD	\$3,400,000	\$3,740,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$748,000
	Stonecrest Parkway Improvements	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Stonecrest Pkwy; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe for on-street parking (reduce to two travel lanes); add pedestrian lighting and landscaping	\$30,000	TBD	TBD	\$300,000	\$330,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$66,000
	Stonecrest Concourse Improvements	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Stonecrest Concourse; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe for on-street parking (reduce to two travel lanes); add pedestrian lighting and landscaping	\$30,000	TBD	TBD	\$300,000	\$330,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$66,000
	Stonecrest Promenade Improvements	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Stonecrest Promenade; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe for on-street parking (reduce to two travel lanes); add pedestrian lighting and landscaping	\$20,000	TBD	TBD	\$200,000	\$220,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$44,000
	Stonecrest Square Improvements	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Stonecrest Square; improve signage/wayfinding; re-stripe for on-street parking (reduce to two travel lanes); add pedestrian lighting and landscaping	\$40,000	TBD	TBD	\$400,000	\$440,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$88,000
	Hayden Quarry Improvements from Klondike Road to Stonecrest Trace Extension	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Hayden Quarry Road between Klondike Road and Stonecrest Trace Extension; pedestrian lighting; 12' multi-use path on one side; and signage/wayfinding.	\$120,000	TBD	TBD	\$1,200,000	\$1,320,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$264,000
	Hayden Quarry Improvements from Stonecrest Trace Extension to Stonecrest Promenade Extension	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Hayden Quarry Road between Stonecrest Trace Extension and Stonecrest Promenade Extension; adding two 5' bike lanes; pedestrian lighting; 12' multi-use path on one side; and signage/wayfinding.	\$210,000	TBD	TBD	\$2,100,000	\$2,310,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$462,000
	Hayden Quarry Road Improvements from Stonecrest Promenade Extension to Turner Hill Road	Roadway / Multimodal Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Multi-modal improvements to Hayden Quarry Road between Stonecrest Promenade Extension and Turner Hill Road; adding two 5' bike lanes; pedestrian lighting; 12' multi-use path on one side; and signage/wayfinding.	\$170,000	TBD	TBD	\$1,700,000	\$1,870,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$374,000
T-1	Forest Lake Trail	Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New Multi-use path surrounding the perimeter of Forest Lake and connecting to Trail Connection, New Northern East-West Connection, and Turner Hill Road; includes lighting	\$340,000	TBD	TBD	\$3,400,000	\$3,740,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$748,000
T-2	Trail Connection	Last Mile Connectivity / Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	New Multi-use path connecting Forest Lake Trail to the existing PATH trail; includes lighting	\$260,000	TBD	TBD	\$2,600,000	\$2,860,000	DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Private Developer, LCI, Federal Funds	DeKalb County	\$572,000

**5.3 Twenty-Five Year Projections**

**Housing Projections**

Housing projections are based on a .33% annual growth rate of housing units in the study area. For the purpose of this report, the residential study area is defined by the 30038 zip code, as the housing market responds beyond the study area boundaries. Housing product for the study area is recommended to be 4-6 plex condos or small lot village homes, which will appeal to the County’s empty nester population. 4-6 plex homes should be ranch or cape cod style with an attached 1-2 car garage, ranging from 1,100 to 1,600 square feet.

Housing Projections (30038 zip code)		2013				
Existing Housing		14,400				
Current Population		37,800				
Household Size Per Occupied Unit	2.58	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038
Projected Housing Units in 5 year Increments		80	200	220	400	600
Cumulative New Housing Units at Designated Year		14,400	14,480	14,680	14,900	15,300
Total Net Housing Units at Designated Year		14,480	14,680	14,900	15,300	15,900

Housing projections for the specific LCI study area boundary are based on the .33% annual growth rate of housing units, with a base existing housing figure obtained from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau for the LCI study area census blocks, as provided by DeKalb County.

Housing Projections (LCI study area)		2010	2012				
Existing Housing		3,555	3,580				
Current Population		6,611	6,720				
Household Size Per Occupied Unit		2.58	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Projected Housing Units in 5 year Increments			80	200	220	400	600
Cumulative New Housing Units at Designated Year			3,580	3,660	3,860	4,080	4,480
Total Net Housing Units at Designated Year			3,660	3,860	4,080	4,480	5,080

Proposed Housing Units by Type (First 5 Years)	
4-6 Plex Condos or Small Lot Village Homes	60-80

**Population Projections**

Population projections are based on the Stonecrest Residential Area, defined by zip code 30038, and a growth rate of .85% annually.

Population Projections (30038 zip code)		2012	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Projected Baseline Population (.85% growth rate)		37,800	39,400	41,000	42,900	44,700	46,700

Population projections for the LCI study are boundary based on the .85% annual growth rate, with a base population figure obtained from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau for the LCI study area census blocks, as provided by DeKalb County.

Population Projections (LCI study area)	2010	2012	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Projected Baseline Population (.85% growth rate)	6,611	6,720	6,780	6,840	6,900	6,950	7,020

### Job Projections

Job projections are based on the Stonecrest-Northlake study area, which the Stonecrest area is a competitive part of, a growth rate of 2.0% in the first two years and a growth rate of 1.0% in the following 15 years. This job growth is anticipated to be spread over the entire Stonecrest-Northlake area. Stonecrest will need a competitive marketing plan to promote the area to potential employers.

Job Projections (Stonecrest-Northlake)	2013					
Existing Jobs	338,000					
		2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Proposed Jobs (2.0% growth rate first 10 yrs)		373,000	412,500	420,000	425,000	433,000

LCI study area boundary job projections are based on the 2.0% growth rate in the first 10 years and the 1.0% growth rate in the following 15 years. The existing 2012 jobs figure of 3,272 was obtained from the Mall at Stonecrest Demographics report, dated April 6, 2012, and provided by DeKalb County.

Job Projections (LCI study area)	2012					
Existing Jobs	3,272					
		2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Proposed Jobs (2.0% growth rate first 10 yrs)		3,613	3,989	4,192	4,406	4,631

### Job/Housing Ratio

The Jobs to Housing Ratio was determined by dividing the projected number of LCI study area boundary jobs to the projected number of LCI study area boundary housing units. A jobs to housing ratio target, within a regional job center is approximately 5 jobs to 1 housing unit. While the Stonecrest area is relatively balanced in the number of jobs to housing, the historic norm for regional centers would include more jobs than housing. To better define this balance and identify the job income to housing cost needs, it is recommended that DeKalb County conduct a detailed study of the pedestrian sheds in the LCI area, as a means to improve the balance of jobs to housing and income to housing options within walking distance.

Jobs : Housing Ratio (Jobs/Housing Unit)	2012	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
	0.91	0.99	1.03	1.03	0.98	0.91

# STONECREST LCI PLAN

LCI Study

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## 6.1 Stakeholder Input

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #1

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Stonecrest Library | May 2, 2013 | 4:00 – 6:00 PM

## **Attendees**

Chad Belinfanti, PSCCA

Wesley Dowdy, Stonecrest Business Alliance

Allison Duncan, Atlanta Regional Commission

Susan Hood, DeKalb Natural Resources Management Office

Deborah A. Jackson, City of Lithonia

Jason Lary, Stonecrest City Alliance; Spring Lake

Johanna McCrehan, Georgia Conservancy

Nichole Simms, DeKalb County District 7

Jetha Wagner, Stonecrest Business Alliance

Madolyn Spann, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Shawanna Qawiy, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Sidney Douse, III, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Cedric Hudson, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Brian Brewer, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Sylvia Smith, DeKalb County Transportation Division

## **Elected Officials**

Stan Watson, Commissioner – Super District 7, DeKalb County Government

Deborah Jackson, Mayor, City of Lithonia

## **Summary**

Cedric Hudson of the DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department welcomed the group for attending and led the group through introductions. He explained that this process is granted through the ARC to develop a master plan of the area. The County has received an LCI grant once per year for the past 10 years. The Stonecrest area is a regional center for DeKalb County. The County wants to make the right

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #1

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decisions to develop a strong master plan for this area. He informed the Core Team that this process will last for the next several months with the study concluding in July/August.

Bill de St. Aubin of the Consultant Team began the presentation. One purpose of this meeting is to show the Core Team what the public will receive at the kick off meeting. After introducing the consultant team, Bill talked about the three kinds of malls and the approach to mall retrofit. He discussed examples of mall retrofit using local, national and international examples. Bill talked about the value of greenspace in gaining public support, improving connectivity and water quality features; the scale of greenspace; and its positive economic impact.

Lastly, Bill defined the study area and talked about the agenda for the night. This session begins the collaborative process which will be consistent throughout they study effort. Other opportunities for input and community engagement will include the upcoming kick off/vision session, key stakeholder interviews and surveys, community workshops, and a tactical urbanism celebration event to conclude the study.

Lily Berrios and Deanna Murphy of the Consultant Team began the interactive workshop portion of the meeting with a brief discussion on goals. The discussion captured for each goal is summarized below.

### **Function (uses)**

- There is a lot of focus on green space. We're all for that and have a conservation easement, but the entertainment complex idea should not be a focus. That was considered before. We do not want to focus on something that doesn't have any interest. We want to focus on some fresh ideas. The area misses office and businesses here. We need ideas on how incentives can be used to draw business to this area. Greenspace is not missing.
- Entertainment can thrive out here. I don't think the right people have been engaged to have this conversation. Entertainment can happen out here and can happen big. The right people have not been involved. I think it is a good idea to combine different functions into one building or space.
- There will have to be some broad thinking to bring in entertainment. I think a convention center should be at the top of the list along with entertainment. It can be either enclosed or outside.
- As a resident, the live-shop-play concept resonates with me. We don't just need jobs but jobs that can sustain the housing that's in the area. There are mainly retail jobs out here, so people leave the area to go to work.
- Industries that could work include automotive (the Stonecrest Kia is coming). Medical would also work.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #1

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- Consider also tech, graphic design and animation companies, the movie industry, and other companies focused on outdoor activities such as bicycle manufacturers.
- There needs to be more synergy with the outdoor resources. The Path trail goes to mall, right behind the library and into the Arabia Heritage Area and nature preserve which is owned by DeKalb County, and on to Panola State Park. There are 7K acres of preserved land that is unique to this area. Currently, the Heritage Area and DeKalb are working on establishing better gateways.
- It is important to look more broadly than just the study area boundaries. Consider the City of Lithonia and the industrial park area. We need to also look at opportunities for connections that are just outside of the study area.

### Form – what will make this a “Place to be”?

- Everything is here to make this the place to be: historic downtown and architecture, economic development center through the overlay district, natural areas, and the South Lithonia area. Perhaps entertainment and great jobs will make it the place to be.
- The area has a lot of historic architecture: not high styled, but architecture built from stone in this area. This area has a rich rock quarrying history. This is a good thing to use to brand the area and to carry through the area thematically.
- The only time that the mall has traffic is during the holidays. That itself proves that there’s nothing about it that makes it unique. It’s a big block with a whole bunch of businesses around it. There isn’t enough traffic there, now. If we are considering a feature point, it should go right at the mall. There needs to be something there that “pops” otherwise, people drive right by. Whatever the “draw” will be, it needs to be something different and unique that stands out when you drive down I-20.
- People from Newton used to come to this mall. It may be that other factors are keeping people from coming. We need to capture that. Newton residents will go elsewhere.
- The exit at Turner Hill is not well maintained. It does not look appealing. All of the exits on this side of DeKalb need attention.
- The area needs an entrance that makes you feel as though you’re driving into something. The first impression is important.
- When speaking to the public, we need clarify that new greenspace is more of an urban green space – like Centennial Park or Piedmont. *There was a discussion on the difference between "urban parks" which provide recreation and entertainment to the community vs. the "conservation greenspace" which provides trails and natural habitats.*
- Water features will draw people to an area. I could imagine some spin-off development around water features in this area.

### Economy

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #1

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- Is a CID possible here given that the mall was built by DeKalb County bond dollars? If it is possible, what do you have to have for a CID? Commercial properties support a CID not residential. *The Consultant Team will be working with experts on this topic. This should become a mixed-use center. The Team will look into that with DeKalb's Economic Development Department and will get back to you the conflict due to the bond dollars used to construct the mall.*

### Time

- People will want to know when implementation will happen.
- I have lived in this area for 26 years and have seen it grow. Improving the area has to be the desire of the people who live, work, and shop here. An amphitheater should still be considered here because the theater in Lithonia is smaller. This could be the cornerstone of positive development to come here. It is the #2 question from people who live here: what are we going to do to bolster the entertainment aspect to make this the place to be? Do not take the idea of an amphitheater off of the list.

### Other Considerations

- As a parent, the education in this area is important to me. I drive my children to a school outside of the area. Plans to bolster the education here would be great. Many parents would say the same. I like the idea of entertainment and sports to bolster hotel stays. The only issue is that they are temporary and event based. We need something for people who live here.
- We have to get higher paying jobs in this area. There is vacant space, un-rented medical space, and a lot of opportunities out here already. Houses were \$240 to \$500K in my neighborhood – this area had some of the highest income in the area.
- Need community advocacy. That's why the Parks of Stonecrest is here and active.
- There is a lot of trash on Turner Hill Road. There needs to be more pride.
- More sidewalks around the mall are needed.
- Trash on Haden Quarry Road needs to also be addressed.
- Public dollars should go towards cleaning up trash.

### What's the "play" piece here?

- Restaurants
- A water park was in the area but didn't last
- Movie theater

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #1

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- There was a farmers market that did not last out here. DeKalb Medical did health fairs at the mall/mall parking lot but they did not work to engage the public. People did not engage.
- Indoor recreation could be attractive (bowling, go-karts, etc.).
- More engagement from the business community or civic community is needed.
- There are many amenities here that people do not know about.
- We need to do a better job of promoting what we do have. The negative stories come out and berate what we do have.
- I avoid taking my family to the mall because kids do not feel welcome there due to the curfew and the perception that they are being watched.

The last few questions asked the Core Team what they wanted to preserve and change in the study area.

### What do you want to PRESERVE?

- Natural features
- Green space
- Medical – we can create synergy between this and well living

### What do you want to CHANGE?

- Would like to see more signage of where the trail starts at the mall and where parking for the trail at the mall is, etc. The trail should be known as trail is an amenity that ends right at the hotels/mall. There should be something to announce the trail.

### Other Issues/Questions Discussed

- How much leeway can this plan do with customer service with mall shops is possible?
- Many employers are reaching outside of the market to find labor pool for jobs in this area.
- The mall needs to be engaged in this process.
- Consider having coordinating with the area newspapers to have articles written to create awareness.
- Consider posters along Turner Hill to announce meetings/input opportunities. Flyers are not as effective.
- Consider a billboard to advertise the project.
- Reach out to the communities/subdivisions in the area to share information about the process.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #1

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- Consider starting the public meeting with the schedule and a discussion of what is an LCI.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #2

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Stonecrest Library | May 2, 2013 | 4:00 – 6:00 PM

## **Attendees**

Sam Armstrong, Stonecrest Business Alliance  
Robert Astrove, DeKalb County Natural Resources  
Chad Belinfanti, PSCCA  
Donald Bieler, The Mall at Stonecrest  
Mera Cardenas, Arabia Mountain Alliance  
Allison Duncan, Atlanta Regional Commission  
Captain Scott Gassner, DeKalb Police Department  
Deborah A. Jackson, City of Lithonia  
Jason Lary, Stonecrest City Alliance; Spring Lake  
Gerald McDowell, Hidden Hills Neighborhood Association  
Johanna McCrehan, Georgia Conservancy  
Charlie Monroe, DeKalb County Natural Resources Management Office  
Major M. L. Reynolds, DeKalb Police Department  
George Turner, Jr., South Lithonia Neighborhood Coalition  
Jetha Wagner, Stonecrest Business Alliance

Madolyn Spann, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department  
Sidney Douse, III, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department  
Cedric Hudson, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department  
Brian Brewer, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department  
Sylvia Smith, DeKalb County Transportation Division

## **Elected Officials**

Representative Dar'Shun N. Kendrick, Georgia House of Representatives

## **Summary**

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #2

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Deanna Murphy began the meeting with a brief overview of the LCI process, the study area, and the purpose of the study. Jen Price presented online survey results received to date followed by a recap of the first public workshop. After a briefing of the study status, Deanna gave an overview of the plan for the June 8<sup>th</sup> community charrette and asked for feedback on the topics to be discussed by the public. A summary of this and other discussions are summarized below.

### **What are the major issues that need to be examined during the charrette?**

- There should be a table/area for general information – could include a looping PowerPoint, demographics/background information and market condition boards.
  - Make sure the demographic data used for the market analysis is accurate. Census information is not always accurate. Be sure to supplement this with empirical and quantitative information.
  - Jetha W. will send her information for apartments and contacts for the residents to the team to assist with this effort.
  - The Mall at Stonecrest just finished a market study that breaks down the demographics, value of housing, and gives a good story of the market. Some of this can be shared with the team.
- Add commercial and residential uses to the “Land Use” table.
- A discussion of short term/low hanging fruit items that can be easily implemented should be considered or incorporated into all discussions.
- Make sure station boards/signage is easy to understand and includes explanations of what we’re asking the public to provide input on (e.g., “Where do you need to travel to?”)
- For a discussion on retail, the marketing team should look at abutting properties if possible to try to capture the influence from outside of the study area. This will help us find out what the regional pull (market) will be.
- For the transportation discussion, this should include vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian issues.
- Consider discussing maintenance, upkeep, etc.
- Consider having a separate table to discuss “Challenges”.
- As a member of the SBA, the County has lots of entrepreneurial spirit and potential. Can something be created under place-making to bring the community together so that smaller businesses have visibility to the public? The public may have ideas/thoughts that can foster these smaller businesses to help them grow and be able to do more for the community. Something is needed to elevate all of the businesses. People don’t know the businesses that are there.
- There should be community events to highlight the businesses (e.g., partnerships, events similar to the Taste of Roswell, or an expo).
- The Mall is exploring hosting a food truck event in the future.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #2

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- Live-Work-Play Table: this provides a thematic background. We should use these themes to help drive people to give more meaningful input.
- One table will discuss “Place Making” or how to make Stonecrest a destination. We can discuss the community’s identity at this table.
- What do we need to put in place so that, if large businesses come, they can “fit” into the area? Do we have good access? What needs to be in place to make that work?
  - We have discussed that this area is missing the ‘work’ component. The question is how we get employment. Should we have a table that addresses core business attraction strategies? This has to be something that works hand in hand with the County’s Economic Development Department.
  - We should have an Economic Development Strategies table.
- Consider discussing transportation within the context of connectivity – how do you get where you’re going? Bikeability and walkability can be discussed.
- Consider having a Long Term Vision/5 Year Plan table.
- Consider having a flip chart or area where stakeholders can discuss challenges and issues.
- Consider having a table that asks “What if you had no limitations – what could you build here?”
- Alternates to rail should also be considered – BRT, etc.
- Sustainability (Green Strategies) – as a theme and topic (protection of greenspace, green jobs, parks and connectivity, alternate transportation) – could be a neat way to capture this discussion. Health/wellness and transportation can be combined into one discussion.
- Discussion on gateway – sense of arrival. This should be a part of the destination/placemaking discussion. The bridge at Turner Hill Road can be a statement of the area.
- Don’t forget the long term vision. The Tucker business association is now a CID. We do not want to forget the long term vision for the SBA to become a CID
  - This plan will be instrumental in that process. It will be a tool to show people the future of the Stonecrest area.
- Should we have a table for the overlay, where can people discuss issues they have? Is this discussion best for the “Land Use” or “Live – Work – Play” table? Businesses are having a challenge w/the sign ordinance. This is a recurring theme.

### **Other Discussions and Comments**

- Mall is 87% full

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #2

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- The police are considering moving the east precinct to the Stonecrest area. There are some potential locations being considered.
  - They are looking for spaces in central and east DeKalb but would prefer the Stonecrest area. They invite input from anyone – can't find the location we need
  - The price and location are the driving criteria.
  - Space needed is approximately 5000 sq ft. to accommodate 150 staff and space for more than 120 vehicles
  - The abandoned hotel may be a location to rebuild but would require a lot of work and could be damaged due to being vacant and unprotected for so long
- Safety/Crime/Perception of Safety:
  - The majority of the crimes around the Mall are break ins. There is not an abundance of crime. Crime consists of vehicle break-ins/smash-and-grab which accounts for about 80% of the crime.
  - Mall loitering is one of the biggest perceptions of negativity at the Mall for families, especially at night near the movies. The police have tried to make these arrests/restrictions but need better support in the court systems. The police arrest the same person multiple times. The system is too lenient.
  - When you have a situation that demands police presence, how do you address a perception that is based on real numbers?
- The area needs more activities
  - Activities for youth are needed. They come to the mall to hang out so younger kids have something to do. A bowling alley, something to constructively engage them is needed.
  - Re: the live/work/play concept, when you look at successful shopping areas, they have seasonal activities (e.g., "Screen on the Green and festivals). People will begin to see the area as a destination.
  - The SBA could organize/sponsor a rolling calendar of events that highlights things that are going on. That would also help to bring more awareness to small businesses.
  - Perception ties directly into this. The perception of the mall being unsafe is why I will drive away to go to the movies. There is a key connection between branding and perception.
  - The movie theater sells 800K tickets every 3 mos. It is in the top 3 theaters in the Atlanta area.
- The general perception is that the area has crime, is low income, and is negative.
  - Marketing is a great part of this. Perception can be changed with good branding.
  - Community involvement is a key part of this. Can we deal with this in the plan? None of this will happen if residents do not get involved.
- Is there a strategic advantage with us being located close to a neighboring county?

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #2

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- Yes, DeKalb can do a lot more than its neighbors. We have an opportunity to attract their resources.
- Sidewalks are needed from the apartments to Mall.

### **Final List of Tables for Charrette:**

- Live – Work – Play
- Sustainability/Green Strategies
- Economic Development Strategies
- Making Stonecrest a Destination/Identity
- Connectivity/Transportation

### **Logistics**

- We should have a place to complete online surveys
- Need an area where people can get an overview of the tables/process
- Community/Core Team members will serve as the champion of each table
- Professionals are drawing what these ideas are/look like at the tables
- Should run through the program 3 or 4 times with different groups of stakeholders so that people can give their input and move on. Each group will build upon the previous group on the same topics of discussion.
- Present at the end what each table came up with to the group or post results online.
- Consultant team will take best ideas, create single plan and move forward.
- The consultants will develop a program and signage for review by the Core Team before the charrette
- Signage should make it clear of exactly what is going on at the tables. Use lots of visuals
- Incorporate a Live/Work/Play dot exercise for people to show their route/means of transit and how they get to destinations

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #3

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Stonecrest Library | June 25, 2013 | 4:00 – 6:00 PM

## **Attendees**

Sam Armstrong, Stonecrest Business Alliance

Donald Bieler, The Mall at Stonecrest

Eddie Broadway, Commissioner Stan Watson's Office

Mera Cardenas, Arabia Mountain Alliance

Allison Duncan, Atlanta Regional Commission

Trish Elmore Edge, The Mall at Stonecrest

Lonnie Hall, Leadership Preparatory Academy

Jason Lary, Stonecrest City Alliance; Spring Lake

Johanna McCrehan, Georgia Conservancy

Dr. Tonya Williams, Leadership Preparatory Academy

Shawanna Qaiwy, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Brian Brewer, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department

Sylvia Smith, DeKalb County Transportation Division

## **Summary**

Brian Brewer from DeKalb County's Department of Planning and Sustainability welcomed the Core Team and introduced the project management team. Lily Berrios of the Sizemore Group gave an overview of the project schedule and status. She explained that the plan is moving towards the development of recommendations and projects and will wrap up at the end of August. A cohesive vision will emerge from input that the Team will review at this meeting and check against the goals of the project that were set at the beginning of the process. The goals will set the stage for the priorities.

Jen Price of Sycamore Consulting discussed the results of the community survey. Survey results will help to confirm the community vision and input heard from the Core Team. The community's input will feed directly into the Master Plan.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Core Team Meeting #3

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Deanna Murphy of the Sizemore Group reviewed the outcomes from the design charrette held on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Mall at Stonecrest. Ideas heard at the charrette will be instrumental in the development of the Master Plan. A brief summary of the input received at the charrette discussion tables is below:

- **Creating the Place to Be:** this discussion recognized The Mall at Stonecrest as the heart of the project area. Building on this area's momentum, the outcome of discussions resulted in a recommendation to develop a Lifestyle Center that connects back to the Mall with a "main street". A "Lifestyle Center" is a mixed use development, where people can live, work, enjoy entertainment, shop similar to downtown Smyrna or Atlantic Station but on a more appropriate scale for the Stonecrest area.
- **Live – Work – Play – Shop:** Stakeholders at this table discussed how to mix uses throughout the community to allow for residence to walk or bike to neighborhood amenities, including neighborhood service retail, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, etc. Identification of several nodes throughout the study area and connectivity to these nodes was discussed.
- **Transportation:** transit was a big part of this discussion. MARTA heavy rail is a future plan and stakeholders discussed potential station locations. Other transportation improvements were also discussed including roadway improvements and creating better connectivity on Klondike and other roads that connect to the mall. Ideally, these connections would be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Some feeder roads were drafted as well as new trail recommendations.
- **Green Strategies:** most discussions centered around building off of the existing natural resources in the study area. These resources create a regional draw and going forward, plans should focus on methods for pulling the green resources into the area more actively. More recreation opportunities for a high density development, signage to create awareness of historic resources, and suggestions of how undeveloped land could be utilized were discussed.
- **Economic Development:** Jobs and employment was a primary focus of discussion. The mall area is where density and more mixed uses should be focused. Other ideas such as Opportunity Zones, customer service training, and the development of a CID were brought forward.

Lily discussed the project goals that will drive the development of the master plan – focusing on where the ARC LCI grant goals the community goals and the market study goals align. The objective moving forward is to focus ideas into priorities. She reviewed the ARC grant goals and the plan goals, and then talked about the findings of the marketing study. The findings are summarized as follows:

- **Market Need in the next 5 years:** housing demand is low and there is minimal office demand but a strong retail demand.
- **Market Need in the next 25 years (visionary plan):** housing demand picks up as does office (larger employers and companies will be drawn here). Retail is the biggest asset in the area.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #3

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- Catalytic market projects could include:
  - Amphitheater – low economic impact
  - Conference Center – low economic impact
  - Sports Complex – creates demand in the hotel, restaurants, retail, entertainment sectors
  - Life style center – this would be a market ready strategy on the main street that connects back to the mall (Mall Terrace Boulevard). This project would build off the mall retail. It is a mixed use center that incorporates retail, housing, office, and greenspace.
  - Bicycle commerce

Next, the discussion focused on projects that can be implemented in 5 years. These projects include:

- Lifestyle (mixed use) center
- Attract regional activity through the sports and health/wellness focus
- Build on the “Green Brand”
- Develop a park & ride trail head – this would connect people to a trail head near Klondike Road and could possibly be funded by ARC. A project such as this can help show that the area is getting ready for transit.

Two (2) priority LCI projects have been identified: the Lifestyle/Mixed Use Center and Park & Ride Trail Head.

The group also discussed a visionary list of projects – those that could be implemented in 25 years. These include:

- A vibrant green urban center
- Regional convention and performance arts center
- A substantial green model
- Heavy rail access
- A CID to help fund improvements

Lastly, the Tactical Urbanism/Celebration Event was discussed which would ideally occur on a Saturday to highlight a major Master Plan project – the Lifestyle Center at the Mall at Stonecrest. The following ideas were gathered:

- The Mall is open to the proposed activity but will need more time to feasibly plan it.
- Consider incorporating local businesses, allowing them to have a booth or tent at the event to showcase their goods/services.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #3

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- Food trucks may be an option but the Mall has to be sensitive to tenants who pay rent.
- Consider inviting existing businesses that have carts/can be mobile to come out and set up at the event.
- Will have a pop up City Hall which would be an opportunity to get feedback from the public on the Master Plan.
- An event on a Saturday in August after 2PM would be ideal for the Mall.

## Questions & Comments

The following questions and comments were heard throughout the meeting:

Q: I have a hard time believing a conference center has a lower economic impact.

A: You have to have the right balance and something that really attracts people to visit the area on a consistent basis. To be successful, the conference center would need enough programming to keep it full at all times. It needs high turnover. Additionally, further market study would be needed to determine the feasibility of a conference center in the study area.

Q: Would the demand for a conference center also depend on the size and scale of the venue?

A: Yes. Some models are much smaller that are successful now. A smaller venue offers a more intimate, small scale environment. Perhaps something like that here with a theme that anchors it may work.

Q: Regarding the conference center, it may not be the center itself that has the impact but the ancillary development around it. With a sports complex, can you have the same perceived economic impact because it ties back into the same businesses as a conference center would?

A: Yes, you need to get the “magnet” going first and the sports uses would be the magnet. If you focus on that, some of the other things will come.

Q: What type of sports complex are you envisioning?

A: This would be a venue that supports regional sports or traveling tournaments. Local high schools that need fields could also use the space. It would be mostly open fields so there is lower investment and maintenance. The complex can be set up without a huge capital investment. A use such as this has the ability to spur the development of other uses such as entertainment, restaurants, hotels, etc. Further market study on the feasibility of a sports complex in the study area and the types of venues that are in demand is recommended.

Q: I understand the need for the sports complex, but that will also require some branding and marketing. Perhaps the recommendation can include a mix of both the sports complex and the hotel/conferencing component.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Core Team Meeting #3

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A: Yes. They can be complimentary uses.

Q: Will sources of funding be defined for projects?

A: Yes. We have not gotten to that level of detail but are currently working on that component. Our hope is that stakeholders who are involved can make sure we know about sources that we may not be aware of.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Round I Public Outreach Summary

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Hilton Garden Inn | 7890 Mall Ring Rd. | Lithonia, GA | May 9, 2013

## **Attendees**

A total of 60 people signed in at the meeting and a total of 9 meeting evaluation forms were returned.

## **Elected Officials**

The Project Management Team recognized the following elected officials in attendance at the meeting:

- Mayor Jackson, City of Lithonia
- Dar'Shun Kendrick, State Representative
- Lee May (Commissioner), DeKalb County
- Darold Honore (Councilmember), City of Lithonia
- Ronald Ramsey, State Senator

## **Meeting Agenda**

- Introduction of the project management team
- Overview: livable centers initiative
- Study area background
- Project schedule
- Public involvement
- Collaborative process
- Next steps

## **Summary**

Cedric Hudson opened the meeting by welcoming attendees. He introduced other project participants including DeKalb County representatives, the Atlanta Region Commission, other Sizemore Group staff and Sycamore Consulting staff.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Round I Public Outreach Summary

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Bill de St. Aubin, the Sizemore Group principle in charge, briefly introduced the project and explained the importance of community input. He noted that the project is still in the early planning phase and this meeting is an opportunity to gain feedback from the local Stonecrest community.

Potential project funding was explained to the group. Planning grants for local governments and nonprofits are used to encourage mixed income of live, work, play and shop activity centers. These areas can be accessible by transit, roadways, biking and walking. Bill also reviewed the current study area for the project, which includes 2,485 acres near the Stonecrest Mall.

Both the project and public meeting schedules were reviewed. The group was also invited to take the online questionnaire that is currently available to the public. Jen Price, with Sycamore Consulting, reviewed the most current results of the questionnaire. So far, 78 online surveys and 10 hardcopy surveys have been received. The results indicate that the primary purpose of the area is to provide shopping/retail opportunities. Outdoor activities such as walking, running, biking and hiking are also important to the community. The questionnaire also indicated that the improvements needed to attract people to the area included: quality businesses, family entertainment, and a live-work-play community. Public access to local community areas was also of importance.

Bill de St. Aubin, Lily Berrios and Deanna Murphy of Sizemore Group, led an interactive discussion with the group. Feedback was gained from the participants regarding items to preserve, change, create and connect the Stonecrest community.

### **Collaborative Process**

The project team led an interactive process with the group, based on four topics: preserve, change, create, and connect. The feedback gathered from the participants is listed below.

#### Preserve

- Greenspace
- Businesses that are good community partners
- Stonecrest Toyota
- Kaiser Permanente/doctor's offices in the area

#### Change

- Sections of Turner Hill Rd. have some potholes that need to be addressed.
- Turner Hill needs sidewalks and better lighting.
- Rockland Rd.- needs better sidewalks and lighting
- Traffic lights leaving Stonecrest to I-20 west need to have better signal timing.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Round I Public Outreach Summary

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- Negative perception of the area (including safety, trash, roadways)
- The area by Wayfield Grocery needs to be addressed.
- No more apartment complexes
- The way that the developer is marketing the area
- Add MARTA in the area.
- Change drainage problems.
- Tear down the unfinished building near the mall/hotels.
- Limit the number of discount stores.
- Allow for signage that helps create growth.
- Stonecrest property seems to be overpriced.

### Create

- Community park
- Entertainment for families
- Commerce/amphitheatre that draws revenue and creates jobs
- Anything we create should compliment what is currently in place.
- Better service stations
- Better bus stops
- Add a police station in the area
- Make the exits on I-20 look more attractive.
- Self-governed/make Stonecrest a new city
- Adult entertainment such as rock climbing facilities, Dave & Busters

### Connect

- Upgrade communication network/broadband/internet in the area
- Have a better connection between downtown Lithonia and Stonecrest
- Have DeKalb County incentivize businesses to come to the area
- Open air shopping instead of enclosed mall
- Stonecrest Business Alliance- connect them with the residents so that they can address issues that aren't happening fast enough
- Don't allow the concrete to take over- connect with the greenspace in the area.

### Next Steps

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Round I Public Outreach Summary

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Public meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Stonecrest Mall

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### **Meeting Evaluation**

Meeting attendees received a meeting evaluation form that gave them the opportunity to give comments on the quality of the meeting and to provide additional comments. A total of 9 evaluation forms were received. The questions asked and the total number of responses received for each is summarized below.

*How would you rate this meeting?*

- Very good: 6
- Good: 3
- Average: 0
- Poor: 0
- Very Poor: 0

*Has staff been helpful in answering your questions?*

- Yes: 9
- No: 0

*If not, please explain: N/A*

*In what areas do you feel the meeting could have been improved?*

- More positive feedback from officials

*Were the meeting time and location convenient to your schedule?*

- Yes: 8
- No: 0

*If not, please suggest another time/location: N/A*

How did you hear about the meeting?

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Round I Public Outreach Summary

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- Newspaper: 1
- Email: 6
- Flyer: 1
- Twitter: 0
- Facebook: 0
- Website: 1
- Other: 2

*If other, please explain:*

- From ARC employee
- Word of mouth

*How can we better promote these community meetings to the public?*

- Businesses can promote with signs
- Newspaper; signage
- Place an ad in the mall, TV and radio
- Email

*Additional comments:*

- Good questions asked and good input from community

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Design Charrette Summary

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The Mall at Stonecrest | 2929 Turner Hill Road @ Macy's Court | Lithonia, GA | June 8, 2013

### **Attendees**

A total of 40 people signed in and participated in the design charrette workshops. Project staff talked with an estimated 80 stakeholders throughout the day.

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Event Overview**

The event format was a design charrette which allowed stakeholders to provide their vision for the Stonecrest LCI study area on five different topics: Transportation, Live-Work-Play-Shop, Creating the "Place to Be", Green Strategies, and Economic Development. Experts sat at tables geared towards these topics, held discussions with stakeholders, answered questions, and recorded their input. At the end of the charrette, the group collectively visited each discussion table and heard a brief presentation of the ideas collected. Stakeholders were free to visit as many tables as they wished.

During the day there were 2 design charrettes (one in the AM; one in the PM) and 2 open house periods. Stakeholders who did not want to commit to the workshop were able to still participate during the open house session and to speak with staff one-on-one in a more informal setting. Project staff also had iPads available for any stakeholder wishing to provide their input via the online survey.

Hosting the event at the mall gave even more people an opportunity to learn about the project and appealed to those who are not likely to attend public meetings. The event also created awareness about the Stonecrest LCI - a large number of those attending/providing input had not heard about the project.

### **What We Heard**

#### **Live-Work-Play-Shop**

- Desired Land Uses within the study area: Family Entertainment (bowling alley, Dave and Busters, etc.); Higher-end restaurants and bars; Recreation Facilities; Playground; Amphitheater; Grocery Store; Business/Office center; Satellite College Campus; High-rise condos surrounding Stonecrest Mall with less dense single family housing on the land south of the Mall.
- Focus Mixed-Use and higher density development near Stonecrest Mall. Less dense nodal development could occur near existing residential areas and provide neighborhood services and retail.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Design Charrette Summary

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- Connect the residential neighborhoods to area amenities, such as Stonecrest Mall, the PATH trail, and the Nature Preserve, with trail extensions and better pedestrian and bicycle amenities – including sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian lighting, trees, shade, etc.

### Creating the “Place To Be”

- The heart/core of the study area is Stonecrest Mall and its surrounding land. This is the place to build from in order to create a destination with a regional draw.
- Potential Uses at the core of the study area that could attract people to Stonecrest: Family entertainment; conference center; offices; high-density housing; athletic fields; multi-use park/amphitheater; grocery store; retail.
- Consider creating a mixed-use development with an entertainment and/or recreational draw that enhances and extends from the existing Stonecrest Mall footprint.

### Transportation

- Utilize the existing rivers and streams to extend the PATH Trail system.
- Consider extending the PATH trail to the surrounding neighborhoods
- MARTA connectivity to the area is desired (heavy rail and BRT). Station locations are preferred near the Mall.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions, including improved lighting, sidewalks, trees, shading, etc., on Turner Hill Rd., Hayden Quarry Rd., Woodrow Dr., Rockland Rd.
- Improve gateways into community with improved landscaping, signage, lighting and beautification.

### Green Strategies

- The Arabia Mountain Preserve is a local amenity and draw for the area – Build from this asset and extend green space into the study area. Bring greenspace into higher density areas, including the Stonecrest Mall area.
- Consider incorporating community gardens, local farms, farmer’s markets, and native plants into the study area.
- Highlight historic sites with signage and connected trails.
- Undeveloped land to the south of the Mall could incorporate low-density housing with natural areas, such as: Deconstructed botanical gardens, walking trails, farms, vineyards, etc.

### Economic Development

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Design Charrette Summary

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- More Jobs are needed in the area to provide a day time population, who will utilize local retail and restaurants. More office space may help provide this opportunity.
- Consider creating an Opportunity Zone as a tool to attract businesses.
- Consider creating a Customer Service Training program for the area retail, with the help of the Stonecrest Business Alliance.
- The Market Analysis will help direct the plan towards realistic implementation strategies and phasing.

### Comment Form

- A Wells Fargo bank would be nice.
- Consider a community garden or edible park (Seattle is a good example)

### **Next Steps**

The Project Team will use the stakeholder ideas from the first public meeting, the design charrette and the online survey to will develop a range of projects that meet the project's goals. On Saturday, June 29th, the project team will host a celebration event that highlights a project and shows how it might actually look once implemented.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Final Open House Summary

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The Mall at Stonecrest | 2929 Turner Hill Road @ the Food Court | Lithonia, GA | August 17, 2013

## **Attendance**

The meeting format did not require attendees to sign in; however those who wished to stay up to date on the project were asked to join the project mailing list. Project staff talked with an estimated 200 stakeholders throughout the open house period.

## **Meeting Summary**

### **Event Overview**

The event format was an open house and bike tour to showcase the Master Plan concepts developed by the project team. The open house allowed mall-goers to review the display boards and speak with staff one-on-one in an informal setting. The session officially began at 2:00 PM, though the project team began answering questions and discussing the project with stakeholders as early as 12:30 PM when the project boards were set up and visible. There was also a looping powerpoint presentation playing on a television that showed the planning Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) grant guidelines, the public process, market findings, projects, project phasing, and next steps. Comment forms were available for those wishing to submit a comment in writing. The bike tour, which was designed to showcase six potential projects in the Mall area, was cancelled due to inclement weather.

### **What we Heard**

Project staff reported hearing positive feedback from the community. Stakeholders were excited about the projects and potential development in the community. Stakeholders reiterated the concerns that were heard from stakeholders during previous outreach events, including the need for higher end retail, family entertainment, sidewalks, and improved recreation opportunities. Stakeholders expressed confidence that the proposed projects would meet their needs and desired improvements.

### **Comment Form**

- The Stonecrest mall area definitely needs entertainment for children. My suggestion is a Dave & Buster's that can facilitate the needs of various aged children. D&B includes bowling, arcade games and wide screen TVs for adults. Additionally, it offers food and a large capacity to host corporate events. Whenever my kids want to visit D&B's, we have to leave DeKalb County. This is unfair since we live and pay DeKalb County taxes.
- From Haynes Park Townhomes, I would like to be able to walk on a sidewalk all the way to Stonecrest Mall along Mall Parkway.
- Path connection through City of Lithonia & a path connection to library.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Final Open House Summary

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## **Next Steps**

The Project Team will finalize the Master Plan and submit it to the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners for adoption. The plan will be updated every five years per Atlanta Regional Commission guidelines.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Community Survey Summary

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### **Overview**

Surveys are an important method of information gathering generating data that is essential for developing an understanding of the community and its needs. As such, a community survey was designed to gather input regarding the vision for the Stonecrest Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study area. The survey was made available online from May 1 through June 14, 2013. Hardcopies of the survey were also distributed and collected at the public kick off meeting held on May 9, 2013. The following methods were used to share the link for the online survey:

- By email via the Consultant Team to the study area stakeholder database
- Through the DeKalb County Office of Neighborhood Empowerment email blasts
- By the Atlanta Regional Commission to the Community Engagement Network e-newsletter and the Transportation Spotlight e-newsletter distribution lists
- By the Stonecrest LCI Core Team
- Via the project website

The project team also made the online survey available via iPad during the June 8<sup>th</sup> design charrette. A total of 263 surveys were completed (235 online and 28 hardcopy).

Results of this survey will be used as a guide to supplement statistical and market data and will also be used to represent the public's voice regarding the future development of the study area.

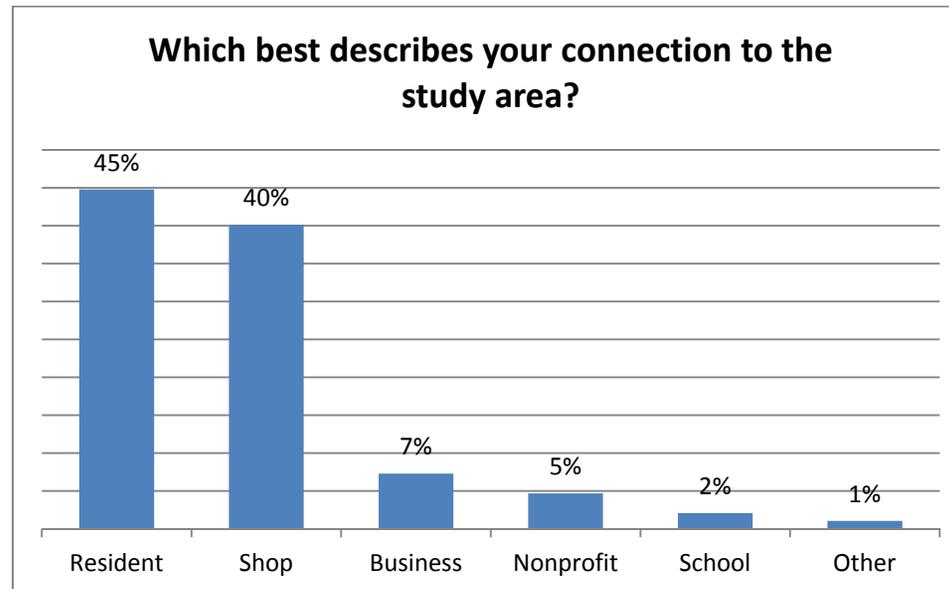
### **Summary of Results**

The majority of survey respondents are residents in the study area who also use the available resources to shop and run errands. Smaller percentages own businesses, represent nonprofit organizations or attend school in the study area. It is assumed that the two percent of respondents who attend school in the study area are students at Strayer University.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Community Survey Summary

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Responses for “Other” include:

- Outdoor recreation (hiking, cycling, walking)
- Those who attend church in the area
- Medical appointments

Next, we asked what name respondents usually use to identify this area.

**Most respondents (91%) refer to the area as Stonecrest.**

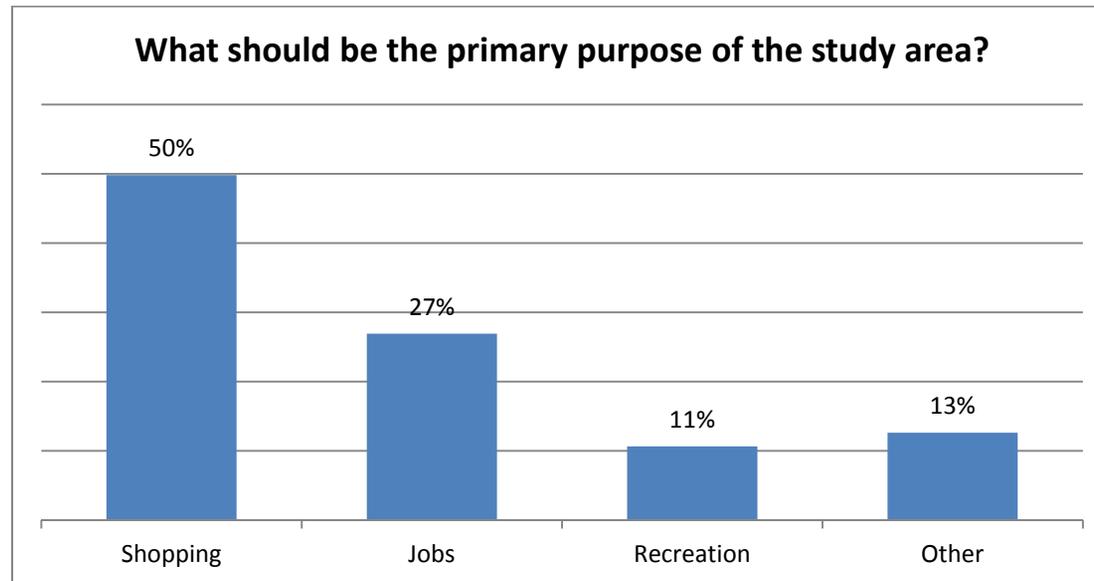
The third question on the survey asked respondents to offer three words to describe the study area. The larger words represent the most popular words in response to this question. According to responses, many feel that the area has potential and is under-developed. Other words describe the area as convenient but also congested and busy.



# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

Community Survey Summary

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For “Other” purposes, respondents wrote in several responses including:

- All of the above
- Entertainment/concerts

The next question talked about the rich natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities and asked the types of outdoor activities in which survey respondents like to participate. Walking is the most popular response followed by biking, hiking, and running. All of these activities are supported by resources currently found in the study area.



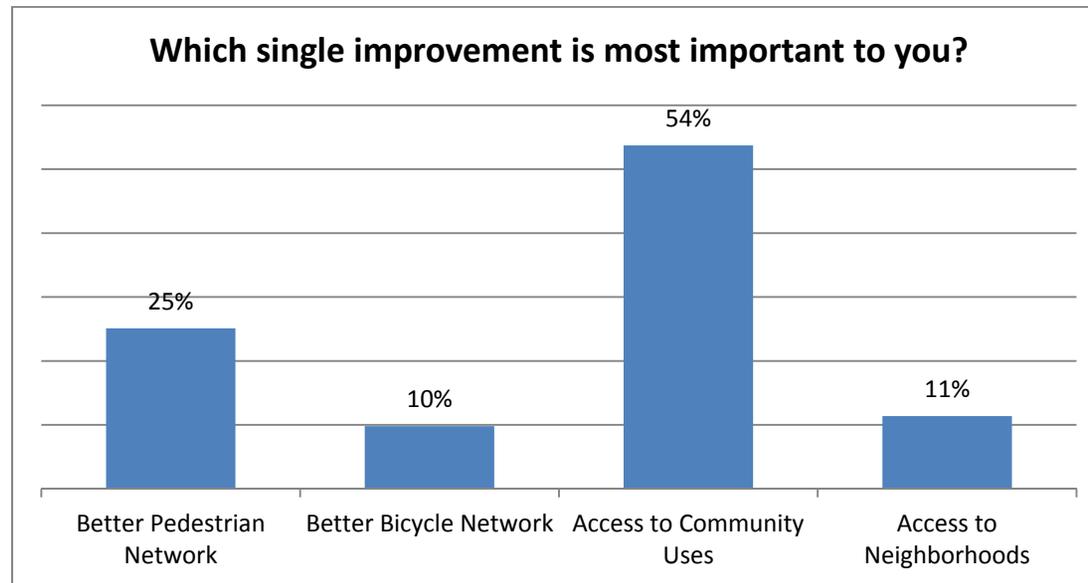


# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Community Survey Summary

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believed that providing access to neighborhoods (11%) or providing a better bicycle network (10%) were the single, most important improvements.



Lastly, we asked respondents to think of all of the resources available in the area today and to tell us what they think this area is missing. The most popular response is a grocery store, followed by family entertainment (such as bowling, a Dave & Busters franchise, or a music venue), quality restaurants, and an active park.



# Stonecrest LCI

## Stakeholder Interview Questions



Date:	May 20, 2013
Name of Interviewee(s):	Deborah Jackson
Affiliation:	Mayor, City of Lithonia
Interviewer(s):	Bill de St. Aubin; Jen Price

### **Study Area Vision**

*Describe your vision for the Stonecrest LCI study area.*

I think of this as an extension of the City. It's the greater Lithonia community. The area at the mall represents the retail, entertainment, and amenities that complement the city. It's a family area – parents can drop kids at the mall. There is an opportunity to create a unique opportunity (like Decatur's Mall-Ternative). There seems to be an interest in creating a community but it didn't become designed in that way. It's lacking the residences and office space to make it a real community. The area is challenged by the lack of employment centers. The creation of office space would have addressed it. There is no office space in the area.

Lithonia has an amphitheater that can hold 1500 + lawn seating. It is a small facility.

As for the transportation component, I envision the idea of a shuttle service from the city to the mall, Arabia Mountain and Stone Mountain. It could function as a tourist attraction shuttle – a recreational shuttle/connector.

Lithonia has been working with the PATH Foundation to bring trail up to the City. There are lots of connections that can be made that we're trying to work on. They want the trail to come up to Main Street to give it more visibility. Way finding signage is needed

*What should be the highest priority in terms of improving the quality of life in the study area?*

Creating employment/bringing jobs to the area. The city is working to bring out the history that is in Lithonia. There could be more diversity in what the mall offers. I have heard that there is a new mall being planned in Conyers. I wonder what kind of impact that will have on Stonecrest.

## Stonecrest LCI

### Stakeholder Interview Questions



I have heard that business owners who were based in Conyers expanded to Stonecrest. They were wondering why clients were not coming to mall.

*Are there specific land use needs that redevelopment of the study area could create?*

Employment and connections.

*Where in the study area do you think the greatest development opportunities are located?*

N/A

*What types of new commercial buildings/establishments would be most appropriate in the study area?*

There could be companies that relocate to the area but one of the challenges is the school system. The leadership change could bring some change to the school system and can begin to address some issues that the community cares about re: the schools. The Superintendent thinking of doing some decentralization of the school system/power. As we look at expanding the city, you have to find the balance of what to create first – housing or jobs.

The city is looking at annexing; not the mall but in the other direction (north). As a part of the county, there is not much of a benefit to annex the mall.

The County needs a Comprehensive Plan that is truly comprehensive that shows a reasonable transition from county to city areas. There needs to be planning at the borders of the individual cities. That they want to do their own thing is what's driving the creation of these new cities.

#### **Study Area Needs & Concerns**

*What transportation and land use issues are of greatest concern in the study area?*

The limited access to transportation. There are 2 MARTA lines that run from the city one to the mall, but there needs to be increased service. There were 3 lines and now there are 2.

## Stonecrest LCI

### Stakeholder Interview Questions



*What are the primary travel related needs of the study area's residents and employees?*

The shuttle service that connects different points of interest. I see this as an opportunity to create jobs. – tour guides, shuttle drivers, etc. Businesses grow up around activity/opportunities.

There is an emphasis on heavy rail but I would like serious consideration given to light rail. Historically people say that development occurs around heavy rail. Light rail is not as expensive and is more flexible. I would like to see this considered more.

#### **Public Involvement**

*What methods do you recommend to maximize study awareness and active public involvement?*

- Social media is working well here.
- Get info to the HOAs

*Identify three individuals and/or groups you feel must be involved in this study.*

- United Ministerial Alliance

*Are there ideal locations within the study area for public outreach events?*

N/A

*Are you aware of any public events (e.g., festivals, community gatherings) where information about the study can be distributed?*

Commissioner Watson hosts breakfast on June 1<sup>st</sup> in the AM. Talk with his staff about making a brief presentation at that meeting.

*Does your organization/agency have a stakeholder database that you can share with the study team (please note that the database would only be used to alert stakeholders of upcoming meetings regarding this study)?*

# Stonecrest LCI

## Stakeholder Interview Summary



Date:	
Name of Interviewee(s):	Mera
Affiliation:	Arabia Mountain Heritage Foundation
Interviewer(s):	

### Study Area Vision

*Describe your vision for the Stonecrest LCI study area.*

- Vibrant, diverse community that provides draw from area that we can build on
- If people don't see scenery as place to go, they won't come out here.
- Economically vibrant
- More appreciation of parks

*What should be the highest priority in terms of improving the quality of life in the study area?*

- Economic – jobs
- Need Employer/Commercial base because no one there during day

*Are there specific land use needs that redevelopment of the study area could create?*

- Design guidelines good – don't bend to business/development community
  - Prevented it from becoming a strip mall
  - Way finding issue at mall

*Where in the study area do you think the greatest development opportunities are located?*

- Development around mall – East of Mall and other infill
  - Big vacant site – no ramp



## Stonecrest LCI

### Stakeholder Interview Summary

*What types of new commercial buildings/establishments would be most appropriate in the study area?*

- No industrial
- Hate Walmart
- Adaptability of building
  - Lofts and open buildings
- Don't need faux town center – Lithonia has it

#### Study Area Needs & Concerns

*What transportation and land use issues are of greatest concern in the study area?*

- Widening Turner Hill Road
- Don't want Klondike widened

*What are the primary travel related needs of the study area's residents and employees?*

- Commute into Atlanta - too difficult

#### *Other Concerns*

- Mall allows for large event space
- Better landscaping around trail at mall

#### Public Involvement

*What methods do you recommend to maximize study awareness and active public involvement?*

- Newspapers
  - Champion
  - Crossroads

*Identify three individuals and/or groups you feel must be involved in this study.*

## Stonecrest LCI

### Stakeholder Interview Summary



- Lithonia Chamber of Commerce
  - President Doreen Carter
- DeKalb Chamber
- Susan Hood
- Mayor Jackson
- Hansen Quarry Owner
- Klondike Civic Association
- Shapperal Home Owners Association

*Are there ideal locations within the study area for public outreach events?*

- Stonecrest Library
- Women's Club

*Are you aware of any public events (e.g., festivals, community gatherings) where information about the study can be distributed?*

- Mom's on the Mountain - Saturday

*Does your organization/agency have a stakeholder database that you can share with the study team (please note that the database would only be used to alert stakeholders of upcoming meetings regarding this study)?*

- YES
- Facebook page
- Miera to ask board to generate

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Stakeholder Interview Summary

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### Overview

During the months of April, May and June the consultant team conducted stakeholder interviews with representatives from DeKalb County, various organizations and businesses. Interviews were consistent in format utilizing a prepared questionnaire that included a range of discussion points. Project Manager Bill de St. Aubin began each interview with an introduction to the study followed by background information and then began the interviewing process. The interviews were scheduled for an hour and were conducted in person or via telephone based on the stakeholder's request and availability.

From the interviews, stakeholders provided insight into their overall vision for the study area. Main transportation and land use needs and concerns were also discussed. Suggestions for how best to involve and inform the public concluded the interviews. The list of persons interviewed and the organizations represented is provided in the table below.

**Table 1 – Stakeholders Interviewed**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Date</b>
Commissioner Lee May	DeKalb County Government	April 4, 2013
Stonecrest Business Alliance (6 questionnaires submitted)	DeKalb County Government	April 4, 2013
Commissioner Stan Watson	DeKalb County Government	May 2, 2013
Hans Williams Dan Drake	DeKalb County Schools	May 2, 2013
Mera Cardenas	Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance	May 8, 2013
Susan Hood	DeKalb County; Natural Resources Management Offices	May 9, 2013
Alan Schmiedicker	Forest City	May 17, 2013
Deborah Jackson	Mayor, City of Lithonia	May 20, 2013
DeKalb County Executive Leadership Team – Various Departments	DeKalb County Government	June 28, 2013

A summary of each of the interviews is included as an appendix to this report.

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Stakeholder Interview Summary

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### **Common Themes**

#### **Study Area Vision**

- Mixed-use, Live-Work-Play environment
- Vibrant
- A destination
- Walkable with less emphasis on driving as primary means of transportation
- Need to bring jobs and economic development to the area
  - Would like to see offices, medical buildings, grocery store
- Should bring entertainment
- Should incorporate natural amenities
  - Bike and walking trails
- Better access to public transportation
  - Shuttle service
- Greatest development opportunities around mall and I-20

#### **Study Area Needs & Concerns**

- MARTA access
  - Heavy rail
  - Shuttle service
  - Too automobile based
- Real transit oriented development
- Better sidewalks
- Walking and bike paths

#### **Public Involvement**

- Methods to raise awareness
  - Ads/signs
    - Local publications
  - Public Forum
  - Direct Mail

# Stonecrest Town Center Livable Centers Initiative

## Stakeholder Interview Summary

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- Commissioner May's email list
- Groups that need to be involved
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Stonecrest Business Alliance
  - Klondike Civic Association
- Locations for events
  - Library
  - Mall
  - Hotels with meeting space
  - Churches
- Where information could be distributed
  - Mall
  - Arabia Mountain Park
  - Moms on the Mountain – Saturday
  - Commissioner Watson breakfast

### **Summary**

In summary, most interviewees identified the Mall at Stonecrest as the heart of the study area and recognized that its success is required for the entire area to continue to thrive. Economic development was a major topic of discussion which includes the need for quality employment. Many also recognized the benefit of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area and other natural resources in the study area and cited them as opportunities for creating a more positive identity for the Stonecrest area. The consensus was that tourist, entertainment, retail and recreational offerings would greatly benefit from leveraging the proximity of this resource and that it should be further integrated into the study area.

## 6.2 Case Study: Silver Comet Trail Economic Impact

Full Report: [http://www.bwnwga.org/wp-content/uploads/Silver\\_Comet\\_Combined.pdf](http://www.bwnwga.org/wp-content/uploads/Silver_Comet_Combined.pdf)



# CHAPTER FIVE

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### MAXIMIZING IMPACT

#### OVERVIEW

Promotional and organizational best practices for other recreational amenities can be drawn from in guiding the expansion of the Silver Comet Trail towards maximum impact. The purpose of this section is to provide such guidance, to the end of steering expansion efforts towards actions that will result in the outcomes associated with the benefits discussed in this report. Four categories of best practices will be discussed: existing trail identity, branding efforts, infrastructure investment and cross-agency collaboration.

### BEST PRACTICES

#### EXISTING TRAIL IDENTITY

Trail identity can be defined as the visual cues users receive when entering, exiting, or using a trail. Identity is influenced by many factors. Geography, surrounding land use, natural features, history, and local community can be used to create a sense of place. These tools are often personified and used in marketing and promotion materials. Establishing a strong trail identity creates interest and can attract tourism and increase visitation, thereby stimulating the local economy.

Part of the Silver Comet corridor's appeal is the diversity of landscapes and population centers to be experienced over 61 miles. The trail extends through rural and urbanized areas, including three counties and six population centers. Much of the remaining trail traverses remote, natural areas including the Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area.

Future trail connections that connect to the Atlanta Beltline Trail, the city of Rome and Town of Cave Springs, and ultimately Chattanooga will contribute to the diversity of trail use and



character. These connections can have a positive influence on trail identity, increasing visitation and trail-oriented business development. The Silver Comet Trail is already considered a regional attraction. Expanding the northern and southern reach of this facility has the potential to enhance local communities and market the trail as a world-class destination.

#### BRANDING EFFORTS

Recreational amenities that sprawl over dozens of miles can yet be described by a single brand that unifies the promotional

message and the user experience. For example, the Adirondacks and the Outer Banks have immediate name recognition among travelers, regardless of whether they are the actual names of geographical locations that can be found on a map. Significantly, they are all seen as one distinct destination to consider when making vacation plans, thus greatly increasing their draw in contrast to the sum of the much smaller draw of the individual destinations contained within them.

# CASE STUDY



## MINNEAPOLIS MIDTOWN GREENWAY

The Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis has implemented a successful wayfinding system that communicates to users how far, in minutes; a destination is for both bicycling and walking. Other wayfinding systems can include signage that communicates health educational tools, such as how many calories are burned for a certain distance walked or

biked on the trail. Additionally, overhead trail signage or "gateways" at road crossings that are visible from the roadway help to market the trail and increase awareness. The gateways typically include the trail name and a short list of destinations and travel times along the corridor. ([http://midtowngreenway.org/.](http://midtowngreenway.org/))



Examples of wayfinding signage systems ranging from static signage to digital kiosks, to QR codes.

### SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

The Silver Comet Trail has its own logo and signage system. PATH Foundation maintains and replaces signage along the trail. The existing system uses mile markers, gateways, and kiosks made of recycled plastic. Although durable and strategically placed, many kiosks are missing maps or wayfinding elements entirely. PATH is considering transitioning to aluminum signage for increased long-term maintenance.

To strengthen the Silver Comet Trail's identity, the logo, signage, and brand would benefit from a more unified and updated aesthetic, with an increase in wayfinding opportunities. At a minimum, wayfinding signage should be installed along the trail at strategic locations near lodging, restaurants, services, and town centers to increase economic growth opportunities.

Alongside overall name recognition comes a number of tangible components of a single unified brand, such as a logo, signage, and other design elements. These components, when used across geographies and on multiple platforms (physical signage, brochures, websites, social media) and by multiple operators (state and local government, as well as hotels, retailers, and restaurants), can reinforce that single identity and thus strengthen the location's overall draw, both to residents and tourists.

### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The purpose of infrastructure investment, in the case of the Silver Comet Trail, is multi-faceted. First, it enhances the user experience by refreshing worn elements and replacing them with newer ones. This sends both a tangible and psychological message – to residents, that the amenity is worth a repeat visit because it has been upgraded, and to visitors, that the amenity is now even more worth the time to explore. Second, it enhances the user experience by tying the entire system of trails together in a cohesive manner. Given that a main goal of the expansion of the Silver Comet Trail is to exponentially increase the ways in which it can be explored, it is vital that clear signage is provided that allows users to navigate through new sections and connect between previously disparate sections. And, as new users are expected – both residents who live close to new sections and visitors who are compelled by the expanded Silver Comet Trail to take a day trip or overnight stay to enjoy it – this presents an opportunity to tell the story of the Silver Comet Trail and create a new impression on its users.

### INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

An under appreciated way to maximize the impact of a new or expanded recreational amenity is to foster inter-agency collaboration. Usage, spending, and overall enjoyment can be enhanced if there can be better integration between the related but separate work of various public and private

sector entities. For example, within the State's government, there are opportunities for the Department of Tourism and the Department of Transportation to collaborate on branded signage and other ways to mark the area and facilitate wayfinding. Local and regional entities should also be connected to, in order to promote the expanded Silver Comet Trail and connect it to other local and regional attractions. And, as mentioned above, private sector entities within the hospitality industry – hotels, retailers, restaurants, and sellers of recreational goods and services – need to be brought into a working partnership that creates a unified and enhanced experience for residents and visitors alike.

## NEW DEVELOPMENT

### VISITOR OUTREACH, PROMOTIONS AND MARKETING

The Silver Comet Trail serves as a link to the outdoors, providing residents and visitors easily accessible opportunities for community building, recreation, education, exercise and transportation. The trail is a facility that is available to all income groups, all neighborhoods, and all community groups, regardless of background and experience. Many residents likely take pride in the trail, as it has become part of their daily, weekly, or monthly lives, and it has allowed them to access basic needs and interact with neighbors without automobile dependence.

### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Interpretive signage programs that promote the historical and cultural value of a community are placemaking tools and inform trail users of important nearby destinations. As future connections are made to the Silver Comet Trail trunk line, additional historical and cultural information should be incorporated into the signage program as programming progresses over time.

Similarly, if connections are made to schools within walking or bicycling distance, the Silver Comet Trail can serve as a hands-on environmental classroom for people of all ages to learn historical information and experience natural landscapes, furthering environmental awareness. Local schools and community groups will be able to incorporate outdoor learning activities into their curriculums and expose children to the experience of outdoor education. According to the book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, by Richard Louv, a reduction in time spent outside seems to increase behavioral problems, anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorder, whereas more time outside increases an understanding of the natural world, relieves stress, and reduces undesirable behaviors. All subjects or curriculum can be presented in an outdoor classroom. Outdoor classrooms also provide alternatives for all to gain a better knowledge of what natural resources are and to understand the interconnectedness of these resources.



Parents gather with their kids to help children learn about riding bicycles safely to school during a bicycle education class.

Opportunities are available in an outdoor classroom to educate youth on the importance of taking care of the environment.

#### BICYCLE EDUCATION & SKILLS (ADULTS)

Bicycle Skills Training Courses should be developed and offered to adult cyclists of all levels who wish to learn bicycling technique, how to navigate busy roads

and complex junctions, and how to teach their children the proper and safe way to ride a bicycle. Courses that are taught as a series of three-hour, on-bike classes on the weekends would most likely be convenient for the majority of adults. The League of American Bicyclists offers excellent resources on proper bicycling practices and have League Cycling Instructors (LCIs) that teach courses to suit the needs of any cyclist.

#### BICYCLE EDUCATION & SKILLS (YOUTH)

Bicycle Skills Training Courses should be developed and offered as part of summer camps or as an independent summer camp to youth cyclists of all levels to teach bicycling technique and how to navigate busy roads and complex junctions. These trainings could

range from one-time, three-hour intensive trainings to a week-long series of daily, two-hour trainings as part of summer camps, to full-week bike adventure camps. The youth courses could also be incorporated into the physical education curriculum in elementary schools and middle schools, which would guarantee that a high percentage of the youth population in the northwest Georgia region are taught proper and safe handling of a bicycle. The Parks and Recreation Departments of the City of Atlanta, Cobb County, and other interested programs stakeholders should partner with community centers or the Boys and Girls Club to initiate adult and youth bicycle education and skills classes that can be attended in the evenings during the week or on the weekends.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bicycle education courses should be taught by law enforcement officers to law enforcement officers to give all officers the tools they need to properly enforce the traffic and parking laws as they relate to bicyclists and pedestrians. The course curriculum should include information on the “rules of the road” for bicyclists, as well as the traffic laws for motorists. The course should be a combination of classroom instruction and field practice. The program will also be useful to police departments for educational outreach to the bicycle community or other organizations. Incorporating skills training and certification for officers who wish to patrol on bicycle could also be included in

these courses.

### BICYCLE REPAIR PROGRAMS

Bike repair programs encourage the learning of technique and create feelings of empowerment in participants in the program. Many programs teach bike safety, maintenance, and on-road skills and have encouraged more people to bicycle for exercise, transportation, and leisure. In addition, these programs have increased the visibility of bicycling in communities. Community bike-repair programs take different forms, but typically they are run by local community groups. These groups acquire used bicycles, often through donations, that are repaired by volunteers who are offered training for the repairs and an option to volunteer for earn-a-bike programs. Bicycle repair programs and bicycle co-ops successfully train citizens in proper bicycle maintenance for the simple trade of sweat equity. Citizens can bring in their own bicycle and learn how to perform maintenance and repairs and, in return, offer their time to perform maintenance and repairs on donated bicycles that will be distributed back out into the community.

### PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Art is one of the best ways to strengthen the connection between neighbors, community members, business owners, and local officials. Across America and elsewhere, public green or open spaces are being dedicated to local or regional art. Artists are employing

a remarkably wide range of creative strategies to foster awareness of public spaces and are lending or donating pieces of art in support of the community initiative.

In 2004, American Trails launched “Artful Ways”, a new partnership with the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program, the USDA Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. Artful Ways will encourage creative ways of enhancing trail interpretation and trail-related facilities on National Recreation Trails using temporary and permanent site-based art. NWGRC and ARC stakeholders should consider initiating a similar program for the Silver Comet Trail and partner with local artists to create engaging public art pieces for display at deliberate locations along the trail.

### ART WALKS

To compliment the public art program, NWGRC and ARC should work with the local artists to plan and promote “Art Walks on the Trail”, a series of events during which local artists may display pieces of their work for sale. An “Art Walk on the Trail” event should be planned on a segment of trail that is accessible from a trailhead. These events



*Public art along trails enhances the trail users' experience and promotes local artists.*

would raise awareness of the Silver Comet Trail, attract people to the facility, create opportunities to socialize and meet new people, and promote local artists. Artists would benefit from the increased public exposure, especially those who do not have their own gallery or store front to display and sell their work.

#### BICYCLE PARKING SUPPORTS LOCAL ESTABLISHMENTS

All affected jurisdictions along the Silver Comet Trail corridor should update local zoning, licensing, and permit processes that designate the types and numbers of bicycle parking required at private employment and retail facilities. These facilities should offer bicycle parking in safe, well-illuminated areas near entrances. Providing secure bicycle parking is a key ingredient in efforts to encourage bicycling as a form of transportation. Placing long-term bicycle parking at transit stations provides opportunities for multi-modal travel and supports alternative transportation choices. Adequate and safe places to park bicycles will draw rail trail users into downtown areas to perform any number of activities that stimulate the local economy, such as shopping or enjoying a meal at a local establishment, running an errand at the post office, or returning a library book.

#### RECREATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: WEEKEND WALKABOUTS

Weekend Walkabouts are recreational community activities occurring regularly that

promote community building, environmental stewardship, walking, and physical activity, while also bringing attention to the new rail trail. Weekend Walkabouts can be held either monthly from May to October or quarterly to include one walk per season, depending on community momentum and leadership. Weekend Walkabouts should be scheduled and held along different stretches of the rail trail. The events' walking routes should highlight safe and inviting places to connect to the rail trail and should be three miles or less in length. These events are ideal for individuals, families, and seniors.

Weekend Walkabouts may be organized based on themes for each walk, such as an architectural tour or a "Steeple Chase" tour (visiting historic churches located in close proximity to the rail trail). The tour could focus on the rail trail connections to parks, neighborhoods, or schools, or it could focus on the public art that will be located along the rail trail as part of the public art program. To generate added marketing potential, community leaders, artists, historians, or local celebrities could be chosen to lead each walk. For each event, at least one volunteer should be positioned at both the front and the rear of the walking group. The pace should remain at 2-2.5 miles per hour or less. A refreshment break with water should be offered at the halfway point for any walk of two or more miles.

### RACE EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Recreational running and bicycling races are extremely popular community building events. Local area events and races such as the Silver Comet 10K, half and full marathon, Dixie200 Relay, Race for a Cure, Frankie's Ride to the Border, already exist and help to foster community spirit. Project stakeholders should reach out to the organizations that plan and promote existing runs and bicycle events to determine if there are opportunities for partnership and rerouting race courses to run segments of a race on future trail connections. National Running Day takes place in June every year, and planning a new community event for an upcoming National Running Day would generate excitement in the region. Successful national examples of recreational community events are the "Susan G. Koman Race for the Cure", Ragnar Relay races, and the Warrior Dash. Obstacle courses such as the Warrior Dash and the Tough Mudder have become increasingly popular events around the country and should be considered in future programming initiatives for the trail. A more traditional event such as a duathlon should also be considered in future programming for the rail trail, as the cycling or running segment of the event could easily be planned on the trail.

Most local running stores and volunteer groups (such as Georgia Running and Big Peach Running Company) are already assisting with promotion and planning of races and have member email list-serves

that they use to send information.

### WALKING OR BICYCLING POSTER CONTEST

This fun and interactive local competition educates and engages students about the variety of benefits the trail provides. The poster contest should include an educational component that teaches students how the rail trail impacts the health, transportation, environment, and economies of the communities it traverses. A field trip to the rail trail should be planned for the class before the poster contest to inspire and excite the children. Each year Polk, Paulding, Cobb, (and eventually Floyd) County should coordinate with the school districts to schedule the contest and develop the "scoring" criteria for the posters. Students in grades four, five, or six would be the best age group for this contest, and the school districts should determine which grade (or grades) should participate. Once the details of the contest have been clearly defined, the students should be tasked with creating a poster that highlights the benefits and value of using the trail. Students could be asked to include their favorite memory from the class' trail field trip. A selection panel made up of the participating school districts



*Race events draw visitors to the area, spurring tourism-related benefits, and create a sense of local community pride.*

will choose the winner of the contest. After the announcement of the winning entry, the poster should be incorporated into the trailhead signage and put on display for a predetermined amount of time.

### WALKING AND BICYCLING GROUPS

Community walking or bicycling groups are dedicated to promoting, motivating and encouraging members to walk or bike for the health of it; to improve their quality of life by living active and healthy lifestyles; and fostering the spirit of fellowship and having fun along the way to better health and fitness. Most groups are open to all ages and abilities; however, some schedule different events offering more or less strenuous options for group members. In some communities, groups even offer “singles” bicycle rides

which connect single adults with other people who enjoy the same activity. Many groups are formed with the goals of increased physical activity, enjoying good company, meeting new people, and finding pleasure in exploring new places in the community in a non-competitive environment – “Go at your own pace”. Members celebrate health, fun, and the social benefits of physical activity by providing a variety of exercise and social events. There are several existing walking and bicycling clubs in Atlanta and the northwest Georgia region, and



*Trail clean-up days preserve the natural environment and help with the overall management and maintenance of the trail.*

a map of the trail with trailhead areas and connections to other trails and parks should be developed and distributed to the existing groups.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Adopt-A-Trail Programs assist with maintaining, enhancing, and monitoring the trails and trailheads all over the country. Volunteers are utilized as part of the program and can be assigned segments of the rail trail. Anyone with an interest in trails and the outdoors can volunteer for the program. Individuals, families, businesses, community and service organizations, churches, schools, and scout troops are all examples of volunteers. Creating an Adopt-A-Trail program provides an opportunity for all members of the community to be actively involved in conservation and preservation. Through this program, local community groups and businesses could have the option of making a donation that is used for trail clean-up and maintenance. Helping to maintain and enhance the rail trail improves the resource for all to enjoy. The effort brings trail and nature enthusiasts closer to the environment and their community. Volunteers will enjoy the time they spend outdoors and the personal satisfaction gained through volunteerism. Volunteer activities could include:

- Keeping the trail surface free of sticks, rocks and other debris.
- Pruning small limbs from the trail corridor.
- Cleaning debris from benches, bridges,

and stairs.

- Litter clean-up.
- Cleaning waterbars and drainage ditches.
- Reporting trees across the trail, erosion problems, suspicious or illegal activities, vandalism, & safety issues.

### WALKING SCHOOL BUSES AND BICYCLE TRAINS

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. If that sounds simple, it is, and that's part of the beauty of the walking school bus. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or as structured as a route with meeting points, a timetable, and a regularly rotated schedule of trained, trustworthy volunteers.

A variation on the walking school bus is the bicycle train, in which adults supervise children riding their bikes to school. The flexibility of the walking school bus or bicycle train makes it appealing to communities of all sizes with varying needs.

When beginning a walking school bus or bicycle train, remember that the program can always grow. It often makes sense to start with a small bus or train and see how it works. Pick a single neighborhood that has a group of parents and children who are interested. It's like a carpool—without the car—with the added benefits of exercise and visits with friends and neighbors. For an informal bus:

- Invite families who live nearby to walk or bike.
- Pick a route and take a test trip.
- Decide how often the group will walk or bike together.

Success with a simple walking school bus or bicycle train may inspire a community to build a more structured program. This may include more routes, more days of walking, and more children. Such programs require coordination, volunteers, and potentially attention to other issues, such as safety training and liability. The school principal and administration, law enforcement, and other community leaders will likely be involved.

First, determine the amount of interest in a walking school bus or bicycle train program. Contact potential participants and partners, such as parents and children; principal and school officials; law enforcement officers; and other community leaders.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend one adult for every six children. If children are age 10 or older, fewer adults may be needed. If children are ages four to six, one adult per three children is recommended.

A good time to begin is during International Walk to School Week, which takes place every October. Walk or bike and look for ways to encourage more children and families to be involved. There are numerous neighborhoods

located near or adjacent to the Silver Comet Trail, and at least three schools are located within 1/2 mile walking or bicycling distance of the trail. These conditions work well with the creation of walking school buses or bicycle trains. The counties should meet with representatives of the school system to begin discussing the development of this community program. There may be a “local champion” who already walks or bicycles with their child to school.

#### NATIONAL BIKE MONTH AND WALK TO SCHOOL DAY SUPPORT/PARTICIPATION

National Bike Month is an opportunity to celebrate the unique power of the bicycle and the many reasons people choose bicycles as their mode of transportation or for recreation.

The schools located along, or in close proximity to the Rail Trail, should support, and as much as possible, encourage students, teachers and staff to participate in National Bike Month activities.

The NWGRC and ARC, in partnership with the counties and towns along the existing and future trail corridor should encourage employers and school systems to offer incentives to employees and students who participate in National Bike Month activities and Walk to School Day events to promote initiative and reward their participation. For example, Cobb, Paulding, and Polk County should encourage school districts to partner

with parents to organize bicycling trains and walking school buses for the children who will participate in Walk to School Day. Each group of students should be led safely to school by a parent or teacher volunteer. Additionally, the State should also encourage employers to allow flexible work days to employees participating in National Bike Month.

## COST-BENEFIT FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

Investment decisions are usually made in part based on a cost-benefit framework: what are the costs associated with an investment, and do the benefits that accrue from that investment positively compare? The purpose of this section is to aggregate the findings from this report into such a framework, so as to inform the decision as to whether and how to invest in the expansion of the Silver Comet Trail.

### COST CONSIDERATIONS

Expansion of the Silver Comet Trail will entail two kinds of costs: upfront capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs. Neither of these costs was estimated for this report, but when such cost estimation work is performed, it will be useful to understand them on a per-mile basis, and to understand how that per-mile cost may vary depending on how much the Silver Comet Trail is expanded by. In other words, it is likely that there are some fixed elements associated with both upfront

capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs, such that per-mile costs decrease if more mileage is added.

### BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS

Expansion of the Silver Comet Trail will entail a number of benefits, as articulated in this chapter (see Table 5.1):

1. \$24 million more in recreational spending and \$5 million more in tourism spending per year
2. \$50 million more in economic impact each year within the Region, supporting 400 more jobs within the Region
3. \$60 million more in economic impact each year within the State, supporting about 700 more jobs within the State and generating about \$1.5 million more in tax revenues each year to the State
4. \$130 million more in property value impact and \$1.7 million more in annual property tax revenues to municipalities and school districts (and even more if investment catalyzes new development in addition to conferring property value gains on existing homes)
5. A greater magnitude of a number of more intangible benefits, such as greater attraction and retention of employers and employees, increased mobility (and attendant declines in emissions, congestion, and road wear),

more direct use value, lower health care costs, and more ecological services rendered

### FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As noted above, to what extent these benefits are actually produced depends in large part on the characteristics of the expansion of the Silver Comet Trail, and not just on whether it happens or not: the quality, configuration, and design of the expansion will go a long way towards determining the existence and magnitude of these benefits. Nevertheless, these preliminary estimates serve as a useful guide for weighing the costs and benefits of any proposed expansion.

As noted above, to what extent these benefits are actually produced depends in large part on the characteristics of the expansion of the Silver Comet Trail, and not just on whether it happens or not. For example, the quality, configuration, and design of the expansion will go a long way towards determining the existence and magnitude of these benefits.

Where it is expanded to also matters, since areas proximate to major population centers are more likely to generate additional use both from those residents as well as from visitors who wish to use the trail while they are visiting nearby destinations. For example, a proposed future expansion to Chattanooga will make the Silver Comet Trail more accessible to the millions of people who live in and around that city as well as those who visit that city each year.

Table 5.1 Summary of Benefits Associated with the Expanded Silver Comet Trail

IMPACT CATEGORY	INCREASE IN BENEFITS	PER-MILE BENEFITS
Recreational Spending	From \$47M to \$71M per year	\$0.71M- \$1.07M
Tourism Spending	From \$10M to \$15M per year	\$0.15M- \$0.22M
Regional Economic Impact	From \$98M supporting 750 jobs to \$147M supporting 1,130 jobs per year	\$1.48M- \$2.22M supporting 11-17 jobs
Statewide Economic Impact	From \$118M supporting 1,310 jobs to \$177M supporting 1,980 jobs per year	\$1.78M- \$2.68 supporting 19-30 jobs
Statewide Fiscal Impact	From \$3.5M to \$5.1M per year	\$0.05M- \$0.08M
Property Value Impact	From +\$182M to +\$316M	\$2.8M- \$4.8M
Property Tax Gains from Property Value Impact	From \$2.3M to \$4.0M per year	\$0.03M- \$0.06M
New Development	More than twice as much aggregate increase in market value and annual increase in annual property tax revenues	

Source: Econsult Solutions, Inc. (2013)

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## 6.3 Arabia Mountain Trail

# ARABIA MOUNTAIN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

SEE 400 MILLION YEARS FROM HERE.

## SELF-GUIDED BIKE TOUR

Explore a land 400 million years in the making. The Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area (AMNHA) is an open landscape of breathtaking beauty, peace, and wonder just east of Atlanta along I-20. Dominated by two massive granite outcrops, it offers visitors natural wonders, compelling history and heart-pumping activity.

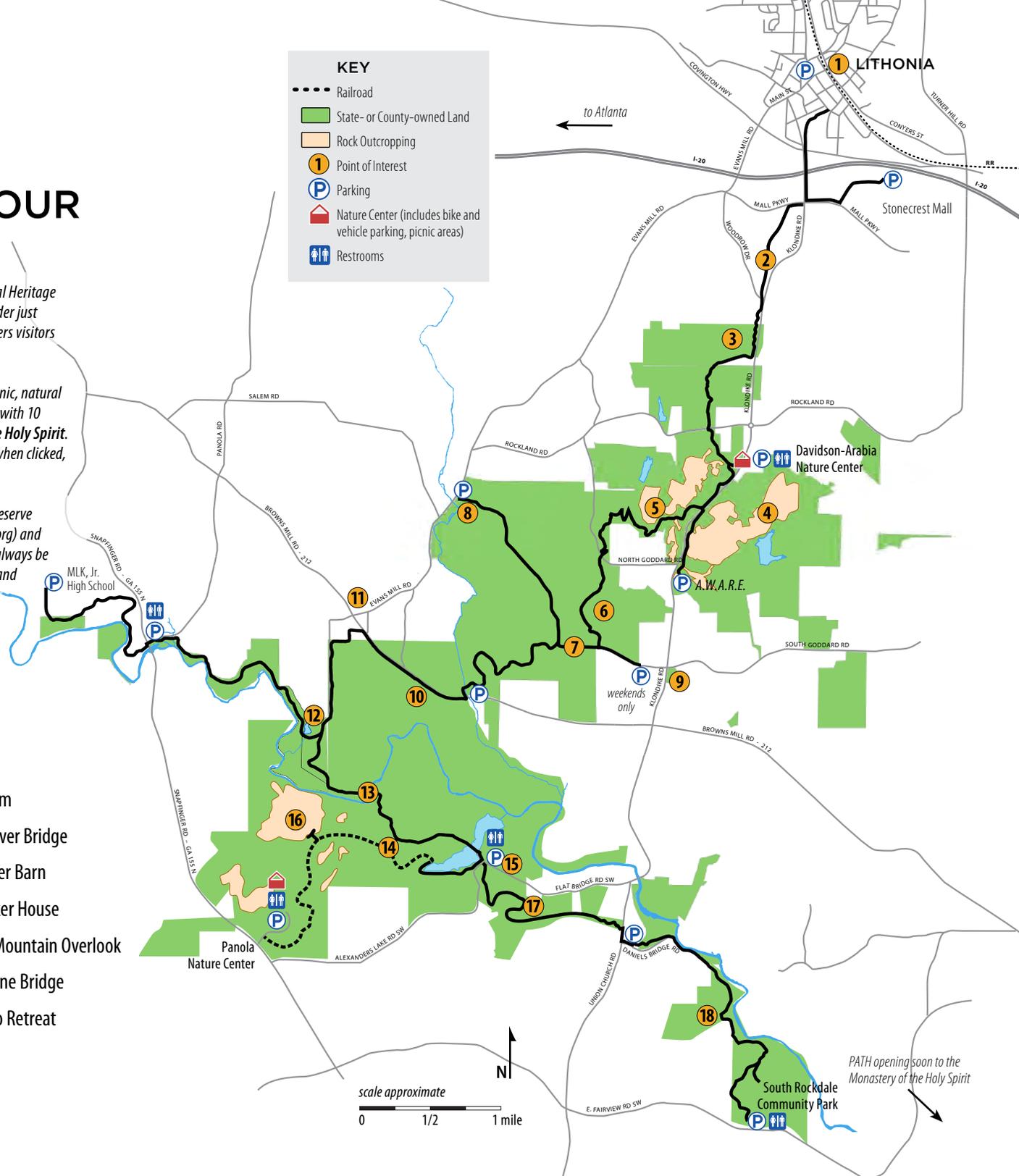
The **PATH Foundation** trail within the AMNHA is designed to link cultural, scenic, natural and historic sites. Over 15 miles of trails are open to bikers, hikers and walkers with 10 more miles scheduled to open, including a connection to the **Monastery of the Holy Spirit**. This interactive PDF can either be printed or viewed on a digital device. Links, when clicked, will lead to additional information.

There are several opportunities with the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve and Panola Mountain State Park to hike trails on foot ([map at arabiaalliance.org](http://map.arabiaalliance.org)) and bike racks are located at the entrances to several of these trails. Remember to always be prepared for your ride, take plenty of water and sunscreen. The terrain is hilly and some bikers should be aware that some climbs are particularly strenuous.

**KEY**

- Railroad
- State- or County-owned Land
- Rock Outcropping
- 1 Point of Interest
- P Parking
- Nature Center (includes bike and vehicle parking, picnic areas)
- Restrooms

- 1 Historic District of Lithonia
- 2 Railroad Cut
- 3 Vaughters' Farm
- 4 Arabia Mountain & Quarry Remains
- 5 Quarry Office Ruins
- 6 Farming Terraces
- 7 Horace King Commemorative Covered Bridge
- 8 Evans Mill Ruins
- 9 Historic District of Klondike
- 10 Pole Bridge Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant
- 11 Flat Rock Community
- 12 Lyon Farm
- 13 South River Bridge
- 14 Alexander Barn
- 15 The Parker House
- 16 Panola Mountain Overlook
- 17 Serpentine Bridge
- 18 DeCastro Retreat



**1 HISTORIC DISTRICT OF LITHONIA** Lithonia means “place of stone.” From the profusion of granite in homes and along Main Street, you can see why. The city was no more than a crossroads before the Georgia Railroad arrived linking Augusta and Atlanta in 1845. It was incorporated in 1856 and the town boundary extended just a mile from the railroad station. That boundary and many historic town buildings are intact today. Find out more about the history of Lithonia and its structures by taking this **walking tour**.

**2 RAILROAD CUT** Most of the PATH trail between Lithonia and Arabia Mountain lies in an old railroad bed. The most visible evidence are the embankments north of the intersection of Woodrow and Klondike Roads. This 4-mile spur opened in 1889 and was used to transport granite from the quarries at Arabia Mountain. The increased use of trucks to haul stone, development of alternatives to building stone, and the effects of the Great Depression caused several quarries to close and the Arabia Mountain line was abandoned in 1935. The railway right-of-way was donated to create the PATH.

**3 VAUGHTERS' FARM**

This is the last remaining dairy farm landscape in a county that was once renowned for its dairy farming. S.B. Vaughters bought the 144 acre farm



for \$4,230 and built the house and barn in 1947. He raised cattle for dairy and beef through the 1980's. Mr. Vaughters, who also taught vocational agriculture at Murphey Candler School, built the family home across Klondike Road out of local granite with the help of a seventh grade student.

The property includes granite outcrops and the headwaters of Stephenson Creek which flows into the South River. Vaughters' Farm is part of Panola Mountain State Park and the future headquarters of the AMNHA.

**4 ARABIA MOUNTAIN** Bikes are *only* allowed on the boardwalk which connects the paved PATH to the South parking lot where they may be locked while hiking the mountain on foot.

Arabia Mountain is actually a granite **monadnock**, an isolated rock hill that rises abruptly from the surrounding landscape. Monadnocks are formed when softer rock erodes away from a body of more erosion-resistant rock such as the granite/gneiss here. Arabia is thought to be about 100-million years older than nearby Stone Mountain.

The granite surface supports a very unique ecosystem. Over time, hollows form in the granite and collect rainwater, creating “vernal pools,” which host many federally listed rare, threatened and endangered **plant species** that survive only in these specific conditions. The **diamorpha**, a succulent that grows in patches on the surface, is one of these plants. Though it is brown and brittle most of the year the new growth is a striking bright red in early spring.

Evidence of the granite quarrying abounds on the bare rock face throughout the AMNHA, but the north peak of Arabia Mountain has the most dynamic remains of the industry. This peak is said to have been lowered 12 feet by the quarrying which continued until the 1970s.

Check for ranger guided hikes **here**.

**5 QUARRY RUINS** With imposing stone walls and barred windows, many speculate this building was a jail but it was most likely an office to support a granite quarry. It's one of several such ruins around the Nature Preserve. Park your bike and explore along the **Mile Rock Trail**.



**6 FARMING TERRACES** Pause near the wildlife overlook in a long bend in the PATH and peer into the woods uphill, can you imagine it as farmland? You may be able to see the terraces from a time when this hilly region was covered in farms. Farmers were encouraged to terrace their fields to decrease soil runoff. Much larger and older oak trees grow in the sloped faces of some terraces where rocks were also placed to stabilize the slopes and reduce erosion. The nearby Forest Trail has a short section that is located on a terrace.

**7 HORACE KING COMMEMORATIVE COVERED BRIDGE** The covered bridge over Stephenson Creek was built by the PATH Foundation in 2004 but its design was based on the lattice truss construction used by **Horace King**. A slave who bought his freedom in 1846, King was an engineer and architect who built bridges across the South. At one point, King was responsible for every major crossing on the Chattahoochee River. After the Civil War, King continued building and served in the Alabama State House.

**8 EVANS MILL RUINS** Just off the trail head parking lot are the remnants of a dam and millrace for a mill located just across Pole Bridge Creek. Notice the nearby hiking trail and cascades, this location on the creek took advantage of a drop in elevation. Dammed water was directed along the stone millrace to a wheel on the mill that would turn gears to grind grain, no motors were used. The mill ground wheat and corn which were likely used to make alcohol. This was once a lively industry of the Evans family, who lived just across the road, but it was abandoned in the 1940s.

**9 HISTORIC DISTRICT OF KLONDIKE** The crossroads community of Klondike, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007, is accessed by following the PATH east from the King Bridge to Murphey Candler School at the intersection of Klondike and South Goddard Roads. The district includes several homesteads built prior to the Civil War and several granite commercial buildings. A cotton gin used to stand behind the stone store.

**10 POLE BRIDGE CREEK WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT** Built in 1973, the plant was upgraded to provide for a major biosolids (sludge) reuse program. The sludge is placed on an adjacent 550 acre hay field, which you can see from the bike path. The hay from this field is primarily used for animal feed including the elephants at Zoo Atlanta. This land application program has saved the county a significant amount of landfill space and many thousands of dollars.

**11 FLAT ROCK COMMUNITY** Flat Rock is one of the oldest African-American settlements in Georgia. It began as an agricultural community bounded by three small slave-holding farms: the South, Lyon, and Johnson farms. After the Civil War, newly freed slaves stayed in the area forming schools, churches, and civic organizations. By the 1920s many residents had begun migrating to northern cities for better economic opportunity. This prompted T.A. Bryant, a local farmer and businessman, to purchase property which he then sold or leased under generous terms in order to encourage people to stay in Flat Rock. Today the Bryant house at 3979 Crossvale Rd is home to the **Flat Rock Archives** which tells the community's story and is open to the public. President Johnny Waits offers tours which can include the slave cemetery and the Lyon Farm.

**12 LYON FARM** This family farm is one of the oldest homesteads in the area. The Lyons were one of the first white settlers along the South River and descendants lived here until 2007. It is now owned by DeKalb County. The main portion of the farmhouse dates to the 1850s and family history notes that slaves once lived in the basement. Outbuildings such as the barn, workshop and sorghum mill reflect the self-sustaining nature of the farm. The family raised cows, hogs, cotton, muscadines, bees and a fruit orchard.



Today, Wonderland Gardens operates an interpretive farm near the PATH and the AMNHA sponsors a public archaeology program. Look across the power line cut for one of the finest views of Panola Mountain.

**13 SOUTH RIVER BRIDGE** The South River is part of the Upper Ocmulgee watershed and is the third largest river in the Atlanta region. This bridge is one of the longest pedestrian spans in the southeast. It is fabricated using cor-ten steel, which was developed to form a stable rust-like appearance when exposed to the weather for a few years. At the end of the bridge, stairs lead to the riverbank and a sandbar. Look for turtles basking in the sun. Swimming or wading are not encouraged but you can join a river paddle by contacting the **South River Watershed Alliance**.

**14 ALEXANDER BARN** This livestock barn serves as a physical reminder that the land along the PATH was a farming landscape even as recently as the late 20th century. Landscape architect Ed Alexander owned much of the land between the South River and Alexander Lake. He sold portions to create a golf course and expand Panola Mountain State Park.



**15 PARKER HOUSE** The **Parker House** is the oldest known house in Rockdale County. Aaron Parker, Jr. a veteran of the War of 1812, purchased three land lots a year after the 1821 Creek cession and moved his family from the Athens area. He built this house as the centerpiece of his plantation. After his death in 1881, the property was divided among 13 children and had various owners through the 20th century.



This type of house, Plantation Plain, was common in rural Georgia. The plan features a two story core with a rear shed addition. The room to one side of the front porch is typically called a parson's or traveler's room. Access through a door onto the front porch maintained family privacy.

The Southerness Golf Course surrounding the Parker House opened in 1991 but has been reclaimed as part of Panola Mountain State Park—can you see the old cart paths? Now, the links are home to an archery program, primitive camping, and a birding area.

**16 PANOLA MOUNTAIN** Panola Mountain is considered one of the finest rock outcrops in the U.S. and is a designated National Natural Landmark. The Georgia Conservancy led the conservation effort and purchased the mountain in 1974. Today the monadnock and its expanded 1,635 acre preserve are a state park. The PATH Trail winds around the park but due to the delicate nature of the ecological system, hikers are only allowed on Panola with a guide.

**17 SERPENTINE BRIDGE** After nearly a mile-long climb from Alexander Lake, you descend into a thickly forested valley, accented by a serpentine bridge high above a creek. This area, previously slated for development, was recently incorporated into the park as a corridor for the trail.



**18 DECASTRO RETREAT** The DeCastro Homestead was donated to Rockdale County in 1996 to be used as part of the trail system. There is a suspension bridge located ¼ mile below the DeCastro house on the right side of the trail.

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## SIZEMORE GROUP

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