

2 ENGAGEMENT

STAKEHOLDER ASPIRATIONS FOR TOMORROW

2-1

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Fulton Industrial Boulevard (FIB) is touched by a wealth of users on a day-to-day basis. A primary goal of the master planning process was to ensure that a reflective mix of the area's stakeholders and partners were actively and meaningfully involved in the development of the Master Plan.

In this spirit, the stakeholder engagement approach for the Master Plan involved a variety of area stakeholders representing the business, infrastructure, and community needs of the area. The team leveraged the Fulton Industrial Community Improvement District's (CID's) existing outreach channels to make connections with each of these groups.

The engagement process included a series of detailed, one-on-one interviews, flash interviews with corridor users, a Core Team (steering committee) consisting of the CID Board, area business leaders, government leaders, regional and state partners, and representatives from adjacent neighborhoods, as well as a presentation at a regular meeting of the CID Board to introduce the community to the master planning process and two public meetings during which the public was invited to participate in the development of the Master Plan.

Beyond these activities, a series of coordination meetings was carried out with partners such as MARTA, the Georgia Department of Transportation, Fulton County, the American Architectural Foundation, and Sky Design. In addition, a team of representatives from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the CID, Jacobs Engineering, and Bleakly Advisory Group oversaw the overall project management and public engagement process.

This chapter begins by highlighting 1) the key planning partners that ensured the plan was implementable and realistic and 2) the big ideas that resonated throughout the stakeholder engagement process and ultimately shaped the Master Plan end product. A description of the overall communications strategy and the key outcomes from each of the public engagement activities follows these items. Appendix C provides additional documentation of engagement activities.

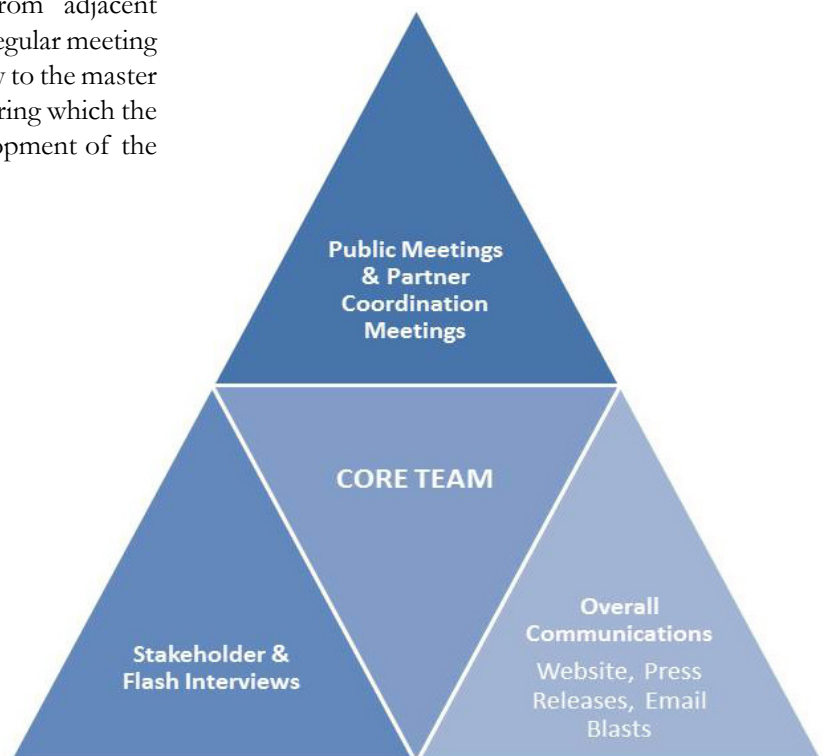


FIGURE 2-1: ELEMENTS OF THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

2.2 PLANNING PARTNERS

The planning process was defined by a large mix of public and private partners and other groups and individuals that are vested in the area's future success. The following organizations were represented in the planning process:

- Alscan, Inc.
- American Fueling Systems
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Atlanta Technical College
- Avison Young
- AWCC
- Bleakly Advisory Group
- Bonded Service Warehouse
- Central Pipe and Supply
- Charitable Connections
- City of Atlanta
- City of Atlanta NPU H
- City of Douglasville
- Clarion Partners
- Clean Air Campaign
- Cobb County Board of Commissioners
- Cobb County Community Development Agency
- Coca-Cola Company
- CSX
- Development Authority of Douglas County
- Development Authority of Fulton County
- Diaz Foods
- Douglas County Planning and Zoning Department
- DRI Properties
- Dunkin Donuts
- Efficiency Lodge Inc.
- FIB Community Court
- Fulton County Arts Council
- Fulton County Chairman Eaves Office
- Fulton County Airport-Brown Field
- Fulton County Commissioner Darnell's Office
- Fulton County Commissioner Edwards Office
- Fulton County Commissioner Garner's Office
- Fulton County Department of Arts & Culture
- Fulton County Development Authority
- Fulton County District Attorney
- Fulton County Economic Development Division
- Fulton County Facilities and Transportation Services Department
- Fulton County Planning and Community Services Department
- Fulton County Police Department
- Fulton County Workforce Development
- Fulton County/Nickel Works
- Fulton Industrial CID
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Department of Transportation Planning
- Georgia Department of Transportation Traffic Operations
- Geiger International
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Power Company
- Georgia State Police
- Georgia Tech
- GSP
- Jacobs Engineering
- Jones Lang LaSalle Americas
- King Industrial Realty
- LAI Engineering
- Laures Technical Institute
- MARTA
- McDonald Development
- McWhirter Realty
- MCX Environmental Energy Corp
- Metro Atlanta Chamber
- Miller Zell
- Newberger-Andes
- Next Step Inc.
- OmniTRAX
- Panattoni Development
- PepsiCo
- Prologis
- Quantum National Bank
- Rainey & Phillips
- Reclaim Atlanta
- RRI
- Selig Enterprises
- Siemens
- Site Selection Magazine
- South Fulton Business Coalition
- South Fulton Chamber of Commerce
- State Road and Tollway Authority
- SunTrust
- Total Warehousing Inc.
- Unincorporated South Fulton County Economic Development Initiative
- USA Economy/DRI Properties Lodge
- West Logistics

2.3 THE BIG IDEAS

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, a series of recurring themes were discussed regarding the key approaches and tactics that would be needed to achieve the vision for the corridor's future. Over time, it became evident to the planning team that these stakeholder initiated ideas would be crucial to the long-term success of the Master Plan. We have coined these key items as “the big ideas.”

ADDRESS THE I-20 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS FIRST.

Many of the challenges that the FIB corridor faces are related to the I-20 interchange. Strategic redevelopment of the interchange area will have a transformative effect on the overall image of the corridor—addressing crime and aesthetics—and providing a welcoming gateway to the corridor that creates a sense of place and adds cohesiveness to the area.

MOBILITY AND COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE TOP NOTCH.

Improved mobility along the corridor and general road maintenance (sufficient road surface, addressing pot holes in a timely manner) are leading functional/aesthetic needs of the corridor. Improved traffic signal timing will help service businesses and facilitate traffic flow along the corridor. Better sidewalk connections are needed to support employee movement along the corridor and connect users to MARTA. Additionally, fiber optics and communications services are critical services for area businesses; current services are inadequate and require notable improvements to retain existing and to attract additional businesses.

ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE.

Safety and services drive the overall perception of the corridor and users' day-to-day experiences. Ensuring and improving overall sense of safety along the corridor and providing support services (such as places to run errands, desirable eateries, convenient and safe parking for trucks and cars alike) will go a long way in providing a supportive industrial environment that is poised for success over time.

BE A LEADER OF THE FUTURE.

The FIB corridor should be positioned to be a leader and model for other industrial districts in the future, based on the choices made today. Considering sustainability and leveraging the corridor's unique history and assets (such as the river, airport, and mix of businesses), the study area can be positioned to be the premiere industrial corridor through improvements in land use mix, design, wayfinding, landscaping, amenities, and transportation improvements.

RAIL AND THE FULTON COUNTY AIRPORT-BROWN FIELD ARE LONG-TERM ASSETS.

These two important transportation facilities are major investments in the corridor, and although they are not viewed as key driving influences in the corridor's future at this point in time (see Appendix B Final Market Report), they have been identified as key assets that should be leveraged over time. Rail service can be improved and leveraged to attract a special niche of businesses. The Fulton County Airport-Brown Field, which regularly welcomes a variety of economic development interests to the region and state, can be used as a foothold to promote the district and show a healthy, well established industrial corridor to visitors upon arrival.

2.4 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Multiple methods of communications outreach were utilized to help inform the area stakeholders and broader community about the planning process. The CID played a lead role in ensuring the stakeholder community was aware of project milestones and dates and actively engaged in the development of the Master Plan.

CID Website – Overall project information as well as materials from public meetings and draft documents were regularly posted to the CID website for public review.

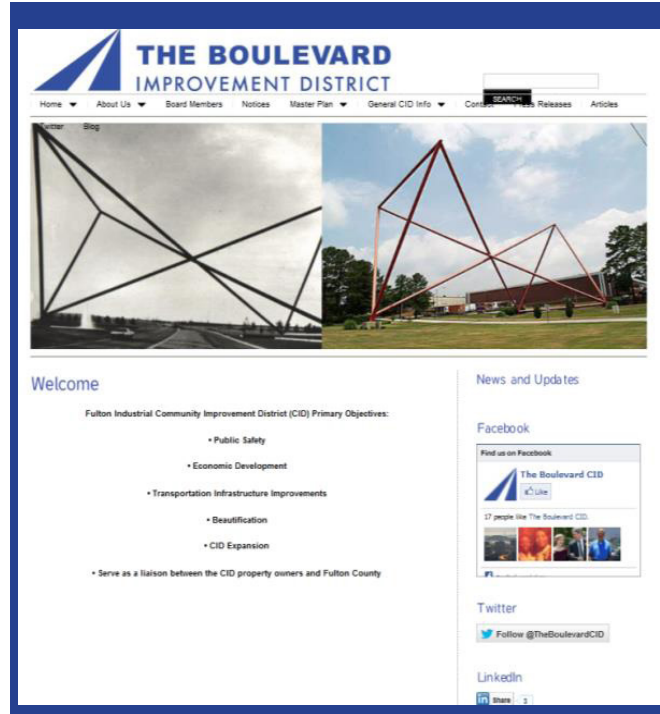
Email Blasts – Email correspondence was sent to Core Team members, interviewees, and members of the

public that signed up for project updates at meetings as appropriate. These blasts reminded groups of upcoming meetings, provided minutes from past meetings, and otherwise notified community members of project milestones.

Press Releases – Press releases were distributed before both public meetings to help get the word out to stakeholders and the general public.

CID Newsletters – The CID's regularly published newsletter provided information about the planning process to its outreach list throughout the study process.

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION AND DRAFT MATERIALS WERE STORED ON THE WEBSITE THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS



PRESS RELEASE FOR CONCEPT PLAN WORKSHOP



July 18, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CID Hosts Workshop to define future of Fulton Industrial Boulevard

The Fulton Industrial Community Improvement District (CID) invites members of the community to attend a workshop to provide input into the creation of a Master Plan for the Fulton Industrial District. The meeting will take place on Thursday, August 1 at the South Fulton Chamber of Commerce. The meeting is open to the public but registration is requested. Please RSVP to 678.333.0476 or amanda.hatton@jacobs.com.

The Workshop will begin at 9:30 am, following the CID's regular board meeting and will end at 11:00 am.

- Existing corridor conditions and trends will be presented as related to land use, transportation, design, and market potential.
- A special focus will be placed on revitalizing the I-20/FIB interchange area.
- Input will be collected on draft concepts for wayfinding, landscaping, and mobility enhancements, including those to improve freight access.
- Light breakfast will be provided.
- The South Fulton Chamber is located at 5155 Westpark Dr. SW, Atlanta, 30336.

The Master Plan is an initiative of The Boulevard CID. The primary objective of the plan is to further the district's economic competitiveness by establishing a guide for future public and private investments.

The Boulevard CID and master plan area consists of the industrial and commercial areas bounded by the Fulton County Airport, located just north of the I-20/Fulton Industrial Boulevard interchange to Campbellton Road in the south and Chattahoochee River to the west.

The master planning effort is being funded by a grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission with matching funds provided by the Boulevard CID.

For more information:

Executive Director Gil Prado, The Boulevard Improvement District at 404.368.4929 or gil@boulevardcid.org or visit www.boulevardcid.org

2.5 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder interviews were held with a mix of key stakeholders in the corridor, including CID Board Members, elected officials, area business owners, and leaders of adjoining residential areas. Input received was utilized by the planning team along with other quantitative and qualitative data collected to shape the study outcome.

Participants were asked a variety of questions, with a special focus on needed corridor-wide infrastructure and aesthetic improvements, opportunities to enhance the I-20/FIB interchange area, ways to improve the area as a business location, and land use/policy changes to achieve the vision of the corridor. Adjoining community member participants were also asked about how the industrial district could be a better neighbor. Interviews were concluded with a general question about what are the biggest opportunities to revitalize the corridor as a whole. Aggregated interview results are provided in Appendix C.

In addition to these stakeholder interviews, the market analysis team completed several interviews with area brokers and economic development leaders. A series of partner discussions and meetings were also completed with agencies such as Fulton County, MARTA, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and other CID implementation partners to ensure the plan was realistic and implementable.

FLASH INTERVIEWS

Flash interviews were held with 55 day-to-day corridor users to better understand the experiences of the variety of people traversing FIB on a regular basis and to help identify needed improvements. These interviews took place in two formats:

1. In-person interviews carried out at the Dunkin Donuts at Cascade Road and FIB on July 3, 2013, and
2. A survey circulated among employees of PepsiCo during July 2013.

Other study area businesses were invited to participate in flash interviews but elected not to participate.

In both formats, surveys were intended to take only one to five minutes and capture the key issues and opportunities individual workers and community members face while traversing the corridor. Key goals were to 1) better understand mobility conditions and 2) identify general needs for the corridor. Top issues and improvements heard are indicated below, in no particular order.

Top issues heard:

- Pot holes.
- Insufficient sidewalks.
- Insufficient lighting.
- Conflicts between freight traffic and cars.
- General social issues around I-20 (crime, drugs, prostitution).

Top improvements identified that would improve day-to-day experience:

- More restaurant options/places to eat.
- More sidewalks.
- Improve overall road maintenance (pot holes and paving).
- More lighting.
- Improve traffic signalization timing and add signalization where lacking.

2.6 CORE TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Core Team included an invitee list of over 50 partners and implementers from the study area district, immediately adjacent neighborhoods and localities, the region, and state. The Core Team make-up was determined by the CID with input from ARC, Jacobs, and Bleakly Advisory Group. A full list of participating Core Team members is highlighted in the Acknowledgments at the beginning of this report. The group played a central role in ensuring that the plan was consistent with the overall vision for the corridor and policies, programs, and initiatives of partner organizations.

The Core Team met three key times throughout the planning process to review progress made by the planning team and provide direction and input to the development of the study. Each meeting lasted two hours and took place at the South Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

MEETING 1 – JUNE 24, 2013

At the first meeting, the Core Team was introduced to the scope of work, time frame, and goals/desired outcomes of the planning process. The planning team provided an overview of the Baseline Assessment. Core Team members asked questions and participated in a SWOT analysis, helping the planning team develop a better understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the corridor.

Feedback Highlights:

- Additional parking is needed for tractor trailer parking throughout the district.
- The rail line is an asset to the district, yet is not currently serving the district's users well.
- Ensuring strong partnerships is key to the corridor's success, including forming positive relationships with Douglas County, the Airport West CID, and MARTA.
- Old and vacant buildings at the north end of the corridor are causing problems for the corridor as a whole.

- Although Fulton County Airport is an amenity to the corridor, it is not a major draw for business attraction.
- A variety of tactics can be taken to enhance the corridor, including implementation of the new overlay district, improving signal timing, and retrofitting roofs on older buildings.

MEETING 2 – JULY 25, 2013

The second meeting of the Core Team focused on facilitating discussion regarding preliminary corridor-wide design concepts, I-20 redevelopment needs, and overall transportation improvements. Committee members were given a variety of opportunities to provide input via discussion, comment forms, and follow-up after the meeting. The meeting identified some areas for further coordination and improvement prior to the planning team moving forward with the final draft concept and recommendations.

Feedback highlights:

- A vacant parcels and available buildings database is a top need to better connect the area with potential new businesses and developers.
- Preserving the industrial character of the district will require being strategic about where certain uses are located, so that traffic flows well.
- There is an opportunity to connect with the arts in the corridor both by linking in with the booming movie industry but also by incorporating arts into the overall landscape of the corridor.
- The northwest quadrant of the I-20/FIB interchange is a logical spot to focus redevelopment attention first.
- Coordinating transportation projects with the South Fulton Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) will be important to ensuring their moving forward.
- Too many trees near the I-20 interchange may inhibit safety; appropriate lighting is needed but should be practical.



MEETING 3 – AUGUST 29, 2013

The final Core Team meeting centered around detailed discussion of the draft plan recommendations. The bulk of the meeting focused on the I-20 Gateway Concept. The concept was explained as a prototype for desirable redevelopment at the I-20 interchange. The concept makes best use of the important quadrants that envelope the entrance into the Fulton Industrial CID area. The planning team collected input via a group discussion format and also individual comment forms.

Feedback highlights:

- The Development Authority of Fulton County is a key partner for Master Plan implementation. The Authority looks forward to being a partner in implementation.
- The draft concept showed some smaller square foot industrial buildings in the northwest and southwest quadrants. Showing fewer, but larger buildings is a more attractive and realistic redevelopment scenario.
- The older buildings along Wendell Drive are likely to undergo redevelopment in the future. It makes sense to show this transformation in the Gateway concept rendering.
- As redevelopment occurs, it is important that access management be improved. The concept for the interchange area should be reevaluated to ensure that access management is sufficiently addressed.
- A police precinct should be shown in the I-20 Gateway area to promote the area's long term sense of safety.
- Improving the CID website and including real estate data regarding development and leasing opportunities is a critical step to moving the district forward.



INPUT GIVEN AT THE FINAL CORE TEAM MEETING PROVIDED VALUABLE INFORMATION FOR MAKING EDITS TO THE PLAN.

2.7 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The planning team held two major public meetings in coordination with regular CID Board meetings to maximize attendance among those with a stake in the study area. In addition to these two meetings, the planning team participated in a study kick-off event on June 6, 2013 in which the community was introduced to the master planning process. Each meeting took place in the morning, between 9:00 and 11:00 am, after CID Board business had been completed. Detailed summaries of the July 29, 2013 and September 5, 2013 meetings are provided in Appendix C.

MASTER PLAN KICK-OFF – JUNE 6, 2013

Attendees were introduced to the study process, timeline, and goals of the master planning process via a short presentation by the planning team. Following the presentation, the team led a brief brainstorming session in which attendees provided ideas/aspirations for the corridor and the planning team answered questions.

Key Ideas Identified

- Leverage existing initiatives, such as the Opportunity Zone, to help attract jobs; Chattahoochee NOW to connect to the river; and sustainability initiatives to propel the area as a visionary leader.
- Consider opportunities for additional commercial/retail, including innovative ideas such as food trucks. Consider whether there is an opportunity for mixed-use development.
- Consider public relations and public art to better connect with the public.
- Understanding data and historic trends, including building stock, travel shed of employees, and availability of trained workforce as it will help make the study meaningful.
- Transportation recommendations should be a key aspect, including addressing tractor trailer and pedestrian needs, among other items.



THE FINAL PLAN REVIEW PUBLIC MEETING DREW A LARGE CROWD. FEEDBACK INDICATED OVERALL SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN.

CONCEPT PLAN WORKSHOP – JULY 29, 2013

Approximately 40 people attended the Concept Plan Workshop. During the meeting, attendees were provided highlights from the Baseline Assessment analysis and asked to provide input during an interactive discussion. Discussion items included preliminary design concepts for the corridor, the redevelopment scenario for the I-20 interchange, and draft transportation recommendations. Input stations were provided for people to comment on draft ideas outside the regular meeting discussion.

Key Ideas Identified

- Nearby workforce housing is important to the district; however, when considering the area's future land use, housing is realistic in adjacent neighborhoods but should be avoided directly within the study area to minimize land use conflicts.
- Improved fiber optics and communications infrastructure is a top priority in the corridor to help further the area's success and reliability.
- Improving the rail network in the corridor, although not a major focus of this study, will require future public private partnership to address.
- Aesthetic improvements at the I-20/FIB interchange should preserve safety and ensure realistic maintenance. The urban forest concept should be toned down and lighting concepts for the underpass should be less intense.
- The I-20 interchange area is the part of the corridor in greatest need of improvement – community members generally agreed with the preliminary concept.

PLAN REVIEW MEETING - SEPTEMBER 5, 2013

A final public meeting was held on September 5, 2013 to present overall plan recommendations and targeted implementation strategies to stakeholders and collect their final input the Master Plan's finalization.

The planning team provided an overview presentation of the overall master plan framework as well as implementation strategies for land use, transportation, landscape design, and the essential public private partnerships to achieve the vision. The I-20 Gateway Concept was discussed in detail. The meeting ended with an Open House, affording an opportunity for attendees to review Master Plan displays and discuss comments/questions with the planning team.

Key Ideas Identified

- Sustainability and protection of the environment are important values to the community. These items are addressed from a high level in the plan and can be further developed as the CID and partners move forward with implementation.
- The rail network and the priority given to its renovation will require additional study. Currently, there is mixed consensus about the value it brings to the corridor.
- Transportation recommendations are based on funding realities and collaboration with various partners, including ARC, Fulton County, GDOT, and MARTA.
- The area's culture should resonate in landscape elements and proposed public art. The planning team took these values into account as recommendations were developed.
- Transforming the I-20 interchange area into a welcoming gateway will require addressing the people problem and associated crime there first. Organizations in the area, including Fulton County, are working to address these items. Coordination among the many partners will be essential to comprehensively transform the area.

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