

Highway 92 Corridor LCI Study



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Livable Centers Initiative Program**

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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This study is funded in part by the **Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)**, a program offered by the Atlanta Regional Commission that encourages local jurisdictions to plan and implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities consistent with regional development policies.

Plan's Response to LCI Goals

Here is a summary of how the Plan meets the goals of the LCI Program:

Encourage a diversity of medium to high-density, mixed income neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices.

- The plan identifies three key nodes along the Highway 92 corridor for mixed-use, medium density and potential future high-density development including the Lee Road intersection area with its new commercial development, the Bomar Road intersection area with future residential retail mixed use development and, the Hillcrest Drive / Midway Road intersection area for potential redevelopment through potential public investments to develop mixed use office, retail and residential development.
- Land use and zoning recommendations are included to encourage and guide the character and use of this development.

Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area.

- Major components of the plan are streetscape design and policy recommendations that seek to make Highway 92 a safer and pedestrian-friendly corridor.
- The plan recommends a network of new multi-use trails that provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between existing parks (such as the Deerlick Park and the Sweetwater Creek State Park), schools, neighborhoods, and transit destinations (the existing Douglas County Transportation Center).

- The plan builds upon the ARC's regional bicycle plan by identifying additional bicycle routes and design policies to connect the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods to destinations on the corridor.
- Long-term transit recommendations are proposed that include routes to existing commuter bus transit operating from the Transportation Center and designating Highway 92 as a transit corridor that will tie into the Regional Transit Vision proposed by the Transit Planning Board (TPB).

Encourage integration of uses and land use policy/regulation with transportation investments to maximize the use of alternate modes.

- The proposed redevelopment sites are specifically planned and designed to be higher-density, mixed-use sites that support jobs and housing, making them more transit supportive, walkable and less dependent on the automobile.
- The larger redevelopment sites are designed to require new streets and connections that structure development on a street and block system that adds to the area's transportation network, encourages small and walkable blocks, and distributes traffic to manage impact.

Through transportation investments increase the desirability of redevelopment of land served by existing infrastructure.

- The proposed redevelopment sites along the Highway 92 Corridor are served by existing infrastructure. The new street connections and pedestrian enhancements will serve to connect these sites to the surrounding neighborhoods and maximize their ability to utilize the existing transportation infrastructure.
- Major underutilized redevelopment sites in the corridor include aging commercial strip centers near the I-20 interchange on Highway 92. The proposed transportation investments will serve to help catalyze these valuable development opportunities.

Executive Summary

Preserve the historical characteristics and create a community identity.

- The Highway 92 Village Overlay ordinance, in large part has helped set the stage for defining the character of development desired by the community on Highway 92. Guidelines for Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) developed as a part of this plan help augment the Village Overlay ordinance and define the important characteristics of new development that when built would fit into the existing neighborhood and commercial character of the area.

Develop a community-based transportation investment program that will identify capital projects, which can be funded in the annual TIP.

- Through the public process a number of transportation projects have been identified that both enhance the quality-of-life and livability of the corridor, and increase connectivity and transportation alternatives; all of which are eligible for TIP funding.

Provide transportation infrastructure incentives for jurisdictions to take local actions to implement the resulting study goals.

- The LCI implementation funding opportunities will serve as an important incentive to implement the project identified.
- These improvements in the long-term will also provide an important signal to local land owners and developers about Douglas County's commitment to quality development in the corridor. This coupled with the design and land use regulations will ensure both public and private "implementation" of the plan.

Provide for the implementation of the RDP policies, quality growth initiatives and Best Development Practices in the study area and at the regional level.

- The plan specifically recommends the kind of mixed-use (jobs and housing), walkable and transit supportive development in the Highway 92 corridor that ARC is intending to promote. The physical infrastructure projects (pedestrian enhancements, trails, new streets, etc.) along with the land use and design policy will serve to begin implementation.

Develop a local planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders particularly low income, minority and traditionally underserved populations.

- The public planning process has included; multi-day design workshop, regular Advisory Committee meetings, broader public meetings, and public mailing notifications of the process along with information updates and plan documents posted on the County's web site.
- Over 200 people have attended the variety of meetings and workshops.

Provide planning funds for development of the corridor that showcase the integration of land use policies/regulations and transportation investments with urban design tools.

- This LCI process with the local funding support of Douglas County, has served to identify projects and policies for the Highway 92 Corridor that will implement and ARC's LCI goals.

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Project Priorities:

A clear message expressed throughout this planning process from the community is the desire to enhance the livability of the Highway 92 Corridor and surrounding neighborhoods through policies and projects that: makes it more multimodal (walking, cycling , transit, and cars), supports mixed use development, and includes stronger private development standards to promote pedestrian-friendly urban form.

The projects and priorities that have resulted are organized in several key areas. Provided here is a summary and highlight of the plan's projects and priorities.

Pedestrian Enhancements & Streetscape – The plan focuses on pedestrian improvements along Highway 92 and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

- The plan recommends widened sidewalks and catalyst streetscape projects along key portions of the Highway 92 corridor to coincide with new developments.
- In addition, the plan identifies new sidewalks on key neighborhood streets that are currently without sidewalks.
- The plan recommends upgrading pedestrian crossings with pedestrian crosswalk markings, ADA access and countdown ped signals to create a safer walking environment. Combined with streetscape projects, these crossings could be designed with landscaped islands that promote traffic calming and provide a pedestrian refuge.

New Street Network – There are several large development opportunities along the corridor that can and should accommodate new street network. These new connections will serve to provide added transportation capacity in the corridor, create smaller, walkable blocks, and reconnect these large sites to the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Key among these is a new 2-lane street parallel to Highway 92 from Lake Monroe to just east of Pine street and the planned extension of Lee Road to Bomar Road.

Intersections – the plan recommends the installation of new traffic signals at key locations along the corridor to:

- Allow multiple points of access to the new street network that will develop over time as new development is planned on Highway 92.
- Provide full access to key large development sites that in-turn connect to other streets and help enhance connectivity in the area.

Transit – Connecting the corridor with enhanced transit opportunities is a key long-term goal identified by the community.

- Long term recommendations include making Highway 92 a key regional transit route that can connect downtown Douglasville with industrial areas along the Chattahoochee, employment centers in South Fulton County and the Atlanta Airport.



View of proposed streetscape on Highway 92

Executive Summary

Open Space, Trails & Greenways – The area includes several unique open space and trail opportunities.

- New park and open spaces as a part of new development will help supplement existing key open spaces like the Deerlick Park and the Douglas Co. Soccer Association.
- A number of new trails are proposed in the plan to connect neighborhoods to schools, parks and regional attractions like the Sweetwater Creek State Park.
- Many of these multi-use trail recommendations are developed to supplement the Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan developed by the ARC in 2002.

Land Use – The plan identifies critical future land use changes necessary to promote the proposed redevelopment and open space recommendations. Also, throughout the corridor, there is a need to enhance the design and site planning standards to strengthen the existing Village Overlay Ordinance.

- These include intensifying residential use from low density single family residential to medium density residential developed around a pattern of streets and blocks with a mix of housing types based on TND guidelines.
- Allowing the development of Retail uses as a part of the existing transitional land use with specific commercial development guidelines.
- In addition, the plan outlines “development standards” for traditional neighborhood development and commercial development in order to help regulate future mixed-use redevelopment projects with the intent to enhance connectivity and make new developments pedestrian friendly.

Section 1.0

Background for the Study

Background for the Study

Overview of the LCI Program

The LCI Process

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program offered by the Atlanta Regional Commission that encourages local jurisdictions to plan and implement strategies that link transportation improvements with land use development strategies to create sustainable, livable communities consistent with regional development policies. The LCI program is intended to promote greater livability, mobility and development alternatives in existing employment center, town centers and corridors. The rationale is that directing development towards areas with existing infrastructure will benefit the region and minimize sprawling land use patterns.

Funding for study projects are awarded on a competitive basis to local governments and non-profit sponsors for producing plans to define future center development strategies and supporting public and private investments. ARC funded 67 planning studies in the first seven years of the LCI program (in 2000 to 2006).

Key Goals for the LCI study

The LCI program was established with ten goals that can be summarized as three general concepts that encourage mixed land use, transportation options, and public involvement.

- Encourage a diversity of residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices at the activity center and town center level; housing should be given strong focus to create mixed-income neighborhoods and support the concept of “aging in place”;
- Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area;
- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders (including those not often involved in such planning efforts).

Every LCI study is expected to address these three key concepts as a part of the planning process and eventually identify projects for implementation which can be funded under the LCI program with matching contributions from local jurisdictions. Since 2000, ARC has awarded \$132 million in implementation grants to LCI area. Locally the downtown Douglasville LCI has received \$3.6 million in implementation grants.

The Highway 92 Corridor LCI Study and Purpose

Highway 92 is a key regional east-west corridor that is facing strong growth pressures. In 2006, Douglas County applied for funding from the ARC under its LCI program to study Highway 92 as an “emerging” corridor to balance its regional mobility function with local development goals that include walkability, economic development, and enhancement of the quality of life within the corridor. The LCI study seeks to:

- Build on the development aspirations of the community to define a community vision for future development of the corridor.
- Provide recommendations to enhance development standards related to connectivity, diverse and sustainable mix of land uses and intensity, which can be adopted in the short term.
- Identify implementation projects in the form of transportation improvements or potential redevelopment opportunities that can be implemented in the short, medium and long term.

Background for the Study

Corridor Context and Study Area

Regional Context of Highway 92

The adjacent map provides a view of the Highway 92 Study area in the context of the regional land use and transportation networks pattern. It highlights the land use transition from historic urban neighborhoods located inside the perimeter just south of I-20 to the first ring suburban neighborhoods near Campbellton Road and Cascade Road outside of I-285, to the emerging suburban residential developments in south Cobb County, southwest Fulton County, and eastern Douglas County.

From a regional perspective, the study area is within the western most piece of this mosaic. Highway 92 (Fairburn Road) plays a key transportation role in this part of the region.

- It can be seen as an extension of Highway 166 that is an important east-west connection that parallels I-20 between areas south of Downtown Atlanta and Douglas County.
- Highway 92 also connects major employment locations – the industrial uses on Fulton Industrial Blvd. and the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport – via Camp Creek Parkway.

This regional mobility function of Highway 92 influences the study area which is home to a growing number of suburban communities and residential neighborhoods. One of the key issues for the study will be to balance regional mobility goals with local neighborhood expectations and future development opportunities.

Background for the Study

Regional Location



Background for the Study

Study Area for the Highway 92 LCI

This study is focused on Highway 92 (Fairburn Road) between I-20 and Lake Monroe Road just past the Lee Road intersection. The study area extends about a quarter mile on either side of the corridor into the neighborhoods along Highway 92.

The study area is strategically located with access to I-20 to the west, and as an eastbound connection to Atlanta (Chattahoochee Industrial/Hartsfield-Jackson Airport). The study area which covers about 3 miles of Highway 92 and encompasses 965 acres is about three times the size of Downtown Douglasville. Hence one needs to see the study area as a series of places rather than merely a corridor.

Portions of the study area near I-20 are within the Douglasville City limits. Although the official study boundary wraps around to exclude some of these portions, recommendations from the study will focus on all properties on the corridor regardless of their jurisdictions and present recommendations that may cross over jurisdictional boundaries and may require both the city and the county to collaborate to implement the recommendations.

The study area truly represents an “emerging” corridor with a wide range of development conditions including:

- Undeveloped, large parcels that were former farms and rural residential estates
- Small parcel, residential lots dating back to a time when Highway 92 was just a two-lane rural road.
- Aging (and vacant) commercial strip centers that are ripe for redevelopment.
- Newly developed commercial centers (Publix at Lee Road) serving the surround residential subdivisions.

Background for the Study

Study Area & Municipal Boundaries

