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FINAL

SOUTH FULTON PARKWAY TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY

Technical Memorandum #1: Existing and Future Conditions Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of Work Order 2009-01, the South Fulton Parkway Transit Feasibility Study, is to advance the Transit Planning Board (TPB) recommendation concerning the parkway by providing a high-level assessment and evaluation of potential transit improvements in South Fulton County. This report is the first deliverable associated with Work Order 2009-01 and serves to document the factors that influence the feasibility of potential transit alternatives along South Fulton Parkway. These factors include existing and projected demographic characteristics, transportation system performance, land use change, and policies/procedures towards growth and development taken from the different jurisdictions in the study area. In addition, input from regional planning partners such as the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) as well as area residents and business interests will be solicited to understand the preferred vision for the corridor from a wide range of perspectives. In conjunction, these factors will be considered to develop transit and land use scenarios that could be feasible to MARTA and those that implement policy along the corridor.

Highlights of Baseline Conditions

The following highlight the major baseline conditions for the South Fulton Corridor study area:

- Most of the roadway network currently operates in non-congested conditions. However, anticipated growth along South Fulton Parkway, coupled with the lack of capacity improvement programmed for the study area, may result in a deterioration of level of service (LOS) by 2030.
- In general, the study area is relatively undeveloped in the western portions. Development intensifies in the eastern portions of the corridor, which includes a concentration of industrial uses capitalizing on access to I-85, I-285, and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (H-JAIA). The predominant land use throughout the developed portion of the study area is single-family residential development.
- Future land uses planned for the study area consist of significant levels of suburban-type residential development, complemented by nodal commercial development at major intersections. The exceptions to this pattern are within the cities of College Park and Union City. These cities foresee their respective sections of the study area to develop in a more intense pattern to transition into a more urban environment. While developed by the private sector , the Parkway South Economic Development Plan within the Union City portion of the study corridor has received a great deal of support from the City and proposes development patterns that are much more intense than those proposed by Fulton County and reflected in the ARC travel demand model.
- Input gathered from stakeholders through group and individual meetings showed overwhelming agreement on the following priorities:
    - Maintaining the rural/suburban character of the area;
    - Limiting access to the parkway; and,
    - Avoiding over development along the parkway.

Major Findings

Based on existing and planned conditions for the study area, in conjunction with input received through the stakeholder consultation process, the following major findings have been derived.

- **A commuter-based service is needed and preferred** - There is a proliferation of auto-oriented development planned and/or permitted within the study area, which is predominantly single-family residential with commercial nodes located at major roadway intersections. The study area has very few major sources of employment, which indicates that the primary trip purpose is external commuter trips to activity centers throughout the region. Regional travel data suggest that this trend will continue in the future. Furthermore, College Park officials noted that the park-and-ride lot at the MARTA station is at capacity on a daily basis and alternatives to park-and-ride facilities are necessary to meet current and future demand.
- **Routing flexibility is critical** - While providing multimodal options is important, the top priority reflected by policy documents and stakeholder input is to maintain traffic flow along South Fulton Parkway. Designated as US 29 throughout much of its length, the roadway is designed to carry high volumes of traffic at high speeds. For this reason, GDOT and Fulton County have worked together to maintain a 100-foot buffer free from the encroachment of development along much of the roadway. To further this objective, the transit technology along South Fulton Parkway will need to access sites off of the mainline facility. This will serve to minimize impedance and conflict between motorists and pedestrians that may be potentially created by attempting to access a transit investment implemented directly on the parkway.
- **Rail technology along South Fulton Parkway is not supported by 2030** – As noted, low-density development patterns are planned for the study area. The importance of maintaining the rural/suburban character of the area has also been emphasized by the majority of stakeholders in the corridor. Consequently, the implementation of fixed guideway investments - such as heavy rail or light rail - along South Fulton Parkway is not supported by public policy or sentiment at this time. However, while the baseline conditions do not support advancing rail technology at this time, it should be noted that policy changes and development activity that ensues between present day and 2030 may influence the potential for rail technology as the corridor develops - particularly in the areas near the proposed Parkway South development.
- **The corridor is not conducive to local bus service** – Based on the aforementioned development patterns, a need to maintain traffic flow, the desire to maintain the character of the corridor, frequent stop-local bus service is not deemed appropriate for South Fulton Parkway at this time.
- **The target market for the alternative will not be transit-dependent populations** – Given the lack of low-income populations and zero-vehicle households throughout most of the study area, the alternative developed for the corridor will need to be attractive to those who desire to use a commute alternative through personal preference.

Based on these findings, the alternatives to be tested along South Fulton Parkway will consist of the following characteristics:

- Rubber-wheeled technology;

- Limited stops to maintain competitive travel times for user benefits;
- Emphasis on peak hour service;
- Stations located off of the parkway designed for timely ingress and egress; and
- Land use scenarios characterized by nodal development of non-residential land uses conducive to transit ridership (dry cleaners, restaurants, day care centers, etc.) and/or residential development at densities/intensities consistent with the rural/suburban character of the area. Land use scenarios will also consider increases in population and employment allocations for the study area. The development of the scenarios, specifically the testing of modifications to socioeconomic forecast will be coordinated with the ARC as appropriate.

Next Steps

Based on the major findings and preliminary alternative characteristics listed above, the following represent the next steps in developing land use and transit alternatives for the study area:

- Refine development projections based on site visits, additional data collection and interviews with regional and local planning authorities;
- Conduct further mapping and analysis to determine the spatial distribution of planned development, in order to verify and corroborate ARC growth projections by Census tracts and traffic analysis zones (TAZs);
- Develop an adjustment factor for each tract and TAZ to adjust forecasts to accommodate actual and proposed development projects in order to provide a more current understanding of South Fulton County's growth potential;
- Coordinate with Douglas County to identify planned development outside of the study area that would generate through trips along the corridor and, in turn, impact the feasibility of shared right-of-way alternatives, such as express bus;
- Identify potential station locations based on development trends and initiatives as well as stakeholder input;
- Assess ridership potential and optimal service options through use of the ARC regional travel demand model (TDM);
- Hold a second round of stakeholder interviews to gather input on the proposed land use and transit scenarios. Unlike the first round, which focused on gathering input on land use and transportation trends, this round will seek input from the business community to better understand how potential alternatives will serve their needs and/or impact economic development;
- Analyze the study area's freight characteristics to identify and address potential issues and/or conflict with freight traffic;
- Coordinate with GDOT on the feasibility of potential transit alternatives along South Fulton Parkway and issues concerning access management; and
- Coordinate with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to obtain their perspective on the potential for GRTA commuter services along the corridor.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Overview

The purpose of Work Order 2009-01, the South Fulton Parkway Transit Feasibility Study, is to advance the Transit Planning Board (TPB) recommendation concerning the parkway by providing a high-level assessment and evaluation of potential transit improvements in the South Fulton County. The corridor extends from SR 166 in Douglas County to the College Park MARTA Station, as shown in **Figure 1-1**. The study will result in the identification of issues impacting the feasibility of transit investment in the corridor and provide scenarios that focus on viable transit solutions. The study will also describe the precedents for transit feasibility and present results that can be anticipated in terms of traffic congestion, multimodal capacity, and related land use patterns, for the South Fulton area.

1.2 Purpose of Report

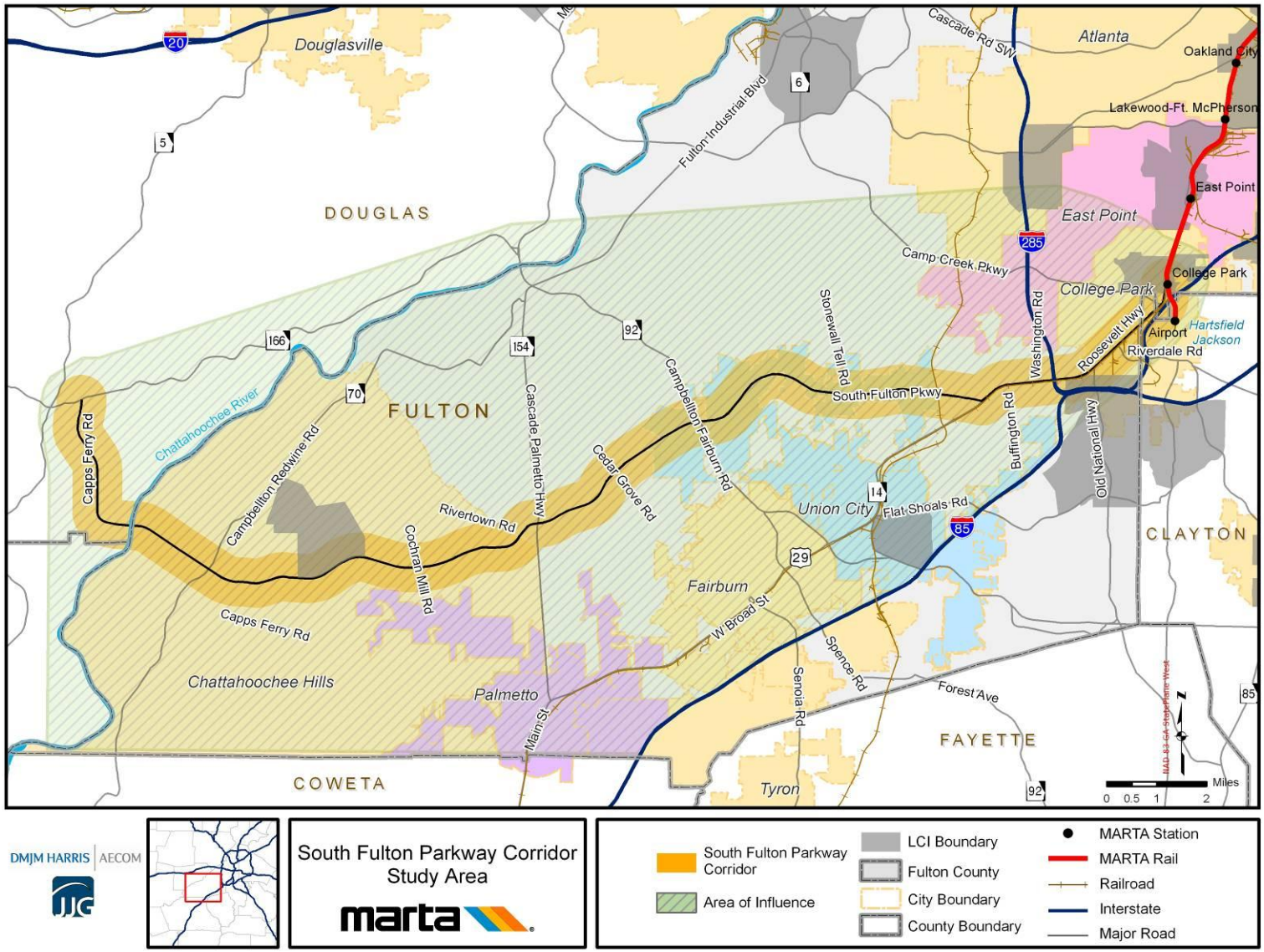
This report is the first deliverable associated with Work Order 2009-01 and serves to document the factors that influence the feasibility of potential transit alternatives along South Fulton Parkway. These factors include existing and projected demographic characteristics, transportation system performance, land use change, and policies/procedures towards growth and development taken from the different jurisdictions in the study area. In addition, input from regional planning partners such as GDOT and ARC as well as area residents and business interests will be solicited to understand the preferred vision for the corridor. In conjunction, these factors will be considered to develop transit and land use scenarios that could be feasible to MARTA and those that implement policy along the corridor.

1.3 Report Organization

Given the purpose of this report, the organization of the remainder of the document is as follows:

- Section 2 provides highlights from previous studies to identify issues and planned initiatives in the study area, which would influence transit and land use alternatives developed as part of this effort;
- Section 3 details the existing and projected transportation conditions within the study area based on data from GDOT, ARC, and MARTA;
- Section 4 provides an overview of demographic and land use characteristics, in addition to development trends that influence the propensity for transit service;
- Section 5 summarizes the input received from interviews of key stakeholders within the study area; and
- Section 6 presents the major findings that will influence the land use and transit alternative scenarios to be carried forward as part of this effort.

Figure 1-1: Study Area Map



1.4 Definition of Transit Propensity

For the purposes of this feasibility study, a broad analysis was conducted regarding the following factors which are traditionally inventoried to determine the potential for transit services:

- Demographic and Forecasts – Investigating the concentration of populations within the study area that are more likely to ride transit as well as population and employment estimates (2005) and projections (2030) developed by ARC;
- Land Use and Development Trends - Assessing the existing and future land uses planned throughout the corridor in addition to recent development trends to identify areas with existing and planned transit-supportive initiatives;
- Transportation Conditions – Analyzing the current and projected roadway levels of service, travel trends with respect to origin and destination and mode choice, and the planned and programmed improvements in the area to provide a context of the potential travel characteristics needed for the area;
- Stakeholder Input – Along with the policy documents reviewed in Section 2, inventory the input received from the stakeholders regarding their overall vision of the corridor and their assessment of the factors listed above.

A detailed assessment for each of these factors is provided in this report. Collectively, they provide the basis to gauge the overall potential for transit services, the transit market that would be served, and the service characteristics needed within the study area.

2.0 REVIEW OF RELEVANT STUDIES

This section provides an overview of studies and planning initiatives undertaken by the various planning partners within the study area. In conjunction, these studies provide a sound policy basis for developing the transit and land use scenarios appropriate for the South Fulton Parkway corridor. As such, these studies are summarized with a strong emphasis on the transportation and land use elements related to transit feasibility.

2.1 Regional Initiatives

The following section summarizes regional studies that have been undertaken. These studies could affect the future character of the South Fulton Parkway study area through the projects they recommend and the policies they establish. The studies include:

- The Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is the federally-designated Long Range Transportation Plan developed by the ARC;
- The TPB Concept 3 that lays out a 2050 expanded regional transit vision for the 14-county greater Atlanta region;
- The Southern Regional Accessibility Study (SRAS), the first sub-regional planning effort to analyze the collective transportation and land use issues faced by the southern metropolitan Atlanta region; and
- The Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan, a comprehensive regional study of freight and goods movement needs in the Atlanta region.

Projects and recommendations from these initiatives may influence the future transportation network and help establish the policy back drop for the recommendations of this study.

2.1.1 Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan

The Envision6 RTP was adopted by the ARC in 2007. As the federally-mandated long range transportation plan (LRTP) for the Atlanta region, it presents transportation improvements to meet the current and future conditions within the 18-county Atlanta metropolitan area. It is also provides the basis behind the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In total, Envision6 recommends $67.1 billion in projects and strategies to address the region's transportation challenges.

There are several RTP projects – including roadway and bicycle/pedestrian improvements – that are planned within the study area. These improvements are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.2 herein.

2.1.2 Regional Development Plan

The Regional Development Plan (RDP) set forth by the ARC prescribes a regional growth strategy to guide future development decisions in the region. These policies seek to integrate land use decisions with transportation, among other public investment objectives. The RDP provides recommendations to local governments for implementation within their local planning efforts. The RDP was adopted by ARC in December 2008.

In the South Fulton Parkway study area, the RDP calls for several land uses that vary depending on location. The cities of Palmetto, Fairburn, Union City, and the Old National Highway corridor are identified as town centers. Chattahoochee Country West Village (now Chattahoochee Hills) is also considered a town center, with a considerable amount of its land reserved as a regional park, reflecting the use of greenspace in that development. The RDP expects town centers to support a mix of uses and have a minimum of 15 residents per acre, 13 jobs per acre and buildings two to five stories in height; and conditionally recommends that these areas have densities up to 80 residents per acre, 25 jobs per acre, and buildings from eight to 50 stories in height.

The RDP calls out that most land on the eastern side of the study area is projected to be urban neighborhoods, with a large area of freight generators west of the intersection of South Fulton Parkway and Roosevelt Highway. Urban neighborhoods are expected to develop in a range of styles, from residential medium-lot neighborhoods, with five residents per acre and buildings no more than two stories, up to low rise development that supports 22 residents per acre in buildings as tall as four stories. These neighborhoods are also complemented with general commercial development, which provides an average of 13 jobs per acre in buildings from one to four stories. The freight generators are associated with industrial uses, supporting nine jobs per acre in one-story buildings, as well as possible office park development featuring two- to-four-story buildings and 40 jobs per acre.

Moving westward toward Cascade Palmetto Highway, the intensity of land use is reduced to suburban neighborhood style development, which includes development styles ranging from very-low density residential development (one resident per acre) up to small-lot residential with seven residents per acre. All buildings in this case are expected to be no higher than two-stories. Some suburban neighborhoods may, like urban neighborhoods, support some general commercial development.

West of Cascade Palmetto Highway, most land use is considered rural in nature, with some suburban development around Palmetto. Rural areas are expected to emphasize conservation open space and residential developments with density at one person per acre. Rural areas are not expected to include commercial development.

2.1.3 Transit Planning Board Concept 3

The TPB was formed in 2006 by a joint resolution of the ARC, MARTA, GDOT and GRTA to establish an integrated transit network for the Atlanta region. This marked the first time that these agencies had worked in tandem to develop a unified transit vision for the region. This regional vision, called Concept 3, identifies approximately $58 billion (2008 dollars) worth of potential transit service improvements.

As part of Concept 3, bus rapid transit (BRT) service was recommended along South Fulton Parkway. As a cooperative partner in the development of Concept 3, this study was undertaken by MARTA to further examine the potential for transit investment in this corridor as part of the regional transit vision. This study builds on the Concept 3 analysis and takes a more detailed look at the characteristics that would influence the feasibility of potential transit alternatives along South Fulton Parkway.

2.1.4 Southern Regional Accessibility Study

The SRAS is a comprehensive sub-area study of the southern portion of the Atlanta metropolitan region. ARC commissioned the study in partnership with GDOT, two

Regional Development Centers (RDCs), six counties and 29 municipalities. Issues addressed by SRAS include rapid future growth, the largest reserve of vacant land, severe deterioration in transportation mobility, limited east-west transportation infrastructure, and multiple local and regional initiatives. The study led to dialogue on the issues facing the sub-area by various constituency groups. The final recommendations of SRAS included a prioritized transportation project list and supportive land use policies. Given the financial constraint faced by the region, the SRAS project recommendations were prioritized based on three guiding principles:

- Their ability to provide cross-regional mobility benefits;
- Their impact on reinforcing ARC's regional strategic network; and
- Their ability to pay for themselves through revenue generation.

South Fulton Parkway makes up the northern boundary of the SRAS study area. The study found that relative to other major roadways, South Fulton Parkway ranked low in terms of congestion. In fact, while the driving conditions along this roadway are expected to deteriorate by 2030, it will not worsen as much as other roads in the SRAS area. Therefore, no capacity improvements were recommended for South Fulton Parkway. Instead, to prepare for future developments in South Fulton County and the adjacent counties, an access management plan to help monitor and guide this growth was recommended for South Fulton Parkway.

2.1.5 Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan

The Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan Final Report was released in February 2008. Produced for ARC and GDOT, the study examined all modes of freight transportation with emphasis on air, rail and trucking.

The study found that, in 2005, over 950 million tons of freight either originated or terminated in the Atlanta metropolitan area, and 276 million tons of that was in Fulton County. By 2030, the study projected that there would be 1.7 billion tons of freight in the region.

The AB&C main rail line, owned and operated by CSX, runs north-south through the eastern portion of the study area. The line connects Atlanta to Waycross. It intersects with a second line, the A&WP line, also owned by CSX, in Union City. Planned freight operation expansions by CSX on these lines are expected to cause them to approach capacity by 2030. The intersections of the AB&C line with Welcome All Road and Old Fairburn Road were identified as the fourth and fifth most active at-grade railroad crossings in Fulton County respectively, each with 16 trains per day. The freight study recommends improving the grade-crossing geometrics at both of these locations.

South Fulton Parkway, I-85, and I-285 are designated truck routes in the study area. Also, there are five distribution centers, and two major stone quarries, all of which are served by significant truck traffic. I-285 and I-85 are noted in the study as key freight corridors due to the volume of freight traffic they carry and the number of commercial vehicle crashes they experience. Finally, the study recommends improvements along the I-85 south corridor, including reconstruction of the SR 74/Fairburn Industrial Boulevard and SR 138/ Jonesboro Road interchanges (providing access to the South Fulton area) and the possible construction of a new interchange at Gullatt Road, between the cities of Fairburn and Palmetto.

2.2 Local Comprehensive Plans

The State of Georgia requires that cities and counties prepare a comprehensive plan to address a wide range of issues, including demographics, economic development, natural and historic resources, housing, community facilities, and land use.

The sections that follow contain an overview of the Comprehensive Plans for the following jurisdictions within the study area:

- Fulton County;
- City of College Park;
- City of Union City;
- City of Fairburn;
- City of Palmetto; and
- City of Chattahoochee Hills.

2.2.1 Fulton County

Fulton County's Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2005. For the purposes of the plan, unincorporated Fulton County is divided into four geographic planning areas: North Fulton, Sandy Springs, Southwest Fulton and South Fulton. Data collection, needs assessments, and goals development were prepared with consideration of the unique characteristics of each planning area. According to the plan, South Fulton is expected to have tremendous population growth of over 100% by 2030. The plan also determined that potentially 17,000 acres of land will have to be developed to accommodate this growth.

Results from the existing conditions analysis revealed that South and Southwest Fulton have major industrial areas and an abundant supply of vacant lands for development. In terms of development, no other planning area is as affected by the transportation system as much as Southwest Fulton given its proximity to the H-JAIA, rail lines, state roads and interstates I-85, I-285 and I-20 to support industrial uses along Fulton Industrial Boulevard.

The plan considered South Fulton to be the most diverse in land uses with older historic crossroads communities, new and established residential developments, new commercial and office centers, areas in need of redevelopment, developing mixed-use villages, and rural areas with farming activities. South Fulton has a substantial amount of undeveloped land, which has been historically zoned for agricultural uses. Due to the recent increase in development, along with higher traffic volumes on roads, which were not originally designed to accommodate such capacity, the plan determined the need for new collector roads, access management tools, traffic studies, pedestrian/bicycle facilities, and public transit service to provide a series of transportation options for South Fulton.

As part of the transportation assessment of current and future needs of the county, the plan includes analyses of the existing transportation LOS and the availability and adequacy of transportation facilities to serve the existing and future land uses. The plan identified the most congested roadways in the county that are part of the ARC's Congested Management System Network. Those congested roadways relevant to the transit feasibility of the South Fulton Parkway study area are Buffington Road, Camp

Creek Parkway (SR 6), Roosevelt Parkway (US 29), Rivertown Road, and Welcome All Road.

The plan also identified redevelopment and infill opportunities along Old National Highway that will be planned and developed to encourage MARTA ridership by bus, and/or rail at the College Park Station.

Future land use maps were developed for each planning area. The 2025 goals for land use in the South Fulton planning area focus on strategically increasing density in areas where growth is projected while encouraging land preservation.

The area immediately surrounding South Fulton Parkway east of Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) is classified as a "Live-Work" district, which allows a mix of uses that are pedestrian-oriented and incorporates open space. A majority of the forecast population and employment growth should occur in these areas. Although most of the Live-Work area along South Fulton Parkway has a Neighborhood Live-Work designation, the future land use plan identified three Community Live-Work nodes at major intersections, which allow higher residential densities. These nodes are located at Stonewall Tell Road, Campbellton-Fairburn Road (SR 92), and Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154).

The Comprehensive Plan recognized that an access management study is imperative for the South Fulton Parkway and its neighboring communities because it is a major east-west connector in South Fulton. In response, GDOT will be undertaking an access management study for the corridor later this year.

2.2.2 City of College Park

The City of College Park's Comprehensive Plan (2005-2025) envisioned the city to be a thriving multimodal community with emphasis on preservation and redevelopment along commercial corridors such as Old National Highway, Main Street, Virginia Avenue, and Jamestown Road. College Park is expected to have a modest gain of 1,900 residents between 2000 and 2025. The expansion of H-JAIA has had a negative impact on the city's population growth. However, plans and strategies for redevelopment proposed in the Old National Highway Corridor and Northwest Clayton LCI studies are indicators of redevelopment that could help renew population growth in the future.

The proximity to the H-JAIA has a significant influence on the city's economic development activities. An inventory of recent and planned major economic activities includes:

- Construction of the fifth runway and the new international terminal at the airport;
- Planned relocation of CONRAC and the associated automatic people mover;
- Gateway Center, which is currently under construction; and
- Construction on the first of four planned hotels as part of the Millennium Center on Sullivan Road.

The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan described that the presence of infrastructure and land use barriers currently segregate the economies of College Park and H-JAIA. For example, Main Street businesses are currently not taking full advantage of traffic from I-85 because of the counter-intuitive route from the highway to

Main Street. Improved signage providing directions around such barriers would be beneficial for local businesses as well as travelers.

The Comprehensive Plan proposes bicycle lanes along Roosevelt Highway from just west of the City limits to Camp Creek Parkway. For the downtown section of Roosevelt Highway, the installation of directional and information signage is also proposed.

The future land use map for College Park designated the area along Roosevelt Highway (US 29) as mostly Airport Commercial/Convention, which includes the GICC and CONRAC. This classification focuses primarily on regional and international facilities, which may or may not be government related. The area across from the College Park MARTA Station has been designated as Mixed Use Town Center that allows for a mix of uses, including a range of housing units and commercial uses with a unified site design.

2.2.3 City of Union City

Through interviews with City staff, the project team was advised that the Comprehensive Plan for Union City had not been updated since 1994. In recognition, the City stated that initiatives detailed in its South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study, as detailed in Section 2.4.1, are most pertinent to this effort.

2.2.4 City of Fairburn

The City of Fairburn's Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2005, provides an outline for its downtown revitalization, the development of mixed-use and traditional neighborhoods, and preservation of the City's resources and quality of life. The City's population forecast from 10,300 in 2005 to 18,500 in 2025 reflects the City's policy concerning development density and annexation. Most of this growth is expected over the next ten years, and then the rate of growth is expected to decrease in the following decade. The Comprehensive Plan indicated that Fairburn's new zoning ordinance actually reduces multifamily development density while permitting increased single-family density through a new, "Planned Development" (PD) district. Additionally, the fact that Fairburn has fulfilled its annexation goals suggests it is unlikely to seek to add population through the annexation of areas developed or planned for residential use.

The transportation element of the plan placed emphasis on providing transportation alternatives that provide land use connections through regionally connected trails and sidewalks. In accordance with the City's intention of placing alternative modes of transportation at the forefront of their planning agenda, the plan discussed the City's current requirement that new subdivisions must include sidewalks and connect those sidewalks to existing sidewalks where feasible. The City also plans to create pedestrian corridors in the downtown areas that better link residential neighborhoods to the historic downtown area and other nearby uses.

In terms of transit, the plan revealed the City's desire to set up express bus service from Fairburn to the College Park MARTA Station. The current bus service makes a number of stops, which discourages its use as alternative means of commuting. The short-term plan for express service to College Park will encourage residents to use public transportation by providing fast and convenient service to and from Atlanta. The City has expressed a long-term desire to locate a MARTA rail station in downtown Fairburn. This would provide better transit access for residents and create a critical mass of people in the downtown area to support commercial development.

2.2.5 City of Palmetto

The City of Palmetto's Comprehensive Plan 2005 Update envisions a city that embraces smart growth while maintaining its small town friendliness and Southern community ambiance, Palmetto is expecting a tremendous increase in population from less than 4,000 in 2005 to over 10,000 by 2025. The plan indicated a major factor for growth in Palmetto over the next decade will be the abundance of undeveloped land and a lift on the sewer moratorium. In this regard, the plan identified the importance of working cooperatively with Fulton County's Economic Development Staff to focus on economic development initiatives for South Fulton including the South Fulton Parkway corridor.

The most prevalent existing land use in Palmetto is vacant land, with over 34% of total land. Development of this vacant land was stalled by a long standing sewer moratorium, which was lifted in 2005. The City has initiated two major public infrastructure projects to upgrade and prepare its water and wastewater systems for the next 20 years. Additionally, the Baptist Retirement Communities of Georgia recently made a multi-million dollar investment at a location they own in Palmetto, creating jobs and attracting related businesses. In terms of redevelopment opportunities, the plan identified Roosevelt Highway (US 29) through the downtown area as a major corridor appropriate for both residential and commercial redevelopment.

The findings from the transportation element of the plan indicate that congestion occurs along Main Street (US 29) primarily from peak hour traffic volumes and the presence of diagonal parking along the street. Additionally, US 29/SR 14 south to Newnan experiences congestion due to its limited two-lane capacity. In terms of transit, Palmetto is the southernmost terminal for the MARTA system. The City is served by one MARTA bus line, and thus, the relationship with MARTA has been generally limited to issues related to the quality and scope of this bus line.

Local transportation priorities for Palmetto include:

- Improvements to the railroad underpass bridges;
- Improving congestion at the railroad grade crossings and limiting semi-truck traffic through downtown;
- Providing left turn queuing lanes and/or protected left turns at intersections along Main Street;
- Additional MARTA pedestrian shelters;
- Evaluating the need for additional signalization on arterial and collector streets;
- Evaluating the need for a by-pass route around the City; and
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle transportation alternatives.

2.2.6 City of Chattahoochee Hills

The City of Chattahoochee Hills, incorporated in 2007, has yet to adopt its own Comprehensive Plan. City staff has indicated that the City expects to complete a Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2009 – after the completion of this study. However, the project team was advised that using the future land use plan from Fulton County would be appropriate for the purposes of this study.

The Fulton County future land use plan designated the Chattahoochee Hill Country Villages as Regional Live-Work Nodes, which permits 14 residential units per acre per village. In order to develop within the village, Transfer of Development Rights must be used to prohibit the traditional sprawl-like patterns in areas designated as for agricultural uses. The unconventional development strategy calls for a Conservation Subdivision, which encourages small-lot development in exchange for preserving significant areas of land for ecological and recreational purposes. The Conservation Subdivision planned in Chattahoochee Hills was projected to accommodate a population of 20,000 or more.

2.3 Livable Community Initiatives

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program offered by the ARC that encourages local jurisdictions to plan and implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities consistent with regional development policies. The primary goals of the program are 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 enable access to all uses within the study area; and
- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders.

There have been four LCI studies completed within the study area that warrant consideration in the development of the transit and land use alternatives to be developed for the South Fulton Parkway corridor:

- Union City LCI Study
- Old National Highway LCI Study
- Chattahoochee Hill Country LCI Study
- College Park LCI Study

2.3.1 Union City LCI Study

The Union City Town Center LCI Study represents Union City's vision for a multimodal downtown area that offers a range of housing, retail, employment and open space options. The study area includes the area surrounding Shannon Mall defined by Flat Shoals Road on the north, Oakley Road on the east, Jonesboro Road/Old Jonesboro Road on the south, and Watson Street on the west. The study area also includes the GDOT-owned South Fulton park-and-ride lot located at Exit 66 on I-85, along South Royal Parkway.

Inventory of the existing conditions revealed that while an interconnected roadway system exists in historic neighborhoods, much of the study area consists of small disconnected local streets that feed into fewer collectors. Other strengths of the transportation system include the excess capacity on Flat Shoals Road, Shannon Parkway, Mall Parkway, and Oakley Road that can accommodate future growth. In fact, all the roadways in the study area are currently operating at acceptable LOS and expected to continue in the future. However, there is a lack of east-west alternatives to Jonesboro Road (SR 138) and Flat Shoals for localized travel. Furthermore, the findings

indicate that roads around Shannon Mall need continuous sidewalks to facilitate a safe environment for pedestrians.

The LCI developed a list of high priority new streets to create an interconnected street network to address the deficiencies in the system. At the top of the high priority list of projects is the extension of Union Street to Shannon Parkway, which will provide a major east-west connection in the heart of the study area. The study recommended that all new developments within the LCI area pay for all or a portion of the costs associated with the new roads.

The transit analysis associated with the study states that connections to the College Park MARTA station are needed and peak-hour usage suggest that the majority of the transit travel is commute-oriented. However, the current land uses and parking do not support transit use and there is limited intermodal integration. Additionally, the GDOT park-and-ride facility is currently under used and not convenient to transit users. The LCI recommends that transit be redirected to the Town Center area and the GDOT park-and-ride facility be used for rideshare participants and as a vanpool staging area, as well as partial redevelopment into office uses.

There is also the need to implement transit priority measures that ensure HOV lanes, transit signal priority measures, and the availability of planned real time travel information will support recommended transit improvements. These transit improvements include the following:

- Upgrading Shannon Parkway to support MARTA buses;
- Providing bus shelters and schedules; and
- Redeveloping a portion of the GDOT park-and-ride lot into office uses to locate high transit trip generating land uses adjacent to transit infrastructure.

2.3.2 Old National Highway LCI Study

The Old National Highway LCI is unique in that it is the first cross-jurisdictional LCI project that required coordination between the City of College Park and Fulton County stakeholders. The purpose of this study was to revitalize this highway corridor to meet the needs of diverse audiences looking for more urban residential and retail land uses. The study area is comprised of I-85 on the west, Sullivan Road on the north, the Clayton County line to the east, and Flat Shoals Road to the south, with Old National Highway and I-285/I-85 bisecting the study area.

The findings from the existing conditions analysis indicate that the study area consists of mostly aging rental communities with numerous vacant lots. Additionally, the proximity to the H-JAIA imposed noise restrictions that affect the types of developments that may be permitted in the area. Existing transportation issues include the general lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, volume nearing capacity on Old National Highway, and lack of transit connectivity to the MARTA rail line.

The concept plan identified three nodes for redevelopment with each node designed to support a different market niche and to complement each other. The Sullivan Road node is based upon creating a diverse residential community with a small mixed-use retail center, building off of the nearby regional office facilities. The Godby Road node is intended to be the entertainment and retail center of the corridor with a mix of retail buildings, hotels and a diversity of housing types. The Flat Shoals Road node is

envisioned as a neighborhood center with smaller retail buildings, a local office center and neighborhood residences.

Of the major nodes identified in the Old National Highway LCI Study, the redevelopment plan at Sullivan Road has the highest potential to make an impact on the transit feasibility on the study corridor. Relevant transportation improvements in the five year implementation plan include installing sidewalks with streetscapes along both sides of Old National Highway, installing new bus shelters at MARTA stops, and implementing shuttle service within study area.

2.3.3 Chattahoochee Hill Country LCI Study

The Chattahoochee Hill Country LCI, also known as a Model Sustainable Village, is a strategically planned community that incorporates smart growth principles and sustainability in its master plan. The current plan for the village is to have 6,860 housing units, almost 2.1 million square feet of non-residential/commercial uses, and over 2.3 million square feet of civic building space. Development of the Chattahoochee Hill Country Model Sustainable Village is estimated to take place over more than 30 years. By the build-out year of 2039, the anticipated number of trips during the PM peak hour is approximately 11,700.

The traffic analysis assumed the growth of South Fulton Parkway west of SR 154 from a two-lane, undivided roadway to a four-lane divided facility by 2029. Similarly, the report also assumed the widening of SR 70 to four lanes by 2024. Neither of the improvements is currently within the RTP. Other findings from the traffic report for the Chattahoochee Hill Country LCI indicated a need for shuttle service not only within the village, but also emphasized the need for transit connections to larger-scale transit systems such as MARTA express bus and rail, potential bus rapid transit, future regional commuter rail, and future statewide inter-city rail. The study recommended that the community leaders should request and facilitate MARTA express bus service from the Chattahoochee Hill Country to MARTA rail at the airport or other transit transfer center.

2.3.4 College Park LCI Study

The College Park Activity Center LCI Study, completed in 2008, was developed in an effort to revitalize the historic downtown and to explore multimodal transportation options. College Park is expected to experience explosive growth due to its accessibility to the interstates and proximity to H-JAIA and GICC. The LCI study area consists of the College Park MARTA Station, Historic Downtown, the Virginia Avenue Neighborhood Corridor and significant vacant redevelopable land created by airport expansion. The list of opportunities and needs identified in the study includes:

- Redeveloping the MARTA parking lots into transit-oriented development;
- Improving connectivity from Camp Creek Parkway to downtown;
- Promoting a safe pedestrian environment especially at railway crossings and to the MARTA station from downtown, and
- Providing diverse housing types.

A roadway improvement recommended from this study included the South Main Street Corridor Enhancement. This project entails installing streetscapes, crosswalks, sidewalk enhancement, and pedestrian lighting along the segment of South Main Street between

Camp Creek Parkway and Harvard Avenue. Transit improvements include the College Park MARTA Station TOD Study and the Hybrid Bus/Trolley Study to consider the potential for a natural gas/electric hybrid bus/trolley to circulate within the activity center, GICC and other business centers.

2.4 Other Studies

In addition to the initiatives detailed within this section, there have been specific initiatives undertaken that also warrant consideration in the development of transit and land use alternatives. These initiatives include:

- The South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study undertaken by the City of Union City;
- The Union City Urban Redevelopment Plan also undertaken by the City of Union City;
- The Parkway South Development Plan developed by the South Fulton Parkway Alliance in cooperation with the City of Union City; and
- The upcoming South Fulton Access Management Study to be undertaken by GDOT.

The sections that follow provide a summary of the major findings of these documents as they pertain to potential transit and land use scenarios along South Fulton Parkway.

2.4.1 South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study

The South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study was commissioned by Union City in 2007 to establish a comprehensive transportation and development plan for the 6.5 mile segment of the roadway recently annexed by Union City. The plan provides a template for municipal decisions affecting the corridor area through 2027.

According to the plan, a significant amount of development is expected along the corridor over the next 30 years, which is expected to produce the following:

- 11,500 – 15,100 new residential units;
- 1.9 – 2.6 million square feet of new retail space; and
- 1.7 – 2.2 million square feet of new office space.

The South Fulton Corridor Study recommends widening two state routes, South Fulton Parkway and Campbellton-Fairburn Road (SR 92), to six lanes and five lanes, respectively. The study found that these improvements would be needed regardless of any additional development in the area. Similarly, the study recommends restricting private driveway access points along South Fulton Parkway to increase safety and efficiency of this route.

For the wider area road network, the plan recommends the addition of five new public road access points to provide access from proposed new development onto South Fulton Parkway. All street intersections with the roadway would be signalized.

To increase area roadway capacity without creating more traffic on South Fulton Parkway, the plan calls for the construction of parallel access roads north and south of the Parkway. The newly constructed streets described above would link South Fulton Parkway to these roadways. The plan recommends the coordination of existing and proposed signals to manage the operation of the ten signalized intersections.

Transit recommendations in the study were developed under two scenarios. In the near term, the study urges the extension of MARTA service into the South Fulton Parkway corridor. It recommends that coordination with MARTA be undertaken to extend current routes further into the study area or provide a new MARTA bus route with direct service to either the College Park MARTA station or H-JAIA. In the long term, as land uses are intensified by these measures, investigation of higher-level transit service will be warranted. Specifically, it found that the right-of-way of South Fulton Parkway is sufficient enough to allow dedication of a transit corridor. This may take the form of an express lane for buses or bus rapid transit, or right-of-way for rail construction.

2.4.2 Parkway South Development Plan

The Parkway South Economic Development Master Plan was developed by private sector interests, in cooperation with the South Fulton Parkway Alliance, and completed in fall 2008. The plan sought to establish development concepts, and the land uses to support them, for the transformation of a nine-mile long corridor along South Fulton Parkway into a live-work-shop-play community. The Parkway South corridor extends from one-half mile east of Stonewall Tell to Cascade-Palmetto Highway (SR 154).

This plan found that South Fulton Parkway and its intersecting roads do not support controlled traffic flow, encourage pedestrian activity, nor would accommodate traffic increases from planned developments in the area. Thus the plan proposed new roadways that would cross South Fulton Parkway at areas of high development, which would provide access routes and encourage nodal development at intersections along the Parkway. To improve safety along the corridor, the plan would widen existing intersections, improve traffic lights, and provide bicycle paths and pedestrian facilities.

The nodes created by this plan include:

- Rivertown Business Park at Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) - with greenspace and office uses;
- The Village at Rivertown at Cedar Grove Road - with mixed-use residential and greenspace uses;
- Town Center at Parkway South at Campbellton-Fairburn Road (SR 92) - with mixed-use business, mixed use village and greenspace uses;
- Stonewall Tell Corporate Center at Derrick Road - with mixed use business, retail and greenspace uses;
- Accolades at South Fulton Parkway at Stonewall Tell Road, with mixed use residential, mixed use village and retail uses; and
- Thompson Park at Thomson Road - with mixed park uses.

The overall character of the planned corridor emphasizes mixed use communities, with modal alternatives associated with successful mixed use development. The plan proposes bus transit and multi-use pathways along South Fulton Parkway and along the proposed parallel road.

As previously noted, the South Fulton Corridor Study for Union City recommended parallel automotive routes to increase connectivity in the area. The Parkway South Plan was built upon this concept, including the five new intersecting roads, the extension of Stonewall Tell Road and Thompson Road, and the new roadway parallel to the South

Fulton Parkway. In the Parkway South street framework plan, connections are made to provide access between parcels and allow for a mix of land use.

2.4.3 Union City Urban Redevelopment Plan

The Urban Redevelopment Plan was adopted by Union City in December 2008. The goal of this plan is to provide short-term and long-term redevelopment strategies for the Target Area designated within the City. The Target Area is divided into three sub areas: the northern area found along South Fulton Parkway, also known as the City's mixed use area; the core area consisting of the City's residential sector; and the southern area in the City's primary commercial sector.

In 2006, Union City annexed over 4,100 acres of land, the majority of which lies along the 6.5-mile stretch of South Fulton Parkway. This corridor is currently zoned and designated within the future land use plan for mixed use development. The plan concluded that the existing connections across the corridor do not encourage nor take advantage of increased pedestrian access routes or controlled vehicular traffic flow. In addition, the plan also indicated that the current number of intersections is adequate to serve the increased activities expected by the proposed developments.

This plan incorporates many of the recommendations from the South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study commissioned by Union City and the Parkway South Economic Development Master Plan. Both studies recommended construction of parallel facilities to increase the South Fulton area's connections to the interstates. These connections are designed to give access between parcels and allow for mixed use developments. Land conservation is another concept from these studies, which recommend the preservation of over 550 acres of wetlands and 200 acres of additional green space.

2.4.4 GDOT Access Management Plan

GDOT, in association with Fulton County and ARC, will be conducting an Access Management Study of the South Fulton Parkway. The study will develop an Access Management Guide to address current and future conditions of the corridor and seeks to mitigate the impact of future development on travel conditions. This guide is to serve as a guide to the local governments to manage growth along the corridor.

The study, in the formulation of access management recommendations, will incorporate the following key factors:

- Maintenance of acceptable levels of service along the South Fulton Parkway;
- Evaluation of current and future land uses;
- Mitigation of the impact of planned development on parkway travel conditions;
- Improvement of safety through a decrease in the number of crashes;
- Creation of corridor access management guidelines; and
- Recommendations for timely implementation of solutions.

2.5 Key Findings

Through the review of the various policy documents summarized herein, the recommendations and/or policy directives that influence the development of transit and

land use alternatives along the South Fulton Parkway Corridor can be organized by the subjects to which they pertain:

- Transit and Transportation Enhancements
- Land Use and Development
- Access Management
- Freight Considerations

The remainder of this section discusses policy direction per these areas of emphasis.

Transit and Transportation Enhancements

Most of the recommendations for transit service are associated with extending bus and/or commuter services along South Fulton Parkway, including:

- Findings from the Chattahoochee Hill Country LCI emphasized the need for transit connections to the regional transit system including MARTA express bus, potential bus rapid transit, and future regional commuter rail.
- Transit recommendations in the South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study were developed under two scenarios. In the near term, coordination with MARTA is recommended to extend current routes further into the study area or provide a new MARTA bus route with direct service to either the College Park MARTA station or H-JAIA. In the long term, as land uses are intensified by these measures, investigation of higher-level transit service would be warranted. In this regard, it concluded that the right-of-way along South Fulton Parkway is sufficient to allow dedication of a transit corridor. This may take the form of an express lane for buses or bus rapid transit, or right-of-way for rail construction.
- Unlike the above referenced study, the City of Fairburn is focused on enhancing transit along the Roosevelt Highway as opposed to South Fulton Parkway. The city has a desire to set up express bus service from Fairburn to the College Park MARTA station. The current bus service has a number of stops, which discourages its use as alternative means of commuting. The City has expressed a long-term desire to locate a MARTA rail station in downtown Fairburn. This would provide better transit access for residents and create a critical mass of people in the downtown area to support commercial development.
- To increase development densities without creating more congestion along South Fulton Parkway, both the South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study and the Parkway South Development Plan propose parallel access roads and new roadways that would cross South Fulton Parkway to encourage nodal development at intersections along the Parkway.

Land Use and Development

The Fulton County Comprehensive Plan classifies the area immediately surrounding South Fulton Parkway east of Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) as a “Live-Work” district, which allows a mix of uses that are pedestrian-oriented and incorporates open space. Although most of the Live-Work area along South Fulton Parkway has a Neighborhood Live-Work designation, the future land use plan identified three Community Live-Work nodes - located at Stonewall Tell Road, Campbellton-Fairburn Road (SR 92), and Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) – which allow higher densities.

Both the South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study and the Parkway South Development Plan call for the development of a live-work-shop-play community along a nine-mile long corridor along South Fulton Parkway east of Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154). This type of development is supportive of transit investment.

Access Management

Of the documents reviewed, no capacity improvements were recommended for South Fulton Parkway. Instead, to prepare for growth in South Fulton County, the establishment of an access management plan to monitor and guide this growth was recommended for South Fulton Parkway in both the SRAS and Fulton Comprehensive Plan. To this end, the ARC programmed the completion of an access management study for the corridor within the Envision6 RTP, which will be undertaken by GDOT in cooperation with ARC and Fulton County in the coming year.

Freight Considerations

South Fulton Parkway, I-85, and I-285 are the major truck routes in the study area. The ARC Regional Freight Mobility Plan identifies the area surrounding the intersection of I-85 and I-285, including those along South Fulton Parkway, as a key area of industrial growth. In order to accommodate this growth in freight traffic projected, the plan recommends the reconstruction of I-85 interchanges at Fairburn Industrial Boulevard (SR 74) and Jonesboro Road (SR 138) and the possible construction of a new interchange at Gullatt Road, between the cities of Fairburn and Palmetto. With respect to rail freight, the rail lines within the corridor will approach capacity by 2030 given planned CSX expansion of rail operations.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHICS AND FORECASTS

The baseline data presented in the following subsections will help set the context for the development of potential land use scenarios to evaluate transit feasibility in the South Fulton Parkway corridor.

3.1 Demographic Profile

The following summary of the study area's demographic characteristics is also based on information provided by Claritas, which uses an algorithm to estimate households and populations based on an area boundary. While absolute values, such as total population and households, will not correlate directly with ARC and Census estimates of the same area, trends, ratios and percentages are reasonably reliable representations of the study area's overall demographic characteristics.

- **Population**: In 2009, the study area has an estimated population of 176,216, representing 3.2% of the Atlanta MSA's population of 4.2 million. Since 2000, the area has grown at an average annual rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.3% for the Atlanta MSA, making South Fulton County one of the region's fastest growing areas. Between 2009 and 2014 the study area is expected to grow at a slower, yet still relatively robust rate of 3.3% annually.
- **Households**: The study area contains an estimated 45,787 households, representing a 4.2% average annual increase since 2000. There are approximately 2 million households in the Atlanta MSA. Household sizes in the study area tend to be similar to those the Atlanta MSA, with 2.79 people per household.
- **Household Composition**: Households in the study area are more likely to include single parents with children, which represent 16% of all households, compared to the Atlanta MSA, where 10% households consist of single-parents. Couples, with and without children, represent 41% of households in the study area versus 53% in the Atlanta MSA.
- **Age**: The study area has a median age of 35, comparable to the Atlanta MSA median of 35. In terms of generational cohorts, the study area is similar to the larger Metro area, with 72% of the population being either "Generation X" or "Millennials", compared to 66% in the Atlanta MSA. Only 20% of study area residents are "Baby Boomers" compared to 25% for the Metro area.
- **Education**: Of study area residents, 19% have less than a high-school education, compared to 17% for the Atlanta MSA. A smaller number of study area resident have 4-year college degrees, 14%, compared to 21% for the Atlanta MSA.
- **Occupation**: In the study area, 17% of residents work in management or professional services, compared to 25% for the Atlanta MSA, while 18% of study area residents work in government, compared to 12% region-wide. All other categories of employment are represented nearly equally in both the study area and the Atlanta MSA.
- **Income**: Median family incomes in the study area, at $55,496, are slightly more modest than in the Atlanta Metro area, at $58,964. In the study area, 36% of residents earn less than $35,000 annually, compared to 27% of residents regionally. There are significantly fewer high-income households in the study area, where 13% of households earn over $100,000 annually, compared to 22% for the Atlanta MSA.

- **Housing Occupancy**: Fewer residents of the study area own their home than residents of the Atlanta MSA. Only 59% of households in the study area own their homes, compared to 69% for the Atlanta MSA.

Given the information presented above, the following generalizations can be made about the study area in comparison to the Atlanta region as a whole:

- It is growing more quickly;
- It has more non-traditional households;
- Its residents are slightly less-well educated; and
- Its residents are less likely to be homeowners.

While South Fulton County is still on course to continue its rapid population increase, it remains to be seen how the current economic and housing crisis, which was, in part, driven by the subprime mortgage crisis, will impact area growth in the long-term.

3.2 Traditionally Transit Dependent Populations

There are four sets of demographics that were inventoried as broad indicators of transit dependency through use of data from the 2000 U.S. Census. They are:

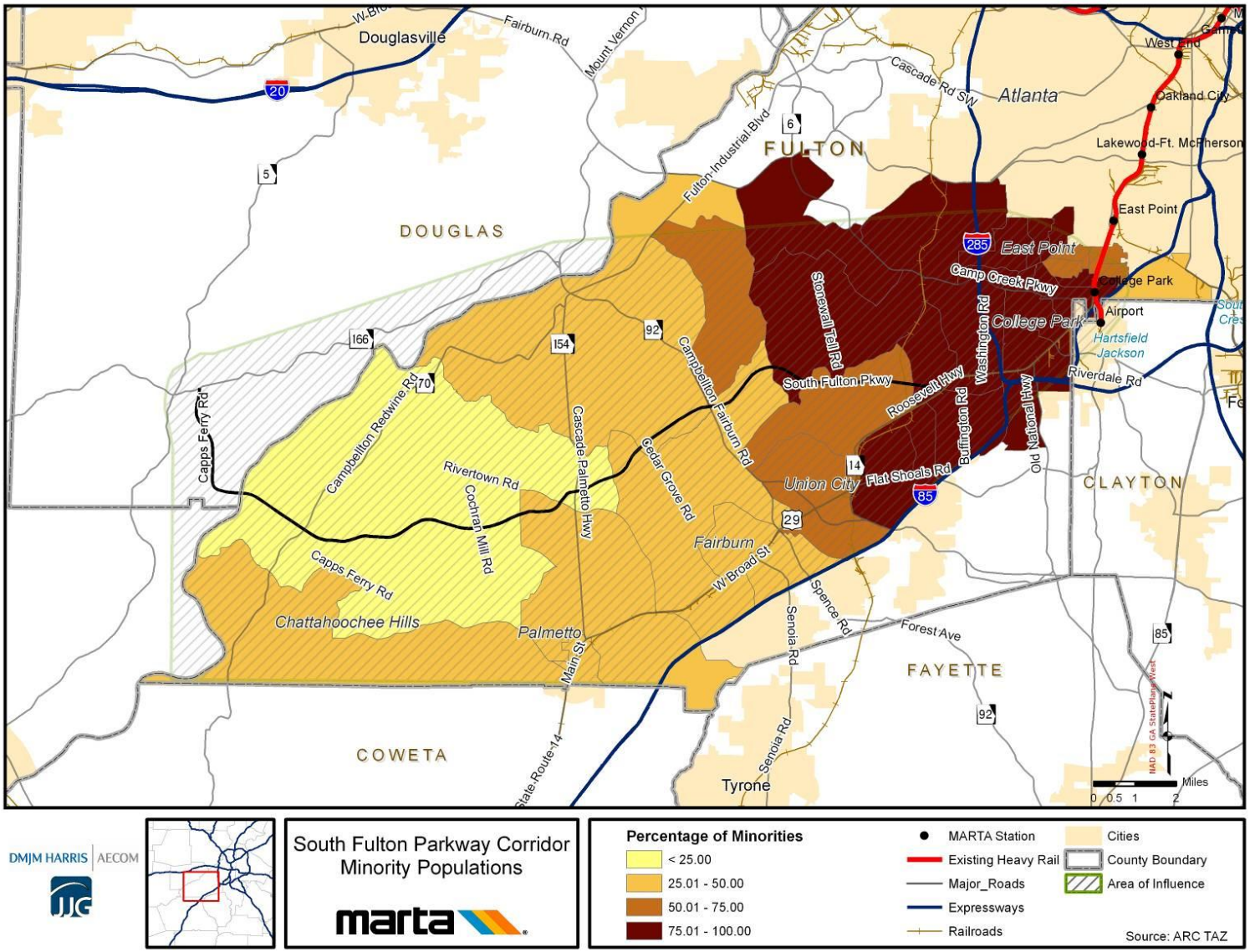
- Minority populations – while not inherently transit dependent, the ability to serve and avoid disproportionate impacts to minority populations is an important aspect as a project advances through the FTA process;
- Low-income populations – those below the poverty level that may not have the disposable income to afford the costs of a personal vehicle;
- Zero-vehicle households – those who do not have a personal vehicle and, therefore, more likely to depend on transit for mobility needs;
- Elderly populations – those over the age of sixty-five who may be more likely to need transit.

It should be noted that these characteristics are not mutually exclusive and one or more could apply to the same individuals. Furthermore, given that it was taken approximately ten years ago and a large amount of development that has occurred in the study area since its collection, the Census data available has likely changed. Nonetheless, it still serves as an indicator of where these populations are located.

3.2.1 Minority Populations

Of the 83,369 total population within the study area, 62,461 (74%) are comprised of African-Americans. However, the largest amounts of minority populations are concentrated in the eastern portion of the study area. As shown in **Figure 3-1**, several Census block groups in this portion of the study area were populated by minority concentrations of 75% or more. To this end, nearly all of the Census blocks east of Campbellton-Fairburn Road (SR 92) had minority populations of 50% or more. Minority populations were less concentrated in the western portions of the corridor.

Figure 3-1: Minority Concentrations (2000 US Census)



3.2.2 Low-Income Populations

Throughout the study area, low-income persons comprise approximately 15% of the population within the study area, totaling over 12,700. However, as shown in **Figure 3-2**, most low-income persons are concentrated in proximity to College Park and East Point. The northern and western portions of the study area have fewer concentrations of low-income populations. The same characteristics apply at a corridor level, where low-income populations are primarily located along Roosevelt Highway.

3.2.3 Zero-Vehicle Households

Of the 31,476 households within the study area, 4,629 (15%) did not have a private automobile. Much like the low-income persons, most of the zero-vehicle households are located in the more developed areas of the study area near College Park, particularly in the areas east of Washington Road. Much of this area has concentrations of 20% or more. It would be reasonable to assume that many zero-vehicle households consist of low-income persons given the spatial correlation of concentrations throughout the study area. The concentration of zero-vehicle households is shown on **Figure 3-3**.

3.2.4 Elderly and Disabled Populations

As shown in **Figure 3-4**, the distribution of elderly populations throughout the study area is fairly widespread. While elderly populations make up a larger percentage of the Census block groups in the western portion of the corridor, it is important to note that these areas are also the least populated and, therefore, the higher concentrations are not reflective of large populations of elderly persons in this area. Elderly persons in the study area total 6,176 and, thus, make up 7.4% of its total population.

3.3 Population and Employment Forecasts

The following subsections provide an overview of the forecasted populations based on TAZ data from the ARC's regional travel demand model.

3.3.1 Population Forecasts

A comparison of the ARC population estimates for 2005 and projections for 2030 are shown below in **Table 3-1.**

Table 3-1: Current and Projected Populations

2005 Population	93,594
2030 Population	138,524
Increase between 2005 and 2030	44,930
Percent Increase	48%

Source: ARC

Figure 3-2: Low-Income Population Concentrations (2000 US Census)

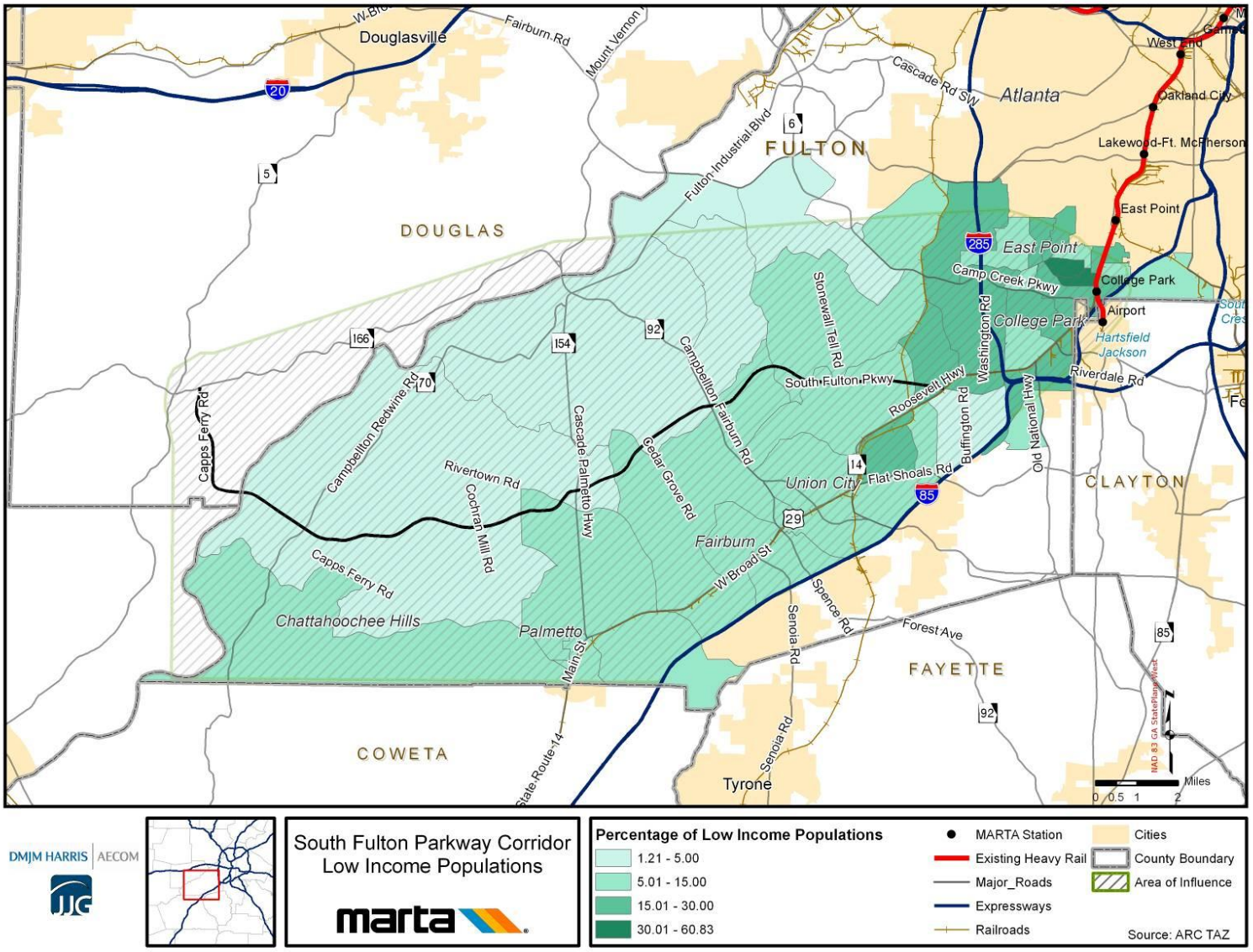


Figure 3-3: Zero-Vehicle Households (2000 US Census)

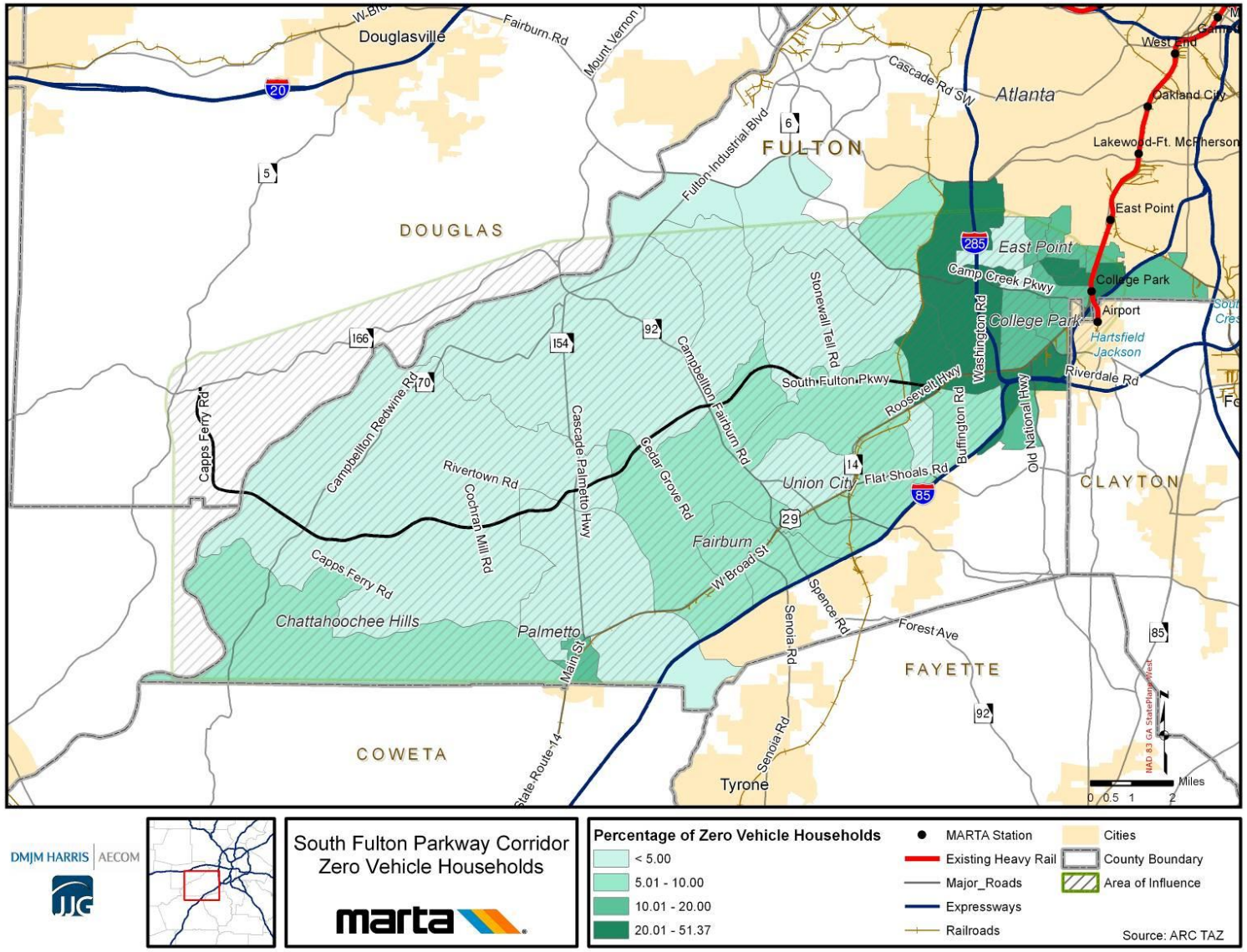


Figure 3-4: Elderly Population Concentrations (2000 US Census)

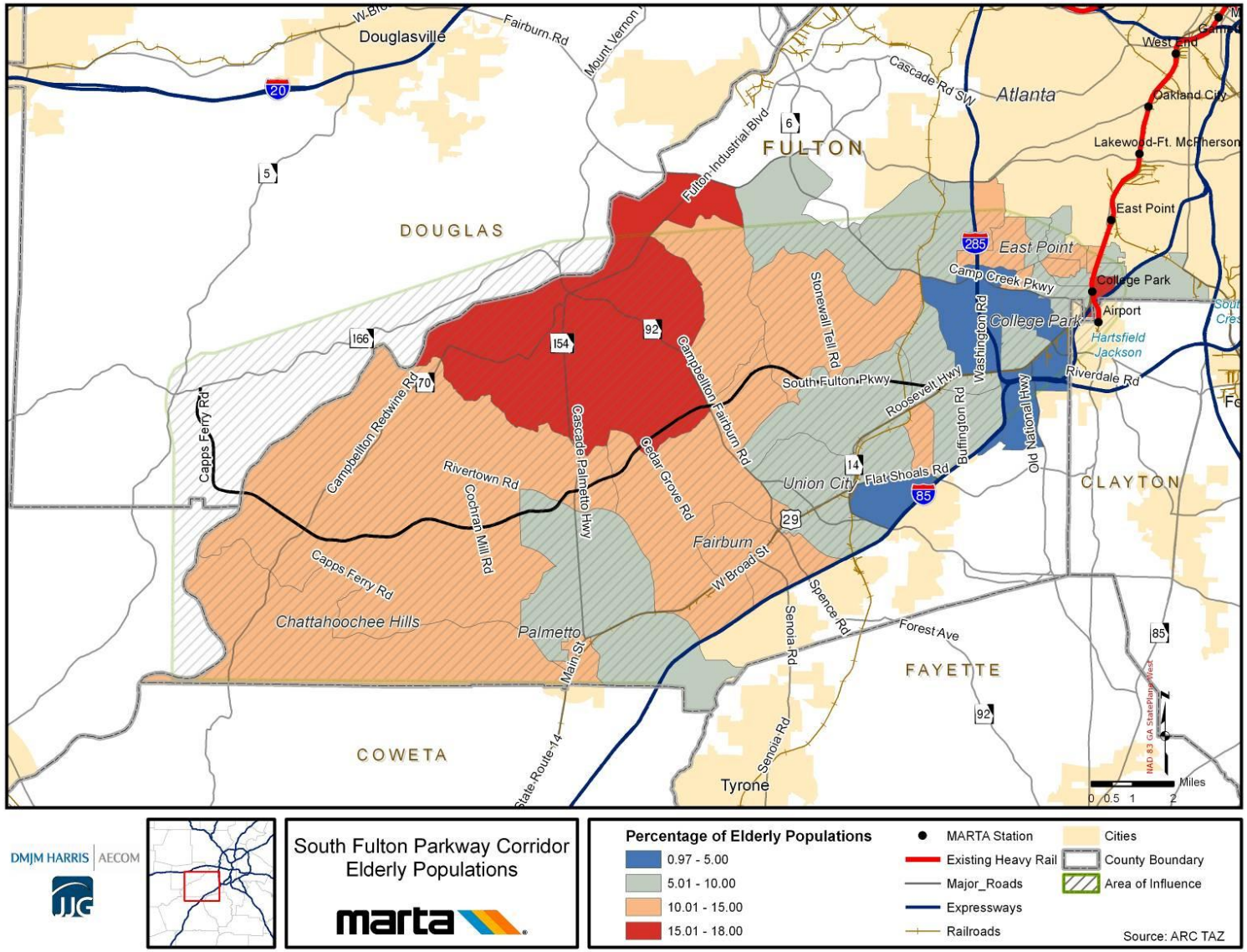


Figure 3-5: Projected 2030 Population Density by TAZ

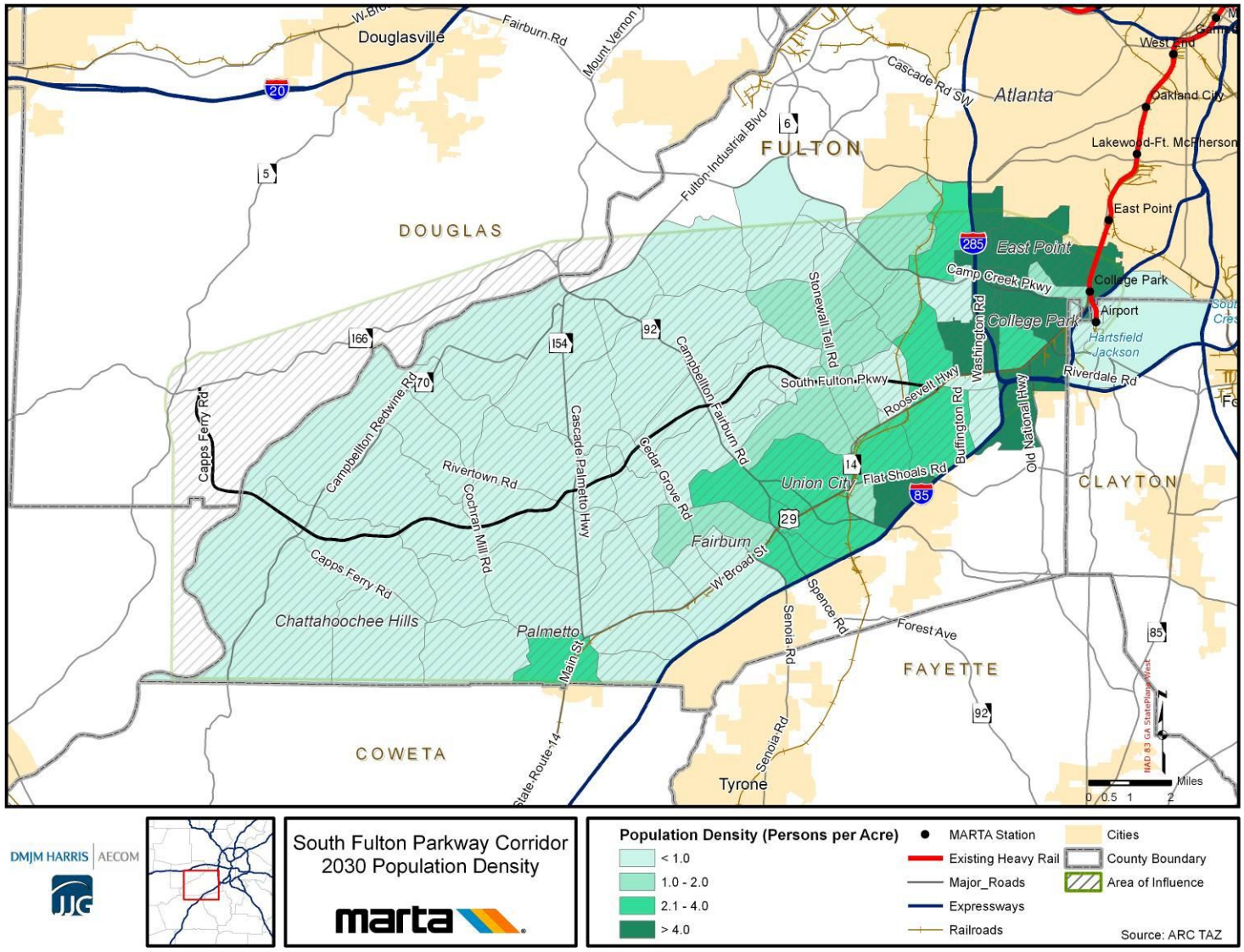
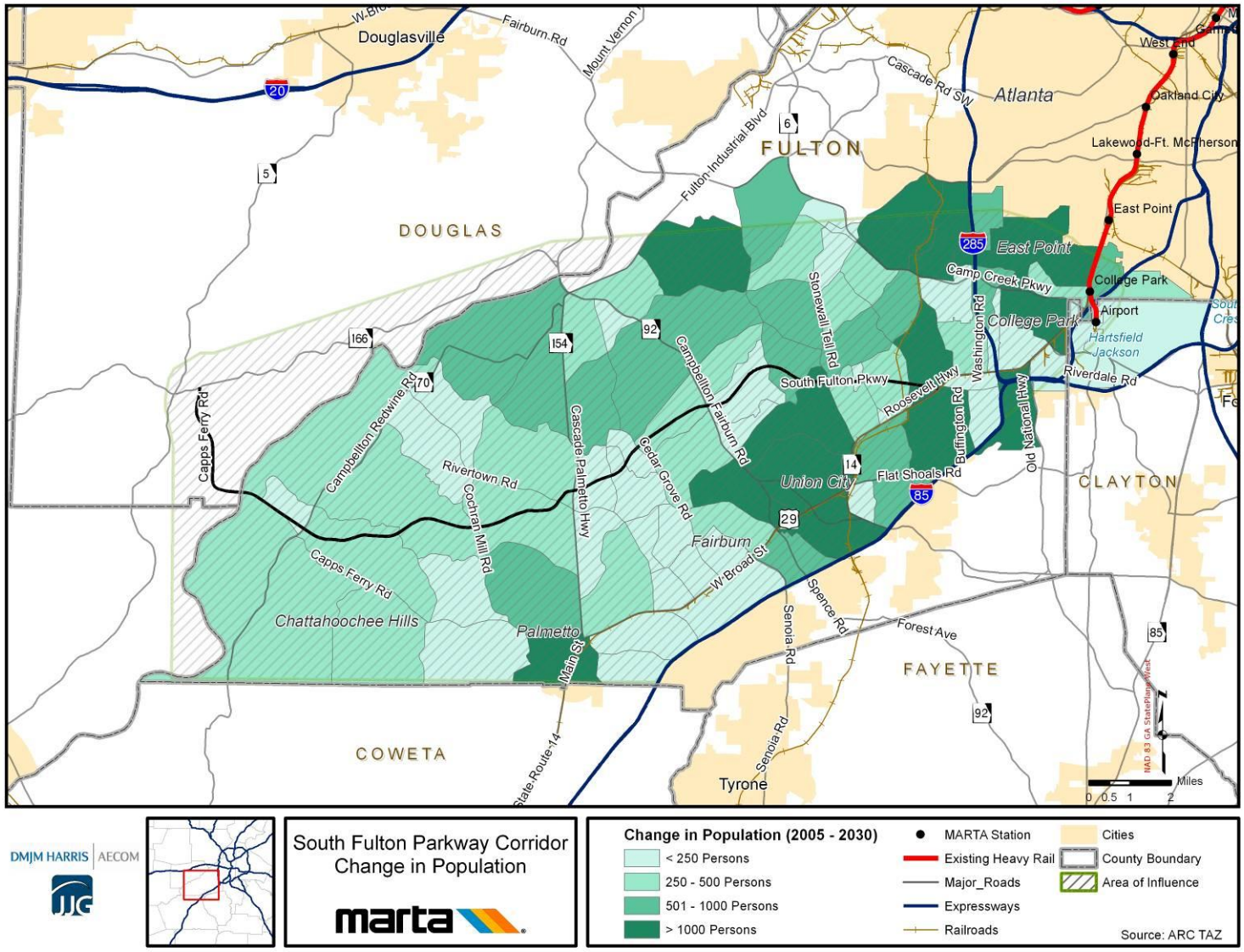


Figure 3-6: Projected 2030 Population Change by TAZ



Pursuant to the 2030 ARC projections, areas within the Cities of Union City, College Park, East Point, and the Old National Highway development area are forecasted to have the greatest number of population. Projected population densities are highest in the study area's eastern portion, with densities of over four persons per acre in areas along I-285 and I-85 and in the cities of East Point and College Park. Conversely, population densities are expected to be lowest (fewer than one person per acre) in the study area's western portion. The population densities throughout the study area are shown in **Figure 3-5**. As shown in **Figure 3-6**, the areas projected to experience the highest increases in population are those in the eastern portion of the corridor.

It should be noted that the populations projections developed by the ARC may be understated given the recent development trends and, more specifically, the number of residential DRIs approved in the study area since 2000. As a result, coordination will be necessary with the ARC as transit and land use scenarios are developed to ensure consistency with the population control totals for the Atlanta region as a whole.

3.3.2 Employment Projections

A comparison of ARC employment estimates from 2005 and 2030 are provided below in **Table 3-2**.

Table 3-2: Current and Projected Employment

2005 Employment	88,917
2030 Employment	131,818
Increase between 2005 and 2030	42,901
Percent Increase	48.2%

Source: ARC

Employment for the study area is projected to almost double by 2030. However, similar to population densities, employment densities in general are expected to be low. Only the H-JAIA and two smaller areas—the Camp Creek Parkway and I-285 interchange area (i.e., Camp Creek Market Place) and the area around I-285/85— are expected to support more than six jobs per acre. The majority of the study area is expected to support fewer than one job per acre, although slightly higher employment densities are anticipated in the study area's eastern portion. Along I-85 and I-285, employment densities range from one to three jobs per acre, with a few Census block groups supporting from three to six jobs per acre. A map of the projected employment densities in the study area is provided in **Figure 3-7**.

H-JAIA and the areas near the interchange of Camp Creek Parkway and the I-285 interchange are projected to be the major employment nodes in the study area in 2030. Other employment concentrations are along I-85 and in the Cities of College Park and East Point. The largest increases in employment are expected to occur in these employment nodes. In addition, the areas around Stonewall Tell Road, Union City, and I-85 are also projected to experience moderate increases. A map of the employment increases by Census block group is provided in **Figure 3-8**.

Figure 3-7: Projected 2030 Employment Density by TAZ

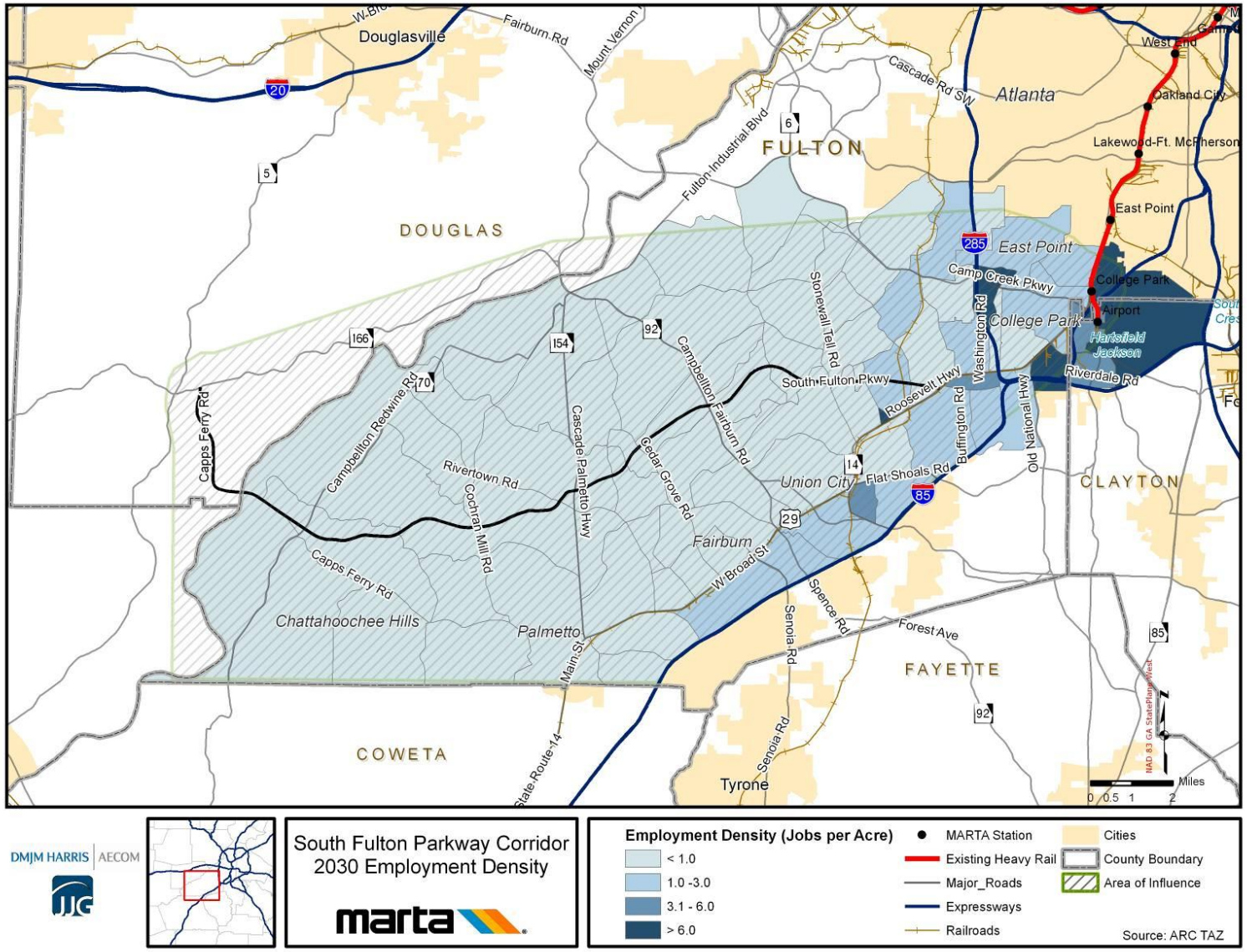
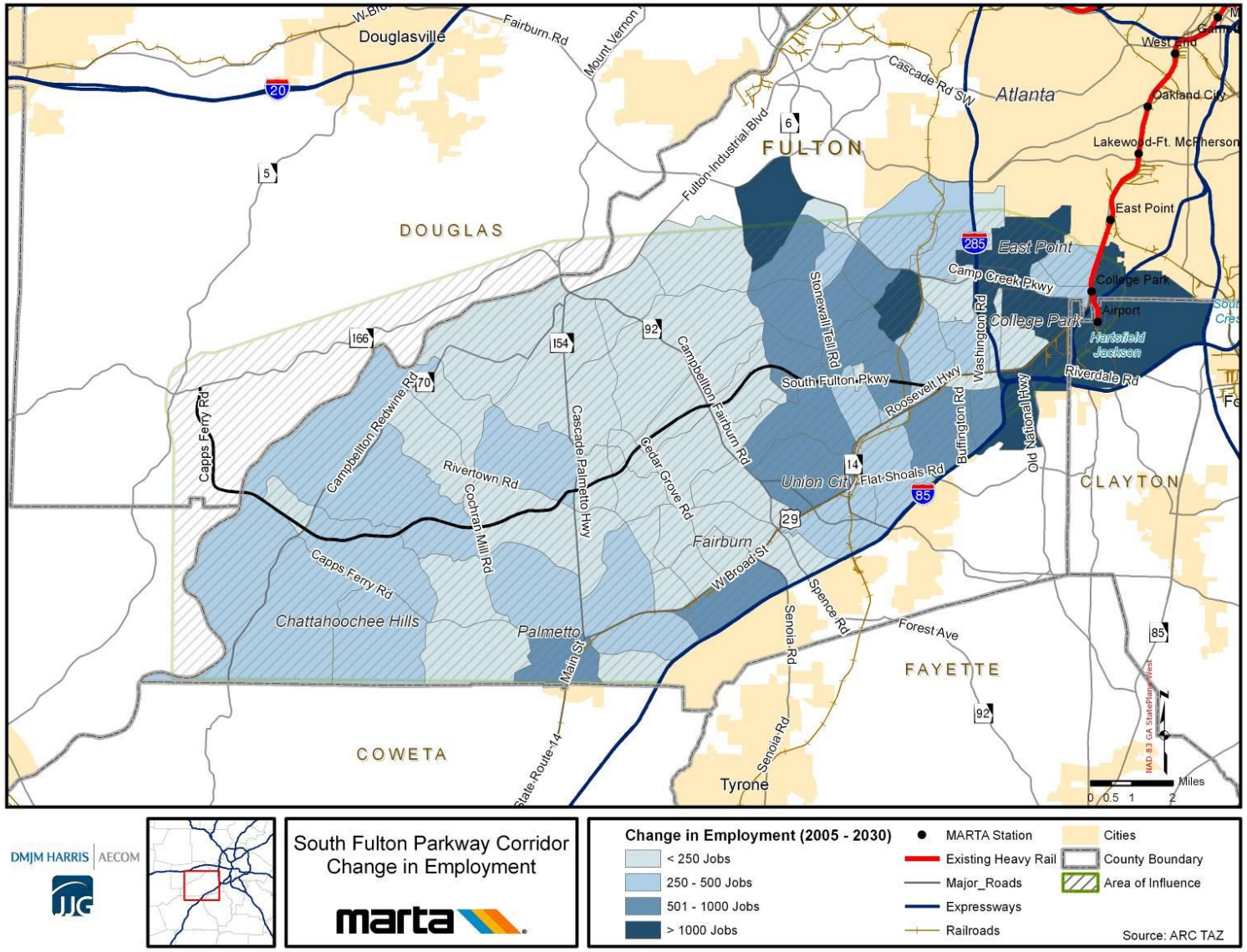


Figure 3-8: Projected 2030 Employment Change by TAZ



3.4 Key Findings

The highlights of the demographic analysis herein include:

- The concentrations of most traditionally transit dependent populations - low-income persons, minorities and zero-vehicle households - are found primarily in the eastern portion of the corridor. Conversely, the distribution of elderly populations throughout the study area is fairly widespread. While elderly populations make up a larger percentage of the Census block groups in the western portion of the corridor, it is important to note that these areas are also the least populated and, therefore, the higher concentrations are not reflective of large populations of elderly persons. However, this would indicate a potential need for paratransit services to complement any line haul service provided within the study area.
- Pursuant to the 203**0** ARC projections, areas within the Cities of Union City, College Park, East Point, and the Old National Highway development area are forecasted to have the greatest number of population. Projected population densities are highest in the study area's eastern portion, with densities of over four persons per acre along I-285 and I-85 and in the cities of East Point and College Park. Similar to population densities, employment densities in general are projected to be low in 2030. Only the H-JAIA and two smaller areas—the Camp Creek Parkway and I-285 interchange area and the area around I-285/85—are expected to support more than 6 jobs per acre.
- It should be noted that the populations projections developed by the ARC may be understated given the recent development trends and, more specifically, the number of residential DRIs approved in the study area since 2000. As a result, coordination will be necessary with the ARC as transit and land use scenarios are developed to ensure consistency with the population control totals for the Atlanta region as a whole.

4.0 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

4.1 Existing and Planned Land Uses

4.1.1 Existing Land Uses

Because there are six different jurisdictions with various land use classifications within the study area, ARC's LandPro2007 data was used to determine the distribution of existing land uses in the study area. As presented in **Figure 4-2,** there is a dramatic difference in the land uses within the eastern and the western portions of the study area.

Unlike many areas considered for transit implementation, a significant portion of the study area is undeveloped, consisting of forest, agriculture uses or vacant property – particularly in the portion of the corridor west of Cascade-Palmetto Highway (SR 154). The majority of existing development is auto-oriented, single-family residential development. As detailed in the sections that follow, much more single-family development has been planned or permitted within this area. The distribution of land uses is provided in **Figure 4-1**. As shown, under the broad assumption that transit supportive land uses would consist of residential densities of at least four units per acre along with concentrations of commercial and office uses would be transit supportive, only 5.7% of the existing land uses within the study area met this criteria. In reality, given the auto-oriented nature of commercial development along with the type of industrial uses in the study area, this percentage is likely overstated.

A significant amount of warehousing and distribution centers have located in the eastern portion of the study area due to its proximity to H-JAIA, I-85 and I-285. Some of the older industrial uses in the study area developed around the rail lines near Roosevelt Highway are also still present. Linear auto-oriented commercial development is present along the more established travel corridors in the area, such as Roosevelt Highway and Old National Highway. Notwithstanding, a significant amount of single-family development is also prevalent in this portion of the study area.

Figure 4-1: Distribution of Existing Land Uses in the Study Area

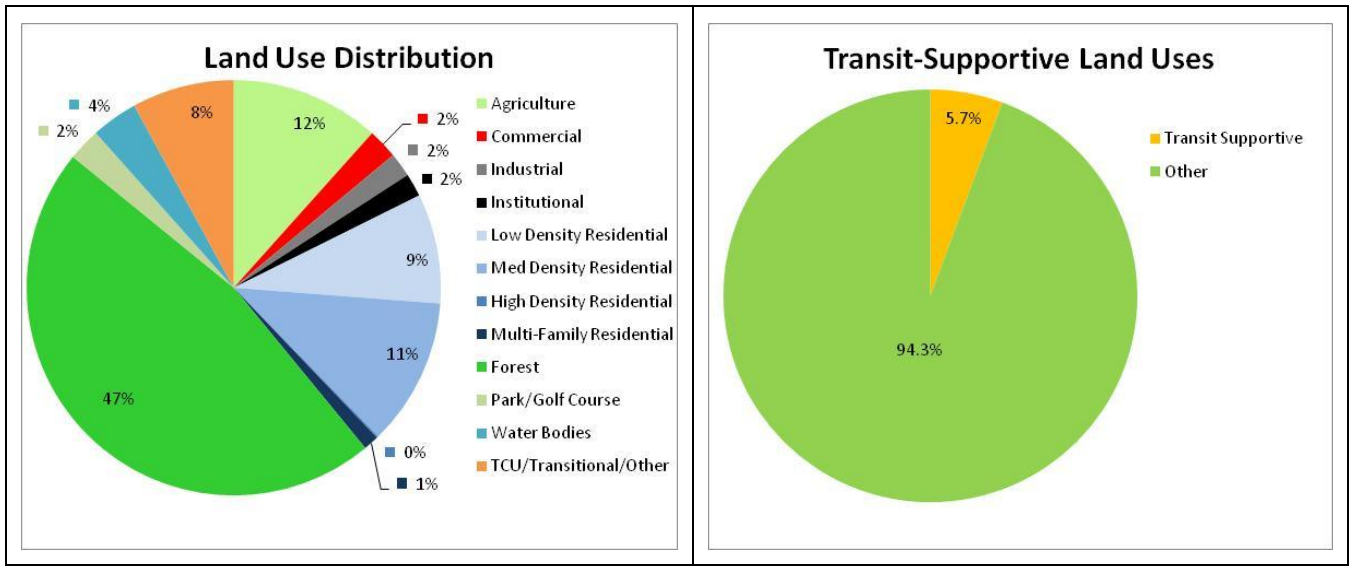
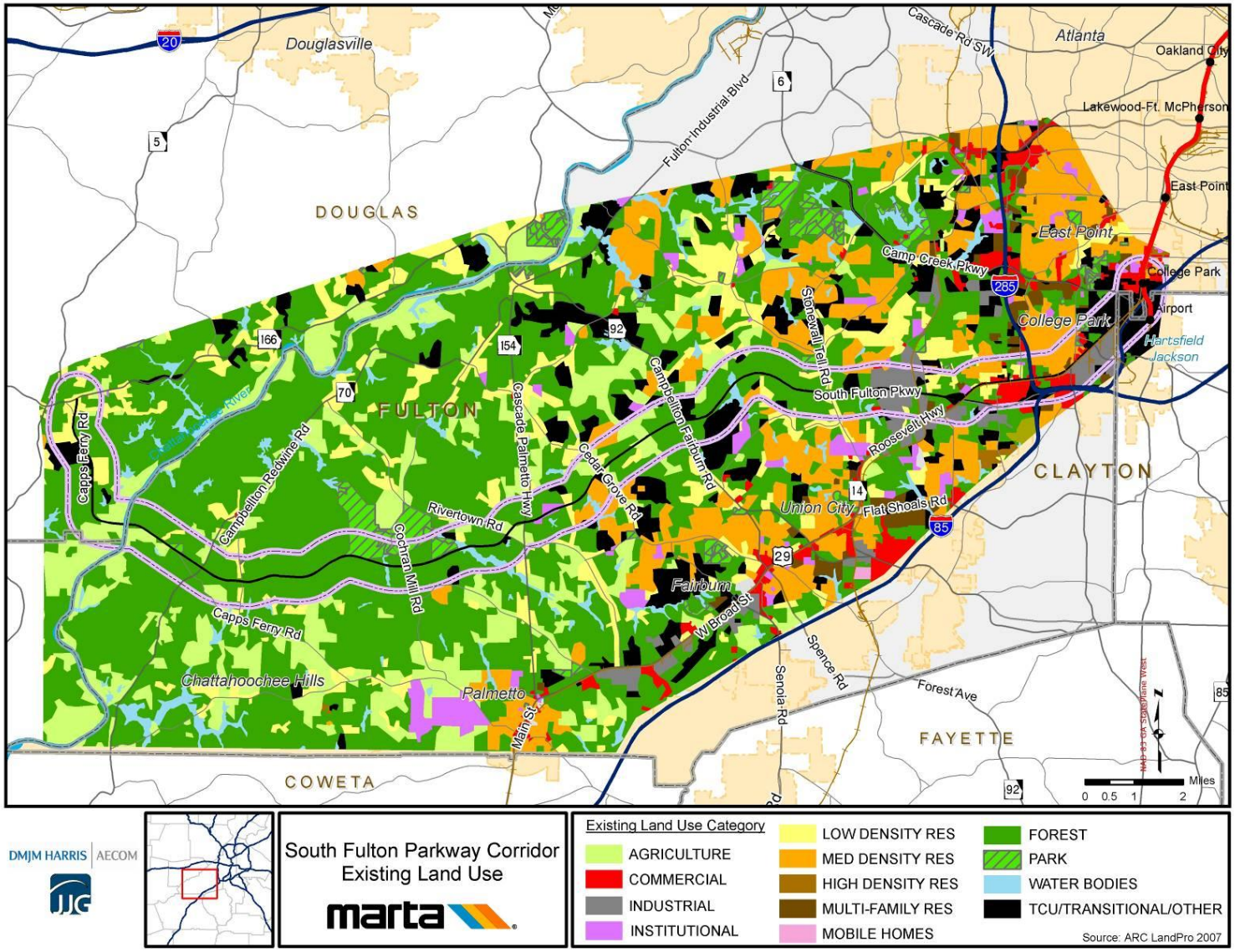


Figure 4-2: Existing Land Uses



4.1.2 Future Land Uses

A map of the future land uses planned along the corridor is provided in **Figure 4-3**. It should be noted that the future land uses for Union City, College Park and Palmetto are not shown since GIS information for these municipalities was not available. However, through input received during interviews with each of the municipalities, recommendations from the various previous studies completed by these municipalities (as detailed in Section 2), and input received from staff from these municipalities provide a sound basis for the analysis that follows.

Overall, future land uses planned along the corridor consist of high levels of suburban residential development complemented by modest nodal commercial development at major intersections. The exceptions to this planned development pattern are within the cities of College Park and Union City. These cities foresee their respective portions of the study corridor with more intense patterns, which would serve to transition into a more urban environment.

As illustrated in the **Figure 4-3**, aside from a few pockets denoting planned communities, the entire Chattahoochee Hills area west of Cascade-Palmetto Highway (SR 154) is designated as Agriculture/Conservation use. Conversely, the unincorporated Fulton County on the east side of the study area is mostly characterized by low-density housing on the periphery of the study area with higher density housing and mixed uses planned for areas directly along South Fulton Parkway.

4.2 Development Trends

This section contains the first phase of the market data collection and analysis for the study area. This includes an overview of major ongoing development activity, including developments of regional impact, and a preliminary market assessment related to recent new home sales activity in the study area.

The data collected in the first phase of this study will form the basis for a more detailed real estate market analysis. Activities currently under way will further refine this data to develop refined projections for the various land use scenarios under consideration for the transportation modeling elements of the study.

4.2.1 Developments of Regional Impact

South Fulton County has planned for a massive amount of large-scale development activity in the past five years. Since 2005, 13 applications for Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) have been approved in the study area. Together, these DRIs indicate that developers intend to build the following between 2005 and 2022:

- 17,054 housing units
- 1.2 million square feet of retail space
- 417,000 square feet of office space
- Over 1.3 million square feet of mixed-use and institutional space
- 2.3 million square feet of industrial space

Figure 4-3: Future Land Uses

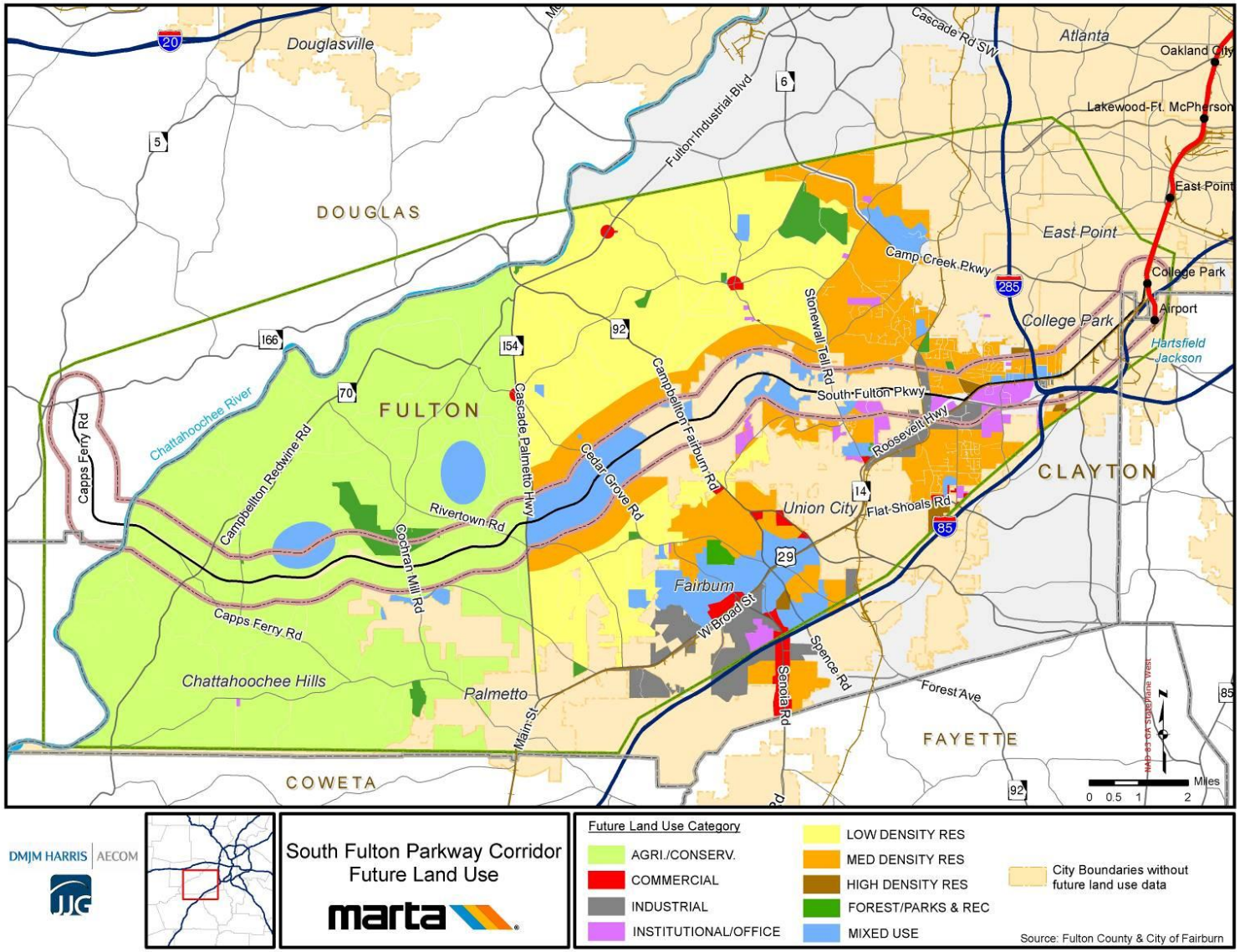


Table 4-2 on the following page provides additional detail on the DRIs approved in the study area since 2005. All of the DRIs approved in the study area since 2000 are reflected in **Figure 4-4** to help illustrate the amount of development activity occurring in the study area.

4.2.2 Other Significant Development

The eastern section of South Fulton Parkway corridor including Roosevelt Highway (US 29) is home to major industrial and commercial developments due to its access to major roads, railroads, interstate highways and H-JAIA. Transit connections along this corridor has the potential to serve one of the largest convention facilities in the state, the Georgia International Convention Center (GICC), located just west of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) across from the airport. The Consolidated Rental Agency Complex (CONRAC) currently located inside the airport is planned for relocation next to the GICC as part of the Gateway Center development (Phase 1). CONRAC will be connected to the airport by an automatic people mover that is built over I-85. It should be noted that the CONRAC facility will be accessible to automobile traffic only through the airport's roadway system and not from surface streets in College Park. The construction of Phase 1 of the Gateway Center development, which also includes Class A office space and a hotel, is already underway with a completion date planned for 2010.

Parkway Village is the first of several commercial centers currently under construction along South Fulton Parkway. It is located at the northeast corner of South Fulton Parkway and Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92). A total of 35 businesses, including Publix as the main anchor, are expected to populate this development.

While not a large development in the context of total housing units compared to some of the other development activity in the study area, the Serenbe community is worthy of note because it serves as an example of an environmentally sustainable community. Located south of South Fulton Parkway in Chattahoochee Hills, the first phase of Serenbe was completed in 2004 with a variety of residential housing and retail development. Phase II is currently under construction and is planned as a farming community. The last phase is still in the planning stages with plans for spas and upscale boutiques as well as assisted living facilities.

4.2.3 Market Analysis

New home sales trends are generally a good indicator of household growth. New home sales from ZIP codes, which correspond to the study area, were analyzed for the period from 2003 to 2007 using data from SmartNumbers. The average annual number of new home sales over the 2003-2007 period was 2,621. In 2006, during the peak of the recent real-estate boom, 3,374 new homes were sold. In 2007, new home sales volumes dropped by 32% to 2,279, as shown in **Table 4-1** and illustrated in **Figure 4-5**.

Table 4-1: Home Sales, 2003-2007, South Fulton County

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	06-07 Chg	'03-'07 Avg
New Units Sold	1,560	2,625	3,267	3,374	2,279	-32%	2,621
Resale Units Sold	517	641	776	1,021	1,016	0%	794
Total Units Sold	2,077	3,266	4,043	4,395	3,295	-25%	3,415

Source: SmartNumbers, Atlanta Journal Constitution (ZIP Codes 30268, 30213, 30291, 30349)

Table 4-2: List of Developments of Regional Impact, 2005-2009

DRI Year	Name	Municipality	Cross St 1	Cross St 2	Build Out Yr	Acres	Residential Dwelling Units				Commercial SF (in thousands)			
							Multi-Family	Single Family	Town-house	Total DU	Retail SF	Office SF	Mixed-Use SF	Indus. SF
2004	**Gables at Stonewall Tell**	S Fulton	Stonewall Tell	S Fulton Pkwy	2008	87	308	34	132	**474**	-	-		-
2004	**Twin Lakes**	S Fulton	Cascade Palmetto Hwy	Campbellton-Fairburn Rd	2011	1,002	150	1,430	790	**2,370**	200	-		-
2006	**Fairburn Renaissance**	Fairburn	Senoia Rd (GA 74)	Milam Rd	2008	139			50	**50**	796	29.6		-
2007	**Fairburn Storage**	S Fulton	Gullatt Rd		2008	61	-	-	-	**-**	-	-		
2008	**Village at Redwine**	East Point	Camp Ck. Pkwy	Redwine Rd	2012	81	833	46	108	**987**	8	34		-
2004	**Oakley Township**	S. Fulton	Fayetteville Rd		2012			984		**984**	-	-		-
2005	**Oakley Township Expansion**	S Fulton	Fayetteville Rd		2012	90		283		**283**	-	-		-
2005	**Majestic Airport Center 3**	Union City	Oakley	Industrial Blvd	2007	193	-	-	-	**-**	-	-		2.3
2007	**Friendship Village**	S Fulton/ Chatt Hills	Cascade Palmetto Hw	S Fulton Pkwy	2022	1,998	2,884	2,747	350	**5,981**	238.3	174	581.6	
2007	**Hawk's Ridge**	S Fulton	Cascade Palmetto Hw	Butner Rd	2012	360		522		**522**				
2006	**Wiregrass Farms (Hathcock)**	S Fulton	West Stupps Rd	DeMooney Rd	2009	272		353	116	**469**				
2009	**Foxhall Village**	Palmetto	Cochran Mill	Rico Tatum Rd	2028	1,333	800	1,822	1,878	**4,500**		180	420	
2006	**Cascade Acres**	East Point	Ben Hill Rd	Welcome All Rd	2008	152	100	182	152	**434**			320	
	TOTAL					**5,768**	**5,075**	**8,403**	**3,576**	**17,054**	**1,242.3**	**417.6**	**1,321.6**	**2.3**

Source: ARC

Figure 4-4: Developments of Regional Impact and Major Developments

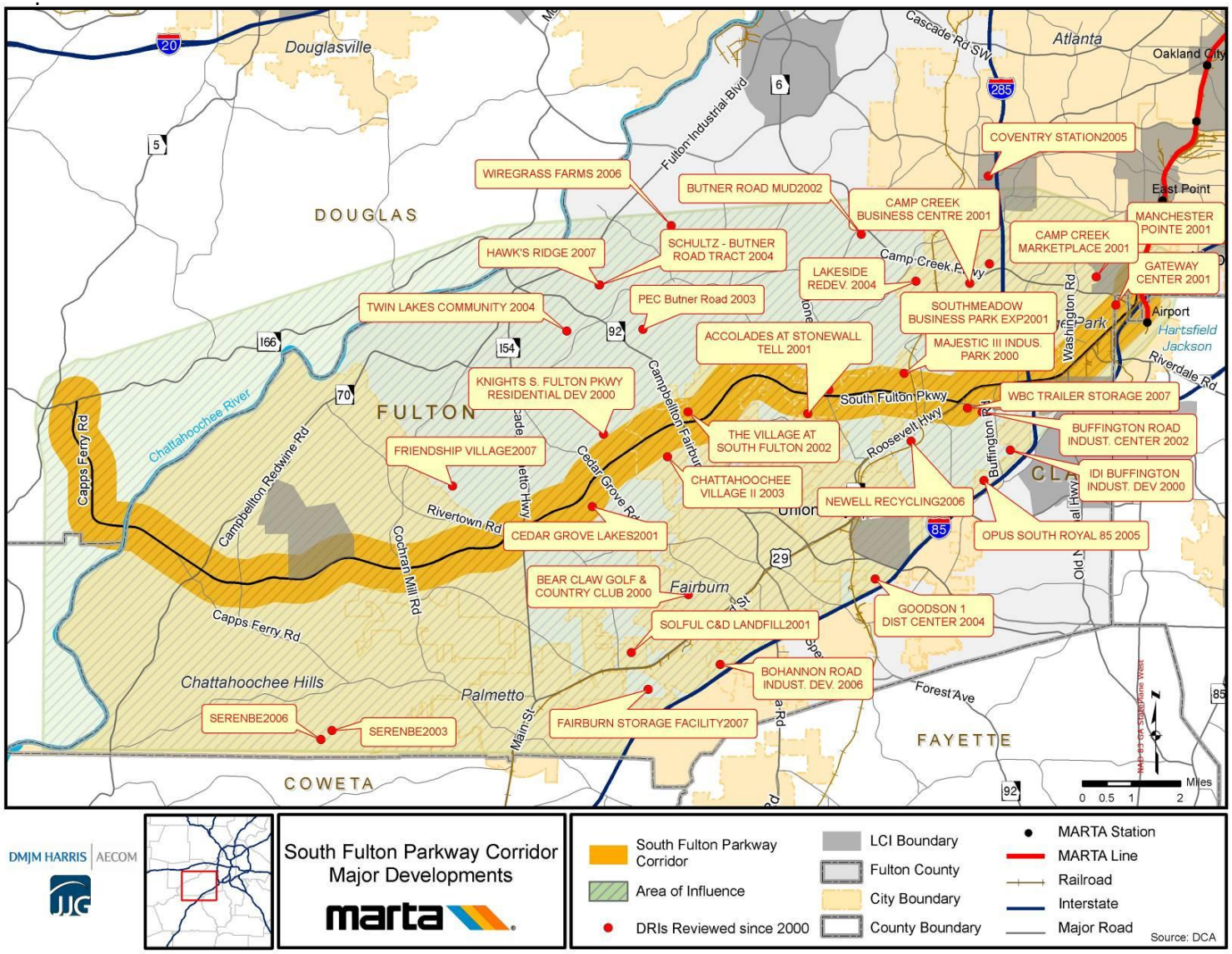
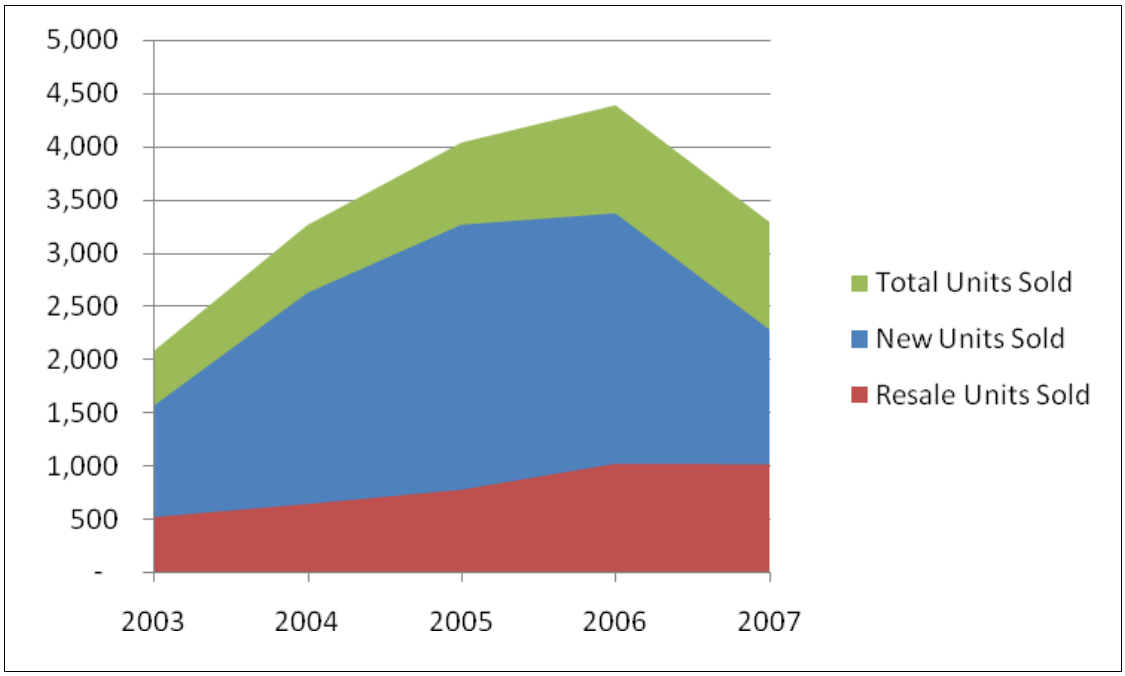


Figure 4-5: Home Sales, 2003-2007, South Fulton County



Source: SmartNumbers (ZIP Codes 30268, 30213, 30291, 30349)

It is not likely that new home sales volumes will return to 2006 peak levels in the foreseeable future, due to the reduced availability of credit terms as a result of corrections to the financial system and the recent mortgage crisis. Assuming a full recovery of the regional economy over the next one or two years, it is conceivable that new home sales volumes in the study area may return to 70% of 2006 peak-year levels of 3,374, or approximately 2,300 - 2,400 new home sales annually, or 23,000 new homes over the next ten years.

4.3 Key Findings

The following comprise the major findings with respect to development and land use trends in the study area that warrant consideration in developing transit and land use alternatives for the South Fulton corridor:

- Only 5.7% of the existing development within the study area would be considered transit-supportive under the broad assumption that residential densities of at least four units per acre along with commercial, institutional and industrial land uses would meet this criteria. In reality, given the auto-oriented nature of commercial development along with the type of industrial uses in the study area, this percentage is likely overstated.
- Overall, future land uses planned along the corridor consist of high levels of suburban residential development complemented by nodal commercial development at major intersections. The exceptions to this planned development pattern are within the cities of College Park and Union City. These cities foresee their respective portions of the study corridor with more intense patterns, which would serve to transition into a more urban environment from the suburban development planned for the western portions of the corridor.

- South Fulton County has planned for a significant amount of large-scale development activity in the past five years. Since 2005, thirteen applications for DRI have been approved in the study area.
- Transit along the eastern section of the study corridor has the potential to serve one of the largest convention facilities in the state, the Georgia International Convention Center, located just west of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) across from the airport.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION

This section provides an overview of transportation characteristics in the study area, including:

- Trip-making and travel trends;
- Existing and projected roadway characteristics, including planned improvements;
- Existing and proposed transit services;
- Existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

5.1 Trip-Making and Travel Trends

This section summarizes the existing and projected trip patterns and mode choice for travel to and from the study area. Specifically, home-based work trips are discussed in terms of trip attractions into the study area and trip productions from the study area. These measures assist in identifying the trip patterns that most need to be served. In addition, mode choice gauges the existing and projected demand for transit in the study area.

5.1.1 Distribution of Trips

Table 5-1 presents the existing and future home-based work trip attractions to the study area. Consistent with the growth and development planned for the study area, the overall number of trip attractions is expected to increase by 130% by 2030. Although the number of internal trips will increase significantly, the share of internal trips will still remain relatively low when compared to total external trips.

In 2005, the largest workforce drawing commuters into the study area was provided by the county and city residents living closest to the study area (Clayton, DeKalb and City of Atlanta). By 2030, Coweta County residents are expected to have the greatest share of commuters into the study area, followed by Clayton County and City of Atlanta. The projected distribution of trips reveals that a greater share of workforce commuting into the study area will originate from counties south of the study area. Therefore, improvements to the transportation facilities that provide connections to the southern part of the study area should be considered to enhance the overall trip-making into and out of the South Fulton County.

As shown in **Table 5-2**, home-based work trip productions from the study area are expected to increase by 74% by 2030. As with trip attractions, there will be a substantial increase in the number of internal trips produced in the study area. Not surprisingly, a major share of work trips are destined for major employment centers located north of the study area, namely the City of Atlanta and H-JAIA. This trend is expected to continue into the future. Currently, the average AM commute time from the study area to downtown Atlanta can range from 30 to 45 minutes. By 2030, the travel time is expected to increase to more than an hour. As such, there is a need to provide alternative commute options for study area residents to better access regional employment centers.

Table 5-1: Home-Based Work Trip Attractions

Daily Trips to South Fulton Parkway Corridor (Attractions)				
	Year 2005	Trip Share	Year 2030	Trip Share
Internal Trips	5,872	17.3%	17,456	22.5%
External Trips				
Clayton	4,502	13.3%	8,313	10.7%
DeKalb	3,014	8.9%	5,026	6.5%
City of Atlanta	3,310	9.7%	7,507	9.7%
Fayette	2,789	8.2%	6,447	8.3%
Coweta	2,759	8.1%	9,156	11.8%
Cobb	2,133	6.3%	3,380	4.4%
Henry & Newton	1,809	5.3%	5,201	6.7%
Rest of S Fulton County	1,710	5.0%	3,304	4.3%
Douglas	1,588	4.7%	4,949	6.4%
Other	4,465	13.2%	6,846	8.8%
Total	**33,949**	**100.0%**	**77,583**	**100.0%**

Source: ARC Regional Travel Demand Model

Table 5-2: Home-Based Work Trip Productions

Daily Trips from South Fulton Parkway Corridor (Productions)				
	Year 2005	Trip Share	Year 2030	Trip Share
Internal Trips	5,872	10.9%	17,456	18.6%
External Trips				
City of Atlanta	17,681	19.0%	26,180	16.8%
Airport	4,910	9.1%	7,703	8.2%
Clayton	3,884	7.2%	6,245	6.6%
DeKalb	3,879	7.2%	4,419	4.7%
Cobb	3,226	6.0%	5,035	5.4%
Fulton Industrial Boulevard	2,648	4.9%	3,736	4.0%
Fayette	1,842	3.4%	4,979	5.3%
Rest of S Fulton County	1,170	2.2%	4,864	5.2%
Other	8,837	16.4%	13,304	14.2%
Total	**53,948**	100.0%	**93,921**	**100.0%**

Source: ARC Regional Travel Demand Model

Table 5-3 displays the modal choice data in terms of home-based work trips within the study area. The overwhelming majority within the study area commutes by auto (92%), and this trend is anticipated to increase in the future. This is indicative of the lack of transit options currently available and planned for the residents of the study area to access their jobs.

Table 5-3: Home-Based Work Mode Split

South Fulton Parkway Corridor Mode Split				
	2005		2030	
Mode	Productions	Attractions	Productions	Attractions
Transit	8.3%	3.1%	7.5%	2.6%
Auto	91.7%	96.9%	92.5%	97.3%

Source: ARC Regional Travel Demand Model

5.2 Roadway Characteristics

This section will detail major roadway characteristics such as functional classification, lane configuration, median treatment, and posted speed limits that are relevant to roadway design and operations. This section also includes a discussion on the existing and forecast volumes and roadway level of service (LOS). Lastly, freight and goods movement conditions are also discussed.

Following the overview of the study area, the major roadways analyzed in greater detail include:

- South Fulton Parkway;
- Roosevelt Highway (East of South Fulton Parkway);
- Roosevelt Highway (West of South Fulton Parkway);
- I-85;
- Old National Highway (SR 279);
- Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92);
- Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154);
- Stonewall Tell Road; and
- Fulton Industrial Boulevard (SR 70).

5.2.1 Study Area Overview

The roadways that make up the study area network are mostly two-lane collectors and minor arterials that provide north-south connectivity. These roadways provide connections between the South Fulton Parkway and the Cities of Chattahoochee Hills, Palmetto, Fairburn, Union City, and College Park, as well as existing activity centers and proposed developments in the surrounding area.

The road network relies upon two principal arterials, South Fulton Parkway and Roosevelt Highway (US 29), to provide the primary east-west connections. Roosevelt Highway (US 29) generally parallels I-85 South within the study area. Thus, there is a lack of east-west roadway connections. This observation is also recognized in the South Fulton Parkway Corridor Study as well as the Parkway South Development Plan. North-south connections are much more prevalent since almost all of the minor arterials and collectors are oriented in this manner. The general lane configurations for the major roadways consist of mostly undivided two-lane facilities with a few four-lane and five-lane facilities. Consistent with the low-density characteristics of the study area, the posted speed limits range from 35 to 55 MPH, with majority of roadways having at least a 45 MPH designation. **Figure 5-1** illustrates the major roadway network and **Table 5-4** presents a summary of the characteristics of the roadway network in the study area.

Figure 5-1: Major Roadway Network

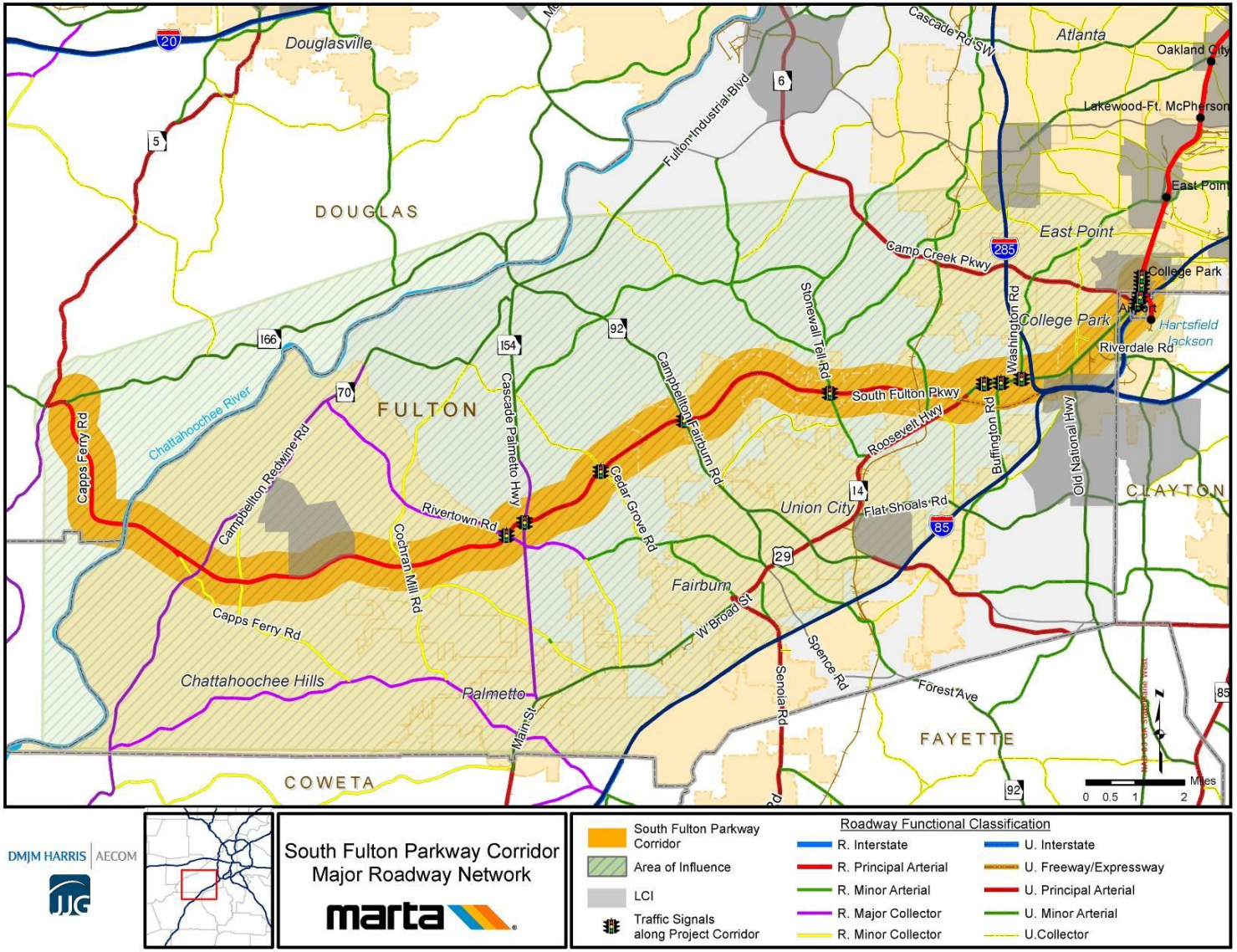


Table 5-4: Roadway Characteristics

Study Area Roadways	Functional Class	Median	Travel Lanes	Speed Limit
South Fulton Parkway (US 29) - Roosevelt Highway to Rivertown Road	Urban Principal Arterial	Divided	4	55 MPH
South Fulton Parkway - Rivertown Road to Duncan Memorial Highway (SR 166)	Rural Principal Arterial	None	2	55 MPH/ 35 MPH
Roosevelt Highway (US 29) - East of South Fulton Parkway to College Park MARTA Station	Urban Minor Arterial	None	2	35 MPH
Roosevelt Highway (US 29) - West of South Fulton Parkway	Urban Principal Arterial	Center Turn Lane	4	45 MPH
I-85	Urban Interstate	Divided	8	65 MPH
Old National Highway (SR 279)	Urban Minor Arterial	None	2	35 MPH
Washington Road	Urban Minor Arterial	None	4	45 MPH
Buffington Road	Urban Minor Arterial	None	2	45 MPH
SR 14 Spur	Urban Freeways/ Expressways	Divided	4	55 MPH
Stonewall Tell Road	Urban Minor Arterial	None	2	40 MPH
Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) - South of South Fulton Parkway	Urban Minor Arterial	Center Turn Lane	4	55 MPH
Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) - North of South Fulton Parkway	Urban Minor Arterial	None	2	55 MPH
Cedar Grove Road	Urban Collector Street	None	2	45 MPH
Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154)	Rural Major Collector	None	2	55 MPH
Rivertown Road	Rural Major Collector	None	2	45 MPH
Campbellton Redwine Road (SR 70)	Rural Minor Collector	None	2	55 MPH
Capps Ferry Road	Rural Minor Collector	None	2	35 MPH

Source: GDOT Roadway Characteristics Data, Field Observations

Planned and Programmed Improvements

Future roadway improvements are illustrated in **Figure 5-2**. These include all planned and programmed improvements (with the exception of bridge projects) in the study area. Of these projects, the most relevant to transit feasibility would be a long range project that calls for the addition of one lane in each direction to Roosevelt Highway (US 29), between Old National Highway (SR 279) and the Clayton County line. This widening project would create a greater potential for shared right-of-way and general improvement in traffic flow. However, as noted previously, Roosevelt Highway (US 29) currently has two lanes of travel immediately east of the South Fulton Parkway interchange. Widening of the eastern segment of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) was removed from the fiscally-constrained RTP during the Envison6 RTP reprioritization process. Thus, plans to widen only the section of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) north of Old National Highway (SR 279) could worsen the bottleneck currently experienced at the interchange of South Fulton Parkway.

Traffic Volumes

Existing traffic volumes were derived from the 2007 Georgia's State Traffic and Report Statistics (STARS) database managed by GDOT. In general, the roadways in the eastern portion of the study area are shown to carry higher average daily traffic (ADT) as a result of proximity to the interstate system, H-JAIA and downtown Atlanta. According to the 2007 GDOT counts, ADT along South Fulton Parkway ranges from 10,000 to 15,000 in the eastern section of the corridor, but is significantly less for the segment west of Campbellton-Palmetto Highway (SR 154), at roughly 4,000 trips per day. The two-lane section of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) east of South Fulton Parkway currently carries approximately 12,000 vehicles, while the five-lane section west of South Fulton Parkway carries the greatest ADT in the study area with 21,000 vehicles.

Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) is also a significant carrier of traffic with approximately 10,000 vehicles, most of which appear to be cut-through traffic to and from I-85 during congested hours. Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) is another important north-south connector, but with approximately 5,000 to 7,000 vehicles per day, does not carry as much traffic as Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92).

Level of Service

Simply stated, level of service (LOS) represents how well a roadway moves the traffic volumes it was designed to accommodate. LOS is an important consideration in analyzing potential demand for transit services. It identifies areas in need of additional mobility options and where problems may arise with transit alternatives proposed along right-of-way shared by automobile traffic. **Table 5-5** presents the LOS standards adopted by the ARC.

In the Atlanta region, the ARC calculates LOS as a function of three variables:

- Generally observed functionality of the roadway;
- Ratio of traffic volumes to design capacity (v/c ratio); and
- Average traffic volumes divided by average travel time.

Figure 5-2: Future Roadway Improvements

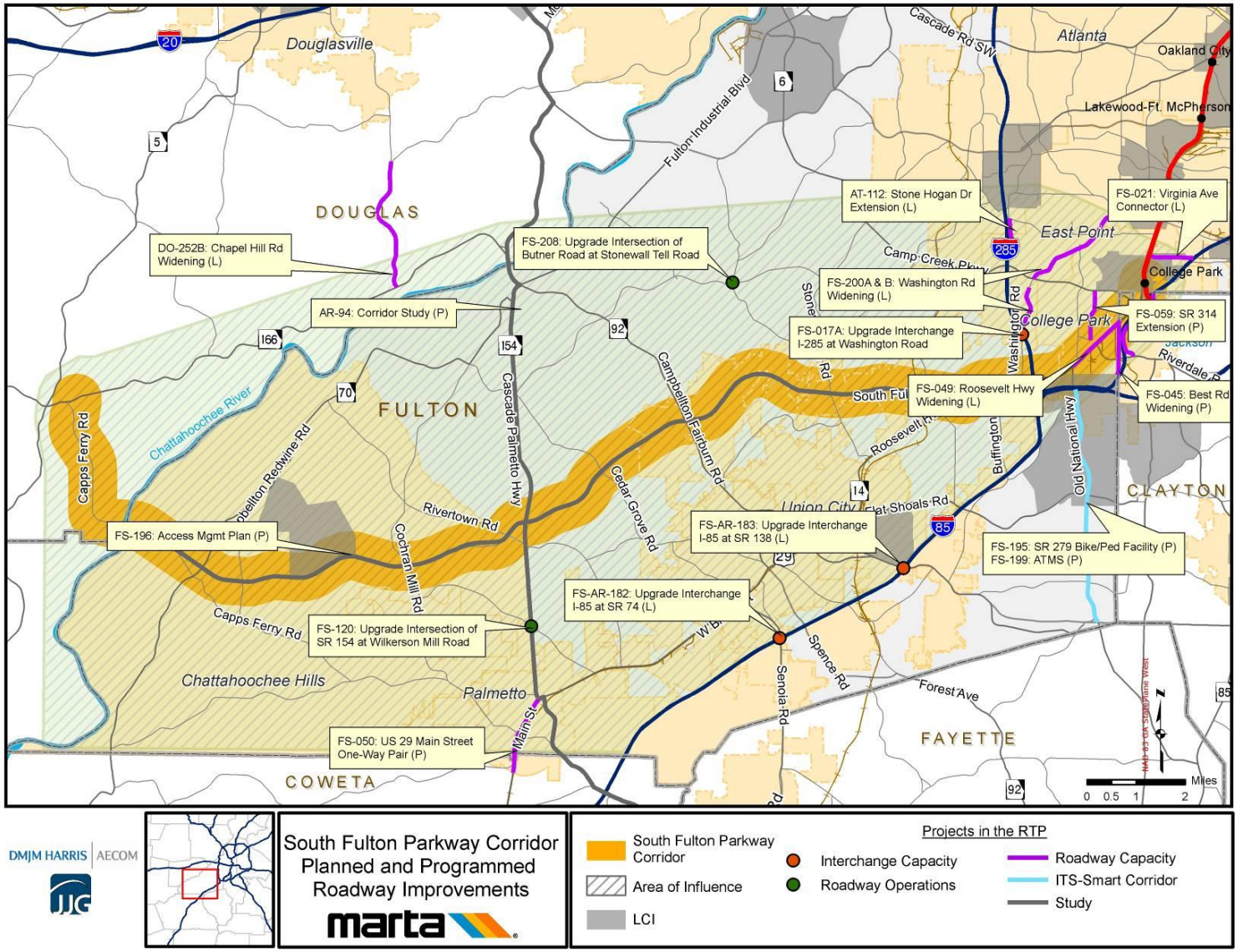


Table 5-5: ARC Level of Service Thresholds

LOS	General Characteristics	V/C Ratio	Average Daily Volume by Second
A	Free flow traffic with individual users virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream;	.00-.55	<10
B	Stable traffic flow with a high degree of freedom to select speed and operating conditions but with some influence from others;	.00-.55	10-20
C	Restricted flow which remains stable but with significant interactions with others in the traffic stream. The general level of comfort and convenience declines noticeably at this level;	.55-.77	20-35
D	High-density flow in which speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and comfort and convenience have declined even though flow remains stable.	.77-.93	35-55
E	At capacity; unstable flow at or near capacity levels with poor levels of convenience and comfort, and very little, if any, freedom to maneuver;	.93-1.00	55-80
F	Forced traffic flow in which the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can be served. LOS "F" is characterized by stop and go waves, poor travel times, low comfort and convenience and increased accident exposure.	>1.00	>80

Source: ARC

It is important to note the discrepancies in the travel demand model-generated volumes reported for the study area's roadways when compared to actual traffic counts provided in GDOT's STARS database. In general, the ARC model overestimates the existing volumes on the eastern segment of South Fulton Parkway and on Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92). The model underestimates the volumes on Roosevelt Highway (US 29) within the study area. Thus, LOS on the eastern section of South Fulton Parkway and Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) may be overstated, while the LOS on Roosevelt Highway (US 29) may be understated.

Figure 5-3 depicts the existing PM peak hour LOS derived from the ARC's 2005 roadway network. In general, the majority of the roadways in the area operate with little congestion. Segments with deficient LOS include:

- Buffington Road;
- Capps Ferry Road just west of the river; and
- I-85 between SR 92 and SR 14 Spur.

In addition, an inventory of 2030 projected LOS for the major roadways in the study area was conducted using the ARC travel demand model as well. The 2030 ARC loaded network, which assumes implementation of all projects within the fiscally-constrained Envision6 RTP, was utilized for projected LOS analysis.

Figure 5-3: Existing Roadway Level of Service

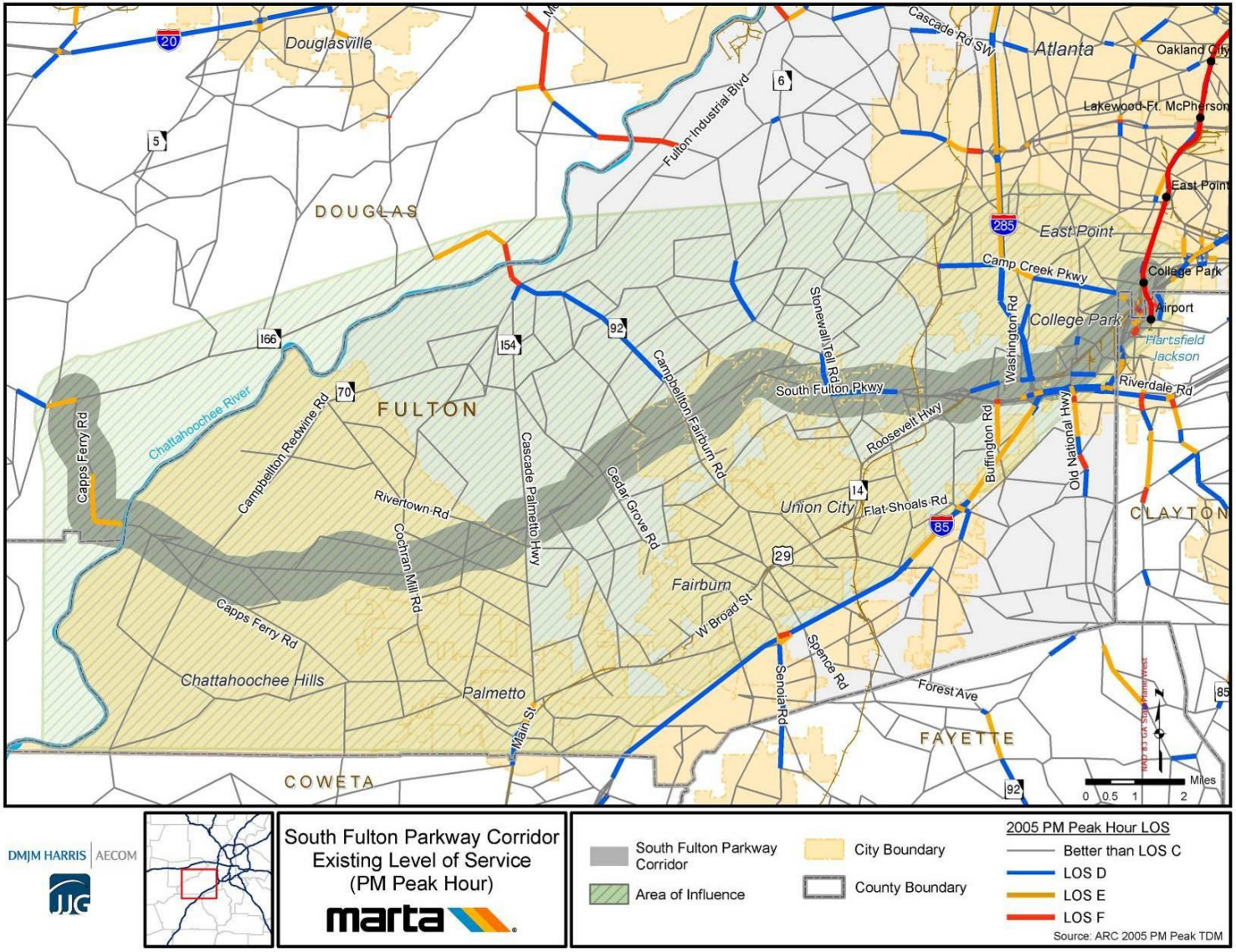


Figure 5-4 shows the projected roadway LOS in 2030. Due to the anticipated growth along South Fulton Parkway, coupled with the lack of capacity improvement currently planned and/or programmed, the general LOS along the corridor is forecast to deteriorate by 2030, particularly in the following locations:

- South Fulton Parkway east of Stonewall Tell Road; and
- Roosevelt Highway (US 29) west of Old National Highway (SR 279).

Other facilities within the study area expected to operate under failing LOS include:

- Stonewall Tell Road;
- Camp Creek Parkway (SR 6);
- Buffington Road;
- Washington Road;
- Old National Highway (SR 279), and
- Riverdale Road (SR 139).

The findings from the LOS analysis indicate that most of the major multi-lane facilities in the study area will operate under acceptable LOS. Therefore, alleviating congestion is not as high a priority as providing better connections and commute choices to and from region activity centers.

Freight Characteristics

Atlanta is among the top three inland distribution centers in the nation. The study area is home to major freight generators such as the Fulton Industrial Boulevard, H-JAIA and several other notable industrial complexes. ARC's Freight Mobility Study indentified Fulton Industrial Boulevard and the City of Fairburn as two key freight areas and potential locations for integrated logistics centers. Fulton Industrial Boulevard provides access to the largest concentration of warehousing and manufacturing industries in the southeast. CSX operates a 24-hour terminal in Fairburn that opened June 1999, and ranks as the 9th largest freight terminal in the nation in terms of lift volume.

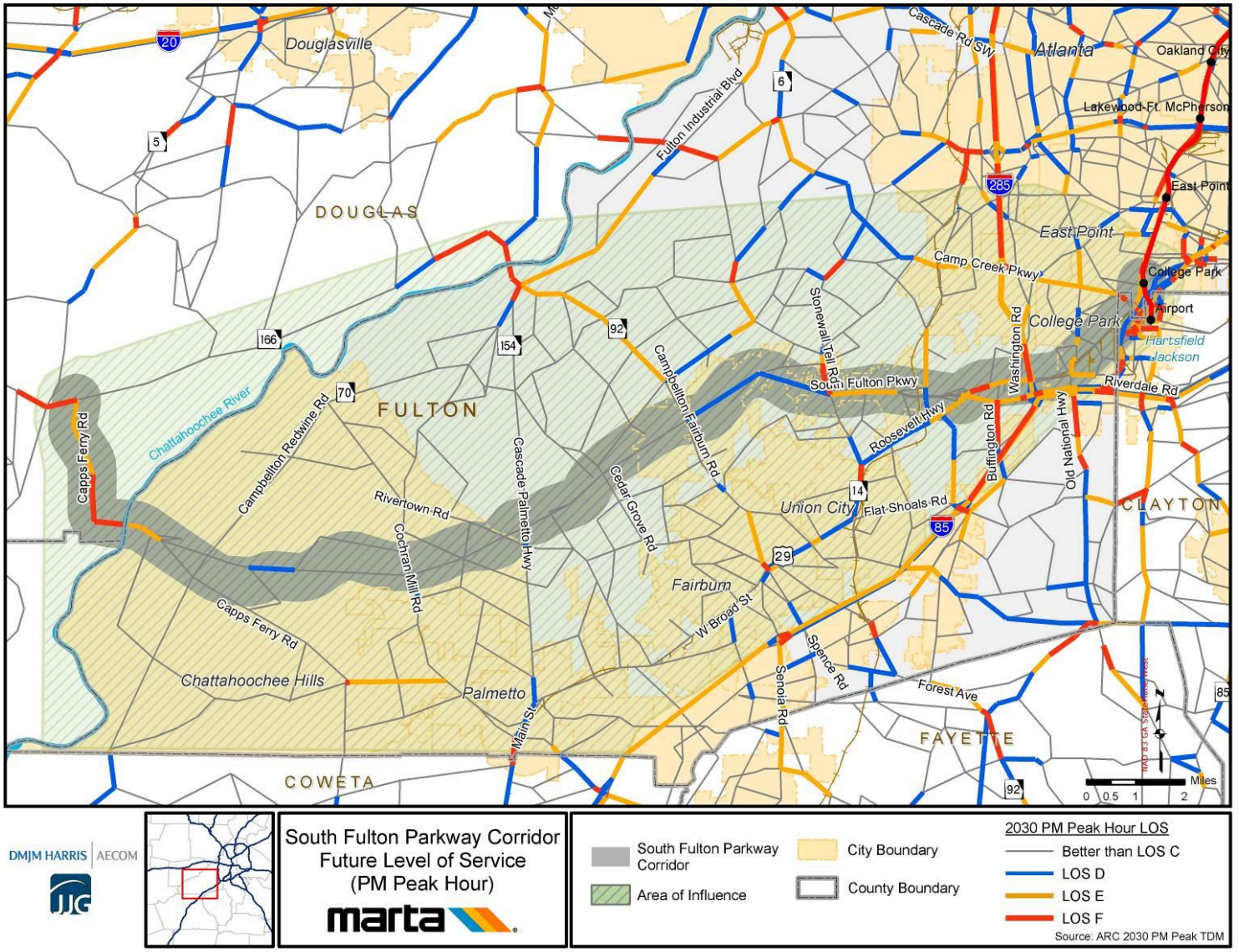
In addition to being a generator of freight, the study area also provides detour routes for trucks traveling to and from Fulton Industrial Boulevard to I-85 South. According to the travel demand model, critical north-south connectors such as Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) and Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) currently carry at least 10-15% medium to heavy trucks on a daily basis. As shown in **Table 5-7**, the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for medium and heavy trucks within the study area is expected to grow from 386,000 miles in 2005 to 589,000 miles in 2030, which translates to an increase of more than 50%. Therefore, alleviating the potential conflicts between freight and vehicular traffic should be a priority for the study area.

Table 5-6: Truck Traffic Vehicle Miles Traveled

	2005		2030	
Vehicle Type	**VMT**	**% SHARE**	**VMT**	**% SHARE**
Medium Truck	131,700	4.8%	209,000	5.0%
Heavy Truck	254,100	9.3%	380,100	9.1%
Other	2,343,200	85.9%	3,610,800	86.0%
Total	2,729,000	100.0%	4,199,900	100.0%

Source: ARC Regional Travel Demand Model

Figure 5-4: Future Roadway Level of Service



5.2.2 Major Roadway Facility Analysis

This section takes a closer look at each of the major roadways within the study area. For each of the major roadways, the following transportation elements will be discussed:

- Roadway Profile and Characteristics;
- Planned and Programmed Improvements;
- Existing and Projected Roadway Volumes;
- Existing and Projected LOS; and
- Freight Characteristics.

South Fulton Parkway

South Fulton Parkway, as a whole, is a 23-mile thoroughfare stretching from I-285/I-85, the City of Atlanta, and H-JAIA towards the Chattahoochee River. It is a regionally significant east-west arterial that functions as one of the major transportation and development corridors in the region. As such, according to the ARC travel demand model, the eastern section of South Fulton Parkway has daily truck percentage of 10-15%. The model also projects that while the percentages of trucks are still expected to remain constant in the future, the overall number of trucks is expected to increase by at least 30% in 2030.

Traversing west from the Roosevelt Highway (US 29) interchange, South Fulton Parkway is a four-lane principal arterial separated by a wide median. The availability of excess capacity coupled with a high posted speed limit of 55 MPH in the eastern segment of the corridor allows for efficient movement of traffic through the study area. According to the 2007 GDOT counts, the daily volumes along the eastern segment of South Fulton Parkway range from 10,000 to 15,000. Conversely, the segment of South Fulton Parkway west of Rivertown Road is a two-lane facility with a significantly lower volumes ranging from roughly 6,000-4,000 trips per day.

By design, the US 29 designation has been shifted to the segment of South Fulton Parkway from Roosevelt Highway (US 29) to Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) in order to facilitate through trips for both vehicles and trucks along Roosevelt Highway (US 29) through Union City and Fairburn. It is for this reason that GDOT, ARC and Fulton County are all committed to limiting access along the facility. GDOT will be conducting an access management study to further this objective. At present, there are very few signalized intersections along the corridor – located at Stonewall Tell Road, Campbellton-Fairburn Road (SR 92), Cedar Grove Road, Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154), and Rivertown Road. This is pertinent because the low number of signals can minimize the need for signal pre-emption associated with potential transit alternatives and may reduce the implementation costs where necessary.

Other than GDOT's access management study along the South Fulton Parkway, there are no improvements along South Fulton Parkway that are currently planned in the RTP. Existing LOS for South Fulton Parkway indicates little congestion and this trend is expected to continue into the future. The projected LOS analysis reveals that only the corridor segment east of Stonewall Tell Road is expected to have a deficient LOS by 2030.

Roosevelt Highway (East of South Fulton Parkway)

The segment of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) east of South Fulton Parkway is a two-lane undivided facility that connects South Fulton Parkway to the College Park MARTA Station. It is designated as a minor arterial with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH as it traverses through the heart of College Park. As mentioned previously, there is a long range widening project along Roosevelt Highway (US 29) between Old National Highway (SR 279) and Clayton County. However, widening is also needed at the section of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) between South Fulton Parkway and Old National Highway (US 29) to prevent a potential bottleneck at the South Fulton Parkway interchange.

According to the 2007 GDOT counts, the eastern segment of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) carries approximately 12,000 vehicles, which is significantly less than the multi-lane segment west of the interchange. Daily truck traffic is estimated to be between 5-10% along this segment of Roosevelt Highway (US 29). Existing LOS derived from the ARC model shows some bottlenecks along the segment just east of the South Fulton Parkway interchange. By 2030, this segment east of the interchange is projected to operate at failing LOS.

Roosevelt Highway (West of South Fulton Parkway)

The segment of Roosevelt Highway between South Fulton Parkway and Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) is the primary parallel arterial to South Fulton Parkway and is the traditional thoroughfare for the cities of Palmetto, Fairburn and Union City. This segment of the roadway is a four-lane facility with a multitude of ingress and egress points throughout- until it becomes a two-lane facility west of Palmetto. Beyond the intersection of Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) in Palmetto, it is again designated as US 29 and continues into Coweta County. The active freight rail line, which runs along the entire length of the roadway, has been discussed as a commuter rail alternative to support redevelopment within the central business districts of the aforementioned communities.

The four-lane section of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) west of South Fulton Parkway carries the greatest daily volume in the study area with 21,000 vehicles just west of the South Fulton Parkway interchange. The ARC model estimates that the share of truck traffic along Roosevelt Highway (US 29) is much higher along the segments west of Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) in Fairburn with 10-15% trucks. Existing LOS analysis only indicates deficiencies along the two-lane segment of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) west of Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154). The findings from the 2030 LOS analysis show bottlenecks and failing conditions along segments east of Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92), west of Stonewall Tell Road and at the South Fulton Parkway interchange.

I-85 South

I-85 South is an eight-lane interstate facility that establishes the eastern boundary of the study area. Much of the north-south traffic through the study area originates or is destined to I-85. Two interchange improvements at SR 72 and SR 138 are planned in the long range RTP. Other noteworthy projects for I-85 South recommended by ARC's Southern Regional Accessibility Study include the investigation of Truck-Only Lanes on I-85 between I-285 and Fayetteville Road, expansion of the current interchange at SR 74 to include access to SR 92, and the construction of new interchange at Gullatt Road.

ARC's Freight Mobility Plan also recommended the new interchange at Gullatt Road in recognition of I-85 South as one of the major freight corridors in the region.

I-85 South currently carries over 145,000 vehicles with a significant share of 15-20% trucks per day. Existing LOS analysis indicates over-capacity conditions and delays along the segments north of SR 92 and at the SR 72 interchange. By 2030, the entire I-85 South corridor within the study area is expected to operate under failing LOS.

Old National Highway (SR 279)

Old National Highway (SR 279) is a two-lane minor arterial that carries over 21,000 vehicles per day. Existing LOS analysis reveals high volume-to-capacity ratios along the majority of segments between I-285 and Flat Shoals Road and conditions are expected to worsen by 2030 without any capacity improvements. Old National Highway (SR 279) has been identified by the ARC, Fulton County and the City of College Park as a major redevelopment corridor. To this end, an LCI study was awarded to identify strategies for redevelopment nodes along the corridor. Consistent with the recommendations from the LCI, a bicycle and pedestrian facility along Old National Highway (SR 279) is programmed in the TIP.

Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92)

Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) is a regionally significant route that provides a critical north-south linkage within the study area. The two-lane segment of Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) provides connections to Douglas County and Fulton Industrial Boulevard to the north, and the four-lane segment with a center median provides access to I-85 and cities of Union City and Fairburn to the south. Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) is also a significant carrier of traffic with approximately 10,000 vehicles, most of which appear to be detour traffic to and from I-85 during congested hours. Truck traffic is also prevalent along this corridor due to its accessibility to I-85. The ARC model reports that the share of truck traffic along this corridor is at least 10-15%.

Existing LOS shows some delay and bottlenecks occurring in the two-lane segment of Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) north of South Fulton Parkway. The segment north of Fulton Industrial Boulevard (SR 70) shows over-capacity conditions with extreme delay as three major state routes (SR 92, SR 70 and SR 154) merge onto a two-lane facility. Not surprisingly, without any capacity improvements programmed in the RTP, even the four-lane segments in Fairburn near the intersection of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) are expected to have failing LOS by 2030.

Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154)

Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) is another major north-south route that provides connections between Fulton Industrial Boulevard and Douglas County to the City of Palmetto and I-85. It is currently a two-lane minor collector that carries 5,000 to 7,000 vehicles with up to 10% truck traffic per day. Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) is another detour route for many trucks to avoid gridlock conditions on I-285 to access I-85 South.

As with the other major routes in the study area, the existing LOS along Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154) reveals predominantly non-congested conditions. By 2030, some bottleneck conditions can be expected near the intersections of Roosevelt Highway (US 29) in Palmetto. Additionally, the heavy delays and queuing at the SR

92/SR 70/SR 154 intersection is expected to have a spillback effect on the northern segment of Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154).

Although no capacity improvements are currently programmed for this corridor, a study to investigate development opportunities along regionally significant routes (Metro Arterial Connector (MAC) Corridor Development Study) is programmed in the TIP.

Stonewall Tell Road

Stonewall Tell Road is a two-lane minor arterial that provides important north-south connections to and from Campbellton Road (SR 166), South Fulton Parkway, and Roosevelt Highway (US 29). According to the 2007 GDOT counts, the daily volume north of the South Fulton Parkway intersection is 7,700, while the volume south of the intersection drops to 4,400. Although the existing land use at this node is mostly forestry and low-density residential, future plans of Union City propose an activity center comprised of medium to high-density mixed uses at this location. As such, without capacity improvements, Stonewall Tell Road just north of South Fulton Parkway is expected to have major deficiencies in LOS by 2030.

Fulton Industrial Boulevard (SR 70)

Fulton Industrial Boulevard (SR 70) is a four-lane divided minor arterial that provides access to the largest concentration of warehousing and manufacturing industries in the southeast. As such, it is one of the top truck generators in the region and carries an estimated 15-20% truck trips per day. Much of this traffic headed south to and from I-85 utilizes Campbellton Fairburn Road (SR 92) through the study area, and thus, can potentially cause conflicts between vehicular and truck traffic.

Currently, there are no improvements on Fulton Industrial Boulevard (SR 70) programmed in the RTP. However, Fulton County's Comprehensive Plan identified this area as one of the top priorities in need of redevelopment, and designated the area as live-work. Existing LOS analysis indicates mostly free-flow conditions. However, consistent with the growth and development anticipated for the Fulton Industrial Boulevard area, the operating conditions are anticipated to deteriorate dramatically to LOS E/F by 2030.

5.3 Transit Characteristics

5.3.1 Existing Transit Services

MARTA provides both heavy rail and bus service within the study area. In addition to heavy rail at the College Park MARTA Station, the following MARTA local bus routes also serve the study area:

- 82 - Camp Creek / Barge Rd Park & Ride – This route connects the College Park Station to the Barge Road park-and-ride lot including the Camp Creek Market Place. It primarily serves Camp Creek Parkway before turning north on to Fairburn Road towards the park-and-ride. Route 82 operates weekdays from 5:30 am to 1 am with 20 minute headways during peak hours and at 30 minute headways during non-peak hours.
- 84 - East Point / Camp Creek – This route provides connections between the East Point Station and the Camp Creek Market Place. The majority of the route traverses

along Washington Road west and intersects Camp Creek Parkway north to the Market Place. Route 84 operates weekdays from 5:00 am to 12:30 am with 20 minute headways during peak hours and 40 minute headways during non-peak hours.

- 88 - Camp Creek / Welcome All – This route begins at the College Park Station and ends at the Camp Creek Market Place by making a loop from Camp Creek Parkway to Washington Road to Roosevelt Highway, then back onto Camp Creek Parkway and terminating at the Market Place. Route 88 operates weekdays from 4:30 am to 1:00 am with 20 minute headways during peak hours and 30 minute headways during non-peak hours.
- 180 - Fairburn / Palmetto – This route provides the most direct access from Palmetto, Fairburn and Union City to the College Park Station. The route begins at the College Park Station and takes East Main Street south to merge with Roosevelt Highway (US 29) through the city centers. Route 180 operates weekdays from 5:00 am to 12:30 am with 20 minute headways during peak hours and 30 minute headways during non-peak hours.
- 181 - South Fulton Park & Ride / Fairburn – This route makes its way south from the College Park Station along Main Street to I-85, then gets off at Buffington Road to make a stop at the South Fulton park-and-ride lot. The route continues southwards on I-85 to make another stop at the Union City Mall along Jonesboro Road (SR 138), then gets onto Roosevelt Highway (US 29) to terminate in Fairburn. Route 181 operates weekdays from 5:15 am to 12:15 am with 30 minute headways during peak hours and 40 minute headways during non-peak hours.

As described above and illustrated in **Figure 5-5**, only the Roosevelt Highway section of the project corridor has direct access to transit. Transit routes are clustered together in the eastern portion of the study area and connect to rail service at the College Park and East Point stations.

It should be noted that, because of a shortfall of revenues associated with the current economic times, budget constraints have caused MARTA to consider service cuts that may affect the routes, headways, and hours of operation described above.

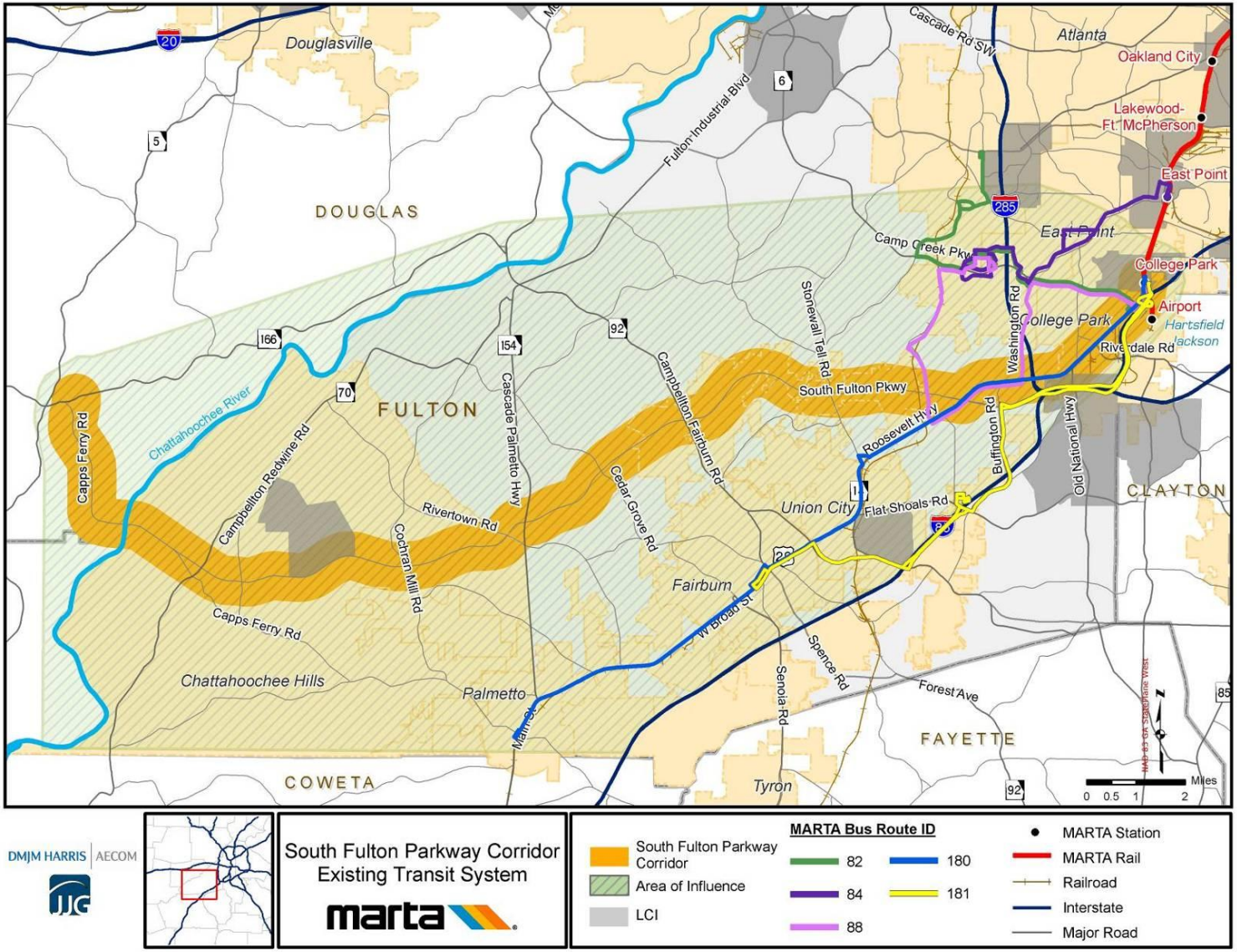
Table 5-7 presents the average weekday boardings collected between August 2008 and December 2008. As shown, the ridership for the routes in the corridor average approximately 2,000 riders per day, which does not rate highly among other routes in the MARTA system. However, as noted in the previous section, the coverage of these routes includes only a small portion of the study area. Therefore, ridership characteristics of these routes shed very little insight on the overall demand for transit services in the study area other than those areas in proximity to College Park and East Point.

Table 5-7: Transit Ridership

MARTA Bus Route	Average Weekday Ridership
82 - Camp Creek / Barge Rd Park/ Ride	2,060
84 - East Point / Camp Creek	1,894
88 - Camp Creek / Welcome All	2,849
180 - Fairburn / Palmetto	2,546
181 - South Fulton Park & Ride / Fairburn	1,808

Source: MARTA

Figure 5-5: Existing Transit Services



5.3.1 Planned and Programmed Improvements

As stated previously, South Fulton Parkway was recommended for BRT in the TPB's Concept 3. Given that the main travel demand originating from the growing residential areas in South Fulton County is to downtown Atlanta and activity centers further north, Concept 3 recognizes that BRT is warranted along South Fulton Parkway. This service would be operated with over-the-road motor coach buses that would stop at park-and-ride lots along South Fulton Parkway and terminate at the College Park MARTA Station. Additionally, feeder service will be provided by local community neighborhood shuttle bus services. The Concept 3 report also noted that with the significant growth anticipated for this corridor, coordination with GDOT is key for identifying right-of-way needs for potential alternatives. This study builds on the Concept 3 analysis and takes a closer, more detailed look at the characteristics that would influence the feasibility of potential transit alternatives along South Fulton Parkway.

Another improvement included in TPB Concept 3 is a proposed commuter rail service from Atlanta to Senoia along the CSX rail corridor. The proposed alignment for this improvement would enter the study area in the vicinity of Union City and travel along the CSX corridor that runs parallel to Roosevelt Highway into the proposed multi-modal transportation center in downtown Atlanta. In conjunction with the transit alternative along South Fulton, an opportunity to foster transit oriented development at the nexus of these alignments could be created.

Outside of the TPB Concept 3, there are no other proposed transit improvements within the study area nor included within the cost-feasible Envision6 RTP.

5.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

5.4.1 Existing Facilities

Although the Fulton County Comprehensive Plan designated South Fulton Parkway as a major thoroughfare that promotes pedestrian oriented development, the existing connections across South Fulton Parkway do not encourage pedestrian access. Also, at this time, South Fulton Parkway does not have separate bicycle lanes or other facilities to support its use as a bicycle route.

5.4.2 Planned and Programmed Improvements

As presented in **Table 5-8** and illustrated in **Figure 5-6,** there are six bicycle and pedestrian improvements within the study area that are programmed in the 2008-2013 TIP. Although none of these projects are planned along South Fulton Parkway, a few bicycle and pedestrian facilities are programmed along various roadways intersecting the corridor. These include South Fulton Scenic Byway Multi-Use Trail (Phase I) and Buffington Road Multi-Use Trail, and the Phoenix Multi-Use Trail. These planned bicycle and pedestrian connections would provide a safer and a more enjoyable environment for bicyclists and pedestrians to access South Fulton Parkway.

The Parkway South Development Plan proposes to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment for the nine-mile segment of South Fulton Parkway between Stonewall Tell Road and Cascade Palmetto Highway (SR 154). Recommendations include providing a continuous multi-use path along South Fulton Parkway with tree-lined sidewalks, a

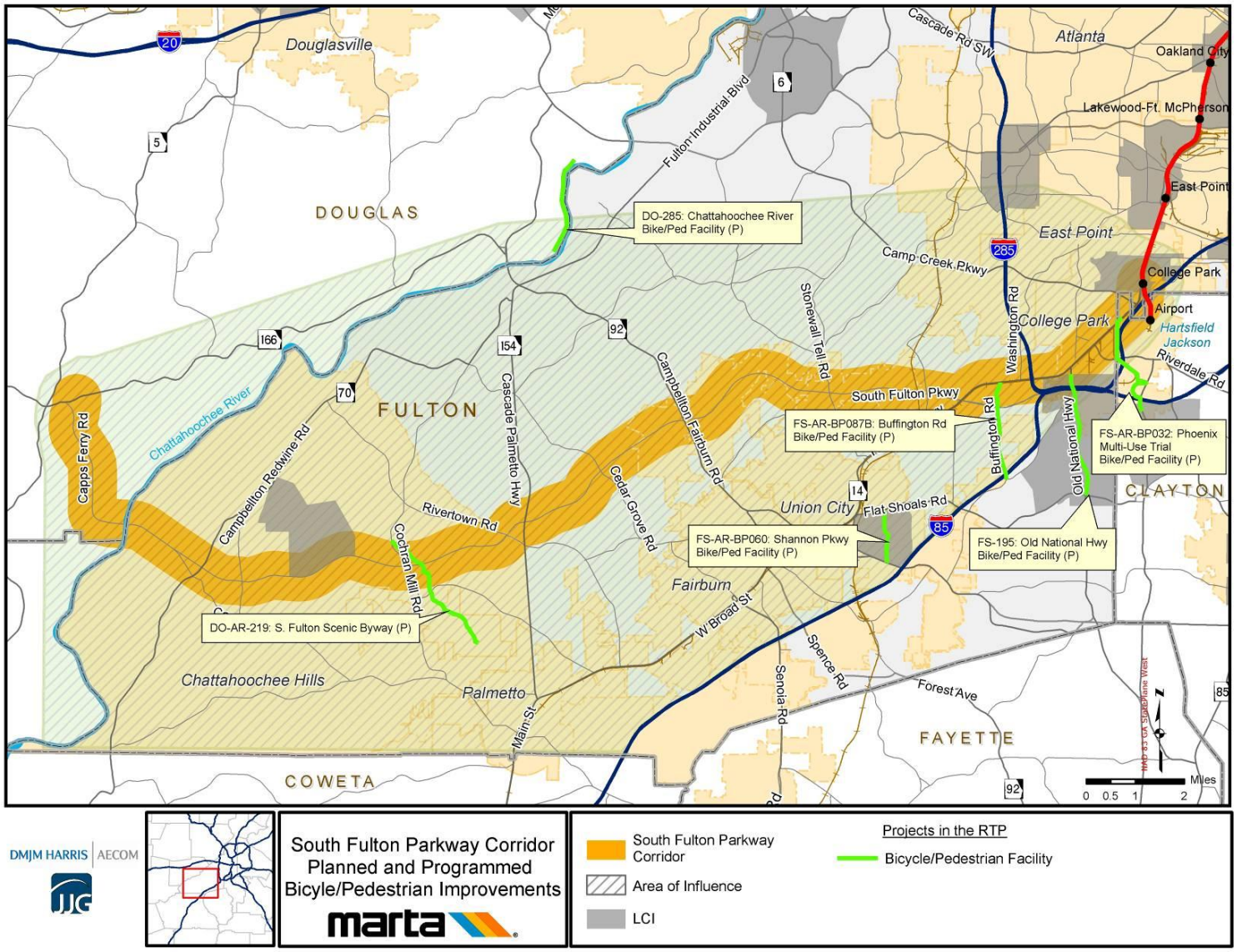
parallel off-road bike path, signalization at various key nodes, designating pedestrian versus vehicle zones, and creating inter-parcel access.

Table 5-8: Planned and Programmed Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

ARC ID	Project Type	Location	Plan	Description
FS-AR-BP060	Pedestrian Facility	South Fulton	TIP (2011)	Shannon Parkway
FS-AR-BP087B	Multi-Use Bike/Ped Facility	South Fulton	TIP (2012)	Buffington Road: Segment 2
DO-285	Bicycle/Ped Facility	Douglas County	TIP (2011)	Douglas County Pilot Segment Along Chattahoochee River In Boundary Waters Park
FS-195	Bicycle/Ped Facility	South Fulton	TIP (2012)	SR 279 (Old National Highway) Transit Oriented Development Implementation Program
FS-209	Multi-Use Bike/Ped Facility	South Fulton	TIP (2011)	South Fulton Scenic Byway Multi-Use Trail - Phase I
FS-AR-BP032	Multi-Use Bike/Ped Facility	South Fulton	TIP (2010)	Phoenix Multi-Use Trail

Source: ARC Transportation Improvement Plan and Regional Transportation Plan

Figure 5-6: Planned and Programmed Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements



5.5 Key Findings

Based on the findings from the baseline transportation characteristics, the following major findings have been derived:

- The study area is anticipated to be a major trip generator by 2030 with an increase of 130% in the overall number of commuter trips over the present day. However, the share of external trips to other employment centers will still remain significantly higher than those coming into the study area for work.
- An overwhelming majority (greater than 90%) of all work trips in the study area are made by automobile, with commute times to the major employment centers reaching 45 minutes during peak hours. These travel conditions are projected to significantly worsen in the future without alternative commute options.
- The findings from the LOS analysis indicate that most of the major multi-lane facilities in the study area will operate under acceptable LOS. Therefore, alleviating congestion is not as high a priority as providing better connections and commute choices within the study area as well to and from other activity centers in the region.
- Given the auto-oriented development patterns within the study area, maintaining traffic flow will continue to be a top priority for South Fulton Parkway. At the same time, a lack of commuter options will perpetuate a greater auto-dependency, which is contrary to the smart growth strategies developed for South Fulton Parkway.
- South Fulton Parkway is designed to carry high volumes of traffic at high speeds. There is an inherent conflict between facilitating an efficient movement of vehicles versus providing a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Truck traffic in the study area is expected to grow by more than 50% and this will result in the increase in potential for conflicts between vehicular and truck traffic.
- Current transit options do not meet the future needs of the residents in the study area. In fact, in addition to having no transit improvements currently programmed in the RTP, service cuts are being considered for the existing bus routes. It is clear that given the expected growth coupled with limited alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel, increased demand for transit is anticipated.
- Another improvement proposed in TPB Concept 3 is a proposed commuter rail service from Atlanta to Senoia along the CSX rail corridor. The proposed alignment for this improvement would enter the study area in the vicinity of Union City and travel along the CSX corridor that runs parallel to Roosevelt Highway into the proposed multi-modal transportation center in downtown Atlanta. In conjunction with the transit alternative along South Fulton, an opportunity to foster transit oriented development at the nexus of these alignments could be created.
- There is a general lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the study area. However, a few of bicycle and pedestrian facilities are programmed along various roadways intersecting South Fulton Parkway.

6.0 INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

In order to establish a context, stakeholder interviews were conducted with representatives from the jurisdictions within the study area, state and regional agencies, and citizen and business organizations to gather perspectives on future development and required transportation improvements to accommodate new development. A Stakeholder Committee, with representatives from the following agencies and/or groups was also established:

- GDOT
- ARC
- Fulton County
- City of Chattahoochee Hills
- City of Union City
- City of College Park
- City of Palmetto
- City of Fairburn
- H-JAIA
- Cliftondale Homeowners Association
- Publix Supermarket (Local Business)
- South Fulton Chamber of Commerce

6.1 Stakeholders Committee Meeting Input

A Stakeholder Committee meeting was held on April 20, 2009 to introduce the overall study process, present baseline information, and gather preliminary thoughts on the corridor and transit solutions that may be viable as the corridor develops. The meeting was well-attended with representation from all of the invited jurisdictions, agencies, and citizen groups.

The input received at the Committee meeting included the following:

- The study should assist in identifying the best locations for transit oriented development.
- There is congestion along South Fulton Parkway in the morning peak hours.
- Transit needs to provide connectivity to shopping destinations.
- All potential modes are being considered at the outset, but transit alternatives will come more into focus upon the completion of stakeholder interviews.
- Preserving limited access should be a priority along the Parkway.
- The corridor is not conducive to fixed route service; it is more conducive to commuter services.
- There is interest in how this study will tie into Concept 3.

- H-JAIA is always looking for transit alternatives for its customers to alleviate demand on limited parking resources.
- Accommodating parking and other amenities can be expensive.
- Connectivity to employment centers is important.
- Preserving the rural character of the area should be a priority.
- Internal trips need to be increased.
- There are new schools approved in the area that will have an effect on congestion.
- Board of education needs to be contacted for input.
- Express bus may be a viable alternative, either for short-term or long-term, and therefore GRTA should be engaged in the study.
- Large suburban developments will be the primary land use for the area.

6.2 Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to the Stakeholder Committee meeting, an initial round of stakeholder interviews were held between from April 21 through May 1 in order to gather more detailed perspectives on the transit and land use characteristics that best meet the objectives of individual stakeholders. Targeted for the initial round of interviews were staff from those agencies responsible for the development of land use and transportation policy who could provide input on the types of transit that would be most favorable to residents in the corridor. Those interviewed included staff from the following:

- GDOT
- ARC
- Fulton County
- City of Chattahoochee Hills
- City of Union City
- City of College Park
- City of Palmetto
- City of Fairburn
- Cliftondale Homeowners Association

The input from these interviews, which generally reflects the same sentiments voiced at the Stakeholder Committee meeting, is summarized in the following section. Although perspectives varied from participants, common themes from the responses received include:

How do you envision the corridor developing through the year 2030?

- Most interviewed envision the corridor in 2030 being characterized by a high level of suburban development with nodal commercial centers. However, a notable exception is that Union City has identified the corridor as an opportunity to develop a transitional zone into a more urbanized environment that includes land use types that are more transit supportive at all times of the day, not just peak hour service.

What are the primary issues you would like to see addressed throughout this effort? What would you like most for this study to achieve?

- Maintaining the rural character, limiting access to the parkway and not allowing the parkway to become over-developed are the overwhelming priorities that those interviewed want recognized.
- The City of College Park would like to utilize a transit investment along South Fulton Parkway to implement a shuttle service along Old National Highway to assist with economic revitalization efforts along the corridor, which is consistent with the recommendations of their Old National Highway LCI study.
- Alternatives for transit that will be attractive enough to promote choice ridership should be prioritized.

Are there any specific studies and/or development initiatives that need to be considered in the development of land use and transit alternatives?

- A clear inventory of approved developments should be considered, especially the numerous DRIs in the area.
- Nodal development rather than a strip commercial development pattern is preferred along the corridor.
- The study needs to account for new schools that are planned for the area.
- Development in Douglas County will be a major influence on the corridor.

What are some of the more pressing transportation needs within the corridor, both as a whole and within your respective jurisdiction?

- Overall, alternatives suggested along South Fulton Parkway are commuter related services such as park-and-ride facilities with BRT and/or express service.
- Better bicycle and pedestrian connectivity is needed in the study area.

What is the overall opinion of transit among your residents and/or constituents?

- With the exception of Fairburn, which would prefer commuter rail along the Roosevelt Highway (US 29) corridor, most interviewed are not proponents of rail technology because of the goal to maintain flexibility at park-and-ride locations and/or transit oriented development nodes.
- Residents would be generally in favor of an alternative that could move them efficiently to Atlanta employment centers, such as a competitive connection to MARTA heavy rail.
- More park-and-ride facilities are needed for the area.

What types of transit investments do you feel are most needed in the corridor, both currently and in the future as the corridor continues to grow?

- Bus lanes should be considered along the facility in the future.
- Any investments should maintain acceptable traffic flow along corridor.
- South Fulton Parkway may compete with I-85 with respect to travel demand.

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7.0 MAJOR FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

7.1 Major Findings

Based on existing and planned conditions for the study area, in conjunction with input received through the stakeholder consultation process, the following major findings have been derived.

- **A commuter-based service is needed and preferred** - There is a proliferation of auto-oriented development planned and/or permitted within the study area, which is predominantly single-family residential with commercial nodes located at major roadway intersections. The study area has very few major sources of employment, which indicates that the primary trip purpose is external commuter trips to activity centers throughout the region. Regional travel data suggest that this trend will continue in the future. Furthermore, College Park officials noted that the park-and-ride lot at the MARTA station is at capacity on a daily basis and alternatives to park-and-ride facilities are necessary to meet current and future demand.
- **Routing flexibility is critical** - While providing multimodal options is important, the top priority reflected by policy documents and stakeholder input is to maintain traffic flow along South Fulton Parkway. Designated as US 29 throughout much of its length, the roadway is designed to carry high volumes of traffic at high speeds. For this reason, GDOT and Fulton County have worked together to maintain a 100-foot buffer free from the encroachment of development along much of the roadway. To further this objective, the transit technology along South Fulton Parkway will need to access sites off of the mainline facility. This will serve to minimize impedance and conflict between motorists and pedestrians that may be potentially created by attempting to access a transit investment implemented directly on the parkway.
- **Rail technology along South Fulton Parkway is not supported by 2030** – As noted, low-density development patterns are planned for the study area. The importance of maintaining the rural/suburban character of the area has also been emphasized by the majority of stakeholders in the corridor. Consequently, the implementation of fixed guideway investments - such as heavy rail or light rail - along South Fulton Parkway is not supported by public policy or sentiment at this time. However, while the baseline conditions do not support advancing rail technology at this time, it should be noted that policy changes and development activity that ensues between present day and 2030 may influence the potential for rail technology as the corridor develops - particularly in the areas near the proposed Parkway South development.
- **The corridor is not conducive to local bus service** – Based on the aforementioned development patterns, a need to maintain traffic flow, the desire to maintain the character of the corridor, frequent stop local bus service is not deemed appropriate for South Fulton Parkway at this time.
- **The target market for the alternative will not be transit-dependent populations** – Given the lack of low-income populations and zero-vehicle households throughout most of the study area, the alternative developed for the corridor will need to be attractive to those who desire to use a commute alternative through personal preference.

Based on these characteristics, the alternatives to be tested along South Fulton Parkway will consist of the following characteristics:

- Rubber-wheeled technology
- Limited stops to maintain competitive travel times for user benefits
- Emphasis on peak hour service
- Stations located off of the parkway designed for timely ingress and egress; and
- Land use scenarios characterized by nodal development of non-residential land uses conducive to transit ridership (dry cleaners, restaurants, day care centers, etc.) and/or residential development at densities/intensities consistent with the rural/suburban character of the area. Land use scenarios will also consider increases in population and employment allocations for the study area. The development of the scenarios, specifically the testing of modifications to socioeconomic forecast will be coordinated with the Atlanta Regional Commission as appropriate.

7.2 Next Steps

Based on the major findings and preliminary alternative characteristics listed above, the following represent the next steps in developing land use and transit alternatives for the study area:

- Refine development projections based on site visits, additional data collection and interviews with regional and local planning authorities;
- Conduct further mapping and analysis to determine the spatial distribution of planned development, in order to verify and corroborate ARC growth projections by Census tracts and traffic analysis zones (TAZs);
- Develop an adjustment factor for each tract and TAZ to adjust forecasts to accommodate actual and proposed development projects in order to provide a more current understanding of South Fulton County's growth potential;
- Coordinate with Douglas County to identify planned development outside of the study area that would generate through trips along the corridor and, in turn, impact the feasibility of shared right-of-way alternatives, such as express bus;
- Identify potential station locations based on development trends and initiatives as well as stakeholder input;
- Assess ridership potential and optimal service options through use of the ARC regional travel demand model (TDM);
- Hold a second round of stakeholder interviews to gather input on the proposed land use and transit scenarios. Unlike the first round, which focused on gathering input on land use and transportation trends, this round will seek input from the business community to better understand how potential alternatives will serve their needs and/or impact economic development;
- Analyze the study area's freight characteristics to identify and address potential issues and/or conflict with freight traffic;
- Coordinate with GDOT on the feasibility of potential transit alternatives along South Fulton Parkway and issues concerning access management; and
- Coordinate with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to obtain their perspective on the potential for GRTA commuter services along the corridor.