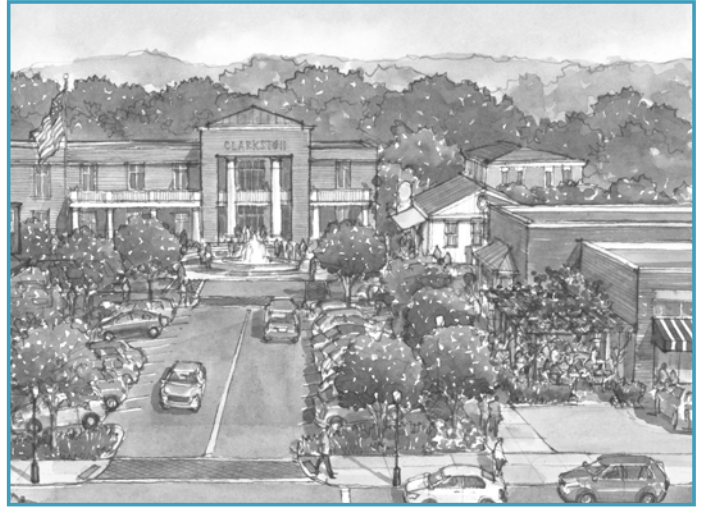


# city of clarkston LCI update

February 26, 2015



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# 1 CONTEXT + PROCESS



# 1.1 A Diverse Study Area

## WELCOME TO CLARKSTON!

The City of Clarkston is a diverse, historic place located in central DeKalb County, Georgia. Originally founded as a Georgia Railroad town in the 1830s, the form and culture of the City has changed greatly over the years. Since 1990, the City has served as a federally mandated asylum for refugees from Asia, Africa, and beyond, garnishing its title as “the most diverse square mile in America.” Within the City’s 1.1 square miles over 60 languages are spoken by local residents. Understanding this, these unique characteristics have informed a custom and creative planning process for the 10 year update of the Livable Centers Initiative.<sup>1</sup>

## EARLY HISTORY

The City of Clarkston planted its roots as a rail road connection point between Athens, Augusta, and South Carolina. The City was officially chartered in 1882 and gets its name from the former Director of the Georgia Railroad, Colonel W.W. Clark. The City grew due to its exceptional location regionally, and became a suburb for homeowners who worked in Atlanta.<sup>2</sup>

## Woman’s Club

Clarkston is home to the historic Woman’s Club, founded in the early 1900s. This building is a notable historic structure within the City Limits. The Club, located on Church Street is the third oldest Woman’s Club building in the state, built in 1913.<sup>3</sup>

## Milam Park

Originally named Clark Park, which was established in 1927, Milam Park serves as the main recreational facility for the City. The founding of this park was spearheaded by a group of mothers and women in Clarkston, including Mrs. A.P. Milam, whom the park was dedicated to years later.<sup>4</sup>

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

The study area is defined as the city limits of Clarkston, which is approximately 10 miles northeast of Atlanta, 5 miles east of Decatur, and 5 miles west of Stone Mountain. The City has direct access to I-285 and State Highway 78. The area was developed due to this regional connectivity and the presence of the Georgia Railroad. To this day, Clarkston exudes a small town feel that is enjoyed by its visitors and residents.<sup>5</sup>



The Georgia Railroad running through Clarkston, Source: City of Clarkston

1 Source: “History,” <http://www.clarkstonga.gov/index.php/about/history>.  
2 Source: “History,” <http://www.clarkstonga.gov/index.php/about/history>.

3 Source: “History,” <http://www.clarkstonga.gov/index.php/about/history>.  
4 Source: “History,” <http://www.clarkstonga.gov/index.php/about/history>.  
5 Source: City of Clarkston <http://www.clarkstonga.gov/index.php/about/history>

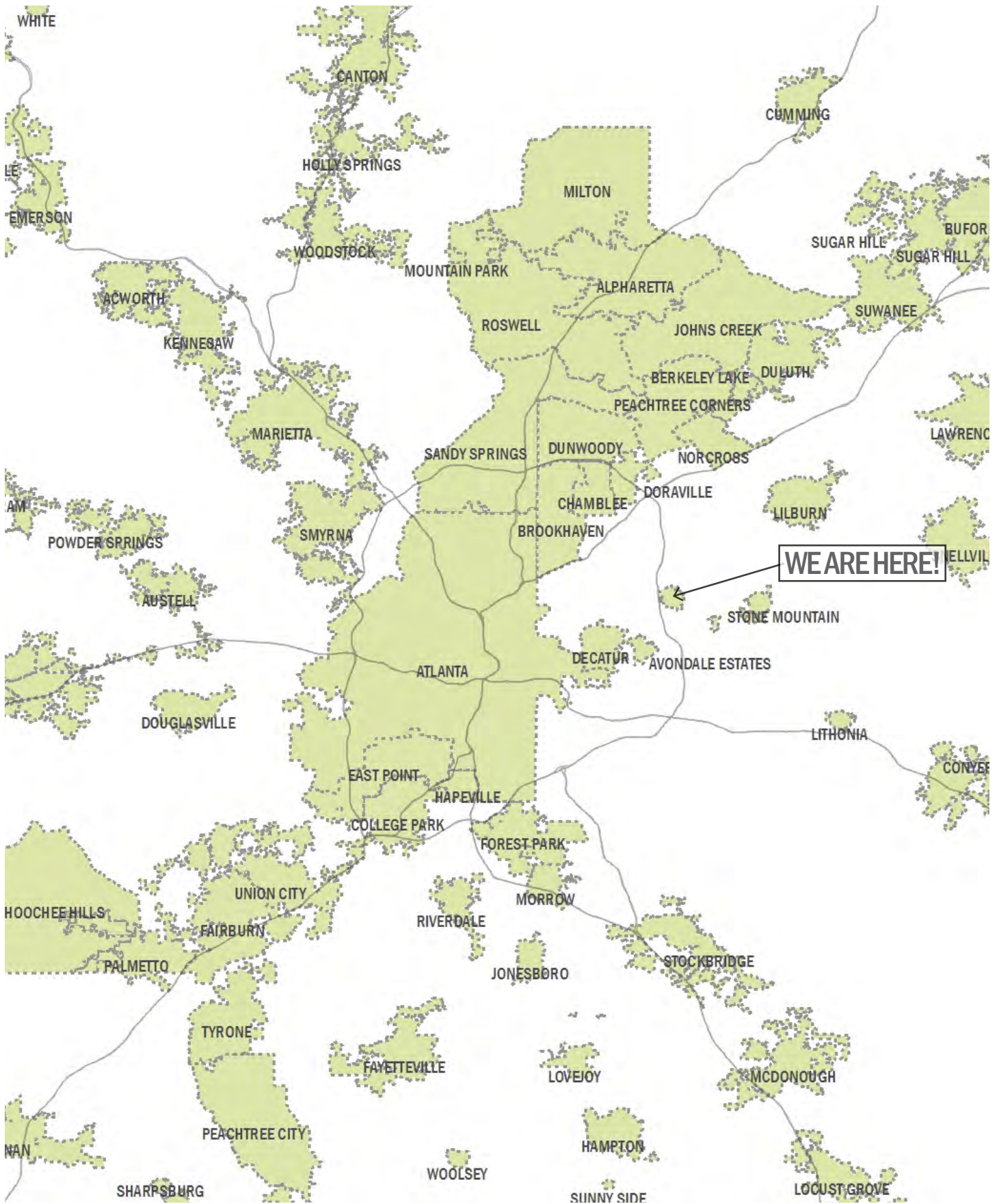


FIGURE 1.1 REGIONAL LOCATION



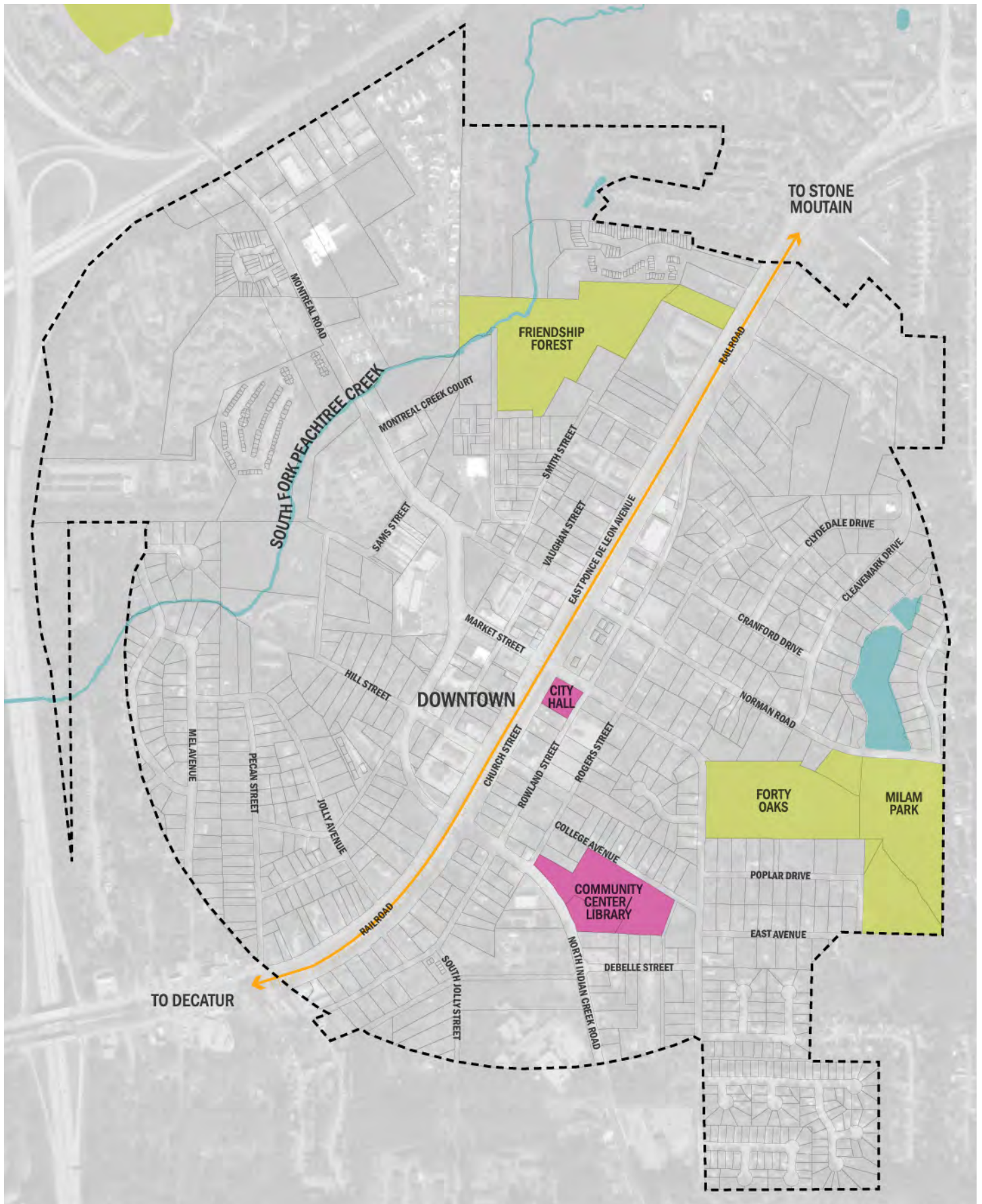


FIGURE 1.2 STUDY AREA/2014 CITY LIMITS

## STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES

The study area covers downtown Clarkston and surrounding areas within the city limits. It is bounded by Stone Mountain Freeway (US 78/SR 410) to the north, I-285 to the east, and bisected by East Ponce de Leon Avenue. An annexation of more land gained approval in November of 2014. The study area is approximately 678 acres and 1.1 square miles.

## LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE

The City is undertaking a ten year update of the initial Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study developed in 2004 and is intended to promote greater livability, mobility and development alternatives throughout the study area. The rationale behind the program is that directing development towards areas with existing infrastructure will benefit the region and minimize sprawling land use patterns. Minimizing sprawl will potentially reduce amount of vehicle miles traveled and the air pollution associated with those miles. Thus, the LCI program is a vehicle whereby the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) can attempt to direct mixed-use and mixed-income development towards existing infrastructure by providing study and implementation dollars.



The LCI program promotes livable communities



Clarkston is a diverse cultural asset to DeKalb County

## 2004 CLARKSTON LCI

The previous study conducted in 2004 addressed the same study area, Clarkston's city limits. The plan established a long-term vision for the City by promoting pedestrian friendly mixed-use development, enhancing connectivity, ensuring multiple transportation options, supporting economic growth and a high quality of life for its diverse population.



The former Crosley Store on E. Ponce de Leon Avenue  
Source: City of Clarkston

Since the plan was completed in 2004, several of the action plan items have been completed and some are currently underway. Additionally, several action items have become irrelevant due to changing situations or obstacles. The purpose of this 10-year update is to reevaluate and update the previous LCI vision based on current market conditions and changing local needs. This ensures the plan meets the goals established in the LCI program, which are stated on the following page.

## GOALS OF 2004 LCI

During this initial process, the LCI's three major goals were:

- Encourage a diversity of uses including mixed income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping, and recreation choices.
- Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area.
- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders particularly low to moderate income and minority citizens.



# 1.2 Planning Process

## PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 10-year plan update started with a review and assessment of the 2004 LCI plan. The City and consultant team worked together and identified the status of each implementation item listed in the previous plan and compiled them into a table of accomplishment. An analysis of existing conditions within the study area was also completed.

### Transportation

A comparison was made among the 2004 LCI transportation improvement maps, DeKalb County's Transportation Plan, and existing infrastructure in the study area to determine any inconsistencies existing between plans and current conditions. Clarkston is embarking on a streetscape project along East Ponce de Leon and Market Street, which was a recommendation from the 2004 LCI. This project is currently in the design phase. There is also discussion to expand the PATH multi-use trail throughout the City.

### Land Use

The update also reviewed the land use plan from the 2004 LCI and compared it with the existing land use and zoning designations in the city. The results indicated that the City has taken measures to anticipate more mixed-

use development throughout the study area and central business district. The zoning has been updated to foster these development patterns.

### Recommendations

Analyzing the 2004 LCI Study informed both the revision and the addition of new goals to better serve the community. The new goals considered include how to achieve sustainable development and make downtown Clarkston a community where people can age in place. Based on the analysis mentioned above, recommendations were made to achieve the updated community vision and goals.

### Market Analysis

A market analysis was conducted during the update process by Bleakly Advisory Group to understand demographic and market conditions, and to determine potential residential and commercial space demands. The results of this analysis were used to guide the physical plan update.

## PHASE 2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A custom public meeting process was designed for the 10-year LCI Update. The public input process, led by Contente Consulting and International Language and



FIGURE 1.3 CLARKSTON LCI UPDATE PLANNING PROCESS



Cultural Services brought the diverse local community into a unique engagement process. The process includes in-person engagement as well as a web presence and neighborhood canvassing.

### Core + Stakeholder Team

The public process began with the first Core Team meeting and stakeholder interviews. The Core Team consists of prominent community leaders and elected officials. The stakeholder team consisted of community members who volunteered their time to the LCI process. This team serves as representatives to the greater community in regard to the LCI process.

### Community Outreach

The project team attended many community events including Clarkston Business Connects and engagement into the refugee population, to reach as many individuals as possible. Further, the team scheduled a coordination meeting with the streetscape design team at AMEC to discuss the physical form of Downtown Clarkston.

### Public Meetings

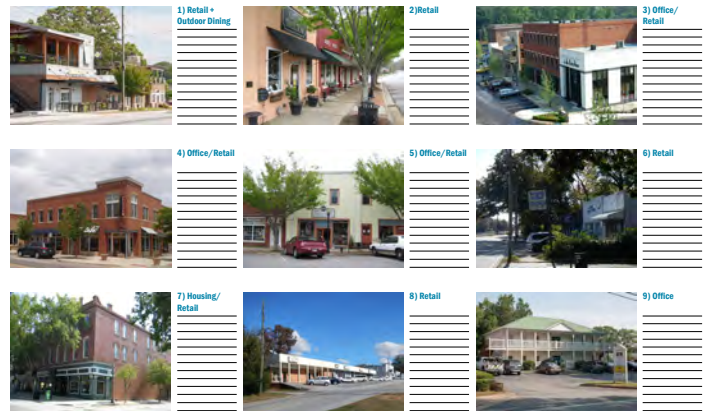
This series of meetings included a Kick-Off meeting on September 9th, 2014. In October of 2014 the project team hosted the Market Street Workshop presenting draft concept plans while soliciting additional feedback from community members. This was followed up by the Draft Plan presentation on February 10, 2015.

## PHASE 3: UPDATED CONCEPT PLAN + LONG-TERM VISION

A concept plan was designed to illustrate long term



Participants marking where they live or work in Clarkston



**COMMERCIAL**  
image preference survey  
September 2014

Look at these images and consider their appropriateness for the study area in the future. Please put two green dots on the two images that you find the most appropriate and two red dots on the two that are least appropriate.

clarkston  
LCIupdate

### Visual Preference Survey from the Kick-Off Meeting

community visions in terms of land use and transportation. The project team was challenged with crafting a mix of uses, appropriate densities, and realistic development schemes for the city to create a vision for the future of Clarkston. These decisions were additionally informed by the market analysis report.

## PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN + DELIVERABLES

An implementation plan formulates a strategy to continue realizing the overall plan’s vision. This entire process is synthesized into this comprehensive document as a plan for Clarkston’s future. Strategies and methods to encourage development and investment in the City are outlined and a 5-Year Schedule of Actions lists realistic short-term goals and projects in the Implementation section of this plan.



Streetscape concept sketch, Source: AMEC

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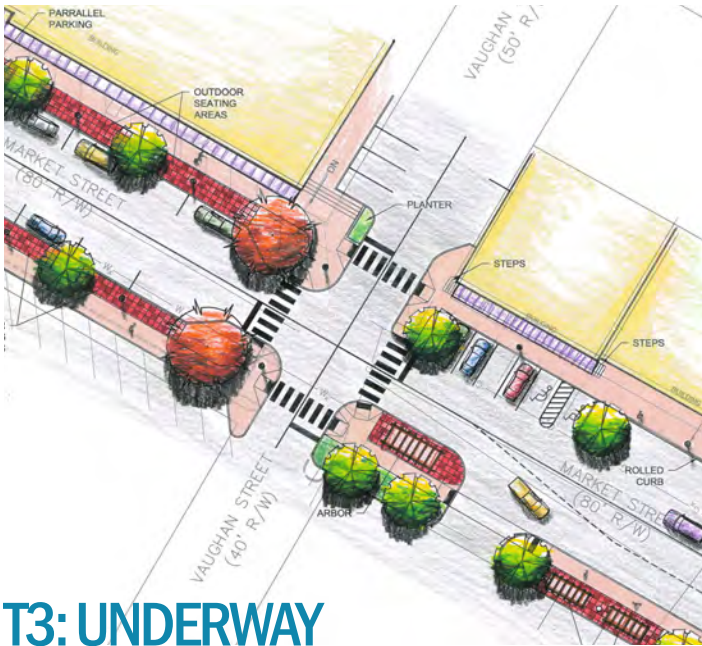
## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



# 2.1 Previous LCI Accomplishments

## 10 YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2004 LCI Study identified 21 projects and action items for the City of Clarkston. The accomplishments of this study are summarized in the charts and images within this section. Many projects have been completed or are underway, such as the streetscape project which is currently in the design phase.



**T3: UNDERWAY**



**T2: COMPLETED**

## Accomplishments Summary

### Projects Completed to Date

- Transportation Initiatives 1
- Housing Initiatives 0
- Other Local Initiatives 3

### Projects On-Going/Underway

- Transportation Initiatives 1
- Housing Initiatives 4
- Other Local Initiatives 1

Clarkston has received \$4,000,000.00 in grants since 2004. Funding sources have also included \$500,000.00 from the CDBG program for Milam Park's pool and bath house renovation. The buildings were condemned in 2008 and the project was completed in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

### Not Started/To Be Completed

- Transportation Initiatives 1
- Housing Initiatives 2
- Other Local Initiatives 1

### No Longer Relevant

- Transportation Initiatives 1
- Housing Initiatives 2
- Other Local Initiatives 1W

<sup>1</sup> Source: Altamira Design, "Clarkston LCI 5-Year Update."



**TABLE 2.1 REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENT**

Project	Description	Engineering/ Study Year	Construction Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant
Transportation Initiatives - Bike + Pedestrian Projects							
T-1	ECO-Lot, Behind City Hall, bordered by Hill Rogers + Rowland	2009	2010			X	
T-2	Streetscape on Montreal from N. Indian Creek to E. Ponce	2010	2014	X			
T-3	Streetscapes on E. Ponce from Montreal to N. Indian Creek	2014/ 2015	2017/ 2018		X		
T-4	Streetscapes on Church, Rowland, + E. Ponce	2011	N/A		X		
T-5	Streetscapes on N. Indian Creek from Market to E. Ponce	2011	N/A		X		
T-6	Gateway at E. Ponce and + N. Indian Creek	2012	N/A		X		
T-7	Gateway at E. Ponce + Market	2012	N/A		X		
T-8	PATH Trail along Church	2012	N/A				X

Source: Clarkston LCI 5-Year Update



Other/Local Initiatives						
Project	Description	Study/ Implementation Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant
OL-1	Create + adopt Zoning Ordinance that will allow LCI Implementation	2008	X			
OL-2	Develop Design Guidelines for new development in City Limits	2004	X			
OL-3	Update + Adopt Comp. Plan	2008	X			
OL-4	Implement new residential urban infill guidelines	2008				X
OL-5	Create 3 community gateways	2008			X	
OL-6	Strictly enforce building code violations	2004		X		
Housing Initiatives						
Project	Description	Study/ Implementation Year	Complete	Underway	Not Started	Not Relevant
H-1	New park-land assemblage + construction, prepared a Master Plan for Friendship Forest + solicited grants for construction	2008		X		
H-2	Create development authority w/funded Director Position/No Development Authority has been created. The City has formed a business owners' alliance and holds monthly meetings.	2008		X		
H-3	Fund zoning + building code enforcement position/CDBG funding awarded for this position	2007				X
H-4	Develop overlay district for Village Center	2008		X		
H-5	Develop urban design guidelines for the City that include ped/bike networks	2008		X		
H-6	Coordinate with DeKalb County Development Authority to promote private investment for infill + redevelopment/initiatives/no action date	N/A			X	
H-7	Investigate the potential for development of a Development Authority for the City of Clarkston/ no action date	N/A				X
H-8	Develop a Community Development Corporation/ no action date	N/A			X	

Source: Clarkston LCI 5-Year Update

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# 2.2 Land Use Assessment

## OVERVIEW

Land uses and the relationship between them impact the quality of life in a community. Different land uses have varying impacts on transportation and utility systems. The arrangement of land uses in Clarkston and their proximity also support or discourage different modes of transportation, including bicycling and walking; this can directly impact the vehicular system by reducing or increasing traffic.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The study area includes a variety of land uses shown in Table 2.2 to the right. The majority of the land within the study area is Residential Medium Density consisting of single family homes. Multi-family residential is also prevalent accounting for condos, apartments and townhomes. These residential uses surround the downtown of Clarkston fostering potential for walkability in the study area.

Commercial uses are concentrated along the major thoroughfares and throughout the downtown. Generally speaking, the crossroads of Clarkston are Market Street and E. Ponce de Leon Avenue. This is the heart of the downtown, although currently underutilized. The downtown contains restaurants, services, and civic uses. Commercial is also scattered to the north along Montreal Road and to the south along North Indian Creek.

TABLE 2.2 EXISTING LAND USE	
Existing Land Use	Percentage
Commercial	12.0%
Institutional Intensive	5.30%
Parks/Open Space	10.0%
Residential Medium Density	38.7%
Residential Multi-Family	33.6%
Trans/Comm/Utility	0.2%
Transitional	0.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ESRI + City of Clarkston

The most significant open spaces are Friendship Forest and Milam Park, accounting for 10% of land use. Despite having these large parks, smaller public spaces are lacking throughout the City.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Aside from existing conditions, land use considerations are also affected by the future land use designations. These designations reflect a long-term vision for growth in Clarkston. They establish policies that, under state law, must support proposed rezoning requests.



The Clarkston Community Center on College Avenue



Renovated Avalon apartments along Montreal Road

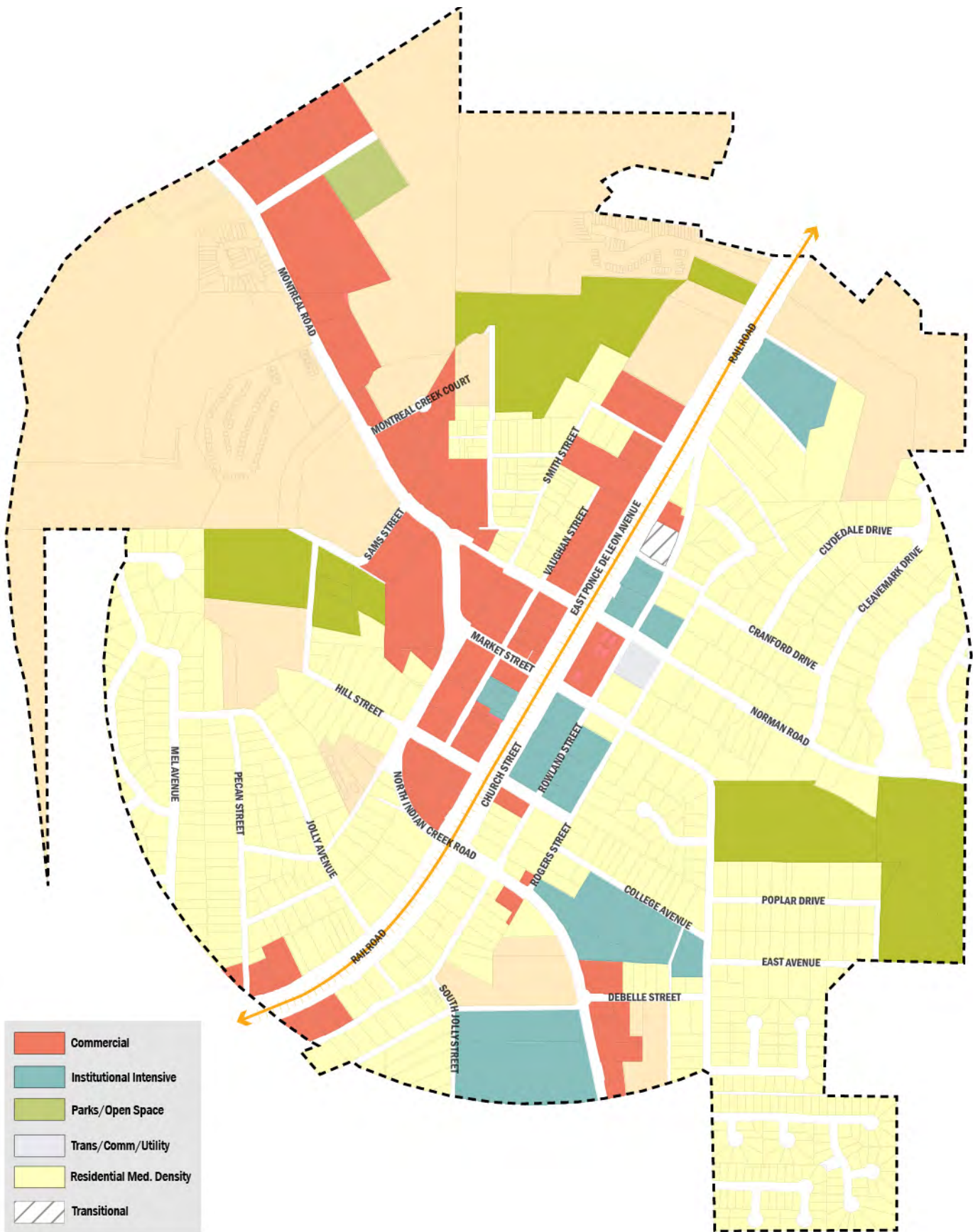


FIGURE 2.1 EXISTING LAND USE MAP

Source: City of Clarkston



## Existing Conditions

The future land use designations are shown in Figure 2.2. In this plan, downtown Clarkston is coded Central Business District and Civic/Institutional. This is supported by a Mixed Use designation on East Ponce as you enter Clarkston from I-285 and travel down North Indian Trail towards US 78. These projected uses will help foster more commercial activity within the City.

Areas surrounding downtown are designated as residential uses. The Suburban Areas designation exhibits a dendritic street pattern of single family homes. The orange Neighborhood Redevelopment Area contains older homes. The Multi-Family Redevelopment Area houses many aging garden style apartment buildings ripe for enhancements or redevelopment.



Thrift Town is a popular grocery store in Clarkston

## EXISTING ZONING

Zoning is the legal framework that codifies the land use vision of a comprehensive plan to regulate private development. It directly shapes the form, placement and design of new buildings, and therefore affects the future of how a community feels and functions more than any other single element.

## Existing Conditions

The study area contains nine zoning districts. The zones Neighborhood Residential 1 (NR-1) and Neighborhood Residential 2 (NR-2) allow only single-family homes. Neighborhood Residential 3 (NR-3) and Neighborhood Residential-Community Development District (NR-CD) allow single family, townhomes, apartments, condominiums, duplexes and triplexes. The designations Town Center, Residential Commercial, Low Density

Neighborhood Commercial, and Moderate Density Neighborhood Commercial allow a mix of uses to different degrees. Town Center is the most urban and allows 0' lot lines as well as a maximum building height of 75' and minimum of 18'. The Town Center zone is paired with a set of Design Guidelines published in 2008.<sup>1</sup>

## Town Center District Design Guidelines

These guidelines contain three main objectives:

- Enhance safety, comfort, and enjoyment of users including pedestrians, bicyclist and transit patrons.
- Provide a diverse selection and mix of commercial, residential, and entertainment uses.
- Promote well-designed and active streetscapes.

The document reviews building design standards including facade treatments, amount of fenestration, building color, and roof-lines. The Town Center streetscape is also defined dimensionally. Additionally, this document also addresses screening, pedestrian design standards, street furniture and signage. Although not currently adopted, these guidelines will progress in the future.<sup>2</sup>

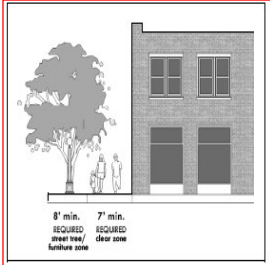
### SECTION 2-STREETSCAPE

**Streetscape**


- Adjacent property owners shall coordinate green space and open space along property line, to create open space areas, unless site constraints prohibits property owners to do so.
  - Landscaping of green space and open space shall maintain consistency from one property line to the next.
- Preserve specimen trees and or significant tree stands as a method to produce shade and reduce the heat island effect
- Provide marked pedestrian walkways through parking areas to the sidewalk/main entrance.
  - Must be clearly identified and possess key components of a pedestrian walkway. (Illustration)
- The establishment of a shared parking agreement with adjacent uses is strongly encouraged.
- Provide bicycle parking facilities
- Outdoor dining areas and public art are encouraged at building fronts, where applicable.

**SIDEWALK ZONE**

- Public sidewalks shall be on both sides of all streets
- Sidewalks shall consist of 2 zones.
  - Landscape and sidewalk clear zone
- Sidewalk clear zone.
  - Shall be located immediately contiguous to the landscape zone and shall be continuous.
  - Local streets should also establish the sidewalk clear zone at a minimum of 7 feet and the landscape zone shall be a minimum of 8 feet, creating a minimum sidewalk/landscape zone of 15 feet as required on arterial streets.
  - Sidewalks shall be hard-scape and unobstructed for a min-height of 8ft
  - Newly constructed wider sidewalks shall provide adequate transition zone to existing sidewalks that may be narrower.



The Sidewalk consist of 2 zones; the sidewalk clear zone (7ft min) and the landscape zone (8ft min).



Sidewalk Clearance Zone

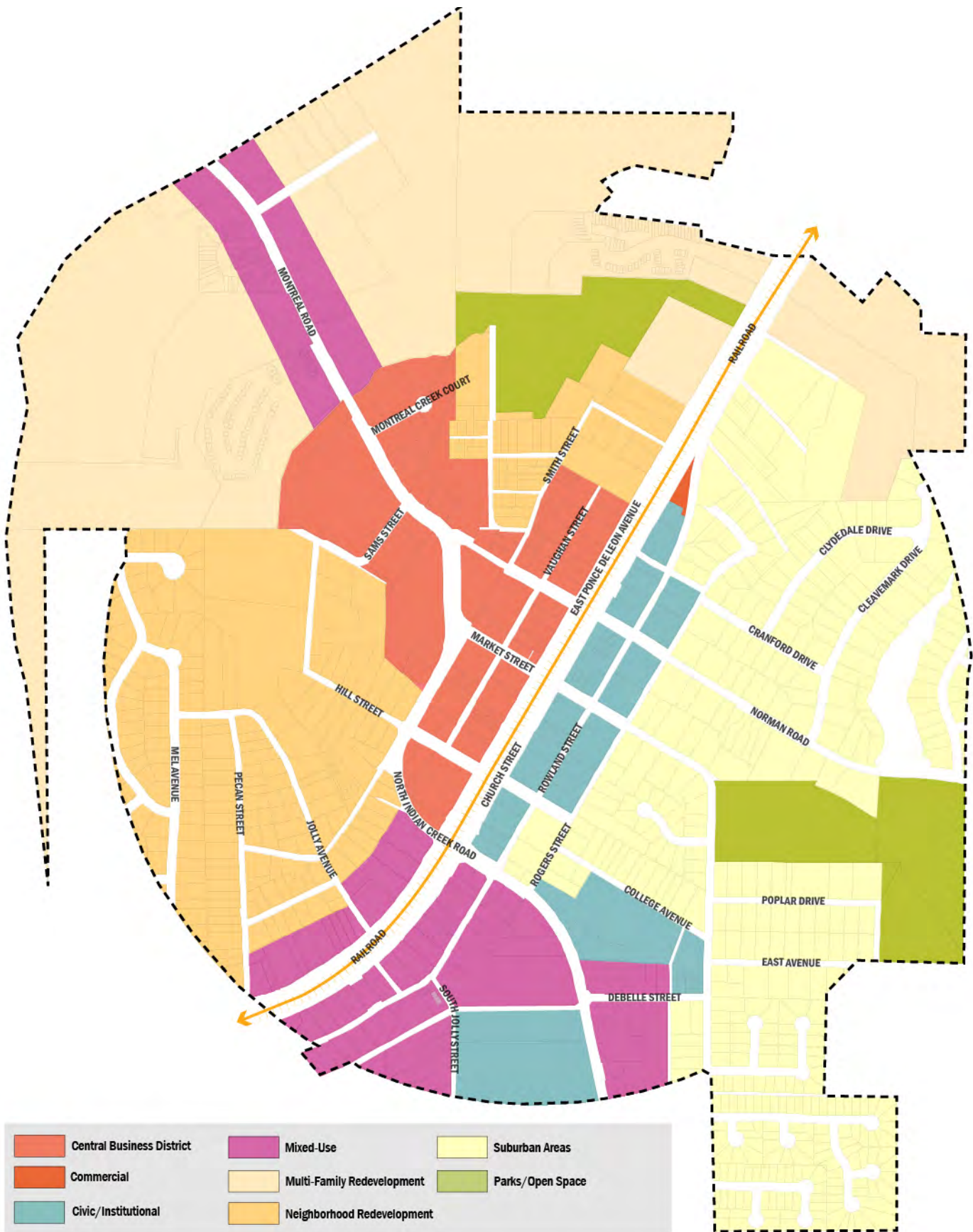
Design guidelines established for Town Center zoning district.

Source: City of Clarkston Town Center Guidelines

1 Source: City of Clarkston Zoning Code

2 Source: City of Clarkston, "Town Center Design Guidelines,"





**FIGURE 2.2 FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

Source: City of Clarkston

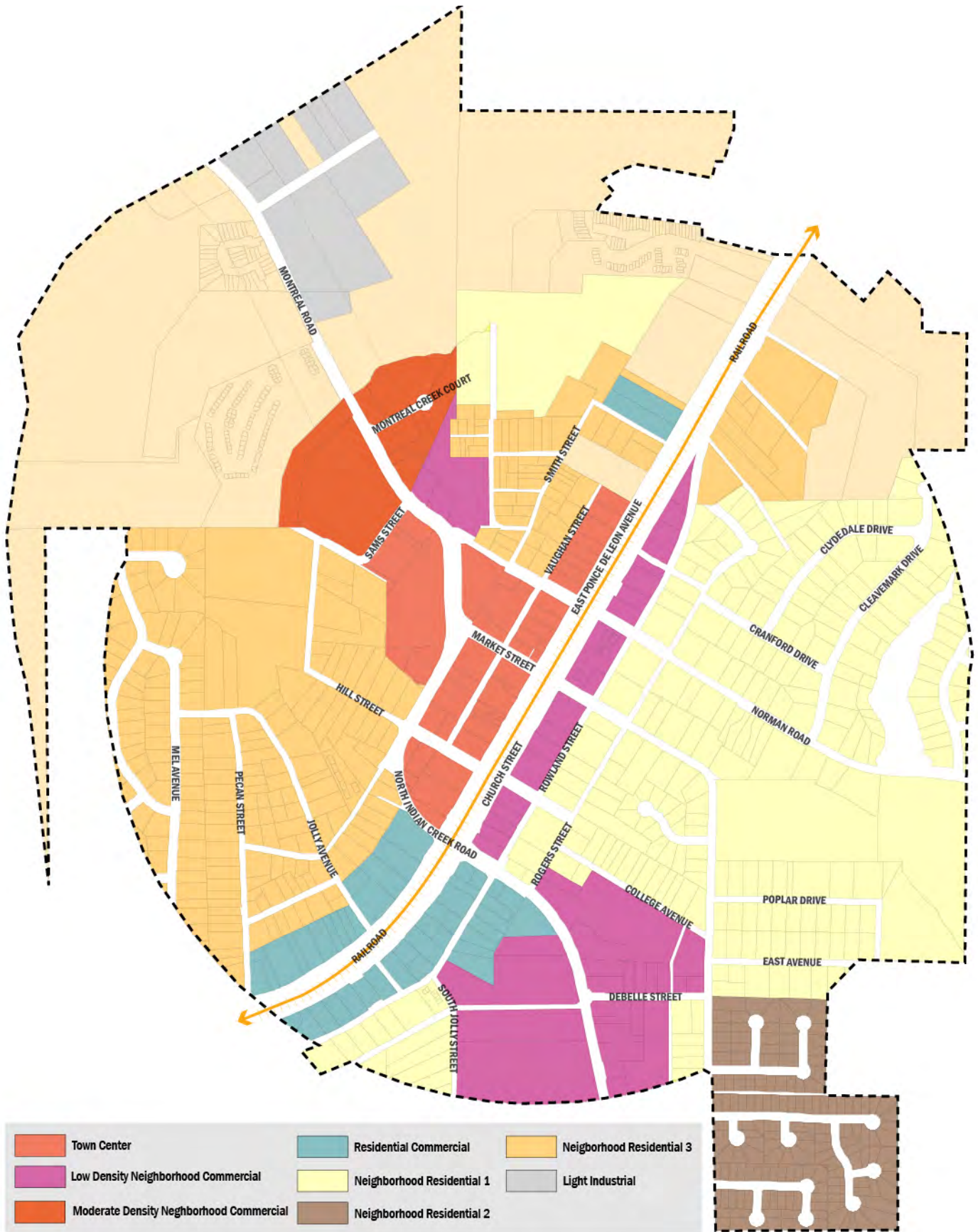


FIGURE 2.3 ZONING MAP

Source: City of Clarkston

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# 2.3 Transportation Assessment

## OVERVIEW OF SYSTEM

The City of Clarkston continues to promote a multi-modal transportation network as a contributing factor to local quality of life. The foundation of this network is a system of streets, sidewalks, sharrows, and the PATH multi-use trail. To build on the basic network, a number of transportation improvements identified in the original LCI Study and the 5-Year Update have been constructed. The analysis below details the existing components of the City's transportation system as well as recent capital improvements in the study area.

### Existing Street Network

East Ponce De Leon Avenue, Church Street, and North Indian Creek Drive/Montreal Road are the major roadways that pass through the City, while numerous other roadways provide local mobility and access. East Ponce De Leon Avenue and Church Street are parallel and are located immediately adjacent to the CSX freight rail line in the City. These roadways are generally oriented east-west, although within the City they are oriented to the northeast-southwest. East Ponce De Leon Avenue is located on the northwest side of the rail line, while Church Street is located on the southeast side of the rail line. North Indian Creek Drive provides a grade separated RR crossing between these two roadways, while Market Street provides an at-grade crossing.

The CSX freight rail line, East Ponce De Leon Avenue, and Church Street cross over I-285 just west of Clarkston. The location of the rail line prevented a standard diamond interchange from being constructed at this location. Instead, East Ponce De Leon Avenue has a half diamond interchange providing access to I-285 northbound and from I-285 southbound. Church Street has a half diamond interchange providing access to I-285 southbound and from I-285 northbound. These roadways primarily serve traffic from the surrounding area passing through Clarkston traveling to and from I-285.

North Indian Creek Drive/Montreal Road is oriented north-south, running roughly parallel to I-285. North Indian Creek Drive connects to Memorial Drive and provides access to Georgia Perimeter College, Clarkston High School, retail development, and multi-family residential development. It is a 4-lane road with two through lanes in each direction

from northwest of Rowland Street to Montreal Road. This same 4-lane design was present southeast of Rowland Street until recently, when a road diet was implemented. This road diet begins near Rowland Street and continues southeast out of Clarkston into unincorporated DeKalb County. This segment of the roadway now consists of one through lane in each direction, a center two-way left-turn lane, and unmarked bike lanes on each side of the road.

Montreal Road is a 2-lane road in downtown Clarkston, which merges with North Indian Creek Drive north of downtown and becomes a 4-lane road, and transitions back to a 2-lane road at the intersection with Montreal Creek Court. Montreal Road crosses Stone Mountain Freeway/US 78 and ends at Lawrenceville Highway/US 29, primarily serving the multi-family residential developments and doctors' offices along the corridor, as well as some non-local traffic.

A small street grid is located within downtown Clarkston.



FIGURE 2.4 CLARKSTON STREET NETWORK

# Transportation System Principles

A community's transportation system is comprised of several interconnected components that work together to move people and goods. These include vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities. Together, these components interact with one another to affect travel mode, land use and system flexibility.

More than anything else, a community's form and transportation is affected by the layout of its streets and blocks. While buildings and uses change, street patterns often remain unchanged over centuries. As such, blocks and streets can be thought of as the bones of a community. Just as bones determine a person's height, stature, and looks, block and street patterns directly affect a community's form and the importance of key sites within it. There are two major types of street patterns:

**Dendritic** or branch-like street systems are made up of many small and disconnected local streets that feed into fewer collector streets that, in turn, feed into even fewer arterials. Because this pattern contains many dead-end local streets, it forces all traffic onto collectors and arterials, resulting in large block sizes and increased trip distances.

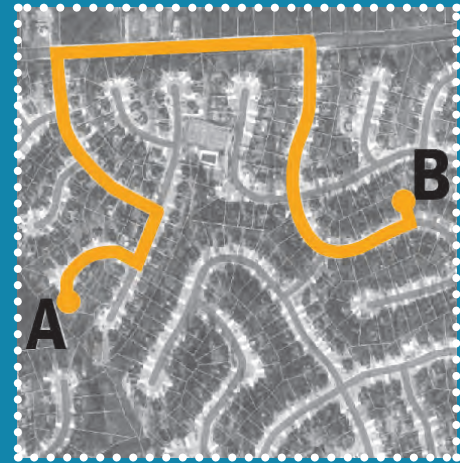
These patterns tend to discourage walking, encourage traffic congestion on collectors and arterials, and create a system prone to shutdown when incidents disrupt traffic on collectors or arterials. Its creation of longer trips also supports "sprawl" marked by automobile orientation, separation of use, and disregard for the quality of the streetscape. These great distances also have a direct impact on the ability of emergency vehicles to respond to situations in an efficient manner.

**Interconnected** street systems are made up of a series of small and medium sized streets arranged in a grid or modified grid pattern. In this pattern, virtually all streets connect to other streets. This provides small blocks, ensuring many possible routes and eliminating the need for wide, high-traffic arterials and collectors.

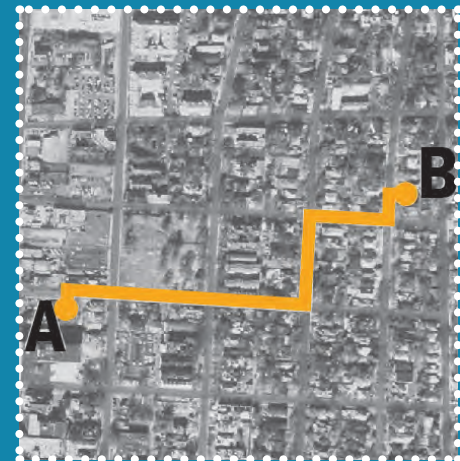
An interconnected street pattern encourages walking, bicycling, and other forms of non-motorized transportation because it increases the likelihood of being able to make a trip without being forced onto a high-speed, high-volume road. It also tends to support pedestrian-oriented land uses by allowing land uses to be closer together, thus increasing the opportunities for shared parking and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes.

"Smart growth" principles generally support an interconnected system over a dendritic system, because it better balances pedestrian and vehicular needs. Both cars and pedestrians operate better when many routes of travel, shorter distances, and more direct trips are available.

Generally, the largest a block should be is 800 feet in length or 3,200 feet in perimeter, although between 200 and 600 feet in length or 800 to 2,400 feet in perimeter is more desirable. In developed areas with an dendritic system, achieving this can be a challenge because interconnected systems work best over a large area. In most places, the reality is that arterials and collectors serve transportation needs that extend beyond the immediate area. Even so, a localized interconnected system can reduce congestion on these streets by dispersing local traffic.



In a dendritic system the distance from A to B is one mile and achievable along one route.



In an interconnected system the distance from A to B is one half mile, with multiple route options.



Glenwood Park in Atlanta is a community with appropriate block sizes and walkable streets.



Additional local roadways are within the City but outside of the downtown street grid. These are all two-lane roadways with relatively low traffic volumes and slow travel speeds. Four signalized intersections are located within the City, while all other intersections are stop-controlled. Low traffic volumes and slow traffic speeds along most roadways make stop-controlled intersections appropriate throughout most of the City.

## BIKE + PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, trails, and paths. Ideally, pedestrian facilities include a clearly defined, smooth walking surface, shading, and adequate buffering from nearby cars. Bicycle facilities are slightly more varied and can include both bicycle paths and lanes. Below is a list of the various types of facilities:

**Bicycle paths** or trails are generally ten to twelve-foot-wide paved areas that permit travel in two directions. Lanes may or may not be striped. Usually, these facilities are built in conjunction with greenways.

**Cycle tracks** combine the experience of an off-street bicycle facility with the on-street infrastructure of a bicycle lane. They provide a protected, dedicated bicycling area physically separated from motor traffic and distinct from the sidewalk.

**Bicycle lanes** are striped, one-way on-street facilities. They are located next to the curb so cyclists move in the same direction as traffic, and should be at least 5 feet wide. Lanes are necessary only on streets with vehicular speeds greater than 25 miles per hour, because cyclists on slower streets can ride safely with traffic.

**Sharrows** is a shared roadway marking placed in the center of a travel lane. It is to indicate that bicyclists may share the lane with cars. It works well on streets without heavy traffic.

### Existing Conditions

The bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the City of Clarkston is vital to the mobility of the its residents, particularly those who do not have access to a vehicle.

**PATH Foundation Trail:** The most notable bike facility is the PATH Foundation’s 19 mile long Stone Mountain Trail, which passes through downtown Clarkston. This trail provides regional bike/pedestrian mobility by connecting downtown Atlanta to the Martin Luther King Jr Historic site, the Carter Center, the Atlanta Beltline Eastside



The PATH multi-use trail in Clarkston

Trail, downtown Decatur, Stone Mountain, and numerous neighborhoods.

The Stone Mountain Trail enters the City from the northeast as a multi-use trail along Church Street. The multi-use trail section ends at the intersection of Norman Street at Rowland Street, and continues through the City as an on-street route along Rowland Street, Lovejoy Street, and Church Street. The multi-use trail begins again along Church Street southwest of Clarkston, a short distance inside of I-285. Completion of this segment of the multi-use trail within the City is being pursued by DeKalb County and the PATH Foundation.

**Sharrows:** These are pavement markings that indicate on-street bike routes. Sharrows are appropriate on relatively low-volume, low speed roadways. They indicate to bicyclists a preferred bicycling route and indicate to motorists that bicycle traffic should be expected along the roadway. Within the City of Clarkston, sharrows designate the on-street PATH Stone Mountain Trail route along Rowland Street and Lovejoy Street. Sharrows are also



Existing sharrow along Norman Road

## Legend

- Existing Shoulder
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing PATH
- Proposed PATH
- LCI Study Area
- Railroad



FIGURE 2.5 EXISTING BICYCLE FACILITIES



along Norman Road to direct bicyclists to the PATH Trail access point.

**Road Diet:** As previously mentioned, a road diet was recently implemented on North Indian Creek Drive near Rowland Street southeast out of Clarkston into unincorporated DeKalb County. This road diet includes unmarked bike lanes on each side of the road. These lanes are striped separately from the vehicular lanes but do not currently include designated bicycle markings. These bike lanes provide a bike connection between downtown Clarkston, the Clarkston Community Center and Library, Clarkston High School, and Georgia Perimeter College.

**Sidewalk Network:** The sidewalk network within the City is shown in Figure 2.6. As the figure shows, the North Indian Creek Drive/Montreal Road corridor has sidewalks along both sides of the road. A number of additional roadways within the City have sidewalks on at least one side of the road, although most residential roadways in the City have no sidewalks. Additionally, some sidewalk segments are associated with specific developments within the City, rather than being part of a cohesive pedestrian network. Sidewalks are typically about 4-5 feet wide and the condition of the sidewalks varies greatly, with some sidewalks cracked and crumbling.

Significant pedestrian activity was observed throughout the study area. Pedestrians included people walking to and from bus stops, retail shoppers, and school kids. Bicyclists were also common in the City. Some bicyclists appeared to be local residents, while others were just passing through the City on the PATH Stone Mountain Trail.

A number of large, older apartment complexes are



Clarkston lacks a comprehensive sidewalk system



A cyclist crossing the CSX rail line downtown

located in the City as well as just outside the city limits. Many residents of these complexes have relatively low incomes and typically walk, bike, or use transit rather than drive. Downtown Clarkston and the adjacent blocks have restaurants, retail stores, government buildings, the Clarkston Community Center, and other destinations. This proximity of lower income residents to commercial and government buildings results in the significant pedestrian and bike activity observed in the City.

The lack of sidewalk infrastructure and the condition of some sidewalks presents challenges to pedestrians in the City. Also, as previously mentioned, there are only four traffic signals within the study area. Low traffic volumes and slow speeds allow pedestrians to cross safely at many stop-controlled intersections within the City. However, pedestrians lack convenient crossing locations along the 4-lane and 3-lane segments of North Indian Creek Drive/Montreal Road. Pedestrians commonly need to cross these roadways at mid-block locations or at intersections that only have side-street stop-control. Crossing these roadways during peak periods can be difficult due to higher traffic volumes, which results in reduced pedestrian connectivity in the study area.

## FREIGHT RAIL LINE

A CSX freight rail line passes through the center of downtown Clarkston, running roughly northeast-southwest, parallel to East Ponce De Leon Avenue and Church Street. This rail line serves as a barrier to travel modes within the City, essentially splitting the City in half. There are only two crossing locations within the City:

- Market Street has an at-grade roadway crossing connecting City Hall to businesses downtown. No separate bike or pedestrian facilities are present here. Bicyclists and pedestrians must travel on the





FIGURE 2.6 EXISTING SIDEWALKS

roadway with vehicular traffic when crossing the tracks here.

- North Indian Creek Drive has a grade separated crossing under the railroad tracks. Five total vehicular lanes pass under the rail line, along with sidewalks on both sides of the road. This crossing serves a significant amount of non-local traffic, particularly traffic traveling to and from I-285.



MARTA bus stop at E. Ponce de Leon Avenue and Market Street

## TRANSIT

Two MARTA local bus lines pass through the City of Clarkston, as shown in Figure 2.6. Route 120 travels east-west through the City on East Ponce De Leon Avenue, providing connections to Tucker and to the Mountain Industrial Boulevard corridor. Peak period headways are as little as 10 minutes, with off-peak headways of about 20-30 minutes. Route 125 travels north-south through the City on North Indian Creek Drive and Montreal Road, connecting to Georgia Perimeter College and the Northlake Mall area. Headways are typically about 20 minutes, with some off-peak headways of 30-45 minutes.

Some bus stops within the City have shelters with trash receptacles. However, most bus stops consist only of signage designating the stop location and no amenities. Both bus routes connect to MARTA's Avondale heavy rail transit station, about 3.5 miles southwest of Clarkston. This station connects to the rest of MARTA's rail network, providing access to downtown Decatur, the City of Atlanta, Hartsfield Jackson International Airport, and many other destinations.

MARTA Mobility provides ADA complementary para-transit service to eligible persons with disabilities. This service is provided within a 3/4 of a mile corridor on each side of all fixed bus routes. MARTA Mobility is an advanced reservation service which operates on the same days and during the same hours as regular bus and rail service

## USER CHARACTERISTICS

Commuting to and from work is the most common trip that most people make on a daily basis. These trips primarily take place during the morning and evening peak periods and are the major cause of traffic congestion. The US Census American Community Survey gathers data about the commute modes of Americans. The commute modes of residents of Clarkston and for Metro Atlanta are shown in Table 2.3



MARTA bus on Market Street



MARTA bus stop along Norman Road



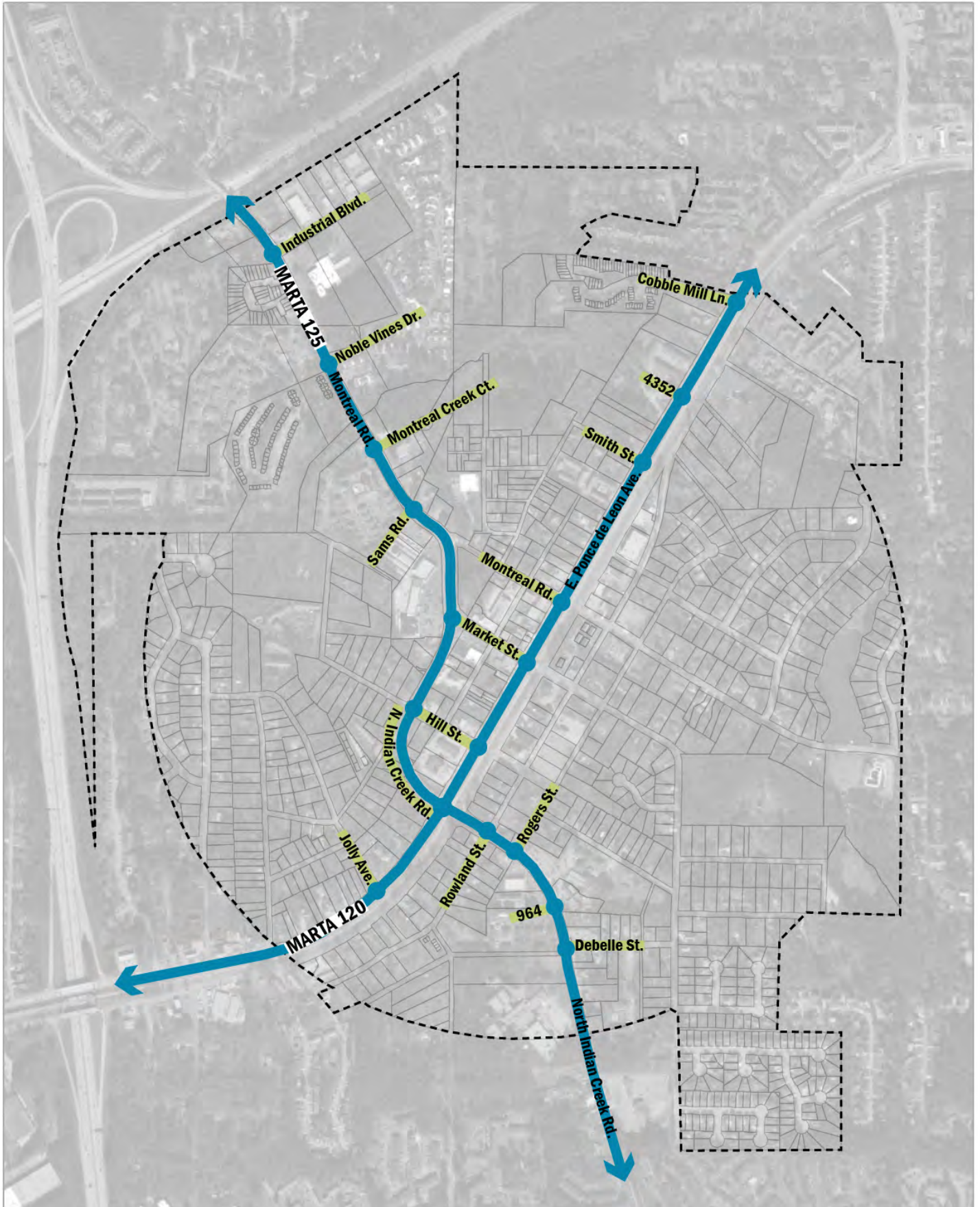


FIGURE 2.7 MARTA BUS ROUTES + STOPS



As the table shows, a lower percentage of Clarkston residents drive alone to work than the average for residents of Metro Atlanta. However, a higher percentage

one worker needs to commute but only one vehicle is available, other travel modes will be used more, including carpooling, biking, walking, and transit.

**TABLE 2.3 COMMUTE MODE**

Commute Mode for Workers 16 Years + Older	Percent of Residents	
	Clarkston	Metro ATL
Drove Alone	70.9%	77.6%
Carpool	15.3%	10.7%
Public Transportation	9.4%	3.2%
Walk	2.3%	1.3%
Bicycle	0.6%	0.2%
Other modes (Taxi, motorcycle, etc.)	0.0%	1.4%
Worked at home	1.6%	5.7%

Source: Census American Community Survey 5-Year Average Through 2012

of Clarkston residents use nearly all other modes of travel, including carpooling, public transit, walking, and biking. Field observations showed a significant amount of walking, biking, and transit use. This census data supports those observations.

The primary reason for use of alternate modes of travel is vehicle availability. Table 24 shows how many vehicles per household that residents of Clarkston and Metro Atlanta have available.

**TABLE 2.4 VEHICLE OWNERSHIP**

Vehicles Available	Percent of Residents	
	Clarkston	MetroATL
No vehicle available	6.5%	3.2%
1 vehicle	40.8%	22.8%
2 vehicles	35.8%	44.2%
3 or more vehicles	16.9%	29.8%

Source: Census American Community Survey 5-Year Average Through 2012

As the table shows, 6.5% of Clarkston residents have no access to a personal vehicle while 3.2 % of Metro Atlanta residents have no vehicular access. This requires residents of Clarkston to find other commute modes. It should also be noted that 40.8% of Clarkston residents have access to only one vehicle. When more than

This data shows how commute patterns for the residents of Clarkston differ from the rest of Metro Atlanta. Clarkston residents have a greater need for transportation infrastructure that supports alternative mode travel for daily commute purposes than typical residents of Metro Atlanta.

## PRIOR PLANS + STUDIES

Prior transportation plans and studies addressing the study area were reviewed as a starting point for this plan. This section summarizes prior transportation related analysis and recommendations as they apply to the current planning effort.

### Clarkston LCI + 5-Year Update

The original Clarkston LCI study provided background information on roadways, bike/pedestrian infrastructure, transit operations, and the commute characteristics of residents in Clarkston. The study also made recommendations for transportation projects as part of its implementation plan.

Transportation recommendations in the implementation plan focused primarily on sidewalks, streetscapes, multi-use paths, and other bike/pedestrian infrastructure. One project recommended improving the railroad crossing at Market Street for both pedestrians and vehicles and considering transitioning to a Quiet Zone crossing. Gateway locations with attractive signage were developed to inform people when they have entered the City and to create a sense of identity. The LCI also made recommendations related to transit and other alternative modes, including the following:

- Develop a Commute Options Information Campaign and distribute information about the various commute options available in Clarkston (vanpool, carpools, bike/walking and transit, including schedules) to new residents. Information should be posted on the City’s website and at City Hall
- Develop a Local “How to Ride Transit” Guide in several languages.
- Maintain a Town Center Transportation Information Center at City Hall and at the community center that provides bus passes, maps, schedules, ride-matching information and other related information

**TABLE 2.5 CITY OF CLARKSTON PROJECTS, 2014 DEKALB COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

<b>City of Clarkston Projects</b>			
<b>Project ID</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Opinion of Probable Capital Cost</b>
0167	Church Street / Ponce de Leon at N. Indian Creek Road Underpass Improvements	Operational improvements at the adjacent intersections of Church St. and Ponce de Leon with N. Indian Creek, including possible turning movement restrictions	\$1,000,000
1237	Church Street Multiuse Path	Adding Church St. multi-use path (10-12 feet), plant and utility zone (5 feet), and railroad safety fencing (adjacent to railroad) from N. Indian Creek Rd. to Mauck St.	\$2,000,000
1278	E. Ponce de Leon Avenue Streetscapes - North Side	Streetscape E. Ponce de Leon (north side of the road) from N. Indian Creek Rd. to eastern city limits.	\$2,000,000
1279	E. Ponce de Leon Avenue Streetscapes - South Side	Streetscape E. Ponce de Leon Avenue (south side of the road) from N. Indian Creek Rd. to eastern city limits.	\$2,000,000
1317	Montreal Road Pedestrian Improvements	Install sidewalks and improve pedestrian crossings along this corridor.	\$200,000
1326	N. Indian Creek Pedestrian Improvements	Install N. Indian Creek sidewalk, plant and utility zone, street trees, street furniture, fixtures, lighting and updated transit signage from Montreal Rd. to southern city limits.	\$7,000,000
1666	East Ponce de Leon Road / Montreal Road/Norman Road Streetscape Improvements	Improve the E. Ponce de Leon Gateway corridor according to the Clarkston streetscape initiative; design features include new pedestrian and bicycle features as well as streetscapes and an at-grade CSX RR crossing/safety feature.	\$9,000,000
1804	North Indian Creek at Jackson Drive Pedestrian Improvements	Install a pedestrian crossing to assist with access to the library.	\$200,000
3254	N Indian Creek Road Diet	Subtract two lanes, to add bike lanes for this road diet candidate project.	\$1,000,000
4022	Casa Drive Bridge Improvement	Replace bridge because bridge sufficiency rating is 50 or less and therefore meets the threshold to qualify for bridge replacement funding.	\$300,000

Source: DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan, Draft Recommendations Report, April 2014

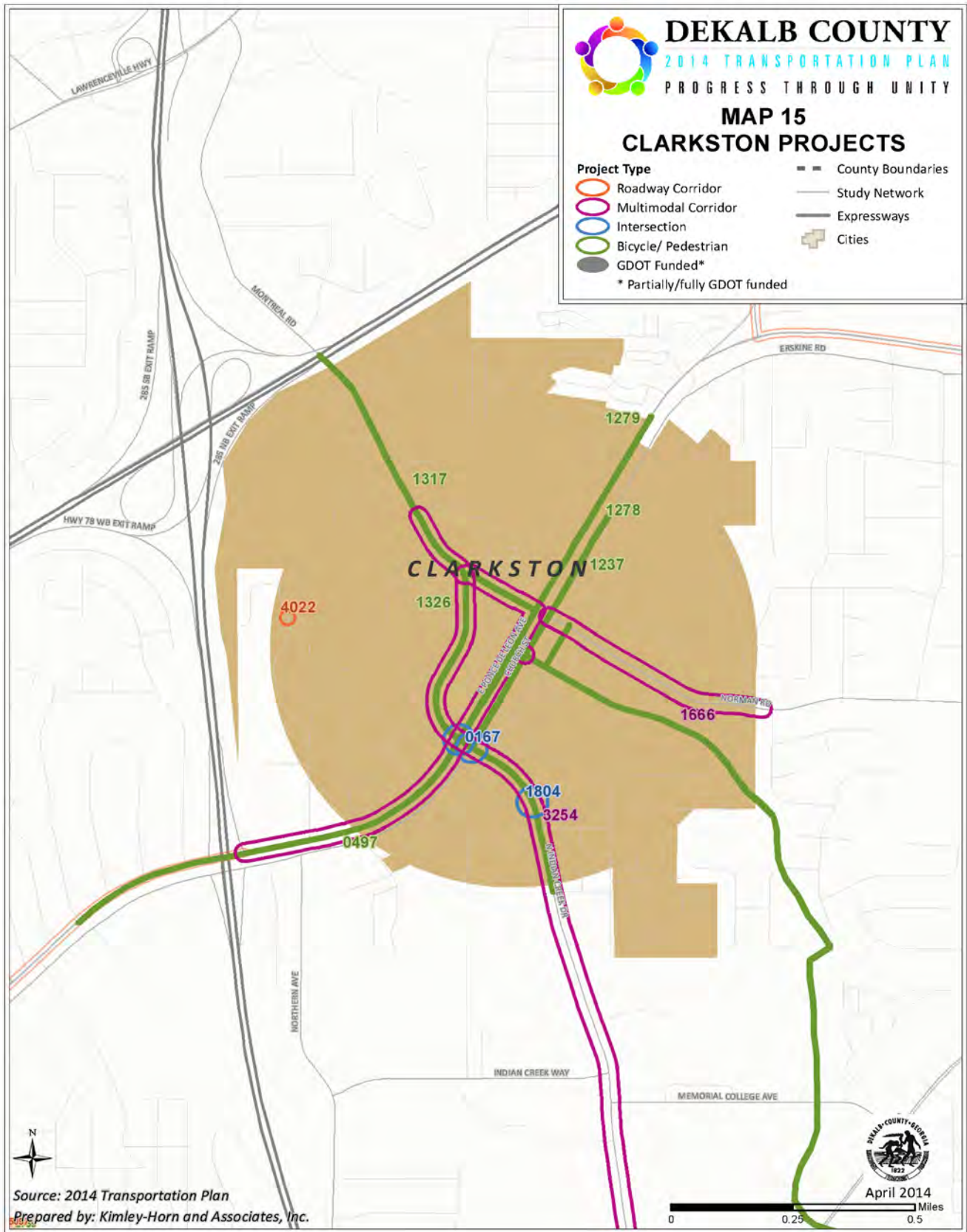
While significant transportation recommendations were made as a part of the LCI, these recommendations have not yet been implemented. The LCI 5-Year Update's Evaluation and Appraisal Report identified a lack of funding and the current economic conditions as the primary barriers to implementation.

The 5-Year update also noted that the City solicited HPP (High Priority Projects) funding from Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. This solicitation resulted in a \$4 million grant for projects from the LCI short term work program, including streetscape improvements and other transportation related projects in the downtown area.

Concept design for this project is currently ongoing.

### **DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan**

The DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan is the recently completed comprehensive transportation plan for DeKalb County. This plan developed an inventory of existing transportation conditions in the County, assessed transportation needs, and developed project and policy recommendations. The plan is intended to guide transportation decision making for the County until the next plan update is conducted. Recommended transportation projects in the City of Clarkston are shown



**FIGURE 2.8 CITY OF CLARKSTON PROJECTS MAP**

Source: DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan, Draft Recommendations Report, April 2014



in Table 2.5 and Figure 2.7.

## Traffic Study

In April 2013, the City completed a traffic study of the following intersections:

- North Indian Creek Road at Church Street
- North Indian Creek Road at East Ponce De Leon Avenue

Church Street and East Ponce De Leon Avenue are parallel roadways with railroad tracks between them. North Indian Creek Road passes underneath the railroad tracks between the intersections. The intersections of North Indian Creek Road at Church Street and North Indian Creek Road at East Ponce De Leon Avenue are approximately 150 feet apart. This study involved performing field observations at both intersections during the AM and PM peak periods to identify any visual deficiencies and contributing factors to operational issues. Suggested recommendations for these intersections were developed based on this analysis and upon engineering judgment. Based on peak hour observations, both intersections appear to be operating at or near capacity. There is significant queuing during the PM peak period at both intersections. This queuing is primarily on North Indian Creek Road southbound at Church Street. Due to the proximity of these intersections, the queue extends back onto East Ponce De Leon Avenue in the eastbound through/right-turn lane. The study recommended potential ways to reduce congestion at these intersections, which includes:

- Add a right-turn lane to the East Ponce De Leon Avenue eastbound approach
- Add an eastbound right-turn overlap with the North Indian Creek Road northbound left-turn phase onto East Ponce De Leon Avenue.
- Or convert both intersections to roundabouts
  - » Based on observed traffic volumes, roundabouts are anticipated to reduce queuing and operate with minimal delay.
  - » Due to the right-of-way constraints caused by the proximity of the railroad overpass, the study anticipated that the center of the two roundabouts would have to be realigned further away from the current center of each intersection.
  - » Since North Indian Creek Road is a four-lane undivided roadway with two travel lanes in each direction, the analysis anticipated that two-lane roundabouts would be needed in order to maintain the current vehicular capacity.

The study indicated that further analysis is required to validate existing and future operations of the suggested improvements.

## ULI Technical Assistance Panel Report

In March 2013, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) convened a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) in the City of Clarkston. The ULI TAP Report documents the results of their analysis. The TAP Report focuses primarily on economic development, real estate, land use, and other related issues. In terms of transportation, the TAP Report recommends the implementation of the Streetscapes and Pedestrian Enhancements project in downtown. The report states that the project “will give the community the feeling that investment is happening” and should help improve property values, particularly for properties along the project route. This programmed project is now in the concept design phase, as discussed below.

## PROGRAMMED PROJECTS

The objective of transportation planning is implementation of transportation projects. Programmed projects are those projects that have funding allocated to them and are moving forward in the design, right-of-way, and construction phases.

### ARC Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the 18-county Metro Atlanta region. They are responsible for developing a long-range, multi-modal, financially constrained transportation plan, known as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which meets all federal transportation Clean Air Act planning requirements. The current version of the RTP is named PLAN 2040. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) allocates federal funds for use in constructing transportation projects that are part of the RTP. The TIP is the programmed short-range work plan for Metro Atlanta.

One project from the ARC TIP, City Streetscapes and Pedestrian Enhancements, is located in the City of Clarkston. As a part of the TIP, this project has design and construction funding programmed. This project is currently in the concept design phase.

No other projects in the TIP are located in or near the City of Clarkston. Other planned projects near the City are in the RTP and are considered aspirations. Projects that are designated as aspirations do not have any long-term

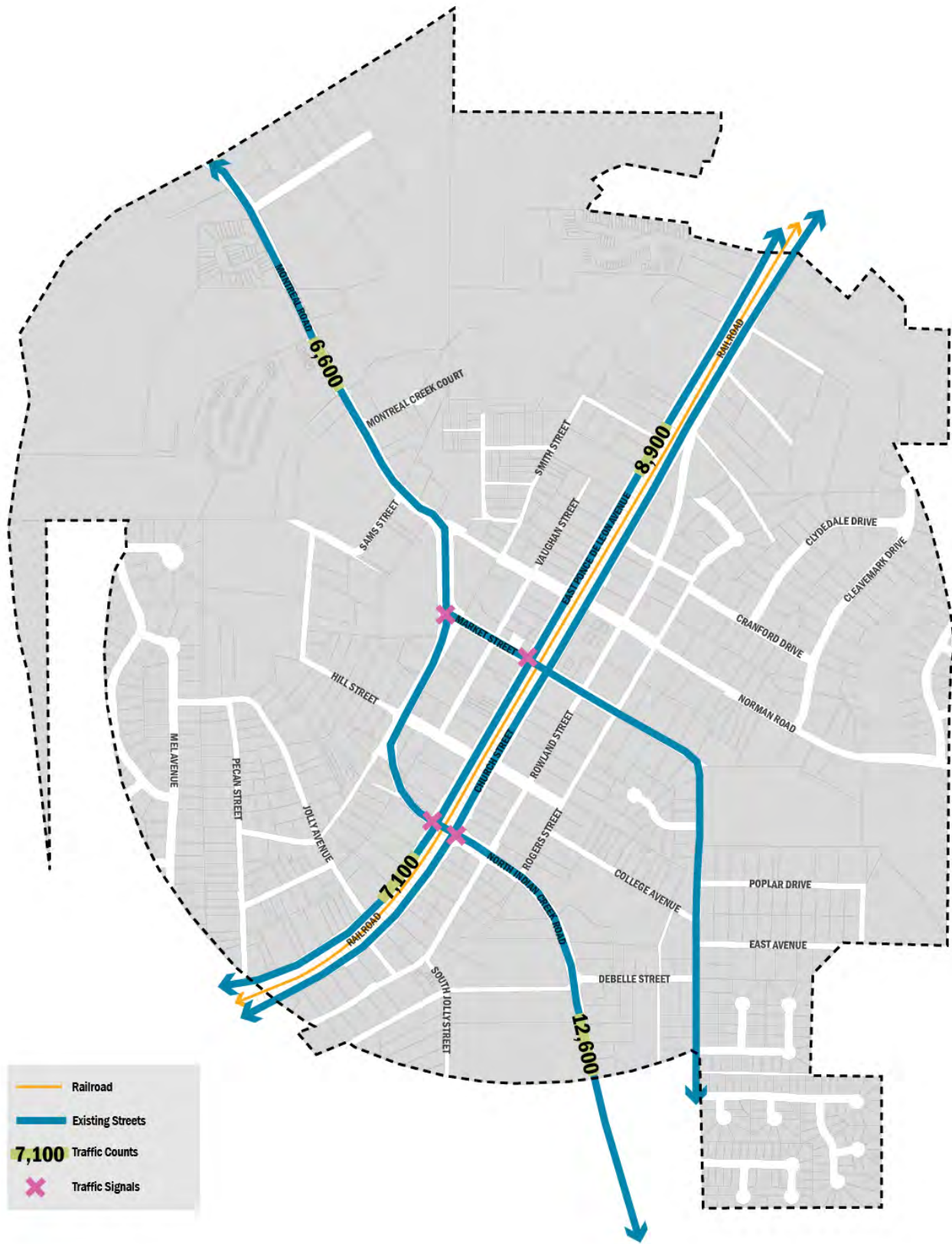


FIGURE 2.9 TRAFFIC COUNTS + SIGNALS

funding allocated through the planning horizon of the RTP, which is the year 2040.

### Streetscapes + Pedestrian Enhancements

As previously noted, prior to the 5-Year update of the original LCI Study in 2009, the City solicited HPP (High Priority Projects) funding from Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. This \$4 million grant is being used to pay for the City Streetscapes and Pedestrian Enhancements project, which includes streetscape improvements and other transportation related projects in the downtown area. The project limits include:

- E Ponce de Leon Avenue from I-285 to Market Street
- Market Street between North Indian Creek Drive and Rowland Street
- Rowland Street between Market Street and Norman Road
- Norman Road between Church Street and the City Limits (Milam Park)
- Rowland Street to Market Street

Concept design for these enhancements is ongoing and includes significant public input. Two all day workshops have been held, with additional public outreach planned. This has provided residents and business owners of Clarkston with the opportunity to work with the design team and develop enhancements that truly fit the community. While the exact design has not been determined, proposed design features for this project include:

- Sidewalks, streetscape elements, street furnishings,

lighting, and decorative fencing

- Wayfinding signage/banners and gateway monuments/signage
- Bus shelters
- Street resurfacing and drainage improvements
- Traffic signals/mast arms and utility relocation/new utility poles
- Dam reconstruction

Additional public meetings will be held throughout 2014, with concepts expected to be approved in December 2014. The City estimates that construction of this project will be completed in 2017.

### PATH Multi-Use Trail

As previously stated, the most notable bike facility in the City is the PATH Foundation's 19 mile long Stone Mountain Trail. Much of the Stone Mountain Trail within the City is an on-street route. A proposed project could complete the multi-use trail section within the City and in part of unincorporated DeKalb County. This project includes construction of a multi-use trails along Rowland Street, with connections on Market Street and Long Indian Creek to reach downtown. The project also includes a potential bridge over I-285.

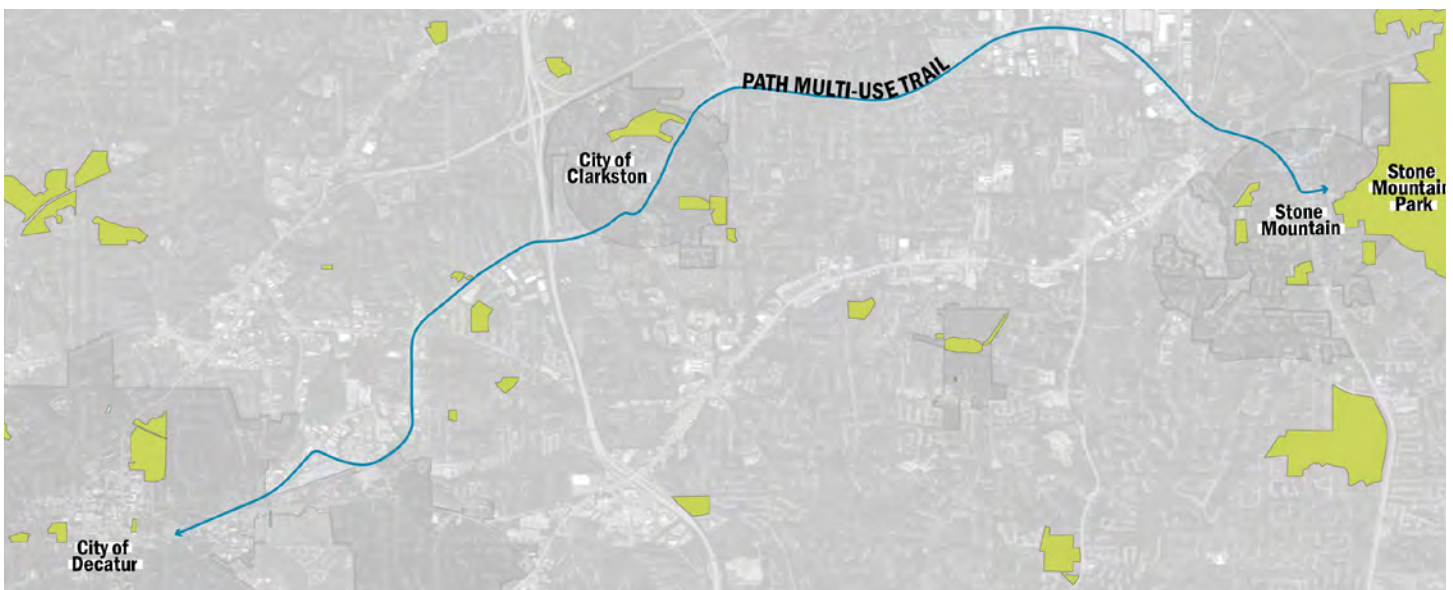


FIGURE 2.10 PATH TRAIL SYSTEM



# 2.4 Markets + Economics

## AREA OVERVIEW

Clarkston is a small city located within central DeKalb County, Georgia incorporated in 1882. It is located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Interstate 285, and State Route 78, known locally as the Stone Mountain Freeway.

- Clarkston is mostly suburban in character with the exception of a small, gridded downtown area of ten to twelve blocks that serves as the historic center of the city.
- Clarkston’s two primary thoroughfares are Ponce De Leon Ave. and North Indian Creek Dr. / Montreal Rd. The city is bisected by a CSX rail right-of way.
- Clarkston is 17 miles north-northeast of Downtown Atlanta, 5 miles northeast of Decatur, and 5 miles west of Stone Mountain Village.
- Despite its central location and adjacency to freeways and interstates, the city lacks a strong regional visibility, largely due to terrain and access restrictions. It is difficult to see Clarkston or its businesses from area freeways or major thoroughfares.
- Nearby assets include Georgia Perimeter College, just south of the City along North Indian Creek Dr., and a cluster of health and medical facilities north of the city along Lawrenceville Highway.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Population + Households

The City of Clarkston has an estimated 2014 population of 8,080 residents, which represents a gradual decline of 0.6% annually since 2000. The 3-mile market area has a population of 100,252, which has remained stable since 2000. Over that same period, DeKalb County has grown by a rate of 0.6% annually while the Atlanta MSA has grown by an average annual rate of nearly 2%. Thus, Clarkston has not shared in the modest growth of DeKalb County or the more robust growth seen elsewhere in the Atlanta region since 2000.

Clarkston has an estimated 2,881 households, with an average size of 2.8 persons per household, slightly larger than DeKalb County and the Atlanta MSA households, at 2.47 and 2.67 persons per household respectively. Since 2000, the number of households in Clarkston has declined slightly.

### Age

Clarkston’s population is significantly younger that of the surrounding area, with a median age of 31 years, compared to 35 years for the 3-mile market area and the county. Children 17-and younger represent 29% of Clarkston’s residents, slightly higher than the county or MSA, while seniors (65+) represent only 5% of the

**Table 2.5 Population + Households**

Population	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
2000 Census	8,735	101,241	665,866	4,263,447
2010 Census	7,554	97,971	691,893	5,286,728
2014 Estimate	8,080	100,252	719,052	5,574,225
CAGR Growth 2000-2014	-0.6%	-0.1%	0.6%	1.9%
Households	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
2000 Census	3,076	38,116	249,343	1,559,711
2010 Census	2,616	37,506	271,809	1,943,885
2014 Estimate	2,881	39,114	286,343	2,056,364
CAGR Growth 2000-2014	-0.5%	0.2%	1.0%	2.0%
2014 Est. Average Household Size	2.8	2.48	2.47	2.67

Source: Nielsen, Inc., US Census CAGR=Compound Annual Growth Rate

population, less than half the rate of the county or MSA.

### Race + Ethnicity

Clarkston is notable for the diversity of its population. Much of this diversity can be attributed to the high amount of refugee resettlement in the area.

- An estimated 56% of Clarkston’s population is black or African American, compared to 52% for DeKalb County, and 32% in the Atlanta MSA.
- 14% of Clarkston’s residents are white, half of the rate in DeKalb County, and a fourth of the regional percentage.
- An estimated 24% of Clarkston’s population is Asian, two-to-four times the county and regional rate.
- Latinos and Hispanics represented just 3% of Clarkston’s population, one-fourth of the regional

- The national origins of Clarkston’s immigrant population tend to be varied, changing over time based on shifts in global socio-economic conditions and federal immigration policy.

### Income

Clarkston’s median household Income is \$31,947, just 61% of the Atlanta MSA median household income of \$52,533. More than a third of Clarkston’s families live below the poverty level, compared to 15% county-wide.

### Education

Residents of Clarkston tend to have lower levels of educational attainment than the County or Region. Nearly one fourth of Clarkston residents have no high school diploma or equivalent, twice the regional rate. Rates of

**Table 2.6 Age + Generational Cohorts**

Age + Generational Cohort	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
Digitalis (0-9)	18%	15%	14%	14%
Millenials (10-29)	29%	25%	26%	27%
Generation X (30-48)	34%	32%	32%	30%
Boomers (50-68)	16%	20%	21%	21%
Silent (69-84)	3%	6%	7%	7%
Greatest (85+)	0%	1%	1%	1%
Children (0-17)	2,370 29%	25,096 25%	172,492 24%	1,422,482 26%
Seniors (65+)	430 5%	9,756 10%	75,038 10%	581,929 10%
2014 Est. Median Age	31	35	35	36

Source: Nielsen, Inc., Bleafly

average.

- Nearly half of Clarkston’s residents are foreign-born, compared to 16% in DeKalb.
- More than a third of Clarkston’s residents, 35%, are not United States citizens, over four times the regional proportion of 8%.
- Nearly half of Clarkston’s households speak a language other than English at home, compared to 19% for DeKalb. One-third of Clarkston residents speak English “less than very well.”
- Discussions with stakeholders suggest that Clarkston’s refugee and immigrant population tends to be transitional, meaning that many new immigrants will often spend 3 to 12 months in Clarkston, becoming established and integrated in the United States, before moving elsewhere using newly established social and economic networks.

college and advanced degrees are roughly half DeKalb County rates.

### Household Characteristics

Households in Clarkston tend to be larger than in DeKalb and the Atlanta MSA. More households in Clarkston have children under 18 present.

### Housing Characteristics

Clarkston’s housing characteristics are truly unique and significantly distinctive from the rest of the county and the region.

- The vast majority of Clarkston’s households, 78%, are renters, more than twice the regional rate.
- Clarkston’s owner-occupied homes tend to be of lower value than homes elsewhere in the region.

Table 2.7		Race, Ethnicity		+ Language	
Race, Ethnicity + Language		Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
2014 Est. Pop by Single Race Class					
White Alone	14%	33%	35%	55%	
Black or African American Alone	56%	50%	52%	32%	
Amer. Indian + Alaska Native Alone	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Asian Alone	24%	12%	5%	5%	
Native Hawaiian + Other Pac. Isl. Alone	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Some Other Race Alone	2%	2%	5%	5%	
Two or More Races	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Hispanic or Latino:					
Not Hispanic or Latino	97%	95%	90%	89%	
Hispanic or Latino	3%	5%	10%	11%	
Place of Birth					
Born in USA	54%	N/A	84%	87%	
Foreign Born	46%	N/A	16%	13%	
US Citizenship Status					
US-Born Citizen	54%	N/A	84%	87%	
Naturalized US Citizen	11%	N/A	6%	5%	
Not a US Citizen	35%	N/A	11%	8%	
Language					
Speak only English at Home	56%	71%	81%	83%	
Speak Other Language at Home	44%	29%	19%	17%	
Speak English "Less than Very Well"	33%	N/A	9%	8%	

Source: Nielsen Inc., Bleafly

**TABLE 2.8 HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

Household Income	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
2014 Est. Median Household Income % of MSA Median Income	\$31,947 61%	\$42,348 81%	\$48,002 91%	\$52,533 100%
Households by Income				
HH with income >\$15,000	619 21%	6,675 17%	41,073 14%	266,304 13%
HH with income \$15K-\$35K	961 33%	10,099 26%	64,576 23%	429,949 21%
HH with income \$35K-\$100K	1,067 37%	15,704 40%	124,092 43%	915,324 45%
HH with income >\$100K	234 8%	6,625 17%	56,602 20%	444,787 22%
2014 Families Below Poverty	35%	21%	15%	12%

Source: Nielsen, Inc., Bleafly



**TABLE 2.9 EDUCATION**

Educational Attainment (25+)	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
Less than HS Diploma	24%	14%	12%	13%
4 Year College or More	20%	34%	39%	34%
Advanced Degree	6%	14%	15%	12%

Source: Nielsen, Inc., Bleakly

**TABLE 2.10 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**

Educational Attainment (25+)	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
Est. Households	2,881	39,114	286,343	2,056,364
Small Households (1 or 2 people)	1,496 52%	24,059 62%	177,544 62%	1,144,949 56%
Large Households (5+)	491 17%	4,226 11%	29,765 10%	252,811 12%
Households with Children	1,226 43%	13,160 34%	92,986 32%	782,809 38%
Households without Children	1,655 57%	29,954 66%	193,357 68%	1,273,555 32%
Non-Family Households	1,022 35%	16,055 41%	116,719 41%	659,672 32%
2014 Est. Average Household Size	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7

Source: Nielsen, Inc., Bleakly

Just 81 of Clarkston’s owner-occupied homes, or 13%, are valued at more than \$200,000, compared to 38% to 40% across the market area, county and region.

- Much of Clarkston’s housing stock is aging: 84% of Clarkston’s housing units were built prior to 1980, compared to roughly half of houses regionally.
- Just 23% of Clarkston’s housing units are single-family homes, compared to 56% for DeKalb and 66% for the Atlanta MSA.
- Multi-family housing units represent 67% of Clarkston’s housing stock, compared to 49% for DeKalb County and 27% for the Atlanta Region.

**TAX DIGEST**

Clarkston’s Tax Digest in 2013 was \$64.6 million. This represents a decline of 36% from the Tax Digest recorded in 2007, and compares to a 25% decline county-wide. This puts Clarkston’s current Tax Digest at approximately 1998 levels, representing zero net tax-digest growth in 16 years.

Clarkston’s Tax Digest growth from 1996 to 2013 has been very modest, even compared to DeKalb County’s relatively slow growth over the same period. A comparison with DeKalb County and other regional peers, such as Gwinnett County and the City of Lawrenceville, puts

Clarkston’s slow Tax Digest growth into perspective:

- Between 1996 and 2013, Clarkston’s Tax Digest grew by 10% while DeKalb County’s grew by 66%.
- Over the same period, Lawrenceville’s Tax Digest grew by 97% while Gwinnett County’s grew by 144%.

Over time, Clarkston has increased property tax millage rates in the face of slow Tax Digest growth. Clarkston’s 2013 city millage rate is 17.95 which contributes to a combined property tax rate of 61.235 mils,

**EMPLOYMENT**

Clarkston is the home to an estimated 660 jobs, and 2,195 working residents.

Of the 660 jobs estimated to be located in Clarkston, the largest sectors represented are real estate, rental & leasing (20%), health care (17%) and administration (private & public, 30%).

- Thirty-two percent of Clarkston’s jobs pay more than \$40,000 per year, compared to 44% for the Atlanta MSA.
- Many of Clarkston’s jobs are located within small, entrepreneurial family-run establishments. As a result, there are relatively few opportunities to work in large organizations in Clarkston.

Of the 2,195 primary jobs held by Clarkston’s residents, the largest employment sectors represented are retail

**TABLE 2.11 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

Housing Characteristics	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
<b>Tenure</b>				
% Owners	22%	48%	56%	66%
% Renters	78%	52%	44%	34%
Total Housing Units	3,191 100%	44,430	320,213	1,273,555
Renter-Occupied Units	2,548	25,508	158,741	939,707
Owner-Occupied Units	643	18,922	161,472	1,351,974
Owner Units Valued <\$100K	245 38%	4,145 22%	36,358 23%	273,910 20%
Owner Units Val \$100K-\$200K	317 49%	7,554 40%	59,448 37%	546,802 40%
Owner Units Val \$200K-\$500K	81 13%	6,783 36%	55,617 34%	448,362 33%
Owner Units Val >\$500K	0%	41 2%	10,049 6%	82,900 6%
<b>Age of Housing</b>				
Units Built since 2000	280 9%	5,083 11%	63,350 20%	653,781 29%
Units Built 1980-2000	1,140 36%	13,469 30%	100,562 31%	922,940 40%
Units Built pre-1980	2,682 84%	35,749 80%	211,860 66%	1,135,788 50%
Median age of housing unit (Years)	36	37	33	24
<b>Type of Housing</b>				
1 Unit Detached (SF)	728 23%	19,931 45%	178,981 56%	1,522,424 66%
1 Unit Attached (TH)	312 10%	2,748 6%	21,232 7%	117,013 5%
Small Multi-Family (2-4 Units/Bldg)	384 12%	3,070 7%	16,871 5%	93,124 4%
Lg Multi-Family (5+ Units/Bldg)	1,755 55%	18,511 42%	101,218 32%	487,600 21%

Source: Nielsen, Inc., Blegly

(16%), health care (12%) and accommodations and food service (11%).

- 19% of Clarkston’s working residents earn more than \$40,000 per year, compared to 44% for the Atlanta MSA.

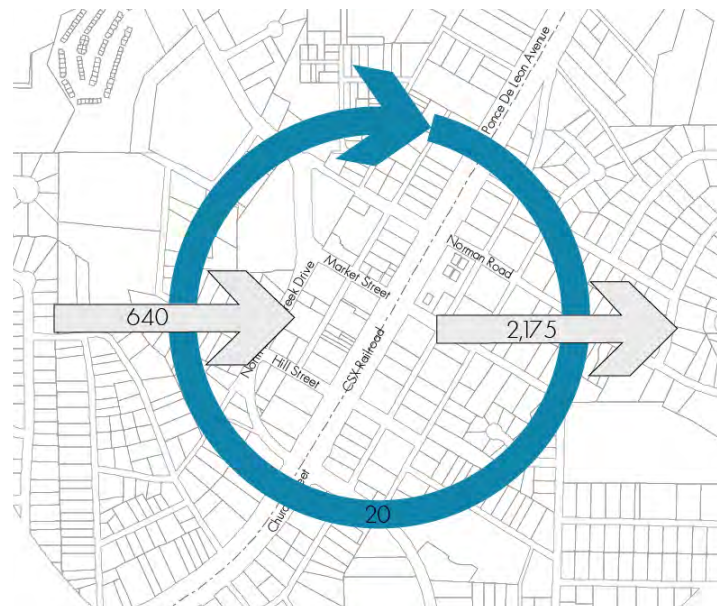
**Commuter Flow**

Given Clarkston’s small base of employers, nearly all of Clarkston’s working residents commute to jobs outside the city for work, 32% to jobs elsewhere in DeKalb, 31% to Fulton or Gwinnett, and most the rest to other core Atlanta metro counties. Nearly all, 97%, of the 660 employees who work in Clarkston commute in from outside the city. Only an estimated 20 individuals both live and work within the city limits.

**Unemployment**

Unemployment in Clarkston is high. The four census tracts

**FIGURE 2.11 INFLOW/OUTFLOW JOB COUNTS**



Source: US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2011

**TABLE 2.12 TAX DIGEST 1996-2013**

Year	Clarkston City	DeKalb County
2013	\$ 64,598,819	\$ 19,025,567,185
2012	\$ 68,375,969	\$ 18,926,895,064
2011	\$ 76,543,203	\$ 20,797,815,04
2010	\$ 92,865,419	\$ 23,727,356,111
2009	\$ 97,671,442	\$ 24,490,085,273
2008	\$ 99,327,587	\$ 25,197,674,686
2007	\$ 100,635,933	\$ 24,306,686,027
2006	\$ 95,371,254	\$ 23,657,981,329
2005	\$ 95,154,314	\$ 21,710,900,827
2004	\$ 87,858,677	\$20,556,022,143
2003	\$ 84,954,211	\$ 19,762,657,507
2002	\$ 81,257,145	\$ 18,672,951,929
2001	\$ 77,144,908	\$17,329,687,149
2000	\$ 69,037,225	\$ 15,975,580,837
1999	\$ 67,424,885	\$ 14,096,200,755
1998	\$ 67,011,168	\$ 13,090,842,726
1997	\$ 61,721,594	\$ 11,756,478,441
1996	\$ 58,831,827	\$ 11,447,679,232

Source: Georgia Dept. of Revenue, Bleakly

which include Clarkston have a combined unemployment rate of 13.4% as of April, 2014, compared to a county-wide rate of 6.8%. Tract 22007, which represents the northeastern portion of the City, containing many of the City’s apartments, has an estimated unemployment rate of 18.9%, nearly three times the county average.

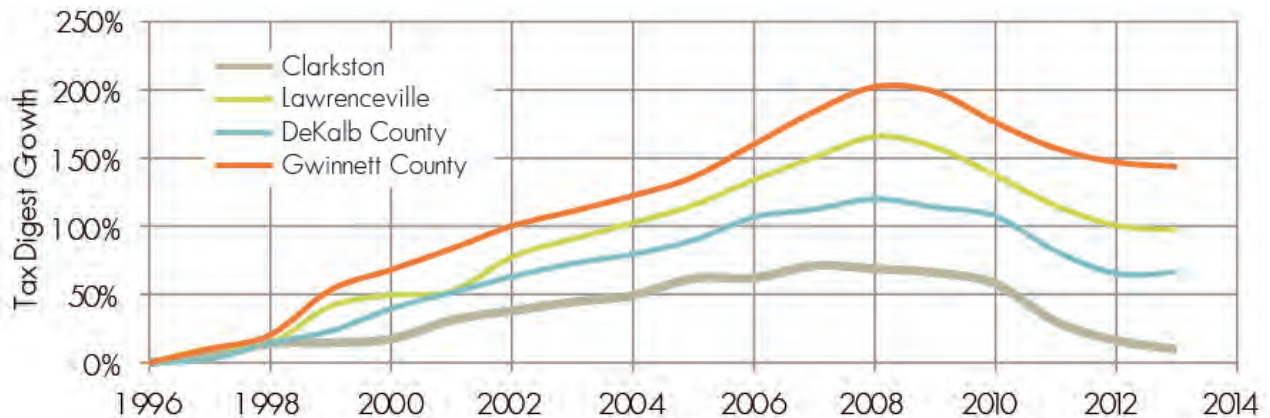
**REAL ESTATE MARKET**

Clarkston’s residential and commercial real estate inventory tends to be significantly older and lower-valued than elsewhere in DeKalb County and the Atlanta metro region. Very few buildings have been added to the commercial or residential inventories in the past 20 years, and the city’s homes and buildings lack many of the features, amenities and aesthetics needed to make them economically competitive. As a result, Clarkston’s rents and sale prices tend to be lower than elsewhere in the region. While this makes Clarkston relatively affordable as a place to live or establish businesses, it also reduces the economic incentive for Clarkston property owners to upgrade, renovate or redevelop their properties.

**Residential: Building Permits**

Residential real estate markets in Clarkston and DeKalb County have been slow to recover since the real estate crisis of 2008. Records indicate that two residential building permits have been issued in Clarkston in the past three years, while DeKalb County has begun to see a rebound from the depths of the Great Recession. After over 2,000 residential building permits were processed each year in 2006 and 2007, an average of just 278 permits were processed each year from 2009-2012. 2013 saw a rebound of 1,099 units permitted, buoyed by strong multi-family permitting.

**FIGURE 2.12 TAX DIGEST GROWTH, CLARKSTON + SELECT PEERS, 1996-2013**



Source: Georgia Dept. of Revenue, Bleakly



**TABLE 2.13 PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE RATE FOR DEKALB MUNICIPALITIES**

City	State, County + Schools	City	SSD	Total
Atlanta	35.99	10.050	-	46.035
Avondale Estates	28.33	10.957	3.350	52.632
Brookhaven	38.33	2.850	-	41.174
Chamblee	38.33	6.400	2.810	47.535
Clarkston	38.33	17.950	4.960	61.235
Decatur	38.33	11.580	0.520	50.425
Doraville	38.33	9.000	0.190	47.515
Dunwoody	38.33	2.700	-	41.025
Lithonia	38.33	17,869	3.070	59.264
Pine Lake	38.33	29.824	3.500	71,649
Stone Mountain	38.33	28.000	0.690	67.015

Source: Georgia Dept. of Revenue

**Residential: Home Sales**

New and existing home sales in Clarkston have been modest over the past five years. Due to low volumes of new and existing home sales in the area, precise trends in average pricing and sales volume data and trends are difficult to determine. This analysis relies on the best data available, combined with anecdotal and sampled data, to provide a snapshot of new and existing home sales trends in and around Clarkston.

- New home sales:
  - » Records indicate that just five new homes were sold in Clarkston since 2009. These five single-family homes, built in 2009, sold in 2012 for prices ranging from \$124,000 to \$147,000.
  - » No new townhomes or condos were sold in Clarkston in past 5 years.
- Existing home resales in Clarkston:
  - » A sample of 50 existing single family home sales in the Clarkston shows that most single family homes that sold in the Clarkston area in 2014 had an average sale price of \$88,000. The graph below illustrates that most of the existing single-family homes sold in the \$50,000 to \$125,000 range, although a significant number of area-homes sold for less than \$50,000.
  - » Most existing homes sold in Clarkston in 2014 were built in the 1970s and 1980s.
  - » A sample of 50 townhome sales in the Clarkston area in 2014 shows that most sold for between

\$14,000 to \$52,000, with an estimated average sale price of \$34,500.

- » A sample of 50 condominium sales in the Clarkston area (mostly rental units converted to condominium ownership) suggests that most units sold for between \$11,000 to \$35,000, with an estimated average sale price of \$25,000.

To gauge the potential pricing and sales volume of new housing units in the Clarkston market, a search for new home sales was expanded to a two mile radius from Clarkston, for the past five years. Even with that increased sample, we found records only for 13 single-family home sales, 48 townhomes, and 4 condominiums. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Home Sales Report, which tracked home sales by ZIP Code before the report was discontinued in 2012, reported only three new housing units sold in ZIP code 30021, which includes Clarkston, between 2006 and 2011.

County-wide new home sales have suffered. Last year saw only 296 new homes sold county-wide, just 8% of the 2005 peak volume of 3,433. County-wide average new home prices have been more-or-less stable between \$200,000 and \$212,000 for the past four years.

Based on this sample of recent, new home sales, we can estimate that new housing units in Clarkston might expect to sell at the following price points.

- Single Family: \$140,000 - \$225,000
- Townhome: \$120,000 - \$180,000
- Condominium: \$ 80,000 - \$120,000.

**TABLE 2.14 EMPLOYMENT PROFILE FOR CITY OF CLARKSTON**

Jobs in the City of Clarkston (2011)			Jobs of Clarkston Residents (2011)		
Real Estate, Rental + Leasing	134	20%	Retail Trade	343	16%
Health Care + Social Assistance	113	17%	Health Care + Social Assistance	272	12%
Admin + Support	93	14%	Accommodation + Food Service	237	11%
Public Admin	77	12%	Admin + Support	233	11%
Retail Trade	72	11%	Manufacturing	179	8%
Construction	64	10%	Educational Services	147	7%
Other Services	34	5%	Transportation + Warehousing	130	6%
Prof. Scientific, and Tech. Svcs.	39	4%	Prof. Scientific, + Tech Svcs.	126	6%
Wholesale Trade	22	3%	Public Admin.	97	4%
Finance + Insurance	11	2%	Wholesale Trade	79	4%
Other	11	2%	Information	72	3%
TOTAL	660	100%	Finance + Insurance	71	3%
			Construction	60	3%
			Other Services	52	2%
			Other	97	4%
			TOTAL	2,195	100%
Jobs by Wage (Est. Annual)			Jobs by Wage (Est. Annual)		
<\$15,000	152	23%	<\$15,000	590	27%
\$15,000-\$40,000	295	45%	\$15,000-\$40,000	1,195	54%
\$40,000+	213	32%	\$40,000+	410	19%

Source: US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2011

**TABLE 2.15 EMPLOYMENT, APRIL 2014**

Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Tract 022010	960	915	45	4.7%
Tract 022009	3,318	2,796	522	15.7%
Tract 0022008	2,970	2,663	207	10.4%
Tract 0220007	1,827	1,482	346	18.9%
Net Clarkston Area Tracts	9,076	7,855	1,220	13.4%
DeKalb County	365,700	340,775	24,925	6.8%

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor

**TABLE 2.16 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS: CLARKSTON + DEKALB COUNTY 2006-2013**

Residential Building Permits	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Clarkston								
Single Family	N/A					0	0	0
Multi-Family						0	0	0
TOTAL						0	0	0
DeKalb								
Single Family	2,765	1,912	728	262	320	261	130	223
Multi-Family	50	104	50	18	78	8	34	876
TOTAL	2,815	2,016	778	280	398	269	164	1,099

Source: US Census

**TABLE 2.17 SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED AVERAGE HOME SALE PRICES, CLARKSTON 2014**

	Single Family	Townhome	Condo
New Homes	\$124,000- \$147,000	N/A	N/A
Resale Homes	\$88,000	\$34,500	\$25,000

Source: Bleakly

**Residential: Apartments**

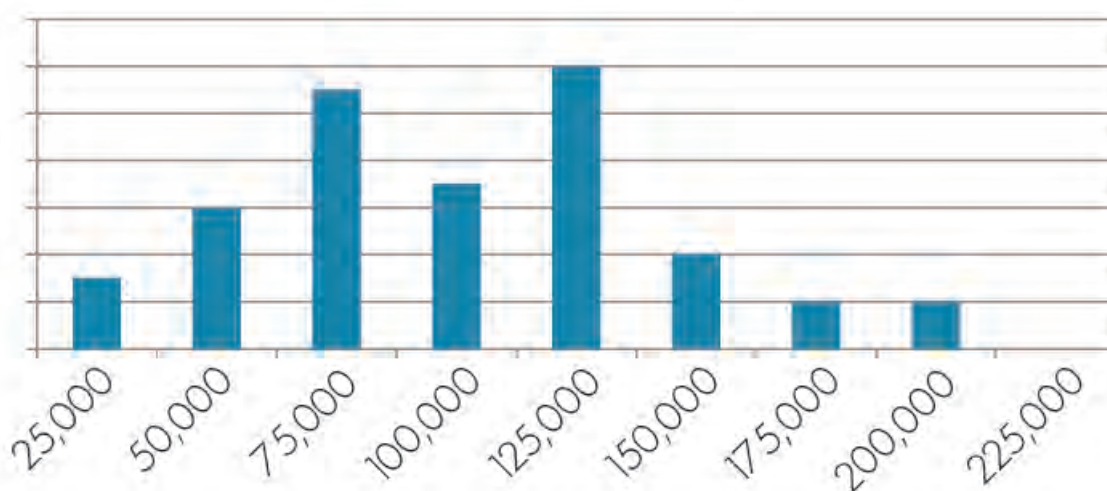
Rental apartments represent 60% of Clarkston’s housing stock, with over 1,900 units in 13 apartment communities. The median age of these apartment communities is 44 years. CoStar, which categorizes apartment communities

by class, ranks two of Clarkston’s apartment communities as “Class B” and the remainder as “Class C”, the lowest of the three classes.

Average apartment rents in Clarkston range from \$479 for a studio, to \$846 for a 3+ Bedroom apartment. Clarkston apartment rents are typically 75% to 80% of average rents in the larger Decatur-Druid Hills multi-family rental sub-market. Vacancy rates, both in Clarkston and the sub-market, are currently significantly lower than the long-term average.

The Atlanta regional market is currently seeing a strong surge in new apartment development, with over 8,000 new units currently under construction. However, this trend is not apparent in the Clarkston area. There have been no new apartments added to the rental inventory since 1988, and no apartments are currently under construction or proposed. That, combined with the age

**FIGURE 2.13 DISTRIBUTION OF CLARKSTON-AREA SINGLE FAMILY HOME RESALE PRICES, 2014**



Source: SmartNumbers Inc.



**TABLE 2.18 NEW HOME SALES NEAR CLARKSTON IN 2009 (2 MILES)**

Type	Subdivision	New Units Sold	Avg. Price	Notes
Single Family		13		
	Village on Ponce	6	\$237,503	West of I-285 on Ponce
	Heritage Ridge	4	\$409,750	Druid Hills rd, West of NDK Mall
	Carroll Park	3	\$128,754	Clarkston, Norman at Church St.
Townhome		48		
	Kingston Point Manor	45	\$219,744	Lawrenceville Hwy, near Home Depot
	Avery Hills	3	\$187,300	Lawrenceville Hwy at College
Condominium		4		
	Orchard Park	4	\$79,625	1/2 Mile East of Brockett off Ponce

Source: SmartNumbers, Inc.

and condition of apartment inventory in both Clarkston and the larger sub-market, and the strong regional apartment market suggests that there is likely latent market demand for new apartments in the area.

## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE: OVERVIEW

The City of Clarkston has very limited commercial real estate inventory of just 300,000 SF across all types of real estate (retail, office, and industrial). While the inventory of commercial real estate within the City of Clarkston is small, the city is served by a substantial commercial real estate inventory in adjacent areas, particularly retail and industrial.

Only one commercial building in the city appears to have been built in the past ten years. The small amount of inventory, limited turnover, and the eclectic character of Clarkston's buildings, commercial spaces, and tenants is evidence of the local-market-serving character of Clarkston's small commercial inventory. Information from CoStar's commercial real estate inventory, supported by additional field surveys and discussions with stakeholders, tenants, and current property listings are combined here to provide the best available estimates of commercial real estate inventory, pricing and trends for the City of Clarkston, compared to a the larger commercial real estate sub-market context.

## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE: RETAIL

### Local Retail

The city of Clarkston has two discount stores with a

combined inventory of 60,000 SF, while the rest of the inventory is in small single-purpose buildings or small strip centers, for a total of approximately 160,000 SF of retail space. Only two national retailers are found within the city limits, Family Dollar and Dollar General. Most retail stores and restaurants are owned and operated by local merchants. Aside from the two chain discount stores and two moderate-sized independent stores (10,000-15,000 SF, a grocery store and a discount store), the vast majority of retail tenants are small (2,000 SF or less) with five-or fewer employees. Small, family-run groceries and restaurants catering to Clarkston's many diverse nationalities and ethnicities make up a significant portion or the retail inventory. Clarkston's restaurants are focused on niche ethnic cuisines, such as Nepalese, Eritrean, and Ethiopian.

### Regional Retail

While retail opportunities within Clarkston are relatively limited, Clarkston's three-mile market area includes a large inventory of retail options. The market area contains 22 major retail centers of 30,000 SF or more, including two regional malls (North DeKalb Mall and Northlake Mall) and numerous national brand retailers, representing a total of over 450 stores and 3 million SF. of retail space. Retail-heavy corridors in the Clarkston market-area outside of the City limits include Lawrenceville Highway, LaVista Road and Memorial Drive, showing in Figure 2.12.

The Stone Mountain-Clarkston retail sub-market includes a total of 8.8 million SF of retail space, with an estimated

**TABLE 2.19 NEW HOME SALES, DEKALB COUNTY**

DeKalb County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
New Units Sold	3,433	3,295	2,482	1,511	860	611	591	486	296
Resale Units Sold	10,227	10,588	9,325	8,372	8,716	8,134	8,815	N/A	N/A
Median New Price	\$180,785	\$228,000	\$240,995	\$234,000	\$212,730	\$203,000	\$199,900	\$207,593	\$205,000
Median Resale Price	\$165,000	\$166,212	\$160,000	\$130,000	\$87,525	\$87,000	\$70,900	N/A	N/A

Source: SmartNumbers, Inc.

8.6% vacancy. Average retail rents in the sub-market are \$10.74.

million SF of office space, all of it Class B or lower. Average full-service office rent in the sub-market is \$16.24, with vacancy at 13%.

**COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE: OFFICE**

**Local Office Market**

Clarkston has just 106,000 SF of office space, 96% of which is classified by CoStar as Class “C” office space. Most of the space is found in small spaces of 2,500 SF or less, much of it in small multi-tenant buildings like that shown below. Currently, occupancy is estimate to be 98%, with average rents estimated to range from \$8.00 to \$10.00/SF. The median age of office space in Clarkston is 64 years.

**Regional Office Market**

The larger Stone Mountain-Clarkston Office Sub-market is not particularly strong. The sub-market has just 1.3

**COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE: INDUSTRIAL**

The City of Clarkston’s industrial inventory is negligible; however the surrounding Stone-Mountain industrial sub-market is massive, representing 22 million SF of space. The adjacent Stone Mountain Industrial Park is easily accessible to Clarkston, just over two-miles east along Ponce De Leon Ave.

**25 YEAR FORECASTS OF EMPLOYMENT HOUSEHOLDS, + JOBS**

The following table uses the Atlanta Regional Commission’s regional growth forecasts, at the census tract and county

**TABLE 2.20 APARTMENT INVENTORY, CLARKSTON, SUB-MARKET + ATLANTA METRO**

Apartments	Clarkston	Decatur - Druid Hills Sbmket	Atlanta Metro
Existing Units	1,923	41,701	484,750
Current Vacancy Rate	2.20%	5.20%	5.30%
5-Yr Avg. Vac. Rate	6.8%	7.4%	7.4%
Studio Asking Rent	\$479	\$632	\$792
1 Bed Avg. Rent	\$663	\$792	\$818
2 Bed Avg. Rent	\$717	\$874	\$918
3+ Bed Avg. Rent	\$846	\$1,047	\$1,102
Units Under Construction (5 Yr Avg)	0	157	3,585
Deliveries last 12 Mos	0	0	3,479
Est. Avg Sale Price/Unit	\$20,020	\$47,632	\$69,901

Source: CoStar Inc.

**TABLE 2.21 CLARKSTON'S RETAIL INVENTORY: CLARKSTON, SUB-MARKET, + ATLANTA METRO**

Retail	City of Clarkston	Stone Mountain-Clarkston Sub-market	Atlanta Metro
Avg. Rent/SF	\$8.00-\$14.00	\$10.74	\$12.94
Current Vacancy Rate	0.00%	8.60%	8.90%
5-Yr. Avg Vac. Rate	2.10%	8.70%	10.10%
Buildings	30	843	24,348
SF	161,121	8,863,591	338 Million
Annual Absorption (5-Yr. Avg)	300	(34,657)	4.6 Million
Under Construction SF	-	44,000	1.2 Million
Deliveries Last 12 Mos. SF	\$171,000	\$82.00	\$126.00
Avg Sale Price/SF	43.6	37.1	34.1

Source: CoStar Inc.

level, to model likely growth of Clarkston and DeKalb County population, households, and jobs over the next 25 years at 5-year intervals. The model is based on current land use patterns and real estate trends. Towards the end of the Clarkston LCI update process, once a concept plan has been developed and approved, a new growth model will be created that accounts for new policies and land use patterns that are likely to impact the growth model.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Clarkston's demographic, economic and real estate conditions combine to create a challenging environment for redevelopment; however, the combination of low vacancy rates and low property values may create selective redevelopment opportunities in the city.

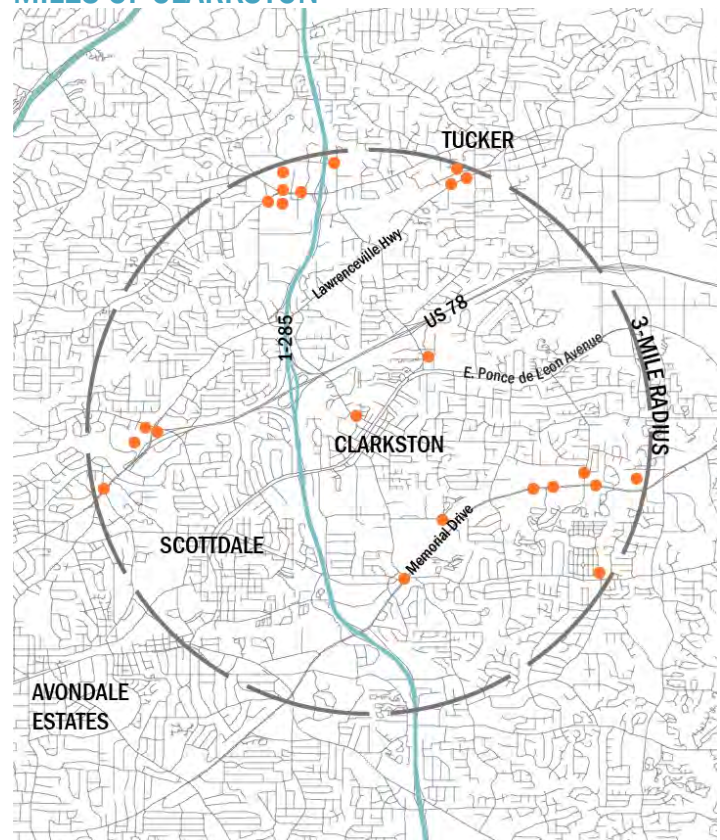
### Demographics + Population

- Clarkston's small population base of 8,080 residents has been in a gradual decline since 2000 while the rest of the Atlanta region has been growing briskly. ARC's forecasts predict only modest growth for the city over the next 25 years.
- Clarkston's population is by far the region's most diverse, largely due to the city's long history of refugee resettlement. While this brings many cultural advantages, it also brings socioeconomic challenges: many of Clarkston's citizens are not US citizens, many do not have strong English language skills and many are transitional.
- Clarkston's residents tend to have lower incomes and

educational attainment levels.

- It is likely that Clarkston has a significant "shadow population" of individuals, many of them recent immigrants or short-term residents, that are not captured by traditional demographic sources.

**FIGURE 2.14 MAJOR SHOPPING CENTERS WITHIN 3 MILES OF CLARKSTON**



Source: CoStar Inc.





## Housing

- Clarkston’s housing stock is aging and dominated by inexpensive multi-family rental units. Just 22% of households own their own homes.
- Homes and apartments tend to be affordable in Clarkston, both for renters and owners. Low sale prices and rents are likely to discourage small-scale reinvestment and redevelopment.
- Many of Clarkston’s large apartment communities are approaching the end of their economic life-spans and may present opportunities for redevelopment. High occupancy rates, combined with low rents and sale values indicate a combination of latent demand and opportunity for new housing.

## Employment

- Clarkston is not a significant employment center. Most of the city’s jobs are in local-serving small businesses or government.
- Clarkston’s working residents tend to work in lower-wage occupations outside of the city, in DeKalb and neighboring counties.
- Clarkston has high unemployment rates, compared to DeKalb County.

## Tax Digest

- Clarkston’s Tax digest has grown little over the last several decades, while peer cities and counties have seen significant growth, even considering the recessionary period of 2008-2011.
- Property tax rates are higher than other DeKalb municipalities and may prove to be a disincentive to growth and economic development.

## Real Estate

- Clarkston’s commercial property inventory is small and modestly valued. The surrounding market area provides access to retail goods and services and employment, especially for retail, industrial, and health sector workers.
- Low commercial rents provide entrepreneurial opportunities, particularly for the small, local-serving, locally-owned and operated stores, consumer services and restaurants that make up the bulk of Clarkston’s economy.
- Clarkston has seen very little new residential or commercial development activity in the last 20 years, a period that included one of the largest nation-wide real estate “booms” in recent history.

**TABLE 2.21 25-YEAR FORECASTS - BASED ON CURRENT LAND USE PATTERNS**

25-Year Forecasts	2014		2020		2025		2030		2035		2040	
	Clarkston	DeKalb	Clarkston	DeKalb	Clarkston	DeKalb	Clarkston	DeKalb	Clarkston	DeKalb	Clarkston	DeKalb
Population												
Total Population	8,080	719,052	8,092	772,444	8,180	794,244	8,270	816,659	8,380	839,830	8,491	863,658
New Population			12	53,392	89	21,800	90	22,415	109	23,171	111	23,828
Annual Pop. Growth %	0.02	1.2	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6		
Household												
Total Households	2,881	286,343	2,906	303,535	2,951	315,497	2,995	327,930	3,055	340,779	3,115	354,131
New Households			25	17,192	44	11,962	45	12,434	59	12,849	61	13,352
Annual HH Growth %	0.1	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.8		
Jobs												
Total Jobs	671	290,835	692	319,821	709	337,570	725	356,304	744	377,809	764	400,613
New Jobs			22	28,986	16	17,749	17	18,734	19	21,506	20	22,804
Annual Job Growth %	0.5	1.6	0.5	1.1	0.5	11.1	0.5	1.2	0.5	1.2		

Source: ARC (Growth Forecast, Tract + County Level), Nielson (Base Population + HH), US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2001 (Base Jobs)

# 2.5 Urban Design + Historic Resources

## URBAN DESIGN

The City of Clarkston was established in the 1830's as a railroad town. The Georgia Railroad ran through the town connecting Athens to Augusta and South Carolina. The downtown area's heart is at the intersection of East Ponce de Leon Avenue and Market Street. This part of the City is gridded with small, walkable blocks. As one travels beyond the downtown core, evidence of a dendritic street pattern appears. <sup>1</sup>

The previous LCI made recommendations for improved landscaping, signage, and lighting along streets, updating parks and creating gateways into the City. However, the previous LCI failed to provide a realistic approach to completing these projects. Some projects, such as streetscaping on E. Ponce de Leon Avenue are underway.

Understanding that this area offers a significant opportunity for infill and new development, it is important to set up urban design standards throughout the City to ensure quality development that can add to the local identity.

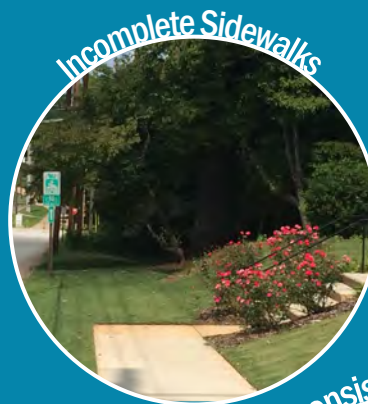
<sup>1</sup> Source: "History," <http://www.clarkstonga.gov/index.php/about/history>



FIGURE 2.15 DOWNTOWN GRID

## URBAN DESIGN ISSUES

- » Decrepit and/or incomplete sidewalks
- » Psychological barriers, safety + security problems
- » Largely forgotten history
- » Setbacks are inconsistent + unattractive
- » Streetscaping is minimal + uninviting
- » Incomplete ADA infrastructure
- » Lack of consistent bike facilities



Incomplete Sidewalks



Lack of Streetscaping



Inconsistent Setbacks



## BLOCK + STREET PATTERNS

Block and street patterns have a significant impact on the transportation system of a community. Additionally, they can impact parcel size, which can, in turn, impact the economic resiliency of an area.

### Existing Conditions

The core of Clarkston has a walkable street and block system. Figure 2.15 shows the general grid pattern of the downtown area. The blocks range 200'-400' and 400'-600' in length. These are illustrated in Figure 2.15 on the following page. The grid breaks down into a more dendritic pattern outside of the downtown core.

## PARCEL PATTERNS

Lots are the second major element in shaping communities. Like streets and blocks, lot patterns tend to be fixed for long periods of time, regardless of their use. Historically speaking, lot sizes are also an indicator of where in the community a lot was located, with smaller lots containing mixed-use buildings near the city center and the larger serving more rural uses such as farming.

Today, with the increasing scale of redevelopment economics and the large amounts of capital necessary to finance infill projects, the traditional notion that lots at the center of community should be small is not universal. Modern financial models often demand that redevelopment projects occupy an entire block and be undertaken by large developers.

### Existing Conditions

Clarkston's downtown contains smaller parcels as shown in Figure 2.16. These parcels measure as small as 25' wide. As one exits the downtown, parcel sizes change depending on use. The largest lots, such as the ones located northwest on N. Indian Creek house garden apartment complexes and large shopping centers. The single family lots scattered throughout the City maintain a smaller size in scale with the downtown.

## BUILDING PATTERNS

The placement and massing of buildings can work together to form spaces greater than the individual buildings. The appropriate amount of enclosure helps pedestrians feel safe and protected while walking. A height-to-width ratio of no more than one-to-three provides a good rule of thumb for designing enclosures. One-to-one is ideal. When a street respects these ratios it creates an environment

where walking is encouraged. When redeveloping the downtown of Clarkston this should be taken into careful consideration since this area is already pedestrian oriented. Enclosure also has a direct impact on driver behavior. All else being equal, buildings close to the street psychologically narrow it and result in slight decreases in vehicular speeds.

### Existing Conditions

Clarkston exhibits inconsistent building patterns and order. The overall edge patterns convey a haphazard and undefined pedestrian experience. The spatial form is weak due to the strip commercial development model that is lining Market Street and N. Indian Creek downtown. Additionally, the mix of residential and commercial on E. Ponce and Church vary in setback distances creating an inconsistent streetscape. Other areas are either vacant or underutilized. The lack of continuity between buildings and the inconsistent setbacks cause the area to feel like a series of wide open spaces.



FIGURE 2.16 PARCEL PATTERNS

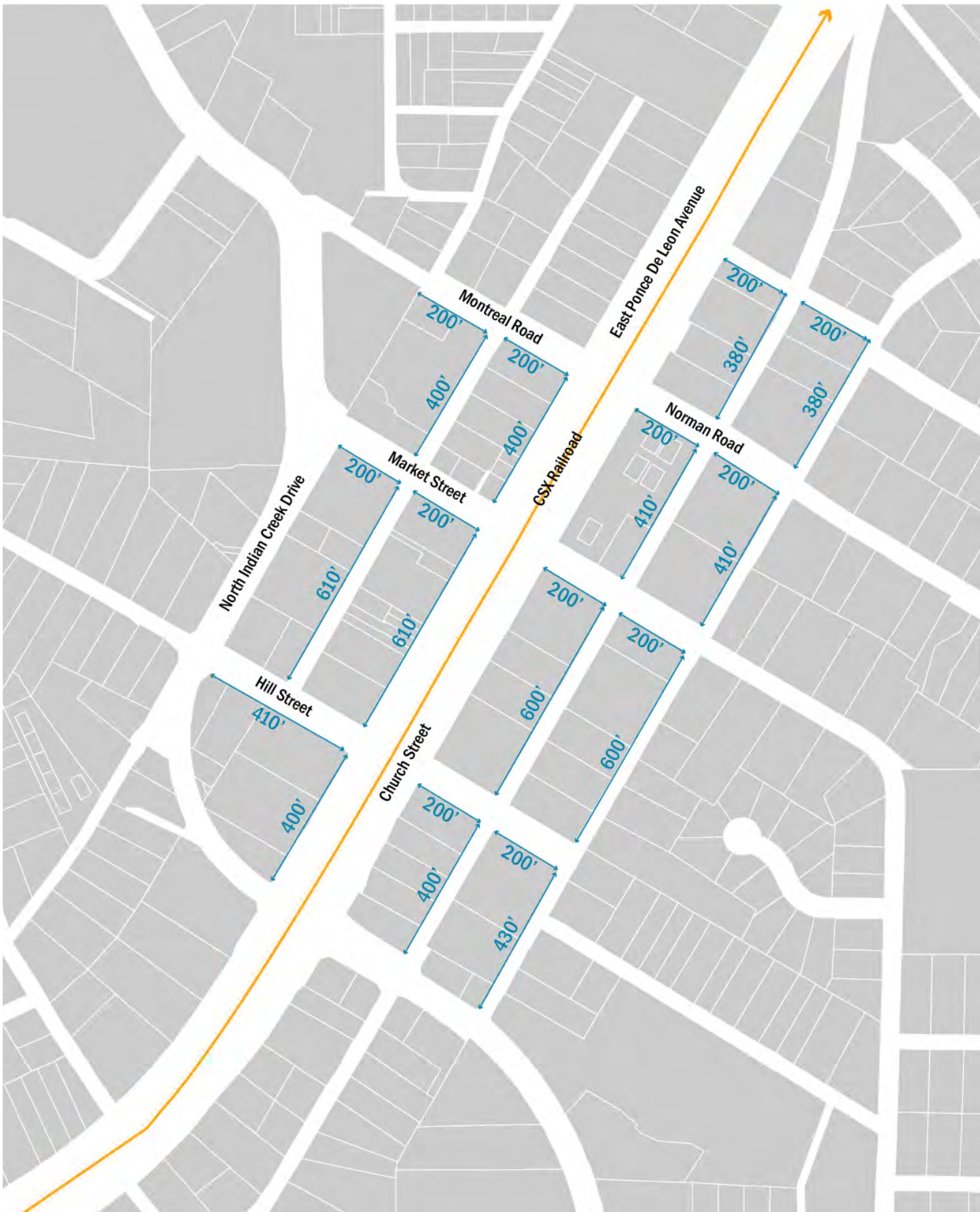


FIGURE 2.17 DOWNTOWN BLOCK SIZES



## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Clarkston's history can be traced back to its founding in the early 1800s as a railroad town. Although some historic structures have been lost over time, there are still many significant properties within the town that serve the public today. The City of Clarkston has historic resources within the city limits, which include:

- The Clarkston's Womans Club: Built in 1913, it is the oldest Woman's Club in Georgia. Currently, the Womans Club serves as an event venue. This structure is covered with a dark brown wood siding and diamond paned windows. The interiors exhibit a fieldstone fireplace and an antique piano.
- City Hall Annex (Historic Morris Family Home): Miss Mary Morris, the former owner, was a great contributor to the City. The building was recently renovated for City use.
- Downtown Clarkston: Established in the 1830s along a line of the Georgia Railroad, this area is the heart of Clarkston.
- The Clarkston Community Center: The Community Center was built in 1924 and is the former Clarkston High School. Now it serves as a gathering place for residents to participate in local arts, continuing education, recreation and community engagement.<sup>2</sup>

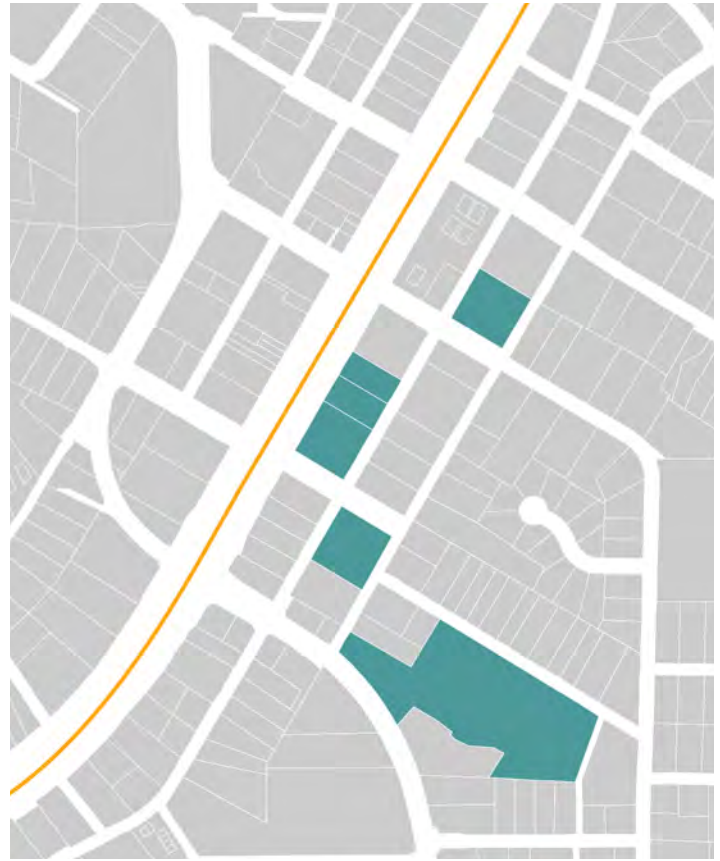


FIGURE 2.18 DOWNTOWN HISTORIC PARCELS



The recently renovated City Hall Annex



A historic home near downtown

<sup>2</sup> Source:: Clarkston Community Center <http://clarkstoncommunitycenter.org/about-us/who-we-are/>



# 2.6 Public Facilities + Spaces

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

Within the study area a variety of public facilities exist, including:

- City of Clarkston Public Library
- City of Clarkston Community Center
- City of Clarkston City Hall
- City of Clarkston City Hall Annex
- City of Clarkston Public Works Building
- City of Clarkston Woman’s Club
- United States Post Office



The new Public Works facility

## PUBLIC SPACES

### Streets + Sidewalks

These are the most used public spaces. In addition to serving as a transportation conduit, streets and sidewalks can be designed to encourage interaction and community building. Streets can be parade routes or the location of special festivals, while in-town sidewalks can provide room for cafe dining, street furniture, and street trees.

### Plazas

These are hardscaped gathering places in a town or city center and surrounded by commercial, mixed-use, or civic buildings. They often include fountains, benches or similar elements. Their entire surface is accessible to the public and consists of stone, concrete, or pavement interspersed with trees and limited plant materials.

### Parks

These are landscaped recreation and gathering places that can be located in any area of a town or city. They may be surrounded by residential or commercial buildings, and are often the focal points of neighborhoods. Parks often include picnic facilities, drinking fountains, benches, and playgrounds. Larger parks may include ponds, sports fields, and courts. Well designed parks are defined at the edges by streets, lawns, shrubs, and other plant materials.

### Greenways

These are parks that can serve as corridors for transportation, wildlife migration, or protection of key habitats that occur in a linear manner, such as the zones along creeks and rivers. Greenways can also connect plazas, parks and conservation lands. Because of this, they can be located in virtually any setting and with any size.



The lake at Milam Park



Clarkston Woman's Club



## Conservation Lands

These protect and enhance areas of environmental and historic significance. They are usually located at the edge of a town or city. Because their primary purpose is the protection of open space, they can include camping sites and trails.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The study area has several public spaces:

- Milam Park, a major public space featuring a pool, playground, trail, lake and dog park.
- Friendship Forest, a park and wildlife sanctuary with trails.
- Path Foundation Trail, a major trail that connects to Stone Mountain.

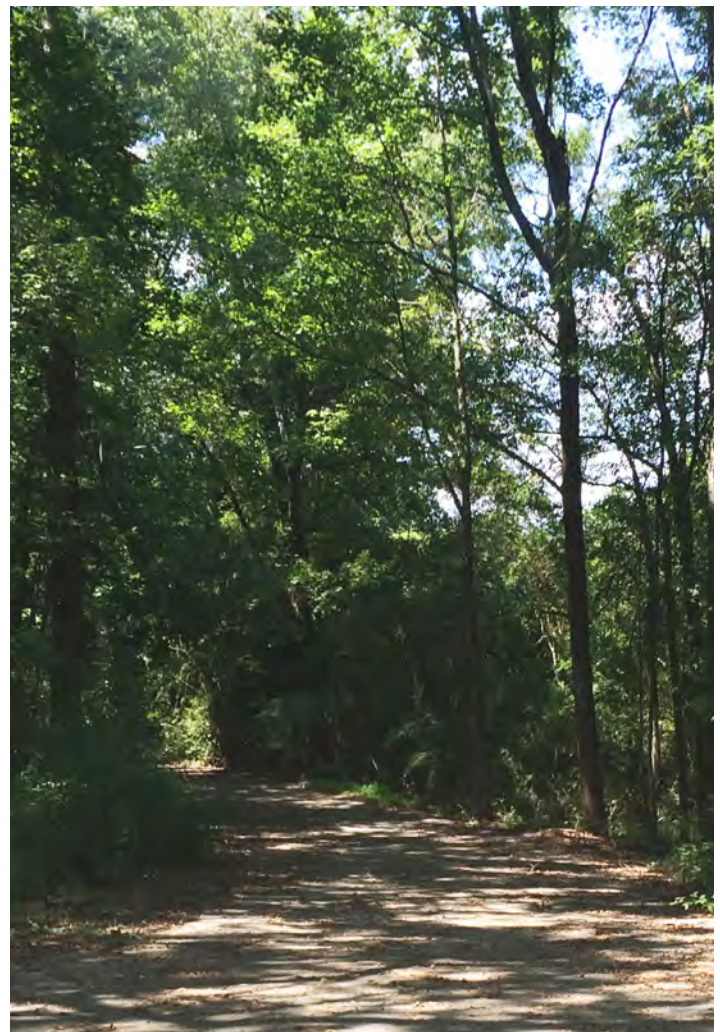
Despite its parks, Clarkston is lacking in public plazas, greenways, and pocket parks. These type of spaces could help activate the downtown core. Additionally, creeks run through Clarkston, one of which is the South Fork of Peachtree Creek. There could be an opportunity to create greenways to enhance connectivity throughout the City and connect to the Stone Mountain Trail.



Entrance to Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary



FIGURE 2.19 WATER IN CLARKSTON



Trail through Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary



# 2.7 Lifelong Communities

## OVERVIEW

Lifelong communities are places where people of all abilities can live throughout their lifetime. Components where individuals can age in place successfully include a range of housing and transportation options (including a connected and walkable environment), opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles, and access to support services and information.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Clarkston’s population is significantly younger than its surrounding areas. The median age is 31 and anyone over the age of 69 accounts for only 3% of the population. With this in mind, as the City grows and develops special consideration should be made for members of the population in every age group. Understanding this, Clarkston can move towards becoming a strong lifelong community. Table 2.22 shows the study area’s performance in a variety of Lifelong Communities measures established by the ARC.

Many principles of Lifelong Communities involved the ability of the transportation system to support mobility and accessibility, especially for non drivers. As identified in Section 2.3, except in downtown, the rest of the area today is still relatively difficult to walk in. This is due to a grid system that diminishes away from the core into a more dendritic pattern.



Lifelong Communities serve people of all ages

A second set of principles involves providing a range of accessible dwellings. Although the study area does offer different types of housing, from apartments to townhouses and single family houses, it fails to provide adequate housing for seniors and people with disabilities.

Social interaction between people of all ages and abilities are also key to Lifelong Communities. In Clarkston, this occurs primarily in downtown, the community center, and major City parks. The City is promoting activities and events in downtown to enhance social communications.

The study area does provide some support for healthy living. The Downtown area, PATH multi-use trail, Milam Park and Friendship Forest provide residents with a variety of activities and facilities, including a community center, swimming pool, sports field and trails. The city is promoting biking and walking through the streetscape improvement project currently in its design phase. However, it has not formed a cohesive connected system that is easy to access throughout the area.

The final element of LifeLong Communities is access to services. The study area does have good access to a variety of services, but some are still lacking. Clarkston has a U.S. Post Office and public buildings, but does not have a bank. Thriftown serves as a grocery and general store but more variety is wanted by the community. Tying this all together, a comprehensive wayfinding system could benefit the area to alert residents of services that are currently in the City. This system could be translated into the most prevalently spoken refugee languages.



Events in the Downtown promote social interaction



**TABLE 2.22 LIFELONG COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

Lifelong Communities Principle		Status
Mobility and Accessibility	Streets that are welcoming and unthreatening	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Traffic calming strategies that make the environment feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Plantings and fencing positioned to reduce traffic noise	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Engaging frontages that include diverse urban and building form	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Walkable/fall-safe sidewalks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Manage sidewalks during any construction and repair to avoid access barriers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Manage sidewalks to avoid cluttering of pedestrian environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Grade level changes that are clearly marked and well-lit	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Handrails installed where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Curb cuts at all intersections	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pedestrian friendly sidewalk paving	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trees for shade	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sensory cues at decision points, such as junctions or grade changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Adequate pedestrian lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Crossable streets	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Accommodation for specialized vehicles (power chairs, golf carts, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Sitting arrangements to provide respite and facilitate conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sturdy seating with arm and back rests, made of appropriate materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Covered bus stops with seating	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Areas of sun and shade considered in the design of the street	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gates/doors requiring less than 5 lbs of pressure to open & having lever handles	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consideration given to required vegetative buffers and pedestrian access	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consideration given to parking requirements and pedestrian access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Centralized transit waiting areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Transit stops that provide protection from rain, wind and sun	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Smart transit technology that alerts riders to bus/shuttle's arrival time	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Smart transit technology alerts bus drivers to riders waiting out of sight	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Stops for shuttles, jitneys, buses and light rail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Dwelling	Diversity of housing (varying sizes, products)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Accessibility of housing products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Workforce housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Range of supportive housing types	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Range of specialized housing types (cohousing, models that address disabilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible spaces as appropriate based on community accessibility standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social Interaction	Front yard gardens, porches and stoops	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reinforcement of found gathering places	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Community rooms (large enough for exercise classes, meetings, movies)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Opportunities for meaningful volunteer activities (e.g. after-school tutoring)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Active and passive open space such as dog parks, playgrounds, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Third-places such as parks, shops, community centers, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Healthy Living	Daily needs within safe and inviting walking distance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Fall-safe environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Shorter block sizes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Walkable destinations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Designated walking loop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Exercise and recreation venues (e.g. bocce, dancing, tennis, yoga, tai chi)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Swimming pool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Community equipped with access to health services and education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Community concierge (and case management)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood access to healthy foods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Access to Services	Community bulletin boards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Wayfinding signage	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Local access to ordinary daily needs that are location appropriate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Yes, this principle is met     No, this principle is not met     This principle is partially met

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# 3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



# 3.1 Public Engagement

Recognizing that no plan can be successful without the support of the people who call it home and do business in the area, the Clarkston LCI Update is a reflection of the vision and aspirations of its diverse community. This vision was developed utilizing a three-level stakeholder participation approach led by Contente Consulting that was tailored specifically for Clarkston’s diverse community and is described in more detail in the following sections:

1. Project oversight;
2. Communication and education; and
3. Information sharing, visioning and recommendations for future development.

**FIGURE 3.1 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION APPROACH**



**TABLE 3.1 MEETING SCHEDULE**

Meeting	Time/Date
Core Team Meeting #1	10:00 AM, Friday June 24, 2014
Stakeholder Interviews	11:30 AM, Friday June 24, 2014
Clarkston Business Connects	6:00 PM, Thursday July 10, 2014
Core Team Meeting #2	4:00 PM, Tuesday September 9, 2014
Public Kick-Off Meeting	6:30 PM, Tuesday September 9, 2014
Public Market Street Workshop	10:00 AM, Saturday October 25, 2014
Core Team Meeting #3	4:00 PM, Tuesday February 10, 2015
Public Meeting #3 (Draft Plan Presentation)	6:30 PM Tuesday February 10, 2015

## 1 PROJECT OVERSIGHT

The six month Clarkston LCI Update planning process included leadership teams developed to guide the process, maintain the schedule and provide technical expertise to ensure that the plan process and recommendations are consistent with the goals of the City of Clarkston and its partners. In addition, various input groups were established, each providing opportunities to share information and capture a range of information to inform the existing conditions analysis, develop a community vision, validate recommendations and prioritize projects. All the portals used to garner oversight and input included:

### LEADERSHIP

**Consulting Team:** The team led by the firm TSW in collaboration with Bleakly Advisory Group, the Grice Group, Contente Consulting and International Languages and Cultural Services provided professional analysis of the existing conditions and associated constraints, along with expertise in respective areas to inform implementable recommendations, and community outreach.

**Project Management Team:** This small group of representatives from the City of Clarkston and the Atlanta Regional Commission met with the consulting team project manager monthly to provide project oversight.

### Input Groups

**Core Team:** A team of approximately 20 individuals who represented a wide array of interests within the broader community was convened to serve as a sounding board, review documents and provide recommendations on delivery to the general public prior to every public forum.

**Stakeholders:** A cross-section of over 50 citizens, businesses owners, agency representatives, elected officials, etc. participated in one-on-one interviews or focus group discussions with the consulting team, and offered detailed information regarding the varying social and economic conditions within the study area and beyond.

**General Public:** Many voices and opinions of the Clarkston community participating in public forums as well as on-line formats throughout the process.

# LCI CORE TEAM

At the beginning of this process, the LCI project team established a core team of key government officials and non-profit organization partners including the following:

- » City of Clarkston Police Department
- » Atlanta Regional Commission
- » DeKalb County Planning Department
- » DeKalb Board of Health
- » Clarkston Community Center
- » CDF: A Community Action Initiative
- » Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
- » Refugee Service Agency



Public Kickoff Meeting Interpreters + Engagement Team

in the process by attending the meetings. The multi-family housing developments were also targeted for canvassing and outreach. The team visited over 20 housing developments within the area and met with property managers/ staff to introduce the planning process and distribute meeting notices at least two weeks prior to each public forum. Team members also shared information with residents encountered while canvassing and encouraged their participation.

Finally, canvassing activities focused on social service organizations. Majority of the organizations and churches that provide services to the Clarkston refugee community in the areas of housing assistance, ESL classes, day care, job placement, etc. were vital resources. The staff was extremely enthusiastic to assist with the distribution of project information to clients by posting and distributing fliers and email blasts, and providing opportunities for the team to make announcements at organizational meetings.

To ensure that the vast refugee population in Clarkston was informed and provided an opportunity to engage in the planning process, the International Languages and Cultural Services firm assisted with the distribution of information to this diverse community. Collectively, the



Clarkston LCI Website

## 2 COMMUNICATION + EDUCATION

Much consideration was given to how to effectively inform the City of Clarkston area stakeholders of the planning process to ensure maximum participation. Using a variety of outreach and communication approaches, over 200 community stakeholders participated in the process.

### OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Various community Outreach activities were utilized throughout the process to serve two purposes: relationship development and information sharing. Through door-to-door canvassing activities the team focused on four primary markets:

1. Small businesses along E Ponce de Leon Avenue and Market Street corridors;
2. Multi-family housing developments;
3. Social service organizations and churches; and
4. The refugee population.

Early in the process the community outreach team visited over 50 businesses to discuss the Clarkston LCI Update objectives and engage in candid discussions with the business owners regarding their experiences, goals and aspirations to grow and reap the benefit from future economic growth of the City. Prior to every public meeting, businesses were revisited to post meeting notices informing and encourage patrons/ clients to participate

## 3: Public Outreach

outreach team was able to utilize existing relationships with international community leaders, business owners and refugee service providers to inform, educate and encourage participation. In addition, to accommodate the various languages, interpreters were utilized at public forums providing translation services in the predominate languages: Arabic, Burmese, Dinka, Somali, and Nepali.

### COMMUNICATION TOOLS

An interactive project website ([www.ClarksonLCI/wordpress.com](http://www.ClarksonLCI.wordpress.com)) was developed to provide the public with accurate and timely information on a wide range of project topics. The website announced all public forums including links to project updates, an interactive map of the study area, draft plan illustrations, and information on the consulting team.



Mailers sent out to the Clarkston Community

Public meeting announcements and project updates were published on the home page of the City of Clarkston webpage and in the city’s quarterly newsletter, the Clarkston Connect. In addition, the use of email blasts to distribute information to a large distribution list compiled by the City of Clarkston and through canvassing activities were highly effective throughout the process. Print media included Postcard mailers that were distributed to over 800 property owners within the city; banners, posters and fliers were placed in public facilities including City Hall, the DeKalb County Public Library – City of Clarkston branch, the Clarkston Community Center; and a host of service provider offices and the small businesses along the commercial corridors. Finally, press releases were

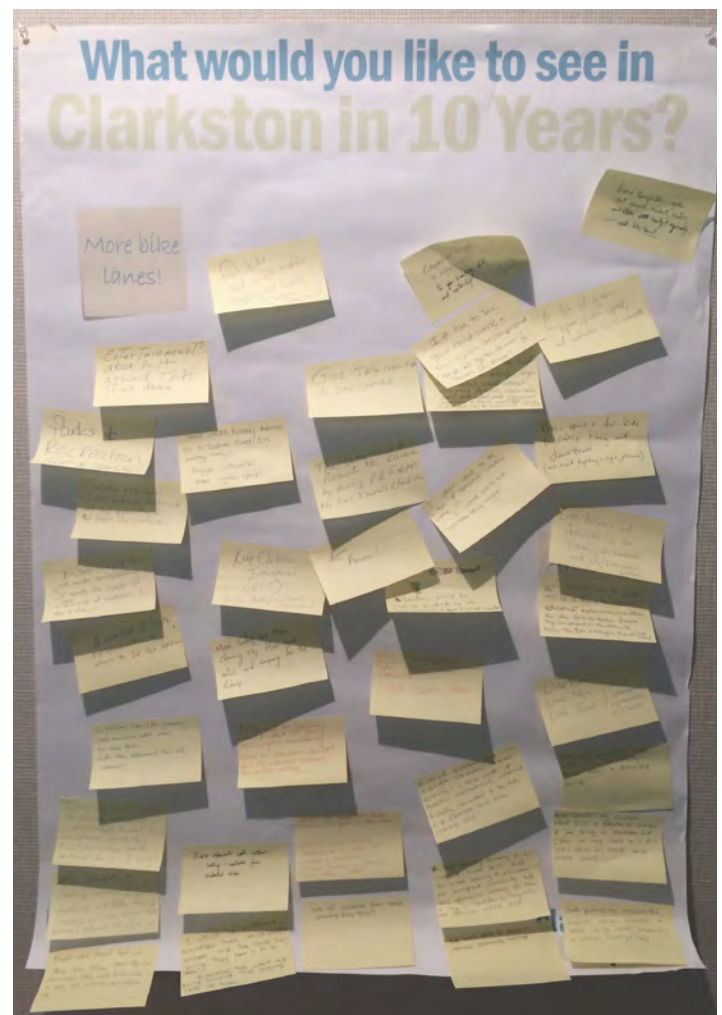
visit us on the web!

<https://clarkstonlci.wordpress.com>

forwarded to the following media outlets announcing public meeting logistics, major events and milestones throughout the life of the project: On Common Ground News, DCTV, Channel 23, Crossroads News, DeKalb Campion Newspaper.

### 3 INFORMATION SHARING, VISIONING + RECOMMENDATIONS

Public forums were used as a formalized method to share information gathered and compiled by the consultants, and offered an opportunity for the public to articulate their vision for the future of Clarkston. The Clarkston LCI Update process included stakeholder interviews, a series of focus group discussions and three public forums that captured a range of information - from general feelings about the quality of life in the city to specific notions of where development types should occur – which formed the basis for the final plan recommendations.



Community input from the Kick-Off Meeting



## Community Input Process

One-on-one stakeholder interviews were conducted by various team members during the first few weeks of the planning process in person or via phone. Interview participants included: residents, business owners, social service organizations, city staff, DeKalb County departments, and Clarkston current and former elected officials.

On August 22, 2014 at the Clarkston City Hall, the team convened a series of focus group discussions with three primary audiences: social services, businesses and community leaders to capture information and on assets, needs, challenges and opportunities facing the city and its citizens. Over 30 Individuals representing these entities participated and the discussions yielded the following observations:

### Assets

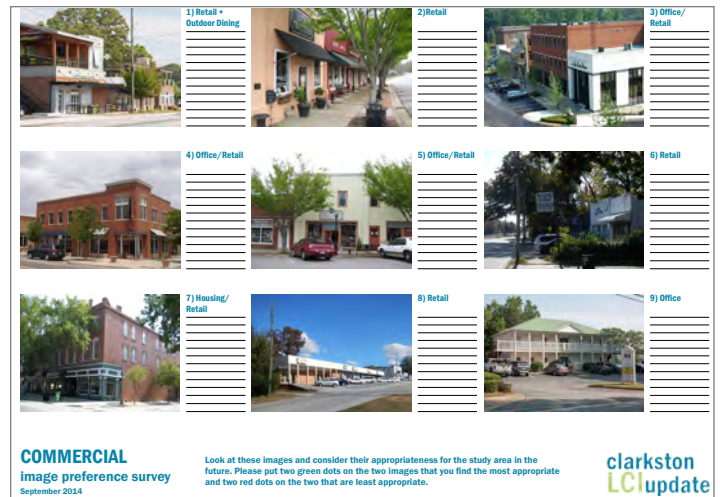
- Cultural diversity
- Recent city investment in infrastructure
- Accessibility to interstates, downtown Atlanta and economic generators
- Collaboration between social service organizations

### Needs

- Well maintained and quality housing
- Diversity of quality retail and restaurant options
- Identity that includes improved signage and aesthetic improvements along the commercial corridors
- Improved outreach to existing and potential business community; an established business association

### Challenges

- Conflict between the City Council and existing business community
- City and DeKalb County school management disconnect; public schools overcrowded
- Tension between residents and immigrant communities
- Lack of police presence to address security issues and vandalism
- Renter lack of ownership and responsibility for property



A sample of the Visual Preference Survey from the Kick-Off Meeting



Community discussion after the Kick-Off presentation

- Lack of quality housing, well performing schools and other amenities to attract employers

### Opportunities

- Potential cultural hub for the region due to the city's cultural diversity
- Demand for single family housing
- Learn from the City of Tucker's growth and transformation

The first of the public forums for the Clarkston LCI was the Public Kickoff Meeting that convened on September 9th at the Clarkston Community Center. The meeting was designed to serve two purposes:

1. Educate the community on the LCI goals, planning process, and existing conditions, opportunities and challenges;
2. Receive input on the community's vision for Clarkston over the next 10 years;



The event included vendor booths and a bounce house

Following a presentation of the city’s existing conditions in the areas of land use, transportation, demographics and market conditions, there was a series of interactive exercises available to capture the community’s vision for the city. First, participants used push pins on a map of the City to identify where they lived, worked or owned property or a business. The second exercise presented potential areas of focus for future redevelopment and the attendees were asked to comment and/ or prioritize where development should occur. Finally, using images that represent various housing types, open spaces, mixed use buildings and transportation options, the over 80 residents, business owners, organization leaders and

elected officials used red and green dots to illustrate what they felt was appropriate and inappropriate for the City. This exercise, also called a Visual Preference Survey (VPS) concluded that the community would like to see 1-3 story commercial and mixed use buildings; plazas and green space that can accommodate open markets and large social events; three story townhomes and historic single family homes in walkable neighborhoods; and buffered bike lanes and wide sidewalks. The images of the VPS exercise and the scores were published on the project website, [www.clarkstonLCI.wordpress.com](http://www.clarkstonLCI.wordpress.com) for additional comment.

The City of Clarkston, the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Clarkston LCI Update hosted Community and Family Fun Day on Market Street on Saturday, October 25th. This outdoor event captured input on the draft concept illustrations and included youth activities, food vendors, entertainment and giveaways. Local partners and organizations including MARTA Disabled and Elderly Action Coalition, Piedmont Technical College, CDF, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Great Day Inc., Clarkston Community Center, and Lifeline Primary Care were present to distribute program information. In addition, the planning team installed a tactical urbanism demonstration of a potential streetscape and pedestrian enhancement project along Market Street. The design and future construction of these enhancements are a result of a 4 million dollar Federal and State grant obtained by the

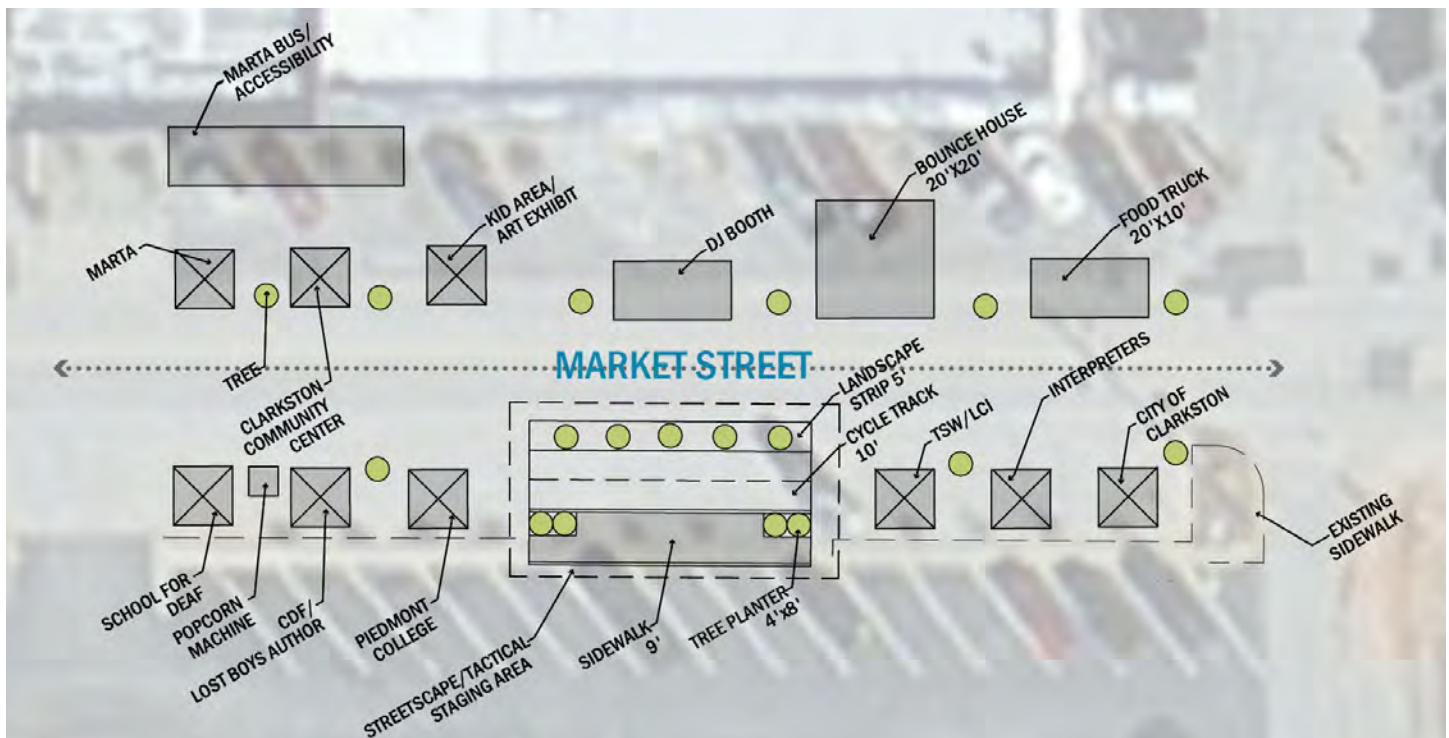


FIGURE 3.2 MARKET STREET WORKSHOP + TACTICAL URBANISM PLAN



# BEFORE...



# AFTER...



Tactical urbanism streetscape demonstration

City of Clarkston. Over 100 citizens and visitors attended the event and participated in the activities.

The Final LCI Draft Plan Presentation convened on February 10th, 2015 at the Clarkston Community Center. Over 80 community residents and stakeholders were in attendance to review and comment on the draft recommendations. The team presented a variety of projects to boost and sustain the economic vitality of the city. These projects include: a revitalized and active town center surrounded by rehabilitated retail; housing options in a variety of densities; and new open spaces, trails and pedestrian projects to enhance pedestrian circulation and connections to the town center. The existing and future market and economic realities; implementation feasibility and strategies over next five to ten years; and a variety of funding sources including public/ private partnerships were also presented.

A Q&A session followed the formal presentation of the recommendations that touched on four primary topics:

- The possibility of gentrification and the financial impact of new development on existing property owners.
- The diversity of housing options to attract residents with a variety of incomes, affordable housing for refugee resettlement, and amenities for the disabled.
- Initiatives and incentives to attract developers, businesses and employers.
- The incorporation of environmental protection and sustainability practices in future development.

The attendees were encouraged to submit questions and comments on the project website and the conclusion of the Clarkston LCI Update planning process will include the following next steps: the team will refine the plan and post to the project website; the City Council will approve the final plan in the late spring; and the city will submit an application to ARC for implementation funding in the summer of 2015.



Q+A Session at the Draft Plan Presentation



Participants at the Draft Plan Presentation



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# 4 VISION + RECOMMENDATIONS

# 4.1 Vision + Recommended Projects

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology behind the LCI 10 Year update included four phases:

- Existing conditions assessment
- Public engagement
- Recommendations for the future vision of the area
- Implementation plan

Recommendations are a synthesis of the existing conditions assessment and public engagement, coupled with sound planning practices. These offer a visionary yet realistic blueprint for sustainable growth that will benefit the future of the City of Clarkston.

## Future Vision

The 2004 LCI study established a vision for the City of Clarkston. As the project team updated this vision, several focus redevelopment sites were identified along with the development of proposed projects and policies for the area. Overall goals for this vision include:

- Redevelopment of the downtown and ensure it is convenient, providing needed services and accessible to all users
- Provide safe and contextual neighborhoods and commercial centers
- Create an active downtown center for Clarkston

## Focus Sites + Projects

The sites shown in their existing state in Figure 4.1 were identified as realistic redevelopment locations.

- Downtown Clarkston
- South Fork Village Area
- Stone Mountain Trail Village Area
- Potential Medical and/or Refugee Outreach District
- Comprehensive multi-system and PATH extension

## POLICIES + PROJECTS

There are two types of plan recommendations:

### Policies

These are area guidelines that provide direction for the implementation of the plan's vision. They often support specific implementation projects and should be the basis for actions by the City of Clarkston. Policies should also guide the private sector, especially to the extent that they define plan aspirations.

### Projects

These are specific tasks, such as transportation improvements, studies, or signs, with a defined cost and time frame. They are often undertaken by a local agency such as the City of Clarkston, GDOT, or GRTA.







FIGURE 4.1 FOCUS SITES/FRAMEWORK PLAN

**Legend**

- Commercial
  - Civic/Institutional
  - Existing Buildings
  - Townhome
  - Single Family Home Lot
  - Proposed Medical or Refugee Outreach District
  - Proposed Park
  - Proposed PATH/Cycle Track extension
  - Existing PATH/Sharrow
  - Keyed Views
- ① SOUTH FORK VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT AREA
  - ② POTENTIAL PARK AREA
  - ③ POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT AREA
  - ④ DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA
  - ⑤ POTENTIAL MEDICAL OR REFUGEE SERVICES DISTRICT
  - ⑥ POTENTIAL MULTI-USE TRAIL
  - ⑦ STONE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

# 4.2 Land Use

## OVERVIEW

The study area provides great opportunities for both infill and new development. As Clarkston grows, it should do so in a way that increases the mix of uses, particularly in the downtown area near Market Street and E. Ponce de Leon Avenue. It should strive to create jobs, serve all ages of the population, and enhance available goods and services. This must occur, however, in a way that minimizes negative environmental impacts and improves the quality of life for the diverse residents of Clarkston.

## LAND USE + ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

### Focus on Creating Land Uses in Concept Plan (O-1)

The proposed concept plan shown in Figure 4.1 reflects a realistic vision for how Clarkston should grow over the next 10 years following the previous LCI plan vision. Central to this is improving the downtown and nearby neighborhoods by promoting mixed-use, a comprehensive trail network and connected green spaces. The plan's goal is to allow the diverse population of varied incomes and ages to be able to live, work, and play in the City. Given the pedestrian nature of Clarkston, the plan could also achieve the addition and extension of necessary supporting services within a short work of its residents. This plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for growth, although actual projects will vary based on economics and review during the entitlement process.

### Promote mixed-use, transit oriented development (O-2)

Clarkston could focus development near and around the proposed and expanded transportation network. This strategy would compliment the large amount of pedestrians that already exist within the City. The downtown area has potential to expand its connectivity through upgraded sidewalks, improved bicycle infrastructure and ease of transit use.

### Increase range of housing choices (O-3)

More diversity of housing types, including townhomes, small-lot single family house, new multi-family buildings, and all types of housing accessible to seniors and those with disabilities should be promoted in Clarkston. This allows a greater diversity of income, ages, and family

types. Additionally, this is also key to achieving aging in place in a community.

### Encourage reuse + rehab of downtown (O-4)

The downtown core is centrally located within the City and serves as the heart of Clarkston. Given that historic and walkable blocks of approximately 200'-600' exist, new development should center around this area. With a newly expanded transit network, the diversity of Clarkston will become highly accessible.

### Encourage redevelopment of South Fork Village (O-5)

This area, identified as a focus site for redevelopment sits just northwest of downtown. It is envisioned as a mix of commercial, educational and residential uses. It could also serve as an improvement project to reinforce the South Fork of Peachtree Creek as an amenity for the City. This area could incorporate an extended multi-use trail and greenway along the creek.

### Encourage redevelopment of Stone Mountain Trail Village (O-6)

This village is envisioned as a development to support aging in place. Currently Clarkston is lacking well connected senior housing. The plan for this development would incorporate walkable blocks, a multi-use trail connecting to the existing PATH trail and accessibility to existing MARTA bus routes. The proposed uses incorporate a large green space adjacent to the existing PATH trail, single family residential and townhomes.



Clarkston Village Shopping Center in Downtown



## Legend

- Central Business District
- Commercial
- Civic/Institutional
- Mixed-Use
- Multi-Family Redevelopment
- Neighborhood Redevelopment
- Suburban Areas
- Parks/Open Space
- LCI Study Area
- Railroad

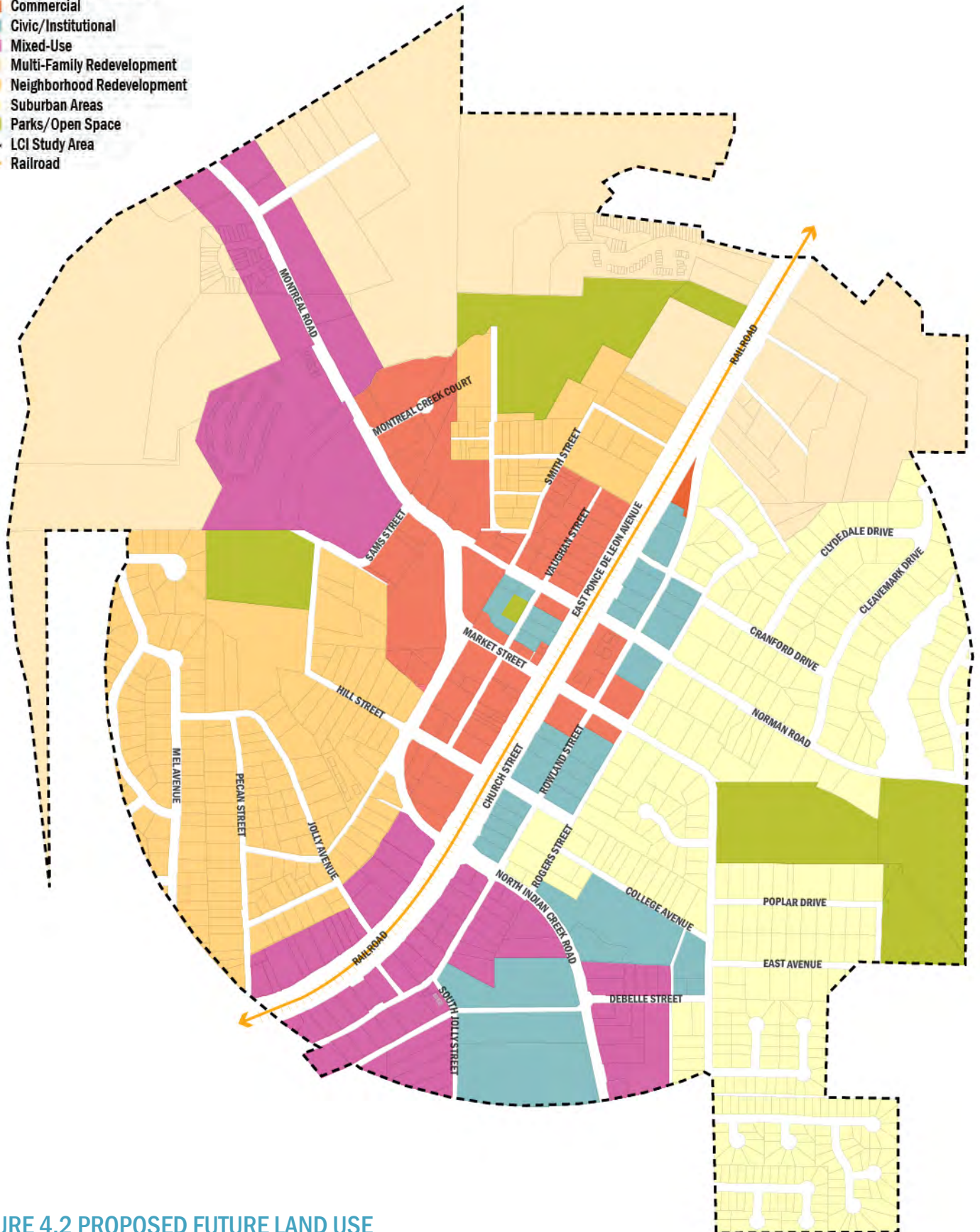


FIGURE 4.2 PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE



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# DOWNTOWN CLARKSTON REDEVELOPMENT

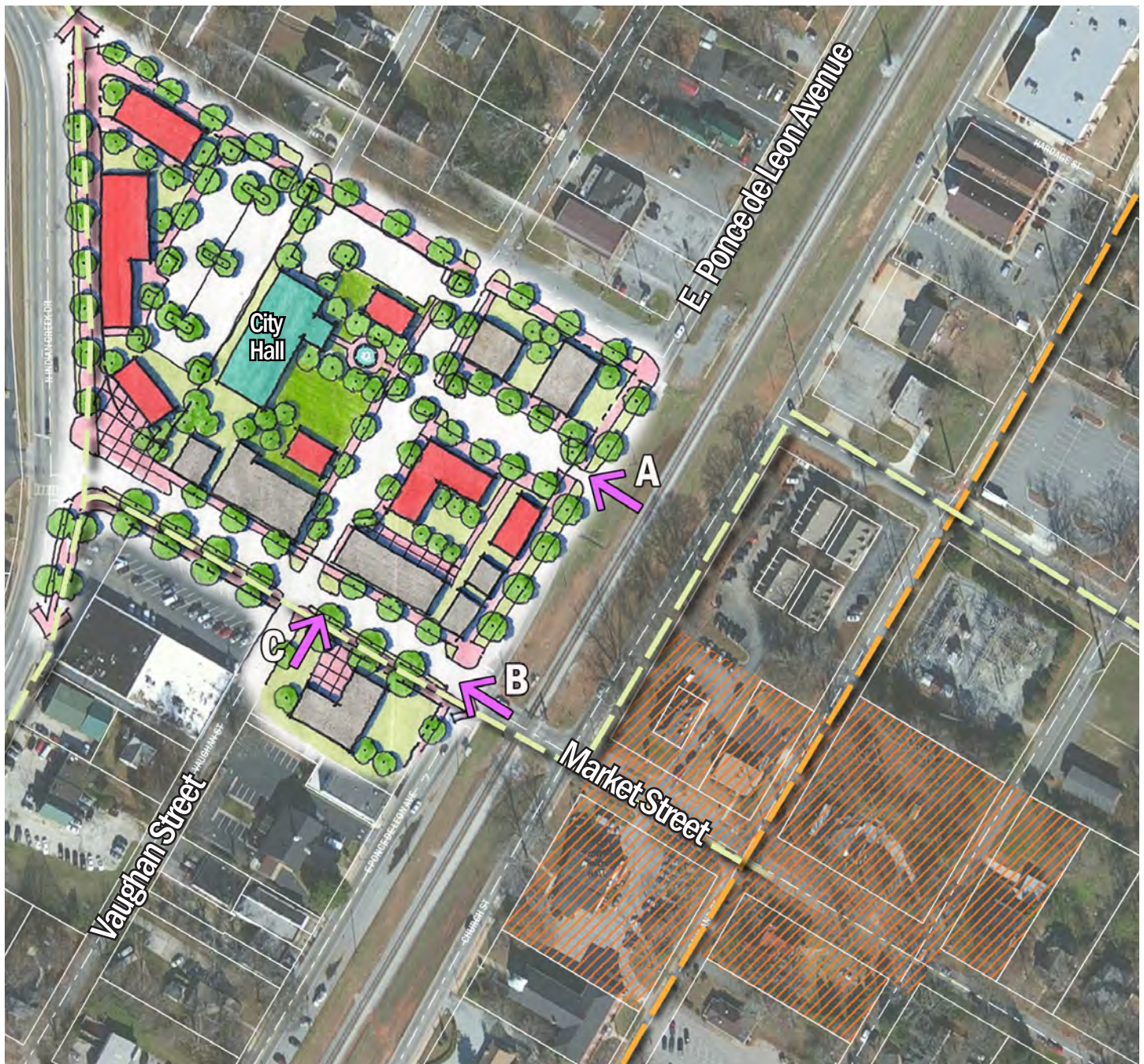


FIGURE 4.3 DOWNTOWN AREA CONCEPT PLAN

## Legend

- Commercial
- Civic/Institutional
- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Medical or Refugee Outreach District
- Proposed PATH/Cycle Track extension
- Existing PATH/Sharrow
- ➔ Keyed Views

## OVERVIEW

An integral part of the LCI update included a realistic and strategic physical plan to activate downtown Clarkston. The intersection of Market Street and East Ponce de Leon Avenue serves as the crossroads for the City and as a projected node for future development. This concept, shown above includes new commercial buildings as well as the rehab of existing structures. The cornerstone of this plan is the new City Hall that would front Vaughan Street, providing a new public amenity for residents. This



**FIGURE 4.4 POTENTIAL CITY HALL PARCELS**



new civic space would also include a multi-purpose town green, fulfilling Clarkston’s need for a public space in the downtown area. Figure 4.4 shows the proposed parcels for this portion of the downtown redevelopment. As shown in Figure 4.3, the Downtown Clarkston Concept Plan, the current City Hall area could be transformed into either a Medical or Refugee Assistance District. Both these business types already exist in the area including CDF at Church Street and Norman Road as well as a Chiropractic Clinic and Dentist on Market Street at Rowland Street.

**View A** shown below is a depiction of the view from East Ponce de Leon Avenue to the proposed City Hall building on Vaughan Street. The area is envisioned as a mixed-use district including civic uses, shops, and restaurants.

**View B** shown on the next page illustrates both the streetscape project and downtown development potential. The streetscape includes an 8’ cycle track or multi-use trail with 4’ landscaped medians.

**View C** shown on the bottom of the next page illustrates the rehabilitation of an existing building on Market Street. The changes to the building include facade enhancements, landscaping and integration with the redesigned Market Street streetscape.



**View A: City Hall**





**View B: Market Street**



**View C: Retail on Market Street**



# SOUTH FORK VILLAGE



**FIGURE 4.5 SOUTHFORK VILLAGE CONCEPT PLAN A**

## Overview

Both concepts explore the redevelopment of aging garden apartments into a mix of commercial, townhomes, single family and multi-family homes. The land closest to the downtown core is envisioned as a potential college district, expanding the presence of the higher education institutions already in the area. Currently, Piedmont College has campus buildings along Montreal Road north of the site.

Along the South Fork of Peachtree Creek a new park is proposed to provide another location for recreation in Clarkston. This space could include a proposed trail connecting to the rest of the City, shown as a dashed green line. The proposed trail would travel through the

park, again linking the entire city through a pedestrian and bicycle network, illustrated in the above plan. There is also potential for vehicular connections outside of this site connecting to the surrounding neighborhoods, expanding the street network of the City.

On the southern end of the site, another potential redevelopment area has been identified. Currently, the site includes aging garden apartments. This site could be replaced with a more sustainable development focusing on walkability, outside connectivity and treating the South Fork of Peachtree Creek as an amenity.





**FIGURE 4.6 SOUTHFORK VILLAGE CONCEPT PLAN B**

**Concept A**

This concept explores a mix of townhomes, single family homes, multi-family apartments, and commercial uses along Montreal Road. The plan includes 57 single family lots, 240 apartments and 48 townhomes.

**Concept B**

This concept lacks multi-family residential and proposes only single family homes and townhomes. The potential commercial and educational buildings along Montreal Road remain. The previous plan is preferred because it incorporates new multi-family which is the existing use on the site. It is also the more economically viable plan.

**Legend**

- Commercial
- Civic/Institutional
- Existing Buildings
- Townhome
- Single Family Home Lot
- Proposed Redevelopment Area
- Proposed Park
- Proposed PATH/Cycle Track extension
- Existing PATH/Sharrow



# STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL VILLAGE



**FIGURE 4.7 STONE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE CONCEPT PLAN**

## Overview

This redevelopment site focuses on aging in place in Clarkston. As stated earlier, the City is lacking in well connected, quality housing for seniors. The plan includes these design concepts and strategies:

- Walkable block sizes
  - Well connected internal street system
  - Outside connections back into the community
  - Cohesive sidewalk network
  - Proposed multi-use trail that connects to the rest of the City
  - Access to current PATH multi-use trail
  - Access to existing MARTA bus routes
- Passive and recreational green space
  - A mix of residential uses supporting diverse price points and needs
    - » Townhome
    - » Single Family Home



# 4.3 Transportation

As it transforms, Clarkston should continue to provide a range of transportation options. In addition to driving, the area should encourage bicycling, walking and transit use. Smooth and speedy traffic flow should be provided along major arterials and collectors, but local streets should be more focused on responding to adjacent land uses and development patterns, rather than simply moving as many vehicles as possible in the shortest amount of time.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

### Ensure balanced between automobiles + other users

Additionally, it should ensure transportation improvements and new streets incorporate complete street principles. Complete streets allow appropriate use by vehicles, pedestrians, and those on bicycles.

### Limit the number of curb cuts + incorporate access management techniques

Recommended techniques for Clarkston include shared driveways, private alleys, and inter-parcel access along major roads. Access management can reduce accidents, especially for pedestrians, as well as improve traffic flows.

### Repair or replace sidewalks where needed

Existing sidewalks should be repaired or replaced to ensure that they are passable. Existing sidewalks and crosswalks should also be upgraded to be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Obstructions should be relocated to allow for passable sidewalks.

### Focus pedestrian and landscape improvements in areas with the highest visibility

This will allow the largest impact in terms of initial impressions for local residents and visitors.

### Establish streetscapes with redevelopment along East Ponce De Leon Avenue + Market Street

These should include at least 8 foot wide multi use trail (or cycle track), 6 foot wide sidewalk, with planted median or strip separating pedestrian and bicyclist from the traffic.



UPGRADE SIDEWALKS



MULTI-MODAL OPTIONS



ACCESS MANAGEMENT



STREETSCAPES

## VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The vehicular transportation projects below strive to reduce existing vehicular system deficiencies and ensure that new growth does not overwhelm the study area's roadway infrastructure. An asterisk (\*) indicates projects from previous LCI studies.

### North Indian Creek Drive/Montreal Road Reconfiguration (T-1)\*

- Road diet to three 12 feet wide vehicular lanes
- One 8 foot wide cycle track
- An 8 foot wide sidewalk on both sides of street

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 3254)

### Market Street Reconfiguration, from North Indian Creek to Rowland Street (T-2)

- Two 10.5 foot wide vehicular lanes
- One 8 foot wide cycle track
- An 8 foot wide sidewalk on both sides of street

### Market Street Reconfiguration, from Rowland Street to Southeast End (T-3)

- Two 10.5 foot wide vehicular lanes
- One 5 foot wide sidewalk, both sides of street

### Hill Street Configuration (T-4)

- Two 12 foot wide vehicular lanes
- One 8 foot wide cycle track
- One 5 foot wide sidewalk, both sides of street

## INTERSECTION SIGNALS + PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

### Market Street at North Indian Creek Drive (T-5)

- Intersection signal upgrade

### Market Street at Vaughan Street (T-6)

- Install signal

### Market Street at East Ponce de Leon Avenue (T-7)

- Intersection signal upgrade

### Market Street at Church Street (T-8)

- Install signal

### Wilson Street at East Ponce de Leon Avenue (T-9)

- Install signal

### Wilson Street at Church Street (T-10)

- Install signal

### North Indian Creek Drive at East Ponce de Leon Avenue (T-11)\*

- Intersection operational improvement

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 0167)

### North Indian Creek at Church Street (T-12)\*

- Intersection operation improvement

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 0167)

### North Indian Creek at Rowland Street (T-13)

- Intersection safety improvement

### North Indian Creek at Debelle Street (T-14)

- Intersection safety improvement

### Church Street at Lovejoy Street (T-15)

- Intersection geometry improvement

## TRANSIT PROJECTS

### North Indian Creek Drive (T-16)

- Bus stop furniture improvement

### East Ponce de Leon Avenue (T-17)

- Bus stop furniture improvement

## PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE PROJECTS

### Multi-Use trail on Rowland Street (T-18)

- Extend existing PATH trail to south city limit

### Multi-Use trail on South Fork Peachtree Creek (T-19)

- Construct multi-use trail that follows the creek





# PROPOSED STREET SECTIONS

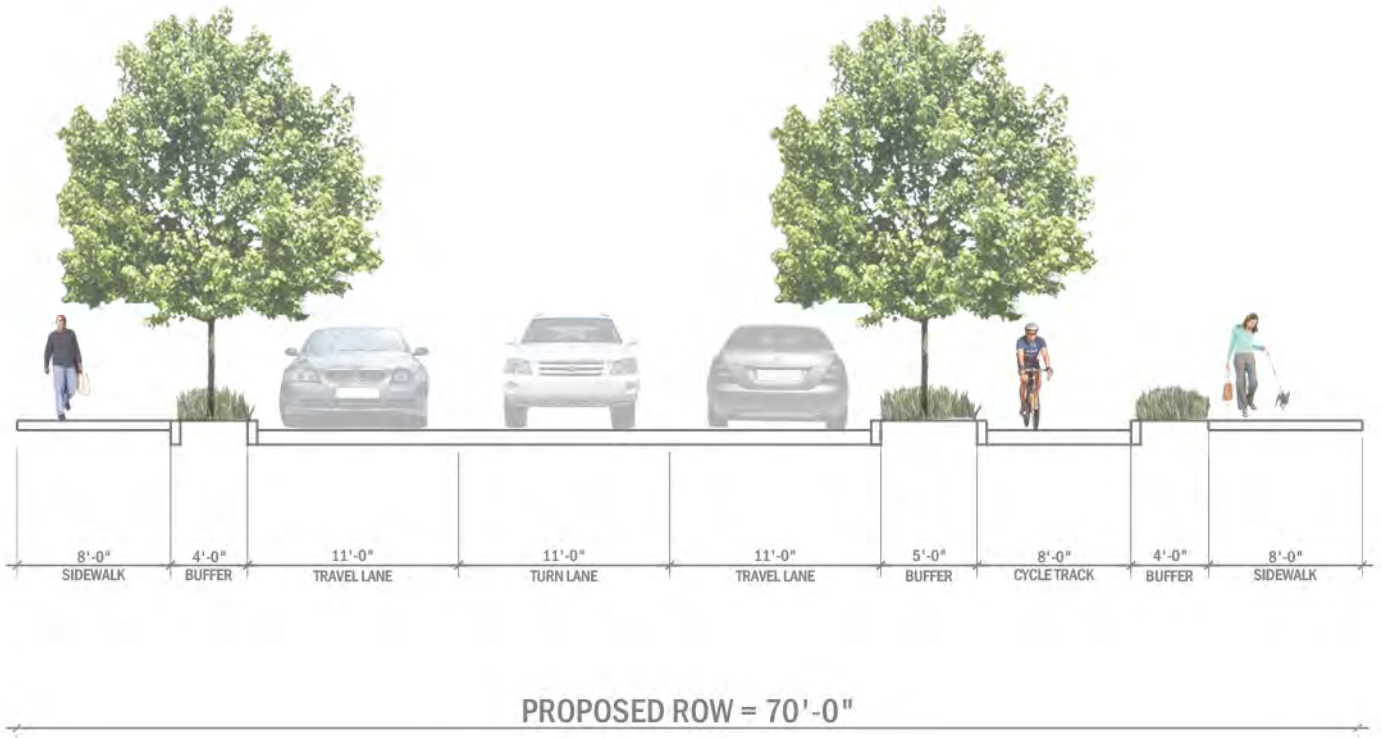


FIGURE 4.9 SECTION A: North Indian Creek Drive, Road Diet

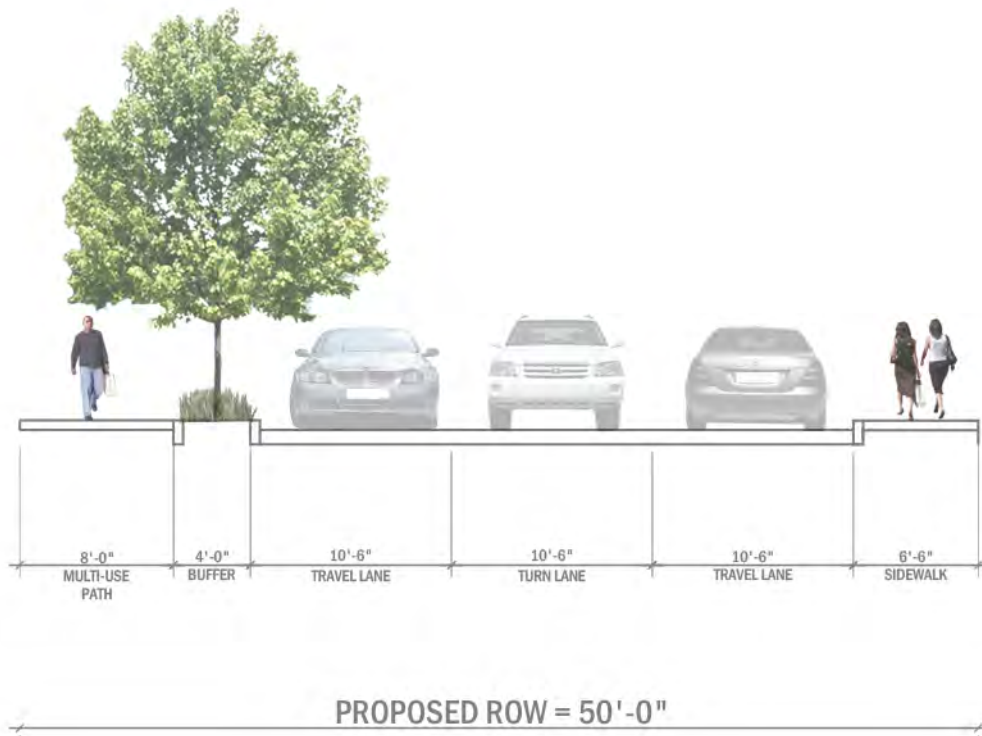


FIGURE 4.10 SECTION B: Market Street, at Railroad Crossing between East Ponce and Church Street



# PROPOSED STREET SECTIONS



FIGURE 4.11 SECTION C: Market Street, between Railroad and Rowland Street

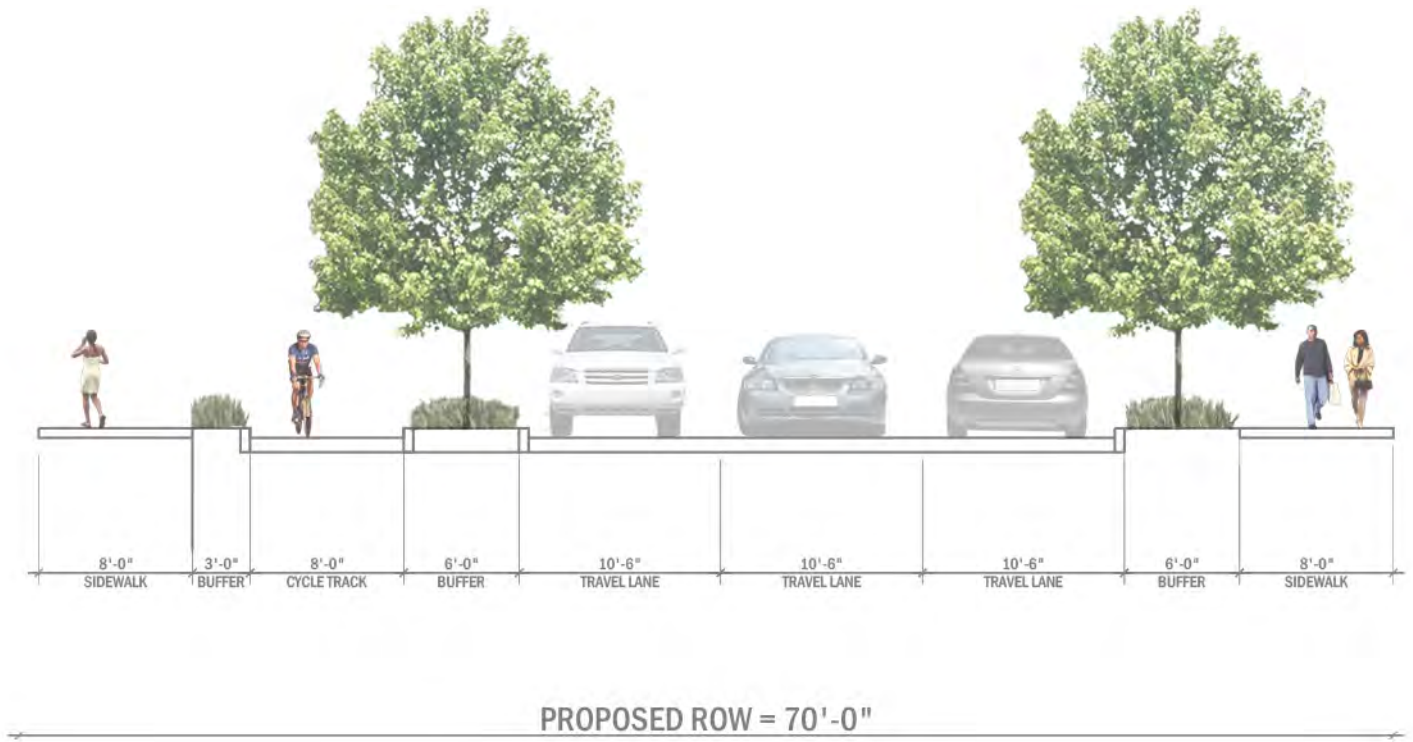


FIGURE 4.12 SECTION D: Market Street, Between North Indian Creek Drive + East Ponce de Leon Avenue



# PROPOSED STREET SECTIONS

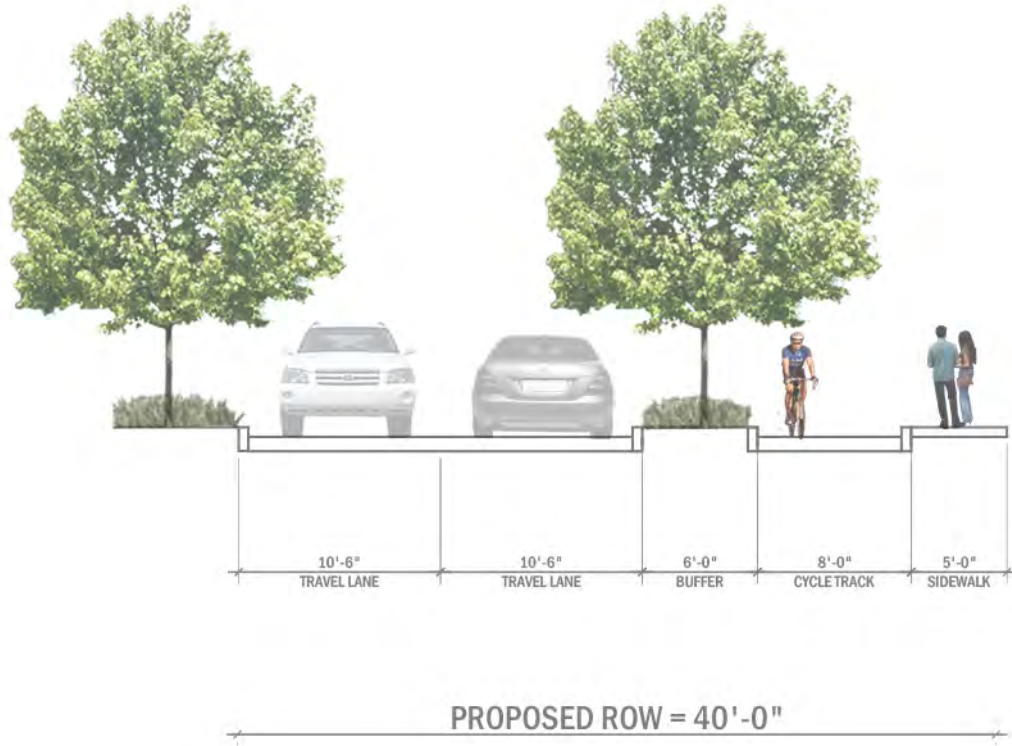


FIGURE 4.13 SECTION E: Rowland Street



FIGURE 4.14 SECTION F: 12' Multi-Use Trail

Legend

- Section Key
- ▬ Proposed Bike Infrastructure
- ▬ Existing PATH



FIGURE 4.15 SECTION MAP

### Multi-Use trail connecting Friendship Forest + Milam Park (T-20)

- Construct multi-use trail to connect these two public spaces

### North Indian Creek Drive (T-21)\*

- Sidewalk improvement from Montreal Road to south city limit

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 1326)

### East Ponce de Leon (T-22)\*

- Sidewalk improvement from North Indian Creek Drive to north city limit

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 1666)

### Church Street (T-23)

- Sidewalk improvement

### Norman Road (T-24)\*

- Sidewalk improvement

\*(DeKalb 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 1666)

### North Indian Creek Drive / Clarkston Public Library (T-25)\*

- Pedestrian crossing signal and sign

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 1666)

### Montreal Road (T-26)

- Install sidewalks and improve pedestrian crossings along the corridor from US 78 to East Ponce de Leon Avenue

\*(DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan: Project 1317)

### Market Street Crossing (T-27)

- At grade railroad crossing

### Wilson Street Crossing (T-28)

- At grade railroad crossing T13

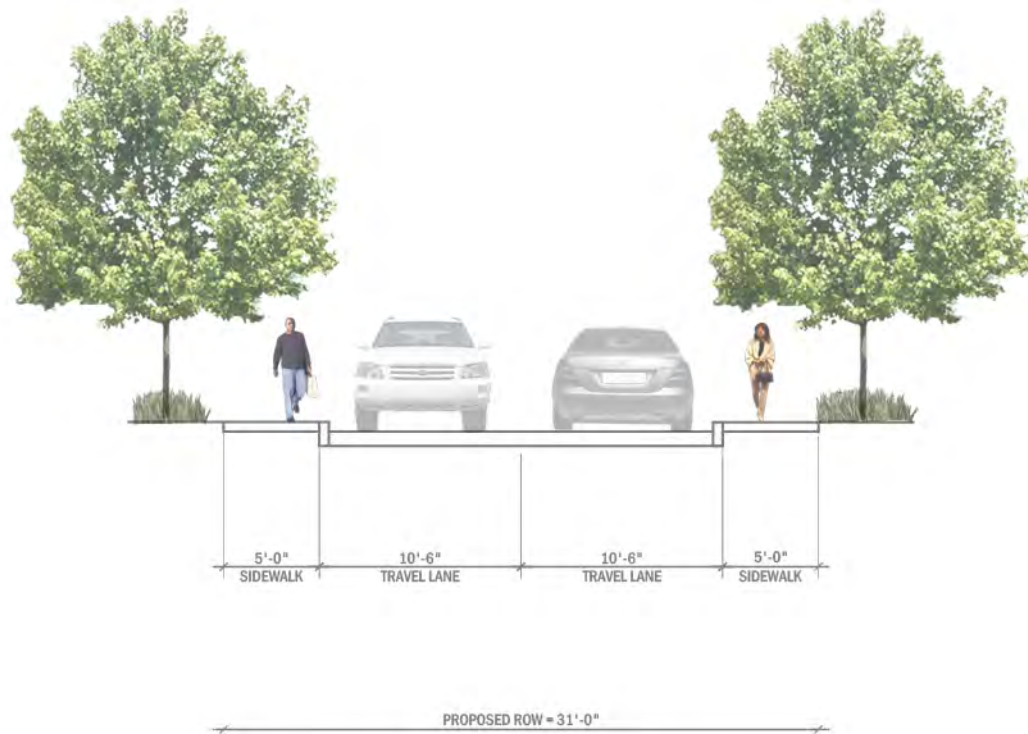


FIGURE 4.15 SECTION G: MARKET STREET, ROWLAND TO SOUTHEAST END



# 4.4 MARKET ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

To ensure that redevelopment recommendations and initiatives emerging from Livable Centers Initiative Studies are realistic and market-feasible, the Atlanta Regional Commission requires the inclusion of a market analysis and real estate demand forecast. This section provides forecasts of future real estate demand in the study area. It also includes recommendations to support the City of Clarkston LCI 10-Year Update.

## STUDY AREA

The study area for the City of Clarkston LCI 10-Year Update is the Clarkston City limits as they existed at the commencement of the LCI study process in mid-2014. The boundary is approximately defined by a radius of 1/2 mile, centered on the intersection of Ponce De Leon Ave. and Market Street. In November 2014, the City of Clarkston was expanded through annexation, thus altering the City boundaries. The study area for this LCI study remains the previous city limit.

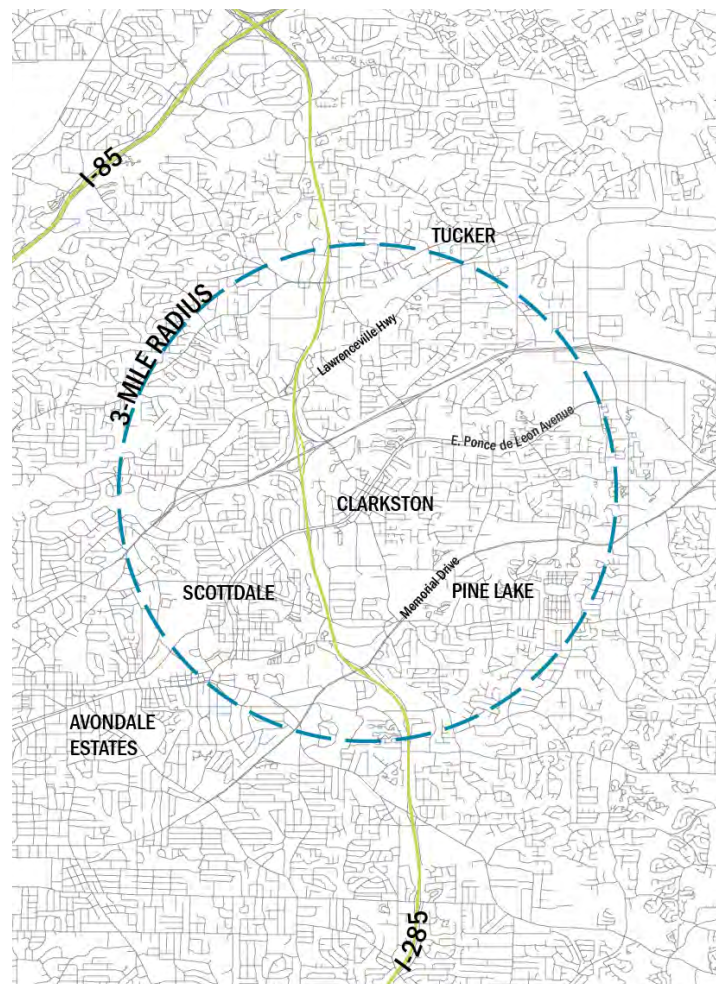
## REAL ESTATE DEMAND FORECAST

The demographic and market analysis of the study area and its surroundings indicated that Clarkston has not shared in the broad regional growth and development seen elsewhere in the region over the past ten to twenty years. Since 2000, the City of Clarkston has experienced a gradual decline in population of -0.6% while DeKalb County has grown by a rate of 0.6% and Atlanta MSA has grown by an average annual rate of nearly 2%.

- » Assume a 25% increase in Clarkston's rate of home ownership, from 22% to 28%, to reflect new housing opportunities.
- » Increase the rate of replacement of aging and substandard housing units from a current estimate of 2% of annual housing turnovers to 10%.
- » Add estimated induced demand of 12 owner housing units and 40 rental housing units annually, reflecting households from outside the market area who would previously not have considered Clarkston as a housing option.

Based on these assumptions, the following conclusions can be made:

FIGURE 4.17 CLARKSTON 3-MILE RADIUS



- » Baseline Scenario– Based on current conditions, Clarkston can expect to see demand for 5 to 8 owner-occupied units and 15 to 20 new rental units annually over the next ten years.
- » Redevelopment Scenario– If we assume that Clarkston successfully implements the recommendations of the LCI Study, and these initiatives and these projects begin to improve the study area's quality of life and offer a broader range of housing opportunities, it is reasonable to expect annual demand of 35 to 40 owner-occupied units and 120 to 160 rental units annually. This scenario assumes that a significant portion of housing demand is derived from the replacement of aging housing units with new-construction units.

The residential component of the LCI Concept plan envisions between 80-100 single-family homes, 24 townhomes, and 240 apartments, with space for additional units in future phases. Based on the residential demand forecast, these housing units could reasonably be absorbed in three to five years.

## HOUSING PRICING

Currently, pricing for homes and apartments in Clarkston is significantly lower than the larger DeKalb County/Decatur market:

- Home sales activity in and around Clarkston is too low to derive new home pricing trend data, although it is likely that new homes in Clarkston, if built, would sell slowly at prices significantly lower than the DeKalb County average price of \$205,000 for a single-family home.
- Clarkston apartment rents average just 75% to 85% of Decatur/Druid Hills submarket averages, with the average 2-bedroom apartment in Clarkston renting for \$717, compared to a sub-market average of \$874.

It is clear that in the current market, average prices for new and existing homes and average apartment rents in Clarkston are too low to justify the construction of new housing units. In order for residential redevelopment to become feasible, Clarkston’s housing market must be stabilized:

- Increase rehabilitation or redevelopment of vacant and foreclosed properties
- Increase home-ownership rates
- Provide a broader range of affordable housing options
- Attract a broader residential base, particularly younger

first-time homeowners

- Gradually cull older sub-standard housing and replace with newer, higher-density homes

If Clarkston’s housing market was to become more stable, and redevelopment of the downtown area as envisioned in the LCI plan could increase the City’s desirability, we believe that the following housing prices and apartment rents could approach to within 90 to 100% of the larger area’s average prices:

- New single family homes or townhomes, mostly targeted at entry-level first-time homebuyers or empty-nesters, could fetch \$175,000 to \$250,000.
- New market-rate apartments could likely achieve average rents of \$0.80 to \$0.85 per SF, or roughly of \$750 for a 1 BR unit, \$850 for a 2 BR unit, and \$925 for a 3 BR unit.

## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Because of the study area’s modest population growth, modest incomes, and relatively low population density, combined with a wide variety of retail and industrial options just outside the study area, we believe that demand for new commercial real estate in the study area will be limited.

- Retail Demand– If the Downtown Clarkston area were to be redeveloped as a “town center”-style activity center, the area could support a small amount of local-serving retail space, perhaps 25,000 to 50,000 SF, but this would likely be achieved as the replacement of existing retail space. Rents would likely fall in the \$11.00 to \$15.00/SF range.
- Office Demand– Office space historically has not had a significance presence in or around Clarkston. Even in a redevelopment scenario development, we do not envision significant demand for office space in the study area. It is conceivable that a small

**TABLE 4.1 POPULATION FORECAST**

Population	Clarkston City	Clarkston 3-Mile	DeKalb County	Atlanta MSA
2000 Census	8,735	101,241	665,866	4,263,447
2010 Census	7,554	97,971	691,893	5,286,728
2014 Estimate	8,080	100,252	719,052	5,574,225
CAGR Growth 2000-2014	-0.6%	-0.1%	0.6%	1.9%

Source: Nielson, Inc, US Census CAGR=Compound Annual Growth Rate

**TABLE 4.2 10 YEAR RESIDENTIAL REAL-ESTATE DEMAND FORECAST**

I. Estimated Housing Demand Due to Growth	Baseline Scenario	Redevelopment Scenario	Scenario Notes
Households 2014	2,881	2,881	
<i>CAGR households 2014-2024</i>	0.3%	0.8%	<i>Increase CAGR to DeKalb CAGR</i>
New Households 2014-2024	90	232	
<i>Estimated percentage owner occupied</i>	22%	28%	<i>Increase owner Ratio by 25%</i>
<i>Estimated percentage renter occupied</i>	78%	73%	
Estimated owner demand 2014-2024	20	64	
Estimated renter demand 2014-2024	70	168	
Potential Annual owner demand	2	6	
Potential Annual renter demand	7	17	
II. Estimated Demand Due to turnover	Baseline Scenario	Redevelopment Scenario	Scenario Notes
Total Households	2,881	2,881	
Total owner-occupied households	634	792	
<i>% of owners who moved in a year</i>	11.0%	11.0%	
Annual owner turnover	70	87	
Annual turnover owner to owner (40%)	28	35	
Annual turnover owner to renter (60%)	17	21	
Total renter-occupied housing units	2,247	2,089	
<i>% of renters who moved in a year</i>	51%	51%	
Annual renter turnover	1,146	1,065	
Annual turnover renter to renter (83%)	951	884	
Annual turnover renter to owner (17%)	162	150	
Annual owner demand from turnover	190	185	
Annual total renter demand due to turnover	968	905	
Turnover HH Demand for new housing stock (%)	2%	10%	<i>Increase replacement of Housing Stock</i>
Annual demand for new owner housing from turnover	4	19	
Annual demand for new owner housing from turnover	19	91	
Summary of Housing Demand	Baseline Scenario	Redevelopment Scenario	Scenario Notes
Demand for new owner housing			
I. Annual demand from household growth 2014-2024	2	6	
II. Annual demand from turnover of existing units	4	19	
III. Induced demand	-	12	<i>Add Induced Demand</i>
Total annual demand for new owner housing	6	37	
Demand for new rental housing			
I. Annual demand from household growth 2014-2024	7	17	
II. Annual demand from turnover of existing units	19	91	
III. Induced demand	-	40	<i>Add Induced Demand</i>
Total annual demand for new rental housing	26	147	

Source: ARC (Growth Forecast, Tract + County Level), Nielson (Base Population + HH), US Census, smartedata.com, Bleakly Advisory Group, TSW



amount of local-serving office space could be added as an accessory use to retail or civic uses in a town center-type redevelopment, but demand, absorption and pricing would likely be modest, perhaps 5,000 to 10,000 SF in total, with rents in the \$11.00 to \$15.00/SF range.

- Industrial demand— Industrial uses would not be appropriate for the study area, based on both existing zoning and the visioning exercises and redevelopment scenario being developed as part of this LCI Study.

The commercial component of the LCI Concept plan envisions approximately 6,000-10,000 SF in the Downtown District, followed by an additional 20,000-30,000 SF of commercial space in the future phases of the College District and South Fork district. Based on the commercial demand forecast, the commercial space in the Downtown District could reasonably be absorbed in three to five years; however additional commercial development to fill later phases would be contingent on the early residential and commercial phases successfully redefining Clarkston and shifting perceptions and demand patterns.

## 25 YEAR FORECASTS OF EMPLOYMENT, HOUSEHOLDS + JOBS

The following table uses the Atlanta Regional Commission’s regional growth forecasts, at the census tract and county level, to model likely growth of Clarkston and DeKalb County population, households, and jobs over the next 25 years at 5-year intervals. The model contains two scenarios— an Existing Scenario which assumes no significant changes to the study area, and a Redevelopment Scenario, which

assumes the implementation of significant enhancements to the study area, ultimately increasing the perception and desirability of the study area as a place to live, shop, conduct business or seek entertainment.

## REDEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Clarkston is dealing with a major challenge in attracting new development opportunities to the community—the conventional real estate market is not working. Our research on the Clarkston market indicates that, current sales prices and achievable rents, both residential and commercial, in Clarkston are too low to justify any new development. It is unlikely that this issue we be corrected by normal market forces since it is impacting so many aspects of the real estate market.

Accordingly, we are recommending that the City undertake a series of policy actions designed to first stabilize and then improve the operation of the real estate market in Clarkston so that the city can attract private investment that will create the types of improvements in downtown that are proposed in this plan.

## MARKET POLICIES

The recommended policies to revitalize the local real estate market are fourfold and detailed below:

- Stabilize the local housing market
- Incentivize key private sector development
- Establish a political and organizational structure to promote redevelopment
- Enhance Clarkston’s economic environment

**TABLE 4.3 REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS/REAL ESTATE DEMAND<sup>1</sup>**

LCI Concept Plan Component	Total Units/SF Envisioned	Annual Demand Forecasts	Absorption Period	Price/Rent Range
<b>Residential</b>				
Single Family	80-100	35-40 Units	3-5 Years	\$175,000-\$250,000
Townhome	24			
Apartment	240	120-160 Units	2-3 Years	\$0.80 - \$0.85/SF \$750/1 BR \$850/2 BR \$925/2 BR
<b>Commercial</b>				
Phase 1 Office + Retail	6,000 – 10,000 SF	3,000-6,000	2-5 Years	\$11.00 - \$15.00/SF
Phase 2 Office + Retail	20,000 – 30,000 SF	TBD	TBD	TBD

<sup>1</sup> Redevelopment scenario assumes the implementation of significant enhancements to the study area, ultimately increasing the perception and desirability of the study area as a place to live, shop, conduct business, or seek recreational or other activities.

### Stabilize Local Housing Market (O-12)

- Create a non-profit housing development corporation to purchase vacant or sub-standard homes, often foreclosures, to rehabilitate and sell to new buyers.
- Start an urban homesteading program, where a non-profit would sell homes to first time home buyers for a nominal fee in return for an agreement by the buyers to rehabilitate and occupy the homes for a minimum time period.
- Invite national organizations such as Habitat for Humanity into the community to rehabilitate and resell homes to designated recipients such as city employees, teachers and others who work in the area.
- Coordinate with the DeKalb Regional Land Bank Authority to acquire homes and sites for redevelopment.
- Create senior housing options in the City which would allow current residents to age in place.

### Provide incentives for private-sector Redevelopment (O-13)

- Create a citywide Tax Allocation District (TAD) to support redevelopment initiatives that support city-side housing and redevelopment goals.
- Incentivize the redevelopment of key aging apartment communities by offering density bonuses and TAD support for infrastructure and pre-development costs.

### Establish Political + Organizational Infrastructure to Facilitate + Promote Redevelopment (O-14)

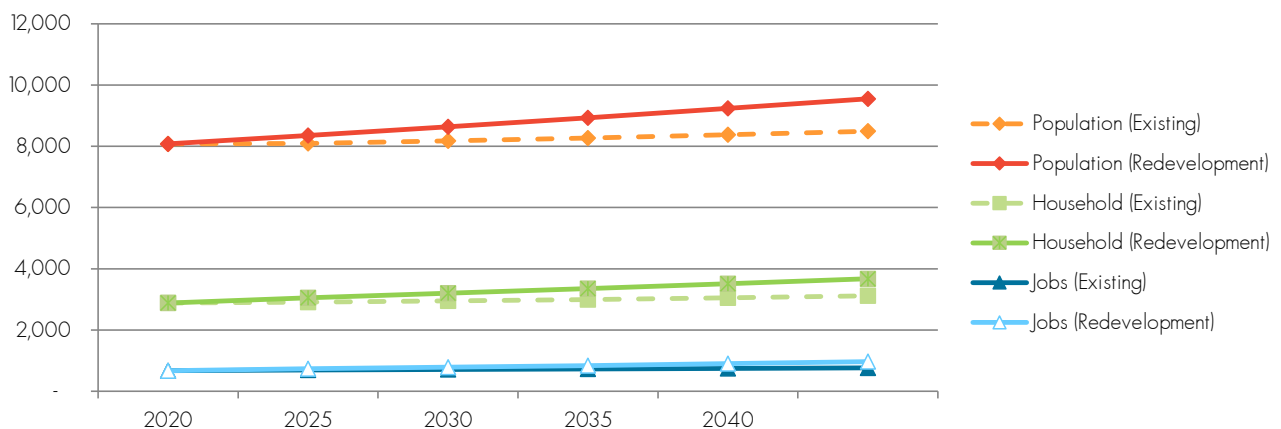
- Establish a non-profit organization to oversee, promote, and execute Clarkston’s housing and redevelopment goals
- Seek foundation support to fund initial years of the Clarkston’s redevelopment initiative
- Facilitate public-private partnerships to use low-income Housing Tax Credits to build mixed-income projects that can increase rents and provide better housing for renters in the city.
- Convene a one day housing summit in Clarkston to bring in regional housing experts to hammer out a more detailed housing strategy. Seek the help of an organization with experience in this area, such as Enterprise Community Partners.
- Seek LCI implementation funding to support the initial year of the housing strategy.

### Enhance Clarkston’s Economic Environment (O-15)

- Develop strategies to support existing local businesses to maintain in, improve and expand their operations in the study area.
- Partner with business development organizations to develop business incubators in vacant buildings. Emphasize entrepreneurial opportunities that capitalize on Clarkston’s local advantages, particularly its ethnic and geographic diversity.
- Prepare an Economic Development Strategy to stabilize and broaden Clarkston’s employment and tax base.

The combination of these strategies could help restore the housing market in Clarkston and help attract new families to live and invest in the community and help accomplish implementation of the vision of the LCI Plan.

**FIGURE 4.18 FORECASTS OF EMPLOYMENT, HOUSEHOLDS + JOBS**



# 4.5 Urban Design + Historic Resources

As public and private sector investment occurs in Clarkston, attention to design will be critical to creating a strong local identity. Central to this will be building on the area's history and diversity, while incorporating place-making principles.

## URBAN DESIGN + HISTORIC RESOURCES POLICIES

### Require Quality Urban Design Standards

Basic elements of urbanism should be required for all new development, including:

- Building setbacks are appropriate distance from street for use, whether it is a zero lot line for a commercial building or a yard requirement for a residential home
- Setbacks used for pedestrian purposes such as outdoor dining, landscaping, or porches
- Parking on-street, or at the side or rear of a building; avoid parking lots
- Pedestrian scaled wayfinding system, that is unified in design
- Avoid gated developments + the building of private streets

### Support Architectural Standards that Allow a Variety of Styles + Require Quality Design

Overall, new buildings in Clarkston should not be restricted to one particular architectural style, but development should respect existing architectural character, if applicable, and follow design guidelines to ensure quality.



Urban Design Guidelines support quality placemaking

### Preserve Historic Districts + Buildings

Use design guidelines for preservation, ensuring new developments are compatible with existing context. Encourage reuse of buildings.

### Incorporate Art, Monuments, + Memorials in Public Spaces

The installation of art projects should be incorporated into streetscape and public space projects. Clarkston is an intersections of diverse cultures and the City should form partnerships with local cultural resources and artists

## URBAN DESIGN + HISTORIC RESOURCES PROJECTS

### Update/Enhance Community Gateways (O-14)

The City should evaluate locations for new gateways and update current gateways' signage to reflect the current Clarkston logo. Signage could be sponsored by local businesses and could incorporate local art. and landscaping.

### Implement Urban Design Guidelines throughout City Limits (O-15)

Urban Design Guidelines throughout the City will help create an identity for the City. It will also ensure that inconsistencies in streetscaping, setbacks and sidewalks are avoided, which plague Clarkston today.

### Continued Citywide Branding (O-16)

Recently the City has adopted a new logo and created street sign toppers. Branding should continue to expand throughout the City and to extend into the greater regional area.

### Uniform Sign Program + Ordinance (O-17)

This program would create consistent design for wayfinding signage, GDOT signs, City signs, and historic signs.



# 4.6 Public Facilities + Spaces

As Clarkston changes over the coming years, needs for public facilities and spaces will grow. Currently, the City is lacking public spaces such as a town green and pocket parks. These types of spaces are important to placemaking and shaping the identity of a City.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES + SPACES POLICIES

### Promote Accessibility to Existing/New Facilities + Spaces

Public facilities and spaces should be easily accessible by pedestrian, car and bike to serve Clarkston’s diverse population.

### Incorporate Parks + Open Spaces into New Developments

New pocket parks and plazas could expand the amount of open space in the City and would reduce the demand in the area.

### Promote Parks + Plazas Where Public Events Can Occur

Public spaces should be designed to accommodate public events.

### Include Public Art + Historic Markers/Wayfinding Signage in Public Spaces

Clarkston can show off its diversity and past through both local art and informational signage.

### Encourage Appropriate Relationships Between Parks + Development

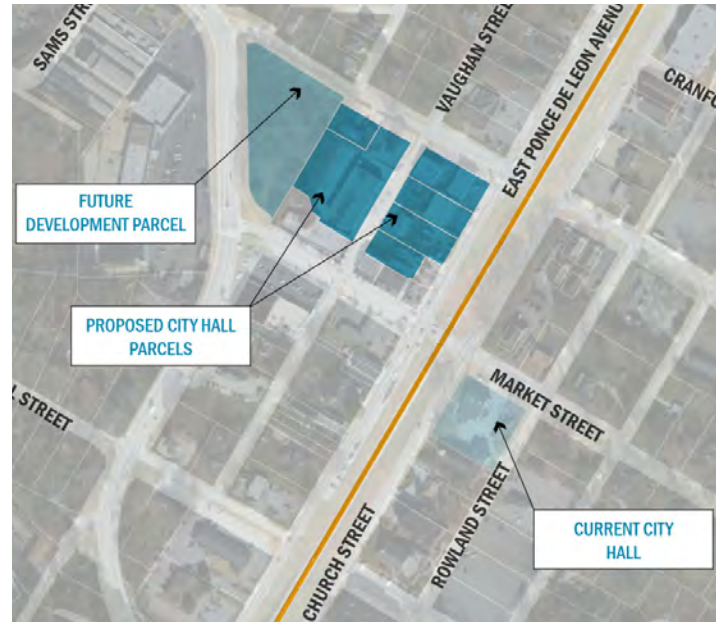
New development adjacent to public spaces should front them with high visibility which includes doors, windows, and walkways. Parking decks, loading zones, dumpsters, or similar uses should be minimized and hidden from view in these areas. New, publicly-accessible streets should be created to separate parks from new development where feasible.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES + SPACES PROJECTS

### City Hall Redevelopment with Town Green (0-18)

As proposed, the new City Hall would front Vaughan Street, providing a new public facility and space for Clarkston.

FIGURE 4.19 POTENTIAL CITY HALL PARCELS



### Design/Create Public Spaces + Pocket Parks (0-19)

The City lacks public and green spaces. Future developments should be encouraged to include gardens and plazas for public use.

### Incorporate New South Fork Park (0-20)

Create a master plan for the park, including the proposed multi-use trail that would connect to the Montreal Road, North Indian Creek Drive, Downtown and Friendship Forest. This could serve as both a passive and active space along the creek.

### Update/Create Parks’ Master Plans (0-21)

These would include Milam Park, Friendship Forest, and 40 Oaks.

### Comprehensive Bicycle Infrastructure Plan (0-22)

An inventory of current conditions and proposed projects including: multi-use trails, sharrows, bike lanes, existing PATH, and cycle tracks throughout the City.

### Sustainable Education Program (0-23)

The City of Clarkston should develop education programs to inform residents, developers and officials of ways they can participate in sustainable living.

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# 5 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



# 5.1 Action Plan

## WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?

The action plan summarizes recommendations related to the future build-out of the study area and the public improvements necessary to support quality development. On the following pages, a series of maps and matrices with list proposed improvements for Clarkston including the following information:

- Project description
- Timeline
- Responsible parties
- Cost estimates

In order to ensure implementation, continued diligence will be required on the part of area residents, businesses, the City of Clarkston government, and other organizations.

These groups must monitor private development and public improvements in the study area to ensure that they are consistent with the community vision embodied in the plan. Specifically, stakeholders must cooperate with local government and private developers to ensure that land use and zoning changes that support the vision are implemented satisfactorily.

Most recommendations are provided on an aggressive five year timeline, although some clearly extend beyond this time period as funding becomes available. Projects in the near future represent those addressing areas with the most critical need for public improvement, or those where public investment can spur private investment. Longer-term projects are less urgent, but equally key to the ultimate success of this study.

## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

During the public outreach process it became evident that the character and diversity of Clarkston needed to grow with the City. Below lists some general community priorities gathered throughout the LCI process:

- Maintain the small town character of Clarkston
- Maintain the socio-economic and ethnic diversity of the community
- Make a variety of housing choices available at varied price points
- Enhance pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure throughout the City
- Enhance the core of Clarkston and create a mixed-use center in the downtown area



# PRIORITY PROJECTS

Extracted from the public outreach process, three projects were identified as high priority to the public at-large.

>North Indian Creek + Montreal Road, Road Diet/ Reconfiguration (T-1)

>Market Street Improvements, Rogers Street south throughout Residential Neighborhood (T-2)

>South Fork Trail, from Friendship Forest to North Indian Creek Road (T-18)



Current conditions along North Indian Creek Road



A new trail could connect North Indian Creek with Friendship Forest

## Local Funding

Through LCI studies, the ARC has committed to making funding available for the implementation of plan elements related to transportation. Their expressed desire is for public infrastructure improvements to spur private investment in existing activity centers. Transportation projects may also be funded through a variety of other sources administered through the ARC. City of Clarkston should continue to work with ARC staff to ensure that projects requiring transportation funds are included in future Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs), which are revised every five years. Most transportation funds administered by ARC will require a 20 percent local match.

Sources for the local match funds could include:

- Proposed Community Improvement District (CID): If a CID is created within the study area, it will have a critical role in providing matching funds for transportation projects, and completing many of the marketing recommendations of the plan.
- Private donations: Local matches could be obtained by soliciting area property owners, businesses, residents, and institutions. Private funds may also be used to fund specific “special interest” projects. For example, the PATH Foundation funds multi-use greenway paths, while the Trust for Public Land and the Blank Foundation sometimes fund park projects.
- SPLOST Funds: Future special local option sales tax (SPLOST) efforts could include funds providing a local match for critical transportation projects.

Without a detailed analysis that is beyond the scope of this study, the ideal source for local match funds cannot be determined. However, all available options should be carefully explored.

## Steps Toward Implementation

This LCI Update contains an aggressive but achievable plan for future growth in Clarkston. For the vision to become a reality, there must be short and long-term commitments to its principles. The following steps are intended to guide the short and long-term implementation processes.

## Short Term

Short term implementation should strive to remove regulatory barriers to the vision contained herein. After plan approval by the City of Clarkston, its recommendations should be officially adopted into the City’s Comprehensive Plan. As part of this, updates to the official Future Land Use map should be undertaken as outlined in this part.



Equally important, a new zoning district should be created and some existing zoning districts should be updated in the short term to legalize the plan vision and encourage compatible development.

### Long Term

A plan's long term vision cannot be achieved overnight, and if it is not consulted and reviewed regularly, it risks becoming obsolete.

As Clarkston moves forward with implementing the vision from this study, it is critical that the following be kept in mind:

The Vision: Of all of the components of this study, the vision should represent its most lasting legacy. The ideas contained in Part 3.1: Future Vision represent the results of an inclusive public involvement process from the 2001 LCI study and was confirmed through a new round of public involvement process during this update. It is unlikely that the general vision and goals resulting from this update process will change significantly, even though the steps to achieving them may.

Flexibility: While the vision is unlikely to change in the near future, it is critical that the community recognize that the ways in which the vision is achieved can and will change. The future addition or subtraction of policies or projects should not be viewed as a compromise of the study, but rather its natural evolution in response to new conditions. Many of the assumptions used to guide this process, including the economic climate, transportation costs, transportation funding programs, and development trends, are never fixed. The City of Clarkston must be prepared to respond to changes in order to ensure a relevant plan.

Development Guide: One of the greatest long-term values of this document, in addition to its role in procuring transportation funding, is that it lays out a detailed land use framework. All future development proposals should be reviewed for compatibility with the framework.

By being mindful of these three concepts, the City of Clarkston LCI update can guide positive change in and around the area for years to come.



FIGURE 5.1 LONG TERM FOCUS SITES/FRAMEWORK PLAN



# 5.2 Project Implementation

## LAND USE

Several changes to the Future Land Use Plan were proposed throughout the LCI process. The diagram below illustrates the recommended changes:

- A: Change five parcels between Montreal Road and Market Street from Central Business District designation to Civic designation. This reflects the Downtown Concept’s plan vision to relocate the Clarkston City Hall to this location. Additionally this Civic space would include a public space such as a Town Green.
- B: Convert Several parcels on east of Montreal Road

to the Mixed Use designation from just commercial to foster many uses such as commercial, education and residential.

- C: East of Hill street a large parcel that is currently residential is recommended to become a park creating a gateway to the North Fork of Peachtree Creek, and an additional recreation area for Clarkston.
- D: Convert parcels currently listed as Civic or Institutional to Mixed Use in an effort to create a cohesive feel for the North Indian Creek Drive corridor.

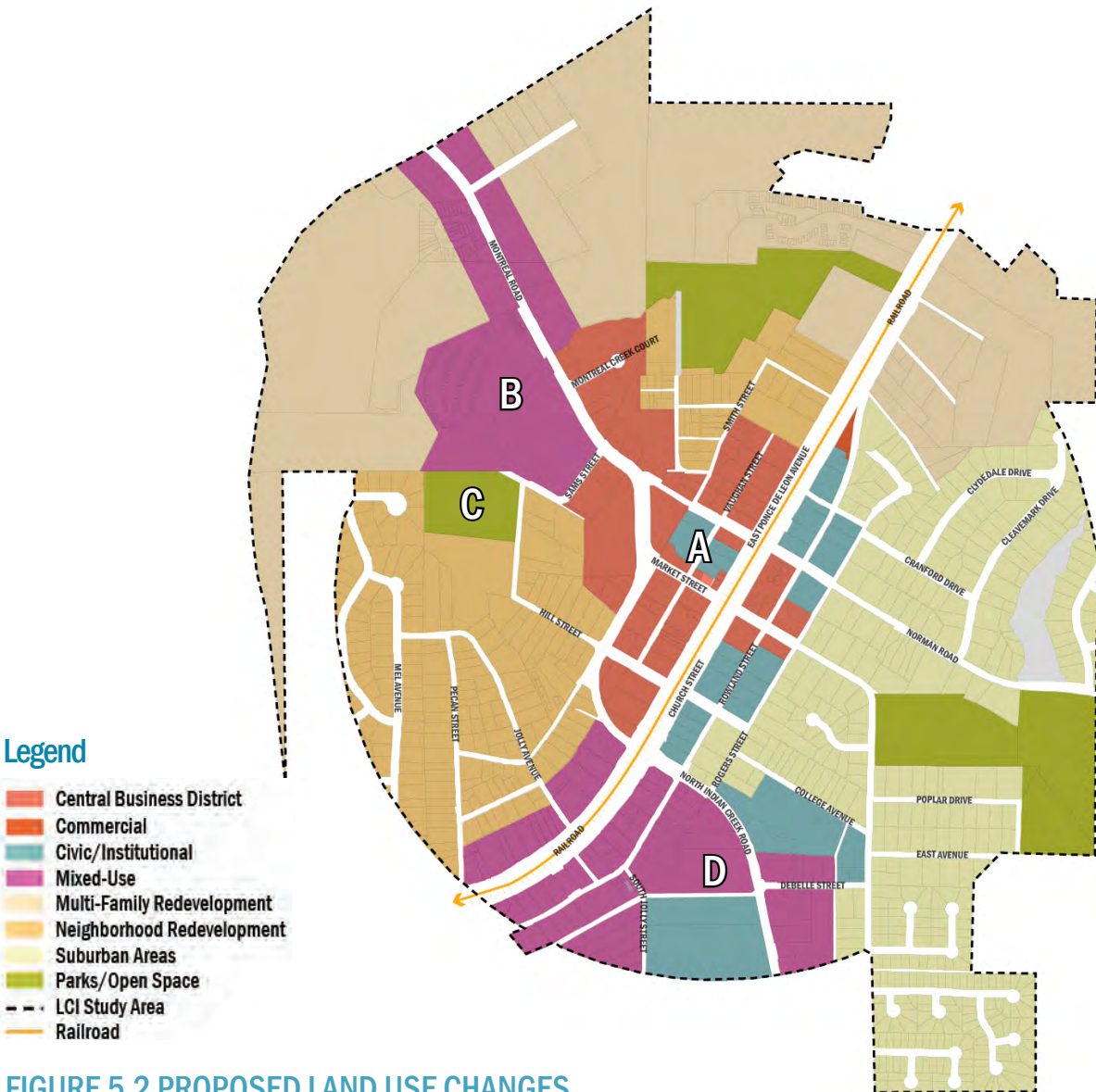


FIGURE 5.2 PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGES

## MARKET + ECONOMICS

It is project that the build-out of the Framework Plan will add population and jobs to the study area as identified on the following page.

### PROJECTED POPULATION + EMPLOYMENT

It is estimated that 8,080 people currently live in the City of Clarkston. These numbers are based off the 2014 city limits and do not reflect the recent annexation of additional properties. The recommended land uses will increase the number of residents to 8,354 by 2020 and 8,638 by 2025. The annual population growth percentage is also

increased with reinvestment into the community. Estimating employment and population growth beyond ten years is difficult on the micro-level. Real estate and economic trends are complex and subject to change. Because the recommended land use plan is based on a 10-year vision, longer-term forecasts can be made based on achieving said vision. Inherent to this is a regional return to economic growth and an assumption that some facilities will be redeveloped.

Study area growth projections are shown in Table 5.4. Note that these figures are based on the general carrying capacity of the area, not a specific site.

**TABLE 5.1 LAND USE PROJECTS**

	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
O-1	Focus on Creating Land Uses in Concept Plan	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	TBD
O-2	Promote Mixed-Use, Transity Oriented Development	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	City/Private
O-3	Increase Range of Housing Choices	Staff Time	2015	Private	City
O-4	Encourage Reuse + Rehab of Downtown	Staff Time	2015	Private	City
O-5	Encourage Redevelopment of South Fork Village	Staff Time	2015	Private	City
O-6	Encourage Redevelopment of Stone Mountain Trail Village	Staff Time	2015	Private	City

**TABLE 5.2 URBAN DESIGN + HISTORIC RESOURCES PROJECTS**

	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
O-14	Update/Enhance Community Gateways*	\$200,000	2015	City of Clarkston	City
O-15	Implement Urban Design Guidelines throughout City Limits*	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	City
O-16	Continued Citywide Branding	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	City
O-17	Uniform Sign Program + Ordinance	\$350,000	2016	City of Clarkston	City

\*From previous LCI Study

**TABLE 5.3 PUBLIC FACILITIES + SPACES PROJECTS**

	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
O-18	City Hall Redevelopment with Town Green	\$5,000,000	2019	City of Clarkston	City
O-19	Design/Create Public Spaces + Pocket Parks	TBD	2015	City of Clarkston,	City/Private
O-20	Incorporate New South Fork Park	Staff Time	2016	City of Clarkston	City
O-21	Update Existing Parks' Master Plans (Milam Park, Friendship Forest, 40 Oaks)	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	City
O-22	Comprehensive Bicycle Infrastructre Plan	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	City
O-23	Sustainable Education Program	Staff Time	2015	City of Clarkston	City/DeKalb County

**TABLE 5.4 FORECASTS OF EMPLOYMENT, HOUSEHOLDS + JOBS**

Existing Scenario												
	2014		2020		2025		2030		2035		2040	
	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County
<b>Population</b>												
Total Population	8,080	719,052	8,092	772,444	8,180	794,244	8,270	816,659	8,380	839,830	8,491	863,658
New Population			12	53,392	88	21,800	90	22,415	110	23,171	111	23,828
Annual Pop . Growth	0.0%	1.2%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%		
<b>Household</b>												
Total Households	2,881	286,343	2,906	303,535	2,951	315,497	2,995	327,930	3,055	340,779	3,116	354,131
New Households			25	17,192	45	11,962	44	12,433	60	12,849	61	13,352
Annual HH Growth	0.1%	1.0%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%		
<b>Jobs</b>												
Total jobs	671	290,835	692	319,821	709	337,570	725	356,304	744	377,809	764	400,613
New Jobs			21	28,986	17	17,749	16	18,734	19	21,505	20	22,804
Annual Job Growth	0.5%	1.6%	0.5%	1.1%	0.4%	1.1%	0.5%	1.2%	0.5%	1.2%		
<b>Redevelopment Scenario</b>												
	2014		2020		2025		2030		2035		2040	
	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County	Clarkston	DeKalb County
<b>Population</b>												
Total Population	8,080	719,052	8,354	772,444	8,638	794,244	8,931	816,659	9,236	839,830	9,552	863,658
New Population			274	53,654	284	21,996	293	22,618	305	23,366	315	23,828
Annual Pop . Growth	0.6%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%		
<b>Household</b>												
Total Households	2,881	286,343	3,054	303,535	3,199	315,497	3,351	327,930	3,509	340,779	3,675	354,131
New Households			173	17,340	145	12,062	152	12,541	158	12,947	166	13,352
Annual HH Growth	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%		
<b>Jobs</b>												
Total jobs	671	290,835	738	319,821	787	337,570	840	356,304	901	377,809	967	400,613
New Jobs			67	29,032	49	17,781	53	18,771	61	21,547	66	22,850
Annual Job Growth	1.6%	1.6%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%		

Source: ARC (Growth Forecast, Tract & County Level), Nielsen (Base Population & HH), US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2011 (Base Jobs), Bleakly Advisory Group, TSW

**TABLE 5.5 MARKET + HOUSING PROJECTS**

	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
O-7	Stabilize Local Housing Market	On going	2015	City/Private	City/Private
O-8	Provide Incentives for Private Sector Redevelopment	Staff Time	2015	City	City
O-9	Establish Political + Organizational Infrastructure to Facilitate + Promote Redevelopment	Staff Time	2015	City	City
O-10	Enhance Clarkston's Economic Environment	On going	2015	City/Private	City/Private
O-11	Coordinate with DeKalb County Development Authority to promote private investment for infill + redevelopment/initiatives/no action date*	Staff Time	2015	City	City
O-12	Investigate the potential for development of a Development Authority for the City of Clarkston/no action date*	Staff Time	2015	City	City
O-13	Develop a Community Development Corporation/no action date*	Staff Time	2015	City	City

\*From previous LCI Study



# TRANSPORTATION

The map on this page and the matrix to the right list and illustrate the proposed transportation projects that have a specific location within the study area. Project numbers refer to the those listed below in Table 5.2.

## TABLE 5.6 TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

ID	Description	Type of Improvement	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs	ROW Year	ROW Costs	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs(W/ 0 ROW)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
<b>Vehicular</b>													
T-1	North Indian Creek Drive/Montreal Road Reconfiguration *	Road Diet	2015	\$18,500	2016	TBD	2017	\$227,312	\$245,812	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$49,162
T-2	Market Street Reconfiguration I	Capacity Improvement	2015	\$408,360	2016	TBD	2017	\$2,041,800	\$2,450,160	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$490,032
T-3	Market Street Reconfiguration II	Capacity Improvement	2015	\$693,560	2016	TBD	2017	\$3,467,800	\$4,161,360	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$832,272
T-4	Hill Street Reconfiguration	Capacity Improvement	2015	\$563,600	2016	TBD	2017	\$2,818,000	\$3,381,600	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$676,320
T-5	Market Street @ North Indian Creek Drive	Intersection signal upgrade	2015	\$40,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	City	TBD	\$48,000
T-6	Market Street @ Vaughan Street	Intersection signal install	2015	\$40,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	City	TBD	\$48,000
T-7	Market Street @ East Ponce De Leon Avenue	Intersection signal upgrade	2015	\$40,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	City	TBD	\$48,000
T-8	Market Street @ Church Street	Intersection signal install	2015	\$40,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	City	TBD	\$48,000
T-9	Wilson Street @ East Ponce De Leon Avenue	Intersection signal install	2016	\$40,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	City	TBD	\$48,000
T-10	Wilson Street@ Church St	Intersection signal install	2016	\$60,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$300,000	\$360,000	City	City	TBD	\$72,000
T-11	North Indian Creek Drive@ East Ponce De Leon Avenue *	Operational Improvement	2016	\$44,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$440,000	\$484,000	City	GDOT/City	TBD	\$96,800
T-12	North Indian Creek Drive @ Church Street *	Operational Improvement	2016	\$44,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$440,000	\$484,000	City	GDOT/City	TBD	\$96,800
T-13	North Indian Creek Drive @ Rowland Street,	Safety Improvement	2016	\$60,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$300,000	\$360,000	City	GDOT/City	TBD	\$36,000
T-14	North Indian Creek Drive @ Debelle Street	Safety Improvement	2016	\$60,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$300,000	\$360,000	City	GDOT/City	TBD	\$36,000
T-15	Church Street @Lovejoy Street	Intersection Improvement	2016	\$60,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$300,000	\$360,000	City	GDOT/City	TBD	\$72,000
<b>Transit</b>													
T-16	North Indian Creek Drive	Bus Stop Improvement	2015	\$40,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$240,000
T-17	East Ponce De Leon Avenue	Bus Stop Improvement	2015	\$40,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$200,000	\$240,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$48,000
<b>Pedestrian &amp; Bicycle</b>													
T-18	Rowland Street	Bike/Ped Improvement	2016	\$69,600	2017	TBD	2017	\$348,000	\$417,600	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$83,520
T-19	South Fork Peachtree Creek path	Bike/Ped Improvement	2016	\$24,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$120,000	\$144,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$28,800
T-20	Friendship with Milam Park	Bike/Ped Improvement	2016	\$36,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$180,000	\$216,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$43,200
T-21	North Indian Creek Drive *	Pedestrian Improvement	2015	\$919,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$6,125,000	\$7,044,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$1,408,800
T-22	East Ponce De Leon Avenue *	StreetScape	2015	\$462,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$3,076,000	\$3,538,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$707,600
T-23	Church Street	StreetScape	2015	\$104,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$520,000	\$388,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$77,600
T-24	Norman Road *	Sidewalk	2015	\$807,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$8,074,000	\$8,881,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$1,776,200
T-25	North Indian Creek Drive in front of Clarkston Public Library *	Pedestrian Improvement	2015	\$20,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$150,000	\$170,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$34,000
T-26	Montreal Road *	Sidewalk	2015	\$32,000	2016	TBD	2016	\$215,000	\$247,000	City	LCI/City	TBD	\$49,400
<b>Railroad</b>													
T-27	Market Street	Railroad Crossing Upgrade	2016	\$40,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$200,000	\$240,000	City/CSX	GDOT/City	TBD	\$24,000
T-28	Wilson Street	Railroad Crossing Upgrade	2016	\$40,000	2017	TBD	2017	\$200,000	\$240,000	City/CSX	GDOT/City	TBD	\$24,000

\* DeKalb County 2014 Transportation Plan

Totals		\$4,845,620		\$0				\$31,242,912	\$35,852,532				
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Legend

- Transportation Project
- Proposed Bike Infrastructure
- Existing PATH



FIGURE 5.3 TRANSIT PROJECT MAP

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# Appendix

## CLARKSTON HOUSING SUMMIT

### Meeting Summary + Findings

Given the many challenges facing Clarkston's housing market, the City of Clarkston, in conjunction with the Clarkston LCI Project team and Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. hosted a Housing Summit on February 4th, 2015 from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm at the Clarkston Community Center. There were approximately 50 participants at the summit. The goal was to share ideas and explore ways to stabilize Clarkston's for-sale and rental housing markets to set the stage for redevelopment and revitalization consistent with the Vision of the LCI plan.

The three session summit began with an overview of the current Clarkston LCI Project and Clarkston's local demographic, economic and housing context.

- Adam Williamson, TSW, presented a summary of the Clarkston 10-Year LCI Study Update and Clarkston's Streetscape and pedestrian Enhancement Project;
- Jonathan Gelber, Bleakly Advisory Group, presented on the Clarkston's demographic, economic and housing context; and
- Paedia Mixon, New American Pathways, presented an introduction to Clarkston's refugee resettlement history and process

The next session was a discussion on successful regional housing strategies for consideration in Clarkston in the areas of affordable housing, led by a panel of regional housing experts. The panelists included:

- Chris Norman, Director, Atlanta-Fulton Co. Land Bank Authority
- Chuck Young, Prestwick Development Co.
- Jesse Wiles, President, APD
- Jon Toppen, Tapestry Developers
- Ethan Davidson, Purpose Built Communities
- Chris Morris and Tonza Clark, DeKalb County Planning
- Moderator: Meagan Shannon-Vlkovic—Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

Over lunch, the final session included an informal dialog identifying key elements that may have application to Clarkston's future housing strategy. The summit participant included:

- Refugee resettlement and service agencies - Catholic Charities Atlanta, IRC, Clarkston Community Center, Lutheran Services of GA Refugee Services, World Relief, CDF, and Clarkston First Baptist Church.
- Representatives from the multi-family housing community.
- Affordable housing organizations such as DeKalb Habitat for Humanity and DeKalb Housing Authority, and
- City of Clarkston staff and elected officials.

### Session 2: Panel Discussion, Successful Regional Housing Strategies for Consideration in Clarkston

Some of the highlights from the panel discussion included the following:

#### Creating Affordable Housing using Low Income Housing Tax Credits Jon Toppen, Tapestry Developers

- » Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) (DCA oversees program)
- » Equity in project in exchange for tax credits, 15 year holding period, 60 or more units with a mix of affordable and market-rate units
- » Public-private partnership
- » Difficult & highly competitive to get approval for limited LIHTCs
- » LIHTC applications are scored based on qualified allocation plan. Factors include access to transit, amenities, schools, redevelopment area, high income area, etc...
- Most effective LIHTC projects involve inexpensive purchase, expensive rehab to maximize benefit of credits.
- Why hasn't Clarkston gotten LIHTC?
  - » Clarkston scores well in some areas but not others. Clarkston several favorable factors: rental demand

positive, services, transit proximity

- » For Clarkston, scoring just doesn't add up, due to factors such as railroad tracks and noise, housing stock/vacancies, incomes too high, not a lot of vacant property suitable for development, many current units functionally obsolete, rents already affordable, 60% of AMI required, Clarkston rents are already low enough to qualify as affordable

#### Market-rate Rental Housing; Chuck Young, Prestwick Development Co.

- Current rents/prices in Clarkston do not support market rate development
- High construction costs limiting new projects to "Class A" development
- Market-rate developers are looking for "cool" streetscapes & adaptable buildings with character to attract millennials and empty nesters
- Mixed-income or senior projects possible with LIHTC and other subsidy programs

#### City of Augusta Lainey-Walker and Bethlehem Neighborhood Housing Strategy Jesse Wiles, President, APD

- A successful public-private partnership program to facilitate neighborhood improvement was created in Augusta, GA
- City acts as a master developer
  - » Evaluated area data and decided where to get started, one site at a time
  - » Focused funding and efforts on a few key catalyst sites, rather than spread limited funding across large area
  - » Land and funding only to developers who agree to support plan and vision
- Use a decision matrix to guide policy
- City took lead in property acquisition and assembly through local land bank, acquired 300 parcels
- Long-term funding commitment
  - » 50 year commitment of \$750,000 annually to more redevelopment forward
  - » Bonds generate continuing funding source
  - » City outsourced planning, pre-development, construction, developer, architects, services,

marketing, etc. to APD, affiliates and development partners. City did not staff-up internally

- Marketing and branding effort was extremely important and effective, helped to create a "cool factor" for the neighborhood
- Success is contingent on mitigating risk for the developer to catalyze investment in the area.

#### Community Quarterback Model for Redevelopment Leadership Ethan Davidson, Purpose Built Communities

- Focus on finding and eliminating community weaknesses
  - » Education, from cradle to college, is key to neighborhood stability
  - » Create quality mixed income housing
  - » Focus on community health
- The key to success is the "Quarterback" – A lead nonprofit who coordinates multi-disciplinary efforts.
- Case studies: Cities where this model has been used successfully:
  - » Charlotte – Housing Authority/nonprofit
  - » Spartanburg – Leadership development program
  - » Birmingham, AL
  - » Fort Worth, TX
  - » Oakland, CA
- Quarterbacks can come from different sectors- public private, non-profit-
- Clarkston needs to have a Quarterback: for a housing strategy here to be successful

#### Land Banking Chris Norman, Atlanta-Fulton County Land Bank

- Land Banks are created by a county government
- There are 18 Land Banks in GA, one in DeKalb County
- The Land Bank has the power to extinguish taxes during the tax foreclosure process
- Land Bank is in partnership with Atlanta School Board to process & sell surplus school property.
- Land bank works with the NSP program administrator
- Clear land title & issue RFP to developers for

redevelopment

- Land banks are effective mechanism to receive, process & clear donated properties
- Land Bank facilitates assemblage of land for large redevelopment sites or parks
  - » Developer needs to deliver on development within 3-4 years or title lapses

### DeKalb County Department of Community Development Chris Morris and Tonza Clark

- DeKalb County has a single-family foreclosure task force
  - » They manage a foreclosure registry and a housing vacancy registry
  - » Task Force includes banks, property preservation, developers/property owners
  - » Working continually to identify properties in City of Clarkston
- Multi family Programs
  - » Loan to developers (HOME – low interest gap funding). Goal is to create mixed income communities
  - » Assistance to buyers
  - » Assistance to renters
  - » Homeless housing strategies
  - » NSP funds
  - » Grants to SF home redevelopers
  - » Housing rehab program
- DeKalb works with other local partners:
  - » DCA
  - » DeKalb County
  - » DeKalb Land Bank Authority
  - » Nonprofits – housing and services
  - » MARTA
  - » DeKalb Housing Authority
- Resources
  - » LIHTC
  - » HOME Funding/CDBG
  - » Land Bank Authority
  - » DeKalb Housing Authority

## Session 3: Key Findings, Take-Aways, Next Steps

The final session was a wide ranging discussion with the speakers and participants in the Housing Summit about what were the key findings about the condition of housing in Clarkston, what were the key take-aways from the earlier session and some idea about the next steps for the city in creating a housing strategy for the future. There were three key areas discussed along with a number of other important comments:

1. Who are the customers of a Clarkston Housing Strategy? Clarkston is a very diverse community with a mix of older residents, new residents, refugees relocating in the community, college students, seniors and others. The housing strategy needs to address the diverse housing needs of all of Clarkston's residents with a long range goal of creating a better functioning housing market that is attractive to new residents and other to live and invest in the city. These needs include:
  - Senior Housing— many seniors live in older single-family homes, but the city lacks a range of housing lifestyle choices that could appeal to seniors seeking rental housing, assisted living and other housing options.
  - New rental housing— Clarkston's rental housing stock is older and portions are not in good repair. The creation of selective new market and mixed income housing in Clarkston could provide a range of rental housing choices which would allow more families to stay in Clarkston as their incomes improve and they can afford a broader range of housing options. This needs to be done in a way that doesn't negatively impact the current affordable inventory that is well managed and providing a valuable housing option for moderate income households.
  - New owner housing— Clarkston's housing market provides limited choices for new market rate housing. The City should be encouraging this housing as a way to stabilize the community, attract more middle income households to support additional retail and services and begin to shift the current balance from a rental dominated community to create a more balanced renter/owner ratio. Improving the demand for the current for-sale inventory is key to attracting new development of market rate for-sale housing in the city.
  - Refugee housing— Clarkston has been a major destination for refugee households to locate in the



Atlanta region. They typically reside in the many multifamily rental projects in the community. The refugees are looking for affordable, safe housing, need services and employment. These households are a major demand segment for Clarkston's rental housing inventory. However, as they progress up the economy ladder many leave Clarkston for better rental housing and to own their first home. The City needs to find ways to better integrate these successful refugee households into the broader housing market.

- Rehabilitate the existing multifamily Inventory— Clarkston has a substantial inventory of older multifamily rental units. Some of these complexes are good shape and attract strong demand from households needing affordable housing. Several other complexes are not well maintained and have difficulty attracting quality tenants and are often locations of criminal activity. The city needs to adopt policies through its code enforcement efforts to require the upgrading and maintenance of the existing rental inventory, or encourage the conversion of those locations to either new housing or other land uses.
- Attract More Young Families to Live in Clarkston— The City needs to improve its current housing stock, attract more homeownership and seek new young families to move into Clarkston, without resulting in gentrification which could be detrimental to many of the City's current residents.

2. Impact of the Refugee Community on Housing— As noted earlier, the refugee community has been a major part of the rental housing market in the City for the last decade or more. The refugees who live in Clarkston have several key characteristics:

- The refugees typically carpool rather than take MARTA to work, since their jobs are often spread around the Atlanta region in areas that are not MARTA accessible.
- Few of the refugees both live and work in Clarkston, which is similar to the pattern of other Clarkston residents.
- It would benefit the refugees and other households in Clarkston if the City were able to attract more employers to locate in the city, it would also diversify the economic base.
- The refugees typically take 6-8 months to get established in the community and they are typically very industrious. As they begin to achieve economic success they tend to move away from Clarkston

seeking their first home or a better apartment.

- The refugees are a major source of demand for businesses located in Clarkston, many of which now cater to their needs.
3. Organizing for Housing— To implement a city housing strategy Clarkston needs to develop a special organization to carry the initiative forward long-term. The concept of a housing “Quarterback” is key.
- Create a Housing Strategy Working Group— From the participants at the Housing Summit the city could create a working group of 10-12 interested individuals to work on creation of a Housing Strategy for the City over the next 90-120 days. Seek funding from ARC, DeKalb County or other organizations to match funds committed by the City to this effort. The goal of the Working Group will be to create a housing strategy to guide the city's housing efforts over the next ten years.
  - Create a Non-Profit Organization to Lead the Housing Strategy— A widely used model would be to have the city create a non-profit housing corporation to lead the effort on for-sale and rental housing. Building on the model used in Augusta, this agency would take a comprehensive approach to addressing housing needs in Clarkston. It could apply for funding to support its operations and act as the quarterback for an on-going, sustained housing improvement program.
  - Create Linkages with Regional Housing Entities— Clarkston needs to identify a range of potential housing partners who can work with the City to improve both its ownership and rental housing inventory. These include Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., DeKalb County, DeKalb Housing Authority, Atlanta Metro Apartment Association, DeKalb Land Bank Authority, Atlanta Regional Commission, and others.
  - Continue the momentum of the Housing Summit— Create a website/email link to keep audience members and interested parties involved as the city works to create a housing strategy
  - Seek Involvement by Financial Institutions-Banks— Clarkston will need access to capital for rehabilitation and new construction. Clarkston has no local financial institutions or banks. Regional banking and financial institutions should be engaged as partners with Clarkston in its housing strategy.
  - Engage the current owners of rental projects and area developers in this effort—There are many good ideas in the private sector about how to improve housing

conditions in Clarkston, make sure they are at the table to benefit from these insights.

- Quality Schools are key to attracting more families— Linking the housing strategy to improving area schools will be key to its long term success.