This appendix contains the Community Engagement Plan and summaries of public involvement activities held throughout the planning process. These materials were originally published on the project website, www.guidesmyrna.com, to provide citizens with access to ongoing information about the project.
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APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The City of Smyrna has earned a reputation as a community of excellence in the Atlanta Region, with quality residential neighborhoods, great services, a strong sense of community, and treasured public amenities, such as the Village Green, the Silver Comet Trail, and quality community parks. Smyrna is experiencing increasing development and investment interest with the construction of the new Braves stadium and exemplified by such developments as Belmont and Jonquil Village. Now is the optimal time for the City to update its comprehensive plan. Much of this is attributed to a long history of strategic, community-based planning.

The City of Smyrna is looking to the community once again to help guide Smyrna’s growth and development and ensure we have the right policies, framework, and action plan in place to facilitate our vision for the future as a part of Guide Smyrna, the process of developing Smyrna’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Guide Smyrna process will build on recent planning processes such as Smyrna’s 10-Year Vision Plan, Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative Study, and South Cobb Drive Corridor Development Study while focusing on areas requiring more detailed attention for the plan to effectively advance the community’s goals for future growth and development.
Figure 1.1. City of Smyrna

Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission
OVERVIEW

The backbone of the Guide Smyrna is an inclusive and informative public engagement. This Community Engagement Program (CEP) details the ways the City of Smyrna will guide those with an interest in the future of Smyrna to be involved in and contribute input to the planning process. Key goals of the CEP are to ensure all voices in the community have a clear understanding of how and when they can get involved and have a meaningful way to help shape the plan. This program rests on consistent communication with the public in person and online. As the CEP is a living document, the meetings and events dates may be subject to change. Current dates will be communicated on the Participate page of www.guidesmyrna.com.

The CEP consists of two key components: 1) engagement opportunities and 2) communications strategy. The engagement strategies indicate how the members of the Smyrna community can provide input to and be involved in the planning process, and the communications strategy depicts how information will be shared throughout the planning process. Community engagement will span a large portion of the project, as illustrated in the Figure 1.2 below. The CEP will be carried out by the planning team, consisting of the City of Smyrna staff and its consultant team led by Jacobs and supported by Market Street Services.

PLANNING TEAM

City of Smyrna Community Development Department, Jacobs, Market Street Services

COMMUNITY

Residents, Property Owners, Community Associations, Business Owners
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWS

The City of Smyrna will conduct interviews with several key stakeholders who play a role in shaping growth and development in Smyrna. These stakeholders include elected and appointed officials, business leaders and developers, neighborhood groups, City staff, and others. These interviews will inform the planning team’s understanding of the issues and opportunities in Smyrna and complement the team’s data analysis of conditions in the city. These interviews will take place on Friday, January 20, 2017 at Brawner Hall from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is a group of 17 community members who will play an ongoing strategic role in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Steering Committee is made up of City Planners, Economic Development leaders, Community Affairs members and Work Groups and will steer the Guide Smyrna process, serve as champions of the plan, and help encourage fellow community members to participate.

The Steering Committee will meet four times through the planning process at the following times:

- Steering Committee Meeting #1 - Thursday, February 2, 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting #2 - Tuesday, March 7, 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting #3 - Tuesday, April 11, 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting #4 - Tuesday, May 16, 2017

Table 1.1. Steering Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEERING COMMITTEE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna Mayor</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna Mayor Pro-Tem</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna Planning &amp; Zoning (P&amp;Z) Board, Chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna P&amp;Z Board Member, Ward 1</td>
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<td>City of Smyrna P&amp;Z Board Member, Ward 2</td>
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<td>City of Smyrna P&amp;Z Board Member, Ward 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna P&amp;Z Board Member, Ward 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna P&amp;Z Board Member, Ward 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative from 2014 Vision Plan Work Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative from 2014 Vision Plan Work Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developer</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Smyrna, Elected Official</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Development Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Representative</td>
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</tbody>
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COMMUNITY SURVEY

The City of Smyrna will develop and carryout a web-based survey, open to the general public, to gain input on the Guide Smyrna vision, priorities, development goals, and key actions for the future. The web-based survey will extend the reach of the Guide Smyrna engagement program and allow us to reach a large cross section of the Smyrna community, including residents who may be unable to attend public meetings (such as families). By providing opportunities for people to comment in their own time, a web-based survey helps ensure the planning process is meaningful, equitable, and inclusive of all voices in the community. The survey is expected to take place over four weeks, with its debut corresponding with the February 16 Public Workshop.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The City will hold two public workshops to facilitate Guide Smyrna visioning and plan development in collaboration with the public. The aim of public workshops is to uncover and discuss issues and opportunities facing Smyrna today and into the future, with a focus on building upon previous planning efforts and updating the City’s overall future land use plan. The workshops will be interactive in nature and will include a group presentation followed by small group discussions. The public workshops will be advertised through a mix of communications channels, including signs along major City roads, social media, and flyers, and take place between at the following times and locations:

- Public Workshop #1 – Thursday, February 16th at Brawner Hall (3180 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Public Workshop #2 – Tuesday, March 21st at Brawner Hall (3180 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

JONQUIL FESTIVAL BOOTH

To create more informal opportunities to interact with and gain input from local residents, the City of Smyrna will host a booth at the Jonquil Festival on April 29th and 30th in the afternoon (exact hours to be determined). This booth will feature information and activities and provide further opportunity for residents to learn more about the Guide Smyrna and provide feedback in an informal setting.

OPEN HOUSE

An open house will be held to provide community members and opportunity to review key recommendations and highlights from the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Open House will be informal in nature and allow people to come and choose as they please and ask one-on-one questions to members of the project team about the draft plan. A full draft of the plan will be available on the City’s website.

- Public Open House – Thursday, June 8th at Brawner Hall (3180 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080) from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Guide Smyrna will be presented at four public hearings to facilitate plan kick-off, review, and adoption. These hearings and associated dates include:

- Kick-off Hearing with Mayor and City Council – Monday, February 6th at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall
- Pre-transmittal Hearing with Planning and Zoning Board – Monday, July 10th at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall
- Pre-transmittal Hearing with Mayor and City Council – Monday, July 17th at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall
- Adoption Hearing with Mayor and City Council – Monday, October 2nd at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The City of Smyrna will use a variety of communication tools to announce public meetings, exhibit draft documents, and enable the community to provide feedback on Guide Smyrna. Regular information updates will help ensure relevant and fluid communications with the public and generate interest in the Guide Smyrna. The following communications tools will be utilized.

PROJECT BRANDING
The process of updating the City’s comprehensive plan document is being branded as Guide Smyrna. The appearance of this project logo and tagline will signal to community members that they are looking at an official document or participating in an official activity of the process.

WEBSITE
GuideSmyrna.com will be a one-stop-shop portal that provides the community with educational information about the Comprehensive Plan and its role in the City’s day-to-day activities as well as information on planning events and links to the Guide Smyrna documents. It will be an easy to use portal to allow the public to submit comments on the Guide Smyrna. This standalone website will serve as the official information portal for the Guide Smyrna process and be linked to the City of Smyrna’s website.

SOCIAL MEDIA
The City of Smyrna operates a dedicated Facebook page and Twitter feed. Social media will be utilized to inform the public of upcoming events and ensure the community is aware of the opportunities to be involved in the Guide Smyrna.

EMAIL BLASTS
Information regarding events and posting of major draft documents will be emailed to residents who participate in and sign-up for the Guide Smyrna outreach list during the planning process.

ROAD SIGNS
The City of Smyrna owns and operates five digital Variable Message Signs and a number of static signs located on roadways around the City. These signs will be used to provide short tailored messages to inform the community of upcoming public meetings for the Guide Smyrna in line with the City’s social media posts.

FLYERS
Flyers will be distributed to help promote public events and to help disseminate information and encourage community participation. The City, Steering Committee, and email blasts will play an important role in distributing flyers.
CONTACT US

WWW.GUIDESMYRNA.COM
GUIDESMYRNA@GMAIL.COM
PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

PURPOSE
The goals of the workshop were to: 1) gather input on vision, challenges, and opportunities; 2) familiarize community members with the Comprehensive Plan and update process; and 3) gain direction on future growth and development to help inform the update of the Future Land Use Plan.

LOGISTICS
The workshop was held on Thursday, February 16, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Brawner Hall. There were 48 participants that signed in at the workshop, along with four staff members of the City of Smyrna Community Development and four members of the consultant team.

AGENDA
6:30 P.M.  Sign-in and Arrival Activities
6:45 P.M.  Welcome Presentation
7:00 P.M.  Smyrna’s Future Development Discussion Groups
8:25 P.M.  Parting Remarks

SUMMARY OF ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES
Upon arrival, participants reviewed background material and participated in input activities. Displays with key maps, data, and observations from the draft Baseline Conditions Report were posted for review. Participants placed stickers on a map to show where they lived, where they worked, and their favorite place in Smyrna. Most indicated they live in the northern part of Smyrna, and their places of work were dispersed across the city and elsewhere in the region. Market Village and the Silver Comet Trail were selected as participants’ favorite places in town.

A set of statements on the opportunities and challenges currently facing the City, which had been collected during stakeholder interviews and the first Steering Committee meeting, was posted for participants to review. In response to the statements, they could place stickers to show if they agreed or disagreed and were able to add their own statement if they felt something had been left out of the discussion thus far. The opportunities and challenges with the most votes are shown in Figures 3 and 4 on the following pages. Congestion on Atlanta Road; school quality impacts on housing; affordable housing; the need for high end retail; and the need to attract and retain young families were affirmed as top challenges. MARTA expansion to Smyrna; education; the reinvention of South Cobb Drive; bicycle and pedestrian access to the new Braves stadium; and improvement of major corridors were seen as top opportunities.
Participants received Vision Questionnaires upon arrival and returned them before leaving, providing feedback on how to refine the strategic vision from the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan to focus on future growth and development. Given a selection of phrases to add to the vision and the option to write in their own, the most popular choices were connectivity, greenspace, diversity of people, sustainable, and entrepreneurial. Participants were also asked three open-ended questions about future development. The parts of Smyrna that define its sense of place were most often cited as parks, Market Village, and South Cobb Drive. The most frequently recommended catalysts for Smyrna’s future were more parks and public amenities, direct integration with MARTA, better bicycle infrastructure, and limits on high density development. In the year 2040, most people envision Smyrna as a livable community with good transportation.

Figure 1. Key phrases for Smyrna’s sense of place

Figure 2. Key phrases for catalysts for Smyrna’s future
Figure 3. Arrival Activity - Top Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Road congestion</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>School quality impacts on housing</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High end retail</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attract and keep young families</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code enforcement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree protection</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of apartments</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools (secondary)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation-- connecting rail to MARTA</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting Vinings Estates in Smyrna</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repair of aging infrastructure</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation and infrastructure for future...</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage growth and infrastructure around</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity of retail</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel closer to downtown</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need more parks and greenspace</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decline in park maintenance</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant space in strip centers</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Left turn into Kroger off Concord Road</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freight movement through the city</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leverage Cumberland CID</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic and light sequencing on Spring Road</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging in place</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Agree | Disagree
Figure 4. Arrival Activity - Top Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Opportunities</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MARTA expansion to Smyrna</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinvention of South Cobb Drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sidewalks and bike paths to Braves stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve major corridors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public art and culture (Smyrna Arts and Culture Council)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect the Comet (future expansion of Silver Comet Trail)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation-- getting everyone to see the opportunity of connecting to MARTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood stability to encourage home ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commuter rail</td>
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<tr>
<td>More local restaurants and B&amp;Bs for Braves visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of City school system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve quality of aging apartment complexes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proximity to Braves stadium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redevelopment (particularly along Atlanta Road)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shuttles (build off Lyft, Uber, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Update zoning and potential for flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design regulations to improve community character</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Need variety of mixed-use districts (more flexibility in the code-- like Woodstock)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annexation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job growth potential due to fiber presence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion of sidewalk and bicycle network</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain more tax dollars and jobs in Smyrna</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing (keeping a variety)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Location, location, location. Center of everything-- take advantage.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Better homes</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Legend: Agree - Green, Disagree - Red
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION
After welcoming the participants, Rusty Martin, senior planner with the City of Smyrna Community Development Department, introduced the project and Amanda Hatton, the consulting team project manager. Amanda then gave a 15-minute presentation, which provided an overview of the planning process, the plan framework and elements, scheduled public meetings and events, the project website, contact information, and directions for the Future Development Discussion Groups.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION GROUPS
Participants were divided into three discussion groups with topics focusing on: 1) Neighborhoods, 2) Activity Centers, and 3) Corridors. Within each group, they envisioned which areas should stay the same or change and discussed key opportunities and initiatives the City should pursue. Groups discussed each topic for 30 minutes and then rotated to the next station.

STATION 1: NEIGHBORHOODS
Discussion Topics: Infill housing, types of housing, affordability
Facilitated by: Meghan McMullen (Jacobs) and Joey Staubes (City of Smyrna)

Overview
The Residential Neighborhoods group discussed the status of and vision for Smyrna’s primarily single-family neighborhoods. Each group began with several members sharing descriptions of the physical characteristics and sense of community in their own neighborhoods. The group then discussed housing trends, as well as areas they felt should stay the same in 20 years and those they felt should change, either because they wanted to improve an area’s current conditions or because they saw it as a location best suited to receive anticipated growth. They shared ideas on preservation and development opportunities and the types of housing they felt would be appropriate in various neighborhoods. A map highlighting the residential neighborhoods in Smyrna was provided as a discussion aid, and participants placed stickers on the map to note the areas they recommended should stay the same or change. Participants represented several Smyrna neighborhoods, including Cheney Woods, Belmont Hills, Forest Hills, Heritage at Vinings, Smyrna Heights, and Williams Park.

Key Discussion Themes
The major trends in Smyrna’s residential neighborhoods are infill housing—where an old home is torn down and replaced by one or more homes—and remodeling of older houses. Participants generally welcomed the renovations. Their concerns centered on infill development, if it is happening too rapidly or when a single home is replaced by multiple homes, because of the potential for associated traffic impacts, tree canopy reduction, and inflated home prices. When infill housing does happen, they want to make sure it is at an appropriate scale for the neighborhood. Home remodels were seen in a more positive light, giving young families a way to buy into the neighborhood at a more affordable price.

Housing needs and preferences varied amongst participants. Some had sought out Smyrna to get a home on a large lot and a tree-lined street close to Atlanta, while others were after the low-maintenance, convenient lifestyle of townhomes or multifamily units. In terms of pricing, some would-be first-time homebuyers expressed difficulty finding starter homes, and renters said they could find affordable options, but that they were typically older, basic units. There was a consensus that walkable neighborhoods are preferred. Because of the range of housing preferences amongst them, most participants valued the variety of housing types currently available within the City and want to continue to see a variety of types available in the future, though some participants said they would rather limit apartment development citywide. Garage apartments (carriage houses) were considered acceptable within single-family neighborhoods. Most participants thought duplexes, townhomes, and quadraplexes would be acceptable in that context, given the appropriate scale and quality and the provision of off-street parking. Apartments were generally
considered more appropriate as transitions between commercial areas and single-family homes than within residential neighborhoods.

**Additional Discussion Highlights**

**Infill Housing**
- To maintain the neighborhood character, it may be appropriate to regulate the scale and quality of new homes through mechanisms such as floor area ratio (FAR) requirements or design guidelines.
- Worried that rapid infill development will eliminate affordable older homes; may need to consider ways of preserving affordability.
- Concerns about speculative investors.
- Younger families are moving into neighborhoods, especially Forest Hills, and often remodeling their homes. Beginning to see many more strollers on the sidewalks and school buses stopping where they didn’t before.

**Affordability**
- Remodeling small, older homes as a primary source of affordable housing for new homeowners.
- Some participants were weary of housing at a lower price point and of apartments in general and expressed a preference to stick to only detached single-family homes.
- Others felt it was important to provide housing that fits the budget of retail employees and public servants, who may be seeking rental housing or homes at a lower price point, in order to have an inclusive community.

**Apartments**
- Older apartment buildings in town need renovations.
- To attract tenants and create long-term value, better to build apartments near an amenity like a park, school, or commercial area.

**Areas to Stay the Same**
- Market Village
- Williams Park (keep the variety of housing stock and inclusion of some neighborhood commercial)
- Belmont Hills (keep the availability of rental homes, affordability, and diverse neighbors)
- Cheney Woods (keep ranch homes on large lots)
- Smyrna Heights
- Bennett Woods

**Areas to Change**
- Riverview Road area (if this develops, make sure the public still has access to the riverfront)
- Neighborhoods adjacent to Spring Road near SunTrust Park
- Would like to annex neighborhoods adjacent to the City
STATION 2: ACTIVITY CENTERS

Discussion Topics: Jobs/housing balance, building heights, transportation and gateway investments
Facilitated by: Amanda Hatton (Jacobs), Ranada Robinson (Market Street), and Bob Summerville (City of Smyrna)

Overview
The Activity Centers group discussed where major or minor activity centers are located in the Smyrna now or in the future and how those areas would ideally evolve over time. Each group discussion began with a general explanation of what an activity center is: a place where you could park your car and complete a few different tasks or activities without having to get back into your car. Activity centers can be characterized in different ways. As a starting point for discussion, the planning team introduced a map to the group that showed activity centers in five locations of the city, each with a half mile radius. The map also showed an initial effort by the planning team to document major and minor gateways into the city.

Key Discussion Themes
Groups generally felt that Smyrna was appropriate for lower scale and lower intensity activity centers. The only area viewed as appropriate for higher intensity uses is SunTrust Park area. People liked the idea of neighborhood centers and activity nodes that fostered entrepreneurship, such as small start-ups, boutique shops, and local restaurants. There was not much appetite for activity centers that brought forth major employers, office buildings, or higher density multi-family structures. Some of the opposition to multi-family was tied to concern about traffic. Many attendees liked the idea of connectivity between activity centers that does not require a car and could be accommodated by bike, walking, or possibly transit. To that end, people would like to see more passive parks throughout the city to create little community nodes. Potential locations for passive recreation include Spring Road and in residential areas south of the Silver Comet Trail.

Activity Center Highlights

SunTrust Park Activity Node
• There was general consensus that this is the one appropriate area for higher density.
• Office makes sense here as well as higher intensity apartments or condos.

Market Village Activity Center
• Groups agreed that this is the one “true” activity center currently in the city that features “live, work, play”.
• Many people placed blue stars on the area to indicate that it should stay the same.
• There is an opportunity to create a linear art walk along Spring Road on the southern end
• Some people voiced concern over the turnover of businesses in Market Village. Daytime businesses have located in some spaces instead of restaurants or shops that could contribute to a more vibrant and appealing destination for residents and visitors.
• The Community Center needs to be expanded, or there is possibly a need for another.

South Cobb Drive and Concord Road
• Community members see this as a commercial area for restaurants and retail. There is an opportunity for small boutique or restaurant entrepreneurship here.
• People would generally like to see this node stay the same, as a neighborhood serving retail area.
• It is not seen as appropriate for higher density multi-family dwellings or office in the future.

South Cobb Drive and Windy Hill Road
• This is an area seen as likely to change, having future potential as an eclectic neighborhood center. That opportunity will need to be balanced with the intersection’s role as a major gateway into the city for commuters going east or west through Smyrna.
• There is an opportunity for a community amenity like a splash pad.
• The node can leverage the area’s cultural diversity. It is believed the area is home to several Hispanic businesses. This could be leveraged to make the area unique.

Riverview Road
• Several people liked the idea of this becoming an activity center in the future.
• The river and its history can and should be leveraged.
• Development here should be high quality and picky as it is a unique opportunity.
• There is an opportunity to incorporate public amenities, such as greenspace.
• This could be a great place for musical or other events or possibly something like a brewery. The example of Winter Garden, Florida’s Plant Street Market was given.
• Some community members pointed out the challenge of limited incorporated city land in the area. To truly have an impact in this area, the City should annex more surrounding land. Adjacent industrial uses could also pose challenges to redevelopment.

Belmont Hills
• Belmont Hills was not mapped as an activity center, but community members pointed out that it is one.
• People would like it to become more like Market Village over time and incorporate passive parks.

Potential Neighborhood Centers
• Area around Rev Coffee on Spring Road
• Area around Creatwood Circle at Atlanta Road. This is a small commercial node with a park nearby.

Other Discussion Points
• How does this plan consider the impact of development on schools and transportation? These are the two major concerns of community members.
• There is a need for a transit center in the city that also serves as a live, work, play location.
• The City needs to piece together assets: civil war ruins to river.
• Connecting our activity centers via non-vehicular modes is of high importance. For example, how can Smyrna residents walk or bike to the Braves game?
• Annexation needs to be a priority. The City should fill in the “holes” in the city.
• Smyrna needs nightlife options such as the Shops of Buckhead, Downtown Decatur, Highland Avenue in Inman Park, or West Midtown.
• There is an opportunity for office space along Windy Hill Road, east of South Cobb Drive.
• East West Connector at South Cobb Drive is not necessarily an activity center, but there is opportunity for greater coordination. There is heavy traffic, and better planning is needed.
STATION 3: CORRIDORS

Discussion Topics: Uses appropriate along corridor, function, design preferences
Facilitator: Jim Summerbell (Jacobs)

Overview
The Corridors group discussed the typologies of the City’s major transportation corridors and the desired land uses along them. Each group discussion began with a general explanation of what the different types of corridors are, including: 1) transit corridors, 2) green community corridors, and 3) technology/employment corridors. Transit corridors primarily handle commuter and cut through traffic and are typically designed to handle transit along with vehicular traffic. Green community corridors are designed to accommodate non-vehicular traffic along with local vehicular traffic. They often have linear parks, trails, or public art along them. The third type of corridor, technology/employment corridors, serves primarily to handle freight and work-based traffic to and from the City’s major employment centers. The planning team introduced a map to the group that highlighted the corridors and an initial effort to identity the typology of each.

Key Discussion Themes
Groups generally felt that traffic was a major concern, and there is strong need for operational improvements, such as signal timing, roundabouts, and additional turn lanes to improve intersection traffic flow. Though many approve of recent transportation related projects, there was a lot of concern and questions about the full scope of such projects as the Windy Hill Road improvements and the work related to the Battery and SunTrust Park. From a land use perspective, there was concern for small business owners being displaced by these efforts, and the types of development and amenities planned along the corridors. All groups also expressed support for transit (both CCT and MARTA), and designing the corridors with all modes of transportation in mind. There was also interest in the potential impacts of driverless vehicles and intelligent transportation systems that help alert travelers to traffic and road conditions. Trail connectivity and improvements to the Silver Comet were also of general interest.

Corridor Highlights

Windy Hill Road
- Plans for linear park design of road will limit the location redevelopment opportunities along it. Need to study plans closely to determine future uses.
- Many small businesses are being displaced due to the road construction. Is the City losing them or are they being relocated?

Atlanta Road
- Prime area for greater density and redevelopment.
- Issues currently exist with left turning movements on the road at rush hour, particularly turning north toward Marietta from the Market Village area.
- Operational improvements are really needed around Brawner Hall.
- Signal timing needs to be improved
South Cobb Drive
- Good location for retail and office around Concord Road Intersection
- People generally would like to see the roadway stay as low density in character, but see the corridor as ripe for redevelopment.
- The southern part of the corridor below Concord Road should be studied like the northern portion is currently being studied now.
- Particular intersections in need of improvement include I-285, the East/West Connector, King Springs, and Concord Road (Note along East/West Connector close to S. Cobb Drive, the intersection with Gaylor Street is an issue too.)

Spring Road
- Arts Line - City should promote through the Arts Council, major public arts displays along the corridor. This would add interest to the multiuse path along it, help promote the arts, and serve as a gateway to the City and SunTrust Park.
- Few alternative routes, everything funnels onto Spring Road.

Riverview Road
- Concern over any new development limiting access to the river. The river should be open to all the public, no gated communities.
- Some community members pointed out the challenge of limited incorporated city land in the area. To truly have an impact in this area, the City should annex more surrounding land.

Oakdale Road
- The western half of the roadway should be designed as a Green Community Corridor, to help preserve residential uses along it.

Local collectors
- Both Ridge Road and Campbell Roads are local residential neighborhood oriented streets, but they handle large volumes of traffic at rush hour. They are seen as cut throughs, and are worthy of improvements or special design consideration.

Other Discussion Points
- How does this plan consider the impact of development on schools and transportation? These are the two major concerns of community members.
- There is a need for a transit center in the city that also serves as a live, work, play location.
- Commuter Rail is needed and should be promoted
- Local shuttle needed from Market Village to SunTrust Park
- Close coordination with the County DOT is a necessity
Clockwise from top left: 1) Participant comments on the Activity Centers map; 2) Neighborhoods discussion group; 3) Welcome presentation; 4) Comments on the Corridors map
PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 SUMMARY

PURPOSE
The purpose of the meeting was to 1) inform participants about the project; 2) review and refine the vision elements of the draft plan; and 3) discuss how well the current plan reflects the vision and what needs to be changed.

LOGISTICS
The workshop was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Brawner Hall. There were 24 participants signed in, along with five staff members of the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development and four members of the consultant team.

AGENDA
6:30 P.M. Sign-in and Arrival Activities
6:45 P.M. Welcome Presentation
7:00 P.M. Smyrna’s Future Land Use Map Discussion Groups
8:30 P.M. Adjourn

SUMMARY OF ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES
Informational boards and input activities were set up for participants to review upon arrival. Participants were asked to place stickers on a map showing where they live and work; all those who responded live in the northern part of Smyrna and worked outside of the city. A map of the current City of Smyrna Future Development Map was displayed, combined with the recommended future land uses for nearby unincorporated Cobb County parcels, per the Service Delivery Agreement for the City and County. The draft Policy Map was also shown, along with an explanation of the process for updating the Future Development Map and the role the Policy Map plays in that.

The list of 21 goals from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan was provided on a board, and participants were asked to place stickers next to the three they feel are most relevant today. The most popular choice was Goal 19, which addresses the need for a well-connected, multimodal transportation system. Participants also selected Goal 1 (protect established residential neighborhoods), Goal 3 (provide a range of housing choices), Goal 8 (protect natural resources), Goal 9 (provide parks and recreation), Goal 10 (protect historic and cultural assets), and Goal 15 (expand on the success of Market Village).
The draft vision statement was presented and participants were asked to vote for phrases they supported or opposed. The most frequently supported phrase was “ease of access and connectivity,” followed by “Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination,” “signature public spaces,” “embodied in unique local businesses,” and “its diversity of distinct and welcoming businesses” (tied). No phrases were opposed.

**SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION**

Ken Suddreth, Director of the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development, welcomed the participants and introduced Jim Summerbell, the acting consulting team project manager. Jim gave a 10-minute presentation that included an overview of the planning process and an outline of the evening’s activities. He explained the small group format and the four stations: 1) Residential Areas; 2) Activity Centers; 3) Public Spaces and Transportation Facilities; and 4) Places of Work and Commerce. Participants were asked to keep the vision in mind throughout the discussion and consider how policies could be adjusted to better align with that vision.
RESIDENTIAL AREAS STATION SUMMARY
The Residential Areas station addressed the single-family residential neighborhoods in Smyrna, as well as activity centers where housing is currently located or may be appropriate. A brief overview of density levels and housing types was provided to acquaint participants with relevant housing policy terminology and concepts.

Policy Map and Future Land Use Discussion
The group reviewed the residential categories on the current Future Development Map and their allowable uses and densities, as well as the draft Policy Map showing the residential areas designated as low, medium, and high susceptibility to change. (See Figure 1.) This categorization considers which residential areas are most likely to change in the near future due to market forces. Change may take the form of renovation, infill, or potentially a change of use depending on approval of a required rezoning. The designations were determined based on factors such as the age or quality of the development; proximity to activity centers; and ownership characteristics. See Table 1 below for a summary of factors contributing to the neighborhood susceptibility ratings.

Table 1. Residential Neighborhood Susceptibility to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Susceptibility to Change</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age of Structures</strong></td>
<td>New development or established neighborhood with very little infill to date</td>
<td>Some degree of variability in age of homes</td>
<td>High degree of variability in age of homes (infill already occurring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Away from activity centers and redevelopment</td>
<td>Close to activity centers</td>
<td>Very close to activity centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership</strong></td>
<td>Majority single-family, owner-occupied homes</td>
<td>• Majority single-family, owner-occupied homes</td>
<td>• Majority single-family, owner occupied homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May have some rental properties</td>
<td>• May have some rental properties</td>
<td>• Apartment complexes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In reviewing the Policy Map and neighborhood susceptibility to change, most participants felt the map reflected realistic locations for future change. The areas surrounding SunTrust Park and along Spring Road were perceived as the most likely areas to change due to market interest in the location and were seen as more appropriate locations for infill development and higher density housing. They also felt it would be appropriate for the Riverview Hub area to shift from industrial to residential to help meet housing demand. Most participants expressed a preference for maintaining the existing character of the single-family neighborhoods to the south (shown as low susceptibility to change), in terms of both character and density and were willing to accept more development in the
northern part of the city in order to accept future growth, as long as the appropriate infrastructure investments are coordinated.
Figure 1. Draft Policy Map - Residential Areas
Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion

Four priority housing needs and opportunities had been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

H1. **Continue to encourage the creation of diverse housing choices.**
- Some areas—such as the area around SunTrust Park and the Riverview Hub—may be appropriate for higher densities in order to provide low-maintenance and lower priced housing.
- A greater variety of housing types would be acceptable in some single-family neighborhoods, especially moderate and medium density areas. Accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, duplexes, and townhomes may be appropriate in these settings.
- Condominiums and apartments should be reserved for urban residential areas with supportive infrastructure and amenities like parks and retail nearby.
- Providing a variety of senior housing is a priority. Residents want both single-family homes with accessible designs (such as zero step entries and master bedrooms on the main floor), as well as condominium, apartment, or assisted living options in walkable, mixed-use settings.
- New apartments are still expensive; may need to consider ways to offer a reduced price point, such as through incentives for moderately priced units. Atlanta BeltLine overlay housing requirements and initiatives were discussed. Need a desirable amenity to leverage.
- The City needs to consider creative ways to provide affordable housing in the long term, such as through a land bank.

H2. **Encourage home ownership and stability.**
- In order to make home ownership realistic for more people, it needs to be more affordable.
- Need to maintain a stock of older homes available for first time homebuyers to purchase and renovate.
- Want to increase maintenance standards for rental homes, but do not currently have a registry of rental properties and owners.
- Interested in providing financial assistance and other support for lower income homeowners who want to renovate their properties. Resources for Residents and Communities of Georgia mentioned as an example for their work in the Reynoldstown neighborhood.
H3. Continue to enhance quality of life in neighborhoods.
- Preserve established neighborhoods.
- Incorporate a park into every neighborhood or provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access from every neighborhood to larger community parks.
- Maintain stricter code enforcement. May require increased City staff capacity.
- Improve coordination between the City, the public works department, and private waste management services to monitor code violations.
- Maintain existing lot sizes in certain areas.

H4. Facilitate context-appropriate housing densities.
- Consider design guidelines for residential neighborhoods to ensure new builds are high quality, respect the scale and character of the neighborhood, and contribute to a pleasant public realm.
- Provide a wider range of zoning designations to avoid reliance on RAD rezonings.
- Encourage the Board of Commissioners to stick to the development regulations and reduce the number of variances approved.
- Look into appropriate locations for tiny homes.
- Locate higher density housing in areas with sufficient infrastructure to handle higher volumes of users.
- Examine the impact of existing stormwater regulations and detention facility requirements on potential lot configurations and development costs for infill development. Current regulations make it more cost effective to replace a single home with multiple homes in many cases.
ACTIVITY CENTERS SUMMARY

The Activity Centers station addressed those areas in Smyrna where mixed-use land use and major commercial crossroads are located. Before discussion began, a brief overview of three different types of activity centers recognized on the Future Development Map was provided to acquaint participants with relevant land use policy terminology and concepts. The three different types of activity centers were described as follows in a handout given out to participants as they signed in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description &amp; Vision</th>
<th>Corresponding Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Activity Center</td>
<td>Neighborhood Activity Centers are neighborhood focal points with a concentration of small commercial, civic, and public activities. Uses within Neighborhood Activity Centers are intended to be local-serving.</td>
<td>LC, NS, FC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Activity Center</td>
<td>Community Activity Centers are regional focal points containing a mix of commercial, professional, civic, and public uses. Community Activity Centers are designed to accommodate commercial uses serving several adjacent neighborhoods.</td>
<td>GC, MU, NS, TS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-Use</td>
<td>A mixed-use, live/work/play district that provides a venue for gatherings, events, and civic activities. A prime example of the mixed use Future Development Area is the Smyrna Market Village.</td>
<td>CBD, MU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were also presented an excerpt from the draft Policy Map that highlighted three different levels of activity hubs (major, minor and local) that were identified by the participants at the first workshop, see Figure 2.

Policy Map and Future Land Use Discussion

The group compared the activity centers located on Future Development Map and their allowable uses and densities, with the draft Policy Map. Staff asked each group what they considered to be appropriate densities and heights for the major hub shown around the SunTrust Park. All the groups agreed that their vision for the areas was denser than what is currently allowed on the Future Development Map, which is similar to what is currently allowed in the Market Village. Groups saw the area as a walkable transit oriented regional development more urban in scale than other current mixed uses developments in the city. Appropriate uses to include in the mix of land uses in the area were seen as high density residential, office, retail, entertainment with high architectural standards. Groups differed in their views of appropriate building height, one groups said as high as 10 to 15 stories, another group 8 to 10 stories, and one said 4 to 5 stories. All agreed, however, that the issue will be discussed in greater detail in Spring Road LCI study, and that the height should be stepped down closer to surrounding low density residential areas. The groups
also agreed that a new land use designation will need to be created on the new 2040 Future Land Use Map, to capture the vision for this area.

**Figure 2. Draft Policy Map - Activity Centers**
Most agreed that the density and scale of development currently seen around the Market Village was desirable, and they see the opportunity for expansion to 4 to 5 stories similar to West Village. As a rule, most participants saw the need for more residential and local businesses around Market Village to support more activity in the area.

The smaller hubs on South Cobb were generally viewed as neighborhood serving in scale and in need of reinvestment and redevelopment. Greater code enforcement was desired by some, and many were willing to explore the possibility of architectural standards to help promote high quality development. Many felt that each hub should have its own character and different form the others to help promote neighborhood and city identity. The provision of multiple housing options was seen as generally desirable, and one group brought up the possibility of tailoring these options as well as local services to active seniors.

The only other activity centers that the participants commented on were Riverside Landing along the Chattahoochee River and those along I-285 just outside the city but within the potential annexation area. Riverview Landing was viewed by many as a blank slate, and felt that even though the council recently approved a revised site plan for the area that was more residential in focus than mixed use, that the potential for infill with non-residential uses was still open and so a more mixed use center was still possible. All agreed that public access and the enjoyment of the river by all Smyrna residents was desirable. Both of the I-285 nodes were seen as desirable for the City to annex but somewhat of a long shot. Both areas would retain a similar scale and density as seen today, but reinvestment into the areas will be needed.

**Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion**

Four priority land use needs and opportunities had been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

**LU1. Target public investment in key nodes and corridors**

For this item, participants identified key areas were they saw the need for more public and private investment. Most agreed that parks should be one of the forms of that this investment should take. These areas included:

- South Cobb Drive from I-285 to the East West Connector
- The area of northern Smyrna between Pat Mell, Windy Hill Road, Atlanta Road and S Cobb Drive
- Market Village
- Jonquil Drive and Spring Road
LU2. Increase adaptability of development regulations
- Most agreed that a zoning update is needed, but little was offered in the way of details other than to stress improving readability and ease of use.
- Toward this end, greater communication about the overall process was also identified as a need.

LU3. Ensure infill development is compatible with its context.
- The existing policies and action items under this topic were still viewed as relevant, which include the undertaking of Study of Infill Development Guidelines.
- One participant pointed out that Brookhaven had a good example of such policies that they were applying to the Deering Area.

LU4. Maintain high design standards.
- Most participants felt that the idea of implementing architectural design standards, not just site design standards, was worth exploring by the city.
- Many pointed out the need for greater code enforcement.

PUBLIC SPACES AND TRANSPORTATION STATION SUMMARY
The Public Spaces and Transportation Facilities station focused on confirming a draft policy map and identifying specific policies and action items to implement that policy. Each group was presented a brief overview of what we have heard to date from the community, followed by a discussion of the draft policy map and action items, and concluded by a discussion on next steps.

Policy Map Discussion
Each group reviewed the draft Public Spaces and Transportation Policy Map, and were in consensus on the direction of that map. The overwhelming majority supported the designation of Spring Road (between Atlanta Road and Cobb Parkway) and Atlanta Road (between Windy Hill Road and Spring Road) as signature corridors. Those corridors should be a top priority for the community and strive to become complete streets. A second tier priority would extend the signature corridor designation along Atlanta Road and Concord Road. Several community members discussed the need for a second east-west corridor – either with trails or linking streets as redevelopment occurs. Finally, transit options along Concord Road/Spring Road should be explored.
Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion
Seven priority needs and opportunities had been identified related to the public spaces and transportation discussion based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work
program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

**T1. Enhance and expand transit service.**
- Improve efficiency of existing system.
- Enhance existing bus stops.
- Explore direct connection from Market Village to the Airport or an end-of-the-line MARTA station (Sandy Springs or Hamilton E. Holmes).
- Study the potential for a Smyrna Circulator.
- Coordinate bus timing with city events.

**T2. Reduce congestion on major roads.**
- Coordinate traffic lights along key corridors and pinch-points
- Continue to encourage parallel networks as redevelopment occurs.

**T3. Expand the bike/pedestrian network.**
- Create continuous bicycle connections to designated activity centers and residential nodes.
- Improve safety along bicycle corridors through signage, providing adequate bicycle facilities, and outreach.
- Provide bicycle facilities along designated routes and/or activity centers.
- Examine existing pedestrian “cow paths” and opportunities to provide formal connections.

**O1. Support school quality excellence.**
- No comments were offered, other than support for the existing policy in the 2030 Comprehensive plan (Policy 20.3) of work collaboratively with Cobb County and the Cobb County School Board in order to improve local schools.

**O2. Provide additional parks and greenspace.**
- Create a signature park, similar to Piedmont Park.
- Improve safety and security at all parks, including along the Silver Comet and other multi-use paths.
- Develop a parks master plan to:
  - Identify if there is a need for additional parks and the type of parks needed (active, passive, signature)
  - Identify what programs and activities should occur at the parks. Basketball was one activity noted as missing.

**O3. Cultivate public art and culture**
- No comments were offered, other than support for the existing policy in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan (Policy 6.3) - Pursue cultural institutions, entertainment, and recreational businesses to locate in and around Smyrna Market Village in order to draw people to the district after business hours.
• As well as support for the Strategic Vision Plan Action Item 2.3.1 - Establish an
Advisory Arts and Culture Council to increase opportunities for high quality
programming.

O4. Develop a strategic approach to annexation
• No comments were offered, other than support for the existing policies and items
from the 2030 Comprehensive plan
  o Policy 12.8 - Promote the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City
    in order to streamline and simplify the provision of public services.
  o Policy 21.1 Ensure that land use plans are consistent with surrounding
    jurisdictions and regional goals, and
  o Community Work Program item - Conduct an Annexation Study in order to
    establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts and community
    facilities.

PLACES OF WORK AND COMMERCE STATION SUMMARY
The Places of Work and Commerce station focused on confirming a draft policy map, See
Figure 4, and identifying specific policies and action items to support economic
development. Each group was presented a brief overview of what we have heard to date
from the community, followed by a discussion of the draft policy map and action items,
and concluded by a discussion on next steps.

Policy Map Discussion
Each group reviewed the draft Places of Work and Commerce Policy Map, and were in
general consensus on the direction of that map, though one group felt that with the recent
City Council action concerning Riverview Landing that that activity center will likely be
more residential than retail or employment based.
Each group also compared the policy map to the 2030 Future Development Map, and made the following comments:

- Northern portion of the city: Ensure spaces for millennial/professional services - connectivity and live, work, play opportunities.
- Comments on Jonquil Industrial area off of Jonquil Drive:
This could be a good area for rezoning and redevelopment for a local activity center or mixed use. The businesses are not rail-served so it’s not required that they are located there. The area may have outlived the zoning.

- Warehouses there need to be near I-285 or other major corridors that are more suited to truck traffic.
- Could be mixed use but no entertainment and retail. Not enough room in that area.
- We might be getting carried away with mixed use. Takes away from culture of the city (single family homes)
- Too tight for retail (parking)
- Redevelopment opportunity for residential? Could be a smaller version of King Plow or space for a brewery.

• Comments on Office Space: There could be some on the east end of Spring Road as long as it’s well done.

Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion
Five priority Economic Development needs and opportunities had been identified based on the existing conditions analysis, stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee input, and feedback from the first public workshop. Participants affirmed the identified priorities and offered suggestions for policies or work program items to act on them. The priorities and the action items discussed are outlined below.

ED1. Reduce commercial vacancies.
- Lure high-tech graduates by leveraging Smyrna’s location in center of colleges and universities, and marketing Smyrna’s access to high-skilled labor. The challenge we face in doing this is the close proximity to the Cumberland CID.
- Promote in the media outside of Cobb County (print advertising and other media).
- Improve public aesthetic along key corridors to influence or incentivize private property owners to provide strip retail center facelifts.
- Clean up garbage behind the vacancies along S. Cobb in particular the SW quadrant of S Cobb and Concord, behind Dunkin Donuts, school of dance, and where recycling center used to be.
- City should invest money in a study to see what would fit best in vacant spaces and promote their use.
- Research best practices from other parts of the region.
- Create another TAD/Enterprise Zone.

ED2. Expand retail in activity centers and priority redevelopment areas.
- Upgrade the quality of stores. General comments included:
  - Too many nail salons, discount dollar stores, selling blood, Ultimate Fighting
  - Planet Fitness came out of nowhere and anchored a space.
  - Orange Theory – similar to Planet Fitness, but can we handle saturation in fitness centers?
- Try to attract business based on traffic through Smyrna
  - Example - Campaign for Trader Joe’s before the new Publix located in that space.
- Keep the north part of the city affordable.
ED3. Leverage Braves stadium for restaurant and hospitality industries, as well as professional services.

- Incentivize “white tablecloth” restaurants
  - If you want something different (not a chain), have to go outside of Smyrna
- Attract more hotels - not enough space in summer because of competitive sports
  - Would also create more meeting space
- Redirect game-goers to Belmont and other nodes: LCI Study will address connectivity from stadium
- Promote boutique hotel or bed and breakfast downtown – potential site unused by the city near the community center

ED4. Support and/or accelerate entrepreneurship.

- Support of an business incubator could be a tactic, but it has challenges, such as donation of property/administrative services; corporation or municipal sponsorship.
- Support Minority Business Development efforts – helping to celebrate diversity
- Encourage Studio art space (also ED1). Ex. King Plow on the S. Cobb corridor (north area would be more affordable)
- Promote more office/business space near Rev Coffee area – having spaces that attract specific types of office

ED5. Retain existing businesses.

- Improve traffic.
- Improve/expand transit, for example offer transit connection to the Perimeter area to reduce traffic.
PURPOSE
The purpose of the festival booth was to solicit input about key issues to inform the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan and to share information about the planning process to date. The location was selected to engage with residents attending the festival who may not have otherwise attended a public workshop and reach a broader segment of the Smyrna population.

LOGISTICS
The Spring Jonquil Festival took place on Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 30, 2017 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. There were more than 140 participants. Two members of the consultant team and three staff members from the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development staffed the booth over the course of the weekend.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
Resident Map
Participants placed dots on a map to show where they live. The group included residents from all parts of Smyrna, with the majority being from the northern part of the city. Only 23 participants lived outside of the city.
Project Background
Background information was provided for participants who may not have previously engaged with the planning process. This included an overview of the planning process and schedule, considerations and action items for the areas of impact (land use, transportation, housing, and economic development), and highlights from previous public engagement activities. Information cards were also distributed, directing people to the project website and promoting the upcoming Open House.

What is Guide Smyrna?
Guide Smyrna is the community-based planning process for updating the City of Smyrna’s Comprehensive Plan and implementation guide for residents’ future growth and development. Guide Smyrna will focus on budget, land use, transportation, housing, and economic development, core issues that shape our collaborative future and require open dialogue and strategic thinking to effect change in our communities. Participating in this process is an opportunity to set the tone for how Smyrna continues to evolve as a city and as a community.

The Process
Guide Smyrna is a participatory planning process. We are currently in the project’s first phase, which focuses on identifying and prioritizing the city’s civic and strategic goals. This phase is called the “Discover” phase. The next phase will focus on the “Imagining” phase, where we will craft a comprehensive plan that delivers these goals.

What have we heard?
We have been listening to community members throughout the planning process and are sharing our vision for Smyrna’s future. The results of our survey questions are available on the project website at www.guidesmyrna.com.

Comprehensive Plan Vision
The vision for Smyrna is to be a place where people can live, work, and play, where they can access a variety of housing options and amenities, and where they can enjoy a high quality of life. The plan will focus on creating a more walkable and bikeable community, protecting open space and natural areas, and ensuring access to a variety of transportation options.

Charge for Action
The goal of the comprehensive plan is to create a cohesive and comprehensive strategy for guiding the city’s growth and development.

Visit www.guidesmyrna.com to review the full survey results!
Future of Smyrna Pictures
Participants were asked to consider their vision for the city’s future by finishing the sentence, “In the future, Smyrna will be known for...” and writing their answers on a white board. They then posed for photos with the boards, and instant pictures were posted for other participants to see. Responses included:

- Walkable, non-congested city with a small town feel
- Maintain “small town” feel and charm
- Vibrant, medium-sized city
- Welcoming to all
- Fun! Culture! Fooooood!
- YMCA
- Better schools
- Green space
- Good, safe area to raise kids
- Sports and entertainment
- Development for young people
- Renovated dog parks
- Happy kids
- Parks and coffee shops
- Family and community
- Braves and more family fun
- Small community feel

Input Boards
Input boards solicited feedback from participants to better understand the community perspective on targeted issues. Though the responses provided are based on a select sample of residents not fully representative of the city, they will be used as one of several forms of input to inform decisions in drafting the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Three locations were identified as needing additional input to inform the draft plan: the SunTrust Park area, the Market Village area, and Windy Hill Road.

The input board questions were also made available as a mobile survey on the project website and received three digital responses.
In the future, Smyrna will be known for...

Wellness, eco-friendly city with street tree.

Maintain "small town" feel & charm.

Better schools, green space, good safe area to raise kids.

Parks and coffee shops.

Willing to all.

More green space for the "Jungle City".

Fun! Culture. Feels good!
SunTrust Park Area
Participants reviewed a series of labeled images depicting a range of development types and intensities. They placed stickers next to the type of development that best represent what they imagine belongs in the area next to SunTrust Park, which was mapped as the study area for the Georgia Tech Smyrna Crossroads Studio. They could select as many images as they felt would be appropriate and were told that a combination of development types would be possible.

The most frequently selected images were a signature public park (32.7%), walkable residential neighborhood (15.5%), and mixed use – retail focus (<5 stories) (14.5%). The least frequently selected choices were those focused on multi-family development, followed by the highest intensity uses.

Some participants provided additional comments suggesting unique restaurants with good parking (1), light rail (10), and schools (1).
Market Village Area
Participants were asked to consider whether there should be additional development concentrated in the Market Village area or not. If they did think there should be additional development, they were asked which uses they felt were missing from the area. The majority of respondents (57.4 percent) thought additional development was needed.

Of those who felt additional development is needed, most desired additional restaurants (37.2 percent), retail (17.0 percent), and arts and culture organizations (16.0 percent). There were two additional comments recommending kid-friendly activities.
Windy Hill Road

A rendering of the proposed transportation improvements to Windy Hill Road was provided and participants were asked to consider which land uses would be best suited along the corridor in the future, given the change. They chose from ten potential uses based on labeled images. Additional comments suggested a Trader Joes (3), high-end retail (3), a movie theater, and the conversion of Fox Creek Golf Course into a public park.

![Rendering of proposed transportation improvements along Windy Hill Road.](image)

**What type of development should the city encourage around the new Windy Hill Road improvements?** *(You may choose multiple.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. Linear park</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Mixed use (&lt;5 stories)</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Small businesses in converted homes</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Free standing retail</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Single family homes</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Strip retail centers</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Offices</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Medical/institutional</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Townhomes</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Condominiums or apartments</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexation
Participants were asked whether they viewed annexation as a positive or a negative for the city. The majority of respondents (90 percent) viewed it as a positive.

Transit
When asked if the City should seek transit services, the majority of respondents (75 percent) said it should.
Priority Spending Voting
Participants were asked what the priorities for City funding should be and were given three tokens to allocate amongst six spending categories: transportation improvements; parks, recreation and open space; public safety; economic and community development; libraries; and water and sewer infrastructure. The most frequently selected categories were parks, recreation, and open space (28.1 percent) and transportation improvements (24.0 percent).
OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

PURPOSE
The Open House provided community members with an opportunity to review plan content prior to the finalization of the draft plan. Participants were asked to provide feedback to help refine content and ensure it reflected the community vision established through previous engagement activities.

LOGISTICS
The Open House was held on Thursday, June 8, 2017 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Brawner Hall. There were 31 participants, 5 staff members of the City of Smyrna Department of Community Development, and three members of the consultant team.

AGENDA
The event was held in an open house format. Rather than a formal presentation, draft materials from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan were displayed and participants reviewed them at their own pace. The planning team was available to discuss the content with participants.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
Upon arrival, participants picked up informational sheets and a feedback form to use as they made their way through the Open House. These included the draft goals, needs and opportunities, 2040 character area descriptions, and a layout of the event setup. Informational boards were displayed around the room with content addressing the planning process, priority needs and opportunities, vision and goals, 2040 Future Land Use Map, and highlights from the action plan.

Process
The process boards explained the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, the overall planning process, the project schedule, the impact of the plan on the community’s future, and highlights from community feedback received to date.
Priority Needs and Opportunities
Key findings from the assessment of existing conditions and community feedback from engagement activities were organized according to the four primary sections of the plan: land use, transportation, housing, and economic development. These findings were the basis for the recommended changes to the Future Land Use Map, policies, and action items for the Community Work Program and were provided to give participants context for the recommendations. Printed copies of the Baseline Conditions Report, which contains a more detailed assessment, were available for participants interested in additional information. The report is also available online at www.guidesmyrna.com/review.

Vision and Goals
The established vision and the Policy Map that was used as a discussion tool throughout the planning process were provided to orient participants to the direction the Future Land Use Map, policy, and action items recommendations were meant to drive the community.

2040 Future Land Use Map
The draft 2040 Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was presented, along with the current 2030 Future Development Map it will replace and the current recommended future land use categories for nearby Cobb County parcels. Key changes to the 2040 FLUM were highlighted. These included:

Community members discussed changes to the proposed 2040 Future Land Use Map.
Consistency Changes
Some changes to the map did not reflect a change in vision, but rather brought the map into better alignment with the current physical and regulatory characteristics of the city, such as:

- Shift to a parcel-based, which more accurately reflects new developments and more closely aligns with existing zoning.
- Alignment with existing, allowable residential densities.
- Alignment with the boundaries of existing industrial and commercially zoned properties.
- Update to public and institutional uses, including schools, city hall, and some large private institutions, which were not reflected on the previous map.

New Definitions and Features
Additional map features were added citywide:

- New categories:
  - Medium High Residential (6-10 dwelling units/acre)
  - Regional Activity Center
  - Industrial Mixed Use
  - Private Recreation and Conservation
  - Transportation/Communications/Utilities (substations)
- 100-year floodplain shown as a map feature
- The Policy Map, a separate but related map, will be used in conjunction with the FLUM to identify potential annexation areas.

Location-Specific Changes
Substantive, location-specific changes to the 2040 FLUM include:

1. Spring Road and SunTrust Park area
   - New Regional Activity Center designation aligned with Spring Road LCI Study
2. Jonquil Drive industrial area redevelopment
   - New Industrial Mixed Use area
   - Linear park shown on the map
3. Roswell Street area
   - New Industrial Mixed Use area
   - Higher residential densities
   - Expansion of Mixed Use area east of railroad and south of Spring Street
4. Market Village area
   - Public/Institutional consistency changes
   - Higher single-family residential densities in the surrounding single-family neighborhoods
Participants review draft items for the 100-Day Action Plan.

• Reflection of existing parks, including the planned linear park along Concord Road

5. Windy Hill Road
• New right-of-way reflected as shown in the Windy Hill Road Improvements plan
• Linear park along the northern side of the road, consisting of the remaining portions of parcels acquired for roadway construction
• New Mixed-Use areas on the southern side of the road between Burbank Circle
• Industrial Mixed Use area east of Atlanta Road and north of Windy Hill Road
• Park along Valley Oaks Drive south of Pat Mell Road

6. North end of South Cobb Drive
• Smyrna Grove development reflected
• Extension of Mixed Use area south of Glendale Place and west of South Cobb Drive

7. Established residential areas
• Private recreation areas reflected

8. Central section of South Cobb Drive
• Consistency changes to reflect the presence of higher density residential areas

9. South end of South Cobb Drive
• Consistency changes to reflect the presence of commercial areas
• Changed Oakdale Court area to industrial

10. Riverview Landing area
• Residential densities increased to reflect existing zoning
• Added private recreation areas

**Action Items**

The 100-Day Action Plan consists of the action items from the overall Community Work Program identified as critical first steps to realizing the community’s vision. The action items for land use, transportation, housing, economic development, public services, and quality of life were outlined for participants to review. While these items should be prioritized and initiated within the first 100
days of the plan’s adoption, most will take longer than that period to be accomplished. They include:

**Land Use**
- Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance.
- Conduct a study of infill development guidelines and adopt recommended guidelines.
- Undertake a study of the application of architectural design standards to key activity centers and corridors of the city.

**Transportation**
- Undertake a transit feasibility study.

**Housing**
- Revise the City Zoning Ordinance to offer a wider range of residential zoning designations.
- Identify declining neighborhoods through planning studies and target these areas for revitalization.
- Consider establishing a land bank that can be used as a redevelopment tool.

**Economic Development**
- Consider expanding the city’s Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.
- Consider implementing an annual economic development survey of local businesses.
- Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
- Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making improvements to commercial properties.

**Public Services and Quality of Life**
- Conduct an annexation study to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts.
- Implement and regularly update the city’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Additional action items will be included in the comprehensive Community Work Program.

**FEEDBACK**
Participants were given feedback forms to document their responses to the draft materials provided. Comments received included:
**Process**

*What worked well? How could the planning process be improved in the future?*

- “Current process worked well.”
- “Good report of impact.”
- “Study and input from disability perspective was lacking.”
- “Inclusion of so many community groups was great, except inclusion of the disabilities community was lacking.”

**Priority Needs and Opportunities**

*Are any needs or opportunities missing? Would you prioritize them differently?*

- “All good.”
- “None.”
- “Awareness of the needs of the disabled to include transportation, safe pedestrian walkways and crossings, and accessibility beyond ADA.”
- “It is surprising to see the order of importance of annexation. I live in Ward 5 and most people to attend were residents in the other communities. There was not much vocal or attendance from Ward 5 to express their concerns for opportunity.”
- “With buildout and increased housing density, how will utility development be upgraded to match increased use, population density (water, sewer, road construction)?”
- “Smyrna needs high quality senior housing—perhaps at Belmont. We do not need 60 condos next to the Reed House—big mistake!”
- “Regardless of funding, ADA compliance should be incorporated on all priorities and projects.”

**Vision and Goals**

*Do the established vision and goals make sense for Smyrna?*

- “Yes.”
- “I think so.”
- “Yes, but the growth sounds very aggressive, so I’m concerned about services for the community and roads keeping up at the same pace.”
- “Yes—please try to keep some of our “old” character intact.”
- “Mixed-use and residential construction has outrun transportation. Trees and islands don’t help traffic move. Major emphasis on transportation is key to quality of life in Smyrna.”
- “I believe the vision from a government development standpoint is there. However, the initiative to educate and push communities that do not participate and getting them to understand the future long-term benefits of the vision and goals can increase interest where it will make sense with proactive ward representation.”
2040 Future Land Use Map

How do the proposed character areas align with your vision for the city’s future?

- “Very well.”
- “Meets future vision.”
- “Feels very dense/crowded.”
- “I am grateful for the thoughtful planning and communications in preparation for change.”
- “I see the initiative to encourage change where I reside. I am interested in seeing more concentration along South Cobb Drive/Windy Hill Road, where there are opportunities for retail shopping at reasonable price points. I don’t see high dollar retail yet, but as the economic change occurs, it will or can have the potential to attract more sustainable residential and business growth that can result in a more sought after attraction.”
- “Don’t current ordinances address the many “eyesore” neighborhoods? Future planning/zoning should address this concern.”
- “Smyrna has had a “small town feel.” Much of the plan shows increased population. This leads to congestion, increased crime, and loss of environment. It is good to have a plan in place; hopefully it won’t be too aggressive.”
- “6-10 homes per acre seems to create overcrowding and lack of green space and personal space.”

Action Plan

Do the proposed actions drive the vision forward? Are there other key actions to consider?

- “Yes, especially zoning and economic development.”
- “Key actions need to include disabled accessibility for sensory-based through all levels of impairment and accommodation for living, working, participating, and contributing to the community.”
- “Smyrna spends $2-3M on the Reed Property and then considers high-density condos from a questionable builder in an area where condos are not needed—please no!”
- “How does this plan interface with Cobb County and Marietta plans?”
- “Key actions to consider in my opinion are getting South Cobb Drive from Concord Road down to Pat Mell Road in a position to attract opportunities more than just aesthetics along roads but bring cohesiveness as it connects to other communities that are currently seeing change.”
- “No condemnation of private property for purposes of private enterprise!!”
- “Inclusion of input from the sensory and physical disabilities community. Their needs are very different.”
COMMUNITY SURVEY

OVERVIEW

An online community survey was conducted as part of the public engagement process for Guide Smyrna, the planning process for the City of Smyrna’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The survey focused on issues related to land use, housing, transportation, economic development, satisfaction with the city, public investment, and overall priorities. There were 37 questions in all.

The survey was open from February 17 to March 24, 2017 and was promoted through posts on the City’s Facebook and Twitter pages, email blasts, the project website, flyers, and announcements at project workshops.

SNAPSHOT OF PARTICIPANTS

A total of 501 respondents participated in the survey. Their responses are a representative snapshot of the opinions of Smyrna community members, but do not reflect all of the voices within the City. Table 1 on page 2 compares demographic characteristics of survey respondents to the Smyrna population as a whole. Relative to the city population, respondents tended to have higher household incomes, higher levels of educational attainment, and were typically more middle aged and less racially or ethnically diverse than city residents overall.

CONTINUITY WITH THE 2014 SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

To establish continuity with the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan and better understand if opinions have changed significantly in the past three years, several questions from the 2014 survey were repeated. Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 20, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 came from that survey.

Most responses to repeated questions were consistent with the results of the 2014 survey, which had 1,763 respondents. Key differences are noted in the question summaries that follow. Some open-ended questions from the 2014 survey were formatted as close-ended responses for this survey; answer choices were based on the most popular responses from the previous version.
Table 1. Survey Respondent Profile Compared to City of Smyrna Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Survey Respondents</th>
<th>City of Smyrna Population¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Income (Q35)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25,000</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$49,999</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$99,999</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$149,999</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 or more</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree of Education (Q34)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (or equivalent)</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college (1-4 years, no degree)</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional school degree</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate degree</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional certifications</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (Q30)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger than 18</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 44</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 64</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race (Q31)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American (Black)</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian (White)</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity (Q32)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
INTRODUCTION

Q1. Which of the following best describes your relationship to Smyrna? Select all that apply to you.

Almost all respondents live in Smyrna (94.2 percent), and their other relationships to the City varied. Working in Smyrna (12.9 percent) or owning and operating a business in Smyrna (6.7 percent) were the next most frequent connections.
VISION AND GOALS

Q2. In your opinion, what is Smyrna's greatest strength (or strengths)? Select up to three.

Proximity to Atlanta (73.5 percent), the City's small town feel (37.4 percent), and the overall sense of community (34.7 percent) were seen as Smyrna's greatest strengths.
Q3. In your opinion, what is Smyrna's greatest challenge (or challenges) to overcome? Select up to three.

The greatest challenges for the City were perceived as traffic congestion (67.6 percent), quality schools (50.6 percent), and transportation choices (30.3 percent).

Q4. Please identify the reasons and/or destinations that you frequently leave Smyrna for. Select all that apply.

The most frequent reasons respondents leave the City are to go to work (61.9 percent), restaurants and cafes (54.4 percent), or to visit friends and family (52.9 percent). The 2014 survey yielded similar responses with the same top seven results in a slightly varied order.
Q5. Please rate the following aspects of quality of life in Smyrna, based on your experience.

Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction with various categories related to quality of life in Smyrna using a Likert scale, ranking their experience with each as Poor (1), Below Average (2), Average (3), Good (4), or Excellent (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of satisfaction.

They were most satisfied with the overall quality of life (3.93 - Good), cost of living (3.75 - Good), location and quality of parks/green space (3.67 - Good), which were also the top results from the 2014 survey. Almost every category had a mean rating above Average (3). Respondents were least satisfied with the access to alternative modes of transportation (2.13 - Below Average), nightlife opportunities (2.44 - Below Average), and commuting time/traffic flow (2.61 - Average).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall quality of life</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of living</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location and quality of parks/green space</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of Smyrna as a whole</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of places to worship</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of housing options</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local levels of civic engagement (voting, volunteerism, etc.)</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation amenities</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to sidewalks and biking paths</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of charitable assistance</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of childcare</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of healthcare</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet service and speed</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development, planning, and land use (growth management)</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping and dining opportunities</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and arts facilities and programs</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting time/traffic flow</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightlife opportunities</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to alternative modes of transportation</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6. How would you describe the quality of the following community services and resources in Smyrna?

Respondents indicated the quality of community services using a Likert scale, ranking their experience with each as Poor (1), Somewhat Poor (2), Neutral (3), Somewhat Good (4), or Very Good (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of satisfaction.

All of the services listed received average scores of Neutral or better. Essential services and facilities generally received higher rankings than programmed activities or cultural resources. The community services with the highest average ratings were public safety (police and fire) (4.27 - Somewhat Good), maintenance of parks (4.24 - Somewhat Good), and sanitation (waste and recycling) (4.09 - Somewhat Good). Performing arts (2.85 - Neutral), cultural resources and events (3.25 - Neutral), and adult recreation and leisure classes (3.31 - Neutral).
DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Q7. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the happiest), how happy are you with developments that have occurred in the City of Smyrna?

Most respondents felt neutral to positive about recent development trends, with an average rating of 6 out of 10.

Q8. If you are unhappy with recent development trends, what aspects do you dislike? Select all that apply.

Of the respondents that were unhappy with recent development trends, most cited too much multi-family development (56.9 percent), a lack of corresponding transportation improvements (50.5 percent), or lack of road or pedestrian connectivity (30.7 percent) as the reason for their dissatisfaction.
Q9. Rank the following areas in order of importance for targeting future public improvement investments, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

The graph below shows the mean rating of importance for each location. Lower scores represent higher prioritization.

The areas ranked as the most important locations to target future public improvement investments are major roads in the northern part of the city: Spring Road (between Cobb Parkway [US 41] and Atlanta Road) (3.61), South Cobb Drive (between Concord Road and the East-West Connector) (4.46), and Atlanta Road (4.55). Locations in the southern part of the city were ranked as lower priorities.
MIX OF USES

Q10. How balanced is our city? Please indicate if you’d like to see less, about the same, or more of each of the following types of development or uses.

Respondents selected whether they wanted to see less (1), about the same (2) or more (3) of each development type or use. The chart below shows the mean rating for each category. Higher ratings indicate people want more of a given category.

People typically indicated they wanted about the same or more of each category. Restaurants (2.82), shops (2.72), and parks and recreation facilities (2.67) were most frequently identified as categories people want more of. They would prefer fewer multi-family homes (apartments or condos) (1.22), high-rise apartments (1.34), industrial development (1.36), and townhomes (1.43).
Housing

Q11. If you are a Smyrna resident, which of the following best describes your living situation?

The vast majority of respondents (91.4 percent) own homes in Smyrna, including both owners of detached single-family homes (82.2 percent) and owners of townhomes or condos (9.2 percent). Renters accounted for a total of 4.1 percent of respondents.

Q12. What drove your decision to live in your current home in Smyrna? Select up to three.

The most frequently selected reasons driving respondents’ decision to live in their current homes were price (56.3 percent), proximity to work (55.3 percent), and the character of the area (37.4 percent). Common responses for the “other” category were:

- Proximity to family or friends
- Near childhood home
- Inherited the home
- Proximity to Atlanta and/or the airport
- Access to sidewalks and running/biking trails
- Believe it is likely to appreciate in value due to changes in the neighborhood
- Yard and landscaping

Percent of Respondents
Q13. Are you concerned about continued affordability of living in the City of Smyrna?

Most respondents (57.3 percent) were not concerned about the continued affordability of living in Smyrna; however, the typical income range for survey respondents was significantly higher than the average household income for the City overall.

There were 88 comments provided for this question, centered on topics such as:

- Cost of living is increasing quickly
- The demolition of small, older homes and replacement with expensive, new builds is eliminating much of the housing stock for first-time homebuyers
- New homes are not affordable for most single people or families with median incomes
- Affordability is more of a concern for renters; homeowners are benefitting from rising home values
- SunTrust Park likely to further increase home prices
- Don't think it will be possible to stay in Smyrna when the family outgrows the current home
- Not enough housing choices under $300,000
- Concerned property taxes will increase
Q14. Which of the following housing policies do you feel are appropriate for the City to pursue? Select all that apply.

The housing policies considered appropriate by the greatest number of respondents were increased code enforcement for rental unit quality (54.2 percent), incentives for incorporating sustainable building practices (39.5 percent), and incentives for the provision of independent senior housing (27.6 percent). Just over a fifth of respondents (22.5 percent) do not believe Smyrna should take a more proactive role in any type of housing policy. For those who selected “other,” common responses included:

- Hold homebuilders to high standards
- Opposition to public housing
- Need education and resources for low-income residents

![Bar chart showing percentage of respondents for each housing policy option.]

- Increased code enforcement for rental unit quality: 54.2%
- Incentives for incorporating sustainable building practices: 39.5%
- Incentives for the provision of independent senior housing: 27.6%
- None of the above. Smyrna should not take a more proactive role in housing policy: 22.5%
- Services for the homeless: 22.5%
- Incentives for the provision of senior services (assisted living & memory care): 21.8%
- Incentives for the provision of affordable housing: 20.8%
- Requirements for the inclusion of affordable housing: 16.7%
- Incentives for the provision of market rate multi-family or condo units in mixed-use settings: 10.6%
- Other (please specify): 7.1%
TRANSPORTATION

Q15. Which transportation modes do you rely on to get around on a daily basis? Select all that apply.

Almost all respondents drive on a daily basis (99.0 percent), but many also walk (33.0 percent), use rideshare services (15.3 percent), or bike (11.8 percent) on a regular basis. Though they do not account for the entire population, these figures paint a more diverse picture of transportation mode choice than is captured in the U.S. Census transportation mode data, which only measures the mode of transportation people take to work, suggesting people may use a greater variety of modes for non-work trips or have changed their travel behavior recently. The 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates indicates the following mode shares for the commute to work: drove alone (81.4 percent), carpooled (6.1 percent), public transportation (1.1 percent), other (3.8 percent), and worked at home (7.6 percent).

Compared to the same question asked in the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan survey, the rate of all alternative transportation modes increased or stayed the same over the three-year period. The use of carpool or rideshare increased most significantly, moving from a combined of 1.5 percent in 2014 to an 18.5 percent use rate in 2017. There was also a major increase in the share of respondents who walk, which increased from 19.7 percent in 2014 to 33.0 percent in 2017.
Q16. What transportation improvements would you like to see that would help you get around inside of Smyrna? Select all that apply.

To improve mobility within Smyrna, respondents would most like to see coordinated signal timing (59.3 percent), sidewalk improvements (55.5 percent), and local shuttles to and from activity centers (such as Market Village and SunTrust Park) (47.5 percent). Of those who chose “other” common responses included:

- MARTA rail station near the Cumberland area
- Reduced speeds on neighborhood roads
- Minimize cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods
- Electrical vehicle charging stations
- More flashing yellow turn signals
- Fewer flashing yellow turn signals
- Airport shuttle

![Bar chart showing percent of respondents for various transportation improvements.](image-url)
Q17. What transportation improvements would you like to see that would help you get around outside of Smyrna? Select all that apply.

To improve access to areas outside of the City, respondents would most like to see an extension of MARTA to Smyrna and Cobb County (54.8 percent), coordinated signal timing (53.0 percent), and the redesign of Interstate interchanges to increase efficiency (45.2 percent). For respondents who selected “other,” common comments included:

- Connection to the Atlanta BeltLine
- Light rail
- Completing existing road projects
- Express bus route directly to Midtown or Downtown Atlanta
- Airport shuttle

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents for each transportation improvement option]

- Extension of MARTA to Smyrna and Cobb County: 54.8%
- Coordinated signal timing: 53.0%
- Redesign of Interstate interchanges to increase efficiency: 45.2%
- Heavy rail service: 36.4%
- Additional travel lanes on major roads: 30.6%
- Road or pedestrian path connections between neighborhoods: 29.1%
- Planning and infrastructure for driverless vehicles: 21.8%
- Additional transit routes: 20.8%
- Higher frequency transit service: 20.5%
- Greater vehicular connectivity: 16.4%
- Bus rapid transit service: 14.5%
- Additional transit stops: 14.0%
- Dedicated bus lanes: 6.8%
- Other (please specify): 4.9%
Q18. How supportive are you of increased transit opportunities along the following roads?

Respondents indicated the degree to which they support increased transit along several corridors using a Likert scale, rating their position as Very Unsupportive (1), Somewhat Unsupportive (2), Neutral (3), Somewhat Supportive (4), or Very Supportive (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of support.

Respondents generally supported increased transit opportunities along all five of the corridors presented, with average ratings for all falling between Neutral and Somewhat Supportive. Additional comments provided on this topic included:

- Support would depend on the type of transit
- Would not oppose if it would not contribute to congestion
- Preference for expanding shared paths over transit
- Need to coordinate transit service across all of Metro Atlanta to be useful
- Want fewer buses
- Work outside of Cobb County, so CCT is not helpful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cobb Parkway</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Cobb Drive</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Road</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windy Hill Road</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Road</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord Road</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q19. To which of the following destinations would you be likely to walk or bike if facility improvements were made? Select all that apply.

Respondents were most likely to walk or bike to mixed-use activity centers like Market Village (71.5 percent) or the SunTrust Park area (53.9 percent) or to recreation destinations like parks (61.5 percent), the Silver Comet Trail (58.9 percent), or the Chattahoochee River (41.1 percent). They were less likely to be interested in walking or biking to strip commercial corridors. Common responses from those who selected “other” include:

- Already walk/bike and don’t need facility improvements
- Already walk/bike and wish it were safer
- Currently have to drive to walkable destinations, then get out and walk or bike around
- Thompson Park in Cobb County
- Would walk to restaurants along the East-West Connector between Highlands Parkway and Cooper Lake Road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Village area</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood or recreational parks</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Comet Trail</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SunTrust Park area</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattahoochee River</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial destinations along Atlanta Road</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial destinations along Spring Road/Concord Road</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial destinations along South Cobb Drive</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Mall area</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial destinations along Windy Hill Road</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable, I would not walk or bike anywhere in Smyrna, even with infrastructure improvements</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial destinations along Cobb Parkway</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Q20. Please indicate the degree to which you believe the community has been successful in the following areas.

Respondents indicated the degree to which they feel the community has been successful at several items using a Likert scale, rating their opinion as Very Unsuccessful (1), Unsuccessful (2), Average (3), Successful (4), or Very Successful (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate greater levels of perceived success.

They believe the community has had an average level of success or better for each of the items listed. The highest perceived success was in marketing the community to potential new residents (3.73), marketing the community to potential businesses considering relocation (3.27), and encouraging and celebrating entrepreneurship (3.23). Ratings were generally consistent with the 2014 survey results for the same question; however, the perceived success of marketing the community to potential businesses has increased. It was ranked lowest in the previous survey with a score of 2.99.
Q21. Which of the following best describes your current work situation?

The highest share of respondents described themselves as employed, but not an executive or manager (36.1 percent), a manager (23.6 percent), or an executive (13.5 percent).

BUSINESS LEADER INSIGHTS

Q22. Which of the following best describes your type of business?*

The majority of respondents were in the professional business services field (46.9 percent). Of those who indicated “other” (17.7 percent), responses included real estate, development, government, transportation, architecture, media, distribution, law, and nonprofits.

*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 96 people responded.
Q23. Please evaluate the following statements according to the degree to which you agree.*

Respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed with a set of statements using a Likert scale, rating their opinion as Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), or Strongly Disagree (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate a better perception of the business climate.

All of the statements received average ratings between Neutral and Strongly Disagree, indicating respondents have a somewhat negative perception of the business climate in Smyrna. They most strongly disagreed that the zoning districts, transportation infrastructure, and cost of commercial/industrial space were conducive to business development. Compared to the results of the 2014 survey, in which all dimensions received average ratings between Neutral and Strongly Agree, the perception of the business climate in Smyrna has weakened. The cost of commercial/industrial space (down 1.53 points) and difficulty finding skilled workers (down 1.31 points) saw the greatest negative changes in perception between the 2014 and 2017 surveys.

*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 89 people responded.
Q24. From an economic standpoint, what do you believe is Smyrna's greatest strength or asset? Please respond in one sentence or less.*

Participants provided open-ended responses, highlighting what they believe to be Smyrna’s greatest strength. Common responses included:

- Central location with proximity to:
  - Atlanta
  - Buckhead
  - Perimeter
  - Airport
- Small town feel
- Lower cost of living
- Highway access
- Diversity
- Relatively high-income residents
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Skilled workforce
- Infrastructure upgrades
- Safety
- Cleanliness
- Resident support for local businesses
- Strong government leadership

*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 67 people responded.

Q25. From an economic standpoint, what do you believe is Smyrna’s biggest challenge?

Participants provided open-ended responses, highlighting what they believe to be Smyrna’s greatest challenge. Traffic, school quality, and insufficient transit were the most common refrains. Typical responses included:

- Lack of quality public transportation
- Ineffective transportation connections to the metro area
- Negative perception of school quality
- Traffic
- Congestion from SunTrust Park
- Blighted strip commercial centers
- Lack of local restaurants and shops
- Tendency to overbuild
- Too much growth
- Increasing home prices and commercial rents
- Increasing amount of multifamily housing
- Maintaining diversity

*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 74 people responded.
Q26. What do you think is the greatest economic opportunity for the City of Smyrna?

Participants provided open-ended responses about what they believe to be the greatest economic opportunity for the City. The most frequent responses were to capitalize on redevelopment around SunTrust Park, improve transportation facilities, and increasing school quality. Common responses included:

- Redevelopment opportunities around SunTrust Park
- Alleviation of traffic
- Provision of transportation alternatives
- Renovation of older buildings
- Build and maintain infrastructure in coordination with new development
- Continue to create a distinct sense of place
- Improve school quality
- Redevelopment of South Cobb Drive
- Attracting higher end retail and restaurants
- More cultural resources and entertainment
- Attracting young professionals and young families

*This question was only asked of people who indicated in Q21 that they were sole proprietors, business owners, executives, or managers. 71 people responded.*
PRIORITIES

Q27. In order of importance (with 1 being the most important), please rank how you believe the City should prioritize the below activities.

The graph below shows the mean rating of importance for each priority. Lower scores represent higher prioritization.

Respondents gave the greatest priority to increasing the efficiency of the road network (3.83), leveraging the development interest catalyzed by SunTrust Park (5.46), and increasing pedestrian and bike infrastructure (5.76).
TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

Q28. Are you and/or your family likely to stay in Smyrna? Please rate the following statements.

Respondents indicated how likely they or their children were to stay in Smyrna using a Likert scale, rating their opinion as Certainly Will Not (1), Not Likely (2), Possible (3), Highly Likely (4), or Certainly Will (5). The mean rating for each category is shown below. Higher scores indicate a higher likelihood to stay.

Most respondents said they were highly likely to continue to live in Smyrna and that it is possible they would retire there. They were less certain that their children would want to live in Smyrna as adults, typically rating that between Not Likely and Possible. Scores were similar to the 2014 survey results for the same question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood you will continue to live in Smyrna</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood you will retire in Smyrna</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood your children (once grown) will want to live in Smyrna</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q29. If you will not continue to live in the community, why do you feel this way? Select all that apply.

If they were to leave the community, respondents said it would most likely be due to the quality of schools or the commute time. For those who specified “other,” common responses included:

- Traffic
- Want to downsize and relocate somewhere more active once kids move out
- Lack of shopping and dining
- Lack of senior services
- Overcrowding
- Increasing property taxes
- Dislike multifamily homes and townhomes
- Quality of schools
- Commute time
- Other (please specify)
- Cost of living
- Safety concerns
- Housing choices
- Closer to family and friends
- Access to transit
- Proximity to job
- Proximity to amenities
- Job relocation
- Lack of connection to community
- Access to pedestrian and bicycle facilities

Percent of Respondents
Q30. What is your age?

The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 (61.0 percent), followed by 45 to 64 (31.7 percent) and 65 and over (6.7 percent). There were no respondents under the age of 25.

Q31. What is your race? Check all that apply.

Most respondents (83.7 percent) were caucasian (white), followed by African-American (black) (7.3 percent), other (2.0 percent), and Asian or Pacific Islander (0.3 percent). This group is less racially diverse than Smyrna as a whole, which is 51.9 percent white, 32.0 percent black, 7.3 percent Asian, 6.9 percent other, and 1.9 percent two or more races, according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.
Q32. What is your ethnicity?

Most respondents were not Hispanic or Latino (86.1 percent) or preferred not to answer (10.6 percent); 3.3 percent of respondents identify as Hispanic or Latino, compared to 14.2 percent of the Smyrna population according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Q33. Please indicate your gender.

The majority of respondents were identify as female (63.1 percent); 32.1 percent identify as male, and 4.8 percent prefer not to answer.
Q34. What is your highest degree of education?

The majority of respondents have a bachelor’s degree or higher levels of education (86.8 percent). No respondents indicated they had not graduated high school. This group has a higher level of education than the Smyrna population, which includes 9.5 percent of people without a high school diploma and only 51.9 percent of people with a bachelor’s degree or a higher level of education, according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Q35. What is your total household income (for all people living in your housing unit)?

Respondents were skewed toward the higher end of the income spectrum relative to the City’s demographics. The majority of respondents live in households earning incomes of $100,000 or more (70.2 percent), a much higher share than the 30.6 percent of Smyrna households earning $100,000 or more, according to the U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. Households earning less than $50,000 make up 40.6 percent of the City population, but made up only 4.2 percent of survey respondents.
Q36. How long have you been a resident of Smyrna?

Respondents had a variety of tenures as Smyrna residents, including less than three years (19.6 percent), 3 to 10 years (37.3 percent), 11 to 20 years (25.5 percent), more than 20 years (12.0 percent), and lifelong (3.1 percent). Few participants (2.5 percent) did not reside in Smyrna.

Q37. What is your primary location for work?

Approximately a quarter of respondents work in Smyrna (24.5 percent), some work elsewhere in Cobb County (16.0 percent), and most work within the Atlanta metro but outside of Cobb County (55.1 percent).
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1

MEETING DETAILS
Date & Time: February 2, 2017, 7:30am-9:30am
Location: Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

MEETING ATTENDEES
Committee Members Present
- Corbin Adams
- Teri Anulewicz
- Denny Campo
- Amanda Coffelt
- Slade Gulledge
- Cheri Harrington
- Emily Hein-Warren
- Chad Koenig
- David Monroe
- Earl Rice
- Ron Roberts
- Troy Sather
- Doug Stoner

Planning Team and City Staff
- Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
- Amanda Hatton, Jacobs
- Ranada Robinson, Market Street
- Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
- Kathe Roper, City of Smyrna
- Kelsey Scott, City of Smyrna
- Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
- Ken Suddreth, City of Smyrna
- Jim Summerbell, Jacobs
- Bob Summerbell, City of Smyrna

Others
Susan Wilkinson, City Council Member

MEETING OVERVIEW & SUMMARY DISCUSSION POINTS
Welcome & Introductions – All, Welcome by City Leadership
- Doug Stoner, City of Smyrna Council Member Ward 6 and Chair of Community Development Committee, started meeting by welcoming attendees.
- Ken Suddreth, Smyrna Community Development Director, followed initial remarks with a quick overview of the plan, emphasizing the importance of focus on land use planning and tie-in with the 2014 Vision Plan and other planning efforts. The City hired the Jacobs and Market Street consultant team to help carryout the plan’s update
- Introductions were given by all in attendance. Each committee member identified his or her perspective on the number one opportunity and challenge for the City’s future growth and development. A listed of topics raised is highlighted on the following page.

Handout: List of Steering Committee Members and Planning Team Contacts
#1 Opportunity

- Model community in the state for schools, shopping, and parks with a concentration on public schools
- Get a bigger tax base and more jobs in Smyrna, new parks, better homes
- Smart growth around major arteries
- Development of depressed areas, such as Belmont, Jonquil Plaza, brings life back into the area and attracts young people
- Focus on education system
- Diversity of opportunities in the city, housing, etc.
- Diversity and healthiness of the city as it grows
- Smyrna Grove and other deals that help with redevelopment
- Location, location, location – how to take advantage of our prime location – new motto: “At the center of everything”
- Old “Brain Train” concept connecting Athens, Atlanta, and Macon
- Staying on the right track

#1 Challenge

- Attracting and keeping young families in Smyrna – we’re fine grades 1-5, but families move out as they move into 6th grade
- Traffic
- Lack of trust in middle schools
- Zero going on in Ward 5 and other wards not seeing much change/revitalization
- Transportation and infrastructure
- Transportation and transit options
- Commute options – we need to be cognizant of what’s coming down the pipe, like autonomous vehicles
- Aging population in Smyrna and how we will provide services and affordable housing to those citizens and keep them here
- Affordable land for schools/to build schools
- Housing mix – “complete community”
- Transportation – we have done a great job with road network – how do we come up with premium transit service to help move folks around in and outside of Smyrna?
- Connectivity between Atlanta and Smyrna – connecting rail to MARTA – changing mindsets about public transportation

Comprehensive Plan 101 – Amanda Hatton

- Amanda Hatton, Project Manager with Jacobs, provided a brief overview of the planning process, highlighting the planning schedule and tasks, topics to be addressed by the plan (land use, housing, economic development, and transportation), public outreach activities, State of Georgia and Atlanta Regional Commission oversight, and
coordination with other planning efforts, including the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative Study and the South Cobb Drive Corridor Redevelopment Study.

- The role of the Steering Committee to help guide and promote the plan and keep the plan update consistent with community vision and priorities as well as upcoming meetings were also discussed.

**Handout: Guide Smyrna Project Overview Sheet**

**8:00 Highlights from Baseline Conditions Analysis – Jim Summerbell & Ranada Robinson**

- Jim Summerbell with Jacobs and Ranada Robinson with Market Street Services gave a brief overview of findings from the planning team’s inventory and trends analysis.
- The presentation covered demographics, economic development, land use, housing, transportation, and community facilities.
- Committee members asked the following questions (Q) and provided related (C), responses (R) were given by the Planning Team:
  - (Q) Why these comparison communities for demographics? (R) The comparison geographies are either carry-overs from the 2014 Vision Plan or otherwise considered similar communities agreed upon by the planning team. All comparison cities are located in similar metropolitan areas with similar recent growth patterns.
  - (Q) Can the presentation be sent out to the group following the meeting? (R) Yes.
  - (C) It would be helpful to see historical information for some of the demographics and housing statistics.
  - (C) It would be helpful to think about how some of the different data points may be related to each other. For example if you look at race and poverty makeup, how does that factor into our school outcomes?

The team concluded by sharing that a full Baseline Conditions Report giving a deeper diver on the statistics would be available for the Steering Committee and general public within the next couple weeks.

**Discussion: The 2040 Development Vision – All**

**Vision & Goals**

Ms. Hatton led the group through an explanation of the “Community Goals” requirement of the Comprehensive Plan update process. The group then reviewed the City’s 2014 Vision Plan vision statement and discussed whether it should be carried over to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan or modified to more directly address future growth and development.
Handout: Vision and Goals Overview

Discussion Comments

- The vision statement is a good base/starting point, but this plan is focused more on economic development and growth so we need to add something about those elements.
- Would like to see our vision statement include something about sustainability or sustainable growth and development.
- Some of these are not applicable to a land use-focused plan, like leadership opportunities for residents.
- Separation of vision from goals is good.
- Share the specific goals of the Vision Plan subcommittees; Inform public of goals work already completed by the committees.
- Some of this leaves me hanging – clarify this – what is community attachment? And commitment to whom?
  - When it’s all together, it makes sense. The goals explain the vision.
- Development is the built environment, but also green space, focusing on entrepreneurship (one good way to tackle poverty #), “mobility” not just transportation.
- Incorporate earlier opportunities and challenges raised by the Steering Committee during introductions, including such items as smart growth, entrepreneurship, and mobility.
- Poverty is largely generational poverty, which is more difficult to overcome than poverty
- Important to note that growth is good but not at the expense of Smyrna’s diversity

The side topic of how the public will be informed and involved in the planning process came up and, in particular, how to reach the Hispanic community.

Future Land Use Map

Mr. Summerbell led the group through a brief review and discussion of the City’s Future Land Use map (also referred to as the Future Development Map). The discussion focused on two key questions: 1) Which aspects of the current Future Land Use map need to be refined? 2) What areas of the community do you expect to experience change?

Handout: Future Development Areas

Which aspects of the current Future Land Use (FLU) map need to be refined?

- Look into changing the color scheme on the map, need a greater diversity of color.
- Consider adding resources in adjacent jurisdictions (such as parks), showing just the city does not show the full picture of accessible resources.
- Need more greenspace/parks in city, specifically:
  - North of Windy Hill Road
  - West side, between Concord and S. Cobb Drive
• Annexation areas – development that is occurring adjacent to city has impact on Smyrna.
  o Some developments adjacent to city, such as those off Cumberland Pkwy, have a significant impact on Smyrna.
  o County’s future land use plan is an important part of plan
  o Mayor and City Council may be engaging in annexation study to do it in a logical way

• Conservation areas

• Consider how transportation projects will impact land use
  o What’s funded – transportation projects
  o Overlay transportation projects on FLU map

What areas of the community do you expect to experience change?
• Near Bolton Rd (just outside city), Atlanta Rd corridor
• Windy Hill
• Spring Rd
• Between I-285 and Atlanta Rd
• Density is changing in yellow residential areas
  o Different people are moving in (life cycle back to families)

• Transportation change (in how we move around within and outside of city)
  o Importance of considering ongoing coordination with state/regional transportation partners to advance our mobility goals
  o Smyrna was identified as an original rail stop for MARTA a long time ago. If that came back, where would it be? S. Cobb Drive?

Up Next – Amanda Hatton

The meeting adjourned with a brief highlight of next steps: City Council Kick-off Hearing on February 6 at City Hall and Public Workshop #1 on February 16 at Brawner Hall. The online community survey will be available beginning February 16. The Committee was asked to help get the word out about upcoming events and encourage fellow community members to get involved. Committee members were handed a copy of the Community Engagement Program. The next committee meeting is Tuesday, March 7 (7:30-9:30am) at City Hall

The meeting adjourned at 9:35am.
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 2
SUMMARY MINUTES

MEETING DETAILS
Date & Time: March 7, 2017, 7:30am-9:30am
Location: Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

MEETING ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present
- Denny Campo
- Slade Gulledge
- Cheri Harrington
- Chad Koenig
- David Monroe
- Earl Rice

Planning Team and City Staff
- Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
- Amanda Hatton, Jacobs
- Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
- Kathe Roper, City of Smyrna
- Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
- Ken Suddreth, City of Smyrna
- Jim Summerbell, Jacobs
- Bob Summerville, City of Smyrna

Others
Susan Wilkinson, City Council Member

MEETING OVERVIEW & SUMMARY DISCUSSION POINTS

Welcome & Introductions – All
- Amanda Hatton, Project Manager with Jacobs, welcomed committee members and reviewed the meeting agenda and goals. Primary goals were to update the group on project status and gain direction on key vision elements.
- Introductions were given by all in attendance.

Handout: Agenda

Project Update – Amanda Hatton
- Amanda Hatton, Project Manager, provided a brief review of the comprehensive plan content and update process, highlighting the plan framework, topics to be addressed by the plan (land use, housing, economic development, and transportation), and an update on the project timeline.
- March and April with be essential for setting a solid foundation for the plan with May and June focused on pulling the plan together into a focused document.

Reference Material: PowerPoint Presentation
Recap of Public Participation Efforts – Amanda Hatton

Ms. Hatton briefly reviewed community engagement activities to date: stakeholder interviews, public kick-off hearing, first Steering Committee meeting, and Public Workshop #1; community survey debuted on February 17.

- **Public Workshop #1 was held on February 16.**
  - There were 48 registered attendees, in addition to the planning team.
  - Upon arrival, attendees gave input to help inform the vision statement development and prioritization of opportunities and challenges. After a welcome presentation, attendees spent the remaining 1.5 hours of the meeting in discussion groups, providing input to help shape the update to the future land use plan. Discussion groups focused on corridors, activity centers, and neighborhoods. Attendees rotated through all three groups.
  - Feedback from the meeting was positive. People liked the interactive nature of the workshop. Feedback received at the workshop would be covered later in the meeting as a part of The 2040 Development Vision Elements discussion.
  - Ken Suddreth, Community Development Director, added that the meeting attracted several “new” faces or people that had not been involved in other recent planning efforts. This was a positive. It was also well received by City Council members in attendance.

- **The Community Survey debuted on February 17.**
  - To date, 264 people have taken the survey. We would like to see the number of participants double, at minimum before the survey closes on March 17.
  - Stats on participants to date were shared:
    - 95 percent live in Smyrna; 14 percent work in Smyrna
    - 59 percent are between ages 25-44; another 35 percent are between ages 45-64
    - 85 percent White; 6 percent African American
    - 4 percent Hispanic
    - 66 percent female; 29 percent male
    - 46 percent hold a Bachelor’s degree
  - Committee members were asked to help promote the survey to their network. If each person on the committee could reach 15-20 people, we would double participation rates.
  - One comment was made regarding having the survey available in printed hard copy format in addition to the online version. In response, Amanda stated that Jacobs will coordinate with City Staff regarding this, and seek direction on where to place them.

- **Public Workshop #2 will be held March 21.**
  - The workshop will follow a similar format to the first public workshop although the meeting will focus on building upon and refining draft elements of the
Discussion: The 2040 Development Vision Elements

Jim Summerbell led the discussion of key vision aspects of the plan, including a review and discussion of priority needs and opportunities by element of the plan, the land use policy map, and the vision statement.

In the notes below, Committee members questions are denoted with (Q), comments by (C), and planning team responses by (R).

Needs and Opportunities

The planning team took an initial effort at identifying top priorities to be addressed by element of the plan (as shown in boxes). The lists were based on community input collected to date from stakeholder interviews, the first Steering Committee meeting, and Public Workshop #1.

Reference Material: PowerPoint Presentation

| LAND USE | LU1. Redevelop key nodes and corridors
|          | LU2. Increase flexibility in regulations
|          | LU3. Ensure infill development is compatible with its context
|          | LU4. Maintain high design standards

Comments:

- (Q) How do you define "redevelop"?
- (C) What we do with schools and retail, etc. influences our land use.
- (C) "Flexibility" in regulations? How do we define? For example, regulations do not allow people to walk around with a beer at Avalon.
  - (R) Maybe “adaptability” is better word. And the example provided is really not a land use regulation but a city ordinance. They do relate to one another though, and certainly can have an impact on a business’s decision to locate in the city.
  - (C) Addressing “Flexibility” has to include some better sense of predictability (what development will look like).

| TRANSPORTATION | T1. Enhance and expand transit service
|                | T2. Reduce congestion on major roads
|                | T3. Expand the bike/pedestrian network
Comments:

- **T2 – (Q) Is this realistic? How can we accomplish this?**
  - (R) Technology is changing how we get around, particularly younger generation (e.g. Waze app and the emergence of driverless cars)
  - (R) Communication is also part of the solution – new signal timing implemented last year. For example, a new website is coming out to provide or already available that will provide real-time info on traffic particularly around stadium and other commute issues. (Cobb and SS Chamber effort)
  - (C) Smyrna is both young and old, each solution does have universal appeal to all age groups.
  - (Q) How do we define transit? (R) We can discuss this with the public at the next workshop.
  - (C) State Senate bill (SR 228) is currently being considered and if passed would restrict the use of CSX rail line for just CSX freight traffic. This would be a barrier to the line being used for commuter rail. We need to lobby against the bill.

**HOUSING**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H1.</strong></td>
<td>Continue to encourage the creation of diverse housing choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2.</strong></td>
<td>Encourage home ownership and neighborhood stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3.</strong></td>
<td>Continue to enhance quality of life in neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

- **(Q) We are pricing out first time homebuyers. How do we address this?**
  - (C) Empty-nesters/seniors also impacted by this – as desire for smaller footprint/lot at affordable price.
  - (R) Consider reducing square footage requirements?
  - (C) Preserve older housing styles (ranch homes on larger lots, for example) should be a part of this, as well as help preserve natural environment? (Trees, etc.)
  - (C) Bungalow style housing (shared greenspace) and meeting buffer/infrastructure requirements also play a part in this. Need for code to allow for this?

- **(Q) How are we addressing higher density with these priorities?**
  - (R) Will be addressed in the Future Land Use map.
  - (R) This topics and a discussion of high amenity areas could be a topic at the next workshop.
  - (C) The plan should consider different housing types, such as Granny pods (one type of accessory dwelling units).

- **(Q) STORMWATER MANAGEMENT - How can stormwater management be more flexible to allow for different housing options?**
(R) Identify areas in the plan where regional detention is possible (example of Corn and Jonquil)

(C) Historic fourth ward park (Atlanta) is a good example of this

Ties to land use and housing

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ED1.</th>
<th>Reduce commercial vacancies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ED2.</td>
<td>Expand retail in activity centers and priority redevelopment areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED3.</td>
<td>Leverage Braves stadium for restaurant and hospitality industries, as well as professional services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED4.</td>
<td>Support and/or accelerate entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ED1. Reduce commercial vacancies**

**ED2. Expand retail in activity centers and priority redevelopment areas**

**ED3. Leverage Braves stadium for restaurant and hospitality industries, as well as professional services.**

**ED4. Support and/or accelerate entrepreneurship**

**Comments:**

- (C) ED3 – GA Tech study and Spring Road LCI implementation (have already focused on this topic from a City perspective)
  - (R) Largely private market driven, but the plan should closely reference the recommendations of the other studies.
- (C) Add retain/maintain existing businesses as ED5.
- (C) ED2 and ED4 – Smyrna has more of a home town, home spun feel (Marietta as an example)
  - Vision Plan Cultural Art Committee
  - Comp Plan should support other initiatives underway (no need to re-invent wheel)
- (C) ED4 – Kennesaw State co-working space – Smyrna could have some space too.
  - Rev Coffee is informal place for this, need formal
  - Also could address ED2
  - There are good examples of Maker Space in Marietta
  - (Q) Should high tech a part of this?
- (C) Opportunity for greater intensity of office on south side of city

**OTHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O1.</th>
<th>Support school quality excellence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O2.</td>
<td>Provide additional parks and greenspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3.</td>
<td>Cultivate public art and culture</td>
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</table>

**O1. Support school quality excellence**

**O2. Provide additional parks and greenspace**

**O3. Cultivate public art and culture**

**Comments:**

- (C) School Quality
  - Much work done to date – best approach may be to reference other initiatives/efforts rather than reinvent wheel in Comp Plan
- (C) Add new priority (an O4) related to annexation strategy
Policy Map

The policy map reflects different areas of the city that may call for tailored actions, initiatives, or policy treatments. The draft policy map is largely a reflection of input received from the community members to date, with notable influence from Public Workshop #1 input.

Discussion Comments

- (C) What land is Cobb considering buying to use for additional park space in unincorporated county? This information, as well as current County parks, would be helpful to have on the map to better show the actual context.
- (Q) Ken Suddreth asked the Steering Committee to pay particular attention to the southern portion of the map and make sure that the area was appropriately addressed by the map.
  - (C) People consider the north and south of Smyrna to be different.
  - (C) The City has always prioritized making sure there are options in Smyrna and the north and south offer different living environments.
  - (C) The policy map shows a lot more going on in northern portion of city. Is that accurate?
    - People like the diversity of options in the city.
  - (C) Intent of RAD should remain - is to be able to address needs of different environments of city
- (C) The City needs to have flexibility, so the Policy map does help address that.
- (C) Would like to see focus at I-285 and S. Cobb Drive, possibly another activity center. The intensity of the activity center needs to be further looked into at the workshop.
- (Q) There is limited opportunity at S. Cobb Drive and East/West Connector. Should this be shown as an activity center.
  - Much land in this area has already redeveloped.
- (C) We need to make sure that we have the tools in place to achieve our vision.
- (Q) Susceptibility to change – why is area by Windy Hill shown this way?
  - (R) Much infill is already going on here. That factor in addition to the age of housing contributes to how areas susceptible to change were identified.
  - (R) It does not necessarily imply that the City will do anything special here to limit or facilitate change. This should be a topic further discussed at the next workshop.
- (C) Area along N. Cooper Hill has a higher susceptibility to change and should be shown as such on the map.
- (C) There is an opportunity for more trail connections on the south side of City. Perhaps that is something that should be shown on the map.

Vision and Goals

A couple handouts were provided to explain how the planning team arrived at a first, preliminary draft of a supplemental “land use based vision” for the Comprehensive Plan that would tack
onto the vision statement in the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan. The group briefly discussed the initial draft of the vision statement and provided the following comments.

### Draft Place-Based Vision Statement

“Smyrna will emerge as a regional destination known for its sense of community, ease of access and connectivity, its diversity of distinct and welcoming neighborhoods, signature public spaces and art, and as an incubator for successful entrepreneurial efforts.”

### Comments

- (C) “Entrepreneurial efforts” is too restrictive, look at adjusting this portion of the statement.
  - Consider replacing the last phrase with something like “Cultivate the homegrown spirit”
  - Encourage, incubate, and cultivate – one of these terms could be used, but we need to be sure the loaded term reflects the meaning we want
  - End on a stronger phrase that is more focused on land use.
  - Remove incubate
  - Ending on neighborhoods may be better.

### Up Next – Jim Summerbell

The meeting adjourned with a brief highlight of next steps: Community Survey (open until March 17), Public Workshop #2 on March 21 at Brawner Hall, and the next Steering Committee meeting at City Hall on April 11. Committee members were encouraged to help distribute flyers promoting Public Workshop #2 and the Community Survey.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.
STEEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #3

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 3
Summary Minutes

Meeting Details
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017
Time: 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Location: Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

Meeting Attendees
Committee Members Present
• Corbin Adams
• Teri Anulewicz
• Denny Campo
• Slade Gulledge
• Cheri Harrington
• Chad Koenig

• Leslie Lightfoot
• David Monroe
• Ron Roberts
• Bennett Sands
• Troy Sather
• Doug Stoner

Planning Team and City Staff
• Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
• Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
• Meghan McMullen, Jacobs
• Ranada Robinson, Market Street

• Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
• Ken Suddreth, City of Smyrna
• Jim Summerbell, Jacobs

Others
• Susan Wilkerson, City Council Member

Meeting Overview and Summary Discussion Points

Welcome and Introductions
Jim Summerbell, Project Manager with Jacobs, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the meeting agenda and goals. The primary goals for the meeting were to inform the committee of the project efforts to date and get direction on plan recommendations. Participants were given a meeting agenda and handout with information about the current Future Development Map categories.

Community Engagement Discussion
Meghan McMullen, a planner with Jacobs, reviewed outcomes from recent community engagement activities (Public Workshop #2 and the Community Survey) and solicited input for the format of the upcoming booth at the Jonquil Festival.

Public Workshop #2
The second public workshop was held on March 21st at Brawner Hall and had 24 attendees. Participants reviewed materials and provided feedback on the draft vision statement and goals from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan upon arrival.
Following a short welcome presentation, participants were broken into four groups and rotated through stations to discuss potential revisions to the Future Land Use Map, review draft priorities, and brainstorm related action items. The station topics were: 1) Residential Areas; 2) Activity Centers; 3) Public Spaces and Transportation; and 4) Places of Work and Commerce. Highlights from the discussions included:

**Residential Areas**
- Some participants were reassured by the low susceptibility to change areas
- Areas around SunTrust Park, along Spring Road, and around Riverview Landing were seen as most likely to change
- Higher density is okay in certain areas if transportation improvements are made
- Affirmed all four priorities
- Greater variety of housing types okay in Moderate, Medium, and Urban Residential (e.g. accessory dwelling units, cottage courts)
- Interested in design guidelines for residential areas

**Activity Centers**
- Envision SunTrust Park area denser than Market Village– more of a regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Need new FLU designation for Regional Activity Center
- Transition densities/heights approaching residential neighborhoods
- Need more residences and local businesses at Market Village
- More code enforcement and architectural standards at smaller hubs on S. Cobb Drive
- Need more commercial in Riverview Landing area and maintain river access

**Public Spaces & Transportation**
- Spring Road and Atlanta Road as signature corridors with complete streets
- May need second east-west corridor with trails
- Improve bus frequency and enhance stops
- Consider end-of-the-line MARTA connection
- Study potential for Smyrna Circulator
- Coordinate signal timing
- Encourage parallel road networks
- Continuous bike connections to nodes
- Create signature park (like Piedmont Park)
- Develop a parks master plan
- Support public art and culture
Places of Work & Commerce

- Industrial area off Jonquil Drive could be good for redevelopment (like King Plow Arts Center, brewery, or residential)
- Could have some office on the east end of Spring Road
- Improve aesthetics along key corridors and incentivize owners to renovate
- Clean up garbage around vacant properties
- Create another TAD/Enterprise Zone
- Attract higher quality retail
- Improve connectivity from SunTrust Park to Market Village/Belmont
- Encourage hotels/restaurants near SunTrust Park
- Consider business incubator
- Support minority business development
- Reduce congestion and expand transit to attract businesses

Community Survey Results

The Community Survey closed on March 24th, and highlights from the results were shared with the committee. 501 people responded to the 37-question survey. The feedback was largely consistent with the input received at previous workshops and included:

- Smyrna’s greatest strengths are perceived as its proximity to Atlanta, small town feel, and sense of community.
- Smyrna’s greatest challenges are perceived as congestion, quality schools, and transportation choices.
- Respondents stated they were likely to continue to live in Smyrna, but those who may leave would do so primarily because of the quality of schools and the commute time.
- Most respondents chose their current home based on price, proximity to work, and the character of the area.
- Most people are concerned about the continued affordability of housing in Smyrna.
- Regarding recent development trends, people were most frustrated by the amount of multifamily, lack of corresponding transportation improvements, and lack of road or pedestrian connectivity.
- The future uses people want to see most are restaurants, shops, and parks, and they want to see less multifamily, high-rise apartments, and industrial.
- The housing policies believed to be most appropriate for the City to pursue are increased code enforcement for rental unit quality, incentives for incorporating sustainable building practices, and incentives for the provision of independent senior housing.
- Almost all respondents drive on a daily basis, but also frequently walk, use rideshare, or bike.
- To improve mobility within Smyrna, respondents would most like to see increased efficiency of the existing road network, an improved pedestrian network, and local shuttles connecting activity centers.
To improve mobility between Smyrna and the surrounding region, respondents would most like to see the extension of MARTA to Smyrna and Cobb County, coordinated signal timing, and the redesign of interstate interchanges to increase efficiency.

Respondents support increased transit opportunities along Cobb Parkway, South Cobb Drive, Spring Road, Windy Hill Road, Atlanta Road, and Concord Road.

If improvements were made to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, respondents would be likely to walk to mixed-use centers, parks, and trails.

The biggest priorities for the City were considered to be increasing the efficiency of the road network, leveraging development interest around SunTrust Park, and increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

The locations seen as the most important targets for future public improvement investments were Spring Road, South Cobb Drive, and Atlanta Road.

Jonquil Festival

The next public engagement event will be a booth at the Jonquil Festival on April 29 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and April 30 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Several potential approaches to soliciting feedback and sharing draft materials were discussed. Committee members recommended a combination of activities including one quick response format (such as dot voting), one extended response format (such as having individuals write their aspirations for the City on a wall), maps explaining concepts from the draft plan, and an option to text in a response or tweet with the #GuideSmyrna hashtag. The committee recommended asking specifically about people’s interest in a potential MARTA extension to better understand the level of support around that issue.

2040 Future Land Use Map Discussion

Jim Summerbell facilitated a discussion of potential changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) based on public input received to date. Committee members were asked to provide feedback on each potential change. These included:

1. Create a Regional Activity Center designation to align with the higher proposed densities in the Spring Road Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study.

The Spring Road LCI Study recommends higher levels of density in the area surrounding SunTrust Park than are currently allowable under any of the City’s future land use categories. To accommodate this character, a new Regional Activity Center category will likely be created, and it is possible that multiple categories will be created to align with the three character areas of the LCI plan. The study is currently being finalized and reviewed by City Council, and the Guide Smyrna planning team will follow up with that process and make a recommendation on how to address this area once it has been approved.

Members of the Steering Committee also recommended revisiting the height and residential density metrics proposed in the LCI plan to ensure they are aligned and reflect a realistic, buildable product. For example, it was mentioned that the Bridge District allows buildings as tall as 200 feet, but residential densities of 80 dwelling units per acre (du/a), a low level for the corresponding height allowance.
2. **Create an industrial/mixed-use designation for the Jonquil Drive Industrial Area.**

Through the community engagement process, the industrial area around Jonquil Drive in north Smyrna was identified as an area that may be likely to redevelop and take on a more mixed-use character, in addition to the existing light industrial uses. Small office, maker spaces, microbreweries, event spaces, and residences were mentioned as potentially appropriate uses. There is currently no future land use category suitable for this combination of uses, so a new category will be created to accommodate this character and may be applied to other parts of the City. Steering Committee members suggested the Riverview and Five Points as other locations where this category may be appropriate.

3. **Show open space and floodplain as features on the map for the Riverview Landing Activity Center.**

The Future Development Map does not currently show open space along the Chattahoochee River as Parks/Recreation/Conservation (PRC) in the Riverview Landing. The team has recommended showing the designated open space area there as PRC and showing the 100-year floodplain as a graphic feature to make it easier for staff in reviewing rezoning applications. The committee discussed the conflict between the mixed-use parcels within city limits in this area and the adjacent County parcels, which are designated as industrial. City staff indicated the County has studied these parcels. It is also possible these parcels would become annexed into the City when they redevelop.

4. **Fix inconsistencies between the 2030 Future Development Map and recent developments.**

Some recent developments are not accurately reflected in the 2030 Future Development Map, including the Smyrna Elementary School site, Concord Linear Park, portions of the Silver Comet Trail, part of Belmont, and Smyrna Grove. The new map will be updated to reflect these changes. The team will consult the Planning Commission to identify other potential inconsistencies.

5. **Align with programmed transportation improvements, such as the Windy Hill Road improvements.**

Roadway and public realm improvements to corridors like Windy Hill Road and South Cobb Drive may impact the likely future development of adjacent parcels. Especially along Windy Hill Road, the adjacent parcels are shallow and would likely require aggregation to redevelop. Committee members recommended extending the Neighborhood Activity Center designation slightly deeper to allow for this possibility.

6. **Increase the allowable residential densities in areas located near activity centers and with supportive infrastructure, and require a high quality of design.**

The low density threshold of the current designation Urban Residential category encompasses forms including detached single-family homes on smaller lots and does not always reflect a true urban character. The team recommended splitting the current Urban Residential designation, used for all residential areas over 6 du/a, into two categories: 1) 6-10 du/a; and 2) >10 du/a. The Steering Committee supported this distinction and recommended renaming the categories.

The potential for establishing design guidelines for residential neighborhoods, which came up at both public workshops, was also discussed. The committee generally
supported standards governing lot size, building size, and the relationship between a building and its surroundings, but felt architectural guidelines regulating detailed issues (such as paint colors) would be too prescriptive and potentially infringe on property rights. They recommended leaving this up to Homeowner Associations (HOAs) and individual neighborhoods to adopt, if there is strong support from residents. To facilitate the creation of design guidelines in neighborhoods without HOAs, they recommended establishing a process through which neighborhoods can apply to the City to get support in creating them and proactively reaching out to neighborhoods to let them know about the option.

Committee members suggested reviewing the proposed path connecting the Silver Comet to the Atlanta BeltLine, showing that path as PRC and assessing where adjacent land may be designated as mixed-use or another appropriate category in anticipation of demand driven by the new connection.

During the discussion, the potential for creating a land bank overseen by the Development Authority was mentioned as a tool to help aggregate small parcels in targeted redevelopment areas and to help retain affordability.

**Priority Needs and Opportunities Discussion**

The priority needs and opportunities were drafted at the previous Steering Committee meeting and reviewed at Public Workshop #2. Jim Summerbell and Ranada Robinson briefly reviewed the list with the committee. Ms. Robinson also explained the process currently underway to review the 2014 Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan, 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and current Community Work Program to identify action items that should be incorporated into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, based on the established set of priority needs and opportunities. Priorities and action items that most needed additional input were also reviewed:

**Economic Development**

The team asked for feedback on the following action items:

- Continue to explore the City’s role in working with Cobb EDGE, surrounding higher education partners, and existing businesses to establish small-scale incubator and mentoring programs.
- Consider expanding the City’s Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program
  - Consider including an annual survey
  - Consider acquiring a customer relationship management (CRM) system customized for BRE, such as ExecutivePulse or Synchronist

Committee members showed support for both concepts, especially the creation or facilitation of a small-scale incubator and mentoring programs. A former car wash site in the Five Points area and the former Imagine International Academy of Smyrna site on South Cobb Drive were mentioned as potential locations, and locations with the new industrial/mixed-use category were generally considered appropriate. They suggested incorporating a co-working space and focusing on how to transition these small entrepreneurs into their own brick and mortar locations, such as by connecting them with available properties and offering legal counsel. IgniteHQ, a partnership
between Kennesaw State University and the Cobb Chamber of Commerce in Marietta, was mentioned as a potential model, and Chattahoochee Technical College was suggested as a partner.

Land Use
The committee was asked for their feedback on the recommended action to:

- Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance to improve readability, ease of use and to allow the development of new residential, industrial, and commercial products in line with the community’s vision

They were specifically asked to consider whether a complete rewrite of the ordinance would be necessary, or if it would make more sense to target certain zoning categories for revisions. Most people felt a complete rewrite was not necessary, but some major revisions are needed and efforts did need to be made to improve clarity and readability. They recommended incorporating a citizen education component, making the code reader-friendly, adding visuals, and improving the digital interface to make it easy for property owners to identify all of the regulations associated with their parcels, possibly through an interactive map. The need to ensure the standalone text would still provide sufficient clarity was also emphasized, as many users access the code through the Municode website, which does not include visuals.

In addition to enhancing legibility, the committee identified some areas where the current regulations are lacking. Additional residential zoning categories should be evaluated to fill gaps in the current set, especially to provide an alternative to the Residential Attached/Detached (RAD) district. There is a growing need for childcare and eldercare, and the code should be revisited to identify locations that should be more permissive of that use. There is no current zoning category that would correspond to the new Regional Activity Center around SunTrust Park, and one will need to be created. An overall review for alignment with the new Future Land Use Map will also be necessary.

Adjournment
The meeting ended at 9:30 AM, and participants were reminded that the next Steering Committee Meeting will be on May 16, at the same location and time, Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room at 7:30 AM.
Meeting Details
Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2017
Time: 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Location: Smyrna City Hall, HR Training Room

Meeting Attendees
Committee Members Present
• Teri Anulewicz
• Denny Campo
• Slade Gulledge
• Cheri Harrington
• David Monroe
• Ron Roberts
• Bennett Sands
• Troy Sather
• Doug Stoner

Planning Team and City Staff
• Jennifer Bennett, City of Smyrna
• Rusty Martin, City of Smyrna
• Ranada Robinson, Market Street
• Joey Staubes, City of Smyrna
• Jim Summerbell, Jacobs
• Addie Weber

Others
• Susan Wilkerson, City Council Member

Meeting Overview and Summary Discussion Points

Welcome and Introductions
Jim Summerbell, Project Manager with Jacobs, welcomed the committee members and reviewed the meeting agenda and goals. The primary goals for the meeting were to inform the committee of the project efforts to date, discuss the first draft of the 2040 Future Land Use Map and discuss the draft action items of the Community Work Program. Participants were given a meeting agenda and handout with information about the proposed 2040 Future Land Use Designations.

Community Engagement Discussion
Jim continued the conversation giving an overview of public meetings and events scheduled for the remainder of the project. He then spent about 10 minutes reviewing the Jonquil Festival results. A formal summary of the festival results can be found in the attachment.

In preparation for the next public meeting, scheduled on Thursday, June 8th between 6:30pm to 8:30 pm, members of the steering committee asked if we could advertise this event during Food Truck Tuesday. City staff discussed having a “teaser” sign at the event to inform the public of the upcoming public meeting.
2040 Future Land Use Map Discussion
The majority of the meeting was focused on recommended changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Jim Summerbell began the facilitated discussion with a review of new definitions and features of the map, and consistency recommendations with existing zoning, and established policies. Committee members were in agreement of these changes that included the following:

- Creating a new residential designation, and renaming the current designations for consistency. The new residential designations are Low Density (<=3 units/ac), Moderate Density (<=4.5 units/ac), Medium Density (<=6 units/ac), Medium-High Density (<=10 units/ac), and High Density (>10 units/ac).
- Creating a new Regional Activity Center Designation
- Creating a new Industrial Mixed Use Designation
- Adding Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Splitting Parks/Recreation/Conservation into two categories, one for public parks and the other for private recreation and conservation areas.
- Adding the 100-year flood plain as a feature of the map.

Steering Committee members were then asked to provide feedback on each FLUM subarea. The areas and their changes include:

1. Spring Road and SunTrust Park Area
   The recommended changes to the FLUM in this area bring together the zoning and Spring Road LCI Study recommendations. It also utilizes a new Regional Activity Center designation. Members of the Steering Committee agreed with the changes to the FLUM and also discussed the desire for a signature park along Spring Road.

2. Jonquil Drive Industrial Area Redevelopment
   A new industrial mixed use designation is proposed for this area. This use would allow for a variety of residential, limited commercial, and office uses. The proposed changes also take into account the linear park along Spring Road. Steering Committee members liked the notion of having an industrial mixed use designation. They suggested the Planning Team review Cobb County’s zoning to ensure they are inline with proposed FLUM recommendations. Residential densities in the surrounding area were also updated to be consistent with approved zoning.

3. Roswell Street Area
   The proposed FLUM for the Roswell Street Area incorporates the new industrial mixed use designation and higher residential densities, as well. Steering Committee members stated that this area has a unique feel and character. A proposed extension of the Mixed Use designation behind Jonquil Village was also approved though slightly modified from that shown in the draft map.

4. Market Village Area
   Around and within the Market Village, the map was updated to reflect the presence of several key city buildings and public park areas and some well-established churches. Overall residential densities in the area were increased to reflect the ongoing trend in rezoning approvals, and the linear park along Concord Road was added.
5. **Windy Hill Road Area**
The widening of Windy Hill Road will be asymmetric, with new rights of way be acquired currently on the north side of the road. The planned remnant pieces of ROW are proposed for a linear park, while the south side of the road is shown as appropriate for mixed use. The committee was in general agreement about these recommendations on the roadway but had some recommended changes for two other subareas near the roadway. For one an existing industrial area on the northeast side of Atlanta Road and Windy Hill had been designated residential on the 2030 map, and the recommendation was to change to industrial to reflect the zoning. The Committee recommended changing this to Industrial Mixed Use. The second recommended change was for the medium density residential neighborhood off of Pat Mell Road should be designated as a future site of a public park, since most of the area is in floodplain and the area is in need of redevelopment.

6. **Northside of South Cobb Drive**
Several changes were recommended for this area including some consistency changes in the NW corner of the city limits along Pat Mell Road which are currently zoned for commercial uses but are primarily being used for residential. The committee recommended not changing these areas and leaving them residential as shown on the current 2030 plan. The primary reason for this is the current market trend away from retail shops, and the fact that the area never developed fully as commercial as zoning indicating a lack of local market for such a use. Another major change on the map was the reflection of the new Smyrna Grove development and the southerly extension of the mixed use area boarding Smyrna Grove, which the committee approved. There was some discussion about how the uses along Birch Street should be designated the current 2030 map and the draft 2040 map show the houses on the west side of the road as Community Activity Center. The Committee decided to pull back the CAC designation to only reflect the existing commercial zoning. Again because the market for further retail expansion in the city is low and projected to decrease.

7. **Concord Road and South Cobb Drive**
Only minor changes were proposed for this area, including a possible addition of a new Industrial Mixed Use district, but the Committee rejected the idea. The committee did advise updating this portion of the map to reflect exiting city facilities, such as the fire station.

8. **Middle section of South Cobb Drive**
This area had several changes to reflect consistency with existing zoning and development around the hospital site. The Committee recommended increasing the housing density in the area, and changing some of the area designated as Public Institutional on the 2030 plan for residential.

9. **South section of South Cobb Drive**
This area also had several changes to reflect consistency with existing zoning particularly industrial and commercial properties. The focus of committee discussion in this area revolved around the Oakdale Court residential neighborhood, which is surrounded by industrial uses. The committee recommended showing the neighborhood as industrial.
10. Riverview Landing Area

This area also had several changes to reflect consistency with parks/recreation/conservation areas and existing zoning particularly residential properties which on the 2030 plan were under shown as lower density than that allowed by the zoning. The focus of committee discussion was on the reflection of private recreation and conservation areas in area as well as the whole city, which the committee was supportive of.

Action Items

The remaining 10 minutes of the meeting were focus on the identifying the 2018-2022 Community Work Program which includes the 100 Day Action Plan. Jim Summerbell began this discussion by presenting an overview of the how the comprehensive plan is framed. He then presented an overview of the 5 topic areas: Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development and Other. The Other category captured priorities that related to parks, culture, schools and annexation.

Addie Weber of Jacobs continued the discussion with an exercise to determine the top action plan priorities. Steering Committee members were given a hand-out that listed all the action items in their representative topic areas. Members were then asked to review and rank their top 3 action items, identify if it is a 100-day action item and a potential partner for that action item. The top priorities are listed below under their topic headings.

- **Land Use**

  Steering Committee members were in general agreement about the overall need to increase adaptability and readability of the City’s zoning and development regulations.

  1. LU2.1 – Revise and update the City Zoning Ordinance to improve readability and ease of use, and to allow the development of new residential, industrial, and commercial products in line with the community’s vision.
  2. LU3.2 – Conduct a Study of Infill Development Guidelines, and in recommended adopt Infill Development Guidelines
  3. LU4.1 – Undertake a study of applying Architectural Design Standards to key activity centers and corridors of the city.

- **Transportation**

  There were only two action items identified for transportation. Discussion amongst the Steering Committee centered on whether or not an evaluation of shuttle service between commercial districts in Smyrna and the Atlanta Braves Stadium should be its own action item. The resulting discussion kept the evaluation as part of the Transit Feasibility Study but acknowledged that this item has more potential as a market solution than one developed by the City. The ranking of the action items included two studies that the City Council has already authorized and strongly support:

  1. T1.2 – Undertake a Transit Feasibility Study.
2. T3.2 – Implement and regularly update the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

- **Housing**
  Addie presented each housing action item and asked the Steering Committee to rank their top 3. The members spent some time discussing H1. *Continue to Encourage the Creation of Diverse Housing Choices* and the need for a Housing Master Plan, and questioned whether they should be included. General consensus was that both efforts should be further refined through the Strategic Visioning committee efforts. The top 3 action items were:
  3. H4.2 – Revise the City Zoning Ordinance to offer a wider range of residential zoning designations to avoid reliance on RAD, single-family residential attached and/or detached zoning district.
  4. H3.3 – Identify declining neighborhoods through planning studies and target these areas for revitalization effort.
  5. H1.2 – Consider establishing a land bank that can be used as redevelopment tool purchase foreclosed and delinquent properties, for future sale or development.

- **Economic Development**
  Ranada Robinson of Market Street presented the economic development action items. Steering Committee members asked for clarification on what it meant to be an Entrepreneur Friendly Community (ED4.4). The top 3 action items were:
  1. ED5.1.1 – Consider expanding the City’s Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. Consider including an annual survey.
  2. ED4.4 – Seek Entrepreneur Friendly Community status through the Georgia Department of Economic Development.
  3. ED1.1 – Consider repackaging current incentives to property owners for making improvements to commercial properties to increase the likelihood of occupancy as a special program, i.e. the Commercial Revitalization Program.

- **Other**
  Addie Weber concluded this section of the presentation by reviewing the two action items that were placed in the “Other” topic area. They were ranked as follows:
  1. O4.3 – Conduct an Annexation Study in order to establish future city expansion areas based on fiscal impacts.
  2. O2.1 – Develop and routinely update a parks master plan.

**Adjournment**
The meeting ended at 9:30 AM.

**Attachments:**
1. Jonquil Festival Summary Report
2. Smyrna 2040 Future Land Use Designation Definitions
3. Steering Committee #4 PowerPoint
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

GUIDE SMYRNA STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
KEY THEMES & TOPICS REPORT

OVERVIEW

The planning team carried out a series of stakeholder interviews with community leaders over the course of two weeks to help identify key topics as well as top opportunities and concerns that should be further considered during the community engagement process. All City Council members and the mayor were invited to participate as well as representative business leaders, small business owners, resident representatives, and citizen leaders from the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan committees. A full list of those interviewed in alphabetical order is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Representing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teri Anulewicz</td>
<td>Mayor Pro-Tem, City Council (Ward 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Bacon</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Bentley</td>
<td>Williams Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrea Blustein</td>
<td>City Council (Ward 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent Buckner</td>
<td>Bennett Woods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Chen</td>
<td>Atkins Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Drawe</td>
<td>Atkins Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Fennel</td>
<td>City Council (Ward 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Fields</td>
<td>Must Ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Gernatt</td>
<td>David Weekly Homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Jones</td>
<td>Smyrna City Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>David McGinnis</td>
<td>Habitat for Humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil Moon</td>
<td>Cobb Board of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Moore</td>
<td>Covenant United Methodist Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derek Norton</td>
<td>City Council (Ward 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holly Quinlan</td>
<td>Cobb Travel &amp; Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Randall</td>
<td>Smyrna Department of Public Works</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doug Stoner</td>
<td>City Council (Ward 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brad Thompson</td>
<td>Single Family Home Builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Waybright</td>
<td>Community and Econ Development Strategic Vision Plan Work Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve West</td>
<td>Halpern Properties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Wilkinson</td>
<td>City Council (Ward 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Woodberry</td>
<td>The Woodberry Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chuck Young</td>
<td>Community and Econ Development Strategic Vision Plan Work Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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PRIMARY OBSERVATIONS

Overall the interviewees were happy with the city’s direction and the progress made in recent years. Many cited as examples the recent development trends favoring mixed-use development, the visionary approach and support of the Strategic Vision Plan, and the overall character and strength of the community. Many see Smyrna as great place to live with a very bright future.

Interviewees were asked about the opportunities and challenges facing the city in the coming years. Most pointed to new developments such as the improvements to Windy Hill Road and all the construction and improvements around the Battery and the new Braves Stadium. For the most part, they saw these as opportunities, but also pointed to the fact that no really knows the full impact and many in the community have expressed some concerns along with their optimism. Traffic, the need for improved transit, and increasing concerns over housing affordability were also high on this list.

Another major goal of the interviews was to gauge the expectations of the Comprehensive Plan Update project itself and what they wanted to see come out of this planning process. Most expressed an interest in incorporating and carrying forward the good work on the Strategic Vision Plan, and the desire for a practical, implementable plan that is grounded in best practices. No one wanted a plan that simply met the minimum state requirements, but rather a plan that exceeds them.

WHAT MAKES SMYRNA STANDOUT IN THE REGION

Interviewees all responded with positive statements about Smyrna’s image and place in the region. A few even mentioned that this was not always the case, and huge improvements thanks to progressive leadership have made a big impact. Common descriptors used by respondents included quality, diversity, balanced, and innovative.

- Smyrna is a very well balanced place with different people, different incomes, backgrounds, types of housing, etc.
- Diversity – ethnic, socioeconomic, housing, opportunity, engagement.
- Smyrna is a down to earth place.
- Although growing, Smyrna still has a small town feel.
- Quality growth and out of the box thinking, such as Market Village.
- Smyrna is like an in-town community outside the perimeter. It has the potential to be the Decatur of Cobb County.
- Convenience (location) and proximity to Atlanta. Easy accessibility and transportation to get to city via I-285/I-75. Smyrna needs a new motto (“At the Center of Everything”).
- Good quality of life, including parks and community events.
- Live-work-play that accommodates a diversity of housing types.
- Good pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. The community is very walkable, having some 10-foot sidewalks with amenities and access to the Silver Comet Trail.
- Sense of community. Vibrant and very active with both its initiatives and fun events.
- A caring City Council, concerned about community welfare and standard of living.
- Dedicated to new technology and innovation with good fiber access.
- Visionary dreams to move Smyrna ahead from yesterday. It’s all in the Strategic Vision Plan.
Stability of leadership.
Transit that connects.
Old neighborhoods and quality of life is good for services.
Arts and culture (provide as an amenity).
Smyrna is well-positioned for tourism.
People want to be in Smyrna.
Smyrna is great at planning.
The uniqueness of people and character.
City taxes are lower than Cobb County taxes.

RECENT CITY TRENDS FAVORED BY STAKEHOLDERS
Stakeholders generally expressed a sentiment that they choose to live or work in the community because they like the direction Smyrna is moving in, and they appreciate that the changes have continued to foster a strong sense of community.

- Tying in sidewalks and bike lanes going toward the ball park.
- The number of restaurants more than doubled. There was not much to choose from before, even around Cumberland. Smyrna now has a local food culture.
- Businesses like Rev Coffee create a spirit of entrepreneurship in the city.
- The Braves stadium has been positive for attracting development.
- Improvements to the downtown area, location, access to Atlanta, library (community feel), trails, concerts downtown, leaf vacuuming truck (as example), and animal control officer has been helpful.

AREAS WITH HIGHEST CAPACITY FOR CHANGE
The areas north of Concord Road/Spring Road, and along major corridors leading into the city were universally seen as the areas with highest capacity for change.

- Area between South Cobb Parkway/Pat Mell Road/South Cobb Drive/and Atlanta Road has the greatest potential for change.
- Annex to west of South Cobb Drive, north of Concord.
- Windy Hill Road redevelopment.
- South Cobb Drive -uses along road.
- In the vicinity of the Battery and the new Braves Stadium - uses should be more intense.
- Areas around transit corridors.
- Spring Road and Atlanta Road.

WHAT DO YOUR CLIENTS LOVE ABOUT SMYRNA?
The small town character and the components that support it, along with strong leadership were the most common responses to this question.

- Live-work-play atmosphere, including Market Village, Belmont, and Jonquil Village.
- Educational system is great.
- Hospital availability – South Cobb Drive (WellStar), Emory at Smyrna.
• Churches.
• Live-work-play that accommodates housing.
• Innovation.
• Administration does a great job working with the community. The City works with us and vice versa.

**WHAT DO YOUR CLIENTS HAVE CHALLENGES WITH IN SMYRNA?**

Issues related to transportation and housing were the most common challenges that the interviewees heard from others.

• South Cobb Drive - is dangerous for walking, has too much commercial, traffic bad, state has much more right of way than it needs.
• Balanced tax base.
• Keeping balance of housing for everyone.
• Access to Transportation – accessing service center itself, located on a bus stop or close to one; some clients walk or ride a bike or ride a bus.
• Public transportation is a need. Bus service is not timely nor necessarily get where they need.
• Affordable housing – rapid increase in prices, members struggling with finding affordable housing. Retail/commercial employees have lower class earnings – can the housing mix accommodate that employment mix so they can live in the area.

**HOW COULD YOUR AGENCY'S GOALS BE BETTER SUPPORTED BY THE CITY?**

Interviewees that represented non-profits and local community groups were asked how the city could better support their goals. For most part, responses indicated that city was very supportive, and open to dialogue. Interest in continued support was universally expressed.

• Council is supportive of affordable housing, allowing flexibility in single family housing, specifically related to lot size.
• Flexibility is essential to balance and having healthy community.
• Improved access and dialogue between city officials and non-profits to foster public-private partnerships to move forward.
• Support tourism around historic resources. Need to leverage our history.

**ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF RESIDENTS**

Elected officials were asked what issues and concerns they most heard from residents, and the most common response was traffic, schools, and public safety. Though schools are not under the jurisdiction of the city, the need for closer coordination and dialogue between city officials and the School Board was strongly stressed.

• Traffic congestion.
• Public safety and apprehension about how the Braves Stadium will impact this.
• Traffic (Atlanta Road – what options are available to mitigate traffic here?) and Braves impending traffic.
• Manage quality development – standards are currently followed.
• Quality of schools.
• Need more schools, but land is too expensive.
• High Turnover in the schools
Business displacement. The City is acquiring north side of Windy Hill Road to widen it. 80 businesses on 40 properties are impacted, many of which are automotive businesses, doctors, etc. Many of the businesses are minority owned or run, especially by Hispanic operators.

• Need more code enforcement
• Traffic and the light sequencing on Spring Road. Need for pedestrian bridge over Highway 41.

BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES
Interviewees were asked about the biggest opportunities facing the community. For the sake of organization, these responses were organized by major topic area, including land use, economic development, transportation, housing, and other. As previously stated, most pointed to new developments such as the improvements to Windy Hill Road and the construction and improvements around the Battery and the new Braves stadium. For the most part they saw these as opportunities, but also pointed to the fact that no one really knows the full impact and many in the community have expressed some concerns along with their optimism.

Land Use
• Redevelopment, particularly along Atlanta Road.
• Additional design regulations to improve community character.
• Location.
• Density transitions. Need step downs in density between lower and higher density housing along transit routes.
• Strategic annexation that to increase housing opportunities. (I-285 should be the city border on the east.).
• The area by SunTrust Park as a major gateway to the City with greater density.
• Reinvention of South Cobb Drive.
• Increase density by Cobb Parkway.
• Need variety of mixed use districts, more flexibility in the code (like Woodstock).
• Improve our heavily traveled corridors.
• There is a need to revisit the design districts, update them, and make them easier to follow.
• Revisit tree ordinance to ensure it is aligned with community, not just developer, goals.

Housing
• Neighborhood stability to encourage greater home ownership.
• More medium and high density housing in activity centers.
• Improve the quality of aging apartment complexes or redevelop.

Transportation
• Transit in general is a big opportunity for Smyrna’s future.
  o MARTA expansion to Smyrna.
  o Commuter rail.
  o Premium transit service.
• Sidewalks and bike paths to the Braves Stadium.
• Shuttles; build off Lyft, Uber, etc.
• Connect the Comet, the future expansion of the Silver Comet Trail.
Economic Development

- More local restaurants and small Bed and Breakfast style hotels for visitors to the Braves.
- Job growth potential due to fiber presence
- Proximity to Braves stadium. Smyrna should complement, rather than mimic, what is going on by the stadium. Offer more local restaurants, shops, and festivals that can appeal to visitors to SunTrust Park while not trying to compete with it.
- Proximity to WellStar Vinings Health Park.
- Leverage quality of life to attract jobs.
- Attract high tech jobs, building off of community's fiber optics, existing businesses, and skillsets of residents.
- The City could also be known for its restaurants. (Porchlight and South City Kitchen were specifically mentioned.)
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is the most underutilized tool in Smyrna’s tool belt. They can actually levy up to 5 mills. Owner-occupied residential is exempted, and everything else is fair game, including rentals.
- Land bank - DDA could own and hold the land. It doesn’t require a referendum, just requires the council to vote on it.

Other

- Expansion of sidewalk and bicycle network, particularly going to the Battery.
- Creation of City school system.
- Public art and culture (Smyrna Arts and Cultural Council).

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Interviewees were also asked about the biggest challenges facing the community, and for the sake of organization, these responses were again organized by major topic area, including land use, economic development, transportation, housing, and other. Traffic, the need for improved transit, and increasing concerns over housing affordability were high on this list of challenges. School quality was also a common theme, but as stated earlier, is outside the specific scope of this planning effort or the jurisdiction of the City. Only through close collaboration and coordination with the school board can any progress be made toward addressing school related concerns.

Land Use

- Would like to see hotel closer to downtown.
- Keep developing the way we’ve been developing so close to Atlanta. Be a vibrant live-work-play community.
- Properly regulate infill housing and its impact on services.
- Code enforcement.
- Need more parks and greenspace.
- Buffers between single family residential and commercial uses, particularly along South Cobb Drive.
- Leverage Cumberland Community Improvement District as an opportunity for quality growth.
- Design overlay districts need to be more consistent.
- The City’s code is outdated for what the City wants to see happen. The RAD zoning district is one example. Another example is limited flexibility for neighborhood level commercial.
- Need better permit and rezoning application forms.
Housing
• Housing affordability - how can we create and preserve affordable housing in the city?
• Keeping balance of housing for everyone.
• School quality impacts housing market.
• Impact of apartments.
• Infill housing is raising housing costs.
• Infill housing impact on community character and density.
• Nowhere for millennials and new college graduates to live.
• Apartments are not kept up to code. Code enforcement needs to be stronger, and State’s property rights law could be improved.

Transportation
• General traffic congestion, with increased concern surrounding following traffic issues:
  o Braves stadium area
  o Traffic and light sequencing on Spring Road.
  o Atlanta Road congestion.
  o Through traffic from West Cobb and Paulding County adding to congestion.
• Freight movement through the city.
• Need more city transportation staff to keep up with growth.
• Pedestrian bridge over US Highway 41.
• Access to public transportation.

Economic Development
• Right Mix of retail to support population.
• Need more commercial to support tax base.
• Windy Hill Road in bad shape. There are too many vacancies and 40 businesses are being displaced by new road construction.

Other
• Maintenance of parks has declined.
• Trees are being planted under powerlines; code should prevent this.
• Planning for community facilities based on future needs.
• Sewer availability in some parts of the city.
• Tree protection.
• Inadequate city staffing.
• Fire Department accommodating new types of development (ladder trucks for taller buildings) to maintain good ISO rating.
• Repairing aging infrastructure.
• Aging population and addressing their needs; need more senior centers.
• Stormwater management – there is a lack of underground detention.
• City’s nonprofits that help those in need are stretched to the max.
• Smyrna desperately needs a Boys and Girls Club. Helps to get youth off the street, but need a city leader to advocate for this.
HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS OR CITY INITIATIVES
Interviewees were asked what were the highest priority projects or city initiatives currently underway. Transportation projects were the most common response, along with initiatives to improve transit and community facilities. Several also mentioned the coordination efforts with the school board and the ongoing Strategic Vision Committee work.

- Windy Hill Road corridor expansion and improvements (under SPLOST).
- Sidewalk projects (under SPLOST).
- Spring Road gateway (under SPLOST).
- Signage needs at gateways.
- Need to physically connect Smyrna to Battery (signage and bridge).
- Fulfilling vacant staffing needs in the City, including Public Works.
- Maintaining appropriate safety equipment (such as fire truck ladders) and safety resources (such as police patrolling) to accommodate needs of new types of development and high intensity uses, such as the Braves stadium.
- Updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (slated for 2017).
- Passage of a parks bond to facilitate priority improvements and investments.
- Connect the Comet initiative. (Top initiative of Quality of Place Committee.)
- Identifying locations for future community facilities such as schools, parks, etc.
- Aquatics center.
- Performing arts facility.
- Museum in old railway one complex, in bad shape and needs to be reworked.
- Land use.
- Premium transit (with or without County).
- Affordable housing – do we need a policy? Provide affordable options in certain areas, what type? What’s the context and how do you make that work? Does our zoning allow for a range of affordability options?
- Schools
  - Impacted by old apartments. How do we diffuse the problem?
  - Council is forming a permanent standing committee on schools in 2017. Work with school district and enhance business role.
- South Cobb Drive Study – implementation funding.
- Schools – improving them and taking into account how development impacts them. What can we do in this area?
- Traffic – continue to implement plans and improve traffic signal synchronization.
- Trail connections – continue to build and provide better signage/maps.
- Add greenspace. (See Parks and Recreation Plan.)
- Strategic Vision Plan was a good start for more community involvement and direction in city matters, need to keep up the momentum.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
Interviewees were asked specifically to comment on the city’s current economic development needs. Everyone was supportive of the work currently underway and saw the need for more resources and support to be dedicated to economic development effort; however, most also realized that with limited resources the city needs to be very strategic and proactive in their approach.

- No major, huge employers here – the City needs balance.
  - Needs dense residential portion to attract companies.
- Better communications about anticipated licensing and permitting fees so that businesses can prepare well in advance.
- Parking should be planned out now, as it could become an issue area later for businesses.
- Help educate the public about and demystify what economic development is all about.
- Harness the increasing entrepreneurial spirit and opportunities to foster homegrown, local business.
- Help bright minds stay in Smyrna.
- Targeted approach to attracting industries; want to explore targeting high-tech industries, etc.
- Need to invest money in our Economic Development Department – only have limited resources now.
- Need a serious look at exactly what our economic development plan is. Currently, efforts are more reactive than proactive.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS
Most interviewees expressed an interest in incorporating and carrying forward the good work on the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan and the desire for a practical, implementable plan that is grounded in best practices. No one wanted a plan that simply met the minimum state requirements, but rather a plan that exceed them.

- The Comprehensive Plan can help educate community members on the benefit of concentrating development as well as the lifestyle preferences of millennials and how that impacts new development or redevelopment.
- Very useable and workable plan that the community is in agreement with and supportive of in terms of how the Smyrna community wants to move forward.
- Reflective of the needs of citizens, institutions, and users.
- A plan that results in a better planned and more inclusive community.
- Keeping up to speed with best practices.
- What are other communities doing and other concepts of development?
- Keep an open mind. What’s the goal? Provide flexibility to get there.
- Education. There is no understanding within the community of what we mean by low, medium, or high density. Need to pair this with a conversation about walkable and transit oriented developments.
- The current plan is good; continue that tradition.
- The Comprehensive Plan needs to focus more on Ward 5, where much of the area was built to house Lockheed Martin employees.
- A practical tool, not just a check off the box type of plan.
- The Vision is central to the document and the plan.
• Housing data needs to be updated. In the last comp plan, Table 15 on page 55 of the Assessment - Demand and Supply of Housing, there is a very important chart, which needs to be updated to help guide housing policy. Even looking at Cobb County’s comprehensive plan, there’s a complete lack of financial data.

• Fiscal planning tool. Even if not now, it needs to be agreed that there should be a follow-up task to develop a practical fiscal impact tool when making rezoning decisions. The fiscal policy is missing to actually determine what’s possible and needed to make smart fiscal decisions.

• Support for more open communication between the citizen groups, city staff, and council committees. Need to further along the goals of the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan.