



# MARIETTA UNIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT DISTRICT

LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDY

July 10, 2013

**JACOBS**





# Marietta University Enhancement District Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study



July 10, 2013

Prepared for:



Prepared by:





## Acknowledgements

This report is the culmination of an intensive eight-month study process led by consulting planners from Jacobs and Bleakly Advisory Group working in conjunction with the City of Marietta, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and local residents, business owners, civic organizations, institutions and other stakeholders. The Marietta University Enhancement District Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan is the result of the strong community commitment and leadership of the following individuals:

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Council Member Griffin L. Chalfant, Ward 2

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Council Member G. A. (Andy) Morris, Ward 4

Council Member Anthony C. Coleman, Ward 5

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report includes the comprehensive work, findings, and recommendations resulting from the Marietta University Enhancement District (MU<sup>2</sup>), Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) planning effort. The MU<sup>2</sup> LCI planning process reflects a multi-disciplinary planning study carried out by the City of Marietta, Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU), and Life University with funding from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

This executive summary highlights the key aspects of each of the chapters contained within this report including: (1) the introduction, (2) a baseline assessment of existing conditions, (3) a review of the public involvement efforts undertaken as part of this plan, (4) a description of the community's vision for the area, and finally (5) an implementation program to make that vision a reality.

### Introduction

The introduction reviews the purpose, scope, and methodology of the report, along with an overview of relevant studies that were drawn upon for information.

- The key purpose of this planning effort was to develop an implementable plan that will serve as a blueprint for addressing transportation, land use, economic development and community design issues for the community surrounding the two universities.
- The MU<sup>2</sup> study area extends just east of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and just north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 with the southwestern boundary abutting the City's southwestern limits. The study area includes the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) bus terminal and park and ride lot, as well as the campuses of both SPSU and Life University.
- The methodology for this study followed the guidelines established by ARC and the LCI guiding principles. It included an extensive public involvement effort, and several levels of coordination between local officials and the project team. **These public outreach efforts are documented in Chapter 3.**

### Baseline Assessment

The baseline assessment is a snapshot of the study area as it existed at the time of the development of this report. It organizes findings into five resource sections: socioeconomic and market conditions, land use, community character, transportation, and station area.

## Socioeconomic and Market Conditions

- The MU<sup>2</sup> study area itself has a small resident population of only 2,433 persons, but the Primary Market Area (2 mile radius from the intersection of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41) contains 30,329 residents.
- The study area itself has a lower average income, higher renter percentage, and more modest housing prices than that of the primary market area.
- The greater market area, as well as the daytime population on both campuses and surrounding places of employment, represents significant market potential.

## Land Use

- Existing land uses in the study area are predominately commercial or institutional.
- A majority of the study area's commercial retail uses serve auto-related uses.
- SPSU and Life University are the largest institutional uses in the study area; others include two Marietta City Schools and a church.
- As of late December 2013 there were only a few parcels of undeveloped property in the study area. These parcels are widely dispersed throughout the study area, and not located at high traffic areas. The one notable exception to this being, the undeveloped parcel at the corner of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Fairground Street.
- The aging retail uses along the major transportation routes in the study area offer several excellent opportunities for redevelopment. Both universities have plans to eventually extend their boundaries to Cobb Parkway/US 41 taking advantage of these opportunities.
- In order to accommodate a live – work – play environment, some modifications to the area's zoning provisions will need to be made. Currently, only the area along Fairground Street allows mixed-use development, and most of the highly visible areas, such as those along Cobb Parkway/US 41, are zoned Community Retail Commercial (CRC) which does not permit a sustainable mix of uses that promote a "live-work-play" environment.

## Community Character

The existing community character of the MU<sup>2</sup> Study Area has many urban design elements that need to be addressed in order to create a better sense of place.

- The basic ingredients needed to create a successful LCI community exist, including two vibrant university campuses, good transit access, and a favorable adjacent market area.
- To better integrate these assets, the study area needs gateways and better visibility for the universities, improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities, particularly at road crossing, and a better mix of retail to serve the needs of the local community and students.

## Transportation and Station Area

Transportation facilities within the MU2 study area carry a large amount of traffic. The study area can truly be considered a major crossroads for the greater Marietta community.

- The study area is probably one of the most well served areas in Cobb County for **transit service** due to the presence of the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) Marietta Transfer Center. The routes that serve the area provide connections to several activity centers within Cobb – such as Cumberland, Town Center and Marietta Town Square – as well as two different MARTA stations – Arts Center and Hamilton E. Holmes.
- The Connect Cobb study includes long range plans for a **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** station on Cobb Parkway. Because the project is still in the environmental phase, a specific concept for the BRT has not yet been developed. The Environmental Assessment for the BRT will be complete in early or mid-2014, after this LCI study has concluded.
- The **roadway network** within the study area is framed by four major arterial roadways that are highly congested: Cobb Parkway/US 41, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, Fairground Street, and South Cobb Drive. The secondary road network is fragmented and is essentially divided by the two university campuses.
- The **bicycle and pedestrian network** is very similar to the roadway network in that there are no connections between the two universities. In addition, there are no sidewalks along Cobb Parkway/US41 and South Cobb Drive, making pedestrian access difficult.

Based on the current and projected conditions in the study area in conjunction with stakeholders and public input, the following needs with respect to transportation were identified during the Assessment phase of the study process:

- Lack of Connectivity to Cobb Parkway/US 41
- Lack of Connectivity between the two universities
- Lack of pedestrian crossings over, and sidewalks along, Cobb Parkway/US 41
- Better connectivity to downtown Marietta for students – for both work and play.

## Public Involvement Overview

The study's approach to public engagement focused on two key priorities: 1) a strong communications program and 2) accessible and meaningful opportunities for all community members to provide input. Below are the chief primary methods by which the public participated.

1. **Core Stakeholder Team** – This group served in an advisory capacity to the study. Members represented the diverse interests of the study area and met four times to discuss plan elements and provide valuable input.
2. **Public Meetings** – Four public meetings were held to gather input from the general community. Each meeting was tailored to further the study process through presentation and feedback.

3. **Community Survey** – A public survey was carried out online to gather additional input on the area’s mobility, design, and market needs.
4. **Website** – An interactive study website was available throughout the study process, providing information on meetings, draft study documents, and facilitating a forum of public comments.

**In general, the public has been very supportive of the planning effort, and expressed a desire to see the area transform into a more live-work-play community.**

## Vision and Conceptual Master Plan

From the beginning of the planning process, a vision of a vibrant live-work-play community where the two universities are more tightly knit into the fabric of the surrounding community has been clear. This vision was reinforced from the cooperative efforts of the project management team, the core stakeholder team, and the many citizens that participated. The Concept Plan presented in this report reflects this vision by establishing four major nodes or phases of redevelopment:

1. **University Center** – A university oriented mixed-use area on the west side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 that would give students a place to gather close to the campuses.
2. **University Square** – An extension of the University Center concept on the east side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 that would incorporate student oriented housing as part of the mix of uses.
3. **Northwest Corner of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41** – An area that would serve as a major gateway to the district as well as provide supportive community oriented commercial uses.
4. **University Research & Development Park/Technology Center** – A concept of leveraging and branding of the two existing business parks in the study area with a greater focus toward the two universities to build a working synergy.

## Implementation Program

### Land Use Recommendations

To transform Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR120 within the MU<sup>2</sup> district from auto-oriented strip commercial environments to the active, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use environment envisioned for Marietta’s “university district” a number of changes to the City’s development policies for the study area including the corridors are needed:

- Amend the City’s Comprehensive Plan character area designations to include a University Activity Center for the study area that would incorporate the vision for the area included in the Concept Plan.
- Create a zoning overlay district for the MU<sup>2</sup> district that:

- Increases the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) allowances to accommodate for mixed-use projects as necessary.
- Permits student-oriented housing along Cobb Parkway/US 41.
- Discourages auto-oriented land uses such as drive-thrus, and non-active uses such as self-storage facilities.
- Provides landscape strips to buffer pedestrians from vehicular circulation and parking areas.
- Requires exterior building elevation review by the City for all new construction or renovation.
- Promotes the consolidation of parcels to allow for master planned redevelopment at a more cohesive scale.
- Incorporates a set of design guidelines addressing streetscape, site and building design elements.

## Transportation Recommendations

The MU<sup>2</sup> study calls for a number of new transportation projects that are reflected on the Transportation and Connectivity Project Map, including the construction of numerous trails and sidewalks, as well as several road projects. A detailed work program is provided in **Chapter 5**.

- The new trails will all link to the Rottenwood Creek Trail system, which eventually will link trails to Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and to the Chattahoochee River.
- The new road projects include improvements to Wylie Road, Polytechnic Road, and the construction of two new roads connecting Cobb Parkway/US 41 with Franklin Road, University North Parkway and University South Parkway. These roadways will all be designed as “complete streets”, which are specifically designed to accommodate multiple modes of transportation safely including cars, transit, pedestrians, and cyclists.

## Recommended Key Steps to Implementation

Highlighted below is a summary of the key steps that will be required for implementation, which are each explained in greater detail in **Chapter 5**.

1. City Council takes action on the LCI Plan.
2. Create MU<sup>2</sup> Consortium to implement the plan.
3. SPSU and Life University focus on the “Campus Quadrant,” west of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and along South Marietta Parkway/SR120.
4. Universities create parallel master plans for future residential housing requirements.
5. City helps facilitate “University Square,” mixed use development east of Cobb Parkway/US 41.
6. Create partnership/linkage/branding with two adjacent business parks to foster technology transfer, shared facilities, applied research activities between the universities and the business community.

7. Develop funding plan to complete trail system connecting the campuses to broader trail network in Marietta and Cobb County.
8. Further coordination between the City, the universities and CCT to identify and develop enhanced transit services to serve the area.
9. Identify how LCI funding can be used to jump start several key initiatives in the LCI Study Area.
10. Establish a Community Improvement District (CID) that could overlap the MU<sup>2</sup> and Franklin/Delk Road LCI study area boundaries



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Purpose .....	2
1.2. Scope .....	7
1.3. Methodology.....	8
1.4. Related Studies and Initiatives.....	9
<b>2. Baseline Assessment.....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Overview .....	11
2.2. Socioeconomic and Market Conditions .....	13
2.2.1. Demographic Characteristics .....	14
2.2.2. Real Estate Market Trends.....	22
2.2.3. Forecasts and Future Real Estate Demands .....	27
2.3. Land Use.....	32
2.3.1. Existing Land Use .....	32
2.3.2. Zoning.....	40
2.3.3. Comprehensive Plan .....	47
2.3.4. Future Land Use .....	52
2.3.5 Related Livable Centers Initiative Studies.....	56
2.4. Community Character .....	59
2.5. Transportation .....	65
2.5.1. Roadway Network Characteristics.....	65
2.5.2. Existing Cobb Community Transit Service .....	67
2.5.3. Local Circulator Service .....	71
2.5.4. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities .....	72
2.5.5. Safety Analysis .....	76
2.5.6. Network Connectivity .....	77
2.5.7. Planned and Programmed Improvements .....	78
2.6. Long Range BRT Station Area Issues .....	85

<b>3. Public Involvement Overview .....</b>	<b>87</b>
3.1 Highlights .....	87
3.2 Project Communication .....	89
3.3 Core Stakeholder Team.....	91
3.4 Public Meetings.....	94
3.5 Community Survey.....	98
<b>4. Vision and Conceptual Master Plan .....</b>	<b>99</b>
4.1 The Vision.....	99
4.2 Concept Plan .....	100
4.3 Connectivity Plan .....	110
4.4 Likely Market Response .....	114
4.5 Anticipated Growth.....	115
<b>5. Implementation Program.....</b>	<b>119</b>
5.1 Overview .....	119
5.2 Implementation Strategies .....	120
5.3 Key Implementation Tasks.....	132
5.4 Action Plan .....	139

## Appendices

Appendix A: LCI Objectives Summary.....	A-1
Appendix B: Public Involvement Meeting Summaries .....	B-1

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: Population, 2000-2037.....	15
Table 2.2: Median Age, 2000-2017 .....	15
Table 2.3: Ethnicity, 2010-2017 .....	16
Table 2.4: Median Household Income, 2010-2017.....	17
Table 2.5: Housing Units, 2000-2037 .....	17
Table 2.6: Housing Units, 2012 Occupancy Status .....	19
Table 2.7: Median Home Value, 2000-2022 .....	20
Table 2.8: Industry Composition by Number of Jobs, 2012.....	21
Table 2.9: Summary Profile, 2012.....	21
Table 2.10: Study Area Commercial Land Uses .....	26
Table 2.11: Summary of Future Real Estate Demand, 2013-2020 .....	28
Table 2.12: Summary of Future Retail Demand, 2013-2020 .....	30
Table 2.13: Existing Land Uses in the MU <sup>2</sup> by Acreage.....	32

Table 2.14: Zoning in the MU <sup>2</sup> by Acreage .....	40
Table 2.15: Future Land Use in the MU <sup>2</sup> by Acreage.....	52
Table 2.16: Key Roadway Network Characteristics .....	66
Table 2.17: Existing Transit Characteristics .....	68
Table 2.18: CCT Ridership Trends .....	68
Table 2.19: Study Area Crash Statistics.....	76
Table 2.20: Crash Rates along Major Roadways (2009-2011) .....	77
Table 2.21: Comprehensive Plan Recommended Short Term Improvements .....	81
Table 2.22: Franklin/Delk Road LCI Study Update, 5-year Implementation Plan, 2011-2016 .....	81
Table 4.1: Market Response Projection based on the Concept Plan.....	114
Table 4.2: Population Forecast 2013-2038 .....	116
Table 4.3: Household Forecast 2013-2038 .....	117
Table 4.4: Employment Forecast 2013-2038 .....	117
Table 5.1: Transportation, Short Term Work Program .....	139
Table 5.2: Transportation Planning Efforts .....	143
Table 5.3: Housing Projects/Initiatives .....	144
Table 5.4: Other Local Initiatives .....	144

## List of Figures

Figure 1-1. MU <sup>2</sup> LCI Study Area.....	3
Figure 2.1. Map of the Market Areas.....	13
Figure 2.2. Zip Codes within the MU <sup>2</sup> Study Area.....	22
Figure 2.2. New Home Sales, 2005-2012 .....	23
Figure 2.3. New Home Sales by Type, 2012.....	24
Figure 2.4. Existing Home Sales, 2005-2012 .....	24
Figure 2.5. Existing Home Sales by Type, 2012.....	25
Figure 2.6. Comparable Current Apartment Locations and Two-mile Study Area Radius .....	26
Figure 2.7. Existing Land Use Map .....	35
Figure 2.8. Zoning Map .....	41
Figure 2.9. Excerpt from City's Character Area Map .....	49
Figure 2.10. Future Land Use Map.....	53
Figure 2.11. MU <sup>2</sup> Character Area Map.....	63
Figure 2.12. Study Area Transit Network.....	69
Figure 2.13. Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Network .....	73
Figure 2.14. Crash Locations .....	79
Figure 2.15. Excerpt from Marietta Multi-use Trail Map.....	83
Figure 2.16. Illustration of Potential BRT Station Concept .....	86

Figure 3.1. MU <sup>2</sup> LCI Study Logo.....	89
Figure 4.1. Concept Plan .....	101
Figure 4.2. Redevelopment Node Location Map.....	105
Figure 4.3. Connectivity Plan .....	111
Figure 4.4. Proposed Street Cross-section for South Marietta Parkway / SR 120.....	113
Figure 4.5. Proposed Street Cross-section for Cobb Parkway / US 41 .....	113
Figure 4.6. Proposed Street Cross-section for University Parkways, North and South.....	114
Figure 4.7. Census Tracts within the MU <sup>2</sup> .....	115
Figure 5.1. Transportation and Connectivity Project Map .....	127

# 1. Introduction

Located in the southeast corner of the City of Marietta and centered around the growing campuses of Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) and Life University, the Marietta University Enhancement District contains many of the important ingredients needed to create a dynamic live-work-play community. Yet, today this goal is hampered by a number of conditions that stifle future investment and redevelopment. These conditions include a common suburban land use pattern that does not reflect the unique character of the community, poor transportation connectivity that impedes non-motorized mobility, and an aging housing and commercial real estate stock that is tailored more for meeting the needs of pass-by traffic than those of the students, residents and workers of the district. This Marietta University Enhancement District Livable Centers Initiative Study, referred to as the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI, establishes a plan to address these conditions and to provide a dynamic vision for the community in keeping with the goals of the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) LCI program.

The LCI program has a proven track record of helping numerous communities around the metropolitan Atlanta area in similar situations and can help the area qualify for needed funding for public investment. If followed



## Chapter 1 Outline

- 1.1 Purpose
- 1.2 Scope
- 1.3 Methodology
- 1.4 Related Studies

*This introductory chapter describes the goals of the LCI program and provides a general overview of what makes this LCI unique and why it is important.*



*Cobb Parkway/US 41*



and properly updated, this MU<sup>2</sup> LCI study will play an important role in successfully shaping the future of the Marietta community.

## 1.1 Purpose

This LCI plan for the Marietta University Enhancement District is a multi-disciplinary planning study carried out by the City of Marietta, SPSU, and Life University with funding from the ARC. Its purpose is to develop an implementable plan that will serve as a blueprint for addressing transportation, land use, economic development, and community design issues for the community surrounding the two universities. This report also documents the public involvement efforts undertaken as part of this study and the input and feedback received from the public in return.

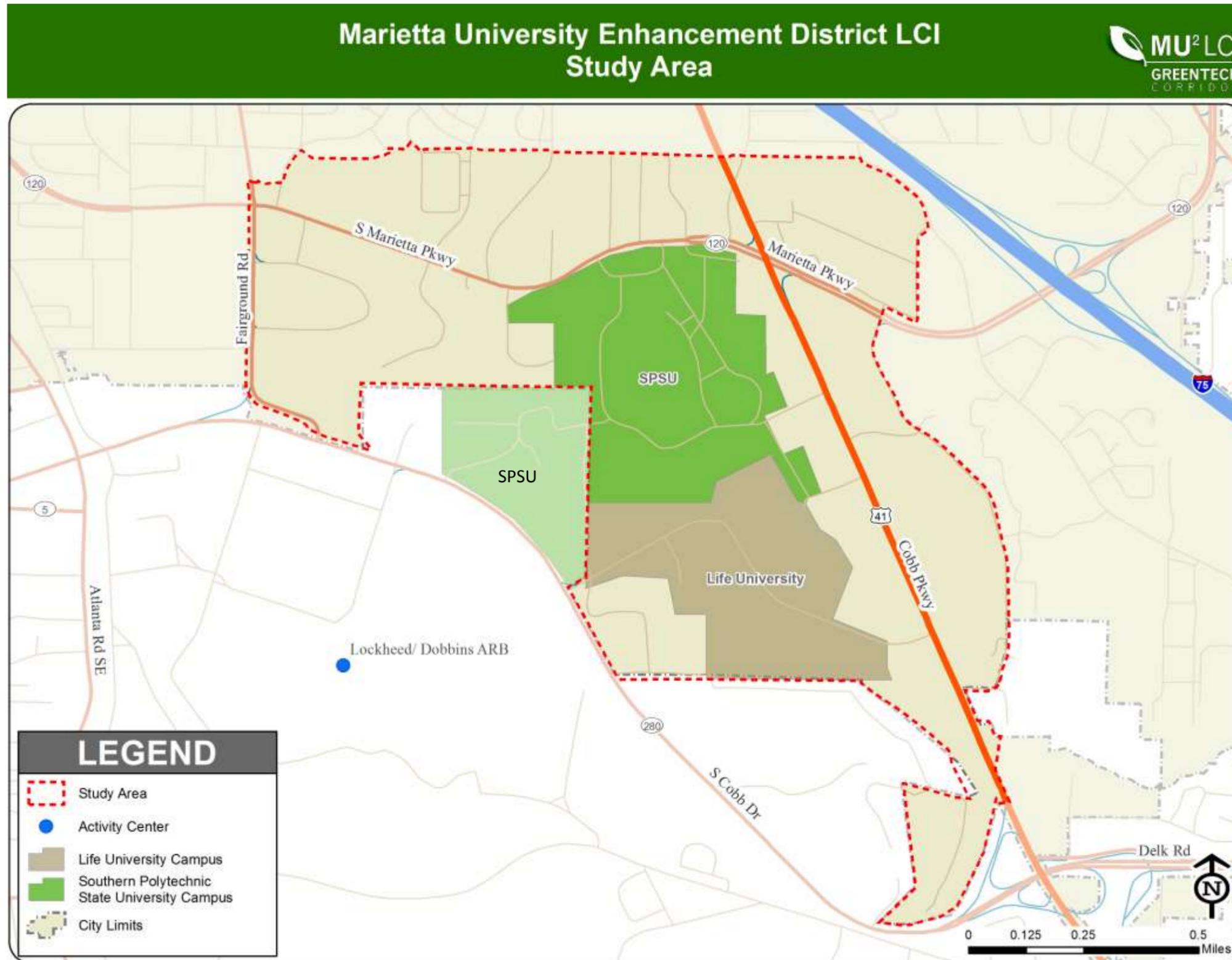
## Study Area

The MU<sup>2</sup> study area extends just east of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and just north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, with the southwestern boundary abutting the City's southwestern limits. The study area includes the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) bus terminal and park and ride lot and parcels fronting South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 to the north and parcels fronting Cobb Parkway/US 41 to the east. **Figure 1-1: MU<sup>2</sup> LCI Study Area** shows the boundaries of the study area.



Cobb Parkway/US 41, above, along with South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 is the main transportation route in the study area.

Figure I-1: MU<sup>2</sup> LCI Study Area



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## LCI Guiding Principals

The following ten primary goals guide the development of any study undertaken as part of the ARC LCI program, which funded this study.



1. Encourage diverse medium to high-density, mixed income neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the transit stations, corridor, activity and town center level.
2. Provide access to a range of travel nodes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation within the study area.
3. Encourage integration of uses and land use policy/regulation with transportation investments to maximize the use of alternative modes.
4. Through transportation investments, increase the desirability of redevelopment of land served by existing infrastructure at transit stations, corridors, activity and town centers by detailing proven incentive strategies that are currently in use.
5. Preserve the historic characteristics of transit stations, corridors, activity and town centers and create a community identity.
6. Develop a community-based transportation investment program at the transit station, corridor, activity and town center level that will identify capital projects, which can be funded in the annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).
7. Provide transportation infrastructure incentives for jurisdictions to take local action to implement the resulting transit station, corridor, activity or town center study goals.
8. Provide for the implementation of Regional Development Plan (RDP) policies, quality growth initiatives and best development practices in the study area and at the regional level.
9. Develop a local comprehensive planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly low income, minority and traditionally underserved populations, through face-to-face meetings.
10. Secure planning funds for development of transit station, corridor, activity and town centers that showcase the integration of land use policies/regulations and transportation investments with urban design tools.

A review of how this study addresses each of these goals can be found in Appendix A. In addition, the study's stakeholders and sponsors, particularly ARC, are interested in promoting the principles of two regional programs as part of this effort: Lifelong Communities and Green Communities. These two programs are described on the following pages.



## Lifelong Communities

Directed by the ARC, the Lifelong Communities Initiative is a place-based approach to creating communities that accommodate the needs of people throughout all stages of life, particularly older adults. The Lifelong Communities Initiative has three main goals: promoting housing and transportation options, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and expanding access to services.



The design of a Lifelong Community may include:

- Location of senior centers/communities on transit routes
- Development of walkable communities
- Improved sidewalk infrastructure to meet older adults needs – curb cuts, wide sidewalks (to accommodate mobility aids) with traffic buffers and shade, countdown crosswalk signals
- Increased neighborhood access to fresh fruit and vegetables
- Creation of accessible recreation options – parks, city facilities
- Expansion of volunteer opportunities for older adults
- Enhancement of healthcare facilities to meet the needs of older adults – parking, lighting, waiting areas, drop off areas, etc.

In support of the initiative, ARC requires that LCI studies seek to incorporate these standards into the overall design of the study area and support their development through appropriate zoning and land use policies.

## Green Communities

The principles of Green Communities revolve around the concept of making our communities more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Green Community strategies include:

- Encouragement of the construction of “green buildings”, or buildings that meet LEED, EarthCraft, and/or Energy Star incentives
- Incorporation of energy efficient design and enforcement of Georgia energy codes and standards that take advantage of natural lighting and shade

- Use of “green” power by removing regulatory barriers that discourage/prohibit onsite renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels
- Support of water use reduction and efficiency through compliance with metro water district plans, incentives for Water Sense certified homes
- Inclusion of native trees and natural green space in site design, which can be encourage with shade coverage standards, and the provision of spaces for community gardens/farmers markets
- Incorporation of design standards that encourage alternative modes of transportation such as “Complete Street” standards and safe routes to school programs
- Adaptive land use strategies that encourage revitalization and the reuse of buildings/sites, incentivize infill, mixed use, traditional neighborhood development (TND) and transit oriented development (TOD)



Rain gardens can minimize stormwater issues and help reduce the heat island in retail areas

## 1.2 Scope

In following the guidelines and requirements for an LCI, this report presents its findings and recommendations in five chapters:

**Chapter 1 – Introduction-** Provides basic information about the study process, desired outcomes, and guiding values.

**Chapter 2 – Baseline Assessment-** Includes a summary of the existing conditions and previous or on-going plans for the study area. This assessment includes an analysis of socioeconomic, real estate market, land use, urban design, and transportation conditions. The transportation assessment is further broken down into overall multi-modal transportation facilities and a separate analysis of transition conditions or station area conditions.

**Chapter 3 - Public Involvement Overview-** Summarizes the key elements of the public outreach process, including the Core Stakeholder Team, public meetings, and other communications; this section is supported by information found in **Appendix B**.

**Chapter 4 – Vision and Conceptual Master Plan-** Provides a conceptual development plan for the study area, and includes a comprehensive overview of vision for the area from land use, transportation, urban design, and market perspectives.

**Chapter 5 - Implementation Program** –Identifies general, economic development, and funding strategies for achieving the vision for the study area which culminates with a short and long term action plan with specific projects listed for regional funding.

### 1.3 Methodology

This LCI study is the product of an active public involvement process and a multi-disciplinary analysis of the community. As part of this planning effort, a Core Stakeholder Team comprised of community leaders was established that met throughout the study process. Four public meetings were also held in the study area to engage and work with the community at large, and an active website was maintained to help inform the public and post draft materials.

In preparing this study, the project team called upon knowledge and experience of professionals in the areas of land use planning, real estate market analysis, transportation planning, and urban design. This report identifies the basic findings of this team, describes the feedback and input of the general public, and provides recommendations on how to make the community vision a reality.



Life University and Southern Polytechnic State University will be key drivers of change in the future of the area. Staff, students, and faculty from both institutes were engaged in the planning process and its recommendations.

## 1.4 Related Studies and Initiatives

Several studies and initiatives that have or will continue to influence the MU<sup>2</sup> study area had recently been completed or were ongoing at the time that this study was initiated. The MU<sup>2</sup> study process and resulting plan builds upon, adds to, and/or provides more direction to these preceding and ongoing studies and initiatives. Below is a list and short description of the principal studies and initiatives that were reviewed and considered in this study process. More detail on these efforts is included, as appropriate, in the chapters that follow.

### City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan

As the policy document providing overall direction of the City of Marietta, the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on land use, community character, transportation improvements, and economic investment decisions. Applicable recommendations of this study should be adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Franklin/Delk Road LCI Study & Envision Marietta LCI Study

Both of these Livable Centers Initiatives have some overlap with the MU<sup>2</sup> Study area. Their recommendations have been considered as a part of this planning process.

### Master Plans for Life University and SPSU

The long-term strategic development plans of both universities played a fundamental roll in the development of this study. The student body growth projections played a particularly important role in the market analysis and demand projections for new housing and mixed-use development opportunities.

### Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2008)

The County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan identifies the overall long-term transportation needs for the county, some of which fall within the study area. A five-year update of the County's plan was just beginning as this study process was ending and is slated for completion in Spring 2014. Recommendations from the MU<sup>2</sup> study process should roll up into the County's update.

### Connect Cobb Northwest Transit Corridor LPA and EA

The Connect Cobb Environmental Assessment (EA) considers the likely impacts of installing the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for transit, Bus Rapid Transit, in the northwest corridor (Cobb Parkway/US 41 and I-75) part of which would impact Cobb Parkway/US 41 within the MU<sup>2</sup> study area. The EA will be completed in spring 2014, and subsequent actions of this effort will influence the opportunities in the study area.

## **Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan**

Adopted in 2010 and updated in 2011, the Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan by the Cobb Department of Transportation (DOT) to enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout Cobb County.

### **PLAN 2040**

PLAN 2040 is the regional long range transportation plan for the Atlanta area, containing both planned and programmed improvements for the region. The plan addresses improvements to Cobb Parkway/US 41.

## 2. Baseline Assessment

In order to move forward with any plan, a clear understanding of existing conditions must be developed. Communities are the same way. The intent of this chapter is to establish the existing conditions at the time this study was undertaken. These conditions include demographics, real estate market conditions, transportation systems, existing land use and zoning, and community character. The preliminary findings of this chapter were presented to the public at community meetings, the feedback from which has been incorporated here.

### 2.1 Overview

This Baseline Assessment presents a portrait of the Marietta University Enhancement District (also referred to herein as MU<sup>2</sup> or the “study area”) from four perspectives:

1. Socioeconomic and market conditions
2. Land Use
3. Community Character
4. Transportation



The current character communicated on US 41 is inconsistent with the unique character exuded by Life University and SPSU.



### Chapter 2 Outline

- 2.1 Overview
- 2.2 Socioeconomic and Market Conditions
- 2.3 Land Use
- 2.4 Community Character
- 2.5 Transportation
- 2.6 Long Range BRT Station Area Issues

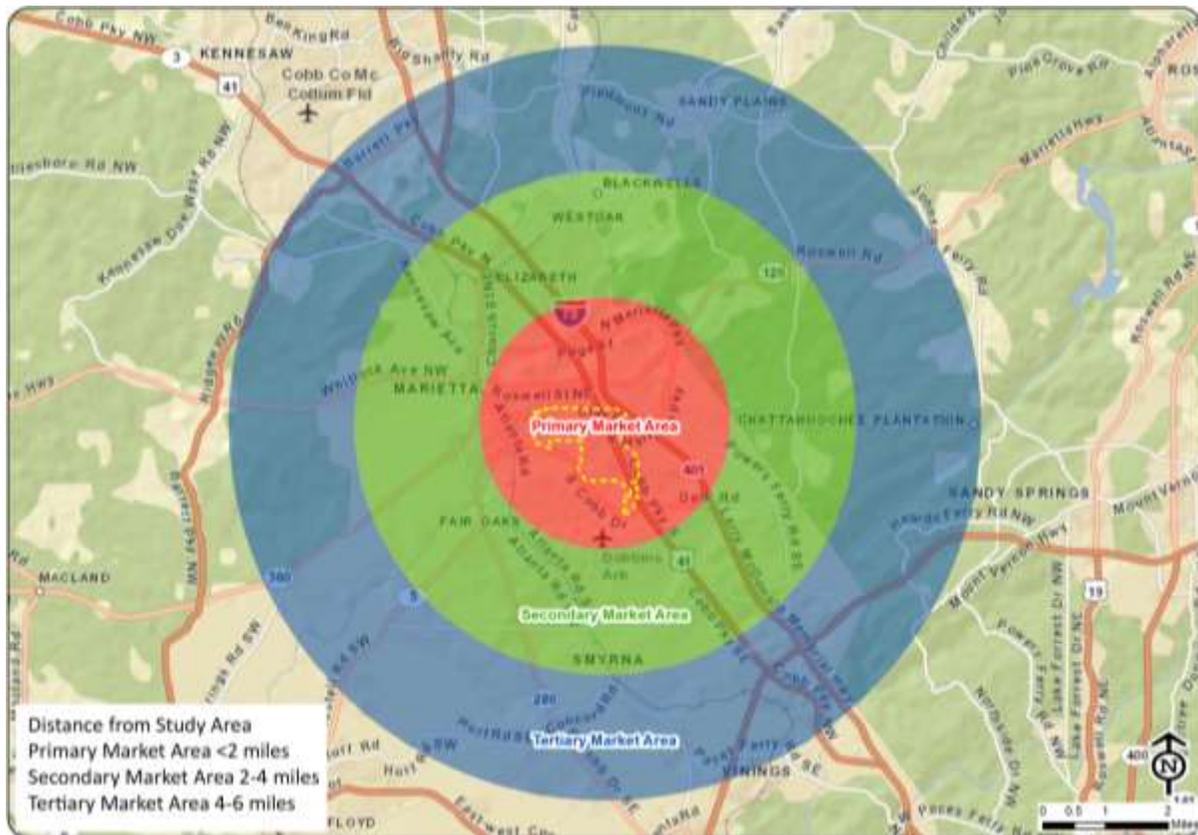
*The MU<sup>2</sup> LCI Study Area has great potential for attracting future investment. The basic ingredients for a vibrant livable center are already present with the activities surrounding the universities and good transit access. The current design of the built environment needs improvement to open up greater visibility of the universities, and to provide more incentives for local residents, students and workers to spend more time in the area. Improved bike trails and sidewalks can also play an important role in this transformation.*

The team that prepared this assessment is comprised of professionals from Jacobs and Bleakly Advisory Group, with support from the staff from the City of Marietta, Cobb County, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and Cobb Community Transit (CCT). As later described in Chapter 3, this information was used to inform the recommendations of the study and was presented to and reviewed by the public.

The demographic data presented in the section of the report are based on several geographically defined market areas.

For the purposes of this analysis the following geographic areas were analyzed and included for comparative purposes:

- **MU<sup>2</sup>** is the Marietta University Enhancement District, which is the defined MU<sup>2</sup>LCI study area.
- **City** refers to the boundaries of the City of Marietta.
- **Market Area** is the area from which the MU<sup>2</sup> will draw its main market demand. It is divided into three levels or rings for the demographic analysis:
  - The Primary Market Area—within two miles of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area
    - The “center” for market-area purposes is at the intersection of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.
  - The Secondary Market Area—the first ring beyond the Primary Market Area and extends from two to four miles from the study area.
  - The Tertiary Market Area—a second ring around the Primary Market Area and extends from four to six miles from the MU<sup>2</sup> study area.
- **Cobb County**—is the county within which Marietta and the study area are located. Marietta serves as the county seat.
- **Metro**—refers to the 28 counties that comprise the Atlanta-Sandy Springs Marietta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

**Figure 2.1: Map of the Market Areas**

## 2.2 Socioeconomic and Market Conditions

This section of the market analysis presents an overview of the demographic, housing and employment characteristics of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area and surrounding market area. The purpose of this section is to provide context to understanding the potential demand for specific types of development that can be supported.

## 2.2.1. Demographic Characteristics

### Population Characteristics

Presented below are several key characteristics of the population in the MU<sup>2</sup> market area. The population figures and projections below are based on U.S. Census and ESRI data sets. The demographic counts include students living on the campuses at Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) and Life University in school-owned facilities, during the school year. Based on information from the schools, this includes approximately 2,000 persons: 1,600 students living on the campus of SPSU and 400 on the campus of Life University. All together, the resident student population comprises over half of the entire population of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area. However, because these residents are considered as living in "group quarters," and are transient residents, their on-campus living units (dormitories, fraternity houses, etc.) are not counted in the area's housing characteristics.

The projections below do not take into account catalytic growth that could occur with the implementation of the LCI plan. Projections that incorporate potential catalytic growth are presented in **Chapter 4** of this report.

#### *Population*

The MU<sup>2</sup> is primarily a commercial area with a very modest population base (**Table 2.1, Population, 2000-2037**). In 2012 there were 2,433 residents in the area, including those students living on-campus at SPSU and Life University.

- Despite the growth in on-campus living at the two universities, the overall study area population has declined modestly since 2000.
- The population of the MU<sup>2</sup> is projected to grow modestly during the next five year period, adding 56 new residents. This projection is based on longer-term trends and not on specific plans for on-campus housing expansions.
- The Primary Market Area, or a two-mile radius around the study area, has a population of 30,329 and is expected to add 1,833 new residents and grow by 1.1% compound annual growth rate (AGR) over the next five years.
- The Primary Market Area is projected to grow at a pace consistent with the City of Marietta overall and at a somewhat faster rate of growth than Cobb County over the next five years.

**Table 2.1: Population, 2000 – 2037**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro
2000	2,586	58,748	33,165	104,240	123,584	260,983	607,751	4,247,981
2010	2,459	56,579	30,802	105,377	136,912	273,088	688,078	5,475,213
2012	2,433	58,238	30,329	105,604	139,577	275,509	695,507	5,365,250
2017	2,489	61,654	32,162	109,266	144,203	285,631	720,150	5,650,874
2022	2,546	65,282	34,105	113,032	148,951	296,088	745,711	5,950,895
2037	2,723	77,496	40,666	125,126	164,153	331,204	827,966	6,949,961
2000-12 AGR	-0.51%	0.05%	-0.74%	0.11%	1.02%	0.45%	1.13%	1.96%
2012-17 AGR	0.45%	1.15%	1.18%	0.68%	0.65%	0.75%	0.70%	1.04%
2012-17 Growth	56	3,416	1,833	3,662	4,626	10,122	24,643	285,624
2017-22 Growth	57	3,628	1,943	3,766	4,748	10,457	25,561	300,021
2012-22 Growth	113	7,044	3,776	7,428	9,374	20,579	50,204	585,645
2012-37 Growth	290	19,258	10,337	19,552	24,576	55,695	132,459	1,584,711

Source: 2000-2010 U.S. Census, 2012 – 2037 Compiled by Huntley Partners, based on data from ESRI

### *Median Age*

The median age in the MU<sup>2</sup> is 23.2 years; students housed on-campus at SPSU and Life University, are significantly younger than that in the city as a whole, or in the broader market area which is not uncommon for areas near college campuses (**Table 2.2: Median Age, 2000-2017**).

**Table 2.2: Median Age, 2000-2017**

Year	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	Market Area	Cobb	Metro
2000	24.2	30.0	32.4	33.2	33.0
2010	23.4	32.6	33.8	35.4	34.9
<b>2012</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>35.0</b>
2017	23.3	33.1	34.4	35.7	35.3

Source: Based on data from the U.S. Census and ESRI

### *Race and Ethnicity*

Racially and ethnically, the MU<sup>2</sup> study area is highly diverse, largely in part to the diversity of the on-campus populations (**Table 2.3: Ethnicity, 2010-2017**).

- The White population represents 49% of the residents in the MU<sup>2</sup>, which is a higher percentage than citywide at 31.5%.
- African Americans represent 24% of the population, versus 53% in the city.

- Hispanics account for 32% of residents, versus 21% in the city.
- The MU<sup>2</sup> study area and the Primary Market Area are both racially and ethnically diverse, but have a higher percentage of Whites and Hispanic's than citywide.

**Table 2.3: Ethnicity, 2010-2017**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro
2010								
Black Alone	24.4%	52.7%	32.8%	27.0%	21.1%	24.6%	25.0%	32.4%
White Alone	49.2%	31.5%	47.8%	55.3%	63.7%	58.8%	62.2%	55.4%
Asian	5.3%	3.0%	2.8%	4.6%	7.1%	5.7%	4.5%	4.8%
Hispanic Origin	32.3%	20.6%	27.2%	20.7%	11.6%	16.8%	12.3%	10.4%
2012								
Black Alone	24.7%	53.1%	33.4%	27.4%	21.4%	25.0%	25.4%	32.5%
White Alone	48.2%	30.8%	46.9%	54.5%	63.0%	57.9%	61.4%	55.1%
Asian	5.4%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	5.1%	8.0%	4.6%	4.9%
Hispanic Origin	33.3%	21.2%	27.8%	21.1%	12.0%	17.2%	12.7%	10.7%
2017								
Black Alone	25.5%	50.7%	34.7%	28.5%	22.5%	26.1%	26.7%	33.3%
White Alone	45.5%	32.1%	44.3%	52.1%	60.4%	55.4%	58.8%	53.1%
Asian	5.6%	3.1%	2.9%	5.1%	8.0%	6.3%	5.0%	5.2%
Hispanic Origin	36.3%	22.9%	29.9%	22.7%	13.3%	18.8%	14.1%	12.0%

Source: Compiled by Huntley Partners, based on data from ESRI

### *Median Household Income*

Median household incomes in the MU<sup>2</sup> area are modest but have been increasing at a higher rate than in the city and Primary Market Area (**Table 2.4: Median Household Income, 2010-2017**).

- The median household income in the MU<sup>2</sup> area is \$27,746 which is only 65% of median household income in the City of Marietta and 52% of the Primary Market Area.
- The median income in the MU<sup>2</sup> grew at a compound average growth rate of 1.7% from 2000 to 2012, exceeding the growth rate in the city and Primary Market Area
- The median income of the MU<sup>2</sup> is less than half of Cobb County's median income of \$60,606.
- The median income of the Primary Market Area of \$47,305 is substantially higher than the MU<sup>2</sup> study area and would be more appealing to retailers and other businesses looking to locate in proximity to the MU<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 2.4: Median Household Income, 2010-2017**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro	MU <sup>2</sup> as % of: City Mkt Area	
2000	\$22,670	\$40,733	\$37,109	\$45,509	\$59,356	\$50,807	\$58,387	\$51,657	56%	45%
2010	\$26,900	\$45,233	\$36,640	\$47,006	\$73,328	\$52,697	\$65,522	\$52,639	59%	51%
2012	\$27,746	\$43,005	\$36,640	\$47,305	\$76,122	\$53,075	\$60,606	\$54,603	65%	52%
2017	\$30,652	\$52,447	\$20,399	\$32,516	\$47,380	\$63,396	\$73,934	\$65,758	58%	48%
2022	\$33,859	\$63,963	\$23,637	\$38,974	\$58,146	\$75,732	\$90,212	\$79,200	53%	45%
2000-12 AGR	1.70%	0.45%	0.11%	0.32%	2.09%	0.36%	0.31%	0.46%	375%	466%
2012-17 AGR	2.01%	4.05%	2.99%	3.69%	4.18%	3.62%	4.06%	3.79%	50%	56%
2012-17 Growth	\$2,906	\$9,442	\$(16,241)	\$(14,789)	\$(28,742)	\$10,321	\$13,328	\$11,155		
2017-22 Growth	\$3,207	\$11,516	\$3,238	\$6,459	\$10,766	\$12,336	\$16,278	\$13,442		
2012-22 Growth	\$6,113	\$20,958	\$(13,003)	\$(8,331)	\$(17,976)	\$22,657	\$29,606	\$24,597		

Source: 2000-2010 information is from or based on U.S. Census data. 2012-2022 is based on data from ESRI

## Housing Characteristics

There are relatively few housing units in the MU<sup>2</sup> area and the total number of units has declined significantly in the last decade. These figures do not include the on-campus housing at SPSU and Life University (**Table 2.5: Housing Units, 2000-2037**).

- There are 673 housing units in the MU<sup>2</sup> area in 2012, which is a significantly less than the 822 units in 2000. This loss is from the residential areas, as the university resident population has grown during that period.
- Projections based on trends indicate only modest gains in total units by 2017 to 678.
- The MU<sup>2</sup> area's housing stock is only a small percentage of the total housing stock of 14,188 units in the Primary Market Area.
- The Primary Market Area is projected to add 511 net new units over the next five years, which represents an addition of 4% to the inventory over that period.

**Table 2.5: Housing Units, 2000-2037**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro
2000	822	24,646	13,985	44,822	53,080	111,887	237,522	1,644,572
2010	698	26,918	14,154	47,895	61,627	123,676	286,490	2,165,495
2012	673	27,111	14,188	48,510	63,336	126,034	284,774	2,199,910
2017	678	28,122	14,699	49,688	65,135	129,522	288,192	2,323,551
2022	683	28,334	14,832	48,898	64,003	127,733	296,685	2,238,202
2037	698	28,978	15,237	46,603	60,724	122,564	283,611	2,343,210

2000-12 AGR	-1.65%	0.80%	0.12%	0.66%	1.48%	1.00%	1.52%	2.45%
2012-17 AGR	0.15%	0.15%	0.18%	-0.32%	-0.35%	0.45%	-0.30%	0.04%

2012-17 Growth	5	1,011	511	1,178	1,799	3,488	3,418	123,641
2017-22 Growth	5	272	133	(790)	(1,132)	(1,789)	8,493	4,651
2012-22 Growth	10	1,223	644	388	667	1,699	11,911	128,292
2012-37 Growth	25	1,867	1,049	(1,907)	(2,612)	(3,470)	(1,163)	142,300

Source: Based on data from U.S. Census and ESRI

### *Occupancy and Tenure of Housing*

The housing in the MU<sup>2</sup> is primarily renter occupied, at 66% versus 11% owner occupied. Almost a quarter of the housing units in the MU<sup>2</sup> are vacant (**Table 2.6: Housing Units, 2012 Occupancy Status**).

- This contrasts dramatically with the city where renters occupy 51% of units and only 13% of units are vacant.
- The MU<sup>2</sup> also contrasts with the Primary Market Area which has less rental housing at 47% and fewer vacant units at 11%.

**Table 2.6: Housing Units, 2012 Occupancy Status**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Market Area	Cobb	Metro
Owner-occupied	71	10,139	3,549	20,050	34,476	58,075	172,398	1,280,946
Renter occupied	441	13,573	8,440	22,941	23,019	54,400	90,021	689,874
Vacant	161	3,399	2,199	5,519	5,841	13,559	25,773	229,090
Owner-occupied	10.5%	37.4%	25.0%	41.3%	54.4%	46.1%	60.5%	58.2%
Renter occupied	65.5%	50.1%	59.5%	47.3%	36.3%	43.2%	31.6%	31.4%
Vacant	23.9%	12.5%	15.5%	11.4%	9.2%	10.8%	9.1%	10.4%

Source: Compiled by Huntley Partners, based on data from ESRI

### *Median Home Value*

While there are relatively few owner occupied units in the MU<sup>2</sup>, their median value is very modest versus the city and Primary Market Area (**Table 2.7: Median Home Value, 2000-2022**).

- The median home value in the MU<sup>2</sup> is \$95,473 in 2012. This is only 57% of the median value of an owner unit in the city at \$166,979, and 51% of the median value in the Primary Market Area of \$178,668.
- Not only are values lower in the MU<sup>2</sup> but they have been increasing at a slower pace than in the city or Primary Market Area. The MU<sup>2</sup> housing values are growing at a compound rate of 1.0% over the 2000 to 2012 period, which is less than half the rate of increase in the Primary Market Area.
- Projections show that home value will increase at a faster rate (2.3%) in the coming five years in the MU<sup>2</sup>, outpacing the rate of increase in the city and Primary Market Area.
- The higher incomes and home prices in the Primary Market Area provide evidence of a significant population of more affluent residents living just beyond the study area boundaries. These households and their potential spending will be keys to attracting new retail and businesses into the study area in the future.

**Table 2.7: Median Home Value, 2000-2022**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro	MU <sup>2</sup> as % of: City Mkt Area	
2000	\$84,500	\$144,384	\$96,630	\$136,270	\$155,625	\$145,097	\$145,349	\$130,800	59%	58%
2010	\$93,644	\$163,213	\$121,932	\$171,602	\$190,068	\$179,983	\$178,200	\$149,648	57%	53%
2012	\$95,473	\$166,979	\$126,992	\$178,668	\$196,956	\$186,960	\$184,770	\$153,417	57%	51%
2017	\$106,754	\$183,950	\$142,940	\$188,479	\$204,722	\$195,156	\$192,736	\$172,070	58%	55%
2022	\$119,368	\$202,646	\$160,891	\$198,829	\$212,794	\$203,711	\$201,045	\$192,991	59%	59%
2000-12 AGR	1.02%	1.22%	2.30%	2.28%	1.98%	2.13%	2.02%	1.34%	84%	48%
2012-17 AGR	2.26%	1.95%	2.39%	1.07%	0.78%	0.86%	0.85%	2.32%	116%	262%
2012-17 Growth	\$11,,281	\$16,971	\$15,948	\$9,811	\$7,766	\$8,196	\$7,966	\$18,653		
2017-22 Growth	\$12,614	\$18,696	\$17,951	\$10,350	\$8,072	\$8,555	\$8,309	\$20,921		
2012-22 Growth	\$23,895	\$35,667	\$33,899	\$20,161	\$15,838	\$16,751	\$16,275	\$39,574		

Source: Compiled by Huntley Partners, based on data from ESRI

### *Workforce Characteristics*

Another dimension of the Study Area is who works in the area. As shown in **Table 2.8: Industry Composition by Number of Jobs, 2012**, there are 4,185 people who are employed in the MU<sup>2</sup> area, which is significantly higher than the number of residents. This indicates that this area is a commercial area and employment oriented. The dominant job categories in this area are in: retail, wholesale trade, education and other services. These four categories account for 74% of all jobs in the MU<sup>2</sup>.

The Primary Market Area is also a major employment location with 33,109 jobs. As with the MU<sup>2</sup>, the primary employment categories are in retail, wholesale trade, education and other services, which account for 44% of all jobs. However, there is also a substantial presence of manufacturing jobs and government jobs in the Primary Market Area.

**Table 2.8: Industry Composition by Number of Jobs, 2012**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro	MU <sup>2</sup> as % of: Mkt Area	
									City	Area
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,185</b>	<b>69,038</b>	<b>33,109</b>	<b>81,531</b>	<b>98,203</b>	<b>212,843</b>	<b>341,276</b>	<b>2,470,883</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Construction	194	5,497	1,757	5,492	3,974	11,223	22,438	125,058	4%	2%
Manufacturing	141	7,229	3,048	7,392	6,222	16,662	24,570	177,769	2%	1%
TCU	145	3,320	1,410	3,903	3,253	8,566	13,786	130,697	4%	2%
Wholesale	546	4,027	1,877	4,505	5,364	11,746	20,201	135,578	14%	5%
Retail	1,493	11,456	2,428	4,750	5,498	12,676	79,204	552,616	13%	12%
FIRE	290	2,832	1,335	5,439	14,418	21,192	25,676	179,397	10%	1%
Health Services	144	8,588	732	10,297	5,280	16,309	25,815	187,213	2%	1%
Legal Services	5	1,596	990	905	1,840	3,735	4,086	35,011	0%	0%
Education	469	3,577	2,047	3,486	3,608	9,141	25,462	196,573	13%	5%
Other Services	670	9,599	8,301	18,281	19,380	45,962	63,917	415,729	6%	1%
Government	127	6,795	4,507	343	879	5,729	11,286	148,224	2%	2%
Other	60	560	268	1,396	484	2,150	5,643	42,722	11%	3%

Source: Compiled by Huntley Partners, based on data from ESRI

### Summary Profile

**Table 2.9: Summary Profile, 2012**

	MU <sup>2</sup>	City	0-2 miles	2-4 miles	4-6 miles	Mkt Area	Cobb	Metro	MU <sup>2</sup> as % of: Mkt Area	
									City	Area
Population	2,433	58,238	30,329	105,604	139,577	275,509	695,507	5,365,250	4%	
Households	512	23,712	11,989	42,991	57,495	112,475	262,419	1,970,820	2%	
Avg Household Income	\$43,434	\$62,250	\$50,165	\$66,839	\$84,214	\$73,943	\$79,500	\$72,679	70%	59%
Per Capita income	\$23,654	\$26,259	\$21,026	\$27,577	\$35,033	\$30,633	\$30,432	\$27,224	90%	77%
Avg Home Value	\$104,084	\$196,663	\$142,708	\$213,464	\$256,959	\$234,970	\$222,673	\$197,158	53%	44%
Housing Units	673	27,111	14,188	48,510	63,336	126,034	284,774	2,199,910	2%	
Owner Households	10.5%	37.4%	25.0%	41.3%	54.4%	46.1%	60.5%	58.2%	28%	23%
Renter Households	65.5%	50.1%	59.5%	47.3%	36.3%	43.2%	31.6%	31.4%	131%	152%
Vacant Housing Units	23.9%	12.5%	15.5%	11.4%	9.2%	10.8%	9.1%	10.4%	191%	222%

Source: Compiled by Huntley Partners, based on data from ESRI

## 2.2.2. Real Estate Market Trends

The performance of the study area real estate market is examined in terms of several key land uses: residential, retail, office and industrial. The purpose of this section is to present an overview of the Study Area's real estate market to serve as the basis to project growth and redevelopment potential in order to inform transportation and land use decisions within the study area.

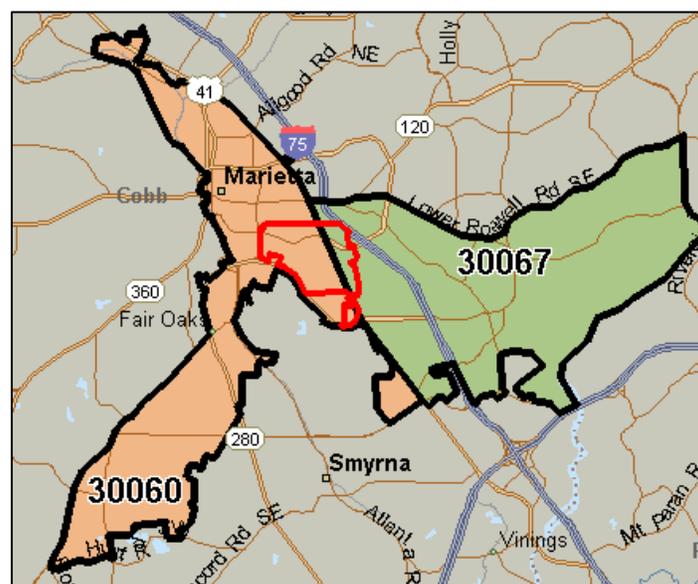
The MU<sup>2</sup> LCI District is characterized by a highly automobile oriented suburban highway commercial development pattern, particularly along the area's two main thoroughfares: Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. Much of the development along the corridors, with some notable exceptions, is aging with transitional tenants and land uses. Large new and used car dealerships typify the largest land holders along Cobb Parkway/US 41 in the southern portion of the study area.

Across all segments of the real estate market, the MU<sup>2</sup> can generally be characterized as a mid-to-lower performing submarket within the City of Marietta area. The area's commercial real estate properties make up less than 10% of the offerings within the city.

### Residential Market Trends

Because the study area boundaries encompass a very small geographical area, very few residential real estate transactions have occurred recently in the study area. Thus, to gain an understanding of the local for sale residential market we gathered data, provided by Smartnumbers, Inc., from the two zip codes that are represented in the Study Area: 30060 and 30067 (see **Figure 2.2**) and compared the totals to Cobb County as a whole.

**Figure 2.2: Zip Codes within the MU<sup>2</sup>**



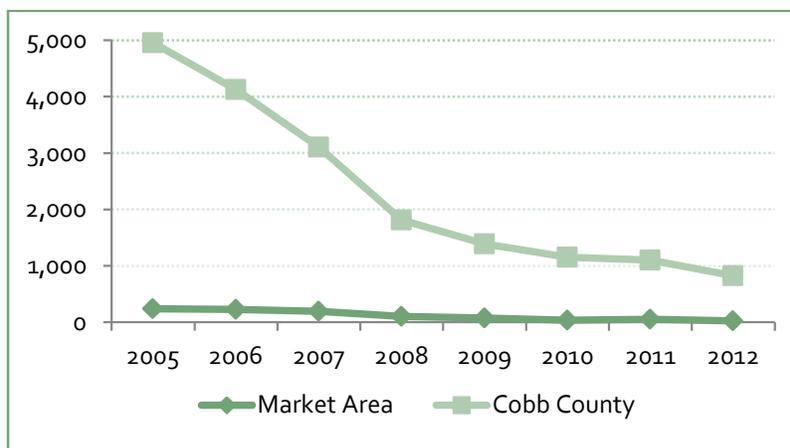
Source: BAG

### *New Home Sales Trends*

In Cobb County, there were 18,467 new homes sold from 2005 through 2012, or an average of 2,308 sales per year. The number of sales of new homes in the County decreased from a high of 4,954 in 2005 to 824 sales in 2012. The median home sale price decreased from a high of \$308,100 in 2007 to \$249,817 in 2011 (**Figure 2.3: New Home Sales, 2005-2012**).

There were 959 new home sales in the Market Area from 2005 through 2012, or an average of 120 units per year. In the Market Area, sales have decreased from a high of 239 sales in 2005 to 27 sales in 2012. The Market Area's share of the county's new home sales peaked in 2007 at 6.3% and dropped to 3.3% in 2012. The median new home sale price in the Market Area decreased from a high of \$276,903 in 2010 to a low of \$182,222 in 2012.

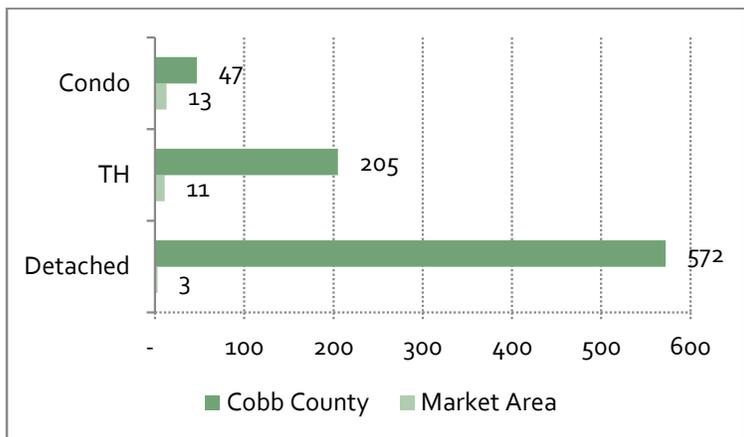
**Figure 2.3: New Home Sales, 2005-2012**



Source: BAG, based on data from Smartnumbers, Inc.

Over two-thirds (69%) of the 824 new homes sold in Cobb County in 2012 were detached single-family homes. A quarter sold were townhomes, with the remainder condominiums. By contrast, only 11% of the 27 new homes sold in the Market Area were single-family. The majority of new homes sold in the Market Area were attached homes, split nearly evenly between townhomes and condominiums.

**Figure 2.4: New Home Sales by Type, 2012**



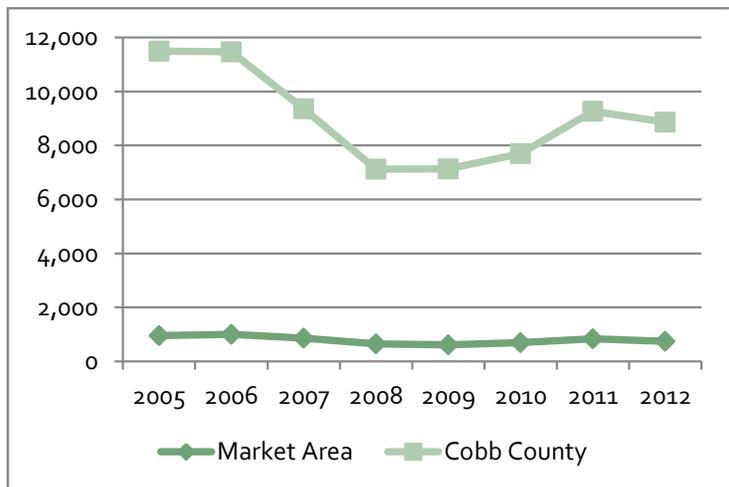
Source: BAG, Based on data from Smartnumbers, Inc.  
 Note that TH stands for Townhome.

**Existing Home Sales Trends**

In Cobb County, there were 72,398 existing homes sold from 2005 through 2012, or an average of 9,050 sales per year. The number of resale homes in the county decreased from a high of 11,489 in 2005 to 8,859 sales in 2012, hitting a low in 2008 with 7,128 resales. The median resale price decreased from a high of \$188,000 in 2006 to a low of \$118,000 in 2011.

There were 6,346 resale homes sold in the Market Area from 2005 through 2012, or an average of 793 units per year. In the Market Area, sales decreased from a high of 1,004 sales in 2006 to a low of 615 in 2009. Sales volume rebounded to 741 sales in 2012. The Market Area’s share of the county’s resales peaked in 2008 at 9.1% and dropped to 8.4% in 2012. The median resale price in the Market Area dipped to under \$66,000 in 2011 as foreclosures flooded the market. The median resale price rebounded dramatically in 2012, rising to over \$156,000 (**Figure 2.5: Existing Home Sales, 2005-2012**).

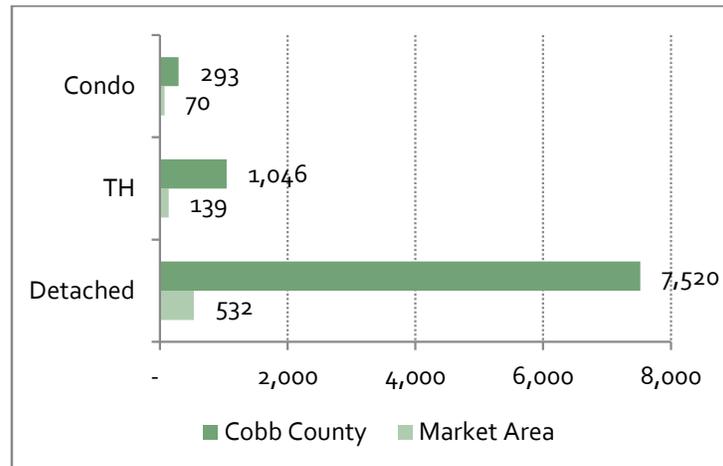
**Figure 2.5: Existing Home Sales, 2005-2012**



Source: BAG, Based on data from Smartnumbers, Inc.

A vast majority (85%) of the 8,859 resale homes sold in Cobb County in 2012 were detached single-family homes. Only 15% were attached—townhomes or condominiums. Similarly, 72% of the 741 resale homes sold in the Market Area were single-family. Nearly 20% (139) resales were townhomes and nearly 10% (70) were condominiums (**Figure 2.6: Existing Home Sales by Type, 2012**).

**Figure 2.6: Existing Home Sales by Type, 2012**



Source: BAG, Based on data from Smartnumbers, Inc.

### *Rental Apartments*

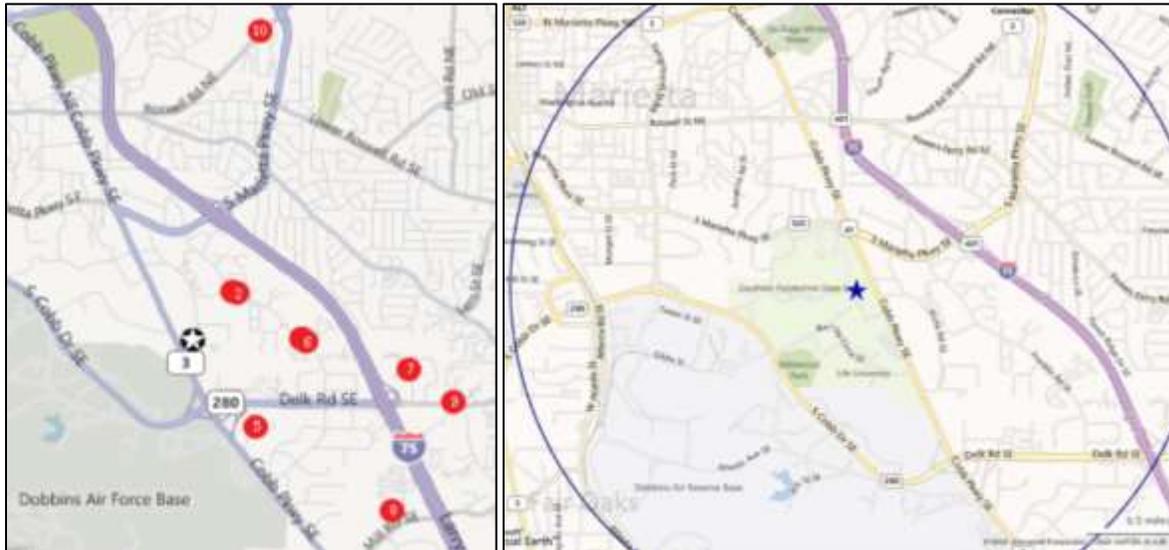
Currently, in addition to the university-owned on-campus residential units and 114 senior housing units owned by the Marietta Housing Authority, 256 privately-owned apartment units are located within the study area boundaries<sup>1</sup>. These privately-owned apartment units are divided among three apartment complexes: Austin Creek (108 units), Wynridge (104 units) and Ridgecrest (32 units). These complexes are older, built prior to 1985.

Within a two-mile radius of the university campuses, private companies lease over 6,500 apartment units. No new apartments have been built in the area since 1997. The complexes average 36 years of age.

In order to understand the local (study area) rental marketplace, we gathered data on 10 of the 32 apartment complexes within the aforementioned two mile radius. This data provides a representative sample of the rental market conditions within the MU<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Data source: CoStar

**Figure 2.7: Comparable Current Apartment Locations (Left), and Two-Mile Study Area Radius (Right)**



Average rents in the study area ranged broadly from \$503 per unit to \$1,004 per unit, with an overall average rent of \$681 per unit, much lower than the average rent in the overall Marietta submarket (\$869) and the Atlanta region as a whole (\$877).

The reported vacancy rate in the study area sample stands at 9.4%, higher than the Marietta submarket (5.5%) and the Atlanta region (7.4%). Thus, the area's large apartment stock, both within the MU<sup>2</sup> and particularly nearby, is generally older and not performing well.

### Commercial Market Trends

The following section describes the existing inventory of commercial space in the study area. The term "commercial" is inclusive of retail, office and industrial space. A breakdown of the commercial use space is identified in **Table 2.10: Study Area Commercial Land Uses**.

**Table 2.10: Study Area Commercial Land Uses**

	<b>Building Area (SF)</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Avg. Rent/SF</b>
Retail	1,235,146	9.2%	\$ 10.92
Flex/Industrial	1,343,508	18.9%	\$ 6.55
Office	281,973	28.4%	\$ 13.85

Source: BAG, CoStar

### *Retail Market Trends*

The study area is a small area with a concentration of retail space along commercial corridors, particularly Cobb Parkway/US 41. Most of the commercial space is primarily in "stand alone" retail and small strip centers, as well as large automobile dealerships.

A total of 1,235,146 square feet of retail space exists within the Study Area. This represents 6% of the total 19,846,952 square feet of retail space in the City of Marietta. A total of 9.2% of the study area retail space is reported vacant compared to 9.8% reported vacant in the city.

Rental rates for retail space in the study area averages \$10.92, which is lower than in the City of Marietta with average rents of \$11.75.

Over the past twelve months, since mid-2012, the City of Marietta has seen a healthy absorption of retail real estate, adding 54,749 square feet of occupied space.

### **Industrial Market Trends**

The study area has 1,343,508 square feet of flex and industrial space, which represents 6% of the city's industrial inventory of 19.8 million square feet. Study area rents currently average \$6.55 per square foot, with 18.9% reported vacant.

The overall flex and industrial market in the City of Marietta is performing better than the local Study area from a vacancy standpoint, with 11% of the current stock available. However, overall rents in the city are lower than in the study area, currently averaging \$5.09 per square foot. The city has seen a negative absorption rate over the past twelve months, shedding just less than 213,000 square feet of occupied space.

### **Office Market Trends**

A total of 281,973 square feet of office space exists within the Study Area. This represents only 2.3% of the total 12,277,406 square feet of office space in the City of Marietta. A significant amount of the study area's office space is reported vacant at 28.4%, compared to 21.6% reported vacant in the city.

Lease rates for office space in the study area average \$13.85, which is lower than in the City of Marietta with average rents of \$15.03.

Over the past twelve months, since mid-2012, the City of Marietta has seen a negative absorption of office space, losing 49,265 square feet to vacancy.

## **2.2.3. Forecasts and Future Real Estate Demands**

Because the majority of the study area is largely built out, future growth will come from infill development and redevelopment of existing land uses.

Outside of car dealerships, demand for new commercial development in the study area has been generally non-existent over the past decade. It is presumed there is latent demand from households in the area that can be tapped into by offering unique real estate products that are often lacking not only from the study area, but largely from the entire Cobb County area. The

key to initiating these unique developments is targeting them, at the outset, toward the approximately 8,500 university students in the area. These students have great potential to support a mix of uses near the SPSU and Life campuses. Their support will drive the initial demand for redevelopment in the study area, which can then attract support from a broader market area interested in the unique appeal created there.

The following real estate market demand summary details the results of our statistical demand analysis, which uses population, household and employment projections from the ARC, Nielsen and the U.S. Census as base data.

**Table 2.11: Summary of Future Real Estate Demand, 2013-2020**

	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Total</b>
Residential (Units)	273	1,914
Retail (S.F.)	20,417	142,920
Office (S.F.)	24,943	174,598
Industrial (S.F.)	4,320	30,237

Source: BAG

The demand analysis is based on an assessment of current conditions and projected growth in the Study Area as well as the larger Marietta area. This analysis does not account for land availability or local political will for any particular real estate product type; rather it is an estimate of what the market would support in the near future. Further, this level of analysis assesses demand through 2020, which correlates with SPSU's master plan and the expectant development horizon of the initial catalyst projects.

### **Housing Demand**

Given the commercial and institutional composition of the study area and the recent economic downturn, few new residential projects have been built in or near the Marietta University district, other than on-campus housing. While the area within a two-mile radius of the SPSU campus is projected to experience approximately 4% household growth over the next five years, according to Nielsen, we would expect little of that growth to happen within the Study Area boundaries. However, largely driven by the universities' interest in expanding on-campus, or near-campus, housing options, we believe that housing, particularly that which is focused on attracting students, could serve as a lynchpin to future mixed use redevelopment projects.

Both SPSU and Life University have expressed goals of growing their on-campus residential populations. Together, they project adding over 2,000 beds on campus over the next decade. We expect that the university housing will be a mix of university-funded development with public-private partnerships with the universities. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the demand for on-campus housing could actually happen through private or public-private market-driven developments adjacent to campus on parcels along Cobb Parkway/US 41.

Initially, multifamily residential projects are expected to be developed exclusively to absorb the schools' on-campus residents. As the study area becomes a more broadly accepted residential location, it could attract additional attention from residential developers who focus on non-student type housing. Future demand analysis must take into account potential student-oriented, as well as more traditional, housing options. For the purposes of this study, it was assumed that one student-oriented unit will be occupied by an average of two students.

Overall, it is estimated that up to approximately 1,900 new residential units could be absorbed within the study area, adjacent to the campuses, through 2020, including both student and non-student units. Most of this demand would be for rental and/or student-oriented units, likely in a multifamily/stacked flat format, but up to approximately 250 for-sale units could be absorbed. We would anticipate the for-sale units in higher density residential units including condominium, townhome and/or very small lot single-family home configurations.

Conversations with experienced student-housing-focused developers about the local area have given us reason to believe that the potential does exist to attract new housing to the campus-adjacent land parcels in the study area.

## **Retail Demand**

Similar to future housing demand in the study area, new retail demand will likely manifest itself by first appealing to the local students. New retail options adjacent to campus that draw students to a lively mixed use format could become redevelopment nodes that then attract area households, and eventually spawn other redevelopment that could attract expenditures from outside the area.

Based on student spending estimates from the UGA Selig Center for Economic Growth and from O'Donnell Learn, SPSU and Life University students spend nearly a combined \$50,000,000 annually on discretionary items. Most of those expenditures are currently "leaking" out of the study area due to the lack of nearby retail options. However, redevelopment could potentially attract upwards of 50,000 square feet of retail space in a mixed use format (with adjacent student housing). This demand potential assumes that a new development could capture about a third of all on-campus resident students' discretionary spending, about 10% of commuter students' overall spending and 5% of the study area's household expenditures. Potential retail tenants could include convenience stores, boutiques, food and drink service providers, and other small miscellaneous retailers.

Most likely, redevelopment will occur in phases (see **Table 2.12: Summary of Future Retail Demand, 2013-2020**). The first phase will likely be smaller, focused on attracting student expenditures, and beginning to establish the area's new character. Later phases will be larger and attract more support from outside the area.

**Table 2.12: Summary of Future Retail Demand, 2013-2020**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Phase One</b>	<b>54,006</b>
Area Household Demand	24,144
Resident Student Demand	14,764
Non-Resident Student Demand	15,098
<b>Phase Two</b>	<b>88,915</b>
Area Household Demand	35,771
Resident Student Demand	21,080
Non-Resident Student Demand	14,281
Additional Outside Draw	17,783
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>142,920</b>

Source: BAG

University areas often offer some of the most appealing mixed use areas in the State of Georgia (Examples can be found near Emory and Georgia Tech in Atlanta, and in Macon, Athens, Valdosta, and Dahlonega.) Over time, as the area becomes established as a “university area” for retailers and begins to attract attention from potential customers from outside the area, and given its location in a highly-trafficked location, another phase of retail development could occur.

The phase two development could pick up additional demand from a growing number of on-campus residents, household growth in the area and from shoppers attracted to the new development who live beyond the immediate area. A phase two retail mixed-use project could occur as redevelopment of currently underutilized land parcels at or near the intersection of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. This type of development would likely attract more national credit retail and restaurant tenants totaling up to approximately 90,000 square feet.

### **Office Demand**

Currently, ARC estimates that approximately 17,000 employees work in the two Census Tracts that encompass the study area (308 and 304.12). By 2020 projections show that number to grow by 12% to approximately 19,000 employees. Of that growth, about 1,270 jobs (63%) could be expected to occupy typical office-related square footage. It is estimated that about half of that square footage could potentially be absorbed within the study area boundaries. Using an industry accepted estimate of 275 square feet per office employee, this equates to the potential for about 175,000 square feet of new office space in the study area.

However, for the purposes of this study, we would not recommend planning for the placement of the entire total office square footage in the catalyst projects. This area does not currently attract typical Class A-type office users. This assertion was verified in interviews with local commercial real estate brokers. Further, the area lacks characteristics that would change this dynamic, particularly within the next decade or so.

Moreover, the area's office space demand is currently satiated by Commerce Park on Fairground Street and American Business Center on South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. These developments are currently "price alternatives" to other Class A locations. Nevertheless, these locations are not candidates for complete redevelopment. They serve as positive anchors to the study area and have potential to possibly be repositioned as Research and Development, or similar-type office parks, catering to firms looking to be near the activities on the two area university campuses. It is also not recommend that this area plan for, larger scale, office activities elsewhere in the study area. Rather, smaller scale, local-serving office tenants (real estate offices, insurance agents, doctors, etc.) could logically occupy space in the aforementioned mixed use projects. This study, along with local public and private sector officials may consider initiatives to ensure that the current office parks remain vital.

### **Industrial Demand**

Of the ARC projected employment growth in local Census Tract through 2020, about 250 jobs (12%) could occupy new typical industrial-related square footage. Similar to the retail analysis, we estimate that about half of that square footage could potentially be absorbed within the study area boundaries. Using an estimate of 300 square feet per employee, this equates to the potential for about 30,000 square feet of industrial office space in the study area. The current industrial space in the area, much of it "flex" space in the American Business Center performs well, according to brokers. While the study area could likely attract more of this type of space, this particular land use may not be compatible with the redevelopment goals of the City of Marietta and the universities. That is, planning for and attracting large amounts of industrial usage may constrain larger goals to increase the vitality and energy in the area. Additionally, given the high-traffic corridors in the study area and the higher income residential areas in nearby locations, the relatively higher land values of likely redevelopment parcels are liable to dissuade industrial development.

## 2.3 Land Use

### 2.3.1. Existing Land Use

**Figure 2.7: Existing Land Use Map** shows the existing land use within the study area, and reflects the built environment as is seen today. **Table 2.13** below shows the composition of this by land use category.

**Table 2.13: Existing Land Uses in the MU<sup>2</sup> by Acreage**

Existing Land Use Classification	# of Parcels	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Commercial	157	200	25.8%
Public Institutional	18	291	37.6%
Industrial	69	97	12.6%
Single Family Residential	127	14	1.8%
Multi-family Residential	10	42	5.4%
Transportation, Communications, and Utilities	3	14	1.8%
Undeveloped	9	11	1.4%
Parks, Recreations, and Conservation	10	105	13.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Car dealerships have a dominating presence along US 41 within the study area.

## Existing Land Use Characterization

Existing land uses in the study area are predominately commercial or institutional. A majority of the study area's commercial retail uses are automotive related. SPSU and Life University are the largest institutional uses; others include two Marietta City Schools, the CCT Marietta Transfer Station, and a church.

Wylie Road is the study area's eastern boundary. The area bounded by Cobb Parkway/US 41, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Wylie Rd includes American Business Center, a large complex of low-rise warehouse/office buildings and commercial uses such as a Captain D's fast food restaurant and Marietta Auto Salvage. Along Wylie Road south of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 there are a variety of land uses, including is a small commercial strip center, industrial uses such as Space Makers, a custom cabinetry and storage system manufacture, the New Hope United Methodist Church and cemetery ,and the AG Rhodes Health and Rehab Center.

West of Wylie Road, Cobb Parkway/US 41 is the study area's main north/south corridor. The roadway is lined with auto-oriented retail establishments such as car dealerships, including both major branded dealers and independent car lots; and establishments for car rental, repair, and customization. North of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 there is a Verizon retail store, a Dairy Queen, Pawn Mart and the Marietta Diner along the western side of the roadway.

Atlanta Auto Brokers anchors the southeast corner of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/ US 41 intersection. Other establishments on the eastern side of



The Marietta Center for Advanced Academics is one of two Marietta City Schools in the area.



Wylie Road includes a mix of land use, include a health and rehab center.



Car dealership along Cobb Parkway/US 41.



A mix of commercial uses lines South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.



Housing located along South Marietta Parkway/SR 120

Cobb Parkway/US 41, south of South Marietta

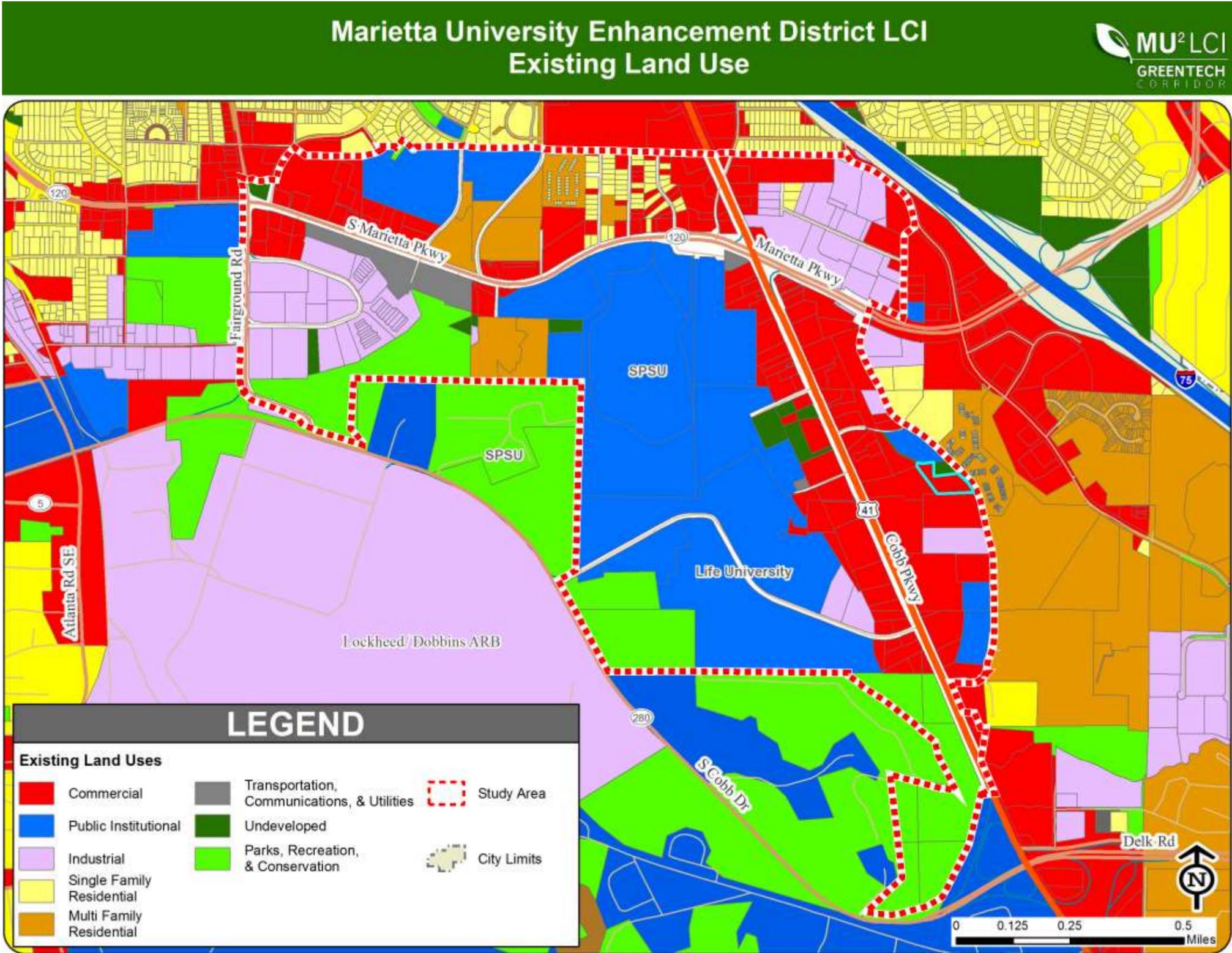
Parkway/SR 120 include the Hodge Army & Navy store, which has been in the area since 1955 and the AMF Marietta Lanes bowling alley. A complex of buildings at Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Church Road houses Tell Tale Theater, an educational children's theater, Georgia Gold and Silver Buyers, Easy Rental, an applicant rental service, and Colonial Stained Glass. There is a car wash, the Marietta Motel and a McDonald's in the stretch of Cobb Parkway/US 41 between Church and New Hope Roads. Car dealerships, sales, and rental lots occupy the parcels fronting this side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 south of New Hope Road.

South of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and along the western side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 includes a couple small strip commercial centers. Barclay Village is located south of the intersection of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Barclay Circle and another center to the north of Polytechnic Lane that includes uses such as an eye glass shop, insurance and tax preparation services. Other establishments on this section of Cobb Parkway/US 41 include the Regency Inn and Suites Motel, El Rancho Mexican

restaurant, a Piccadilly Cafeteria and Playnation Play Systems, an outdoor play set retailer south of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 intersection. A Greyhound bus station is located at the southwest corner of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.

South Marietta Pkwy/SR 120 is the study area's primary east/west corridor. The land uses along the northern side of this roadway are nearly all commercial. Uses are more diverse than those found along Cobb Parkway/US 41 and include a few single-family residences that have been converted to commercial uses, several small commercial strip centers, a small office building at the corner of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Bell Street, and the Parkway Plaza Shopping Center at the intersection of South Marietta Pkwy/SR 120 and Fairground Street. Branson Walk, a Marietta Housing Authority property for elderly and disabled individuals is located between Aviation Road and Lake Drive. Properties along Aviation Road also include the study areas two Marietta City schools; the Marietta Six Grade Academy and Marietta Center for Advanced Academics.

Figure 2.7: Existing Land Use Map





There are a number of small local streets running north/south between South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and the study area's principal northern boundary, Pine Forest Way. Martin Court, Bell Street, Lockheed Avenue, Rose Lane, and Lake Drive comprise the study area's main residential node that includes small, one-story, single family homes, a recently developed townhome community and older garden-style apartments. However, many of the area's single-family homes have been converted to commercial use and few properties in the area have been redeveloped with purpose built commercial structures.

On the south side of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, land uses are predominately institutional (SPSU and International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 709) and transportation use related (CCT Marietta Transfer Center). The only housing existing in this portion of the study area is an apartment complex located off of Hudson Road. This portion of the study area also includes two of the study area's three parks: Aviation Road terminates south of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 at Aviation Park, a 20.34 acre ball field complex, and Wildwood Park a 28 acre park with playground, dog park, picnic pavilion and jogging trail at the corner of S. Cobb Drive and Barclay Circle. The study area's third park, A. L. Burruss Nature Park is a 45 acre natural greenspace with trails for walking, running or biking located at the intersection of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and S. Cobb Drive.

The study area's western boundary is Fairground Road south of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 to S. Cobb Drive. The land uses in this area are mixed including a Quick Trip gas station at the corner of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Fairground Street, and



Single family homes in the neighborhood just north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120



Active commercial use north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120



Aviation Baseball/Softball Complex

Commerce Park, a business park that includes the LGE Credit Union, Cobb County School District offices, Marietta Non-destructive Testing, Champions Fast Pitch Academy and Cobb Works, a workforce development agency.

### Undeveloped Parcels

As of late December 2012, there were only a few parcels of undeveloped property in the study area, which can be defined as any parcel with no active use, without a permanent structure, and with no maintained landscaping. These parcels include raw land that has not been developed as well as parcels that may have been used in the past but have reverted to a natural state. As the graphic illustrates, these parcels are widely dispersed throughout the study area, and not located at high traffic areas. The one notable exception to this being, the undeveloped parcel at the corner of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Fairground Street.



### Incompatible Uses

With the overall goal of this LCI Study being to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly activity center, there are certain existing uses that would be considered incompatible with that vision. Aside from the general incompatibility of the auto-centric land uses along Cobb Parkway/US 41, there are areas of incompatible land uses within the study area north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. The first area is a group of three single-family homes located at on Kathleen Drive, which is accessed from Lucile Drive. These single-family homes are surrounded by

industrial uses such as a Marietta Auto Salvage and Ragan Mechanical Contractors Inc. and cut-off from any residential serving commercial uses or amenities.

The area encompassing Lockheed Avenue, Bell Street, Martin Court and Pine Forest Way is the largest area of incompatible land uses in the study area. Many of the 1950s single-story single family homes in this neighborhood have been converted to commercial uses and some have been demolished and replaced with purpose-built commercial structures. These commercial uses, which bring increased traffic and noise, can result in nuisances to the remaining residents if not properly regulated or sited.

### **Redevelopment Opportunities**

The aging retail uses along the major transportation routes in the study area offer several excellent opportunities for redevelopment. These opportunities include:

- Most parcels on the east side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and south of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, with the exception of the stable commercial car dealerships south of New Hope Road.
- Western side of Cobb Parkway/US 41, especially The Regency Inn and Suites property and adjacent vacant lots.
- Parkway Plaza shopping center at South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and the Fairground Road intersection.

It should be noted that both universities have plans to or have seriously considered the possibility of eventually extending their boundaries to Cobb Parkway/US 41 taking advantage of these opportunities.



Properties prime for redevelopment along US 41

## 2.3.2. Zoning

Zoning determines what a land owner legally can do with his land. **Figure 2.8, Zoning Map**, identifies the existing zoning in the study area.

Zoning districts within MU<sup>2</sup> include:

- OI – Office Institutional
- CRC – Community Retail Commercial
- LI – Light Industrial
- PRD-MF - Planned Residential Development/Multi Family
- RM-10 – Multi Family Residential (10 Units per Acre)
- RM-8 – Multi-family residential (8 Units per acre)
- R-4 – Single Family Residential (4 Units per Acre)
- R-2 – Single Family Residential (2 Units per Acre)
- CCDOD - Commercial CorridorDesign Overlay District

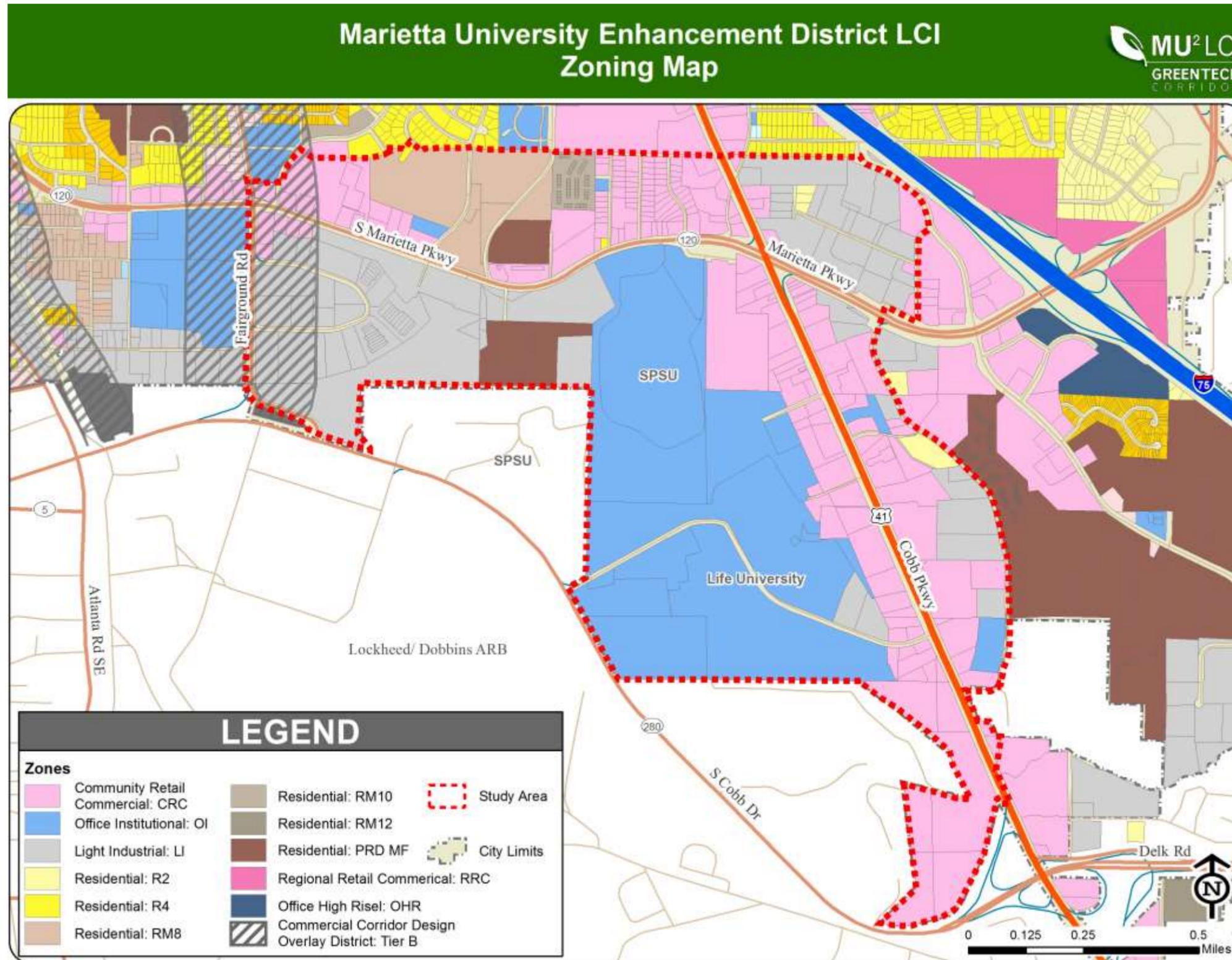
**Table 2.14** below shows how much area each zoning category occupies. The CCOD Overlay District, which includes a portion of Fairground Street<sup>2</sup>, lies on top of the underlying districts and regulates the visual character of the main corridors in and around Historic Downtown Marietta. It covers approximately 49.5 acres within the study area.

**Table 2.14: Zoning in MU<sup>2</sup> by Acreage**

ZONING	# of Parcels	Acres	Percent
CRC	197	243.69	31.4%
LI	92	194.68	25.2%
OI	18	258.62	33.4%
PRD_MF	6	23.39	3.0%
R2	4	4.49	0.6%
R4	2	0.62	0.1%
RM10	78	7.44	1.0%
RM8	6	41.13	5.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>774.06</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>2</sup>Roads that are designated as part of the Commercial Corridor Design Overlay District include Whitlock Avenue from Lindley Avenue to the westernmost intersection of Manning Road, Fairground Street from Birney Street to South Cobb Drive, Powder Springs Road from the South Marietta Parkway to the intersection of Laurel Springs Lane and Longwood Drive, Roswell Street from Haynes Street to Cobb Parkway/US 41, Atlanta Street from Waverly Way to South Cobb Drive, and the North Marietta Parkway from Kennesaw Avenue to Whitlock Avenue, and South Marietta Parkway /SR 120 from Whitlock Avenue to Powder Springs Street. *Source: City of Marietta Zoning Ordinance.*

Figure 2.8: Zoning Map



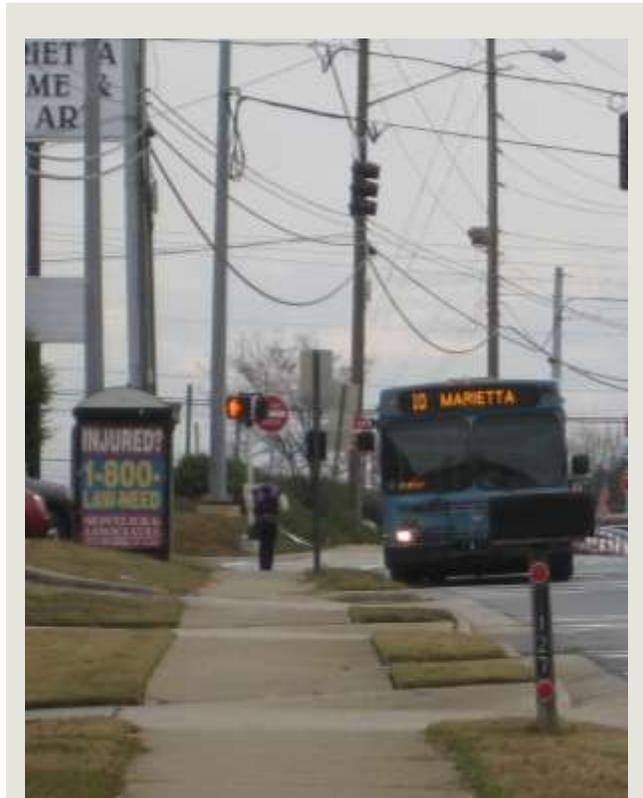


## **Potential Issues & Opportunities**

### ***Office-Institutional (OI)***

The OI district provides incentives for locating parking to the rear of a parcel, underground or in a parking deck (reduced front setback and bonus floor area respectively) as well as establishing connectivity to adjacent parcels (10% reduction in parking requirements) and proximity to public transit (10% reduction in parking requirements). Although the OI district permits flexible uses for colleges and universities including cultural facilities, day care centers, residence halls and health clinics, the zoning district also allows shelters, halfway houses, and group homes which could potentially lead to conflicts with economic development goals. Additionally, the building height limitations of 50 feet may inhibit university expansion.

Requirements for pedestrian facilities are limited in the OI district: five foot sidewalks are required to be installed within the public right-of-way along streets and other public improvements. Other sidewalks, such as those providing internal site circulations are required to be a minimum of four feet wide.



This OI district provides incentives for locating near public transit, such as CCT bus stops.

### ***Community Retail Commercial (CRC)***

The CRC district provides for a variety of retail and personal service uses. Many of these are compatible with the adjoining university atmosphere, however, some permitted uses may detract from it becoming a more multi-modal pedestrian friendly area, including, car maintenance facilities, automobile, trailer and boat sales, automotive repair shops, service stations, commercial landscape services, mini warehouses and self-storage facilities. Other, incompatible uses such as adult entertainment and indoor Ball Bearing (BB) Gun/Air rifle shooting ranges can be established in this district as special uses permitted by City Council.

The CRC regulations include building and site design regulations when a single retail tenant occupies more than 40,000 square feet or more so that buildings facades include architectural elements and high-quality exterior finishes, mechanical equipment and refuse containers are screened from public view and enhanced pedestrian facilities are provided including eight foot sidewalks along and between building facades and public right-of-ways. Landscaping is also required at building foundations and along sidewalks.

CRC district height limitations of 75 feet provide for greater heights than OI but are limited by the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.50. The same zoning bonuses and incentives provided for OI are provided in CRC.

### ***Light Industrial (LI)***

This district provides for a broad array of uses including: light manufacturing, heavy repair services and trade shops, warehousing and mini-warehouses, outdoor advertising services, automotive sales, maintenance and service facilities, dry cleaning plants and outdoor storage facilities. While most of these would have minimal impact on surrounding areas, they in general do not add to an active, pedestrian-friendly environment. The LI district requires a 75ft front setback required for parcels on arterial roads (Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120), which also detracts from a pedestrian environment. The maximum building height in the district is 50 feet and FAR is limited to 0.50.

### ***Multi-family Residential Zoning***

There are three categories of multi-family zoning categories present in the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI study area: Residential Multi-family ten units per acre (RM-10), Residential Multi-family eight units per acre (RM-8), and Planned Residential Development Multi-family (PRD-MF).

The RM-10 and RM-8 districts are multi-family residential district that may serve as a transitional zone between commercial/office uses and lower-intensity residential districts. Permitted uses include; condominiums, multi-family dwelling units, group homes, townhomes, assisted living, personal care and retirement home facilities, fraternity and sorority houses and residence halls, rooming and boarding houses. Halfway-houses, places of assembly, private parks and playgrounds, neighborhood recreation centers and swimming pools are allowed by special use



Multi-family housing near the study area

permits. Dwelling units are limited to 10 and 8 units per acre respectively, and minimum floor areas are proscribed for unit types ranging from 500 sq. ft. for an efficiency unit to 1,000 sq. ft. for a three-bedroom unit. Minimum lot size is five acres in RM-10 and two acres in RM-8, building height is limited to 45 ft. and buildings must be set back 50 feet from arterial roadways. Both districts provide a density bonus of two units per acre if over half of the required parking is provided underground.

PRD-MF provides for nearly the same set of uses as the RM districts with the same floor area requirements for dwelling units, but allows for more flexible site design provided 25% of the tract remains as open space post-development. The minimum tract size in PRD-MF is 5 acres, and there are no height limitations. Density and lot development standards for this district are to be governed by a general plan for the development approved by City Council.

The traditional multi-family zoning districts (RM-8 and RM-10) present a number of challenges to developing an active, pedestrian-oriented environment in the MU<sup>2</sup>. Pedestrian connections are not addressed through regulations in any of the three districts. Parking requirements present another challenge; the two spaces per unit required may be excessive, especially if developments are skewed to smaller unit (efficiencies, one bedrooms) and non-driving populations (assisted living, retirement facilities). The height limitations require land consumptive developments, versus taller developments which may be more fitting with an active, pedestrian oriented development scheme for Cobb Parkway/US 41 especially. The PRD-MF zoning designation as written provides for a considerable amount of flexibility to design and develop high-quality multi-family housing.

### ***Single-family Residential Zoning***

There are a very limited number of parcels in the study area with single-family residential zoning designations (six parcels). The two single-family residential zoning designations presented are R-2 and R-4, indicating a maximum of two and four dwelling units per acre respectively. In all instances, the zoning designation and/or residential use of the parcel is inconsistent. For example, the New Hope United Methodist Church and cemetery located on Wylie Road is zoned R-2 (two dwelling units per acre). Churches and cemeteries were allowed in residential districts before an ordinance change in the mid-2000s, so technically these would be considered grandfathered uses which are allowed but nonetheless are still considered incompatible (Also see the discussion of incompatible land uses in the Existing Land Use section discussion).

### ***Overlay District***

The City's Commercial Corridor Design Overlay District (CCDOD) applies to parcels along Fairground Street, along the eastern edge of the study area. The CCOD Tier B guidelines apply to this area. The purpose of the CCOD in general is to enhance the visual character of the main corridor in and around Downtown Marietta. Tier B specifically is designed to encourage the

integration of pedestrian design features and visual interest into automobile-oriented corridors without negatively impacting roadway efficiency. The guidelines include optional and mandatory elements for four categories: land use, site, building and streetscape design. For code compliance projects must contain all mandatory elements and obtain 50% of the possible optional point totals in each category.

The CCOD – Tier B provides the only current allowances for vertical mixed-use development within the study area; allowing for residential and office or commercial spaces within the same building. A maximum FAR of 2.0 is allowed for mixed-use development in this overlay while single-use developments are capped at FAR stipulated by the underlying zoning district; 0.05 FAR for the LI and CRC zoning applicable in the study area. Additionally, mixed-used development can include an expanded array of uses while single-use developments are limited to those uses permitted by the underlying zoning.

Highlights of the mandatory elements of the CCOD Tier B include:

- Commercial uses on the first floor of parking structures and disguised appearance of upper floors
- Residential uses prohibited on the first floor of a mixed-use building
- Maximum 75' front setback with a bonus point awarded for a setback of 35' or less and 6' setback at other property lines
- 10% minimum open space
- 90% maximum impervious surface for mixed use development
- Maximum building height of 85' and minimum of 18'
- Blank walls prohibited
- 6' sidewalk required
- 8' landscape zone required between sidewalk and building facade

Optional elements of the CCOD Tier B include:

- Angled entrance for structures on corner lots
- Coordinated greenspace between lots
- One curb cut per property + 1 additional for each 500' of frontage, with more than one curb-cut per property resulting in a deduction of 30 points
- Parking located to the side or rear of the structure
- Pedestrian walkways through parking areas connected to sidewalks leading to the main building entrance
- Interparcel access
- Shared parking
- Bike parking
- Outdoor dining
- Primary entrance oriented to the street

A potential weakness of the CCOD Tier B is the minimum floor area for residential units, which are greater than those required for traditional multi-family residential districts.

### 2.3.3. Comprehensive Plan

The City's Community Agenda, the Comprehensive Plan's policy component for future growth and development, generally encourages the development of community focal points and gathering places for neighborhoods. Aging commercial and residential areas as well as the built-out status of the community make redevelopment a top priority for the City. The Plan generally encourages policy interventions to "support quality redevelopment of appropriate areas by establishing incentives, streamlining permitting processes, and actively promoting the vision that is established for the community." (Comprehensive Plan, page 73).

There are few specific recommendations for the study area in the Comprehensive Plan; however, the City has historically incorporated separate small area studies as a component of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Issues and Opportunities

Several land use and zoning issues and opportunities that are called out in the City's Comprehensive Plan have direct implications for the study area:

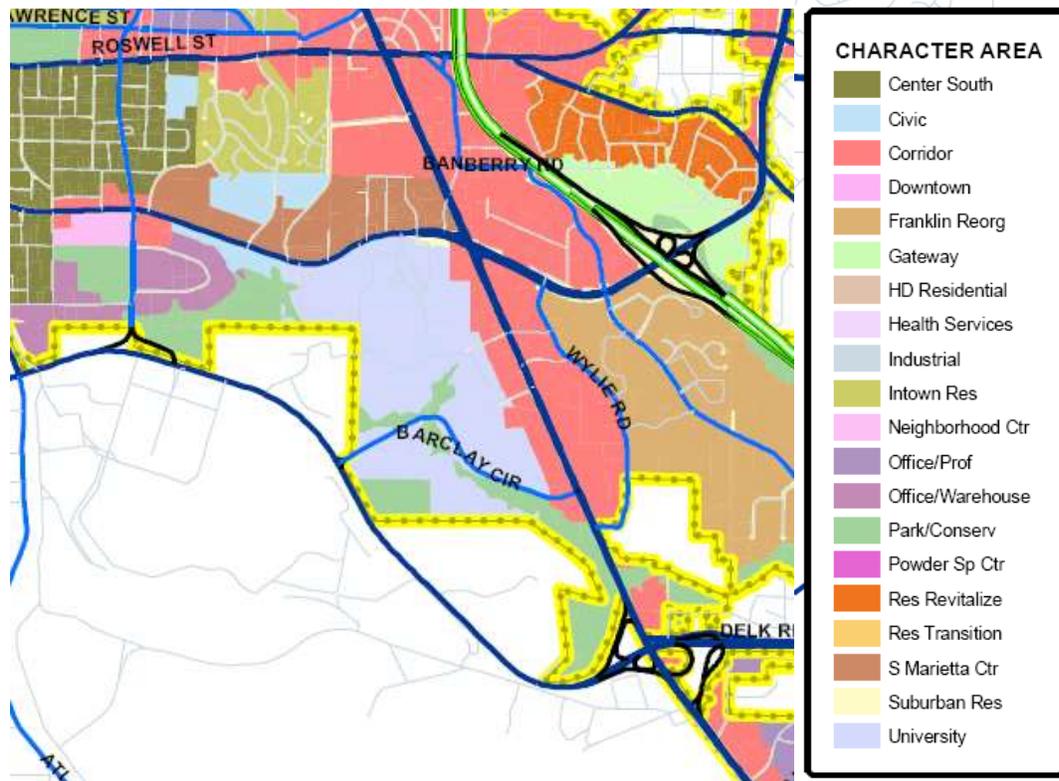
- Too much land dedicated to parking and impervious surface;
- Infill housing can provide more market-preferred housing in the center city;
- Unattractive and antiquated commercial centers;
- Marietta has one of the best job-housing ratio in metropolitan Atlanta;
- Visual clutter along roadways;
- Complaints about development approval processes in Marietta;
- Aging corridors could be rejuvenated with new investment and a mixture of uses;
- Neighborhood opposition to residential density and to innovative development ideas;
- Lack of high quality commercial development in Marietta;
- Infill housing does not blend with the existing neighborhood;
- Lack of a sense-of-place along major corridors;
- Too many strip centers where parking is the only visible feature;
- Lack of identity beyond Historic Downtown Marietta;
- Proximity to Atlanta and major interstate highways will make Marietta an attractive location for new investment;
- Inadequate public facilities and utilities in areas needing redevelopment;
- Poor perceptions of neighborhoods requiring redevelopment;
- Many multi-family complexes are deteriorating and have high vacancy rates making them prime locations for private sector redevelopment;
- Crime has a negative impact on areas that should be stable.

### **Relevant Objectives & Policies from Community Agenda**

- Objective 2.5 Encourage class “A” office, high end commercial, and mixed-uses, especially along the I-75 and Cobb Parkway/ US 41 corridors, the downtown area, and other appropriate areas.
  - Policy 2.13 Conduct corridor studies as necessary and establish zoning policies to the establishment of high intensity uses along the I-75 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridors, the Canton Road corridor, and other appropriate areas.
  - Policy 2.14 Periodically update property inventories of targeted redevelopment areas.
- Objective 2.6 Emphasize the redevelopment of existing underperforming commercial properties, obsolete or abandoned structures, and economically deteriorating areas.
  - Policy 2.16 Coordinate with the Marietta School System and Cobb County to create Tax Allocation Districts, where appropriate, and administer existing Tax Allocation Districts to assist in creating public-private partnerships to remove blight and assist in redevelopment.
  - Policy 2.17 Investigate the possible use of Opportunity Zones in Marietta as a means of promoting economic development.
  - Policy 2.18 Further define Redevelopment Areas within the City.
- Objective 4.1 Create a strategy for targeting specific areas for growth.
  - Policy 4.1 Conduct a series of corridor studies, master plans, and neighborhood plans to improve underperforming areas.
  - Objective 4.3 Encourage a mix of shopping and mixed-use opportunities in and around downtown Marietta and along major corridors with buildings that include ground floor retail and owner-occupied flats/lofts to enhance a “sense-of-place”.
  - Policy 4.12 Establish design guidelines or form base coding in selected areas of the city, where appropriate.

### **Character Areas from Community Agenda**

The City’s Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda defines its character areas as component of the City’s vision for the future, identifying unique areas of the community. The Future Land Use Map is the ultimate policy framework for the City.

**Figure 2.9: Excerpt from City's Character Area Map**

Source: Marietta Comprehensive Plan 2006-2030

The following character areas are represented in the study area, with the bulk of the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI falling into the “University” district:

- University
- Parks/Open Space/Conservation
- Corridors
- Office/Warehouse
- South Marietta Parkway Activity Center
- Civic

*University* - The University District is an area of the city that is appropriate for the expansion of our post-secondary educational institutions and other uses that would work in association with these institutions. Currently, SPSU and Life University are in this area. SPSU is a fast growing institution that has seen large jumps in enrollment in the last decade. As the university grows it will need the space to expand and provide additional social, residential, administrative, research, and educational space.

*Parks/Open Space/Conservation* - The purpose of the Parks/Open Space/Conservation District is to delineate areas for public gathering, recreation, and environmental protection at a regional,

community and local scale. These areas include public parks, waterways, wetlands, floodplain, private recreation areas, plant and animal habitats, and other environmentally sensitive areas. In addition, land in this district should promote passive uses, tourism, and recreation.

*Corridors* -The Corridors Districts are areas that exist along major arterial and collector roads. Currently, the areas are primarily commercial in nature with the majority of the uses being in strip centers and served almost exclusively by the automobile. These areas require a new vision that will help bring a more pleasing and inviting built environment. This can be accomplished by transitioning these roadways to boulevards that serve the automobile, while also incorporating pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Landscaped medians, multi-use facilities, sidewalks, streetscape enhancements and other amenities could be used to help the transformation of these roads to boulevards while enhancing the individual's experience in Marietta. In some cases, these boulevards should transition to multi-modal facilities. Boulevards should serve as connections within the community that guide residents and visitors to downtown and other scenic views or activity centers throughout the community. Corridors that connect directly with downtown should contain guidelines for new developments so that the mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, and aesthetic aspects of downtown are incorporated into these areas, thereby extending the influence of downtown. Uses along the other corridors should continue to be commercial in nature due to the heavy traffic volumes that will persist. It is appropriate to add some residential uses to the commercial mix, especially in areas that are served by public transportation, but residential should not be the predominant use along the corridors. Also, if regional mass transit such as bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail, or other similar technology becomes a reality on corridors, Transit Oriented Developments should be developed within ¼ mile of the transit station. The Transit Oriented Developments should incorporate mixed-use developments that include office, retail, and high to moderate density residential uses in a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

*Office/Warehouse* -Office/Warehouse Districts are areas of Marietta that are appropriate for office, warehousing, distribution, and research and development uses with operating characteristics that do not require highly visible locations or the type of vehicular access needed for retail and high-intensity office developments. These areas should have safe direct access to regional transportation systems, including the Interstate highway system and heavy rail systems. Uses in this district generate relatively low levels of noise, odor, smoke, dust, or intense light that have minimal impacts on local residential communities.

*South Marietta Parkway Activity Center* -The South Marietta Parkway Activity Center District is an area at the intersection of South Marietta Parkway /SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41. This area is an activity center because it can attract a mix of people and activities. This area is appropriate for a mixture of uses including housing, entertainment, retail, and other services. Redevelopment in this area should provide convenient access, pedestrian orientation, a compatible mixture of land uses, higher residential density, and public spaces. This is an area that can combine many of the aspects that are appealing to Marietta, the interests, diversity,

and economic vitality of a city, with the charm of a smaller town center. This can be accomplished through new urban design principles that stress the functional relationship between people, buildings, and the public spaces.

*Civic* -The Civic District is an area of Marietta, in close proximity to downtown, which is appropriate for special government and cultural activities. This is an area appropriate for schools, city and county government buildings, post offices, and museums. Public art should be encouraged throughout this district as a means of celebrating the history and culture of the area, enhance the pedestrian environment, and create a distinct identity.



Future land uses in the area will be supported by the area's parks and planned trail network, providing valuable amenities to the students, community members, and area employees.

## 2.3.4 Future Land Use

The City's Future Land Use (FLU) designations are the City's policy framework for making land use decisions. Listed below are relevant FLU categories that relate to the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI study area:

- Community Service and Institution
- Community Activity Center
- Industrial Warehousing
- Parks/Recreation
- Transportation & Utilities

**Figure 2.10: Future Land Use Map** illustrates the portion of the FLU that is within the study area. **Table 2.15: Future Land Use in the MU<sup>2</sup> by Acreage**, below indicates how much area each future land use designation occupies within the study area.

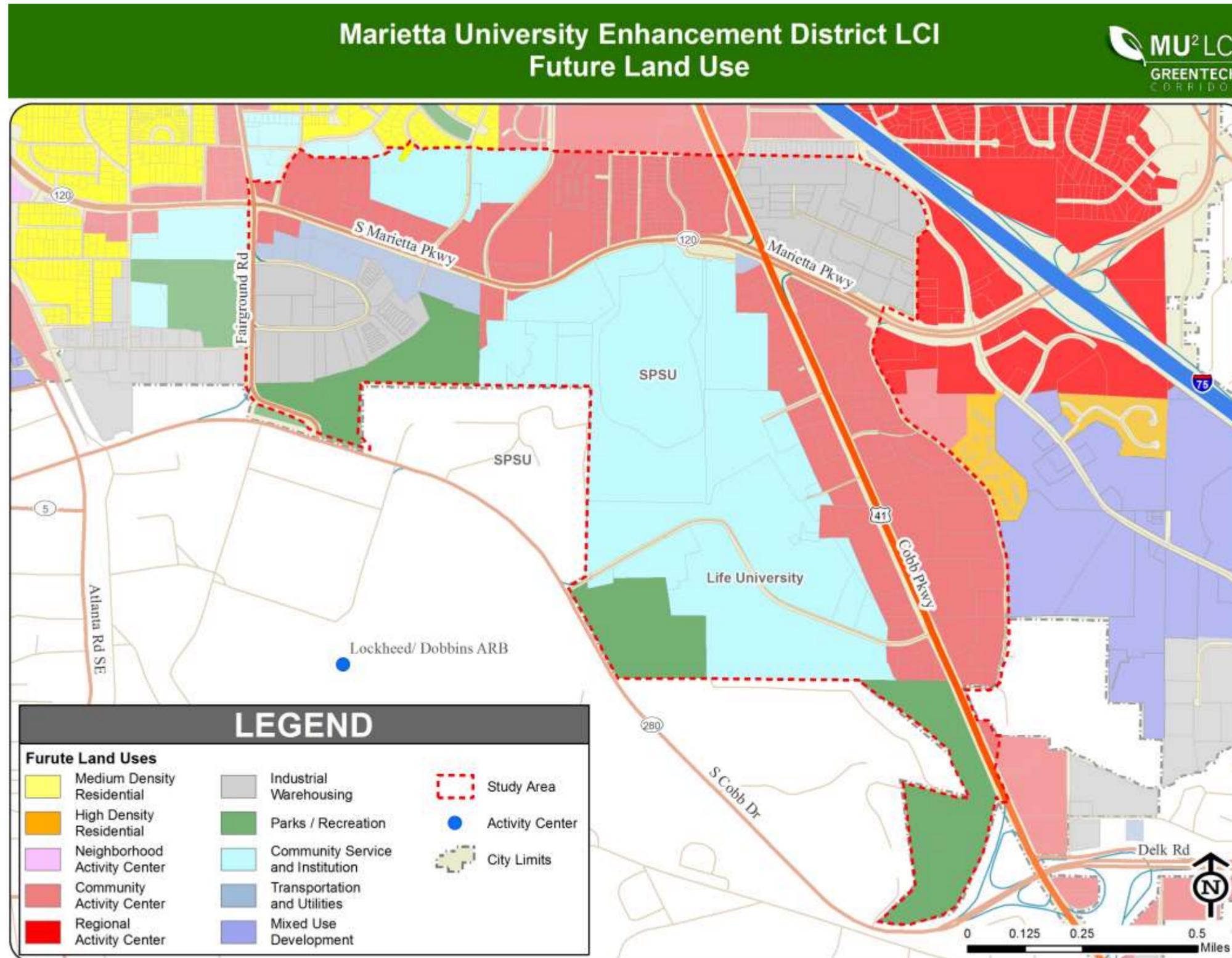
**Table 2.15: Future Land Use in the MU<sup>2</sup> by Acreage**

FLU	# of Parcels	Acres	Percent
Medium Density Res	1	0.42	0.1%
Community Activity Center	278	234.57	30.3%
Regional Activity Center	6	0.03	0.0%
Industrial Warehousing	77	108.86	14.1%
Parks/Rec	10	105.37	13.6%
Community Service and Institution	25	310.34	40.1%
Transportation and Utilities	2	14.50	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>774.09</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



University structures and services will continue to play a dominate role in the future land use of the area.

Figure 2.10: Future Land Use Map





### **Community Service & Institutional (CSI)**

The purpose of the CSI category is to provide for certain local, state, or federal government uses and institutional land uses such as governmental building complexes, police and fire stations, colleges, churches, hospitals, etc. Compatible zoning districts include: Office Institutional and Office Institution Transitional. Primary uses should be oriented toward the provision of public, quasi-public, or non-profit services and supporting features.

### **Community Activity Center (CAC)**

The purpose of the CAC category is to provide for areas that can meet the retail and service needs of several neighborhoods and communities. These are areas that provide a wide range of goods and services, including businesses and professional offices, which are appropriately located throughout the city. These districts are located along collector and arterial streets. Many of the older CAC Districts are auto-oriented. These should be required to become more pedestrian friendly as new development and redevelopment occurs. Compatible zoning districts include: Community Retail Commercial, Low-Rise Office, Office Institutional, Office Services, Planned Commercial Development and Mixed-Use Development. Guidelines for this category include:

- Low- to medium-intensity office, retail and commercial service uses should be encouraged to locate in areas designated as Community Activity Centers.
- Limited residential opportunities may be available in this district as long as it is along major commercial corridors and is provided in a mixed-use traditional neighborhood development or “new urbanist” community.
- Community Activity Centers should be primarily located near the intersection of two arterials or near freeway interchanges.

### **Industrial – Warehousing (IW)**

The purpose of the IW category is to provide for areas that can support light industrial, office/warehouse and distribution uses and the vehicular traffic associated with such uses. It is important to protect IW districts from encroachment of residential uses and the rezoning of IW properties to any residential designation is highly discouraged. Compatible zoning districts include: Light Industrial, Office Services, and Planned Industrial Development. Guidelines for this category include that. Industrial-Warehousing areas should not be encouraged to locate immediately adjacent to residential areas.

### **Parks & Recreation (PR)**

The purpose of the PR category is to identify existing parks & recreation facilities, and locate lands suitable either for expansion of existing facilities or construction of new facilities. Currently, no zoning category exists for such a future land use. Guidelines for consideration in

the selection of these types of sites indicate that public parks should be developed in areas that are accessible from nearby residential neighborhoods. Scale and use should be compatible with the surrounding residential units.

### **Transportation, Communication & Utilities (TCU)**

The purpose of the Transportation, Communication & Utilities category is to provide for airports, rail and bus facilities, power substations, radio and television transmission facilities, and other utility land uses. Compatible zoning districts include: Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial and Planned Industrial Development. Primary uses within this district should be oriented toward the provision of public and quasi-public infrastructure and facilities.

## **2.3.5 Related Livable Centers Initiative Studies**

### **Envision Marietta Livable Centers Initiative Study and 5-Year Updates**

The northern portion of the study area is also included in the study area boundaries of the Envision Marietta LCI (completed in 2001) and its five year updates completed in 2005 and 2010. The planning effort has been very successful in the improvement of Intown Marietta. The following initiatives have significance for the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI:

- 2009 Update to City's Sign Ordinance – According to the LCI study report, the ordinance includes a system for permitting LED billboards along I-75 when non-conforming billboards elsewhere in the city are demolished. This provision is intended to eliminate some of the sign blight on secondary roads such as South Marietta Parkway and Fairground Street, which form part of the border of the Marietta University LCI. Previous, 2003 sign ordinance revisions added stricter regulations for sign height and sign fixture materials and also created an amortization schedule for all non-conforming signs to be removed within 10 years.
- In 2003, the Marietta Redevelopment Corporation (MRC) was developed as a result of the study. The MRC serves as the community's "recommending body on issues of redevelopment." One redevelopment project identified in the update is located in the MU<sup>2</sup> study area. The Rose Drive Retail Space is located near the northeast corner of Lake Drive and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.
- The Commercial Corridor Design Overlay District was developed in 2002 as a result of the Envision Marietta study and impacts portions of Fairground Street, and South Marietta Pkwy which run through the MU<sup>2</sup> district. See the zoning discussion above for a description of this district.
- Parts of the study area, north and south of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and along Cobb Parkway/US 41 are also included in the city's three opportunity zones, approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in 2009. The zones offer state income tax credits for five years to eligible businesses located within the zone if it creates a

minimum of two new jobs in the state of Georgia. The creation of new jobs in the corridor will provide employment opportunities to the existing residents as well as future residents.

- 2010 Update action plan items that appear to have relevance to the MU<sup>2</sup>:
  - Shuttle Circulator – conduct a study on a shuttle system to tie into proposed transit system.
  - Fairground Street Streetscapes – Streetscape project to enhance Fairground Street from North Marietta Parkway to South Marietta Parkway.

### **Franklin/Delk Road LCI**

Wylie Road, the eastern boundary of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area south of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 abuts the western boundary of the Franklin/Delk Road LCI study area. This 2004 LCI study was a joint effort between the City of Marietta and Cobb County to determine the potential of a BRT station to stimulate revitalization of the surrounding area. The BRT station location considered in the 2004 study was along Franklin Road west of I-75 between Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Delk Road, however subsequent reconsideration of regional BRT eliminated plans for the Franklin/Delk Road station and shifted consideration of transit to the Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridor, including portions of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area. Initiatives and projects identified in the 2009 plan update and 2011 revisions that will have an impact on the MU<sup>2</sup> district are identified below:

- Franklin/Gateway Tax Allocation District (TAD), which takes in some of the multi-family development that abuts Wylie Road opposite of the MU<sup>2</sup> boundaries. The TAD and the redevelopment plan for the Franklin Road and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 areas set the stage for financial incentives and attract redevelopment to the economically distressed area.
- Global Green Technology Corridor - The Global Green Technology Corridor is a developing concept within the Franklin and Delk Roads area. Specifically, the vision that has been identified for this innovative concept is to create an ecosystem where business, academia and government collaborate in building on the renewable energy initiatives. Key future steps identified as part of this initiative, which correlate with the MU<sup>2</sup> district include:
  - Building a connector road from Cobb Parkway/US 41 to Franklin Road.
  - Establishing circulator service from the proposed light rail initiative on Cobb Parkway/US 41 to run between SPSU, Life University, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Franklin/Delk Road.
  - Establishing a GreenTech Corridor presence on the corridor via signage.
  - Establishing an incubator facility in partnership with local universities.
  - Providing a resource center with meeting space for the GreenTech Alliance to plan and strategize how to accomplish short and long-term goals.

- Development of a mixed-use area adjacent to the MU<sup>2</sup> boundaries between Franklin and Wylie Roads north of Delk Road.
- High density residential is projected for the area of unincorporated Cobb County adjacent to the MU<sup>2</sup> study area at Cobb Pkwy near the Delk Rd. intersection.
- Establishing sidewalks on Wylie Rd from South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 to Cobb Parkway/US 41. Phase one from SR 120 to Ridge Run is complete and Phase 2 from Ridge Run to Cobb Parkway/US 41 is slated for construction in 2015.
- Establishing sidewalks and street trees along Cobb Parkway/US 41 from Wylie Rd to Rottenwood Creek. Construction was planned for 2014 in the Franklin/Delk Road LCI.
- Rottenwood Creek Multi-use Trail - trail and greenway system along Rottenwood Creek/floodplain zone from I-75 to Barclay Circle. Slated for construction in 2016 with engineering in 2014 in the Franklin/Delk Road LCI. This will connect through to the MU<sup>2</sup> study area with the trails leading to the A.L. Burruss Nature Park and along Barclay Circle.
- Franklin Road/Cobb Parkway Connector: the plan call for a divided roadway with medians, 7' grass strip, 6' sidewalks, street trees at back of sidewalk and pedestrian lighting. Construction slated for 2016. Engineering in 2014 in the Franklin/Delk Road LCI.



Public improvements to streetscapes, pedestrian islands and crossings, and pedestrian-oriented lighting both in the study area and in adjoining LCI areas will influence the character of the area.

The original 2004 study recommends many architectural and site design elements for fostering activity centers that have been subsequently incorporated into the City's CCOD and would be appropriate along the major corridors of the MU<sup>2</sup>; South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41. These include:

- Limited use of aesthetically unappealing/less durable building materials such as synthetic stucco (EIFS), split-faced brick and concrete masonry units to side and rear of structures.

- Continuous storefronts for retail continuity.
- Discouragement of corporate prototypes in order to cultivate a sense of place versus “Anywhere USA”.

Potential impacts of implementation of the Franklin/Delk LCI on the MU<sup>2</sup> study area:

- If high-density mixed-use development is encouraged on Franklin Road in such close proximity to the MU<sup>2</sup> district it could reduce demand for redevelopment along Cobb Parkway/US 41. There is a need to prioritize the likelihood/desirability of the differing corridors for redevelopment.
- Development of the GreenTech corridor along Franklin Road will further induce the need for greater east-west connectivity in the MU<sup>2</sup> Study Area, as well as bike and pedestrian connectivity. However if not done sensitively it could negatively impact the residential areas currently existing between Wylie Road and Franklin Road.
- Consistent streetscape dimensions for roads that will connect through to both areas, however elements could be developed specifically reflecting the character of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area.

## 2.4. Community Character

The MU<sup>2</sup> study area has many urban design issues that need to be addressed in order to create a better sense of place; a concept that is central to a successful LCI community. In analyzing the design issues of the study area, a Character Area map was created, (**Figure 2.14**), that identifies existing areas in the community that share a common design or function. Each of these areas have their own design strengths and weaknesses which are described below. This map was first presented to the public at the Kick-off meeting and was later revised for the Design Charrette based on public input and project team comments.

### Character Area 1: Cobb Parkway/US 41

This area was identified by Core Stakeholder Team as a primary focus for redevelopment. The older commercial areas present opportunities for reinvestment, and both



Auto-centric design along Cobb Parkway/US 41 makes for an unfriendly environment for pedestrians and cyclists



Commercial signage dominates views along Cobb Parkway/US 41

university master plans identify these areas for future expansion.

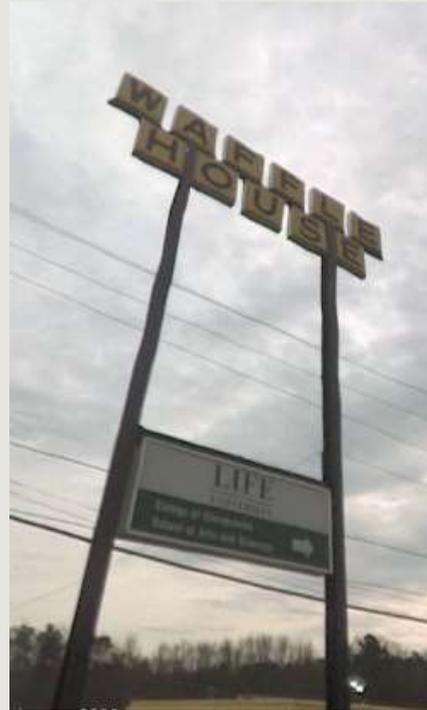
Gateways are needed in this area to help point out the presence of the universities and help create a strong sense of place. Life University in particular is hidden behind commercial uses. The current sign on Cobb Parkway/US 41 for Life University is below and shared with that of a Waffle House.

Cobb Parkway/US 41 is heavily traveled (27,000 AADT) which creates a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists. This is a place designed for cars. As earlier identified, sidewalks and trails are needed to help accommodate non-motorized traffic. Current long range plans for transit and widening of the parkway may exacerbate this crossing issue, unless steps are taken to address it as facilities are improved.

There is a generic design character displayed in the corridor. Corporate architecture leaves one with the impression that they could be almost anywhere in suburban America.

### **Character Area 2: Rottenwood Creek**

The Rottenwood Creek area is heavily wooded and recreationally oriented. As its name implies the area runs along both banks of Rottenwood Creek, which in turn runs south to the Chattahoochee River. This area links four city parks, ball fields, and university recreation areas. It also includes the CCT transfer station and a number of connecting trails. As described earlier, more trails are planned for the area which could eventually tie to the multi-use trail system around Cumberland



Welcome sign to Life University from Cobb Parkway/US 41.



Character Area 2: Ball fields in the Rottenwood Creek area



CCT Station in Area 2

Mall to the south and Kennesaw Mountain to the north.

Much of the area is undeveloped, and due to presence of floodplain, and steep slopes is likely to remain so. There are no architectural structures in the area other than the facilities associated with the CCT station and the parks.

### **Character Area 3: SPSU**

The SPSU campus is well maintained and certainly has the appropriate character of an institution of higher education. There is no uniformed architectural style, which is not unusual to university campuses. Most of the buildings are brick and modern. Student housing is limited on campus, but there is constant activity, particularly during the day when most of the students come in classes. The campus is pedestrian and bicycle friendly though there is no direct connection to Life University. The main gateway to SPSU is from South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, and improvements to it were ongoing during the course of this study. Access the campus from Cobb Parkway/US 41 is available from Polytechnic Lane, but that serves more as a utility or back entrance.

### **Character Area 4: Life University**

Life University has much more of a wooded natural park like campus character than SPSU. Main access is from Barclay Circle, though like SPSU it too has a back or utility entrance off of Cobb Parkway/US 41. Also like SPSU, there is limited student housing and no uniformed architectural style. In many ways the character of two campuses complement each other very well, though there is not direct access between them.



SPSU classrooms



SPSU Campus



Life University gateway along Barclay Circle

### **Character Area 5: South Marietta Center**

Located north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 this character area is dominated by older single family homes built before the 1960s. Most of these homes have been converted to commercial use, and these uses are scattered throughout the neighborhood. Its name comes from the City Future Development Map, where it is also designated as a character area. Most of the housing within the study area is located here, and it also contains a few multifamily structures. South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 has the area's highest average daily traffic counts (+/- 28,000 daily trips), a factor that requires safe pedestrian crossings and one that discourages housing.

### **Character Area 6: Fairground Street**

Fairground Street has recently implemented some streetscape improvements. The area is predominately office and aging commercial. Currently there is an overlay zoning district in the area that permits mixed-use development, but none has been built yet. There is no uniform architectural style or materials, and other than South Marietta Parkway, and South Cobb Drive there is no direct access to the rest of the study area. The area contains no housing.



Commercial uses in South Marietta Center converted from single family homes



Offices along Fairground Street



Recent sidewalk improvements along Fairground Street

Figure 2.11: MU<sup>2</sup> Character Area Map





## 2.5 Transportation

The following section contains a baseline of transportation characteristics that lend themselves to assessing both short term and long term mobility needs in the LCI study area. Key characteristics in the corridor include:

- Roadway Network Characteristics
- Existing CCT Service
- Local Circulator Service
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Safety Analysis
- Network Connectivity
- Planned and Programmed Improvements

Each of the above items is touched upon in the analysis that follows, with the exception of public transit, which is addressed in **Section 2.6, Long Range BRT Station Area Issues**. The information contained in this section is a combination of data from local, regional, and state agency planning partners and that gathered from on-site field surveys. Public input also provided critical input for this analysis the results of which are described in **Chapter 3, Public Involvement Overview**.

### 2.5.1 Roadway Network Characteristics

#### Functional Characteristics

The primary roadway network within the LCI study area consists of the following roadway types:

- Cobb Parkway/US 41
- South Marietta Parkway/SR 120
- Fairground Street
- South Cobb Parkway/SR 280
- Barclay Circle

A summary of the overall traffic characteristics of this network within the study area is provided in **Table 2.16: Key Roadway Network Characteristics**.

**Table 2.16: Key Roadway Network Characteristics**

Roadway	Segment	# of Lanes	AADT* 2010	AAD* 2040	LOS** 2010	LOS* 2040
Cobb Parkway (US 41)	SR 280 - SR 120	4	26,908	49,975	C	D
Cobb Parkway (US 41)	North of SR 120	4	26,800	54,825	D	F
S. Marietta Parkway (SR 120)	East of US 41	6/8	25,776	38,918	A/B	C
S. Marietta Parkway (SR 120)	US 41 - Fairground St.	4/6	27,886	41,348	D	F
Fairground Street	South of SR 120	4	20,460	27,768	E	F
Fairground Street	North of SR 120	4	19,302	23,073	D	E
South Cobb Parkway (SR 280)	West of US 41	4	17,898	28,226	A/B	C

\*AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic

\*\*LOS – Level of Service

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Department of Transportation (2011)

As noted in the table, the standard measurement of congestion is level of service, or LOS. A generalized description of roadways under each LOS category is as follows:

- LOS A – Best driving conditions: With little traffic on the road, drivers experience little or no delay
- LOS B – Drivers perceive some delay, but traffic is reasonably free-flowing
- LOS C – Drivers slow down and may have to wait at intersections
- LOS D – Drivers travel at speeds below that of the posted speed limit and are delayed by considerable waits at intersections
- LOS E – Drivers travel very slowly and are delayed frequently by prolonged stops at intersections and on roadways
- LOS F – Worst driving conditions: Drivers experience heavy traffic, extreme delays, and long queues at intersections

Based on the information provided in **Table 2.16**, the following highlights existing and future conditions along the major network of the LCI study area:

- While there is some congestion in the area, the existing levels of service are somewhat low when compared to other urbanized areas in the region – with none of the roadways operating at LOS F.
- As would be expected, the number of trips in the study area is projected to increase by 2040. This is particularly true along Cobb Parkway/US 41 – which is projected to double. However, with this increase there is visibility of the corridor to more travelers and, thus, potential redevelopment opportunities.
- Overall, the level of congestion will increase along the primary roadway network in the study area. Other than South Cobb Drive on the periphery of the study area, all of the major roads will have at least one segment operating at LOS F. This is consistent with the projected level of increases for traffic.

## 2.5.2 Existing Cobb Community Transit Service

The primary provider of transit service within the study area is Cobb Community Transit (CCT). With the presence of the Marietta Transfer Center, the LCI study area is served by several CCT routes; however, of these routes only Route 10 serves the core of the study area. Nonetheless, by inventorying service into the Marietta Transfer Center, potential route enhancements can be explored to capture surrounding markets and employment needs. These routes are described below and depicted in **Figure 2-12: Study Area Transit Network**.

- CCT Route 10 – Cobb Parkway: This route provides service between the Marietta Transfer Center and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Arts Center Station primarily along US 41 and I-75 (in Atlanta). It is the only route within the study area providing direct access to the universities in the study area. The route also serves the Cumberland area and, in conjunction with downtown, provides access to several employment opportunities.
- CCT Route 15 – Windy Hill Road: This route serves primarily local trips from the Marietta Transfer Center through downtown Marietta to County Services Road and then travels along Windy Hill Road.
- CCT Route 20 – South Cobb Drive: This route connects the Marietta Transfer Center to the Cumberland Transfer Center via South Cobb Drive and Spring Road.
- CCT Route 30 – Austell Road: This route operates from the Marietta Transfer Center to the MARTA Hamilton Holmes Station along several roadways through southern Cobb County, including Austell Road, Floyd Road, East-West Connector and I-20.
- CCT Route 40 – Bells Ferry Road: This route connects the Marietta Transfer Center to Kennesaw State University through the Town Center area via Bells Ferry Road and George Busbee Parkway.
- CCT Route 45 – Barrett Parkway: This route serves the Town Center area from the Marietta Transfer Center primarily via US 41 and Barrett Parkway.
- CCT Route 50 – Powers Ferry Road: This route connects the Cumberland Transfer Center and the Marietta Transfer Center via US 41 and Powers Ferry Road.

A summary of the transit service characteristics of the routes described above is provided in **Table 2.17: Existing Transit Characteristics**. As would be expected given their route lengths and service frequency, Routes 10 and 30 have the highest ridership of the CCT routes in the study area.



A pedestrian navigates Cobb Parkway /US 41 to catch a southward heading CCT bus.

**Table 2.17: Existing Transit Characteristics**

CCT Route	Route Name	Service Frequency – Peak (Minutes)			Annual Ridership (FY 2012)
		Peak	Non-Peak	Saturday	
10	Cobb Parkway	15	30	30	992,301
10C	Town Center-Arts Center	30	N/A	N/A	26,073
15	Windy Hill Road	30	60	60	344,789
20	South Cobb Drive	30	60	60	356,118
30	Austell Road	15	30	30/60/90	793,059
40	Bells Ferry Road	60	60	60	200,071
45	Barrett Parkway	50/60/80	60/80	60/70	140,170
50	Powers Ferry Road	30	60	60	376,087

Source: CCT (2012)

## Ridership Trends

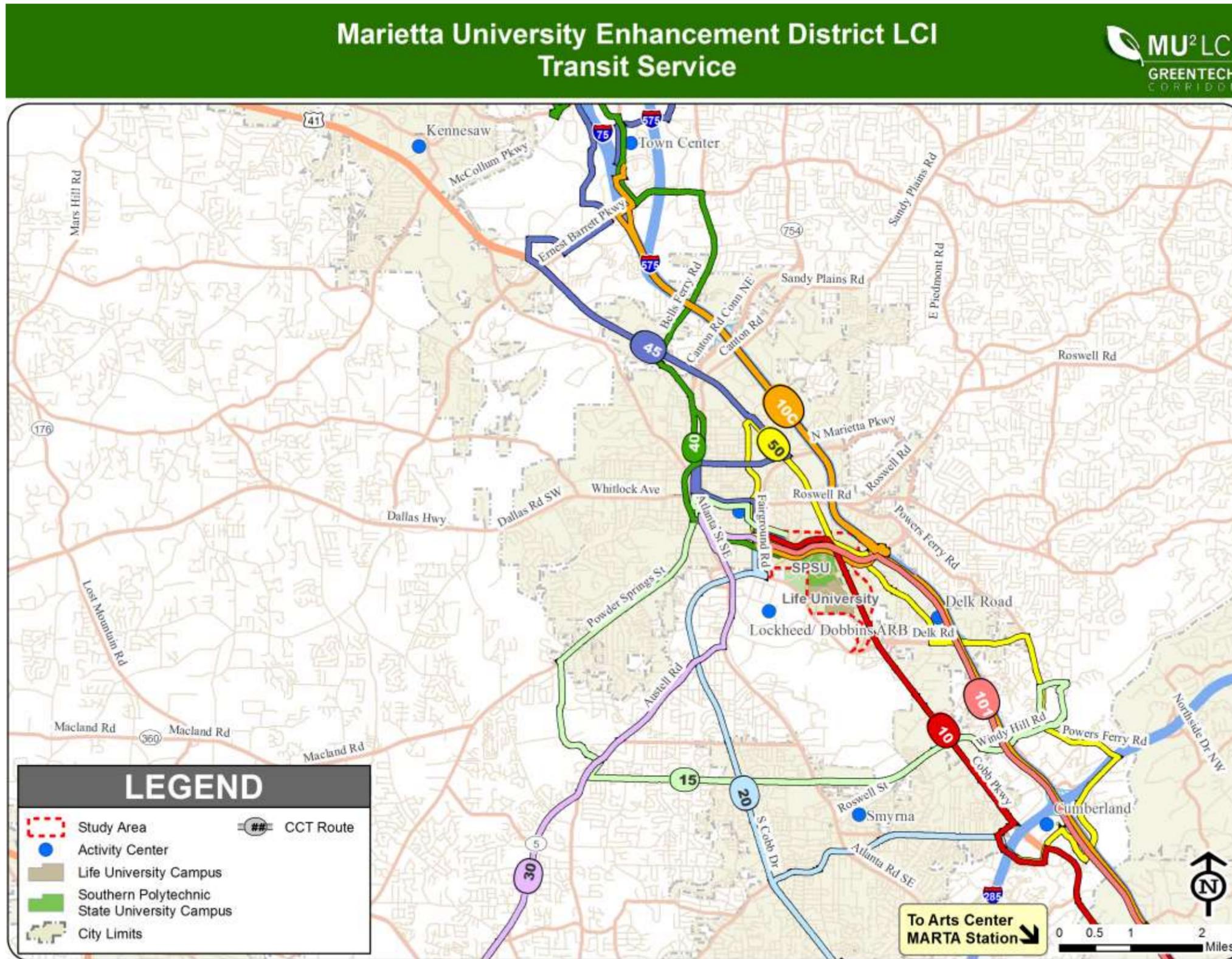
Transit ridership trends can be an indicator of the potential success of enhancing transit service within the study area. As shown in **Table 2.18: CCT Ridership Trends**, the ridership trends for the CCT routes in the study area have shown a steady decline since FY2010. However, according to CCT staff, there were fare increases in 2010 and 2011 along with major service reductions in 2011 that have contributed to this trend.

**Table 2.18: CCT Ridership Trends**

CCT Route	Route Name	Annual Ridership			Percent Change (FY 2010-2012)
		FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	
10	Cobb Parkway	1,105,786	1,063,414	992,301	-10.3%
10C	Town Center-Arts Center	33,899	26,272	26,073	-23.1%
15	Windy Hill Road	399,732	381,543	344,789	-13.7%
20	South Cobb Drive	430,632	409,679	356,118	-17.3%
30	Austell Road	837,349	804,077	793,059	-5.3%
40	Bells Ferry Road	232,513	219,719	200,071	-14.0%
45	Barrett Parkway	151,143	181,127	140,170	-7.3%
50	Powers Ferry Road	430,974	402,493	376,087	-12.7%

Source: CCT (2012)

Figure 2.12: Study Area Transit Network





## 2.5.3 Local Circulator Service

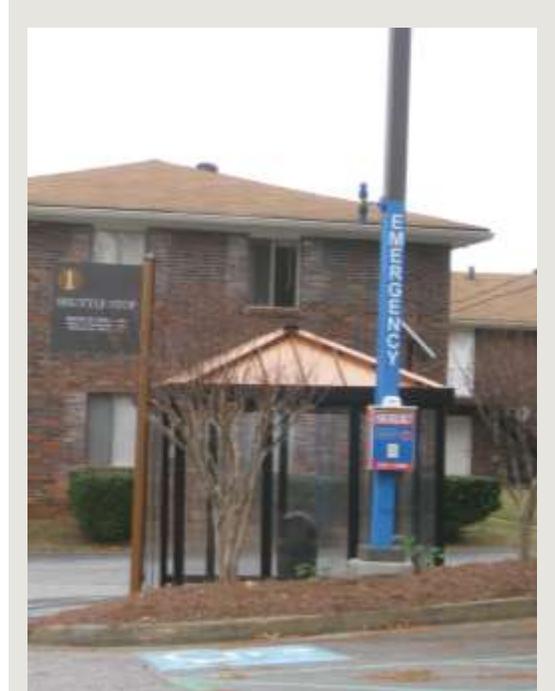
### Life University Shuttle

In addition to the CCT routes in the area, Life University also provides shuttle service for its students and faculty. The shuttle serves as an internal circulator and, as such, does not service the nearby Marietta Transfer Center. As such, the shuttle serves the university and two nearby apartment complexes - Bexley and Ashborough Apartments. The service operates from 7:00 AM to 7:30 PM Monday through Friday and between 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Saturdays.

### Marietta Trolley and SPSU

The Marietta Trolley Co. provides chartered tours throughout the city – particularly in its more historic areas. The vehicle itself is a replica of a trolley that originated in 1905, called ‘Uncle Ruben,’ that once provided trips from Marietta to Atlanta. As a privately-operated source of transit, they have flexibility with regards to their trip destinations and operations.

In October 2012, SPSU negotiated with the trolley company an initiative called “Trolley Thursdays” that provides free trips for SPSU students, staff and faculty on Thursday evenings to the nearby Wal-Mart and Marietta Square.



Life University shuttle stop on Barclay Circle

## 2.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

### Existing Facilities

The most prevalent characteristic of the existing bicycle and pedestrian network is the lack of sidewalks along Cobb Parkway/US 41. Throughout the remainder of the study area, the condition and provision of existing sidewalks in the area varies greatly with most being 4 to 5 feet in width. The locations of existing sidewalks are shown on **Figure 2.13: Study Area Bicycle Pedestrian Network**. The lack of sidewalks along both sides of Cobb Parkway/US 41 creates hazardous conditions for pedestrians and CCT riders along the corridor. Sidewalks within the SPSU and Life University campuses are generally in good shape and are provided for major access corridors. There are some bicycle lanes on the SPSU campus and as a part of the renovated areas along South Marietta Parkway. The existing multi use trail through the area is an asphalt trail of approximately eight feet wide that wraps around the SPSU playing fields. This trail is in poor condition, is not delineated properly and receives little use. There are numerous soft surface recreational trails within Wildwood and A.L. Burruss Park, but signage from campuses to these parks is poor and many students and staff are not aware of these amenities.



Crosswalks: South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 at Fairground

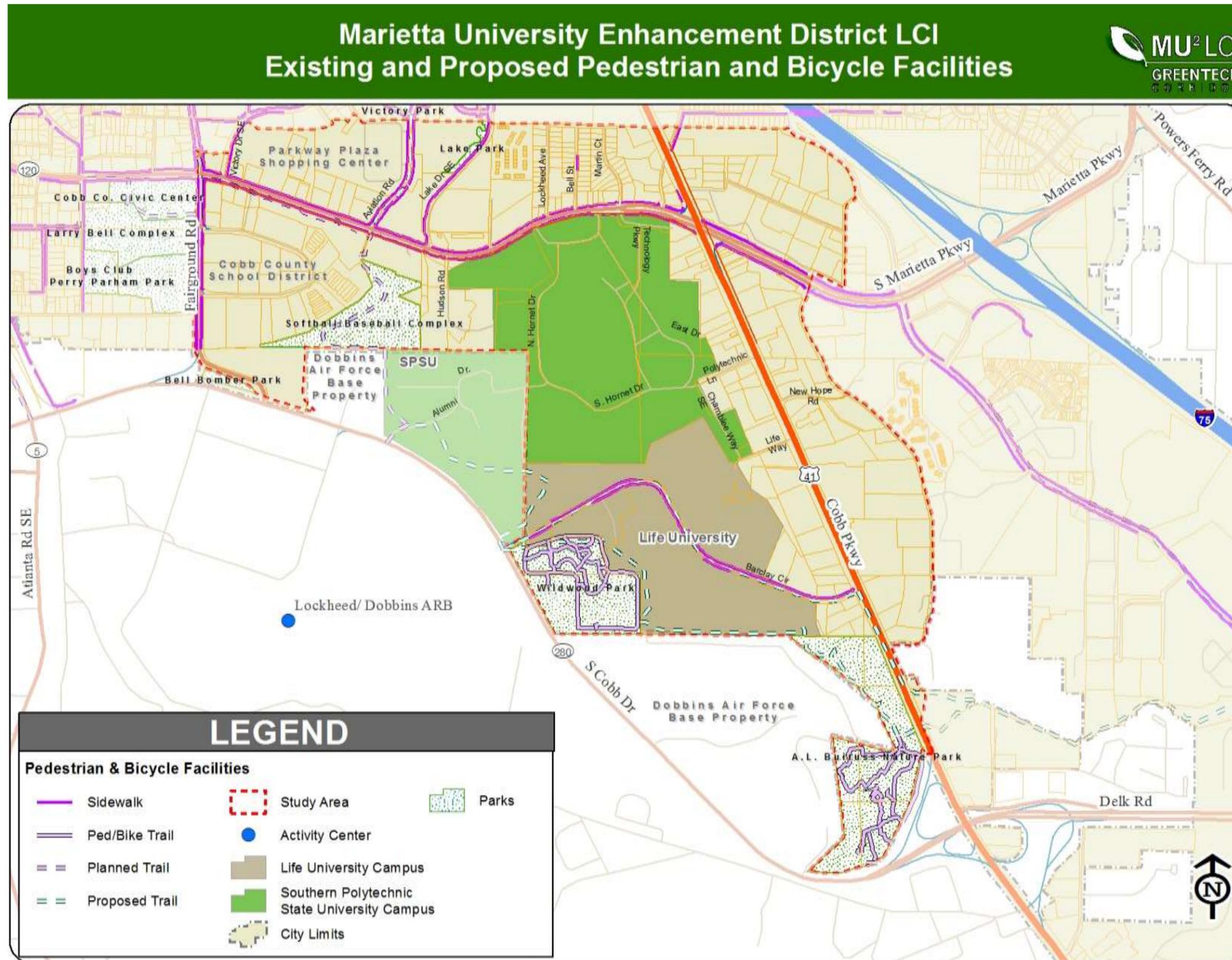


Cobb Parkway/US 41 current conditions



Crosswalk and ADA ramps at SPSU

Figure 2.13: Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Network





## Needs

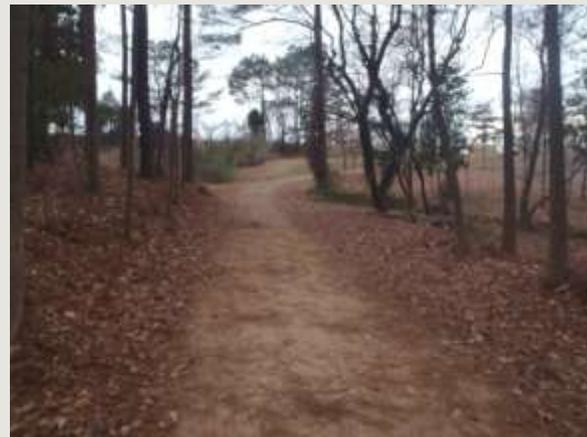
Based on input received and/or data collected from the Design Charrette, Core Team meetings, and on-site evaluation, key deficiencies in the current alternative transportation network were identified by the planning team. Clearly identified connections between the two universities are lacking as are safe routes to destinations along Cobb Parkway/US 41, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and the Marietta downtown shopping district. There is a particular need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities that would allow users to travel to restaurants, shopping and entertainment venues within the area.

Cobb Parkway is a key commercial and bus transportation corridor and lacks safe, accessible facilities for both pedestrian and bicycle users. Safety at night is especially a concern for users of sidewalks and trails within the area. Directional signage that provides users with information regarding orientation and distance to potential destinations is lacking.

There are long term plans to link the Marietta area into an extensive system of trails that span from the Chattahoochee River corridor to the Silver Comet Trail and to Kennesaw Mountain. It will be critical for the trail network within the study area to provide safe and clear connections to accommodate these long distance trail corridors for both recreational and alternative transportation usage.



Existing asphalt trail behind SPSU field



Soft Surface Trail at Wildwood Park



Soft Surface Trail at A.L. Burruss Park

## 2.5.5 Safety Analysis

A key factor in identifying potential locations for improvements is safety. Locations with crashes – particularly multiple crashes – are typically in need for operational improvements. These improvements could include turn lanes, wider shoulders, or traffic signalization and pedestrian signalization improvements.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) keeps a database of crashes throughout the state. Crash statistics from the years 2009-2011 are provided in **Table 2.19: Study Area Crash Statistics**. There were a total of 285 crashes within the study area in 2011, which represents more than double the crashes that occurred in 2010, including two fatalities.

**Table 2.19: Study Area Crash Statistics**

Year	Total	Injury	Fatality	Pedestrian
2009	199	65	0	4
2010	131	30	0	2
2011	285	65	2	6

Note: Please note that crashes could fall into more than one category.

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation (2011)

A map of crash locations within the LCI study area in 2011 is provided in **Figure 2.14: Crash Locations - 2011**. As one would logically expect given their respective overall traffic volumes, most of the accidents occur along Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.



Traffic along Cobb Parkway/US 41, nearing intersection with South Marietta Parkway/SR 120

In order to gauge the overall safety, it is important to compare the rates of crashes along the roadways in the study area. The crash rates for the major roadway network within the study area are provided in **Table 2.20: Crash Rates Along Major Roadways (2009-2011)**. For reporting purposes, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) measures crash rates by the total number of crashes by 100 million vehicle miles travelled. When comparing the major roadways in the study area to the statewide average per their respective functional classification (as determined by GDOT), Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Fairground Street have slightly higher accident rates than roadways of the same classification. Cobb Parkway/US 41 is officially classified as an Urban Minor Arterial Street; however, it should be noted that it functions very much like a Principal Arterial given its volumes and regional travel function.

**Table 2.20: Crash Rates along Major Roadways (2009-2011)**

Roadway	Functional Classification	Accidents		Injuries	
		Rate per 100MVM	Statewide Average	Rate per 100MVM	Statewide Average
Cobb Parkway/ US 41	Urban Minor Arterial Street	580	475	223	156
South Marietta Loop/ SR 120	Urban Principal Arterial	396	603	179	214
Fairground Street	Urban Collector Street	477	431	66	149
South Cobb Parkway	Urban Minor Arterial Street	69	463	46	173

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation (2009-2011)

## 2.5.6 Network Connectivity

The roadway network within the study area is fragmented and is essentially divided by the two university campuses. Furthermore, there are no roadways connecting the two campuses. As a result, travelers from SPSU and Life University have to exclusively rely on the arterial system (South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, Cobb Parkway/US 41, and South Cobb Drive) and Barclay Circle to move about in the study area. There is also very little access to Cobb Parkway/US 41 from the two universities, which limits their visibility and the mobility of their students.

With regard to transit service, the study area is probably the most well served area in Cobb County due to the presence of the CCT Marietta Transfer Center. The CCT routes that serve the area provide connections to several activity centers within Cobb – such as Cumberland, Town Center and Marietta Town Square – as well as to two different MARTA stations – Arts Center and Hamilton E. Holmes. Therefore, there is a high level of transit connectivity to the study area from both a local and regional perspective; however, as previously noted, only one CCT route (Route 10) connects the Marietta Transfer Center to SPSU and Life University.

The bicycle and pedestrian network is very similar to the roadway network in that there are no connections between the two universities. However, as shown in **Figure 2.13 Study Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Network**, there are no bicycle lanes in the study area with the exception of those on the SPSU campus. In addition, there are no sidewalks along South Cobb Drive or

Cobb Parkway/US 41. In conjunction, the environment for cycling and walking in the area needs improvement.

## 2.5.7 Planned and Programmed Improvements

The policy documents that lay out future transportation improvements within the study area include:

- City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan
- Marietta Multi-Use Trail Map (March 2012)
- Franklin/Delk Road LCI Study
- Southern Polytechnic State University Transportation System Master Plan Future Years Forecast
- Connect Cobb – Northwest Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis
- Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2008)
- Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan
- The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) PLAN 2040

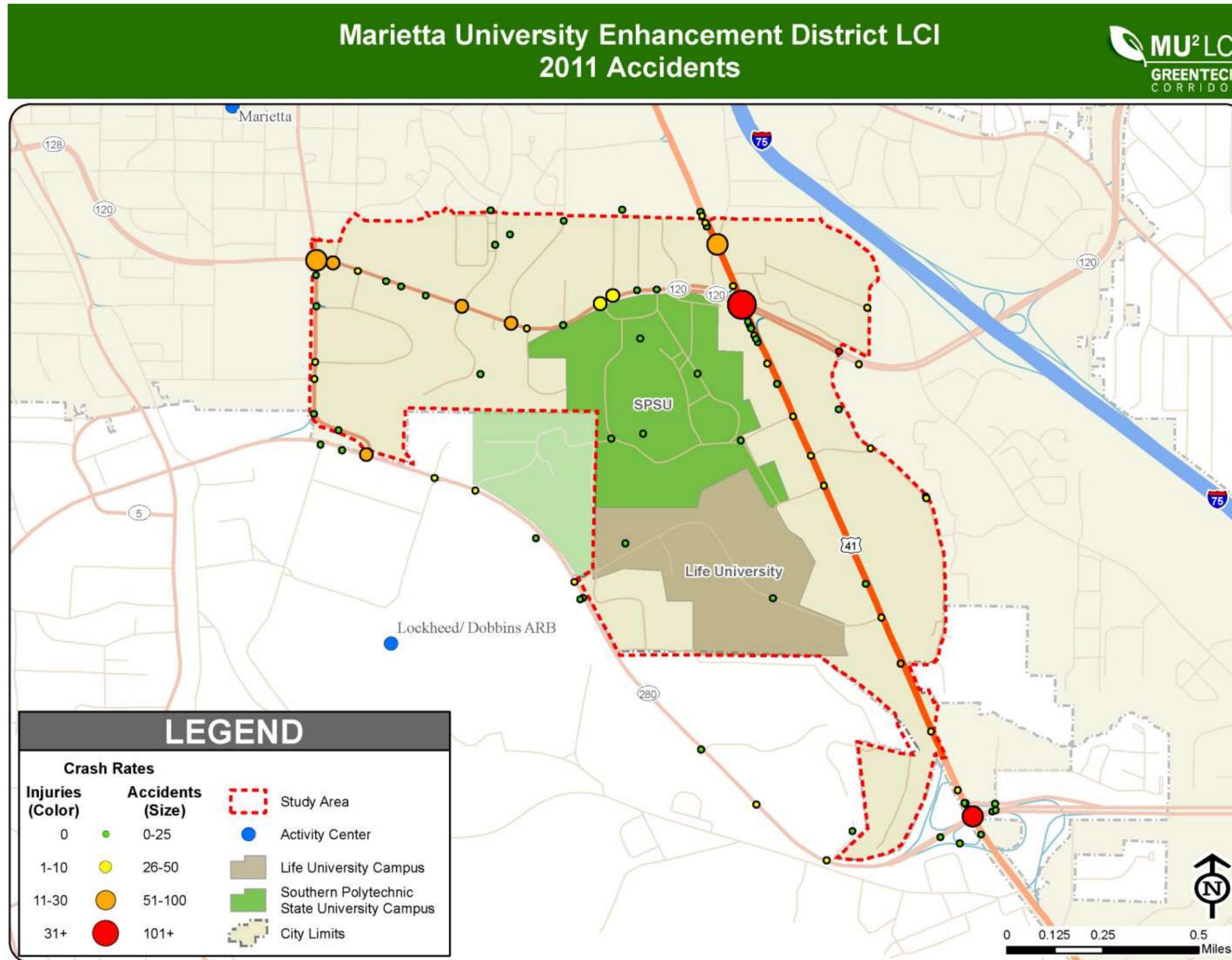
### City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan

As the policy document providing overall direction of the City of Marietta, the Comprehensive Plan provides more localized look at transportation needs and issues. The Comprehensive Plan provides policy recommendations and identifies specific projects to implement these policies. The projects are listed in the Comprehensive Plan's Short Term Work Program (STWP), which was last updated in 2012. A list of these updated projects with the expected year of completion is provided in **Table 2.21: Comprehensive Plan Recommended Short-Term Improvements**. As shown, many of the local projects are bicycle and pedestrian improvements. It should be noted that the Marietta Multi-use Trail is programmed and its construction is currently underway.



Traffic along Cobb Parkway/US 41

Figure 2.14: Crash Locations - 2011





**Table 2.21: Comprehensive Plan Recommended Short-term Improvements**

Improvement	Program Year
Marietta Multi-use Trail - from CCT Transfer Station to Alumni Drive (ARC# CO-AR-BPI77)	2012
Addition of median, turn lanes, and sidewalks and streetscape improvements along Franklin Road (Between South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Delk Road) Franklin/Delk Road LCI	2014
Wylie Rd Sidewalks Phase I - Construct sidewalks along Wylie Road from South Marietta Parkway (SR120) to Ridge Run, Includes minor roadway alignment improvements	2018

Source: City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan (2012)

### Marietta Multi-use Trail Map (March 2012)

The City of Marietta's Multi-use Trail Map is a working document that displays multi-use trail projects in various phases of development. It identifies trails that have been recommended through previous studies and plans. The Map contains projects that 1) currently exist; 2) are scheduled for construction with programmed funding; and 3) proposed for construction once funding becomes available. **Figure 2.15: Excerpt from Marietta Multi-use Trail Map** identifies the portion of the map that falls within the study area.

### Franklin/Delk Road LCI Study

The five year update to the Franklin/Delk Road LCI Study Update (2011-2016) was completed in 2011 by Cobb County and the City of Marietta. This LCI is east and south of the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI study area. This study area is approximately 2,146 acres and encompasses part of the I-75 corridor and has some overlap with the updated MU<sup>2</sup> LCI boundary. Projects identified in the Franklin/Delk Road LCI that affect the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI are shown in **Table 2.22**.

**Table 2.22: Franklin/Delk Road LCI Study Update, 2011-2016 Action Plan**

Project Name	Project Description	Type of Improvement	Construction Year(Proposed)
Cobb Parkway/US 41 Sidewalks	Construct sidewalks and street trees along Cobb Parkway/US41 from Wylie Road to Rottenwood Creek, linking to future trail alignments	Pedestrian	2014
Wylie Road Sidewalks	Sidewalks on Wylie Rd from South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 to Cobb Parkway/US 41. Phase one from SR 120 to Ridge Run is complete and Phase 2 from Ridge Run to Cobb Parkway/US 41 is slated for construction in 2015.	Pedestrian	2015
Rottenwood Creek Multi Use Trail Phase 2	Study and construct a multi-use trail along Rottenwood Creek corridor (where feasible) from I-75 to Barclay Circle	Multi-Use Trail	2016
Franklin Road Improvements Phase I	Install roadway improvements along Franklin Road from South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 to Twinbrooks Drive. Project will include safety operational improvements and sidewalks.	Safety Operational	Complete
Franklin Road Improvements Phase 2	Install roadway improvements along Franklin Road from Twinbrooks Drive to Savannah Oaks Drive. Project will include safety operational improvements, medians, sidewalks, and lighting.	Safety Operational	2014

## **Southern Polytechnic State University Transportation System Master Plan Future Years Forecast**

This plan outlines enrollment and staffing targets for each of the horizon years, expected land use and infrastructure changes, and identified potential deficiencies. It calls for improvements for bicycles and pedestrians by creating a more comprehensive on-campus sidewalk and crosswalk program and addressing existing maintenance issues, tying into adjacent infrastructure, eliminating major vehicular/pedestrian conflict locations, providing additional and enhanced bicycle on-road and end trip facilities, and enhancing lighting and safety. It also called for a comprehensive signage study to address campus vehicular and pedestrian signage. It is expected that the provision of proper signage will help to manage campus traffic and increase vehicular and vehicular/pedestrian safety.

### **Connect Cobb**

A planning study that will impact this study area is the Connect Cobb initiative, being undertaken by the Cobb Department of Transportation (DOT). In the fall of 2012, a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) was adopted Cobb County that called for a BRT system in the median of Cobb Parkway/US 41. The LPA also calls for a station in the vicinity of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and New Hope Road. More detail on this project is provided in **Section 2.4, Community Character**.

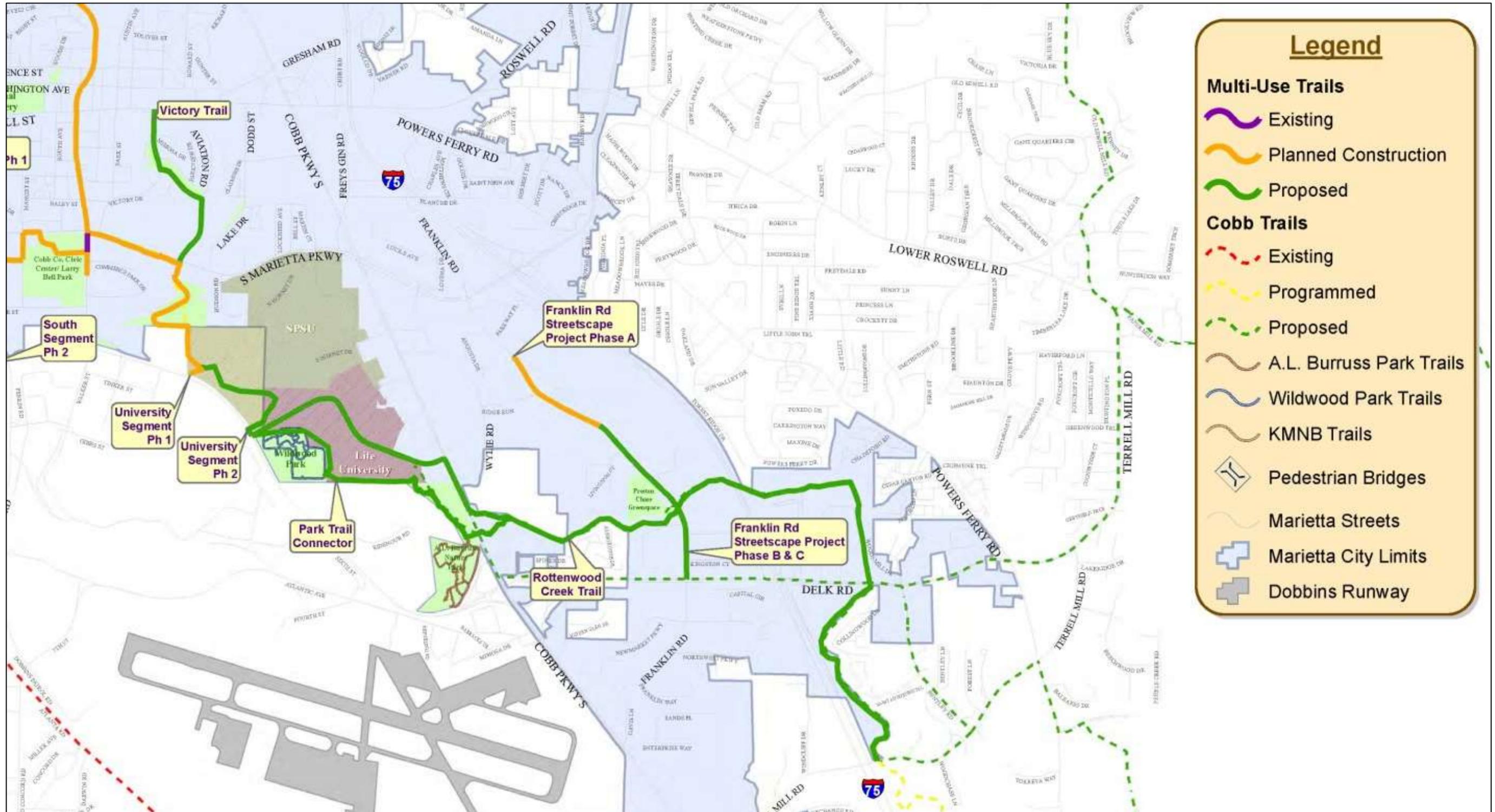
### **Cobb County 2030 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2008)**

Completed in 2008, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was a long range transportation study that reviewed and analyzed existing transportation needs including mobility, transit, multi-use trails and sidewalks as well as future transportation needs. Within this current LCI study area, the CTP identified the University Trail from Barclay Circle to South Marietta Parkway for bicycle improvements, and transportation and bicycle facility and transit improvements along Cobb Parkway.

### **Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan**

The Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan was developed by Cobb DOT to enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the county. It was originally adopted in 2010 and updated in 2011. There is one improvement identified in the plan within the study area. This proposed trail, as identified in **Figure 2.15: Excerpt for Marietta Multi-Use Trail Map** is the trail that extends from South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 along Rottenwood Creek to A.L. Burruss Park. This would essentially serve as an extension of the Marietta Multi-use Trail currently under construction.

Figure 2.15: Excerpt from Marietta Multi-use Trail Map



Source: City of Marietta Multi-use Trail Map.



## PLAN 2040

PLAN 2040 is the regional long range transportation plan for the Atlanta area. As such, the plan contains both planned and programmed improvements for the region. Within the study area, there is only one planned improvement within PLAN 2040. It calls for the widening of US 41 from four to six lanes from Delk Road/South Cobb Drive to the North Marietta loop.

## Additional Transportation Needs based on Initial Assessment

Based on the current and projected conditions in the study area in conjunction with stakeholders and public input, the following needs with respect to transportation were identified during the Assessment phase of the study process:

- Lack of connectivity to Cobb Parkway/US 41
- Lack of connectivity between University
- Lack of pedestrian crossings and sidewalks along Cobb Parkway/US 41
- Better connectivity to downtown Marietta for students – for both work and play.

## 2.6 Long Range BRT Station Area Issues

There are long range plans for BRT from the Cumberland area to Kennesaw. As currently proposed, the BRT is to operate within the Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridor and have a total of eight stations within the City of Marietta, including one within the study area. The exact location of said station has not yet been determined, but a preferred location was identified through working with Cobb DOT, CCT and the City of Marietta staff, which is at the corner of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and the proposed University North Parkway (new road alignment). Because the project is still in the environmental process, a specific concept for the BRT has not yet been developed either, though **Figure 2.16: Illustration of Potential BRT Station Concept**, shows an illustration from the study of what it could look like.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the BRT will be completed in the spring of 2014 after this LCI study has concluded. Multiple coordination efforts between the City of Marietta and Cobb DOT have taken place. The outcomes of said coordination were that:

- The LCI study should assume the long range vision for Cobb Parkway/US 41 to have the BRT and associated station in the median; however, there are still ongoing discussions between GDOT and Cobb DOT on the amount of through lanes (four or six) that would be planned moving forward.
- Cobb DOT stated that there is 200 feet of right-of-way available for future improvements along Cobb Parkway/US 41.
- Construction of the BRT and station should be considered long range, greater than ten years.

- The Connect Cobb Study also recommends that a local circulator system would link the station to Franklin Road, SPSU, Life University, and the Marietta Transfer Center on South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.

**Figure 2.16. Illustration of Potential BRT Station Concept**



Source: *Connect Cobb, Northwest Transit Corridor Analysis*, Figure 8-5 on Page 121

Based on information from CCT, the proposed University BRT station is not envisioned to have a large parking area associated with it and will not serve as a major Park-n-Ride facility, but rather a local station for the universities, local businesses, and residents. This, in turn, influences the future development in and around the station by promoting more of a densely developed environment that is more favorable to transit and pedestrian access. Furthermore, current plans call for the station to be located on the center of Cobb Parkway/US 41. As such, safe pedestrian connections will be needed that minimize potential conflicts between high-speed vehicular traffic and those accessing the station. At the conclusion of the EA, a more detailed concept for the station will be available. Some of the improvements recommended through this LCI study may need to be slightly modified based on this concept.

It should be noted that currently, within walking distance of the preferred site (1500 foot radius), are the two universities, but there are no transit-oriented commercial or residential uses. Sidewalk and bike connectivity to the site is also practically non-existent.

## 3. Public Involvement Overview

### 3.1 Highlights

Public engagement is a fundamental element of all successful planning processes. Not only does it ensure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard and that those voices are reflected in the resulting plan, but it also lays the foundation for implementation. A plan that is orchestrated from the ground up will have champions and leaders to see it through to fruition. It will also have the checks and balances in place, by way of community and stakeholder oversight, to ensure that the issues and opportunities identified along the way are pursued in keeping with the community's vision.

In keeping with the aforementioned principles and values, public involvement played a central role in the development and completion of the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI study. The culmination of the public input received is demonstrated by the overall community vision for the study area defined in **Chapter 4** of this report Vision and Conceptual Master Plan.

The study's approach to public engagement focused on



Small group discussion at the Design Charrette



#### Voices of the Community

**What you would like the area to look and feel like in 15 years? Sample of responses provided in the study survey.**

*"Park-like, serene, safe."*

*"More like a community instead of a piece-meal of businesses."*

*"I would like to travel that area and be proud of its beauty, and practically, I would also like to make it part of Marietta that I would frequent."*

*"Bustling with life."*

*"Walkable area - grocery store, restaurants, other conveniences in walking distance. Traffic planning that allows for pedestrian and bike rider safety. Attractive and affordable housing; Great outdoor space."*

*"I believe in lifelong communities that provide a wide variety of services for young and old alike."*

two key priorities: 1) a strong communications program and 2) accessible and meaningful opportunities for all community members to provide input. At the start of the study process, the City of Marietta, Life University, SPSU, and Jacobs established a public involvement program that facilitated these priorities. The first of these two priorities is described in Section 3.2 and the second is described in sections 3.3 through 3.5 of this Chapter.

Below are the primary methods by which the public provided input, ideas, and feedback.

- 1. Core Stakeholder Team** – The Core Stakeholder Team served in an advisory capacity to the study. Members represented the diverse interests of the study area and met four times during the study process.
- 2. Public Meetings** – Four public meetings were held to gather input from the general community. Each meeting was tailored to achieve specific goals and further the study process.
- 3. Community Survey** – A public survey was carried out online to gather additional input on the area’s mobility, design, and market needs and increase the reach of the engagement program.
- 4. Website** – An interactive study website was available throughout the study process, providing information on meetings, draft study documents, and facilitating a forum of public comments, making it easy for people to participate in the study from remote locations twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.



Attendees review existing conditions board at Kick-off Meeting.

Each of these methods is discussed in more detail, along with other supporting tools and tactics, in the pages that follow.

## Study Participants & Key Stakeholder Groups

Over 300 people contributed to the study process via community survey, public meetings or other methods. A variety of stakeholders played a meaningful role in the study process. The cross section of contributing partners included local businesses, residents, Cobb County government, SPSU and Life University leadership and students, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Cobb Community Transit, and City of Marietta staff. Stakeholders contributed in a variety of ways, including via Core Stakeholder Team meetings, transportation coordination meetings, public meetings, and direct correspondence with City and Project staff.

## 3.2 Project Communications

At the onset of the study process, it was identified that a clear and consistent communications strategy was fundamental to coordinating communications between the City of Marietta, Life University, SPSU, and other partners in order to provide a united planning voice to the broader community about the study process and its goals.

The team quickly identified the communications tactics to be employed, how they should be coordinated, and finally, overall branding for the study. A study logo was established (as identified in **Figure 3.1**).

**Figure 3.1**



**Website** – The study website was branded in coordination with the study logo and served as the communication portal for the study process. It was debuted at the Public Kick-off Meeting with continued use through the duration of the study. It not only provided information on ways to become involved, access to draft study documents and maps for review, and contact information for the study team but also included an interactive element giving visitors the opportunity to comment on various aspects of the site. The website also provided connections to the City’s and Universities’ social media pages and featured a YouTube video introducing community members to the study. The Introductory Video included statements from Dr. Lisa Rossbacher, President of SPSU, Guy Riekeman, President of Life University, and Bill Bruton, City Manager of Marietta. Information from Core Stakeholder Team meetings was also provided at the site, creating a transparent study process.

*A log of website comments posted publicly to the site is provided in Appendix B.*

**Social Media** – Social media was utilized as a key means to help educate the public about upcoming activities and events. The Twitter and Facebook accounts for the City, SPSU, and Life University were leveraged to access their large quantities of followers. Additionally, the City worked with the two Universities to create the Introductory Video, discussed above. Besides being posted to YouTube the Video was available on the study website to help educate the community on study goals and encourage involvement.

**Press Releases** – Press releases were provided on the City of Marietta’s website prior to each of the public meetings and also coordinated with each of the universities. The press releases helped communicate the study goals, outreach opportunities, and general study awareness in the broader community.

**Media Coverage** – The media was an active partner in helping spread information about the LCI study. WSB-TV Action News featured the study on its evening news prior to the public kick-off meeting, helping gain regional awareness of the study. The Marietta Daily Journal, Marietta Patch, and the Atlanta Journal Constitution posted articles about upcoming meetings.

Additionally, the Marietta Daily Journal provided overviews of meeting outcomes in follow-up articles after the first two public study meetings.

**Newsletters** – The City and Marietta City Schools included information about the study process in their regular newsletters, informing the general community about opportunities for involvement and study progress.

**Posters & Electronic Message Boards** – The study team produced posters to help promote each public meeting. These materials were provided in both physical and electronic formats. The physical versions were posted at locations at Life and SPSU campuses and at Marietta City Schools within the study area. The electronic versions were provided to Life and SPSU to post on their electronic message screens on their campuses. The posters included a quick response (QR) code for smart phone and tablet users. People that scanned the code were directly linked to the study website.

**Outreach List & Email Blast** – A study outreach list was established at the onset of the study process and built upon throughout the project’s duration. Community members voluntarily signed up for the list, which was used to reach out to community members at milestone points in the study.

**MU<sup>2</sup> LCI**  
GREENTECH  
CORRIDOR

## Public Kick-off Meeting

*Come learn about a new important planning initiative aimed at transforming the area around the SPSU and Life University campuses into more of a live-work-play environment.*

**ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE INVITED. STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.**

**Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**4:00 pm to 6:00 pm**  
**Life University**  
**Center for Chiropractic Education Building, Room 149**

**Directions:** Go North/South on Cobb Parkway ; Turn Left /Right on Barclay Circle (at Waffle House); Turn right at the first driveway after you pass the ATCO building. Take an immediate right and follow signs to CCE building.

**Questions? Contact us:** [amanda.hatton@jacobs.com](mailto:amanda.hatton@jacobs.com), 678-333-0476

**STUDY AREA**

This study is a joint initiative of: **Marietta** **LIFE UNIVERSITY** **SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY**

Public Kick-off Meeting Poster

### 3.3 Core Stakeholder Team

The Core Stakeholder Team was formed at the beginning of the study process to keep the study on track, review draft recommendations, and help further excitement and disseminate information about the study to their respective networks and the broader community. The group met together a total of four times at the Marietta Museum of History.

The Core Stakeholder Team represented the diverse views and perspectives represented in the study area. A full list of Core Stakeholder Team members is provided in the acknowledgments at the front of the report.



Debrief at Second Core Stakeholder Team meeting.

#### Meeting 1 – November 13, 2012

The first Core Team Meeting introduced committee members to the study process and its goals. Attendees participated in an electronic polling activity that was integrated with the presentation. Strategic questions were asked to help identify the biggest issues in the study area and the stakeholders' realistic vision for the area's future. Instant polling results facilitated discussion and helped the study team better understand the area's key issues and opportunities.

#### Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the first meeting included:

- Cobb Parkway should be the top priority for revitalizing the area, with special focus placed on the west side; strategies for improving South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 are also needed.
- The study should emphasize walkability and connectivity.
- A mix of land uses, including more desirable commercial and additional public spaces, should be promoted by the recommendations.
- The study should identify recommendations that will accommodate the area becoming more vibrant in evening hours to better accommodate students.

## Meeting 2 – January 29, 2013

The second Core Stakeholder Team meeting occurred on the heels of the second public meeting, the Design Charrette. The meeting's key objectives were to present preliminary concepts that captured the ideas and vision heard at the Design Charrette and to fine tune those ideas based on feedback and technical awareness of the committee. Four stations were set-up to mimic the break-out groups at the Charrette. Committee members participated in a prioritization activity at each of the four stations, using dots to identify those ideas that were well grounded and suit the realities of the area and those that should be taken off the table. Key implementation strategies were also identified by the group at the meeting.

### Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the second meeting included:

- A high priority should be given to siting a centralized green space between the universities.
- Streetscaping along Cobb Parkway/US 41 is a priority.
- An overlay district that could promote the use of common design materials and design styles for new development along Cobb Parkway/US 41 is needed.
- Creating common green space along the edge of the two universities is a priority. A newly proposed University Parkway would provide a framework from which to build on.
- The new BRT station on Cobb Parkway/US 41 could be a good opportunity for a gateway as it is proposed to be elevated. The BRT station should be named to reflect the Universities, such as University Center Station.

## Meeting 3 – February 26, 2013

At the final meeting, the study team presented the draft Concept Plan for the area as well as a draft Connectivity Map that highlighted transportation improvements. Core Stakeholder Team members were then asked to provide a LCI Implementation Plan Report Card by grading what was presented against study goals provided at the beginning of the study process. Electronic polling was used to quickly gather these responses and to facilitate discussion about how each goal could be better met. The activity helped identify areas of the plan that should be strengthened, as identified by many of the key outcomes.



Meeting began with a discussion of the Draft Concept Plan & Connectivity Map

## Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the third meeting included:

- Parking is needed in front of all buildings along Cobb Parkway/US 41 to accommodate retail business needs.
- The multi-use path network has great opportunities to connect in with the broader regional trail network and plans, including those of the City of Marietta, Cobb County, and those identified through the study process, and should also be coordinated with the BRT station. Creating a crossing over Cobb Parkway/US 41 is a priority.
- Real estate strategies and other incentives and policies to promote the area's economic development goals should be a key element of the implementation program.
- The plan should be sure to incorporate Lifelong Community goals and fully address housing needs.
- Green communities principles should be incorporated to promote green transportation opportunities.
- The plan should ultimately be linked to anticipated growth at the Universities.

## **Meeting 4 – April 30, 2013**

A fourth Core Stakeholder Team meeting was added at the end of the study process to present revised market data and vet subsequent changes in the conceptual development plan and connectivity plan. The meeting offered an opportunity for the group to identify any major issues with the plans or concerns with implementation recommendations prior to the Public Open House. The plans and recommendations presented were revised to address key concerns raised by the group prior to the May 7 Public Open House.

## Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the first meeting included:

- Overall, the concept plan and supporting recommendations reflect the vision for the area communicated by the area's stakeholders prior to and during the study process.
- Limiting parking in front of buildings along Cobb Parkway/US 41 could be a potential barrier to redevelopment and successful retail locating in the corridor. The market should drive where parking locates.
- Planning for the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and transit oriented development should be and is a key theme in the recommendations of the study.
- Student housing must be carefully constructed in the study area to avoid issues that have occurred in the past within the city's rental housing developments.
- Pedestrian safety and connectivity will continue to be a concern in the study area due to the amount of lanes and amount of traffic that travels along Cobb Parkway/US 41. Recommendations to improve pedestrian safety are a key element of the recommendations, some of which will occur as redevelopment occurs and density increases in the area.

### 3.4 Public Meetings

The MU<sup>2</sup> LCI process included four public meetings. Each of these captured unique input from the general public to further the study process, starting with the first step of identifying core opportunities and challenges and ending with the last step of vetting and collecting final input on the vision and action plan for the future.

Meeting locations were strategically rotated throughout the study area to help the community gain exposure to the unique assets of the area, including the two Universities, Marietta City Schools, and Marietta City Hall.

Combined overall attendance at first three MU<sup>2</sup> LCI specific meetings was 250 people. Appendix B provides full summaries of each meeting. Highlights are provided below.

#### **Public Kick-off Meeting – December 13, 2012 at Life University**

Approximately 75 people attended the public kick-off meeting. The meeting included three main components: 1) an open house portion during which attendees could review maps from the Baseline Assessment at their leisure and discuss study goals and preliminary data with staff; 2) an overview presentation of the study process and questions/answers; and 3) a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Presentation) analysis. The SWOT analysis helped lay a solid groundwork of topics for the Design Charrette in January.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- The key strengths of the area are its general location as well as proximity to Marietta Square, access to major transportation corridors, the two Universities, and vibrancy that students/youth bring to the area.
- Major weaknesses include limited pedestrian facilities, the dividing influence that Cobb Parkway/US 41 plays in the area, undesirable housing stock, undesirable land uses, lack of safety, and lack of mixed use development.
- Key opportunities include creating a sense of place as well as a “destination,” increasing interaction among the two universities, creating an activity center with more desirable shops and dining opportunities, and improving the bike/pedestrian atmosphere.
- Fewer threats were identified when compared to opportunities; however, “property owner greed”, business as usual, congestion, changes at Lockheed Martin and Dobbins, and crime were seen as continued threats.



Roadside message boards helped promote public meetings among the public.

## Design Charrette – January 15, 2013 at SPSU

Community members worked hand-in-hand with urban designers to identify solutions and strategies to lay out a vision for the area. The workshop-style meeting included a brief presentation followed by small group work-sessions focused on unique goals for the area and a recap of major outcomes at the end. Attendees participated in one or two of the following groups:

- University Center – Focused on creating a common public space in close proximity to the two campuses of Life and SPSU and land use changes that would facilitate more of a live-work-play environment a greater presence of both universities on Cobb Parkway/US 41.
- Revitalizing Cobb Parkway Corridor – Focused on how Cobb Parkway/US 41 could be transformed in the future.
- Gateways and Entryways – Focused on creating a sense of arrival in the area and defining those locations where physical gateways should be located and what those gateways should look like.
- Connecting to the Greater Cobb Community – Focused on transportation, mobility, and creating a trail network through the area as well as coordination with future BRT investments.



Connectivity group brainstorms about area's future.

### Key Takeaways

- There is a need for centralized green space and connectivity among the two campuses.
- The area currently does not exude a unique sense of place or let you know that you have arrived in a university district.
- An overlay district, design guidelines, streetscaping, signage, and iconic buildings will help create a better sense of place and transform the character of the area.
- There is a need to strike a balance between accommodating thru-traffic on Cobb Parkway/US41 and creating an activity center feel in the area as properties redevelop.
- Mixed use development and multi-modal travel options, including better bike and pedestrian facilities and recreational trails would create a more accommodating environment.

## Open House – May 7, 2013

An Open House was held in May at the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics, giving community members an opportunity to review and comment on the draft conceptual master plan and overall recommendations of the study prior to the final public hearing and the plan's finalization. Approximately 70 community members attended. The meeting was informal, with the bulk of time dedicated to attendees reviewing displays at four stations centered around the plan's key elements, including: overall conceptual plan, land use recommendations, connectivity and multi-modal transportation improvements, market and economic development strategies, and linkages with other area plans. A short presentation was provided to brief people on study progress to date, as well as the keys to making the plan a reality.

### Key Takeaways

- Overall feedback indicated that the community supported the draft conceptual plan and overall recommendations.
- Developer interest and pursuit of new projects in the area will be essential to seeing the vision forward. Implementation of key recommendations, such as an overlay district and design guidelines, are important to the community in ensuring the vision can be accomplished.
- Pedestrian facilities and walkability improvements remain an important theme for the area's future. Cobb Parkway/US 41 will continue to be a challenge for pedestrian safety due to its sheer size and volume of traffic.



City of Marietta staff fields questions from meeting house attendees



Jim Summerbell of Jacobs gives a brief overview presentation of the study process and outcomes.

## Public Hearing – July 10, 2013

The final step in the public outreach process was a public hearing, which was given to the Mayor and Council at the end of the study process following formal City procedures. This public forum provided an opportunity for elected officials and citizens to provide final questions and comments on the draft plan before it was finalized and adopted by the City and submitted to ARC. Once again the meeting was well attended, and before the agenda item related to the study came up, Council gave members of the audience the opportunity to make any general statements. Dr. Lisa Rossbacher, the President of SPSU, was one of those that came up to give a statement. She stated her support for the study, and was “thrilled” at the progress made by the partnership between the two universities and the City, and was looking forward to exploring the possibilities together to improve the area. Approval of the plan was placed on the consent agenda, and after taking other general comments from the public on a number of other items, the Council took action to approve the consent agenda.

### Key Takeaways

- Overall feedback indicated that the community supported the plan’s adoption and recommendations.
- The important partnership between the two universities and the city is supported by all parties, and will be the key to the plan’s implementation.

## 3.5 Community Survey

A web-based community survey was carried out for one month between the Design Charrette and Open House meetings in early 2013. The goal of the survey was to provide the broader community a voice in the development of the study's concept plan and implementation program.

The survey was promoted via the Core Stakeholder Team, meetings, press releases, news articles, and partner websites. Design Charrette attendees were able to access the survey via a QR code on the bottom of their agenda.

Questions focused on gaining insight on three priority areas: 1) transportation and mobility, 2) destinations and market opportunities, and 3) general connectivity and design. The questions were designed as to better understand people's current behaviors and how study area changes could best meet their goals and vision for the future. The survey was rounded out with a series of demographic questions to help the study team identify how well the study reflected the broader community.

A solid cross section of the targeted community participated, including students and faculty of SPSU and Life, residents of the study area, employees working in the study area, area businesses, and the broader Marietta community.

### Key Takeaways

- Participants indicated a wide variety of preferences for future retail and dining establishments, including both larger stores such as Target or grocers as well as more boutique stores that are a smaller scale.
- Participants identified that they would likely continue to use cars as their number one travel mode; however, should conditions of sidewalks, crosswalks, and overall sense of safety improve, people would be likely to walk more and in some instances even bike to and from locations.
- A more visibly active area, with more people spending time outside, was a common vision for the future of the area.

*A complete survey summary in Appendix B.*

## 4. Vision and Conceptual Master Plan

From the beginning of the planning process for this study, a vision of a vibrant live-work-play community where the two universities are more tightly knit into the fabric of the surrounding community has been clear. But what does that vision look like, and what exactly will have to be changed to accomplish it? Those are the questions this chapter addresses, along with a close look at the likely market response and anticipated growth that implementation of this vision will accomplish.

### 4.1 The Vision

Today, the area of the City of Marietta around Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) and Life University is characterized by typical suburban development. The area's major transportation corridors, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41, are wide, traffic-clogged arteries lined with older strip-style shopping centers and auto dealerships setback from the roadway across large parking lots. The pedestrian linkages are incomplete and generally unsafe. The presence of vacant and undeveloped properties and troubled hotel/motel sites along the corridors contribute



Small group discussion at the Design Charrette



### Chapter 4 Outline

- 4.1 The Vision
- 4.2 Concept Plan
- 4.3 Connectivity Plan
- 4.4 Likely Market Response
- 4.5 Anticipate Growth

*The vision for the MU<sup>2</sup> Study Area presented in this chapter is drawn from the cooperative efforts of the project management team, the core stakeholder group, and the many citizens that participated in the public meetings.*

*The vision is presented in two key parts, a Concept Plan and a Connectivity Plan. The Concept Plan shows how the study area can be developed in a form that will meet the LCI objectives, and the Connectivity Plan shows how the community will be able to efficiently access the area.*

a sense of economic decline, despite the presence of two vibrant higher education institutions teeming with activity. Due in part to a wall of strip-style development and in part to topography, both Life University and SPSU are nearly invisible from Cobb Parkway/US 41. In order to develop a “unified college district with an active presence on Cobb Parkway/US 41” as envisioned for this district through the input received from stakeholders and the work of the MU<sup>2</sup> Core Stakeholder Team, a plan for connecting the universities to Cobb Parkway/US 41 and integrating them better into the Marietta community is required. This vision is presented in the Concept Plan (**Figure 4.1: Concept Plan**) and its accompanying Connectivity Plan (**Figure 4.2: Redevelopment Node Relocation Map**). In combination, these graphics represent the desired future for the MU<sup>2</sup> district – a future that is marked by enhanced opportunities for commercial activity, residential presence, and mobility throughout the university district.

## 4.2 Concept Plan

The Concept Plan focuses redevelopment along MU<sup>2</sup>'s major corridors with the goal of transforming them into attractive and active thoroughfares (see **Figure 4.1: Concept Plan**). A signature gateway element located at the southwest corner of intersection of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 will announce arrival into the district. Smaller gateway signage will reinforce this monument at the University Center on Cobb Parkway/US 41, at the entrance to Life University at Barclay Circle, and at the district's edge on South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 at Aviation Road. The South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 corridor will be upgraded to include a.



Source: [www.mas-ps.com](http://www.mas-ps.com)

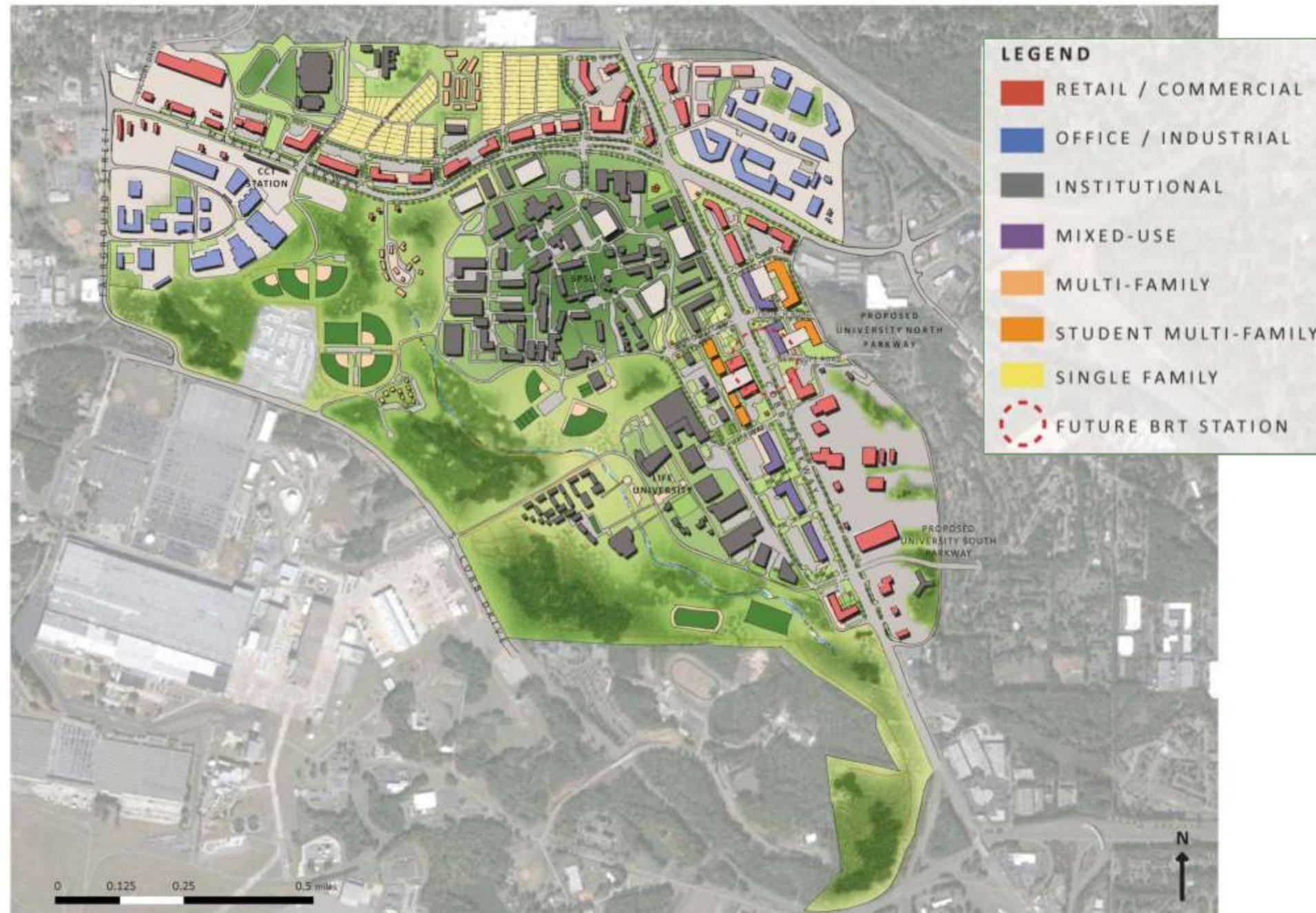
Main Street Commons is a mixed-use development located in Peoria, IL, which offers affordable housing to Bradley University students and features comfortable living conditions with modern amenities and conveniences. The ground level contains retail space, covered parking, and a common area for educational, recreational and social programming. Floors two through five are dedicated to student housing and study space.



Source: [www.tirealestatedevelopment.com](http://www.tirealestatedevelopment.com)

The Lofts @ Mercer Village is a four story 65,987 sq.ft. mixed-use facility situated on the campus of Mercer University in Macon, GA. The new building has 127 residential units and 15,076 sq.ft. of retail space being occupied by Barnes & Noble, Fountain of Juice, Margaritas, Designer Tan and a student amenities area.

Figure 4.1: Concept Plan





planted median and to encourage and enhance pedestrian activity along the corridors. Landscape strips will be added at the roadway edge adjacent to a multi-use trail on the university side and a sidewalk on the opposite side of the road.

The Cobb Parkway/US 41 lane configuration will remain as is, reserving the middle turn lane for the bus rapid transit (BRT), which is anticipated along the corridor in the long-term. A series of off-roadway trails throughout the study area will also enhance pedestrian (and bicycle) connectivity in the area. These trails will connect to both campuses, local parks, local retail and services and transit facilities.

The presence of the universities would be felt both through a physical presence along the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridors and a mix of uses that serves the needs of the university students and area employees. Redevelopment will occur at a series of nodes in a number of phases over the next seven to ten years, eventually creating a discernable district in the City of Marietta with a unique feel that serves the needs of the university community and attracts visitors from the city, Cobb County, and the Atlanta region. **Figure 4.2: Redevelopment Node Relocation Map** identifies the locations of these nodes.

### **Node 1: University Center**

The most pressing need for the universities is a presence on Cobb Parkway/US 41. The first phase of redevelopment, the University Center, is designed to fill this need. This development will be located along the western side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 where the SPSU and Life University campuses share boundaries south of Polytechnic Lane. It will include signage, landscape features, view corridors designed to visually connect into the campuses, and a mix of uses to pull the campus out to the corridor.

**Existing Conditions:** The area to be transformed into the University Center is currently the site of a car rental facility, a title pawn shop, the Regency Inn & Suites – a distressed motel property, and a used car dealership.

**Proposed Plan:** The redevelopment for the area is for a vibrant mixed use area to contain two groups of buildings

surrounding a central parking deck. The buildings adjacent to Cobb Parkway/US 41 will include retail uses oriented to the university community – restaurants, personal services, boutiques, while the buildings closest to the campus edges will include student-oriented housing. The site will serve as a gateway to the universities and include a gateway element at its southwest corner. The site design should include pedestrian plazas and greenspaces to serve as gathering spaces, as well as provide for a one-way access aisle and at a minimum 2 rows of parking



The Regency Inn is one of a group of properties that will be redeveloped to create the University Center node on the west side of US 41.

between the building facades and the 8'-10' multi-use trail planned for the western side of Cobb Parkway/US 41.

**Project Timing:** Since the universities would be partners in and drive this project, development could begin as soon as properties can be acquired and plans can be approved. Construction could begin as soon as 2014. It is anticipated that the development of University Center will happen in two phases, each with a mix of retail and residential buildings.

**Project Requirements:** Key to implementation of this vision for Node 1 will be the adoption of provisions in the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow appropriate mixed-use development. Implementation will also strongly rely on the investment in needed transportation improvements and investment on the part of the universities to expand to Cobb Parkway/US 41.

## **Node 2: University Square**

Following implementation of the University Village, the goal will be to build on the success and energy that the activity node created on the western side of Cobb Parkway/US 41, by expanding the university oriented redevelopment across the roadway to the eastern side of the corridor.

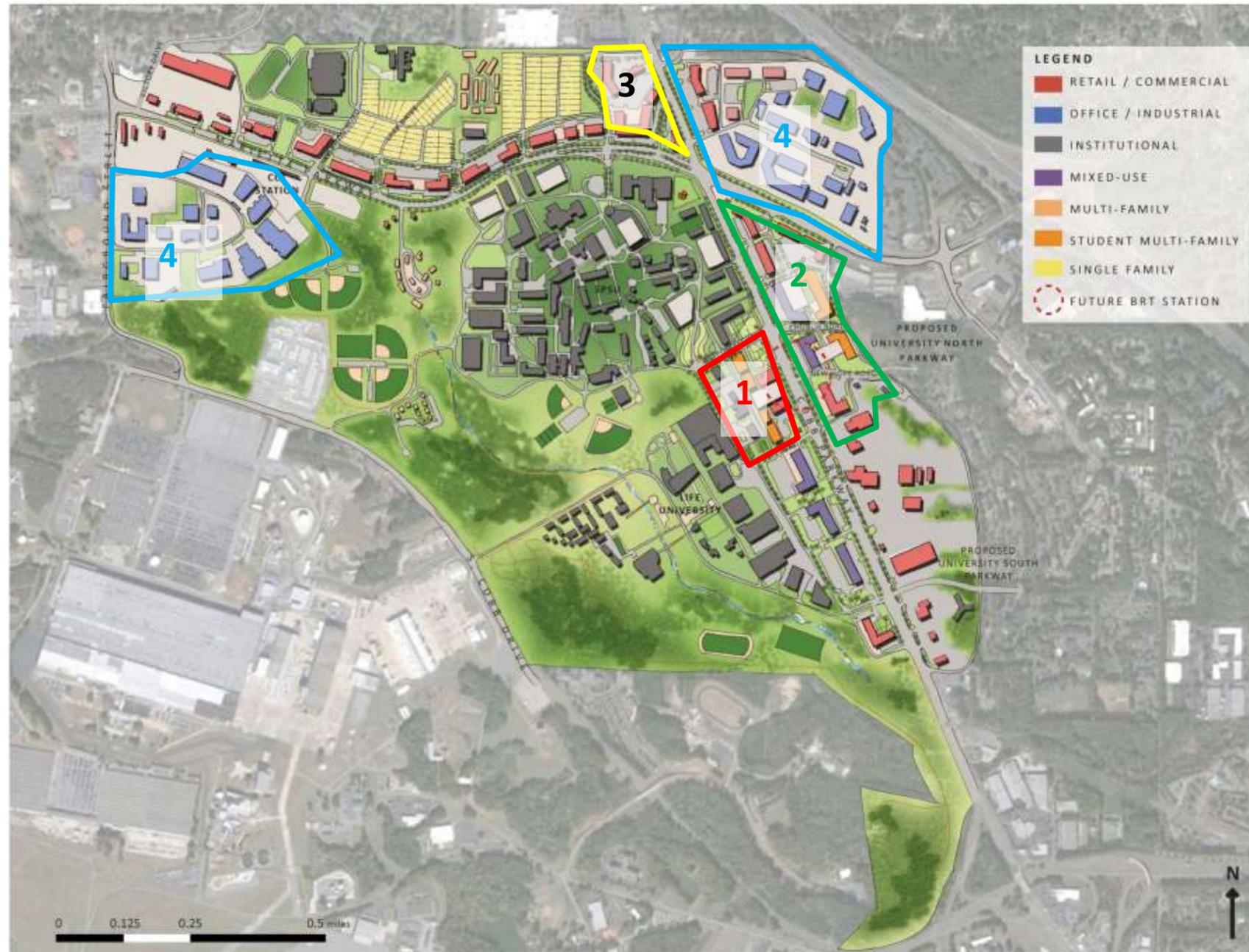
**Existing Conditions:** The area proposed for University Square currently includes a mix of retail uses, the AMF Marietta Lanes bowling alley, the aging Marietta Hotel, an independent car dealer and a vacant parcel. There are three streets that traverse the area connecting Cobb Parkway/US 41 to Wylie Road.



Source: [www.bioconferqence.gatech.edu](http://www.bioconferqence.gatech.edu)

Opened in 2003, Technology Square is an education, research, hospitality, office and retail project that occupies over 5 blocks and has spurred a thriving high-tech corridor in Midtown Atlanta. The project which has revitalized an area of deteriorated and abandoned buildings is a result of public-private partnerships between Georgia Tech and the development community.

Figure 4.2 Redevelopment Node Location Map





Proposed Plan: The heart of University Square, located directly across from University Village, will be redeveloped in a manner that mirrors uses in the University Village on the western side of US 41. The area to the north, encompassing the southeast corner of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 intersection will become a village-style commercial-retail center. To improve connectivity, the development will be laid out along a traditional grid-style network of internal streets between Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Wylie Road. Parking will be accommodated in front of buildings fronting on Cobb Parkway/US 41, with the majority of parking located along the internal streets and in internal lots and parking decks. In total, this area will contain eleven buildings; across from University Village will be two, four-story, mixed-use retail/residential buildings fronting Cobb Parkway/US 41 with a third five-story residential structure located to the rear. The retail village will contain eight single-story buildings ranging in size from 12,000 to 40,000 sq. ft. When completed, the area will contain approximately 258,000 sq. ft. of retail uses and 440 student-oriented residential units.

Project Timing: It is anticipated that University Square would redevelop subsequent to University Village, potentially in the 2015-2017 time frame. Build-out would occur in stages with completion by the end of the study period in 2020.

Project Requirements: Like the University Center west of Cobb Parkway/US 41, successful development of the east side will also require appropriate provisions for mixed-use development. Also key will be the construction of safe pedestrian crossings of the Cobb Parkway/US 41. The construction of the proposed BRT station would provide these crossings, but the timing of the BRT station and this development may not coincide, so interim at grade crossings might need to be provided. The construction of the new University Parkway North roadway should also be completed before the development of this node, as it would help improve connectivity and visibility to potential visitors to the area. The proposed housing in this area will be university related, so close coordination with the two universities will be needed to ensure that the proper student market is accommodated.

### **Node 3: Northwest Corner**

The redesign of the northwest corner of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 intersection is critical to increasing roadway safety and creating a signature arrival statement for those entering the district from the north.

Existing Conditions: This area is currently a mix of smaller commercial buildings and the Marietta Diner, a local landmark and favorite local eating establishment.

**Proposed Plan:** The area will be redeveloped to include a new single-story 52,000 sq. ft. commercial building facing South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 between Martin Court and White Avenue. The Marietta Diner, an area landmark, will remain in place with parking and circulation improvements made to its surroundings and a new 24,000 sq. ft. single-story commercial building located to its rear. A 20,000 sq. ft. commercial building and gateway signage will be located in the triangle area bounded by White Avenue, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, and Cobb Parkway/US 41.

**Project Timing:** It is anticipated that the Northwest Corner will begin redevelopment after University Village and University Square, potentially in the 2017-2018 timeframe, and would be completed by the end of the planning period in 2020.

**Project Requirements:** Because the properties are currently zoned commercial and are occupied, redevelopment of this corner will have initiated by private investment, though public investment into operational improvements of the roadway intersection and the possible construction of some gateway feature would help improve the look and commercial viability of the intersection which in turn should lead to private investment.

#### **Node(s)4: University R & D Park / Technology Center**

To further solidify the character of the area as a university district, it is recommended that two of the study area's positive industrial/office anchors be rebranded: the American Business Center, located at the northeast corner of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41, and Commerce Park, located at South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Fairground Street, as centers for innovation and job creation.

**Existing Conditions:** Both the American Business Center and Commerce Park are a mix of older and newer light industrial and flex type buildings. In the area of the American Business Center there are some parcels containing incompatible uses (single-family residences).

**Proposed Plan:** These areas will remain relatively the same as today, undergoing some "branding" in terms of signage and architectural and landscape enhancements to highlight their ties to the universities. Limited redevelopment will be accommodated to the north of the American Business Center at the intersection of Cobb Parkway / US 41 and White Avenue/Banberry Road. At this location, the grouping of smaller commercial structures facing Cobb Parkway/US 41 will be replaced by two single-story commercial-retail buildings at 20,000 sq. ft. each and the



www.jmiller17.hubpages.com

The Marietta Diner will continue to serve as a hub of activity, and great late-night dining option for the University District.

industrial area behind this development would be developed with three flex office/industrial buildings totaling 65,000 sq. ft.

Project Timing: Rebranding of these areas could be initiated immediately in late 2013 as the universities expand into them for commuter student class room space. The goal would be full integration by 2020.

Project Requirements: Properties in this area are currently zoned light industrial; however, there are three non-compatible single-family residential properties that would be redeveloped and a few commercially zoned properties fronting the east side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120.

### **Long-term Redevelopment Areas**

It is anticipated that redevelopment will continue to spread along the study area's corridors after the catalyst node projects described above are underway. Additional redevelopment along US 41 will include a cluster of two-story mixed use buildings adjacent to Life University. To draw the core values of Life University out onto the Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridor it is anticipated that these buildings will include health and wellness focused retail spaces on the first floor. Office space on the second floor will be appropriate for a combination of chiropractic and other medical services. The buildings will include approximately 40,000 sq. ft. each of new retail and office space. Parking will be accommodated throughout the site in various ways. A one-way access aisle and at a minimum 2 rows of parking provided between the building facades and the 8'-10' multi-use trail planned for the western side of the Cobb Parkway/US41.

Redevelopment should also occur on South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 west of the SPSU entrance. Changes will be limited to the north side of the roadway, as the university and the large Cobb Community Transit Marietta Transfer Station for the majority of land on the southern side. Due to the narrow depth of the parcels this redevelopment will likely be limited to replacement of the aged commercial strip centers along the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 frontage with new retail structures. These buildings might also accommodate some small offices. In either case, the site design and building orientation should contribute to an active pedestrian environment; uses that are auto-oriented such as fast food drive-thru restaurants would not be appropriate. Another option for spurring redevelopment along South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 would be to consolidate the frontage parcels with the lots



<http://www.johnjacksonmasonry.com>

The Stanford University Auxiliary Library is located in an industrial park separated from the University, but the design quality and environmental harmony associated with the University are maintained.

behind to create deeper development sites. These larger sites might accommodate institutional uses coordinated with or complimentary to the universities and/or senior oriented housing.

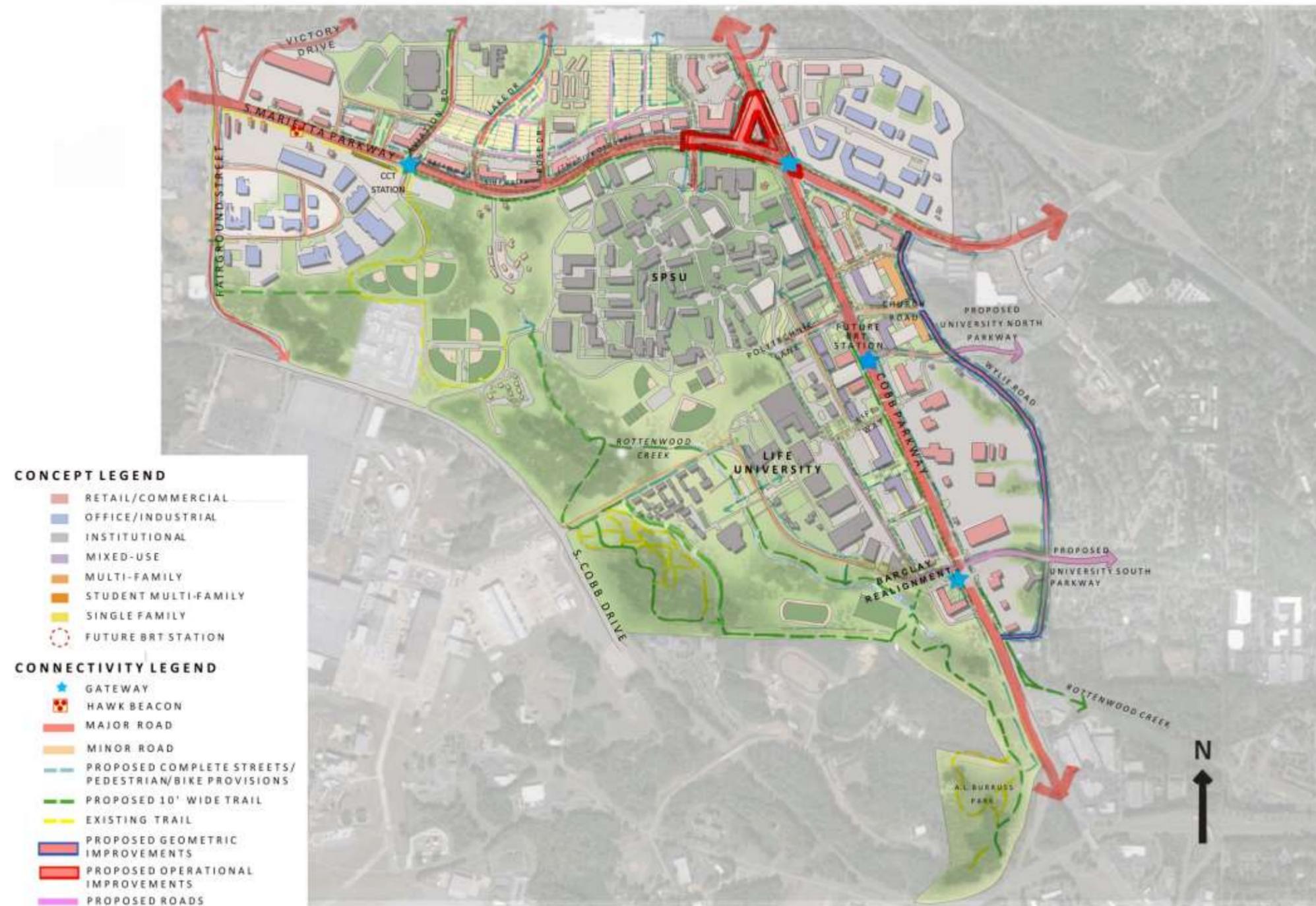
### 4.3 Connectivity Plan

The Connectivity Plan (**Figure 4.3: Connectivity Plan**) illustrates the future transportation system network for the MU<sup>2</sup> or the framework upon the Concept Plan is built. It identifies not only the alignment of future roadways, but also trails, sidewalks and transit facilities. The Connectivity Plan was critical in the development of the Action Plan presented in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**, where detailed descriptions of the future roadways and trails are included.

The concept of “complete streets” is integral to the vision for the study area. These are roadways that are designed to accommodate multi-modes of transportation in the same right-of-way including: cars, pedestrians, cyclists and transit vehicles. **Figure 4.4 Proposed Street Cross-section for South Marietta Parkway/SR 120**, is a prime example of this. Note the multi-use path on the south side of the road, and a separate sidewalk on the north. To accomplish the concept of “complete streets” several of the area’s roadways are proposed to be upgraded and improved including Polytechnic Lane, Wylie Road, South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, Cobb Parkway/US 41 and two new road connections between Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Franklin Road known as University Parkways, North and South. The typical sidewalk in the area is proposed to be 5 foot wide which is consistent with City of Marietta’s standards.

The Connectivity Plan also shows an extensive network of trails running through the study area, linking key destinations both inside and outside of the MU<sup>2</sup>. The central spine of this network is the Rottenwood Creek Trail that would eventually link trail systems around Kennesaw Mountain and along the Chattahoochee River. The typical trail section in the study area is proposed to be 10 feet wide and, where appropriate, have lighting and call boxes. Wayfinding signage will be needed to help guide users.

Figure 4.3: Connectivity Plan

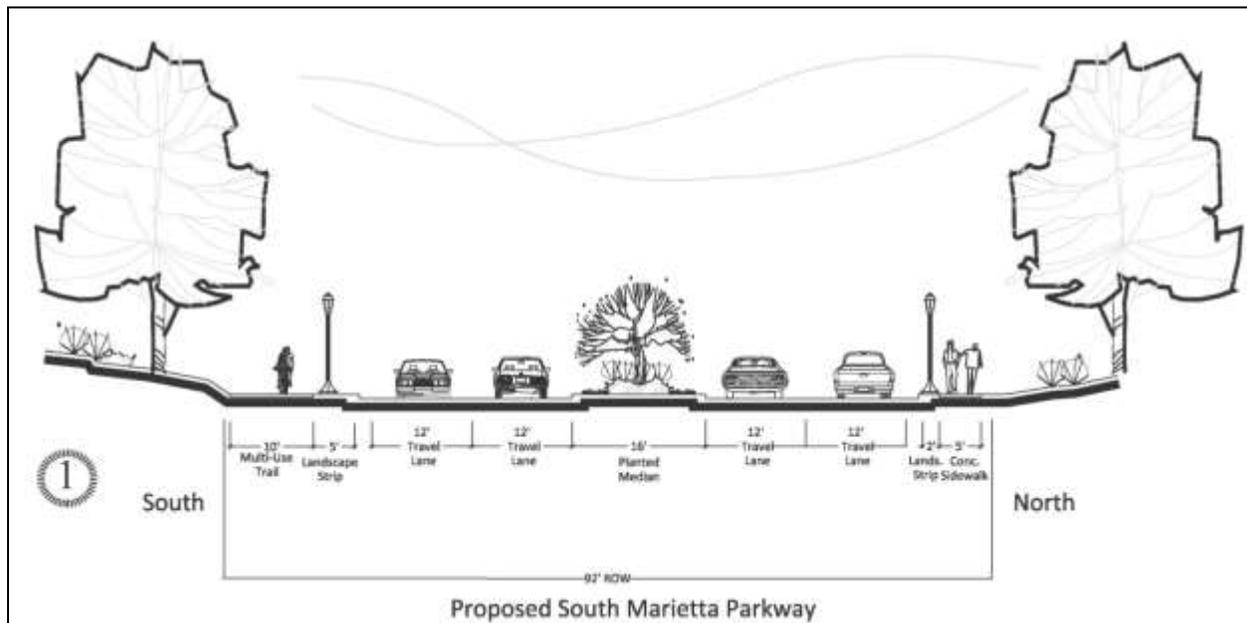


**Marietta University Enhancement District LCI**  
 Transportation and Connectivity Map  
JUNE 14, 2013

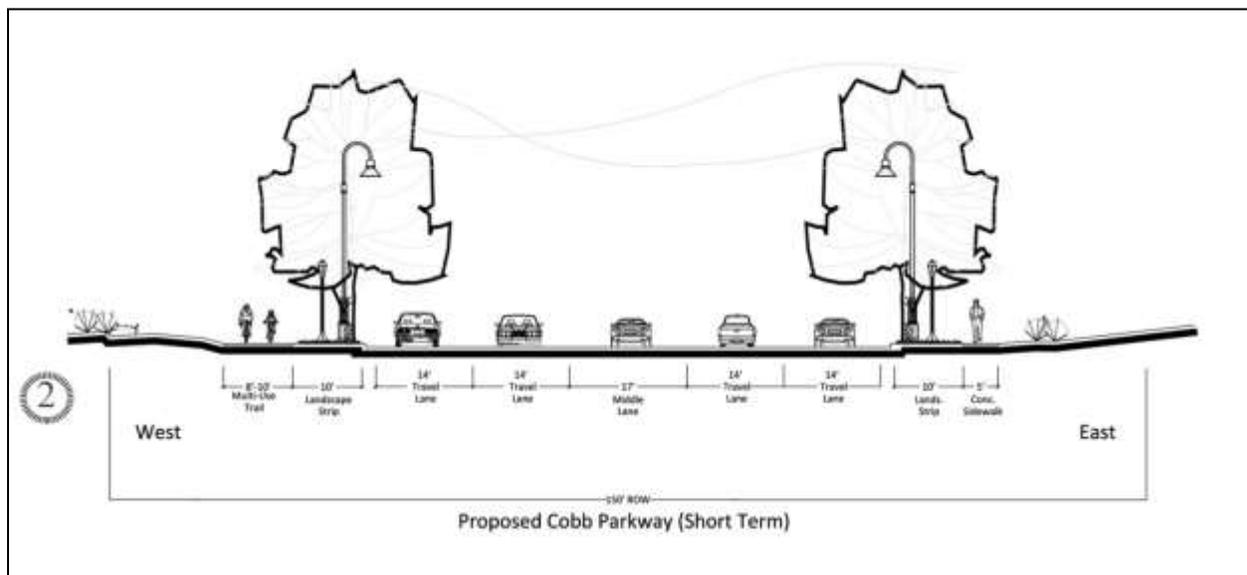
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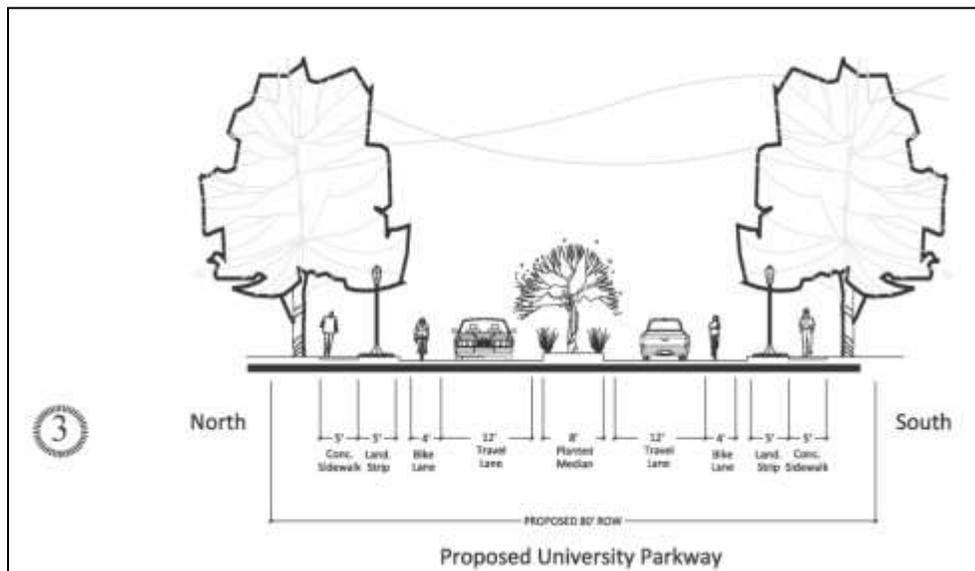
**Figure 4.4: Proposed Street Cross-section for South Marietta Parkway/SR 120**



**Figure 4.5: Proposed Street Cross-section for Cobb Parkway/US 41**



**Figure 4.6: Proposed Street Cross-section for University Parkways, North and South**



### 4.4 Likely Market Response

Over the next 25 years, the employment and residential demographics will change in the Study Area as growth continues, generating demand for new housing, office and industrial development, as well as demand for new commercial development to meet the needs of new students, residents and employees in the Study Area. Specifically, as the private sector market helps to meet the residential and commercial demands of the students, faculty and staff of the growing universities in the MU<sup>2</sup>, along with public infrastructure investment, the area will begin to offer new real estate product types heretofore unseen in this portion of the Atlanta region. As this transformation takes hold, new demand will come from outside the study area and the Market Area will grow. The combination of the universities and the growing outside markets will allow the vision of this LCI plan to succeed.

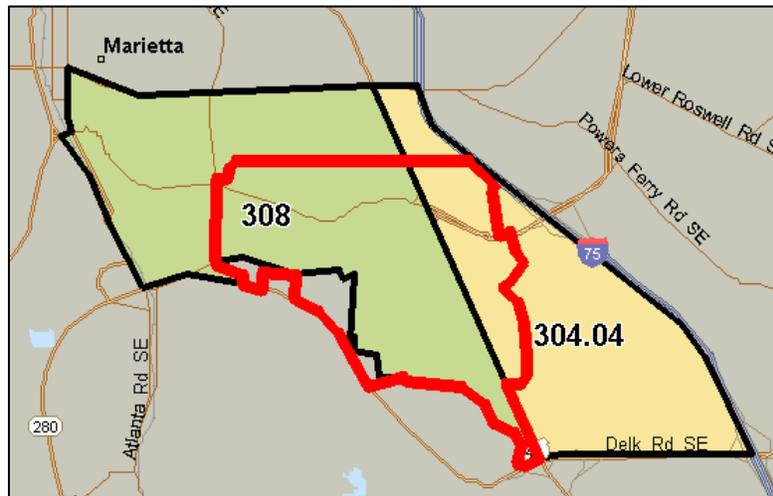
**Table 4.1: Market Response Projection based on the Concept Plan, New Development**

Node	New Retail	Student Housing	New Office/Industrial
1: University Center	83,200 sq. ft.	134 units	NA
2: University Square	258,000 sq. ft.	520 units	NA
3: NE Corner	106,000 sq. ft.	NA	NA
4: University R & D Park/Technology Center	40,000 sq. ft.	NA	65,000 sq. ft.

## 4.5 Anticipated Growth

The following forecasts are based on the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) population, household and employment forecasts for the Atlanta region. It assumes that the study area will continue to capture growth in the larger Market Area. For the purpose of this analysis, the Market Area was defined as the two Census Tracts encompassing the study area: 308, 304.04 (see map below).

**Figure 4.6: Census Tracts within the MU<sup>2</sup>**



Because the majority of the Study Area is built out, future growth will come from infill development and redevelopment of existing land uses. This redevelopment can take many forms and densities. Therefore, multiple projections for the study area have been developed.

- The first, called “Expected Growth” uses projections from national data providers based on the recent history of population and household growth in the area. This growth has been traditionally slower in the study area than in the Market Area and is projected to continue to grow extremely slowly if current conditions persist.
- The second, “Proportional Growth,” assumes that the study area will grow at roughly the same pace as the Market Area, maintaining the same proportion of population, households and employment that exist currently.
- The third and final scenario, called “Accelerated Growth” assumes that through redevelopment efforts like the LCI, the overall growth of the on-campus populations of SPSU and Life University, incentives provided by the City, the study area will capture a higher proportion of future growth.

The Market Area is projected to grow from a population of 16,008 in 2013 to 21,304 in 2038, a total change of 5,296 residents or 33% over the 25-year period. In 2013, the study area’s population was 2,444, or 15% of the Market Area. Assuming current growth and development

patterns the area is expected to add less than 300 people over the next 25 years. If only small changes in the development pattern were to come to fruition, “Proportionate Growth” shown in the table below, could be expected. This would mean the study area would increase to a population of 3,253 in 2038, an increase of 33%. Assuming accelerated growth for the study area, the study area would increase its proportion of the Market Area population from 15% to 18%, with a population of 3,754 in 2038, an increase of 1,310 people or 54%.

**Table 4.2: Population Forecast 2013-2038**

	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038	Change 2013- 2038	% Change
Market Area	16,008	18,829	20,298	20,864	21,170	21,304	5,296	33.1%
Study Area								
Expected Growth		2.3%	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.3%		
% of Market Area	15.3%	13.3%	12.6%	12.6%	12.7%	12.9%		
Population	2,444	2,500	2,557	2,619	2,681	2,743	299	12.2%
Proportional Growth		17.6%	7.8%	2.8%	1.5%	0.6%		
% of Market Area	15.3%	15.3%	15.3%	15.3%	15.3%	15.3%		
Population	2,444	2,875	3,099	3,186	3,232	3,253	809	33.1%
Accelerated Growth		19.7%	16.9%	2.8%	3.2%	3.5%		
% of Market Area	15.3%	15.5%	16.8%	16.9%	17.1%	17.6%		
Population	2,444	2,926	3,420	3,517	3,628	3,754	1,310	53.6%

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Nielsen, BAG

## Households

The Market Area is projected to grow from 5,519 households in 2013 to 7,656 households in 2038, a total change of 2,137 households or 39% over the 25-year period. In 2013, there were 513 households in the Study Area, or 9.3% of the Market Area. Assuming current growth and development patterns the area is expected to add only 35 households over the next 25 years.

- Assuming “Proportionate Growth” for the study area, it would increase from to 712 households in 2038, an increase of 199 households.
- Assuming “Accelerated Growth,” the Study Area would increase its proportion of the Market Area households to 15.9%, increasing the Study Area to 1,215 households in 2038, an increase of 702 households, or 137%. This strong household growth rate will occur as higher-quality housing options greatly increase in the study area, and as the university campuses expand and allow a higher number of resident students. We expect that this higher-quality development will drastically impact the number of persons-per-household, which currently is near five persons-per-households. In the “Accelerated Growth” scenario the figure drops to just over three persons-per-household, which is more in accordance with the Market Area and larger region.

**Table 4.3: Household Forecast 2013-2038**

	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038	Change 2013-2038	% Change
Market Area	5,519	6,068	6,487	6,821	7,217	7,656	2,137	38.7%
Study Area								
Expected Growth		1.2%	0.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%		
% of Market Area	9.3%	8.6%	8.1%	7.8%	7.5%	7.2%		
Households	513	519	523	531	540	548	35	6.8%
Proportional Growth		9.9%	6.9%	5.1%	5.8%	6.1%		
% of Market Area	9.3%	9.3%	9.3%	9.3%	9.3%	9.3%		
Households	513	564	603	634	671	712	199	38.7%
Accelerated Growth		30.1%	25.6%	13.7%	13.2%	12.8%		
% of Market Area	9.3%	11.0%	12.9%	14.0%	14.9%	15.9%		
Households	513	667	838	952	1,077	1,215	702	136.9%

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Nielsen, BAG

### Employment

The Market Area is projected to grow from 17,003 jobs in 2013 to 23,946 jobs in 2038, a total change of 6,943 jobs or 41% over the 25-year period. In 2013, there were 4,185 jobs in the Study Area, or 24.6% of the Market Area.

- Assuming proportionate growth for the Study Area, it would increase to 5,894 jobs to in 2038, an increase of 1,709 jobs.
- Assuming accelerated growth, the Study Area would increase its proportion of the Market Area jobs from 24.6% to 26.3%, increasing the Study Area to 6,293 jobs in 2038, an increase of 2,108 jobs or 50%.

**Table 4.4: Employment Forecast 2013-2038**

	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038	Change 2013-2038	% Change
Market Area	17,003	18,434	19,773	21,052	22,457	23,946	6,943	40.8%
Study Area								
Proportionate Growth								
% of Market Area	24.6%	24.6%	24.6%	24.6%	24.6%	24.6%		
Employment	4,185	4,537	4,867	5,181	5,527	5,894	1,709	40.8%
Accelerated Growth								
% of Market Area	24.6%	26.5%	26.4%	26.3%	26.3%	26.3%		
Employment	4,185	4,888	5,218	5,532	5,902	6,293	2,108	50.4%

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Nielsen, BAG



## 5. Implementation Program

The City of Marietta, Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU), and Life University, together with local residents, businesses and stakeholders spent several months planning for the future of the Marietta University Enhancement District. The resulting plan includes ambitious goals for the area – including extensive infrastructure improvements to enhance mobility for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians throughout the corridor, as well as private redevelopment designed to create a live, work, play environment that is welcoming to students, residents and thriving businesses. The following sections discuss potential implementation strategies to ensure that the community’s vision for the area is realized.

### 5.1 Overview

This chapter presents an implementation plan comprised of implementation strategies, a short term work program, and recommendations for policy changes. This plan is intended to be a living document, one that will be updated regularly and adjusted as conditions change. It will not be implemented overnight, and will take many



The Village at Townpark is an example of mixed-use development that could be successful in the study area



*Successful implementation of this study will require the coordinated efforts of key players, the efficient use of financial tools, and strategic public and private investment.*

*Redevelopment of the study area will not happen overnight. The timing depends on number of key factors including availability of funding, strength of the overall economy, level of commitment to implementation by key stakeholders.*



*Portion of the Transportation and Connectivity Project Map*

years of leadership and commitment on the part of area stakeholders to make it a reality. In addition, the plan should be regularly revisited to ensure that it remains on track or that changes need to be made in order to meet current and future market demands.

## 5.2 Implementation Strategies

### 5.2.1 Land Use Strategies

Despite a land use framework that supports the transformation of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 from auto-dependent strip-style commercial corridors into boulevards accommodating of pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles and a mix of uses including retail along with services, housing and public spaces – redevelopment in this form has not occurred. This may be in part due to some conflicts between the vision for the area expressed in the city’s Comprehensive Plan policies and the current zoning of the parcels. The Community Retail Commercial (CRC) that applies to nearly all of the Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridor and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 corridor west of US 41 precludes all forms of residential development, which is vital for creating the “active” mixed-use corridor desired.

To resolve the conflict between current zoning and the desired redevelopment of the study area, a number of regulatory changes and enhancements are necessary. These changes will support a balanced mixed-use district that is accessible for many modes of transportation and capitalizes on the presence of two major institutions of higher learning. With the coordinated support of the universities and the City of Marietta, the new development regulations proposed for the MU<sup>2</sup> study area will provide the guidance necessary for transforming the corridors.

#### Land Use Policies

Key policies designed to guide the development of a more walkable and active environment along the study area’s major corridors, include:

- Existing strip commercial properties, particularly in locations on Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 west of Cobb Parkway/US 41 are representations of typical “sprawl” development and contribute to the lack of character, or unique differentiators in the area. These strip centers should be redeveloped to create a more pedestrian friendly environment that is accessible to the large “captive” user group represented by the university students and employees. This will likely require proactive participation by the universities and the City of Marietta to provide economic development incentives for property owners or development investors.
- New development should seek to provide a mix of commercial uses that provide community-oriented retail goods and services; such as restaurants, health and personal care, clothing, computer and electronics, convenience services within walking distance of each other.

- New development on the west side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 should connect to and provide visibility into the university campuses.
- New development in the University Village and University Square should be mixed use, preferable within the same building – i.e., “vertical mixed-use”. This will be particularly important as the area will be proximate to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station in the long-term and establishing a base for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) will ensure support for transit.
- New development should seek to improve mobility within and among sites by providing continuous pedestrian routes and developing a grid-style network of internal streets as appropriate. “Super-block” development (blocks greater than 500ft./frontage) is a hallmark of suburban car oriented development; the long stretches discourage the pedestrian activity and connectivity that are typical to college districts. Achieving this type of connectivity will require cross access easements between developments and will open the redevelopment sites to the public realm. This is a positive factor in encouraging activity within the district, but can lead to public-private issues of liability. Dedicating the new streets to the City of Marietta is a solution to this potential issue.
- The area’s parks, A. L. Burruss Nature Park and Wildwood Preserve, combined with the green areas of the Life and SPSU campuses, provide green space at the core of the study area and its southern tip. However, the area’s major corridors are generally lacking in vegetation, creating an uninviting environment and discouraging people from lingering in the area. Redevelopment along the corridors should enhance the environment of the area by providing shade trees, generous site landscaping, plazas and other gathering places.
- In order to increase the redevelopment viability of the narrow parcels along the northern edge of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, parcel consolidation should be encouraged. If not addressed, the current parcel depth may lead to redevelopment of the corridor with auto-oriented fast-food restaurants; the drive-thru facilities associated with this type of land use do not support a pedestrian-oriented district.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS**

The City’s Comprehensive Plan classifies the bulk of the study area within the University, Corridor (Cobb Parkway/US 41) and South Marietta Parkway Activity Center (South Marietta Parkway/SR 120) character areas, as discussed earlier in the Land Use section of the Baseline Assessment in **Chapter 2**.

The **University Character Area should be expanded** to encompass those parts of the study area classified as Corridor and South Marietta Parkway Activity Center and could be renamed University Activity Center, or something similar, to capture the physical happenings of this area. This would allow the city to combine the purposes found in the current Corridor and South Marietta Parkway Activity Center descriptions with the purposes of the University area to

identify the area as a unified district or activity center in its own right, thus creating a template for the pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use environment envisioned.

It is also recommended that **a portion of the study area north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and east of Cobb Parkway/US 41 be reclassified from Corridor to Office/Warehouse**. This change would make the character area designation consistent with the light industrial flex spaces currently present at American Business Center. It will also further support them as a stable presence in the study area and encourage the incorporation of additional research and development type uses here and in Commerce Park (already designated as Office/Warehouse) as these areas become more integrated with the universities.

**The City's current "future land use plan" supports the vision of the area depicted in the Concept Plan.** The parcels along Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120, with the exception of the Cobb Community Transfer (CCT) Marietta Transfer Center, are classified as Community Activity Center. This designation specifically recommends that older auto-oriented areas become more pedestrian friendly and states MXD (mixed use) as a appropriate zoning classification with the caveat that residential be provided in mixed-use traditional or "new urbanist" type communities.

*It is important to note that the housing to be developed in the University Center and University Village areas will be specifically geared to university students, and preferably developed as a public private partnership between the institutions and private student housing developers. The residential redevelopment in the area north of South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 west of Cobb Parkway/US 41 should be medium density (greater than three units per acre) single-family residences to provide opportunities for homeownership within the district and oriented towards ownership opportunities.*

## **ZONING AMENDMENTS**

Despite the general support of the Concept Plan included in the City's Character Area Map and Future Land Use Plan described above, the study area's current zoning presents a road block to redevelopment as it provides very few opportunities for the mix of uses recommended in the Concept Plan, including provisions for residential development, or the connectivity and pedestrian-oriented environment outlined in the Connectivity Plan.

There are seven zoning classifications that currently exist in the study area including office-institutional, light industrial, three categories of multi-family residential and a small number of properties zoned single-family residential. **Figure 2.13, Zoning Map** identifies the predominate zoning classification for the parcels along the Cobb Parkway/US 41 and South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 corridors

While the general purpose of the zoning district is consistent with the Concept Plan, the district's permitted uses do not support the corridor's adjacent university community.

Additionally, the CRC (Community Retail Commercial) zoning does not address the quality of the pedestrian experience or built environment, with the exception of buildings larger than 40,000 square feet occupied by a single tenant.

To better define the uses that would support the university community, and to provide guidance for developing an attractive district that supports a variety of modes of transportation, **development of a zoning overlay is recommended. The overlay should apply to those parcels with frontage along South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 within the boundaries of the MU<sup>2</sup> study area and follow the same structure and administrative process that the city has established with the Commercial Corridor Design Overlay District (CCOD).** Like the CCOD, the MU<sup>2</sup> Overlay District would include mandatory and optional development requirements. The optional elements would be assigned a points value with a minimum score required for development approval.

The MU<sup>2</sup> Overlay District could be modeled on the existing CCOD and should address the following:

#### *Land Use Pattern Considerations*

- Additional Permitted Uses – The following uses excluded for CRC should be specifically permitted within designated areas of the MU<sup>2</sup> Overlay:
  - Student Housing
  - Senior Housing
- Prohibited Uses. There are a number of auto-oriented uses permitted by the CRC that are incompatible with the vision of this study and should therefore be prohibited with the overlay. Existing businesses would be grandfathered in and would not be affected as long as the structures are not rebuilt, altered, or repaired if such construction would exceed 50 percent of its replacement cost, but new ones should not be permitted:
  - Automobile repair shops
  - Automobile service stations
  - Car washes
  - Car maintenance facilities
  - Commercial landscapers
  - Mini warehouses and self-storage facilities
  - Adult entertainment uses (current permitted as a special use, but should be specifically prohibited in the overlay)
- Use Limitations. There are a number of uses that should be limited in terms of their impact on adjacent uses:
  - Residential rental units shall be restricted to student and senior housing
  - Outdoor storage is prohibited
- Bulk and Area Requirements:

- Allow an increased floor area ratio (FAR) for mixed use projects; a maximum FAR of 2.0 is suggested to permit for higher densities.
- **Mandatory Elements:**
  - Parking structures or garages fronting South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 or Cobb Parkway/US 41 should be designed so as to disguise the appearance of the parking garage or structure and to have an exterior finish and facade design keeping with the quality of finish and design of the remaining structures in the same development.
  - Projects should be designed and operated so as not to adversely impact surrounding uses with noise, light, or vibration.
  - Loading and service areas should not be visible from any public street and should not front South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 or Cobb Parkway/US 41.
  - Building or site mechanical equipment should be screened from public view.

#### *Site Design Considerations*

- **Mandatory Elements** - recommended to include those listed in Tier B of the CCOD with the following exceptions and additions:
  - The requirements of section 712.08G of the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance should be modified as follows for application within the overlay district: The planted strip/border areas should not be required for public street frontages when an 8 – 10' planted landscape strip is included in any streetscape improvement planned for or in place along South Cobb Parkway/SR 120 or Cobb Parkway/US 41.
- **Optional Elements** – recommended to include those listed in Tier B of the CCOD with the following exceptions and additions:
  - Curb cuts should be limited one per 500 feet of frontage along South Cobb Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41, but additional curb cuts/access points from other public rights-of-way should be encouraged.
  - For side yard parking, landscape buffers should not be required; however, point(s) should be removed when parking areas lie on either side of a property boundary without inter-parcel access and a shared parking agreement.
  - Bonus point(s) for increased landscape strip should not be included due to the shallow depth of most parcels in the MU<sup>2</sup> study area.

#### *Building Design Considerations*

- **Mandatory Elements** - recommended to include those listed in Tier B of the CCOD with the following exceptions and additions:
  - Buildings should be designed to a pedestrian scale; ground floors should not be oversized.
  - One story buildings should be permitted.
  - A maximum building height of four stories should be permitted.

- A provision for garages is not necessary.
- Optional Elements - recommended to include those listed in Tier B of the CCOD with the following exceptions and additions:
  - Roofing style does not need to be proscribed since there is no dominant style present on the corridor that needs to be emulated, however decorative cornices and occupied roofs should be encouraged.
  - All buildings with non-residential ground floor uses should be designed so that at least 50 percent of the ground floor incorporates entrances, windows, and other views into the building. Buildings that include ground floor residences should be designed to incorporate at least so that at least 30 percent of the ground floor incorporates entrances, windows, and other views into the building.
  - Residential buildings shall incorporate active uses, such as leasing offices, community rooms, fitness areas, etc. on the ground floor facing the primary street frontage ground floor.
  - A provision for historic buildings is not necessary.

#### *Streetscape Design Considerations*

- Streetscapes should be addressed in a manner consistent with the recommended typical sections provided in **Chapter 4, Vision and Conceptual Master Plan**.

In addition to a regulatory framework as outlined above, a set of illustrative **design guidelines** would provide graphic guidance to ensure that redevelopment within the MU<sup>2</sup> Overlay was consistent with the vision for the district outlined in this plan. Elements of the regulations that would benefit from illustration include:

- Streetscape treatments for the major corridors and new internal streets, including location and recommendations for street furniture, trees and other landscaping, and decorative elements.
- Site layout including building orientation, pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation routes, parking and service areas.
- Signage – recommendations for types and locations.
- Building massing and articulation.

## 5.2.2 Transportation Projects

Following are descriptions of the recommended transportation projects needed to implement this plan. **Figure 5.1: Transportation and Connectivity Enhancement Map**, identifies the location of these projects

### Proposed Trail Projects

**T1 A.L. Burruss Multi Use Trail** – This trail link would include a 10' wide hard surface trail with emergency call boxes every ¼ mile and directional signage. It would run from A.L. Burruss Park to the Life University Trail. It would also provide a link for people wanting to use the larger soft surface trail system to the existing parking lot in this park.

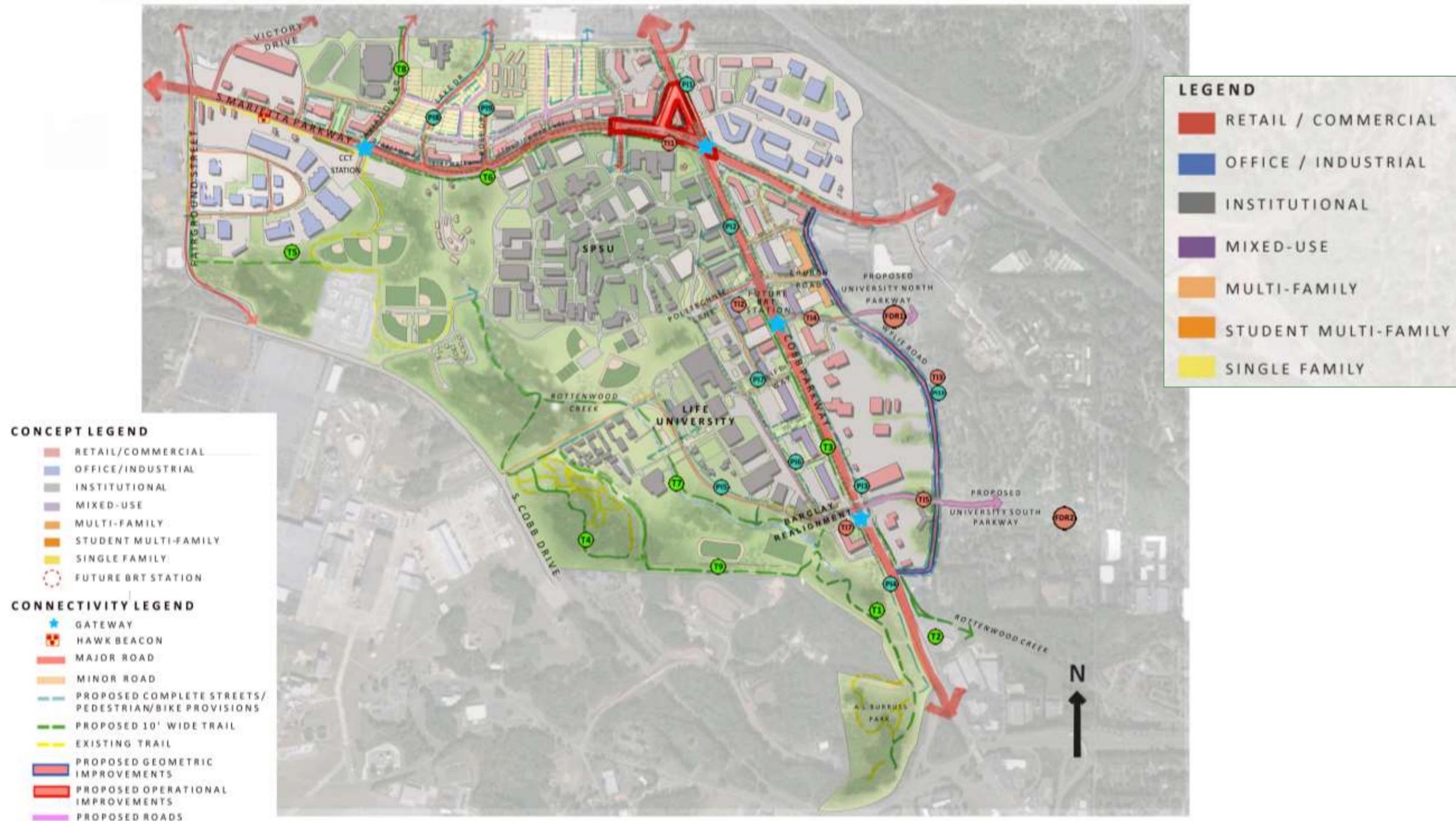
**T2 Rottenwood Creek Trail, Phase 1: Cobb Parkway Segment** – A proposed 10' wide concrete trail along the east side of Cobb Parkway to Barclay Circle will provide access to businesses and safe pedestrian and bicycle access to bus transit in this area. This proposed segment will have pedestrian lighting and directional signage. It will be separated from the road by 5'-8' planted tree landscape strip to improve safety and aesthetics. Pedestrian crossing signal improvements will be needed at the lighted intersection.

**T3 Cobb Parkway /BRT Station Multi Use Trail** – An additional 10' wide concrete trail along the west side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 from Barclay Circle north to the proposed BRT station location. This trail will provide a critical link between users of the new BRT line, local businesses and the universities and the overall trail system. This segment includes pedestrian lighting and directional signage, separation from the road by 5'-8' planted tree landscape strip to improve safety and aesthetics.

**T4 Wildwood Park Multi-Use Trail Connector** – A proposed 10' wide concrete trail along the west side of Wildwood Park utilizing existing soft surface trail routes. The trail will link to the dog park and parking area at Wildwood Park. Directional signage to be provided.

**T5 South Fairground Street Multi-use Trail** – A new segment of 10' wide trail along Fairground Street on the east side of the roadway will connect with the recently completed trail on the west side of Fairground Street in front of Larry Bell Park/ Perry Parham Park Ballfields. Project to include a 5' separation from the road, including landscaping and directional signage. Improvements for the pedestrian crossing signal will be needed and some R/W will be required along the roadway. This trail also includes approximately 1,700 linear feet of trail off the road along City property ( Kudzu field) to connect to the recently constructed University Trail in Aviation Park.

Figure 5.1: Transportation and Connectivity Project Map



**Marietta University Enhancement District LCI**  
 Transportation and Connectivity Project Map  
JUNE 14, 2013

JACOBS



**T6 SPSU South Marietta Parkway Multi Use Trail** – Upgrade the existing sidewalk to a 10' wide concrete trail and include a 5' separation from the roadway. This will provide safe and improved access between transit, local businesses and SPSU as it will connect along the south side of the roadway from the CCT Marietta Transfer Center to Cobb Parkway/US 41. Trail improvements to include call boxes every ¼ mile, pedestrian lighting, and directional signage. Additionally streetscape improvements will include a 16' wide planted median in the roadway.

**T7 Rottenwood Creek Trail, Phase 2 – Life University Segment** – A new section of trail that will follow along Rottenwood Creek, connecting University Segment at SPSU/ Alumni Drive to the north and the Life University Trail segment to the south. The proposed trail would be a 10' wide concrete trail with directional signage and call boxes every ¼ mile. This will be a scenic route for both recreational and transportation purposes. Right of way (ROW) will be needed from Life University to construct this portion of the trail. A new and safe pedestrian/bicycle crossing at grade where the trail crosses Barclay Circle will be a part of this project.

**T8 Victory Trail** – From the north side of South Marietta Parkway, this project proposes an upgrade to the existing 6' wide sidewalk to a 10' wide concrete trail along the west side of Aviation Road. Where possible implement a 5' wide planted landscaping strip separation from the roadway. Right-of-way will be needed for this project.

**T9 Wildwood & A.L. Burruss Park Connector Trail** – A proposed trail segment located to the east of the Rottenwood Creek Trail – Life University Segment. It will follow along the west side of Wildwood Park and head south to the A.L. Burruss Trail. This proposed trail will offer both recreation and transportation uses and will include directional signage and emergency call boxes.

### Complete Streets/Proposed Pedestrian Improvement Projects

**PI1 Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements, Phase 1** – Proposed 5' wide sidewalks with 5'-10' separation from the roadway, pedestrian lighting and landscaping. To be constructed along the east and west sides of Cobb Parkway/US 41 from South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 to the northern boundary of the study area.

**PI2 Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements, Phase 2** – This project will improve conditions for pedestrians and transit users along the west side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 from Polytechnic Lane north to South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. This will include 5' wide sidewalks with a 5'-10' separation from the roadway, pedestrian lighting and landscaping in the 5'-8' buffer.

**PI3 Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements, Phase 3** – Proposed 5' wide sidewalks with 5'-10' separation from the roadway, pedestrian lighting and landscaping. To be constructed along the east side of Cobb Parkway/US 41 from the Barclay Circle Intersection at the south end to South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 at the north end.

**PI4 Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements, Phase 4** – This project will improve conditions for pedestrians and transit users along the west side of Cobb Parkway from Barclay Circle with a small sidewalk link at A.L. Burruss Park. This will include 5' wide sidewalks with a 5'-10' separation from the roadway, pedestrian lighting and landscaping in the 5'-10' buffer.

**PI5 Barclay Road Sidewalk Improvements** – There are gaps in the existing sidewalks along this roadway. This project includes proposed sidewalks of 5' adjacent to the roadway on the northern and eastern sides of the road. To include directional signage, lighting and landscaping. Right-of-way acquisition will be needed for this critical link for users from Life University and surrounding areas.

**PI6 Life Service Pedestrian Improvements** – New single 5' sidewalk route along the rear of businesses along Cobb Parkway and the Life University Campus. Will provide safe and comfortable access from Life University to businesses and proposed multi use buildings on Cobb Parkway/US 41. Right-of-way acquisition will be required.

**PI7 Life Way Road Pedestrian Improvements** – New 5' wide sidewalks on both sides of Life Way directly adjacent to the road with lighting and directional signage. Right-of-way acquisition will be required.

**PI8 Lake Drive Pedestrian Improvements** – There are existing sidewalks on the west side of this roadway. These proposed improvements would fill in gaps on the west side and add 5' wide sidewalks adjacent to the roadway on the east side of the road. Right-of-way acquisition may be required.

**PI9 Rose Drive Pedestrian Improvements** – Proposed 5' wide sidewalks adjacent to the road on the east side. Right-of-way acquisition will be required.

### Roadway Transportation Improvements

**TI1 South Marietta Parkway (SR 120) Signal Improvements**– This is a operational road project designed to improve the safety of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 and Cobb Parkway/US 41 Intersection. Project includes an additional left turn signal on eastbound South Marietta Pkwy/SR 120 at White Avenue, and signal timing at Cobb Pkwy (US 41 and Martin Court/ Technology Parkway (entrance to SPSU).

**TI2 Polytechnic Lane Complete Street** – This project will upgrade the existing Polytechnic Lane to a complete street from Hornet Drive to Cobb Pkwy/US 41. Project will include 5 foot sidewalks, bike lanes and a median.

**TI3 Wylie Road Realignment** – This is a roadway operation improvement designed to improve pedestrian safety and to help facilitate and divert truck traffic off of Cobb Parkway/US 41. The project would add 4' of ROW on west side of the roadway and 5' sidewalks on both sides.

**TI4 and FDR1 University North Parkway**– New complete street linking Cobb Parkway/US 41 with Franklin Road. A portion of the new road would be located within the boundaries of the Franklin-Delk Road LCI (FDR1) and so the pricing is split between the two portions. There would include a two lane roadway, with 12' travel lanes, a 8 ft planted median, 4' bike lanes in both directions, 5' landscape strip and 5' sidewalks on both sides with lighting.

**TI5 and FDR2 University South Parkway** – This will be a parallel road to the University North Parkway, with the same design. Again a portion of the new road is within the boundaries of the Franklin-Delk Road LCI (FDR2) and so the pricing is split between the two portions.

**TI6 Barclay Road realignment** – Roadway realignment to the north to line up with University Parkway South (Project TI5).

### Transit Improvements

1. Creation of the **University oriented CCT route** that would be a modification of Route 10 serving local universities and local destinations.
2. **BRT Station** at University Center. As described earlier this would be the creation of BRT station along or in the median of Cobb Parkway/US 41 at the proposed University Center. This will be a long range project, greater than 10-years, but will have a major benefit to the redevelopment efforts in the MU<sup>2</sup> study area

### 5.2.3 Other Strategies

Besides land use strategies and transportation investment, this plan recommends a number of key strategies related to organizational, investment priorities, and housing. These strategies are described in greater detail in the following section on Key Implementation Tasks, but include the following:

1. Creation an MU<sup>2</sup> Consortium or Task Force to lead the implementation of the plan.
2. Creation of parallel housing master plans by the two universities.
3. Consideration of expanding the boundaries of the current Franklin Road Tax Allocation District(TAD) or creating a new TAD for the MU<sup>2</sup> Area.
4. Creation of a partnership and co-branding opportunity with the adjacent business parks
5. Development of a funding plan to complete the trail system.
6. Joint ventures with local developers and the universities to create the University Village and develop student oriented housing.
7. Establish a Community Improvement District (CID) that could overlap the MU<sup>2</sup> and Franklin/Delk Road LCI study area boundaries. This initiative will unify the business community and provide a vision and objective for the area.

## 5.3 Key Implementation Tasks

The implementation of the MU<sup>2</sup>LCI plan will change the pattern of auto-oriented commercial strip development that characterizes so much of the Cobb Parkway/US 41 corridor by creating a university-focused mixed use district. As implemented, the plan would transform the feel and look of the area and differentiate it from its surroundings. Making this change gradually over a five to ten year period should result in a new, attractive and vibrant gateway into the larger Marietta community. It will also provide SPSU and Life Universities with an enhanced campus environment that will be appealing to its current and future students and a great place to both live and get an education. Implementing the master plan for the LCI area will be a complex multiyear task, since traffic volumes on Cobb Parkway/US 41 support comparatively high land values that make redevelopment more economically challenging. The implementation of the MU<sup>2</sup> master plan involves ten major tasks:

### 1. City Council approval of the LCI plan and adoption of land use strategies

The first step in the implementation process will be to secure City Council approval of the LCI. This is important because the approval of the plan provides a formal acknowledgement that the City endorses its vision for the area and is willing to make the commitments necessary to carry the plan into implementation. Following the adoption, the City needs to take action on recommended changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance, as described above under land use strategies.

### 2. Create an MU<sup>2</sup>Consortium or Task Force to lead the implementation of the plan

The City of Marietta and the two universities have already indicated, through their commitment to the LCI process, that they can work together towards an effective plan that benefits both the universities and the City of Marietta, and there is much to be gained by collaborating on a better future for this area of the city. We would urge the City and the universities to formalize this relationship and establish an on-going consortium, or task force, to work collaboratively over the next decade to get the key elements of the LCI plan implemented. In addition to the physical changes called for in the LCI plan there are opportunities to work together on transportation issues affecting the area, uniform signage and streetscaping, parks and trails and other areas of mutual benefit. From the City's perspective the goal will be to maximize the portion of the economic impact from the \$282 million in annual operations of the two universities on the City of Marietta. For the universities, working together with the City will enhance the attractiveness of its campuses and their surroundings and provide a more appealing environment for students to live and recreate as well as go to school. Both the City and the universities can have a 'win-win' outcome from their on-going efforts to implement the LCI plan

The MU<sup>2</sup> Consortium must meet on a regular basis to review the status on implementing the LCI, new activities and accomplishments and discuss any issues which have emerged that

impact the LCI area. The Consortium should be composed of city administrators, local elected officials and university officials who have a stake in the outcome of the effort. It is recommended that the Consortium have 5 to 8 permanent members, with the Mayor and the University presidents as ex-officio members, to provide evidence of the commitment by both institutions and the city to this effort at the highest level. The Consortium should also be involved in seeking LCI and other funding to support the implementation of the LCI plan.

### **3. SPSU and Life Universities focus on the campus quadrant**

In the implementation of the LCI plan it would be logical to assign the members of the Consortium with specific tasks and responsibilities that align with their overall interests and expertise. Accordingly, it would seem logical to have the two universities focus on the implementation of the portion of the LCI plan that deals with the portion of the Study Area around their campuses, to the West of Cobb Parkway/US 41 and south of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. Both universities are already working on implementing campus plans that would provide increased visibility and presence for their institutions on Cobb Parkway/US 41. They are also engaged in various campus housing initiatives to provide sufficient housing for expanding on-campus student living options.

We recommend the two universities and the City of Marietta focus on three key implementation tasks:

- Identify the site or sites for creating the initial mixed use campus village on the west side of Cobb Parkway/US 41. It may be possible to develop the mixed use project in phases or all on one site.
- Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to potential development partners to create the campus village. The universities can work with the development community to create a joint venture to create the campus village.
- Life University could consider a joint venture with an office developer to create a special office/health clinic facility facing onto Cobb Parkway/US 41 that could be a way for businesses to affiliate with Life University and provide a transitional land use replacing some of the unrelated retail activities between the University and Cobb Parkway/US 41. The focus of the facility could be to attract health-related businesses that desire proximity to Life and its programs.

### **4. The Universities create parallel housing master plans**

To help determine what type of additional student housing could be provided in the LCI area, an essential first step is for the universities to detail their future on-campus housing requirements and a timeline for when the new facilities will be needed. This will establish the parameters of what the universities see as the need for additional on-campus housing and what they have plans to fund themselves.

From the needs-analysis it should be possible to map out an assessment of student housing demand for both campuses and identify where there might be opportunities to close the gap on needed facilities that the universities don't intend to self-fund. Further, it should be possible to consider how other student housing development options could be used to provide the needed on-campus and off-campus housing facilities. The housing plan would consider three principal avenues to get the new units built:

- Housing development on-campus executed by one or both of the universities.
- Housing developed through a joint venture with a private company in the business of constructing and potentially managing student housing.
- Construction of student housing adjacent to the campuses, on non-university land, but affiliated with the universities to secure student demand for the project.

The goal at the end of this planning process is the development of a clear schedule of when self-funded university housing would be developed on the campuses, and what additional opportunities exist for creating additional housing through joint ventures or joint development arrangement, and the timing of those opportunities. Ideally some of the additional student housing demand could be accommodated at the University Square mixed-use development (discussed in the next section). From the City's perspective, as well as the universities, there needs to be agreement that all of the additional housing created in the early phases of the implementation plan should be university-affiliated in some manner and developed consistent with the housing master plans. The City's support for rental housing as part of the plan is only for units restricted to student or faculty occupancy.

### **5. The City takes the lead in facilitating the creation of University Square**

The second large redevelopment area would be the sites located on the east side of Cobb Parkway and south of the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120 that has been identified for the development of University Square, a mixed use retail and residential project. There are a number of key properties that would need to be acquired or optioned to assemble a site large enough to accommodate the first and second phase of the project. Without significant City involvement, it is unlikely that the plans for University Square can be achieved since few private developers want to take on the task or risk of land assembly for the project. It is suggested that the City take a lead role in the creation of University Square by implementing the following steps:

- Provide point of contact staff person support to the Consortium to help work on priority projects on an on-going basis.
- Explore, with the current land owners, their future plans for their property and whether they would be willing to sell their property as part of a larger land assembly.

- Depending on the results of the property owner discussions, consider optioning the desired site for a period of 12 months to allow the City time to find a developer interested in creating the University Square project.
- Consider expanding the boundaries of the current Franklin Road TAD or creating a new TAD for the MU<sup>2</sup>Area. The TAD could provide essential funding to create the structured parking and project infrastructure that will be required to create the level of density necessary to cover land costs and create a walkable pedestrian design for both the Campus Quadrant mixed use project and University Square.
- Conduct a developer solicitation to identify a master developer for the University Square project, let the developer close on the land options with the participating current land owners.
- Pursue LCI funding for initial projects designed to show a sense of momentum for the MU<sup>2</sup> LCI plan and its recommendations.
- Should the proposed City Redevelopment Bond issue be approved by voters in the fall, use a portion of those funds to pay for creation of two streets that would provide interparcel access to the properties in the study area and open up access to the larger parcels along Cobb Parkway.

#### **6. Create a partnership and co-branding opportunity with the adjacent business parks**

Given the science and technology focus of both universities and SPSU in particular, there is an opportunity to create a partnership and co-branding opportunity between the universities and the two adjacent business parks—American Business Center to the northeast of the campuses and Commerce Park to the west of SPSU. Both of these business/industrial centers could benefit from a marketing tie to the universities that would emphasize them as locations for businesses interested in the research and technology transfer opportunities associated with SPSU and Life University. In addition, SPSU currently has operations in the American Business Center, which along with presence of for-profit educational institutions, already provides the American Business Center with a differentiator from the many other industrial and business parks located along Cobb Parkway/US 41. We believe it would be beneficial for both the business parks and the universities to explore other areas of potential collaboration.

#### **7. Develop a funding plan to complete the trail system**

The LCI master plan calls for the extension of the trail system through the university campuses to link to the regional trail system in Marietta and Cobb County. This would provide a unique way to access and enjoy the campuses, would likely be very popular with the students and creates another way to link key parts of the Study Area together through greenways and trails and minimize the need to use the major commercial corridors. This is consistent with the emphasis on both campuses to create a more green and sustainable environment. The

expansion of the trail system would be a logical funding request for the LCI implementation funding, which could spark other investment in the area.

### **8. Further coordination between the City, the universities and CCT to identify and develop enhanced transit services to serve the area**

In the short-term the plan suggests continued coordination between the City of Marietta, SPSU, Life University, and Cobb Community Transit (CCT) on how to improve the existing transit options within the area. It was mentioned that the existing CCT route 10 has multiple stops along Cobb Parkway/US 41 resulting in approximately a two (2) hour bus ride into Midtown Atlanta. To address this concern, the partners identified the creation of a “University CCT” bus route that would link students and other transit patrons into Midtown Atlanta in shorter timeframe. This proposed route would stop only at major identified destinations to decrease travel time into Midtown Atlanta. The partners are looking into various avenues to address the concern and test out the demand of creating the “University CCT Route”.

One of the challenges of the plan is the difficulty in making strong pedestrian connections across both Cobb Parkway/US 41 and, to a lesser extent, the South Marietta Parkway/SR 120. These roads create major barriers that need to be mitigated in some way to allow for the easy passage and connectivity of the individual parts of the overall master plan. We would suggest over time phasing in a limited campus shuttle system that might initially tie together the main campuses with the University Square development and then could include a loop through the business parks and to nearby shopping as well. A prototype for this system would be the “Stinger” shuttle bus system run by Georgia Tech, which has expanded greatly from its initial on-campus system to link together the main campus with other areas such as Technology Square across the Atlanta Downtown Connector. This would create an effective circulator system what would connect the four quadrants of the plan and allow students to move more freely with in the Study Area. With Cobb Transit as an immediate neighbor in the LCI study area, they could potentially be involved in the effort to provide service to the area on a limited schedule at first and expand as additional demand warrants

### **9. Identify how LCI funding can be used to jump start several key initiatives in the LCI Study Area**

One of the first priorities of the Consortium should be to take the recommendations in the final LCI master plan regarding implementation and identify opportunities for LCI implementation funding that could serve as a catalyst to move key initiatives in the plan forward. The consulting team will be making recommendations of how LCI funding can be used for this purpose and link into the long-range investments that will be needed to achieve the vision for the area.

## **10. Establish a Community Improvement District (CID) that could overlap the MU<sup>2</sup> and Franklin/Delk Road LCI study area boundaries.**

A CID- is an excellent means for a community of businesses to augment city and county services it receives. It also allows a CID entity, with its own Board of Directors and staff, to specify how the funds it generates can be used. A CID is a special self-taxing district. The only funds it raises come from a millage assessment on real property owned by CID members/participants – any amount from 1/8 mill to a maximum of 5.0 mills within Cobb County.

Georgia law authorizes property owners in commercial areas to establish special tax districts to pay for infrastructure enhancement. These CID's do not replace traditional city and county infrastructure improvement programs but supplement them by providing a means to pay for required facilities in densely developed areas such as those around large shopping malls. Projects which can be funded by a CID include street and road construction and maintenance, sidewalks and streetlights, parking facilities, water systems, sewage systems, terminal and dock facilities, public transportation, and parks and recreational areas.

A CID is created through local legislation passed by the General Assembly with the approval by resolution of the city or county government which has jurisdiction over the area in which the CID would be located. Any law creating or providing for the creation of a CID shall require the adoption of a resolution consenting to the creation of the CID by:

- The governing authority of the county if the CID is located wholly within the unincorporated area of a county; or
- The governing authority of the municipality if the CID is located wholly within the incorporated area of a municipality; or
- The governing authorities of the county and municipality if the CID is located partially within the unincorporated area of a county and partially within the incorporated area of a municipality.

In addition, written consent to the creation of the CID must be given by:

- The owners of real property within the proposed CID which will be subject to taxes, fees, and assessments levied by the administrative body of the CID; and
- The majority of owners of real property within the CID which constitutes at least 75% by value of all real property within the CID which will be subject to taxes, fees, and assessments levied by the administrative body of the CID.

The administrative body of each CID is authorized to levy taxes, fees and assessments on all property subject to the tax up to a level which amounts to 5% of the assessed value of the property, i.e., 5 mills. Bonded debt is permitted but such debt may not be considered an obligation of the state or any other unit of government other than the CID.



5.4 Action Plan

The following tables summarize the transportation, housing and other initiatives identified to implement the Master Plan. The tables include costs, program years, funding sources and responsibilities.

**Table 5.1: Short-Term Transportation Projects (2014-2019)**

ID	Name	To/From	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs (YOE\$)	ROW Year	ROW Costs (YOE \$)	Construction Year	Construction Costs (YOE\$)	Total Project Costs (YOE\$)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
Trail Projects															
T1	A.L. Burruss Park Multi Use Trail	From A.L. Burruss Park to Life University Trail	Multi-use Trail	Existing soft surface trail should be upgraded to 10' wide hard surface trail with emergency call boxes periodically, and directional signage.	2015	\$ 83,283	NA	\$ -	2017	\$ 900,791	\$984,074	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$196,815
T2	Rottenwood Creek Trail Phase I	Multi-use trail along the east side of Cobb Pkwy from Barclay Circle to property north of Rottenwood Creek at Cobb Pkwy	Multi-use Trail	10' wide concrete trail with lighting, signage and 10' separation from roadway. Pedestrian crossing signalization improvements at light.	2016	\$ 44,995	NA	\$ -	2018	\$486,661	\$531,656	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$106,331
T3	Cobb Parkway Multi Use Trail	Multi-use trail along the west side of Cobb Pkwy from future BRT station/Polytechnic Lane to Barclay Circle	Multi-use Trail	10' wide concrete trail with 10' separation from roadway, lighting, landscaping and directional signage.	2014	\$ 81,640	NA	\$ -	2016	\$883,018	\$964,658	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$192,932
T4	Wildwood Park Multi Use Trail Connector	Rottenwood Creek To University Segment Phase 2	Multi-use Trail	10' wide concrete trail -upgrade from existing soft surface trail with directional signage.	2016	\$ 23,622	NA	\$ -	2018	\$255,497	\$279,119	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$ 55,824
T5	S. Fairground Street Multi-Use Trail	Along the west side of S. Fairground Street from existing multi-use trail at Larry Bell Park southern driveway, to Glover St along the east side of S. Fairground Street, cut through Kudzu field to connect to the University Trail in Aviation Baseball Complex Park	Multi-use Trail	10' wide concrete trail along Fairground on east side of road with 5' separation from roadway, landscaping and directional signage. 10' wide off road trail through City property. Periodic call boxes and directional signage along off road trail. Pedestrian crossing signal at Fairground.(R/W Needed)	2015	\$ 47,590	2017	\$558,023	2019	\$556,740	\$1,162,353	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$ 232,471

**Table 5.1: Short-Term Transportation Projects (2014-2019)**

ID	Name	To/From	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs (YOE\$)	ROW Year	ROW Costs (YOE \$)	Construction Year	Construction Costs (YOE\$)	Total Project Costs (YOE\$)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
T6	S. Marietta Parkway Multi Use Trail	Along South side of S. Marietta Pkwy from Aviation Rd to Cobb Pkwy	Multi-use Trail and Streetscape improvements	Upgrade existing sidewalk to 10' wide concrete trail with call boxes, directional signage and lighting, along south side of South Marietta Parkway. 5' separation from roadway. Additional 16' wide planted medians to be added.	2014	\$ 176,800	NA	\$ -	2016	\$1,912,269	\$2,089,069	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$417,814
T7	Rottenwood Creek Trail Phase 2 (Life University)	Begin at University Trail at Alumni Dr. (SPSU) and meander southward along Rottenwood Creek crossing Barclay Circle, and continue along Rottenwood Creek and terminate at Project T1.	Multi-use Trail	10' wide concrete trail with directional signage and periodic call boxes. Crossing at grade at Barclay Circle. (R/W needed)	2014	\$ 193,300	2016	\$904,000	2018	\$2,260,967	\$3,358,267	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$671,653
T8	Victory Trail (Along Aviation Rd)	Along Aviation Rd from S. Marietta Pkwy to the northern boundary of the MU2 study border.	Multi-use Trail	Upgrade existing 6' sidewalk to 10' wide concrete trail along west side of Aviation Road adjacent to road (R/W Needed Current r/w appears to be 50')	2014	\$ 6,240	2017	\$ 508,888	018	\$72,999	\$ 588,128	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$117,626
T9	Wildwood & A.L. Burruss Park Connector Trail	Barclay Circle (at Project T8) to AL. Burruss Trail (Project T1)	Multi-use Trail	10' wide off road concrete trail with directional signage and periodic call boxes.	2016	\$ 73,116	NA	\$ -	2018	\$790,824	\$ 863,941	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$172,788

**Complete Streets/Pedestrian Improvements**

ID	Name	To/From	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs (YOE\$)	ROW Year	ROW Costs (YOE \$)	Construction Year	Construction Costs (YOE\$)	Total Project Costs (YOE\$)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
PII	Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements Phase I	South Marietta Parkway to northern boundary of study area.	Pedestrian	New 5' sidewalks with 10' separation from roadway, lighting and landscaping. Along east and west sides of Cobb Parkway.	2014	\$ 66,560	NA	\$ -	2016	\$ 719,913	\$ 786,473	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$157,295

**Table 5.1: Short-Term Transportation Projects (2014-2019)**

ID	Name	To/From	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs (YOE\$)	ROW Year	ROW Costs (YOE \$)	Construction Year	Construction Costs (YOE\$)	Total Project Costs (YOE\$)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
PI2	Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements Phase 2	West side of Cobb Pkwy from S. Marietta Parkway to Polytechnic Lane	Pedestrian	New 5' sidewalks with 10' landscape strip separation from roadway, lighting and landscaping. Along west side of Cobb Parkway.	2014	\$ 44,720	NA	\$ -	2016	\$ 483,692	\$ 528,412	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$105,682
PI3	Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements Phase 3	East side of Cobb Pkwy from S. Marietta Parkway to Barclay Circle	Pedestrian	New 5' sidewalks with 10' separation from roadway, lighting and landscaping. Along east side of Cobb Parkway	2015	\$ 129,792	NA	\$ -	2017	\$ 1,403,830	\$1,533,622	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$306,724
PI4	Cobb Parkway Pedestrian Improvements Phase 4	West side of Cobb Pkwy from Barclay Circle to A.L. Burruss Park	Pedestrian	New 5' sidewalks with 10' separation from roadway, lighting and landscaping. Along west side of Cobb Parkway.	2015	\$ 62,733	NA	\$ -	2017	\$ 678,518	\$ 741,251	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$148,250
PI5	Barclay Circle Sidewalk Improvements	Sidewalk improvements begin on the south side of Barclay Circle east of S. Cobb Dr. (Wildwood Park), crosses at the bend in the road to the north side of Barclay Circle and ends at Cobb Parkway.	Pedestrian	Expand existing sidewalks and fill in new 5' sidewalks adjacent to roadway on North and eastern side of the road. Directional signage, lighting and landscaping along new areas. (R/W Needed)	2016	\$ 89,989	2018	\$1,048,451	2020	\$1,052,745	\$2,191,185	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$438,237
PI6	Life Service Pedestrian Improvements	From Polytechnic Lane to Barclay Circle	Pedestrian	Single 5' wide sidewalk along proposed access road behind Life University Campus and Cobb Parkway proposed mixed use developments. (R/W Needed)	2016	\$ 13,498	2018	\$ 862,303	2020	\$ 157,912	\$1,033,713	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$206,743
PI7	Life Way Road Pedestrian Improvements	Along Life Way from Cobb Parkway to Life Campus	Pedestrian	Both sides of road adjacent to road with lighting and directional signage. (R/W Needed (existing r/w is 30')	2016	\$ 33,746	2018	\$ 562,094	2020	\$ 394,780	\$ 990,619	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$198,124
PI8	Lake Drive Pedestrian Improvements	Along Lake Drive from northern boundary of MU2 LCI border to S. Marietta Parkway	Pedestrian	There are already sidewalks on west side of the road, this would provide 5' sidewalks on both sides and fill in any gaps.	2017	\$ 11,699	NA	\$ -	2019		\$ 11,699	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$ 2,340

**Table 5.1: Short-Term Transportation Projects (2014-2019)**

ID	Name	To/From	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs (YOE\$)	ROW Year	ROW Costs (YOE \$)	Construction Year	Construction Costs (YOE\$)	Total Project Costs (YOE\$)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
PI9	Rose Drive Pedestrian Improvements	From South Marietta Parkway to existing northern terminus of road	Pedestrian	5' sidewalk added to east side of road adjacent to road. Current right of way is 30'. (R/W Needed)	2017	\$ 2,925	2019	\$ 155,160	2021	\$ 34,214	\$ 192,299	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$ 38,460

**Roadway Improvements**

T11	S. Marietta Pkwy (SR 120) Signal Improvements	At S. Marietta Pkwy (SR 120) and White Avenue	Roadway operational improvement	Addition of left turn signal on EB S. Marietta Pkwy (SR 120) at White Avenue, signal timing at Cobb Pkwy (US 41 and Martin Court/ Technology Parkway (entrance to SPSU)	2014	\$ 38,480	N/A	N/A	2014	\$ 124,800	\$ 163,280	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$ 32,656
T12	Polytechnic Lane Complete Street	Hornet Drive to Cobb Pkwy (US 41)	Complete Street	Improve existing street to complete street with 5 foot sidewalks, bike lanes and median	2017	\$ 31,118	\$2,017	\$1,250,813	2018	\$ 355,993	\$1,637,924	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$327,585
T13	Wylie Road Realignment	S. Marietta Pkwy to Cobb Pkwy	Roadway operational improvement	Adding 4 foot of ROW on west side of the roadway and adding 5' sidewalks on both sides. This operational improvement is intended to improve pedestrian safety and to help facilitate and divert truck traffic off of Cobb Parkway (US 41)	2017	\$ 42,700	\$2,017	\$1,375,871	2018	\$ 488,851	\$1,907,422	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$381,484
T14	University Parkway North, Phase I	Cobb Pkwy (US 41) to Wylie Road	Complete Street	Two lane roadway, with 12 ft. travel lanes, a 8 ft. planted median, 4 ft. bike lanes in both directions, 5 ft. landscape strip and 5 ft. sidewalks on both sides with lighting	2017	\$ 29,246	\$2,017	\$ 821,241	2018	\$333,606	\$1,184,093	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$236,819

**Table 5.1: Short-Term Transportation Projects (2014-2019)**

ID	Name	To/From	Type of Improvement	Description	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs (YOE\$)	ROW Year	ROW Costs (YOE \$)	Construction Year	Construction Costs (YOE\$)	Total Project Costs (YOE\$)	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Source	Match Amount
FDR1	University Parkway North, Phase 2	Wylie Road to Franklin Road	New complete street. Note this is outside the MU2 LCI Study area, however project is within the Franklin Delk Road (FDR) LCI study boundary.	New two lane roadway, with 12 ft. travel lanes, a 8 ft. planted median, 4 ft. bike lanes in both directions, 5 ft. landscape strip and 5 ft. sidewalks on both sides with lighting	2017	\$ 47,730	\$2,017	\$2,842,756	2018	\$ 545,912	\$3,436,399	City of Marietta	ARC LCI (As part of Franklin Road LCI)	Capital Funds	\$687,280
T15	University Parkway South, Phase 1	Cobb Pkwy (US 41) to Wylie Road	Complete street	Two lane roadway, with 12 ft. travel lanes, a 8 ft. planted median, 4 ft. bike lanes in both directions, 5 ft. landscape strip and 5 ft. sidewalks on both sides with lighting	2017	\$ 34,862	\$2,017	\$2,000,458	2018	\$ 398,210	\$2,433,530	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$486,706
FDR2	University Parkway South, Phase 2	Wylie Road to Franklin Road	New complete street. Note this is outside the MU2 LCI Study area, however project is within the Franklin Delk Road (FDR) LCI study boundary.	New two lane roadway, with 12 ft. travel lanes, a 8 ft. planted median, 4 foot bike lanes in both directions, 5 ft. landscape strip and 5 ft. sidewalks on both sides with lighting	2017	\$ 97,215	\$2,017	\$6,275,121	2018	\$1,112,264	\$7,484,601	City of Marietta	ARC LCI (As part of Franklin Road LCI)	Capital Funds	\$1,496,920
T16	Barclay Road realignment	At US 41 to line up with proposed University Parkway South	Road Realignment	Roadway realignment to the north to line up with University Parkway South (Project T15)	2017	\$ 17,899	\$2,017	\$ 710,689	2018	\$ 203,789	\$ 932,377	City of Marietta	ARC LCI	Capital Funds	\$ 186,475

**Table 5-2: Transportation Planning Efforts**

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Create CCT Route to serve local universities.	Staff Time	On-going	City, CCT, SPSU, Life University, Cobb DOT	NA
BRT planning for Cobb Parkway/US 41	Staff Time	Ongoing	City, Cobb DOT	NA

**Table 5-3: Housing Projects/Initiatives**

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Creation of parallel housing master plans by the two universities	NA	2014	SPSU, Life University.	NA
Joint ventures with local developers and the universities to develop student oriented housing	Staff Time	ongoing	SPSU, Life University.	NA
Pursue Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) for Senior Housing	Staff Time	Ongoing/TBD based on development timeline	City of Marietta	NA

**Table 5-4: Other Local Initiatives**

Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
Create MU2 Consortium	Staff Time	2013-2014	City of Marietta, SPSU, Life University	NA
Undertake TAD Redevelopment Plan to include the MU2 area	\$25,000-\$45,000	2014	City of Marietta	General Fund
Develop of community gateways	TBD - based on location	2014 - 2019	City of Marietta	TAD, General Fund
Creation of a MU2 Overlay District as outlined in the LCI Report	Staff Time	2014	City of Marietta.	NA
Apply for ARC Implementation Funds	Staff Time	2013	City of Marietta.	NA
Creation of a partnership and co-branding opportunity with the adjacent business parks and local universities	Staff Time	TBD based on development timeline	SPSU, Life University	NA
Develop a Community Improvement District	TBD	2014 - 2015	City of Marietta and Business Community	TBD

## Appendix A: LCI Objectives Summary

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) requires all Livable Centers Initiatives (LCI) studies to address certain objectives. Each of these objectives is listed below along with a brief description of how the Marietta University Enhancement District LCI Study meets the objective.

### *1. Efficiency/feasibility of land uses and mix appropriate for future growth, including new and/or revised land use regulations needed to complete the development program.*

The Marietta University Enhancement District LCI Study provides detailed land use recommendations for implementation of the Concept Plan. These recommendations are based on a thorough market analysis conducted in collaboration with the study as well as an assessment of existing conditions and input received from community members. The City's Comprehensive Plan is consistent with this study and so no major changes are needed, other than for the plan to be amended to adopt the study as a guide in making rezoning decisions in the study area. Policy changes necessary to accomplish LCI revitalization goals include additional provisions in the zoning ordinance for appropriate mixed-use development. A comprehensive overview of proposed land use recommendations is provided in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

### *2. Transportation demand reduction measures.*

Transportation demand reduction is a key element of the Marietta University Enhancement District LCI Study. Implementation measures for achieving this include several short and long term activities. Completion of the sidewalk network and multi-use trail, either underway or programmed for the short-term, will reduce demand for short trips. In the long-term, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station has been proposed for study area, with a potential location within close proximity to the two universities. Provisions for mixed-use zoning and a better connected street grid will also contribute to decreased transportation demand.

### *3. Internal mobility requirements (including safety and security of pedestrians), such as traffic calming, pedestrian circulation, transit circulation, and bicycle circulation.*

Several techniques and projects are proposed for improving mobility. Traffic calming measures are recommended along the Barclay Circle. The plan also includes a strategic mix of pedestrian crossing improvements, intersection improvements, and complete street prototypes to facilitate multimodal travel for pedestrians and cyclists. Access management measures are also discussed at length in the Transportation Recommendations and Concept Plan section of the report.

#### ***4. Mixed-income housing, job/housing match, and social issues.***

The Regulatory Strategies and Incentives section discusses the importance of sustaining affordable housing options in the community. Recommended changes to the Future Land Use Plan will allow for a greater variety of housing options and price-points to meet the diverse needs of area workers and residents as well as the special needs of the senior population. Recommendations also include density incentives for inclusion of mixed-income housing by residential developers. Supportive policies, programs, and funding streams are discussed for assisting in the preservation and improvement to existing housing and neighborhoods. The plan includes several community organizational strategies that address housing and social issues.

#### ***5. Continuity of local streets in study area and development of a network of minor roads.***

The Concept Plan proposes the addition of several new roadway connections, particularly between Cobb Parkway/US 41 and Franklin Road. Complete street designs are also recommended for eventual implementation on main thoroughfares, including connection roadways between the university campuses and the proposed BRT station and the existing Cobb Community Transit (CCT) Marietta Transfer Center.

#### ***6. Need/identification of future transit circulation systems.***

This study recommends that additional bus service between the two university campuses and local destinations be implemented. The plan also supports additional housing units for the area further supporting the extension of transit service to the area. The potential long-term addition of a BRT Station is also considered in the plan. The proposed street grid improvements and changes to land use would help facilitate efficient transit service in the area.

#### ***7. Connectivity of transportation system to other centers.***

The study area is located in a strategic location, serving as a gateway to the historic downtown to the northwest, the GreenTech Corridor to the east, and the Cumberland area to the south. Because of the area's central location transportation improvements ensure connectivity with adjacent centers, including the regional trail system with improvements to the Rottenwood Creek Trail linking Kennesaw with the Cumberland Mall area.

#### ***8. Community organization, management, promotion and economic restructuring to ensure implementation.***

Several community organizational strategies are proposed to help achieve the study's vision. The City of Marietta in coordination with area economic development groups will help ensure that business/development goals are pursued. The plan recommends the formation of the

Consortium of area stakeholders that will help the City oversee the implementation of the plan. Implementation time frames will serve as a guide for meeting benchmarks along the way.

### *9. Stakeholder participation and support.*

This planning effort included an extensive public involvement effort. Meetings held to solicit public input included the Kick-off Meeting, Visioning Workshop, and Open House. In addition, a Core Stakeholder Team participated in three specialized meetings to help provide more in-depth contributions to the planning process and plan recommendations. Community leadership, including the Mayor, Council and City staff played an important role in the process. A summary of public involvement may be found in **Chapter 3, Public Involvement Overview**.

### *10. Public and private investment policy.*

Several catalyst sites (nodes) were identified in the Concept Plan. Actualization of these catalyst sites will rely on private, developer-driven investment. Several improvements to the street network, including multi-use paths, pedestrian crossings and intersection improvements will be leveraged by the public sector to facilitate desired private development. Changes to land use policy will help facilitate desired growth and increase efficiency of public infrastructure by allowing a more diverse range of development types and increased development densities. Part of the implementation strategy is also use of a Tax Allocation District, which the City has already approved for the area.

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## Appendix B. Public Involvement

Public Comment Log from the Website

Public Kick-off Meeting Summary

Design Charrette Summary

Open House Summary

Public Hearing Summary

Survey Summary

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## Public Comment Log from MU2 Website

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
1	12/14/2012	Give Feedback Now!	<p>A strength to the area is that it contains major thorough fares in the area, especially those going to downtown Marietta. Weakness – it's a thorough fare. There needs to be more destinations created with visibility. This plays into the "threats." Visibility due to some of the terrain. Some areas are hidden, especially around the Southern Poly and Life University. There needs to be more pedestrian scale lighting for safety and perhaps call boxes along Cobb Parkway. Opportunities are endless...I'm sure everyone would love the area to be improved aesthetically. You improve the appearance (lighting, sidewalks!, trees) then people and businesses will come.</p>	Alisha Smith	
2	1/16/2013	Give Feedback Now!	<p>Long term I'd like to see Banberry Road connected to Lockheed Avenue/Bell Street. It would buy us a walkable route to the other side of 75 and would potentially eliminate the need for the White Ave/Frey's Gin road segment. This may spur redevelopment and open the door for bicycle or pedestrian traffic to the retail locations currently anchored by Whole Foods and Burlington Coat Factory.</p>	David Stone	<p>Mr. Stone, Thank you for your comment and your interest in the MU2LCI study initiative. We will review your comments to see how we may utilize the pedestrian connections in this study and to the north of the study area (where Banberry Road and Whole Foods is located). If you are not already aware, please check out the MU2LCI survey that is located on at <a href="http://www.mu2lci.com">www.mu2lci.com</a> website. If you haven't had a chance to take it please help us with soliciting survey comments by completing and encouraging others to complete. This will help us to better determine the needs and desires of the community. One last note, we have two more public meetings: 1. March 21, Marietta Center for Advanced Academics (MCAA) Gym; 2. April 17, Public Hearing, Marietta City Hall. Thank you again for your interest, and please feel free to contact me via the contact information below.</p>

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
3	1/16/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Better connections from the campuses to the restaurant (El Rancho, Baby Tommy's, Piccadiy, etc.) and entertainment (Bowling alley: Amf Marietta Lanes) as well as between the SPSU and Life Communities and the City of Marietta in General. I like the proposed trails that will run through/by the campuses. A lot could be done with the creek trails as well for recreation. Life University does have some great nature walks and perhaps they could be leverage for more passive recreation for students and the general community.	David Stone	
4	1/17/2013	Give Feedback Now!	I live within the study area and would like to continue living in my house. "Redeveloping the area" would essentially force hundreds of people to move.	Michael	Mr. Michael, Thank you for your comments and interest in the MU2LCI study. The purpose of the study is to look at ways of how to attract necessary shopping, eating places, businesses, and services within the study area. During this initiative we hope to identify the different types of housing that is needed and where. The study area lacks housing options for students and residents that want to live close to the assets within the area, and currently the does not have many residents living within the study area. However, we hope to accomplish ways to attract more housing into the study area, therefore adding to what already exists. Please let me know if you have any other questions. Feel free to contact me at the information listed below.
5	1/19/2013	Community Survey	Thank you for taking interest and providing direction for an area well-travelled with little to offer.	J Autry	
6	1/22/2013	Community Survey	Interesting idea.	Carolyn Debavadi	

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
7	1/24/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Create an identity for the district. Possibly refer to the district as a “village” and develop and install markers similar to those found around Marietta with a slightly different theme to define the area. The Artisan Resource Center (ARC) is 43,000 sq. ft. warehouse building at 585 Cobb Parkway S. (inside the study area) and has been home to professional artists for over 20 years – yet not many people know this. There may be an opportunity to involve the students from SPSU/Life and the artists to create sculpture or monuments that could be used along Cobb Parkway and/or placed within the district.	Peter Bilson	
8	1/24/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Cobb Parkway and South Marietta Parkway seem to have very large setbacks from the street and this does not provide a good sense of place. Maybe this study could recommend incentives for any new development to build closer to the street and/or taller building, when possible.	Peter Bilson	
9	1/24/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Create great public spaces – use the natural features of the area and develop large useable open spaces such as parks. Provide connections with trails for pedestrians and bicycles to be used for recreation and to serve multiple purposes – connected to destinations such as residences, school, and commercial areas.	Peter Bilson	
10	1/24/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Provide a shuttle for campus and to specific other locations -i.e. residences, parking, restaurants, Marietta Square?	Peter Bilson	
11	1/24/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Continue to promote community involvement for the development of the project.	Peter Bilson	

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
12	1/25/2013	Community Survey	The public transportation should be revisited for more convenience to those that are frequent riders, the connection system is an unbearable nuisance and expensive especially when unemployment is playing a part in the lack of. The drivers should be more customer friendly and knowledgeable whereas the city is growing with great diversity and people are learning to get from here to there and drivers fail to have knowledge on how to assist in questions of destination. The time frame does not line up with pick up and drop off and often times creating lateness to jobs, schools and appointments. The fact that there is no service on Sundays creates a stigma leading to depression because there is a sense of being trapped and confined without the ability to travel e.g., to place of worship.	Robin Montgomery	
13	1/25/2013	Give Feedback Now!	Weakness of diversity with compassion and open mind to all people. Limited awareness to events that would create and improvement in social gatherings of all ethnicity, weakness that the city delights more on the history of an ugly war (Civil) and all the negatives that goes with the history versus the change and growth of a nation that has evolved into Freedom and Liberties of all mankind. You know more about gun shows versus MLKJR Holiday events, expansion of venues for Juneteenth Holidays and such. Marvel at greatness of all mankind and not the self serving of destruction of a people. Weakness in the political arena incumbents with no opponents where is the democracy in this city. Unconstitutional acts in the Judicial System is extreme and horrific.	Robin Montgomery	

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
14	1/25/2013	How to Participate	Yes I attend the Chattahoochee Technical College as a Business Management Major so I go through the area, I am also part of the community association in the area.	Robin Montgomery	
15	1/28/2013	Community Survey	It would be nice to have a safe community place where mom's could let their children play possibly a park and walking trail conducive for strollers. It would be nice to have cafe for families and students. Activities for night would include festivals that include art, arts and crafts, and wholesome music that could get everyone moving. Something where the community could have a great movie night on a "green". This is the feel that would put this community on the next step for a thriving city.	Morgan Lightsey-Santos	
16	2/2/2013	Give Feedback Now!	I disagree with Robin in that we should not keep emphasizing our history, good and bad. We must never forget where we have come from and how the events of the past have shaped our culture. To do this would require us to incorporate subsequent events as well. Therefore any redevelopment would be inclusive of business, families, singles, young and retired. A variety of home styles would allow more opportunities for all income levels - not everyone wants a 2-story house or a high-rise condo. How about affordable cluster ranch style homes with basements? Wider sidewalks that allow bicycles, especially along the loop and 4 I, with added trees for shade would be great. Nature/walking/running trails that are already available need signage for access. Many people don't know they are there.	Carole	

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
17	2/8/2013	Community Survey	I live directly adjacent to the area in a small neighborhood of houses and I think a visible from Cobb Pky pocket park in the study area with parking with nearby walkable distance small social type businesses would be nice. The area is basically the gateway to the city from the south on the largest city highway, so some sort of significant area delineation should be desired. Perhaps purchase of larger tract that is now languishing could be public-private partnership developed into something. Maybe even a food truck park area like they have in Atlanta could be a big hit to all the local workers and students and help the overall area thrive and become more vibrant. There is definitely a need for something to compete with Kennesaw State's many developments. This area will not thrive without some sort of significant public investment. You would think it should not be that hard of sell since it is such a visible city gateway.	Mark	
18	2/8/2013	How to Participate	My son goes to school at MCAA so we go through the area everyday, twice a day, during the weekdays.	Bhea Barcarse	

ID	Date	Website Section	Comment	Author	Response from City (if any)
19	3/7/2013	How to Participate	I reside in Marietta and “drive through- that the only thing you can do now” the study area. This is a great opportunity to positively impact the city of Marietta, the adjacent neighborhoods & communities through sensitive & thoughtful urban planning and development that could become a destination. Success would be the balance/harmony with the cohabitation of: Education, Culture, Retail, Mix use housing, favor alternate mode of transportation while enabling controlled car access (would be great to have no cars and rely on access to public bicycle service), Public access, Public spaces, Public venues, Green spaces. The new area must have a vibe and energy and not be a dead zone at night or on weekends.	Eric Nicolas	
20	3/12/2013	Upcoming Public Meetings	Very interesting, I would love to attend these meetings to learn more about this collaborative and community organized project.	Charlotte	
21	3/21/2013	Give Feedback Now!	This study removes all the residential areas. How will this be handled?	Natosha Williams	
22	5/10/2013	Past Public Meetings	Unfortunately, I just learned of this initiative (5/10/2013), and therefore missed the meeting to discuss the future, and plans of Southern Polytechnic. I own the first house on Bell Street on the west side – #362 – and am adjacent to the apartment building that exists on Lockheed. For a long time I have thought that my property might be a key to additional dorms, or facilities that could be incorporated into the growing Southern Polytechnic State University. I hope this message can be directed to Dr. Lisa Rossbacher and her associates who are looking to the future for this International, and growing University.	George Anagnostache	



## Marietta University Enhancement District

### Livable Centers Initiative Study

#### SUMMARY OF PUBLIC KICK-OFF MEETING

##### Life University – CCE Building

December 13, 2012, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

### Overview

The City of Marietta, in partnership with Life University (Life) and Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU), kicked off the Marietta University Enhancement District Livable Centers Initiative (MU2 LCI) study on December 13, 2012. The partners held the public kick-off meeting at Life's Center for Chiropractic Education Building from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Approximately 75 community members, representing the Life, SPSU, area businesses and agencies, and the overall Marietta community, attended.

Attendees enjoyed refreshments graciously provided by Life University while reviewing baseline assessment materials prior to formal introductions and a presentation by the study team. The meeting ended with a lively brainstorming session. Attendees identified the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The following pages provide a summary of meeting proceedings and the discussion that occurred.

*The next study meeting will take place January 15, 2013 at SPSU's Student Center from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. An important study survey will be released the same day. Community members are encouraged to review material and participate via the study website: [WWW.MU2LCI.COM](http://WWW.MU2LCI.COM).*



Above: Entrance to CCE Building at Life University.  
Below: Discussion prior to meeting.

## Introductions

Kyethea Clark, Project Manager with the City of Marietta, welcomed attendees to the meeting. The study was made possible by a grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). The study's goal is to develop a strategic plan for transforming the area around SPSU and Life into a more vibrant corridor with stronger live/work/play and multi-modal attributes. It is being led by a Project Management Team (including Life, SPSU, the City, ARC, and consulting team) and a Core Stakeholder Team, including leadership from the area's many stakeholder groups.

An introductory video coordinated by the City, Life, and SPSU and featuring the presidents of the two universities as well as the City Manager was shown to orient attendees to the study goals and aspirations. The leaders offered insight on the importance of the study for shaping the area's future.

## Presentation

Introductions were followed by a presentation by the consulting team. Jim Summerbell with Jacobs gave an overview of the study process, goals, and schedule followed by an overview of the existing conditions and trends in the study area. The analysis included an assessment of existing and future land use policy as well as the area's transportation network and existing design characteristics. The existing conditions in the study area were presented from the perspective of the area's six subareas, each with unique qualities and opportunities.



*The presentation fueled a round of questions and comments by attendees.*

Jim highlighted ingredients of successful college communities. Attendees were asked what comes to mind when they think of a great college town. Participants identified Athens, GA, Tuscaloosa, AL, and Morgantown, WV.

Rick Padgett with Huntley Partners gave an overview of current market conditions and demand projections. This portion included a discussion of potential markets, area demographics and types of potential development that could occur in the future.

## Questions? Comments!

Attendees were invited to ask questions and provide general feedback after the presentation. Several questions were raised, as documented below:

- How does the apartment market compare to other college towns? Where will housing be provided?
  - A comparison of the market to other college towns has not been made. The City currently has an over abundance of apartments, compared to other cities.
  - The presentation's portrayal of SPSU as having limited housing is inaccurate. SPSU currently provides housing to just fewer than 30 percent of its students and has a 30 percent goal for housing its students. SPSU does not want competing housing.
- Why was the entertainment market not represented as a potential market opportunity?
  - Entertainment uses are a possibility. What was listed in the presentation was a representation of many, but not all, possibilities.
- The student population is small compared to the rest of the market. Is this typical?
  - Students are a sizable portion of the market and will have an impact on what is developed.
- Does the City support the college town image? When will the public have an opportunity to comment on this vision?
  - The City does support promoting a supportive educational environment that is conducive to living, working, and playing.
  - The team is looking at creating an "educational corridor" in this area, not transforming Marietta into a "college town" overall.
  - This meeting and the three that follow as well as the study survey (to be released January 15) are opportunities for community members to participate, have their opinions heard, and help shape the vision for the area.
- Movie theater market – is it accessible to students? Do they know it is there?
  - That is a good question. Marketing of area businesses is an important ingredient to creating a well-connected area.
- How do you connect the historic Marietta core to this area? How is the previous LCI study for downtown being coordinated with this?
  - Trail design is underway.
  - This LCI study incorporates a portion of the previous, Envision Marietta LCI study. The two planning efforts/recommendations are being coordinated.
- Driving time – How is this calculated for the market area?
  - This is determined by the average speed during typical times of the day but not during rush hour. The speed is ultimately determined by the data source.
- Can existing roads accommodate more development on Cobb Parkway?
  - There are long-term plans to widen and add Bus Rapid Transit to Cobb Parkway.
  - Creating more of a live, work, play environment with mixed-use development will also allow for more trips without driving.
- What tools are available for implementation and to facilitate desired development?

- Opportunity zones and tax credits are a couple tools.
- Having a conceptual plan and vision in place will also help spur development.
- Other campuses are located in the study area, including Georgia Highlands, which has between 1000 and 1200 students. This population should not be overlooked.
- Will the study consider eminent domain?
  - No. We are just in the planning stage, and the City's policy prohibits use of eminent domain for economic development.
- Has the economic impact of Lockheed & the Naval Air Reserve Base been studied?
  - Positive economic impact is felt as a result of these resources' proximity to the study area.
  - The two facilities and their existing plans are being considered as a part of the study.

## SWOT Discussion

Following Questions/Answers, Amanda Hatton with Jacobs led the group in a brainstorming session on the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Attendees were given a comment form to provide additional input on this activity. Feedback from both the meeting discussion and comment forms are combined below. This input will help inform the next step in the planning process as the team works towards developing a conceptual plan for the area.



## Strengths

- Transportation – major roads, buses
- The two universities – student population
- Easy access to I-75 & US 41
- Lack of competition, market
- Reinvestment is occurring now
- Reverse commute to Marietta is strong
- Missions of the universities, non-traditional
- Dining options, some shopping
- Proximity to Marietta Square
- Proximity to I-75 & I-285
- Near parks and woods
- Brain power
- Location by major highway and arterials
- High traffic area with diverse population.
- Concentration of students/young people
- Educational facilities
- Transit
- Great student population
- Opportunities that students bring

## Weaknesses

- Few pedestrian connections
- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of lighting
- Property on US 41 is expensive
- Lack of sense of place
- Current mix of businesses does not support the vision
- Low income area
- [Large quantity of] renters
- Housing stock
- No pedestrian bridges shown to cross US 41 or 120; no bike lanes shown (transportation rather than just recreation)
- Not enough mixed use on US 41 corridor!
- Lockheed traffic jam limits desirability of that approach corridor
- Not practical to incorporate both sides of US 41 - road may as well be a wall and bridging is not a convenient solution
- Build it [new development] on the west side [of US 41]
- Near Air Reserve Base & Lockheed
- Cobb Parkway is hot, busy, and pedestrian unfriendly and divides Marietta.
- Cobb Parkway and surrounding land uses
- Marketing to students
- Too many apartments already
- Fire Department
- Not enough police
- Low household income
- Lost cost/rent housing in proximity to study area
- It is currently primarily a commuter corridor, connecting outlying areas to downtown Atlanta
- The current business mix is not aesthetically pleasing
- Lighting and walkways are insufficient for foot/bicycle traffic
- Poor housing stock for single family housing
- Lack of development on Cobb Parkway that appeals to a student population or that attracts others to the area
- Lack of identify
- Limited activities for students
- Current “available” property along Cobb Parkway is broken up pretty badly.

## Opportunities

- Sense of place in the future (challenge)
- Student festivals and events
- Become a destination
- Incentives (mixed use) and others
- P3 – Public private partnerships
- New zoning – less restrictive
- Interaction between the two universities, internally (resources & trails)
- Commissary on Naval Air Reserve Base
- No resident people, no resident disposable income
- Captured market with the 9,000 students
- Open a student activity area where campuses meet facing US 41 and incorporating the transit stop
- Clothing stores, bar, “Staples”, computer gear, student housing, university sports related, “pizza” shops, job/placement support, police substation, circulator bus stop, movie theater, clinic (doc in a box), incubator business center
- Provide pedestrian and bike-friendly connections to dining, shopping, Marietta Square
- Build walkways across Cobb Pkwy
- Plant more trees on and along Cobb Pkwy
- Walking bridge across Life and SPSU

- Easy connection to MARTA rail from campuses
- Branding: overhead pedestrian crossings across Cobb Parkway – high-profile uniformity/connectivity/identity/perceived expansion/reclamation of campuses
- Mixed use commercial/retail along Cobb Pkwy with higher densities, small retail, and housing choices
- Blank slate; ability to brand
- Closeness or interconnectivity of schools
- There is not much competition for new and unique retail/service businesses, meaning that resident dollars are currently being spent in other communities
- To build a community center/activity/entertainment type campus that could serve both the student population and long-term residents
- Some type of destination attraction like the City Museum in St. Louis - it could be a joint project of the universities and the city and could be what draws people to the area.
- An opportunity to eliminate all the vacant business sites
- Branding
- More cohesiveness
- Connectivity
- Increased pedestrian/bicycle traffic
- Ability to attract “creative class”
- Need to figure [out] ways to take in contingent property along Cobb Parkway as it becomes available with “blocks” of space. It could provide student housing and businesses that support this livable environment.

### Threats

- Cobb Parkway/South Marietta Parkway/Delk/I-75 area
- Congestion
- Crime (lack of safety) – need more police presence
- Lighting
- Lockheed
- Financial support for education from State is down
- Trail system along the creek would endanger that ecosystem unless done very carefully
- Business as usual
- Political pressure
- Closure/low-sizing of Lockheed and/or Dobbins affecting many other businesses
- Town within a town – compatible to each other
- Low household income – This continues to decline. Investors do not step in with new housing arts in area east of Fairground and within the loop. Also Franklin Road.
- Changes in major economic drivers – Lockheed, Dobbins, higher education funding
- We should not let the current seeming realities of the economy deter from the vision. Even in the current market realities, much redevelopment seems to be thriving in the surrounding areas.
- Do not see any threats
- Traffic
- Visibility of area
- Lack of identity
- Safety
- Greed of property owners
- Inability of project to have cash to tie up property when it becomes available.
- Signage restrictions and their ability to market [area] hurts: need to allow “digital signage”.

## Additional Feedback

In addition to the SWOT analysis above, the following additional feedback was provided via comment forms.

**Was this meeting what you expected? Please provide any specific thoughts on today's meeting format as well as any recommendations you may have for future meetings.**

- Have we polled Life and SPSU students about demand for on campus/ near campus rental apartments (like KSU)?
- Great meeting space, easy to access, plenty of time for questions and answers, and food.
- All businesses and property owners should be notified of these meetings and kept apprised of status of this project with their input solicited.
- Audience could be better heard with microphone or at least have speakers repeat questions.
- Good meeting.
- I think it was a good introductory meeting.
- The end felt rushed, as we were pressed for time, but I think the overall format was beneficial, and I look forward to the coming meetings.
- Not really.
- Yes, good meeting.
- Boards (displays) could be in same room as presentation.

## Other Comments

- Image – drop Smyrna Market Village on US 41 where the campuses meet.
- Study refers to housing as limited. We house 25-30% of the student body, which is considered a residential campus.
- Study does not seem to consider GA Highlands College (1100 students).
- It took Marietta five years to get rid of the mess at I-75 and Franklin Road. No evidence anything will happen.

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## Marietta University Enhancement District

### Livable Centers Initiative Study

#### DESIGN CHARRETTE SUMMARY

#### Southern Polytechnic State University – Student Center

January 15, 2013, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

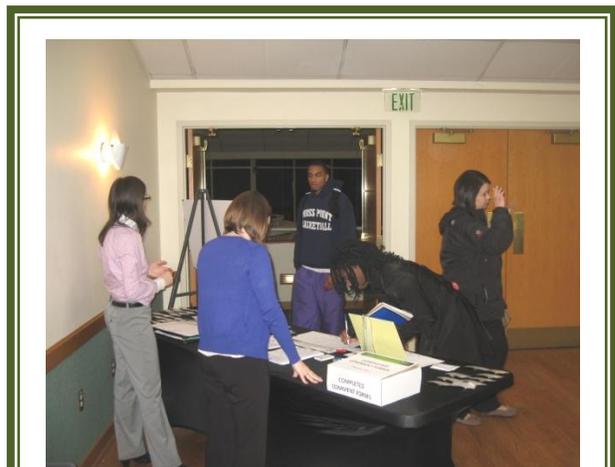
### Overview

On January 15, 2013, Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU), in partnership with the City of Marietta and Life University (Life) hosted a Design Charrette, the second of four public meetings, for the MU2 LCI study.

The event brought together various voices of the public to gather input on the design needs, priorities, and overall vision for the area. The meeting was attended by just fewer than 100 people representing SPSU and Life, the City of Marietta, and the broader community.

- The two-hour meeting began with a warm welcome from the SPSU President, Dr. Lisa Rossbacher, and the Mayor of Marietta, Steve “Thunder” Tumlin, and City of Marietta’s Project Manager, Kyethea Clark.
- Next, the project consultant team, led by Jim Summerbell of Jacobs Engineering, gave a brief overview of the study objectives and Design Charrette goals.
- Attendees then joined two of four topic specific break-out sessions, each lasting 40 minutes, prior to reconvening for a recap from each of the four groups and adjourning at 6pm.

*The following pages provide key highlights from each group. A full set of notes from each group is provided at the end of this summary.*



*Attendees arrive at Charrette, signing in prior to start of meeting.*



*SPSU President Dr. Rossbacher welcomes a packed house at SPSU student center.*

The next study meeting will take place March 21, 2013 at the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics (MCAA) Cafeteria from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

## Highlights from Break-Out Groups

Design discussions centered around four topic areas. Each topic was addressed by a unique break-out group and facilitated by a group of two facilitators as well as City of Marietta staff. There were two sessions for each break-out group. Attendees were invited to participate in two of the four groups during the meeting.

### **Connecting to Greater Marietta Community** ..... **Green Group**

- Focused on multi-modal transportation needs and critical connections to existing networks and activity centers – including bike and pedestrian facilities, transit and road improvements

### **Gateways & Entryways** ..... **Blue Group**

- Focused on current arrival points to the study area and where future gateways should be and look like – including an array of design characteristics, transportation needs, and other things.

### **Revitalizing Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41) Corridor** ..... **Red Group**

- Focused on how Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41) can be transformed in the future – including transportation needs, redevelopment preferences, and other design improvements.

### **University Center** ..... **Purple Group**

- Focused on creating a common public space in close proximity to the two campuses of Life and SPSU and design characteristics that would facilitate more of a live, work, play environment and better connectivity.

Each group was equipped with a sheet of design prototypes from benchmark districts as well as a series of maps to help facilitate location-specific discussion about the area’s design needs. While each group focused on unique opportunities within the district, conversations largely overlapped, reflecting an emerging vision of the area and some consensus on the area’s top needs/priorities as highlighted below.

### Key Priorities/ Needs

- A landmark building or notable architectural element that creates a sense that one has arrived to a academic-based district
- A public space that is appealing to the broad community and provides a strategic connection between the two universities
- Greater connectivity among campuses
- More diverse destinations in the area
- Housing that is complementary rather than redundant than what is offered on campuses
- New and improved pedestrian facilities to U.S. 41, including better signage
- Cohesive design scheme that creates a pedestrian-friendly scale, building elements common to both universities
- Mixed use environment that facilitates combined trips and serves as a hub of activity

## Connecting to Greater Marietta Community

Andrea Greco and Wade Carroll of Jacobs led the Connecting to Greater Marietta Community group. The following key questions were asked:

1. What are your main destinations off campus that you currently travel to?
2. If you would not use a bicycle or pedestrian route, what would be your main reason for not doing so?
3. Are there other destinations that you would use if there was good bicycle or pedestrian access?
4. What are the difficult roadway hotspots?
5. Would you take a shuttle or transit if provided? Where would you take it?

The majority of the discussion from both sessions of the group focused on increasing connectivity both within the study area and outside the area to top destinations. Discussions regarding specific modes of travel helped clarify unique needs for each mode of travel.

### Group Highlights

- General Needs – There is a need for centralized green space and connectivity among the two campuses. Although Marietta Square has desirable destinations, there is limited connectivity to this area from the campuses. Most destination options lead you out of Marietta and not into it.
- Transit – Any shuttle service would need to run frequently – class schedules are an issue and it would need to be flexible. Transit needs to focus more on schools but also on the surrounding areas -. Would be good if all the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) lines ‘hubbed’ at the square so people could get there easily.
- Car Travel – A principal driving challenge is crossing U.S. 41 and making a left turn into the campuses and other left turns are also difficult. Travel at peak times is a challenge.
- Pedestrian Connectivity for Recreation and Transportation – Better and safer pedestrian connectivity is needed to U.S. 41 and the Marietta Transfer Station for CCT, within the SPSU campus, and along U.S. 41. Better signage would improve pedestrian experience. More recreational trails between the two campuses are desired.



*Attendees consider ways to increase mobility in the area.*

## Gateways & Entryways

The Gateways & Entryways Group was facilitated by Megan Will and Amanda Hatton of Jacobs. Both group sessions asked participants to address the following key questions:

1. What do you consider to be the current points of arrival into the university district?
2. Where should gateway and entryway investments occur?
3. What design characteristics should these gateways and entryways exhibit?
4. What other areas in or outside the city create a sense of arrival; what do you like or dislike about those areas?



The general feedback was that there's currently a limited sense that you have arrived somewhere unique. SPSU has a decent presence on S. Marietta Parkway and once you enter Barclay Circle, you know you have arrived at Life. While Fairground Street, Barclay Circle, and S. Marietta Parkway/U.S. 41 are major transitions to the area, there is no unique, overall sense of arrival to a university-centric district.

The two sessions discussed issues that constrain the character of the area and opportunities to create a sense of place and key entryways into the campus. Constraints included: visual clutter on U.S. 41, no strong signage on U.S. 41 for the universities, and no sense of arrival to a university district.

Creating new common spaces that both university bodies utilize is an important step for building a unique identify for the area. Two appropriate locations for these common spaces are (1) along U.S. 41, between the Universities' campuses, and (2) at the intersection of U.S. 41/S. Marietta Parkway.

### Key Needs and Opportunities

- Wayfinding signs
- Consistent character, regulated through zoning regulations and design guidelines
- Collective entrance to both universities
- Improved streetscaping elements - new lighting, signage, and landscaping, focusing primarily on U.S. 41
- Unified architecture treatments
- Parking behind buildings
- Use of brick, stone and steel materials
- Appropriately scaled signage for context
- Incorporation of green infrastructure as redevelopment occurs
- Further promote pedestrian facilities and environment through regulations and public investments.

## Revitalizing Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41) Corridor

Brett Wylie of Jacobs and Rick Padgett of Huntley Partners facilitated the Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41) Corridor Group. Key discussion points covered by both sessions of this group included:

- General needs of U.S. 41
- Desired land use mix
- Streetscape improvements
- Creating a pedestrian orientation
- Balancing efficient traffic movement and pedestrian orientation along U.S. 41

Due to the diverse nature of opportunities to revitalize U.S. 41, the overall discussion was broad and varied.

Group participants generally agreed that there is a need to strike a balance between facilitating thru-traffic movement on U.S. 41 and facilitating an environment that attracts desirable destinations that will draw people to the area. Improved visibility of both universities along the corridor is a priority.



*Break-out group discussion regarding opportunities to revitalize U.S. 41.*

### Priorities for the Corridor

- A shuttle/trolley service that caters to students and is interlinked to area's other transit modes – Marietta trolley, proposed bus rapid transit (BRT), CCT, etc.
- Making U.S. 41 more pedestrian friendly – add medians, landscaping, improved and new sidewalks
- Give the corridor character by having common design materials for new development and redevelopment, common sign heights and unique signal design
- Promote mixed use development – retail below with housing above including housing that is complementary to what universities provide, has great exposure on corridor yet promotes a pedestrian-oriented center
- Future BRT station should be a signature use on the corridor
- Further consideration of whether a pedestrian bridge would be used. It must link to a destination.

## University Center

Megan Holder and Jim Summerbell of Jacobs facilitated the University Center Break Group. Both sessions of the group were asked the same three questions:

1. What does not work now?
2. What would you like to see?
3. What are examples of University Centers that are done well?

Several items that were identified as not working well now:

- Lack of fluid relationship between U.S. 41 and Universities
- Poor campus visibility
- Unsafe and otherwise limited pedestrian facilities
- Lack of nearby job center, variety of housing options on and off campus, and mix of restaurants/retail in study area



*The University Center group brainstorms about potential improvements to the area.*

### Key Improvements Recommended

- Create connectivity between the campuses
- Public gathering spaces, including green space and aesthetically pleasing elements
- Mixed-use development that can accommodate a more diverse group of destinations - including cafes, complimentary housing, better shopping, and entertainment
- Additional transit resources

Among others, participants cited Tech Square (Georgia Tech), Athens (UGA), and Massachusetts Ave. (Boston) as benchmark university centers to take best practices.

*Example illustrations of design features that could be incorporated into the master plan for the area were provided to group members. Below are illustrations that participants preferred.*



*Privately developed student housing with community serving retail*



*Plaza and open space bring the university to the street*



*Repurposing existing commercial space for university classrooms, common space, cafeteria and offices*

*Additional illustrations that participants preferred.*



*University operated shuttle that connects both campuses to each other and nearby destinations*



*Open space links the private housing development to the public university.*

## Meeting Conclusion

The meeting ended with five minute presentations from the facilitators of each group highlighting the key group outcomes as summarized on the previous pages.

Brief concluding comments by Amanda Hatton of Jacobs and Kyethea Clark of the City of Marietta reminded community members to stay involved:

- All community members are invited to participate in an online study survey open from January 15 to February 15.
- The next public meeting is March 21 at the MCCA Cafeteria from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.
- The study website [www.mu2ci.com](http://www.mu2ci.com) provides detailed study information, draft documents, meeting materials, and opportunities to publicly comment on the study process and contact the study team.



*A wrap-up session at the end provided key highlights from each group. Rick Padgett highlights the discussion regarding U.S. 41.*

## Additional Feedback

The following additional feedback was provided via comment forms.

### **What public investments would best facilitate more of a live, work, play environment in the study area?**

- Walkable communities and more entertainment in area.
- Realignment/ removal of Freys Gin Road on S. Marietta Parkway.
- Crossing S. Marietta Parkway is not walkable.
- Less separation of business and residential.
- Sidewalks radically change this area. Addition of pedestrian scale activities also changes the character.

### **What else would help improve the study area? Please provide additional comments and ideas here.**

- Route Banberry Road southeast past Marietta Diner and remove Freys Gin Road/ White Ave.
- Build a pedestrian friendly connection between SPSU and businesses to north.
- [An] improved sense of place (and that includes the auto dealers).

### **Was this meeting what you expected? Please provide any specific thoughts on today's meeting format as well as any recommendations you may have for future study meetings.**

- Yes. More information about session structure in advance would be useful.

## Detailed Notes from Each Break-out Group

### Connecting to the Greater Marietta Community

#### General

- Access to parks is problematic. People don't know they're there, can't get to them from campus or don't feel safe in them.
- Central greenspace is desired at SPSU or connecting with Life University.
- No existing connectivity to Life University from SPSU.
- There is some interaction between athletics on the two campuses but that's about it.
- Evenings and afternoons are busy class times at SPSU.
- There are a couple days a week when students spend the whole day on campus. Would be good to have other things to do when they're on campus.
- SPSU students live mostly off campus. Probably only 30% on campus residents
- Life University is probably 20% on campus at the most. They don't have much student housing
- Marietta Square has student friendly restaurants and businesses...however there is little connection marketing wise or transportation wise to the University.
- More outdoor dining destinations
- Campus folks might be willing to pay a nominal charge (say \$1) to leave their car and take transit into Marietta
- Parking is limited and not easy in Marietta. The parking garage is about \$5.
- There are some frequently visited destinations along U.S. 41 including the Marietta Diner and Baby Tommy's Taste of New York
- Further outside the study area, the Cobb Performing Arts Center is a destination.
- Most of the existing and planned transit and trails are north south towards Atlanta. There is little east west connectivity in Cobb County.
- Feels like all the options lead you out of Marietta and not into it.
- Need more agency cooperation (i.e. between Marietta and Cobb). Interagency cooperation seems to be a big sticking point as far as why things don't get done.
- Embry Riddle and St Leo University are in the commercial office park at the NE corner of S. Marietta Parkway and U.S. 41. Students here may feel especially isolated.
- University of Phoenix is leaving the area.
- People go downtown Marietta for entertainment: Marietta Square or Johnnie Mccrackens Celtic Pub.

#### Transit

- Student passes or discounts on CCT would be good
- Better access to the Square via transit
- If students work while in school, they usually have retail jobs. Could benefit from frequent transit service
- Transit within the 'hub area' in other cities is free.

- Existing transit is largely commuter based
- BRT is planned for U.S. 41. There would be a station near the universities along 41. Probably an underground or overhead crossing across U.S. 41.
- There is an existing privately run trolley service in Marietta. It caters to parties and tourists <http://www.mariettatrolley.com/index.html>
- There is an existing Trolley Thursday service goes downtown and to the Wal-Mart on Thursday evenings .It does not appear to get much ridership <http://marietta.patch.com/articles/southern-poly-teams-up-with-marietta-trolley>
- Any shuttle service would need to run frequently-class schedules are an issue and it would need to be flexible.
- Mentality of "if you have a car you won't ride a campus bus" or CCT.
- Fear based upon about getting robbed on CCT
- Transit needs to focus more than on schools but on the surrounding areas. Maybe CCT should come through the campus.
- Would be good if all the CCT lines 'hubbed' at the square so you knew you could get there.
- Connection opportunities between buses and trails
- Shuttle service to/near Roswell Road would be good. There are apartment complexes that students live in along Roswell Road across 75.
- Would support a weekend or periodic shuttle to Kennesaw or the Chattahoochee Parks

### **Car Travel**

- Traffic level at peak times (lunch) is problematic
- Left turns from Campus onto South Cobb Drive are difficult
- Crossing U.S. 41 is problematic
- The main road through campus needs a more prominent feel
- Left turns are problematic from the industrial park.
- Support for the New Hope connector
- Might like a connection between bell street and if pine forest way went through to U.S. 41. Right now there is just a rear exit with the Marietta Diner

### **Pedestrian Connectivity for Recreation and Transportation**

- Would be good to have a safe cut through for pedestrians or bikes to U.S. 41 to access the restaurants.
- Better pedestrian connectivity across S. Marietta Parkway and needed to CCT Marietta Transfer Center
- Bicycle travel along U.S. 41 is problematic due to the design of the road; recommend "complete street."
- Better connectivity of pedestrian facilities needed on SPSU campus.
- More and safer pedestrian connections needed along and across U.S. 41.
- Safety for trails is an issue

- Discontinuous sidewalks on campus are an impediment to getting around.
- Better linkages to both on and off campus restaurants. Hard to find the on campus dining locations.
- Better signage on campus for pedestrians/bikes would be good.
- Would like more recreational trail connections between the two campuses.
- Part of University segment phase 1 trail through the existing ball fields is about to be let for construction by the city of Marietta.
- Running club usually runs on campus. They run down....and hop a fence to get to the Life University Running track.

## Gateways & Entryways

### What locations do you consider to be the existing “arrival” points to the Marietta University District?

- Barclay Circle
  - Once you enter Barclay Circle, you feel as though you have arrived on the Life University campus.
- Fairground
- S. Marietta Parkway and U.S. 41
- Traffic on U.S. 41 inhibits a feeling of entryway into the community.
- On U.S. 41, there is no sense of arrival.
  - Waffle House is the arrival point to Life University on U.S. 41.
- Nowhere in the study area provides a sense of arrival.
- SPSU’s entryway at Technology Parkway is positive entry point in the area.

### Issues that Constrain Character Area

- There is no sense of university presence on U.S. 41.
- There is limited university presence on S. Marietta Parkway.
- “Trash” on U.S. 41.
- The Life University sign on U.S. 41 is posted with signs for various other businesses. This detracts from the University’s sense of place in the area.
- CCT announces arrival at SPSU, but a similar announcement is not given when bus nears Life University.

### Needs & Potential Strategy to Develop a Sense of Place

- Add wayfinding signs
  - Signage similar to what is located in Kennesaw near Kennesaw State University was recommended.
  - Atlanta University Center has collective branding for the universities in that area, something similar could be done in this area of Marietta.
- Consistent character from the S. Loop to Barclay Circle on U.S. 41
  - Compatible zoning is needed on U.S. 41
  - Lighting
  - Landscaping
- Creating connectivity between the two universities on U.S. 41 is important.
- A collective entrance to both universities is needed.

- Need to amend zoning and design regulations.
- Prioritize changes on U.S. 41.
- Redevelopment on S. Marietta Parkway will help but is a lower priority. It would be nice to be able to cross S. Marietta Parkway to pass desirable destinations on the opposite side of the street.

### **Potential Gateway Locations**

- Just north of Life Way would be a logical location for a major entryway.
- Major signage is needed at intersection of U.S. 41 and S. Marietta Parkway.
  - This could be an iconic building and greenspace. Architectural details should be reflective of a university environment.
- A collective student area on U.S. 41 that joins the two campuses would provide a sense of arrival in the area.
  - The old hotel on U.S. 41 could become a joint university center. This could also serve as a gateway.
- Edges of universities (including planned expansion areas) are strategic locations for creating district entry points.

### **What Characteristics should Gateways/Entryways have?**

- Unified architecture
  - The architecture building at SPSU is a good model building.
  - Tech Square in Midtown Atlanta/GA Tech does a good job pulling together various styles.
- Color schemes of both campuses (green) could be reflected in design elements
- New development at intersection of U.S. 41/120 will set the tone for the whole district – it is critical that this property redevelop with desired character!
- Incorporate sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian friendly area.
  - Provide a buffer between pedestrians and the U.S. 41.
  - Sidewalks also help create a more desirable visual presence.
- Incorporate green infrastructure as redevelopment occurs, and use these elements as an educational tool in the area.
- Require parking behind buildings on U.S. 41.
- Brick, stone, and steel materials should be encouraged.
- Bury or lower utility lines
- Need signage that is appropriate for pedestrians and scale of street.

### **Features of Campuses & City of Marietta to bring to study area corridors**

- SPSU architecture building
- Something like Marietta Square to provide connection between universities – recreational and pedestrian friendly
- Streetscaping – brick sidewalks, wrought iron fencing
- Brick signage (such as that at Georgia Tech and Life University)
- Along U.S. 41, the turn lane should be extended onto two campuses

## Other Connectivity Ideas and Recommendations

- Banberry Road could be extended through the diner parking lot on U.S. 41 to connect with S. Marietta Parkway, leading directly into the SPSU campus.
- Polytechnic Lane could connect to Life.
- Olympic Torch leading to the Braves Stadium near Downtown Atlanta is a good example of a strong entryway.

## Revitalizing Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41) Corridor

### Pedestrian Orientation

- Sidewalks – not enough crosswalks, lack pedestrian safety
- Students and others have to walk in road dangerous to cross!
- Use islands/ median to create safe crossing
- Is there a way to congregate uses in one key area(s) that draw pedestrians in concentrated area rather than “strung out” along corridor
- Look at traffic movement “turning into” businesses and not prohibiting customer access
- Little Five Points is a good model as walkable mode for business and people: food, retail, and village character
  - Maybe placed/located between universities

### General Needs

- Strike a balance between thru-traffic along U.S. 41 and more destination-oriented modes
- Dobbins AFB – changes going on at base
  - What does this offer in way of challenges and opportunities?
  - Does this offer connectivity/access points?
- Improve visibility of both universities from/along U.S. 41
- Part of solution to providing desired aesthetic look/change is to use subtle (not so dramatic) interventions
  - May be easier to implement instead of one major change/ element

### Desired Land Use Mix to Locate Along Corridor

- Grocery store – students now go to Wal-Mart for grocery needs; food
- Coffee/”Starbucks” – like Emory, geared to students
- Mixed-use, retail below with residential above
  - like Mercer-Macon (downtown)
  - Emory Pointe
- Look at Emory and GA Tech – examples of making bookstore & coffee shop in a more public setting;
  - Within a pedestrian oriented/parking reduced mixed-use environment
  - Great exposure on U.S. 41
- Develop strategy for evolving existing land uses to the desired future uses – similar to an “overlay district”
- If housing is added to corridor area, it should compliment and not compete with housing provided by the university.
- Add residential types to increase “roof tops”
- Students are asking for a variety of off campus housing beyond what is offered today.

## **S. Marietta Parkway between Aviation and Fairground**

- Improve lighting, landscaping, and general overall look/appearance

## **High Volume Roads/Pedestrian Friendly Areas**

- Mentioned several examples in southern California where there's a mix of high volume/ mix of cars and businesses up along a sidewalk
- Smyrna/Atlanta Road (City Hall area) is a good example of what can be done along a similar corridor as U.S. 41
- U.S. 41 is too wide! Too much asphalt!
  - Add medians, landscape, sidewalks
  - Common fencing/ materials to be used together to visually unify area
  - Create "parkway" character along U.S. 41 and S. Marietta Parkway
  - Add common heights and signals that are unique, announcing that you have arrived!

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station** - Could be signature use along corridor that could change area/ character

## **Trolley System for Students**

- Specific bus line for students that can take you around area
  - SPSU bus currently only runs one time per week
- Kennesaw State has bus that runs to residential, campus, and surrounding uses
- Could Life and SPSU combine trolley system for more of a comprehensive system?
- A system that is catered to students and interlinked to area's other transit modes – Marietta trolley, proposed BRT, CCT, etc.

## **Streetscape**

- Improve intersection visually at U.S. 41 and S. Marietta Parkway
- Add sidewalks
- Look at improvements to streetscape like downtown Marietta area and Suwanee
- Improved pedestrian-oriented character
- Lighting, signage, landscape, sidewalks
- "You know you have arrived"
- Clean up visual clutter – signs, lights, power lines and poles
  - Move overhead power lines to underground

## **Pedestrian Bridge**

- Could be a gateway element
- Would this be used?
- Design could influence whether it gets used or not
- Where would bridge lead people to? It must be a destination!
- New transit station in area could provide funding and impetus (magnet) for bridge

## University Center

### What does not work now?

- U.S. 41 does not relate to the universities
- Poor campus visibility
- Poor retail, business + restaurant mix
- Lack of pedestrian accessibility
- Concerns for pedestrian safety
- Lack of campus housing
- Housing options and variety on and off campus
- Lack of connectivity between campuses
- Lack of community destinations or night life
- No walkability
- Lack of interaction between the campus and community
- Lack of mass transportation options
- U.S. 41 is a major road with too much traffic
- No landmark announcing that you are at a destination
- No job centers near the university

### What would you like to see?

- Access into the universities from U.S. 41, possibly a shared entry way
- Traffic calming – better pedestrian access + safety
- Better shopping, unique stores, venues and restaurants
- Entertainment that draws people at night and on the weekends
- Pedestrian friendly environment
- Connectivity between the campuses
- Active green space that the universities could share
- Gathering spaces that people in the community and the university would use
- Complimentary housing
- Catalyst for other redevelopment
- Feature lighting
- Public Art
- Outwardly active public spaces
- S. Cobb entrance
- Streetscape on U.S. 41- parkway feel, trees in median
- Pedestrian bridge over U.S. 41
- Transit hub, should be unique
- Conference Center
- Multi-use space
- More cafes
- Cohesive architectural style
- Theme that reflects the campus
- Outdoor seating
- More aesthetic public space
- Brick walks and sidewalks
- Landmark building or architectural element

- Shuttle services or trolley
- More parking behind buildings and less fronting the street
- Focus on sustainability and LEED
- More density – needed to support desired uses

**What are examples of University Centers that are done well?**

- Georgia Tech / Tech Square – Atlanta, GA
- Church Street – Burlington, Vermont
- UGA - Athens, Georgia
- Mass. Avenue – Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Masdar City – how the technology and sustainability is integrated into the community

The group also worked with maps of the study area to define preferred geographic locations of proposed design features. The group focused on the area along U.S. 41 along the border of SPSU and Life Universities, seeing this as the most logical location for a shared university center, that would include all the features listed under the responses to Question 2, above.

## Marietta University Enhancement District

### Livable Centers Initiative Study

#### OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

#### Marietta Center for Advanced Academics – Cafeteria

May 7, 2013, 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

### Overview

Approximately 70 community members attended the MU2 LCI Open House on May 7 at the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics. The public meeting gave participants an opportunity to review the draft conceptual plan for the study area and to learn about draft recommendations for implementing the overall vision for the area, identified through the public engagement process. A window of two hours was provided for community members to come and go at their leisure:

- All attendees received a copy of the draft conceptual plan upon arriving.
- Displays were mounted throughout the room that reflected the central recommendations of the plan. Materials were organized around five stations: 1. Sign-in Table, 2. Redevelopment & Economic Growth Strategies, 3. Overall Concept & Land Use, 4. Transportation & Connectivity, and 5. Linking [MU2 LCI] to other area plans. *The room layout is provided on the next page.*
- The project consultant team, led by Jim Summerbell of Jacobs Engineering, gave a brief overview of the study process and key elements of the plan's recommendations.
- Geoff Koski of Bleakly Advisory Group presented the key outcomes of the market analysis, including the development vision for the area and keys to implementation.



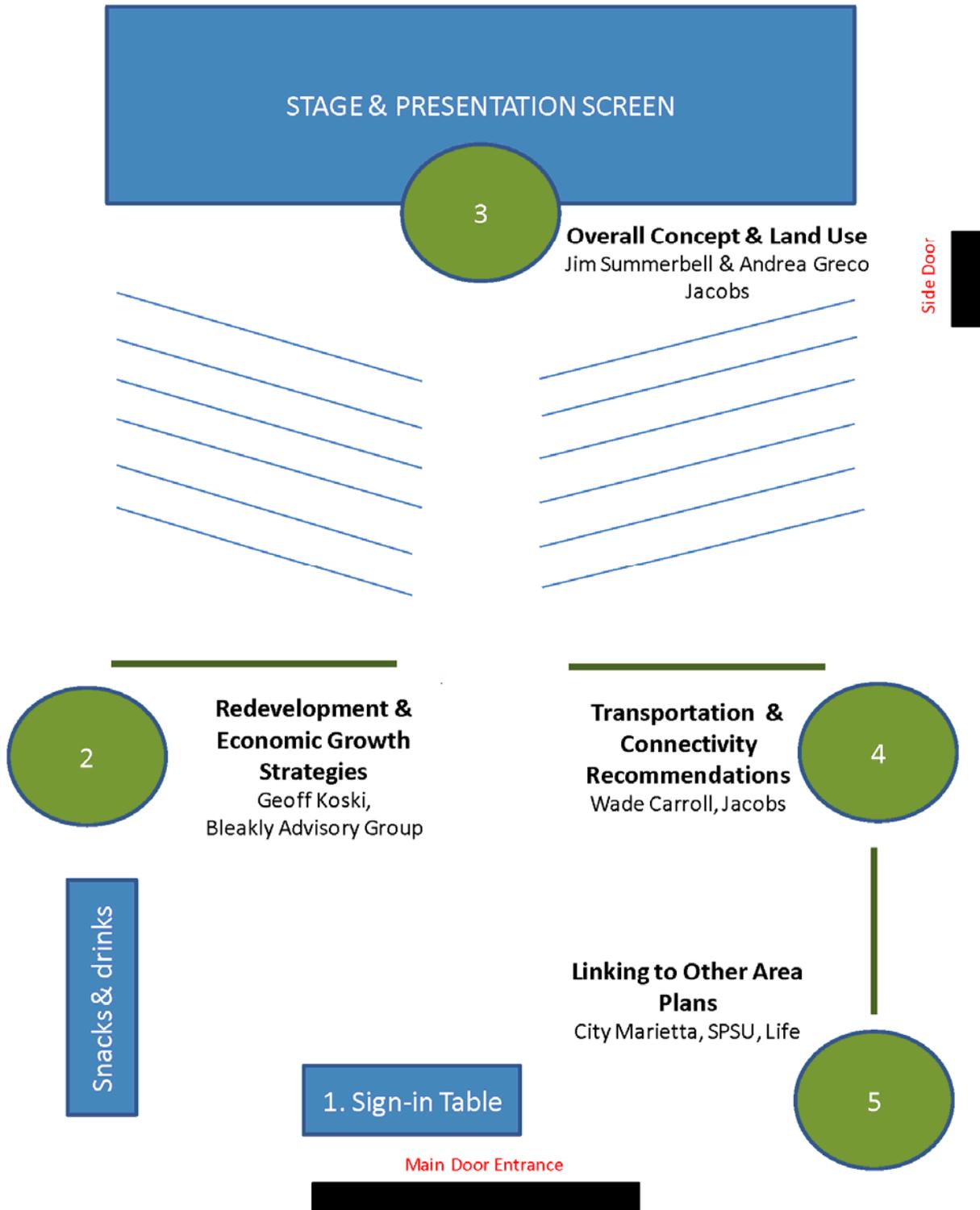
*City of Marietta staff fields questions from meeting house attendees*



*Jim Summerbell of Jacobs gives a brief overview presentation of the study process and outcomes.*

Participants were asked to provide comments on the draft plan and its recommendations either directly to the project team or via comment forms given to attendees as they arrived at the meeting. These comments are provided on pages 3 and 4 of this summary and being considered in final edits to the LCI plan.

## MU2 LCI Open House May 7 – MCAA Cafeteria Layout



## Open House Feedback

### Input Provided to Facilitators

The following input was provided to meeting facilitators regarding the Plan recommendations.

- It was suggested that signal improvements include a protected left for White/Frey's Gin at US 41.
- It was requested that connections to trails to on campus routes be checked.
- A couple participants requested that the City ensure that the guidelines made all the sidewalks ADA accessible, except where this is not an option due to slope).
- One gentleman wanted to see a different configuration at the SPSU /Life University mixed use center development, suggesting the design to be focused towards the universities, creating a real place where students from the two schools can interact.
- A concern was raised by a SPSU representative about the plan's focus on capturing student expenditures as a part of making the development vision a success. Although it is recognized that this is an important aspect of reshaping the area, it should not dominate the plan's overall message.



*SPSU President Lisa Rossbacher and SPSU discuss the draft recommendations.*

### Feedback Provided via Comment Forms

The following additional feedback was provided via comment forms.

#### **Please provide comments and feedback on the Draft Concept Plan and study recommendations.**

- In the paper today, it was revealed [that] incentives to developers have not lived up to expectations – the developers have not created promised jobs. Bottom line is tax payers fund these studies and developments. A pretty picture but I am tired of increased taxes. Not practical.
- You are leaving the redevelopment to chance by just having a zoning overlay. Need to incorporate some design guidelines or form base code to guarantee future development is mixed use and not a one-story building.
- I am interested in what has been discussed for the comment area between SPSU and Life University.
- The draft of the concept plan was very good, great presentation, creative ideas, great discussion, and answers to questions.

- How do I cross US 41 to get to “University Square”?
- How do I cross half of US 41 to get to transit running in the median?
- The Commons/Mixing Center/”Smyrna Market Village” component between the Universities is weak. Mostly retail with some open space. Does not show in the plan. Should be the jewel in your “sense of place.” Must touch both universities and US 41.
- If developers saw potential profit in restaurants, housing, etc., they would already be there.

**Please provide additional comments and ideas here.**

- Consider including night life businesses for students to use within walking distance.
- Looking forward to the next meeting and to see this Concept Plan hopefully implemented.

**Was this meeting what you expected? Please provide any specific thoughts on today’s meeting format.**

- Yes
- It was a great meeting. I enjoyed the presentation and the break-out sessions. Very informative.



## Marietta University Enhancement District

### Livable Centers Initiative Study

#### PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

July 10, 2013, 7 PM

Excerpt from City Council Meeting Minutes, July 10, 2013



#### City of Marietta

205 Lawrence Street  
Post Office Box 609  
Marietta, Georgia 30061

#### Meeting Summary

##### CITY COUNCIL

*R. Steve Tumlin, Mayor*  
*Annette Paige Lewis, Ward 1*  
*Griffin "Grif" L. Chalfant, Jr., Ward 2*  
*Johnny Sinclair, Ward 3*  
*G. A. (Andy) Morris, Ward 4*  
*Rev. Anthony C. Coleman, Ward 5*  
*James W. King, Ward 6*  
*Philip M. Goldstein, Ward 7*

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

7:00 PM

Council Chamber

Page 8 Action Item summary, related to the MU2 LCI Adoption

* 20130555	<b>MU2LCI Final Draft Plan</b>
	Approval of a resolution for the adoption of the Marietta University Enhancement District (MU2) LCI Plan.
	PUBLIC HEARING
	Approved and Finalized

Source: <http://www.mariettaga.gov/city/cityhall/clerk/minutes>.



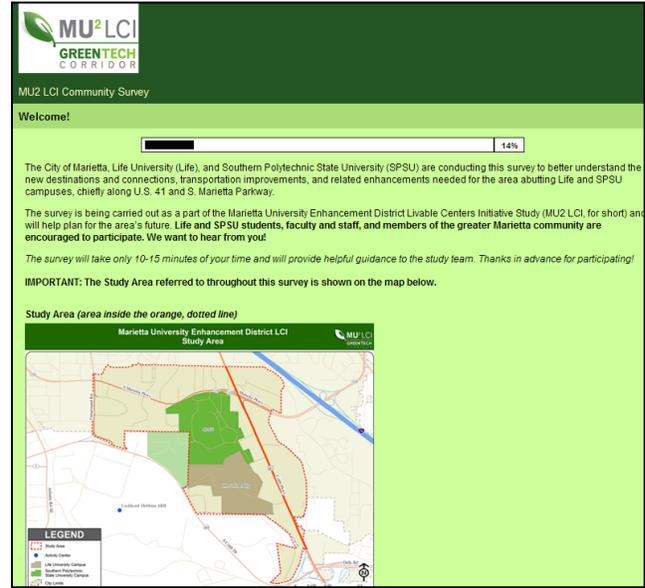
# MU2 LCI COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

Between January 15 and February 15, 2013 just over 300 community members participated in a voluntary online survey to offer input to the Marietta University Enhancement District Study, or MU2 LCI. The survey was targeted to those people spending time in or around the study area or passing through the study area on a regular basis.

The survey focused on three major topic areas: transportation/mobility, destinations and market opportunities, and general connectivity and design. Several demographic questions were also asked to assess how well the survey results represented the diverse perspectives of the community.

Survey results are being used to help inform the conceptual master plan and recommendations of the study, and upon study completion, survey findings will continue to be used by the City of Marietta, Life University, Southern Polytechnic State University, and other partners to further the vision for the area. Key findings from the survey are summarized on the following pages and followed by a snapshot of survey results.

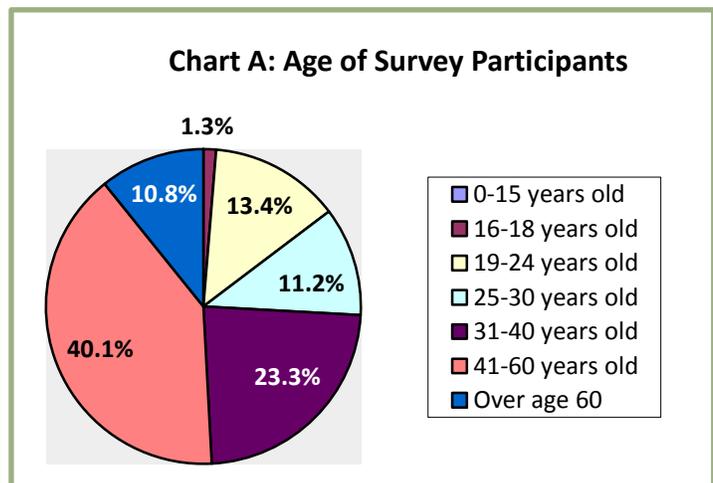


*Screenshot from online survey interface*

## WHO PARTICIPATED?

Survey participants represented a solid cross section of the targeted Marietta community: roughly one third residents, one third University faculty/ staff, and approximately one quarter students.

The primary reason people spend time in the study area is to either work or attend school (56 percent). Traveling through the study area going somewhere else and residing in the study area are the next two most common relationships with the study area (26 percent and 9 percent, respectively).



The majority of participants (85 percent) indicated that they work or study within the study area zip code (30060). The residential locations of participants had a greater variation. Approximately 34 percent live in 30064 (just west of the study area), another 25 percent live within 30060, and another 28 percent reside within either 30062 or 30067, located adjacent to the study area yet east of I-75.

**WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY?**

A series of questions asked about transportation and mobility in the area. Because a central goal of the LCI program is providing multi-modal transportation options, the majority of these questions focused on travel by foot, bicycle, and transit.

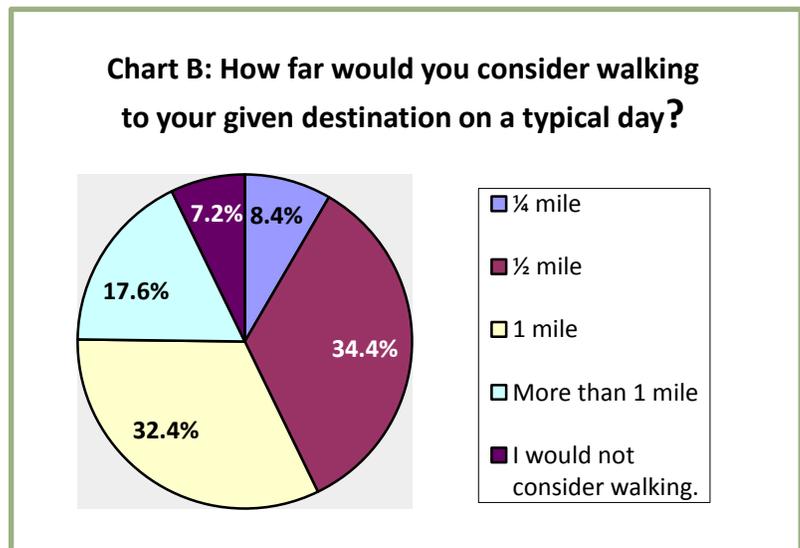
**PREFERRED TRAVEL MODES**

When asked about top two preferred travel modes for getting to and from work/home/school, the majority (59 percent) indicated that they prefer travel by car. This was followed by travel by light rail (42 percent), on foot (31 percent), and bicycle (26 percent). Participants were asked how likely they would be to travel via different modes within the study area if conditions for doing so were favorable. Not surprisingly, 91 percent said they would be very likely or likely to travel via car. Another 66 percent said they would be likely or very likely to walk; 46 percent very likely/likely to take a shuttle, 42 percent very/likely to bike, and only 27 very likely/likely to take bus.

**WALKING IN THE AREA**

Participants indicated that walking is a viable option for getting around the study area with nearly 42 percent indicating they would walk ½ mile or less. Another 50 percent indicated a willingness to walk 1 mile or more.

When asked about the top obstacles to walking, the biggest issues identified were a generally unsafe walking environment (71 percent) and distance between destinations (69 percent). Over 60 percent of all participants also indicated that a lack of sidewalks and difficult intersections are barriers to walking. Student respondents also identified not enough lighting as a major obstacle.



**BICYCLING**

Bicycling was also seen as a viable transportation mode should conditions improve: 55 percent of participants indicated they would bike 30 minutes or less, and 69 percent of students indicated they would consider biking the same distance.





preferences in the study area and suggest the preference to revive the area in a way that accommodates both smaller-scale and larger-scale establishments.

**WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT GENERAL CONNECTIVITY AND DESIGN?**

Participants answered a handful of questions about general design and connectivity. Questions focused on the area’s multi-use path potential, streetscape priorities, and the vision for the area.

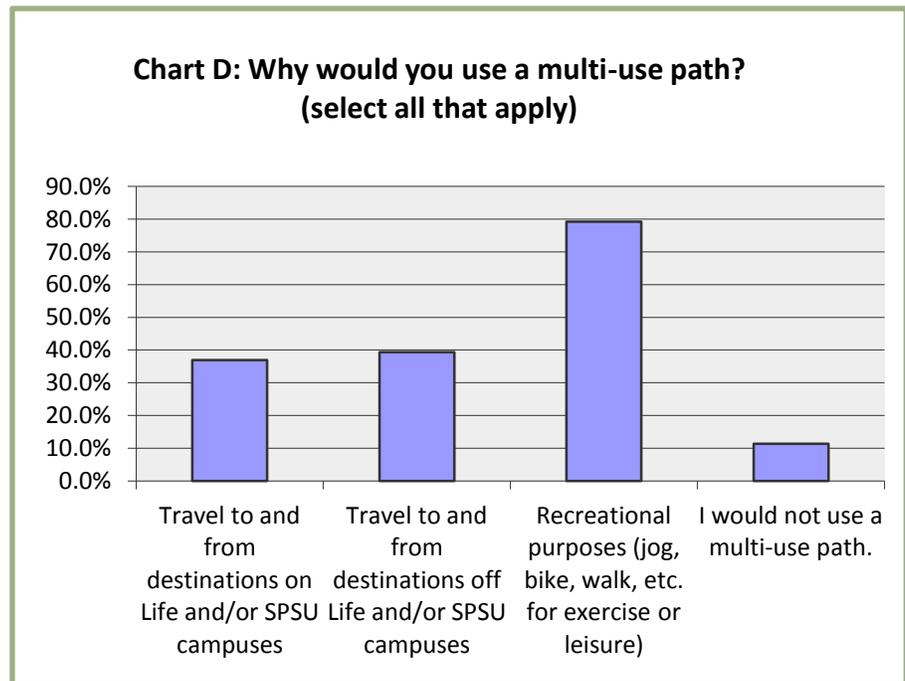
**MULTI-USE PATH USE**

Participants were asked how they would use a multi-use path, defined as a paved surface at least eight feet in width, should one be developed within the study area: 79 percent indicated for recreational purposes, 39 percent to travel to/from locations off the Universities’ campuses, and 37% percent to/from locations on the Universities’ campuses.

Student participants indicated a greater likelihood of using such a path for travel to /from destinations with 55 percent indicating they would use it to travel to destinations on campus and 49 percent said they would use it to travel to destinations off campus. These responses indicate that connecting a multi-use path through both Life University and Southern Polytechnic State University would be a strategic investment.

**STREETSCAPE PRIORITIES**

The survey asked participants to rank a series of streetscapes improvements in order of priority by those that would best improve the character of the area. Increased lighting for pedestrian areas was ranked highest followed by other landscaping. Responses indicated that directional signage, gateway features, and street furniture are a lower priority.



*15-Year Vision*

A final question in the survey asked participants what they would like the area to look and feel like in 15 years. A variety of responses were given, some of which are highlighted on the next page. Overall responses indicated that people would like the area to be more of a live-work-play environment with people visibly enjoying the area and walking, biking, and spending more time together outdoors. People would like the area to have “cutting edge ideas” and be “clean and

modern,” accommodating to both college students and families. Overall, survey participants desire the area to be a safe, active, and accommodating to diverse populations.

### *15-Year Vision (selection of participant responses)*

- Park-like, serene, safe.
- Vibrant, thriving with local businesses providing food, shopping, and entertainment options.
- Walkable area - grocery store, restaurants, other conveniences in walking distance. Traffic planning that allows for pedestrian and bike rider safety. Attractive and affordable housing; Great outdoor space.
- I would love to see a community feel, such as downtown Smyrna, with greenspace and recreational areas. Getting rid of some of the abandoned/empty storefronts/buildings/shopping centers would also help improve the visual curb appeal too, and improve the quality of life aspect.
- More of a college town look: shops, restaurants, multi-use path, sidewalks and everything well lit.
- In the next 15 years I would love to see a district somewhat like Atlantic Station, but has a college town feel to it. Where the student, community and visitors come to have fun. And with the universities getting seen on US41 the community appreciates them and supports them 110%.
- The area would have a well defined edge perhaps marked by 'gateways' and defined throughout by unique or signature landscaping, pavements, hard-scapes, and signage. The area would have nodes of mixed use commercial, retail, dining, entertainment, and residential development and provide adequate parking to accommodate use by the community from beyond the immediate area. The area would provide opportunities for multiple transportation options - automobile, pedestrian, bike, shuttle/trolley, etc.
- A place known for sustainable beautiful building, art and architecture, where earth-conscious, responsible construction is the norm. A place where people come to live and learn, both formally and informally, and shop for items that are healthy, high quality good value. A place not known for cronyism and back door deals benefitting the few at the expense of the local community or the quality/value of the construction.
- A place where I can bike around, picnic, read something from a nearby library or class or eat something from a nearby restaurant, watch outdoor events, have a trolley running up and down Cobb Parkway from the Big Chicken all the way down to Cumberland Mall.
- More like a community instead of a piece-meal of businesses.
- Bustling with life.
- Spacious, shaded, landscaped and well-maintained, with ample sidewalks for pedestrian movement and interconnectivity between shops, schools and dwellings, bit on and off campus.
- I would like to see the area build on its historical foundation; brick sidewalks, trees, benches, flags, signage (old town feel).
- I would like to travel that area and be proud of its beauty and practically. I would also like to make it part of Marietta that I would frequent.

# SNAPSHOT OF SURVEY RESULTS

## SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- 313 participants (35% resident of Marietta, living outside study area; 33% faculty or staff at school/college in the study area; 22% student attending school/college in the area; 11% work within study area)
- 57% female; 43% male
- 40% (41-60 years old); 23% (31-40 years old); 13% (19-24 years old); 11% (25-30); 10% (over 60)
- Tenure: 72% own; 18% rent; 6% live in dorms; 4% live with parents/relatives
- Income: 27% (\$50,000-\$99,999); 22% (\$25,000-\$49,999); 22% (\$100,000-\$149,999)
- Primary reason for spending time in the study area?
  - 56% work or attend school within the study area
  - 26% travel through the study area going to somewhere else
  - 9% live in the study area

## Reasons You Would Spend More Time in the Study Area versus just passing through (common responses)

- Improved shopping, dining or entertainment
- Green space: parks, green spaces, recreational areas
- Safer and cleaner

## TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY QUESTIONS

### What two modes would you prefer to travel by? (two responses)

- 59% car (including taxi)
- 42% light rail
- 31% on foot
- 26% bicycle
- 16% shuttle (circulator)

[**Students:** 61% car; **35% on foot**; 33% light rail; 29% bicycle]

### Top Obstacles to Walking in the Area

- 71% generally unsafe walking environment
- 69% distance between destinations
- 65% lack of sidewalks
- 63% intersections difficult to cross
- 46% time required to walk is too long
- 38% not enough lighting

[**Students:** 70% unsafe; **68% intersections**; 66% distance; 64% lack of sidewalks; **57% lighting**]

**How far would you consider walking to your given destination on a typical day if conditions for doing so were favorable?**

- 34% ½ mile
- 32% 1 mile
- 18% more than 1 mile

[**Students:** 46% ½ mile; 32% 1 mile; 16% more than only mile]

**How far would you consider bicycling to your given destination on a typical day if conditions for doing so were favorable?**

- 36% would not consider biking
- 28% >5 to 15 minutes
- 24% > 15 to 30 minutes

[**Students:** 41% >5-15 mins; 23% >15-30 mins; 20% would not consider biking]

**If shuttle service were provided in the study area, between Life and SPSU campuses and along US 41, how likely would you be to ride it?**

- 26% not sure
- 25% very unlikely
- 19% likely
- 16% very likely
- 14% unlikely

[**Students:** 30% very likely; 20% likely; 29% not sure]

**If a shuttle service were provided in the study area, where would you want it to take you?**

- SPSU campus, between campuses, Marietta Transfer Station, to buy groceries, several areas outside study area (e.g. Cumberland, Marietta Square, Wal-Mart)
- Several comments given that a shuttle service is not appropriate for area.

**GENERAL CONNECTIVITY & DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES**

**If a multi-use path, defined as a paved surface at least 8 feet in width, were developed within the study area, for which of the following reasons would you use it?**

- 79% recreational purposes
- 39% travel to and from destinations off Life and/or SPSU campuses
- 37% travel to and from destinations on Life and/or SPSU campuses

[**Students:** 82% recreational purposes; 55% destinations on Life and/or SPSU campuses; 49% destinations off Life and/or SPSU campuses]

**Rank the following streetscape improvements from 1 to 5 in order of priority for improving the character of the study area. (average ranking)**

- 2.11 increased lighting for pedestrian areas
- 2.42 increased trees and other landscaping

- 3.39 directional signage
- 3.50 gateway
- 3.59 street furniture

**Type of public or green space is most needed in the study area**

- 37% multi-use path
- 22% pocket park
- 21% outdoor plaza or courtyard

[**Students:** 33% path; **26%** recreational space for organized sports; 24% pocket park]

**In 3 sentences or less, tell us what you would like the area to look and feel like in 15 years.  
(select responses)**

- A living laboratory where students, faculty, businesses and residents of the community regularly interact with cutting edge ideas for how to live more comfortably and sustainably.
- A true university campus with young people visibly enjoying themselves and traveling through the area on foot, bike and some sort of transit
- A healthy buzzing college town community where you see more people walking than riding in cars, more people enjoying the given environment and people don't feel threatened for their safety.
- A continuation of the fantastic job that is going on at Marietta Square and the surrounding area. The entire area looks different, a great place to live, shop and dine. Small town living with all of the conveniences!!!
- Clean and modern. Busy with young people and faculty members during the week. Activities for families during the evening.

**DESTINATIONS & MARKET OPPORTUNITIES**

**Where do you typically participate in each of the below activities. Please select all answers that apply.**

Answer Options	Inside study area	Along US 41, north of study area	Cumberland area	Marietta Square	Roswell	Smyrna	Town Center area	Woodstock	Somewhere else	N/A	Response Count
Pick up a quick lunch	133	110	47	103	17	20	48	4	46	10	255
Go to a sit-down restaurant	72	87	79	145	31	35	83	17	82	6	252
Buy groceries	35	54	17	16	12	9	30	8	130	13	247
See a movie	10	17	55	9	14	5	74	7	105	33	242
Exercise	68	10	14	22	3	3	9	4	108	42	247
Shop for clothes	22	35	62	16	14	11	102	8	128	18	249
Shop for school/work supplies	49	85	28	9	12	8	49	8	103	32	245
Spend time with family or friends	66	49	47	105	30	33	60	21	144	11	249
Purchase, repair and/or maintenance of vehicles, recreational vehicles, and/or big ticket expenditure	57	37	18	14	11	17	43	7	113	23	247

**Where is “somewhere else?”**

- Kennesaw
- Atlantic Station/Midtown
- Buckhead
- East Cobb
- West Marietta
- Acworth
- Powder Springs

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**What specific types of retail(ers) (big box stores, boutique stores, grocers, etc.) would you like to see come to the study area? (common responses)**

- Grocery stores (Publix, Kroger, Whole Foods), home improvement, boutique stores, Target or Kmart, coffee shop, consignment stores

**What specific types of dining establishments (fast food, cafes, restaurants, fine dining, etc.) would you like to see come to the study area? (common responses)**

- All over the place – coffee shop, specific fast food chains, sit-down restaurants, cafes, local & boutique restaurants, health food stores

**If you live outside the study area, what would entice you to live inside the study area? (common responses)**

- Mixed use, safer, grocery stores, good restaurants, more accessible for bikers & pedestrians, affordable/quality housing, townhomes or stylish lofts





