

## ROAD NETWORK

The City of Smyrna's local road network is strategically connected to high capacity interstate highways and principal arterials located within Smyrna, including I-75, I-285, State Route (SR) 41 Cobb Parkway, and the East West Connector). Both I-75 and I-285 carry high traffic volumes and provide access to employment and activity centers across Metro Atlanta and beyond. The city's principal arterials include SR 41 Cobb Parkway, which is a key north-south link on the western edge of the city, and the East-West Connector, located in the south of Smyrna. Minor arterial roads as classified by GDOT include Atlanta Road, Windy Hill Road, Spring Road, SR 280 South Cobb Drive, and Concord Road east of South Cobb Drive. Cooper Lake Road SE and Concord Road west of South Cobb Drive are designated major collectors by GDOT.

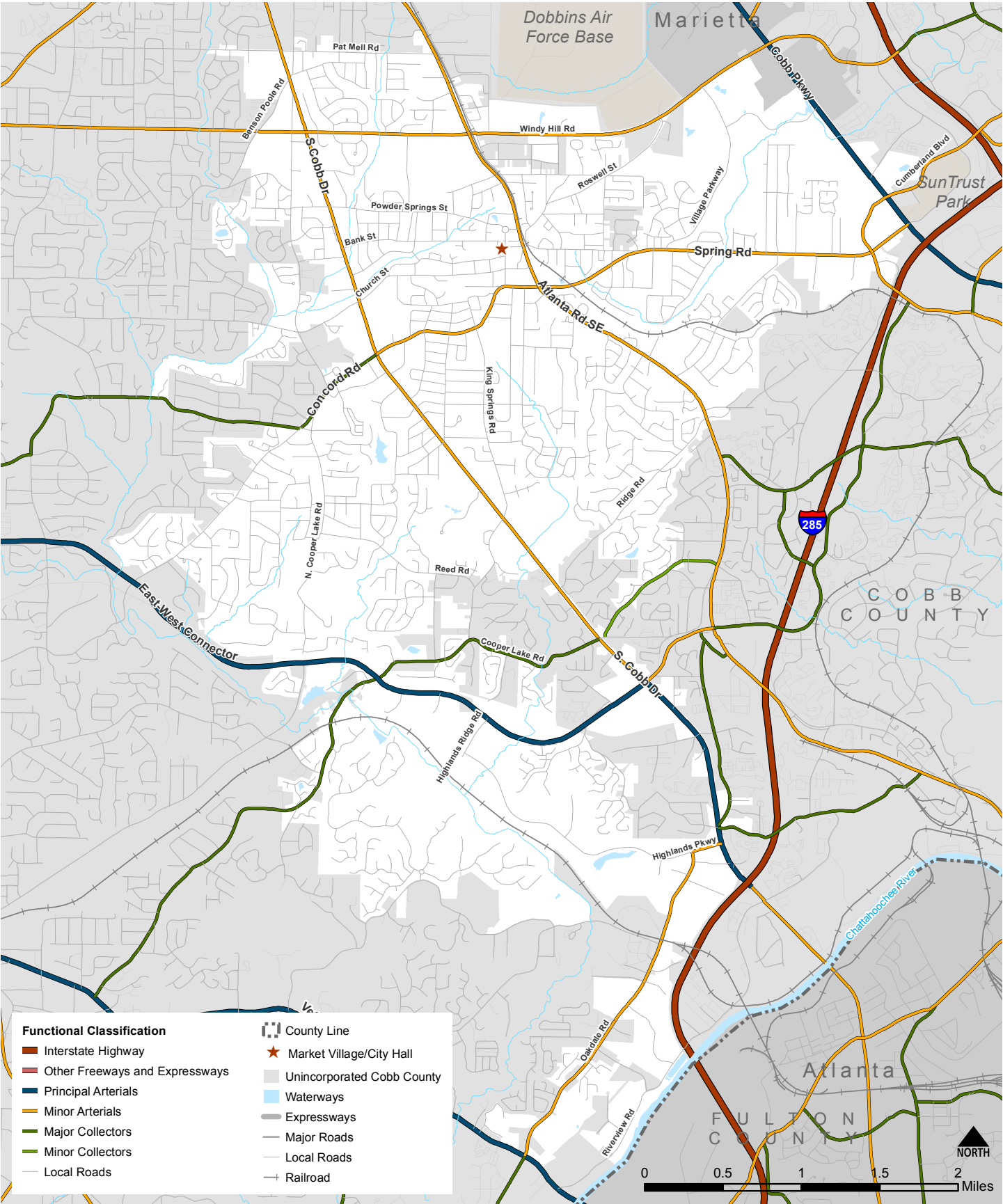
The built form of Smyrna is typical of low-density, suburban areas in Atlanta. This form of development has resulted in residential streets and neighborhoods that are inefficiently disconnected from the street grid, often with only one or two outlets to the city road network. Figure B-23 shows the effective road network for the city, highlighting the streets that are connected to the broader network by multiple outlets and those that are connected only by a single outlet, such as a cul-de-sac or subdivisions with a single entrance. Of the 225.7 total linear miles of roadway within City limits, 134.1 miles (59 percent) have multiple outlets and form a connected network, and 91.5 miles (41 percent) are single outlet roads that do not contribute to network connectivity.

This network design puts tremendous strain on key arterial and collector roads in Smyrna as local traffic cannot bypass these major roads on lower volume local roads. Subsequently, the resulting congestion on key arterials like Atlanta Road, Spring Road, and South Cobb Drive may affect the travel times of residents in Smyrna due to lack of sufficient connectivity.

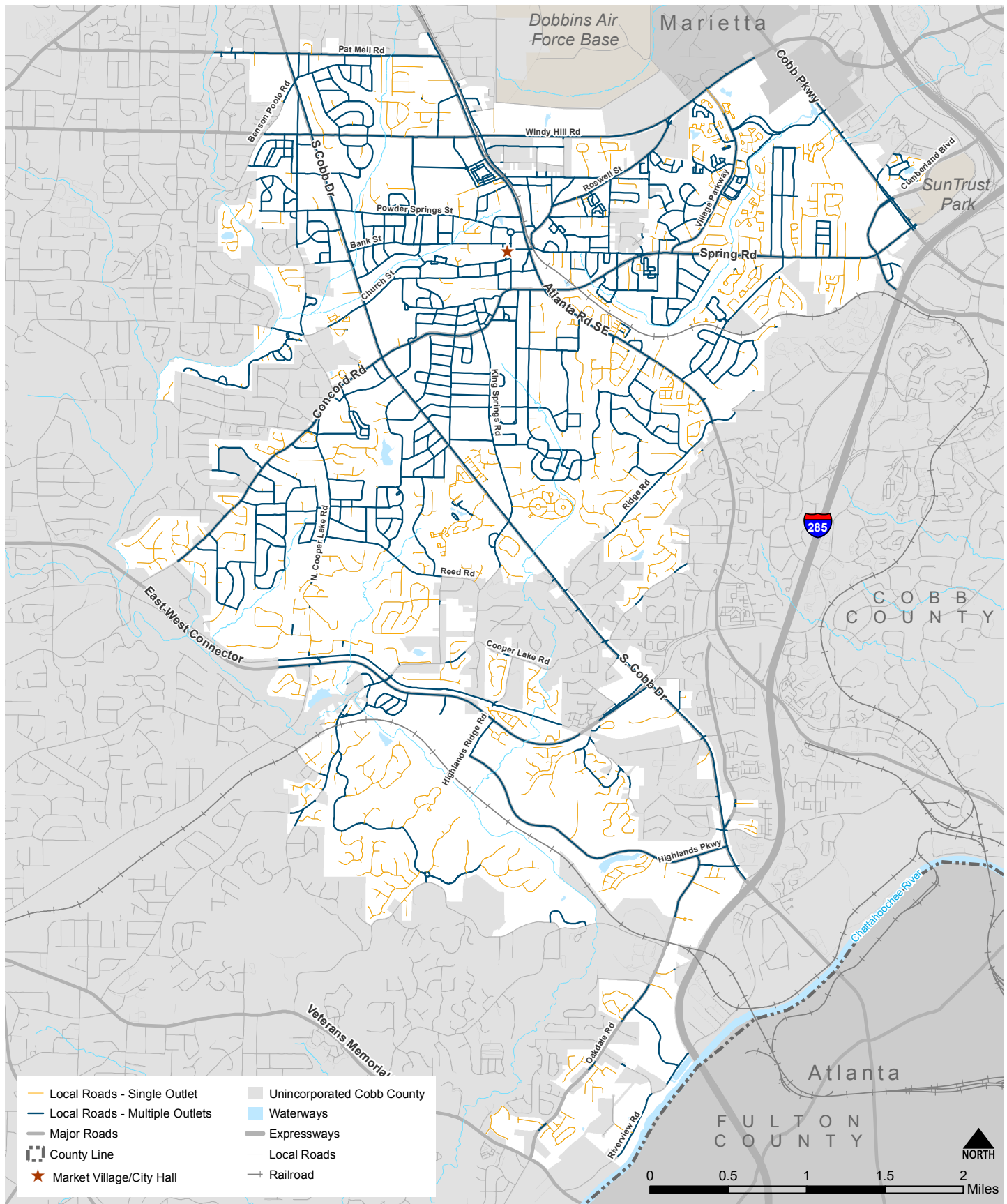
Community feedback collected in the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan indicates residents are concerned about the impact on local roads from fans accessing the 41,000 seat SunTrust Park at nearby Cumberland CID. In 2017, the Atlanta Braves games are scheduled to begin at 7.30 p.m., with travel to games overlapping with evening peak traffic times.

Future projects including the widening of Windy Hill Road, known as the Windy Hill Boulevard Widening and Complete Streets Project, and Spring Road Complete Streets will increase the capacity, operation, and travel times on these key corridors. Guiding future development in Smyrna along a more regular and permeable street network would help spread traffic evenly across the local road network.

Figure B-22. Road Network Map



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

**Figure B-23. Effective Road Network Map**

Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Jacobs

## FREIGHT

The movement of road freight in the City of Smyrna is served by two major Interstates (I-75 and I-285) and a GDOT-designated oversize vehicle route (South Cobb Drive), which together handle freight through traffic in and around the city. South Cobb Drive connects with industrial areas in Smyrna near Oakdale Road and Highlands Parkway. Both the ARC and American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) pinpoint the intersection of I-285 west and I-75 north as the worst truck bottleneck in the region. This congestion is caused by freight traffic traveling from Chattanooga to Macon, avoiding Metro Atlanta. State Traffic and Report Statistics (STARS) database compiled by the GDOT show the maximum daily volumes for I-75 North is 25,000 trucks per day and 20,000 for I-285 west, making it the heaviest traveled truck corridor in Georgia. Road Freight traffic has the potential to impact travel times in Smyrna, especially during the peak times.

CSX operates a freight railroad connection through Smyrna, connecting to Inman Yard in West Atlanta and Cartersville in northwest Georgia. This line carries significant amounts of rail freight bound for Chattanooga and serves businesses located near the mainline.

Strategies and projects to improve the movement of freight around Smyrna include Atlanta Region's Plan, the GDOT Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan 2010-2050, and the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update 2040 (CTP). A proposal to reconstruct the interchange of I-75 and I-285 is outlined in Atlanta Region's Plan along with the "Northwest Corridor" project currently under construction, which will add corridor capacity along I-75 to I-285 and improve the flow of traffic, assisting the movement of freight. The CTP has a goal to increase capacity and operations along major truck freight routes through Cobb County through roadway widening or signal timings. The strategy outlines innovative strategies for moving road freight, including potential truck friendly lanes on key corridors.



## TRANSIT

Transit in Smyrna is provided by CobbLinc which operates services between Cobb County and Downtown Atlanta. Four services operate within the City of Smyrna, including routes:

- **10** - Marietta Transfer Center to MARTA Arts Center Station, via Cobb Parkway.
- **15** - Marietta, south to County Services Parkway, then Windy Hill Road west to Wildwood office park.
- **20** - Marietta to Cumberland Mall, via South Cobb Drive.
- **25** - Cumberland Transfer Center, to MARTA's Hamilton E. Holmes station, via Concord Road and Mableton Parkway.

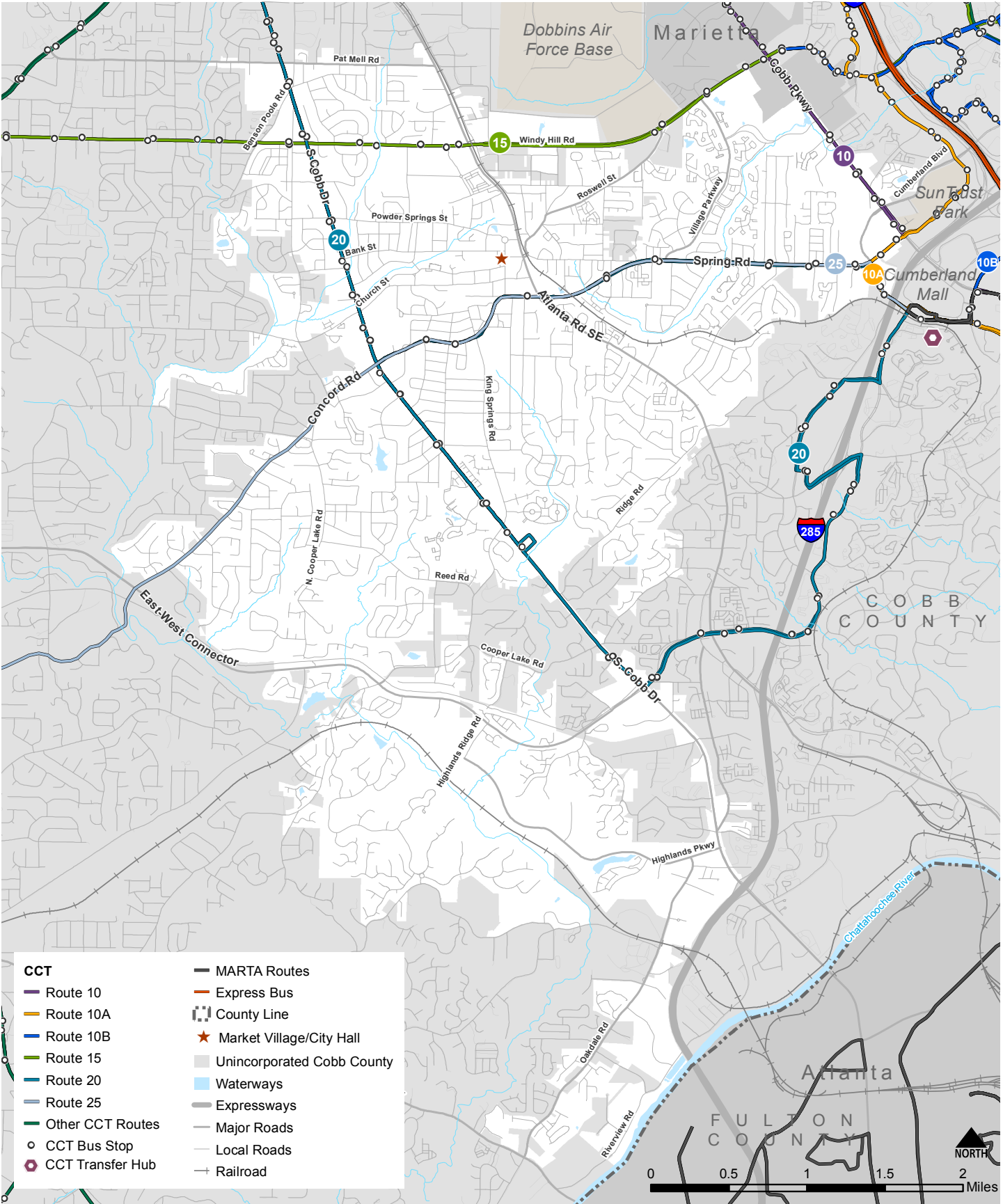
Routes 15, 20, and 25 are the chief routes serving major transportation corridors in Smyrna and connect with Cobb Express buses to Metro Atlanta along Interstate 75. Routes 15 and 20 operate a bus every 30 minutes from Marietta during peak times. Outside peak times and on Saturdays, Route 20 provides a bus every 60 minutes. Route 25 operates a bus every 60 minutes Monday through Saturday. CobbLinc services do not operate on Sunday. Route 10 operates Monday through Saturday with a bus every 30 minutes during peak times. There are no

park-and-ride facilities within the City of Smyrna, with the Marietta park-and-ride facility located to the north of Dobbins Air Force Base being the closest services for Smyrna residents.

CobbLinc operates 100 buses on 18 routes and makes more than four million trips per year. In 2016, CobbLinc revised its schedule and added 35 new buses and a new Route 25 to its service. Despite these improvements, transit options in Smyrna are limited. Community feedback in the 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan identified transit services operated by CobbLinc as being insufficient for the community's transit needs. More reliable, frequent and fast services to Cumberland CID and Metro Atlanta are desired, including a potential rail connections to MARTA. A dedicated city shuttle service connecting Smyrna with Cumberland CID was also proposed by residents.

Increasing the frequency, scheduling and speed of Routes 15, 20, and 25 through Smyrna would have an immediate and greater benefit for the majority of Smyrna residents. Increasing the time advantage of bus services through the installation of dedicated priority lanes on Windy Hill Road, Spring Road and South Cobb Drive during peak times would also make transit a more attractive transportation option.

Figure B-24. Transit Map



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Jacobs; Cobb Community Transit

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation includes any form of transportation powered by human activity, typically walking and bicycling. Active transportation is proven to improve health, quality of life, and economic development in communities and is supported by a network of safe and connected sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways and trails. Active transportation projects in Smyrna are guided by the Cobb CTP Active Transportation Policy and Program improvement and the City of Smyrna's Master Plan LCI Study. Figure B-25 on page B64 shows the existing active transportation facilities in the city. Sidewalks are the most common form of active transportation infrastructure in Smyrna, bolstered by 10-foot-wide shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists along select corridors and the Silver Comet Trail (see page B65 for more information). There are no on-street bicycle facilities in the city.

### URBAN CORE

The pedestrian network is strongest around Market Village and along key roads, including Concord Road, Spring Road, South Cobb Drive, Windy Hill Road, and Atlanta Road. These areas provide access to retail, civic, and recreational areas in Smyrna and CobbLinc bus connections to Marietta and Cumberland Mall.

## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

More recently built residential neighborhoods generally have a sidewalk on one side of the road. Streets in older residential neighborhoods are often without sidewalks, and pedestrians are faced with a variable environment, including obstruction from public infrastructure; parked cars; trees and landscaping; walking on private property along roads; and uneven terrain. These obstacles increase the danger for vulnerable pedestrians-- including the elderly, disabled and children-- to be exposed to passing vehicle traffic.

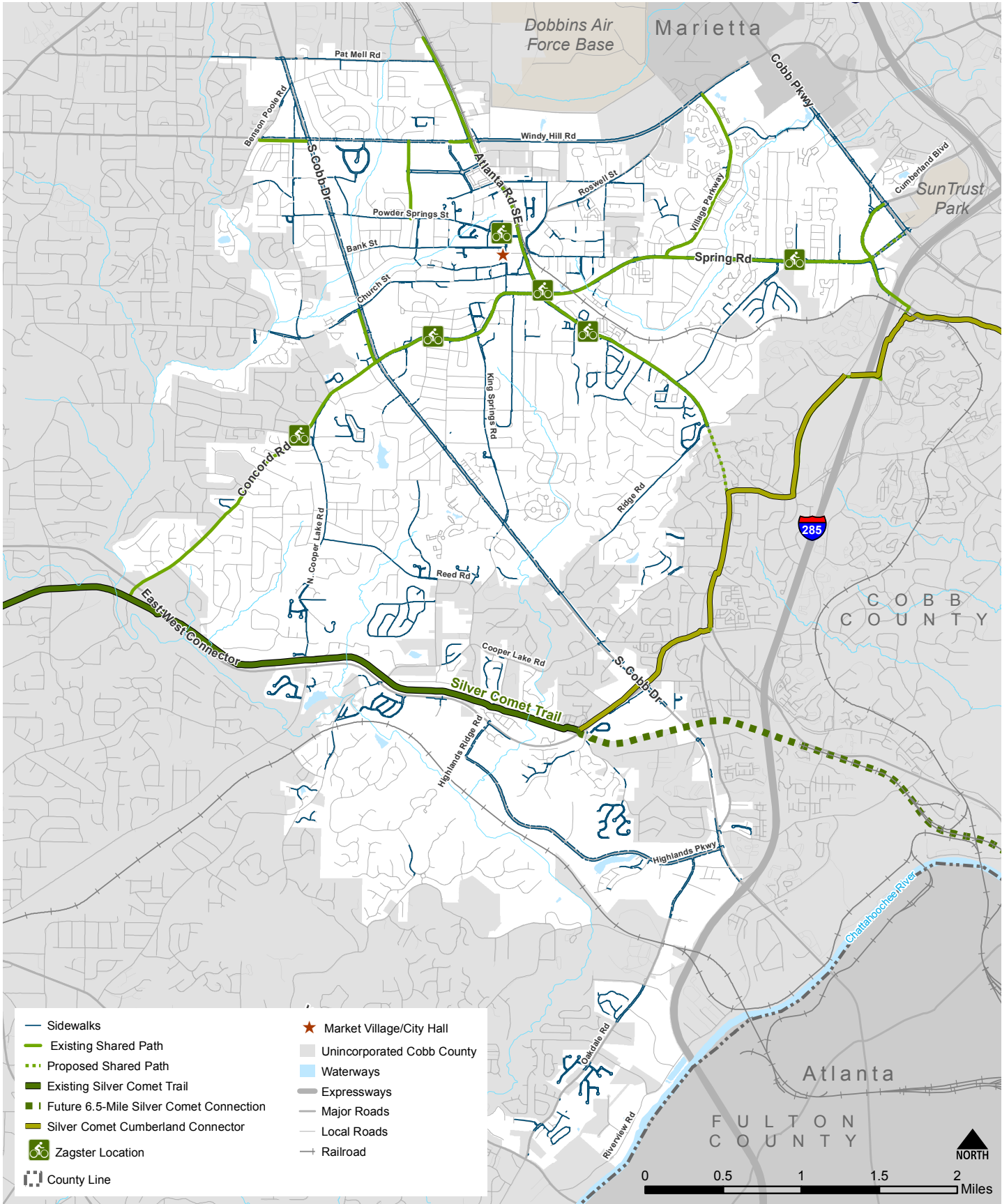
### RECREATION

The Silver Comet Trail does not connect to as many uses as do other paths, and it is used primarily for recreation. Cyclists and hikers from across the region come to Smyrna to use the trail. Most city parks are located within residential neighborhoods and are connected to a sidewalk or shared path on at least one side.

### IMPACT OF CITY FORM

The City's low-density urban form and disconnected street grid create another barrier to active transportation. Compared to a connected street network, this type of neighborhood design can often significantly increase the walking distance and time to destinations by requiring a circuitous route rather than a direct one.

Figure B-25. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Map



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission





Left to Right: 1) Atlanta Road Shared Path; 2) Covered pedestrian and bicycle bridge at the Spring Street Shared Path

## MAJOR CYCLE ROUTES

There are four recommended cycle routes in Smyrna, including the Atlanta Road Shared Path, Spring Road Shared Path, Village Parkway Shared Path, and Silver Comet Trail.

1. The **Atlanta Road Shared Path** is a 10-foot-wide path that runs along Atlanta Road beginning at Pat Mell Road in the north and ending at Ridge Road in the south. The path is shared between cyclists and pedestrians and crosses many residential and commercial entrances, creating potential conflicts with motorists. At Windy Hill Road, users must cross Atlanta Road to continue along the path.
2. The **Spring Road/Concord Road Shared Path** is the primary cycle route between the Cumberland CID and the Silver Comet Trail, hitting several destinations within the City along the way. This connection to the Cumberland Transfer Center within the CID provides Metro Atlanta transit riders with access to the local trail network. However, like Atlanta Road, the path crosses many parking lot entrances, roads, and private driveways, potentially posing safety risks for cyclists.

3. The **Village Parkway Shared Path** is a scenic, 10-foot-wide path along the west side of Village Parkway, connecting Spring Road to Windy Hill Road.
4. The **Silver Comet Trail** is a 61 mile long, off-road, paved trail that starts at the Mavell Road Trailhead in Smyrna and ends at the Georgia/Alabama state line, near Cedartown. Smyrna residents account for 434,000 uses of the Silver Comet Trail per year – or around 1/4 of the total usage statewide. A plan to acquire 7 miles of Silver Comet railroad track and convert it to trail would connect the Silver Comet and the Atlanta BeltLine Trails. This connection would provide a significant boost to cycling in Smyrna and the wider Atlanta region as it would provide a safer commuting option for Smyrna residents to employment, education, transit, and cultural locations in Metro Atlanta than current on-road routes.

Since 2015, the City of Smyrna has provided a Bike Share program operated Zagster Bikes. The City has installed five sharing stations at Smyrna Public Library, Taylor-Brawner Park, Jonquil Park, and two on Concord Road, allowing easy access to the Spring, Concord and Atlanta Road shared paths. Rides are free for the first four hours, and then five dollars per hour after that up to forty dollars.



Left to Right: 1) Neighborhood road without sidewalks; 2) Zagster bike share station at Market Village

Smyrna's bike share program provides access to residential and commercial areas, transit services and trails within Smyrna and beyond.

Community feedback in the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan indicated a desire for safer and more pedestrian and biking friendly environment in Smyrna. The City of Smyrna is improving the experience of pedestrians and cyclists through the Windy Hill Boulevard Project and Spring Road Complete Streets Programs. The Cobb County CTP Update 2040 has allocated funding for improved sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure in Smyrna, including \$2.5 million for pedestrian crossing and access improvements at Spring Street, Hawthorne Avenue, and South Cobb Drive. The plan also allocates \$200,000 to install traffic calming devices, \$150,000 for traffic and pedestrian crossing signal upgrades, and \$1 million for new sidewalks and upgrades to existing sidewalks. These projects will improve the pedestrian environment in Smyrna and increase the attractiveness of walking as a transport option. Most of these projects are being funded wholly or in part through the 2016 SPLOST.

To increase the attractiveness of active transportation in Smyrna, the City should look to install sidewalks on all residential streets and roads within a walkable catchment of key retail and activity nodes, generally about 0.5 mile or ten

minutes' walk. Increased connections between neighborhoods, including laneways and trails, could also decrease the distance between residents and centers.

The City's new existing shared path systems should be installed with large signs, wayfinding, distinctive pavement marking and network maps. To increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the city's shared paths, a right-of-way priority for pedestrians and cyclists over motorists at junctions and entryways that cross share paths could be instituted. Road safety infrastructure, including speed bumps, flashing lights and colored pavement, would reinforce this priority and decrease vehicle speeds at shared path junctions and entryways. Lastly, increased marketing of the City's bike network and bike share program, the creation of a network map and the development of cycle themed programs like free bike valet, would encourage residents to view active transportation as a viable, safe and attractive mobility option in Smyrna.

## TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

Land use has a significant impact on the transportation system and affects the mobility options available to residents. Low-density single-family residential development dominates land use in Smyrna, with small pockets of medium density apartments clustered on key roads, including Atlanta Road, and around Market Village. Many neighborhoods are disconnected from the street grid and have only one outlet to the road network. This puts tremendous strain on key arterial and collector roads in Smyrna as local traffic cannot bypass these major roads on lower volume local roads. Subsequently, congestion on principal and minor arterials like Atlanta Road, Spring Road, and South Cobb Drive affects the travel times of residents in Smyrna.

Smyrna's disconnected street network also reduces walkability in Smyrna by decreasing route options and increasing the distance to local shops and centers. Community feedback in the 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan indicated the urban form and street network in Smyrna made travel by private vehicle the only viable option for mobility throughout Smyrna. Active transportation was considered to be possible in limited areas of Smyrna.

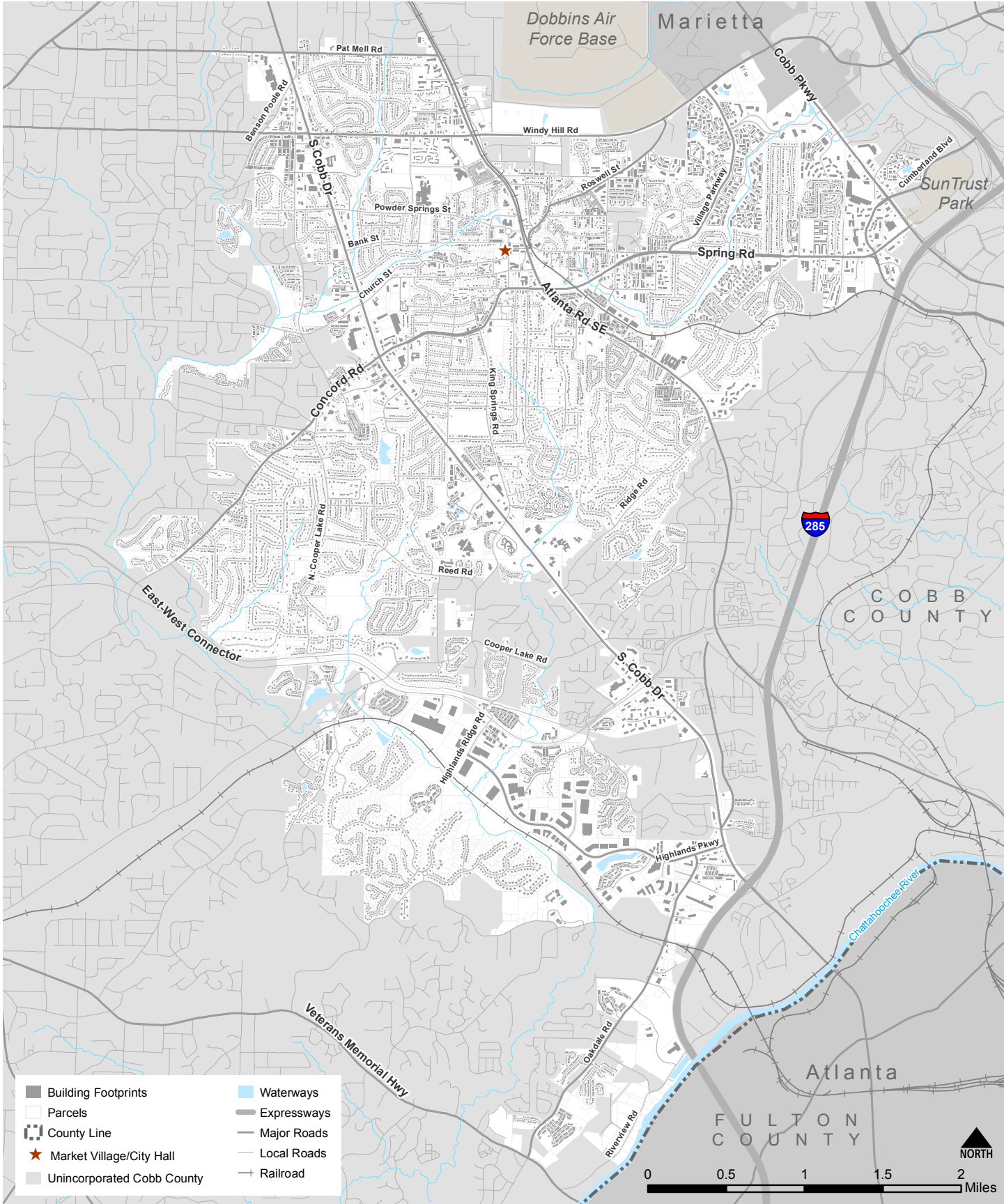
Future residential and commercial growth should be focused on Market Village and along mixed use corridors, including Spring Road and Atlanta Road, to increase the viability and attractiveness of transit and active transportation. This would provide the population density required for increased transit services through Smyrna.

## PARKING

A general inventory of parking facilities in the City can be found in the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2040 Update (Cobb CTP). It noted that parking is available in various public and private parking garages, surface lots, and on-street locations. Public parking facilities in Smyrna are generally off-street surface lots located off major roads, including South Cobb Drive and Windy Hill Road, as well as on street parking around Market Village. The Cobb CTP does not provide any detailed parking assessment of need; however in 2016, the City of Smyrna did approve \$288,152 for a new parking lot to be built at the intersection of Concord Road and Hollis Street, 0.7 miles south of Market Village to serve the new linear park on Concord Road.



Figure B-26. Road Network and Physical Form Map



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission



## KEY FINDINGS

- Within the city core and along key transportation routes Smyrna is experiencing a greater density of development than what has historically occurred in the city. While this may increase future traffic congestion in Smyrna, it also presents an opportunity to increase mobility options in the city.
- The operation of SunTrust Park, the new home of the Atlanta Braves, has potential to severely impact the operation of local roads in Smyrna at least 81 days of the year. Close collaboration with Cobb County and other key stakeholders will be required to minimize the impact on the transportation system during Atlanta Braves games.
- Transit services in Smyrna are limited, infrequent, and slow. Collaboration with Cobb Transit to increase the frequency and scheduling of Routes 20 and 15 through Smyrna would make transit a more attractive option. The City could investigate the use of City resource as Park-and Ride facilities and dedicated bus priority lanes for Windy Hill Road, Spring Road, and South Cobb Drive during peak times to decrease transit travel times.
- The quality of active transportation infrastructure in Smyrna is varied and includes a well connected network of sidewalks in an around Market Village and along key roads, including Concord Road, Spring Road, and Atlanta Road, as well as four primary bicycle routes: the Atlanta Road Shared Path, the Spring Road/Concord Road Shared Path, the Village Parkway Shared Path, and the Silver Comet Trail . Nonetheless, there is need for improved infrastructure and information that can help increase the safety and attractiveness of walking and biking as a transport option for Smyrna residents.
- Smyrna is characterized by a low density urban form and disconnected street network. Increasing street connections in existing and new developments would improve route and mobility options for residents, increasing walkability and the operation of local roads in Smyrna.
- Higher density development should be focused at Market Village and along mixed use corridors, including Spring Road near Cobb Parkway and Atlanta Road, to increase the viability and attractiveness of transit and active transportation.



# HOUSING

---

## INTRODUCTION

Housing plays an important role in the story of Smyrna's history growth and future development. The housing available in the community and the form it takes impacts who lives and stays in the community over time. The mix of housing types shapes how people interact with each other and the built environment as well as the services and jobs that the community attracts. Availability of housing at different price points can also have an impact on business decisions to remain, expand, or locate in a community. This section takes a close look at how Smyrna's housing stock and housing policy interact with and impact the city's form and population by considering the following factors:

- Adequacy and suitability of existing housing stock
- Condition and occupancy
- Cost of housing (rental and ownership)
- Availability of housing options across the life cycle
- Housing needs of special populations
- Jobs housing balance
- Key findings and potential opportunities and issues based on the analysis

# HOUSING STOCK

## OVERALL MIX

Smyrna's housing stock consists of a variety of different types of both single-family and multi-family homes, with roughly 59 percent single-family homes, including both detached and attached units (e.g. townhomes), and 41 percent multi-family homes (duplex, fourplex, and multiple unit buildings). Single-family detached units make up the biggest segment of housing types, and multi-

family products with five or more units comprising another important segment of housing at roughly 35 percent. The city's housing stock is more diverse than that of Cobb County and the State of Georgia. The City of Marietta has a relatively similar mix of units with fewer single-family attached products and more multi-family units with 5 units or more.

**Table B-12. Housing Structures**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Total housing units</b>	25,735	100.0%	26,277	100.0%	10,556	100.0%	290,963	100.0%	4,133,065	100.0%
<b>1-unit, detached</b>	10,716	41.6%	10,592	40.3%	6,997	66.3%	191,582	65.8%	2,742,156	66.3%
<b>1-unit, attached</b>	4,565	17.7%	3,039	11.6%	1,423	13.5%	23,475	8.1%	153,418	3.7%
<b>2 units (Duplex)</b>	349	1.4%	755	2.9%	19	0.2%	2,701	0.9%	91,607	2.2%
<b>3 or 4 units (Triplex &amp; Quadraplex)</b>	1,090	4.2%	1,149	4.4%	162	1.5%	7,070	2.4%	124,540	3.0%
<b>5 to 9 units</b>	2,629	10.2%	2,903	11.0%	241	2.3%	16,747	5.8%	210,166	5.1%
<b>10 to 19 units</b>	3,573	13.9%	3,444	13.1%	710	6.7%	23,330	8.0%	194,905	4.7%
<b>20 or more units</b>	2,721	10.6%	4,130	15.7%	996	9.4%	21,680	7.5%	230,534	5.6%
<b>Mobile home</b>	92	0.4%	265	1.0%	8	0.1%	4,307	1.5%	382,992	9.3%
<b>Boat, RV, van, etc.</b>	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	71	0.0%	2,747	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04





Smyrna features an assorted housing stock, including detached single-family homes on lots of various sizes, attached single-family homes, and multi-family buildings.



## AGE

An up-tick in housing built in the 1950s corresponds with the opening of Lockheed Martin in Marietta in 1951, which led to a surge in nearby job opportunities and demand for new housing – almost ten fold over the previous decades. Nearly 80 percent of the City's housing stock was built in 1970 or later. This is similar to Marietta at 76 percent and Cobb County at 85 percent. Located in the southern portion of Cobb County, it is not surprising that Smyrna has a higher percentage of housing built in the mid to early 20th century, compared to the county as a whole. The greatest percentage of the

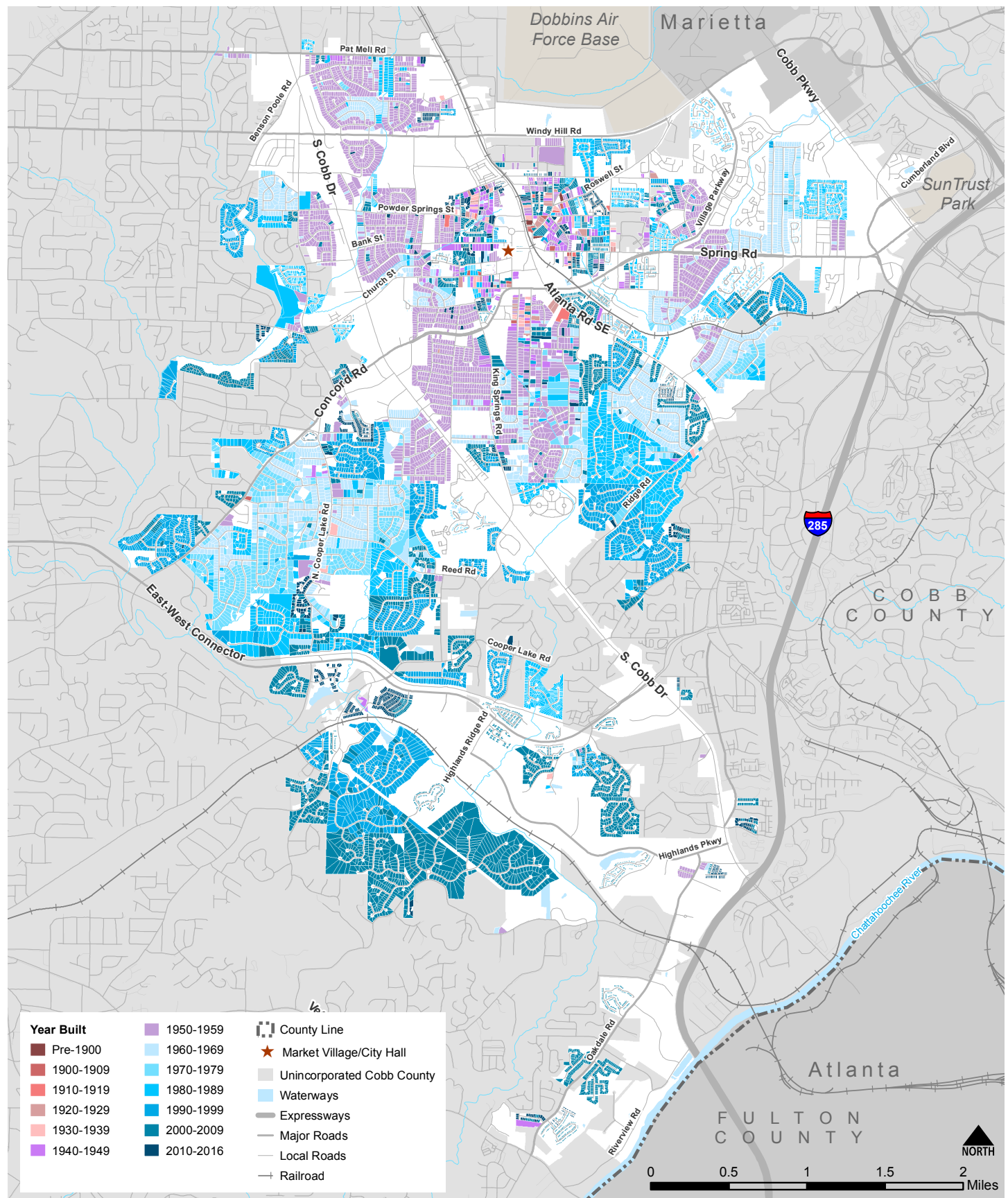
city's housing stock growth occurred during the 1980s when 27 percent of the city's housing stock was built. This concentration of 1980s built housing is similar to the makeup of nearby Marietta and Cobb as whole, reflecting the boom of growth of Atlanta's suburbs at the time.

As demonstrated by Figure 24, the grand majority of Smyrna's pre-1960s housing is located in the northern half of the city, with the newest units (those built between 2010 and 2016), interspersed throughout the city either as newer neighborhoods or infill units in preexisting neighborhoods.

**Table B-13. Age of Housing**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Total housing units</b>	25,735	100.0%	26,277	100.0%	10,556	100.0%	290,963	100.0%	4,133,065	100.0%
<b>Built 2010 to 2015</b>	505	1.9%	456	1.8%	490	4.7%	4329	1.5%	67432	1.6%
<b>Built 2000 to 2009</b>	4,958	19.3%	3,368	12.8%	5,784	54.8%	55,394	19.0%	951,412	23.0%
<b>Built 1990 to 1999</b>	4,573	17.8%	4,783	18.2%	2,511	23.8%	64,408	22.1%	878,551	21.3%
<b>Built 1980 to 1989</b>	6,828	26.5%	6,343	24.1%	922	8.7%	76,482	26.3%	717,212	17.4%
<b>Built 1970 to 1979</b>	3,566	13.9%	5,038	19.2%	585	5.5%	47,108	16.2%	580,003	14.0%
<b>Built 1960 to 1969</b>	2,380	9.2%	2,319	8.8%	103	1.0%	23,954	8.2%	374,216	9.1%
<b>Built 1950 to 1959</b>	2,378	9.2%	1,707	6.5%	103	1.0%	12,414	4.3%	258,270	6.2%
<b>Built 1940 to 1949</b>	320	1.2%	901	3.4%	46	0.4%	3,183	1.1%	121,047	2.9%
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	227	0.9%	1,362	5.2%	12	0.1%	3,691	1.3%	184,922	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

**Figure B-27. Age of Residential Buildings\***

\*Apartments excluded from data source

Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Cobb County Tax Assessor

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING TYPES

The existing land use map (see Figure B-14 on page B24) reflects the pervasiveness of low density single family residential (defined as three units per acre or less) on the City's landscape, particularly south of Spring Road and Concord Road, north of the East-West Connector. High density residential is concentrated in the northeast segment of the City, along the Village Parkway, Spring Road, and Atlanta Road corridors. High density residential is also an element of mixed-use projects of Belmont and Jonquil. Where these higher densities of people are located, there will be a high traffic impact on local roads (the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) estimates an average number of 10 daily trips per single family dwelling and 6 daily trips per multifamily unit). This provides an opportunity to better incorporate other modes of transportation such as transit, walking, and biking, with focus on connecting people to common destinations such as parks, commercial areas, local job centers, and other community destinations.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

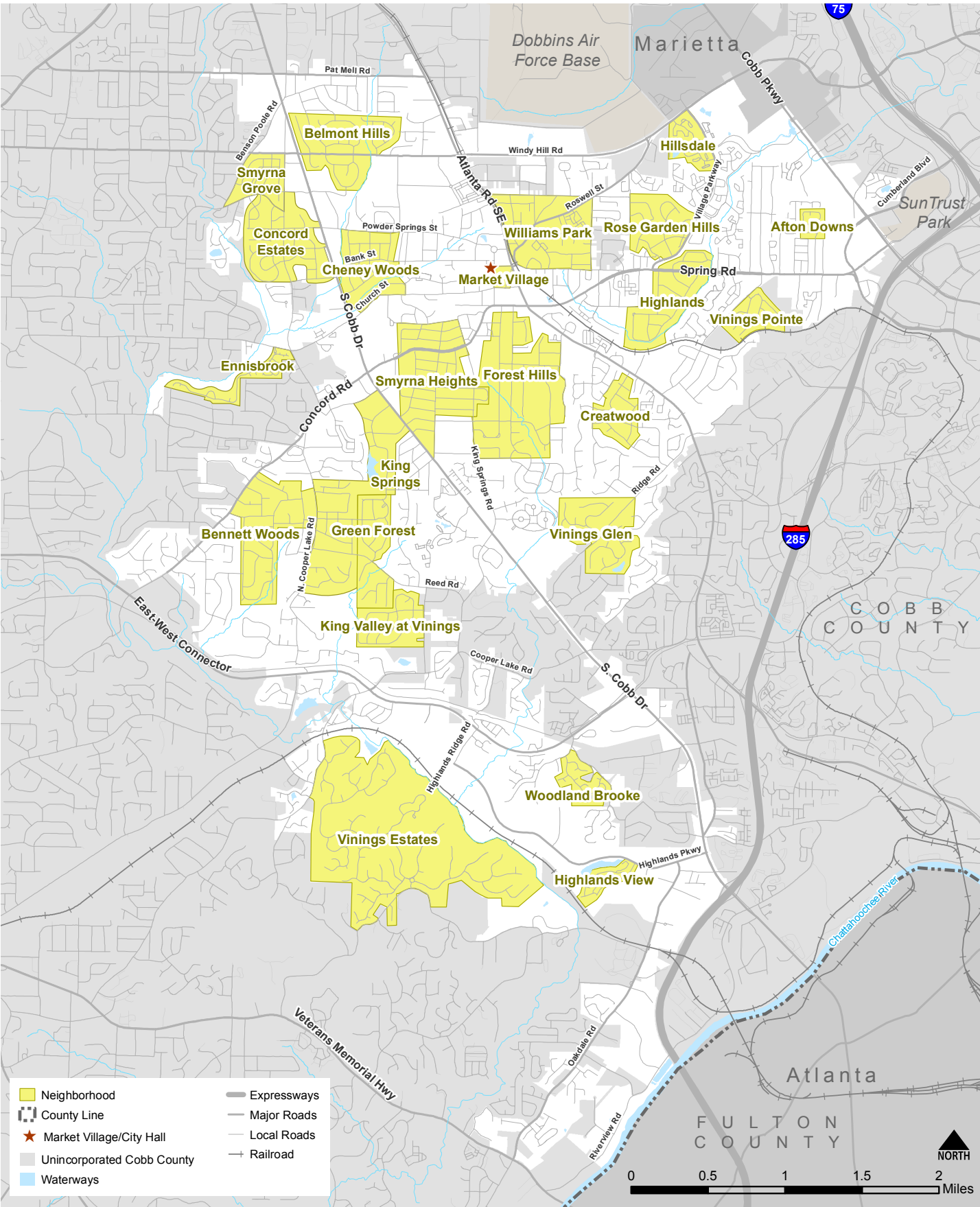
As discussed in the land use analysis, there are more than 360 formally identified neighborhoods/subdivisions within the city. (Figure B-28 shows some of the largest and most recognized neighborhoods in the city, but does not include all neighborhoods.) The neighborhoods and their suburban design have an important impact on the way the city functions. While offering privacy to residents, their insular design over time has contributed to arterial congestion at peak travel time and limited connectivity between different neighborhoods through the use of cul-de-sac and curvilinear street design. Although most of the neighborhoods are pedestrian friendly with sidewalks, some lack pedestrian connectivity between each other and to and from commercial and business areas. This can partially be attributed to topography and environmental constraints, such as streams.

## HOUSING TRENDS

Recent investment around the Village Green and Market Village has introduced a new traditional development style within Smyrna that emphasizes connectivity and a positive relationship between residential units and street life. This has led to new housing products that are more reflective of an urban live, work, play environment, providing greater diversity in the City's housing stock and living environments. The diversification of housing makes Smyrna more accommodating as a life-long community by offering different housing products and living environments to accommodate the young and old alike.

Smyrna has been experiencing a continued evolution of its housing stock as a result of carrying out its vision for the community. Belmont and Jonquil are expected to add nearly 692 residential units to Smyrna between 2016 and 2017. Belmont includes senior units, which will help provide for aging in place alternatives within the city. Redevelopment of property along Smyrna's southern boundary and the Chattahoochee River is expected to continue to diversify the housing stock by adding approximately 608 units.

Figure B-28. Neighborhoods



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; City of Smyrna Economic Development Department; Atlanta Regional Commission



## OCCUPANCY

The American Community Survey estimates Smyrna housing vacancy rate at 8 percent, the same as Cobb County. This is notably lower than the state and slightly lower than that of Marietta. Some degree of vacancy is considered healthy to allow for movement of households within the housing market. Smyrna's homeowner vacancy rate is similar to that of Cobb County, estimated at 2 percent, while its rental vacancy rate is estimated at 4.8 percent, the lowest of all comparison geographies. This low rental vacancy rate may be a reflection of Smyrna's desirable location within Cobb County and the broader Atlanta region and implies there is likely additional opportunity for rental housing within Smyrna. During Census years, Smyrna's vacancy rate has fluctuated from 11.8 percent in 1990, to 6.7 percent in 2000, and 10.7 percent in 2010.

Housing tenure measures the makeup of occupied housing units within a community by owners and renters. It is estimated that Smyrna's occupied housing is evenly occupied by owners and renters, with 50 percent owner-occupied units and 50 percent renter occupied units. By comparison, Marietta has an estimated 42 percent owner occupancy rate, and Woodstock has a 68 percent owner occupancy rate.

The American Community Survey (2011-2015 5-Year Estimates) also show that the average household size of owner-occupied units within Smyrna is 2.36 people, which is lower than Cobb at 2.69, Georgia at 2.76, and Woodstock at 2.76. Smyrna also reflects a lower average household size for rental units at 2.17, which is lower than Cobb at 2.55, Georgia at 2.67, and Woodstock at 2.52. These smaller household sizes may be a symptom of both the community's attractiveness as a residence for young adults and empty-nesters as well as school-related concerns that may deter some families from staying in the community when at certain times in their children's education, as pointed out by the findings of the 2014 Strategic Vision Plan.

**Table B-14. Housing Occupancy**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Total housing units</b>	25,735	100%	26,277	100%	10,556	100%	290,963	100%	4,133,065	100%
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	23,666	92%	23,371	89%	9,933	94%	268,616	92%	3,574,362	86%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	2,069	8%	2,906	11%	623	6%	22,347	8%	558,703	14%
<b>Homeowner vacancy rate</b>	2.0%		3.3%		1.2%		2.1%		2.7%	
<b>Rental vacancy rate</b>	4.8%		8.3%		7.1%		7.0%		8.7%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

**Table B-15. Housing Tenure**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	23,666	100.0%	23,371	100.0%	9,933	100.0%	268,616	100.0%	3,574,362	100.0%
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	11,927	50.4%	9,837	42.1%	6,705	67.5%	172,334	64.2%	2,263,697	63.3%
<b>Renter-occupied</b>	11,739	49.6%	13,534	57.9%	3,228	32.5%	96,282	35.8%	1,310,665	36.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

HOUSING POLICY

RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

The City of Smyrna’s Zoning Ordinance includes 13 residential zoning districts out of 20 total base zoning districts. The districts generally allow for a variety of different housing types, ranging from single-family detached residential, attached single-family residential (townhomes), and multifamily, both owner and renter occupied. Residential zoning districts are shown in Table B-16.

HOUSING AS A COMPONENT OF MIXED USE

The City’s also offers a Planned Development option that permits residential development as a part of a comprehensive development plan when certain conditions are met, such as appropriate underlying zoning and minimum development tract size. The planned development option allows from deviations from conventional development standards of the city, and thereby, affording flexibility of design and product to developers while creating desired community amenities such as open space.

APARTMENT MORATORIUM

Beginning in the 1990s, the City had a long-term moratorium on zoning for rental housing, which was allowed to expire in 2008, making way for the first apartment complex in 20 years, Avonlea Square, which was a complete redevelopment of the Regency Square apartment complex. The long-term policy addressed concerns about the large quantity of rental units within the city and their impact on quality of life aspects, most notably their negative impact on maintaining a stable school environment within classrooms. The expiration of on the moratorium was intentional to allow for higher end apartments that would have a limited impact on quality of life factors while offering housing that meets the demand to live in Smyrna with its accessible location in close proximity to both perimeter area employment centers as well as those within the City of Atlanta.

Table B-16. Residential Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Characteristics
R-30	Single-family residential, 30,000 square feet, 1.3 dwelling units per acre.
R-20	Single-family residential, 20,000 square feet, 2 dwelling units per acre.
R-15	Single-family residential, 15,000 square feet, 2.7 dwelling units per acre.
R-12	Single-family residential, 12,000 square feet, 3.4 dwelling units per acre.
RAD	Residential attached and/or detached, 6 dwelling units per acre.
RMC-8	Multi-family residential condominium ownership, 8 dwelling units per acre.
RM-10	Multi-family residential, 10 dwelling units per acre.
RM-12	Multi-family residential, 12 dwelling units per acre.
RD	Multi-family residential, maximum 2 units per 12,500-square-foot lot.
RD-4	Multi-family residential, maximum 4 units per 17,000-square-foot lot.
TD	Multi-family residential, maximum 10 units per acre.
RM-15	Redevelopment district - Multi-family residential, 15 dwelling units per acre.
RHR	Residential high-rise, 12 dwelling units per acre, or as provided in article X.

## COST OF HOUSING

Housing costs are an important metric for a locality's housing stock. They determine over time what level of diversity or homogeneity a place accommodates and whether current residents can afford to move or change residences within the same community or would be priced out, should a move be necessary. Housing costs also impact travel patterns to jobs. If people that work in the Smyrna area are unable to live here, then there will be increased pressure on the roadways and increased congestion. Finally, housing costs and underlying land values impact people's decisions to invest in a given location versus another. While rising costs are often good for those seeking to make a long-term investment, they can also inhibit current residents from remaining in the community should housing costs exceed an affordable house point. **Cost burdened households are widely defined as those spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs**, which factor in costs such as mortgage, rent, utilities, property taxes, etc. The conventional use of the 30 percent metric dates back to the U.S. National Housing Act of 1937, which has maintained acceptance over time as the amount of income that a family could spend on housing and still have enough left over for other non-discretionary spending. Households within Smyrna that are cost burdened are highlighted under owner-occupants and renters. It should be noted that homeowners can be cost burdened without a mortgage. Some people, such as the elderly, may own their homes outright, but are cost burdened due to taxes, utilities, and other housing expenses.

## OWNER-OCCUPANTS

The estimated median value of owner-occupied units within Smyrna is \$216,000. This is comparable to that of the City of Marietta (\$211,500), while notably higher than that of Cobb County (\$197,400). Just above 50 percent of Smyrna's housing stock falls within the \$200,000 to \$499,999 range. An estimated 23 percent of Smyrna home owners with a mortgage and an estimated 8 percent without a mortgage are cost burdened. In comparison to other communities (see Table B-19 on page B82), fewer Smyrna home owners are estimated to be cost burdened.

## RENTERS

Median monthly rent in Smyrna is estimated at \$951, which is slightly higher than Marietta (\$900) but lower than Cobb (\$1,006) and notably lower than Woodstock (\$1,129). Interestingly, an estimated 45 percent of Smyrna's renters are cost burdened, according to the 30 percent of income standard. While this number seems very high, it is not unique to Smyrna. In fact, when comparing to other geographies (see Table B-18 on page B81), Smyrna is estimated to have the fewest cost-burdened renter households of all other areas reviewed. This likely is related to Smyrna's high number of older apartment units within the city that make renting costs slightly lower.

Sometimes high housing costs can lead to overcrowded housing situations. Overcrowding is general defined as more than one person per room. Overcrowding does not appear to be a pervasive problem in Smyrna, with the American Community Survey estimating only two percent of occupied housing units at having more than one person per room.



**Table B-17. Housing Value of Owner-Occupied Units**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Owner-occupied units</b>	11,927	100.0%	9,837	100.0%	6,705	100.0%	172,334	100.0%	2,263,697	100.0%
<b>Less than \$50,000</b>	367	3.1%	716	7.3%	169	2.5%	8,011	4.6%	247,350	10.9%
<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	1,426	12.0%	1,258	12.8%	403	6.0%	17,600	10.2%	456,049	20.1%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	1,654	13.9%	1,021	10.4%	1,599	23.8%	27,999	16.2%	443,760	19.6%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	1,927	16.2%	1,548	15.7%	1,882	28.1%	34,161	19.8%	374,496	16.5%
<b>\$200,000 to \$299,999</b>	3,071	25.7%	3,003	30.5%	2,075	30.9%	40,835	23.7%	367,121	16.2%
<b>\$300,000 to \$499,999</b>	2,910	24.4%	1,579	16.1%	446	6.7%	30,728	17.8%	255,611	11.3%
<b>\$500,000 to \$999,999</b>	572	4.8%	630	6.4%	119	1.8%	11,362	6.6%	97,719	4.3%
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	-	0.0%	82	0.8%	12	0.2%	1,638	1.0%	21,591	1.0%
<b>Median (dollars)</b>	\$216,000		\$211,500		\$180,700		\$197,400		\$148,100	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

**Table B-18. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Occupied units paying rent*</b>	11,184		13,021		3,140		91,345		1,190,334	
Less than 15.0 percent	1,576	14%	1,092	8%	226	7%	10,610	12%	134,809	11%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	1,715	15%	1,747	13%	426	14%	13,653	15%	147,816	12%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	1,814	16%	1,441	11%	636	20%	11,835	13%	147,963	12%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	1,021	9%	1,414	11%	243	8%	10,352	11%	136,458	11%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	1,133	10%	1,243	10%	368	12%	8,308	9%	107,069	9%
35.0 percent or more	3,925	35%	6,084	47%	1,241	40%	36,587	40%	516,219	43%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

\*Excludes units where GRAP cannot be computed

**Table B-19. Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income**

	Smyrna		Marietta		Woodstock		Cobb County		Georgia	
<b>Housing units with a mortgage*</b>	9,632	100%	7,483	100%	5,713	100%	133,032	100%	1,526,935	100%
Less than 20.0 percent	5,089	53%	3,405	46%	2,881	50%	62,980	47%	640,471	42%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	1,587	16%	982	13%	880	15%	21,471	16%	237,404	16%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	760	8%	971	13%	416	7%	13,403	10%	165,759	11%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	463	5%	535	7%	416	7%	8,315	6%	112,359	7%
35.0 percent or more	1,733	18%	1,590	21%	1,120	20%	26,863	20%	370,942	24%
<b>Housing unit without a mortgage*</b>	2,205	100%	2,258	100%	971	100%	38,033	100%	711,202	100%
Less than 10.0 percent	1,236	56%	1,171	52%	460	47%	21,644	57%	319,918	45%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	364	17%	481	21%	224	23%	5,969	16%	136,213	19%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	135	6%	206	9%	124	13%	3,363	9%	80,562	11%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	187	8%	132	6%	115	12%	2,060	5%	50,252	7%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	111	5%	92	4%	21	2%	1,476	4%	31,250	4%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	41	2%	-	0%	9	1%	679	2%	21,204	3%
35.0 percent or more	131	6%	176	8%	18	2%	2,842	7%	71,803	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04

\*Excludes units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed

## SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Although the City of Smyrna does not provide direct services to meet special housing needs in the city, through administration of Cobb County's Consolidated Plan, the County provides related services and access to resources through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Act Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), which are open to city residents. Services include community development, funding of building, buying, and rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership, and providing direct rental assistance to low-income people. Key goals in administering the County's Consolidated Plan are affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization and reinvestment, increased housing options for homeless, increased capacity of public services, and increased funding for economic development. Additionally, Habitat for Humanity actively helps build affordable housing within Smyrna and consistently helps place families here.

Other special housing needs beyond affordable units include housing for seniors and those needing assisted living or continuing care facilities. Seniorhousingnet.com identifies over 20 housing developments either in Smyrna or in adjacent Mableton, Marietta, or unincorporated Cobb County, that offer assisted living, independent living, personal care, an age restricted 55+ environment, or some combination of these housing plus care opportunities. Examples of these facilities include: Delmar Gardens, Smyrna Towers, and Providence at Creekside Village.

## PREVIOUS PLANS & HOUSING

Important planning documents that address housing policy in Smyrna include the City of Smyrna Comprehensive Plan 2030, the City of Smyrna 2014 Strategic Vision Plan, and the Cobb County Consolidated Plan.

### SMYRNA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030

Comprehensive Plan 2030 documents the City of Smyrna's housing stock largely based on 2000 Census data and highlights the housing environment in relation to the broader context, considering factors such as jobs/housing balance, affordability, and special housing needs. The policy aspect of the plan identifies a series of needs and opportunities for housing.

### SMYRNA STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

The 2014 Smyrna Vision Plan provides a unique perspective on how housing contributes to sense of place and local perceptions, priorities, and concerns. The Quality of Place Goal area strives to strengthen community attachment. Among desired outcomes for this goal is that "Housing diversity in Smyrna will enhance community attachment, cater to a diverse population, and be a model for other growing cities." The goal includes the following three action items:

**2.4.1:** Conduct a housing master plan to promote the densities and types of housing that will be favorable to Smyrna's continued development.

**2.4.2:** Evaluate the competitiveness of City incentives for new mixed-use development.

**2.4.3** Improve the quality of multi-family housing and the living experience of residents.



## HOUSING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES, 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### 1

#### HOUSING MIX & FUTURE DEMAND

- The city should continue to provide a variety of housing options to meet resident's needs at all stages of life.
  - There is a lack of special needs housing (elderly, handicapped, etc.) in our community.
  - There is no inventory of public and private land available for the development of future housing.
  - Continued townhome and condominium development will cause some areas of Smyrna to transition from a suburban to urban character.
  - Conversion of apartments to townhomes may allow the city to upgrade older multi-family structures and increase the rate of ownership.
- 

### 2

#### WORKFORCE/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- The increase in high-end housing in the City of Smyrna may create affordability issues for low income residents and seniors.
  - Our community does not have a Workforce Housing Master Plan.
  - The incentives and barriers to maintenance and/or development of affordable/workforce housing in the community have not been inventoried.
- 

### 3

#### HOUSING & LAND USE INTERACTION

- Our community does not have an inventory of vacant properties, properties owned by the city or other government agencies, and tax delinquent properties suitable for infill development.

## COBB COUNTY CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Cobb County oversees administration of federally funded housing grants to support special housing and community development needs throughout unincorporated Cobb County and within its municipalities. These grants include CDBG, HOME, and ESG. The PY2016-2020 Consolidated Plan and PY2016 Annual Action Plan is the most recent documentation of the County’s priorities for these programs. Among other items, the document outlines a comprehensive strategy for addressing affordable housing and related community development and economic development needs. The plan’s needs assessment identifies a high concentration (20 percent more than the countywide designation) of African

American residents as well as Hispanic/Latino residents within Smyrna. The plan identifies that, in these minority neighborhoods where residents are concentrated, there is often a prevalence of older housing stock, old infrastructure, and lack of funds for rehabilitation in housing. These areas are often served by CDBG funding. As an entitlement community, the City of Smyrna receives a direct allocation of CDBG funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), although funds are administered by Cobb County through a cooperation agreement.

**Table B-20. 2016 Smyrna CDBG Allocation from HUD**

PY2016 Funding	Description	Annual Goals	Target Areas	Priority Needs Addressed
\$292,002.00	Public Facility projects and Administration	Acquire/Construct/Rehabilitate Public Facilities; Provide Administrative Structure	City of Smyrna	Neighborhood Revitalization and Reinvestment

## KEY FINDINGS

Smyrna's housing stock offers a wide variety of unit and structure types to accommodate different residential preferences over one's lifetime. Historically, the city's landscape has been dominated by low-density, suburban style subdivisions, resulting in a large stock of detached single-family homes. Recently, there has been movement towards creating a live, work, play environment in strategic areas of the city. This approach uses a traditional style of development, allowing for smaller blocks and setbacks, as well as a greater diversity of housing products. Smyrna is adapting to being more and more centralized in region as the I-285 perimeter area continues to see major investments in infrastructure, jobs, and recreational facilities, such as the home of the Atlanta Braves Major League Baseball team in adjacent SunTrust Park. The City has a broad range of residential zoning districts that contribute to this flexible environment. This policy foundation, with the recent expiration of the apartment moratorium, open up a new era of opportunity in Smyrna for how it is perceived and experienced as a place to live for people in different stages of their life. With this dynamic and what could be labeled "hot" environment comes with a set of likely opportunities and challenges:

- As residential density in the city continues to increase, how will the City ensure mobility of existing and new residents? Opportunities include increased access and options for public transit, cycling, and walking.
- Smyrna's property values are on the rise. To maintain some level of affordability, Smyrna may need to consider new policies to maintain affordability across the lifecycle. Land values alone could price some households out of the community completely without some other intervening policy to set aside dedicated housing that is affordable to lower-waged residents and those on a limited income.
- Continued partnership with Cobb County and area non-profits will help accommodate needs of special needs housing populations desiring to live within Smyrna.
- Housing as a component of a mixed-use development has generally been the result of site plan specific rezonings. There may be some opportunity to allow for smaller scale mixed-use residential/commercial in certain locations by considering addition of a new, small scale mixed-use zoning category. Mixed use categories can often be effective at providing amenities that are beneficial to broader community members, such as open space, pedestrian facilities, and neighborhood serving commercial.
- Like many communities situated in proximity to I-285, infill housing and major renovations and "flipping" of houses within the City's single-family neighborhoods is a reality. The level of priority that the community desires to put on community character should be further explored to understand if the City's current ordinances sufficiently address community preferences for these infill housing situations over time.
- There is limited land for future development within the city. To accommodate a larger population, housing will largely need to result from either redevelopment of existing property or annexation of new land into the city.



*This page intentionally left blank.*



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

---

Holistic economic development is about more than a single event or an individual prospect. It is about more than having good retail options and requires more than just developing a strategy to recruit new companies. Economic development is about the **people** and the **places** that make the community special and building long-term **prosperity** for all residents. It is about ensuring fiscal stability for a community. Successful economic development requires measuring progress across all these areas and not just tracking jobs and investment numbers. Economic Development is about protecting investments with predictable and sustainable development goals.

### REVIEW OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLANS

Smyrna is part of a large region, and the City works with multiple economic development partners to plan for future growth and prosperity. Locally, Smyrna embarked on a strategic visioning process in 2014 with the goal of increasing community attachment and commitment of its residents and ensuring that all the fundamental components are in place to continue to be a thriving community. Smyrna's Vision and its initiatives are currently being implemented by five citizen-led work groups:

Quality of Place, Image and Identity, Involvement and Leadership, Community and Economic Development, and Smyrna's Schools.

At the county level, Smyrna is a part of Cobb's Competitive EDGE, an initiative of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce and other community partners. The holistic and transformational community and economic development strategy is designed to strengthen the quality of life, education, and infrastructure throughout the county and to market Cobb County to the world. The plan is designed to increase job growth, incomes, and educational levels for residents, while reducing unemployment and poverty rates.

Regionally, Smyrna is located in metro Atlanta, an area that has seen tremendous growth and development in recent years. In 2012, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) embarked on a process to create a five-year Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy for metro Atlanta which satisfies Economic Development Administration's guidelines for the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The plan satisfies federal guidelines that enable the region to receive federal funding for economic development, and is meant to serve as the region's roadmap for

improving its competitiveness. Together, local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and other community partners are working collaboratively to leverage the region’s existing assets, improve upon its weaknesses, and address the issues affecting

regional competitiveness. Implementation of the strategy is being carried out by four committees, each of which focuses on one of the four goal areas included in the Strategy: Educated, Prosperous, Innovative, and Livable.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Economic development is a “team sport” and requires partnerships, collaborations, and ongoing communication. Below is a list of existing and potential partners for economic development initiatives.



### LOCAL

- City of Smyrna, Community Development & Community Relations
- Public schools and private schools
- Smyrna Education Foundation
- Wave of Excellence
- Smyrna Downtown Development Authority
- Smyrna Business Association
- Smyrna Economic Advisory Incentive Committee



### COUNTY-LEVEL

- Cobb County Chamber of Commerce
- Cobb’s Competitive EDGE
- Cobb Travel & Tourism
- CobbWorks
- Development Authority of Cobb County
- Cobb County Commission
- Cumberland CID
- South Cobb Redevelopment Authority
- CobbLinc



### REGION- AND STATE-LEVEL

- Georgia Power
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Technology Association of Georgia
- Georgia Economic Development Association
- Southern Economic Development Council
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Department of Labor
- Georgia Chamber of Commerce

## SMYRNA ECONOMY OVERVIEW

Smyrna’s location in metro Atlanta is a competitive advantage due to its strategic position between multiple employment centers and an asset base that includes a large labor pool, a major international airport and interstate connectivity, and a significant consumer base. Although the majority of residents commute outside of Smyrna for their primary job, Smyrna is much more than a bedroom community. Smyrna is home to a large and healthy supply of employment opportunities. In 2016, there were an estimated 34,877 jobs located in Smyrna, which accounted for roughly 9.2 percent of total jobs in Cobb County.

During the Smyrna Strategic Vision Plan process, residents were optimistic with regards to Smyrna’s future economic opportunities related to recent and upcoming development projects. These include the Atlanta Braves Major League Baseball stadium and the Jonquil and Belmont mixed-use projects. Smyrna’s economy has exhibited healthy growth, despite a slight downturn during the recessionary years. Overall, Smyrna’s economy, as measured by

total job growth, has out-performed the region, county, state, nation, and majority of the comparison communities since 2006.

The average annual wage of jobs in Smyrna falls in the middle range among comparison communities, but trails those in Cobb County and the Atlanta MSA; however, wages in Smyrna have been increasing at a relatively fast pace in recent years. Between 2010 and 2015, wages increased by 14.9 percent; a faster rate than Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States. Over the ten-year period, wages in Smyrna grew by 29.1 percent; Smyrna’s overall wage growth outpaced that of all of the comparison communities. Such wage growth could be attributed to a shift in the composition of the jobs in the local economy and an increase in higher-paying, higher-quality jobs within city limits.

Many of Smyrna’s most concentrated sectors provide wages higher than the Smyrna average of \$51,283, including jobs in construction; wholesale trade; professional, scientific, & technical services;

Table B-21. Total Jobs, 2006-16

	2006	2011	2016	2011-16, % Chg.	2006-16, % Chg.
Smyrna, GA	31,437	29,353	34,877	18.8%	10.9%
Cedar Park, TX	17,402	21,083	25,291	20.0%	45.3%
Duluth, GA	79,377	75,613	84,540	11.8%	6.5%
Marietta, GA	151,782	147,401	165,231	12.1%	8.9%
Matthews, NC	28,670	28,629	34,114	19.2%	19.0%
Woodstock, GA	21,880	20,707	26,166	26.4%	19.6%
Cobb County	346,258	324,964	380,059	17.0%	9.8%
Atlanta MSA	2,573,105	2,441,353	2,764,100	13.2%	7.4%
Georgia	4,566,904	4,312,659	4,790,795	11.1%	4.9%
United States	150,944,871	145,672,482	158,524,651	8.8%	5.0%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)



**Table B-22. Average Annual Wages, 2005-15**

	2005	2010	2015	2011-16, % Chg.	2006-16, % Chg.
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	\$39,722	\$44,623	\$51,283	14.9%	29.1%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	\$38,899	\$40,372	\$47,334	17.2%	21.7%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	\$49,097	\$55,321	\$62,290	12.6%	26.9%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	\$42,065	\$45,486	\$50,897	11.9%	21.0%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	\$40,776	\$44,025	\$51,332	16.6%	25.9%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	\$30,616	\$31,388	\$36,081	15.0%	17.9%
<b>Cobb County</b>	\$42,663	\$46,229	\$52,952	14.5%	24.1%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	\$42,657	\$46,778	\$52,839	13.0%	23.9%
<b>Georgia</b>	\$37,670	\$42,058	\$47,449	12.8%	26.0%
<b>United States</b>	\$39,135	\$44,646	\$50,445	13.0%	28.9%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)

## LOCATION QUOTIENTS

Location quotients are used throughout this report to measure the relative concentration of local employment in a given business sector or occupation. When applied to business sector employment, they measure the ratio of a business sector's share of total regional employment to that business sector's share of total national employment.

$$LQ = \frac{(\text{Local Employment in Sector} / \text{Total Local Employment})}{(\text{National Employment in Sector} / \text{Total National Employment})}$$

A business sector with an LQ equal to 1.0 possesses exactly the same share of total county employment as that business sector's share of national employment. When a local business sector possesses a location quotient greater than 1.0, this signals that the business sector is more concentrated in the city than it is nationwide. Conversely, a location quotient less than 1.0 indicates that the business sector is less concentrated in the city than it is nationwide. The higher the location quotient, the more concentrated the level of local employment as compared to its national equivalent. For example, a location quotient of 1.25 would indicate that a local business sector's share of total employment is 25 percent higher than the same business sector's share of national employment. An LQ of 2.0 would indicate that a business sector's share of local employment is twice as large as the national share, while an LQ of 0.5 would indicate that the business sector's share of local employment is half the national equivalent.

management of companies and enterprises; and real estate. As demonstrated by their LQ, employment within these sectors is more concentrated in Smyrna than the average community and has been growing over the past five- and ten-year periods. Combined, these five sectors account for an estimated 11,765 jobs, or roughly 33.7 percent of all jobs in Smyrna. Nationally, the same five sectors account for 18.8 percent of jobs. Smyrna's most concentrated jobs are reflective of some of the large private sector employers that are located in the city, including IBM, United Distributors, and S.P. Richards.

Top employing sectors such as health care and social assistance, information technology, professional services, and wholesale trade align with Cobb County's collaborative economic development program, Cobb EDGE. Overall, local job growth in many of the top employing sectors outpaced national growth. Employment in construction – an industry hit hard during the 2007-09 Great Recession – has rebounded over the past five years in the Smyrna area. Jobs within the sector grew at twice the national growth rate and, overall, contributed nearly 900 net jobs to the local economy.

**Table B-23. Smyrna Area Economy Overview, 2011-16**

Description	2016		Change 2011-2016			Smyrna Wages, 2015	
	Total Jobs	LQ	Smyrna # Chg.	Smyrna % Chg.	US % Chg.	Avg. Annual Wage	% of Nat'l Avg. Wages
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>34,877</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,524</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>\$51,283</b>	<b>101.7%</b>
Retail Trade	4,156	▲ 1.14	479	13.0%	8.2%	\$34,939	118.2%
Accommodation & Food Services	3,960	▲ 1.33	892	29.1%	16.3%	\$17,776	91.4%
Construction	3,913	▲ 2.08	859	28.1%	14.5%	\$56,838	112.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3,787	▼ 0.86	417	12.4%	14.5%	\$50,237	107.4%
Wholesale Trade	3,532	▲ 2.65	300	9.3%	6.2%	\$89,306	123.1%
Admin & Support & Waste Mgmt./Remediation Svcs	3,154	▲ 1.45	373	13.4%	14.9%	\$36,366	102.5%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Svcs	2,843	▲ 1.27	277	10.8%	15.0%	\$75,385	90.3%
Manufacturing	1,683	▼ 0.61	534	46.4%	4.7%	\$53,081	83.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,637	■ 0.98	74	4.8%	1.3%	\$25,624	92.1%
Government	1,167	▼ 0.22	91	8.5%	0.2%	\$46,383	90.4%
Finance & Insurance	785	▼ 0.58	117	17.5%	5.3%	\$82,728	84.5%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	768	▲ 1.55	404	111.0%	17.3%	\$106,800	91.5%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	709	▲ 1.24	110	18.4%	9.4%	\$52,440	104.6%
Information	665	■ 1.03	133	24.9%	4.0%	\$77,950	84.8%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	558	■ 0.94	125	29.0%	14.7%	\$18,944	57.2%
Educational Services	554	▼ 0.62	55	10.9%	9.9%	\$29,743	77.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	548	▼ 0.47	112	25.6%	13.6%	\$47,362	94.4%
Utilities	318	▲ 2.57	114	55.5%	2.5%	\$90,133	89.2%
Unclassified Industry	120	▲ 2.05	51	73.9%	52.8%	\$67,394	133.5%
Crop & Animal Production	12	▼ 0.03	N/A	N/A	3.8%	\$42,042	140.2%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	<10	▼ 0.05	N/A	N/A	-14.4%	Insf. Data	N/A

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)

Note: Geographic area for Smyrna is made up of zip codes 30080, 30081, and 30082. LQ is the abbreviation for 'location quotient,' which is an indicator of employment concentration. It is the ratio of a sector's share of total local employment to that same sector's share of total national employment. If a business sector has a location quotient greater than one, it is said to be more concentrated in a given area than the United States as a whole. If the location quotient is less than 1.0, it is under-concentrated. Color coded symbols are as follows: LQ>1.1 is green; LQ<.09 is red; LQ between .09 and 1.1 is yellow.

## SMYRNA OCCUPATIONAL OVERVIEW

While the business sector data provided in the previous section is useful in understanding jobs from an industry perspective, occupation data provides insight from a workforce perspective. The following section examines the presence of various occupations of workers at Smyrna area firms. Understanding business sector composition is vital—however, it is important to also understand that the jobs within those sectors can range from managers to janitors. Occupational data analysis allows for honing in on the type of talent and the range of skills present in Smyrna companies.

As with Smyrna's business sectors, the top occupations have outperformed national trends over the past five years, some significantly so. Additionally, the most concentrated occupations, as measured by the location quotient, are reflective of the community's top business sectors. Sales and related occupations and construction and extraction are both among the top employment and most concentrated occupations at Smyrna businesses.

The occupational overview also offers further insight into the wage growth observed in Smyrna's average annual wages. Management and business and financial operations occupations are two occupational groups that have growth rapidly over

the past five years. Combined, the two groups have added over 700 new jobs in Smyrna, and over the five-year period, employment in each group grew by more than twice the national growth rate. In 2015, average hourly wages for the two occupational groups were \$53.63 and \$33.22, respectively, which is significantly higher than the average hourly wage for all jobs in Smyrna (\$22.30). These occupations typically have a minimum education requirement of a bachelor's degree or higher and often times also require years of experience. Growth in high paying jobs helps to raise the overall average annual wage for Smyrna.

The fastest growing jobs between 2011 and 2016 were in architecture and engineering occupations, followed by protective service and production occupations. Nationally, food preparation and serving related occupations were the fastest growing occupations. These occupations are lower paying and often require very little education or skills in order to perform the job duties associated with the occupation. Although food preparation and serving related occupations were not the fastest growing occupational group in Smyrna over this period, jobs within this group grew by 27.4 percent in Smyrna, compared to the 15.7 percent growth that was seen at the national level, and contributed the largest number of new jobs in Smyrna. Overall, 14.5 percent of the net gain in jobs were classified as food preparation and serving related occupations.

**Table B-24. Smyrna Area Occupational Overview, 2011-16**

Occupational Group	2016		Change 2011-2016			Smyrna Wages, 2015	
	Jobs	LQ	Smyrna # Chg.	Smyrna % Chg.	US % Chg.	Avg. Hourly Wage	% of Nat'l Avg. Wage
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>34,877</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,524</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>\$22.30</b>	<b>98.1%</b>
Office & Administrative Support	4,805	0.92	593	14.1%	6.9%	\$17.04	97.1%
Sales & Related	4,455	1.26	465	11.7%	7.4%	\$21.30	111.8%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	3,738	1.29	804	27.4%	15.7%	\$9.81	86.6%
Construction & Extraction	2,505	1.61	490	24.3%	10.9%	\$20.22	95.5%
Management	2,332	1.23	418	21.8%	8.4%	\$53.63	108.7%
Transportation & Material Moving	2,290	1.01	331	16.9%	11.5%	\$15.62	92.1%
Business & Financial Operations	1,931	1.11	325	20.3%	10.0%	\$33.22	94.7%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	1,734	1.31	310	21.8%	9.1%	\$21.67	100.4%
Production	1,623	0.79	384	31.0%	6.6%	\$16.18	92.7%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	1,507	0.79	186	14.0%	9.2%	\$38.90	103.0%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	1,279	0.97	131	11.4%	7.4%	\$13.06	102.7%
Protective Service	1,067	1.37	261	32.3%	5.1%	\$15.86	73.2%
Computer & Mathematical	947	0.98	159	20.1%	15.3%	\$38.70	94.8%
Personal Care & Service	938	0.66	101	12.1%	12.0%	\$11.74	99.0%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	915	1.48	199	27.8%	8.4%	\$22.74	93.1%
Healthcare Support	756	0.78	102	15.7%	12.1%	\$14.73	103.5%
Education, Training, & Library	656	0.33	73	12.5%	3.9%	\$18.98	75.7%
Community & Social Service	500	0.89	43	9.3%	11.3%	\$20.64	93.0%
Architecture & Engineering	429	0.75	122	39.8%	6.7%	\$36.74	92.9%
Military	232	0.52	(13)	-5.4%	-2.0%	\$18.10	98.5%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	125	0.45	22	21.5%	6.2%	\$30.49	89.3%
Legal	92	0.32	15	19.6%	3.0%	\$46.11	96.3%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	24	0.09	3	12.8%	8.1%	\$13.23	103.3%
Unclassified	-	0	-	N/A	N/A	\$0.00	N/A

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (ESMI)

Note: Geographic area for Smyrna is made up of zip codes 30080, 30081, and 30082. LQ is the abbreviation for 'location quotient,' which is an indicator of employment concentration. It is the ratio of a sector's share of total local employment to that same sector's share of total national employment. If a business sector has a location quotient greater than one, it is said to be more concentrated in a given area than the United States as a whole. If the location quotient is less than 1.0, it is under-concentrated. Color coded circles are as follows: LQ>1.1 is green; LQ<.09 is red; LQ between .09 and 1.1 is yellow.



## SMYRNA LABOR FORCE

Smyrna's well-educated population and high household incomes are reflected in the quality of its local labor force. As previously mentioned, over half of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. Smyrna's well-educated workforce indicates that its residents are highly skilled and qualified for jobs that are typically higher paying, white-collared occupations. National trends show that higher levels of education are tied to lower unemployment rates and higher earnings. In 2015, the national unemployment rate for adults over the age of 25 was 2.8 percent, while the unemployment rate for adults without a high school diploma was 8.0 percent. Likewise, median usual weekly earnings for adults with a bachelor's degree was \$1,137 in 2015 compared to \$493 for workers without a high school diploma. In Smyrna, the 2015 annual unemployment rate was 4.9 percent, while metro Atlanta's unemployment rate was 5.9 percent. Smyrna's unemployment rate has historically remained below the unemployment rates in Cobb County, metro Atlanta, and the state.

Smyrna's labor force grew by 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2015, while the number of residents with employment increased by 10.7 percent over the

five-year period. Both rates outpaced the regional growth rates and indicate that Smyrna is attracting a labor force that is skilled and able to find employment. Further support is seen in the number of unemployed residents actively seeking work, which fell by nearly half (46.8 percent) between 2010 and 2015.

## RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY BUSINESS SECTOR

While the previous section analyzed the businesses operating within Smyrna city limits and the occupations found within them, this section and the following one focuses on the types of jobs and business sectors that Smyrna residents are employed in. As previously mentioned, 94.3 percent of residents are employed outside of Smyrna for their primary job. Although Smyrna's location in metro Atlanta and access to a large labor pool make it competitive for all types of jobs, knowing which sectors Smyrna residents are employed in is useful information for analyzing the compatibility of the local workforce with local jobs.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011-15 American Community Survey, roughly half of Smyrna residents work in one of five sectors –

**Table B-25. Smyrna Labor Force**

	2005	2010	2015	2010-15, 5-yr Chg.
<b>Smyrna, GA</b>	28,311	31,474	33,082	5.1%
<b>Cedar Park, TX</b>	26,202	27,522	34,254	24.5%
<b>Duluth, GA</b>	15,450	14,456	15,311	5.9%
<b>Marietta, GA</b>	34,620	32,786	34,180	4.3%
<b>Matthews, NC</b>	13,444	14,248	16,294	14.4%
<b>Woodstock, GA</b>	N/A	13,006	14,613	12.4%
<b>Cobb County</b>	369,291	380,297	398,123	4.7%
<b>Atlanta MSA</b>	2,584,601	2,720,044	2,836,322	4.3%
<b>Georgia</b>	4,586,420	4,696,676	4,770,873	1.6%
<b>United States</b>	149,320,000	153,889,000	157,130,000	2.1%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) and Current Population Survey (CPS)

professional, scientific, and technical services; health care and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; and accommodation and food services. An estimated 13 percent of Smyrna residents work in professional, scientific, and technical services, and 10.8 percent of residents work in health care and social assistance alone. These two business sectors typically provide quality jobs that pay above-average wages and require an educated and skilled workforce.

Table 26 shows the distribution of sectors in which residents of Smyrna are employed in and the share of jobs by business sector located in Smyrna. The right column shows the difference in percentage point between the two and is sorted in descending order based on the difference in the share of residents employed in a field and the share of jobs

in Smyrna. Given the community's high educational attainment rates, it's not surprising to find that Smyrna is home to many residents that work in traditionally white-collar, knowledge-based sectors.

The percentage point difference between resident employment and area job distribution reveals that the city may have more opportunities to capitalize on its skilled, local workforce. For example, there is additional local capacity for expansion in professional, scientific, and technical services and finance and insurance. Both sectors typically require a highly educated workforce and provide higher paying employment opportunities. Given the shift in preferences towards more live-work-play environments, Smyrna has the opportunity to better communicate its local talent and competitive advantage for new business growth and expansion.

**Table B-26. Resident Employment and Local Job Distribution by Business Sector**

Business Sector	Resident Employment by Sector	Smyrna Area Job Distribution	Difference
Educational Services	8.6%	1.7%	7.0%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Svcs	13.0%	8.3%	4.7%
Finance & Insurance	6.6%	2.2%	4.4%
Information	4.5%	1.8%	2.7%
Transportation & Warehousing	4.2%	1.6%	2.6%
Manufacturing	6.3%	4.9%	1.4%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	3.1%	2.2%	0.9%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2.0%	1.5%	0.5%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Crop & Animal Production	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Utilities	0.6%	0.9%	-0.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	10.8%	11.2%	-0.4%
Retail Trade	10.7%	11.8%	-1.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3.3%	4.9%	-1.6%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.3%	2.3%	-2.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	7.8%	11.3%	-3.5%
Admin & Support & Waste Mgmt/Remediation Svcs	4.7%	8.7%	-4.0%
Construction	6.7%	10.7%	-4.0%
Wholesale Trade	3.7%	10.3%	-6.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-15 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate and Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI)

Note: Cell shading is based on range of percentages with red corresponding to lower numbers and green corresponding to higher numbers. Data for resident employment is based off of 2011-15 five-year average estimate, while data for Smyrna area jobs is for 2015. Government and unclassified employment were not included.

## RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

The top occupations of Smyrna residents are reflective of the business sectors in which residents are employed in. The top five occupations comprise over 50 percent of the occupations of the city's residents: management occupations (17.8 percent), sales and related occupations (12.5 percent), office and administrative support occupations (11.2 percent), business and financial operations occupations (7.5 percent) and computer and mathematical occupations (6.1 percent).

Similar to the distribution of resident and area employment by business sector, there is a higher share of residents working in high quality and high paying occupations such as management, computer and mathematical and business and financial support operations. Smyrna could capitalize on economic opportunities that require a skilled workforce in such key business sectors by effectively communicating its valuable and talent local workforce.

**Table B-27. Resident Employment and Local Job Distribution by Occupational Group**

Occupational Group	Resident Employment by Group	Smyrna Area Job Distribution	Difference
Management	17.8%	6.8%	11.0%
Education, Training, & Library	5.9%	1.9%	4.0%
Computer & Mathematical	6.1%	2.7%	3.4%
Business & Financial Operations	7.5%	5.6%	2.0%
Legal	1.5%	0.3%	1.2%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%
Architecture & Engineering	1.7%	1.2%	0.5%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	3.0%	2.5%	0.4%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	4.8%	4.4%	0.3%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.0%	0.1%	-0.1%
Personal Care & Service	2.6%	2.7%	-0.1%
Sales & Related	12.5%	12.8%	-0.3%
Community & Social Service	1.0%	1.5%	-0.4%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	2.9%	3.6%	-0.7%
Healthcare Support	1.3%	2.2%	-0.9%
Protective Service	1.3%	3.0%	-1.7%
Construction & Extraction	4.6%	6.9%	-2.3%
Production	2.2%	4.7%	-2.5%
Office & Administrative Support	11.2%	13.9%	-2.7%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	2.2%	4.9%	-2.8%
Transportation & Material Moving	3.6%	6.6%	-3.0%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	5.1%	10.6%	-5.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-15 American Community Survey 5-yr Estimate and Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI)

Note: Cell shading is based on range of percentages with red corresponding to lower numbers and green corresponding to higher numbers. Data for resident employment is based off of 2011-15 five-year average estimate, while data for Smyrna area jobs is for 2015. Government and unclassified employment were not included.

## CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The City of Smyrna offers several incentive programs for businesses, including an opportunity zone, an enterprise zone, and various fee waivers. Additional incentive programs are available from Cobb County and the State of Georgia.

### NORTH SMYRNA OPPORTUNITY ZONE

If a new or existing business locates in an “opportunity zone” and creates two or more jobs, the business is eligible for a Job Tax Credit of \$3,500 per job that can be applied against its state income tax liability and payroll withholding tax. In 2011, the City of Smyrna achieved its first Opportunity Zone designation, which consists of roughly 695 acres that include commercial and retail areas located along South Cobb Drive, Windy Hill Road, and Atlanta Road.

### SMYRNA-OSBORNE ENTERPRISE ZONE

This enterprise zone was created in 2014 by joint resolution of the Smyrna City Council and the Cobb County Board of Commissioners to encourage employment growth and new investment in underperforming areas. The Smyrna-Osborne Enterprise Zone covers an area between Powder Springs and Austell roads, parts of South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road, and even some portions of unincorporated Cobb County. Incentives are granted to businesses within the zone on a case-by-case basis. If a business spurs new development or redevelopment of an existing property or is in an eligible business sector (retail, manufacturing, warehousing & distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, research and development, finance, insurance, real estate, or daycare ) and creates at least five new qualifying jobs, potential incentives include tax exemption or reduction (including local ad valorem taxes, occupation taxes, property taxes, license fees, etc.).

## OTHER CITY INCENTIVES

If a business is not located in the opportunity zone or enterprise zone, other incentives are available if a project meets one of the criteria in Table B-28.

Depending on the impact of the project, the following fees may be waived upon approval of the City Council:

- Occupational Tax Certificate Fees
- Plan Review Fees
- Building Permit Fees

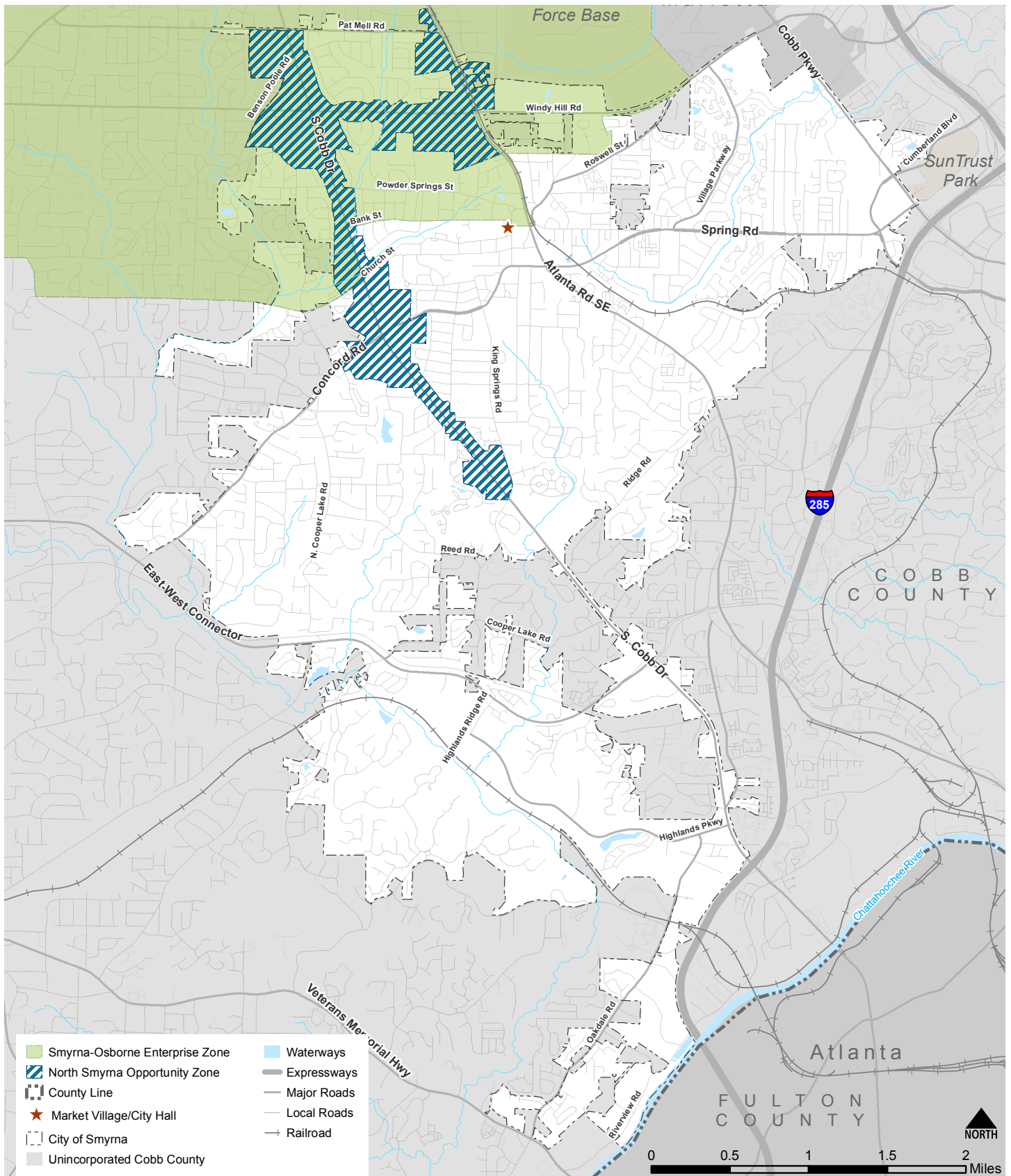
For new development, additional waivers may include:

- Water System Development Fees
- Sewer Impact Fees
- Financing of Sewer System Development Fees
- Water/Sewer User Charges

**Table B-28. Economic Development Incentive Criteria**

Tier	Minimum New Jobs	Economic Impact
1	25-71	\$500,000
2	75-99	\$350,000
3	100-124	\$250,000
4	125+	\$125,000
Small Business	10-25	\$250,000
Target Property	N/A	N/A



**Figure B-29. Opportunity Zones and Enterprise Zones**

Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission; Georgia Department of Community Affairs

## METHODOLOGY

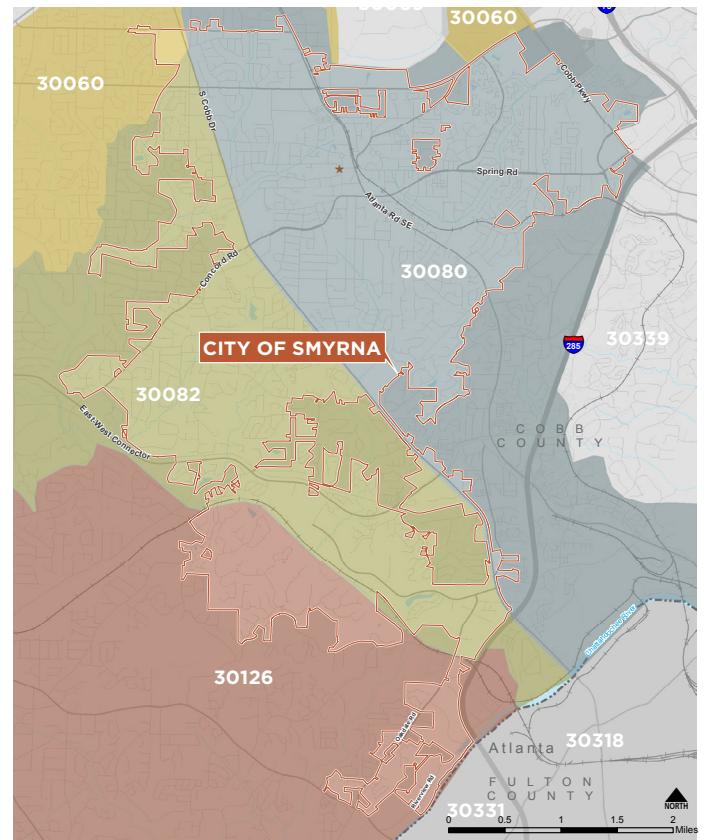
Because economic data is not available at the city level, this analysis focuses on a geography that is slightly different from city boundaries, but includes the vast majority of economic activity in the city. Smyrna, for the purposes of this analysis, consists of the primary three ZIP codes the city lies in: 30080, 30081, and 30082. For city comparisons, the following ZIP codes were used:

- **Cedar Park, TX:** 78613 and 78630
- **Duluth, GA:** 30095, 30096, 30097, 30098, and 30099
- **Marietta, GA:** 30006, 30007, 30008, 30060, 30061, 30062, 30063, 30064, 30065, 30066, 30067, 30068, 30069, and 30090
- **Matthews, NC:** 28104, 28105, and 28106
- **Woodstock, GA:** 30188 and 30189

The data was obtained from Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), an industry-leading provider of proprietary data. EMSI's datasets are comprised of aggregated data from over 90 public sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the National Center for Education Statistics, CareerBuilder, and many others. In order to develop employment by business sector tables contained with this analysis, Market Street utilized EMSI's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Non-QCEW, and Self-Employed data sets.

Residential employment data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015). It is important to note that while the Smyrna area business sector and

**Figure B-30. Local ZIP Codes**



Source: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

occupational data refer to the three aforementioned ZIP codes and to jobs in Smyrna without regard to where those workers live, residential business sector and occupational data refer to the City of Smyrna's census boundaries and to jobs held by residents without regard to where those jobs are located. It is also important to point out that time periods are inconsistent between these data sources. EMSI estimates for the 3-ZIP Smyrna area are one-year estimates, with the most recent year in 2016, while American Community Survey estimates for city residents are five-year estimates, with the most recent year in 2015. Therefore, direct comparisons cannot be made between these data sets.

## KEY FINDINGS

- In 2016, there were an estimated 34,877 jobs located in Smyrna, which accounted for roughly 9.2 percent of total jobs in Cobb County.
- Smyrna's strategic location in metro Atlanta, place-based assets, and skilled workforce have helped to support a healthy and prosperous economy.
- Between 2011 and 2016, employment in Smyrna increased by 18.8 percent. Local job growth outpaced that of Cobb County, the Atlanta MSA, Georgia, and the United States.
- Jobs in construction; wholesale trade; professional, scientific, & technical services; management of companies and enterprises; and real estate pay above the local average annual wage and are more concentrated in the local economy than the average community nationwide. Combined, these five sectors account for 33.7 percent of all jobs in Smyrna.
- Smyrna's labor force grew by 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2015, while the number of residents with employment increased by 10.7 percent over the five-year period. Both rates outpaced the regional growth rates and indicate that Smyrna is attracting a labor force that is skilled and able to find employment.
- An analysis of resident employment versus area employment indicates that there is local capacity to support additional economic activity in business sectors that provide high quality and high-paying employment opportunities.



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

---

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Smyrna's community resources contribute greatly to livability, community cohesion and quality of life in Smyrna. Smyrna has earned a reputation as a community of excellence in the Atlanta Region, with quality residential neighborhoods, great services, a strong sense of community, and treasured public amenities. This chapter provides an overview of the City's community resources including public facilities, parks, public safety, utilities, and historically significant items. Since, 2013, the City has improved existing assets and added new facilities including:

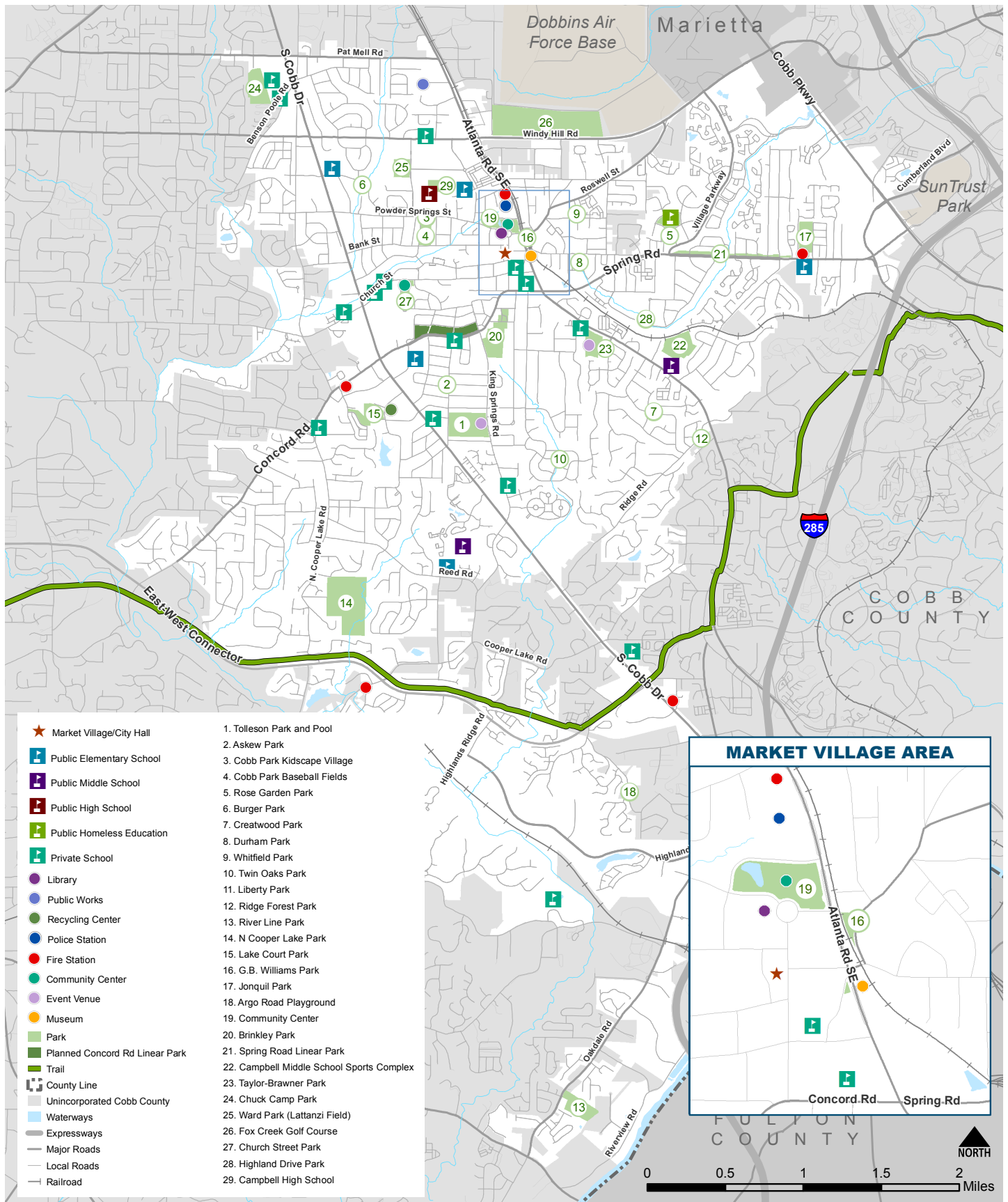
- The City's Recycling Center was greatly improved after a \$2.12 million upgrade in May 2015. This modernization program greatly expanded the city's recycling scheme and improved access to the facility for Smyrna businesses and residents.
- Replacement of the roof at Wolfe Pool in April 2014. This involved the installation of an insulated roof and a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system to provide dehumidification and greater temperature control for the heated pool.

- Renovation of the Tolleson Park Pool Building. This included improvements to bathrooms, the lobby area, concession stand, and the electrical system. The total project cost was \$120,000.00 and was completed in May 2013.
- The completion of the Concord Road project in June 2015. The upgrade of Concord Road involved the installation of a landscaped median, multi-use trail, a linear park, and decorative lighting to the corridor between South Cobb Drive and Atlanta Road.
- Installation of the Atlanta Road and Spring Street Shared Paths to accommodate safe active transport between residential areas, Market Village and the city's trail network.

Additionally, the Cobb County School District opened Smyrna Elementary School in 2013, which now accommodates over 900 students.



**Figure B-31. Community Facilities Map**



Sources: City of Smyrna GIS Department; Atlanta Regional Commission

The City of Smyrna is experiencing strong residential and commercial investment as highlighted by the development of new mixed-use communities at Belmont and Jonquil. The 2017 opening of SunTrust Park, the home of the Atlanta Braves, in the adjacent Cumberland area of unincorporated Cobb County will create fresh opportunities for businesses and enhance the entertainment options available to residents. In addition to its high quality of community facilities, the City of Smyrna enjoys a fantastic natural environment, with 304 acres of parklands, trails, and green space within the City's 15 square miles.

Despite a rich history, Smyrna has relatively few officially recognized historic and cultural resources. Currently, there are two sites on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), but many additional sites are potentially eligible following the 2007 Cobb County Historic Resources Survey. Many of the city's historic sites are privately owned and remain largely unprotected.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Market Village is the civic and commercial heart of the City of Smyrna. Located off Atlanta Road, this area is centrally located for all city residents and houses City Hall, the library and community center, and restaurants and shops, as shown in Figure 1. The Village Green is a beautifully landscaped area that enhances the village atmosphere and hosts the City's annual concert series and diverse festivals held throughout the year. Market Village also includes:
- The Smyrna Community Center - a multi-use facility with a variety of indoor spaces for meetings, athletics, and activities. It is located at the Village Green and hosts a variety of community sports including youth and adult league basketball in two gymnasiums, three racquetball courts, a walking track, fitness area, and game room. Other activities include gymnastics, ballet, dance, martial arts and fitness classes. The Center was host to 1,130 rentals in 2014.



Left to Right: 1) Brawner Hall and 2) Taylor-Brawner House, both properties on the National Register of Historic Places.



- Smyrna's City Hall, a 22,000-square-foot facility, houses the departments of Finance, Human Resources, Court Services, Community Relations and the Administrative Offices, including those of Mayor and Council. The Utilities Services Division, which includes the Water Department and the application office for garbage collection, is also located in City Hall.
- The City of Smyrna Library is the oldest city-operated library in the state of Georgia and works with the community to present high-quality events, improve services, and expand collections. In 2014, the library had a total circulation of 257,144 items, a 14 percent increase on 2013. Smyrna Library's public computers continue to be an extremely popular resource. Half of the library's computer users are non-residents. Innovative children's programs including "Smyrna Reads" and "Write a Letter to Santa" led to a 49 percent increase in children and youth attendance.
- The Smyrna Museum was opened in 1999 and is located in a replica of the 1910 Smyrna Train Depot on Atlanta Road. Its collection includes thousands of photographs, publications, artifacts, oral histories as well as historical and genealogical research materials. The materials are from both Smyrna and Cobb County and date to 1832. The Museum is permanently staffed by volunteers from the Smyrna Historical Society, the Smyrna Golden K Kiwanis Club and individuals who have an interest in preserving this history of this city.
- The Twentieth Century Veterans Memorial is located in downtown Smyrna and is the designated site of the annual Smyrna Memorial Day and Veterans Day Ceremonies. The Twentieth Century Veterans Memorial is dedicated to the memory of those who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces – Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard – during the twentieth century. The Memorial honors the living, the dead, the wounded, the missing, and the families who supported those who gave part or all of their lives to our country, in war and in peace.



Left to Right: 1) Market Street; 2) City Hall

## SENIOR SERVICES

The Programs Division of the Parks and Recreation Department manages the City's senior services program. The Programs Division is located at the Aline Wolfe Adult Recreation Center, which is located at Church Street Park and is designed for fitness and social interaction for those 55 years of age and older. The Wolfe Center is a social hub for the City's community programs for senior citizens and is open 56 hours a week. The center features a wide range of facilities including a therapy pool, fitness center, dance room, and large meeting rooms. The center hosted nearly 38,000 visits to the center by 930 members, offering 2,629 programs in 2014. Community programs include crafts, art classes, bus trips, and special social events.

Major goals for the Programs Division in 2017 as outlined in the budget include:

- Modifying and improving adult fitness classes at the Community Center and expansion of community programming.
- Expanding Wolfe Therapy Pool class offerings for senior adults and implementation of a special population aquatic program.
- Planning the expansion of senior adult programs at the Aline Wolfe Adult Recreation Center.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### E-911

The City of Smyrna offers a 24/7 E-911 center dedicated to taking emergency calls from Smyrna businesses and residents. The City's E-911 Fund pays for the maintenance of the City's 911 Center, which has an operating budget of \$1,505,612 in 2017. While many cities do not operate their own E-911 centers and allow county governments to manage emergency calls, the City of Smyrna believes a dedicated E-911 Center increases the safety of Smyrna residents and heightens coordination of emergency services in Smyrna.

On November 4th, 2014 the voters of Cobb County approved a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to fund capital improvement projects throughout Cobb County and within each of the County's six cities. Approximately \$52 million in sales tax funding is anticipated to be allocated to the City of Smyrna between January 2016 and December 2021. In 2016, the SPLOST will fund the upgrade of fire station alarms and emergency radios to maintain compatibility with the Cobb County radio system.

### POLICE DEPARTMENT

The City of Smyrna Police Department serves the community through the operation of seven divisions, employing 98 sworn officers, 20 full and part-time jail employees, 20 full and part-time communications officers, and 10 administrative staff members. In 2014, the Police Department arrested 3,943 suspects and issued a total of 23,909 citations. This represents an increase of 7 percent and 18 percent on 2013 numbers respectively. Overall, the City of Smyrna experienced a 10.3 percent decrease in Part 1 crimes. Part 1 crimes include crimes most likely to be reported to police including homicide, aggravated assault, auto theft and burglary.

The increase in arrest and citation percentages and a decrease in serious crime are attributed to a shift to community policing. The Police Department has continues its citizen engagement program, including “Coffee with a Cop” and the Citizens Police Academy, to ensure the continuation of social order and facilitate the maximum use of Police resources in Smyrna.

The City of Smyrna Jail, a full-service technologically progressive facility, processed 6,171 inmates in 2014. Of that, 2,415 inmates were housed for other jurisdictions, a cooperative service that realized revenue of \$440,885.61 in 2014.

The City’s 2017 Budget allocates \$6.7 million to Police Department Administration and \$1.1 million for Jail Operations. This budget includes a range of upgrades and improvements for the department including:

- Seven new or replacement vehicles,
- Additional storage capacity for body camera data,
- New Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Alternate Light Sourcing used for forensic investigations,
- An upgrade to the departments Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) for fingerprint identification, and
- Replacement of approximately 90 Tasers for officers.

The City’s Police Department is well placed to serve Smyrna into the future. A combination of community policing initiatives, excess jail capacity and infrastructure upgrades will ensure the maintenance of social order and a safe environment for residents in Smyrna.



Top to Bottom: 1) Smyrna Police patrol vehicle; 2) City of Smyrna Fire Department Station #1



## FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The City of Smyrna Fire Department employs 80 career firefighters to provide fire protection and emergency management for the 56,146 residents in Smyrna. It has an operating budget of \$5.06 million (2016) and currently operates 8 pieces of emergency response equipment at five stations around the city. This equipment consists of three engines, two Advanced Life Support (ALS) trucks, two Advanced Life Support (ALS) Rescue Units, and one Command vehicle. In addition to the frontline apparatus, Smyrna Fire has one reserve Engine, and an Air and Light Trailer. In 2015, the Department responded to 5,626 emergencies .

The City of Smyrna Fire Department is an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rated Class 2 “all hazards” response agency that responds to all types of emergency medical calls and fire incidents. ISO is an insurance industry risk advisory body that helps insurance carriers set appropriate premiums. Fire departments are rated on a varied set of items including manpower, station distribution, water supply, and communications. The Class 2 rating is the second highest available ISO rating Smyrna joins 27 other Class 2 agencies within the State of Georgia.

The City of Smyrna Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2021 earmarks \$80,000 for the re-modelling of Fire Station 4, a two year project to replace HVAC mechanical equipment, roof replacement and installation of an emergency power generator. Smyrna is well placed to respond to emergencies and maintain its Class 2 ISO rating into the future.

## UTILITIES

### WATER AND SEWER

The Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA) is a regional public utility that provides potable water on a wholesale basis to the City of Smyrna. The Water and Sewer Division of the City of Smyrna is primarily responsible for ensuring the supply of potable water and wastewater service to residents. 21 employees are responsible for maintaining 240 miles of water lines and 130 miles of sewer lines and carry out maintenance, replacement and emergency repairs to lines, installation of water and sewer taps, and the operation of lift stations

In 2014, the City of Smyrna Water and Sewer Division of Public Works detected and serviced approximately 11 miles of water and sewer mains, 4 percent of the overall system. Repairs and maintenance of the water/sewer system, including

rehab for 2014, included six water mains and three sewer mains. Activities included servicing/installation of 3597.5 linear feet, repairs and maintenance 105 linear feet of sanitary sewer mains and the continued Belmont Hills sanitary sewer rehab project.

Smyrna is served by the South Cobb and R.L. Sutton Wastewater Treatment Plants, part of the Cobb County Wastewater Treatment System.

- The R.L. Sutton Wastewater Treatment Plant has a capacity of 50 million gallons per day (MGD) and is Cobb County's largest treatment plant. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Long-Term Wastewater Management Plan proposes an expansion of the R.L. Sutton Plant to 60 MGD between 2011 and 2020 – an increase of capacity by 20 percent.
- The South Cobb Wastewater Treatment Plant has a capacity of 40 MGD, with a planned expansion to 50 MGD by 2030 – a capacity increase of 25 percent.

## RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE

The removal of solid waste and recycling are the tasks of Smyrna's Residential Sanitation and Recycling Division. During the 2014 reporting period, the sanitation division collected up to 10,180 tons of municipal solid waste and 2,589 tons of yard waste. The City of Smyrna Recycling Center averages approximately 7,096 participants with an average of 40 tons of recyclable materials collected and transported each week which saves approximately \$55,151 in annual tipping fees.

Waste reduction is a key part of the 'Keep Smyrna Beautiful', an initiative to raise awareness of environmental and solid waste issues in the community. 'Keep Smyrna Beautiful' is a non-profit organization funded by the City of Smyrna and private contributions. Keep Smyrna Beautiful works with local schools to educate and promote sustainability to improve quality of life in the community.

The City of Smyrna Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2021 allocates \$28,000 for 'New Sanitation Roll-Out Carts' to provide new customers with improved refuse and recycling equipment.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Smyrna manages 28 park facilities including athletic fields for organized sports like baseball, softball, and soccer and passive recreation areas for walking, picnicking, and community gardening. Thanks in part to the 2005 Parks Bond, Smyrna's park system has expanded significantly over the past decade with the development of five new parks including: Taylor-Brawner, Brinkley, Riverline, North Cooper Lake Road, and Burger Park. Projects at existing parks including Jonquil and Rose Garden have expanded the opportunities for recreation in the City of Smyrna.

Taylor-Brawner Park is one of the more visited recreation sites in Smyrna and considered by many as the City's flagship park property. The park has walking trails, open lawns, pavilions, an amphitheater and a playground with access from surrounding areas via a multi-use trail. The popular and successful Smyrna Food Truck Tuesday series is hosted here.

The Silver Comet Trail is a 61 mile long non-motorized, paved trail that starts at the Mavell Road Trailhead in Smyrna and ends at the Georgia/Alabama state line, near Cedartown. It is free of charge and allows for walkers and bicyclists to travel through the natural beauty of the north Georgia countryside, crossing a 500-foot-long trestle bridge and gliding through tall stately pines and rock cliffs. Smyrna residents account for 434,000 uses of the Silver Comet Trail per year – or around 1/4 of the total usage statewide.

The 2017 Capital Improvement Plan allocates \$767,119 or 17 percent of the total budget for upgrading, maintaining and replacing Smyrna's Parks and Recreation assets. Some of these projects include:

- Complete FY17 planned functional and aesthetic upgrades at the Community Center.
- Implement a Connectivity and Trails Plan. Plan improved access to parks with better connections.
- Implement a youth fencing program at the Community Center.

The Table B-28 outlines parks and recreation facilities in Smyrna.



Smyrna Community Center

**Table B-29. Park Facilities**

Park/ Facility	Classification	Acres
Arboretum and Pond	Gazebo, Walking Trail	3
Askew Park	Playground	0.5
Brinkley Park	Sport fields, Pavilion, Walking trail	16
Burger Park	Dog Park	3.7
Campbell Middle School Sports Complex	Baseball Field, Multi-Use field, Running Track, Tennis Courts	16.2
Chuck Camp Park	Baseball Field, Concession Stand, Gazebo, Multi-Use field, Playground, Walking Trail	16

Table B-29. Park Facilities (Continued)

Park/ Facility	Classification	Size
Cobb Park and Kidscape Village I & II	Baseball Field, Playground, Gazebo	5.8 acres
Community Center	Basketball Court, Game Room, Gazebo, Gymnasium, Kitchen, Meeting Room(s)	Capacity 100+
Creatwood Park	Playground	0.5 acres
Durham Park	Open Space, Walking Trail	3 acres
Fox Creek Golf Course	Golf Course / Driving Range	77 acres
GB Williams Park	Open Space	0.6 acres
Jonquil Park	Gazebo/Pavilion, Multi-Use field	-
Playground, Restrooms, Walking Trail	14.1	-
Lake Court Park	Bocce Court, Dog Park, Gazebo,	-
Playground, Volleyball Court	12.6	-
Liberty Park	Historic Site	0.5 acres
North Cooper Lake	Community Garden, Mountain Bike Trail, Restrooms, Walking Trail	51 acres
Ridge Forest Park	Fitness Room / Exercise Stations	1.1 acres
River Line Park	Concession Stand, Gazebo, Historic Site, Multi-Use field, Playground, Walking Trail	14.2 acres
Rose Garden Park	Basketball Court, Gazebo, Playground, Restrooms, Tennis Courts, Volleyball Court (Sand), Walking Trail	9 acres
Silver Comet Trail	Walking, Bicyclist Trail, Wheelchair accessible	61.5 linear miles
Spring Road/Concord Road Linear Park	Walking Trail	0.7 acres
Taylor-Brawner Park	Historic Buildings, Gazebo, Open Space, Playground, Restrooms, Walking Trail	10 acres
Tolleson Park and Pool	Baseball Field, Gazebo, Multi-Use field, Playground, Pool, Volleyball Court (Sand), Walking Trail	26 acres
Twentieth Century Veterans Memorial	Historic Site, Open Space	-
Twin Oaks Park	Passive Open Space	1.3 acres
Ward Park (Lattanzi Field)	Baseball Field, Concession Stand, Restrooms	6 acres
Whitfield Park	Gazebo, Open Space, Playground	2 acres





Clockwise from Top Left: 1) Rose Garden Park; 2) Village Green; 3) Pavilion at Brinkley Park ; 4) Silver Comet Connector



## SCHOOLS

Smyrna is served by the Cobb County School District. There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school serving the Smyrna area. Smyrna Elementary School opened in 2013 and has over 900 students. In addition, there are seven private institutions located within the city limits of Smyrna.

In 2016, 93 percent of fifth grade students in Smyrna were “On-track for Graduation,” defined as the percentage of 5th grade students passing at least four courses in the core content areas: English language arts (ELA), math, science, social studies, or world languages. This score is 1 percent higher than results for Cobb County as a whole. Students in Smyrna, however, scored lower than the rest of Cobb County in tests for Advanced Academics, Iowa Reading 3rd Grade Score, and the CCRPI Score – Georgia’s accountability rating system for schools, districts and the state.

Community responses to City’s Vision Plan outlined schools as the greatest challenge for the City of Smyrna. Concerns over underperformance (especially in middle and high school), both real and perceived; school safety; physical appearance; and leadership quality were apparent and are supported by input and data. Many parents and stakeholders believe that now is the time to demand higher performance, increase parental involvement, and support the local schools to be points of pride in the community.



Top to Bottom: 1) Smyrna Elementary School; 2) Campbell High School recreation facilities

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic resources are cultural resources that remind us of our past and help define a community's character. Residential and commercial growth in the Smyrna region since the mid twentieth century has steadily eroded the rural character of Smyrna and many important historic resources have been lost to property and infrastructure development. The City of Smyrna retains several significant historic resources, which are currently being preserved by the City and volunteer associations. These resources include historically significant public and private buildings, archeological items, and historic museum items, including Brawner Hall, Aunt Fanny's Cabin, and The Chattahoochee River Line.

Brawner Hall opened as a private mental health hospital in 1910 and, when constructed, was the only alternative to state mental health care in Georgia. It is listed on the NRHP. The City of Smyrna rehabilitated the two-story Greek revival era property after it lay vacant since the 1990s. Brawner Hall is located within the 11-acre Taylor- Brawner Park, along with the Taylor-Brawner House, a Victorian home built in 1890 and listed on the NRHP.

Aunt Fanny's Cabin opened in 1941 and was a landmark in Cobb County, known as one of the best restaurants in the Atlanta area. It is located on Atlanta Road near Market Village and is currently used as an event venue.

The River Line Historic Area derives its name from The Chattahoochee River Line: a six to seven mile line of Civil War trenches and forts along the Chattahoochee River. The River Line is particularly significant due to its unique fortifications called Shoupades, exclusive to Cobb County and designed by Confederate Brigadier General Francis A. Shoup. Currently, only 9 of the original 36 Shoupades are identifiable as most have been damaged from housing development. Many are threatened as eight Shoupades are located on private property.

The Cobb County Historic Resources Survey, completed in August 2007, evaluated historically significant properties located within Cobb County.

The locations of each property can be found at the Georgia Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) on-line database, operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Division. A total of 875 properties in Cobb County met the criteria of the Georgia Historic Resources Survey, 273 of which were located in Smyrna. Information and photographs of each property can be found on the Cobb County Government website.

As detailed in the Smyrna Vision Plan, Smyrna's residents have called upon the City to provide better protection and promotion of the city's historic assets. These include:

- **Creating a tour map** of historic and cultural sites in Smyrna.
- Working with volunteer partners to **promote and distribute information on historic sites** including the Smyrna Historical and Genealogical Society, the Smyrna Museum, River Line Historical Association, Mableton Improvement Coalition, and the Vinings Historic Preservation.
- **Promote the City's Civil War Artifacts Collection** and consider securing a long-term location for the collection and other historical artifacts.
- **Collaborate with the National Park Service** to more closely connect Smyrna's historical and cultural sites to Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park programming and visitors.

The City of Smyrna has made significant efforts to rehabilitate historic properties and make them accessible to the community. Aunt Fanny's Cabin is rented to the public for dinner parties and small receptions while weddings are commonplace at Brawner Hall. As part of the Parks and Recreation budget in The City of Smyrna Capital Improvement Plan 2017-2021, the City will renovate the historic Reed House and begin managing it as a public rental

facility by Fall 2017. Opening historic properties for public use is a useful way to help cover the costs for the preservation of historic sites in Smyrna.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The City of Smyrna has a robust network of community facilities, civic spaces and recreational resources, enhancing quality of life in the city.
- With solid budgets, the City of Smyrna is on track to meet the future needs of the residents and businesses in Smyrna.
- A key challenge will be ensuring that the income coming into the city can be sustained and increased to meet the continuing community facility needs and demands. This can be done through maintaining a balanced and strong commercial/industrial tax base and/or higher taxes.
- To maximize usage of the city's extensive park and trail network, the City could look to raise the profile of the City's bike share program and create a network map to showcase active transport connections to the Silver Comet Trail and commercial and recreational areas in the city.
- Increased marketing of the City's historical assets will open these sites to a larger audience, and raise custodianship of the city's heritage. Increasing planning controls over historic items located on private properties would ensure the city's heritage is safeguarded for future generations.
- The City's wide ranging programs and facilities at The Wolfe Center is well equipped to meet demands for senior services from an aging population in the future.

*This page intentionally left blank.*