

GPA Spring Conference 2025

REIMAGINING TARA BOULEVARD

Pioneering a Vibrant Transit – Driven Future

March 13, 2024



Speakers



Keri Stevens

Planning Project Manager/
Economic Development
Atlanta Regional
Commission



Lillian Al Haddad

Senior Project Manager
Pond & Company



Cheryl Brooks

Assistant Director
Clayton County
Community Development



Mary Darby

Planning Administrator
Clayton County
Community Development

Tara Boulevard LCI is a PARTNERSHIP

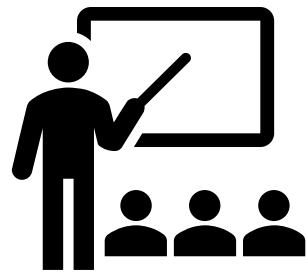




Atlanta Regional Commission

LCI Vision

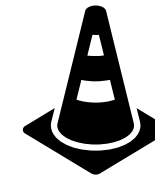
LCIs by the Numbers



130
Catalytic LCI
Studies



182
Tactical Studies

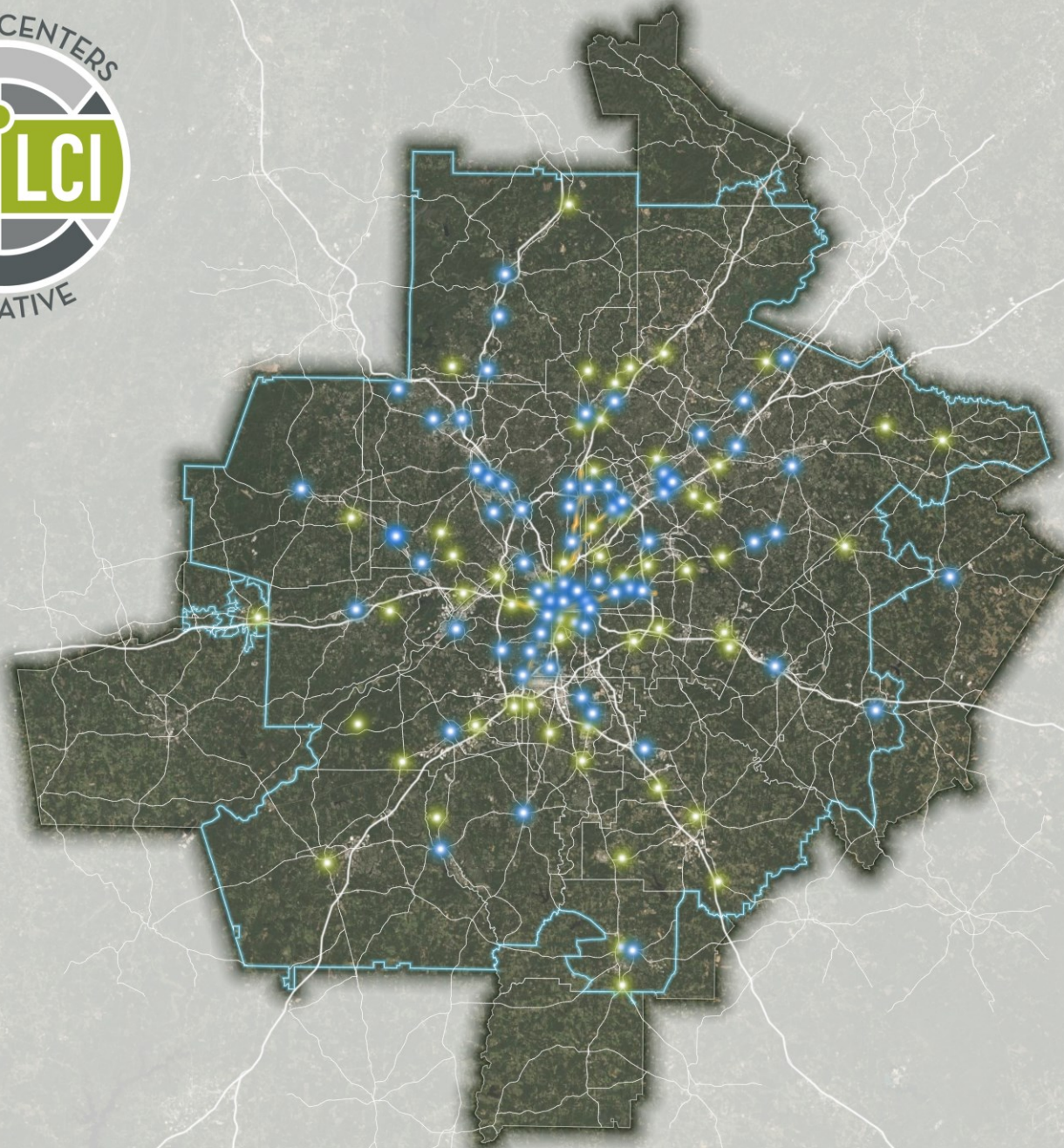


143
Transportation
Projects

\$21.7 M
in Total Study
Funds

\$357 M
in Transportation
Project Funding

LCI Impact



127
LCI
AREAS

Basic LCI Program Information

1 REIMBURSABLE GRANT PROGRAM

- ARC pays up to 80% of the study amount
- Sponsor funds 20% of the study amount and must be a CID, local government, or transit agency
- \$1.8 M available in study funds for 2025

2 TWO YEAR STUDY TIMELINE

- 2025 studies must be completed by October 2027

3 LAND USE & MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NEXUS

- Encourage co-location of diverse land uses at major transit, local, and regional centers for all ages, abilities, and income levels
- Enhance access to a range of travel modes, increase connectivity, and improve
- Foster public-private partnerships and sustained community support through engagement with stakeholders, including community-based organizations and those who are historically underserved or underrepresented

STUDY TYPES

CATALYTIC

FOCUS ON VISIONS

- Study funds may be used to **create long term master plans or visioning plans** for an LCI area.
- Each Catalytic Study contains an implementation strategy, including a 100-day Action Plan, 5 Year Work Program, implementation partners, and funding sources.

TACTICAL

FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION

Study funds may be used to prepare detailed studies that **foster specific LCI plan implementation** for an LCI area that has a completed catalytic plan.

Examples include:

- Creating detailed right-of-way designs and estimates for a streetscape concept
- Undertaking a trail feasibility study

LCI Focus Areas



MAIN STREETS & DOWNTOWNS



TRANSIT AREAS

LCI Priorities



Affordable Housing



Creative Placemaking

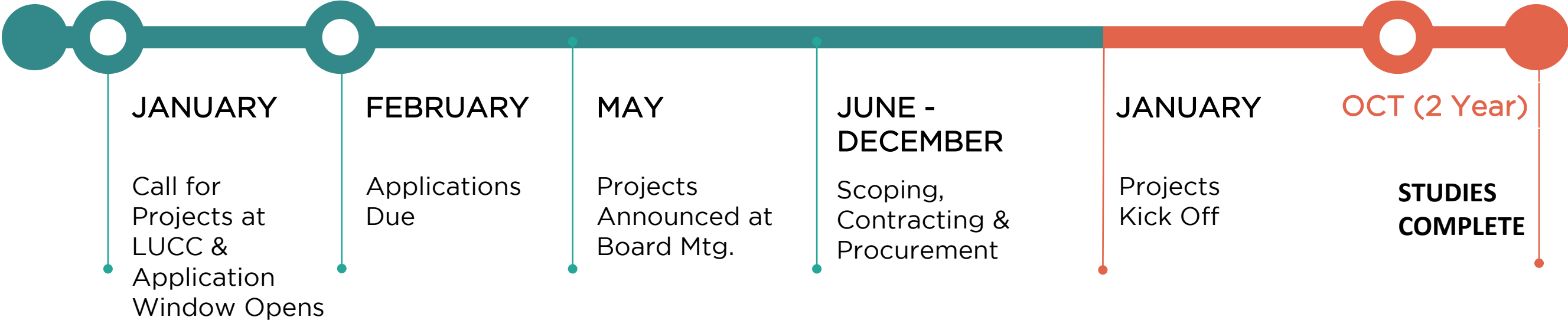


Smart Technology



Green Infrastructure

General LCI Schedule





Moving Clayton Forward

Local Government Perspective and Community Needs

What is the Moving Clayton County Forward Project? It is a Movement!



Moving Clayton County Forward is an initiative that is a part of a local and regional strategy to balance land uses, spur economic development, and promote housing stability.

MCF is not an isolated movement.

It's Collaborative. It's Comprehensive. It's Collective.

Local Government Perspective and Community Needs

How is Clayton County Meeting Community Needs through the MCF Initiative?



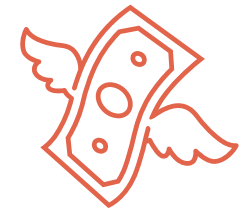
Promoting **small area planning** projects in Commission Districts through our Planner In-Residence Program with ARC



Implemented an Economic Development
Expediting process

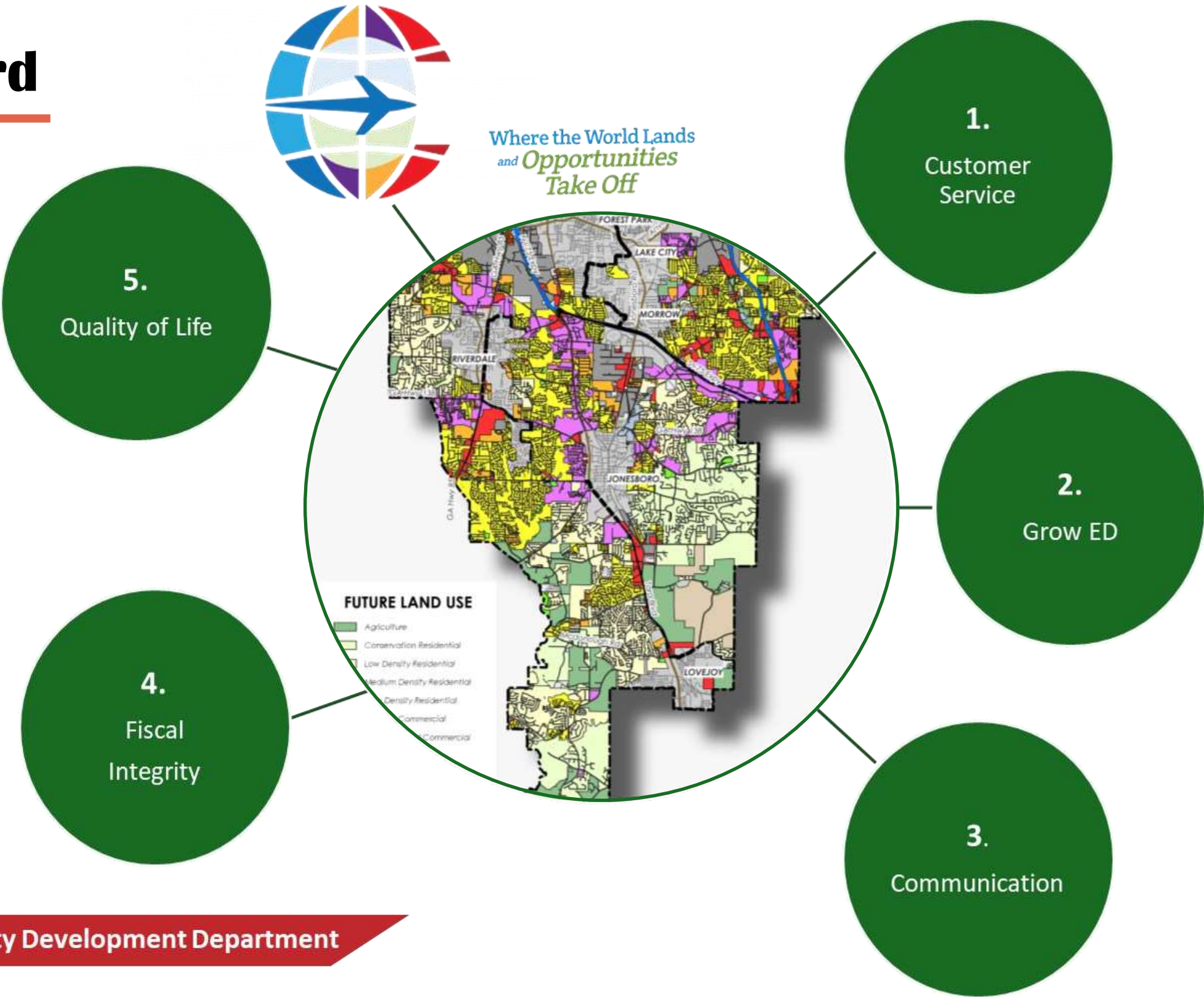


Enhancing the **efficiency of processing** of landuse, zoning, Building permits, and business licenses operations



Seeking a **grant through the ARC** Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) to conduct a county-wide collaborative housing assessment and study

Moving Clayton Forward



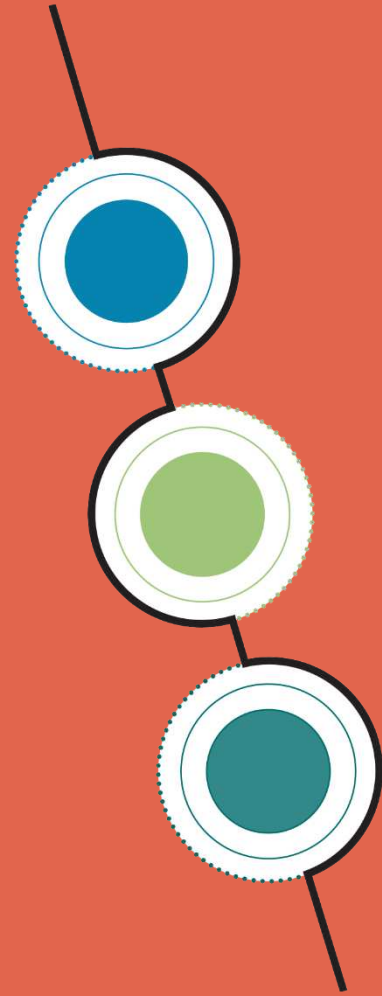
Strengthening Partnerships



To Move Clayton Forward We Partnered with our Community

Atlanta Regional Commission
Aerotropolis Atlanta
Clayton State University
Council for Quality Growth
Clayton County Chamber of Commerce
Clayton County Housing Authority
Housing and Urban Development
Clayton County Operating Departments

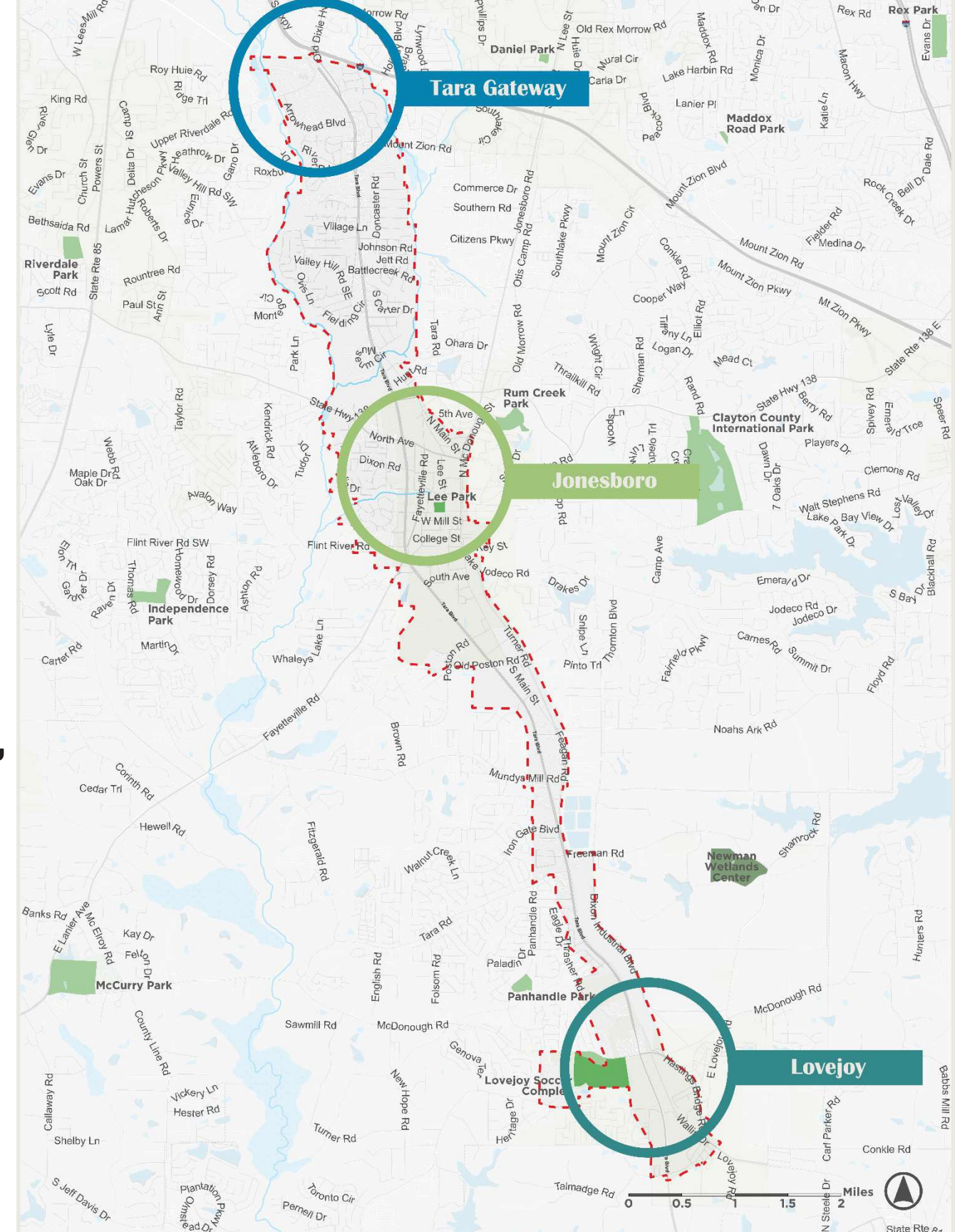
City of Jonesboro
City of Lovejoy
City of College Park
City of Riverdale
City of Forest Park
City of Lake City
MARTA
Board of Education



Tara Boulevard LCI Study

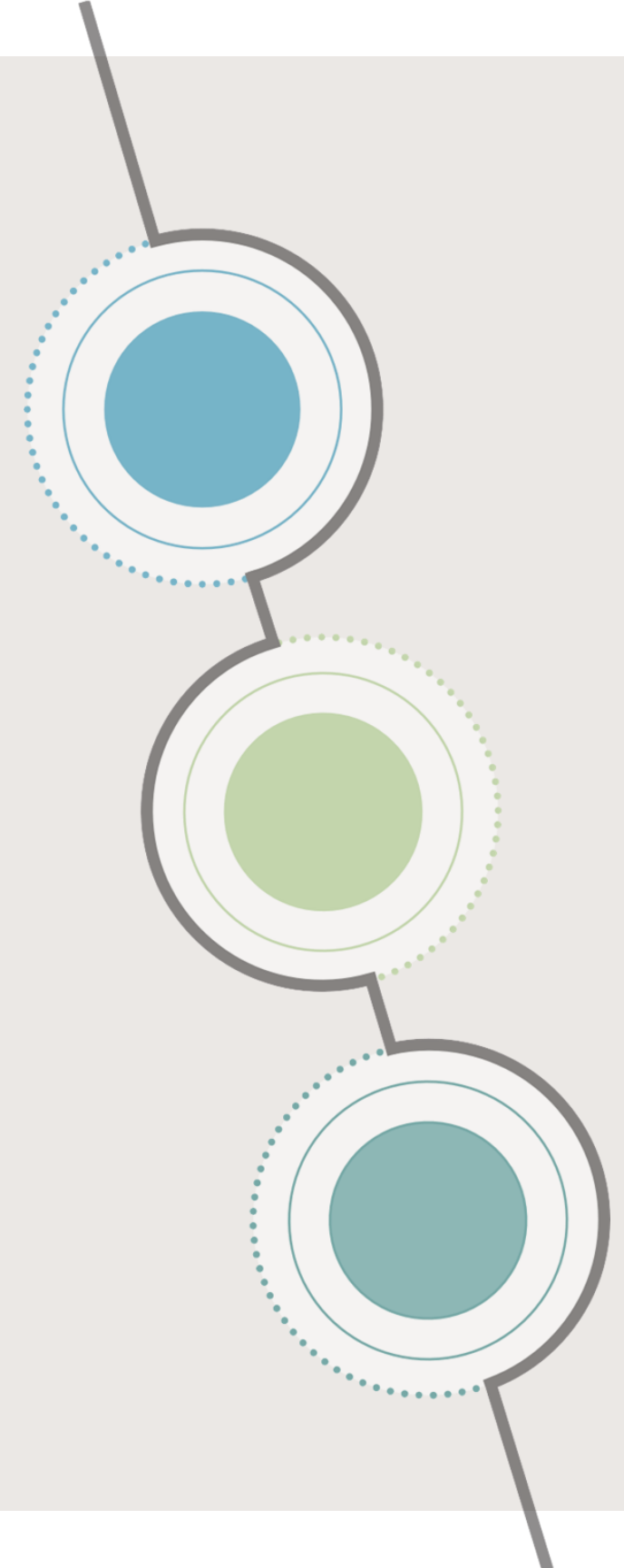
The Study Area

- The study area covers an 11-mile corridor
- The process builds consensus among Clayton County, Jonesboro, and Lovejoy community
- The study identified opportunities for affordable housing, economic development, and connectivity.

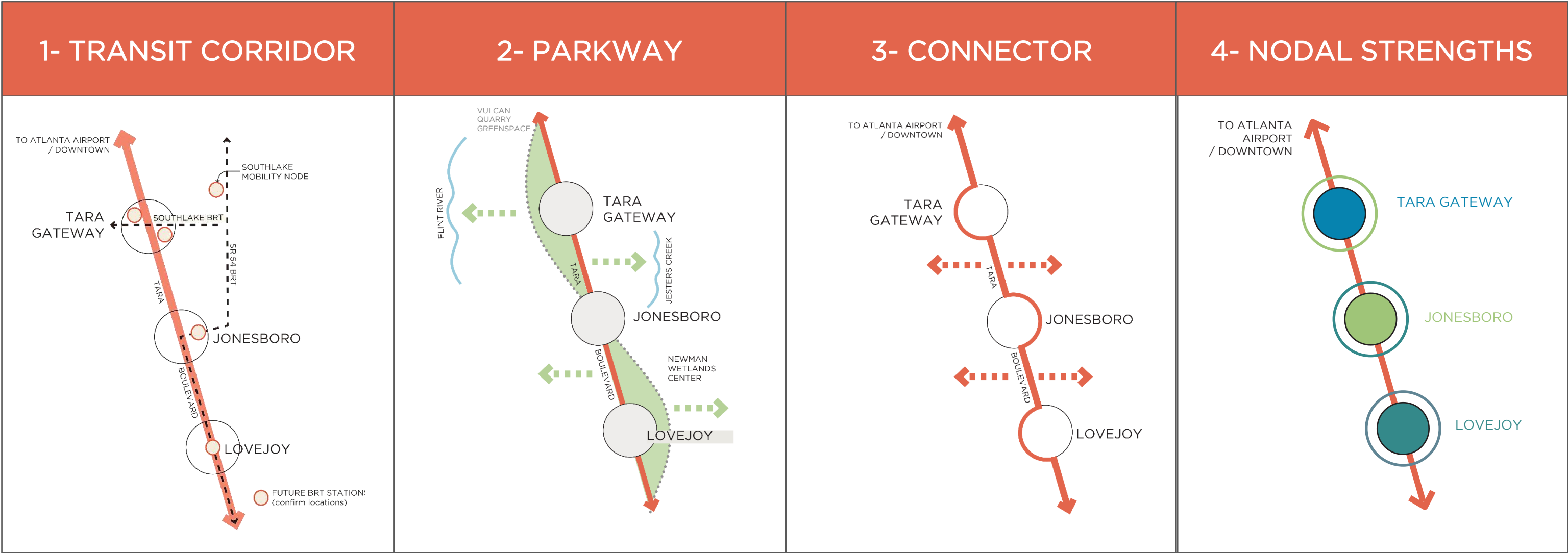


Project Vision

Tara Boulevard is a vibrant, cohesive corridor that provides safe connections **for all, attracts a **diverse** mix of uses, and activates **happy places**.**



The Framework



Corridor-Wide Strategy

A Safe + Connected Tara Blvd

1- A TRANSIT CORRIDOR

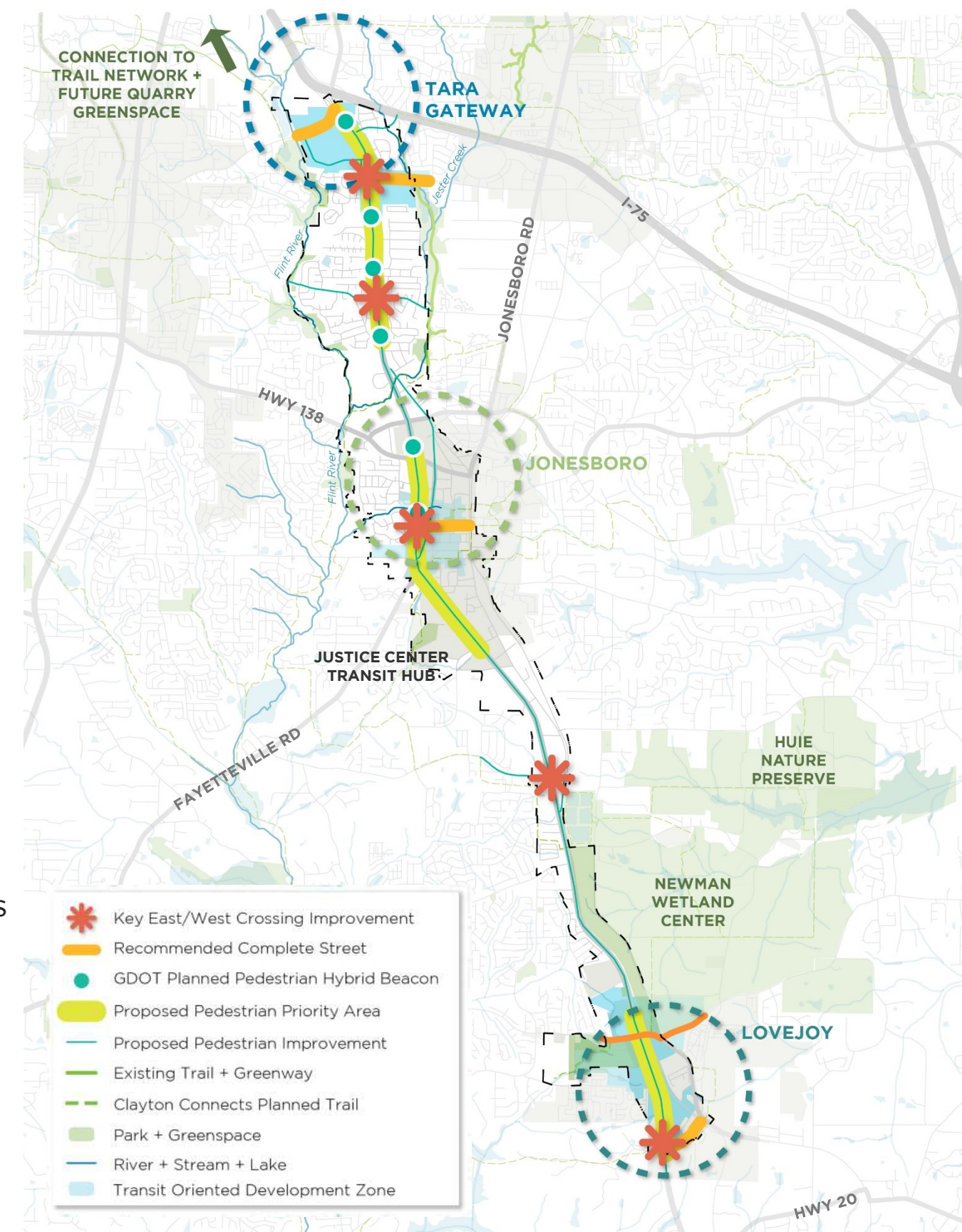
- Complete Street improvements on key cross streets
- Transit Oriented Development Overlay zones

2- A PARKWAY

- Pedestrian-oriented network of connected greenspaces
- Pedestrian Priority “Zones” where pedestrian-level design should be prioritized

3- A CONNECTOR

- Recommended crossing improvements at key signaled intersections
- GDOT planned Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons between signaled intersections



TRANSIT CORRIDOR

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zones

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zones
The “Big 5” of transit supportive land use:



Density +
Intensity



Mix of
Uses



Walkability



People-Friendly
Design



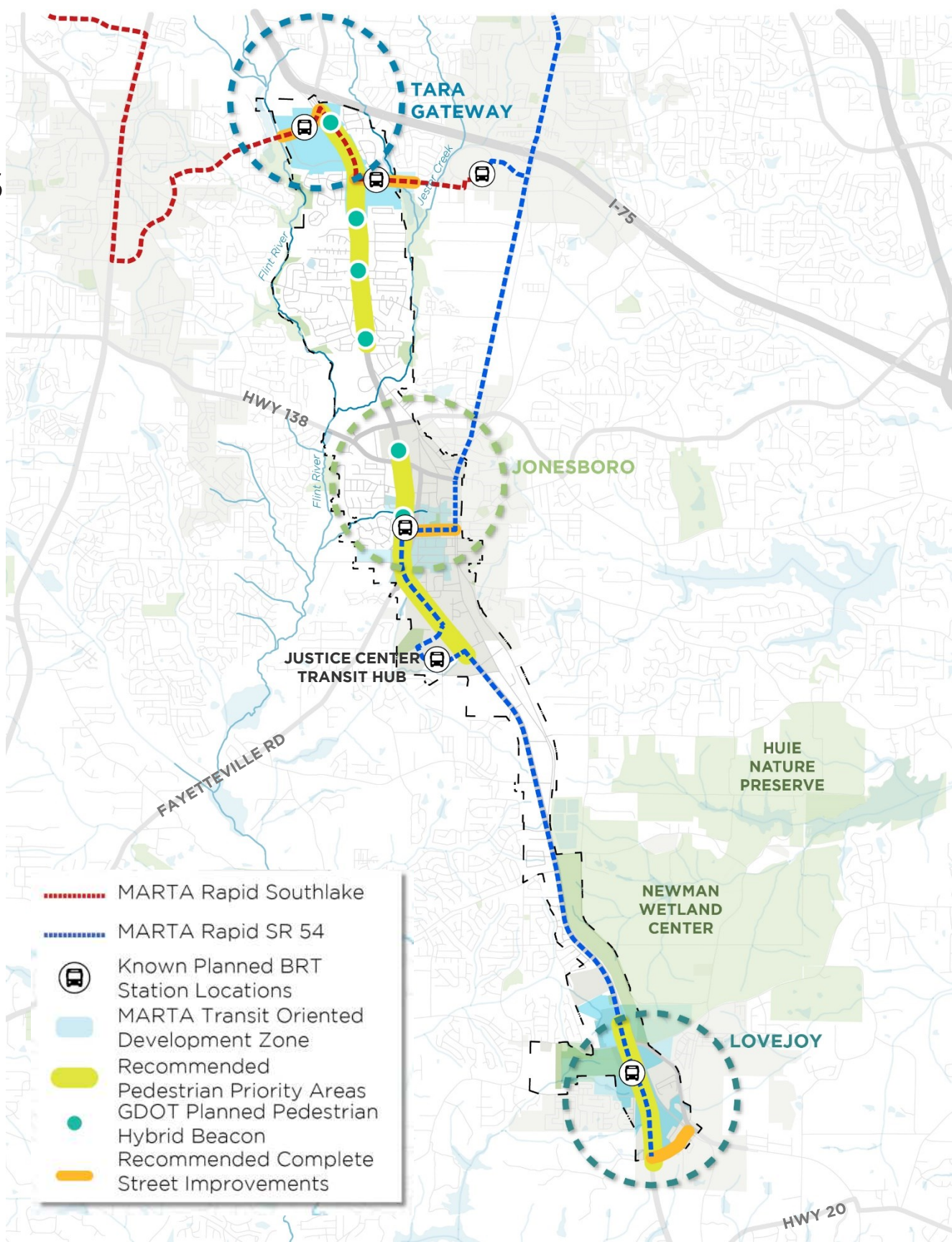
Managed
Parking

MARTA Rapid Station Location Coordination



Considerations:

- High ridership stops on existing local bus routes
- Existing or planned GDOT PHBs
- Existing or planned trail facilities
- Existing destinations
- Planned developments
- Surrounding land uses



4- Nodal Strengths

Node 1

TARA GATEWAY

Strong retail and services area but low vacancies

Node 2

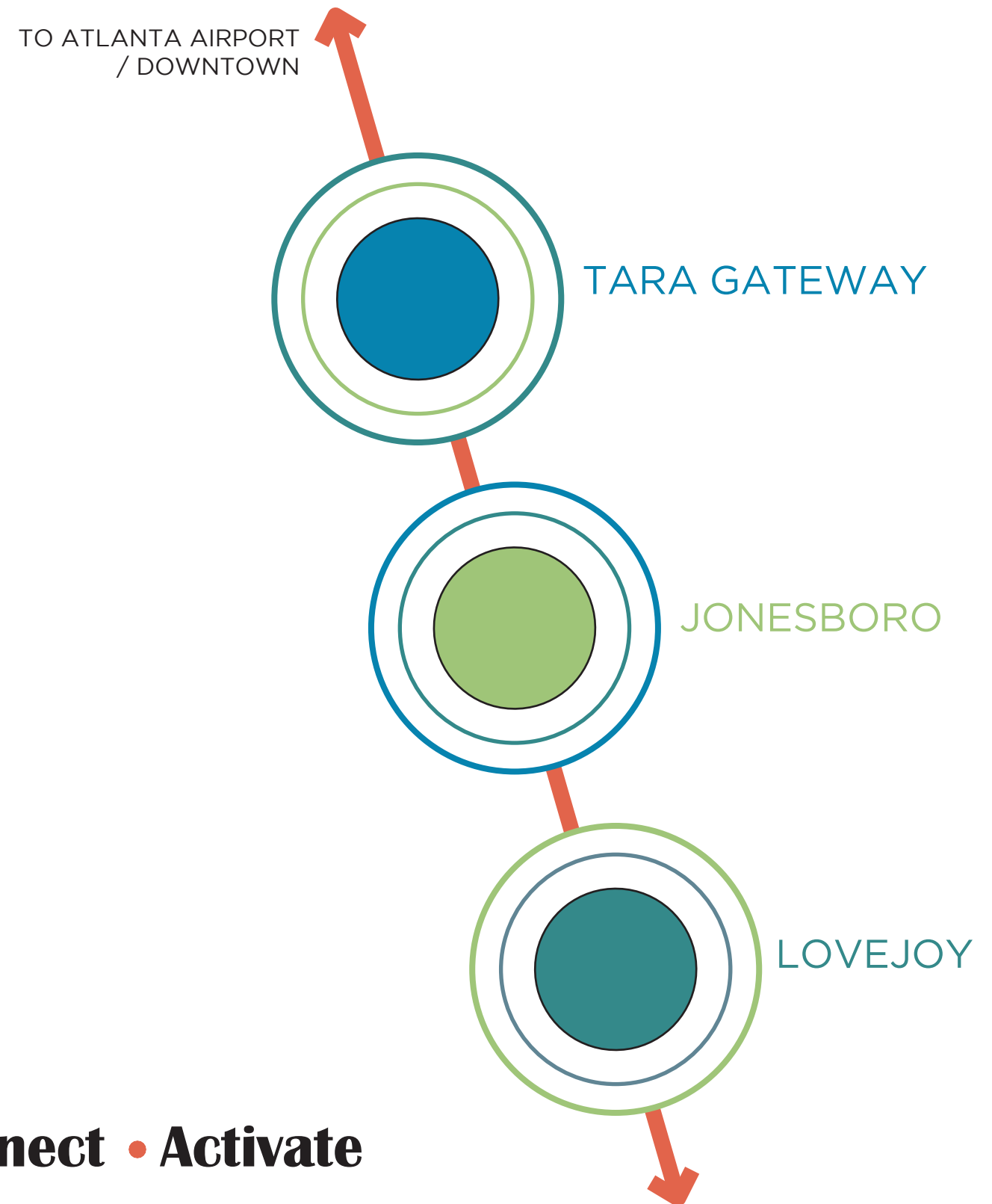
JONESBORO

Strong placemaking in place, strong presence of civic, cultural and community spaces

Node 3

LOVEJOY

Strong residential growth



Catalytic Sites

Tara Node- Tara Crossings

Urban Wellness Village



- Retail/ Commercial (2 to 3 Storeys)
- Mixed-Use (4 to 5 Storeys)
- Residential
- Greenspace

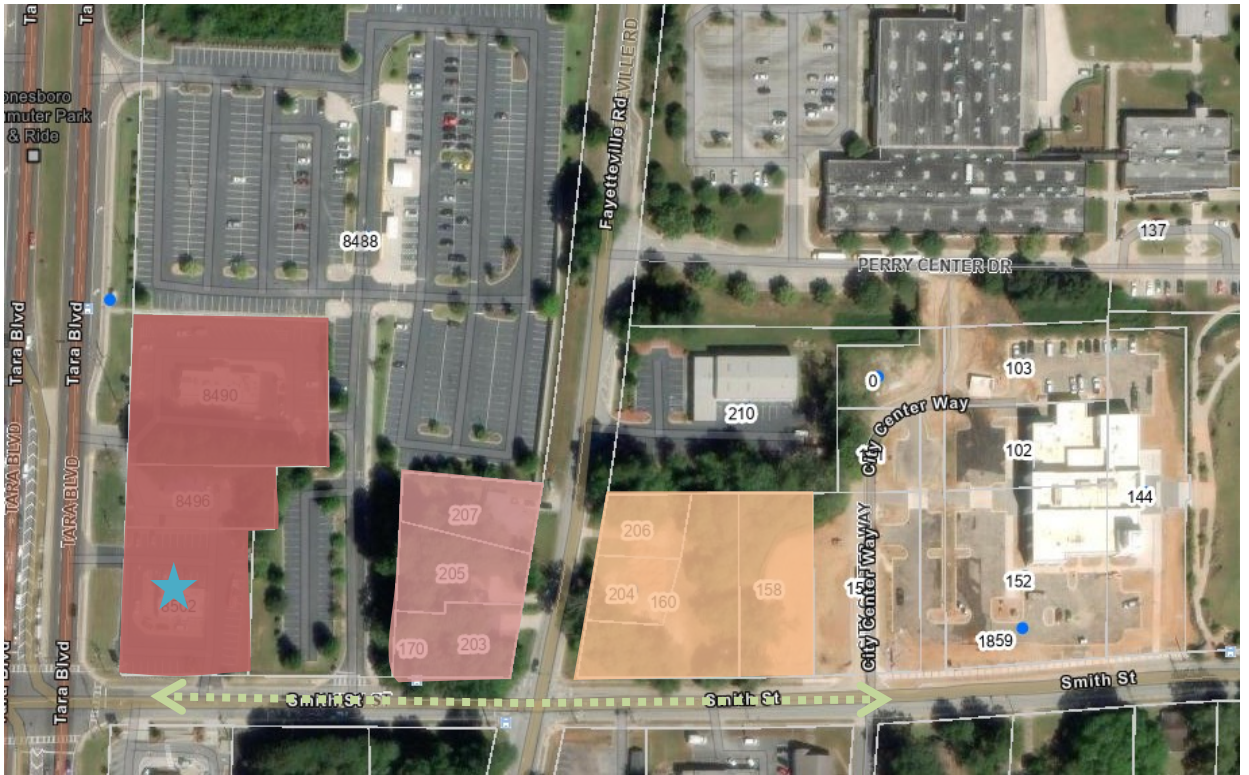
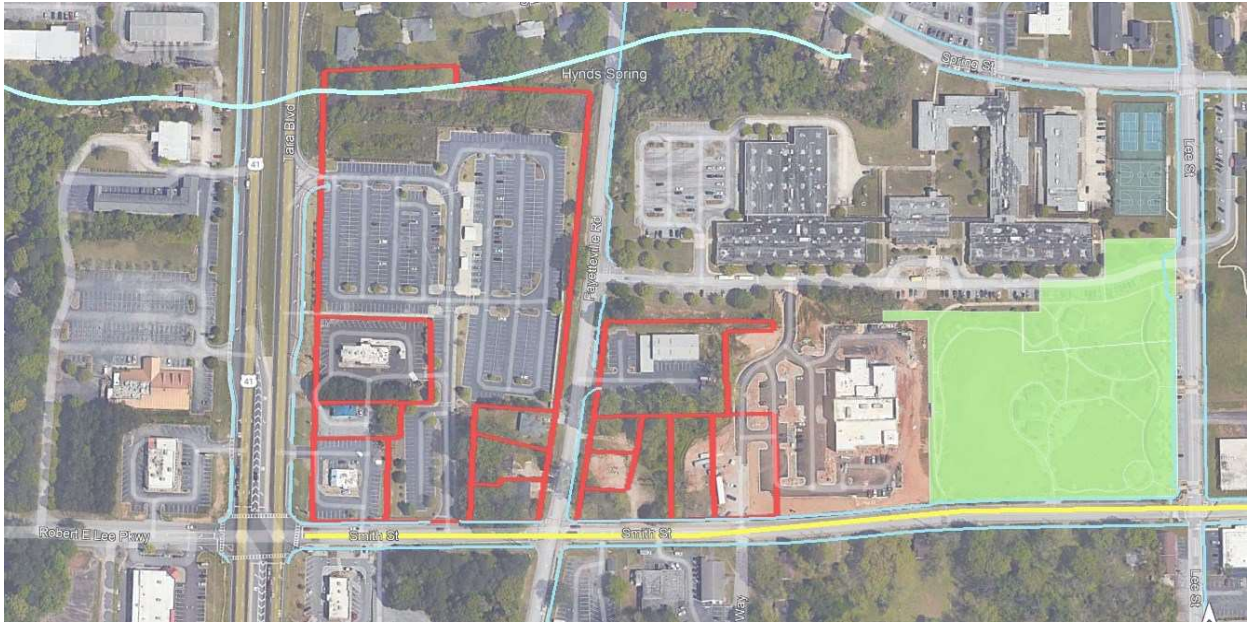
Catalytic Sites
Tara Node - Tara Crossings



Catalytic Sites

Jonesboro Node - Smith Street

Jonesboro Gateway



- Retail/Commercial Mixed-Use (3- to 4-Storeys)
- Mixed-Use (4-Storeys)
- Residential

Catalytic Sites
Jonesboro Node - Smith Street



POND

View showing mixed use environment on Smith Street from Tara Crossings entrance

Catalytic Sites

Downtown Lovejoy – Hastings Bridge Road

Community Hub

- Community Retail
- Destination Retail
- Main Street Village Retail (Expansionary Phase)
- Multi-Use Transit Node
- Residential



Catalytic Sites

Downtown Lovejoy – Hastings Bridge Road

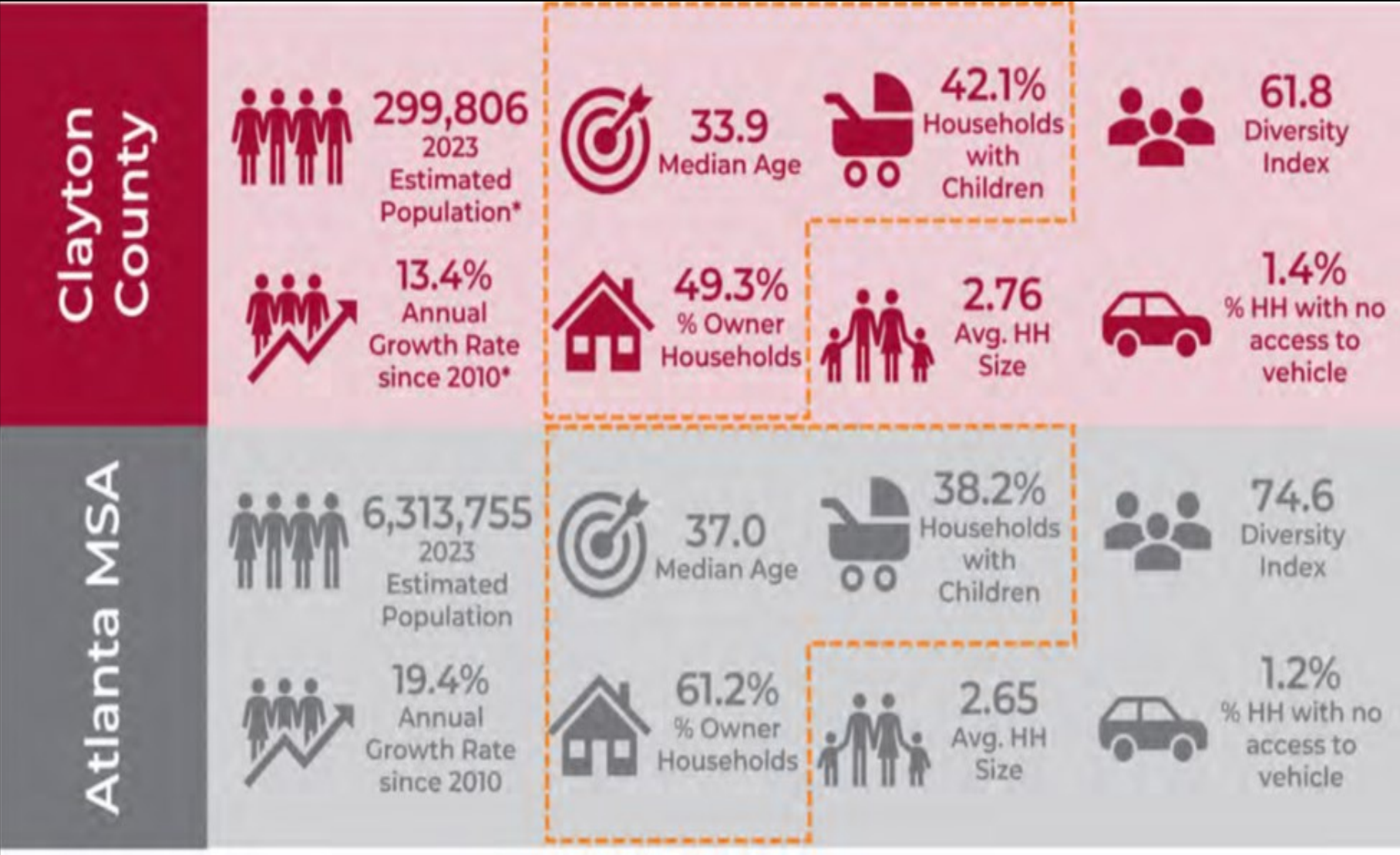
Discussion Topic

Affordable... But Accessible?

Affordable housing is a big focus, but what are some strategies to connect housing with opportunities in an equitable way?

Inclusive and Equitable Planning

Demographic Snapshot

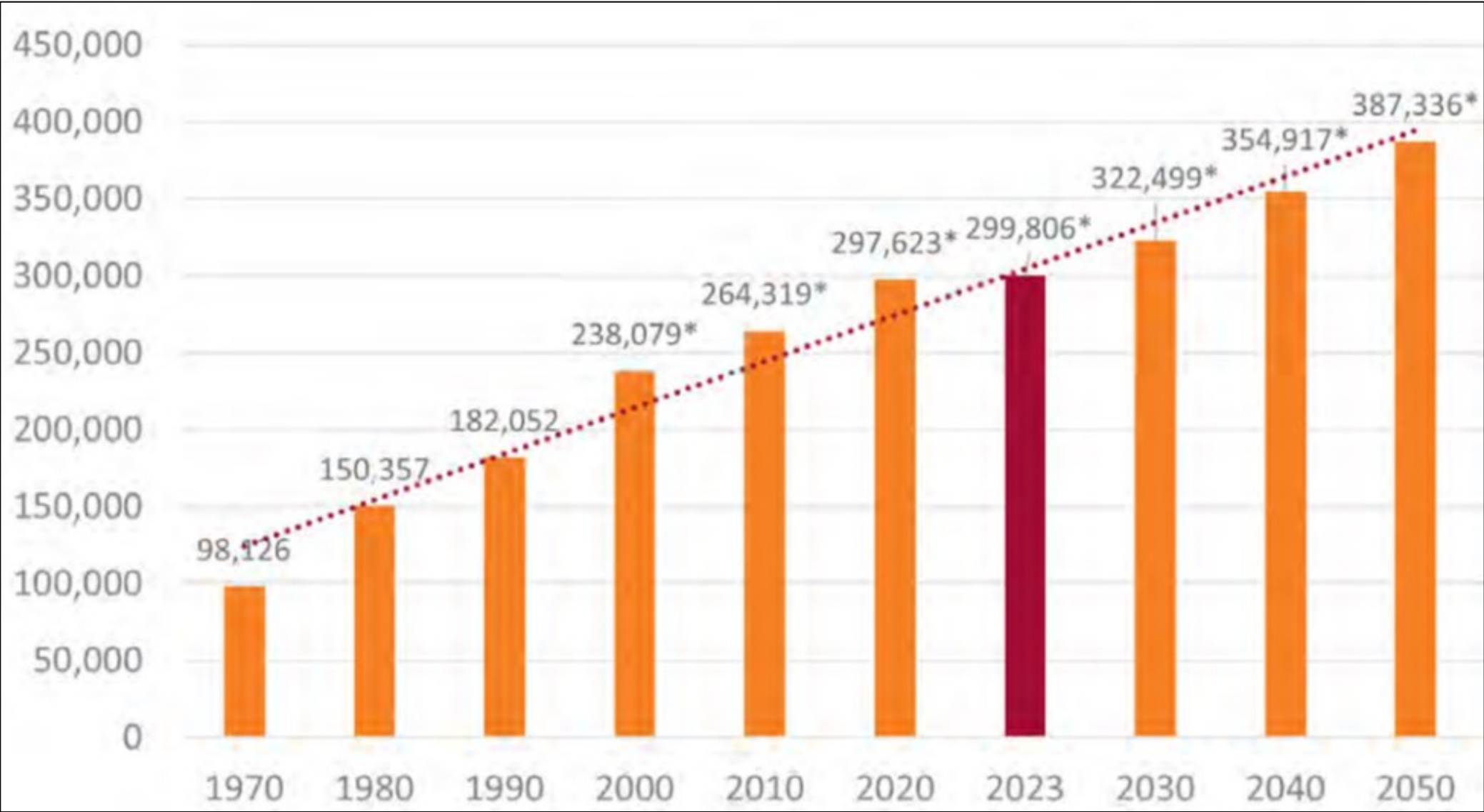


Clayton County Atlanta MSA

Median Household Income, 2023 Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2023)

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Woods & Poole (2023)

Demographic Snapshot



Clayton County Population Projections Source: 1970 to 1990 Data from 2034 Comprehensive Plan, 2000 to 2050 Data from Woods & Poole (2023)

Open Houses



Open House # 1
*Tara Gateway-
Riverdale Center*

15



Open House # 2
*Lovejoy-
Community Center*

22



Open House # 3
*Jonesboro -
City Center*

24



Final Open House # 4
*Jonesboro -
Lee Park*

48

Project Advisory Group Meetings

- Multiple PAG Meetings
- 15 involved PAG Members from the Community



... & Even More Engagement and Outreach



Public Design Workshops

- Clayton County
- Jonesboro City Center
- Lovejoy Community Center



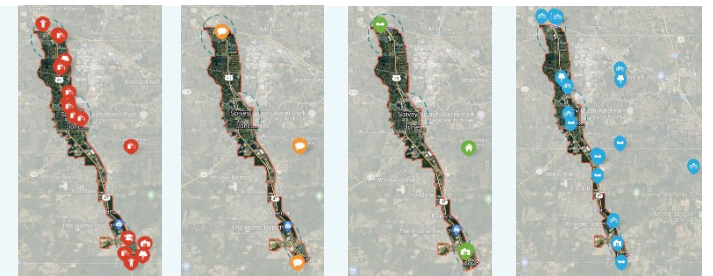
Stakeholder Engagement

- Focus Groups
- One-on-One sessions



Online Engagement via Project Website

- A presentation and materials from the workshops
- An opportunity for public feedback on what was shared
- Included the younger age group



Elected Officials Updates

- Clayton County City Council x 2
- Jonesboro City Council x 3
- Lovejoy City Council x 2



Discussion Topic

Who Gets a Seat at the Table?

*Planning often misses the voices of certain groups –
What are some creative ways to make sure everyone
feels heard and represented in planning decisions?*

Partnerships Build Success

Inviting Success through Strong Leadership



Community Engagement and Support

- Clayton County and Lovejoy have adopted the study
- Jonesboro is working toward adoption (staff transition)
- Strong leadership from ARC to continue conversations



Policy Alignment

- Clayton County Zoning Re-Write in progress
- Aligned with the adopted 2039 Clayton Comprehensive Plan
- Supports the Aerotropolis Blueprint 2.0



Strategic Initiatives

- Formation of the Tara Boulevard Task Force and Housing Task Force through the MCF project
- ARC remains active & involved, supporting implementation and funding efforts

Discussion Topic

Equity in Planning

Love the Idea, how do we make it Real?

What are some strategies or partnerships that could help turn inclusive planning goals into real lasting change?

Thank you!