

1.1 FRAMEWORK/ WHY MASTER PLAN

The Fulton Industrial Boulevard (FIB) corridor in Fulton County, Georgia has long-enjoyed a preeminent role in the regional economy. Beginning in the 1960s and taking off in the 1970s, the area's location along and near major transportation nodes, I-20 and I-285, as well as proximity to the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and to the City of Atlanta markets has fueled its development and furthered its importance over time.

As we near the close of 2013, it is clear that the area continues to serve as a highly important source of industrial land, employment, and tax revenue for Fulton County, with economic benefits extending throughout the Atlanta region with strong linkages to other major economic development initiatives in the southeast. Despite this important role, a variety of changes in surrounding areas, the county, the region, and the overall economy have provided new pressure on the district's competitiveness and economic vitality, calling for a strengthened approach for the future.

While the County has strategically planned for surrounding areas, an industrial-focused plan for the Fulton Industrial area has been lacking. The consequence of the lack of this master vision and plan has been the underutilization of parcels and allowance of uses that detract from the area's overall industrial economic viability and preeminence. Increased industrial market competition in other areas of the region has further intensified this situation.

Laurence J. Peter, an American management theorist, said, "If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else." This was the experience that Fulton Industrial was beginning to undergo in the mid 2000s without the targeted industrial district leadership to ensure and propel the district's success. However, with the establishment of the Fulton Industrial Community Improvement District (CID) in 2010, the leadership of the area, led by its businesses, decided that it would not be a victim of lack of vision and took an important step forward in ensuring a united voice for the area. The self-taxing district would define where it's going and establish the steps to make FIB a regional leader in industrial markets.

The Fulton Industrial (CID) Master Plan (Master Plan) is a critical next step and juncture in the district's history that will help ensure the economic integrity of the district for the businesses, the region, and the employees that sustain it. This Master Plan was built from the ground up from the vision of the businesses, property owners, neighbors, and in some cases newcomers, that fully realize the area's prominence, value, and long-term role and greater potential to serve the area economy for perpetuity and be an industrial leader that communities benchmark in the years to come.

"If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else."

-Laurence J. Peter

1.2 REPORT GUIDE

The Master Plan document, and the work behind it, is implementation focused. At the time of its compilation, the CID and its partners were already moving forward in its implementation.

The Master Plan document is organized in six chapters:

- Chapters 1 and 2 highlight essential background information and input that shaped the plan;
- Chapter 3 provides a competitive assessment of the corridor from an economic development perspective, the foundation upon which the Master Plan is built;
- Chapter 4 lays out the overall vision and Master Plan for the corridor; and
- Chapters 5 and 6 provide the implementation strategy and work plan to achieve the vision.

The bulk of supporting data (baseline conditions analysis, stakeholder engagement summaries, detailed market analysis, and supportive transportation materials) is included in the appendices. These materials document the thorough and necessary analysis, partner coordination, and vetting process that led to the forward-thinking vision and plan laid out within.

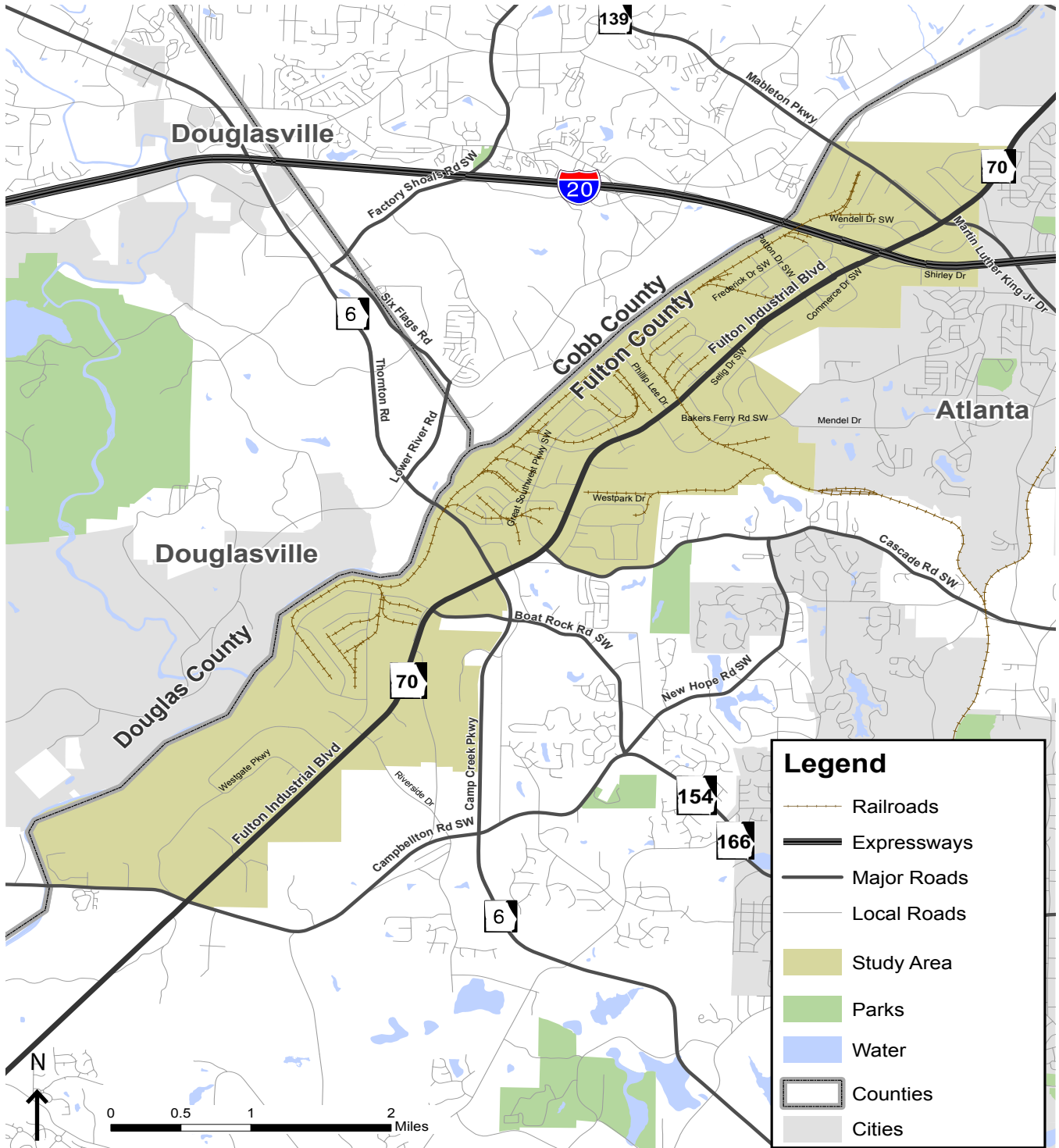
Five key technical areas, as highlighted in Figure 1-1, are addressed in the Master Plan.

1.3 STUDY AREA

The Fulton Industrial CID Master Plan study area (study area) is consistent with the boundaries of the Fulton Industrial Boulevard Redevelopment Area and encompasses the entire Fulton Industrial CID area. The study area is focused on Fulton Industrial Boulevard (FIB) corridor located in southwest unincorporated Fulton County. The Chattahoochee River marks the western edge of the study area and the residential neighborhoods of Sandtown (unincorporated Fulton County) and Baker Hills, Bakers Ferry, Boulder Park, Midwest Cascade (City of Atlanta) are the eastern edge. Fulton County Airport-Brown Field, north of the FIB / I-20 interchange, is the northern boundary; and Campbellton Road is the southern boundary. Figure 1-2 on the following page identifies the boundaries of the study area.



FIGURE 1-1. FIVE TECHNICAL AREAS ADDRESSED IN THE MASTER PLAN



1-2. FULTON INDUSTRIAL CID MASTER PLAN STUDY AREA MAP

Source: Fulton County GIS, Atlanta Regional Commission

1.4 OUR HISTORY

The Fulton Industrial area has long enjoyed a history as the largest industrial and business complex in the Atlanta region. It has been a major contributor in the dynamic growth of the Atlanta regional economy over the last fifty years and home to many of the major industrial business enterprises that created economic wealth for the region and employment for thousands of residents.

Changing economic conditions, shifts in global and regional manufacturing and distribution trends, and intensified competition have all, over time, taken a toll on the pre-eminence of the Fulton Industrial area. Nevertheless, because of its advantageous locational and infrastructure attributes, the area remains competitive for industrial users and possesses a potential to further improve its current positioning in a very active regional marketplace.

Development along the corridor began in the late 1950s, but most of the current structures were built in the 1970s. Approximately one third of the corridor was developed during this decade, with 1973 being the busiest year with 64 structures built. Development began in proximity to the rail lines and then progressed outward towards the roadway. Construction activity in the study area tapered off dramatically in the 1990s with only 50 structures built in that decade, compared to 190 in the 1980s. Development slowed again in the 2000s; the study area added 25 structures between 2000 and 2005. Tax records do not show any parcels built after 2005; however, recent windshield surveys of the area show evidence of limited development activity, especially towards the southern end of the FIB corridor.



GREAT SOUTHWEST PARKWAY GATEWAY

1.5 STUDY PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

The Fulton Industrial master planning process consisted of the following key phases:

- Analysis of study area (baseline assessment).
- Stakeholder engagement (see Chapter 2).
- Development of a conceptual master plan for the future of the FIB corridor.
- Refinement of the conceptual master plan/development of the Master Plan.
- Development of study report, including project and policy recommendations for implementing the Master Plan.

The planning process was led by the Boulevard Community Improvement District (aka, Fulton Industrial CID) in partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and its consultant team of Jacobs Engineering and Bleakly Advisory Group.

The planning process occurred over a five month process from May to October 2013.

DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUES

This Master Plan was largely built upon the existing plans, studies, and initiatives that have shaped the corridor to date and will continue to influence its success in the future (see Table 1-1). The planning process began with an analysis of each of those items that had been completed, currently serve as decision making tools, or were underway at the time of the study.

Each of these elements are discussed in more detail, as appropriate, throughout the report. Existing land use, transportation, urban design, and market analysis data was collected from reputable sources including Fulton County, CoStar, Georgia Department of Economic Development, and the ARC as well as other departments and agencies as identified throughout the plan.

The data collected was fact-checked and balanced against additional qualitative and quantitative data collected, including:

- Interviews with area stakeholders and corridor users.
- Corridor site visits made by land use, urban design, market analysis, and transportation team experts—testing empirical data and previous studies against what’s on the ground today.
- Technical expertise from benchmark areas—brought to reason against what the possibilities are here today.

TABLE 1-1. RELATED PLANS, STUDIES & INITIATIVES

Plan, Study & Initiative	Year Completed (if applicable)
Atlanta Regional Commission PLAN 2040	Updated annually
Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan	2008
Atlanta Strategic Regional Truck Master Plan	2009
Branding & Marketing for the CID	Underway
Fulton County Redevelopment Framework	2010
Fulton County 2030 Comprehensive Plan	2011
Fulton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan	Underway
Fulton County Zoning Ordinance	NA
Sustainable Cities Design Academy	Fall 2013
ULI TAP for the Redevelopment of Properties Adjacent to FIB and the I-20 Interchange	2012

1.6 MASTER PLAN GOALS & GUIDING VALUES FOR THE FUTURE

The Master Plan is a declaration to study area land owners and businesses, partners, and potential investors that FIB has a visionary, yet realistic and implementable plan for its future.

GOALS

The goals driving the Master Plan's development included the following:

- Create a guide for future public & private investment that improves the area's:
 - Aesthetics,
 - Safety,
 - Mobility, and
 - Commercial vitality.
- Enhance the economic competitiveness of district.
- Identify creative opportunities to set the district apart.

These goals were developed by CID leadership prior to initiation of the planning process and articulated to the planning team and partners at the start of the process.

GUIDING VALUES FOR THE FUTURE

A series of key ideas and priorities were repeated by stakeholders throughout the planning process. We have highlighted these items below as guiding values that the CID should keep in mind as Master Plan implementation occurs and planning for the corridor continues.

Strengthen Partnerships to Achieve Shared Goals

Our plan is about vision, leadership, and shaping our future. We recognize the assets FIB has to offer the county and region—there are many, including a strong history and solid partnerships—that set us apart from our competitors. Building teamwork and partnerships during and after the planning process is critical to achieve joint success.

Preserve and Maximize What Makes Us Unique

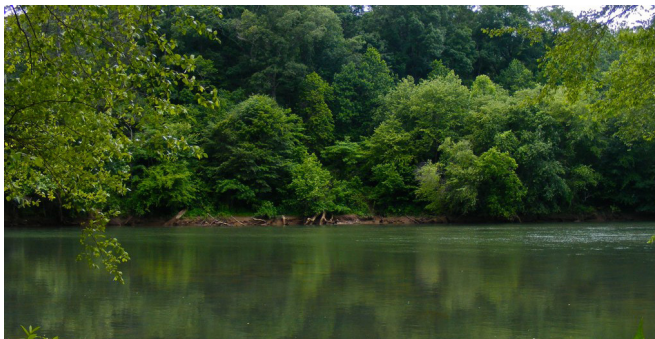
- Strategic location.
- Solid transportation network.
- A large, intact industrial district.

Be a Model Local and Regional Citizen

- Consider mega trends impacting the region and facilitate related opportunities in our district.
- Think creatively and outside the box.
- Encourage sustainability in our redevelopment and development.
- Protect the Chattahoochee River.
- Be a good neighbor to adjacent residential areas.



INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS IN THE FIB CORRIDOR



CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

1.7 KEY FINDINGS FROM BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Highlights from each substantive area of the Baseline Assessment are summarized below. Appendix A (and Appendix B for Market Analysis) provides in-depth data and analysis backing each of these discussions as well as additional baseline data supporting the overall Master Plan and recommendations.

TRANSPORTATION

This section details the major findings of the needs assessment for multimodal and freight mobility.

Multimodal Travel

Multimodal travel is comprised of multiple modes of transportation including, car, bicycle and pedestrian.

- There is significant projected growth in roadway traffic volumes throughout the study area by 2040. This is particularly true for roadways at the southern portion of the FIB corridor, where Camp Creek Parkway and a number of other supporting east-west roadways projected to have increased congestion intersect FIB. However, level of service (LOS) along FIB is projected to remain relatively steady through 2040. This is due primarily to the planned widening of FIB to six lanes from I-20 to Campbellton Road, anticipated by 2030.
- With no Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) service, transit in the study area is limited to the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Route 73. While the route runs at 15 minute intervals, the route is somewhat lengthy with respect to time. Because of this length of time per trip in conjunction with the limitations of the MARTA service area (only providing service from east of the corridor), transit access to potential workers in the area is limited.
- With respect to transit amenities, of the 84 bus stops in the area, 13 are sheltered and three provide benches. In many cases, these amenities are placed in locations with higher average

boardings; however, there are several stops along Route 73 with high boarding totals that do not provide shelters along these portions of FIB:

- Between Martin Luther King Boulevard and Commerce Drive; and
- Between Cascade Road and Bucknell Drive.
- There is a very limited bicycle and pedestrian network in the study area with respect to external and internal connectivity.

Freight Mobility

Freight mobility is comprised of multiple modes including truck traffic and rail traffic.

- The FIB corridor has a significant rail network, which can be seen in Figure 1-2. Rail access has been less important to industrial users in the recent past, but trends show it is poised for resurgence. Currently there are no plans for rail improvements or expansion in the FIB corridor. The planning team and stakeholders recognize rail access as a potentially underutilized asset to the corridor's redevelopment. The CID and its partners recognize this critical issue and are committed to ongoing discussions with CSX and track manager OmniTRAX.
- Both FIB and Camp Creek Parkway are characterized by a high level of truck travel.
- Freight traffic in the study area is projected to increase substantially by 2040.
- Truck operations have damaged medians, sidewalks, and/or turn radii throughout the FIB corridor.
- The highest level of freight traffic and crash sites is along FIB near I-20.

The needs assessment provided the major findings and context to identify a set of preliminary recommendations for transportation improvements, which were coordinated with a variety of partners (see Appendix D). This vetting process ultimately led to a complete list of recommendations, discussed in Section 4.4.

LAND USE & ZONING

Existing land use in the study area (Figure 1-3) is predominantly industrial with commercial development concentrated in nodes along FIB. Smaller parcels on the northern end of the study area transition to large parcels moving southward, reflecting changes in industrial marketplace needs and the development of the corridor over the last 50 years.

Key Findings

- Warehousing is the predominant use in the study area, but most older warehouses do not meet the needs or specifications of current users.
- Very little non-industrial development exists along the corridor south of the I-20 interchange, although a series of commercial nodes has emerged at key intersections.
- In addition to many vacant existing structures, approximately 20% of land in the FIB corridor area is vacant and developable.
- Industrial development opportunities are concentrated at the southern end of the corridor.
- There are few areas where incompatible land uses (residential) abut the corridor's industrial uses.
- Commercial opportunity is greatest at I-20 interchange.

Issues

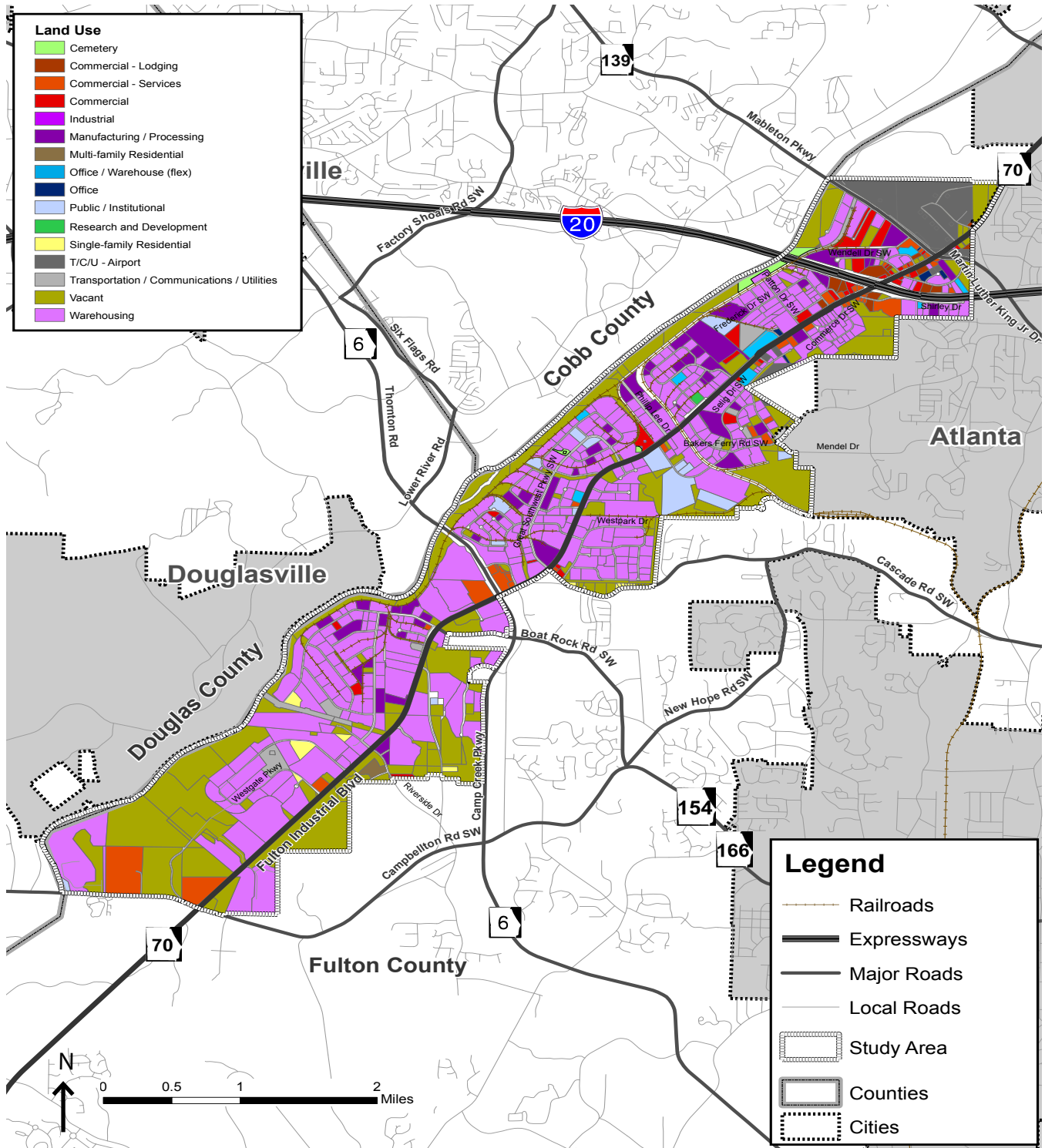
- Prevalence of smaller parcels (< 10 ac.) between I-20 and Camp Creek Parkway may inhibit redevelopment.
- The County's Future Development Map character area designations may lead to incompatible adjacent land uses, particularly on the eastern side of FIB.
- The presence of industrial uses at some major intersections could stymie development of desired commercial nodes.
- Permissive industrial zoning supports the presence of incompatible/undesired uses, with the main issue being adult businesses.

Opportunities

- There is a good inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels and structures in a variety of sizes available for (re)development.
- Overlay zoning is in place to address aesthetic quality of new development.
- The revitalization of FIB is well supported by Fulton County's policy documents.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE SOUTHERN END OF THE STUDY AREA (LEFT), WHILE REDEVELOPMENT IS A PRIMARY NEED IN THE NORTHERN PORTION OF THE STUDY AREA (RIGHT).





Source: Fulton County Tax Assessor

URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Below are the initial findings/takeaways from the baseline Urban Design Assessment, organized based on three main themes: Space, Activity, Path. Space is the physical characteristics and attributes that define the corridor. Activity describes the uses of land and buildings along the corridor and how they relate. Path provides an overview of the visual and physical connections in the study area.

Space

- There is no major gateway identification at primary access points.
- There are three types of character districts: industrial, commercial, and airport.
- The area lacks a sense of place and branding throughout district.
- There are two types of landmarks that help characterize the district: structures and streets.

Activity

- The area is mainly industrial in nature with commercial nodes.
- Industrial/warehouse structures lack cohesive district-wide design elements.
- The area is an isolated district: defined edges are created by the Chattahoochee River and forested “green belt” around the study area.
- Aging building stock provides issues and opportunities for development.

Path

- The area exhibits disjointed internal and external pedestrian networks.
- There is a lack of pedestrian-scaled design.
- There is a lack of secondary and tertiary road connections.
- Street networks are very wide to accommodate trucks and cars with no secondary functional/aesthetic value and no defined streetscape.
- There is a lack of district-wide signage and wayfinding strategy.

MCCORMICK OPERATES A DISTRIBUTION CENTER FOR ITS FLAVOR DIVISION IN THE FIB CORRIDOR



Preliminary Issues + Opportunities

Issues and opportunities provide a first glance at the district's problems and possibilities based on baseline design analysis.

Issues

- There is insufficient pedestrian/bicycle connectivity throughout the study area.
- Insufficient roadway design creates space challenges for freight traffic, causing excessive wear on travel lanes and damage to right-of-way amenities.
- Subpar secondary vehicular connectivity throughout the district developments promotes for 'cul-de-sac' type development.
- The area exhibits under-utilized land uses and building stock.
- There is a lack of cohesive design standards for signage, wayfinding, streetscape, or landscape enhancement.

Opportunities

- District-wide design elements to improve wayfinding, streetscape, landscape enhancements, and building components.
- Gateways and landmarks to help add a sense of place and locational direction to the district.
- Sustainable infrastructure to establish an ecodistrict that facilitates sustainable practices in energy conservation, transportation, water/waste handling, and open space.
- Tie into the Chattahoochee River as a recreational and functional asset
- Inter-development pedestrian/bicycle/vehicular connectivity.

LACK OF PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES IN THE FIB CORRIDOR



MARKET CONDITIONS

Overview

The Fulton Industrial Study Area encompasses roughly 4,800 acres of land. Within that area there is approximately 46.1 million SF of industrial inventory. There are approximately 553 industrial buildings in the inventory. The largest employer in the area, McMaster-Carr Supply Company, employs 600, according to Hoover’s. Table 1-2 identifies the top employers in the study area.

Developers

The study area is characterized by the presence of many individual owners and projects in buildings of a wide range of sizes, including some large institutional and large tenant owners. The three largest industrial buildings in the Study Area in terms of built square footage are sized between 600,000 and 700,000 SF. Three others are greater than 500,000 SF. The majority of these largest buildings in the area are used as food and/or beverage warehouse and distribution centers.

Many of the region and nation’s top industrial developers and brokers are active in the local area. As shown in Table 1-3, Clarion Partners, a worldwide real estate investment firm headquartered in New York, owns more industrial square footage than the next three largest owners combined.

TABLE 1-2. TOP EMPLOYERS WITHIN FULTON INDUSTRIAL STUDY AREA

Company Name	Employees at this Location	Primary Industry
McMaster-Carr Supply Company	600	Industrial Supply Wholesalers
MacDermid Printing Solutions	599	Machinery Manufacturing
Cleveland Electric Co.	550	Electrical Contractors
National Distributing Company, Inc.	500	Beer, Wine & Distilled Spirits Wholesalers
Geiger International, Inc.	450	Office Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment Manufacturing
The Quaker Oats Co.	450	Soft Drink Manufacturing
Miller Zell, Inc.	399	Sales Promotion Services
Tie Down Engineering Inc.	320	Automobile Parts Manufacturing
Geiger Group Inc.	320	Office Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment Manufacturing
Diaz Wholesale & Manufacturing Co. Inc.	300	Food Wholesalers
United Natural Foods, Inc.	300	Food Wholesalers

TABLE 1-3. TOP INDUSTRIAL OWNERS WITHIN FULTON INDUSTRIAL STUDY AREA

Owner	Estimated SF
Clarion Partners	4,890,642
IndCor Properties, Inc.	1,240,567
Selig Enterprises, Inc.	1,233,711
Prologis	1,193,451
Quaker Oats	992,865
Cobalt Capital Partners, LP	976,821
McDonald Development Co.	902,067
AmeriCold Logistics, LLC	852,918
DCT Industrial Trust	779,891

Absorption - FIB has seen a strong improvement in industrial absorption. Over 1.8 million SF of the region's absorption total of 10.1 million SF occurred within the study area since the beginning of 2012.

Rental Rates - With an older stock of building, the FIB study area rental rates are, on average, the most affordable of any submarket in the Atlanta region. Currently, rates average just under \$3 per SF (\$2.97/nnn), whereas all other submarkets average over \$3, with the northern suburbs averaging, in some cases, over \$6 per SF. Overall the metro region averages just under \$3.50 per SF for industrial space according to CoStar.

Industrial Real Estate Market Indicators

The competitive market performance of the industrial buildings in the study area suffered a "lost decade" from 2000-2010. During that time, as the overall economy ebbed and flowed, with dramatic upswings and downturns, as rents dropped and the study area consistently lost market share to other areas in metro Atlanta; however, since the beginning of 2012 the study area has improved, outperforming the region as whole in terms of absorption and rent growth.

Vacancy - Similar to, and because of, improving absorption at FIB, the vacancy rates in the area have improved recently. Whereas the vacancy rate has historically been higher than that of the region as a whole in, FIB has improved to a current level of under 13%, which is nearly in-line with the overall market and the Airport submarket and much lower than nearby Douglas County's rate.

WAREHOUSING IS THE DOMINANT USE IN THE FIB CORRIDOR



“Mega Trends” Impacting the Fulton Industrial Area Market

The Fulton Industrial CID Master Plan study area will be affected not only by the micro trends impacting the industrial market in and around its immediate area but also by “Mega Trends” that will impact the character of the industrial marketplace regionally and nationally over the coming decade. These trends will impact industrial development in the Atlanta region as a whole and have implications for opportunities for growth in the Fulton Industrial market area.

- The growth and expansion of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.
- The growth of the Port of Savannah as a global portal in to the Southeastern U.S. economy.
- The resurgence of rail as freight transportation option.
- The renaissance of manufacturing.
- The growth of the Southeast as a major automotive manufacturing center.
- The impact of Big Data on a wide range of industries.

FIB Issues

- For over two decades the CID’s share of the Metro industrial market has been shrinking
 - 1990 = 8.9%
 - 2013 = 6.8%
- 2000-2011: A “Lost Decade+”
 - Annual absorption disappeared
1990s: 786,000+ SF
2000s: (14,297) SF
 - Inventory has been largely static since 2004
 - Vacancies remained 2% to 3% higher than overall Metro
 - 5.9 million SF of space is currently vacant and available

FIB Opportunities

- Improving absorption rates (19% of metro in 2012-2013) have helped lower vacancies.
- Vacancies in small amount of flex space (1 million SF) are exceptionally low (2%).
- Since 2009, rents are now tracking with metro averages and are recently trending up.
- Wages in the CID are on par with state averages.



PORT OF SAVANNAH (LEFT) EXPANSION AND RESURGENCE OF RAILROAD (FIB RAIL SPUR, RIGHT) ARE TWO TRENDS THAT CAN BE LEVERAGED TO POSITIVELY INFLUENCE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH ALONG FIB.